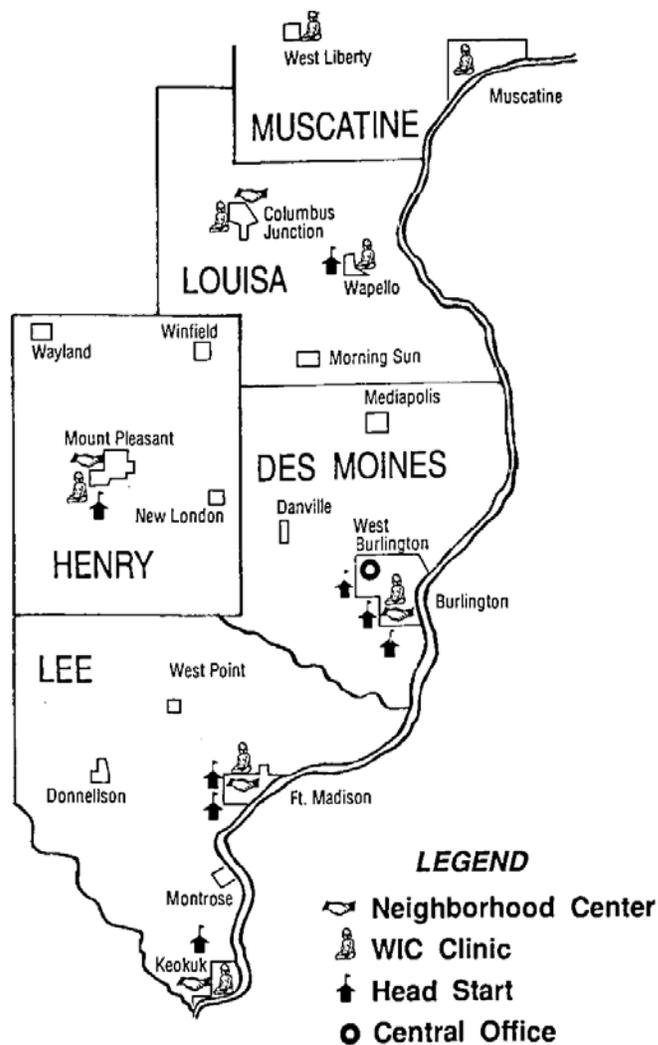


Community Action

OF SOUTHEAST IOWA

2019 Community Needs Assessment



Board approved on July 16, 2019

Executive Director Sheri Wilson

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Contact Us:

Central Office:

2850 Mt Pleasant St, Suite 108

Burlington, IA 52601

319-753-0193

community.action@caofseia.org

Find out more about us on our website: www.caofseia.org

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityActionofSoutheastIowa/>

Introduction

Community Action of Southeast Iowa is dedicated to alleviating the conditions and causes of poverty by building partnerships and strengthening people through quality services. We have been in operation since 1964 in southeast Iowa providing support and meeting needs in our communities.

Overview and Purpose

Community Action of Southeast Iowa conducts a community needs assessment every three years in accordance with the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) standards. This assessment provides an in depth look at the needs of our area, our client's needs, evaluates causes of poverty, conditions of poverty, and assesses how, we as an agency, may address various issues. This forms the basis of planning as we follow the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) framework to identify needs, look at desired outcomes, develop services to reach those outcomes, implement strategies, follow through with evaluation, and reporting.

Summary and Key Findings

The top identified needs in our area are employment, housing, transportation, food, and budgeting. While there are some services in place to address these needs, there still remain gaps where individual's needs are not being met. Increasing household income would greatly alleviate these needs; however, there are a complex array of struggles around increasing income. Across the nation children and minorities are in poverty at a disproportional rate and southeast Iowa is no different.

Approach

Community Action of Southeast Iowa desires to have ongoing input regarding needs in our area. For this reason there is generally some form of systematic collection of data occurring in at least one of our programs throughout any given year. We collect information from a variety of sources and utilize many in analyzation. The planning director is primarily responsible for the Community Needs Assessment; however, other managers, administration staff, and the board have a hand in it as well.

Process used

In completion of this report, many specific assessments were freshly analyzed as listed below. Census data was accessed and compared nationally and locally. Many different areas of the community were able to present their needs, opinions, and views, as you will see throughout the report and from the different assessments used.

