

**Action Inc.**

Community Assessment Report & Strategic Plan

2018 – 2020



**ACTION INC.**

**5**  
**PLEASANT STREET**  
Action, Inc.  
Executive Office  
Client & Housing Services  
Computer Youth Program  
HomeCare  
Job Training & Education  
  
North Shore Career Center  
HAWC

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## Section 2 • Executive Summary

Action Inc.'s 2018 – 2020 Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan will serve as a roadmap for our organization's work over the next three years. This document provides a picture of our service area, a summary of current needs in our community, and concrete goals that will help our agency and our partners meet those needs through new and existing initiatives.

This document is the result of a nine-month process during which Action Inc. staff and Board members conducted a comprehensive community needs assessment (Section 8, *Community and Internal Assessment Process*). Through surveys, focus groups, and interviews, we learned about our community's most pressing needs and concerns. We gathered input from a broad range of stakeholders, including Action Inc. clients, social service providers, public officials, faith community representatives, school officials, and community members. In addition to our own data collection, we analyzed secondary data from a variety of local, state-level, and national sources to provide context for the data we collected (Section 7, *Community Profile*).

We discovered that housing, employment, and behavioral health are the top needs in our service area — and that these issues have manifested at the individual/family level and at the community level (Section 9, *Key Findings: Community Assessment*). We discussed these top needs and ways to meet them at our strategic planning retreat in April 2017 (Section 8, *Community and Internal Assessment Process*). At the retreat, Board members and staff from every department were actively engaged in identifying solutions to the top needs and ways that we can better serve our community. These ideas served as the basis for our strategic three year goals and for the specific steps we intend to take in order to meet these goals (Section 11, *Strategic Three Year Goals*; Section 12, *Specific Objectives*). As part of this retreat, staff and Board members shared their visions for Action Inc.'s future and their perspectives on our core values. These thoughts were incorporated into our restated mission and vision statements (Section 5, *Mission Statement*; Section 6, *2018 – 2020 Action Inc. Vision Statement*).

While we were conducting our community needs assessment, we also conducted an internal needs assessment (Section 8, *Community and Internal Assessment Process*). We distributed surveys to our staff and Board of Directors, conducted Board interviews, and held staff focus groups. This process helps us assess our operations, employee satisfaction, funding strategies, and internal agency needs (Section 10, *Key Findings: Internal Assessment*). Based on our assessment, we intend to improve our interagency communication, increase community awareness of our programs, and increase our staff capacity over the next three years (Section 11, *Strategic Three Year Goals*).

This Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan will serve as a guide for our staff and Board members over the next three years. It will help us keep our programs on track and will remind us to focus on addressing the top needs. We will monitor progress toward our goals throughout the year, and staff will work collaboratively to revise annual goals as needed (Section 13, *Plan Monitoring and Reporting*). We will report our outcomes to the Board and to the Department of Housing and Community Development every six months. This Strategic Plan will also be a living document, which we will reevaluate over the course of each year in an effort to remain responsive to any developing community needs and to the changing world around us.

## Section 3 • Board Authorization

The Action Inc. Board of Directors reviewed the 2018 – 2020 Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan at the Board of Directors meeting that was held on June 13, 2017.

The Board of Directors voted to approve the Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan at this meeting.

Documentation of this vote can be found in the agency's June 13, 2017 Board meeting minutes.

<b>ACTION INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>		
<b>PUBLIC SECTOR</b>	<b>PRIVATE SECTOR</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SECTOR</b>
Gretchen Wood, 1st Vice-Chairperson	Dennis Acker	Linda Murphy, Chairperson
Linda Giamanco, Treasurer	Elise Sinagra	Beverly Melvin
Marcy Pregent, Secretary	Gavin Keenan	Fernando DeSouza
Charlotte Dodge	Rebecca Sumner	Katherine Dench
Courtney Lane	Reverend Karin Wade	Kathy Stewart
Roger Lesch	Shelly Luckenbill Sevinor	Loretta Peres
	Troy Sullivan	Tone Kenney

## Section 4 • Agency Description

Action Inc. is a non-profit human services organization and the designated Community Action Agency for the Greater Cape Ann area. Our primary service area consists of the City of Gloucester and the towns of Essex, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Rockport.\* As a Community Action Agency, we are part of a nationwide network of more than 1,000 similar organizations that are working to eliminate poverty in the United States.

Action Inc. was established in 1965 as a result of the Economic Opportunity Act, which began the War on Poverty and resulted in the formation of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across the country. CAAs act as hubs in their local communities, bringing together state, local, and national partners to address community needs and providing vital services to promote economic security. Action Inc. – like other CAAs – was founded to address the underlying causes of poverty in our service area and to provide programs that help people move up the ladder of economic opportunity.

For more than 50 years, Action Inc. has been instrumental in responding to our community's needs. We created and incubated a number of local organizations, including the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association, Pathways for Children, and the Cape Ann Food Bank (now known as The Open Door). We brought Meals on Wheels to Gloucester, operated Cape Ann's public transit system before the formation of the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), and were the first agency on the North Shore to provide in-home care for seniors.

Today, we operate a number of critical programs in our community through our five core departments: Client & Housing Services, Energy Services, Riley Education & Training Center, HomeCare, and Administration. We provide a broad range of services, including: assistance with public benefits enrollment, case management, housing assistance, eviction prevention, homelessness prevention, emergency shelter for homeless adults, affordable housing, weatherization, energy conservation, assistance with fuel and utility bills, heating system repair and replacement, adult basic education, resume assistance, academic and career counseling, healthcare career training programs, High School Equivalency Test preparation for out-of-school youth, and in-home personal care for elders and disabled adults.

Action Inc. has a tripartite Board of Directors that consists of one-third private sector representatives, one-third public sector representatives, and one-third community sector representatives.

*\*These five municipalities represent our designated Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) service area. Our Energy Services division provides fuel assistance in two additional neighboring towns (Hamilton and Wenham) and oversees energy conservation projects throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. For the purposes of the 2018 – 2020 Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan, we will focus on our primary service area as defined above.*

## Section 5 • Mission Statement

The mission of Action Inc. is to create opportunities that promote a thriving Cape Ann for all.

*The Action Inc. Board of Directors reviewed the mission statement at the Board of Directors meeting that was held on June 13, 2017.*

## Section 6 • 2018 – 2020 Action Inc. Vision Statement

**Action Inc. aims to be an instrument of change, working collaboratively with partners to strengthen the community and helping all people in our service area access the opportunities they need to thrive.**

**RESPONSIVENESS:** We will seek input from the community and will be flexible with our programming, ensuring that our services address needs that have been identified by the community itself.

**IMPACT:** We will design and implement innovative solutions to community issues, and we will measure our outcomes to ensure we are producing positive results.

**COLLABORATION:** We will collaborate with local, state, and federal organizations to leverage resources and advocate for social change, and we will work with local partners to offer comprehensive services to our community.

**RESPECT:** We will treat everyone with dignity and respect, and we will offer our clients compassion and support in hopes of empowering them to achieve their goals.

## Section 7 • Community Profile

Action Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Cape Ann, a coastal region in Essex County that is about 40 miles north of Boston. Action Inc.'s designated CSBG area includes the four Cape Ann municipalities — Gloucester, Essex, Rockport, and Manchester-by-the-Sea — as well as the neighboring town of Ipswich. Action Inc.'s fuel assistance program extends into the nearby towns of Hamilton and Wenham (which are undesignated CSBG towns). Action Inc.'s Energy Services division also oversees energy conservation projects throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through subcontracts with other Community Action Agencies, housing agencies, and energy providers. For the purposes of this section, we will focus on the seven towns where Action Inc. is providing direct services to clients.

### Areas We Serve:

Essex  
 Gloucester  
 Ipswich  
 Manchester-by-the-Sea  
 Rockport  
 Hamilton\*  
 Wenham\*

*\*fuel assistance only*

### PART 1: SUMMARY OF SERVICE AREA

Action Inc.'s service area has a population of 70,096 people, with 7.6 percent of those people living below the poverty line (according to the most recent American Community Survey data). A comparison of town-by-town population and poverty can be seen below.

	TOTAL POPULATION*	POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE	PERCENTAGE BELOW POVERTY LINE
<b>GLOUCESTER</b>	29,163	2,712	9.3%
<b>IPSWICH</b>	13,511	937	6.9%
<b>HAMILTON</b>	7,935	584	7.4%
<b>ROCKPORT</b>	7,042	394	5.6%
<b>MANCHESTER</b>	5,270	367	7.0%
<b>ESSEX</b>	3,608	236	6.5%
<b>WENHAM</b>	3,567	96	2.7%

*\*Population for whom poverty status is determined.  
 All data from American Community Survey, 2011-2015.*

The following pages contain town-by-town breakdowns of poverty by age, gender, race, and ethnicity for the seven municipalities where Action Inc. provides direct services. All seven municipalities are located within Essex County, and county-level data is included for the purposes of comparison. Essex County includes a mix of urban and suburban areas, similar to our service area; however, it is worth noting that the county-level data is somewhat skewed by two cities (Lynn and Lawrence). Together, Lynn and Lawrence make up more than 20 percent of Essex County's population and each city reports between 20 and 30 percent of its people are living in poverty.

## BREAKDOWN OF INDIVIDUALS LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE BY AGE

This chart reflects the age breakdown of individuals living below the poverty line in the towns that make up our service area. The figures in parentheses show the percentage of individuals within that age bracket that are living in poverty (i.e., 7.4 percent of Essex residents under 18 years old are living below the poverty line).

	ESSEX	GLOUCESTER	HAMILTON	IPSWICH	MANCHESTER	ROCKPORT	WENHAM	ESSEX COUNTY
Under 18 years	61 (7.4%)	591 (11.5%)	216 (9.7%)	109 (3.9%)	44 (3.7%)	52 (4.2%)	24 (2.7%)	27,519 (16.4%)
18-34 years	18 (3.0%)	546 (10.0%)	91 (7.2%)	171 (8.8%)	12 (2.4%)	52 (5.4%)	27 (6.3%)	19,157 (12.6%)
35-64 years	91 (5.9%)	1,098 (8.5%)	252 (7.7%)	443 (7.2%)	264 (11.0%)	178 (6.1%)	36 (2.4%)	27,877 (8.8%)
65 years and over	66 (10.2%)	477 (8.4%)	25 (2.2%)	214 (8.2%)	47 (4.0%)	112 (5.8%)	9 (1.2%)	10,864 (9.7%)

*Population for whom poverty status is determined. Data from American Community Survey, 2011-2015.*

It is worth noting the percentage of children living in poverty within our service area. According to data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, all school districts within our region have seen an increase in the percentage of “economically disadvantaged” students between the 2014-2015 school year and the current school year (2016-2017). Most notably, 35 percent of students in Gloucester meet the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's definition of “economically disadvantaged” for the current school year.

## BREAKDOWN OF INDIVIDUALS LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE BY GENDER

This chart reflects the gender breakdown of individuals living below the poverty line in the towns that make up our service area. The figures in parentheses show the percentage of men and women that are living in poverty in each town (i.e., 4.7 percent of all men in Essex are living in poverty).

	ESSEX	GLOUCESTER	HAMILTON	IPSWICH	MANCHESTER	ROCKPORT	WENHAM	ESSEX COUNTY
Male	81 (4.7%)	923 (6.8%)	280 (6.8%)	421 (6.3%)	148 (5.7%)	129 (4.2%)	41 (2.5%)	35,457 (9.8%)
Female	155 (8.2%)	1,789 (11.5%)	304 (7.9%)	516 (7.6%)	219 (8.1%)	265 (6.7%)	55 (2.9%)	49,960 (12.9%)

*Population for whom poverty status is determined. Data from American Community Survey, 2011-2015.*

Based on this data, the percentage of women living in poverty is nearly double the percentage of men living in poverty in Gloucester. This is consistent with qualitative data collected during our community needs assessment, in which Action Inc.'s direct care staff indicated that they have seen an increasing number of low-income women between the ages of 55 and 59 coming in to seek assistance from Action Inc.'s programs.

