



Boone County
Community Needs and Resources

Contents

BOONE COUNTY 2

 History & Geography 2

 Demographic Characteristics..... 2

 Socio-Economic Characteristics..... 3

 Causes of Poverty 3

 Community Needs 5

 Primary Strengths and Community Resources 17

BOONE COUNTY

History & Geography

Boone County is located in the southwestern part of West Virginia. In 1847 the county was formed by taking parts of Kanawha, Cabell, and Logan Counties. The county is named for Daniel Boone, who from 1789 to 1795 was a noted hunter and explorer, whose home was in the Great Kanawha Valley. Although Boone County was named for the great American frontiersman, it was another explorer, John Peter Salley, who had a more significant impact on what was to become Boone County. In 1742, while on an exploring trip, Salley and companions discovered coal near the present-day community of Peytona.



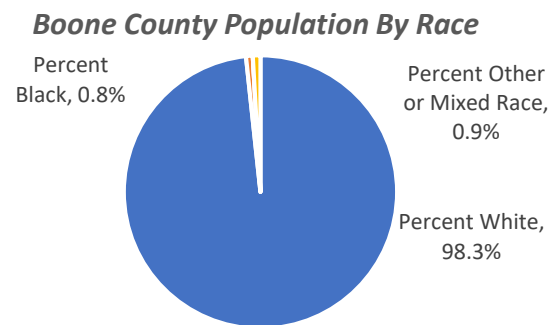
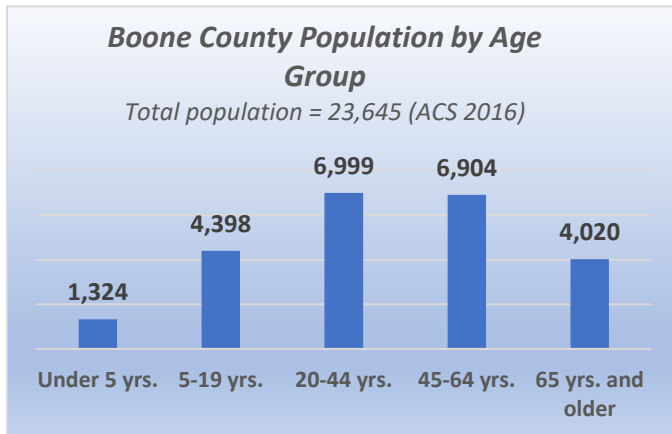
The discovery of coal has played a vital role in fueling the steel mills and power plants of the United States and remains the backbone of Boone County's economy. Recent years have, however, seen many jobs in the coal industry lost to mechanization and declining coal markets.

In 1906, Madison was incorporated as the county seat. Madison derived its name from Colonel William Madison Peyton, who led the movement for the formation of Boone County. Peyton was instrumental in developing the Coal River Valley. There are three other municipalities in Boone County - Danville, Whitesville, and Sylvester.

Boone County encompasses 503 square miles in the southwest portion of West Virginia.

Demographic Characteristics

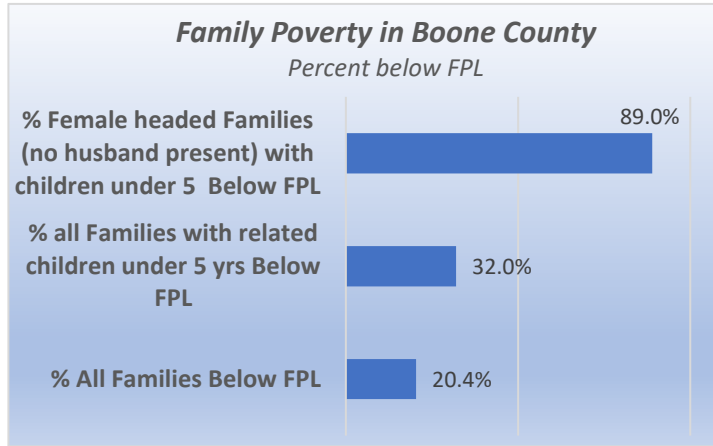
The total population of Boone County is 23,645 persons (ACS, 2016). 5.6% of the population is under five years of age and 17.0% is over the age of 65 yrs.



98.3% of the population is White and only 0.8% is Black. The remaining 0.9% of Boone County residents are of mixed or other races.

There are 9,466 households and 6,593 family households in the county. 2,991 or 31.6% of the total households have children under 18 yrs. of age.

Socio-Economic Characteristics

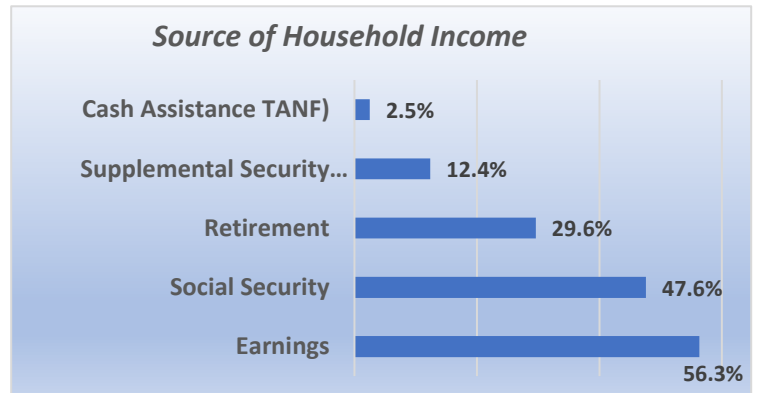


20.4% of Boone County families have annual income below the FPL. In families with children under the age of 5 only, the poverty rate increases to 32.0%. Single female headed families with all children under 5 yrs. of age are particularly susceptible to poverty with 89.0% of these single parent families with young children struggling with annual income below the FPL.

Median household income in Boone County is \$37,820 which is significantly below the state average of \$42,644 (ACS 2012-16). 56.3% of

the households in the county have income from employment and 2.5% receive cash assistance through the TANF program.

14.9% of Boone County households are estimated to have zero net worth, and many have little in the way of liquid assets. The “Liquid Asset Poverty Rate” defined as a lack of sufficient liquid assets to subsist at poverty level for three months in absence of any income, is at 40.2% in the county (2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation, US Census Bureau).



Causes of Poverty

Primary causes of poverty in the county appear to include:

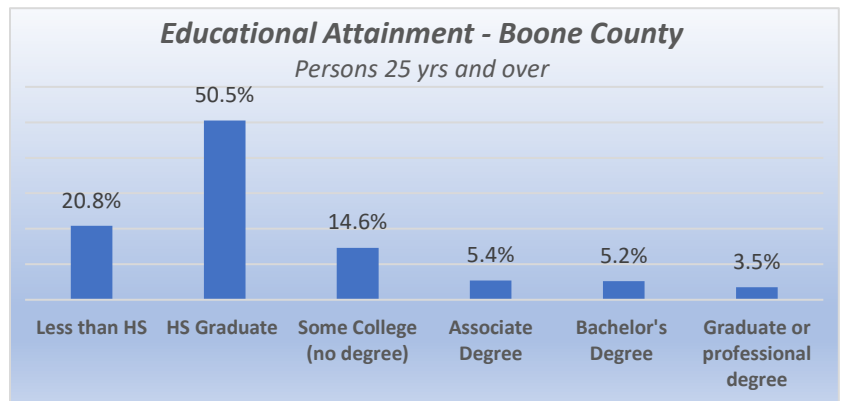
- Lack of a diverse economy,
- An unemployment rate of 6.6% (March 2018),
- Lack of education and skills among the adult population,
- Low rates of education beyond high school,
- Lack of access to “good jobs” paying a living wage, and
- Substance use/abuse and addiction to Opioids.

The unemployment rate of 6.6% held steady between March of 2017 and March of 2018; and it remains higher than the state average of 5.9%. The drug overdose mortality rate in Boone County is 69 per 100,000 population (CDC Mortality data 2014-16).

Secondary data sets reviewed document the school dropout rate in Boone County at 10.0% (Kids Count 2015), and the 4-year cohort graduation rate is 88.2% (WVEIS 2016).

11th grade reading proficiency is at 48.6% and mathematics proficiency is quite low at only 16.9% (*WVEIS 2016-17*).

Educational attainment is generally low among Boone County residents. 8.7% of those 25 yrs. of age and older hold a college degree and an additional 5.4% have an associate degree; however, 71.3% of county residents over age 25 yrs. have no education beyond high school and 20.8% have less than a high school education (*ACS 2016*).



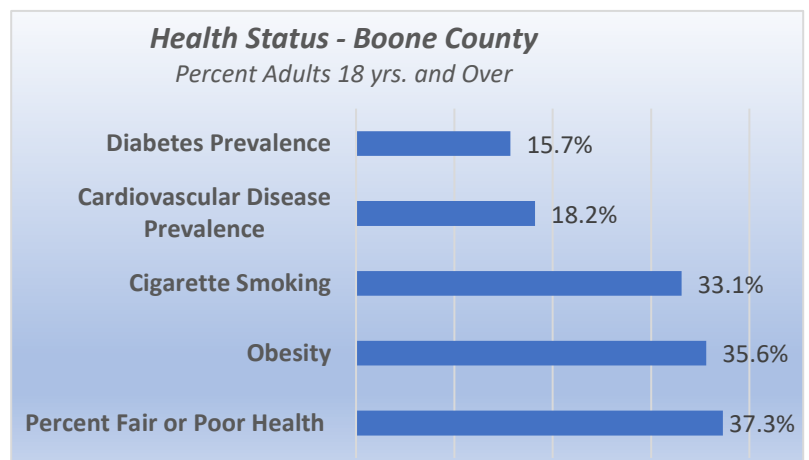
The 2016 college going rate (4 yr. institutions) in the county is at 24.6% of graduating high school seniors and an additional 12.3% enroll in a 2-yr. program (*WV Higher Education Policy Commission*).

