

ESPRI

VILLAGE OF HEMPSTEAD

Empire State Poverty
Reduction Initiative

ESPRI Hempstead- needs assessment survey

February 14, 2018

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Introduction

The Village of Hempstead was selected as one of 16 communities statewide to participate in the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI).

ESPRI is modeled after the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative and is an exciting opportunity for community members to work together to develop and execute an innovative plan to reduce the number/percentage of households residing in poverty and increase the number/percentage of households with earned income above poverty. On November 2016 The Village of Hempstead established an anti-poverty task force to identify common issues that significantly contribute to individuals living in poverty and develop recommended interventions to address these issues.

The goal of the Task Force is to ensure that children and families in Hempstead have the opportunity to live in a stable environment where the promise of economic mobility is a reality.

The Task Force is a 60 member appointed body consisting of:

- Individuals impacted by and living in poverty;
- Local social service districts;
- Local school districts and other educational organizations;
- Not for profit and faith-based organizations;
- Employers;
- Workforce services entities;
- Economic development organizations;

- Public safety officials;
- Local, county, state governments; and
- Health services providers.

Six focus areas were selected by the Task Force members as having the most direct impact or influence on individuals living in poverty. Task Force members, as well as community members, were asked to join one of the six committees on these focus areas and provide their expertise. Committees met monthly or twice a month depending on the depth of their focus area for the past year. Simultaneously, the Village of Hempstead, along with the ESPRI administrative agency, United Way of Long Island proceeded to gather input from over a thousand Village residents through one-on-one meetings, focus groups, listening sessions, committee participation, surveys and community events.

The goal was to hear the voices of as many people living in poverty as possible and to document those conversations to have a better understanding of the needs of the community.

Executive Summary

The following provides a summary of poverty needs assessment administered to Village of Hempstead residents in 2017. The survey was based on questions we have heard throughout the community in the form of listening sessions, focus groups and interviews. The survey also asked participants questions regarding the likelihood of supporting the projects the committees developed. We also asked them for their feedback about innovative ideas to reduce poverty.

The ESPRI needs assessment was administered to 562 Village of Hempstead residents with the intention to get input from people living in poverty and residents who struggle financially. Residents received a \$15 dollar gift card for their participation. The survey asked participants for an account of their experiences living in poverty and in the Village of Hempstead.

The data analysis presented the following key findings: majority of survey participants are single household parents. Parents who have children 0-5 years of age do not receive childcare vouchers. Majority of participants were in the 25-35 and 36-45 age groups. African Americans and Hispanics were equally split with a 50.7% and 52.7% respectively. A major key finding that also follows the statistical data collected was the average annual income for the Village of Hempstead. 83.9% of survey respondents earned less than \$30,000 per year. While the majority of respondents reported income under \$30,000 per year. 61.2% reported being employed for wages or being self-employed. The remaining 38.7% were unemployed, unable to work, retired, and students or in the military. The biggest barrier to gaining employment or obtaining a better

job was listed as needing help finding better paying jobs followed by more schooling or special training.

Note: The complete survey questionnaire is included later in this document for reference.

Methodology

The survey was put together using key questions from various sources such as NPR poverty survey, Census Bureau and from other ESPRI sites sample surveys to create a unique survey for ESPRI Hempstead. A preliminary draft of the survey was tested out with community residents during National Night out against Crime on August 1, 2017. The survey was also reviewed and approved by both the Mayor’s Office and the ESPRI Community Advisory Council who were asked to submit feedback, make suggestions for possible changes, additions and (or) deletions. The data was collected using a self-reporting method, giving participants the freedom to provide as much information as they felt comfortable.

Survey topics included on this report:

Demographics

- Male
- Female
- Age ranges
- Race/ethnicity
- Language
- Marital status
- Income
- House size/composition
- Education

