



WE ARE
COMMUNITY ACTION

dicsami.org
906-774-2256

DICKINSON IRON COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

1238 Carpenter Ave. | Iron Mountain, MI | 49801

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025

Accepted by the DICSA Governing Board July 10, 2025

About

Since 1989, the Dickinson Iron Community Services Agency has been a leader in providing opportunities to improve the lives of individuals and families throughout our region.

DICSA is a non-profit Community Action Agency serving primarily Dickinson and Iron Counties. Our mission is to connect people to resources, provide a means to overcome challenges, strengthen self-sufficiency, and work in partnership with our community to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

We are governed by a 9-12 member board made up of representatives from the public (elected officials), private, and low-income sectors of our communities. DICSA is funded by federal, state, and local grants, UPCAP, the United Way of Dickinson County, local senior millage and private foundations.

In 2024, DICSA provided service to 1,925 community members. We operate 13 different programs and employ an average of 58 people, all committed to making a difference.

Introduction

DICSA conducts a formal Community Needs Assessment every 3 years to collect and analyze information regarding the issues impacting our service area. The Community Needs Assessment is used to gain insight into what challenges are faced by members of the community, identify gaps in services and potential unmet needs, and guide programming, collaborations and grant-seeking to meet those needs.

As a Community Action Agency, DICSA is one of 27 in the state of Michigan and one of over 1,000 in the United States. We all adhere to a set of organizational standards set at the federal level to guide us and ensure excellence among the network. There are 58 standards, five of which directly guide the process for conducting and reporting upon a Community Needs Assessment. They are listed below:

Standard 3.1 – The organization conducts a Community Assessment and issues a report every 3 years.

Standard 3.2 – As part of the Community Assessment, the organization collects and includes current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area.

Standard 3.3 – The organization collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area in the Community Assessment.

Standard 3.4 – The Community Assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.

Standard 3.5 – The governing board formally accepts the completed Community Assessment.

Methodology

DICSA staff held internal meetings and discussions along with following the standards put forth by our state partners to assemble the 2025 survey. A 14-question assessment (both online and hard copy) was distributed in the spring of 2025 to the community via emails, website links, QR codes, direct mailings, social media, and partner organizations. 468 responses were collected.

Beyond the surveys, local demographic data was gathered using the Community Action Partnership's Data Hub, which accesses over 30 different federal data systems. Additionally, DICSA relied upon quantitative data collected internally through our client database system, empowOR. Also included in this report is information on DICSA services, customer satisfaction data, overall community health status, and community resources.

This completed report will be distributed electronically to all DICSA contacts, made available on our website, and published/presented in community media and at collaborative gatherings.

Full survey results are included as Appendix A to this report.

2025 Snapshot - Michigan and Local Data

Population

- Total Population of State of Michigan: 10,051,595
- Total Population of Dickinson County: 25,940
- Total Population of Iron County: 11,650
- Percentage Population Over Age 65 in Michigan: 18.16%
- Percentage Population Over Age 65 in Dickinson County: 23.66%
- Percentage Population Over Age 65 in Iron County: 30.93%

Unemployment

- Michigan Unemployment Rate: 5.7%
- Dickinson County Unemployment Rate: 5.8%
- Iron County Unemployment Rate: 9.7%

Income and Poverty

- Michigan Poverty Rate Below 100% FPL: 13.05%
- Dickinson County Poverty Rate Below 100% FPL: 9.79%

- Iron County Poverty Rate Below 100% FPL: 16.94%
- Michigan Median Household Income: \$71,149
- Dickinson County Median Household Income: \$61,882
- Iron County Median Household Income: \$53,614
- US Median Household Income: \$78,538

Data Sources: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2019-23. US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2025-March (unemployment).

Respondent Profile

Gender: Females (65.8%) responded to the community needs assessment in greater numbers than males (34.4%). DICSA's actual client base is more equitably distributed at 58% female and 42% male.

Age: The distribution for the age of respondents indicates 46% at age 65 or older, which is lower than the majority of DICSA's client base at 60% served who are age 65+.

Race/Ethnicity: The race/ethnicity of respondents is representative of Dickinson and Iron Counties. Over 97% responding are White/Caucasian with 1.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.6% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.6% Asian, and 0.4% Black or African American. Nearly 93% of Dickinson and Iron County residents are Non-Hispanic White, 0.8% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.1% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.5% are Asian, and 0.8% are Black or African American. The same is true of DICSA's client base.

Living Situation: Of respondents, 67% own their home, about 23% rent, and nearly 10% report living with someone else. Less than 1% responding are homeless. Those numbers similarly reflect DICSA's client base.

