

**2012 - 2014**



CITY HALL &  
POST OFFICE →

RAILROAD STATION →

SARGENT HOUSE  
MUSEUM →

HISTORIC DISTRICT →

CAPE ANN  
MUSEUM →

**ACTION** INC.  
**Community Action Plan**

Prepared for the Massachusetts Department of  
Housing and Community Development  
Community Services Unit

## ***Our Mission:***

*To improve the quality of life for disadvantaged residents of Cape Ann and beyond by minimizing the effects of poverty, promoting economic security, and advocating for social change.*

## 2010-2011 Planning Committee

### **STAFF MEMBERS**

Timothy Riley • Executive Director

Jessica Benedetto • Director of Marketing & Planning

Patty Bongiorno • Career Development Coordinator

Linda Brayton • Energy Services

GerryAnne Brown • Director of HomeCare

Molly Derr • Licensed Substance Abuse & Mental Health Counselor

Peggy Hegarty-Steck • Director of Administration & Program Operations

Maggie Howard • Director of Benefits & Support Services

Judy Manchester • Human Resources Administrator

Elizabeth Moran • COMPASS Youth Program Coordinator

Ronna Resnick • Director of Job Training & Education

Jennifer Stapleton • Assistant Planner

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Linda Giamanco • Vice Chair

Tone Kenney • Treasurer

Loretta Peres • Member

Richard Rafuse • Secretary

***Special thanks to Michelle Ameno & Jason Burroughs***

# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....                                 | 2  |
| About ACTION INC. ....   | 2  |
| Overview of Strategic Planning Process .....                   | 2  |
| <b>SERVICE AREA &amp; COMMUNITY PROFILES</b> .....             | 3  |
| Gloucester Profile .....                                       | 3  |
| Essex Profile .....  | 4  |
| Ipswich Profile .....  | 5  |
| Manchester Profile .....                                       | 6  |
| Rockport Profile .....   | 7  |
| Community Profile Summary & Service Area Map .....             | 8  |
| <b>COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT</b> .....                        | 9  |
| Overview of Methods .....                                      | 9  |
| Service Provider Focus Group .....                             | 10 |
| COMPASS Youth Program Focus Group .....                        | 11 |
| ACTION Shelter Focus Group .....                               | 12 |
| Interviews .....   | 13 |
| Community Needs Survey Results .....                           | 14 |
| Community Needs Assessment Summary .....                       | 26 |
| <b>INTERNAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT</b> .....                         | 28 |
| Methods .....  | 28 |
| Outcomes .....   | 29 |
| Review of Mission & Vision .....                               | 29 |
| Board Survey: Community Needs .....                            | 30 |
| Staff Survey: Community Needs .....                            | 31 |
| Internal Needs Assessment Summary .....                        | 32 |
| <b>CONCLUSION &amp; EVALUATION</b> .....                       | 33 |
| <b>SERVICE DELIVERY, STRATEGIES &amp; NATIONAL GOALS</b> ..... | 34 |
| National & State Goals .....                                   | 34 |
| Agency-wide Service Delivery & Goals .....                     | 34 |
| Benefits & Support Services .....                              | 37 |
| COMPASS Youth Program .....                                    | 41 |
| Energy Services .....  | 44 |
| HomeCare .....   | 47 |
| Job Training & Education .....                                 | 48 |
| Shelter Services .....   | 53 |
| <b>LINKAGES, PARTNERS &amp; FUNDING</b> .....                  | 57 |
| Linkages .....   | 57 |
| Partner List .....   | 57 |
| Funding Strategy .....   | 60 |
| <b>VISION STATEMENT</b> .....                                  | 62 |
| <b>REFERENCES</b> .....  | 63 |
| <b>CONTACT US</b> .....  | 65 |

# Executive Summary

## About ACTION INC.

ACTION INC. is a charitable non-profit organization and the designated Community Action Agency serving primarily the City of Gloucester and the towns of Rockport, Essex, Ipswich, and Manchester-by-the-Sea. Our Energy Services programs are also available to residents of Hamilton and Wenham. In addition, Energy Services oversees energy conservation projects throughout the state of Massachusetts and in parts of southern New Hampshire.

ACTION INC. offers a wide range of services for disadvantaged individuals and families, including access to public benefits, alternative high school programs for at-risk teens, in-home care for elders and disabled adults, job training and adult education programs, assistance with home heating and utility payments, weatherization and energy conservation, an emergency homeless shelter, and housing advocacy.

ACTION INC. has been a local leader in the nationwide fight against poverty since 1965. We have built a sustainable and coordinated system of services for Greater Cape Ann's families in need, through our Benefits and Support Services, COMPASS Youth Program, Energy Services, HomeCare, Job Training and Education, and Shelter Services departments. ACTION INC. employs approximately 150 dedicated individuals.

### Facilities

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Main Offices</b> .....                | 180 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930        |
| <b>Ipswich Office</b> .....              | 15 Market Street, Suite 4, Ipswich, MA 01938 |
| <b>Rockport Office</b> .....             | 37D Whistlestop Mall, Rockport, MA 01966     |
| <b>Energy Services</b> .....             | 47 Washington Street, Gloucester, MA 01930   |
| <b>Emergency Homeless Shelter</b> .....  | 370 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930        |
| <b>Affordable Housing Building</b> ..... | 95 Prospect Street, Gloucester, MA 01930     |

## Overview of Strategic Planning Process

As a Community Action Agency, ACTION INC. receives federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds distributed through the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Community Services Unit. As a CSBG recipient, every three years ACTION INC. conducts a strategic planning process in order to assess the needs that exist among disadvantaged individuals in our service area, and to create a service plan to address those needs over the next three years. This process includes a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment, which provides an opportunity to assess the state of ongoing issues while identifying new and changing needs.

Between November 2010 and July 2011, the ACTION INC. Planning Committee surveyed community members, facilitated focus groups, and conducted interviews. ACTION staff and board members also underwent an Internal Needs Assessment to identify areas where the agency can become even more effective and efficient. Data was collected, reviewed and analyzed alongside secondary data.

The information collected through this process will help ACTION INC.—and the invaluable local providers with whom we partner—to prioritize services and strategically plan for the next three years.

# Service Area & Community Profiles

## Gloucester

*Gloucester is America's original seaport and the oldest working art colony in North America. The city is an important center of the fishing industry and a popular summer destination.*

**Geographic Boundaries:** Gloucester is located in northeastern Massachusetts, 31 miles northeast of Boston. Gloucester is located in the North Shore region, on Cape Ann in Essex County, and is bordered by Manchester and Essex on the west, the Atlantic Ocean on the north and south, and Rockport on the east. The total area of Gloucester is 41.50 square miles with a total land area of 25.97 square miles.

### Population:

- 28,789 individuals
- 12,486 households

The U.S. Census 2000 reported a total population of 30,273 compared to the U.S. Census 2010 total population of 28,789.

### Gender:

- Male: 13,845
- Female: 14,944

### Age:

- Under 18: 5,354 = 18.0%
- 18 and over: 23,435 = 81.4%
- 20 – 24: 1,444 = 5.0%
- 25 – 34: 2,834 = 9.8%
- 35 – 49: 5,950 = 20.7%
- 50 – 64: 7,514 = 26.1%
- 65 and over: 5,099 = 17.7%

Gloucester has the second lowest percentage of youth (following Rockport) and elderly (following Essex) of all cities/towns in ACTION INC.'s service area.

### Income:

- Median per capita income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$37,151
- Median household income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$63,158

Gloucester's median per capita income, \$37,151, is higher than the Massachusetts median per capital income, \$33,460. Gloucester's median household income, \$63,158, is lower than the Massachusetts median household income, \$64,496.

### Housing:

- Number housing units: 14,557 (12,486 occupied)
- Owner-occupied: 7,745 (19,148 individuals)
- Renter-occupied: 4,741 (9,191 individuals)
- Vacancy rates: 2,071 vacant housing units

### Assets:

- Homeownership rate: 67.1%
- Median value of owner-occupied housing: \$394,100

### Household Characteristics:

- Average household size: 2.36
- Average family size: 3.0

### Race/Ethnic Origin:

- White: 27,548
- African American: 239
- Asian: 258
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 40
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 26
- Some other race: 302
- Two or more races: 376
- Hispanic or Latino: 787
- Not Hispanic or Latino: 28,002

Percent of total population who were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity in 2000: 1.5%. In 2010: 2.7%.

### Labor Force (May 2011 data):

- Number in workforce: 16,166
- Number unemployed: 1,254
- Unemployment rate: 7.8%

Of Gloucester's total population of 28,789, only 16,166 individuals are in the workforce. This is in part due to Gloucester's youth and elderly comprising 36% of the city's population.

Gloucester's unemployment rate, 7.8%, is slightly higher than the Massachusetts unemployment rate, 7.4%. Gloucester has the second highest unemployment rate in the North Shore Workforce Investment Area (WIA), following Lynn at 8.9%.

### Education:

Gloucester High School:

- Drop-out rate: 2.4%
- Graduation rate: 86.5%
- Suspension rate: In-school – 1.5%; out-of-school – 7.5%

The average drop-out rate for Massachusetts is 2.9%, compared to Gloucester's rate of 2.4%.



# Service Area & Community Profiles

## Essex

*Established in 1819, Essex is a small, rural town with a maritime history and is filled with the natural beauty of woodlands, open spaces, and the Essex River flowing through a marsh system. Clamming continues to be one of the town's primary industries. Essex is known for its antique shops and restaurants.*

### Geographic Boundaries:

Essex is located in northeastern Massachusetts, about 25 miles north of Boston. The town is bordered by Manchester on the south, Hamilton on the west, Ipswich on the north, and Gloucester and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. The total area of Essex is 15.94 square miles with a total land area of 14.16 square miles.

### Population:

- 3,504 individuals
- 602 households

The U.S. Census 2000 reported a total population of 3,267 compared to the U.S. Census 2010 total population of 3,504.

### Gender:

- Male: 1,753
- Female: 1,751

### Age:

- Under 18: 823 (23.5%)
- 18 and over: 2,681 (76.5%)
- 20 – 24: 136 (3.9%)
- 25 – 34: 298 (8.5%)
- 35 – 49: 818 (23.3%)
- 50 – 64: 881 (25.1%)
- 65 and over: 490 (14.0%)

Essex has the lowest percentage of elderly and the second highest percentage of youth (closely following Manchester) of all towns/cities in ACTION INC.'s service area.

### Income:

- Median per capita income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$44,550
- Median household income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$76,594

Essex's median per capita and median household incomes are higher than the Massachusetts median per capita and median household incomes of \$33,460 and \$64,496 respectively.

### Housing:

- Number housing units: 1,600 (1,402 occupied)
- Owner-occupied: 993 (2,760 individuals)
- Renter-occupied: 409 (744 individuals)
- Vacancy rates: 198 vacant housing units

### Assets:

Homeownership rate: 72.2%  
Median value of owner-occupied housing: \$492,800

### Household Characteristics:

- Average household size: 2.60
- Average family size: 3.32

### Race/Ethnic Origin:

- White: 3,406
- African American: 12
- Asian: 35
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 3
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 1
- Some other race: 7
- Two or more races: 40
- Hispanic or Latino: 46
- Not Hispanic or Latino: 3,458

Percent of total population who were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity in 2000: 0.9%. In 2010: 1.3%.

### Labor Force (May 2011 data):

- Number in workforce: 1,794
- Number unemployed: 101
- Unemployment rate: 5.6%

Of Essex's total population of 3,504, the total number of individuals in the workforce is 1,794 (51%). At 23.5%, Essex has the second highest percentage of youth in ACTION's service area. However, this is offset by Essex having the lowest population of elderly in ACTION's service area. Essex's unemployment rate, 5.6%, is lower than the Massachusetts unemployment rate, 7.4%.

### Education:

Manchester Essex Regional High School:

- Drop-out rate: 0.9%
- Graduation rate: 95.3%
- Suspension rate: In-school – 0.4%; out-of-school – 1.8%

The average drop-out rate for Massachusetts is 2.9%, compared to Manchester Essex's rate of 0.9%.

# Service Area & Community Profiles

## Ipswich

*Ipswich is a coastal town with a highly developed town center surrounded by rural landscapes and residential neighborhoods. The town is one of the top shellfish producers in the U.S. due to its prime location near the ocean and Ipswich River. Like Essex, Ipswich is famous for its clams and has a vibrant tourist industry due to the town's traditional New England charm and natural abundance of preserved and protected salt marshes, estuaries, and open space.*

### Geographic Boundaries:

Located in northeastern Massachusetts, Ipswich is 28 miles north of Boston and is bordered by Topsfield, Hamilton, and Essex on the south, Boxford on the west, Rowley on the north, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. Ipswich's total area is 42.15 square miles with a land area of 32.61 square miles.

### Population:

- 13,175 individuals
- 1,838 households

The U.S. Census 2000 reported a total population of 12,987 compared to the U.S. Census 2010 total population of 13,175.

### Gender:

- Male: 6,275
- Female: 6,900

### Age:

- Under 18: 2,782 (21.1%)
- 18 and over: 10,393 (78.9%)
- 20 – 24: 483 (3.7%)
- 25 – 34: 1,036 (7.9%)
- 35 – 49: 2,846 (21.7%)
- 50 – 64: 3,413 (26.0%)
- 65 and over: 2,351 (17.8%)

Ipswich rates for youth and elderly populations are average compared to ACTION's service area.

### Income:

- Median per capita income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$40,907
- Median household income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$81,651

Ipswich's median per capita and median household incomes are higher than the Massachusetts median per capita and median household incomes of \$33,460 and \$64,496 respectively.

See page 63, References, for a list of sources for Community Profile data.

### Housing:

- Number housing units: 6,007 (5,462 occupied)
- Owner-occupied: 4,060 (10,343 individuals)
- Renter-occupied: 1,402 (2,656 individuals)
- Vacancy rates: 545 vacant housing units

### Assets:

- Homeownership rate: 76.4%
- Median value of owner-occupied housing: \$465,300

### Household Characteristics:

- Average household size: 2.43
- Average family size: 3.05

### Race/Ethnic Origin:

- White: 12,636
- African American: 65
- Asian: 174
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 20
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 6
- Some other race: 96
- Two or more races: 178
- Hispanic or Latino: 232
- Not Hispanic or Latino: 12,943

Percent of total population who were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity in 2000: 1.0%. In 2010: 1.8%.

### Labor Force (May 2011 data):

- Number in work force: 7,366
- Number unemployed: 489
- Unemployment rate: 6.6%

Of Ipswich's total population of 13,175 individuals, only 7,366 are in the workforce (55.9%). This is in part due to the town's youth and elderly comprising 38.9% of the town's population. Ipswich's unemployment rate, 6.6%, is lower than the Massachusetts unemployment rate, 7.4%.

### Education:

Ipswich High School:

- Drop-out rate: 1.1%
- Graduation rate: 96.0%
- Suspension rate: In-school – 2.2%; out-of-school – 1.2%

The average drop-out rate for Massachusetts is 2.9%, compared to Ipswich's rate of 1.1%.

# Service Area & Community Profiles

## Manchester

*A fishing and seafaring town for the early settlers, it later became a summer resort for the wealthy and well-known. Manchester is acclaimed for its beautiful beaches, with seven beaches lining the coast, including Singing Beach, a popular summer destination. Manchester also features a renowned yachting harbor and commercial lobstering.*

### Geographic Boundaries:

Manchester is located in northeastern Massachusetts, 25 miles north of Boston. The town is bordered by Beverly and Wenham on the west, Hamilton and Essex on the north, Gloucester on the east, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south. Manchester's total area is 18.25 square miles with a total land area of 7.84 square miles.

### Population:

- 5,136 individuals

The U.S. Census 2000 reported a total population of 5,228 compared to the U.S. Census 2010 total population of 5,136.

### Gender:

- Male: 2,406
- Female: 2,730

### Age:

- Under 18: 1,215 (23.7%)
- 18 and over: 3,921 (76.3%)
- 20 – 24: 153 (3.0%)
- 25 – 34: 283 (5.5%)
- 35 – 49: 1,071 (20.9%)
- 50 – 64: 1,327 (25.8%)
- 65 and over: 1,009 (19.6%)

Manchester has the highest percentage of youth (closely followed by Essex) and the second highest percentage of elderly out of all towns/cities in ACTION's service area.

### Income:

- Median per capita income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$57,020
- Median household income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$98,319

Manchester's median per capita and median household incomes are higher than the Massachusetts median per capita and median household incomes of \$33,460 and \$64,496 respectively.

### Housing:

- Number housing units: 2,394 (2,147 occupied)
- Owner-occupied: 1,560 (4,112 individuals)
- Renter-occupied: 587 (1,015 individuals)
- Vacancy rates: 247 vacant housing units

### Assets:

- Homeownership rate: 71.1%
- Median value of owner-occupied housing: \$762,200

### Household Characteristics:

- Average household size: 2.55
- Average family size: 3.08

### Race/Ethnic Origin:

- White: 5,013
- African American: 7
- Asian: 44
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 11
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0
- Some other race: 5
- Two or more races: 56
- Hispanic or Latino: 76
- Not Hispanic or Latino: 5,060

Percent of total population who were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity in 2000: 0.8%. In 2010: 1.5%.

### Labor Force (May 2011 data):

- Number in workforce: 2,657
- Number unemployed: 137
- Unemployment rate: 5.2%

Of Manchester's total population of 5,136, 2,657 individuals (51.7%) are in the workforce. This is largely due to Manchester having the highest percentage of youth (23.7%) and the second highest percentage of elderly (19.6%) out of all towns/cities in ACTION's service area. Manchester's unemployment rate, 5.2%, is lower than the Massachusetts unemployment rate, 7.4%.

### Education:

Manchester Essex Regional High School:

- Drop-out rate: 0.9%
- Graduation rate: 95.3%
- Suspension rate: In-school – 0.4%; out-of-school – 1.8%

The average drop-out rate for Massachusetts is 2.9%, compared to Manchester Essex's rate of 0.9%.



# Service Area & Community Profiles

## Rockport

Rockport is a quaint, coastal town with a small fishing village and many small shops, inns, and restaurants. The town has an active art scene with a number of artists' studios and galleries. Rockport has a vibrant tourist industry. The year-round population of over 7,000 nearly triples during the summer season. Tourists and locals alike enjoy Rockport's beaches, boating, and parks.

### Geographic Boundaries:

Rockport is located in northeastern Massachusetts, 37 miles north of Boston. The town is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the north, east, and part of the south, and by Gloucester on the southwest and west. Rockport's total area is 17.59 square miles with a total land area of 7.07 square miles.

### Population:

- 6,952 individuals
- 2,339 households

The U.S. Census 2000 reported a total population of 7,767, compared to the U.S. Census 2010 total of 6,952.

### Gender:

- Male: 3,205
- Female: 3,747

### Age:

- Under 18: 1,196 (17.2%)
- 18 and over: 5,756 (83.0%)
- 20 – 24: 283 (4.1%)
- 25 – 34: 462 (6.6%)
- 35 – 49: 1,261 (18.1%)
- 50 – 64: 2,009 (28.9%)
- 65 and over: 1,608 (23.1%)

Rockport has the highest percentage of elderly and the lowest percentage of youth of all towns/cities in ACTION INC.'s service area.

### Income:

- Median per capita income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$41,283
- Median household income (2009, inflation-adjusted): \$64,154

Rockport's median per capita income, \$41,283, is higher than the Massachusetts median per capital income, \$33,460. Rockport's median household income, \$64,154, is slightly lower than the Massachusetts median household income, \$64,496.

### Housing:

- Number housing units: 4,223 (3,213 occupied)
- Owner-occupied: 2,1248 (5,045 individuals)
- Renter-occupied: 1,065 (1,838 individuals)
- Vacancy rates: 1,010 vacant housing units

### Assets:

- Homeownership rate: 69.8%
- Median value of owner-occupied housing: \$510,200

### Household Characteristics:

- Average household size: 2.22
- Average family size: 2.94

### Race/Ethnic Origin:

- White: 6,745
- African American: 45
- Asian: 56
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 5
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 6
- Some other race: 22
- Two or more races: 73
- Hispanic or Latino: 111
- Not Hispanic or Latino: 6,841

Percent of total population who were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity in 2000: 1.1%. In 2010: 1.6%.

### Labor Force (May 2011 data):

- Number in workforce: 4,043
- Number unemployed: 266
- Unemployment rate: 6.6%

Of Rockport's 6,952 total population, 4,043 individuals (58.2%) are in the workforce. Rockport has the highest percentage of elderly (23.1%) but the lowest percentage of youth (17.2%) out of all towns/cities in ACTION's service area. Rockport's unemployment rate, 6.6%, is lower than the Massachusetts unemployment rate, 7.4%.

### Education:

Rockport High School:

- Drop-out rate: 1.8%
- Graduation rate: 87.9%
- Suspension rate: In-school – 1.3%; out-of-school – 2.6%

The average drop-out rate for Massachusetts is 2.9%, compared to Rockport's rate of 1.8%.

# Service Area & Community Profiles

## Community Profile Summary

Of the primary communities served by ACTION INC., the City of Gloucester has the highest population (28,789) followed in descending order by the towns of Ipswich (13,175), Rockport (6,952), Manchester (5,136), and Essex (3,504). Gloucester has the lowest median per capita income in our service area (\$37,151), followed in ascending order by Ipswich (\$40,907), Rockport (\$41,283), Essex (\$44,550), and Manchester (\$57,020).

