

Yonkers Community Action Program



Community Needs Assessment 2015

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Introduction

As a community action agency, Yonkers Community Action Program, Inc. (YCAP) is charged with addressing the conditions of poverty in Yonkers and improving the lives of those in poverty. Regularly community action agencies nationally met the challenge to consider if they will be a “service provider,” “self-sufficiency/anti-poverty agent” or both. YCAP addresses this question today with the aid of our Community Needs Assessment (CNA). We find the information in this document critical to inform the Agency’s strategic plan in effectively meeting our mission.

The Community Needs Assessment 2015 (abbreviated CNA 2015 throughout this report) was undertaken both as best practice and the first step to effective strategic planning. Additionally, the new Community Action Organizational Standards require that we:

- analyze data collected directly from low income individuals
- maintain a systematic approach for collection, analyzing and reporting customer satisfaction data to the Board
- utilize information gathered from key sectors of the community, including at minimum, community based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector and educational institutions
- collect data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age and race/ethnicity for our service area
- include key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed
- and that the Board formally accepts the completed Community Assessment.

CNA 2015 is our first report based on these standards and with access to new resources such as the Community Commons needs assessment tool. This report is a baseline from which we will expand in both reach and depth, to build and maintain an accurate knowledge of the Yonkers community. Our process was to:

- Increase our understanding of the Yonkers community through the collection and analysis of data, including statistical data, vital statistics and information from community stakeholders
- Organize/paint a snapshot of poverty in Yonkers (conditions and causes)
- Prepare a report to enable Board review and establishment of priorities for the upcoming year, leading into agency strategic planning.
- Establish an update process to confirm, identify changes in the community and expand areas of focus. There are points where this will coincide with a review of the strategic plan.

We aim for a strong CNA document which can become the foundation for effective planning reflecting the strengths, needs, issues and challenges of the community and provide a basis for program activities and actions that meet the needs of clients, families and the community.

The Strategic Plan will be addressed by the Board in Fall 2015 and continue through 2016. This process will apply the “lenses” of agency capacity, resources, community service delivery system and organizational standards to the CNA and produce a plan that will set the agency direction for a five to seven year period.

Overview

City of Yonkers

Yonkers Community Action Program (YCAP) is a not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to improve the lives of low income people and engage residents in the revitalization of their communities. Incorporated in 1966 as the community action agency in Yonkers, YCAP's role has evolved based on locally-led needs assessments, linkages to local resources and community-based leadership.

For the City of Yonkers, YCAP's services to low income residents continue to be a necessity. The City is suffering from years of disinvestment, distrust, segregation and a high concentration of poverty. Particularly in southwest Yonkers (which is the location of the agency's building) for the last 30 years, this neighborhood has experienced a range of intended and unanticipated consequences stemming from the lawsuits related to desegregation as well as stop-start urban renewal efforts. The area is again targeted for redevelopment efforts by the City of Yonkers particularly as Ashburton Avenue is one of two roadways to the developing waterfront. Now often referred to as the Ashburton Corridor, this east-west transport is seen as vital area to the City's overall development plans.

YCAP's office is north of the downtown district at 164 Ashburton Avenue. The site is a former school building constructed in 1897. While a few shops and small restaurants have remained consistent and others have opened, many vacant storefronts exist. The section is conducive to residential housing, and YCAP's presence, because of its proximity to transportation corridors, proximity to schools, some commercial conveniences and lower than average rents than elsewhere in Yonkers and other portions of metro New York.

Poverty continues to be situated in this quadrant of the City of Yonkers - beginning to be referred to as Croton Heights - as well as a very small section of Runyon Heights in the northern part of the City (See Census Tract Map). Geography is also a factor in the impact of gang presence and community sensitivity to gang lines; youth participation and parent support often react to location of resources. While invisible to the eye, it is impactful to the younger residents of the City and to be dismissiveness to these, is naïve. Youth remain mindful to them.

The City does not have the traditional neighborhood school due to the historic desegregation order and this has challenged efforts to impact a particular neighborhood through the community school model. However, recent conversations lead us to wonder if some of this is happening naturally. At the local grade 7-12 school, Palisades Prep, 90% of the students walk to school with most remain for the full six years.

YCAP Interventions

Over the past three years, YCAP priorities for direct services have focused on food insecurity, youth development/prevention, academic support in the terms of after school and summer enrichment and family strengthening. While some programming seems historic to the agency such as the food pantry and summer programming, they also continue to be a strongly desired by the low-income community and integral in their overall personal goals. Even these programs, however, have been systematically updated to become more efficient and targeted.

There have been more dramatic changes in the family development and youth development components of YCAP's programming. Requirements of OASAS to demonstrate an increasing percentage of program offerings to be evidenced based lead from loosely structured family and youth offerings to the ability to deliver "Strengthening Families," "Parenting Wisely," and "Life Skills." The agency's strategy in delivering most of these services is to team with other community partners who have established populations and go into their setting and provide the requested module. Working with organizations like Mary J. Blige, Municipal Housing and Yonkers Public Schools, initial interactions with one evidence-based program has led to be invited back to deliver others.

For the YCAP FY 2015, the Range of Direct Services include:

Prevention provider:

- Evidence based family strengthening,
 - Parenting Wisely
 - Strengthening Families
- Evidence based youth development
 - Life Skills - elementary
 - Life Skills – middle school
- Non-evidence based:
 - Parent Empowerment (family strengthening)
 - Gambling Prevention

Nutrition and food insecurity:

- On Site food distribution
- Emergency food response
- Home Delivery Program

Other Services to the Family:

- Senior outreach
- Summer Smarts

While the range of services have narrowed in the past 10 years, it is both a function of the changing environment of non-profit and the movement to evidence-based programming and other standards –based practice. Tighter dollars and increasing community needs are requiring smarter and more effective and accountable management practice. As these shifts in non-profit organizational expectations have changed, so too have the skill sets necessary to manage and deliver services. New CSBG standards have raised the levels of thoughtful, strategic and documented planning and implementation, including community participation at every step.

Evaluation exercises conducted by YCAP management envisions staff capacities and roles needed to meet current and upcoming commitments. Finding and keeping qualified staff to bring these skills to YCAP has been complicated by the management of facility conditions. Remaining positive on all fronts, it is realized that creative ideas and not being tied to previous thought patterns will provide innovative solutions allowing the agency to be stable and effective in its delivery.

In the area of collaborations and leadership, the reach of YCAP has broadened and as documented in the Department of State's CORE Assessment, is a strength of the agency. Always strong with partnering, YCAP is involved in key and strategic City-wide collaborations including the Community Planning Council, Yonkers Thrives Partnership, Healthy Yonkers Initiative, Workforce Investment Board; county-wide connections include Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth and the Campaign for Kids. The Agency's involvement has move from just participating to strong leadership being provided by YCAP members. This includes directorships of the Yonkers Coalition for Youth, the Yonkers Community Network and its work group Solutions Not Suspensions, and VP on the Community Planning Council. Such involvement not only gives the ability to plan and coordinate services but is an effective business model to accomplish agency and community outcomes.

