



Putnam County
Community Needs and Resources

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PUTNAM COUNTY

History & Geography

Putnam County, in the western part of West Virginia, was created in 1848 from parts of Cabell, Mason, and Kanawha counties. It was named in honor of General Israel Putnam of Massachusetts (1718-1790). The county seat is at Winfield on the Kanawha River. The town was incorporated on February 21, 1868 and named in honor of General Winfield Scott, the commanding General of the American Army during the War with Mexico. The Putnam County region was among the first to be settled in West Virginia and is among its most productive agricultural markets. Much of the northern part of the county is wooded or in farmland.



George Washington, who surveyed the county's Buffalo district in the fall of 1770, was probably the first man of European descent to set foot in the county. James Conner was the first settler. He arrived in 1775. Winfield, the county seat, was established on a 400-acre tract of land owned by Charles Brown. He established a ferry across the river in 1818. The first meeting of the county court was held at the home of Talleyrand P. Brown, in Winfield, on May 22, 1848.



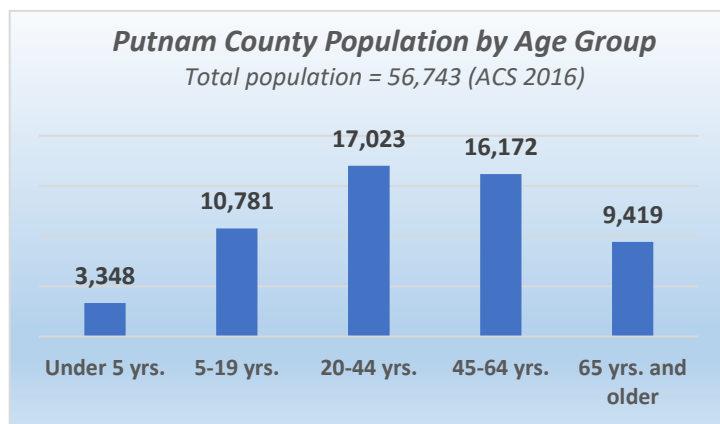
The Putnam County economy is strongly tied to that of the Charleston and Huntington metropolitan areas located to the east and west respectively. The Interstate 64 corridor follows the suburban Teays Valley through the southern neck of Putnam County. The development of the Toyota manufacturing plant in 1996 provided a substantial boost to the local economy and employment opportunities in Putnam County.

Putnam County encompasses 346 square miles and the county has a population density of 160.5 persons per sq. mile.

Demographic Characteristics

The total population of Putnam County is 56,743 persons (ACS, 2016). 5.9% of the population is under five years of age and 16.6% is over the age of 65 yrs.

96.5% of the population of Putnam County is White and 1.5% is Black. 0.1% is American Indian or Alaska Native. The remaining 1.9%

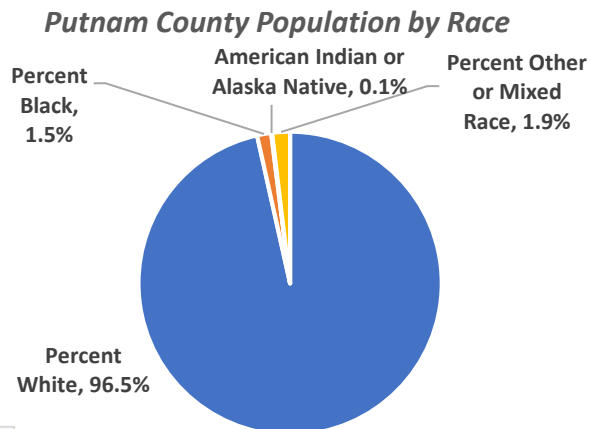
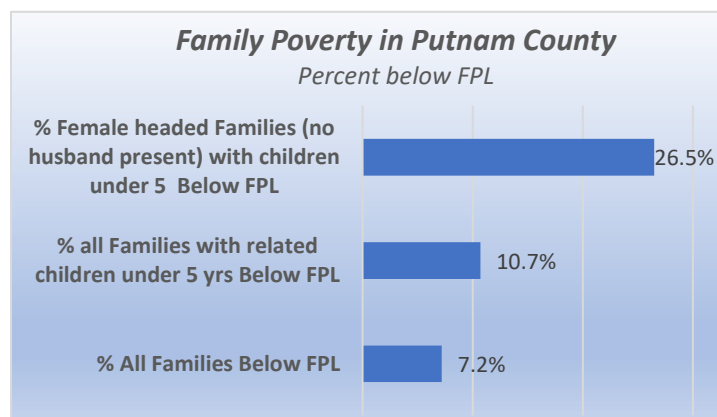


of Putnam County residents are of mixed or other races.

There are 21,780 households and 15,680 family households in the county. 7,402 or 34.0% of the total households have children under 18 yrs. of age.

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Putnam County has one of the lowest poverty rates in the state. 7.2% of Putnam County families have annual income below the federal poverty level (FPL).

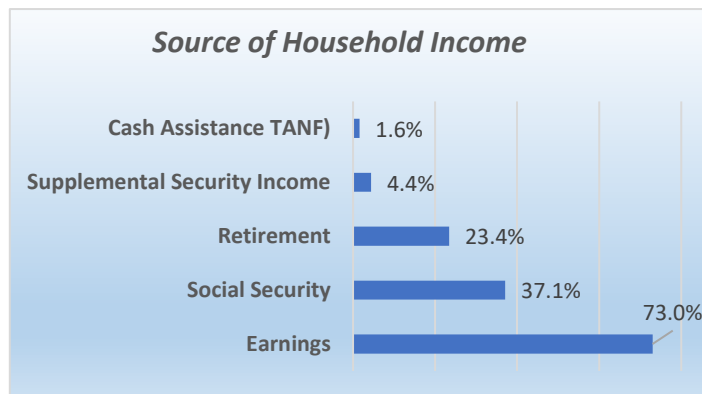


In families with children under the age of 5 only, the poverty rate increases to 10.7%. About one in four (26.5%) of all single female headed families with all children under 5 yrs. of age have annual income below the federal poverty level.

Median household income in Putnam County is \$56,640 which is much higher than the state average of \$42,644 (ACS 2012-16).

73.0% of the households in the county have income from employment and 1.6% 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 27.6% in the county; and 12.3% of all households are estimated to have zero net worth. (2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation, US Census Bureau).



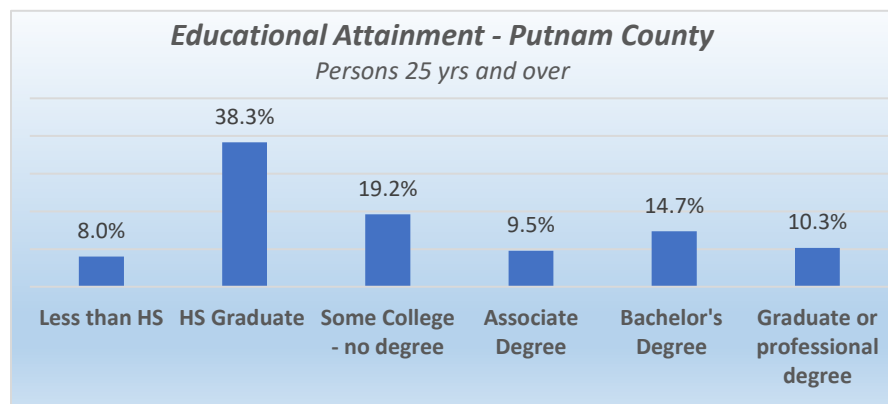
Causes of Poverty

Primary causes of poverty in the county appear to include:

- Persons with a disability who are unable to work,
- Lack of post-secondary education and skills among the adult population,
- Some level of chronic disease prevalence among the adult population, and
- Drug abuse and addiction.

The drug overdose mortality rate in Putnam County is 29 per 100,000 population (CDC Mortality data 2014-16). The unemployment rate in Putnam County is at 5.5% (March 2018) and the rate increased between March of 2017 and March of 2018 by 0.5%. Unemployment in the county is below the state

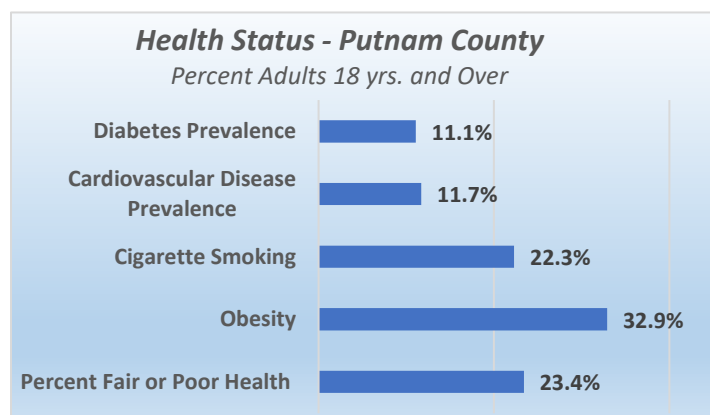
average of 5.9%. The percentage of the population with a disability is estimated to be at 13.0% (ACS 2016).



Overall educational attainment in Putnam County is similar to that in Kanawha County. 25.0% of persons 25 yrs. of age and older hold a college degree and an additional 9.5% have an associate degree. 46.3% of all county residents 25 yrs. of age and older have no education beyond high school and 8.0% of county residents have less than a high school education (ACS 2016).

Kids Count data indicates the school dropout rate in Putnam County is quite low at 2.5% (*Kids Count 2015*). The 4-year cohort graduation rate is 92.7% (*WVEIS 2017*). 11th grade reading proficiency is at 54.1% and 28.9% of 11th grade students are assessed to be proficient in mathematics (*WVEIS 2016-17*). More than half of all young people in the county are enrolling in higher education programs. The 2016 college going rate (4 yr. institutions) in the county is at 47.4% of graduating high school seniors and an additional 5.6% are enrolled in a 2-yr. program (*WV Higher Education Policy Commission*).

