

**FINAL REPORT  
CARBON COUNTY  
COMMUNITY SURVEY  
OF NEEDS AND SERVICES  
September 2009**

Prepared For:  
**Carbon County Community Action Committee  
(CCCAC)  
Community Services Block Grant Tripartite  
Board  
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## I. Executive Summary of Findings

The purpose of the 2009 Carbon County Needs Assessment was to better understand the needs of people who are in poverty in Carbon County Wyoming. The intent of the needs assessment was to find out the following:

- Extent of poverty in Carbon County
- Factors that support the creation of poverty
- Factors that exacerbate the impact of poverty
- Services and resources currently available to offset creation or impact of poverty
- Priorities for meeting needs
- Barriers to services

To accomplish this a four pronged strategy was used in gaining such information that included community surveys, community meetings in four county locations, review of relevant quantitative data about Carbon County in key documents, and public comment that will be held on August 31, 2009 with the Carbon County Community Action Committee Board Members.

The survey consisted of demographic questions and nine questions related to human services needs. Fifteen service categories allowable under the Community Services Block Grant Program were used to guide the development of the categories of need used throughout the study. These categories were accessibility/affordability of medical services, dental services, prescription drugs, and eye care, affordable housing, and eye care, affordable housing, child care, disability services, education, emergency services, employment and training, family services, food, commodities and nutrition services, linkages to other resources, mental health services, senior services, substance abuse services, transportation, and youth services.

The community survey was administered to 250 random county citizens, 615 agency clients of current Community Service Block grant agency and other service agencies, 136 human service delivery agencies, and 12 Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) agencies. Two hundred seventy-six (276) surveys were returned with a 27.7% return rate. The community and low-income client surveys included respondents from every community and age bracket with the exception of the category, less than 18, in Carbon County. Thirty-five (35) human service agencies also responded to the survey.

The three groups ranked in order the following as the most highly rated needs:

- Accessibility and affordability to medical services, dental services, prescription drugs and eye care
- Affordable housing
- Child Care
- Senior Services
- Employment and Training Services
- Food, Commodities and Nutrition Services
- Education
- Family Services
- Transportation

Community meetings were held with 19 community members or representatives of CSBG agencies and at-large human service agencies in four Carbon County locations, i.e., Rawlins, Saratoga, Hanna and Baggs from July 16- July 23, 2009. The purpose of the community meetings was to determine the following:

- What human services are in Carbon County and their community?
- What are the most important needs?
- What are the least important needs?
- What do you think would help people in their community to get out of poverty and become self-sufficient?
- Any other comments?
- Do the comments verify information in survey?

A plethora of information was obtained from these community meetings. Their comments closely paralleled the needs as stated above with the exception of education. Most locations indicated that their educational needs were being met or in the process of being met.

Thirty-one local, state and regional data resources were scanned for quantitative data on population, race and ethnicity, income, number of households, employment, housing, cost of living, community service block grant poverty factors, health care, dental health, teen births, birth rate, mothers who smoked during pregnancy, mental health and divorce, children and youth in poverty, school drop-out rates, and other community needs assessment results. The data mirrors the needs as discussed in the previous two strategies. It is to be noted that the statistics haven't caught up with the reality of the current economic slump.

Based on the strategies as described above, the following can be concluded to answer the original questions set out in this needs assessment:

**Extent of Poverty in Carbon County:**

- Carbon County holds 3.1% (1,484/47,182) of statewide population of those who live in poverty
- 1,484 persons (9.5% of total Carbon County population live below the poverty level.)
- 15.3% of children live near or below the poverty level (3,675 children, 0-18) live below 100% of Federal Poverty Level (2004).
- Between 42-56% of school-aged children have free or reduced lunch.
- Many families are not in the statistics because they have not asked for assistance as indicated by Linda from the Encampment Preschool, "I am seeing a lot more people than there are on the radar for poor. They actually qualify for Quality Care and Kids Chip but they are too proud to take part of the programs."

**Factors that Support Creation of Poverty:**

- The cost of living (food, housing, apparel, transportation, medical, recreation and personal care) for Carbon County is sixth-eighth highest in the State with a ranking of 101(tied with Natrona, and Lincoln Counties.) One Hundred (100) is the statewide average.

