

8-16-2013

Friends in the Desert Foundation, Inc. Program Evaluation

Gina Brooksbank
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Jessica Wilde
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Holly Williams
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations>



Part of the [Community-Based Research Commons](#), [Health Policy Commons](#), [Inequality and Stratification Commons](#), [Public Administration Commons](#), [Public Policy Commons](#), and the [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Brooksbank, Gina; Wilde, Jessica; and Williams, Holly, "Friends in the Desert Foundation, Inc. Program Evaluation" (2013). *UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones*. 2049.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/5413907>

This Professional Paper is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Professional Paper in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Professional Paper has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

MPA Capstone Project

Friends in the Desert Foundation, Inc.

Program Evaluation

University of Nevada Las Vegas

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for PUA 791

Submitted to:
Dr. Jaewon Lim

Submitted by:
Gina Brooksbank
Jessica Wilde
Holly Williams

8/16/13

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgements | 3 |
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| Introduction | 8 |
| Purpose of Evaluation | 8 |
| Scope of Work | 8 |
| Regional Homelessness Background | 9 |
| Agency Background | 10 |
| Research Design | 11 |
| Research Questions | 12 |
| Methods | 12 |
| Findings/Data Analysis | 14 |
| Program Data | 14 |
| Benchmark | 18 |
| Homeless Summit | 19 |
| Survey | 19 |
| Recommendations | 21 |
| Conclusion | 26 |
| Limitations & Future Direction | 27 |
| References | 29 |
| Appendices | 31 |

Acknowledgements

The project team would like to acknowledge Friends in the Desert Foundation, Inc. (FID) who provide commendable meal services in the Henderson community on a daily basis. With a limited amount of volunteers and financial resources, FID serves approximately 700 sit-down meals per week to those in need. Working with FID has not only been a great learning experience for the project team but has also instilled in us a deep appreciation of the services they provide 365 days per year. The project team would also like to thank Dr. Jaewon Lim for his continued support, and the City of Henderson, City of Las Vegas, Clark County, and other non-profits agencies that provided information.

Executive Summary

This report presents an evaluation of the Friends in the Desert, Foundation Incorporated (FID), a sit-down feeding program in downtown Henderson, Nevada. The evaluation identified both strengths of the program and opportunities for growth. Major components of this report are presented in the following order: scope of work, research design, findings, recommendations, conclusions and limitations. The report recommendations provide the agency's members and principal stakeholder groups with proposals designed to improve the program's financial position and long-term viability. These recommendations focus on opportunities for restructure, growth, and uninterrupted success.

FID is a sit-down feeding program located at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Henderson, Nevada. The agency's main purpose is to feed those in need and to offer additional services based on availability of resources. Other services provided include health and wellness checks, pro-bono legal services, the provision of clothing items and toiletries, and bus passes for use to travel to specific appointments such as doctor visits.

The need for this program evaluation was identified at both the regional and program levels. Regionally, there are many issues associated with feeding the homeless, especially if not done in a controlled setting. These issues include: a potentially dangerous environment; safety of the people distributing the food; increase in trash, litter, pests/bugs, spread of disease, defecation/urination; congregation in public areas and parks; numerous complaints from members of the community; loitering and panhandling, and a variety of other issues.

At the program level, FID had a number of questions to address and challenges that they hoped to obtain more information about or find solutions for. FID wanted to find out more about their client demographics and to obtain recommendations from an outside party regarding ways to improve the agency's current financial situation.

Research methods used in this study were both qualitative and quantitative in nature and selected in accordance with the type of data being collected and analyzed. Information was obtained through multiple channels including: program document review; benchmark study; client survey; City of Las Vegas homeless summit attendance; and conducting multiple phone interviews with government agencies. The following research questions were then developed:

1. Who is using the program?
2. Does program attendance fluctuate? If so, why?
3. How many clients want or need additional services?
4. How can the feeding model be improved?

Major findings were split into sections according to the methodology: program review findings, benchmark findings, survey findings, and Homeless Summit findings. A positive correlation was found when historic program data was analyzed in comparison to Bureau of Labor Statistics for the same years. When the unemployment rate dropped, the number of clients served meals also dropped, and during years of the recession when unemployment rates surged, FID meal attendance also grew. Survey findings closely resembled those of the 2013 Southern Nevada Homeless Census. 70% of the clients utilizing the program are currently homeless, and the majority of program participants are white males. The largest distribution of users is between the ages of 51 to 60, and 35% are attending meal services 5-6 days per week. 89% of the clients reported that they are unemployed, and 31% reported that they currently live on the "streets." Benchmark

findings showed that all three charities examined were receiving some sort of grant funding (local/state/federal) and all have a business plan and a written set of documents relating to operation policies and procedures. At the Homeless Summit, it was made clear that the principal summit objective was to increase collaboration amongst local government and faith-based organizations that provide homeless support programs and services. The “It takes a village” concept was used to illustrate the need for increased partnership, collaboration, and communication amongst all agencies. Organizations were encouraged to partner with other organizations like FID who are already offering meal services in controlled settings.

The project team developed four principal recommendations:

1. Increase inter-agency collaboration and partnership
2. Develop a comprehensive business plan
3. Apply for grant funding
4. Utilize the survey tool to improve strategic decision making, increase inter-agency partnership, and secure additional funding

By collaborating, agencies can maximize effectiveness and decrease the incidences of duplication of programs and services. The coordination of community services is imperative to achieving the regional goal. In maintaining working relationships with similar organizations in the valley, FID will gain the opportunity to learn about other programs and services; share best practices; learn how government partnerships can improve their program; and expand their volunteer base. The development and implementation of a business plan is needed in order to underpin program operations; improve record keeping; secure funding; and enhance the overall efficiency of program. Applying for grants will stabilize funding streams, which increases the possibility of adding to existing programs and services. Finally, utilizing

and expanding the survey tool for future research can provide data used to demonstrate the programs' measurable outputs. The results of the survey can be instrumental in performing a gap analysis, which would compare current programs and services against those that are critically needed.

Introduction

This report presents the findings of a collaborative research project performed by three UNLV students in the Master of Public Administration program under the supervision of Dr. Jaewon Lim, and in cooperation with Friends in the Desert Foundation, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as FID) who provide free sit-down meal services to those in need. The project team worked closely with Donna Coleman (Vice President of Development, FID) to obtain agency background information for the program evaluation process.

Purpose of Evaluation

UNLV MPA students consulted with FID and determined that the evaluation will be used as a tool to: better understand their client demographic; expand existing client services where necessary; secure and stabilize funding sources; and improve program accountability, strategic decision making, and overall program effectiveness.

Scope of Work

The educational objectives of the FID program evaluation were to: obtain real world experience by collaborating with an agency to evaluate a social program; complete the capstone project as part of graduation requirements; and to provide recommendations in hopes of ultimately affecting social change.

The program objectives for FID were to: obtain information about who is using the program, develop strategies to more effectively serve their clients, and better define program outcomes. The information obtained from the program evaluation is to be used by the FID staff and Board of Directors to secure and stabilize funding sources, improve

program accountability, improve strategic long-term decision-making, and expand existing services where appropriate.

Regional Background on Homelessness

In 2007, Southern Nevada coordinated a bi-annual U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homeless census to measure the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals living in the region. HUD has since allocated more than \$15 million to Southern Nevada in efforts to provide services to the homeless for the Homeless Continuum of Care; the “regional planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals” (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2013).

The 2013 Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey (2013) was conducted to compare data to previous years, evaluate the effectiveness of current programs on a local level, and raise public awareness of the scope and nature of homelessness in Southern Nevada (p. 6). According to the 2013 Homeless Survey, 33,883 members of the Southern Nevada population experience homelessness yearly, which is around 1.7% of the total regional population. Of the survey respondents, almost 75% were male, over 33% were between the ages of 51 and 60, and the majority (73%) were living in Southern Nevada at the time they became homeless. Over 60% of the people surveyed were unsheltered.

In addition to the survey, the City of Las Vegas has also developed the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition’s (SNRPC), Committee on Homelessness (COH), which “support homeless prevention and intervention efforts through policy development and financial support” (City of Las Vegas).

Furthermore, Mayor Oscar Goodman implemented the *Homeless Nevadans: 10 Year Plan to Reduce Homelessness* plan in 2006. The plan's main objectives are to prevent and end homelessness, reduce the time individuals spend being homeless, and promote coordination amongst agencies offering Human Services. To assist with this plan, the City of Las Vegas Homeless Summit was developed to promote and increase collaboration amongst local governments and faith-based organizations that provide homeless services. One of the overarching goals of this program evaluation is to collaborate and work with agencies providing regional support and advice on homelessness to help formulate research questions and recommendations that will benefit FID.

Agency Background

FID is one of several organizations in Clark County that focus on serving sit-down meals to those in need. The program began in 1997 when a priest at St. Timothy's church in downtown Henderson and several church members began handing out small amounts of donated food to hungry people at the back door of the church. As the circumstances that bring about poverty and homelessness are often complex and far-reaching, the need for feeding services has grown over time. What started out as a grassroots effort to feed the hungry and disadvantaged at the back door of the church has grown into a volunteer/donor driven program that now serves meals and sack lunches to approximately 700 clients per week.

The meal services are provided Monday through Saturday, and a sack lunch is distributed at the Saturday service to account for no meal service being offered on

Sundays. The services are provided at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, located at 43 West Pacific Avenue, Henderson, Nevada.

The ultimate goal of the program is to help keep people healthy by providing a nutritionally balanced meal. FID also provides additional services, based on availability, such as: distributing toiletries and clothing; offering monthly health and dental assessments; offering pro-bono legal services twice a year; and distributing bus passes for transportation to doctor appointments or community sponsored events that benefit homeless or disadvantaged persons.

