



*Developing pathways out of poverty  
through innovative, community-based,  
collaborative approaches.*



## **2016 NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

# KEY FACTS AND FINDINGS

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## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Wages in all of the service area counties are well below the national average.

1,500 people are unemployed in the service area, down from 2,275 in 2013.

Median Household Income is lower than the national median in all six counties of the service area.

## POVERTY & LOW-INCOME STATUS

There are over 11,488 people (17.07%) subsisting below the federal poverty line in the six-county region of Southwest Montana; the rate is higher than both the Montana and national rates and down from 18.24% in 2013.

38% of the population (26,00 people) subsists below 200% of the federal poverty line which places them in 'low-income status'.

Regionally, an average of 8,615 people in 2015 received SNAP assistance; the number increased by 55% between 2009 and 2014 and decreased by 9% between 2014 and 2015.

A 2015 survey of people receiving services from Action Inc. indicated that heat assistance, dental assistance and prescription drug assistance were their most important needs.

Action Inc. served 5,754 people in 2016 or 22% of low-income people in the region.

Half of school children in the service area are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

## HEALTHCARE ACCESS

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act, the number of people under 65 without health insurance in the service area decreased by 33% since 2010. Still, 22% of low-income people in the area are without health insurance, according to Census estimates.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

High concentrations of poverty in blighted neighborhoods in Butte-Silver Bow County, the region's population center, are contributing to a cycle of intergenerational poverty.

## ACCESS TO ACTION INC. SERVICES

Action Inc. served only 22% of low-income people in the services area through its programs and only 18% of people eligible for heat assistance, pointing to the need for effective outreach work.

## HOUSING

In the service area, over 8,000 households are experiencing a housing cost burden—48.4% of renters and 19.6% of homeowners; these rates have increased significantly since 2000.

283 people are on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance in the region.

The rate of homeownership among the lower income cohort in the region dropped to 50% compared with 81% for the middle and upper income group.

The rate of homelessness in Silver Bow County, the region's population center, is estimated to be about 0.5% or an approximate 164 people.

## AGING POPULATION

The number of senior citizens is projected to grow by 42% by 2030, going from an estimated 13,483 to over 19,000.

31% of the region's senior citizens have low-incomes.

## YOUTH & CHILD WELL-BEING

There are factors at work in the region that put children and youth at risk of underachievement and future poverty.

21.36% of the region's children are so materially poor, normal health and development may be at risk; the rate is higher than the Montana and national rates.

57% of children in the region are low-income.

Graduation rates for economically disadvantaged youth are significantly lower than the general student population.

The number of out-of-home placements due to child neglect or abuse increased 67% between 2013 and 2016 going from 149 children to 249 children.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Suicide rates in the service area are among the highest in Montana, a state that has for 35 years had one of the highest suicide rates in the nation.

## OVERARCHING CONSIDERATIONS

Prolonged low family income can be expected to lead to a more ingrained feeling of social exclusion, which may also have more lasting consequences.

American children are less likely to move out of the bottom of the income distribution than children in five other industrialized nations.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Action Inc., a Community Action Agency serving a six-county region of Southwest Montana, assesses needs for poor and low-income people in its service area triennially, with updates to demographic and socioeconomic data done biennially. The assessment includes three levels of information gathering and analysis. First, Action Inc. conducts a mail survey of people who have received a service or services from Action Inc. in the twelve months preceding the survey. Survey results in this report were gathered in January of 2015. The survey asks recipients to indicate their most important need overall and their needs in a series of categories.

Second, population level data is gathered and analyzed to understand the extent to which citizens are subsisting with inadequate incomes, which may impede their access to basic necessities. The analysis contained here includes a review of general economic conditions, poverty and low-income rates, the impact of cyclical poverty on people and communities and the extent to which people need necessities like food, housing, heat and healthcare. All information is processed within a theoretical framework related to the effects of poverty on achievement and upward mobility.

Finally, focus group meetings are conducted in each county. The purpose of the meetings is to gather information about needs of poor and low-income people in each county from the perspective of community leaders, service providers and citizens at large. For the purpose of this report, focus groups were conducted over the spring and summer of 2016.

The data and conclusions contained in this analysis inform the strategic direction for Action Inc. as determined by the eighteen-member Board of Directors as well as the agency's overarching work plan, which serves as a blue print for work to be done by the agency over the two-year period 2018--2019.

## **2.0 Description of the Service Area**

### **2.1 THE GEOGRAPHY**

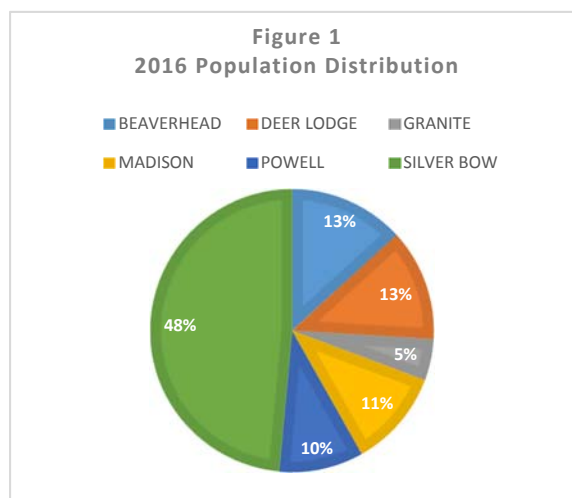
Action Inc. is one of ten community action agencies operating in the state of Montana. It serves a six-county area of Southwestern Montana that includes Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Granite, Madison, Powell and Silver Bow Counties. The District covers a land area of 14,631 square miles which represents 10% of the state's total land area (*source: US Census Bureau*). The map below provides an illustration of the District's service area.



The population of the service area is an estimated 71,189 which represents 6.8% of Montana's total population (*source: U. S. Census Bureau; 2016 Population Estimates*). Although the population has grown slightly, the area's proportion of the state population declined slightly since 2010. Butte-Silver Bow County is the most densely populated county in the service area, comprising 48% of the total population and is home to the largest city in the region—Butte. Deer Lodge County and Beaverhead Counties both comprise 13% of the region's population followed by Madison (10%), Powell (10%) and Granite (5%) counties. (Refer to Table 1 and Figure 1 for population distributions.)

This southwest corner of Montana is mountainous and scenic. Along with its majestic mountain ranges are pristine rivers, forests and grasslands that are home to abundant fish and wildlife. Winter weather can persist for up to nine months with periods of subzero temperatures. Population densities range from 1.7 people per square mile in the vast, agricultural county of Beaverhead to 47.6 people per square mile in Silver Bow County where Butte, the most densely populated city in the service area, is located. With such sparse populations, five of the six counties in the region are classified as "frontier" by the federal Department of Health and Human Services; Silver Bow County is classified as "rural". These densities stand in stark contrast to the 839 people per square mile found, for example, in the more densely populated state of Massachusetts.

County	2016 Estimated Population
BEAVERHEAD	9,401
DEER LODGE	9,085
GRANITE	3,368
MADISON	7,924
POWELL	6,858
SILVER BOW	34,553
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>71,189</b>



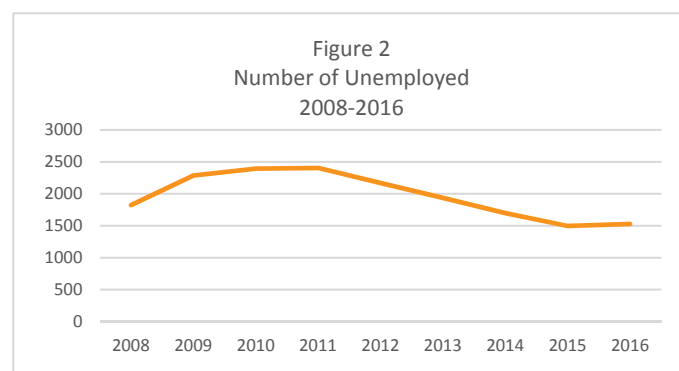
The geography of Southwest Montana presents challenges in the delivery of services, particularly to poor and low-income people. For people in need, services in rural areas are limited, requiring people to travel to population centers for healthcare and other services. Travel times can be as long as two hours in winter months with access to some communities limited to secondary highways. There is no public transportation system between counties and, in most counties, no internal public transportation system. For residents of Madison and Granite counties, there is no Office of Public Assistance which means needy people are required to travel long distances for assistance and there is no central place for service linkages to occur.

## 2.2 GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

In this sparsely populated region of Southwestern Montana, the hard-working people have toiled for over one hundred years in agriculture and mining. People in these resource-based economies have struggled to adapt to a modern service-based economy. Abundant basic industry jobs in mining and agriculture that once provided well for many families across the area continue to become scarcer. Job growth that has occurred over time has been in lower paying service and retail sectors, which now represent the largest job sectors in all six counties.

Unemployment rates throughout the region have fallen since the 2013 needs assessment was conducted. According to annual unemployment figures, there were 406 less unemployed people in the region in 2016 with a regional rate of 4.15% compared to 5.38% in 2013. Overall, unemployment has been on the decline after hitting an eight-year high of 6.74% in 2011 during the national recession. In 2016, just over 1,500 people district-wide were unemployed (*Refer to Table 2 and Figure 2 for specific unemployment figures and trends.*)

Table 2 2016 Unemployment			
County	Number of Unemployed	Rate	% Change in # of Unemployed 2013-2016
BEAVERHEAD	170	3.3%	-59
DEER LODGE	203	3.8%	-55
GRANITE	96	5.9%	-19
MADISON	168	3.8%	-61
POWELL	146	5.0%	-18
SILVER BOW	746	4.3%	-194
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>1,529</b>	<b>4.15%</b>	<b>-406</b>
Source: U.S. Montana Department of Labor and Industry			



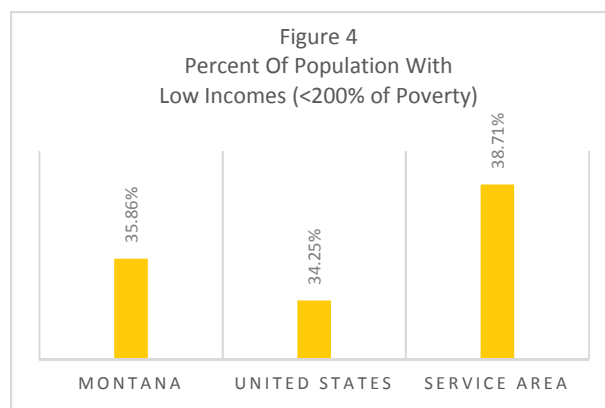
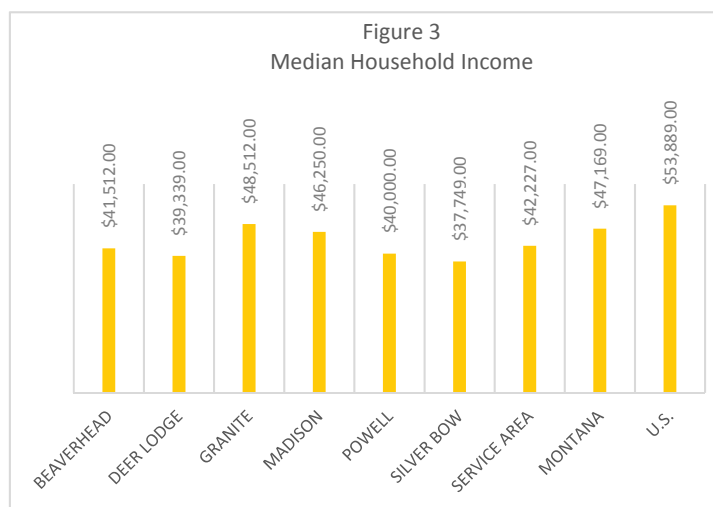
While the job picture has improved, wages in Southwestern Montana continue to be lag well behind the national average. The annual average wage in the region ranges from a low of \$30,160 in Granite County, where the wage is a mere 62% of the national wage, to a high of \$40,300 in Silver Bow County, where the wage is 83% of the national wage. (Refer to Table 3.) Median Household Income, another measure of economic well-being, is lower than the national median in all six

counties of the service area. Median household income ranges from a low of \$37,749 in Silver Bow County, where median household income is 70% of the national median, to a high of \$48,512 in Granite County where the figure is 90% of the national figure.<sup>i</sup> (Refer to Figure 3.)

