

Collier County Needs Assessment For Program Years 2016-2020



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Prepared for
Collier County, Florida
by



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Introduction

Every five years, Collier County must prepare a strategic plan, known as the Consolidated Plan, to govern the use of federal housing and community development grant funds that it receives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). At about the same time that the County prepares a new Consolidated Plan, it must also submit to HUD an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) examining any potential barriers to housing choice based on protected class. Federally protected classes include race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability status.

The grant funds received from HUD by the County that are covered by the Consolidated Plan include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program.

The County must also submit to HUD separate Annual Action Plans for each of the five years during the Consolidated Plan period. The Annual Action Plans serve as the County's yearly applications to HUD and are required to receive annual allocations from the three grant programs. Annual grant award amounts are determined by a formula administered by HUD, and may change slightly from year to year.

When preparing a Consolidated Plan and related Action Plans, grantees must assess housing, community development, and homeless needs within their jurisdictions. This Needs Assessment report will serve as background for Collier County as it identifies funding priorities and related projects for the 2016-2017 program year. Needs Assessment findings will also be incorporated into the 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan as a means of developing goals and strategies to address priority housing, community development, and homeless needs over the five-year term. Finally, the report also identifies potential issues and barriers that may affect housing choice in the County.

Under HUD's grant program regulations, Collier County may use its HUD grant funds in the unincorporated portions of the County, as well as within incorporated cities that cooperate with the County for the purpose of receiving HUD grant awards. Of its three incorporated cities, only Naples currently partners with the County to use HUD grant funds; Marco Island had previously participated, but opted out as of 2012.

The Needs Assessment relies on demographic, economic, and housing data to identify top needs in Collier County. It also draws heavily upon substantial community input collected through public meetings, focus groups, interviews, and a survey. Summaries of quantitative and qualitative research findings are provided, along with a synthesis of top housing,

community development, and homeless needs. The appendices lists agencies that gave input for the needs assessment and provides the complete results of the community survey.

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Socioeconomic Overview

This section presents demographic and economic information collected from the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other sources. Data was used to analyze a broad range of socioeconomic characteristics, including population growth, age, employment, income, and poverty. Ultimately, the information presented in this section helps illustrate the underlying conditions that have shaped housing and community needs in the county.

To supplement 2000 and 2010 census data, information for this analysis was also gathered from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS data covers similar topics as the decennial counts, but also includes data not appearing in the 2010 census such as household income and poverty. The key difference in these datasets is that ACS data represents samples as opposed to a 100 percent count; however, population distributions from the ACS data can be compared to those from the census.

Population Dynamics

Collier County is the 17th largest county by population in the state of Florida and has approximately 1.7% of the state's overall population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, its 2014 estimated population is 348,777. As of 2010, the County estimated an additional 65,000 to 72,000 residents during season (from October to May).

Population growth for the county has remained steady, growing at a rate of 27.9% between 2000 and 2010 and 8.5% between 2010 and 2014. The projected population growth rate by 2020 is slightly less than 10.0% (9.6%). Table 1 below shows the population count in Collier County, as drawn from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 censuses and the 2014 American Community Survey.

| Table 1. Population Change in Collier County, 1990-2020 | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2014 |
| Population | 152,099 | 251,377 | 321,520 | 348,777 |
| Growth Rate | | 65.3% | 27.9% | 8.5% |

Source: 1990, 2000, and 2010 U.S. Census and American Community Survey 2014 1-Year Estimates

Population by Age

The population of Collier County can be characterized as older than the overall population of Florida and the U.S. with a median age of 47.9 years in 2014, compared to 41.3 years for the state of Florida and 37.0 for the nation. In 2014, residents over the age of 65 accounted

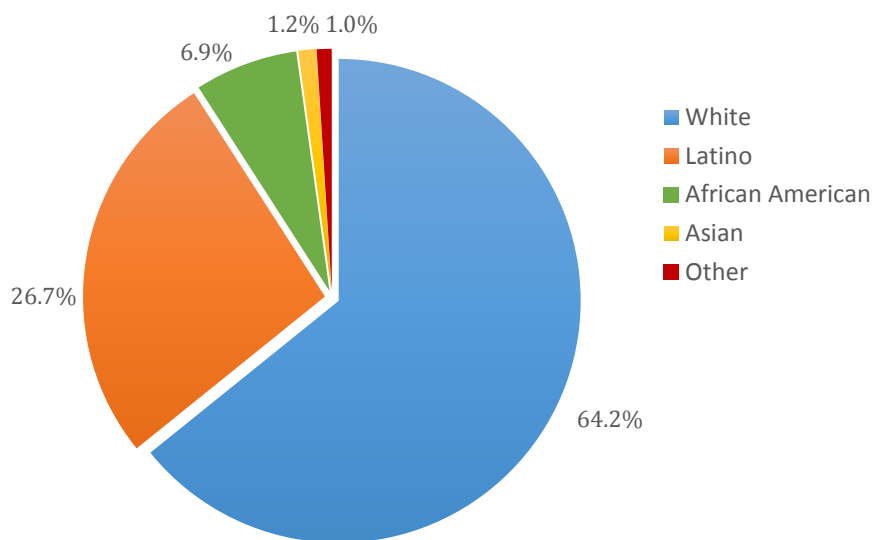
for over a quarter of the County's population (29.7%). Approximately 1 in 5 residents (18.3%) were under the age of 5.

Population by Race

While the majority of Collier County residents were non-Latino white (64.2%) as of ACS 2014 estimates, the rates of diverse populations have steadily increased, according to the Census Bureau. The Latino population grew by 301.2% in the decades between 1990 and 2010, while the African American population rose by 196%.

The growth of the Latino population in the county is anticipated to continue its upward trend, increasing at an annual rate of approximately 2.3% between the years of 2010 and 2040 to surpass 160,000. The number of individuals who speak a language other than English in the home was 31% in 2010.

Figure 1. Population by Race and Ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014 1-Year American Community Survey Table B03002

Economic Overview

Labor Force and Total Employment

Data regarding the labor force, defined as the total number of persons working or looking for work, and employment, or the number of persons working, as gathered from Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates are presented below. As shown, labor force and employment figures in the County reflects a gradual decline in the unemployment rate since 2011.

| Table 2. Unemployment Rates in Collier County | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Year | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Unemployment Rate | 8.7% | 7.5% | 5.7% | 4.9% | 4.6% |

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment, <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/dsrv?la>

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, major private-sector employers in the county included Naples Community Hospital, Publix Supermarkets, and Walmart. As of 2014, the top employment industries in the county, based on percentage of employment for the overall workforce, were:

1. Leisure and Hospitality (19.7%)
2. Trade Transportation, and Utilities (19.3%)
3. Educational and Health Services (14.3%)
4. Professional and Business Services (10.5%)
5. Government (9.7%)
6. Construction (9.2%)
7. Financial Activities (5.6%)
8. Other Services (4.5%)
9. Natural Resource and Mining (3.4%)
10. Manufacturing (2.6%)
11. Information (1.1%)

Annual wages for the top employment industries for 2014 were:

1. Financial Activities \$86,624
2. Information \$64,982
3. Professional and Business Services \$57,024
4. Government \$51,534
5. Manufacturing \$ 49,064
6. Educational and Health Services \$48,286
7. Construction \$ 42,501
8. Trade, Transportation and Utilities \$37,285
9. Other Services \$32,623
10. Leisure and Hospitality \$28,801
11. Natural Resource and Mining \$25,894

Income and Earnings Dynamics Overview

Income and earning dynamics are important to assessing community needs related to ability to access housing, healthcare, food, and other quality of life indicators. Collier County's cost of living is slightly higher than the Florida state average. The price level index for 2013 was 100.28, compared to the Florida state average set at 100. Personal per capita income for 2014 was \$73,869, while median household income was \$56,250 and median family income was \$65,373.

While Collier County is one of the wealthiest counties in Florida, with a per capita income that is approximately 1.4 times that of the state, there are significant poverty indicators and geographic areas of poverty. Four Collier communities have per capita incomes ranging from \$9,496 to \$24,556, according to the 2010 Census: Immokalee and three communities in the Greater Naples area (Naples Manor, Golden Gate City, and Naples Park). Additionally, Collier County has 5 zip codes designated as Low Income Areas by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (34142, 34114, 34104, 34113, and 34116).