Financial situation

- Employment
- Job status

Childcare

- Cost/childcare subsidies
- Schooling
- Transportation

Housing

Health

- Insurance coverage
- Chronic illness/hospitalization

- Access to food

Justice System

- Levels of incarceration
- Impact on employment

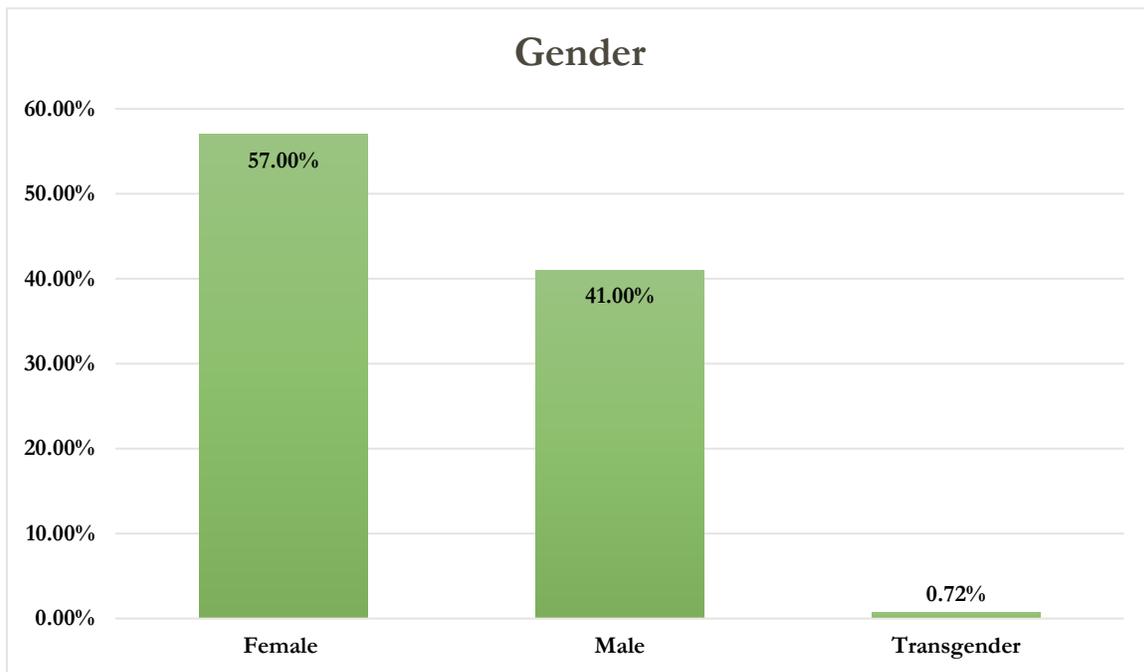
Community Resources

- Access/ utilization of resources
- Needs

The surveys were administered both electronically through Survey Monkey and on paper in both English and Spanish using Survey Monkey to analyze and collect the data.

Demographics

Note: Survey responses are broken out by top responses, some items are given complete data set to show more representation.



Age

Majority of participants were in the 25-35 and 36-45 age groups with 27.5% and a 26.8% respectively.

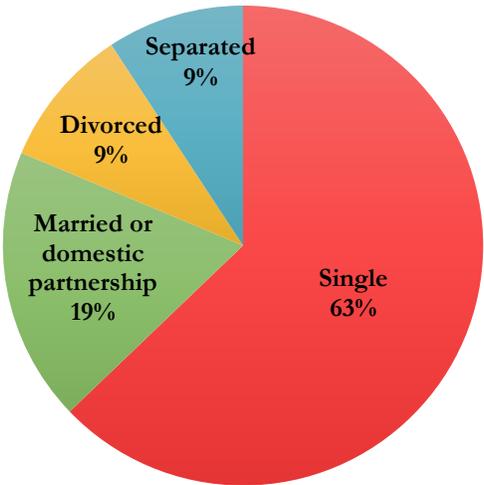
Race

African Americans and Hispanics were equally split between a 50.7% and 52.7% while only 4.6% of survey respondents identified themselves as white.

Language

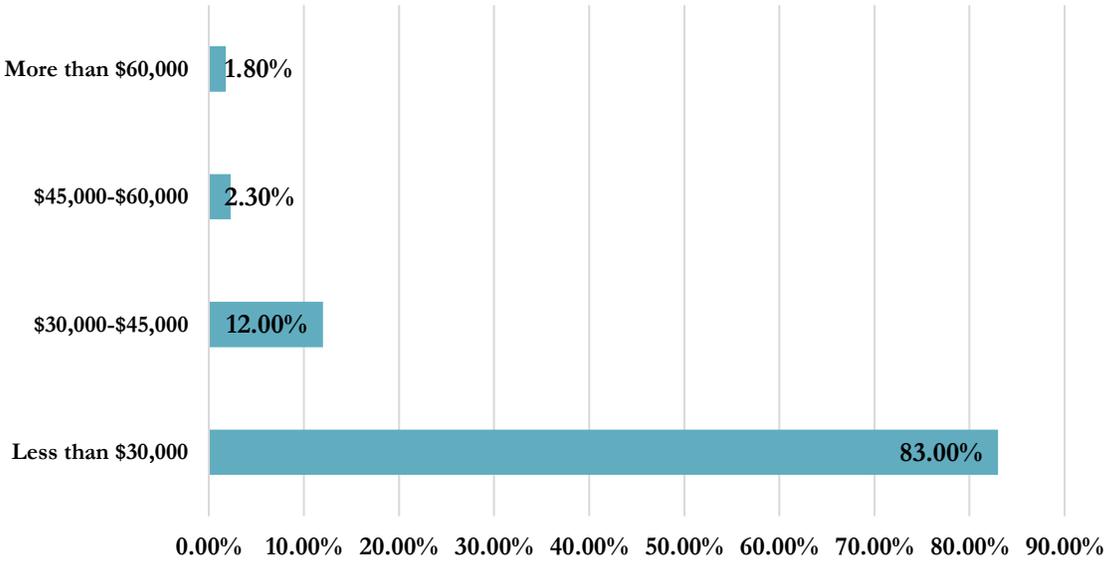
English is the primary language spoken at home with a 62.6%, followed by Spanish with a 35.7% and Haitian Creole with 1.4%.

