Community Needs Assessment Template (CNA) Guide

A guide to Illinois’ Community Needs Assessment Template.
Created in partnership by Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the Illinois Community Action Agency Network

This guide is intended for use with the Community Needs Assessment Template, as used by Illinois CSBG eligible entities. The content of this guide may be subject to change. We welcome feedback on the guide's content. If you have questions or concerns, please contact IACAA or your Grant Monitor. This document provides guidance on conducting a Community Needs Assessment. The use of the Community Needs Assessment Template is required by each CAA. However, each CAA has the discretion to use the steps in this guide or create their own steps. Please note that any text in BOLD font, except for titles, is supported by regulation. Any font that is not bolded, should be considered optional guide language, and is not intended to be interpreted as mandated regulation.

By using this guide, you agree to the terms outlined in this disclaimer. If you do not agree with these terms, please refrain from using the guide. Last Updated: 3.21.24

Community Needs Assessment Template Development

Over the course of 2023 and 2024, The Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA) developed the template, this instructional guide, and training with financial support and direction provided by the Office of Community Assistance, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), with active input and participation of a working group comprised of staff from Illinois Community Action Agencies.

The prompts in the template meet CSBG application requirements.

Federal Requirements for Needs Assessments

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") issued Information Memorandum 49, requiring eligible entities to conduct needs assessments and use the results to design programs to meet community needs. In 2015, USHHS issued Information Memorandum No. 138 establishing Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards requiring CAAs to conduct a Community Needs Assessment and develop a Community Action Plan to address the needs identified in the needs assessment.

At a minimum, CAAs must conduct Community Needs Assessments that meet requirements established by the Organizational Standards specifically noted in Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.2, 6.4.

Reporting Requirements for the Community Needs Assessment Template Tool:

Full CNA Template Sections 1 – 6: will need to be completed every third year's CSBG Application starting with Program Year 2025.

CNA Template 2nd Year Update Section 7: must be completed and submitted with the CSBG Application, the program year after the full assessment was completed.

CNA Template 3rd Year Update Section 8: must be completed the program year after Section 7 (Year 2 Update) was completed.

Proposed submission calendar based on the release date of this template:

Full CNA Template (Sections 1-6)	CNA Template 2nd Year Update (Section 7)	CNA Template 3rd year Update (Section 8)
CSBG Application PY 2025	CSBG Application PY 2026	CSBG Application PY 2027
CSBG Application PY 2028	CSBG Application PY 2029	CSBG Application PY 2030
*These dates are subject to change		

1 Community Needs Assessment Template Guide: Table of Contents

Click to enter the grant year your Community Needs Assessment is for.

Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Click to Enter Grant Year

Click the ICON below to add your Agency's logo to the Community Needs Assessment

Click to enter Agency Name

Click to enter Agency Address

Click or tap here to enter your agency's Mission Statement.

- To update your Table of Contents with the proper page numbers, after your CAP is Complete:
  - Click on the Table of Contents above.
  - Right Click
  - Choose “Update Field”
  - Choose “Update Entire Table”
  - Click “OK”

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)

1 Community Needs Assessment Certification

Agency Name	Click to type Agency Name
Name of CNA Contact	Click to type name of CNA Contact.
Title	Click to type Title of CNA Contact
Phone	Click to type Phone Number of CNA Contact
Email	Click to type Email of CNA Contact .
***CNA Board Approved MM/DD/YYYY:**	Click to type Date the Agency's Board appro
CSBG Year (YYYY):	Click to type the Program Year the CNA is su
Is this an updated CNA? If so, which year is this update for and when was it completed?	☐Year 2 Update Click to enter the program year for the update ☐Year 3 Update Click to enter the program year for the update

Each box allows you to click and enter your Agency's specific information.

Board and Agency Certification

Each box allows you to click and enter your Agency's specific information.

…at this ag… BG Programmatic and … CSBG A… the information in this … d the Con… has been authorized by the …

This signature can be ink or electronic or Board Minutes can be attached for verification of Board Approval in place of Board Chair Signature.

If minutes are attached, list in the appendices in section 2.

Click or tap here to enter text.		Click or tap to enter a date.
Executive Director (printed name)	**E**	**Date**
Click or tap here to enter text.		Click or tap to enter a date.
Board Chair (printed name)	**Board Chair (signature)**	**Date**

2 Approach

2.1 Provide a brief description of your service territory.
Describe the geographic location(s) that your agency serves. If applicable, include a description of the various pockets, high-need areas, or neighborhoods of poverty that are being served by your agency.
Example: ABE Community Action Partnership serves counties Abraham, Boggs and Even counties in Central Illinois

2.2 Describe who was involved in developing this report and analyzing the data to determine the needs, causes, and conditions of poverty in your community. (Standard 2.2)	
Please specify how each one of the below sectors was included in the process. Include information on how they were engaged in the process and who (person, group, organization) was included. See Example below:	
A. Board of Directors:	*Regular board meetings were held to discuss and deliberate on key initiatives and organizational planning for the completion of the Community Needs Assessment. Specific meetings where CNA data and planning were addressed were the meetings on March 3rd, April 15, and May 4 (See Exhibit F for more details).*
B. Community Partners	*ABECAP is part of a committee of community partners that hold regular meetings and forums were organized to gather input, share information, and foster partnerships with representatives from local businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and other stakeholders including:* • *Local Police Departments in each community we serve.* • *Health Department* • *Local Food Banks* • *(Continue listing specific partners that assisted in the gathering of data the help determine the needs, causes and conditions of poverty in your community).*
C. Customers:	*Surveys, focus groups, and community forums were conducted to gather insights from actual service users, community members, and individuals affected by the agency's work were actively consulted.*
D. Agency Leadership	*We established a working group comprised of the Executive director, senior management, and department heads who were actively involved during the assessment process. We held leadership meetings, strategy sessions, and planning meetings were held monthly.*

2.3 Please complete the table below by entering the title of the document you used in your Needs Assessment and its assigned appendix letter.

