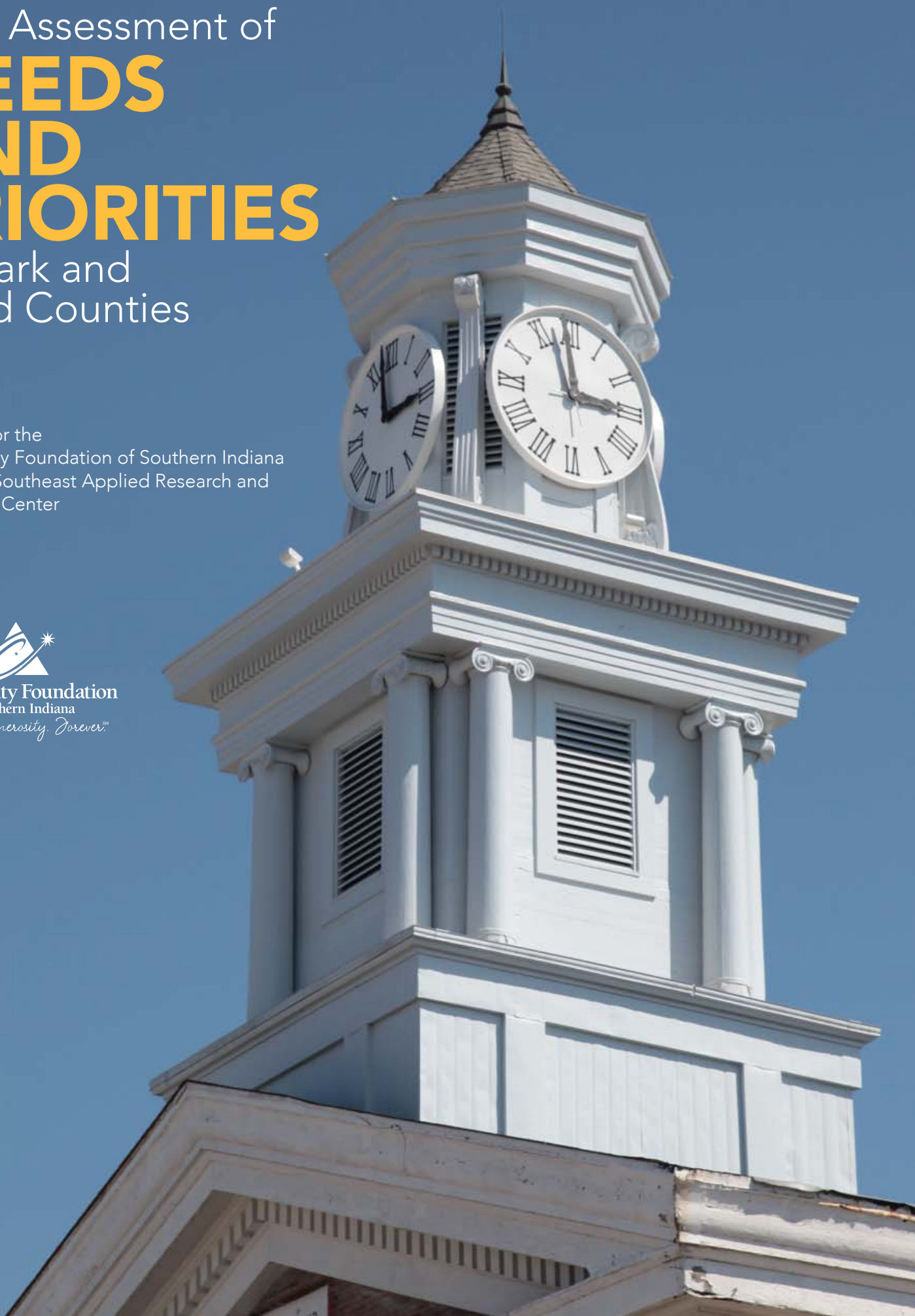


2015 Assessment of **NEEDS AND PRIORITIES** in Clark and Floyd Counties

A report for the
Community Foundation of Southern Indiana
by the IU Southeast Applied Research and
Education Center



Community Foundation
of Southern Indiana
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APPLIED RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTHEAST

Director: Dr. Melissa S. Fry
Operations Specialist: Debra Voyles
Research Associate: Angela Leonard
Research Assistants: Aubrey Garman, Jeffry Gunter, Hannah Gillespie
Applied Research and Education Center
4201 Grant Line Road New Albany, IN 47122 812.941.2323

With research contributions from students enrolled in The Community Fall 2014:
Kelsey Adkins, Amanda Alexander, Kevin Blalock, Isaiah Bowling, Tayler Brown, Ryan Collins, Kelsey Combs,
Megan Forman, Hillary Geswein, Magen Gulliver, Megan Gusler, Megan Hannel, Aysia Hogle, Shannon Kidd,
Morgan McNelly, Djulietta Mehic, Evan Mix, Jonathan Mulinda, Lisa Parsons, Jasmine Riddlespriger,
Courtney Samuels, Kelvin Smith, Marcie Smith, Rayann Spicer, Ariel Temples, Kaile Thompson, and Carolyn Zipp

And from Sociology Senior Seminar students, Spring 2015:
McKenzie Acuff, Kevin Blalock, Megan Hannel, Brenton Lagowski, Abrielle Linton, Thuy Nguyen, Jessica Schreck,
Lauren Smith, and Chris Tivnan

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The AREC provides research, consulting and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations, foundations,
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projects as it actively engages every stage of each community-based project. The AREC combines learning, teaching
and doing to support and empower community organizations in the IU Southeast service region.



Ashland Park, Clarksville, Indiana

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Executive Summary

The Community Foundation of Southern Indiana surveyed Clark and Floyd county residents, nonprofit community service organizations, business and community leaders, and their own fund holders to develop strategic community goals based on needs and priorities. Respondents shared that they are proud of their community, its history and culture; they feel safe and enjoy opportunities to engage in the community; and they want more to be done to better meet the needs of local residents and build an educated workforce and a strong economy. Responses indicate the following broad community goals:

- Meet the basic needs of community members, particularly the homeless and the mentally ill.
- Build a qualified work force to attract good jobs by supporting education and enrichment across the life course.
- Sustainably develop the economy to provide meaningful work and broadly shared economic security through living wage jobs and a clean and safe environment.

These broad goals reflect both priorities and needs and identify areas in which people indicated the community is not doing very well or about which respondents expressed negative sentiments.

In addition to these broad goals, respondents repeatedly indicated overlapping needs and priorities in transportation, child care, and substance abuse treatment across different topics, from economic concerns to healthful living.

PRIORITIES

Priorities tend to be things that people value and think are important. The community's shared values may lead to very effective efforts to meet needs or provide a valued resource to the area. But in many cases, people identify priorities in areas that they value and that are not adequately addressed in the community. The combination of prioritization and assessment of performance provides a measure of where the community would like to invest time, effort and resources and some indication of what they would like to achieve as a result of those investments.

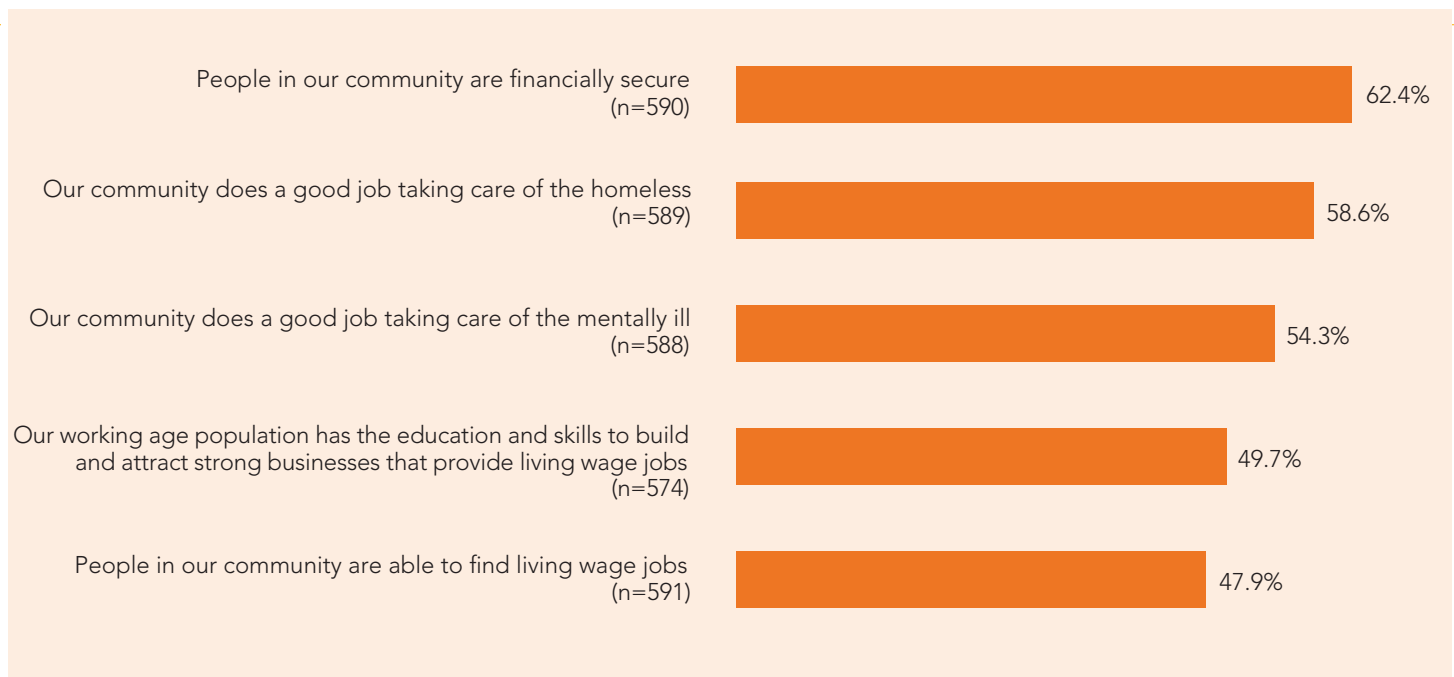
The survey required people to prioritize across several broad areas: sense of community, meeting basic needs, education, the economy, the environment, health and wellness, relationships, recreation, community pride and identity, and arts and entertainment.

The assessment instrument required respondents to choose five of 11 broad areas covered on the survey as priorities—issues or opportunities that people think are important or highly valued. The top priority areas were determined based on the number of respondents that included the item in their top five (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Priorities Across All Areas (n=604)



Figure 2: Overall Needs Across All Assessed Areas (Percent that **Disagree** with the Statement)



Priority lists within a service area included more specific needs within each sector. For example, the topic of meeting basic needs included food pantries, hot meals, clothing distribution, emergency shelter, supportive housing and day shelter. In addition to basic needs, the survey assessed priorities for engagement and relationship building; economic development; healthful living; and education.

NEEDS AND STRENGTHS

Respondents indicated whether or not they thought the community was doing well in providing particular types of programs and services and generating positive community experiences and sentiments.

Needs are areas where a large share of respondents indicate that the community is not doing very well. The top five overall needs are those items where the largest number of respondents indicate that they do not think the community provides enough support or service or are community attributes where they indicate the region falls short (Figure 2).

All of the top five needs also emerged as priorities which means that residents value the community's ability to respond more effectively to those needs. In some areas, respondents did not feel the community was falling short, but public data indicate that the area is, in fact, not performing well. For example, respondents repeatedly prioritized clean air, water and environment, but did not indicate that the community is not doing well in this area.

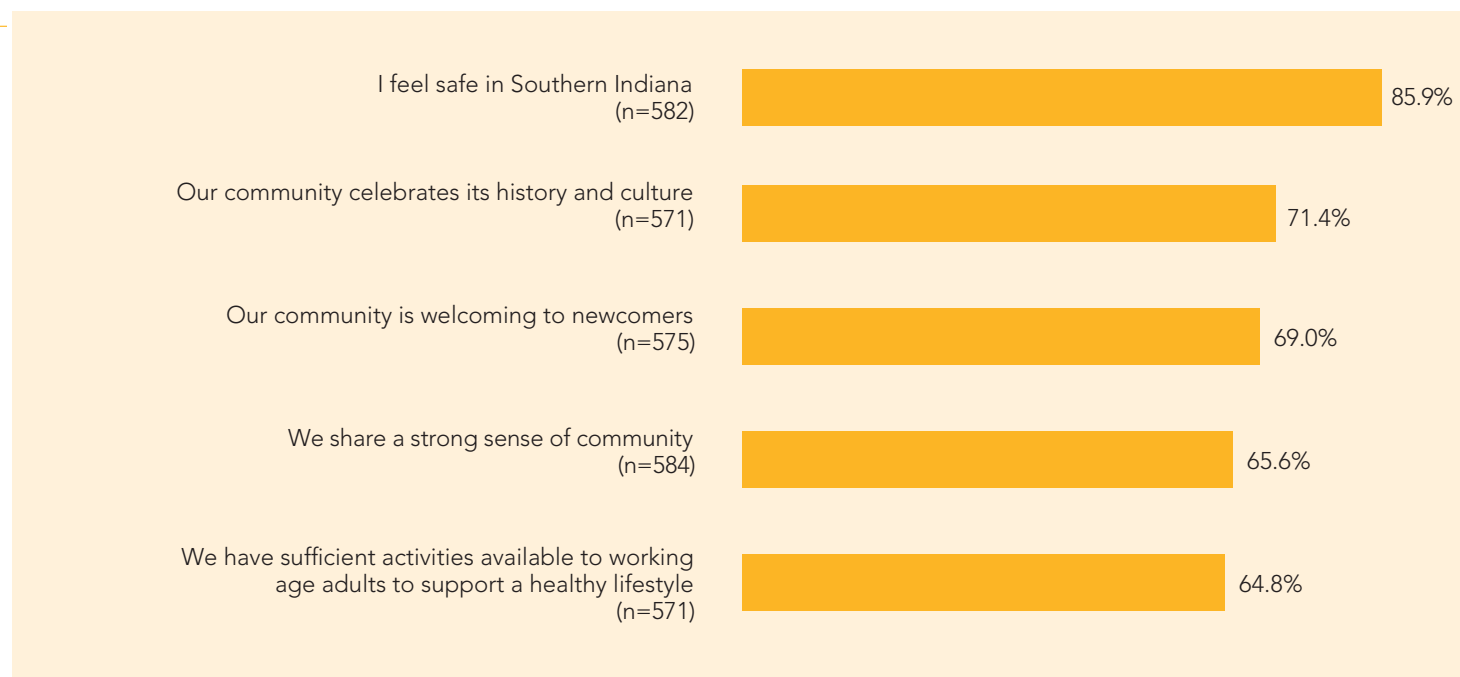
Public data, however, indicates that more needs to be done. Items like these were incorporated into the broad community goals.

Strengths are those areas where the majority of survey respondents indicate they think the community performs well. Southern Indiana's greatest strength lies in strong social ties and a sense of shared identity (Figure 3). The top priority item was also identified as the top strength: people prioritize safety, security and civility and they feel safe in Southern Indiana. Strengths are the community's assets and may be used to better address priorities and needs in order to reach community goals.

IMPLICATIONS

Respondents in Clark and Floyd counties have concerns about financial security and recognize that the quality of the local workforce is essential to attracting and building living wage jobs and a healthy economy. Respondents believe that more needs to be done to address homelessness, mental health and substance abuse. Findings indicate that people value clean water, air quality and access to fresh local food and some have strong concerns about the area's struggle with pollution. Many indicate that transportation and child care are essential to meeting the needs of families and workers and developing tomorrow's high quality labor force.

Figure 3: Overall Strengths Across All Assessed Areas (Percent that **Agree** with the Statement)



Amid these needs, residents report strong pride of place, shared identity and culture and ample opportunities to build relationships with one another. The strength of the community provides a firm foundation upon which to build efforts to address areas of concern.

Building a strong and resilient Southern Indiana community will require:

- Support for the community services system that prevents and responds to housing, mental health and substance abuse issues.
- Investment in education and workforce development.
- Environmental clean-up, and sustainable development strategies.
- Building and attracting good jobs to ensure more widespread financial security.

Responding to priority needs will require commitment and resources from local, state and federal governments, investment from local, regional and national foundations, and coordination and communication across nonprofit, for-profit and public sectors.

BASIC NEEDS

Meeting the basic needs of all community members supports quality of life in the region. According to survey responses, Clark and Floyd counties are home to active faith-based communities and nonprofit organizations that do a good job making sure those in need are fed and caring for the developmentally disabled. Across income groups and

respondent categories, people want to see the community do a better job responding to homelessness through food pantries, providing shelter, increasing the supply of affordable housing and helping people return to paid work. Community members recognize that behavioral health services that treat mental illness and addiction will be essential to preventing and responding to homelessness and instability in the community.

Nonprofit organizations indicate gaps in services and funding in the following areas:

- Coordination of services to prevent and respond to homelessness.
- Behavioral health services for the treatment of mental illness and substance abuse.
- Supportive housing for the mentally ill and disabled.

Local government, nonprofit agencies and private investors may be able to collaborate in responding to basic needs in the community. Possible ways to address these needs may include the following:

- Bring together for-profit and non-profit developers, builders, real estate professionals and those working in public housing and community services to identify opportunities to better match rental housing costs to area income levels and provide support services for those who need assistance to remain housed.
- Continue to support food and clothing programs and coordination of those efforts to ensure that community-wide needs are met.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A high quality educated workforce can build, attract and maintain sustainable economic development. Business and community leaders share strong concerns about the quality of the local labor force in Clark and Floyd counties and all respondent groups see education as a high priority.

