

2012/2013 Community Needs Assessment Study:
Results of a Survey of Residents in Nine Texas Counties

Entergy Texas, Inc.

Low-Income Advocacy Division

Community Outreach Program

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Introduction

The Lamar University Community Outreach Program with assistance from Entergy Texas Foundation and Catholic Charities, commissioned the Lamar University Center for Public Policy Studies under the direction of Dr. James Vanderleeuw to conduct a needs assessment targeting the predominantly rural areas of Southeast Texas, including Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Jasper, Chambers, Polk, Tyler, Liberty and Newton Counties in Southeast Texas. A research team composed of Dr. James Vanderleeuw, director of Center for Public Policy Studies, Dr. Thomas Sowers and Dr. Jason Sides, Department of Political Science, Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas, conducted the study. The following Lamar University students were hired to assist with the project: Adeola Adeyemo, Macy Deng, Sarah Irwin, Joanna Joseph, Candida Rodriguez, and Brian Williams.

The remainder of this section discusses the purpose of the study, the methodology employed in gathering data, and the organization of this report.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide information that will empower individuals, families and communities across a nine county region of Texas. The study will be a regional empowerment effort designed to research the personal, financial, health and wellness and other safety and security needs of individuals and families in the region. The study will identify specific safety and security needs and produce data that will enhance the programs and services of nonprofit, for profit, municipalities and citizen advocacy organizations serving citizens of the

nine counties in the study. This study will allow citizens to voice their concerns and needs directly to practitioners of low-income anti-poverty programs and services in the region.

Methodology

To identify community needs, church and community organization leaders across nine Texas counties were asked to distribute a survey to their congregation or membership. The nine counties are Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk and Tyler counties. For each county, churches and community organizations (such as the American Legion and Knights of Columbus) were first identified via an internet search. For all nine counties, a total of 1,003 churches and 201 community groups were identified. Next, contact information for each of the identified churches and community groups was obtained via a review of church and community organization web sites. This contact information included a phone number, the name of the church or community organization representative, and an e-mail address. Not all contact information was available for each church or community organization, though in all cases at least one method of contact was obtained.

Following this, for all identified churches and community groups across the nine-county region, permission to survey the congregation or membership was sought. When the e-mail address was available, institutional leaders were first e-mailed a request to survey their members. A copy of the e-mail request to church leaders is displayed in Appendix A; the request to community organizations follows the same format. If no response was received within two weeks, phone calls were made. A phone call was the first approach used when an e-mail address was unavailable. In all cases regarding phone calls, at least three calls per church or community organization were made before the effort to establish contact was terminated.

The identification of, and collection of information on churches and agencies began in the summer of 2012. The effort to contact church and community organization leaders began during the fall of 2012 and continued through the summer of 2013.

In all, 39 churches and community organizations participated in the survey – that is, gave permission for their members to be surveyed, accepted blank surveys to be administered, and returned completed surveys. A list of churches and community organizations who participated in the survey is reported in Appendix B. It was not always the case that permission to survey yielded completed surveys. In some cases, permission was given, but further contact concerning delivery of blank surveys could not be made. In other cases, after surveys had been delivered, the administration of surveys yielded no completed surveys (in all cases, church or community organization leaders preferred that they administer the survey) or no further contact could be established. A total of 598 returned surveys from citizens across the nine Texas counties were obtained as the result of the 39 churches and community groups that participated in the survey.

As shown in Appendix C, the percentage of respondents from each county is generally proportional to the percentage of the nine-county population that resides in each county. The surveyed percentage of Jasper County residents, however, is larger than the percentage of the nine-county population that resides in Jasper County (15% v. 6%). Conversely, the surveyed percentage of Liberty County residents, however, is smaller than the percentage of the nine-county population that resides in Liberty County (5% v. 12%).

The social and economic characteristics of respondents are reported in Appendix D. Females are heavily represented in the respondent cohort, as are whites, though blacks make up over 20 percent of the cohort and Hispanics make up another 10 percent. Fifty percent of the survey cohort reports an annual household income of less than \$50,000, with the modal income

category in the \$25,001 to \$50,000 range. More than one-third of respondents report holding either an Associate's degree or having some college, while nearly 30 percent report having high school or less. Over 40 percent of respondents report attending either a four year or two year college.

The survey instrument addressed needs in seven issue areas – Employment, Education, Housing, Health, Nutrition, Finances and Budgeting, and Transportation. A copy of the survey instrument is displayed in Appendix E. (Special effort was made to include Hispanics populations in the survey; a Spanish-language survey was developed and administered to Hispanic congregations.)

Organization of the Report

The following report is divided into two sections – Findings and Assessment. The section on findings is divided into the seven issue areas identified above. For each issue area there was typically a question that asked about the reason or reasons that the issue was a problem in the respondent's area (i.e., community), a question that asked about the barriers to the respondent's own personal success in that issue area, and a question that asked about the types of services the respondent required. For each issue area, each of these is discussed in turn. After the presentation of findings, the report proceeds to the Assessment section. In this section of the report, we provide a context for the interpretation of the findings. Because our study draws from public opinion, we discuss how best to understand what a study based on opinion has to offer. Further, we discuss the influence that the economic environment as well as political culture can have on public opinion. Finally, we consider what are likely the most critical community needs across our nine-county area.

Findings

Employment

Most of the following tables report both the percentage of surveys in which a given response item was identified (as a problem or barrier or needed service, etc.) (labeled “% of Surveys”) along with the percentage of times that particular item was identified out of all items identified on a given question (labeled “% of Responses”). To use the findings reported in Table 1 as an example, lack of education was identified as a cause for unemployment on 54% of the returned surveys (on 323 of the 589 returned surveys). Therefore because each survey comes from a unique respondent we can say that 54% of respondents identified lack of education as a cause of unemployment. However, on most questions a respondent could identify as many items as applied (in Table 1, from 1 to 9 items). Therefore, on the question that pertains to Table 1 (“Unemployment is a problem in this area because”), response items were identified a total of 1,804 times (excluding the “No Problem” category). The 323 times that lack of education was identified represents 18% of this total. Taken together, both measures offer a more comprehensive view of the relative importance of a given response item than the use of one measure along. As reported in the following tables, response items for each question are rank-ordered by the percentage of surveys on which items were identified

Table 1 reports peoples’ views of the causes of unemployment in their area. The response categories addressed three broad causes of unemployment – lack of education and training, personal issues such as substance abuse, and lack of jobs.

Thirty-seven percent of responses that identified a problem cited some type of educational deficiency that was believed to be the cause of unemployment in the area. The most common of these was lack of education, the single most frequent response, identified as a cause

of unemployment by the majority (54%) of respondents. Also in the area of education and training, a lack of computer skills was identified by nearly one-third of the respondents and lack of language skills was identified by slightly more than a quarter of respondents.

Thirty-eight percent of all responses concerned three items that addressed personal issue as a problem for employment in their area. Substance abuse was identified by 43% of respondents. Child care, such as hours available or cost, was identified as a problem by 38% of respondents. Lack of transportation was cited by about one-third of respondents as a problem.

