

In 2013, Couleecap Inc. conducted a needs assessment to gather information regarding the needs of low-income individuals and families in a four-county service area (Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties). Information was gathered via surveys designed for low-income households. Surveys were distributed to a total of 1,350 households with 1,185 responses in the Couleecap Service area (response rate = 88%).

In La Crosse County, 424 surveys were collected. The responses from low-income households represent at least 1,553 people (adults and children) that live in La Crosse County. Demographic information about the low-income households includes:

- 63% had annual incomes less than \$20,000; an additional 18% had incomes between \$20,000 and \$29,999.
- 60% had income from wages; 5% had income from self-employment.
- 8% received income from unemployment.
- Other sources of cash income:
  - 13% received income from Social Security
  - 12% received income from Social Security Disability
  - 8% received income from SSI
- Other sources of support:
  - 42% received support from Food Share / Food Stamps
  - 32% received support from BadgerCare
  - 29% received support from Food Pantry
- 48% were renters; 38% owned their own home.
- 19% could be considered homeless.
- 43% had children.
  - 20% with children were single-parent households
  - 23% with children were married-parent households
- 46% had at least one person limited by a physical, mental or emotional problem.
- 31% have had at least one adult have difficulty finding employment because of physical, mental, or emotional problems.

The information from the 2013 Couleecap Needs Assessment along with information from other recent, local assessments will be used to help plan for and implement services to address the needs of low-income households in La Crosse County.

**Outcomes**

*Low-Income Households.* Households that responded to the needs assessment were asked to rate issues that were a need for their household. The table below reports the eight areas of need (rank ordered from most to least important) and the top two concerns within each area:

<b>Areas of Need</b>	<b>Significant Concerns</b>
Housing	Paying for utility bills Paying for rent / security deposit and home repairs
Employment	Finding a job with higher wages Getting health benefits with job
Transportation	Paying for car expenses – gas, insurance, repairs Getting / buying a reliable car
Health	Having adequate and paying for health insurance Paying for and getting dental care
Education	Paying for school Getting training for a better job
Emergency Assistance	Getting help with utility bills Getting help with rent / security deposit
Business Development	Getting business start-up loans Getting business start-up help
Child and Family Development (child care)	Finding available and affordable, quality child care Finding child care when child is sick
Child and Family Development (parenting)	Dealing with increased levels of stress Correcting / disciplining my child

All of the data gathered from the household surveys are reported in the findings sections of this report.