## BREAKDOWN OF INDIVIDUALS LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The chart below shows the racial and ethnic breakdown of individuals living below the poverty line by town. The figures in parentheses show the percentage of individuals of each race/ethnicity that are living in poverty in each town (i.e., 6.7 percent of all Essex residents who identify as “white” are living in poverty).

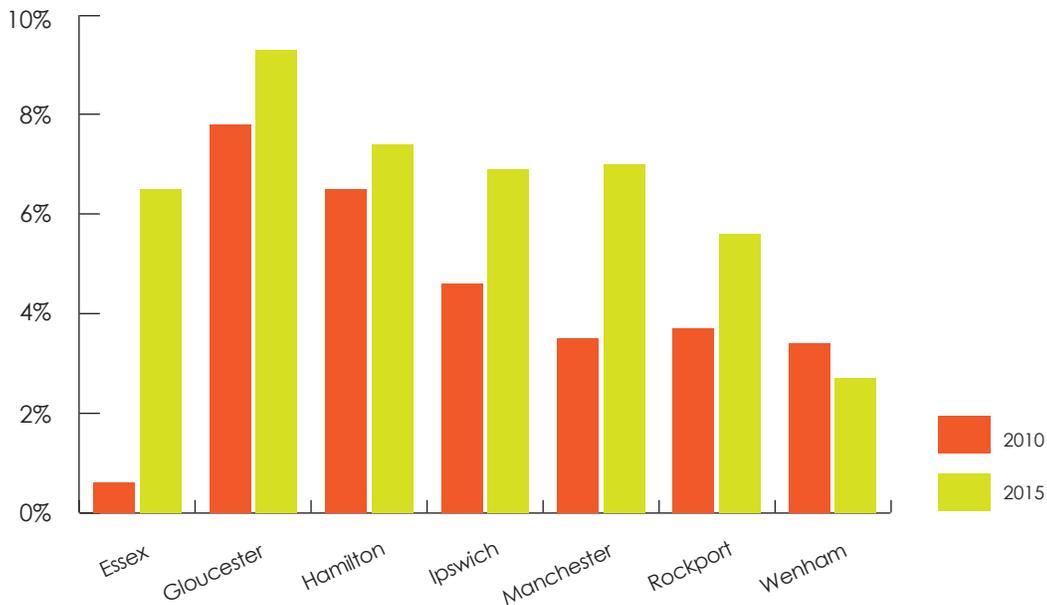
	ESSEX	GLOUCESTER	HAMILTON	IPSWICH	MANCHESTER	ROCKPORT	WENHAM	ESSEX COUNTY
<b>RACE</b>								
White	236 (6.7%)	2,536 (9.1%)	348 (4.9%)	845 (6.4%)	359 (7.0%)	362 (5.3%)	96 (2.7%)	49,322 (8.3%)
Black or African American	--	46 (15.4%)	--	58 (71.6%)	--	--	--	5,952 (20.6%)
American Indian and Alaska Native	--	--	--	--	--	15 (100.0%)	--	232 (14.9%)
Asian	--	--	232 (46.0%)	1 (1.6%)	--	--	--	3,497 (13.4%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	66 (31.4%)
Other race	--	109 (30.4%)	4 (15.4%)	12 (40.0%)	8 (17.8%)	--	--	22,486 (29.3%)
Multi-racial	--	21 (5.3%)	--	21 (15.8%)	--	17 (100.0%)	--	3,862 (21.5%)
<b>ETHNICITY</b>								
Hispanic or Latino	--	209 (34.7%)	4 (2.5%)	14 (6.3%)	--	33 (34.7%)	--	37,606 (27.5%)

*Population for whom poverty status is determined. Data from American Community Survey, 2011-2015.*

The towns within our service area have limited racial/ethnic diversity, with at least 90 percent of residents in all seven towns identifying as “white” and at least 97 percent of residents in all seven towns identifying as “not Hispanic or Latino.” Considering how little racial and ethnic diversity exists within our service area, it is clear from the chart above that poverty rates are disproportionately high among minority groups.

## PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE, 2010 VS. 2015

The percentage of people living in poverty increased from 2010 to 2015 in six of the seven towns within our service area, as shown below. This data is consistent with county-level data, which shows the percentage of people living in poverty in Essex County increasing from 10.1% in 2010 to 11.4% in 2015.



Data from American Community Survey, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015.

## BREAKDOWN OF SERVICE AREA POPULATION VS. SERVICE AREA POVERTY

Gloucester is the only city within Action Inc.'s service area. It accounts for the largest share of our service area's population, and this has been consistent for the past several years. Gloucester contains an even larger share of the poverty within our region, as shown in the charts below.

Breakdown of Service Area Population, 2015



Data from American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Breakdown of Service Area Poverty, 2015

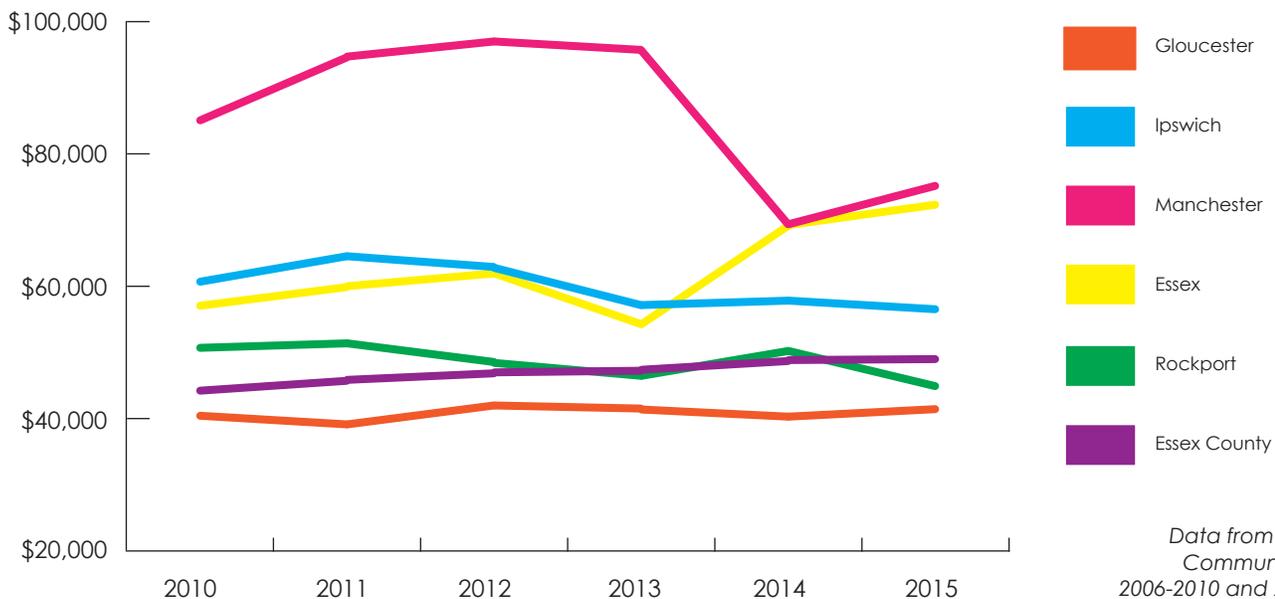


Data from American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Action Inc. has noticed the breakdown of poverty between towns in our service area seems to be shifting. In 2012, 14 percent of the individuals in poverty within our service area resided in Ipswich. Since 2012, this portion has increased — most recent data shows Ipswich is now home to 18 percent of the individuals in poverty within our service area.

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income varies widely among the municipalities served by Action Inc., as seen on the chart below. While median household income for Essex County has increased steadily over the five-year period, the median income has decreased in Manchester, Ipswich, and Rockport. Median household income in Gloucester has stayed virtually the same for the five-year period and has remained below the median household income for Essex County — and for Massachusetts — during the entire period. (Hamilton and Wenham have been omitted from this graph for the sake of readability, however the chart on page 13 shows that median incomes are high in these two towns.)



## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES

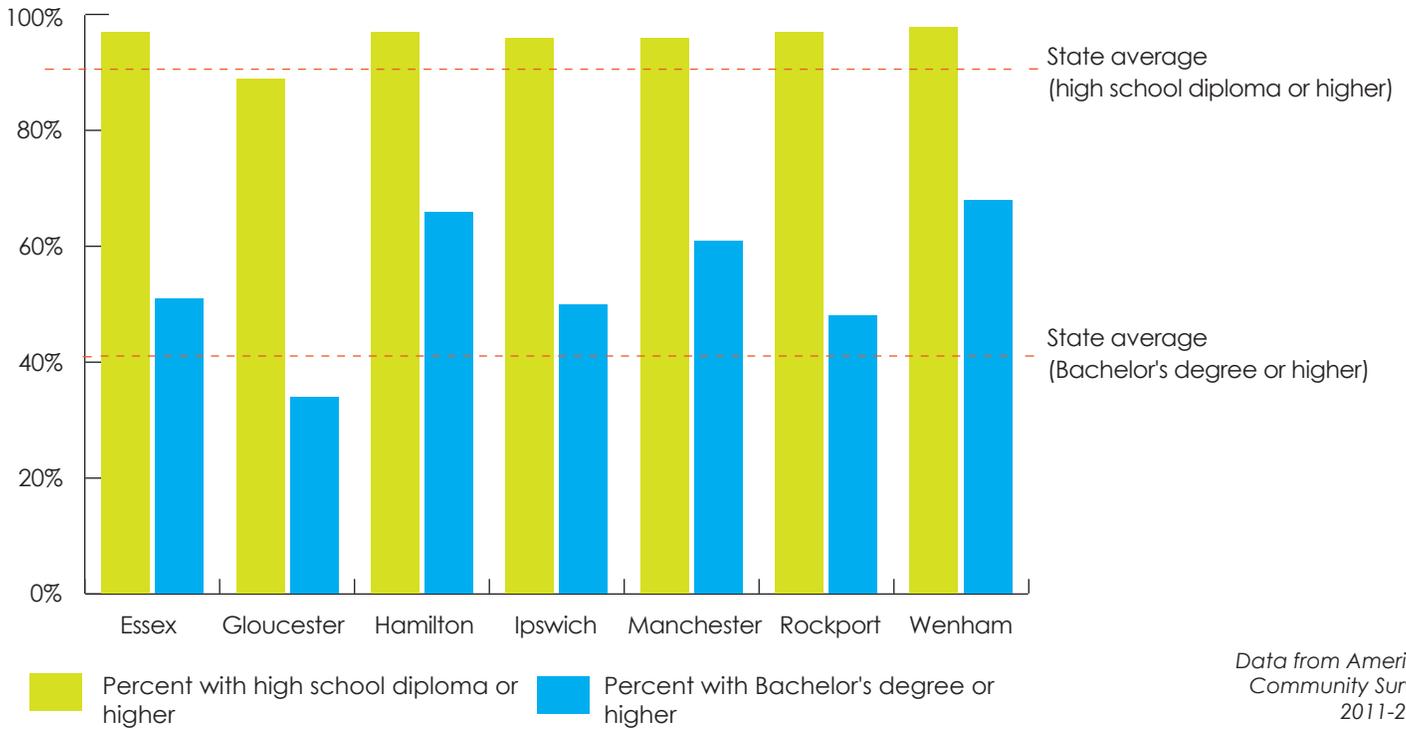
Action Inc.'s service area consists of five school districts — Gloucester, Ipswich, Rockport, Hamilton-Wenham, and Manchester-Essex Regional. In 2016, the Ipswich, Rockport, Hamilton-Wenham, and Manchester-Essex Regional school districts all reported high school graduation rates of 94 percent or higher — well above the state average. The high school graduation rate in Gloucester was 86.7 percent, just slightly below the state average of 87.5 percent.