Research Design

For the completion of this evaluation, a four-pronged approach was utilized so that the greatest amount of pertinent information could be collected to answer the research questions. Evaluation methods in this project include:

1. Analyze FID program data
2. Conduct a benchmark study
3. City of Las Vegas Homeless Summit attendance
4. Administer a survey to FID clients

FID program data was analyzed to help determine and identify any historical trends and subsequently compare those to trends in the County Homeless Population survey as well as Bureau of Labor Statistic information. A benchmark study was conducted to help identify best practices from similar agencies in the Las Vegas valley. The 2013 Homeless Summit meeting was attended to learn more about the issue of homelessness in the Las Vegas valley and how it is being managed. A survey was administered to FID guests to gather current data regarding FID's clients.

Research Questions

The questions that were developed and used as the basis for research were designed as a result of discussions with FID regarding their expectations. The research questions are as follows:

1. Who is using the program?
2. Does program attendance fluctuate? Why?
3. How many clients want or need additional services?
4. How can the feeding model be improved?

Methods

The program evaluation will be accomplished using both qualitative and quantitative mixed methods. Analysis of the data will assist in the creation of recommendations that will support future growth and management of FID.

Review of program data. The review of FID's program data will answer Research Questions 1, 2, and 4. Several meetings were conducted with FID's board members to obtain information about the scope of program operations, board identified program challenges and funding sources, and to obtain copies of existing policies or procedures and program operations plan. The program budget will be reviewed to develop a better understanding of program costs.

An analysis will be conducted using FID's historic program information collected from 2002 through 2012 regarding the total number of guests served at each meal and is broken down into the following categories: gender, age, number of meals served, number of sack lunches distributed, and the number volunteers who prepared and each meal. FID's historical data will be used to compare their client attendance against the UNLV survey findings.

FID's historical program data will be compared to the unemployment rate for Clark County from 2002 to 2012. The intent of this comparison is to determine if meal service attendance fluctuates with unemployment rates.

Benchmark Study. Analysis of benchmark study results will answer Research Question 4. A benchmark study will be completed to determine what agencies in the region are similar in size or scope to FID. The questions for the benchmark study were designed specifically around FID's needs from the survey project and are listed in Appendix D.

Homeless Summit Attendance. Observations from the Homeless Summit will answer Research Question 4. The Homeless Summit was created and hosted by the City of Las Vegas to encourage partnership and collaboration between government, social service providers, and faith-based organizations currently providing homeless services. The summit will be attended to increase knowledge about regional efforts to prevent and end homelessness and to obtain information about the importance of providing meal services in a controlled setting. Summit attendance will be used to collect agency contact information for the benchmark study and to gather information about programs and services currently offered in Southern Nevada.

Survey. Results of the survey will answer Research Questions 1, 3, and 4. A survey will be developed and administered to FID clients to gather demographic information. The demographics portion of the survey tool will be designed as closely as possible to the 2013 Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey so that regional comparisons can be made whenever possible. The survey tool will be administered on June 18th, June 21st, and June 22nd, 2013 by Gina Brooksbank, Jessica Wilde, and Holly

Williams, and on June 24th to June 30th 2013 by FID staff members Muriel Dufendach and Donna Coleman. Clients attending the meal service will be asked if they would complete a survey. In an effort to reduce the possibility of duplicate surveys, clients will be asked if they have completed a survey previously. It is assumed that each client only completed one survey. The survey will be designed to address the following questions, based on FID's requests:

- Who are the clients?
- What side of town are they travelling from to get to FID?
- What is their current living situation?
- How long have they been using the program?
- How often do they use the program?
- How many are homeless versus how many are utilizing the service transitionally?
- How many want or need additional services?

Phone Interviews. Multiple phone interviews will be conducted with representatives from the City of Henderson, City of Las Vegas, Clark County, United Way, and other the non-profit agencies used to perform the benchmark study. The purpose of the interviews will be to obtain information regarding: the issues surrounding homelessness; potential funding opportunities; best practices utilized when delivering meal services; and to gather the necessary documents to conduct the program evaluation and to ultimately develop the recommendations portion of the final report.

Findings & Data Analysis

Review of Program Data

Document Review. The review indicated that the agency does not have operational policies and procedures, a comprehensive business plan, documented feeding plan, or a computerized method of guest tracking. A review of FID's 2012 budget identified inconsistencies that resulted in a deficit of approximately \$10,000. The

Program Operations Manager contributes her personal funds to supplement the current and past deficiencies. Because the method of financial record keeping is not consistent or computerized, the source of the deficit is unknown.

Historical Data Trend Analysis. An analysis of FID’s historical data shows several trends. For example, Figure A indicates that meal service attendance has consistently increased from 2002 through 2012, and the percentage increase in FID meal attendance from 2009 to 2012 was 35%.

Figure A: Total People Served 2002 – 2012:

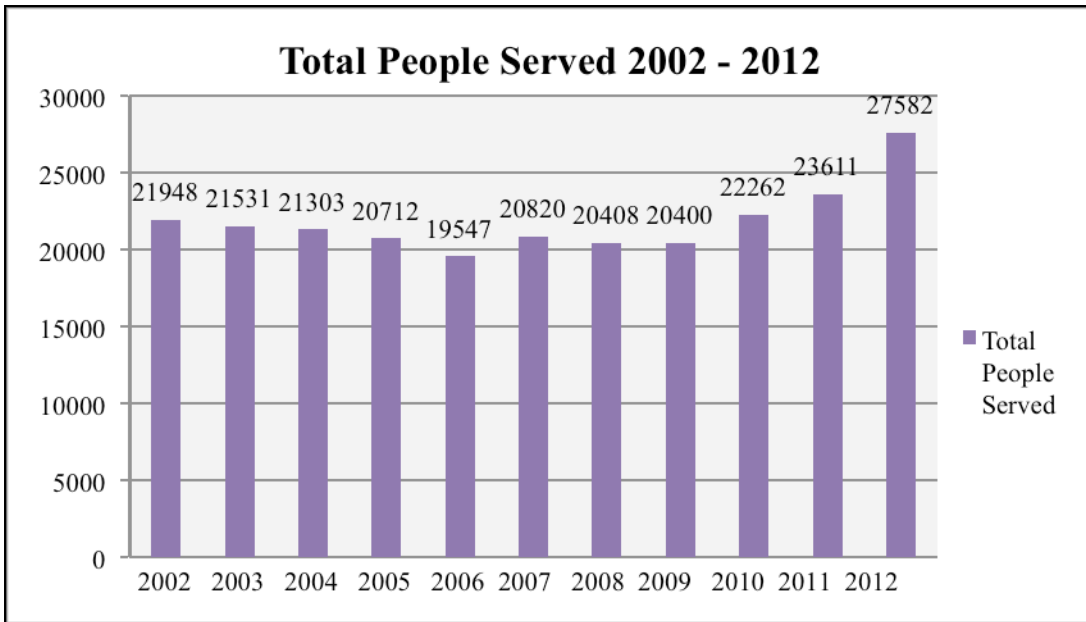


Figure A: Total People Served 2002-2012

Figure B shows that the percentage of women attending each meal service has gradually increased over the years and stood at an all-time high in 2012 at 21% (Clark County survey shows the homeless population at around 25% female in 2012).

Figure B: Gender Attendance by Percentage 2002-2012:

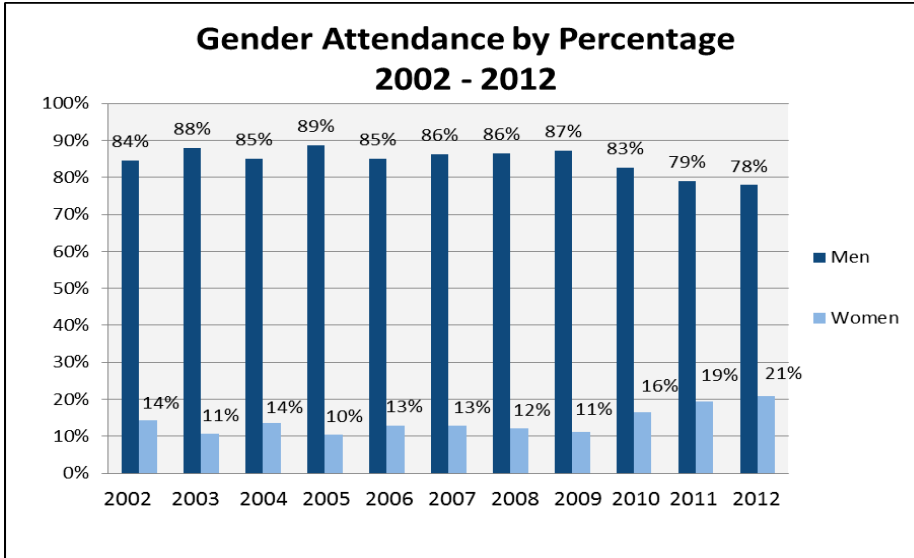


Figure B: Gender Attendance by Percentage 2002-2012

Figures C and D show that the number of volunteers serving and preparing food for each of FID’s meal services was at an all-time high in 2012 at just over 3,600 for the year. Additionally, the number of people served by each volunteer has increased from 6.4 in 2002 to 7.6 in 2012.