- Housing is the highest ranking (103)
- While weekly average wage is \$732, single mothers make 66.3% less than males, \$485.31/week or \$25,236.12
- Many low income families work in the service industry with no health benefits. Headwater Economics states that service-providing employees were paid an average of \$24,508.
- Difficult to make ends meet when average rental cost is \$706 and the average service related weekly wage is \$485.31.
- Headwaters Economics in a socioeconomic profile prepared in 2009 state, “Average earnings per job adjusted for inflation have fallen from \$36,802 in 1970 and \$35,118 in 2006.”
- Nearly 19% (18.6%) of the Carbon County population has no health care coverage which leads to medical bills that impoverished families will have to pay.

**Factors that Exacerbate Impacts of Poverty:**

- Very expensive housing
- Service jobs with poor wages and no benefits
- Transportation from outlying areas to areas of services (medical, social services, etc.) is not always available.
- There were some good paying jobs but many of them have disappeared due to economic downturn.
- Some of the community at large population does not understand the impact of poverty in County as indicated in the comment from a community at large member to the question of *What kind of help would you like to have offered in Carbon County?*, “People need to learn to depend on themselves – not on hand-outs . . .” This is validated that the largest number of households in Carbon County are in the 96%+ of median family income (estimated 2010, 3,028)
- Some agencies are territorial and not getting along which results in ineffective or sub-standard level of services.

**Services and Resources Currently Available to Offset Creation or Impacts of Poverty:**

- Many services available in the two pockets of population, Rawlins and Saratoga
- Little to no services available in outlying areas.
- Good linkages/referrals among various providers of services and resources in two pockets of population but in outlying areas information services are sketchy.
- Excellent resource directory for providers but wish it to be on-line.
- In Hanna while the services are not available, a community leader takes care of issues through community volunteers.
- In Baggs, one agency, Higher Education takes the lead and coordinates services with other agencies.
- Gaps in service: Senior and affordable housing, assisted living, medical urgent care and availability of prescription drugs, home care and hospice and transportation, childcare for infants and
- Question: Do clients know of the many services? Do they know how to request the services?

### **Priorities for Meeting Needs:**

- Accessibility/Affordability to Medical Services. Dental, Prescription Drugs & Eye care
- Affordable Housing
- Child Care
- Senior Services
- Employment Services
- Food/Commodities & Nutrition Services
- Family Services
- Transportation
- And while Youth Services was not highly ranked, it is one of the goals of the CSBG funds. If funding is eliminated for this need, the problem could be exacerbated.

It is to be noted that while Education ranked 7<sup>th</sup> of needs in the survey the community comments did not indicate that there was a great need. It appears that many of the communities have educational services occurring (GED, ESL, and Literacy).

### **Barriers to Services:**

- Community generally has lack of knowledge of financial/budgeting management skills
  - Recommendation: Develop financial management skills class as pre-requisite to receiving CSBG funds. Resource: Bill Taylor, UW Cooperative Extension, Newcastle WY
- Clients need to know of services available and apply for them
  - Recommendation: Current Resource Directory for clients (short and sweet)
- Lack of community knowledge of the extent of poverty and “affordable housing”
  - Recommendation: Community information on poverty issues.
- Lack of funding (local, state, federal) to non-profits
  - Recommendation: Develop community grant-writers or community-wide notice of funding opportunities.
- Territorial and feuding agencies results in ineffective or sub-standard level of services.
  - Recommendation: Resolve agency feuds, collaborate on programs, and share meager resources.
- Limited state nutritional (WIC) and social services (DFS) to outlying areas
  - Recommendation:
    - In lieu of a “mobile services” van, develop a lead agency/individual in each community to assist in the coordination of services.
    - Develop an on-line county-wide communication system with services, special events, etc.

The Carbon County Community Action Committee elected to adopt a Community Action Plan that included funding in the following areas:

### **2009 Recommended PRIORITIES**

#### **Priority 1 – Medical Services/Senior Services, including**

- Dental
- Eye care

- Prescription Drugs
- Transportation to medical appointments
- In-Home Health Care for Seniors

Priority 2 – Housing, including

- Emergency Shelter
- Food
- Clothing
- Senior Assisted Living Assessment Project

Priority 3 – Childcare/Youth Services including

- After school programs
- Vouchers for child care expenses

Priority 4- Employment & Training, including

- Transportation
- Work Attire
- Technology Training

Priority 5 – Food/Commodities & Nutrition Services

Priority 6 – Family Services including

- Domestic violence programs
- Parenting classes

Priority 7 - Linkages to other Resources

- Community Resource Directories

The complete needs assessment report and the power point presentation are available at the following web sites:

