

AppCAA

APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY ACTION
& DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, INC.

2022 Community Needs Assessment

Updated March 2022

175 Military Drive
Gate City, VA 24251

(276) 452-2441 (phone)

(276) 452-2472 (fax)

www.appcaa.org

Author: Michael Griffin, Agency Planner

Executive Summary

Background

This update to our Community Needs Assessment was conducted February and March of 2022 by Appalachian Community Action and Development Agency, Inc. This assessment was completed to obtain data about the needs of the communities that we serve and compare them to the results that were received during the 20-21 fiscal year. The results will help our agency to: make more concise decisions about possible programs to assist the community in the ways that they feel pose the biggest issues; assess changes, or lack thereof, in our service communities and identify ways to improve in these categories; determine which concerns are most prevalent throughout our service area. The results of this assessment will also be used in the 22-23 Community Action Plan to better judge the gaps that are present in our service area. This assessment also includes data collected from our client satisfaction survey, as well as referrals that have been tracked for this fiscal year.

Survey Findings/Data Analysis

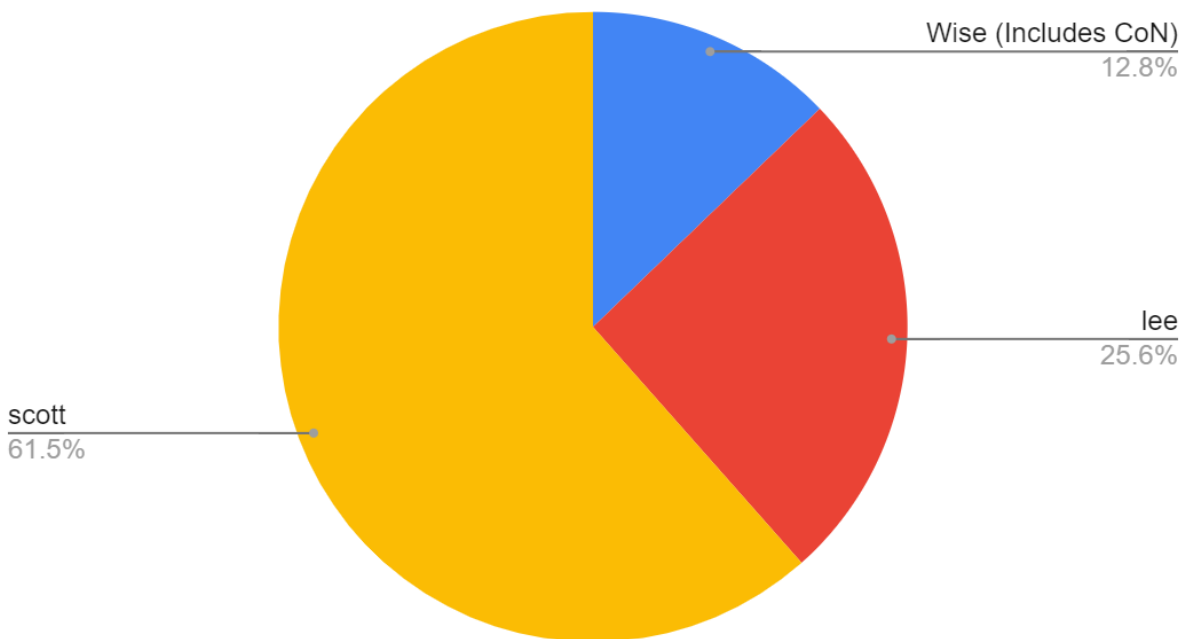
The data collected from the surveys supports the data that was also found in the 20-21 fiscal year, as much of the data found showed similar trends. Included below is a list of the demographic questions asked in the new survey. These questions were multiple choice, aside from question 1, which allowed respondents to input their community or county. We collected this data to better understand how communities as a whole see these problems rather than focusing on individual responses.

- 1) *What community are you a member of? (ie. Nickelsville, Duffield, Big Stone Gap, etc.)*
- 2) *Which age bracket do you fall under?*
- 3) *What is your gender?*
- 4) *What is your housing status?*
- 5) *How many children are living in your household? (under 18)*
- 6) *What is your current employment status?*
- 7) *How much income does your household receive annually?*

These questions allow us to collect more detailed data, such as how the responses differ between households with more income compared to little-to-no income. We have not collected enough information at the time of writing to confidently make statements about these differences, though it appears that income level does not have an effect on the number of issues listed, nor the issues selected. This will be further explained with the questions listed later in the assessment. Below are graphs breaking down the responses for each of the demographic questions listed above.

Question 1:

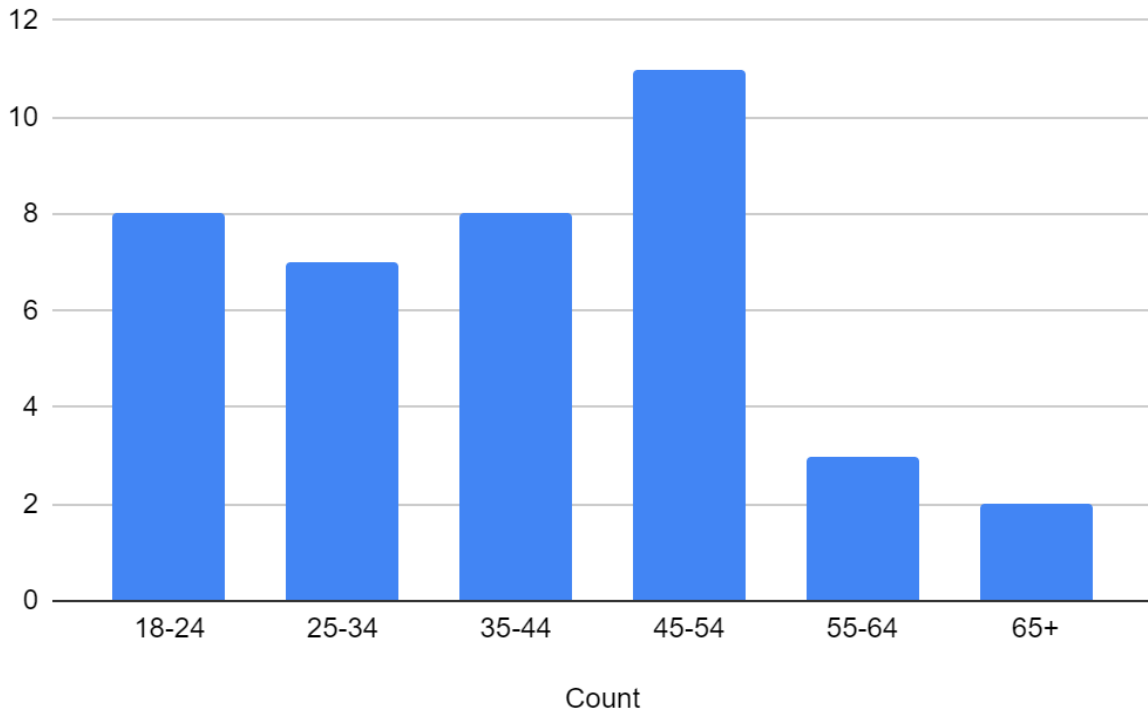
County of Respondent



The results of this question follow trends that are apparent in our agency, as the majority of our clients are from Scott. AppCAA is aware of this imbalance, and staff members have met to discuss ways to focus more on Wise and Lee Counties and the City of Norton.

