Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission

November 2019 Community Needs Assessment

Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission (OHCAC) is located in North Central Ohio with our clients living in Marion, Morrow, and Crawford Counties. The 1,211.68 square miles are comprised of 141,918 citizens living in 54.18% Urban Population and 45.82% Rural Population with Morrow County having the largest Rural Population at 88.84%. Our Rural Population is comprised of under the Age of 18, with 22% or 31,222 citizens, 18-64 at 59.67% or 84,682 citizens and 18.33% being 65+ or 26,014 citizens. Our rural population is comprised of 94.8% White citizens as well as 1.57% Multiple Race, 2.8% African American, 0.53% Asian, 1.9% Hispanic or Latino, 0.23% Native American/Alaska Native, and 0.03% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Males make up 50.67% of our total population. (U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts website)

The U.S. Census Department defines Urban as an area comprised of a densely settled core of census tracts and/or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements and/or land use requirements. The Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas: Urbanized Areas of 50,000 or more people and Urban Clusters of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people. None of the three counties we serve through OHCAC encompass an Urbanized Area but do include a few Urban Clusters. For that reason, there are no Urban statistics available because we service Rural communities.

Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission (OHCAC) conducted a needs assessment during May 2019, reaching out to the five sectors: public, private, faith based, educational and community based. Examples of public sector is Mayor Scott Schertzer, examples of private sector is Interim Health Care of Ohio, examples of faith based is Galion Alliance Church, examples of educational is Gilead Christian School and examples of community based is Salvation Army. Surveyed clients represented sixty-four different towns/cities and thirty-eight different Zip Codes. OHCAC clients were surveyed and given a list of possible needs, as well as an opportunity to list any other needs, and asked to rate items currently needed on a scale of one to five, with five being most needed. An example of the survey is attached to this assessment. The results of the three county surveys are compiled to produce a guide for prioritization of agency efforts.

The results of the three county surveys are as follows:

**MARION COUNTY**

In Marion County 114 community partners, including service agencies, elected officials, etc., were mailed surveys and asked to prioritize the needs for services in the community, from Least Needed to Most Needed. The Private Sector had 0 of 2, the Public Sector had 12 of 67, the Faith Based Sector had 2 of 8, the Educational Sector had 5 of 10 and the Community Based sector had 9 of 27 return their surveys for a total of 28. We also allowed patrons of the Marian Clark Office to fill out the surveys as they waited for their appointment with 29 completing the survey. Completed surveys including mailed and in-house surveys were 57. The top results for Most Needed were **Access to Alcohol/Substance Abuse Treatment, Access to Mental Health Treatment, and Prevention Programs for Youth regarding**
alcohol and other substances tying with 44% each, Safe & Affordable Rental Housing and Services for Individuals with Disabilities tying with 42% each.

Marion County’s population estimate according to the U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts website as of July 1, 2018 was 65,256 citizens with 10,767 or 16.5% living in poverty. The median household income for 2017 was $44,708 with 5.1% unemployment rate.

1. There are 105 Mental Health Providers in Marion County working out to 1 for every 620 citizens as of 2018 (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute). Statewide 61.9% of recipients receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) have a mental disorder, with 17.6% of those having an intellectual disability and 16.3% having a mood disorder.

1. Of the 65,256 citizens in Marion County, 51,683 are 18 years of age or older and it is estimated that 11,094 or 17% drink alcohol excessively. Final 2017 overdose deaths according to the Marion Star (published December 26, 2018) showed a county record 32 citizens passed away ranking our county 12th in the state according to the Ohio Department of Health and Ohio being ranked 2nd in the Nation for overdose deaths according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. These losses of lives equate to 11,469 years lost from the National Average for the time period ranging from 2009-2018. Marion County in partnership with Crawford County have created ADAMH. ADAMH partners with local agencies to provide the highest level of quality services for Mental Health and/or Substance Abuse concerns. In Marion County ADAMH sponsors the Marion Area Counseling Center, Recovery to Work Program, Family and Children First Council, Marion-Crawford Prevention Programs, Maryhaven, and National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI).

2. The total renter-occupied housing units in Marion County is 8,818. Of the 27,904 total housing units in Marion County 14% have one or more substandard housing condition. Substandard housing includes the following conditions (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute):
   1) lacking complete plumbing facilities-hot and cold running water, a flushing toilet and a bathtub or shower-of which 56 units do not or 0.2%
   2) lacking complete kitchen facilities-a sink with a faucet, a stove or range and a refrigerator.
   3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room of which 363 units or 1.3% do,
   4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30%.
   5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 1,975 households or 22.4%.

Average rent for Marion County from 2013-2017 was $712. According to the Ohio Housing Needs Assessment, Marion County was in the top 5 counties in the State for formal court eviction filings in 2016 with 81.2 per 1,000 rental households or 627 cases. Statewide average for eviction filings per 1,000 rental households was 67.5. In 2017 Marion County was ranked third in the State of Ohio for Foreclosure Rate at 1.66% over twice the state average of 0.82%. From 2010-2016 Marion County has lost .28% of its total housing units. In Marion County there is a shortage of 1,211 affordable rental units to extremely low-income households. For the 2016-2017 school year Marion City Schools had 4.1% share of their total student enrollment experiencing homelessness equating to 173 students.