From early childhood education and care through higher education and workforce re-training, the community needs to do more. The primary objective is to increase educational attainment among working age adults for those already in the labor force and for future generations of workers.

Increasing educational attainment will require public and private investment in educational institutions, enrichment programs and support services that allow people to succeed in education and training programs.

Some ways for public and private investments and efforts to improve educational attainment and workforce development might include the following:

- Support programs that prevent high school drop outs.
- Support for child care providers to increase their Paths to Quality Rating (the state of Indiana's quality rating system for childcare providers).
- Support for enrollment of low-income children in high quality early childhood education and care programs.
- Attention to child care transportation, which is often a barrier to accessing quality care.
- Increase awareness of and support for programming for children and youth from child care through 12th grade: afterschool programs, opportunities for educational enrichment beyond the school day, and quality non-academic youth programming.
- Increase educational attainment among working age adults and youth.
- Support many pathways to success by providing information and encouragement for pursuit of skills training, trade schools, and college.
- Provide financial assistance for adult education, trade schools, and higher education (certificates, associate's and bachelor's programs).
- Increase awareness of the importance of higher education to economic prosperity in the 21st century.
- Advocate for support of higher education that eases the cost burden on resident students so they can focus on their studies and complete associate's, bachelor's and graduate degrees without significant debt.

- Continue to support Education Matters Southern Indiana and 55,000 Degrees' efforts to increase educational attainment in the region and work with those programs to ensure that energy is directed both to associate's degrees and certificates and to bachelor's degrees.

HEALTHFUL LIVING

Healthful living results from a combination of behavioral, programmatic and environmental factors. Air and water quality are essential to the health and well-being of residents. Opportunities to engage in physical activity are abundant throughout the two county region, but health behaviors leave many in the community suffering from chronic illness and obesity. Low leisure time activity rates, smoking and poor air quality combined contribute to the three leading causes of death in the community: heart disease, cancer and lower respiratory disorders. Community members see environmental quality, access to fresh local produce, recreational spaces, health and wellness education and programs for youth as top priorities.

Public policy, public and private investment, education and nonprofit programming all have roles to play in promoting healthful living. Efforts might include the following:

- Public regulation and private investment may converge in efforts to improve air quality and clean up local streams and rivers.
- Private innovation may be partially funded by public dollars available for brownfield redevelopment to clean up industrial waste and make way for sustainable development throughout Clark and Floyd counties.
- Public, private and philanthropic investments can support the creation and maintenance of recreational space, including bike lanes and paths, parks and indoor recreational facilities. Residents can utilize these spaces to build community around healthy active lifestyles.
- Nonprofit organizations and public schools will need public and philanthropic support to develop, implement, and expand strong programs to educate youth on health and wellness and engage them in physical activities.
- Public transportation routes and schedules should support access to full-service grocery stores, farmers' markets, physical activity and recreation.

ECONOMY

A strong economy is essential to quality of life and creating opportunities for all community members to thrive. Clark and Floyd counties need to build, attract and maintain quality businesses and a qualified local labor force to provide better jobs and a stronger local economy.



Sherman Minton Bridge, New Albany, Indiana

Economic development and environmental concerns may be addressed jointly through sustainable development strategies that create economic opportunities and support healthy air, water and food.

Public policies and institutions, private enterprise and innovation, and the nonprofit sector all have roles to play to ensure that market growth reaches all portions of the community. Efforts to improve economic security and develop a sustainable economy may include:

- Public and philanthropic support for local entrepreneurship and small business development.
- Increasing availability, reliability and use of public transportation through public investment and potential partnerships with the area's largest employers.
- Increasing access to affordable rental housing through cross sector coordination to increase the supply of safe housing provided at prices that match income levels in the community.
- Attracting socially and environmentally responsible and sustainable businesses to the region. The region may build economic opportunity out of the region's need to restore air and water quality and remediate brownfield sites.
- Encouraging fresh local food production and improved distribution through farmers' markets and relationships between local grocers, schools and area farmers.
- Attracting and recruiting diverse businesses that provide living wage jobs and opportunities for advancement to support a strong middle class.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Art and cultural activities and opportunities generate community identity, contribute to quality of life and foster creativity in youth. Area residents feel reasonably good about what is available in Southern Indiana, but see opportunities for growth and improvement.

Respondents recognize that income may be a barrier to engagement with and enjoyment of arts and culture. They would like to see a wider variety of art and cultural

activities and believe there is potential to attract visitors to the area to enjoy these amenities. Increasing opportunities for creative self-expression across the life course will improve quality of life and contribute to a more vibrant community.

Public policies and investments to support arts in schools and communities, nonprofit programming, and private enterprises all play a role in developing a rich landscape of local art and culture. Efforts to improve access and enjoyment of arts and culture, art and cultural education, nurture creative expression and boost economic development may include the following activities:

- Identify, promote and support making the arts more accessible to low-to-moderate income people.
- Public and private investment and support for the development of new and varied art and cultural activities in the region.
- Develop and promote arts and culture in ways that attract more visitors to the area and use those opportunities to showcase other local amenities by supporting efforts that cross-promote arts, culture and local shopping, restaurants or the farmers' markets.
- Target youth for attendance at performances and tie those experiences to active, hands-on opportunities for children to express themselves.
- Advocate for and support strong field trip programming that provides opportunities for all children, regardless of income, to learn about the history and culture of the region and be exposed to the performing arts through engaging and memorable experiences.
- Promote opportunities for adults to engage in creative self-expression.

COMMUNITY

Clark and Floyd counties enjoy a strong sense of community, pride of place and shared identity rooted in celebration of the region's history and culture. People generally believe the community is welcoming to newcomers and offers diverse opportunities to build relationships.

Fostering community among youth, in neighborhoods and among senior citizens are all top priorities. In some areas, new programs may be warranted, but increasing engagement with existing neighborhood, youth development and mentoring programs is a first step to ensuring that area residents build strong community ties from youth to old age. Nonprofit organizations note that they struggle to get the word out about their programs and are sometimes unable to attract target audiences.

Nonprofit voluntary associations and service organizations play the largest role in building community, but they also rely on support from local businesses and governments in order to fund activities. Responses indicate the following strategies may foster community engagement across the life course:

- Funding to nonprofit organizations for communications and marketing staff.
- Support to more effectively advertise programs to target populations—funding for targeted outreach and promotion of existing programs.
- Improved information, coordination and referral to ensure that available programs are fully utilized and to better understand full demand for existing programs.
- Build better systems for tracking unmet needs.
- Increase access to transportation to support youth and adult engagement in existing programs.
- Support neighborhood events and activities.
- Support the development and implementation of diverse programs to provide opportunities for senior citizens to engage in group activities.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION—MEETING NEEDS ACROSS SECTORS

Public transportation was not addressed by the core questions of the survey, but respondents commented on the need for more and better public transportation in response to basic needs, economic development, and in discussing barriers to future success in the region.

Public and/or program transportation can remove barriers to program participation among youth and adults and improve employment stability and air quality.

Public transportation is an area where the market falls short because those who need it most cannot cover the costs of providing effective public transportation. In addition, in a culture of drivers, shifting public behavior in ways that can increase demand and better cover the expense will require significant time, effort and money. Some places to begin to shift investments and behavior include the following:

- Increase use of available public transportation through improved service, incentives and promotion.
- Educate the public on advantages of public transportation to workers and potential impacts on air quality.
- Advocate for improved public transportation for Southern Indiana—target advocacy to Federal and State Departments of Transportation, Transportation Authority of River City, the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency and local municipalities.

- Procure additional funding for transportation in grants to local programs that address priority areas that need attention: services for the homeless and mentally ill, after school programs, workforce development, adult education programs, child care facilities and youth development programs.

CHALLENGES

The survey did not ask any questions about local government or local leadership. The assessment did, however, elicit comments about potential barriers to success for the region and the responses were consistent across all respondent groups. People in Clark and Floyd counties share a perception that the area's greatest barrier to success lies with ineffective leadership. Respondents cited regional divisions, lack of cooperation, lack of vision and local politics.

In a community with strong social capital and shared priorities, these barriers are surmountable through community effort and public pressure to change patterns of governance and styles of leadership. Clark and Floyd county residents value civility and want to see the area move beyond polarized politics, division within and among area communities, and local power struggles that hinder effectiveness.

CONCLUSIONS

Clark and Floyd counties are good places to live where people welcome newcomers and enjoy a sense of shared identity and culture. People feel safe and connected to others in the community and they value civility and want to see the regional community work together to build prosperity and strong quality of place.

For those who live and work in this region, achieving quality of place will mean improving services that meet basic needs for vulnerable populations, improving education to build a qualified labor force, and developing a sustainable economy that provides living wage jobs and a clean and safe environment.

Clark and Floyd counties have many strong community attributes to build on and use in responding to areas of need. The Community Foundation of Southern Indiana's *2015 Assessment of Needs and Priorities in Clark and Floyd Counties* provides a guide to the area's shared priorities and needs. With a strong sense of social connection, the community can overcome barriers, invest in addressing priorities that need attention, and build strong quality of life for the future.

Introduction

Assessing needs and setting priorities is essential to moving forward in the decade ahead. The Community Foundation of Southern Indiana sought public input on the community's highest priorities and greatest areas of need. Current public data on areas of interest combined with findings from a survey of residents, nonprofit executives, business and community leaders, and Community Foundation fund holders provides a snapshot of current conditions and perceptions as well as a guide to local priorities and needs, and the assets the region can build on to reach the area's shared goals.

ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Community Needs Assessment design process began with a scan of public data on the region and informal interviews with community service providers, environmental experts, business owners, teachers, and artists to better understand the issues that emerged in the data profile and to draft an assessment instrument that covered locally relevant issues.

The research team and Community Foundation's needs assessment committee used profile and interview data to design a list of core items and questions for all respondents. The Foundation asked additional questions specific to the nonprofit sector, business and community leaders, and Community Foundation fund holders. The result was four distinct surveys with an overlapping core of more than 42 items.

Items assessed needs and strengths in the areas of basic needs, education and workforce development, healthful living, the economy, arts and culture, and community engagement. Nonprofit executives responded to a series of questions about needs, gaps, and overlaps in the nonprofit community service sector. Business and community leaders reflected on what it takes to build, attract and maintain a highly qualified workforce and good jobs that pay living wages. Fund holders provided their perspectives on philanthropic priorities. Dividing the surveys by respondent group also allowed the research team to examine how different social locations and community roles shape perceptions of area needs and priorities.

A total of 650 surveys were returned, providing a large enough sample to accurately capture the views and needs of Clark and Floyd counties. Responses included: 391 resident surveys, 155 business and community leader surveys, 68 nonprofit organization surveys, and 36 fundholder and donor surveys. For more information on the responses and survey, please visit www.cfsouthernindiana.com/cna.

PRIORITIES – NEEDS – STRENGTHS

Priorities tend to be things that people value and think are important. The community's shared values may lead to very effective efforts to meet needs or provide a valued resource to the area. This means that some priority areas may not need more attention than what they currently receive. But in many cases, people identify priorities in areas that they value and that are not adequately addressed in their community. The Assessment of Community Needs and Priorities combines prioritization and assessment of performance to provide a clearer sense of where the community would like to invest additional time, effort and resources.

The assessment instrument requires respondents to choose five of 11 broad areas covered on the survey as priorities—issues or opportunities that people think are important or highly valued. The top priority areas are based on the number of respondents that included the item in their top five (Figure 1, Page 4) and are as follows:

Top Priority Areas

1. Safety, security and civility
2. Meeting the basic needs of our community members
3. Opportunities for education and enrichment across the life course
4. Clean and safe environment
5. Meaningful work and broadly shared economic security

In some areas where many activities or institutions may compete for attention and investment, the assessment asks respondents to prioritize particular programs and services. These areas include: basic needs, education, healthful living, economic development, engagement and relationship building (community).

Needs are those areas where the largest number of respondents indicate that the community does not perform well. In these cases, respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with statements about community performance, sentiments about the region or experiences living in Clark and Floyd counties (Figure 2, Page 5). The assessment also draws on public data for more objective measures of needs and strengths. The top five most identified needs include:

Top Needs

1. Financial security
2. Care for the homeless
3. Care for the mentally ill
4. Education and skills to build and attract strong businesses that provide living wage jobs
5. Living wage jobs

Strengths are those areas where the largest number of survey respondents indicate they think our community performs well. The survey provides statements about available programs and services or sentiments about the area. When respondents agree with those statements, they indicate that we do well in those areas. Items where a large portion of respondents agree are seen as strengths and do not appear in the list of broad goals for addressing priority needs. The following areas are the community's strongest overall assets and may be used to better address priorities and needs: (Figure 3, Page 6).

Community Assets

1. Safety
2. Celebration of history and culture
3. Welcoming to newcomers.
4. Strong sense of community
5. Activities for working age adults to support a healthy lifestyle

The three overall goals bring together the top priorities that need more attention. These goals reflect the highest overall priorities combined with those areas where the largest number of respondents indicated the community does not perform well. They are a synthesis of several survey items, including open-ended comments provided by respondents (Figure 4).

The language of these items intentionally covers several items found in the lists of top priorities and needs because they reflect the combination of responses. To help community members understand how the research team arrived at these priorities, data on priorities, needs and strengths are provided in text and graphics that illustrate community perceptions and values in each area of interest.

Figure 4: Three Overall Community Goals Generated by Responses

- Meet the basic needs of community members, particularly the homeless and the mentally ill.
- Build a qualified work force to attract good jobs by supporting education and enrichment across the life course.
- Sustainably develop the economy to provide meaningful work and broadly shared economic security through living wage jobs and a clean and safe environment.



Downtown Jeffersonville, Indiana

MOVING FORWARD

The first section of the report provides a regional overview of demographic characteristics shaping the local context. The overview includes attention to population size, the urban rural mix, racial and ethnic characteristics, and a broad description of the local economy.

The sections of the report that follow the regional overview cover the substantive areas addressed by the needs assessment. Each section opens with top identified priorities in the sector and a community profile comprised of public data on the topic for Clark and Floyd counties. These data provide objective measures and reference points for understanding how Clark and Floyd counties are performing in each substantive area. Following the community profile, data from the Assessment of Community Needs and Priorities are presented in the “Priorities - Needs - Strengths” section. These data reflect respondents’ perceptions.

Data from the community profiles combined with respondents’ assessments of priorities, needs and strengths, are combined in “recommendations” for community action and development in each of the sectors. Recommendations are starting points for conversation and reflect the need for government agencies, nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and residents to participate in supporting community success.

Regional Overview

Clark and Floyd counties comprise an interesting mix of small town rural community and more densely populated metropolitan suburbs. Home to roughly 190,000 residents (Figure 5), the area has substantially higher population density than the state as a whole (Figure 6). While farmland and rural community mark large portions of Clark County and remain an element of the Floyd County landscape, just over 20% of the population in each county lives in a rural area (Figure 7).

The more populous communities of Jeffersonville, Clarksville and New Albany experience both the vibrancy and the challenge of urban living. The region is one where the outcomes of latest revisions to the Farm Bill are important at the same time that new models for complete streets and mixed use urban neighborhoods are up for debate. This mix is both an asset to the area's culture and a challenge to decision-making around resources and planning. The two-county region is predominately white, but has recently seen pronounced growth in its Latino population. Clark County, with a larger population, is slightly more diverse than Floyd County. Clark County's population is 84.6% White, 7.3% Black and 5.1% Hispanic, while Floyd County is 88.8% White, 5.3% Black and 2.9% Hispanic.¹ The landscape is marked by racial, ethnic and economic segregation and this is reflected in the composition of the schools.

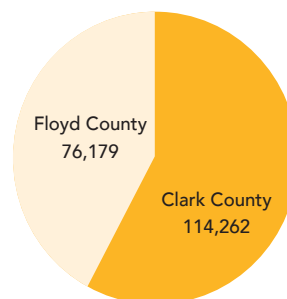
Clark and Floyd counties use a magnet school system to meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL), the largest group of which are Hispanic. This means they intentionally place students that need ELL services in one school at each level in the district and they direct the district's resources for those services to those magnet schools. Magnet schools are generally a good way to utilize scarce resources to meet the needs of a new student population, but an unintended consequence of these policies is ethnic residential segregation.

The neighborhoods in close proximity to the magnet elementary schools have seen their Hispanic populations grow dramatically in the last fifteen years. In addition, Black residents tend to be clustered in those schools that serve the denser communities of New Albany and Jeffersonville. This clustering is closely tied to the way that race and class intersect in these communities and concentrate Black residents in low-income neighborhoods.

Neighborhood patterns are most closely reflected in elementary school demographics and broader inequalities across larger areas show up in high school demographics (Figure 8). Black students comprise 39.1% of the student

body at Spring Hill Elementary (Clark) compared to none of the student body at William W. Borden Elementary (Clark) and less than five percent at nine other elementary schools in Clark and Floyd counties (particularly more rural schools). At the high school level, Black students comprise 34.3% of the student population at Clark County Middle/High School, 17.1% at Jeffersonville High School (Clark) and 12.9% at New Albany High School (Floyd) compared to 0.6% at Silver Creek High School (Clark), 0.7% at Floyd Central (Floyd) and 1.9% at Charlestown High School (Clark), and there were no Black students reported at New Washington Middle/High School or William W. Borden High School (both in Clark County) in 2015 (though nine and six students were recorded, respectively, as multiracial).