YCAP's Place in the Community

Current thinking about causes and conditions of poverty include repeated emphasis on place – that poverty is closely correlated to specific areas and as such, solutions need to also be area-specific.

The YCAP neighborhood can be challenging in terms of service delivery. Physical characteristics include heavy traffic, littered sidewalks, often groups of people congregating, few recreational resources or meeting places, Area demographics continue to shift as new housing is planned and built to diversify the residential options. New areas of needs assessment and strategic planning arise: If new housing brings in varied income levels, how should YCAP address its low income priority targets? What are the issues that can develop between longtime residents and new residents of different backgrounds? How can YCAP engage this evolving neighborhood in order to meet community action standards of community revitalization? What is the appropriate balance between direct service and community mobilization to improve conditions of poverty?

Yet with all these challenges in this evolving neighborhood, there are flowers in the street boxes, several community gardens, building renovations underway, some new shops opening, neighborhood associations meeting regularly, increased police/community shared problem solving interactions and many friendly neighbors. Staff members receive constant inquiries as to when the YCAP building will re-open both for services and connections to services and as a long-term positive presence in the neighborhood. YCAP's next 50 years will look different than the first 50. We aim for it to be an even more vital resource and essential in meeting community needs.

Our capacity to be that community resource is currently challenged given that our building is not available for full operations. While we have worked hard and creatively to maintain visibility

and services, the closed building decreases the easy access, informal and unscheduled contacts that lead to a sense of shared community. It also led to the loss – temporary or permanent to be determined – of our after school program, community meeting and programming space and the services of the three tenant agencies. Exploration continues on how to proceed with building renovations and/or re-purposing in a responsible, sustainable and cost effective manner. The goal is to invest the time and research now that will result in a facility that will meet current as well as future needs of the agency and the community.

Review and Use of Data

To conduct this community needs assessment, YCAP pulled from many sources of data, both quantitative and qualitative. National and State data was included where appropriate to help provide insight and perspective on City of Yonkers data.

Based on when surveys were done and definitions used, demographic data can vary slightly. In these situations we have been mindful not to mix numbers from differing sources. We have used number, percentages and diagrams to present the information in a clear and usable format.

Qualitative data is presented in narratives to capture community input as well as Board and staff analysis.

Being a Community Action Agency

As we opened this report, “As a community action agency, Yonkers Community Action Program, Inc. (YCAP) is charged with addressing the conditions of poverty in Yonkers and improving the lives of those in poverty.” It does so with the support of Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funds.

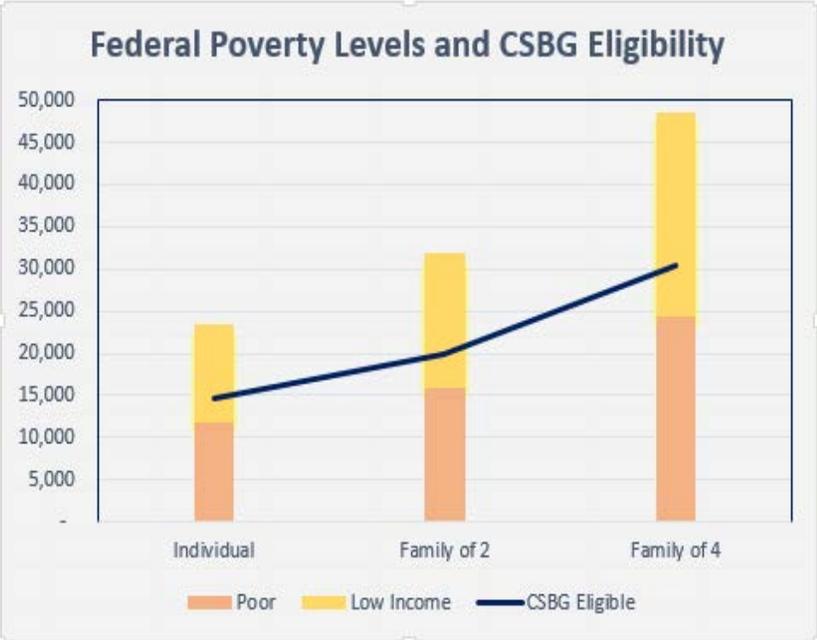
CSBG provides funds to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. The objective is for CSBG funding to support projects that:

- Lessen poverty in communities
- Address the needs of low-income individuals including the homeless, migrants and the elderly
- Provide services and activities addressing employment, education, better use of available income, housing, nutrition, emergency services and/or health.

As such, with the support of CSBG funding community action agencies can work to achieve the following goals for low-income individuals:

- Increased self-sufficiency
- Improved living conditions
- Ownership of and pride in their communities
- Strong family and support systems

To add a layer of richness to the community needs assessment as it pertains specifically to YCAP and its programming, it is important to understand the federal poverty level and the eligibility requirements of Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Funds. The following information is based on the January 2015 Federal Register.



For a family of 2, low income is a household income of less than \$31,860. CSBG eligibility is an annual income of no more than \$19,912. A family of 2 with less than \$15,930 in income is considered to be in poverty.

For an Individual, low income is an income of less than \$23,546. CSBG eligibility is an annual income of no more than \$14,712. An individual with less than \$11,770 in income is considered to be in poverty.

For a family of 4, low income is a household income of less than \$48,500. CSBG eligibility is an annual income of no more than \$30,312. A family of 4 with less than \$24,250 in income is considered to be in poverty.

Demographic Information

Yonkers is the fourth largest city in New York State and by far the largest in Westchester County. Occupying 20.3 square miles, it is a city spread out over hills which rise from the banks of the Hudson River. Considered an “inner suburb” of New York City, Yonkers directly borders the Bronx and is approximately two miles north of Manhattan.

New York State, Westchester County and the City of Yonkers

Population, Race and Ethnicity	Total Population	Low Income Population
New York State		
Population	19,378,112	15.9% live in poverty
Black	12%	23.2% of those in poverty are African Americans
White	70%	11.5% of those in poverty are White
Hispanic (<i>ethnicity</i>)	18.4%	25.9% of those in poverty are Hispanic
Westchester County		
Population	949,113	9.6% live in poverty
Black	14.6%	16.2% of those in poverty are African Americans
White	68.1%	5.8% of those in poverty are White
Hispanic (<i>ethnicity</i>)	21.8%	19.6% of those in poverty are Hispanic
City of Yonkers		
Population	195,976	17.2% live in poverty
Black	18.7%	22.4% of those in poverty are African Americans
White	55.8%	12.5% of those in poverty are White
Hispanic (<i>ethnicity</i>)	34.7%	26.2% of those in poverty are Hispanic

In addition to race and ethnicity, Yonkers’ diversity is enriched with a 30% foreign born population, captured in the chart below. The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen or a U.S. national at birth. This includes any non-citizens, as well as persons born outside of the U.S. who have become naturalized citizens. The native U.S. population includes any person born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (such as Guam), or abroad of American (U.S. citizen) parent or parents. Yonkers 30% rate of foreign birth is significantly greater than the rate in Westchester County, New York State or the United States.