One consequence of an economy that relies heavily on jobs in lower-paying, service sector jobs, is a high proportion of low-income people. In the service area, 39% of people subsist with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty threshold, making them eligible for sliding fees at the federally qualified Community Health Center and free weatherization services. The compares with 36% for the state and 34% for the nation.<sup>ii</sup> (Refer to Figure 4.)

To add to the financial pressure for people with low incomes is the high cost of basic necessities. The price of gasoline is \$2.34 per gallon as this report is written and food prices have risen. Increased housing costs, as illustrated below, have generally outpaced gains in income, placing cost burdens on already strapped families and individuals. Heating costs increased over the last year, the burden of which was exacerbated by a severely cold winter.

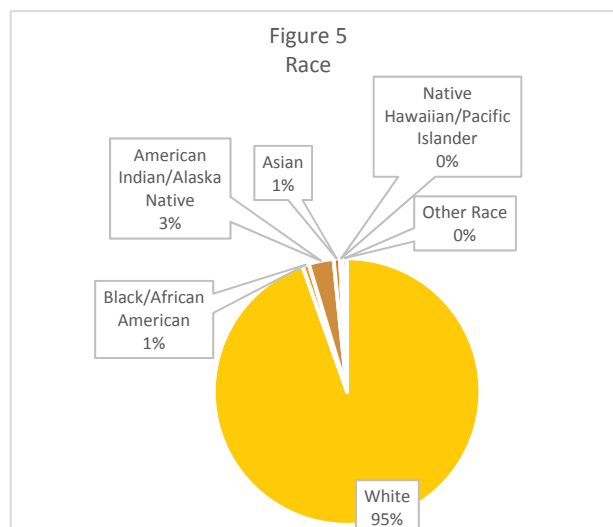
Table 3 Average Annual Wages	
County	Annual Average Wage (2015)
BEAVERHEAD	\$34,372.00
DEER LODGE	\$34,320.00
GRANITE	\$30,160.00
MADISON	\$34,528.00
POWELL	\$38,012.00
SILVER BOW	\$40,300.00
MONTANA	\$35,282.00
U.S.	\$48,320.00
Source: Montana Department of Labor; QCEW Annual County Data, 2015	



## 2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### 2.3.1 RACE/ETHNICITY

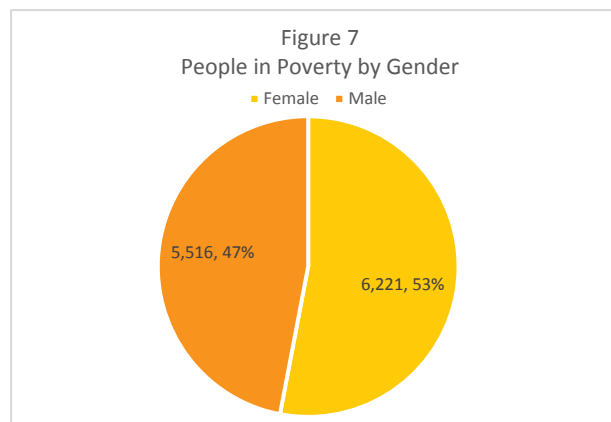
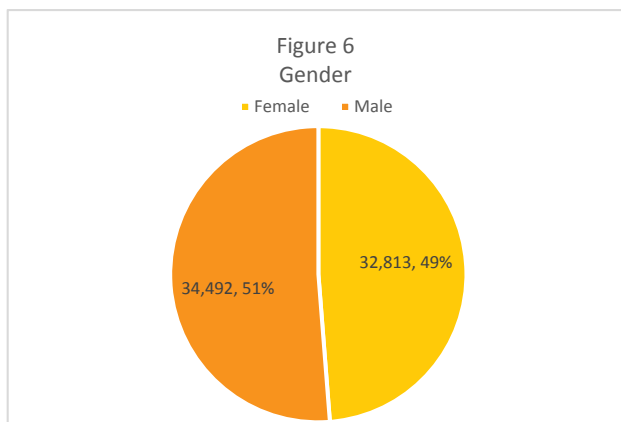
Race composition in the Action Inc. service area is relatively homogenous with 95% of the population claiming “white” as their sole race. The largest minority group is “American Indian/Native Alaskan”, which comprises 3% of the service-area population. (Refer to Figure 5.) Ethnicity for purposes of Census data includes two categories--Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. In the Action Inc. Service area, 3% of the population claims a Hispanic or Latino ethnicity and 97% claiming a Non-Hispanic ethnicity.<sup>iii</sup> This composition is consistent across the six counties.



Although people in the “white” race category comprise 95% of the population, they comprise 97% of people living under the federal poverty threshold. Within all minority race categories that exist within the service area including American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, there is a combined total of 367 people living under the poverty threshold. This represents 3% of all people living in poverty in the area.<sup>iv</sup>

### 2.3.2 GENDER

Females comprise 49% of the Action Inc. service area population while comprising 53% of people subsisting below the federal poverty threshold. Males comprise 51% of the area population and 47% of people living in poverty. In all six of the counties served by Action Inc., the percentage of females in poverty exceeds the percentage of males living in poverty. (Refer to Figures 6 and 7.)





### 2.3.3 AGE

The population of the Action Inc. service area is older than the overall population of Montana and the nation. The median age is higher throughout the region than it is for Montana and the nation. The percentage of the population, therefore, that is 65 years of age and older is higher than the state and national figures; conversely, the percentage of the population under the age of 18 is greater than the state and national figures. <sup>v</sup> (Refer to Table 4.)

The increasing proportion of people 65 years of age and older is perhaps the most significant demographic factor facing Southwest Montana today and into 2030. Currently, there are 13,483 senior citizens in the region<sup>vi</sup>, which represents an 8% increase just since 2013. The number of seniors is projected to reach 19,096 by 2030, an increase of 42% over the 2015 figure. Today, senior citizens comprise 19% of the region's population; by 2030, they are projected to comprise 25%.<sup>vii</sup> (Refer to Table 5.)

The projected increase in the 65 and older age cohort is associated with the “baby boom” and is impacting the entire nation. This phenomenon will significantly increase the number of people needing health, housing and other services. It is important to note that “baby boomers” as a group have adapted life styles that may call for new approaches to service delivery and community planning. For example, they tend to prefer living closer to amenities and aging in their homes rather than moving to apartment complexes in peripheral areas of cities or into assisted living communities. Planning for the provision of services to senior citizens who have different living preferences is a significant and pressing need. For example, home health services will play a bigger role in service delivery for this population.

In the Southwest Montana area served by Action Inc., over one-third of people 65 years of age and older have low-incomes—incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty threshold. The figure is on par with the national figure and slightly higher than the statewide figure. Three of the service area counties have higher rates of low-

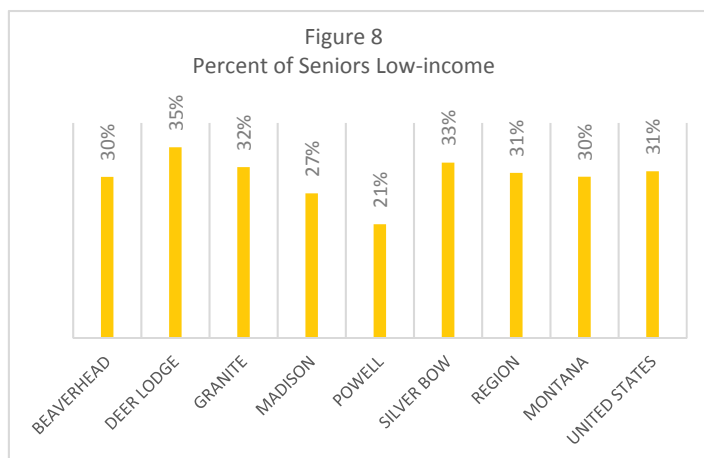
Table 4 MEDIAN AGE	
BEAVERHEAD	42.6
DEER LODGE	46.8
GRANITE	53.7
MADISON	52.1
POWELL	45.4
SILVER BOW	40.6
MONTANA	39.7
UNITED STATES	37.6
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; 5-year Estimates; 2011-2015	

Table 5 Current and Projected Senior Population				
County	Current # of Seniors	% of Population	Projected # 2030	% of Population 2030
BEAVERHEAD	1,786	19.00%	2,492	25%
DEER LODGE	1,849	20.35%	2,432	23%
GRANITE	897	26.63%	1,310	41%
MADISON	1,918	24.20%	2,829	32%
POWELL	1,261	18.39%	2,023	28%
SILVER BOW	5,772	16.70%	8,010	23%
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>13,483</b>	<b>18.94%</b>	<b>19,096</b>	<b>25%</b>

income seniors than the state and national rates. They are Deer Lodge, Granite and Silver Bow counties.<sup>viii</sup> (Refer to Figure 8 for specific rates by county.)

Provision of services to low-income seniors is more challenging as it adds an affordability layer to the equation and often requires special grants and pay sources to create access to services. Action Inc.

served 1,450 low-income seniors in 2016 or 35% of low-income seniors in the service area. People over 65 comprised 25% of total individuals served by Action Inc. in 2016.



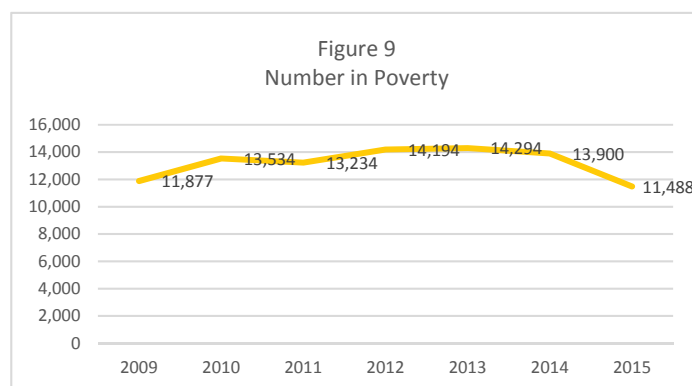
### 3.0 COMMUNITY-LEVEL INDICATORS OF NEED

#### 3.1 FRAMEWORK

The United States is a wealthy nation. Within it, however, lies the great paradox of poverty. Inequality in American wealth has been increasing since the 1970's. A study conducted by Saez and Zucman and published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* has found that "wealth inequality is high and rising fast in the United States: the top 0.1% share (of wealth) increased from 7% in the late 1970s to 22% in 2012. The wealth share of the middle-class has followed an inverted-U evolution over the course of the twentieth century: it is no higher today than in 1940.<sup>ix</sup> The study shows that the top 0.1% of families now own roughly the same share of wealth as the bottom 90%.

