

Attachment H

Blount County Community Action Agency FY' 15/16 Community Needs Assessment 2014-2015

Blount County Community Action Agency, Inc. conducted a community needs assessment survey that was completed by Board Members, Police Officers, Judges, Elected Officials, Sister Agencies and clients served through our programs. These forms were distributed, collected and analyzed by the Community Service Block Grant Staff. Information from the 2013 United Way of Blount County Needs Assessment Survey, American Fact Finder, Tennessee Monthly Snap Participation, Blount County City Data, US Census estimates for 2014 and the Community Action Partnership Website Community Needs Assessment Tool were used, as well. The results are listed below.

Community Action Partnership Needs Assessment Online Tool: This report gives a summary of the current Blount County, Tennessee community conditions. The demographics are broken down into Population Profile, Employment, Education, Housing, Income, Nutrition and Health Care. Categories include gender, ethnicity and poverty level.

Blount County Community Action Agency, Inc.- Blount County Community Action Agency conducted a needs assessment using surveys developed to determine the most serious needs in the community. Based on information collected by the needs assessment from participating clients, the following ranking of the Community Needs was as follows for major community issues:

- 1) Lack of money for utility bill(s)(54.38%)
- 2) Lack of money for food (45.94%)
- 3) Lack of money to pay prescription drugs (44.16%)
- 4) Lack of employment/unemployment due to other reasons (43.62%)
- 5) Lack of money for housing (41.56 %)
- 6) Lack of money to pay doctor (41.29%)
- 7) Lack of funds for healthy foods/fresh produce (39.40%)
- 8) Lack of affordable housing (38.49%)
- 9) Lack of money for house repairs (37.32%)
- 10) Unable to get dental care (36.95%)

After eliminating those services already provided by other agencies in Blount County and those services beyond the capability of Blount County Community Action Agency to provide, a priority ranking of services this agency can administer is established:

1. Energy/Emergency assistance
2. Employment
3. Nutrition
4. Health
5. Linkages/Senior Services
6. Information and Referral

**Attachment H
Community Action Plan
And Community Needs**

Assessment

Blount County Community Action Agency

FY 14/15 CSBG Community Action Plan and Needs Assessment

Blount County Community Action Agency, Inc.'s mission is to plan, develop, and conduct Federal, State and local programs designed to improve the living conditions of low-income households and to enable them to become more self-sufficient.

Demographics for Blount County:
Statistical Information taken from the US Census 2014 estimates
2013 United Way of Blount County Needs Assessment
Community Action Partnership Website
Community Needs Assessment Online Tool
American Fact Finder
Blount County City Finder
Tennessee Snap Participation

People Facts	Blount County
Population Census 2014 Estimates	126,399
White persons, percent	94.2%
Black or African American person, percent	2.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent	0.4%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent	3.0%
Asian Persons	0.9%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent	1.5%
Persons below poverty level 2009-2013	13.7%

Families below poverty level	13.4%
Population of elderly (over 65)	17.9%

I. Needs Assessment:

Blount County Community Action Agency utilized community needs assessment forms completed by other sister agencies, Police Officers, Judges, Elected Officials, Board Members and clients served by Blount County Community Action Agency in developing this plan. These forms were distributed, collected and analyzed by Community Service Block Grant staff. Census information was utilized as well as informational data from the Community Needs Assessment Online Tool accessed through the Community Action Partnership website. The latest Needs Assessment was completed in March, 2014, and is done on a yearly basis. This Needs Assessment serves as a Community Needs Assessment and is a Comprehensive Needs Assessment for the agency due to the wide range of participants polled.

With the population of Blount County growing at a steadily increasing rate and the economic situation, the need for services have become more apparent. Low-income households are in need of utility assistance due to the lack of employment, harsh winters and rise in energy costs.

There is also a need for Low-income housing which at this time has a waiting list of at least three years. While there seems to be a large number of homes available, there are few homes that serve low income individuals. There is also no low income housing in development at this time nor does Blount County provide a Homeless Shelter. The area of affordable housing is a major issue of concern in the community. Many households are forced to rent manufactured housing units with very little insulation or maintenance performed which leads to high utility bills that they simply do not have the funds to pay.

While there are several food pantries in the county, the increase in population and economic condition are reflected in the rising number of new participants to these pantries. Pantries are struggling to keep nutritional foods in stock to serve the large number of those who are seeking assistance.

