



**Community Action**  
Partnership of Hennepin County

## **National Poverty in America Awareness Month**

### **2021 Community Needs Assessment**

#### **LISTENING TO COMMUNITY VOICES**

Every three years, Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County (CAP-HC) conducts a Community Needs Assessment to (CNA) understand the changing needs of families and individuals with lower incomes in the community we serve. Information for these comprehensive assessments is gathered in a number of ways directly from community members as well as through community-based organizations. By listening to the needs of our community, CAP-HC can align our programs and services to address the specific factors that cause and reinforce poverty in Hennepin County. We also learn where there are gaps between community need and available services and identify ways to address those gaps.

#### **2020 AND 2021 ASSESSMENTS?**

CAP-HC completed a CNA early in 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. Knowing that individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or as People of Color make up over half of our clients—and that these historic events exacerbated existing inequities—we conducted another CNA in 2021. The goal of the 2021 assessment was to understand how the needs of Hennepin County residents with lower incomes have changed, particularly in communities of color. Engagement centered on five communities of color which CAP-HC serves—African American, Hmong, Latino, Native, and Somali.

#### **BASIC NEEDS PERSIST AND NEW NEEDS ARISE**

While specific strengths and needs varied for each community, there were some common themes.

- **Strength in community** – neighbors have come together to help each other during these exceptionally difficult times
- **Struggles with basic needs continue** – better access to affordable and healthy food, stable and affordable housing, and training for higher-wage employment options were emphasized
- **Public safety is a key challenge** – community members named fear for safety, distrust of police, and lengthy emergency response times
- **Anxiety, stress, and fear** – COVID-19 has caused feelings of uncertainty leading to anxiety, stress and fear that erodes mental health
- **Trust, transparency, and access** – people mentioned a need for working with trusted partners, improving transparency in eligibility requirements and application processes, and the need for more outreach regarding CAP-HC programs and services

*Read the full 2021 Community Needs Assessment at:*  
[caphennepin.org/what-we-do/2021-cna.html](https://caphennepin.org/what-we-do/2021-cna.html)