

# Listening to Families

## Client Opinion of Needs

Below are the top eight needs of families, as identified by clients themselves. The percentages are based on the number of families who stated they had social services needs, and identified the particular need from the categories listed in the chart below.



Indiana		WICAA	
Emergency rent, utilities, shelter	57%	Emergency rent, utilities, shelter	51%
Food or nutrition	35%	Health-related or medical	41%
Know more of what's available	30%	Transportation	33%
Health-related or medical	29%	Know more of what's available	32%
Transportation	26%	Food or Nutrition	30%
Other	25%	Education	23%
Housing situation improvement	24%	Employment Services	22%
Education	21%	Housing situation improvement	21%

Source: 2007 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Data



## Economic Impact

Fighting poverty is not just altruistic; it is a key economic development strategy. Based on client survey data, if we could move each of the families served by WICAA to at least 100% of the FPG, it would generate an additional \$26,142,414 per year in income. This money would then be spent in the community, further stimulating the local economy.



## The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For questions or to see the full Community Needs Assessment Report, please contact WICAA:

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For more information about IHEDA please visit [www.in.gov/ihcda/](http://www.in.gov/ihcda/).

# Community Action Agencies



laying the  
**groundwork**  
 for our  
**communities**  
 2008 Community Needs Assessment

Western Indiana  
 Community Action Agency, Inc.

# 2008 Community Needs Assessment

## A Research Report Western Indiana Community Action Agency, Inc. (WICAA)

In order to better serve the low-income residents of the region, it is important that we maintain an up-to-date picture of who they are and what they need. To do this, the Western Indiana Community Action Agency, Inc. (WICAA) board and staff participated in a statewide study which was conducted by the Indiana Community Action Network.

The research was conducted in two parts:

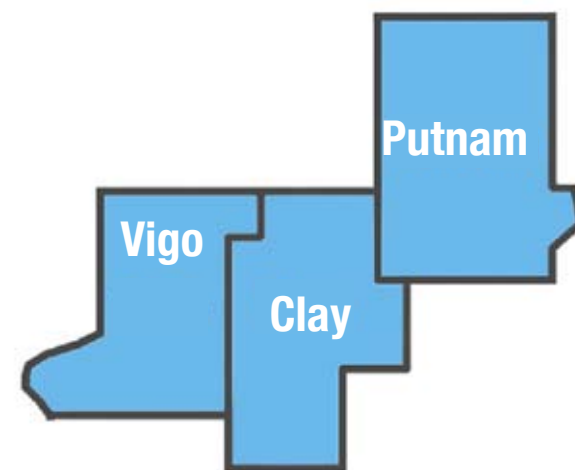
- Background research was conducted using secondary data available from federal, state, and local resources.
- A client survey was designed and administered directly to Hoosiers who use WICAA's services.

**In 2007, WICAA served 17,722 low-income Hoosiers.**

### Of those served...

- 56%** lived in rental housing
- 42%** were children
- 36%** of heads of households were working
- 28%** were single-parent female headed households
- 9%** had two or more years of post-secondary education
- 9%** were African-American
- 6%** were 70 years old or older
- 6%** were Hispanic/Latino

### WICAA Service Area Indiana's West Central Region



The findings are helpful to the WICAA board and staff who want to better understand WICAA's clients and their needs. WICAA is using the findings to plan new strategies and services designed to help reduce poverty.

WICAA is eager to share its findings with others who wish to serve low-income families in West Central Indiana.

The client survey respondents are a valid and reliable sample of the low-income population. This makes it possible for any community group to factor in these results when considering service for community programs and projects.

## Overcoming Poverty and Income Barriers

### Service Area Poverty

According to U.S. Census Bureau, in 2007, 14% of the WICAA's service area population, or 22,774 people, lived below the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG). These numbers have increased from 11%, or 18,536 people, in 2000. In 2007, the FPG for a family of four was \$20,650 a year.