An indicator of the potential for 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 in Putnam County is relatively low at 8.2% in 2015 (*Kids Count 2015*).



Health status and lack of healthy lifestyles are also factors that may potentially contribute to poverty in Putnam County. The latest statistics on health status available indicate nearly one quarter (23.4%) of the adult population (18 yrs. of age and older) are in fair or poor health. 32.9% are estimated to be obese, and 22.3% of the adult population of the county smoke (*BRFS 2014*). Although the health indicators compiled through the BRFS survey are better than other counties in the EnAct service region, they document that 11% to 12% of the adult

population has a chronic health condition.

7.5% of the population is estimated to be without any type of health insurance (ACS 2016). The infant mortality rate in Putnam County is at 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births and 7.6% of babies born to county residents are low birth weight (less than 2500 grams). The teen birth rate may also be a contributing factor to poverty at 22.8 births per 1,000 females age 15-19 yrs. (*Kids Count 2015*).

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

- The drug epidemic,
- A lack of livable wage jobs,
- Poor life and work skills,
- Short term, survival mindset among some of the population, and
- A lack of awareness about training/career opportunities.

When asked to define poverty and the factors that keep county residents in poverty, community discussion participants identified several local conditions that tend to promote poverty including:

- A lack of transportation, housing and low skill jobs,
- A sense of hopelessness,
- Generational poverty and mindset, and
- Isolation and stigma.

Community Needs

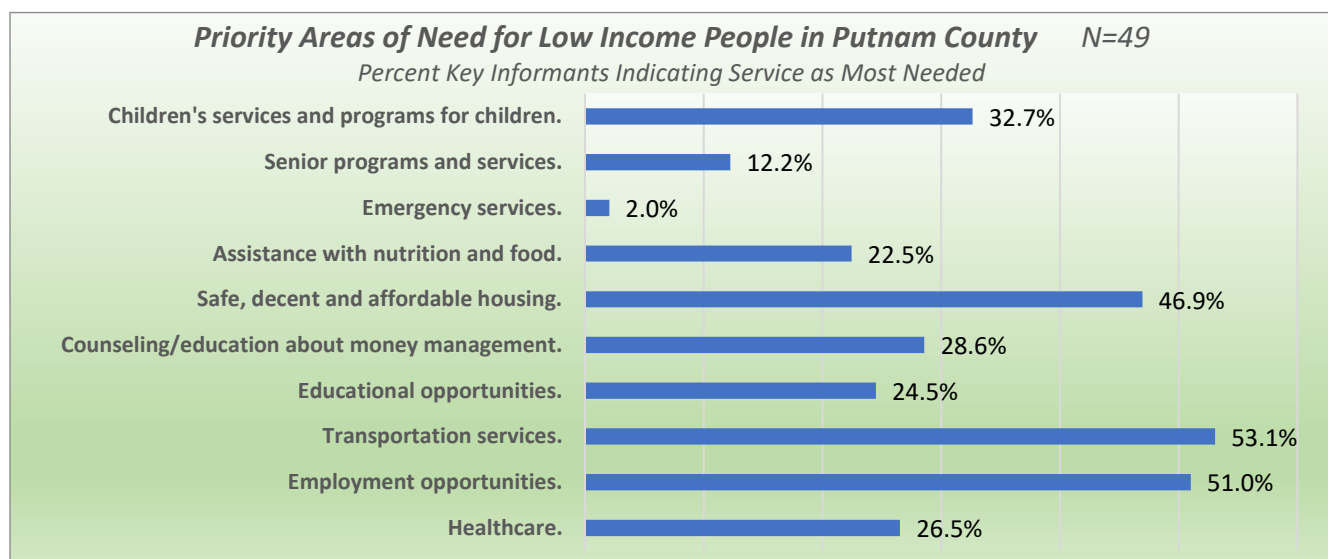
The survey was designed to identify overall areas of need in each county served by EnAct as well as the priority needs within each of the ten distinct domains assessed. 49 key informants familiar with local services and community conditions completed the community survey in Putnam County.

Overall Needs and Priorities

Key informants surveyed were asked:

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

Transportation services and employment opportunities were the most frequently selected areas of need by the key informants in Putnam County. 53.1% of the key informants indicated transportation was a priority area of need, and 51.0% of survey respondents selected employment opportunities as one of the top areas of need of low income people in the county.



Housing was also identified as an area of greatest need by nearly half (46.9%) of all key informants.

Service recipients were asked:

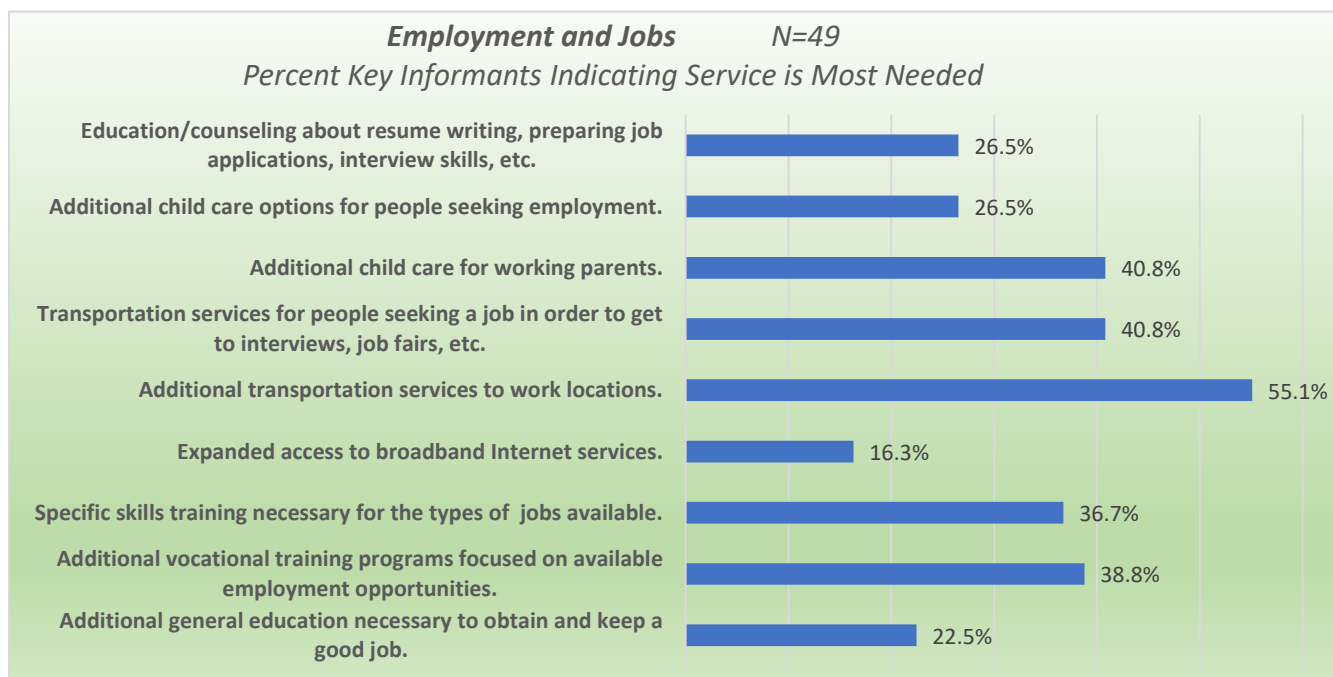
“If you could only choose one type of service, which of the following would be your area of greatest need?”

Only 8 service recipients responded to the survey in Putnam County; however, all 8 clients did not respond to each question. Three areas of greatest need were chosen by the 7 service recipients who answered this question. Four (4) clients think employment opportunities is the greatest area of need in the county, 2 selected children’s services and programs, and 1 indicated their area of greatest need was counseling/education about money management.