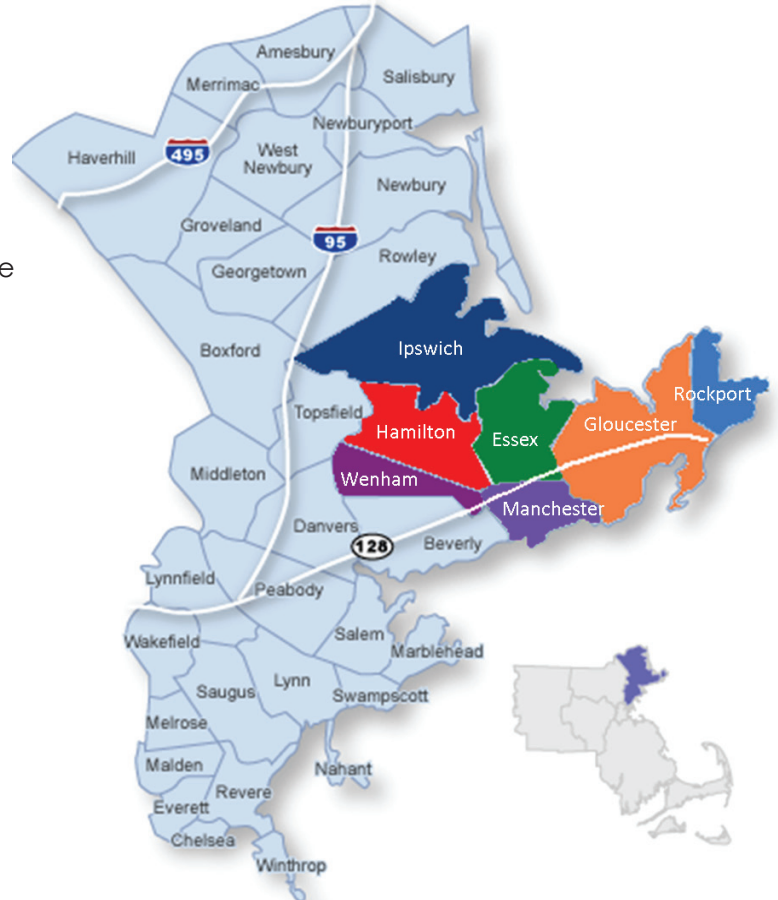
The homeownership rate is lowest in Gloucester (67.1%), followed in ascending order by Rockport (69.8%), Manchester (71.1%), Essex (72.2%), and Ipswich (76.4%). The median value of owner-occupied housing is lowest in Gloucester (\$394,100), followed in ascending order by Ipswich (\$465,300), Essex (\$492,800), Rockport (\$510,200), and Manchester (\$762,200). The median value in Manchester is nearly twice as much as the median value in Gloucester, with a difference of \$368,100.

The population in ACTION INC.'s service area remains primarily white. Gloucester has the highest diversity (95.7% white), followed in descending order by Ipswich (95.9% white), Rockport (97% white), Essex (97.2% white), and Manchester (97.6% white). However, between 2000 and 2010, the percent of the total population who are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity has risen in all of our communities. The largest increase was in Gloucester (1.2% increase), followed in descending order by Ipswich (0.8% increase), Manchester (0.7% increase), Rockport (0.5% increase), and Essex (0.4% increase).

Gloucester has the highest unemployment rate (7.8%), followed in descending order by Ipswich/Rockport (6.6%), Essex (5.6%), and Manchester (5.2%). Of the communities we serve, only Gloucester has a higher unemployment rate than the state average of 7.4%.

Gloucester also has the highest high school drop-out rate (2.4%), followed in descending order by Rockport (1.8%), Ipswich (1.1%), and Essex/Manchester (0.9%).

Based on these profiles, the needs among low-income individuals and families are highest in Gloucester and lowest in Manchester-by-the-Sea.



# Community Needs Assessment

## Overview of Methods

ACTION INC.'s comprehensive Community Needs Assessment collected input from various types of stakeholders throughout our service area, using the methods below.

### Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholders are those who hold a stake in the communities we serve. This could mean anyone who has an interest in the health and needs of the community. **Primary stakeholders** are those who will be directly affected by the results of this assessment, such as ACTION INC.'s program participants. **Secondary stakeholders** are those who are indirectly affected, such as other service providers and funders with whom we partner. Finally, **external stakeholders** are those who are not directly involved but who may be interested in the results, such as other residents of our service area.

## Community Needs Assessment Methods

### Focus Groups

The ACTION INC. Planning Committee organized and facilitated three focus groups. The first was with representatives from local service providers, the second involved high school juniors and seniors in the COMPASS Youth Program, and the third was conducted at the ACTION Emergency Homeless Shelter. These sessions provided an opportunity for targeted groups to discuss the needs and issues in our community and to brainstorm together about solutions.

### Interviews

ACTION INC. conducted one-on-one interviews with Gloucester Mayor Carolyn Kirk as well as Sander Shultz, EMS Coordinator for the Gloucester Fire Department. In addition, Jason Burroughs, a student in ACTION's COMPASS Youth Program, spent two afternoons outside Shaw's Supermarket chatting with local residents about the needs in our community.

### Surveys

ACTION INC. distributed surveys to community members through multiple methods. A simple postcard-sized survey was mailed to a sampling of ACTION clients and was also distributed on-foot by Planning Committee members. Members took to the streets in each town within our service area, placing surveys and flyers at local businesses, organizations, and schools. A more detailed electronic survey was also created and the link was emailed out to select constituents, and was advertised through local media and flyers.

### Foreign Language Surveys

In an effort to reach out to our area's increasing immigrant population, we created versions of our postcard survey in Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. These surveys were distributed at local businesses and organizations by ACTION INC.'s English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Instructor.

## Service Provider Focus Group

### Overview

On March 3, 2011, the Planning Committee held a focus group of local service providers, with eight participants representing the following organizations:

- Addison Gilbert Hospital
- Cape Ann Clergy's Association
- Catholic Charities
- Gloucester Housing Authority
- North Shore Health Project
- The Open Door Food Pantry
- SeniorCare

### Needs

The group identified the following as the top needs and challenges in the community:

- **Jobs and job training** (associated needs: transportation, training for in-demand jobs)
- **Healthcare/Health issues** (associated needs: substance abuse and mental health support, access to health insurance, smoking cessation, affordable medication)
- **Cost of living/Financial management** (associated needs: homelessness prevention, financial literacy classes, rental readiness, representative-payee service, laundry service, transportation, trash management)

### Summary and Solutions

Many of the issues discussed during the Service Providers focus group are already being addressed by ACTION INC. Due to limited funding and resources, it is necessary to prioritize which needs we can address over the next three years. ACTION INC. intends to address the top three needs listed above in the following ways:

- **Jobs and job training:** ACTION offers employment training programs through our Job Training and Education department. Department staff will continue to identify in-demand jobs and develop appropriate training. See page 48, *Job Training and Education*. Accessibility and availability of affordable transportation was also identified as a barrier to employment. ACTION will discuss the issue of transportation and other basic needs with the Cape Ann Transportation Authority. See page 41, *Benefits and Support Services: Basic Needs*.
- **Healthcare/Health issues, including substance abuse and mental health support:** Though these issues have been identified for many low-income individuals in our service area, over the next three years ACTION will focus on our area's neediest—homeless individuals. ACTION has already employed a Licensed Substance Abuse and Mental Health Counselor and is currently pursuing a new Healthcare for the Homeless initiative. See page 55, *Shelter Services: Case Management and Supportive Services*.
- **Cost of living/Financial management:** ACTION believes that financial education and awareness are important steps for those struggling to manage limited incomes. We will increase financial literacy services, including classes and one-on-one counseling, and will explore the possibility of offering representative-payee services. We will also partner with other community groups to explore ways we can address basic needs such as transportation and trash management. See page 39, *Benefits and Support Services: Financial Management and Literacy*, and page 41, *Benefits and Support Services: Basic Needs*.

## COMPASS Youth Program Focus Group

### Overview

On March 23, 2011, the Planning Committee held a focus group of 12 disadvantaged high school juniors and seniors enrolled in ACTION INC.'s COMPASS Youth Program.

### Needs

The group identified the following as the top needs and challenges in the community:

- **Job opportunities and job training**
- **Transportation**
- **Money/Financial problems**

### Summary and Solutions

The group identified a number of potential solutions and services to meet the biggest needs in our service area, including free or discounted job training programs in high-demand fields and free or discounted driver's education classes.

ACTION aims to address the needs among disadvantaged teenagers primarily through our COMPASS Youth Program. However, this program is limited by size, funding, and resources and cannot address needs for all disadvantaged youth throughout our service area.

Over the next three years, ACTION and COMPASS will aim to address the top needs above in the following ways:

- **Job opportunities and job training:** One of the main goals of COMPASS is to prepare students for full-time employment or post-secondary education. We will therefore continue to work with students on job skills and on obtaining internships in order to access better job training and opportunities. See page 41, *COMPASS Youth Program*.
- **Transportation:** In addition to discussing the issue of affordable transportation with the Cape Ann Transportation Authority, our COMPASS Coordinator will contact local driver's education providers to explore the possibility of offering a reduced-cost class specifically to COMPASS students. See page 44, *COMPASS Youth Program: Basic Needs*.
- **Money/Financial problems:** As stated previously, ACTION believes that financial education and awareness are important steps for those struggling to manage limited incomes. We will increase financial literacy services, including classes specifically geared toward teenagers. See page 39, *Benefits and Support Services: Financial Management and Literacy*. We will also continue to seek funds to assist COMPASS students with expenses such as GED testing fees and college application fees. See page 44, *COMPASS Youth Program: Basic Needs*.



## ACTION Shelter Focus Group

### Overview

On March 28, 2011, the Planning Committee held a focus group at the ACTION Emergency Homeless Shelter, located at 370 Main Street in Gloucester. The group included representatives of ACTION INC., Shelter staff, and Shelter guests.

### Needs

The group identified the following as the top challenges in the community:

- **Lack of transportation**
- **Lack of jobs and job training**
- **Lack of affordable housing**
- **Inability to manage money**
- **Daytime services and shelter for homeless individuals**

### Summary and Solutions

The group identified a number of potential solutions and services to meet the biggest needs in our service area. ACTION will address these top needs in the following ways:

- **Lack of transportation:** We will contact the Cape Ann Transportation Authority to address the affordable transportation issue. See page 41, *Benefits and Support Services: Basic Needs*.
- **Lack of jobs and job training:** We will connect homeless individuals with the services and programs available through our Job Training and Education department. We will also offer computer skills classes geared specifically toward homeless individuals and low-income job seekers; for example, an Excel class that teaches budgeting, a Word class that also explains how to write an effective resume and cover letter, and a Windows class that shows students how to conduct online job searches using Craigslist.org and other sites. See page 48, *Job Training and Education*.
- **Lack of affordable housing:** We will continue to own and manage affordable housing units in Gloucester, and will also work on the development of new affordable housing for homeless families. We will continue to partner with local Housing Authorities to address the issue of affordable housing. See page 54, *Shelter Services: Affordable Housing*.
- **Inability to manage money:** See page 10, *Service Provider Focus Group: Summary and Solutions*.
- **Daytime services and shelter for homeless individuals:** Local faith-based groups have formed a committee to explore the development of a daytime drop-in center in Gloucester for homeless individuals. ACTION has been informed of these discussions and will continue to provide suggestions and advice. ACTION also offers limited daytime hours during which homeless individuals can meet with our Licensed Substance Abuse and Mental Health Counselor. See page 55, *Shelter Services: Homeless Shelter*, and *Shelter Services: Case Management and Supportive Services*.

# Community Needs Assessment

## Interview with Mayor Kirk CITY OF GLOUCESTER

On April 12, 2011, ACTION INC. interviewed Gloucester Mayor Carolyn Kirk about the current needs and challenges in our community. Mayor Kirk identified the following as the top issues: economic development, jobs, drug abuse, and technical education.

**Q:** Why do you think these continue to be issues?

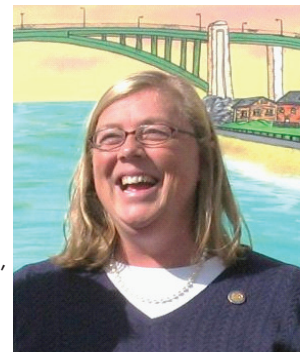
**A:** Due to a lack of education/skills, isolation of Cape Ann, and lack of transportation.

**Q:** In the past three years, have you noticed any new problems facing the community?

**A:** Every issue and vulnerability we have as a community has just increased over the past three years.

### Solutions & Ideas

Mayor Kirk identified skill building and job training as the most important solutions to meet the needs in our service area. She stated that we need to identify jobs that exist on Cape Ann and then reach out to the top 25 local employers to learn how to do specialized training in order to fill those jobs. Examples of jobs/job training include water treatment workers, boat engine repair, fiberglassing, bank tellers, and machinists.



Mayor Carolyn Kirk

### A Closer Look ...

A major current concern for Gloucester's Mayor is the 18-22 age group. According to the Gloucester Police Department, this group is the biggest police problem. Mayor Kirk believes that it is critical to find a way to re-engage members of this age group, and to start this process at a younger age by providing better role models, helping individuals to develop life aspirations, and creating opportunities for job-shadowing.

## On-the-Spot Interviews SHAW'S SUPERMARKET

Jason Burroughs, a senior in ACTION INC.'s COMPASS Youth Program, spent two days talking to local residents outside Shaw's Supermarket on Railroad Avenue in Gloucester. Jason asked people what they think are the biggest needs and challenges in our community and how to address them. In total, he interviewed 62 individuals, 24 of whom were male and 38 of whom were female.

The following needs and challenges were most frequently identified by those interviewed: jobs, drug abuse, affordable housing and homelessness, education, and financial assistance and management/literacy.

### Solutions & Ideas

The following are examples of solutions people suggested for addressing the biggest needs in the community: better access to higher education, job creation and training, support for obtaining a valid driver's license, more support for substance abuse prevention and treatment services, lower rents, more teachers, and credit coaching services.



Jason Burroughs

# Community Needs Assessment

## Community Needs Survey

### Distribution and Respondents

Approximately 6,900 hard-copy and electronic surveys were distributed throughout ACTION INC.'s service area. The response rate was roughly 10%.

#### Survey types:

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| • English Postcard Surveys:    | 500        |
| • Portuguese Postcard Surveys: | 46         |
| • Italian Postcard Surveys:    | 3          |
| • Spanish Postcard Surveys:    | 18         |
| • Electronic Survey:           | 106        |
| <b>• TOTAL:</b>                | <b>673</b> |

#### Respondents:



### Demographics of Respondents

#### • Gender:

Responded: 575 • Skipped: 98

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| Male   | 30.8% |
| Female | 69.2% |

#### • Age:

Responded: 531 • Skipped: 142

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 15-24 | 3.9%  |
| 25-34 | 10.7% |
| 35-44 | 13.0% |
| 45-54 | 20.9% |
| 55-64 | 20.2% |
| 65+   | 31.3% |

#### • Number of people in household:

Responded: 554 • Skipped: 119

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1 | 33.4% |
| 2 | 34.1% |
| 3 | 14.3% |
| 4 | 10.7% |
| 5 | 5.2%  |
| 6 | 1.4%  |
| 7 | 0.2%  |
| 8 | 0.5%  |
| 9 | 0.2%  |

#### • Income:

Responded: 537 • Skipped: 136

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| \$0 - 24,999        | 58.1% |
| \$25,000 - \$49,999 | 24.0% |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 7.8%  |
| \$75,000 - \$99,000 | 4.7%  |
| \$100,000+          | 5.4%  |

#### • Residence:

Responded: 579 • Skipped: 94

|            |       |
|------------|-------|
| Gloucester | 64.3% |
| Essex      | 2.6%  |
| Ipswich    | 10.0% |
| Hamilton   | 2.1%  |
| Manchester | 4.1%  |
| Rockport   | 13.6% |
| Wenham     | 0.7%  |
| Other      | 2.6%  |

#### • English is first language:

Responded: 574 • Skipped: 99

|     |       |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 84.3% |
| No  | 15.7% |

#### • Language if "no" above:

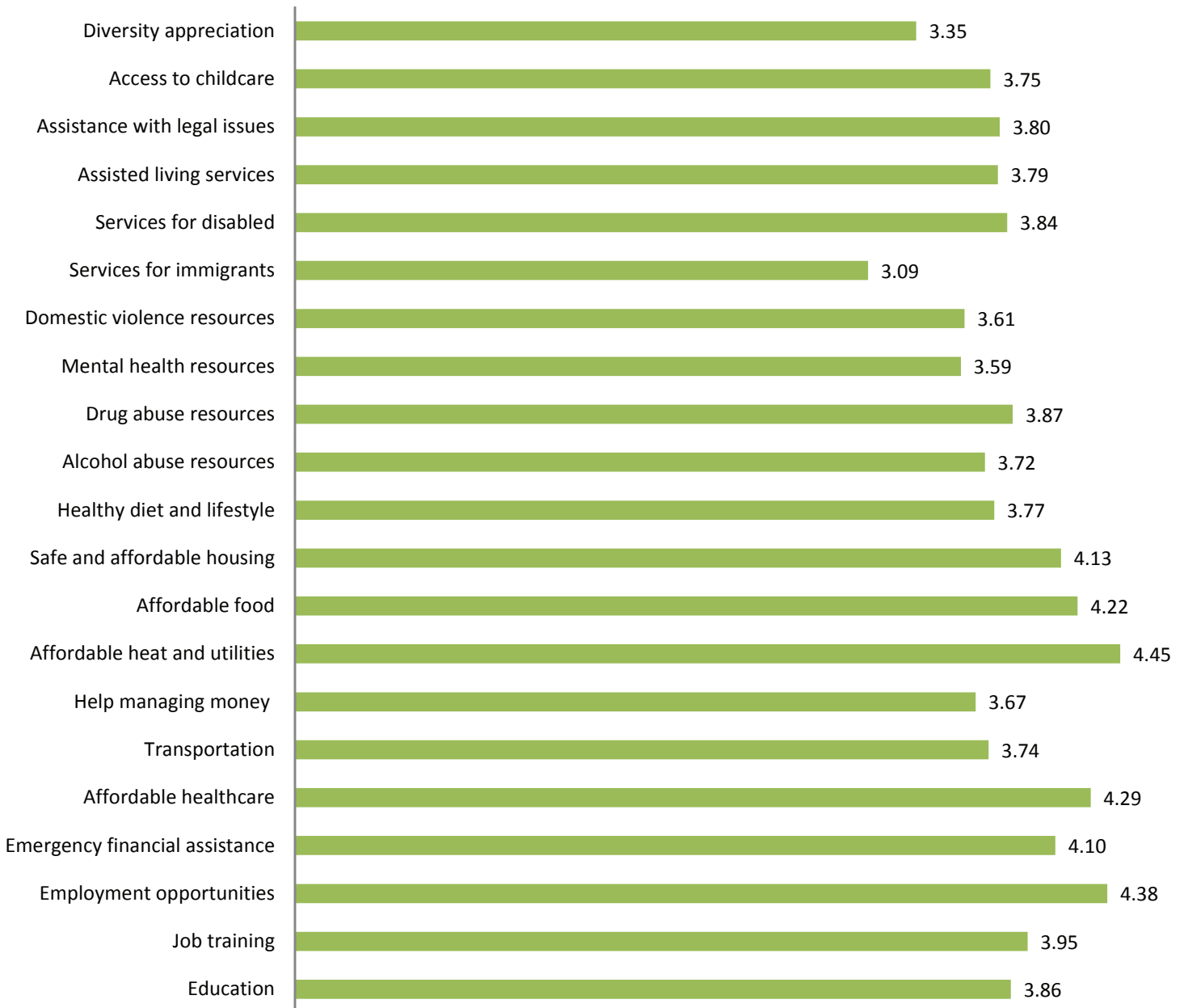
Responded: 88 • Skipped: 585

|            |       |
|------------|-------|
| French     | 2.3%  |
| German     | 2.3%  |
| Hindi      | 1.1%  |
| Italian    | 5.7%  |
| Nepali     | 2.3%  |
| Portuguese | 55.7% |
| Russian    | 2.3%  |
| Serbian    | 2.3%  |
| Spanish    | 26.1% |

# Community Needs Assessment

## Overall Survey Results

Q. What are the biggest needs in your community? *Total responses: 662*



Average rating • 1 = Not a need • 2 = Slight need • 3 = I don't know • 4 = Need • 5 = Great need

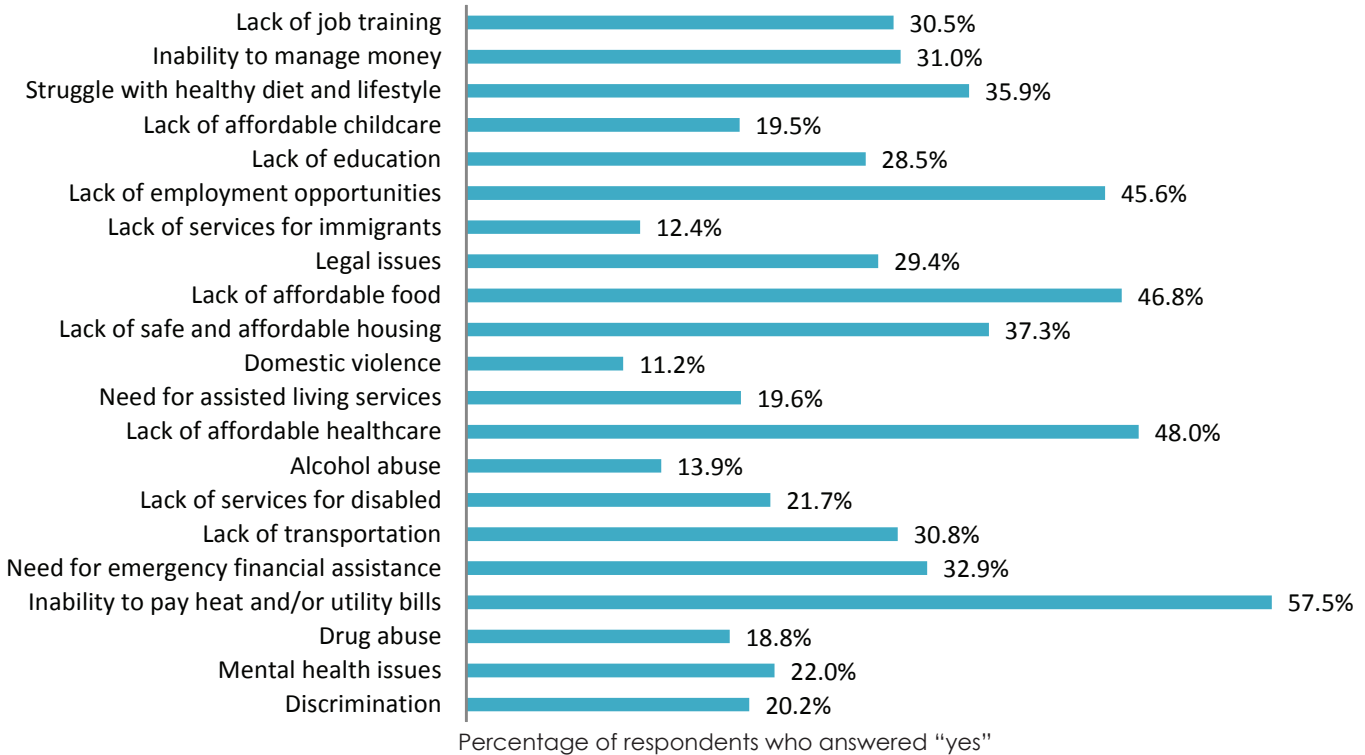
### TOP FIVE RESPONSES

1. Affordable heat & utilities
2. Employment opportunities
3. Affordable healthcare
4. Affordable food
5. Safe & affordable housing