Marital Status

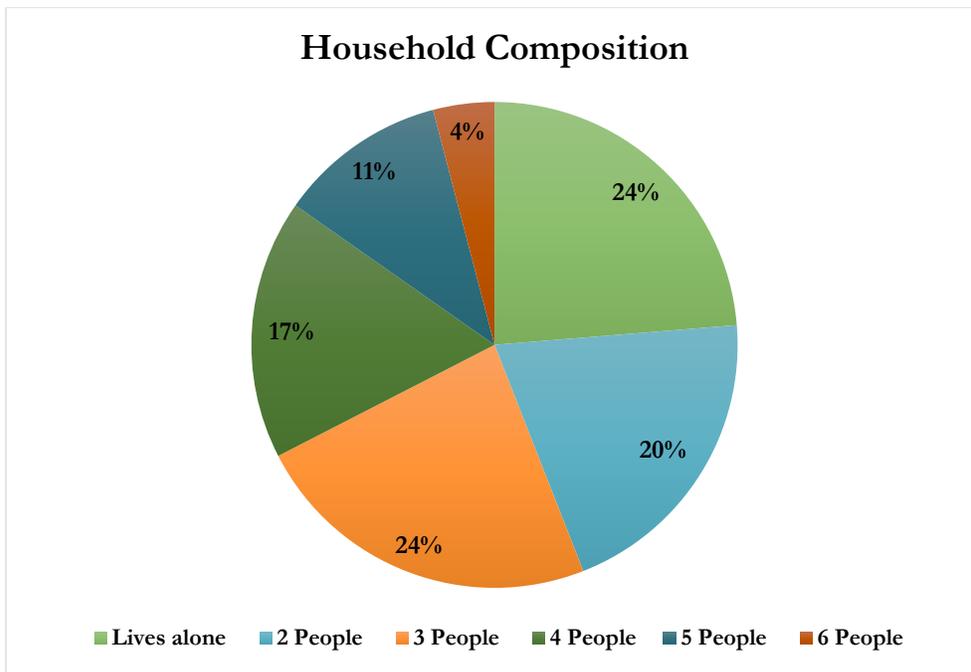


■ Single ■ Married or domestic partnership ■ Divorced ■ Separated

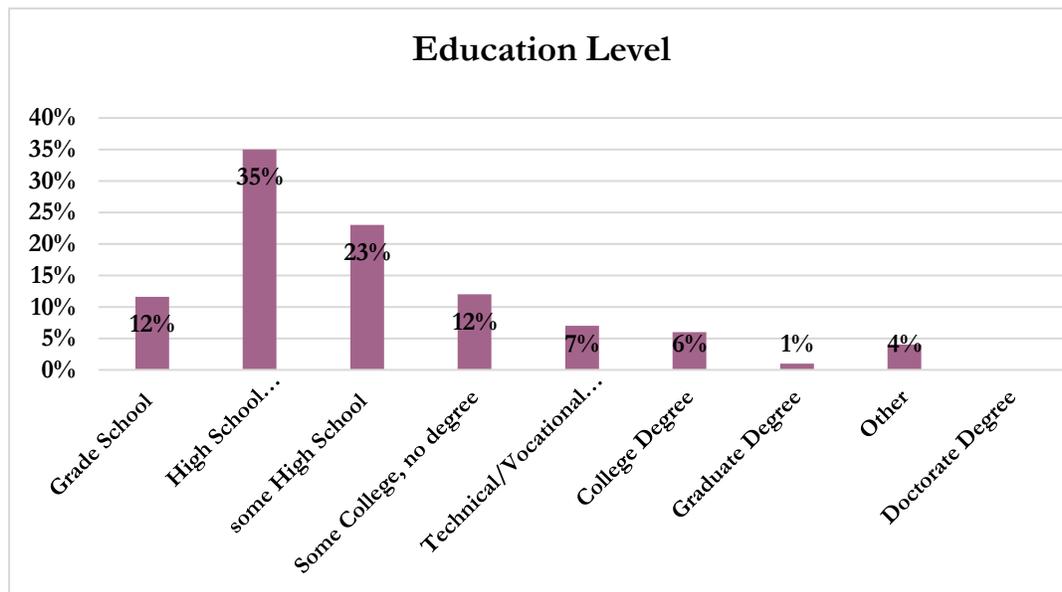
Income



The answers provided by survey respondents showed a correlation to the statistical data gathered through committee