Blount County has an income based dental clinic. Due to the small number of staff, they are only able to be open two days a week and perform minor procedures.

Community Needs Assessment: Blount County Community Action Agency conducted a county needs assessment using questionnaires developed to determine the most serious community needs.

- a. Based on the detailed information garnered by the needs assessment survey from the participating clients, the following prioritized ranking of the Community Needs was as follows in order of major problem ranking first:

1. Assistance with Utilities
2. Assistance with Food
3. Lack of Funds for Prescription Drugs
4. Lack of Employment/Unemployment due to other reasons
5. Lack of money for acceptable housing
6. Lack of funds to pay doctor
7. Lack of funds for healthy food/produce
8. Lack of affordable housing
9. Lack of funds for Housing Repair
10. Unable to get Dental Care/No Insurance

After eliminating those services already provided by other agencies in Blount County and those services beyond the capability of Blount County Community Action Agency to provide, a priority ranking of services this agency can administer is established:

1. Energy/Emergency assistance
2. Employment services
3. Nutrition Services
4. Health Services
5. Linkages/Senior Services
6. Information and Referral

- a. When the above priorities are formatted into the FY 15/16 CSBG Service Categories provided by DHS, the following services result:

1. Energy Assistance
2. Emergency Services
3. Nutrition
4. Employment
5. Health
6. Linkages

II. Service Delivery

To receive services through a program funded under CSBG, financial eligibility and the need for service must be established through an interview. All applicants must qualify at 125% of the poverty guidelines (Guidelines are subject to change issued by State). Once income and need are established, applicants are required to fill out a State issued application and needs assessment tool at the Blount County Community Action Agency office at 3509 Tuckaleechee Pike, Maryville, TN, 37803.

CSBG Application Intake Process

The Director of Community Service Programs, Office on Aging Director or Community Service Programs Manager completes the application and through the interview process establishes the family situation and a plan of action. After the application for assistance is completed and proof of eligibility is attached, the process begins for the assistance to be provided (funded) in a timely manner.

There is no waiting list for Cash Assistance. If Chore Service is at its maximum, a waiting list is kept and openings are filled as they become available.

Information and Referral are provided to the community as needed regardless of eligibility.

After intake and approval of an application and those clients eligible for case management are identified, a plan of action will be established and the following takes place:

Employment

After eligibility process is completed, a gas voucher is issued to assist with fuel costs associated with transportation to a job or job interview.

Cash Assistance

The Director of Community Service Programs, along with the Community Service Programs Associate, is charged with the application process, counseling and referrals. When the funds are available, the client is notified that payment will be made directly to the source, by check, on the client's behalf. Information and referral are given.

Community funding is also available for utilities increasing the ability to assist more households.

Mobilizing Goods

Clients needing various household items, etc., are asked to complete an application self-declaring their income. If donated items are available, upon completion of application and verifying need; goods are given as made available.

Nutrition

Support assistance will be given for the application and certification process for the Commodity Distribution Program.

Blount County Community Action Agency and local food pantries have formed a Community Resource Initiative to assure that the pantries have food to give to those in need. Blount County Community Action Agency will certify the applicant by verifying income and need and a Resource Card (Red or Pink Card) will be issued allowing that applicant to participate in receiving food from the pantries. It is also an opportunity to advise them of other resources in the community. This card will assist in eliminating duplications at the pantries, thus giving pantries more opportunity to minister and more food to serve those in need.

Blount County Community Action Agency will work with the Senior Nutrition Program to provide meals to homebound elderly and/or disabled as long as funding allows. Each applicant will be certified through an application and assessment process. This service will allow those elderly and/or disabled clients to receive healthy nutritious meals while providing outreach for those in the program who otherwise would have no contact with others.

Elderly Projects

After certification approval and a plan of action have been designed, a chore worker is assigned to a client. The type of assistance rendered depends on client needs. Some receive daily or weekly visits, while others will be visited bi-weekly or monthly. The service will continue until the client is able to do their own work, a family member decides to help, the client goes into a nursing home, moves in with relatives or is deceased or if on re-certification, the client is found to be ineligible.

The CSBG/Smiles Program is a senior-friendly transportation program for Blount County residents 60 years of age or older who are in need of transportation for essential trips such as going to the doctor, purchasing groceries, picking up prescriptions, etc. This program is available to those clients who qualify under the Community Service Block Grant Services by allowing them to purchase an annual membership to ride.

