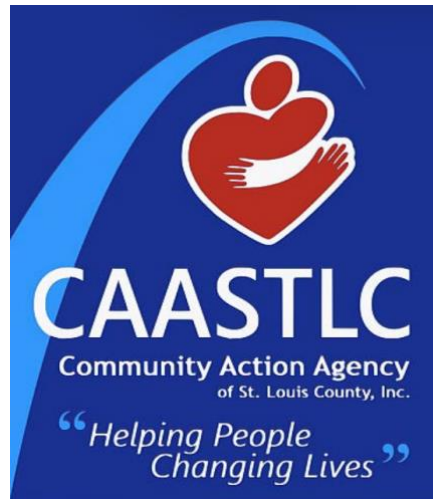


# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc.

August 30, 2023

**CAASTLC**  
*Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc.*

# Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment 2023

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## Letter from Chief Executive Officer



The purpose of our Community Needs Assessment is to comprehensively understand the challenges, needs, strengths, and aspirations of our neighbors. This process involved gathering data, insights, and perspectives from community members to make informed decisions and develop targeted strategies that address those needs.

For CAASTLC the Community Needs assessment Serves several key purposes:

1. **Identifying Priorities:** Engaging with community members, we can pinpoint the most pressing issues and concerns that require attention. This helps allocate resources to areas with the greatest impact potential.
2. **Informed Decision-Making:** An assessment provides a data-driven foundation for making decisions about resource allocation, program development, and community initiatives. It helps ensure that decisions are based on real needs rather than assumptions.
3. **Resource Allocation:** Organizations, governments, and nonprofits can allocate resources more effectively by targeting areas of greatest need. This prevents wasting resources on areas that may not require as much support.
4. **Program Development:** The insights gained from a needs assessment guide the development of programs and services that are relevant and responsive to the community's needs. This increases the likelihood of successful outcomes.
5. **Evidence-Based Advocacy:** Data and insights from the assessment can be used to advocate for policy changes or funding from external sources to support community improvement initiatives.
6. **Community Engagement:** The assessment process fosters community engagement and involvement. When community members are actively engaged in shaping their own solutions, there is a greater sense of ownership and commitment.

7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** A baseline established through the assessment helps in measuring progress over time. This allows organizations to track the impact of their interventions and adjust strategies as needed.

8. **Equity and Inclusion:** A needs assessment helps identify disparities and inequities within a community. By recognizing these disparities, efforts can be directed towards achieving more equitable outcomes for all community members.

9. **Strengthening Collaboration:** The assessment process involved collaboration among various stakeholders, fostering partnerships and collaboration within the community. This collective approach increases the chances of success.

10. **Long-Term Community Well-Being:** Ultimately, the goal of a community needs assessment is to contribute to the long-term well-being of the community. By addressing specific needs and challenges, the community becomes more resilient, vibrant, and self-sustaining.

Overall, a community needs assessment is a crucial step in understanding the unique dynamics of a community, involving its members in the decision-making process, and creating positive, lasting change. Thank you for lending your support to make this assessment a success. Let us continue to work until poverty becomes a footnote in the history books.

Yours In Service,

Linda Huntspon

Chief Executive Officer

## Executive Summary

The Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC) has completed a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) to identify the primary needs of low-income individuals and families in the county. CAASTLC staff began work on this CNA in December 2022 and the assessment was finalized and submitted for approval on August 30, 2023. The CNA was conducted in conjunction with Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) requirements and as a means for developing CAASTLC's next three-year strategic plan. The purpose of the CNA is to identify primary needs voiced by CAASTLC customers, board, and advisory council members, CAASTLC staff, community members, and community partners, as CAASTLC continues to be intentional in delivering services to empower low-income individuals and families in St. Louis County.

The CNA included data acquisition from government sources, quantitative and qualitative research on the service area, and input from community members and partners. The findings of the CNA revealed that the top three needs in the county are:

**Basic needs:** This includes food, housing, and energy assistance.

**Employment:** This includes job training, placement services, and financial literacy education.

**Education:** This includes early childhood education, adult education, and GED/HiSET preparation.

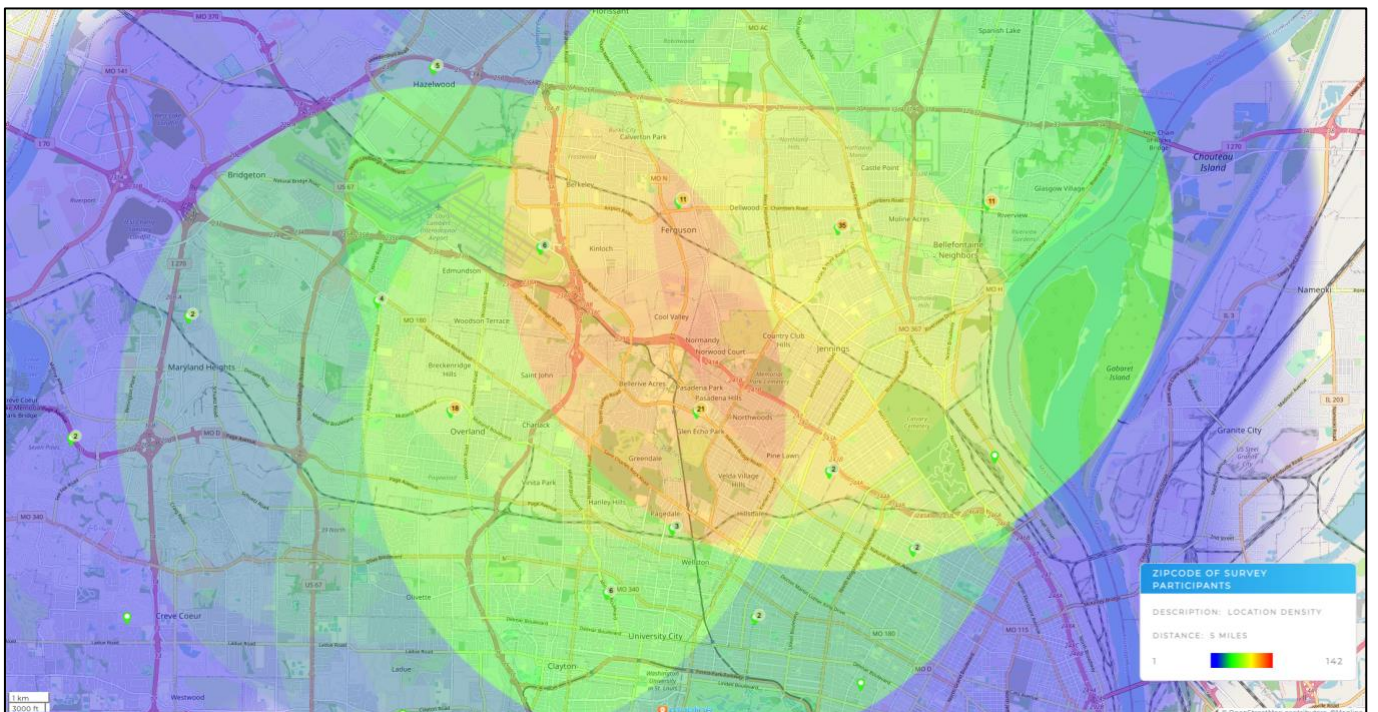
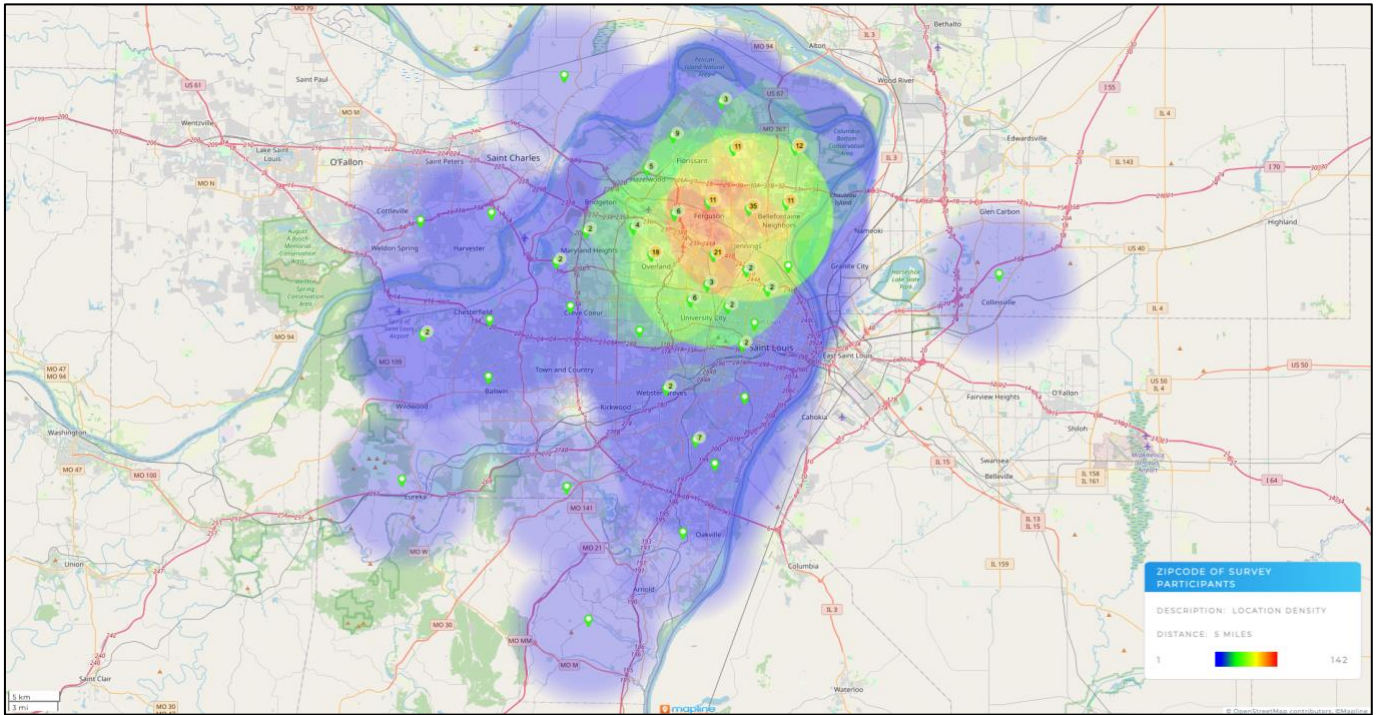
The CNA also identified several other needs, including transportation, health care, and mental health services, and crime. The plan will focus on developing and implementing programs and services that address the identified needs and partnering with other agencies that deliver requested services when appropriate.

The CNA provides a valuable resource for CAASTLC as it develops its next three-year strategic plan. The findings of the CNA will help CAASTLC to focus its resources on the most pressing needs in the community. By addressing these needs, CAASTLC can help to improve the lives of low-income individuals and families in St. Louis County. The following sections of this document will cover in detail the makeup and needs of our community. Please note the distinct characteristics and needs of our members that participated in our assessment. County-level data does not reveal the full story of our community. As a result, this assessment also aims to give the members of our community a voice in order to tell their story.



# Demographics of St. Louis County

## Map of Survey Participants<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Both maps depict areas where survey participants reside. Red areas depict a higher concentration of poverty. The red flag is the office location of CAASTLC



St. Louis County, Missouri is the most populous county in the state. As of 2022, the county had a population of 990,414 people. The racial makeup of the county was 67.1% white, 25.2% black or African American, 0.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 5.0% Asian, and 2.5% from other races. The median age in the county was 37.6 years. The population was 49.4% female and 50.6% male. The median household income was \$72,566. The most spoken languages in the county were English (87.5%), Spanish (2.8%), and French (1.3%).