While we don’t currently have data on income status based on birth country, it is reasonable to anticipate that relocation to new country, especially if reason is based on safety, economics or family reunification, results in at least temporary delays in building income stability. This would

be even greater if language, education, employment history are immediately aligned with the new community and culture.

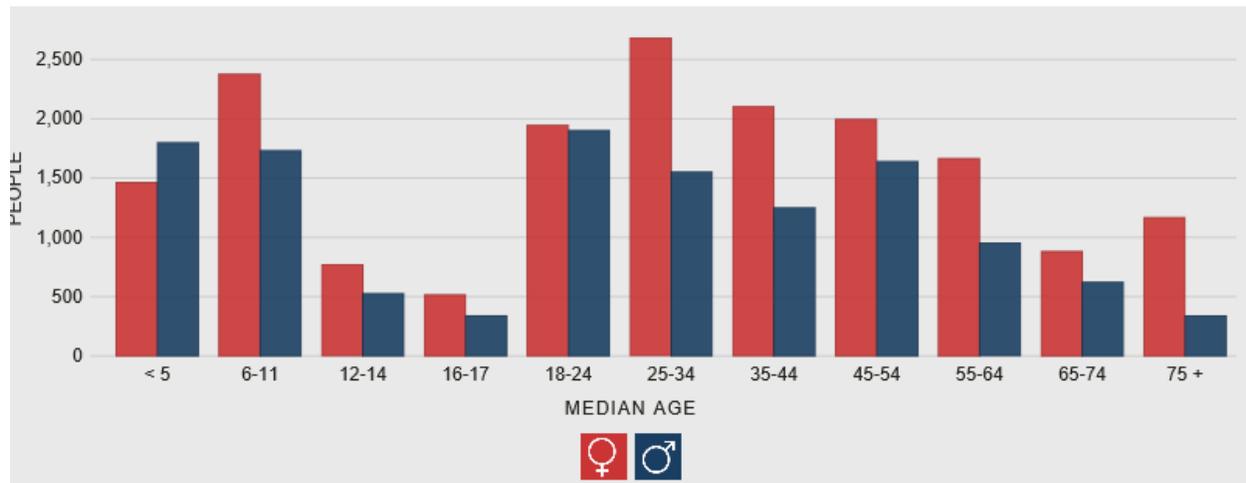
Report Area	Total Population	Naturalized U.S. Citizens	Population Without U.S. Citizenship	Total Foreign-Birth Population	Foreign-Birth Population, Percent of Total Population
Yonkers est	197,493	31,692	29,422	61,114	30.94%
Westchester County, NY	956,283	115,690	122,957	238,647	24.96%
New York	19,487,052	2,270,762	2,043,941	4,314,703	22.14%
United States	311,536,608	18,206,896	22,135,004	40,341,900	12.95%

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2009-13. Source geography: County

New York State, Westchester County and the City of Yonkers

Age	Total Population	Low Income Population
New York State		
Population	19,378,112	15.9% live in poverty
Children (under 18)		22.6% (36,938) live in poverty
Adults 25+		13.0% (1,729,867) live in poverty
Senior Citizens (65+)		11.7% (327,362) live in poverty
Westchester County		
Population	949,113	9.6% live in poverty
Children (under 18)		12.2% live in poverty
Adults (25+)		8.1% live in poverty
Senior Citizens (65+)		7.0% live in poverty
City of Yonkers		
Population	195,976	*** population count doesn't add to this number
Children (age 0-4)	13,920	
Children (ages 0-17)	44,646	26.2% live in poverty
Adults (ages 18-64)	122,501	
Adults (25+)		13.5% live in poverty
Senior Citizens (65+)	28,776	10.4% -- Low income seniors: 6,112

Poverty by Age and Gender in Yonkers



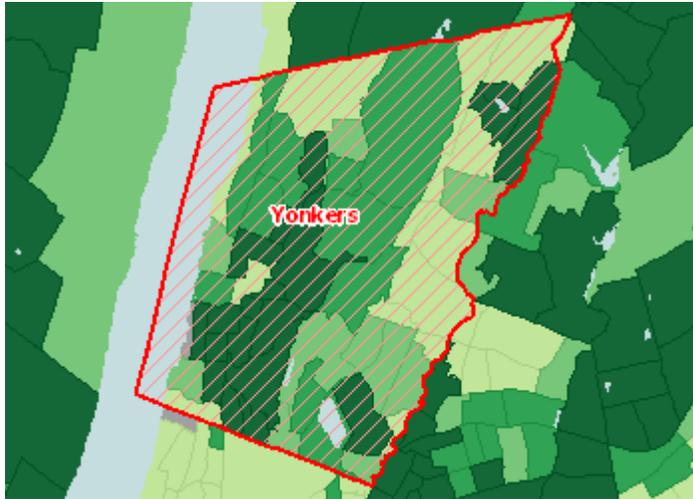
Yonkers Seniors

A closer look at the senior population in Yonkers shows that over half of the senior population are age 75 and above.

City of Yonkers	Total Population	Low Income Population
Population – All Ages	195,976	
Senior Citizens (65+)	28,776	10.4% are low income – 30% live alone
Age 65-74	14,182	
Age 75+	14,594	
Age 85+	4,582	

Families of Yonkers

As defined by the US Census Bureau, a family household is any housing unit in which the householder is living with one or more individuals related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. A non-family household is any household occupied by the householder alone, or by the householder and one or more unrelated individuals.



