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INTRODUCTION: A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“What is the one thing our community could do to improve peoples’ lives in Skagit County?”

Affordable housing.

That is the overwhelming answer from the 650 low-income households (representing nearly 2,000 individuals) who responded to the 2017 Skagit Prosperity Project low-income needs assessment. Having heard the same call in our 2013 research, and seeing the thousands of people each year who come to Community Action of Skagit County and our partners for help, this isn’t news. It’s the everyday reality of our low- and moderate-income neighbors, whose incomes are not keeping up with skyrocketing housing prices.

The need for more housing of all types, and especially affordable multifamily housing, is also the conclusion of many other local research and planning projects. In 2013 and before, Community Action and our partners in the Skagit Coalition to End Homelessness were banging the drum for more affordable housing, and one positive change since then is that local governments, health organizations, businesses, economic development organizations, churches and others now have joined the call for action.

In other good news, we know what we need to do. We have a roadmap. In 2017, the Skagit Council of Governments released its “Skagit County Housing Inventory and Transportation Analysis Report,” as well as a step-by-step action plan. Endorsed by the Population Health Trust, a collaborative community health planning group, the report tells us we need:

- Every jurisdiction in the county to collaborate to increase zoning for residential multifamily housing.
- Access to affordable land, or a combination of federal, state and local incentives and partnerships to help affordable housing developers make the numbers pencil out.
- Community and political will – neighbors and elected officials who say “Yes, please!” to affordable housing in their backyards.

Other findings about community needs in the Skagit Prosperity Project report are driven by the fact that most Skagitonians are spending too much on housing, so there isn’t enough to go toward basic needs such as adult dental care.

We offer this report as a tool for community planning, and we celebrate the collaborations that have been fostered to keep moving us forward to improve the health and wellbeing of all in Skagit County. We especially thank the survey respondents for sharing their experience and expertise about the community with us.

Bill Henkel
Executive Director

P.S.: Find the SCOG report here:

http://www.scog.net/Housing/Skagit%20Housing%20Final%20Report%202017_12.pdf

INTRODUCTION

Periodically, Community Action of Skagit County (Community Action) is required by its funders to conduct a needs assessment of low-income residents. The needs assessment is designed to clearly describe the experiences and characteristics of people who may need supportive services. Community Action contracted with Applied Research Northwest to assist in developing the updated survey instruments, program online data collection tools and conduct analysis of the data collected.

The contents of this report will be used in compiling the final Skagit Prosperity Project Community Needs Assessment Report.

RESEARCH METHODS

ARN met with Community Action and project stakeholders to review prior needs assessments and determine current information needs. Together they revised the most recent Community Action survey based on stakeholder input. The final survey included 93 questions about a wide range of service areas (see Appendix B).

For this 2017 needs assessment, Community Action piloted an online data collection method in the interest of reducing data processing costs and increasing the breadth of participation through flexible feedback channels. ARN programmed the final survey online in English and Spanish and provided Community Action with the link for distribution.

Community Action coordinated with local organizations and agencies to promote and schedule data collection. Community Action volunteers recruited low-income residents to complete the survey using a convenience sampling methodology, placing themselves at social and health service agencies where the target population accesses services. Some hosting organizations provided one or more laptops or desktop computers for their customers and clients to use to complete the survey. In addition, pen and paper surveys were available.

Data collection spanned from July through late November 2017, the bulk of surveys were completed in October and November. The complete list of participating agencies can be found in Appendix A. Data collection efforts yielded 650 valid complete survey (219 online, 431 paper). Research methods are detailed in Appendix A.

In addition, surveys were also collected from 58 service provider staff in November and December of 2017, to compare perspectives of clients and providers about needs.

FINDINGS

The community needs assessment presents the findings of a low-income client community survey. This report describes the demographic characteristics of the sample plus analysis of several general categories of needs and services: asset building and financial stability, legal assistance, transportation, education, parenting, housing, health, nutrition, and gaps in service.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS: WHO ARE THEY?

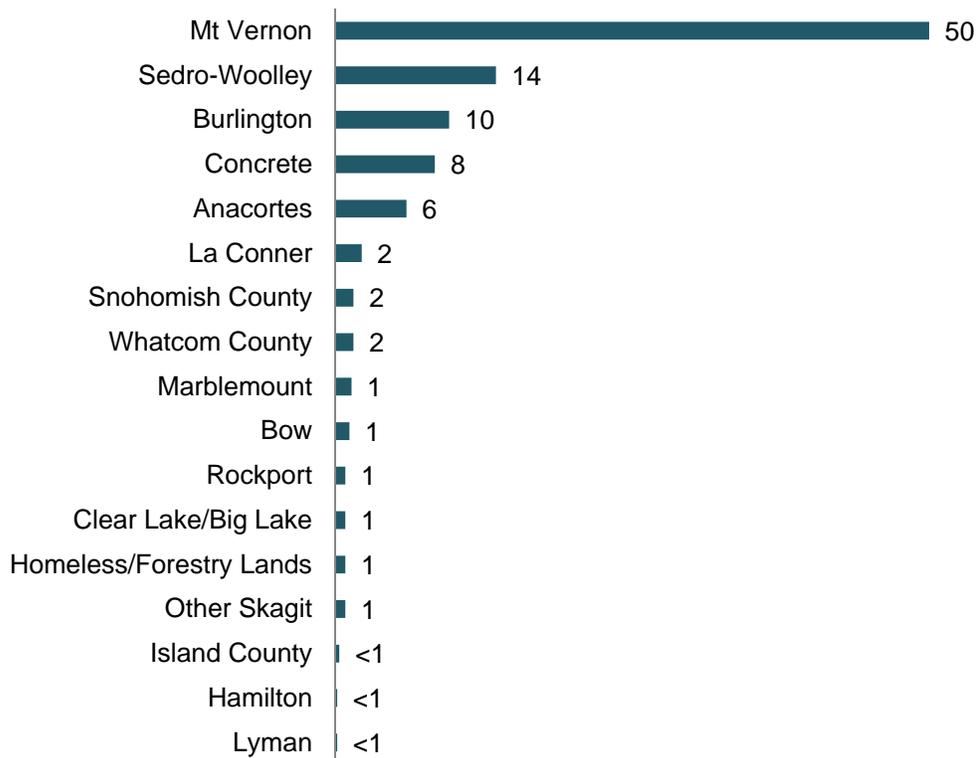
Because there is no existing list of all low-income households (or persons) in Skagit County, it is not possible to draw a random sample from a well-defined population. For this survey, the team chose to intensively sample as many unduplicated households as possible from social and health service sites throughout the county. Overall, 650 households responded to the survey. These households included an estimated total of 1,929 persons.

Geographic distribution

Half of the survey respondents said they live in Mount Vernon. The next most common cities were Sedro Woolley, Burlington and Concrete. Approximately five percent of respondents said they live outside of Skagit County (Snohomish, Whatcom, and Island).

Most Skagit county residents surveyed said they live in the county year round (95%). Five percent (5%) said they live here seasonally.

Figure 1. Geographic distribution of survey respondents



(N=581)

Gender, sexual orientation and age

Three in four survey respondents were female (73%). The majority (88%) identified themselves as heterosexual (4% homosexual and 9% other). They ranged in age from 17 to 89 years old. The mean and median ages were 44 and 42 years, respectively.

Duration of Residence in Skagit County

Survey respondents were asked how long they have lived in Skagit County. Responses ranged from less than a year up to 85 years, with a mean response of 18 years (median, 14). Roughly three-quarters (76%) said they have lived in Skagit County for four years or longer.

Household size and family status.

The average household size of the survey sample was 3.1 and the median household size was 2. Forty-three percent (43%) of households included children and 28% included children between birth and five years old. Thirty-two percent (32%) of households included at least one senior (age 60+).

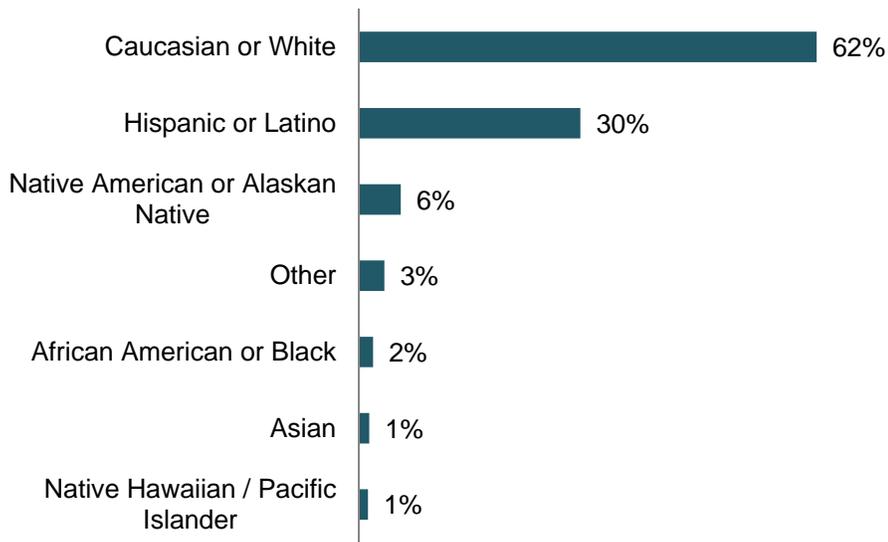
Veteran status

When asked if anyone in the household has served in the military, 15% indicated there was at least one veteran in the household.

Race and ethnicity

Respondents were invited to check all race and ethnicities that applied. More than half (62%) identified themselves as white, 6% Native American, 2% African American, and 1% Asian and Native Hawaiian (each). Just under one-third (30%) identified as Hispanic/Latino. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Respondent race and ethnicity

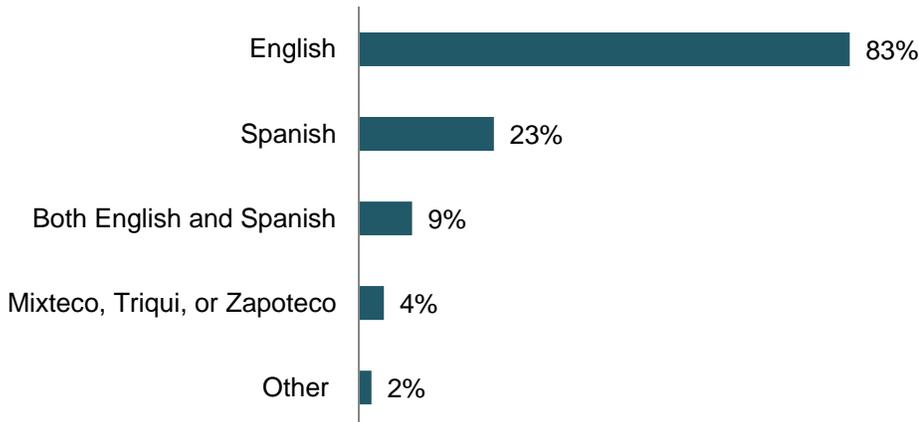


(N=616)

Language

Some survey respondents speak a language other than English at home (Figure 3). Other than English (83%), the most common language was Spanish (23%). Nine percent of respondents (9%) indicated that they spoke both English and Spanish at home. Four percent said they speak Mixteco, Triqui or Zapoteco, and 2% indicated other languages that included Russian or Ukrainian, Tagalog, Chinese, French, Hmong, Marshallese, Guamanian, Dutch and American Sign Language.

Figure 3. Language usually spoken at home

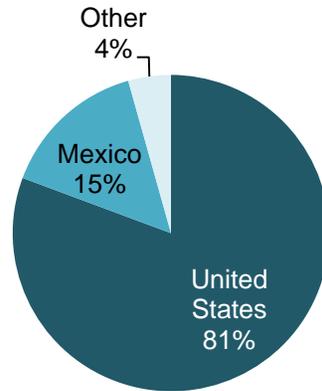


(N=620)

Country of origin

Eighty-one percent of respondents (81%) were born in the United States, 15% were born in Mexico and 4% were born in some other country (see Figure 4). The list of other countries of origin includes: Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, England, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Marshall Islands, Japan, Philippines, Russia, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand and Ukraine.