The demographics of St. Louis County have changed over time. In the early 1900s, the county was majority white. However, the black population has grown significantly since then, and now makes up about a quarter of the population. The Asian population has also grown in recent years.

However, there are disparities as it pertains to race, gender, and age when it comes to poverty within St. Louis County. The poverty rate in St. Louis County, Missouri is 10.1%, according to the U.S. Census. However, the poverty rate for African Americans in St. Louis County is 23.2%, which is more than twice the rate for white residents (7.3%). The poverty rate for Hispanic residents is also higher than the rate for whites, at 15.8%.

There are also significant disparities in poverty rates between different age groups in St. Louis County. The poverty rate for children under the age of 18 is 16.7%, which is more than twice the rate for people over the age of 65 (7.4%).

There are a number of factors that contribute to the high poverty rates in St. Louis County, including a lack of economic opportunity, high levels of unemployment, jobs that pay low wages, and a lack of affordable housing. These factors are particularly acute for African Americans and children in the county.

The disparities in poverty rates between different racial and age groups in St. Louis County have a number of negative consequences. For example, children who grow up in poverty are more likely to experience health problems, have lower educational attainment, and be involved in the criminal justice system. Map of Survey Participants depicts where participants in our study reside within the county. The red regions suggest areas where there is a higher concentration of poverty.

## Assessment



*“Places like this help people... who knew a place like this existed?” (Quote from focus group participant)*

### **Methodology**

The Community Needs Assessment (CNA) is a comprehensive process aimed at identifying the needs, assets, and priorities of a community in order to inform the development of effective programs and services. It typically involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, and data collection from various sources. We began our assessment December 12th, 2022, and concluded August 8th, 2023.

### **Limitations**

The conducted Community Needs Assessment, which employed a combination of surveys, focus groups, interviews, and data aggregation from various sources, offers a valuable window into the intricacies of community needs. However, it is important to acknowledge several limitations inherent in the assessment process. One notable concern is the potential lack of full representativeness among the participants, introducing both sampling bias—due to the potential exclusion of certain demographic groups—and self-selection bias—where those with vested interests or strong opinions are more likely to participate. While the assessment endeavors to encompass a broad spectrum of perspectives, there is the possibility that certain nuanced needs within the community might not be fully captured.

Furthermore, the involvement of community partners in the data collection process, while valuable for their insights, could inadvertently introduce their perspectives and biases into the analysis. Consequently, the true diversity of opinions within the community might not be fully represented. Additionally, the assessment's focus on visible issues and existing services may inadvertently overshadow hidden needs that require exploration. As conditions evolve over time, the assessment's relevance and accuracy might wane, as it may not sufficiently capture shifts that occur due to changing circumstances or unforeseen events.

In conclusion, while the Community Needs Assessment presents valuable insights, a comprehensive understanding necessitates the recognition of these limitations. Balancing diverse research methods, engaging a broad array of stakeholders, and maintaining awareness of these constraints are all essential for interpreting the results effectively and for making informed decisions that are responsive to the community's needs.

## **Surveys**

Surveys are structured questionnaires designed to gather quantitative data from a large number of participants. In this case, 231 people participated in the survey. The survey included closed-ended questions with multiple-choice options, Likert scale questions, and some open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data.

- Surveys were designed with a mix of closed-ended questions (e.g., multiple-choice, yes/no) and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Questions were formulated to address specific areas of concern, such as education, housing, healthcare, employment, etc.
- The surveys have been distributed both online and in-person to reach a wide range of participants.
- This took place both onsite and offsite at the locations of community partners.

## **Focus Groups**

focus group is a qualitative research method that involves bringing together a small group of people to discuss a specific topic. Focus groups were conducted with key stakeholders, community leaders, and individuals who could provide valuable insights into the community's needs.

- Questions were tailored to individual participants' roles and expertise.
- Questions addressed their perspectives on the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

## **Community Partner Involvement**

- Partners played a major role in allowing us to utilize their locations to conduct our assessment.
- Partners participated in focus groups online and onsite at CAASTLC's office.
- Partners assisted in recruiting participants for surveys and focus groups, leveraging their local connections and trust within the community.

## **Recruitment**

- Community partners played a critical role in recruiting participants for various research methods, utilizing their networks to reach a diverse range of community members.
- Partners used multiple approaches, such as community events, social media, local organizations, and word of mouth, to ensure a representative sample.

## **Data Collection**

Data from local, state, and federal government sources were collected to complement the community-generated information. This includes demographic data, economic indicators, health statistics, and more. These sources provide an objective context for the community's needs.

**Data Analysis:**

- The heat map showing participants' zip codes can help identify geographical patterns of participation and ensure representation from various areas.
- Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using statistical methods to derive insights and identify trends.
- Qualitative data from focus groups were subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, concerns, and priorities.

The combination of these methodologies, along with the involvement of community partners, allows for a comprehensive understanding of the community's current needs, helping to guide future programming and initiatives effectively.

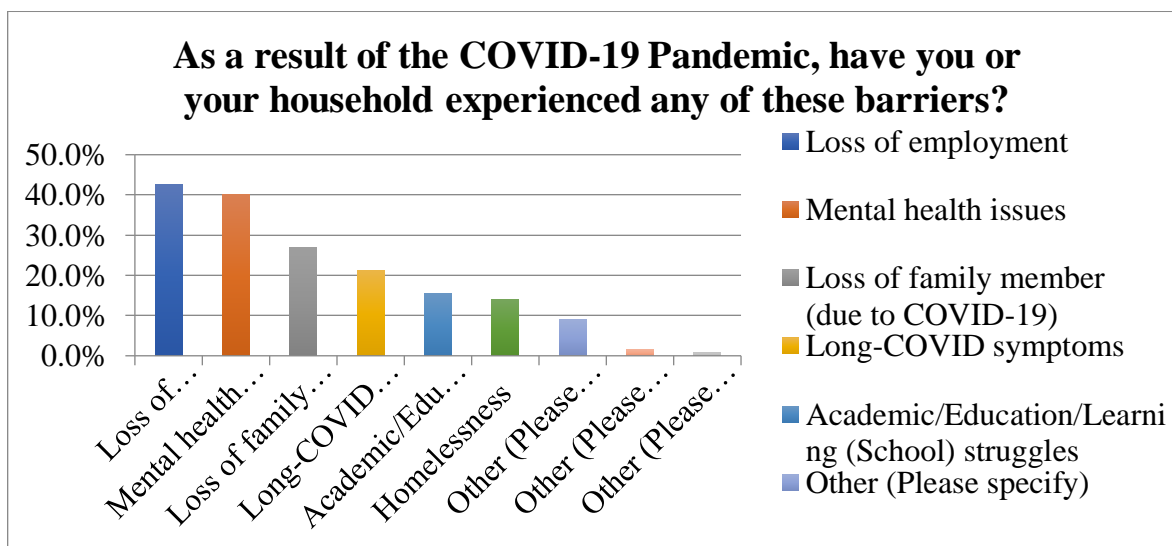
## Prioritized Needs

### Basic Needs:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on people's ability to meet their basic needs; this impact is still being felt. People of color, low-income people, and people with disabilities are disproportionately affected. This is because they are more likely to be unemployed, have lower incomes, and have difficulty accessing healthcare.

The pandemic is not over, and the impact on basic needs is likely to continue for some time. It is important to continue to support people who are struggling to meet their basic needs. This includes providing financial assistance, increasing access to food and healthcare, and addressing the underlying factors that make people vulnerable to poverty and inequality.

Figure I.



[Figure I](#) shows the percentage of people who have experienced different negative impacts due to COVID-19. The most common impact is loss of employment, at nearly 45%. This is followed by mental health issues at 40%. Other common impacts include loss of family member, academic/education/learning struggles, and long-COVID symptoms.

It is important to note that the chart does not show the percentage of people who have experienced multiple impacts. For example, it is possible that someone who lost their job also experienced mental health issues or loss of a family member.

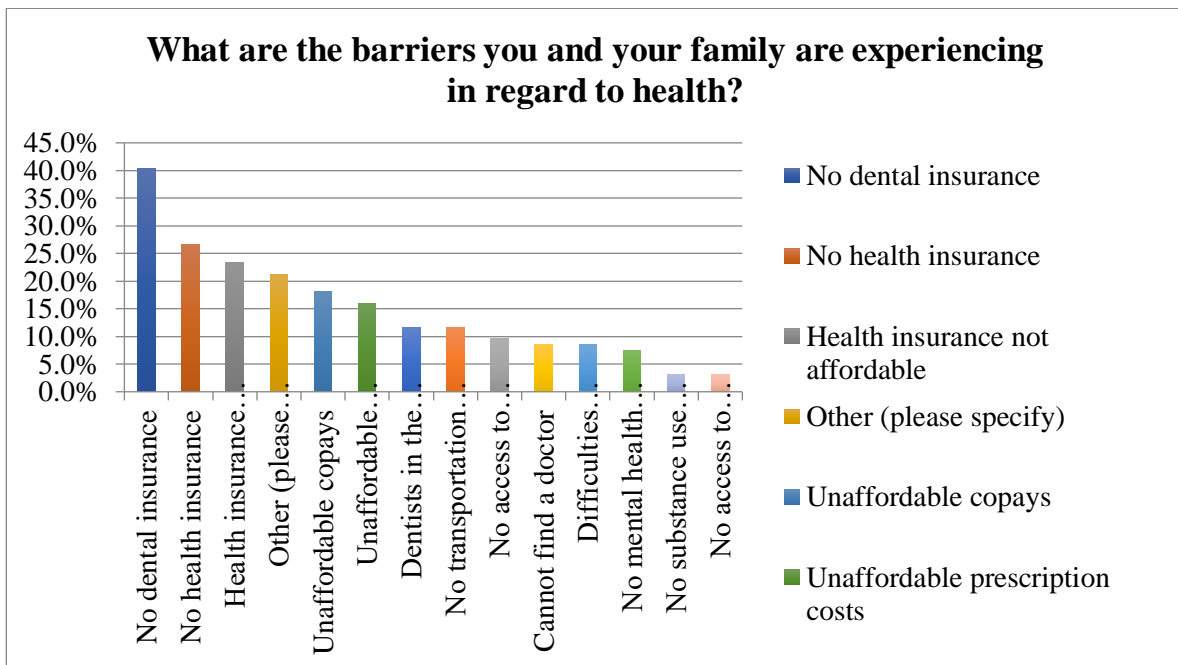


The chart also does not show the severity of the impacts. For example, someone who lost their job may have been unemployed for a short period of time, while someone else may have been unemployed for a long period of time.

Overall, the chart shows that COVID-19 has had a significant negative impact on many people's lives. The most common impacts are loss of employment and loss of a family member. However, many people have also experienced mental health issues, academic/education/learning struggles, and long-COVID symptoms.

In addition, many participants within the focus groups discussed their continual issues that began with COVID-19. One participant said, “I’m on the heels of closing up my three-year practice. I’m a small business owner. I’m experiencing extreme financial hardship. just recently got divorced. found myself not able to provide the needs for my mom so I got her that air conditioner.” The majority of participants aligned with this quote: making ends meet required making tough financial decisions.

Figure II.



