



Community Needs Assessment Summary

Prepared for: BI-CAP Community Action Program

6603 Bemidji Ave N. Bemidji, MN 56601

Prepared by: Brenda Holden

22603 Fable Road • St. Augusta MN 56301 • brendaupfront@gmail.com

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Summary

This summary is intended to introduce the full Community Needs Assessment and highlight the highest needs of clients, the strengths and gaps in community services, population trends and perceptions of BI-CAP's reputation which will be useful for BI-CAP's strategic planning process.

Primary research was done through parallel surveys that help compare multiple perceptions of needs. Response rates included 178 clients, sixteen (16) community partners such as county services, corrections, churches, and nonprofits, forty-one (41) staff from across BI-CAP and three board members. Participants offered many comments and suggestions that should be reviewed by leadership. A focus group of Head Start parents reviewed and discussed the top needs identified from the multiple perspectives surveyed and how BI-CAP and BI-CAP Head Start could best support community needs.

Extensive secondary data available in separate sources such as the U.S. Census as well as information provided by county public health providers, BI-CAP Head Start's Performance Indicators Report, data from several state government departments and other local sources. Sources are listed for all data.

Highest Needs from Multiple Perspectives

The following table reflects the highest needs identified in each survey. Prioritized needs are inter-related. Themes around having enough money for food and housing likely impact mental health.

Ranking of Needs	Head Start PIR	Needs of children in household (158 client responses)	Clients (158 responses) <i>High response rates noted.</i>	Staff (41 responses) <i>High response rates noted.</i>	Partners (16 responses) <i>High response rate noted.</i>	Board (3 responses)
Highest need	Emergency or crisis help (food, clothing, shelter)	Tie between education and food	Finances (55% of clients said this is #1)	Mental health services (80% of staff said this is #1)	Housing (87% said this is #1)	Housing
2nd highest need	Mental Health	Health and Wellness	Food (44% of clients said this is #2)	Employment/living wage	Transportation	tie: employment/living wages; education, parenting skills/Head Start/Childcare; Transportation; Addiction/Recovery Services
3rd highest need	Housing assistance (subsidies, utilities repairs)	Finances	Health and Wellness	Housing	Employment/living wages	tie: health and wellness; mental health services for children
4th highest need		Parenting skills/Head Start/Childcare	Employment	Transportation	Mental health services for adults	
5th top need		Tie between transportation and housing	Housing	parenting skills/Head Start/Childcare	Tie between food; parenting skills/Head Start/Childcare; and addiction/recovery services	

A Closer Look at Highest Needs Identified

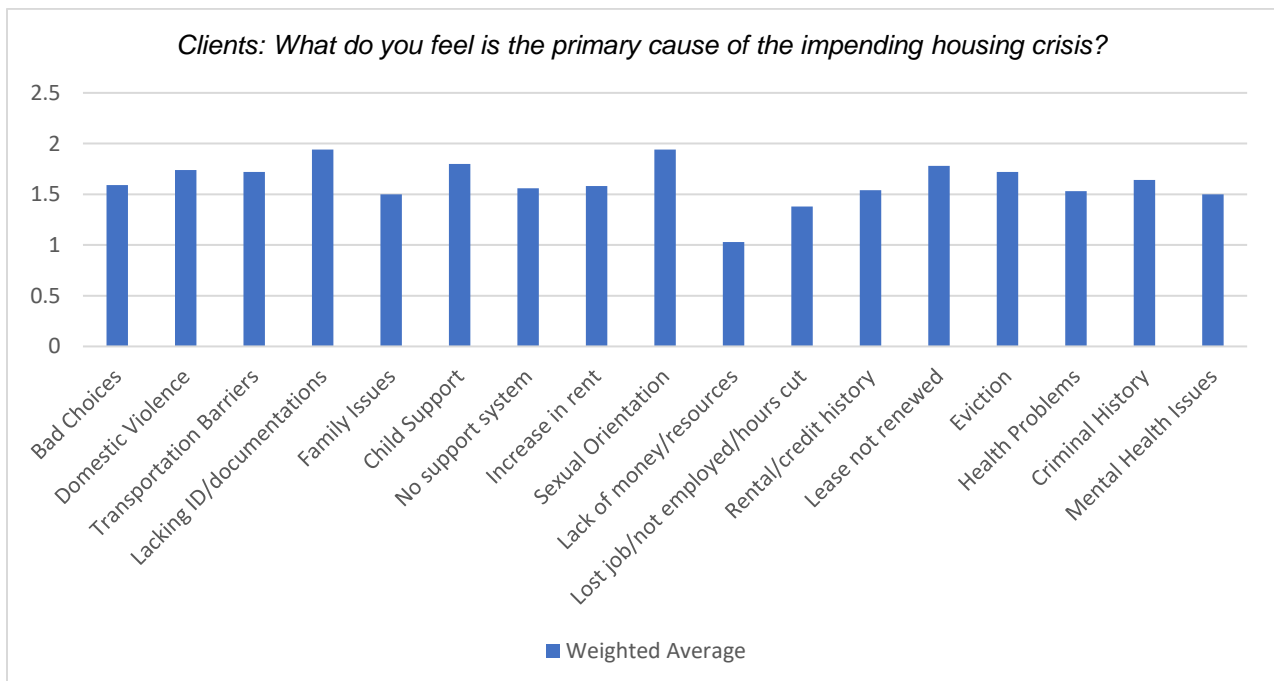
Mental health, finances, housing needs and crisis help are inter-related. The Head Start parent focus group reiterated this in their discussions. This section of the report breaks down information within each of those areas to include data and relevant survey responses.

