

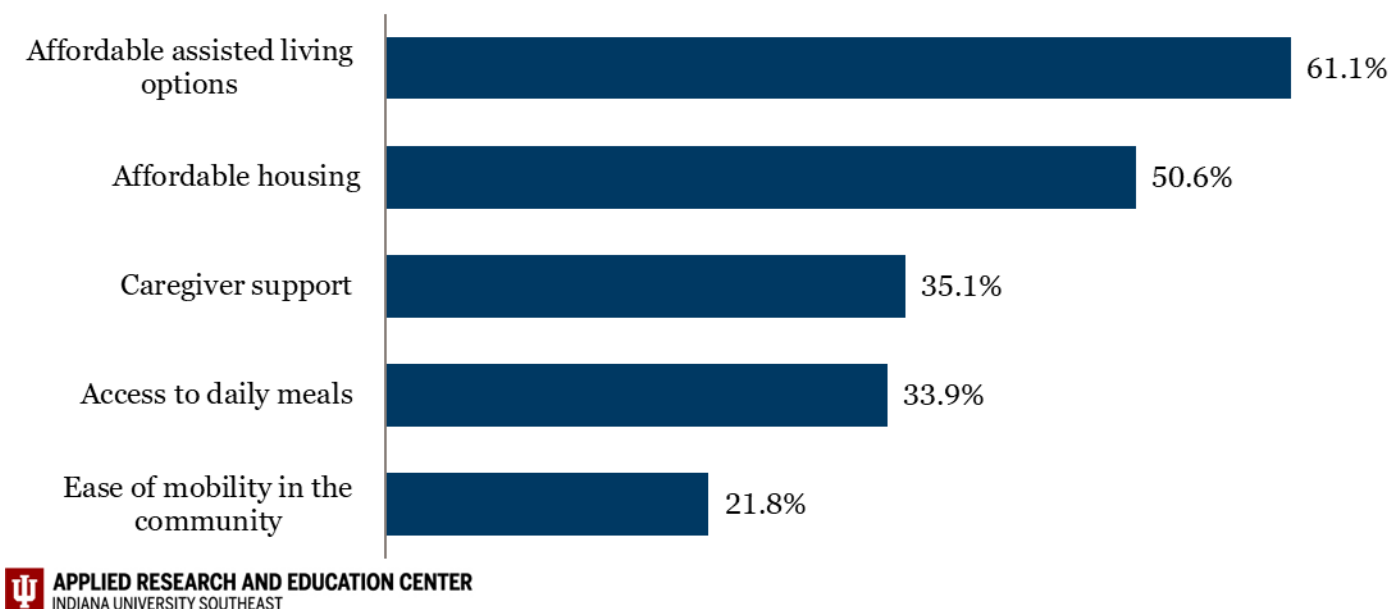
With funding from the Community Foundation of Southern Indiana, the IU Southeast Applied Research and Education Center held community listening sessions and surveyed Clark and Floyd county residents, nonprofit, business, and local government leaders, and the Foundation's fund holders to identify priorities, assets, aspirations, and opportunities for growth and improvement to support thriving communities. Findings will be used to guide the Foundation's grant making to support the community's *Priorities for Progress*.

*Youth and Old Age* looks at the ability for the region to accommodate the needs of both children and elderly adults. Providing appropriate resources to youth will foster a successful, new future for the region. Similarly, providing adequate resources to age in place is vital to improving the quality of life for retiring individuals. .

**Figure 1: Priorities for Supporting Children and Youth in Clark and Floyd counties**



**Figure 2: Priorities for Older Adults (N=542)**



---

Providing necessary resources and support to the region's youth is important not only to them but to the health of the community in general. Oftentimes these resources can best be used in school or in extracurricular activities instead of at home. With many families having all adults in the household working, it is very important to design and implement programs in education that can support working families.

With the Baby Boomer population continuing to age, there is increased demand in services directed towards the elderly population. Seniors now comprise 15.5% of the two-county region's population. This will create demand in health care and social service programs. Additionally, many grandparents raise their grandchildren. This creates increased strain on finances. While 2.2% of the region's senior population lives in poverty, this increases to 23.6% in Clark County and 12.4% in Floyd County for seniors raising their grandchildren.

## **Recommendations**

### *SUPPORTING HEALTHY HAPPY CHILDHOODS*

- Support community partnerships to deliver mental health services through local school systems. Many families will need to access care outside of school hours as well, but building these connections into the school structure increases access and supports children's health and educational success.
- Pool appropriate public and private resources to support local nonprofit organizations' community-wide and school-based substance abuse prevention and trauma-informed resilience building programs (which include violence and bullying prevention).
- Design, implement, and evaluate strategies to better support single parents across the income distribution.
- Use existing school infrastructure to ensure that all children have full access to extracurricular school clubs, homework help, performing arts, athletics, and needed community support services. Schools can become hubs of activity and support for families during the common working hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Strategies might include bringing nonprofit afterschool activities to the schools, providing school bus transportation to off-site activities, and adding school bus transportation options that remove barriers to full engagement in activities and access to needed supports. A 6:00 bus gives all kids access to participation in arts, clubs, and athletics and it supports working parents.
- Improve adult access to mental health and substance abuse treatment to reduce the prevalence of child abuse and neglect.
- Collaborate and combine public and private funding to support more widespread access to youth substance abuse treatment, both outpatient and inpatient, for the uninsured and underinsured.

### *SUPPORT THE AGING*

- Public and nonprofit organizations need to continue to collaborate to provide services to support aging in place. These collaborations may need to expand and will need to increase affordable housing and assisted living options for the region's seniors. As more of the baby boomer cohort moves toward age 75, the need for assisted living will balloon. Local leaders need to create options with an eye toward the demographic contraction that will follow this wave to ensure intentional and sustainable long-term community planning.
- Place the needs of seniors at the top of priorities in plans to expand public transportation and increase walkability. Walkability efforts need to include attention to accessibility to ensure that all residents can benefit from such improvements.
- Develop and maintain funds for the express purpose of assisting grandparents over the age of 60 who are responsible for children under the age of 18 in their households. Such supports might include funds or programs to help with clothing, student activities, and necessities like dental care.