



# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT, 2015-16 PARTNER AND PROVIDER SURVEY

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## Abstract

A summary of the results of an electronic survey sent to both community partners and providers to help guide the Community Needs Assessment, 2015-16

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## *BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION*

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For over 30 years, Children’s Services Council (CSC) funds programs and services to support pregnant moms and parents in raising children to achieve their full potential. The Council is an independent special district established by Palm Beach County voters who approved a dedicated source of funding to ensure that children are healthy, safe, and strong. The Council’s goals for children are:

- **Children are Born Healthy**
- **Children are Safe from Abuse and Neglect**
- **Children are Ready for Kindergarten**
- **Children have Access to Quality Afterschool and Summer Programs**

CSC carefully selects the programs, services, and interventions taking into account community needs, likely community “fit,” and the best available research and evidence to back-up claims that specific child and family results will be achieved. The Council engages local non-profit and governmental agencies to operate and deliver programs.

The Strategic Review and Allocation Analysis (SRAA), is the process which adds to the Council’s ability to make decisions regarding program funding. This includes conducting a community needs assessment. The assessment will help to identify gaps in services and health priorities for pregnant women, infants and young children in Palm Beach County. Additionally, the information garnered from the community needs assessment will aid in writing a new five year Healthy Start Plan.

The Community Needs Assessment, 2015-16 will include a multitude of data from both primary and secondary sources. This section of the report summarizes findings from a survey of services providers and community partners in Palm Beach County. Research findings in this report supplement findings from other research tasks performed in the Community Needs Assessment and are intended to assist CSC in understanding the priority needs of county residents, as well as, resources available to serve county residents.

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## *METHODOLOGY*

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A survey of service providers was conducted online using Question Pro. A link was sent to both CSC funded agencies and other identified community partners through email. The major steps in developing the survey were as followed.

1. A list of CSC funded service providers was gathered from CSC from 2015-16. Additionally, CSC had two other contact lists of agencies who had attended conferences on services for youth which included: The 2013 Youth Symposium and the 2015 What Works Summit. The three lists were combined and reviewed by the Community Needs Assessment Team at CSC.
2. A questionnaire was developed and revised based on comments provided by the Community

Needs Assessment Team.

3. The survey link was emailed by CSC administrative staff to the list of identified organizations on Thursday, July 7, 2016 with a deadline to complete by Friday, July 22.
  - a. Any emails which were inactive were researched and replaced with an active email. A reminder email was sent out on Monday, July, 18, 2016.
  - b. Program Officers at CSC were asked to encourage funded providers participation in the survey.
  - c. Survey recipients were asked to complete only one survey per organization. This required the recipient to determine the best person to complete the survey or for individuals to work as a group in order to provide the answers. This method was chosen to avoid results being skewed by organizations with high participation rates.
4. One of the first survey questions included identifying the respondent's organization.

The steps listed above were taken to ensure a high rate of participation. Summary response statistics are listed below.

#### Survey Population Response Rates

CSC emailed the survey to providers in early July 2016. The general population of the survey included governmental agencies, non-profits and funders in Palm Beach County. Agencies were either CSC funded or attended one of CSC's large conferences in 2013 or 2015. The findings detailed in this report are based on the collective responses of those organizations. The table below indicates the total number of eligible agencies which received a survey and the response rate.

Total Mailing List of Organizations	118
Total Completed Surveys	51
Duplicated Organizations	6 (4 organizations completed 2 surveys. 1 organization completed 3 surveys)
Unduplicated Organizations	45
CSC Funded Organizations	19
Overall (Unduplicated) Response Rate	38.1%

The reader should note that findings are comprised of only the information submitted by the respondents. As such, it may not reflect the total Palm Beach County community service delivery system for pregnant women, families and young children.

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## *SUMMARY OF FINDINGS*

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This survey revealed several key findings related to the service providers for pregnant women and families within Palm Beach County. Additionally, it added information from funders, community partners and providers' perspective on the needed services within the community.

- The majority of agencies completing the survey served all geographic areas within the county; however, almost 17% were concentrated on the population living within the south part of Palm Beach County.
- The highest percentage of agencies who participated in the survey were in social services and child welfare. The smallest percentages were in business, labor, and philanthropy.
- The majority (40%) of service providers were from larger organizations able to serve over 1,500 unduplicated clients per year. About 30% of providers served less than 300 individuals each year.
- The top services provided by respondents included referrals for both housing and jobs. This was followed by after school and youth programs and counseling and mental health services.
- The majority of organizations (62%) were either at capacity or on a waitlist for services.
- The majority of programs (95%) were offered outside of business hours to be available to families who are involved with work. Additionally, programs were being offered at no cost (51%) or on a sliding fee scale (26%) by providers.
- Resident's age and location were the top two eligibility requirements. This was followed by capacity of the organization to provide the service.
- Affordable housing, enough money for bills and steady secure work were rated highest for the needs and worries of client's served in programs. This was followed by mental health services.
- In the ranking of 20 services, mental health came out on top for needing more services. There was also a great need perceived for homeless services and transportation.
- Respondents felt that the amount of nutritional services and food access programs should be left the same. Less of a need was seen for substance abuse services; however, the number selecting this choice was very low. Providers were also unsure if more services are needed in the areas of family planning and with special needs populations.

- In asking about the most critical need for children 0 to 8 years old, most answers were classified as “economic” or “access” issues. Access would include access to quality subsidized childcare and after school care, access to food and access to safe, stable and affordable housing.
- The majority of organizations felt that they had a program available or another organization had a program available to address the critical need. Providers suggested that clients have some challenges to obtaining these services such as cost or limitations of programs ability to serve all individuals who are in need of services.
- Resources were listed as the greatest strength to help serve children in Palm Beach County. This included both local funders, donors and community volunteers.
- Although, not specifically asked about opportunities for improvement, respondents included this information in the open-ended question about strengths. The top opportunity for improvement was collaboration. Some providers felt Palm Beach County has the resources and a large number of non-profit in the community; however, these organizations don’t work together to maximize funds available. Also, it was thought that both residents and providers are not included in the process to achieve solutions for community problems

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RESULTS

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SECTION 1: Service Providers in Palm Beach County

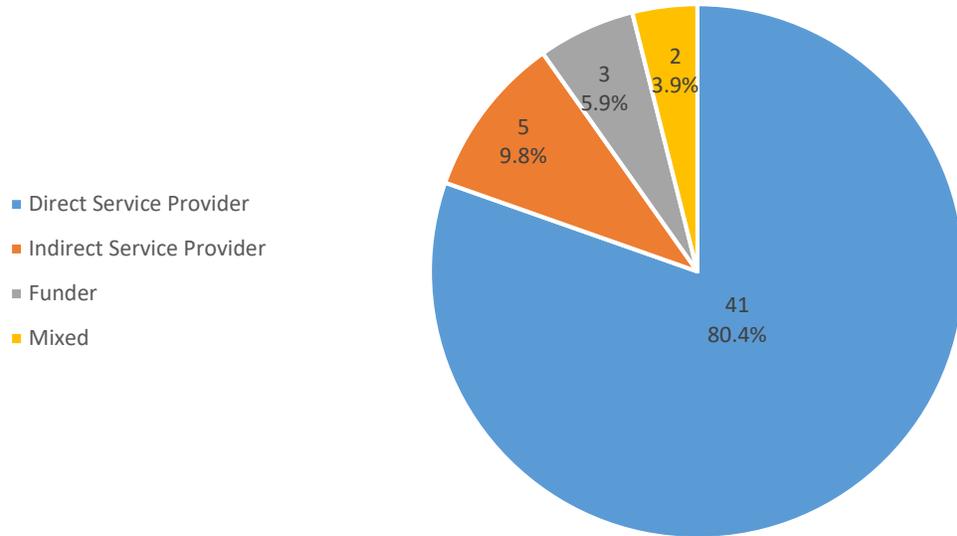
**Responding Organizations were Likely to be Direct Service Providers**

Eighty percent (80%) of the organizations responding to the survey provided direct services to the public.