Income: The household income reported by the majority of respondents trended lower than the median income for the reporting area. Of those responding, 36.8% have an annual household income of \$29,999 or less. Just shy of 20% of respondents have income between \$30,000 and \$49,999. Therefore, more than half of the survey respondents earn less than the median income for either county. The median income for Dickinson County is \$61,882, while Iron County reports \$53,614. Since 51% of those completing the survey are retired from the workforce, an annual income based in part on social security alone aligns itself with the relatively low income base of nearly half of the respondents. Of DICSA's client base, 54% report a very low household income at 100% or less of the Federal Poverty Level (\$15,650 annually for a household size of 1; \$32,150 annually for a household of 4). In Dickinson County, 9.79% of the total population is below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. In Iron County, 16.94% of the total population is below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. The average for Michigan is 13.05% of households below 100% FPL.

Residency: 58% of the respondents reside in Dickinson County and 42% in Iron County. DICSA's dual-county programs served 68% Dickinson residents and 32% Iron County residents in fiscal year 2024.

Veteran Status: 90% responding are not veterans, while 10% are veterans. This number is higher than DICSA's client base, which reports that only 3.0% of the individuals served in 2024 are veterans.

Employment Status: Of those responding to the survey, almost 30% reported being employed full-time; 14% part-time; 51% retired; and 2% unemployed. The unemployment rate of respondents is less than that of DICSA's coverage area, which indicates 5.8% in Dickinson County and 9.7% in Iron County. However, of those requesting services from DICSA in 2024 only 1.0% reported being unemployed.

Data sources include the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019-23; DICSA client database empowOR.

Key Findings

The 2025 Community Needs Assessment gathered both qualitative and quantitative data.

Overall, the quantitative data such as poverty rates and median income levels point to the conditions of poverty in our area. Statistics from DICSA's client database indicate the specific demographics of those actively seeking assistance.

Qualitative data collected gave an opportunity for community members to express their viewpoints to the causes of poverty (gaps in services and areas of greatest need).

A summary of qualitative data collected follows.

Community Need: Respondents were presented with a list of 29 situations or typical community assets and asked to rank each one on whether it was *Very Needed, Needed, Rarely Needed, Not Needed, or Don't Know*.

- 84.4% of respondents ranked Meals on Wheels as *Very Needed* or *Needed*
- 80% of respondents ranked Transportation as *Very Needed* or *Needed*
- 78.2% of respondents ranked Affordable Medical Care as *Very Needed* or *Needed*

Tax Preparation Services received the greatest percentage of votes for a service that is *Not Needed* or *Rarely Needed* (27%).

Most Critical Challenge: When asked to choose from a list of 20 typical issues that a community may face, respondents ranked highest the following:

- Lack of Mental Health Services (49.6%)
- Lack of Affordable Housing (37.4%)

- Substance Abuse (34.8%)
- Lack of Transportation (25.2%)
- Lack of Services for the Aging (24.4%)

Most Needed Services: When asked to choose from 20 existing community programs/services, respondents noted that the most needed services are:

- Meals on Wheels (42.9%)
- Mental Health (39.7%)
- Transportation (26.7%)
- Substance Abuse Services (22.2%)
- Housing Assistance (22.2%)

Unmet Needs: The survey asked about needs that the community does not meet/where our community could improve. Respondents' top three out of a list of 20 were:

- Affordable Housing (51.5%)
- Mental Health Services (45.7%)
- Public Transportation (42.9%)

Agency & Community Data

Fiscal Year 2024 DICSA Program Data

Acronym Key Below

Transp	9,700 rides	85,752 miles				
Wx	41 units	64 individuals	18 seniors 60+	6 youth under 18		
MGYSA	28 seniors earned	8,912 hours				
In-Home	38 total clients	4,145.25 total hours				
Cong	21,611 meals	9,485-D (6,272-Norway)	5,854-I		465 ppl	
HDM	90,024 meals	60,432-D	23,291-I	6,301-Baraga	450 ppl	
	111,635 total meals				915 total ppl	
RSVP	183 volunteers	28,406.5 hours	29 stations			

CSFP	14,448 boxes-10 counties	2,790 boxes-D&I		307 ppl-D&I		
TEFAP (Denim Heart Pantry)	617 HH used food pantry (not undup)	1,669 individuals (not undup)				
Family Ties	28 individuals	8,751.5 hours				
Diaper Bank	367 individuals	2,714 diaper cases				
Denim Heart Thrift	108 HH used free shopping (not undup)	16 volunteers	553 volunteer hours	26 Naloxone Boxes		
Water	147 individuals	344 bills paid				

Acronym Key

Transp=Transportation	CSFP=Commodity Supplemental Food Program
Wx=Weatherization	TEFAP=The Emergency Food Assistance Program
MGYSA=Michigan Governor's Youth Service Award	RSVP=Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
Cong=Congregate Meals	HDM=Home Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels)
D=Dickinson County	B=Baraga County
I=Iron County	PPL=People
Undup=Unduplicated	HH=household

Customer satisfaction data is gathered annually (if not more often) from recipients of DICSA services. A snapshot of DICSA's largest program in terms of participants shows that 91% of individuals receiving Meals on Wheels feel that the program increases their social support and 92% are satisfied with the quality of food they receive (2024 survey). Comments received support that data point. Below are a few direct quotes:

- "Everything about Meals on Wheels is excellent. Our driver is wonderful."
- "Thank you so much for all of your help and kindness."
- "I look forward to the meals and the pleasant driver every day."