The community discussion held in Boone County identified several factors contributing to poverty including:

- A normalization and acceptance of high rates of poverty in the community,
- Abuse and neglect,
- Substance abuse and addiction,
- A lack of transportation and child care for working parents, and
- Low educational attainment.

When asked to define poverty and the factors that keep people in poverty, community discussion participants identified: (1) helplessness and lack of support from community members, (2) generational poverty, (3) pride of some residents prevents them from asking for help, and (4) high rates of single parent households. Generational poverty appears to be documented through secondary data reviewed with 18.6% of births in Boone County to mothers with less than a high school education (*Kids Count 2015*).

Health status of the population and access to healthcare, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment are also major contributing factors to poverty in Boone County.



Obesity rates are at 35.6% among the adult population and 33.1% of the adult population smoke (*BRFS 2014*). 8.7% of the population is without any type of health insurance (*ACS 2016*).

The infant mortality rate in Boone County is 3.1 deaths per 1,000 live births and 11.2% of babies born to county residents are low birth weight (less than 2500 grams). The teen birth rate is high at 53 births per 1,000 females (*Kids Count 2015*).

Community Needs

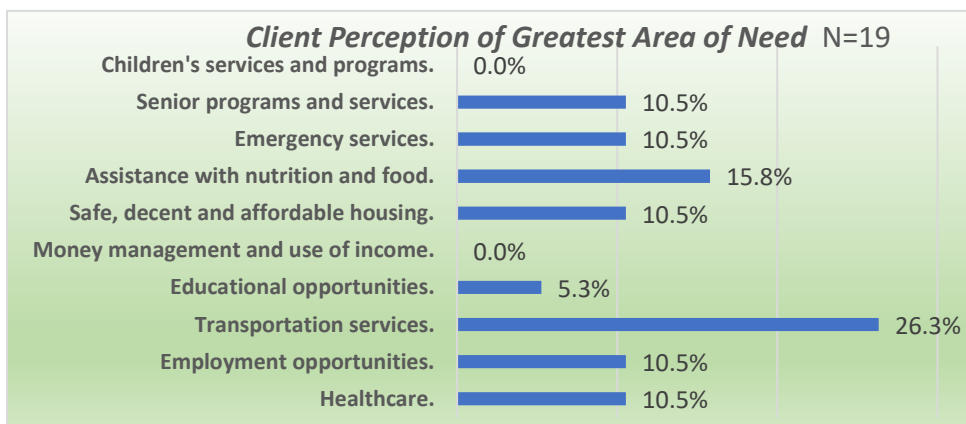
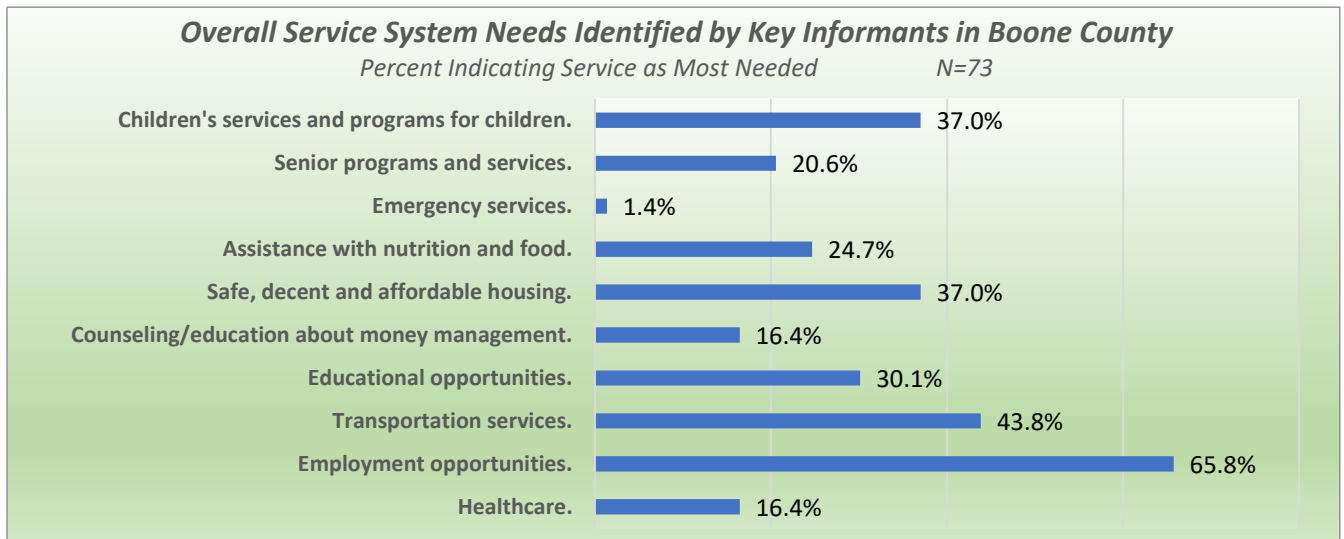
The survey was designed to identify overall areas of need in each county as well as the priority needs within each of the ten distinct domains assessed.

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, by far, the most frequently selected area of need with 65.8% of respondents focusing on this domain. Transportation services and Housing were identified as secondary priority needs in Boone County by the key informants.



Service recipients were asked to identify the one type of service that was their area of greatest need. Transportation services were selected by 5 of the 19 clients (26.3%) who responded to the question.

A variety of other service domains were prioritized by smaller numbers of the

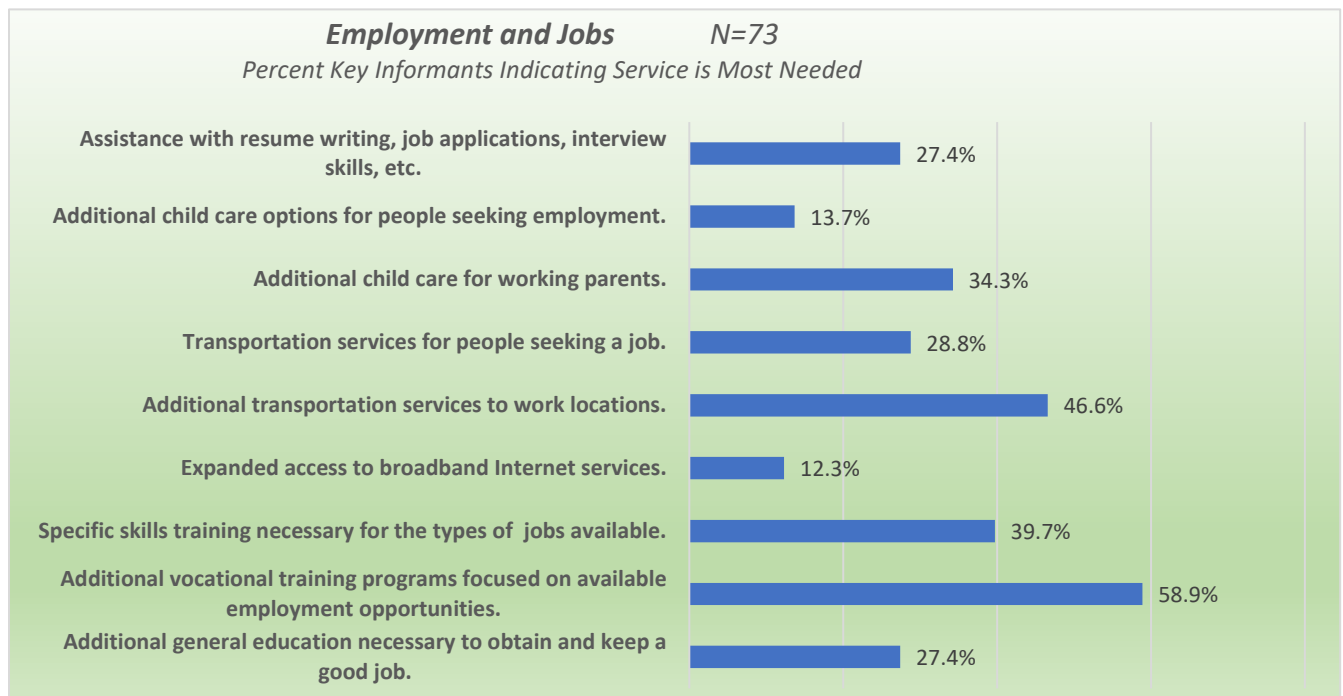
clients completing the survey.

The key informants were also asked to identify what they considered to be the three top priorities within each of the assessment domains examined for the Community Needs Assessment and each domain is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Employment and Jobs:

Most key informants responding to the survey in Boone County focused on a need for additional training opportunities in the county. Based on the survey responses, the top three priority areas of need in Boone County related to Employment and Jobs are:

- Specific training for types of jobs available,
- Transportation services to work locations, and
- Child care for working parents.

