

# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

December 2023

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# A NOTE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

The Putnam County Community Foundation (PCCF) partners with those who give to enrich the quality of life and strengthen community for this and future generations. Through this lens, we view our role in the Putnam County community as three-fold.

First, it is our responsibility to gather and grow assets. This includes developing relationships with donors and investing and protecting the principal of donors' gifts.

Second, we are committed to broad, flexible grantmaking. This requires our staff and board to understand community needs in order to re-direct charitable dollars as those needs evolve. These grants may be proactive or responsive in nature but are certainly more effective if made from a place of understanding and knowledge.

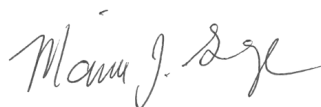
Third, it is our role to act as a community leader. There are many ways to play a leadership role including acting as a convener, effectively guiding resources to the areas of greatest need or opportunity, and educating the public on issues that are of most concern to them.

With this in mind, PCCF committed to leading a unique Community Needs Assessment in 2023. Our goals for this endeavor were to identify and prioritize needs and assets in Putnam County, unite organizations and resources, and create solutions that produce significant and lasting results.

PCCF humbly presents the following public report as a summary of this year-long process and its findings. We are grateful to the many partners, donors and community members who made this work possible.

It is our hope that the information collected through the 2023 Community Needs Assessment will allow our community's decision-makers to come together and create data-informed solutions to the needs of our community, foster collaboration among agencies and sectors, and improve the overall well-being and quality of life of Putnam County residents.

Sincerely,



Marianne Savage  
Board President



Neysa Meyer  
Executive Director



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2023, the Putnam County Community Foundation (PCCF) committed to leading a unique Community Needs Assessment to identify and prioritize needs and assets in Putnam County, unite organizations and resources, and create solutions that produce significant and lasting results. In planning the Community Needs Assessment, PCCF deliberately sought broad and inclusive input from various stakeholders and residents throughout Putnam County.

PCCF plays a vital role as a community convener and plans to bring community leaders together in the following months to use the data collected in the Community Needs Assessment to address the community's most pressing issues.

Ultimately, we want to educate the public about the issues that are most important to their neighbors, empowering local agencies and organizations to make data-informed decisions as they serve those same families and individuals.

PCCF conducted 16 one-on-one interviews, facilitated five focus groups, administered a county wide survey, and held a community session, as part of the year-long Community Needs Assessment.

Our survey results revealed the following top-reported issue areas:

1. Addiction and Illegal Drug Use (50%)
2. Inadequate Mental Health Treatment Options and Resources (37%)
3. Inadequate Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage (37%)
4. Lack of Affordable Housing and/or Diverse Housing Options and Resources (37%)
5. Limited Access to Quality Healthcare Options (28%)

Other areas of need highly reported include early childhood education and childcare, food insecurity, and transportation.

Community assets most frequently identified as "very important" to survey respondents include the following:

1. Safe Neighborhoods (88%)
2. Access to Quality Healthcare Options (84%)
3. Strong K-12 Education Systems (82%)
4. Adequate Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage (77%)
5. Healthy and Strong Families (76%) / Trusted Community Leadership (76%)

PCCF still has more to learn as we move forward from our 2023 Community Needs Assessment. We hope to continue this work alongside our partners and are committed to investing in sustainable solutions to address our county's priorities, improving the quality of life and building a brighter future for Putnam County.

# ASSESSMENT PROCESS

To begin the year-long process of the 2023 Community Needs Assessment, our team identified other community foundations that had recently implemented similar assessments and studied successful parts of their efforts.

The PCCF Board of Directors was also instrumental in identifying the goals for the assessment. With their guidance, our team created an implementation plan which included measurable goals for the assessment process.

Within that implementation plan, PCCF developed a four-phase approach to the assessment.

In Phase 1, we conducted one-on-one interviews with a variety of community leaders and key stakeholders.

