

FOREWORD



Patrick Moran, President,
Greater Ottawa County
United Way

Greater Ottawa County United Way publishes a Community Assessment every five years as a way of identifying pressing and prevalent health and human service needs in the community. The Community Assessment is intended to be useful to a broad spectrum of leaders and organizations in addressing the health and human service needs in Ottawa County.

It also serves as a report to the community in general on the state of health and human service needs, and provides benchmarks from which to gauge progress. It is intended that this report, and the ongoing work of United Way, will facilitate increased community engagement around meeting the community's needs.

Greater Ottawa County United Way is committed to creating the **building blocks to a better life for all**. Our goal is to provide the necessary information to those who work to improve the quality of life for all residents of Ottawa County. We believe that **when you reach out a hand to one you influence the condition of all**. Through funding, collaborative partnerships, advocacy and mobilizing collective resources, **together we can make a difference in the lives of thousands in our communities**. Join us as we strive to **LIVE UNITED**.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Moran



Alan Vanderberg,
Ottawa County
Administrator

Ottawa County is a growing and vibrant place to live. Natural beauty and a sense of community abound in every part of the county. Greater Ottawa County United Way's Community Assessment is a vital part of the work done by the County of Ottawa and the many service providers located within our borders.

Ottawa County is faced with many challenges. The economic downturn has hit our area hard, causing many of our citizens to experience financial hardship, high foreclosure rates, food insecurity, and job challenges. But our communities are facing up to that challenge. The Ottawa County Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) is working in collaboration with United Way to create indicators that will track how we are doing in specific issues. This will allow us to see what types of programs and services are having the best effect on the issues.

The impact that our many social service agencies have on the residents of Ottawa County is impressive, and we look forward to our partners using this report to focus on the pressing and prevalent issues in Ottawa County.

Best regards,

Alan Vanderberg

Acknowledgments

To create the Community Assessment, seven “think tanks” were formed, one for each of the focus areas. The think tank members were given a huge and daunting task: Define and quantify the pressing and prevalent issues in the focus area. The think tanks gathered and analyzed all relevant data, and determined where further research was needed. They assisted in crafting the surveys that were used to flesh out the study, and refined the final copy of the Assessment. Cumulatively, the think tank members invested more than 2,000 hours into the process, as well as providing locations, back-office support and (of course) food to the participants. The amount of time, energy and resources committed was substantial, and is deeply appreciated. We thank each of the following dedicated community champions for their hard work:

Steering Committee

Patrick Moran, Greater Ottawa County United Way
Liz DeLaLuz Vanderby, Greater Ottawa County United Way
Brian Bieber, Ottawa County Health Department
Kori White-Bissot, Lakeshore Coordinating Council
Sandy Boven, Ottawa County Health Department
Larry Erlandson, Evergreen Commons
Susan Howell, CALL 2-1-1 of the Lakeshore
Jeannette Hoyer, Pathways, MI
Mark Kornelis, Ottawa County Community Action Agency
Doug Pastoor, Grand Valley Business Machines
Char Seise, City of Grand Haven
Jan Shangle, Great Start Collaborative—Ottawa
Mike VandenBurg, Formerly of Good Samaritan Ministries
Pat VerDuin, formerly of Ottawa County Juvenile Services

THINK TANKS

Access to Health Services

The Ottawa County Human Services Coordinating Council’s Access to Health Services Subcommittee

Basic Needs & Financial Stability

Char Seise, City of Grand Haven, Co-chair
Mark Kornelis, Ottawa County Community Action Agency, Co-chair
Donna Cornwell, Ottawa County Human Services Coordinating Council
Jinnifer Gibbs, MSU Extension
Linda Jacobs, Good Samaritan Ministries
Bill Raymond, Ottawa County MI Works/Community Action Agency
Peter Ruark, MI League for Human Services
Loren Snippe, Ottawa County Department of Human Services
Captain Pat Towne, The Salvation Army, Grand Haven



Children & Youth: Fostering Stable and Nurturing Environments

Jan Shangle, Great Start Collaborative—Ottawa, Chair
Sharalle Arnold, Grand Valley State University Children’s Center
Joyce Bos, Pathways, MI
Joan Meeusen, Pathways, MI
Andy Page, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holland
Craig Schotenboer, Youth for Christ
Vonnice Vanderzwaag, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Community Infrastructure

Thank you to the following municipal leaders for attending the initial meeting that set the direction for this section:

Pat VerDuin, formerly of Ottawa County Juvenile Services, Host
Alan Vanderberg, County of Ottawa, Host
James Beelen, Allendale Charter Township
Craig Bessinger, City of Ferrysburg
Bill Cargo, Grand Haven Charter Township
Mayor Donald Van Doeselaar, City of Hudsonville
Susan Howell, Call 2-1-1 of the Lakeshore
Timothy Klunder, City of Zeeland
Connie Langeland, Polkton Charter Township
Arthur Lucas, Polkton Charter Township
Patrick McGinnis, City of Grand Haven
Joanne Marcetti, Grand Haven Charter Township
Mayor Al McGeehan, City of Holland
John Nash, Spring Lake Township
Steven R. Patrick, City of Coopersville
Stuart Visser, Park Township
Todd Wolters, Olive Township

Community Support & Care Systems

Larry Erlandson, Evergreen Commons, Chair
Dina Anaya, Ottawa County Community Mental Health
Martha Cook, North Ottawa County Council on Aging
Pam Curtis, Senior Resources
Amy Florea, Senior Resources
Pam Haverdink, Georgetown Senior Center
Darcy Komejan, Children's Advocacy Center
Sindee Maxwell, American Red Cross
Gail Ringelberg, North Ottawa County Council on Aging
Ruth Stegeman, Lakeshore Disability Network
Charlie VanderBroek, Resthaven
Linda VanOpynen, ARC Advocacy Resource Center
Jo Verbeek, Evergreen Commons



Diversity, Equality & Cultural Competency

Mike VandenBerg, formerly of Good Samaritan Ministries, Co-chair
Jeanette Hoyer, Pathways, MI, Co-chair
Ortencia Bos, Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance
Wayne Coleman, Learning Enhancement Achievement Program
Gail Harrison, Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance
Ron James, Antioch Christian Center
Roberto Jara, Latin Americans United for Progress
Eleanor Lopez, Holland Hospital
Beatriz Mancilla, Office of Congressman Pete Hoekstra
Janie Briones, City of Holland
DJ Peck, Haworth
Ana L. Ramirez-Saenz, La Fuente Consulting
Marjorie Rosario, Good Samaritan Ministries
Melissa Villarreal, Hope College
Marvin Younger, Community Member



Healthy Lifestyles

Brian Bieber, formerly Ottawa County Health Department, Co-chair
Sandra Boven, Ottawa County Health Department, Co-chair
Kelley Adkin, Zeeland Community Hospital
Randy Boss, Ottawa-Kent Insurance
Dixie Dreyer, Visser Family YMCA
Jodi Goglin, Holland Hospital
Marcia Knol, Ottawa County Health Department
Kim Kooyers, Ottawa County Health Department
Leigh Moerdyke, Pathways, MI
Lisa Uganski, Ottawa County Health Department
Barb VerCande, Holland Hospital
Becky Young, Ottawa County Health Department

And to our production team:

Louann Werksma, Wordwerks Communications
Sheila B. Warners Design
Flo Predko, Concepts...Graphic Design
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Youth Advisory Council

Tri-Cities Area United Fund Advisory Committee

Holland / Zeeland Community Foundation

Coopersville Area Community Foundation

Greater Ottawa County United Way

Technical Assistance

The Community Research Institute (CRI) at Grand Valley State University's Johnson Center for Philanthropy provided the research segments of the Community Assessment.

Our thanks go to these organizations, without whom Greater Ottawa County United Way would not be able to create and maintain the Community Assessment.

For content, technical or media questions:

Liz DeLaLuz Vanderby, Director of
Community Impact

or

Patrick Moran, President

616-396-7811

Assessment Format

The 2008 Community Assessment is reported in seven **focus areas**:

Access to Health Services

Basic Needs & Financial Stability

Children & Youth: Fostering Stable and
Nurturing Environments

Community Infrastructure

Community Support & Care Systems

Diversity, Equality & Cultural Competency

Healthy Lifestyles



METHODOLOGY

The Community Assessment creates a snapshot of community needs by gathering new data, analyzing current data, and through collaboration with experts in Think Tanks. In total more than 75 Ottawa County professionals provided technical assistance and expertise in this assessment.

The Community Research Institute (CRI) of Grand Valley State University's Johnson School of Philanthropy provided the research arm of the assessment, facilitating surveys and analysis with United Way think tanks.

Greater Ottawa County United Way began the process by recruiting a Community Assessment Steering Committee (CASC) from leaders and experts in many areas of Health & Human Services in Ottawa County, and by gaining support from The Ottawa County Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC), Great Start Collaborative (GSC) and local community foundations, including Holland/Zeeland, Grand Haven Area, and Coopersville Area Foundations.

A Key Informant survey began the process, surveying almost 100 local community leaders regarding Ottawa County's needs. From this initial survey the seven focus areas came to the surface. Greater Ottawa County United Way then recruited leaders from the CASC for Think Tanks in each area to delve deeper into the focus areas. These leaders then recruited think tank members who were experts in the areas that comprised the focus area.

These think tanks, with assistance from CRI, compiled and analyzed all current data, researching issue areas and finding places where more data and current data were needed. Out of these think tanks, additional survey questions were created, leading to a comprehensive 2008 Ottawa County Household Needs Survey conducted by CRI.

Think tanks then finalized data-driven reports in each area, resulting in the assessment you see before you today.

An on-line version of the assessment, including updates and additional studies, is available at www.ottawaunitedway.org.



