



Community Action
Partnership of Hennepin County

2022 Community Needs Assessment Summary

Consulting Partner:

IMAGINE | DELIVER



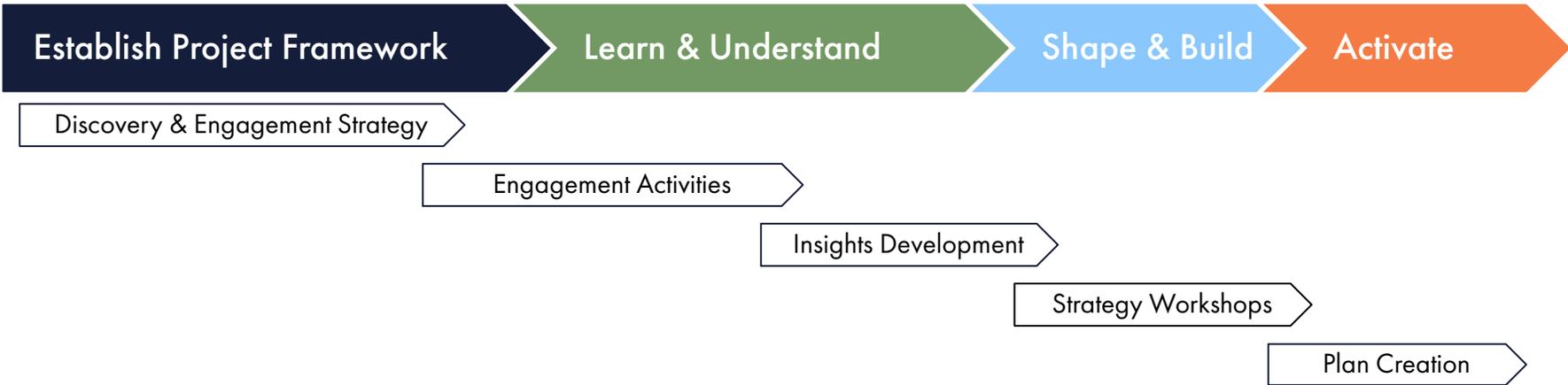
Project Purpose

Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County (CAP-HC) conducts a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years. Assessment information is gathered in a number of ways, incorporating quantitative data (e.g. U.S. Census data) as well as qualitative data (e.g. interviewing people with lower incomes). By listening to the community we serve, CAP-HC is able to identify the specific factors that cause and reinforce poverty in Hennepin County and develop and deliver programs that address those factors.

CAP-HC goes through a strategic planning process concurrently with the CNA. This approach, referred to as “One Journey,” ensures that the changing needs of people with lower incomes in our community are at the center of organizational planning.

CAP-HC partnered with Imagine Deliver for the One Journey process. Imagine Deliver’s community-driven design process integrated community perspective and participation from start to finish of the One Journey process. The learnings from the 2022 CNA have been incorporated into the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

ONE JOURNEY PROJECT PLAN



Discovery & Engagement Strategy

LEARNING PRIORITIES

CAP-HC and Imagine Deliver reviewed Client Satisfaction Survey data and previous CNA reports, then met with key stakeholders to analyze and discuss the information. From these conversations, the team created three learning priorities.

Community Values, Beliefs, and Assets

Understand the individual and shared assets and strengths that CAP-HC clients leverage in place of, or to supplement, the resources they receive. We want to learn more about what skills and informal networks community members utilize when formal options fall short of their needs.

Navigating Crisis Management

Understand how community members interact with CAP-HC services, as well as the services provided by other similar organizations. We'd like to identify gaps in resources or programs and opportunities to highlight resources/programs that have been working well across the county.

Future Dreams of Prosperity

Understand the aspirations of community members in order for organizations to move beyond meeting community members' basic needs into a place of building opportunities for prosperity.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

These learning priorities guided the structure of engagement activities for the Community Needs Assessment which included three types of engagement activities.

Sociohistorical Scan

A sociohistorical scan is a deep dive into secondary quantitative data to gather the context necessary to understand the data, histories, and theories of a systemic issue. This context informs the approach and strategy during the engagement period.

Community Meal

A community meal is a radically hosted community listening session that brings community members together to share their wisdom and connect with one another. The community meal for this engagement effort was for current CAP-HC clients and took place held at New Rules, located in Minneapolis.

Community Pop-Up

A community pop-up event is an engaging and accessible way to learn from community genius by meeting community members where they are, physically and through design. The two pop-up events for this engagement effort were in collaboration with trusted community organizations.

Sociohistorical Scan

RESEARCH SUMMARY

The social and historical context of our geographic location is crucial to formulating thoughtful decisions and reimagining our future. To set the context and prime a robust strategic engagement, Imagine Deliver completed a socio-historical analysis of Hennepin County to better understand the social determinants of poverty and barriers to wealth generation.