All data indicators from the Needs Assessment provided in the Illinois Association for Community Action Agencies Data Hub Needs Assessment Tool, should be generated, and attached to this report.

Analyze your quantitative data by comparing key indicators to the surrounding areas or the statewide averages.

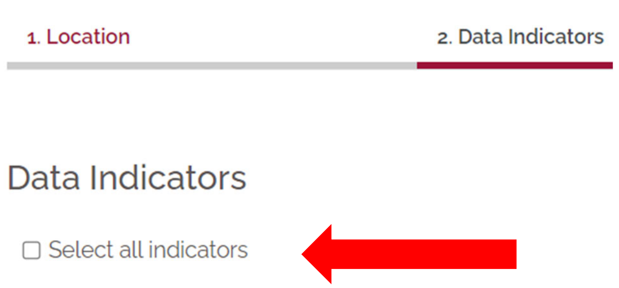
When you start your analysis consider these questions:

- *How have the key indicators changed over time and why is that important for the people you serve?*
- *What does your qualitative data tell you about the needs in your area and why is that important to know as you carry out your mission?*

Required data collection tools are generated in the list below, however agency specific data should still be listed and used for the creation of your Community Needs Assessment. This can include information from:

- **Focus Groups**
- **Agency Specific Surveys**
- **Community Forums**
- **STARS**
- **LiHeap.net**
- **Client Interviews**
- **Internal Data Warehouses**

Document Title	Attachment Item
Community Action Needs Assessment Report (IACAA website)	A
All data indicators should be selected prior to generating the report for your service area.	



Client Needs Survey	B
Community Partner Survey	C
Customer Satisfaction Data	D

3 Strengths:

This section is intended to be an overview of the strengths as identified in all of the data documents you collected. It's important to see the strengths in your community, agency and families to properly assess current capacity, avoid duplication of services and be able to exhibit the impact and importance of the work you do.

3.1 Please list and briefly describe the community, agency and/or family strengths as identified in your assessment.

ABECAP's service area has numerous grassroots organizations and community groups, focusing on various aspects such as education, health, and cultural enrichment. These organizations showcase the community's commitment to addressing diverse needs.

We have a high volume volunteers, with community members actively participating in local events, agency initiatives and fundraisers.

Regularly organized community events and celebrations indicate a vibrant social fabric. Festivals, fairs, and cultural events provide platforms for social interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity among residents.

The community exhibits strong interpersonal connections. Residents often support each other through informal networks, offering assistance during times of need and creating a supportive environment.

Effective partnerships between the community and local agencies are apparent. Collaboration between community organizations, schools, healthcare providers, and government entities is established to address common goals and challenges.

4 Family and Individual Level Needs

Organizational Standard 3.4 says, “The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.”

Organizational Standard 4.2 asks what you did with all the great data once you collected it. Did you analyze it and use it in your planning process? The following prompts paint the picture of your data analysis.

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) *helps us identify the difference in Agency, Family and Community level needs. To learn more about this process please refer to the resource portion of this guide.*

All the data you are collecting will describe the ***condition*** *of poverty for each stated need, while your* ***causes*** *of poverty will be discovered through the analysis of the data. It’s important that this process is a collaborative process, so forming a small team to assist with analyzing this data will help answer why the data looks the way it looks.*

The “Needs Statement” *in your Community Action Plan should align with those in your Community Assessment. Please see the resource section of this guide to learn how to identify your Needs Statements using a ROMA Lens.*

“Conditions of poverty” *are the negative environmental, safety, health and/or economic conditions that may reduce investment or growth in communities where low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the conditions of poverty in your agency’s service area(s)*

“Causes of poverty” *are the negative factors that create or foster barriers to self-sufficiency and/or reduce access to resources in communities in which low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the key findings on the causes of poverty in your agency’s service area(s).*

Each community will be different and have a different number of needs, there is no minimum or maximum number of needs. You may need to add additional tables to this section to accommodate the number of needs statements you have at your agency. To do so: Hover over the bottom left corner until a “+” sign appears. Press the “+” sign 4 times for each additional Needs Statement you have in your service area. In the left column label your need, causes, conditions, and community resources.

In your Community Action Plan, you will need to prioritize these identified needs. It would be helpful to consider this process during your Community Needs Assessment.

4.1 Briefly list each Family/Individual need, the condition and cause of the need and community resources as Identified in your Community Needs Assessment.[1]	
Needs Statement *The Community Needs Assessment reveals several customer needs. Customer needs include the needs of individuals, families, and children living in poverty within the service area.*	*Example: Individuals with low income lack transportation*
Conditions: *Here you will briefly summarize the key data from your appendices related to the identified need of families. You may summarize in a couple of sentences, or you may add a key chart or graph.*	*Example:* *Data shows that 45% of low income households in our services area do not have reliable transportation.* *A survey indicates that only 30% of individuals with low income utilize public transportation due to limited routes, inconvenient schedules, or prohibitive costs. Upon further analysis we discovered that 60% of low-income households reside more than ten miles away from the nearest public transportation stop, posing challenges for daily commuting. (See Attachment U) Additionally 40% of students from low-income families report missing classes or facing difficulties attending educational programs due to transportation constraints. (See Attachment S)* *Research indicates that 25% of individuals with low income postpone or forgo medical appointments due to inadequate transportation options, impacting overall health outcomes. (See Attachment T)*
Causes: *Ask yourself: Why is this a need?* *Explain what you believe to be the causes in a few short sentences. You may be able to find some of the causes in your quantitative or qualitative data in your appendices.*	*Example: Our service area is largely rural, and the data shows that the area relies overwhelmingly on cars for commuting to and from work. The service area has a large percentage of working families who remain in poverty. (See Attachment A). Households are dependent upon cars, but cars are expensive to own and maintain. One of the people participating in our focus group shared that she lost her job recently when her car quit working and she had no way to get to work (See Attachment K) A community survey reveals that 80% of respondents from low-income backgrounds identify transportation as a significant barrier, affecting their ability to access essential services and opportunities. (See Attachment B)*

Community Resources/Partners *Briefly discuss the community resources in your area that meet this need, whether there is a gap in the resources available.* *Also, briefly discuss the community partners that your agency has collaborated with.*	*There are no car ownership or car repair service providers in our area that help households with low income acquire or maintain their cars. Riverbend Transit services has a grant to assist some households with job commutes, using a transit bus service. This service is limited to specific communities. We will continue to collaborate with XYZ Transit, but many gaps remain.* *ABE CAP partnered with the local school district to help design and expand school routes so bus stops can be closer to homes. In turn we've supported the school districts search for drivers and bus aides. We have also established a partnership with Vans for Vets to assist our Veteran population get to their medical appointments. Many gaps still remain.*

5 Community Needs

Organizational Standard 3.4 says, "The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed."

