

2021
**COMMUNITY HEALTH
NEEDS ASSESSMENT —
KEY INFORMANT FINDINGS**
Haywood County, North Carolina

Sponsored by
WNC Health Network for

WNC **HEALTHY** IMPACT

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INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGY

Online Key Informant Survey

To solicit input from key informants, those individuals who have a broad interest in the health of the community, an Online Key Informant Survey also was implemented as part of this process. A list of recommended participants was provided by WNC Healthy Impact; this list included names and contact information for physicians, public health representatives, other health professionals, social service providers, and a variety of other community leaders and representatives. Potential participants were chosen because of their ability to identify primary concerns of the populations with whom they work, as well as of the community overall.

Key informants were contacted by email, introducing the purpose of the survey and providing a link to take the survey online; reminder emails were sent as needed to increase participation. In all, 20 community stakeholders took part in the Online Key Informant Survey, as outlined below:

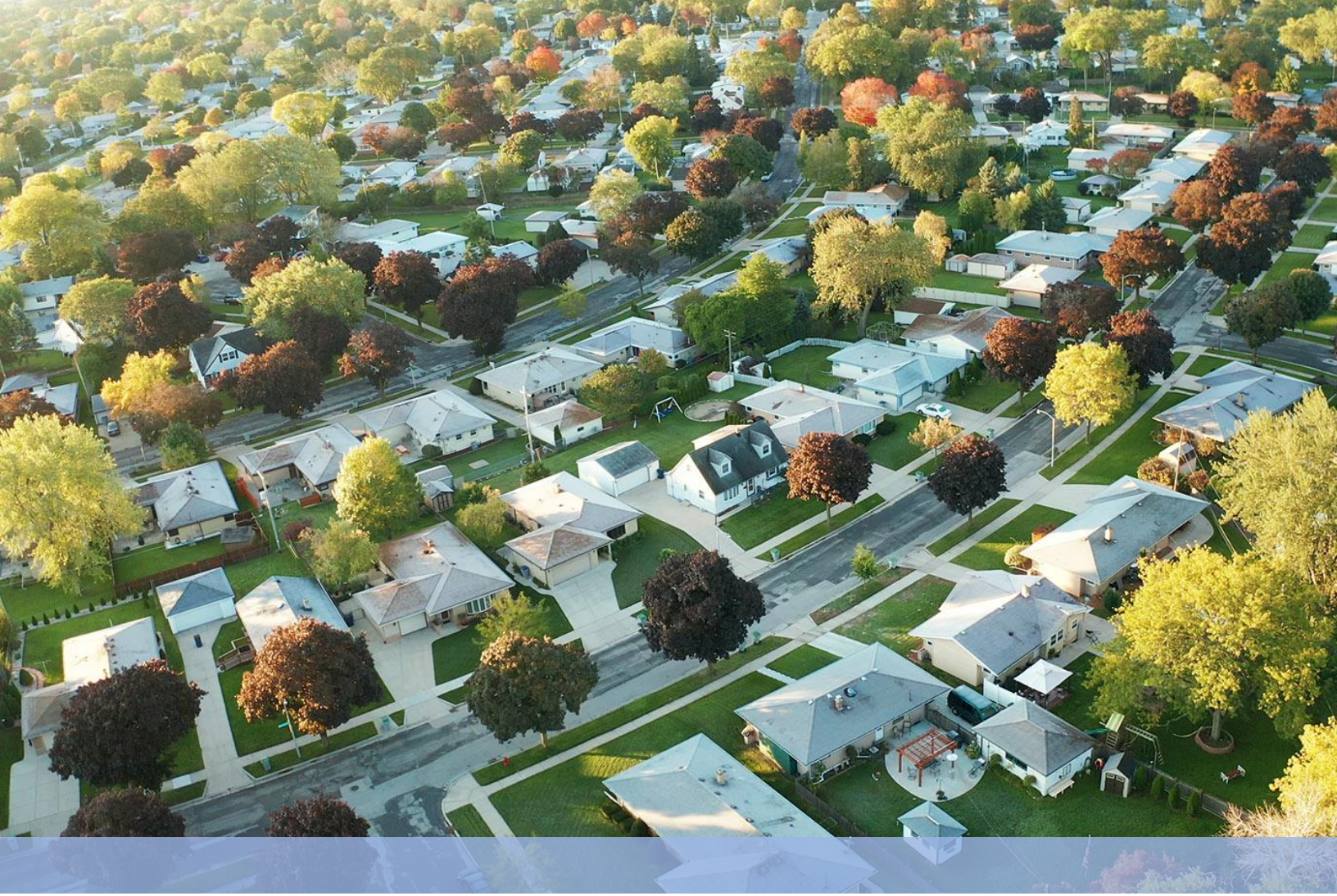
ONLINE KEY INFORMANT SURVEY PARTICIPATION	
KEY INFORMANT TYPE	NUMBER PARTICIPATING
Physicians	0
Public Health Representatives	2
Other Health Providers	0
Social Services Providers	1
Other Community Leaders	17