# Community Needs Assessment

## Overall Survey Results

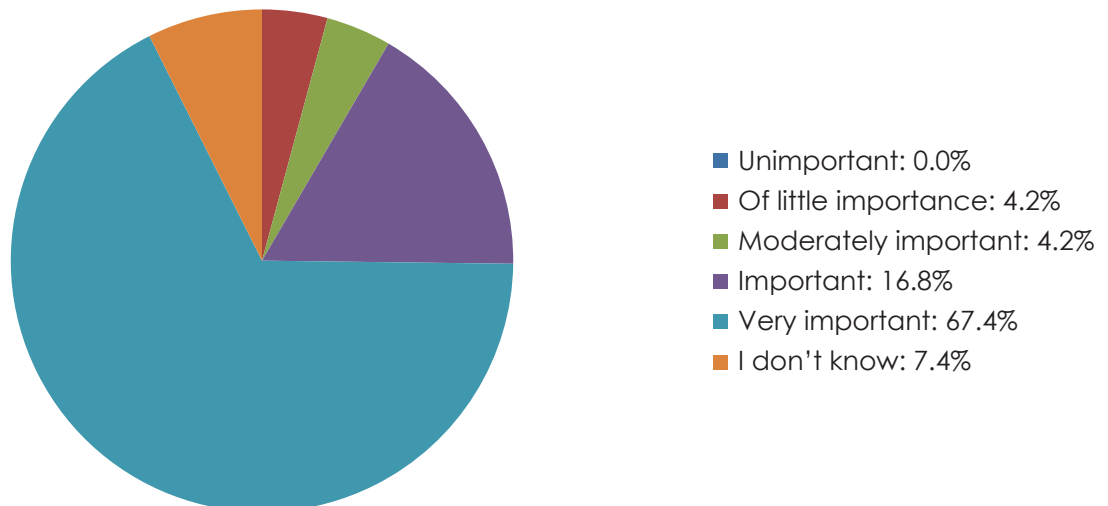
**Q. Do any of these needs personally impact you or anyone in your household?** *Total responses: 348*



### TOP FIVE RESPONSES

1. Inability to pay heat/utility bills
2. Lack of affordable healthcare
3. Lack of affordable food
4. Lack of employment opportunities
5. Lack of affordable housing

**Q. How important is ACTION INC.'s role in addressing community needs?** *Total responses: 95 (electronic survey only)*

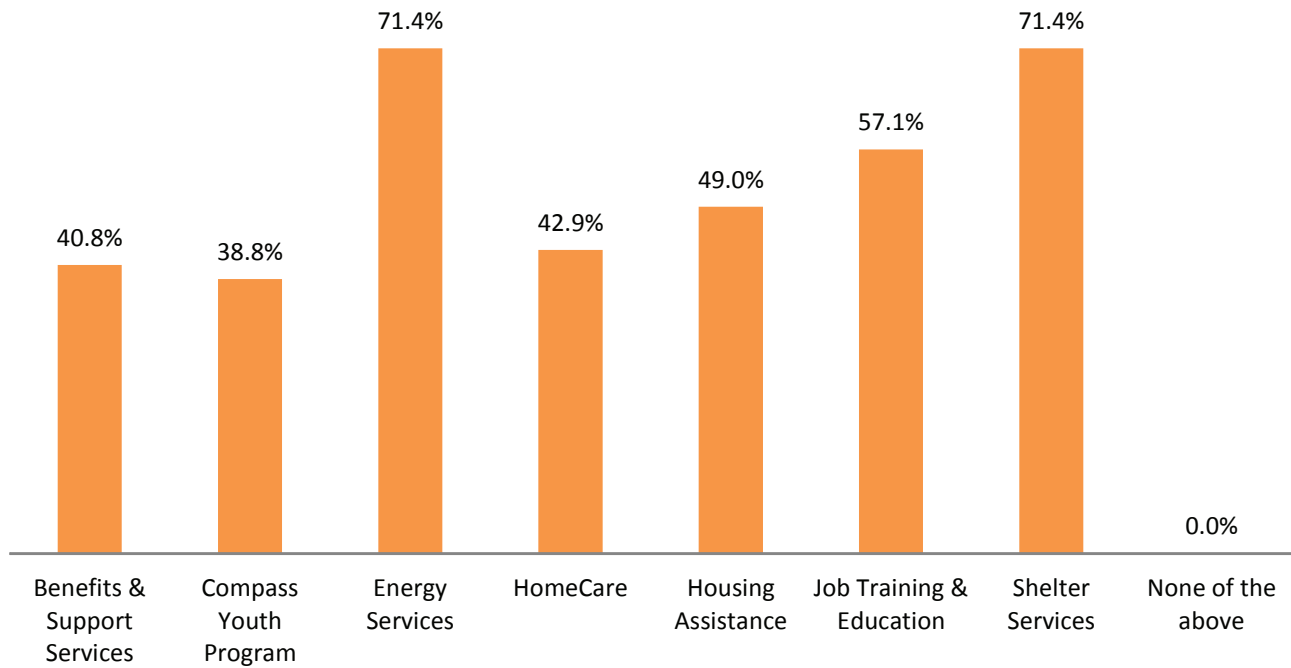




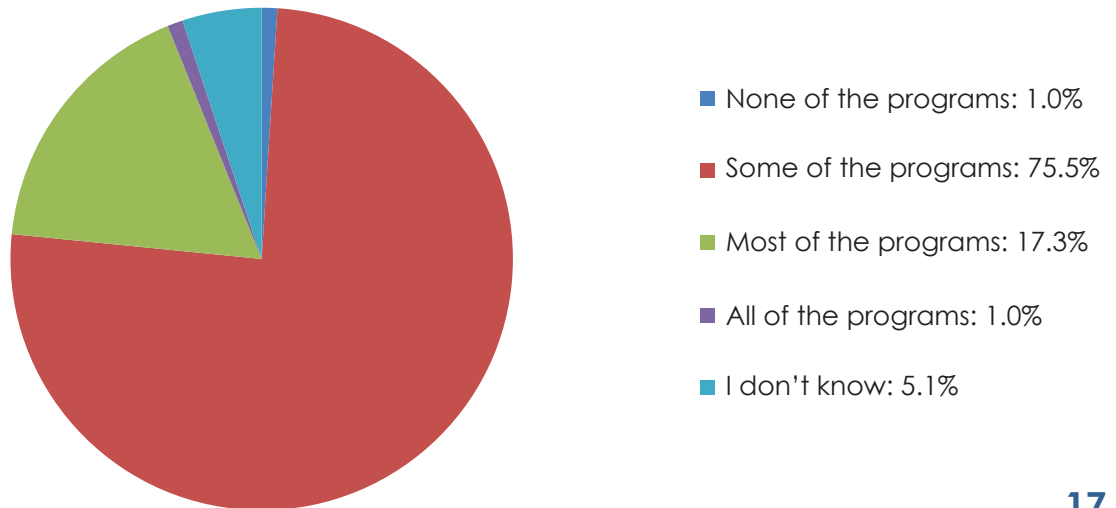
# Community Needs Assessment

## Overall Survey Results

Q. When you think of ACTION INC., which programs do you think of?  
*Total responses: 98 (electronic survey only, multiple choices allowed)*



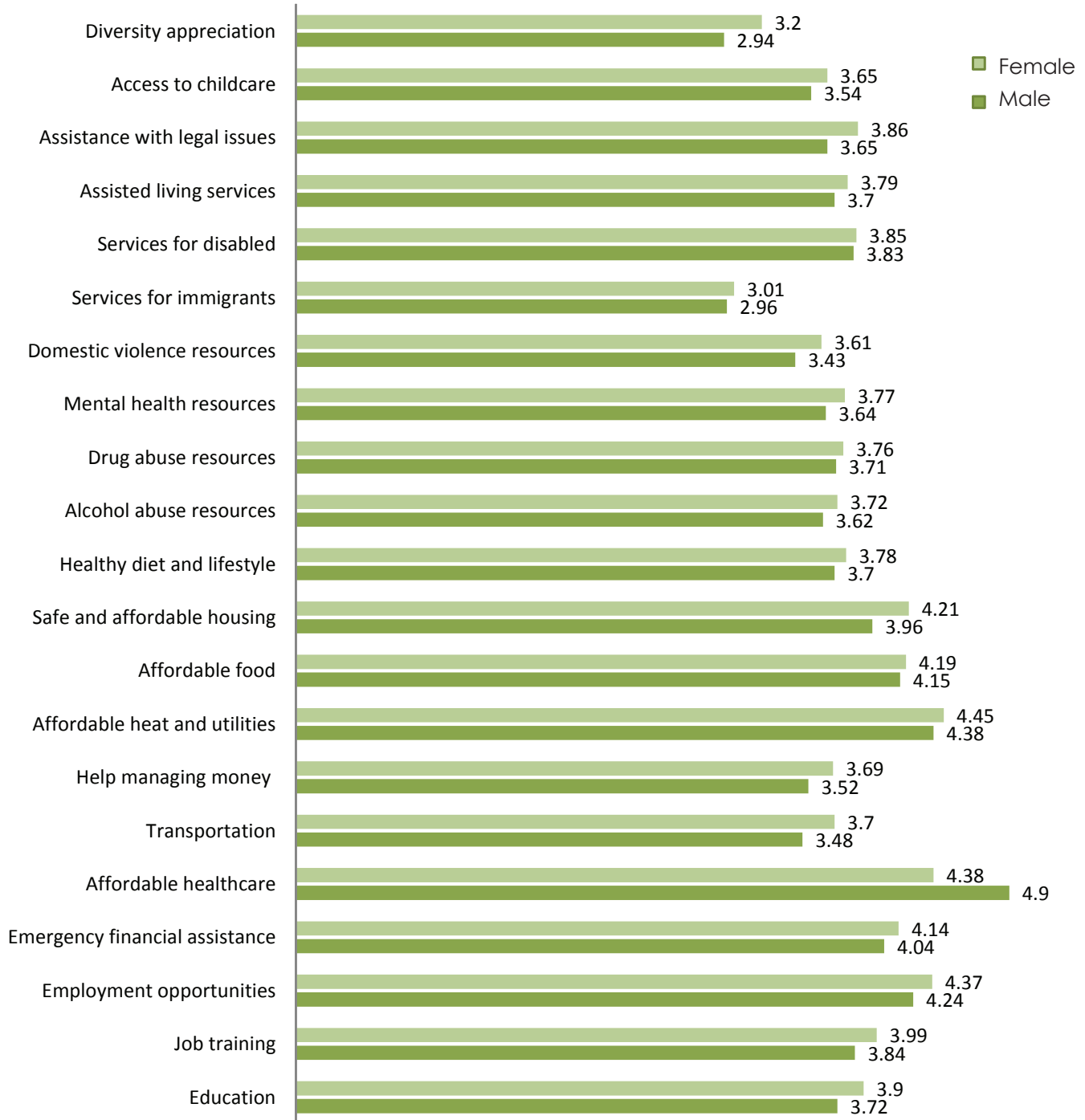
Q. To what extent do you think the community is aware of ACTION INC.'s programs and services?  
*Total responses: 98 (electronic survey only)*



# Community Needs Assessment

## Survey Results by Gender

Q. What are the biggest needs in your community? *Total responses: 565*



Average rating • 1 = Not a need • 2 = Slight need • 3 = I don't know • 4 = Need • 5 = Great need

### TOP FIVE RESPONSES: MALE

1. Affordable healthcare • 2. Affordable heat & utilities • 3. Employment opportunities • 4. Affordable food • 5. Emergency financial assistance

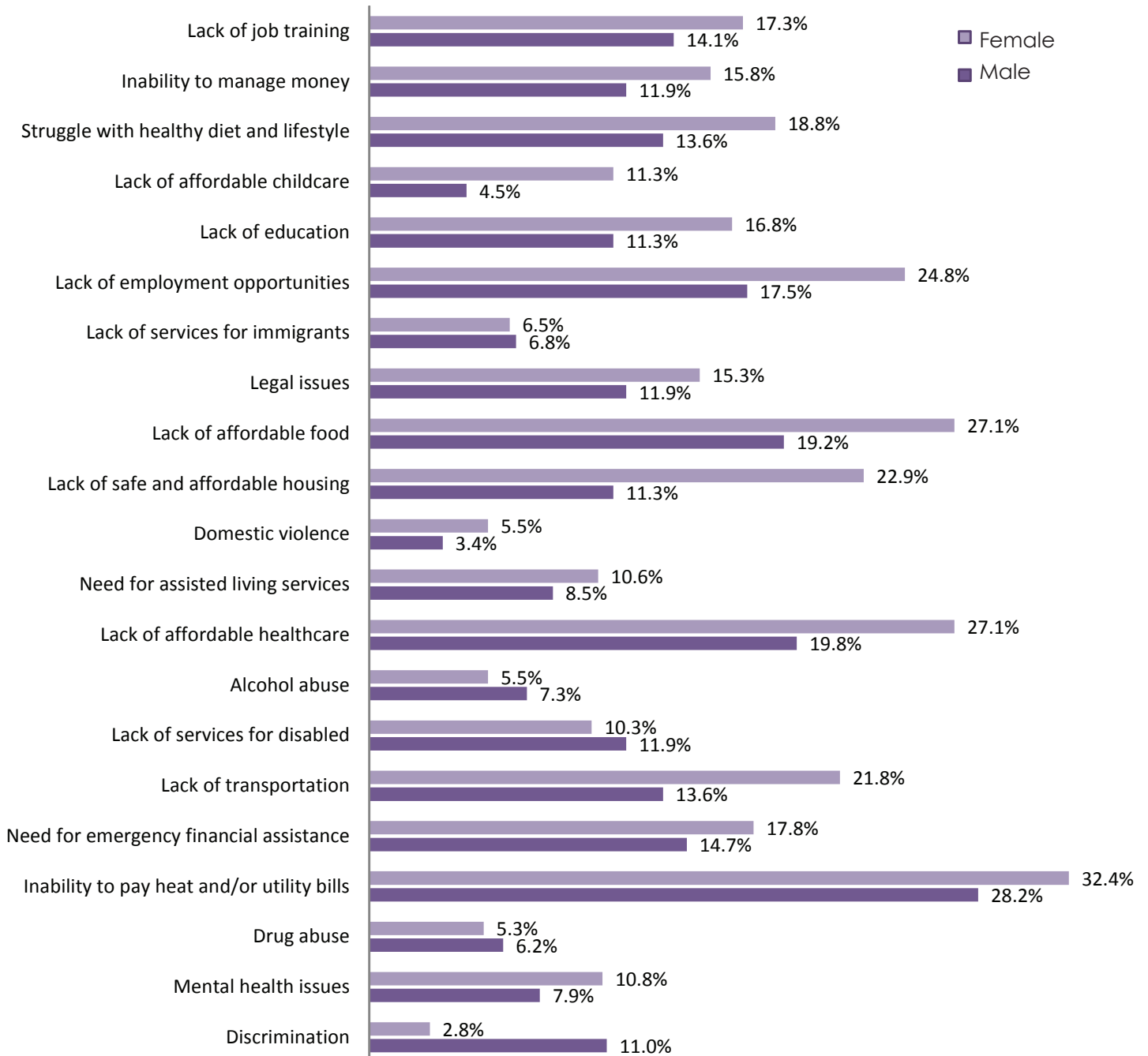
### TOP FIVE RESPONSES: FEMALE

1. Affordable heat & utilities • 2. Affordable healthcare • 3. Employment opportunities • 4. Lack of affordable housing • 5. Affordable food

# Community Needs Assessment

## Survey Results by Gender

Q. Do any of these needs personally impact you or anyone in your household? *Total male respondents (overall): 177 • Total female respondents (overall): 398*



Percentage of total male and female respondents who answered "yes"

### TOP FIVE RESPONSES: MALE

1. Affordable heat & utilities • 2. Affordable healthcare • 3. Affordable food • 4. Employment opportunities • 5. Emergency financial assistance

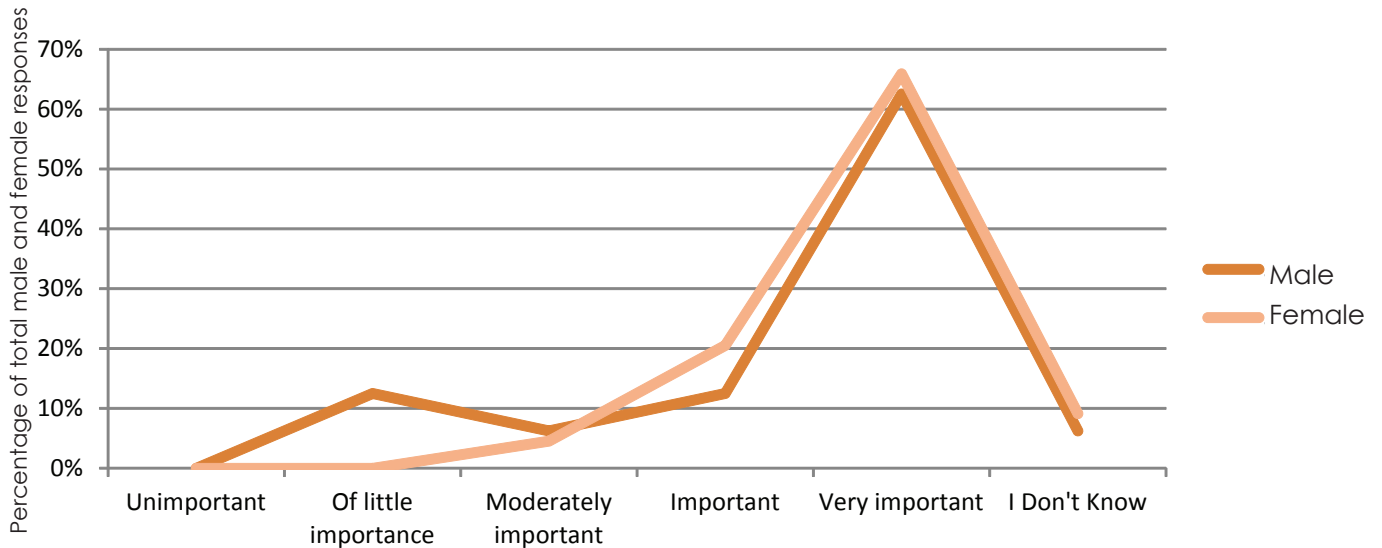
### TOP FIVE RESPONSES: FEMALE

1. & 2. (tie) Affordable healthcare & Affordable food • 3. Employment opportunities • 4. Lack of affordable housing • 5. Lack of transportation

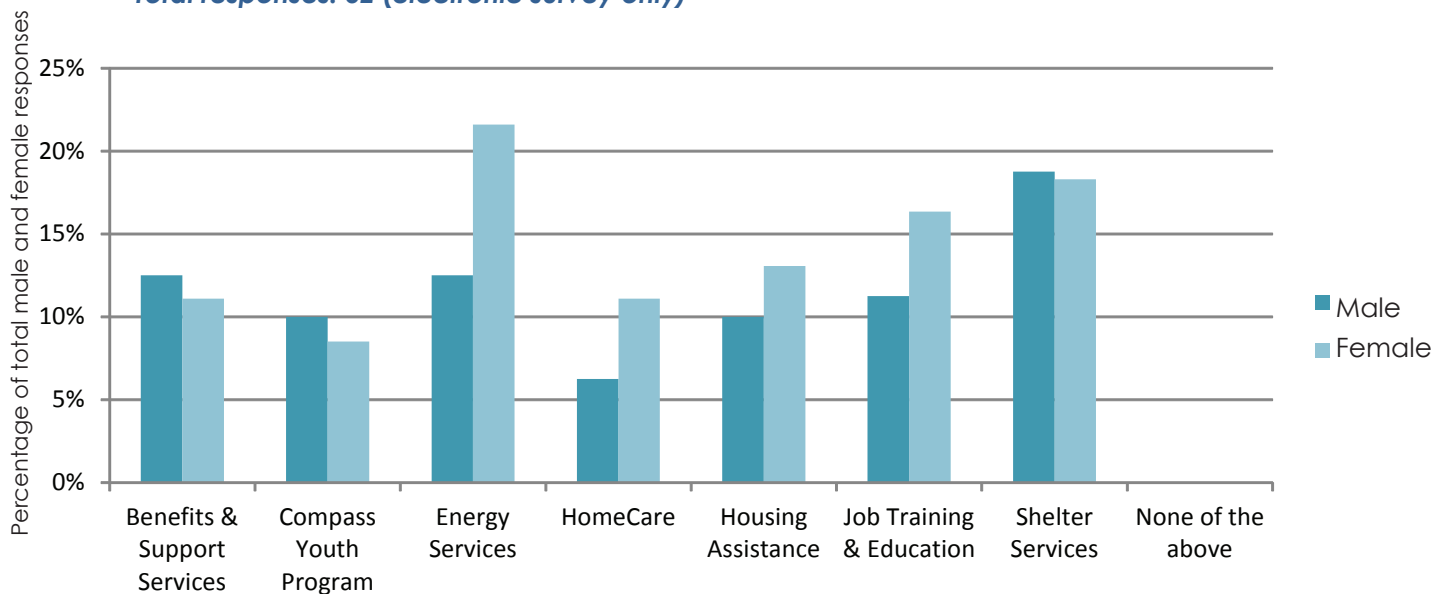
# Community Needs Assessment

## Survey Results by Gender

Q. How important is ACTION INC.'s role in addressing community needs? *Total responses: 60 (electronic survey only)*



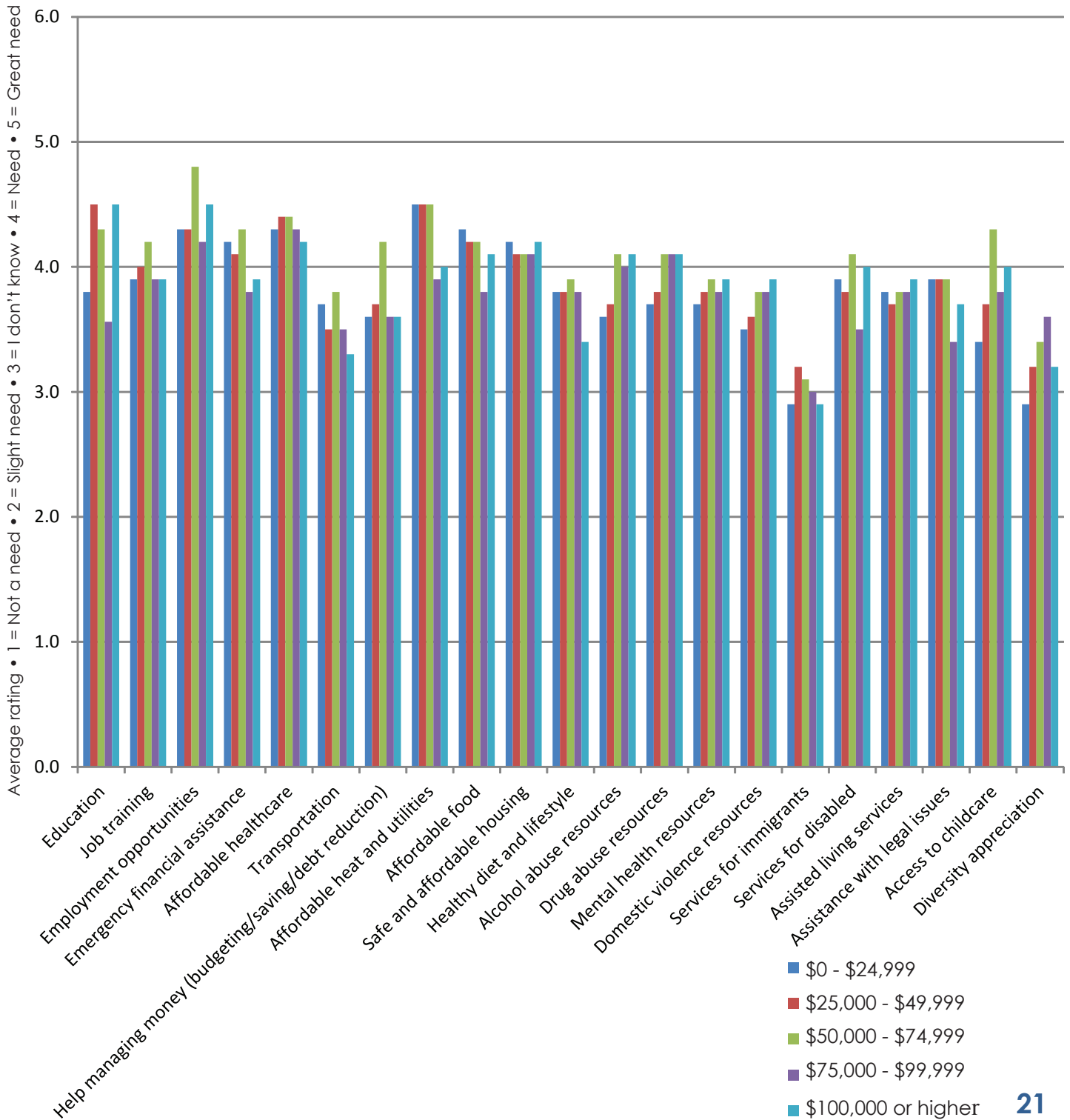
Q. When you think of ACTION INC., which programs do you think of? *Total responses: 62 (electronic survey only)*