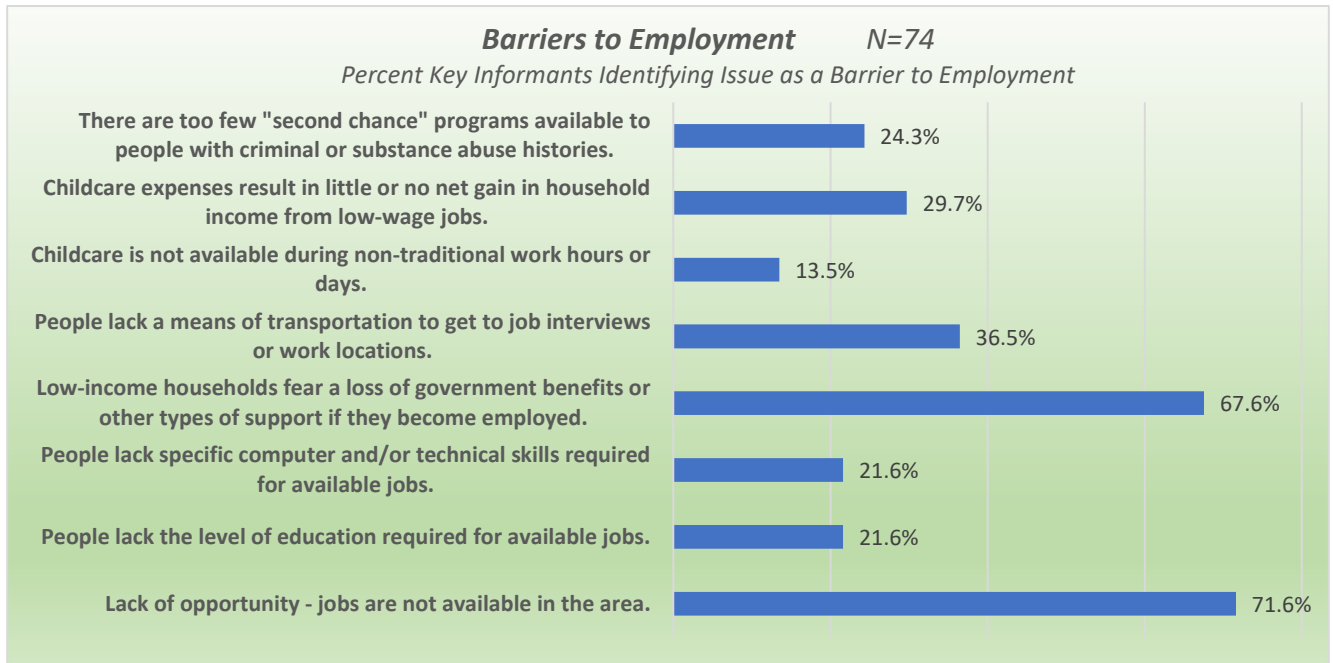


Very few of the service recipients in Boone County shared their experiences related to seeking employment. 15 of the 19 clients (79.0%) responding to the client survey indicated they had a disability or handicap that prevented them from working. Others said they lacked the education required, lacked the skills necessary to compete, and/or tried to unsuccessfully to find work in the area.

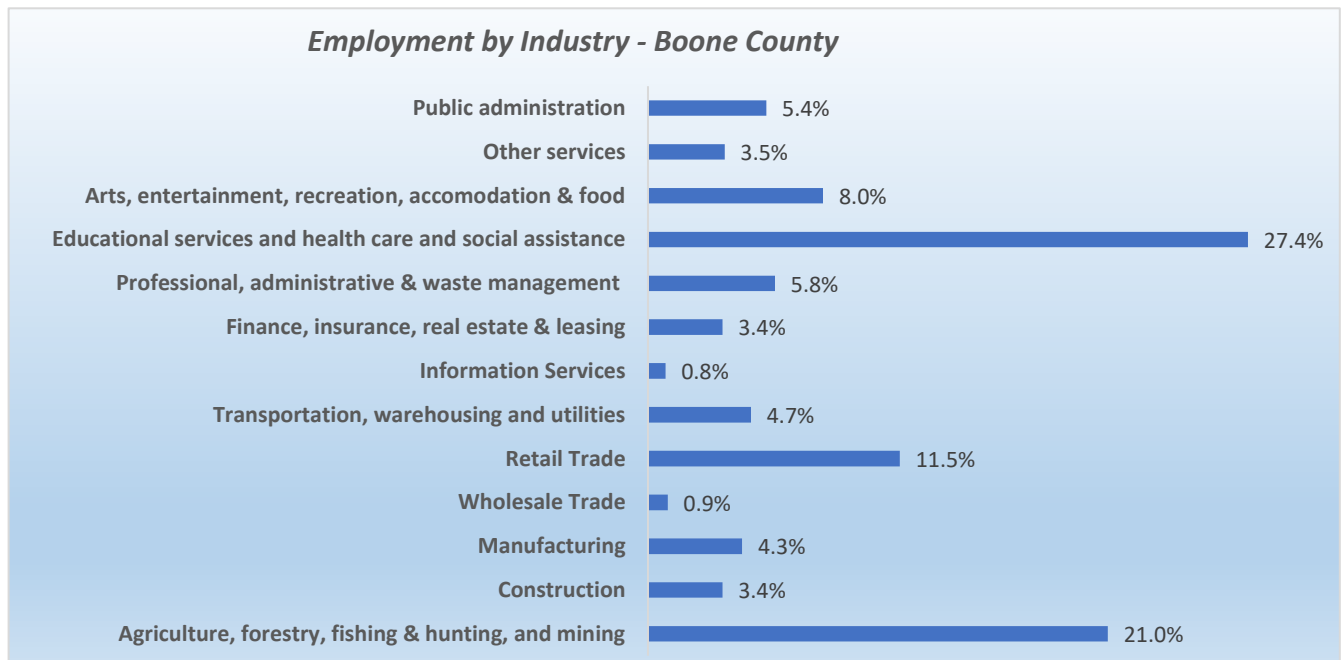
The key informants surveyed were also asked what they consider to be the most significant barriers to employment in Boone County. The most significant barriers to employment identified through the survey of key informants are:

- A lack of opportunity – sufficient jobs are not available in the area (71.6%), and
- Low income households receiving government benefits fear a loss of benefits if they become employed (67.6%).

- There also appears to be issues related to transportation to job locations for some low-income job seekers based on the survey responses.



Current employment in the county tends to focus on educational, healthcare, and social service programs and mining. Education, healthcare, and social services jobs account for 27.4% of total employment in the county. The agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting and mining industry sector accounts for 21.0% of the county employment (*Selected Economic Characteristics - ACS 2016*).



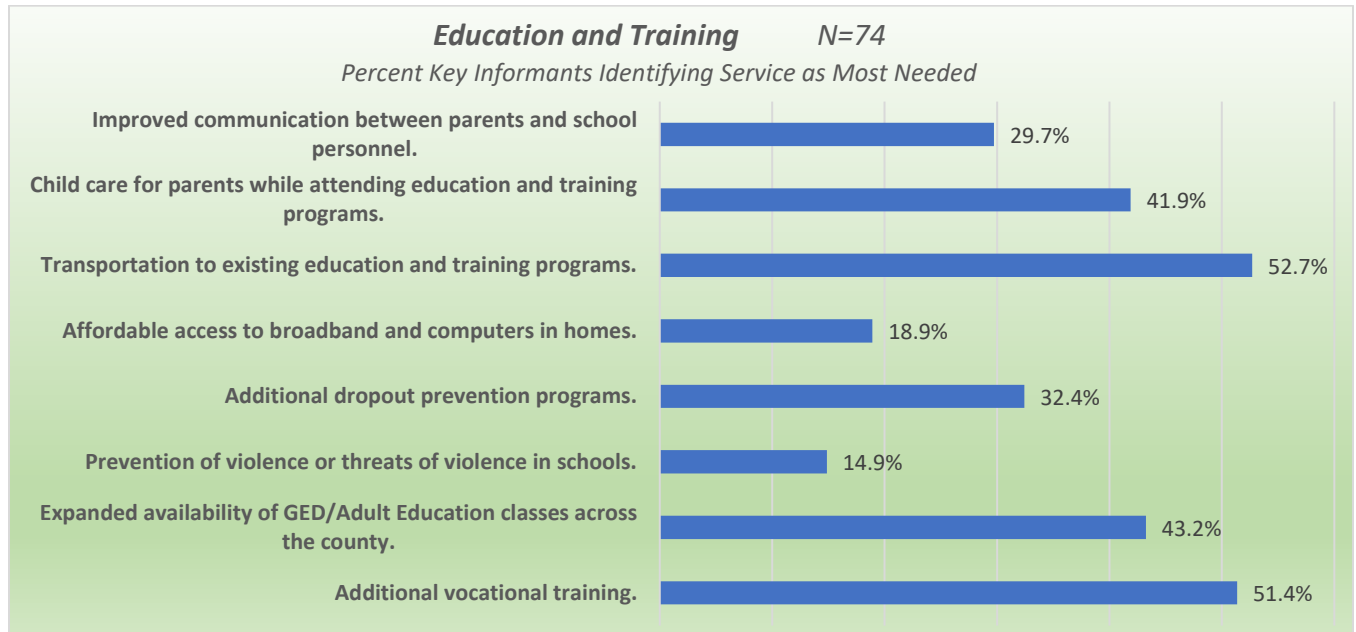
The largest employers in Boone County (in order of number of people employed) are:

1. Boone County Board of Education,

2. Elk Run Coal Company,
3. Boone Memorial Hospital, and
4. Blackhawk Mining.

Education and Training:

A majority of key informants responding to the survey in Boone County focused on the need for vocational training programs and transportation services to existing education and training programs. More GED/Adult Education classes and child care for people attending education and training programs are also seen as priorities by survey respondents.