Organizational Standard 4.2 asks what you did with all the great data once you collected it. Did you analyze it and use it in your planning process? The following prompts paint the picture of your data analysis.

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) *helps us identify the difference in Agency, Family and Community level needs. To learn more about this process please refer to the resource portion of this guide.*

All the data you are collecting will describe the ***condition*** *of poverty for each stated need, while your* ***causes*** *of poverty will be discovered through the analysis of the data. It's important that this process is a collaborative process, so forming a small team to assist with analyzing this data will help answer why the data looks the way it looks.*

The "Needs Statement" *in your Community Action Plan should align with those in your Community Assessment. Please see the resource section of this guide to learn how to identify your Needs Statements using a ROMA Lens.*

"Conditions of poverty" *are the negative environmental, safety, health and/or economic conditions that may reduce investment or growth in communities where low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the conditions of poverty in your agency's service area(s)*

"Causes of poverty" *are the negative factors that create or foster barriers to self-sufficiency and/or reduce access to resources in communities in which low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the key findings on the causes of poverty in your agency's service area(s).*

Each community will be different and have a different number of needs, there is no minimum or maximum number of needs.   You may need to add additional tables to this section to accommodate the number of needs statements you have at your agency. To do so: Hover over the bottom left corner until a "+" sign appears. Press the "+" sign 4 times for each additional Needs Statement you have in your service area. In the left column label your need, causes, conditions, and community resources.

In your Community Action Plan, you will need to prioritize these identified needs. It would be helpful to consider this process during your Community Needs Assessment.

5.1 Community Needs: Briefly list each ***community** need, the conditions and causes of the need and community resources* as Identified in your Community Needs Assessment [2]	
Needs Statement *The Community Needs Assessment also reveals community needs. Community needs are needs that have an impact on an entire community.*	A.B.E Counties lack quality childcare options
Conditions: *Briefly summarize the key data from your appendices related to state need in your service area. You may summarize in a couple of sentences, or you may add a key chart or graph*	A.B.E has been identified as a childcare desert. There are 502 children under the age of 5 who need care, and only 106 available spaces provided by registered or licensed care providers in A.B.E. Counties according to Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) data (see Attachment J). One mother in our focus group shared that she could not find quality infant care and has been unable to search for a job because of the lack of care (see Attachment K, Focus Group Summary).
Causes: *Here you will analyze why the community lacks in the attended area of need.* *Explain what you believe to be the causes in a few short sentences. You may be able to find some of the causes in your quantitative or qualitative data in your appendices.*	*The number of childcare providers in rural areas is dropping statewide (See Appendix M). A.B.E. Counties have an unemployment rate that is 12.5% lower than the state average. This drives up the demand for care and has also led people previously providing care in their homes to exit the childcare business and seek employment in the community due to higher wages and better benefits.*

Community Resources/Partners *Here you will briefly discuss the community resources in your area that meet this need, whether there is a gap in the resources available.* *Briefly discuss the community partners that your agency has collaborated with.*	*Childcare Resource & Referral provides support and training to both home providers and center providers in the service area. Training is provided to both current providers, and individuals who are considering entering the business. Additionally, our agency operates a Head Start program in A.B.E. Counties and may want to consider collaborating with the community to apply for additional spaces if a national expansion opportunity becomes available.* *ABE CAP currently has partnerships with all existing childcare providers in our service area.* ***Informational Note: You can suggest possible solutions to issues and gaps in resources, but you are not trying to solve the issue. Hold those thoughts for the Community Action Plan and the Strategic Planning processes that happen later.***

6 Customer Satisfaction Data

Organizational Standard 6.4 says that "customer satisfaction data and customer input should be collected as part of the community assessment and is included in the strategic planning process." When meeting this standard at minimum you should:

- **Regularly survey your customers about their satisfaction level with agency services. (Standard 1.2)**
- **Use a systematic approach to gathering this data (Standard 1.3)**
- **Include qualitative data (Standard 3.3) including but not limited to:**
    - **Success stories, quotes, survey responses**

Customer Satisfaction data is a key tool in determining what works and what needs improving at your agency. Some things that are not required but good practices to consider when collecting this data:

- *Ask open ended questions to gain qualitative data and customer suggestions.*
- *Conduct focus groups*
- *Speak with customers throughout the year and record their input.*
- *Information discovered in this data will help identify Agency Level Needs.*

6.1 Please provide a ***summary*** of the customer satisfaction data that was collected, and include the report on customer satisfaction in the appendix.			
Dates data was collected:	*5/1/2024 – 12/31/2024*	**Total # of Customers who participated in the survey:**	*836*
Here you will identify the summary of your key findings.	*76% of all Agency customers surveyed were either satisfied or highly satisfied with their overall experience at the Agency (See Attachment D). 96% of Head Start parents rated their experience in Head Start as excellent or good, with just 4% rating it average or lower (See Attachment E). This shows that our customers are highly satisfied with our services. There are areas for improvement however, as detailed below.*		

