



*Fayette County*  
*Community Needs and Resources*

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## FAYETTE COUNTY

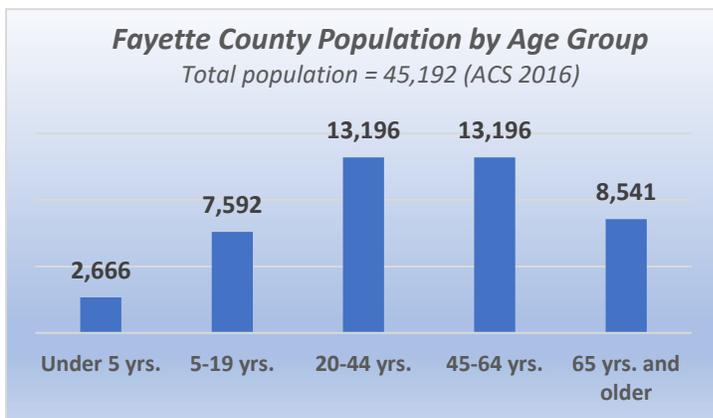
### History & Geography

Fayette County, in south-central West Virginia, was created in 1831 from parts of Logan, Greenbrier, Kanawha, and Nicholas counties. It was named in honor of the Marquis de LaFayette. Its county seat is at Fayetteville, though its largest municipality is Oak Hill. The New River and Kanawha River carve steep-walled valleys across the county, dividing it into eastern and western regions. The Gauley and Meadow rivers carve similar valleys in their courses along the northern boundary of the county. Traversed by the longest single arch bridge in the world, the New River Gorge is among the best known of these valley regions.



Fayette County is traversed by one of the Appalachian Corridor Highways (US 19) opening the mountainous terrain to the tourism industry which has become one of the main employers in Fayette County. Each year more than a million tourists visit the region, attracted largely by the New River gorge and recreation opportunities, including hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, camping, kayaking, rock climbing, and whitewater rafting. The county is home to the National Boy Scout Jamboree, the Bechtel National Scouting Center at Mount Hope attracts thousands of scouts to the region annually.

Fayette County encompasses 662 square miles and the county has a population density of 69.6 persons per sq. mile.



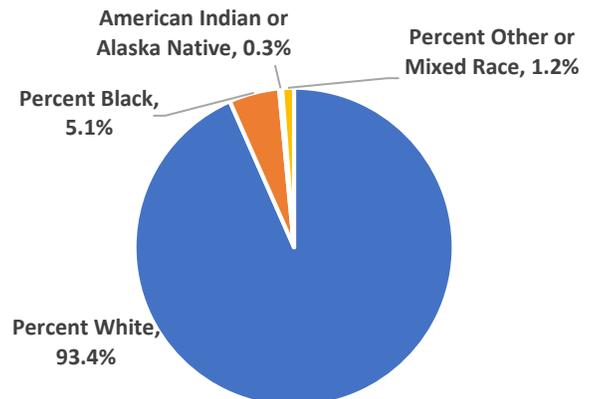
is over the age of 65 yrs.

93.4% of the population is White and 5.1% is Black. 0.3% is American Indian or Alaska Native. The remaining 1.2% of Fayette County residents are of mixed or other races.

### Demographic Characteristics

The total population of Fayette County is 45,192 persons (ACS, 2016). 5.9% of the population is under five years of age and 18.9%

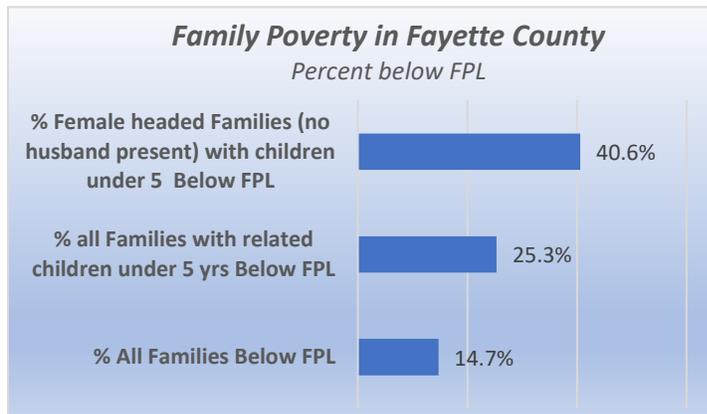
### Fayette County Population by Race



There are 17,845 households and 12,121 family households in the county. 4,889 or 27.4% of the total households have children under 18 yrs. of age.

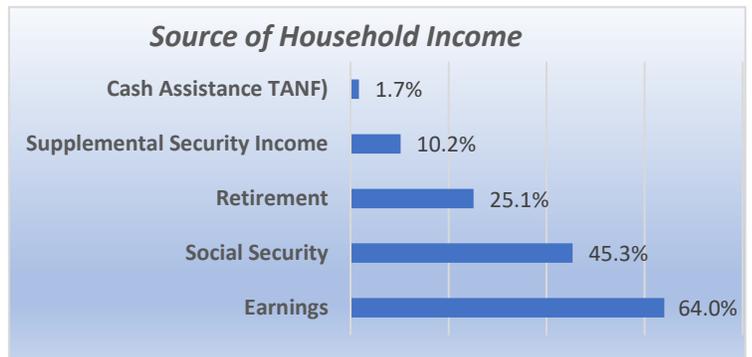
### Socio-Economic Characteristics

14.7% of Fayette County families have annual income below the FPL. In families with children under the age of 5 only, the poverty rate increases to 25.3%. Single female headed families with all children under 5 yrs. of age have higher rates of poverty. 40.6% of these single parent families with young children have annual income below the FPL.



Median household income in Fayette County is \$37,846 which is below the state average of \$42,644 (ACS 2012-16).

64.0% of the households in the county have income from employment and 1.7% receive cash assistance through the TANF program.



The “Liquid Asset Poverty Rate” defined as a lack of sufficient liquid assets to subsist at the poverty level for three months in absence of any income, is at 41.0% in the county. In addition, 15.3% of all households are estimated to have zero net worth. (2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation, US Census Bureau).

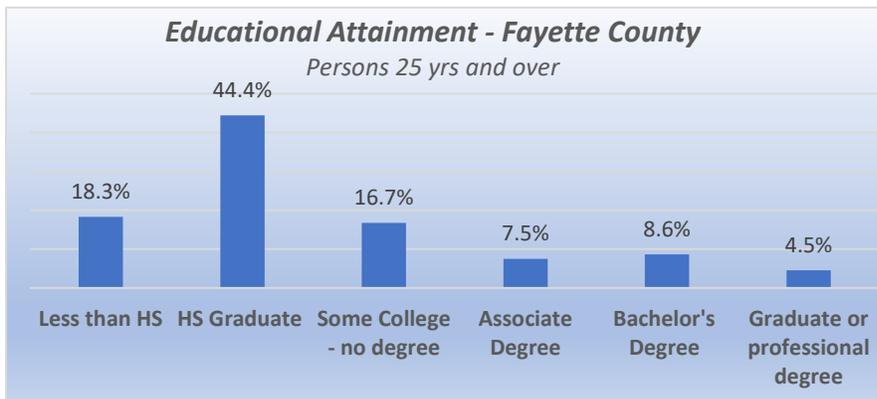
### Causes of Poverty

Primary causes of poverty in the county appear to include:

- A higher rate of unemployment than the state average (March 2018),
- A preponderance of lower paying jobs,
- Lack of post-secondary education and skills among the adult population,
- Lower than average high school graduation rates,
- Substance abuse and addiction, and
- High rates of disability.

The unemployment rate in Fayette County is at 7.7% (March 2018) and the rate increased between March of 2017 and March of 2018 by 0.4%. Unemployment in the county remains higher than the state average of 5.9%. The percentage of the population with a disability is estimated to be at 26.4%. The drug overdose mortality rate in Fayette County is 33 per 100,000 population (CDC Mortality data 2014-16).

Kids Count data indicates the school dropout rate in Fayette County is high at 10.6% (Kids Count 2015). The 4-year cohort graduation rate is 84.5% (WVEIS 2017). 11<sup>th</sup> grade reading proficiency is at 33.6% and mathematics proficiency is very low at only 9.0% (WVEIS 2016-17).



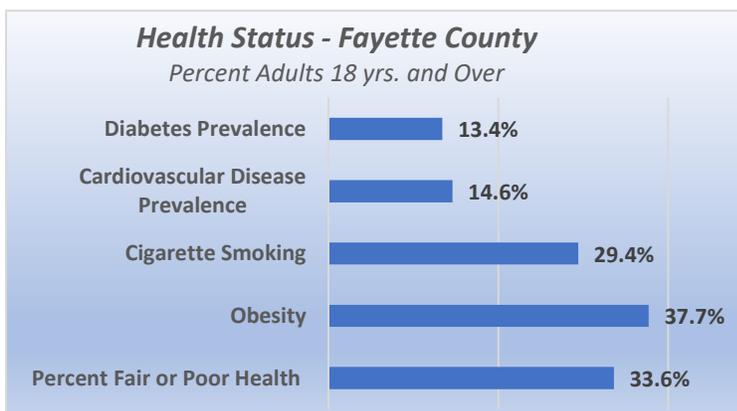
Educational attainment is relatively low among Fayette County residents over 25 yrs. of age. 13.1% hold a college degree and an additional 7.5% have an associate degree; however, 62.7% of county residents over age 25 yrs. have no education beyond high school and 18.3% of county residents have less than a high school education (ACS 2016).

Increasing numbers of young people are enrolling in higher education programs. The 2016 college going rate (4 yr. institutions) in the county is at 29.7% of graduating high school seniors and an additional 10.6% enrolled in a 2-yr. program (WV Higher Education Policy Commission).

The community discussion held in Fayette County identified the following factors contributing to poverty:

- Geographic isolation,
- Opioid abuse and addiction,
- Family dynamics promoting generational poverty, and
- Lack of education.

When asked to define poverty and the factors that keep county residents in poverty, community discussion participants identified: (1) situational poverty resulting from loss of employment or health problems, (2) acceptance of poverty as a way of life, (3) parental fears of children leaving results in some degree of generational poverty. One indicator of potential generational poverty is births to mothers with less than a high school education. The percentage of total births to county residents without a high school education is relatively high in Fayette County at 27.4% (Kids Count 2015).