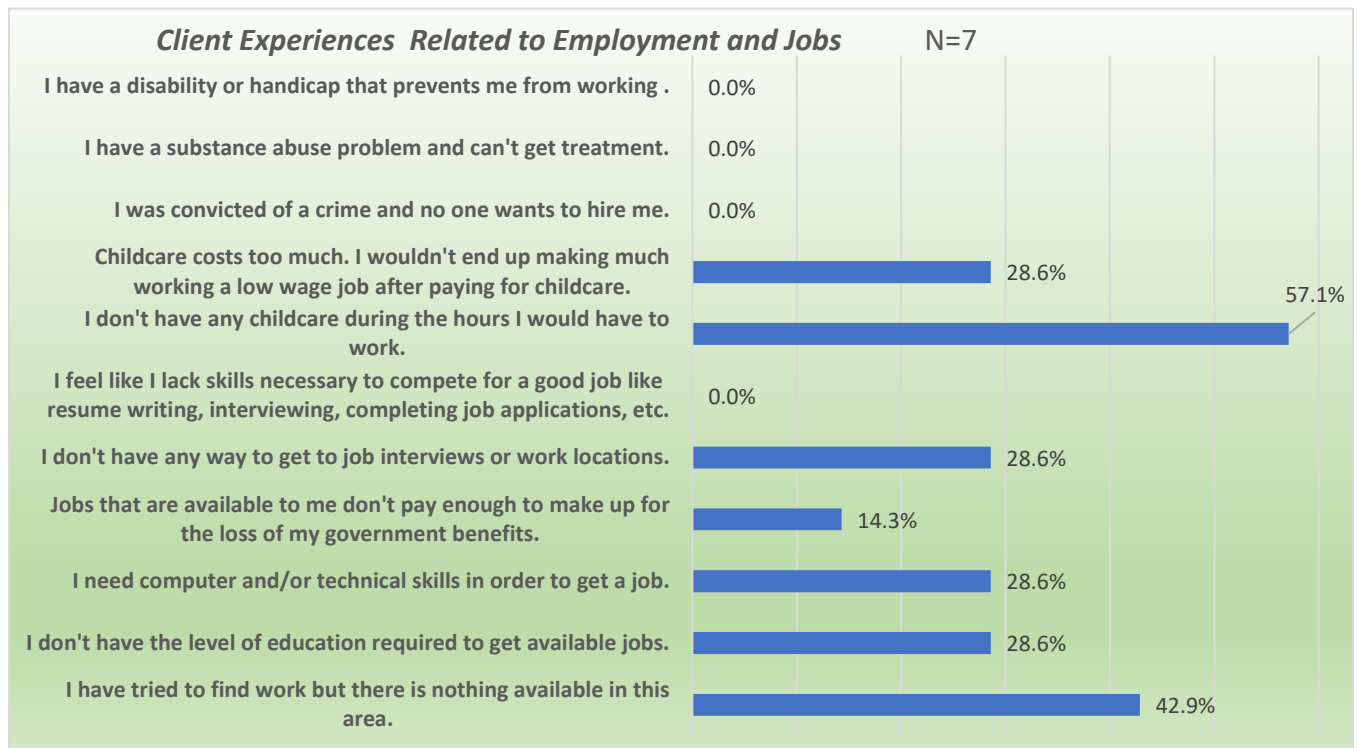
The key informants familiar with services and community conditions in Putnam County were asked to identify what they considered to be the three top priorities or area of need within each of the ten domains examined for the Community Needs Assessment. Service recipients were also asked to share their needs and personal experiences about each of the ten domains. Responses of both the key informants and small number of low-income service recipients participating in the survey are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Employment and Jobs:

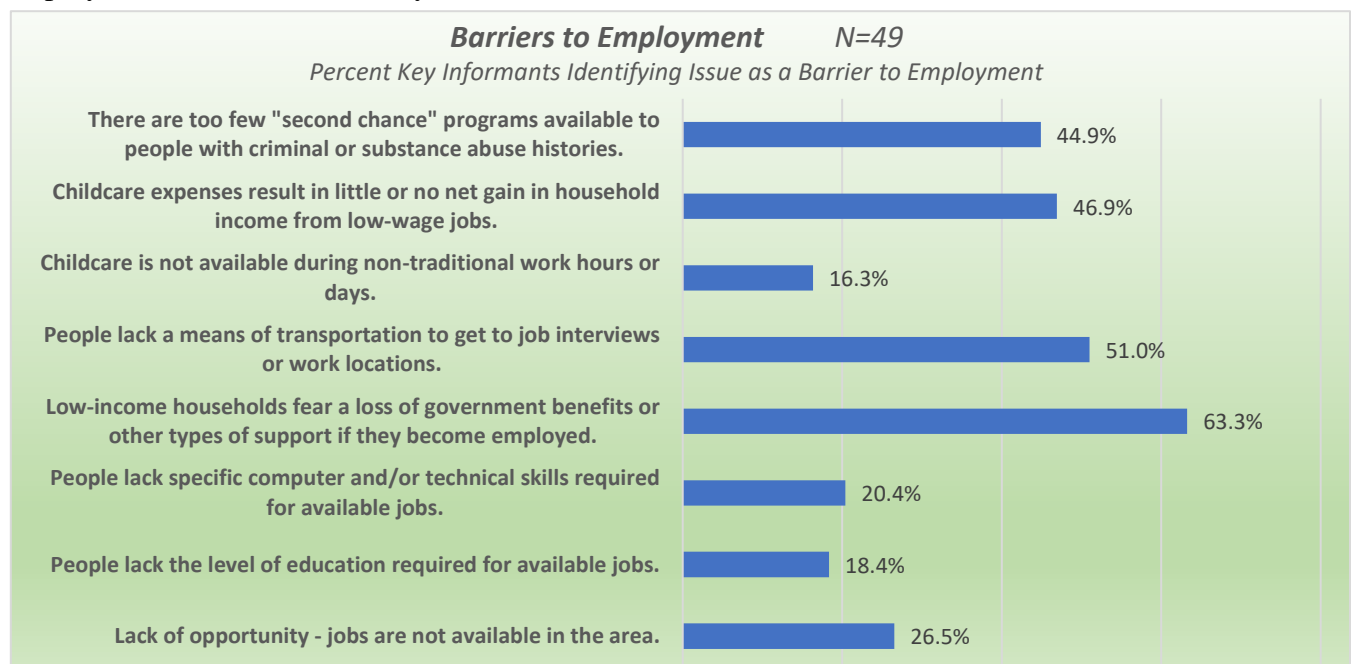
When asked about the most needed services within the employment and jobs domain, key informants in Putnam County identified transportation as a priority for the county. 55.1% of the key informants indicated transportation services to work locations was one of the most needed services in the county, and 40.8% said transportation for people seeking a job to get to interviews, job fairs, etc. was needed. Other service needs identified through the community survey include child care for working parents, and vocational programs and training opportunities for the types of jobs available in the area.



Seven (7) service recipients shared their opinions and experiences about jobs and employment. 42.9% said they have tried to find work but nothing was available to them, and 57.1% said childcare was not available during the hours they would have to work.



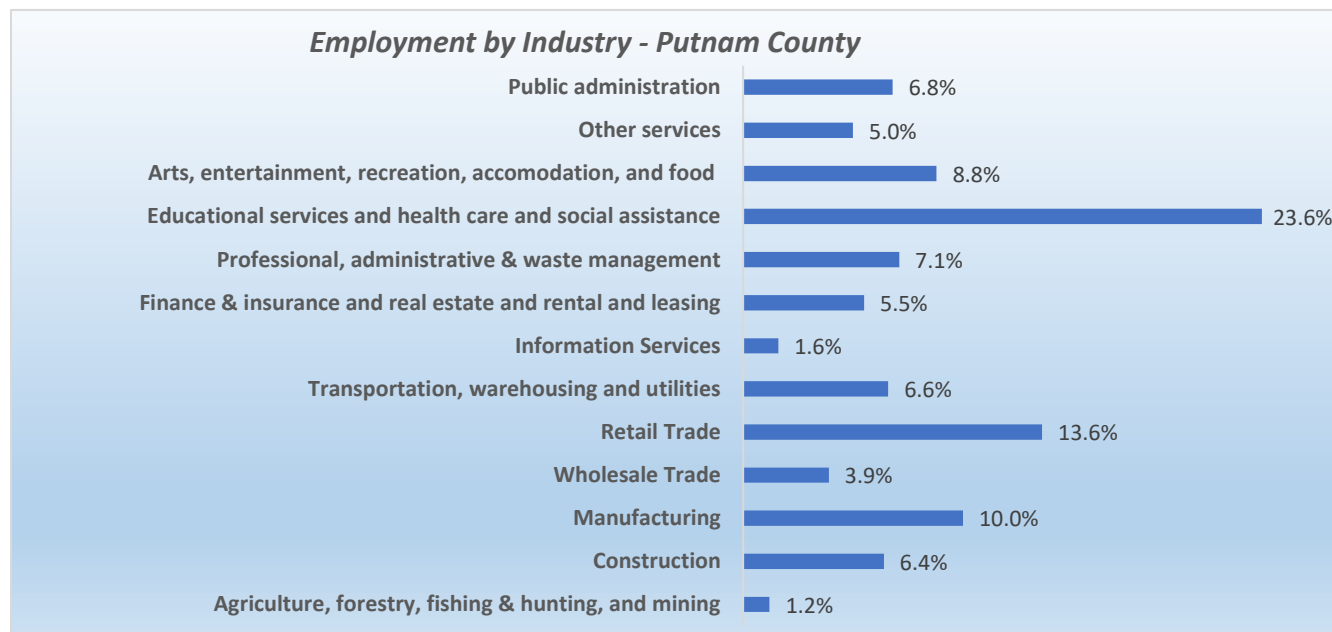
The key informants surveyed were also asked what they consider to be the most significant barriers to employment in Kanawha County.



The most significant barriers to employment identified by the key informants include:

- Low income households fear a loss of government benefits if they become employed (63.3%),
- People lack a means of transportation to get to job interviews or work locations (51.0%), and
- Childcare expenses result in little or no net gain from a low wage job (46.9%).

Current employment in Putnam County is highest within the education, healthcare, and social service sectors. Education, healthcare, and social services jobs account for 23.6% of total employment in the county. 13.6% of the jobs are found in the retail trade sector, and manufacturing accounts for 10.0% of the total jobs. Each of the other industry sectors account for less than 10% of overall employment.