Ten percent (10%) provide services to other organizations which serve the public directly. Approximately 6% were funders and 4% were organizations who provided both direct and indirect service.

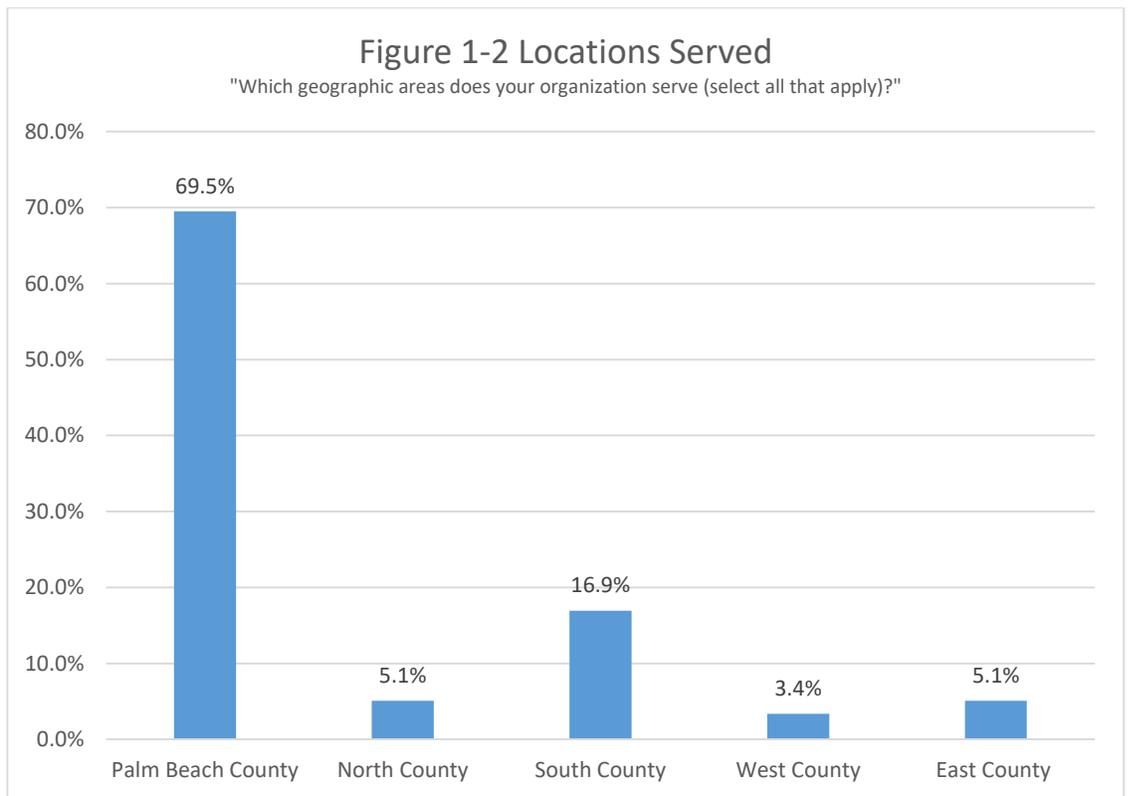
**Figure 1-1: Organization's Role**

What best describes your roles in the services that you provide to pregnant women, children under 18 years old in Palm Beach County (select one)?



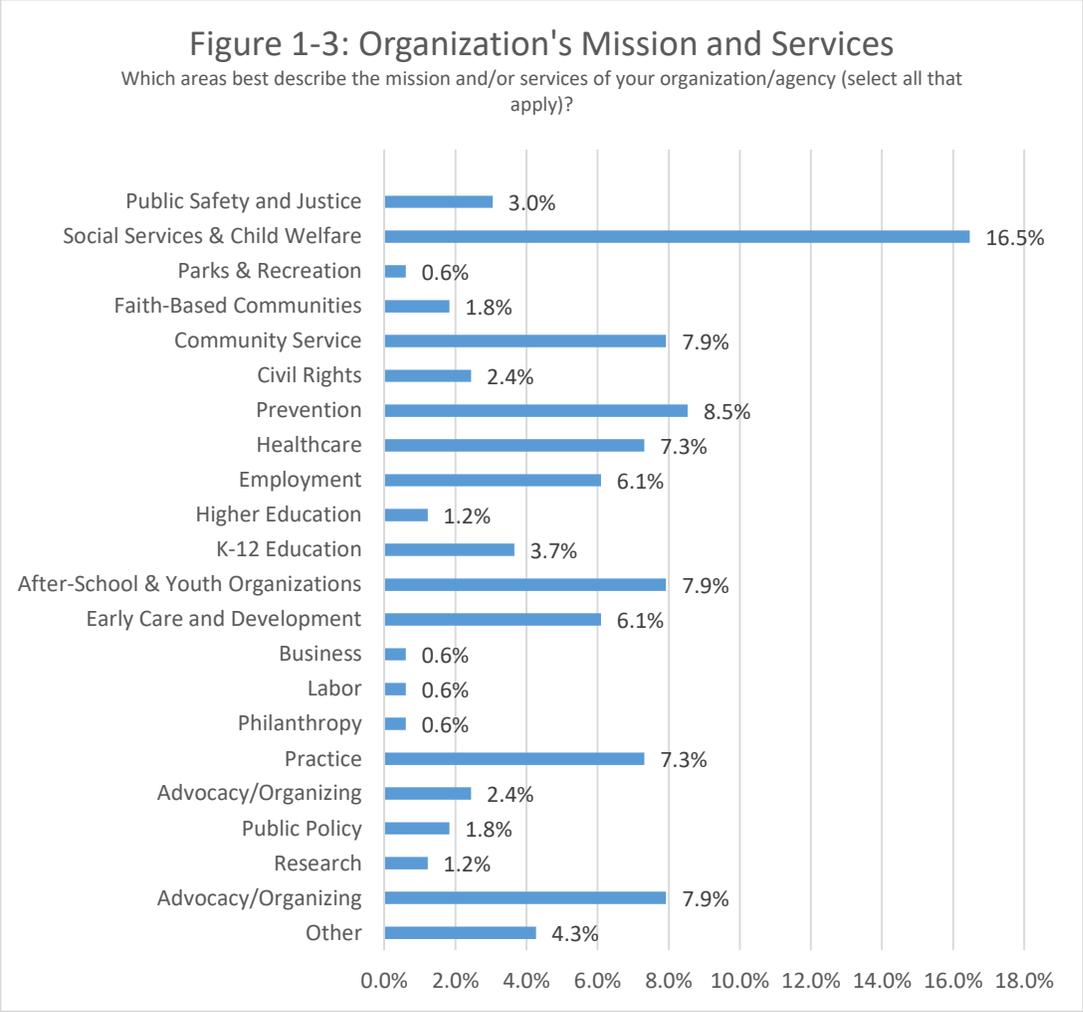
**The Majority of Responding Organizations Serve Families Throughout Palm Beach County.**

Almost 70% of organizations who took the survey serve all geographic areas within Palm Beach County. More organizations serve the south part of the county (17%) compared to other areas. Only 3% of organizations serve the west part of Palm Beach County.