The general health of county residents and access to healthcare, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment are also factors contributing to poverty in Fayette County. Among the adult population (18 yrs. of age and older), 37.7% are estimated to be obese, and 29.4% of the adult population of the county smoke (BRFS 2014).

11.5% of the population is estimated to be without any type of health insurance (ACS 2016). The infant mortality rate in Fayette

County is at 3.7 deaths per 1,000 live births and 9.0% of babies born to county residents are low birth weight (less than 2500 grams). The relatively high teen birth rate also appears to be a cause for concern and a contributing factor to poverty at 51.7 births per 1,000 females (Kids Count 2015).

## Community Needs

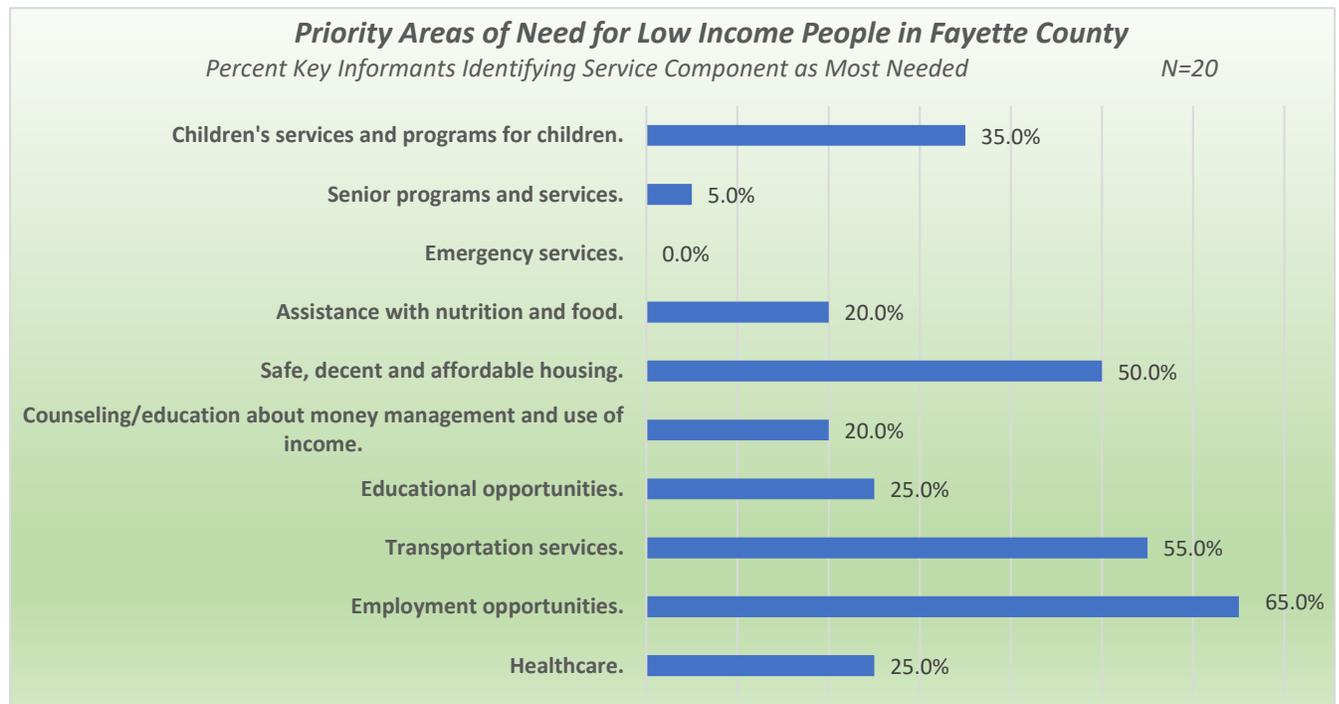
The survey was designed to identify overall areas of need in each county served by EnAct as well as the priority needs within each of the ten distinct domains assessed. Only twenty (20) key informants familiar with local services and community conditions completed the community survey in Fayette County.

### Overall Needs and Priorities

Key informants surveyed were asked:

*” What do you think are the top three areas of need of low income people? ”*

Employment opportunities were the most frequently selected area of need by key informants. 65.0% of survey respondents indicated jobs and employment was one of the priority areas of need of low income people in the county. Transportation services and housing were additional domains identified as “top areas of need” by the key informants completing the community survey. These domains were selected by about half of the 20 key informants in Fayette County as an area of the service system that needs to be improved.

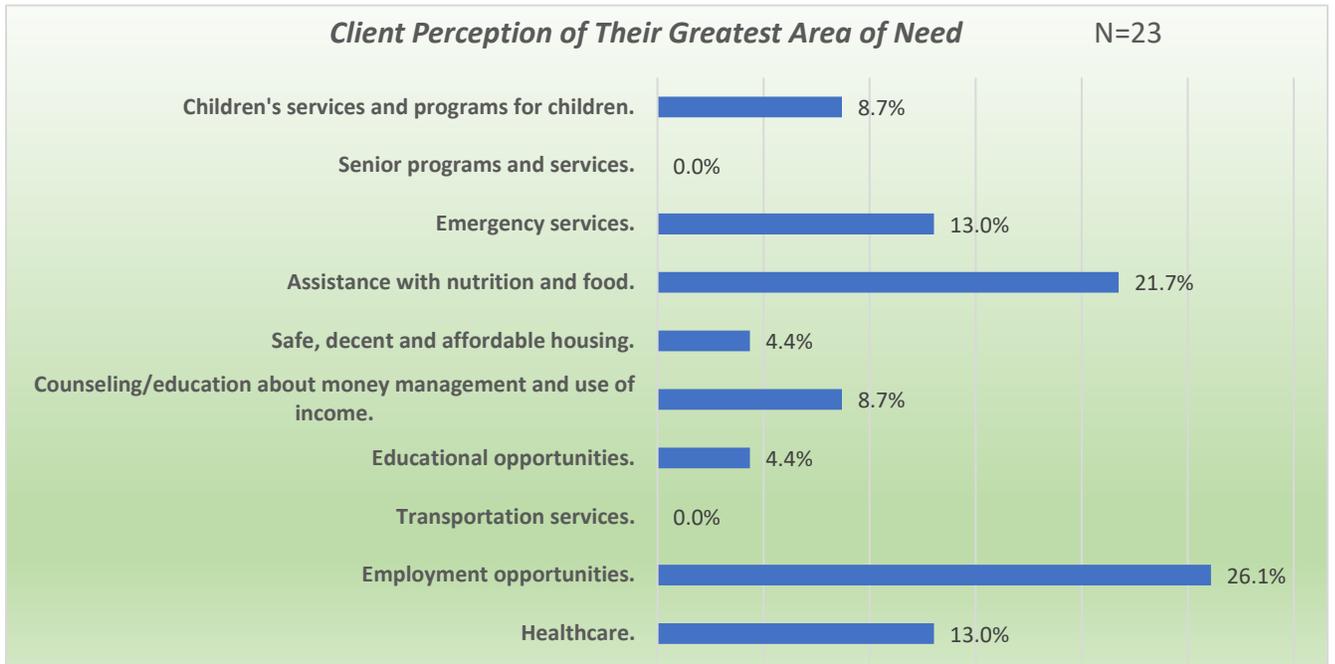


Services and programs for children were identified as a secondary priority area by 35.0% of the key informants.

Service recipients were asked:

*“If you could only choose one type of service, which of the following would be your area of greatest need?”*

Thirty-two (32) service recipients responded to the survey in Fayette County; however, all clients responding did not offer their experiences for every area examined through the survey. Among those that answered the question about their particular area of greatest need (23 people), employment opportunities were chosen as the area of greatest need by 26.1% and assistance with food and nutrition was the area of service selected by 21.7% of the service recipients.



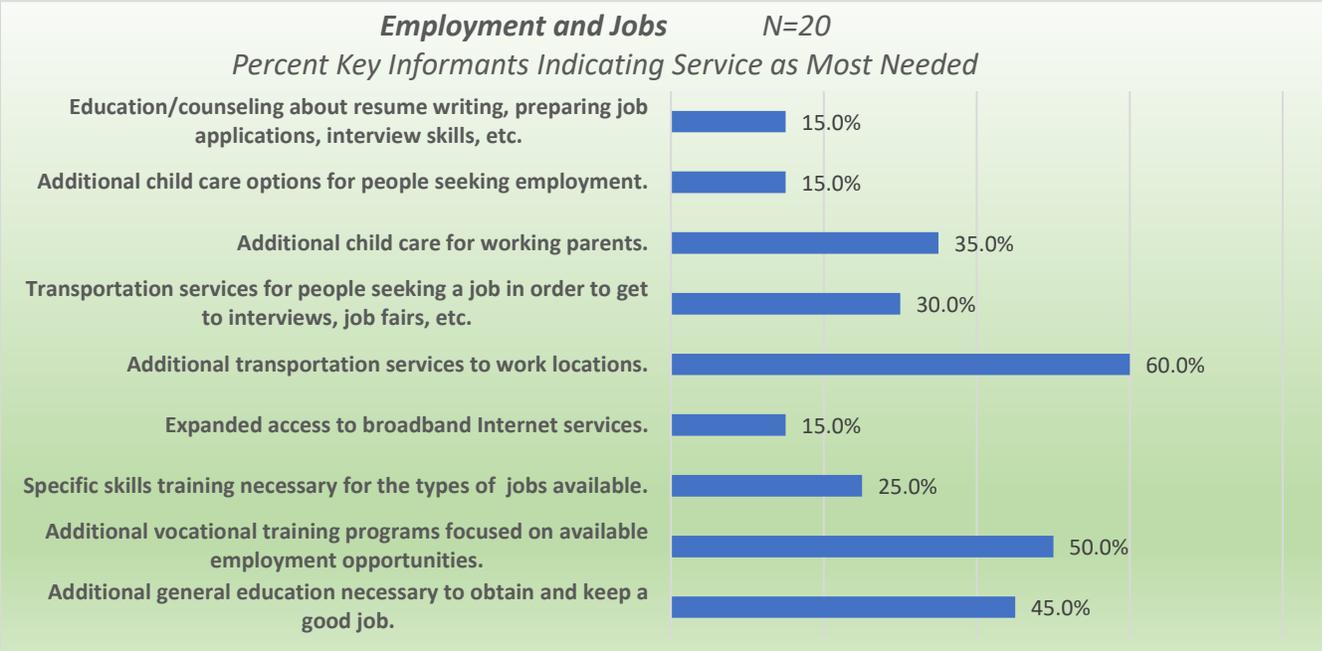
Other services or opportunities were selected by at least one of the respondents except for Senior programs and transportation services.