work, which shows the largest demographic living in poverty are single mothers ages 25-34 years of age with a median income of \$ 21,636.



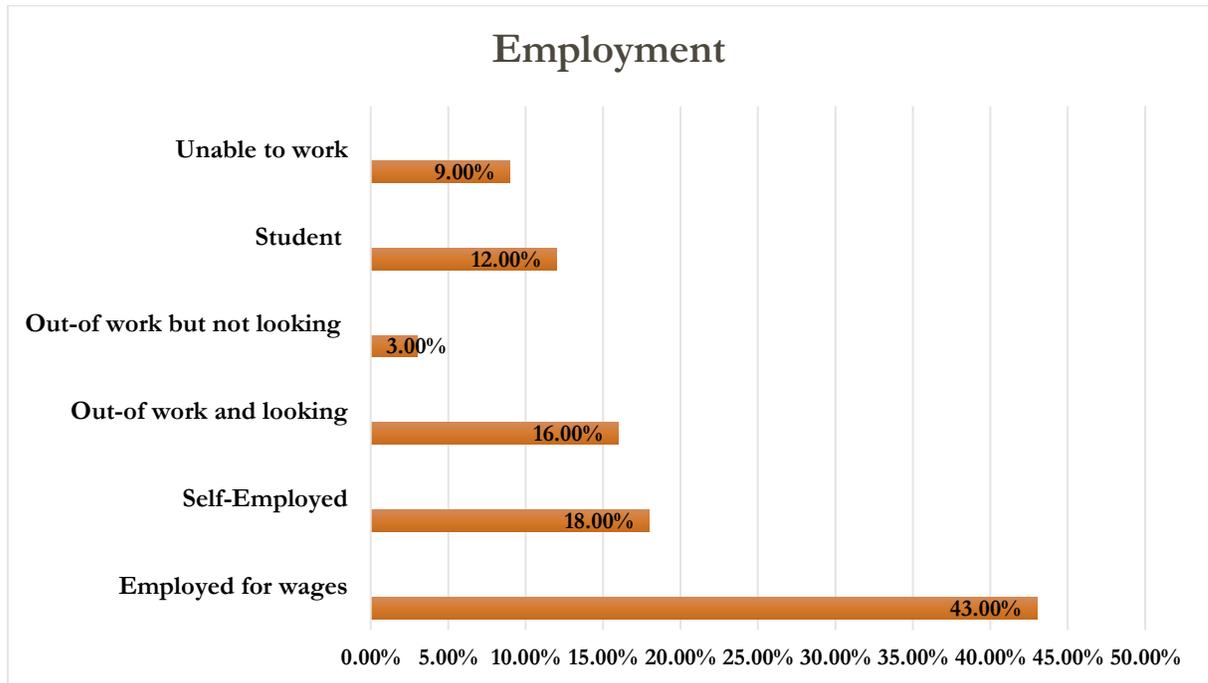
- Approximately 79% of respondents indicated that they have children 18 and under living in the household.