Figure C: Total Volunteers 2002-2012:

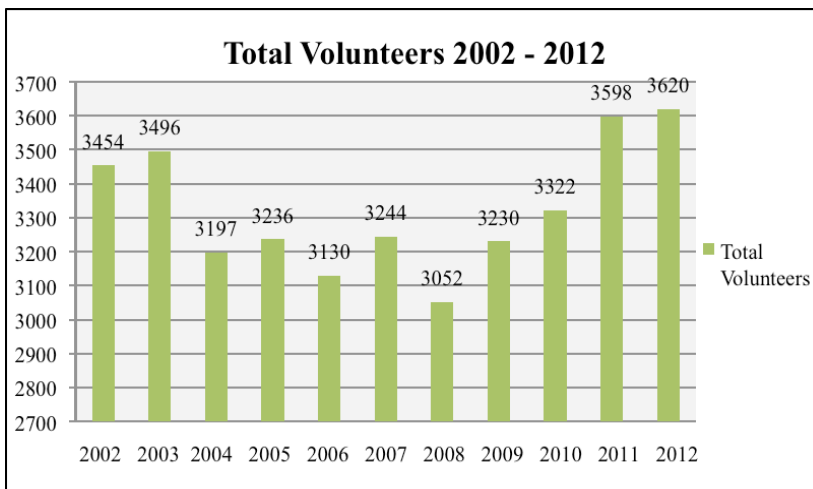


Figure C: Total Volunteers 2002-2012

Figure D: Number of FID Clients Served by Each Volunteer 2002-2012:

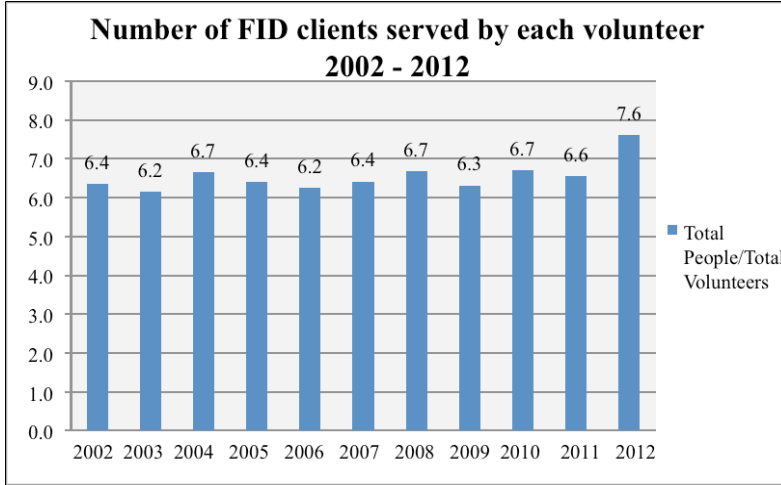


Figure D: Number of FID Clients Served by Each Volunteer 2002-2012

Figure E shows a comparison of FID’s Total People Served to the Las Vegas unemployment rate. When the unemployment rate decreased between 2002 and 2007, the number of people served also dropped. However, when the unemployment rate surged from 2008 to 2010, the number of people served did not increase at the same rate. What this figure shows us is that the total number of people served at FID did in fact increase after unemployment rates skyrocketed; it simply increased about two years after the growth in unemployment in 2008. This suggests that, when adjusted for a two-year time lag, a potential correlation exists between program usage and unemployment.

Figure E: Las Vegas Unemployment Rate/FID Total People Served 2002-2012:

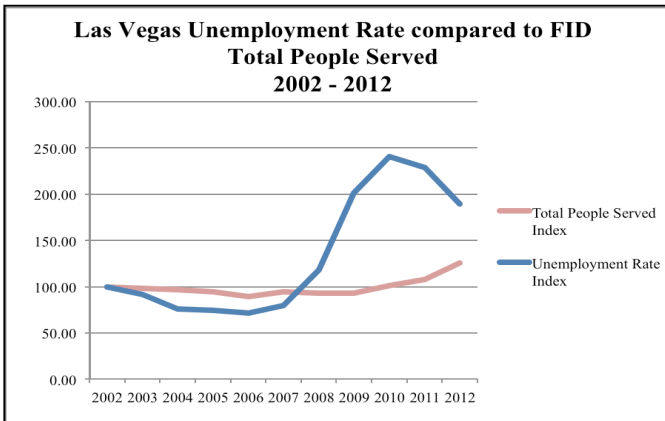


Figure E: Las Vegas Unemployment Rate/FID Total People Served 2002-2012

Benchmark findings. We received feedback from two of the largest homeless feeding programs in the Las Vegas Valley Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army. In addition, we received feedback from Christ Church Episcopal in Las Vegas. Some of the highlights, including the greatest similarities and/or differences of FID when compared to three other non-profit organizations in the Las Vegas valley, are as follows: (1) Catholic Charities, Christ Church Episcopal and Salvation Army all receive grant funding from several different sources (i.e., local, state, Federal) while FID does not; (2) Catholic Charities, Christ Church Episcopal and Salvation Army have in place a written set of documents related to their operational procedures and business plan as a tool to memorialize their program and obtain and maintain funding while FID does not; (3) Both Catholic Charities and Salvation Army collect client names prior to being able to receive a meal while both FID and Christ Church Episcopal do not; and, (4) FID serves roughly the same ratio of clients during each meal service as the three other organizations while having no paid staff members, fewer volunteers, and significantly less options for funding sources. Refer to Appendix D for a list of Benchmark Questions. The table below lists the highlights from the study.

| Agency | Meals Served/Day | Total Staff (paid & volunteer) | Receives Grant Funding (local/state/federal) | Information collected from clients | Written Operational Procedures |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| FID | 100 - 150 | 0/varies | None | None | None |
| Catholic Charities | 1000-1200 | 14/19 | Local/State/Federal | Name | x |
| Christ Church Episcopal | 100 (served 4 days per month) | 0/4 | Local/State/Federal | None | x |
| Salvation Army | 200-250 | 7/8 | Local/State/Federal | Name | x |

Figure F: Highlights from Benchmark Study

Homeless summit attendance findings. The main goal of the first annual Homeless Summit was to increase collaboration and partnership amongst local government and faith-based organizations that provide homeless programs and services. Because of the nature and complexities surrounding the issues of preventing and ending homelessness in Southern Nevada, the City of Las Vegas is asking the faith-based community to work with local government and other agencies to leverage resources. The face of homelessness is continually changing due to high levels of unemployment and foreclosures. Homelessness is a community-wide challenge that cannot be tackled easily. Local governments recognize how critical it is to include the faith-based community in regional efforts to prevent and end homelessness. The “It takes a village” concept was used to illustrate the need for increased partnership, collaboration, and communication amongst all agencies. Organizations were encouraged to partner with other organizations such as FID that are already offering meal services in controlled settings. Feeding people in a controlled environment reduces health and safety issues as well as the number of complaints received from surrounding businesses or residents regarding pan handling, loitering, etc. The City of Las Vegas wants to encourage agencies such as FID to mentor other agencies and continually spread the word about the importance of feeding in a controlled environment (Tara Ulmer, May 2013 & City of Las Vegas Homeless Summit, May 2013). Delivering meal services in a controlled environment is considered to be the “gold standard,” and FID is recognized for its efficiency.

Survey findings. A total of 106 surveys were collected. The results of the survey indicate that the demographic profile closely resembles that of the 2013 Southern Nevada Homeless Census. 70% of the clients utilizing the program are currently homeless, and

the majority of program participants are white males. The largest distribution of users is between the ages of 51 to 60, and 35% are attending meal services 5-6 days per week. 89% of the clients reported that they are unemployed, and 31% reported that they currently live on the “streets.”

Additional survey highlights:

- Demographic profile
 - a. Homeless by gender: 75.3% of the homeless survey participants were identified as male, and 24.7% were identified as female.
 - b. Homeless by age range: 31.5% of the participants were between 51 to 60 years of age, 31.5% were between 41-50 years of age, and 17.8% were between 31 to 40 years of age.
 - c. Homeless by race/ethnicity: The survey results indicate: a larger percentage of White/Caucasian participants (+18.3%); a larger percentage of Hispanic/Latino participants (+3.7%); and a smaller percentage of Black/African American participants (-22.4%) than the Clark County survey (top three categories).
- Total meals eaten: 78.1% of the survey participants reported eating 1 to 2 meals per day total (including the meal they eat at FID).
- Miles traveled to program: 57.0% of survey participants traveled less than 5 miles to the program the day they were surveyed.
- Wants job assistance/recently unemployed: 22.4% of the survey participants who wanted job assistance have been unemployed for 0-1 years.
- Own residence/recently unemployed: 13.6% of the survey participants that live in their own residence have been unemployed for the last 0-1 year.
- Nighttime residence: 31.4% of the survey participants reported that their nighttime residence was the street, 21.6% in their own residence, and 11.8% in a camp or with a family or friend (top three categories).

Refer to Appendices B and C for the complete set of survey questions and full report of the findings.

Recommendations

The recommendations were created using: self-reported program data and document review; FID board member interviews; benchmark study results; observations from the homelessness summit attendance; survey tool findings; and information obtained from multiple government and non-profit phone interviews. The section highlights four major recommendations, which include: increase inter-agency collaboration and partnership; develop a comprehensive business plan; apply for grant funding; and utilize the survey tool to improve strategic decision-making, increase inter-agency partnership, and secure additional funding. The following table lists each recommendation, which is followed by a justification and strategies to help accomplish each goal.