Lead Based Paint is a 12.2% (3,404 units) hazard in Marion County putting our county in the top 3 counties in the State (state average 9.4%). Lead Based Paint can cause damage to the brain, kidneys,
nerves and blood and has been associated with behavioral problems, learning disabilities, seizures and even death.

In an effort to combat Substandard housing Marion County through the Neighborhood Initiative Program through OHFA demolished 7 blighted and/or vacant homes using $110,268 in reimbursed funds in 2017.

In Marion County there is 194 active HUD-Subsidized rental properties, 264 active Housing Tax Credit for seniors age 55 and over rental units and 295 Federal Housing Tax Credit rental properties for low-income families and individuals.

2. According to the Ohio Housing Needs Assessment, 63% of all homes statewide cannot be entered by someone in a wheelchair, with over 25% of the state’s population aged 65 to 74 and nearly 50% of those 75 or over reporting they have one or more disabilities. From 2012-2016 16.0% of Marion County was 65 years and over with 12.6% of those citizens living alone. According to U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts website 15.3% or 8,237 citizens under the age of 65 were considered disabled from 2013-2017. The average disability benefit paid at the beginning of 2019 according to the Social Security Administration website was $1234. That is barely enough to keep a beneficiary above the 2018 poverty level of $12,140 annually. From 2012-2016 Marion County was the only non-Appalachian County to have a Disability Rate of 20.0% or higher.

Marion County rationale for OHCAC Services:

OHCAC has established a working partnership with service agencies to ensure that clients are receiving access to all community resources.

Regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a program offered directly from the Ohio Development Services Agency. Customers may receive a one-time credit or voucher to their main heating source. From July 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 RHEAP helped 2,439 households.

Winter Crisis Program (WCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment for utility bills, bulk fuels, coal, wood or wood pellets. The customer must be income eligible and either have a disconnection notice, be without heating services, or have less than a 10 day supply of bulk fuel. From November 1, 2018 to April 15, 2019 WCP helped 935 households.

Summer Crisis Program (SCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment on your electric bill. Eligibility Requirements are: a member of the household who would medically benefit from assistance verified by a licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner, or seniors age 60 and over who meet the 2019 Poverty Income Guidelines. From July 1, 2019 to September 15, 2019 SCP helped 235 households.

Columbia Gas Fuel Funds (CGFF) is a program designed for a one-time payment on Columbia Gas bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 CGFF helped 163 households in all 3 counties.

First Energy Fuel Funds (FEFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 FEFF helped 107 households in all 3 counties.
Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) is a program designed for a one-time payment on AEP bills for income eligible clients. In 2018 & 2019 N2N helped 18 households in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) helps Ohioans manage their energy costs year round to avoid disconnection. The program allows participants to pay a percentage of their gross income toward their utility bills, instead of the total amount of current charges. The payment is based on a percentage of the household gross income. From July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019 PIPP helped 2,609 households.

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) assists clients once a year with rental assistance. In 2018 we helped 8 households.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides financial and technical assistance in the rehabilitation and weatherization of low-income owner occupied and renter occupied housing. In 2018 OHCAC HWAP weatherized 73 homes in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

AEP has their own program that provides the same energy measurements as EPP, but is for only AEP clients. In 2018 AEP helped 8 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

Community Connections through First Energy also provides energy measurements similar to EPP for only First Energy clients. In 2018 Community Connections helped 82 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

Warm Choice through Columbia Gas also provides energy measurements for only Columbia Gas customers. In 2018 Warm Choice helped 8 homes in Marion County.

Rapid Rehousing Program provides an intervention housing model by which households experiencing homeless move to permanent housing quickly. From January 1-December 31, 2018 the Marion County office helped 19 households obtain housing with 16 of the households achieving their performance target.

Personal Needs Pantry provides personal hygiene items that can not be purchased with SNAP benefits to households that are at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. The Marion County Office helped 114 households from January 1-December 31, 2018 and received 398 donations.

United Community Rx Program provides assistance to households with or without Prescription Drug Coverage obtain their prescriptions by finding the most cost-effective way to purchase their prescriptions, whether that be by coupon, Patience Assistance Programs through the pharmaceutical company or purchasing the prescription through donations provided by sponsors, such as the United Way, Marion Community Foundation or OSUM Pay It Forward Program. From January 1, 2018-December 31, 2018 the UCRx Program helped 55 households receive life sustaining medications.

Comments and Concerns from our Marion County surveyed clients included: “Transportation, Affordable Housing, Outreach Programming; I feel we should emphasize all programs to help senior citizens (meals, mental and physical health, transportation etc.) also helping the disabled/handicapped should be a priority.; Get rid of all freebees and make them more responsible for their actions! "No such thing as a free lunch! Tax payers pay for it!; Helping with groceries/prescription pick up; Good Programs.; Removal of Condemned Properties.; Getting people out of unemployment and finding them jobs. Helping with groceries/prescription pick up; Good Programs.; Removal of Condemned Properties.;
Getting people out of unemployment and finding them jobs. Develop programs that reduce drug activity in our community. As a trustee no one has come to me for any of these things. Thank you.