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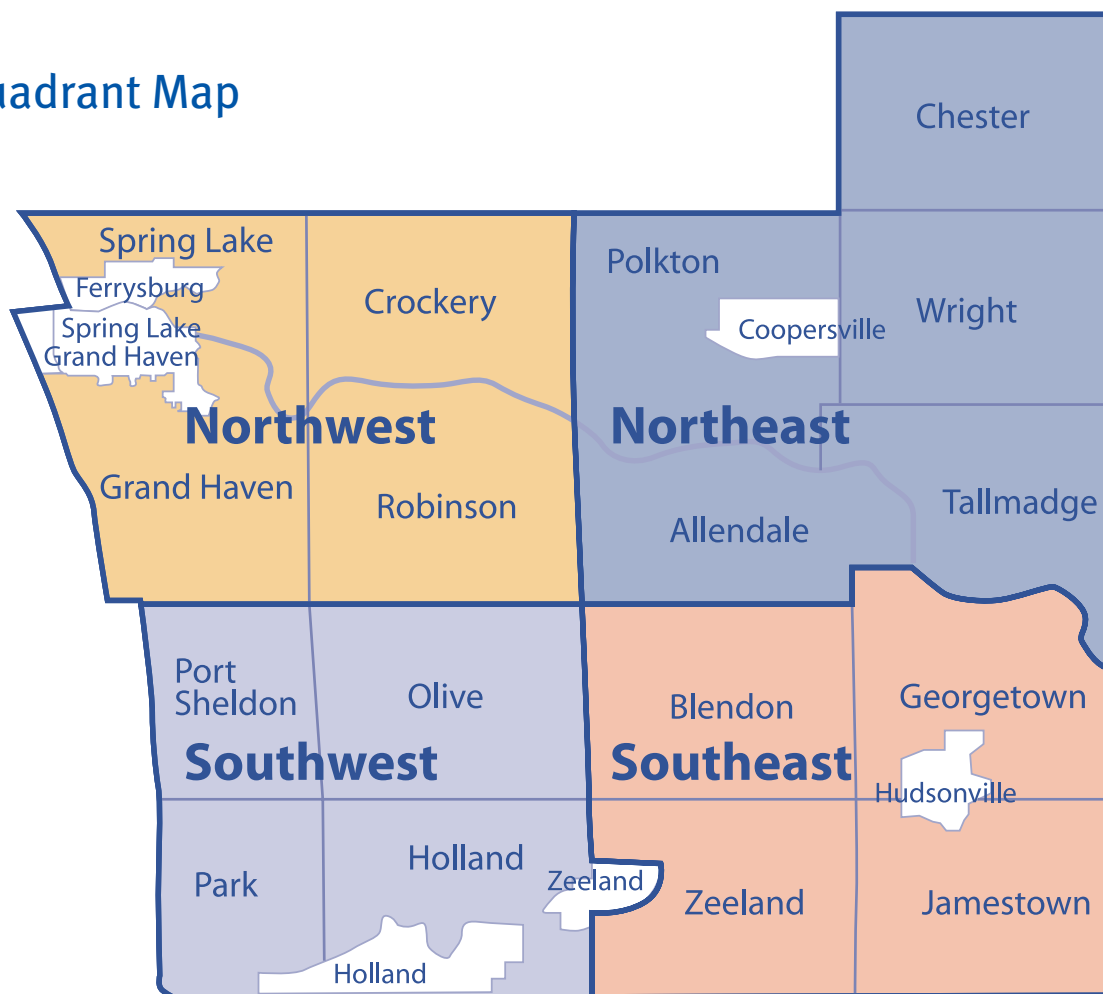
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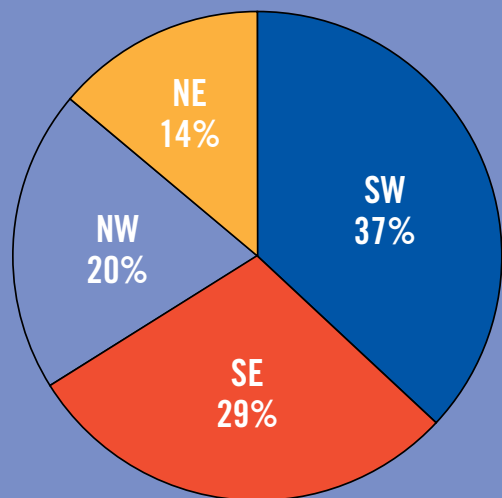
COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Quadrant Map



NOTE: Although the Ottawa County southern border ends at 32nd Street in Holland, The 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey includes all of the 49423 zip code, which encompasses portions of Allegan County.

Total Population

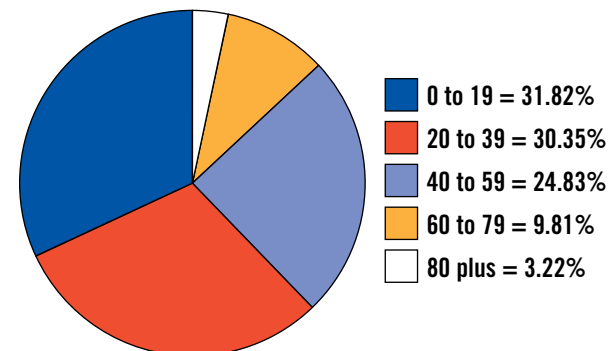


Population by Age

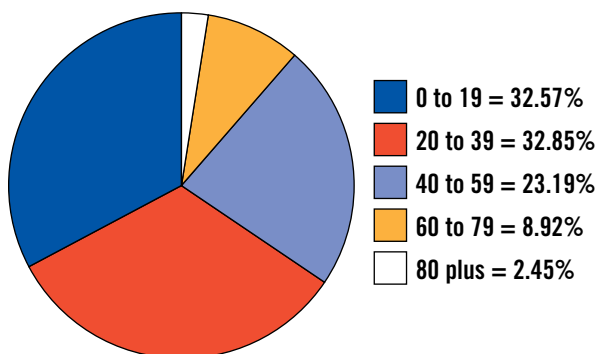
	Quadrant							
	NE		NW		SE		SW	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Population by Age Group (Percentage)								
Under 5	3.56	3.48	3.33	3.22	3.90	3.91	4.40	4.29
5 to 9	3.21	3.14	3.30	3.14	3.72	3.74	4.03	3.88
10 to 14	3.24	3.10	3.46	3.22	3.86	3.84	3.76	3.66
15 to 19	5.55	7.29	3.46	3.14	3.98	3.90	3.84	3.96
20 to 24	6.60	6.94	2.98	2.87	3.50	3.59	3.75	4.10
25 to 29	3.78	3.55	3.20	3.14	3.43	3.59	3.70	3.67
30 to 34	3.21	3.03	2.96	2.89	3.19	3.20	3.94	3.74
35 to 39	2.92	2.82	3.31	3.28	3.20	3.26	3.84	3.61
40 to 44	3.07	3.10	3.63	3.76	3.46	3.65	3.64	3.41
45 to 49	3.32	3.27	4.15	4.17	3.72	3.78	3.44	3.33
50 to 54	2.87	2.72	3.91	4.01	3.30	3.40	2.93	3.03
55 to 59	2.49	2.35	3.45	3.55	2.95	3.05	2.47	2.58
60 to 64	1.68	1.63	2.48	2.65	2.17	2.22	1.76	1.90
65 to 69	1.14	1.23	1.76	2.02	1.50	1.60	1.20	1.39
70 to 74	0.85	0.98	1.32	1.56	1.04	1.21	0.86	1.03
75 to 79	0.61	0.80	1.02	1.40	0.83	1.08	0.70	0.97
80 to 85	0.47	0.72	0.77	1.33	0.61	0.96	0.54	0.96
85 Plus	0.45	0.81	0.67	1.50	0.53	1.11	0.54	1.18



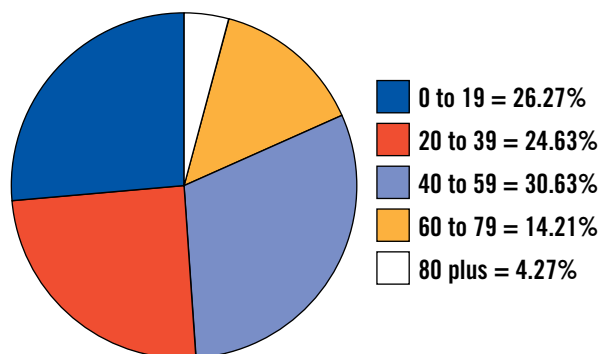
**Population by Age
SW Quadrant**



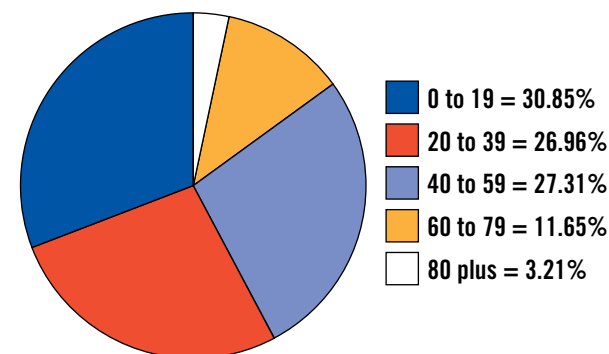
**Population by Age
NE Quadrant**



**Population by Age
NW Quadrant**



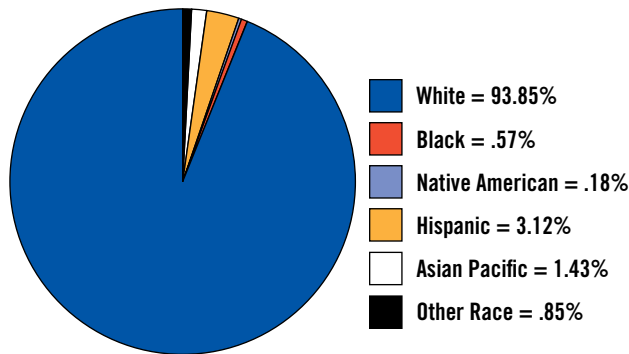
**Population by Age
SE Quadrant**



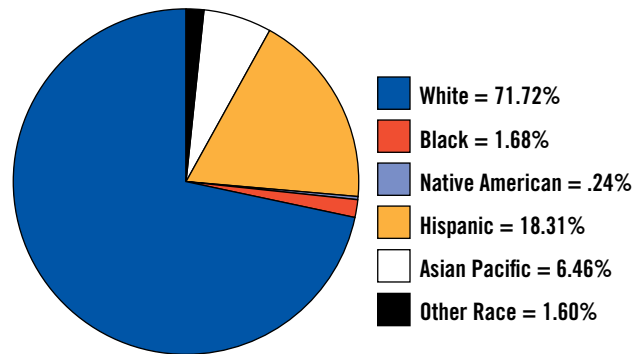
Population by Race

Demographic Data for Ottawa County by Quadrant	Quadrant			
	NE	NW	SE	SW
Total Population	37671	54812	77862	98877
Population by Race (Percentage)				
White	92.08	93.88	93.85	71.72
Black	1.68	0.36	0.57	1.68
Native American	0.38	0.44	0.18	0.24
Hispanic	3.93	3.11	3.12	18.31
Asian Pacific	0.96	1.03	1.43	6.46
Other Race	0.96	1.19	0.85	1.60
Population by Gender (Percentage)				
Male	49.01	49.15	48.90	49.34
Female	50.99	50.85	51.10	50.66