**Households with Children (Age 0-17),
Percent by Tract, ACS 2009-13**

- Over 35.0%
- 31.6 - 35.0%
- 28.1 - 31.5%
- Under 28.1%
- No Data or Data Suppressed
- Report Area

City of Yonkers	Total Population	Family Income
Family Households	47,518	
Families with Children under 18	21,601	
Families with Married Parents	55%	Median income 95,251
Families led by Single Mothers	38%	Median income 27,751
Families led by Single Fathers	6%	Median income 40,379

Children in Poverty by age, Yonkers and New York State

Children in poverty	Children 0-5	Children 6-17	YONKERS CHILDREN	NYS CHILDREN
POOR 100% Federal Poverty Level	27%	22%	22.6%	23%
LOW INCOME 100-200% Federal Poverty Level	21%	22%		
CHILDREN LOW INCOME OR BELOW	48%	44%		

Child Poverty by Race/ethnicity in Yonkers

35% of Latino children live in poverty;

30% of black children live in poverty

28% of white children live in poverty

21% of Asian children live in poverty

Analysis and Summary - Population

From 2010-13, the total population of New York State grew slightly at 1.6%. The U.S. population grew at 2.5% and Yonkers grew at 1.9%. In reviewing its population, the City of Yonkers remains alert to the projected national population trends including:

- National Trend: By 2044 more than half of all Americans will belong to a minority (any group other than non-Hispanic White alone.) – 53.4% of the current population of Yonkers identifies themselves as either Hispanic or African American. While there is an overlap (those who identify themselves Black as their race and Hispanic as their ethnicity), if Yonkers is not yet more than half minority, it is close. There is a likelihood that the percentage will increase further.
- National Trend: By 2060 one in five Americans will be foreign born – while the projection nationally is 20% of Americans will be foreign born in 2060, the City of Yonkers is ahead of this trend with a current population of over 30% of its residents being foreign born. Challenges which will be felt nationally are already being experienced in Yonkers. The area of language and cultural values becomes impactful in delivering service to community members.
- National Trend: Population growth will slow due to lowered fertility rates – The population growth for the City of Yonkers is lower than that of the entire nation. Sensitivity to what degree fertility rates has in Yonkers versus factors such as immigration or mortality will determine how closely Yonkers may adhere to this trend.
- National Trend: By 2030, one in 5 Americans will be 65 and over – While 20% of the population is expected to be 65 and over in 15 years, the City of Yonkers is only a few percentage points from that milestone now with approximately 15% of the population being seniors. Sensitivities of this population include health, safety and other quality of life measures.

The mosaic that is the City of Yonkers will face challenges due to Mayor's Generation Yonkers campaign to position Yonkers as the next hot spot for millennials to live and work. YCAP will need to stay actively engaged with the low income community of all ages as they are impacted by City development.

Income and Economics

Income

Yonkers median income compared to Westchester County and New York State as reported in NYS Poverty Report March 2015 prepared by New York State Community Action Association.

	New York State	Westchester	City of Yonkers
Median income (\$ annually)	39,820	49,577	41,733
With HS diploma	29,454	30,964	30,965
Living wage for 1 adult/1 child household – estimate of cost of living for low wage family based on typical expenses.	\$23.58 hour	\$55,416 annual or \$26.64 hour	

Median incomes in Yonkers are comparable to the Westchester County median and both are higher than the New York State median. However,

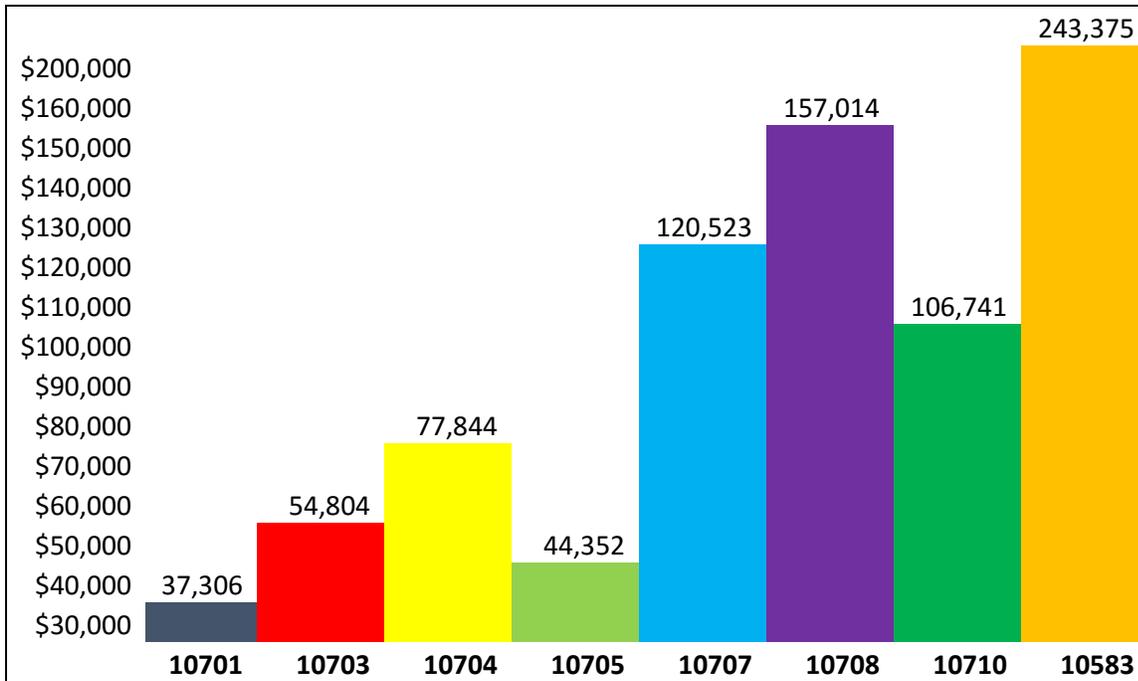
In Yonkers and Westchester County, the living wage/cost of living is 13% higher than the New York State requirements.

In Yonkers, having only a high school diploma has a significant impact on median income. For women the impact is even greater - \$25,666 vs \$35,464 for males.

In Yonkers, family composition impacts median incomes

- 38% with children under 18 are headed by single mothers; median income \$27,261
- 6% are headed by single father; median income: 40,379
- 55% are headed by married couples/two adult households: median income \$95,261

In Yonkers, median incomes vary significantly across zip codes.



To prioritize areas for HUD CDBG funding, The City of Yonkers maps income and minority areas by census tracts and blocks, providing even greater focus than the above zip code definitions.

Employment

The NYS Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the regional employment picture for the 12-month period ending in April 2015:

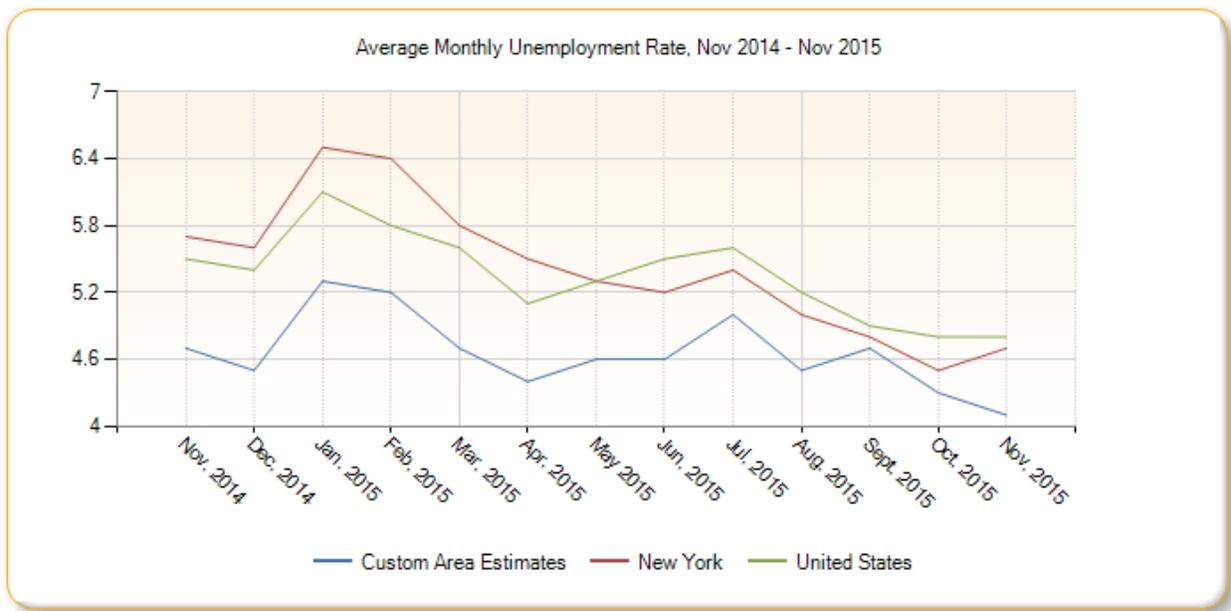
- Private sector employment in the Hudson Valley Region increased by 4,500 or 0.6 percent.
- Jobs were added in educational and health services (+5,100), leisure and hospitality.
- Jobs were lost in manufacturing (-1,500), natural resources, mining, and construction (-800), information (-700), financial activities (-600), and trade, transportation and utilities (-500).
- The government sector shed 1,000 jobs over the period.
- The fastest growing occupations 2010-20 are projected to be personal care aides, home health aides, meeting and event planners, health educators and physical therapy aides.

Federal and State employment resources include the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which became law in July 2014, superseding the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Communication to CSBG funded agencies from HHS Office of Community Services in April 2015 describes a new requirement that *"at least 75% of available statewide funds and 75% of funds available to local areas be spent on workforce services for out of school youth, which is a 30%*

increase from the requirements under WIA." CSBG employment and training activities remain as a required partner in WIOA One Step Career Center.

Unemployment

As with national and New York State data, unemployment in Yonkers is trending lower. General economic recovery and increased development in Yonkers impact this decrease. Many believe it also represents workers who have given up their job search and people working off the books often with minimal wages.



*Custom area is Yonkers

Public Assistance

The Community Commons organized the following two tables that capture public assistance and SNAP participation in Yonkers as well as county, state and nationally. Yonkers is significantly higher in both programs.

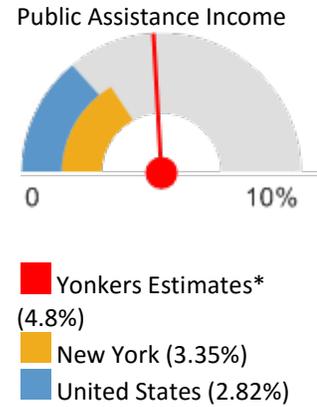
Public assistance income includes general assistance and Temporary

Percent Households with

Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Separate payments received for hospital or other medical care (vendor payments) are excluded. This does not include Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or noncash benefits such as Food Stamps.

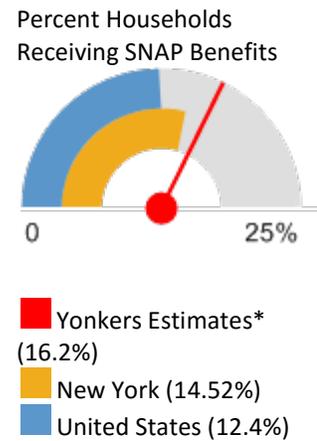
Report Area	Total Households	Households with Public Assistance Income	Percent Households with Public Assistance Income
Yonkers Estimates*	72,855	2,786	4.8%
Westchester County, NY	343,561	7,338	2.14%
New York	7,234,743	242,588	3.35%
United States	115,610,216	3,255,213	2.82%

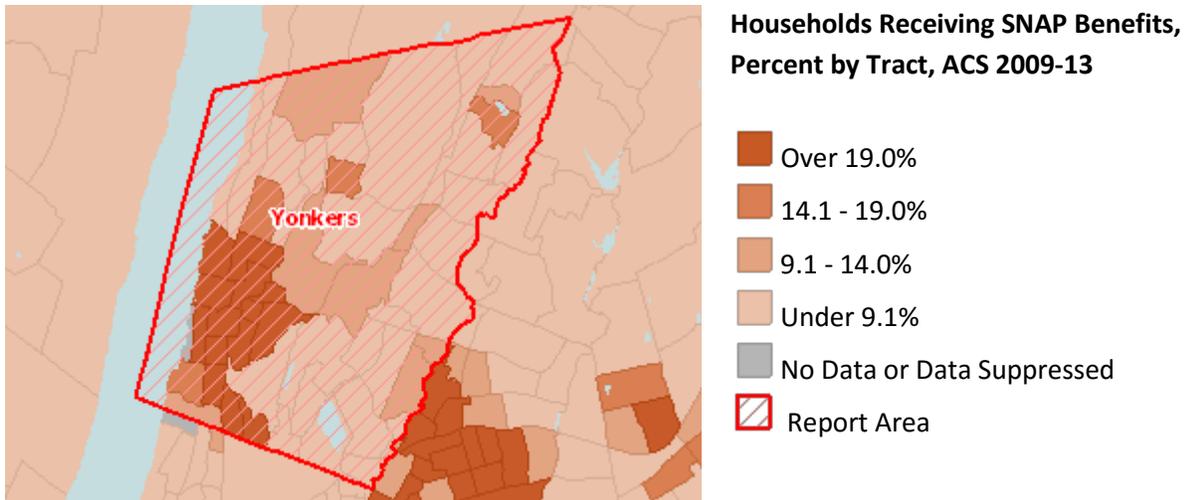
Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2009-13. Source geography: Tract



	Total Households	Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	Percent Households Receiving SNAP Benefits
Yonkers Estimates*	72,855	11,803	16.2%
Westchester County, NY	343,561	27,083	7.88%
New York	7,234,743	1,050,669	14.52%
United States	115,610,216	14,339,330	12.4%

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2009-13. Source geography: Tract





Key Findings from Community

Community members' feedback about local employment includes lack of jobs at decent wages and specifically few apprentice programs as entrée to union and construction trades. Criminal history is a barrier to employment for many, falling heavily on minority males in a system ripe with allegations of disproportionate arrest and imprisonment. Community Voices Heard prioritized this issue in last year's successful "ban the box" campaign.

Additional advocacy initiatives have been organized to increase the minimum wage, fair wages, for women, increased apprenticeship positions and local hiring.