**The Highest Percentage of Agencies who Responded to the Survey were in Social Services and Child Welfare.**

Sixteen percent of agencies who participated in the survey were from Social Services and Child Welfare. This was followed by agencies which focus on prevention (8.5%). The least represented sectors included business, labor and philanthropic organizations at 0.6%. "Other" responses included legal services and behavioral healthcare.



## SECTION 2: Services Provided

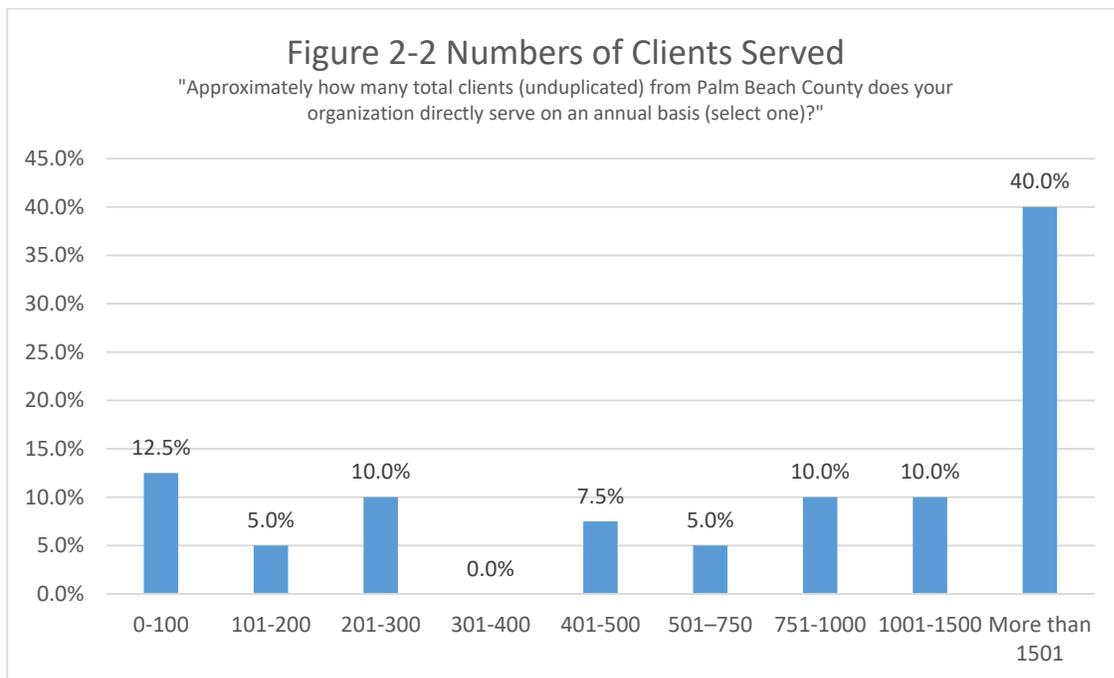
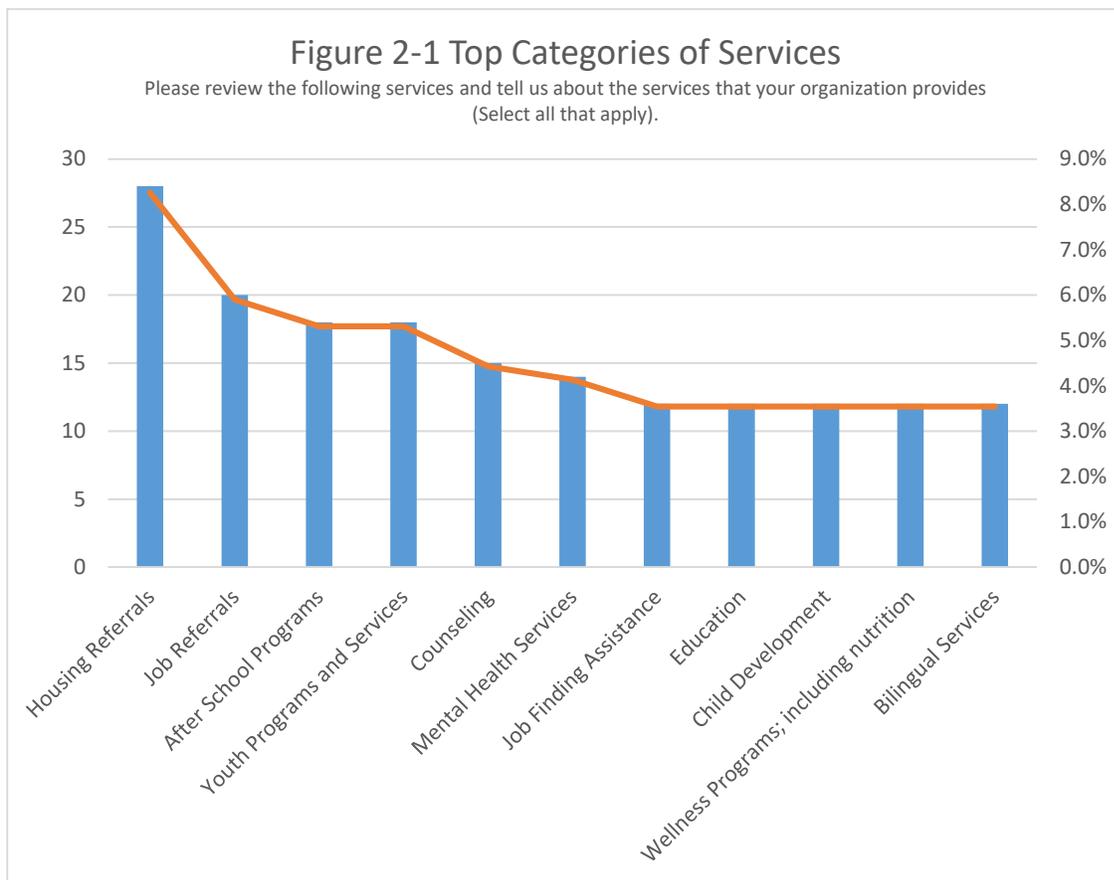
### The Agencies Responding to the Survey Provided a Wide Variety of Services for Clients in Palm Beach County.

The highest percentage of similar services provided included referrals for housing and jobs. Eight percent of the agencies who participated in the survey provide referrals for housing needs.

The smallest percentage of services provided by respondents (not listed on the chart) included childcare, extension of credit and loans and respite services.

