

North East Community Action Corporation

Community Needs Assessment

FFY10-11

Mission

“Empowering People, Changing Lives, Building Communities”

Vision

Vision: That all people will become empowered within their own communities to eliminate poverty so that all residents can achieve and enjoy economic self-sufficiency. We are committed to building stronger communities by strengthening families. Our visualization is that all community members, including lower income people themselves, will take the responsibility and work together to alleviate the causes of poverty.

NECAC is governed by a 36-member Board of Directors consisting of one public elected official, one civic interest representative, and one elected low income representative from each county. This structure assures fair and equal community-based representations, decision-making and accountability. The Board of Directors of NECAC is charged with setting the strategic direction for the Agency. The founders of this organization left high expectations for future board members to look ahead-analyze the issues and to continue to develop the Agency's strategic direction. To accomplish this, the Board of Directors must continuously examine new opportunities and strategies. The Board has provided strategic direction related to the agency's mission, vision, case for change, agency approach, assessment of our work and the transformation planning process.

NECAC's needs assessment planning, data collection, analysis and prioritization of needs has been conducted over the last 9 months. All agency departments, all levels of staff, low income individuals, community members, partners, and board members were involved in the needs assessment process. Focus meetings were held in all 12 counties, client satisfaction surveys, client surveys, special client surveys, needs assessments and 360 degree self survey were all completed in all 12 counties of NECAC's service area. Information from CARES (Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment web base tool developed by Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems) report was also included in the summary of the needs assessment.

In order to obtain as much information from all areas of NECAC's 12 counties 834 needs assessments, 4,313 client surveys, 845 client satisfaction surveys, 175 special client surveys and 71 360 degree agency's self survey were completed. This process began October 1, 2010 and concluded June 10, 2011. NECAC used several different modes to obtain this information. In five (Marion, Lincoln, St. Charles, Warren, Randolph) of our 12 counties have opinion meters which gather information electronically and tallies the results. NECAC also used their official website to obtain more information from the other 7 counties (Lewis, /Ralls, Pike, Montgomery, Randolph, Shelby, Macon, & Monroe) who did not have access to the opinion meters. Partners, clients, board members and community members were given the address and directions on completing the needs assessment, 360 agency's self survey plus the special client surveys. Client surveys and client satisfaction surveys were completed by hand and tallied by hand. This information was gathered by developing reports from the opinion meters and the web site. These results plus the hand tallied results and results from the focus meetings were gathered together and evaluated by the leadership team. Also the CARES report was developed and this information was compared with the results from all other information.

The leadership team met and compared information from all sources and then each individual made a list of priorities. The group then discussed each priority and what had been done in the past, why should we be interested, what can we do different, do we have control over this issue, do we have the capabilities to address this issue, and what program do we have that can help address this issue. The team also used an interrelationship diagram to show how all were linked together. This process showed that everything links back to income/employment. Without income/employment the other issues are hard to obtain. The top five priorities determined from this process will be used in FFY12 CSBG planning process to develop new programs or to enhance existing programs to better serve clients and communities. These five top priorities will be used to provide and develop opportunities in employment

and education, in defining needed improvement for the agency as a whole for customer service, public relations, strategies, and setting goals. These priorities will be used in the development of the CSBG Plan and the agency strategic plan. In serving the best interest of the low income we will be serving the best interest of all people in the community.