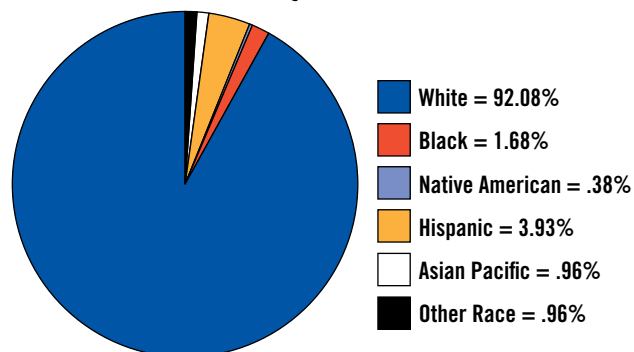
**Population by Race
SE Quadrant**



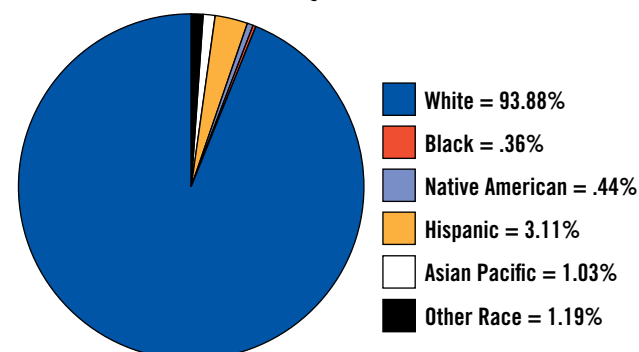
**Population by Race
SW Quadrant**



**Population by Race
NE Quadrant**



**Population by Race
NW Quadrant**



Cities, villages, townships, and unincorporated communities in Ottawa County:

Cities:

Coopersville
Ferrysburg
Grand Haven
Holland

Hudsonville
Zeeland

Villages:

Spring Lake

Townships:

Allendale Charter Township
Blendon Township
Chester Township
Crockery Township
Georgetown Charter Township
Grand Haven Charter Township
Holland Charter Township
Jamestown Charter Township
Olive Township
Park Township
Polkton Township
Port Sheldon Township
Robinson Township
Spring Lake Township
Tallmadge Charter Township
Wright Township
Zeeland Charter Township

Unincorporated:

Allendale
Beechwood
Drenthe
Eastmanville
Jenison
Marne

OAISD provides general education, career/technical education, and special education services to the following local schools and school districts within the Ottawa area:

Public K-12 School Districts

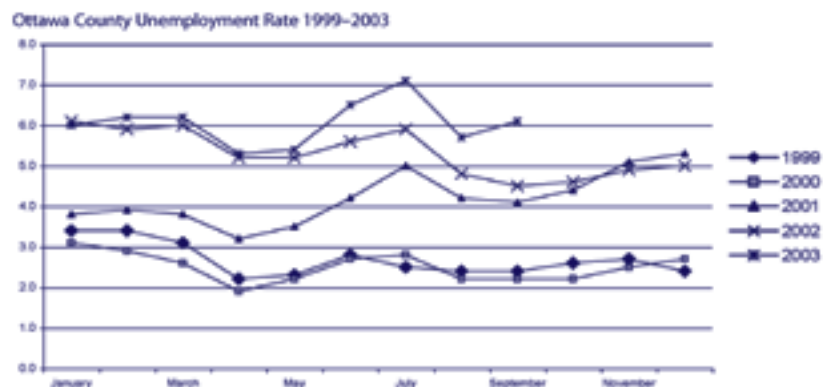
Allendale Public Schools
Coopersville Area Public Schools
Grand Haven Area Public Schools
Holland Public Schools
Hudsonville Public Schools
Jenison Public Schools
Spring Lake Public Schools
West Ottawa Public Schools
Zeeland Public Schools
Public School Academies
Black River Public School
Eagle Crest Charter Academy
Vanderbilt Charter Academy
Walden Green Montessori
Wavecrest Career Academy
West Michigan Academy of Arts and Academics

Non-Public Schools

Allendale Christian School
Beaverdam Christian School
Borculo Christian School
Calvary Schools of Holland
Corpus Christi Catholic School
Freedom Baptist Schools
Grand Haven Christian School
Grand Haven Seventh Day Adventist School
Heritage Christian School
Holland Christian Schools
Holland Seventh Day Adventist School
Hudsonville Christian Schools
Hudsonville Unity Christian
Jenison Christian School
Lakeshore Baptist Academy
Lakeside Montessori
Lamont Christian School
South Olive Christian School
St. John's Lutheran School
St. Joseph School
St. Mary's School
St. Michael's School
Zeeland Christian Schools

Employment Data for Ottawa County by Quadrant	Quadrant			
	NE	NW	SE	SW
Total Population	37671	54812	77862	98877
Number in Civilian Laborforce	19288	27546	39470	47929
Number Employed	17439	24855	37084	44045
Percent Unemployed*	9.59	9.77	6.05	8.10
Employment by Sector (Percentage)				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	4.01	0.54	2.44	1.36
Mining	0.17	0.06	0.08	0.02
Construction	7.98	5.67	6.70	4.56
Manufacturing	15.86	22.44	20.01	29.92
Wholesale Trade	4.19	2.94	6.03	3.15
Retail Trade	13.95	10.73	12.24	11.16
Transportation and warehousing	2.53	2.82	3.35	2.30
Information	1.55	1.50	1.33	1.09
Finance and insurance	3.25	3.87	3.52	2.95
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.71	1.65	1.86	1.52
Management of companies and enterprises	0.04	0.00	0.11	0.14
Administrative and waste services	2.94	2.53	2.60	3.52
Educational services	12.01	9.88	9.70	10.11
Health care and social assistance	10.32	13.51	12.19	10.68
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1.35	1.59	1.04	1.01
Accommodation and food services	6.98	5.78	4.57	5.83
Other services, except public administration	5.14	4.61	6.16	4.96
Household Incomes (Percentage)				
Under \$10,000	4.35	3.66	2.29	3.38
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.26	2.31	2.07	2.03
\$15,000 to \$24,999	7.85	7.61	6.18	7.02
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.22	9.94	5.87	7.48
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13.24	13.13	11.84	14.01
\$50,000 Plus	64.07	63.34	71.75	66.08

*NOTE: Current Ottawa County unemployment rate significantly increased versus the 2003 Community Assessment, as shown here:



Source: 2003 Community Assessment, Greater Ottawa County United Way

Employment Data



Crime Data

Crime Data for Ottawa County and State of Michigan, 2004, 2005, 2006	2006 County	2006 State	2005 County	2005 State	2004 County	2004 State
Population Served	254,770	10,095,643	237,675	10,120,860	230,746	9,938,237
Sworn Officer Count As Of 10/31/2006	N/A	19,406	N/A	19,797	N/A	20,801
Civilian Employee Count	N/A	6,726	N/A	7,089	N/A	7,636
INDEX TOTAL	5,701	379,992	5,639	367,396	5,813	356,753
Murder & Non-negligent Manslaughter	0	713	2	615	3	638
Rape (includes attempts)	171	5,344	219	5,301	185	5,516
Robbery	47	14,142	40	13,321	34	11,207
Assault - Aggravated	317	36,363	267	36,515	285	31,792
Burglary	1,038	75,389	1,054	69,742	1,051	63,425
Larceny	3,888	195,109	3,796	190,616	3,993	190,489
Motor Vehicle Theft	203	49,709	217	48,064	217	49,982
Arson	37	3,223	44	3,222	45	3,704
NON-INDEX TOTAL	19,358	655,871	17,896	648,269	17,176	641,161
Negligent Manslaughter	9	106	6	136	3	76
Assault (non-aggravated)	2,381	130,790	2,391	133,558	2,384	116,339
Forgery & Counterfeiting	167	6,204	146	7,022	118	7,421
Fraud	1,130	47,177	867	46,295	731	40,761
Embezzlement	108	3,904	96	3,963	105	4,084
Stolen Property	45	5,445	54	6,565	53	5,131
Vandalism	2,184	97,713	1,841	90,964	1,910	92,491
Weapons (carry, possession, etc)	77	5,125	84	4,623	58	4,175
Prostitution & Common Law Vice	6	1,450	2	1,833	2	1,698
Sex Offenses (except rape & prostitution)	291	9,985	305	10,215	249	10,158
Narcotic Laws	996	47,227	937	44,816	937	43,477
Gambling	0	234	1	120	0	134
Family & Children	432	7,234	365	7,338	642	7,022
Driving Under Influence Alcohol/Narcotics	1,175	49,546	1,247	50,827	1,162	49,845
Liquor Laws	993	19,233	944	18,992	935	18,919
Disorderly Conduct	1,509	45,809	1,350	46,109	1,230	65,716
All Other (includes drunkenness & vagrancy)	7,855	178,689	7,260	174,893	6,657	173,714
GRAND TOTAL	25,059	1,035,863	23,535	1,015,665	22,989	997,914

ISSUE AREAS:

- Access to Dental Health Services for Adults
- Access to Primary Care and Insurance Coverage
- Access to Mental Health Services for the Mild and Moderately Mentally Ill
- Vision/Hearing Services

THINK TANK

The Ottawa County Human Services Coordinating Council's Access to Health Services Subcommittee



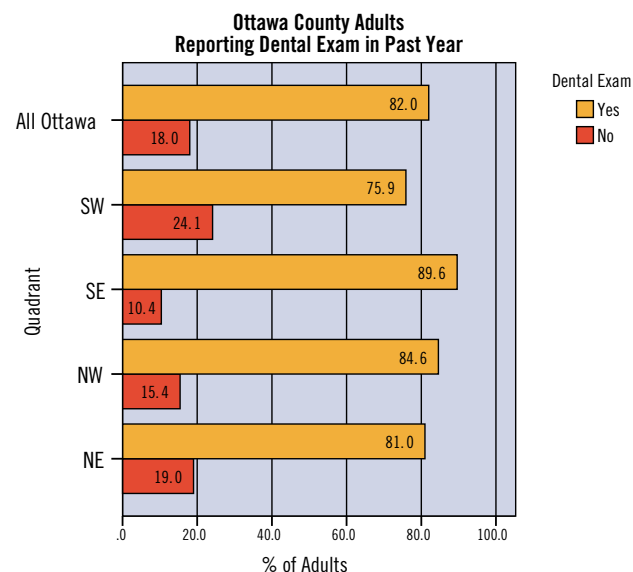
ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Access to Dental Health Services for Adults

Dental health is very important in that failure to maintain proper oral hygiene can lead to serious health complications. According to the American Dental Association, poor oral hygiene can lead to tooth loss, infection, damage to bone or nerve, and trouble eating and/or smiling. Infection from an abscessed tooth can also spread throughout the body and potentially lead to death. In spite of the importance of dental health, services meant to provide this care to everyone, including the underprivileged, are often underfunded. Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) are examples of this. Adult dental coverage is often not provided through public health programs. Even when adults do have access to dental care, they often face issues such as lack of transportation or having to miss work. Many Americans also lack the understanding of the importance of preventive measures, such as brushing, flossing, and eating a healthy diet.

