Community Needs Assessment

Community Services Block Grant Program

A study and analysis of the service area of Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. to determine the needs of those living in poverty. The identification of these needs through statistical data and community input, enables us to operate a program that is designed to help meet the Agency’s mission to help eliminate poverty – one individual, one family at a time.

Completed June 2017
Approved by the Board of Directors July 11, 2017
Introduction

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. (SCFS) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) Community Action Agency providing services to individuals and families in Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Hoke, Pender, Robeson and Scotland Counties. These services are provided through management of Federal and State grants for the Head Start Program, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Agency’s mission is to improve and empower the lives of the families we serve. This is accomplished through the operation of these programs.

SCFS is a Community Services Block Grant eligible entity. CSBG is a federal, anti-poverty grant which provides core funding to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities and to empower low-income families to become self-sufficient. The CSBG program is currently authorized under the 1998 CSBG Act. Community representation and accountability are hallmarks of the CSBG program.

The 1994 Amendment to the CSBG Act specifically mentions a requirement to provide outcome measures to monitor success in three areas: promoting self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization. Our Community Services Block Grant Program is based on six national goals:

**Goal 1:** Low-income people become more self-sufficient. *(Family)*
**Goal 2:** The conditions in which low-income people live are improved. *(Community)*
**Goal 3:** Low-income people own a stake in their community. *(Community)*
**Goal 4:** Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved. *(Agency)*
**Goal 5:** Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results. *(Agency)*
**Goal 6:** Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems. *(Family)*

SCFS is committed to providing high quality services through intensive case management to individuals and families which we serve. Our ultimate goal is to help each customer become self-sufficient. This is accomplished by helping them identify their strengths and weaknesses. Using this data each customer is equipped with the knowledge necessary to help him or her identify specific goals as the journey begins toward attaining self-sufficiency.

SCFS is committed to the ROMA vision. ROMA is defined as “a performance-based initiative designed to preserve the anti-poverty focus of community action and to promote greater effectiveness among state and local agencies that receive Community Service Block Grant funds.” Using the ROMA structure and principles, SCFS incorporates the use of outcomes and results into the administration, management, operation, and evaluation of the services we provide.

SCFS Community Services Block Grant Program provides services to 325 individuals or families throughout our seven county service area. Oversight is accomplished through a core Management Team, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Program Director, and three (3) Case Management Field Supervisors. The Case Management Field Supervisors supervise a staff of thirteen (13) Case Managers. Our CSBG Program operates a
total of eight (8) sites. Governance is provided by a tripartite Board of Directors consisting of 21 members. One-third of its memberships are elected officials, one-third are representatives of private organizations, and one-third are consumer representatives who are elected by those we serve.

**Purpose**

The Community Assessment is updated every three years. Statistical data and relevant community information are compiled in order to identify the strengths, needs and trends that impact the design and implementation of our CSBG program.

During the assessment process, the following questions were addressed:

- How many low-income, CSBG eligible individuals/families reside in the service area?
- Are there changes in the low-income population or demographics in the CSBG service area?
- Are there community trends which affect CSBG families?
- What are the most critical needs and challenges facing the individuals/families in the service area?

The data which we collected and analyzed is utilized in making programmatic decisions such as determination of the types of services most needed by the individuals and families that we serve, our philosophy, the Agency’s long- and short-range objectives, and our recruitment and service area.

**Methodology**

The Community Assessment is based on the collection and analysis of all relevant data for the communities served by the SCFS Community Services Block Grant Program. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were completed of demographic and community needs data.

Data were obtained from a variety of sources including state and local agencies as well as a community needs survey which was developed and disseminated to determine the needs and challenges of the SCFS service area. This information was utilized to frame a report that defines the number of CSBG eligible individuals and families who live in the service area, the greatest needs and challenges for the families and communities, what the program can do to help meet those needs, and to help determine the program design best suited for our potential customers. Key findings from the data indicate that the communities which we serve have many resources, but these communities are also faced with problems which include pervasive poverty, widespread illiteracy, drug abuse, high child-abuse and neglect rates, adolescent and teen pregnancies, high crime rates, and high unemployment rates.
Description of Service Area

Illustration A. Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc.

Illustration A is a map of the State of North Carolina in which we have outlined the geographical service area for Southeastern Community and Family Services, Inc. The service area extends from the south central district of the state to the Atlantic coast, and is bordered by South Carolina to the south. The Community Services Block Grant Program currently provides services in all six of counties defined in the service area.

The Agency’s central office is located in Lumberton, Robeson County, North Carolina. Because of the distance from the central office to the most distant point (approximately 85 miles), a satellite office is located in Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina to help insure the delivery of timely services to all Neighborhood Service Centers. The Program Director and Case Management Field Supervisor are housed in both the Laurinburg and Whiteville Offices to provide daily contact, technical assistance and support to each center.

The eight CSBG Neighborhood Service Centers are distributed throughout the service area as follows:

- Bladen County: Elizabethtown Neighborhood Service Center
- Brunswick County: Brunswick Neighborhood Service Center
- Columbus County: Whiteville Neighborhood Service Center
- Hoke County: Hoke Neighborhood Service Center
- Pender County: Pender Neighborhood Service Center
- Robeson County: Lumberton and Red Springs Neighborhood Service Centers
- Scotland County: Scotland Neighborhood Service Center
Directions to Neighborhood Service Centers

Bladen County

1. Elizabethtown: From the Lumberton office travel toward East 4th Street, approximately 79 feet. Turn left onto East 4th Street. Turn left onto NC-41/North Pine Street. Turn right to stay on NC-41/East Elizabethtown Road. In 17.7 miles turn right onto NC-41 East/NC-87 South. In 1.8 miles turn left onto NC-41/NC-87. Travel 4.4 miles to 106 West Broad Street, Elizabethtown. The center is located in the basement of the Bladen County Courthouse.