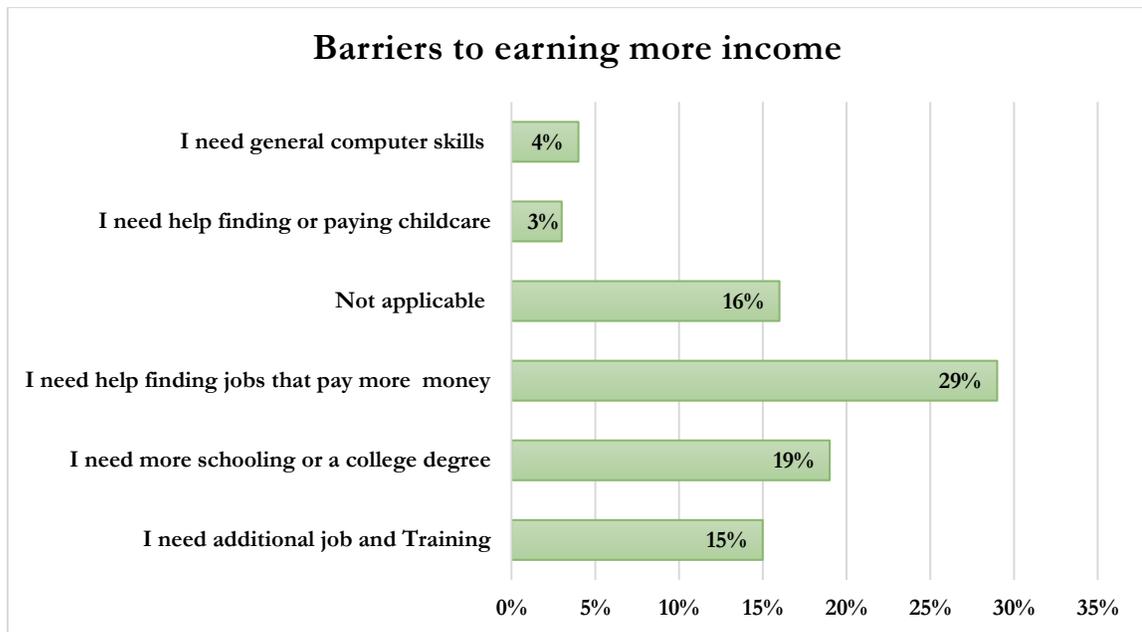
- Out of the 562 survey participants, only 103 participants reported education or schooling higher above the high school level. Only 41 participants have a technical or trade school degree.

Financial Situation

- Although the majority of respondents reported income under \$30,000 per year. 61.2% reported being employed for wages or being self-employed. The remaining 38.7% were unemployed, unable to work, retired, and students or in the military. The biggest barrier to gaining employment or obtaining a better job was listed as needing help finding better-paying jobs followed by more schooling or special training.



- 87.3% of respondents classified their financial situation as fair or poor. Indicating that they struggle to make ends meet sometimes or that they are not doing well and could use the help.
- 70% of participants stated that they would need to work more than one job to meet their current needs.
- The biggest barrier to employment or obtaining a better job was listed as needing help to find jobs, followed by more schooling and special training. *(Complete chart below)*



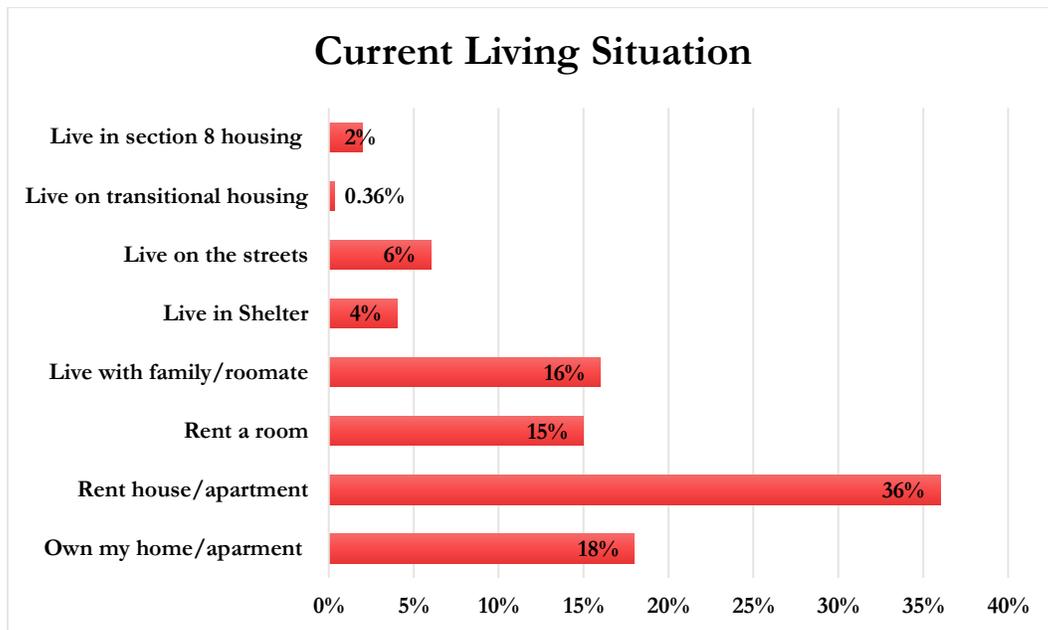
According to Hempstead Works data collected and the listening sessions, Hempstead residents need more help with finding jobs that pay more money as well as obtaining more training or skills and improving their levels of education.