Five top Priorities:

1. Employment/job skills/available jobs
2. Housing/cost of rent/temporary emergency
3. Health/dental /eye/affordable insurance
4. Income/not enough to meet basic needs
5. Transportation /cost of gas/public transportation

Poverty % in NECAC's 12 county service area ranges from 18.93% down to 4.82%. With these percentages and all that go in between there is a great need in all counties to provide for the low income population. Unemployment has decreased in all 12 counties but from the needs assessment and client surveys the need is lack of good paying jobs and unable to find employment. **First Priority:** Employment/lack of available jobs and job skills were the two top issues. NECAC has addressed these issues through employment programs and had great success. By partnering with local businesses, Mo Career Center, Work Ready Mo Program, Booneslick, MERS Goodwill, vo-tech schools, and community college support for those seeking employment or job skills has helped individuals obtain gainful employment. **Second Priority:** Housing/high cost of rent/ temporary/emergency housing. From the CARES report there has been a 19.53% increase in available housing units in NECAC's 12 county service area since 2000. Fair market rent report shows that a 2 bedroom unit in Lewis County would be \$547 where in Lincoln that same unit would rent for \$794. The average rent for 2-bedroom units in the 12 county service area was \$609 in 2011, compared to a statewide average of \$708. Families in Lewis would have to earn \$10.40 per hour and Lincoln \$15.27 per hour to meet the accepted limit of 30% of income spent on housing. The average wage earned is \$8.02 in Lewis County and \$8.38 in Lincoln. These are some reasons why we see the need for assistance with rent for families living in our 12 county service area. The hourly wage does not match the amount that in reality is needed to provide a safe, decent, and sanitary living environment. Temporary/emergency housing is an issue that is growing in some communities. With unemployment, lack of available housing and income to pay for housing costs more families and individuals are in need of assistance first with temporary/emergency housing and then permanent housing. NECAC continues to offer Section 8 and emergency programs that assist with rent and deposit. More partnerships will be developed in each county to help study and develop strategies in decreasing this problem. **Third Priority:** Health/ affordable insurance/dental/eye were the top issues. In 2007 the percentage of persons uninsured ranged from 10.1% in St. Charles County to 22.2% in Shelby County. In 2010 the number of physicians per 1,000 persons ranged from .31% in Ralls to 4.01 in Marion, dentists per 1,000 persons ranged from .33% in Monroe County to 1.23% in St. Charles County. These numbers support the outcomes of the needs assessments from NECAC's 12 county service area. NECAC will again work with each community to address these needs and issues in

developing strategies and goals to help to alleviate these issues for low income families. NECAC offers WIC/Family Planning in four of their 12 counties. **Fourth Priority:** Income which with not enough income to meet basic needs also affects all other areas of low income families and individuals lives. The average hourly and annual wages in the 12 county service area ranged from \$23,363 in Shelby County to \$36,890 in St. Charles County in 2009. The average wage in the 12 county service area was \$29,307 compared to statewide average of \$40,024. Income is one of the top 5 priorities which affect all the other priorities. Without sufficient income families and individuals struggle to provide for themselves and their families. NECAC will continue to address this issue through Money Management education, emergency services, providing an intake/assessment/referral for each individual and support through case management. **Fifth priority:** Transportation the main issue being the increase in gas cost and lack of available public transportation. NECAC has addressed transportation in the past and found it difficult to address the public transportation issue. With the continuation and development of partnerships NECAC will work together to study and develop strategies to assist the community and low income families/individuals with this issue.

NECAC as an agency will continue to develop new strategies, new partnerships and new ideas to address the top three priorities. The main strategy will be to provide support and leadership in each community, to bring communities together and open the lines of communication. The development of high impact outcomes and opportunities for the low income will be the driving force for all programs.

360 Degree Self-Survey:

How well does NECAC do in letting the community know its purpose, services and values, relationships NECAC has with the community, other organizations, and people served, and confidence in NECAC's ability to do its work professionally and provide leadership in the community. These all received a well enough answer which indicates there is a need for more communication between staff, more communication with the community and other organizations. NECAC will address these issues by increasing their media coverage through news articles, radio, TV, community chatterbox, providing information to the community about programs, enhance community involvement by providing more volunteer opportunities for the community and low income participants. Poverty Simulations and Poverty walks have helped to increase the delivery of NECAC information and the plight of the low income.

From written comments the concern of decrease in staff, better communication between upper management, and better leadership will be addressed with strategies to help build NECAC's capacity. Also with continued search for funding opportunities that provide administrative funding to help support increased staff will be addressed.