Another aspect of basic needs includes health care. [Figure II](#) shows the percentage of people who are experiencing barriers in regard to health. The most common barrier is not having dental insurance, at 40%. This is followed by a lack of health insurance, at 27%. Other common barriers

include unaffordable copays, unaffordable prescription costs, dentists in the area not accepting insurance, no transportation to get to healthcare, no access to healthcare, cannot find a doctor, no mental health services in the area, no substance use treatment in the area, and no access to prenatal care.

It is important to note that the chart does not show the percentage of people who have experienced multiple barriers. For example, it is possible that someone who does not have health insurance also has unaffordable copays or unaffordable prescription costs.

The chart also does not show the severity of the barriers. For example, someone who does not have health insurance may be able to get care through a public health clinic or by paying out of pocket, while someone else may be completely unable to get care.

Overall, the chart shows that many people are experiencing barriers in regard to health. The most common barriers are not having health insurance and health insurance not being affordable. However, many people are also experiencing other barriers, such as unaffordable copays, unaffordable prescription costs, and lack of transportation.

Figure III.

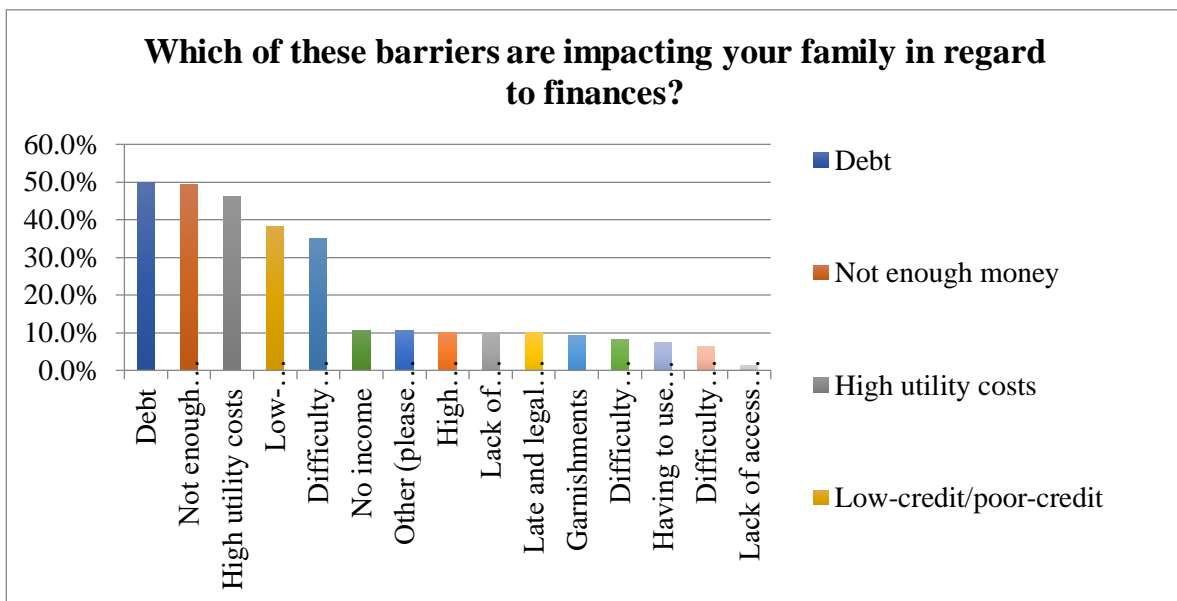


Figure III shows the percentage of people who have experienced different barriers impacting their finances. The two most common barriers are debt and not having enough money, at 50%. Other

common barriers include difficulty managing money, high prescription costs, lack of knowledge about savings, late and legal fees, difficulty getting child support, having to use payday loans/check cashing services, difficulty qualifying for disability, lack of access to banking services, low credit/poor credit, and difficulty managing money.

The chart also does not show the severity of the barriers. For example, someone who does not have enough money may be able to “get by,” by cutting back on expenses, while someone else may be completely unable to make ends meet.

Overall, the chart shows that many people are experiencing barriers impacting their finances. The most common barriers are not having enough money and high utility costs. However, many people are also experiencing other barriers, such as difficulty managing money, high prescription costs, and lack of access to banking services.

Figure IV.

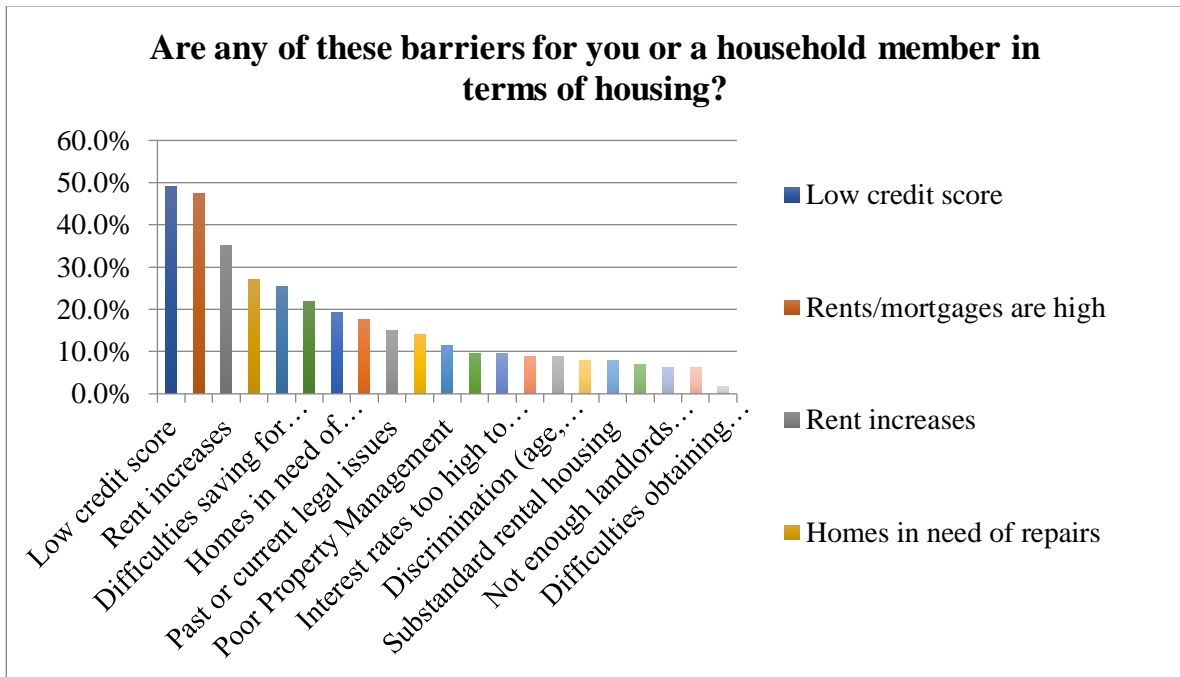
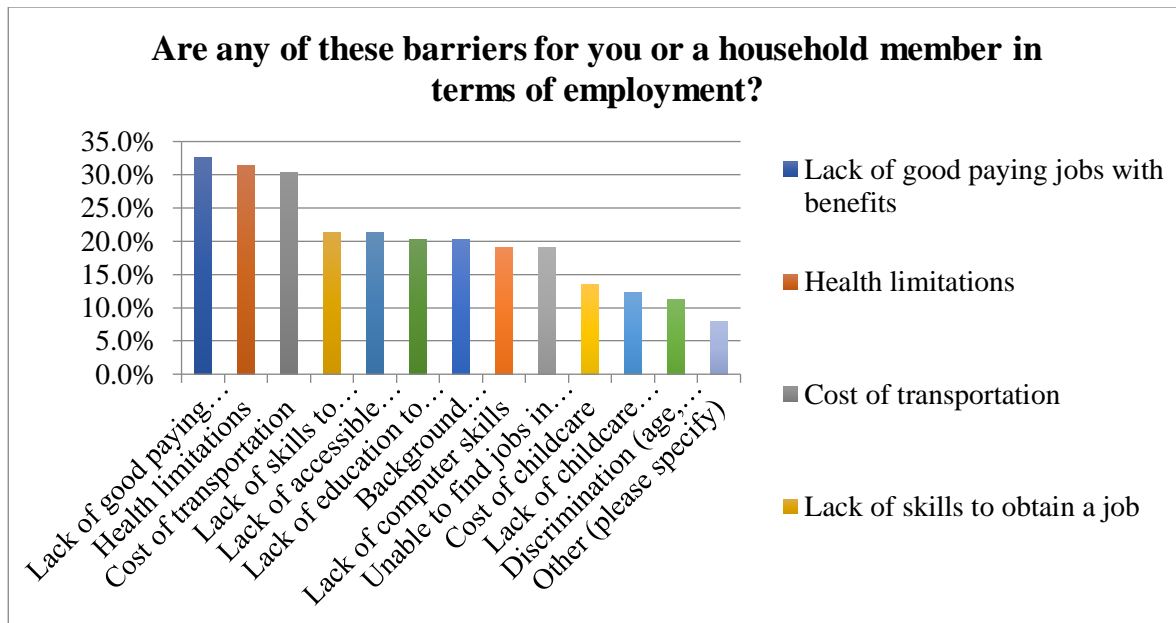


Figure IV shows the percentage of people who have experienced different barriers to housing. The most common barrier is low credit scores, at 50%. This is followed by rent or mortgage being too high, at 48%. Other common barriers include homes in need of weatherization, not enough savings for down payment, no funds for security/rent deposit, and difficulty qualifying for Section 8 housing choice.

Overall, the chart shows that many people are experiencing barriers to housing. The most common barriers are high rents/mortgages and homes in need of repair. However, many people are also experiencing other barriers, such as homes in need of weatherization, not enough savings for a down payment, and difficulty qualifying for Section 8 housing choice.

Basic needs include food, housing, and healthcare. The assessment found that a significant number of community members were struggling to meet their basic needs. Many people were living in poverty and did not have enough money to afford food, housing, or healthcare. This was having a negative impact on their health, well-being, and ability to participate in the community.

Figure V.



**Employment:**

Employment is another important need for community members. The assessment found that unemployment was high in the community and that many people were underemployed. This was making it difficult for people to support themselves and their families. It was also leading to social isolation and a lack of hope for the future. While many participants believed that their employment issues began with COVID-19, others believed that employment issues stem from systemic issues within the community. Figure V shows the percentage of participants with barriers to employment. The most common barrier is lack of good paying jobs with benefits, followed by lack of access to transportation, lack of skills to obtain a job, and lack of access to food and

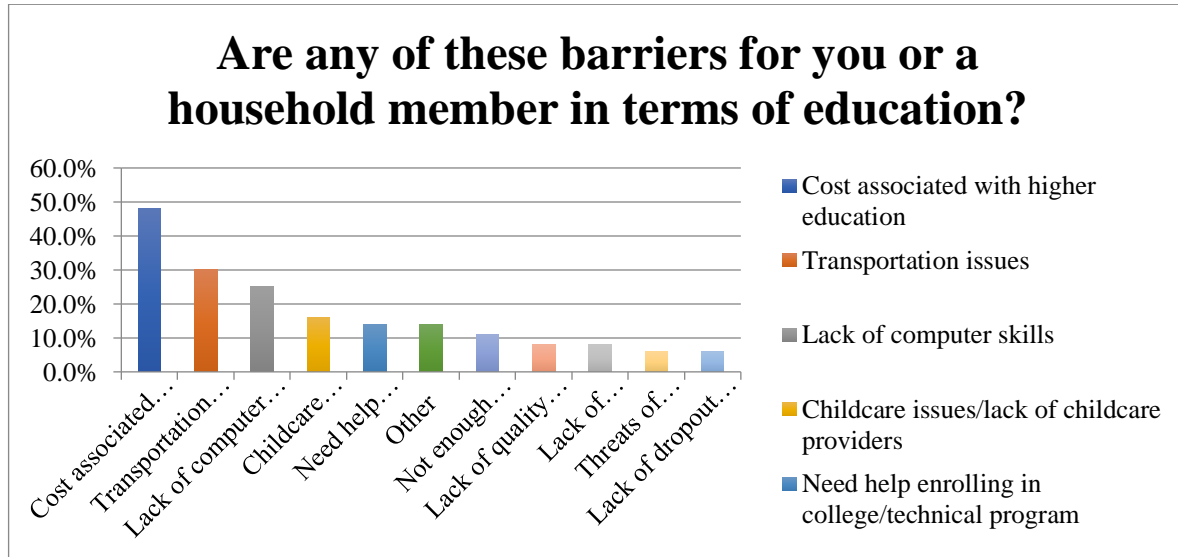
healthcare. People with disabilities are more likely to report lack of accessible transportation as a barrier to employment, while people with less education are more likely to report lack of skills to obtain a job as a barrier to employment.