Figure 5: Population, 2014



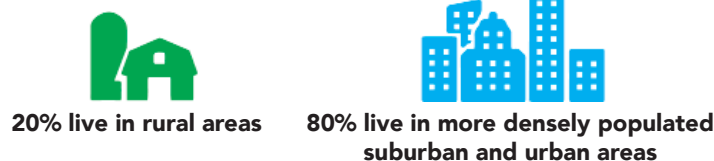
Total = 190,441

Figure 6: Land Area and Population Density

	Clark County	Floyd County	Indiana
Land area in square miles, 2010	372.9	147.9	35,826
Persons per square mile, 2010	295.6	504.1	181

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Quickfacts. Clark County, IN and Floyd County, IN, 2010

Figure 7: Rural, Suburban and Urban



Source for population and rural statistics: U.S. Census Bureau. Quickfacts. Clark County, IN and Floyd County, IN, 2010.

Hispanics comprise 51.5% of the Parkwood Elementary (Clark) student body compared to only 6.1% at Slate Run Elementary (Floyd) and less than two percent at Georgetown (Floyd), William W. Borden (Clark), and Henryville (Clark) elementary schools. At the high school level, Hispanic students comprise 10.0% of Jeffersonville High School students, 9.8% of Charlestown High School, and less than two percent of students at Henryville, New Washington, and Floyd Central high schools (all Clark County Schools except Floyd Central, Figure 8).

The percent of students receiving free or reduced price lunches ranges from 16.6% at Floyds Knobs Elementary to 91.8% at Spring Hill Elementary. The high schools range from 14.3% at Floyd Central to 67.6% at Clark County Middle/High School. Floyd Central is an outlier with the next lowest rate at Silver Creek High School with 28.3% (double the rate at Floyd Central). Dramatic differences across schools reflect significant economic inequality.

As with the rest of the country, the population is aging. Nearly 14 percent of the population is over age 65 and that figure is expected to increase in the next 10 to 15 years as the Baby Boomers age and birth rates continue to stagnate or decline. The aging community, particularly among rural residents, will need opportunities for community engagement and healthful living as they move into retirement and live longer than previous generations.

Historically, Southern Indiana has built its economy on manufacturing. The post-industrial era hurt local economies as mechanization reduced demand for human labor and jobs shifted to cheaper labor markets in Southeast Asia and the global south. The rise of a service and knowledge-based economy left areas with relatively low educational attainment behind. Recent years have seen a renaissance of sorts in the downtown areas of Jeffersonville and New Albany as small local businesses generate activity buttressed in New Albany by the YMCA and several high quality restaurants, and in Jeffersonville, most recently by the opening of the Big 4 Bridge. Proximity to Louisville, paired with strong schools and an affordable market for middle class homebuyers, attracts Louisville commuters to the Indiana side of the Ohio River.

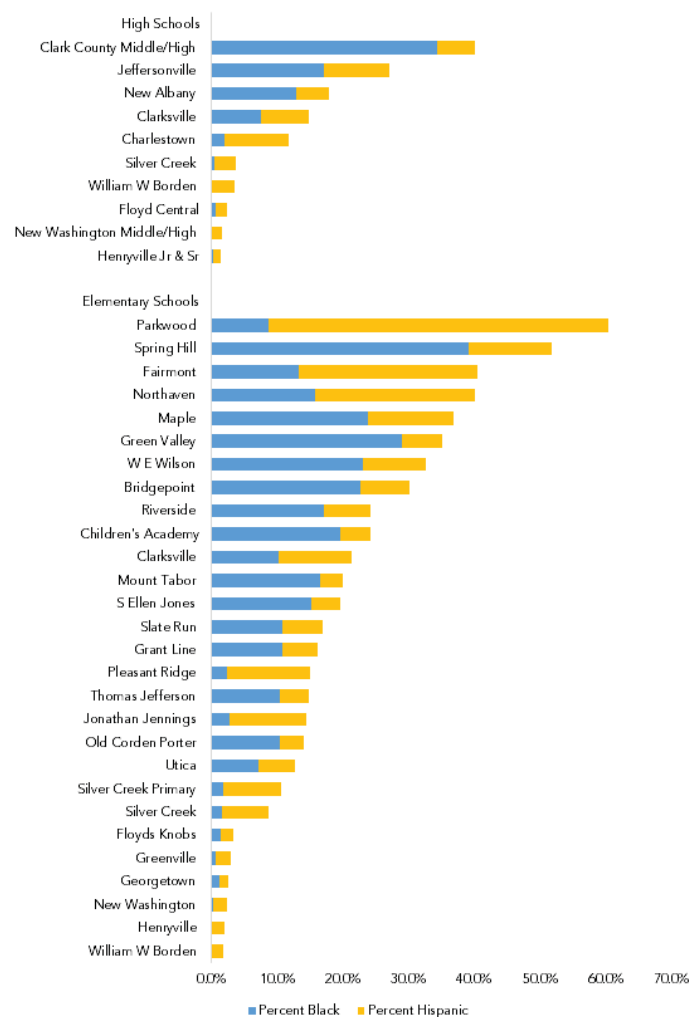
Industrial development in both counties seeks to attract new manufacturing and logistics operations to the area. Completion of the East End Bridge is expected to bring significant population growth to Clark County and efforts to connect Indiana waterfront recreation and community development to the larger Metro community on the

Kentucky side of the river continue to advance. These projects have the potential to drive social and economic change for decades to come.

As the community grows and evolves, assessing priorities and understanding perceptions of local strengths and needs can be a powerful planning tool. Southern Indiana has an opportunity to greet these changes proactively and create new possibilities for prosperity and quality of life.

The remainder of this report profiles aspects of the community and takes a closer look at community perceptions of priorities, strengths and needs in the following areas: Basic Needs, Education and Workforce Development, Healthful Living, the Economy, Arts and Culture, and Community.

Figure 8: Race and Ethnicity in the Schools



Source for race, ethnicity, and free and reduced lunch data: Indiana Department of Education. 2015. School enrollment by ethnicity and free/reduced meal status: <http://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/find-school-and-corporation-data-reports>.

Basic Needs

Priorities for Meeting Basic Human Needs in Southern Indiana

- 1 – Homeless shelter (including shelters for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, veterans, pregnant women families, and the general population)
- 2 – Assistance in finding or returning to paid work
- 3 – Affordable housing
- 4 – Food pantries
- 5 – Homeless shelter for children and youth

Basic human needs include food, clothing and shelter, but residents' ability to meet those needs is tied to other factors such as ability to maintain a paying job, pay utility bills and access affordable housing. The area has resources to help residents meet basic needs, but many continue to struggle.

FOOD, CLOTHING AND OTHER NEEDS

More than 26,000 people in Clark and Floyd counties are food insecure (Figure 9). Of those, an estimated 9,140 are children. The child food insecurity rate is estimated to be 20.3% in Clark County and 21.5% in Floyd County, with 33-38% of those children living in families not eligible for any public food assistance. An estimated 10,416 area residents (seven percent in Clark County and four percent in Floyd County) find it difficult to access healthy food because they do not live in close proximity to a full-service grocery store (Figure 9).²

Church networks in Clark and Floyd counties provide free hot meals every day of the week in each of the two

communities. New Albany's Hope Southern Indiana was established as Interfaith Community Council to consolidate food banks and provide additional gap filling services to those struggling to maintain housing and meet their basic needs. Similarly, the Center for Lay Ministries in Jeffersonville hosts a food bank, coordinates the meals program in concert with Exit 0, and also works with them to enlist churches to provide emergency shelter services when temperatures drop below 35 degrees in the winter.

Additional meal providers include the Community Kitchen and, until recently, Gilt Edge Baptist Church's King's Table. The Salvation Army distributes food through their Emergency Financial Assistance program in Clark and Floyd counties and a number of churches, the Center for Lay Ministries and Exit 0 provide clothes closets and food pantries for low-income and homeless individuals and families. New Hope Services provides additional gap-filling services through their offices in Jeffersonville.

SHELTER

Clark and Floyd counties attract homebuyers with more affordable housing than Louisville and other metro areas. But the rental market for low-income residents and housing for those who may need support services to remain stable in housing present challenges.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines "affordable" as housing costs (including utilities) that total no more than 30% of monthly income.³ A couple with two minimum wage jobs can just barely afford fair market rate (and this does not include utilities) for a two-bedroom apartment in the area (Figure 10). A single person has to earn \$10.10 per hour in order to be able to afford fair market rent for an efficiency or studio apartment, and a household must earn \$39,036 per year to make a three-bedroom apartment affordable (\$20.33 per hour for a single earner and still more than minimum wage for two earners). Roughly 1,168 low-income renters in Clark and Floyd counties are vulnerable to loss of housing, doubling up or

Figure 9: Food Security and Health

	Clark County	Floyd County	Indiana
Number Experiencing Food Insecurity	15,640	10,630	1,012,970
Percent Food Insecure	14.1%	14.2%	15.4%
Number with Limited Access to Healthy Food	7,316	3,100	409,497
Percent with Limited Access to Healthy Food	6.6%	4.2%	6.3%

Source: Feeding America. 2015. Map the Meal Gap 2015: Overall Food Insecurity in Indiana by County in 2013 (based on 2009 - 2013 ACS data); County Health Rankings. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data/IN>.

homelessness.⁴ New Albany has substantial public housing, but much of that stock is old and in need of replacement. Current efforts include participation in the state's Supportive Housing Institute with a plan to replace older housing units with a development that will provide public supportive housing. Supportive housing targets those individuals most difficult to house due to mental health and substance abuse issues, and provides support services to help them remain housed. The hope is that this development will help the community do a better job stabilizing those most difficult to house and will reduce shelter and street homeless populations.

The New Albany Housing Authority (NAHA) recently replaced some older units with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant units and continues to seek opportunities to replace old stock with new units suited to meet current needs. NAHA also offers a family self-sufficiency program that provides financial management classes, mentoring, support and guidance to help residents succeed, and a program for saving toward a down payment on a home. The program and the Authority are recognized as national models.

Jeffersonville Housing Authority and the smaller public housing developments in Charlestown and Sellersburg are also important resources for low-income renters, and they work in partnership with a wide range of service providers to meet support needs of their residents. But all, including NAHA, maintain nearly full occupancy and months long waiting lists.

Over the last five years, Point-In-Time (PIT) counts of the homeless in the two-county region documented between two and three hundred sheltered and unsheltered homeless, 15-20% of whom were children (Figure 11). These counts are conservative. They do not include individuals who may be homeless, but were in jail, in the hospital, at a Louisville shelter or in a rehab facility on the night of the count. They also do not include those who are staying with friends or family but do not have a place to call their own and those who simply chose not to participate in the count.

A few organizations currently provide emergency shelter for the homeless in Clark and Floyd counties.

- The Center for Women and Families has ten units for families leaving unsafe home environments.
- St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities provides emergency shelter to 10 to 12 pregnant women at a time and can accommodate one to two very young children for a pregnant mother who needs to stay at the shelter.
- Haven House's Williams Emergency Shelter provides general population shelter for this and surrounding areas. The facility is intended to house 50-60 residents, but has been overcrowded with census numbers ranging from 80 to more than 100 during the last two winters.
- Each county also has a youth shelter for adolescents under the age of 18.

Transitional and supportive housing are provided by St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, LifeSpring, and a handful of additional organizations provide halfway house and residential substance abuse recovery programs.

Figure 10: Housing Affordability in Clark and Floyd Counties

	Efficiency (Studio)	One Bedroom	Two Bedroom	Three Bedroom	Four Bedroom
FY 2014 Fair Market Rent (FMR)	\$485	\$567	\$705	\$976	\$1,104
Number of hours of minimum wage (\$7.25/hr.) work per week needed for this to be affordable (does not include utilities).	56	65	81	112	127
Hourly wage required for one income	\$10.10	\$11.81	\$14.69	\$20.33	\$23.00
Monthly income	\$1,617	\$1,890	\$2,350	\$3,253	\$3,680
Annual income	\$19,400	\$22,680	\$28,200	\$39,036	\$44,160

Source: Fair Market Rent Figures come from The Urban Institute. 2014. "Mapping America's Rental Housing Crisis." *Housing Assistance Matters Initiative*. Retrieved 4-2-15 (<http://urban.org/housingaffordability/>). Table taken from *Vision 2025: A Strategic Plan to End Homelessness in Clark and Floyd Counties*.

PRIORITIES – NEEDS – STRENGTHS

Among respondents, support for prioritizing homeless shelter for adults and families is overwhelming followed by assistance in finding or returning to paid work, affordable housing, food pantries and homeless shelters for children and youth.

The majority of respondents do not feel that our community does a good job taking care of the homeless (58.6%) and the mentally ill (54.3%)(Figure 12). These two issues are closely related as a portion of our street homeless and sheltered population suffers from mental illness. LifeSpring Health System recently secured funding for street outreach to the disabled homeless to address these concerns, but the funding is small and has mostly allowed providers to get a better sense of just how much more supportive housing the community needs. Only 16.8% of respondents did not include homeless shelter as a top three priority for meeting basic needs. The combination of priority and need places services for the homeless and the mentally ill among the top three areas of concern for the community.

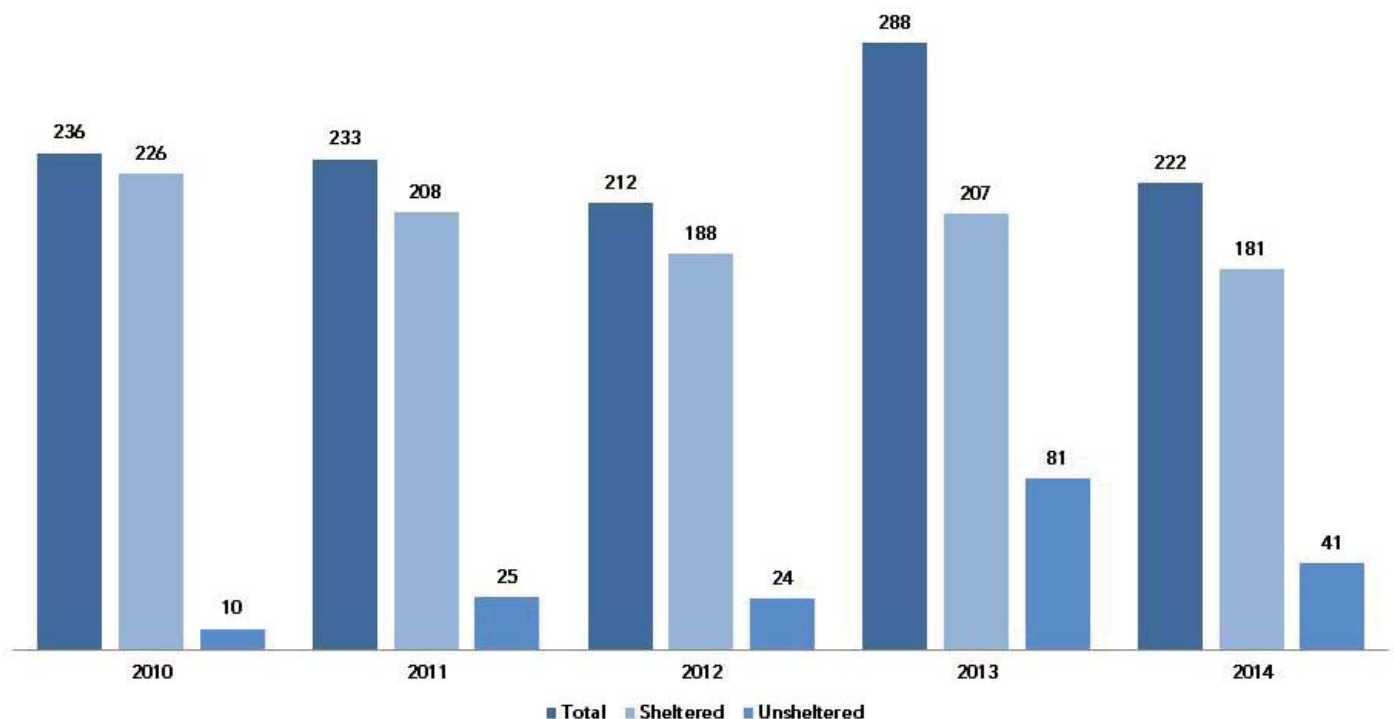
The proximate cause of homelessness is lack of housing. Two key ways to prevent and end homelessness are to support

people staying in their homes through difficult times and make sure housing costs are affordable and match incomes in the local market.

The survey solicited perceptions of housing affordability and services available to help keep people housed. Overall, a slight majority (51.4%) of respondents believe we have a good supply of affordable housing and a somewhat lower number (46.5%) think that housing costs match income levels (Figure 13). When we look more closely at how different groups responded, it is clear that higher income respondents believe we have a good supply of affordable housing and lower income respondents, those it may directly affect, do not.

Business and community leaders tend to think the community has a good supply of affordable housing (72.7%), but nonprofit community service providers have concerns. 53.9% disagree that we have a good supply of affordable housing (Figure 14). The distinct perspectives of these groups are also apparent in their assessments of whether housing prices match income levels. The majority of business and community leaders think they do, while the majority of nonprofit executives disagree (Figure 15).

Figure 11: Clark and Floyd County Point-In-Time Count (PIT) of the Homeless, 2010-2014



Source: 2010-2014 PIT Count Totals provided by Wendy Helterbran, Region 13 PIT Count Coordinator 2010-2014.

These findings are not surprising. People in different social locations see very different parts of how local markets operate and what it means for people of varied income levels. Higher income residents and leaders are more likely to own their homes. The housing market in this area (for those purchasing homes) is relatively affordable—far more affordable than neighboring Louisville. For people whose experience is mostly limited to this market and for those who earn enough to find the rental market reasonable, the supply of affordable housing seems good. But for low-income renters, affordable housing options are hard to come by.

