2012/2013 Community Needs Assessment Study:

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Introduction

The Lamar University Community Outreach Program with assistance from Entergy Texas Foundation and Catholic Charities, commissioned the Lamar University Center for Public Policy Studies under the direction of Dr. James Vanderleeuw to conduct a needs assessment targeting the predominantly rural areas of Southeast Texas, including Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Jasper, Chambers, Polk, Tyler, Liberty and Newton Counties in Southeast Texas. A research team composed of Dr. James Vanderleeuw, director of Center for Public Policy Studies, Dr. Thomas Sowers and Dr. Jason Sides, Department of Political Science, Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas, conducted the study. The following Lamar University students were hired to assist with the project: Adeola Adeyemo, Macy Deng, Sarah Irwin, Joanna Joseph, Candida Rodriguez, and Brian Williams.

The remainder of this section discusses the purpose of the study, the methodology employed in gathering data, and the organization of this report.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide information that will empower individuals, families and communities across a nine county region of Texas. The study will be a regional empowerment effort designed to research the personal, financial, health and wellness and other safety and security needs of individuals and families in the region. The study will identify specific safety and security needs and produce data that will enhance the programs and services of nonprofit, for profit, municipalities and citizen advocacy organizations serving citizens of the

nine counties in the study. This study will allow citizens to voice their concerns and needs directly to practitioners of low-income anti-poverty programs and services in the region.

Methodology

To identify community needs, church and community organization leaders across nine Texas counties were asked to distribute a survey to their congregation or membership. The nine counties are Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk and Tyler counties. For each county, churches and community organizations (such as the American Legion and Knights of Columbus) were first identified via an internet search. For all nine counties, a total of 1,003 churches and 201 community groups were identified. Next, contact information for each of the identified churches and community groups was obtained via a review of church and community organization web sites. This contact information included a phone number, the name of the church or community organization representative, and an e-mail address. Not all contact information was available for each church or community organization, though in all

The identification of, and collection of information on churches and agencies began in the summer of 2012. The effort to contact church and community organization leaders began during the fall of 2012 and continued through the summer of 2013.

category in the $25,001 to $50,000 range. More than one-third of respondents report holding either an Associateôs degree or having some college, while nearly 30 percent report having high school or less. Over 40 percent or respondents report attending either a four year or two year college.

The survey instrument addressed needs in seven issues areas ï Employment, Education, Housing, Health, Nutrition, Finances and Budgeting, and Transportation. A copy of the survey instrument is displayed in Appendix E. (Special effort was made to include Hispanics populations in the survey; a Spanish-language survey was developed and administered to Hispanic congregations.)

Organization of the Report

The following report is divided into two sections ï Findings and Assessment. The section on findings is divided into the seven issue areas identified above. For each issue area there was typically a question that asked about the reason or reasons that the issue was a problem in the respondentôs area (i.e., community), a question that asked about the barriers to the respondentôs own personal success in that issue area, and a question that asked about the types of services the respondent required. For each issue area, each of these is discussed in turn. After the presentation of findings, the report proceeds to the Assessment section. In this section of the report, we provide a context for the interpretation of the findings. Because our study draws from public opinion, we discuss how best to understand what a study based on opinion has to offer. Further, we discuss the influence that the economic environment as well as political culture can have on public opinion. Finally, we consider what are likely the most critical community needs across our nine-county area.

Findings

Employment

Most of the following tables report both the percentage of surveys in which a given response item was identified (as a problem or barrier or needed service, etc.) (labeled ñ% of Surveysò) along with the percentage of times that particular item was identified out of all items identified on a given question (labeled ñ% of Responsesò). To use the findings reported in Table 1 as an example, lack of education was identified as a cause for unemployment on 54% of the returned surveys (on 323 of the 589 returned surveys). Therefore because each survey comes from a unique respondent we can say that 54% of respondents identified lack of education as a cause of unemployment. However, on most questions a respondent could identify as many items as applied (in Table 1, from 1 to 9 items). Therefore, on the question that pertains to Table 1 (ñUnemployment is a problem in this area becauseò), response items were identified a total of 1,804 times (excluding the ñNo Problemò category). The 323 times that lack of education was identified represents 18% of this total. Taken together, both measures offer a more comprehensive view of the relative importance of a given response item than the use of one measure along. As reported in the following tables, response items for each question are rank-ordered by the percentage of surveys on which items were identified

Table 1 reports peoplesô views of the causes of unemployment in their area. The response categories addressed three broad causes of unemployment ï lack of education and training, personal issues such as substance abuse, and lack of jobs.