There is a need for home repair and rental housing repair. A great need for financial education and basic home and car repair/maintenance & savings for car and home repairs beyond their skill level. Finding jobs for people who depend on welfare. Drug Tests for those who get welfare, food stamps etc. Programs to fix up homes that are in sad shape. Program to go in and clean up nuisance properties immediately without waiting for court proceedings. Understanding that people have to work 2 jobs to just make ends meet and live. But “make too much” for certain help; Pest control in homes; Be able to help communicate better with utilities; Personal Needs; Wasn’t sure on some, no personal experience so I marked middle of the line; Seniors; Vocational training is an important area that is too often ignored by various services; So many needs and services to be covered difficult to rate; I'm glad that Community Action do care for people everywhere and a lot also help those who food and things the world need; Housing, Medication assistance, Transportation in county; Access to services for individuals with disabilities; More help for working families that do not receive any type of assistance; Continued provision and programming for basic needs such as good clothing, shelter etc. Also, job skill development-work skill, soft skill alike.”

MORROW COUNTY

Forty-nine community partners, including service agencies, elected officials, etc., and clients were surveyed in Morrow County and asked to prioritize the needs for services in the community, from Least Needed to Most Needed. The top results for Most Needed were Safe and Affordable Rental Housing with 51%, Prevention Programs for Youth regarding Alcohol and Other Substances with 46.9%, Alternatives to Delinquency/Mentoring for Youth & Teens with 44.8%, Head Start and Early Head Start Services for Children with 40.8% and Parenting Skills/Family Counseling and Before and After Schools Programs tying with 38.7% each.

Morrow County’s population estimate as of July 1, 2018 was 35,112 citizens with 3,933 or 11.2% living in poverty. The median household income in 2017 dollars was $52,767 with a 4.9% unemployment rate.

1. The total renter-occupied housing units in Morrow County is 2,538. Of the 14,338 total housing units in Morrow County 12% have one or more substandard housing condition. Substandard housing includes the following conditions:
   1) lacking complete plumbing facilities-hot and cold running water, a flushing toilet and a bathtub or shower-of which 72 units or 0.5% do not
   2) lacking complete kitchen facilities—a sink with a faucet, a stove or range and a refrigerator.
   3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room of which 301 units or 2.1% do,
   4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30%.
(Average mortgage in Morrow County from 2012-2016 was $1190.)
   5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 510 households or 20.1%.

Average rent for Morrow County from 2013-2017 was $646 a 7.8% decrease from 2007-2011 the second highest decrease in the State. From 2010-2016 Morrow County has lost .49% of its total housing units however their population has grown 0.48% over the same time period. Of the 14,338 total housing units 12.8% or 1,835 units are mobile homes compared to the state average of 3.8%.
Morrow Metropolitan Housing currently has 26 families on the waitlist. Currently the waitlist is closed and is not receiving any new applicants, with an average wait time of 2-4 years. Morrow County Metropolitan Housing is currently helping 98 families on the Housing Choice Voucher Program with 30 of the families having children in the household and 68 households have a member with a disability. The average annual adjusted income for the 98 households is $13,066. Morrow Metropolitan Housing was also awarded a TBRA (temporary rental assistance) grant from the State of Ohio in which they helped 14 households with rental assistance and 6 additional households with security deposit. (Collected from email with Morrow County Metropolitan Housing Authority on June 10, 2019). In Morrow County there is a shortage of 499 affordable rental units to extremely low-income households.

In Morrow County there is 162 active HUD-Subsidized rental properties, 56 USDA Rural Development subsidized rental properties and 187 Federal Housing Tax Credit rental properties for low-income families and individuals.

Morrow County Job and Family Services Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Program assisted 9 Families with an eviction notice on their rent and 1 voucher was issued for home repairs. PRC assisted the employment process by providing: 70 families with car repairs, car down payment or transportation to and from employment, 219 gasoline vouchers were given out, 5 individuals were assisted with getting a background check for new employment, 18 Individuals were given vouchers to purchase items needed to start new employment and 16 hygiene kits were given out to Able Bodied Adults without Dependents. Energy Assistance was provided to 49 families to stop utility disconnect for electric, gas, or water in 2018. School clothing vouchers were provided to 200 families (Collected from email with Morrow County Job and Family Services on June 12, 2019).

Lead Based Paint is an 8.6% (1,233 units) hazard in Morrow County. Lead Based Paint can cause damage to the brain, kidneys, nerves and blood and has been associated with behavioral problems, learning disabilities, seizures and even death.

Currently there is not a Homeless Shelter located within Morrow County. Citizens are often referred to Marion County’s Homeless Shelters which are currently at full capacity.

2. According to the 2016 Morrow County Health Assessment 24% of male youth under the age of 18 were currently drinking with 53% stating that they had at least one drink in their lifetime. Female youth under the 18 accounted for 15% of the current drinkers with 42% having at least one drink in their lifetime. One percent of the current drinkers are 13 years of age or younger and 21% of all youth under the age of 18 reported that they had binge drink in the past month. This behavior is causing Alcohol-Related Risky Behavior such as 15% Riding with someone who was drinking or 5% youth who participated in Drinking and Driving. Current Youth Drinkers tried to attempt suicide in the past 12 months 10% more than non-drinkers, misused prescription medications at some time in their life 23% more, have used marijuana in the past 30 days 31% more, have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days 41% more, participated in some form of sexual activity 46% more and are 6% less likely to participate in extracurricular activities.