Between 1989 and 2009, the number of persons living in poverty increased 56% in the county. Children under the age of 18 years living in poverty increased by 138% for this 20 year period, compared to an overall increase of 44% in the state of Florida. The use of entitlements also increased during the time between 1990 and 2010. According to the USDA, the use of the Women, Infants, and Children's (WIC) Nutrition Program, which provides food and nutritional assistance to pregnant and new mothers and children through 5 years of age, increasing by over 174%.

Housing and Homeless Needs

This housing need assessment presents a snapshot of current housing conditions in Collier County, including characteristics of the housing stock, housing cost and affordability, subsidized housing locations, and the availability of accessible housing.

Housing Stock Characteristics

According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, there are an estimated 199,818 housing units in Collier County, an increase of 38.2% since 2000. Over one-third of these homes are vacant (36.8%), well above the national vacancy rate of 12.5%. As Table 3 shows, the county’s supply of seasonal housing is the driving factor behind its high vacancy rate – more than three-fourths of vacant units are for seasonal, recreational, or other occasional use. Other vacancies, however, did increase significantly since 2000, by 149.8% in comparison to 22.7% for occupied housing units.

| | 2000 | 2010-2014 | Change from 2000 to 2010-2014 |
|--|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Total Housing Units | 144,536 | 199,818 | 38.2% |
| Occupied Housing Units | 102,973 | 126,331 | 22.7% |
| Vacant Housing Units | 41,563 | 73,487 | 76.8% |
| For Seasonal, Recreational, Occasional Use | 34,337 | 55,438 | 61.5% |
| Other Vacant Units | 7,226 | 18,049 | 149.8% |
| Vacancy Rate | 28.8% | 36.8% | +8.0 points |

Sources: U.S. Census 2000 SF1 Tables H003 and H005; 2010-2014 5-Year American Community Survey Tables B25002 and B25004

The large majority of housing in Collier County is owner-occupied – 72.9% compared to 64.4% in the U.S (see Table 4). Exactly half of homes are single family detached and 37.7% are multifamily (2 or more units). While the share of multifamily housing is above that of the nation (25.9%), it is notable that owner-occupied housing outnumbers rental housing for every structure type. Condominium units (i.e., owner-occupied housing with more than 5 units per structure) make up 15.1% of housing in Collier versus 2.1% in the U.S.

Variety in terms of tenure and structure type is important in providing housing options to meet the needs of all residents, including low-income, elderly, persons with disabilities, and other special needs populations. Multifamily housing, including rental apartments, are

often more affordable than single-family homes for low- to moderate-income households and those with fixed incomes. Multifamily units may also be the preference of elderly and disabled householders who are unable or do not desire to maintain a single-family home.

| Table 4. Housing Units by Structure Type in Collier County, 2010-2014 | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Units in Structure | Owner | | Renter | | Total | |
| | Number | Share | Number | Share | Number | Share |
| 1, detached | 54,714 | 59.4% | 8,429 | 24.6% | 63,143 | 50.0% |
| 1, attached | 7,115 | 7.7% | 1,998 | 5.8% | 9,113 | 7.2% |
| 2 to 4 | 6,536 | 7.1% | 5,804 | 16.9% | 12,340 | 9.8% |
| 5 to 9 | 5,833 | 6.3% | 5,439 | 15.9% | 11,272 | 8.9% |
| 10 to 49 | 8,875 | 9.6% | 8,332 | 24.3% | 17,207 | 13.6% |
| 50 or more | 4,376 | 4.8% | 2,484 | 7.2% | 6,860 | 5.4% |
| Mobile home | 4,444 | 4.8% | 1,779 | 5.2% | 6,223 | 4.9% |
| Other | 165 | 0.2% | 8 | 0.0% | 173 | 0.1% |
| Total | 92,058 | 100.0% | 34,273 | 100.0% | 126,331 | 100.0% |

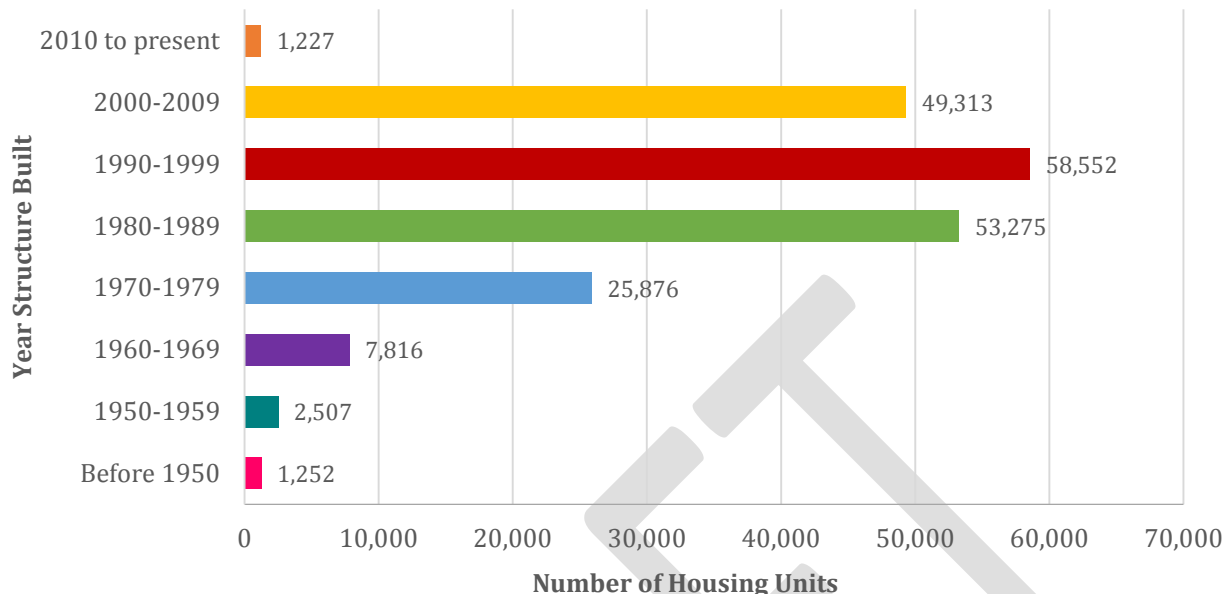
Sources: U.S. Census 2010-2014 5-Year American Community Survey Table B25032

The age of an area’s housing stock can have substantial impact on housing conditions and costs. As housing ages, maintenance costs rise, which can present significant affordability issues for low- and moderate-income homeowners. Aging rental stock can lead to rental rate increases to address physical issues, or deteriorating conditions if building owners opt to defer maintenance. Additionally, homes built prior to 1978 present the potential for lead exposure risk due to lead-based paint.

The figure on the following page shows the age of housing stock for Collier County. The largest share of homes were built during the 1990s (29.3%), followed by the 1980s (26.7%). In comparison to national figures, Collier County’s housing stock is much newer. One-quarter of homes in the county were built since 2000¹ versus 15.9% of those nationwide. Homes at elevated risk for lead hazard exposure (those built before 1980) are 18.7% of the county’s stock versus over half (56.3%) across the U.S.

¹ Age of housing estimates for Collier County and the state of Florida are taken from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, which collects data over a five-year time frame to reduce sampling error. Because figures reflect data collected from 2010 to 2014, the estimated number of housing units built since 2010 (1,227 in Collier County) is likely lower than the actual number of recently-built units. The 2014 1-year American Community Survey estimate (reflective of data collected in 2014 only) puts the number of housing units built since 2010 in Collier County at 2,248.