Key informants who voluntarily named their organization during the survey included representatives from:

- Community Impact North Carolina
- Drugs in Our Midst
- Grace Episcopal Church
- Haywood Community College
- Haywood County Cooperative Extension
- Haywood County Detention Center
- Haywood County Emergency Services
- Haywood County Health and Human Services Agency
- Haywood County HHS
- Haywood County Schools
- Haywood County Sheriff's Office
- Haywood Healthcare Foundation
- Haywood Pathways Center
- Haywood Senior Resource Center
- Mercy Urgent Care
- Mountain Projects, Inc.
- Town of Clyde
- Town of Waynesville Parks and Recreation

In the online survey, key informants were asked to evaluate specific health issues, as well as provide their perceptions about quality of life and social determinants of health in their communities. For many of these, they were asked to evaluate both strengths and opportunities in these areas. Their perceptions, including verbatim comments, are included throughout this report.





QUALITY OF LIFE

PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE

Key Informant Perceptions of Community Resilience

In the Online Key informant Survey, community stakeholders were asked: *“Thinking over the past 12 months, what have you experienced in your community that has helped you feel inspired, confident, or hopeful related to the health and wellbeing of people in your community?”* The following represent their verbatim responses.

Community Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

I have witnessed individuals pulling together and volunteering in grassroots efforts to address the issues around food insecurity, addiction, and homelessness. There is more attention being paid by our town and county on these concerns. Health department updates on COVID-19 infection rates and recommendations related to infection control. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

People coming together to care for and support friends, relatives, neighbors who were in need. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

The teamwork and willingness to partner to help others has been profound, especially as related to food, shelter and COVID vaccinations. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Strength of our community-based services that do not take no for any answer. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

COVID-19 Testing/Vaccination Efforts

The dedication of the county employees in public health, EMS, and throughout the infrastructure that worked long hours to protect and serve the community during the pandemic. Without question they made a difference. They made the vaccination campaign a great success. They prevented many deaths. They accomplished much and at the same time maintained their normal workload. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

All of the efforts made during the pandemic including the mass vaccinations. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Vaccination programs. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

People getting vaccinated. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Health Department Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Reduction of positive COVID results. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community Food Distribution

The community agents working together to meet the basic needs of the community. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community working together to address food insecurity needs. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

The large number of food banks, drive-thru and support offered by local agencies and individuals. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Our community has worked incredibly hard to help residents with food security, as well as to link them with needed resources. This has included drive-through resource fairs, free school meals for all children (regardless of age or enrollment) and providing space for students to access wireless internet. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Action Groups/Collaboratives

The faith-based organizations willingness to help citizens. Also, mental health care for students K-12. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Return to Normalcy

Thinking back to 12-months ago, we were at the height of the pandemic shut-down and just beginning to reopen essential functions within the community. Over the past 12-months, the surge of COVID-19 in our community was challenging, and it was inspiring to see all our community agencies come together to address this issue – safety, testing, vaccination – all important factors in getting us to where we are today. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



Improved Access to Mental Health Resources

More emphasis on Mental Health than ever. Educating the public is a missing link. Lots of real action and moving in this direction. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Access to Healthcare Services

Access to healthcare for the uninsured through the local FQHC. Access to vaccinations for COVID. More providers treating opioid abuse. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

School District Efforts

The way our school system stepped up to feed children year-round; the way our public health and first responders worked together to efficiently administer COVID-19 vaccinations when they became available; the way human service providers and faith-based organizations in our community collaborated to make information and concrete assistance available through drive-through resource fairs & food distributions. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Key Informant Perceptions of a “Healthy Community”

The following represent characteristics that key informants identified (in an open-ended question) when asked what they feel are the most important characteristics or qualities of a “healthy community” (up to three responses allowed).