Thirty-seven percent of responses that identified a problem cited some type of educational deficiency that was believed to be the cause of unemployment in the area. The most common of these was lack of education, the single most frequent response, identified as a cause

of unemployment by the majority (54%) of respondents. Also in the area of education and training, a lack of computer skills was identified by nearly one-third of the respondents and lack of language skills was identified by slightly more than a quarter of respondents.

Thirty-eight percent of all responses concerned three items that addressed personal issue as a problem for employment in their area. Substance abuse was identified by 43% of respondents. Child care, such as hours available or cost, was identified as a problem by 38% of respondents. Lack of transportation was cited by about one-third of respondents as a problem.

The last broad cause of unemployment dealt with the availability of jobs in the area. The two response items that dealt with job availability accounted for 25% of all responses. The first was the lack of jobs that provided high wages and benefits in the area. This was identified as a problem by a majority (53%) of respondents and was the second most common response item (after lack of education). The other issue was employment leaving the area. This was identified as a problem by slightly over one-in-five respondents.

Table 1: ***Unemployment is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n

In Table 2 we move from the perceived causes of unemployment in an individualôs area to personal barriers to an individualôs gaining employment. Stated another way, we transition from what someone thinks about her or his community on a given issue to their own personal situation regarding that issue. (This movement, from views of the community to personal situation will be replicated regarding other issues where both a question concerning a ñproblemò in an area and a question about a ñbarrierò to attainment are asked).

Table 2: ***Please identify your barriers to securing employment (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Education	23	18	138
Lack of Reliable Transportation	12	10	73
Credit History	12	9	72
Lack of High School Diploma/GED	12	9	69
Criminal Background	11	9	67
Permanent Health/Disability	9	7	55
Lack of Reliable Dependent Care	9	7	55
Lack of Proper ID (driverôs licenseé)	9	7	53
Language	8	7	50
Temporary Disability Problem	6	4	33
Unauthorized to Work (expired green cardé)	5	4	32
Pregnancy/Illness	5	4	29
Emotionally Unable to Work	3	3	19
Lack of Veteran Status	2	2	13
None of these are Barriers	54		321
N =	598	758	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598
% of Responses: Number of responses across the 14 items=1079 (excludes None of these are Barriers)
n: Number of responses for each item

education was a barrier to gaining employment. The next most common response was essentially a three way tie between lack of reliable transportation, poor credit history, and lack of a high school diploma or GED. Twelve percent of respondents identified each of these as a barrier to securing employment. The only other item to be noted as a barrier to employment by at least 10% of respondents was having a criminal background. As can be seen, other response items were noted by less than 10% of respondents.

Table 3 presents the breakdown of the respondents based on their employment status (respondents could give only one answer to this particular question). A majority of respondents identified themselves as employed full time. Fourteen percent identified themselves as employed part-time. The remaining 32% were unemployed (with 7% were actually looking for work). Interestingly, on the responses displayed in tables 1 and 2, when those that were employed full time are compared to those who were under-employed (employed part-time and unemployed), there appears to be no meaningful difference in these groupsô perceptions of the employment environment in the area.

Table 3: ***What is your current employment situation? (check only one)***

	%	n
Employed Full Time	54	294
Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	25	135
Employed Part Time	14	77
Unemployed, Looking for Work	7	45
N =		551

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598
% of Responses: Number of responses across the 4 items=551
n: Number of responses for each item
% of Surveys items may not equal because some questions were unanswered 100
% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Finally, Table 4 addresses what type of employment services the individual needed. The

Lack of money for tuition was the most frequently cited problem (by 17% of respondents). This was followed by lack of a college education, and lack of programs that included dropout prevention, vocational skills, and computer skills programs (each identified by 10 percent or more of respondents). Problems with child care, transportation and lack of a high school education were identified by nearly one-in-ten respondents. The remaining items were thought to be an educational problem in their area by relatively few respondents.