Figure 2. Age of Housing in Collier County



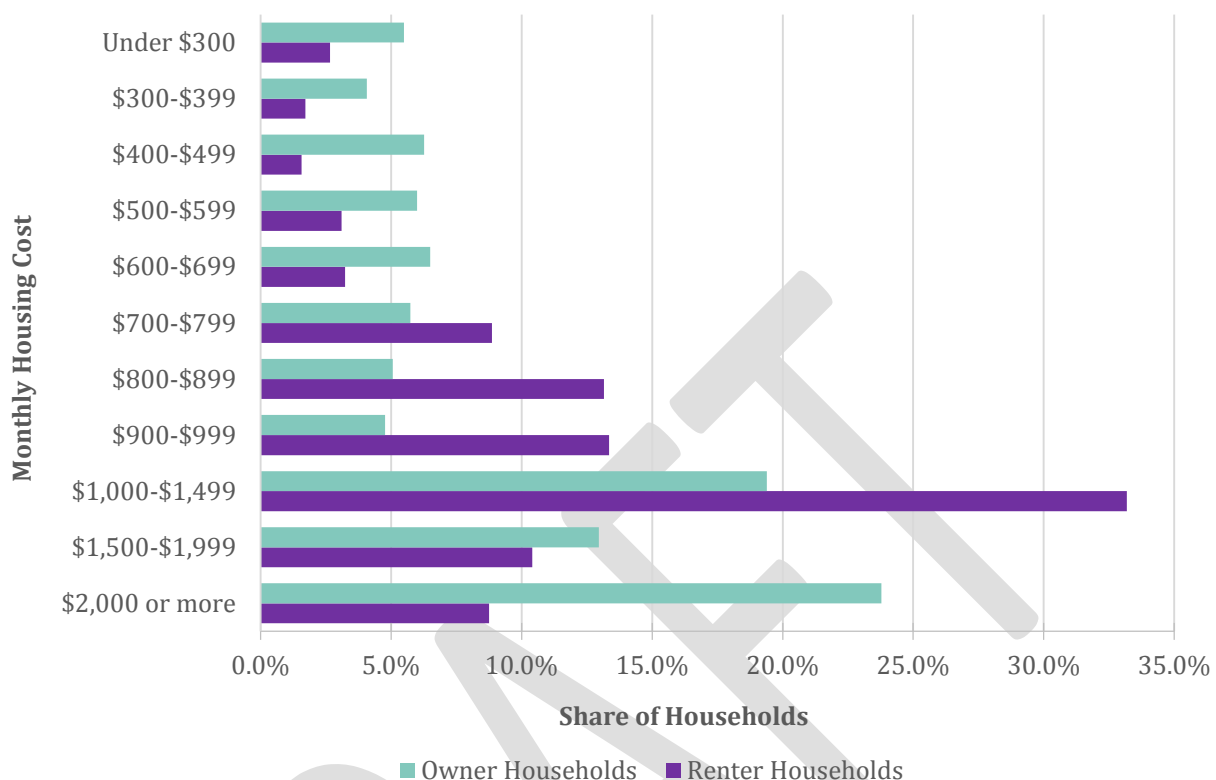
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2014 5-Year American Community Survey Table B25034

One of the most important aspects of any jurisdiction's housing stock is the cost associated with owning or renting a home. Stakeholder input overwhelmingly indicated high housing costs as an issue for low- and moderate-income households, as well as middle-income households, including persons employed in education, healthcare, and social assistance industries. Figure 3 below identifies housing costs for households by tenure in Collier County. For owners, monthly housing costs include mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities/fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees. For renters, costs include contract rent plus utilities.

For owners, the most common range of monthly housing costs is over \$2,000 (23.8%), followed by \$1,000 to \$1,499 (19.4%) and \$1,500 to \$1,999 (13.0%). Together, these cost ranges comprise over half of Collier County owner households. Note that this distribution includes owners with and without a mortgage; lower cost ranges likely represent a large number of owners who do not have mortgages.

Looking at renters, one-third pay between \$1,000 and \$1,499 for monthly housing costs. Thirteen percent spend between \$900 and \$999 and another 13% spend between \$800 and \$899. Only 5.9% of renters pay less than \$500 for housing, indicating a limited supply of housing at the lower priced end of the spectrum, as stakeholders identified. The next section takes a more in-depth look at issues of housing affordability in Collier County.

Figure 3. Monthly Housing Costs in Collier County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2014 5-Year American Community Survey Tables B25094 and B25063

Housing Needs

To assess affordability and other types of housing needs, HUD identifies four housing problems:

1. A household is cost burdened if monthly housing costs (including property taxes, insurance, energy payments, water/sewer service, and trash collection for owners and utilities for renters) exceed 30% of monthly household income. A severe cost burden occurs when more than 50% of monthly household income is spent on monthly housing costs.
2. A household is overcrowded if there is more than 1.0 persons per room, not including kitchens and bathrooms. A household is severely overcrowded if there are more than 1.5 persons per room, not including kitchens or bathrooms.
3. A housing unit lacks complete kitchen facilities if it lacks one or more of the following facilities: cooking facilities, a refrigerator, or a sink with piped water.
4. A housing unit lacks complete plumbing facilities if it lacks one or more of the following facilities: hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet, and a bathtub or shower.

To assess housing need, HUD receives a special tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey that is largely not available through standard Census products. This data, known as the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, counts the number of households that fit certain combinations of HUD-specified criteria, such as housing needs by income level, race, and ethnicity. CHAS data for low- and moderate-income households in Collier County (households with incomes of 80% area median income or less) is provided below.

| Table 5. Households with One or More Housing Needs by Income for Collier County | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Income | Renter Households | | | Owner Households | | |
| | With Needs | Total | Share with Needs | With Needs | Total | Share with Needs |
| Up to 30% AMI | 4,495 | 5,620 | 80.0% | 4,965 | 6,380 | 77.8% |
| 31% to 50% AMI | 4,180 | 5,025 | 83.2% | 5,690 | 7,760 | 73.3% |
| 51% to 80% AMI | 5,060 | 6,995 | 72.3% | 7,545 | 13,230 | 57.0% |
| Total up to 80% AMI | 13,735 | 17,640 | 77.9% | 18,200 | 27,370 | 66.5% |

Source: 2008-2012 CHAS

Note: As of 2015, the median income for the Naples-Marco Island MSA (which includes Collier County) was \$66,500.

According to the 2008-2012 CHAS data (Table 5), there are an estimated 13,735 low- and moderate-income renter households and 18,200 low- and moderate-income owner households with one or more housing needs in Collier County. Over three-fourths of renters with incomes under 80% AMI have at least one housing need, as do two-thirds of owners.

By far the most common housing needs are cost burdens, as Table 6 shows. Of the low- and moderate-income housing needs populations shown, 94.0% of renters and 97.9% of owners spend at least 30% of their income on housing. Owners make up a larger share of the cost burdened population at 27,370 households (a rate of 65.1%) but renters are more likely to face a cost burden (with a rate of 73.2%).

Severe cost burdens affect a smaller but still sizeable share of low/moderate income households – 37.0% of renters and 42.1% of owners. Combined there are a total of 18,045 households with incomes below 80% AMI spending more than half of their income on housing.

While HUD funds are primarily targeted to households with incomes below 80% AMI, higher income bands are also provided in Table 6 to assess other potential housing issues in Collier County. It is typically assumed that those with incomes above 80% AMI have access to enough housing options to secure a unit for less than 30% of their annual income,

and thus, that cost burdens at these income levels are results of choice rather than of a limited supply of appropriately affordable housing. Community input, however, indicates that Collier County’s high housing costs may preclude many middle income households, including those employed in education, healthcare, and social assistance industries, from affording housing. The data from Table 5 suggests support for these claims – over one-third of renters and two-fifths of owners with incomes from 81%-100% AMI have a cost burden. One-fifth of owners have a severe cost burden.

Looking at all households in Collier County regardless of income or tenure, 40.0% spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Of those, about half (or 19.3% of all households) are severely cost burdened.

