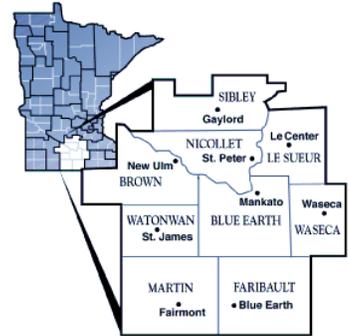


2019 Community Needs Summary



The Process

MVAC partnered with Minnesota State University, Mankato Master of Social Work students to conduct this assessment in the summer of 2019. The report aims to inform agency programming and planning, while fulfilling funding requirements. The students conducted surveys with service recipients, stakeholders and staff, and analyzed demographic trends and data.

Southcentral Minnesota Trends

The 9-county region covers 5,128 square miles with a population of 231,069.

Aging

Individuals aged 65+ comprise the largest and fastest growing age group. Brown County has the highest median age at 47, Martin County at 45, while Blue Earth County, with a significant college population, is the lowest at 30.6.

While the region saw overall population growth at 4% in the past decade, only Blue Earth, Brown and LeSueur Counties saw net growth, while the other six counties saw a decline in population.

Shifts

From 2000-2010, there was a 53% increase in our Hispanic and Latino population.

Growing Diversity

Our African American / Black population has increased 103%.

38% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch. 8% of the population receives SNAP benefits. 12.47%, (6,188) children live below the Federal Poverty Level.

Hunger & Poverty

Housing

24% of households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. More than 23% have one or more substandard conditions, including inadequate plumbing or incomplete kitchens.

The Participants

Stakeholders (63) include MVAC Board Members and community partners representing nonprofits, schools, government, and private business.

Staff (49) from all departments were invited to participate to the needs assessment.

Service Recipients (497) represent current or recent program participants from Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan Counties.

Communication

The way we communicate has changed dramatically in the past decade. Service recipients identified their preferred methods of communication with staff:

Email 42%

Phone 29%

Face to Face 12%

Text 7%



The Results - Unmet Needs

Staff	Stakeholders	Service Recipients
Transportation Childcare Mental Health Services Livable Wage Jobs Adequate Housing	Childcare Transportation Mental Health Housing Costs Home Repairs Emergency Funds	Livable Wage Food Insecurity Transportation Clothing and Supplies Home Repairs Car Repairs

All three groups prioritized transportation as a key unmet need. This was further specified as (1) the need for more accessible public transportation in rural areas, (2) the need for reliable vehicles and (3) the need for assistance with car repairs. Reliable transportation is a direct link to maintaining a job and transporting children to school and activities.



Staff and Stakeholders both identified affordable childcare one of the top two unmet needs.



Service recipients focused on livable wage jobs and food insecurity – access to healthy food, food shelves and home-delivered meals. Individuals are able to find work, but are not making enough in these jobs to pay for basic needs like housing costs, home repairs, car repairs, clothing and supplies.



Barriers

What prevents households from accessing services through MVAC and other area programs?

Transportation

Child Care

Income

Mental Health

Knowledge of services

Knowledge of qualifications for service

Hours of Operation

Awareness

Each group noted that MVAC should continue to focus on awareness. The most common sources of information in the community are: other providers/agencies, social media, current/former service recipients, events and pamphlets.

Service recipients noted that they were unaware breadth and depth of services available to them until they connected with staff MVAC. Eligibility can be confusing and the agency should educate other providers and the community on all programs.

An increased social media presence, wider participation in community events and targeted emails to promote services will benefit community awareness.