Assessments, Reports and Data Used

**Superscript references throughout this document reference data sets listed below.

1. 2016 Client Needs Survey, 603 respondents, of which 319 were from Des Moines County, 122 from Henry County, 142 from Lee County, and 19 from Louisa County. Surveys were distributed and collected from clients through all of our agency programs.
2. 2016 Client Satisfaction Report, included in the 2016 Client Needs Survey, 603 respondents.
3. 2017 Community/Stakeholders Needs Assessment, 276 survey responses, including 27 from community-based organizations, 14 private businesses, 34 educational institutions, 20 from local

- government, 12 health care providers, 16 faith-based organizations, 18 from other public sector organizations, and 4 unidentified.
4. 2014 Strategic Plan, this involved a group discussion of community needs at each of the six tables comprised of community members, board members, business, social service agency providers, and interested parties.
 5. 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey, 228 respondents mostly collected through our CSBG centers, representing each of our four counties with clients receiving 13 of our 15 listed services in the past year.
 6. 2019 Facebook/Website Survey, 41 respondents collected through the internet, 11 had received services from us in the past year and 30 were other community members.
 7. FY 2018 and 2019 Advisory Committee Qualitative Data/Input; information collected from monthly Community Action Program Advisory Committee meetings of clients, community members, board members, and interested parties. Monthly meetings (except for summers) occur in each of our four counties and a summary of each was provided by the Neighborhood Center Director.
 8. 2018 Staff Needs Evaluation; at our October 2018 fall agency in-service 124 staff participated in a needs assessment individually and then in groups. 113 turned in assessment forms.
 9. 2019 Head Start Community Needs Assessment, a committee of 20 people including staff, Policy Council members, board members, and community partners participated in focus groups, online research, phone calls, emails, surveys, and discussion around community needs in each of our four counties.
 10. Community Action Partnership Data Tool was utilized, which accesses the American Community Survey and Census data.
 11. Living Wage Calculator by Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/19/locations>
 12. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) Iowa Wage Report 2018, Region 16 Burlington-Ft Madison Area, <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/iowa-wage-report>
 13. NIFCAP Database, Fiscal Year 2018 client data unless otherwise noted.
 14. 2019 Family Survey Exit, Head Start and Early Head Start end of the year satisfaction data, 208 respondents.
 15. Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, US Department of Justice, reports on property crimes 1985 through 2014 from Burlington Police Department, City of Fort Madison Police Department, and Keokuk Police Department.
 16. IWD 2016 Southeast Iowa Region Laborshed Analysis, https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/southeastiowa_execsummary2016.pdf
 17. IWD 2017 Annual Profile Region #16, <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/documents/2017%20IWD%20Region%2016.pdf>
 18. 2017 Feeding America Map the Meal Gap Food Insecurity in Iowa. This measures the lack of access to enough nutritionally adequate food for household members. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2017/overall/iowa>
 19. 2017 Workforce Needs Assessment Regional (#16) Analysis https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/documents/ed_region_17_wna_2017_1.pdf

Population

Programs and services focus on persons who have low incomes. The following chart displays the population, those in poverty (100% of the federal poverty rate), and those served by our agency.

Report Area	Total Population, 2017 ACS	All Ages No of Persons in Poverty	All Ages Poverty Rate	Population Served by the Agency in FY 2018	% of Population served by the Agency
Report Location	105,764	13,059	12.95%	14,418	13.63%
Des Moines County, IA	39,876	5,218	13.5%	6,710	16.83%
Henry County, IA	19,865	2,125	11.6%	2,041	10.27 %
Lee County, IA	34,785	4,621	14.1%	4,387	12.61%
Louisa County, IA	11,238	1,095	9.9%	1,311	11.67%
Iowa	3,118,102	328,629	10.8%	-	-
United States	321,004,407	42,583,651	13.40%	-	-

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. US Census Bureau, 2013-17.
NIFCAP FY2018 Data

Of our clients in fiscal year 2018, 21.8% were non-white, 6.5% were multi-race, and 9% were over age 65¹³. In southeast Iowa, among identified population groups, those most likely to be in poverty are those who identify as more than one race and are 65 years of age or older. Their rate of poverty in southeast Iowa is 60.63% compared to the national average of 13.72%. This represents 77 individuals in southeast Iowa¹⁰.