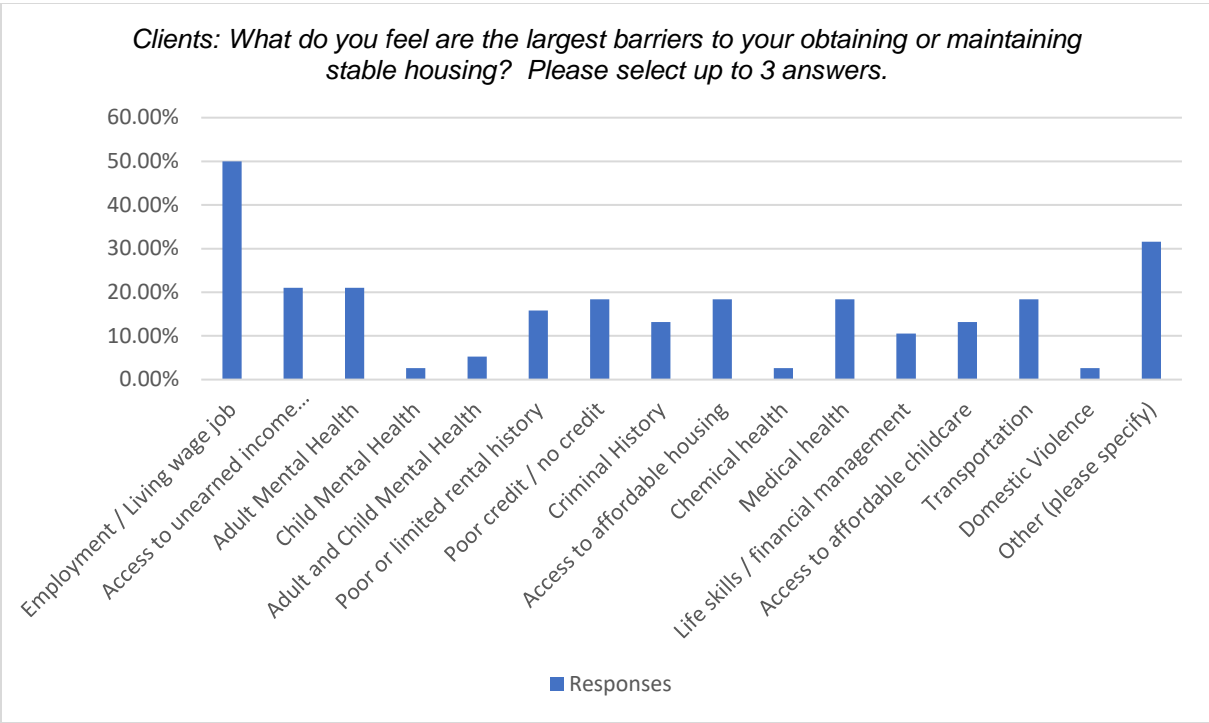
Housing

As housing prices increase, it becomes more challenging to cover other expenses. Incomes are not rising at the same pace as home values, making it more difficult to purchase and own a home. Rent has increased, but the income of renters has not kept pace. The following table is created from data from the 2023 County Housing Profiles at <https://mhponline.org/2023-county-profiles/>.

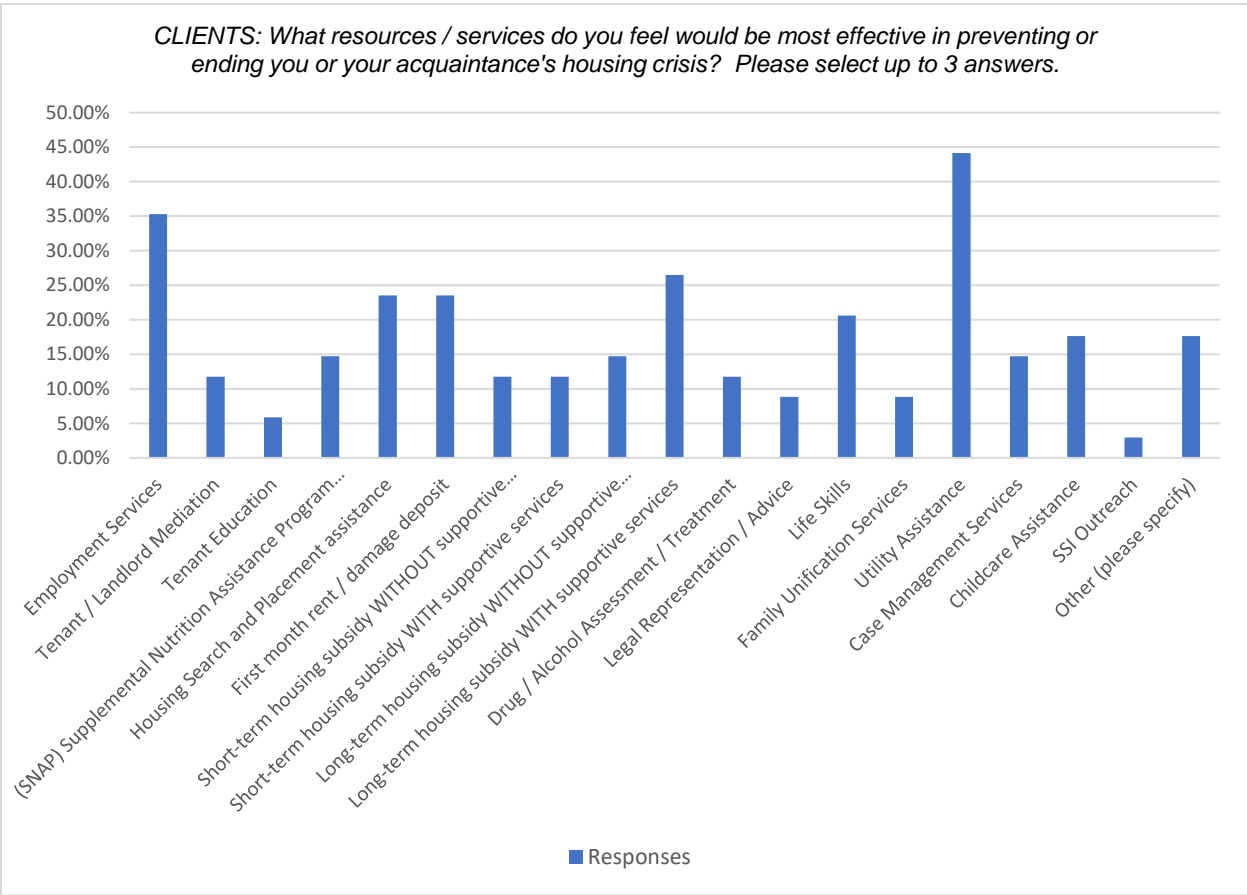
HOUSING INVENTORY FOR EXTREMELY LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