6.2 Please provide **areas for improvement** as identified from the customer satisfaction data that was collected.	
Here you will list the key findings from the data	*1. Customers in A.B.E. Counties who were applying for energy assistance through the low-income home energy assistance program shared that their wait time to be seen for assistance was a problem. They shared that they had to wait too long to be seen, especially in November and December (See Attachment D).* *2. Head Start parents in A.B.E. Counties shared (both in open-ended parent survey responses and in the Head Start Parent focus group (Attachments E and L)) that the hours the center is open do not align with the hours they are working.* *3. 61% of Agency customers would like to see us improve our ability to accept online applications for services (See Attachment D).*

7 Year 2 Update

This section (Section 7) should only be completed for the CSBG Application in the 1st program year after the full Community Needs Assessment Template (Sections 1-6). See example timeline below:

Full CNA Template (Sections 1-6)	**CNA Template 2nd Year Update (Section 7)**
CSBG Application PY 2025	CSBG Application PY 2026
CSBG Application PY 2028	CSBG Application PY 2029

7.1 Please list the emerging trends and key changes in your service area.

CSBG Program Year	Specify the Program Year for which this annual update is being submitted within the CSBG Application.

1. Family Incomes Declined: The negative economic impact of the pandemic and the uneven economic recovery significantly impacted Head Start and Early Head Start families' financial health. Fifty current Head Start and Early Head Start parents completed a survey to ask about the pandemic's impact. 48% of the households responded that they lost income due to the pandemic. 20% reported losing employment, and 52% reported reduced hours of work since the pandemic began.
2. Families Lack Basic Necessities: Due to lost income, families struggle more to meet their basic needs. Parents surveyed listed their most significant challenges as rent, utilities, and mental health.
3. Food: ABECAP provided food pantry assistance to 4,326 unique households in 2020, up from 506 the previous year, increasing more than 800%. The vast majority of the food provided was delivered to the household's doorstep using a contactless process. Head Start and Early Head Start families automatically received food deliveries for several months. Numerous community partners provided funding for food assistance.
4. Diapers: ABECAP ordered two semi-trailers full of diapers. A total of 1,168 unduplicated households received doorstep delivered diapers, up from 68 families.
5. Water/Sewer/Garbage Assistance: ABECAP accessed funding through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to provide more than $85,000 in water and sewer bill assistance. This was a new program, and the funding was exhausted within six months. The late 2020 recovery act passed by Congress may include additional resources for water bills.
6. Staff Recruitment and Retention Difficulties: 59 ABECAP Head Start and Early Head Start employees have had lost days of work due to COVID-19 (56% of all program staff). 45 employees have qualified for emergency sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) due to exposure or potential exposure to COVID-19, and 22 employees have qualified for FMLA under the FFCRA due to school closures for their children. This has caused ABECAP to be unable to appropriately staff classrooms to keep them open. Additionally, staff vacancies have been more challenging to fill despite the high unemployment rate. We believe this is at least partly because of the perceived risk of the jobs. ABECAP anticipates staff recruitment and retention as a primary concern coming out of the pandemic in mid-to-late 2021

8 Year 3 Update

This section (Section 8) should only be completed for the CSBG Application for the 2nd program year after the full Community Needs Assessment Template (Sections 1-6). See example timeline below:

Full CNA Template (Sections 1-6)	CNA Template 2nd Year Update (Section 7)	CNA Template 3rd year Update (Section 8)
CSBG Application PY 2025	CSBG Application PY 2026	CSBG Application PY 2027
CSBG Application PY 2028	CSBG Application PY 2029	CSBG Application PY 2030

8.1 Please list the changes that occurred in your community that have changed or increased a need(s) in your service area.

CSBG Program Year	Specify the Program Year for which this annual update is being submitted within the CSBG Application.

1. Labor Shortages: In what is being referred to colloquially as "The Great Resignation," eastern Illinois realized severe labor shortages in 2021. Pharmacies, restaurants, and many other businesses reduced operating hours because they could not hire and retain staff. Record low unemployment resulted. This phenomenon resulted in more employment opportunities for families with low income, but the opportunity has been unrealized for many because of the lack of child care. Child care providers, including ABECAPs Head Start and Early Head Start programs, have been unable to operate at full capacity due to a lack of qualified staff.
   - A. When parents were asked about their families' most significant challenges, 16% reported the need for employment in 2021, up from 12% in 2020.
   - B. ABECAP surveyed 80 parents of children enrolled in its Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Parents were asked if it was easier or harder to find employment in 2021 compared to the previous year. Just 26% of the parents responding thought it was easier to find jobs in 2021, even though the unemployment rate for the Metropolitan Statistical Area declined from 5.5% in October 2020 to 3.9% in October 2021. The State of Illinois has increased job search and other requirements for individuals claiming unemployment benefits, effective January 2022, and these rule changes may impact families.
   - C. Parents reported an increase in unmet child care needs (19% of families in 2021, up from 12% in 2020). Parents were also asked if they thought it was easier or harder to find childcare than in 2020. Thirty-seven of eighty parents responding (46%) reported it was more difficult, and just six percent thought it was easier.
   - D. A November 2021 report by the Metro Area Chamber of Commerce surveyed area businesses about ongoing labor shortages. 38% of local businesses reported that positions remained open and unfilled for more than three months. The area's most significant labor shortages are food preparation and serving (365 jobs unfilled) and construction (222 positions unfilled).
   - E. The Agency's annualized turnover percentage for 2021 was 28%, an all-time high for the organization (up from 23% in 2020). This rate compares to the 2016 turnover rate of just 18%. The Agency's turnover is predominantly in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. ABECAP has been unable to keep all Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms consistently open this school year due to both intermittent (COVID-related) and longer-term

staff vacancies. ABECAP enacted several intentional measures to redress turnover in 2021 and will continue these measures in 2022:

1) Substantial pay increases, including approval of a supplemental budget amendment to increase Head Start and Early Head Start pay. The Agency's lowest-paid position was increased from $10.70 per hour to $14.07 in 2021.
2) Digital and social media advertising to recruit positions.
3) Retention pay "bonuses" to staff who remain employed in classroom positions in Head Start and Early Head Start.
4) Differential pay for team members who assume additional duties due to shortages or are asked to work at a different location due to unfilled vacancies.
5) Changes to the recruitment and interview processes.