Negative comments focus on the types of foods served such as a preference for meat raviolis instead of cheese, a request for more soups and salads, or complaints about overcooked meat.

Overall DICSA's services and programs remain steady from year to year. The meal programs, food box programs, weatherization, in-home services, adult day care, and transportation have

all been in operation for 30+ years. Nonetheless, there are times when programs cease or change due to funding or staffing. There are also times when a program is added for those same reasons or to respond to a community need, such as continuing the work of a local thrift store (Denim Heart) versus letting it go out of business completely.

In situations where DICSA does not offer a needed service/program, we provide referrals to other agencies that do have the service or we work to partner so that our community is still covered. For instance, people often stop into our office with a housing need. While DICSA does not directly provide housing assistance, we make sure the individuals are given every available resource to connect with the organizations that can assist. Additionally, DICSA staff will offer our services that can help meet other needs they may have such as food, transportation, and clothing. DICSA staff also participate in community collaborative efforts to create networking opportunities so that all service providers stay current on who is offering what service.

A community health assessment was conducted by the Western UP Health Department in 2021. It assessed all 15 Upper Peninsula Counties and can be accessed at www.wupdhd.org/community-health-needs-assessment/. Data from that survey mirrors some of what our survey gathered in pointing to concerns about drug abuse/treatment and mental health access. A survey conducted in 2023 by Marshfield Medical Center-Dickinson identified the following health priorities: Alcohol & Substance Abuse, Behavioral Health, and Health Equity (accessibility/affordability, chronic disease prevention/management, and tobacco/vaping).

Analysis & Next Steps

The 2025 Community Needs Assessment provides direction toward identifying gaps in our communities as well as areas of strength upon which to build. Responses provide a general reference point when looking at programmatic planning for DICSA.

The 2013, 2016, and 2019 surveys listed public transportation as one of the top three community needs or unmet needs. In 2022 it remained an area of community concern. Now in 2025, public transportation is again within the top three most needed services. The data is clear that DICSA's Transportation Program is desperately needed but not doing enough to meet the demand. As with most such services, funding is the reason that transportation remains limited. DICSA administers the Transportation Program primarily on grant funds provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation. Partnerships with insurance companies and some Dickinson County senior millage dollars have recently helped us expand slightly. Still, funding sources do not cover the total budget including fuel, vehicle maintenance, insurance, wages, facility maintenance, and administrative costs. Because of this recurring gap between income and expenses, the 2025 Community Needs Assessment survey asked Dickinson County

respondents if they would be willing to support a millage or special assessment dedicated to expanding public transportation in the region. All but two of the Dickinson County respondents stated “yes”. While this survey indicates community support for such an effort, it is only a starting point in gathering evidence for officials to consider options.

Ranking high on the list of important needs and services for the community was Meals on Wheels. DICSA provides that service to eligible seniors in both Dickinson and Iron Counties as well as other food assistance through Congregate Meals, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and a food pantry. The results of the Community Needs Assessment reinforce the importance of senior nutrition programs, especially. Funding for the program is split between federal dollars that come through UPCAP (local Area Agency on Aging) and a portion of the Dickinson County Senior Millage. In Iron County, the majority of the support is from UPCAP with invaluable help from an Iron County Meals on Wheels Millage. Revenue streams have been generally flat-funded through the years and thus it is impossible to serve as many seniors as need the program. Fundraisers and private donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations make a difference in providing the necessary aspects of the program that aren’t covered by grants (vehicle purchases/maintenance, facility maintenance, emergency meals).

For the areas of community concern that DICSA does not directly address through programming (e.g. mental health, substance abuse, housing, etc.), our staff is committed to making solid referrals and collaborating with our community partners to ensure accurate knowledge of resources available.

As our mission states, DICSA strives to connect people to resources, provide a means to overcome challenges, strengthen self-sufficiency, and work in partnership with our community to make a difference for others. Our staff and board will continually evaluate the needs of our community in order to build up all who call this area home. This Community Needs Assessment will serve as a guide for DICSA’s strategic planning and agency leadership while we continually work to achieve our mission.