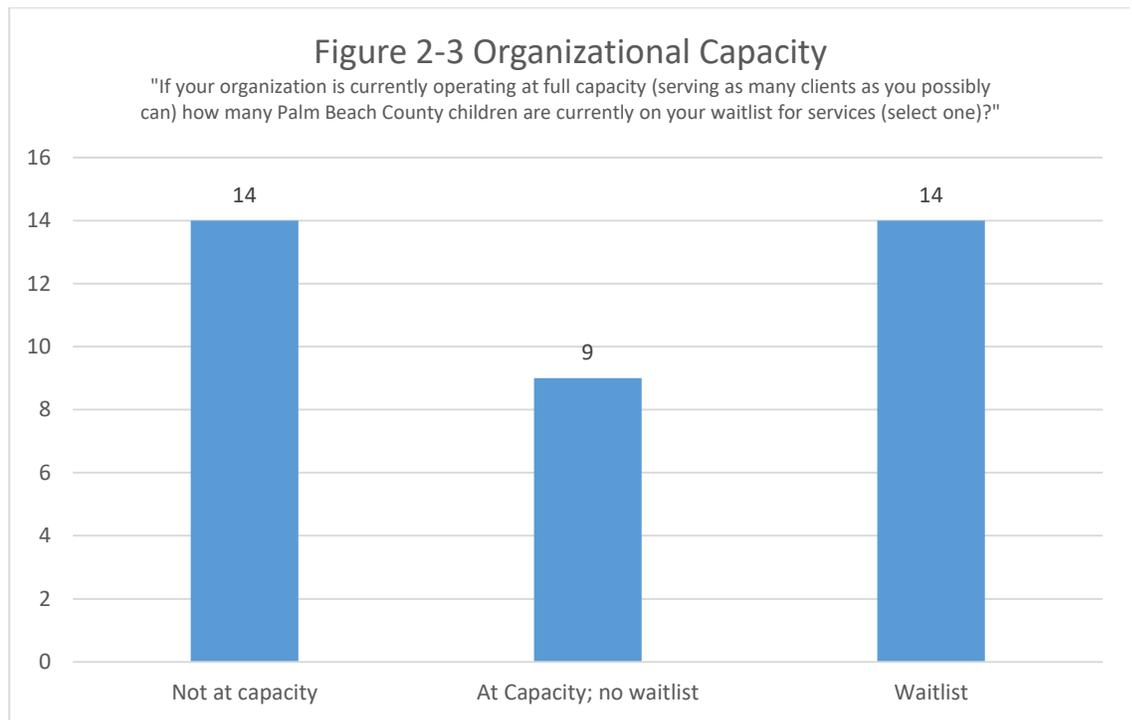
### Most of the Agencies who Responded to the Survey are able to Serve More Than 1,500 unduplicated individuals each year.

Forty percent of organizations survey serve more than 1,500 Palm Beach County residents. Thirty five percent served under 500 clients.



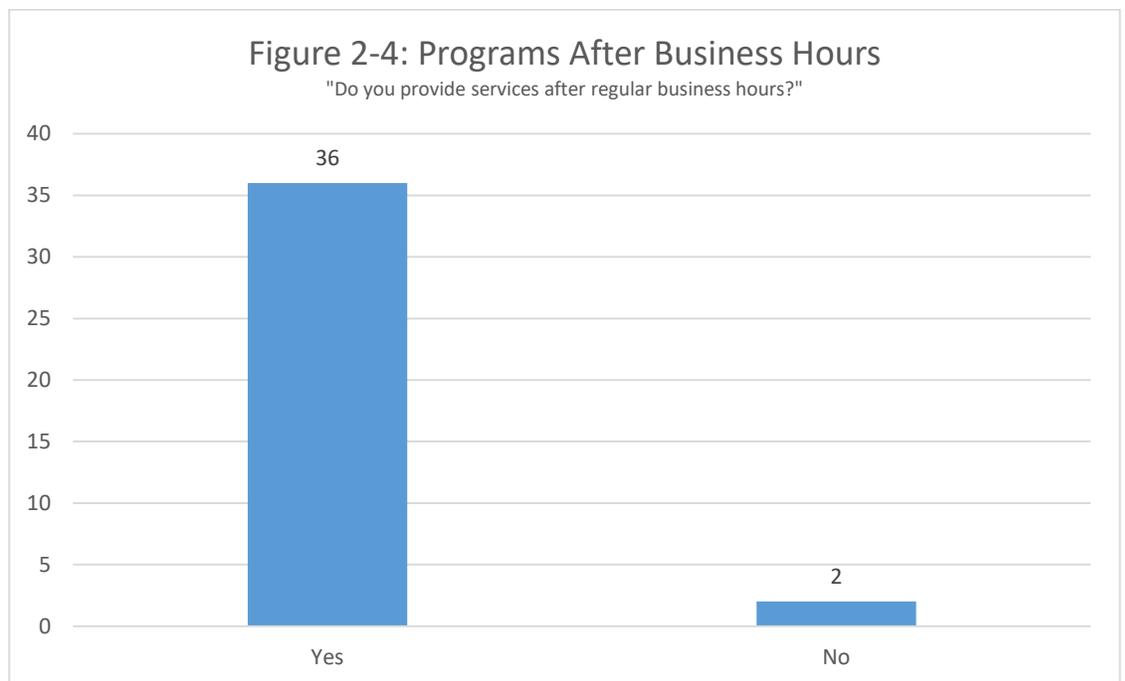
**The Majority of Survey Respondents had a Waitlist or were Currently at Capacity for clients.**

Sixty two percent of the respondents indicated their organization was at capacity or on a waitlist for services.



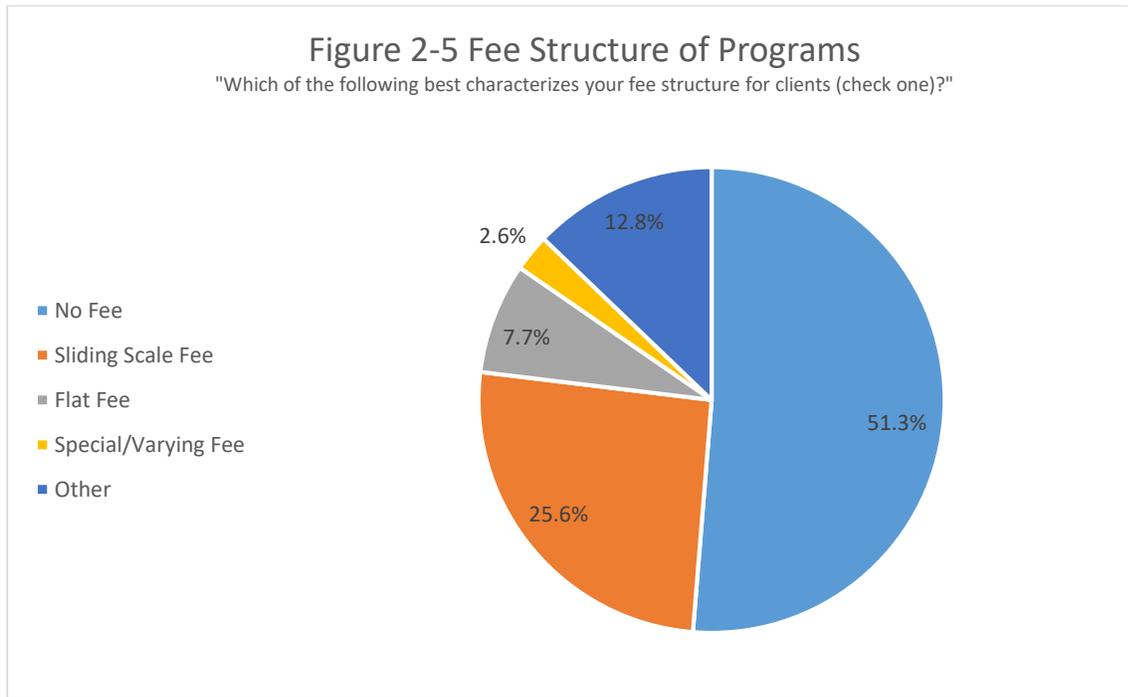
**Most Organizations Provided Services After the Typical Business Day.**

Only 5% or 2 organizations did not provide services after "typical" business hours. This would include programs outside of the hours of 8 to 5 on the weekdays or on the weekends.