	Beltrami County	Cass County
Eviction Filings in 2022	80	48
Shortage of affordable/available homes for Extremely Low-Income households	1,160	310
Percent of rental units build before 1970	34%	33%
Percent of houses built before 1970	25%	21%
2022 multi-family units permitted	105	0
2022 single-family units permitted	86	310
Number and percent of severely cost-burdened renters (50%)	1,455 38%	281 16%
Number in the county that are 'cost-burdened' – at risk of being forced to choose between a home and other basic needs like food, clothing and medicine	4,752	3,046





**Note: Other barriers listed can be found in the transcribed responses to surveys.



Crisis Intervention

The need for crisis intervention supports continues, particularly in Beltrami County. Homelessness continues to be an issue, with a significant number of people who applied for emergency rent assistance that are on hold, declined or waiting for payment. The increase in food shelf visits is the most telling data with an increase of over 200% in Beltrami County.

Increase in Food Shelf Visits

According to Minnesota Hunger Solutions data on food shelf visits, Beltrami County had a significant increase (over 200%) in visits to food shelves from 2021-2022.

	Beltrami County	Cass County
2022 Breakdown of Visits	Child visits 13,801 Adult visits: 22,209 Senior visits: 4,841 Total visits: 40,851 Household visits: 13,462 Pounds distributed 863,518	Child visits: 7,250 Adult visits: 10,718 Senior visits: 4,182 Total visits: 22,150 Household visits: 7,759 Pounds Distributed: 477,538
2021 Breakdown of Visits	Child visits: 3,777 Adult visits: 6,694 Senior visits: 1,832 Total visits: 12,303 Household visits: 4,372 Pounds distributed: 419,200	Child visits: 6,714 Adult visits: 9,167 Senior visits: 4,402 Total visits: 20,283 Household visits: 7,625 Pounds distributed: 586,975
Percent of change	Child: 265.4% Adults: 231.8% Seniors: 164.2% Total visits: 232% Households: 207.9% Pounds distributed 106%	Child: 8% Adults: 16.9% Senior: -5% Total visits: 9.2% Households 1.8% Pounds distributed: -18.6%

Emergency Rent Assistance

2022 Emergency Rent Assistance Data from Minnesota Housing Partnership

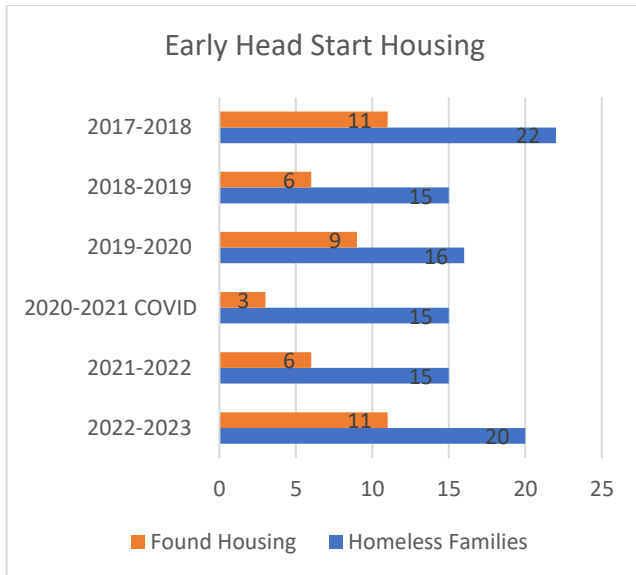
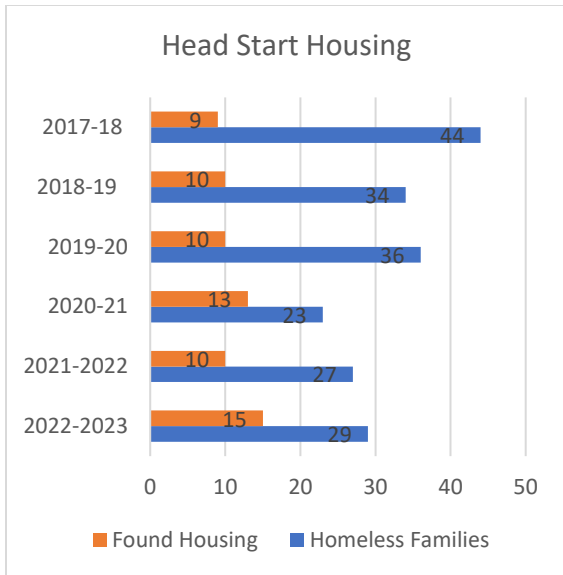
<https://www.mhponline.org/>

