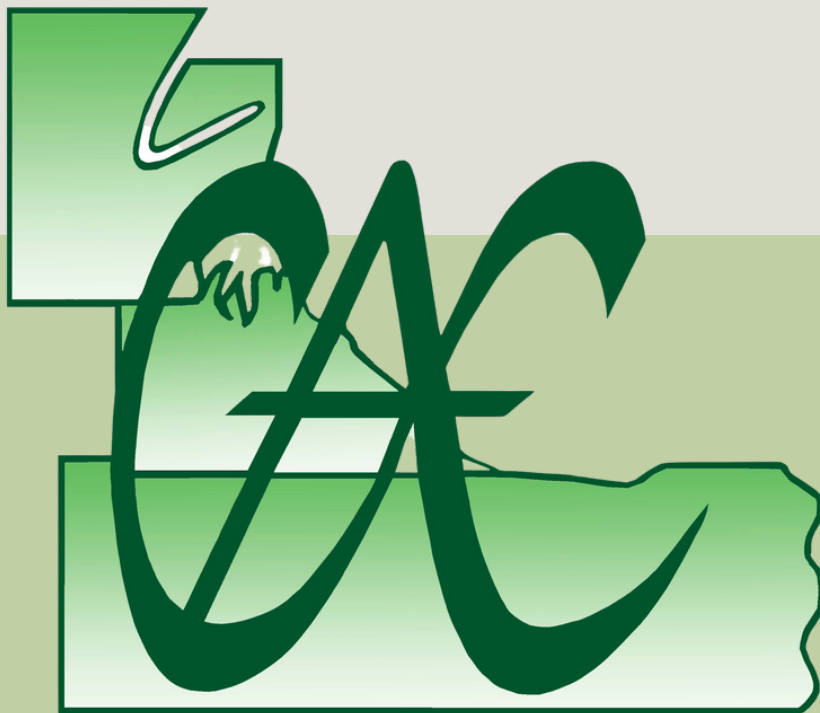


# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 2023 -



Approved by Community  
Action Board of Directors on  
*December 13, 2023*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason, and Thurston Counties (CACLMT) is a non-profit organization established in 1966 to empower and improve the lives of community members in Washington State. Focused on housing, health, safety, and community engagement CACLMT serves five counties, with its headquarters in Lacey, Washington.

In the spring of 2023 a Community Needs Assessment was conducted to identify service gaps and assess the needs of the communities in Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties. The assessment focused on four major program areas: housing, health, energy assistance, and weatherization. The complexities of poverty and violence are vast, and while there are numerous local community resources addressing different needs, this document will concentrate on CACLMT's services within the specified program areas.



## We are on a mission to strengthen individuals and families to lessen the impacts of poverty.

In the 2022 fiscal year, CACLMT supported 5,804 families, benefitting more than 12,000 individuals on their path to self-sufficiency.

As our communities change, their needs evolve as well. Conducting a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) is crucial to align our programs with the actual needs of the communities we serve and stay true to our mission. This CNA will provide essential insights to guide our organization's strategic planning and program development for the next five years.

## OUR HISTORY

For over 50 years, CACLMT has supported low-income communities in Lewis, Mason, Thurston, Kitsap, and Grays Harbor counties. Our mission is to empower individuals and families, fostering self-sufficiency, and improving lives.

CACLMT provides essential programs, mirroring those offered by Community Action Agencies nationwide, such as Family Support, Economic Security, Weatherization, and Housing. Our organization serves as an incubator for vital programs, nurturing their growth to meet the ever-changing needs of our dynamic region. Throughout our history we have developed programs that address critical needs within our community.



“Our programs and services help people build stable and self-sufficient lives.”

## WHAT WE DO

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Our programs are rooted in equity to help people achieve stability and self-sufficiency by meeting essential needs for health, safety, housing, financial stability, and community engagement. At CACLMT, we prioritize excellence in client service, respecting and upholding the dignity of all individuals.

Our belief is that everyone deserves their basic needs met. We are dedicated to offering a diverse range of services to the community, addressing health access, affordable housing, financial stability, and community engagement. Our program initiatives are grouped under each of these themes to ensure a holistic approach to support the communities in which we work.

## OUR MISSION

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CACLMT is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) agency governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. By providing direct services and maintaining community partnerships, our mission is to strengthen individuals and families to lessen the impacts of poverty.

## HOW WE DO IT

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**We provide** a wide range of services to meet the varied needs of the communities we serve. These include services which support healthy, safe, and sustainable housing, access to low barrier one-on-one care, and utility assistance.

**We build** the capacity for long term solutions, and serve as an incubator for dynamic community-based solutions to grow into thriving programs.

**We cultivate** strong partnerships to address the dynamic and complicated issues faced by the communities we serve.



# MONARCH CHILDREN'S JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY CENTER

Monarch Children's Justice and Advocacy Center (Monarch) stands as the sole nationally accredited, local resource for abused children and their families in Thurston, Mason, and Lewis Counties.

Child Advocacy Centers like Monarch work to reduce the incidence and impact of child abuse by providing a coordinated, multi-disciplinary response to victims of abuse and their families. This response includes advocacy, prevention, investigation, prosecution, and treatment with community partners who are experts in their areas. By approaching these situations as a team from one geographic office, the amount of potential re-traumatization of children and their families is reduced. All partners coordinate a specialized, child-centered approach to victims and their families.

**Monarch is one of seventeen accredited advocacy centers operating in the State of Washington and one of over 600 centers nationwide.**

## ON-SITE SERVICES OF MONARCH

Therapy Services  
Community Outreach & Education  
Information and Referral Services  
Victim Advocacy  
Forensic Interviews  
Support from justice facility dogs from disclosure to prosecution  
Medical Care  
Multi-disciplinary Coordination



### We are growing!

In July, 2023 Monarch broke ground to expand access to child advocacy services in the Thurston County to meet the growing needs in the region.



# HOUSING

CACLMT's Housing program offers support to community members who are unhoused or vulnerable of becoming unhoused. Providing support through comprehensive wrap around case management.



## FOUNDATIONAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Providing supportive housing and supportive employment services, the Foundational Community Support program offers wrap around case management using targeted Medicaid benefits to help community members with complex health needs obtain and maintain housing and employment.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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During the last three years, the Affordable Housing program has supported 382 housing units, providing a home for approximately 644 individuals across Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties.

## HOUSING & ESSENTIAL NEEDS


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The Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program in Mason and Thurston county aims to prevent homelessness, rehouse unemployable adults, and offer support like utility payments, hygiene products, and transportation. Last year, an average of 134 individuals at risk of homelessness receive monthly aid.

---

## COVID-19 SUPPORT

To address the ongoing impacts of COVID on community members, the Housing Team provides COVID-19 specific relief to eligible community members in Lewis and Mason counties. These efforts include assistance with disconnected services, evictions, and other essential need in order to stabilize housing. The Housing Program over the past three years was also able to assist residents in Thurston County with COVID relief funds that supported housing.





# ENERGY AND UTILITY ASSISTANCES

The Energy Program works with residents in Lewis, Mason, and Thurston Counties providing utility assistance including heat, water, and power, helping community members remain safe, warm, and healthy in their homes.

## ENERGY

Energy Assistance program is dedicated to delivering dependable aid to low-income individuals and families. Federally funded through LIHEAP, this program supports residents with gas, electricity, oil, wood, and propane expenses. CACLMT administers Puget Sound Energy's privately funded PSE-HELP program which offers qualified PSE customers support for natural gas and electricity costs.

## WATER

Water assistance is provided to low-income community members ensuring they are able to pay their water bill thereby supporting their access to clean and safe water. Additionally, this supports keeping community members housed as many tenants can be evicted if they do not maintain running water at their residence.

## UTILITY ASSISTANCE

Utility Assistance provides support for utilities, include power and water, helping people reduce their monthly costs and retain safe and sustainable housing.

## AC UNITS

As our region experiences rising temperatures, the AC Unit program works with low-income seniors to ensure they have access to air conditioning to support their health and well-being.



# WEATHERIZATION



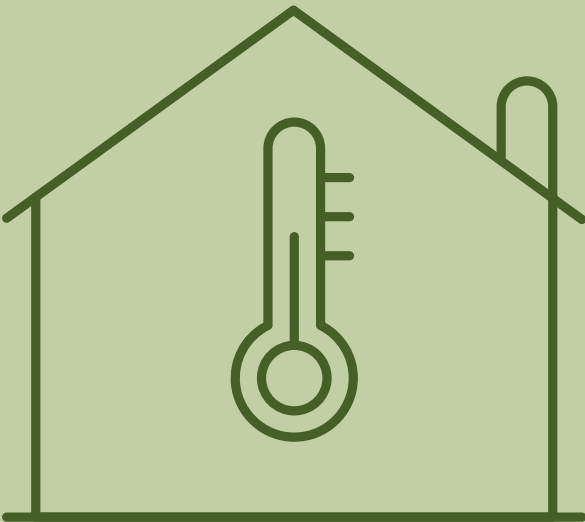
The Weatherization program weatherizes homes to support sustainability, health, and bill reduction. Each home receives a personalized assessment by a skilled energy assessor/inspector to identify the unique improvements required. The improvements installed follow established technical specifications, cost-effectiveness assessments, and relevant building codes, employing CACLMT crews and specialized contractors.

This holistic approach not only reduces energy costs and enhances the comfort of residents, but contributes to the retention of affordable housing in the community. Additionally, by creating healthier living environments, the program supports the well-being of residents and fosters self-sufficiency. Weatherization becomes a vital part of the broader effort to enhance the quality of life for community members while addressing the pressing issue of affordable housing.

The Weatherization program provides support in Lewis, Mason, Thurston, Klickitat, and Skamania counties.

**In the 2022 fiscal year our Weatherization program weatherized 86 homes in four different counties!**

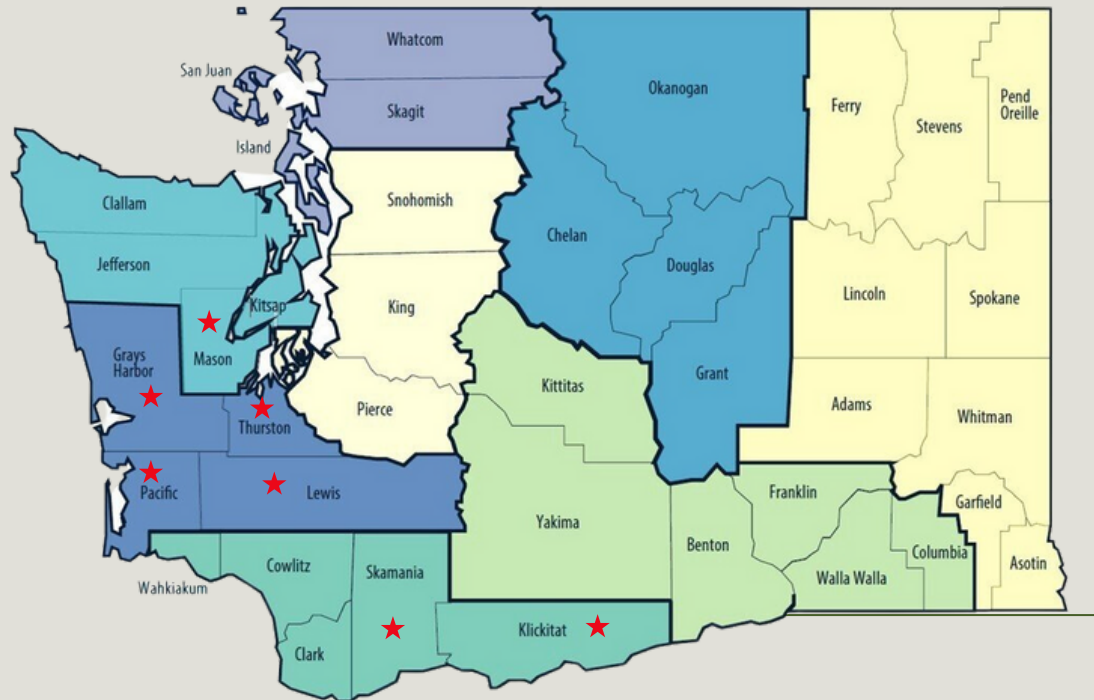
Thurston  
Lewis  
Mason  
Klickitat



58  
21  
6  
1



# OUR SERVICE AREA



The Council's core service jurisdiction encompasses Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties, with targeted services extending to Grays Harbor, Pacific, Skamania, and Klickitat counties. Services to other counties include Child Advocacy Services to residents in Pacific and Grays Harbor, and Weatherization initiatives extending support to Klickitat and Skamania Counties. Geographically, the Council operates within legislative districts 14, 17, 20, 22, 26, & 35, as well as congressional districts 3, 6, & 10.

In conducting this Community Needs Assessment, data collection efforts concentrated on Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties, reflecting the main service regions and acknowledging that the majority of our client base resides within this pivotal area. This strategic focus on the three major counties ensures the integrity of data, providing a non-skewed representation that enhances our understanding of the unique needs within the communities we predominantly serve.

To enrich our perspective and contextualize the local data, we also gathered information at the state level. This broader scope enables us to assess and compare our findings with statewide trends and priorities. By combining localized insights with a broader statewide context, we aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of community needs, enabling the Council to tailor its services effectively and address the diverse challenges faced by the populations we serve.



# OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT PROCESS



## PURPOSE & GOALS FOR COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CNA)

As a Community Action Agency, the Council undertakes a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years. This assessment serves as a crucial tool for identifying areas where our services can be enhanced to better attend to the needs of the community members we support. The insights gathered from this assessment play a pivotal role in fostering community involvement, forging new partnerships, soliciting authentic input from stakeholders, revealing factors that can improve our adaptability, and providing guidance for our board governance. By aligning our strategic plan with the findings of the CNA, we ensure that our services remain attuned to the evolving needs and challenges faced by the communities we serve.

## SURVEYS

**Clients** - Community members who accessed services at the Council over the last year were sent a survey in the Summer of 2023 to gather participant demographic information and collect information about any gaps in services they experienced. The survey was shared on the Council's website, social media platforms, and via staff email signatures. This survey was administered in English and Spanish.

**Community Members/Providers** - The Community Stakeholder Survey was conducted during the Summer of 2023 and was sent to over 60 providers to complete. This survey was also posted on the agency website, social media channels, and was included in staff email signatures.

Survey development and implementation was supported by a student from The Evergreen State College. The surveys were available for four months.

## METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

For the Community Needs Assessment, our quantitative data collection drew extensively from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). This approach covered Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties, as well as Washington State and the entire nation. To uphold data quality standards, reliance on ACS estimates allowed us to capture average characteristics over a relevant time span, providing a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic landscape.

In addition to ACS, quantitative insights were derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's Community Fact Finder, offering a detailed view of the listed counties and the state. This dual-sourced methodology ensures a robust dataset that combines broader regional trends with localized nuances.

Complementing these primary sources, supplementary datasets including data from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Department of Health (DOH), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Community Commons. These supplementary datasets cover a spectrum of vital areas including health, housing, poverty, victimization, and education, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of community needs.

By amalgamating data from various sources, we aim to provide a holistic view of the landscape, enabling the Council to pinpoint specific needs and prioritize interventions that align with the unique challenges faced by the communities we serve.



# CLIENT SURVEY



Historically, CACLMT collected client satisfaction surveys during the course of providing in-person client services. This approach was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic when services shifted to virtual care. To maintain access to client feedback, a client survey was developed for the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) process. This survey was distributed via email to all program participants who had utilized services in the past year and had provided their email information. A total of 285 clients returned the survey.

The survey included a range of questions specific to the type of services accessed, demographics, and identified needs. It aimed to uncover gaps in access that clients may have encountered or are currently experiencing, as well as to identify the most significant needs for support for both themselves and the larger community. One of the primary goals of this survey was to ensure that the CNA centered the lived experiences of our clients.

The survey was created by CACLMT's Operations Team and an intern from Evergreen State College, and was sent to a member of the Client Advisory Committee at the Council for their review and approval.