We gathered research and designed our socio-historical scan to answer one central question:

- What are some of the greatest determinants that affect those experiencing poverty in Hennepin County?

Two major conditions in history are foundational to the composition of the local region and how residents navigate it:

- **Political Disruption and Displacement of Indigenous and Black Communities**
- **Social Inequity in Employment, Opportunity, and Compensation**

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE SOCIOHISTORICAL SCAN¹

Research uncovered five historical topics that still inform local realities today and should be considered thoughtfully as we endeavor to build something better:

- Colonial History of Minnesota – the Violent Acquisition of the Sacred Land
- Anti-Black Policies that Displaced Communities – Housing Policies, Homeownership, & Displacement
- Environmental Injustice – Environmental Health Equity for Communities Affected by Poverty
- History of Labor Exploitation in Minnesota – Slavery & Labor Exploitation
- Opportunity Gaps in Education and Skills Acquisition – Disparities in Education & Resources

¹ A copy of the full Sociohistorical Scan of Hennepin County can be downloaded using this link: [Download the Sociohistorical Scan of Hennepin County](#)

Community Engagement

APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CAP-HC and Imagine Deliver worked together to identify the target community members we wanted to hear from and the best way to reach them. Our goal was to hear from community members in Minneapolis as well as the northern and southern Hennepin County suburbs, particularly lower-income neighborhoods. Imagine Deliver hosted one family meal-style engagement session and two pop-ups in three distinct locations across the Hennepin County area.

COMMUNITY MEAL QUESTIONS

Using the three learning priorities established for the One Journey project, Imagine Deliver asked community meal attendees, who were all CAP-HC clients, the following questions.

Community Values, Beliefs, and Assets	Navigating Crisis Management Services	Future Dreams of Prosperity
My stability and the stability of my family comes from these three things: ____, ____, ____.	What is the first thing you would change about crisis services if you were in charge? What would you want to stay the same?	If you had the power to build a future where everyone had all of their needs met, what would you do?
When I am in crisis, I know that I can count on _____.	What needs do you have that you haven't found resources for?	I could build a better future for myself and my family if I knew how to ...
Despite living with low income, I feel like I have abundance in _____.	Which organizations provide the most reliable availability for services that fit your needs? (Follow Up) What organizations could CAP-HC learn from?	If all of my bills were paid for a year, I would finally be able to ...
Is there anything that you think is important about navigating crisis situations that people often forget?	Do you believe that your current financial situation has been improved, made worse, or stayed the same after receiving COVID-19 aid? Why do you believe your current financial situation has been improved/ made worse/stayed the same?	

POP-UP EVENT QUESTIONS

Using the three learning priorities established for the One Journey project, Imagine Deliver asked pop-up event attendees, a mix of community members and CAP-HC clients, the following questions.

Community Values, Beliefs, and Assets	Navigating Crisis Management Services	Future Dreams of Prosperity
When I am in crisis, I know that I can count on _____.	What needs do you have that you haven't found resources for?	If all of my bills were paid for a year, I would finally be able to ...
When government services fail me, my community and I have learned to _____.	Do you believe that your current financial situation has been improved, made worse, or stayed the same after receiving COVID-19 aid? Why do you believe your current financial situation has been improved/ made worse/stayed the same?	If you had the power to build a future where everyone had all of their needs met, what would you do?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

In total, 61 Hennepin County residents—some being current CAP-HC clients—participated in the “Learning Together” phase of the Community Needs Assessment. Of this total, 51 (83%) provided some demographic information. All demographic questions were optional for community engagement participants.



61

Community Participants



20

Video Interviews



\$1,700

Incentive Dollars Distributed

Insights Development

An insight, as defined by Imagine Deliver, is a unique piece of information that tells us something we wouldn't know from asking a question by itself. Insights let us understand more about what is happening and why, so we can dream of actionable solutions. Together, these insights create stories that share narratives, aspirations, and possibilities to dismantle system issues that affect our clients the most. Insights are developed from a information and wisdom from community members and clients, research, and organizational context.

INSIGHTS BY THEME

The following themes and insights were developed from the information and wisdom community members and clients shared with us, research, and organizational context.

Themes	Insights
Information and Relationships Are Powerful Tools of Social Capital	Behind Us Is a Village: Community Networks Lift Us
	Resource Information as an Asset: Increasing Resource Accessibility
A Holistic Approach as a Pathway to Systems Change	Poverty in Layers: Compounding Factors Stack on Top of Economic Instability
	Uproot Economic Instability: From Short-Term Solutions to Long-Term Wealth Building
More Choice & Autonomy	I Have a Dream: Reclaiming Time and Livelihood

RELATIONSHIPS & INFORMATION ARE POWERFUL TOOLS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

What People Said

"When government services fail me, my community and I have learned to work together ... work as a team."