Figure 4 Country of origin



(N=574)

ASSET BUILDING AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

Income

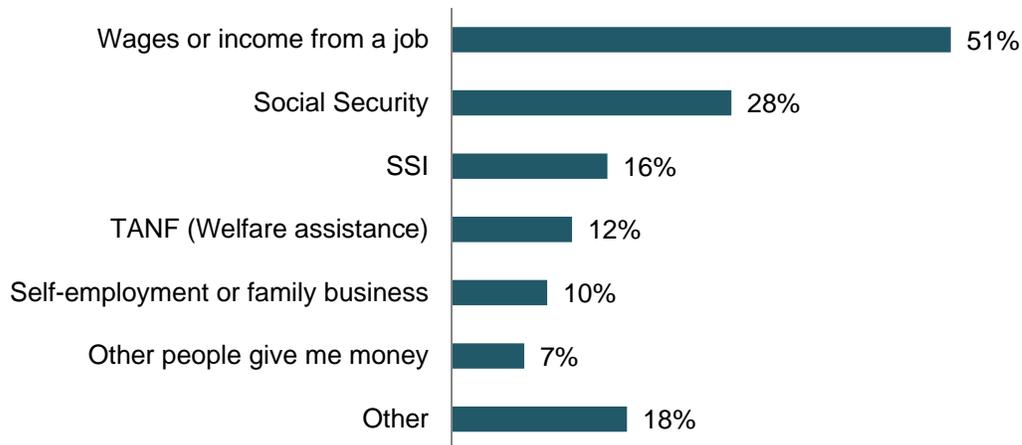
Respondents were asked to report their monthly income from all sources. Table 1 shows that monthly incomes ranged from zero to \$6,000. The median monthly income ranged from \$760 for single person households to \$2,650 for households of seven.

Table 1. Household monthly income by household size

Household size	Number of households	Monthly income			
		Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
1	141	\$788	\$760	\$0	\$2,000
2	92	\$1,153	\$1,126	\$0	\$2,500
3	53	\$1,393	\$1,200	\$50	\$3,264
4	56	\$1,568	\$1,300	\$0	\$4,000
5	41	\$1,905	\$2,000	\$0	\$4,400
6	26	\$1,684	\$1,550	\$0	\$4,000
7	12	\$2,436	\$2,650	\$400	\$5,000
8	14	\$2,179	\$1,650	\$0	\$6,000
9+	7	\$2,121	\$1,300	\$600	\$5,000
Total	442	\$1,301	\$1,100	\$0	\$6,000

Half of the respondent households (51%) included at least one member with employment income. The next most commonly reported source of income was Social Security (28%), followed by SSI (16%) and TANF (12%). Eighteen percent of respondents identified that they had some “other” source of income. These included a wide array of sources, most notably Food stamps/SNAP, child support, SSDI, retirement or pensions, VA benefits, unemployment, L&I, and ABD.

Figure 5. Household income sources



(N=558)

Employment

Respondents were asked whether getting or keeping a job has been hard for them or anyone in their household in the last 12 months. Just under half (48%) said yes. This figure was similar among both English and Spanish speaking households.

Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents said that they (or someone in their household) has worked in agriculture in the past year. This was a higher rate among Spanish speaking households (38%).

Poverty status

Adjusting for family size, the proportion of survey respondents who report household income at or below the federal poverty level (FPL) is 70%. Those households below 125% of FPL account for 83% of respondent households.

Table 2. Respondent households by poverty status and household size

Household size	Number of households	FPL threshold (income per month)	Respondent households at or below FPL threshold		125% of FPL threshold (income per month)	Respondent households at or below 125% FPL threshold	
			N	%		N	%
1	141	\$1,005	101	72%	\$1,256	117	83%
2	92	\$1,353	57	62%	\$1,691	70	76%
3	53	\$1,702	38	72%	\$2,128	42	79%
4	56	\$2,050	40	71%	\$2,563	46	82%
5	41	\$2,398	29	71%	\$2,998	35	85%
6	26	\$2,747	22	85%	\$3,434	25	96%
7	12	\$3,095	8	67%	\$3,869	10	83%
8	14	\$3,443	11	79%	\$4,304	13	93%
9+	7	\$3,792*	5	50%	\$4,740*	7	100%
All households	442			70%			83%

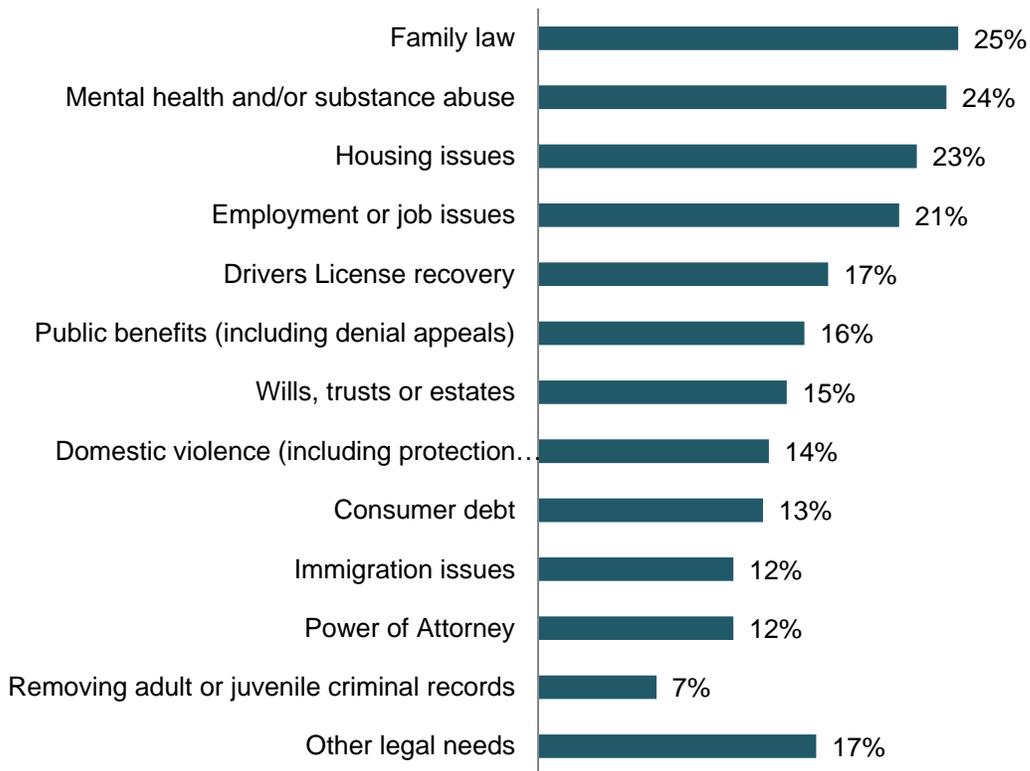
* Households sized 9 to 12 were combined into one category. Actual FPL threshold figures included an additional \$348/month per person

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Respondents were asked about needs for legal assistance in their household in the past 12 months. Roughly half (49%) said that legal assistance was not needed.

Among those who needed legal assistance, family law was identified as the most common type of assistance, followed closely by legal assistance for mental health or substance abuse issues, and housing issues. See Figure 6.

Figure 6. Types of legal service needed



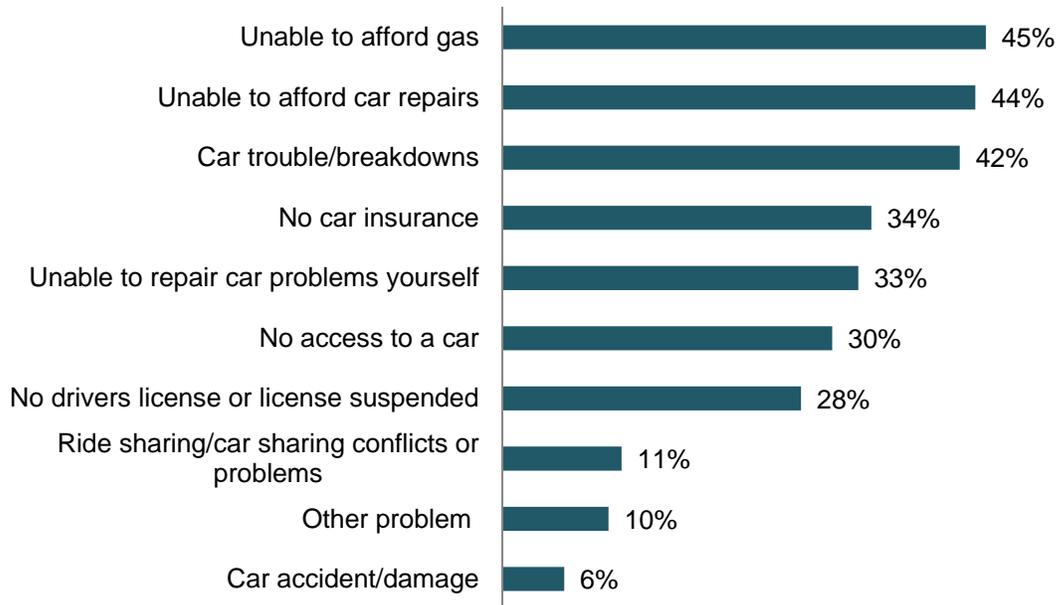
(N=284)

Analysis found that immigration was the top legal service among Spanish speakers. Just over a third (35%) of those Spanish speakers looking for legal assistance specified immigration issues.

TRANSPORTATION

Respondents were asked to identify transportation problems experienced in the past 12 months. Just under a third (31%) said that they had not experienced transportation problems. Those who experienced problems identified affordability of gas and car repairs as the top problems, followed by car trouble/breakdowns. Just over one-third of those with transportation problems cited lack of car insurance (34%).

Figure 7. Transportation problems

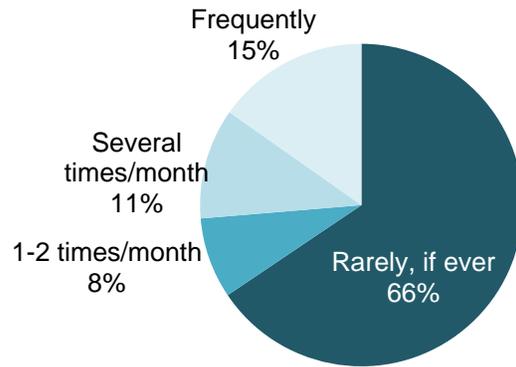


(N=417)

Public transit

Respondents were asked how often they, or others in their household, use Skagit Transit. Figure 8 shows that approximately one-third (34%) said they use public transit at least once a month. Fifteen percent indicated frequent use.

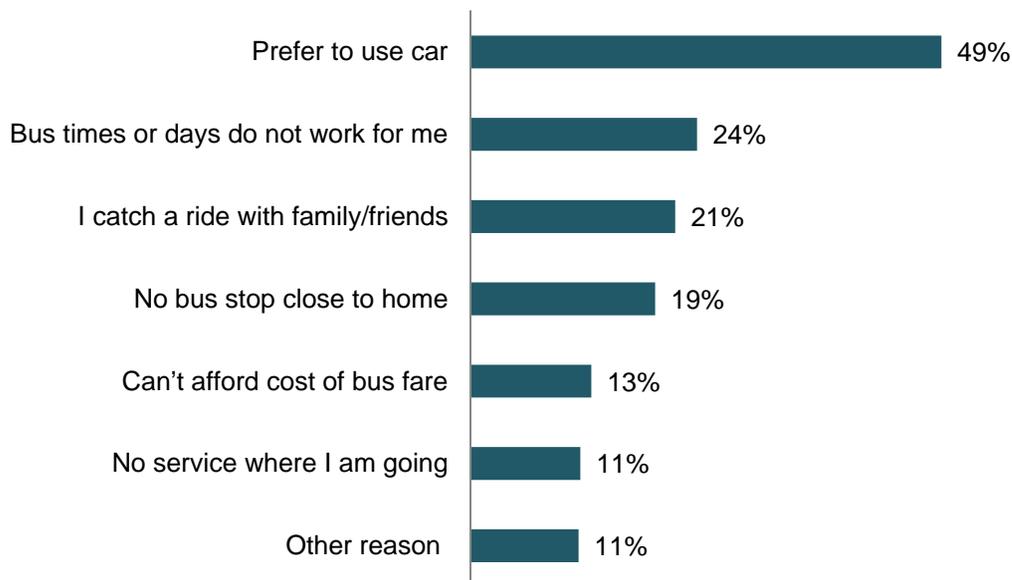
Figure 8. How often respondents use Skagit Transit



(N=604)

When asked to explain why the bus doesn't work well for them, half said they prefer to use their car (49%).

Figure 9. Reasons why respondents don't use public transit



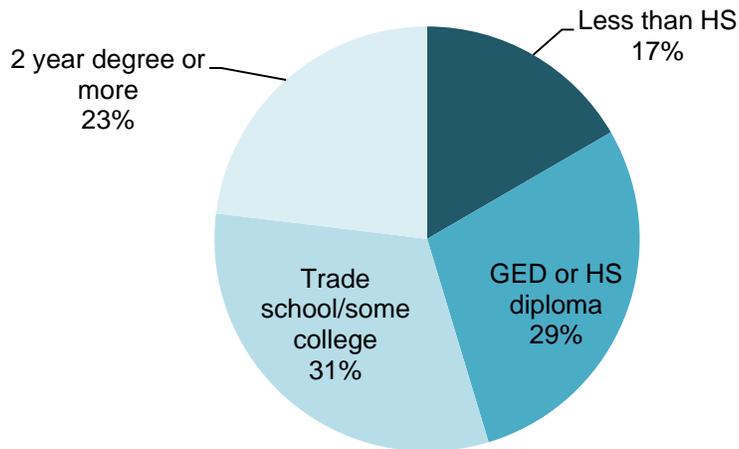
(N=524)

EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Just over half (54%) of respondents over 25 years old indicated that they have had some form of post-secondary education. Some said they attended a trade school or have some college education (31%), or have a two-year degree or higher (23%). Seventeen percent (17%) said they do not have a high school diploma or GED.