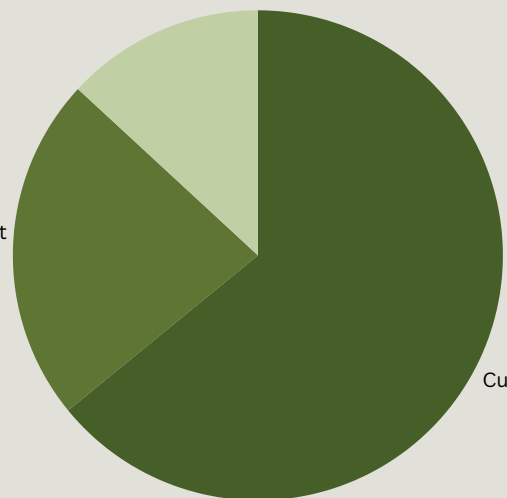
## CLIENT SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### RELATIONSHIP TO CACLMT

Community member who would benefit from CACLMT services  
13.1%

Past Client  
22.8%

Current Client  
64.1%

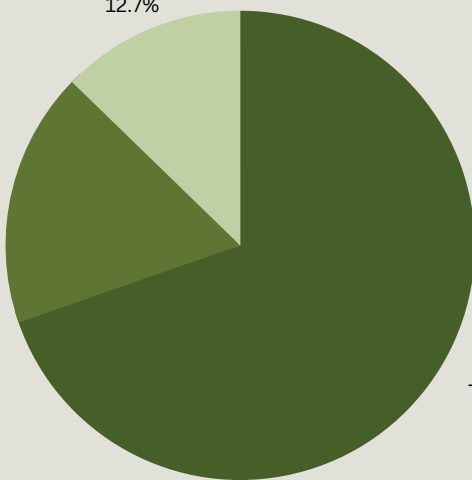


### COUNTY WHERE SERVICES WERE RECEIVED

Mason  
12.7%

Lewis  
17.6%

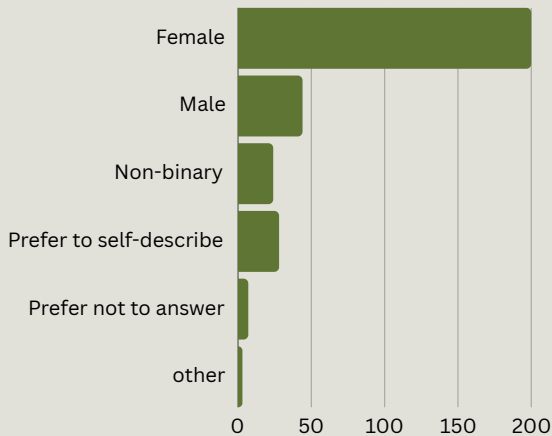
Thurston  
69.7%



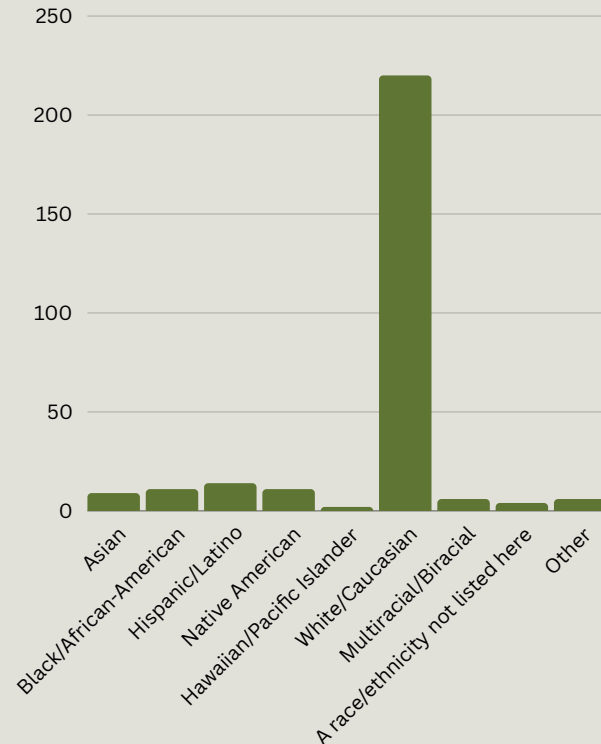


# DEMOGRAPHICS CONTINUED

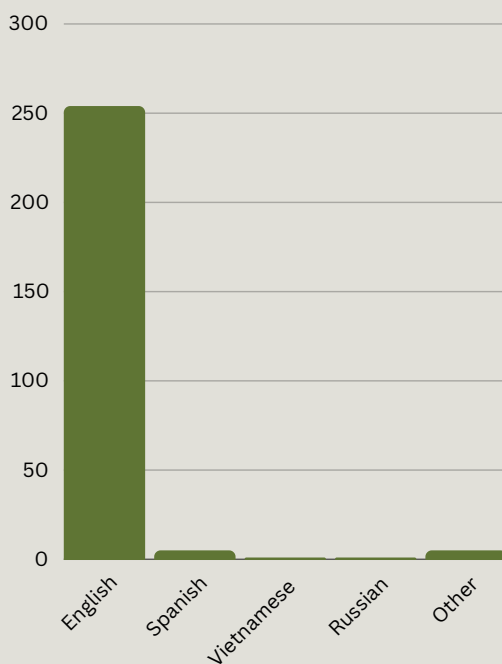
## GENDER IDENTITY



## RACE



## PRIMARY LANGUAGE



By merging the insights garnered from the Client Survey with the data that the Council compiles on clients served within the same timeframe, we can significantly enrich our grasp of client demographics and needs. Delving into the 2022 client demographic data, as elaborated below, provides a deeper exploration of those the Council has supported:

42% male

58% female

70% white

17% Latino

5% African American

6% Asian

67% rented their homes

30% were homeowners

2% were homeless

23% of households at least one member was employed

50% were either on Social Security, SSI, or pension

13% received Public Assistance

30% had incomes at or below 50% of poverty

22% reported having not completed high school

30% identified as disabled



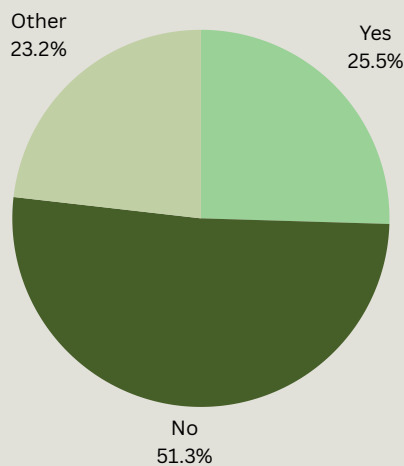
Survey respondents reported the most common services they came to CACLMT to access were Energy Assistance followed by support around Housing/Rent



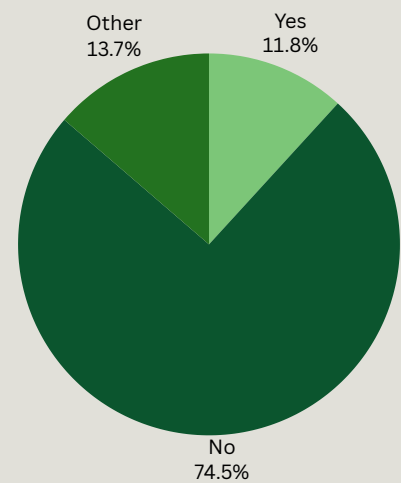
# CLIENT SURVEY RESPONSES



## IS THERE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO LIVABLE WAGE JOBS IN THE COMMUNITY?

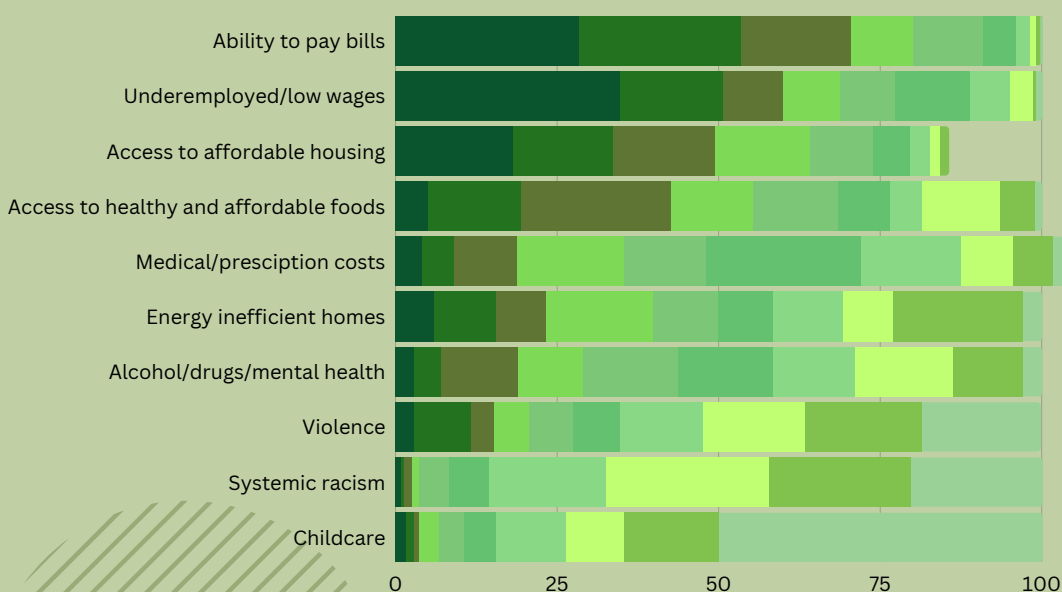


## IS THERE ACCESS TO ADEQUATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE COMMUNITY?



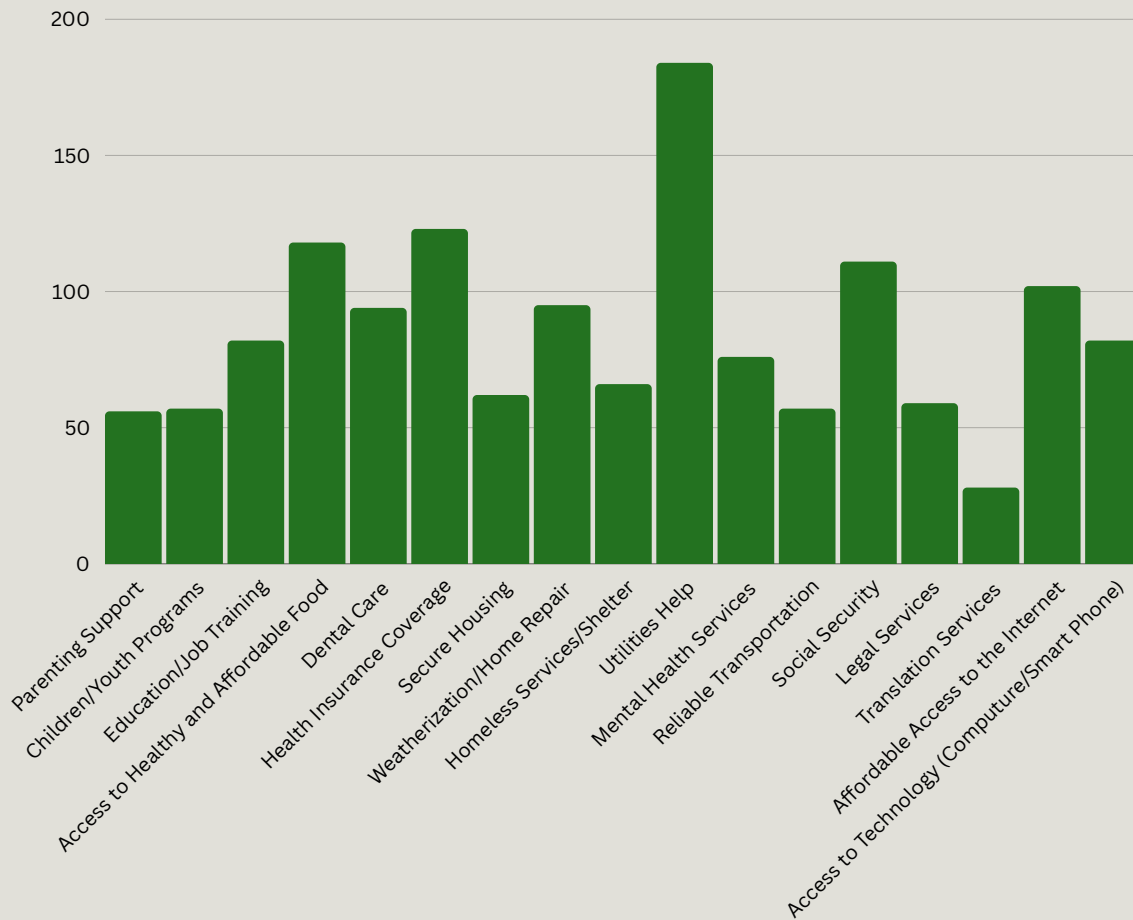
## BIGGEST PROBLEMS YOU/THOSE IN YOUR FAMILY ARE FACING

First Choice Last Choice



In the Client Survey, respondents' primary concerns centered around bill payments, underemployment or low wages, and affordable housing. These findings were in line with the predominant services sought, with Energy Assistance being the most frequently utilized, followed closely by Housing support.

## AWARENESS OF HOW TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE



Participants were posed with the question: "Would you know where to get help if you or someone you know were experiencing hardships or in need of the following?" This inquiry aimed to gauge their awareness of how to access assistance for various services, and the results revealed patterns in their knowledge. Notably, the top four areas where participants identified knowing how to access assistance were as follows:

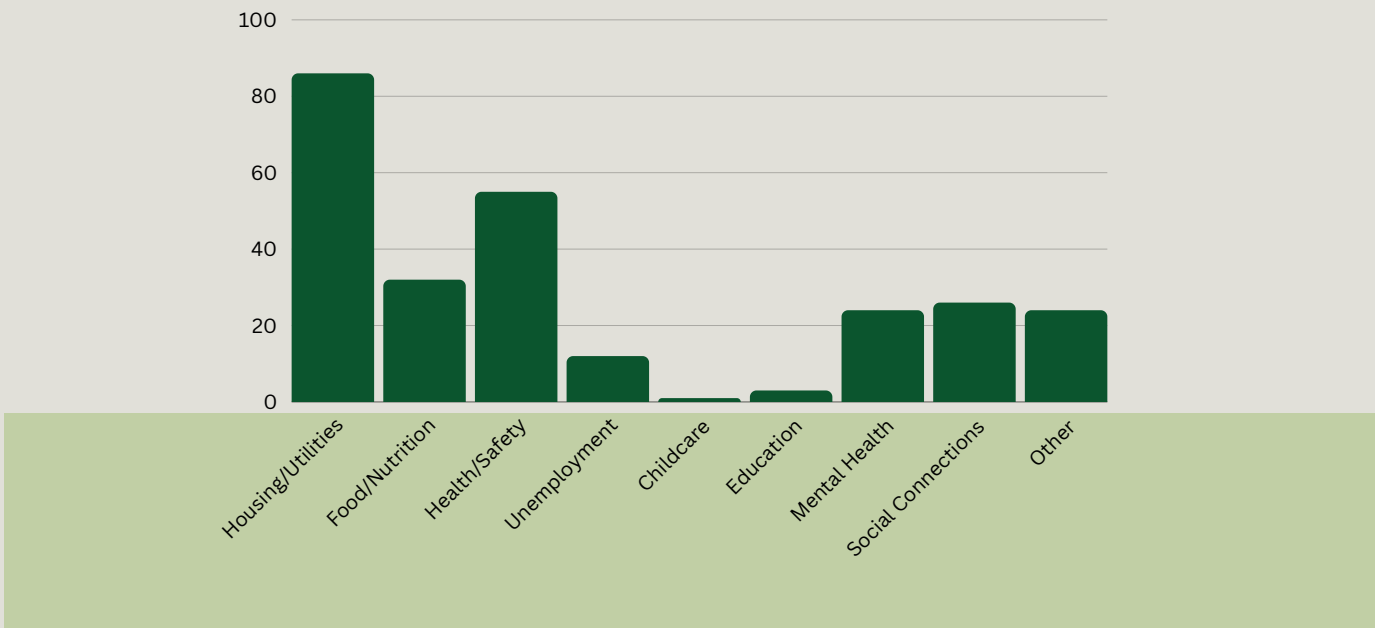
- 70% of respondents are aware of resources for obtaining help with utilities.
- 47% possess knowledge about obtaining support for health insurance coverage.
- 45% have information on accessing healthy and affordable food options.
- 39% reported knowledge around accessing affordable internet.

These responses underscore significant opportunities for the expansion of education and connection to support services for the clients CACLMT serves, enabling them to navigate these challenges more effectively and expanding engagement in support services.

# PRIMARY CONCERN DUE TO COVID

The region served by CACLMT continues to grapple with the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. May 2023, the formal conclusion of the national Public Health Emergency, marked the conclusion of several emergency support programs that were implemented during the pandemic. These programs, which included initiatives like automatic Medicaid re-enrollment, increased food benefits, and housing assistance, were initially designed as temporary measures. However, their discontinuation has left a significant impact on numerous members of the community who access CACLMT's services.

Participants in our survey shed light on the ongoing and evolving community needs that have arisen as a result of the pandemic. Chief among these needs are concerns related to housing, utilities, and health and safety.