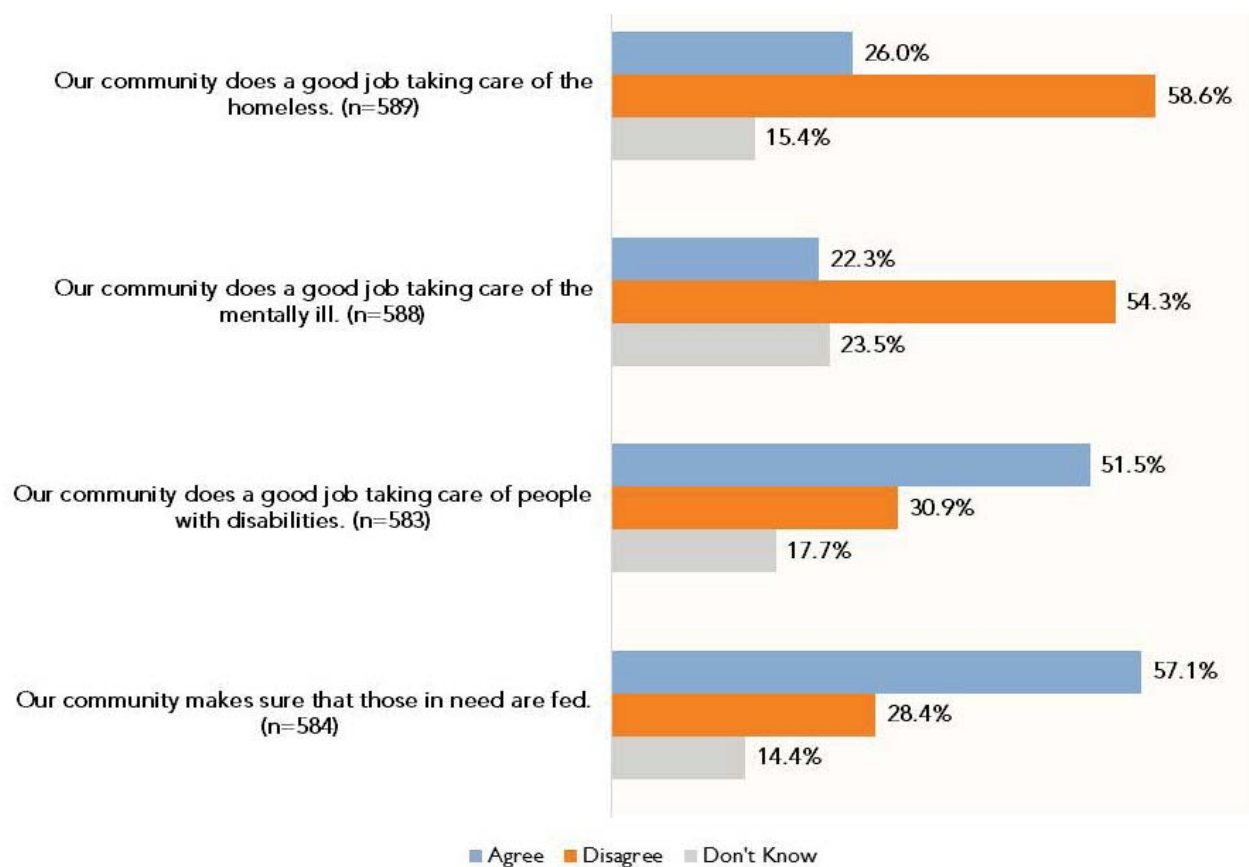
Over the last several years since the housing market crashed, the rental market tightened.⁵ Many low-to-moderate income families opted out of buying, particularly during the height of the recession. Lenders used stricter loan requirements, buyers became keenly aware of the risks, and depressed wages and employment during the recession and slow recovery simply limited people's ability to make large purchases. This means that would-be-buyers entered the rental market in very large numbers and drove up prices. Those prices have come down some in the last year or so,

but stagnant wages mean low-income workers still struggle to find affordable, available and safe rental units.⁶

In addition, instability in the labor market (including the rise of part-time and contingent labor⁷) places stable housing options, including public housing, out of reach for many as they do not have consistent and reliable paychecks. These factors shape buying and renting behavior, but they also create instability and uncertainty for low- to moderate-income renters and homeowners.

A full third of respondents do not know whether the community provides sufficient support to help people who are struggling financially stay in their homes. Still, a strong minority of respondents and a majority of community service provider respondents (people who are likely to know this area better) indicate the community does not provide sufficient support to keep people housed. During the recent community planning effort around homelessness, several service providers indicated that more services to support keeping people housed would be a cost-effective way to prevent homelessness.

Figure 12: Perceptions of Community Efforts to Meet Basic Needs



Both counties have a number of services available to fill the kinds of gaps that lead to loss of housing; unfortunately, most residents do not know those services exist until after they lose their housing and turn to the service sector for support.

When it comes to meeting basic needs, Clark and Floyd county respondents believe the area performs well in making sure those in need are fed and in supporting those with disabilities. Food pantries and soup kitchens are particularly important to those who may not qualify for government food assistance. Maintaining strong food banks and the hot meals programs in both communities are important to continuing to meet this need and serve the shared priority. This is, however, one area where the community may have some overlap in service. Several nonprofit executives indicated that faith-based programs such as food pantries and Angel Tree programs could benefit from increased coordination and collaboration.

I appreciate the work that faith based organizations are doing, but I get frustrated that they are not all working together to provide for the community rather than competing against one another for the same donations for the same programming.
- Survey Respondent

Other respondents dismissed concerns about overlaps in service in the nonprofit sector and one commented that “people who depend on such services should have a choice of providers.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community members clearly identify services for the homeless and the mentally ill as priorities that need attention. Comments across respondent groups and in the “service gaps” section of the nonprofit organization survey indicate that the community needs to do more to respond to substance abuse as part of greater attention to mental illness. Access to safe affordable housing and assistance in returning to paid work are essential to meeting the basic needs of the community, returning people to stability, and ensuring quality of life for area residents.

Figure 13: Perceptions of Housing Costs and Services to Keep People Housed

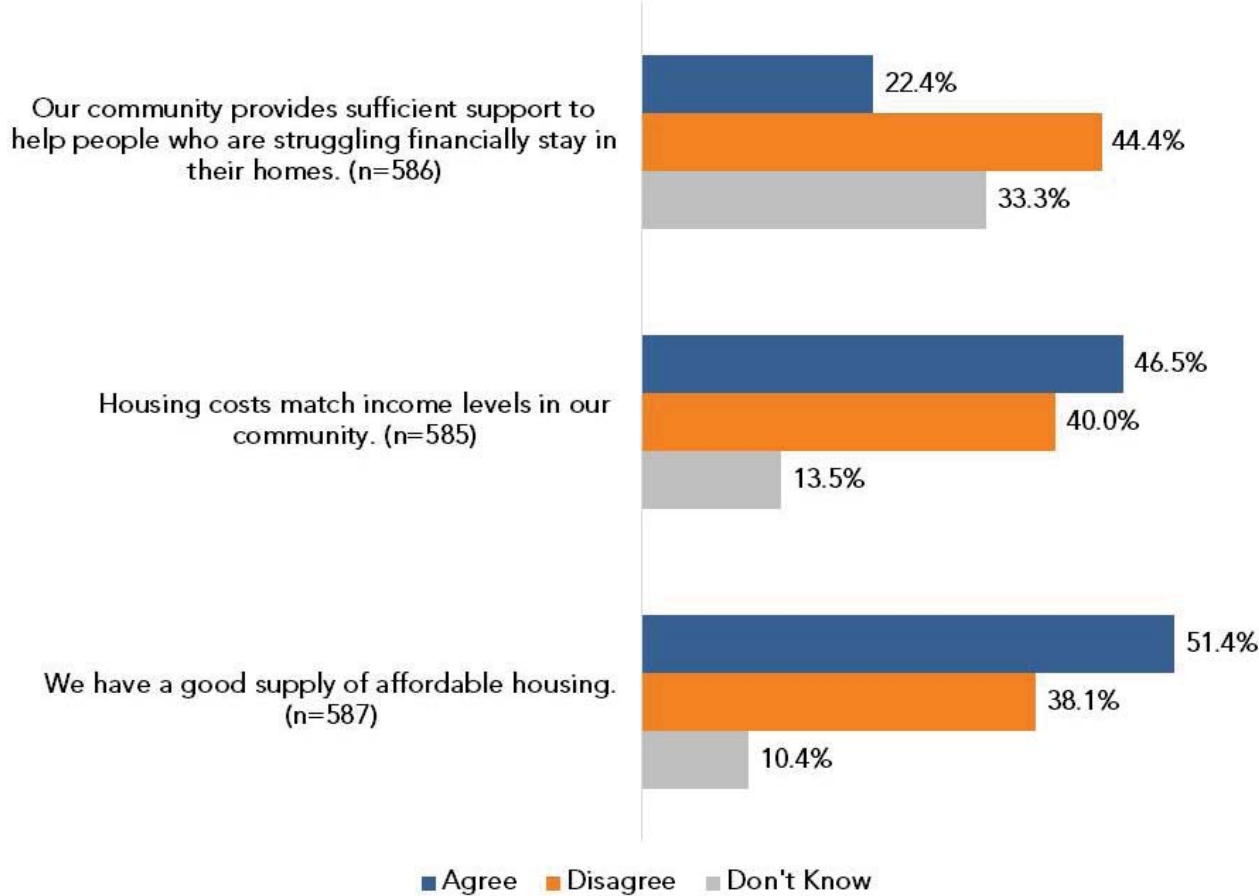
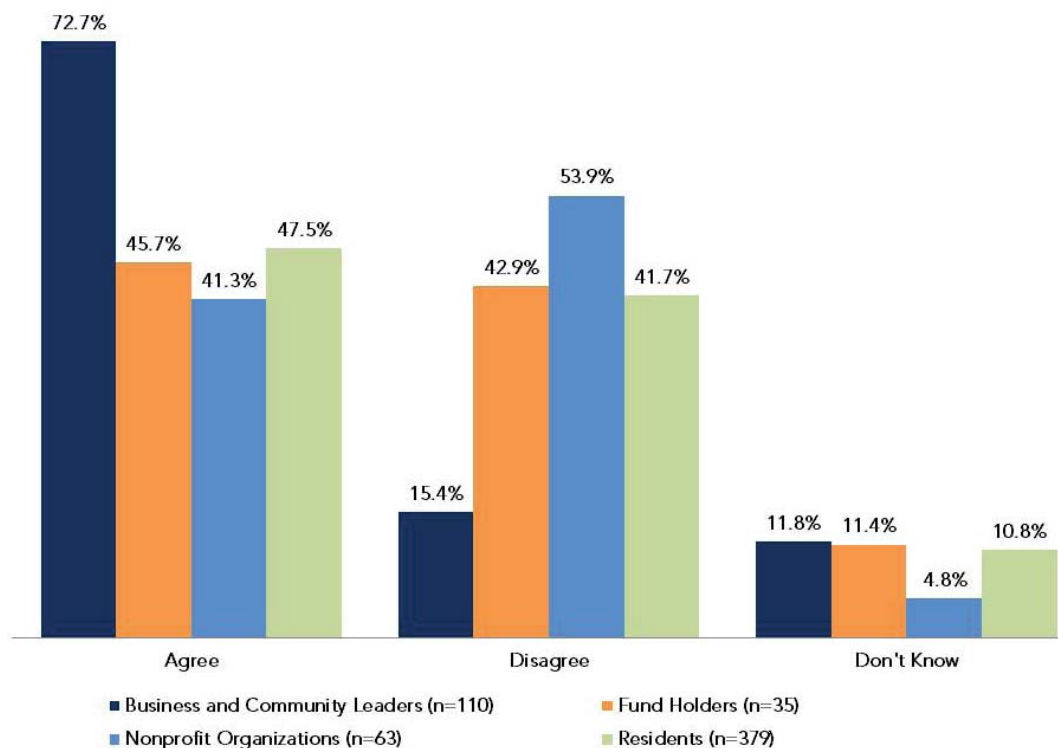


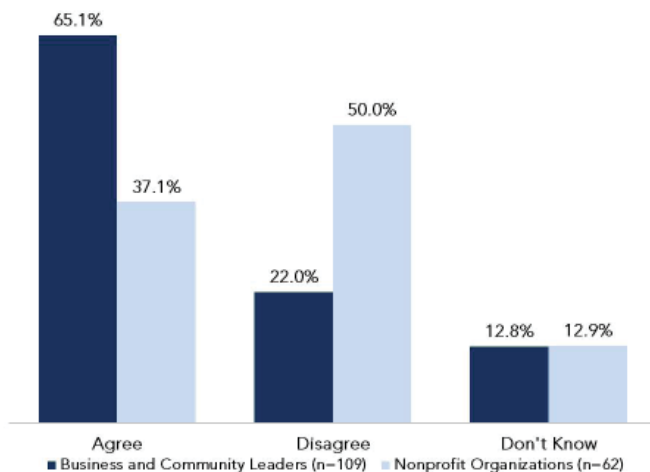
Figure 14: Group Differences in Response to the Statement “We have a good supply of affordable housing.”



Nonprofit organizations indicate gaps in services and funding in the following areas:

- Coordination of services to prevent and respond to homelessness.
- Behavioral health services for the treatment of mental illness and substance abuse.
- Supportive housing for the mentally ill and disabled.

Figure 15: Business and Community Leaders vs. Nonprofit Executives – Differing perspectives on the statement, “Housing costs match income levels in our community.”



Local government, nonprofit agencies and private investors may be able to collaborate in responding to basic needs in the community. Possible ways to address these needs may include:

- Bring together for-profit and non-profit developers, builders, real estate professionals and those working in public housing and community services to identify opportunities to better match rental housing costs to area income levels.
- Continue to support food and clothing programs and coordination of those efforts to ensure that community-wide needs are met.

Education and Workforce Development

Priorities for Education and Workforce Development in Southern Indiana

- 1 – High school completion
- 2 – Early childhood education and care (birth to age five)
- 3 – Post high school certificates and associate's degree programs
- 4 – Educational opportunities targeting working adult learners
- 5 – College scholarships and financial assistance

Note: Next two items had nearly as many votes—After school programs; Educational opportunities during times when school is not in session; and the lowest ranked item—Four-year college degree completion.

Education plays a role in many aspects of quality of life and community well-being. Improvements in educational attainment and the quality of education in a community can put a wide range of positive feedback loops in motion in all areas: from economy to healthful living, arts and culture.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Clark and Floyd counties are home to four public school districts, a community college and a regional four year public university, offering a small number of graduate degrees. Students have access to vocational and technical training at the secondary level that can feed into further training at Purdue's Polytechnic campus or Ivy Tech. In addition, the area has a number of private and charter school options for primary and secondary education. As a school choice state, residents are able to use vouchers to opt out of the public school districts and attend private schools. Public schools in the area cover kindergarten through 12th grade. The state has not adopted universal pre-school, but several schools in the region offer pre-K programs.

As noted in the "Regional Overview" area schools reflect economic, racial and ethnic dynamics of the community. The number of people living in poverty has increased significantly over the last 15 years.^{7b} Families of young children are more likely to live in poverty than others and this is reflected in high rates of free and reduced price meals, especially at area elementary schools. High poverty and the recent increase in English Language Learner students places significant demands on the schools as they work to meet needs and fill gaps.

In most families, a single parent or both married parents are working. This makes afterschool programs an essential extension of the school day (labor force participation rates in the area exceed 70%). Communities in Schools, the YMCA, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and their community partners host on-site after school programming in elementary schools throughout the two-

county region. These programs provide child care, tutoring, opportunities for youth to form positive relationships with teachers and other adult afterschool staff, and they provide safe space for students to socialize with each other beyond the school day.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

As with many communities historically driven by a manufacturing economy, the two counties fall well below national figures for educational attainment at or beyond the bachelor's degree and have larger portions of the population with high school as their highest level of educational attainment.

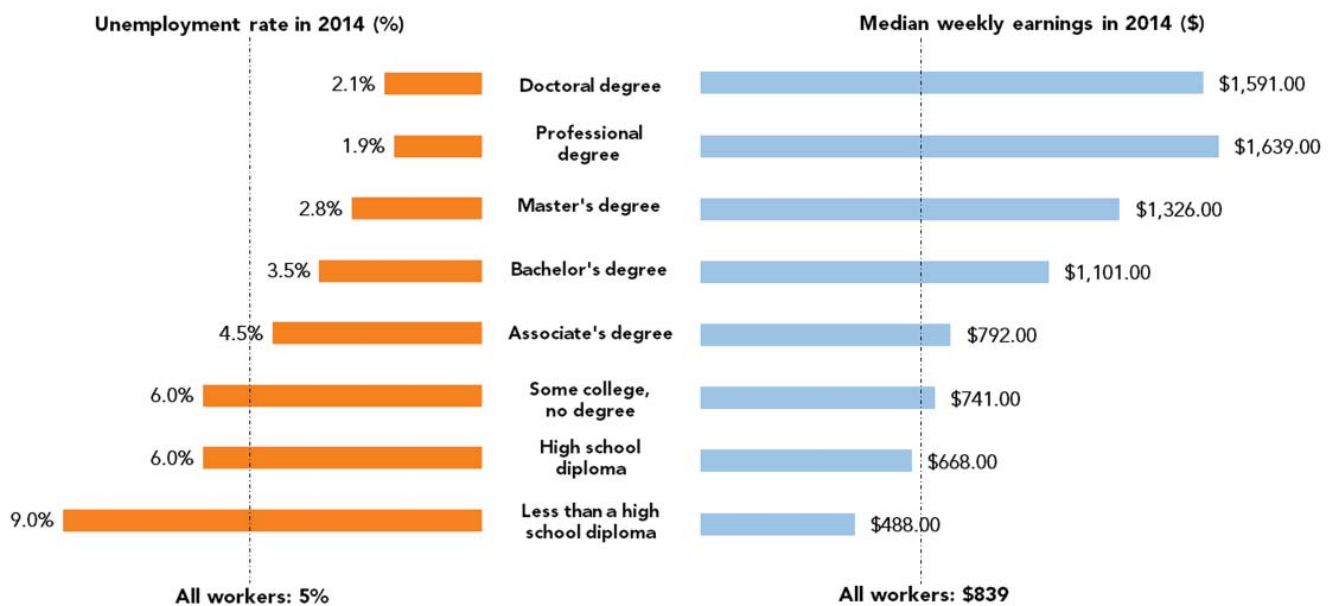
The U.S. economy has shifted to a service driven, knowledge-based economy. Over the last several decades the labor force has become increasingly educated and large shares of job growth have gone to those with a bachelor's degree or more.⁸ Those without a bachelor's degree were hard hit by the recession and are recovering more slowly.⁹ In this context, low educational attainment affects employment, income and the local economy's ability to build and attract living wage jobs that can produce economic growth and prosperity.