Childcare

- While only 29% of participants reported households with children ages 0-5 in them, only 14.7% of respondents utilize childcare, and only 3.6% are receiving subsidize childcare.
- On average, survey respondents with children in their households spend approximately \$400.00 a month on childcare.
- The overwhelming majority of students attends public school, 4.8% attends private schools, and 2.1% attends charter schools.
- When asked how long it takes for their children to get to school, respondents reported between 5 and 45 minutes. Additionally, 163 respondents reported their top concerns with their children walking to school are: safety, time and distance, bad influences and gang violence.
- Out of the 562 participants, 40.7% thinks that comprehensive school transportation is important.

Housing

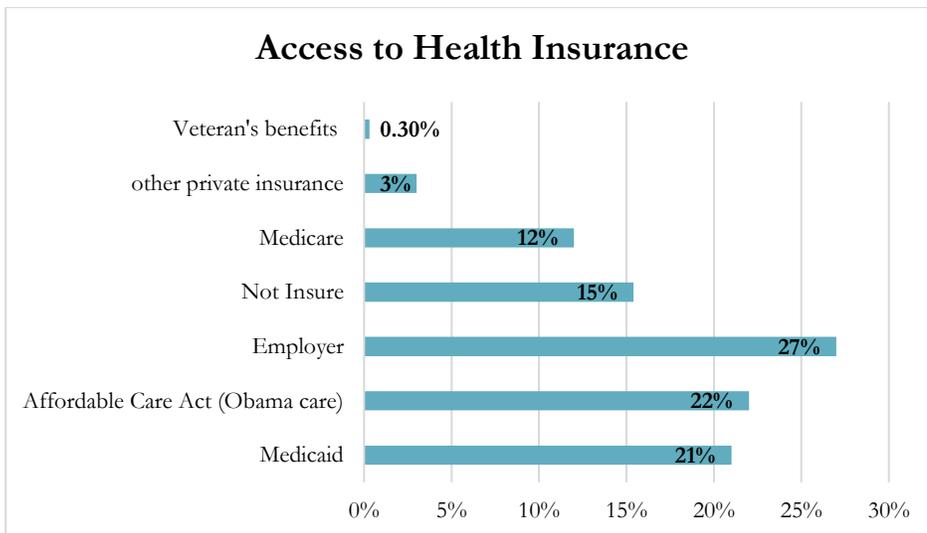
- 36% of respondents rent their houses or apartments, followed by 18% who own a house or apartment and 15% who rent a room. *(complete chart below)*



- Out of 562 respondents, only 31.1% reported being previously homeless.

Healthcare

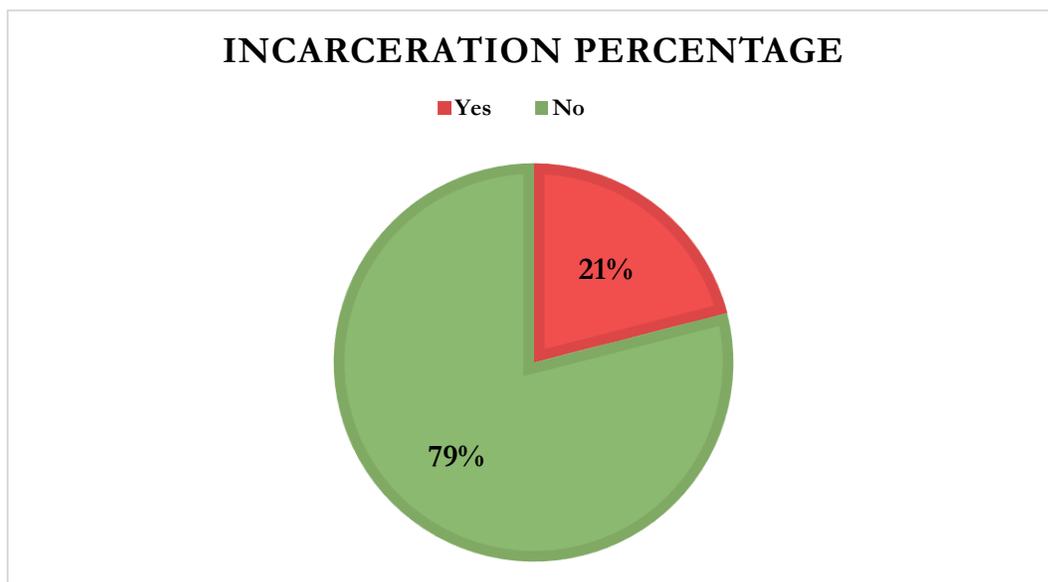
- 15% of respondents reported being uninsured which is significantly higher than the percentage for Long Island or NYS. According to the NY State Department of Health open enrollment reports only 5% of New Yorkers are uninsured. *(complete chart below)*
- 53.1% of participants reported having difficulties paying for co-pays, deductibles and other healthcare costs.
- 61.6% of participants or someone else in their household reported being hospitalized at least once in the last twelve months.
- 24.4% of participants reported chronic illness as a reason why they or a family could not work.
- 36.2% experienced difficulties feeding their families. Close to the same percentage access SNAP benefits and uses a soup kitchen or food pantry to supplement their needs.