Health Services

Dental applications are completed after a referral from the local dental clinic or other local dental providers. The application process may take approximately 1-3 days to complete determined by client ability to provide all required documentation and availability of dental provider. After completion and approval of the application, the client is examined by a local cooperating dental provider to determine the extent of dental problems and cost of treatment. Once treatment options are determined, the client schedules an appointment for treatment. After treatment is provided, the dental provider sends Blount County Community Action Agency an invoice that is sent to accounting for payment to vendor. Local dental providers are extremely cooperative in the client receiving timely treatment. Dental treatment is provided once in a contract year. Dental providers provide additional treatments as in-kind.

The Garden Produce for Fitness Program requires an approved application process and services will be provided to each applicant in the Spring of each program year. Clients will be given plants, gardening instructions and seeds to plant based upon family size. This program will allow qualifying applicants the opportunity to grow their own produce to enable them to afford to eat healthy and combat the wide spread obesity problems in Tennessee.

Local Needs Assessment/Outreach

The needs assessment is an ongoing project collecting and compiling pertinent information. Outreach is conducted on an ongoing basis including during commodity distributions or any occasion where a large group is assembled as every effort is made to obtain data from all possible sources. Outreach offers services that the low-income might not normally have access to.

III. DESCRIPTION OF LINKAGES

Many organizations in Blount County have recognized the need for partnerships in assuring the needs of the community are met. United Way of Blount County has organized all social service organizations, educational programs, and training providers for a “Helpline Advisory Committee” for Blount County. Service providers, etc., are members of the Helpline Advisory Committee meeting once a month to discuss available services and resources and any needs not met in the community. The organization and participation of these committees have enabled members to network in an effort to improve or create services if there is a gap or need in the community. A homeless coalition has also been formed to increase awareness of the homeless issues in the county. This coalition partnered with the local newspaper to provide stories and articles about the lives of individuals and families who are homeless in an effort to raise community awareness of the growing issue and to abolish the traditional stereotype of the homeless population. This initiative was very successful and was able to pique the interest of the county mayor who is now involved in working towards providing better homeless services in the county. It is only by working together that an impact can be made in this community.

Through the Community Needs Assessment unmet needs are also identified. The need for more rental assistance is apparent, but funds are difficult to obtain. The only assistance available in Blount County with rent is a local agency, Good Neighbors, and their funds are limited. The Good Neighbors and Blount County Community Action Agency work together to assure there are no duplications of services. The need for rental assistance could also be met as additional housing is made available through programs with such agencies as HUD, Maryville Housing Authority and THDA. The availability of affordable housing at present is limited as these agencies have a waiting list of up to five years in some cases. The resources for this need are limited. Local churches often fill the need, but they, too are limited in their funds. Community cooperation is vital.

Interagency referrals are also made linking together all possible and available services to meet the needs of those requesting assistance. Agencies work in cooperation with each other in order to provide services to households to strengthen families and communities as this is a priority on which all services in the community are based.

IV. FUNDING COORDINATION

Blount County Community Action Agency has an excellent working relationship with other local agencies such as DHS, Good Neighbors, several food banks, Sheriff's Office Senior Outreach Program, United Way, Salvation Army, local churches and other organizations. Blount County Community Action Agency refers all clients who are in need of long-term assistance such as Families First, food stamps, TennCare, medical needs, etc., to the local DHS office and accepts referrals from DHS as a priority.

CSBG funding is coordinated with funding from other sources such as our Share the Warmth Program. In a joint agreement with the local utility companies, Blount County Community Action Agency uses funds collected from utility customers donated for this purpose. This program shows community support for the services provided through CSBG.

Area churches, civic clubs and individuals make periodic contributions, either in cash or other donations, to the agency for use in providing emergency assistance. All agencies in Blount County make referrals to Blount County Community Action Agency for emergency assistance. Blount County Community Action Agency also acts as a clearing house for area churches, organizations and social services agencies to avoid duplications.

Local organizations and businesses also volunteer time and services for assistance in workshops, etc. Also, the use of equipment is donated by some organizations. The coordination of funding and volunteers is vital to all services.

Support to Other Programs is used to assist with the support staff in order to effectively and efficiently serve the low income in Commodity Assistance.