Client Surveys, Special Client Survey, and Client Satisfaction Survey Results

FY2010-2011

In NECAC's five counties (Lincoln, Marion, Randolph, St. Charles & Warren) special client surveys were completed on the opinion meters for thirty days 175 clients completed this survey and the prioritized results are as follows:

1. Housing is a problem because: cost of rent/house payment: 75.43%
2. Employment is a problem because: unable to find job in the area: 74.86%
3. Transportation is a problem because: cost of gasoline: 73.71%
4. Use of income is a problem because: lack of knowledge of budgeting: 61.71%
5. Health care is a problem because: lack of insurance: 61.14%
6. Nutrition is a problem because: food stamps run out before end of month: 58.86%
7. Education is a problem because : cost of transportation: 37.14%

NECAC provided client surveys October 1, 2010 – June 10, 2011 in all 12 counties (Lewis, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Shelby, St. Charles, & Warren). Each person entering these county service centers were encouraged to complete a survey to track reason for visit. Individuals coming to outreach service centers 4,313 completed this survey. Prioritized results as follows:

1. Utility Assistance: 70%
2. Housing: 11%
3. Weatherization: 7%
4. Life Skills: 3%
5. Other 3%
6. Employment: 2%
7. GED: .004%
8. Homeownership: .004%
9. FSS: .003%

Client satisfaction surveys were mailed to clients randomly from October 1, 2010 – June 10, 2011. These surveys are provided to obtain from random clients feedback on our customer service. There were 845 surveys returned. Prioritized results are as follows:

1. Friendly, courteous & respectful: Excellent: 74%, Very Good: 18%, Good: .06%
2. Compassion: Excellent: 73%, Very Good: 18%, Good: .06%
3. Punctuality: Excellent: 74%, Very Good: 17%, Good: .07%
4. Responsive to needs: Excellent: 75%, Very Good: 16%, Good: .06%
5. Confidentially: Excellent: 74%, Very Good: 16%, Good: .07%
6. Staff did personal best: Yes: 99%, No: 1%

Community Needs Assessment

FY2011

NECAC made available to clients, partners, community members, board members and staff community needs assessment. These were placed on NECAC's web site and opinion meters in all 12 county outreach service centers and central administration office. The opportunity to complete needs assessments ran from March 1, 2011 – May 31, 2011 with 1,403 total assessments completed. Please refer to copy of needs assessment attached. Prioritized results as follows:

1. Do you feel there is a lack of good paying jobs? Yes 90.41%
2. Do you feel there is a need for more affordable dental and eye care? Yes 90.03%
3. Do you feel there is a need for temporary/emergency housing? Yes 83.76%
4. Do you feel there is a need for more Home Repair Programs? Yes 82.23%
5. Do you feel that there is a need for more affordable Women's Health Care? 73.91%
6. Do you feel there are enough jobs for people without skills? No 71.99%
7. Do you have difficulty meeting all your basic needs each month? 70.33%
8. Do you feel there is enough affordable, safe, decent, and sanitary housing? No 68.41%
9. Do you feel there is a lack of affordable public transportation? Yes 63.68%

360 degree agency self survey was completed by 71 staff and board members June 1, 2011 – June 10, 2011. This survey was placed on NECAC's official web site for better access for staff and board members. Please refer to attachment. NECAC upper management will address the priorities listed below. The prioritized results are as follows:

1. In general, how well does NECAC do in letting the community know its purpose, services and values? Well enough 40.85%
2. In general how confident are you of NECAC's ability to do its work professionally and provide leadership in the community? Well enough 42.25%
3. In general how would you describe the relationships NECAC has with the community, other organizations, and people served? Well enough 46.48%
4. All other questions received answers of Agree as the top answer.
5. Communications between staff and upper management, more media, better leadership, more front line staff, more education for clients, and NECAC relationship in communities these stand out as the main concerns.