Question 2:

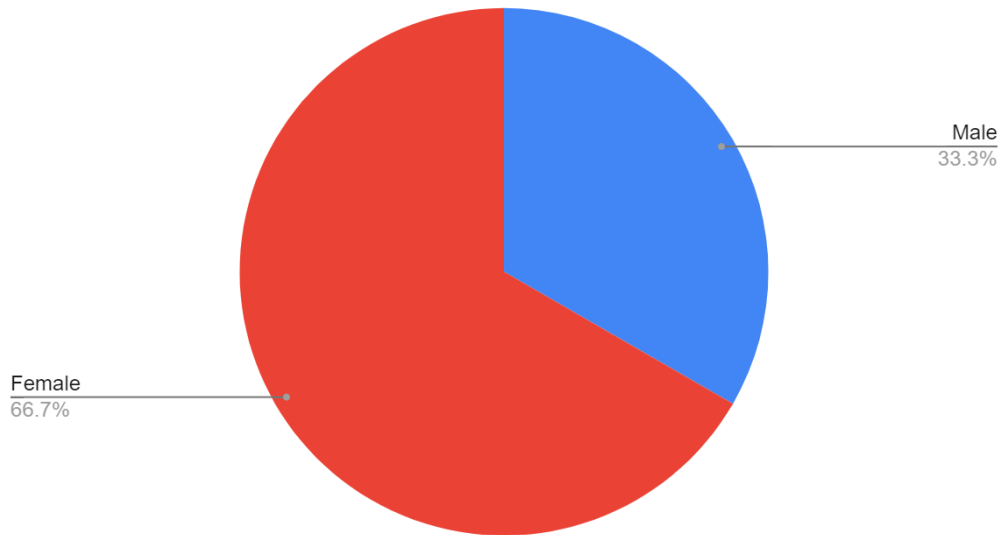
Age of Respondents



This data differs greatly from the CNA that was conducted, though it is likely due to the lack of phone survey. In the 20-21 fiscal year, a phone survey was conducted along with the internet survey. A majority of our elderly clients either do not have access to the internet or are not comfortable using it. This is likely the cause of this discrepancy in our data collection. The survey was shared to AppCAA's facebook page, meaning there was a higher chance of younger clients seeing and responding to it, which would also contribute to the large increase in percentage of 18-24 respondents.

Question 3:

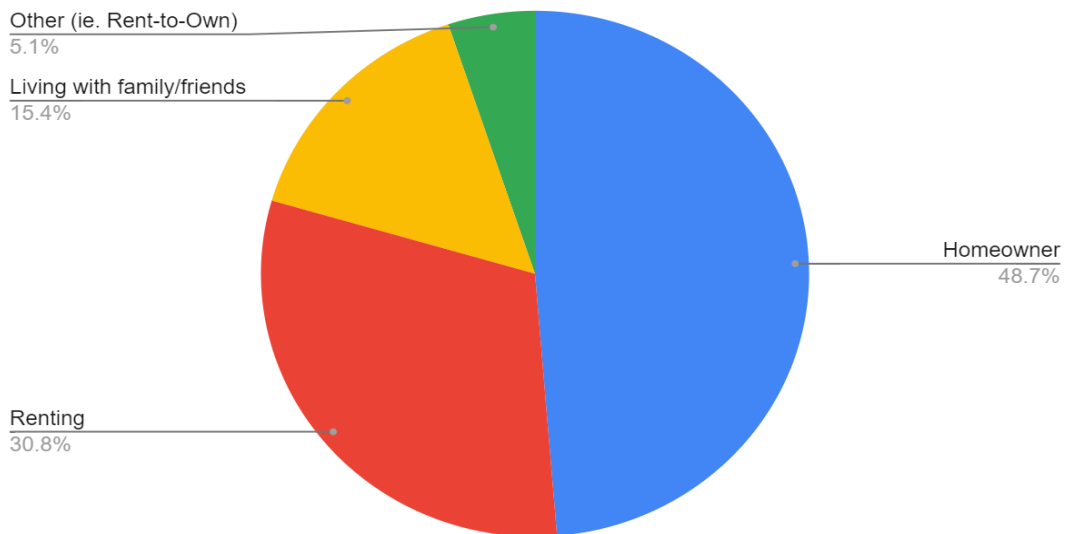
Gender of Respondents



This data follows the trend of the 20-21 CNA, which also found $\frac{2}{3}$ of respondents to be female

Question 4:

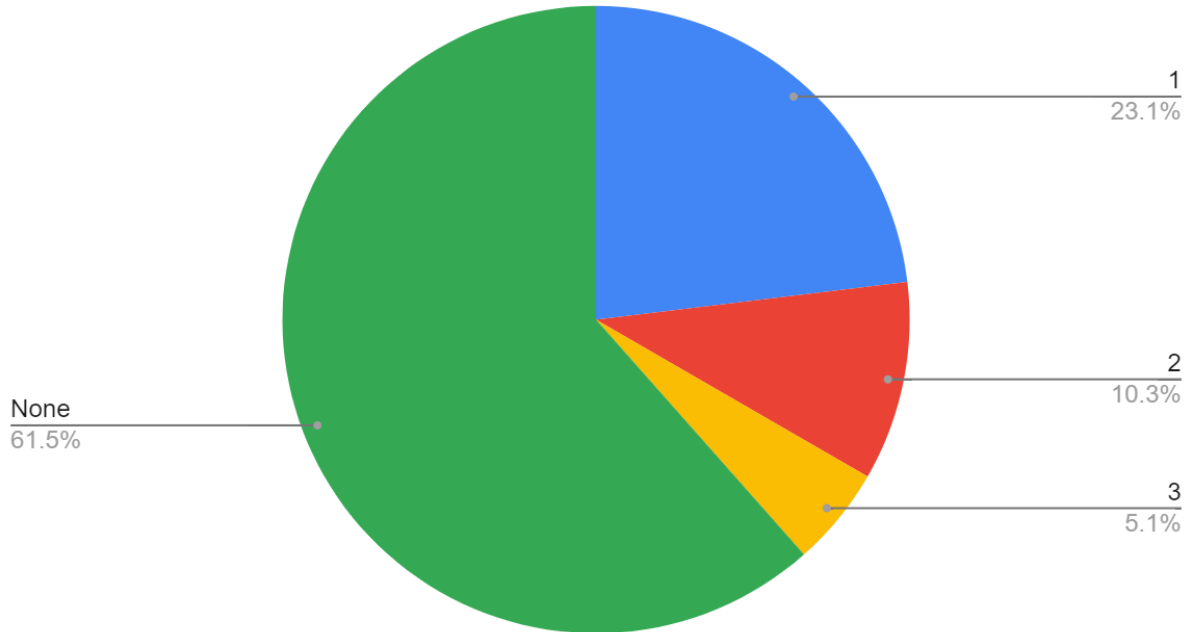
Housing Status of Respondents



This data shows a significant decrease in the number of homeowners compared to the 20-21 CNA. This is likely due to the smaller sample size of respondents.

Question 5:

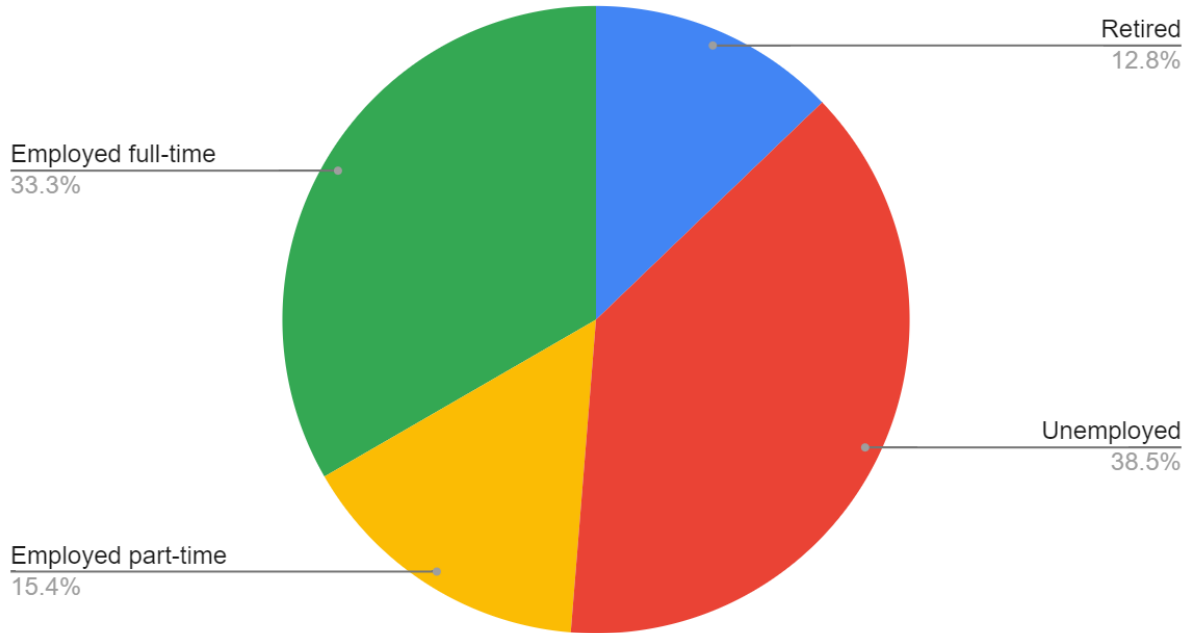
Children in Household Under Age 18



These values are similar to those reported in the 20-21 survey, though we did not receive any respondents that reported having 4 or more children. There is also a slight increase in the amount of “no children” responses. It is likely that this is due to the increase in responses from the 18-24 demographic in comparison to the 20-21 survey’s lack of 18-24 demographic responses.

Question 6:

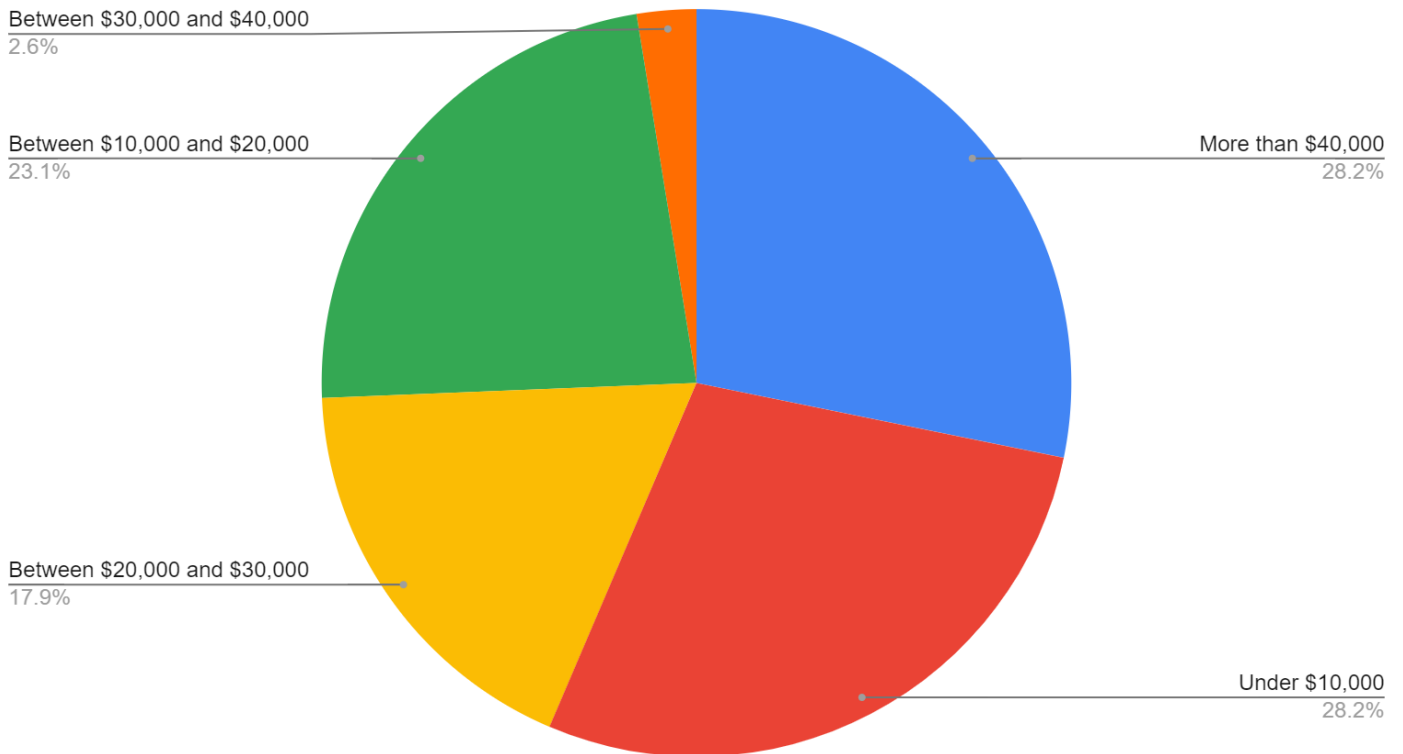
Employment Status of Respondents



This graph changed the most in comparison to our 20-21 CNA. Retired decreased by 14.2%, though this can be attributed to the lower number of elderly responses received in the survey. Part-time employment increased by 13.4%, which is a notable increase from 2% collected in 20-21. This increase is not attributed to the increase in participation from the 18-24 demographic, as 66% were from the 35-44 demographic.

Question 7:

Annual Income of Household



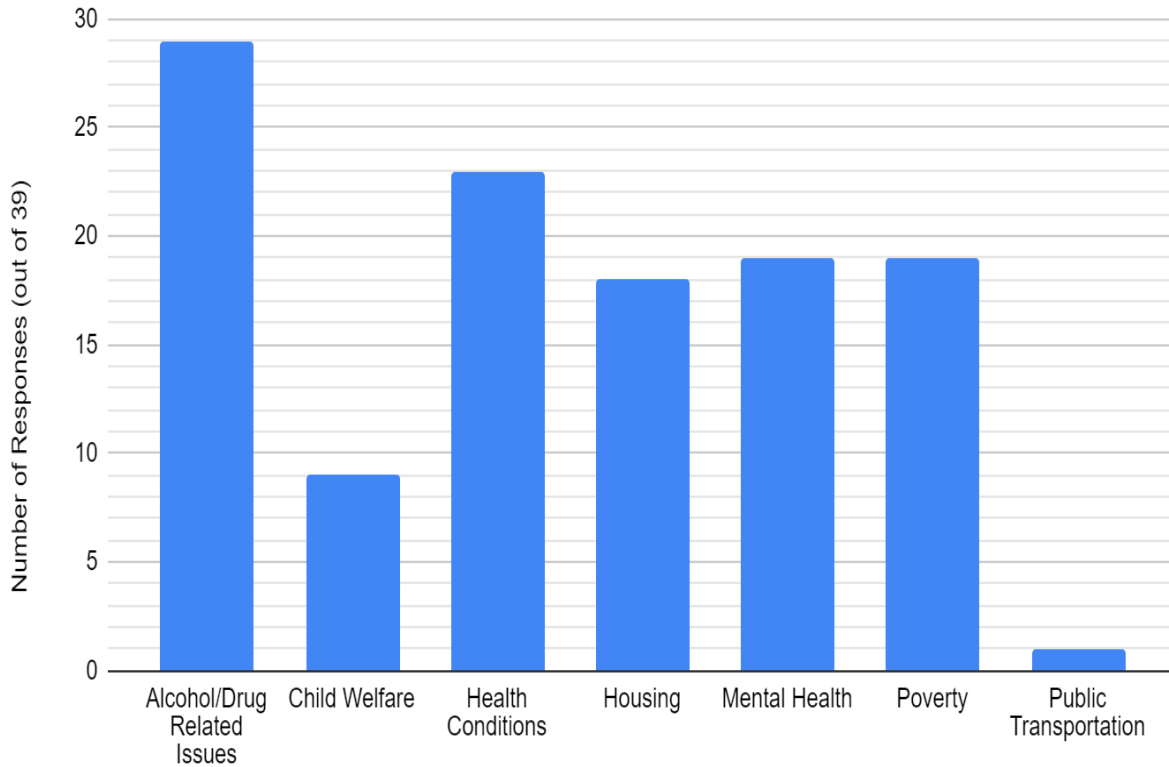
This data shows similar results, but with a small increase in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range and the Under \$10,000 range. This cannot be attributed to the increase in the 18-24 demographic, as only one person falls into each category from this age bracket. The increase in \$20,000 to \$30,000 is spread throughout the age brackets fairly uniformly, with only the 35-44 bracket having more than 1 person. The under \$10,000 category is mostly made up of the 45-54 age bracket, the category with the most respondents, which makes up for just under 50% of responses.

Following these questions were the data-collection questions about the problems in these communities. At the time of writing, our survey had only received 39 responses, which is lower than the number we had hoped to receive. With this being said, it has thus far shown that many of the responses have the same recurring problems in many communities. Below is a list of the questions that were on the survey to help us better understand the problems that the communities of our service area are facing. It should be noted that questions 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14 were formatted as agree or disagree answer choices.

- 8) *What do you consider to be significant problems in your community? (Check all that apply)*
- 9) *Transportation is a problem for community members.*
- 10) *There is adequate childcare in the region.*
- 11) *There are plenty of good employment opportunities in the area.*
- 12) *How do people in your community support themselves when they are unemployed? (Check all that apply)*
- 13) *There is affordable, quality housing in the area.*
- 14) *There is equal opportunity for everyone in the community to become homeowners.*
- 15) *What populations do you feel are being underserved in the entirety of Southwest Virginia?*
- 16) *Are communities in Southwest Virginia poorer than other areas?*
 - a) *If "Yes," please state why? This question is optional and may be left blank if you do not wish to elaborate.*
- 17) *How optimistic are you for the future of our area? (Scale of 1 to 5)*

Question 8:

Significant Problems in Communities

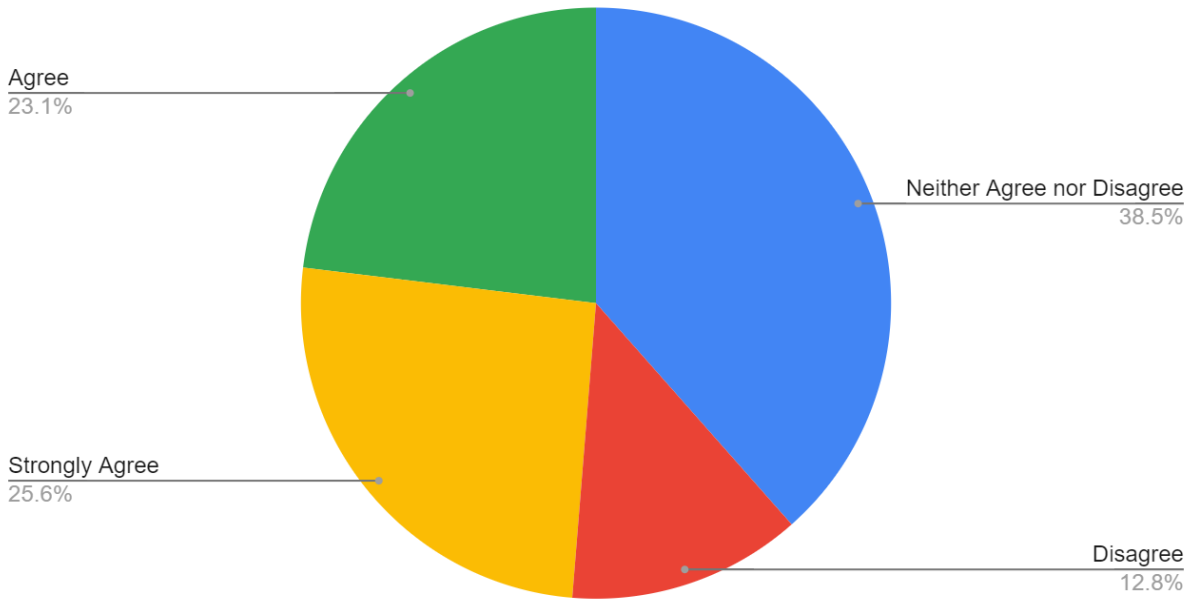


What do you consider to be significant problems in your community

Public Transportation was the only open-ended response that we received on this question. In comparison to the 20-21 survey, every category apart from Health Conditions and Housing has fallen significantly based on these results. Alcohol/Drug Related Issues have fallen from ~82% to 74.36%, Child Welfare has fallen from ~35% to 23.1%, Health Conditions increased substantially from ~44% all the way to 59%, Housing has risen very slightly from ~42% to 46.15%, and Poverty has went from ~70% to just 48.72%. Mental Health is a category that was added, as the AppCAA staff believed it to be a growing issue in our area. This theory was proven to be accurate, as it was also chosen on 48.72% of our responses, the same rate as poverty. AppCAA is aware of this widespread issue and is continuously tracking referrals made to ensure that everyone contacting or employed by our agency receives the help that they need in a timely, efficient manner, no matter what the need may be.

Question 9:

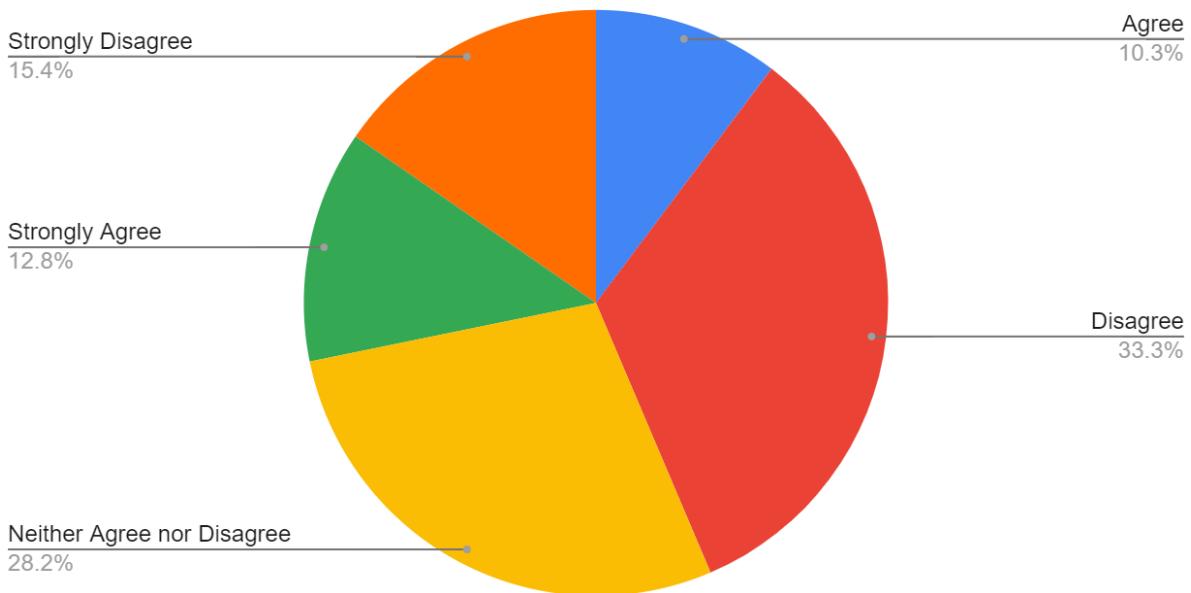
Transportation is a Problem for Community Members



48.7% of respondents agreed that transportation is an issue for community members.

Question 10:

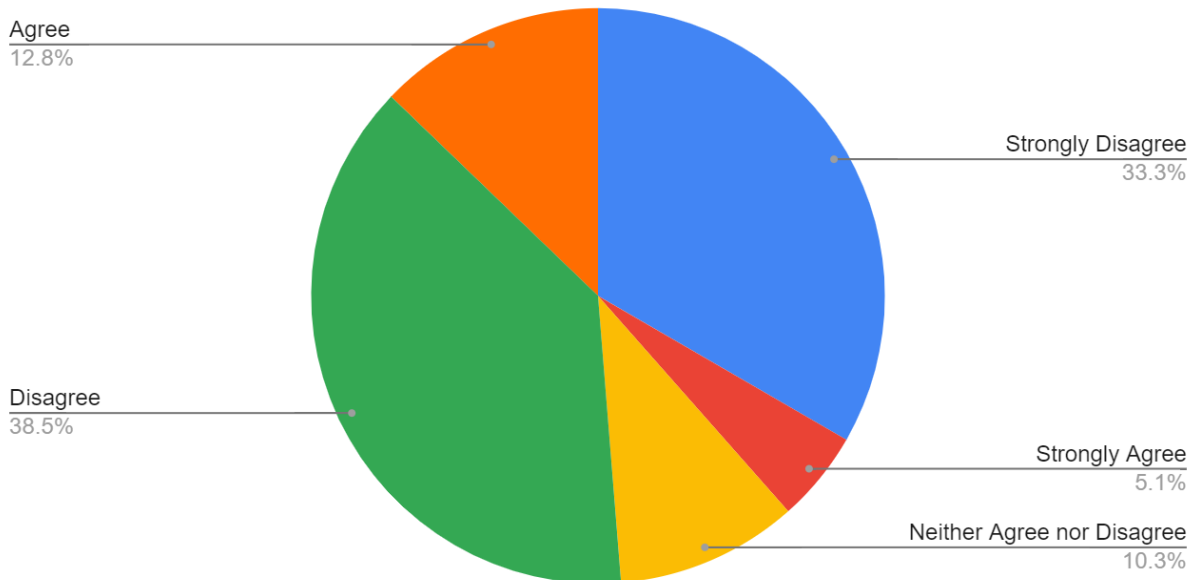
There is Adequate Childcare in the Region



48.7% of responses say there is **not** adequate childcare in the region, while 23.1% say there is.

