

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%).

The responses reported here are from 130 low-income households that were identified as homeless. A household is considered homeless if they reside in one of the following places: transitional housing; live “on the street” (such as in cars, parks, abandoned buildings); leaving a domestic violence housing situation with no plans or means for other housing; being evicted from housing unit with no plans or means of obtaining other housing; living with others (less than 30 days); or emergency shelter. The data represents at least 384 people (adults and children) that live in the Coulee Region. Demographic information about the low-income households includes:

- 79% had annual incomes less than \$20,000; an additional 6% had incomes between \$20,000 and \$29,999.
- 40% had income from wages; 5% had income from self-employment.
- 9% received income from unemployment.
- Other sources of cash income:
 - 16% received income from Social Security Disability
 - 15% received income from Social Security
 - 12% received income from SSI
- Other sources of support:
 - 45% received support from Food Share / Food Stamps
 - 29% received support from Food Pantry
 - 15% received support from Medicaid / Medicare
- 29% had children.
 - 21% with children were single-parent households
 - 8% with children were married-parent households
- 51% had at least one person limited by a physical, mental or emotional problem.
- 37% have had at least one adult have difficulty finding employment because of physical, mental, or emotional problems.

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 across the Couleecap, Inc. service area.

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:

Areas of Need	Significant Concerns
Housing	Finding safe, affordable housing Paying for rent / security deposit
Health	Paying for health care, health insurance, and dental / eye care Having adequate health insurance
Emergency Assistance	Getting help with rent and utility bills Getting transportation assistance and shelter
Transportation	Buying a car and paying for car expenses – gas, insurance, repairs Getting a reliable car
Employment	Finding a permanent job Getting health benefits with job
Education	Getting training for a better job Paying for school
Business Development	Getting business start-up help Getting business start-up loans and developing a business plan
Child and Family Development (child care)	Finding available, affordable, quality child care Finding child care when child is sick
Child and Family Development (parenting)	Developing appropriate parenting skills Correcting / disciplining my child