Client Needs

Our clients have several varying needs, as each situation is unique. This report does not encompass all of them, yet focuses on the top ones identified:

Employment - Clients need employment. Clients need living wage employment.

Housing - Clients need safe and affordable housing.

Transportation - Clients need reliable, affordable and available transportation.

Food - Clients need food. Clients need resources for obtaining affordable and healthy foods.

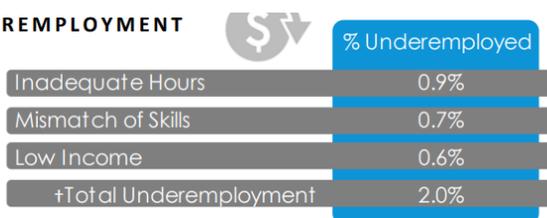
Budgeting - Clients need assistance managing their finances. Clients need to resolve debt.

Conditions of Poverty

Employment

Employment is often identified as one of the top five needs for clients in many of our surveys; 2014 Strategic Planning, 2016 Client Needs Assessment, 2017 Community/Stakeholders Needs Assessment, 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey, and the 2019 Facebook/Web Survey. The Advisory committees in each county, 2019 Head Start Community Needs Assessment, and the 2018 Staff Needs Evaluation identify this as a top need. Of the clients who responded to the 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey, 26.56% reported employment as one of their greatest challenges. In the 2017 Community/Stakeholders Needs Assessment 58.33% believe unemployment is an issue and 63.82% that under-employment is an issue. In the 2016 Client Needs Assessment, 45.93% stated they could use help with “finding a permanent, full time job that will support me or my family,” and 33.33% could use “help knowing what jobs are available.” The Bureau of Labor Statistics for April 2019 put the unemployment rate for our area at 2.7%, while the national rate is 3.4%¹⁰. Of our 1,690 adult clients, in April 2019, 25.3% were unemployed short term (15.1%) or long term (10.2%)¹³.

UNDEREMPLOYMENT



The underemployed are individuals who are working fewer than 35 hours per week but desire more hours; are working in positions that do not meet their skill or education level, or have worked for higher wages at previous employment; or are working at wages equal to or less than the national poverty level and are working 35 or more hours per week.

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Housing

Housing has been listed among the top five needs in a number of our surveys; 2014 Strategic Planning, 2016 Client Needs Assessment, 2017 Community/Stakeholders Needs Assessment, and the 2019 Facebook/Web Survey. The Advisory committees in each county, the 2018 Staff Needs Evaluation, and 2019 Head Start Community Needs Assessment identify this as a top need. Of respondents to the 2016 Client Needs Assessment 35.59% identified they needed help finding affordable housing to fit their family needs; 24.71% stated they needed help getting financial assistance with rent payments; and 38.53% listed needing assistance making their home more energy efficient¹. In the 2017 Stakeholder Assessment, 51.93% said they don't believe there are a sufficient number of safe and affordable housing units built or set aside for low-income people; 58.62% also believe homelessness is an issue in their community³.

Transportation

Much of our four county area is rural and people have transportation needs. The 2019 Facebook/Web Survey, 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey, 2016 Client Needs Assessment, and 2018 Staff Needs Evaluation all list transportation in the top five needs. All four Advisory committees identify transportation needs in their communities. In the 2016 Client Needs Assessment 45.02% list they could use financial assistance to make car repairs, 31.08% list needing help getting financial assistance to buy a dependable car, and 19.52% could use help having access to public transportation.

Food

In our 2016 Client Needs Assessment, 56.77% said they could use help getting food from food pantries, food banks, or food shelves; 46.45% said they could use help maintaining enough food at home. All the Advisory committees have identified food as a leading need in their communities. The 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey notes getting food as a top need, the 2014 Strategic Planning process identified food assistance as a primary need, and the 2018 Staff Needs Evaluation listed food assistance as a top need for our clients to obtain self-sufficiency.

Budgeting

In the 2016 Client Needs Assessment, 40.36% said they could use help with budgeting and managing money. In the 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey 12.5% of respondents identified budgeting as a top need. Having debt affects client's ability to budget. In the 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey 21.35% of respondents stated one of their family's greatest challenges was debt. In the 2018 Staff Needs Evaluation, budgeting was listed as the second highest need for low-income households to achieve or maintain self-sufficiency.