Additionally, Gloucester's dropout rate is considerably higher than the rates reported by other communities served by Action Inc. In 2016, Gloucester reported a high school dropout rate of 7.5 percent, compared to a statewide dropout rate of 4.9 percent. The other towns within our service area all fell below the state average, with the Hamilton-Wenham and Manchester-Essex districts reporting dropout rates below 1 percent.

It is also worth noting that Gloucester's 2016 dropout data represents a significant increase over the year before and a reversal of recent trends. From 2013 to 2015, Gloucester's dropout rate was steadily decreasing, with the district reporting a dropout rate of 3.8 percent in 2015. Unfortunately, the dropout rate nearly doubled between 2015 and 2016, jumping up to 7.5 percent in 2016. (Data from MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Gloucester falls below the state average for both percentage of residents with a Bachelor's degree and percentage of residents with a high school diploma. Gloucester is the only municipality within Action Inc.'s service area that falls below the state average on these measures, as shown below.



## SPOTLIGHT ON GLOUCESTER

Gloucester is the largest municipality in Action Inc.'s service area and is the only designated "city" in the Cape Ann region. Gloucester contains the majority of the poverty within Action Inc.'s service area. Many of the issues affecting Gloucester — from educational attainment to adequate income — are connected to the city's history.

Gloucester is known as "America's oldest seaport" and has been an important center of the fishing industry for more than a century. While the fishing industry bolstered the city's economy for many years, Gloucester's economy and its residents have struggled for the past 20 years, as the number of jobs in the fishing industry has declined. City officials refer to Gloucester's economy as "in transition," as the community works to find new economic opportunities for Gloucester's residents.

Gloucester has become a popular vacation destination, which has boosted the economy but has also created challenges for year-round residents. These issues will be discussed further in the rest of this section.

Gloucester has several distinct neighborhoods, and median household income varies significantly among them. In Lanesville, median household incomes range from about \$76,000 to \$102,000. In the downtown area, median household incomes range from about \$26,000 to \$48,000 (city-data.com).

## PART 2: MAJOR CONDITIONS AFFECTING GREATER CAPE ANN

### COST AND AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING

Housing is a major contributor to poverty within Action Inc.'s service area. Housing costs are high for renters and homeowners alike due to a shortage of housing stock, proximity to Boston, and Cape Ann's popularity as a vacation destination.

The chart below shows median home values in the seven municipalities we serve — all of which are higher than the median home values for Massachusetts and for Essex County. Many homeowners within our service area struggle to afford their housing costs, most notably in Gloucester, where median and mean household incomes fall well below median and mean household incomes for both Essex County and Massachusetts. As a result, more than one third of homeowners with mortgages in Gloucester are “cost burdened,” spending 35 percent or more of their monthly income on homeownership costs (data from American Community Survey).

For further discussion on income, please see page 11.

	MEDIAN HOME VALUE	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
ESSEX	\$524,500	\$92,396
GLOUCESTER	\$364,000	\$61,505
HAMILTON	\$501,200	\$109,500
IPSWICH	\$412,300	\$76,458
MANCHESTER	\$768,900	\$92,243
ROCKPORT	\$450,400	\$64,839
WENHAM	\$516,600	\$109,250
ESSEX COUNTY	\$353,100	\$69,068
MASSACHUSETTS	\$333,100	\$68,563

Data from American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Housing costs are a struggle for renters within Action Inc.'s service area, as well. More than a third of renters in Gloucester, Essex, Ipswich, Rockport, and Hamilton spend at least 35 percent of their monthly income on housing costs. Since 2010, median gross rent has increased by 10 percent in Essex County.

Since Cape Ann is a popular vacation destination, rental properties often sit vacant during the winter so they can be used by vacationers during the summer — which means they are not affordable or available for year-round renters. At last count, 4.5 percent of vacant units in Ipswich were reserved for “seasonal, recreational, or occasional use” — as well as 8.8 percent of vacant units in Gloucester and 18.1 percent of vacant units in Rockport (2010 Census).

Ipswich reports the highest number of renters paying more than 35 percent of their income on housing costs, clocking in at more than 40 percent.

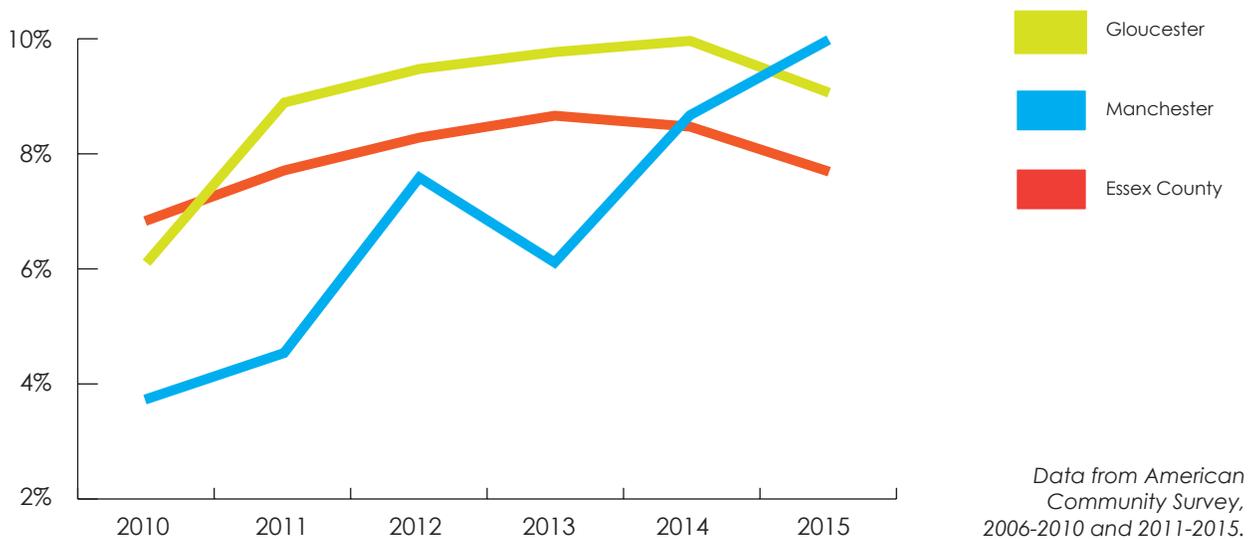
## EMPLOYMENT

Employment continues to be a major issue facing Cape Ann residents.

Gloucester is still feeling the effects of the declining fishing industry, although the city's popularity as a vacation destination has created jobs in hospitality. These jobs allow for seasonal work, however year-round residents often struggle to find year-round work to support their families. The most recent data shows that nearly 40 percent of workers in Gloucester (ages 25-64) worked "less than full-time, year-round hours" in 2015 (compared to 30 percent of workers for Essex County). These jobs are often low-paying jobs, as well. This has a significant impact on household incomes in Gloucester, as referenced on page 11. While the median household income increased in Essex County by 8 percent between 2010 and 2015, median household income in Gloucester increased by just 2 percent over the same five-year period.

Unemployment continues to be an issue in Action Inc.'s service area as well, as shown in the chart below.

*Notable Unemployment Trends, 2010 to 2015*



Unemployment is particularly significant in Gloucester, where the unemployment rate is consistently higher than the rate for both the county and the state. Unemployment in Gloucester is distributed relatively evenly across all age brackets, with individuals between ages 16 and 24 and between ages 55 and 59 reporting the highest levels of unemployment.

The unemployment rate is highest in Manchester, where unemployment has more than doubled since 2010. The data shows a significant number of young people between the ages of 19 and 26 in Manchester are unemployed; however, the majority of these individuals are living above the poverty line.

The most recent ACS data estimates the unemployment rate in Gloucester to be 9.1 percent, above both Essex County (7.7 percent) and the state (7.6 percent).

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral health has emerged as a significant condition affecting the communities served by Action Inc. The category of “behavioral health” is generally considered to include both mental health and substance use disorders, which are often co-occurring and both of which are issues within Action Inc.’s service area.

Alcohol abuse is a significant problem in our service area. Beverly Hospital and Addison Gilbert Hospital (BH-AGH) conducted a community health survey in 2015 as part of a community-wide needs assessment (BH-AGH serves all of Action Inc.’s service area, plus several other neighboring towns). According to BH-AGH’s survey, 12 percent of adults in our region are “heavy drinkers” (refers to men who consume over 60 drinks per month and women who consume over 30 drinks per month) and 30 percent of adults in our region are “binge drinkers” (refers to men who consume at least five drinks at a time and women who consume at least four drinks at a time). These percentages are well above the figures for both Massachusetts and the United States. The prevalence of alcohol and other substance use in our area is evident in our hospitalization data. According to the BH-AGH report, Essex and Gloucester “had rates of alcohol or other substance use-related hospitalizations per 100,000 population that were significantly higher than the Commonwealth rate” — and the rate of alcohol or substance-use related hospitalizations in Gloucester is almost double the rate for the state.

Over the past several years, the opioid crisis has become a significant issue in Massachusetts and throughout our service area. From 2001 to 2014, the number of opioid overdose deaths in Essex County rose by more than 200 percent. In Gloucester alone, the number of opioid-related overdose deaths increased by 100 percent between 2014 and 2015 (from five deaths in 2014 to 10 deaths in 2015). Additionally, Gloucester “had rates of opioid-related emergency department discharges per 100,000 population that were significantly higher than the [statewide rate],” with a rate of 655 per 100,000 people (compared with the statewide rate of 260 per 100,000, according to the BH-AGH report).

Mental illness is an issue in our service area as well, however there seems to be less data documenting this issue. Based on the BH-AGH survey, we know that mental health hospitalization rates and emergency department utilization rates are high for towns in our region. Both Essex and Gloucester reported a much higher rate of hospitalizations for mental health conditions than Essex County and Massachusetts, with Gloucester reporting 1,391 mental health-related hospitalizations per 100,000 people (compared to the statewide rate of 838 per 100,000). Rockport and Gloucester have higher rates of mental health-related emergency department visits that the county and state, as well. Gloucester reported nearly twice as many mental health-related emergency department visits as the state (8,827 visits per 100,000 people for Gloucester, compared with 4,990 visits per 100,000 people for MA).

40 percent of Americans with a substance use disorder also have a mental health condition, according to SAMHSA.

Individuals who are living below the poverty line are more than twice as likely to experience serious mental illness as individuals living above the poverty line (SAMHSA).

## **Section 8** • *Community and Internal Assessment Process*

Action Inc. conducted a thorough community and internal needs assessment in the first four months of 2017 as part of our strategic planning process. We collected community feedback through surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a full-day strategic planning retreat. We were committed to hearing from as many people as possible, and we conducted more focus groups and interviews this year than ever before in order to ensure we offered plenty of opportunities for the community to provide input. We supplemented our own data with secondary data from a variety of sources.

### **SURVEYS**

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The Cape Ann Community Survey, which was created by Action Inc. staff, was distributed widely throughout our service area. The survey included questions about community needs, community strengths, barriers to housing, barriers to employment, and satisfaction with our services (if applicable).