Question 11:

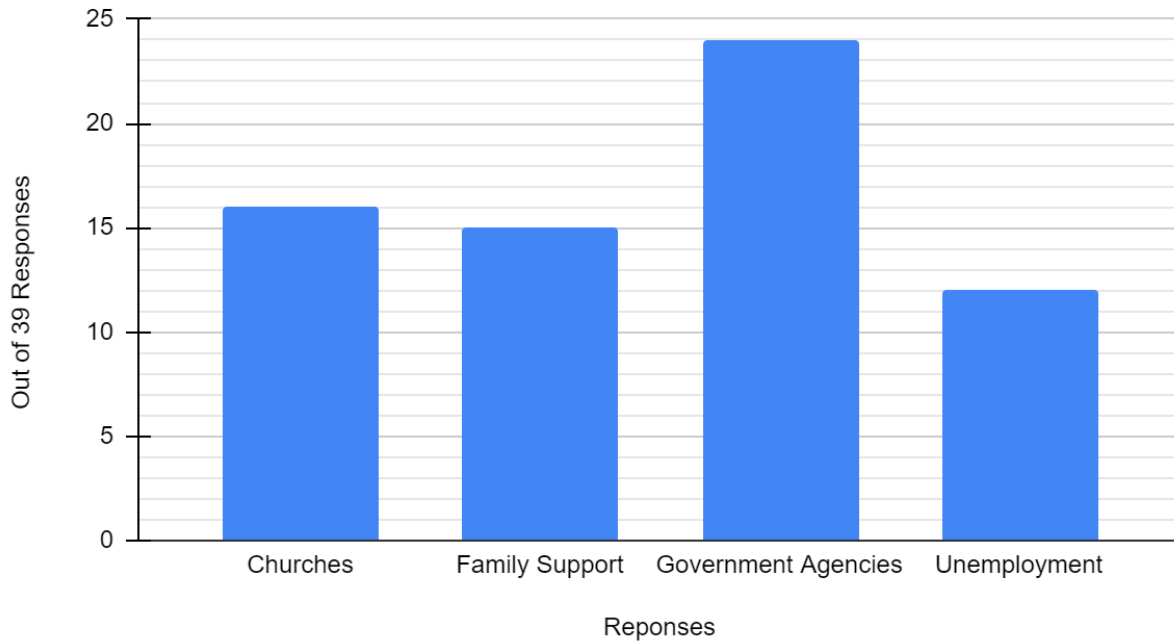
There are plenty of good employment opportunities in the area



This is a topic that has been discussed in the agency prior to conducting this survey, and the general thought was that lack of employment opportunities caused the reduction in population that was recorded from 2010 to 2020 (via US CENSUS). The results from the survey supported the thoughts that were expressed by our agency. 17.9% of responses think that there are good employment opportunities in the area, while 71.8% think that there are not enough good employment opportunities. In addition to the staggering number that selected one of the “disagree” options, 8 of the 14 responses on question 16(a) stated, in a generalized way, that lack of employment opportunities was the primary reason that communities in Southwest Virginia are poorer than other regions of the state.

Question 12:

How do people in your community support themselves when unemployed



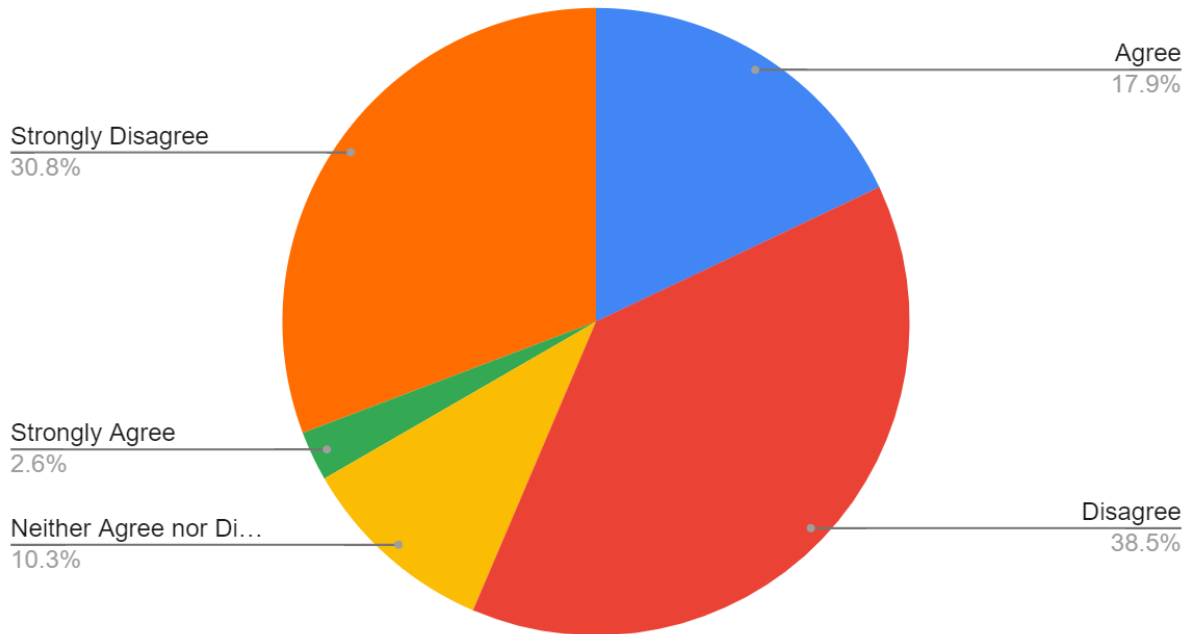
Responses entered by respondents under “other” included:

- “Figure out which bills will go unpaid/paid late, live off \$1 food, and hope for the best”
- “Odd jobs”
- “Selling prescription drugs”
- “Retired”

Each of the responses under “other” had only one response. The data collected from this survey question will help us to make better, more accurate referrals in situations that we are unable to assist clients that have little-to-no income.