Analysis found that Spanish speakers were especially likely to indicate they did not have a High School degree (36%).

Figure 10. Highest level of education completed

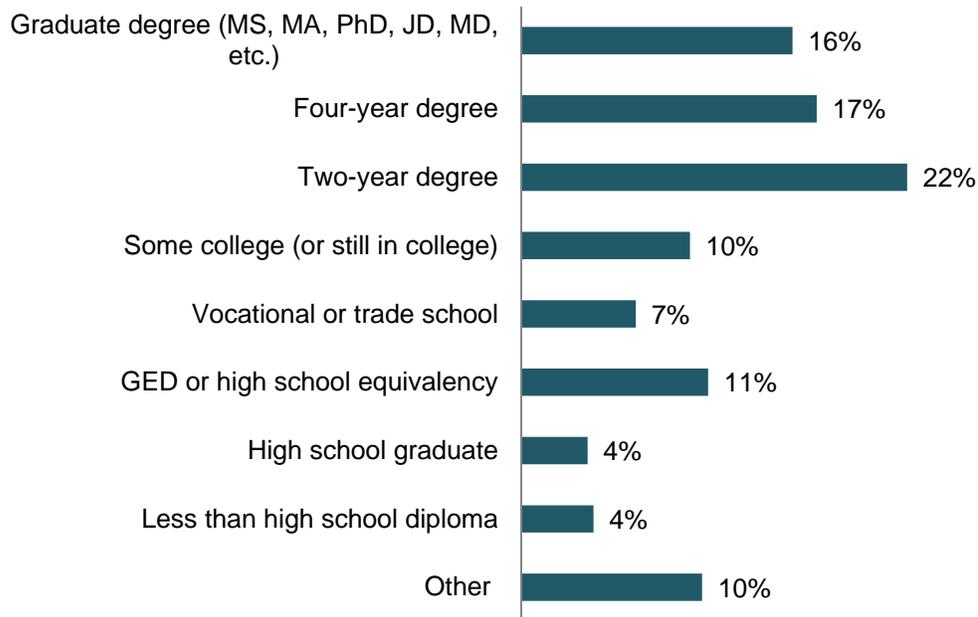


(N=492)

Respondents were asked if they are currently in school or had any interest in going to school if they could—roughly half (48%) fit in this category. Spanish speakers were especially likely to say they were in school or would like to be in school (66%).

Respondents who were currently attending or interested in future school were asked how far they would like to go in school. Figure 11 shows that over half (55%) had aspirations for a two year degree or higher.

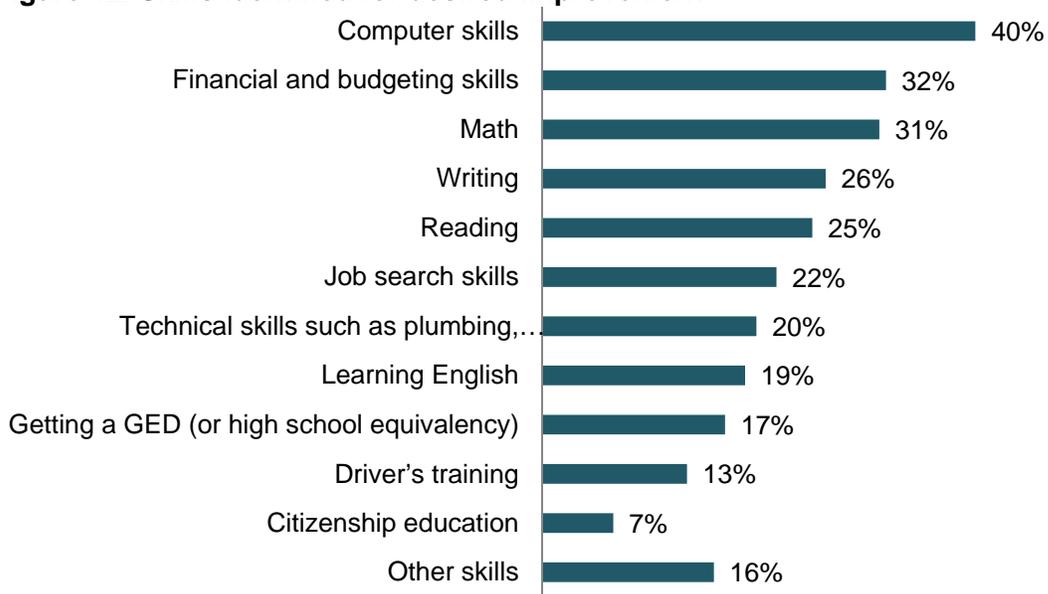
Figure 11. How far respondents would like to go in school



(N=492)

Many respondents expressed an interest in improving their skills. Figure 12 shows that 40% identified computer skills as an area they would like to improve. Other top areas where respondents would like to improve included financial and budgeting skills (32%), math (31%), writing (26%), and reading skills (25%). Sixteen percent identified “other” skills, predominantly language (Spanish), but other examples included parenting, office skills, art, cooking, farming, and carpentry.

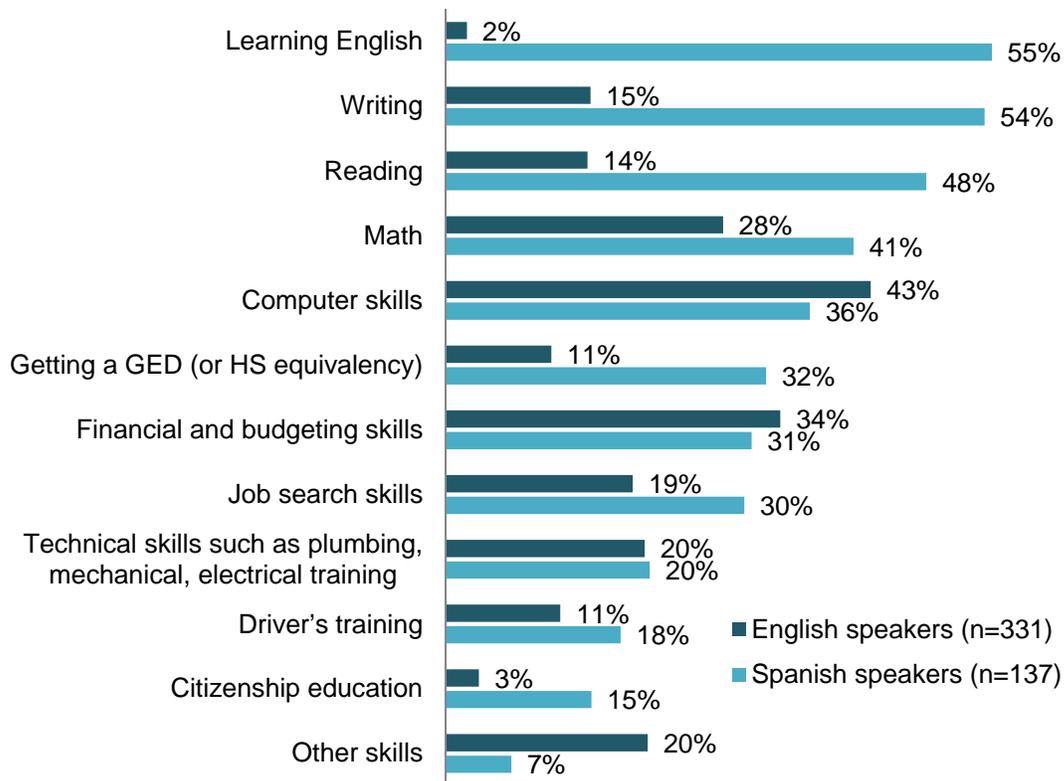
Figure 12. Skills identified for desired improvement



(N=483)

Figure 13 shows that Spanish speakers prioritized basic educational skills.

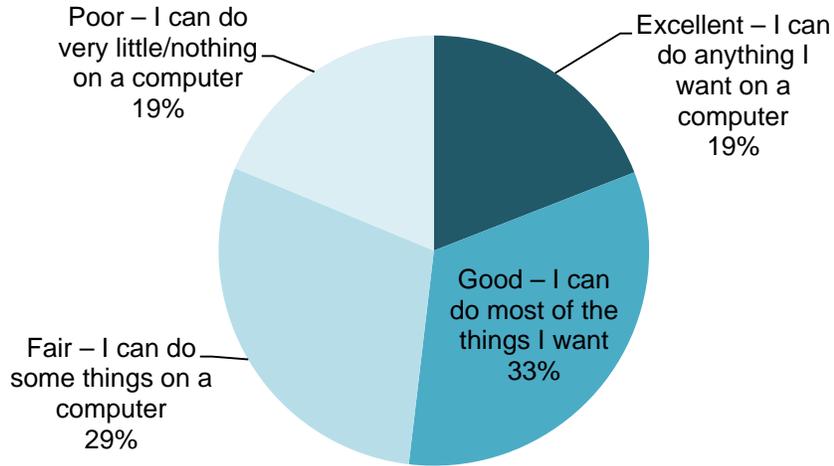
Figure 13. Skills identified for desired improvement, Spanish speakers compared to English speakers



Respondents were asked specifically about their ability to use a computer and the internet. Figure 14 shows that just over half (52%) characterized their abilities as good or excellent. Approximately 1 in 5 (19%) said they could do very little or nothing on a computer.

Spanish speakers rated their skills less favorably than English speakers (30% poor).

Figure 14. Ability to use a computer and the internet

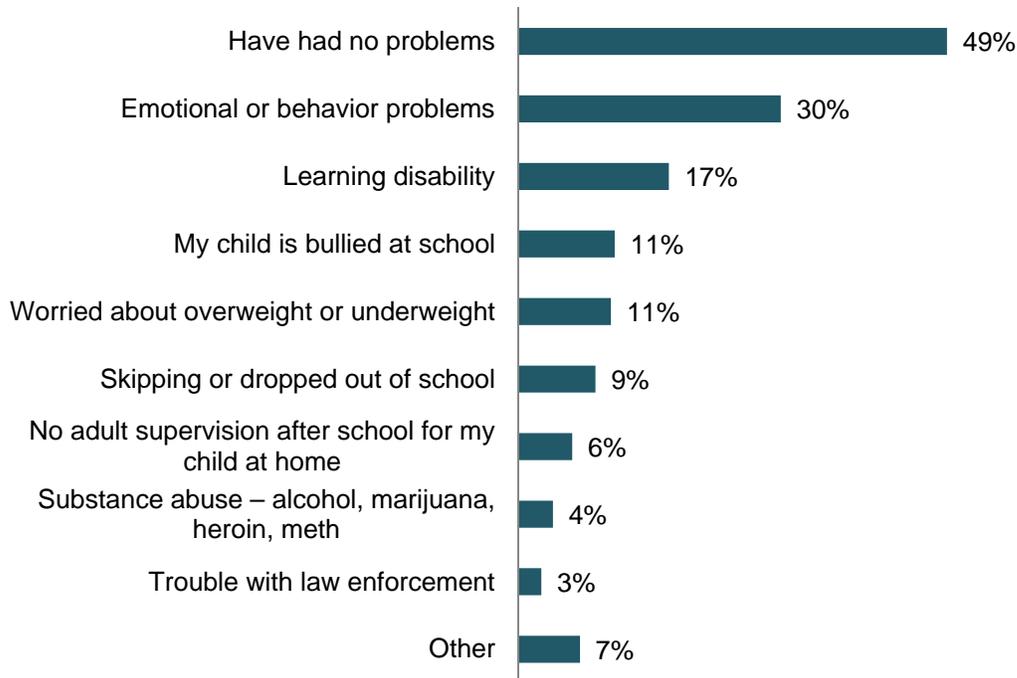


(N=619)

PARENTING

Respondents with children under 18 years old living at home were asked what problems they had experienced with their children. About half (49%) reported that they had no problems with their children. The most common problems reported were emotional or behavior problems (30%), followed by learning disabilities (17%).