FIRST MENTION

Access to Care/Services

Access to care. Resources to education. Healthy initiatives. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Proven resources and programs to help those in need find and get help to better their situations. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Focus on prevention. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

An informed community that cares about all their different segments and realizes that total community health is a good investment. A community that realizes that well-funded health programs are a good investment and well bring good dividends. A community that set goals that will make life better in the near future. A community that works together for the common good. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Community Connections/Support

Whole community engagement in community pride. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Youth activities led by community leaders. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Support and compassion for everyone, including the most vulnerable residents. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Strong community supports- people and organizations that recognize concerns and provide resources to address them. A community that focuses on identifying issues and treating them upstream. Rather than fixing concerns after they occur, let's focus on fixing the problems that create the concerns. Prevention! Include the people who have issues at the table and use them as peers to create true community engagement. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community supports. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Built Environment

Opportunities to exercise. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Opportunities for free physical activity. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Health & Wellness of Residents

Mental health assistance. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Employment & Opportunity

The prevalence of well-paying careers in a variety of sectors. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



Equality

Recognition that all people within the community are fellow human beings (no us vs. them). Willingness to partner to address issues holistically and to the best of our ability. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Government

Local government willingness to work for what is best for citizens. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Safety

Invests in the safety, wellbeing, and fulfilled potential of its children. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

SECOND MENTION

Access to Care/Services

Access to physical and emotional health. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Ability to see a provider when needed – insurance and free/reduced cost clinics, pop-up free clinics including dental/vision clinics. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

Education. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Education about the importance of physical activity. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community Connections/Support

Having a 'no wrong door' approach. If you cannot help someone, you offer a warm handoff and connect them with someone who can help. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Professionalism and expertise. Strong partnerships between organizations, churches, etc. Resources (financial, social, etc.) to solve problems. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Churches joining together to provide leadership and training. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Activities for children. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Health & Wellbeing of Residents

Substance abuse assistance. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Makes the healthy choice the easy choice, whether it involves being physical active, practicing good nutrition, or obtaining high-quality, low-stigma mental/behavioral health care, to name a few. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Access to Affordable Healthy Food

Access to free or low-cost, healthy activities, such as walking trails, community parks, etc. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Being fed. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Affordable housing. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Equality

A community that plans for the wellbeing of all its citizens. Those with the most must care about those with the least. A community that values every person and makes sure that all children has good health and a chance succeed in life. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

THIRD MENTION

Access to Care/Services

Access to healthcare. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Access to health care. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Low cost transportation with evening hour routes. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



Employment & Opportunity

Adequate employment set at a living wage. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

Access to free or low-cost higher education, such as through the community college. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community Connections/Support

People pitch in; individual and organizational strengths are leveraged so everyone plays their own part in promoting the common good. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Built Environment

Clean environment. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Health & Wellbeing of Residents

Having a strong faith-based presence in the community. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Good physical health, good mental health, safe environment, a quality education, and an opportunity to succeed in life would be my five. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Prevention of substance misuse. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Diversity

Includes ethnic groups. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Prevention/Screenings

Prevention services and services available for mental health/substance abuse. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Resilience

Resilience. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Key Informant Perceptions of Social Determinants of Health & Physical Environment

In the Online Key Informant Survey, community stakeholder respondents were asked to identify up to three social determinants of health about which they feel they have personal or professional insight, experience, or knowledge. For each of these, respondents were then asked to identify strengths and challenges for that issue, as well as populations they feel are most impacted.