#### 3.2 LOCAL POVERTY AND INCOME CONDITIONS

Growing income inequality is occurring in Southwestern Montana as the area has experienced increases in the number of higher income households since the year 2000. But, in the midst of prosperity for the few, poverty persists. The overall poverty rate in the six-county area stands at an estimated 17%, which is down from the 2013 rate of 18.24% but remains higher than the state and national rates of 14.4% and 14.7%. Today, an estimated 11,488 people in



the service area are so materially poor they do not have means to purchase basic necessities.<sup>x</sup> Five out of six counties in the region have poverty levels higher than the nation. Madison and Granite counties, according to Census estimates, have rates below the national rate. (Refer to Table 6 for specific rates.)

Of concern is the extent to which children in Southwestern Montana are living in poverty. According to 2015 Census estimates, there are an estimated 2,700 children in the service area living below the federal poverty line. This means that one in five children are so materially poor that normal health and development may be at risk. If the estimates are correct, child poverty rates have declined across the service area following a trend of decline nationally and statewide. All counties in the District, apart from Madison, have child poverty levels that are higher than both the state and the nation. (Refer to Table 7 for specific rates.)

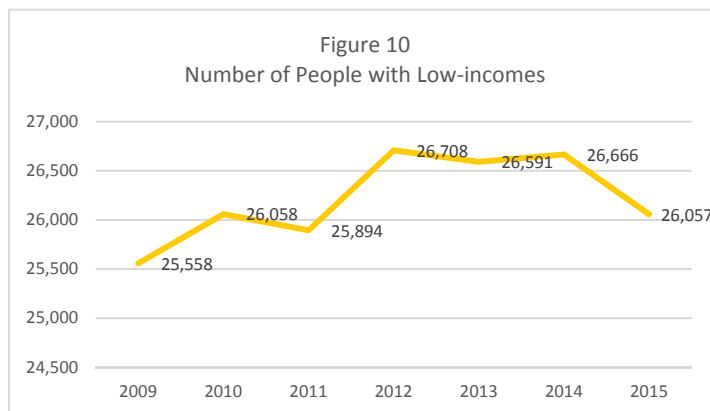
Aside from the number of people in the region subsisting in material poverty, there are a significant number of people who have low incomes. Over 26,000 people in the region subsist at 200% of the federal poverty line or less. People at this income level have inadequate incomes for all necessities and are, therefore, eligible for some types of public assistance including reduced fees

Table 6 Poverty Rates				
County	2011 Poverty Rate		2013 Poverty Rate	
	Number of People	Rate	Number of People	Rate
BEAVERHEAD	1,503	17.00%	1,519	17.10%
DEER LODGE	1,537	18.10%	1,534	17.70%
GRANITE	453	14.10%	495	15.93%
MADISON	846	11.40%	931	12.19%
POWELL	956	18.10%	1,093	20.03%
SILVER BOW	6,193	18.41%	6,709	19.99%
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>11,488</b>	<b>17.07%</b>	<b>12,281</b>	<b>18.24%</b>
MONTANA		14.40%		16.1%
NATION		14.70%		15.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2013, 2015; American Community Survey, 2011-2015; note that SAIPE and ACI figures were averaged for Powell and Silver Bow Counties due to the large disparity between figures.

Table 7 Child Poverty Rates				
County	Number of Children	2015 Rate	Number of Children	2013 Rate
BEAVERHEAD	323	20.70%	398	24.66%
DEER LODGE	319	23.20%	385	25.31%
GRANITE	130	24.00%	120	24.39%
MADISON	212	17.14%	218	17.55%
POWELL	208	20.12%	271	24.48%
SILVER BOW	1,517	21.90%	1821	25.95%
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>2,709</b>	<b>21.36%</b>	<b>3,213</b>	<b>24.73%</b>
MONTANA		20.70%		20.8%
NATION		18.80%		22.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates; 2013, 2015



at Community Health Centers and free weatherization services, for example. The current figure is 2% less than the 2014 figure but remains 2% higher than the 2009 rate, which occurred during the national recession. (*Refer to Figure 10.*) An estimated 92% of low-income people in the service area—24,000 people—are at or below the 180% of poverty threshold, making them eligible for Low Income Energy Assistance services.

Table 8 Estimated Number of Low-income People		
County	Number of People	Rate
BEAVERHEAD	3,158	35.70%
DEER LODGE	3,689	42.48%
GRANITE	1,119	35.88%
MADISON	2,381	30.96%
POWELL	2,078	38.99%
SILVER BOW	13,632	40.53%
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>26,057</b>	<b>38.71%</b>
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; 2015 5-Year Estimates</i>		

Action Inc. served 5,754 people in 2016 through its various programs. This represents only 22% of low-income people in the service area. Additionally, during the 2015 heat season, Action Inc. assisted 4,378 people with heat assistance. This represents 18% of people who are potentially eligible for the service. The agency will want to focus on efforts to reach more people in the service area who may be in need of services, based on income.

### 3.3 ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS

#### 3.3.1 HEALTH CARE

Access to health care services for both preventive measures and illness depends in large part on access to affordable health insurance. Without health insurance in America, medical costs are prohibitive and for lower income people, wellness can be blocked for a lack of resources. When Action Inc. conducted its needs assessment in 2013, the Affordable Care Act, which mandated insurance coverage for all, had not yet been implemented. As this report is written, the Act has been in effect for two years and available data reflects one year of implementation. According to 2015 Census estimates, the number of people without health insurance in the Action Inc. service area decreased by 33% since 2010, going from 11,000 uninsured to 7,394. For people with incomes at or below 200% of poverty, the percentage without health insurance decreased by 38% since the last report, going from 7,046 to 4,436. Census estimates for 2015 show that 13.87% of people under 65 in the service area and 22% of low-income people under 65 in the service area still have no form of health insurance.<sup>xi</sup> (*Refer to Table 9 for specific rates by county.*)

Table 9 Uninsured Under 65, Uninsured Low-income Under 65, 2015				
County	# Uninsured People under 65	%	# Uninsured People Under 65, 200% of Poverty or less	%
BEAVERHEAD	1,084	15.60%	673	25.6%
DEER LODGE	914	13.90%	522	21.8%
GRANITE	430	19.00%	236	29.6%
MADISON	857	15.00%	493	26.1%
POWELL	634	15.60%	356	23.1%
SILVER BOW	3,475	12.50%	2,066	19.5%
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>7,394</b>	<b>13.87%</b>	<b>4,346</b>	<b>21.91%</b>
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Small Area Health Insurance Estimates for Montana Counties; 2015</i>				

For children (people under the age of 19), the percent without insurance is lower; 8% or 1,065 children, have no form of health insurance according to census estimates. The percentage is higher for low-income children; 11% or 640 are uninsured.

Lack of insurance among poor and low-income people presents challenges to the healthcare service delivery system which suffers from shortages of primary care providers; these providers are at the forefront of treating chronic illness. People living in poverty or subsisting on low-incomes are more likely to have risk factors that lead to chronic illness. There is, in fact, a higher prevalence of disability and chronic illness among people with low incomes, a group that also, statistically, has a shorter life expectancy.<sup>xii</sup>

The future for the Affordable Care Act is unknown at this time. There was an unsuccessful attempt to repeal it in Congress and there remains discussion about changes to the current policies. Whatever happens, it will be critical for low-income and poor people to have access to healthcare for themselves and their children so they may remain healthy, contributing citizens and so health and development of their children may be normal.

### 3.3.2 AFFORDABLE, SAFE HOUSING

The degree to which housing costs become a burden to occupants helps measure economic hardship for citizens. In the United States, housing costs are considered a burden when they exceed 30% of income. In the Action Inc. service area, over 8,000 households are experiencing a housing cost burden—48.42% of renters and 19.46% of homeowners. The number of renters experiencing cost burdens in the service area has increased by 17 % since 2000. The percentage of households with a housing cost burden are particularly high in Beaverhead and Silver Bow counties where over half of renters have a burden. (Refer to Table 11 for county figures.)

A rising cost burden occurs when housing costs increase at a greater rate than income. In four of six counties in the service area, median gross rent has increased at a higher rate than median household income. In three of the six counties, median mortgage payments increased at a higher rate than household income since 2000. (Refer to Figure 10.) The housing cost burden being felt by Southwest Montana citizens makes it harder to meet basic needs.

The supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of low-income people appears to be inadequate in the region. The more rural portions of the service area have few designated affordable housing units. In Granite County, there

are no designated units. Madison County has only 12 units designated for families and 12 for senior citizens.

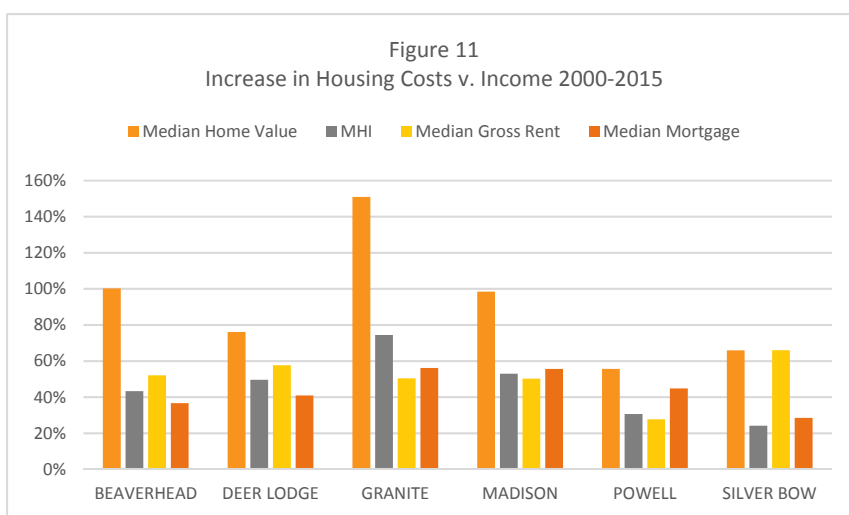
Stakeholders in all counties identified affordable housing as a need in their communities. At the time of this report, there were 283 people regionally on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance. Continued work to ensure people have access to decent and affordable housing is needed.