Causes of Poverty

Employment

Clients need jobs. Clients need living wage employment. Possible reasons this need exists for clients is that there are not adequate living wage jobs available in our area. The median wage for all occupations is \$16.13 per hour¹². The Advisory committees in each county identify this as a top need and have discussed this in relation to there not being enough living wage jobs available in our area. Only 7 of 22 job vacancy positions listed by industry have an entry wage above \$15 per hour¹⁹. In the 2017 Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment, employers listed 1,172 estimated job vacancies: 12.97% have an entry wage over \$15 per hour, 87.03% are under \$15 per hour, and 39.16% are under \$10 per hour¹⁹. When the majority of employment available is well under a living wage for a household it makes it very difficult for households to get out of poverty. A living wage in Des Moines County for one adult and one child is listed as \$23.07¹¹.

Possible other causes behind clients needing jobs is the affordability of childcare, lack of education, need of increased skills, knowing where to apply, resume writing skills, having appropriate clothing, and equipment for employment¹.

Many of our clients are working. 85.1% have income from employment¹³, and yet they are unable to make ends meet and cover their basic needs. Low wage employment without adequate benefits continue to keep families in poverty⁹.

Housing

Clients need safe and affordable housing. Clients may not know where to look to find affordable housing. They may be unaware of resources in their communities. Income based housing units have long waiting lists and there are not enough units for the number of people needing them. Clients list needing assistance with rent payments. It may be due to lack of employment, lack of living wage employment, debt, budgeting, or other factors. High energy costs in an otherwise safe home can reduce the affordability of that home. Of our four county area, Des Moines County has the oldest median age homes with the median year built being 1954, compared to the national median year being 1977¹⁰. With being 23 years older than the national age, this lends to there likely being higher energy costs as materials and weatherization items are older or more degraded with age. This increased age likely raises utility costs and reduces affordability.

Transportation

Clients need reliable, affordable and available transportation. Awareness of public transportation options is a possible cause behind this need. In our rural area there are only two public transportation options along with a few taxis. With public transportation's limited hours of availability, many rely on friends and family's vehicles or their own. There are few taxis and even less which are affordable for low-income clients. Vehicles can be expensive to obtain and maintain leading to an ongoing need for assistance in the realm of transportation. Complex vehicular issues also lend to there being few assistance programs to help in the area of car repairs, which may greaten the need.

Food

Clients need food. Clients need resources for obtaining affordable and healthy foods. Clients struggle with budgeting, which may affect their ability to buy food. Clients may also be unaware of the resources that are available to them, the requirements, or frequency of which they may access local resources. Times, transportation, and ability to get to local resources may also factor into their ability to obtain needed foods. In the 2018 Staff Needs Evaluation, 15% of staff noted that pride in accessing resources may factor into why people do not utilize resources that are available to them.



Budgeting

Clients need assistance managing their finances. Clients need to resolve debt. Merriam-Webster defines budget as “following a plan for coordinating resources and expenditures.” It can be assumed that many of our clients have low resources therefore coordinating what few they may have affects their budgeting. In some cases it may not be the lack of budgeting skill or not knowing how to plan, but rather a lack of resources with which to plan that affects their ability to budget. In other cases, it may be a lack of budgeting skill, knowing how to prioritize their finances, and actively following through with a developed plan. Many clients list having debt, a possible cause of this could have been poor budgeting. Their need to resolve debt may center around it being a continual drain on their budget keeping them unable to move forward financially. A possibility of debt could be medical bills or health struggles which prevent them from obtaining more income from employment.

Community Needs

Each of our communities have varying needs; however, the top needs are significant and many are similar county to county and town to town. This report does not mention all needs. The top needs identified in the 2017 Community/Stakeholders Needs Assessment are as follows:

Public Safety – Our communities need to reduce non-violent crime.

Infrastructure – Our communities need to reduce the number of neglected houses and buildings.

Employment – Our communities need more living wage employment opportunities.

Health – Our communities need accessible and affordable behavior and mental health care resources and services for low-income people.

Housing – Our communities need more shelter beds for the homeless.