Recommendations

| |
|---|
| <p>1. Increase Inter-Agency Collaboration and Partnership</p> |
| <p><u>Justification:</u> The issues surrounding homelessness is a regional problem that has profound impacts on all agencies and the entire community. The Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) oversees all of the regional homelessness efforts and initiatives. There are multiple agencies and organizations currently working together to prevent and end homelessness in Clark County made up of: government; homeless service providers; non-profit organizations; and faith-based organizations. By working together to leverage scarce resources, agencies can maximize efficiency and effectiveness and decrease the incidences of duplication of programs and services. The coordination of community services is imperative to achieving the regional goal. Networking with other agencies and professionals is also an efficient way to help smaller agencies access resources that they would not otherwise be eligible for or aware of. Smaller agencies that partner with larger agencies increase their chances of eligibility for different types of grant funding. Because there are challenges associated with managing grant money once it is received, it is often more difficult for smaller agencies than the actual process of obtaining grant funding; therefore, the larger agency can act as a “fiscal agent.” In addition, by creating and maintaining working relationships with similar organizations in the valley: FID gains the opportunity to learn about other programs and services; share best practices; learn how government partnerships can improve their program; and expand their volunteer base.</p> |

Strategies:

- a. Increase partnership and stay connected with the City of Henderson, which has access to information about: current trends in homelessness; grant opportunities; upcoming meetings; and plays a vital role in the execution of the regional plan by contributing money and other resources.
- b. Actively partner with agencies in the valley to obtain valuable information and learn from their experiences. Increase partnership and stay connected with Clark County, the City of Las Vegas, and other non-profit agencies by attending yearly Homeless Summits. (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).
- c. Schedule meetings with other non-profits to tour their facilities and learn about the programs and services they provide. Identify ways to partner with them to increase number of referrals between agencies, expand the volunteer base, or to combine existing programs and/or services.
- d. Access the Help Hope Home website on a regular basis, which provides information about regional planning efforts, success stories, and upcoming events and meetings (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).
- e. Access the 2010 Regional Plan to End Homelessness (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).
- f. Attend Mainstream Basic Training, which is "...a collection of workshops geared towards social workers, case managers, and the public to educate/inform the community about the various services available for the low-income or homeless individuals and families in Southern Nevada (Tara Ulmer, 2013)." (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).
- g. Increase program name recognition. Many of the government and non-profit agencies interviewed during the program evaluation were not aware of who "Friends in the Desert" is or what services are provided. The program is most commonly known as the St. Tim's or St. Timothy's Program and the connection to the name "FID" is rarely made.
- h. Access the 2013 Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey Report (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).
- i. Retain an up-to-date copy of the Homeless Resource Sheet (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).
- j. Attend the 2013 Fall Project Homeless Connect at Cashman Center (November 19, 2013) (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).
- k. Attend or watch Committee on Homelessness Meetings on a regular basis. Second Thursday at 2:00 pm at the Clark County Government Center Commission Chambers (<http://www.helphopehome.org/>).

2. Develop a Comprehensive Business Plan

Justification:

What started out as a grass-roots effort to feed the hungry and disadvantaged at the back door of the church has grown into an operation that requires long-term strategic planning and consistent funding sources to maintain. The development and implementation of a business plan is needed to: memorialize program operations; improve program tracking and record keeping; secure funding; and enhance the overall efficiency of program. In

order to successfully develop and implement a business plan, the board must come to an agreement on the scope and future direction of the program. The needs of individuals utilizing this type of program have changed dramatically over the years. Clearly defined and consistent business practices and program tracking are paramount to the future success of the program. Until there is a solid business plan in place, it is not recommended that additional programs or services be added at this time. One important component of the business plan is to establish a more comprehensive method of guest tracking, which will not only enhance the current feeding model but will also increase FID's chances of securing additional funding. Additional information to consider collecting will depend largely on the specific eligibility requirements of the sought after funding streams. For example, two of the agencies researched in the benchmark study collect client names as a source of documentation, which has not negatively affected their client base, nor resulted in turning away potential clients. A primary reason for this is to allow their clients to provide a fictitious name, or sign with an "X," if the client prefers to remain anonymous. There are some grant funds that are allocated to faith-based agencies because the programs' clients reside in a certain geographic area. In this case, it may be necessary to collect addresses. In this circumstance, having a physical address not only allows clients to obtain needed documentation and referral to other services that can greatly improve their current situation, but can also increase FID's chances of eligibility for obtaining certain types of grant funding. For example, there is a local church in Henderson that is currently receiving Community Development Block Grant (CDGB), "area benefits," and is only collecting client addresses. The survey results indicate that 57% of the participants reported that they traveled 0-5 miles to get to the program on the day they were surveyed, which may place them into the geographic location eligible for area benefits.

Strategies:

- a. Recruit someone to develop a business plan. Three possible strategies for developing a business plan include: recruiting an experienced volunteer or university student; hiring a consultant; or utilizing the existing board volunteers or staff.
- b. Increase board cohesion and direction by participating in board team-building exercises. Three possible strategies for enhancing board synergy and team-building include: recruiting a university student to facilitate board team-building exercises; hiring a consultant; or utilizing existing board members, volunteers, or staff.
- c. Determine what types of client information will be collected and why.
- d. Prepare and maintain accurate financial spreadsheets that clearly and accurately represent FID's financial position. Save invoices and receipts to provide documentation for every transaction that occurs within the organization.

3. Apply for Grant Funding

Justification:

Securing grant funding will help FID stabilize their funding sources, which increases the likelihood of adding to and supplementing existing programs and services. Three major types of grant opportunities that were identified in the program evaluation process include: City of Henderson Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) “Area Benefits”; Clark County Outside Agency Grants (OAG); and United Way Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP) funds. The City of Henderson conducts grant workshops on a regular basis to assist agencies with the grant application process. Outside Agency Grants (OAG) are administered by Clark County to agencies that “provide a substantial benefit needed by disadvantaged citizens to increase their self-sufficiency, and personal independence, programs or events that foster community pride or cohesiveness, and/or facilities or projects that strengthen the community’s infrastructure (Sandra Villatoro, 2013 & Clark County Website, 2013).” EFSP funds are available to non-profit agencies that are currently providing feeding programs. The local United Way allocates the funds based on the agency’s capacity to provide programs and services. Eligibility requirements include collecting a small amount of client information on a daily basis and the ability to maintain accurate records of how the money was disbursed. Agencies who receive the funding are required to collect the total number of clients and the total units of service (meals served) per day. Because the information requirements for certain types of grant funding vary so greatly, it is imperative that the decision on, “what information should be collected,” is made strategically to ensure the greatest chances of success.

Strategies:

- a. Contact the City of Henderson Neighborhood Services Division to discuss eligibility for CDBG funding.
 1. Attend City of Henderson Grant Workshop and inquire about “area benefits.” Note: if the collection of client addresses is required, ask if verified cross street information be used to satisfy this requirement.
 2. Ask for a copy of the Sample City of Henderson CDGB Required Documents
- b. Contact the United Way to discuss eligibility for EFSP funding.
 1. Contact person: Debbie Harpster
 2. Title: Community Development Manager, United Way
 3. Phone: 892-2365, or email: debbieH@UWSN.org
- c. Contact Clark County Community Resources Management Division for eligibility requirements for Outside Agency Grants.
 1. Ask for a copy of the Sample Application Instructions and Guidelines for Clark County Outside Agency Grants FY 2012/2013.
- d. Partner with larger agencies to apply for grant funding (larger agency can act as “fiscal agent”).
- e. Register with Grants.gov. Directions for joining the site are available from the page itself and are easy to follow. There should be an allotted amount of time daily/weekly spent researching grants and applying for them. Goals can be set to incentivize applying for grants, i.e. “We will apply for three grants per week.”

- f. Access http://www.helphome.org/our_progress_fundraising.html and click on glossary of homeless terms and commonly used acronyms, which is a helpful way to learn some of the “jargon” used in the homeless service provider community.

4. Utilize the Survey Tool to Improve Strategic Decision Making, Increase Inter-Agency Partnership, and Secure Additional Funding

Justification:

The information obtained from the survey contributes to a better understanding of how often and how long clients have been using the program, and how far clients are traveling to attend the program. Applying the survey tool to enhance strategic decision-making capacity increases the opportunity to secure additional funding by showing the program’s measurable outputs. This information is instrumental when fundraising, soliciting donors, and obtaining grant funding. The results of the survey can be instrumental in performing a gap analysis, which would compare the currently offered programs and services against those that are critically needed. The survey results indicate that 54.7%% of the clients would like FID to offer additional services. Even though 53.8% of the clients have been using the program for more than one year, many of the clients are unaware of services beyond the food program that FID currently offers. Knowing this information helps FID develop the strategies to provide client education and increase client awareness of existing services offered. The tool can also be applied to identify and partner with existing non-profit agencies currently providing the services that clients are requesting of FID. Establishing partnerships with surrounding agencies is a more holistic strategy that helps reduce the possibility of providing duplicate services. When should new services be added? Is a partner agency already providing the service? Is the agency meeting the level of need identified? If not, there may be a need for additional programs and services. If so, then a referral to a partner agency may be more appropriate. Lastly, the survey tool can be revised and expanded to include more in-depth questions to help a future researcher capture the information necessary to determine the program’s impact on the client’s current living situation, i.e. program “outcomes.”

Strategies:

- a. Partner with existing agencies to maximize service delivery and minimize duplication of programs and services.
- b. Use data from the survey to solicit potential donors, apply for grant funding, and solicit long-term funding opportunities.
- c. Create table tents or notice boards in dining area that explain services.
- d. Before the meal services, provide brief introduction to the program and use an announcement of services offered. Each week, a particular service could be highlighted.
- e. Partner with the UNLV MPA Program in order to be considered as a future program evaluation project so that a new project team can revise the existing survey tool.
- f. Partner with UNLV MPA Program to administer and analyze the survey tool on a semi-regular basis. This may be a great project for the quantitative analysis or research design class.

Conclusions

It is evident from the evaluation undertaken that FID has in some ways become a victim of its own success, especially as demand for services has grown considerably over the duration of a long-lasting economic downturn which impacted the Las Vegas Valley harder than most areas of the United States. What is evident is that FID's operations have grown organically and have not been managed as effectively had the growth been planned for.

It can be seen that as FID has grown, the level of complexity of its operations has placed organizational demands that were neither anticipated nor accounted for. This is not a criticism of FID: with organizational growth comes complexity, which can prove a challenge to any organization.