Morrow County agencies work together with different programs regarding prevention, treatment and recovery to provide services for all stages of mental health and substance use disorders. The Drug & Alcohol Awareness and Prevention (DAAP) of Morrow County is a coalition with a mission to bring drug and alcohol awareness to the community through educational programs, speakers, and organized events. DAAP collaborates with other individuals in the community to reduce the misuse/abuse of
medication and underage drinking in Morrow County through programs such as Parents Who Host, Lose the Most, Hidden in Plain Sight, Drug Take Back Events and The Medication Project.

Parents Who Host, Lose the Most educates parents about the health and safety risks associated with serving alcohol at teen parties and increases awareness of and compliance with the state underage drinking laws.

Hidden in Plain Sight brings awareness to parents/guardians in an interactive exhibit of a teenager’s bedroom, that helps identify signs of risky behavior in teens. As of September 30, 2018, sixty-one individuals had attended a Hidden in Plain Sight Training.

Drug Take Back Events in collaboration with the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office and Kroger host two events a year one in the Spring and one in the Fall to collect unused or expired medication. Since October 26, 2016, Drug Take Back Events have collected 860.4 pounds helping to remove the majority of abused prescription drugs that are obtained from family and friend’s medicine cabinets and help prevent adults and youth who used medication not prescribed to them or took more than prescribed to feel good or to get high.

The Medication Project provides Morrow County residents with Drug Disposal and Deactivation Bags to properly dispose of unused prescription or over the counter drugs. Since 2017 they have distributed 2,450 Drug Disposal bags and 152 Deactivation Bags. They will also begin distributing free lock boxes for residents to lock up their medication.

Recovery and Prevention Resources provides at no charge a 10-week evidence/research-based violence or substance abuse program to K-9 grade students. Substance use and its effect on the body are introduced when developmentally appropriate. In the youngest grades, the lessons develop an understanding of what is healthy to put in the body and what is not. This program prepares students for discussions about tobacco, alcohol and other drug use in later elementary years with courses including: Safe Use of Medicines-Grades K-5, Effects of Tobacco Use-Grades 2-5, Effects of Alcohol Use-Grades 3-5 and Effects of Marijuana Use-Grade 5.

4. Morrow County currently has 1,932 children under the age of 5 in the community of which Head Start is currently serving 60 children and 8 Early Head Start children with full day services. Head Start operates at two locations in Morrow County one in Mount Gilead and another in Cardington. The Cardington location offers one classroom during the school year Monday-Thursday from 8:30-3:30 and can educate 20 children at a time. The Mount Gilead location offers two classrooms also during the school year Monday-Thursday from 8:30-3:30 and can educate 20 children at a time in each classroom. There is one Early Head Start location in Mount Gilead all year Monday-Friday from 8:30-3:30 and can educate 8 children. There is no transportation available for Early Head Start but there is one bus available for Head Start at each location, however the radius of how far they can go away from the center to pick up children is limited.

Currently as of 6/7/2019 there is 13 Early Head Start Registrations and 16 Head Start Registrations for Cardington and 32 for Mount Gilead for next school year. As of 4/2/2019 there is 7 Early Head Start children and 1 Over Income Early Head Start children on the wait list. There is also 3 Head Start and 4 Over Income Head Start on the wait list.

5. The Morrow County Health Department offers a free home visit to all newborn parents. The home visit provides an assessment of the mother and child, support and resources for new parents and a registered nurse to answer questions. In addition, the Morrow County Health Department offers free of charge the Help Me Grow Program for pregnant woman through infants age 6 months. Help Me Grow provides parenting skills, home visits focused on child development, family support, child development
screenings, in-home health and prenatal education, information about child health/development, safety, identifying and establishing medical home/provider and connections to community resources.

Morrow County rationale for OHCAC Services:

OHCAC has established a working partnership with service agencies to ensure that clients are receiving access to all community resources.

Regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a program offered directly from the Ohio Development Services Agency. Customers may receive a one-time credit or voucher to their main heating source. From July 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 RHEAP helped 976 households.

Winter Crisis Program (WCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment for utility bills, bulk fuels, coal, wood or wood pellets. The customer must be income eligible and either have a disconnection notice, be without heating services, or have less than a 10-day supply of bulk fuel. From November 1, 2018 to April 15, 2019 WCP helped 624 households.

Summer Crisis Program (SCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment on your electric bill. Eligibility Requirements are: a member of the household who would medically benefit from assistance verified by a licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner, or seniors age 60 and over who meet the 2019 Poverty Income Guidelines. From July 1, 2019 to September 15, 2019 SCP helped 127 households.

Columbia Gas Fuel Funds (CGFF) is a program designed for a one-time payment on Columbia Gas bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 CGFF helped 163 households in all 3 counties.

First Energy Fuel Funds (FEFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 FEFF helped 107 households in all 3 counties.

Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) is a program designed for a one-time payment on AEP bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 N2N helped 18 households in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) helps Ohioans manage their energy costs year round to avoid disconnection. The program allows participants to pay a percentage of their gross income toward their utility bills, instead of the total amount of current charges. The payment is based on a percentage of the household gross income. From July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019 PIPP helped 599 households.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides financial and technical assistance in the rehabilitation and weatherization of low-income owner occupied and renter occupied housing. In 2018 OHCAC HWAP weatherized 73 homes in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Electric Partnership Program (EPP) is a program through the State of Ohio that provides services to clients with regulated utilities, such as AEP and First Energy, with replacement of non-energy efficient appliances and light bulbs. In 2018 EPP helped 24 homes in Morrow County.

Morrow County offers an Emergency Food Pantry & Personal Needs Pantry (PNP), for items that cannot be purchased with SNAP benefits, through which, from July 1, 2018-June 30 2019, they have helped 179 Morrow County household with Emergency Food provided by Pizza Hut and 204 Morrow County
households with PNP and have received $9,707 in food and personal need donations from area businesses.

The Del-Co Water Community Fund assisted 13 households for a total of 50 residents with a grant to stop disconnects on water bills (4 households), electric bills (8 households) and propane bill (1 household).

Morrow County assists residents with Birth Certificates and State Identification to obtain employment in which they helped 6 residents.

Comments and Concerns from our Morrow County surveyed clients included: “Collaborate on efforts with youth and families and any service for support.; Affordable Housing, Shelters.; Dental services are available but hard to get into.; Many needs that are being or have the ability to be met are under promoted. Building awareness is needed for present program success.; I feel the highest needs regard education, transportation, shelter and caregiver support as most barriers.; Helping seniors repair on homes and help with energy be it insulation and better furnaces.; Morrow County Community Center/Gym encourages more publicity regarding our scholarships and discounted fees at the gym for youth, military and families to exercise.; Prevention programs for youth regarding drugs and alcohol.; Utility/energy assistance, home repair funds for roof and heating/cooling furnace/appliances, early childhood education and parenting skills, personal needs pantry and public and private transportation.; Morrow County needs evidenced based prevention services. Need more child care providers.; I think in general access to care is a big issue for individuals. Either the care they need is unavailable, or they lack the means to get to the place that provides the care.; Affordable housing and employment opportunities are the highest of the high priorities.; Impatient drug treatment facility.; Affordable housing, shelters.; Educating people on the services available to them from all agencies. Sometimes help is there you just need to know where to go.; High of the list, affordable housing (renting), dental care, daycare, parent classes, car repair clinic.; Places for teens to go to be safe and guided in whatever their needs are.; I really can't address much on this survey, but if there is some way we can partner with you to help, please let me know.; Transitioning housing for youth, Housing options for my couch surfers.; Better collaboration with public schools and local human service agencies.”

CRAWFORD COUNTY

In Crawford County fifteen community partners, including service agencies, elected officials, etc., and clients were surveyed and asked to prioritize the needs for services in the community, from Least Needed to Most Needed. The top results for Most Needed were Access to Recovery Support Programs with 46.6%, Access to Alcohol/Substance Abuse Treatment with 40%, and Homelessness Prevention/Shelters, Down Payment Assistance, Accessibility Improvements to Housing, Assistance with Prescriptions/Medications and Prevention Programs for Youth regarding Alcohol and Other Substances tying with 33.3% each.

Crawford County’s population estimate as of July 1, 2018 was 41,550 citizens (2018 U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts) with 6,751 or 16.2% living in poverty (2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates). The median household income in 2017 dollars was $41,726 with a 5.7% unemployment rate (2018 U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts).

1 and 2. According to the 2019 Crawford County Health Assessment 55% or 18,181 of adults had at least one alcoholic drink in the past month and would be considered current drinkers. That statistic increased
to 63% of males and 62% of females whom have an income of more than $25,000. Of those who drank, Crawford County adults drank 3.4 drinks on average, increasing to 5.4 drinks for those under the age of 30 and 4.3 drinks for those with income less than $25,000. Twenty-five percent of all adults reported they had five or more alcoholic drinks (for males) or four or more drinks (for females) on an occasion in the last month and would be considered binge drinkers. Of those who drank in the past month, 51% had at least one episode of binge drinking. This behavior is leading to risky behavior such as 7% of adults reported driving after having perhaps too much alcohol to drink and 5% using prescription drugs while drinking.

According to the 2019 Crawford County Health Assessment 3% or 1,247 of adults had used non-medical marijuana in the past six months and 7% or 2,909 of adults had used medication not prescribed to them or took more than prescribed in the past six months. The percent increased to 17% or 7,064 adults who used medication not prescribed to them or took more than prescribed when their income was less than $25,000. Four percent or 1,662 adults reported using other recreational drugs in the past six months. As a result of using drugs, Crawford County adults indicated they or a family member had failed a drug screen (40%), had legal problems (33%), placed themselves in dangerous situations (23%), regularly failed to fulfill obligations at work or home (23%), overdosed and required EMS/hospitalization (17%), received Narcan or nasal Naloxone (7%), and administered Narcan or nasal Naloxone (3%). Crawford County saw at least 4 drug overdose deaths in 2018 (data is incomplete and subject to change) and in 2017 a record high 17 drug overdose deaths.