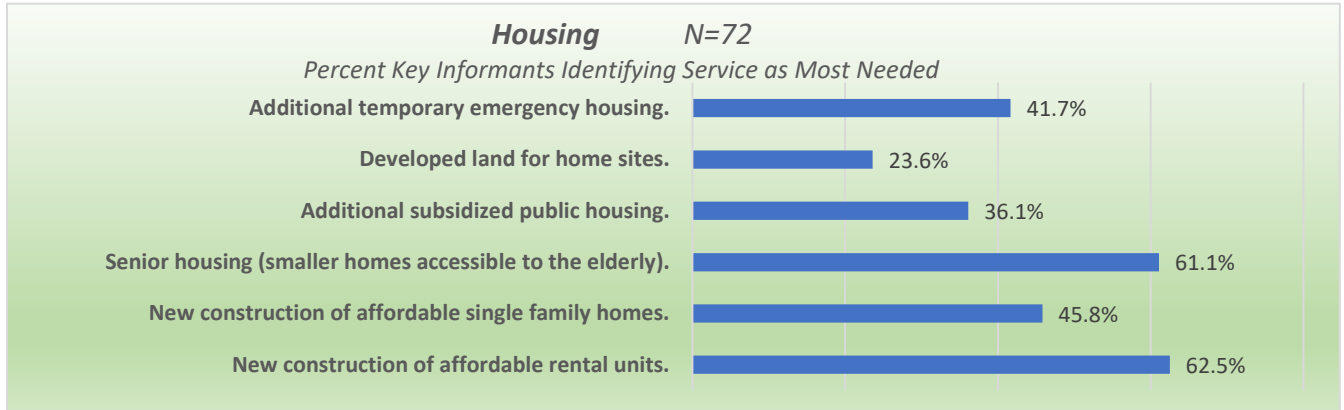


Additional vocational training programs was identified as a priority by 51.4% of the survey respondents, and transportation to existing training programs was identified as a need by 52.7%. Expanded availability of GED and adult education is viewed as a priority by 43.2% of the key informants and child care for parents attending training classes was selected as a “most needed” service by 41.9%. A variety of other programs and services are seen by some respondents as important in order to improve education and training in the county.

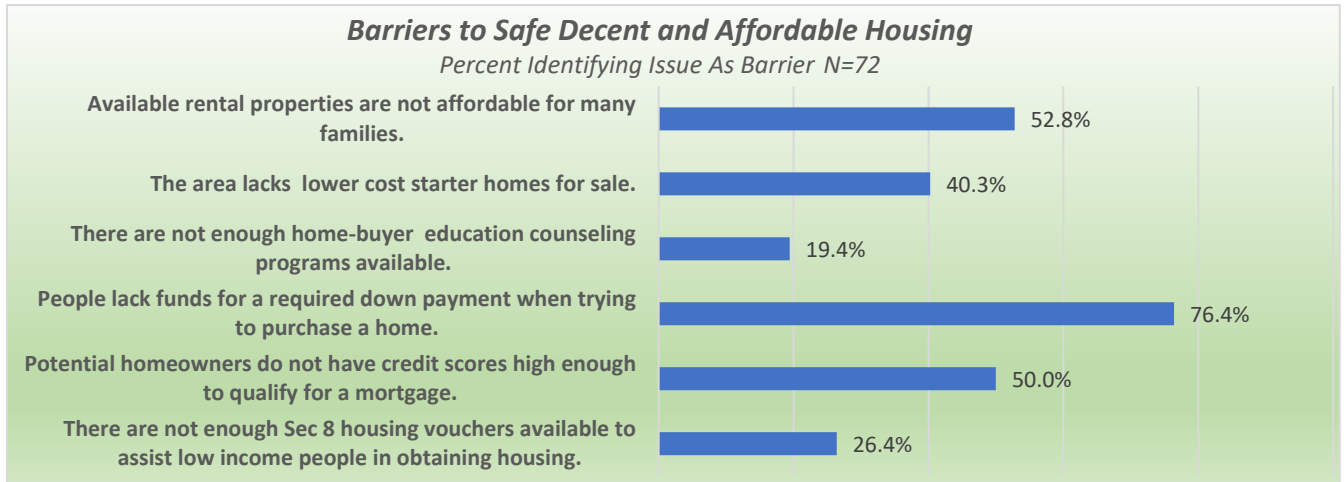
Service recipient experiences reinforce a need for transportation to education and training programs. 3 of the 12 clients (25%) who answered the question about their experience in seeking education and training said they personally lacked transportation to a program they would like to attend. Another client concern expressed by 3 survey respondents is an inability to afford an Internet connection or computer.

Housing:

Key informants responding to the survey in Boone County identified a need for new construction of affordable housing including rental units (62.5%), Senior housing (61.1%), and single-family homes (45.8%). Temporary emergency housing is also seen by 41.7% of county informants as a need.



When asked about barriers to safe, decent and affordable housing, survey respondents focused on affordability of rental units and the inability of many residents to purchase a home due to low credit scores and/or lack of a sufficient down payment.

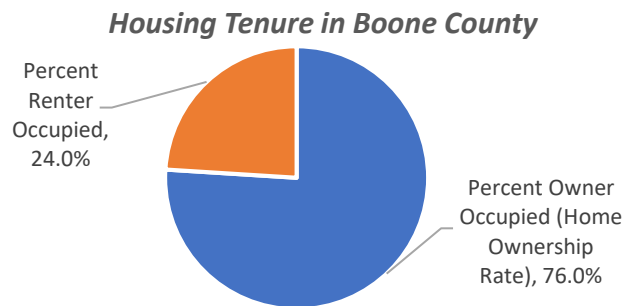


More than three of every four key informants (76.4%) indicated they believe people lack the required funds for the down payment when trying to secure a mortgage, and more than half (52.8%) don't think rental properties are affordable for many families.

The limited number of Boone County service recipients who offered their experiences related to housing (15 people) confirm the lack of affordability of housing for many families. 73.3% of the clients said decent places to rent cost too much for them to afford and 53.3% said they could not afford a decent home for sale in the area. 40% of the service recipients also indicated they have either been unable get approved for any type of housing assistance or been placed on a waiting list for public housing.

Secondary data sets reviewed supplement the survey findings related to housing needs. A little more than three-quarters of Boone County residents are home owners while a little less than one-quarter live in rental properties.

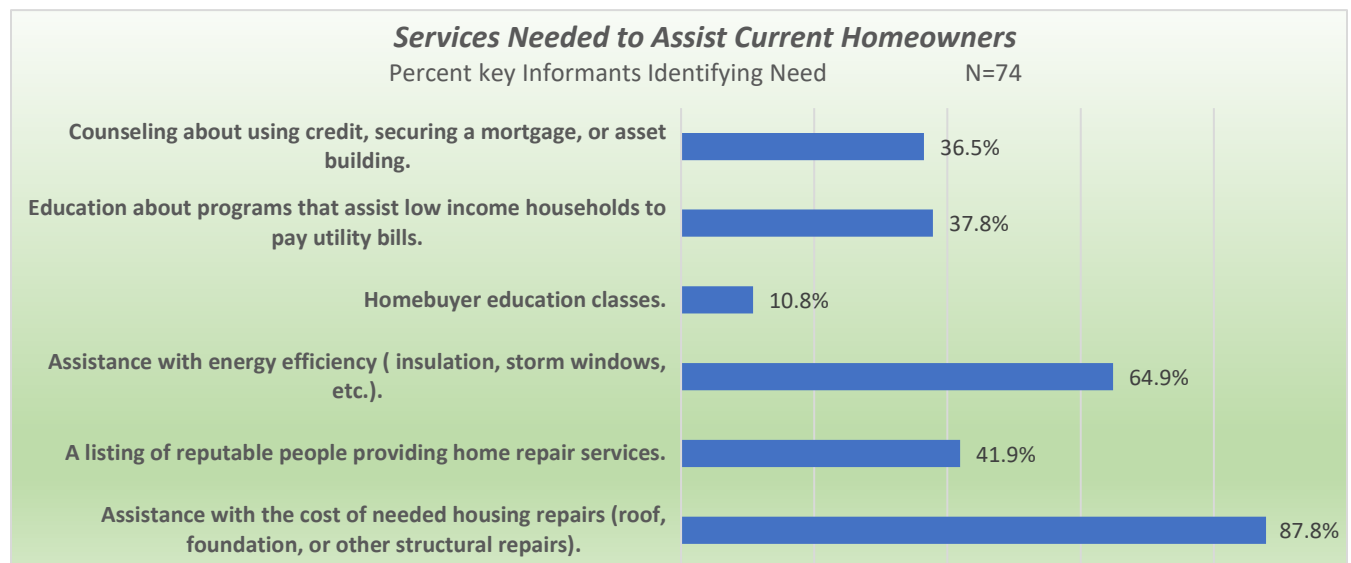
85.9% of existing housing units are occupied and 14.1% are vacant. 18.6% of existing homes were built prior to 1950. As of 2016, there were an estimated 65 occupied homes without plumbing in the county. The median value of owner occupied housing in the county is \$72,900 (ACS 2011-16).