Question 13:

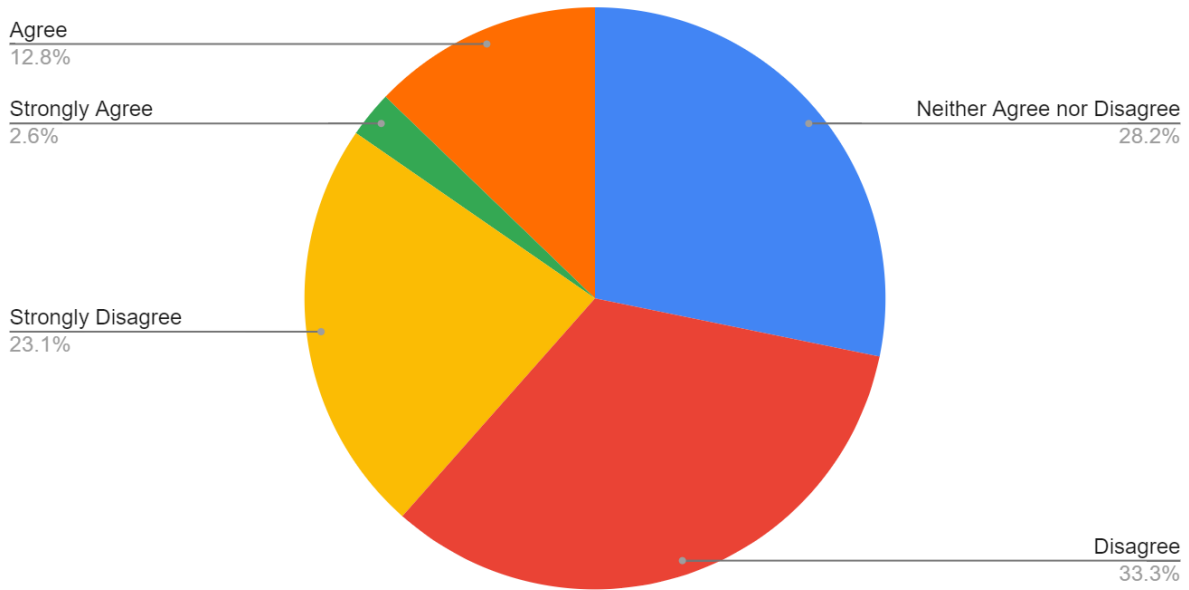
There is affordable, quality housing in the area.



20.5% of respondents stated that they agree that there are affordable, quality options for housing available in the area, while 69.3% disagree with this statement. Our agency has noticed an increase in applicants asking for assistance with rent and mortgage payments, as well as an increase in callers that report being homeless due to not being able to afford their rent and mortgage payments. This fiscal year, our agency has made a total of 206 referrals at the time of writing. Of those 206, 69 were for assistance with a deposit, rent, mortgage payment, or seeking shelter. This accounted for 33.5% of all referrals that were made, with the only category higher being assistance with electric bill payments for clients that did not fit our guidelines.

Question 14:

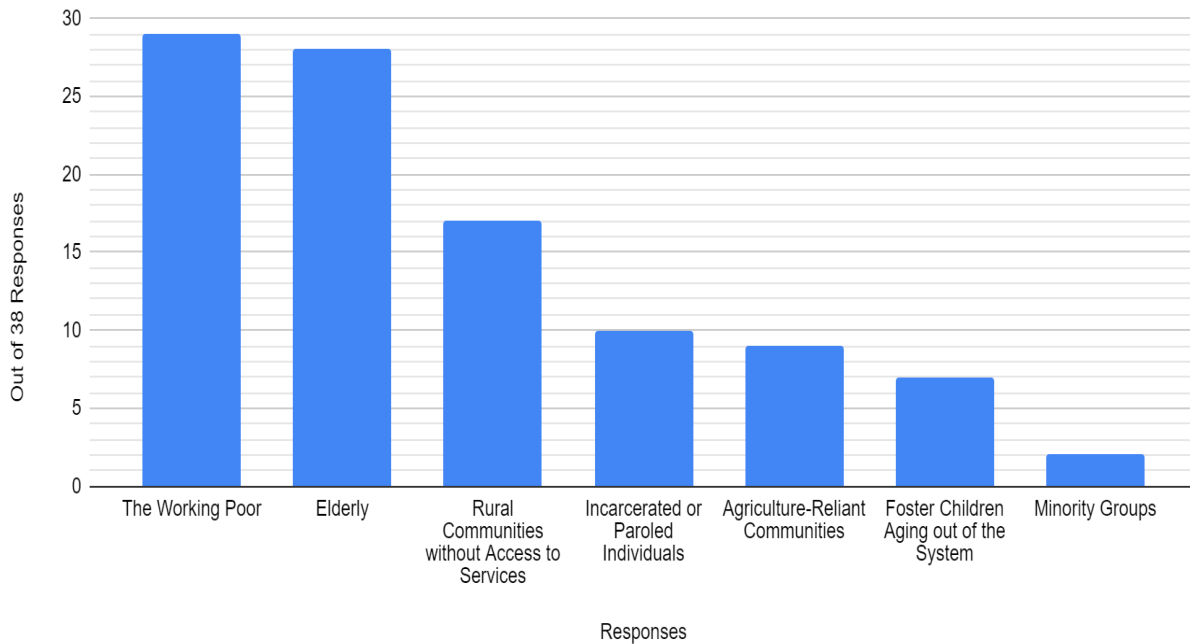
There is equal opportunity for everyone in the community to become homeowners.



56.4% of respondents indicated that they disagree that everyone has an equal chance to become a homeowner, while 15.4% agree that there is equal opportunity.