Brunswick County

2. Brunswick: From the Lumberton office travel toward West 4th Street. Turn right onto West 4th Street. Turn left onto North Water Street. Turn right onto West 2nd Street (NC-41, NC-72). Turn left onto Martin Luther King Drive (NC-41). Turn left and take ramp onto Andrew Jackson Highway (I-74-E) towards Wilmington. Continue on US-74 East for 20.1 miles. Take the ramp onto North JK Powell Blvd (US-701-BYP) toward US-701-BYP W/Whiteville. Travel 3.7 miles. Continue on South Madison Street (US-701) for 9.7 miles. Turn left onto Peacock Road, then left onto Walter Todd Road traveling approximately 5.9 miles. Turn left onto MM Ray Road and travel 2.6 miles. Turn right onto Seven Creeks Highway (NC-905) and travel 8.5 miles. Bear left onto Swamp Fox Hwy E (NC-904) and travel 6.3 miles. Turn right onto Longwood Road NW (NC-904) and travel 5.3 miles. Turn left onto Ocean Highway West (US-17) and travel 7.4 miles. Turn right onto Smith Avenue and travel 1 mile. Turn Left on Main Street (US-17-BR) then right onto Holden Beach Road SW (NC-130-BR). Center is located on the left approximately .2 miles after turning.

Columbus County

3. Whiteville: From the Lumberton office travel toward West 4th Street on North Elm Street (approximately 75 ft.) Turn right onto West 4th Street. Travel about 485 ft. and turn left onto North Water Street. Travel 0.1 miles and turn right onto West 2nd Street (NC-41, NC-72). Travel 0.2 miles and turn left onto Martin Luther King Drive (NC-41). Travel 3.4 miles and turn left. Take the ramp onto Andrew Jackson Highway (I-74-E) toward Wilmington. Travel 7.8 miles. Continue on US-74 E for 20.1 miles. Take ramp onto N JK Powell Boulevard (US-701-BYP) toward US-701-BYP S/Whiteville. Travel 1.8 miles. Turn left onto West Columbus Street and travel 0.1 miles. Turn right onto South Lee Street. Center is located on the left in approximately 334 feet.

Hoke County

4. Hoke: From the Lumberton Office travel toward West 4th Street and turn right onto West 4th Street. Turn right on North Water Street. Travel 0.3 miles and continue on Carthage Road for 1.1 miles. Turn right onto I-95 N/US-301 N/Fayetteville for 141 feet. Take ramp onto Hector MacLean Highway (I-95 N) toward Fayetteville. Travel 0.9 miles and take exit #20/NC-211/NC-41/Lumberton/Red Springs and travel 0.2 miles. Turn left onto North Roberts Avenue (NC-211) and travel 15.6 miles. Turn right onto
South Main Street (NC-211) and travel 11.7 miles. Turn left onto Harris Avenue (US-401-BR) and travel 0.8 miles. Turn left onto Laurinburg Road (US-401). Travel 0.3 miles. Turn right onto West Palmer Street and travel 0.7 miles. Turn left onto Thomas Drive. Travel 0.2 miles. Center is located on the left.

**Pender County**

5. **Pender:** From the Lumberton Office travel toward East 4th Street on North Elm Street approximately 74 feet. Turn left onto East 4th Street and travel approximately 0.2 miles. Turn left onto North Pine Street (NC-41) and travel 0.4 miles. Bear right onto East Elizabethtown Road (NC-41) and travel 17.7 miles. Turn right onto NC-41-E, NC-87-S and travel 1.8 miles. Turn left onto NC-41, NC-87 and travel 4.4 miles. Turn left onto North Poplar Street (US-701) and travel 7.3 miles. Turn right onto NC-41 and travel 19.2 miles. Turn right onto US-421 and travel 15.7 miles. Turn left onto NC-53 and travel 8.5 miles. Turn right onto South Dickerson Street. Travel 449 ft. Center is located on the left.

**Robeson County**

6. **Lumberton:** From the Lumberton Office travel toward West 4th Street on North Elm Street for approximately 74 feet. Turn right onto West 4th Street, traveling 485 feet before turning left onto North Water Street. Travel 0.1 miles on North Water Street and turn right onto West 2nd Street (NC-41, NC-72) and travel 0.2 miles. Continue on West 2nd Street (NC-72) for 1.6 miles. Turn left onto Halsey Drive. The center is located on the right.

7. **Red Springs:** From the Lumberton Office travel toward West 4th Street on North Elm Street for approximately 75 feet. Turn right onto West 4th Street and travel 485 feet. Turn right onto North Water Street, traveling 0.3 miles. Continue on Carthage Road for approximately 1.1 miles. Turn right toward I-95 N/US 801 N/Fayetteville and travel 141 feet. Take ramp onto Hector MacLean Highway (I-95-N0 toward Fayetteville for 0.9 miles. Take exit #20/NC-211/NC-41/Lumberton/Red Springs and travel 0.2 miles. Turn left onto North Roberts Avenue (NC-211) and travel 14.5 miles. The center is located on the right.

**Scotland County**

8. **Scotland:** From the Lumberton Office travel toward West 4th Street on North Elm Street for approximately 75 feet, turn right onto West 4th Street, traveling 485 feet. Turn left onto North Water Street and travel 0.1 miles. Turn right onto West 2nd Street (NC-41, NC-72) and travel 0.2 miles. Turn left onto Martin Luther King Drive (NC-41) and travel 3.3 miles. Turn right and take the ramp onto I-74 West toward Rockingham and travel 22.6 miles. Continue on US-74 W for 7.3 miles. Take exit #184/US-15-BR/US-401-BR/Laurinburg and travel 0.2 miles. Turn left onto South Main Street (US-15-BR, US-401 BR) and travel 0.8 miles. The center is located on the left in Suite H.
County Profiles
Bladen County

Bladen County is the fourth largest county in North Carolina with 879 square miles and is located in Southeastern North Carolina in what is known as the Coastal Plains, lying within 25 miles of the Atlantic Ocean. The terrain is relatively flat, with maximum altitudes of 120°. Temperatures in Bladen may reach 105° F in summer and get as low as 10°F in winter. The average yearly temperature is 63°F and the average yearly precipitation is 49.06 inches.

Bladen County is an ideal location for industry, offering manpower, an abundant water supply and easy access to four major highways: NC 41, NC 87, NC 53 and US 701. The County has a diversified economy with industry, manufacturing and tourism being significant contributors. The average farm size is 238 acres, with total reported agricultural receipts for 2015 of $367,080,868. The Labor & Economic Analysis Division of the NC Department of Commerce reported the largest employers in the 4th quarter of 2016, each reporting 100 or more employees. These companies include Smithfield Foods, Inc. Gildan Yarns LLC, Bladen County Schools, Bladen County, Cape Fear Valley Health Systems, Danaher Controls, Packers Sanitation Services Inc. Ltd, Bladen Community College, First Source Staffing Services LLC, NC Department of Transportation, Lineage Logistics LLC, Wal-Mart Associates Inc., Genesis Administrative Services LLC, and Fresh Foods LLC.