The key informants responding to the community survey were also asked to identify what they considered to be the three top priorities for the county within each of the individual assessment domains examined for the Community Needs Assessment. Service recipients were also asked to share their needs and personal experiences about each of the domains. Responses of both the key informants and low-income service recipients are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

*Employment and Jobs:*

When asked about the most needed services within the employment and jobs domain, a majority (60.0%) of the key informants responding to the survey in Fayette County indicated transportation to work locations was needed. Additional training opportunities for the types of jobs available in the area was also a priority for half (50.0%) of the survey respondents. Based on the survey responses, the top three priorities identified by key informants in Fayette County related to employment and jobs are:

- Transportation to work locations.
- Specific training for the types of jobs available, and
- General education necessary to obtain and keep a “good job”.



A high percentage of the 27 clients sharing their experiences about jobs and employment (59.3%) said they have a disability that prevents them from working. 25.9% (7 of 27 respondents) said they have tried to find work but there is nothing available to them in the area, 4 of the clients said they had no means of transportation to get to job interviews or work locations, and 3 said they were convicted of crime and no one would hire them.

The key informants surveyed were also asked about the barriers to employment in Fayette County.



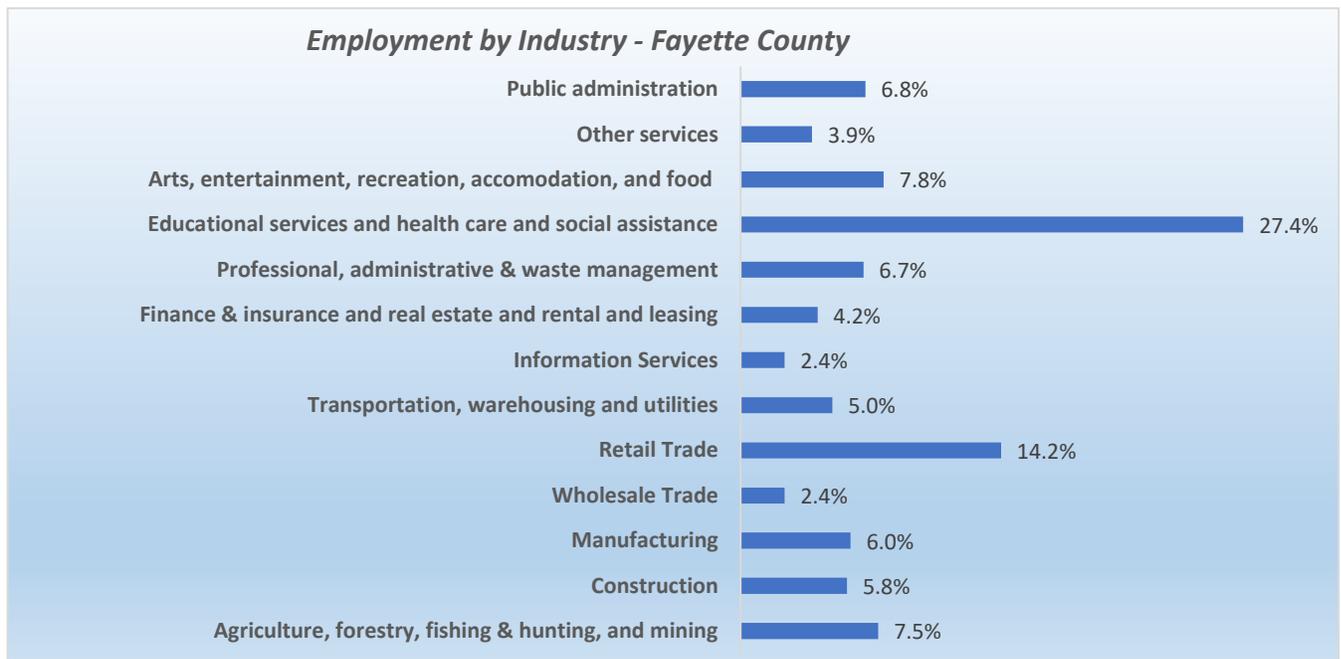
The most significant barriers to employment identified by the key informants support the experiences of

some of the clients related to seeking employment. These barriers include:

- A lack of “second chance” programs available to persons with criminal or substance abuse histories. (50.0%),
- A lack of transportation to get to job interviews or work locations (45.0%), and
- A lack of opportunity for employment due to jobs not being available in the area (35.0%).

45.0% of the key informants also indicated they believe low income households receiving government benefits fear they will lose their benefits if they become employed. The high cost of childcare also appears to be a barrier to employment. 6 of the 20 key informants said there would be little or no net gain in household income from a low wage job after paying for childcare.

Current employment in Fayette County is highest within the education, healthcare, and social service sectors which tend to be primarily supported by public funds. Education, healthcare, and social services jobs account for 27.4% of total employment in the county. 14.2% of the jobs are found in the retail trade sector; however, other employment is spread across all other industry sectors with no single sector accounting for more than 8% of total jobs available.

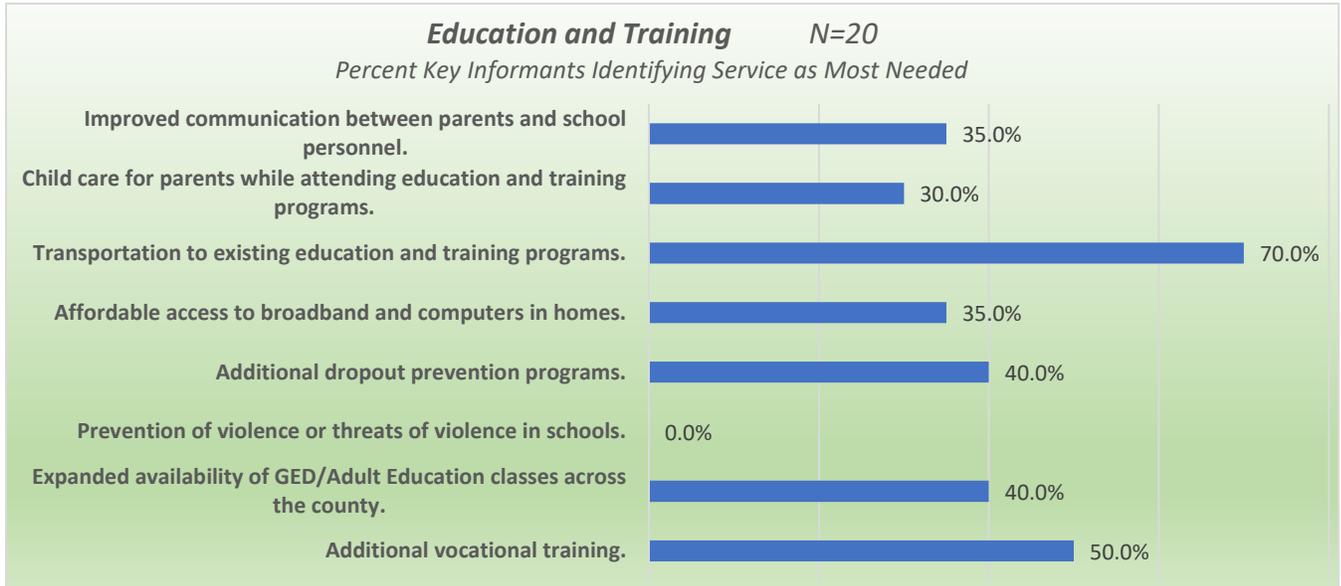


The largest employers in Fayette County (in order of number of people employed) are:

1. Fayette County Board of Education,
2. Mount Olive Correctional Complex,
3. Wal-Mart Associates, and
4. W VA Manufacturing, LLC.

*Education and Training:*

The key informants tend to think the most significant need related to education and training is transportation to the existing education and training programs available in the county. 70.0% of the respondents selected transportation to existing training as a priority area of need in the county. Additional vocational training programs was also prioritized by 50.0% of the key informants knowledgeable of local needs and community conditions.

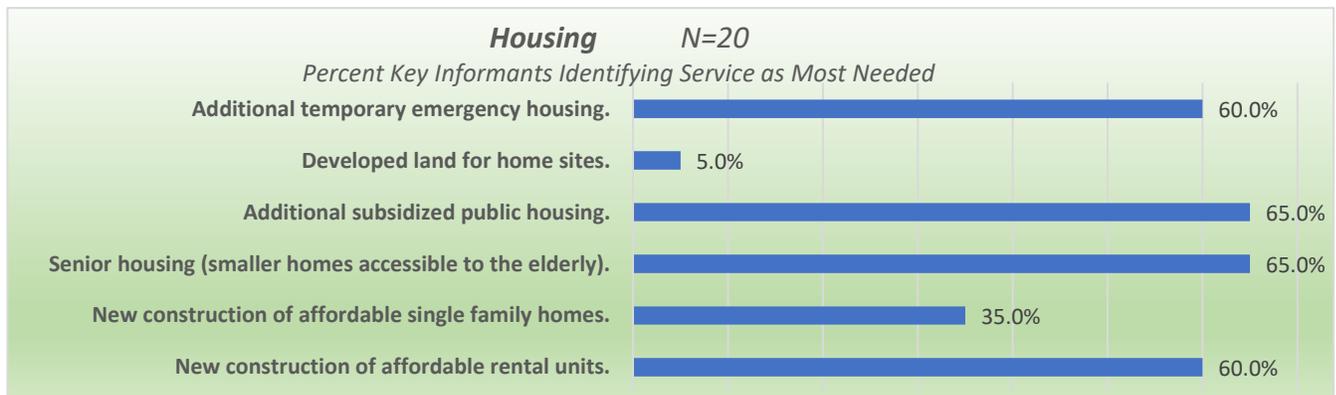


Expanded availability of GED classes/adult education and drop-out prevention programs are viewed as one of the most needed services within this domain by 40.0% of the key informants.

