2020 Community Needs Assessment Report Lycoming County



In response to COVID-19 April 2020

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Executive Summary

The Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP), Inc. is the Community Action Agency for Lycoming and Clinton counties and as such is required to complete a Community Needs Assessment every three-years and upon any major change in the service area. The COVID-19 pandemic is a major community change, and thus STEP mobilized rather quickly to develop and coordinate a Community Needs Assessment survey for both Lycoming and Clinton counties. The Community Needs Assessment surveys were deployed digitally through SurveyMonkey. The community survey was deployed on April 15, 2020 and was open until May 16, 2020. While a Community Needs Assessment survey was developed for both counties, in order to better analyze the local needs, the questions mirrored one another. The key areas addressed in the Community Needs Assessment survey, includes: Employment, Education, Children & Youth, Housing, Health & Nutrition, Emergency Services, Senior Support Services, Disability Services, and Substance Abuse. Given the quick turnaround for the survey, the response rate was good with 776 respondents in Lycoming County. The overwhelming theme of the data analysis was the community needs that were existent prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic were amplified and heightened in our communities.

Demographics:

Of Lycoming County's 53 municipalities, only 4 did not have any respondents to the community survey. The total number of respondents was 776. Before getting into the data analysis, there were some interesting trends of those who completed the survey. While STEP utilized various methods to get the information about the survey out, the majority of respondents were not from low-income households and noted though they did not have needs, they know families are struggling due to lay-offs and school closures. This can be seen with many respondents stating that they 'do not know' in response to the question about what other needs do you see as it relates to key areas and the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 58% of the respondents did not have children in their household. This illustrates that households with children that were juggling both home schooling and likely working from home did not have the time to complete the survey. Another 62% of respondents did not have anyone over the age of 60 in their household. In terms of education, 70% have a college degree or higher. From this information, most of the individuals who completed survey were middle-aged working individuals. The survey was also coordinated through an online format. This may be another reason why low-income households, particularly in rural communities, were not able to engage. The lack of reliable internet access was a main theme in the responses. Typically, STEP's Community Needs Assessment draws many responses from low-income households and a main reason for this is the coordination through our non-profit partners, who worked with their customers on completing the community survey. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our non-profit partners were not open and/or were contacting their customers remotely.

Summary – Lycoming County

In the open-ended question of *what is the most important problem facing Lycoming County* that started off the community survey, the top three issues were **Jobs/Economy, COVID-19/Pandemic** and **Substance Abuse.** Substance Abuse followed by Jobs/Economy were both noted as major problems in the 2018 Community Needs Assessment. During the time of the survey, Lycoming County was in a stay at home order, so it is understandable that COVID-19/Pandemic was one of the top three issues. The COVID-19/Pandemic comments range from lack of personal protection equipment to lack of knowledge, issues with testing and future outbreaks.

Throughout the survey, major themes were seen intertwining the key areas:

Access to Reliable Internet/Technology: The COVID-19 pandemic and associated stay at home orders changed daily life. There was an immediate reliance on the internet and technology for schooling, work, and socialization. Access to reliable and affordable internet and technology was detailed as a major issue in

the community survey, specifically as it relates to education and remote learning, telemedicine access, and employment with work from home requirements. The quality of distance learning was also a major concern, with each school district in the county using technology differently to engage students. Many rural areas of Lycoming County do not have access to reliable, affordable, internet services. Beyond the availability of internet access, respondents also noted not having the technology, such as computers and smart phones with the capabilities to access the internet as being an issue. This is a community-wide problem that has been known, yet the pandemic brought to light how challenging life can be without the equal access to technology, specifically for education purposes.

Lack of Child Abuse Reporting: Nearly half of the respondents who stated they were aware of someone who has been a victim of child abuse or neglect did not report it to authorities. Education of how to call Childline to report abuse and neglect is needed community wide. The responsibility to keep children safe is on the whole community and it is essential individuals have the information to make the decision to report abuse and neglect.

Food Insecurity: The lack of food and hunger was also noted throughout the community survey as a major concern. This was discussed in multiple ways including the increased demand and the lack of supply in food products. Whether it is due to age, transportation issues, or lack of income, access to food is a struggle. Also, how to obtain access to food was also a barrier. The data showed that many of the households are unaware of the resources in the community as they never had to access them before. Beyond food products, cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, and other basic needs were discussed as being an issue to secure. From the data provided, there is a concern about food insecurity moving forward for many respondents. This illustrates a long-term need for basic needs through the recovery.