Figure 15. Problems respondents have experienced with their children



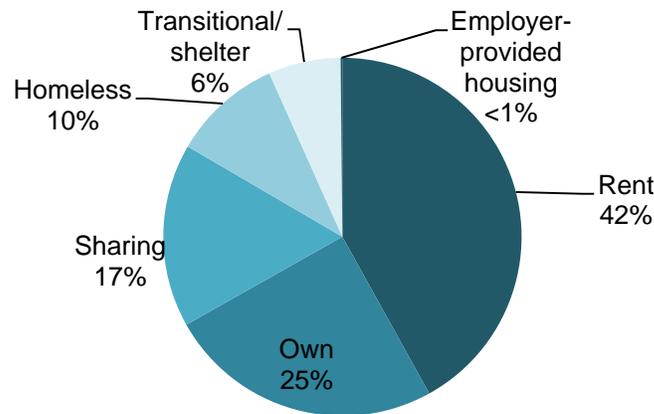
(N=332)

Parents were also asked about the primary language of their children. Ninety-two percent said their primary language was the same. In the cases where the language was different (21 households), eight respondents (38%) said they understood their children’s primary language *very well*. Seven respondents (33%) said they understood their children’s primary language *somewhat well*, and six (29%) said they did not understand it well.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Forty-two percent of respondents (42%) said they rent their housing and another 25% said they are homeowners. The remaining survey respondents said they share housing with another household (17%), are homeless (10%) or live in a transitional housing or a shelter (6%).

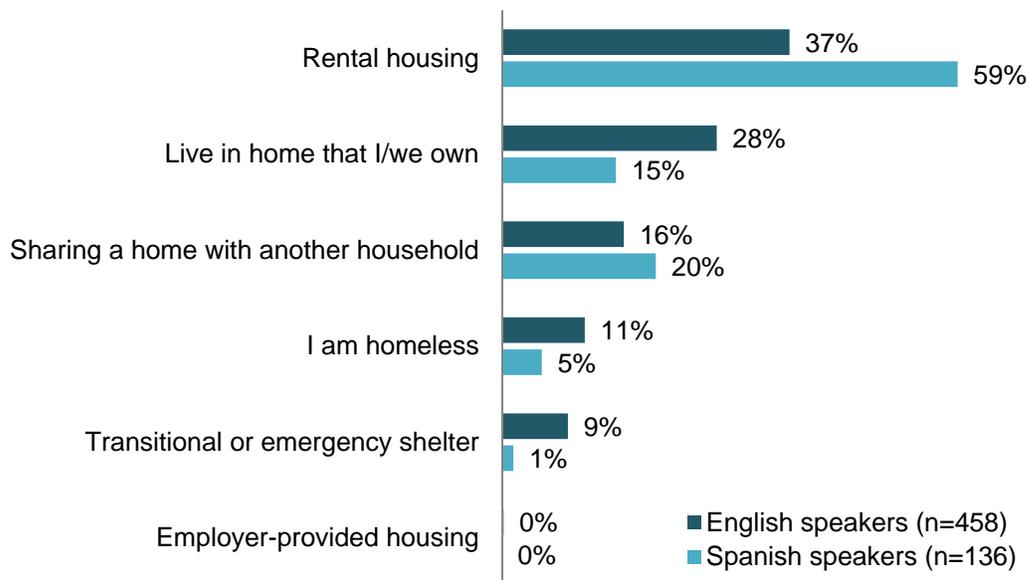
Figure 16. Housing type



(N=627)

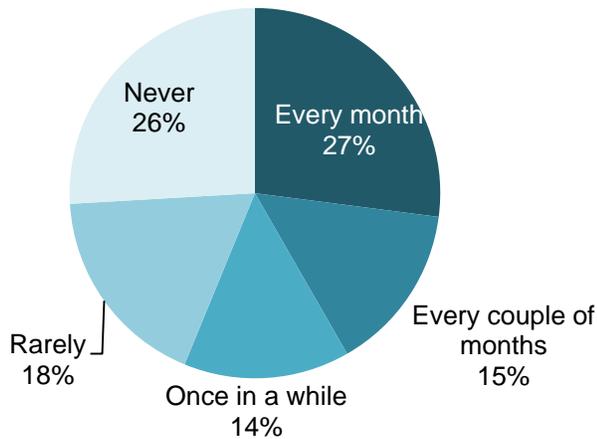
Analysis found that Spanish speaking respondents were more likely to say that they rent when compared to English speakers (59% vs. 37%).

Figure 17. Housing type, Spanish speakers compared to English speakers



Respondents were asked how often they have had to choose between paying their rent/mortgage and paying for other basic needs. Just over one-quarter (27%) said this was a monthly occurrence, and another 15% said this happened at least every couple of months in the past year.

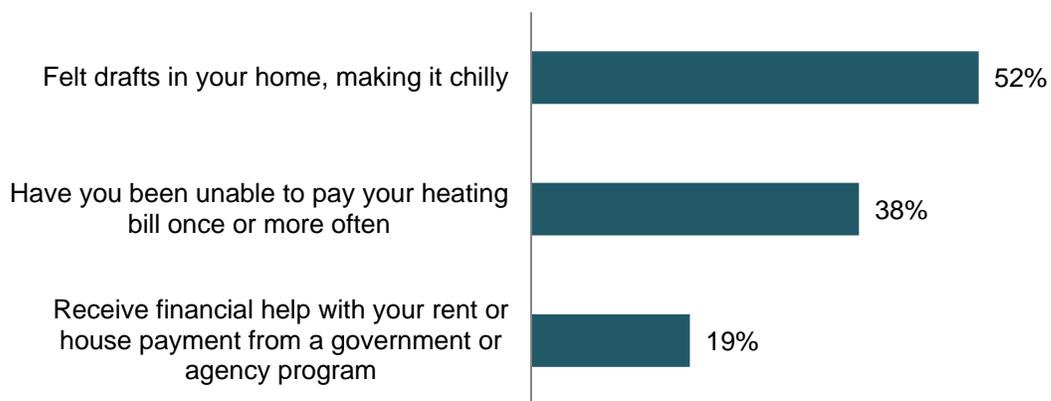
Figure 18. Frequency of choosing between paying for housing vs. other basic needs such as food, medical care or transportation



(N=621)

Respondents were asked about three indicators relating to housing programs in Skagit County. Figure 19 shows that half have felt drafts in their home (52%), and over one-third have struggled to pay their heating bill at least once in the past year (38%). Nearly one in five (19%) said they have received financial help with their rent or house payment from a government program.

Figure 19. Housing Program Needs



(N=560)

Housing cost burden and assistance

On average, low-income renter households said they pay \$721 per month for rent, and low-income homeowners said they pay \$787 for mortgage payments (Table 3). Housing is considered to be affordable when households spend no more than a third of their pretax income on housing costs. Comparing household income to reported rent or mortgage payment, a conservative estimate of the housing affordability rate can be determined for this sample of low-income households. About half of low-income homeowners (47%) and just over two-thirds of renters (70%) reported that they spend more than a third of their household income on mortgage or rent payments. The proportion of low-income clients paying more than a third of their income of housing costs is certainly higher than what could be estimated with this survey data because the questionnaire did not measure other housing costs such as insurance, property taxes and maintenance.

Compared to the results in 2013, housing costs have increased substantially for renters. Homeowner costs increased slightly, but the cost burden remained similar.

Table 3. Rent, mortgage and cost burden

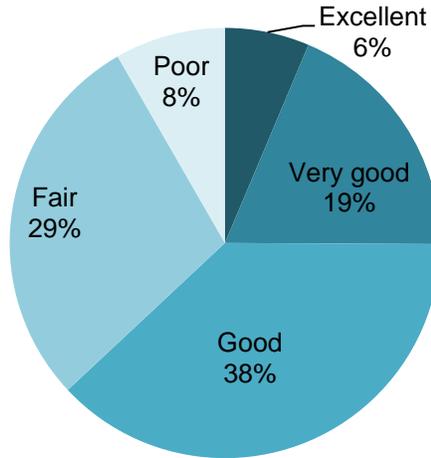
		Renters				Owners			
		2005	2009	2013	2017	2005	2009	2013	2017
		(n=416)	(n=417)	(n=420)	(n=252)	(n=82)	(n=78)	(n=122)	(n=133)
Monthly housing cost	Mean	\$520	\$530	\$553	\$721	\$720	\$989	\$708	\$787
	Median	\$550	\$500	\$550	\$713	\$710	\$947	\$687	\$710
Cost burden*	Mean	50%	50%	46%	60%	50%	68%	37%	34%
	Median	44%	43%	40%	47%	43%	53%	33%	28%
Cost burden > 30% of income		66%	67%	65%	70%	76%	76%	53%	47%

*cost burden is the proportion of income that goes to rent/mortgage

HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

A majority of respondents rated their health care positively. Just over one-third (37%) gave unfavorable ratings of *fair* or *poor*.

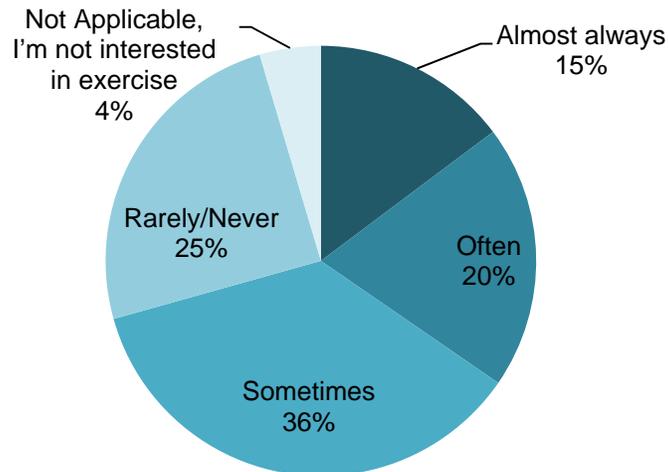
Figure 20. General health status



(N=560)

Respondents were asked whether they exercise as often or as much as they would like. Roughly one-third (35%) said they *often* or *almost always* can exercise at the desired levels. Another third (36%) said this is true *sometimes*, and another third (29%) said they were *rarely* able to, or didn't want to.

Figure 21. Ability to exercise as often as desired

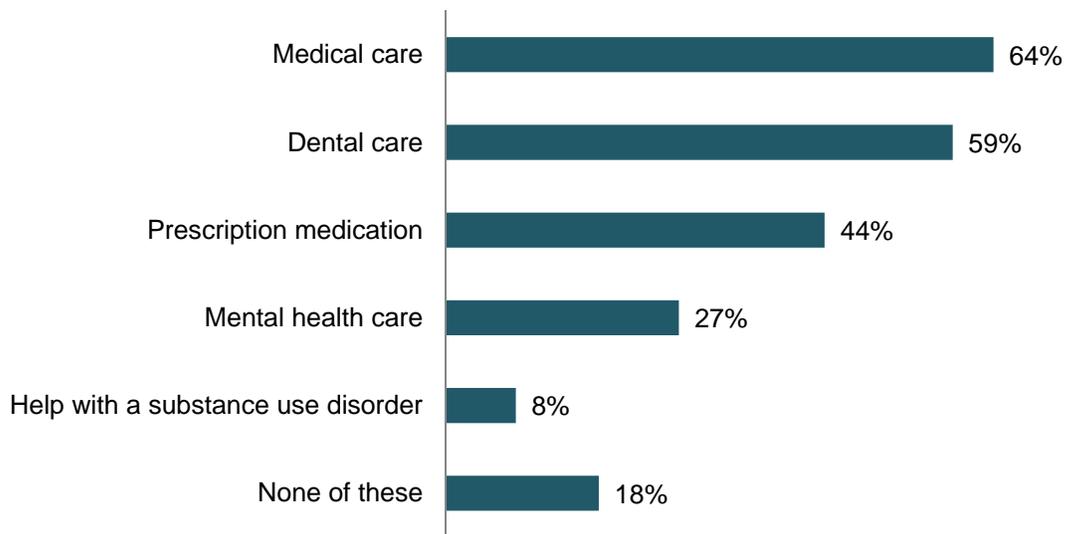


(N=610)

Respondents were asked to estimate how many times per month they were able to exercise. The mean estimate was ten times a month, and the median was eight.

Respondents were asked if there has been a time in the past 12 months where they (or anyone in their household) needed medical or other health-related care. Figure 20 shows that the top needs were medical care (64%), dental care (59%) and prescription medication (44%). Just over one quarter (27%) of households needed mental health care.

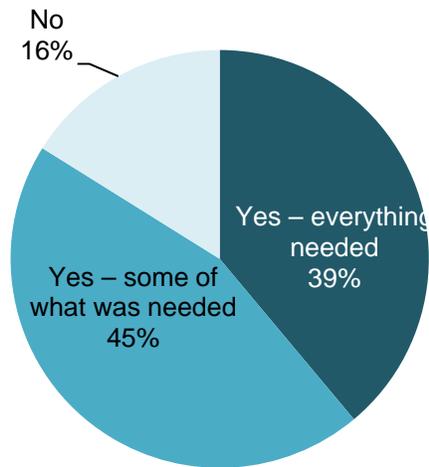
Figure 22. Healthcare needs



(N=587)

Respondents who needed healthcare were asked whether they were able to get it. Thirty-nine percent (39%) said they got everything they needed, and 45% received some of what was needed, while 16% indicated that they did not get the health help they needed. See Figure 21.