The chart is a useful tool for understanding the barriers to employment that people face. It can be used to develop policies and programs to address these barriers and help people get jobs.

Here are some specific examples of the barriers to employment mentioned in the chart:

- Lack of good paying jobs with benefits: This means that there are not enough jobs that pay a living wage and offer benefits such as health insurance and paid leave. This can make it difficult for people to afford basic necessities and to take care of their families.
- Lack of access to transportation: This means that people do not have a reliable way to get to and from work. This can be a barrier for people who rely on public transportation, which often lacks routes to areas for employment. In addition, public transportation does not allow commutes for those who work outside of normal daytime hours.
- Lack of skills to obtain a job: This means that people do not have the skills that are needed for the jobs that are available. This can be a barrier for people who have not been to college, obtained technical training, or who have not had the opportunity to learn new skills.

Figure VI.



### Education:

Education is essential for children and adults to succeed in life. The assessment found that there were a number of barriers to education in the community, including poverty, lack of childcare, and language barriers. This was preventing many children and adults from getting the education they needed to reach their full potential.

Figure VI shows the percentage of participants with barriers to education. The most common barriers are costs associated with higher education, lack of computer skills, and transportation issues. Other barriers include childcare issues, lack of quality education, lack of alternative education, threats of violence in schools, and lack of dropout prevention. The chart is a useful tool for understanding the barriers to education that people face. It can be used to develop policies and programs to address these barriers and help people get an education.

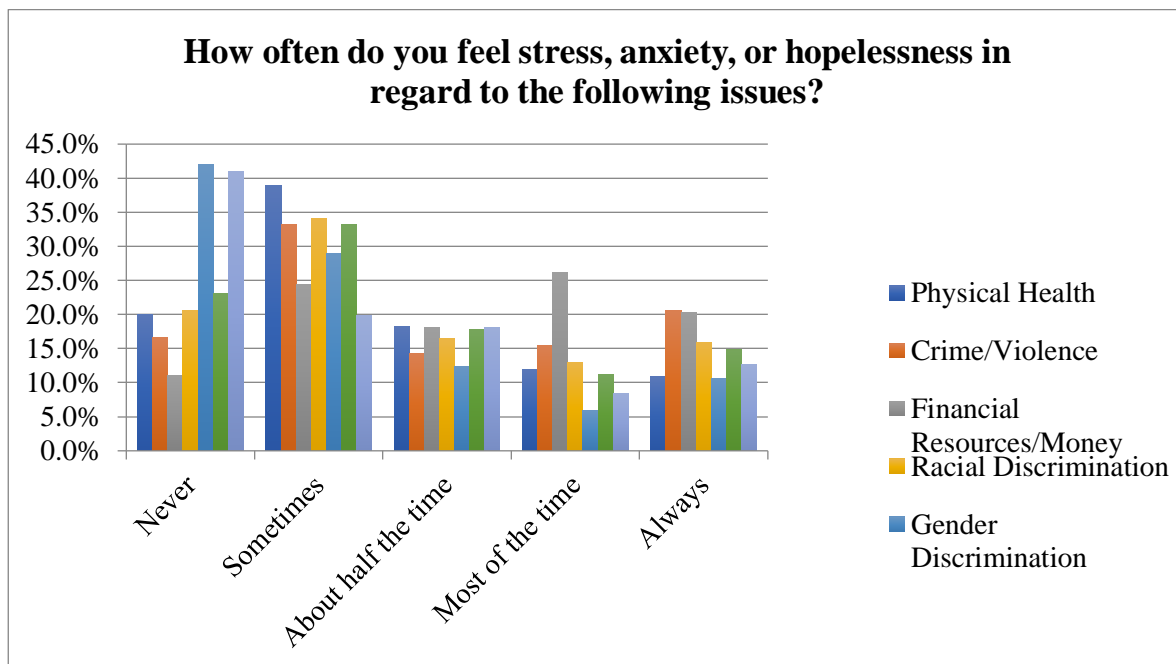
Here are some specific examples of the barriers to education mentioned in the chart:

- Cost associated with higher education: This means that the cost of college tuition and fees is a barrier for many people. This is especially true for people who come from low-income families.



- Lack of computer skills: This means that people do not have the skills to use computers and other technology. This can be a barrier for people who want to take online courses or who need to use computers for their jobs.
- Transportation issues: This means that people do not have a reliable way to get to and from school. This can be a barrier for people who depend on public transportation due to limited routes to employment opportunities (ex. Earth City and Chesterfield).
- Childcare issues: This means that people do not have someone to take care of their children while they are in school. This can be a barrier for parents, especially single parents.
- Lack of quality education: This means that the schools in some communities do not provide a quality education. This can be a barrier for people who want to get a good education.

Figure VII.



Other Areas of Concern:

In addition to these three main categories (Basic Needs, Education, and Employment), crime and mental health were also identified as areas of concern. The assessment found that crime was a problem in the community and that many people felt unsafe. In addition to [Figure I](#) suggesting a high percentage of participants experiencing mental health issues since the Pandemic, Figure VII

suggests that many participants are experiencing anxiety related to crime and other issues. Figure VII shows the percentage of people who feel stress, anxiety, or hopelessness in regard to the following issues: physical health, gender discrimination, children's education, crime, and financial security.

Nearly 84% of survey participants experience some level of anxiety related to crime. This is second only to financial issues. The anxiety related to crime is likely due to a number of factors, including the increasing rate of violent crime in some areas, the fear of becoming a victim of crime, and the perception that the criminal justice system is not effective in protecting people from crime.

The anxiety related to crime can have a significant impact on people's lives. It can make it difficult to feel safe, to focus on work or school, and to enjoy life. It can also lead to physical health problems, such as anxiety disorders and depression.

Many participants within the focus groups echoed this sentiment. One participant said, “My son was just shot, and he had nothing to do with anything in the streets. He was just trying to drop off a DoorDash delivery.” Crime along with financial issues operate in a cycle of anxiety for many in our community. As noted in [Figure II](#), many members of our community lack health insurance in order to combat their mental health issues stemming from their socioeconomic condition.

In addition, the impact of crime and violence can be felt in one’s sense of belonging to a community. Many focus group participants suggested that they noticed a decline in a sense of community. One participant stated, “People used to watch out for each other. You could go to a neighbor if you needed help with things. This doesn’t happen anymore. You don’t even see kids playing outside nowadays.”

## Discussion

The results of this needs assessment will help CAASTLC and its Board of Directors develop a new strategic plan for fiscal years 2025-2027. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2024, CAASTLC will form a Strategic Planning Team consisting of staff, board members, and advisory council members. This team will develop a formal plan that includes reviewing the current needs assessment and strategic plan, creating a detailed timeline for workgroups, and hiring a consultant to facilitate the strategic planning process.

Over the next year, the needs assessment data and findings will be analyzed and discussed in depth to identify critical needs in St. Louis County. These critical needs will be weighed against the agency's capacity to determine the scope of programs and services that will be provided in the future. Current programs will be reviewed and assessed for impact to determine which should be developed further and which may be phased out to make way for more empowering initiatives with results-oriented outcomes.

Currently, CAASTLC offers a host of programs in order to meet many of the needs of our community. Below is a list of programs and their respective goals:

Current CAASTLC Programs and Services:

### **Family and Economic Security**

#### **Family Case Management:**

Case Management is a customer centered, goal-oriented process for assessing the needs of an individual/family and guiding them to help them achieve their goals. The Case Manager “bundles” services, including education and employment goals to assist the customer in achieving economic security.

#### **Drug & Alcohol Education Classes:**

A twelve-session substance abuse prevention program is offered by CAASTLC and facilitated by certified alcohol and drug counselors who utilize informative materials and group discussions.

#### **Anger Management Education Classes:**

An eight-session program that uses cognitive behavioral theories for learning. The program places an emphasis on hope by providing methods to identify and manage anger.

**Employment Development Program:**

Our Employment Program curriculum teaches job search techniques, retention skills, computer skills and resume building for the job seeker.

**Life Skills Classes:**

Classes are offered to help our clients reach their greatest potential through education and training. Classes are offered in the following areas: Health & Wellness, Financial Management, Parenting & Family Development, Home Management and Energy Conservation.

**Reentry Support for Returning Citizens:**

This program is designed to help ex-offenders find satisfying work by providing successful tips to navigate the job market, developing resumes that incorporate prison education and work programs and tools to improve an interviewee's performance. All participants are assigned a case manager to assist with identifying all needs and goal setting. The Makin' It Work curriculum is a core component.

**Entrepreneurship Training:** CAASTLC hosts a certified training program consisting of 18 continuing education credit hours focused on key aspects of entrepreneurship including business development and management. CAASTLC case managers meet with each participant individually to provide one-on-one support. We also partner with local universities, financial institutions, and subject matter experts to co-facilitate training sessions.

**Immigrant Inclusion:** Immigrant Case Management is designed to help immigrants build their life in the USA by providing support from the first steps of meeting basic needs such as food, finding affordable housing, and navigating the legal processes to achieving educational and career goals.

**Youth Services****HiSET (GED)/Technical Training Programs:**

Partnering with various St. Louis County school districts, CAASTLC provides Case Management and supportive services to students enrolled in HiSET programs. In Partnership with various St. Louis County school districts, CAASTLC provides Case Management and supportive services to at-risk young adults aged 17-24, who are enrolled in HiSET and technical programs to help

individuals attain educational certification. CAASTLC removes barriers for people wishing to obtain a High School Equivalency, testing fees, practice tests, & coaching are available.

**Reality Enrichment and Life Lessons (REALL):**

The Reality Enrichment and Life Lessons (REALL) project is a hands-on simulation designed to challenge youth to think critically about how choices and decisions made in adolescence may have consequences in adulthood. Middle and high schools and youth groups can request this impactful exercise focused on keeping youth in school.

**Farm STEM Program:**

Using a STEM curriculum developed by The University of Missouri Extension, students and youth groups participate in hands-on agricultural experiences based on the science of farming.

**Housing and Energy**

**Weatherization Assistance Program:**

The Weatherization Assistance Program is administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Weatherization reduces air infiltration into the home to help households save money on their heating and cooling bills. The average family saves over \$437 a year after their home has been weatherized. Income eligible homeowners and renters are eligible for this free service. CAASTLC's weatherization team follows strict COVID-19 protocols.