Table 6 reports the barriers people face to completing or continuing their education. The majority (65%) experienced no personal barriers. Transportation and defaulting on student loans were the two most frequently identified barriers, each by 8% of respondents, though no one barrier dominated the list.

Table 6: ***Please identify your barriers to completing or continuing your education (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Dependable Transportation	8	21	49
Default on School Loan	8	20	47
Dependable Child/Dependent Care	7	18	43
Previous Difficulty with School	7	17	40
Lack of High School Diploma/GED	6	15	35
Criminal Background	4	10	24
None of these are Barriers	65		391
N =	598	238	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598
% of Responses: Number of responses across the 6 items=238 (excludes None of these are Barriers)
n: Number of responses for each item
Due to respondentsô ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100
% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 7 reports the educational services that were needed by individuals. Only 35% identified themselves as needing services. For those who needed services, financial aid was

clearly the most needed service, identified by one-in-five respondents. The need for tutoring was identified by nearly on-in-ten respondents. All other response items were identified as a need by six percent or less of respondents.

Table 7: ***Do you need any of the following educational services*****? (check all that apply)**

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Financial Aid	20	39	117
Tutoring, Reading, Math, Science, Other	9	17	53
English as a Second Language	6	12	37
ABE/BED Classes	6	11	33
Vocational Rehabilitation	5	11	32
Citizenship Classes	3	6	17
Veterans Benefits	2	5	14
Do Not Need any of these Services	65		390
N =	598	303	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598
% of Responses: Number of responses across the 7 items=303 (excludes Do Not Need any of these Services)
n: Number of responses for each item
Due to respondentsô ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100
% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

second most commonly identified community educational problem). These services included lack of convenient child care hours, transportation, GED programs, tutoring, ABE/BED classes, and vocational rehabilitation programs. The need for services was identified both at the community level and at the individual level.

Housing

In the following section we examine the issue of housing, both rental and home ownership. Table 8 reports the results of asking respondents to identify problems facing housing in their area. Nearly 80% of respondents identified some problem with housing in their area. The item response list that respondents were offered encompasses three broad housing problems ï financial issues relating to hosing, the supply of housing, and services to obtain/maintain housing.

Fifty-one percent of all responses concerned the cost of housing. The top four response items were about cost ï the cost of renting/making housing payments (37% of all respondents), access to affordable rental housing (32%), move-in costs (26%), and lack of affordable single family homes (22%). Twenty-seven percent of all response relate to lack of available housing. Items here include lack of available housing in acceptable neighborhoods and a long waiting list for section 8 housing (both identified by 20% of respondents), lack of shelters (19%), lack of public housing (13%), and lack of housing of adequate size (11%). Finally, 14% of all responses were about lack of services to obtain/maintain housing. These were lack of assistance for repairs (8%) and lack of supportive services (15%).

Table 9: ***Please identify the barriers to buying your own home (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
No Money of Down Payment	24	35	145
Low Credit Score	22	32	134
Cost to Maintain Home	18	26	109
Physically Unable to Live Alone	3	4	15
Emotionally Unable to Live Alone	2	3	11
None of these are Barriers	60		357
N =	598	414	
N =	521	324	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598
% of Responses: Number of responses across the 5 items=414 (excludes None of these are Barriers)

their own situation, 40%

to receive health care garnered 13% of all responses. An insufficient number of providers who accept Medicaid or Medicare was identified by 15% of respondents and the lack of doctors of clinics where one resides was cited by 5%. While there are numerous problems to obtaining medical services, as reported in Table 12 most respondents had a primary care physician. Eight-in-ten respondents reported that they had a primary care physician.

Table 11: ***Obtaining medical/health services is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n

Finally, Table 13 provides information on which types of insurance individuals possess. The majority (53%) noted they did have some type of private insurance. One third of respondents reported having dental insurance, and about one-in-five reported having vision insurance. Most respondents had some type of private insurance. One quarter of respondents reported relying on Medicare as a primary form of insurance, while 16% noted they also made use of the Medicare Supplement. Only 7% of respondents said they relied on Medicaid and 1% reported accessing the services provided by CHIP.