# Community Needs Assessment

## Survey Results by Income Level

Q. What are the biggest needs in your community? *Total responses: 530*





# Community Needs Assessment

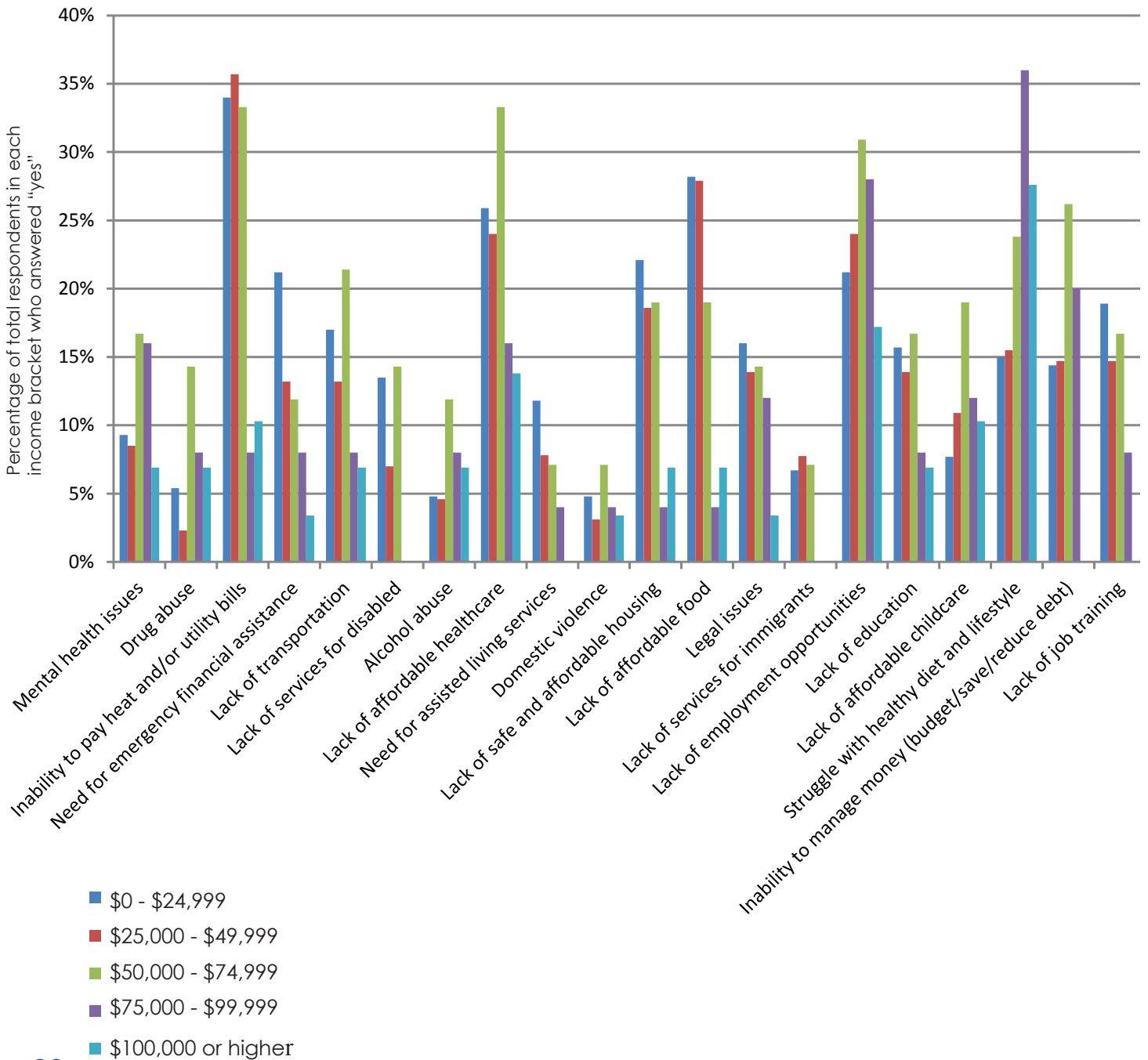
## Survey Results by Income Level

**Q.** Do any of these needs personally impact you or anyone in your household?

**Total overall survey respondents:**

**\$0 - \$24,999: 312 • \$25,000 - \$49,999: 129 • \$50,000 - \$74,999: 42**

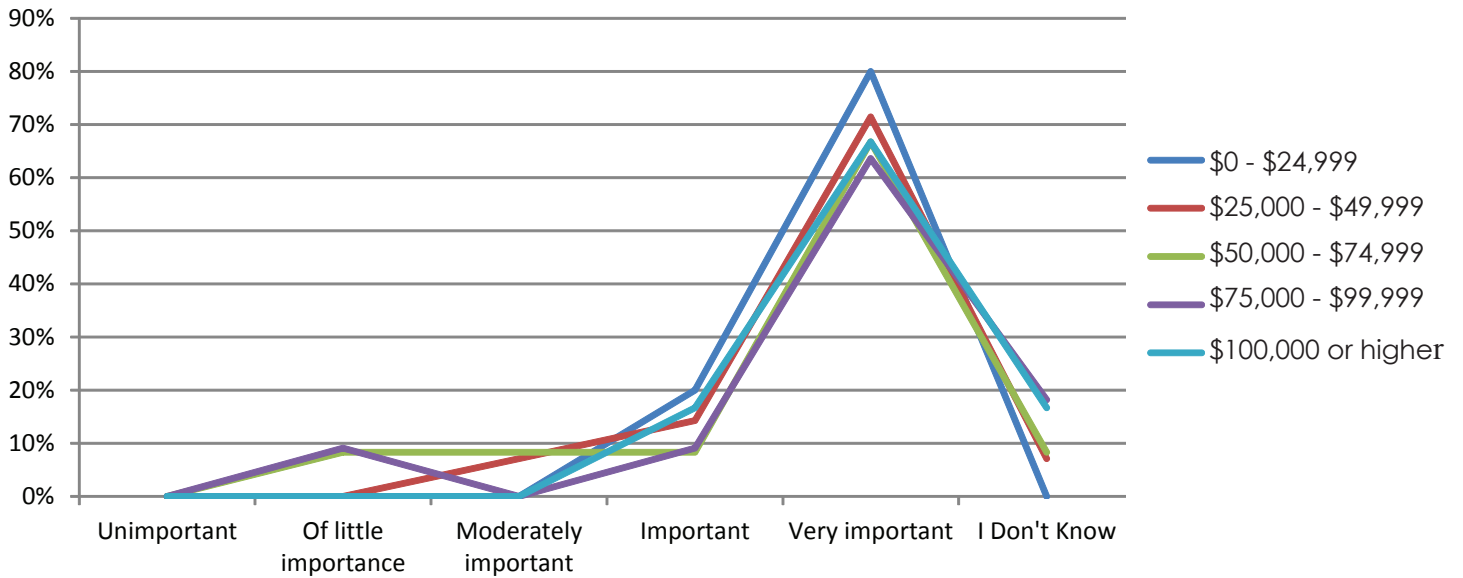
**\$75,000 - \$99,999: 25 • \$100,000 or higher: 29**



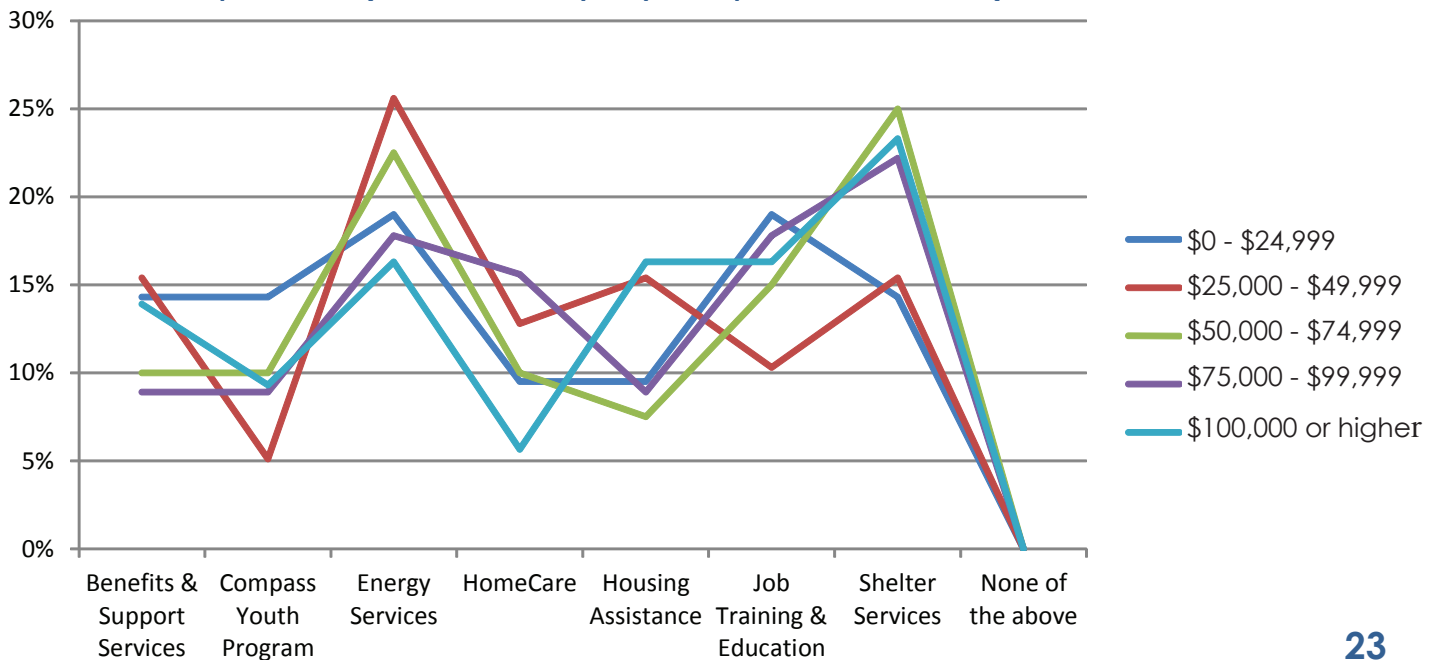
# Community Needs Assessment

## Survey Results by Income Level

Q. How important is ACTION INC.'s role in addressing community needs? *Total responses: 59 (electronic survey only)*



Q. When you think of ACTION INC., which programs do you think of? *Total responses: 61 (electronic survey only, multiple choices allowed)*

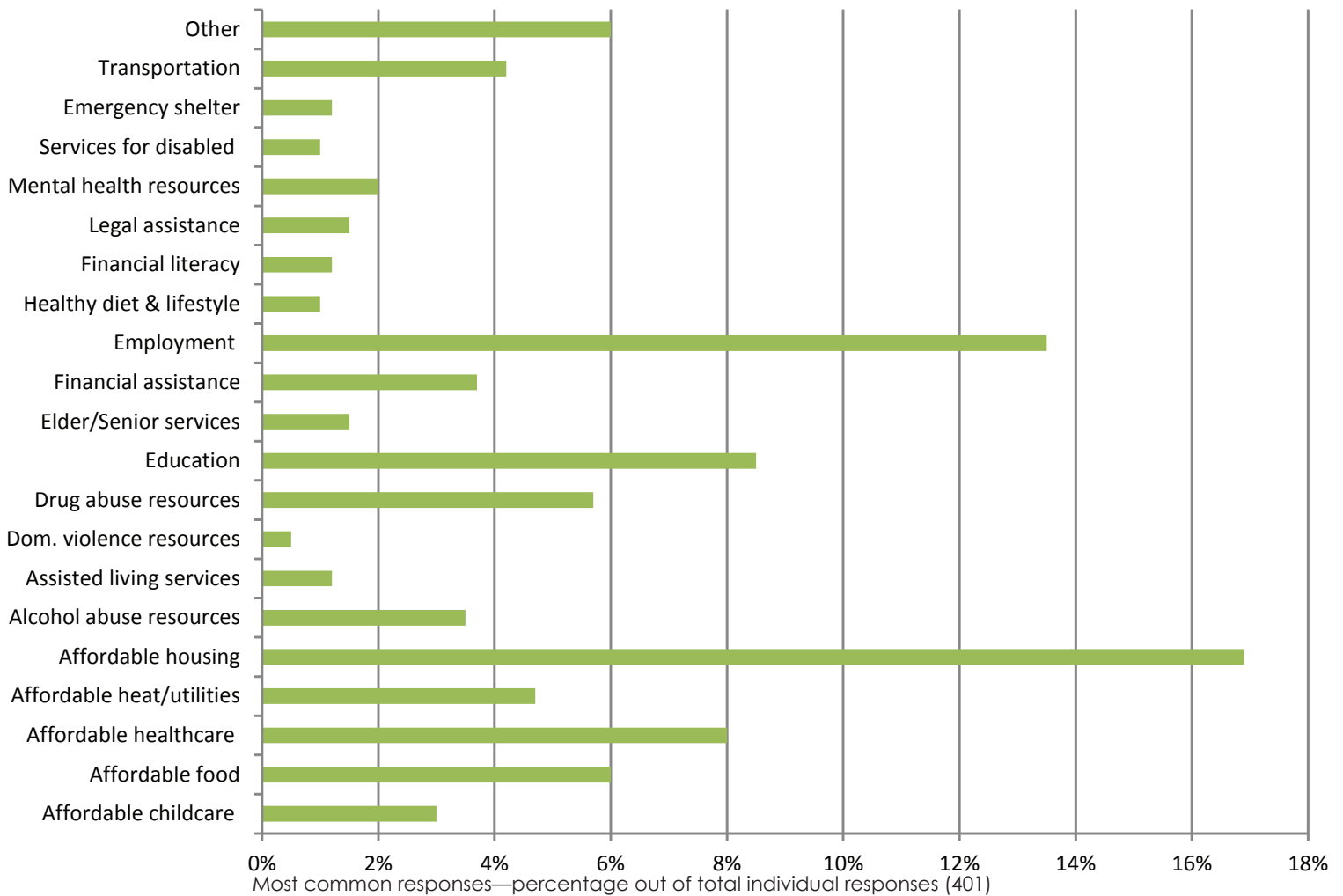


# Community Needs Assessment

## Survey Results: Open-Ended Questions

Q. What do you think are the top three needs in your community?

Total respondents: 134 • Total individual responses: 401



**MOST COMMON RESPONSES:** 1. Affordable housing 2. Employment opportunities

Q. Why do you think these needs exist? *A random sampling of responses*

“There are very few ‘regular working people’ who can afford to live in our area. The cost of real estate is making [Gloucester] one-dimensional as far as socioeconomic diversity is concerned.”

“Salaries aren’t going up, but prices on everything else are.”

“Cutbacks at the Federal and State level have reduced services.”

“Culturally, we treat sex and drug use as a moral issue, as opposed to a prevention/education issue.”

24 “Gloucester is an isolated community with a long history of complex socioeconomic challenges.”

# Community Needs Assessment

## Survey Results: Open-Ended Questions

Please share your ideas for addressing the most important needs in your community. *A random sampling of responses*

- “Provide job training and education for the people, support the entrepreneur, have a new jobs think tank.”
- “A campaign to educate the population about the need for low-cost housing to break through the ‘not in my back yard’ opposition to any proposed new housing.”
- “I feel education leads to empowerment. Also, intervention with children so that they can break some of the cycles that are repeated from the lifestyle choices that they see within their family units.”
- “Build or convert smaller buildings for studio apartments. Maintain an industrial base and working harbor. Provide extensive education on drug abuse at early ages.”
- “Education that reaches out and touches the lives of all Cape Ann residents, helping them to understand why our neighbors are in such peril.”
- “Create more affordable housing collaborations; work with the business community, city government and interested community members to creatively brainstorm ways to increase employment opportunities and funding for such endeavors; increase services for prevention as well as treatment of substance abuse and domestic violence.”

### Q. Are there programs/services that you would like to see ACTION provide?

*A random sampling of responses*

- “Better availability of free or low cost legal services.”
- “Affordable childcare.”
- “Classes in managing money and all issues relating to credit cards for teenagers.”
- “Clothing swap for maternity and infant/ kids clothes.”
- “Homeless shelters that partner with animal shelters to care for people’s pets if they are suddenly displaced but there is a chance they will be able to keep the pet if they get short-term help.”
- “Work with the city on a comprehensive housing plan. We need to have a community of mixed incomes and occupations.”
- “More about healthy lifestyle mentally and physically.”
- “Helping out with employment for students.”
- “Transportation assistance.”
- “Assistance and somewhere to stay for homeless people during the day.”
- “Support for single parents with a college education who need help to advance their careers.”
- “More services geared toward those with mental health issues.”
- “More trade-specific job training.”

## Community Needs Assessment Summary

### Top Community Needs

The overall results of the community needs survey identified the biggest community needs as follows: 1) employment opportunities, 2) affordable heat and utilities, 3) affordable healthcare, 4) affordable food, and 5) safe and affordable housing. Interestingly, the top five community needs are the same as the top five needs that respondents identified as personally impacting them or anyone in their household. A designated top need for employment opportunities, along with job training, cut across all assessment methods including the three focus groups that were held (see page 10, *Service Provider Focus Group*; page 11, *COMPASS Youth Program Focus Group*; and page 12, *ACTION Shelter Focus Group*).

### Addressing Top Needs

ACTION INC. operates programs that address all five of the top needs listed above as follows: 1) employment opportunities: addressed directly by all Job Training and Education programs (see page 48, *Job Training and Education*) and indirectly by many other programs that help people tackle barriers to employability; 2) affordable heat and utilities: addressed directly by Energy Services (see page 44, *Energy Services*); 3) affordable healthcare: addressed by Benefits and Support Services through case management and access to MassHealth (see page 37, *Benefits and Support Services: Public Benefits Advocacy*), and by Shelter Services specifically for homeless individuals (see page 55, *Shelter Services: Case Management and Supportive Services*); 4) affordable food: addressed by Benefits and Support Services through case management and access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (see page 37 *Benefits and Support Services: Public Benefits Advocacy*) and by Shelter Services specifically for homeless individuals (see page 55, *Shelter Services: Homeless Shelter*); and 5) safe and affordable housing: addressed by Benefits and Support Services through housing-related advocacy including rent/mortgage assistance (see page 39, *Benefits and Support Services: Housing Assistance*), and by Shelter Services through the operation of affordable housing units in Gloucester (see page 54, *Shelter Services: Affordable Housing*).

### Surveys Versus Focus Groups: Uncovering Underlying Causes of Top Needs Through Deeper Discussion

Unlike the survey respondents (due to the nature of the survey), focus group participants were able to explore through an in-depth discussion the causations and links between the designated needs. Participants in all three focus groups noted transportation and training for in-demand jobs as needs associated with employment opportunities. Lack of transportation is a major barrier to access to employment. To address this, ACTION INC will hold discussions next year with the Cape Ann Transportation Authority and other stakeholders to explore ways to increase access to transportation thereby increasing access to employment opportunities for our service area's population. See page 41, *Benefits and Support Services: Basic Needs*. ACTION's COMPASS Youth Program recently discussed plans with a local driving school to partner together to offer driver's education classes to the program's students at a discounted rate. Acquiring driver's licenses will allow the students to access employment, internship, and further education opportunities. See page 44, *COMPASS Youth Program: Basic Needs*.