25.2% of homeowners with a mortgage are “cost burdened” with monthly housing costs exceeding 30% of income. More than twice as many renters are cost burdened (55.8%) based on their gross rent exceeding 30% of the household income. Median monthly owner costs for those with a mortgage is \$830 (ACS 2011-16).

Homeowner Assistance:

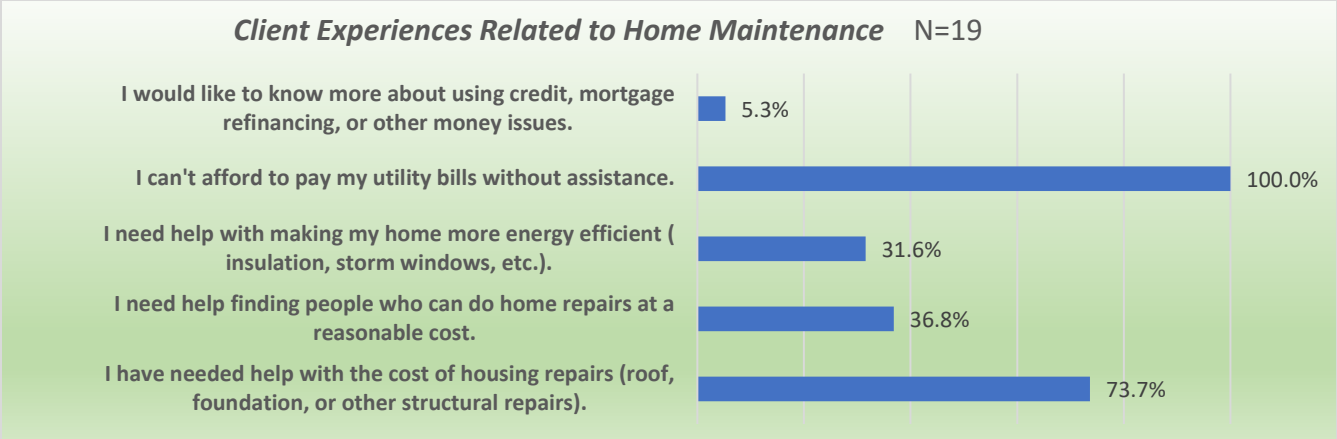
Key Informant Survey respondents in Boone County believe housing repairs are the greatest need among low-income persons. 87.8% of the key informants prioritized repairs to existing homes. Assistance with energy efficiency also appears to be a high priority based on the survey responses.



Education or counseling about use of credit, mortgages, asset building, and programs to assist with paying utility bills were also seen as priority areas of need by about 37% of the key informants.

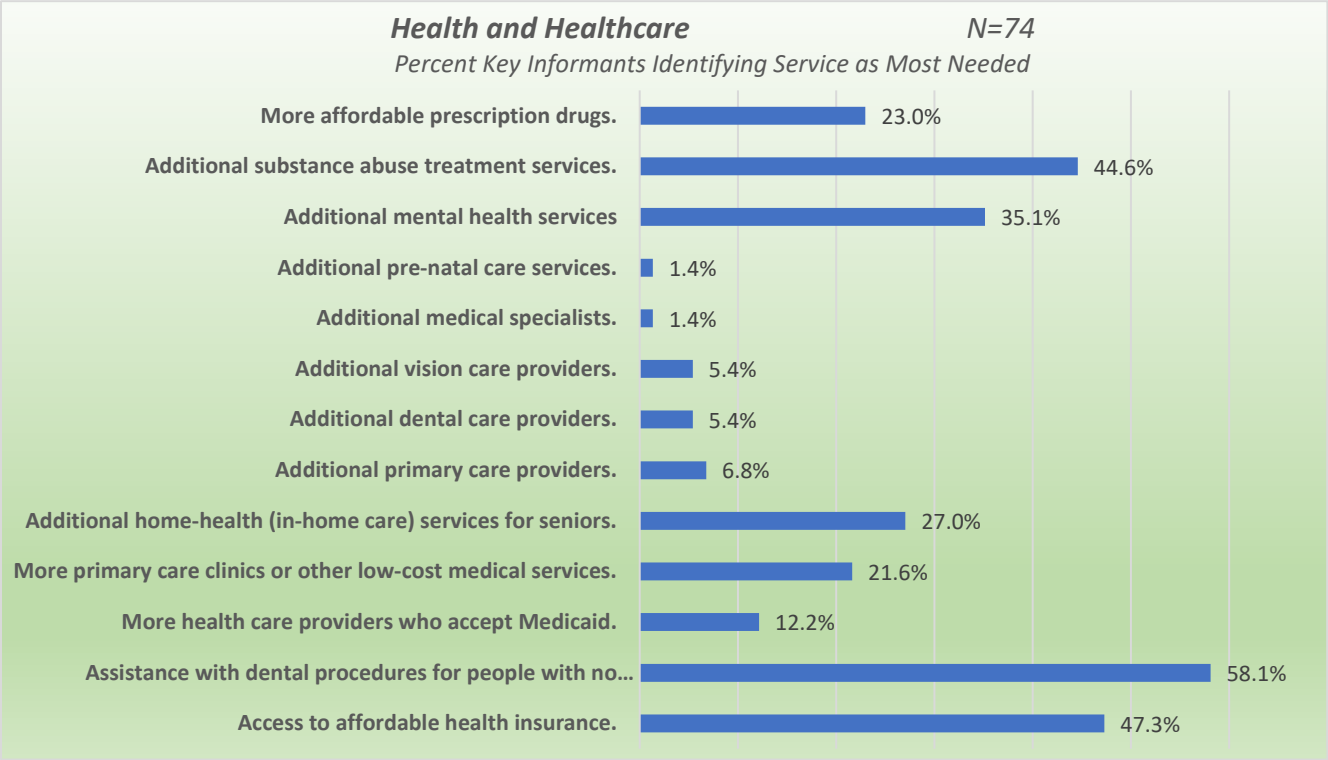
When the service recipients were asked about their needs and experiences related to housing, 100% of the 19 people responding to the survey said they can’t afford to pay their utility bills without assistance.

73.7% of the clients surveyed also said they have needed help with the cost of housing repairs and 36.8% said they have needed help finding people who can do home repairs at a reasonable cost.



Healthcare:

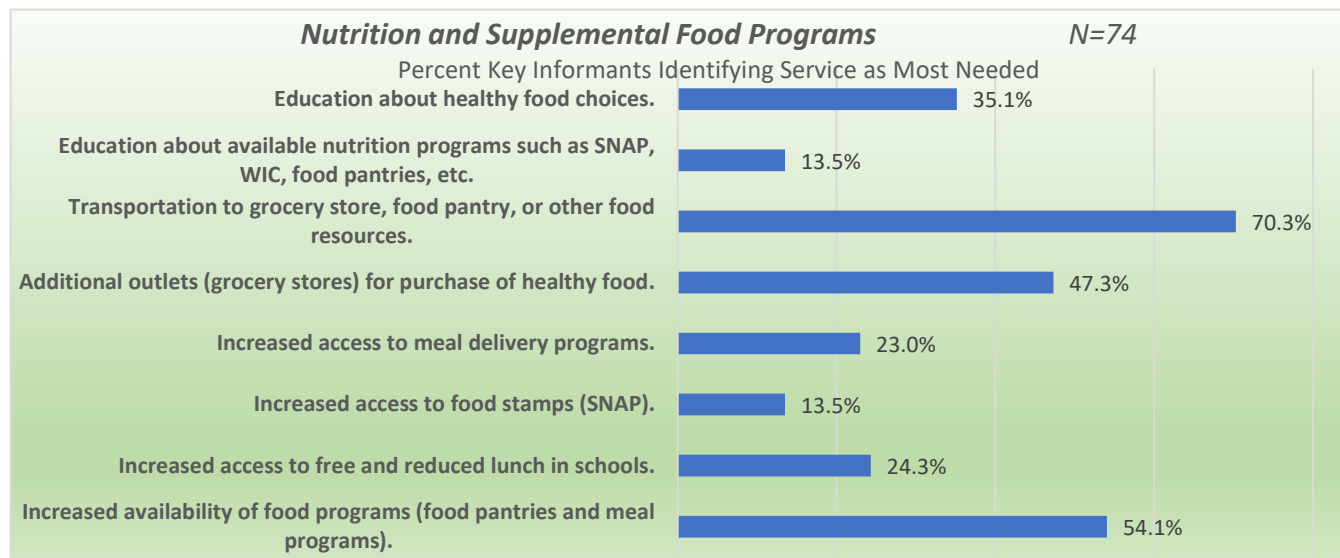
Assistance with dental procedures, affordable health insurance options, and access to substance abuse treatment are the major priorities identified by the key informants surveyed in Boone County within the healthcare domain. More than half (59.1%) of the key informants indicated people in the county need help accessing dental care.



Only seven service recipients responded about their needs and experiences in seeking healthcare services. Those who did share their experience indicated their needs are consistent with the priorities identified by the key informants. In addition to needing help paying for dental procedures and needing health insurance, at least one of the respondents to the service recipient survey said they need help paying for prescription drugs, need in home care for Seniors, or have had difficulty finding providers who accept Medicaid.

Nutrition:

When asked about community needs related to food and nutrition, Boone County respondents to the community survey focused on a need for transportation to food outlets and increasing the availability of food programs (food pantries, meal programs, etc.) in the county. 70.3% prioritized transportation to food outlets as a priority for lower income people, and 54.1% believe the county needs more food programs. Nearly half of the respondents (47.3%) also think additional outlets (grocery stores) are needed where healthy food can be purchased.