# PROVIDER/COMMUNITY MEMBERS



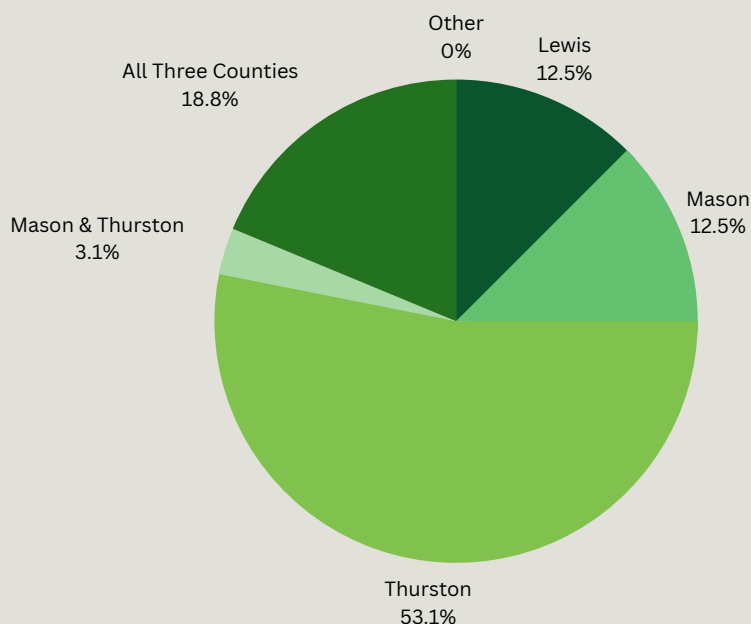
In our Community Needs Assessment process, we actively involved both service providers and community members. This comprehensive approach included reaching out to our extensive network of partners and making the survey accessible through community outreach events, online platforms, and various social media channels.

We recognized the importance of this strategic inclusion because addressing complex social issues demands a profound understanding of the community's multifaceted needs and challenges. By actively engaging service providers and community members, we sought to tap into their firsthand experiences and insights, which complemented the data from the Client Survey.

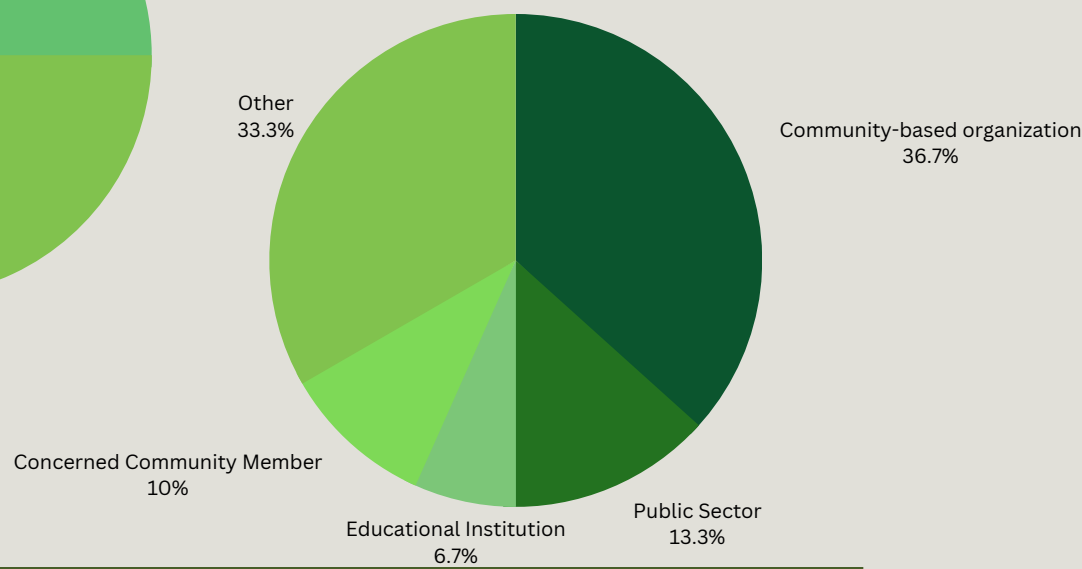
Moreover, the perspectives shared by service providers and community members often echoed and reinforced the themes identified in the Client Survey, thereby providing a more robust and holistic view of the pressing issues within our community.

## PROVIDER/COMMUNITY MEMBER SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### WHAT COUNTY (OR COUNTIES) DO YOU PROVIDE SERVICES?



### WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY/CACLMT?



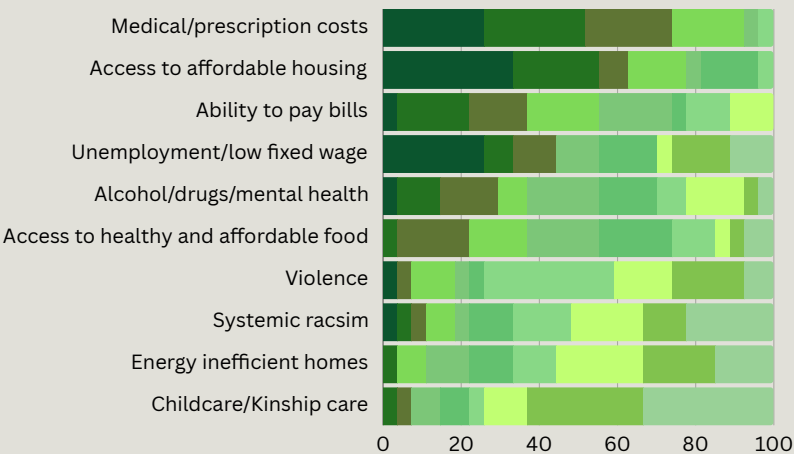
# THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE FACING

In the Provider/Community Survey, respondents were asked about the most significant challenges facing community members. This question was divided into three subgroups based on age: youth aged 5-17, adults aged 18-64, and seniors aged 65 and older. Across all three subgroups, access to housing emerged as one of the top four issues. Provider and community members considered it the most pressing concern for adults in the region, the second most pressing for seniors, and the fourth most pressing for youth. Additionally, the ability to pay bills and issues related to underemployment, low wages, and low fixed incomes were also identified as top concerns for adults and seniors in the region.

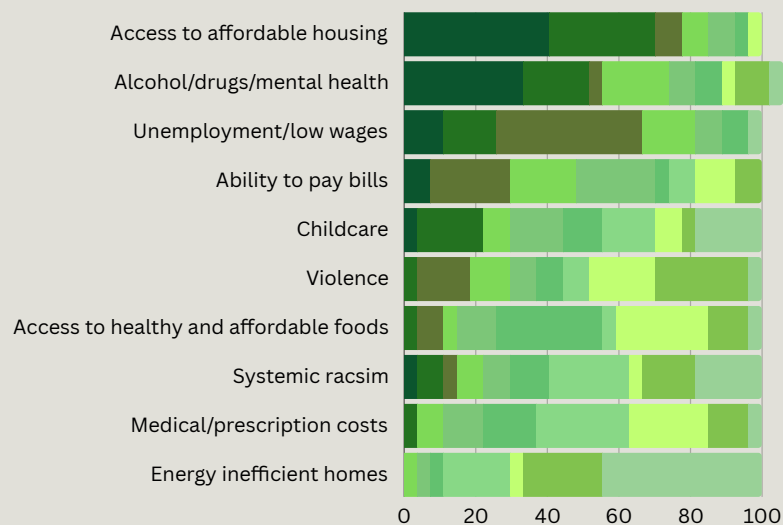
For youth, the primary issue identified was mental health, a finding that aligns with the conclusions in the 2023 Children's Alliance report on youth mental health in Washington State.

First Choice Last Choice

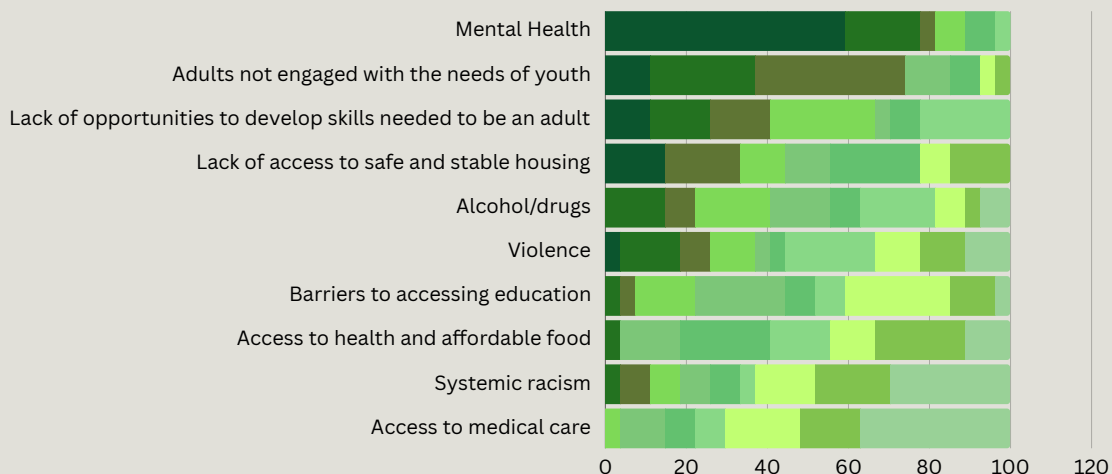
## SENIORS (65+)



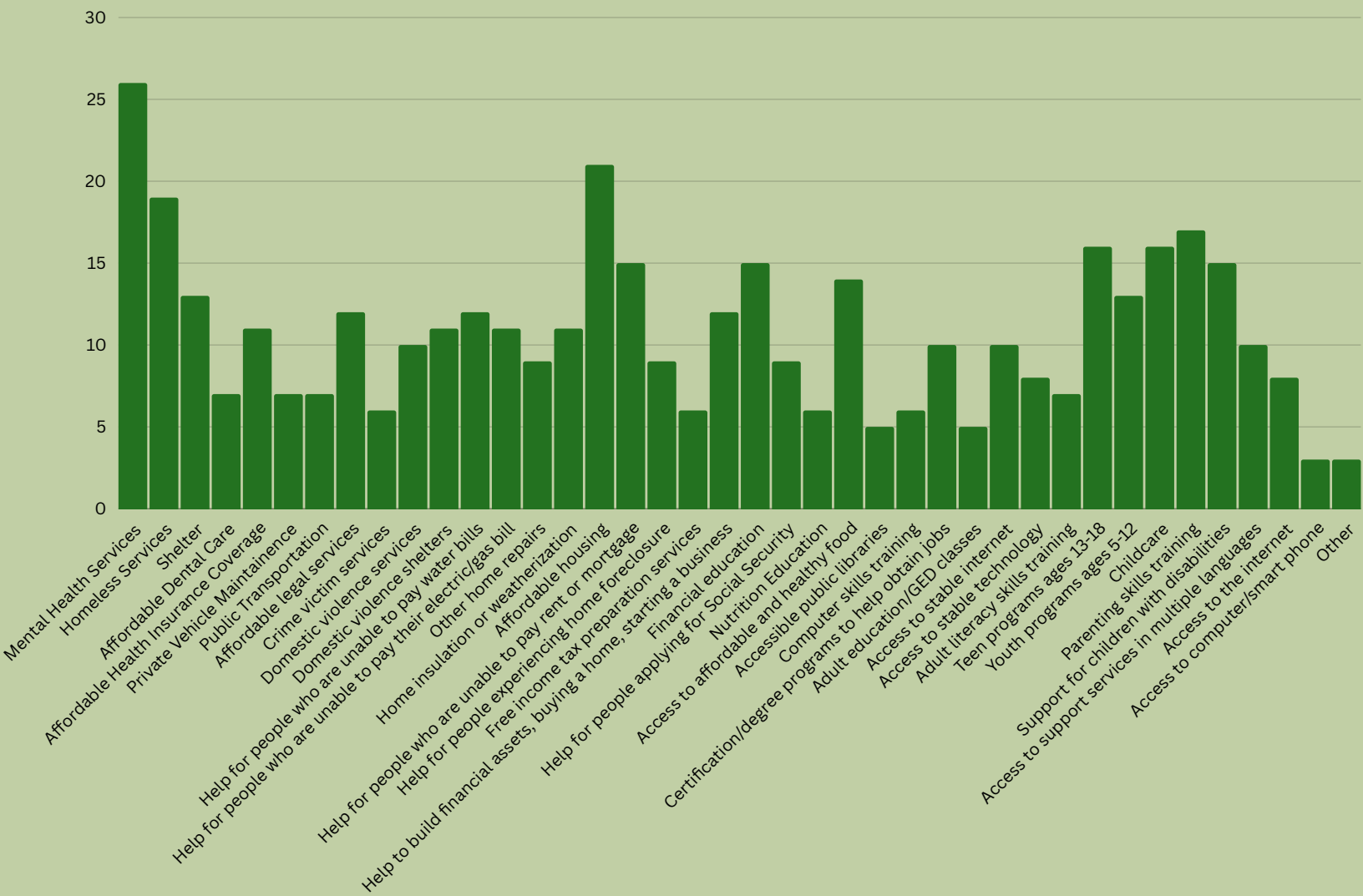
## ADULTS (18-64)



## YOUTH (5-17)



# SERVICES MOST NEEDED IN THE COMMUNITY

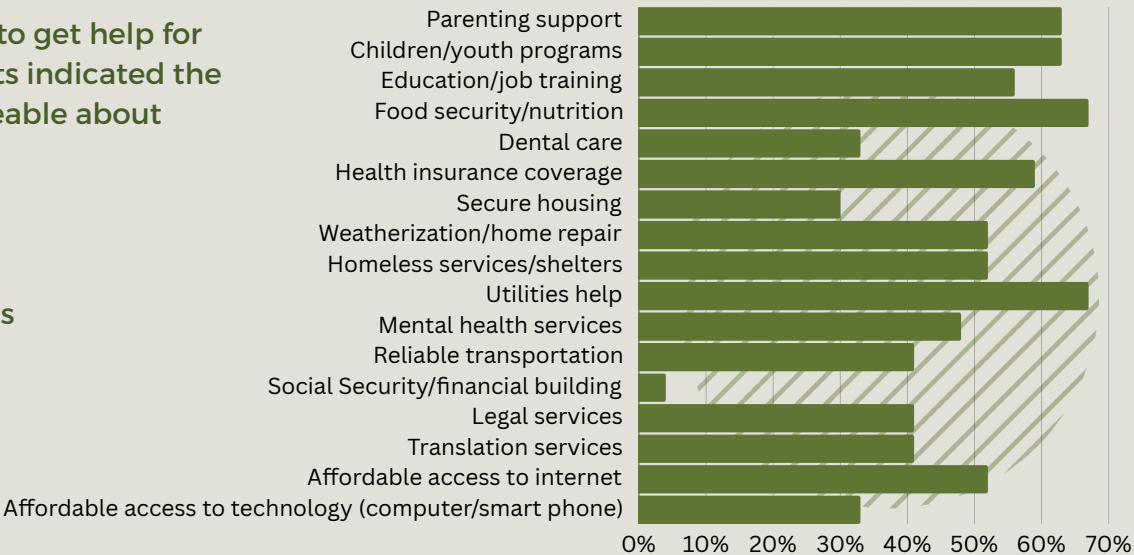


In the Provider/Community Survey, respondents identified mental health services, affordable housing, and shelter as primary services needed in the region. Additionally, respondents highlighted the need for more services related to parenting skills and access to child care.