Conditions of Poverty

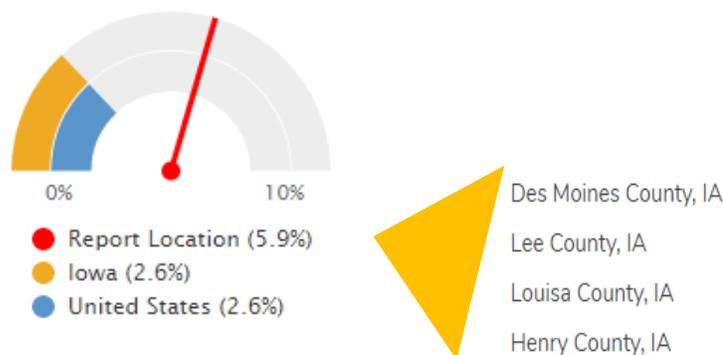
Public Safety

82.46% of respondents said public safety related to non-violent crime is an issue³. While all property crime rates per 100,000 people reported in Burlington and Fort Madison has decreased from 1985 to 2014 there is still a perception that the public is not safe. In Keokuk there has been a slight increase in crime rates between 1985 and 2014: property crime rate per 100,000 has increased from 4,055.9 to 4,105.1, burglary has increased from 1,053.2 to 1,077.4, and larceny theft rate has gone up from 2,763.7 to 2,860.6¹⁵.

Infrastructure

75.21% of respondents state infrastructure related to abandoned or neglected houses and buildings are an issue³. According to the American Community Survey in 2017 our area of southeast Iowa has 0.33% of housing units without plumbing. This is comparable to the national average of 0.39%¹⁰. According to the US department of Housing and Urban Development 2016 Quarter 4 report, southeast Iowa has a vacancy rate of 5.9%; over double the Iowa and national average of 2.6%¹⁰. Lee County especially has a high residential vacancy rate of 10.2%, the highest in our four county area, while Louisa County has the lowest at 1.9%¹⁰. The US Postal Service quarterly information delivered to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development lists 280 business addresses were vacant, a rate of 13.2%¹⁰.

Residential Vacancy Rate



Employment

68.65% feel there are needs around employment, specifically that there are not a sufficient number of full-time job opportunities available that pay at least \$15 per hour and 68.8% said there are not a sufficient number of part-time job opportunities available that pay at least \$15 per hour³. Of those employed 22% would be likely to change/accept other employment¹⁶. Of those unemployed an offering of \$14 per hour would attract 75% of applicants¹⁶. All industries combined from 2015 to 2016 had a decrease of 1.91% of employment¹⁷. Lee County reported the highest jobless rate in the state in 2016 at 6.2%¹⁷.

Health

74.35% of respondents say there are not enough behavior and mental health care resources/services that are accessible and affordable for low-income people³.

Housing

73.28% state there are not a sufficient number of shelters or shelter beds³. There are only two shelters in our service area; the Burlington Area Homeless Shelter and the Emma Cornelius Hospitality House in Fort Madison. Both of these are short-term stay shelters and are often full.

Causes of Poverty

Public Safety

There is a myriad of possibilities as to why non-violent crime occurs. Some possible causes could be youth who are unsupervised, a lack of positive influences in close social relationships to model non-criminal, socially responsible behavior, lack of involvement in positive activities, or the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Infrastructure

Many homes and buildings in southeastern Iowa are older than the national average¹⁰. This lends to their disrepair, as people do not have funding or ability to maintain them.

Employment

At places of business where people are making a living wage, people may stay longer leading to less openings. Small businesses, less than 50 people, represent 94% of the jobs in our region¹⁷. These small employers often hire few people and are often not able to offer a living wage along with benefits. The physical nature of some jobs may limit those with disabilities or health struggles from keeping them. Factories in the local area often hire through staffing agencies, which pay a lower wage with less benefits leading people to continue to seek other employment. In southeastern Iowa 87.03% of estimated employment vacancies are under \$15 per hour¹⁹.

Health

With a high demand and a low number of locations or providers offering services some behavior and mental health care resources have chosen to not accept Medicaid. Medicaid has a payment system which some providers choose not to navigate. Clinics are able to stay very busy with months of preset appointments without accepting Medicaid members. This lessens the services available for low-income people. Long waiting lists discourage some from getting mental health care. High business costs for those offering mental health care may contribute to locations closing.



Housing

Adding more shelter beds and resources to our communities is not easy. Funding continues to be one of the larger barriers to doing so. Large capital is needed to construct sites for the homeless and human resources are needed to run the operations as well as the funding to keep them operational.