The 2010 U.S. Census reported a population of 35,190. The 2014 projected total population as reported by the NC Economic Data and Site Information (a division of the NC Department of Commerce) is 35,758. Bladen County is abundant in natural recreation areas. There are three rivers within its boundaries, with the Cape Fear River, the largest, bisecting the county. White Lake is commercially developed and attracts thousands of visitors annually. Bay Tree Lake is a growing private resort development. Jones and Singletary Lakes are state owned parks offering outdoor recreation as well as an educational visitors’ center. According to a study prepared by the NC Department of Commerce by the US Travel Association, tourism in Bladen County generated $36.42 million in 2013, a 2.01% increase from 2012. More than 190 jobs were directly attributed to travel and tourism resulting in a $3.73 million payroll in 2013.

Housing figures initially indicate affordable housing opportunities, with the median value of owner occupied housing units at $85,000, compared to the state median of $178,600, and a home ownership rate of 67.3%. However, the estimated median household income for 2015 as projected by the NC Department of Commerce is $41,501. The American Community Survey Brief published by the U.S. Census Bureau reports that the median household income for the United States in 2015 was $53,755 while the median household income for North Carolina totals $47,830, more than 14% higher than the median income for this county. Bladen poverty rates are at 25.5% based on the 2015 Small Area Income & Poverty Estimate. The April 2017 unemployment rate is 5.5%, 1.2% higher than the state average of 4.3%.

The Bladen County School System operates 13 schools, serving 4,649 students in grades PK through 12 in the 2015-16 school year. Higher education opportunities are offered at Bladen Community College, located in the County. Bladen County students also have convenient access to Mt. Olive College and the University of North Carolina – Pembroke.
Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. operates one Neighborhood Service Center in Bladen County – which is located in the County Seat, Elizabethtown. The center is equipped with one Case Manager.
Brunswick County

Brunswick County, located in Southeastern North Carolina on the Atlantic seaboard, covers over 854 square miles. The weather is ideal for year-round visits. During the spring and summer months the average temperature ranges from 81° to 90°. During the fall and winter months the average temperatures range from 56° to 84°. The sub-tropical climate and beach access have made Brunswick County a highly desirable recreational area.

The County, located between Wilmington, N.C. and Myrtle Beach, S.C., had a population of 107,431 as reported in the U.S. Census of 2010. The projected population for 2014 is 116,005. During the past 10 years, growth in Brunswick County has outpaced the state and nation by a large margin. The recorded percentage of growth in 2010 was 46.9%.

While Brunswick County income is largely derived from or associated with tourism, creating more than 5,030 jobs. This county ranged 10 in travel impact among North Carolina’s 100 counties in 2013. Travel generated a $85.71 million payroll in 2013. The area is home to several manufacturing facilities as well as having a healthy agricultural economy. 542,033 acres of the county are being used for agriculture, with a total of 254 working farms. In 2015 these farms generated case receipts totaling $48,044,148.


Housing indicators for Brunswick County has a relatively high home ownership rate of 76.1%. The median value of owner occupied houses is $186,600. The 2015 estimated median household income is $57,126 which is $9,296 higher than the 2015 median household income for North Carolina as reported by the American Community Survey Briefs published in September, 2016. Brunswick County reports a 16.6% poverty rate. The unemployment rate of 5% is .7% higher than the state average of 4.3 as reported in April 2017.

The Brunswick County Board of Education, one of the largest employers in the county, operates a total of 19 schools and serves 12,500 students. Higher education is offered through Brunswick Community College, which has two campus locations, and the University of North Carolina – Wilmington.

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. operates one Neighborhood Service Center in Brunswick County – located in Shallotte. The center is equipped with two Case Managers.
Columbus County

Columbus County, located in Southeastern North Carolina, covers over 937 square miles. The county enjoys a warm climate, with an average high temperature of 74° and an average low of 49°. The 2010 U.S. Census report shows a total population of 57,206. The projected 2014 total population is 58,574 (ACCESSNC@NCCommerce.com).

Columbus County is located halfway between Maine and Miami, Florida, which offers strategic access to Eastern United States consumers, suppliers and business partners. Less than an hour east is the Port of Wilmington, with the Port of Charleston a short drive south. A web of four lane highways offers convenient surface transit, including U.S. 74. A CSX mainline traverses the county, and passenger air service is available in easily accessible communities.

Columbus County has a diversified economy which includes farming, manufacturing and tourism. Total agricultural receipts for 2015 were $139,686,298 with a total of 731 farms averaging 218 acres each. Tourism added a total of $49.59 million to the county’s economy in 2013, generating more than 290 jobs. These jobs generated a $5.77 million payroll.

The county has developed an economic development commission to actively solicit industry and offers incentives in the form of tax rebates, job creation grants, site development assistance, free training and management relocation support. The Labor & Economic Analysis Division of the North Carolina Department of Commerce released a report of the largest employers in the 4th quarter of 2016. These companies report having 100 or more employees and includes Columbus County Board of Education, NC Department of Public Safety, International Paper Company Inc., Century Employer Organization LLC, Columbus County, Columbus Regional Healthcare System, BB&T, Whiteville City Schools, Southeastern Community College, Wal-Mart Associates Inc., Atlantic Corporation, Community Innovations Inc., National Spinning Company Inc., Food Lion, Liberty Healthcare Group LLC, Carolinas Home Care Agency Inc., West Fraser Inc., McDonalds, Wayne E. Bailey Produce Company, Lowes Home Centers Inc., Boys & Girls Homes of NC Inc., Blacks Tire, Interim Health Care, and Premier Living Rehab Center LLC.

The home ownership rate is moderate at 62%. The median value of owner occupied housing units is $86,717. The 2015 estimated median household income is $44,783, $3,047 less than the 2015 median income for North Carolina as reported in the American Community Survey Briefs published in September, 2016. Unemployment rates were reported at 5.2% in April 2017 which is .9% higher than the state average of 4.3%. The county poverty rate is 25.0%.

Columbus County is host to two school systems: Whiteville City Schools with five schools serving 2,297 students, and Columbus County Board of Education which consists of 18 schools with more than 6,129 students.