Community Needs Assessment Survey

2025

General

 Survey name	Community Needs Assessment Survey 2025
 Author	
 Survey language	 English

 Survey URL	https://www.survio.com/survey/d/T1V4J5Q9P9S3S9Y6X
 First response	4 March 2025
 Last response	24 April 2025
 Duration	51 days
 Total Responses	468

Survey visits

803

Total visits

468

Total completed

0

Total unfinished

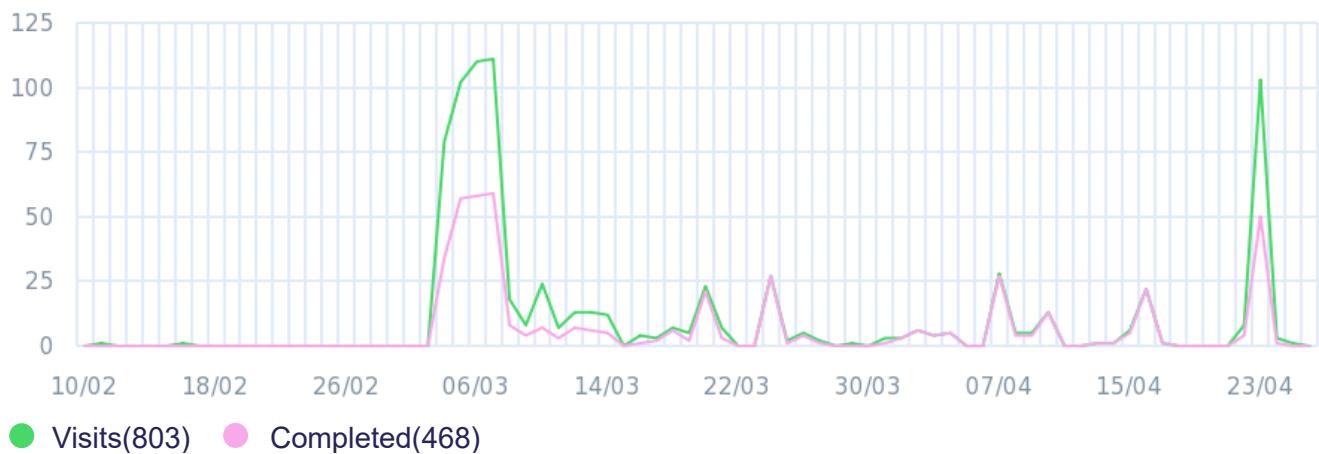
335

Displayed only

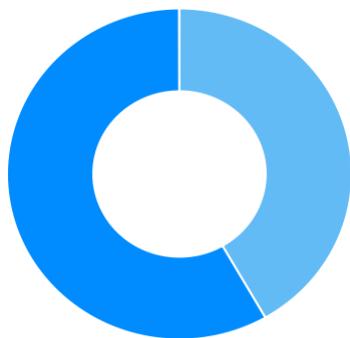
58.3%

Overall completion rate

Visit History 4 March 2025 - 24 April 2025

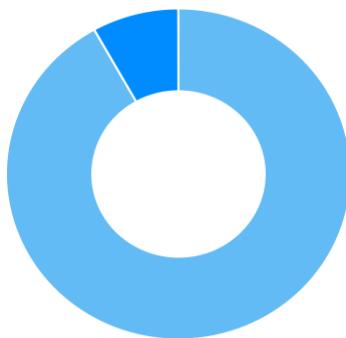


Total Hits



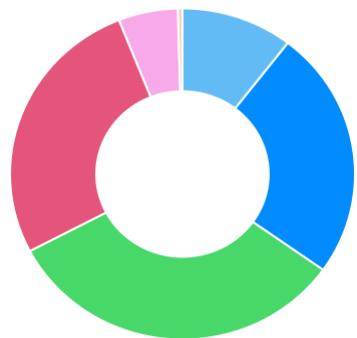
- Displayed only (41.7%)
- Completed (58.3%)
- Unfinished (0.0%)

Visit Sources



- Direct link (91.9%)
- QR code (8.1%)

Average Time of Completion



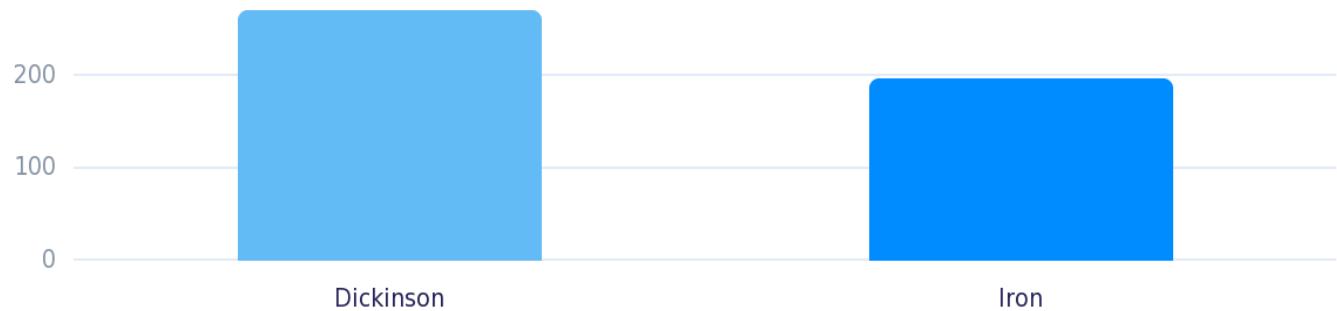
- <1 min. (10.5%)
- 1-2 min. (24.4%)
- 2-5 min. (32.5%)
- 5-10 min. (26.7%)
- 10-30 min. (5.6%)
- >60 min. (0.4%)