**Housing Assistance:**

CAASTLC has a comprehensive housing assistance program which includes Down Payment Assistance, Housing Counseling, Disaster Relief, and Rent/Mortgage Assistance. *Depending on availability of funding*

**Energy Services Programs:**

CAASTLC has several Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP, Dollar Help, Dollar More & Heat Up) designed to alleviate the immediate threat of utility service disconnection and assist with restoration.

### **Water and Wastewater Assistance:**

CAASTLC has two different programs that assist with water and wastewater bills (LIHWAP and H2O). Both programs are designed to alleviate the immediate threat of water disconnection and assist with restoration.

### **Community Outreach**

#### **Poverty Simulations:**

Missouri's Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) is a unique tool that helps people begin to understand what life is like with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress.

#### **Empowerment Fairs & Hiring Events:**

Our Employment Program sponsors job fairs and Hiring Events within the St. Louis County region. A variety of employers participate and often provide on-site hiring opportunities. **Empowerment Fairs** are held throughout the year. Through networking & partnerships with various area employers, these events bring employers all in one place, giving people an opportunity to meet a number of companies at one time. Some even hire on the spot! **Hiring Events:** CAASTLC partners with several local employers who come into our office for an afternoon at various times throughout the year. These employers spend a few hours meeting and interviewing people. These events build upon skills learned in our Job Readiness Classes and often result in a job offer.

#### **Step Up to Leadership:**

Step Up to Leadership is designed for income eligible, community-minded individuals desiring to develop leadership skills and turn their civic passions into action. Topics cover the value of grassroots participation, goal setting, public speaking, negotiation, conflict resolution, grant writing, and board and committee structures and policies.



## **Health and Nutrition**

### **Drive-Through Food Pantry:**

In collaboration with St. Louis Area Food Bank and others, CAASTLC operates a drive through food pantry that provides USDA commodities and nutritious food items to individuals and families needing help. CAASTLC's Seeds of Hope Farm adds fresh, organically grown fruits and vegetables to the food bags.

### **CAASTLC's Seeds of Hope Farm:**

CAASTLC's Seeds of Hope Farm in Spanish Lake, is striving to improve access to high quality, nutritious food. The farm features cooking classes, volunteer opportunities, on-farm demos and workshops, all free for the whole family. Our fresh seasonal produce is provided to area food pantries and to our volunteers. Healthy lifestyles begin with healthy eating!

### **Mental Health:**

CAASTLC provides mental health services to residents of St. Louis County with an emphasis on those who are involved with the justice system. Available services include screening/assessments; individualized care/service plans; counseling; linkage/referral; parenting classes/support groups; targeted case management; adjustment counseling for immigrant/inclusion issues; addressing stigma to treatment. Services are provided by a trauma-informed, LMSW, QMHP in the state of Missouri.

## Conclusion

The results of this needs assessment have revealed that many of the community's needs are similar to those identified in past assessments, such as basic needs, employment, housing, and food. However, there are also some significant differences, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the community, causing widespread job losses, housing instability, and food insecurity. The civil unrest that has occurred in recent years has also exacerbated these problems.

In addition to these challenges, the community is also facing an increase in crime. This is due to a number of factors, including the economic hardship caused by the pandemic, the availability of guns, and the lack of opportunities for young people. The increase in crime is having a significant impact on the community. People are feeling less safe, and they are hesitant to go out at night or to let their children play outside. This is also making it difficult for businesses to operate and for people to get jobs.

The needs assessment data provides a valuable starting point for developing a new strategic plan that will address the community's needs in the years to come. Basic needs, education, employment services, crime, and mental health issues are all serious concerns of our community. In the coming months, CAASTLC will work with its board to construct a strategic plan that aims to alleviate some of the barriers consistent with these issues.

# Appendix

## Descriptive Statistics of Survey

Figure VIII.

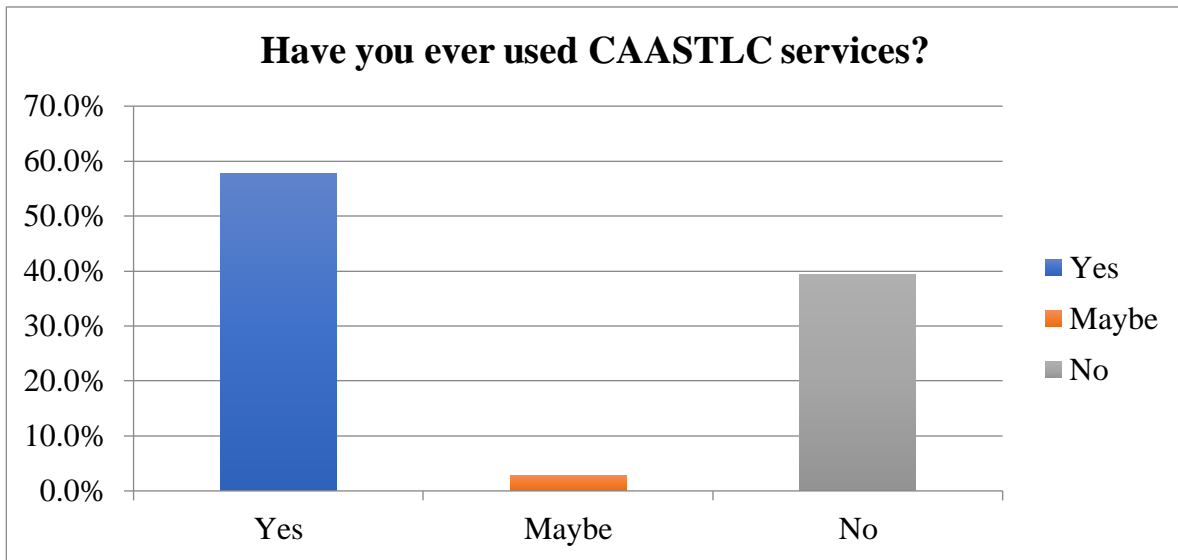


Figure IX.

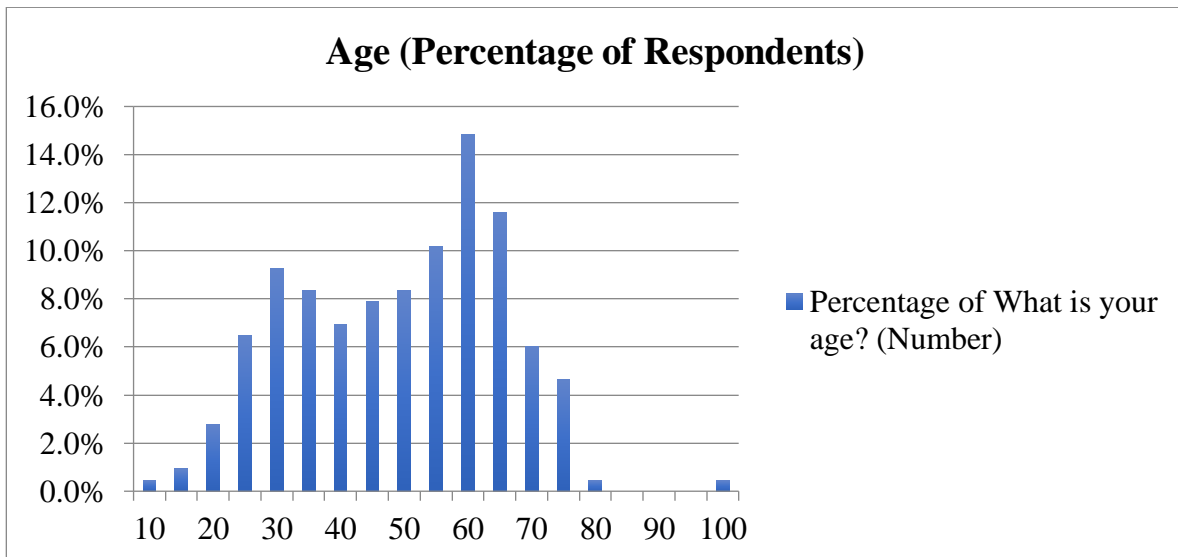


Figure X.

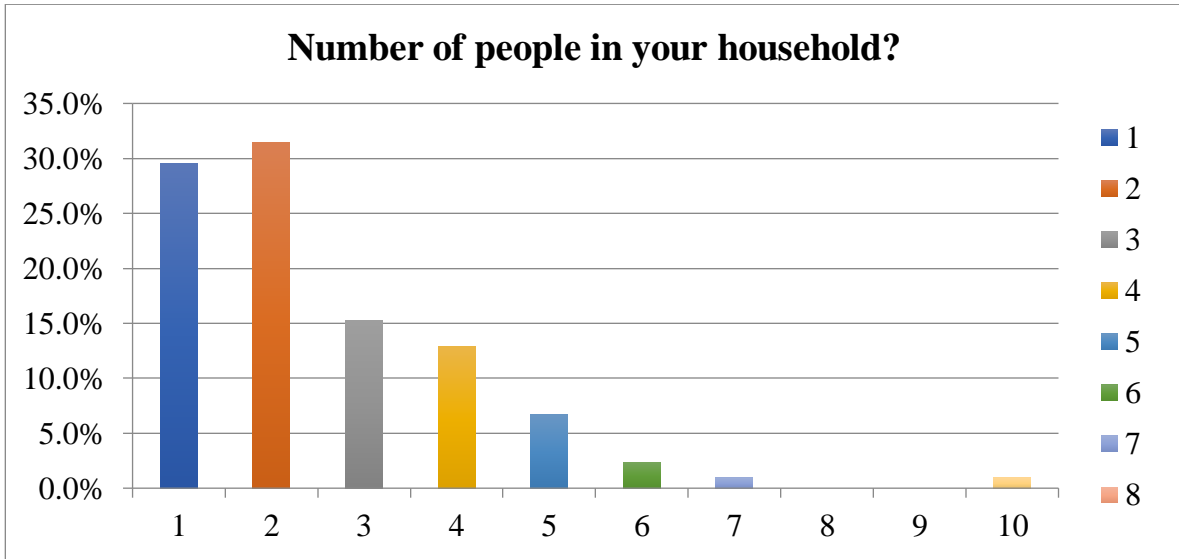


Figure XI.

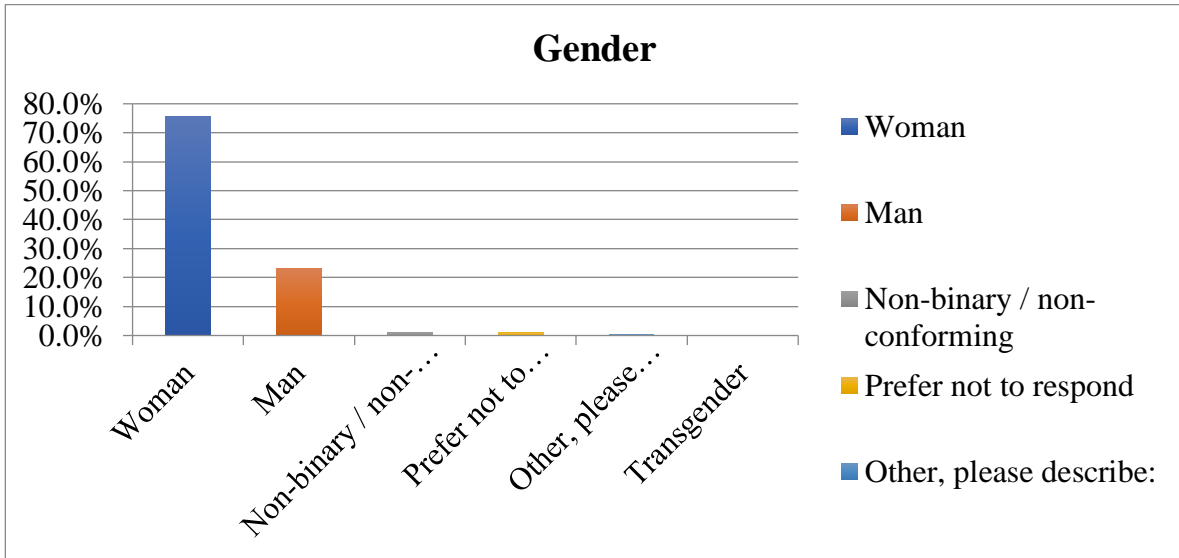


Figure XII.