**Over Half of the Organizations Provided Program Free. This was Followed by One Quarter Which Provide Programs on a Sliding Scale Fee.**

Fifty one percent of organizations did not charge a fee for programs. Twenty six percent of respondents had a fee based on the income of the participants.

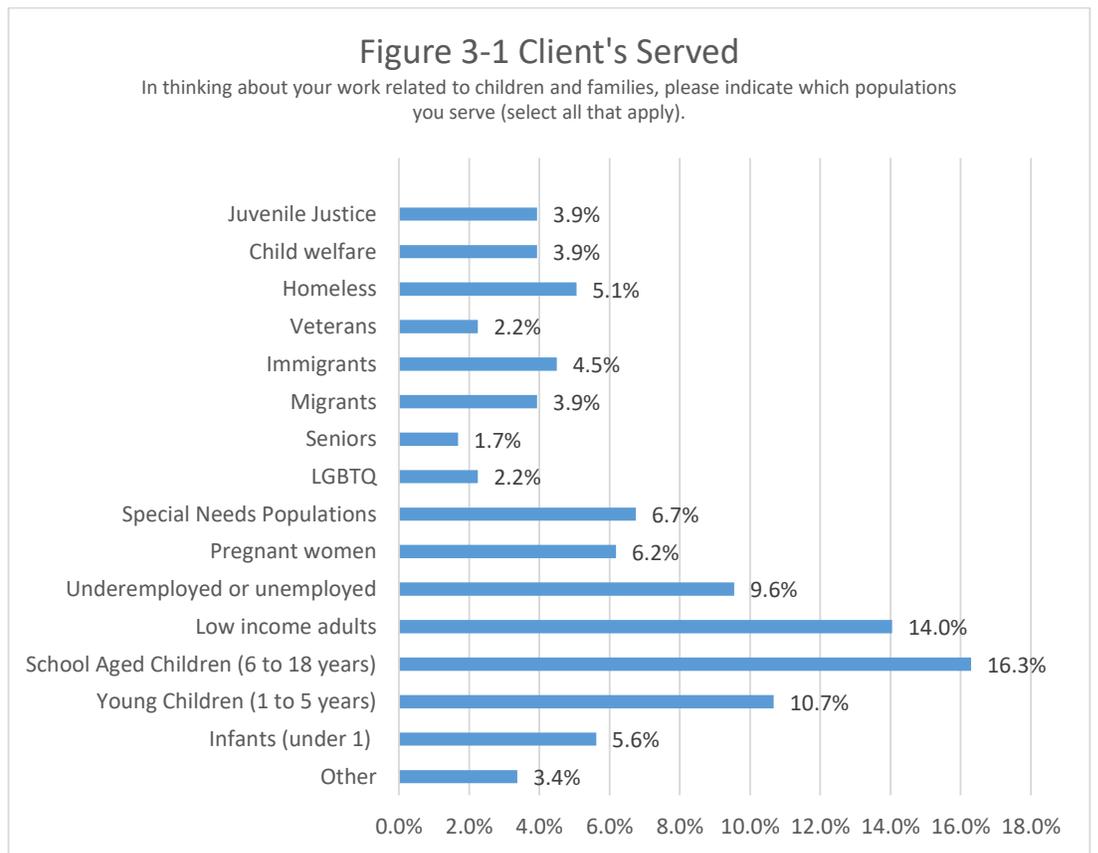


### SECTION 3: Palm Beach County Clients

**Most Organizations Served School Aged Children, and Low Income Adults.**

The highest percent of respondents served school aged children at 16.3%. This was the same combined percentage as a young children and infants.

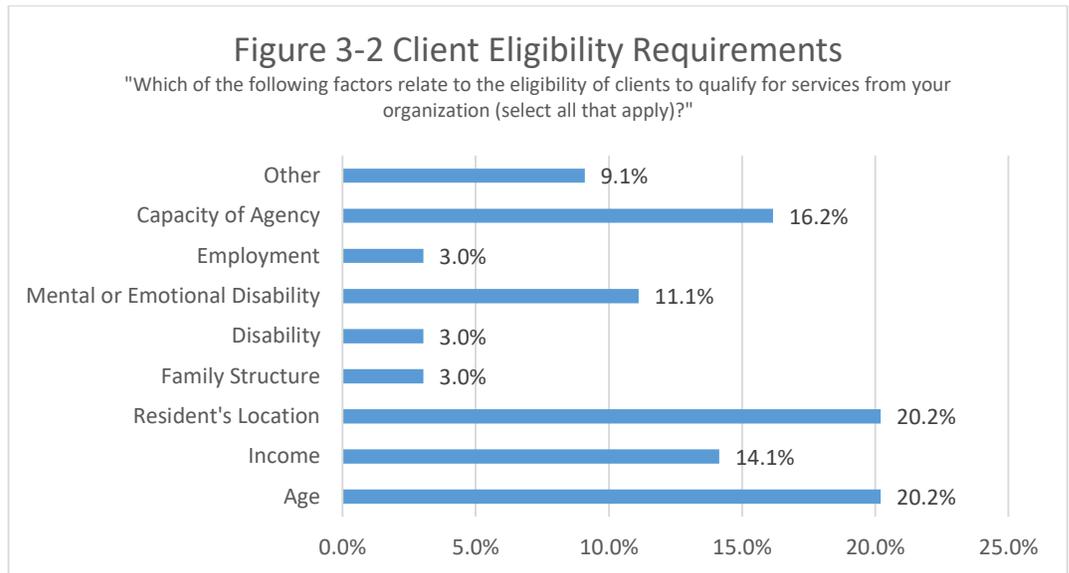
Less of the organizations served groups including seniors (1.7%), veterans (2.2%) and LGBTQ (2.2%).



**Age and Residents Location Were the Most Common Factors for Eligibility. This was Followed by the Organizations' Capacity.**

The geographic location of the client's residence and age of the participant was the most common eligibility requirement for programs.