## AWARENESS OF HOW TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE

When asked if they knew where to get help for various needs, survey respondents indicated the areas they were most knowledgeable about accessing services:

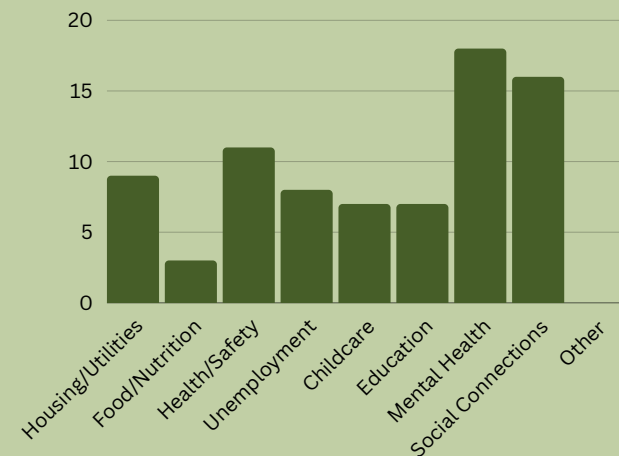
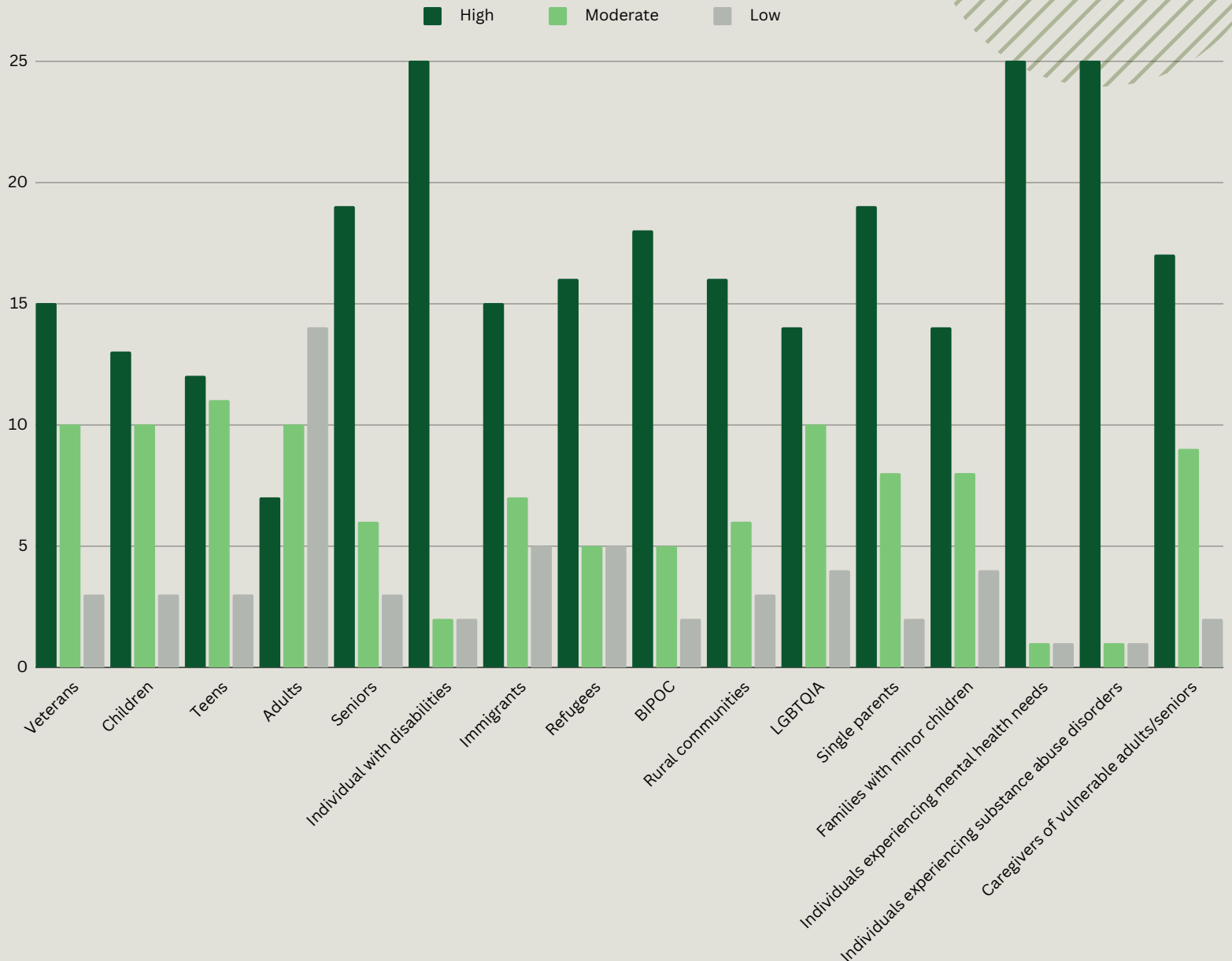
- 67% Utilities Assistance
- 67% Food Security/Nutrition
- 63% Parenting Help
- 63% Children/Youth Programs



## SERVICE LEVEL NEEDS

When asked to pinpoint the groups with the most significant service needs in the region, respondents identified the following:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals experiencing mental health needs
- Individuals grappling with substance abuse disorders



## PRIMARY CONCERN DUE TO COVID IN THE COMMUNITY

Service providers and community members identified mental health and social connections as the two primary concerns facing the region due to COVID.

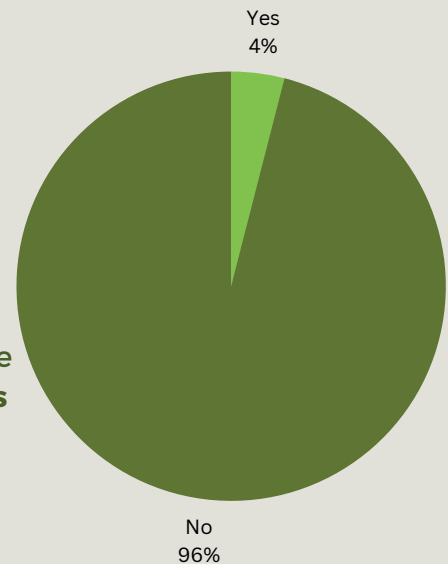


As part of the Provider/Community Member Survey, questions were asked regarding the workforce in the nonprofit/social services sector. The goal was to gain a better understanding of opportunities within the sector to support those providing services to the region. These questions specifically focused on compensation and access to career development, with a particular emphasis on leadership opportunities.

## ARE SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED FOR THE WORK THEY DO

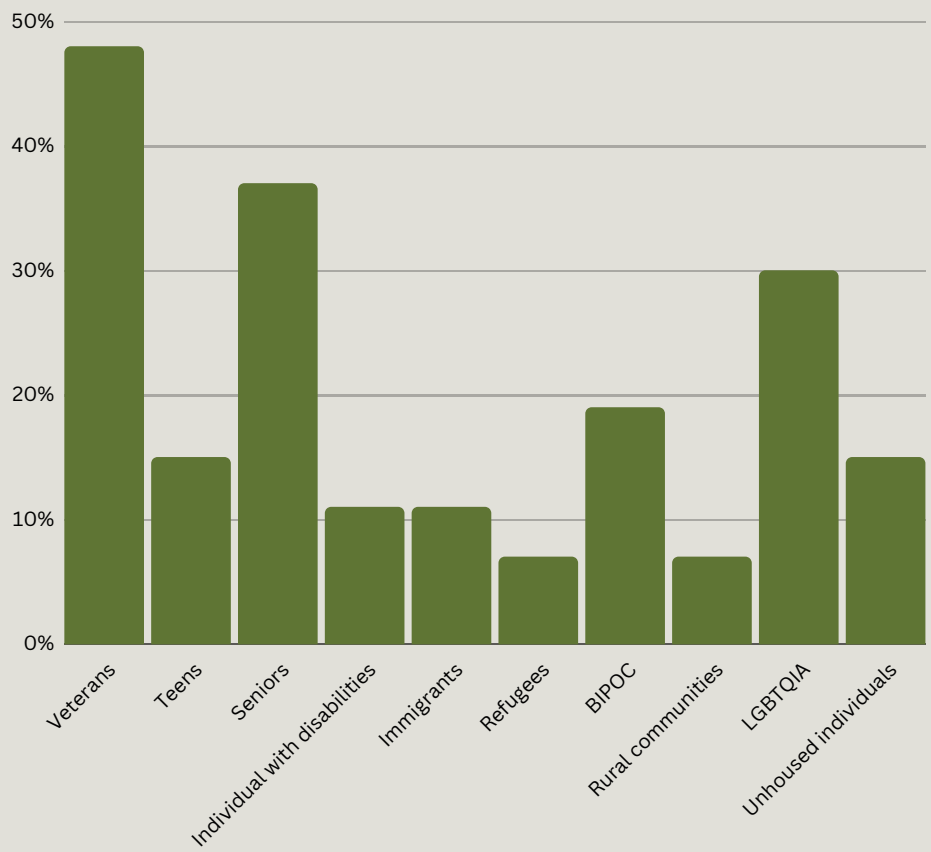
In the fall of 2022 and winter of 2023, researchers at the University of Washington School of Social Work collaborated with national scholars to investigate pay disparities in nonprofit human services providers. The study revealed that individuals working in this sector earned 37% less than their counterparts in non-care industries.

To contextualize the study within the region CACLMT serves, participants were questioned about the compensation of service providers, **96% of respondents reported that social service providers in the region were not adequately compensated.**



## ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THE REGION

When queried about the access to leadership roles for the groups depicted in this graph within the region, **the responses underscored the barriers encountered by many community members.** These responses indicated a lack of access to leadership roles in the region, with no group surpassing 50% of respondents expressing satisfaction with their access to such roles.



# SUMMARY OF SURVEYS



The 2023 Community Needs Assessment provided valuable insights from the 2023 Client Survey, highlighting three critical categories related to essential services and their significance. Respondents revealed the primary challenges faced by them and their families, the most urgently needed services, and the help they seek but cannot find.

The top concerns for respondents and their families included the ability to cover bills, underemployment/low wages, and access to affordable housing. Notably, only 25.5% of respondents reported having access to livable wage jobs in the community, and a significant 74.5% indicated inadequate access to affordable housing.

In the context of the pandemic, respondents identified housing, utilities, and health and safety as their most pressing needs resulting from COVID-19's impact.

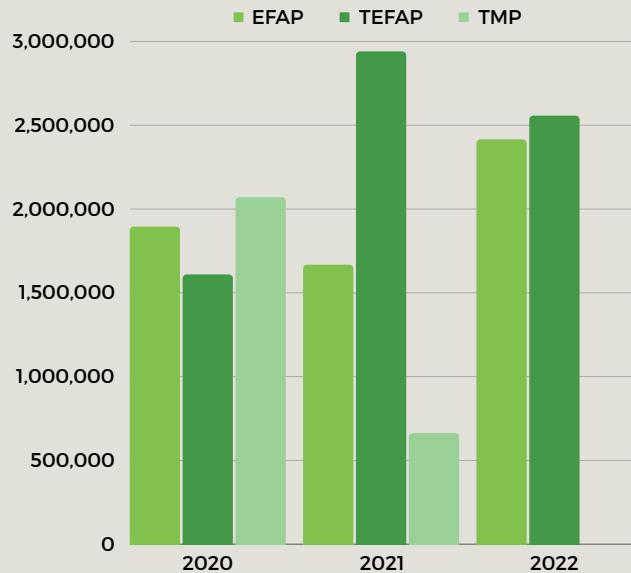
When discussing the help that is most needed but currently unavailable, the 2023 Provider/Community Member Survey identified affordable housing, healthcare services, transportation options, and heat/utilities assistance at the top of the list.

Moreover, the 2023 Provider/Community Member Survey revealed critical issues and needs across various demographic groups. For adults, the most significant challenges were related to affordable housing and issues related to alcohol, drugs, and mental health. Among youth, mental health issues, a lack of engagement from adults in addressing youth needs, and limited opportunities to develop essential life skills were predominant concerns. For seniors, primary concerns centered around medical/prescription costs and access to affordable housing.

In summary, the most urgently needed services are those addressing affordable housing, mental health services, homeless services and shelters, and assistance for individuals unable to pay their rent or mortgage. It is important to note that the survey also exposed issues within the landscape of nonprofit social service providers with a striking 96% of respondents indicating that social service providers are not adequately compensated. Additionally, respondents highlighted a lack of access to leadership roles for historically marginalized/excluded groups in the region.

# OVERVIEW OF CACLMT SERVICE NUMBERS FOR ALL PROGRAMS, FISCAL YEARS 2020, 2021, & 2022

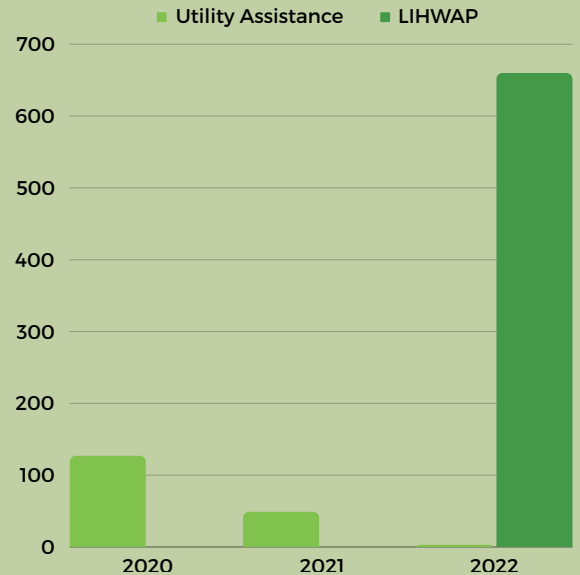
## Pounds of Food by Program and Year



For over three decades, CACLMT has been a steadfast supporter of the region, channeling food commodities to meet the needs of the community. This program facilitated the distribution of millions of pounds of food to 21 Food Banks and 11 congregate sites, playing a crucial role in alleviating hunger across the served communities.

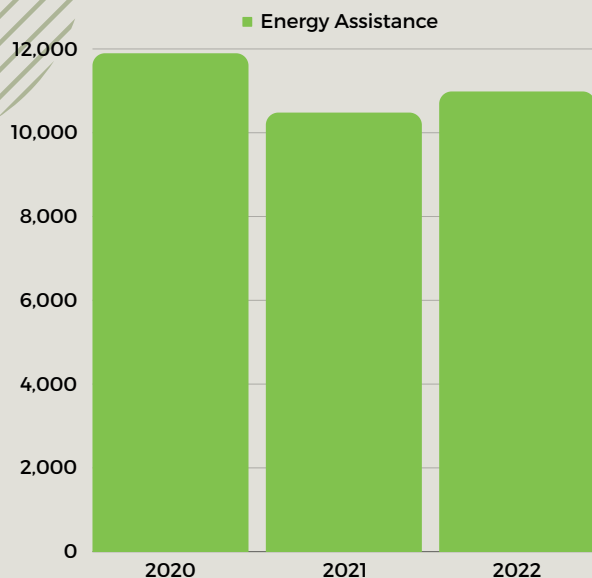
In a strategic move in 2022, following meaningful discussions with Thurston County Food Bank and the Department of Agriculture, the management of Commodities was transitioned to the Thurston County Food Bank. This transition exemplifies the model of program incubation employed by CACLMT, where the organization supports the development of essential programs until a more appropriate and sustainable structure is established. This shift ultimately benefits the region by enhancing the capacity to address hunger. The collaborative dialogue and partnership showcased in this transition underscore the commitment of Community Action to engage in impactful and cooperative community processes.

## Persons Served with Water Assurances by Program by Year



CACLMT has a longstanding history of receiving water assistance from local Public Utility Districts (PUDs) to facilitate access to this essential resource. Notably, in 2022, the introduction of the LIHWAP program marked a pivotal moment in enhancing support for community members facing challenges with their water bills. This strategic initiative resulted in a significant upsurge in assistance, strategically aimed at mitigating the lingering impacts of COVID-19. The primary objective was to guarantee that access to vital utilities, including water, remained accessible. This approach was undertaken to safeguard community health and housing, recognizing the interconnectedness of these factors in promoting overall well-being.

### Persons Served with Energy Assistance by Year



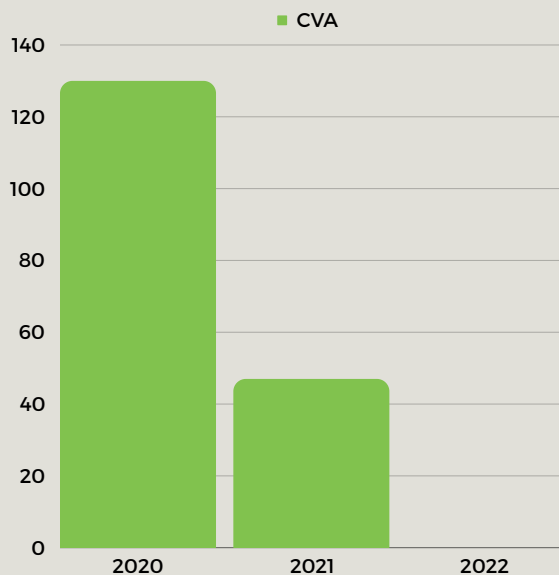
In FY 2021, service access declined due to disconnection moratoriums and COVID-related staff furloughs. In 2022, with the end of moratoriums and increased staffing, service numbers rebounded.

### Persons Served by Monarch Children's Justice and Advocacy by Year



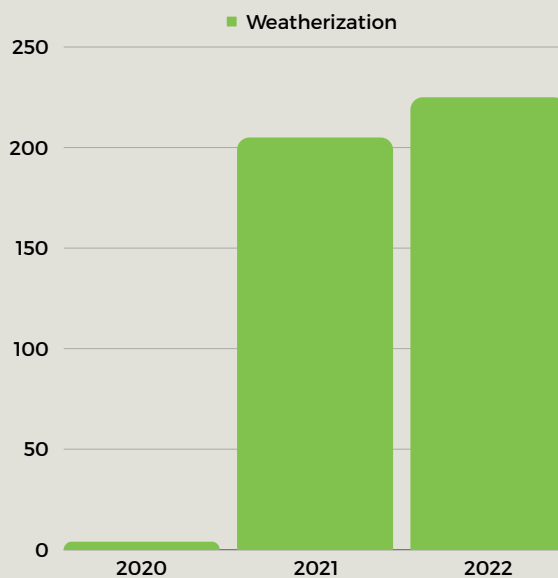
Amid limited avenues for reporting violence during the peak of COVID-19, Monarch observed a slight decrease. However, in 2021, there was a significant 22% increase in community members accessing services. This upward trend continued into 2022, with a notable 10% increase from the previous year, highlighting an ongoing and heightened need for support.

### Persons Served by Crime Victims Advocacy by Year



The Crime Victim Advocacy Program, dedicated to supporting adults who have experienced crimes in Lewis and Mason counties, concluded its services in 2022. Staff members, in response to this transition, have pivoted to deliver services in other program areas.