In Phase 2, we facilitated community focus groups with participants from different communities and backgrounds.

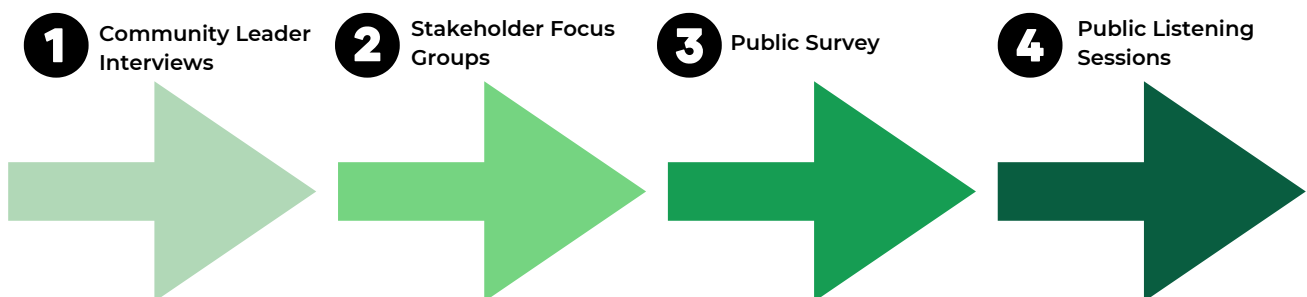
In Phase 3, we used what we heard in Phase 1 and 2 to develop and

administer a public survey to identify the top issues and assets in Putnam County.

After collecting survey responses, we worked with Transform Consulting Group (TCG), an organization with expertise in data collection and analysis to help validate the data and ensure the results were representative of Putnam County's population.

*Each phase of the Community Needs Assessment provided a different perspective on the existing resources and the most pressing concerns of communities across Putnam County.*

In Phase 4, the final phase, we committed to hosting public meetings to share what we learned and ensure that our stakeholders understood the assessment results. This provided an opportunity for community members to ask clarifying questions and provide additional feedback. Phase 4 culminated in publishing this final report.



# PHASE 1: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

For Phase 1 of the Community Needs Assessment, PCCF staff and board created a list of key stakeholders who represented a variety of industries and backgrounds. Efforts to gain broad and inclusive insight remained a cornerstone of each phase of the assessment beginning with identifying Phase 1 participants. PCCF sought to gather diverse perspectives and ensured that all reasonable efforts were made to be as inclusive as possible in the data collection process.

The 16 participants in Phase 1 represented education, small business, agriculture, local government, healthcare, religion, manufacturing, youth and more.

Phase 1 participants also came from all over the county with representation from each of the four county school districts.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted by PCCF staff using uniform questions for each interview in order to collect comparable data points. Participants also referred other community members who would provide unique and valuable perspective for Phase 2.

The issues we heard most frequently from these 16 individuals were related to housing, healthcare, mental health and addiction, and childcare.



*“Our community is doing great work, but we’re missing out on collective response to issues and collective impact that could be made with intentional collaboration.”*

*“It can be very disheartening to work with individuals struggling with addiction and not have the community resources to support them.”*

*“Our industry needs experts but without appropriate housing, it’s challenging to recruit new talent to our county.”*



**HOUSING**



**HEALTHCARE**



**MENTAL HEALTH &  
ADDICTION**



**CHILDCARE**

# PHASE 2: FOCUS GROUPS

Using the referrals from Phase 1 participants, over 100 community members were invited to participate in 5 focus groups. Of those invited, 36 community members joined the focus groups, which were held at locations throughout the county: Off the Rails Event Center in Roachdale (North Putnam), Endeavor Communications (Cloverdale), Ivy Tech Greencastle (Greencastle), South Putnam High School (South Putnam), and PCCF (Greencastle).

PCCF values building trust and wanted to empower community members to share openly in each focus group. To remove PCCF from the conversation and avoid introducing unintentional bias, we partnered with a well-respected community member to facilitate each focus group.