2. Supply Chain Concerns and Price Inflation: Parents report feeling the effects of price inflation in their lives. When asked if they thought prices for everyday things like food and utilities were more expensive or less expensive than one year ago, parents overwhelmingly reported increased costs of living.

3. Families Struggle with Housing Costs: Families report increased difficulty meeting rent and utility costs compared to one year ago.

A. More families are struggling to pay their rent. Thirty-five percent of parents surveyed reported difficulty paying their rent in 2021, up from thirty percent in 2020.

B. Forty-five percent of parents surveyed reported difficulty paying their utilities in 2021, up from thirty-two percent in 2020.

C. ABE Energy , the largest utility company in ABECAP’s service area, issued an alert in October of 2021 that residential customers in ABE Energy's service area can likely expect their total bills to increase by 46-96% over the 2021-2022 heating season due to market forces and supply shortages.

9 Resources

This section is a resource only.

9.1.1 CNA Process Planning

The National Association for State Community Services Programs created his guide supports planning and implementing the comprehensive Community Needs Assessment. It lays out planning steps, implementation practices, analysis, and presentation options. It is intended to help individual CAAs choose and implement effective community assessment practices. Visit www.nascsp.org, search "CNA Guide" to read more about this resource.

Four Steps to Develop a Community Needs Assessment

This four-step process was designed as the foundational outline used in creating this template. This is a guide to help get you started and not a mandated process. Each Agency can determine the proper planning process for their Agency.

1. **Planning the Community Needs Assessment Process** – See considerations below when starting your planning process.
    a. Create a Community Needs Assessment Work Group
    b. Plan Board Involvement
    c. Develop a Timeline
    d. Report Progress to the Board
    e. Determine how to collect information.
    f. Develop a task list with staff and working group responsibilities.
    g. Recruit/Identify Community Partners
    h. Monitor Progress

2. **Collect Qualitative and Quantitative Data** – Section 2
3. **Analyze Data** – Section 3-7
4. **Develop Report** – Sections 3-6

9.1.2 Data Analysis

Conducting an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data is the most critical part of the assessment process because the critical needs are identified, and the key findings will guide the strategic planning. This step can be carried out by staff, management, the CNA workgroup, a consultant, or a combination of these.

Analyzing Data is the process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, informing conclusions, and supporting decision-making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names. [3] However, at its core, it is about asking the right questions then seeking and supporting the answers with accurate data.

Data analysis encourages you to look deeper and read between the lines. Starting with the simple question "why?" can help shift your mindset from accepting what something says and push you to dig deeper. Specifically, though, here are some questions to start guiding you on your analysis process:

- What are the key variables or features in the dataset?
- Are there any outliers in the data, and if so, do they need to be addressed?
  - Outliers are highlighted red, in IACAA's Needs Assessment Tool, making them easy to spot.
- Have you explored the relationships between variables?
  - Are there correlations or associations?
- What visualization techniques can be used to understand the data better?
- Are there any trends or patterns in the data over time or across different categories?
- Have you considered segmenting the data by different groups or categories (disaggregating)?
- Are there any seasonality or cyclical patterns in the data?
- What are the potential limitations or constraints of the data?
- How does the data align with your research or agency objectives?
- What are the practical implications of your findings for decision-making?

Simple ROMA Steps in Analyzing Data [4]

- Aggregate the data – bring all the data together.
- Count the number of elements that are important to your agency.
- Compare data elements to begin to see relationships that might increase knowledge of need and changing needs.
- Identify possible trends by determining potential patterns.

Identify Key Findings

- Consider your mission – What data points to a situation that is or is not part of your mission?
- Consider resources – Does your agency have resources to address the needs?
- Consider the needs identified in interviews, forums, and focus groups.
- Determine if there are similarities in needs and key findings between quantitative and qualitative data.
- Identify the causes and conditions of poverty.
- Rank the needs and develop key findings.
- Take the major needs that have been identified in each category and put them in a matrix and determine the ranking of that need from each datatype. See matrix example below.

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[3] Stephan Kudyba, *Big Data, Mining, and Analytics Components of Strategic Decision Making*

[4] Richmond, F., & Mooney, B. (2020). Introduction to Results-Oriented Management and accountability (ROMA) for the Community Action Network (5.1). The Center for Applied Management Practices, INC.

- Do not give the greatest weight to the results of surveys simply because they are the largest number of responses.

Additional Analysis Techniques: [5]

- Identify Root Causes/The Five Whys
- Force Field Analysis/ Factor Analysis
- Comparison techniques
- Cause and Effect Analysis
- Trend Analysis

9.1.3 Writing Needs Statements[6]

- Identifying broad domain areas doesn't not provide a clear identification of the need facing low-income populations.
    - For example: saying "Education" doesn't tell you who or what the actual education need is.
- It's important to identify who the need belongs to: Family, Agency or Community.
    - See the examples below to help understand how we can be more specific when writing needs statements
        - Individuals do not have high school diplomas
        - Our Community has a low high school graduation rate
        - Our agency does not have a GED preparation program.
- When writing your needs statements remember these 3 rules:
    - You cannot use one word.
    - You cannot identify the service or strategy that would address a need.
    - You cannot use the same needs statement for all 3 levels of needs.
        - Example of Needs Statements that **<u>don't</u>** follow these rules.
            - Families need Weatherization service – Identifies the service not the need
            - Our community needs to develop summer programs for youth. – Identifies the Strategy
            - Our community needs to develop summer programs for youth. – Identifies the Strategy
    - See this chart for more examples with suggestions on how to correct the needs statement:

[5,7] Richmond, F., & Mooney, B. (2020). *Introduction to Results-Oriented Management and accountability (ROMA) for the Community Action Network* (5.1). The Center for Applied Management Practices, INC.