42.1% of the service recipients sharing their experiences about education and training confirmed the need for transportation to existing programs. 83 of the 19 clients who answered the question about their experience said they lacked transportation to a program they would like to attend. 7 Of 19 clients (36.8%) also said they could not afford an Internet connection or computer in their home.

*Housing:*

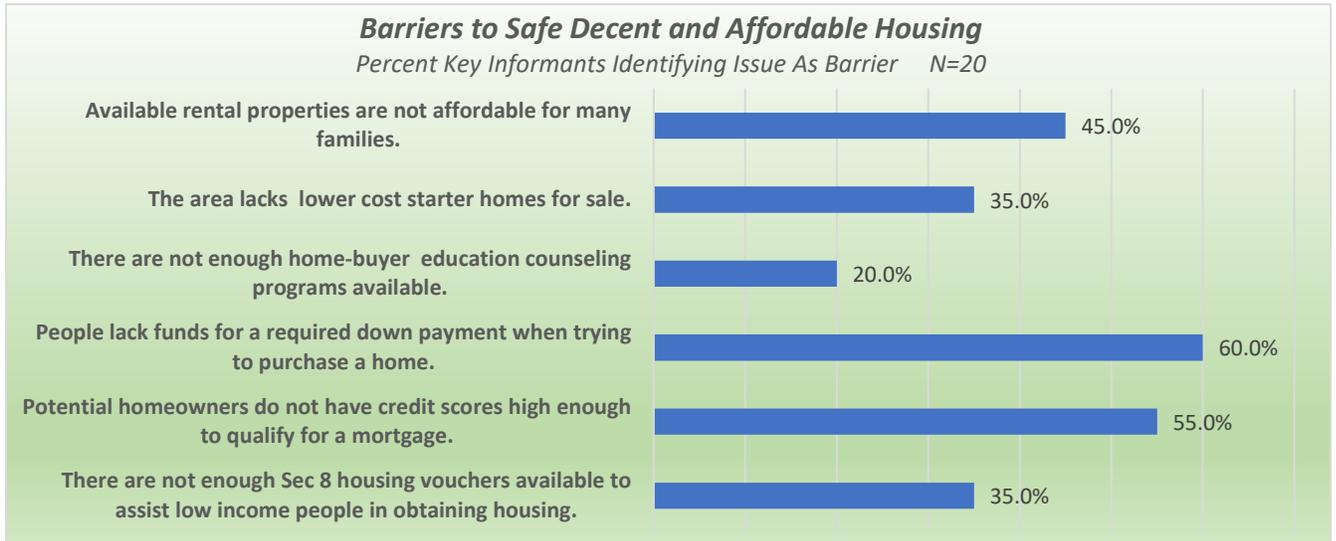
Key informants responding to the survey in Fayette County identified a need for more affordable housing including Senior housing (65.0%), subsidized public housing (65.0%), and affordable rental units (60.0%).



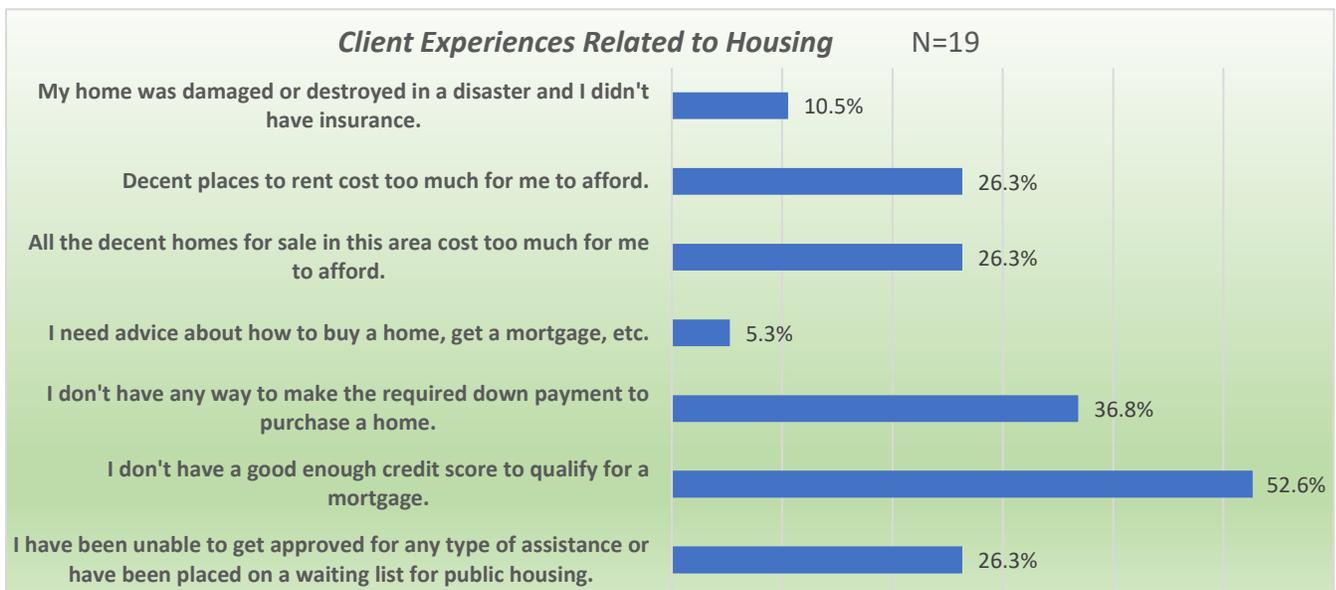
Additional temporary emergency housing is also seen as a priority by 60.0% of the 20 key informants

completing the community survey.

When asked about barriers to obtaining safe, decent and affordable housing, 60.0% of the key informants identified an inability of many residents to purchase a home due to a lack of a sufficient down payment and more than half (55.0%) said potential homeowners cannot qualify for a mortgage due to low credit scores. Nearly half of the informants (45.0%) indicated available rental units are not affordable for many Fayette County families.

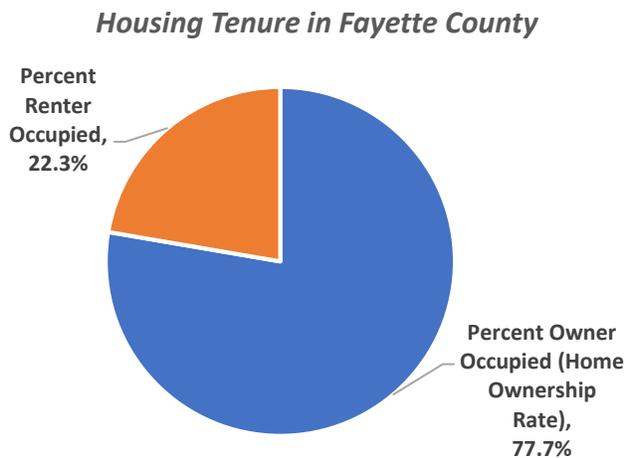


Fayette County service recipients relating their experiences about housing reinforced the perception of the key informants about poor credit scores and inability to make a down payment on a home. 52.6% of the service recipients said they did not have a good enough credit score to qualify for a mortgage, and 36.8% said they had no way to make a required down payment.



Secondary data sets were reviewed in order to provide more information about housing in Fayette County. Available data tends to reinforce the need for additional safe decent and affordable housing units in the county.

77.7% of Fayette County residents are home owners 22.3% live in rental properties.



There are 21,510 housing units in Fayette County; 83.0% of existing housing units are occupied while 17.0% are vacant. Housing is relatively old with 32.8% of existing housing stock built prior to 1950. As of 2016, there were an estimated 94 occupied homes without plumbing in Fayette County.

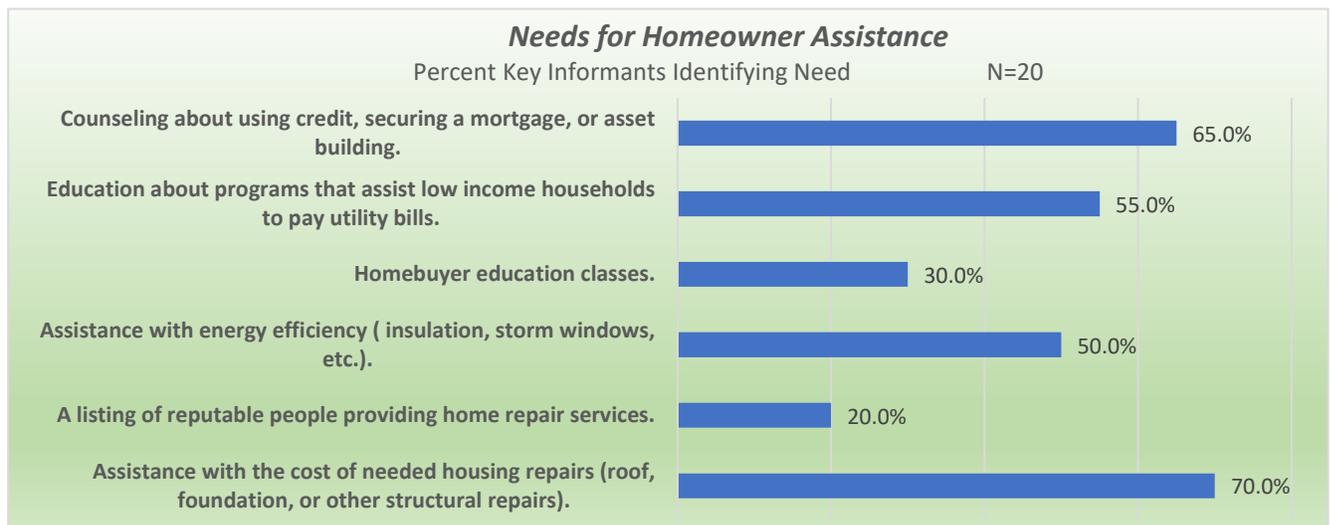
The median value of owner occupied housing in the county is \$81,300 (ACS 2011-16).