Data through December 31, 2021	Beltrami County	Cass County
Number of Applicants	257	107
Number of Applicants with minors	119	55
Total Amount Requested	\$1,067,900	\$633,500
Number of applicants paid	113	50
Number of approved applicants waiting to be paid	38	14
Number of applicants that are on hold, withdrawn or declined	80	29

Homeless Data

A statewide count of people who are homeless at the January 2022 point in time count 147 people in Beltrami County and 106 people in Cass County who were homeless.

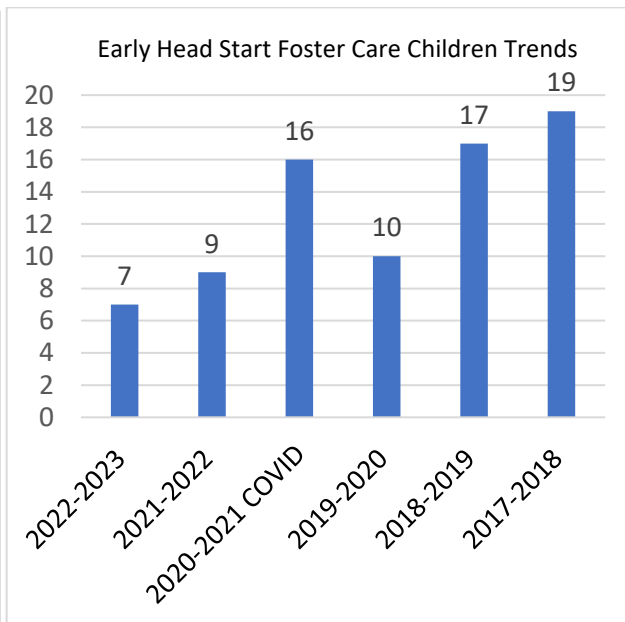
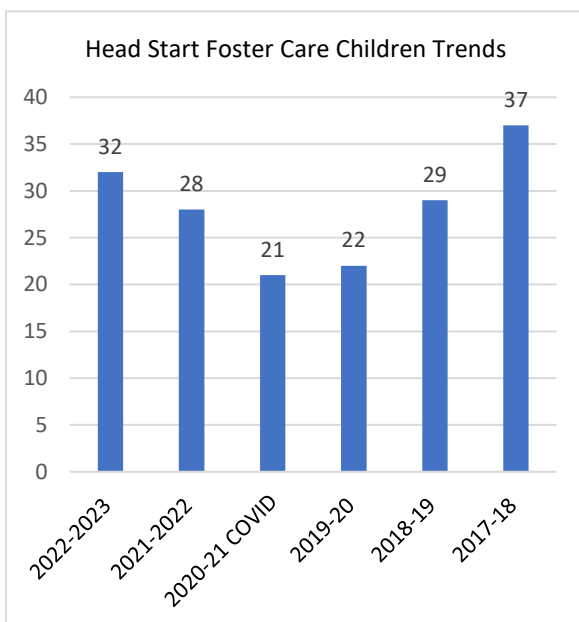
BI-CAP Head Start Parent Survey from November 2022 shows the trend compared to previous years for the Head Start and Early Head Start families. These graphs do not identify duplicate counts where siblings may be in both programs.



2021 County Social Service Data on early intervention of maltreatment

Number of social service agency referrals to early intervention for infants and toddlers involved in substantiated cases of maltreatment, 2021 https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5408N-ENG	Beltrami County	Cass County
Children required to be referred	43	2
Children with referrals (number and percentage)	34 (79%)	2 (100%)

Head Start Foster Care Data from PIR



Health and Wellness: Physical health, mental health and impact on families and finances

Beltrami and Cass Counties are rated among the least healthy counties in the state. Health and wellness, including mental health, rated in the top needs across all surveyed groups. BI-CAP staff ranked this as the highest need (80% of responses). Clients identified this as the second highest need for the children in the household. Clients and board members identified this as the third highest need. Partners identified this as the fourth highest need. Head Start parents in a focus group talked about the mental health strain of dealing with coming out of COVID and making ends meet.

According to the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps data, both Beltrami and Cass counties are ranked among the least healthy counties in Minnesota (lowest 0%-25%) in terms of length of life and quality of life for residents. Beltrami County is ranked #86 of the state's 87 counties and Cass County is rated #85.