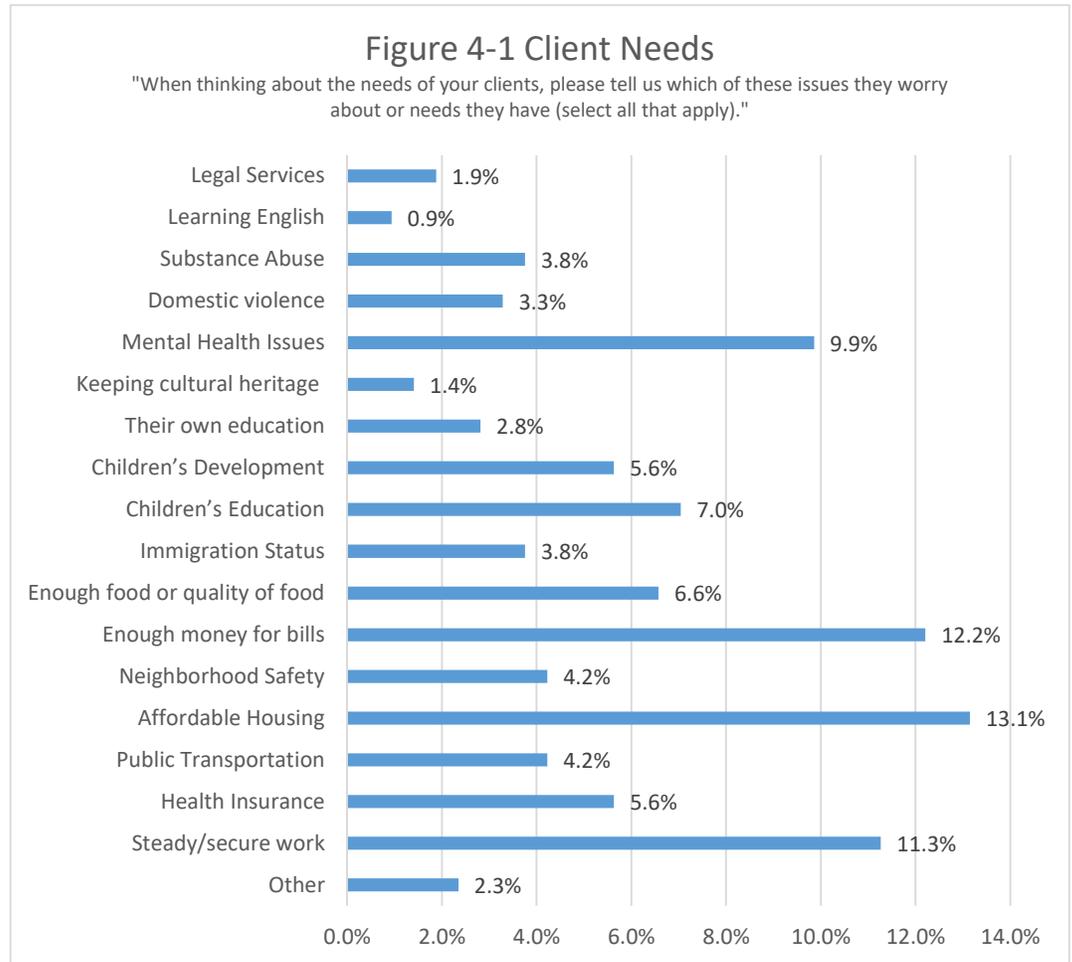
Other requirements included pregnancy, client's risk, and diagnosis or court involvement.



## SECTION 4: Palm Beach County Resident Needs

### The Top Needs or Worries Identified for Clients Include Affordable Housing, Money for Bills and Secure Work.

Most commonly affordable housing (13.1%) was seen as a top need for residents in Palm Beach County. This was followed by enough money for bills at 12.2% and steady/secure work at 11.3%. Issues which were not seen as high needs were learning English, legal services and "other." The other category included individuals who thought "all of the above" should have been included as an answer, prostitution and teen pregnancy.



**Respondents Ranked Mental Health Services as a Top Priority Area for Needing More Services. Transportation and Homeless services were next on the list.**

Most commonly (86%) of respondents thought mental health services were seen as a sector needing more programs. In terms of needing less services, substance abuse came out on top of the list; this was followed by care coordination. Most providers (37%) felt services which provide nutritional services and food access (32%) should remain the same within the county.

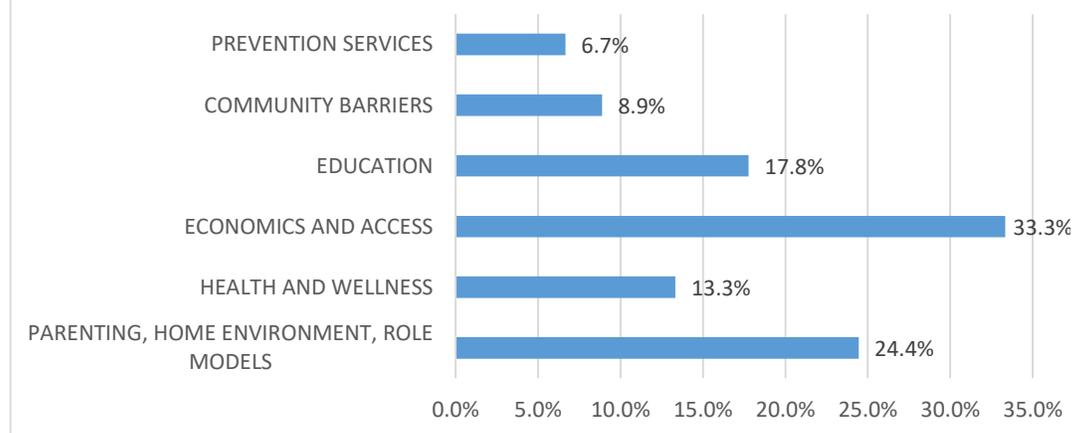
	More	Fewer	Same	Don't Know
<b>Mental Health Services</b>	86.1%	0.0%	7.0%	7.0%
<b>Homeless Services</b>	81.4%	0.0%	9.3%	9.3%
<b>Transportation</b>	81.4%	2.3%	11.6%	4.7%
<b>Subsidized Child Care</b>	74.4%	2.3%	14.0%	9.3%
<b>Youth Programs</b>	72.1%	0.0%	23.3%	4.7%
<b>Rental Assistance</b>	72.1%	2.3%	18.6%	7.0%
<b>Job Training (Youth)</b>	69.8%	2.3%	16.3%	11.6%
<b>Child Abuse Prevention</b>	67.4%	0.0%	18.6%	14.0%
<b>Utility Assistance</b>	67.4%	2.3%	25.6%	4.7%
<b>Healthcare Services</b>	65.1%	0.0%	25.6%	9.0%
<b>Food Assistance</b>	62.8%	2.3%	32.6%	2.3%
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	62.8%	0.0%	18.6%	18.6%
<b>Job Training</b>	60.5%	0.0%	27.9%	11.6%
<b>Parenting Classes</b>	60.5%	2.3%	20.9%	16.3%
<b>Care Coordination</b>	58.1%	4.7%	23.3%	14.0%
<b>Substance Abuse Services</b>	55.8%	7.0%	20.9%	16.3%
<b>Youth with Disabilities</b>	55.8%	0.0%	20.9%	23.3%
<b>Wellness Services</b>	55.8%	0.0%	27.9%	16.3%
<b>Nutritional Services</b>	51.2%	0.0%	37.2%	11.6%
<b>Family Planning</b>	39.5%	2.3%	30.2%	27.9%

**Almost One Third of Respondents felt that Economics and Access were the Most Critical Needs of Children, 0 to 8 years old.**

When asked to identify a critical need of young children, 33% of provider's answers were categorized as Economic and Access Issues. This included topics such as access to affordable housing, childcare, afterschool programs and food. This was followed by parenting, home environment and role models. These individuals felt parents needed more educational supports, classes and role models.