Each focus group was facilitated using the same guided questions and notes were compiled from each.

While we heard about similar issue areas as we did in Phase 1 – housing, healthcare, mental health and addiction and childcare – we also heard about issues related to workforce development, infrastructure and transportation, and food insecurity.

We also gained more insight into the specific concerns related to each issue. Housing, mental health and childcare created the most discussion among focus group participants. Their concerns within these areas were much broader than in other issue areas.

When discussing housing, concerns ranged from affordable housing, to availability of housing and diversity of housing stock.

Similarly, conversations about mental health often included concerns about substance misuse and recovery but many individuals thought the distinction between the two was too important not to recognize. Participants also discussed how while the community might have resources to support mental health or recovery needs, it may not have treatment options.

Lastly, participants expressed a variety of opinions on the issues related to childcare. Many were concerned with the affordability of childcare options while some were more concerned with early childhood education options. Even more participants were concerned with the quality of existing childcare and preschool options.



HOUSING



HEALTHCARE



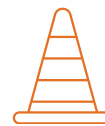
MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION



CHILDCARE



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION



FOOD INSECURITY

← Different From Phase 1 →

# PHASE 3: PUBLIC SURVEY

Phase 3 curated significantly more data than Phase 1 or 2 because of the community's incredible response to it.

While developing the goals for Phase 3, we considered the response rates of other recent community surveys and determined that we needed at least 380 responses to be reasonably confident to report the results.

Over the course of about six weeks, PCCF received 1,206 responses to the survey, providing data that is 99% accurate with a 4% margin of error. This means we are confident that this sample size is statistically representative of our county's population. Our partners at TCG confirmed the data as valid and representative.

The public survey was distributed primarily online via Survey Monkey. This platform was chosen based on accessibility, affordability and ease of use. Survey Monkey allowed us to promote the survey from four primary "collectors" – unique URLs that indicate how a respondent arrived at the survey site.

These collectors included social media and digital advertising, promotion through our community partners, printed ads and community events, and an "other" category which was used during the testing stages of the survey development.

We received the most responses (70%) from printed advertising in the local newspaper, on postcards handed out at community events and on flyers sent home with elementary students.





# SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

Survey questions were developed using a peer organization's needs assessment and informed by the data collected in Phase 1 and 2. PCCF then invited a select group of community members to test the survey before its public launch and made minor adjustments based on their feedback.

Goals for survey efficacy were determined based on publicly available data from recent US Census reports. These data points were used to determine the sample size for each demographic area which would allow us to confidently report the data collected.

These benchmark data points included total county population, age, median annual household income, and more.



37,301 POPULATION  
13,747 HOUSEHOLDS



15,293 HOUSING UNITS  
73.5% OWNER OCCUPIED



55.5% RESIDENTS AGE 16+ IN WORKFORCE  
\$64,993 MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME



89.1% ADULTS HAVE H.S. DIPLOMA/EQUIVALENT OR HIGHER  
17.7% HAVE 4-YEAR DEGREE OR HIGHER



92.2% HOUSEHOLDS HAVE COMPUTER ACCESS  
83.9% HOUSEHOLDS HAVE BROADBAND ACCESS



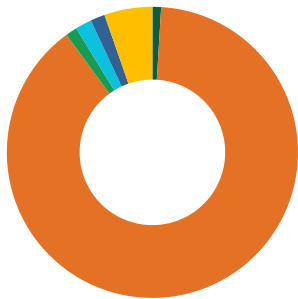
46% STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH  
12% RESIDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY

# RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



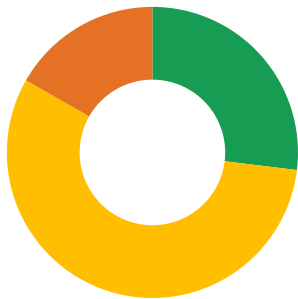
## SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Cloverdale, 15.09%
- Greencastle, 44.2%
- North Putnam, 17.41%
- South Putnam, 11.77%
- N/A, 11.53%