Childcare Needs: Lycoming County was in a childcare crisis prior to COVID-19 pandemic. The situation quickly spiraled out of control as essential workers needed childcare and so many facilities were shut down and did not have operations in place to allow for new enrollments. The struggle was both on the childcare providers, the limited number of facilities that received a waiver to stay open during the stay at home order, and the large number of low-income essential workers, who with no access to childcare could not work. Childcare providers need support and guidance to ensure safety of all children and more slots need to be developed to accommodate the pressing need for quality childcare in our community.

Connection to Resources: Lycoming County has a comprehensive network of non-profit organizations, yet the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that many residents are still unaware of the resources that exist in the community and how to connect to them. Many households found themselves for the first-time needing services during this time and did not know where to turn. More general education to residents is needed on the support systems available throughout Lycoming County, whether it is for childcare, food, utility assistance, or housing assistance.

Emergency Needs for Families In-Crisis: The needs of families are very individualized, are differing based on their situation prior to COVID-19, and will change on how the pandemic proceeds. From the community survey, many households were not prepared for any emergency, including the pandemic. There is a lack of knowledge on resources that exist for families in-crisis and many do not want to be seen asking for assistance, even if they are in dire need. As Lycoming County moves into recovery, some of the anticipated requests from families in crisis will likely be rental assistance, security deposits, utilities assistance, basic personal care needs, essential document costs, and transportation cost. Service coordination and connecting families with the various agencies to ensure they can return to self-sufficiency is necessary.

Safe & Affordable Housing: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lycoming County was in need of safe and affordable housing options and this was highlighted through the community survey that the there is still a need. Affordable housing is a complex issue and includes ensuring a community has a range of housing options that are safe and accessible to individuals at various income levels. Approximately 15% of respondents to the community survey also indicated they knew someone in that was homeless with no place to live. As the eviction moratorium concludes, rental and assistance and homeless supports are going to be critical in Lycoming County.

Mental Health Supports: With the stay at home order in place, social isolation and the need for more mental health supports in the community was noted throughout the survey. As Lycoming County moves to recovery, this will still be a major concern for our most vulnerable populations, such as seniors, children, individuals dealing with addiction issues, and individuals with disabilities.

Substance Abuse Recovery Services: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, drug and alcohol abuse was the top concern in Lycoming County behind Jobs/Economy. The community survey illustrates a small uptick in substance abuse. The main problem identified as it relates to substance abuse is the connection to affordable substance abuse resources, such as counseling services available to Lycoming County residents.

Moving Forward:

The global and local situation as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic is continually changing, STEP expects our local community needs to also change as the community moves into recovery. STEP intents to administer another Community Needs Assessment survey early Fall 2020 to see how needs have changed. This will also allow STEP to be responsive and diligent with future planning.

Understanding & Using this CNA Report

In order to have the CNA be a resource and tool for the greater community, provided below is a breakdown of the document into three key sections and a summary of each.

 Purpose of CNA Meet STEP requirements Analyze comprehensive community needs Provide CNA tool to the community Respond to community change or crisis 	 Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP), Inc. is required by many of its federal and state revenue sources to produce a CNA on a three-year time frame. This CNA analyzed comprehensive needs through a community- wide survey. The CNA report will be used by STEP, Inc. and other community stakeholders for strategic planning, grant writing, program development, and partnerships.
 CNA Organizational Structure Critical need rankings Key need categories with summary themes Supporting data 	 Critical need rankings provide relative importance of identified needs of Lycoming County. In each key need category section, category themes summarize findings. Supporting data includes community-wide survey data. Use findings and data to plan short- and long-range goals. Use findings and data to support new program development and enhancement.
 Using the CNA Strategic planning Program development Grant writing & resource development Internal & external assessment Resource management 	 Collaborate with community partners to maximize community outcomes efficiently and effectively. Justify funding requests with CNA content within and across need categories. Utilize CNA as a foundation for developing and implementing assessment tools. Measure effectiveness to achieve program effectiveness. Manage human and financial resources to respond to valid community needs.

Please note: Throughout the report the data is presented as percentages that have been rounded to the nearest whole percent.