There can be little argument that homelessness is a highly complex issue and that many organizations seek to support those in such need. It is also clear that many service providers act in isolation, leading to the potential for excess support of some needs and the lack of support for other key services.

It is considered significant that, on a regional basis, the need for a coordinated approach to addressing the problems of the homeless has been recognized. Such an approach, organized through the annual Homeless Summit, has the potential to help with a number of pressing problems, principally with coordinating the delivery of unique and complementary services and through sharing best practices across a range of service providers.

What is clear from the research is that complex national, regional, and local economic conditions all contribute to the growth in the homeless population. Despite

challenges caused by a prolonged economic downturn, the willingness of community based organizations to work hard to provide support to the homeless continues unabated, even with many of them having to undertake unfamiliar operations. With an effective coordinating agency in the form of the Homeless Summit, it is reasonable to expect that agencies such as FID can deliver an even greater level of community support as they can borrow from the expertise of other services providers and share their own.

Limitations & Future Direction

There are three major limitations associated with the project team's research: time and resources; the availability and use of self-reported historical data provided by the agency; and the absence of comparable data from previous studies. Additional time and resources would allow: further research; the development of a more comprehensive survey tool; and administration of a greater number of surveys. The historical data provided by the agency was helpful in creating an understanding of program growth over time; however, the data could not be independently verified because of the handwritten method of the collection, which increases the potential for error and bias (selective memory) over time.

The survey tool was created to establish a baseline method of data collection that could be utilized to substantiate trends over a long period of time. However, because this was the first use of this tool, the project team lacked any data for comparison purposes. Additional in-depth research is needed to fully determine how this program impacts the individuals and families using it and what services are required to better serve this population of clients over time. In the future, questions such as why FID clients are homeless; how the program improves the client's current situation; and why program

attendance fluctuates seasonally could be explored further, perhaps in separate surveys.

Administering the current survey tool on a regular basis throughout the year may increase the likelihood of identifying some the factors attributed to program use fluctuation.

Assembling a more robust survey design and adding a focus group to help answer more complex research questions pertaining to program “outcomes” could improve the research methodology.

The survey tool may be used as a basis for future research projects and studies, and the outcomes of this evaluation may be extended to meet the growing and changing needs of the organization.

References

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Clark County Unemployment Data, 2002 through 2012.

City of las vegas homeless services . (n.d.). Retrieved from

<http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/information/22762.htm>

City of Las Vegas, Homeless Summit attendance. East Las Vegas Community Center.

May 22, 2013. 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Friends in the Desert Foundation, Inc. 2013. Retrieved from

<http://www.friendsinthedesert.com/>

McCarty, Colleen, Investigative Reporter, Channel 8 News. “Dozens Turn Out Daily for a Free Meal,” May 7, 2013. Retrieved from

<http://www.8newsnow.com/story/22183909/i-team>

Phone interview with Debbie Harpster. United Way, Community Development Manager.

August 7, 2013.

Phone interview with John Barry. Christ Church Episcopal. July 9, 2013.

Phone interview with Kandice Miller. Catholic Charities Manager, Lied Dining Hall. July 12, 2013.

Phone interview. Salvation Army. July 8, 2013 and July 15, 2013.

Phone interview with Sandra Villatoro. Clark County Community Resources Management Division. Grants Coordinator. August 1, 2013.

Phone interview with Stacey Maneilly. City of Henderson Neighborhood Services Division. Housing Specialist II. August 1, 2013.

Phone interview with Tara Ulmer. City of Las Vegas Parks, Recreation and

Neighborhood Services Department. Homelessness Specialist. May 8, 2013.

Regional Plan to End Homelessness. 2006. Retrieved from

http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/files/Homes_for_Homeless_Nevadans_Plan.pdf

Sample “Application Instructions and Guidelines for Clark County Outside Agency

Grants FY/2013” retrieved from Sandra Villatoro and

http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/depts/admin_services/comresmgmt/Pages/ZoomGrants.aspx.

Sample “Clark County Outside Agency Grant Application” retrieved from Sanda

Villatoro.

Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey. Comprehensive Report. 2011.

Retrieved from http://www.helphopehome.org/2013-Southern_Nevada_Census-FINAL-FULL.pdf

Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey. Comprehensive Report. 2013.

Retrieved from http://www.helphopehome.org/2013-Southern_Nevada_Census-FINAL-FULL.pdf

Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC), Committee on Homeless

Meeting attendance. Clark County Government Center. Council Chambers. May 9, 2013, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

United States Department of Health and Human Services. Administering & Managing

Child Welfare Agencies & Programs (resource for program development and management). Retrieved from

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/administration/>

United States Department of Urban Housing and Development. Annual Homeless

Assessment Report. 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.hudhdx.info/>

Appendices

1. Appendix A: Blank Survey Tool
2. Appendix B: Survey Results (Questions 1-14)
3. Appendix C: Survey Results Additional Services (Question 15)
4. Appendix D: Benchmark Study Questions

Appendix A: Survey Tool



Friends In The Desert
Friends Helping friends

Date:
Survey #:
Staff Name:

Guest Survey *(updated 6/16/13)*

Survey Tool:

- This survey was developed by UNLV graduate students pursuing their master's degree in Public Administration in June of 2013.
- It is strongly recommended that the survey is administered face-to-face, by a FID staff member.
- It is important that the person delivering the survey does so in an objective manner and that it is filled out completely to ensure the integrity of the data.

Read to each participant prior to administration:

- This survey was created by a group of UNLV students.
- The purpose of the survey is to help our staff learn more about our guests and to help us improve our program.
- This information is confidential, and will **not** be used to identify you.
- The results of this survey will be used for program improvement and for future fundraising efforts.
- Your participation is great appreciated. Thank you.

Survey Questions:

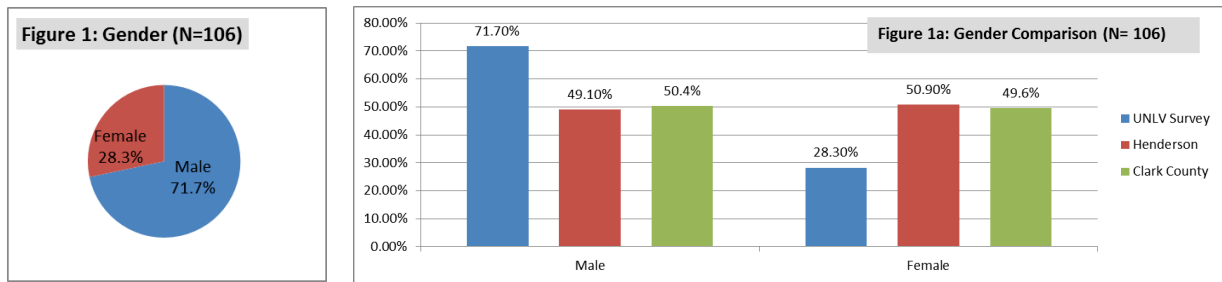
1. What is your gender? ___ Male ___ Female ___ Other _____
2. How old are you? _____
3. Are you a United States Veteran? ___ Yes _____ (What branch) ___ No
4. What race/ethnicity best describes you? ___ American Indian or Alaska Native ___ Asian/Pacific Islander ___ Black/African American ___ Latino/Hispanic ___ White/Caucasian
___ Multiple Ethnicity/Other (specify) _____
5. Are you currently homeless? ___ Yes ___ No
6. Where will you be sleeping tonight?
___ Street ___ Vehicle ___ Camp ___ Park ___ Family/ Friend ___ Homeless shelter
___ Motel/Hotel ___ Don't know ___ Own residence ___ Other (specify) _____
7. Are you currently employed? ___ Yes ___ No _____ (Last Date of Employment)
8. Do you want help getting a job? ___ Yes ___ No
9. How did you get here today? Walked ___ Drove ___ Bicycle ___ Dropped off ___ Bus ___ Taxi cab ___ Other (specify) _____
10. How far did you travel to come here today? ___ 0-5 Miles ___ 6-10 Miles ___ 11-15 Miles ___ 16-20 Miles ___ 21-25 Miles ___ 26+ Miles ___ Don't know
11. Please name the major cross streets you traveled from to get here?

12. How often do you eat at St. Timothy's church? ___ First time ___ 1-2 Days/week
___ 3-4 Days/week ___ 5-6 Days/week
13. How many meals do you eat "TOTAL," per day? ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 or more
14. How long have you been using the program?
___ 0-6 Months ___ 7-11 Months ___ 1-3 Years ___ 4-6 Years ___ 7-9 Years ___ 10+ Years
15. What additional services would you like to see us offer?

Appendix B: Survey Results (Questions 1-14)

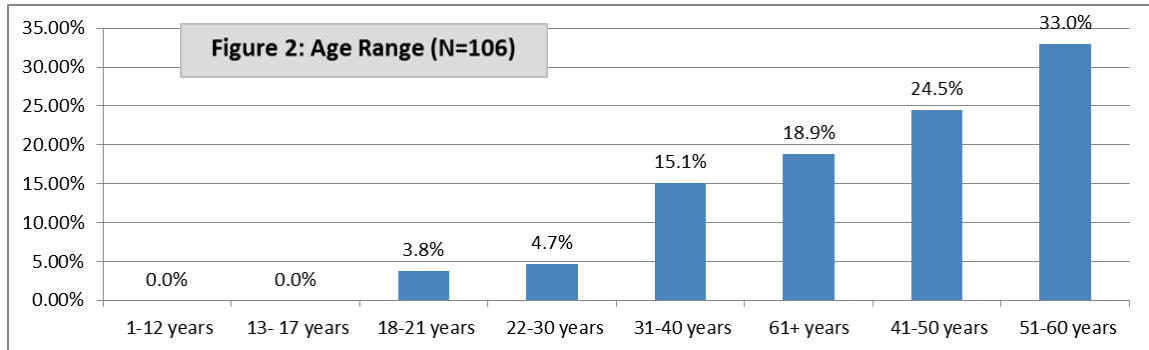
- The figure number corresponds with the survey question, with the exception of figure 16.
- A total of 106 surveys were collected.
- There are a total of 15 survey questions, and N represents the number of valid responses for each question.