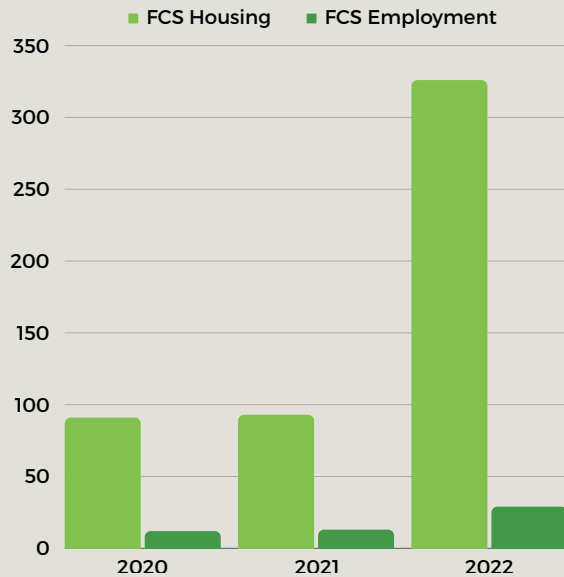
### Persons Served with Weatherization by Year



In 2020, amidst the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Weatherization services faced a temporary halt due to restrictions on entering homes. In response, the Weatherization Team swiftly pivoted to remodeling work, focusing on enhancing the agency's facilities.

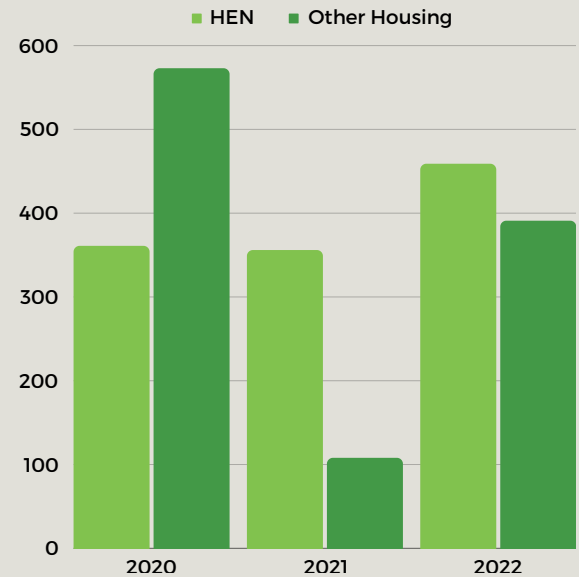


## Persons Served by Foundational Community Support by Service Type by Year



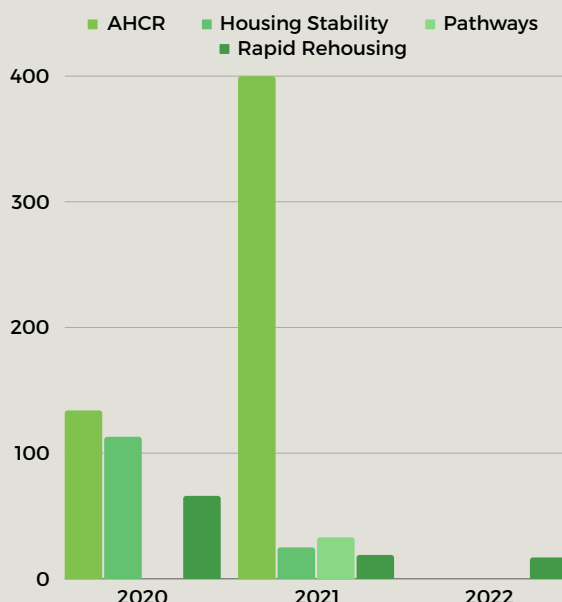
The Foundational Community Support Program, serving Medicaid-eligible community members, offers intensive one-on-one case management services focusing on housing and employment. Notably, there has been a consistent uptick in program participation. The growth observed in 2022 is attributed to staff redirection from administering T-RAP housing services, highlighting the organization's strategic pivot towards enhancing FCS services.

## Persons Served by HEN and COVID Relief Funds



The HEN program, previously serving Mason and Thurston counties, has shifted its focus solely to Mason County starting in FY23. Other Housing Services reflect the ongoing work being done in the community to stabilize and retain housing in both Lewis and Mason counties in response to the lingering impacts of COVID-19. Notably, a revamped communication effort in 2022 resulted in a sharp increase in program participation, ensuring eligible community members were well-informed about the available support.

## Persons Served by Housing Program by Year

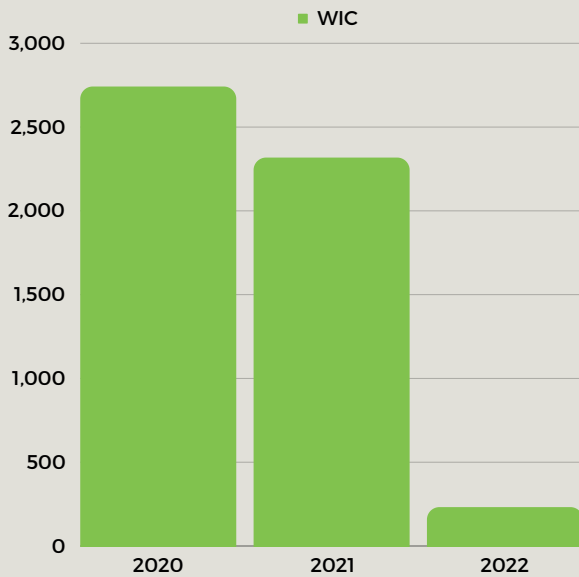


AHCR Flexible Funding provided direct assistance for securing or maintaining permanent housing, covering expenses like overdue rent, utilities, application fees, deposits, and emergency necessities such as baby formula and winter clothing. This COVID-specific relief program has concluded.

Consolidated Homeless Grant Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) swiftly facilitated the transition of households from homelessness to permanent housing through Housing Identification, Financial Assistance, and Case Management Services. In 2021, CACLMT collaborated with the community to transfer this program to other local providers.

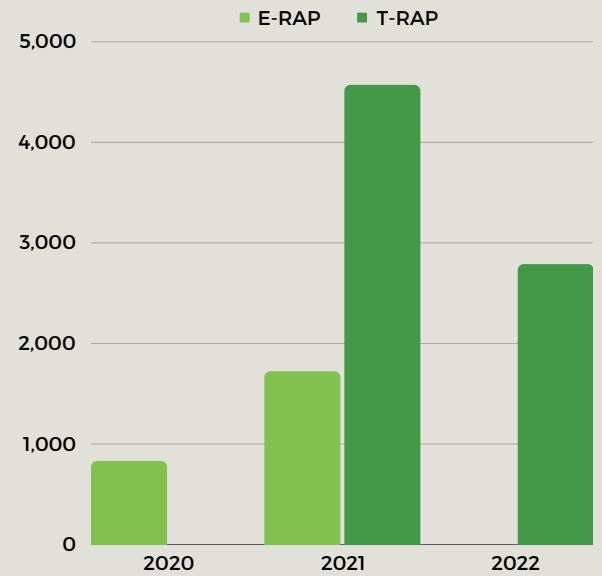
Pathways Care Coordinators aided clients in accessing essential services like healthcare, housing, education, and employment. Similar to RRH, this program underwent a transition to other community providers.

### Persons Served by WIC by Year



The WIC program, offering services to expectant mothers and children up to 5-years-old and their families, was discontinued due to insufficient funding. This decision was made to ensure financial viability while prioritizing the ability to provide staff with livable wages.

### Persons Served by E-RAP/T-RAP by Year



E-RAP and T-RAP, COVID-19 funding initiatives, aimed to provide financial resources for community members to maintain or retain housing during the pandemic. CACLMT successfully supported thousands of community members, allocating tens of millions of dollars directly benefiting individuals to ensure access to housing.

Over the past three years, CACLMT has undergone substantial program growth, reevaluation, and strategic pivoting. This period reflects our commitment to adaptability in the face of significant community change and stress, ensuring that our services consistently align with our mission to provide vital resources to the community. Additionally, a key focus has been placed on evaluating programs more closely, with an emphasis on avoiding the attempt to do it all. Instead, we strive to provide a depth of care and support, concentrating on programs that we can holistically and robustly sustain.

# COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS



CACLMT has established partnerships with over 70 public and private organizations, including nonprofits, faith-based entities, local governments, and private businesses. These collaborations have played a pivotal role in expanding available resources and opportunities, ultimately contributing to positive outcomes for both families and the community.

In 2016, CACLMT initiated a comprehensive client satisfaction survey process. Due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, these surveys were temporarily paused. However, in 2023, CACLMT launched an online survey to recapture valuable data. This data plays a crucial role in guiding the strategic planning process, ensuring that services remain closely aligned with the evolving needs of clients.

In 2023, the results from the client Community Needs Assessment Survey provided invaluable insights into how clients perceive their needs. These insights will continue to shape CACLMT's approach to service delivery and will be complemented by the new online client survey, which is now available and being administered to clients engaged with CACLMT services.

Furthermore, in 2023, a Provider/Community Member Survey was conducted, involving stakeholders from the Lewis, Mason, and Thurston regions. Out of over 80 recipients, 27 stakeholders participated, representing diverse sectors, including education, faith-based, nonprofit, for-profit, and community-based organizations. The data collected from this survey will be instrumental in further aligning CACLMT's services with the unique needs of its service area and the specific requirements of the agency.

## Sample of Agency Partnerships

- City of Lacey
- City of Olympia
- City of Shelton
- City of Tumwater
- Providence Medical Group
- Community Foundation of South Puget Sound
- March of Dimes
- ROOF
- TOGETHER!
- United Way of Lewis County
- United Way of Mason County
- United Way of Thurston County
- Paul G. Allen Family Foundation
- Cascade Natural Gas Corporation
  - Lewis County PUD #1
  - Mason County PUD #1
  - Mason County PUD #3
  - Puget Sound Energy
- Chehalis Tribe
- Nisqually Tribe
- Bonneville Power Administration
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Department of Commerce
- Department of General Administration
- Department of Health
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Southwest Washington Health District
- Washington State Rural Development Council



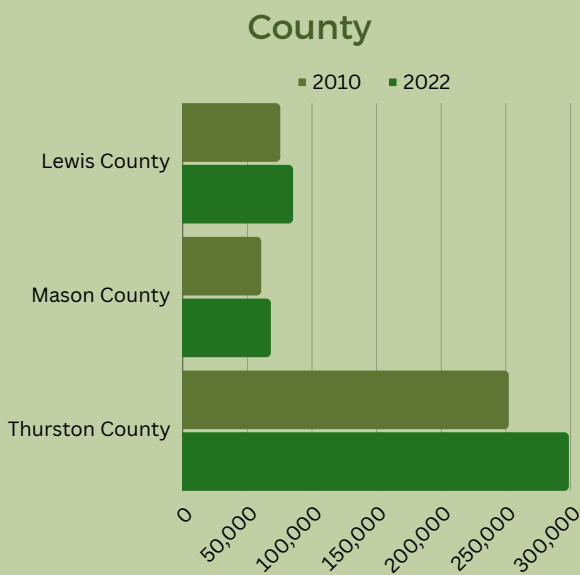
# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

“The experience of poverty is not shared equally. Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians, women, families with young children, youth, rural residents, immigrants and refugees, seniors, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities have poverty rates above the state average.”

- Blue Print for a Just and Equitable Future: The 10 Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty In Washington State

This section of the Community Needs Assessment aims to offer demographic data and insights pertaining to the primary counties served by CACLMT.

## 2010-2022 Population Trends by County



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: Population Estimates. 2010 & 2022.

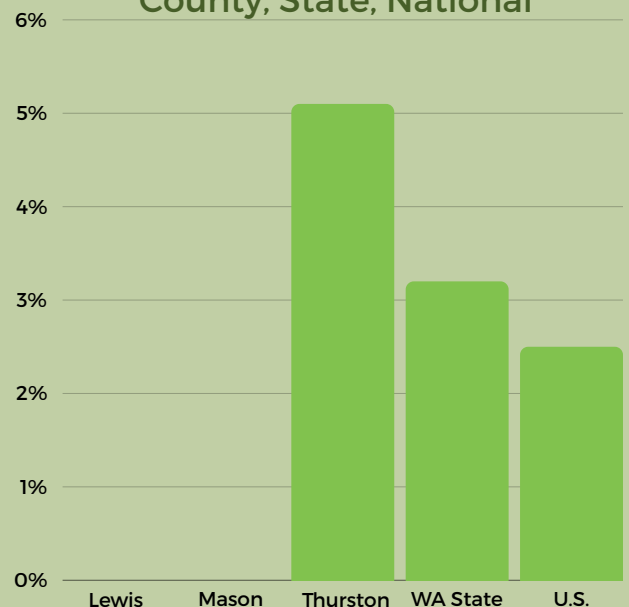
The COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant shifts in migration patterns, accelerating established trends observed before the pandemic. It appears that the pandemic accelerated the movement of people from larger urban areas to more rural regions. However, in 2022, this trend began to slow down, with rural counties experiencing smaller increases in population.

In 2022, Thurston County stood out with the most significant population increase at 5.1%, surpassing both the state and national averages. On the other hand, Lewis and Mason Counties saw negligible changes in their population rates during the same period.

Over the last 12 years, Thurston County has experienced the most substantial population growth among the three counties, both in terms of raw numbers and as a percentage of growth. Thurston County's population has increased by 16%, with Lewis at 12% and Mason at 11%.

As of April 1, 2023 Lewis and Mason Counties were both classified by the Office of Financial Management as rural areas.

## Population In-Migration by County, State, National

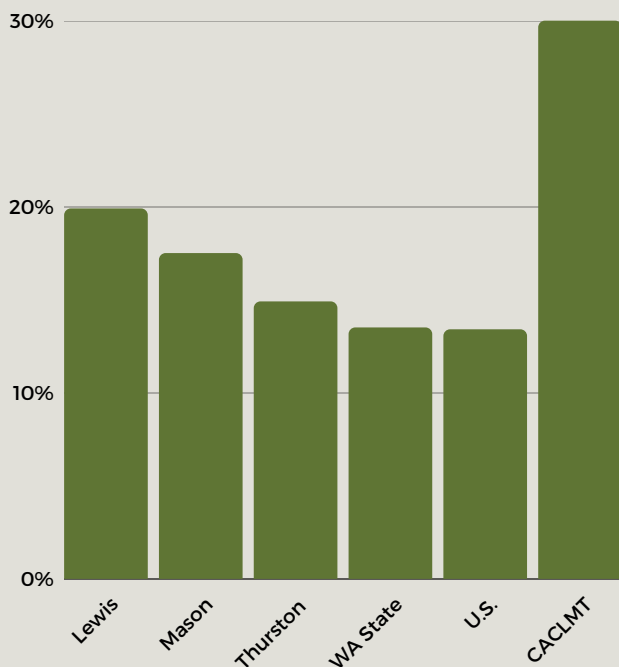


Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: Profiles Estimates. 2022.

1. Office of Financial Management. (n.d.). Population Density and Land Area Criteria Used for Rural Area Assistance and Other Programs. Retrieved October 23, from [Office of Financial Management, Retrived 10/23, https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/population-density/population-density-and-land-area-criteria-used-rural-area-assistance-and-other-programs](https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/population-density/population-density-and-land-area-criteria-used-rural-area-assistance-and-other-programs)

2. U.S. Census Bureau. (2023, March). Domestic Outmigration From Some Urban Counties Slowed, Smaller Gains in Rural Counties. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/03/domestic-migration-trends-shifted.html>

## Percent of Population with a Disability by County, State, National levels, & CACLMT Clients



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: Profiles Estimates: Health 2022.

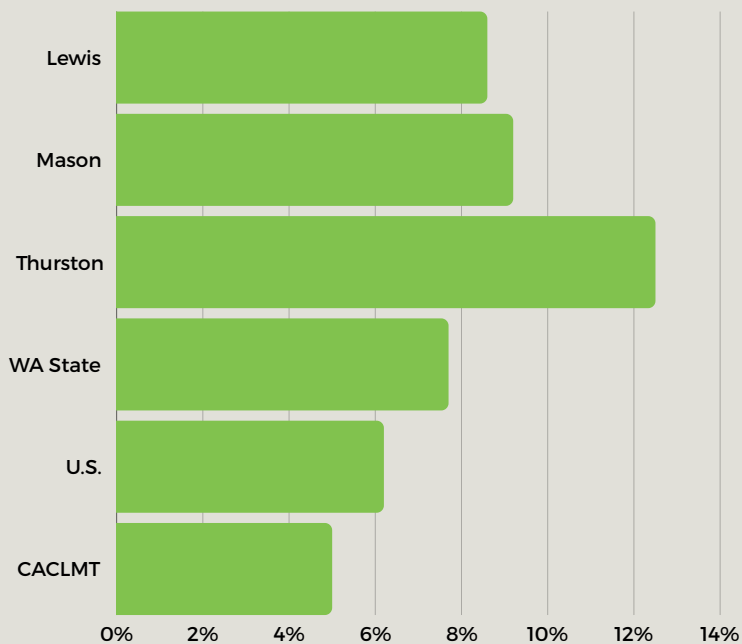
All three primary counties served by CACLMT consistently experience higher rates of community members identified as having a disability when compared to state and national figures. Notably, CACLMT clients report disability rates that are 16.6% higher than the statewide statistics for community members with disabilities.