<http://www.cchec.org>

<http://www.carbonwy.com>

## II. Local Community Needs Assessment Introduction

The completion of a needs assessment every three years is required by the State of Wyoming, Wyoming Department of Health, Community Services Programs, and is a pre-requisite to a local entity receiving Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds. The goal of the Carbon County Community Survey of Services and Needs was to provide input to the Carbon County Community Action Committee in preparing the Community Action Plan. The Carbon County Community Action Committee (Tripartite Board) consists of nine members with three members being elected officials, three elected low income representatives and three community at large members (see Appendix A- Carbon County Tripartite Board Members.) The Plan determines the need for Community Service Block Grant Funds, and assists the Board in determining the best uses for those funds. It was the intent of the assessment to answer the following questions:

- What is the extent of poverty in the county?
- What factors support the creation of poverty?
- What factors exacerbate the impacts of poverty?
- What services and resources are currently available to offset the creation or impacts of poverty?
- What are the priorities for meeting needs?
- What are the barriers to services? (i.e., knowledge, getting to the resources, childcare)

The Carbon County Community Action Committee contracted with Sheela M. Schermetzler, Ed.S. of Laramie, Wyoming, a state-wide consultant specializing in grant writing, fundraising, needs assessment, evaluation, and special projects, to conduct the needs assessment. She has been involved with the Community Services Block Grant Program in the State of Wyoming for the past fifteen years. For seven years, she administered the Block Grant program for the Campbell County Commissioner's Office in Gillette. During 2000-2001 the Campbell County grant funds exceeded \$99,000.00. During this time, she prepared, distributed and analyzed two Community Needs Assessments for the Campbell County Commissioners Office.

In 2001, 2004 and 2007 she was contracted by the Campbell County CARE Board to prepare, distribute, and analyze a Community Needs Assessment. From the results of the survey, the Community Action Plan was then developed in concert with the Board to be included in the Community Services Block Grant Application. She has conducted an update to that needs assessment in 2002, 2003, and 2005, 2008 and 2009. She also wrote the Community Services Block Grant applications for FY 2001-2008 funds. She also completed a Needs Assessment for Albany County in 2004 and has recently completed the Sheridan County Tripartite Board Needs Assessment. Lastly she presented two workshop sessions at the State Community Action Conference in August 2002 in Casper on E-Z NEEDS ASSESSMENTS and the ABC'S OF CONDUCTING AN ON-SITE COMPLIANCE REVIEW. She also is contracted with the Department of Health, Rural Health Office on CSBG related matters.

### **III. Description of Needs Assessment Strategies Utilized & Results**

The approach to the needs assessment is that information is derived from three select sources. That is, the general population, human service delivery agencies, and the low-income population. With that in mind, a four-pronged strategy was used in gaining such information and producing the community resource inventory and community needs assessment. This strategy included community surveys, community meetings, review of relevant quantitative data about Carbon County, and gaining additional public comment at the CSBG 09-10 Public Hearing. Each strategy is described and the results are reported in the following sections.

#### **A. Community Survey**

##### **1. Survey Distribution**

The community survey was administered to random citizens, specific low-income population, and human service delivery agencies. By surveying different populations differing perceptions of human service issues will be obtained. This will give the Carbon County Tri-Partite Board a good cross-section of the populations that are served through the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funds.

The survey consisted of Section I - demographic questions tailor-made to each of the three populations, and Section II – nine (9) questions related to human services needs. Fifteen service categories allowable under the Community Services Block Grant Program were used to guide the development of the categories of need used throughout the study. These categories were accessibility/affordability of medical services, dental services, prescription drugs, and eye care, affordable housing, and eye care, affordable housing, child care, disability services, education, emergency services, employment and training, family services, food, commodities and nutrition services, linkages to other resources, mental health services, senior services, substance abuse services, transportation, and youth services. Of the nine questions, one question would enlist ranking of human service and health issues ranging from 1-5, three multiple choice questions with open-ended description of the response, and five open-ended questions.

The random citizen survey was mailed to 250 Carbon County citizens obtained through a mailing list prepared from Gwen Bartlett, County Clerk. It contained names and addresses for key community members in each of the communities in Carbon County including the City of Rawlins, and the Towns of Baggs, Dixon, Elk Mountain, Encampment, Hanna, Medicine Bow, Saratoga, Sinclair, and other unincorporated areas of Carbon County. The specific low-income population survey was distributed directly through the current Community Services Block Grant agencies and in turn was distributed to clients. Lastly, the human service agency surveys were distributed to the current Community Service Block Grant Agencies, and mailed to other federal, state, private for profit, private for non-profit and school agencies. The agencies were obtained through an excellent community document, “Carbon County Community Resource Interagency Resource Directory, 2008-2009.