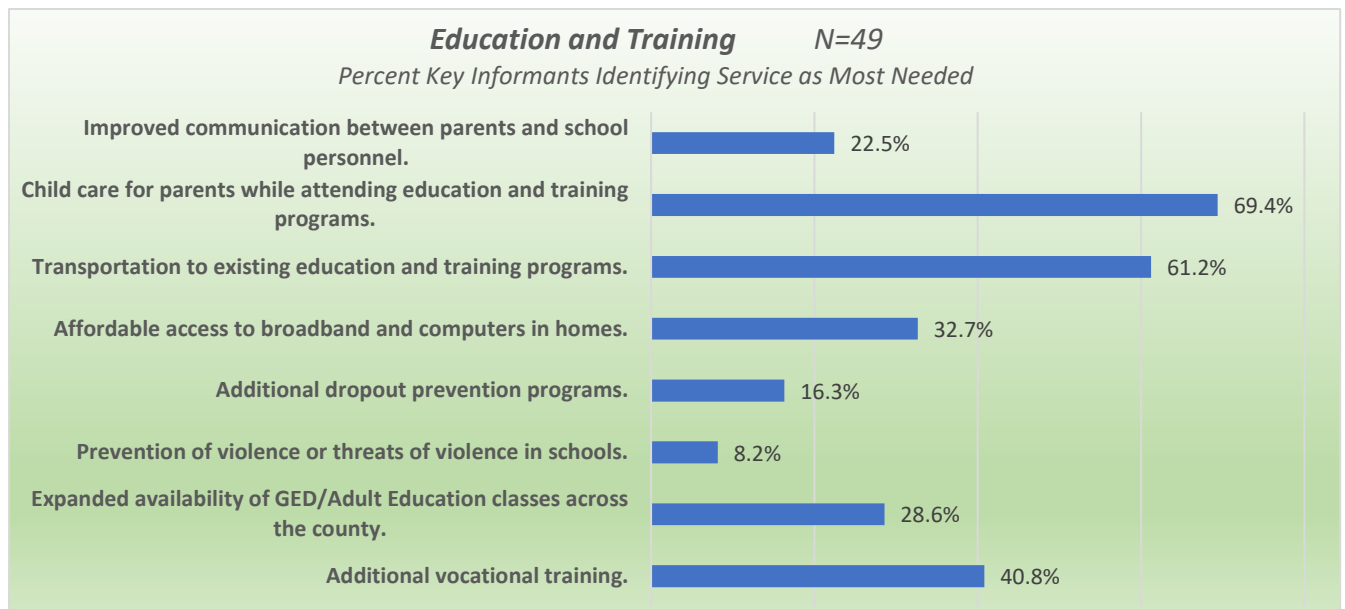
The largest employers in Putnam County (in order of number of people employed) are:

1. Putnam County Board of Education,
2. Toyota Motor Manufacturing, West Virginia Inc.,
3. Appalachian Power Company, and
4. Manpower of WV Inc.

Education and Training:

The key informants tend to think the most significant needs within the education and training domain are (1) child care for parents while attending education and training programs, and (2) transportation to the existing education and training programs available in the county. 69.7% of all respondents selected child care while attending education and training programs as “most needed” to improve education and training opportunities. 61.2% of the key informants said one of the most needed services is transportation to existing education and training programs.

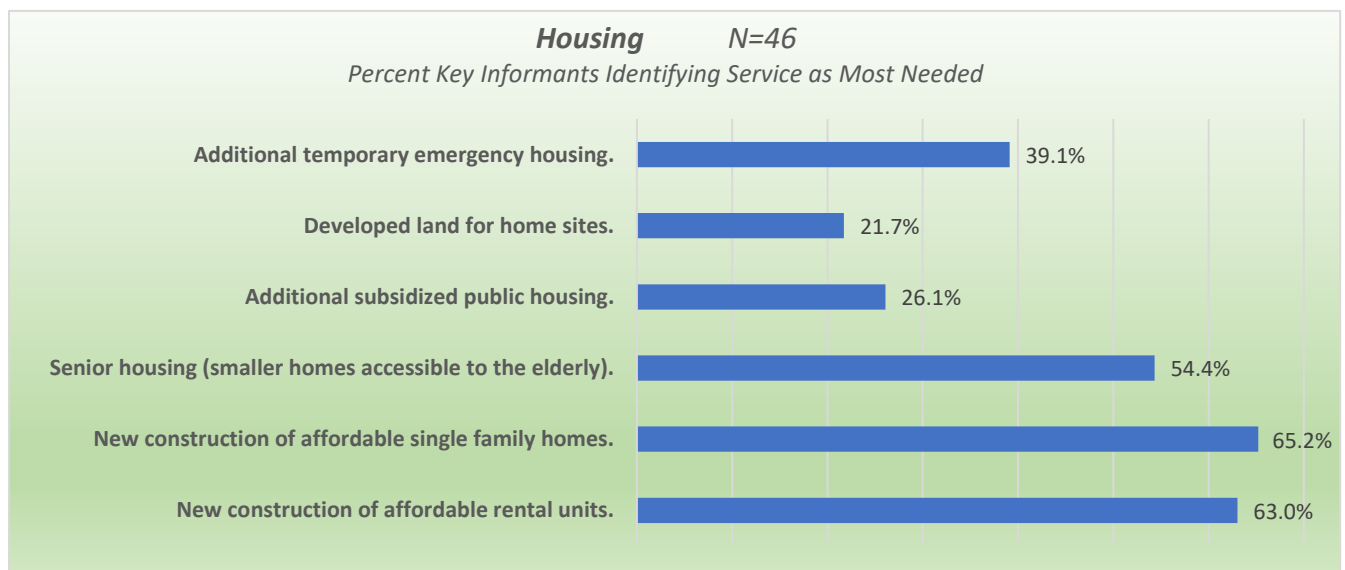
Key informants also thought additional vocational training programs were needed in Putnam County. 40.8% identified this as one of the top three needs to improve employment opportunity.



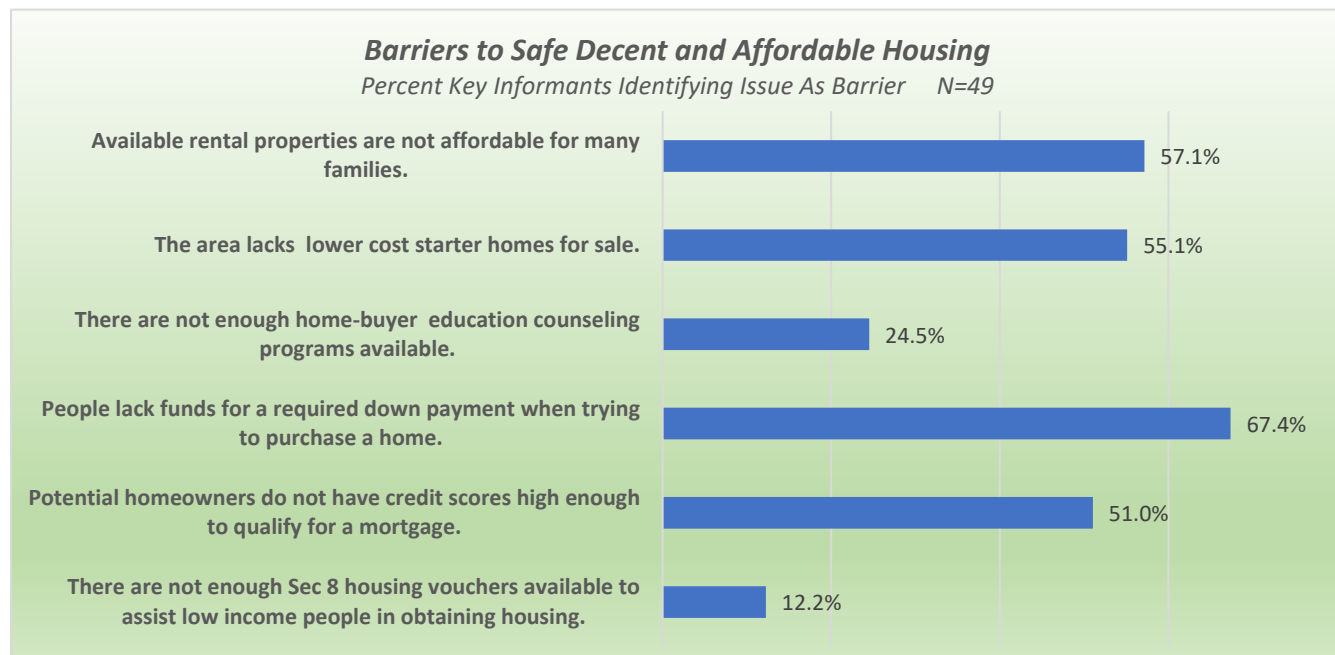
When asked about their experiences related to education and training, 3 service recipients said they could not afford a fast Internet connection or computer at their home, 2 said they could not attend education or training because they did not have any childcare when classes were held, and 2 said they didn't have any transportation.

Housing:

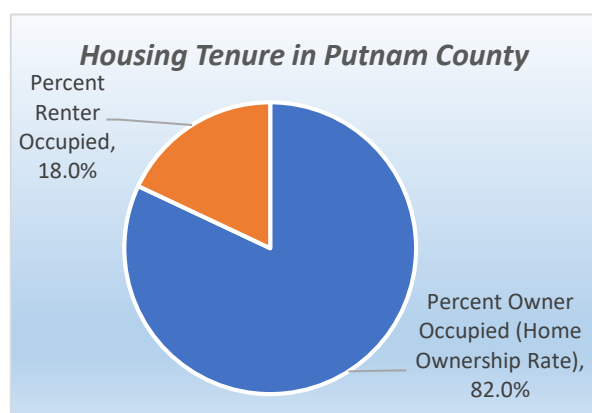
Putnam County key informants indicated new construction of housing units is needed in the county. More than 60% of all respondents said new construction of affordable single-family homes and affordable rental units were the most needed services related to housing. A need for Senior housing was also a priority for 54.4% of the survey respondents. 39.1% of the key informants in Putnam County also see a need for additional temporary emergency housing.



When asked about barriers to obtaining safe, decent and affordable housing, 67.4% of the key informants identified a lack of a required down payment as one of the main barriers for residents trying to purchase a home. More than half (55.1%) said a barrier was a lack of lower cost “starter homes” for sale. 51.0% of the key informants also said potential homeowners cannot qualify for a mortgage due to low credit scores.



Experiences of 6 service recipients relating to housing indicate these lower income residents simply cannot afford housing. 50.0% of the service recipients have found decent places to rent to be more than they can afford to pay and 50.0% also report that decent homes for sale cost too much for them to afford. The other experience reported by clients (3 of 6 people responding) is they do not have a good enough credit score to qualify for a mortgage.