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. operates a Neighborhood Service Center in Columbus County which is located in the county seat, Whiteville, North Carolina. Staff housed at this site include a Case Management Field Supervisor and two (2) Case Managers.
Hoke County

Hoke County is located in the southern part of Central North Carolina, and is bordered by Cumberland, Moore, Robeson and Scotland Counties. Hoke encompasses 391.2 square miles of primarily rural land, part of which is connected to the Fort Bragg Military Installation.

The estimated total population for Hoke County as of 2014 is 52,452 according to ACCESSNC. The 2000 Census population of 33,646 was a 47.2% increase over the 1990 Census. Hoke has further exhibited an almost 40% growth over the past 13 years, making it the fastest growing county in the State. The major contributor to this population growth is the closing of several military bases and the subsequent relocation of those personnel to Fort Bragg and Edwards Air Force Base.

Formed in 1911, the county was originally covered with cotton plantations, with cotton being the primary basis of its economy. As agriculture declined, Hoke County attracted industrial development to replace agriculture. Agriculture receipts now contribute $62,588,795 to the local economy. However, in 2011 the highest percentage of residents, 26%, were working in the manufacturing field. Interstate 95, US 401 and state routes 20 and 211 provide quick access to major metropolitan areas and markets. Air transportation is available at Fayetteville’s Granis Field, approximately 30 miles away.

The Labor & Economic Analysis Division of the North Carolina Department of Commerce released a report of the largest employers for the 4th quarter of 2016. Companies reflected in that report which employ 100 or more people include Hoke County Board of Education, Butterball LLC, Hoke County, Staffing Alliance LLC, Cape Fear Valley Health Systems, Conopco Inc., Burlington Industries V LLC, NC Department of Public Safety, Wal-Mart Associates Inc., First Health of the Carolinas Inc., and House of Raeford Inc.

The US Census Bureau State and County Quick Facts reports the 2007-2011 home ownership rates at 72.7% which is higher than the state average of 67.8%. Median value of owner occupied houses for this period is $126,700, $30,000 below the state median. The 2015 estimated median household income is $50,890, $3,060 higher than the 2015 median household income for North Carolina as reported in the American Community Survey Briefs published in September, 2016. The poverty rate for Hoke County is 22.9%. The unemployment rate in April 2017 is reported at 5.4% which is 1.1% higher than the state average of 4.3%.

Hoke County School System operates a total of 14 schools serving 8,300 students. Five colleges are located within 30 minutes of the center of the county, and Sandhill’s Community College-Hoke Campus is located in Raeford, the County Seat.

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. has one Neighborhood Service center in Hoke County. Hoke Neighborhood Service Center is located in Raeford and houses one full time Case Manager.
Pender County

Pender County is located in the southeastern section of North Carolina and was formed in 1875 from New Hanover County. This county was named for William Dorsey Pender, a Confederate General who was mortally wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg. It is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and New Hanover, Brunswick, Columbus, Bladen, Sampson, Duplin, and Onslow counties. Pender encompasses 933 square miles. Burgaw is the county seat.

The 2000 Census population for Pender County totaled 41,082. ACCESSNC reports the 2014 projected population total at 55,698, projecting an annual growth of 1.7%. Pender County is a very diverse area which affords a unique opportunity to create a balanced economic base. Major interstate and highway corridors include I-40, I-140, US 74 (future I-74), US 421 and US 17. The industrial park is located only 15 minutes from the Wilmington International Airport.

The Labor & Economic Analysis Division of the North Carolina Department of Commerce released a report of the largest employers in the 4th quarter of 2016. Employers reporting 100 or more employees include Pender County Schools, Pender County, NC Department of Public Safety, Pender Memorial Hospital Inc., L Building Products (A Corp), Food Lion, Pender EMS and Fire Inc., Wal-Mart Associates Inc., C.W. Wright Construction Company LLC, R.C. Recreations LLC, Woodbury Wellness Center Inc., Lowes Home Centers Inc., Daybreak of Rocky Mount Inc., Huntington Health Care & Retirement, and Harris Teeter. Agriculture is also a major contributor to the economy of Pender County. In 2015 cash receipts totaling $162,022,290 was generated through livestock, dairy, poultry, and crops.

Home ownership rates at 76.9% are higher than the state average of 67.8%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units for the period of 2011-2015 totals $153,400. The 2015 estimated median household income is $56,277, $8,447 higher than the State median household income as reported in the American Community Survey Briefs released in September, 2016. The poverty rate of Pender County is reported at 19.3%. The unemployment rate for the period ended April 2017 is 4.2% representing .1% less than the state average of 4.3%.

Pender County School System operates a total of 17 schools, including four high schools. NC Report Card reports that 9,294 children were enrolled during the 2016 school year. Cape Fear Community College is centrally located for easy access to all Pender County residents.

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. has one Neighborhood Service center in Pender County. Pender Neighborhood Service Center is located in Burgaw and houses one full time Case Manager.
Robeson County

With over 949 square miles of land area and 2 square miles of water, Robeson County is the largest county in the State of North Carolina. Situated in the southern part of Central North Carolina, the average annual temperature is 58°; annual snowfall average is 3”, and annual rainfall is 49”. Population density is primarily rural, with 37% urban and 63% rural. The 2010 U.S. Census reports a population of 134,168. The projected 2014 population as reflected in ACCESSNC through the NC Department of Commerce totals 137,224.

The highway system in Robeson County is outstanding with major north, south, east and west highways, including I-95 and the proposed I-74. Trucking, rail, local air and nearby major airports are available for shipping of manufactured goods. Lumberton, the county seat, sits on I-95 and is a mid-way point between New York and Florida. Domestic tourism generated an economic impact of $127.57 million in 2013 ranking this county number 34 in travel impact among North Carolina’s 100 counties. More than 1,050 jobs were directly attributable to travel and tourism, generating a payroll of $18.49 million in 2013.

A major part of the Robeson County economy is agriculturally based, with receipts totaling $396,029,982 in 2015. Major employers in the county, providing jobs to 100 or more individuals, include Public Schools of Robeson County, Mountaire Farms of North Carolina, Inc., Southeastern Regional Medical Center, Robeson County, Wal-Mart Associates Inc., University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Campbell Soup Supply Company LLC, Two Hawk Employment Services LLC, Staffing Alliance LLC, BB&T, Kayser-Roth Corporation, NC Department of Public Safety, Prestage Foods, City of Lumberton, Food Lion, Sroriginals, RHA Health Services LLC, McDonalds, Elkay Southern Corporation, Quickie Manufacturing Corporation, Graphic Packaging International Inc., Mega Force Staffing Group Inc., and M. J. Soffee LLC. Robeson County Economic Development Commission has been organized to promote Robeson County’s economic growth by offering incentives to new and existing industries for creation of new jobs, business retention and expansion. Industrial development grants and research and development tax credits are available to qualifying business within the region.