ORIGINAL NEEDS STATEMENT	**LEVEL**	**SUGGESTED CHANGE**
Households are facing eviction	FAMILY	GOOD STATEMENT!
Lack of affordable housing	COMMUNITY FAMILY	**Community lacks affordable housing.** **Families are unable to afford housing.**
Homeless individuals need a bed at a temporary shelter.	FAMILY COMMUNITY	**Individuals are homeless.** **There are not enough beds at temporary shelters**
Our agency does not have any shelter services	AGENCY	**GOOD STATEMENT!**
Families have limited housing options in our area.	COMMUNITY	**There are limited housing options in our area.** ***Note:*** *(Be on the look out for community words like "options" and "access".) Because the statement starts with "family" it seems like it should be family level. But what is the problem? Is this is really a family level need?*
Individuals don't have living wage jobs	FAMILY	**GOOD STATEMENT!**
There are a large number of unemployed adults looking for living wage jobs.	COMMUNITY	*It is the "large number" that makes this community level. The idea of "looking for" seems to say that the living wage jobs are not accessible.*
We need to have employment services at our agency so people don't have to go somewhere else	AGENCY	**Our agency does not have employment services.** The original statement identifies services to meet the need, but does not say what they are lacking.
Individuals seeking employment lack a high school diploma.	FAMILY	**Individuals are unemployed. Individuals lack high school diploma.** *there are two needs in the original statement*
Children are not kindergarten ready	FAMILY	**GOOD STATEMENT!**

9.1.4 IACAA's Data Hub Tool found here: https://www.iacaanet.org/login/ If you do not have a login contact info@iacaanet.org. All data in the Data Hub is aggregated from the following resources:

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry	EPA - Smart Location Database	National Transit Map
American Communities Projects	ESRI	National Transportation Atlas
American Community Survey	Eviction Lab	NCES - Common Core of Data
Association for Religious Data Archives	FBI Uniform Crime Reports	NCES - Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System	FCC FABRIC Data	NCES - Private School Universe Survey
Brookings Earned Income Tax Credit Interactive	FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund	NCES - School Attendance Boundary Survey

Bureau of Labor Statistics	Federal Emergency Management Agency	NCES - School Segregation Index
Bureau of Land Management	Feeding America	Neighborhood Atlas
Business Dynamics Statistics	FITNESSGRAM Physical Fitness Testing	Nielsen SiteReports
CDC - Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke	Health Resources and Services Administration	Office of Family Assistance
CDC - Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry	Home Mortgage Disclosure Act	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
CDC - Diabetes Atlas	Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
CDC - Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity	HRSA - Administration for Children and Families	Opportunity Index
CDC - FluVaxView	HRSA - Health Professional Shortage Areas Database	Opportunity Insights
CDC - GRASP	HUD - Neighborhood Stabilization Program	Population and Housing Unit Estimates
CDC - National Center for Health Statistics	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	PRISM Climate Group
CDC - National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network	Institute of Museum and Library Services	Provider of Services File
CDC - National Vital Statistics System	IRS - Exempt Organizations Business Master File	Purdue
Census 2020 Response Rates	IRS - Statistics of Income	SFID - School Finance Indicators Database
Census of Agriculture	Johns Hopkins University	Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO)
Center for Homeland Defense and Security	Land Resource Regions	State Cancer Profiles
Center for Neighborhood Technology	Location Affordability Portal	Statistics of U.S. Business
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services	Major Land Resource Area	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
CMS - Geographic Variation Public Use File	Mapping Medicare Disparities Tool	The Urban Institute
CMS - National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES)	Microsoft	Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing
Community Development Financial Institutions Fund	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	Trust for Public Land

County Business Patterns	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency
County Health Rankings	National Atlas	U.S. Energy Information Administration
Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care	National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention	U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project
Decennial Census	National Center for Injury Prevention and Control	UDS Mapper
Definitive Healthcare	National Council on Aging	United States Geological Survey
Diversity Data Kids	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	United Way
EDFacts	National Interagency Fire Center	US Bureau of Economic Analysis
Environics Analytics - Consumer Buying Power	National Land Coverage Database	US Census Community Resilience Estimates
Environmental Conservation Online System	National Low Income Housing Coalition	US Census SAPEI and Living Wage Calculator
EPA - Climate Change Indicators in the United States, Fourth Edition	National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System	US Department of Education - Civil Rights Data Collection
EPA - EJScreen	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	US Department of Health and Human Services
EPA - Facility Registry System	National Risk Index	US Department of Homeland Security
EPA - National Air Toxics Assessment	National Survey of Children's Health	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
EPA - RE-Powering Screening Dataset	National Telecommunications and Information Agency	US Drought Monitor
USGS - Earthquake Hazard Program	USDA - Farm to School Program	US Environmental Protection Agency
Watershed Boundary Dataset	USDA - Food Access Research Atlas	US Fish and Wildlife Services
Wilderness.net	USDA - Food and Nutrition Service	US Food and Drug Administration Compliance Check Inspections of Tobacco Product Retailers
Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System	USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service	USDA - Agriculture Marketing Service
USDA - Economic Research Service	USDA - SNAP Retailer Locator	USDA - Atlas of Rural and Small-Town America

9.1.5 Tips for Conducting a Good Survey

Conducting a good customer survey requires careful planning and execution to gather valuable and actionable insights. Here are some tips to help you conduct an effective customer survey:

Before you design your survey, clearly outline the goals of your survey. Know what specific information you want to gather and how it will be used to improve products, services, or customer experiences.