The last broad cause of unemployment dealt with the availability of jobs in the area. The two response items that dealt with job availability accounted for 25% of all responses. The first was the lack of jobs that provided high wages and benefits in the area. This was identified as a problem by a majority (53%) of respondents and was the second most common response item (after lack of education). The other issue was employment leaving the area. This was identified as a problem by slightly over one-in-five respondents.

Table 1: *Unemployment is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Lack of Education	54	18	323
Lack of Good Paying Jobs with Benefits	53	18	319
Substance Abuse	43	14	257
Problems with Child Care (hours, cost...)	38	13	226
Cost/Lack of Transportation	34	11	206
Lack of Computer Skills	30	10	178
Language Skills	27	9	162
Employers Leaving the Area	22	7	133
No Problem	6		36
N =	598	1804	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 8 items=1804 (excludes No Problem)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

In Table 2 we move from the perceived causes of unemployment in an individual's area to personal barriers to an individual's gaining employment. Stated another way, we transition from what someone thinks about her or his community on a given issue to their own personal situation regarding that issue. (This movement, from views of the community to personal situation will be replicated regarding other issues where both a question concerning a "problem" in an area and a question about a "barrier" to attainment are asked).

Table 2: Please identify your barriers to securing employment (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Education	23	18	138
Lack of Reliable Transportation	12	10	73
Credit History	12	9	72
Lack of High School Diploma/GED	12	9	69
Criminal Background	11	9	67
Permanent Health/Disability	9	7	55
Lack of Reliable Dependent Care	9	7	55
Lack of Proper ID (driver's license...)	9	7	53
Language	8	7	50
Temporary Disability Problem	6	4	33
Unauthorized to Work (expired green card...)	5	4	32
Pregnancy/Illness	5	4	29
Emotionally Unable to Work	3	3	19
Lack of Veteran Status	2	2	13
None of these are Barriers	54		321
N =	598	758	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 14 items=1079 (excludes None of these are Barriers)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

As reported in Table 2, slightly less than 50% of respondents cited any personal barriers to attaining employment. For those who did identify a barrier, education was once again the most common response with nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents believing that a lack of

education was a barrier to gaining employment. The next most common response was essentially a three way tie between lack of reliable transportation, poor credit history, and lack of a high school diploma or GED. Twelve percent of respondents identified each of these as a barrier to securing employment. The only other item to be noted as a barrier to employment by at least 10% of respondents was having a criminal background. As can be seen, other response items were noted by less than 10% of respondents.

Table 3 presents the breakdown of the respondents based on their employment status (respondents could give only one answer to this particular question). A majority of respondents identified themselves as employed full time. Fourteen percent identified themselves as employed part-time. The remaining 32% were unemployed (with 7% were actually looking for work). Interestingly, on the responses displayed in tables 1 and 2, when those that were employed full time are compared to those who were under-employed (employed part-time and unemployed), there appears to be no meaningful difference in these groups' perceptions of the employment environment in the area.

Table 3: What is your current employment situation? (check only one)

	%	n
Employed Full Time	54	294
Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	25	135
Employed Part Time	14	77
Unemployed, Looking for Work	7	45
N =		551

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 4 items=551

n: Number of responses for each item

% of Surveys items may not equal because some questions were unanswered 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Finally, Table 4 addresses what type of employment services the individual needed. The majority of respondents (61%) did not require employment services (they were employed, retired, etc.). For those who needed services, the need for skills training and resume writing were the most common responses, both identified by 13% of respondents. No one service need, though, dominated. People said they needed assistance with various aspects of the process of finding a job (including assistance identifying a career, finding a job, and assistance with interview skills).

Table 4: Do you need any of the following employment services? (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Skills Training	13	18	80
Resume Writing	13	17	76
Career Search	10	13	57
Job Interview Skills	10	13	57
Job Seeking	9	12	55
Small Business Ownership	7	10	42
Vocational Rehabilitation	7	9	39
Dress for Success	6	8	36
Do Not Need any of these Services	61		364
N =	598	442	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 8 items=442 (excludes Do Not Need any of these Services)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, unemployment is a concern. Overwhelmingly, respondents believed that unemployment was a problem in their community (i.e., their “area”) and a sizable percentage (just slightly less than half) believed that there were barriers to the attainment of their own employment goals. A lack of education showed up as a key explanation for unemployment – concerning both community difficulties and personal barriers. To a lesser extent, lack of

child/dependent care and lack of transportation also showed up as explanations for unemployment difficulties at both the community and individual levels. As the findings also made clear, many people are in need of the skills necessary to successfully apply for and have some realistic chance of obtaining a job.

Education

The second issue addressed by the survey was education. Respondents were first asked to assess the problems facing education in their area. As can be seen in Table 5, over 80% of respondents identified some problem facing education.

Table 5: *Education is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Lack of Tuition Money	42	17	251
Lack of College Education	31	12	188
Lack of Dropout Prevention Program	27	11	161
Lack of Vocational Skills Programs	24	10	158
Lack of Computer Skills Programs	24	10	144
Problems with Child Care (hours, cost...)	24	9	141
Cost/Lack of Transportation	23	9	139
No High School Diploma	23	9	135
Lack of GED Programs	13	5	77
Threats of Violence in School	11	5	68
Lack of Preschool Programs	8	3	49
No Problem	17		100
N =	598	1511	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 11 items=1511 (excludes No Problem)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Lack of money for tuition was the most frequently cited problem (by 17% of respondents). This was followed by lack of a college education, and lack of programs that included dropout prevention, vocational skills, and computer skills programs (each identified by 10 percent or more of respondents). Problems with child care, transportation and lack of a high school education were identified by nearly one-in-ten respondents. The remaining items were thought to be an educational problem in their area by relatively few respondents.

Table 6 reports the barriers people face to completing or continuing their education. The majority (65%) experienced no personal barriers. Transportation and defaulting on student loans were the two most frequently identified barriers, each by 8% of respondents, though no one barrier dominated the list.

Table 6: Please identify your barriers to completing or continuing your education (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Dependable Transportation	8	21	49
Default on School Loan	8	20	47
Dependable Child/Dependent Care	7	18	43
Previous Difficulty with School	7	17	40
Lack of High School Diploma/GED	6	15	35
Criminal Background	4	10	24
None of these are Barriers	65		391
N =	598	238	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 6 items=238 (excludes None of these are Barriers)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 7 reports the educational services that were needed by individuals. Only 35% identified themselves as needing services. For those who needed services, financial aid was

clearly the most needed service, identified by one-in-five respondents. The need for tutoring was identified by nearly on-in-ten respondents. All other response items were identified as a need by six percent or less of respondents.