The median value of owner-occupied housing is low at $70,200, which is less than half of the State median of $153,400. Home ownership rates are low at 63.1% for the period of 2011-2015. The 2015 estimated median household income is $36,903, $10,927 less than the median household income for North Carolina as reported in the American Community Survey Briefs released in September 2016. The poverty rate for Robeson County is reported at 31.7%. The unemployment rate as reported for April 2017 is 6.2% which is nearly 2% higher than the state average of 4.3%.

Public Schools of Robeson County operates 44 schools, including 7 high schools and serves 24,090 students. Opportunities for higher education are available at Robeson Community College and the University of North Carolina – Pembroke.

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. operates two Neighborhood Service Centers in Robeson County located in Red Springs and Lumberton. The administrative offices of SCFS are also housed in Lumberton, providing jobs to 33 individuals. Through the Community
Services Block Grant funding the agency employs a Program Director, three Case Management Field Supervisors, and five (5) case managers.
Scotland County

Scotland County, located in the area known as the Sandhill’s Region, covers 319 square miles. It is adjacent to the State of South Carolina. This is the smallest county served by Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. Scotland County is located halfway between Charlotte, the State’s largest city, and Wilmington, the State’s largest port, and is 100 miles south of Raleigh, the State Capital, and 100 miles north of Columbia, the State Capital of South Carolina. The 2010 U.S. Census reports a population of 36,157 with ACCESSNC of the NC Department of Commerce projecting the population as of 2014 at 36,383.

Choice industrial sites, available manpower, convenient location to the coast and the Research Triangle area, and readily available shipping make Scotland County an ideal choice for business locations. Major highways US 15, 401, 501 and the proposed I-74 bisect the county, and industrial railway spurs are available through the locally owned Laurinburg and Southern Railroad.

The Scotland County Economic Development Corporation has been established to actively solicit businesses to the region, working with new and expanding companies to provide incentives for job creation and capital investment. Major employers identified as companies providing employment to 100 or more individuals include Scotland County Schools, Scotland Memorial Hospital (A Corp), NC Department of Public Safety, FCC North Carolina LLC, Scotland County, Wal-Mart Associates Inc., Pilkington North America Inc., Maverick Transportation LLC, Farmers Furniture Company, St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Hanesbrand Inc., Meritor Heavy Vehicle Systems LLC, Presbyterian Home, Inc., City of Laurinburg, Nics Pic Kwik Inc., Railroad Friction Products Corporation, Scottish Pines Rehabilitation and Nursing, Debbie’s Staffing Services, Kordsa Inc., Mega Force Staffing Group Inc., Olsten Staffing, Carolina Container Company (A Corp), and Cascades.

Agriculture and tourism also impact the economy of this county. The 2012 Census of Agriculture reported 68,934 acres was used as farm land representing 150 farms. Cash receipts through agriculture in 2015 totaled $92,332,466. Domestic tourism generated an economic impact of $39.20 million in 2013 and attributed to 350 jobs. Travel generated a $6.22 million payroll. Scotland County is ranked 64 in travel impact among North Carolina’s 100 counties.

The home ownership rate in Scotland County for the period of 2011-2015 is 63.1%. Median value of owner-occupied housing is $79,100, a marked decrease from $96,005 in 2007. The 2015 estimated median household income is $36,870, $10,960 less than the median income for North Carolina as reported in the American Community Survey Briefs released September 2016. The county poverty rate is at 32.3%. The reported unemployment rate at the end of April 2017 is 7.5% which is 3.2% higher than the state average of 4.3%.

The Scotland County School System operates a total of 13 schools serving pre-k through high school and serves 6,147 students. The county is home to St. Andrews Presbyterian College and a satellite of Richmond Community College. Higher education opportunities are also provided through close proximity to the University of North Carolina – Pembroke campus.
Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. operates one Neighborhood Service Center in Scotland County located in Laurinburg. The Scotland center houses one full Case Manager and three (3) Section 8 Housing staff.
Demographics

As of the 2010 Census, each of the counties in our Community Services Block Grant Program service area had consistently showed a positive population growth since 1990. Three counties, Brunswick, Hoke, and Pender were among the nation’s top 100 fastest growing counties in 2010. The 2014 and 2019 population estimates as published by the North Carolina Department of Commerce shows a slight decrease in the population for Columbus and Scotland Counties with the projections for Brunswick County having the highest increase.

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Racial and Ethnic Diversity of Families

Hispanic population growth has nearly doubled in the State over the past decade. Each county in our service area has had a significant increase in that facet of the population, with as much as a 2.4% increase in Hoke County.

| Family Racial and Ethnic Composition – 2012 US Census American Community Survey Estimates |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Race/Ethnicity          | Bladen        | Brunswick    | Columbus     | Hoke         | Robeson      | Scotland     |
| White                   | 60.5%         | 83.3%        | 64%          | 50.4%        | 32.8%        | 46.8%        |
| Black/African Amer.     | 35%           | 11.5%        | 30.6%        | 34.2%        | 24.7%        | 38.9%        |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 2.7%     | .8%          | 3.5%         | 9.7%         | 39%          | 11.3%        |
| Asian                   | .3%           | .6%          | .4%          | 1.3%         | .8%          | .9%          |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | -          | .1%          | .1%          | .4%          | .1%          | -            |
| Two or More Races       | 1.4%          | 1.7%         | 1.5%         | 4%           | 2.5%         | 2.1%         |
| White, non-Hispanic     | 54.6%         | 81%          | 60.5%        | 41.1%        | 27%          | 45.2%        |
| Hispanic                | 7.3%          | 5%           | 4.6%         | 12.4%        | 8.2%         | 2.5%         |
Poverty

In North Carolina poverty remains elevated and touches the lives of more than 1.7 million Tar Heels. Poverty continues to keep the fiercest grip on communities of color, children, and single parent households.

The U.S. Census Bureau 2015 poverty estimates shows that the state poverty rate was 16.4%. Robeson County’s poverty rate is estimated at 30.6% while Scotland County’s rate is estimated at 29%. These rates are significantly higher than the state average. Hoke, Columbus, and Bladen Counties estimated poverty rates are also significantly higher with only two counties reporting a poverty rate that is less than the state poverty rate – Brunswick County reports a poverty rate of 14.3% while Pender County reports a rate of 14.8%.