Figure 1: Gender & Figure 1a: Gender Comparison:



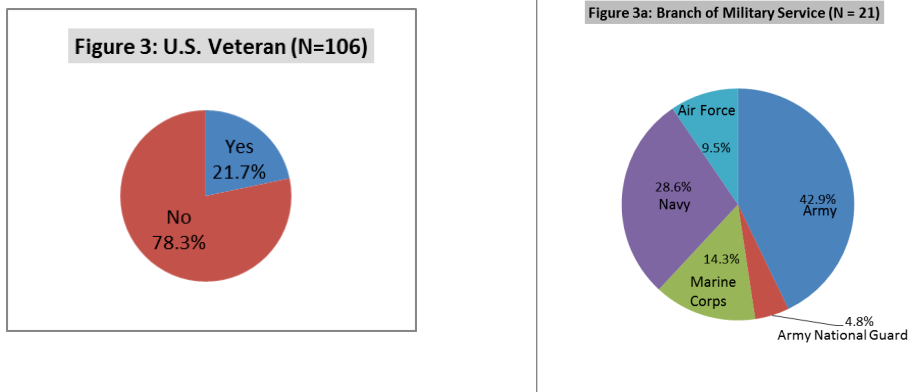
- 71.7% of the survey participants were identified as male, and 28.3% were identified as female.

Figure 2: Age Range:



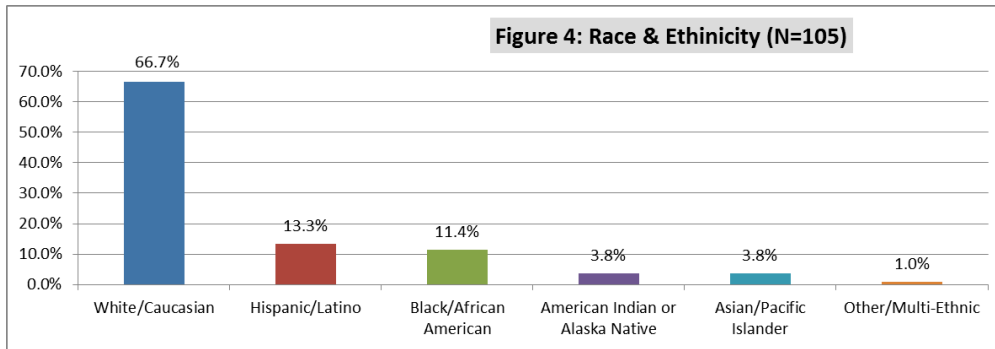
- Age: 57.6% of the survey participants reported that they were between the ages of 41-60 years of age.

Figure 3: United States Veterans & Figure 3a: Branch of Military Service:



- 21.7% of the survey participants reported that they were United States Veterans. 42.9% of the of veterans reported that they served in the United States Army.

Figure 4: Race/Ethnicity:



- 66.7% of the survey participants identified their racial/ethnic group as White/Caucasian, 13.3% as Hispanic/Latino, and 11.4% Black/African American (*three largest categories*).

Figure 4a: Race/Ethnicity Comparison:

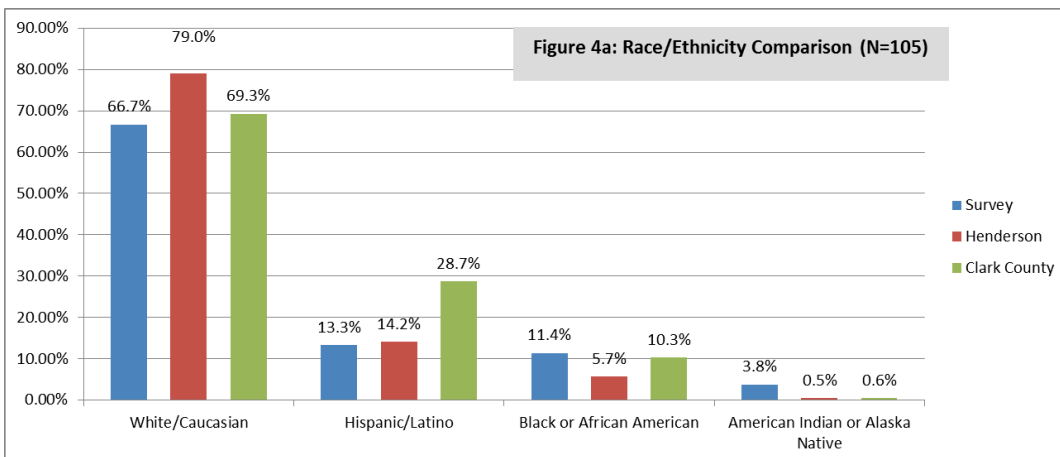


Figure 5: Currently Homeless:

- 69.5% of the survey participants reported that they were currently homeless, and 30.5% reported that they were not currently homeless.

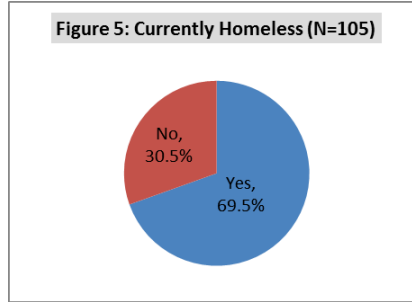
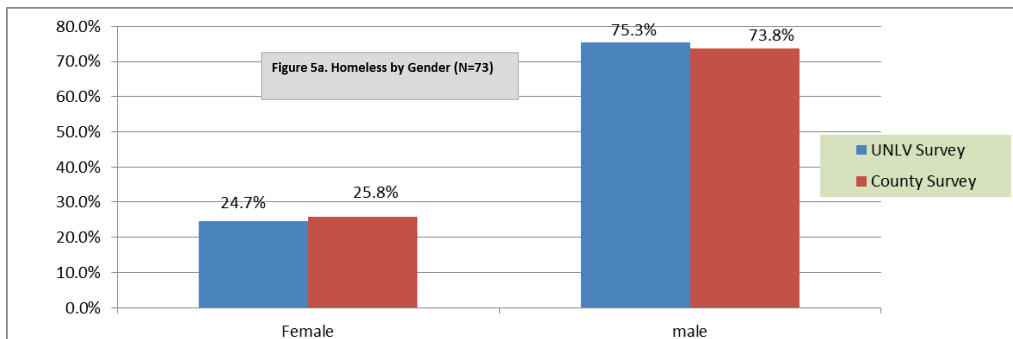
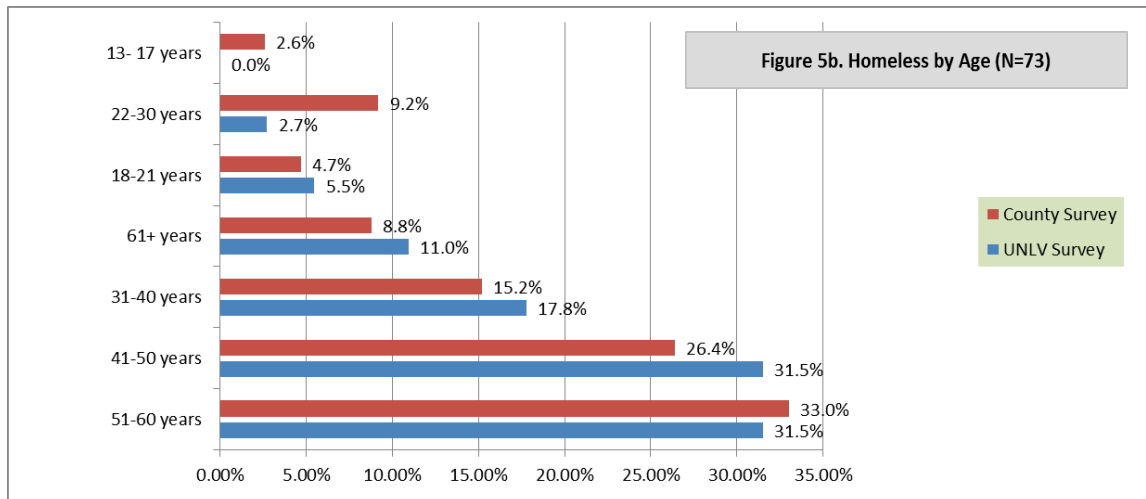


Figure 5a: Homeless by Gender:



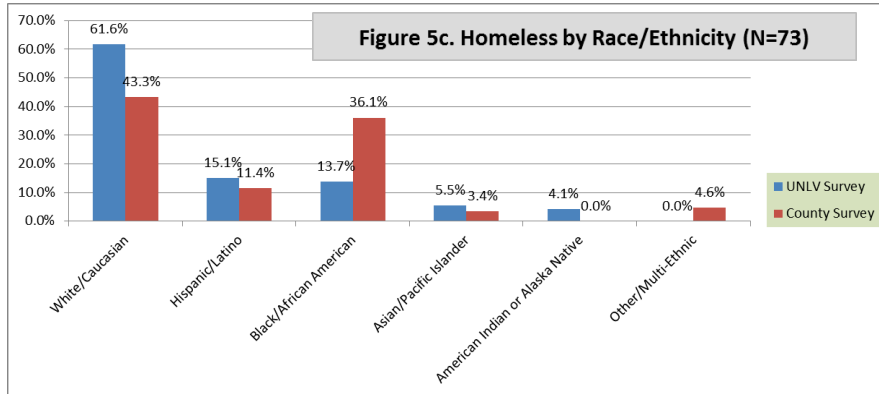
- 75.3% of the homeless survey participants were identified as male, and 24.7% were identified as female.