Table 7: Do you need any of the following educational services? (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Financial Aid	20	39	117
Tutoring, Reading, Math, Science, Other	9	17	53
English as a Second Language	6	12	37
ABE/BED Classes	6	11	33
Vocational Rehabilitation	5	11	32
Citizenship Classes	3	6	17
Veterans Benefits	2	5	14
Do Not Need any of these Services	65		390
N =	598	303	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 7 items=303 (excludes Do Not Need any of these Services)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, education is a concern, particularly when viewed from the perspective of the community. The vast majority of respondents believed that unemployment was a problem in their community. While comparatively fewer believed barriers to educational attainment applied to their own situation, over one-third cited personal barriers. One obstacle to educational attainment that stands out is financial cost. Lack of money for tuition was the most frequently cited community-level problem and financial aid was the most frequently cited needed educational service (the cost of child care and transportation were also noted). A second obstacle that stands out is lack of support services. Many people said that they needed services to enable them to have an opportunity for continued education (and lack of college education was the

second most commonly identified community educational problem). These services included lack of convenient child care hours, transportation, GED programs, tutoring, ABE/BED classes, and vocational rehabilitation programs. The need for services was identified both at the community level and at the individual level.

Housing

In the following section we examine the issue of housing, both rental and home ownership. Table 8 reports the results of asking respondents to identify problems facing housing in their area. Nearly 80% of respondents identified some problem with housing in their area. The item response list that respondents were offered encompasses three broad housing problems – financial issues relating to housing, the supply of housing, and services to obtain/maintain housing.

Fifty-one percent of all responses concerned the cost of housing. The top four response items were about cost – the cost of renting/making housing payments (37% of all respondents), access to affordable rental housing (32%), move-in costs (26%), and lack of affordable single family homes (22%). Twenty-seven percent of all responses relate to lack of available housing. Items here include lack of available housing in acceptable neighborhoods and a long waiting list for section 8 housing (both identified by 20% of respondents), lack of shelters (19%), lack of public housing (13%), and lack of housing of adequate size (11%). Finally, 14% of all responses were about lack of services to obtain/maintain housing. These were lack of assistance for repairs (8%) and lack of supportive services (15%).

Table 8: *Housing is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Monthly Cost of Rent/House Payment	37	16	222
Affordable Rental House/Apt not Available	32	14	194
Move-in-Costs (deposit for rent, utilities)	26	11	154
Affordable Single Family House not Avail for Purchase	22	10	133
Housing Not Avail in Accept Neighborhoods	20	9	122
Long Wait List for Section 8 or Other Housing Assist	20	9	121
Lack of Shelters for Families, Women, Men	19	8	115
Lack of Assistance for Repairs/Maintenance	18	8	110
Lack of Supportive Services	15	6	87
Lack of Public Housing	13	5	76
Housing Size Does Not Meet Family Needs	11	5	63
No Problem	23		138
N =	598	1397	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=521

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 11 items=1178 (excludes No Problem)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Tables 9 and 10 report barriers to buying a home and to securing affordable rental housing identified by respondents. While the majority of respondents reported no personal barrier to buying a home, four-out-of-ten identified some barrier (Table 9). For those who identified a barrier to owning a home, financial barriers dominated. People did not have the money for a down payment (24%), did not have the required credit (22%), or could not afford the cost to maintain a home (18%). As shown in Table 10, financial issues also dominated problems in the rental market. Among the third of respondents who identified a personal barrier to securing affordable rental housing, credit history (19%) was a major issue as was an employment history of the individual (10%). Financial problems appear to be the primary barrier to either buying a home or securing affordable rental housing.

Table 9: Please identify the barriers to buying your own home (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
No Money of Down Payment	24	35	145
Low Credit Score	22	32	134
Cost to Maintain Home	18	26	109
Physically Unable to Live Alone	3	4	15
Emotionally Unable to Live Alone	2	3	11
None of these are Barriers	60		357
N =	598	414	
N =	521	324	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 5 items=414 (excludes None of these are Barriers)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 10: Please identify your barriers to securing affordable rental housing (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Credit History	19	49	115
Employment History	10	24	57
Criminal Background	6	16	38
Physically Unable to Live Alone	2	6	13
Emotionally Unable to Live Alone	2	4	10
None of these are Barriers	68		406
N =	598	233	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 5 items=233 (excludes None of these are Barriers)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, housing is a concern, particularly when viewed from the perspective of the community. The majority of respondents believed that housing was a problem in their community. While relatively fewer believed barriers to owning or renting a home applied to

their own situation, 40% cited barriers to home ownership and over 30 percent cited barriers to renting. By far, the dominant obstacle to housing involved cost/finances. Respondents believed that lack of affordable housing and other cost-related issues constituted a significant problem at the community level. Many people cited cost-related issues, such as the cost to maintain a house and lack of money for a down payment, as personal barriers to home ownership. Finances also show up regarding rental housing, where credit history was the most frequently cited barrier. Concern with the cost of housing seems linked with housing availability. A lack of available housing was identified as a community problem by over one-quarter of respondents. A reasonable inference from these findings is that for many people, the present housing stock is simply not affordable.

Healthcare

Table 11 reports respondents' perceptions of the barriers to obtaining adequate healthcare in their communities. The barriers to obtaining adequate healthcare can be attributed to three basic causes – the cost of insurance, the cost of healthcare (apart from insurance), and inability to receive health care. Forty-three percent of all responses concerned two health insurance items. The cost of health insurance, the most frequently identified problem, was identified by a majority of respondents. The cost of vision/dental insurance was identified as a problem by 40% of the respondents. Apart from insurance, the cost of medical services is perceived as a barrier to obtaining proper healthcare. Forty-four percent of all responses were about three medical service cost items. Lack of affordable health services was identified as a problem by one-third of respondents, as was the cost of prescription medication. Nearly as many respondents identified lack of affordable dental care (30%) as a significant problem. Two items relating to the inability

to receive health care garnered 13% of all responses. An insufficient number of providers who accept Medicaid or Medicare was identified by 15% of respondents and the lack of doctors of clinics where one resides was cited by 5%. While there are numerous problems to obtaining medical services, as reported in Table 12 most respondents had a primary care physician. Eight-in-ten respondents reported that they had a primary care physician.

Table 11: *Obtaining medical/health services is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Cost of Health Insurance	54	25	336
Cost of Vision/Dental Insurance	40	18	236
Lack of Affordable Health Services	33	15	199
Cannot Afford Prescription Medications	33	15	198
Lack of Affordable Dental Care	30	14	181
Not Enough Providers Accepting Medicaid /Medicare	25	11	149
No Clinic/Doctors Where I Live	5	2	31
No Problem	21		128
N =	598	1330	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 7 items=1330 (excludes No Problem)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 12: *Do you have a primary care physician? (check only one)*

	%	n
Yes	80	454
No	20	115
N =	569	

n: Number of responses for each item

Finally, Table 13 provides information on which types of insurance individuals possess. The majority (53%) noted they did have some type of private insurance. One third of respondents reported having dental insurance, and about one-in-five reported having vision insurance. Most respondents had some type of private insurance. One quarter of respondents reported relying on Medicare as a primary form of insurance, while 16% noted they also made use of the Medicare Supplement. Only 7% of respondents said they relied on Medicaid and 1% reported accessing the services provided by CHIP.