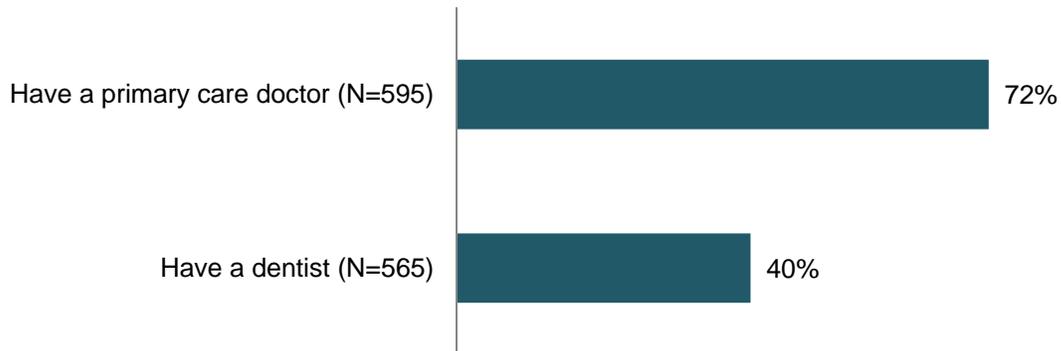
Figure 23. Household ability to get needed care



(N=478)

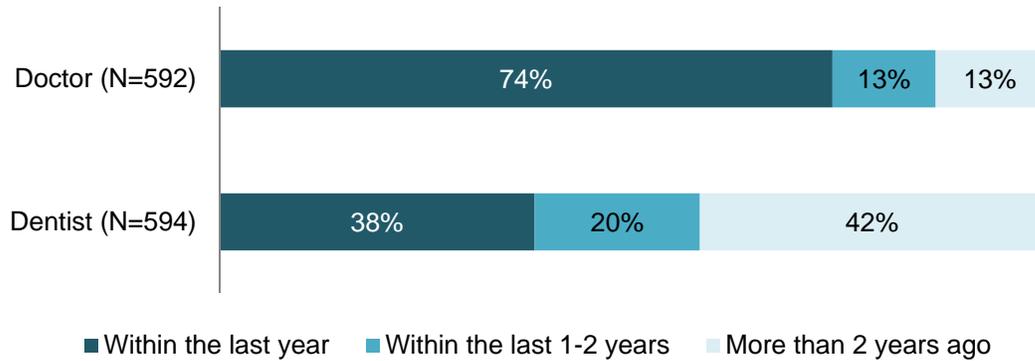
A majority (72%) of respondents said they have a primary care doctor. Less than half (40%) said they have a dentist.

Figure 24. Have a primary care doctor or dentist



Nearly three-quarters (74%) have seen a doctor in the past year. Only 38% of respondents have seen a dentist in that same period. Forty-two percent of respondents said it has been more than two years since they have seen a dentist.

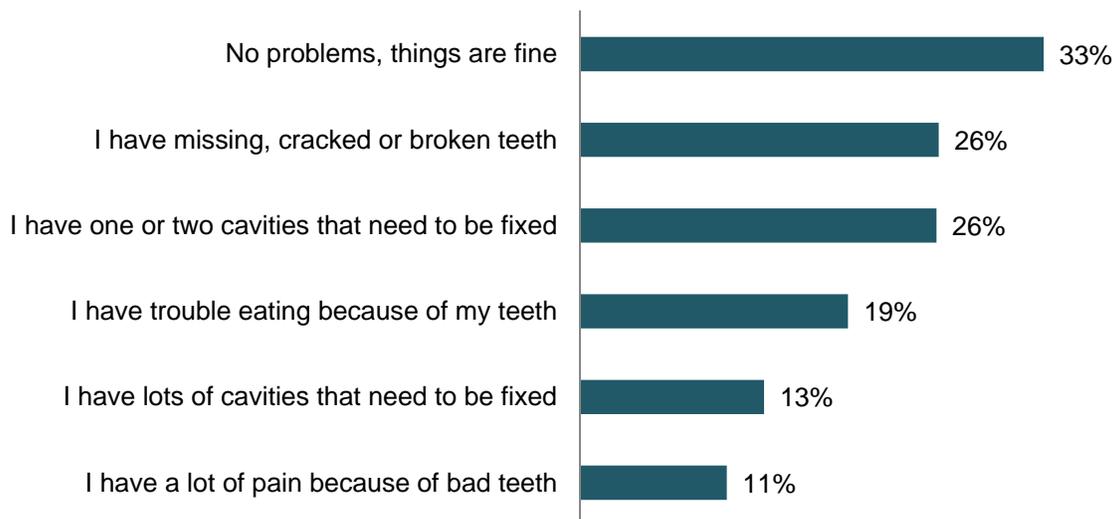
Figure 25. Last time to see a doctor or dentist



Analysis found that Spanish speakers were less likely than English speakers to have a doctor (54%) or a dentist (32%). Spanish speakers were less likely to have seen a doctor in the past year (64%) but reported roughly similar rates of dental visits when compared to English speakers.

One-third of respondents (33%) described their dental health as fine, with no problems. Just over one-quarter (26%) said they have missing, cracked or broken teeth; the same proportion said they have at least one cavity that needs to be fixed. Roughly one in five said they have trouble eating because of their teeth (19%). See figure 26.

Figure 26. Dental health description

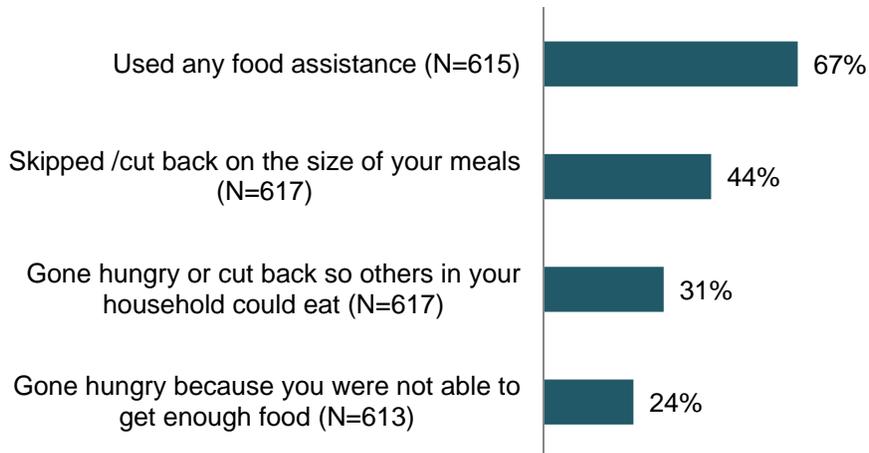


(N=595)

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Two-thirds of survey respondents said they used food assistance programs. Even so, 44% said they have skipped or cut back on meals because there was not enough money for food. Nearly one-third have gone hungry so others in their household could eat. And one-quarter said they have gone hungry because they were not able to get food.

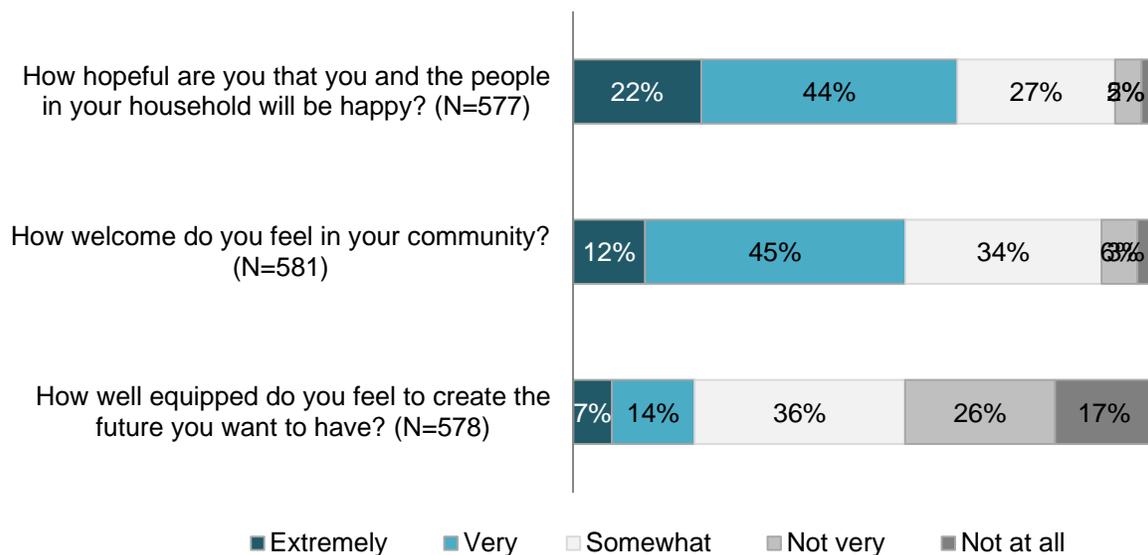
Figure 27. Food security and assistance indicators



ASPIRATIONS

Respondents were asked about their sense of hope, welcoming, and preparation for the future they want. Sixty-six percent (66%) said they felt *very* or *extremely* hopeful. Only 21% felt *very* or *extremely* equipped for the future they want.

Figure 28. Sense of hope, welcoming and preparation for the future



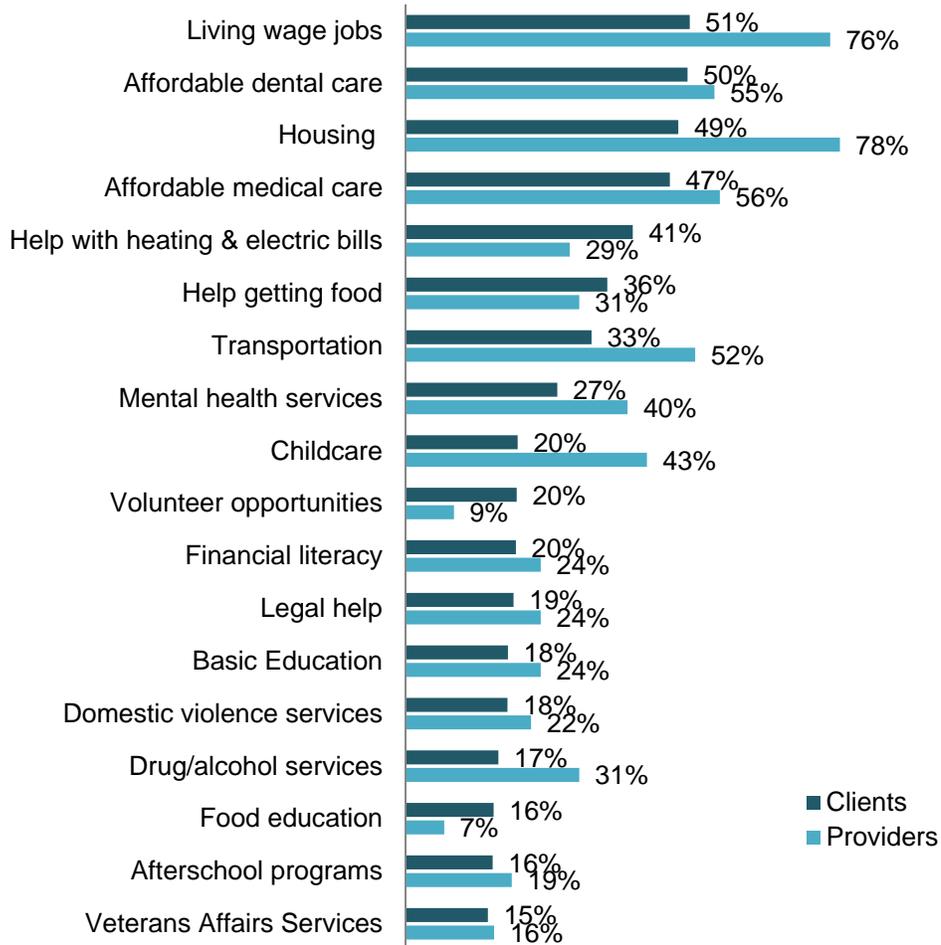
SERVICE GAPS ANALYSIS

Survey respondents rated both the importance and the availability of 18 categories of services in Skagit County to their own household. An additional survey asked service providers to rate the same list of services on the same attributes.

Importance of services

Client ratings identified living wage jobs, affordable mental and dental care, and housing as the most important service areas, with roughly half saying those services were “extremely important” to their households. Providers also ranked those same four areas as the most important, though providers were more likely to see living wage jobs and housing as *extremely important* when compared to clients. Clients were more likely to rate help with utilities as important when compared to providers.