Additional insight into housing issues in Putnam County is provided by secondary data sets reviewed.

82.0% of Putnam County residents are home owners while 18.0% live in rental properties.

There are 23,794 housing units in Putnam County and 21,788 (91.5%) of these existing housing units are occupied. Only 8.5% of the existing housing stock is vacant. The housing stock in the county is not as old as in other counties within the region. Just 9.1% of the housing stock was built prior to 1950. As of 2016, there

were an estimated 88 occupied homes without plumbing in Putnam County.

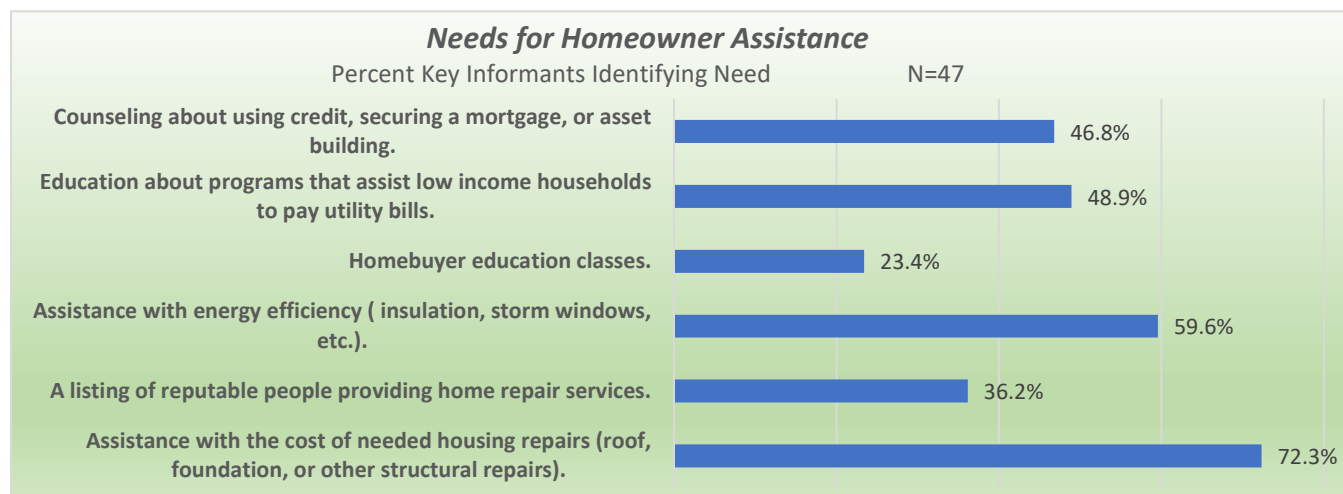
The median value of owner occupied housing in the county is higher than in other counties in the region at \$151,800 (ACS 2011-16). Median monthly owner costs for those with a mortgage is also higher at

\$1,159, and 18.7% of homeowners with a mortgage are “cost burdened” with monthly housing costs exceeding 30% of income.

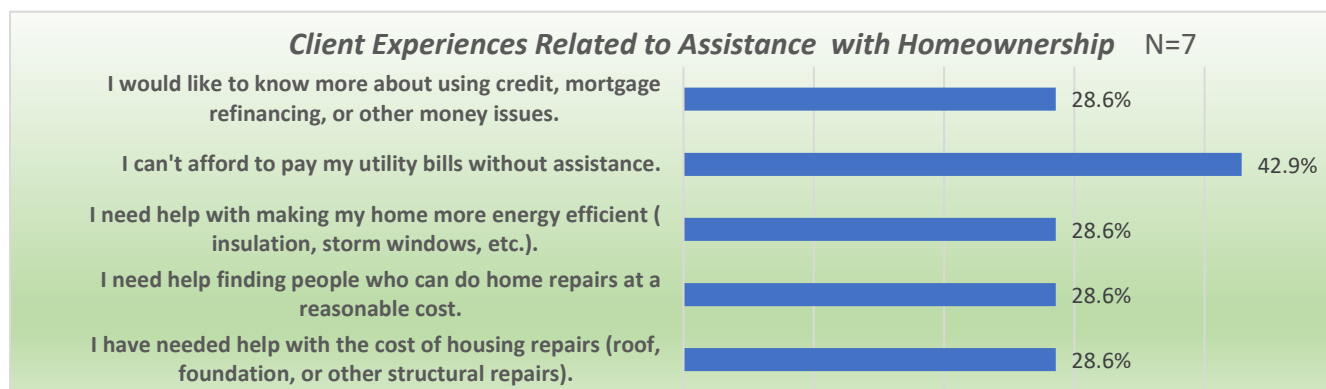
Median rent in Putnam County is \$765 per month and 42.6% of people who rent are cost burdened based on their gross rent exceeding 30% of the household income. (ACS 2011-16).

Homeowner Assistance:

Key informants in Putnam County identified four areas where current or potential homeowners need some type of assistance. Assistance with housing repairs appears to be the highest priority based on the survey responses. 72.3% of the key informants prioritized assistance with the cost on needed repairs to existing homes as a most needed service to help current homeowners. Assistance with making existing homes more energy efficient was identified as a priority by 59.6% of the survey respondents. Nearly half of the key informants also said counseling about using credit, securing a mortgage, or asset building, and education about programs to assist low income households with utility bills were services needed by lower income residents.

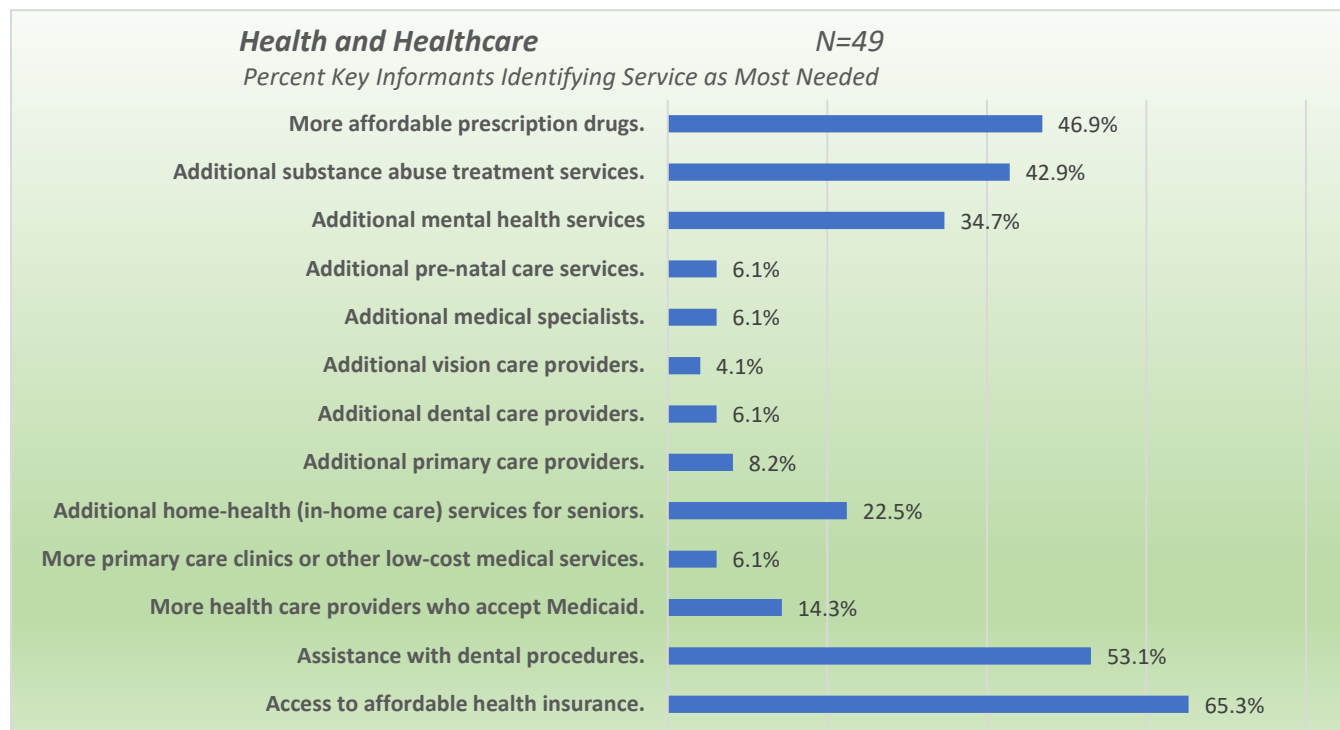


42.9% of the 7 service recipients responding to the survey said they can't afford to pay utility bills without assistance. 2 of these 7 clients responding to the question said they had experienced needs in each of the other areas related to housing.



Healthcare:

Access to affordable health insurance and assistance with dental procedures are the types of health related services most needed based on the key informant responses. 65.3% of the key informants surveyed indicated affordable health insurance was a priority need for lower income residents and 53.1% said assistance with the cost of dental procedures was needed. More affordable prescription drugs and substance abuse treatment are other health-related services prioritized as “most needed” by the key



informants.