The disproportional rise in housing costs verses income also impacts the rate of homeownership and the ability of low-income people to accumulate wealth. Although homeownership rates among low-income people increased dramatically between 1994 and 2006<sup>xiii</sup>, lower income people are less likely today to own a home in Southwest Montana than higher income people; the rate of homeownership among lower-income people in the region is 50%, down from 52% in 2011 and compared with 81% with middle and upper income people.<sup>xiv</sup>

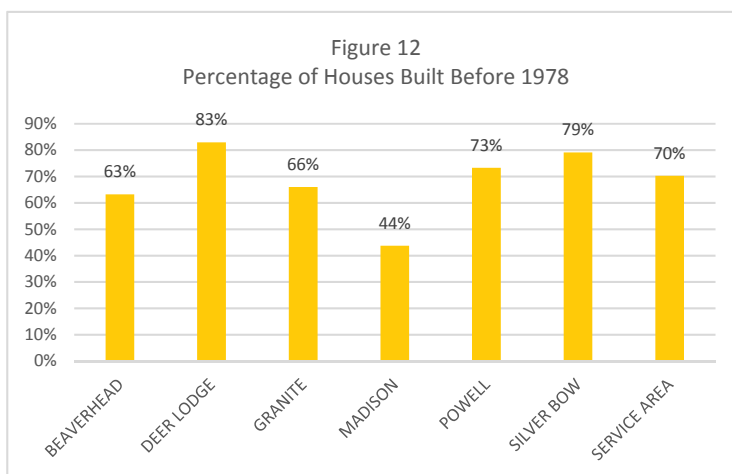
One measure of safe housing is the age of the housing stock. Older housing units are more likely to be energy consumptive and in poor condition and lower-income people are more likely to reside in areas where the housing stock is in poor condition. Also, the age of housing units can be indicative of lead paint hazards; because

Table 10 Housing Cost Burdens, 2000-2015				
County	Renters		Homeowners	
	2000	2015	2000	2015
BEAVERHEAD	33.15%	53.04%	18.00%	19.81%
DEER LODGE	25.03%	45.76%	19.11%	18.90%
GRANITE	30.91%	29.12%	19.18%	21.02%
MADISON	29.35%	35.41%	22.15%	29.17%
POWELL	27.76%	32.81%	13.27%	20.70%
SILVER BOW	33.32%	52.37%	16.22%	16.63%
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>31.36%</b>	<b>48.42%</b>	<b>17.29%</b>	<b>19.46%</b>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; 2011-2015; Decennial Census, 2000



lead paint was not banned from use until 1978, homes built prior to that year may pose health and development risks to children residing in the homes. In the six-county service area, 70% of homes were built prior to 1978. (Refer to Figure 12.) Additionally, there are an estimated 694 occupied mobile homes that were built before the enactment of the National Manufactured Home Safety Standards in 1976<sup>xv</sup>, making them potentially unsafe for habitation.

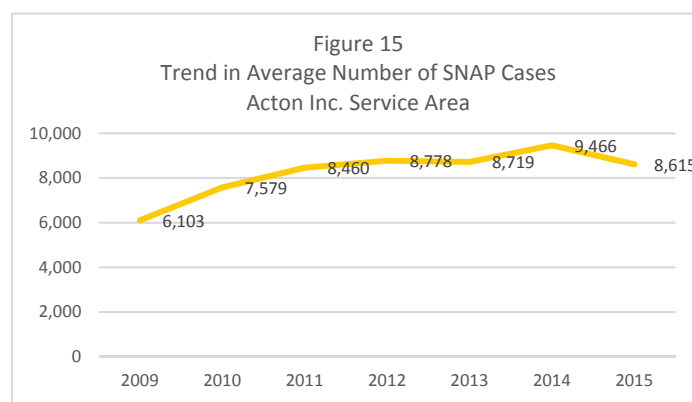


While overall condition of housing for all counties in the region is not known, Butte-Silver Bow County—the population center—has a high proportion of substandard housing. In Census Tract One, where over half of people in poverty reside, an estimated 73% of housing units are in fair to unsound condition; much of the housing stock in that area are 100 or more years old.

Action Inc. has a number of housing programs that help provide affordable housing options in the region. The agency has 60 units of affordable, supportive housing for very low-income senior citizens in Silver Bow County, 24 units in Madison County and 9 units in Powell County. Additionally, the agency has 300 Section 8 Rental Assistance vouchers throughout the region that help make rents more affordable. The agency can assist people with emergency rent assistance in cases where homelessness is a threat and provide rental assistance for up to 12 months. In Silver Bow County, emergency rent assistance is available for indigent, disabled adults applying for disability status.

### 3.3.3 FOOD

One measure of food insecurity is the number of people receiving assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administered by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. The trend in the Action Inc. service area beginning in 2009 and through 2014 is one of growth in the average number of cases. There was a 55% increase in the average

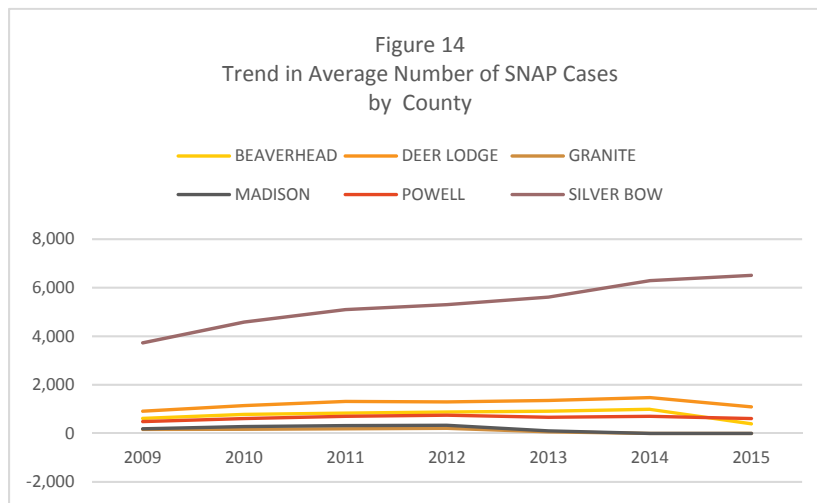


number of cases during that period, going from 6,103 people receiving assistance to 9,466. The figure decreased

by 9% between 2014 and 2015, dropping to 8,615. (Refer to Figure 13.) The trend in Silver Bow County, the most populous county in the service area, varied from the regional trend in that the average number of SNAP cases continued to increase into 2015.<sup>xvi</sup>

(Refer to Figure 14 for county trends.)

Another measure of food insecurity is the number of children in the public school system eligible for free and reduced lunch. In the Action Inc. service area, half of children are eligible for the program.<sup>xvii</sup> This is 4,190 children and represents an increase of 19% over 2012. Action Inc. provides a summer meal program for



children and youth during the summer months in two of its six counties. Between 10,000 and 11,000 meals are served each summer to over 300 kids. During the summer of 2017, Action Inc. will add meal sites in Butte and Deer Lodge in order to reach more children. The agency also works with a community collaboration to provide over 10,000 meals each year to homeless people delivered to sites throughout the population center of Butte.

### 3.3.4 HEAT

Staying warm in Montana is a significant challenge for low-income people as winter weather can persist for nine months of the year and subzero temperatures are common. And, maintaining a warm home has become increasingly challenging over the past several years as heating costs have soared. Heating costs, no doubt, contribute to increasing monthly housing costs and the increasing percent of income spent on housing. Today, 48.42% of renters in Southwest Montana are experiencing a housing cost burden. Action Inc. assists about 4,300 people per year through its energy assistance programs, which is about 18% of eligible, low-income households in the service area. It assists on average, 679 people with emergency heat assistance through the Energy Share program and weatherizes about 175 homes per year through its Weatherization Program. Heat assistance remained the highest need among respondents to the 2015 survey of low-income people in the region. Programs that assist people with heating bills in winter months and help weatherize homes to decrease usage continue to be pressing needs in Southwest Montana.



### **3.4 CYCLICAL POVERTY**

#### **3.4.1 FRAMEWORK**

As poverty takes hold of families, the condition can persist through generations. As Bradbury, Jenkins and Micklewright point out in their study about the duration of child poverty among six industrialized nations, “prolonged low family income can be expected to lead to a more ingrained feeling of social exclusion, which may also have more lasting consequences.” They found that American children are less likely to move out of the bottom of the income distribution than children elsewhere and that, in the U.S., some 5 to 6 % of children were in the poorest fifth in each of ten consecutive years.<sup>xviii</sup>

The intergenerational nature of poverty in the U.S. and locally, then, is of great concern in the crafting of intervention techniques. The poverty of expectation found in people who have been subject to societal exclusion and degradation over long periods of time undoubtedly inhibits their mobility. There is a growing recognition among all industrialized nations that social problems like drug abuse, crime, educational underachievement and alienation from common values are strongly associated with the poverty-amid-prosperity that afflicts a significant portion of the population (in industrial societies)<sup>xix</sup>. The challenge becomes, then, how to impact not only the economic aspects of poverty, but also the psychological effects.

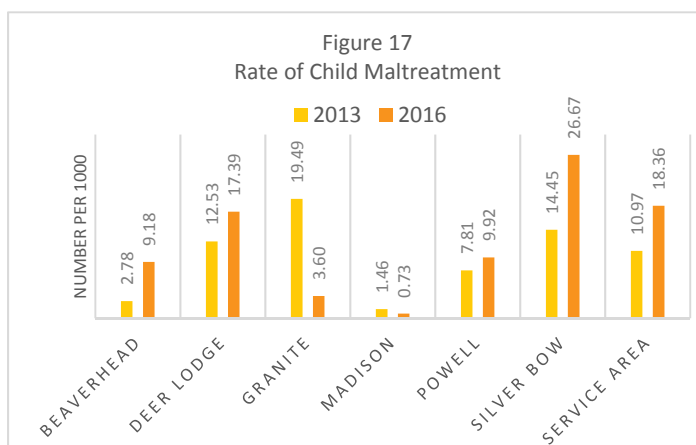
#### **3.4.2 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND CONSEQUENCES**

##### **3.4.2.A HIGH POVERTY NEIGHBORHOODS**

A consequence of the imbalance between incomes and housing costs is the isolation of lower income families and individuals in blighted neighborhoods as they become forced by the market into the most substandard of housing. In Silver Bow County, the most densely populated county in the service area, a redistribution of more affluent people to peripheral rural settings is causing higher vacancies in the urban core, the result of which is further deterioration of older neighborhoods. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the community’s substandard housing units are located in the older portion of the urban core where 52% of the county’s poor also reside. In pockets of Census Tract One, which encompasses a large swath of the urban core, poverty rates are as high as 53%; in some Block Groups, 83% of households have low incomes<sup>xx</sup>.

The result is what the renowned sociologist William Julius Wilson refers to as “concentration effects”. The term refers to the effects on people of living in an overwhelmingly impoverished environment. In areas where this occurs, people are influenced by the behavior, social perceptions, beliefs and orientations of similar people disproportionately concentrated in the neighborhood. He goes on to state, “social isolation results when there is a high concentration of impoverished people in a neighborhood who have little opportunity for interaction

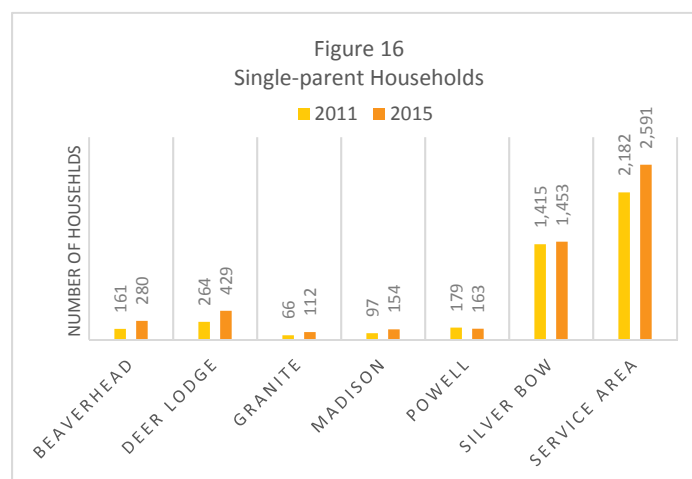
with conventional role models.”<sup>xxi</sup> Community Action leaders and activists in the Action Inc. service area have come to recognize that this phenomenon is contributing to a cycle of intergenerational poverty. Action Inc. took the lead on a neighborhood revitalization project that focused on empowerment of low-income citizens through neighborhood councils as well as improving housing, infrastructure and social conditions in the area. The work continues in the Emma Park neighborhood area of central Butte.