Figure 29. Respondents who rated services as “extremely important”¹

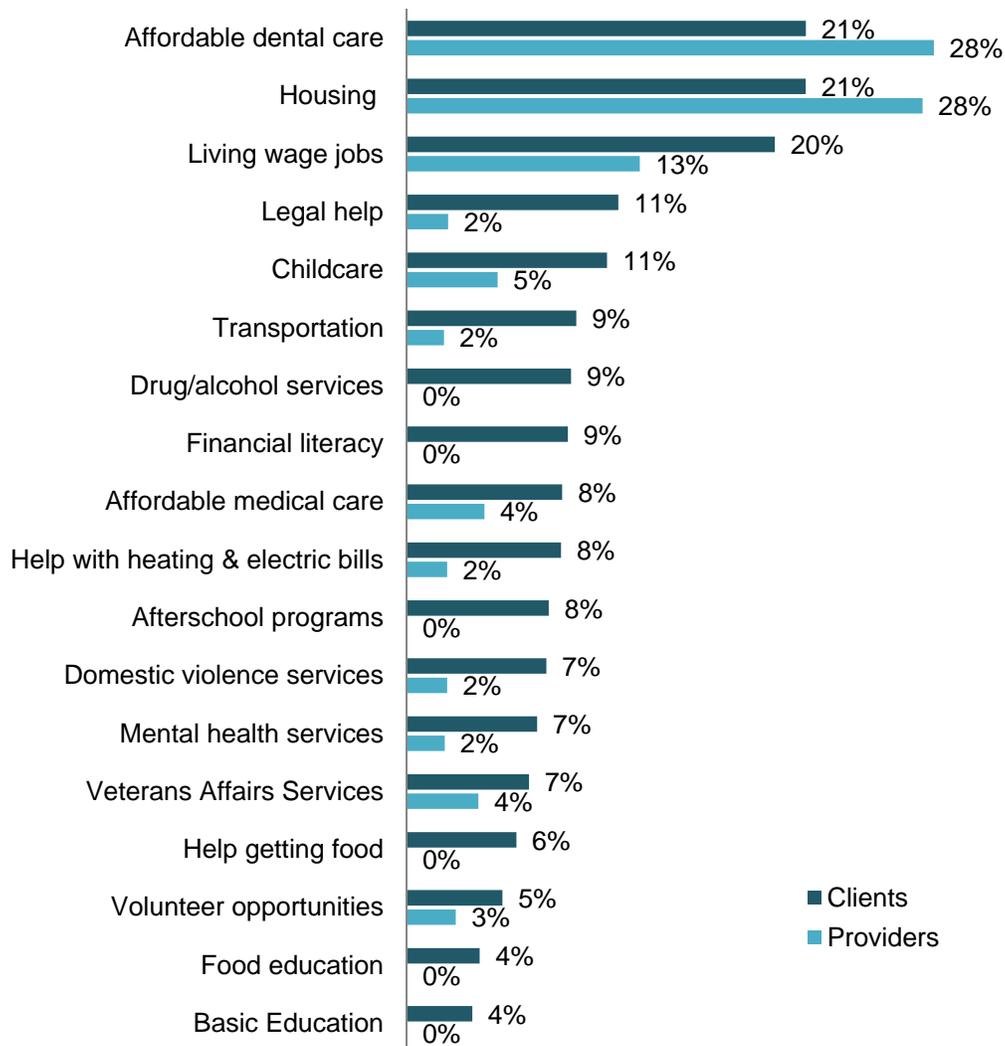


¹ The number of respondents who rated these items ranged from 490 to 548 among clients and 57 to 58 providers.

Availability of services

Clients and providers were asked to rate the availability of the same services. Figure 27 shows the proportion who identified services as extremely challenging to access (“impossible to get”). At the top of the list were affordable dental care and housing. Living wage jobs was a close third for clients, though providers were less likely to consider this “impossible to get”.

Figure 30. Respondents who rated services as "impossible to get"²

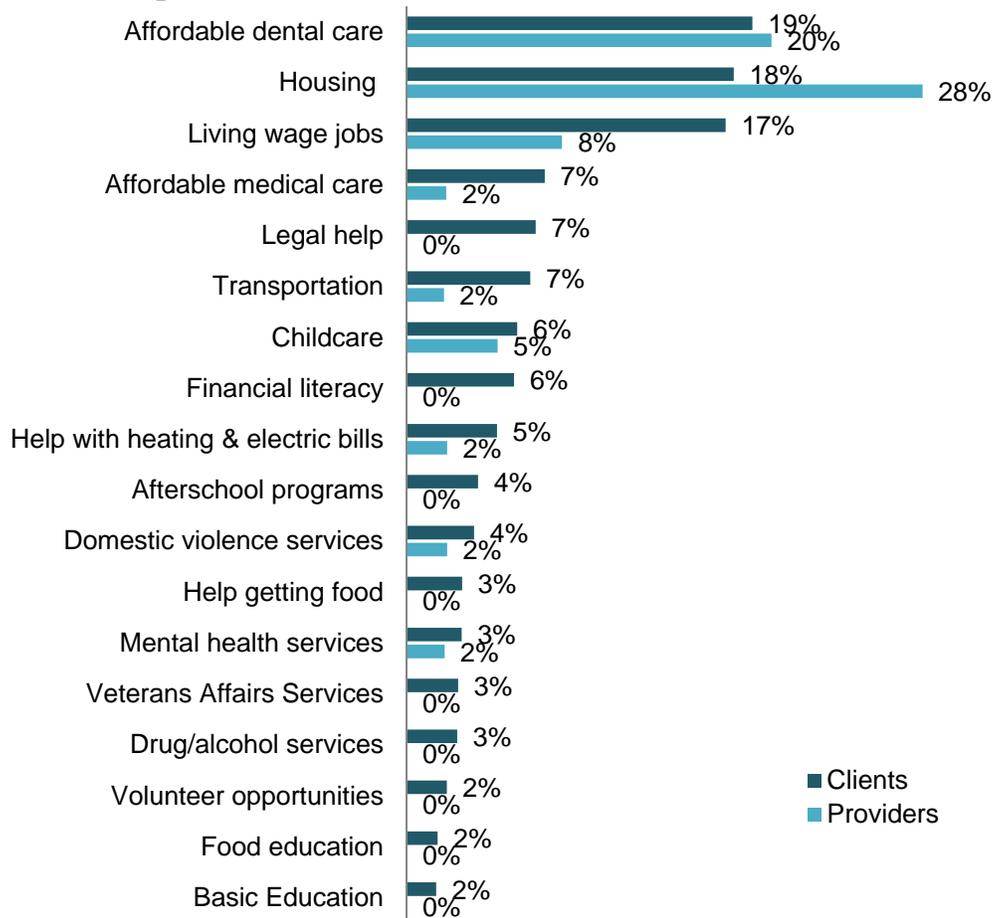


² The number of respondents who rated these items ranged from 183 to 444 among clients and 31 to 51 providers. Respondents could skip items that were not relevant.

Service gap analysis using importance-availability index

From an individual household’s or individual service provider’s perspective, if a social or health service is both “extremely important” to their household or their clientele and “impossible to get”, there is a perceived extreme service gap for that particular service. Figure 31 presents the proportion of survey respondents in both groups who perceive an extreme service gap for each of the 18 service areas. Clients and providers agree on the most extreme service gaps: dental, housing and living wage jobs, though providers were more likely to see that most extreme gap around housing.

Figure 31. Respondents who rated services as both “extremely important” and “impossible to get”³



³ The number of respondents who rated these items ranged from 183 to 444 among clients and 26 to 51 providers. Respondents could skip items that were not relevant.

Service gap analysis using importance-availability coordinate system

The importance and availability ratings were provided on a five point scale⁴. Another way to analyze that data is to calculate the average importance and availability scores for each service area. These data form the basis of an “importance-availability” coordinate rating system (Figures 29 through 33). The average importance and availability ratings among the clients and providers were calculated and plotted on graphs. The lines making up the crosshairs of each graph represents the average importance score and the average availability score for each group of survey respondents.

The importance-availability charts are divided into quadrants that rate the services as follows:

Quadrant I: Above average importance and below average in availability

Quadrant II: Above average in importance and availability

Quadrant III: Below average in importance and availability

Quadrant IV: Below average in importance and above average in availability

Individuals and organizations planning for future services may want to pay particular attention to the service that appear in the first quadrant (I) of the graphs. These are services that, on average, are extremely important to low-income households and very challenging for them to access.

Technical note about these figures: Readers will note that the quadrants for each chart are of different size. This is because the crosshairs that delineate each chart’s quadrants are positioned at the average importance and availability scores for survey respondents within each segment. Additionally, the low and high ends of the scale vary slightly in order to maximize the spread of the services in each illustration (so services are less clustered and easier to read).

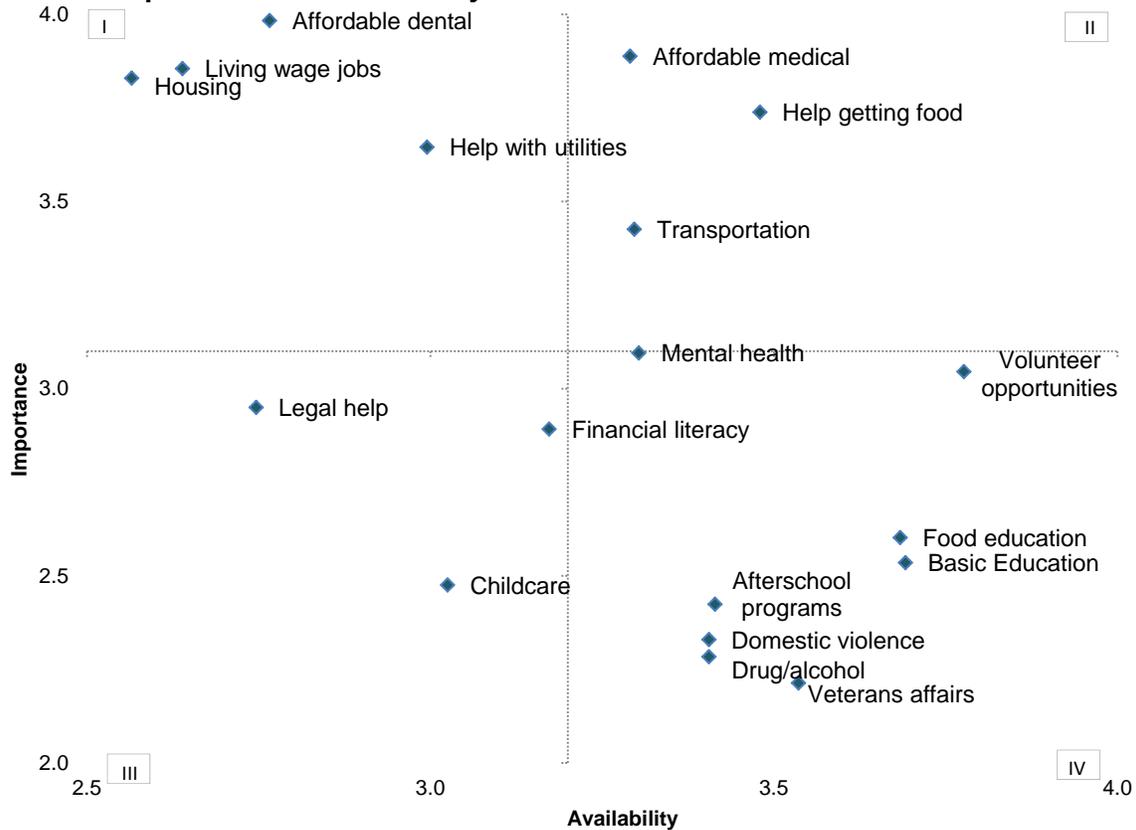
⁴ Importance scale: Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, a little important, Not important

Availability scale: Very easy to get, somewhat easy to get, somewhat hard to get, very hard to get, impossible to get

All clients

Housing, living wage jobs, affordable dental care and help with utilities appear to be high priority service areas across the general population of low-income households surveyed. This is the same group of services that were identified in surveys conducted in 2005, 2009, and 2013.... with one exception. Affordable medical care moved from Quadrant I to Quadrant II, presumably due to increased availability of medical care through the Affordable Care Act.