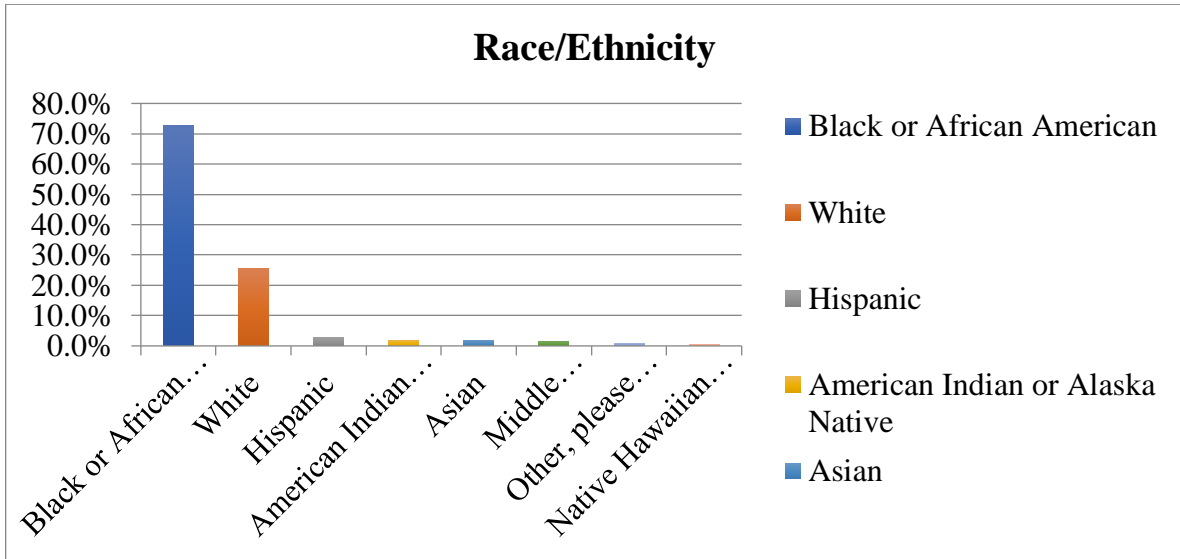
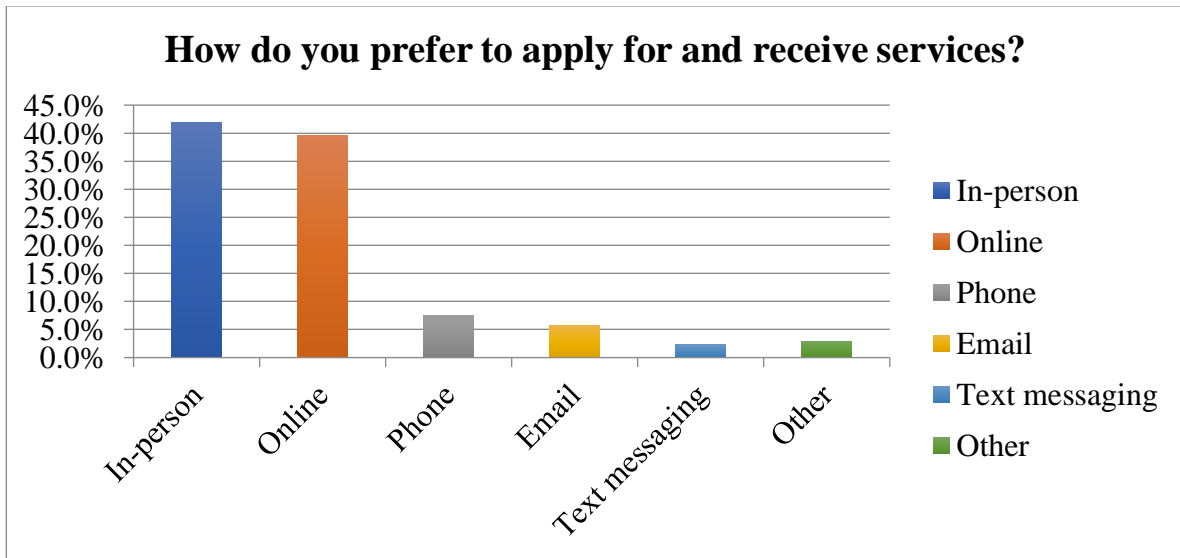


Figure XIII.



## CAASTLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023

Name	Sector
<b>Louis “Lou” Aboussie</b> <a href="mailto:labou@att.net">labou@att.net</a>	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<b>Cheryl Anthony</b> <a href="mailto:canthony@detalus.com">canthony@detalus.com</a>	<b>PRIVATE</b>
<b>Renada Chandler</b> (Board Secretary) <a href="mailto:Rlrf47@gmail.com">Rlrf47@gmail.com</a>	<b>LOW-INCOME</b>
<b>Geralyn Clifton</b> <a href="mailto:gclifton128@sbcglobal.net">gclifton128@sbcglobal.net</a>	<b>LOW-INCOME</b>
<b>Linda Eikerenkoetter</b> <a href="mailto:Lenda17@peoplepc.com">Lenda17@peoplepc.com</a>	<b>LOW INCOME</b>
<b>Clayton Evans</b> <a href="mailto:Clayton.Evans@simmonsbank.com">Clayton.Evans@simmonsbank.com</a>	<b>PRIVATE</b>
<b>Julie Harris</b> <a href="mailto:jh12@charter.net">jh12@charter.net</a>	<b>LOW-INCOME</b>
<b>Terrie Hart</b> <a href="mailto:terrie.hart@bjc.org">terrie.hart@bjc.org</a>	<b>PRIVATE</b>
<b>Antonio Maldonado</b> <a href="mailto:tmmt3212@gmail.com">tmmt3212@gmail.com</a>	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<b>Kevin Marquitz</b> <a href="mailto:kevinmarquitz@sbcglobal.net">kevinmarquitz@sbcglobal.net</a>	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<b>Cynthia Pender McCarthy</b> <a href="mailto:mayor@pasadenahillsmo.us">mayor@pasadenahillsmo.us</a>	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<b>Gloria McQueen</b> <a href="mailto:gjmcqueen@sbcglobal.net">gjmcqueen@sbcglobal.net</a>	<b>LOW-INCOME</b>
<b>Sheila D. Pearson</b> (Board Chair) <a href="mailto:Sheila.pearson2@centene.com">Sheila.pearson2@centene.com</a>	<b>PRIVATE</b>
<b>Michael Pendergast</b> (Vice Chair) <a href="mailto:mcp2015law@icloud.com">mcp2015law@icloud.com</a>	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<b>Tyrrell Rodgers</b> (Board Treasurer) <a href="mailto:rodgerstl@hotmail.com">rodgerstl@hotmail.com</a>	<b>PRIVATE</b>
<b>Linda Huntspon</b> (CEO) <a href="mailto:lhuntspon@caastlc.org">lhuntspon@caastlc.org</a>	<b>CEO</b>

## Community Advisory Council

1. Marcus Adams, Chair
2. Delsie Boyd
3. Rose Cason
4. Stacy Clay
5. Bonita Cornute
6. Michael Crayton
7. Alvin L. Doss
8. Rose Eichelberger
9. Sharonica Hardin-Bartley
10. Debra Harper-LeBlanc
11. Mike Kniepman
12. Sharon Pace
13. Monica Peterson
14. Jay Rhodes
15. Shenisia Watson
16. Brandon Wilkes

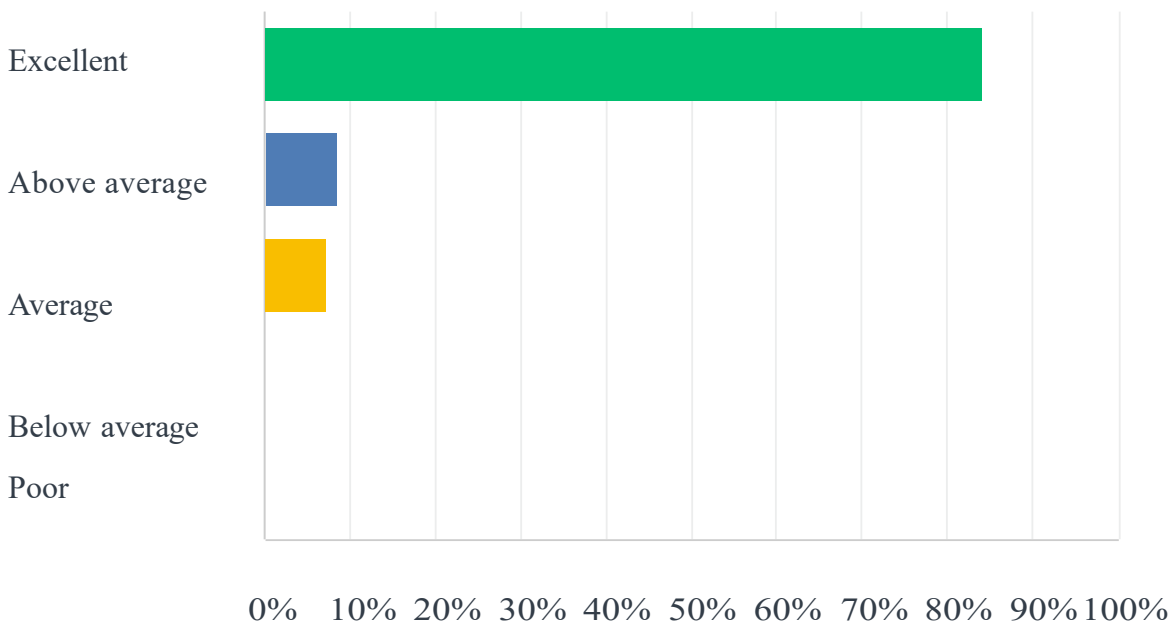


## Customer Satisfaction Survey

To collect feedback on the organization's services, customer satisfaction surveys were implemented in three ways. Email surveys were sent to a sample of 100 customers who had recently interacted with the organization. Printed surveys were available at outreach sites, the food pantry drive through, and the foyer for 2 weeks. Telephone surveys were conducted by a customer service representative over a period of 1 month. A total of 82 surveys were recorded, with 3 completed via email and the rest, 79, entered manually. 69 complete printed surveys were received from customers at outreach sites, while 10 surveys were completed via telephone.