More than 4,000 surveys were mailed to households that have accessed Action Inc.'s services, in order to ensure that customer input and customer satisfaction data was collected. Additionally, staff and Board members distributed more than 1,000 copies to 40 community locations across our service area and to all Action Inc. programs. Community locations were chosen carefully to ensure that low-income individuals, community members, and partners all had the opportunity to respond to our survey. A web-based version of the survey was created through SurveyMonkey.com. The survey website was publicized via email, social media, and other local websites/email lists (i.e., the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce newsletter). Flyers containing the web address for the online survey were posted at nearly 70 community locations. Additionally, Action Inc. staff conducted in-person outreach by canvassing downtown Gloucester locations with tablets to gather additional on-the-spot survey responses. A breakdown of survey respondents can be found in Appendix C.

Action Inc. created an extended version of the community survey, which contained questions targeted to partner organizations. This survey was distributed to community, public sector, and private sector organizations that partner with Action Inc. (such as Backyard Growers, city officials, and the Gloucester Housing Authority).

For Action Inc.'s internal assessment, two additional SurveyMonkey surveys were created: a staff survey and a Board of Directors survey. These surveys were emailed to staff and Board members on multiple occasions, and Board members received paper copies of the survey at the February Board meeting.

### **FOCUS GROUPS**

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Action Inc. held 12 focus groups as part of this year's community and internal assessment.

Action Inc. facilitated four focus groups composed of Action Inc. customers: a focus group of shelter guests; a focus group of adult education students; a focus group of Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking clients; and a more general focus group of Action Inc. clients representing several different programs.

We conducted three focus groups containing members of community-based organizations and/or members of the public sector: one for members of the Gloucester Police Department; one for

Gloucester Housing Authority staff; and one for Gloucester High Risk Task Force members (which includes representatives from the Gloucester Health Department, Gloucester Police Department, and non-profit organizations such as Learn to Cope). Additionally, we conducted a separate focus group specifically for faith community representatives. We recognized the importance of conducting specific outreach to youth, so we held two focus groups for young adults — one in Gloucester and one in Ipswich. Additional information about focus groups can be found in Appendix B.

This year, we held two Action Inc. staff focus groups as part of our assessment process; one group was composed of direct care staff and one group consisted of staff from all Action Inc. departments. For the latter group, our Director of Human Resources helped identify participants to ensure we had a representative cross section of the agency in attendance. This focus group was facilitated by Nancy Jackson of Gammy Bird Consulting.

## **STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

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Action Inc. staff and Board members conducted 33 stakeholder interviews as part of this year's community assessment. Interviewees represented all five towns in Action Inc.'s CSBG-designated service area. We interviewed elected officials from local and state government; representatives from boards of health, councils on aging, and housing authorities; chiefs of fire and police departments; school superintendents, school nurses, and one school guidance counselor; and representatives from the community and non-profit sector. A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix A.

As part of our internal assessment, staff conducted three additional stakeholder interviews with Action Inc. Board members. We interviewed one Board member who represents the community sector, one who represents the public sector, and one who represents the private sector.

## **RETREAT**

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At the end of April, we held a strategic planning retreat for Action Inc. staff and Board members, which was facilitated by Nancy Jackson of Gammy Bird Consulting. More than 50 people attended the retreat, including staff from all Action Inc. departments and Board members representing the community, public, and private sectors.

At the retreat, we discussed the preliminary results of our community and internal needs assessments — including our customer satisfaction data. We also gathered additional qualitative data and ideas from attendees, which has been incorporated into this strategic plan. Nancy Jackson facilitated a number of small and large group activities to engage attendees and encourage an active exchange of ideas among staff and Board members. We received positive feedback from attendees, who were grateful for the opportunity to discuss Action's mission, vision, and strategic direction with their colleagues.

## **SECONDARY DATA**

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Action Inc. collected and analyzed secondary data from a variety of national, state, and local sources. We relied on secondary data to craft our community profile and to provide context for our community assessment data. A full list of secondary data sources can be found in Appendix D.

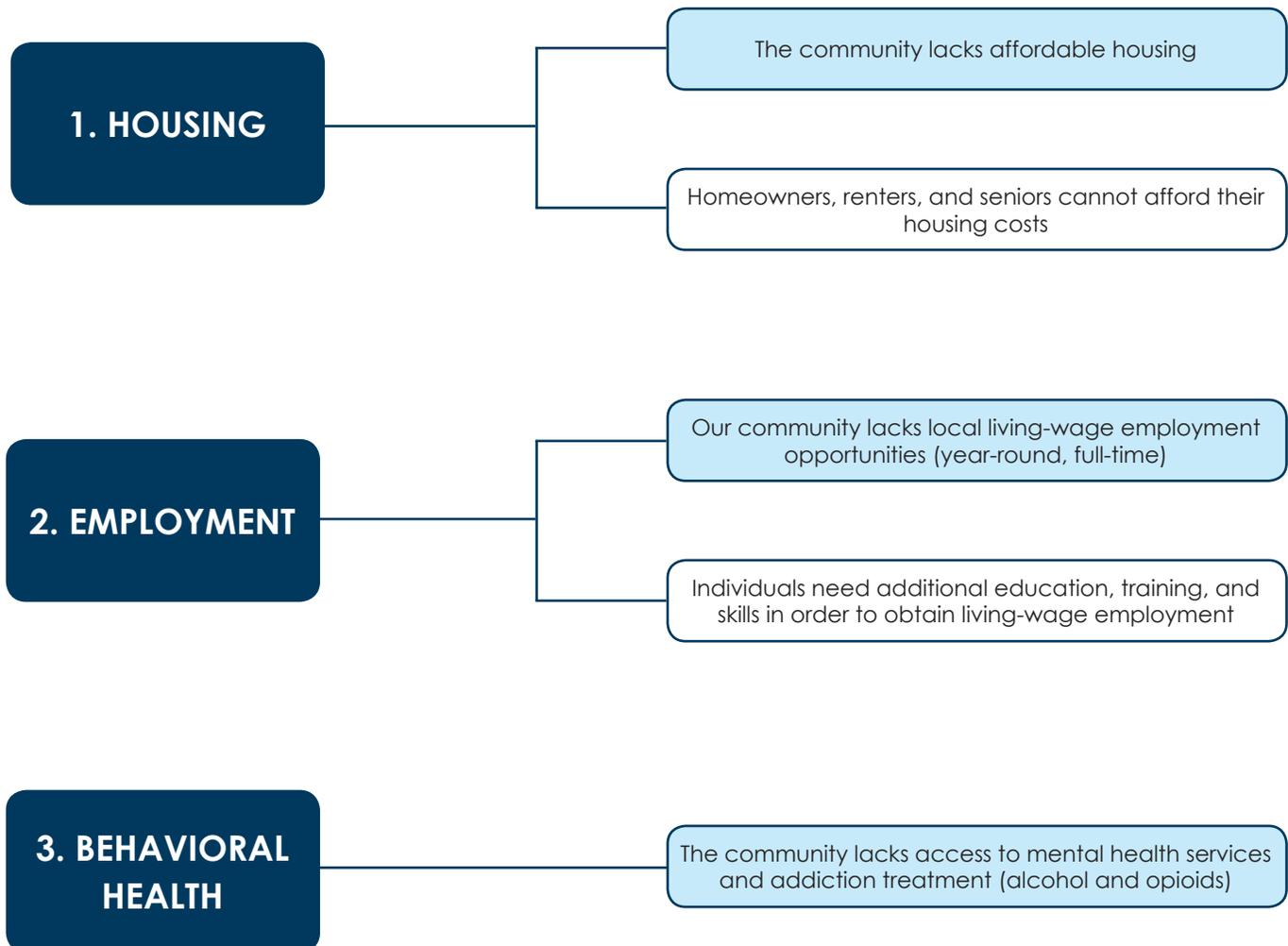
## Section 9 • Key Findings: Community Assessment

Action Inc. conducted an in-depth analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected through our community assessment process. This data revealed strong consensus around the top three needs within our service area, which will be discussed in greater detail on the pages to follow. During the next three years, we will specifically address two of these needs at the community and individual/family levels and will address the third need at the community level, as shown in the chart below.

Community collaboration is a strength of our service area. Action Inc. is currently part of several collaborative initiatives and partnerships that are working to address these top needs. These efforts are discussed in greater detail in Section 11.

### TOP NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN ACTION INC.'S 2017 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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## HOUSING

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For the second consecutive planning cycle, housing emerged as the greatest need in our community.

In Action Inc.'s service area, individuals and families have significant housing needs. Our community survey shows 35 percent of individuals/families cannot afford their housing costs or are homeless. This data is in alignment with American Community Survey data, which indicates that more than a third of renters and homeowners are cost-burdened in several towns served by Action Inc.'s programs (see page 13). The high cost of housing was identified as the biggest barrier preventing individuals and families from securing adequate housing.

Through our assessment, we learned that families and individuals are cost-burdened for a number of reasons. Renters struggle with the up-front costs associated with moving into an apartment, such as security deposits and last month's rent. Renters reported that "it feels like rents are going up" and becoming harder to afford. Homeowners reported burdensome real estate taxes, home heating costs, and home maintenance/repairs. Homeless individuals are unable to find landlords who will rent to them because they lack good credit, appropriate savings, or living-wage incomes. Individuals with subsidized housing vouchers (such as Section 8) are often subject to discrimination, as some landlords will refuse to accept tenants who possess rental vouchers.

Homeowners, renters, and homeless individuals alike agree on one key point: housing is a significant need because the community lacks affordable housing stock.

Key stakeholders in Essex told Action Inc. that their town has only 40 affordable housing units — all of which are reserved for seniors. In Gloucester, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council projects the city will have a shortage of 600 affordable housing units by 2020. Throughout our service area — and the state — individuals and families can remain on public housing waiting lists for years because housing authorities lack sufficient resources to meet the need.

It seems the demand for affordable housing will continue, particularly as baby boomers begin to reach retirement age. Members of the community said our service area needs more affordable housing units that are handicap-accessible and meet the needs of elderly residents. Additionally, our community lacks affordable housing units for families; many properties in our service area contain lead paint, which renders them inappropriate options for families with children. Cape Ann's popularity as a vacation destination has had an impact as well. Out-of-town vacationers and property developers

"There are a few affordable projects under way, but the need is probably greater than ever."

- Interviewee

"The kids who grow up here will not be able to afford to live here."

- Interviewee

continue to turn existing properties into luxury vacation homes, and significant numbers of rental units are reserved for seasonal or vacation use in Ipswich, Rockport, and Gloucester (as discussed on page 13).

Local governments lack the funding they need to develop additional affordable housing, and many developers continue to focus on building market rate or luxury properties rather than affordable housing. It is worth noting that Gloucester, Rockport, and Manchester are attempting to develop additional affordable housing, however progress is often slow — or stopped altogether — due to zoning and siting issues.

"The more wealth that comes into town, the smaller the lower and middle classes [become] and the smaller our voices become."

- Focus group participant

## EMPLOYMENT

For the second consecutive planning cycle, employment is the second greatest need in our community.

Action Inc.'s community survey shows that unemployment and underemployment are significant issues for individuals and families in our service area. Eleven percent of survey respondents were unemployed and seeking employment at the time of the survey, and 23 percent of respondents reported they were "underemployed" or were employed only part time.

There are a number of interrelated community-level and individual/family-level issues that prevent Cape Ann residents from obtaining adequate employment. The chart at right shows the "barriers to employment" that were reported by community survey respondents. Among people who selected "other," a significant number of individuals reported age discrimination as a barrier.

What are your barriers to adequate employment?	Survey responses
Employed but pay doesn't cover living expenses	23%
Physical disability	16%
No transportation	12%
Lack of training or experience	11%
Mental disability	11%
No jobs in my field	9%
Need help finding/ applying for jobs	8%
No childcare during work	8%
Other	3%

The Cape Ann community lacks full-time, year-round, living-wage employment opportunities. As the fishing industry has declined, it has become more challenging for people to find jobs in their fields. There are a number of tourism-related jobs in our region, however these tend to be seasonal and/or part-time opportunities (as discussed on page 14). People often are faced with a difficult decision when they know a job will provide them with just enough income to lose their government benefits (such as food stamps) but will not provide them with enough income to support themselves or their family.