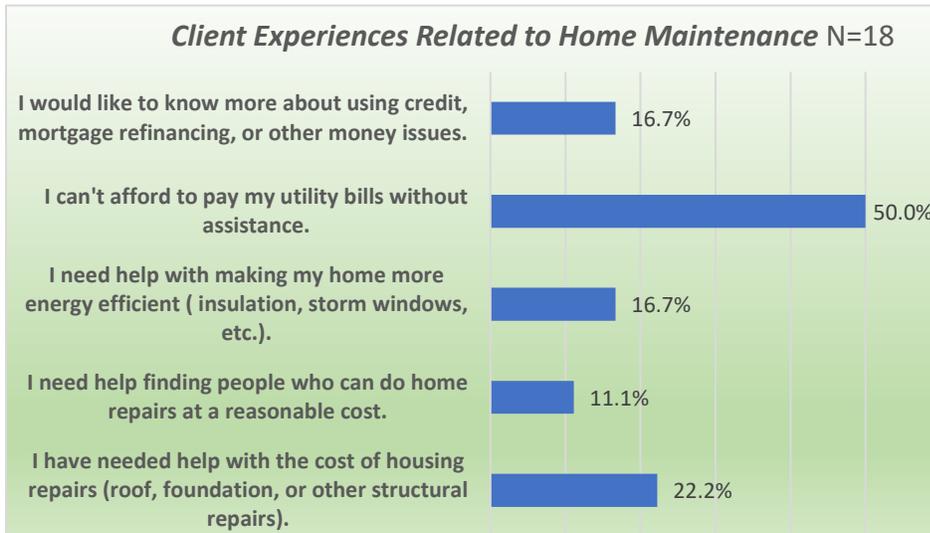
Median monthly owner costs for those with a mortgage is \$823, and 24.4% of homeowners with a mortgage are “cost burdened” with monthly housing costs exceeding 30% of income.

Median rent in Fayette County is \$560 per month and nearly half (46.4%) of the people who rent are cost burdened based on their gross rent exceeding 30% of the household income. (ACS 2011-16).

*Homeowner Assistance:*

Key informants in Fayette County indicated by their survey responses that assistance with housing repairs and counseling about using credit, securing a mortgage, and building assets are the greatest needs of low income people in the county. 70.0% of the key informants prioritized repairs to existing homes, and 65.0% indicated one of the most needed services to assist current homeowners is counseling about credit, mortgages, or and/or asset building. Education about programs that assist low income households with utility bills and assistance with energy efficiency were also identified as priorities by half of the survey respondents



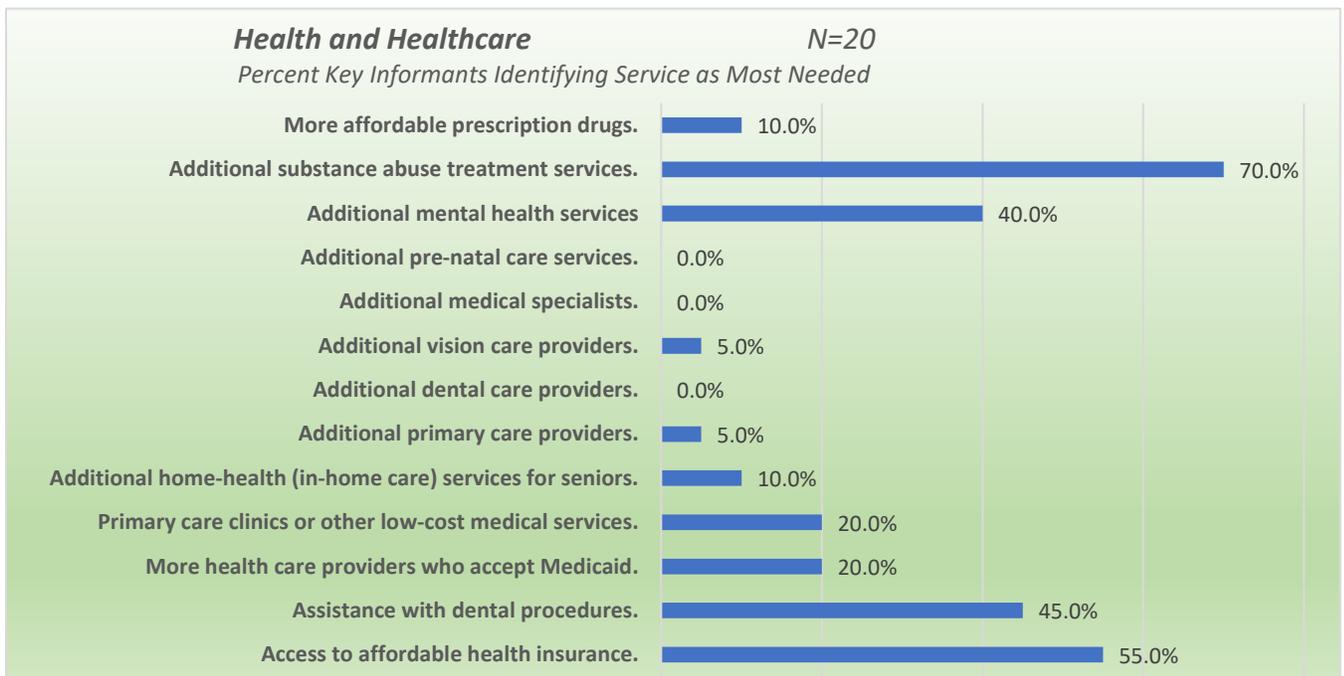


When the service recipients in Fayette County were asked about their needs and experiences related to maintaining their home, half of the 18 people responding to the survey said they can't afford to pay their utility bills without assistance. 22.2% said they have needed help with structural repairs, and 16.7% need help making their home more energy efficient.

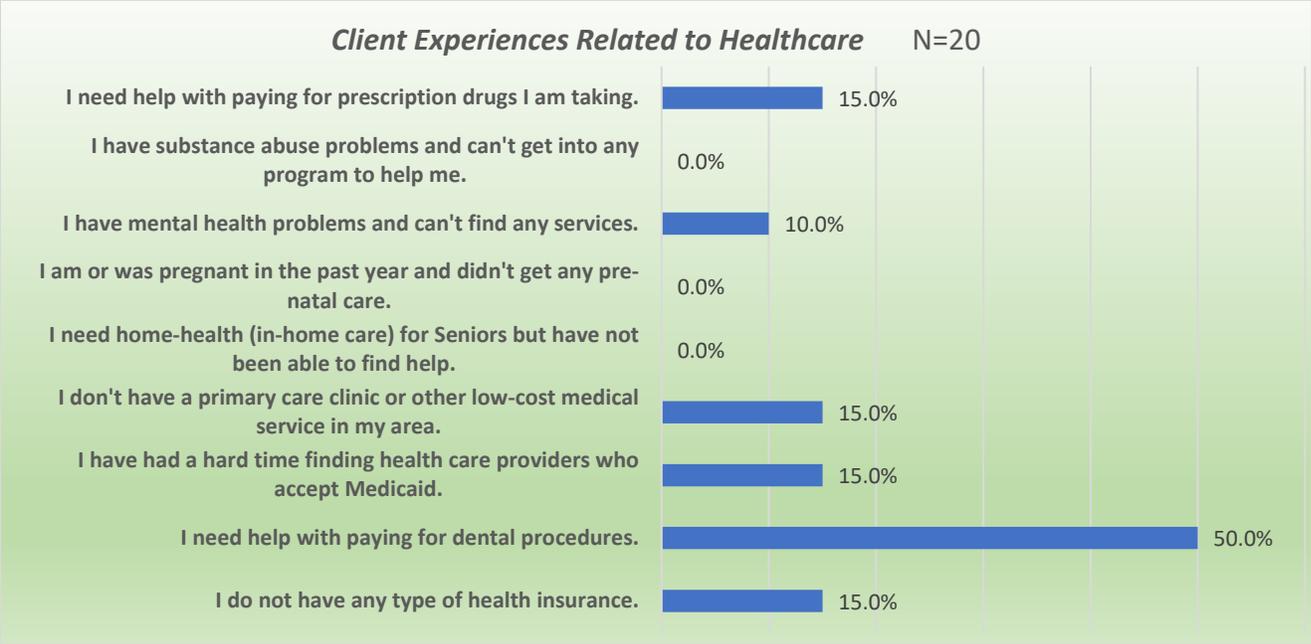
*Healthcare:*

Substance abuse treatment is the health-related service most needed based on the key informant survey responses. 70.0% of the respondents identified this as "most needed".

Nearly half of the key informants (55.0%) of the key informants indicated people in the county need help accessing affordable health insurance, and 45.0% think assistance with dental procedures is a priority in the county. Additional access to mental health services is also an identified need by 40.0% of respondents.

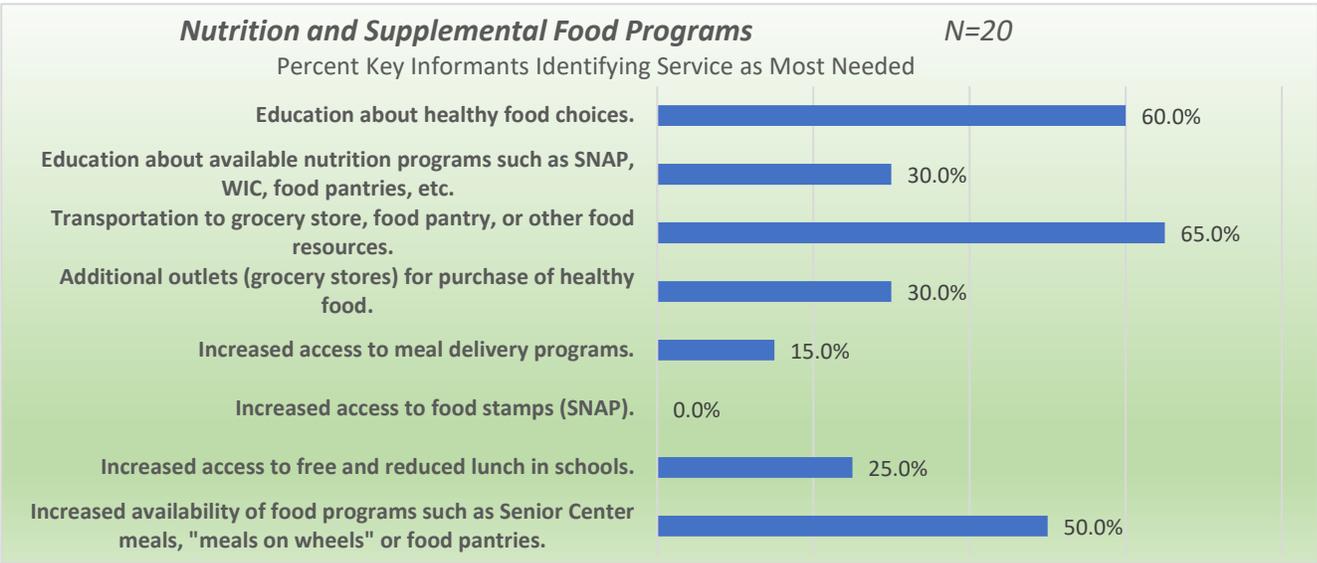


When service recipients were asked about the issues or experiences they have had related to healthcare, the clear priority identified by half of 20 respondents was assistance with paying for dental procedures.