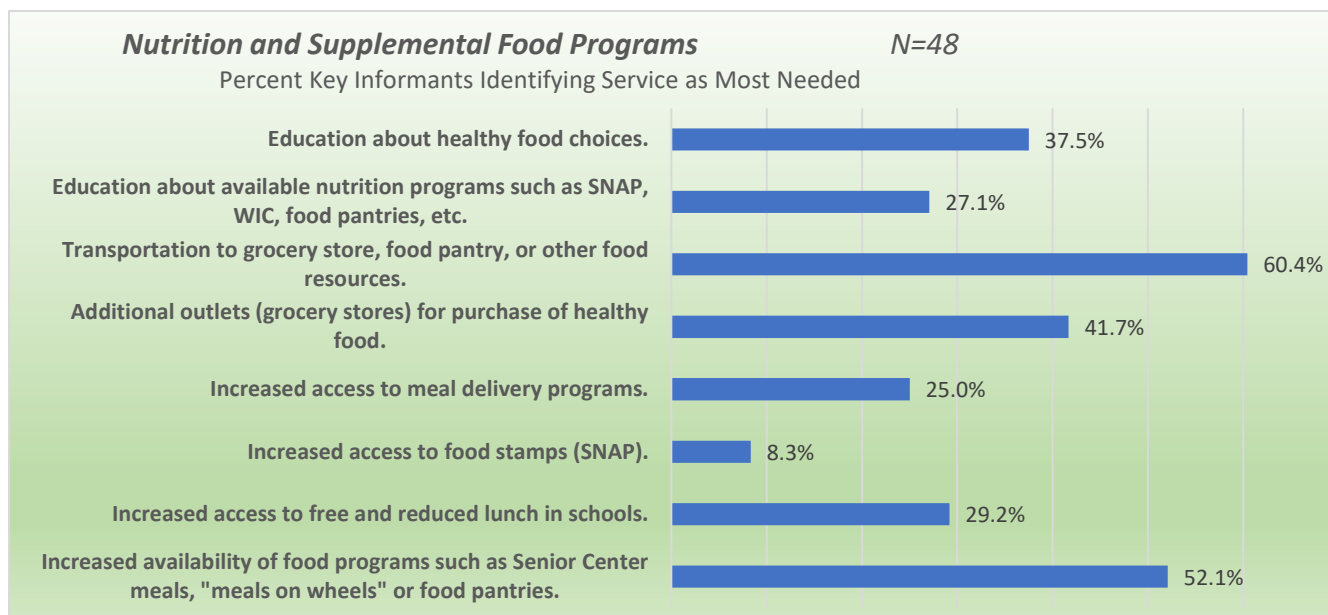
Service recipients responding to the survey confirm they need help paying for dental procedures. 5 of the 7 clients responding (71.4%) said they need help with dental expenses. 2 of the 7 service recipients said they do not have access to a primary care clinic or other low cost medical service in their area of the county.

Nutrition:

When asked about community needs related to food and nutrition, the key informants in Putnam County identified transportation to grocery stores and availability of supplemental food programs as the most needed services to improve access to food and nutrition for low income people. 60.4% of the key informants in Putnam County indicated low income people lack transportation to grocery stores, food pantries, or other food resources.

There also appears to be a need for more food programs such as food pantries, Senior meals, meal delivery programs such as “meals on wheels”, etc. More than half (52.1% of the key informants identified increased access to these food services as a priority for the county.

41.7% of the respondents to the community survey also see a need for more grocery stores in the county where healthy food can be purchased.



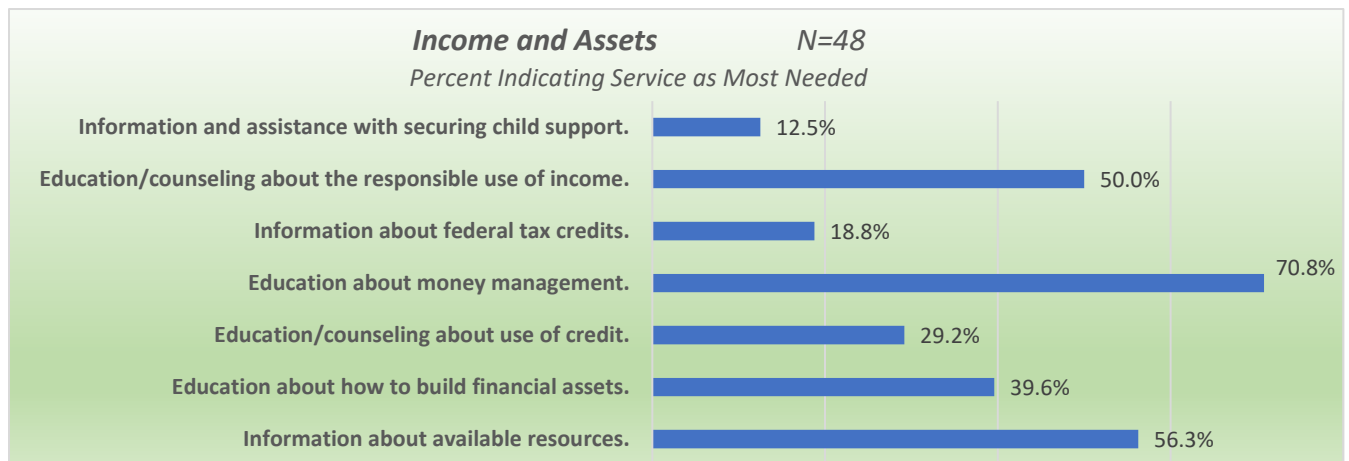
Only 4 service recipients responded to the question about their needs and experiences with nutrition and food and 2 of the 4 respondents said they sometimes need help feeding themselves or their families. Two (2) of these low-income persons receiving services also said they would like to know more about what type of food is healthy, and 1 of the clients responding to the survey said they didn't have any way to get to a grocery store, food pantry or other location to get food.

In 2015, there were 5 supplemental food programs (food pantries, hot meal programs, backpack programs, meal delivery, etc.) serving Putnam County (*WV Foodlink 2015*), and 9.7% of households receive food stamps to supplement their food budgets (ACS 2016). 899 families were enrolled in WIC through the WIC office serving the county. The *WV Foodlink County Profile for Putnam County* documents 57 retail locations that accept food stamps and 4 locations accepting WIC (2015). 2015 data indicates there were 3,958 school-age children eligible for free and reduced cost meals at school; however, only 59.0% of the eligible students participated in the school lunch program (*WV FoodLink*).

Income and Assets:

Community Survey responses indicate low income residents need education about money management (using credit, budgeting, bank accounts, etc.), available resources, and using income responsibly. 70.8% of the key informants believe education about money management is one of the services most needed in the area, and 56.3% indicated information about available resources such as health insurance coverage, nutrition programs, housing subsidies, etc. was a priority. Half (50.0%) of the key informants think some type of counseling focused on the responsible use of income is one of the "most needed" services related to income and assets.

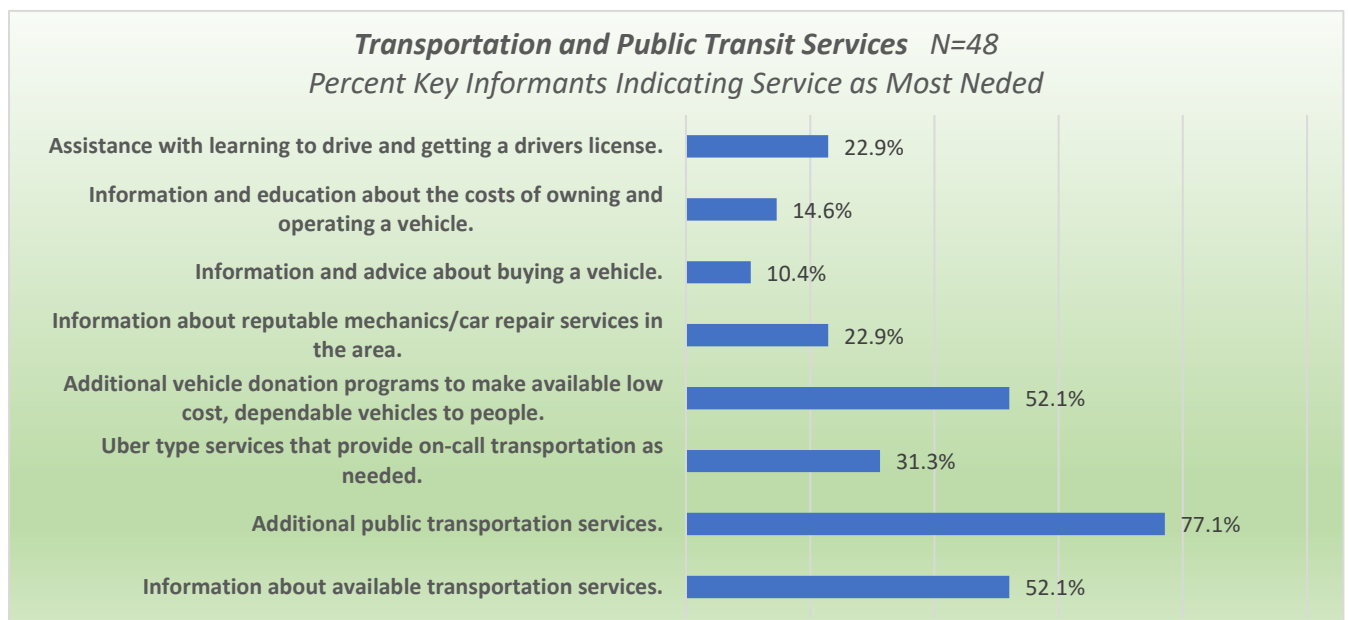
Available data from the 2015 FDIC Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked households indicates 4.5% of Putnam County households are "unbanked" (have no checking or savings accounts).



Six (6) of the service recipients in Putnam County shared their needs related to money and finances. These service recipients were most interested in learning more about how to raise their credit score (5 of the 6 respondents). Two (2) of the 6 clients said they would like more information about money management such as using credit, budgeting, and using bank accounts.