The North Carolina Department of Justice released a BTC Brief. Research was conducted to evaluate the problem of concentrated poverty in North Carolina’s neighborhoods. This study shows that a growing number of people in our service area are living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. Those living in these areas face restricted access to jobs, education, and networks that can improve their financial standing. The disadvantage of being poor and residing in a poor neighborhood magnifies and perpetuates the problems they face. Research shows that the residential segregation of people who are poor can lead to negative neighborhood effects including low-quality educational opportunities, weaker employment networks, poorer health outcomes, and elevated levels of crime. Changes have been seen in the concentration of poverty nationally. The number of poor people living in concentrated-poverty neighborhoods increased nearly twofold from 1970 to 1990 and declined by 31% from 1990 to 2000 only to see an increase by one-third from 2000 to 2005-2009.

The map below reflects the areas of concentrated poverty. Throughout the seven-county service area of Southeastern Community & Family Services there are high percentages of people living in areas of concentrated poverty. This study also reports that African Americans who were poor were 2.7 times more likely to live in concentrated-poverty neighborhoods than Latinos who were poor, and 3.5 times more likely than whites who were poor. Studies show
that living in areas of concentrated poverty result in higher stress levels, higher dropout rates, and more emotional problems. Focusing outreach efforts in areas of concentrated poverty can help us break the cycle of poverty.

**Concentrated Poverty in North Carolina by Census Tract, 2006-2010**

**Hurricane Matthew’s Impact**

Already battered by an economy that left Eastern North Carolinians behind, the counties hit hardest by Hurricane Matthew are still suffering from anemic job growth. Scotland, Robeson, Bladen, and Columbus counties have lost a significant number of employed people since 2007. Robeson County has lost 6,288 employed persons since pre-recession. Each of the seven (7) counties served were included in the emergency declaration that resulted in the approval of individual assistance and public assistance for individuals impacted by the flood.

Robeson County was one of the hardest hit by Hurricane Matthew and is still in the process of rebuilding the community. Hundreds of low-income apartments were damaged or destroyed. Matthew flooded hundreds of homes and shutdown businesses across Robeson County. The lack of affordable housing has hindered relocation efforts for many. The school system sustained widespread damage and the city’s water plant became inoperable after taking on more than five feet of flood water. Once the flood waters receded, sand from the Lumber River made streets look like beaches. Housing remains an immediate need for many families.

**Child Care Programs**

Children from moderate and higher income families tend to achieve higher academic success than those from lower income backgrounds. However, families at all income levels tend to
struggle with child care. State child care subsidies can help parents afford the dependable child care they need in order to work every day, but there are many children who are on waiting lists for those subsidies. Difficulties with child care force many parents to quit, change jobs or give up on searching for employment altogether. Lower-income parents are more than twice as likely to make job changes based on child care issues than moderate to upper income families. Compared to the national average, North Carolina has one of the highest rates of working mothers with young children; thus making the need for child care one of the state’s top priorities.

According to the North Carolina Division of Child Development, a total of 336 licensed day care facilities are located in the Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. Community Services Block Grant Program service area. These facilities include Head Start Centers, public school Title 1 and pre-k programs, and privately owned day cares. It would appear at first glance that there are ample quality facilities to provide day care to this age group. However, the rising cost of day care or tuition puts this option out of reach for many, particularly those who are unemployed and those who are considered to be among the working poor. Low or no wages as well as lack of transportation make it difficult for many families to secure these services.

**Education Overview of the SCFS Service Area**

The table below shows the educational levels of each county in our service area for 2012. Graduation rates have greatly improved since 2012 in Brunswick, Hoke, Pender, Robeson, and Scotland Counties. The graduation rate reduced in Bladen, Columbus, and Pender Counties. However, figures for the population having less than a high school diploma and those achieving degrees for higher education still indicate a pressing need for basic and continuing adult education in each county.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Less Than HS Diploma</th>
<th>High School Diploma</th>
<th>Associate’s Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</th>
<th>HS Graduation Rate 2012</th>
<th>HS Graduation Rate 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bladen</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoke</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pender</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robeson</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-secondary education has become a prerequisite in our increasingly competitive job market. However, the high cost of education has made it difficult for individuals from low-income families to achieve this milestone. Additionally, individuals living in poverty face other challenges because of their socio-economic background. They are 2 ½ times more likely to repeat a grade, resulting in lowered academic achievement and socio-emotional adjustment. They are also less likely to participate in after school activities, sports and community service activities which are associated with better academic outcomes, higher self-esteem and improved
social skills. All of these factors contribute to low educational outcomes and limited skills, both of which are associated with unemployment and low earnings potential.

Health Overview of the SCFS Service Area

Individuals and families cannot succeed if they are not healthy. North Carolina has made significant strides in some areas of child health:

- Child mortality rates have improved from 105.2 per 100,000 in 1990 to 57.5 in 2010, and are holding steady at 58.6 as of 2012.
- Infant mortality rates have dropped 12.9% since 2007.
- The immunization rate for children entering public school is 97.1%.
- The rate of uninsured children living in low-income families has dropped from 20.6% in 2007 to 11.4% in 2012.

Even with these successes, there are still areas in which improvement is urgently needed for both child and adult health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a brief, “Health and Access to Care Among Employed and Unemployed Adults: United States, 2009-2010.” This report reflects several key findings which include:

- Unemployed adults aged 18-64 years were less likely to have private insurance and more likely to be uninsured than employed adults. (See Figure 1)
- Unemployed adults in 2009-2010 were more likely to have fair or poor health than employed adults across all categories.
- Unemployed adults were more likely to have serious psychological distress than employed working-age adults, regardless of health insurance coverage.
- Unemployed adults had more difficulties obtaining needed medical care due to cost than employed adults, regardless of insurance coverage.
- Unemployment was associated with reduced access to needed prescription drugs due to cost.

Lack of health insurance has been shown to be associated with problems obtaining health care, and the unemployed are less likely to have health insurance than their employed counterparts. The number of adults aged 18-64 lacking health insurance has been increasing, in part due to the historically high unemployment rates. According to this study, poor health may be both a cause and effect of unemployment. In addition to having poorer health, unemployed adults
were more likely to delay or not receive needed prescriptions, due to cost, than their employed counterparts.