Programs and Services

Our agency operates several programs and services which address our client and community needs. We recognize we can not do it all and rely on our several partners in the area who also provide great services to those of low income. Partnerships and knowledge of local resources enables our staff to refer to others so needs can be met. We produce local guides to resources and have these and many other resources listed on our website: www.caofseia.org

Employment

Employment and living wage jobs are a focus of the FaDSS program and Employment Counseling done by CSBG Family Development Specialists.

Housing/Infrastructure/Homeless Beds

Housing is addressed with the agency's Emergency Rental Assistance program, the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) for those who are homeless and at risk of homelessness, and the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program, which pays a portion of rent for those who qualify. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) puts a one-time payment towards winter heating costs for those who qualify. The Crisis program assists those with disconnect notices for their utilities to keep them on or to re-establish connection. The Weatherization program makes homes more energy efficient thereby reducing home energy costs. The Senior Home Repair program makes safety improvements so clients are able to remain in their home. These improvements relate to the quality of the home and maintenance improving property values for the community.

Transportation

Our Family Development and Self Sufficiency program (FaDSS) is sometimes able to assist clients with car repairs such as batteries and tires. The Embrace Iowa program, supported by the Des Moines Register and donations has been able to help people replace windshields, tires and batteries in their vehicles. Our centers work with the local bus companies to provide bus passes and tokens.

Food

In addressing food needs, each of our local centers have a food pantry to assist those seeking nutritional assistance. Our agency administers the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) to enhance food availability and nutrition.

Budgeting

In regards to financial needs, CSBG Specialists have budgeting resources and are trained to do budget counseling. FaDSS may assist clients with money management. Specialists are knowledgeable regarding other area programs and services, which may help to alleviate financial needs to further assist people.

Public Safety

Head Start does positive role modeling and involves local law enforcement. Head Start and Parents as Teachers (PAT) work with parents to instill positive qualities in youth in hopes that they will be productive law abiding citizens as they age. Head Start and PAT provide positive social opportunities where parents and children can engage in healthy social behaviors. FaDSS and CSBG Specialists promote positive local events for all ages to provide enriching community opportunities, which may counter involvement in criminal activity.

Health

Head Start and WIC provide health screenings for enrolled children and makes referrals for behavioral needs. A recent victory in spring of 2019 was that Hillcrest in Mt Pleasant, who was slated to close, will continue to offer mental health services in that community.

Client and community needs are a colorful puzzle. We have pieces that fit as do other people, donors, agencies, and communities.

Data Specific to Poverty

According to the Federal Register January 11, 2019 the federal guidelines of poverty are below. The standard usage of poverty in this document is discussed in relation to 100% of the federal poverty level. Different programs and services through our agency serve those up to 200% of poverty: Head Start income limits are set at 100% with few exceptions, WIC has a limit of 185%, LIHEAP 175%, and Weatherization 200%.

Family Size	100%	200%
1	\$12,490	\$24,980
2	\$16,910	\$33,820
3	\$21,330	\$42,660
4	\$25,750	\$51,500
5	\$30,170	\$60,340
6	\$34,590	\$69,180
7	\$39,010	\$78,020
8	\$43,430	\$86,860
Add \$4,320 for each additional person		

The following statistics relate to the counties of Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa in southeastern Iowa unless otherwise noted¹⁰. The total poverty rate is 12.95% compared to the Iowa rate of 10.8%. Poverty in southeast Iowa has increased by 3.12% from 2000 to 2017 while the national average of increase has been 2.1%¹⁰.

Population in Poverty by Gender

A greater percentage of females are in poverty in southeast Iowa than the state and national average. While males fare better in southeast Iowa than nationally, they are still at a higher percentage in poverty when compared to the state average¹⁰.

