

Community Needs Assessment 2013 Update

Background/Demographic Information

Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas (CAI-CT) is a non-profit organization that operates the Head Start programs in Hays and Caldwell Counties. Although CAI-CT serves a 10 county region, its Head Start grant serves Hays and Caldwell Counties. Within those counties, the program identified through the March 10, 2012 Community Needs Assessment, the communities of San Marcos, Kyle, Wimberley, Lockhart and Luling as the neediest communities, thus they served as the program's recruitment areas for the school year 2012-2013. Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas also collaborates with five school districts to serve four year old children in the previously referenced communities; therefore the recruitment effort for these collaborations focused on recruiting four year old children that resided within the public school district boundaries (Wimberley ISD, Luling ISD, Lockhart ISD, Hays ISD, and San Marcos CISD). Because of the makeup of the San Marcos CISD, which includes some portions of Guadalupe County, Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas also recruits in the Rancho Vista neighborhood and the Redwood Community (as identified in the Community Needs Assessment) so that those children can benefit from preschool services within the community where they will be attending public school when they reach school age. These areas are otherwise not served by the Community Council of South Central Texas which serves other areas of Guadalupe County.

This 2013 update to the Community Needs Assessment of March 10, 2012 seeks to determine if there have been any significant changes to the information described in that assessment. A review of the Census Data using the American Fact Finder tool on the census.gov website indicates no significant changes in the number of estimated children in poverty in each of the communities previously identified except for the community of Wimberley (*see Head Start Eligible Children Estimates chart*). In this community, the number of estimated children decreased by almost half. In the other four communities, poverty numbers remained close to last year's numbers, and most increased at least slightly. This pattern also holds true when using the Economically Disadvantaged Student Rates for the school districts located in the Program's service area to generate a more liberal estimate of Head Start Eligible children. Again, the greatest change came in the community of Wimberley, which showed a significant decrease in the number of estimated Head Start Eligible children (*see Head Start Eligible Children Estimates chart*).

In looking at the numbers for the community of Wimberley, however, these numbers do not reflect the whole story. Christi Moeller, principal at Scudder Elementary, states that "although the community is small, the need for Head Start remains." Moeller points to the number of ELL students currently attending the school (53 of 335) and the fact that census numbers don't accurately reflect the undocumented immigrant population of Wimberley. She further points out that this population has the greatest need for services in the community, and Head Start is one of the only resources available to them. According to the 2011-2012 CAI EHS/HS Program Information Report, 18 children were served at Scudder by the program over the course of the year, the majority of which (72%) were from Spanish speaking homes (13). Also, important to note, were that three of the 18 families served were over income (17%) and the majority of the waitlist was over income.

Overall little change occurred in the ethnic make-up of both Hays and Caldwell Counties from that reported in the 2012 Community Needs Assessment. According to the 2011 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census, Hispanic or Latino origin persons in Hays County were estimated to constitute 34.8% of the its population (as opposed to 35.3% reported in the 2010 U.S. Census). Caldwell County was estimated at 46.5% (as opposed to 47.1%). The foreign-population in each county shifted a small amount and in fact, seemed to show a shift in the opposite direction with Hays County shifting from 5.7% to 6.9%, and in Caldwell County shifting from 6.5% to 5.4%. Again, a sizeable proportion of children older than 5 years live in homes where a language other than English is spoken (23.3% in Hays and 30.7% in Caldwell).

According to the 2011-2012 CAI EHS/HS Program Information Report, 94.8% or 588 enrollees of 620 total cumulative enrollees (414 in HS and 206 in EHS including 11 pregnant women) had income below 100% of the federal poverty line, were receiving public assistance such as TANF and SSI (71), were homeless (2), or were foster children (18). Out of all enrollees in 2011-2012, 82% are of Hispanic or Latino origin, and 3% are Black or African American. Spanish is the primary language at home for 26% of the enrollees.