Accessible & Affordable Healthy Foods

STRENGTHS

Access to Healthy Foods

Availability of produce stands & farmers' markets; public health educators, Extension Service & others offering nutrition classes, meal prep demonstrations, etc.; distribution of food through schools including drop-off to more remote locations throughout the county (last summer only?) - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Farmers markets and local pantries with fresh food. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Local grassroots efforts to provide food pantries, farmer's markets accepting EBT, mountain projects and meals on wheels. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

The amazing network of people who ensure that food is consistently available. During COVID the flexibility and creativity that included food being delivered to homes for those without transportation, strong partnerships to move food to reduce waste. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community Partners

Manna Food Bank has many food disbursements sites in the county. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

We have a food resource group supported by Haywood County Health and Human Services. The faith community and community centers offering pantries. Gleaners and outdoor pantries. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

My community has a strong network of resources who provides food to those who may be experiencing food insecurity. - Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

Education offered through NC Cooperative Extension, Haywood Health and Human Services, Mountain Wise, Healthy Haywood Initiative. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Access to Affordable Healthy Food

Not enough support from MANNA our regional food bank. We are the second largest MANNA partner, but the board is Asheville/Buncombe focused. No representation from Haywood on their board. Need more participation from MANNA staff in local events. Need more focus from MANNA on HEALTHY foods - constant complaint about receiving unhealthy items. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Contributing Factors

Foods distributed to those in need often consist mainly of shelf-stable convenience foods. When produce or dairy items are available, they may be close to their expiration and marginally useful. I am aware of situations where someone cannot use food that has offered them because they lack a working refrigerator or other appliance. Even prepared meals can rely heavily on processed foods, fried foods, etc. Transportation barriers may prevent people from accessing healthier options at larger stores, and healthier, less processed foods are often far more expensive. Foods found at convenience stores and "dollar" stores in less populated geographical areas tend to be highly processed, high in sugar & sodium, etc. - Community Leader (Haywood County)



Limited transportation to places where access to these foods is possible. Limited hours of availability of these opportunities. High expense of healthy foods. Limited teaching about healthy food choices to the general public. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Transportation

Transportation. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Transportation to get to some food distribution sites and/or funds to purchase healthy food. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

For those who lack transportation, getting the available food can be a challenge, publicizing when and where food is available. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Income/Poverty

Adequate income. - Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Lifestyle

Willingness to participate, timing of education offerings, childcare, transportation, lack of education, language and culture barriers. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Children

Children. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Children especially. The food made available in the school system is more devoted to convenience than nutrition. Those foods are full of poor-quality calories and nutrient poor. We offer these types of foods to children who might not have food available at home. We are setting them up for poor nutrition and health from the beginning of their lives. Then blame them for being obese and unhealthy. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Low Income

Low income, working-class and historically marginalized communities. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Low income families with children. - Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Older adults on fixed incomes and families with low income jobs or multiple jobs. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Older Adults

Older adults and families living in extreme poverty situations. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

All Populations

Half the population? Meaning ALL the have-nots -- from elderly on fixed incomes, to children whose family household income is less than \$20,000 a year, to the forgotten working poor and working middle class who live paycheck to paycheck. This is a large swath of people who share a "class" designation despite differences in gender, age, race and ethnicity. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Children and Older Adults

Elderly and families. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Adverse Childhood Experiences/Childhood Trauma

STRENGTHS

Community Partners

Willingness to put experts in school systems. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

Becoming more trauma informed and willingness to seek help from trauma experts. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Local community groups. - Community Leader (Haywood County)



A coordinated and comprehensive county effort needs to be planned and implemented that identified ACES early in childhood and develops a pathway to resiliency for our young people. At the same time resiliency needs to be created in our adult population. This effort will need to include our school, public health, mental health, law enforcement, and the judicial systems. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Before COVID, we were really going forward. Need to get back on board and keep up the momentum. Early childhood adversity is at the top of the need. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Citizens with trauma education. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Affordable Housing

Opportunities for affordable housing, job creation with livable wages, more access to mental and behavioral health care. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Nutrition

The efforts of non-profits and individuals to make food available within distance of the individual's and family's homes and communities. Providing education and access to affordable, healthy, good tasting food is essential for healthy communities. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Access to Care/Services

Lack of access to the needed resource. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Lack of resources to assist those with high ACE's. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Lack of Providers

Using social workers for counseling rather than hiring experts in the trauma field. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Contributing Factors

Poor transportation options, not enough affordable housing, not enough access to mental and behavioral health care. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Affordable Care/Services

Expense, availability, accessibility and overcoming resistance to choosing healthier foods due to family and cultural traditions of foods and meals typically eaten. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Funding

Lack of funding. Seeking expertise from people who aren't experts. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Politics