- Keep it Short and Focused:
  - Respect your customers' time by keeping the survey concise. Focus on the most important questions to gather meaningful data without overwhelming respondents.
- Use Clear and Simple Language:
  - Formulate questions using clear and straightforward language. Avoid jargon or complex terms that may confuse respondents. Make sure the questions are easily understandable.
- Mix Question Types
  - Include a mix of question types, such as multiple-choice, open-ended, and rating scales. This variety provides a more comprehensive view of customer opinions and experiences.
- Start with Easy Questions:
  - Begin with simple, non-intrusive questions to ease respondents into the survey. This helps establish a positive tone and encourages participation.
- Focus on Customer Experience:
  - Center questions around the customer's journey and experience. Ask about specific touchpoints, satisfaction levels, and areas for improvement.
- Ensure Anonymity (if applicable):
  - Assure customers that their responses will remain confidential and their services are not dependent on the completion of the survey. This can encourage more honest and candid feedback, especially when addressing potential issues.
- Pilot Test the Survey:
  - Before launching the survey, conduct a small pilot test with a diverse group to identify any issues with question clarity, survey flow, or technical glitches.
- Optimize for Delivery:
  - Many people access surveys on mobile devices. Ensure your survey platform is mobile-friendly to accommodate respondents who prefer using smartphones or tablets.
  - Use QR Codes for easy accessibility, and collect responses electronically as often as possible.
- Regularly Review and Update:
  - Periodically review and update your survey questions to keep them relevant. Customer needs and preferences may change over time, and your survey should reflect those changes.
- Additional Tips on Gathering Customer Input
  - Gather data from Google and Social Media Reviews
  - Surveys can be done during any part of the customer interaction, but shouldn’t be given in a way that makes the customer believe they need to complete the survey to receive services.

9.1.6 Tips for Conducting a Focus Group

One of the biggest challenges in facilitating a focus group is recruiting so consider these things to help you recruit the right audience for your focus group:

- Target Audience:
    - Clearly define your target audience. Tailor your advertising efforts to reach individuals who match the demographic and psychographic criteria for your focus group.
- Use Multiple Channels:
    - Advertise through various channels such as social media, email newsletters, community bulletin boards, and local publications to maximize reach.
- Create Compelling Messaging:
    - Craft clear and compelling messages that highlight the purpose of the focus group, its importance, and the benefits of participation. Clearly communicate the value participants will bring.
- Offer Incentives:
    - Consider offering incentives such as gift cards, discounts, or product samples to motivate participation and attract a diverse group of individuals.
- Provide Clear Instructions:
    - Clearly outline the steps for participation, including how to apply or register for the focus group. Ensure that potential participants understand the commitment involved.
- Leverage Online Platforms:
    - Utilize online platforms or market research websites to reach a wider audience. Many individuals are open to participating in virtual or online focus groups.
- Utilize Existing Networks:
    - Tap into existing customer databases, social media followers, or community networks to find participants who are already engaged with your brand or industry.
- Highlight Confidentiality:
    - Assure potential participants that their responses will be kept confidential. This can build trust and encourage more candid feedback.

Remember to monitor the recruitment process closely, track responses, and adjust your advertising strategy as needed. The success of a focus group relies on attracting the right participants who can provide valuable insights for your research or decision-making process.

Conducting a focus group requires careful planning to ensure you attract the right participants and gather meaningful insights.

- Define Clear Objectives:
    - Clearly outline the goals and objectives of the focus group. Know what specific information you want to gather and how it will be used to inform decision-making.
- Select a Diverse Group:

    - Ensure diversity among participants to capture a range of perspectives. Consider factors such as age, gender, demographics, and relevant experiences.
- Moderator Training:
    - Train your focus group moderator to facilitate discussions effectively. The moderator should be skilled in guiding conversations, probing for deeper insights, and managing group dynamics.
- Create a Comfortable Environment:
    - Choose a comfortable and neutral venue for the focus group. Ensure that participants feel at ease to express their opinions openly.
- Keep it Interactive:
    - Encourage interaction among participants. Utilize activities, brainstorming sessions, or group exercises to stimulate engagement and varied perspectives.
- Record and Analyze:
    - Record the focus group sessions, either through audio, video, or note-taking. Thoroughly analyze the data afterward to extract meaningful insights.
- Follow-Up Surveys:
    - Consider sending follow-up surveys to participants to gather additional feedback or insights after the focus group session.

9.1.7 Example of a Partner Survey

When creating a partner survey, it's important to ask questions that help you understand the strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement in your partnership. Remember to include a mix of closed-ended (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) questions to capture both specific data and detailed insights. Additionally, tailor the questions to the nature and context of your partnership. Regularly revisiting and updating the survey can help ensure that it remains relevant and aligned with the evolving needs of the partnership.

You'll want this survey to not be anonymous so be sure to collect the partner agencies identifying information.

Here are some questions you may consider including in a partner survey:

- Multiple Choice Questions: (Quantitative)
    - Which of the following best describes the partner organization?
    - Which geographic region does the partner organization serve?
    - What is the primary population demographic the partner serves?
    - What are the greatest challenges in low-income residents in your service area?
    - What are the top three aspects of health that low-income residents face?
    - What are the top three aspects of housing with which low-income residents?
    - What are the top three aspects of employment with which low-income residents?
    - What are the top three aspects of adult education with which low-income residents?
    - What are the top three aspects of childcare and child development with which low-income residents?
    - What are the top three aspects of financial/legal (income management) with which low-income residents?
    - What are the top three aspects of food and nutrition with which low-income residents?
    - What are the top three aspects of family support with which low-income residents?
    - What are the greatest challenges seniors/the elderly in our service area face?
    - What are the greatest challenges teens in our service area?
    - Which of the following barriers do you think low-income residents experience accessing services?

    - How would you rate your relationship with the DuPage County Department of Community Services?
    - How good a job is our agency doing in meeting the needs of low-income residents?
- Open Ended Questions: (Qualitative)
    - Which services for low-income residents, teens, or seniors, if any, are needed, but not currently available in
    - What suggestions do you have for changes or additions to the services provided by our agency?
    - What community issues in xxx service area would you most like to see addressed?