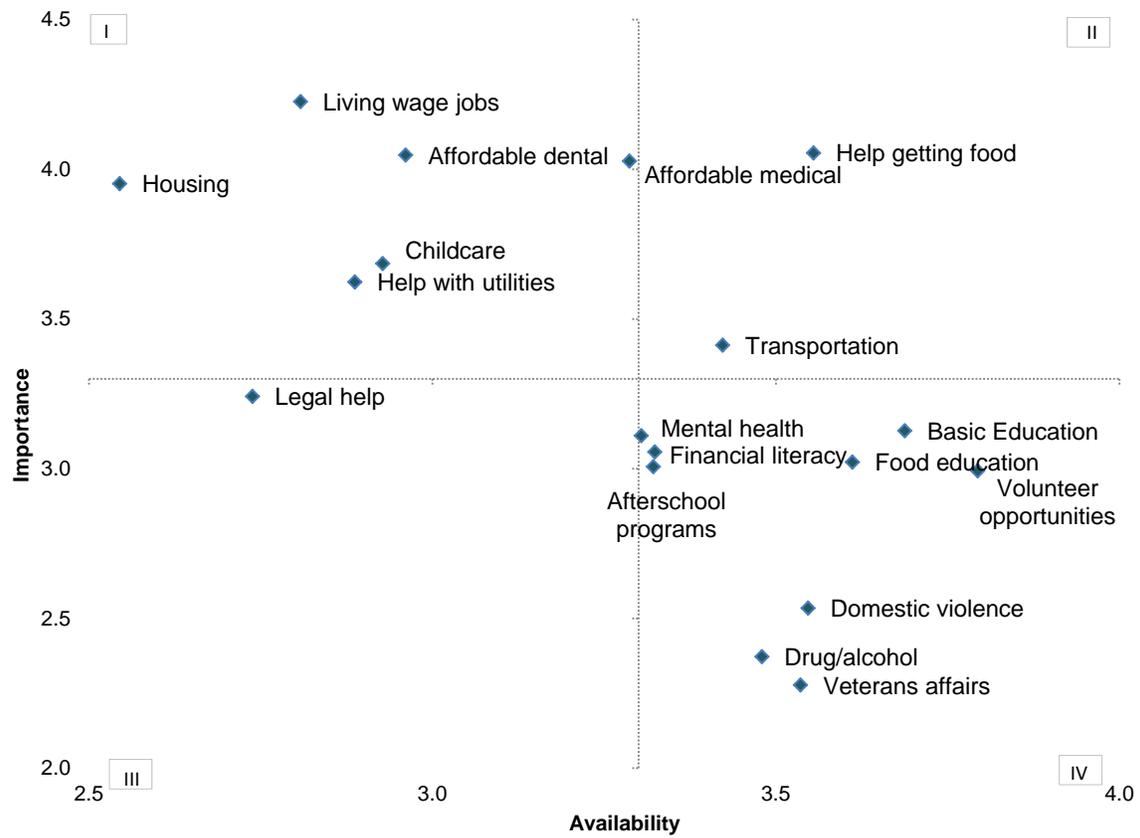
Figure 32. Low income household survey respondent perspectives on low-income service importance and availability



Families with children birth through five years old

The analysis for families with young children yielded similar results as that of the entire survey sample, with one notable difference: a service gap for *childcare*.

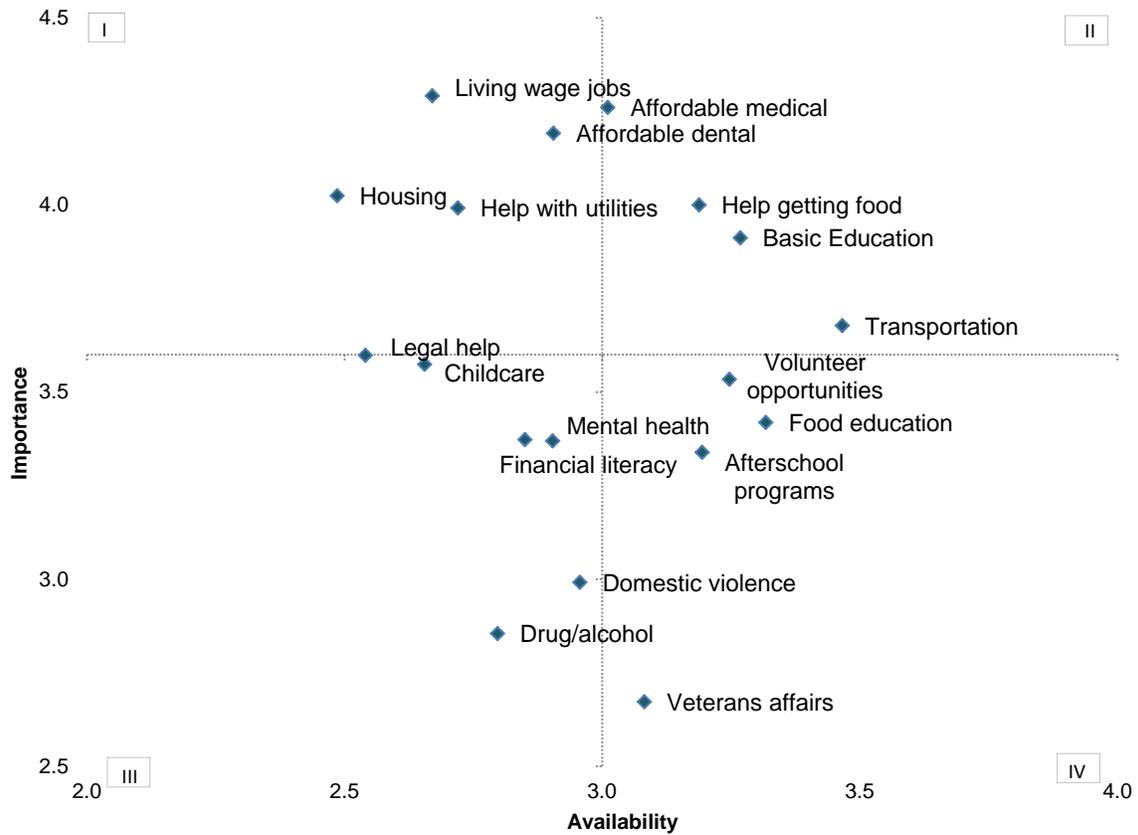
Figure 33. Families with young children's perspectives on low-income service importance and availability



Spanish-speakers

Clients who speak Spanish at home considered the same services to be above average in importance yet below average in availability as all clients: *housing, living wage jobs, affordable dental care and help with utilities*. It is noted that *legal help* is on the cusp of Quadrant I; this was a new finding for 2017.

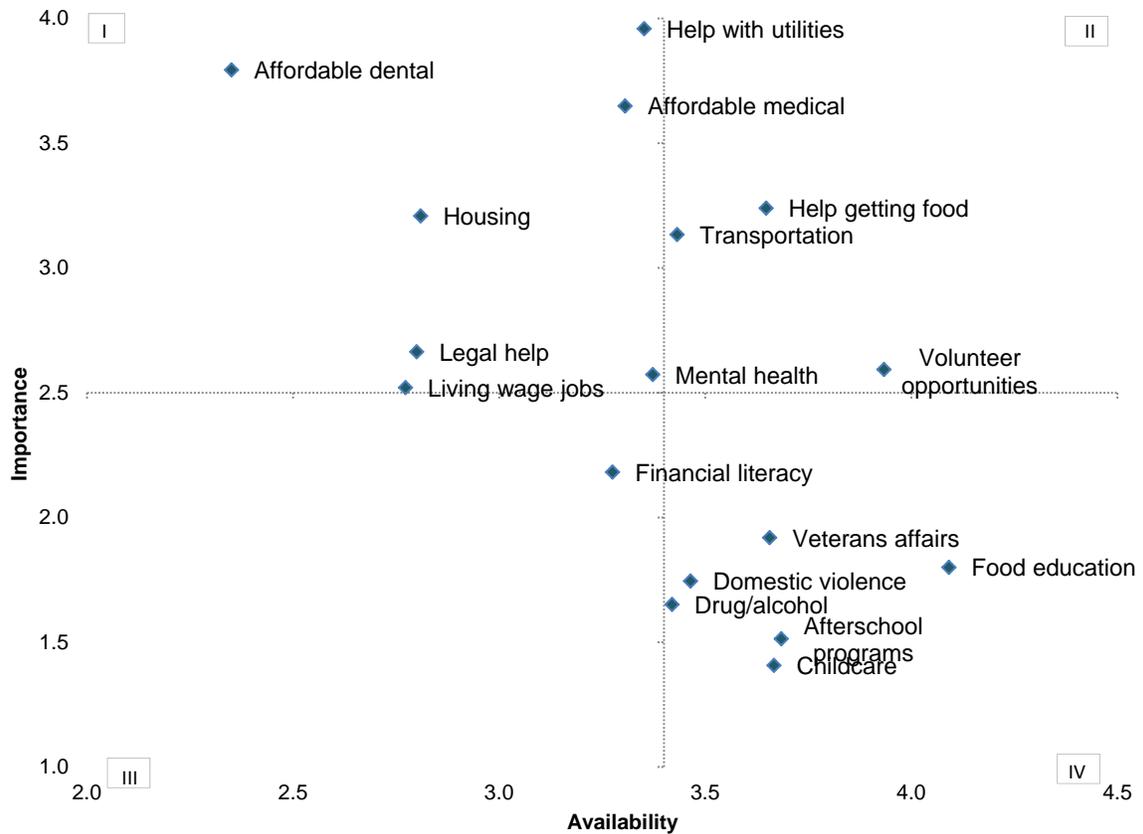
Figure 34. Spanish speaker perspectives on low-income service importance and availability



Seniors

Compared to the overall sample, senior clients had a tendency to rate many services as more available, and less important. In addition to the four service areas identified for the general client population, three additional services areas fell just inside of the range of Quadrant I: *affordable medical, mental health, and legal help.*

Figure 35 Senior perspectives on low-income service importance and availability

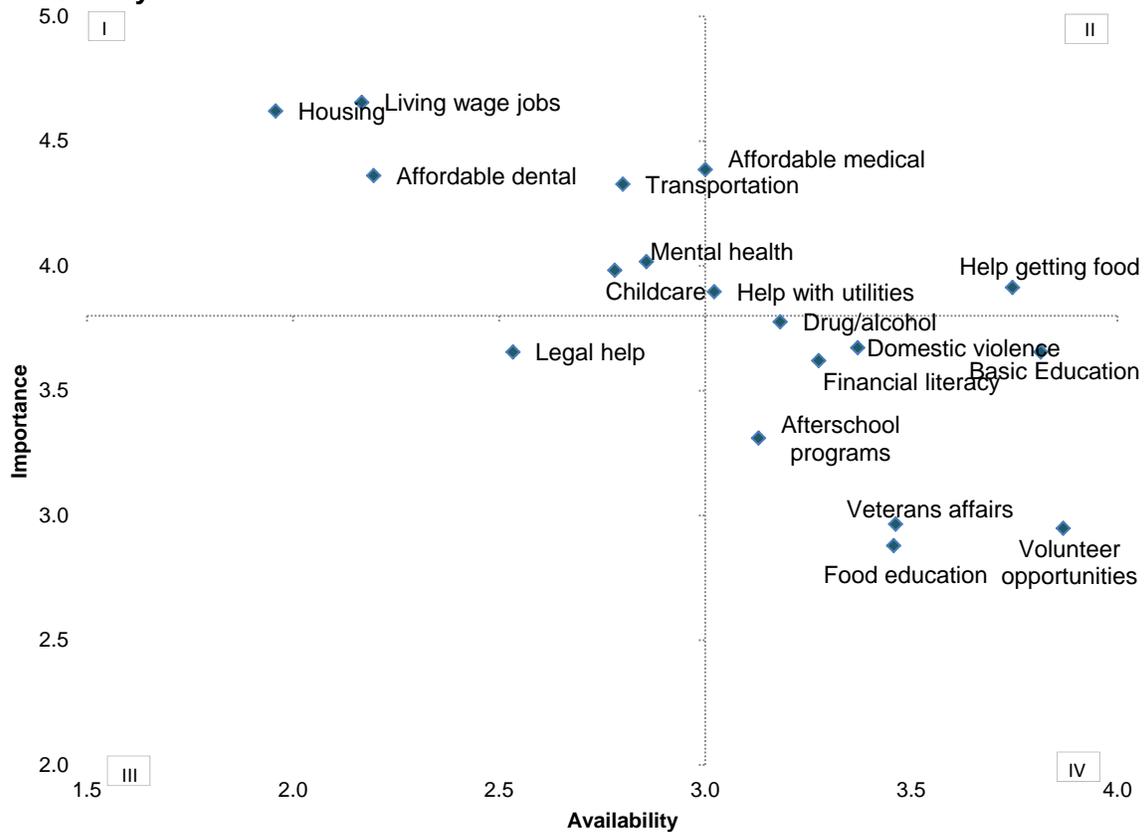


Service providers

Service providers highlighted several of the same service areas that the clients did in general: *Housing, living wage jobs, and affordable dental care.*

They also indicated a service gap for *transportation, childcare, and mental health.* Providers ratings placed *affordable medical and help with utilities* on the cusp of Quadrant I, approximately average in availability but higher than average importance.

Figure 36. Service provider perspectives on low-income service importance and availability



APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODS

ARN met with Community Action and project stakeholders to review prior needs assessments and determine current information needs. Together they revised the most recent Community Action survey based on stakeholder input. The survey final survey included 93 questions about a wide range of service areas (see Appendix B).

For this 2017 needs assessment, Community Action piloted an online data collection method in the interest of reducing data processing costs and increasing the breadth of participation through flexible feedback channels. ARN programmed the final survey online in English and Spanish and provided Community Action with the link for distribution.

Because there is no existing list of all low-income households (or persons) in Skagit County, it is not possible to draw a random sample from a well-defined population. For this survey, the team chose to intensively sample as many unduplicated households as possible from social and health service sites throughout the county.