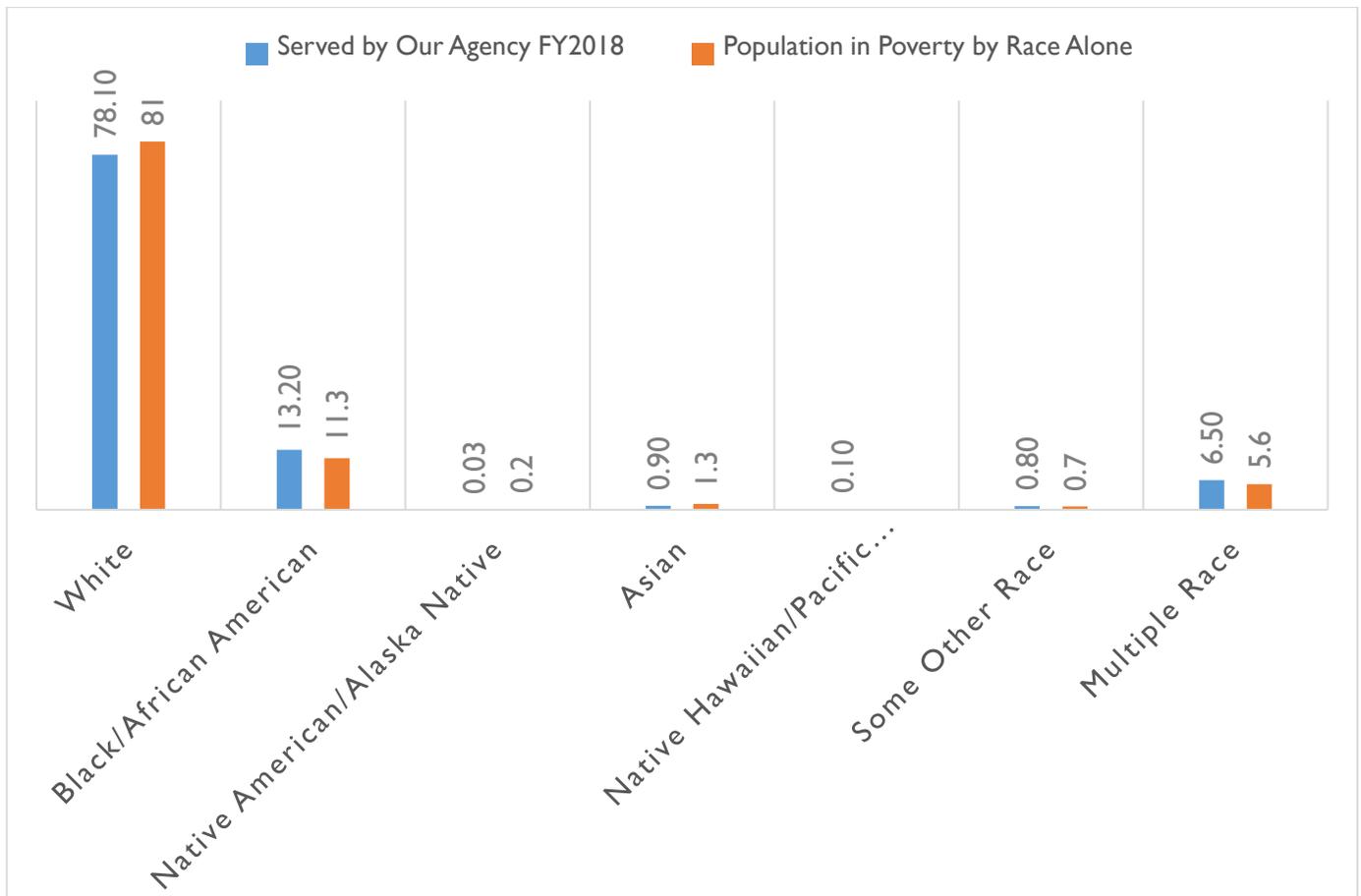
Report Area	Total Male	Total Female	Percent Male	Percent Female
Report Location	6,521	8,445	12.9%	16.31%
Iowa	161,197	200,146	10.78%	13.16%
United States	20,408,626	25,241,719	13.31%	15.8%

Population in Poverty by Age

The Iowa average of children 0-4 who lived in poverty based on the 2019-2017 American Community Survey was 16.6%. The rate in southeast Iowa is considerably higher at 26.8%. For those who are ages 5-17 it is 20.4%, while the Iowa average is 14.1%. Persons over age 65 are in poverty at a rate of 8.4% in southeast Iowa compared to 7.3% in Iowa.

Population in Poverty by Race

While whites make up 92.6 % of the population, they have the smallest percentage of their population in poverty, 12.84%. Identified populations who are non-white have between 10.8% and 49.73% of their population in poverty in southeast Iowa. Native American/Alaska Natives have the lowest rate in poverty at 10.8% and Black or African Americans have the highest rate at 49.73%¹⁰.