"Tourism jobs are usually seasonal and low paying. These jobs do not pay enough to even afford affordable housing."

- Interviewee

There is a community-level need for more diverse employment opportunities — particularly living-wage jobs for people without advanced educational degrees. Community members recognize that it can be difficult to attract businesses to the Cape Ann area and acknowledge that there are more job opportunities closer to Boston; however, many low-income Cape Ann residents cannot look for jobs closer to Boston (or even elsewhere on Cape Ann) because they lack transportation. For some, public transportation is their only option — but buses stop running after 6 pm, the commuter rail runs infrequently, there are limited taxi options in our service area, and the cost of a train ticket or a taxi can be an insurmountable barrier.

"We need jobs that pay enough so people can live here."

- Survey respondent

During our needs assessment, we also heard from parents who are grappling with the lack of affordable childcare in the region. Some parents are unable to work because their entire salary would end up going toward childcare.

Individuals expressed a need for job training — particularly training that aligns with job opportunities that are available or accessible to people in our service area. There is also a need for job readiness training (i.e., help with interviewing skills and resume preparation).

## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

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For the first time, behavioral health emerged as one of the top three needs in our community.

Behavioral health came up as a top need across all data collected by Action Inc. It was of particular concern to service providers and stakeholders, who mentioned that community members are often hesitant to ask for help with behavioral health issues because of stigma surrounding mental health and addiction. Action Inc. and other organizations across Massachusetts are trying to fight this through the "CEOs Against Stigma" campaign led by NAMI Massachusetts, however there remains more work to be done.

"The addiction issue is being addressed however it is like turning a large ship and will take a long time. I think the best we can hope for [right now] is to stem the tide of substance abuse."

- Interviewee

The community recognizes a need for addiction prevention and treatment programs that will address alcohol abuse and opioid addiction. As mentioned on page 15, the opioid crisis has exploded in recent years — particularly due to the increased popularity of fentanyl. The MA Department of Public Health notes that "the rate of heroin or likely heroin present in opioid-related deaths has been decreasing while the presence of fentanyl has been increasing [and] the number of fentanyl-related deaths continues to increase" statewide. Meanwhile, alcohol abuse continues to be a significant issue in our service area — and one that some community members feel has been ignored as the opioid crisis has grown. Heavy drinking, binge drinking, and alcohol abuse-related hospitalizations are prevalent in our community (as discussed on page 15) and emerged as major concerns in focus groups and interviews.

While there are a number of programs in the region that already address these issues (i.e., the ANGEL Program, Lahey Health Behavioral Services), the existing programs are unable to meet the level of demand. Our community needs more treatment beds, and individuals in the community need better access to transportation so they can travel to treatment programs in other towns. People who have just left treatment programs need dedicated places where they can go to minimize the possibility of relapse — places where they will be surrounded by others who are working on maintaining their sobriety. The Our Place Recovery Safe Space pilot program in Gloucester does meet this community need, however it is only open one day per week. Additionally, several focus groups and interviewees indicated a need for increased drug prevention education for children and more resources for youth who have family members that are struggling with addiction.

"The system is always overwhelmed."

- Focus group participant

Mental health appears to be an increasingly prevalent issue for Cape Ann residents. Among survey respondents reporting barriers to employment, nearly 20 percent reported a mental health disability. In focus groups and interviews, we heard about a community-wide need for more mental health treatment providers — including therapists and psychopharmaceutical prescribers. Many current providers have long wait times or are inaccessible to individuals without personal transportation. Additionally, there seems to be a need for clinicians with specific expertise in dealing with trauma and hoarding disorder, as both of these conditions seem to be on the rise in our community.

"Mental health issues make it very difficult to maintain a regular [work] schedule."

- Survey respondent

## HIGHLIGHTING YOUTH AND OLDER ADULTS

Since Action Inc. has programs that specifically serve youth and older adults, data for these two groups was further analyzed.

According to Action Inc.'s community survey, the top needs among youth are overwhelmingly housing and employment/training (based on responses from individuals under 18 through 23 years old). In focus groups and interviews, we heard about the following additional needs for youth in our community: addiction prevention and treatment; mental health counseling; basic life skills and financial management training (i.e., how to make a budget); and mentoring. We learned that young adults are often unable to obtain housing because they lack credit history and/or sufficient funds to cover the up-front costs associated with renting an apartment (i.e., security deposit, first month's rent, last month's rent).

The top needs among older adults (age 55 and up) are: housing, employment/training, affordable food, health care, and behavioral health. Housing — and affordable senior housing, in particular — emerged as the dominant need among the older population. Members of the community are concerned about meeting the demands of the burgeoning senior population, as the baby boomer generation continues to age (current projections from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council estimate that 43 percent of Gloucester's population will be over age 60 by 2030). The need for affordable senior housing is expected to increase significantly in the coming years.

## Section 10 • Key Findings: Internal Assessment

Action Inc. analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data that we collected during our internal assessment process in order to determine our agency's greatest needs and greatest strengths.

### **ACTION INC.'S STRENGTHS**

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During our internal assessment, we were surprised to see near universal agreement on Action Inc.'s greatest strengths.

Staff and Board members agree that Action Inc.'s greatest strengths are:

- our dedicated, caring staff;
- our strong leadership, including our Board of Directors;
- our commitment to focusing on the needs of the community and our clients;
- our diverse range of services and programs.

For more information on the results of our staff and Board surveys, please see Appendix E.

### **ACTION INC.'S NEEDS**

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Throughout the assessment, we heard that Action Inc. needs to improve its interdepartmental communication. Several major Action Inc. programs are physically separated from the agency's main office, which causes some departments to feel isolated from the rest of the agency. Staff would like to know more about the full range of programs that Action Inc. operates and the goings-on of all the agency's departments.

Several Action Inc. programs are understaffed, particularly Advocacy and HomeCare. There is a significant need for us to build capacity in these departments. Staff from several Action Inc. programs expressed a need for more resources to assist clients with behavioral health conditions. Staff members who do not possess clinical degrees or training are increasingly finding themselves in situations where they need to support clients with behavioral health challenges.

Staff and Board members raised concerns about the impact of possible cuts to federal funding and encouraged Action Inc. to work on diversifying our funding sources.

We heard throughout our internal assessment — and our community assessment, as well — that the community does not know the full range of programs and services that Action Inc. offers. There is a need for more marketing and outreach to ensure that everyone on Cape Ann knows about Action Inc. and our programs.

Both staff and Board members are concerned about Action Inc.'s ability to successfully meet community needs when housing is a top need and there is a lack of affordable housing in our area.

## Section 11 • Strategic Three Year Goals

During the next three years, Action Inc. intends to address the top needs that we identified through our community and internal assessments (discussed in Sections 9 and 10). We have set eight strategic agency-wide goals to address these critical needs. These goals will guide our efforts from 2018 to 2020 and will ensure that we remain focused on achieving our mission.

### **ACTION INC.'S GOALS FOR 2018–2020**

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<b>GOAL #1</b>	Increase access to affordable housing in the community
<b>GOAL #2</b>	Assist individuals with gaining stability and achieving economic security through the provision of housing and services
<b>GOAL #3</b>	Increase access to living-wage employment in the community
<b>GOAL #4</b>	Assist individuals with gaining skills and obtaining employment by providing education and training programs
<b>GOAL #5</b>	Increase access to behavioral health treatment and supports in the community
<b>GOAL #6</b>	Increase interdepartmental communication
<b>GOAL #7</b>	Increase community awareness of agency programming
<b>GOAL #8</b>	Increase agency capacity

### **SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

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Action Inc. will work toward achieving the goals listed above through our existing programs, through new initiatives, and through partnerships with other agencies in our service area. All services are delivered by our five core departments: Client & Housing Services, Riley Education & Training Center, Energy Services, HomeCare, and Administration.

#### **CLIENT & HOUSING SERVICES**

Action Inc.'s Client & Housing Services department offers programs and services that address the underlying causes of poverty and homelessness. Our advocates, case managers, and other direct care staff work with clients to identify their individual needs and barriers to self-sufficiency. We help our clients find stability by connecting them to resources and services — whether they need a number to call for help, a meal at our shelter, or a permanent place to call home.

Our Client & Housing Services department includes the following programs:

- Advocacy
- Affordable Housing (includes Harbor Village project)
- Emergency Homeless Shelter
- Housing First
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Tenant-Based Rental/Mortgage Assistance

## **RILEY EDUCATION & TRAINING CENTER**

Action Inc.'s Riley Education & Training Center offers programs that help youth and adults gain the skills and education they need to obtain living-wage employment. We work with youth who have struggled to learn in the public school system and with unemployed or underemployed adults who want to gain new skills and find better jobs. In all our programs, we provide a supportive environment where we inspire our students to do their best — whether that may be passing the High School Equivalency Test, going to college, gaining job-specific skills, or finding full-time employment.

Our Riley Education & Training Center includes the following programs:

- Adult Education
- Career Services
- Healthcare Career Training
- Youth HiSET Preparation

## **ENERGY SERVICES**

Action Inc.'s award-winning Energy Services department offers programs that help keep people warm in their homes and reduce their energy costs. We assist low-income individuals and families with paying their heat and utility bills, and we bring those bills down over time by making energy-saving improvements to homes throughout the state. We partner with contractors and vendors, providing a source of local living-wage jobs. Additionally, Action Inc.'s Vice President for Energy Services participates in a number of regional, statewide, and national groups that advocate for energy affordability.

Our Energy Services department includes the following programs:

- Energy Conservation
- Fuel Assistance

## **HOMECARE**

Action Inc.'s HomeCare department provides services that help people continue living in the comfort of their own homes for as long as possible. Our HomeCare program is staffed with a team of healthcare professionals who provide personal care, companion, and Home Health Aide services to seniors and disabled adults so they can remain stable, which reduces the amount of time they need to spend in hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities. Additionally, our HomeCare program is a source

of local employment for previously unemployed and underemployed low-income individuals. We employ more than 70 workers and provide them with a living wage, benefits, and training that opens the door for career advancement opportunities.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Action Inc. has a robust Administration department that operates additional agency-wide initiatives that address poverty and related issues in our community. Our Administration department organizes donation drives, including our annual holiday toy and clothing drive for children from economically disadvantaged families. For the past several years, we have taken on a more active role in addressing substance use within our community. We partnered with Healthy Gloucester Collaborative to operate the Our Place Recovery Safe Space pilot program and provided seed funding for Ipswich Aware, a collaborative initiative dedicated to tackling substance use in Ipswich.

## **LINKAGES**

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As a Community Action Agency, we are dedicated to identifying community needs and helping meet those needs by providing services ourselves, by collaborating with our partners, and by making referrals to other agencies to address certain issues. Through partnerships and referrals, we leverage the existing resources within our community and strengthen the community as a whole.

Action Inc. employees are active members of a number of local, regional, and statewide groups — from the City of Gloucester High Risk Task Force to the North Shore Workforce Investment Board to the Low-Income Energy Affordability Network — to ensure we are connected to other social service providers and government agencies. We work collaboratively with these groups to serve our target population, advocate for resources, and ensure we are not duplicating services that already exist in the community.

In Section 12, we have included details about specific linkages that are critical to our programmatic initiatives. A full list of the wonderful groups we worked with in Fiscal Year 2017 — and anticipate continuing to work with over the next three years — can be found in Appendix F.