There are programs funded to provide supports to improve employability of adults who want to work - EOC, Greyston, WestCOP, Westhab- but funding is inconsistent and never enough to meet total needs. YCAP successfully secured CSBG funding for workforce development in partnership with Greyston on two special funding cycles. YCAP is a partner in the One Stop Center

The largest youth employment program is managed by the Workforce Investment Board and YCAP is on the Board.

Several partners focus on workforce development and community development opportunities and YCAP is kept informed and frequently asked to join in planning initiatives and providing outreach to program participants and letters of support.

Analysis and Summary – Economics

The City of Yonkers faces economic challenges that contrast with some of its neighboring Westchester communities. This is reflected in the median family income level which is notably lower in Yonkers than in Westchester County.

City-wide there is positive economic growth in some areas, for some people. Poverty is concentrated in pockets as seen by zip code, census tract mapping. This provides YCAP with target areas for program delivery.

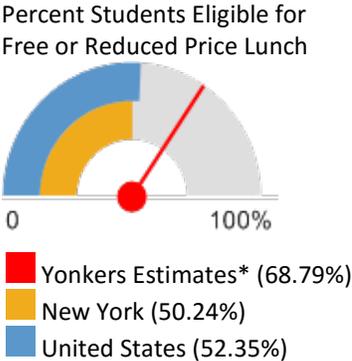
Interventions to improve the conditions of poverty can be at the direct service level (such as basic needs - food, eviction supports, utility assistance, referrals, training, case management) and the broader community level (improved education and training, advocacy, community development initiatives, advocacy.) Historically YCAP has addressed economic issues at the individual level through case management and referral to training programs and work readiness resources. YCAP has some direct and indirect experience in workforce development programming. At this time, based on agency capacities and existing community resources, no new direct service programming is recommended. However, it is important that YCAP is viewed as representative of the low income community and supportive of initiatives for economic improvements. Continued and expanded visible participation in planning and development activities is recommended.

Many community action agencies nationally focus on asset development and literacy education to build economic self-sufficiency for individuals and families. YCAP needs to stay abreast of such initiatives and include in on-going needs assessments.

Education

In the City of Yonkers, the school district has a contentious history and track record that has provided some students with excellent educations and failed others. Challenges have included the previously cited desegregation case, financial controls, changing demographics, educational reforms and always, funding.

Yonkers schools have a high preponderance of low income students.



Yonkers Students

- 15% are considered college ready (second lowest in county)
- 55.1% of Yonkers Public School students are Hispanic; 20.2% are black; 17.8% are White; 6.9% are other
- 74.1% of Yonkers Public School students are identified as economically disadvantaged
- 15.6% of students have disabilities
- 11.7% are English Language Learners / limited English proficient

Yonkers Adults

- 17.3% have no degree
- 28% have high school degree
- 24.6% have associate degree
- 30.1% have bachelor’s degree or higher

Key findings from the Community

YCAP leadership on the Solutions Not Suspensions work group has given us a front row seat on the shared community and school district exploration of how suspensions are used. Data

supports the complaints of parents and advocates that suspensions are disproportionately applied to students of color, to boys and to special education students.

Parents repeatedly report they do not feel welcome in their child's schools.

Teachers, principals, PTA and other community groups report difficulties and resistance to parent engagement in school activities.

Funding for education in Yonkers is a frequent topic of media coverage and political advocacy. Many see racial overtones to historical funding decisions.

The Mayor and school district have led a new initiative called Yonkers Thrives to build "cradle to career" pathways to success for all Yonkers students.

Analysis and Summary - Education

Education has always been valued as a pathway out of poverty. It is a national, state and local issue and is being addressed from many directions with many theories of change.

While not educators or municipal decision makers, it is essential that YCAP remain visible and active and ensure engagement of the low income constituency.

While YCAP cannot resolve the long and short term funding and educational issues of Yonkers Public Schools there are opportunities to impact children and families

- Align with strong education messaging initiatives and continue visible leadership roles in community partnerships – Thrives, Solutions Not Suspensions, Attendance Matters
- Weave parent training into parent engagement initiatives (new Parent Resource Centers tied to universal Pre-K)
- Continue to design and deliver after school and summer academic skills programs.
- Position YCAP as family resource center (services and site)

Health

Tremendous strides continue to be made in improving overall health outcomes and extending quality of life. Costs seem to be skyrocketing. Health care continues to shift as hospitals merge, new healthy systems develop. Health insurance remains in the headlines.

At the State level, **DSRIP** (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment) is the main mechanism by which New York State will implement the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) Waiver Amendment. Goal is to reduce avoidable hospitalizations through improved coordination among providers, CBOs and patients

There has been an alarming increase in opioid and heroin use and abuse, as well as the marketing of "synthetic marijuana", with the Governor leading an aggressive media campaign to alert the public.

To prepare for DSRIP, a Health Needs Assessment was undertaken jointly by Westchester Medical Center and Montefiore Hospital that captured a snapshot of local health including:

- Top causes of ER visits include injuries, acute respiratory infections, infectious and parasitic diseases, mental disorder, discomfort in chest.
- Top causes of hospitalization: injury and poisoning, circulatory system disease, digestive systems disease, mental disorders, and respiratory system diseases.
- 13% of behavioral health emergency department visits in the Hudson Valley region are to St. Joseph's Hospital.
- Diseases of the circulatory system, neoplasms, and diseases of the respiratory system were the three leading causes of death among both women and men

The Westchester County Dept of Health Assessment reports that in Yonkers...

- Babies born to mothers with delayed or no prenatal care: 34.1%
- Babies born preterm: 11.5%
- Babies born underweight (under 5 lbs): 9.5
- 34% of city's youth are obese
- 15.56% of adults have no medical insurance
- Average age at death: 76 *For Hispanic males, the average age is 57*
- 47% of all premature deaths (<65) are Hispanic

There are 196 offices of physicians and 18 offices of mental health practitioners in Yonkers.

Key Findings from the Community

There are several major community initiatives in Yonkers that address improved health outcomes. The Healthy Yonkers Initiative is a broad coalition to engage community members of all ages in improved health and fitness. Reach for LYFE was organized to specifically address health disparities among people of color.

Many projects focus on blending family health and fitness into their activities – schools, Family Day events, Y programs, Riverfront library, Parks and Recreation.

Age, frailty, isolation, health care costs are major concerns expressed by senior service providers;

The Choice Neighborhood Resident survey identified asthma, diabetes, hypertension and poor prenatal and perinatal health as major issues; mental health concerns were significant, with high rates of diagnosed (33% in residents 56 and older) and undiagnosed depression and untreated addiction identified by residents and health providers. Seniors also identified issues of transportation, safety, cultural competency of providers.

Additionally, the resident survey identified that 35% of households have at least one smoker living there which is roughly triple the county rate of 12%

Analysis and Summary - Health

Health – physical and mental, behavioral - is a major concern among residents and the service provider community.