The Ottawa County Household survey revealed that 18 percent of Ottawa County adults have *not* had a dental exam in the past year, with the majority of those being in the southwest quadrant (24.1 %). In contrast, dental services appear to be well used in the southeast quadrant, where only 10.4 percent of residents indicated that they had not gone to the dentist in the past year (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Figure 2 shows that those with higher income, a higher level of education, and those with a job are more likely to report having had a dental exam in the past year. Young adults (age 18–24) are less likely to access dental services on a routine basis.

Figure 2

Percentage of Ottawa County Adults Reporting Dental Exam in Past Year by Select Demographics		
Age	Yes	No
18-24	67.0	33.0
25-44	82.7	17.3
45-64	86.9	13.1
65+	78.0	22.0
Income	Yes	No
Low/Very Low Income	69.6	30.4
Middle/High Income	89.3	10.7
Education	Yes	No
High School or Less	71.9	28.1
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	82.8	17.2
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	91.7	8.3

Access to Primary Care and Insurance Coverage

For most people, health is the one make-or-break factor in leading a full and productive life. Conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart failure, arthritis, hypertension, and asthma can cause years of pain and productivity loss. Preventive care and periodic screening accessed through a primary care provider can help ward off some chronic conditions—or catch them before they cause severe damage.

Insurance Coverage

Health insurance plays a critical role in this issue. Simply put, being uninsured can have dire consequences. Nationally, uninsured people are more likely than the insured to postpone or fail to receive primary care and preventive services, to skip recommended treatments or not fill prescriptions because of cost. A high proportion of the uninsured do not have a regular source of care, and they are more likely than the insured to have costly, avoidable emergency room or hospital visits. Long-term studies indicate that, compared to insured adults, uninsured adults have a 25 percent greater risk of premature death. This mortality difference exists after social, demographic, health status, and health behavior differences are statistically removed. The Institute of Medicine estimates that 18,000 excess deaths occur each year among uninsured adults, age 25–64.

The Ottawa County Behavioral Risk Factor Study (BRFS) conducted in 2004 (Figure 3) showed that nearly 10 percent of Ottawa County residents had no healthcare coverage that year. This rate was lower than the rate of the uninsured in the State of Michigan and in the nation (Figure 4). (Michigan Department of Community Health, Special Report, July 2006).

Viewing BRFS demographically, it becomes clear that disparities exist based on socioeconomic status. Just over 26 percent of those with an income of \$20,000 or less report not having access to health insurance during the last twelve months because of the cost, while only 3.1 percent of those with an income of \$75,000 or more report the same.

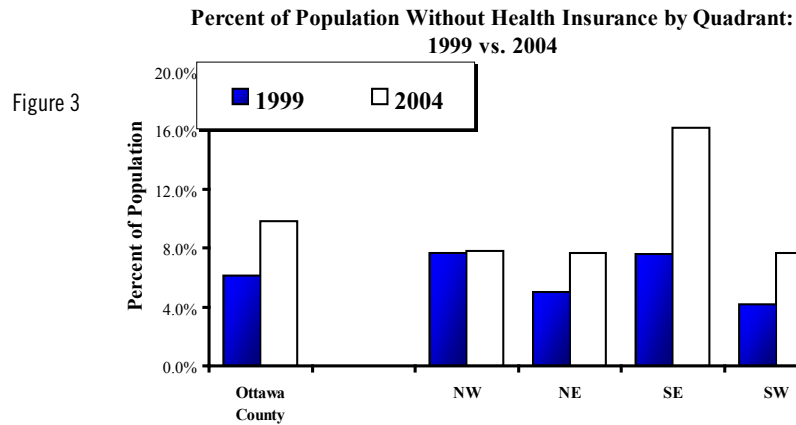
In general, the number of uninsured individuals is on the rise. According to a report published by the Michigan Department of Community Health, since 2001 the number of individuals covered by public programs in Michigan has increased and the number of individuals covered by employer-based coverage has decreased. (Michigan Department of Community Health Community Health Profile, 2006).

Employer Provided Insurance

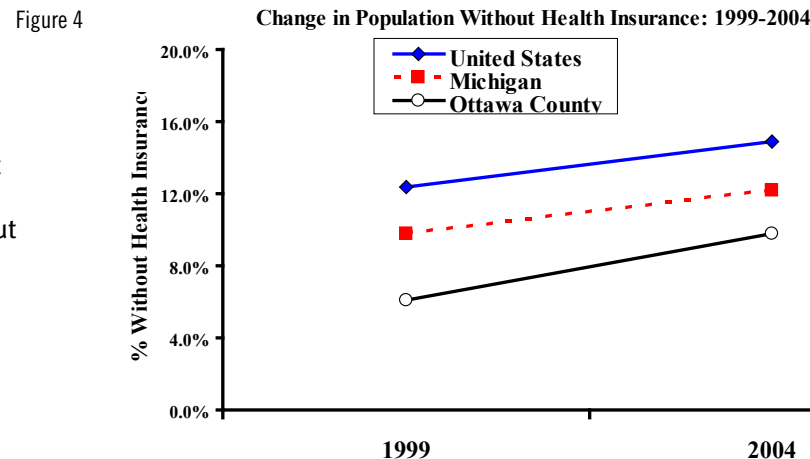
It is well known that due to cost, many employers are reducing or terminating coverage or shifting cost to employees. According to the Ottawa County Health Department, the percentage of companies offering healthcare coverage declined from 69 percent in 2000 to 60 percent in 2005.

What may not be as well known is the fact that many of the uninsured households in America have at least one individual employed full-time, but they cannot afford the health insurance options available to them. Over 80 percent of the non-elderly uninsured population lives in a household where the head of the family works. Individuals in this growing segment of the population are more likely to delay seeking care, less likely to receive preventive care, and are therefore “more likely to suffer poor health and premature death” according to an Institute of Medicine study. Further, in recent years, individuals with health insurance coverage have experienced an increase in out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare, thereby decreasing their access to affordable health services.

Household Survey results for Ottawa County show that 18.4 percent of those who are working and are satisfied with their job do not have health coverage. Just over a quarter of those working and not satisfied with their job do not have coverage. This result suggests that one of the reasons they want a better job is lack of health insurance (Figure 5).



Source: 2004 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey



Source: 1999 and 2004 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

2004 Ottawa County data are the most current available, but updated U.S. and Michigan statistics for population without health insurance are available through the U.S. Census.

Figure 5

Ottawa County Adults with Group Health Insurance Coverage through Their Own or a Family Member's Employer		
Employment Status	No Coverage	Insurance Coverage
Working and satisfied with your job	18.4%	81.6%
Working but want a better job	25.3%	74.7%
Not working but looking for a job	67.2%	32.8%
Not working and not looking for a job	41.2%	58.8%
Retired	69.1%	30.9%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Government Sponsored Insurance

In Michigan, the percentage of doctors who will see Medicaid patients fell from 88 percent in 1999 to 64 percent in 2005. Even these statistics can be misleading. Many of those doctors tightly cap how many Medicaid patients they will see or refuse to take on new Medicaid patients. At the same time, enrollment in the Medicaid program in Michigan has risen more than 50 percent, to nearly 1.6 million, since 1999. (*Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 2007). In 2005 the Michigan Public Health Institute conducted a survey titled "Michigan Household Survey on Health Insurance." Survey results bring forward one potential solution. Results show that over 90 percent of 273,000 uninsured households would be willing to pay something to participate in a government-sponsored insurance program offering basic coverage, with over 41 percent willing to pay up to \$50 per month, and an additional 30 percent willing to pay up to \$100 per month.

Inadequate Insurance Coverage

In addition to those with no insurance coverage, attention should be paid to those with inadequate insurance coverage. For example, catastrophic coverage is a low-cost alternative many employers are choosing in order to provide insurance for their employees. However, this type of insurance only provides coverage in extreme emergency situations. This means that individuals must

pay out-of-pocket for things such as doctor visits and prescription drugs. Limited coverage such as this may prevent individuals from accessing care when they need it.

An estimated 1.8 percent of Ottawa County adults were turned down for healthcare despite having insurance. Because of the small number of respondents reporting that they were turned down for healthcare, estimates further breaking down this number are highly unstable. Of this small percentage of insured Ottawa County residents turned down for healthcare, reasons were split among those who indicated that their insurance did not cover the service; those who indicated that their provider did not accept their coverage; and those who indicated they were turned down for some other, unspecified reason.

One other section of the Ottawa County Household Survey explores the issue of inadequate insurance coverage. More specifically, the survey asked respondents if there was a time in the past year when they did not have enough money to fill a prescription or get follow-up medical treatments recommended by a doctor. 8.1 percent admitted that there was a time when they did not have enough money. Results vary significantly by demographics, particularly income (Figure 6).