## **SERVICE GAPS**

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Action Inc. has a history of building strong partnerships to fill service gaps in our programs and in our community. As mentioned above, we rely on referrals to other agencies to meet particular needs. In the most recent fiscal year, our advocates alone made more than 3,000 referrals to non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, government agencies, and healthcare providers. In some instances, we have integrated other providers into our programs so we can offer more comprehensive services to our clients while they are at our sites. For example, we partnered with North Shore Community Health to bring health care services to our shelter rather than attempt to provide these services ourselves.

During the next three years, we intend to continue leveraging our partners' expertise to meet the housing, employment, and behavioral health needs that we have identified. In Section 12, we have identified a number of specific areas where we anticipate coordinating with others to address these issues. A full list of anticipated partners can be found in Appendix F.

## **FUNDING STRATEGIES**

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Action Inc.'s core funding comes from the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG), which is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Our CSBG contract designates us as a Community Action Agency (CAA), and it is this funding that allows us to be flexible and innovative in order to meet a broad and evolving set of needs specific to the communities we serve.

To supplement our CSBG funding, we leverage a number of other contracts we have with local, state, and federal government agencies. This includes funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE); the City of Gloucester; and the Town of Rockport. More information on our funding strategies can be found in Section 12.

Action Inc. is unique among most CAAs in that it serves as a lead contractor for utility corporation National Grid, which trusts Action Inc. to manage many millions of dollars' worth of energy conservation projects on residential units and developments throughout Massachusetts. In this role, Action Inc. serves as the lead agency overseeing more than 20 other CAAs across the state.

We raise additional funds through private foundation grants, individual donors, and fundraising events. While government and corporate contracts make up the majority of our funding, the relatively small amount of support we receive through private foundations, local businesses, and individual donors is absolutely crucial to the work we do. Most of our funding is restricted to specific initiatives, and each of Action Inc.'s departments aims to operate independently with sustainable funding support. While some programs have very large budgets and largely reliable support, others operate on very small budgets where every dollar truly makes an impact.

## Section 12 • Specific Objectives

The specific objectives outlined in this section will guide Action Inc.'s efforts to achieve the goals that were listed in Section 11.

It should be noted that our ability to achieve our goals is contingent upon renewal of all our existing public contracts. When setting our goals and specific objectives, we have made the assumption that we will receive level funding. We recognize that we may be required to change our goals and objectives if we receive less funding from our core public contracts.

### GOAL #1: Increase access to affordable housing in the community

#### OBJECTIVE #1: Develop 30 units of affordable housing in downtown Gloucester through the Harbor Village project

<b>FY 2018</b>	Secure funding commitments
<b>FY 2019</b>	Begin construction
<b>FY 2020</b>	Complete construction and lease up units
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Partner with North Shore Community Development Coalition for this project to leverage their experience in developing affordable housing and in neighborhood revitalization</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Leverage Action Inc. general funds and funding from public funding sources, including DHCD and the Gloucester Community Preservation Committee</i>

#### OBJECTIVE #2: Increase the affordability of housing units in the community through Energy Conservation initiatives

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Improve 300 housing units per year in 1-4 unit buildings through weatherization and other energy conservation measures in order to maintain or increase housing affordability (dependent upon renewal of contract and receipt of level funding)
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Improve 10,000 housing units per year in multi-family buildings through weatherization and other energy conservation measures in order to maintain or increase housing affordability (dependent upon renewal of contract and receipt of level funding)
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Investigate feasibility of advocating for increased income limit for weatherization eligibility (to bring weatherization income guidelines in alignment with HUD income guidelines)
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Pursue funding that would make Healthy Homes investments feasible
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Continue research into new energy efficiency technologies and additional cost-effective energy efficiency improvements (i.e., air-source heat pumps, dehumidifiers)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Hire local contractors to complete weatherization improvements, work with other CAAs on energy advocacy</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Leverage funds from DHCD and National Grid</i>

## GOAL #1, continued

### OBJECTIVE #3: Pursue opportunities to develop additional affordable housing

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Seek opportunities to privately invest in affordable housing properties by being attentive to local real estate market
<b>Linkages</b>	Work with local real estate agent (and general contractors, as needed)
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	Leverage Action Inc. general funds and pursue additional public and/or private grants

### OBJECTIVE #4: Strengthen relationships and increase number of relationships with local landlords by educating landlords on the benefits of renting to our clients

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Lead one landlord education workshop per year
<b>Linkages</b>	Connect with and conduct outreach to local landlords
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	Utilize CSBG funds

## GOAL #2: Assist individuals with gaining stability and achieving economic security through the provision of housing and services

### OBJECTIVE #1: Assist disabled adults and seniors with obtaining and maintaining affordable housing or an independent living situation

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Provide 32 formerly homeless individuals with permanent housing and supportive case management each year through our Housing First program
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Provide 300 adults per year with Home Health Aide, personal care, homemaker, and companion services through our HomeCare program
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Provide 26 individuals with permanent housing and supportive services each year through our Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Provide 30 individuals with access to nutrition services/support each year through HOPWA
<b>Linkages</b>	Coordinate with other social service providers through case management, referrals, and partnerships
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	Leverage funds from public sources (HUD, DHCD), private non-profit sources, private foundation sources, and individual donors

## GOAL #2, continued

### OBJECTIVE #2: Assist low-income adults with maintaining housing and achieving economic security

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Provide 1,185 clients per year with benefits coordination, rental assistance, SNAP certification assistance, housing advocacy, referrals, etc. through our Advocacy program
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Provide 25 clients per year with rent or mortgage assistance and assist clients with budgeting through our Tenant-Based Rental/Mortgage Assistance program
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Provide fuel assistance to 1,550 households per year to reduce energy burdens and improve economic security
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with social service providers through case management, referrals, and partnerships; work with existing local fuel vendors</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and leverage other funds from DHCD, City of Gloucester, Town of Rockport</i>

### OBJECTIVE #3: Educate low-income community members on housing, benefits, financial literacy, and other related topics to assist with achieving economic security

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Lead three workshops per year on topics such as tenant rights, "Benefits 101," etc.
<b>FY 2018</b>	Assess feasibility of organizing a financial literacy workshop, develop necessary partnership(s)
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Deliver one financial literacy workshop per year
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with local bank(s) to lead financial literacy workshops</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds</i>

### OBJECTIVE #4: Support homeless individuals with obtaining housing, accessing health care and behavioral health services, obtaining employment, and gaining stability

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Serve 250 homeless individuals each year at the Action Inc. Emergency Homeless Shelter
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with social service providers through case management, referrals, and partnerships; contract with Eliot Community Human Services and North Shore Community Health to bring additional services to the shelter; work with faith communities to provide meals; work with Gloucester Police Department to maintain safe shelter environment</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Leverage funds from DHCD, private foundation sources, and individual donors</i>

## GOAL #3: Increase access to living-wage employment in the community

### OBJECTIVE #1: Increase outreach and credentialing efforts to promote Action Inc.'s HomeCare program as a source of local living-wage jobs

<b>FY 2018</b>	Pursue funding to cover costs associated with training new employees
<b>FY 2018</b>	Identify cost-effective, creative ways to advertise for HomeCare positions and develop outreach strategy
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Offer in-house trainings to credential existing and new HomeCare employees
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Implement outreach strategy to attract additional staff
<b>Linkages</b>	Access training provided by UMass Medical School in conjunction with the Home Care Aide Council
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	Raise funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions

### OBJECTIVE #2: Increase partnership with Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce to foster better relationships and integration within local business community

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Develop strategy to increase partnership and involvement with the Chamber
<b>Linkages</b>	Connect with Chamber of Commerce and local business community
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	Utilize Action Inc. general funds

## GOAL #4: Assist individuals with gaining skills and obtaining employment by providing education and training programs

### OBJECTIVE #1: Support youth and adults with earning a high school diploma or passing the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET)

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Serve 25 out-of-school youth per year through the Youth HiSET Preparation program
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Serve 48 adult students per year through the Adult Education program
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Explore feasibility of offering credit recovery for Gloucester High School students at Action Inc.
<b>Linkages</b>	Coordinate with other social service providers through case management and referrals to other agencies; coordinate with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to provide support of an on-site counselor; work with local employers for internship and job placements; partner with North Shore Community College and other educational institutions
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	Leverage funding from North Shore Workforce Investment Board, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, City of Gloucester, and private foundations

## GOAL #4, continued

### OBJECTIVE #2: Provide Nurse Aide trainings at Action Inc.'s Riley Education & Training Center

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Offer two Nurse Aide trainings per year to prepare students for taking the American Red Cross' Nurse Aide Competency Evaluation test for certification
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with Seacoast Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Den-Mar Health &amp; Rehabilitation Center to offer training course</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Leverage funds from the City of Gloucester and raise funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions</i>

### OBJECTIVE #3: Develop and pilot additional vocational training programs that will prepare students for living-wage jobs

<b>FY 2018</b>	Build relationships and pursue funding to pilot a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program; develop partnerships with local agencies such as Pathways for Children and CATA to place graduates with local employers
<b>FY 2018</b>	Investigate feasibility of ServSafe Food Handler certification program and the local need for employees with this certification; develop partnerships with local agencies/hospitality industry to administer training and place graduates with local employers
<b>FY 2018</b>	Explore possibility of partnering with Essex Technical High School to increase access to vocational training
<b>FY 2019</b>	Pilot CDL program (possible in 2018, depending upon receipt of funding)
<b>FY 2019</b>	Pilot ServSafe Food Handler certification program
<b>FY 2020</b>	Fully implement CDL program
<b>FY 2020</b>	Fully implement ServSafe Food Handler certification program
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with local employers to launch training and assist with job placements; connect with social service providers that have developed similar programs to learn from their experiences</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and raise funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions</i>

## GOAL #5: Increase access to behavioral health treatment and supports in the community

### OBJECTIVE #1: Offer support groups for youth and young adults at Action Inc.'s Riley Education & Training Center

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Partner with Children's Friend & Family Services to lead five support groups per year for youth and young adults, addressing topics such as emotion regulation, coping skills, and substance use disorder (dependent upon receipt of funding)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Partner with Children's Friend &amp; Family Services to leverage their experience in providing therapy and support groups to young adults</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and raise funds through private foundation grants and/or individual donations</i>

### OBJECTIVE #2: Revitalize Action Inc.'s youth day programming by developing supportive drop-in center for out-of-school and at-risk youth

<b>FY 2018</b>	Pursue funding to develop drop-in center for at-risk youth and expand available supportive services
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Develop and implement program (dependent upon receipt of funding)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Connect with social service providers that have developed similar programs to learn from their experiences</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Raise funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions</i>

### OBJECTIVE #3: Address substance use disorder and mental health needs through partnerships with other local agencies

<b>FY 2018</b>	Continue to partner with Healthy Gloucester Collaborative to provide two Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings per week; pursue funding to increase the number of meetings
<b>FY 2018</b>	Explore feasibility of bringing Alateen groups to Cape Ann
<b>FY 2018</b>	Explore possibility of partnership with Eliot Community Human Services' Danvers clinic to provide increased access to mental health services for low-income Cape Ann residents
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Continue collaborating with Healthy Gloucester Collaborative to provide the Our Place Recovery Safe Space and work together to expand this program
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Provide at least three AA meetings per week (dependent upon receipt of funding)
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Explore partnerships with other behavioral health providers (dependent upon feasibility of partnership with Eliot)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with social service providers, faith-based organizations, clinicians, and public agencies through partnerships and collective impact initiatives</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Leverage funds from the City of Gloucester and private foundation sources; raise funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions</i>

## GOAL #6: Increase interdepartmental communication

### OBJECTIVE #1: Formalize interdepartmental communication about programs, events, and accomplishments through the publication of an internal agency-wide newsletter

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Develop and implement bi-monthly electronic newsletter
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with partners, training providers to learn about resources and events (communicate this information to staff via newsletter)</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and Action Inc. general funds</i>