The low-income service recipients were also asked about their experiences in trying to obtain sufficient food for themselves and/or their family. 70.6% said they sometimes need help feeding themselves or their family but were unable to find anyplace to get free food. 47.1% of the 17 clients surveyed said they didn't have any way to get to a grocery store, food pantry or other place to get food.

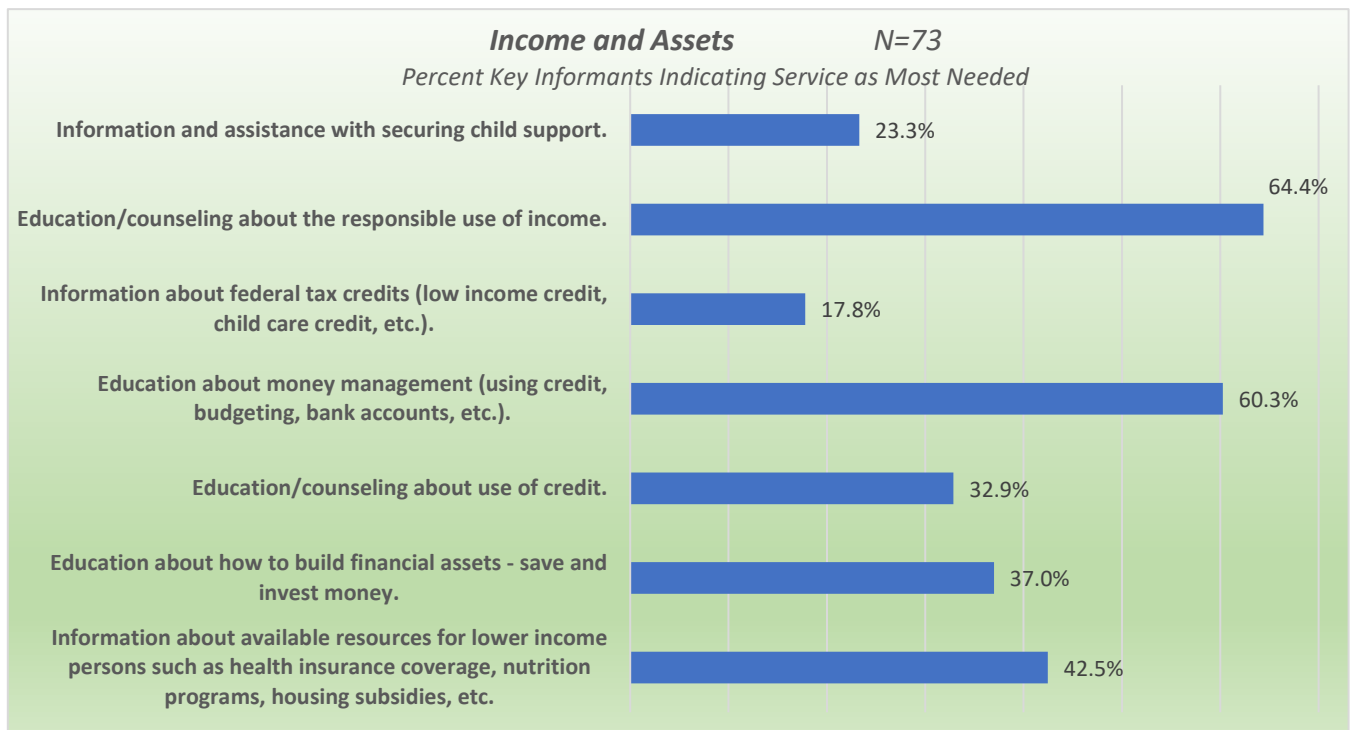
In 2015, there were 10 supplemental food programs (food pantries, hot meal programs, backpack programs, meal delivery, etc.) serving the county (*WV Foodlink 2015*). 25.2% of households in Boone County receive food stamps to supplement their food budgets.

668 Boone County families were enrolled in WIC through the WIC office serving the county in 2013. The *WV Foodlink County Profile for Boone County* documents 36 retail locations that accept food stamps and 6 locations accepting WIC (2015). 3,218 school-age children are also eligible for free and reduced cost meals at school; however, available data indicates only 64% of eligible students participate in the program (*WV FoodLink*).

Income and Assets:

Community Survey responses indicate a need for educational services about money management including responsible use of income, using credit, budgeting, using bank accounts, and other issues related to financial literacy.

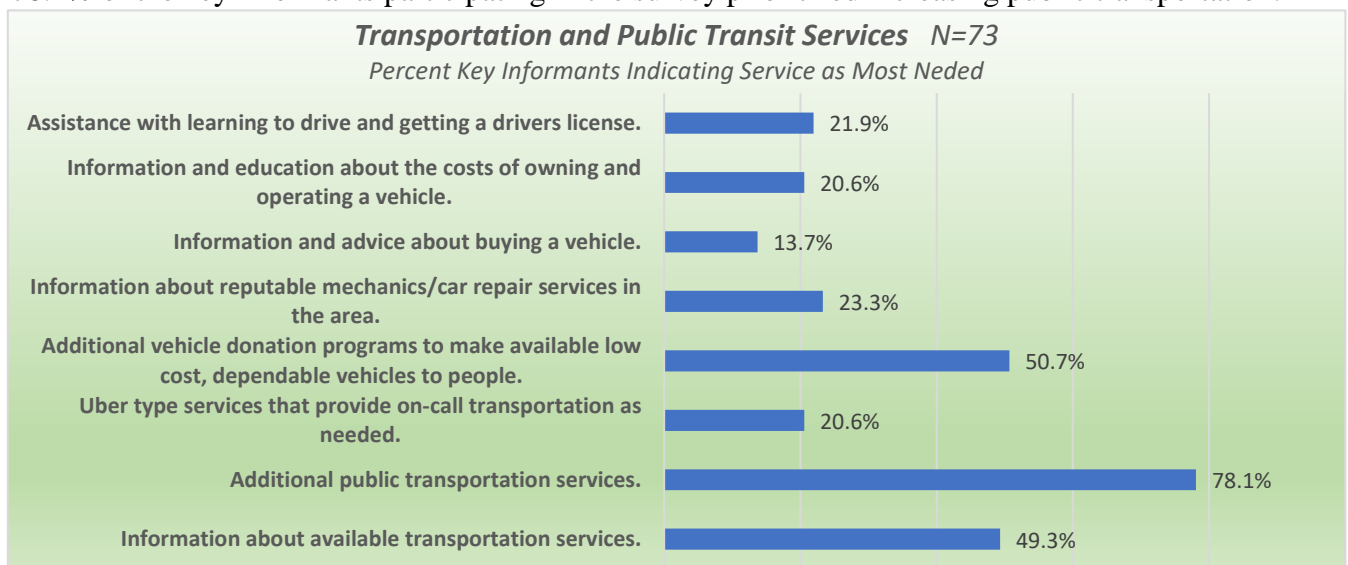
Some type of education about these issues appears to be the area of services most needed within this domain based on survey responses from key informants. More than 60% of respondents indicated education or counseling about these issues was one of the services related to income and assets.



Secondary data from the 2015 FDIC Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked households indicates 8.4% of Boone County households are “unbanked” (have no checking or savings accounts).

Transportation:

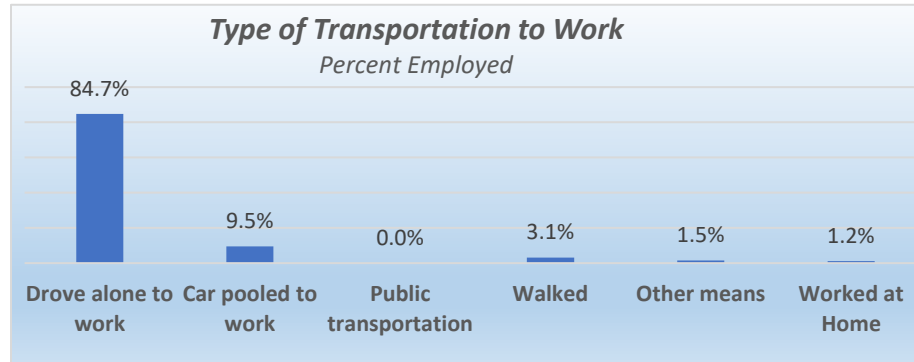
Additional access to public transportation was identified as the most needed service within this domain. 78.1% of the key informants participating in the survey prioritized increasing public transportation.



About half of the respondents (50.7%) also thought vehicle donation programs to make available dependable but low-cost vehicles to people in need was a priority, and dissemination of information about available transportation was prioritized by 49.3% of survey respondents.

61.1% of the service recipients surveyed also said they need to know what transportation services might be available in the area. One-third of the clients completing the survey indicated they need to know where to take a vehicle to get it repaired at a fair price.

Dependable private transportation is necessary for most employed people to access their work location.