Table 13: *I have the following insurance (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Private Insurance	53	34	319
Dental Insurance	34	21	201
Medicare	25	16	150
Vision Insurance	21	13	124
Medicare Supplement	16	10	95
Medicaid	7	4	39
CHIP	1	1	8
Do Not Have Insurance	17		103
N =	598	936	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 7 items=936 (excludes Do Not Have Insurance)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, the majority of respondents viewed the inability to obtain adequate medical and health services as a problem in their community. In one form or another, cost was the biggest issue – either directly due to the cost of services or indirectly due to the cost of insurance. While lack of providers was cited by some people as a problem, most reported having a primary care physician. Most respondents also reported having some form of medical insurance or coverage. However, because of the predominance of cost-related issues, it seems reasonable to

infer that even though many people have some level of medical coverage and access to some healthcare needs, not all needs are being met and for many people, health and medical expenses are a heavy if not excessive financial burden.

Nutrition

The next issue involves proper nutrition. As shown in Table 14, the vast majority of respondents (67%) believed that proper nutrition was a problem in their area. Over 40% of respondents thought that nutrition was a problem due to lack of sufficient income for proper nutrition. This was the most frequent response and comprised half of all the responses to this question. The second most common problem was poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables (cited by 18% of respondents). A somewhat smaller group, 14% of respondents, felt that alternate food support was not available and therefore prevented people from accessing adequate nutrition. The final response item, lack of grocery stores, was selected by 11% of respondents as a problem to nutrition.

Table 14: *Nutrition is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Not Enough Income to Purchase Food	42	50	252
Poor Access to Fresh Fruits/Vegetables	18	21	107
Alternate Food Support Not Available	14	17	84
Lack of Grocery Stores	11	13	64
No Problem	33		198
N =	598	507	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 4 items=507 (excludes No Problem)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 15 reports responses to the question of identifying barriers to eating healthy. The majority, 64%, reported no barriers. However, as was the case with other issues, where a barrier exists it appears to be about cost – in this case the cost of healthy food. About one-in-five respondents reported an inability to afford healthy food as a barrier, with slightly under one-in-ten saying that they did not know how to prepare healthy foods.

Table 15: Please identify your barriers to eating healthy (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Not Able to Afford Healthy Food Choices	21	72	128
Don't Know How to Prepare Healthy Foods	9	28	51
None of these are Barriers	64		382
N =	598	179	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 2 items=179 (excludes None of these are Barriers)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 16 provides insight into needed nutritional services. The overwhelming majority of respondents, 74%, reported that they were not in need of any services. For those who need services, however, once again, cost appears to be an issue. Slightly more than one-in-ten respondents needed Food Stamps/SNAP, with somewhat fewer saying they needed either free or reduced school lunch for children (7%) or home delivered meals (4%).

Table 16: Do you need any help with the following nutritional services? (check all that apply)

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Food Stamps/SNAP	12	52	71
Free/Reduced School Lunch for Children	7	32	44
Home Delivered Meals/Meals on Wheels	4	15	21
Do Not Need any of these Services	74		455
N =	521	136	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 3 items=136 (excludes Do Not Need any of these Services)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, proper nutrition is a concern, particularly when viewed from the perspective of the community. The majority of respondents believed that lack of proper nutrition was a problem in their community. Although comparatively fewer believed barriers to nutritious eating applied to their own situation, over one-third cited personal barriers. By far, the primary problem to eating healthy was seen as financial – eating healthy was perceived to be too expensive. This applies both to perceptions of the community as well as to individual barriers to nutrition. Most respondents said that they do not require nutritional services. Among those who did require services, Food Stamps/SNAP was cited most frequently. This particular finding supports the overall conclusion that the single biggest obstacle to eating healthy is cost.

Income and Finances

Table 17 reports whether respondents accessed certain financial services that would impact the level of income they enjoyed. The first financial service respondents were asked about was tax preparation. The majority (56%) reported they had accessed the use of a tax preparer. Of those who did access the use of a tax preparer, and reported the cost, the mean cost

was \$283. The utilization of free tax preparation services, however, represented a service upon which the respondents showed some ambivalence. Forty-three percent of respondents reported they would make use of free tax preparation services, while 35% noted they would not. That respondents might be somewhat ambivalent about the use of a free tax preparation service is further supported by the fact that more than one-in-five respondents were not sure whether they would make use of these services.

Table 17: *Use of Income (check applicable answer)*

Use Paid Tax Preparer Last Year? N = 553	Yes = 56% (n=310)	No = 44% (n=243)	
If Used Paid Tax Preparer, How Much?*	Mean = \$283		
N = 207			
Would Use Tax Free Prep Services? N = 527	Yes = 43% (n=226)	No = 35% (n=186)	Not Sure=22% (n=115)
Know that Free Tax Prep Available? N = 539	Yes = 49% (n=265)	No = 51% (N=274)	
Used Payday Lend/ Auto Title Service? N = 539	Yes = 11% (n=58)	No = 89% (n=481)	
Would Use Small Loan, Bank or CU? N = 529	Yes = 54% (n=287)	No = 46% (n=242)	
Have Checking Account? N = 557	Yes = 88% (n=488)	No = 12% (n=69)	
Have Saving Account? N = 552	Yes = 79% (n=437)	No = 21% (N=115)	

*: Open-ended question

Respondents displayed a clearer willingness to render a judgment about the benefits of utilizing a payday or auto title lender. Nearly nine-in-ten reported they did not make use of the

services provided by these vendors. By contrast, a slight majority signaled a willingness to avail themselves of the service of a small loan from a bank or credit union. Finally, most respondents had either a checking account (88%) or a savings account (79%).

Table 18 reports preferences for financial services. The largest group of respondents, 61%, reported they did not need help with any listed service. The most frequently identified needs were with budget and credit repair services (both listed by 17% of respondents). Tax preparation was identified by just over one-in-ten respondents, with only a few identifying the need for help opening a checking or savings account.

Table 18: *Would you like help with any of the following services? (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Budgeting	17	36	104
Credit Repair	17	35	101
Tax Preparation	11	23	68
Opening Checking/Savings Account	3	7	19
Do Not Need any of these Services	61		366
N =	598	292	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 3 items=292 (excludes Do Not Need any of these Services)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, most respondents used a paid tax preparer. There may be some ambivalence about using a fee tax preparation service, though over 40 percent said that they would. Most people were savvy about where they borrowed money, and would rather use a bank or credit union than rely on a payday lender or auto title service. Presumably, bad press regarding the latter type of lenders has permeated much of society. Most respondents had a checking and/or savings account and had little use for a service that assisted in opening such accounts. Most

people in fact did not require additional financial services. For those who did, the need for services to help budget and assist with credit repair stand out.

Transportation

The final issue respondents were asked about was transportation, particularly bus transportation. Table 19 reports respondents' opinions regarding problems with transportation in their area. The overwhelming majority (74%) reported some transportation related problem. Most of the response categories regarding transportation can be separated into those that concerned private transportation and those that concerned public transportation.