Three percent (3%) of adults used a program or service to help with an alcohol or drug problem for themselves or a loved one. Reasons for not using such a program included the following: had not thought of it (1%), stigma of seeking alcohol services (1%), did not know how to find a program (1%), did not have any openings/wait-listed (1%), insurance does not cover it (<1%), program was not available (<1%), did not want to miss work (<1%), could not afford to go (<1%), stigma of seeking drug services (<1%), did not want to get in trouble (<1%), and fear (<1%). Ninety-three percent (93%) of adults indicated such a program was not needed for themselves or a loved one. Alcohol and Drug Treatment Programs were covered by 33% of adults’ insurance coverage, 7% are not covered and 60% didn’t know if they had coverage.

3. According to the 2019 Crawford County Health Assessment 33% of Crawford County youth (6th-12th Grade) had at least one drink of alcohol in their life and 12% had at least one alcoholic drink in the past month and would be considered current drinkers. Sixty-one percent or 296 of all youth reported they had five or more alcoholic drinks (for males) or four or more drinks (for females) on an occasion and would be considered binge drinkers. This behavior is leading to risky behavior such as 2% of youth reported driving after having alcohol to drink in the past month, 14% have used marijuana in the past 30 days, 10% have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days, 27% have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months with 20% actually attempted suicide in the past 12 months. The average age of drinking was 13.5 years old.

According to the 2019 Crawford County Health Assessment 2% of Crawford County youth (6th-12th Grade) had used marijuana at least once in the past 30 days and 9% had used marijuana at some time in their life. Five Percent of Crawford County youth have used prescription drugs not prescribed for them in the past month. Youth who misused prescription medications got them in the following ways: a parent gave it to them (68%), took them from a friend/family member (26%), a friend (21%), another
family member (21%), bought from someone else (16%), and bought it from a friend (1%). No one reported getting prescription medication from the Internet and 3% of youth reported that someone had offered, sold or given them an illegal drug on school property during the past 12 months. Forty percent of current youth marijuana user seriously considered attempting suicide with another 40% attempting suicide in the past 12 months.

Of the 41,550 citizens in Crawford County, 33,749 are 18 years of age or older and it is estimated that 9,011 or 26.7% drink alcohol excessively. Final 2016 overdose deaths show 8 citizens passed away.

3. According to the 2019 Crawford County Health Assessment 93% of adults had Prescription drug coverage, 5% did not and 2% did not know.

3. The total renter-occupied housing units in Crawford County is 6,148. Of the 20,025 total housing units in Crawford County 13% have one or more substandard housing condition. Substandard housing includes the following conditions:
   1) lacking complete plumbing facilities-hot and cold running water, a flushing toilet and a bathtub or shower-of which 40 or 0.2% units do not
   2) lacking complete kitchen facilities-a sink with a faucet, a stove or range and a refrigerator.
   3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room of which 160 or 0.8% units do,
   4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30%.
   (Average mortgage in Crawford County from 2012-2016 was $926.)
   5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 1,371 households or 22.3%.

Average rent for Crawford County from 2013-2017 was $637. Crawford County from 2012-2016 had the lowest Median Home Value in the State at $85,200 with the State average being $131,900. From 2010-2016 Crawford County has lost 1.09% of its total housing units. In Crawford County there is a shortage of 900 affordable rental units to extremely low-income households.

In Crawford County there is 457 active HUD-Subsidized rental properties, 179 active Housing Tax Credit for seniors age 55 and over rental units, 76 USDA Rural Development subsidized rental properties and 328 Federal Housing Tax Credit rental properties for low-income families and individuals.

Lead Based Paint is a 10.1% (2,023 units) hazard Crawford County. Lead Based Paint can cause damage to the brain, kidneys, nerves and blood and has been associated with behavioral problems, learning disabilities, seizures and even death.

3. Currently there is not a Homeless Shelter located within Crawford County. Citizens are often referred to Marion or Richland County Homeless Shelters.

3. According to The Salvation Army Bucyrus, Ohio Facebook page the Crawford County Society for Crippled Children and Adults build custom wheel chair ramps for the physically impaired.

Crawford County rationale for OHCAC Services:

OHCAC has established a working partnership with service agencies to ensure that clients are receiving access to all community resources.
Regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a program offered directly from the Ohio Development Services Agency. Customers may receive a one-time credit or voucher to their main heating source. From July 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 RHEAP helped 1,555 households.

Winter Crisis Program (WCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment for utility bills, bulk fuels, coal, wood or wood pellets. The customer must be income eligible and either have a disconnection notice, be without heating services, or have less than a 10-day supply of bulk fuel. From November 1, 2018 to April 15, 2019 WCP helped 711 households.

Summer Crisis Program (SCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment on your electric bill. Eligibility Requirements are: a member of the household who would medically benefit from assistance verified by a licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner, or seniors age 60 and over who meet the 2019 Poverty Income Guidelines. From July 1, 2019 to September 15, 2019 SCP helped 222 households.

Columbia Gas Fuel Funds (CGFF) is a program designed for a one-time payment on Columbia Gas bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 CGFF helped 163 households in all 3 counties.

First Energy Fuel Funds (FEFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 FEFF helped 107 households in all 3 counties.

Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) is a program designed for a one-time payment on AEP bills for income eligible clients. In 2019 N2N helped 18 households in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) helps Ohioans manage their energy costs year round to avoid disconnection. The program allows participants to pay a percentage of their gross income toward their utility bills, instead of the total amount of current charges. The payment is based on a percentage of the household gross income. From July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019 PIPP helped 1,346 households.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides financial and technical assistance in the rehabilitation and weatherization of low-income owner occupied and renter occupied housing. In 2018 OHCAC HWAP weatherized 73 homes in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

AEP has their own program that provides the same energy measurements as EPP, but is for only AEP clients. In 2018 AEP helped 8 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

Community Connections through First Energy also provides energy measurements similar to EPP for only First Energy clients. In 2018 Community Connections helped 82 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

The Crawford County Office provided from September 1, 2018-August 31, 2019 assistance to 164 households through their Food Pantry, 178 households through their Clothing Outlet, 43 households through their Backpack Program for school age children, 27 households with School Supplies, 45 households with Senior Commodities Boxes, 19 households with Rental Assistance, 77 households with Christmas and the Community has invested $101,326.00 through donations such as the Galion Kentucky Fried Chicken providing left over food twice a week.
Comments and Concerns from our Crawford County surveyed clients included: “I feel community action does a wonderful job and the people are very caring. They do everything they can to help families or individuals.; The biggest thing I’ve noticed individuals needing assistance with are down payments on houses/apartments.; Senior Day Care services, Daycare for children, Many who live in the 44833 zip code cannot access any care from Avita due to the open market not being on their plan.; Youth mentoring-enhance program-bring Big Brother/Big Sisters back or similar program.; Funding to help individuals with down payments and first month rent for individuals who have proof they can afford to rent a home.”

SUMMARY/KEY FINDINGS OF OHCAC PROGRAMMING
ADDRESSING AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Our service area like most of Ohio has been hit hard by the opioid drug epidemic and the need for Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities as well as Counseling Centers/Recovery Support Programs for the addicts and their families out pace the number that are available within our service area. The opioid drug epidemic also leads to related issues such as Safe and Affordable Housing for recovering addicts who have felonies on their records as well as homelessness of families because their income is going to feeding the addiction and not their rent. When there is not any education from an early age and prevention of idling teenagers before or after school then there is a tendency for the pattern to continue or worsen as there is no other options for children to participate in. More and more grandparents and even great grandparents are raising their grandchildren which creates a unique family situation increasing the need for Parenting Skills classes and/or Family Counseling as the new family learn to adjust to their new lifestyle.

The population as a whole is getting older as the Baby Boomers are becoming retirement age. The increase in age has caused a demand for more homes to need to be modified to meet the increase of Individuals with Disabilities and well as Accessibility Improvements to Housing or Down Payment Assistance for Seniors to move into homes that are accessible. The increase in age has also increased the demand for Prescription Medication which has sky rocketed in price over the last decade.

With these needs in mind Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission offers the following programs in our service area to help relieve some of the burdens of our citizens:

1. Energy programs: HWAP, EPP, AEP, Warm Choice, and Community Connections. These programs operated by OHCAC in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties are intended to increase household income by reducing the energy burden on the households of low to moderate income residents. **Goal:** to reduce housing costs and provide minor home repair, furnace and appliance replacement over an extended and continuing period of time.

2. Galion Food Pantry: Provision of emergency food for CSBG eligible households. Provided food includes canned goods, packaged meals, meat, fresh vegetables as available, bread and dairy through food cards at local grocery store. The Program partners with local churches and grocery stores. **Goal:** To provide emergency food for low income households in Galion up to 4 times per year.

3. Crawford County Clothing Outlet: Serves all OHCAC counties in a central location providing clothing for all program participants, including school uniforms, donated winter coats, and summer and winter
work attire. **Goal:** To assist families as needed providing school clothing, initial work clothing, winter coats.

4. The Crawford Office started a program through Second Harvest Food Bank called Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for Seniors 60 and over. CSFP offers a monthly box of food, produce, and a block of cheese. Income eligible seniors can sign up at our office. **Goal:** To assist 60 Senior Households a month with receiving nutritional food.

5. The Backpack program in Galion and Crawford County: The provision of weekend food for low income children (similar to the daily lunch program) in Galion, Ohio for between 50-75 children per week and the coordination with similar programs for referral in Bucyrus and Marion. Program partners and supporters include United Way, volunteers (packing and delivering meals), schools, and churches. **Goal:** To insure the provision of weekend meals to low income children in Galion (direct service) and Bucyrus and Marion (referral) for up to 75 children per week.

6. Rapid Rehousing Ohio is an intervention with a Housing First approach that is a critical part of a community’s effective homeless crisis response system. Rapid re-housing rapidly connects families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. Rapid re-housing programs help families living on the streets or in emergency shelters solve the practical and immediate challenges to obtaining permanent housing while reducing the amount of time they experience homelessness and also linking them to community resources that enable them to achieve housing stability in the long-term. **Goal:** Assisting 60 households a year to obtain safe, affordable and permanent housing.

7. Personal Needs pantry (Morrow and Marion County): Provides personal items including deodorant, tooth paste, tooth brushes, razors, shaving cream, personnel hygiene items, shampoo, soap (bar and powder) to low income residents of Morrow County. Pantry provides for a void that had existed with the various food pantries in Morrow County. Supporters include local churches, local donors, and grocery and outlet stores. **Goal:** To provide for the items that the existing food pantries in Morrow and Marion County were not meeting serving 200 households annually in Morrow and 100 households annually in Marion.