# Community Needs Assessment

## Importance and Awareness of ACTION INC.

When asked “How important is ACTION INC.’s role in addressing community needs?” the majority (67.4%) of survey respondents answered “very important.” In comparison, when asked “To what extent do you think the community is aware of ACTION INC.’s programs and services?” a larger majority (75.5%) of survey respondents answered “some of the programs” as opposed to “most of the programs” or “all of the programs.” Despite the fact that most people think ACTION’s role in addressing community needs is very important, most people are only aware of some of ACTION’s programs. This discrepancy shows a need for increased marketing efforts and outreach to raise awareness of the services that ACTION offers to ensure that residents are able to access what services they need. During 2010 and 2011, ACTION INC. increased participation at community outreach events, the number of publications and outreach materials we distributed, and our presence and activity in local news outlets, online social media outlets and our own website. We will continue to focus on these areas over the next three years. See page 35, *Agency-wide: Community Outreach*.

## Data by Gender and Income

For a more in-depth review of the overall community needs survey results, the data was broken down into 1) data results by gender and 2) data results by income. Disaggregating the data into subgroups uncovers important information on patterns and trends. The gender-disaggregated data shows that, while both males and females identified affordable healthcare, affordable heat and utilities, and employment opportunities as the top as the top three community needs, males identified 1) affordable heat and utilities, 2) affordable healthcare, and 3) affordable food as the top three needs that personally impact them or anyone in their household, while females identified 1) affordable healthcare, 2) affordable food (tied with affordable healthcare) and 3) employment opportunities as personally-impacting needs. In general, females place more importance on ACTION INC.’s role in addressing community needs. Also, females relate ACTION INC. more to the organization’s Energy Services, Job Training and Education, and HomeCare programs, while males identify ACTION INC. more with the organization’s Benefits and Support Services, COMPASS Youth Program, and Shelter Services programs. Although the gender-disaggregated data’s value must be weighted on the number of male versus female respondents out of the total service area’s population, the data may play a role in ACTION INC.’s efforts to target males versus females with which services are needed and outreach efforts to raise awareness on which programs are offered.

The income-disaggregated data uncovered patterns and trends between the different income levels of survey respondents. The importance of ACTION INC.’s role in addressing community needs was rated highest by the \$0 - \$24,000 household income level and second highest by the \$25,000 - \$49,999 level. Interestingly, there is a decrease in the rating of importance by the \$50,000 - \$74,999 and \$75,000 - \$99,000 household income levels but the importance rating increases according to the \$100,000 or higher level. Logically, the lowest income level would rate the importance of ACTION INC.’s role in addressing community needs highest, since those in the lowest income bracket are often most in need of, and qualify for, ACTION’s services. The question remains as to why a rating increase of the importance of ACTION INC.’s role is seen in the highest income bracket, \$100,000 or higher. The income-disaggregated data reveal the significance of ACTION INC. increasing the organization’s engagement and dialogue with low-income groups to ensure that they have access to needed services, with mid-income groups who may be eligible for some ACTION programs now or in the future, and with high-income groups to explore ways to partner together to address community needs.

# Community Needs / Internal Needs

## Conclusion

Overall, the need for employment opportunities and job training was the major theme in the community needs assessment. With the high unemployment rate, lack of jobs, and, in a rapidly changing labor market, the mismatch of in-demand jobs to workers with sought-after skills, ACTION INC. will focus on strategic implementation of job training and employment initiatives. ACTION will continue to offer training in the high demand healthcare industry and expand the type of job training and education offered to address the need for sought-after skills and accommodate for a larger and more varied unemployed and underemployed population. ACTION INC. will also build and strengthen partnerships with local employers to fulfill the need for internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training. See page 48, *Job Training and Education*.

## Internal Needs Assessment Methods

### Meetings

The Planning Committee and its subcommittees met regularly throughout the strategic planning process to discuss both the Community Needs Assessment and the Internal Needs Assessment. Included in the full Planning Committee were members of the Board of Directors Planning Committee. These individuals, along with ACTION staff, reported back to the full Board of Directors on the status of the strategic planning process. In addition, Planning Committee members met individually with each Program Director as well as some support staff to discuss the outcomes of the Community and Internal Needs Assessments, and in response, to develop the program's service strategy and goals for the upcoming three years.

### Surveys

The ACTION INC. Planning Committee developed electronic surveys for staff and for the Board of Directors using the online tool Survey Monkey. These surveys were completed anonymously and designed to obtain input on the needs and issues within the community, including ideas for new services and improvements to existing programs. They also collected information on staff and Board satisfaction and on the effectiveness of ACTION INC.'s internal operations. Surveys were completed by 45 staff members and 10 Board members.

Survey results will be used to further guide the services we provide in the coming years, as well as the type of experience our valued Board and staff members can expect to have in their interactions with ACTION.

Included in this report are some results from the community needs portions of the staff and Board surveys.

### Staff & Board Strategic Planning Retreat

An all-day Staff and Board Strategic Planning Retreat was held on April 19, 2011 at the Community House of Hamilton and Wenham. The day provided an opportunity for staff and Board members to connect with one another, share program successes and new initiatives, and discuss the needs within our service area. The event was facilitated by Nanette Robicheau of Technical Development Corporation, a nonprofit consulting



# Internal Needs Assessment

and research group experienced in assisting Community Action Agencies and other organizations with strategic planning.

The agenda for the Staff and Board Strategic Planning Retreat included the following components:

- Overview of the strategic planning process
- Panel discussion of the current political climate and how it will impact ACTION INC. and other Community Action Agencies
- Giving an Effective Elevator Speech—overview and small group activity
- Mission and Vision Statement—overview and small group activity
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis—overview and small group activity
- Presentation on preliminary results of the Community Needs Assessment

## Outcomes of Surveys & Retreat

Among the outcomes of the surveys and retreat, staff and Board members expressed a need for increased community outreach, fundraising efforts, interdepartmental communication and collaboration, and innovation in service creation and delivery.

Over the past year, ACTION INC. has already been hard at work toward these goals, which were furthered with the creation of a new Marketing and Planning department to increase community outreach and fundraising efforts, as well as a new Director of Administration and Program Operations to help coordinate departments and encourage collaboration. The new vision statement for ACTION INC. (see page 62, *Vision Statement*), as well as the service strategies for each of our programs (see *Service Delivery, Strategies and Goals*, beginning on page 34), took these goals into consideration.

## Review of Mission & Vision Statement

The Staff and Board Strategic Planning Retreat provided an opportunity for all ACTION INC. staff and Board of Directors members to review our existing mission and vision, engage in a discussion (led by facilitator Nanette Robicheau) on effective mission and vision statements, and break into small groups to develop suggestions for new statements.

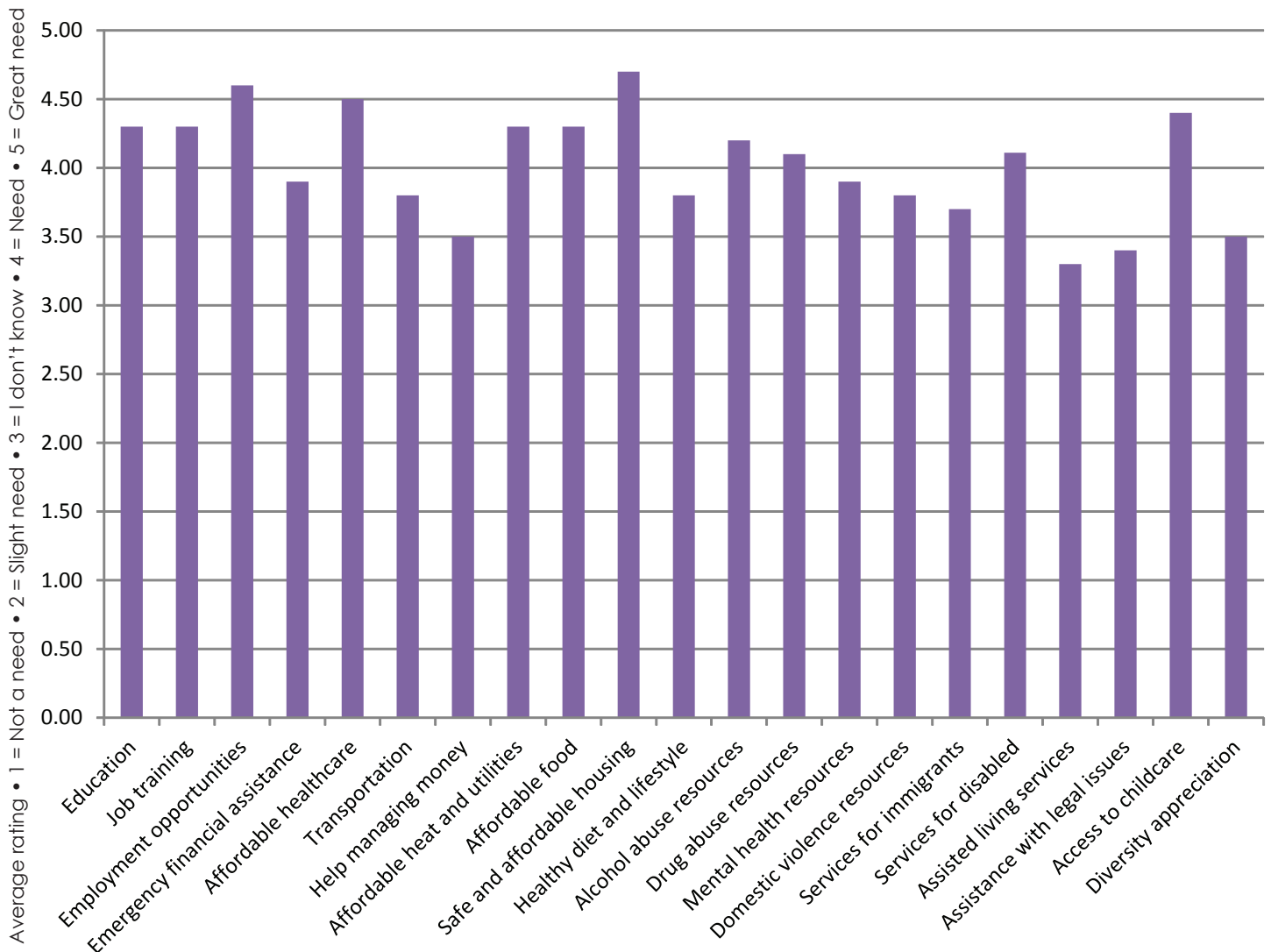
Planning Committee members compiled and consolidated the results of these discussions to draft new mission and vision statements for ACTION INC. These drafts were then reviewed by the Executive Director, the full Planning Committee, and finally, the full Board of Directors.

In drafting the new statements, the Planning Committee took into consideration the guidelines suggested in "Telling Community Action's Story: A Guidebook," a manual put out by the National Association for State Community Services Programs in February 2009.

# Internal Needs Assessment

## Board of Directors Survey: Community Needs

Q. What are the biggest needs in ACTION's service area? *Total responses: 10*



### TOP FIVE RESPONSES

1. Safe & affordable housing • 2. Employment opportunities • 3. Affordable healthcare
4. Access to childcare • 5. (Tie) Education, job training, affordable heat & utilities, affordable food

Q. What do you think are the top three needs in our service area?

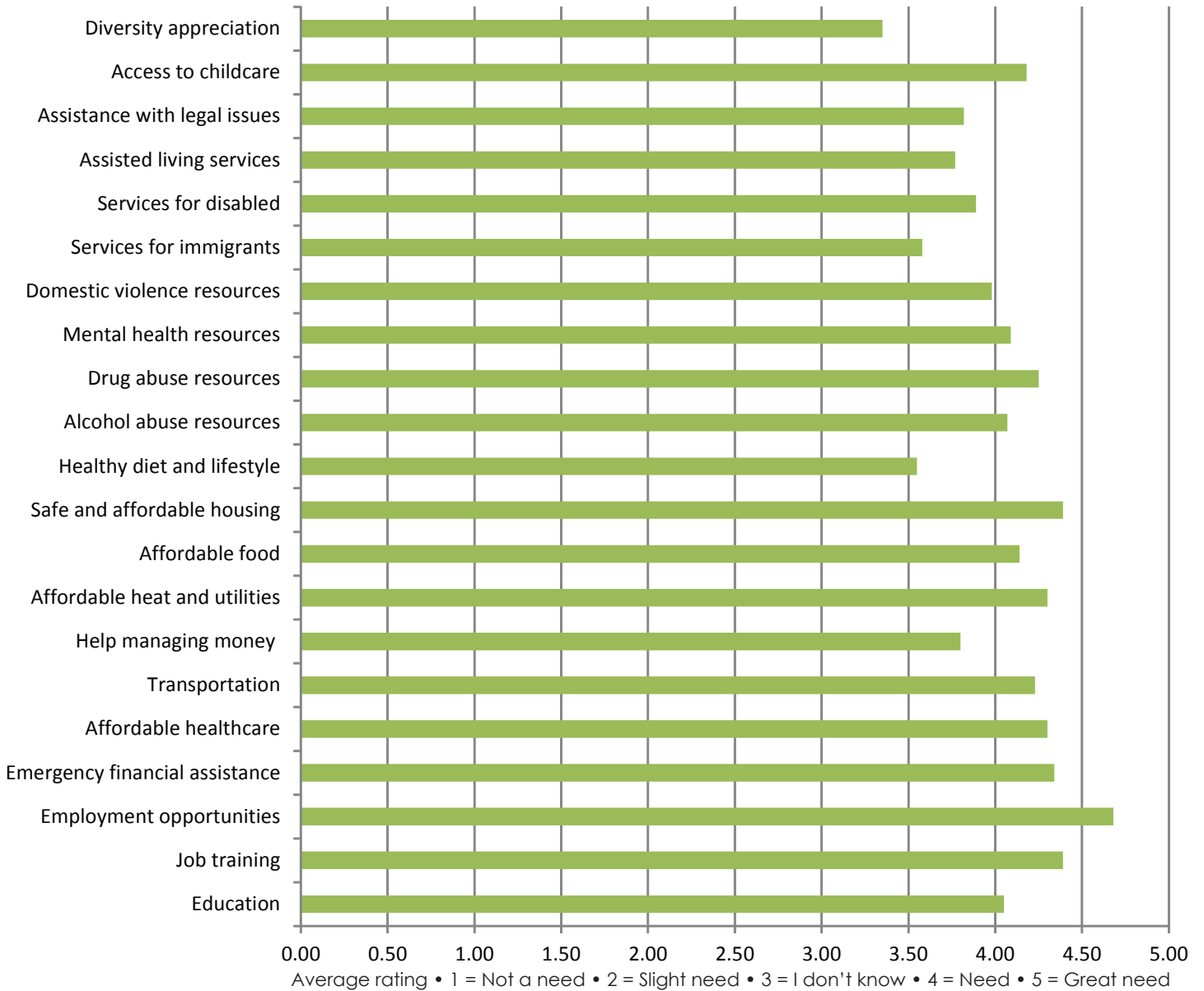
*Total responses: 10*

**MOST COMMON RESPONSES:** Affordable housing & employment opportunities

# Internal Needs Assessment

## Staff Survey: Community Needs

Q. What are the biggest needs in ACTION's service area? *Total responses: 44*



### TOP FIVE RESPONSES

1. Employment opportunities • 2. & 3. (Tie) Safe & affordable housing, job training  
 4. & 5. (Tie) Affordable heat & utilities, affordable healthcare

Q. What do you think are the top three needs in our service area?

*Total responses: 40*

**MOST COMMON RESPONSES:** Affordable housing, employment opportunities, affordable healthcare, affordable heat & utilities/energy assistance

## Internal Needs Assessment Summary

Conducting the internal needs assessment provided a way for staff to uncover ACTION INC.'s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges as an organization. It also offered an opportunity to explore community need from the perspective of ACTION INC. staff members, who interact daily with disadvantaged individuals and families in need of our services. This process will allow ACTION INC. to grow and ensure that the agency is strategically positioned to provide the best possible service to clients in a time of greatest need. The assessment also provided an opportunity to assess the level of staff satisfaction, engagement, and ownership. The health of the organization and quality of service delivery is dependent upon the productivity, satisfaction, and investment of its staff.

Staff and board members identified 1) employment opportunities, 2) job training, 3) safe and affordable housing, and 4) affordable healthcare as the top community needs. Of these, employment opportunities and safe and affordable housing were rated as the biggest needs. The staff- and board-designated needs are in line with the top needs designated in the community needs assessment. Although employment opportunities remained the prevalent theme in the internal needs assessment, safe and affordable housing received an even higher rating internally than in the community needs assessment. The overlap in top needs designated in the internal needs assessment compared to the community needs assessment is a reflection of the frequent interaction and dialogue that staff and board members maintain with clients, community members, and local partners. At ACTION INC., we believe that the success of our programs and direct service delivery is based on the level at which staff and board are engaged with clients, partners, and the local community. It is essential that shared decision-making, participation, collaboration, and ownership occur on an ongoing basis. ACTION INC. will continue practicing these values over the next three years.

During the retreat and in the surveys, staff and board members expressed a need for increased community outreach, fundraising, interdepartmental communication and collaboration, and innovation in service creation and delivery. In both assessments, staff, board, and community members recognized a need for community outreach to raise awareness of ACTION INC.'s role in the community and the organization's services across all programs. This is particularly important since the majority of survey respondents expressed that, although they think ACTION INC.'s role in addressing community needs is very important, they are aware of only some of ACTION's programs.

As mentioned previously, during 2010 and 2011 ACTION INC. increased participation at community outreach events, the number of publications and outreach materials we distributed, and our presence and activity in local news outlets, online social media outlets and our own website. We will continue to focus on these areas over the next three years. See page 35, *Agency-wide: Community Outreach*. In addition, ACTION INC. has heightened fundraising efforts through a new Planning, Marketing, and Development department and, over the next three years, will increase fundraising activity. See page 60, *Funding Strategy*.

## Conclusion & Evaluation

Based on the Community and Internal Needs Assessments, ACTION INC. has designated the following priorities: 1) job training and employment opportunities, 2) safe and affordable housing, 3) affordable healthcare, and 4) affordable heat and utilities. In the following section (*Service Delivery and Goals*), we describe the many programs and services offered by ACTION INC. which work to address these priority areas along with other needs. We also outline the goals for each of our programs and activities over the next three years (2012-2014).

To develop these goals, ACTION staff took into consideration all of the information gathered through the various needs assessment methods included in the previous pages, as well as discussions that took place during Planning Committee meetings, Board of Directors meetings, and the Staff/Board Strategic Planning Retreat. Planning Committee members met individually with program staff from each ACTION department to evaluate services and set new goals. Program staff were able to provide information on their own experiences in developing and providing services on a day-to-day basis, setting short- and long-term goals for each service, and tracking outcomes over time.

In setting goals for the next three years, we assumed a level of funding equal to or above 2011 levels. However, it is important to note that despite ACTION's intentions of increasing fundraising efforts, funding availability is subject to change from year to year.

To evaluate the success of our programs and services, ACTION Planning Committee staff will work with program staff to track and report on the outcomes of each goal twice yearly. Outcomes will be reported to the Community Services Unit of the Department of Housing and Community Development through annual workplans as well as six-month progress reports. In completing each report, ACTION staff will carefully review the 2012-2014 Community Action Plan to ensure that we are continuing to meet the needs of our community and to achieve set goals. It is also important to note, however, that the Community Action Plan is designed to be a living document which can and should be revisited and revised in response to the evolution of our community's needs and the agency's available resources.

### National & State Goals

#### National Goals & Indicators

As a Community Action Agency, ACTION INC. works toward the goals set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services. These goals and their related performance indicators help agencies like ACTION to identify needs, set goals, develop services, and evaluate outcomes.

The six overarching goals are:

**Goal 1:** Low-income people become more self-sufficient.

**Goal 2:** The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.

**Goal 3:** Low-income people own a stake in their community.

**Goal 4:** Partnerships among supporters and providers to low-income people are achieved.

**Goal 5:** Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

**Goal 6:** Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

Each of these six goals has related National Performance Indicators used to track progress toward that goal. National Indicators have been identified for each service described in the next section.

#### Massachusetts Priority Areas

The State of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has identified the following four broad priority topics for the state:

1. Financial literacy, income management, and asset development
2. Job development and job readiness
3. Housing and homelessness prevention
4. Benefit enrollment and coordination of services

### Agency-Wide Service Delivery & Goals

#### Service Delivery Structure

ACTION INC. is overseen by a Board of Directors made up of one-third community representatives, one-third public sector representatives, and one-third private sector representatives. The agency is operated by an administrative team led by the Executive Director, and delivers a range of programs and services through the following departments: Benefits and Support Services, COMPASS Youth Program, Energy Services, HomeCare, Job Training and Education, and Shelter Services. The following pages outline agency-wide issues, strategies, and goals, along with those specific to each department.

# Service Delivery & Goals: Agency-Wide

## Strategies & Goals

### Agency Capacity

ACTION INC. is a major employer in Gloucester, with approximately 150 staff members. The agency also enlists the help of interns, including students participating in the COMPASS Youth Program and students from local colleges, and volunteers, particularly for the agency's annual Project Uplift Holiday toy drive for children. Over the next three years, ACTION INC. will continue to serve as a top employer in the area and will encourage innovation and cross-departmental collaboration and training. ACTION will also encourage and seek out opportunities for continued training and professional development, in order to increase the agency's ability to provide high-quality services while also helping employees to achieve professional goals.

**National Goals & Indicators: 5.1** - Broadening the resource base.

**Goals for the next three years: 5.1D** - Each year 158 ACTION INC. staff members will attend one or more professional development trainings. **5.1E** - Each year 10 ACTION INC. Board of Directors members will attend one or more trainings.

### Agency Partnerships

ACTION INC. maintains a network of partnerships in order to connect people with the services and resources they need. See page 57, *Linkages*, for more information and a list of partnerships. Over the next three years, ACTION will continue to maintain and strengthen partnerships and to develop new relationships, which will in turn provide new opportunities for funding and service delivery.

**National Goals & Indicators: 4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**Goals for the next three years:** ACTION INC. will maintain 148 partnerships in the first year, 150 partnerships in the second year, and 152 partnerships in the third year.

### Community Outreach

Both the 2011 Internal Needs and Community Needs Assessments suggested that ACTION INC. enhance its community outreach and public relations efforts in order to increase awareness of the agency's programs and services. In the past year, ACTION has already created a new Marketing and Planning department to work toward these goals, and has increased participation in community events as well as creation and distribution of outreach materials. We also underwent a redesign of our website at [www.actioninc.org](http://www.actioninc.org) and created an ACTION INC. Facebook page.

Over the next three years, ACTION will continue to increase the agency's presence at community events; the number of publications and outreach materials produced and distributed; and the number of press releases and notices about our programs, services, needs, and achievements in local news outlets. We will also continue to regularly update our website and Facebook page.