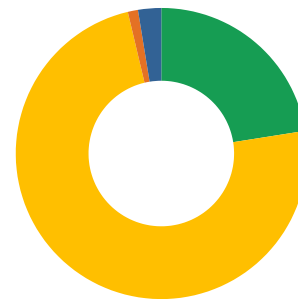
## ETHNICITY

- White, 89%
- Black, 1.28%
- Hispanic, 0.96%
- Multiracial, 1.82%
- Other, 1.61%
- Prefer Not to Answer, 5.34%



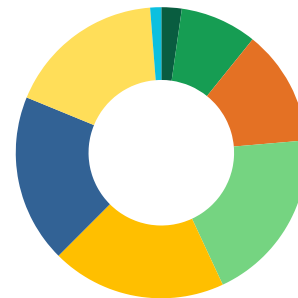
## ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- Above \$64,993, 56.32%
- Below \$64,993, 26.93%
- Prefer Not to Answer, 16.75%



## GENDER IDENTITY

- Woman, 73.79%
- Man, 22.51%
- Other, 1.13%
- Prefer Not to Answer, 2.57%



## AGE

- Under 18, 2.26%
- 18-24, 8.53%
- 25-34, 12.85%
- 35-44, 19.42%
- 45-54, 19.42%
- 55-64, 18.71%
- 65+, 17.57%
- Prefer Not to Answer, 1.23%

*“What do you do in Putnam County?”*

**80%**

**LIVE**

**52%**

**WORK**

**15%**

**ATTEND  
SCHOOL**

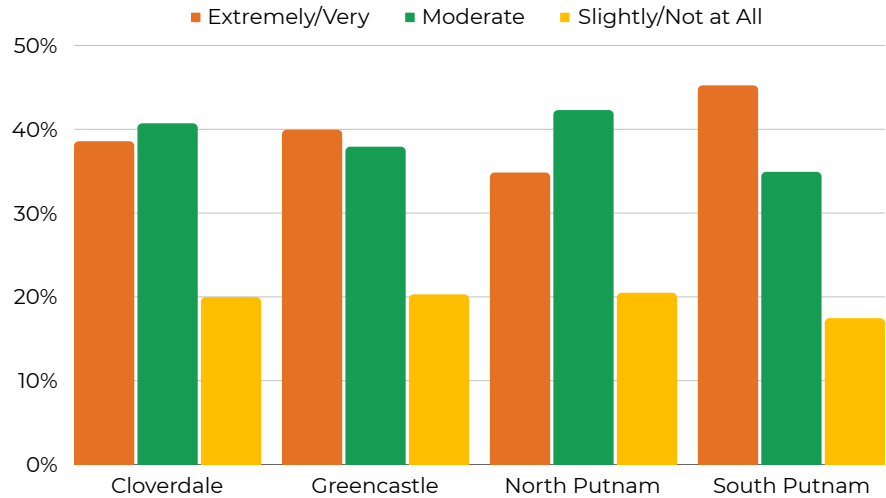
**60%**

**SHOP &  
DINE**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

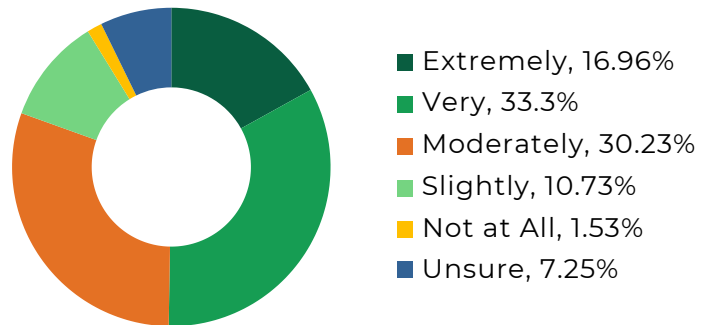
*“How connected do you feel to Putnam County?”*