Unemployment is lowest among those with a Bachelor's degree and job growth for those with higher levels of education is expected to continue. Economists also expect job growth in areas that require more than high school and less than college, leaving even fewer jobs available to those with just a high school diploma. The area's high percentage of adults with only high school or equivalent (46.5% in Floyd County and 49.2% in Clark County compared to a national rate of 42%) need more training to qualify for high tech manufacturing positions and skilled trades, and some currently employed in manufacturing may need retraining and skill upgrades to remain current with manufacturing technologies.

In *Good Jobs Are Back: College Graduates Are First in Line*, a recent analysis finds that good jobs (defined as full time, earning more than \$53,000, with employer provided health insurance and employer-sponsored retirement plans) are going to those who have completed their college education. The study finds that 2.9 million of the 6.6 million jobs created between 2010 and 2014 were good jobs. Of those good jobs 2.8 million went to people with a bachelor's degree or more, 152,000 went to people with some college or an associate's degree, and the number of good jobs that went to those with a high school diploma or less decreased by 39,000.¹⁰ Access to good jobs increasingly requires a bachelor's degree or more (Figure 16).

In order for Clark and Floyd counties to match national rates of educational attainment and compete for good jobs roughly eight percent of the labor force needs to shift from the category of "Associate's Degree or Less" to "Bachelor's Degree or Higher." That means more than 12,000 additional people need to complete a Bachelor's degree and a portion of those (roughly half) need to go on for graduate or professional degrees just to bring attainment up to 2009-2013 national rates.¹¹ Respondents ranked four year college degree completion last among educational priorities, but these data suggest they are a need and should be a priority for the region.

Figure 16: Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

20.3%
of Clark and Floyd
County Residents
have attained a
Bachelor's Degree
or Higher

Compared to
28.8%
Nationally

Nearly 8 out of 10
Clark and Floyd County residents have
an associate's degree or less

Compared to
just over 7 out of 10
nationally

To attract good jobs and build financial
security, more residents need to earn
Bachelor's and graduate degrees.

EDUCATION MATTERS SOUTHERN INDIANA

The Education Matters Southern Indiana (EMSI) initiative was organized by the community foundations serving Clark, Floyd, Harrison, Scott and Washington counties in Indiana to strengthen the regional workforce and economy. The initiative capitalizes on the location of three higher education institutions, a workforce development office and a regional economic development agency within the five counties. Partners include Ivy Tech's Sellersburg Campus, Indiana University Southeast, Purdue Polytechnic New Albany, WorkOne Region 10, and One Southern Indiana. The initiative focuses on increasing the educational attainment of adults with some form of post-secondary education but no degree or certification. The goal is to increase attainment numbers by 25% in the next 5 years (10,000 people).

EMSI is achieving its mission through innovative programs and services which make it easier for adults to return and complete their degree or certification. The EMSI "One Stop" provides resources for adults to evaluate their degree or certification completion options and navigate the entire process from enrollment to graduation. The community foundations collectively offer many adult scholarships including "Hand Up Scholarships," a successful partnership with WorkOne. Importantly, EMSI actively seeks ways to help students persist to graduation once they are enrolled. For example, emergency funds and mentoring programs

provide adult students access to a supportive network. Grassroots public awareness leveraged by EMSI keeps the spotlight on this important community goal. The blend of individual attention to adult "completers" and systemic partnerships with community foundations, education and workforce development institutions is a model for Indiana's statewide effort to increase adult educational attainment. For more information, visit: www.EducationMattersSI.org.

55,000 DEGREES

Following the merger of Louisville's city and county governments in 2003, the community took stock of its strengths and challenges. They found that to reach their goals and address local priorities, they needed to increase educational attainment. 55,000 Degrees was established to coordinate collaborative efforts to do just that. Louisville partners in the effort determined that 40,000 more bachelor's degrees and 15,000 more associate's degrees would position the community to build and attract better jobs and would improve quality of life.

Objectives

- Create and support a culture of college-going and completion.
- Use the business community's unique points of leverage to accelerate attainment.
- Prepare students for success in college, career, citizenship and life.
- Make postsecondary education accessible and affordable.
- Increase educational persistence, performance and progress.

Programs and collaborative efforts educate and inform area residents, high school students, and working age adults of the benefits of education and opportunities for support in pursuing education. In addition, 55,000 Degrees collects data to better understand barriers to education, identify trouble spots where students leave education and training programs or fail to transition to the next stage, and they use research on best practices to build and reinforce programs that provide support to those pursuing education and training.

55,000 Degrees is funded by both local and national foundations and employs a small staff that works to engage organizations and individuals in the effort, coordinates collaborative efforts, and provides research and data on education and educational attainment as a resource for the region. For more information, visit <http://www.55000degrees.org/>.



IU Southeast Campus. Photo: Mark Barczak

PRIORITIES – NEEDS – STRENGTHS

Respondents place high school completion and early childhood education and care at the top of their priority list. Post-high school certificates, associate's degree programs and opportunities for working adult learners are next with college scholarships and financial assistance rounding out the top five priorities. After school programs and educational opportunities during times when school is not in session were close behind, but did not make the top five and the lowest priority was four-year college degree completion. Several respondents left comments that all items were top priorities for education.

Public data on both the economy and education suggest that, in fact, all of these areas should be priorities for the region. High school completion is essential to furthering educational attainment, and drop-out prevention has tremendous cost-saving benefits. Increasing the portion of high school students who complete their degree should, over time, reduce the need for high school level adult education, allowing those resources to be directed to reskilling to meet the needs of changing technologies and serve those making mid-career shifts.

Post-high school certificates and opportunities for working age adults are an important way to mitigate the low educational attainment of our working age population. Rapid changes in technology mean that even skilled laborers may need access to additional training and reskilling throughout their careers. Much of this will happen in the work place, but some will need to be available to support job and career changes and to move the unemployed back into the paid labor force. These strategies are an important piece of education and workforce development, but do not reduce the need for more residents to complete Bachelor's and graduate or professional degrees.

Just over 40% of respondents disagreed with the statement “We have sufficient opportunities for education and enrichment for children (beyond the school day).” Area school districts have shifted to a balanced calendar making opportunities for times when school is not in session a child care necessity for working parents. High employment ratios in the area mean that after school programming provides needed supervision to school age youth. Tutoring and enrichment through these programs has the potential to improve school performance and provide important opportunities for children to develop positive social relationships with program staff and other students, all known to increase high school completion rates and improve overall outcomes.

Several comments were consistent with discussions among those providing after school and other education and

enrichment opportunities: the programs are there, but participation and engagement is lower than program directors would prefer. The Assessment of Needs and Priorities did not explore the question of how to increase engagement and participation in programs across the areas assessed by the survey, but comments and responses consistently indicate that this is a challenge for the community.

When asked how well the community does in providing education and enrichment opportunities across the life course, responses were mixed, but leaned toward agreement that these opportunities are available in the area.

Post-secondary education made the list of top priorities with attention to opportunities for adult learners, increasing certificates and associates degrees, college scholarships and financial assistance.

A large share of respondents (22%) do not know whether the community has sufficient opportunities for education and enrichment for senior citizens (Figure 17). This was also true for other items that specified senior citizens as the targets. Those who are not senior citizens or do not live with or serve senior citizens have no reason to know much about what is available to them. Nearly a third of seniors disagree that the area has sufficient opportunities for education and enrichment, but a higher proportion of those ages 55-64 disagree. As the population shifts and a larger share of residents fall into the senior category, it will be very important to have sufficient programs and services available and to be sure residents know about them and can get to program sites.

Nearly 50% of respondents disagreed with the statement, “Our working age population has the education and skills to build and attract strong businesses that provide living wage jobs” (Figure 17). More than ten percent said they didn't know and less than 40% agreed with the statement. A majority of business and community leaders (64.2%) do not think that the area's education and training providers are doing enough to address workforce education and training needs.

The assessment asked business and community leaders who did not think area providers were doing enough to meet workforce needs to share what they think could help address these needs. Respondents identified the following:

- Teaching basic life skills
- Supporting degree completion
- Utilizing greater community cooperation to respond to issues
- Early job training in schools
- Diverse career preparation and training
- Matching training to workforce needs

Many respondents identified more preparation in skilled trades. Several indicated that not everyone can or should go to college and the community needs to encourage other areas of training. They argued that the high schools should be preparing students for both by teaching critical thinking and providing opportunities for hands-on learning that can help them identify their own appropriate path.

The assessment asked business and community leaders to indicate the five factors most important to attracting and retaining businesses that provide quality jobs. A qualified workforce ranked number one and a high quality education system ranked third. Education tied for number two in importance to attracting educated workers to the region.

Business and community leaders believe that well-paid jobs will attract qualified workers to the area, but the area struggles to attract well-paid jobs because it lacks a

qualified, educated labor force. The region is constrained by this dynamic. Beyond well-paid jobs, strong quality of life and a high quality education system are essential to attracting and retaining businesses that provide quality jobs and attract educated workers.

A significant share of those who felt they knew enough to gauge their agreement either agreed or strongly agreed with the following:

- We have sufficient opportunities for education and enrichment for working age adults.
- We have sufficient opportunities for education and enrichment for senior citizens.
- We have sufficient opportunities for education and enrichment for children (beyond the school day).

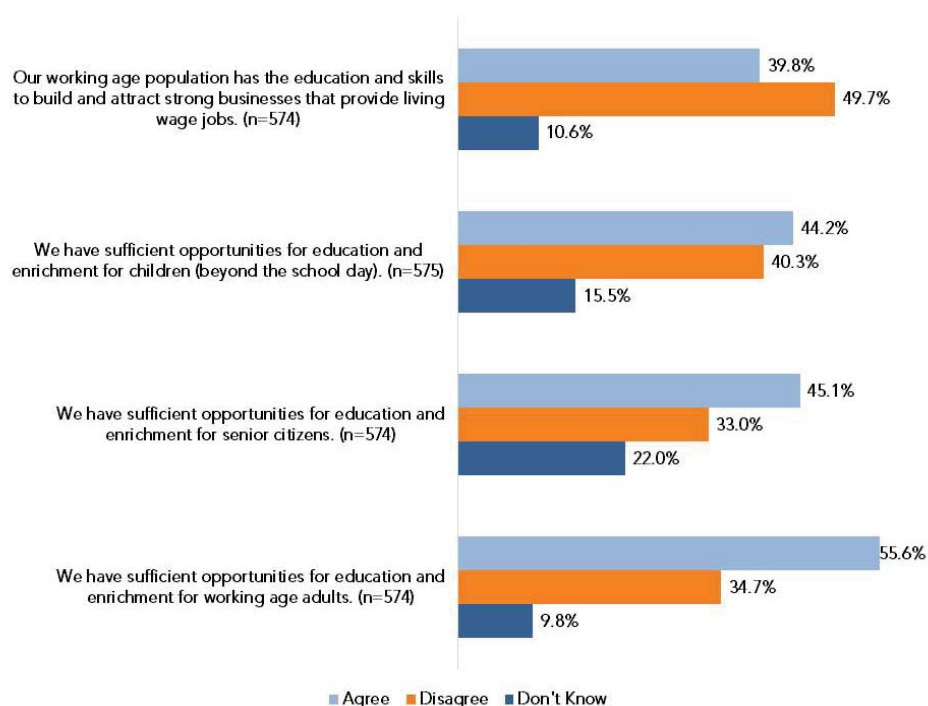
While the majority of business and community leaders indicated that local education and training services are not doing enough to meet workforce needs, those who think these services are doing enough saw local public educational institutions as particularly important to that work. Having a local public vocational and technical high school, a community and technical college, a liberal arts university and a technology college, all located within the two-county region may be an important asset upon which to build in addressing workforce needs.

Early Childhood Education and Care

Early childhood education and care is a triple pronged economic development approach that better prepares children for success in school and beyond, makes it possible for parents to work, and employs primarily working age women. Improvements in availability of high quality child care and pre-school have the capacity to change the landscape of educational outcomes and may be partnered with increases in wages for those working in the field as they are required to have a higher level of education and skills to improve quality.

Unfortunately, those who need access to high quality early care and education for their children are not all earning enough to pay for it and will not all be able to respond to any rate increases that may be needed to boost quality. This sector is one where the market does not work and charitable and public finance tools have to play a role.

Figure 17: Perceptions of Community Performance in Education And Enrichment

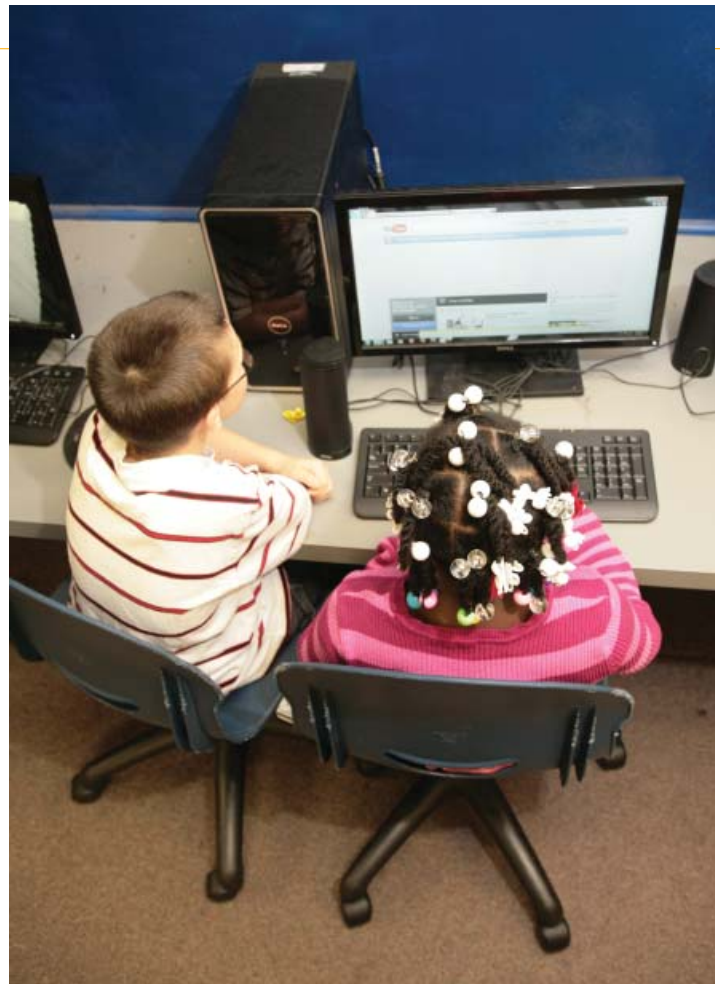


RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving educational attainment will require efforts that affect all stages of the education pipeline, from pre-K through certifications, associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctoral and professional degrees. Educational institutions, vocational rehabilitation, specialized job training, and job search support will all play a role in training workers and connecting them to jobs. In addition to expanding skills training through two-year degrees and certificates, the area must attract and produce more working age adults with four year, graduate and professional degrees.

Some ways for public and private investments and efforts to improve educational attainment and workforce development might include:

- Support programs that prevent high school drop outs.
- Support child care providers trying to increase their Paths to Quality Rating (the state of Indiana's child care quality rating system).
- Support for enrollment of low-income children in high quality early childhood education and care programs.
- Attention to child care transportation, which is often a barrier to accessing quality care.
- Increase awareness of and support for programming for children and youth from child care through 12th grade: afterschool programs, opportunities for educational enrichment beyond the school day, and quality non-academic youth programming.
- Increase educational attainment among working age adults and youth.
- Support many pathways to success by providing information and encouragement for pursuit of skills training, trade schools, and college.
- Provide financial assistance for adult education, trade schools, and higher education (certificates, associate's and bachelor's programs).
- Increase awareness of the importance of higher education to economic prosperity in the 21st century.
- Advocate for support for higher education that eases the cost burden on resident students so they can focus on their studies and complete associate's, bachelor's and graduate degrees without significant debt.
- Continue to support Education Matters Southern Indiana's and 55,000 Degrees' efforts to increase educational attainment in the region and work with those programs to ensure that energy is directed both to associate's degrees and certificates and to bachelor's degrees.