### Self-Sufficiency Standard

Studies have shown that it actually takes about twice the FPG for a family to actually be economically self-sufficient. According to the 2005 Indiana Self-Sufficiency Standard, a family of four (two adults, one infant, and one preschooler) in Clay County would need to make \$2,754 monthly or \$33,049 annually to reach economic self-sufficiency. For this same family type in the remainder of WICAA's service area, it would take the following for this family to meet economic self-sufficiency:

**Putnam County**  
\$2,980 monthly or \$35,755 annually  
**Vigo County**  
\$2,922 monthly or \$35,063 annually

Thirty-one percent, or 48,829, of the WICAA's service area population lived below 200% FPG in 2007.

	2007 Poverty Rate	# All Persons & Ages in Poverty, 2007	2000 Poverty Rate	# All Persons & Ages in Poverty, 2000
<b>Clay</b>	11%	2,835	9%	2,265
<b>Putnam</b>	12%	3,692	8%	2,516
<b>Vigo</b>	17%	16,247	14%	13,755
<b>Indiana</b>	12%	755,245	10%	559,484

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Children in Poverty

In 2007, Indiana's child poverty rate was 17%. All counties served by WICAA, with the exception of Vigo County, were below the statewide average. The child poverty rates for the counties served by WICAA are as follows:

Clay County	16%
Putnam County	13%
Vigo County	23%

It is estimated that 7,210 children (under the age of 18) in the WICAA service area were living in poverty in 2007.

### Working Poor

Fifty-six percent of client survey households with adults under 65 years old had at least one adult working, compared to 48% for the state as a whole.

### Single-Parent Female Headed Households in Poverty

Fifty-seven percent of female client survey respondents under 40 years old, who had incomes below 100% of FPG, were single-parents.

## Employment and Education

### Unemployment Rates

In 2007, the unemployment rate in the WICAA service area was 5%, making it the same as the statewide unemployment rate of 5%. However, this is an increase of 1% from 2000 for this service area.

Unemployment Rates		
Counties	2007	2000
<b>Clay</b>	6%	4%
<b>Putnam</b>	5%	3%
<b>Vigo</b>	5%	4%
<b>Indiana</b>	5%	3%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Education Level and Income

Post-secondary education is becoming increasingly important to the earning potential of families. For client survey respondents 25 years old and older, without any post-secondary education, the average monthly income was \$996. Client respondents, 25 years old and older, with a two-year post-secondary degree, had an average monthly income of \$2,120.

### Full Time vs Part Time Employment

A key indicator of yearly household income is number of hours worked (increased hours worked having a far greater impact on overall income than an increase in hourly wage). Of those client survey respondents who were employed, over half (54%) worked less than 36 hours per week. When accounting for spouses, 46% worked less than 36 hours per work. These figures were lower than the statewide averages, which were 63% and 55% respectively.

## Other Barriers

### Renting vs Homeownership

In 2007, 50 percent of WICAA client survey respondents lived in rental units compared to 28 percent of Indiana residents who lived in rental units statewide. Whereas 42 percent of WICAA client survey respondents owned their home. This is compared to a statewide homeownership rate of 72 percent in 2007.

### Homelessness

Four percent of client survey respondents have been homeless in the last 12 months. When projecting that out to the entire WICAA service area population, it means 247 families have been homeless in the last 12 months.

### Transportation

Twenty-six percent of WICAA client survey respondents did not have a car in working order. Of those who do not have a car, 74% consider this to be a barrier or problem, and 45% feel they could acquire better employment if they had a car in working order.

### Child Support

For single-parent families, child support is a crucial income source to help these families meet their basic needs. Thirty-four percent of client survey respondents were eligible to receive child support, but only one-third of those families (34%) actually received their support regularly over the last year.

### Health Insurance

Fifty-eight percent of client survey respondents who were employed, did not have private health insurance, indicating that the majority work in jobs with little to no health insurance benefits. Twenty percent of survey respondents stated that neither they as individuals nor their family had private or public health insurance.