Many people perceive teen and adolescent pregnancy as a growing problem throughout our service area. However, the number of teen births has dropped nearly 62% since the highest figures reported in 1990. Even with the decline in teen pregnancy rates, United States pregnancy and birth rates are still higher than those in other Western industrialized nations. Our state has benefited from an aggressive campaign led by the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of North Carolina, whose overall goal is to increase the number of effective prevention programs through local partners. Due in part to these efforts North Carolina’s rates are at an all-time low.

**2010 Births – Teens and Adolescents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th># of Births</th>
<th>Total Births All Age Groups</th>
<th>% of All County Births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bladen</td>
<td>15 - 19</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>16 - 19</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1,046</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>14 – 19</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoke</td>
<td>14 - 19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robeson</td>
<td>12 – 19</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>2,103</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>12 – 19</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2011 Births – Teens and Adolescents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th># of Births</th>
<th>Total Births All Age Groups</th>
<th>% of All County Births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bladen</td>
<td>14 – 19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>13 – 19</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoke</td>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robeson</td>
<td>13 – 19</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1,886</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>14 – 19</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
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**2012 Births – Teens and Adolescents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th># of Births</th>
<th>Total Births All Age Groups</th>
<th>% of All County Births</th>
<th>State Ranking (100 Counties)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bladen</td>
<td>14 – 19</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoke</td>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robeson</td>
<td>12 – 19</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1,834</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>14 – 19</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
While rates are dropping through a concerted education and preventative effort, the effects of teen pregnancy are long reaching:

- Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school; only one-third receive a high school diploma or GED.
- Teen mothers are more likely to live in impoverished conditions. Teen pregnancy makes it harder to escape poverty, with more than 40% reporting that they live in poverty at age 27.
- Teen fathers have a lower probability of graduating from high school.
- The children of teen mothers have lower birth weights, are more likely to perform poorly in school, and are a greater risk of abuse and neglect.
- The sons of teen mothers are 13% more likely to end up in prison, while teen daughters are 22% more likely to become teen mothers themselves.
- Risks for medical complications are greater for girls 14 years of age and younger, as an underdeveloped pelvis can lead to difficulties in childbirth.
- The occurrence of developmental disabilities and behavioral issues is increased in children born to teen mothers.

Teen pregnancy and motherhood can influence younger siblings. In a study conducted by the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of North Carolina it was reported that the younger sisters of teen mothers were less likely to place an emphasis on education and employment, and to accept early sexual behavior, parenting and marriage at younger ages.

- One-fourth of adolescent mothers will have a second child within 24 months of the first.
- Women exposed to abuse, domestic violence and family strife in childhood are more likely to become pregnant as teenagers.
- Girls whose fathers left the family early in their lives had the highest rates of early sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy.
- Teenage mothers are more likely than older mothers to experience single parenthood, as well as serious health and emotional problems.
Social Service Needs and Challenges

During what is now being termed the Great Recession, North Carolina lost an estimated 300,000 jobs. Unemployment rates soared and have led to long-term joblessness for many of the families that we serve. Rates charted over a 12-month period show that five of the seven counties in our service area were well over the National and State averages.

Lower incomes impact all facets of life, thus creating a vicious circle for many families. Low incomes lead to substandard or unaffordable housing which contributes to health problems, creating medical bills which generate financial problems due to a lack of affordable insurance, in turn contributing to poor nutrition because of financial need.

The quality of rural housing has increased over the past 20 years. Twenty years ago, during that time, a quarter of a million homes lacked complete plumbing; the number now is less than 300. One reason is that many older houses have been replaced with inexpensive mobile homes, which comprise 20% of all rural housing. However, as many as 4% of all rural housing still lack a complete kitchen or have inadequate plumbing.
Community Resources Available for Community Services Block Grant Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Resources</th>
<th>B L A D E N</th>
<th>B R U N S W I C K</th>
<th>C O L U M B U S</th>
<th>H O K E</th>
<th>P E N D E R</th>
<th>R O B E S O N</th>
<th>S C O T L A N D</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community Centers</td>
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<td>Local Universities, Colleges and Community Colleges</td>
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<td>Department of Mental Health and/or Private Service Prov.</td>
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<td>Churches and Church Affiliated Groups</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern Community &amp; Family Services, Inc.</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Service Agencies</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**2017 Community Needs Assessment Survey**

During Program Year 2016-17, SCFS Community Services Block Grant program conducted an assessment survey of staff, volunteers, partners, and community representatives.

The survey was distributed electronically, via Survey Monkey, as well as in paper format. To make the public aware of the survey, a notice was placed on SCFS’ website, in the agency’s newsletter, via social media sites, and by word-of-mouth.

502 surveys were completed during the process. Surveys were submitted from each of the counties served by Southeastern (Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Hoke, Pender, Robeson, and Scotland Counties). It is important to know that 502 surveys were collected; however, every participant did not complete all questions of the survey. In addition, several questions allowed multiple answers per question, which resulted in the appearance of escalated responses. Here is the demographic break-down of participants:

![Pie chart showing gender distribution](image1)

![Pie chart showing age group distribution](image2)
What is your marital status?

How would you classify your race?
What is your highest level of education completed?

- Elementary/Grammar: 0.0%
- Middle School: 5.0%
- High School: 10.0%
- GED: 15.0%
- Vocational/Technical: 20.0%
- Some College: 25.0%
- Bachelor’s Degree: 30.0%
- Master’s Degree: 35.0%
- Doctoral Degree: 40.0%
- No formal education: 45.0%

Employment Status (check all that apply)?

- Employed (Wages): 45.0%
- Self-Employed: 5.0%
- Unemployed: 10.0%
- Retired: 15.0%
- Student: 20.0%
- Military/Spouse (Active): 25.0%
- Veteran/Spouse: 30.0%
- Ex-Offender/Paroled: 35.0%
- Other: 40.0%
Household Income (annually)?

- $80,000
- $70,000 to $79,999
- $60,000 to $69,999
- $50,000 to $59,999
- $40,000 to $49,999
- $30,000 to $39,999
- $20,000 to $29,999
- $10,000 to $19,999
- Less than $10,000
The following survey questions were created to get an understanding of the thought processes of community needs and issues, as well as to better understand program and services desired by participants.