1. Are you a resident of Dickinson or Iron County Michigan?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



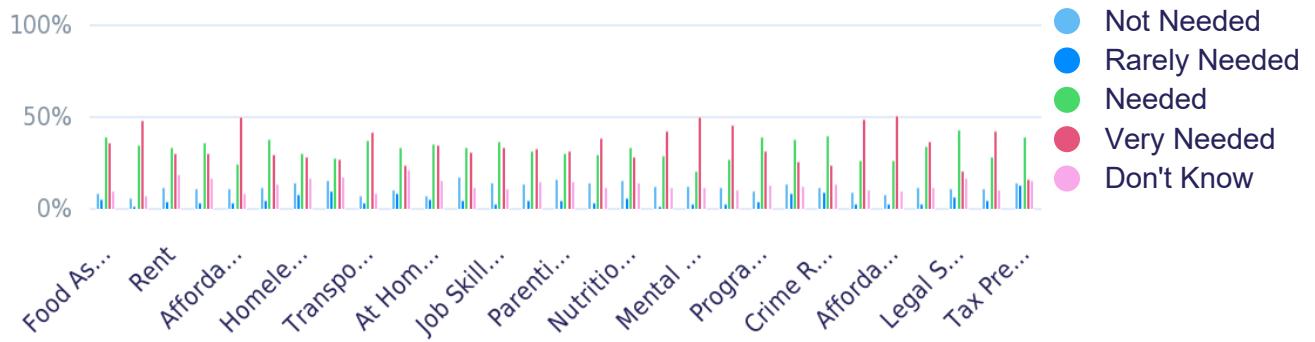
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Dickinson	271	57.9%
Iron	197	42.1%

2. For the following list, please check the box that reflects your opinion on the need for each item in your community (whether or not you personally have needed help).

468x answers

0x unanswered

Matrix of multiple choices



	NOT NEEDED	RARELY NEEDED	NEEDED	VERY NEEDED	DON'T KNOW
Food Assistance (pantry, Feeding America)	41	26	185	171	49
Meals on Wheels	29	8	166	229	36
Rent	56	22	160	143	89
Utility Bills	53	19	170	145	82
Affordable Housing	54	18	117	237	42
Energy Efficiency (Weatherization)	57	23	181	142	66
Homeless Services	69	40	143	136	81
Homeless Shelters	76	48	132	129	83
Transportation	35	17	176	199	43
Adult Day Care	50	42	159	115	103
At Home Personal Care	35	27	167	165	75
Job Opportunities	83	24	158	147	56
Job Skills/Training	68	14	173	158	55
Financial Education	65	23	151	157	73
Parenting Classes	77	23	145	150	73
Child Care	69	19	141	183	57
Nutrition Education	74	30	158	136	70
Counseling Services	61	10	138	202	57
Mental Health Services	59	15	100	237	57
Programs and Activities for Youth	58	15	129	215	52
Programs and Activities for Seniors	47	22	185	151	63

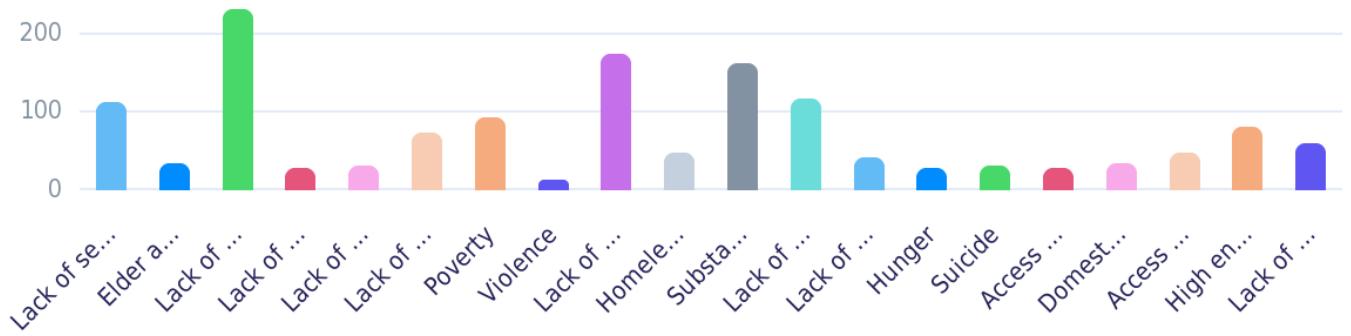
Public Parks	65	42	179	122	60
Crime Reduction	57	44	190	113	66
Affordable Health Insurance	44	15	126	231	52
Affordable Medical Care	39	14	126	240	49
Services for Veterans	57	16	163	174	58
Legal Services	53	32	203	100	81
Substance Abuse Services	55	23	136	202	52
Tax Preparation Services	68	62	185	79	76

