

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2017

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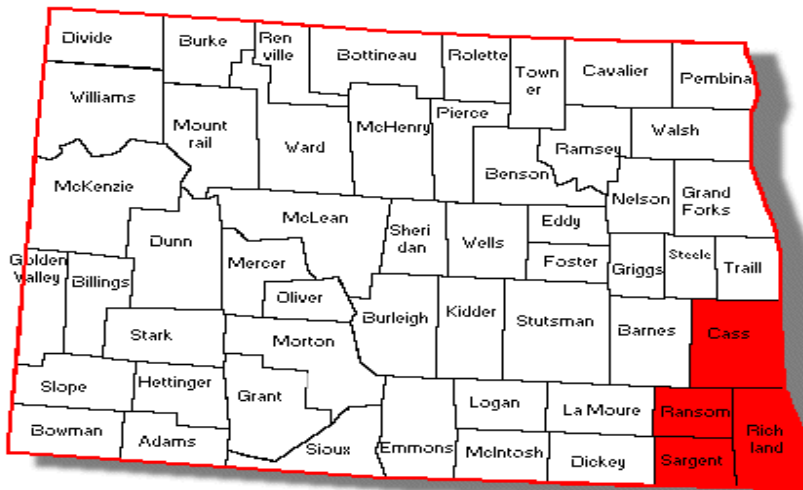
Introduction

This report, the Community Assessment, represents a needs assessment study of barriers to the low-income population in our service area. It will be used to evaluate the needs of Head Start eligible families and to assist in planning for future program options based on the data collected. The data will be used to adjust current program options to fulfill needs identified, over the next five year grant cycle. The Community Assessment contains both survey data and Census data derived from Community Commons and ND Kids Count.

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five is a grantee of SouthEastern North Dakota Community Action Agency (SENDCAA), and is funded to serve 369 children in eight facilities, which spans across four counties. All Head Start program options are center-based and follow the public school calendar of the city in which they are located. The children attending Head Start are ages 3 -5. The Early Head Start program options are also center-based and operate on a 48 week basis, having one month off in summer. This program option serves ages six weeks to three years, as well as four pregnant mom slots. In addition to the 369 enrollment slots we currently serve, we maintain an average waiting list of 270 in Head Start and 325 in Early Head Start.

Service Area

In Cass County, the cities of Fargo and West Fargo accommodate the majority of our enrollment population, and we have three smaller sites in Lisbon (Ransom County), Gwinner (Sargent County), and Wahpeton (Richland County). Below you will find a map of our county service area:



Source: diymaps.net (c)

Demographics

The demographics for our service area (by county) are as follows:

	Population	Ages: Male	Ages: Female	Median Income	Below Poverty	Children in Poverty
Cass	162,500	81,905	92,999	\$75,531	12.1%	11.32%
Ransom	5,453	2,788	2,665	\$68,368	9.27%	8.19%
Richland	16,317	8,414	7,903	\$73,574	10.77%	13.35%
Sargent	3,874	2,038	1,836	\$72,930	5.81%	5.48%

According to *US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011-15 (5 Year Estimates)*, a total of 188,144 people live in the 4,921.58 square mile service area defined for this assessment. The population density for this area, estimated at 38.23 persons per square mile, is less than the average national population density of 89.61 persons per square mile.

Also in the demographics table is Median Family Income, which is based on the latest US Census 5-year American Community Survey estimates. A household is defined as any housing unit in which the head of household is living with one or more individuals related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. Family income includes the incomes of all family members age 15 and older.

The total unemployment rate in the entire service area is currently 2.4% of the civilian non-institutional population age 16 and older. This figure is lower than the state of North Dakota rate of 3% and 4.6% nationwide, thus showing employment is not a barrier in our area.

With regards to the population in the “Below Poverty” and “Children in Poverty” categories, these both refer to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. In the report, 11.28% of 4,597 children aged 0-17 are living in households with income below the Federal Poverty Level. This indicator is relevant because poverty creates barriers to accessing services, including health services, healthy food, and other necessities that contribute to poor health. *Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011-2015.*

In addition to living below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, there are several other factors considered when a family applies for Head Start Birth to Five services. Among these are homelessness and children in foster care. The following table will indicate the number of eligible mothers and children in our service area, and those living in foster care. *Data source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families and North Dakota KIDS COUNT 2015*

	Children under 5	Pregnant Mothers	Foster Care
Cass	10,415	2,569	355
Ransom	304	69	6
Richland	1,029	189	28
Sargent	207	44	NA

Disabilities and Available Resources

All Head Start and Early Head Start programs serve children with disabilities, and special health care needs, children who are at high risk for developmental delays. 10% of enrolled slots must be filled by a child with a disability.