In addition to professional medical services, there is strong response from community based organizations in terms of collaborative planning (i.e. Healthy Yonkers Initiative, REACH for LYFE, Yonkers Community Network.) YCAP needs to stay engaged in these initiatives, ensuring that low income community is always represented.

The health partnerships developed for the DSRIP initiative have identified “patient engagement” projects as priorities over the next five years, providing YCAP an opportunity for leadership in the community-based outreach and connection activities.

YCAP has been engaged in Prevention programming, namely youth alcohol and substance abuse prevention activities through coalition building and evidence-based training. There are opportunities to expand the interventions to prevention counseling and broader evidence-based training such as violence prevention and youth Mental Health supports.

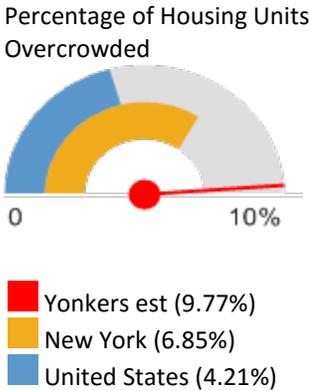
Housing

Housing is a complicated issue in an evolving and diverse city like Yonkers.

In low income neighborhoods, housing includes rental property, public housing managed by MHACY or private contractors, single rooms and shared housing.

Yonkers is an urban center with high density housing. Estimates of overcrowding are considerably higher than county, state and national estimates.

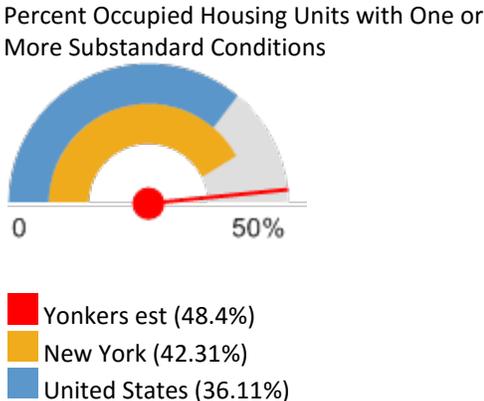
Report Area	Total Occupied Housing Units	Overcrowded Housing Units	Percentage of Housing Units Overcrowded
Yonkers Estimates*	44,286	4,328	9.77%
Westchester County, NY	245,459	14,440	5.88%
New York	5,098,017	349,049	6.85%
United States	90,126,088	3,797,345	4.21%



Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2009-13. Source geography: Tract

Almost 50% of housing has substandard conditions.

Report Area	Total Occupied Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units with One or More Substandard Conditions	Percent Occupied Housing Units with One or More Substandard Conditions
Yonkers Estimates*	72,855	35,260	48.4%
Westchester County, NY	343,561	155,307	45.21%
New York	7,234,743	3,061,125	42.31%
United States	115,610,216	41,747,016	36.11%



Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2009-13. Source geography: Tract

Key Findings from the Community

The Choice Neighborhood Resident Needs Assessment focused on residents in Cottage Gardens Housing and the immediate neighborhood. A very detailed assessment undertaken evaluate planned municipal housing transformations, there is some concern and lack of confidence in the plans to upgrade housing and services in their neighborhood

The issues voice most often in our neighborhood include cost, substandard conditions, safety, overcrowding and neighbors.

Eviction prevention is identified by several of our partners as the major issue among low income residents, including Cluster, the Bridge Fund and Catholic Charities.

Complaints are frequent to police and community leadership about loitering and aggressive pan-handling by people identified as homeless, especially in Getty Square, the library and train station.

Analysis and Summary – Housing

YCAP has traditionally addressed housing needs of individuals through case management supports and referral to specialized partner agencies. Interventions for eviction prevention focus on emergency rental supports, search for alternate housing as immediate assistance and budgeting, financial education and housekeeping supports to aid in long term successful housing.

We have recently participated in information webinar to learn how CSBG funds can be leveraged with HUD funding to impact homelessness. We maintain awareness of local homeless initiatives but exploration of greater engagement could be considered.

The need to repair and/or renovate our building offers an opportunity to consider if affordable and/or supportive housing is a viable option for to meet community needs and provide for sustainability.

Since housing is a major concern for individuals and for the community, it is recommended that YCAPb assess a new or expanded role as we proceed with needs assessment and strategic planning.

Food Insecurity and Nutrition

In the State

1 in 7 New Yorkers are considered food insecure (US rate is 1 in 6)

3,045,154 (14.5) of New Yorkers participated in SNAP In February 2015 (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – formerly called food stamps)

Gross income, net income and assets are factors in SNAP benefit calculations. An average monthly benefit is \$144 for individual, \$257 for family of two and \$464 for family of four.

In Westchester

1 in 5 households (200,000 people) are at risk of hunger or food insecure.

Food Back for Westchester (FBW) reports that of the people receiving food through their network, 33% are children under 18 and 51% are seniors.

There is at least 1 employed adult in 41% of households receiving food through FBW families.

SNAP participating households 7.88%

Key Findings from the Community

At this time last year, the west side of Yonkers has one major supermarket to serve 98,000 people. There are many small bodegas and markets, many with limited supplies of fresh produce. (Update: A&P announced closing of Nepperhan Avenue store)

Community gardens are a proven means to engage people of all ages in health and wellness activities. Greyston is a primary manager of community gardens, including one in partnership with YCAP at our Oak Street property.

Farmer's Markets are popular during the growing season.

The Sharing Community, YMCA, many churches provide hundreds of meals daily in their soup kitchens.

Food pantries are available almost daily around Yonkers.

Hundreds of seniors received meals through the four Office of the Aging nutrition centers as well as meals on wheels home delivery. Office for the Aging identifies isolated and disconnected seniors as key concern.

Analysis and Summary – Food Insecurity

The YCAP food pantry has been a resource for decades and is strongly recommended to continue as a priority program. We continue to refine operations, incorporating technical assistance and resources from the Food Bank for Westchester. FBW is increasingly building relationships among community food resources to assess community-wide capacities and needs and YCAP should look to providing leadership to this approach.

We continue to hone in on the impact of food pantry distribution and home delivery – how many meals are provided according to nutrition requirements, can we identify the value of the bags? We will be increasing the client choice options and look to pack the bags according to household size.

Given the concerns about isolated seniors, YCAP should assess need and capacity to increase home delivery pantry services.

The Oak Street Garden is an opportunity for a neighborhood focal point for health and nutrition outreach.

Nutrition and health messaging needs to be incorporated into all outreach and program delivery.

Quality of Life and Safety

Safety, Neighborhoods, Recreation, Transportation

Official crime reports are down citywide.

Gang activity and violence remain high community concerns. SNUG, based on the Ceasefire Initiative, reports significant decreases due their interventions.

NY is one of only two states considering youth 16+ as adults in the criminal justice center. Raise the Age is a statewide advocacy effort. Of arrests of 16-17 year olds in Westchester County, 71% were for misdemeanors. 13% were for no-violent felony and 16% for violent felony.