Politics and funding. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Politics, lack of funding, and lack of community understanding the issue all contribute to developing and implementing an effective prevention and correction program. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Children

Children and young adults. The drug problem in our area is out of control. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Children. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Children and local population. Generational. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Children. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Low Income

Low income, underdeveloped area, trailer parks. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Since the issue is generational, cultural norms have to be changed and the family foundation needs to be altered and redirected. Poverty, mental health and ignorance are the two primary components that need to be addressed. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)



Haywood Generational Citizens

Haywood generational citizens. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Availability of Primary Care Providers, Specialists, Hospitals, or Other Places That Provide Healthcare Services

STRENGTHS

Local Healthcare Facilities

Strong health care network program. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Collaboration

Collaborative efforts from all stakeholders in the community are important. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community Engagement

Community involvement and awareness along with education. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Lack of Providers

Lack of capable health care providers in the community, which are understaffed and not mission-focused. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Funding

Funding and

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Low Income

Low fixed income. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Veterans

Veterans, race and ethnic groups. - Community Leader (Haywood County)

Clean Air & Water

STRENGTHS

Community Partners

Haywood Waterways. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Tobacco Use

Vaping and smoking. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Teens/Young Adults

Teens. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



Community Safety

STRENGTHS

Law Enforcement

Police. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Housing

Feeling like they can be safe in their homes as well as in other places in their communities. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Lack of Law Enforcement

Lack of police and funding. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Legal System

Our court system and the weaknesses of it. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

All Populations

Parents and grandparents. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

All ages. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Education

STRENGTHS

School System

Schools for our children and senior center for our elderly. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Educational needs are supported by strong and supportive educational systems within our community, including the K-12 system and the Community College. The Haywood County School System is critical to the success of our children, for their education and socialization – supporting health and wellness needs, in addition to providing access to enriching learning experiences. Haywood Community College is a valuable resource for Haywood County which provides access to higher education close to home and is dedicated to lifelong learning. In addition, strong collaborative partnerships exist between these organizations for the benefit of the community. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

Well trained public health workers, social service workers, school staff, and mental health staff are crucial in supporting the health and wellbeing of the community. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Community Partners

We are just now moving forward. Uncertain what will be leading. Hopefully churches, educators, and community leaders of all ages. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Organized groups. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Funding

Funding. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Income/Poverty

Money and transportation for the elderly. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



Politics

Politics. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Again, it is politics, finances and lack of community education. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Transportation

Sometimes transportation issues get in the way for students to access on-campus learning opportunities. In this same category, lack of access to high-speed broadband is also a deterrent for those unable to afford, or who live in remote areas that are not services – which is far too high of a percentage for our county. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Children

Children in the most rural areas of our county. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Elderly

Older adults. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Older adults. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Low Income

Lower social economic families that are struggling with finances, health issues, housing, security, moral values. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Single Parent Homes

Single parent families. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Family & Social Support

STRENGTHS

Community Partners

Good programs from DSS and other agencies. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Haywood County Health and Human Services is a strong advocate and supportive agency for the financial and social supports of our community. They provide nearly unlimited resources and referrals for children and families in need in our area. Area churches and non-profits also assist heavily in providing support through the community to help fill-in where needed. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Religious Organizations

Community, religious groups. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Churches. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Contributing Factors

Public health, social health, and mental health are major components that are all essential for the health and well being of the family and the community. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Access to Care/Services

Education through NC Cooperative Extension, Health and Human Services, school system, Head Start, Healthy Haywood Initiative, Food Security network, non-profit church organizations. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Contributing Factors

Separation of social status, income. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



It's challenging to say why, but sometimes pride gets in the way of children and families receiving the social supports they need. Many times, people will forego assistance for fear of appearing weak or helpless. As we know, these supports are in place for a reason – and it is up to our agencies and organizations to help connect with all who are in need, even those who may not want to admit it. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

Lack of education, timing, transportation, childcare, language and culture barriers. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Funding

Funding and politics. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Lack of funding. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Government

Politics, program funding and lack of community, understanding and support all get in the way of good programs that improve the health and wellbeing of the community. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Children

Children. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Children are most impacted by this issue when parents don't seek the help they need, or don't know about the resources available to them. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Children and their parents. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Low Income