Figure 5b: Homeless by Age:



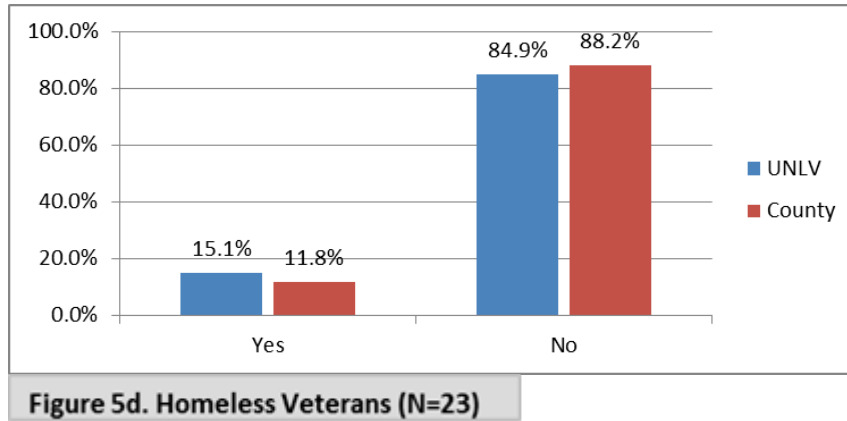
- 31.5% of the participants were between 51 to 60 years of age, 31.5% were between 41-50 years of age, and 17.8% were between 31 to 40 years of age.

Figure 5c: Homeless by Race/Ethnicity:



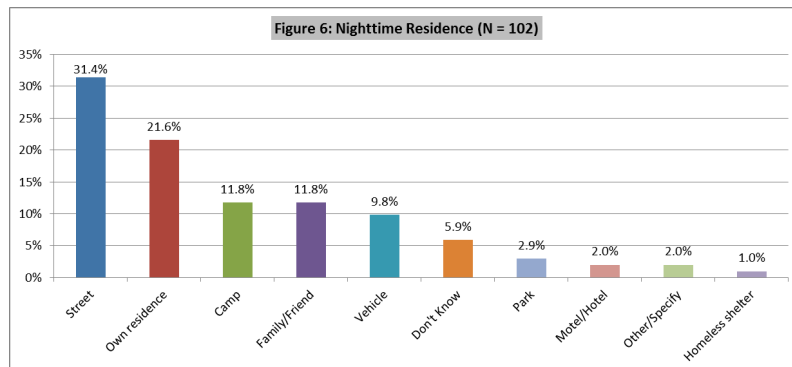
- The survey results indicate: a larger percentage of White/Caucasian participants (+18.3%); a larger percentage of Hispanic/Latino participants (+3.7%); and a smaller percentage of Black/African American participants (-22.4%) than the Clark County survey (top three categories). Refer to Figure 4a. for Race/Ethnicity Comparison.

Figure 5d: Homeless Veterans:



- 15.1% of the survey participants reported that they are homeless veterans, which is 3.3% more than the county survey.

Figure 6: Nighttime Residence:



- 31.4% of the survey participants reported that their nighttime residence was the street, 21.6% in their own residence, and 11.8% in a camp or with a family or friend (top three categories).

Figure 7: Currently Employed:

- 11.3% of the survey participants reported that they were employed, and 86.5% reported that they were not currently employed.

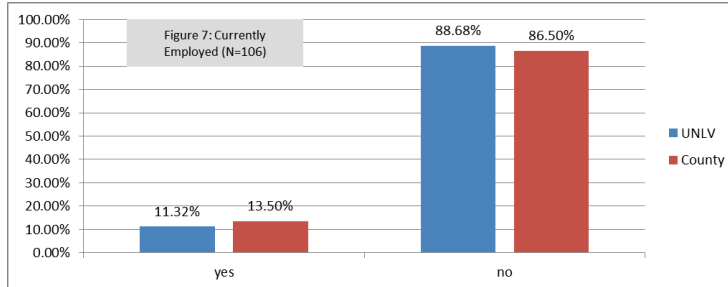
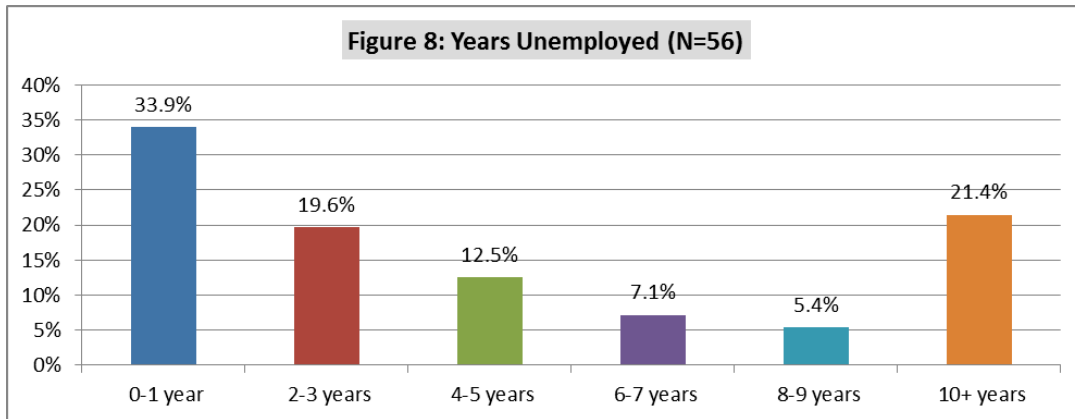
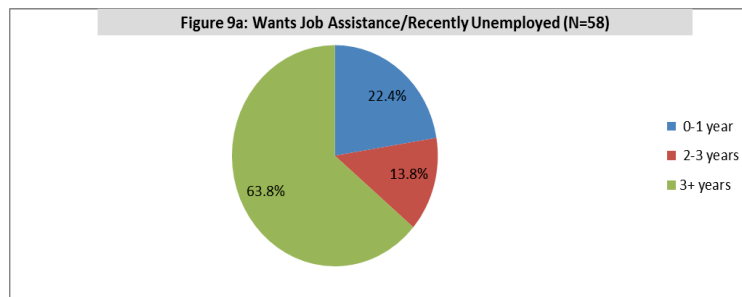
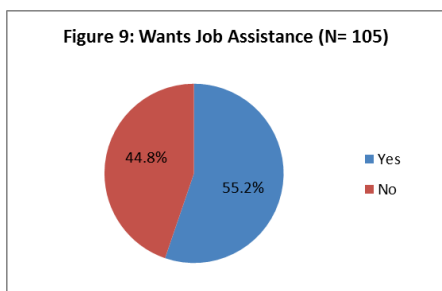


Figure 8: Years Unemployed:



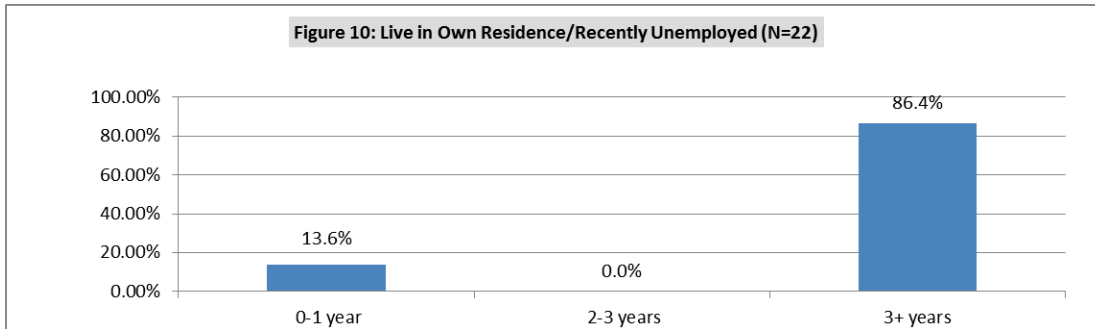
- 33.9% of the survey participants reported that they have been unemployed for less than one year; while 53.6% of the survey participants reported that they have been unemployed for less than 3 years (top two categories).

Figure 9: Wants Job Assistance & Figure 9a: Wants Job Assistance/Recently Unemployed:



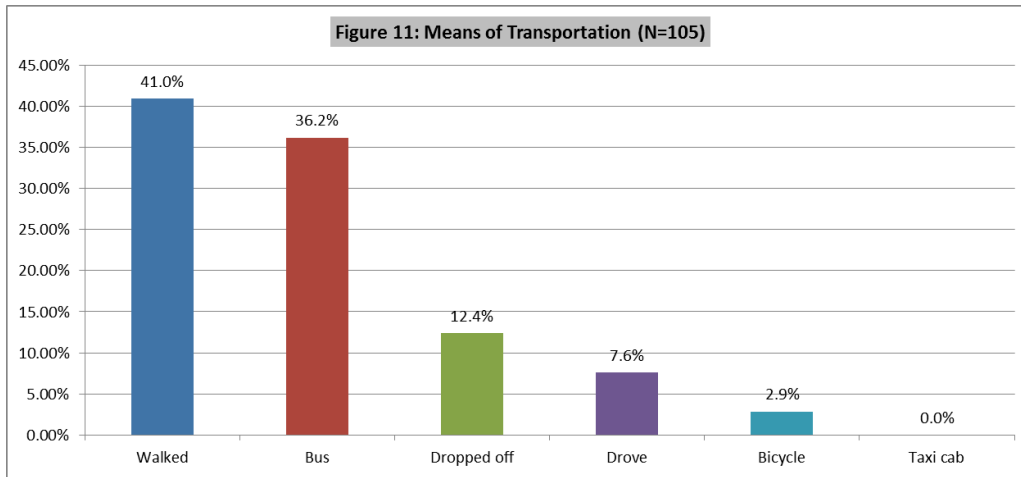
- 55.2% of the survey participants reported that they want job assistance, and 44.8% did not.
 - 22.4% of the survey participants who wanted job assistance have been unemployed for less than 1 year, 13.79% who wanted job assistance have been unemployed for 2-3 years, and 36.2% who wanted job assistance have been unemployed for less than 3 years (top three categories).