These findings are further supported by various studies that highlight the presence of significant barriers to employment for many community members with disabilities. As outlined in a report from the [National Disability Institute](http://www.nasuid.org/sites/nasuid/files/Disability-Race-Poverty-in-America.pdf), disabled adults face poverty rates nearly double those of their nondisabled counterparts.

Washington State, along with the region served by CACLMT, exhibits higher rates of the population who are Veterans when compared to national statistics. This is in part due to the region's close proximity to major military installations. Particularly, Thurston County is significantly affected by this proximity as it borders Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

It's noteworthy that in a region with above-average rates of Veterans, CACLMT serves a lower percentage of clients who identify as Veterans in comparison to the regional averages.

## Percent of Population who are Veterans by County, State, National levels, & CACLMT Clients

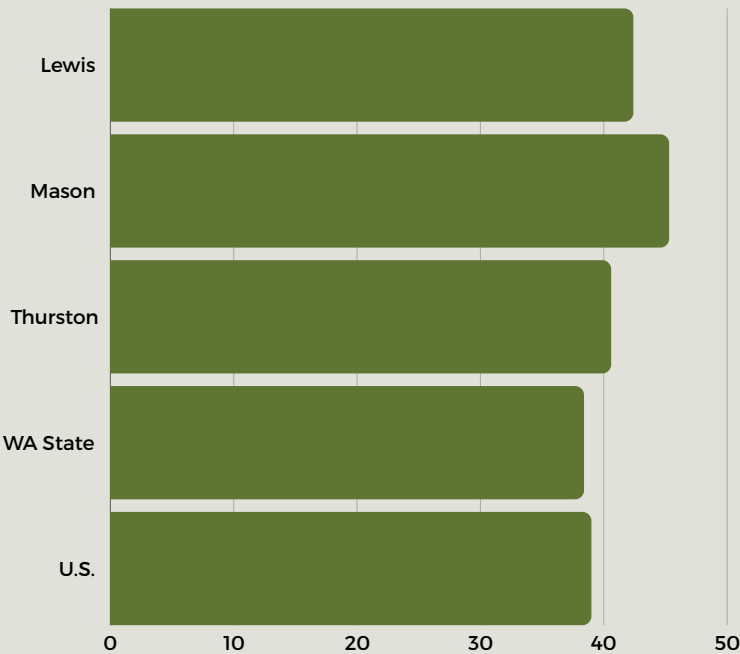


Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: Profiles Estimates: population. 2022.

## Median Age by County, State, & National levels



Population aging is occurring worldwide, with significant increases in developed countries, such as the US, pushing the median age higher. Even with county-wide population aging happening, the rural counties in the region served by CACLMT are experiencing median age figures that exceed the national average. In the least populated county, Mason, the median age is 14% higher than the national median age. This finding is confirmed in recent research published in the National Library of Medicine, which highlights more rapid aging is occurring in rural areas. The research also, points to unique challenges related to accessing resources and mental health for populations aging in rural communities.

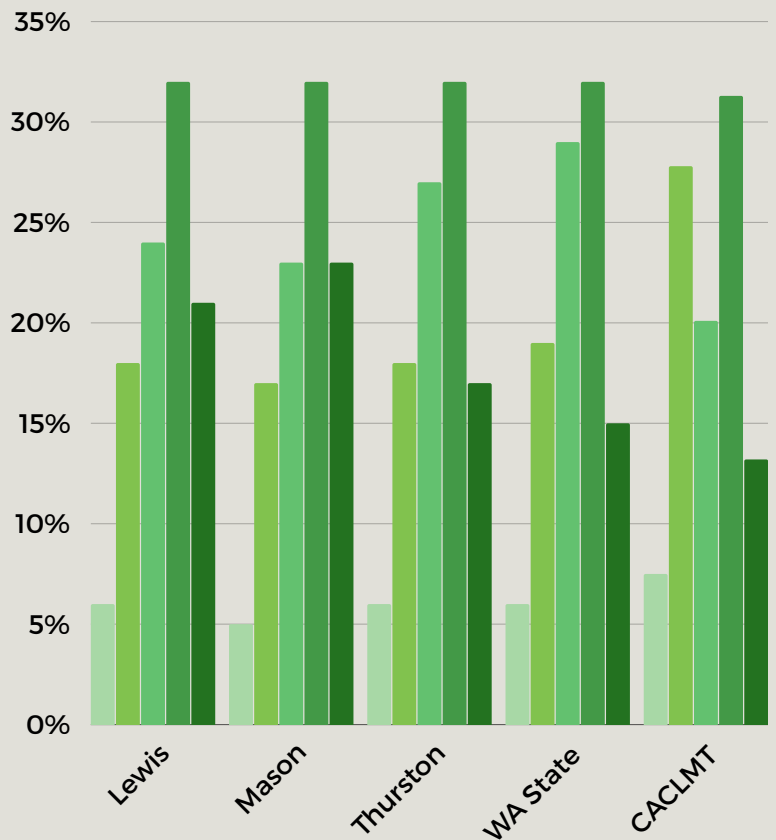


Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts:  
Profiles Estimates: population. 2022.

In Washington State, the age breakdown of the population reveals a diverse demographic landscape. The age distribution in the region CACLMT serves sees more urban areas like Olympia having a younger demographic, and rural areas seeing a higher proportion of seniors. These demographic patterns have significant implications for education, healthcare, and the economy, shaping the social and economic dynamics of the region.

## Age by County, State, & CACLMT

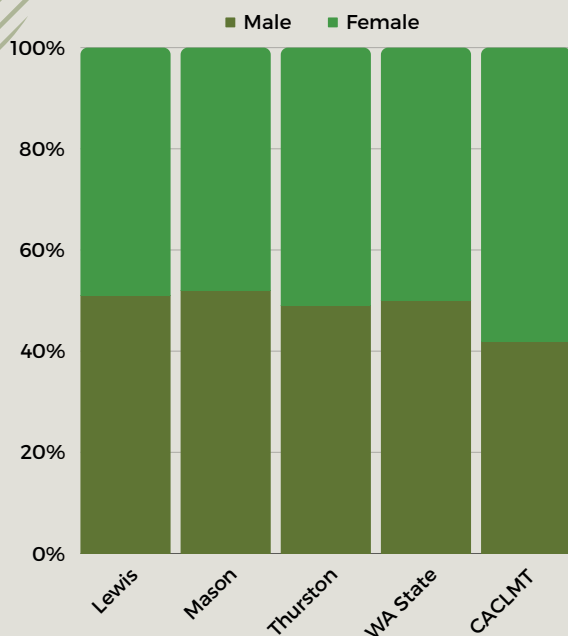
Under 5   5-19   20-39   40-64   65+



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts:  
. 2022.



## Sex by County, State, & CACLMT Clients



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: . 2022.

Sex demographics in Washington State, as well as in the counties served by CALCMT, generally exhibit a balanced distribution between males and females, much like many regions in the United States. It's important to note that the data for 2022, while representing males and females, does not encompass community members who do not identify within the binary categories of male and female. This acknowledgment is vital as it recognizes the existence and significance of non-binary and gender-diverse individuals within the broader population.

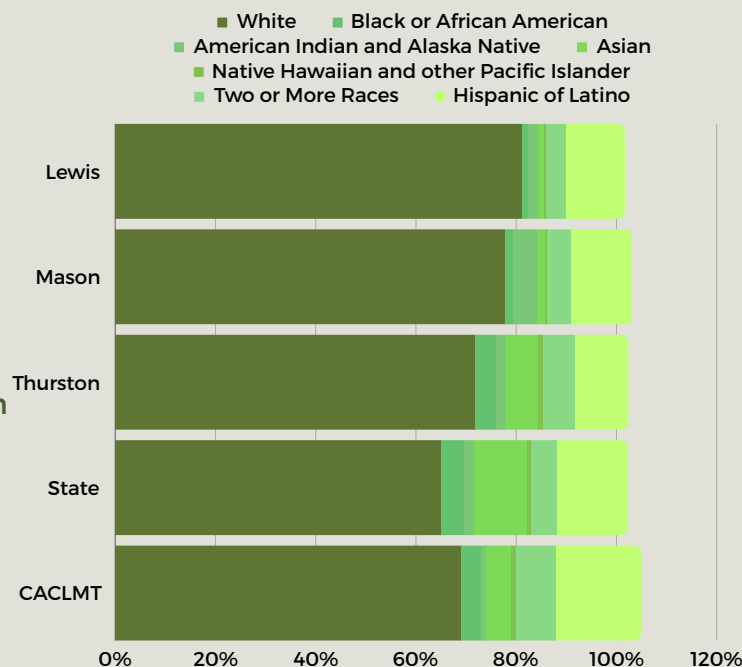
The client demographic data reveals an overrepresentation of individuals identifying as female, a trend that stands in contrast to the regional population statistics. This disproportionality aligns with findings from multiple studies, highlighting that women are more susceptible to experiencing poverty compared to men. This discrepancy has been further exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring an opportunity for targeted support and intervention measures.

In the CACLMT service area, the majority of the population is White, with Lewis County at 81.3% and Mason County at 77.9%. The second most commonly identified racial or ethnic group is Hispanic/Latino.

The 2022 demographics of CACLMT clients offer crucial insights into the complex relationship between race and poverty within our community. Notably, CACLMT serves a higher percentage of Hispanic, Black, and Multi-Racial community members compared to the regional averages, highlighting the systemic connections between race and poverty. This pattern is not unique to our region, emphasizing the need for CACLMT to address poverty with a focus on the intersection of structural and systemic racism.

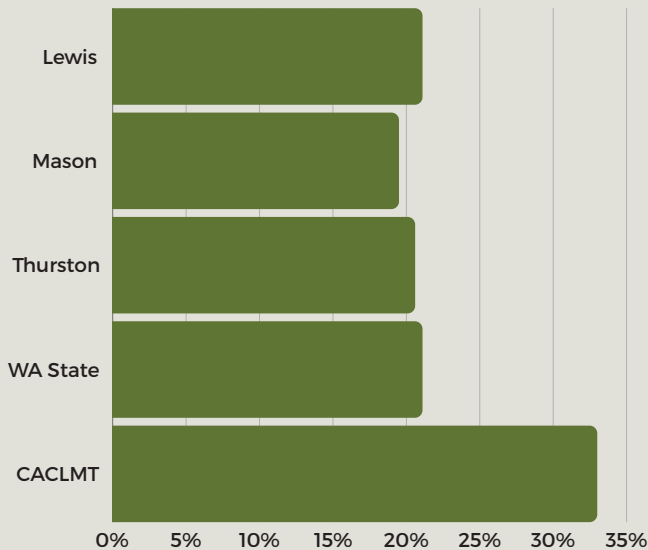
Additionally, the limited choices for clients to specify their race/ethnicity options present a significant opportunity to enhance our understanding of our program's impact and identify potential gaps. By expanding and refining these choices, we can better capture the diverse and nuanced racial and ethnic identities of our clients. This strategic step will not only improve our ability to effectively serve a wide range of communities but also ensure that our services are inclusive and responsive to the unique needs of all individuals in our region.

## Race/Ethnicity by County, State, & CACLMT Clients



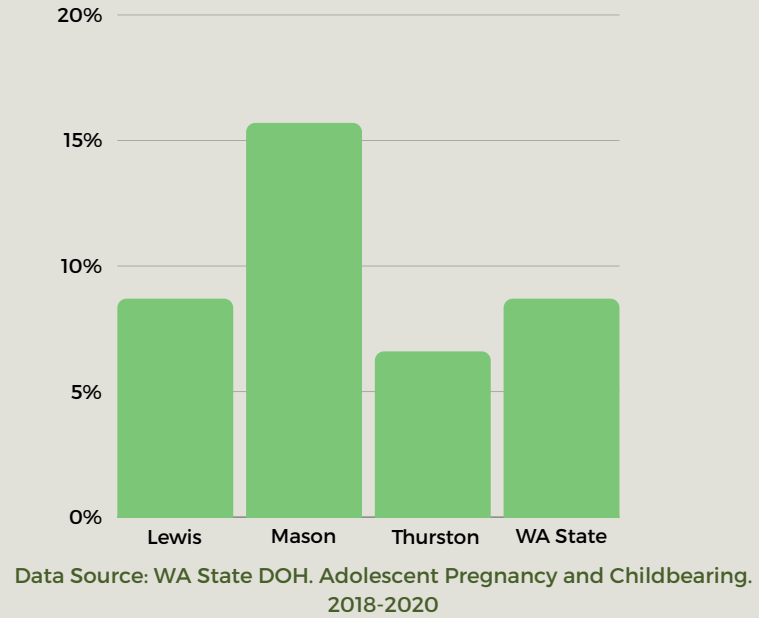
Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: 2022.

## Families with Children (Under age of 18) by County, State, & CACLMT Clients



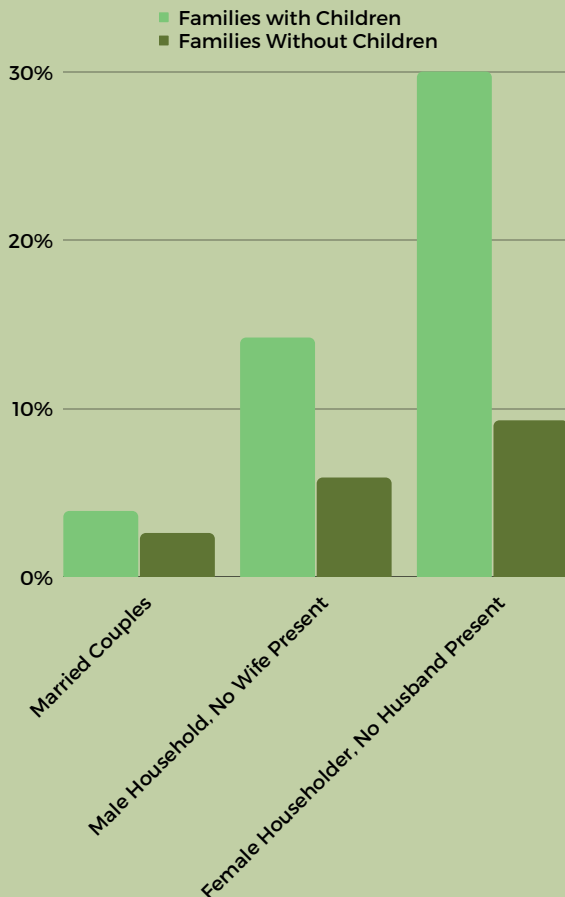
Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: Profiles Estimates: Families and Living Arrangements, 2022.

## Adolescent Pregnancies by County & State



Data Source: WA State DOH, Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing, 2018-2020

## Families in Poverty by Household Type, State



Data Source: Office of Financial Management  
Families in Poverty by household type: Based on 2020 income (2023)

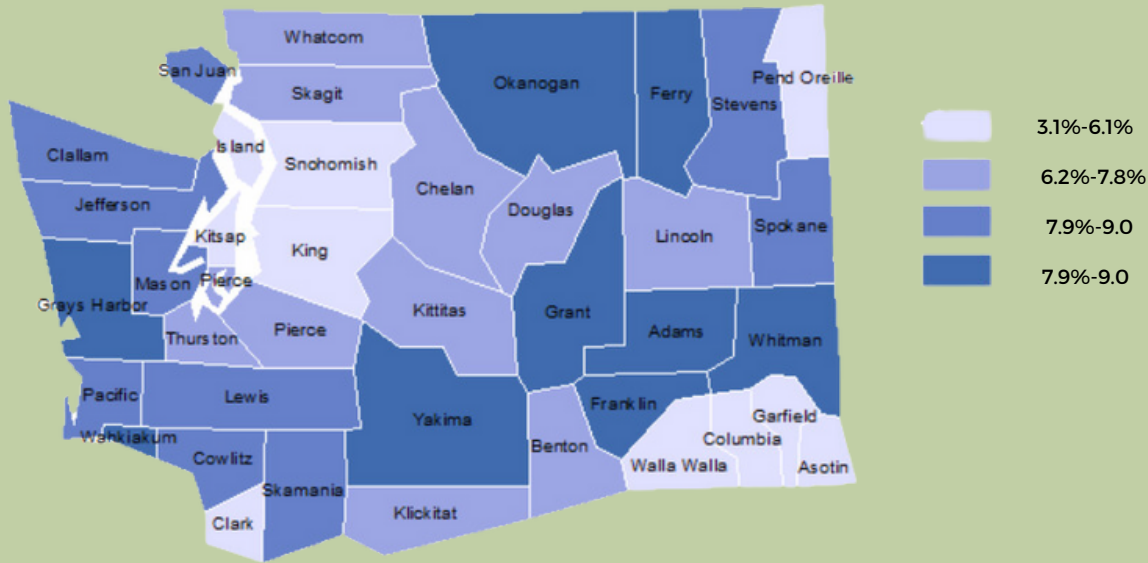
“Children are overrepresented among our nation’s poor.” - National Center for Children in Poverty

In the United States, families with children under the age of 18 are notably more susceptible to poverty compared to households without dependents. The study done by the National Center for Children in Poverty also emphasizes the intricate relationship between poverty and race, revealing that Black, Hispanic, and American Indian children are experiencing poverty at a rate more than twice as high as white and Asian children. This socioeconomic trend is not limited to the national level but is similarly observed within the state of Washington and remains prevalent within the geographic region served by CACLMT.