3. Which of the following are the three most critical CHALLENGES we face in our community?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Lack of services for the aging	114	24.4%
Elder abuse	35	7.5%
Lack of mental health services	232	49.6%
Lack of veteran services	28	6.0%
Lack of adult day care	31	6.6%
Lack of employment opportunities	74	15.8%
Poverty	94	20.1%
Violence	13	2.8%
Lack of affordable housing	175	37.4%
Homelessness	48	10.3%
Substance abuse	163	34.8%
Lack of transportation	118	25.2%
Lack of child care	42	9.0%
Hunger	28	6.0%
Suicide	32	6.8%
Access to technology	28	6.0%
Domestic violence	35	7.5%
Access to fresh food	48	10.3%
High energy costs	82	17.5%
Lack of senior housing	60	12.8%

4. Which of the following are the three most needed SERVICES in our community?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



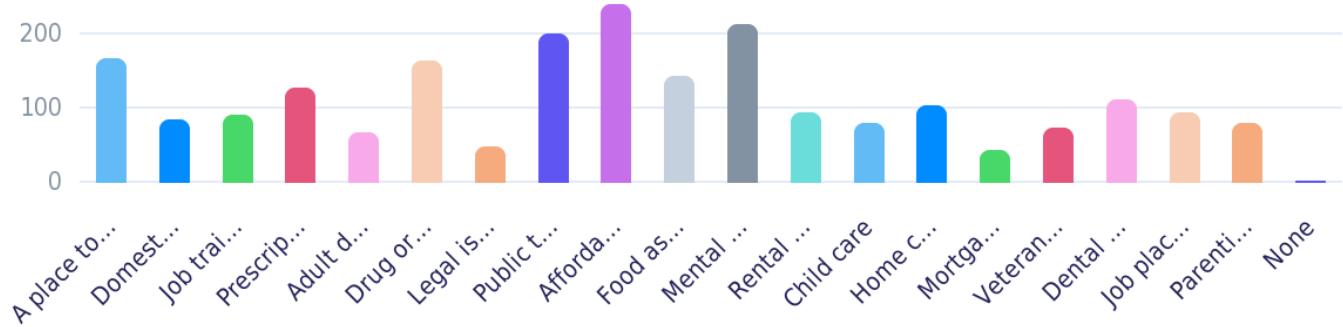
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Meals on Wheels	201	42.9%
Adult Day Care (Family Ties Adult Center)	68	14.5%
Rental assistance	79	16.9%
Veteran assistance	46	9.8%
Tax preparation services	17	3.6%
Boxes of food/food pantries	101	21.6%
Home Weatherization	70	15.0%
Utility bill assistance	71	15.2%
Volunteer programs (RSVP or youth volunteer programs)	21	4.5%
Mental health services	186	39.7%
Congregate meals (meals at a senior center)	28	6.0%
Housing assistance	104	22.2%
In-home services	80	17.1%
Head Start	23	4.9%
Thrift stores	33	7.1%
Transportation	125	26.7%
Homeless prevention	46	9.8%
Personal care services	22	4.7%
Substance abuse services	104	22.2%
Diapers	3	0.6%

5. Of the following, where do you think our community needs to improve?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
A place to live	169	36.1%
Domestic violence help	86	18.4%
Job training	92	19.7%
Prescription drug assistance	129	27.6%
Adult day care	69	14.7%
Drug or alcohol services	165	35.3%
Legal issues	50	10.7%
Public transportation	201	42.9%
Affordable housing	241	51.5%
Food assistance	144	30.8%
Mental health services	214	45.7%
Rental assistance	95	20.3%
Child care	81	17.3%
Home care services	104	22.2%
Mortgage assistance	45	9.6%
Veteran assistance	75	16.0%
Dental care	112	23.9%
Job placement/better jobs	95	20.3%
Parenting classes	81	17.3%
None	3	0.6%

6. Would you support additional funding (millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Dickinson County?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