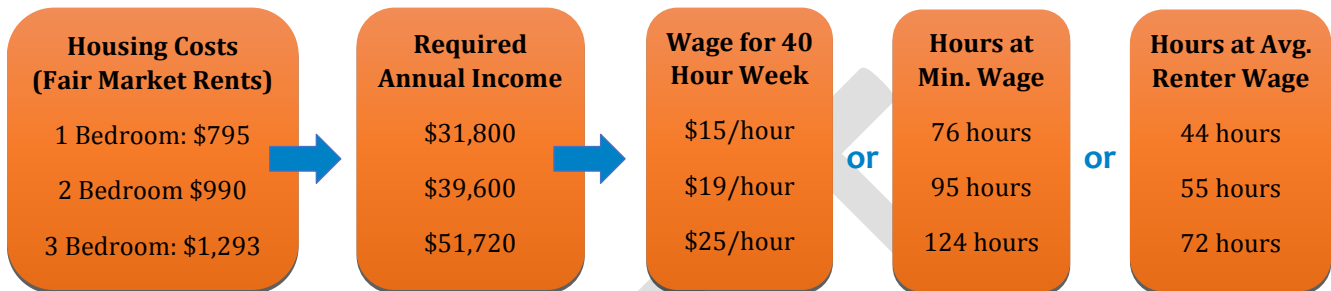
| Table 6. Households Cost Burdens and Severe Cost Burdens by Income for Collier County | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Income | Renter Households | | | Owner Households | | |
| | With Cost Burden | Total | Share with Cost Burden | With Cost Burden | Total | Share with Cost Burden |
| Housing Cost Burdens | | | | | | |
| Up to 30% AMI | 4,310 | 5,620 | 76.7% | 4,920 | 6,380 | 77.1% |
| 31% to 50% AMI | 3,930 | 5,025 | 78.2% | 5,575 | 7,760 | 71.8% |
| 51% to 80% AMI | 4,675 | 6,995 | 66.8% | 7,315 | 13,230 | 55.3% |
| 81% to 100% AMI | 1,170 | 3,380 | 34.6% | 3,765 | 8,740 | 43.1% |
| Over 100% AMI | 1,100 | 8,840 | 12.4% | 11,625 | 54,965 | 21.1% |
| Total | 15,185 | 29,860 | 50.9% | 33,200 | 91,075 | 36.5% |
| Total up to 80% AMI | 12,915 | 17,640 | 73.2% | 17,810 | 27,370 | 65.1% |
| Severe Housing Cost Burdens | | | | | | |
| Up to 30% AMI | 3,785 | 5,620 | 67.3% | 4,275 | 6,380 | 67.0% |
| 31% to 50% AMI | 1,760 | 5,025 | 35.0% | 3,565 | 7,760 | 45.9% |
| 51% to 80% AMI | 990 | 6,995 | 14.2% | 3,670 | 13,230 | 27.7% |
| 81% to 100% AMI | 290 | 3,380 | 8.6% | 1,680 | 8,740 | 19.2% |
| Over 100% AMI | 330 | 8,840 | 3.7% | 3,050 | 54,965 | 5.5% |
| Total | 7,155 | 29,860 | 24.0% | 16,240 | 91,075 | 17.8% |
| Total up to 80% AMI | 6,535 | 17,640 | 37.0% | 11,510 | 27,370 | 42.1% |

Source: 2008-2012 CHAS

Housing Affordability

The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s annual *Out of Reach* report examines rental housing rates relative to income levels for counties and metro areas throughout the U.S. The figure below shows annual household income and hourly wages needed to afford Fair Market Rents (FMRs) in Collier County for one, two, and three bedrooms units.

Figure 4. Required Income, Wages, and Hours to Afford Fair Market Rents in Collier County, 2015



Note: Required income is the annual income needed to afford Fair Market Rents without spending more than 30% of household income on rent. Minimum wage in Collier County is \$8.05; average renter wage is \$13.88.

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition *Out of Reach* 2015, Accessed from http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/files/reports/state/OOR_2015_FL.pdf

To afford a one bedroom rental unit at the Collier County FMR of \$795 without being cost burdened would require an annual income of at least \$31,800. This amount translates to a 40 hour work week at an hourly wage of \$15, a 76 hour work week at the minimum wage of \$8.05, or a 44 hour work week at the average renter wage of \$13.88. The two bedroom FMR of \$990 translates to an hourly wage of \$19, a 95 hour work week at minimum wage, or a 55 hour work week at the average renter wage. Statewide, a minimum wage employee would need to work about the same number of hours as in Collier: 77 hours per work to afford a one bedroom unit and 97 for a two bedroom unit. Work weeks at the average statewide renter wage are also very similar to those in Collier County.

Homeless Needs

In January 2015, Collier County conducted its annual Point-In-Time survey count of the County’s homeless population. The count identified 389 homeless residents in total, comprised of 211 persons in emergency shelter, 134 in transitional housing, and 44 who were unsheltered. This count reflects an increase of 28 persons in comparison to the 2014 Point-In-Time count of 361.

The homeless population presented with several social service and mental health needs/issues such as:

- Chronic substance abuse – 121 persons

- Adults with disabilities – 103 persons
- Domestic violence survivors – 90 persons
- Serious mental illness – 33 persons
- Chronically homeless – 32 persons
- Veterans – 5 persons
- HIV/AIDS – 3 persons

The Point-in-Time Count included 63 children in families, 31 unaccompanied youth (4 of whom were under age 18), and 18 parenting youth with 10 children. The Hunger and Homeless Coalition of Collier County's public schools' liaison reported serving 592 students from the start of the school year to January 29th. In addition to those meeting HUD's definition of homelessness, this count also includes children awaiting foster care placement, families doubled up with relatives or friends, and unaccompanied youth living staying with relatives or friends.

Input from service providers in Collier County identified some top needs for homeless persons or persons at risk of homelessness as:

- Rapid rehousing
- Tenant based rental assistance
- Supportive housing for persons with physical and/or mental disabilities
- Access to substance abuse and mental health programs
- Assistance navigating social services network
- Transportation assistance

Public Facilities and Infrastructure Needs

This needs assessment conducted for Collier County uncovered significant needs related to public facilities and improvements to public infrastructure.

Public Facilities Needs

The top needs for public facilities were reported to be for community centers, health care facilities, and public safety stations/offices. In the course of the engagement with residents and stakeholders relative to this assessment, many described a need for more opportunities for social interaction for seniors and activities for youth and children. Presumably, community centers and similar facilities would be necessary in order to provide these types of services. The lack of affordable, accessible healthcare services was also frequently mentioned. Many physicians, doctors, and other health providers serving the county are said to offer concierge-based services in which patients pay premium fees in order to receive a higher level of service and access to their providers. These concierge-based practices do not typically accept Medicare or Medicaid patients. As a result, many low- and moderate-income residents expressed a need for healthcare facilities providing services at lower cost. Public safety facilities, such as fire, police or emergency management facilities were also described by residents as significant public facility needs.

In the public survey conducted as part of this needs assessment and described more fully later in this report, respondents were asked to rank public facility needs in the County as high, moderate, or low need. The top three needs ranked as high need were community centers (ranked high by 57.3% of respondents), health care facilities (48.2%), and public safety officers (46.3%).

Infrastructure and Public Improvement Needs

Demolition or redevelopment of blighted properties was seen by Collier County residents as an important need. Additionally, the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has undertaken several subarea studies of bicycle and pedestrian mobility in communities throughout the County. Though only a few individual communities have been studied to date, the MPO reports have indicated significant needs for sidewalks, bike lanes, and pedestrian safety improvements. For example, in Naples Manor, the MPO report graded the community with an overall level of service of D. Of 31 streets in the community, only one had sidewalks on both sides of the road. The proximity of Lely High School and Parkside Elementary School to the area heighten the need for public improvements. Improved street lighting and the addition of street furniture, such as benches and signs, was often a frequent recommendation as well. Similar findings were contained in a separate MPO report on the Immokalee area.

Over 35% of respondents to the public survey rated demolition or redevelopment of blighted properties as a high need. Another 42% of respondents rated this a moderate need. Needs for sidewalk, street lighting, and street furniture were determined based on a review of prior studies conducted by the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization. County staff in the Growth Management Department confirmed these as needs.

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Special Population Needs

The table below depicts the needs of special populations within Collier County that were reported by county residents and other local stakeholders. Special populations include the elderly, residents with disabilities, domestic violence survivors, residents with limited English proficiency, and migrant workers.

| Table 7. Special Populations Needs | |
|--|--|
| Elderly | People with Disabilities |
| Increased affordable housing options Supportive housing services Accessible housing for disabled seniors Memory care services for residents with dementia Accessible transportation for seniors with disabilities Affordable transportation Social activities and programs | Increased affordable housing options Increased accessible housing options Fair housing education related to source of income discrimination Supportive housing services Increased independent living facilities Special education support in school setting Accessible transportation Affordable transportation |
| Domestic Violence Survivors | People with Limited English Proficiency and Migrant Workers |
| Increased affordable housing options Supportive housing services Employment skills and job training Substance abuse counseling services Affordable transportation Childcare subsidies/assistance Financial literacy classes Fair housing education | Increased affordable housing options Employment skills and job training Fair housing education Improved maintenance of affordable housing Affordable transportation ESL services in schools and for adults Financial literacy classes Childcare subsidies/assistance |

Sources: Stakeholder interviews, community meetings, focus groups, and community survey conducted during November and December, 2015

As indicated in the socioeconomic overview of this assessment, the elderly population in the county is high and rising, creating a need for special focus on the needs of the county's elderly population. Additionally, as elderly residents are likely to have higher rates of disabilities, the rise in elderly population also creates a need for increased attention to services for disabled residents. The Department of Social Work from Florida Gulf Coast University conducted a needs assessment for the Leadership Coalition on Aging for Collier County in 2012. The report detailed several other community needs amongst the county's

elderly population including: social isolation; need for social activities; difficulty navigating systems and application processes related to healthcare, transportation, and housing; need for Independent Living services and programs; need for supplemental food assistance; low-income housing; and supportive housing with assisted daily living skills activities.²

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² <http://www.collierseniorresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/LCA-report-electronic-final1.pdf>. Last accessed on 01/04/2016.