Q1: What do you feel is the most important problem facing Lycoming County today? Answered: 614

27.04%	100
21.020/	166
21.82%	134
10.26%	63
7.82%	48
6.51%	40
6.35%	39
5.54%	34
5.21%	32
4.72%	29
4.23%	26
3.91%	24
3.42%	21
3.42%	21
3.26%	20
2.93%	18
2.61%	16
2.12%	13
1.79%	11
1.79%	11
1.63%	10
1.63%	10
1.30%	8
1.14%	7
0.98%	6
0.98%	6
0.81%	5
0.81%	5
0.81%	5
8.31%	51
	Total Responses
	614
	7.82%6.51%6.35%5.54%5.54%5.21%4.72%4.23%3.91%3.42%3.42%2.61%2.61%1.79%1.79%1.63%1.63%1.30%1.14%0.98%0.81%0.81%

Demographic Data

Q2: Please indicate what municipality in Lycoming County you reside.

Answered: 768

Answer Choices	Resp	onses	Answer Choices	Respo	onses
City of Williamsport	30.21%	232	Watson Township	0.52%	4
Loyalsock Township	11.33%	87	Cummings Township	0.39%	3
Jersey Shore Borough	6.38%	49	Franklin Township	0.39%	3
Old Lycoming Township	6.25%	48	Picture Rocks Borough	0.39%	3
South Williamsport Borough	5.34%	41	Nippenose Township	0.39%	3
Montoursville Borough	4.43%	34	Penn Township	0.39%	3
Hepburn Township	2.47%	19	Cascade Township	0.26%	2
Lycoming Township	2.34%	18	Jordan Township	0.26%	2
Limestone Township	2.08%	16	McHenry Township	0.26%	2
Hughesville Borough	1.69%	13	Piatt Township	0.26%	2
Muncy Borough	1.69%	13	Plunketts Creek Township	0.26%	2
Muncy Creek Township	1.69%	13	Salladasburg Borough	0.13%	1
Duboistown Borough	1.56%	12	Brown Township	0.13%	1
Fairfield Township	1.56%	12	Mill Creek Township	0.13%	1
Porter Township	1.56%	12	Pine Township	0.13%	1
Wolf Township	1.56%	12	Jackson Township	0.00%	0
Clinton Township	1.43%	11	McIntyre Township	0.00%	0
Upper Fairfield Township	1.30%	10	McNett Township	0.00%	0
Susquehanna Township	1.17%	9	Shrewsbury Township	0.00%	0
Anthony Township	1.04%	8			
Cogan House Township	1.04%	8			
Gamble Township	1.04%	8			
Lewis Township	1.04%	8			
Mifflin Township	1.04%	8			
Woodward Township	1.04%	8			
Muncy Township	0.91%	7			
Montgomery Borough	0.78%	6			
Washington Township	0.78%	6			
Bastress Township	0.65%	5			
Eldred Township	0.65%	5			
Moreland Township	0.65%	5	Total Respondents:	768	
Other/Unknown	0.65%	5			
Armstrong Township	0.52%	4			
Brady Township	0.52%	4			

Demographic Data

Q3: How many people are in your household?

Answered: 761



Q4: How many children under the age of 18 live with you in your household? Answered: 762



Q5: How many adults over the age of 60 live with you in your household? Answered: 765



Demographic Data

Q7: What is your highest level of education?

Answered: 765



Q7: What was the total income of all persons in your household over the past year? Answered: 759



Employment

Q8: Which of the following best describes your employment status? Answered: 733



Q9: I have access to the internet, which allows me to continue my current employment. Answered: 672



Q10: Has anyone in your household been laid off from a job at anytime in the past two months?

Answered: 704



Q11: If someone in your house was/is laid off, how long is the layoff anticipated to last? Answered: 174



Employment

Q12: I have access to affordable job training services if I were to need them. Answered: 690



Q13: Are there other job-related needs brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 712



If yes, please specify. Answered:181

Theme Responses		onses
Internet Access/Technology	20%	36
Business Related	14%	25
Employee Safety/Personal Protective Equipment	12%	21
Unemployment Benefit Issues	9%	16
Small Business Assistance	9%	16
Unemployment	8%	15
Finding Employment	7%	12
Childcare	4%	7
Financial Insecurity	3%	6
Transportation Issues	3%	5
Health Related	3%	5
Food Insecurity	3%	5
Politics	2%	4
Pandemic/COVID-19	2%	4
Housing Issues	2%	4
Employee Training	2%	3
Other	13%	24

Education

Q14: Are you aware of any adults in your community who cannot read? Answered: 698



Q15: Currently, are your school-aged children required to participate in distance learning? Answered: 515



Q16: My children have the technology (computer, internet, phone) they need to continue to complete distance learning.