**National Goals & Indicators: 5** - Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

**Goals for the next three years:** Each year ACTION INC. staff will conduct outreach at community-based events 10 times and will submit press releases and/or notices to local news outlets at least 10 times. Staff will also maintain an ACTION Facebook page and will update this page on a weekly basis.



# Service Delivery & Goals: Agency-Wide

## Leveraged Funding

ACTION INC. is supported by a range of public and private funders as well as individual donors. With federal funding for many community programs at risk, it is becoming increasingly important for agencies such as ACTION to increase private fundraising efforts and seek out new partnerships.

Over the next three years, ACTION INC. will work to develop unrestricted revenue through fundraising appeals and enhanced public outreach efforts; seek out and apply for program-specific as well as agency-wide grants from new funding sources, particularly private and corporate foundations; and continue to generate rental revenue as landlord to retail space, service provider offices, and affordable housing units.

See page 55, *Funding Strategy*, for more information.

**National Goals & Indicators: 5** - Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

**Year 1 Goals:** ACTION will mobilize \$25,000,000 in non-CSBG dollars to help support and expand its programs, \$90,000 will be raised through individual donations and fundraising events, \$110,000 will be raised through private grants, and \$65,000 will be received as rental payments from Action tenants.

**Year 2 Goals:** ACTION will mobilize \$26,250,000 in non-CSBG dollars, \$95,000 will be raised through individual donations and fundraising events, \$120,000 will be raised through private grants, and \$65,000 will be received as rental payments from Action tenants.

**Year 3 Goals:** ACTION will mobilize \$27,500,000 in non-CSBG dollars, \$100,000 will be raised through individual donations and fundraising events, \$130,000 will be raised through private grants, and \$65,000 will be received as rental payments from ACTION tenants.

## Project Uplift

ACTION INC.'s administrative team operates the annual Project Uplift holiday toy and clothing drive for underprivileged children in the Cape Ann area. The program aims to remove some of the stress low-income families experience during the holidays, when faced with the decision of purchasing gifts for their children over food, rent, and other essentials. By alleviating some of the pressure to spend limited resources on gifts, ACTION helps disadvantaged families maintain financial stability during the holiday season.

Each year, local businesses and organizations volunteer to serve as collection sites for toy and clothing donations. The Project Uplift Coordinator and volunteers work to compile donations, collect and review applications from income-eligible families, and distribute gifts to participating children. Over the next three years, ACTION will continue to operate Project Uplift and develop relationships with new businesses willing to support the program.

**National Goals & Indicators: 2.3** - Community engagement. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**Goals for the next three years:** Each year ACTION INC. will provide clothing and toys to 700 children during the holiday season, will partner with 60 businesses and organizations who will serve as donation collection sites for Project Uplift, and will secure three volunteers to assist with the program.

# Service Delivery & Goals: Agency-wide / Benefits

## Substance Abuse Treatment

ACTION INC. continues to be committed to addressing substance abuse issues in our community. Please see page 55, *Shelter Services: Case Management and Supportive Services*, for a description of measures ACTION has taken to address these issues for the homeless and the community at large. Additionally, in response to needs expressed through our local Mass Call2 Opioid Overdose Prevention initiative, the City of Gloucester Health Department applied for a state grant to pilot an innovative substance abuse education and intervention program, S.B.I.R.T. (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment). In 2011, the City received the grant which allows for a Health Promotion Advocate (HPA) to be placed in Gloucester's Addison Gilbert Hospital Emergency Room during peak hours to screen patients for substance abuse issues and facilitate referrals to treatment as appropriate. The City created a Core Team to help implement the S.B.I.R.T. pilot. ACTION INC. serves as an active member of this team and fiscal sponsor for the grant. The HPA is an ACTION staff person and several other ACTION staff also participate fully in team meetings and trainings.

The goal of the pilot is to assist ER staff and the community by improving patient access to primary care, preventative services, and substance abuse treatment. The long-term goal for the project is for the S.B.I.R.T. model to be integrated into hospital operations after the pilot is completed. In addition, ACTION INC.'s Licensed Substance Abuse Counselor, a full-time employee at our Emergency Shelter, also received training in the S.B.I.R.T. program.

**National Goals & Indicators: 4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**Goals for the next three years:** This is a pilot program in its first year of operation. **4.1C** - During the pilot, ACTION will partner with local government (City of Gloucester). **4.1L** - During the pilot, ACTION will partner with a health service institution (Addison Gilbert Hospital).

## Benefits & Support Services

### Description & Goals

The Benefits and Support Services department works with individuals and families to identify steps to take in order to become more self-sufficient and improve their quality of life. For many people, this department is their first introduction to ACTION INC. and to the many services we offer. The department is staffed by social service advocates who help people access public benefits, free tax assistance, financial literacy, assistance with housing-related issues, referrals to other service organizations, and more.

### Issues & Strategies

#### Public Benefits Advocacy

**Issue:** The Community Needs Survey ranked affordable healthcare and affordable food as high needs in our service area. For low- to mid-income households, accessing medical services and health insurance and paying to put food on the table can be difficult and overwhelming. Individuals have stated that application forms for MassHealth and for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can be confusing and difficult to complete and submit.

## Service Delivery & Goals: Benefits & Support

**Strategy:** Benefits and Support Services offers public benefits advocacy services, helping people navigate the application process for MassHealth and SNAP and submit their applications online. Where ACTION INC. cannot assist directly, referrals are provided to other agencies and resources to connect people with benefits such as Social Security; Emergency Aid to Elders, Disabled and Children (EAEDC); Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); aid for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and food pantry services.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.2** - Employment supports. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.4** - Family supports. **6.5** - Service counts.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.2G** - Each year 50 working individuals will obtain healthcare services for themselves or family member. **1.2I** - Each year 100 working individuals will obtain food assistance. **6.4D** - Each year 10 non-working (elderly or disabled) individuals will obtain healthcare services for themselves or family member. **6.4F** - Each year 35 non-working (elderly or disabled) individuals will obtain food assistance. **6.5E** - Each year ACTION staff will provide information or referrals 1500 times. **4.1A** - Each year ACTION will partner with 3 non-profit organizations. **4.1D** - Each year ACTION will partner with 5 state government agencies. **4.1L** - Each year ACTION will partner with 3 health service institutions.

### Referrals & Information

**Issue:** The Service Provider Focus Group and open-ended responses to the Community Needs Survey confirmed our belief in the importance of coordinating efforts among local service providers in order to provide comprehensive and accessible services.

**Strategy:** During 2010, ACTION took steps to improve its intake and client referral process, creating a Client Services Coordinator position responsible for a comprehensive initial assessment of the needs of all call-in and walk-in clients. After conducting an initial intake, the Coordinator schedules an appointment for the client, if necessary, with a social services advocate from the Benefits and Support Services department. The advocate then conducts a more detailed intake to identify the specific needs of the client and his or her household. By revamping this system, ACTION has greatly improved the efficiency of its client services. Clients receive more one-on-one attention during their first visit and are able to meet more quickly with an advocate. If certain services cannot be provided directly by ACTION INC., the advocate will provide information and referrals to outside agencies as appropriate. See page 57, *Linkages*, for a list of partners.

During the next three years, ACTION will continue to enhance our intake and service coordination processes by implementing the Benefits Enrollment and Coordination System (BECS), a statewide initiative that will allow Community Action Agencies to more effectively provide clients with referrals to internal departments and outside agencies.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.5** - Service counts.

**Goals for the next three years:** **6.5E** - Each year ACTION staff will provide information or referrals 3000 times. **4.1** - Each year ACTION will maintain at least 40 partnerships. Each year 200 call-in and walk-in clients will be referred to ACTION programs by the Client Services Coordinator and the Coordinator will make 300 referrals. During year one, ACTION will discuss implementation of the Benefits Enrollment and Coordination System (BECS). During year two, staff will participate in BECS training and will begin piloting the system. BECS will be fully implemented in year three.

# Service Delivery & Goals: Benefits & Support

## Housing Assistance

**Issue:** A lack of and need for affordable housing consistently ranked very high in the Community Needs Assessment. A need for emergency financial assistance was also noted. Benefits and Support Services staff report that housing-related issues are present in the majority of cases they see.

**Strategy:** Advocates will continue to work with clients to address housing-related issues. The aim will be to help households reach stability and greater economic security by preventing evictions and foreclosures and assisting in accessing affordable housing. Services provided to help stabilize housing situations will include: rental/mortgage assistance, landlord/tenant conflict mediation, referrals to legal assistance and budget counseling, case management, referrals to appropriate partner agencies, and more. ACTION will work with the Gloucester Housing Authority and local service providers to connect clients with safe, affordable housing.

Advocates will also assist households experiencing housing crises using available emergency funds. Funding will be provided to alleviate temporary emergency housing situations through a variety of sources, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Cape Ann Interfaith Commission, and other private donations. Funds will be secured by ACTION through applications, requests to public sources and appeals to private sector funders, specifically faith communities and neighborhood groups.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.3** - Economic asset enhancement and utilization. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.2** - Emergency assistance. **6.5** - Service counts.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Housing and homelessness prevention; financial literacy, income management, and asset development.

**Goals for the next three years:** **6.2B** - Each year 10 emergency vendor or utility payments will be funded. **6.2C** - Each year 70 individuals will receive emergency rent or mortgage assistance. **6.5E** - Each year ACTION staff will provide information or referrals 1000 times. **4.1** - Each year ACTION will maintain at least 23 partnerships. Each year 200 households will maintain or work to secure safe and affordable housing situations as a result of ACTION's housing advocacy services.

## Financial Management & Literacy

**Issue:** The Community Needs Assessment, particularly focus groups and interviews, identified a need for financial literacy and management to help households learn to budget, manage a small or decreased income, and prioritize spending. The Assessment also identified a need for representative-payee services for those who are unable to manage their finances on their own.

**Strategy:** Benefits and Support Services will continue to operate the Individualized Development Account (IDA) program and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, and will increase financial literacy class offerings over the next three years.

IDA is a five-year program designed to help participating clients increase their financial literacy, work toward opening a savings account, and save toward a specific asset. Participants complete a structured financial literacy course and work toward opening a savings account to save for one of the following goals: 1) developing a small business, 2) pursuing post-secondary education, 3) pursuing the purchase of a home.

## Service Delivery & Goals: Benefits & Support

VITA is an annual program that helps households accurately file their state and federal taxes, receive the maximum possible return, and receive the Earned Income and Child Care Tax Credits when applicable. Tax assistance is provided at ACTION INC.'s main office by ACTION staff as well as trained seasonal volunteers.

During 2010, ACTION hired a part-time Financial Literacy and Education Coordinator to manage IDA and VITA and to offer other financial literacy services. The Coordinator will develop targeted classes for groups with different income levels and backgrounds. In the next year, ACTION will also look into training staff as representative-payees, in order to offer this valuable service to those who are unable to manage their own finances.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.3** - Economic asset enhancement and utilization. **2.3** - Community engagement. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Financial literacy, income management, and asset development.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.3A1** - Each year 95% of individuals participating in the VITA program will identify a tax credit. **1.3B1** - Each year 60% of IDA program participants will demonstrate the ability to complete and maintain a budget for over 90 days. ACTION will offer 6 financial literacy classes and provide one-on-one financial counseling to 20 individuals in year one; 8 classes and 25 individuals in year two; and 10 classes and 30 individuals in year three. In year one, ACTION staff will meet to discuss adding representative-payee services, and if feasible, will begin training. In years two and three, if feasible, representative-payee services will be available as needed.

### Advocacy Services for Spanish & Portuguese Speakers

**Issue:** ACTION INC.'s 2008-2011 Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning Process revealed an increasing immigrant population and a greater need for services specifically for the non-English-speaking community. New services were created as a result, but additional outreach is required to reach potential participants in need of assistance. In addition, for every town/city in ACTION's service area, the percentage of individuals of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity increased from the 2000 U.S. Census to the 2010 U.S. Census (see pages 3-8, *Community Profiles*).

**Strategy:** Following the 2008-2011 Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning Process, ACTION INC. hired a trilingual Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking advocate. ACTION offers advocacy services to Spanish and Portuguese speakers including access to public benefits such as MassHealth and Food Stamps, case management services, assistance obtaining and renewing passports, U.S. citizenship applications, and referrals to other ACTION services as well as outside agencies. Also see page 51, *Job Training and Education: Services for Immigrants and Non-Native Speakers*.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.2** - Employment supports. **6.4** - Family supports. **6.5** - Service counts.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.2G** - Each year 20 working non-English-speakers will obtain healthcare services for themselves or family member. **1.2I** - Each year 8 working non-English-speakers will obtain food assistance. **6.4D** - Each year 12 elderly or disabled non-English-speakers will obtain healthcare services for themselves or family member. **6.4F** - Each year 5 elderly or disabled non-English-speakers will obtain food assistance. **6.5E** - Each year ACTION staff will provide information or referrals to non-English-speakers 200 times. Each year 50 non-English speakers will receive advocacy services.



# Service Delivery & Goals: Benefits / COMPASS

## Basic Needs

**Issue:** The Community Needs Assessment, in particular the Service Providers Focus Group, revealed some additional basic needs that are not currently being met effectively, or at all. These include affordable trash removal, affordable laundry services, basic supplies for infants, and access to affordable transportation.

**Strategy:** Over the next three years, ACTION will work with other local service providers and businesses to develop strategies to ensure that critical basic needs are met. During 2011 ACTION became the fiscal agent for the local program Better Off Baby Showers, which provides diapers, clothing, and other baby essentials to disadvantaged parents.

ACTION will reach out to the Cape Ann Transportation Authority and other providers to develop a transportation strategy, to town officials to address the issue of trash removal and recycling awareness, and to other service providers, local laundromats, and/or affordable housing developments to address the need for affordable, accessible laundry services.

**National Goals & Indicators: 4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**Goals for the next three years:** In year one, ACTION staff will set up meetings with relevant partners. During years two and three, depending on the outcomes of these meetings, ACTION and/or relevant partners will develop and implement strategies to address these needs. Each year ACTION will also continue to partner with Better Off Baby Showers.

## COMPASS Youth Program

### Description & Goals

ACTION INC.'s COMPASS Youth Program provides alternative education for disadvantaged young adults ages 16-21 who have experienced barriers to learning in the traditional school environment. COMPASS helps students realize educational goals, develop employment skills, discover personal and career interests, and earn a high school diploma or GED. These goals are accomplished through the Gloucester High School Satellite Day Program, Night School Program, and General Education Diploma Preparation Course, along with case management, life skills, and internship opportunities. To offer these programs, COMPASS partners with Gloucester High School, the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board/U.S. Department of Labor, Cape Ann Art Haven, Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center, Cape Ann YMCA, Cape Ann Museum, and various private funders and foundations.

### Issues & Strategies

#### Gloucester High School Satellite Day Program

**Issue:** Data illustrates that young adults with higher levels of education earn considerably higher incomes than those without a high school or college degree. According to the U.S. Department of Education's 2010 report, *The Condition of Education*, in 2008 the median earnings of young adults with a Master's degree or higher was \$55,000; it was \$46,000 for those with a Bachelor's; \$36,000 with an Associate's; \$30,000 with a high school diploma or equivalent; and \$23,500 for those who did not earn a high school diploma or equivalent.

## Service Delivery & Goals: COMPASS Program

According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the drop-out rate at Gloucester High School (GHS) for the 2009-2010 school year was 2.4%. In addition to students who have already dropped out, many others are considered "in-school drop-outs" due to their low grades and poor attendance.

Meetings with staff at GHS, including the Principal and School Adjustment Counselor, have revealed a need for alternative programming for younger students (freshmen and sophomores), in order to "catch" these students before they drop out of high school. Currently, the COMPASS Youth Program serves juniors and seniors only.

**Strategy:** COMPASS offers the Gloucester High School Satellite Day Program in partnership with GHS, in order to help high school juniors and seniors who are at risk of dropping out. The program provides an alternative high school education with small class sizes, one-on-one attention, and supportive services to get students back on track for graduation. COMPASS is operated under ACTION INC.'s Job Training and Education department, and has a strong focus on preparing students for employment and/or post-secondary education. Classes run Monday through Friday, 8:40 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. throughout the school year. Students earn credits in Math, Science, English, and History, while also taking elective courses and participating in academic advising, career coaching, computer and financial literacy classes, life skills, and counseling and case management as needed. Students work with the COMPASS Academic and Vocational Coach to identify career interests and skills, and have the option of participating in paid internships to gain valuable work experience.

The COMPASS Day Program enjoys a graduation rate of nearly 100% and the success of this model has been proven year after year. Over the upcoming three years, COMPASS staff will continue to support juniors and seniors through our existing programs, while developing new strategies to reach out to more youth and to offer additional opportunities to COMPASS students.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.2** - Employment supports. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.3** - Child and family development. **6.5** - Service counts.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** **6.3B2** - Each year 16 students will improve social/emotional development. **6.3B3** - Each year 16 students will avoid risk-taking behavior. **1.2A** - Each year 16 students will obtain job skills. **1.2B** - Each year 9 students will receive a diploma. **4.1** - ACTION will maintain 7 partnerships. **6.5E** - Each year ACTION staff will provide information or referrals to students 15 times. Each year 6 juniors enrolled in the Day Program will earn credits to move on to senior year. In year one, ACTION staff will meet to discuss the expansion of our COMPASS facility and will obtain necessary estimates and plans for building modifications. If deemed feasible, building modifications will be implemented during years two and three.

### **Night Diploma Program & General Education Diploma Program**

**Issue:** A lack of employment opportunities was one of the top concerns in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. For students who have already left high school without earning a diploma, options for employment and educational opportunities are even more limited.



# Service Delivery & Goals: COMPASS Program

**Strategy:** The COMPASS Youth Program offers two programs for students who have already left high school without earning a diploma. The Night Diploma Program is designed for students who have left Gloucester High School (GHS) but have at least 90 credits and passed both the Math and English MCAS. The program provides these students with high quality alternative education and supportive services to get them back on the path toward earning a high school diploma. Students work on independent studies Monday through Thursday from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. under COMPASS staff supervision. Upon completion of courses, they are awarded their high school diploma.

The General Education Diploma (GED) Preparation Course is for young adults ages 16-21 who have dropped out of high school. The program is available to residents of Gloucester, Essex, Ipswich, Rockport, and Manchester-by-the-Sea, and runs in eight-week cycles beginning at the end of September, with an additional seven-week summer program. Participants are given the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) to assess their reading and math levels and develop an education plan. GED tutoring is provided four evenings per week. Once participants are prepared to take the GED exam, COMPASS staff work to schedule the test at one of the North Shore Community College campuses.

Participants in the Night Program or the GED Program also have access to onsite case management, academic advising, career coaching, help identifying interests and skills, computer and financial literacy, life skills, and counseling services.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.1** - Employment. **1.2** - Employment supports. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.3** - Child and family development. **6.5** - Service counts.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.2A** - Each year 8 Night Program and 10 GED students will obtain job skills. **1.2B** - Each year 9 Night Program and 10 GED students will receive a diploma/GED. **1.1A** - Each year 5 Night Program and 8 GED students will get a job. **6.3B2** - Each year 8 Night Program and 10 GED students will improve social/emotional development. **6.3B3** - Each year 8 Night Program and 10 GED students will avoid risk-taking behavior. **4.1** - Each year Action will maintain 4 partnerships. **6.5E** - Each year ACTION staff will provide information or referrals to students 15 times.

## Internships

**Issue:** Employment opportunities were rated as a top need in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Unemployment Assistance, in May 2011 Gloucester's unemployment rate was 7.8%, compared to the Massachusetts rate of 7.4%. Further, Gloucester had the second highest unemployment rate in the North Shore Workforce Investment Area, following Lynn.

**Strategy:** Past experience has proven that on-the-job training and internships can lead to better employment opportunities. Students enrolled in the three primary COMPASS programs (GHS Day Program, Night Diploma Program, and GED Preparation) have the opportunity to participate in 150-hour paid internships. Students meet regularly with an on-staff Academic and Vocational Coach to explore their individual interests and skills. Students utilize the Harrington-O'Shea Interest Inventory and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in order to develop profiles and determine potential academic and vocational programs that would be a good fit. Based on the outcomes of students' work with the Academic and Vocational Coach, some students choose to participate in internships in

## Service Delivery & Goals: COMPASS / Energy

a career area that fits their profile. Students are paid for their hours by U.S. Department of Labor funding provided through the North Shore Workforce Investment Board.

Internship participants have the opportunity to earn high school work-study credits and may also be offered employment opportunities with the host companies following the conclusion of the internships.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.1** - Employment. **1.2** - Employment supports. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.1A** - Each year 5 students will get a job. **1.2A** - Each year 10 students will obtain job skills. **4.1D** - Each year Action will maintain a partnership with the Workforce Investment Board, which funds paid student internships.

### Basic Needs of COMPASS Students

**Issue:** For economically disadvantaged teenagers, including participants in the COMPASS Youth Program, it can be difficult or impossible to pay for certain basic needs that could help those individuals to access better education and employment opportunities. Examples of such needs include money for testing fees, college application fees, school supplies, clothing appropriate for job interviews, and driver's education classes. During the 2011 COMPASS Focus Group, students identified the inability to pay for driver's education classes as a major barrier to obtaining their driver's licenses and accessing better employment and education opportunities.

**Strategy:** COMPASS Youth Program staff work closely with each student to identify individual needs and barriers to success. Over the next three years, COMPASS staff will work with ACTION development staff to identify and secure funding and partnerships that will allow us to meet certain student needs, when students are unable to afford these expenses on their own.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**Goals for the next three years:** COMPASS and ACTION development staff will work together to identify new funding sources for basic student needs, securing one new source each year. In year one, ACTION staff will contact local driver's education providers and arrange for a discounted class for COMPASS students; funding will be secured to help pay for the class, which will be offered to 10 students who have already expressed interest. In years two and three, as funding allows, discounted driver's education will be available to interested COMPASS students.

## Energy Services

### Description & Goals

ACTION INC.'s Energy Services division offers programs that help households reduce energy consumption and costs. These programs include assistance with home heating bills, weatherization to keep homes warmer in winter and cooler in summer, heating system repairs and replacements, and advice and products to reduce electricity use. Energy

# Service Delivery & Goals: Energy Services

Services is a nationwide leader in the energy affordability crisis facing economically disadvantaged households. Our highly-trained energy experts work in partnership with local weatherization contractors, utility companies, and fuel providers to help people save money and conserve energy resources. In addition to offering programs within communities throughout the North Shore, Energy Services also oversees energy conservation improvements funded through utility companies and conducted through Community Action Agencies throughout Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire.