### OBJECTIVE #2: Improve data management systems and/or procedures to address issues relating to interdepartmental communication of client-level data

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Investigate data sharing policies and other data management systems that would improve data sharing among departments; implement improved data management systems and/or policies
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with other CAAs to learn from their experiences</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and Action Inc. general funds</i>

### OBJECTIVE #3: Create additional opportunities to bring staff together and strengthen interdepartmental staff relationships

<b>FY 2018</b>	Determine how staff can be involved with planning social events and plan one additional staff social event
<b>FY 2018</b>	Explore feasibility of having each department host a "coffee hour" once per year
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Plan at least one additional social event per year
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Implement departmental "coffee hour" (dependent upon results of feasibility assessment)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with community partners to plan events (i.e., Cape Ann Community Cinema, Cape Ann Lanes)</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and Action Inc. general funds</i>

## GOAL #7: Increase community awareness of agency programming

### OBJECTIVE #1: Invite the community to see Action Inc.'s work at a community-wide Open House

<b>FY 2018</b>	Explore feasibility of planning an annual Open House for the community
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Formalize and implement annual Open House event
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with local media outlets, community groups, and social service partners</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and Action Inc. general funds</i>

## GOAL #7, continued

### OBJECTIVE #2: Increase outreach and marketing efforts for Energy programs to address under-enrollment issues

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Conduct outreach at three new events/locations per year
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Work with National Grid to contact clients who are eligible for our energy programs and are not accessing them
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with local partners and participate in community events</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Leverage funds from DHCD and National Grid</i>

### OBJECTIVE #3: Develop digital marketing strategy to increase community awareness and share more client stories

<b>FY 2018</b>	Implement new digital marketing strategy, which will include increased coordination with local media outlets and the creation of new content for our website (website redesign should be completed end of FY 2017)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with local media outlets and community groups</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and Action Inc. general funds</i>

## GOAL #8: Increase agency capacity

### OBJECTIVE #1: Increase outreach and advertising process to attract more applicants for HomeCare positions

<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Investigate cost-effective, creative ways to advertise for HomeCare positions
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Seek funding to cover required training for new employees
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Access training provided by UMass Medical School and the Home Care Aide Council</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds, raise additional funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions</i>

### OBJECTIVE #2: Increase number of credentialed HomeCare employees to meet the higher level of care that some seniors and disabled people require

<b>FY 2018</b>	Nurse Supervisor completes training requirements so she can certify staff as Home Health Aides (HHAs) or Personal Care Homemakers (PCs)
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Nurse Supervisor offers additional trainings to certify more people as HHAs and PCs
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Access training provided by UMass Medical School and the Home Care Aide Council</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds, raise additional funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions</i>

## GOAL #8, continued

### OBJECTIVE #3: Expand Advocacy department capacity by hiring additional staff to meet client need

<b>FY 2018</b>	Pursue funding to hire one additional full-time advocate, as well as one part-time advocate who would address crisis situations and provide triage services
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Increase presence at satellite offices in Rockport and/or Ipswich (dependent upon receipt of funding in 2018)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with local Rockport and Ipswich partners (dependent upon receipt of funding in 2018)</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds, raise additional funds through private foundation grants and/or individual contributions</i>

### OBJECTIVE #4: Develop more robust training resources to support Action Inc.'s staff

<b>FY 2018</b>	Create plans to offer annual staff-wide training on universal topic (i.e., stress reduction) and a behavioral health training curriculum so staff can better support their clients
<b>FY 2019 – 2020</b>	Implement plan for new staff trainings (implementation may occur in 2018 depending upon timing)
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with training providers and local partners; leverage clinical partners' expertise for behavioral health training curriculum</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds, raise additional funds through public/private grants, and leverage existing public/private grants received by Action Inc. that contain training allocations</i>

### OBJECTIVE #5: Increase fundraising efforts to increase revenue and diversify funding sources

<b>FY 2018</b>	Develop and implement one new fundraising campaign
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Formalize annual fundraising event and grow net funds raised by 10 percent each year
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Increase donor stewardship efforts to achieve a 5 percent annual increase in total funds raised through donations
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Build relationships with new funders and increase number of grant proposals submitted each year to increase revenue from private grants by 10 percent each year
<b>FY 2018 – 2020</b>	Explore feasibility of implementing additional fundraising campaigns and developing additional revenue streams for the agency
<b>Linkages</b>	<i>Coordinate with corporate and community partners</i>
<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<i>Utilize CSBG funds and raise additional funds through private foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual contributions</i>

## **Section 13** • *Plan Monitoring and Reporting*

Action Inc. will monitor progress toward achieving these strategic goals on an ongoing basis throughout the next three years.

The Director of Marketing and Planning and the Planning Coordinator have monthly meetings with several Action Inc. departments to discuss grant writing, marketing, and required CSBG reporting. These meetings offer an opportunity to evaluate strategic plan implementation throughout the year.

Each year, the Planning Coordinator will work closely with the heads of each department to translate our strategic goals and specific objectives into our agency's Community Action Plan. They will monitor progress toward achieving these objectives in March and September of each year. The Planning Coordinator will submit semi-annual and annual progress reports to DHCD in April and October respectively.

After these reports have been submitted, the Planning Coordinator will prepare reports for the Board of Directors, evaluating implementation of our strategic plan. These reports will be shared with the Board at the April and October Board meetings, providing our Board members with an opportunity to actively participate in monitoring and evaluating our progress toward achieving our strategic goals.

## Appendix A • Stakeholder Interviews

The list below includes the name and affiliation of each person who participated in a stakeholder interview during our community and internal assessment process. (Action Inc. Board members are noted with an asterisk.)

<b>Beverly Low</b> , Manchester Essex Regional Middle High School
<b>Brendhan Zubricki</b> , Town of Essex
<b>Chief Edward Conley</b> , Manchester-by-the-Sea Police Department
<b>Chief Gregory Gagnon</b> , Ipswich Fire Department
<b>Chief John Horvath</b> , Rockport Police Department
<b>Chief John McCarthy</b> , Gloucester Police Department
<b>Chief Paul Nikas</b> , Ipswich Police Department
<b>Chief Peter Silva</b> , Essex Police Department
<b>David Clark</b> , Ipswich Aware
<b>David Houlden</b> , Gloucester Housing Authority & Rockport Housing Authority
<b>Dawn Gross</b> , Harborlight Community Partners
<b>Diane Bertolino</b> , Rockport Council on Aging
<b>Dr. Richard Safier</b> , Gloucester Public Schools
<b>Erin Kirchner</b> , Essex Board of Health
<b>*Gavin Keenan</b> , Action Inc. Board of Directors (Private Sector Representative)
<b>Gregory Federspiel</b> , Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea
<b>Irene Frontiero</b> , Manchester Housing Authority & Essex Housing Authority
<b>Jack Reed</b> , Rockport Rotary
<b>Jeanne Pratt</b> , Rockport High/Middle School
<b>Joan Whitney</b> , Healthy Gloucester Collaborative
<b>Karin Carroll</b> , Gloucester Health Department
<b>Kate McGuire</b> , Ipswich Housing Authority
<b>Kate VanDemark</b> , Rockport Senior Citizens' Activist

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**\*Kathy Stewart**, Action Inc. Board of Directors (Community Sector Representative)

**Kristin Crockett**, Essex Senior Center / Council on Aging

**\*Linda Giamanco**, Action Inc. Board of Directors (Public Sector Representative)

**Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken**, City of Gloucester

**Nancy Hammond**, Manchester-by-the-Sea Council on Aging

**Patricia Brown**, Town of Rockport

**Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante**, Massachusetts House of Representatives

**Rob Liebow**, Rockport Public Schools

**Robert Visnick**, Town of Rockport

**Robin Crosbie**, Town of Ipswich

**Sarah Sawyer**, Rockport Elementary School

**Senator Bruce Tarr**, Massachusetts Senate

**Toby Arsenian**, Rockport Community Member

## Appendix B • Focus Groups

The list below includes information about the 12 focus groups that were held during our community and internal assessment process. (Groups that contained low-income individuals are noted with an asterisk.)

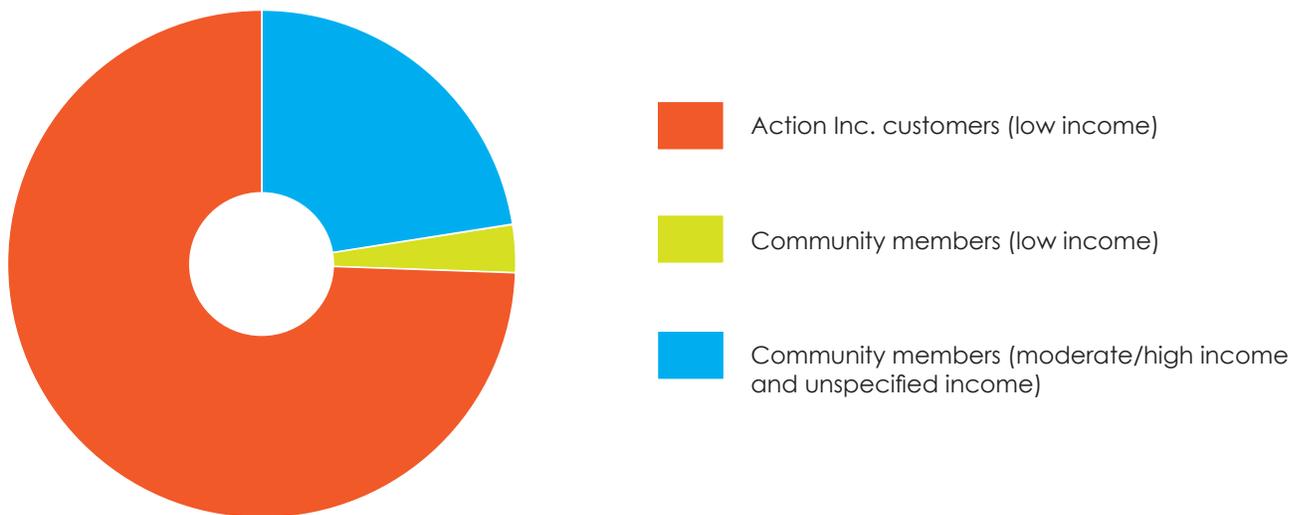
*Guests at Action Inc.'s emergency homeless shelter
*Adult Education students
*Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking clients
*Action Inc. clients representing several different programs
Members of the Gloucester Police Department
Gloucester Housing Authority staff
Gloucester High Risk Task Force members (included representatives from the Gloucester Health Department, Gloucester Police Department, and Learn to Cope)
Faith-based organizations (included representatives from Orthodox Congregational Church in Lanesville, Gloucester Assembly of God, First Congregational Church of Rockport, Cape Ann Interfaith Commission, and Grace Center)
Young adults in Gloucester
Young adults in Ipswich
Action Inc. direct care staff
Action Inc. staff representing all departments at the agency

## Appendix C • Community Assessment Surveys

Action Inc. surveyed clients and community members as part of our community assessment process. We distributed surveys broadly throughout our service area, as explained in Section 8.

We received 624 responses to our community survey. Of those, 465 were submitted by individuals or families who have accessed Action Inc.'s services and are therefore assumed to be low-income individuals (75 percent of respondents). We received an additional 20 surveys from individuals or families who have not accessed Action Inc.'s services and who we know to be low income based on their responses to the survey (3 percent of respondents). We had a significant number of respondents leave the household income question blank and assume many of these respondents may also be low income.

### **BREAKDOWN OF 624 SURVEY RESPONDENTS**



Data collected from low-income community members and Action Inc. clients was incorporated into the analysis contained within Section 9. It is worth noting that housing, employment, and behavioral health (in that order) were identified as top needs among low-income survey respondents, which is consistent with the results of our overall community assessment.