Community Participation Results

The community outreach process used to elicit input regarding community needs, affordable housing, and fair housing included four community meetings, two focus groups, individual and small group interviews, and an online and hard copy survey in English and Spanish. Participation was sought from persons living or working in Collier County, specifically including representatives from organizations working with low- and moderate-income populations, homeless persons, domestic violence survivors, migrant workers, persons with limited English proficiency, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Housing professionals (housing providers, lenders, real estate agents, fair housing advocates, and others) were also invited to participate. This section provides more details about each outreach method and a summary of the responses received.

Community Meetings

The County held four community meetings in different neighborhoods throughout Collier County during the weeks of November 2 and November 9, 2015. Table 8 provides the locations, dates, and times for each of the community meetings.

| Date | Area | Time | Location | Number of Attendees |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|--|----------------------------|
| 11/03/2015 | West Naples | 5 pm | Estates Branch Library, 1266 Golden Gate Blvd, West Naples | 10 |
| 11/04/2015 | Naples | 6 pm | Naples Regional Library, 650 Central Ave, Naples | 9 |
| 11/05/2015 | Immokalee | 5 pm | Immokalee Branch Library, 417 N First St, Immokalee | 14 |
| 11/10/2015 | East Naples | 5 pm | East Naples Branch Library, 8787 Tamiami Trail E, Naples | 22 |

Themes emerging from comments received at the community meetings are highlighted below.

Housing Needs

- A growing need for senior housing and services, especially given the limited supply of affordable senior housing currently available. Additional senior centers are also needed. There is a need for services for seniors with dementia, especially assistance in securing housing.

- A need for supportive housing for persons with developmental disabilities. Current resources do not meet the need for supportive housing, and this need is likely to grow as parents of adults with development disabilities age and are no longer able to care for them.
- More transitional housing and counseling services are needed for persons with substance abuse issues.
- In Naples, need housing that is affordable to all segments of the workforce, including teachers, healthcare workers, social assistance providers, and tourism industry employees. High housing costs in Naples mean longer commute times from more affordable locations.
- Housing stock in Immokalee is not sufficient to meet the needs of the existing workforce or the professional jobs (teachers, dentists, etc.) the area would like to attract. Options are needed for middle-income households and households looking to move out of mobile homes.
- Mobile homes in Immokalee are often run down and overpopulated, but owners have little incentives to make improvements.
- Question of whether there will be the policy-level will to make real changes regarding housing options in Collier County, both in Immokalee and Naples.
- East Naples has a high share of affordable housing. Funds should be used for remodeling existing homes, more permanent senior housing, and more housing vouchers.

Community Development Needs

- In Immokalee, top community development needs include commercial district revitalization, healthcare and dental care, bike and walking trails, expanded library hours, parks and recreation fields, activities for children, senior services, and hands-on homebuyer education/assistance.
- In East Naples, top community development needs include improved lighting and sidewalks in Bayshore area, formation of a civic association, a community pool, and a public garden.
- Public transit is not sufficient to meet the needs of low-income and disabled populations due to limited routes and service hours, leading to long trip times. Paratransit pick up times are too broad. For many low-income residents, the cost of transit is prohibitive. Transit across county lines is difficult.

Fair Housing

- Education is needed for landlords and residents regarding fair housing. Attendees generally do not know where to file a housing discrimination complaint, although Legal Aid was often mentioned as a resource.

Distribution of Community Resources

- Residents in Immokalee felt that community resources are not distributed equally. Immokalee has fewer and inferior resources such as parks, sports fields, libraries, and bus shelters.
- Attendees at the Naples meeting noted that library resources and beautification efforts are not evenly distributed, and that while there are parks throughout the county, access has been limited historically.

Stakeholder Interviews

In person and telephone interviews with 36 people representing 22 local organizations were held during November 2015. Participants included local governments departments, nonprofit organizations, housing developers, and private sector entities located in and/or serving Naples and unincorporated Collier County (see Table 9).

| Table 9. Participating Organizations | |
|--|---|
| United Cerebral Palsy | Collier County Mental Health/Drug Court |
| Collier County Hunger and Homeless Coalition | Collier County Court Administration |
| Collier County Housing Authority | Corizon |
| Legal Aid | Collier County Sheriff's Office |
| Drug Free Collier | Lighthouse of Collier |
| Habitat for Humanity of Collier County | David Lawrence Center |
| Shelter for Abused Women | Immokalee Housing & Family Services |
| Foundation for the Developmentally Disabled | Collier County Planning |
| Harry Chapin Food Bank | Goodwill |
| Able Academy | St. Matthews House |
| Rural Neighborhoods | AVOW Hospice |
| Collier Senior Resources* | Residential Options of Florida* |
| Immokalee CRA* | Community Assisted & Supported Living* |
| Immokalee Chamber of Commerce* | Golden Gate Estates Civic Association* |

*Participated through community meetings rather than interviews.

Interviewees were asked questions similar but not identical to those posed during the community meetings. Table 10 contains questions and a summary of response themes. Because interviews were confidential, summaries of individual interviews are not provided. Note that not all individuals interviewed responded to every question.

Table 10. Interview Response Summary

1. What issues and challenges do your clients commonly face? What do you believe they would name as their top needs in the community?
 - Affordable housing for people with convictions and substance abuse issues; residential treatment facility for children and adolescents
 - Transitional housing and support services for those with drug and substance abuse problems
 - Affordable housing that is safe for single mothers
 - High deposits and application fees for rental housing
 - High childcare costs
 - Difficulty accessing services, especially low income residents living in the east who must come to Naples for services
2. From a professional perspective, what do you believe are the greatest community development needs in the county?
 - Public transportation is needed in Golden Gates
 - Improved public transit; service times are limited and costs are high for low wage workers
 - Improved paratransit; currently has limited hours and doesn't run on Sunday; too expensive for low-income riders; approval process is too lengthy; window for pickup time is too wide
 - Transportation across county lines is very difficult
 - Improved access to healthcare and mental health treatment
 - Affordable childcare and afterschool care/activities
 - Job and employment training
 - Financial literacy
 - Entry level jobs with livable wages
 - Access to resources and help navigating social assistance network
 - Nowhere for people to go upon release from prison; need for better transition out of justice system and more housing options; Leads to homelessness
 - Housing and services for homeless veterans
 - English language assistance, English classes, and computer literacy classes in Immokalee
 - Afterschool care and transportation assistance in Immokalee
3. What do you believe are the greatest fair and affordable housing needs in the community? Where is this housing most needed?
 - Rental housing in general; lots of condos but few apartments
 - Workforce housing, including affordable housing for service/tourism, healthcare, education, and social service workers in Naples
 - Affordable housing in East and North Naples
 - Affordable and accessible housing for persons with disabilities, including with support animals; property managers are often not diligent about accommodations
 - Housing with supportive services for residents with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities
 - Intermediate care facilities or group homes
 - Expanded public housing and housing choice vouchers/tenant based rental assistance; Housing Authority waiting list is full
 - Senior housing, including with supportive services

- Much of Immokalee affordable housing is substandard, including farmworker housing; property issues are not fixed and there are no eviction procedures (people are just put out on the street)
- Single room occupancy dormitory for single women in Immokalee
- Senior housing in Immokalee
- Multifamily housing in Golden Gates
- For farmworkers, income fluctuates throughout the year which can impact ability to afford housing
- Could do more housing programs but there is difficulty making required HOME match
- Home sales prices are usually out of reach of Housing Authority residents, which makes it difficult to help them transition to homeownership
- Housing advisors and relationships with Section 8 landlords

4. What types of recent community development, affordable housing, and fair housing initiatives have been successful in the area? What made them work?