**Nutrition:**

When asked about community needs related to food and nutrition, Fayette County respondents to the community survey focused on transportation to grocery stores and supplemental food programs, education about healthy food choices, and increased availability of food programs (food pantries, meal programs, etc.). 65.0% of the key informants said transportation to grocery stores, food pantries, or other food programs was one of the most needed services in the county.



The low-income persons receiving services were asked about their experiences trying to provide adequate food for themselves and their families. 43.5% of the 23 clients responding said they sometimes need help feeding themselves or their family but were unable to find anyplace to get free food. 39.1% of these

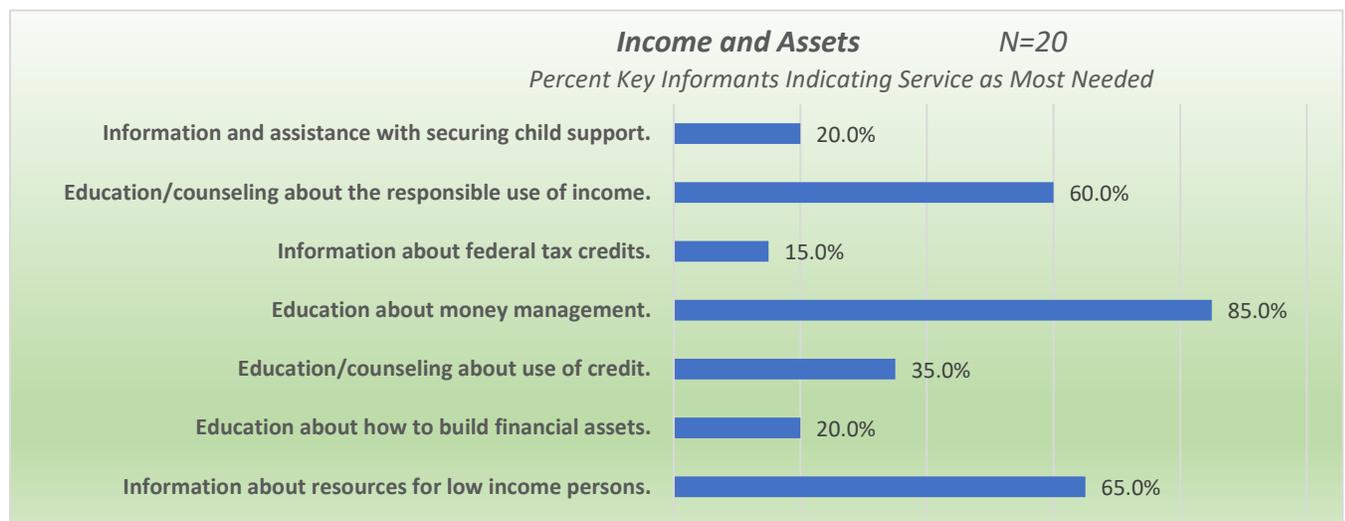
service recipients indicated they would like more information about healthy food choices, and 34.8% said they have no way to get to a grocery store, food pantry or other place to get food.

In 2015, there were 23 supplemental food programs (food pantries, hot meal programs, backpack programs, meal delivery, etc.) serving Fayette County (*WV Foodlink 2015*), and 19.4% of households receive food stamps to supplement their food budgets (ACS 2016). 974 families were enrolled in WIC through the WIC office serving the county in 2013. The *WV Foodlink County Profile for Fayette County* documents 73 retail locations that accept food stamps and 8 locations accepting WIC (2015).

There are 5,159 school-age children eligible for free and reduced cost meals at school, but available data from 2015 reflects only 62.0% of eligible students participate in the program (*WV FoodLink*).

*Income and Assets:*

Community Survey responses indicate low income residents need education about money management including using credit, budgeting, using bank accounts, and other issues related to financial literacy. 85.0% of the key informants believe such education is one of the services most needed in the area. 65.0% of respondents indicated information about available resources such as health insurance coverage, nutrition programs, housing subsidies, etc. was a priority need in the county, and 60.0% believe education and counseling about the responsible use of income is a needed service.

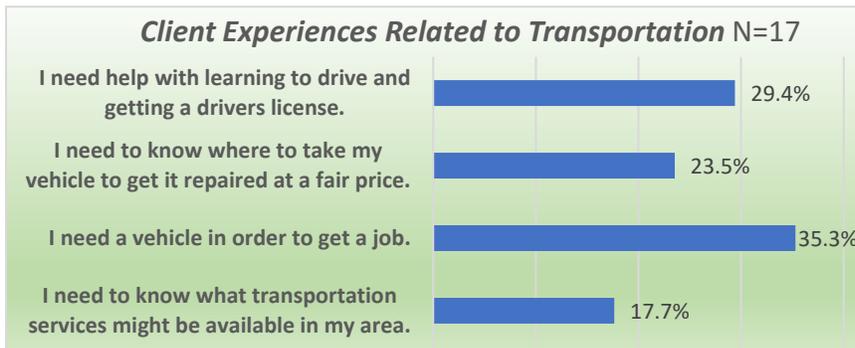
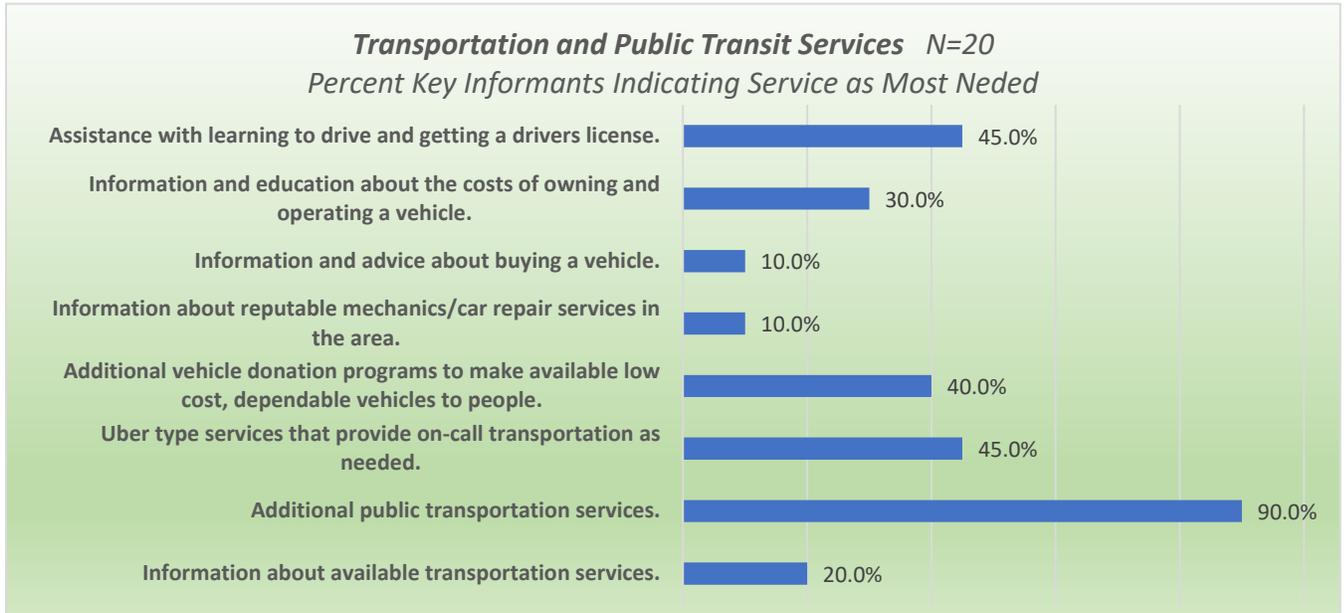


Available data from the 2015 FDIC Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked households indicates 8.1% of Fayette County households are “unbanked” (have no checking or savings accounts).

The service recipients relating their experiences and needs about money and finances appear to be most concerned about how to raise their credit score. 45.0% of the 20 clients responding to the question said they wanted to learn how to improve their credit score, while no more than 20% expressed an interest in learning more about other issues related to money and finances. One in four (25.0%) of the service recipients said they need more information about health insurance, housing subsidies, or other programs to help low income people.

*Transportation:*

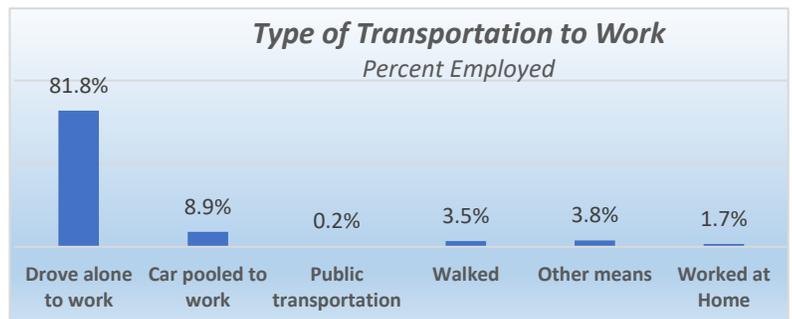
Additional access to public transportation was a clear priority identified by the key informants. 90.0% of the informants participating in the survey indicated access to public transportation was the most needed service in order to meet the needs of county residents. 45.0% also said assistance with learning to drive and on-call “Uber type services” were needed. 40.0% of the survey respondents thought a vehicle donation programs to make available dependable but low-cost vehicles to people in need was a high priority.