## Appendix D • Secondary Data Sources

Action Inc. collected and analyzed data from the secondary data sources listed below as part of our community assessment.

<b>NATIONAL DATA SOURCES</b>
KIDS COUNT Data Center (A Project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation)
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute's County Health Rankings & Roadmaps
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (via The CBHSQ Report)
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Projections 2014 – 2024
U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2011 – 2015
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2006 – 2010
<a href="http://www.city-data.com">www.city-data.com</a>
<b>STATE-LEVEL DATA SOURCES</b>
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School and District Profiles
Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Current Statistics (regarding the opioid crisis)
<b>LOCAL DATA SOURCES</b>
Beverly Hospital and Addison Gilbert Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment 2016
City of Gloucester Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Plan 2015 – 2019
City of Gloucester Health Department Strategic Plan 2017
Metropolitan Area Planning Council's Gloucester Housing Production Plan (February 2017 Draft)

## Appendix E • Internal Assessment Surveys

Action Inc. surveyed staff and Board of Directors members as part of our internal assessment process. These surveys included sections where staff and Board members were asked to agree or disagree with certain statements about the agency. The results to these questions are included below and are summarized in Section 10.

### STAFF SURVEY

<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING 95-100% “AGREE” RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
<b>Action Inc. clients are treated in a respectful and caring manner.</b>	100%	0%	0%
<b>I feel proud to work at Action Inc.</b>	100%	0%	0%
<b>I am satisfied with my role at Action Inc.</b>	98%	2%	0%
<b>I enjoy Action Inc.’s work culture.</b>	96%	4%	0%
<b>I have a clear understanding of Action Inc.’s mission.</b>	96%	4%	0%
<b>I feel confident in Action Inc.’s leadership.</b>	96%	2%	2%
<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING 90-94% “AGREE” RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
<b>I have a clear understanding of Action Inc.’s goals.</b>	94%	6%	0%
<b>The services Action Inc. provides meet the needs of our clients.</b>	94%	6%	0%
<b>I feel informed about Action Inc.’s policies and procedures.</b>	92%	8%	0%
<b>I understand what is expected of me by Action Inc./my supervisor.</b>	92%	6%	2%
<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING 85-89% “AGREE” RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
<b>I receive the training and supervision I need to do my job well.</b>	88%	10%	2%
<b>Action Inc.’s organizational structure makes sense.</b>	88%	10%	2%
<b>Communication between staff and managers is effective.</b>	86%	12%	2%
<b>I am satisfied with the benefits available to Action Inc. employees.</b>	86%	14%	0%

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<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING 80-84% "AGREE" RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
Career growth opportunities exist for Action Inc. employees.	84%	16%	0%
The amount of work expected of me is reasonable.	84%	14%	2%
The morale in my department is high.	82%	18%	0%
I feel informed about Action Inc.'s programs and services.	80%	16%	4%
Communication between administration and programs is effective.	80%	20%	0%
<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING LESS THAN 80% "AGREE" RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
I feel that I am fairly paid for my work at Action Inc.	75%	20%	6%
I feel informed about the Community Action Network and how federal, state, and local issues impact the agency and its clients.	69%	31%	0%

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS SURVEY**

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<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING 95-100% "AGREE" RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
I have a clear understanding of Action Inc.'s mission.	100%	0%	0%
I have a clear understanding of Action Inc.'s goals.	100%	0%	0%
I feel informed about Action Inc.'s programs and services.	100%	0%	0%
I am satisfied with my role on Action Inc.'s Board of Directors.	100%	0%	0%
I feel confident in Action Inc.'s leadership.	100%	0%	0%
Communication between Board members and staff is effective.	100%	0%	0%
I understand what is expected of me as a Board member.	100%	0%	0%
I feel proud to be on Action Inc.'s Board of Directors.	100%	0%	0%

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<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING 90-94% "AGREE" RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
<b>I feel informed about Action Inc.'s policies and procedures.</b>	91%	9%	0%
<b>I understand Action Inc.'s budget and funding strategy.</b>	91%	9%	0%
<b>I feel informed about the Community Action Network and how federal, state, and local issues impact the agency and its clients.</b>	91%	9%	0%
<b>The orientation and training I received prepared me to be an effective Board member.</b>	91%	9%	0%
<b>Action Inc.'s organizational structure functions effectively.</b>	91%	9%	0%
<b>QUESTIONS RECEIVING LESS THAN 90% "AGREE" RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
<b>The services Action Inc. provides meet the needs of our clients.</b>	73%	27%	0%

## Appendix F • Linkages

The tables in this section include our formal and informal partnerships for Fiscal Year 2017. We anticipate continuing to work with these partners — and more — over the next three years.

<b>FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS AS OF FISCAL YEAR 2017</b>		
Action for Boston Community Development	Gloucester Community Preservation Committee	North Shore Continuum of Care Homeless Services Consortium
Berkshire Community Action Council	Gloucester Housing Authority	North Shore Workforce Investment Board
Bridging Peace Fund of Tides Foundation	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council	Quincy Community Action Programs
Cape Ann Art Haven	Healthy Gloucester Collaborative	Sailors Snug Harbor of Boston
Children's Friend & Family Services	Housing Assistance Corporation	Seacoast Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
Citizens for Citizens	Ipswich Aware	Self Help, Inc.
City of Gloucester	Low-Income Energy Affordability Network	Senior Care
City of Rockport	Lynn Economic Opportunity	South Middlesex Opportunity Council
Commonwealth Care Alliance	MA Clean Energy Center	South Shore Community Action Council
Community Action of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions	MA Department of Housing and Community Development	Springfield Partners for Community Action
Community Action Programs of Inter-City, Inc.	Massachusetts Commission for the Blind	St. John's Episcopal Church
Community Action Inc.	Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance	U.S. Department of Energy
Community Teamwork, Inc.	Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Den-Mar Health & Rehabilitation Center	Menotomy Weatherization	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Edward S. & Winifred G. Moseley Foundation	Montachusett Opportunity Council	Valley Opportunity Council
Element Care	National Grid	Wellspring House
Eliot Community Human Services	North Shore Community Action Programs	Worcester Community Action Council
Food and Fuel Fund	North Shore Community Development Coalition	

## **INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS AS OF FISCAL YEAR 2017**

Accord Food Pantry	Independent Living Center of the North Shore	New England ISO
Annisquam Village Church	Invest in People	North Shore Career Center
Babson-Webber-Mustard Fund	Ipswich Caring	North Shore Community Action Programs
Backyard Growers	Ipswich High School	North Shore Community College
Beverly and Addison Gilbert Hospitals	Ipswich Housing Authority	North Shore Health Project
Beverly Bootstraps	Lahey Health Behavioral Services	North Shore Housing Action Group
Beverly Housing Authority	Lynn Economic Opportunity	Open Door Food Pantry
Cape Ann Interfaith Commission	Lynn Housing Authority	Pathways for Children
Cape Ann Motor Inn	Lynn Shelter Association	Riverdale Methodist Church
Catholic Charities	MA Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs	Rockport Community Preservation Committee
Element Care	MA Department of Mental Health	Rockport Council on Aging
Emmaus	MA Department of Transitional Assistance	Rockport High School
Essex County Bar Association	MA Department of Veterans' Services	Rockport Housing Authority
Essex Housing Authority	MA Energy Director's Association	Salem State University
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Manchester Essex Regional High School	Shaw Fund for Mariner's Children
Gloucester Department of Public Health	Manchester Housing Authority	St. John's Episcopal Church
Gloucester District Court	Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless	St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Gloucester Family Health Center/North Shore Community Health	Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission	St. Paul Lutheran Church
Gloucester Fire Department	MassHousing	St. Vincent DePaul
Gloucester High Risk Task Force	Mission of Deeds – Reading	Strongest Link – Cornerstone
Gloucester High School	Moore's Way	The Low Income Peer Exchange
Gloucester Housing Authority	National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners	The Salvation Army
Gloucester Police Department	National Association of State Consumer Advocates	Wellspring House
Good Friday Walk	National Energy Assistance Director's Association	Women, Infants, and Children
Grace Center	Neighborhood Legal Services	YMCA
Holy Family Parish		

## Appendix G • Acknowledgements

This Community Assessment Report & Strategic Plan was made possible thanks to the hard work of Action Inc.'s 2017 Strategic Planning Committee.

<b>2017 STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: BOARD REPRESENTATION</b>	
<b>Private Sector</b>	Troy Sullivan
<b>Public Sector</b>	Linda Giamanco
	Roger Lesch
<b>Community Sector</b>	Katherine Dench
	Tone Kenney
	Linda Murphy
	Loretta Peres
<b>2017 STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: AGENCY REPRESENTATION</b>	
<b>Leadership</b>	Peggy Hegarty-Steck, President & Executive Director
	Maggie Howard, Deputy Director
<b>Client Services</b>	Cheryl De Primio, Client Services Coordinator
<b>Housing Services</b>	Jennifer Beloff, Director of Client & Housing Services
<b>Shelter</b>	Melissa Lezynski, Shelter Manager
<b>Energy Conservation</b>	Louis Silveira, Information Technology Coordinator
<b>Fuel Assistance</b>	Linda Brayton, Energy Liaison/Fuel Assistance Advocate
<b>HomeCare</b>	Lisa Murrin, Director of HomeCare
<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	Michele Ameno, Adult Education Coordinator
	Shannon Cormier, Youth Education Coordinator
	Karli Washington, Academic & Career Counselor
<b>Facilities</b>	David Brooks, Facilities Manager
<b>Human Resources</b>	Judy Manchester, Director of Human Resources
<b>Marketing &amp; Planning</b>	Joe McEvoy, Director of Marketing & Planning
	Allison Lex, Planning Coordinator
	Megan Merlin, Project Coordinator

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We would also like to thank the following staff and Board members, who were not part of the Strategic Planning Committee but who volunteered their time to facilitate focus groups and distribute surveys.

Amy Clancy, Payroll and Billing Clerk	Taylor Jesso, Office Assistant
Caryn Clifford, QUEST Case Manager	Lacey Natti, Housing First Case Manager
Maureen Dexter, Coordinated Entry Case Manager	Jim Noble, Housing First Transitions Coordinator
Debbie Eason, Advocate	Marie Sarviti, Assistant Director of Energy Services
Erin George, Housing First Case Manager	Jennifer Schmorow, Utilities Advocate
Fatima Gomes, Advocate	Heidi Weller, Advocate
Stephanie Jackson, Counselor	Gretchen Wood, Board of Directors

Additionally, we worked with two consultants during this process. We would like to acknowledge Jessica Benedetto, Nationally Certified ROMA Trainer and Action Inc.'s former Director of Marketing & Planning. After leaving Action Inc. last fall, Jessica continued to participate in our community assessment process as a consultant. We would also like to acknowledge Nancy Jackson of Gammy Bird Consulting, who worked with us on strategic planning by providing consulting and facilitation services.

Finally, we would like to say a big "thank you" to the entire Action Inc. staff and Board of Directors for contributing to this process by attending focus groups, answering surveys, participating in the retreat, and working together to set our priorities for the future.

# Contact Information

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180 Main Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930

**Emergency Homeless Shelter**  
370 Main Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930

**Energy Services**  
47 Washington Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930

**Ipswich Satellite Office**  
Ipswich Housing Authority  
00 Southern Heights  
Ipswich, MA 01938

**Rockport Satellite Office**  
37J Whistlestop Mall  
Rockport, MA 01966

[www.actioninc.org](http://www.actioninc.org)

**ACTION INC.**

**5**  
**PLEASANT STREET**  
Action, Inc.  
Executive Office  
Case & Housing Services  
Community Work Program  
Community  
Social Training & Support  
North Shore Career Center  
HABC