## Issues & Strategies

### Fuel Assistance

**Issue:** Affordable heat and utilities was listed as a top need in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. Economically disadvantaged households are devastated by the need to choose between heating their homes and basic necessities such as groceries and medications. With the cost of home heating fuel rising dramatically over recent years, many people would be unable to pay to heat their homes without some form of assistance. In New England, as in many other parts of the country with extreme weather patterns and harsh winters, this is a life-threatening situation.

**Strategy:** ACTION Energy Services works to address the energy affordability problem endemic to economically disadvantaged consumers. Through our Fuel Assistance program, we work with local fuel providers and assist households with paying their home heating bills. Each client's eligibility is determined through a comprehensive intake process. Once determined eligible for Fuel Assistance, households are referred to the Energy Conservation department to receive additional long-term saving services.

The Fuel Assistance program is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The program also receives some funding through private donations and grants. Funding for Fuel Assistance is currently at serious risk of major cuts. Over the next three years, Energy Services will work to advocate for the program while also increasing private fundraising as needed. Despite these efforts, it is anticipated that individual fuel assistance payments will be lower than in recent years.

**National Goals & Indicators: 4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.2** - Emergency assistance. **6.4** - Family supports.

**Goals for the next three years: 6.2B** - 2400 households will receive emergency heating assistance in year one, 2520 in year two, and 2650 in year three. **6.4G** - 1600 elderly and disabled individuals will receive heating assistance in year one, 1660 in year two, and 1725 in year three. **4.1F** - ACTION will maintain partnerships with 40 heating fuel vendors each year for the next three years. ACTION will maintain partnerships with 5 private funders.

### Energy Conservation

**Issue:** As mentioned above, affordable heat and utilities was listed as a top need in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. However, assisting disadvantaged households with paying their heating bills is not enough to address the problem of energy affordability and overconsumption. In order to help households become more self-sufficient and experience long-term savings, it is essential to assist them with reducing their consumption of non-renewable fuels and to provide education on energy conservation. With funding for the Fuel Assistance program facing serious cuts, these longer-term solutions are more important than ever.

## Service Delivery & Goals: Energy Services

**Strategy:** ACTION's Energy Conservation department works to contribute to the health and safety of disadvantaged households, lower the consumption of greenhouse gas-producing carbon-based fuels, create stability in housing, and ultimately contribute to national security by lowering dependence on foreign sources of energy.

Our Energy Conservation programs include home weatherization, heating system repairs and replacements, and the Appliance Management Program. Weatherization includes measures such as insulating walls, floors, ceilings, and pipes; weather-stripping windows and doors; conducting a blower-door test; and more. The Appliance Management Program, operated in partnership with National Grid, offers clients educational resources to help them reduce electricity use, in addition to compact florescent light bulbs and replacement of inefficient refrigerators and freezers.

These programs are funded primarily through the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Energy American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (DOE ARRA), and National Grid. Over the next three years, DOE ARRA funding will come to a close and regular DOE funding is expected to decrease, while utility company funding is expected to increase. As the funding landscape changes, ACTION Energy Services anticipates being able to continue serving households at the same rate, thanks in large part to our history of adaptability and expertise in the field.

In the past, Energy Conservation programs have focused primarily on residential buildings with between one and four units. In the upcoming years, we intend to increase services for larger, multi-family buildings of up to 25 units, to possibly include public housing in addition to private. Projects will be selected based on cost-efficiency and the amount of energy that will be saved.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **2.1** - Community improvement and revitalization. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.4** - Family supports.

**Goals for the next three years:** **2.1D** - 1475 housing units will be improved directly by ACTION through energy programs (weatherization, heating system, and Appliance Management Program jobs) in year one, 1769 in year two, and 2122 in year three. **4.1F** - ACTION will maintain partnerships with 25 contractors each year for the next three years. **6.4H** - 400 elderly and disabled households will receive energy services in year one, 500 in year two, and 600 in year three. ACTION will also oversee an additional 7,465 energy conservation jobs throughout MA and parts of southern NH in year one, 8950 in year two, and 10750 in year three.

### **Energy Conservation Advocacy and Partnerships**

**Issue:** Energy affordability is a complicated national issue, and one which is expected to only increase in importance as non-renewable fuels become more depleted and energy consumption and costs continue to rise. It is essential that local, regional, and national groups join together and design comprehensive strategies to address this issue, and to mobilize and leverage resources to fund services for disadvantaged households.

**Strategy:** ACTION INC.'s Vice President for Energy Services will continue to develop and lead state, regional, and national energy programs, and to advocate for principals of conservation and affordability for disadvantaged households. Over the next three years, the Vice President will negotiate with government agencies, negotiate a new three-year (2013-2015) plan with utility companies, and partner with national trade organizations including the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, National

## Service Delivery & Goals: Energy / HomeCare

Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates, Low Income Peer Exchange, National Low Income Energy Coalition, State Energy Advisory Board, Health and Human Services Low Income Energy Committee, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and the New England Public Utility Commission. He will also attend ISO New England on behalf of ACTION INC., the New England Community Action Association, and the Low Income Energy Affordability Network. In addition, ACTION INC. partners with Action for Boston Community Development, the largest Community Action Agency in Massachusetts, to administer the CEC Renewables Program. The two agencies will subcontract with Community Action Agencies to provide renewable energy and/or repair services to economically disadvantaged electric consumers.

**National Goals & Indicators: 4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**Goals for the next three years:** Over the next three years, ACTION will maintain partnerships with 7 non-profit organizations (**4.1A**), 7 consortiums/collaborations (**4.1G**), and 3 for-profit businesses/corporations (**4.1F**).

### HomeCare

#### Description & Goals

ACTION INC.'s HomeCare program has been serving elderly and disabled adult clients for more than 40 years. The program is designed to allow these vulnerable populations to continue living in the comfort of their own homes for as long as possible. To achieve this, the program offers personal care, homemaking, companion, Home Health Aide, and hospice services to income-eligible individuals as well as private-pay clients. HomeCare serves approximately 600 individuals each year.

#### Issues & Strategies

##### HomeCare

**Issue:** The need for both in-home care and placement in long-term care facilities is expected to rise in coming years as the population ages. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's middle series projections, "The number of persons 65 years old and over would more than double by the middle of the next century to 80 million. About 1 in 8 Americans were elderly in 1994, but about 1 in 5 would be elderly by the year 2030. The oldest old (persons 85 years old and over) is the fastest growing segment of the elderly population" (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/pop-profile/elderpop.html>).

In addition, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' guidelines for elder care emphasize care that is by choice and that is as unrestrictive as possible. This means that the preference is for elders to remain in their own homes, receiving supportive services as needed, for as long as possible rather than utilizing the limited resources of long-term care facilities. The services required for elders and disabled adults to continue to remain at home may change or increase over time; therefore, a range of services are necessary to allow for a continuum of care.

## Service Delivery & Goals: HomeCare / Job Training

**Strategy:** ACTION HomeCare utilizes a model that emphasizes care that is as unrestrictive as possible and that allows clients to remain at home. The program is able to offer a range of services through contracts with other providers, including SeniorCare, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Program for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly, Senior Care Options, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and private-pay clients. During 2010 the program also partnered with the VNA Network and Hospice to offer hospice care. HomeCare's available services include cleaning, laundry, shopping, and meal preparation; personal care including bathing, dressing, medicine reminders, transfers, and toileting; caregiver respite and companion services; Home Health Aide services; and hospice care.

The recent increase in ACTION HomeCare employees trained as Home Health Aides, as well as the addition of hospice care, will allow HomeCare to continue to serve clients even as their needs increase. This will provide a greater continuum of care while also creating a large and stable workforce.

Over the upcoming three years, HomeCare will continue to recruit and train new employees and to emphasize continuous learning and credentialing for existing employees; in particular, the program will increase the number of Home Health Aide trained employees on staff. Home Health Aides will then have the option of receiving training in hospice care.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **5.1** - Broadening the resource base. **6.1** - Independent living.

**Goals for the next three years:** **4.1** - Each year ACTION will maintain partnerships with Senior Care, VNA Hospice Network, Elder Services Plan of the North Shore, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. **5.1F** - Each year HomeCare staff will spend 550 hours in professional development trainings. **6.1A** - 575 seniors will be able to maintain an independent living situation in year one, 590 in year two, and 610 in year three. **6.1B** - Each year 2 disabled adults between the ages of 18 and 54, and 4 ages 55+ will be able to maintain an independent living situation.

## Job Training & Education

### Description & Goals

ACTION INC.'s Job Training and Education department helps disadvantaged individuals who are unemployed or underemployed gain the skills and experience necessary to improve their career choices. To this end, we offer skilled training programs; basic computer courses; career coaching; assistance with job searches; case management; employment assistance for immigrants, homeless and transitionally homeless individuals, and members of Gloucester fishing families; and referrals to other employment programs and resources. We also work to identify and address the underlying issues behind each individual's lack of adequate employment. Our expert staff works to stay up-to-date on labor market trends in order to identify specific industries and positions where local jobs with livable wages exist.



# Service Delivery & Goals: Job Training & Education

## Issues & Strategies

### *Job Development*

**Issue:** Employment opportunities were rated as a top need in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Unemployment Assistance, in May 2011 Gloucester's unemployment rate was 7.8%, compared to the Massachusetts rate of 7.4%. Further, Gloucester had the second highest unemployment rate in the North Shore Workforce Investment Area, following Lynn.

**Strategy:** ACTION's Job Training and Education department employs a full-time Career Development Coordinator. The Coordinator meets with unemployed and underemployed individuals and provides employment-related case management, career counseling, job placement and retention services, and assistance with resume, cover letter, and interviewing skills. She also connects clients with other ACTION services and outside agencies as necessary, in order to reduce or eliminate other barriers to adequate employment. ACTION's Job Training and Education staff continuously research changes in the job market and remain aware of locally available employment opportunities.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.1** - Employment. **1.2** - Employment supports. **6.5** - Service counts.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.1A** - 90 unemployed individuals will get jobs in year one, 100 in year two, and 100 in year three. **1.2A** - 200 individuals will obtain job skills in year one, 250 in year two, and 250 in year three. Job Training staff will provide job development services to 625 individuals in year one, 700 in year two, and 700 in year three.

### *Skilled Training Programs in the Allied Healthcare Industry*

**Issue:** As stated above, Gloucester has the second highest unemployment rate in the North Shore Workforce Investment Area. Many of the jobs that do exist in the Cape Ann area are seasonal and in the service and tourist industry. Such jobs tend to be highly competitive, offer few or no benefits, and have little or no growth potential.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development reported for the first quarter of 2010 that the healthcare and social assistance sector comprises 19% of the total workforce in the North Shore. According to ACTION INC.'s employer partners in the healthcare field, there are persistent vacancies in our service area for Certified Nursing Assistants/Home Health Aides (CNA/HHA). The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the projected increase in demand for HHAs for the period 2006 through 2016 to be 49% nationwide and 34% statewide.

**Strategy:** ACTION has offered multiple healthcare training programs through the Job Training and Education department. Over the next three years, we will continue to offer our successful Clinical Medical Assistant (CMA) Training Program, a 22-week program that teaches participants the skills necessary for careers such as medical assistants, laboratory technicians, and, with additional training, dialysis technicians. Students learn how to check vital signs, assist in physical exams, perform electrocardiograms and CPR, and collect and prepare laboratory specimens. The course includes a 120-hour hands-on externship at an academically affiliated medical facility.



## Service Delivery & Goals: Job Training & Education

We will also seek support to offer a Certified Nursing Assistant/Home Health Aide (CNA/HHA) Training Program, which was offered successfully in 2009 and 2010 using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. If funding allows, the CNA/HHA Training Program will be offered in partnership with Golden Living Center, an assisted living facility in Gloucester. Students will learn the skills necessary to provide quality healthcare to residents in nursing homes, assisting-living facilities, and for clients in their homes. Golden Living Center provides onsite clinical training space as well as instruction and mentoring by professional healthcare staff.

In addition to training in the healthcare field, CNA/HHA and CMA students will also receive case management, life skills training, job development services, and referrals to other services as necessary.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.1** - Employment. **1.2** - Employment supports. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.1A** - 23 Clinical Medical Assistant (CMA) and Home Health Aide (HHA) program participants will get jobs in year one, 25 in year two, and 25 in year three. **1.2A** - Each year for the next three years, 36 CMA and HHA students will obtain job skills. **1.2C** - Each year for the next three years, 18 CMA students will earn a CMA certificate. Each year for the next three years, 18 HHA participants will complete the HHA program. ACTION will maintain 40 partnerships in offering training in the allied healthcare industry in year one, 45 partnerships in year two, and 48 in year three.

### Computer Training

**Issue:** A lack of computer skills has proven to be a significant barrier to employment for many of the individuals that seek help through ACTION's Job Training and Education department. According to a July 2010 MSNBC article, "About a fifth of Americans don't have Internet access at home, the Pew Internet and American Life Project reported in June. Their profile—generally older and less educated—correlates closely with the demographics of those suffering the fastest rises in unemployment, an analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows" ([http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33106445/ns/technology\\_and\\_science/t/lack-computer-skills-foils-many-job-seekers/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33106445/ns/technology_and_science/t/lack-computer-skills-foils-many-job-seekers/)).

**Strategy:** ACTION's Job Training and Education department offers computer courses designed to help disadvantaged individuals develop the basic computer skills necessary to succeed in today's job market. Courses are taught in ACTION's modern computer lab facility in Gloucester and include Basic Windows, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Over the next three years, we will continue to offer basic computer courses to disadvantaged individuals. Additionally, we will work to address suggestions made at the 2011 ACTION Emergency Homeless Shelter focus group and the COMPASS Youth Program focus group to offer both more advanced computer courses, as well as courses targeted specifically to job seekers; for example, writing cover letters and resumes in Microsoft Word or conducting online job searches using Microsoft Windows.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.2** - Employment supports.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** 120 individuals will obtain job skills by attending computer courses offered by ACTION in year one, 130 in year two, and 130 in year three.

# Service Delivery & Goals: Job Training & Education

## **Employment Assistance for Homeless & Transitionally Homeless**

**Issue:** Employment opportunities and affordable housing were both listed as major needs in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. With Gloucester's high unemployment rate and with the area's ongoing lack of affordable housing, many individuals find themselves unable to obtain employment and unable to pay their rent or mortgage—losing their homes as a result.

**Strategy:** ACTION's Job Training and Education department offers Project Achievement, supported by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development McKinney-Vento funding. Project Achievement provides employment assistance and supportive services to homeless and transitionally homeless individuals. A full-time Job Developer assists eligible clients in job searches and helps them overcome barriers to employment, leading to permanent, affordable, and stable housing situations. An on-staff Licensed Mental Health Counselor is also available.

Clients staying at the ACTION Shelter and in Moore's Way sober house receive case management, job counseling, job placement support, and skills training. Participants who live at Moore's Way also participate in experiential workshops, co-dependency workshops, and individual and group counseling. Project Achievement also offers an entrepreneurship program for up to two individuals at Moore's Way. Participants are assessed for skill levels and appropriate motivation for self-employment businesses.

ACTION will continue to operate Project Achievement over the next three years.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.1** - Employment. **1.2** - Employment supports. **3.2** - Community empowerment. **6.5** - Service counts.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness; homelessness prevention.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.1A** - Each year for the next three years, 16 unemployed individuals will get jobs. **1.2A** - 19 individuals will obtain job skills in year one, 20 in year two, and 20 in year three. **1.2H** - 15 individuals will obtain safe and stable housing in year one, 16 in year two, and 16 in year three. **6.5E** - ACTION staff will provide information and referrals 52 times in year one, 60 in year two, and 60 in year three. Each year for the next three years, 19 Moore's Way and ACTION Shelter clients will enter post-secondary education programs and 2 individuals will participate in an entrepreneurship program.

## **Services for Immigrants & Non-Native Speakers**

**Issue:** During ACTION INC.'s 2008-2011 Community Needs Assessment, we discovered a need to make our services and programs more accessible to immigrants and non-native speakers. This led to the creation of new programs and the hiring of two bilingual social service advocates, one full-time and one part-time. While great strides have been made to serve these vulnerable populations, our advocates report that many non-English-speaking individuals continue to struggle with seeking and securing help. In addition, the percentage of individuals with Hispanic or Latino ethnicity increased in every town/city in ACTION's service area between the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2010 U.S. Census (see pages 3-8, *Community Profiles*).

**Strategy:** ACTION offers English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses that include access to supportive services and are designed to help immigrants gain the language skills, cultural awareness, and support necessary to obtain jobs or better jobs. ACTION offers three levels of ESOL: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. English literacy classes are

## Service Delivery & Goals: Job Training & Education

proven to lead to better employment opportunities and increased community involvement. Classroom space is provided by Gloucester High School. In addition to three class instructors, a Portuguese/Spanish-speaking case manager provides supportive services for participants, including referrals to other ACTION services and outside agencies.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.2** - Employment supports. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.5** - Service counts.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** **1.2A** - 65 ESOL students will obtain job skills in year one, 65 in year two, and 70 in year three. **4.1I** - Each year for the next three years, ACTION will partner with Gloucester High School to offer ESOL. **6.3C2** - 65 ESOL students will learn improved family functioning skills in year one, 65 in year two, and 70 in year three. **6.5E** - ACTION staff will provide information and referrals 70 times in year one, 70 in year two, and 75 in year three.

### Employer Partnership Development

**Issue:** Feedback from the 2011 Community Needs Assessment suggested that ACTION diversify available job training options. Whereas more in-depth training programs currently focus on the healthcare industry (due to the availability and growth potential of these jobs), such programs are not suitable for all people. A broader range of training opportunities are necessary to help more individuals gain the skills necessary for stable and fulfilling employment.

**Strategy:** Over the next three years, Job Training and Education staff will work to identify opportunities for partnering with employers in other industries, in order to develop new training programs and placement opportunities. Specific industries and programs suggested through the Community Needs Assessment include culinary training, bank-telling, day labor opportunities, green jobs, and machinist training. ACTION staff will research a range of industries, training possibilities, and funding sources in order to determine what types of programs are feasible and will lead to actual job opportunities.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** ACTION staff will research and discuss new employer partnerships and will begin reaching out to potential partners in year one. 5 new employer partnerships will be established in year two. An additional 5 will be established in year three.

### Additional Adult Education Programs

**Issue:** As stated throughout the Community Action Plan, employment opportunities were a top need in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. Due to the isolated geography of the Cape Ann area, many unemployed and underemployed individuals are unable to access adult education and training programs that are available in the Danvers/Peabody area. Currently, ACTION offers job training programs out of our main offices in Gloucester. These programs are operated out of our only staff conference room and computer lab, and attendance is limited due to space restrictions. Other programs, such as our English for Speakers of Other Languages courses, are operated out of space donated by Gloucester

## Service Delivery & Goals: Job Training / Shelter

High School. Additional funding, space, and resources are necessary to meet the demand for these types of programs in Greater Cape Ann.

**Strategy:** Over the next three years, we will seek funding to expand our programs by constructing an Adult Education and Training Center in the unfinished lower level of our main building. This new center would include a computer lab and classroom space for a range of education initiatives, including adult and teen programs. This project would also be a crucial step toward our goal of earning designation as a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education licensed Proprietary School and toward positioning ACTION to become a Community Adult Learning Center, which would expose our programs to additional funding and partnership opportunities.

Already ACTION INC. offers a range of adult education programs. Beginning in 2011, we began offering an Adult Basic Education course, which assists with reading, writing, math, and work skills, and provides referrals to supportive services. If successful in funding the new Adult Education and Training Center, we will also add General Education Diploma (GED) preparation courses to our adult job training and education continuum.

In 2011 ACTION was also able to place our Director of Administration and Program Operations on the North Shore Workforce Investment Board, which allocates federal funding to employment initiatives in the North Shore region. The Director will advocate for additional funding to support training programs in the under-served Cape Ann area.

**National Goals & Indicators:** 1.2 - Employment supports. 4.1 - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** 1.2A - 10 Adult Basic Education (ABE) participants will obtain job skills in year one, 18 in year two, and 20 in year three. 10 ABE participants will complete the program and increase their ability at least one grade level in year one, 15 in year two, and 16 in year three. In year one, ACTION staff will meet to discuss the expansion of our facility to include an Adult Education and Training Center and will obtain necessary estimates and plans for building modifications. Construction will begin on the new Adult Education and Training Center in year two, and will be completed in year three.

## Shelter Services

### Description & Goals

The Shelter Services department provides shelter, affordable housing, and case management to low-income and homeless adults, offering them stability and a second chance. The department operates ACTION INC.'s Emergency Homeless Shelter and affordable housing units, and also oversees the operation of the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. Shelter Services staff work with the agency's other departments to develop a holistic approach that addresses the multi-faceted needs of the area's homeless population. This approach includes case management, employment and training services, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and referrals to additional service providers.

## Issues & Strategies

### **Affordable Housing**

**Issue:** Obtaining safe and affordable housing has been a persistent challenge for low- to moderate-income individuals and families in the Cape Ann area. The 2011 Community Needs Assessment revealed that this is even truer now than in the past, with affordable housing ranking as the highest or one of the top three highest needs in nearly all assessment methods. Affordable housing units are very limited in our isolated community, and for many individuals, factors such as mental health and substance abuse issues make it even more difficult to obtain and maintain stable housing.

**Strategy:** In addition to providing housing-related advocacy and working closely with the Gloucester Housing Authority for affordable housing placements, ACTION directly owns and provides property management for 11 affordable, below-market-rate, one-bedroom units at 95 Prospect Street in Gloucester, as well as four brand new efficiency units at 370 Main Street. Construction on the new units was completed in 2010 and in 2011 they were filled by previously homeless individuals.

Individuals living at these properties have access to all of ACTION INC.'s supportive services for which they are eligible. Over the course of the next three years, ACTION will work to increase accessibility to supportive services for residents of 95 Prospect Street, to possibly include regularly scheduled visits from a counselor/case manager to the building, group counseling sessions, and/or an onsite ACTION staff person. In addition, during 2011 ACTION acquired a new property in Gloucester and over the next three years intends to construct and fill four units of affordable housing for homeless families.

Shelter Services also oversees Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program that assists individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS with finding a safe and affordable place to live. ACTION supports approximately 46 HOPWA households.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **1.2** - Employment supports. **2.1** - Community improvement and revitalization. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **6.1** - Independent living.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Housing and homelessness prevention.