<i>DATA FROM 2023 REPORT by COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS AND ROADMAPS</i>			
Health Outcomes	Beltrami County	Cass County	MN
Poor or Fair Health	14%	13%	10%
Poor physical Health Days	3.5	3.3	2.6
Poor Mental Health Days	4.8	4.4	4.1
Low Birthweight	6%	7%	7%
Adult Smoking	23%	21%	14%
Adult Obesity	39%	33%	31%
Food Environment Index	6.9	8.1	9.0
Access to Exercise Opportunities	78%	57%	86%
Excessive Drinking	23%	23%	22%
Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	30%	41%	30%
Sexually Transmitted Infections	432.3	339.2	392.1
Teen Births	30	29	12
Primary Care Physicians Ratio	1010:1	2990:1	1110:1
Dentists Ratio	1250:1	1460:1	1310:1
Mental Health Providers Ratio	250:1	1060:1	320:1
Preventable Hospital Stays	2466	2812	2323
Mammography Screening	47%	42%	45%
Flu Vaccinations	54%	47%	57%
Injury Deaths	102	116	69
Air Pollution - Particulate Matter	6.0	4.2	6.1
Severe Housing Problems	16%	13%	13%
Driving to work alone	77%	73%	74%
Long Commute -driving alone	19%	32%	31%

Several survey questions asked clients about their financial situation and how it has changed. Many clients commented in the survey about the impact of inflation and the increased cost of groceries, utilities, and daily expenses. Some clients said that costs have gone up, but their fixed income hasn't changed. Some people worked less during COVID or had to quit to stay at home with children. When COVID-related financial supports ended, some had increased stress of trying to pay for living expenses.

Staff identified stressors of clients to include rising costs, isolation, and fear of illness, need for more childcare that is safe and affordable, and need for helping families with addiction and/or mental health issues. Agency partners also identified the need for more addiction and mental health services.

One board member stated in the survey: “Many low-income folks work service industry jobs that were most impacted by the pandemic. People either lost their jobs due to lockdowns or people faced the risks of exposure to COVID. If you lost a job or your hours were cut, then you had to deal with the consequences of falling behind on rent and other bills. Even short-term changes to employment or loss of income can have very significant long-term impacts. It becomes almost impossible to dig out of a financial hole if you lose a job for a few weeks or few months. Sometimes assistance doesn’t come quick enough or the process to get help can feel burdensome when dealing with all the other impacts of the pandemic.”

Supports Used or Needed

A more complete picture of supports used or may be needed is listed in the table on page 11, which also includes staff, partner, and board perception of whether the community has adequate levels of each support or if should be expanded or improved.

Living Wage:

Client survey respondents indicate that 77% (84) feel their finances for the past few months are worse than a year ago, and 39% (69) said their needs are worse than in the past.

The information in this section comes from county profiles from Minnesota Employment and Economic Development.

Beltrami County: Job vacancies in the Northwest Region reached new highs in the 4th quarter of 2021, quickly bringing back challenges in finding new workers and the lowest jobseeker-per-vacancy ratio on record. Labor force growth has slowed in recent years. After experiencing a net gain of 468.6 workers each year from 1990 to 2000, Beltrami County averaged an annual gain of 223.5 new workers from 2000 to 2010, and most recently a gain of 242.1 new workers since 2010.

Cass County: Labor force growth has slowed in recent years. After experiencing a net gain of 428.6 workers each year from 1990 to 2000, Cass County averaged an annual gain of 96.4 new workers from 2000 to 2010, and most recently a gain of 16.8 new workers since 2010. Moving forward, Cass County is expected to add workers from 2025 to 2035. At 4.2%, Cass Co. had a higher unemployment rate than the state in 2022. After the pandemic recession, Cass County’s unemployment rate decreased compared to 9.3% in 2020 and declined compared to the 5.9% pre-pandemic rate posted in 2019. The number of unemployed workers actively seeking work in Cass County declined over the past year and is down compared to 2019.

Labor Force Projections From DEED 2022 County Profiles

Note: More detailed information on types of employment and wages is available at [County Profiles / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](https://www.mn.gov/county-profiles)