Health System Capacity

Another way to examine the issue of care access is by the supply of medical services available in a community. In 2005, Ottawa County's population-to-physician ratio was calculated as 1,163 : 1. Nationally this ratio is 1,500:1; however, according to national census data, we are underserved in the Greater Holland Area (census tracts 223, 224, and 225).



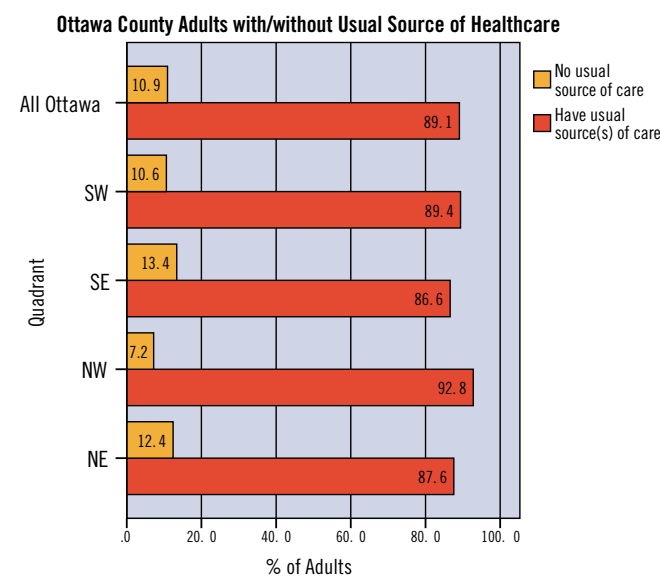
ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Figure 6

Ottawa County Adults Lacking Money in the Past 12 Months to Fill a Prescription or Follow Up on Medical Treatment by Income, Employment Status, Hispanic Origin, and Education Level		
Income Level	Yes	No
Low/Very Low Income	20.9%	79.1%
Middle/High Income	2.7%	97.3%
Employment Status		
Working and satisfied with your job	5.2%	94.8%
Working but want a better job	17.9%	82.1%
Not working but looking for a job	21.5%	78.5%
Not working and not looking for a job	14.4%	85.6%
Retired	5.8%	94.2%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	13.4%	86.6%
Non-Hispanic	7.7%	92.3%
Education Level		
High School or Less	11.6%	88.4%
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	9.1%	90.9%
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	4.4%	95.6%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Figure 7



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Figure 8

Ottawa County Adults with Usual Source of Care by Select Demographics		
Gender	Have usual source(s) of care	No usual source of care
Male	85.6	14.4
Female	92.5	7.5
Age	Have usual source(s) of care	No usual source of care
18-24	74.1	25.9
25-44	89.9	10.1
45-64	91.4	8.6
65+	91.2	8.8
Marital Status	Have usual source(s) of care	No usual source of care
Now married	91.7	8.3
Widowed	88.3	11.7
Divorced	86.4	13.6
Separated	91.4	8.6
Never married	76.5	23.5
Educational Attainment	Have usual source(s) of care	No usual source of care
High School or Less	84.0	16.0
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	93.0	7.0
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	90.4	9.6

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Figure 9

Ottawa County Adults' Source of Usual Healthcare by Quadrant						
Source of Usual Healthcare		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Doctor/HMO	Estimated #	145,728	18,890	33,050	39,106	54,683
	Estimated %	85.8	89.9	90.2	88	80.6
Emergency Room/Hospital/Urgent Care	Estimated #	9,583	**	**	**	**
	Estimated %	5.6	1.9	4.3	5.8	7.5
Other Clinic/Center/Facility	Estimated #	11,007	1,551	**	**	5,982
	Estimated %	6.5	7.4	3.9	4.6	8.8
Other/Not Sure	Estimated #	3,600	**	**	**	**
	Estimated %	2.1	0.8	1.7	1.6	3.1

Source: 2008 Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa adults 18 and older
Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are NOT significant at the $p=.05$ level.
** Due to high coefficient of variation or low unweighted counts for these cells, point estimates are considered too unstable to report. Percentage values are left in for reference but should be interpreted with caution.

Primary Care

Because having a usual source of care means individuals are more likely to receive preventive care, communities across America have sought to find ways to link individuals with primary care providers as an alternative to emergency rooms. These primary care providers serve as a “medical home” for individual patients.

Survey results from the Ottawa County Household Survey (Figure 7) show that 10.9 percent of Ottawa County residents do not have a regular place to go when they need medical care. That is equivalent to more than 20,000 people.

Another 8.4 percent said they go to more than one place. On a more encouraging note, 89.1 percent (169,707 residents) indicated that they have a usual source of care (Figure 7).

Viewing the results geographically by quadrant allows readers to see that there are considerably more individuals in the southwest and northwest quadrants without a medical home than in the southeast and northeast quadrants.

Discrepancies among subgroups are also seen when viewing the results demographically. Figure 8 shows:

- **Age.** Those in the 18–24 age group are less likely than other age groups to have a usual source of healthcare (74.1%).
- **Gender.** Over 85% of males report having their usual source of healthcare, while 92.5% of females report the same.
- **Education.** Those with a high school diploma or less are the least likely group to report having a usual source of healthcare (84%). Comparatively, 93% of individuals with some college or a 2-year degree have a medical home.
- **Marital Status.** Those who are currently married are more likely to have a usual source of health care (91.7%) than others.
- **Income & Race/Ethnicity.** When viewing results by Hispanic/Non-Hispanic and various income levels there were no significant differences among subgroups.

As we saw earlier, 89.1 percent of Ottawa County residents reported having a place that they usually go when they are sick or need advice about their health. The majority (85.8%) cited a private doctor as their source for regular care. However, 6.5 percent rely on clinics and health centers, and 5.6 percent rely on emergency rooms (Figure 9).

Routine Physical Exams

Routine physical exams are an important part of maintaining physical health. Throughout Ottawa County, 71.1 percent of adults reported having a physical exam in the past year (Figure 10). In comparison, 21 percent of the adult population in the United States reported getting a physical exam annually (Doheny, 2007).

Results vary within demographic subgroups. Figure 11 shows:

- 65.4 percent of males reported having a physical exam in the past year while 76.5 percent of females reported the same.
- Those in the 18–24 age group were the least likely to report having a physical exam in the last year (50.4%) while those in the 65+ age group were the most likely to report having a physical exam in the past year (84.2%).
- Those who were never married were the least likely to report having a physical exam in the past year (58%) while those who were separated were the most likely to report having a physical exam in the past year (82.9%).

Results from Ottawa County's Behavioral Risk Factor Survey add to the picture. The report states that 28.4 percent of those with an income of \$75,000 or higher did not receive a routine check-up in the past year, while 33 percent of those with an income of \$20,000 or less reported the same. These data show that some disparities may exist on the basis of socioeconomic status, and show that access to basic healthcare is not available to all.

When Ottawa County residents were asked why they did not have a physical checkup in the past year, 69.4 percent said the primary reason was that they did not feel sick enough to need a checkup or had not thought of getting one. This result hints at the potential for an educational campaign to make an impact (Figure 12).



Figure 10

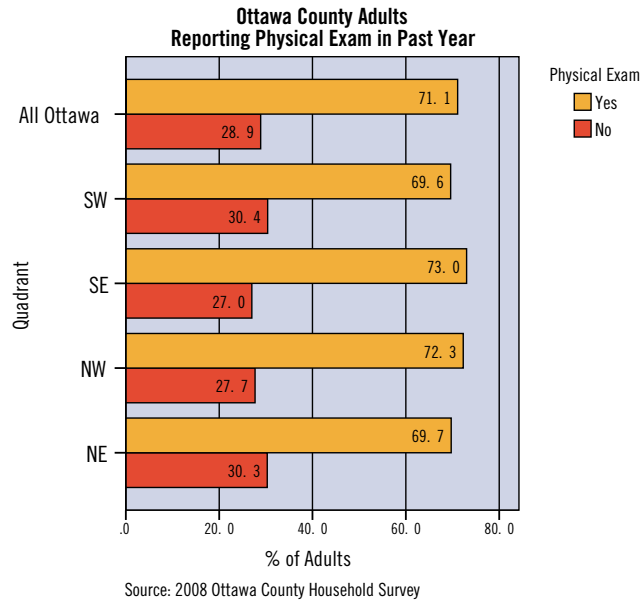


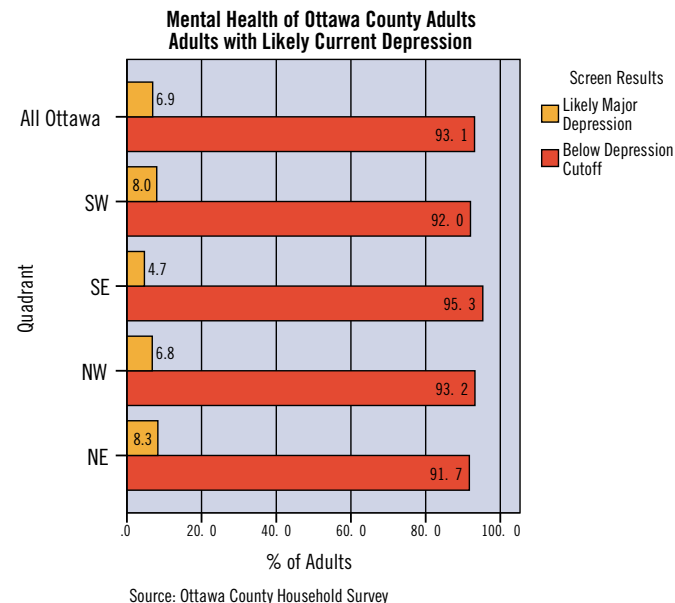
Figure 11

Ottawa County Adults Reporting Physical Exam in Past Year by Select Demographics		
Gender	Yes	No
Male	65.4	34.6
Female	76.5	23.5
Age Group	Yes	No
18-24	50.4	49.6
25-44	70.7	29.3
45-64	71.7	28.3
65+	84.2	15.8
Marital Status	Yes	No
Now married	74.1	25.9
Widowed	71.7	28.3
Divorced	60.2	39.8
Separated	82.9	17.1
Never married	58.0	42.0

Figure 12

Ottawa County Adults' Main Reasons for No Physical Checkup in Past 12 Months	
Cost or Insurance	16.9%
No Doctor, No Transportation, or Unable to Get Appointment	3.7%
Not Sick or Have Not Thought of It	69.4%
No Time	10.0%

Figure 13



Access to Mental Health Services for the Mild and Moderately Mentally Ill (including Substance Abuse)

According to the Report of the Surgeon General, about 28 percent of the adult population has either a mental or a substance abuse disorder. (Mental Health: A report of the Surgeon General, National Institute of Mental Health 1999). Of these people, only about one-third received treatment. The cost of care is the most frequently listed reason for not seeking help, with 83 percent of the uninsured and 55 percent of the privately insured giving this reason. There are more issues beyond cost in terms of combining benefits for those with both a mental illness and a substance abuse disorder. A majority of private insurance groups have benefits that combine coverage of mental illness and substance abuse disorders. Most services separate the treatment of the two, making it particularly difficult to treat those who have issues with both.