Staff support children with special health care needs or disabilities by:

- Identifying health and developmental issues through screening and ongoing child observation
- Working with the child's family and health care professionals to make referrals for further evaluation or more intensive support when necessary
- Implementing individualization plans that include specific instructions for adaptations to ensure that each child can participate in program activities

The following tables indicate the percentages of children enrolled in special education in our service area, as well as the types of disabilities represented, and associated percentages. *Data Source: 2016 ND Kids Count Fact Book.*

	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-11	Ages 12-17	Ages 18-21
Cass	12.4%	43.2%	39.8%	4.5%
Ransom	14.8%	36.4%	42.1%	6.8%
Richland	17.2%	40.8%	38.5%	3.5%
Sargent	14.4%	34.6%	40.4%	10.6%

	Emotionally Disturbed	Speech/ Language Impaired	Specific Learning Disability	Intellectual Disability	Autism
Cass	7.4%	19.9%	28.8%	5.2%	9.5%
Ransom	1.1%	18.2%	25.0%	6.8%	8.0%
Richland	6.1%	21.9%	32.4%	2.6%	4.7%
Sargent	1.9%	15.4%	43.3%	6.7%	6.7%

The following community partners provide support and services for children with a disability:

- Fargo Public Schools ECSE
- West Fargo Public School ECSE
- Southeast Human Service Center
- Anne Carlsen Center
- Children’s Consultation Network
- Early Intervention Partners
- South Valley Special Education

Childcare and Head Start Classroom Options

Quality, affordable childcare was indicated as a need in our 2017 Community Assessment Survey data. There are currently no other full day, publicly funded Pre-K programs in our service area. The following table will indicate the number of available Licensed Child Care Providers by county and the number and percent of children served. This includes all children age 0-13 and clearly indicates a lack of available childcare in our area. *Data Source: ND Kids Count 2016 Child Well Being Report.*

	# of Licensed Providers	Capacity	% of Children Served
Cass County	393	13, 201	59%
Ransom County	18	279	39.3%
Richland County	51	882	44%
Sargent County	9	198	40%

The location and number of funded enrollment slots (369) during the 2016-2017 school year is as follows:

- Central Site (3233 S University Drive, Fargo)-70
- South Site (3329 S University Drive, Fargo)-88
- Madison Site (1040 29th St N, Fargo)-31
- West Site (109 3rd St E, West Fargo)-68
- Wahpeton Site(1202 Westmore Ave, Wahpeton)-34
- Lisbon Site (418 5th Ave W, Lisbon)-9
- Gwinner Site(14 Main St N, Gwinner)-9
- Early Head Start (3600 15th St S,Fargo)-60

The Central and South sites are located in south Fargo and each have a combination of part-day and full-day classrooms. Central has two full-day classrooms and two part-day classrooms. South has two part-day classrooms and three full-day classrooms.

The Madison site is located in the Madison Elementary School in north Fargo. This location has two part-day classrooms. The West site is located in the Lodoen Community Center of West Fargo Public Schools. This site consists of five part-day classrooms.

The Lisbon and Gwinner sites each consist of one part-day classroom, and are located in the cities of Lisbon and Gwinner. The Wahpeton site consists of two part-day classrooms and is located in the city of Wahpeton.

The Early Head Start site is located in south Fargo and consists of five full-day, full year classrooms. In addition, Early Head Start also contains a Local Program Option, in which one class attends Monday, Wednesday, and every other Friday. The other class attends Tuesday, Thursday, and every other Friday.

We offer before and after school care to children and families enrolled at our Central and South locations through Fargo Youth Commission (FYC) programming. Due to budget cuts in 2012, our school bus transportation was cut and has not been reinstated, so we do not offer bussing to any of our centers.

Race and Ethnic Representation

Our currently enrolled children come from varying backgrounds and cultures and speak numerous different languages. There are 137 children identified as African American/Black for primary race, 141 as Caucasian/White, 24 as American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1 as Pacific Islander, 13 as Asian, 26 as Multi/Bi-Racial, and 7 were Unspecified or chose Other. Along with the varying backgrounds, there are also numerous language spoken within our centers. Among the languages spoken by our families is Arabic, Spanish, English, Nepali, French Creole, Urdu, Somali, Kirundi, and Swahili (*Information derived from ChildPlus for currently enrolled families*). We have a small number of staff members who speak other languages, as well as volunteer foster grandparents in classrooms who speak varying languages. Until the middle of this school year, we had a Family Advocate/Cultural Liaison staff who worked with our DLL families. Due to the continually increasing numbers of DLL families in Head Start, that position will likely be filled again in school year 2017-2018. Combined with an intentional program-wide approach to DLL in the classroom, we believe our support of these families will be strengthened.