Trends around child poverty are particularly accentuated in rural counties such as Lewis and Mason and are further intensified in households with a female head of the family.

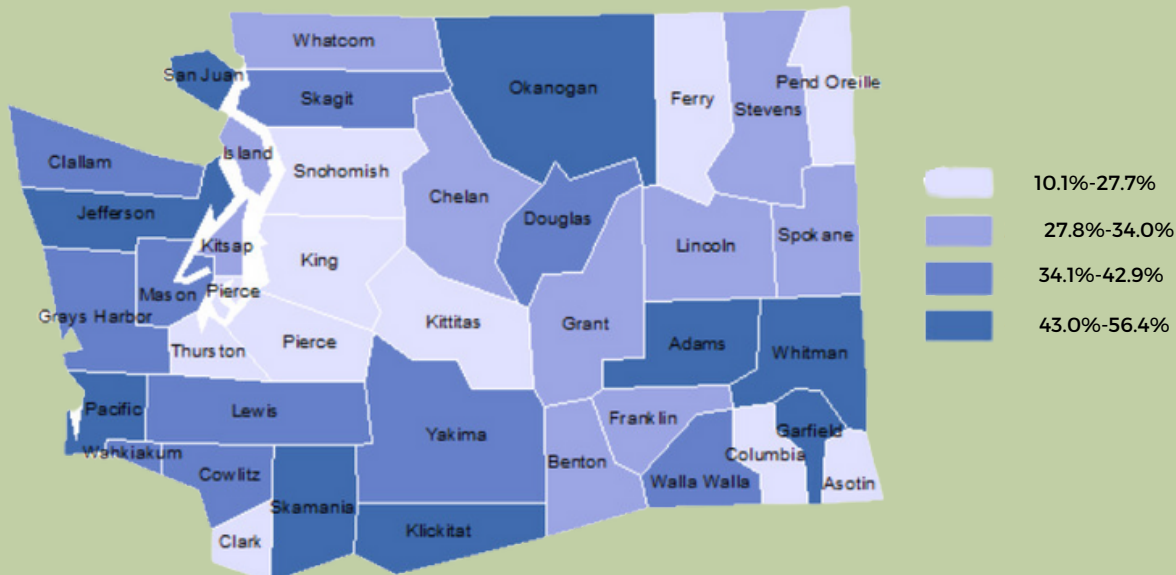


## Families With Children Under Age 18 in Poverty



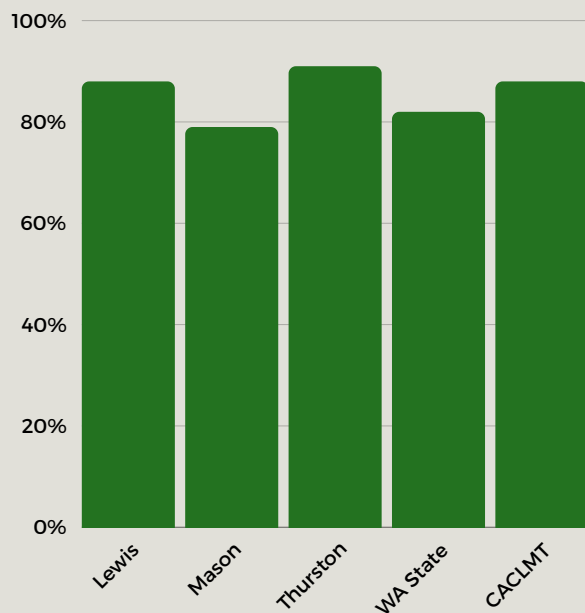
Data Source: Office of Financial Management  
Families With Children Under Age 18 in Poverty(2021)

## Poverty rate for single-parent families headed by a female householder (mapped by county)



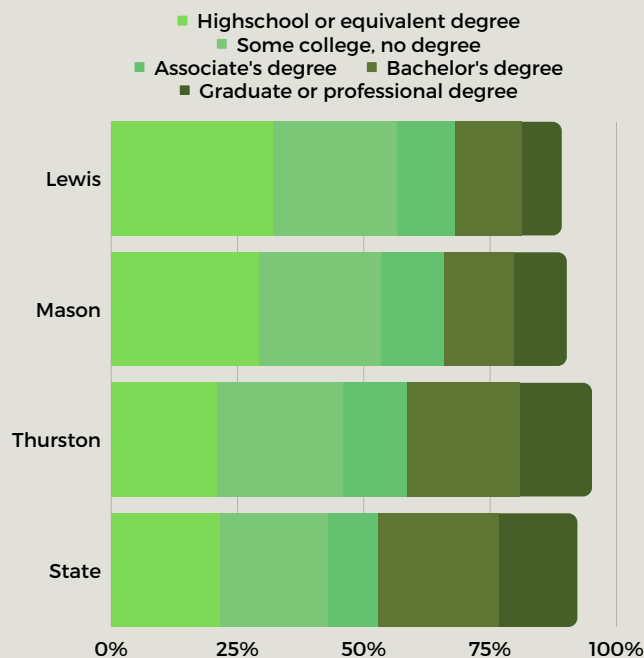
Data Source: Office of Financial Management  
Poverty rate for single-parent families headed by a female householder (mapped by county)  
(2021)

## Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, by School District in County Seat, State, & CACLMT Clients



Data Source: Washington State OSPI. Report Card. School District Data. 2022

## Educational Attainment by County & State



Data Source: Washington State OSPI. Report Card. School District Data. 2022

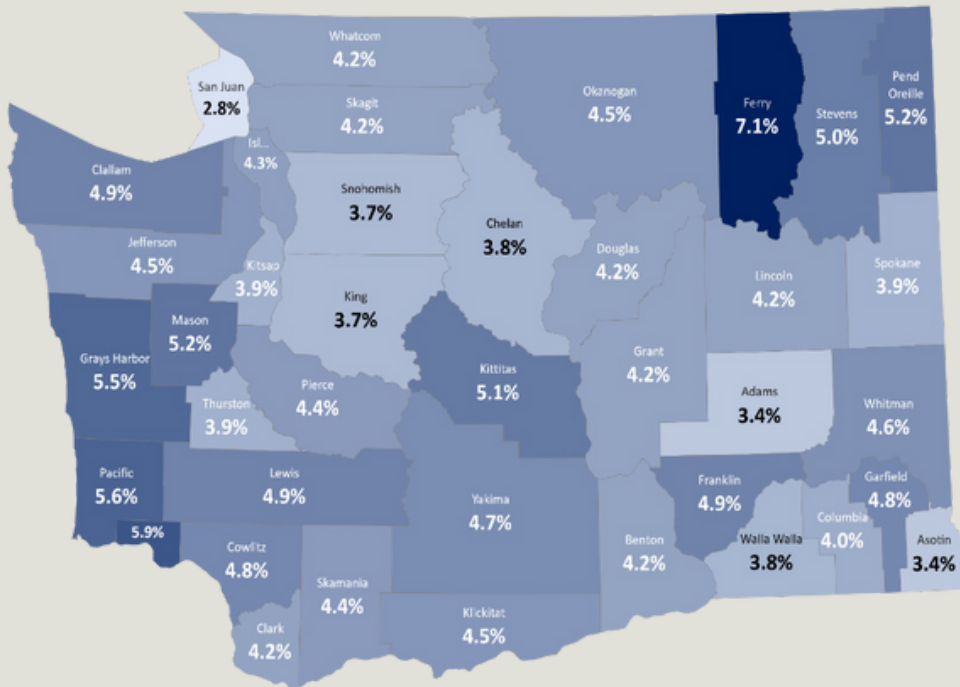
The intricacies of poverty are linked with educational milestones, specifically high school graduation rates. Within the region serviced by CACLMT distinct variations are evident.

Thurston County exhibits a notable graduation rate of 91%, marking it as a leader in educational achievement among the counties served by CACLMT. Additionally, Thurston County demonstrates the highest levels of educational attainment.

In comparison, Lewis County closely follows with an 88% graduation rate, while Mason County records a lower rate of 79%. Notably, Lewis and Mason counties exhibit relatively similar levels of educational attainment.

This data underscores the significance of education in addressing poverty within the region, and the potential for educational support programs, specifically geared towards Mason and Lewis counties to play a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of poverty.

## Unemployment Rates by County in 2023

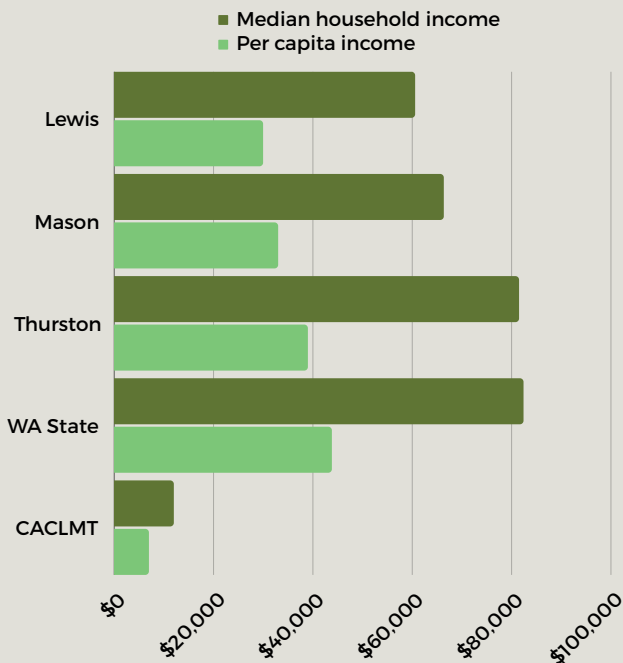


Since the last Community Needs Assessment conducted in 2020, there has been a notable decline in statewide unemployment rates. As of August 2023, nearly all counties in Washington State have achieved what is considered a "healthy" unemployment rate, falling within the range of 4-6%. Within CACLMT's service area, all counties maintain unemployment rates below 6%, with Thurston County leading the way at just below 4%.

Data Source: Washington State Employment Security Department. Monthly Employment Report. August 2023

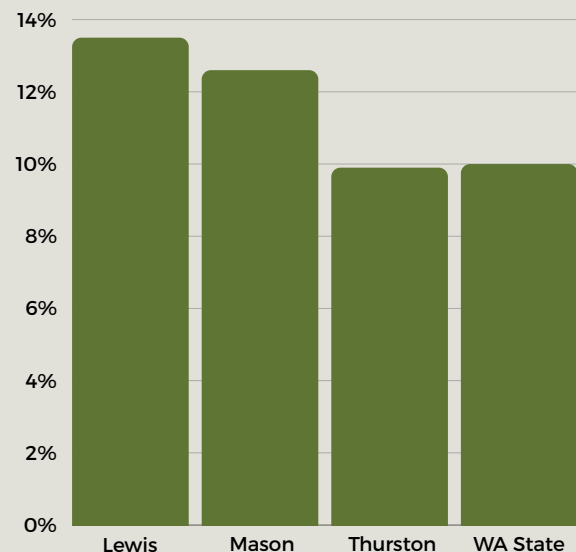
Poverty, stemming from systemic and structural issues, often persists for generations and tends to be concentrated within specific areas. The experience of poverty varies across each community and its subcomponents within the larger community. Notably, within the state of Washington, poverty disproportionately impacts Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities, as well as women, families with young children, youth, rural residents, immigrants and refugees, seniors, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities. Understanding these disparities is crucial for tailoring effective strategies to address the diverse needs of our community members

## Income by County, State, & CACLMT Clients



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: . 2022.

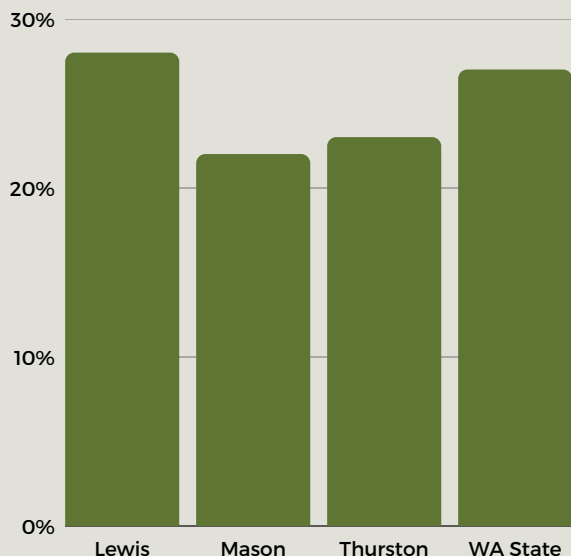
## Persons in Poverty by County & State



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: . 2022.

# THE COST OF LIVING & WAGES IN LEWIS, MASON, & THURSTON COUNTIES

Child Care Cost Burden by County & State

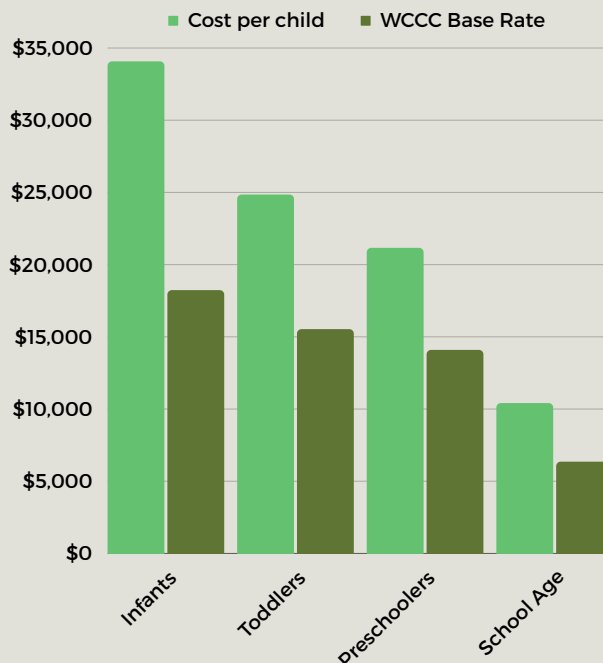


Historically, the Department of Health and Human Services has defined child care as affordable if it constitutes less than 10% of household income. However, in recent years, this benchmark was adjusted to 7%. In our region, comprising Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties, child care costs exceed this affordability threshold by at least threefold. This significant discrepancy highlights a substantial financial burden placed on families seeking child care services within the region

Data Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps: Building a Culture of Health, County by County. Child Care Cost Burden. 2022 & 2021

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program assists low-income families by providing childcare subsidy benefits. However, as illustrated in this graph, the actual statewide average cost remains significantly higher, thereby continuing to impose a heavy burden of high child care costs on low-income families.

Annual cost per child with living wage salaries and benefits compared with WCCC base subsidy rate, child care center, statewide average

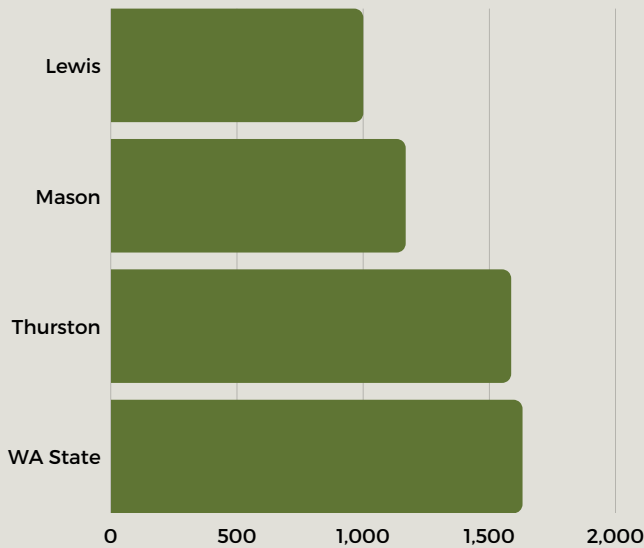


Data Source: Washington State Department of Commerce. The True Cost of quality child care in Washington. 2022.



## Median Gross Rent by County & State

## Fair Market Rents by bedroom count and by County



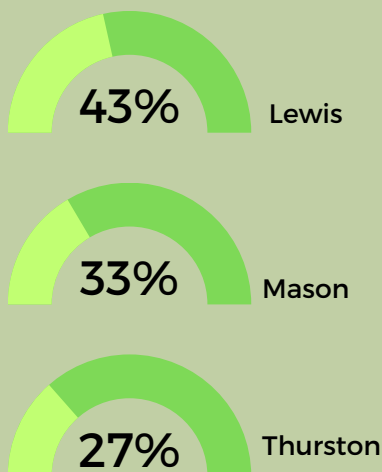
Data Source: US Census Bureau, Quick facts: Median gross rent. 2022.