The Report of the Surgeon General also states that the problem of access to mental health services is particularly strong among racial/ethnic minorities. This is not only due to cultural differences, but also the fact that the mental health system is not designed to respond to the cultural and linguistic needs of minority groups. Minorities are also less likely to have private health insurance. As a result, they are paying for more expensive forms of insurance. (National Institute of Mental Health, 1999).

As of December 2005, Ottawa County was designated as having a mental health professional shortage by Ottawa County Health Department.

The following usage statistics have been gathered from mental health providers in Ottawa County:

Intercare/Holland (2006)

- 2,469 (approximately one-third of the patients) were uninsured
- 178 had depression, 25 were diagnosed with bipolar disorder

Holland Community Hospital Emergency Room (2006/2007)

- Approximately 1,500 ER visits had mental health as the primary diagnosis
 - 700 severely or persistently mentally ill
 - 800 mild or moderate (not Community-Mental-Health-eligible)

Catholic Charities West Michigan (adolescents only)

- In 2006/2007, there were 184 unduplicated clients
- 32 percent had a household income of less than \$10,000, 22 percent at \$10,000–\$14,000, 13 percent at \$15,000–\$24,999
- CCWM claims for Mental Health Services from 1/1/2007–5/31/2007
 - 63 percent (207 out of 326 units of service) were diagnosed with depression, anxiety, or judgment disorders

Ottawa County Jail (January–March 2007)

- Of approximately 1,800 bookings, there were 230 mental health referrals for mild to moderate mental illness
- Ottawa County Sheriffs Road Patrol had 41 contacts with mild and moderate mentally ill of Ottawa County

Community Mental Health of Ottawa County

- Of 1,086 open cases, 38 percent (417) have co-occurring mental health/substance abuse
- 65 had one or more of the following in the past three months: incarceration, homelessness, unemployment, or hospitalization for psychiatric care of substance abuse

Note: Court ordered substance abuse treatment does not cover co-occurring disorders such as depression

Overall, 93.1 percent of adults in Ottawa County were below the depression cutoff. This means that 6.9 percent of Ottawa County adults were likely to have major depression. This lines up with findings by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, which found that from 2004–2006, 7 percent of full-time workers aged 18–64 experienced a major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year (Figure 13).

Figure 14

DEPRESSION		
Employment Status	Below Depression Cutoff	Likely Major Depression
Working and satisfied with your job	96.0	4.0
Working but want a better job	91.0	9.0
Not working but looking for a job	82.3	17.7
Not working and not looking for a job	87.7	12.3
Retired	91.7	8.3
Marital Status	Below Depression Cutoff	Likely Major Depression
Now married	94.4	5.6
Widowed	92.4	7.6
Divorced	78.7	21.3
Separated	92.2	7.8
Never married	91.8	8.2
Income	Below Depression Cutoff	Likely Major Depression
Low/Very Low Income	88.7	11.3
Middle/High Income	95.3	4.7
Educational Attainment	Below Depression Cutoff	Likely Major Depression
High School or Less	89.2	10.8
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	93.0	7.0
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	97.4	2.6



Viewing the results demographically we find the following significant variances among subgroups. Figure 14 shows:

- **Employment.** Locally, those who are working and satisfied with their job were the least likely to have major depression (4%), while those not working but looking for a job were the most likely to have major depression (17.7%). The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that from 2004–2006, 12.7 percent of those who were unemployed had experienced a major depressive episode in the past year, compared with 9.3 percent of those who worked part-time, and 7 percent of those who worked full-time. This suggests that occupational status and occupational satisfaction are linked to mental health. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that the highest rates of a major depressive episode in the past year among workers aged 18–64 occurred in those in personal care and service occupations (10.8%) and those in food prep and serving related occupations (10.3%). This suggests that those who work in lower status jobs are more likely to have issues with depression, compared with those with “better” jobs.
- **Marital Status.** Those currently married were the least likely to have major depression (5.6%) while those who were divorced were the most likely to have major depression (21.3%).
- **Income.** 11.3 percent of those with a low/very low income were likely to have major depression, while 4.7 percent of those with a middle/high income were likely to have major depression. A recent study by the Michigan Department of Community Health found that those with an income of less than \$20,000 reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their life 19.2 percent of the time, while those with an income of \$75,000 or greater reported the same only 1.9 percent of the time. Taking all of this into consideration, think tank

members conclude that income is related to mental health. This is not to say that money makes one happy. Instead, it may suggest that having more money means facing less uncertainty about one's future (financially), that one may have better access to healthcare, and that one does not have to face the same general battles as one who makes less money.

- **Education.** Those with a high school diploma or less were the most likely to have major depression (10.8%) while those with a Baccalaureate degree or higher were the least likely to have major depression (2.6%). The Behavioral Risk Factors Survey from the Michigan Department of Community Health, as cited in other chapters, shows that 18.4 percent of those with less than high school education have experienced poor mental health at least 14 days in the past month, while only 6 percent of those who are college graduates say the same. This survey also shows that 19.7 percent of those with an income of \$20,000 or less report poor mental health at least 14 days of the past month, while 6.2 percent of those with an income of \$75,000 or more report the same. This shows how socioeconomic status ties in closely with mental health, suggesting that lower socioeconomic status impacts one's access to certain resources that could help them maintain their mental health.

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Vision/Hearing Services

As this assessment was being printed, several studies on vision/hearing needs were close to completion and will be included in the updated online versions at www.ottawaunitedway.org.

One source of information regarding vision and hearing disabilities in Ottawa County is the American Community Survey (ACS) which is conducted annually by the US Census Bureau. The following question appears on the ACS instrument, "Does this person have any of the following long-lasting conditions: blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment..."? Answers are classified as sensory disabilities. In 2006, Ottawa County results showed the nearly 4 percent of the population had a sensory disability (Figure 15).

At this point little is known about the affordability of services for this population or the knowledge of the general population regarding the importance of screenings. This is an area for further research.

Figure 15

Ottawa County, Michigan 2006	
Total with Sensory Disability:	3.7%
Total without Sensory Disability	96.3%

ISSUE AREAS:

- Sustainable Family Income
- Job Advancement/Adjustment Opportunities and Education
- Financial Literacy
- Affordable, Quality Housing
- Food Security and Hunger

THINK TANK

Char Seise, City of Grand Haven, Co-chair

Mark Kornelis, Ottawa County Community Action Agency, Co-chair

Donna Cornwell, formerly with Center for Women in Transition

Jennifer Gibbs, MSU Extension

Linda Jacobs, Good Samaritan Ministries

Bill Raymond, Ottawa County MI Works/Community Action Agency

Peter Ruark, MI League for Human Services

Loren Snippe, Ottawa County Department of Human Services

Captain Pat Towne, The Salvation Army, Grand Haven

BASIC NEEDS & FINANCIAL STABILITY

It's hard to avoid the fact that it takes a certain amount of financial resources to acquire the basic necessities of life. Aside from the very small number of people who live "off the economic grid," the rest of us must find a way to meet our basic needs by acquiring them within the mainstream economy.

Researchers have tried to establish reasonable thresholds, based on household composition and regional cost trends, of what is needed to maintain the most basic level of economic self-sufficiency. The Michigan League for Human Services researches these trends. Their study, *Economic Self-Sufficiency in Michigan—A Benchmark for Ensuring Family Well-Being* (May 2007), defines economic self-sufficiency as: "the level at which a household is able to meet all of its basic expenses without relying on government or nonprofit assistance."

Many areas fall into the category of Financial Stability including sustainable family income, financial literacy, affordable quality housing, food security, reliable efficient transportation, health care, systems navigation, and more.

Sustainable Family Income

The Michigan League of Human Services has estimated the minimum self-sufficiency wage for Ottawa County as:

- \$20,281 (\$9.75/hour) for a single individual,
- \$40,077 for a single parent with 2 children,
- \$22,286 for each working parent in a 2-parent household where both parents work, and
- \$26,059 for a 2-parent household where one parent works and the other is available to take care of the children (Michigan League of Human Services, 2007).

It is important to note that the expense and income estimates identified do not include allowances for certain expenses many consider essential, such as savings for emergencies, certain child educational expenses, furniture and appliance costs, and so forth. Neither do they account for expenses that may not be essential but are common to most households, such as gifts and occasional leisure travel.

The "livable wage" must be a goal for all families. In 2006, the average annual wage in Ottawa County was \$36,895 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). That amount is more than the livable wage estimate for some family types (e.g., a single person) but less than adequate for others (e.g., single working parent with two children).

Statewide data reflect that poverty rates are increasing in Michigan. In 2006, according to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, fully 34 percent of single parent families were living below the federally established poverty threshold, which represents a 13 percent increase over the rate in 2002.

The poverty rate in Ottawa County for single parent households headed by a female with children under five years old was 19.8 percent. The total poverty rate for Ottawa County in 2005 was 6.7 percent. Specific neighborhoods and areas of the County have significantly higher poverty rates.



The number of children and families living at or near the poverty level in Ottawa County is a cause for concern. Using data from the US Census Bureau's Small Area Income Estimates, Kids Count (2007) reports that the poverty rate of youth, while proportionally smaller than the overall percentage for Michigan (17.3 percent), has been consistently rising for the past several years (Figure 1).