The following table reflects the number of surveys distributed and received:

<b>TABLE 1</b>			
<b>Number of Surveys Distributed and Number of Surveys Received</b>			
	Surveys Distributed	Surveys Received	Percent (%) Returned
At-Large Community Surveys	250	98	<b>38.8%</b>
Baggs	9 (3.6%)	6	66.7%
Dixon	4 (1.6%)	1	25%
Elk Mountain	6 (2.4%)	1	16.6%
Encampment	12 (4.8%)	6	50%
Hanna	19 (7.7%)	5	26.3%
Medicine Bow	7 (2.8%)	2	28.6%
Rawlins	130 (52.4%)	50	38.5%
Riverside	6 (2.4%)	4	66.7%
Saratoga	44 (17.7%)	15	34%
Savery	1 (.4%)	0	0%
Sinclair	12 (4.8%)	7	58.3%
No Town Listed		1	0%
Agency Low Income Client Surveys	615	143	23.3%
Human Service Agencies	136	27	19.9%
CSBG Human Service Agencies	12	8	66.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>27.7%</b>

Samples of the surveys are presented in Appendix B. The surveys were distributed and mailed June 19-20, 2009 and they were due by July 17, 2009. Compilation of the surveys was held July through early August 2009. It is to be noted that in 2006, there was a 55.9% return rate. The number of surveys received provides statistical reliability for the Carbon County population (Source: Presentation, "Making Surveys Effective", Michael C. Rodriguez PhD, Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute, March 2006).

## **2. Compilation of Community and Low Income Client Survey Data**

The Community Survey and the Low-Income Client survey were compiled according to two criteria including City/Town/Area of Residence and Age groups. Baggs, Dixon, Elk Mountain, Encampment, Hanna, Medicine Bow, Rawlins, Riverside, Saratoga, Sinclair, were represented in the survey. Age groups were compiled according to Less than 18, 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79 and 80+. Table 2 reflects the demographics and Table 3 reflects the survey responses. A listing of longer statements from the survey are found in Appendix C. They are arranged according Town, Age Grouping and by question.

TABLE 2 - CARBON COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS OF AGENCY CLIENT AND COMMUNITY AT LARGE SURVEYS 2009

Community/ Age	Number		Gender		Race		Grade		No. of Persons		Children Under 18		Yearly Income		Yrs In Carbon County		Own Home / Rent		Money spent per month on ...		
	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	Low- Income	Com.	
40-49		2	M- F- No resp-	M-1 F-1 No resp-	White - Hisp- Afr.Am	White -2 Hisp- Afr.Am	11 <sup>th</sup> - HS- Asso	11 <sup>th</sup> - HS	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	Temp- Less 1 yr- 1-2- 3-9- 10-20- Over 21-	Temp- Less 1 yr- 1-2- 3-9- 10-20- Over 21-	Own- Rent- Live with another- Other- No resp-	Own-1 Rent- Live with another- Other- No resp-	Housing: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300- \$301-\$400- \$401-\$500- \$500+ Med/Pres: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300-	Housing: 0-\$250- \$251-\$500- \$501-\$750- \$751-\$1,000- \$1001+ Groceries: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300- \$301-\$400- \$401-\$500- \$500+ Med/Pres: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300- \$301-\$400- \$401-\$500- \$500+ Med/Pres:
		1	M- F- No resp-	M-1 F-1 No resp-	White - Hisp- Afr.Am	White -1 Hisp- Afr.Am	11 <sup>th</sup> - HS- Asso	11 <sup>th</sup> - HS	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	0- 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8-	Temp- Less 1 yr- 1-2- 3-9- 10-20- Over 21-	Temp- Less 1 yr- 1-2- 3-9- 10-20- Over 21-	Own- Rent- Live with another- Other- No resp-	Own-1 Rent- Live with another- Other- No resp-	Housing: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300- \$301-\$400- \$401-\$500- \$500+ Med/Pres: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300-	Housing: 0-\$250- \$251-\$500- \$501-\$750- \$751-\$1,000- \$1001+ Groceries: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300- \$301-\$400- \$401-\$500- \$500+ Med/Pres: 0-\$150- \$151-\$300- \$301-\$400- \$401-\$500- \$500+ Med/Pres:

Carbon County Community Survey of Needs and Services 2009