Table 13: ***I have the following insurance (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Private Insurance	53	34	319
Dental Insurance	34	21	201
Medicare	25	16	150
Vision Insurance	21	13	124
Medicare Supplement	16	10	95
Medicaid	7	4	39
CHIP	1	1	8
Do Not Have Insurance	17		103
N =	598	936	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598
% of Responses: Number of responses across the 7 items=936 (excludes Do Not Have Insurance)
n: Number of responses for each item
Due to respondentsô ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100
% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

To sum up, the majority of respondents viewed the inability to obtain adequate medical and health services as a problem in their community. In one form or another, cost was the biggest issue ï either directly due to the cost of services or indirectly due to the cost of insurance. While lack of providers was cited by some people as a problem, most reported having a primary care physician. Most respondents also reported having some form of medical insurance or coverage. However, because of the predominance of cost-related issues, it seems reasonable to

infer that even though many people have some level of medical coverage and access to some healthcare needs, not all needs are being met and for many people, health and medical expenses are a heavy if not excessive financial burden.

Nutrition

The next issue involves proper nutrition. As shown in Table 14, the vast majority of respondents (67%) believed that proper nutrition was a problem in their area. Over 40% of respondents thought that nutrition was a problem due to lack of sufficient income for proper nutrition. This was the most frequent response and comprised half of all the responses to this question. The second most common problem was poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables (cited by 18% of respondents). A somewhat smaller group, 14% of respondents, felt that alternate food support was not available and therefore prevented people from accessing adequate nutrition. The final response item, lack of grocery stores, was selected by 11% of respondents as a problem to nutrition.

Table 14: ***Nutrition is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Not Enough Income to Purchase Food	42	50	252
Poor Access to Fresh Fruits/Vegetables	18	21	107
Alternate Food Support Not Available	14	17	84
Lack of Grocery Stores	11	13	64
No Problem	33		198
N =	598		

Table 15 reports responses to the question of identifying barriers to eating healthy. The majority, 64%, reported no barriers. However, as was the case with other issues, where a barrier exists it appears to be about cost ï in this case the cost of healthy food. About one-in-five respondents reported an inability to afford healthy food as a barrier, with slightly under one-in-ten saying that they did not know how to prepare healthy foods.

Table 15: ***Please identify your barriers to eating healthy (check all that apply)***

Table 16: ***Do you need any help with the following nutritional services? (check all that apply)***

services provided by these vendors. By contrast, a slight majority signaled a willingness to avail themselves of the service of a small loan from a bank or credit union. Finally, most respondents had either a checking account (88%) or a savings account (79%).

people in fact did not require additional financial services. For those who did, the need for services to help budget and assist with credit repair stand out.

Transportation

The final issue respondents were asked about was transportation, particularly bus transportation. Table 19 reports respondentsô opinions regarding problems with transportation in their area. The overwhelming majority (74%) reported some transportation related problem. Most of the response categories regarding transportation can be separated into those that concerned private transportation and those that concerned public transportation.

Fifty-six percent of all responses that identified a problem referred to private transportation. The most frequently citied problem was the cost of gasoline, identified by a majority of respondents. More than a quarter of respondents also identified the cost to maintain a car and lack of sufficient credit to buy a car as a problem with another nearly one-in-four saying that they could not afford car insurance. Almost one-in-five identified lack of reliable transportation as a problem, though this response item can refer to both private and public transportation as can lack of afford transportation for health services that was identified as a problem by about one-in-ten respondents.

Thirty-one percent of all responses concerned public transportation. Most frequent among these was limited availability of public transportation, identified as a problem by 37% of respondents. Other public transportation related problems were identified less frequently ï bus

Table 19: ***Transportation is a problem in this area because (check all that apply)***

	% of Surveys	% of Responses	n
Cost of Gasoline	52	22	310
Limited Public Transportation	37	16	222
Cost of Maintaining a Car	28	12	169
Lack of Credit to Buy a Car	28	12	165
Cannot Afford Car Insurance	23	10	137
Lack of Reliable Transportation	19	8	115
Bus Routes Not Go to Needed Destination	16	7	94
Hours/Days of Operation for Public Trans	12	5	70
Lack of Afford Trans for Health Services	11	5	66
Public Trans Not User Friendly to People w/Disabilities	8	3	48
No Problem	26		120
N =	598	1396	