"When I lost my job, I felt like something was just taken away from me. And then when Covid came behind that and I've seen, I couldn't go back to work there was unemployment office and forget about that. We forget about sometimes our church just learning all these resources, just get involved with them being volunteers."

"There's different organization[s] [I] can go to for rent assistance. Maybe the church, maybe friends and family. [I] forget resources that [I] might have or where to go for resources or how to even use the resource that [I] might have knowledge of."

"[I] don't know of resources with mental health because I don't want to tell my extended family about my depression."

"When I am in crisis, I know I can count on community organizations. People I live next to neighbors."

"I don't work anymore due to an injury, but church assistance and food banks have supplemented our needs."

"Resources aren't public without research and connections."

Key Implications

- Leverage an asset-based approach or cultural wealth model to uplift, empower, and drive forward the various strengths community members bring to the table across social, linguistic, familial, aspirational, navigational, and resistance domains.
- Ideate a multitude of venues for information distribution across technology and local networks. Utilizing technology, text, newspapers, community hubs, providers, grocery stores, etc. can increase access to information.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH AS A PATHWAY TO SYSTEMS CHANGE

What People Said

"When I started receiving money for SNAP, I only qualified for \$20 which was helpful, but with extra COVID funds, I started getting \$250 a month which was more helpful for buying food. That benefit [expired], and I'll go back to getting \$20 a month. But food is so expensive right now."

"Food shelf [is helpful], but transportation is an issue to get there. They provide an amount for a family of 5, and issue to store it in the apartment, especially when it's perishable. Feeling guilty having it when it could have been to a family that needed it the most."

"I think one of the things people forget about, or don't realize [about] being in a crisis or experiencing a crisis, whether it's mental health or physical health or just financial, is that we're still human beings and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect ... You know, we just need to have our basic needs met and then a lot of the stressors and crises wouldn't exist, you know? And what I consider basic needs is a roof, a safe, affordable roof over the head, healthy quality food, and clothing that's appropriate for, you know, how Minnesota is with all the extremes."

"Free housing because we don't have anywhere to go anymore ... Housing is the root of the issue."

"I used to work two jobs but can't get any other work now that I'm older."

"What people often forget when they're going through a crisis is your mental health. I think that's very important. And also when you're going through a crisis I would say stability as well too ... Financial stability, housing stability, mental health. And I would say more food [access], you know, that will help people out a lot."

Key Implications

- State or federally funded programs or organizations are often barred from using their programmatic expenditure for essential services that address the interrelated needs of communities. A multi-layered system issue requires a multidisciplinary, collective force rooted in partnerships across organizations and organizations to create alternative solutions that do not depend on the state.
- Transformation must include addressing systemic issues such as racial capitalism to move beyond safety-net solutions that only address the symptoms of the issue.

MORE CHOICE & AUTONOMY

What People Said

"Taxes did not reflect urgency. There's a big wall to climb in getting qualified. CAP-HC is helpful in ways they can help households, but it means calling many times and only other resources is low. Struggling and resources are inconsistent."

"I want to improve my career."

"If all my bills were paid for a year I would take my daughter on a girl's trip and be at peace."

"If all my bills were paid for a year I would start my hair and nails business."

"If all my bills were paid for a year I would finish school."

"If all my bills were paid for a year [I would buy a] development, build houses, buy a house!"

"Make sure opportunities to be involved because it gives people dignity to contribute. I helped Habitat for Humanity and helped through church but now I am being helped."

"If all my bills were paid for a year I would treat my girlfriend to the things I wish I could give her."

"I would build something like the African American movement. Free food program so no one is in need. Coordinate drives for donation. Give where I can."

Key Implication

- Community members are calling for holistic, human-centered programs that consider their humanity, interests, aspirations, and personality. Community members call for a trusting, easy, and dignified process for acquiring assistance, help, and care.

A Bold Vision

HENNEPIN COUNTY WITHOUT POVERTY

Over the course of the Community Needs Assessment, Imagine Deliver heard from over 60 community members across Hennepin County who shared their experiences living with low income. Participants talked about their ideas for the future, their dreams, and their most challenging, vulnerable moments.

Receiving services while living with low income is often a deeply personal experience, and community members expressed a need to feel like they could do so while being seen in their full humanity. Community members want an experience that is empathetic, holistic, and connected. CAP-HC can achieve that with: community networks that lift us, increasing resource accessibility, addressing the compounding factors that stack on top of economic instability, shifting away from short-term solutions to long-term wealth building, and helping community members reclaim their time and livelihoods.