The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Unemployment/Lack of Available Jobs
2. Low Paying Jobs
3. Crime/Violence
4. Alcohol/Substance/Drug Abuse
5. Lack of Education
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Unemployment/Low Paying Jobs
2. Alcohol/Substance/Drug Abuse
3. Violence/Domestic Violence
4. Lack of Education
5. Incarceration
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Job Readiness/Resume Writing
2. Life Skills/Home Management
3. Tutoring/Education Support
4. Computer Training
5. After School Activities
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Family Support
2. Spiritual Guidance
3. Financial Stability
4. Transportation Accessibility
5. Mental/Physical/Emotional Health
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Parents/Guardians
2. Pastor/Spiritual Advisor
3. Spouse/Significant Other
4. Community Leaders
5. Friends
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Increase in Pay/Responsibilities
2. Job Stability
3. More Training/Growth Opportunities
4. Increase in Benefits
5. Transportation to Work
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Lack of Training
2. Nearly one-fourth who answered this question said they needed no services.
3. Lack of Reliable Transportation
4. Lack of Job Search Training/Resume
5. Lack of Skills (Vocational)
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Nearly one-third who answered this question said they needed no services.
2. Computer Training
3. Job Searching
4. Career Planning/Goal Setting
5. Resume Writing
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Employment/Career
2. Homeownership
3. Education (for all)
4. Spiritual Growth
5. Health/Wellness/Nutrition
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Lack of Income/Financial Support
2. Nearly 22% of respondents answered this question said they needed no services.
3. Lack of Education
4. Declining Physical Health
5. Lack of Spiritual Guidance
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Banking and Budgeting
2. Nearly one-fourth who answered this question said they needed no services.
3. Home Buying/Selling
4. Family Planning/Goal Setting
5. College Preparation
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Nearly one-third who answered this question said they needed no services.
2. High cost of rent/house payments
3. High cost of housing improvements/repairs
4. High cost of utilities
5. Affordable housing is unavailable
The top agency-wide findings from this survey question are:

1. Utility Assistance
2. Nearly one-third who answered this question said they needed no services.
3. Weatherization
4. Section 8/HUD
5. Rental Deposit Assistance
Program Design for FY 2018 - 2021

Based on the results of the Community Needs Assessment survey and our research of each county within the Agency’s service area, it is evident that the primary barrier to individuals and families attaining self-sufficiency is based on the lack of jobs with a livable wage, job stability, and a need for job training. Additional barriers that are of high importance to breaking the cycle of poverty is the need for training in the areas of banking and budgeting, family planning and goal setting, computer training, and job search training. Another thread that can be seen throughout all responses is the need for reliable transportation in our rural service area.

The Family Empowerment Self-Sufficiency Project (FESS) is designed to provide very comprehensive case management with the long range goal of helping remove families and individuals from poverty. This program is not designed to just pay utility bills, rent, or other immediate needs identified by the family. It is designed to help meet the individual’s immediate need utilizing Agency resources as well as other available community resources. The true strength of this project is found in the comprehensive case management where skills are taught through workshops and one-on-one mentorship where we help break the cycle of poverty and eliminate the barriers that have prevented them from successfully breaking the chains of poverty.

The Agency’s goal is to mobilize resources of other community programs first, utilizing Agency resources to meet needs that cannot be readily addressed by other programs. For example, if a barrier to finding employment is the lack of education, we will guide the customer in making a decision as to how to address this issue. It may be through an adult basic education program or through enrolling in a local community college. Our case managers will assist the customer in applying for Pell Grants to pay the cost of tuition, books, and other expenses. When Pell Grants and other resources have been exhausted, CSBG funds would then be utilized to pay for additional costs to help ensure the customers success. This could be through the payment of transportation expenses, for day care services so the parent can attend school, or for the payment of uniforms or other supplies that are not covered by a grant or scholarship. The customer’s success will be monitored regularly to ensure that progress is being made in all areas of identified need.

The FESS program will enable SCFS to provide comprehensive services that will meet the unique needs of each customer. This program design will enable case managers to address these needs through a holistic approach that will address the barriers that are specific to each customer enrolled in the program. We are now in the second year of our three year planning cycle where this project has been our primary focus. We have successfully moved more 77 families out of poverty. This is a major accomplishment as you consider that two of the counties served by SCFS are the poorest counties in North Carolina, the impact of Hurricane Matthew on our service area, and the high poverty and unemployment rates that can be seen throughout the service area.
Program Objectives

Based on the results of the Community Survey and the data compiled in the Community Needs Assessment, program objectives have been established to address the identified needs of the individuals who will be served through this program. These goals will be accomplished through collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as; other service agencies, faith-based groups and organizations, and other community partners to provide intensive services to all families enrolled.

I.  To provide opportunities to 325 low-income families to participate in comprehensive services during the 2018-19 program year.

2.  To assess their eligibility, strengths, resources, and needs of 325 low-income families.

3.  To assist 325 families in accessing programs as needed by making the appropriate contacts and assisting with the applications process.

4.  To maintain regular contact with customers to assess progress, to address barriers that the customer may be facing, and to provide encourage and support along their journey to attaining self-sufficiency.

5.  To move 39 families above the poverty level.

6.  To maintain partnerships with local resources and to provide training/workshops to staff and CSBG FESS customers.

Long Range Goal

To provide opportunities to acquire needed skills to become self-sufficient to 1,339 over the next three-year planning cycle families of whom at least 117 will have succeeded by June 30, 2021.
Conclusion

While the Great Recession officially ended in June 2009 according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the after-effects are far reaching. High unemployment rates, scarce low-paying jobs, and rising costs of necessary resources to adequately maintain lifestyles are all factors that contribute to the daily challenges that low-income individuals and families face. The closing of local industries, the devastation caused by the destruction caused by Hurricane Matthew, and the ever-increasing unemployment rate create a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break.

Through implementation of the goals outlined on page 47, as well as adherence to all Federal and State Regulations and guidelines, our Community Services Block Grant Program will continue its concerted efforts to establish and maintain quality delivery systems that ensures comprehensive case management for all individuals and families enrolled in the Family Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency Program. The needs of the population that we serve are ever increasing; therefore, the role of Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. will continue to be a key factor in addressing the needs of families in poverty. The Agency will continue to play a key role by working collaboratively with County Health Departments, Social Services, Mental Health and other agencies and providers in meeting the needs of the individuals and families we serve in each county. We will continue to provide services to all families within the service area and maintain the current locations. Through needs identified through the Community Needs Assessment, the program design will continue to be the Family Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency Project. We will continue to seek input from our Family Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency Teams, the Board of Directors, and community leaders to provide support for our staff and those we serve.
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