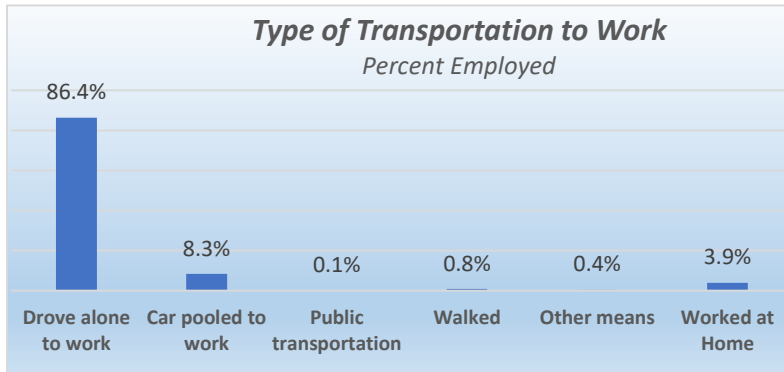
Transportation:

Additional access to public transportation was the most prevalent need identified through the community survey of Putnam County key informants within the transportation domain. 77.1% of all respondents indicated expanded public transportation was one of the “most needed” services in the county. More than half (52.1%) of the survey responses also indicate a vehicle donation program to make available dependable but low-cost vehicles to people in need and information about available transportation services is needed.



57.1% (4 of 7 respondents) of the service recipients surveyed said they need to know where to get a vehicle repaired at a fair price. One (1) of the clients said they need a vehicle in order to get a job and 1 also said they need help learning to drive.

The mean travel time to work for current workers in Putnam County is 25.1 minutes.

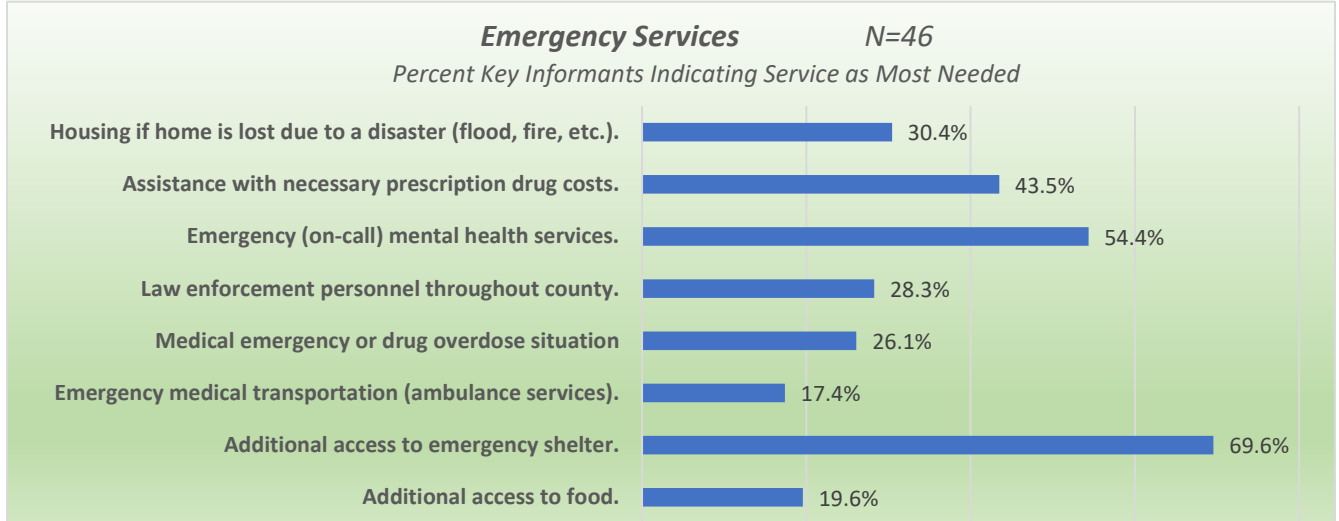


Most of the employed people in Putnam County rely on a private vehicle to get from home to their work site. 94.7% of all persons employed either drive alone or car pool to work (ACS 2011-16).

There is no public transportation available in Putnam County. Specialized and limited transportation services are available through some local agencies including the Putnam Aging Program, Winfield Senior Citizens, and Prestera Center. These agencies generally provide limited transportation for persons utilizing their services. A private taxi service is available in Hurricane – Teays Valley Taxi, LLC.

Emergency Services:

The key informants in Putnam County believe the most needed service within the emergency services domain are temporary emergency shelter in cases of domestic violence, flood, fire, eviction, etc. (69.6%). Emergency (on call) mental health services are also prioritized as one of the most needed services by 54.4% of the respondents. Another need within this domain identified by key informants is assistance with prescription drug costs (43.5%).

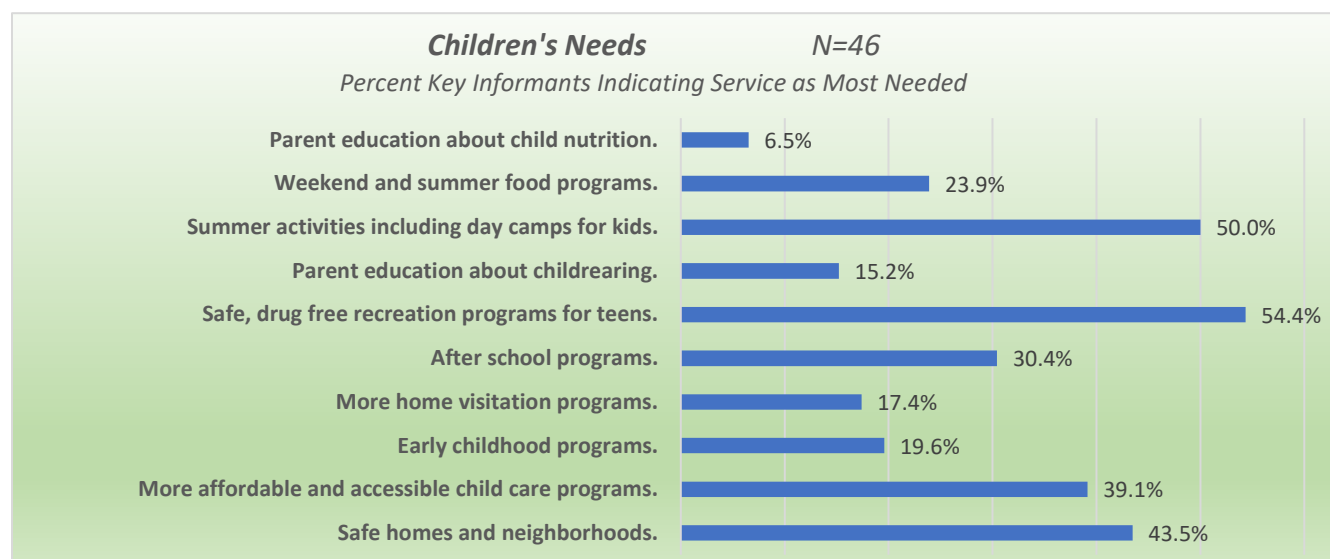


Client experiences in Putnam County within the emergency services domain were addressed by only 3 service recipients and the only responses related to food. When asked about their experiences with emergency situations, all 3 clients said they have needed help putting food on the table.

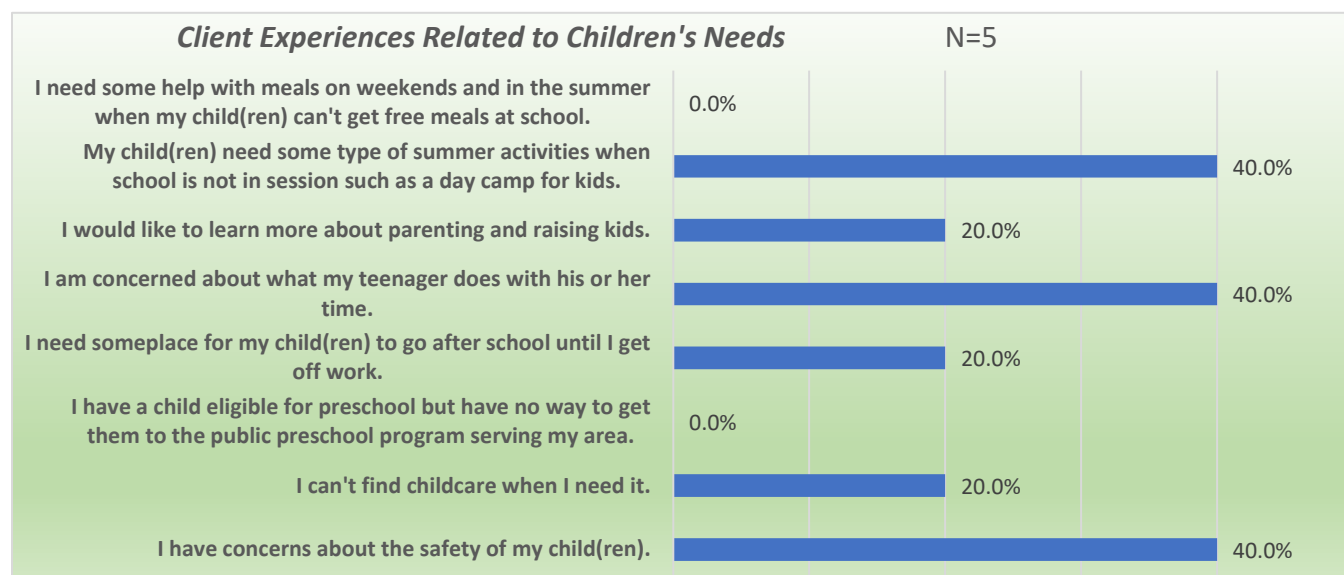
Children's Needs:

Child safety and recreational activities for children and youth are services needed in Putnam County based on key informant responses to the community survey. Safe, drug free recreation programs are one of the most needed services identified by 54.4% the key informants, and summer activities for children when school is not in session was also a priority for 50.0% of the informants. Safe homes and neighborhoods

was a top area of concern for 43.5% of the survey respondents. More affordable and accessible child care programs was also selected as one of the “most needed services for children by 39.1% of key informants.