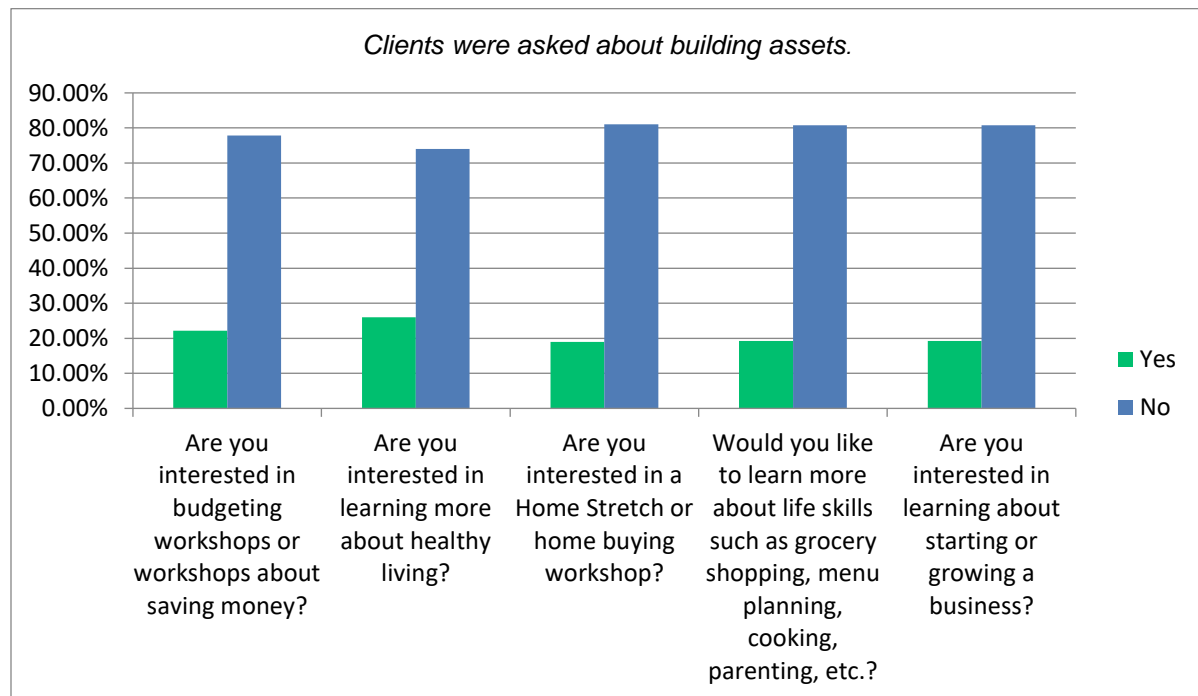
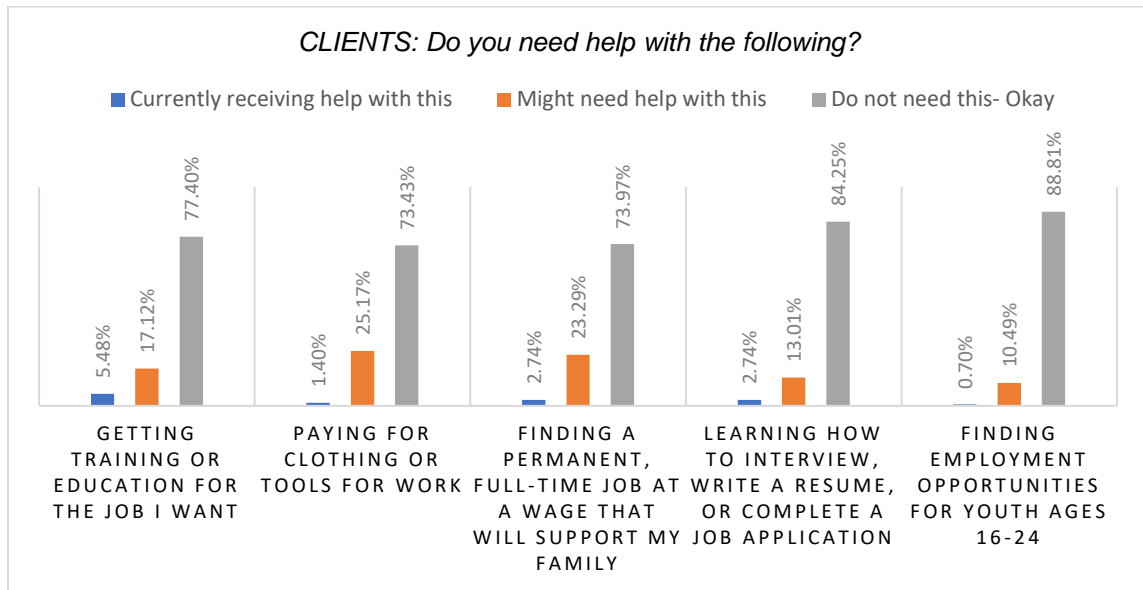
Labor Force Projections by Age Group	Beltrami 2025	Beltrami 2035	Cass 2025	Cass 2035
16-24 year olds	4,717	5,225	1,901	1,986
25-54 year olds	13,142	13,809	7,877	9,089
55-64 year olds	3,336	3,194	2,849	2,477
65 years and over	1,572	1,461	1,420	1,448
TOTAL LABOR FORCE	22,768	23,688	14,045	15,001

Agency Survey Comparison of big barriers to people getting jobs

Client - Big Problem	Staff - Big Problem	Partners - Big Problem
pay is too low	transportation	childcare
physical or mental disability	childcare	transportation
need childcare	criminal record	criminal record
need transportation	physical or mental disability	physical or mental disability
need more training	low paying jobs	low paying jobs

Client Perspective

Clients were asked if they receive or may need specific employment supports.



Comparison of Community Supports Needs and Quality from Survey Responses

This table compares perceptions of supports in the community using color coding to distinguish between responses of staff and partners. The first column indicates how many clients indicated they either use or may need each support.

Supports listed in all parallel surveys	Clients use/may need	Services are adequate	Services should be expanded	Services need improvement	No longer needed	Don't Know
		Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS						
Getting training or education for the job wanted	33	5, 1	10, 6	22, 9	0, 0	4, 0
Paying for clothing or tools for work	38	4, 3	11, 2	17, 8	1, 0	8, 3
Finding a permanent, full-time job at a wage that will support my family	38	8, 0	11, 5	21, 11	0, 0	1, 0
Learning how to interview, write a resume, or complete a job application	23	5, 2	12, 3	19, 8	2, 0	3, 3
Finding employment opportunities for ages 16-24	16	12, 1	16, 3	10, 9	1, 0	5, 3
Legal help with domestic abuse or restraining orders	4	2, 3	17, 7	15, 5	0, 0	7, 2
Help to solve problems with credit cards and other debt	39	3, 1	9, 4	18, 3	0, 0	11, 8
Help getting financial assistance – benefits / cash	51	15, 2	13, 8	7, 5	1, 0	5, 1
Help with finding ways to raise personal income	61	4, 2	11, 6	17, 6	0, 0	9, 2
Help to fill out tax forms	24	10, 3	15, 9	7, 2	0, 0	9, 2
Getting enough money to meet basic needs	76	4, 2	12, 6	20, 7	1, 0	4, 1
Dealing with a criminal record that limits opportunities for work or other needs	11	1, 0	8, 3	23, 10	1, 0	9, 3
HEALTHY LIVING - HEALTH SUPPORTS						
Help applying for Medical Assistance or MN Care	37	16, 10	11, 4	5, 2	1, 0	0, 6
Help getting treatment for a drug or alcohol problem	4	6, 2	15, 10	13, 4	0, 0	7, 0
Help applying for disability support benefits	20	9, 3	12, 9	12, 2	0, 0	7, 2
Finding good health insurance that is affordable	29	6, 6	10, 5	20, 4	0, 0	1, 4