Quantitative data gathered through the Long Island FQHC and the experiences shared through the health listening sessions support what survey respondents have expressed the need to improve residents' quality of life and address the need to lower obesity and diabetes levels.

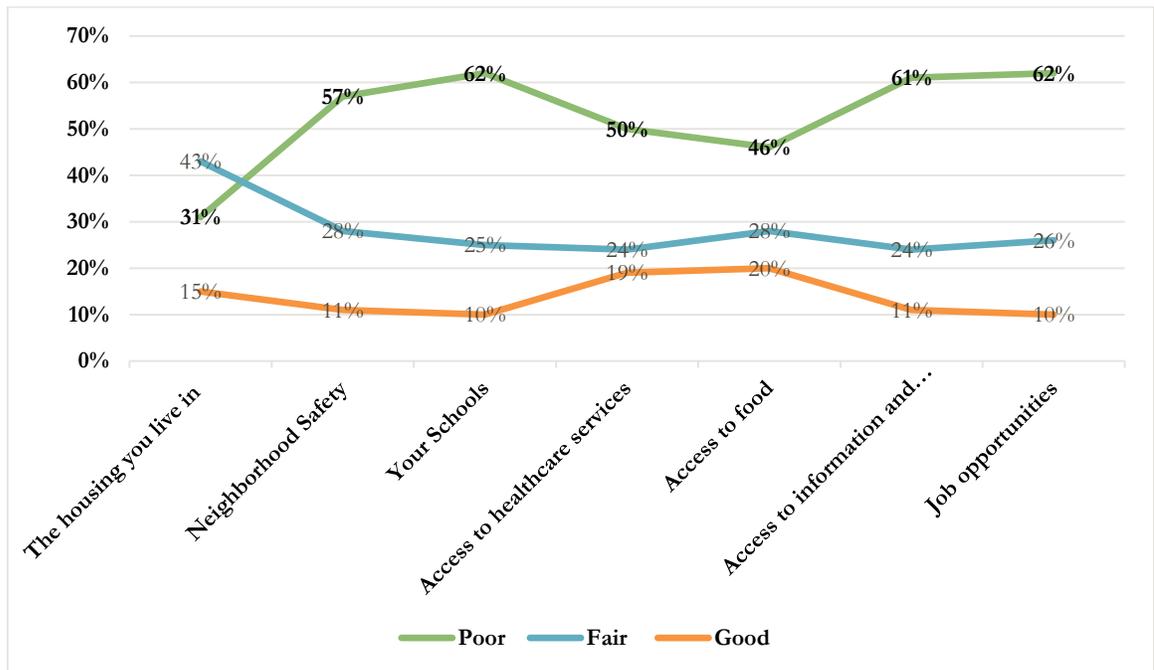
Justice System

- 21% or 119 participants reported being incarcerated at least once in their lifetime. Out of those 119 individuals, only 31.9 or 38 individuals indicated that they have applied for any of the certificates (*certificate of good standing, certificate of good conduct, certificate of relief and certificate of good disposition*) to assist them in gaining employment. Half of those who applied (16) were able to gain employment as a result. (complete chart below)