### 3.4.2.B DEVELOPMENTAL ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

One of the most distressing aspects of the poverty cycle is diminished expectations amongst children whose vantage point should be one of unlimited potential. Analysis of community indicators for childhood distress in Southwestern Montana reveals some startling facts about the living conditions for far too many children including the following:

- 21.36% children in the region are poor; this child poverty rate is higher than both the state and national rates.<sup>xxii</sup>
- 57% of children in the region are considered low-income (live in households with incomes less than 200% of poverty).<sup>xxiii</sup>
- It is estimated that 40% of children in the region live in single parent households, up from 37% in 2013. County rates range from 16% in Madison County to 43% in Powell County.<sup>xxiv</sup> (Refer to Figure 16.)
- The graduation rate for economically disadvantaged youth is significantly lower throughout the region than it is for the general student population; the rates range from 59.1% in Silver Bow County to a high of 87.8% in Deer Lodge County.<sup>xxv</sup>



- At 18.36 per 1,000 children, the rate of child maltreatment, as measured by the number of children in out-of-home placement through the Department of Family Services, is significantly higher than the national rate of 9.2/1,000<sup>xxvi</sup>. In four of six counties, the rate is significantly higher. (Refer to Figure 17 and Table 11.) In April of 2017, there were 249 children in out-of-home placement in the region<sup>xxvii</sup>, which is a 67% increase over the 2013 figure.

While no single factor dictates an outcome of poverty, the set of factors presented here, when taken together, provide an indication that a significant proportion of children in the region may be at risk for inhibited aspirations and, perhaps, a life in poverty. The indicators help shed light upon the need for intervention in what has become for many, a generational continuum and what may become, for some, the beginning of diminished potential.

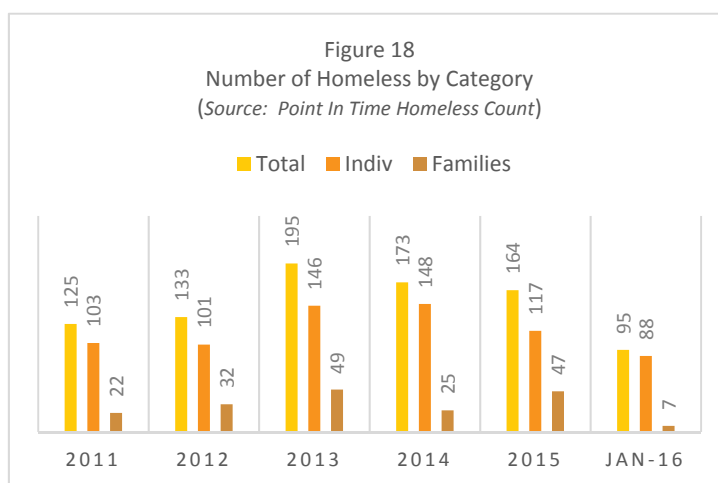
Action Inc. provides employment and training programming and foster care transition support to about

90 youth regionally per year as well as Head Start services to 200 children per year. Children also benefit from housing and heat assistance through Action Inc. programs. Twenty-four percent (24%) of low-income children and youth received services through Action Inc. in 2016.

### 3.4.2.c Homelessness

Homelessness for many is an indication of long-term poverty that is often accompanied by serious barriers to normal functioning in society. These barriers create persistent poverty as people are unable to sustain employment, housing and meet basic needs. Therefore, it is treated in this needs assessment as a condition of cyclical poverty that requires intensive intervention.

Table 11 Rate of Child Maltreatment (2016)		
County	Number of Children	Number per 1,000
BEAVERHEAD	16	9.18
DEER LODGE	29	17.39
GRANITE	2	3.60
MADISON	1	0.73
POWELL	11	9.92
SILVER BOW	190	26.67
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>18.36</b>
<b>NATION</b>		<b>9.2</b>



Determining the extent of homelessness is difficult. Point-in-time counts are subject to climate and other changing factors and finding people who are homeless for purposes of a count is less than scientific. In Southwestern Montana, point-in-time homeless counts are conducted during one of the coldest months of the year in order to participate in the national survey. The data is currently limited to Silver Bow county with plans by the local Continuum of Care Coalition to develop methodologies for capturing data in the other more rural counties of the service area. Four-year trend data from the annual point-in-time homeless survey indicates a growth trend in homelessness between 2011 and 2013, with the numbers decreasing in the three subsequent years. The 2016 count is the lowest number since the count began. This is due, in part, to a new approach to addressing homelessness called “rapid rehousing”. From the period August 1, 2015 through July 31, 2016, Action Inc. rapidly rehoused 170 households.

Homelessness has persisted and grown since 1992 when the first homeless count was conducted in June of that year. At that time, 76 people were counted as homeless, most of whom were residing at the local emergency shelter (the Butte Rescue Mission), at Safe Space (the local domestic violence shelter), or were living in cars or other places not meant for human habitation. In response to the need in the need in the early 1990’s, Action Inc. developed a transitional housing program (Homeward Bound) and through that vehicle, the community provided transitional housing services to between 85 and 100 people per year. In response to the changing focus of HUD in the provision of homeless services and evidence that “housing first” models have a greater positive impact on breaking the cycle of homelessness, Action Inc. reallocated its funding that supported transitional housing for 20 years to a rapid rehousing program in 2015.

#### **3.4.2.D Behavioral Health**

The subject of behavioral health was discussed at length in communities throughout the service area during the needs assessment meetings in 2013. Triggering the intense conversation were statistics related to suicide and substance abuse that can both be statistically tied to income and living in rural settings. According to a 2005 Rural Health Research Center report entitled “*Depression in Rural Populations: Prevalence, Effects of Life Quality and Treatment-seeking Behavior*”, “the prevalence of major depression is significantly higher among rural than among urban populations.” In rural Southwestern Montana, the likelihood of depression is compounded by financial hardship for a significant portion of the population. “Research has shown that people with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to develop a depressive illness and that their depression is more severe than that of people higher on the socioeconomic status scale.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

That depression is a serious health problem in Montana and the Southwestern corner of the state is underscored by suicide rates. According to the American Association of Suicidology (January, 2014), Montana's has the highest suicide rate in the nation at 24.5 per 100,000.<sup>xxix</sup> Further, Montana has ranked in the top five for suicide rates for the past thirty-five years. Rates in four of the six counties in the service area, including Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Madison and Silver Bow, are among the top ten rates in the state of Montana. For the period 1994-2013, all counties in the region, except Granite for which data is not available, exceed the state rate. All available rates in the region are significantly higher than the national rate. (Refer to Table 12.)

Table 12 Suicide Rates Per 100,000 Population	
County	1994-2013
BEAVERHEAD	25.7
DEER LODGE	28.6
GRANITE	*
MADISON	25.9
POWELL	25.5
SILVER BOW	27.6
MONTANA	24.5
UNITED STATES	13.4
*Data only provided for counties that had 20 or more suicides	
Source: Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services; Vital Statistics: Montana Strategic Suicide Prevention Plan	

Substance abuse among adults and youth was a serious concern among stakeholders across the service area and not unrelated to mental health. "Research has shown that there is a strong association between mental health disorders and substance abuse disorders. For example, research suggests that adults and adolescents with major depressive episode (MDE) in the last year were more likely than those without MDE to have used alcohol heavily or to have used an illicit drug in the past year."<sup>xxx</sup>

Addressing substance abuse and mental health issues is critical to treating the whole effect of poverty and sustained low-income status. The role of Action Inc. in addressing behavioral health issues likely will be on a collaborative level, working with mental health and substance abuse providers, public officials and citizens to address policy concerns and to encourage expansion of services provided by treatment-focused agencies.

#### 4.0 COMMUNITY MEETINGS (SPRING-SUMMER, 2016)

A goal of Action Inc., as a Community Action Agency, is to ensure its programs and services are in alignment with needs of low-income people and communities. Understanding needs within the large geographic area served by the agency requires input from stakeholders within communities through the region. In order to get this input, Action Inc. conducted meetings throughout its service area as part of its needs assessment process. Participation was solicited from key community sectors including community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, the private sector and educational institutions. Representation from all sectors occurred during the process. The following is a summary of needs related to poverty and low-income status that were identified through

stakeholder meetings. A more thorough description of meeting discussions along with a sector participation list is attached as Appendix A to this document.

- Connect to each county's website and related agencies
- Build stronger presence in outlying counties
- Expand service information/education materials to incorporate a multi-media model (print, traditional media, online)
- Create a mentoring or local volunteer program to improve support and guidance through application process to build program awareness
- Expand housing and/or partner with housing authorities to increase/improve low income housing options
- Facilitate the creation of centralized or coordinated care models in each county
- Expand youth mentoring and training programs
- Pilot a coordinated program model that follows youth from birth to maturity, creating a continuum of care
- Engage in planning a coordinated program model that supports those waiting for assistance
- Expand marketing and awareness of all programs
- Create more opportunities for outreach and engagement at local events/ locations in counties
- Build a strong educational and prevention component to programs
- Expand involvement in neighborhood redevelopment efforts in counties
- Engage in planning/resolving the increasing needs of **children** (care, hunger, education, health), **families** (housing, food, heat, employment, health), **youth** (education, employment, adulthood), **seniors** (care, housing food, health, isolation, transportation) and **communities** (housing, coordinated resources, advocacy)
- Build collaborative relationship with other service providers to ensure all needs are being met and that each provider is a knowledgeable source of information
- Expand funding/resource/ partnership opportunities for mental health and addiction services
- Create more opportunities to build awareness/ educate those in direct contact positions (police, fire, EMT, schools, etc.)

## 5.0 CLIENT SURVEY

In order to understand the needs of individuals whose incomes are inadequate for the purchase of basic necessities, Action Inc. conducted a mail survey of people who had over the course of the 2014 calendar year been the recipient of a service through the agency. The agency assisted over 6,600 individuals in over 3,000

households during that twelve-month period. Surveys were sent to 1161 households; 428 responses were received for a 36.9% response rate.

The survey asked adults in households to respond to questions regarding their needs. They were asked to identify their single most important need overall as well as within several categories including housing, health, nutrition, family and finances. Among respondents, heat assistance was by far the highest ranked need. Following heat assistance were assistance with dental services and eye glasses. Assistance with home maintenance, food and rent followed in the ranking of needs.

One third of respondents to the survey were people 65 years of age and older, down from the 2013 survey from which nearly half of respondents were senior citizens. Home maintenance was identified as a need, not only in the survey, but in stakeholder meetings held throughout the region during the needs assessment process. (Refer to Table 13 for Overall Rating of Needs) *(Refer to Appendix B for the survey and all survey results.)*

Table 13  
Survey Results, 2011

NEED CATEGORY	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	RANKING
Assistance with Heat Bills	167	1
Dental Assistance	59	2
Assistance with Prescription Eye Glasses	55	3
Home Maintenance Assistance	53	4
Food	49	5
Rent Assistance	46	6
Affordable Health Insurance	41	7
Prescription Drug Assistance	24	8
Transportation	18	9
Down Payment Assistance	17	10
Employment	17	10
Mental Health Services	11	11
Education/Training	11	11
Home Health Services	4	12
Child Care	3	13
Financial Counseling	3	13
Affordable Preschool	2	14
Parenting Classes	1	15
No Needs	41	-

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based on survey results, community meetings and data, it is imperative that Action Inc.'s current programming meet the needs of the significant poor and low-income population, including its energy assistance programs, affordable housing and homeless programming, food assistance and youth programming. Action Inc. has provided services for less than one quarter of low-income people in the service area. Based on this, there is likely a need to expand services. This will require a focused effort to build more effective outreach approaches as well as develop resources to serve more people. The current funding environment for poverty and low-income programs makes expansion of existing services difficult. There remain threats to federal funding due to attempts in Congress to decrease funding to human service programs.