- Habitat for Humanity; one of the best in the country
- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
- Noah's Landing – transition from emergency shelter to Habitat for Humanity home
- Foundation for the Developmentally Disabled housing
- David Lawrence Center
- Neighborhood Health Clinic
- St. Matthews and the Friendship House
- Boys and Girls Club
- Youth Haven programs
- Care Club of Collier
- Immokalee CRA

5. What new uses of HUD grant funds should the County consider?

- Substance abuse treatment
- Transitional housing with supportive services
- Legal aid and domestic violence services
- Afterschool programs and youth programming
- Fair housing grant
- Improved transportation/paratransit
- Affordable housing closer to services
- Rapid rehousing program
- Housing counselors to help people find appropriate housing
- Partner with most efficient organizations and choose projects that will really make an impact on top needs

6. What organizations in the area provide fair housing services? How well are these organizations coordinated with the work of other organizations in the community?

- Collier County has a fair housing representative, this is not well-publicized
- Legal Aid
- HUD and Florida Commission on Housing
- Unknown

7. Do residents of similar incomes generally have the same range of housing options?

- No, more education regarding fair housing rights is needed for people with limited English proficiency

- No, white families have more options than Hispanic family even with similar incomes; Creole-speaking family is likely to have even more limited options
- Condo application processes may impact housing options
- Source of income discrimination relative to Social Security/Supplemental Security Income
- Yes
- Unsure

8. Are people in the area segregated in where they live? What characteristics define the segregation? What causes it to occur?

- Yes, county is racially segregated but may be due to income; there is an intersection between race and income relative to where people live in Collier County
- More racial minorities in Immokalee (Mexican, Native American, Haitian residents)
- Naples is not diverse
- Golden Gate City and Naples Manor are more diverse but also lower income areas
- Has improved over time

9. Are you aware of any housing discrimination that occurs in the area? If so, what are some things that can be done to overcome discrimination to make access to housing more equitable?

- Has heard stories of racism and bias in the rental market
- General sense that there may be some discrimination; landlords have a large enough demand pool to be picky
- Discrimination is not overt, but is there
- Undocumented workers, persons with criminal history, or no credit end up paying more for substandard housing because they have less rental options
- Discrimination based on disability
- Discrimination toward families with children
- Many apartment complexes have bilingual staff, which is helpful
- No/not aware of any

10. Are public resources (e.g., parks, schools, roads, police and fire services, etc.) invested evenly throughout all neighborhoods?

- Yes
- Parks are great and County puts money towards beautifying roads
- Highly visible roads are often better taken care of
- Parks are needed in Golden Gate Estates and Immokalee
- Schools are generally all good, but some differences in student/teacher ratio and special education services depending on the area's income
- Parks tend to be better the closer you are to Naples
- Streetlights were turned off in some parts of the county during the Recession
- Immokalee has less access to community resources than other parts of the county

11. Is there anything we haven't discussed that you feel is important to our research?

- Wages for the area are low and generally below market rates
- CDBG grant reporting requirements are onerous and payment by Clerk's office is slow; many social service agencies have unfavorable view of CDBG/HOME/ESG because of the red tape associated with getting grant funds
- Policy changes are needed to improve affordable housing; activities of AHAC need to be acted upon

- Need to define affordable housing; different groups have different definitions (low income, workforce, etc.) and it confuses the discussion
- Business community needs to understand that they are part of the issue related to affordable housing and they may need to put up some money to address it (specifically in reference to affordable housing for service industry workers in Naples)
- In addition to HUD funds, money from the County general fund should be used toward addressing affordable housing challenges
- Affordable housing is not on the minds of money seasonal residents who think of Naples solely as a vacation destination

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted during the week of November 2, 2015 – one at the Shelter for Abused Women and one at Immokalee Housing and Family Services. A total of 13 people participated. Input is summarized below.

Community Development Needs

- Public transit was reported as a need. Identified needs included more frequent buses due to buses running only every 2 hours, it taking 2 hours for buses to reach locations, not enough stops throughout the region (stops too far off to walk to or for people with mobility issues), no buses at Golden Gate and more rural and outlier areas, and limited service hours. Cost of bus fare was reported as high and had recently increased to \$35 for monthly passes with rules which makes the cost really \$60-\$75 per month.
- Disabled residents reported insurance issues with not getting payment or reimbursement for paratransit.
- Public transit has limited shelter from weather.
- Childcare was reported as unaffordable in Naples. The most expensive care is for ages 0-2.
- After school care is expensive (\$60 week/child). Costs extra for lunch and snacks. The higher the costs the better the activities and facilities. The one subsidy program for childcare (4 C's) is currently full.
- Education on employment and worker rights, especially for residents with limited English proficiency was identified as a need. Employment discrimination in job market for workers with limited English proficiency. Residents reported being asked on job applications the number of children they have and whether or they were not married.
- Limited wages. Minimum wage (\$8.05) is not enough money to pay for rent. There are no full time jobs, most residents reported working part-time and being underemployed.
- Residents do not receive any benefits from employment including healthcare.
- People prey on vulnerable, using immigration status as a means of threat.
- Exploitation of residents with English as a second language.

- In Immokalee, need for childcare assistance, transportation assistance (especially to and from childcare), and free or low cost English classes for adults. Continued need for after school activities.

Housing Needs

- Predatory lending practices with source of income discrimination for residents with SSI or Social Security income, immigration status used as a threat, and ESL residents are exploited with landlords charging higher application fees and accepted cash only and refusing to provide receipts.
- The cost of applying for rentals and high deposits for rent and utilities complicate renting properties for lower income households.
- Greater housing and financial assistance is needed for low- income persons, low-income persons with disabilities, and seniors. Affordable housing is needed in East and North Naples. Many residents move to Lee County for affordability or “double up.”
- A greater need for accessible housing for disabled residents with mobility issues and supportive service animals.
- Even living in subsidized housing in Immokalee, rent is high for very low income families.

Survey of County Residents

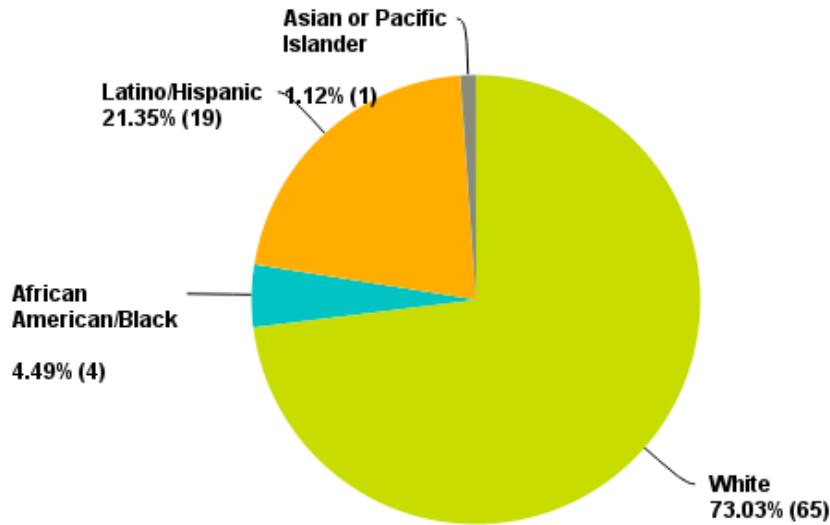
Additional evaluation of perceptions related to community needs and fair and affordable housing in Collier County was conducted via a community survey designed to gather insight into the knowledge, experience, opinions, and feelings of local residents, employees, and service providers. A total of 87 residents completed the English survey and 4 respondents completed the Spanish version. Findings are summarized below and complete results are available in an appendix to this document.

Respondent Demographics

The majority of the survey’s 91 respondents identified as white, however, over 1 in 5 survey respondents identified as Latino or Hispanic. Additionally, in 28.1% of households a language other than English is spoken regularly. The chart below depicts the self-identified racial make-up of survey respondents.