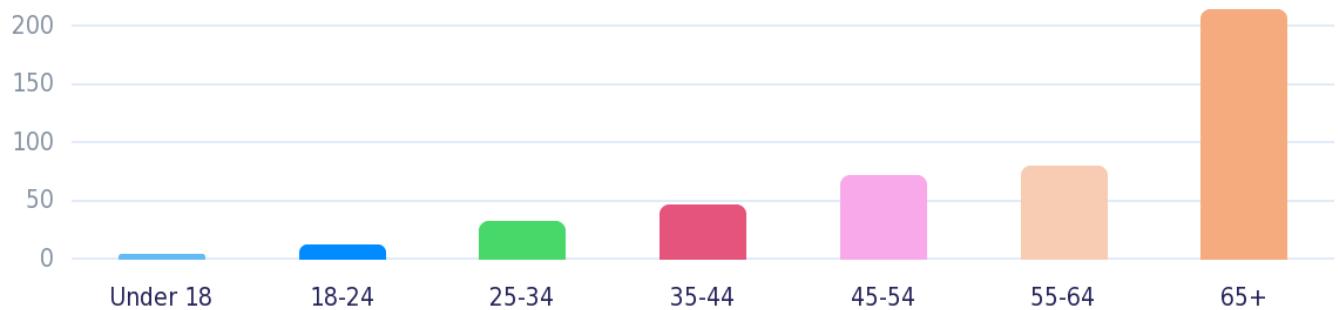
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Yes	269	57.5%
No	72	15.4%
Not Sure	127	27.1%

7. What is your age?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



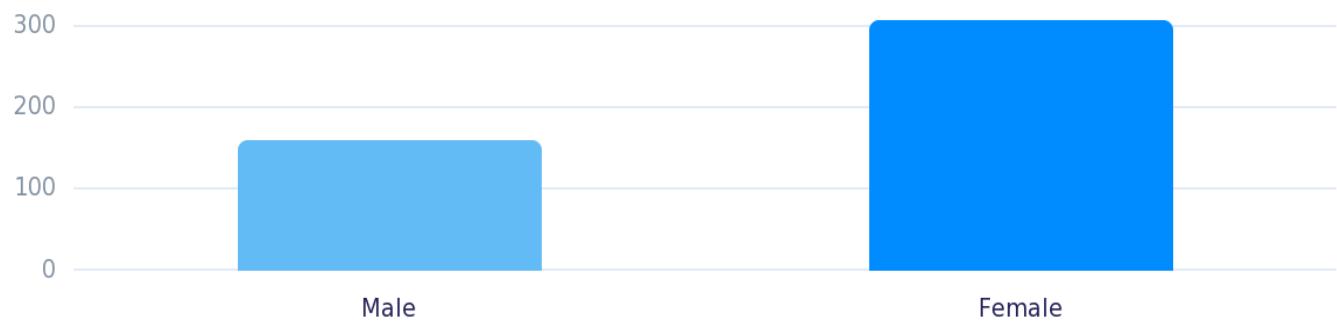
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Under 18	5	1.1%
18-24	13	2.8%
25-34	33	7.1%
35-44	48	10.3%
45-54	73	15.6%
55-64	81	17.3%
65+	215	45.9%

8. What is your sex?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



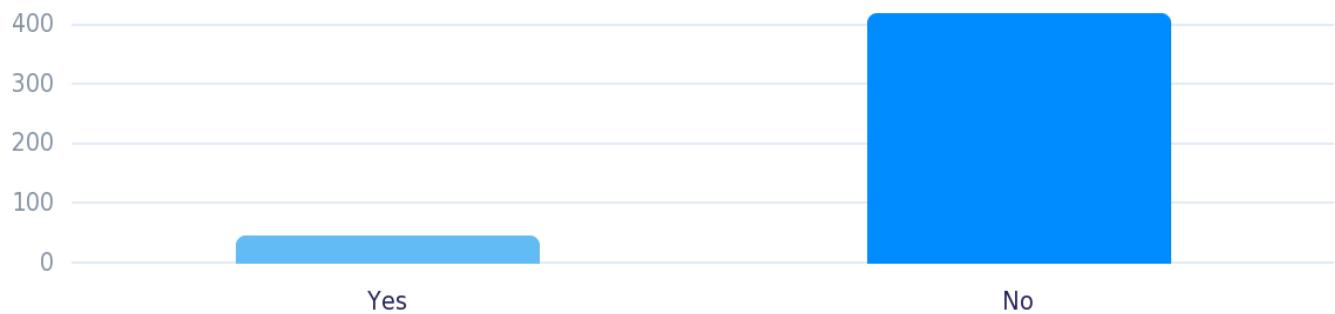
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Male	161	34.4%
Female	308	65.8%