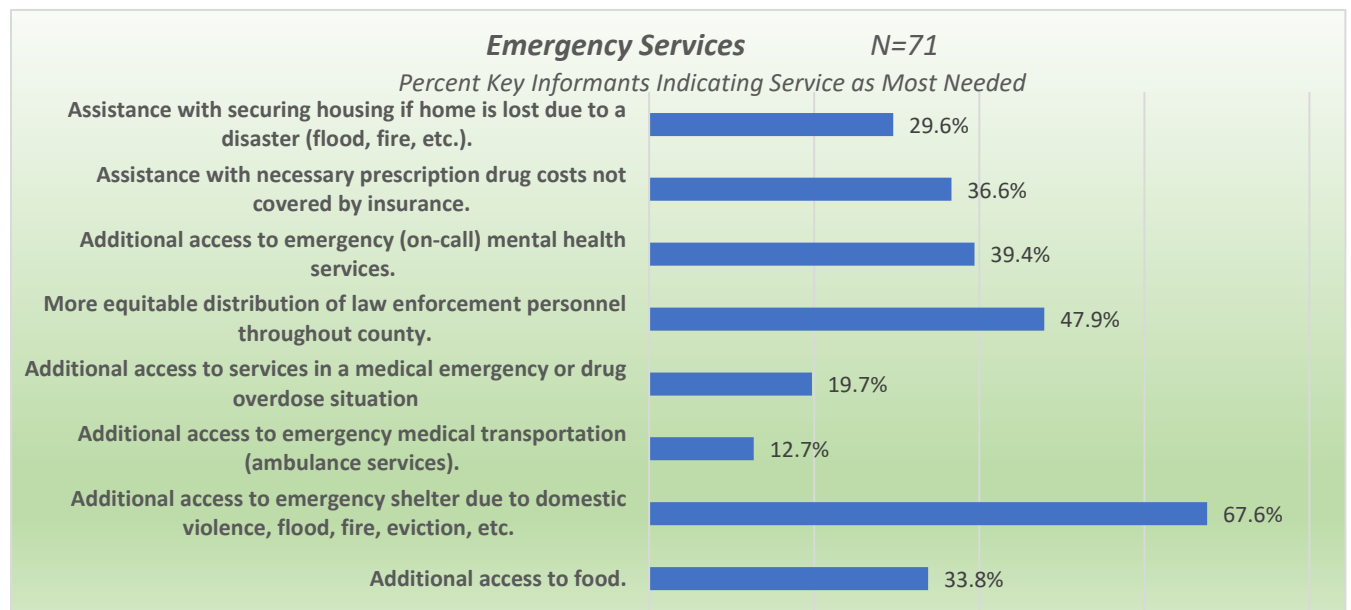
The mean travel time to work for current workers is 32.2 minutes.

Most workers rely on private transportation to get from home to their work site. 94.2% of all persons employed either drive alone or car pool to work (ACS 2011-16).

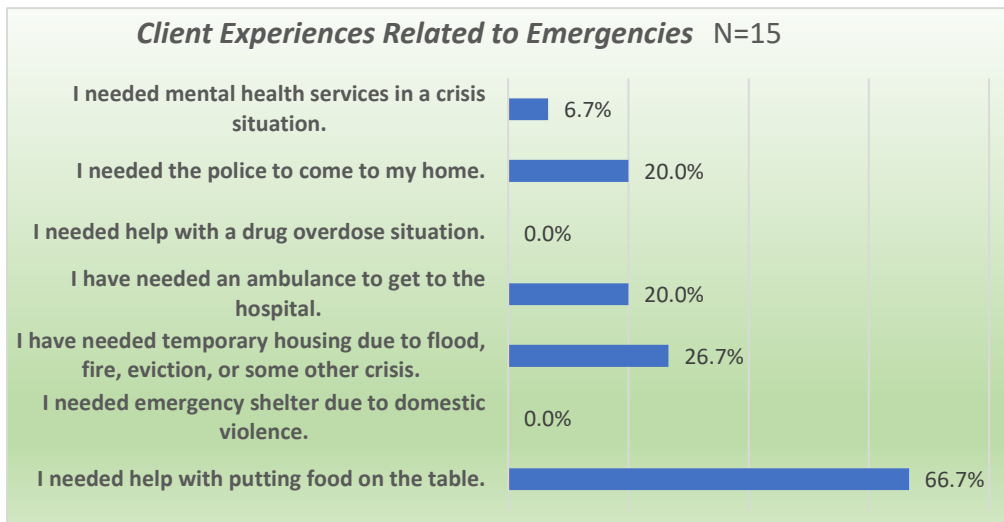
Limited public transit services are available in Boone County. A bus route operated by Tri River Transit Authority connects Clothier, Madison, and Charleston. This service appears to be quite limited and is available only one day a week (Tuesday). The transportation service provides some access to key shopping and public service locations in Madison and Charleston.

Emergency Services:

The most frequently cited need within the emergency services domain is temporary emergency shelter due to domestic violence, flood, fire, eviction or another emergency.



67.6% of the key informants knowledgeable of community conditions in Boone County prioritized temporary shelter as “most needed” in the county. Nearly half of the survey respondents (47.9%) think a more equitable distribution of law enforcement personnel is needed throughout Boone County.



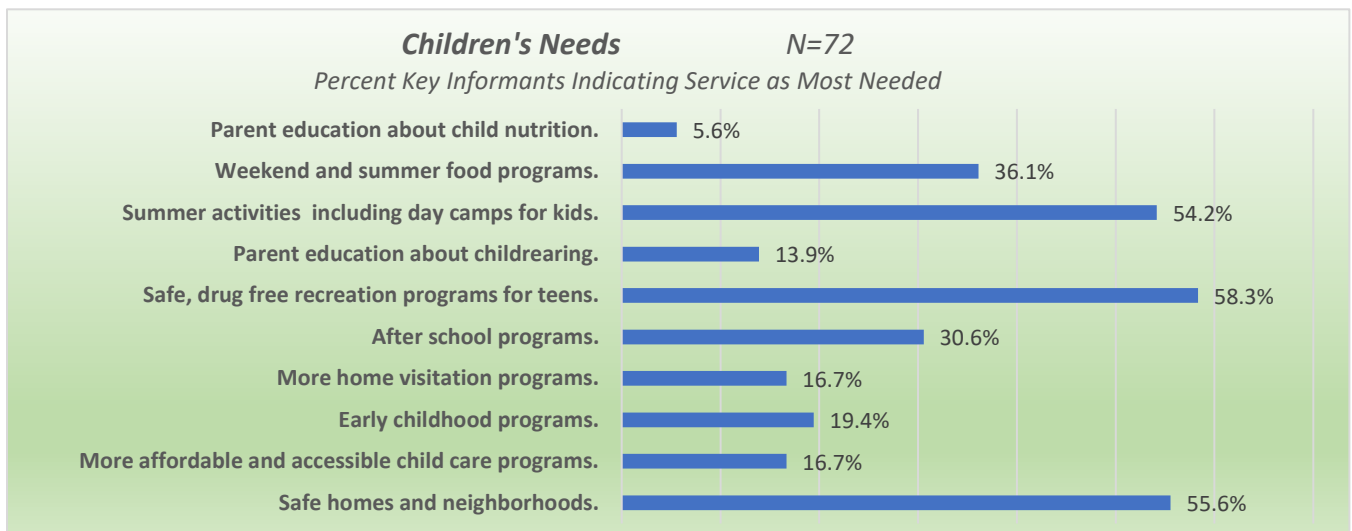
Clients surveyed tend to be primarily concerned about putting food on the table. 66.7% of the 15 service recipients who shared experiences related to emergency situations view adequate food as the area they are most concerned about.

26.7% of the clients said they have needed

temporary housing due to a crisis at some point, and 20% have needed police to come to their home and ambulance services to get to the hospital.

Children’s Needs:

Safety issues and summer programs were identified as areas of concern when community survey respondents were asked about the needs of children.



Priorities for attention related to services and programs for children include:

- Safe homes and neighborhoods,
- Safe and drug free recreation programs for teens, and
- Summer activities for children/youth including day camps.

The concerns expressed through the survey are further documented by available quantitative data related to child and family safety. The child abuse/neglect rate in the county in 2015 was 32.0 per 1,000 children

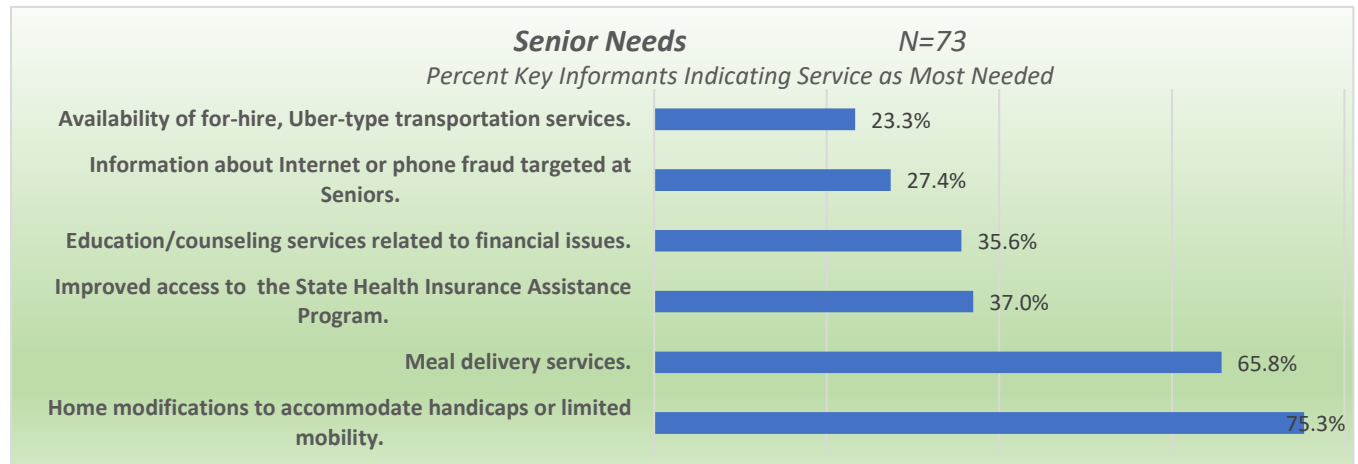
(Kids Count 2015). There were 93 court filings for child abuse/neglect in 2016 which is a rate of 31.1 filings per 1,000 households with children (2016 *Circuit Court case filings data*). There were also 153 domestic violence cases filed in 2016 which is a rate of 23.2 filings per 1,000 family households (2016 *Family Court case filings data*).

