



Executive Summary

This community needs assessment reviews the indicators of need for Orleans and Genesee Counties and its low-income residents, as well as the strengths and resources in place to support these residents. It includes both quantitative data collected through surveys and meetings with CAOG staff and board members and qualitative data using data from a variety of sources including both national Census data and state and local sources. This assessment provides an overview of the CAOG and its programs and an overview of the areas served, incorporating detailed demographics, an economic profile, and the most up-to-date data available regarding poverty, employment, education, housing, homelessness, early childhood, health, nutrition, food insecurity, and other community and social services need indicators. This report also includes information regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the community's response efforts. The data presented, combined with CAOG's community engagement and ongoing partnerships as well as information regarding community resources, provides the basis for continued analysis of community needs and key findings.

Identified Needs

The community assessment found the greatest needs and concerns in the following areas:

- There is a lack of affordable and accessible childcare that meets the need of households in Orleans and Genesee Counties, especially for employed essential workers beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There is a lack of health care providers in both Orleans and Genesee counties (i.e. hospitals).
- The agency can play a larger role in addressing Health Related Social Needs to improve health literacy, reduce healthcare costs, and improve health outcomes.
- There is an increased need to coordinate efforts among providers to address food insecurities in Orleans and Genesee counties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There is an increased need to assist households with the delivery of food and household items or transportation to resources with food and household items, who have limited or no other means to assist in obtaining resources to address food insecurities.
- Orleans County is considered to be a “food desert” where there are little to no nutritional food options available (i.e. fast-food restaurants available with limited healthy, nutritional options to choose from).
- Low-income residents of Orleans and Genesee Counties lack financial literacy skills to manage their resources.
- The CAOG services may not be accessible to remote areas of the counties served by CAOG, especially if there is no available transportation.
- Low-income residents lack funds outside of their monthly income to pay for some items such as vehicle maintenance, house repairs, utilities, household (including pet food), and hygiene items.



- Orleans County dropout rates are high which correlates to lower income and risk of poverty.
- Public transportation is limited to route based services.
- There is limited available housing stock, and most homes are aging and in need of costly repair.
- Places to shelter and assist unhoused individuals are scarce.
- CAOG staff need to enhance their skills in specific areas such as the use of technology and fund development.
- Opioid addictions continue to take lives. Education and prevention is key.
- Orleans County continues to struggle with high teenage pregnancy rates.
- Current eligibility guidelines do not support the ALICE population.
- Community Action lacks brand recognition which impedes donations and a true community understanding of what the agency does for the community.

Recommendations

As a result of the community needs assessment, the following have been identified as recommendations:

- Continue driving the agency to breakdown silos and act as one agency providing wraparound services along with partners with the goal of helping people to become self-sufficient.
- Continue support and advocacy to ensure that working parents have access to safe and affordable daycare.
- Expand health related programs to enhance health literacy, address Social Related Health Needs, and partnership with health providers. Increase involvement with the NYHER Medicaid 1115 waiver to position the agency for potential Medicaid reimbursement. Explore acute care clinic opportunity.
- Explore additional food sources and partnerships to meet increasing demand for food. Explore avenues which may help customers grow their own food.
- Continue or expand programs which help customers to make healthy food choices.
- Pursue additional opportunities to promote financial literacy.
- Participate in partner programs to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness.
- Explore expanding the Credit Recovery program to more Orleans County schools to increase high school graduation rates.
- Invest in agency education in fund development and grant management.
- Act as a community partner in preventing unnecessary death from overdose. Become a distribution site for fentanyl and xylazine test kits, naloxone, and educational materials. Enhance partnership with UConnectCare.
- Continue and strengthen agency advocacy of increasing eligibility rates so working people in the ALICE population can access resources.

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- Increase marketing, success stories, community involvement, and relationship building to increase brand awareness and public understanding of the important role the agency serves. Focus and report outcomes.
- Seek and develop social enterprise opportunities to increase non-grant dependent revenue and increase agency stability.