Low income. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Poverty is interwoven throughout every community and is the foundation for the childhood traumas that lead to many physical health and mental health problems. Childhood experiences create unhealthy lifestyles. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Single Parent Homes

Single parent families. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Income & Employment

STRENGTHS

Employment

The availability of jobs that provide a living wage and adequate pay. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Resources for job seeking, availability of employment opportunities, public transportation route. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Access to well-paying jobs through a variety of employers and sectors within our community. Access to higher education for job-skills training, both short term training and degrees through Haywood Community College. A solid system of support through the NC Works Career Center and Southwestern Workforce Development Board. A dedicated group of employers who engage in activities through the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce. A strong level of entrepreneurial support offered through the Haywood Community College Small Business Center. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community Resources

Community resources. For example, domestic violence tools. Education and campaigns to teach the community about the long-term effects of diabetes and STD's. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



CHALLENGES

Transportation

- Limited transportation. Large portion of available jobs do not pay enough relative to living expenses, limited childcare options especially for any shifts outside of 8:00 to 5:00 during the week, limited options for those who have a criminal background. – Community Leader (Haywood County)
- Transportation, childcare. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Awareness/Education

- Lack of priority given to education for those who do not seek higher education following high school. For many who enter the workforce without a credential following high-school, the anticipated wages over their lifetime will be limited – adding any level of credential, certification, or degree will greatly enhance wages over their careers. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Affordable Care/Services

- Cost of medical care. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Low Income

- Poor and marginalized. – Community Leader (Haywood County)
- Low income families with children. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Unemployed/Underemployed

- Those who lack stability to utilize the tools to obtain and maintain employment, recently released from incarceration, homeless. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Single Women

- Single women who must work and do not have time to earn a higher credential. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

STRENGTHS

Awareness/Education

- Education and access to care, especially prevention. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Affordable Care/Services

- Cost. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Elderly

- Older seniors. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



Opportunities for Physical Activity

STRENGTHS

Built Environment

Parks and recreation departments. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Education/Awareness

Education, promotion of opportunities. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Built Environment

Lack of greenways and other physical activity outlets in Candler and towards Haywood County. – Community Leader (Buncombe County)

Awareness/Education

Lack of education, priorities out of order, lack of understanding, must focus on food, clothing, shelter and cannot focus on physical activity. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Environmental Contributors

Cold weather. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Children

Children. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Teens/Young Adults

Young adults. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Public Transportation

STRENGTHS

Transportation Options

The fact that we have a low-cost transportation system is great. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

The local transit system offers both fixed route and appointment-based services. The fixed route is especially economical and offers both single-ride and unlimited monthly passes. The transit system is able to transport individuals out of the county for reasons such as medical appointments. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Limited available services. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Transportation Time/Location/Accessibility

Transportation to Asheville appointments and appointments or work later in the evening hours. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

The local transit program is not currently available for evening or weekend transportation. Also, the fixed route does not go into Maggie Valley. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)



POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Low Income

Individuals experiencing poverty. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Unemployed/Underemployed

I would say working age people with low income jobs or multiple jobs. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Safe & Healthy Housing

STRENGTHS

Community Partners

The Salvation Army and similar groups provide rental assistance. Mountain Projects is able to connect people with public housing and the self-help housing program. Vaya Health has the permanent supportive housing voucher program. Habitat for Humanity builds homes in our community. Health and Human Services connects eligible residents with the Crisis Energy Program and the Low Income Energy Assistance Program. The Town of Waynesville and others have committed funds to provide unsheltered residents with emergency housing. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Places like the Towers, The Laurals, and Aviemore offer low income housing for seniors. These are nice options. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

There could be limited access with the Mountain Projects vans. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Housing assistance through organizations like Mountain Projects and Habitat for Humanity. Environmental inspections conducted by the health department. A generally robust local economy. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Local Programs

We need programs funded and supported by financial backing to reduce child maltreatment, domestic violence and improve care of mental health concerns. Through prevention, early recognition and treatment we can impact the current generation and future generations of children and families. This will improve health overall. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Many services are available in Haywood, especially when compared with surrounding counties. Usually, there is some resource that can do something to at least alleviate a symptom (ex: food box availability until next wave of food stamps). There are people willing to help and problem solve even if an immediate solution is not available. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Section eight vouchers. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Housing