Several other data sources help to paint the picture of struggle encountered by many families in Ottawa County. These data sets include the Michigan Department of Human Services, the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2008 Household Survey and 2-1-1 data:

- **Free/Reduced Price School Lunches** (Students from families with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty level) In 2006, Ottawa County had 11,712 students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. That number was equivalent to 27.5 percent of the student body.
- **Food Stamps** – In 2005, 9 percent of students in Ottawa County received food stamps. This number represents a sustained annual increase, having almost doubled since 2001.
- **Utility Bills** – At the 2-1-1 call center the top request in 2007 was the combined need for gas and electric bill payment assistance. This was also the top unmet need in the 2-1-1 calls. In the 2008 Household survey, 6.5 percent of households in Ottawa County reported having difficulty paying utility bills in 2007.



Figure 1

Children in Poverty, Ottawa County and Michigan 2002–2004						
Year	Children Ages 0-17 in Poverty			Children Ages 5-17 in Poverty		
	Ottawa #	Ottawa %	MI %	Ottawa #	Ottawa %	MI %
2002	4,214	6.2%	14.2%	2,687	5.5%	13.1%
2003	5,080	7.5%	15.0%	3,150	6.4%	13.6%
2004	5,892	8.7%	17.3%	3,577	7.2%	15.0%

Source: KidsCount

Figure 2

Households Requiring at Least One Family Member to Work More Than One Full-time Job to Make Ends Meet		
	Percentage	
Age Group	Yes	No
18-24	14.8	85.2
25-44	9.0	91.0
45-64	4.9	95.1
65+	1.8	98.2
Marital Status		
Now married	6.2	93.8
Widowed	2.0	98.0
Divorced	14.9	85.1
Never married	10.8	89.2
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	10.0	90.0
Middle/High Income	5.3	94.7
Have Children 0-5		
Yes	9.6	90.4
No	6.3	93.7

Source: Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

After reviewing poverty data, the logical next question is: What options does a family have when they are not earning a livable wage from their jobs? Obtaining a second job is an option that many individuals turn to. Unfortunately, studies show that the additional physical demands and psychological stress of balancing late night and rotating work schedules pulls at the threads of marriage stability. This ultimately puts families at risk and thus is not an ideal solution for Ottawa County residents (Hyatt 2000).

Using the 2008 Household Survey estimates to examine the “overworking” situation in Ottawa County, we see:

- Over 5 percent (5.2 percent) of households in Ottawa County have at least one family member working greater than a full time job in order to make ends meet.

There are several demographics that have a significantly higher prevalence of additional work requirements;

- In the southwest quadrant, rates are above 7 percent, compared to the County average of 5.2 percent.
- 9.6 percent of families with young children required a family member to work more than full time, in comparison with 6.3 percent of families without children aged 5 and younger (Figure 2).
- A full 10 percent of households in the low/very low income bracket needed someone to work more than one full time job in order to make ends meet, compared with 5.3 percent of families with middle or high incomes (Figure 2).
- Families in which a member had to work more than full time to make ends meet were more likely to be divorced (14.9 percent) (Figure 2).
- From the table in Figure 2 we can also see the effect that being young (18–24) has on financial stability.



Job Advancement/Adjustment Opportunities and Education

People having jobs is the first step to eliminating poverty. Historically, programs aimed at reducing poverty have focused on placement—attaching unemployed adults to the labor force in the first available job. However, we have learned that there is much more to the notion of increasing employment than simply helping a person to get a job. The idea of providing people with education and training as a precursor to a specific type of employment has shown promise in moving low-wage workers into stable jobs with greater chance for advancement compared to the practice of placing workers in any available job. (Community Research Institute 2002).

Figure 3

Employment Status & Satisfaction	NE	NW	SE	SW
Working and satisfied with your job	59.2%	60.2%	62.9%	48.2%
Working but want a better job	10.3%	10.6%	6.5%	11.8%
Not working but looking for a job	6.7%	3.0%	4.2%	7.0%

Figure 4

Employment Status and Satisfaction of Ottawa County Adults Percent by Income, Hispanic/Non-Hispanic, and Education Level					
	Working and satisfied with your job	Working but want a better job	Not working but looking for a job	Not working and not looking for a job	Retired
Income Category					
Low/Very Low Income	34.2	14.0	12.8	19.8	19.1
Middle/High Income	69.2	8.1	2.2	7.7	12.9
Hispanic					
Yes	31.8	16.0	13.5	29.0	9.7
No	59.6	9.0	4.2	8.3	18.9
Education Level					
High School or Less	42.0	11.6	9.6	13.7	23.1
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	56.3	11.1	5.5	11.0	16.0
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	70.3	6.9	0.9	8.1	13.9

Source: Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Again we turn to available data to help us understand the current employment situation in Ottawa County.

- Data show us that, despite the fact that poverty is on the rise in Ottawa County, the unemployment rate has generally been declining since 2003, with a recorded official unemployment rate of 5.2 percent at the end of 2006 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Current household survey data support this, with an estimated 5.4 percent of adult residents reporting that they are unemployed but looking for a job (Figure 3).
- Bureau of Labor Statistics data also show us that Ottawa County experienced a net loss of nearly 2,500 jobs between the second quarter of 2005 and the same period in 2007. The bulk of jobs lost are in the manufacturing sector; while some job growth has occurred in the service, social service, and healthcare sectors, we lack the data to understand how prepared Ottawa County workers are to transition to these new opportunities. In addition, many jobs available to those leaving manufacturing jobs may be based in the service economy and pay significantly lower wages than what was offered in a former position. Household survey estimates show that nearly 10 percent of Ottawa County adults across the quadrants are currently employed but want a better job (Figure 3).
- Those with lower levels of education experience lower levels of satisfaction with their jobs. Of those with a high school degree or less, 42 percent are satisfied with their jobs. Comparatively, 70.3 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or higher are satisfied (Figure 4).

Several demographic populations have significant differences in Employment status and satisfaction (Figure 4).

- Despite the fact that those with lower levels of education were less satisfied with their employment, survey results show that Ottawa County residents generally feel they have the skills and training for the work they desire. Of those Ottawa County adults currently unemployed but looking for a job, an estimated 86 percent feel that they have the skills and qualifications needed to get the kind of jobs they want.
- Comparatively, Ottawa County stacks up slightly better than the state of Michigan when it comes to educational attainment. A quarter of Michigan residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher. In Ottawa County, 29 percent have achieved a bachelor's degree or more. This is better than the Michigan average but, as we saw from the correlation between education and financial stability, not high enough to promote stability to the majority of the population (Figure 5).

Financial Literacy

According to former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, financial literacy education serves to prevent vulnerable consumers from becoming caught up in financially devastating situations. In addition, this type of education helps to provide individuals with the financial knowledge necessary to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make strategic investment decisions for their retirement or children's education. Such financial planning can help families to meet their near-term commitments and to solidify their long-term financial well-being.

Think Tank members feel that it is important for Ottawa County to 1) provide adequate educational opportunities and 2) use a program approach to helping families with financial literacy.

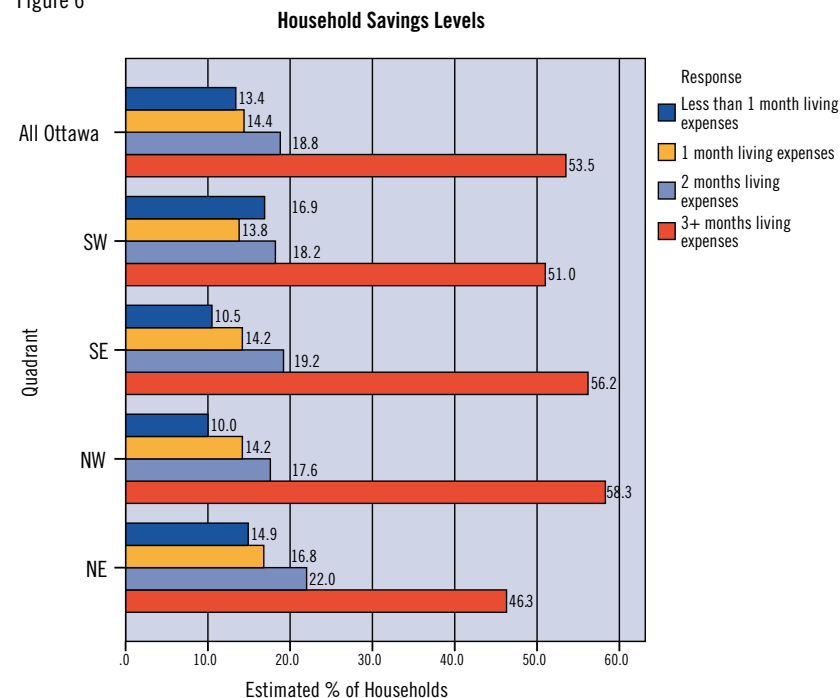
Assessment findings suggest a considerable need for financial education among Ottawa County residents.



Figure 5

Adult Education Levels, Ottawa County Residents 25+ Years of Age Percent of Population by Year		Ottawa County			Michigan
		2004	2005	2006	2006
Education Level	No schooling completed	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%
	9th grade or less	1.3%	1.4%	1.2%	4.8%
	Some high school, no diploma	2.3%	2.1%	2.2%	7.4%
	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	37.2%	34.4%	35.9%	32.5%
	Some college, less than one year	7.8%	8.1%	7.8%	7.6%
	Some college, 1 or more years, no diploma	12.7%	14.7%	14.5%	14.9%
	Associates degree	9.5%	8.8%	8.7%	7.8%
	Bachelor's degree	19.9%	20.1%	20.9%	15.3%
	Master's degree	7.3%	7.6%	6.4%	6.6%
	Doctorate degree	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
	Professional school degree	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.7%

Figure 6



Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey



Figure 7

Amount of Emergency Savings of Ottawa County Households By Income, Hispanic/Non-Hispanic, Employment, Children 0-5, Age, and Education Level				
Income Category	3+ months living expenses	2 months living expenses	1 month living expenses	Less than 1 month living expenses
Low/Very Low Income	22.7	16.1	20.6	40.7
Middle/High Income	61.1	19.6	13.0	6.4
Hispanic	26.1	19.9	21.3	32.7
Employment Status				
Working and satisfied with your job	51.0	22.2	18.0	8.8
Working but want a better job	27.0	16.3	17.3	39.4
Not working but looking for a job	25.3	31.4	2.9	40.4
Not working and not looking for a job	33.9	18.0	11.8	36.3
Retired	69.7	13.5	11.3	5.5
Have Children 0-5				
Yes	35.2	20.7	14.7	29.4
No	52.5	19.9	15.4	12.1
Age Group				
18-24	34.6	32.4	23.3	9.8
25-44	37.7	22.9	15.8	23.5
45-64	56.5	15.1	14.9	13.4
65+	68.8	16.3	9.6	5.3
Education Level				
High School or Less	41.8	19.0	18.9	20.3
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	44.8	21.0	14.3	19.9
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	60.0	20.3	12.5	7.2