25% of acreage in Yonkers is considered open space, including 945 acres of county parks, 654 acres of state parks and 278 acres of local parks.

Yonkers Parks and Rec operates 70 parks and playgrounds, 74 street malls, 57 ball fields, 24 tennis courts, fourteen senior citizen centers, a skating rink, a rifle and pistol range, two greenhouses, an indoor pool, four community centers as well as other facilities.

Arts and culture continues to play a visible role in community development and revitalization.

Key Findings from the Community

The Choice Neighborhood Resident survey reported that 87% of residents feel safe in their neighborhood during the day, but 44% do not feel safe at night.

In the survey, 73% of residents suggest that they have personal connection to their neighborhood but that they do not see others sharing their views.

Transportation issues ranged from parking, car vandalism, double parking and noisy, rude cab drivers to the cost, timeliness and complicated routes of public transportation.

Police and residents agree that pockets of violence remain as well as areas of gang presence and drug trafficking.

Domestic violence is an increasing issue in Child Protective investigations, as reported in an interview with DSS

There have been long term concerns about police and community relations, including racial bias and aggressive policing. Recent programmatic interventions have included Youth Police Interaction trainings, Power of Peace, Kids and Cops.

There is frequent complaint from youth, parents and community members that Yonkers youth do not have enough opportunities and places for recreation and leisure.

Youth need to learn skills in peer mediation and conflict resolution at school, at church and in their recreation and leisure activities, according to a local pastor.

Police have been alert to increased crime and/or negative behaviors (especially youth on youth bullying) after school hours in the areas to/from the schools. In the 4th precinct, police worked with the schools to identify "safe zones" for their travel home.

At neighborhood association and precinct meeting, the most frequently voiced concerns are litter and dumping, street lights, speeding cars, double parking, noise, loitering, petty crime and vandalism - all contributors to neighborhood quality of life and reputation.

Analysis and Summary - Quality of Life

Neighborhood associations continue to offer community engagement and improvement opportunities, primary tools for community action and mobilization. It is recommended that YCAP continue participation as a key strategy.

Additional resources are needed to build youth skills to avoid, prevent and mediate conflict. These skills are integrated in existing YCAP evidence-based training offerings and should be expanded to additional youth engagement opportunities such as peer mediation.

YCAP should continue to serve as key community resource, a 'safe haven" for the community and a place to come together for personal and community strengthening.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted to hear feedback from program participants. In 2014-15 we focused on point of service surveys at pantry distribution in December and September. The surveys were developed by YCAP staff to learn about their service experience as well as their primary family and community concerns. Surveys are available in English and Spanish. One survey was conducted using Survey Monkey and iPads with volunteers reading the questions; the other was on paper and completed independently. In summary, the respondents reported:

- Overall pantry experience is good, staff is helpful, food meets needs. Recommendations for pantry included more meat, fewer canned goods, seats while waiting.
- Top three family and community concerns were Housing, Health, Safety/crime
- Interestingly, Housing was the top concern on the English version; Health among the Spanish speaking respondents
- Trusted sources for information also showed a variance: On the Spanish version; media, church, family/friends were the top selections. On the English version, Agencie, Family/friends, Church were the top three sources.

Going forward, we will increase our capacity to conduct productive surveys, utilize various collection methods, schedule throughout the year and strengthen the analysis and use of the findings.

Key Findings from the Community

Collection Methodologies

Surveys

We were fortunate in this initial community assessment to have the valuable partnership with Sarah Lawrence College and The Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative that provided access to hundreds of surveys of low income residents in our neighborhood. Extensive surveying is a challenging undertaking, one which we will be prepared to undertake in CNA updates. To build our capacity, we have participated in the NYSCAA work group to organize and test a survey appropriate to all community action agencies

We do have two customer satisfaction surveys from low income program participants that we will build upon going forward.

Focus groups

Formal focus groups were organized by the Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative.

YCAP integrated a focus group approach into specific neighborhood meetings (St. Joseph Neighborhood Assn, Fourth Precinct Community Council) to solicit input from community members

Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were conducted for the Choice Neighborhood Needs Assessment and by YCAP and included elected officials, clergy, local business representatives, community-based organizations, municipal agencies and educational professionals.

Other Community Assessments

- *Community Health Needs Assessment* – extensive seven-county assessment led by Westchester Medical Center and Montefiore Hospital as basis for DSRIP planning
- Choice Neighborhood Resident Needs Assessment Report
- Choice Neighborhood Stakeholder Organization Assessment Report

- Yonkers Thrives Baseline Report

Stakeholders as Resources

YCAP Board: input as elected officials, business, clergy, community representatives; data review; report review; approval

YCAP Staff: data collection, issue research, review, organization, updating

Partners: key informant interviews and discussion, community meetings included Catholic Charities, Community Voices Heard, Sarah Lawrence College, Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, Westchester County Department of Probation, Westchester County Department of Social Services, Yonkers Office for the Aging, Yonkers Police Department, Yonkers Public Schools

Community planning and work groups (on-going, topic-focused): Community Planning Council of Yonkers, Solutions Not Suspensions, Yonkers Coalition for Youth, Yonkers Community Network, Healthy Connections for LYFE and Yonkers Thrives Partnership

Low income Community Members

- 242 resident households participated in the *2014 Choice Neighborhood Yonkers Needs Assessment* which also included 59 focus group and key informant interviews
- 65 YCAP clients participated in the December 2014 customer survey
- 25 community residents meet monthly as YPD 4th Precinct Community Council
- 10 community residents meet monthly with St. Joseph's Neighborhood Association

Data Resources reviewed

- New York State Poverty Report March 2015. NYSCAA
- Yonkers Thrives 2015 Community Report
- Child Care Council of Westchester 2014 Public Policy Agenda
- Westchester Children's Assn 2015 Children by the Numbers
- Food Insecurity and Hunger in the U.S. Jan 2014 Food Research and Action Center
- Support for DSRIP Implementation Planning January 2015
- Westchester County Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan 2014-17
- US Census Data through FactFinder and American Community Survey reports
- 2014 Choice Neighborhood Yonkers Needs Assessment
- Bureau of Labor Statistics website

CNA 2015 PROCESS

Determining community needs

Data and community input was organized by staff, reviewed thoughtfully and integrated into a draft document to facilitate further discussion.

Prioritizing community needs

The draft document was shared with the Board to review. A subcommittee of Board members and staff met to work through the draft and identify priorities. While consensus was reached to continue with food insecurity responses, youth development, family strengthening, community engagement and partnerships, there was passionate advocacy for more aggressive involvement in local housing matters.

Determining YCAP response

The type and level of response falls into one of the following four areas:

1. Direct services within the Agency
2. Expand the Agency's scope of services
3. Effect community change
4. Advocate for community change

The 2016 Community Action Workplan was submitted in September, approved and included in the 2016 executed contract.

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