Education, Health, Nutrition and Social Service Needs

Major findings of the 2012 Community Needs Assessment Report included the great need for affordable child care for low income families, a need for pediatric health services accepting Medicaid, more mental health services needed by both children and their parents or guardians, and a need for a variety of services for children's families. Those parents identified with the greatest needs included parents with serious employment, housing, and transportation problems, single parents, immigrant parents, grandparents as caregivers, families with incarcerated parents, and those affected by domestic violence. In order to determine if these results still represent the greatest needs of families, this update utilized a parent survey (of current enrollees) and a community partner survey (of partners attending both an Education Advisory Meeting and a Health Advisory Meeting).

Survey results showed a very similar pattern to that found in the 2012 Community Needs Assessment with some additional new findings. As in 2012, over half of the respondents identified Employment concerns as a need including the number of good jobs available and low wages (for example, 55.12% in 2013, 53.4% in 2012 identified the number of good jobs available as a serious problem). One third of respondents identified Housing and Transportation concerns as a need including affordable housing (36.10% in 2013; more than a third in 2012) and public transportation (31.22% in 2013; more than a third in 2012) as a serious problem. Other specific needs identified that mirror the results found in 2012 included Immigration, families of Incarcerated individuals, and Grandparents raising grandchildren. Additional specific needs identified include Child Support, Substance Abuse, Family Crisis, Homelessness, and Utility Assistance. 41.67% of respondents identified GED services as a need of their family or family they may know. Lastly, while the need for pediatric health services accepting Medicaid was identified in 2012, respondents in 2013 also identified Health Insurance for Adults (46.67%) and Affordable Dental Care for Adults (52.78%) as a need.

Several of the needs identified can also be supported in looking at the U.S. Census Data in the American Community Survey (2007-2011). For example, the percentage of adults ages 18 to 64 in Hays County that were not insured was 24%. In Caldwell County, this percentage was even

greater at 35.1%. Of those uninsured that are 25 years or older, 49% in Hays County and 33.9% in Caldwell County were less than high school graduates. Also, of those uninsured that are 18 years or older, 43.8% in Hays County and 62.4% in Caldwell County were unemployed. These figures show not only the need for greater health coverage for adults, but the need for adult education programs such as GED and greater opportunities for employment as well. In Hays County, of the 1073 grandparents living with their own grandchildren under the age of 18 years, 33.8% were responsible for their grandchildren. In Caldwell County, this percentage was 31.9%. In terms of single parent households, according the County Health Rankings, 25% of children in Hays County lived in single parent households, while 37% of children in Caldwell County lived in single parent households.

In Hays County, specifically the community of Kyle, Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas also collaborates with the Hays ISD School Age Pregnant and Parenting Education Program to serve the needs of pregnant teens and teen parents in the community at both Hays High School (16 slots) and Lehman High School (16 slots). In the community of San Marcos, although Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas no longer maintains a site located at the Phoenix Academy, communication is maintained to continue serving those pregnant and teen parents referred to the program by the San Marcos CISD School Age Pregnant and Parenting Education Program. In Caldwell County, pregnant teens and teen parents are also actively recruited in Luling in collaboration with the school district because that community does not have its own School Age Pregnant and Parenting Education Program. Lockhart ISD also maintains its own School Age Pregnant and Parenting Education Program, of which Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas recruits when those students complete its program.

Other Child Development and Child Care Programs for Low Income Children

According the US Census American Community Survey (2007-2011), Pre-Kindergarten enrollment was 2,372 in Hays County and 535 in Caldwell County. This shows significant growth from the figures quoted in the 2012 Community Needs Assessment (Pre-Kindergarten enrollment for 2009-2010 was 937 in Hays County and 330 in Caldwell County). Although the need is greater, little has changed in the number of child care centers available since the 2012 Community Needs Assessment. In a search using the search engine on the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website of licensed child care centers in Hays County, a lesser number of child care centers was found (70 versus 80 found in 2012). As search for Caldwell County was similar (15 versus 16 in 2012). Both of these lists also included the names of the Head Start Child Care Centers, so the number of centers available to the community as a whole is actually smaller. The need for the availability of affordable daycare centers is also supported by response from the parent survey that was conducted as part of the 2013 update which showed that 37.07% of respondents listed this issue as a need.