Answered: 495



Q17: My children have the supplies (crayons, paper, pencils, etc.) they need to continue to complete distance learning requirements. Answered: 485



Education

Q18: My children will be prepared for the 2020-2021 school year.

Answered: 484



Q19: Are there other educational needs brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 596



If yes, please specify. Answered: 216

Theme	Responses	
Internet Access/Technology	60%	129
Distance Learning Quality	16%	34
Parent as Teacher	6%	14
Students Need Extra Help	5%	10
Specific School Issues	3%	7
Social-Emotional Support	3%	7
Social Service Needs	3%	6
Extracurricular Activity	2%	4
Pandemic/COVID-19	1%	3
Early Education Needs	1%	2
Unspecified	3%	7
Other	12%	25

Children & Youth

Q20: Are you aware of anyone in your community who has been the victim of child abuse or neglect in the last two months?

Answered: 662



Q21: If yes, did you report it to the proper authorities?

Answered: 92



Q22: If you are an essential worker, are you having a difficult time finding appropriate childcare?

Answered: 333



Q23: If you have children under your care, are you ever having to leave them unsupervised for any reason?

Answered: 367



Children & Youth

Q24: Are there needs, specific to children, brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 523



If yes, please specify. Answered: 131

Theme	Resp	Responses	
Childcare	39%	51	
Child Abuse	15%	19	
Food Insecurity	13%	17	
Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Services	8%	10	
Internet/Technology Issues	7%	9	
Increased Child Needs	7%	9	
Education Support	6%	8	
Unattended Children	5%	6	
Recreation Needs	5%	6	
Parenting Issues	3%	4	
Housing Issues	2%	2	
Pandemic/COVID-19	1%	1	
Other	12%	16	

Housing & Homelessness

Q25: Do you own or rent your home?

Answered: 637



Q26: Housing and Homelessness: [multiple part question] Answered: 633

Have you or your family had difficulty finding money to pay your mortgage or rent at any time in the last two months?



Do you foresee having difficulty finding money to pay your mortgage or rent at any time in the next year?



Have you or someone you know in your community have no place to live?



Housing & Homelessness

Q27: Are you able to keep up with your utility payments, such as water, sewer, electric, gas, etc.? Answered: 637



Q28: Housing and Homelessness: [multiple part question] Answered: 610

There is affordable housing available for me and others like me.



I have a hard time making ends meet (paying bills, groceries, etc.).



I have access to housing counseling services, if I needed them.



Housing & Homelessness

Q29: How safe is your neighborhood?

Answered: 627



Q30: Over the last two months has the safety of your neighborhood changed? Answered: 625



Q31: Are there other housing needs brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 621



If yes, please specify.

Answered: 72

Theme	Responses	
Shelter Intakes	21%	15
Homelessness	15%	11
Rent/Mortgage Needs	14%	10
Financial Insecurity	11%	8
Affordable Housing Issue	10%	7
Housing Repair Needs	7%	5
Eviction Threat	7%	5
Other	22%	16

Health & Nutrition

Q32: I have avoided medical treatment because it was too costly.

Answered: 615



Q33: I did not receive treatment that I needed because I could not get in to a doctor. Answered: 610



Q34: Does your medical provider offer other options to be seen, such as telemedicine, nurse hotlines, or virtual appointments?

Answered: 615



Q35: Do you have adequate health insurance for you and your family? Answered: 616



Health & Nutrition

Q36: Which of the following would be your first choice if you or someone in your family became ill enough to seek medical help?

Answered: 619



Q37: Have you or someone you know in your community gone without food for more than a day in the last two months because they could not afford it? Answered: 616



Q38: Do you foresee you or someone you know in your community going without food for more than a day over the next year because they could not afford it? Answered: 617



Health & Nutrition

Q39: Are there other health and nutrition needs brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 614



If yes, please specify. Answered: 110

Theme	Resp	onses
Food Insecurity	40%	44
Food Shortages	15%	16
Transportation Issues	8%	8
Access to Healthcare	6%	6
Unhealthy Food	4%	4
Mental Health Issues	4%	4
Medical Insurance Issues	4%	4
Access to Fresh Food	4%	4
Senior Needs	3%	3
Rural Area Lack of Food Programs	3%	3
Pandemic/COVID-19	3%	3
Exercise Needs	2%	2
Other	24%	26

Emergency Services

Q40: Emergency Services: [multiple part question]

Answered: 603

I have access to affordable individual and family counseling services if I were to need them.