Question 15:

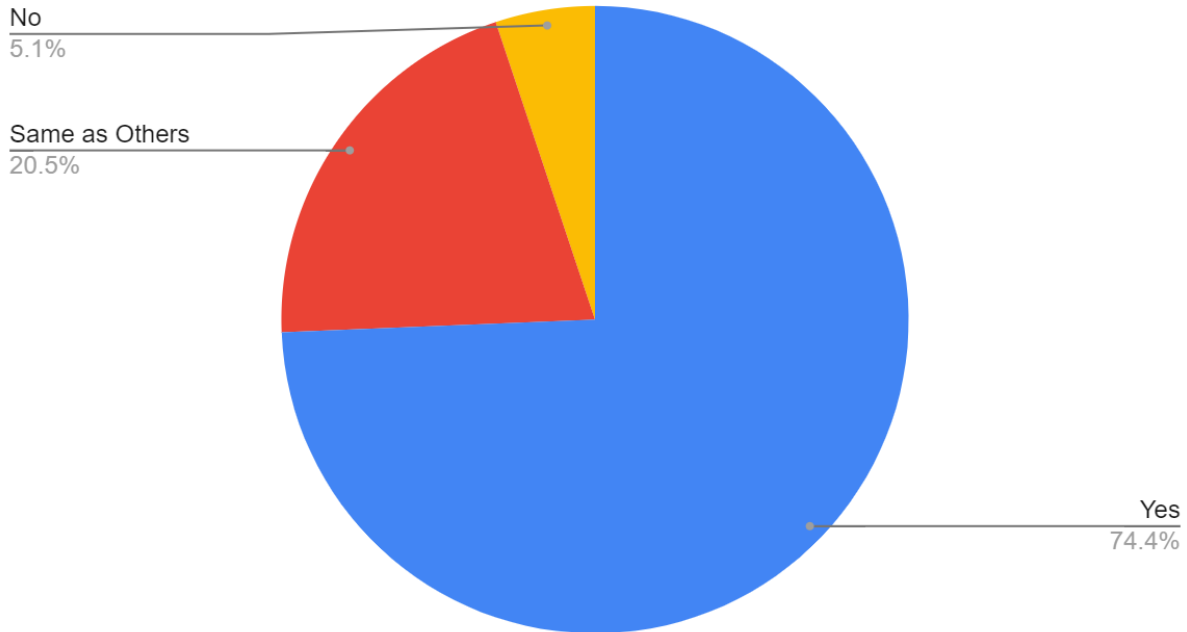
Underserved Communities



These results are only listed out of 38 responses rather than 39 like every other chart. There was an “other” option on this question, and one response had listed “do not have enough knowledge to accurately answer.” With this omitted, the working poor was selected by 76.3% of respondents, and the elderly was right behind it with 73.7%. These are by far the most selected groups, with the next closest being rural communities with 44.7%. Recently incarcerated or paroled individuals were selected by 26.3%, agriculture-reliant communities were selected by 23.7%, foster kids aging out of the system were selected by 18.4%, and minority groups were chosen by 5.2%. AppCAA will use this data, in particular, to help determine what groups to focus our programs around in the coming years.

Question 16:

Are communities in southwest Virginia poorer than other areas



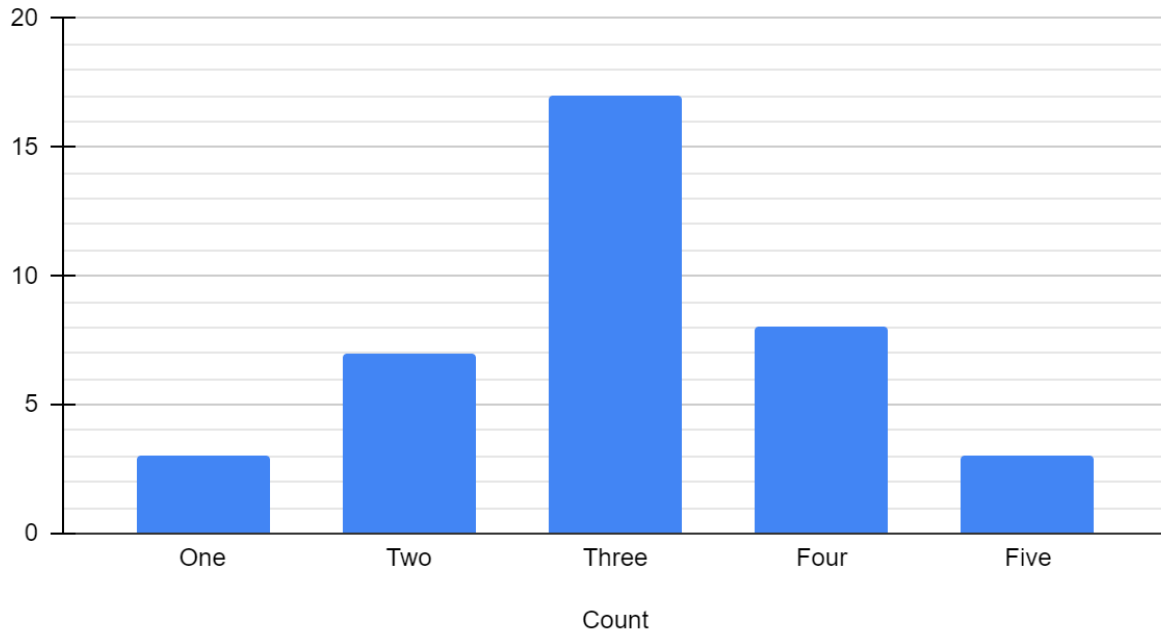
Question 16 (a):

Listed are generalized versions of the short answers that were received as to why southwest Virginia communities are more poor than other regions. Options in quotation marks are copy and pasted directly from the response page:

- Lack of Jobs - 8 out of 14
- Area is forgotten by the people of northern Virginia - 3 out of 14
- Economy of SW Virginia - 2 out of 14
- Lack of childcare - 2 out of 14
- Substance abuse - 1 out of 14
- "Because we receive sufficient amount of funding yet the committee has yet to fix up the towns and help the children whom don't have the proper caring or help the parents who have been struggling due to this pandemic. They don't spend our funds correctly in the the areas that need it most" - 1 out of 14

Question 17:

How optimistic are you for the future of this area



While this question was asked in the 20-21 CNA, this is a smaller sample size, being only about one-third of the participants. This means that the data for this question could quickly change and show a much different ratio.

“Three” was the most picked option in both CNAs, followed by “Four.” However, in the 20-21 CNA, it was much closer, with ~28% choosing “Three” and ~25% choosing “Four.” “Three” has thus far been selected at a much higher rate of 43.6% compared to “Four” being selected only 20.5% of the time. “Four” is not the only choice that dropped in percentages, as options “One” and “Five” fell from ~16% to 7.9%. Answer choice “Two” increased very slightly from ~15% to 18.4%.

Conclusion

The 21-22 CNA provided AppCAA with some very important data and information that can be utilized to better serve the communities in our service area. Many of the responses collected correlate with the results that were expected. AppCAA will use this data that has now been confirmed in order to improve current programs, as well as help create ideas for brand new programs in the future.

In addition to the information that was collected in this update to the CNA, AppCAA would like to mention that the rapid inflation occurring was not taken into account. This was created and uploaded prior to the current world events that have caused fuel prices to skyrocket. We have received calls and applications requesting fuel vouchers. This is something that our agency is looking into in order to determine how a program similar to this could be achieved.