“Have a cradle-to-career comprehensive community plan where the business sector, the education sector at all levels, the nonprofit and charitable sectors, government at all levels, and the faith-based community all work together. The idea would be to have true community impact on having a more qualified workforce for the future. The key components would include: having agreed upon plan and goals, ways to measure progress, interrelated activities and programs, constant communications, and some kind of infrastructure or backbone to help make it happen.”

- Survey Response

Healthful Living

Healthful Living Priorities for Southern Indiana

- 1 – Clean water in our streams and rivers
- 2 – Recreational space, including bike lanes and paths, parks and indoor recreational facilities
- 3 – Access to fresh local produce
- 4 – Air quality
- 5 – Health and wellness education and programs for youth

Healthful living combines attention to the health of our natural resources with aspects of built environment that can encourage or facilitate a healthy active lifestyle. Educational activities and programming designed to encourage health and wellness are essential to promoting healthful living in the community. The well-being of residents and the local environment are key components of quality of life and they play an important role in building and attracting economic growth and a high quality workforce.

Clark and Floyd counties are home to abundant natural resources and opportunities for healthy active lifestyles, but they face challenges to realizing the full benefits of these assets.



Child playing at Woehrle Athletic Complex, Jeffersonville, Indiana

NATURAL RESOURCES

Clark and Floyd counties are situated on the banks of the Ohio River. In general, the region has enjoyed rich water resources (both underground and surface) and beautiful natural features. However, heavy industry, multiple interstates, power generation and the natural dynamics of a valley location converge to generate serious air quality concerns. Heavy use of the river for industry, power and waste removal have left it polluted. The area is home to strong water filtration systems, but continued development is quickly outstripping the capacity of filtration, delivery, storm water runoff and waste removal systems.¹² These concerns affect the ability of the region to meet basic needs and foster economic growth.

The Louisville Metro area averages more high ozone days than comparable cities in Indiana and over two times more than Indianapolis, which has twice the population of Louisville (Figure 18). That is not to say that Indianapolis has dramatically better air quality. In fact, both Louisville and Indianapolis receive a failing ozone grade and are among the dirtiest cities with Louisville ranking 15th and Indianapolis 17th for year round particle pollution. Both cities have dramatically reduced ozone since the mid-1990's and seem to be making progress on particle pollution as well. Still, there is significant work to be done. The ozone indicator makes it clear that pollution here is very high for the size of our population and ozone can be particularly dangerous to human health.

Air quality issues are the result of a combination of factors ranging from commuting patterns to industrial waste and deforestation resulting from growth and development. No single solution can fully address air quality in the area. Policies that regulate pollution and guide development processes, investments in clean technologies and remediation, and changes in individual and community behavior will all contribute to reductions in ozone.

A higher percentage of local workers drive alone to work than the state rate, and Clark County reports a higher percentage with long commutes and solitary driving than the state rate. Lack of public transportation, a location at the crossroads of three major interstates, and mixed rural and suburban location (requiring longer commutes to work) contribute to increased traffic which exacerbates air quality issues (Figure 19).

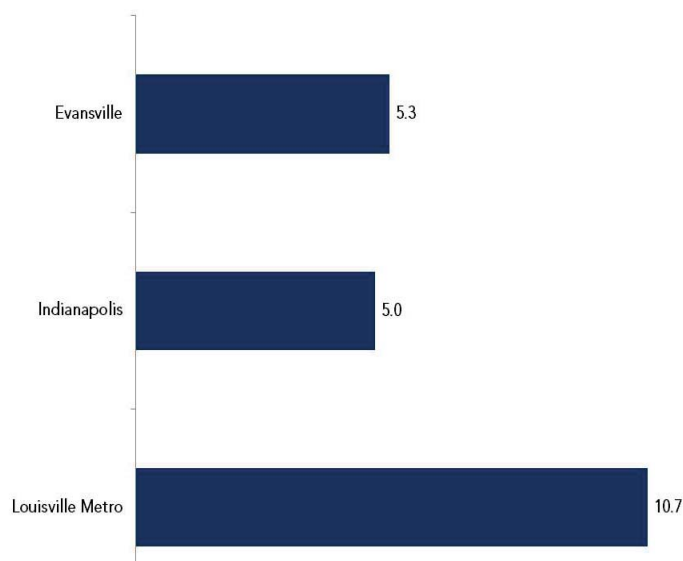
Power plants and other industries add to pollution of the region's air and water. When the wind in the Louisville Metro area is due west, industry from Evansville, Indiana, as well as Owensboro and Meade County, Kentucky, funnel pollution into the Louisville-Metro region, including Southern Indiana.

Water, vegetation, and the air work in concert to provide ecosystem services upon which the region's communities rely for their health, food production, industry, recreation, and general functioning. Deforestation, to make way for development or repurpose forest land for agriculture, can contribute to poor air quality by disrupting the environment's ability to provide air and water filtration services.

Air quality concerns may be addressed, in part, through reforestation. In 2010, the state of Indiana found that Clark County lost only .05% of forestland and gained .81%, for a net gain. Floyd County, however, lost .43% of its forest and replenished only .09%. Floyd County was the only county among its neighbors that did not replenish more forest area in 2010 than it lost. Reforestation in surrounding areas can improve overall air quality for the region, but communities cannot control the choices of surrounding areas, so managing air quality concerns must remain on the radar at the county and municipal levels. Deforestation in Floyd County is largely the result of growth and development in the area. Intentional efforts to maintain and replenish forestland will be important as the area continues to grow and thrive.

The County Health Rankings ranked Clark County 66 and Floyd County 52 out of 92 counties in Indiana for “Physical Environment”.

Figure 18: Average Number of High Ozone Days Per Year



Source: American Lung Association, www.stateoftheair.org. These figures were very recently updated (during the final editing of this report). Note: The numbers you see reflect a decrease in the gap over prior year figures—Louisville high ozone days went down by one day and Indianapolis and Evansville increased by two and three days, respectively. Bloomington did not have data for the most recent year, but had only 2.3 high ozone days in the last data set.

Figure 19: Commuting Patterns

	Clark	Floyd	Indiana
Percent of workers who drive alone	87%	86%	83%
Number of workers who drive alone	44,710	30,632	2,420,721
Percent that have long commutes and drive alone	32%	28%	30%

Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. 2015. Retrieved 06-15-2015 (www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/indiana/2015/rankings/.)



Big Four Playground, Jeffersonville, Indiana

HEALTH, WELLNESS AND RECREATION

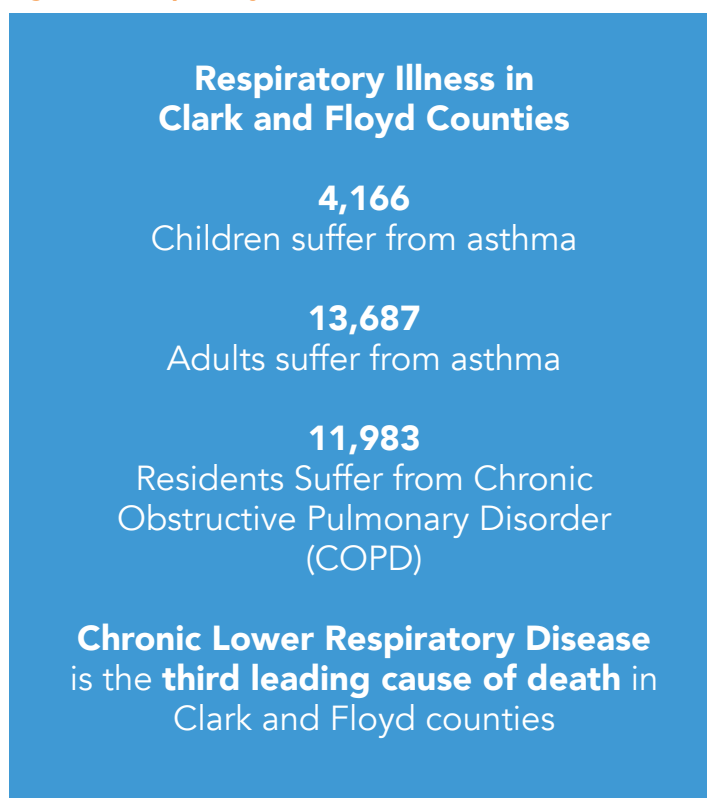
The built environment, education and available programming also shape behaviors that affect overall health outcomes for the region. Parks and recreational facilities, wellness education programs and organized activities can all affect individual behaviors and the community's culture around healthful living. For example, air quality problems are just one piece of the area's problems with lung diseases. High smoking rates contribute to higher rates of COPD, asthma and lung cancer (Figures 20 and 21). Community policies, such as public smoking ordinances and local smoking cessation programs can influence individual choices and, over time, reshape health behaviors in the community.

Clark County ranks 62 and Floyd County ranks 60 out of 92 counties in Indiana for "Health Behaviors". In terms of "Health Outcomes", Clark County ranks 63 and Floyd County ranks 54.¹³ Specific problem health behaviors in the area include: smoking and high rates of physical inactivity.

Floyd and Clark counties have a combined total of 23 parks in a variety of areas.¹⁴ The parks in Floyd and Clark counties offer diverse features and events for adults and children. Parks and recreation programs and school offerings mean recreational activities for children in the area are often free or provided at a reduced cost for those who cannot afford to pay. Still, 31% of adults in Clark County and 30% in Floyd County are obese and a third in Clark County and 29% in Floyd County are physically inactive despite the fact that the vast majority have access to exercise opportunities. These findings suggest that our infrastructure for active healthy lifestyles is strong, but the local culture may not yet embrace healthy active lifestyle choices.

Clark County ranks 62 and Floyd County ranks 60 out of 92 counties in Indiana for "Health Behaviors".

Figure 20: Respiratory Disease



Source: American Lung Association. www.stateoftheair.org/2015/; StatsIndiana <http://www.stats.indiana.edu/vitals>. Retrieved March 25, 2015

PRIORITIES – NEEDS – STRENGTHS

In addition to prioritizing clean water at number one and air at number four, respondents place recreational space including bike lanes and paths, parks and indoor recreational facilities at number two for healthful living priorities, followed by access to fresh local produce at three, and health and wellness education and programs for youth at number five. Nearly 60% of respondents selected “Clean and Safe Environment” and 40.4% rank “Activities and spaces that create and maintain a community that values health and wellness” in their top five overall priorities. These priorities reflect the desire to reduce the physical inactivity rate and to support healthy living with active lifestyles and fresh local food.

In comments, a number of respondents stressed the vital importance of cleaning up the Ohio River and addressing poor air quality. Notably, residents consider clean air and water a top priority far more frequently than do business and community leaders. Neither age, income nor educational attainment appears to be a significant predictor for prioritizing the environment. When ranking priorities across categories, the majority of respondents in all age groups included “Clean and Safe Environment” in their top five priorities.

More than a third (36.9%) disagree with the statement, “People across income levels have access to healthy activities in Clark and Floyd counties,” seeing this as a need. A majority of respondents agree with the statement, suggesting they think the area does well in providing these

Figure 21: Health Behaviors and Outcomes, 2015 County Health Rankings

	Clark	Floyd	Indiana
Health Behaviors	62	60	X
Percent of Adults who Smoke	26%	28%	23%
Percent Physically Inactive	33%	29%	27%
Health Outcomes Rank	63	54	X
Percent Reporting Fair or Poor Health	18%	19%	16%
Physically Unhealthy Days	4.0	4.0	3.6
Mentally Unhealthy Days	4.8	3.7	3.7
Percent Diabetic	13%	10%	11%
Percent Obese	30%	31%	31%
Other Health Factors			
Percent With Access to Exercise Opportunities	83%	94%	75%

Source: County Health Rankings. 2015. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data/IN>.

opportunities, but the sizeable minority that disagreed reflects real perceptions in the community. Having activities and programs available does not mean that those targeted by the programs participate. Survey comments and ongoing efforts among community organizations suggest that perceptions of cost as well as “hidden costs” are a barrier for many. Hidden costs include things like personal athletic equipment. In addition, transportation and work schedules (particularly for those working multiple jobs) can make engagement in such activities unlikely or impossible.

A majority of Clark and Floyd county residents agree that the area offers sufficient programs and recreational opportunities to support a healthy lifestyle. Findings suggest support for further investment in recreational space, including bike lanes and paths, parks and indoor recreational facilities as well as more health and wellness education and programs for youth.

Accessibility of local parks and recreation spaces is a strength for the two-county region. Air and water quality, on the other hand, may stifle active lifestyles. High levels of pollution in the Ohio River and surrounding creeks may deter use for recreation. In addition, poor air quality can be a significant constraint on outdoor activity and exercise, especially for those with asthma and other lower respiratory disorders.

Physical inactivity is higher than average in the area, and while the region has many activities and parks available, the culture of the community and other constraints seem to limit the extent to which those facilities and programs are utilized. A large minority disagree with the statement, “Local recreational opportunities attract visitors” (Figure 22).

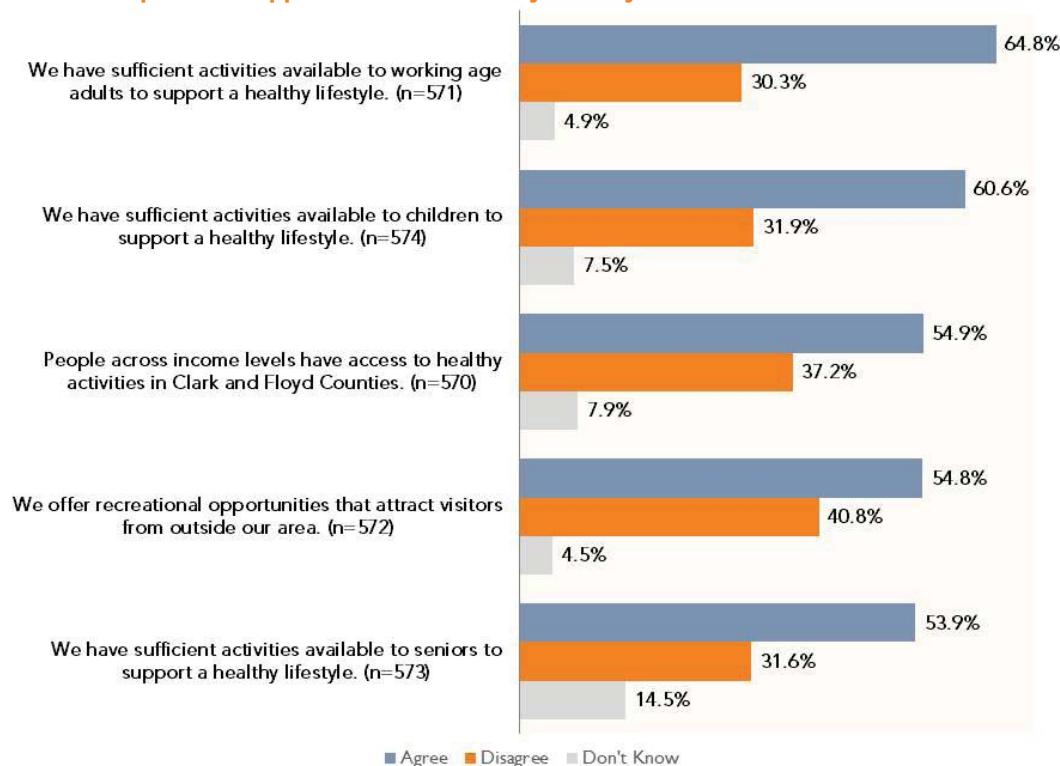
Responses further indicate that people would like resources directed to restoring air quality, cleaning local waterways and improving access to fresh local produce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Clark and Floyd counties have abundant natural resources, opportunities for active lifestyles, and strong programs to support healthful living. In general, this is an area where the majority of respondents think the community does well. However, public data suggests that while we have tremendous assets, the community is failing to utilize those assets to their full potential.

Public policy, public and private investment, education and nonprofit programming all have roles to play in promoting healthful living. Some examples follow.

Figure 22: Perceptions of Opportunities for Healthy Activity



- Public regulation and private investment may converge in efforts to improve air quality and clean up local streams and rivers.
- Private innovation may be partially funded by public dollars available for brownfield redevelopment to clean up industrial waste and make way for sustainable development throughout Clark and Floyd counties.
- Public, private and philanthropic investments can support the creation and maintenance of recreational space, including bike lanes and paths, parks and indoor recreational facilities. Residents can utilize these spaces to build community around healthy active lifestyles.
- Public and philanthropic support will be important for nonprofit organizations and public schools to develop, implement, and expand strong programs to educate youth on health and wellness and engage them in physical activities.
- Public transportation routes and schedules should support access to full-service grocery stores, farmers' markets, physical activity and recreation.

In addition to these efforts, progress in other areas can produce improvements in healthful living. Increasing educational attainment and improving economic opportunities will likely improve health behaviors and outcomes. Research indicates that among those with higher educational attainment, income, access to health insurance, knowledge and social networks all combine to produce better health behaviors which yield better health outcomes and public cost savings.¹⁵



Floyd County YMCA, New Albany, Indiana

Economic Priorities for Southern Indiana

- 1 – Good jobs and living wages
- 2 – Skilled and qualified working age population
- 3 – Locally owned businesses
- 4 – Quality early childhood education and care
- 5 – Sustainable development strategies

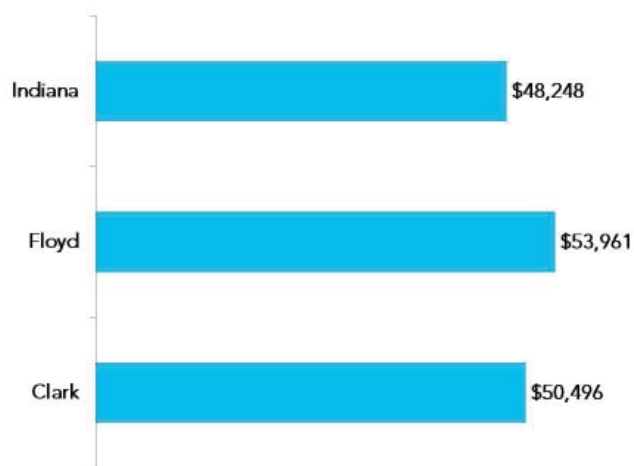
Historically, Clark and Floyd counties were home to manufacturing, agriculture, munitions and army supply production, and shipping. Manufacturing remains a relatively strong part of the economy and the region's location at the crossroads of three major interstates, on the Ohio River (which has an international port and trade zone and is a highway to the Mississippi), and with access to an international airport (and a UPS hub) makes logistics a strong sector in the area. Medical and higher education institutions are also major employers.

INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

In recent years the two-county region has benefited from its proximity to Louisville and efforts to raise the quality of primary and secondary education. The area came through the recent recession better than many communities and continues to rebound. Unemployment rates are relatively low. The median household incomes for Clark and Floyd counties are slightly higher than the state (Figure 23), but stagnant wages and a proliferation of low wage jobs (particularly for low-skilled workers) remain barriers to financial security and economic prosperity. Unfortunately, the area struggles to attract higher skilled and higher paid work because of the low educational attainment and skills of the working age population.

Floyd County is at 5.6% unemployment and Clark County is slightly higher and even with the state at 6.0%.¹⁶ Clark and Floyd counties have strong employment ratios (the percent of the working age population that is employed) with 74.9% in Floyd County and 73.1% in Clark County compared to 71.2% in Indiana.¹⁷ The employment ratio may also reflect the fact that two-parent families in these communities must have two incomes to make ends meet. In both counties, the employment rate for mothers of children under the age of six is significantly higher than the national rate (77.4% in Clark, Floyd and Harrison counties combined compared to 67.6% nationally).¹⁸

Figure 23: Median Household Income 2009-2013 (2013 dollars)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2009-2013 as cited in State and County Quickfacts.

Roughly 12.2% of Clark County residents live below the poverty line compared to 13.3% in Floyd County and 15.4% in the state of Indiana (Figure 24).¹⁹ While both counties are doing better than the state as a whole, the number of people living in poverty has grown tremendously over the last 15 years, placing significant stress on the local economy and the community service system.²⁰

LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES

Locally owned businesses are an important driver of economic development, even if each operation is relatively small. The more dollars spent at locally owned businesses in the community, the more dollars stay in the community. On average, 48% of each purchase at local independent businesses is recirculated locally, compared to less than 14% of purchases at chain stores.²¹ According to the Small Business Administration, small independent businesses represent 99.7% of all employer firms and have generated 65% of net new jobs over the past 17 years.²²

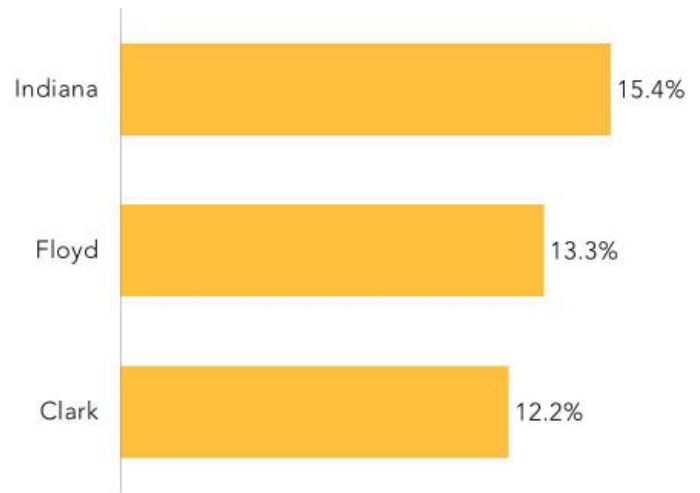
One Southern Indiana, the area's chamber of commerce, works to support local businesses and attract development to the area. Develop New Albany and Jeffersonville Main Street both focus on economic revitalization, historic preservation, and promotion of historic downtown. In the past five years more than 90 new businesses have moved into New Albany and the vast majority of those businesses have been locally owned and operated. Jeffersonville has added many new businesses since the opening of the Big 4 Bridge and both downtown areas are hoping to benefit from the full completion of the Ohio River Greenway and the traffic it is expected to generate.

Local efforts have been supported by financial and technical assistance programs designed to support small local businesses. The Southeast Indiana Small Business Development Center (www.seisbdc.org), SCORE (www.score.org), US Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov), Velocity (a local business accelerator), and small business loans from local philanthropies have played an important role in both communities. These organizations provide workshops, guidance and assistance throughout the process of business planning and operation.

PRIORITIES – NEEDS – STRENGTHS

Economic issues are a high priority and a significant concern for people in Clark and Floyd counties. Residents do not think people in the area are financially secure, and respondents are split on whether people are able to find living wage jobs. A “living wage” is an earning level that allows a full-time worker to support a family above the poverty line (which varies by household size). Definitions range from 100% to 130% of the poverty line and 115% of poverty is commonly used in advocacy efforts.²³

Figure 24: Percent Below Poverty Last 12 Months, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2009-2013 as cited in State and County Quickfacts.

Building, Attracting and Retaining Businesses that Provide Good Jobs

(Responses of local business and community leaders in order of importance) (n=117)

- 1 - A qualified workforce (95)
- 2 - Quality physical infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, logistics) (84)
- 3 - High quality education system (74)
- 4 - Strong quality of life (72)
- 5 - Quality technology infrastructure (broadband capacity) (60)
- 6 - Tax incentives for business (54)
- 7 - Low start-up costs (31)
- 8 - Adequate, accessible, and affordable transportation (31)
- 9 - Vibrant downtown community (27)
- 10 - Area population with discretionary income to spend (19)
- 11 - Industrial space (17)

“Meaningful work and broadly shared economic security” was the “economy” item on the list of broad priorities and it was among the five most frequently chosen by respondents. The majority of those surveyed across all respondent groups included it in their top five broad priorities for the region.

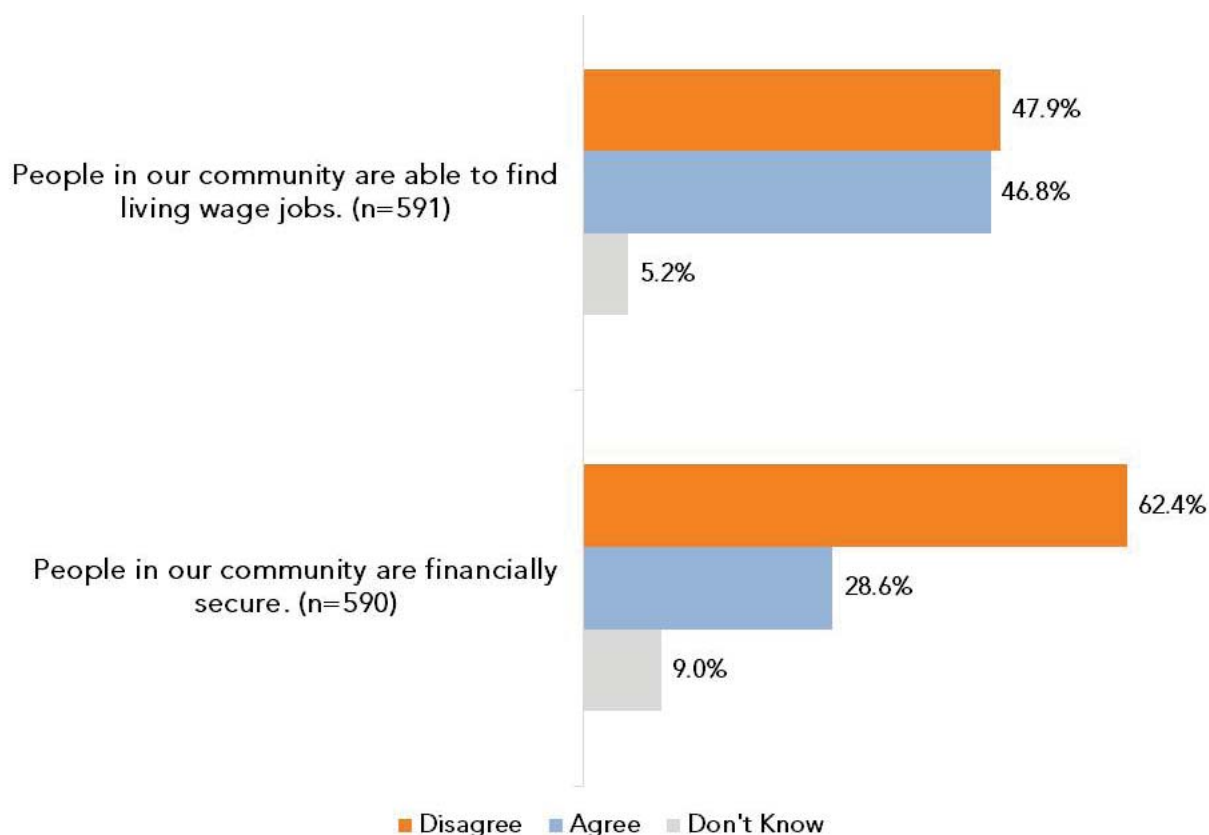
Business and community leaders agree that a qualified workforce, strong infrastructure, good schools, and strong quality of life are top priorities for attracting businesses that provide good jobs.

Cost of living, including affordable housing, is important to attracting businesses as well. Some noted that cooperation between local governments and social and political open-mindedness are vitally important to attracting businesses that provide quality jobs. Other comments stressed the importance of strong arts and recreation programming both in the schools and in the community. Respondents noted energy costs and quality technology infrastructure as well as the need for strong public transportation.

Business and community leaders indicated the need for visionary leadership and competence from local government. This theme and problems with local government emerged throughout qualitative comments from all respondent groups on several different items included in the assessment.

The majority of respondents (62.4%) do not think that people in Clark and Floyd counties are financially secure. Respondents who felt they knew enough to agree or disagree were split on the question of whether people in our community are able to find living wage jobs. A significantly larger portion of low-income respondents than higher income respondents disagreed with the statement, “People in our community are able to find living wage jobs.” Those earning more than \$100,000 more frequently agreed with the statement. These findings fit with national employment trends since the recession. More highly educated workers who also earn more have been able to find work more easily than those with less education and lower earnings (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Perceptions of Availability of Living Wage Jobs and Financial Security



RECOMMENDATIONS

A strong economy is essential to quality of life and creating opportunities for all community members to thrive. Clark and Floyd counties need to build and attract quality businesses and a qualified local labor force to provide better jobs and a stronger local economy. Economic development and environmental concerns may be addressed jointly through sustainable development strategies that create economic opportunity and support healthy air, water, and food.

Public policies and institutions, private enterprise and innovation, and the nonprofit sector all have roles to play to ensure that market growth reaches all portions of the community. Efforts to improve economic security and develop a sustainable economy may include:

- Public and philanthropic support for local entrepreneurship and small business development.
- Increasing availability, reliability and use of public transportation through public investment and potential partnerships with the area's largest employers.
- Increasing access to affordable rental housing through cross sector coordination to increase the supply of safe housing provided at prices that match income levels in the community.
- Attracting socially and environmentally responsible and sustainable businesses to the region. The area may also build economic opportunity out of the region's need to restore air and water quality and remediate brownfield sites. Brownfields are locations where pollution from past use remains and limits options for development and future use.
- Encouraging fresh local food production and improved distribution through farmers' markets and relationships between local grocers, schools and area farmers.
- Attracting and recruiting diverse businesses that provide living wage jobs and opportunities for advancement to support a strong middle class.



Construction of new I-65 Bridge, Jeffersonville, Indiana

Arts and Culture

Priorities for Arts and Culture in Southern Indiana

- 1 – Opportunities for people across income levels to engage in diverse art and cultural activities
- 2 – Availability of diverse art and cultural activities in Southern Indiana
- 3 – Attracting visitors with art and cultural activities
- 4 – Opportunities for adults to engage in creative self-expression
- 5 – Nurturing creativity in children and youth

Arts and culture are essential components of community life that provide leisure activities, nurture creativity and generate opportunities for small business and community development. Theaters and museums attract tourists, increase local revenue and encourage identification with the area's history and culture. Public art installations in both counties reflect interest in the arts and convey pride of place to visitors.

Area schools are home to strong programs in visual and performing arts. In addition to homegrown opportunities, Clark and Floyd counties have ready access to the Louisville arts community. People enjoy the convenience, but it may lead to underdevelopment of the arts in Southern Indiana. This pattern may have its greatest impact on those who cannot afford to take advantage of options across the river, do not have reliable transportation or those living in surrounding rural communities who would be more likely to attend an event in Clark or Floyd county than to travel to Louisville.

From the well-known Derby Dinner Playhouse to the increasingly recognized Stage on Spring operating out of St. Mark's in New Albany,²⁴ performances at the Ogle Center, Jeffersonville's RiverStage and New Albany's Bicentennial Park, the Indiana side of the Metro Area is managing to attract the attention of Louisville urbanites and continues to offer more convenient destinations for those living in surrounding rural communities.

More than 1,500 area residents are employed in arts, entertainment and recreation. The Arts Council of Southern Indiana encourages and displays art, advertises events, provides exhibitions and arts education programs in the area and promotes opportunities for local artists.

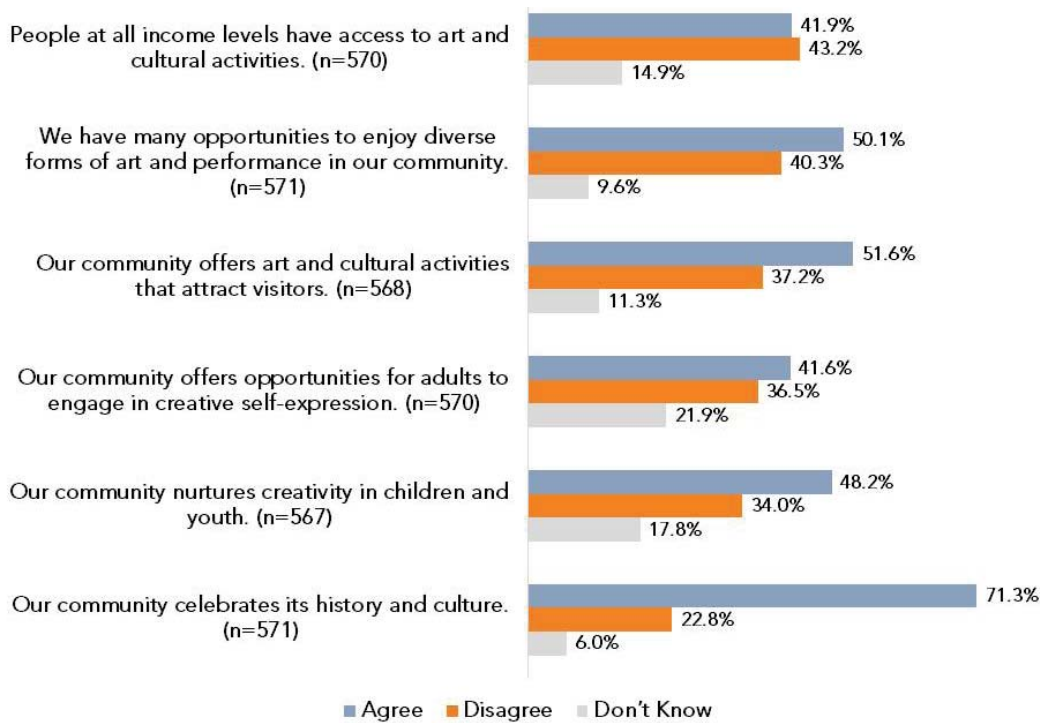
PRIORITIES – NEEDS – STRENGTHS

Clark and Floyd counties celebrate the history and culture of the region and they are home to a range of art and cultural activities that attract visitors from surrounding rural communities and from Louisville, but residents also believe the community can do more. Southern Indiana may not be reaching its full potential for revenue generated by visitors spending money on tourism, arts and culture in Clark and Floyd counties.

Many respondents indicated they did not know enough about the arts to comment on the availability of various items. Views on the arts among those who felt they knew enough to have an opinion were split but leaned toward positive assessments of what the community offers (Figure 26).

Responses suggest, however, that cost may be a barrier to accessing art and cultural activities in the region. Access to the arts across the economic spectrum was clearly identified as a weakness and likely affects the extent to which our community is able to nurture creativity in children and youth from diverse income levels. While secondary schools have strong performing and visual arts programs, in 2010, the elementary schools eliminated art and other programming as part of major budget cuts and significantly reduced field trips that exposed students to opportunities and art forms they may not have realized were available.²⁵ Art and field trip programs have been restored through public and philanthropic support, but local interviews suggest these activities have not recovered to pre-2010 levels.²⁶ Research shows that, particularly for low-income and rural students, field trips improve critical thinking, historical empathy, tolerance and interest in art museums.²⁷

Figure 26: Perceptions of Art and Cultural Opportunities



RECOMMENDATIONS

Art and cultural activities and opportunities are important to community identity, contribute to quality of life and foster creativity, critical thinking, historical knowledge and empathy, tolerance, and interest in the arts. Area residents feel reasonably good about what is available in Southern Indiana, but see opportunities for growth and improvement. Opinions about strengths and needs are split. Comments suggest this may result in part from the area's proximity to Louisville. Those who can afford to enjoy the arts find it easy to access opportunities across the river, whereas those less likely to go across the river, may want to see more opportunities available in Indiana.