**37%**  
**EXTREMELY OR VERY CONNECTED**

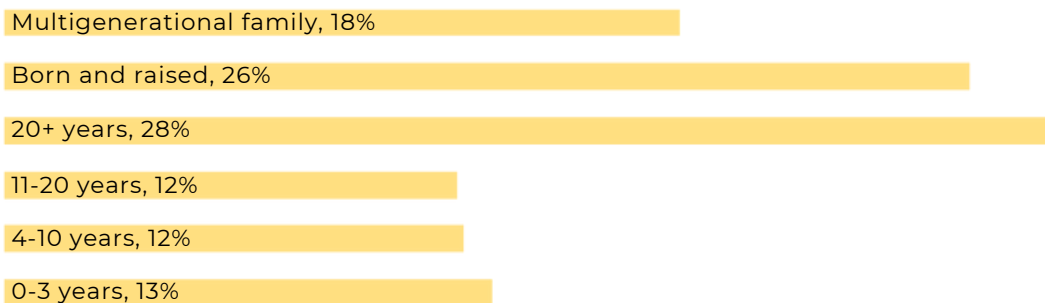


*“How willing are you to actively engage in making your community a better place?”*

**50%**  
**EXTREMELY OR VERY WILLING TO ENGAGE**



*“How long have you lived in putnam County?”*



# COMMUNITY ASSETS

At a glance



*“Please tell us how important each of the following community assets are to you.”*

**88%** Safe Neighborhoods

**84%** Access to Quality Healthcare

**82%** Strong K-12 Education Systems

**77%** Adequate Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage

**76%** Healthy and Strong Families  
**- AND -**  
Trusted Community Leadership

# COMMUNITY ASSETS

We asked our 1,206 respondents to “please tell us how important each of the following community assets are to you.” While “community asset” was not defined for respondents, the question did not ask respondents to identify things that their community is already doing well. It asked them what our community values most.

The top-reported “very important” community assets were Safe Neighborhoods (88%), Access to Quality Healthcare Options (84%), Strong K-12 Education Systems (82%), Access to Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage (77%), and Healthy and Strong Families along with Trusted Community Leadership (76%).

Community Asset	Not Important at All	Somewhat Unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Safe neighborhoods	0%	1%	2%	9%	88%
Access to quality healthcare options	1%	1%	2%	9%	84%
Strong K-12 education systems	1%	1%	6%	10%	82%
Adequate job opportunities to make a living wage	2%	2%	5%	15%	77%
Healthy and strong families	1%	1%	5%	17%	76%
Trusted community leadership	0%	0%	5%	18%	76%
Community unity and trust	1%	1%	9%	24%	65%
Available and reliable workforce	1%	1%	9%	25%	64%
Strong early childhood education and/or childcare resources	2%	2%	12%	20%	64%
Access to mental health treatment and resources	2%	4%	11%	22%	62%
Adequate post-graduation opportunities for young adults	1%	2%	10%	27%	60%
Welcoming and inclusive community	1%	2%	13%	23%	60%
Affordable and/or diverse housing options	2%	2%	11%	26%	59%
Elderly care options	2%	1%	11%	27%	59%
Adequate spaces and/or opportunities for recreational activities	0%	2%	8%	34%	56%
Access to training or education to get a new or better job	3%	3%	16%	28%	50%
Available retail and shopping	0%	2%	13%	39%	45%
Social offerings and community events	1%	2%	12%	41%	44%
Strong transportation system and resources	3%	3%	19%	34%	41%
Volunteer and civic opportunities	1%	2%	19%	42%	35%
Access to arts and culture	5%	6%	25%	35%	28%