Fifty-six percent of all responses that identified a problem referred to private transportation. The most frequently cited problem was the cost of gasoline, identified by a majority of respondents. More than a quarter of respondents also identified the cost to maintain a car and lack of sufficient credit to buy a car as a problem with another nearly one-in-four saying that they could not afford car insurance. Almost one-in-five identified lack of reliable transportation as a problem, though this response item can refer to both private and public transportation as can lack of afford transportation for health services that was identified as a problem by about one-in-ten respondents.

Thirty-one percent of all responses concerned public transportation. Most frequent among these was limited availability of public transportation, identified as a problem by 37% of respondents. Other public transportation related problems were identified less frequently – bus routes that do not go in the needed direction (16% of respondents), inconvenient hours or days of operation and public transportation not being user friendly (both identified by about one-in-ten respondents).

Table 19: *Transportation is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Cost of Gasoline	52	22	310
Limited Public Transportation	37	16	222
Cost of Maintaining a Car	28	12	169
Lack of Credit to Buy a Car	28	12	165
Cannot Afford Car Insurance	23	10	137
Lack of Reliable Transportation	19	8	115
Bus Routes Not Go to Needed Destination	16	7	94
Hours/Days of Operation for Public Trans	12	5	70
Lack of Afford Trans for Health Services	11	5	66
Public Trans Not User Friendly to People w/Disabilities	8	3	48
No Problem	26		120
N =	598	1396	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 10 items=1396 (excludes No Problem)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 20 reports whether lack of transportation has caused people to an appointment or meeting. Overwhelmingly, people have not missed an appointment or meeting. Sixteen percent, though, reported having missed an appointment or meeting due to lack of transportation.

Table 20: *Have you ever missed an appointment or meeting due to lack of transportation? (check only one)*

	%	n
Yes	16	90
No	77	423
Not Sure	7	39
N =	552	

Tables 21 and 22 are about bus transportation, whether bus stops well lit and the use of buses to reach various destinations. Three-quarters of respondents did not know about bus stop lighting. Among the remainder, the most common response was that bus stops were usually well lit (Table 21). Almost nine-in-ten respondents said they did not use bus transportation (87%, Table 22). Only a small portion of respondents rely on bus transportation, and this small portion uses the bus to reach a variety of destinations, with no one destination being particularly common.

Table 21: *To what extent are bus stops located in well-lit safe areas? (check only one)*

	%	n
Always	3	13
Usually	10	46
Seldom	7	33
Never	5	23
Don't Know/Not Sure	75	352
N =	467	

Table 22: *Do you use the bus to reach any of the following destinations? (check all that apply)*

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Grocery	2	18	10
Medical Appointment	2	22	12
School	2	18	10
Work	1	15	8
Social Service	1	11	6
Government Office	1	7	4
Bank	1	9	5
Do Not Use the Bus	87		518
N =	598	55	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598

% of Responses: Number of responses across the 7 items=55 (excludes Do Not Use the Bus)

n: Number of responses for each item

Due to respondents' ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100

% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, lack of adequate transportation is of some concern. The problems people perceived were heavily about private transportation, although nearly one-third cited problems with public transportation. Problems concerning private transportation were financial, such as the cost of gasoline or purchasing a vehicle. Problems regarding public transportation were about availability and convenience of this service. It is not unreasonable to speculate that if private transportation was more affordable, more people would rely on private transportation; it is not unreasonable to speculate that if public transportation was more accessible and convenient that more people might rely on public transportation. As a specific type of public mode of transportation, bus usage does not seem too widespread. There was little opinion on bus stop lighting and there was little and varying usage of this mode of transportation. Overall, while perceived as a community concern, evidence that inadequate transportation adversely impacts peoples' daily lives is limited. Nearly 80 percent of respondents denied ever having missed a meeting or appointment due to lack of transportation.

Assessment

This section provides a discussion of community needs that involves a consideration of the problems facing communities, the barriers to the personal attainment of goals, and the services people need to attain these goals. This is followed by concluding remarks about the study's findings and the implications for service providers.

Community Needs

Problems Facing Communities

The findings in this study are based on public opinion, which is the collected attitude of citizens on a given issue or topic. When we ask people questions, we tap into their knowledge, understanding, opinions and attitudes on an issue. We do not directly measure “objective” conditions. Perceptions may not always line up with objective conditions. For example, some people may say that bus stops are not well lit, even when in fact they are well lit (or well-lit relative to other public facilities). However, peoples’ attitudes and opinions on issues are derived from their interaction with their environment. Although perhaps imperfectly, the collected opinion of people on a given issue will generally reflect the conditions within which people live their lives, their personal and their community’s conditions

On most issues any given respondent was asked to identify why that issue was a problem in their area (i.e., community) and to identify barriers to their individual attainment on that issue (the income and finance issue did not include these questions). On most issues, therefore, each respondent essentially was asked to offer an opinion on the community and on their own personal situation. In all such cases, a larger percentage of respondents identified community-level problems than identified individual-level barriers. This difference, however, cannot be

taken to mean that respondents had a skewed (more negative) view of their community relative to their own needs. Respondents had to select items from a particular response-set for each question, and in most cases on a given issue the response-set for the question that asked about barriers differed from the response set that asked about the issue being a problem in the area (i.e., the questions contained different sets of response items). Therefore, the higher percentage of respondents who identified problems, relative to barriers, may to some extent be due to the nature of the response-set offered.

Varying response sets across questions also means we have to be cautious in how we interpret a rank-ordering of what respondent's perceived as the biggest problem facing their communities. This said, the findings clearly suggest that some issues are perceived as more of a problem than others. Based on the percentage of respondents who identified at least one problem in their area, we have the following ranking (drawn from tables 1, 5, 8, 11, 14 and 19):

1. Unemployment (94% identified at least one problem with this issue in their area)
2. Education (83%)
3. Healthcare (79%)
4. Housing (77%)
5. Transportation (74%)
6. Nutrition (67%)

While the percentage point difference between several of these issues is relatively modest, it is apparent that more respondents viewed the issue of unemployment as a problem in their area than any other issue as a problem. By comparison to unemployment and education (the second most frequently cited problem facing people's community), the issue of nutrition was seen by respondents as substantially less of a problem facing their area. (As a cautionary note, a ranking is useful in that it provides a convenient way to prioritize. However, a rank-ordering is not to be interpreted as saying that issues ranked lower or at the bottom are unimportant. Even if

relatively few respondents consider nutrition to be a problem in their area, the issue of healthy eating remains an important one.)

While differing question response sets may explain some of the differences in ranking shown above, the dominance of unemployment as a community problem is unlikely fully related to the particular response-set to this question. Rather, it makes sense that unemployment was a concern given the lagged impact of the recent Great Recession – the steepest economic recession in our country since the Great Depression. When we interpret public opinion we need to keep in mind that opinion can be influenced by social and economic conditions. Likely, this study “picked up” influences of the Great Recession. Although we may be coming out of the most recent recession, continued unemployment means that more people continue to be concerned with their financial situation.