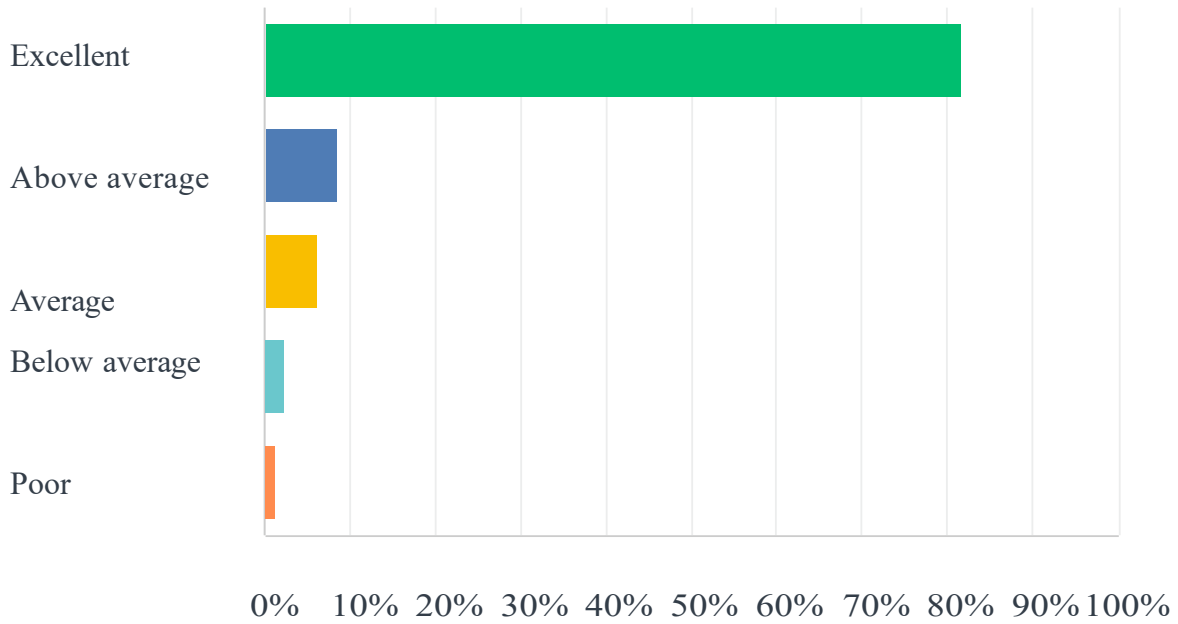
The feedback from the surveys will be used to improve the organization's services and customer experience. The survey results will be analyzed to identify areas where the organization can improve its services. The results will also be used to develop a plan for improvement.

### Friendliness and courtesy of staff member



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	84.15%	69
Above average	8.54%	7
Average	7.32%	6
Below average	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		82

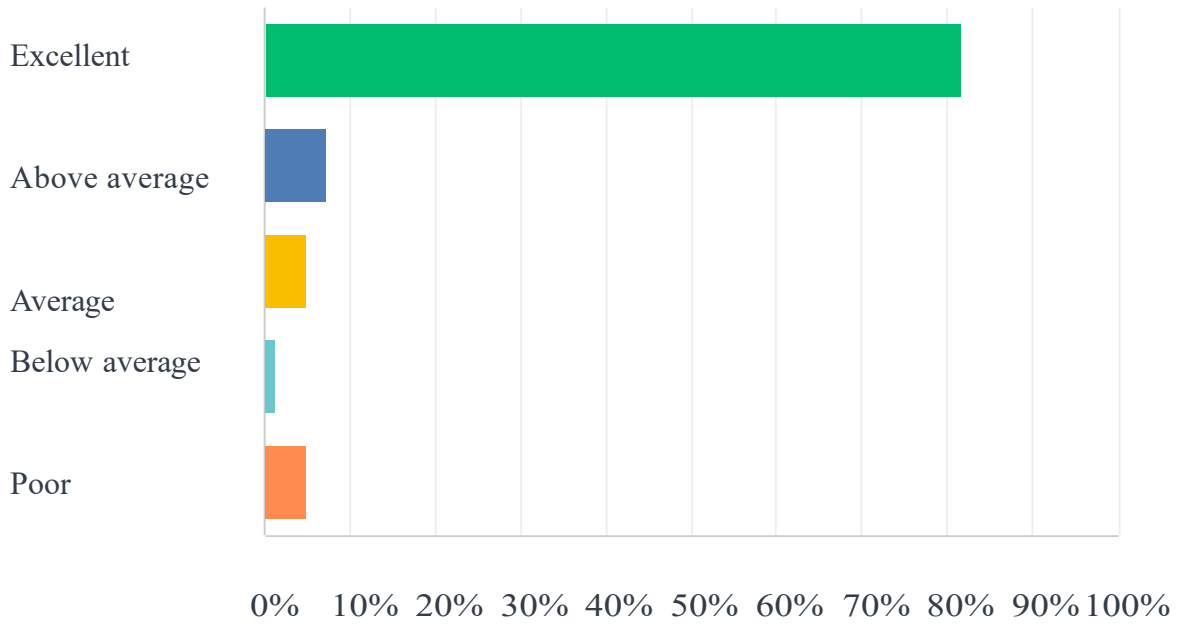
Staff responsiveness to your needs



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	81.71%	67
Above average	8.54%	7
Average	6.10%	5
Below average	2.44%	2
Poor	1.22%	1

TOTAL	82
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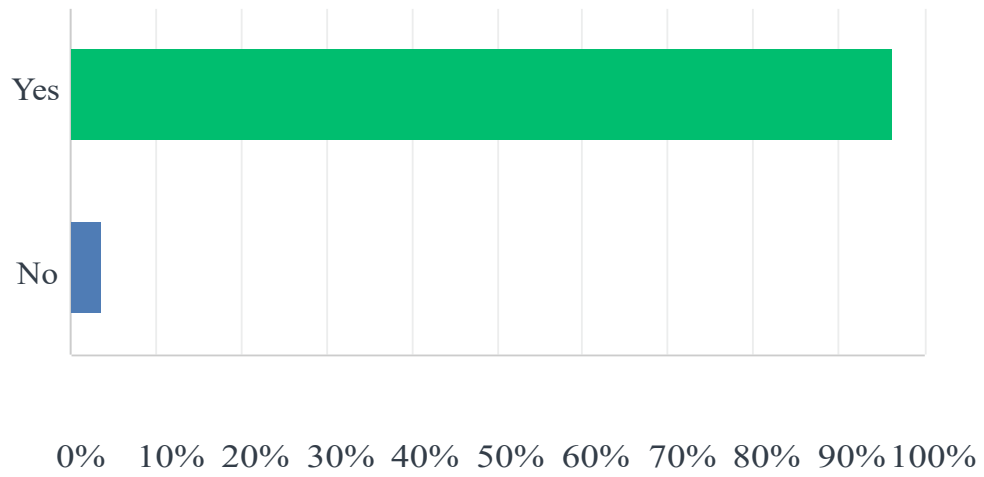
Quality of service



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	81.71%	67
Above average	7.32%	6
Average	4.88%	4
Below average	1.22%	1
Poor	4.88%	4

TOTAL	82	
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Do you feel our employees did their, "Personal Best," to help you with your needs?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	96.34%	79
No	3.66%	3
TOTAL		82

Please list any additional comments and/or suggestions for improvement:

#	RESPONSES
1	I graduated from the Entrepreneurship Program and the instructor was amazing.
2	I graduated from the drug and alcohol class in February 2023. The teacher was kind and taught me things to help me stop drinking.
3	The reentry case managers are very nice. They care about our success.
4	Free gas money card for auto
5	Less paperwork otherwise services improving
6	Great Services
7	Nobody answers their phone
8	Thank you all much
9	I've always received help and every visit was professional. Everything was great.
10	Nobody in the energy department answer their phones. It's hard to talk to someone to get an update.
11	You are all absolutely amazing. Thank you!
12	I'm tired off waiting outside to come into the building to get applications. But the receptionist is nice.
13	The security guard can only do so much. I prefer talking to a front desk staff member.
14	I am extremely disappointed that community action has not opened the lobby for us to come in
15	Very Curtious
16	Wonderful blessing
17	Just keep doing what yall doing.

18	I participated in a poverty simulation and it was an eye opening experience. The facilitator was passionate about the topic of poverty and her deliverance was exceptional. I never lived and poverty, but I now have a basic understanding of what many families living in poverty may experience.
19	I really appreciate all you guys do for me. Thank you so much. You help me and my family.
20	The people are nice but I can't get all the help I need because I can't come in the building. When I come in, I don't know what to do and the guard don't know the answers to my questions.
21	I feel like the workers do their best but they help a lot of people that it takes a long time to get help.
22	Everyone always has a smile and has a friendly attitude. Thank you so much for your service. They help out so much!
23	Reopen the building so we can come in and speak with a worker
24	Very happy
25	Very helpful and feeling
26	Staff are very helpful and friendly
27	Staff was so nice and help me complete application
28	Excellent engagement from a couple, and facilitator did a good job - he might have called on attendees specifically to get more engagement. Excellent discussion!

## Community Partner CNA Assistance

**Low income-** Surveys, interviews, and focus groups were conducted to gather information from our low-income customers. Surveys were accessible through business cards with a QR code, links were sent via email, and made available on the agency's website and social media pages. Printed surveys were mailed and given directly to the customers. All surveys collected in paper form were entered manually. Customer satisfaction surveys were made available in paper form and via Survey Monkey. CAASTLC staff also provided surveys during case management intake and after Drug & Alcohol, and Anger Management classes. Focus groups were conducted both in-person, and via zoom.

**Community Partners-** Surveys and focus groups were administered to collect data from our community partners. Community partners accessed surveys through business cards with a QR code, links were emailed and available on the agency's website and social media pages. Printed surveys were mailed. The customer satisfaction surveys were made available via Survey Monkey. Focus groups were conducted via Zoom.



### Community Partner Engagement

Organization	Survey	Interview	Focus Group
Ameren	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Barnes Jewish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Better Family Life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Healthy Blue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennings Junior High School	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Montgomery Bank	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ritenour	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CAASTLC Board Members		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Low-Income	Manually Entered-100	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Special School District (SSD)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Grantsview Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Jamestown Bluff Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Weber Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ferguson Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Florissant Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Feed My People	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
The Salvation Army	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

## CAASTLC 2023 CNA DATA POINTS

St. Louis County Employment		
Characteristic	County-Level Data	Source
Unemployment Rate	2.9% (May 2023)	<a href="https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MO_SLURN">https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MO_SLURN</a>
Job Growth Percent	1.3% (May 2023)	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Employer Reported Barriers		
Vehicles Per Household	2 cars per household (2020)	<a href="#">Data USA / Data Census U.S</a>
Method of Commute	Car, truck, or van 73.9% (2021)	<a href="#">Data Census U.S</a>
Area's Largest Growth Industry	Healthcare and Technical Occupations (2022)	<a href="#">Bls.gov</a>
Sector with the Highest Unemployment Rate	2.9% (June 2023)	<a href="#">Bls.gov</a> U.S. BLS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.
Percent of Population on Disability	15.4% (2017 - 2021)	American Community Survey

St. Louis County Education		
Characteristic	County-Level Data	Source
High School Graduation Rate	89.73% (2022)	<a href="https://dese.mo.gov">dese.mo.gov</a>
Early Education Enrollment	Private School 18.1% Public School 81.9% (2021)	<a href="#">Data Census U.S</a>
Higher Education Enrollment	Private School 44.4% Public School 55.6% (2021)	<a href="#">Data Census U.S</a>
Higher Education Completion Rate	45.3% (2017 - 2021)	<a href="#">Census</a>
Average Child Care Cost	\$584 monthly (October - 2020)	<a href="#">Economic Policy Institute</a>
Student Enrollment Rate	25.8% (2021)	<a href="#">Data Census U.S</a>
Number of Homeless Students	See Figure: <a href="#">CAASTLC 2023 CNA DATA POINTS</a>	Missouri Housing Development Commission
Adult Literacy Rate	94%	National Center for Education Statistics

