

Community Needs Assessment Recap (Mid-Delta Community Services, 2023–2024)

Purpose

The assessment was conducted to help Mid-Delta Community Services (serving Lee, Monroe, Phillips, and Prairie Counties, AR) identify critical needs, guide program planning, and inform strategic decisions for improving quality of life in the community.

Methodology

- **276 surveys** were distributed across the four counties.
- Participants rated issues on a scale of 0–4 (from “don’t know” to “very much needed”).
- Responses revealed the **Top 5 Needs** affecting residents.

Top 5 Community Needs

1. **Assistance with Goals & Self-Sufficiency (30%)**
Residents need support in breaking barriers to independence through training, community partnerships, referrals, and financial aid (e.g., utility assistance).
2. **Youth Programs (27%)**
High need for mentoring and structured opportunities for ages 18–19, particularly in Lee County (19.6% disconnected youth). Focus is on improving behavior, leadership, and employability.
3. **Full-Time Employment (26%)**
Insufficient living-wage jobs create instability. April 2024 unemployment rates ranged from **4.9% in Phillips** to **2.2% in Prairie County**. Transportation and job training are critical supports.
4. **Education (13%)**
Higher education links to greater self-sufficiency. While 79–87% of county residents hold a high school diploma, only **10–15%** have degrees. Partnerships with local colleges are recommended.
5. **Affordable Healthcare (4%)**
Poor health outcomes plague the counties, with **Phillips ranked 75th of 75** statewide. Better access to healthcare and stable housing is vital to improve community well-being.