Findings on the problems facing respondents’ communities reveal two specific challenges – cost and lack of services. Cost seemed the more pronounced of these two challenges. Regarding cost, the findings show that in many cases frequent response items to questions about community problems identified economic concerns (that again may be linked with the recent recession). On the issue of unemployment, the cost of transportation was commonly cited as a community problem (Table 1). Regarding the issue of education, the cost of tuition was frequently cited (Table 5). Concerning the issue of housing, the cost of rent, as well as move in costs, were typically identified as community problems (Table 8). For the issue of transportation, the cost of gasoline, along with the cost of maintaining a car were frequently mentioned community problems (Table 19).

Regarding lack of services (as a problem in a respondent’s area), for the issue of healthcare numerous respondents cited lack of enough providers who accept Medicaid/Medicare

as well as a lack of clinics. For the issue of education, frequent responses to the question of community problem included lack of dropout prevention programs, vocational and computer skills programs, and GED programs (Table 5). On the issue of housing, respondents often cited lack of services as a community problem included lack of supportive services and lack of public housing (Table 8). Concerning the issue of transportation, limited public transportation along with lack of convenient times of public transportation service were identified as community problems (Table 19).

Barriers to Personal Attainment

The emphasis on unemployment as a community problem is also quite compatible with the predominance of cost-related factors when people were asked about their own personal barriers to attainment. Although fewer respondents identified specific barriers to their own personal attainment than identified problems in their area, the findings regarding barriers to personal attainment tend to mirror findings on community problems. People heavily identified cost and to a lesser extent lack of services and service providers as personal barriers.

Cost was a pervasive barrier to people attaining home ownership, adequate healthcare, adequate nutrition and transportation. (As was the case with perceived community problems, the heavy emphasis on cost as a barrier is likely linked with our recent experience with recession.) Beyond cost, lack of service providers also showed up as a barrier on some issues, particularly the issues of education and unemployment (tables 2 and 6 respectively). For both these issues, an often-cited barrier was lack of child care. Lack of reliable transportation was also cited as a barrier for both issues, though we cannot separate the extent to which this particular response item referred to public or to private transportation.

Respondents were asked to answer a question about barriers to attainment in four of the seven issue areas – unemployment, education, housing and nutrition. Housing contained two

questions about barriers, one on buying a home and the other on renting. Based on the percentage of respondents who identified at least one barrier to attainment, the issues over which there are most barriers rank as follows (derived from tables 2, 6, 9, 10 and 15):

1. Employment (46% identified at least one barrier to attaining employment)
2. Buying a Home (40%)
3. Nutrition (36%)
4. Education (35%)
5. Renting a House (32%)

Not only is unemployment viewed as the dominant community problem, more than other issues employment is the issue where people tend to experience barriers. The need for people to be employed and to gain employment stands out as the single biggest finding from the survey. After employment, people experience barriers to home buying (more so than they do to renting). Barriers to proper nutrition and to education are experienced by about an equal percentage of people, with barriers to renting a housing experienced by the fewest percentage.

Most Needed Services

In addition to problems facing their community and barriers to their own personal attainment of goals, respondents were asked about the services they needed to attain these goals. A particular finding that stands out regarding needed services is that people need to be prepared – prepared to interview for a job, prepared for educational advancement, prepared to take control of their economic future. For example, for those in need of employment services, skills training, specifically resume writing and job interview skills were among the most frequent responses (Table 4). For those in need of educational services, tutoring and English and vocational rehabilitation were popularly cited needs (Table 7). For those in need of income and financial assistance, budgeting skills was the top-cited need (Table 18).

This emphasis on individual preparedness, rather than assistance that does not prepare people to assume control of their own situation may in some measure be linked to our political culture in Texas. In addition to economic context, opinion on issues can be influenced by the values and beliefs that people hold about the proper role of government and about individual responsibility – i.e., political culture. Derived from the work of scholar Daniel Elazar, the United States can be viewed as exhibiting three political cultures – Traditionalistic (where an emphasis is placed on societal hierarchy, and governance is the domain of economic and social elites), Moralistic (where an emphasis is placed on government providing for the well-being of society, and where public service is seen as a noble calling), and Individualistic (where an emphasis is placed on individual self-reliance and responsibility, and government is to be kept to a minimum). The prevalence of a given political culture is associated with region with, for instance, the Moralistic political culture historically reflected in the New England region and along the northern tier of the United States. Important for present purposes, political culture can be understood as a filter through which information is interpreted, and can therefore influence peoples' attitudes on issues.

Citizens in Texas have been classified as reflecting the Individualistic political culture: People succeed or fail on their own merits and “government that governs best, governs least.” The term government, however, does not need to be understood in a restrictive sense, but can be understood more broadly as institutionally organized collective action (to include nonprofit along with government agency activities). As such, Individualistic political culture refers to a set of values and beliefs whereby citizens emphasize individual self-reliance, initiative and responsibility, and deemphasize institutionally organized collective action in solving problems. Among other things, this means that citizens in another region of the country, for instance in

states such as Massachusetts, may view their community's needs quite differently, with perhaps a greater tendency to designate things as a community need by contrast to citizens in Texas.

While not an explanation for all findings in this report, our region's Individualistic political culture provides a helpful framework to understand some of what is going on. Our Individualistic political subculture in Texas may help explain the preference for some types of training services. Training services, such as training in resume writing, allow individuals to pursue their goals without continued support from government or nonprofit agencies. An understanding of our political culture provides a useful guide to predict those nonprofit programs that will have the best chance to garner public support. Programs designed to get people to assume self-responsibility and programs designed to help those who are in extreme need through no fault of their own may receive wider support compared to programs perceived as designed to spend money on people who should otherwise help themselves.

Respondents were asked about services they needed on four of the seven surveyed issues – Unemployment, Education, Nutrition, and Finances and Income. Based on the percentage of respondents who identified at least one needed service, the issues over which there exists the most needed services rank as follows (derived from tables 4, 7, 16 and 18):

1. Employment (39% identified at least one needed service)
Finances and Income (39%)
3. Education (35%)
4. Nutrition (26%)

Once again employment tops the list, and this time shares the top rank with finances. Once again, likely we see the impact of a bad economy. The need for educational services follows closely behind these with nutritional services needed by the fewest percentage of respondents. Overall, the issue of nutrition seems to lag behind other issues in importance.

Conclusion: Implications for Service Providers

The findings in this study have implications for service providers, both governmental and nonprofit. Many people do not need services for any of the issues this study analyzed. Many, however do need services, approximately one-third of those surveyed said they required some assistance. The cost of needed services in many cases is prohibitive, or at least an important concern for people. There may not be much that either government or nonprofit agencies can do to directly bring down the cost of services. However, the findings in this report show that many people could benefit from services that best prepare them to most successfully manage their own affairs. Of important, many of the services identified by people as services that they require to obtain a better life are temporary in nature, either training or some service that is limited in duration.

