

Harlan County Community Action Agency, Inc. (HCCAA)
Community Needs Assessment Report
Completed April 1, 2020

The Harlan County Needs Assessment was conducted from August 2019 to February 2020. A total of 225 Community Needs Assessment surveys were completed. One survey was used to gather data in the community from all sectors of the community including: Community Action Clients/Low-Income Residents, Faith Based Organization Representatives, Private Sector Representatives/Community Members, Community Organizations/Partners, Educational Institution Faculty/Staff, Health Care Agencies, HCCAA Board Members, HCCAA Staff/Volunteers, and Local Politicians/Government/Public Sector Representatives. Data gathering strategies included distributing surveys in person (to residents, clients, community members, etc.), mailing surveys, emailing the online survey link, adding the online survey link to our website, distributing paper surveys at partner meetings, and adding the survey link to an online focus group HCCAA has on Facebook. Community members and groups were identified as both internal and external stakeholders for purposes of relaying quantitative and qualitative feedback.

A total of 400 HCCAA surveys were distributed with 225 surveys being completed by individuals, for a completion rate of 56%.

This report is being issued on behalf of HCCAA to inform the community, service providers, clients, funders, and anyone associated with the Harlan County community of the results of the information gathered during the Community Needs Assessment.

Community Needs Assessment Key Findings

The community needs assessment data is provided as quantitative and qualitative and presented in a multi-format reporting structure.

225 Surveys Taken:

48.44%	109	Community Action Client/ Low-Income Resident
8.44%	19	Faith Based Organization Representative
7.56%	17	Private Sector Representative (For profit, small business, etc.)
3.56%	8	Community Organization/Partner
4.00%	9	Educational Institution Faculty/Staff
4.00%	9	Health Care Agencies
5.33%	12	HCCAA Board Member
14.67%	33	HCCAA Staff or Volunteer
4.00%	9	Local Politician/Government/Public Sector Representative

The overall needs assessed are listed based on votes: Employment, Education, Housing, Supportive Services, Health, Income and Asset Building, and Civic Engagement.

Employment:

Surveyors felt that the top 3 most important Employment needs were: More jobs with better pay and benefits, More training for the types of jobs available in the area, and Affordable transportation to and from job.

Education:

Surveyors felt that the top 3 most important Education needs were: More parents involved in student's education, more assessable counseling to prepare students for tech or college, and More certificate/degree programs offered locally.

Housing:

Surveyors felt that the top 3 most important Housing needs were: More monthly rental assistance programs, More grants to make home ownership and home rehab affordable, and More community supports for homeless families.

Supportive Services:

Surveyors felt that the top 3 most important Supportive Services needs were: Meal Programs, Child Support, and Youth Services.

Health:

Surveyors felt that the top 3 most important Health needs were: More payment assistance programs for adult dental, hearing and/or vision, More community focus on preventative healthcare, and More access to affordable comprehensive (or primary) health care services.

Income and Asset Building:

Surveyors felt that the top 3 most important Income and Asset Building needs were: Anonymous and confidential budget counseling, More access to low interest loans, and More education on how to build assets.

Civic Engagement:

Surveyors felt that the top 3 most important Civic Engagement needs were: Increasing the community's skills and knowledge for leadership development, More education on how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups or similar organizations, and More knowledge on civic activities.

Other Key Findings:

Additional Survey Comments:

*Grants and scholarships for all who wants to continue their education.

*Drug treatment locally.

- *More psychological therapy.
- *Mental health needs.
- *Employment opportunities/more choices.
- *Quality healthcare.
- *Help with housing.

In the comments or Other sections of the questions community members who took the survey expressed their opinions on what else might benefit Harlan County or what else the county lacks in services.

Key Findings on Poverty Causes and Conditions:

After reviewing all the data gathered, there seem to be many things that contribute to the cause of poverty in Harlan County. The main reasons seem to be insufficient employment opportunities, lack of education, and environment. Although the poverty causes and conditions seems to be different in many situations.

According to the Community Action Partnership Report for Harlan County prepared in November 2019, the 2017 estimated poverty rate for Harlan County is 41.5%. This rate is much higher than the estimated Kentucky rate of 17.1% and the estimated United States rate of 13.40%. From 2000-2017 this rate increased by 13.9%.

Lack of education is a key factor in finding employment and eliminating poverty. In the 225 community members surveyed 12.44% indicated their education level was Grades 9-12/Non-Graduate.

*HCCAA offers WIOA program which helps many individuals obtain the skills and opportunities to receive education needed to overcome poverty.

Insufficient employment opportunities are a high contributor to poverty in this area. In the 225 community members surveyed 84.89% indicated Harlan County need more jobs with better pay and benefits and 50.67% indicated Harlan County needs more training for the types of jobs available in the area. As shown in the Community Action Partnership Report for Harlan County prepared November 2019, from 2000-2017 the population in Harlan dropped -17.03%. This is a high indication that community members move away to find better opportunities for themselves and their families. In November 2019 the unemployment rate of 11% for Harlan County is shown as drastically higher than the average for Kentucky (3.8%) and the United States (3.3%).

*HCCAA offers WIOA program, which helps many individuals obtain the skills and opportunities to receive education and employment needed to overcome poverty. This program has helped many of the laid off coal miners during the Blackjewel Bankruptcy lay off, which left hundreds out of work.

Environment contributes to poverty in having the available access to the programs and services that may be offered to the Harlan County community. Lack of motivation, self-esteem, drug addictions, affordable childcare, and management of finances are all contributors to poverty in this community.

HCCAA Community Needs Assessment Overall Results

225 Harlan County community members completed the Needs Assessment surveys.

Rankings:

- 1 Employment (*Family*)
- 2 Education (*Family*)
- 3 Housing (*Family*)
- 4 Support Services (*Family*)
- 5 Health (*Family*)
- 6 Income & Asset Building (*Family*)
- 7 Civic Engagement (*Agency*)