8.3% of children under the age of 18 yrs. have some type of disability (ACS 2016); and survey results indicate services for young children are relatively strong as compared to the need for recreational and summer activities for older youth. There are 202 children enrolled in Pre-K programs and the participation rate for preschool children enrolled is at 75% (2017 school year).

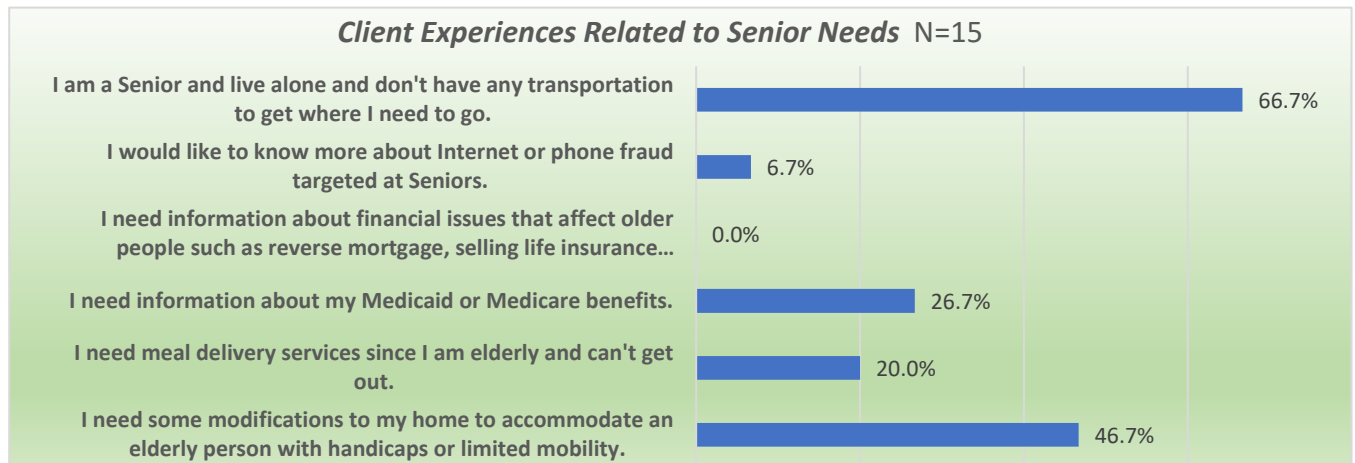
Senior Needs

There are 2,892 households with Seniors in Boone County and 58.9% of Seniors have some type of disability. 25.7% of the Senior population lives alone (ACS 2016). It is estimated that 66.9% of grandparents who live with their grandchildren are responsible for raising grandchildren under 18 yrs. of age. Several possible needs of Seniors were explored through the community survey.

The most prevalent need identified by the key informant responses is modifications to homes to accommodate limited mobility or handicapping conditions among the Senior population. 75.3% of the key informants indicating this was a “most needed” service within the Senior needs domain. The other major area of need identified through the survey is for meal delivery services for Seniors. 65.8% of all respondents cited this area of need.



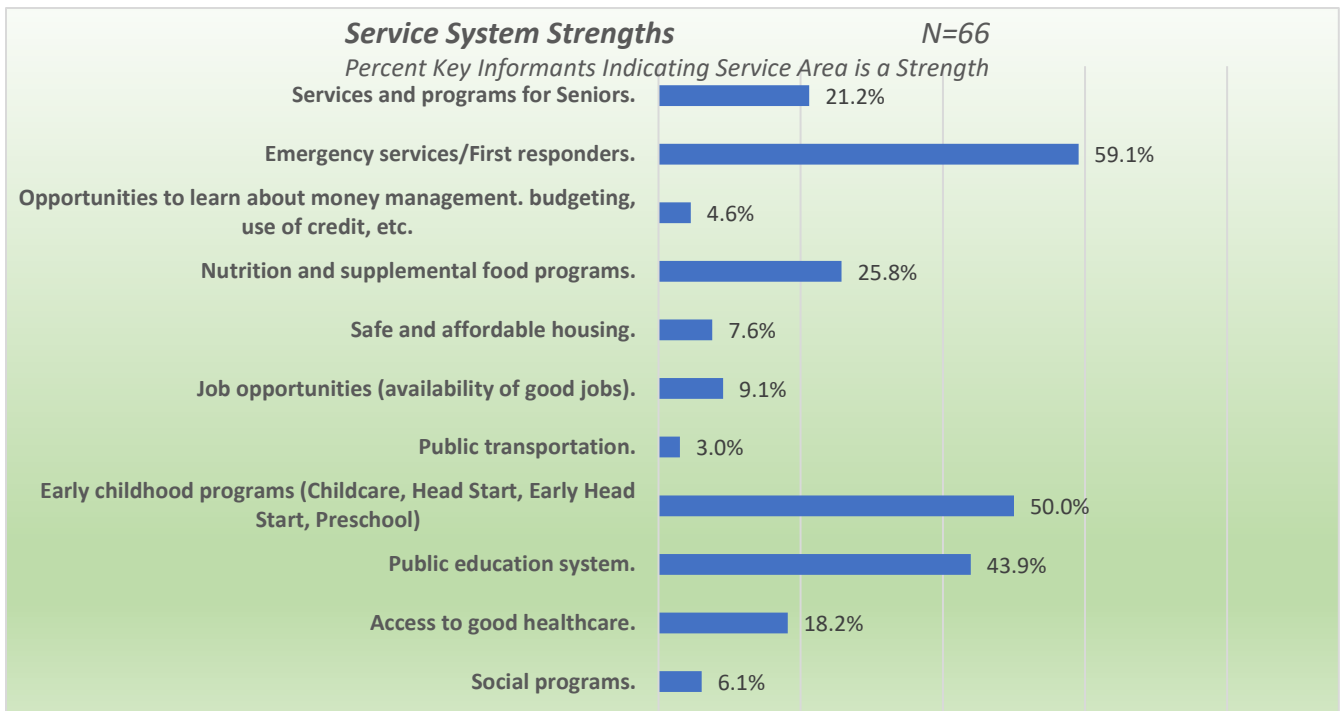
When low income service recipients in Boone County were asked about the needs of Seniors, 15 of the 19 people surveyed identified one or more needs of this population. Ten (10) of the survey respondents indicated they were a Senior living alone who had no means transportation. Other areas of need identified by the clients are consistent with those identified by the key informants including a need for home modifications and meal delivery services. 26.7% of the clients also said they need information about their Medicaid and/or Medicare benefits.



Primary Strengths and Community Resources

Community survey respondents in Boone County were asked what they considered to be the greatest strengths within the Boone County services system and they were asked to select all options they consider to be a “particular strength”. Half or more of the respondents indicated they thought emergency services and early childhood services were areas of strength within the overall services system.

59.1% identified first responder type emergency services as a strength; and 50% thought early childhood services including childcare, preschool programs, and Head Start was strong component of the system.



The public education system was the third most cited area of strength in Boone County. None of the other service system components listed is seen as a strength by more than one in four of the respondents.

The service recipients surveyed found few areas of strength within the overall service system. The greatest area of strength identified by clients is First Responders; however, less than half (41.2%) of the 17 low

income clients offering their opinion identified this service component as a strength in the county. None of the other services or programs are seen as a notable area of strength by the service recipients completing the survey.

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

- Opportunity for tourism
- Community involvement including local ministers and communities of faith in the county
- An emerging sense of hope among people in Boone County
- Strong community organizations
- Great administrators and counselors at Scott High
- Boone Memorial Hospital is involved in the community
- Trade schools and a community college

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

- Boone County Community Economic Development Corporation
- A range of public health and healthcare services provided by Boone County Health Department and Boone Memorial Hospital
- Behavioral Health services provided by Prester Center
- KVC In-home Family Therapy and School Based Mental Health
- Cornerstone Family Interventions – Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program
- Amazing Grace – Recovery Support and Family Support Groups
- Medicaid Waiver services provided by Community Services Inc.
- *Right from the Start* program for Medicaid eligible pregnant women and infants
- Agape Cloak – Weekend “Love Bags” for school children on Big Coal River
- Two licensed child care centers
- Nine licensed family day care providers
- Twelve Pre-K public school classrooms
- Appalachian Council Head Start – 9 sites
- Birth to Three services
- Southern WV Community & Technical College – Boone Campus
- A limited route one day a week public transportation service – Tri-Rivers Transit
- Boone Area Transit System – limited demand response transportation
- Boone County Community Centers
- West Virginia University Extension Service
- Local office of the WV Department of Health and Human Resources
- Boone County Family Resource Network
- Boone County Senior Center
- Five banking locations
- Catholic Charities of Boone County