# COMMUNITY ISSUES

At a glance



*"Please select the top 5 issues facing your community."*

**50%** Addiction and Illegal Drug Use

**37%** Inadequate Mental Health Treatment Options and Resources

**37%** Inadequate Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage

**37%** Lack of Affordable and/or Diverse Housing Options and Resources

**28%** Limited Access to Quality Healthcare Options

# COMMUNITY ISSUES

We also asked our respondents to “please select the TOP five issues facing your community” from the list provided. The top-reported issue area is Addiction and Illegal Drug Use with 50% of respondents including this issue in their top five. This is followed by Inadequate Mental Health Treatment Options and Resources (37%), Inadequate Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage (37%), Lack of Affordable and/or Diverse Housing Options and Resources (37%), and Limited Access to Quality Healthcare Options (28%).

We noted that the three issues immediately following healthcare were all reported at nearly the same frequency. These include Inadequate Safe Public Spaces for Youth Outside of Schools (28%), Food Insecurity (28%), and Inadequate Early Childhood Education and/or Childcare Resources (27%). These results are very much aligned with what we heard during Phase 2 focus groups.

Community Issue	Response Rate
Addiction and illegal drug use	50.30%
Inadequate mental health treatment options and resources	37.35%
Inadequate job opportunities to make a living wage	37.04%
Lack of affordable and/or diverse housing options and resources	36.94%
Limited access to quality healthcare options	27.83%
Inadequate safe public spaces for youth outside of schools	27.63%
Food insecurity	27.53%
Inadequate early childhood education and/or childcare resources	27.43%
Lack of knowledge or understanding of existing community resources	25.40%
Inadequate transportation system and resources	23.38%
Inadequate access to broadband internet	21.05%
Effects of adverse childhood experiences and trauma	17.51%
Lack of coordination and planning between county and towns	16.80%
Not enough skilled workers (e.g., trade, soft skills, work ethic)	16.09%
Inadequate availability and accessibility of elder care options	14.27%
Not enough social offerings or community events	13.26%
Lack of access to training or education to get a new or better job	9.41%
Unwelcoming community	8.50%
Lack of community-wide communication vehicles to inform public	8.10%
Limited art and culture options	7.39%
Limited volunteer and civic opportunities	4.25%

# UNPACKING THE ISSUES

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Similar to Phase 2, we wanted to learn more about our respondents' most pressing concerns. In Phase 3, we specifically asked about the three categories that caused the most discussion during Phase 1 and 2: Mental Health, Housing, and Childcare. Within the issue area of Mental Health, addiction continues to show up as the most pressing issue; within Childcare, respondents were most concerned with the quality of existing resources; and within Housing, the biggest concern was a lack of affordable housing.

## MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION

**38%** Inadequate addiction treatment options and resources



**32%** Inadequate mental health resources



**30%** Inadequate mental health treatment options



## HOUSING

**47%** Lack of affordable housing



**42%** Lack of available housing options




**11%** Lack of diversity of housing options



## CHILDCARE

**48%** Lack of high quality early childhood education and/or childcare options



**39%** Lack of affordable childcare options



**13%** Lack of affordable early childhood education options





# RAISING COMMUNITY VOICES

The top-reported issues vary by demographic groups including income, age, and school district.

For respondents which reported below median income, the top five reported issues are Addiction and Illegal Drug Use (50%), Lack of Affordable/Diverse Housing Options (42%), Inadequate Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage (40%), Inadequate Mental Health Treatment Options and Resources (35%), and Food Insecurity (29%).

The top five reported issues for respondents age 24 or younger are Food Insecurity (38%), Addiction and Illegal Drug Use (34%), Inadequate Job Opportunities to Make a Living Wage (34%), Inadequate Mental Health Treatment Options and Resources (32%), and Lack of Knowledge or Understanding of Community Resources (30%).

While reported issues were similar across school districts, each community's biggest concerns varied slightly as seen in the table below.