% of Surveys: Number of returned surveys=598
% of Responses: Number of responses across the 10 items=1396 (excludes No Problem)
n: Number of responses for each item
Due to respondentsô ability to check as many items as applied, % of Surveys items will not equal 100
% of Responses may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 20 reports whether la0k of transportation has c

Tables 21 and 22 are about bus transportation, whether bus stops well lit and the use of buses to reach various destinations. Three-quarters of respondents did not know about bus stop lighting. Among the remainder, the most common response was that bus stops were usually well lit (Table 21). Almost nine-in-ten respondents said they did not use bus transportation (87%, Table 22). Only a small portion of respondents rely on bus transportation, and this small portion uses the bus to reach a variety of destinations, with no one destination being particularly common.

Table 21: ***To what extent are bus stops located in well-lit safe areas? (check only one)***

	%	n
Always	3	13
Usually	10	46
Seldom	7	33
Never	5	23
Donâ t Know/Not Sure	75	352

To sum up, lack of adequate transportation is of some concern. The problems people perceived were heavily about private transportation, although nearly one-third cited problems with public transportation. Problems concerning private transportation were financial, such as the cost of gasoline or purchasing a vehicle. Problems regarding public transportation were about availability and convenience of this service. It is not unreasonable to speculate that if private transportation was more affordable, more people would rely on private transportation; it is not unreasonable to speculate that if public transportation was more accessible and convenient that more people might rely on public transportation. As a specific type of public mode of transportation, bus usage does not seem too widespread. There was little opinion on bus stop lighting and there was little and varying usage of this mode of transportation. Overall, while perceived as a commun12 0 6t7r

taken to mean that respondents had a skewed (more negative) view of their community relative to their own needs. Respondents had to select items from a particular response-set for each question, and in most cases on a given issue the response-set for the question that asked about barriers differed from the response set that asked about the issue being a problem in the area (i.e., the questions contained different sets of response items). Therefore, the higher percentage of respondents who identified problems, relative to barriers, may to some extent be due to the nature of the response-set offered.

as well as a lack of clinics. For the issue of education, frequent responses to the question of community problem included lack of dropout prevention programs, vocational and computer skills programs, and GED programs (Table 5). On the issue of housing, respondents often cited lack of services as a community problem included lack of supportive services and lack of public housing (Table 8). Concerning the issue of transportation, limited public transportation along with lack of convenient times of public transportation service were identified as community problems (Table 19).

Barriers to Personal Attainment

The emphasis on unemployment as a community problem is also quite compatible with the predominance of cost-related factors when people were asked about their own personal barriers to attainment. Although fewer respondents identified specific barriers to their own personal attainment than identified problems in their area, the findings regarding barriers to personal attainment tend to mirror findings on community problems. People heavily identified cost and to a lesser extent lack of services and service providers as personal barriers.

Cost was a pervasive barrier to people attaining home ownership, adequate healthcare, adequate nutrition and transportation. (As was the case with perceived community problems, the heavy emphasis on cost as a barrier is likely linked with our recent experience with recession.) Beyond cost, lack of service providers also showed up as a barrier on some issues, particularly the issues of education and unemployment (tables 2 and 6 respectively). For both these issues, an often-cited barrier was lack of child care. Lack of reliable transportation was also cited as a barrier for both issues, though we cannot separate the extent to which this particular response item referred to public or to private transportation.

Respondents were asked to answer a question about barriers to attainment in four of the seven issue areas ï unemployment, education, housing and nutrition. Housing contained two

questions about barriers, one on buying a home and the other on renting. Based on the percentage of respondents who identified at least one barrier to attainment, the issues over which there are most barriers rank as follows (derived from tables 2, 6, 9, 10 and 15):

1. Employment (46% identified at least one barrier to attaining employment)
2. Buying a Home (40%)
3. Nutrition (36%)
4. Education (35%)
5. Renting a House (32%)

Not only is unemployment viewed as the dominant community problem, more than other issues employment is the issue where people tend to experience barriers. The need for people to be employed and to gain employment stands out as the single biggest finding from the survey. After employment, people experience barriers to home buying (more so than they do to renting). Barriers to proper nutrition and to education are experienced by about an equal percentage of people, with barriers to renting a housing experienced by the fewest percentage.