V. DESCRIPTION OF OUTCOME MEASURES

The needs of the families, individuals and the community will be met by providing, implementing and making available services that will enable low-income people to become more self-sufficient, reach their maximum potential and improve their lives. Measuring the success of services will be done first by measuring the results from the goal attained by the clients and second by monitoring the number of services provided to families and individuals. Success will also be measured by utilizing the follow-up surveys to gage the difference made in the lives of the people receiving services with the number of families achieving success measured against the number of families participating. Increasing the availability and affordability of opportunities to clients and involvement with the community are inherent to the plan.

In looking at successful outcomes, the services may be provided to fewer numbers by focusing on the outcome of the family or individual. The greatest success will be in shifting those assisted to a permanent status of self-sufficiency, as in moving from a crisis living situation to a stable living situation.

Community services need to be organized and developed with providers using the best means to attain goals in assurance that the client has access to all services, especially those most critical services. Area agencies need to reaffirm agreements to coordinate mutual goals, objectives and activities. The goals set will ensure that services received will be a step toward changes in the conditions in which the client's live in order to become stable and self-sufficient. The agency will achieve goals on behalf of the client.

While, at best, the outcome of the promotion of self-sufficiency is measured by the number of clients served and processes completed, priority will be given to increasing the capacity to implementing results for improving the lives of the clients. The benefit to clients involved with their community is the revitalizing of human potential as well as uniting the community.

Goals and outcomes are described in the program services with the numbers served representing benchmarks toward the statistical achievement. The success in outcomes is the contact with clients and the community and the fulfillment of the goals of the program, agency and the community.

To better serve the household and community, a State approved annual sample survey of clients will be compiled and completed for both the Low Income Home Energy Program (LIHEAP) and the Community Service Block Grant Program (CSBG). If the results of the customer survey are less than 80% satisfactory rating, the agency will submit a corrective action plan to address the deficiency and submit to the State for approval.

FY 15/16

**The following are the results of the Blount County Community Action Agency's
Community Needs Assessment**

A total of 107 surveys were completed. The demographics of the respondents are below.

Age:

>21:	1.24%
22-35:	11.65%
36-54:	30.49%
55-61:	16.42%
62+:	40.02%

Gender

Female:	69.76%
Male:	30.24%

Race

White:	86.52%
African American:	10.94%
Native American:	1.61%
Asian:	0.93%
Native Hawaiian	0%
Other Pacific Islander	
Hispanic/Latino	3.0%
Other Races	1.5%
Two or More Races	1.5%

Total Household Members

One:	26.15%
Two:	34.69%
Three:	18.61%
Four:	7.37%
Five:	2.86%
Six or more:	10.32%

Children in Household

Zero:	63.48%
One:	15.95%
Two:	12.10%
Three:	2.40%
Four:	2.85%

Five: 0.93%
Six or more: 2.29%

Household Monthly Income

\$400-499: 11.15%
\$500-599: 7.69%
\$600-699: 17.32%
\$700-799: 9.58%
\$800-899: 12.81%
\$900 and up: 41.45%

Years Lived in Blount County

Less than 1: 1.35%
1-5 12.42%
6-10: 7.52%
11-15: 8.13%
16-20: 8.50%
Over 21: 62.08%

The results of the surveys show that the following items are seen as the ten most notable problems in Blount County.

- 11) Lack of money for utility bill(s) (54.38%)
- 12) Lack of money for food (45.94%)
- 13) Lack of money to pay prescription drugs (44.16%)
- 14) Lack of employment/unemployment due to other reasons (43.62%)
- 15) Lack of money for housing (41.56 %)
- 16) Lack of money to pay doctor (41.29%)
- 17) Lack of funds for healthy foods/fresh produce (39.40%)
- 18) Lack of affordable housing (38.49%)
- 19) Lack of money for house repairs (37.32%)
- 20) Unable to get dental care (36.95%)

Total Surveys: 158

Top 5

Community Needs/Services:

- 1) Energy Services 58.23%
- 2) Housing Services 40.51%
- 3) Health Care Services 40.51%
- 4) Elderly Services 33.33%
- 5) Employment Services 32.00%

Community Problems/Barriers

- 1) Unemployment 54.43%
- 2) Drug/Alcohol Abuse 53.16%
- 3) Hunger 50.63%
- 4) Homelessness 43.04%
- 5) Elderly Needs 39.24%