Service recipients with children (5 people) were asked about issues or situations they had personally experienced within the past year related to children’s needs. 40.0% (2 of the 5 clients responding) said they have concerns about the safety of their children. Two (2) clients also said their children need some type of summer activities when school is not in session such as a day camp and 2 service recipients said they were concerned about what their teenager does with his or her time.



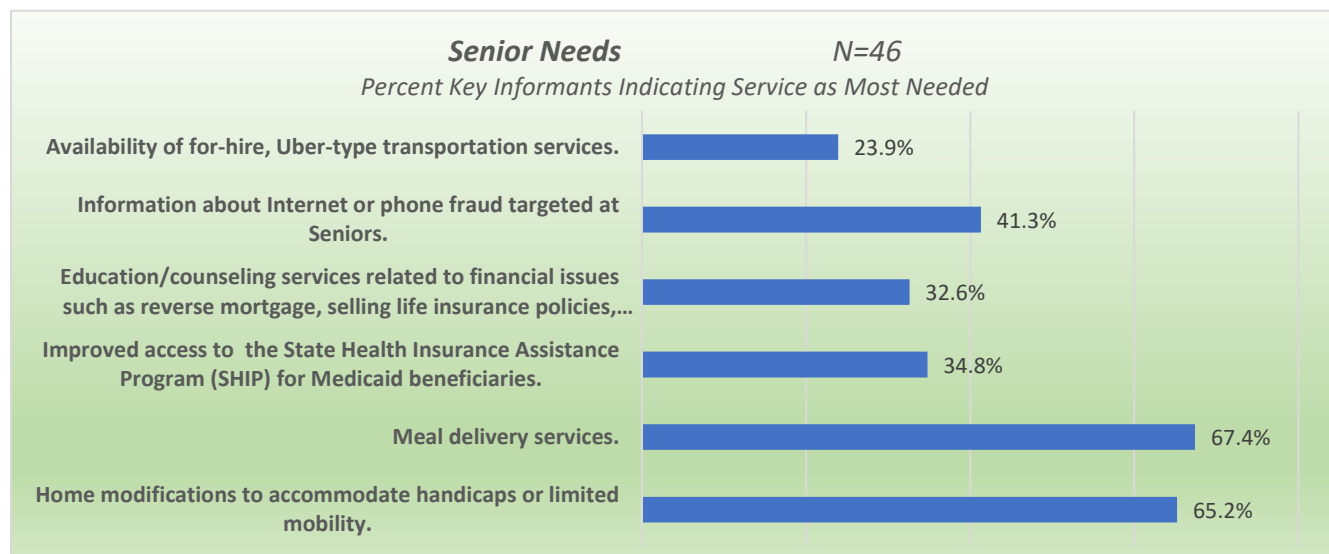
Secondary data sets indicate child abuse and neglect rates are relatively low in the county at 5.5 per 1,000 children. (Kids Count 2015). Circuit court data related to court filings for child abuse/neglect in Putnam County was not available; however, there were 306 domestic violence cases filed in 2016 which is a rate of 19.5 filings per 1,000 family households (2016 Family Court case filings data).

2.8% of children in Putnam County under the age of 18 yrs. have some type of disability (ACS 2016). 450 young children (preschool age) are enrolled in a Pre-K program in Putnam County at one of 27 Pre-K classrooms. The Pre-K participation rate is low at 66.0% (2017 school year).

Senior Needs

There are 6,266 households with Seniors (over 65 yrs. of age) in Putnam County and 35.6% of these Seniors have some type of disability. 23.8% of the Seniors in the county over 65 yrs. of age lives alone (ACS 2016). It is estimated that there are 645 grandparent households in Putnam County where a grandparent is responsible for raising grand children under 18 yrs. of age.

The most frequently cited needs identified by the key informant responses are (1) home modifications to accommodate handicapping conditions or limited mobility (65.2% of respondents), and meal delivery services. 67.4% of the key informants indicated meal delivery was a “most needed” service within the Senior Needs domain.



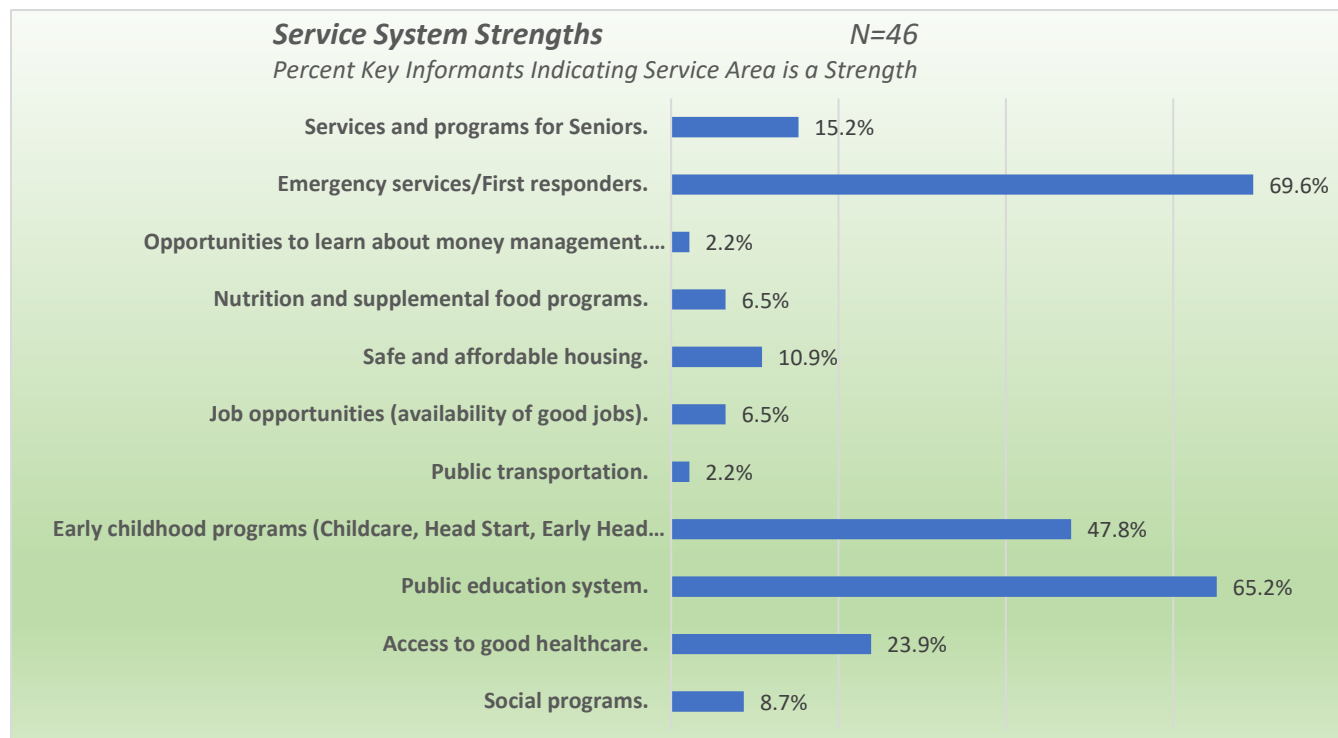
Only 1 service recipient responded to the question about the needs of Seniors in Putnam County. This Senior citizen said they live alone and don't have any means of transportation to get where they need to go, and they need meal delivery services.

Primary Strengths and Community Resources

Community survey respondents in Putnam County were asked what they considered to be the greatest strengths within the Putnam County services system and they were asked to select all options they consider to be a “particular strength”. First responders and public education are thought to be the strongest components of the service system in Putnam County based on the responses of key informants. 69.6% of the respondents identified emergency services/First Responders as an area of strength, and 65.2% indicated they thought the public education system in the county was a strength. 47.8% said early childhood services was a strong component of the service system. Less than one in four key informants

see any of the other components of the service system as a particular area of strength.

Two (2) of the 6 service recipients who offered their opinion about strengths in the services system also identified public education and early childhood services as areas of the service system that had been



responsive to their needs. Job opportunities, the healthcare system and social programs were each found to be to be responsive by 1 of the clients.

Persons participating in the community discussion held in Putnam County identified several strengths and assets within the county including:

- A strong sense of community
- Empathy demonstrated by community residents
- Resilient, hardworking people
- School teachers are helpful
- Schools in Winfield draw people to the Winfield area
- A good networking system within the county
- Jobs are available in the valley
- Strong will to make the county an even better place to live, work, and play
- A feeling of belonging where you live
- A strong, caring school system

Many services and programs are available to Putnam County residents either within the county or in the more populous bordering counties of Kanawha and Cabell. Some of these resources that address the needs of low income individuals and families include:

- A range of public health services provided by the Putnam County Health Department
- Charleston Area Medical Center – Teays Valley
- Valley Health Services

- Home health care services
- Teays Valley Center Genesis Health Care
- Broadmore Assisted Living
- Behavioral Health services - Prester Center
- Putnam Counseling Center
- 12 step and support groups
- *Right from the Start* program for Medicaid eligible pregnant women and infants
- Nine licensed family day care providers
- Three licensed child care centers
- Six after school programs
- Twenty-seven Pre-K classrooms
- Appalachian Council Head Start – 11 sites
- Parents as Teachers
- Birth to Three
- Faith-based food programs
- West Virginia University Extension Service
- Local office of the WV Department of Health and Human Resources
- Senior Centers in Hurricane, Hometown, and Buffalo
- Regional Family Resource Network
- Tri-County YMCA
- Five banks with branch locations