35.3% of the service recipients surveyed about transportation needs said they need a vehicle in order to get a job, and 29.4% said they need help learning to drive and getting a license. Dependable transportation is necessary for most employed people to access their work location. The mean travel time to work for current workers is 28.1 minutes.

Most workers rely on private transportation to get from home to their work site. 90.7% of all persons employed either drive alone or car pool to work (ACS 2011-16).

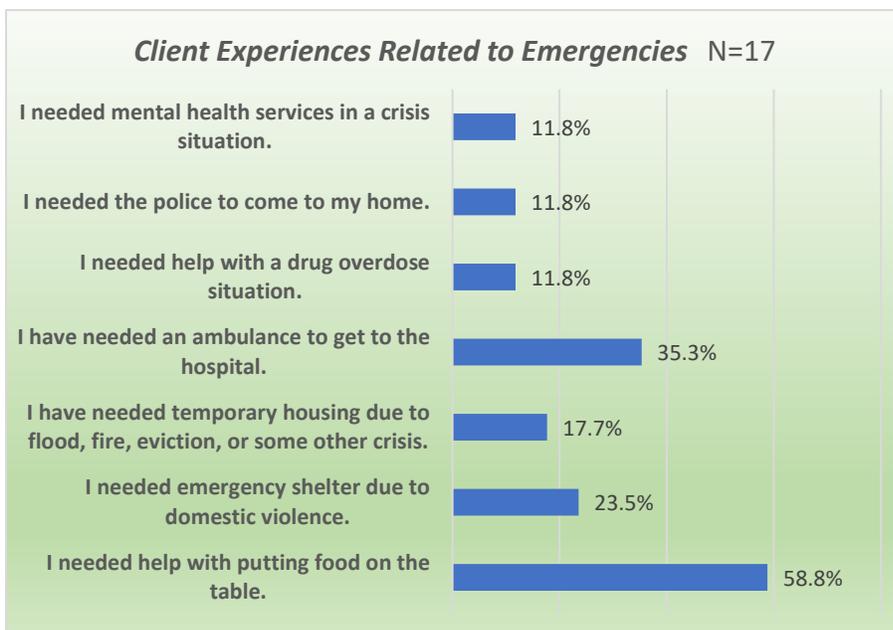
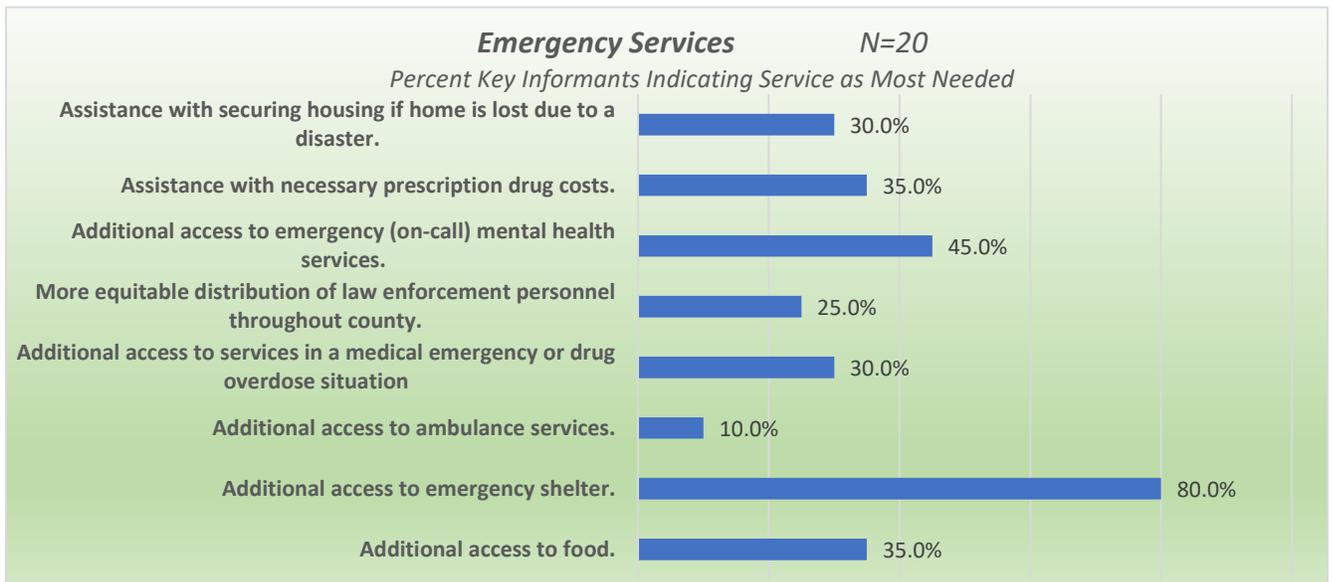
There are no public transit services available in Fayette County. Specialized and limited transportation services appear to be available through some local



agencies including the Fayette Senior Programs, the Head Start program in Oak Hill, and FMRS Health Systems. These agencies generally provide limited transportation for some persons utilizing agency services.

*Emergency Services:*

The most frequently cited need by the key informants within the emergency services domain is temporary emergency shelter in cases of domestic violence, flood, fire, eviction, etc. 80.0% of the respondents said temporary shelter was a service most needed in the county. Other needs within this domain identified by the key informants include access to emergency on-call mental health services (45.0%), assistance with prescription drug costs (35.0%), and access to food (35.0%).



58.8% of the clients surveyed about their experiences related to emergency situations said they have needed help putting food on their table. 35.3% have needed ambulance services (emergency medical transportation). Four (4) of the 17 clients sharing their experiences said they have needed emergency shelter due to domestic violence and 3 have needed temporary housing due to a flood, fire, eviction or other crisis.

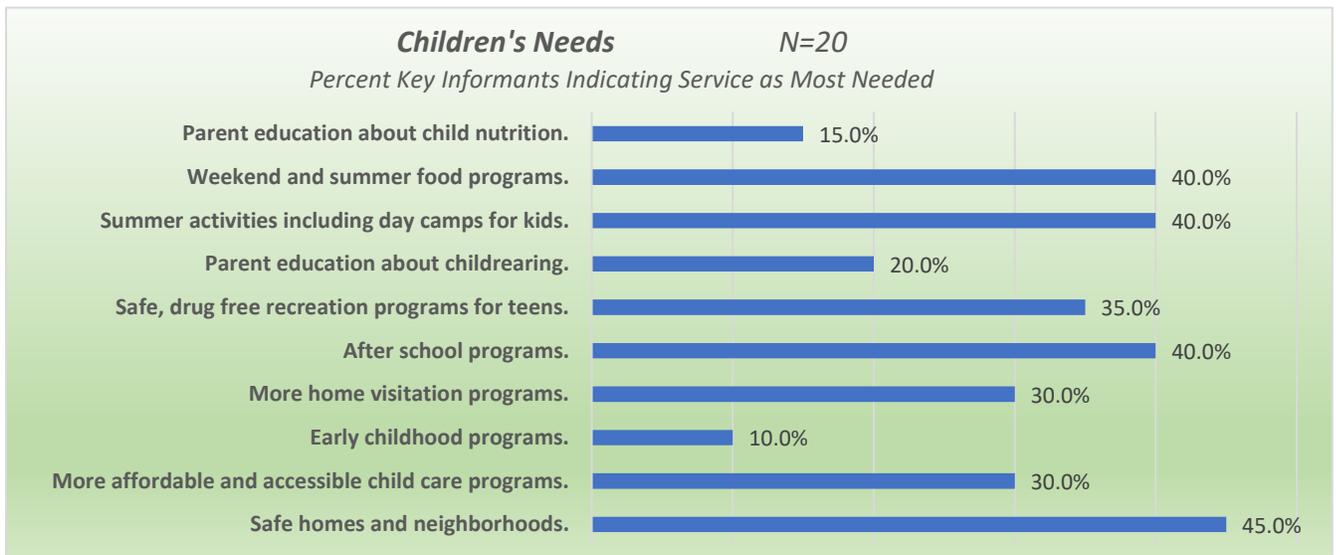
*Children's Needs:*

There does not appear to be any clear consensus among the key informants about children's needs in Fayette County. 45.0% indicate safe

homes and neighborhoods are a concern and 40.0% prioritize several other types of services as most needed including:

- Weekend and summer food programs,
- Summer activities for children/youth including day camps, and
- After school programs.

Safe and drug free recreational programs for teens was a priority for 35.0% of the respondents familiar with the county service system.



Available quantitative data related to children’s needs can be used to further explore child safety issues. The child abuse/neglect rate in the county in 2015 was 35.4 per 1,000 children (Kids Count 2015). There were 77 court filings for child abuse/neglect in 2016 which is a rate of 15.7 filings per 1,000 households with children (2016 *Circuit Court case filings data*). There were also 247 domestic violence cases filed in 2016 which is a rate of 20.4 filings per 1,000 family households (2016 *Family Court case filings data*).

9.2% of children under the age of 18 yrs. have some type of disability (ACS 2016). 333 young children (preschool age) in Fayette County are enrolled in a Pre-K program at one of 24 pre-k classrooms serving the county. The Pre-K participation rate is, however, low at 70.0% (2017 school year). The relatively low participation rate in Pre-K programs may be tied to the lack of transportation and isolation of many smaller communities.