Community Action coordinated with local organizations and agencies to promote and schedule data collection. Community Action volunteers recruited low-income residents to complete the survey using a convenience sampling methodology, placing themselves at social and health service agencies where the target population accesses services. Some hosting organizations provided one or more laptops or desktop computers for their customers and clients to use to complete the survey. In addition, pen and paper surveys were available.

Data collection spanned from July through late November 2017, the bulk of surveys were completed in October and November. The complete list of participating agencies can be found in Appendix A. Data collection efforts yielded 650 valid complete survey (219 online, 431 paper). These households included an estimated total of 1,929 persons.

Table 4 Completed surveys

	Language		Total
	English	Spanish	
Paper	322	109	431
Online	186	33	219
Total	508	142	650

In addition, surveys were also collected from 58 service provider staff in November and December of 2017.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY AGENCY AND PROGRAM SITES

As in past years, paper surveys were available at the following Community Action and partner sites in both English and Spanish. For the first time, both English and Spanish surveys were also available online.

Partner organizations:

- Anacortes Family Center
- Anacortes Housing Authority
- Anacortes Senior Center
- Asset Building Coalition
- CCS Farmworker Center
- Coalition to End Homelessness
- DSHS
- Friendship House
- Jail Transitions
- Cascades Job Corps
- Mount Vernon School District
- NWTS
- Project Homeless Connect
- Skagit Food Bank Coalition
- Skagit/Islands Headstart
- Samish Nation
- SeaMar (Mount Vernon)
- Skagit Transit
- Skagit YMCA
- SV Farms
- Worksource

Community Action of Skagit County programs:

- Adult Education
- Concrete Community Center
- East County Resource Center
- Energy Assistance
- Family Development Center
- Food Distribution Center
- Housing & Resource Center
- Latina/o Advisory Committee
- Skagit Volunteer Center
- Veterans' Services
- Volunteer Lawyer Program
- Volunteer Services for Seniors & Disabled
- WIC

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Needs of Skagit County Households

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

A survey about ways to support everyone in Skagit County

The Skagit Prosperity Project wants **EVERYONE** in our community to be successful in their lives. We have designed a survey to help identify your vision for the future and where there are gaps in resources that could help you attain your vision.

Please take a moment to fill out this survey. It is important to answer all the questions. It takes about 15 minutes. All answers are confidential.

As a thank you for your input, your completed survey will be entered in a drawing for a Bank Card: \$100, \$50, and \$25 prizes.

Thanks for participating!

Questions? Please contact Community Action of Skagit County
survey@communityactionskagit.org
(360) 416-7585 ext. 1190



HOUSING

Q1. How often in the last 12 months have you had to choose between paying your rent/mortgage or paying for other basic needs (such as food, medical care or transportation)?

- Every month (12 times)
- Every couple of months (6-11 times)
- Once in a while (4-5 times)
- Rarely (1-3 times)
- Never

Q2. Which best describes the place where you are living this week? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- Rental housing
- Live in home that I/we own
- Sharing a home with another household
- Transitional or emergency shelter
- Employer-provided housing
- I am homeless ⇒ **PLEASE SKIP TO Q7**

Q3. What is your monthly payment for housing?

- If you OWN your housing: Mortgage payment per MONTH \$_____ per MONTH
- If you RENT your housing: Rent payment per MONTH \$_____ per MONTH
- Don't know

Q4. Do you receive financial help with your rent or house payment from a government or agency program?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q5. In the past 12 months have you been unable to pay your heating bill once or more often?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q6. In the past 12 months have you felt drafts in your home, making it chilly?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

Q7. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- Less than high school diploma
- High school graduate
- GED or high school equivalency
- Vocational or trade school
- Some college (or still in college)
- Two-year degree
- Four-year degree
- Graduate degree (MS, MA, PhD, JD, MD, etc.)
- Other (*please describe*)

Q8. Are you currently in school, or would you like to be in school if you could be?

- Yes, I am currently in school
- Yes, I would like to be in school
- No ⇒ *PLEASE SKIP TO Q10*
- Don't know

Q9. How far in school do you hope to go?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> Four-year degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GED or high school equivalency | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree (MS, MA, PhD, JD, MD, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational or trade school | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please describe</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college (or still in college) | _____ |
-

Q10. Here is a list of skills that some people are interested in improving. Please indicate if you, or other adults in your household, want help to improve any of these skills. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Learn or improve computer skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial and budgeting skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Math | <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical skills such as plumbing, mechanical, electrical training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job search skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Other skills you would like to learn (<i>please describe</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning English | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's training | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting a GED (or high school equivalency) | |

Q10x. How would you rate your ability to use a computer and the internet?

- Excellent – I can do anything I want on a computer
- Good – I can do most of the things I want
- Fair – I can do some things on a computer
- Poor – I can do very little/nothing on a computer

Q11. What language do you usually speak in your household?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Mam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Nahut |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixteco, Triqui, or Zapoteco | <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Russian or Ukrainian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>Specify</i>): _____ |

Q12x. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living with you?

- Yes
- No ⇒ *skip to Q15*

Q13x. Is the primary language of your children the same as yours?

- Yes⇒skip to Q15 No

Q14x. How well do you understand your children's primary language?

- Very well Somewhat well Not well

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Q15. In the past 12 months, has anyone who lives with you needed legal assistance for any of these issues...?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family law | <input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health and/or substance abuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer debt | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence (including protection orders) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers License recovery | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment or job issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Other legal needs? (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE BELOW</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public benefits (including denial appeals) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration issues | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wills, trusts or estates | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Removing adult or juvenile criminal records | |

FOOD AND NUTRITION

In the last 12 months, have you or anyone who lives with you...

Q16A. Gone hungry because you were not able to get enough food?

- Yes No Don't know

Q16B. Skipped or cut back on the size of your meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- Yes No Don't know

Q16C. Used any food assistance services such as food stamps, food banks, or any other program that helps with food or food costs?

- Yes No Don't know

Q17x. Gone hungry or skipped or cut back on the size of your meals so others in your household could eat?

- Yes No Don't know

TRANSPORTATION

Q18. In the last 12 months, which of the following transportation problems has your household experienced? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No transportation problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to afford gas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No access to a car | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to afford car repairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No car insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to repair car problems yourself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No drivers license or license suspended | <input type="checkbox"/> Other problem? <i>(Please describe)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ride sharing/car sharing conflicts or problems | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car trouble/breakdowns | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car accident/damage | |

Q19. How often do you or other people in your household use Skagit Transit (SKAT)?

- Rarely, if ever
 1-2 times/month
 Several times/month
 Frequently

Q19x. If the bus (SKAT) does not work for you or other people in your household, why not? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to use car | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't afford cost of bus fare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I catch a ride with family/friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Other reason? <i>(Please describe)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No service where I am going | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No bus stop close to home | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus times or days do not work for me | |

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

Q20. Would you say that in general your health is...? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

Q20x. How often are you able to exercise as often or as much as you'd like to? (For example, walking, running, playing a sport or doing fitness exercises at home or in a gym)

- Almost always Often Sometimes Rarely/Never
 Not Applicable, I'm not interested in exercise

Q20y. How often are you able to exercise? _____ times a week month

Q21. Was there a time during the past 12 months when you or anyone else in your household needed ... (please check all that apply)

- Medical care
- Dental care
- Mental health care
- Prescription medication
- Help with a substance use disorder
- None of these ⇒ please skip to Q23x

Q22. Were you (or your household member) able to get it?

- Yes – everything needed
- Yes – some of what was needed
- No

23X. Do you have a primary care doctor?

- Yes
- No

24X. When did you last see a doctor?

- Within the last year
- Within the last 1-2 years
- More than 2 years ago

25X. Do you have a dentist?

- Yes
- No

26X. When did you last see a dentist for a checkup or cleaning?

- Within the last year
- Within the last 1-2 years
- More than 2 years ago

27X. How would you describe your dental health? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- No problems, things are fine
- I have one or two cavities that need to be fixed
- I have lots of cavities that need to be fixed
- I have a lot of pain because of bad teeth
- I have missing, cracked or broken teeth
- I have trouble eating because of my teeth

INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Q28. Where do you live now? CITY _____

Q29. Which best describes your household? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- Single parent female
- Single parent male
- Two-parent household
- Single person
- Two adults NO children
- Multi-family household
- Grandparent(s) and grandchildren
- Other (*Please describe*)

Q30. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

_____ PERSONS (*PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOURSELF IN THIS NUMBER*)

Q31. Including yourself, how many persons in your household are...?

0-5 years old ____ 6-17 years old ____ 18-59 years old ____ 60+ years old ____

Q32. What is your age?

_____ YEARS OLD

PLEASE GO TO Q34 IF YOU DO NOT HAVE CHILDREN LESS THAN 18 YEARS OLD IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

Q33. Here is a list of problems some parents experience with their children. Please check those problems you have had with your child(ren)? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)

- Skipping or dropped out of school
- Trouble with law enforcement
- Emotional or behavior problems
- Learning disability
- My child is bullied at school
- Worried about overweight or underweight
- No adult supervision after school for my child at home
- Substance abuse - alcohol, marijuana, heroin, meth
- Have had no problems
- Other (*please describe*)

Q34. How long have you lived in Skagit County? (IF LESS THAN ONE YEAR, WRITE "less than 1")

_____ YEARS

Q35x. Do you live in Skagit County seasonally or year-round?

- Seasonally
- Year-round

Q36x. Please indicate your sexual orientation

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Other

Q37. Your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender/Other

Q38. Have you or anyone in your household served in the military?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q39. In what country were you born?

- United States
- Other (Specify) _____
- Don't know

Q40. What best describes your race and ethnicity? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- African American or Black
- Asian
- Caucasian or White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander
- Other (Specify) _____

Q41x. Do you belong to a church or other type of faith community?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

This section is about employment and income. Your answers are completely confidential.

Q42x. In the last 12-months have you or anyone in your household worked in agriculture, that is for a farm or fishery?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q43. Here is a list of common sources of household income. Which of these has been a source of income for anyone in your home during the last 12 months? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Wages or income from a job
- Self-employment or family business
- Social Security
- SSI
- TANF (Welfare assistance)
- Other people give me money
- Other (*please describe*)

Q45. In the last 12 months, what was your average estimated total MONTHLY household income from all sources?

- Dollars per MONTH \$_____ (Please enter an amount)
- Don't know

Q46. Has getting or keeping a good job been hard for you or anyone in your household in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

ASPIRATIONS

Q47x How well equipped do you feel to create the future you want to have?

- Extremely well-equipped
- Very well-equipped
- Somewhat well-equipped
- Not very well-equipped
- Not at all well-equipped
- Don't know

Q48x. How welcome do you feel in your community?

- Extremely welcome
- Very welcome
- Somewhat welcome
- Not very welcome
- Not at all welcome
- Don't know

Q49x. How hopeful are you that you and the people in your household will be happy?

- Extremely hopeful
- Very hopeful
- Somewhat hopeful
- Not very hopeful
- Not at all hopeful
- Don't know

Your answers to the next questions will help us find out which of the services listed below are the most important and hardest to get.

Q50. Please rate how important this service is to your household now? PLEASE PLACE AN "X" FOR EACH SERVICE

	Not Important	A little important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Housing help (help finding way to afford rent or mortgage)					
Childcare					
Basic Education/English (ESL)/GED					
Legal help					
Food (help getting enough food or nutritious food such as fruits and vegetables)					
Help with how to buy and cook good meals					
Transportation that meets my needs					
Affordable medical care					
Affordable dental care					
Living wage jobs					
	Not Important	A little important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Help with heating & electric bills					
Mental health services or family counseling					
Domestic violence shelter and/or counseling services					
Substance Use Disorder services, such as Drug/alcohol treatment & counseling					
Help with basic financial health (such as budgeting & money management, fixing credit, how to save money, etc.)					
Volunteer opportunities to build skills and/or give back to my community					
Veterans Affairs Services					
Afterschool programs					

Q51. How easy or difficult is it for your household to find and get these services?

	Very easy to get	Some-what easy to get	Some-what hard to get	Very hard to get	Impossible to get	Don't know
Housing help (help finding way to afford rent or mortgage)						
Childcare						
Basic Education/English (ESL)/GED						
Legal help						
Food (help getting enough food or nutritious food such as fruits and vegetables)						
Help with how to buy and cook good meals						
Transportation that meets my needs						
Affordable medical care						
Affordable dental care						
Living wage jobs						
	Very easy to get	Some-what easy to get	Some-what hard to get	Very hard to get	Impossible to get	Don't know
Help with heating & electric bills						
Mental health services or family counseling						
Domestic violence shelter and/or counseling services						
Substance Use Disorder services, such as Drug/alcohol treatment & counseling						
Help with basic financial health (such as budgeting & money management, fixing credit, how to save money, etc.)						
Volunteer opportunities to build skills and/or give back to my community						
Veterans Affairs Services						
Afterschool programs						