Data Source: Office of Policy Development and Research. Fair Market Rents. 2023.

Washington is the 14th highest state in the nation for its expensive rental prices. In our region, specifically, both Lewis and Mason counties have Fair Market Rents (FMR) significantly above the national average. Lewis and Mason counties' FMRs are 82% and 85% higher than the national average, respectively. Thurston County, in contrast, stands out with an even higher FMR, reaching 96%.

## Housing Affordability Index Fourth Quarter 2022 by County



The fourth-quarter Housing Affordability Index (HAI) offers insights into the percentage of household income allocated to mortgage expenses. Across all counties, the data reveals that households are dedicating close to or more than the HUD-established affordability benchmark of 30% of their income to housing costs. This issue is further exacerbated for low-income families.

Data Source: University of Washington, & Washington State Department of Licensing, Real Estate Commission. 4th Quarter 2022



Lewis County, WA Affordable Housing Snapshot		Mason County, WA Affordable Housing Snapshot		Thurston County, WA Affordable Housing Snapshot	
Total Affordable Apartment Properties	24	Total Affordable Apartment Properties	11	Total Affordable Apartment Properties	39
Total Low Income Apartments	1,125	Total Low Income Apartments	305	Total Low Income Apartments	3,381
Total Housing Units with Rental Assistance	635	Total Housing Units with Rental Assistance	242	Total Housing Units with Rental Assistance	773
Percentage of Housing Units Occupied By Renters	32.62%	Percentage of Housing Units Occupied By Renters	23.05%	Percentage of Housing Units Occupied By Renters	35.44%
Average Renter Household Size	2.50	Average Renter Household Size	2.82	Average Renter Household Size	2.41
Average Household Size	2.52	Average Household Size	2.58	Average Household Size	2.52
Median Household Income	\$44,100 ± \$1,437	Median Household Income	\$50,406 ± \$2,362	Median Household Income	\$61,677 ± \$1,071
Median Rent	\$801 ± \$23	Median Rent	\$884 ± \$36	Median Rent	\$1,054 ± \$19
Percentage of Renters Overburdened	49.88% ± 3.3pp	Percentage of Renters Overburdened	51.59% ± 6.41pp	Percentage of Renters Overburdened	46.67% ± 2.38pp
Total Population	75,515	Total Population	60,791	Total Population	262,723

Data Source: <https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Washington/>

Housing cost burdens, defined as individuals paying more than 30% of their income on housing, are a pressing concern in our region for renters. In Lewis County, 49.9% of renters experience this burden, and in Mason County, this percentage rises to 51.6%, while Thurston County reports a slightly lower rate of 46.7%.

The Community Action Council, through its Affordable Housing Program, has been instrumental in assisting approximately 700 individuals in the past three years. Additionally, over 275 people have received support through rental assistance funds. With the inauguration of our Salmon Run property in November 2012, we now offer 382 housing units available for rent. The persistent escalation of housing costs for both renters and homeowners across the regions we serve underscores the urgent need to further expand our efforts in providing affordable housing options

# Living Wage in Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties

Living Wages

Poverty Wages

Minimum Wages

## Lewis County

### 1 Adult

### 2 Adults (1 Working)

### 2 Adults ( Both Working)

0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
\$15.72	\$33.91	\$43.70	\$57.77	\$26.17	\$32.89	\$37.88	\$42.55	\$16.09	\$19.05	\$24.15	\$29.10
\$6.53	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$15.74	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$13.34	\$15.61	\$4.40	\$5.54	\$6.67	\$7.81
\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74

Data Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator., Lewis County, WA: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/53041>

## Mason County

### 1 Adult

### 2 Adults (1 Working)

### 2 Adults ( Both Working)

0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
\$15.94	\$33.59	\$42.67	\$56.55	\$27.21	\$33.21	\$38.20	\$43.35	\$13.60	\$18.90	\$23.68	\$28.54
\$6.53	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$13.34	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$13.34	\$15.61	\$4.40	\$5.54	\$6.67	\$7.81
\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74

Data Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator., Mason County, WA: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/53045>

## Thurston County

### 1 Adult

### 2 Adults (1 Working)

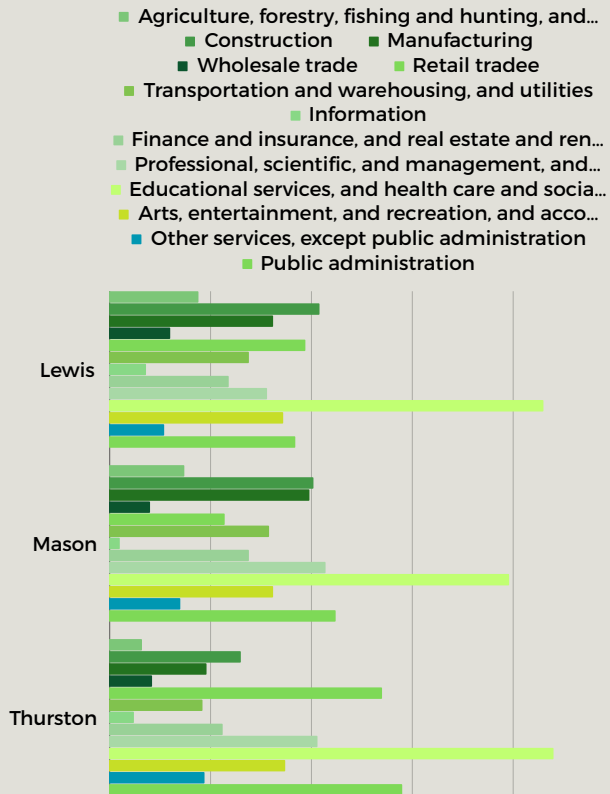
### 2 Adults ( Both Working)

0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
\$18.24	\$35.79	\$45.86	\$61.32	\$28.19	\$34.66	\$39.65	\$45.50	\$14.09	\$19.99	\$25.15	\$30.75
\$6.53	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$13.34	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$13.34	\$15.61	\$4.40	\$5.54	\$6.67	\$7.81
\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74	\$15.74

Data Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator., Mason County, WA: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/53067>

The data presented in the above tables reflects the Live Wage Calculations for the three counties within CACLMT's service area. This information has been sourced from the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](https://livingwage.mit.edu/) and comprehensively considers essential expenses such as food, child care, medical costs, housing, transportation, taxes, and other relevant factors specific to the region. These calculations have been tailored to accommodate the diverse family sizes and compositions depicted in the aforementioned tables.

## Industry for Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over

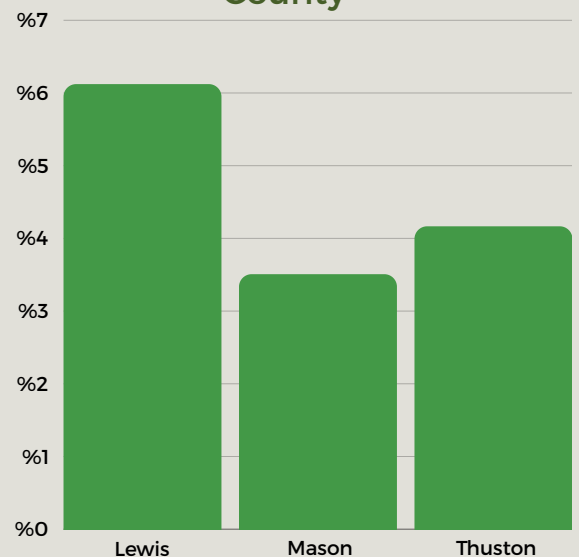


Data Source: US Census Bureau, County Profile. Industry for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. 2022

A nuanced understanding of the employment distribution by industry not only identifies the predominant sectors but also provides insights into the unique economic fabric of each county within the CALCMT service region. This information is crucial for tailoring community programs and initiatives that align with the distinct needs and strengths of the local workforce. In the region served by CALCMT, the most common industry across all three counties was educational services/health care and social assistance followed by Public Administration. While the Construction Sector closely followed Public Administration in Lewis and Mason counties.

The transportation system plays a pivotal role in shaping community and city density. The choice of transportation modes is intricately linked to density, and the capacity to own a vehicle significantly influences employment factors and the ability to access essential services like food, schools, social services, and healthcare facilities. It is important to note that below certain density levels, the economic feasibility of many mass transit options for communities becomes challenging. Understanding this interplay between transportation, density, and community needs is essential for devising effective strategies that address accessibility and mobility challenges in the region.

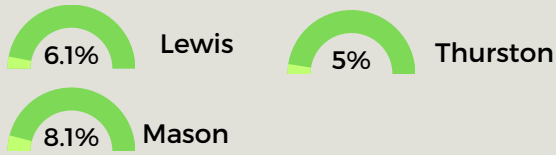
## Percentages of Households without a Motor Vehicle by County



Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

# HEALTH IN LEWIS, MASON, AND THURSTON COUNTIES

## Percent of Population with out Health Care Coverage by County

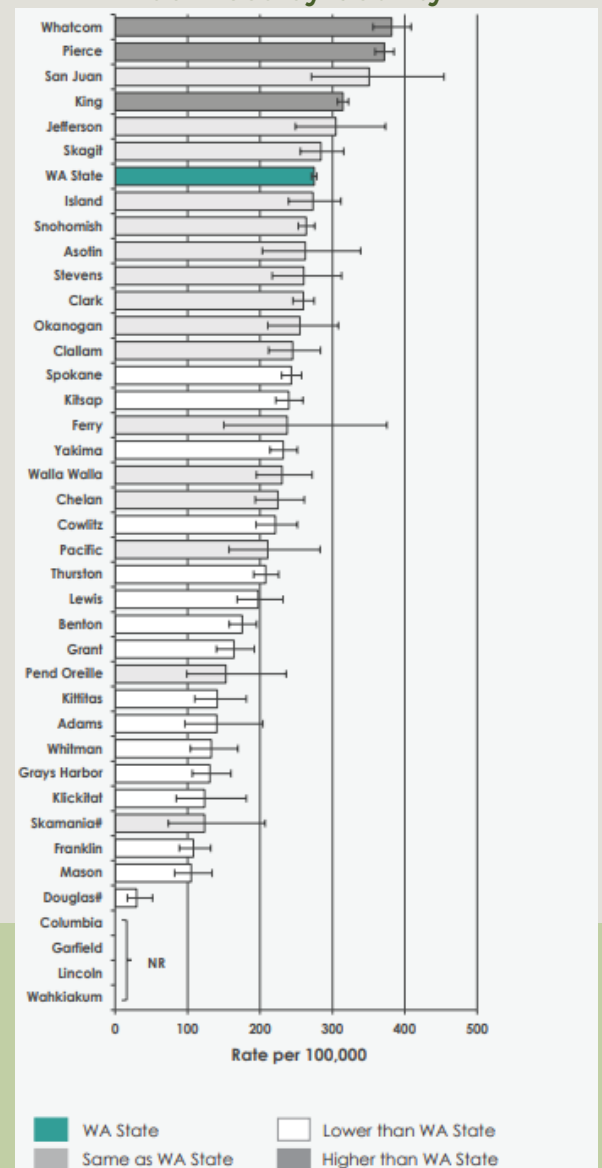


Data Source: US Census Bureau, County Profile.  
Health Care Coverage, 2022

The percentage of adults aged 18 to 64 without health insurance coverage is a crucial metric, as the lack of insurance poses a primary obstacle to accessing healthcare, including regular primary care, specialty care, and various health services. This absence of coverage significantly contributes to a compromised health status. Notably, Lewis County shares the exact percentage as the statewide average. The data underscores opportunities to educate the populations served on healthcare coverage options, emphasizing the need for targeted outreach and education initiatives.

Comprehending the overall mental health landscape within a region is imperative, with access to behavioral health care serving as a crucial indicator. Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties all demonstrate lower-than-statewide averages in terms of mental health providers. This is particularly concerning, given that more rural areas frequently report elevated rates of suicide and depression. The evident disparity in access to mental health services underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and increased resources in these communities.

## Access to Behavioral Health Services by County



Data Source: Department of Health. Access to Behavioral Health.  
<https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/1000/SHA-AccessstoBehavioralHealthProviders.pdf>

## Opioid and Drug Overdose Data by County

### Lewis



### Mason



### Thurston



Data Source: Department of Health. Opioid and Drug Overdose Data. <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/opioids/overdose-dashboard>

Data on substance use and overdoses has revealed significant increases since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the three primary counties served by CALCMT, higher rates of injury deaths resulting from overdoses are observed, surpassing the statewide average of 32%. This trend highlights the necessity for proactive measures and resources to address the escalating challenges associated with substance abuse within these regions.

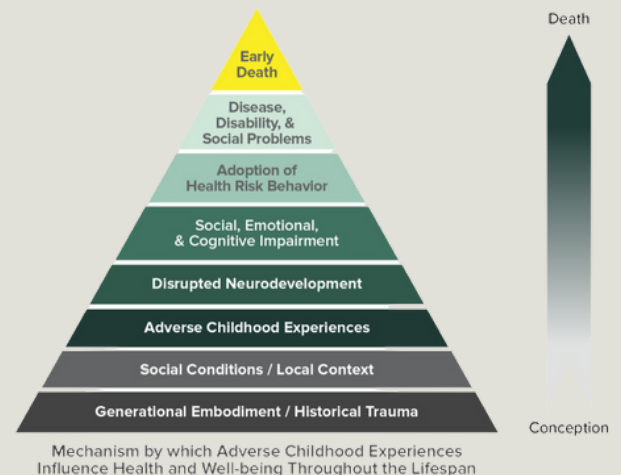
The ACE Pyramid serves as the conceptual framework for the ACE Study revealing a strong connection between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the development of risk factors for disease, as well as overall well-being. Childhood experiences, whether positive or negative, wield a profound influence on future violence victimization and perpetration, as well as lifelong health and opportunity. Consequently, early experiences emerge as a critical public health concern.

Adverse Childhood Experiences have been correlated with:

- Risky health behaviors
- Chronic health conditions
- Low life potential
- Early death

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention notes that as the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for these adverse outcomes. This underscores the significance of addressing and mitigating the impact of ACEs to foster healthier, more resilient communities. Underscoring the importance of expanding the Child Advocacy Services in the region served.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences





# SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

The region served by CACLMT, comprising Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties, is undergoing rapid expansion, echoing trends observed across the South Sound region. This growth, compounded by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and higher inflation rates, has intensified challenges such as housing volatility, increased costs of essential needs, and heightened issues related to mental health and substance use disorders. These challenges disproportionately impact community members already residing at or near the poverty line. Recognizing the complexity of these issues is paramount for developing targeted community initiatives that respond to the evolving needs of the population.

## Key Findings and Opportunities:

### 1. Increased Collaboration:

- Opportunities lie in enhancing collaboration among CACLMT programs and community partners. Given the multifaceted nature of poverty, ensuring that community members accessing services are seamlessly integrated into holistic coordinated care is essential. Shifting the responsibility for coordinating care to the service provider will be vital in supporting the dynamic individuals and families served.

### 2. Anti-Racist and Equity Lens:

- Adopting an anti-racist and equity lens is imperative to fully comprehend the systemic and historical circumstances contributing to generational cycles of poverty. Addressing root causes requires grounding program and agency development in anti-racist and equity principles.

### 3. Data Collection Enhancement:

- It is evident from the Community Needs Assessment that there is a pressing need to modernize data collection methods to gain a more nuanced understanding of the communities served. Creating expanded opportunities for individuals to share their stories and express their needs authentically is paramount. This approach ensures that data collection truly reflects the diversity and intricacies of the community. By doing so, we can significantly contribute to the development of more targeted and effective programs that address the specific and varied needs identified during the assessment.

#### 4. Expansion of Services:

- The assessment underscores a clear imperative to expand all currently offered services, with a particular emphasis on enhancing Housing and Behavioral Health services. This targeted expansion is crucial to effectively address the escalating demands and complexities within these critical areas. Responding to this call for growth will ensure that our services align dynamically with the evolving needs of the community, contributing to a more comprehensive and impactful support framework.

#### 5. Advocacy for Thriving Wages:

- Advocacy, both internally and externally, for thriving wages is crucial. Ensuring that families can not only afford to live in the region but also thrive is fundamental for community well-being.

#### 6. Greening Energy and Weatherization Initiatives:

- Continued focus on greening the work of the Energy and Weatherization Teams is essential. Understanding the close connection between poverty and environmental well-being underscores the importance of these initiatives.

The Community Needs Assessment reveals a landscape marked by both challenges and opportunities. Through strategic collaboration, an equity-focused approach, expanded data insights, and targeted service expansions, CACLMT is poised to address the evolving needs of the region effectively. These findings will serve as a foundation for informed decision-making and the development of programs that make a lasting impact on the well-being of the communities served.

Thank you to the team that supported the development, research, and writing of this Community Needs Assessment.