Figure 10: Lives in Own Residence/Recently Unemployed:



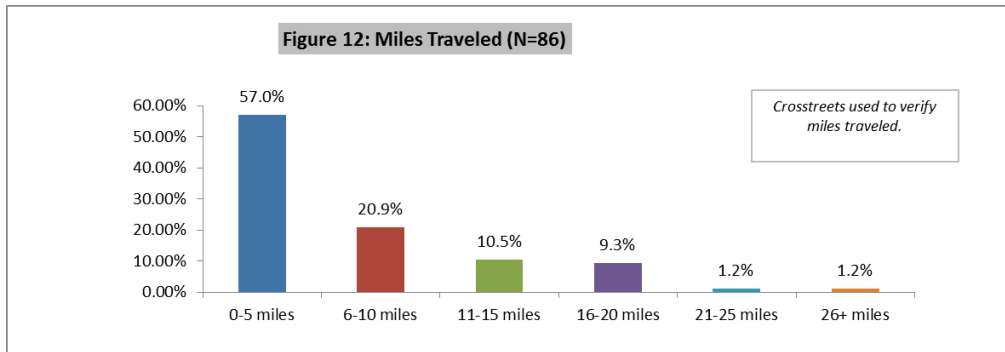
- 13.6% of the survey participants live in their own residence and have been unemployed for the last 0-1 year, and 86.4% have been unemployed for three years or more.

Figure 11: Means of Transportation:



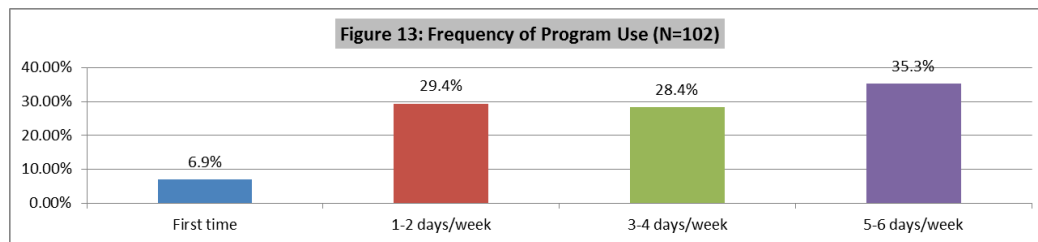
- 41.0% of the survey participants reported that they walked to the program, 36.2% ride the bus, and 12.4% were dropped off (top three categories). 80.0% walked, rode the bus, or rode a bicycle to the program.

Figure 12: Miles Traveled to Program:



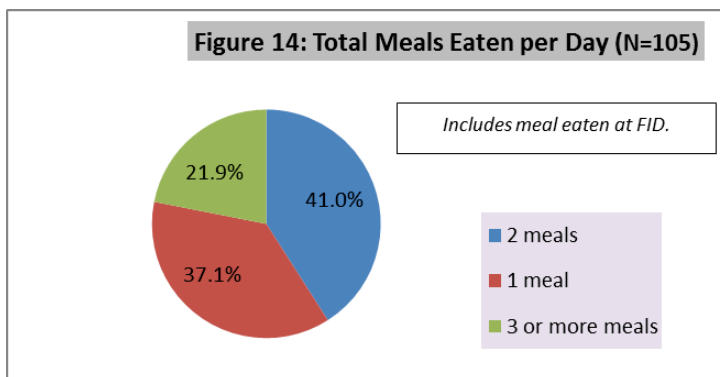
- 77.9% of survey participants traveled less than 10 miles to the program the day they were surveyed.

Figure 13: Frequency of Use:



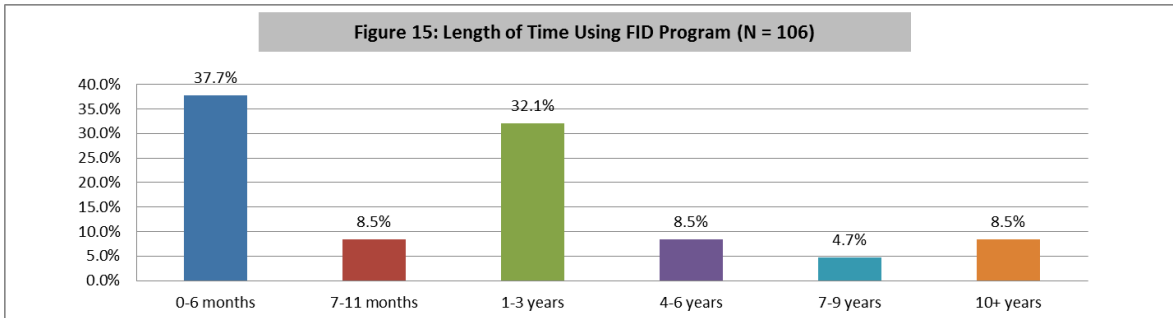
- 35.3% of the survey participants are using the program 5-6 days per week.

Figure 14: Total Meals Eaten per Day:



- 78.1% of the survey participants reported eating 1 to 2 meals per day total (including the meal they eat at FID).

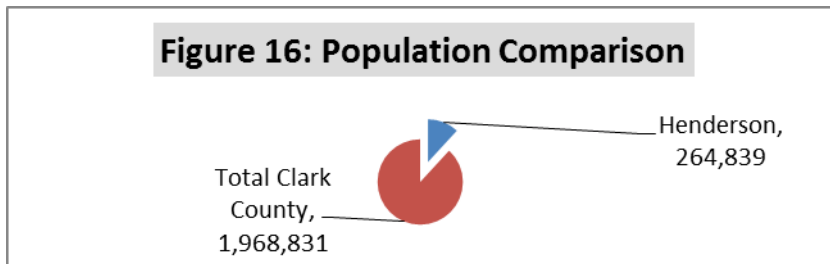
Figure 15: Length of Time Using Program:



- 46.2 % of the survey participants have been using the program for less than 1 year; while 78.3% of survey participants have been using the program for three years or less.

Figure 16: Population Comparison:

- Additional services requested by survey participants are categorized into: transportation; housing assistance; job assistance; hygiene products/services; medical services; miscellaneous; and other comments/feedback. Refer to Appendix J for further details.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Appendix C: Survey Results (Question 15)
Additional Services**

Additional Services Requested:

Additional services and comments were categorized into: transportation; housing assistance; job assistance; hygiene products/services; medical services; and miscellaneous services/comments. 54.7% of the clients surveyed would like FID to offer additional services (N=58). The top three additional services requested were bus passes, medical services offered on a consistent basis, and job assistance.

| Top Three Additional Services Requested (N=58) | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <u>Percentage</u> | <u>Service Requested</u> |
| 22.4% | Bus Passes |
| 22.0% | Consistent Medical Services |
| 12.1% | Job Services |

All Additional Services Requested:

| |
|---|
| <p><u>Transportation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus passes • Reduced bus pass rate for disabled • Bus passes are not a good idea because people lie and abuse the service; bus passes are okay for people who have medical appointments. |
| <p><u>Housing Assistance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 8 housing assistance • Housing assistance to keep people out of the heat • Safe place to sleep • Shelter assistance • Housing assistance for families with kids • Provide overnight homeless shelters for two to three days |
| <p><u>Job Assistance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job assistance services |

| |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job bank/employment opportunities • Offer trade schooling |
| <p><u>Hygiene Products/Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haircuts • Shower facilities • Personal hygiene/toiletries • Feminine hygiene • Q-tips |
| <p><u>Medical Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental/vision/hearing services • Blood screenings • Medicaid/Medicare assistance • Veterinary services for pets • Mental health services • Podiatry services • Offer medical exams • Provide more help finding medical care for people with disabilities • Help with medications/prescriptions |
| <p><u>Miscellaneous</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to phone • Aid with applying for disability • Bigger portions of food • Blankets and camp equipment • FID staff that can help monitor the line waiting to go inside and eat • Client is not familiar with other services offered; only knows about the food program. • Clothing and shoes • Communication assistance so that he can contact loved ones • Create and distribute a booklet containing all services offered from all agencies. • Disabled services • Get rid of the people who don't need to come here. Client used to work at Friends in the Desert. • Provide information on paid market research • Kids events/feeding kids • Mail services • Provide more clothes that can be given to friends • More clothes for kids • Meals without red meat such as chicken, fish, and turkey. • Offer more help with social security benefits and veteran's benefits. • Place to wait inside before meals/line monitoring • Want to be able to save seats for friends (my security blankets); I come to see my |

| |
|--|
| friends. |
| <u>Other Comments/Feedback</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Already have a lot of services• Do a good job.• Doing a great job already.• Do a very good job.• Okay so far, have only been using services for a short time. |

Appendix D: Benchmark Study Questions

1. How long has your feeding program been in place?
2. How many meals are served each day?
3. How many days per week are meals served?
4. Do you ask for demographic data from your clients before they can use your services? For example, name, DOB, etc...
5. Number of paid staff members?
6. Number of volunteer staff members?
7. Who can receive the meals (men, women, and children)? Any restrictions?
8. Other services offered?
9. How do you receive your food? For example, through food banks, donations, grocery store donations, individual volunteer donations, organization volunteer donations, church groups, staff donations etc...
10. How do you receive your funding? For example, grant money (local, Federal), donations, non-profit, etc...
11. What types of business plans, procedures, or processes do you have in place? For example, SOP's, Budget, Mission, Vision, Feeding Plan, etc...
12. Any suggestions for FID?