Q5 What is your race/ethnicity?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 2

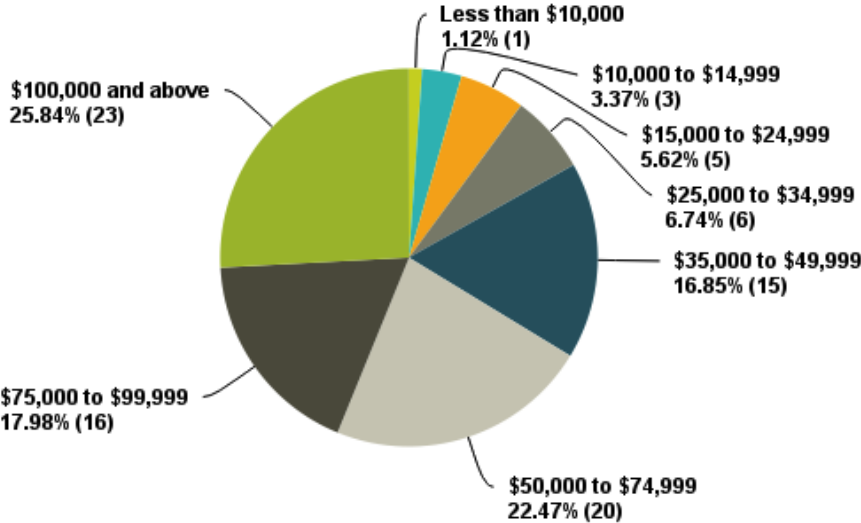


The most widely reported occupations were educational services, health care and social assistance (34.4%), public administration (16.6%), professional, scientific, and management (15.6%), and finance, insurance, and real estate (6.7%) representing over 73%, or nearly three quarters, of survey respondents. Approximately 1 in 10 respondents, or 11.1%, reported not currently working.

A large percentage of survey respondents were primarily from middle to upper middle class income groups with over 65% of households earning \$50,000 or more annually, and more than 1 in 4 respondents earning \$100,000 or more per year. The graph below depicts income distribution for survey respondents.

Q3 Which range most accurately reflects your total household income?

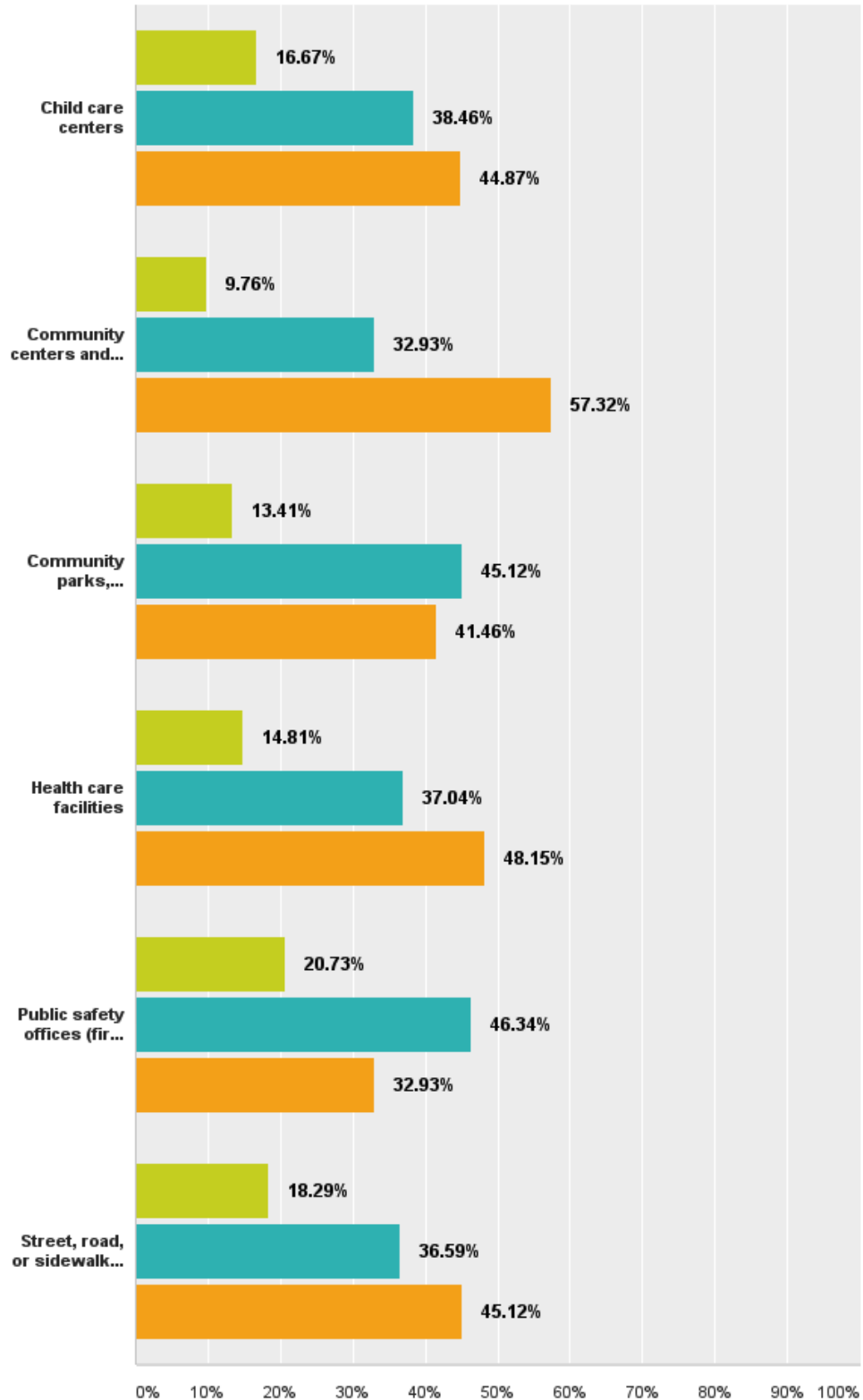
Answered: 89 Skipped: 2



Respondents were asked to rank public facility needs in the County as high, moderate, or low need. The top three needs ranked as high need were community centers (ranked high by 57.3% of respondents), health care facilities (48.2%), and public safety offices (46.3%). The chart below illustrates respondents' depiction of public facility needs.

Q13 Please rank the following Public Facility Needs in Collier County on a scale ranging from a low need to a high need.

Low Need Moderate Need High Need



Respondents were asked to rank economic and community development needs in the County. Financial assistance for community organization was identified as a high need by over half of the survey's respondents. Over one-third of survey respondents (37.3%) identified financial assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses as a high need.

| | Low Need | Moderate Need | High Need | Total | Weighted Average |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Facade improvements for businesses | 50.65% 39 | 28.57% 22 | 20.78% 16 | 77 | 1.70 |
| Financial assistance for community organizations | 9.09% 7 | 31.17% 24 | 59.74% 46 | 77 | 2.51 |
| Financial assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses | 24.00% 18 | 38.67% 29 | 37.33% 28 | 75 | 2.13 |
| Historic preservation efforts | 41.33% 31 | 49.33% 37 | 9.33% 7 | 75 | 1.68 |
| Increased code enforcement efforts | 44.00% 33 | 33.33% 25 | 22.67% 17 | 75 | 1.79 |
| Redevelopment/rehabilitation/demolition of blighted properties | 22.37% 17 | 42.11% 32 | 35.53% 27 | 76 | 2.13 |

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One-half or more of survey respondents identified the following public services needs as high needs: medical and dental services, senior services, youth services, housing counseling, and employment training. The chart below displays respondents ranking of public service needs.

| | Low Need | Moderate Need | High Need | Total | Weighted Average |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Child abuse prevention | 17.72% 14 | 39.24% 31 | 43.04% 34 | 79 | 2.25 |
| Childcare | 9.76% 8 | 42.68% 35 | 47.56% 39 | 82 | 2.38 |
| Domestic abuse services | 8.86% 7 | 45.57% 36 | 45.57% 36 | 79 | 2.37 |
| Drug abuse education/crime prevention | 7.59% 6 | 37.97% 30 | 54.43% 43 | 79 | 2.47 |
| Employment training | 6.10% 5 | 43.90% 36 | 50.00% 41 | 82 | 2.44 |
| Food banks/community meals | 12.20% 10 | 48.78% 40 | 39.02% 32 | 82 | 2.27 |
| Housing counseling | 11.11% 9 | 33.33% 27 | 55.56% 45 | 81 | 2.44 |
| Legal services | 14.63% 12 | 43.90% 36 | 41.46% 34 | 82 | 2.27 |
| Medical and dental services | 7.50% 6 | 32.50% 26 | 60.00% 48 | 80 | 2.52 |
| Neighborhood cleanups | 30.86% 25 | 44.44% 36 | 24.69% 20 | 81 | 1.94 |
| Senior services | 9.88% 8 | 38.27% 31 | 51.85% 42 | 81 | 2.42 |
| Transportation assistance | 7.50% 6 | 50.00% 40 | 42.50% 34 | 80 | 2.35 |
| Youth services | 10.00% 8 | 36.25% 29 | 53.75% 43 | 80 | 2.44 |