Supports listed in all parallel surveys	Clients use/may need	Services are adequate	Services should be expanded	Services need improvement	No longer needed	Don't Know
		Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners
Finding a doctor, dentist or counselor that accepts Medicaid/MA or MNCare	49	3, 3	13, 6	22, 7	0, 0	2, 0
Finding ongoing or emergency mental health care	22	4, 1	10, 9	21, 6	1, 0	4, 0
Getting health care	25	8, 7	18, 8	11, 1	0, 0	3, 0
Getting dental care	57	5, 3	10, 8	22, 5	0, 0	3, 0
Coping with stress or depression	52	4, 1	11, 9	19, 6	1, 0	5, 0
HEALTHY LIVING - NUTRITION SUPPORTS						
Applying for food support benefits – SNAP/EBT	63	21, 8	12, 5	5, 3	0, 0	3, 0
Applying for WIC (Women Infant and Children) program	17	20, 10	12, 4	3, 2	0, 0	6, 0
Applying for Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS)	29	15, 7	10, 3	3, 3	0, 0	13, 3
Applying for Meals on Wheels	9	12, 5	10, 4	5, 2	0, 0	14, 5
Finding a Community Table / Soup Kitchen	5	18, 7	10, 5	6, 1	0, 0	7, 3
Finding a Food Shelf	18	22, 9	12, 5	3, 1	0, 0	4, 1
Applying for free/reduced lunch	25	22, 8	11, 4	1, 2	0, 0	6, 2
Getting enough food for the people in our household	47	11, 3	16, 10	12, 2	0, 0	2, 1
Learning how to stretch our food budget	37	9, 3	18, 7	12, 5	0, 0	2, 1
HOUSING						
Help pay the mortgage or rent	53	10, 2	10, 8	16, 6	0, 0	5, 0
Help pay damage or security deposits	11	9, 2	12, 8	15, 6	0, 0	5, 0
Help pay for home heating expenses	136	6, 3	14, 8	9, 5	0, 0	2, 0
Help with energy-related home repairs and improvements such as air sealing, furnace efficiency, insulation for attics/walls, or health and safety measures	95	13, 3	21, 8	5, 5	0, 0	2, 0
Help with household chores, cleaning or small repairs	49	8, 3	9, 6	13, 6	0, 0	11, 1
Help to prevent foreclosure	10	5, 3	10, 4	8, 5	2, 0	16, 4
Help to prevent eviction	12	2, 8	13, 7	12, 5	0, 0	8, 2
Finding Emergency Shelter	3	8, 2	10, 8	21, 6	0, 0	2, 0
Finding safe & affordable housing that meets my/our needs	19	4, 1	14, 7	21, 8	0, 0	1, 0
Finding housing in safe neighborhoods	14	4, 3	11, 5	24, 7	0, 0	2, 1

Supports listed in all parallel surveys	Clients use/may need	Services are adequate	Services should be expanded	Services need improvement	No longer needed	Don't Know
		Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners	Staff, Partners
Getting the landlord to make repairs	7	4, 4	7, 4	22, 8	0, 0	8, 0
Finding affordable home ownership opportunities	27	4, 4	10, 3	20, 7	1, 0	6, 2
Finding safe and affordable rental units	22	4, 3	11, 4	23, 9	0, 0	3, 0
TRANSPORTATION						
Getting access to public transportation	16	3, 2	9, 4	27, 10	0, 0	2, 0
Having a reliable car to get to and from school or work	29	3, 1	10, 4	25, 10	0, 0	3, 1
Having transportation to get to medical appointments	20	6, 2	11, 7	22, 7	0, 0	2, 0
Having transportation to get children to childcare or other activities	13	3, 1	12, 3	23, 11	0, 0	3, 1
Having enough money for car insurance, or license tabs	57	5, 2	6, 3	27, 11	1, 0	2, 0
Having enough money for gas	65	5, 3	8, 2	25, 11	0, 0	3, 0
Having enough money for car repairs	79	5, 1	6, 4	28, 11	0, 0	2, 0

Population Trends:

The population projections listed below are based on Minnesota State Demographic Center Data reported by Minnesota Employment and Economic Development Office. The increase in the proportion of older adults anticipated over the next decade in both Beltrami and Cass Counties are worth noting during strategic planning.