Public policies and investments to support arts in schools and communities, nonprofit programming, and private enterprises all play a role in developing a rich landscape of local art and culture. Efforts to improve access and enjoyment of arts and culture, art and cultural education, nurture creative expression and boost economic development may include the following activities:

- Identify, promote and support making the arts more accessible to low-to-moderate income people.
- Public and private investment and support for the development of new and varied art and cultural activities in the region.
- Develop and promote arts and culture in ways that attract more visitors to the area and use those opportunities

to showcase other local amenities by supporting efforts that cross-promote arts, culture and local shopping, restaurants or the farmers' markets.

- Target youth for attendance at performances and tie those experiences to active, hands-on opportunities for children to express themselves.
- Advocate for and support strong field trip programming that provides opportunities for all children, regardless of income, to learn about the history and culture of the region and be exposed to the performing arts through engaging and memorable experiences.
- Promote opportunities for adults to engage in creative self-expression.



Public art display at the Carnegie Center for Art and History, New Albany, Indiana

Community

Community Building Priorities for Southern Indiana

- 1 – Mentoring programs for adults to mentor children
- 2 – Opportunities for youth to engage in voluntary associations (for example: 4-H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts)
- 3 – Neighborhood activities
- 4 – Peer mentoring programs for youth
- 5 – Group activities for seniors

Clark and Floyd counties enjoy a strong sense of community, pride of place, and shared identity rooted in the celebration of the region's history and culture. People in these communities welcome newcomers and enjoy diverse opportunities to build relationships. Area residents value and enjoy the safety and security that comes from a strong community and they are generally proud of how the community looks.

PRIORITIES – NEEDS – STRENGTHS

Public data on “community,” or what is often called “social capital” are not readily available for Clark and Floyd counties. The County Health Rankings include an association rate which attempts to measure the rate at which the population engages in organized groups or voluntary associations. Clark and Floyd counties rate slightly below the state average, but the data are difficult to interpret without additional information on engagement. The assessment asked for perceptions of community identity, pride of place, safety, whether the community is welcoming to newcomers, and whether people have opportunities to build relationships with others. Responses were overwhelmingly positive for these indicators of community (Figure 27).

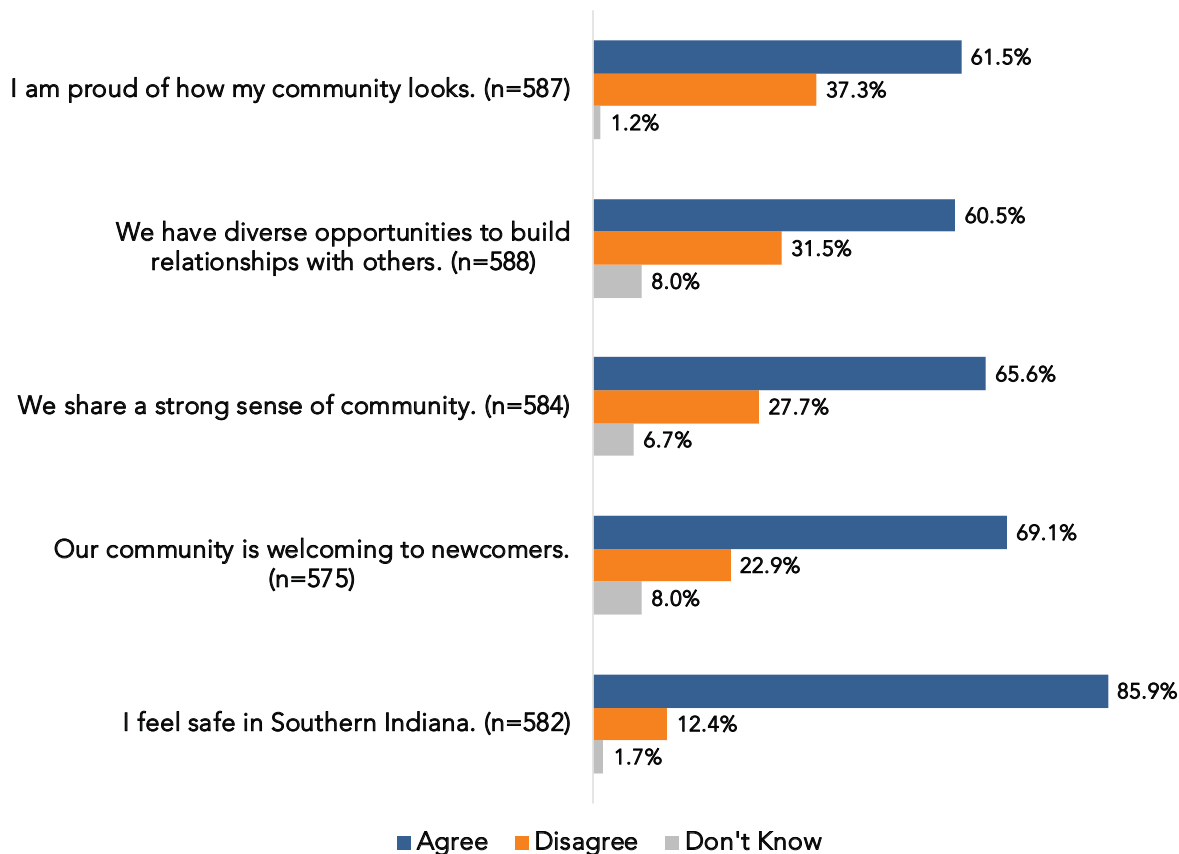
Responses indicate that adults in the region want to pass on this strong sense of community to the next generation and build on it to promote engagement and progress among youth. Mentoring programs for adults to mentor children, opportunities for youth to engage in voluntary associations and peer mentoring programs for youth, all made the list of top priorities for building relationships in Clark and Floyd counties, along with neighborhood activities and group activities for seniors.

Among seniors, 52.3% indicate group activities for seniors should be a priority. Not surprisingly, the proportion is lower in other age groups. As the senior population grows, awareness of this need and demand for such activities is likely to increase.

Organizations in Clark and Floyd counties offer high quality youth programs. Many youth are involved in activities, while others who could benefit from engagement are not enrolling. Cost can be a barrier, but even among those programs that



Figure 27: Perceptions of Community



limit costs or offer nearly free programs, transportation, parents' work schedules, and lack of knowledge about what is available often remain barriers to participation.

Clark and Floyd counties are strong communities with a number of opportunities for youth and adults to engage and build relationships. Building on these strengths to support youth development, neighborhood communities, and group activities for senior citizens will improve quality of life and ensure that social ties and local commitment remain strong into the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Respondents repeatedly cited the need for various types of youth development and mentoring programs. Local organizations provide many such programs, but target audiences do not always show up. Nonprofit organizations note that they struggle to get the word out to attract target audiences and that they struggle to find funding for communications and marketing staff.

Nonprofit voluntary associations and service organizations play the largest role in building community, but they also rely on support from local businesses and governments in order to fund activities. Responses indicate the following strategies may foster community engagement across the life course:

- Funding to nonprofit organizations for communications and marketing staff.
- Support to more effectively advertise to target populations for existing programs.
- Improved information, coordination and referral to ensure that available programs are fully utilized and to better understand full demand for existing programs.
- Build better systems for tracking unmet needs.
- Increase access to transportation to support youth and adult engagement in existing programs.
- Support neighborhood events and activities.
- Support the development and implementation of diverse programs to provide opportunities for senior citizens to engage in group activities.

Moving Forward

Clark and Floyd counties enjoy strong community relationships. This high social capital creates an environment that encourages mutually beneficial action. Respondents to the Assessment of Community Needs and Priorities share fairly strong consensus on priorities and local strengths. In identifying weaknesses, responses are more varied but still suggest some key areas that need attention.

The following are top priorities that need attention and may be seen as goals for the community:

- Meet the basic needs of our community members, particularly the homeless and the mentally ill.
- Build a qualified work force to attract good jobs by supporting education and enrichment across the life course.
- Sustainably develop the economy to provide meaningful work and broadly shared economic security through living wage jobs and a clean and safe environment.

The region boasts some key strengths that may be utilized to help respond to opportunities for improvement. In general, people in Clark and Floyd counties feel safe, have a shared identity around the area's history and culture, and they welcome newcomers and share a strong sense of community. Overall, people seem to agree that the area supports a healthy lifestyle and needs to do more to encourage such a lifestyle among youth and young adults.

Economic challenges, however, are a concern for the two-county region and a large share of survey respondents believe these challenges are rooted in low educational attainment and other factors that compromise the quality of the local workforce (e.g. substance abuse). These factors make it less likely that the area will generate its own successful enterprises and they make it difficult to attract outside businesses to the community. This weakness keeps wages low and financial security elusive for a large portion of the population. The number of poor people living in the area has increased dramatically, and those individuals and families are concentrated in particular neighborhoods marked by the problems associated with urban poverty.

In the years since the recession of the late 2000's, need has continued to rise placing an ever greater burden on the community service system. Providers in the area have struggled to respond effectively to the needs of the homeless and the mentally ill as demand for these services has simply outstripped diminishing resources. The longer people are out of housing, the more difficult it is to return them to stability and the more likely that mental illness and behavioral health issues will progress. Nonprofit leaders indicate (and research supports) that it is more cost effective to assist people in keeping their homes than to provide housing and other services after the home has been lost.²⁸

Nonprofit organizations who provide the services that prevent and respond to the needs of the homeless and the mentally ill note that resources are short and they are piecing together funding from many sources to try to make ends meet. These organizations rely on government grants and contracts, foundation support, and individual donations. When the economy struggles, public revenue, private giving, and foundations' endowment payouts also decline. These contractions severely limit community services at the time they are most needed.



Meals on Wheels Delivery

Communities are systems not unlike natural ecosystems. When all parts of the system are healthy and functioning well, the system feeds its own success and the entire community benefits. When parts of the system are broken or underperforming, the impacts spread to other areas of community well being. The problems Southern Indiana faces are complex and multiple efforts must move at once and in concert in order to make progress in any of these areas.



The Overlook on Riverside Drive, Jeffersonville, Indiana

The nonprofit survey asked community service providers what needs they have difficulty funding. Nonprofit executives indicate that while programs and supplies are easy to fund, they need far more support for staff, administration and capacity building. Moreover, they indicate that the need to continually raise year-to-year funding makes it difficult for nonprofit organizations to develop and implement consistent, reliable programs that might move the needle on the issues they address.

Public policy plays an important role in funding the nonprofit sector to provide public goods in the community. Where public funding falls short, foundations and individual donors fill in the gaps. The business sector shapes economic security in the region as owners and executives determine wages and plan for strategic growth through innovations. All of these leading sectors have the capacity to address issues discussed in this report, but residents also have a responsibility to engage the community through civic participation, take advantage of the programs and services available, and participate in the democratic processes that shape local leadership and decision-making.

PRIORITIES ACROSS SECTORS

Area residents, nonprofit executives, business and community leaders, and Community Foundation fundholders identified the following priorities in each of the sectors assessed:

BASIC NEEDS

- Improve homeless shelter and general care for the homeless.
- Increase and improve care for those suffering from mental illness and substance abuse.
- Provide more assistance to help the unemployed return to paid work.
- Support those in crisis so they may remain housed.
- Establish more safe affordable housing for renters.

HEALTHFUL LIVING

- Provide more recreational activities to attract visitors—bike paths, outdoor and indoor recreational spaces.
- Improve air and water quality.
- Provide programs to educate youth and engage them in healthful living activities.
- Increase public transportation to improve air quality.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Increase high school completion rates.
- Increase access to high quality affordable early childhood education and care (birth to age five).
- Make more certificate and associate's degree programs available with a focus on skills that lead to living wage jobs.
- Educational opportunities for working age adult learners.
- Financial support for traditional age students and working adults to pursue higher education.

ECONOMY

- Build and attract good jobs with living wages.
- Support locally owned businesses.
- Engage sustainable development strategies.
- Increase public transportation.
- Increase access to affordable high quality child care.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: ADDRESSING MULTIPLE AREAS OF PRIORITY NEED

The core assessment did not address public transportation, but comments across respondent groups raised the issue of public transportation. Public and/or program transportation can remove barriers to program participation among youth and adults and improve employment stability and air quality.

Public transportation is an area where the market falls short because those who need it most cannot cover the costs of providing effective public transportation. In addition, in a culture of drivers, shifting public behavior in ways that can increase demand and better cover the expense will require significant time, effort and money. Some places to begin to shift investments and behavior include the following:

- Increase use of available public transportation through improved service, incentives and promotion.
- Educate the public on advantages of public transportation to workers and potential impacts on air quality.
- Advocate for improved public transportation for Southern Indiana—target advocacy to Federal and State Departments of Transportation, Transportation Authority of River City, the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency, and local municipalities.
- Procure additional funding for transportation in grants to local programs that address priority areas that need attention: services for the homeless and mentally ill, after school programs, workforce development, adult education programs, child care facilities and youth development programs.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The survey did not ask any questions about local government or local leadership. It did, however, elicit comments on potential barriers to success for the region and the responses were consistent across all respondent groups. People in Clark and Floyd counties share a perception that the area's greatest barrier to success lies with ineffective leadership. Respondents cited regional divisions, lack of cooperation, lack of vision, and local politics. In a community with strong social capital and shared priorities, these barriers are surmountable through community effort and public pressure to change patterns of governance. Clark and Floyd County residents value civility and want to see the area move beyond polarized politics, division within and among area communities, and local power struggles that hinder effectiveness.

Responses to general open ended questions throughout the survey indicate that people believe issues in local leadership may pose significant barriers to effectively responding to local priorities. This finding may suggest that civic engagement needs to be a priority as well—if the community is unhappy with local governments and the direction in which they continue to lead the region, then residents need to show up, make educated decisions at the ballot box and they need to remain engaged in order to support better decision-making and demand leadership that responds to shared priorities for the community.



Soup Kitchen at St. Mark's United Church of Christ, New Albany, Indiana

All of the needs identified in the study are related to one another: the area must do better with education to generate more economic activity and local communities need greater economic activity to generate the public and private revenue to invest in education and in social services to support struggling residents and help them return to stability.



Statue of Thomas Jefferson in Warder Park, Jeffersonville, Indiana

The frustration with leadership may also reflect a problematic contradiction of this moment in time. People want to be safe and to have strong education systems, a clean and safe environment, effective programs to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable, and meaningful work and shared economic security. All of these things require resources which the region struggles to generate.

All of the needs identified in the study are related to one another: the area must do better with education to generate more economic activity and local communities need greater economic activity to generate the public and private revenue to invest in education and in social services to support struggling residents and help them return to stability.

Communities are systems not unlike natural ecosystems. When all parts of the system are healthy and functioning well, the system feeds its own success and the entire community benefits. When parts of the system are broken or underperforming, the impacts spread to other areas of community well-being. The problems Southern Indiana faces are complex and multiple efforts must move at once and in concert in order to make progress in any of these areas. To the extent that such efforts generate positive feedback loops, the entire system will benefit, people will experience strong quality of life, and each part of the system will generate success and balance in other parts of the system.

Local philanthropic grantmaking can play an important role in providing funds to support programs and services for which market processes do not work and where public resources fail to meet need. Foundations may be able to coordinate efforts to ensure that all priority areas are being addressed.

Clark and Floyd counties are good places to live where people welcome newcomers and enjoy a sense of community. People feel safe and connected to others and they want to see the region work together to build prosperity and strong quality of place.

The Community Foundation of Southern Indiana's *2015 Assessment of Needs and Priorities in Clark and Floyd Counties* provides a guide to the area's shared priorities and needs. With a strong sense of social connection, the community can overcome barriers, invest in addressing priorities that need attention, build strong quality of life, and achieve its shared goals for the future.

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ENDNOTES Continued

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Interviews with local art educators indicate that cuts to art funding meant the schools implemented Rosetta Stone language programs in elementary classrooms as an alternative cultural experience. Elementary and middle schools continue to do field trips, but local interviews with educators and arts organizations that used to receive significant field trip traffic suggest they remain more limited than they were prior to the cuts. More in-depth exploration is needed to determine where things stand and which types of learning experiences continue to be supported through field trips.

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More Information

For more information on the 2015 Assessment of Needs and Priorities in Clark and Floyd Counties please visit www.cfsouthernindiana.com/cna



OPERATION DESERT STORM

DUTY

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

The Community Foundation of Southern Indiana was founded in 1991 as the region's partner, resource and steward in philanthropy. The Foundation manages \$30 million in charitable assets and administers over 240 individual funds – each supporting the unique charitable intent of the donor who established the fund. To date, the Foundation has awarded over \$22 million in grants and scholarships and is a National Standards certified community foundation.

VISION

To be the partner and trusted resource for philanthropy in our community, providing stewardship of charitable intent so the impact of generosity will last for generations.

MISSION

To build enduring charitable resources used to positively impact our community by:

- Serving as a partner and resource for donors, their advisors, and not-for-profit organizations
- Making it simple for donors to fulfill their individual goals in giving back
- Providing stewardship of donor gifts and charitable intent for generations to come
- Fulfilling a leadership role on important community issues

VALUES

Integrity/Ethical Behavior - Do the right thing every time

Stewardship – Preserve donor intent and charitable value across generations

Excellence – Exceed expectations in all we do

Passion – Love what we do; believe what we do makes a real difference

Leadership – Know our community and its needs; act on that knowledge

Donor Service – Create an environment of personal engagement and fulfillment of charitable wishes for each donor



Community Foundation
of Southern Indiana
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4104 Charlestown Road, New Albany, Indiana 47172

P: 812.948.4662

F: 812.948.4678

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