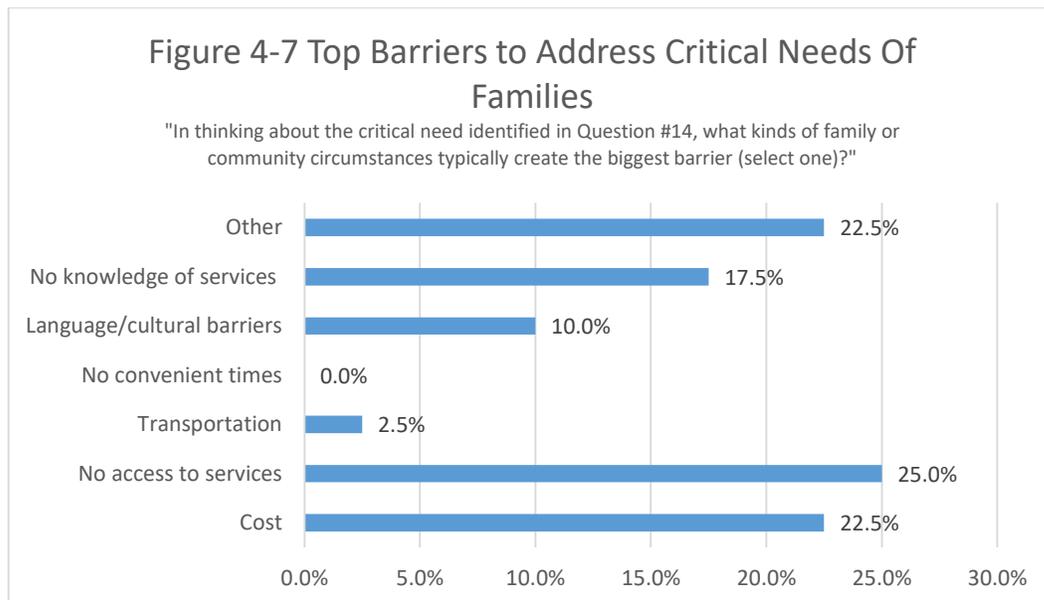
**Figure 4-6 Most Critical Needs for Children, 0 to 8**

"In thinking specifically about young children, 0 to 8 in the geographic area that you serve, in your opinion, what do you think is the most critical need or concern for children?"



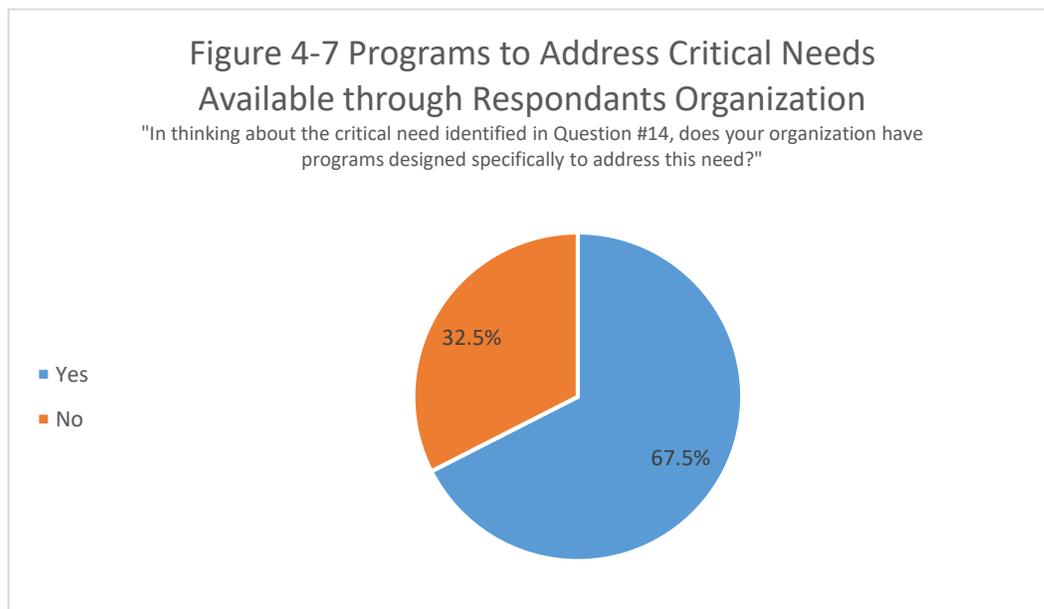
**The Largest Barrier Identified for Clients was no access to Services; this was Followed with a Tie Between Cost and “Other.”**

No access to services was the largest barrier identified to organizations who responded to the survey at 25.0%. Cost was also seen as a large barrier for residents at 22.5%. This was followed by “other” at 22.5% which included lack of interest or understanding (stigma) of the family, funding for programs, and family issues such as lack of structure, violence, drug abuse and toxic stress.



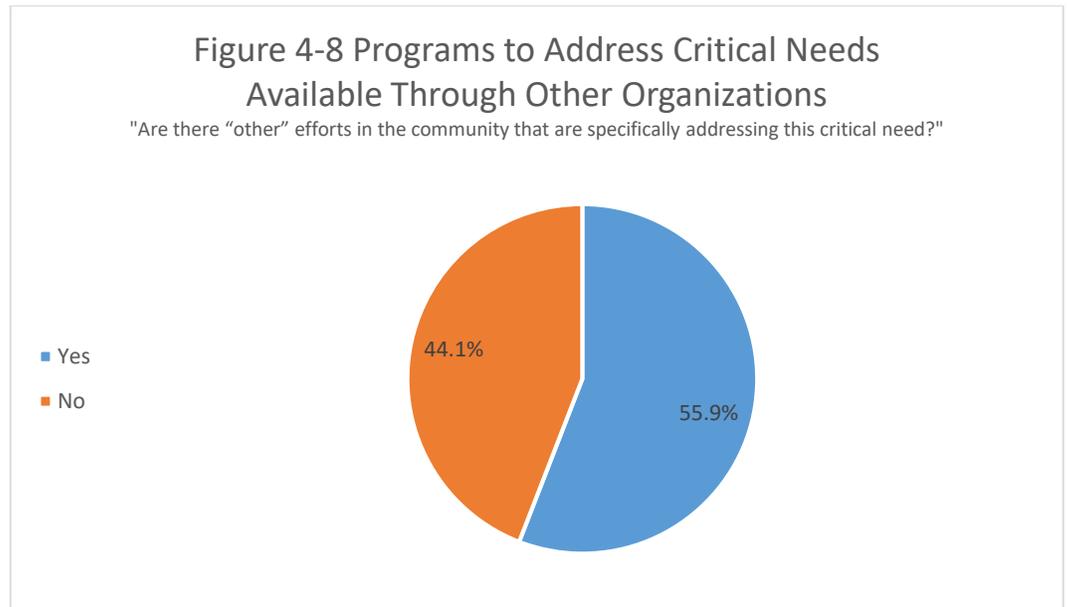
**The Majority of Respondents had Programs to Serve the most Critical Needs Identified.**

Seventy percent (70%) of organizations identified an internal program which addressed priorities for families in Palm Beach County.



**Most Provider Could Identify a Program to Serve the Most Critical Needs of Families.**

Fifty six percent (56%) of service providers could identify a program available through another agency to address the critical needs of families.



**A Few Organizations Identified a Critical Issue with No Program Or Service Identified As Support.**

A few critical needs were identified in the survey; however, organizations did not know about programs or services available to help fill these gaps. This included a safe and healthy home environment, male mentors and education.

For some needs providers were able to identify services; however barriers and gaps still exist and the critical needs are not being addressed properly. See the chart for more information.