Most Needed Services

In addition to problems facing their community and barriers to their own personal attainment of goals, respondents were asked about the services they needed to attain these goals. A particular finding that stands out regarding needed services is that people need to be prepared ï prepared to interview for a job, prepared for educational advancement, prepared to take control of their economic future. For example, for those in need of employment services, skills training, specifically resume writing and job interview skills were among the most frequent responses (Table 4). For those in need of educational services, tutoring and English and vocational rehabilitation were popularly cited needs (Table 7). For those in need of income and financial assistance, budgeting skills was the top-cited need (Table 18).

This emphasis on individual preparedness, rather than assistance that does not prepare people to assume control of their own situation may in some measure be linked to our political culture in Texas. In addition to economic context, opinion on issues can be influenced by the values and beliefs that people hold about the proper role of government and about individual responsibility ï i.e., political culture. Derived from the work of scholar Daniel Elazar, the United States can be viewed as exhibiting three political cultures ï Traditionalistic (where an emphasis is placed on societal hierarchy, and governance is the domain of economic and social elites), Moralistic (where an emphasis is placed on government providing for the well-being of society, and where public service is seen as a noble calling), and Individualistic (where an emphasis is placed on individual self-reliance and responsibility, and government is to be kept to a minimum). The prevalence of a given political culture is associated with region with, for instance, the Moralistic political culture historically reflected in the New England region and along the northern tier of the United States. Important for present purposes, political culture can be understood as a filter through which information is interpreted, and can therefore influence peoplesô attitudes on issues.

Citizens in Texas have been classified as reflecting the Individualistic political culture: People succeed or fail on their own merits and ñgovernment that governs best, governs least.ò The term government, however, does not need to be understood in a restrictive sense, but can be understood more broadly as institutionally organized collective action (to include nonprofit along with government agency activities). As such, Individualistic political culture refers to a set of values and beliefs whereby citizens emphasize individual self-reliance, initiative and responsibility, and deemphasize institutionally organized collective action in solving problems.

states such as Massachusetts, may view their communityôs needs quite differently, with perhaps a greater tendency to designate things as a community need by contrast to citizens in Texas.

While not an explanation for all findings in this report, our regionôs Individualistic political culture provides a helpful framework to understand some of what is going on. Our Individualistic political subculture in Texas may help explain the preference for some types of training services. Training services, such as training in resume writing, allow individuals to pursue their goals without continued support from government or nonprofit agencies. An understanding of our political culture provides a useful guide to predict those nonprofit programs that will have the best chance to garner public support. Programs designed to get people to assume self-responsibility and programs designed to help those who are in extreme need through no fault of their own may receive wider support compared to programs perceived as designed to spend money on people who should otherwise help themselves.

Respondents were asked about services they needed on four of the seven surveyed issues ï Unemployment, Education, Nutrition, and Finances and Income. Based on the percentage of respondents who identified at least one needed service, the issues over which there exists the most needed services rank as follows (derived from tables 4, 7, 16 and 18):

1. Employment (39% identified at least one needed service)
   Finances and Income (39%)
3. Education (35%)
4. Nutrition (26%)

Conclusion: Implications for Service Providers

The findings in this study have implications for service providers, both governmental and nonprofit. Many people do not need services for any of the issues this study analyzed. Many, however do need services, approximately one-third of those surveyed said they required some assistance. The cost of needed services in many cases is prohibitive, or at least an important concern for people. There may not be much that either government or nonprofit agencies can do to directly bring down the cost of services. However, the findings in this report show that many people could benefit fr

people also say they need a credit repair service. The combination of improved credit, enhanced knowledge of how to manage individual and family finances, and skills related to obtaining a job, will provide for self-sufficient citizens who are in a position to lead productive and fruitful lives.