The following tables illustrate additional information regarding race and ethnic composition within our service area (by county), as well as language representation. *Data source: US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) 2015 Head Start locator and 2010 US Decennial Census.*

	White	Black	Asian	Native American/ Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Multiple Races	Hispanic
Cass	90.13%	3.18%	2.68%	1.17%	.01%	.44%	2.39%	2.34%
Ransom	97.21%	.59%	.29%	.75%	0%	0%	1.16%	1.6%
Richland	94%	.47%	.34%	2.79%	.05%	.8%	1.54%	2.45%
Sargent	96.08%	1.08%	.57%	.57%	0%	.85%	.85%	2.63%

Assessment Process and Results

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five conducts a Community Assessment once every five years by surveying currently enrolled families and community partners in the counties of Cass, Ransom, Richland, and Steele. The methodology of the data collection was via paper and electronic surveys. The data will be used to establish programming priorities and guide future planning.

The following sectors were surveyed for the 2017 Community Assessment:

- Currently Enrolled Families
- Community Based Organizations
- Healthcare Providers
- Mental Health Providers
- Faith Based Organizations
- Educational Institutions

Surveys were sent out in March to all identified recipients. Currently enrolled parents returned surveys in drop boxes at their respective sites and community partners completed theirs electronically. The survey consisted of seven questions requesting information on barriers, needs, and accessibility of current resources provided by Head Start and our communities as a whole, as well as work/training schedules, desired program options, and prioritization of family circumstances. Data was collected and

entered into an online format where responses were tallied using specific formulas. Survey respondents were also given the option of submitting additional comments to questions, which gives additional insight into the barriers families are facing in their pursuit of quality Pre-K education.

Based on the data from completed community partner surveys, the top three NEEDS of low income clients in our service area are:

1. Before and After School Care
2. Affordable Housing (Rent & Mortgage)
3. Parenting Education

The top three CAUSES for the needs identified are:

1. Affordability of Childcare
2. Low Parental Education
3. Lack of Awareness of Community Resources

In addition to the indicated causes, there were two more prevalent concerns indicated in additional comments. Those were the need for quality transportation services in our communities, as well as the availability of mental health services.

The analysis of the 2017 Community Assessment data revealed the underlying needs of eligible families in our service area, as well as their barriers. The community partner and currently enrolled family data reveals that more families are working and in need of extended hours of care. The availability and affordability of quality Pre-K education and childcare options also prove to be a challenge faced daily.

Transportation was also indicated as a key need. Transportation to all of our sites was eliminated due to funding cuts in 2012. Public transportation is available only within the city of Fargo and West Fargo. A small number of Head Start families utilize the MatBus system, but have indicated it is not effective. Bus stops are 2-4 blocks away from the entrances to several sites and buses only stop at most sites every other hour. We do provide free Matbus passes to families, but we typically only get an average of five families yearly who utilize this service. Of the 6.65% of Cass County residents without a motor vehicle (shown in the table below), there is currently only .83% of the population who utilize the available public transportation. There is no public transportation available in Ransom or Sargent County, and only services for senior citizens in Richland County.

The following table shows the number of households without a motor vehicle within our service area:
Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-15.

	Total Occupied Households	Households With No Motor Vehicle	% of Households with No Motor Vehicle
Cass County	68, 776	4, 571	6.65%
Ransom County	2, 352	142	6.04%
Richland County	6, 621	354	5.35%
Sargent County	1, 728	26	1.5%

The following tables report the percentage of households where housing costs exceed 30% of total household income, otherwise known as housing cost burden. This information includes monthly housing expenses for owners and renters. *Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-15.*

	Total Households	Cost Burdened Households	% of Cost Burdened Housholds
Cass County	68, 776	18, 722	27.22%
Ransom County	2, 352	375	15.94%
Richland County	6,621	1,062	16.04%
Sargent County	1, 728	251	14.53%

By utilizing the Parent and Community Survey data results, SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will continue to provide quality Pre-K education and make greater strides in building community partnerships. In addition to needing full day services, an indicated need for program improvements within Head Start Birth to Five was Increased Collaboration with Community Partners. Head Start Birth to Five staff will hold community dialogues to explore additional partnerships, and conduct outreach to address the unmet needs of 1.) Full day services, Before and After School Care, 2.) Parenting Education, and 3.) Transportation services, along with any other indicated needs by respondents. These needs will be reflected in the planning and goal setting process of our next 5 year grant cycle.