While not the only issue, employment was a big issue for many people. To use unemployment as an example, for a large segment of those for which employment was an issue, they needed help with acquiring requisite skills to secure a good job. These included assistance with resume writing skills, assistance with seeking out the appropriate job, as well as learning the proper way to interview for a position. The need for training or short-term assistance in acquiring skills reverberates throughout many of the other issues. In fact, on the some other issues the need for services connects nicely to being prepared for employment. One educational need, for instance, is the need for tutoring in areas such as math and reading, quite arguably essentially skills in obtaining a good job. Personal and family finance is another issue where needed services are about training, in this case specifically the issue of budgeting, and ultimately this also may dovetail with employment and self-sufficiency. Many people are saying that they need to be taught how to best manage their individual or family finances. Relatedly, many

people also say they need a credit repair service. The combination of improved credit, enhanced knowledge of how to manage individual and family finances, and skills related to obtaining a job, will provide for self-sufficient citizens who are in a position to lead productive and fruitful lives.

All of this is not to suggest that longer-term services are unnecessary. A number of people indicated the need for longer-term assistance. However, it is instructive that on the heels of a major recession large numbers of people, who said that they needed services, said that they needed services that are training oriented or shorter-term in nature. Those who make decisions regarding the provision of services, of course, must consider resources and the likely impact resources will have. The findings of this study provide support for the provision of services that are designed to prepare people in need to achieve self-sufficiency.

Appendix A

Letter Requesting Permission to Survey



Dear Pastor/Outreach Director

The Lamar University Center for Public Policy Studies is coordinating a study of community needs across nine Texas counties -- Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk, and Tyler counties. The study is being funded by Entergy with organizational support from the Lamar University Office of Community Outreach. Our goal is to identify crucial service needs in the areas of employment, education, housing, health, financial planning and transportation.

I am writing to ask if 20 to 25 members of your congregation, or more if possible, would be willing to participate in a 15 to 20 minute survey questionnaire to identify areas of social need in their community, and if you would facilitate in this effort.

Answers will be confidential and anonymous. Results from the survey will provide valuable information to help identify community needs, particularly in a time of economic distress. The information we collect will be made available to various nonprofit service providers to help improve services and ultimately better the lives of citizens.

We hope to be able to administer the survey during mid-October to mid-November. Every effort will be made to ensure that the survey is as convenient for you and your congregation as possible. The distribution of the survey will be at your convenience. The survey can be delivered to you to administer to members of your congregation, and then picked up at the end of the process. Alternately, I can make arrangements to distribute the survey to your members.

For your participation, a copy of the survey findings will be provided to you upon request. I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the survey if you would like to see the survey prior to its distribution to your congregation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you are able to participate in the survey.

Sincerely,

Dr. James Vanderleeuw, Director
Center for Public Policy Studies -- Department of Political Science, Campus Box # 10030
Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas 77710
(409) 880-2288, vanderlejm@my.lamar.edu

Appendix B

List of Participating Churches and Community Organizations

<i>Organization</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>County</i>
Calder Baptist Church Beaumont	Beaumont	Jefferson
Central Baptist Church	Kirbyville	Jasper
Circle Drive Baptist Church	Bridge City	Orange
Common Ground Community Church	Bridge City	Orange
Crestwood Baptist Church	Kountze	Hardin
Cristo Ray	Beaumont	Jefferson
Diocese of Beaumont Hispanic Ministry	Beaumont	Jefferson
Fellowship Baptist Church	Bridge City	Orange
First Baptist Church Lumberton	Lumberton	Hardin
First Baptist Church Anahuac	Anahuac	Chambers
First Baptist Church Newton	Newton	Newton
First Baptist Church Nome	Nome	Jefferson
First Presbyterian Church of Jasper	Jasper	Jasper
First Presbyterian Church Orange	Orange	Orange
First United Methodist Church	Kountze	Hardin
Hillcrest Baptist Church	Nederland	Jefferson
Junior League of Beaumont	Beaumont	Jefferson
Kirbyville United Methodist Church	Kirbyville	Jasper
Knights of Columbus	Port Neches	Jefferson
Lone Star Youth Council	Jasper	Jasper
Macabe Roberts Ave United Methodist Church	Beaumont	Jefferson
Mt Nebo Baptist Church	Fred	Tyler
Nederland Ave Church of Christ	Nederland	Jefferson
North Main Baptist Church	Liberty	Liberty
Oak Island Lodge	Oak Island	Chambers
One Way Outreach	Port Arthur	Jefferson
Silsbee Kiwanis International	Silsbee	Hardin
Spurger United Methodist Church	Spurger	Tyler
St Anne Catholic Church	Beaumont	Jefferson
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church	Orange	Orange
St Henry's Catholic Church	Bridge City	Orange
St John the Evangelist Catholic Church	Port Arthur	Jefferson
St. Michael's Church	Jasper	Jasper
St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Woodville	Tyler
Starlight Church of God in Christ	Orange	Orange
Trinity Church	Beaumont	Jefferson
Trinity Lutheran Church	Port Arthur	Jefferson
United Daughters of the Confederacy	Livingston	Polk
Victory of Life Orange	Orange	Orange

Appendix C

Population Distribution across Counties and Survey Cohort

	<i>Population</i>		<i>Survey Cohort</i>	
	Population	% of Total	# of Respondents	% of Total
Chambers	33,720	5	41	7
Hardin	54,061	9	36	6
Jasper	35,437	6	86	15
Jefferson	252,390	41	255	43
Liberty	76,206	12	27	5
Newton	14,389	2	11	2
Orange	81,930	13	93	16
Polk	45,575	7	18	3
Tyler	21,717	4	23	4
Total	615,425		590	

Note: % of Total may not add to 100 due to rounding; 8 returned surveys did not designate a county of residence.

Appendix D

Social and Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Age:

Mean Age = 50

N = 458

Gender:

Female = 67%

Male = 34%

N = 562

Ethnic Background/Race:

Asian = 1%

Black = 22%

Hispanic = 10%

White = 66%

Other = 1%

N = 550

Number in Household:

Under 16: 1 (n=71), 2 (n=70), 3 (n=19), 4 (n=6), 5 (n=3)

17-24 years of age: 1 (n=82), 2 (n=21), 3 (n=5)

25-35 years of age: 1 (n=69), 2 (n=37), 3 (n=1), 4 (n=1), 6 (n=1)

36-60 years of age: 1 (n=117), 2 (n=161), 3 (n=2), 4 (n=1), 6 (n=1)

61 and older: 1 (n=81), 2 (n=106), 3 (n=1)

Yearly Household Income:

Below \$10,000 = 9%

10,000-\$20,000 = 15%

25,001-\$50,000 = 26%

50,001-\$75,000 = 23%

75,001-\$100,000 = 12%

Above \$100,000 = 16%

N = 526

Education:

Less than High School = 6%

High School or GED = 23%

Some College/Associate's degree = 36%

Bachelor's degree = 21%

Master's or Ph.D. = 14%

N = 547

Attending or Enrolled in:

Two Year College = 16%

Four Year University = 27%

Vocational/Trade School = 9%

Other = 48%

N = 128

Appendix E

Community Needs Survey Instrument

Unemployment is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
√			√
	Lack of education		Problems associated with child care (hours, cost, location)
	Cost or lack of transportation		Language skills
	Lack of good paying jobs with benefits		Lack of computer skills
	Employers are leaving the area		Substance abuse
	There is no problem with unemployment in this area.		