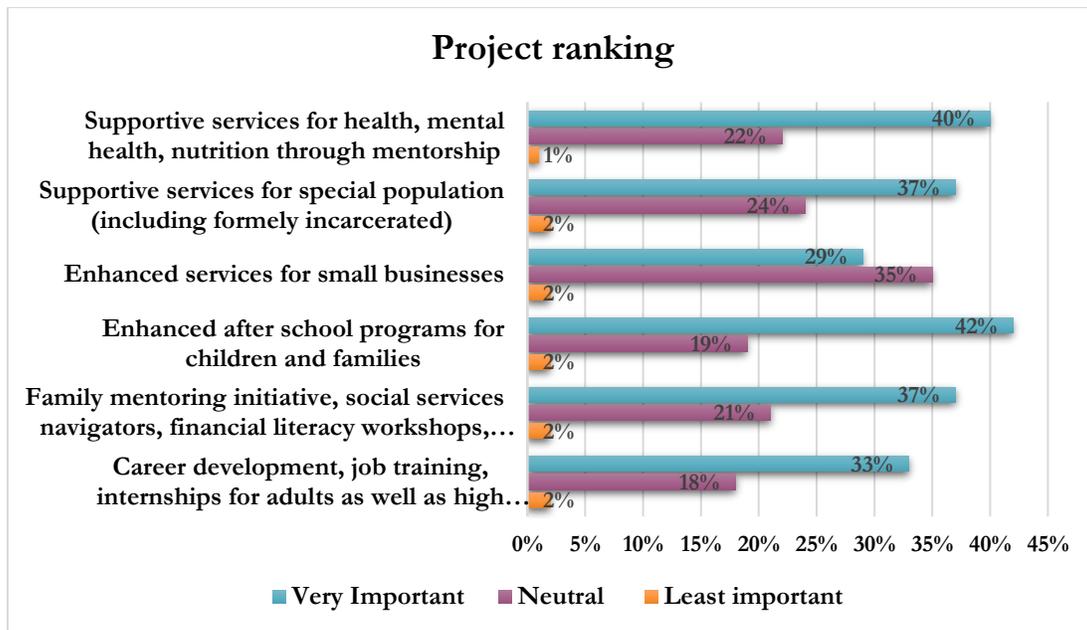
Community Resources and needs

- When asked to rate the conditions of their housing, neighborhood safety, job opportunities, healthcare and access to food and information, the average rating was fair with schools, and job opportunities ranked the lowest. *(Complete chart below)*



Information collected through various listening sessions, one-one interviews, and focus groups supports the answers provided by survey takers on the need to improve the community as a whole.

- 94% of participants said they would utilize a resource center if there were one.



Survey participants were asked to share any innovative ideas to reducing poverty in the Village of Hempstead. Below are their comments, this is a summary of their responses.

- Revamp our tax system to help fund these programs. Move away from the outdated property tax to an income tax system.
- Recreation center for kids
- Lower property taxes and school taxes
- Gang and gun control
- Community outreach programs
- Raise minimum wage
- More jobs
- Better schools for our children
- More jobs, vocational schools
- Educational help for the homeless
- Cleaner streets
- Rent programs
- Better employment opportunities
- Get rid of corruption
- How to open up their own business
- Education and work vouchers for internships and apprenticeship to gain higher pay
- More programs and information to help families in need
- More affordable housing

- More jobs, education and housing opportunities for the homeless
- More educational, recreational activities for youth and seniors citizens
- An initiative to sell foreclosed/abandon homes within the village to low/mid income residents either through a rent to own program or a village mortgage assistance program.

Conclusion, Limitations, and findings

Survey results concluded that for the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative in the Incorporated Village of Hempstead (*Hempstead ESPRI*) to work, it would require more time and resources to be allocated for individuals living in poverty to complete the survey or provide feedback.

Furthermore, data gathered from 562 Village residents confirms the qualitative data collected during Phase I (*Planning Phase*) of the ESPRI project and the need for improvement in the areas of mentoring, employment and career readiness, information sharing and allocation of resources across the board. Additionally, the design and implementation of strategies for social and economic changes at a local and state level are imperative for real impact that will further influence and reduce the poverty level in the Village of Hempstead is necessary. Despite the number of surveys completed it is important to take into consideration these individuals opinions and experiences as they are a representation of the residents of the Village of Hempstead.

Limitations:

While we are providing key findings of the ESPRI survey, it is important to also notice survey limitations when it comes to reading the data. Below are some of the limitations we encounter.

- Limited time to administer the survey.
- Incomplete surveys.
- Few agencies were able to administer the survey in the time frame allotted.
- Participants left some questions blank, making the data analysis incomplete.

Findings and possible connections

The data collected presented the following finding

- Limited knowledge of where to receive help when needed
- For ex-offenders population, it would be important to find out if they knew how to properly fill out the application? Were they aware of the ability to apply for any of the certificates to get employment or improve their education?

- c) Large percentage of parents do not receive childcare vouchers
- d) How can we improve the quality of life of those who do not have health insurance?
- e) Long-term sustainability is vital to the viability and long-term life of the project
- f) It is essential to find a connection or link between the various projects happening in the Village. *(i.e., Brownsfield project, My Brother's Keeper, etc...)*
- g) Better utilization of existing resources is vital for the improvement of the Village as a whole and its residents' lives.
- h) Improvement of educational programs and job training for young professionals between the ages of 25-45 yrs. old is key for economic development.