St. Louis County Income

Characteristic	County-Level Data	Source
Poverty Rate	All Families 7.4% (2021)	<a href="#">Data Census U.S.</a>
Required Living Wage	<p>2 Adults (Both working) and 2 Children <b>\$22.89</b></p> <p>2 Adults and 3 Children (Both working) <b>\$27.01</b></p> <p>2 Adults and 2 Children (1 working) <b>\$37.40</b></p> <p>2 Adults and 3 Children (1 working) <b>\$41.42</b></p> <p>(2019)</p>	<a href="#">Living Wage</a>
Average Hourly Wage	\$33.58 (Jun 2023)	<a href="#">FRED</a>
Median Wage	\$26.76 (May 2021)	<a href="#">bls.gov</a>

Median Household Income	\$72,562 (2021)	<a href="https://www.census.gov">Census.gov</a>
Cost of Living	88.4 (2023)	<a href="https://www.meric.mo.gov">Meric.mo.gov</a> Composite Cost of Living Index
Inflation Rate	4% (April 2023)	U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
Number of Population Receiving State Assistance	131,148 (December 2021)	<a href="https://www.ssa.gov">Social Security Office</a>
Percent of Households Earning Less Than 30% of Median Income	21.5% (2022)	U.S. Census

St. Louis County Housing		
Characteristic	Data	Source
Fair Market Rent	\$818 (2023)	<a href="https://www.hud.gov">HUD.gov</a>
Home Ownership Rates	49.30242 (2021)	<a href="https://fred.stlouisfed.org/">FRED</a>
Foreclosure Rate	4,066 (properties) 46% increase from 2021	ATTOM Data U.S. Foreclosures
Utility Costs	\$436 Monthly (2018)	<a href="https://www.hud.gov">How much</a>
Median Rent/Mortgage Cost	\$1,200 (July 2023)	
Homeless Rate	2.7% (2022)	<a href="https://www.hudexchange.info/">Hudexchange</a>
Low Income Housing Availability (HUD, Section 8, PHA)	Households >30% AMI (Area Median Income) need an additional 34,000	HUD (2020)
Average Household Size	2.38 (2017 - 2021)	<a href="https://www.census.gov">Census.gov</a>
Vacancy Rates	7.1 (March 2023)	<a href="https://fred.stlouisfed.org/">FRED</a>
Overcrowded Rates	2.1% (2017 - 2021)	<a href="https://www.thinkhealthstlouis.org/">Think Health St Louis</a>
Monthly Housing Costs	Monthly Housing Costs \$1,448 (STL Metro Area)	Redfin

St. Louis County Health		
Characteristic	County-Level Data	Source
Food Affordability	↑ 1.3% (June 2023)	<a href="https://www.bls.gov">bls.gov</a>
Percent of Individuals Who are Food Uncertain	9.8% (2020)	<a href="#">Think Health St Louis</a>
Percent of Individuals Who are Uninsured	13.90% (2019)	<a href="https://www.census.gov">Census.gov</a>
Ratio of Mental Health Providers to Population	340 providers/100,000 population (2022)	<a href="#">Think Health St Louis</a>
Food Insecurity by Household	11.7% (2017-2019)	<a href="https://www.frac.org">frac.org</a>
Infant Death Rate	6.6 deaths/ 1,000 live births (2009-2019)	<a href="#">Think Health St Louis</a>

Percentage of Insured by Type 2019

Source: American Community Survey

All Income Level	19.30%
At or below 138% of Poverty	30.80%
At or below 200% of Poverty	29%
At or below 250% of Poverty	27.50%
At or below 400% of Poverty	23.80%
Between 138% and 400% of poverty	18.10%



St. Louis County Poverty Data

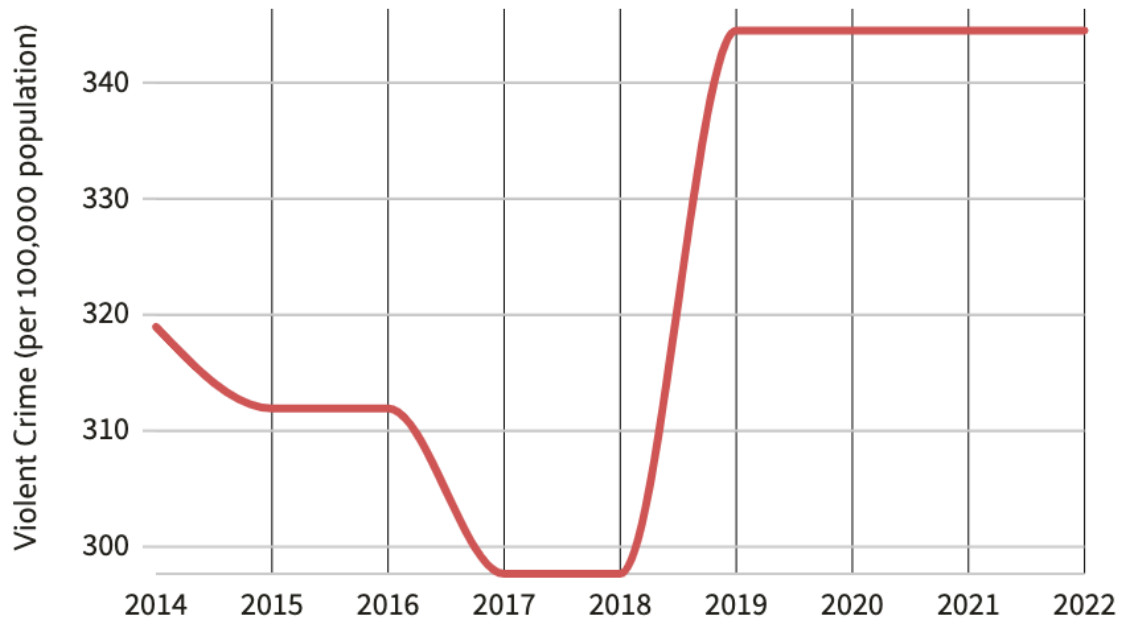
Category	Sex	Source
White	Male: 11.9% Female: 16.7%	U.S. Census Bureau
Black	Male: 14.5% Female: 20.1%	U.S. Census Bureau
Native American	Male: 0.117% Female: 0.373%	U.S. Census Bureau
Asian	Male: 1.3% Female: 1.22%	U.S. Census Bureau
Other	Male: 0.522% Female: 0.655%	U.S. Census Bureau
Two Or More	Male: 1.42% Female:1.22%	U.S. Census Bureau
White Non- Hispanic	Male: 11.3% Female:15.8%	U.S. Census Bureau
Hispanic	Male: 1.36% Female:1.46%	U.S. Census Bureau

St. Louis County Multiple Domains

Category	County-Level Data	Source
Percent of Households with No Motor Vehicle	18.6% (2017 - 2021)	<a href="#">Think Health St Louis</a>
Total Households	412,858 (2017 - 2021)	<a href="#">Census.gov</a>
Households Receiving Food Stamps	108,174 (December 2022)	<a href="#">FRED</a>
Number of Licensed Child Care Facilities	352 (2022)	Missouri Department of Social Services - Children's Division Early Childhood and Prevention Services Section
Percent of People without Internet	37.3% (2016)	<a href="#">stlouis-mo.gov</a>

Veterans Demographics (State of Missouri)	
Source: <a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau</a> / <a href="#">Veterans Data info</a>	
Percent female	6.3%
Unemployment rate for veterans	5.7%
Number of homeless veterans	652
Population	377,127
Veteran occupied homes	242,373
Home ownership	78.1%

Violent Crime Rate in St. Louis County (Source: County Health Rankings)

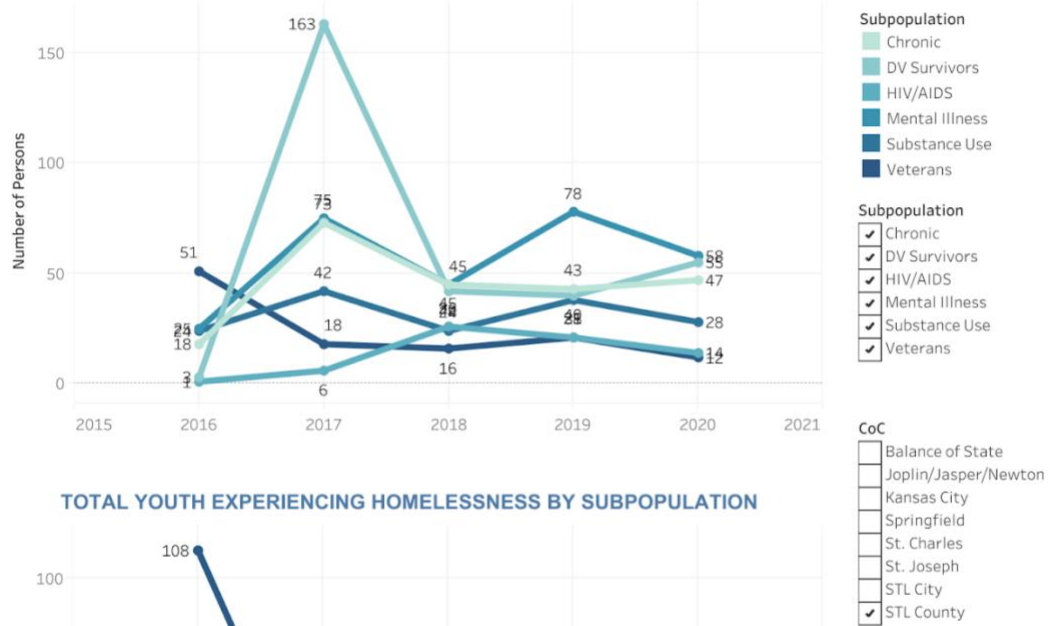


# Total Persons Experiencing Homelessness (Source: MHDC)

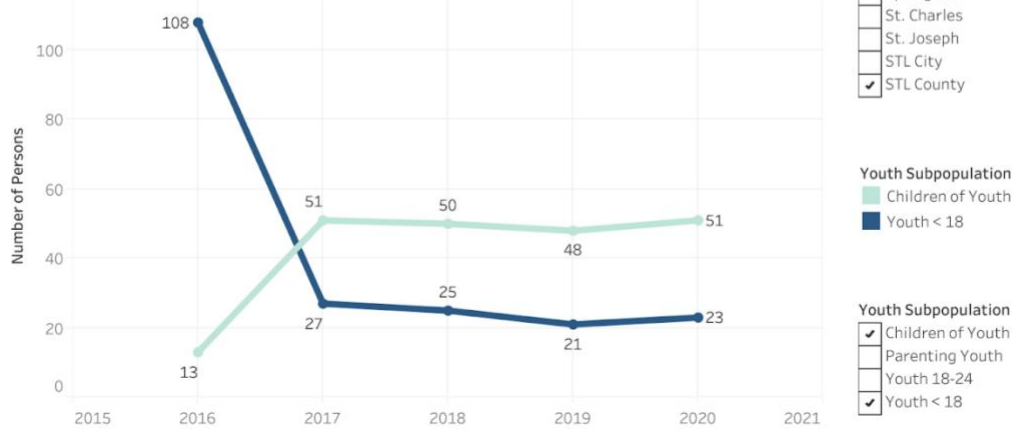
## TOTAL PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Overview	Gender	Race & Ethnicity	Subpopulation
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### TOTAL INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SUBPOPULATION



### TOTAL YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SUBPOPULATION



CAASTLC In Action