There are needs identified through this assessment that are not in the realm of Action Inc.'s knowledge base and programming tracks. However, because the needs are related to poverty and income, it is incumbent upon the agency to support efforts to address the needs and develop solutions. This can be done through collaboration with other service providers and consortiums of providers to effect positive change. This assessment points to a need to address a mental health crisis in Southwest Montana as well as a high number of at-risk youth. Although Action Inc. will not likely become a provider of mental health services, it can work through a regional collaborative to effect changes in policy and resource allocation to ensure poor and low-income people in the region have access to services.

Based on this assessment, Action Inc. should continue its work to address cyclical poverty through its early childhood education programming, housing approaches, and through its efforts to transform the Emma Park Neighborhood and other high poverty neighborhoods. It should explore ways to have a greater impact on changing the environment and creating more opportunities for high-risk, low-income youth.

Finally, based on the high proportion of senior citizens in the service area and the projected growth within this age cohort, Action Inc. should continue to explore programming to help senior citizens age in their homes. This should include exploration of home maintenance and home retrofit services that could potentially fit within the organizational structure.

As the Board of Directors considers the needs identified through this assessment, it should consider the current capacity of the agency to take on further programming, both from the standpoint of expertise and funding, but also whether facilities can accommodate growth.



## END NOTES

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- <sup>i</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; Median Household Income in the Past Twelve Months, 2013 Inflation-adjusted Dollars; 5-year estimate 2011-2015
- <sup>ii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; 2011-2015
- <sup>iii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; Five-year Estimates, 2011-2015
- <sup>iv</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; Five-year Estimates, 2011-2015
- <sup>v</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; Five-year Estimates, 2011-2015
- <sup>vi</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; Five-year Estimates, 2011-2015
- <sup>vii</sup> eREMI – Projection of Seniors 2010-2060; a product of Regional Economic Models, Inc. ([www.remi.com](http://www.remi.com)); Released April 2013; Compiled by the Census & Economic Information Center, MT Dept. of Commerce ([www.ceic.mt.gov](http://www.ceic.mt.gov))
- <sup>viii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; 2011-2015 5-year Estimates
- <sup>ix</sup> *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*; Vol. 131, May 2016, Issue 2; *Wealth Inequality in the United States Since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data*; Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman
- <sup>x</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; Small Area Poverty Estimates, 2015; SAIPE and ACI figures were averaged for the purpose of this report due to the large disparity between figures.
- <sup>xi</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2015
- <sup>xii</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; *Health, United States*, 1998
- <sup>xiii</sup> National Poverty Center; University of Michigan, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy; Policy Brief #15; Homeownership; America's Dream; Prepared from a paper by Raphael W. Bostic and Kwan Ok Lee; November, 2008
- <sup>xiv</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; Extrapolated from data provided through the American Community Survey, 2011-2015
- <sup>xv</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; Five-year Estimates, 2011-2015
- <sup>xvi</sup> Montana Department of Health and Human Services; Statistical Report, Fiscal Year End 2009-2015
- <sup>xvii</sup> Montana Office of Public Instruction, Free/Reduced Eligibility Data; 2016-2017
- <sup>xviii</sup> Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University; Growing Wealth, Inequality, and Housing in the United States, Zhu Xiao Di, February, 2007 Source: paper by B. Bradbury, S. Jenkins and J. Micklewright
- <sup>xix</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, Italy; Innocenti Report Card No. 1, June, 2000; A League Table of Child Poverty in Rich Nations
- <sup>xx</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; Ratio of Poverty to Income by Block Group; provided by the Montana Census and Economic Information Center; 2009
- <sup>xxi</sup> *Poverty and Inequality, Chapter 5, Social Theory and the Concept of Underclass*
- <sup>xxii</sup> Two sources were reviewed for poverty rates; American Community Survey 2011-2015 and Census Estimates for 2015
- <sup>xxiii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2011-2015
- <sup>xxiv</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; 2011-2015
- <sup>xxv</sup> Montana Office of Public Instruction; Graduation Rates 2015-2016
- <sup>xxvi</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau: *Child Maltreatment, 2015*
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Butte CPS Office, April, 2016
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Medical News Today; Article Date: 04 Jan 2006
- <sup>xxix</sup> American Association of Suicidology; U.S.A. Suicide: 2014 Official Final Data
- <sup>xxx</sup> National Survey on Drug Use and Health; U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Depression and Initiation of Alcohol and Other Drug Use Among Youths Aged 12 to 17, May 3, 2007

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*Appendix A: County Focus Group Meeting Results*

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## Needs Assessment Focus Groups

For the focus groups, a number of stakeholders from each county were selected to participate in a facilitated discussion. These focus groups were held in Philipsburg, Deer Lodge, Anaconda, Dillon, Virginia City, Butte from May to August, 2016.

Six focus groups were facilitated at the following locations:

Philipsburg Museum Room, Philipsburg

Powell County Community Center, Deer Lodge

Hearst Free Library Meeting Room, Anaconda

Bank of Commerce Room, Dillon

Madison County Administration Office, Virginia City

Emma Park Neighborhood Center, Butte

Each participant was offered the chance to participate in a facilitated discussion after the presentation and light snacks. Upon completion of the focus group discussions, the data was carefully examined to determine key findings and implications for the HRDC.

## Summary- Issues Presented

### Value and Purpose – Dialogue on Poverty

- Better understand emerging and ongoing needs across HRDC XII service area – what are the most pressing needs, what needs are unmet, who is underserved?
- Gather valuable insights and discuss needs relevant to county citizens.
- Build partnerships in county with existing service partners/agencies that may be working on similar issues impacting citizens.
- Identify service gaps, and discuss possible solutions and appropriate resources.

### HRDC XII/ Action Inc. Mission, Services, Impact

- Mission to end poverty by developing innovative, community-based, collaborative solutions.
- Services: Early Childhood Services, Youth Employment, Mentoring and Training, Affordable Housing and Support Services, Home Heating and Weatherization, Neighborhood Redevelopment
- Impact: 5,829 served in 2016, households per county served

### County Facts and National Facts

- Median Household Income
- Unemployment Rate
- Annual Average Wage
- Health Insurance Rate (aged under 65 years)
- Housing
- Children and Services
- Median Age
- Senior Citizens and Services

## Summary of Focus Group Overarching Themes and Significant Outcomes

### *Discussion revealed these participant recommendations:*

- Connect to each county's website and related agencies
- Build stronger presence in outlying counties
- Expand service information/education materials to incorporate a multi-media model (print, traditional media, online)
- Create a mentoring or local volunteer program to improve support and guidance through application process to build program awareness
- Expand housing and/or partner with housing authorities to increase/improve low income housing options
- Facilitate the creation of centralized or coordinated care models in each county
- Expand youth mentoring and training programs
- Pilot a coordinated program model that follows youth from birth to maturity, creating a continuum of care
- Engage in planning a coordinated program model that supports those waiting for assistance
- Expand marketing and awareness of all programs
- Create more opportunities for outreach and engagement at local events/ locations in counties
- Build a strong educational and prevention component to programs
- Expand involvement in neighborhood redevelopment efforts in counties
- Engage in planning/resolving the increasing needs of **children** (care, hunger, education, health), **families** (housing, food, heat, employment, health), **youth** (education, employment, adulthood), **seniors** (care, housing food, health, isolation, transportation) and **communities** (housing, coordinated resources, advocacy)
- Build collaborative relationship with other service providers to ensure all needs are being met and that each provider is a knowledgeable source of information
- Expand funding/resource/ partnership opportunities for mental health and addiction services

- Create more opportunities to build awareness/ educate those in direct contact positions (police, fire, EMT, schools, etc.)

## Summary of Focus Group Discussion by County

### Granite County

#### Population

- Highly transient - difficulty in identifying of people in need
- Quiet/unseen population (low population density of county but are dispersed in very rural area)

#### Building partnerships

- Highly desired, increase collaboration of service providers (need multiple view points and providers to service each individual)
- Find ways for greater impact

#### Energy Assistance

- Need propane providers (LIEAP)

#### Technology

- Use technology to reach/ connect with those needing services
- Website connection (HRDC link on county website)

#### Youth Programming

- Expansion of youth training (summer work sights) and mentoring programs

#### Housing

- 300 vouchers in 6 county area

#### Outreach Services

- Need for: low income weatherization, health fairs/ events
- Focus on the hidden population

### Powell County

#### Population

- Shrinking middle class means more in need (economy has declined and the impact has been huge)
- Frequent moving among need population which leads to problems finding them to provide service
- Increased meth use – breakdown of family units

#### Utilities

- Water bills have doubled
- Solid waste costs have increased
- Energy share process is difficult for people to navigate

#### Housing

- High rents for substandard housing
- Need multi-family affordable housing for low wage jobs at prison with goal to keep families here

#### Technology

- Barrier for some
- Suggestion to use rural town schools' computers to help people connect with services
- Need links for Action Inc. on county website

#### Health Care

- Need for help for homebound – no health care available
- Training for volunteers to service
- Mental health services – need support system and available counseling

#### Outreach Services

- Rural areas (lack of transportation/ pride) – one person in each small rural town would be solution to connect those needing service to Action Inc.
- Communication need – matching tech people with people who don't know how to use/ have access to technology
- Training to volunteers to service
- Using library as place for people to access information and be a designated local access point
- Need front line connection with access to services with police, teachers, CPS
- Suggestion to have a case worker once per week in rural areas
- Suggestion to improve communication so when people call, they get a person, not a machine
- Multi-point connection model would help (print, traditional media, online)

### Deer Lodge County

#### Population

- Shifts in local population continues to be a draw on resources. Residents requiring additional assistance is increasing, especially in the areas of behaviors health
- Multi-generational heads of household and/or grandparents serving as primary care providers is on a rise. As a result, there is a tremendous drain on senior(s) income, both financially and emotionally, and a gap in primary and consistent parenting.

Additionally, the support programs and resources that recognize this unique, but all too common, household dynamic is extremely limited.

- The increase presence of behavior health, chemical dependency, and other addictive behaviors on the rise within Deer Lodge County, the need for coordination between support programs and providers is challenging.

#### Utilities

- The need for energy assistance is high. The challenge is a lack of awareness of program requirements, ease of application and understanding of who is eligible.
- The % of household income going to utilities continues to increase.

#### Housing

- There is limited access to quality and affordable low-income housing. The housing infrastructure continues to decline and go into disrepair. Many low-income residents find themselves in unsafe (i.e., aging mobile homes) facilities.
- Independent housing for seniors and young families.

#### Technology

- The trend of shifting to predominate electronic applications for many public programs is concerning as many who need the support do not have access or knowledge necessary to research or access funding.
- The need to increase accessibility of information. Coordination of local, county and state resources is exceptionally challenging for individual in the clerical or non-governmental space. Residents and those serving residents need to know who to contact for what services.