Lack of affordable rental units. Many have a Section 8 voucher but can't find a place to use it. Lack of landlord recruitment by Section 8 administrators. Lack of a low barrier shelter. Lack of transitional housing for people leaving homelessness. Lack of inspections/code enforcement for subsidized housing. Too much focus on homeownership. Not enough affordable rental housing (subsidized and unsubsidized). Not enough financial support for case management for people about to experience homelessness and people experiencing homelessness --- why don't we have a paid county case manager that can connect people with resources???? – Community Leader (Haywood County)

There simply is not enough housing that is affordable across the spectrum of income levels, but particularly workforce income levels and below. Housing and the ability to sustain it is a challenge for 1) those with untreated substance abuse and mental health issues at levels for which treatment and support is not available, 2) the elderly and/or disabled who are not able to care for themselves, do not have enough funds/resources to pay for care resources but are not disabled "enough" to qualify for assisted living/nursing home care, 3) single parents with low-wage jobs, especially in the current housing market and 4) lack of wider spread transportation resources which would expand a person or family's housing search area. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



The housing shortage that has affected our nation for several years is exacerbated here by our community's unique selling points: the stunning landscape, recreational opportunities, business environment, etc. The demand for housing by people who come from out-of-area, whether as vacationers, part-time residents or full-time residents, has inflated the price of all available housing. Properties are gobbled up for investment if not for personal use. Young working adults looking to purchase a first home have little to no chance of realizing their dream when the cost of housing has skyrocketed and buyers demand cash-in-hand (because they can). Rental rates are also inflated. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

There is a shortage of housing, especially affordable housing, in our community. Many who are unable to afford housing in nearby Buncombe County choose to reside in Haywood, impacting the amount of available and affordable housing. While excellent programs exist to help with housing expenses, the wait times can be quite long. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Availability. Not a lot available. I've had a few seniors move out of state because they couldn't find low income housing after months and months of looking. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Access

Availability and affordability. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Contributing Factors

A sense of despair that things can change, limited resources at recognizing threats to children and families, limited supports to assist families. Our systems are too segmented and there is limited time for those at highest likelihood of recognizing and treating concerns to do their best. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Low Income

Lower income families and children. – Social Services Provider (Haywood County)

Low income and working class people. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Elderly

Older adults and families with low income or multiple jobs. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Homeless

Individuals experiencing homelessness. It takes time to save for deposits and rent, not to mention the daily struggles of this population that can make it difficult to focus on housing. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

Teens/Young Adults

Younger working adults. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Families

Families. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Uninsured/Underinsured

STRENGTHS

Access to Care for Uninsured/Underinsured

People that don't have insurance feel they cannot go to the doctor or get the help they need. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

Community Partners

Open enrollment for ACA this year. Free enrollment assistance. – Community Leader (Haywood County)



Medicaid Coverage

Residents are able to apply for Medicaid at the county's Health and Human Services Agency. Agencies such as the HHSA and Blue Ridge Health are able to serve people with little-to-no insurance. There are services specifically for individuals who receive Medicaid. Senior adults are able to apply for the Senior Health Insurance Information Program and receive counseling about healthcare options and be connected with prescription assistance. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

CHALLENGES

Insurance Issues

Medicaid needs to be expanded. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

There are many people who cannot afford private insurance, but make too much to qualify for Medicaid. Since Medicaid was not expanded in North Carolina, many people have been left without coverage. Due to COVID, some lost their job-based coverage. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

COVID-19

Due to Covid lack of in-person enrollment assistance. Lack of enrollment events. Medicaid Gap in NC. Family glitch in NC. – Community Leader (Haywood County)

POPULATIONS IMPACTED

Working Class

The 'working poor.' Many have regular income, but a job may not provide coverage and they make too much to qualify for Medicaid. – Public Health Representative (Haywood County)

People making too much for Medicaid but not enough for ACA, Medicaid Gap. – Community Leader (Haywood County)





HEALTH ISSUES

KEY INFORMANT RATINGS OF HEALTH ISSUES

Key informants taking part in the Online Key Informant Survey were asked to rate each of 14 health issues; the following chart illustrates those most often identified as “major problems” in their own communities.