**Affordable housing goals for the next three years:** **1.2H** - 1 individual will obtain safe and affordable housing in year one, 7 in year two, and 5 in year three. **4.1** - ACTION will maintain 4 partnerships each year for the next three years. 19 of 19 ACTION-owned affordable housing units will be occupied in year one, 23 of 23 in year two, and 23 of 23 in year three. ACTION will secure final funding to build four new affordable housing units at Marsh Street in Gloucester by January 2012; if secured, construction will begin and will be completed in fall, 2012. 4 homeless families will be placed into the new Marsh Street units in year two. ACTION will continue to serve as landlord and provide supportive services to Marsh Street tenants in year three.

**HOPWA program goals for the next three years:** **6.1B** - 26 HOPWA clients will maintain an independent living situation in year one, 27 in year two, and 27 in year three. **1.2A** - 16 HOPWA clients will obtain job skills in year one, 17 in year two, and 18 in year three. **1.2H** - 26 HOPWA clients will obtain safe and stable housing in year one, 26 in year two, and 27 in year three. **6.5E** - ACTION staff will provide information and referrals to HOPWA clients 125 times in year one, 135 in year two, and 150 in year three. **4.1** - ACTION will maintain 14 partnerships through the HOPWA program in year one, 16 in year two, and 18 in year three.



# Service Delivery & Goals: Shelter Services

## Homeless Shelter

**Issue:** In nearly all assessment methods, the 2011 Community Needs Assessment ranked affordable housing as the highest or one of the top three highest needs. As stated above, factors such as mental health and substance abuse issues can make it even more difficult to obtain and maintain stable housing. According to the City of Gloucester's 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan, in January 2010 in Gloucester there were 65 homeless individuals and 76 homeless persons in families with children. Of the 65 homeless individuals, 54% were considered chronically homeless and served at an emergency shelter, 29% were served at transitional housing, and 17% were served at permanent supportive housing. An additional nine individuals were counted on the streets, living in cars or boats.

**Strategy:** ACTION operates a co-ed emergency homeless shelter in Gloucester to provide meals, shelter, and supportive services to homeless adults 365 nights per year. Shelter guests are provided with two hot meals and a carry-out lunch daily. Food is provided with support from The Open Door Food Pantry and the Cape Ann Interfaith Commission. For more information on supportive services available at the ACTION Emergency Homeless Shelter, see page 55, *Shelter Services: Case Management & Supportive Services*.

The 2011 Community Needs Assessment and the staff at the Action Shelter identified a need for increased capacity at the shelter. During 2011, discussions with the City of Gloucester took place to initiate raising bed limits.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **6.2** - Emergency assistance. **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Housing and homelessness prevention.

**Goals for the next three years:** **6.2E** - 275 individuals will receive emergency shelter in year one, 315 in year two, and 295 in year three. **6.2A** - 300 individuals will receive emergency food assistance in year one, 315 in year two, and 295 in year three. ACTION will maintain 3 partnerships in year one, 4 in year two, and 4 in year three. In year one, ACTION staff will meet with local officials to discuss raising the bed limit at the Shelter from a winter maximum of 26 to a year-round maximum of 34 to accommodate an increase in need. If approved, the new bed limit will be implemented in year one and will apply during years two and three.

## Case Management & Supportive Services for Homeless Individuals

**Issue:** In order to become self-sufficient and to find a pathway out of homelessness, individuals need more than just food and shelter. Supportive services are key to address the underlying causes of homelessness and poverty. During the 2008-2011 Community Needs Assessment, substance abuse was determined to be a major factor in homelessness in the area. A lack of job training and employment opportunities also play a role, as revealed through past and current assessments. When combined, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and mental health issues ranked high in the 2011 Community Needs Survey as issues impacting our service area.

**Strategy:** Supportive services available to Shelter guests and residents of ACTION-run affordable housing units include case management, employment and training services, housing counseling and assistance, substance abuse counseling, mental health and healthcare counseling and referrals, Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) appeals, and Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous meetings. The primary aim of supportive services is to help homeless individuals transition into safe and affordable



## Service Delivery & Goals: Shelter Services

housing. Services are available both directly at the ACTION Shelter and at ACTION INC.'s main offices through our other departments. The Shelter employs a full-time, onsite Licensed Substance Abuse and Mental Health Counselor. Shelter Services also oversees supportive services for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program.

Over the next three years, ACTION INC. will continue to enhance its offerings of supportive services, including job training, healthcare, and affordable food/nutrition services to address three needs that ranked high in the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. We will offer additional trainings at the Shelter, including computer skills, financial literacy, and nutrition classes. During 2011, Shelter staff and guests worked together to create a vegetable garden on the Shelter property in order to provide fresh fruit and vegetables to homeless individuals.

In addition, an initiative is underway to address healthcare concerns among homeless individuals. Shelter Services staff will work with other organizations and clinics, including the Gloucester Family Health Center, Salem State University's School of Nursing, and the Gloucester Health Department, to provide medical services at the Shelter such as consultations with a nurse, onsite immunizations, and referrals to medical professionals.

**National Goals & Indicators:** **4.1** - Expanding opportunities through community-wide partnerships. **5.1** - Broadening the resource base. **6.5** - Service counts.

**DHCD Priority Area:** Housing and homelessness prevention; job development and job readiness.

**Goals for the next three years:** **4.1** - ACTION will maintain 8 partnerships each year for the next three years. **5.1F** - ACTION Shelter staff will spend 34 total hours in professional development training in year one, 40 hours in year two, and 65 hours in year three. **6.5E** - ACTION staff will provide information and referrals 1250 times in year one, 1300 in year two, and 1350 in year three. 381 individuals will receive case management services in year one, 399 in year two, and 385 in year three. 55 individuals will obtain safe and affordable housing as a result of case management in year one, 68 in year two, and 75 in year three. 55 individuals will receive after-care case management following placement into housing in year one, 65 in year two, and 80 in year three. Shelter guests will participate in the planting and management of an onsite vegetable garden in year one, and will sell surplus vegetables at the Cape Ann Farmers' Market in years two and three.

## Linkages

### Joining Together to Meet Needs

ACTION INC. has a long history of partnering with other agencies, organizations, and individuals in order to identify and meet needs within our service area as comprehensively and efficiently as possible. Our partners include local, state, and federal government agencies; non-profit organizations; service providers; faith-based and community groups; local officials; private funds and foundations; and individual supporters.

Over the years we have striven to develop a broad range of wrap-around services to meet the ever-evolving needs within our community. In addition to the programs operated in-house, ACTION also incubated other critical Cape Ann social services such as The Open Door Food Pantry, Pathways for Children, Gloucester Senior Center, SeniorCare, and Meals-on-Wheels, all of which now operate independently and play crucial roles in Cape Ann's safety net for those in need.

In cases where individuals seek assistance which is not available directly through one of our departments, we rely on a wide-reaching and reciprocal referral network. By staying in close communication with other area service providers, we are able to accept and provide referrals and ensure that no one in need goes unheard.

### Our Partners

The following groups have partnered with ACTION INC. to serve those in need in a range of ways—from providing financial support, client referrals, or donation of space and resources, to serving as employer partners for our job training programs, and more.

#### **Non-Profit Organizations**

Accord Food Pantry  
Associated Charities of Gloucester  
Beverly Bootstraps  
Boston Living Center Food Program  
Cape Ann Art Haven  
Cape Ann YMCA  
Children's Friend and Family Services  
Commonwealth Corporation  
Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation  
Community Teamwork, Inc. - Lowell  
Consumer Credit Counseling  
Emmaus  
Good Friday Walk  
Healing Abuse Working for Change  
Health and Education Services  
Independent Living Center of the North Shore  
Ipswich Caring  
Justice Resource Institute  
Lifebridge  
Link House  
Lynn Shelter Association  
Maritime Heritage Center  
Mass Substance Abuse Helpline  
Mission of Deeds - Reading  
Moore's Way  
Neighborhood Legal Services

New England ISO  
North Shore Community Action Programs  
The Open Door Food Pantry  
Pathways for Children  
Rose Baker Senior Center  
SeniorCare  
Strongest Link - Cornerstone  
VNA Network and Hospice  
Wellspring House

#### **Faith-Based Organizations**

Annisquam Village Church  
Ascension Memorial Church  
Cape Ann Interfaith Commission  
Catholic Charities  
Emmanuel Church  
First Congregational Church of Rockport  
First Parish Church Congregational  
Holy Family Parish  
Riverdale Methodist Church  
Rockport Congregational Church  
Rockport United Methodist Church  
St. John's Episcopal Church  
St. Mary's Episcopal Church  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
St. Vincent DePaul  
Trinity Congregational Church  
West Gloucester Trinitarian Congregational

#### **Local Government**

City of Danvers  
City of Gloucester  
City of Peabody  
Gloucester District Court  
Gloucester Housing Authority  
Ipswich Housing Authority  
Lynn Housing Authority  
Manchester Housing Authority  
Rockport Community Preservation Committee  
Rockport Housing Authority  
Rockport Police Association  
Town of Essex  
Town of Ipswich  
Town of Manchester  
Town of Rockport

#### **State Government**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
MA Commission for the Blind  
MA Department of Children and Families  
MA Department of Housing and Community Development  
MA Department of Mental Health  
MA Department of Transitional Assistance  
MA Department of Youth Services

# Linkages, Partners & Funding

Mass Housing  
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
Massachusetts Technology Collaborative  
MassHealth  
North Shore Career Center  
North Shore Workforce Investment Board  
Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly  
Veteran's Office

## **Federal Government**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Oak Ridge National Labs  
U.S. Department of Energy  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Women, Infants and Children

## **For-Profit Businesses & Corporations**

ATP Business Inc.  
Bass Rocks Golf Club  
Beeman School  
Blockbuster Video  
Bookstore of Gloucester  
Cape Ann Insurance Agency  
Chebacco Market  
Clear Water Industries  
Converge  
Cricket Press  
Crow's Nest  
Curves of Gloucester  
CVS  
Dress Code  
Eastern Insurance  
Eileen's Bridal Alterations  
The Fifth Wave  
Foster from Gloucester  
Giana's Goodies  
Glovers Floor Covering  
Goodwin Party Shop  
Gorton's  
Highwave Hair Design  
Hilz Moving and Storage  
Ipswich Bay Glass Company  
John J. Walsh Insurance Agency  
Keyspan  
Kid's Closet  
Lil' Sprouts of Essex  
Magnolia Variety  
Miriam Silva Marketing  
MLS Property Information Network  
Montagnino Real Estate  
Morning Glory  
National Grid  
Nor'East Cleaners  
Palazola's Sporting Goods  
Patio Restaurant  
Pigeon Cove Whole Foods  
PM Environmental, Inc.  
Polar Bear Insulation

Proctor and Company Insurance  
Putnam Veterinary Clinic  
Richdale's  
Schlichte and Johnstone, PC  
Schooners  
Sea Meadow Designs  
Shaw's  
Sibase Inc.  
Silly Goose  
Tuck's Candy  
Village at West Gloucester  
Vista Motel  
Winning Solutions  
Woodman's Restaurant  
Zak's Handcrafts and Gifts

## **Associations & Advocacy Groups**

Coalition for the Homeless  
Community Action Partnership  
Energy Demand Side Management Professionals Association  
Essex County Bar Association  
Low-income Energy Affordability Network  
Low Income Peer Exchange  
Massachusetts Community Action Partnership  
Massachusetts Energy Directors Association  
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners  
National Association of State Consumer Advocates  
National Community Action Foundation  
National Energy Assistance Director's Association  
New England Community Action Association  
North Shore Continuum of Care  
North Shore Housing Action Group

## **Schools & Educational Institutions**

Essex Elementary School  
Gloucester High School  
Rockport Elementary School  
West Parish Elementary School  
Bay State College  
Bunker Hill Community College  
Millennium Training Institute  
Northern Essex Community College  
North Shore Community College  
Salem State University

## **Banks & Financial Institutions**

BankGloucester  
Cape Ann Savings Bank  
Citizens Bank  
First National Bank of Ipswich  
Granite Savings Bank  
Rockport National Bank  
Sovereign Bank  
TD Bank

## **Health Service Institutions**

Addison Gilbert Hospital  
Atlantic Family Chiropractic  
Beverly Hospital

Beverly Surgical Associates  
Cape Ann Eye Specialists  
Cape Ann Medical Center  
Cape Ann Surgical Associates  
Cummings Center Medical Associates  
Essex County OB/Gyn  
Garden City Pediatric Associates  
Gloucester Family Health Center  
Harborlight Family Medicine  
Harvard Vanguard  
Internal Medicine of the North Shore  
Lynn Community Health Center  
The Medical Group  
New England Institute of Urology  
North Shore Community Health  
North Shore Health Project  
North Shore Pediatrics  
North Shore Physicians Group  
North Shore Plastic Surgery  
North Shore Primary Care  
North Shore Visiting Nurses Association  
Northeast Health Systems  
North Shore Medical Center Learning Resource Center  
OB/Gyn of the North Shore  
Office of Dr. Amy Esdale  
Office of Dr. Lynne Drizen  
Office of Dr. Maura Magrane  
Office of Dr. Zaven Jehourian  
Partners, North Shore  
SeniorCare  
Spaulding Rehabilitation Center  
Spectrum Adult Day Program  
Team Coordinating Agency - Haverhill  
Tri-City Mental Health Agency  
VonWeiss Dermatology  
Willowdale Medical Center

## **Private Funds & Foundations**

Amelia Peabody Foundation  
Apple Lane Foundation  
Babson-Webber-Mustard Fund  
Carlson Family Fund  
Charlesbank Homes  
Clark Family Fund  
Coburn Charitable Society  
Cutler Family Gift  
David B. Manley Charitable Gift Fund  
Edward G. and Mary E. Anderson Fund  
Edward S. and Winifred G. Moseley Foundation  
George Holman Gale Memorial Fund  
Gilbert Fund For Indigent Persons  
JKB Fund  
Kanter Kallman Foundation  
Koechlin Fund  
Linden Foundation  
McCarthy Family Foundation  
Muddy Pond Trust Fund  
Paul and Leah Kelley Charitable Fund  
Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation  
Sailors' Snug Harbor of Boston  
Shaw Fund for Mariner's Children  
Tides Foundation  
Wales Family Fund

# Linkages, Partners & Funding

## Partnership Development Over the Next Three Years

As the economy continues to struggle and resources become more and more limited, it is essential that ACTION INC. work closely with other groups in order to meet the growing needs within our community. Over the next three years, ACTION INC. will build upon existing partnerships and also develop new partnerships to coordinate services and identify new, private funding sources (also see page 60, *Funding Strategy*).

During 2011, ACTION staff presented a workshop at the Community Action Partnership Annual Convention held in San Francisco, California. The workshop covered private fundraising and partnership-building in a new era of limited government funding. ACTION staff were able to discuss partnership strategies with other agencies from all over the country.

The 2011 Community Needs Assessment identified some specific areas where local community members could benefit from new partnerships between ACTION and other local groups. For example, during 2012 we will contact local transportation and driver's education providers to discuss the issue of affordable transportation. We plan to offer discounted driver's education to disadvantaged teenagers beginning in 2012 (see page 44, *COMPASS Youth Program: Basic Needs*).

The assessment also identified healthcare and substance abuse as ongoing needs. During 2011 ACTION began partnering with Salem State University and the Gloucester Family Health Center to initiate the Healthcare for the Homeless program (see page 55, *Shelter Services: Case Management and Supportive Services*) and with Addison Gilbert Hospital to offer a substance abuse treatment program (see page 37, *Agency-wide: Substance Abuse Treatment*). ACTION will continue to build these partnerships and programs over the coming years.

ACTION partners with different groups in a range of ways, from coordinating overlapping services, to collaborating on new initiatives, to serving as a fiscal sponsor for start-up programs. One example of the latter is our partnership with Better Off Baby Showers (see page 41, *Benefits and Support Services: Basic Needs*).

Through our Job Training and Education department, we also work with a number of employer partners that serve as externship and employment sites for students in our job training programs. Over the next three years, Job Training and Education staff will identify growing industries and positions, and develop training programs and new employer partnerships accordingly (see page 52, *Job Training and Education: Employer Partnership Development*).

By communicating regularly with our partners, our community members, and the individuals we serve, ACTION staff will stay abreast of the ever-changing needs within our community and will find new ways to collaborate with others in order to meet those needs.

# Linkages, Partners & Funding

## Funding Strategy

ACTION INC. secures funding from federal, state, local, and private sources. A large portion of the agency's funding is derived from private utility companies to offer energy conservation programs through ACTION's Energy Services division. ACTION Energy Services serves as the lead agency overseeing weatherization measures, heating system replacements, and other energy conservation projects throughout the State of Massachusetts and in parts of southern New Hampshire.

Aside from these utility contracts, ACTION INC.'s main sources of funding for services offered directly by ACTION to residents of our primary service area are federal and state respectively. The following is ACTION INC.'s financial report for fiscal year 2010, as published in our 2010 Annual Report (available online at [http://actioninc.org/2010\\_AnnualReport.pdf](http://actioninc.org/2010_AnnualReport.pdf)).

### 2010 Financial Report

Total Revenues • \$26,448,699

Total Expenses • \$25,718,026

#### Expenses by Program

Administration • 3.1%

Benefits and Support Services • 1.8%

COMPASS Youth Program • 0.6%

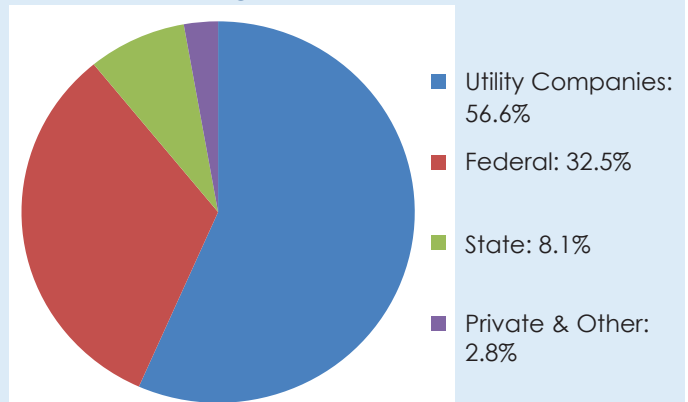
Energy Services • 83.0%

HomeCare • 7.2%

Job Training and Education • 0.7%

Shelter Services • 3.6%

Sources of Funding



### Leveraging Funds

ACTION INC. continues its success in maximizing service delivery impact by increasing revenue each year (see table below), diversifying funding, and leveraging Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) dollars. In fiscal year 2010, for every CSBG dollar, ACTION INC. leveraged \$23.47 in non-CSBG funds. Over the next three years, ACTION will continue to leverage non-CSBG funding from non-CSBG federal programs, state programs, local public funding, private sector resources, and in-kind resources.

#### Revenue by Fiscal Year (FY)

| FY 2005      | FY 2006      | FY 2007      | FY 2008      | FY 2009      | FY 2010      |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| \$16,162,844 | \$16,395,958 | \$16,657,572 | \$18,369,881 | \$21,161,450 | \$26,448,699 |

# Linkages, Partners & Funding

## Using Community Services Block Grant Funds

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds awarded to ACTION INC. are used to provide stable, core support for the agency's six primary programs: Benefits and Support Services, COMPASS Youth Program, Energy Services, HomeCare, Job Training and Education, and Shelter Services. Additionally, CSBG funds cover some of the administrative costs which are shared by all of the agency's programs, allowing ACTION to minimize these costs to 3% of total expenses.

CSBG funds are also used as "seed money" to incubate new programs and initiatives. This critical support provides a basis for ACTION to secure and grow alternative funding, increasing the sustainability of our programs.

## Fundraising Efforts & Goals

Over the next three years, ACTION aims to further leverage CSBG funds by increasing private funds to help support and expand our programs. Many government-funded programs are at risk of serious cuts, and ACTION recognizes the importance of diversifying funding sources and developing strong partnerships in order to combine resources (also see page 59, *Partnership Development Over the Next Three Years*).

ACTION already has a number of strong private-sector partnerships and funding sources. One notable example is our partnership with National Grid, a major funder of our Energy Services department. While federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for Energy Services will come to an end next year, the department will continue to increase the number of households it serves thanks to increased utility company funding. See page 44, *Energy Services*.

During 2010 and 2011, ACTION took additional steps to increase private fundraising and partnership-building efforts, including creating a Marketing, Planning, and Development department, designating staff time toward researching new funding opportunities, and increasing staff attendance at relevant workshops and events. Marketing, Planning, and Development staff work closely with program staff to identify evolving needs, gaps in resources, and new funding and partnership opportunities. The department has worked to increase the number of private grants for which ACTION applies, and to provide accurate and timely reports to each funding source as required. We have also increased the scope of our annual fundraising appeal to include a much larger audience, while improving cost-efficiency by using in-house expertise.

ACTION will continue with these efforts over the next three years, working to increase private funds raised through individual donations, private grants, and fundraising events (see goals below). We recognize that relationships with new funders and partners take time to grow and reach their full potential, and we look forward to cultivating these relationships over the coming years.

**Fundraising goals over the next three years:** ACTION will mobilize \$25,000,000 in non-CSBG dollars to help support and expand its programs in year one, \$26,250,000 in year two, and \$27,500,000 in year three. \$90,000 will be raised through individual donations and fundraising events in year one, \$95,000 in year two, and \$100,000 in year three. \$110,000 will be raised through private grants in year one, \$120,000 in year two, and \$130,000 in year three. \$65,000 will be received as rental payments from ACTION tenants each year for the next three years.



# Our Vision



## Vision Statement

ACTION INC. envisions a future where all residents of the Greater Cape Ann area know where to turn when life takes a turn for the worse. We aim to connect disadvantaged individuals and families with programs, services, and resources that will provide them with opportunities to get their lives back on track—whether in-house or through one of our many partnering organizations in the community.

### ***Over the next three years, we will strive to:***

- Provide high-quality, comprehensive services that create opportunities for people to become more self-sufficient and take the next steps toward a better life.
- Identify and reach out to underserved populations.
- Use available funding as effectively and efficiently as possible, in a time when resources are limited.
- Take advantage of new technologies and ideas in order to better serve our community.
- Be adaptable and innovative in order to respond to new and evolving needs.
- Maintain partnerships and communication with other organizations and businesses, and actively seek out new partners and funding sources.
- Communicate our mission and programs to potential supporters, those who may be in need of our assistance, and the community at large.
- Create an open-minded, encouraging, and respectful environment for clients and employees.
- Be the voice of the disadvantaged and raise awareness of poverty and social issues in our community.

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**2012 - 2014**

**Community Action Plan**

**ACTION** INC.

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

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