Respondents were asked to describe whether or not public resources were evenly distributed across the County. Schools received the highest percentage of respondents reporting equal distribution and public transportation received the highest percentage of reports of unequal distribution.

| | Equally provided | Not equally provided | I don't know | Total | Weighted Average |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Roads | 40.26% 31 | 48.05% 37 | 11.69% 9 | 77 | 0.46 |
| Public transportation | 18.18% 14 | 70.13% 54 | 11.69% 9 | 77 | 0.21 |
| Water/sewer | 45.45% 35 | 28.57% 22 | 25.97% 20 | 77 | 0.61 |
| Parks | 55.41% 41 | 39.19% 29 | 5.41% 4 | 74 | 0.59 |
| Schools | 68.83% 53 | 24.68% 19 | 6.49% 5 | 77 | 0.74 |
| Police protection | 63.16% 48 | 25.00% 19 | 11.84% 9 | 76 | 0.72 |
| Fire protection | 66.23% 51 | 23.38% 18 | 10.39% 8 | 77 | 0.74 |
| Code enforcement | 41.56% 32 | 42.86% 33 | 15.58% 12 | 77 | 0.49 |
| Sanitation services | 55.84% 43 | 25.97% 20 | 18.18% 14 | 77 | 0.68 |

Conclusions

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to identify needs that are to be used in the development of strategies and objectives for the 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan. Community meetings, interviews, focus groups, and surveys were used to assist in obtaining comments and opinions from organizations and residents of the County concerning housing, community development and homelessness needs.

While the Needs Assessment is not an exhaustive listing of all needs, it is intended to highlight priority needs identified from data analysis and by residents and other stakeholders of the County. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data presented in this document, top needs in Collier County include:

Housing and Homelessness Needs

Increased access to affordable housing

- Tenant based rental assistance
- Homeownership counseling and down payment assistance
- Support for the construction of new rental and for-sale affordable housing

The most common need identified by interviewees and community meeting participants was affordable housing, including both rental and for-sale housing. Almost all interviewees listed affordable housing as an issue in the county. In Naples, they described difficulties securing housing for low and moderate income groups (including many tourism industry workers), as well as middle income households and persons employed in healthcare, education, and social service professions. A lack of rental housing and apartments was also noted. In Immokalee, stakeholders mentioned affordability issues for migrant farmworkers and their families, many of whom have limited English proficiency. Public meeting participants also described a lack of options and assistance for households looking to move out of rental units/mobile homes and into homeownership.

Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) and National Low Income Housing Coalition data supports stakeholders' comments. Forty percent (40.0%) of all households in the county have a housing cost burden (i.e., spend over 30% of their income on housing). Looking specifically at low and moderate income households, over 90% of both renters and owners are cost burdened; more than 35% are severely cost burdened (i.e., spend over half of their income on housing). The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that a minimum wage worker would need to work 76 hours per week to afford a one-bedroom apartment at Collier County's fair market rent of \$795, and 95 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom unit.

When asked identify specific housing needs, survey participants ranked new construction of affordable rental units, downpayment assistance, and tenant based rental assistance as the

highest priorities. Each were listed as high needs by more than 60% of respondents.

Housing for Special Needs Populations

- Supportive housing for persons with developmental disabilities

Comments from stakeholders in both interviews and public meetings indicated a need for supportive housing for individuals with developmental disabilities. Input revealed a low availability of housing options to meet difficulty with mobility. Housing with services that would allow developmentally disabled residents to live more independently, such as case management services to assist with navigating needs related to employment, education, managing finances, health, and daily living were frequently requested. It was reported that many residents with developmental disabilities remained living in the home of their parents or other family members due to a lack of supportive housing services. In the community survey, over half (56.6%) of respondents reported that services for the disabled was a high need in the County, while over one third (38.1%) identified it as a moderate need.

- Senior and accessible housing

Over 60% of stakeholders interviewed reported that Collier County does not have enough senior housing. Stakeholders described a long waiting list to obtain affordable housing for seniors and reported that most housing was not accessible to persons with disabilities including mobility, sight, and hearing disabilities, along with memory care. Several requests were made for supportive housing with case management services to assist with social activities and integration, health management, financial management, transportation, and daily living assistance. A study on issues affecting seniors in Collier County identified social isolation as a key negative outcome impacting seniors that could be ameliorated with more supportive housing services. In the community survey, more than half (55.1%) of respondents reported that senior housing was a high need for the county and more than one-third (35.9%) of respondents identified it as a moderate need. Similarly, over half (51.8%) of respondents described senior services as a high need and over a third (38.2%) described it as a moderate need.

- Homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing

In the community survey, 65.4% of respondents identified homelessness prevention as a high need and 29.5% described it as a moderate need. The vast majority of respondents (70.1%) identified housing with supportive services as a high need while 20.8% described it as a moderate need. Stakeholder interviews and input supported the results of the community survey with requests made for prevention services and rapid rehousing with supportive services that would include temporary financial assistance with rent or application fees, substance abuse counseling and education, and case management.

- Transitional housing with supportive services

Transitional housing with supportive services to aid homeless residents, including those with substance abuse issues, was identified by stakeholders and residents as a need. Requests for services included more sober living facilities with counseling, employment skills training, case management, and childcare. Education and services to aid with substance abuse issues was identified as a high need by 54.4% of the community survey respondents and as a moderate need

by 37.9%.

Community Development Needs

Public services

- Transportation assistance

Over 75% of stakeholder interviews identified transportation assistance as a community need. Input identified several concerns with public transit including difficulty with getting insurance to cover paratransit, limited hours and locations, and the increased cost of public transit. Input from focus groups and community meetings described issues with transportation as limiting childcare, employment, educational, and housing opportunities. In the community survey, 70.1% of respondents reported that public transportation was not evenly distributed across the County.

- Youth programs

Another common community development need identified in interviews was youth programs and activities. Over half of survey respondents (53.8%) identified youth activities as a high need, and 36.3% identified them as a moderate need. Additionally, a survey previously conducted of Immokalee residents and stakeholders identified a lack of activities for children and teens as the number one need related to education and youth. Specific examples provided by respondents included festivals and other cultural activities, clubs for children, dance/music/arts programs, and game nights. Public meeting participants also brought up the need for more youth programs, longer hours, and general facility improvements at the library and parks/sports fields in Immokalee.

- English language classes and job/life skills training

In Immokalee, a key need identified by interview, focus group, and community meeting participants was English language and other classes. Concentrations of Creole- and Spanish-speaking residents, including many who are low income, will provide continued demand for English language classes. Other training identified as a need by Immokalee residents/stakeholders includes financial literacy and job skills training.

Fair housing

- Fair housing education for landlords and residents, especially for special needs populations including persons with limited English proficiency and migrant workers

Information from key stakeholders indicated a need for increased education around issues related to fair housing for both landlords and residents of Collier County. Information obtained at focus groups indicated minority residents and those with limited English proficiency being charged higher application fees or rental rates for similar properties, and refusal by landlords to make needed repairs to properties. Several interviewees identified similar issues, and the majority indicated a lack of awareness about fair housing resources in the county.

In the community survey, nearly 1 in 5 (18.8%) of respondents reported experiencing housing discrimination and the majority reported that this discrimination was related to their race (33.3%), ethnicity (25.0%), or national origin (16.6%). Of respondents who experience discrimination, over 70% reported that they were discriminated against by a landlord. Additionally, 55.8% of respondents identified lack of knowledge regarding fair housing rights by residents as a barrier to fair housing, while 48.0% of respondents identified lack of fair housing by landlords and property owners as a barrier to fair housing.

Public Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements

- Construction of community centers, health care facilities, and public safety stations
- Improvements to public parks, libraries, and other facilities

In the public survey conducted as part of this plan development process, respondents were asked to rank public facility needs in the County as high, moderate, or low need. The top three needs ranked as high need were community centers (ranked high by 57.3% of respondents), health care facilities (48.2%), and public safety officers (46.3%). Parks, libraries, and other public facilities also represented needs described by residents who were engaged in this needs assessment.

- Demolition or redevelopment of blighted properties
- Infrastructure improvements in the Immokalee and Bayshore CRAs and in other communities
- Support for infrastructure related to affordable housing development

Over 35% of respondents to the public survey rated demolition or redevelopment of blighted properties as a high need. Another 42% of respondents rated this a moderate need. Needs for sidewalk, street lighting, and street furniture were determined based on a review of prior studies conducted by the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization. County staff in the Growth Management Department confirmed these as needs.