9. Are you a veteran?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Yes	47	10.0%
No	421	90.0%

10. What is your race?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



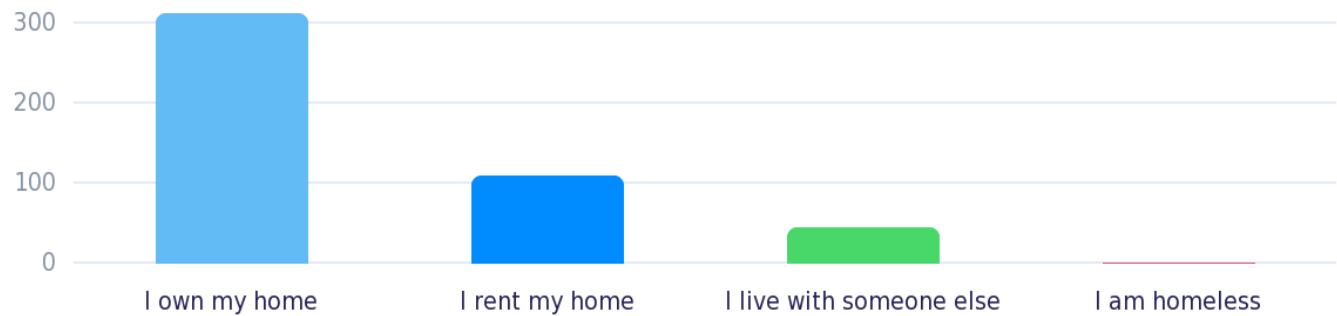
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	1.5%
White/Caucasian	457	97.6%
Asian	3	0.6%
Black or African American	2	0.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	0.6%

11. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



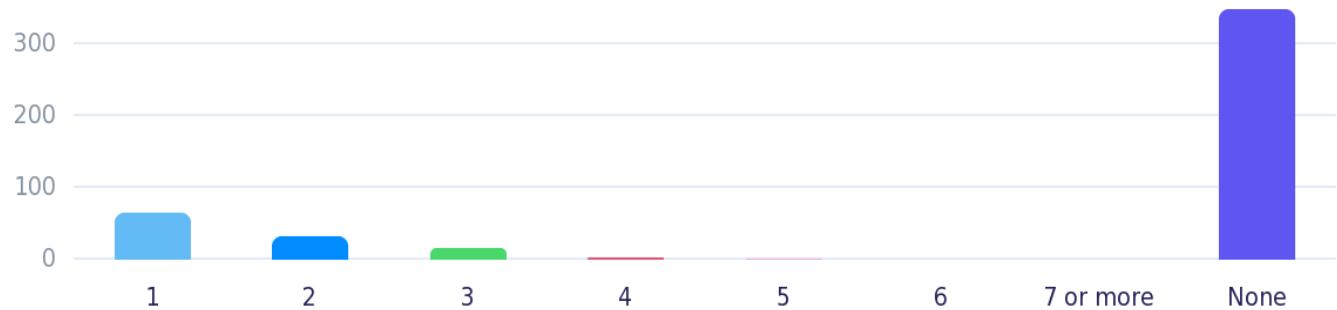
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
I own my home	313	66.9%
I rent my home	111	23.7%
I live with someone else	46	9.8%
I am homeless	1	0.2%

12. How many children (age 0-17) live in your household?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



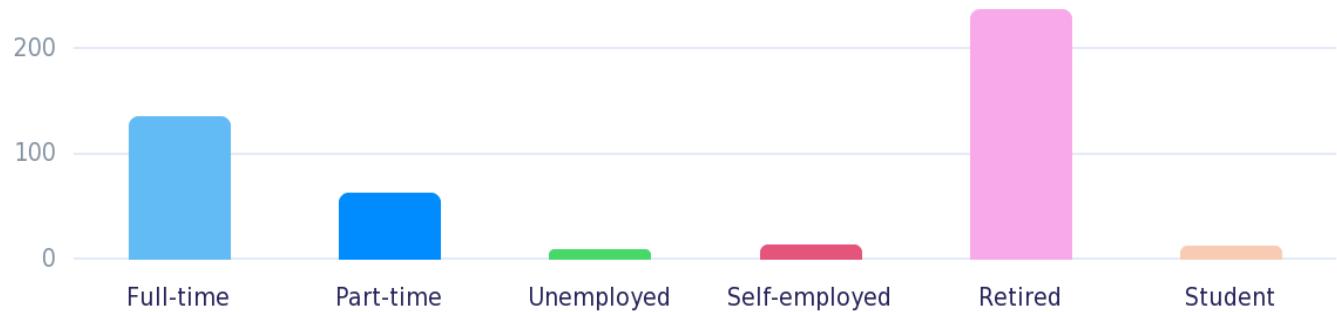
ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
1	66	14.1%
2	32	6.8%
3	16	3.4%
4	4	0.9%
5	1	0.2%
6	0	0.0%
7 or more	0	0.0%
None	349	74.6%

13. What is your current employment status?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Full-time	136	29.1%
Part-time	64	13.7%
Unemployed	10	2.1%
Self-employed	15	3.2%
Retired	238	50.9%
Student	13	2.8%

14. What is your annual household income?

468x answers

0x unanswered

Multiple choice



ANSWER	RESPONSES	RATIO
Under \$15,000	78	16.7%
\$15,000 - \$29,999	94	20.1%
\$30,000 - \$49,999	88	18.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	84	17.9%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	50	10.7%
\$100,000 - \$150,000	46	9.8%
Over \$150,000	28	6.0%