I have access to affordable mental health supports if I were to need them.



Domestic violence is on the rise in my community.



Child abuse is on the rise in my community.



Emergency Services

Q41: Emergency Services: [multiple part question]

Answered: 601

Have you or someone you know in your community been the victim of physical abuse by a family member in the last year?



Have you or your family had difficulty finding the money to pay for the costs of heating, electricity, or water at any time in the last year?



Have you or your family had difficulty obtaining infant/toddler care supplies (diapers, wipes, formula, etc.) at any time in the last year?



Emergency Services

Q42: Are there other emergency services needs brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 599



If yes, please specify. Answered: 45

Theme	Responses	
Pandemic/COVID-19	11%	5
Overburdening Resources	11%	5
Medication Needs	11%	5
Transportation Issues	7%	3
Mental Health Issues	7%	3
Baby Care Items	7%	3
Personal Protective Equipment	4%	2
Childcare	4%	2
Internet/Technology Needs	2%	1
Homelessness	2%	1
Financial Insecurity	2%	1
Child Abuse	2%	1
Other	31%	14

Senior Support Services

Q43: Seniors in my community receive adequate services to meet their needs. Answered: 572



Q44: Which of the following services are lacking in Lycoming County? Answered: 576



Senior Support Services

Q45: Are there other needs, specific to the senior citizens, brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community? Answered: 571



If yes, please specify. Answered: 69

Theme	Responses	
Social/Isolation	36%	25
Checking on Seniors	23%	16
Food Insecurity	19%	13
Mental Health Issues	12%	8
Pandemic/COVID-19	10%	7
Internet Access/Technology	7%	5
Transportation Needs	6%	4
Access to Resources	6%	4
Homelessness	1%	1
Other	13%	9

Services for the Disabled

Q46: Are you or anyone in your household disabled?

Answered: 557



Q47: Services for the Disabled: [multiple part question] Answered: 110

Does the disabled person in your household have a physical disability?



Does the disabled person in your household have a mental disability?



Q48: The disabled in my community receive adequate services to meet their needs. Answered: 528



Services for the Disabled

Q49: Which of the following services are lacking in Lycoming County? Answered: 531



Q50: Are there needs, specific to the disabled population, brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 529



If yes, please specify.

Answered: 40

Theme	Resp	onses
Access to Resources	18%	7
Social/Isolation	15%	6
Pandemic/COVID-19	10%	4
Internet Access/Technology	10%	4
Food Insecurity	10%	4
Transportation Issues	8%	3
Mental Health Issues	8%	3
Medical Insurance Needs	3%	1
Homelessness	3%	1
Educational Supports	3%	1
Other	40%	16

Substance Abuse

Q51: Are you aware of anyone in your community who has a problem with drug or alcohol abuse?



Q52: Are you personally aware of anyone in your community who has a problem with heroin or opioid addiction?





Q53: Have you noticed an increase in the use of drugs and/or alcohol in your community during the last two months? Answered: 554



Q54: Are there needs, specific to substance abuse, brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that are lacking in your community?

Answered: 549





If yes, please specify.

Answered: 63

Theme	Responses	
Narcotics Anonymous/Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings	32%	20
Need for Counseling	16%	10
Increase in Drug Use	14%	9
Access to Resources	13%	8
Mental Health Needs	6%	4
Internet/Technology Needs	3%	2
Social/Isolation	3%	2
Child Abuse	2%	1
Transportation Needs	2%	1
Other	19%	12

Additional Information

Q55: Do you have any additional information about community needs in Lycoming County?

Answered: 112

Theme	Responses	
Access to Resources	6%	7
Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Services	6%	7
Politics	4%	5
Education Supports	4%	4
Financial Insecurity	4%	4
Food Insecurity	4%	4
Homelessness	4%	4
Pandemic/COVID-19	4%	4
Social/Isolation	4%	4
Business Related	3%	3
Counseling Needs	3%	3
Internet/Technology Needs	3%	3
Recreational Needs	3%	3
Transportation Needs	3%	3
Education	2%	2
Employee Safety/Personal Protective Equipment	2%	2
Housing Issues	2%	2
Senior Needs	2%	2
Youth	2%	2
Disability Needs	1%	1
Environmental Issues	1%	1
Medical Insurance Issues	1%	1
Medication Needs	1%	1
Mental Health Needs	1%	1
Unemployment Benefits	1%	1
Other	50%	56