8. Head Start Transportation: Providing daily Head Start pre-school transportation 148 days per year to over 561 Head Start enrolled children in our 4 County service area. By providing this transportation, OHCAC is able to serve the neediest households that have identified transportation challenges. **Goal:** To provide daily pre-school transportation to 561 households in the OHCAC Head Start service area.

9. The provision of EFSP (formerly FEMA) assistance as needed in Marion and Crawford Counties. OHCAC is a continuing member of the FEMA Boards in Marion and Crawford County (32 years). In this position, OHCAC provides the following services utilizing EFSP funding: housing assistance (rent/mortgage) in Marion County and utility and food assistance in Crawford County. **Goal:** To provide the identified community need for EFSP services in Marion and Crawford Counties as EFSP funds are available.

10. VITA Program: Income Tax assistance is provided for residents of Marion, Morrow, and Crawford Counties. The program operates chiefly out of the Marion Center during the tax preparation season. It serves up to 600 local low to moderate income households with tax return service while insuring that all
eligible benefits are received. **Goal:** Assisting up to 600 central Ohio households to obtain complete and accurate income tax returns including the full benefits of the low income tax credit.

11. Drug and Alcohol Awareness and Prevention (DAAP) of Morrow County: Works with the four county schools on prevention of drug abuse among teens and works with the community and parents on ways to recognize and deter drug abuse. Intervention, Prevention and Treatment is the goal.

12. ID Program: Allows men and women in Marion and Morrow County who are seeking employment through a Temporary Agency to overcome the barrier of not have proper documentation to confirm their identity, by providing them gift certificates to purchase their Birth Certificate and/or State I.D.. In 2018 Marion helped 3 individuals and Morrow County helped 6 individuals in 2018.

13. Head Start/Early Head Start: OHCAC Head Start/Early Head Start is a free, developmentally appropriate preschool education and socialization program for income eligible children from birth to 5 years old and their families. Children with special needs are also eligible. The program operates according to applicable Head Start Performance Standards and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services licensing regulations. We strive to provide an environment where children feel safe and are encouraged to be active and creative explorers trying out their own ideas and thinking their own thoughts in areas that interest them. **Goal:** Our comprehensive program provides services to our families in the areas of Family Partnership, Transition, Education, Health and Nutrition, Intervention, Mental Health and Transportation to 635 children in our 4 County service area.

14. The programs and assistance offered by OHCAC cannot meet every customer’s needs. OHCAC County Offices provide intake and referral services for a variety of client needs. They refer clients within Agency programming as well as to outside agencies to ensure that clients have access to all available programs. OHCAC is always willing to cooperate and partner with other agencies. In our service area OHCAC has working relationships with the Salvation Army, Job and Family Services, churches, school systems, for-profit companies, fraternal organizations, foundations, boards, United Ways, Boy Scouts, postal employees, non-profit agencies, Chambers of Commerce, and elected officials. In addition to directly assisting shared customers, some of these groups sponsor food drives, donate funds, and provide space. Those relationships allow the county offices to assist customers in meeting their basic needs and to enjoy a lifestyle that includes safe housing, adequate food, and the means to maintain it. All office staff have an excellent rapport with staff from other agencies. The Executive Director, Deputy Director, and the Marion, Morrow and Crawford County Center Directors are members of several organizations and boards in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties.

***Joe Devany*** – Youth and Family Council Morrow County, Metro-Transit Committee Marion County, OPAE all counties, EFSP Board Marion and Crawford Counties, OACAA Board all counties, MACA Board, National Community Action Partnership Board;  
***Tracey Rector*** – Continuum of Care, Marion Community Services Committee, Marion Matters, Marion County Extension Advisory Board, EFSP Local Board; Marion County Drug Free; CommUNITY Collaboration; Marion County Council on Aging, Licking County Rapid Rehousing, OSUM Pay it Forward, VITA, Marion County Health Department, Region 11 Liaison  
***Ashley Glass*** – DAAP Coordinator, Engage Facilitator, FCFC Morrow County; Kiwanis; Jobs and Family Services Advisory Board; Regional Transportation Community; Tomorrow Center Advisory Board; Chamber of Commerce; Morrow County Health Care Coalition; Statewide Prevention Coalition; Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America; Opiate Engagement Team
Tammy Crabtree – Crawford Community Council, Kiwanis of Galion, Galion/Crestline Chamber of Commerce, Citizen Circle of Crawford County, Crawford County APS I Team, Together We Hurt Together We Heal, and Crawford County Prevention Coalition.

Liz Feliciano-Deeter – Metro Housing Board, Marion Area Administrative Professionals, Marion League of Women Voters (up-coming membership), Habitat for Humanity Volunteer, Ohio Health/Marion General Hospital Volunteer: member of TWIG III and TWIG V (current TWIG V 11 President), Marion Area Small Business Network, Marion Popcorn Festival Fundraising Committee, Local Elks Lodge 32;

OHCAC has always looked for opportunities to expand programming and services to assist low income residents. We believe that Community Action cannot and should not be static.

The agency leaders strive to seek opportunities and develop programming to better our communities. One goal of OHCAC is to assist the customers we serve to improve their situations, expand the resources that are available to them and to work with community resources to assist those in need, in all areas of all the counties served by OHCAC.