Resources in the Community to Address the Needs of Head Start Eligible Children and their Families

Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas acts an umbrella organization, not only for the Head Start Program, but also includes programs that offer Health Services, Social Services, and Adult Education Services, and thus some of its greatest strengths lie in the ability to refer clients to programs within the same agency and the communication and coordination opportunities that can result from working within the same agency. Health Services include family planning clinics,

breast cancer awareness and outreach program, prescription assistance, and the Rural Aids Services Program. Social Services include utility assistance, case management, and senior citizens centers. Adult Education services include both ESL and GED classes as well as college preparation and career counseling services. Head Start families have access to all of these programs should they need these services, and staff work to ensure that the process of referral is smooth.

Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas also maintains partnerships with many Community Organizations in order to best serve its clients. These partnerships include organizations/programs that offer child education and developmental care, health services, social services, disability services, mental health services, and nutrition services. As identified in its Head Start Annual Report these organizations include the school districts in which it works, as well as non-profit agencies including the Hays County Health Department and Early Childhood Intervention Services. Other agencies include the San Marcos Area Food Bank, the Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and the Greater San Marcos Youth Council (*for a more complete listing of other Community Resources see also attached Community Resource Lists for each community*). In addition to these resources, Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas has also expanded its partnerships with private therapy companies in the 2012-2013 to expand services to children with disabilities. These companies include Connect Care, Himmel Home Health Care, and Total Child Therapy.

The Community Needs Assessment of March 10, 2012 identified several barriers to accessing these resources. A survey of Community Partners was completed to for the 2013 updated and identified many of the same barriers still facing families. Overall the predominant barriers identified in accessing services included Awareness and Knowledge of the services, Identification, and Transportation. Needs also indentified in the community partner survey closely mirrored those identified in the parent survey, but also included some new areas such as a need for greater mental health (play therapy, family counseling, adult relationship counseling, adult child relationship) and parenting services (positive parenting, social emotional skills). Health needs identified included preventive care, physical activity for children, healthy meals and obesity.

Children with Disabilities Four Years Old or Younger

According to the 2011-2012 CAI EHS/HS Program Information Report, the program served 48 children who had an Individualized Education Plan and were thus receiving special education services from their local school district. Fifteen children were served who had an Individualized Family Support plan and were thus receiving services from an Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program. Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas maintains partnerships with both the local school districts in providing services to these children with disabilities as well as with the local Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) programs. In many cases, the therapists either from the school district or the ECI program often provide services at the Head Start center the child attends. Also, as previously stated, Community Action Inc. of Central Texas has expanded its community partnerships to expand services to the children with disabilities enrolled in the program to include private therapy companies who can offer services to children with disabilities who may not qualify for services offered through the school district or ECI. Types of disabilities for children that were identified by the community partner survey as what is most often seen in

their communities included speech impairment, emotionally disturbed, intellectual deficiency, multiple disability, specific learning disability, and autism.

Implications of the Community Needs Assessment 2013 Update

As previously stated, this update sought to determine if any significant changes had occurred to the information given in the 2012 Community Needs Assessment. To do this several data sources were used. These included a review of the U.S. Census American Community Survey (2007-2011) Data, County Health Rankings data, and data from the Texas Education Agency School District Performance Reporting Snapshot for 2011. A survey was also conducted that solicited responses from both currently enrolled parents and community partners. Lastly, data was reviewed from the 2011-2012 CAI EHS/HS Program Information Report. Overall, little change was noted from the 2012 Community Assessment with the exception of the estimated number of Head Start eligible children in the community of Wimberley which showed a significant decrease. As a result of this decrease, a reexamination of services provided in this community is recommended. However, this reexamination should also take into account the needs of Spanish speaking and undocumented families that reside in Wimberley and show a need for services. Lastly, because the needs identified by the surveys conducted showed a very similar pattern to those identified in the 2012 Community Assessment, it is recommended that the program's Selection Criteria remain in effect.