**Needs Listed with No Identified Programs**

- A safe and healthy home environment
- Male clients need positive, healthy ,available mentors
- Education

**Other Barriers for Critical Needs**  
**Critical Need Identified**

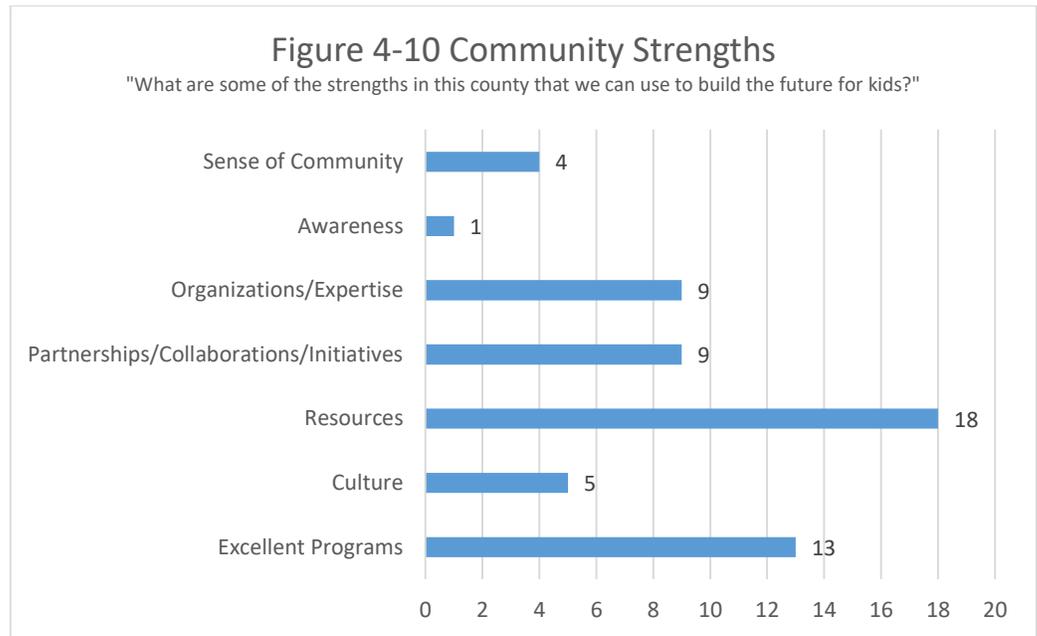
- Readiness for kindergarten
- Access to affordable and quality early childhood education program
- Parents need parenting classes to insure the safety of the children
- After school programs, summer camp, parent engagement, mentoring, tutoring

**Challenges To Meet Critical Needs**

- There are some available VPK but not enough and not long enough
- We offer the cheapest early childhood program for our residents and yet the families are struggling to pay the \$75.00 per week for 55 hours of service.
- We provide parenting classes but with limited staff and time it doesn't reach all the parents that would benefit from sessions.
- Summer camp limited for 20 kids, Parenting Classes once per week, Adult Education (ESL, Basic Literacy)

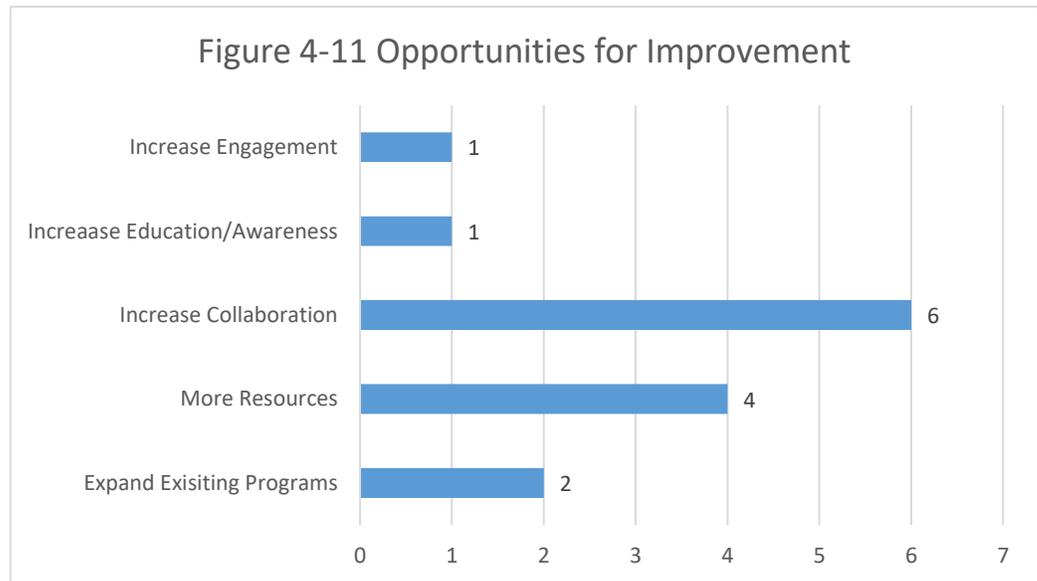
**Resources Ranked as the Top Strength in Palm Beach County. This was Followed by Excellent Programs.**

Many strengths were identified for Palm Beach County. This included the County’s affluence, good economy and available resources. Many providers felt that Palm Beach County has strong programs



**The Top Opportunity for Improvement was Identified as Better Collaboration Among Community Providers and Nonprofits. This Was Followed By More Resources.**

Most respondents felt organizations in Palm Beach County needed to work better together in order to maximize resources. Additionally, although resources was a strength many respondents felt they were not being spent properly or on programs which support families and children.



Some of the comments included:

- “we are resource rich but we don’t work together to solve problems”
- “Many of the communities in Palm Beach County have strong neighborhood involvement & with resident leaders identified their voices could be heard & work in collaboration with agency leaders to first identify problems & obstacles to making appropriate changes and then creating a plan of action with residents involved in the changes needed to increase safety and increase thriving environments for the children to grow and learn.”

## Discussion

The programs provided by the organizations who participated in the survey mainly serve all residents regardless of resident's geographic location within in the county; however, 16% of the organizations served the south county. Additionally, only 3% serve the areas of Belle Glade and Pahokee. This may be an over-representation of organizations who serve residents in the south on the survey as more of the underserved populations live in the northern and western parts of Palm Beach County.

The survey captured a high percentage of social service and child welfare agencies which provide direct service programs for children. More information could be gleaned from faith-based, businesses and other philanthropic organizations which may fund or provide direct services for children.

Programs within the county seem to be flexible towards the needs of the client and offer services for free or at very low cost and outside of traditional business hours. This helps overcome many barriers for families on limited incomes who may not be able to participate due to work. However, many of the organizations indicated being at capacity and having a waitlist for services. This is a large barrier for families needing support by these organizations.

Basic needs including affordable housing, money for bills and steady/secure work were rated the highest need/concern for families living in Palm Beach County. This was followed by mental health needs; this was also an identified as needing more services by providers on the survey. Mental Health ranked at the top need for more programs followed by homeless services. Transportation was also seen as a service which needs to be increased in Palm Beach County; however, this was ranked as one of the lowest barriers for services.

The most critical need identified for children included areas which could be categorized under economics and/or access. Most providers felt families had needs for affordable housing, childcare, afterschool programs and access to healthy foods. Although, many providers indicated there were programs available to address these needs; there are obviously still barriers or gaps in services. Families still face cost barriers and programs are limited in capacity and availability.

Palm Beach County was seen by respondents as an area with many available resources. It was described as having great programs and agencies with expertise in the childhood arena. Additionally, the community was seen as one which cares about future outcomes for children. Some efforts in the areas of collaboration and partnerships were taking place and seen as a strength for the community; however, some providers still felt collaboration could be better amongst nonprofits and for maximization of resources. Respondents would like to see more residents and providers involved in community decisions. Furthermore, a few community partners felt there were opportunities to increase existing programs to more and other areas in the county.