CLOVERDALE	NORTH PUTNAM
Addiction and illegal drug use (52%)	Addiction and illegal drug use (41%)
Inadequate job opportunities to make a living wage (34%)	Inadequate access to broadband internet (35%)
Inadequate safe public spaces for youth outside of school (34%)	Inadequate mental health treatment options and resources (33%)
Lack of affordable and/or diverse housing options and resources (31%)	Limited access to healthcare options (30%)
Food insecurity (27%)	Inadequate job opportunities to make a living wage (29%)
GREENCASTLE	SOUTH PUTNAM
Lack of affordable and/or diverse housing options and resources (38%)	Addiction and illegal drug use (51%)
Addiction and illegal drug use (38%)	Inadequate mental health treatment options and resources (35%)
Inadequate mental health treatment options and resources (33%)	Limited access to healthcare options (31%)
Inadequate job opportunities to make a living wage (32%)	Lack of affordable and/or diverse housing options and resources (29%)
Inadequate early childhood education and/or child care resources (26%)	Inadequate job opportunities to make a living wage (27%)

# PHASE 4: REVIEW & ANALYSIS

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After collecting survey responses in Phase 3, PCCF worked with TCG to analyze the survey responses and validate the data.

TCG also facilitated a planning session with the PCCF Board of Directors in which they presented the survey results and guided the group's decision-making process for the assessment's Phase 4 and beyond.

In Phase 4, PCCF also committed to hosting two public meetings to share the initial assessment findings and provide context and clarification.

In the first of these public meetings, PCCF presented the assessment results to a group of nearly 60 community members. The second public meeting will take place in 2024 to share how PCCF's Board of Directors chooses to move forward with the information gathered in the 2023 Community Needs Assessment.

The content of this publication is consistent with the content of the the first public meeting and has been informed by the questions and comments raised by community members and PCCF's Board of Directors during Phase 4.



Photo courtesy of Banner Graphic/Jared Jernagan.

# MOVING FORWARD

PCCF is committed to realigning our organization's programs and initiatives using the results of the 2023 Community Needs Assessment.

Using experience, expertise and the information collected in the assessment, PCCF will make data-informed decisions to realign our organizational priorities and our resource deployment. We expect this information to guide our grantmaking, community outreach and public education efforts.

Additionally, PCCF seeks to empower other organizations to do the same and hopes to make comprehensive local data available to the public in 2024.

It is our goal to regularly convene local leaders who are already working to address the community's reported priorities to promote collaborative work. This may include connecting regional and state leaders to local experts who are well-informed on the needs related to the top-reported issue areas.

From the beginning of this process, our board has hoped to use the information gathered to for a large-scale initiative. This may be an investment in a special project or initiative which will address needs in the top-reported issue areas. While PCCF continues to explore options for this initiative, we invite others to support the good work already happening to address those needs. We hope to have additional information to share regarding this initiative early in 2024.



## Additional Resources

More resources and cited data sources are available at [pcfoundation.org](http://pcfoundation.org).

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to Karen Heavin, Honorary Board Member and dedicated community member, for her guidance and support during Phase 1 and 2 of the assessment process.

Thank you to Bieniek Law, P.C., Hendricks Regional Health, and Shuee's Furniture & Appliance for providing great incentives for Phase 3 participants.

Thank you to Transform Consulting Group for providing an unbiased overview of the data collected in Phase 3 of the assessment and for facilitating planning sessions for the PCCF Board of Directors.

Thank you to the PCCF Board of Directors for their guidance and oversight throughout the 2023 Community Needs Assessment and their commitment to providing data-informed community leadership.

Special thanks to the countless community members who participated in and supported the 2023 Community Needs Assessment.

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# Thank you to our 2023 Community Partners!



With additional support from: Buzzi Unicem USA, Prime Real Estate, Cloverdale Drugs, Abstract & Title.

[pcfoundation.org](http://pcfoundation.org)