9.1.8 Community Needs Assessment Compliance Checklist:

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Requirements Checklist					
#	**Yes**	**No**	**Requirement**	**Organizational Standard #**	**Where to Find the Data**
1			Does the assessment analyze information collected directly from low-income individuals?	1.2	What does the customer value? (Drucker question 3) You can meet with customers individually, conduct focus groups, or collect surveys. The information must come directly from low-income individuals. Incorporating data from the customer needs survey also meets the standard.
2			Does the assessment utilize information from key community-based organizations in the community, including:	2.2	How you collect this information is up to you, ideally, you will include multiple sources. Options include: 1. A community stakeholders survey (make sure all categories are well-represented). 2. Community focus groups. 3. Use data and reports generated by others in the community.
			- Faith-based organizations?		
			- Private sector?		
			- Public sector?		
			- Educational Institutions?		
3			Was the last community assessment completed less than three years ago? Next assessment due no later than:___________	3.1	You will want to look at the minutes from the Board of Directors meeting to find the date the Board approved the last full community needs assessment.
4			Does the assessment include current data specific to poverty and its prevalence to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for your service area?	3.2	Use the Assessment Tool on the Illinois Community Action Association website to collect this data. Run the tool with all Data Indicators selected.
5			Does the assessment collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data?	3.3	Including brief success stories, quotes, open-ended survey responses, and focus group summaries are great ways to include qualitative data. In addition to the quantitative data from the Assessment Tool, don't forget that

					quantitative data should include data from your program databases. Use your National Performance Indicator (NPI) results in your assessment (and planning) processes as part of the ROMA cycle.
6			Does the assessment include key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the community?	3.4	All the data you are collecting will describe the conditions of poverty. Your analysis will provide what you believe to be the causes of poverty (based on a careful review of the data). Form a small team to talk through why the data looks the way it looks.
7			Did the Board of Directors formally accept the completed community assessment?	3.5	Approval must be documented in the Board of Directors meeting minutes.
8			Is the Community Action Plan outcome-based, anti-poverty focused, and tied to the Community Assessment?	4.2	This standard asks what you did with all this great data once you collected it. Did you analyze it and use it in your ROMA planning process? The needs statements in your Community Action plan (CSBG application) should be easy to find in your Community Assessment.
9			Is customer satisfaction data and customer input collected and incorporated into the community assessment?	6.4	At a minimum you should regularly survey your customers about their satisfaction level with agency services. You should have a systematic approach to this process. Additionally, you could: 1. Ask open-ended questions to gain qualitative data and suggestions for improvements you had not previously considered. 2. Conduct focus groups. 3. Speak with customers throughout the year and record their input.

9.1.9 Head Start Needs Assessment Requirement Checklist

Head Start Requirements Checklist					
IF YOUR AGENCY OPPERATES A HEADSTART, YOUR NEEDS ASSESMENT MAY NEED TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE COMPLAINT WITH HEAD START REGULATIONS IF YOU ARE COMPLETING A UNIFIED NEEDS ASSESSMENT. THE CHART BELOW CAN BE SURED TO HELP GUIDE IN THE CREATION OF A NEEDS ASSESMENT THAT IS COMPLIANT WITH HEADSTART GUIDELINES.					
#	**Yes**	**No**	**Requirement**	**Head Start Standard #**	**Where to Find the Data**
10			Does the assessment include the number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers and their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak?	1302.11(b)(1)(iv)	Use the Assessment Tool, your annual Program Information Reports (PIRs), parent surveys, your Head Start program database, and other sources. Your local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) program may also have data you can use.
11			Does the assessment include information about the children experiencing homelessness?	1302.11(b)(1)(i)(A)	Census information, other public reports, parent surveys, your Program Information Reports (PIRs), and your Head Start program database may be helpful.
12			Does the assessment include information about children in foster care?	1302.11(b)(1)(i)(B)	This number may be available locally. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count database is also a great tool for this and other indicators required by Head Start. https://datacenter.kidscount.org/
13			Does the assessment include information about children with disabilities, including the type of disabilities, and relevant services and resources?	1302.11(b)(1)(i)(C)	Local school districts may have information you can use. Kids Count (see above) has some useful information. Note that this indicator does not ask for specific numbers of children with disabilities but does require an analysis of the types of disabilities and the community resources available. You can also use your Program Information Reports (PIRs) for information about currently enrolled children.
14			Does the assessment include information about the education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of eligible children and their families including prevalent social or economic factors impacting their well being?	1302.11(b)(1)(ii)	Parent surveys are a great way to collect this information. That family/parent sections of your Program Information Reports (PIRs), and your Head Start database is also helpful, as they show what types of services you have been providing. You can also contact your local Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program for data and reports.
15			Does the assessment include the typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children?	1302.11(b)(1)(iii)	Include this as part of your parent survey. You can also collect this information from enrolled parents as part of the family needs assessment and goal-setting process.

16			Does the assessment include other child development, childcare centers, and family childcare programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served?	1302.11(b)(1)(iv)	Your local Childcare Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program likely collects and publishes this data.
17			Does the assessment include resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families?	1302.11(b)(1)(v)	You can either collect community resources information and include it in your appendix of assessment documents, or you can include the resources in the Key Findings section of your executive summary (or both).
18			Does the assessment include the strengths of the community?	1302.11(b)(1)(vi)	Don't forget to identify strengths. You can address this in the introduction to your executive summary, and within the Key Findings sections.
19			Was the annual update completed? A full assessment is due every five years, and updates are due annually. Date of full assessment: ______________ Date next full assessment due: _________ Date of last update: __________________ Date next update is due: ______________	1302.11(b)(2)	It is up to you to keep track of the due dates for the complete assessment and the annual updates. Electronic calendar reminders may be helpful. If you decide to complete one assessment for the entire organization, you will have to figure out the schedule (CSBG requires a complete assessment every 3 years/Head Start every 5 years).
20			Does the assessment consider whether the characteristics of the community allow it to include children from diverse economic backgrounds that would be supported by other funding sources, including private pay?...A program must not enroll children from diverse backgrounds if it would result in a program serving less than its eligible funded enrollment.	1302.11(b)(3)	If your program has a partnership arrangement with another provider than results in economically diverse enrollment, or if you operate a diverse program that blends Head Start children with other children from diverse economic backgrounds, you should discuss that in your assessment. If your program cannot do this, you should state in your community assessment that this is not possible, due to the need to serve your full-funded enrollment.