All of this is not to suggest that longer-term services are unnecessary. A number of people indicated the need for longer-term assistance. However, it is instructive that on the heels of a major recession large numbers of people, who said that they needed services, said that they needed services that are training oriented or shorter-term in nature. Those who make decisions regarding the provision of services, of course, must consider resources and the likely impact resources will have. The findings of this study provide support for the provision of services that are designed to prepare people in need to achieve self-sufficiency.

Appendix A
Letter Requesting Permission to Survey

Dear Pastor/Outreach Director

The Lamar University Center for Public Policy Studies is coordinating a study of community needs across nine Texas counties -- Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk, and Tyler counties. The study is being funded by Entergy with organizational support from the Lamar University Office of Community Outreach. Our goal is to identify crucial service needs in the areas of employment, education, housing, health, financial planning and transportation.

I am writing to ask if 20 to 25 members of your congregation, or more if possible, would be willing to participate in a 15 to 20 minute survey questionnaire to identify areas of social need in their community, and if you would facilitate in this effort.

Answers will be confidential and anonymous. Results from the survey will provide valuable information to help identify communityegPdsentia service needs in the areas o(as)-3(o(0r)9(ar)04 Tf-[reW* nBT/F29(l)-4(n5 t)6(o 20

Appendix B
List of Participating Churches and Community Organizations

Organization	*City*	*County*
Calder Baptist Church	Beaumont	

Appendix C

Appendix D
Social and Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Age:	
Mean Age =	50
N = 458	
Gender:	
Female =	67%
Male =	34%
N = 562	
Ethnic Background/Race:	
Asian =	1%
Black =	22%
Hispanic =	10%
White =	66%
Other =	1%
N = 550	
Number in Household:	
Under 16:	1 (n=71), 2 (n=70), 3 (n=19), 4 (n=6), 5 (n=3)
17-24 years of age:	1 (n=82), 2 (n=21), 3 (n=5)
25-35 years of age:	1 (n=69), 2 (n=37), 3 (n=1), 4 (n=1), 6 (n=1)
36-60 years of age:	1 (n=117), 2 (n=161), 3 (n=2), 4 (n=1), 6 (n=1)
61 and older:	1 (n=81), 2 (n=106), 3 (n=1)
Yearly Household Income:	
Below $10.000 =	9%
10,000-$20,000 =	15%
25,001-$50,000 =	26%
50,001-$75,000 =	23%
75,001-$100,000 =	12%
Above $100,000 =	16%
N = 526	
Education:	
Less than High School =	6%
High School or GED =	23%
Some College/Associateôs degree =	36%
Bachelorôs degree =	21%
Masterôs or Ph.D. =	14%
N = 547	
Attending or Enrolled in:	
Two Year College =	16%
Four Year University =	27%
Vocational/Trade School =	9%
Other =	48%
N = 128	

Do you need any of the following employment services? (check all that apply)			
ã		ã	
	Resume writing		Skills training
	Vocational rehabilitation		Small business ownership
	Career search		Job seeking
	Job interview skills		Dress for success
	I do not need any of these services.		

We move next to the second issue area, **EDUCATION**

Education is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
ã		ã	
	No high school diploma		Cost or lack of transportation
	Lacks dropout prevention programs		

The fifth issue area is **NUTRITION**

Nutrition is a problem in this area because (check all that apply):			
ã		ã	
	Lack of grocery stores		Alternative food support not available (soup kitchen, pantry)
	Not enough income to purchase food		Poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables
	There is no problem with nutrition in this area.		

Please identify your barriers to eating healthy (check all that apply):			
ã		ã	
	Not able to afford healthy food choices		Donôt know how to prepare healthy food items
	None of these are barriers to my healthy eating.		

Do you need any help with the following nutritional services? (check all that apply)			
ã		ã	
	Food stamps/SNAP		Free/reduced school lunch for children
	Home delivered meals/Meals on Wheels		I do not need any of these services.

The sixth issue area is **USE OF INCOME**

Use of Income **(check applicable answer):**

How many people in your household are:	
Under age 16	
17-24 years of age	

Location	
What city do you live in?	
What county do you live in?	

What is your race/ethnic background? (check only one):				
ã		ã		
	1. Asian		2. Black	
	3. Hispanic		4. White	
			5. Other	

Thank you for completing the survey! Your participation is greatly appreciated.