Please identify your barriers to securing employment (check all that apply):			
√			√
	Education		Lack of reliable or dependent care
	Lack of reliable transportation		Permanent health/disability problem
	Temporary disability problem		Lack of high school diploma/GED
	Lack of proper identification (driver's license, social security card)		Unauthorized to work (expired green card, not a U.S. citizen)
	Credit history		Pregnancy/illness
	Language		Lack of veteran status
	Criminal background		Emotionally unable to work
	None of these are barriers to my securing employment.		

What is your current employment situation? (check only one)			
√			√
	1. Employed full time		2. Employed part time
	3. Unemployed, looking for work		4. Unemployed, not looking for work

Do you need any of the following employment services? (check all that apply)			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resume writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skills training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vocational rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small business ownership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Career search	<input type="checkbox"/>	Job seeking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Job interview skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dress for success
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not need any of these services.		

We move next to the second issue area, **EDUCATION**

Education is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No high school diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost or lack of transportation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lacks dropout prevention programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of GED/programs to obtain GED
<input type="checkbox"/>	Problems associated with child care (hours, cost, location)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of vocational skills/programs teaching vocational skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of computer skills/programs to obtain computer skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of preschool programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of tuition money	<input type="checkbox"/>	Threats of violence in schools
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of college education	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no problem with education in this area.

Please identify your barriers to completing or continuing your education (check all that apply):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dependable transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Previous difficulty with school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Default on school loan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dependable child care or dependent care
<input type="checkbox"/>	Criminal background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of high school diploma/GED
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of these are barriers to completing my education.		

Do you need any of the following educational services? (check all that apply)			
√		√	
	ABE/GED classes		English as a second language
	Veterans benefits		Tutoring: reading, math, science, other
	Vocational rehabilitation		Citizenship classes
	Financial aid		I do not need any of these services.

The third issue area is **HOUSING**

Housing is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
√		√	
	Monthly cost of rent/house payment		Housing size does not meet family needs
	Affordable rental houses/apartments not available		Lack of shelters for: families, women, men
	Move-in costs (deposits for rent, utilities)		Housing not available in acceptable neighborhoods
	Long wait list for Section 8 or other housing assistance		Lack of assistance for repairs and maintenance
	Affordable single family houses not available for purchase		Lack of public housing
	Lack of supportive services		There is no problem with housing in this area.

Please identify the barriers to buying your own home (check all that apply):			
√		√	
	Low credit score		Cost to maintain home
	Physically unable to live alone		No money for down payment
	Emotionally unable to live alone		None of these are barriers to my buying a home.

Please identify your barriers to securing affordable rental housing (check all that apply):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Credit history	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment history
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physically unable to live alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Criminal background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotionally unable to live alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	None of these are barriers to securing affordable rental housing.

The fourth issue area is **HEALTH**

Obtaining medical/health services is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough providers accepting Medicaid and Medicare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost of vision/dental insurance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of affordable health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot afford prescription medications
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost of health insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of affordable dental care
<input type="checkbox"/>	No clinics or doctors in the town where I live	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no problem obtaining medical/health services in this area.

Do you have a primary care physician? (check only one)			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. No

I have the following insurance (check all that apply):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medicaid	<input type="checkbox"/>	Private insurance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vision insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	CHIP
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medicare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dental insurance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medicare supplement	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not have insurance.

The fifth issue area is **NUTRITION**

Nutrition is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of grocery stores	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alternative food support not available (soup kitchen, pantry)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough income to purchase food	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables
<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no problem with nutrition in this area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please identify your barriers to eating healthy (check all that apply):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not able to afford healthy food choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know how to prepare healthy food items
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of these are barriers to my healthy eating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Do you need any help with the following nutritional services? (check all that apply)			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food stamps/SNAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Free/reduced school lunch for children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Home delivered meals/Meals on Wheels	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not need any of these services.

The sixth issue area is **USE OF INCOME**

Use of Income (check applicable answer):							
Did you use a paid tax preparer to file your tax return last year?					1. Yes		2. No
If you used a paid tax preparer, how much did you pay?				\$			
Would you use free tax preparation services?			1. Yes		2. No	3. Not sure	
Did you know that free tax preparation is available?					1. Yes		2. No
Have you used a payday lending or auto title loan service?					1. Yes		2. No
Would you use a small loan from a bank or credit union?					1. Yes		2. No
Do you have a checking account?					1. Yes		2. No
Do you have a savings account?					1. Yes		2. No

Would you like help with any of the following services? (check all that apply):			
√		√	
	Budgeting		Tax preparation
	Credit repair		Opening a checking or savings account
	I do not help with any of these services.		

The final issue area is **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
√		√	
	Lack of credit to buy a car		Cannot afford car insurance
	Limited public transportation		Lack of reliable transportation
	Public transportation not user friendly to people with disabilities		Lack of affordable transportation for health services
	Cost of maintaining a car		Cost of gasoline
	Hours/days of operation for public transportation		Bus routes do not bring to needed destination
	There is no problem with transportation in this area.		

Have you ever missed an appointment or meeting due to a lack of transportation? (check only one)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. No	<input type="checkbox"/>
				3. Not Sure

To what extent are bus stops located in well-lit safe areas? (check only one)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Always located in well-lit safe areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Usually located in well-lit safe areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Seldom located in well-lit safe areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Never located in well-lit safe areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Don't know/Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Do you use the bus to reach any of the following destinations? (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government office	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical appointment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grocery
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bank	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work
<input type="checkbox"/>	School	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not use the bus.

Please provide the following **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION** about yourself

Demographic Information					
What is your age?					<input type="text"/>
Are you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Male	
What is your marital status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Married	3. Separated/Divorced/Widowed

How many people in your household are:	
Under age 16	
17-24 years of age	
25-35 years of age	
36-60 years of age	
61 and older	

What is your yearly household income? (check only one)			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Below \$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. \$10,000 to \$25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. \$25,001 to \$50,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. \$50,001 to \$75,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. \$75,001 to \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Above \$100,000

What is the highest grade of school you have completed? (check only one)			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Less than high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. High school or GED
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Some college/Associate's degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Bachelor's degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Master's or Ph.D.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Are you currently enrolled or attending (check only one):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Two year college	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Four year university
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Vocational/Trade school	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Other: <input type="text"/>

Location	
What city do you live in?	
What county do you live in?	

What is your race/ethnic background? (check only one):			
√		√	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Black
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. White
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Other

Thank you for completing the survey! Your participation is greatly appreciated.