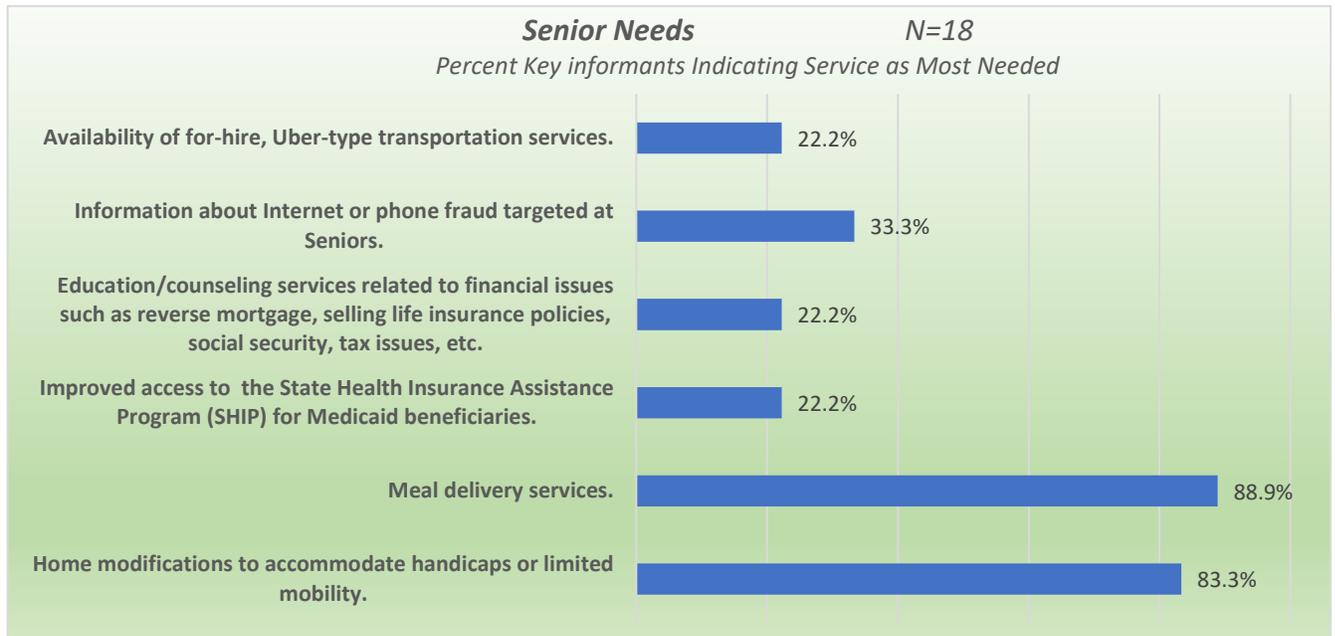
When service recipients were asked about issues or situations they had personally experienced within the past year related to children’s needs, only 9 people indicated they had experience within this domain. 44.4% of those 9 service recipients said they were concerned about what their teenager does with his or her time. Other concerns expressed by 2 of the clients were related to child safety and the need for help with meals on weekends and in the summer when children cannot get meals at school.

#### Senior Needs

There are 5,799 households with Seniors in Fayette County and 51.0% of Seniors have some type of disability. A relatively high portion (28.8%) of the Senior population (over 65 yrs. of age) lives alone

(ACS 2016). It is estimated that 53.4% of grandparents who live with their grandchildren are responsible for raising grandchildren under 18 yrs. of age.

The most prevalent Senior needs identified by the key informant responses are meal delivery services, and home modifications to accommodate handicapping conditions or limited mobility. 88.9% of the key informants indicated meal delivery was a “most needed” service within the Senior Needs domain, and 83.3% prioritized home modifications for Seniors with a handicap or mobility issue.

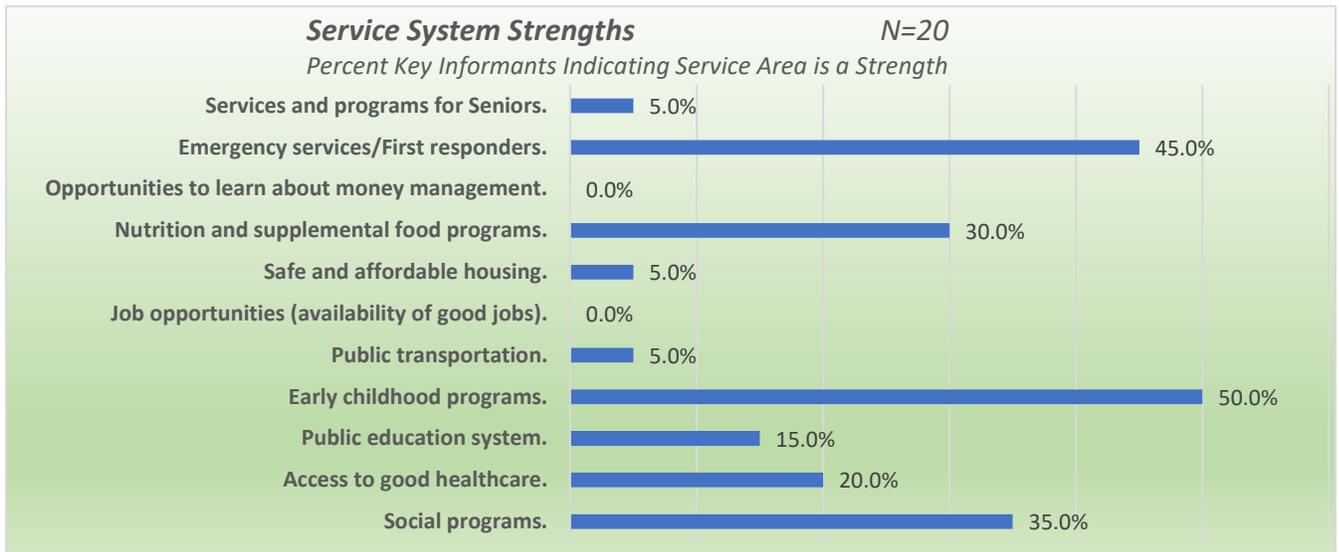


When low income service recipients in Fayette County were asked about the needs of Seniors, 8 people responded. Three (3) of the respondents said they need meal delivery services since they are elderly and can't get out of their homes, and 2 of the respondents need home modifications.

#### Primary Strengths and Community Resources

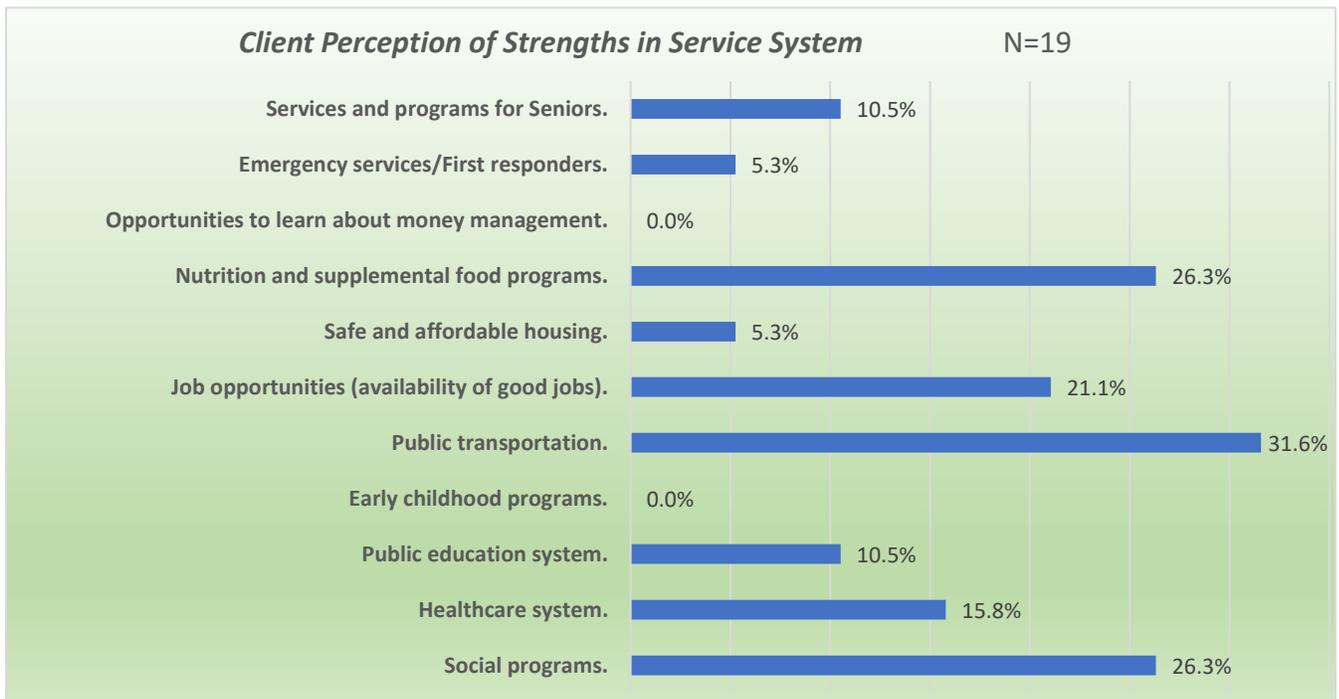
Community survey respondents in Fayette County were asked what they considered to be the greatest strengths within the Fayette County services system and they were asked to select all options they consider to be a “particular strength”. Early childhood services and first responders are considered to be the strongest components of the service system in Fayette County based on the responses of key informants. 50.0% of the respondents selected early childhood programs as a “particular strength and 45.0% indicated they though emergency services provided by first responders was a strong component of the overall system.

Other components of the overall service system are seen by relatively few key informants as areas of strength.



Service recipients offered their opinion about strengths in the services system and the service recipients surveyed were asked to select only those service system components that had been responsive to their particular needs.

31.6% of the 19 service recipients responding think public transportation is a strong component of the service system, and 26.3% find nutrition and food programs and social programs to be strengths.



Persons participating in the community discussion held in Fayette County identified a number of strengths

and assets within the county including:

- Available property
- Community centers that are available to everyone
- The people - they are resilient, unique, different, everyone has their own idea and vision. People have a sense of pride, great work ethic
- Recreation opportunities available (walking group)
- Bridge Valley and Montgomery Hospital and Brookefield Plant
- Montgomery General Care
- Faith-based community resources are available
- Rich history that can lead into tourism
- The YMCA providing programs for families

Some of the resources that address the needs of low income families identified within Fayette County include:

- A range of public health services provided by Fayette County Health Department
- School-based Wellness Center at Collins Middle, Mt Hope Elementary, Mt Hope High, Oak Hill High and Meadow Bridge schools
- Fayette Clinic in Lochgelly
- Beards Fork Community Center
- New River Health Association FQHC
- Behavioral Health services provided by FMRS Systems Inc.
- Fayette Starting Points Center
- *Right from the Start* program for Medicaid eligible pregnant women and infants
- Forty-nine licensed family day care providers
- Twenty-four Pre-K classrooms
- Five Head Start locations
- Early Head Start program
- Birth to Three services
- MIHOW home visiting program
- West Virginia University Extension Service
- Local office of the WV Department of Health and Human Resources
- Fayette County Family Resource Network
- Five banking locations in Oak Hill, Fayetteville and Anstead