As noted in the table above¹⁰, our agency is serving all minorities in poverty at a slightly higher rate, other than Asians, than their identified occurrence in poverty in our area.

Population in Poverty by Ethnicity

The graph below shows the number and percentages of those who identify as Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/Latino who are living in poverty. In southeastern Iowa 1.6% less than the national average and 2.12% less than the Iowa average of Hispanics/Latinos are living in poverty in our area¹⁰.

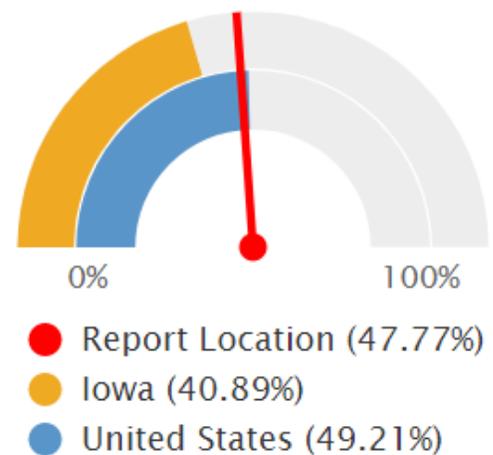
Report Area	Total Hispanic / Latino	Total Not Hispanic / Latino	Percent Hispanic / Latino	Percent Not Hispanic / Latino
Report Location	1,023	13,943	20.55%	14.32%
Iowa	39,197	322,146	22.67%	11.33%
United States	12,269,452	33,380,893	22.15%	12.96%

Food Needs Data

Of school age children in southeast Iowa, 47.77% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch compared to the national average of 49.21%. Children in southeast Iowa; however, are not as well off as their peers around the state, as the Iowa state average is 40.89%¹⁰. Nationally the food insecurity of children is 17%. There are likely 79% of children that are income eligible for nutrition programs who have household incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. In southeast Iowa Lee County has the highest rate of food insecurity among children at 20.6%¹⁸.

Our agency served 13.54% of the population in southeast Iowa in fiscal year 2018. We provided 4,201 food boxes to 3,740 individuals, which is 25% of the population in poverty (14,966) in southeast Iowa. Of those provided food boxes by our agency, 34.1% were under the age of 18. In a staff survey 22.94% said low-income households need assistance with food in order to achieve or maintain self-sufficiency⁸. In the 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey, 20.83% of clients listed “getting food” as one of the greatest challenges their household is currently facing⁵. Feeding America lists Iowa’s food insecurity at 10.9% compared to the national average of 12.5%. While as a whole we are better off than the state, Louisa County’s low rate of food insecurity at 8.6% balances out Lee County and Des Moines County, which are both above the national average at 13.5% and 13.4%¹⁸.

Percent Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch



Customer Satisfaction

Overall clients are very satisfied with Community Action of Southeast Iowa.

Survey Question	2019 Client Satisfaction	2016 Client Needs Survey	2019 HS Family Exit Survey
I had a positive experience when receiving services	87.39%	92.5% (treated with respect and staff were friendly and helpful; combined average)	99.52%
I got the information and services I needed	90.32%	90.57%	99.52%

Qualitative responses on our client satisfaction surveys remind us that people are more than data and a service provided. Each number is a human life that has been impacted. Stories of hope flood out of surveys. Thankfulness, appreciation and impact are revealed as clients share in their own words what Community Action has meant to their life. Below are a few client responses to the question: “How has Community Action made a difference in your life?” from the 2019 FY Client Satisfaction Survey:

- They are a blessing to my family.
- They are great people that helps out good people.
- Well yes, they have helped me with food and energy assistance, helped me keep my place too. I got back to work! So, yes they have helped in a big way!
- Really saved the day. Happy to have them in the community.
- Big difference, we are fed and warm.
- Helped me when times were hard and never judged.
- Helped keep heat on when we have little ones in the house.
- They have always been a helping hand when one was needed.
- I am very grateful to have help with my gas bill. I feel I would not be able to make it without this help.
- Community Action has helped me with my utilities and takes a lot of stress off of my shoulders.
- They are great with kids, my kids love it there and they help people that are in need.
- Made me smile and realize there are good people out there still.
- They have helped with education for my 3 yr. old. It was an amazing opportunity for him.