#### Health Care

- Healthcare providers are challenged with the increase in behavioral and mental health cases.
- Many homebound seniors and disabled are unable to receive the care necessary to address even basic needs.
- Coordination between program managers is improving. The ability for public and private sector service groups to reach out, interact and coordinate services is welcomed and occurring more frequently.
- An increase in suicide and homelessness is a serious concern. We are often unaware of these individuals until a situation occurs. Cross-program education would increase our ability to respond earlier.

#### Outreach Services

- Coordination of communication and education for “all programs” offered to residents in the county is necessary. Residents are often confused and frustrated by with the time and process.

- If a full-time local representative of Action Inc. is not feasible, it would be nice to hear from and see a representative on a monthly basis. The weatherization department is often the only visible representation in the community.
- Coordination of a county meeting, such as this, on a regular basis would be hugely valuable. The discussion in today's meeting was broader than Action, Inc. It included representatives from clerical, healthcare, nonprofit, housing, media and others impacting our citizens.
- MT Tech Trio Coordinator shared the need to reach at-risk youth and interrupt the pattern of poverty with education, support and an ability to become self-sufficient.

## Beaverhead County

### Population

- Economy is a root cause
- There is an isolation of poverty services

### Technology

- Need links for Action Inc. on county website
- Suggested the use of webinars
- Matching tech savvy/ 4-H/ extension agents with rural people in poverty (especially elderly and families)

### Outreach Services

- Need front line connection with access to services with law enforcement, Food Bank, teachers, etc.
- Suggestion to have a case worker once per week at two locations
- Suggestion to improve communication so when people call, they get a person, not a machine
- Multiple points of contact/ info for services

## Madison County

### Population

- Increased awareness has started to work
- Pride prevents some individuals from participating
- Some are actively re-locating – finding jobs is difficult; there is both a temporary and transient population in need
- The community sees people in need, but many of these people do not know how to access services

### Technology

- Need links for Action Inc. on county website
- Suggested the use of webinars



- Matching tech savvy/ 4-H/ extension agents with rural people in poverty (especially elderly and families)

#### Outreach Services

- Utilize senior centers for outreach
- Many referrals are coming from Ruby Valley Hospital
- Discussion of the idea to train community members to participate in outreach (e.g. Senior Companion Program)
- There is a need for short/ effective info media in a variety of locations to build awareness and increase use of assistance resources

#### Housing

- Affordable housing a need
- There was a housing study done in Madison County – there is a need to re-visit that
- Is there a way for the commissioners to get involved to expand Sheridan Manor?
- Need for senior and worker housing – define a model for affordable housing

#### Programs

- Assistance to residents who struggle to survive the wait period for social security or other assistance
  - There has been discussion in the community about creating a fund for disabled adults who are applying for disability services
- There is discussion of closing the Office of Public Assistance in Madison County, which is causing many concern
- There are transportation issues, as people travel between communities for services or to make their assistance go further (e.g. food is expensive in Ennis so people travel to Dillon)
- There are issues making SNAP go far enough
- Need for collaboration to provide weatherization and a need for LIEAP awareness

#### Youth Programs

- Need for communication with law enforcement/ school counselors so they are informed about youth programs
- Outreach to schools – home visits can help build relationships
- Create partnership with schools to get service info to them
- Give a packet of information to the superintendent – condensed format they can reproduce
- Childcare is expensive, accessibility is an issue
- There have been discussions in the community about the possibility of the county funding early childhood education (like many other places in Montana)

## Silver Bow County

### Population

- Two groups – those who don't want to help themselves (generational poverty) and those that "try" to make it
- The youth are a population at risk – they struggle making long-term goals when they worry about addressing basic needs (food, shelter), and increased dependence on alcohol and drugs (especially meth)
- Need for workforce training and access to higher paying jobs/ jobs that pay above the poverty line
- There is an underserved population of those in the legal system
- There is an unaddressed issue in the population around substance abuse
- Need to evaluate the data to find the underserved

### Mental Health and Physical Disabilities

- Need advocates/ more service providers
- Butte Community Council has a chart of resources

### Housing

- Need a model that does not exclude – top priority
  - Lack of affordable and safe housing
  - There is a need for "transitional" housing as well
- Housing rehabilitation is a need – living standards are substandard
- CAP may have money to contribute – find funding to address these issues
  - Outreach to landlords to educate on standards, those in poverty, and the resources

### Youth Programs

- Workforce training is needed for this population and the general population
- Outreach to schools so youth know there are opportunities/ resources
- Expand youth programs to reach the at-risk population and provide recreation activities
- Need for provision of school supplies

### Seniors

- Need to support/ expand Meals on Wheels

### Technology

- Linkage of service ALL services on county websites

### Outreach Services

- Top priority issue is coordination of resources and collaboration among service providers- find ways to help/promote private-public partnership and to encourage

providers to be knowledgeable about not only their services, but other providers' services

- Need to create a “one-stop” place for people to access services (place to facilitate paperwork transfer and completion) and to create a model to educate the community
  - There are many unknown services – need resource guide
- Need to partner with local government to motivate movement on addressing issues surrounding poverty
- There is a community management team in Butte that is beginning to connect resources to build a continuum of care network
- Need for better identification process/ model for the “unmet needs” to understand and develop a plan to address



## 2016 Needs Assessment

Location	# of invitees	# of attendees	County Representation Invited	
Beaverhead County - Dillon, MT	25	13	City/ County Officials	6
			Emergency Services (Fire/Police, EMT)	3
			Education/ Child Care	1
			Employment Services	1
			Healthcare	1
			DPHHS	2
			County Public Health	1
			Mental Health	2
			Senior Services	0
			Housing	0
			Non-Profits	2
			Religious Organizations	4
			Private Citizens	0
Madison County - Virginia City, MT	76	9	City/ County Officials	21
			Emergency Services (Fire/Police, EMT)	10
			Education/ Child Care	9
			Employment Services	0
			Healthcare	9
			DPHHS	0
			County Public Health	1
			Mental Health	1
			Senior Services	2
			Housing	0
			Non-Profits	3
			Religious Organizations	19
			Private Citizens	
Granite County - Phillipsburg, MT	22	5	City/ County Officials	13
			Emergency Services (Fire/Police, EMT)	0
			Education/ Child Care	0
			Employment Services	0
			Healthcare	0
			DPHHS	0
			County Public Health	0
			Mental Health	0
			Senior Services	3
			Housing	0
			Non-Profits	1
			Religious Organizations	4
			Private Citizens	1
Deer Lodge County - Anaconda, MT	50	19	City/ County Officials	10
			Emergency Services (Fire/Police, EMT)	1
			Education/ ChildCare	3
			Employment Services	1
			Healthcare	3
			DPHHS	3
			County Public Health	1
			Mental Health	6
			Senior Services	0
			Housing	0
			Non-Profits	4
			Religious Organizations	19
			Private Citizens	2
Powell County - Deer Lodge, MT	41	13	City/ County Officials	3
			Emergency Services (Fire/Police, EMT)	3
			Education/ ChildCare	5
			Employment Services	0
			Healthcare	2
			DPHHS	0
			County Public Health	1
			Mental Health	5
			Senior Services	2
			Housing	4
			Non-Profits	2
			Religious Organizations	1
			Private Citizens	8
Silver Bow County - Butte, MT		30	City/ County Officials	5
			Emergency Services (Fire/Police, EMT)	2
			Education/ ChildCare	3
			Employment Services	2
			Healthcare	3
			DPHHS	0
			County Public Health	1
			Mental Health	2
			Senior Services	1
			Housing	3
			Non-Profits	8
			Religious Organizations	2
			Private Citizens	4

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## *Appendix B: Client Survey, Results*

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DPHHS - IHSB

Survey Type #: 181

HRDC

SAMPLE CLIENT  
110 SAMPLE LANE  
SUITE S  
SAMPLEVILLE, MT 59000-0000

Please circle the answer that best reflects your view.

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Optional

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1 What is the most important need you have related to housing?</p> <p>HELP WITH MONTHLY RENT<br/>AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNIT IN GOOD CONDITION<br/>HELP WITH HOME MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING<br/>HELP WITH A DOWN PAYMENT ON A HOME<br/>HELP PAYING HOME HEATING BILLS<br/>HELP MAKING MY HOME ENERGY EFFICIENT<br/>I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO HOUSING</p> <p>2 What is the most important need you have related to your and your family's health?</p> <p>HEALTH INSURANCE; I CURRENTLY HAVE NONE<br/>MORE AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE<br/>HOME HEALTH SERVICES<br/>DENTAL SERVICES<br/>HELP PAYING FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS<br/>HELP PAYING FOR EYE GLASSES<br/>ACCESS TO A REGULAR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER<br/>HELP WITH DEPRESSION/MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES<br/>I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO HEALTH</p> <p>3 What is the most important need you have related to nutrition?</p> <p>HELP WITH MEAL PREPARATION<br/>NUTRITION EDUCATION<br/>HELP PROVIDING FOOD FOR ME AND MY FAMILY<br/>HELP WITH A GARDEN TO GROW MY OWN FOOD<br/>I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO NUTRITION</p> <p>4 What is the most important need you have related to your family?</p> <p>AFFORDABLE, SAFE CHILDCARE SERVICES<br/>AFFORDABLE PRESCHOOL<br/>HELP WITH IMPROVING MY PARENTING SKILLS<br/>MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR MY CHILD<br/>FAMILY COUNSELING<br/>I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO FAMILY</p> <p>5 What is the most important need you have related to your financial situation?</p> <p>FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT<br/>HELP WITH FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT<br/>EDUCATION/TRAINING ASSISTANCE<br/>HELP WITH OBTAINING DISABILITY STATUS<br/>TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM WORK/APPOINTMENTS<br/>I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO MY FINANCES</p> | <p>6 What do you believe is the single most important need you have today?</p> <p>RENT ASSISTANCE<br/>DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE ON A NEW HOME<br/>HOME MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE<br/>ASSISTANCE WITH HEATING BILLS<br/>AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE<br/>HOME HEALTH SERVICES<br/>MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES<br/>DENTAL SERVICES<br/>PRESCRIPTION DRUG ASSISTANCE<br/>ASSISTANCE WITH EYE GLASSES<br/>FOOD<br/>AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE SERVICES<br/>AFFORDABLE PRESCHOOL<br/>PARENTING CLASSES<br/>EMPLOYMENT<br/>FINANCIAL COUNSELING<br/>MORE EDUCATION/TRAINING<br/>TRANSPORTATION<br/>I HAVE NO NEEDS AT THIS TIME</p> <p>7 Please mark the answer that represents your situation. The assistance I received from programs of the Human Resources Council, District XII has improved my financial stability.</p> <p>STRONGLY AGREE<br/>AGREE<br/>DISAGREE<br/>STRONGLY DISAGREE<br/>DON'T KNOW<br/>DOES NOT APPLY</p> <p>8 Please indicate your overall satisfaction with assistance you received through the Human Resources Council, District XII.</p> <p>VERY SATISFIED<br/>SOMEWHAT SATISFIED<br/>NOT SATISFIED AT ALL<br/>DON'T KNOW</p> <p>9 Please indicate how pleasant and helpful our workers have been with you.</p> <p>VERY PLEASANT AND HELPFUL<br/>SOMEWHAT PLEASANT AND HELPFUL<br/>NOT PLEASANT AND HELPFUL AT ALL<br/>DON'T KNOW</p> |
|--|---|

10 For statistical purposes only, please indicate the age bracket that applies to you.

18-24  
25-34  
35-44  
45-54  
55-61  
62-64  
65 AND OLDER

11 For statistical purposes only, please indicate your household type.

SINGLE, LIVING ALONE  
SINGLE ADULT, CHILDREN PRESENT  
COUPLE, NO CHILDREN PRESENT  
COUPLE, CHILDREN PRESENT

12 For statistical purposes only, please indicate your disability status.

DISABLED  
NON-DISABLED

Please use the following space for comments, suggestions, etc.  
If you would like us to contact you, please list your name and phone number. If you do not have a phone, please list your address.