BELTRAMI COUNTY	2023 Projection	2033 Projection	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Under 5 years	3,446	3,566	120	3.5%
5-14 yrs	6,676	6,792	116	1.7%
15-24 yrs	8,284	8,858	573	6.9%
25-34 yrs	5,811	5,849	38	.7%
35-44 yrs	5,551	5,635	84	1.5%
45-54 yrs	4,467	5,462	995	22.3%
55-64yrs	5,083	4,256	-827	-16.3%
65-74 yrs	4,858	4,324	-534	-11%
75-84 yrs	2,628	3,637	1,009	38.4%
85+	1,176	1,570	394	33.5%
Total population	47,980	49,949	1,969	4.1%

CASS COUNTY	2023 Projection	2033 Projection	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Under 5 years	1,687	1,752	65	3.9%
5-14 yrs	3,420	3,659	239	7%
15-24 yrs	3,013	3,029	16	.5%
25-34 yrs	2,721	2,811	90	3.3%
35-44 yrs	3,014	3,265	251	8.3%
45-54 yrs	2,985	3,290	305	10.2%
55-6yrs	4,571	3,478	-1,093	-23.9%
65-74 yrs	5,015	4,943	-72	-1.4%
75-84 yrs	2,703	3,390	687	25.4%
85 yrs+	797	1,100	303	38%
Total population	29,926	30,717	791	2.6%

Reputation of BI-CAP

BI-CAP continues to maintain a good reputation. The comments sections of the surveys include praise and suggestions that agency leadership will take into consideration. Below is the comparison of Client and Partner Responses to several survey questions regarding BI-CAP's reputation.

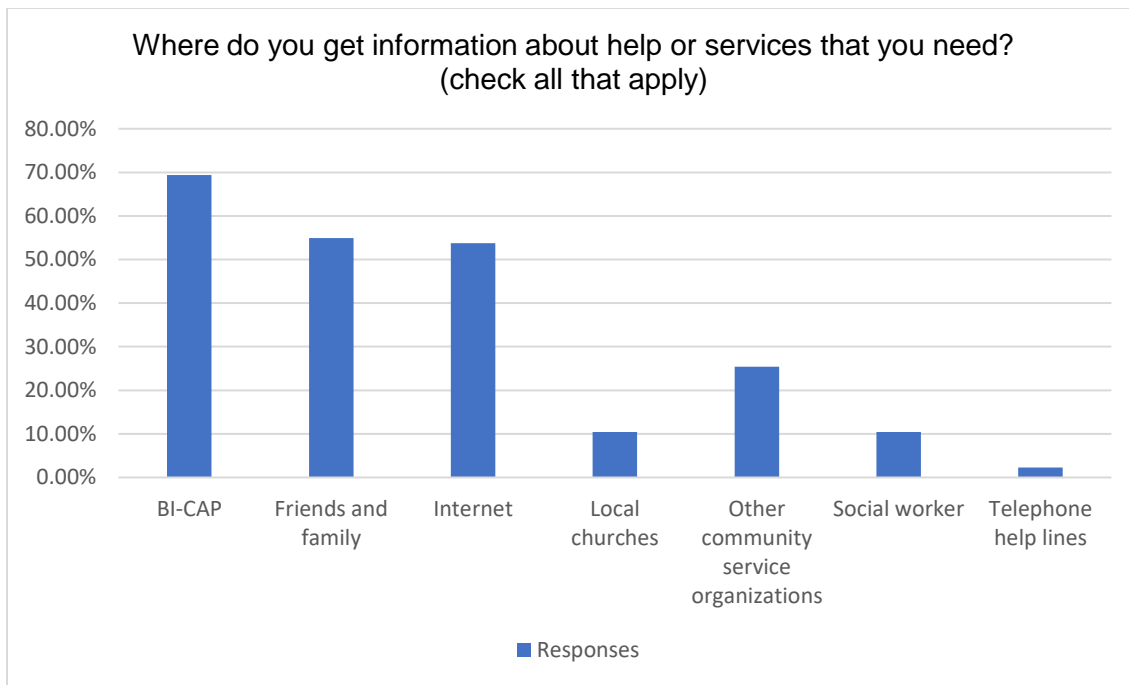
Would you recommend BI-CAP to friends and family?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
Client Responses	73.84% 127	20.35% 35	5.81% 10	0
Partner Responses	75% 12	25% 4	0	0

Do you think BI-CAP is an asset in the community?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
Client Responses	79.65% 137	17.44% 30	2.9% 5	0
Partner Responses	81.25% 13	12.5% 2	6.25% 1	0

Do you think it is pretty easy to get to the BI-CAP office?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
Client Responses	47.65% 81	39.41% 67	8.24% 14	4.71% 8
Partner Responses	37.5% 6	31.25% 5	31.25% 5	0

Do you think it is fairly easy to get someone at BI-CAP to help you with any concerns?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
Client Responses	59.65% 102	32.16% 55	6.43% 11	1.75% 3
Partner Responses	50% 8	25% 4	25% 4	0

BI-CAP is a main source of resource information for clients.



Additional Resources

- Transcription of Individual responses and suggestions from all 2023 surveys will be useful for planners and departments. The 48-page document is organized by client responses, staff responses, partner responses and board responses.
- 2022 Head Start parent survey and 2024 Needs Assessment
- Survey responses from 4 target audiences: clients, staff, partners, board
- Secondary Data includes extensive data and identifies state and federal sources in a template format that could be updated in the future.
- All staff participated in a facilitated session that included reviewing mission, vision, core values and how the agency as well as departments could go from good to great. A summary report is available as a separate document.