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Thank You for completing this survey!

TOTALS

Beaver Head  
30

Deer Lodge  
58

Granite County  
16

Madison County  
36

Powell County  
27

Silver Bow County  
261

COMPLETED RESPONSE FROM ALL 6 COUNTIES  
TOTAL: 428

Returned, unable to forward  
113

Returned w/ Forwarding address  
126

TOTAL RETURNS:  
239



## Survey Questions

1 What is the most important need you have related to housing?

HELP WITH MONTHLY RENT  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNIT IN GOOD CONDITION  
HELP WITH HOME MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING  
HELP WITH A DOWN PAYMENT ON A HOME  
HELP PAYING HOME HEATING BILLS.  
HELP MAKING MY HOME ENERGY EFFICIENT  
I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO HOUSING.

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
37	5	5	4	7	6	64
14	4	1		1		20
18		8	2	3		31
15		3	2	3	3	26
114	21	34	11	19	14	213
30	6	8	3	3	3	53
17	1	8		4	2	32

2 What is the most important need you have related to your families health?

HEALTH INSURANCE: I CURRENTLY HAVE NONE.  
MORE AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE  
HOME HEALTH SERVICES  
DENTAL SERVICES  
HELP PAYING FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS  
HELP PAYING FOR EYE GLASSES  
ACCESS TO A REGULAR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER  
HELP WITH DEPRESSION/MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES  
I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO HEALTH

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
40	1	11		6	2	60
30	1	4	3	2		40
7	1	1	4			13
58	7	19	7	10	7	108
25	4	3	2	4	3	41
38	9	13	7	13	6	86
12	1	5	1		2	21
12	1	5		2	1	21
63	12	18	2	10	11	116

3 What is the most important need you have related to nutrition?

HELP WITH MEAL PREPARATION  
NUTRITION EDUCATION  
HELP WITH PROVIDING FOOD FOR ME AND MY FAMILY  
HELP WITH A GARDEN TO GROW MY OWN FOOD  
I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO NURITION

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
7	1	3	1		1	13
14	3			4	2	23
71	9	14	3	5	10	112
19	2	6	2	4	1	34
18	12	35	9	22	14	110

4 What is the most important need you have related to your family

AFFORDABLE, SAFE CHILDCARE SERVICES  
AFFORDABLE PRESCHOOL  
HELP WITH IMPROVING MY PARENTING SKILLS  
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR MY CHILD  
FAMILY COUNSELING  
I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO FAMILY

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
8	1		1			10
6	1	1				8
2		1		1	1	5
7		1				8
7	1	11				19
158	21	37	13	32	26	287

5 What is the most important need you have related to your financial situation?

FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT  
HELP WITH FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION TRAINING ASSISTANCE  
TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM WORK/APPOINTMENTS  
I HAVE NO NEEDS RELATED TO MY FINANCES

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
43	1	2		1		47
18		3	3	1	1	26
11	5	1		1	2	20
18	4	7	1	1	1	32
98	14	31	9	24	21	197

6 What do you believe is the single most important need you have today?

RENT ASSISTANCE  
DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR A NEW HOME  
ASSISTANCE WITH HEATING BILLS  
HOME MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE  
AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE  
HOME HEALTH SERVICES  
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
DENTAL SERVICES  
PERSCRIPTION DRUG ASSISTANCE  
ASSISTANCE WITH EYE GLASSES  
FOOD  
AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE SERVICES  
AFFORDABLE PRESCHOOL  
PARENTING CLASSES  
EMPLOYMENT  
FINANCIAL COUNSELING  
MORE EDUCATION TRAINING  
TRANSPORTATION  
I HAVE NO NEEDS AT THIS TIME

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
25	6	3	2	6	4	46
9	1	4	1	1	1	17
90	20	20	6	18	13	167
36		11		2	4	53
32		6	1	2		41
3	1					4
7	1	2	1			11
34	2	10	4	7	2	59
14	3	4	1	1	1	24
33	3	7	1	9	2	55
33	4	9		2	1	49
2		1				3
2						2
1						1
15		2				17
2					1	3
7	2		1		1	11
12		3	2		1	18
18	3	10	3	4	3	41

56  
10  
-1  
-4  
-12  
-10  
-2  
-8  
-3  
-5  
-90  
-10  
-9

7 Please mark the answer that represents your situation

The assistance I received from programs of the

Human Resources Council, District XII

STRONGLY AGREE

AGREE

DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

STRONGLY DISAGREE

DOES NOT APPLY

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
95	13	25	6	13	13	165
97	14	21	7	15	10	164
6		1		1		8
15	3	4			1	23
1						1
12		3		3	3	21

8 Please indicate your overall satisfaction

with assistance you

Resources Council, District

VERY SATISFIED

SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

NOT SATISFIED AT ALL

DON'T KNOW

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
153	20	44	13	23	17	270
41	6	10	1	4	7	69
2		1			1	4
7	1	22		3	2	35

9 Please indicate how pleasant and helpful our workers

have been with you.

VERY PLEASANT AND HELPFUL

SOMEWHAT PLEASANT AND HELPFUL

NOT PLEASANT AND HELPFUL AT ALL

DON'T KNOW

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
154	22	35	14	26	13	264
37	1	4		4		46
6						6
9	4	2			2	17

10 For statistical purposes only, please indicate the

age bracket that applies to you.

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-61

62-64

65 AND OLDER

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
5					1	6
12	2	5	1		3	23
18	1	7		2	1	29
35	8	7		4	5	59
54	3	12	1	2	7	79
15	22	7	3	6	2	55
74	12	13	9	18	9	135

11 For statistical purposes only, please indicate your household type.

SINGLE, LIVING ALONE  
SINGLE, ADULT CHILDREN PRESENT  
COUPLE NO CHILDREN PRESENT  
COUPLE, CHILDREN PRESENT

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
115	20	21	12	20	18	206
23	4	4		3	9	43
24	2	7	2	4		39
23	2	7	1	2	1	36

12 For statistical purposes only, please indicate your disability status.

DISABLED  
NON-DISABLED

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
107	18	22	8	17	16	188
91	10	20	5	15	12	153

13 For statistical purposes only, please indicate your veteran status.

VETERAN  
NON-VETERAN

Silver Bow	Beaverhead	Deer Lodge	Granite	Madison	Powell	TOTAL
39	4	9	1	8	5	66
151	23	45	13	23	23	278

## COMMENTS SECTION FOR ALL COUNTIES.

### POSITIVE FEED BACK

1. Human Resources Council Dist. XII has been good to me and the community! It has helped a lot of people who needed it.
2. Was injured and your programs saved my life! Thank you for being helping here to help people like me!
3. Section 8 has helped me and employees are good at their job.
4. Thank you very much for help I have received in the past
5. LIEAP has helped me immensely.
6. Your assistance is very helpful.
7. Your office has been a great help in my life would like to extend personal thanks to all and their support.
8. Family has had services and wanted to say very grateful employees are very kind and helpful.
9. Believes hourly staff could use an increase in pay and also believes they also need more of an orientation.
10. HRC has been good to me helps a lot! Thank You.
11. All Services from HRC are very helpful and employees are very nice.
- 12 Your crew were very helpful and gave me a lot of tips and were very good at their craftsmanship.
13. Had weatherization 3 years ago it helped.
14. The LIEAP program helps me out with winter heating bill. I don't know what I would do with out you.
15. I appreciate these programs I still have some financial problems, but they are better.
16. They were great and helpful all the time I'm 62 now and could not do this on my own.
17. Many years applied for LIEAP and Weatherization. This year my income changed for the better so I did not apply. You have helped me when money was tight.
18. Thank you for winterizing my trailer last winter was very cold in my place. I wouldn't of been able to stay if it wasn't for weatherization coming in.
19. All People that we have contact with have more than helpful and very pleasant. This office has been really a god sent when we really needed them.
20. Very helpful!
21. Thank you for what you did last year your staff was A+++!
22. Struggled for years until recently. I am thankful HRC that was there for me and my daughter.
23. Staci Flink is such an awesome employee that treats you like her equal; she doesn't look down you needing assistance as some people do.
24. lived in Sheridan at the Shermont Manor for about 9 years and would like a new window, cannot see out of it. Would also like to see about getting a walk-in shower rather than bath tub.
25. Keep up the good work!

## **INQUIRIES & SUGGESTIONS**

1. Inquiry on porch sloping and is deteriorated.
2. Inquiry on help with grandchild.
3. Person inquiring on some rental assistance behind on rent. Left name and number to call.
4. Inquiry on Rapid Rehousing left name and number.
5. Prescription Assistance Inquiry.
6. On maintenance assistance Inquiry.
7. Inquiry on a hot water tank wrap  
wishes windows could be replaced after weatherization insulated house still draft coming through windows.
8. Suggestion on help with prescription glasses and dental.
9. Suggestion, should not base income on yearly but month to month would help seasonal workers.
10. Inquiry on help with dental and eye for couple.
11. Inquiry for rental assistance and LIEAP.
12. Person wanting a call from anyone of the departments left name and number.
13. Inquiry on drains along side house being cleaned.
14. Inquiry about energy efficient heat that landlord and tenant cannot afford.
15. Inquiry for weatherizing house.
16. Need help with obtain s.s cards. Lost out on section 8 because of it.
17. Need help with rental assistance.
18. Needs help with weatherization of home.
19. Inquiry on dental assistance.
20. Suggestion, would like help with hearing aids cannot afford them.
21. Likes the fact that gets help with LIEAP but would like a phone call from someone to listen about what she needs to say about some things.
22. Inquiring if there is help to get her water running. Needs help to hire a contractor.
23. Inquiry on dental assistance.
24. Need more houses available to the poor.
25. Inquiry on storm windows and heating bill assistance.
26. Inquiry on home maintenance and cleaning.
27. Was hoping that Human resources would have more youth employment training to help them build the skills for the future.
28. Would like a phone call back to talk to someone if they would qualify to check furnace.
29. Inquiry for section 8.

30. Inquiry on help with changing electric over to gas. Only has electric heat and gas water tank.
31. Suggestion to have dentists that allow adult Medicaid in my area and it would be nice to own my own home.
32. Suggestion print to be larger for older folks that have a hard time seeing survey.
33. Inquiry on LEIAP if she would qualify.
34. Inquiry on weatherization for home.

### **Complaints**

1. Process for going through apps is to long for LIEAP.
2. The man I gave my application to treated me extremely rude.
3. Front desk person needs to be more helpful and people friendly.
4. When you get a \$18.00 Cola raise they take \$100.00 plus away from your LIEAP for propane. You get more if you can afford to buy firewood. This is not right

Thank you for letting me comment. From Deer Lodge.