Source: Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

- Across Ottawa County, 22.1 percent of households do not follow a budget or spending plan in order to watch spending and set goals.
- Although nearly 78 percent of Ottawa County households report setting aside savings on a regular basis only 53.5 percent of households have three or more months' worth of living expenses saved (Figure 6). Savings levels were even lower in the northeast quadrant of the county—possibly because of the high student population in this area—and the southwest quadrant where the highest concentration of low-income residents resides.
- In contrast, 13.4 percent—nearly 12,000 households—are literally living paycheck to paycheck, with less than one month's worth of living expenses in savings for an emergency (Figure 6). Without an adequate savings cushion, these households are at high risk for spiraling out of control in the event of an unforeseen expense that is either large or urgent.
- There was no significant relationship between household income and whether a household followed a plan/budget. However:
 - Income played a considerable role in whether families managed to set aside money regularly for savings.
 - Whereas 84.5 percent of middle/upper income households in Ottawa County save regularly, only 55.7 percent of low/very low income households do so. The same trend, shown in Figure 7, held true for the amount set aside for emergency savings.
 - Also of note is that only 26.1 percent (Figure 7) of Hispanic households have three months or more of living expenses, compared, to the all-Ottawa-County-rate of 53.5 percent (Figure 6).



Affordable, Quality Housing

Findings from the Ottawa County Housing Needs Assessment conducted in 2007-08 found that over 29 percent of Ottawa County households renting housing units experienced “**shelter overburden**,” defined as paying greater than 30 percent of one’s income for shelter.

An Ottawa County household needs to earn at least \$24,084 per year in order to afford \$669/month—the current fair-market rent on a 2-bedroom apartment (HUD, 2007).

It would be anticipated that such households would have ongoing challenges meeting their basic needs expenses due to an excessive proportion of their income committed to shelter expenses each month.

When housing expenses exceed 50 percent of a household’s income, such households are said to be experiencing “**severe shelter overburden**.” Nearly 13 percent of Ottawa County’s renting households fall into this tenuous situation. It would be expected that such households would, on an ongoing basis, find themselves unable to meet their basic needs expenses and could easily find themselves facing eviction.

As for homeowners, 2000 U.S. Census data suggest that over 18 percent of those with existing mortgages experienced ongoing shelter overburden, while a little over five percent experienced severe shelter overburden. **In total, it was found that 11,591 (17%) Ottawa County households in 2000 (renters and homeowners combined) experienced shelter overburden, leaving them susceptible to ongoing financial challenge and risk of housing instability.**

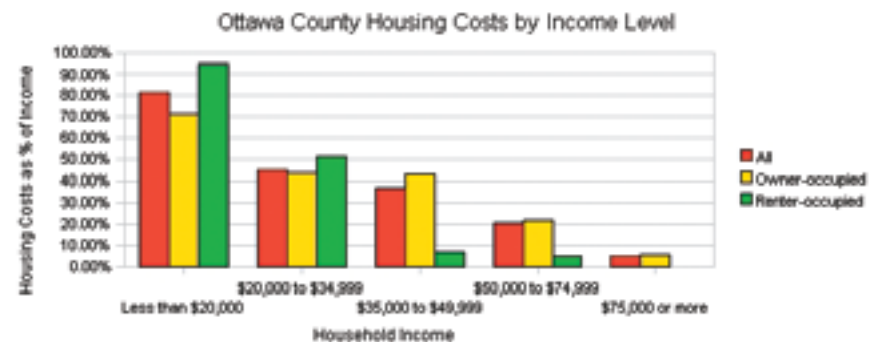
However, data from the U.S. Census 2006 American Community Survey and The Department of Housing and Urban Development suggest that Ottawa County households earning \$20–35,000 per year on average spend over 40 percent of their income on housing; households earning less than \$20,000 can spend an average of 70 percent of their income on housing here (Figure 8).

This is an especially scary situation because families that pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing can be burdened to the point that they may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.

Key concerns to Ottawa County Think Tank participants are the availability of affordable ownership and rental opportunities in their communities. The high proportion of lower-income residents paying over 30 percent of their income on housing expenses suggests a significant gap in the availability, location, or suitability of more affordable housing options.

Figure 8

Average Housing Costs Paid as a Percentage of Income, by Income Level



Source: U.S. Census and Department of Housing and Urban Development



Figure 9

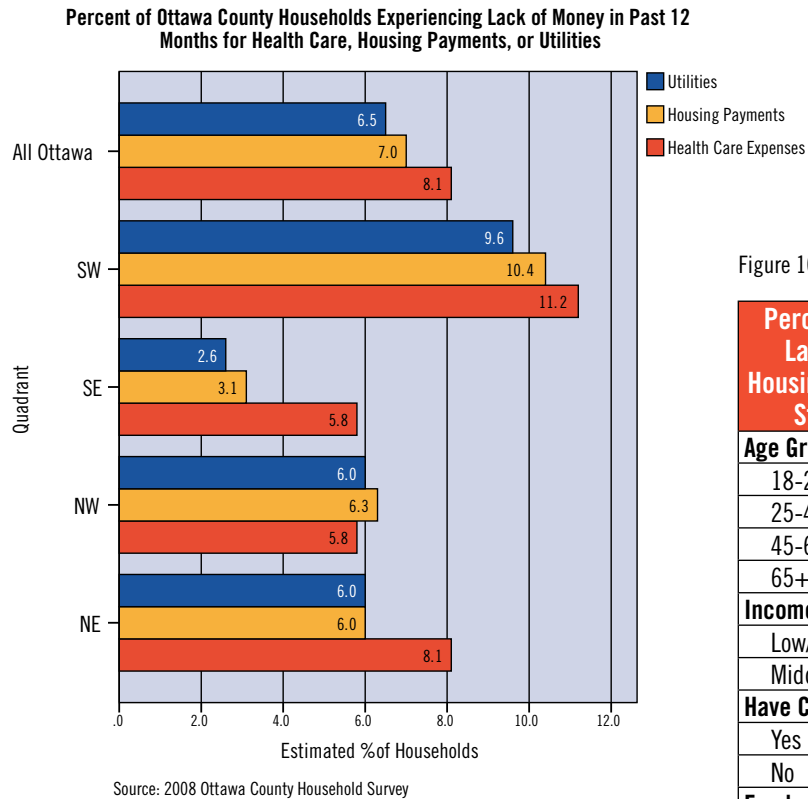


Figure 10

Percent of Ottawa County Households Experiencing Lack of Money within Past 12 Months to Pay for Housing and Utility Costs By Age, Income, Employment Status, Hispanic/Non-Hispanic, and Education		
Age Group	Housing	Utilities
18-24	16.8	19.6
25-44	12.3	10.2
45-64	6.9	5.6
65+	2.3	4.3
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	26.8	25.8
Middle/High Income	2.6	1.0
Have Children 0-5		
Yes	13.8	11.5
No	8.1	7.8
Employment Status		
Working and satisfied with your job	3.9	3.5
Working but want a better job	20.9	17.6
Not working but looking for a job	30.9	24.9
Not working and not looking for a job	23.3	22.8
Retired	4.9	6.0
Hispanic		
Yes	25.3	28.3
No	7.0	5.7
Education Level		
High School or Less	14.5	14.9
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	11.0	9.8
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	2.3	0.7

Source: Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Local data tell us that:

- Across the county, approximately 7 percent of households experienced a time in the past year when they did not have enough money to make their mortgage, rent, or real estate tax payment. The rate was considerably higher in the southwest quadrant, at over 10 percent of households, and lower in the southeast quadrant (3.1 percent of households)(Figure 9).
- Difficulties meeting housing payments were concentrated among lower-income populations: The risk for having a lack of money to meet a housing-related payment in the past year was nearly 10 times greater for households with low or very-low income than for those in the middle or upper income brackets (26.8 percent vs. 2.6 percent)(Figure 10).
- With foreclosure rates continuing to rise across the state and nation, these indicators are a cause for concern. Reported rates of lack of money for utility bills were similar and followed the same pattern, with an estimated 5,700 Ottawa County families struggling against rising heating and other utility costs (Figure 11). Troubles were experienced with greatest frequency among younger households, families with children, Hispanic households, and households with lower income, lower education levels, and members experiencing unemployment (Figure 10).
- Notice again, the value of a college degree when comparing difficulty in paying housing bills. Baccalaureate degree holders experienced difficulty with housing and utility payments 2.3 percent and 0.7 percent of the time, respectively, compared with 14.5 percent and 14.9 percent, respectively, for those with a high school education or less (Figure 10).

- Part of the issue may be connected to the availability of housing in the appropriate price structure. According to the Ottawa County Housing Needs Assessment, the northwest quadrant needs an additional 680 owner units under \$125,000, and 100 renter units under \$400/month.

Additional data sources studied for this project include data from Ottawa County 211, migrant data reported by the City of Grand Haven, and homelessness figures presented by Ottawa County's homelessness advisory board.

Ottawa County has the largest migrant worker population in the state—a number nearly 2.5 times the number of licensed and known available housing units for these workers (Ottawa County Housing Needs Assessment; March 2008). These figures suggest a similar lack of suitable housing for the county's large migrant worker population.

Approximately 1,300 Ottawa County residents experience homelessness each year—at least 400 on any given day, with at least 200 more either precariously housed or on the verge of homelessness. Think tank members point out that another important dimension to housing for the homeless is the location of options in relation to other services.

2-1-1's 2007 annual report indicates that rent payment assistance and electric and gas bill payment assistance were among the top five needs reported by 2-1-1 callers that year (Figure 11). Unfortunately, these needs were also among those that frequently could not be met. Twenty-eight percent of rent assistance needs, 15 percent of gas payment assistance needs, and 13 percent of electric bill assistance requests could not be met; this was typically because of caller ineligibility due to lack of documentation or income.



BASIC NEEDS

Figure 11

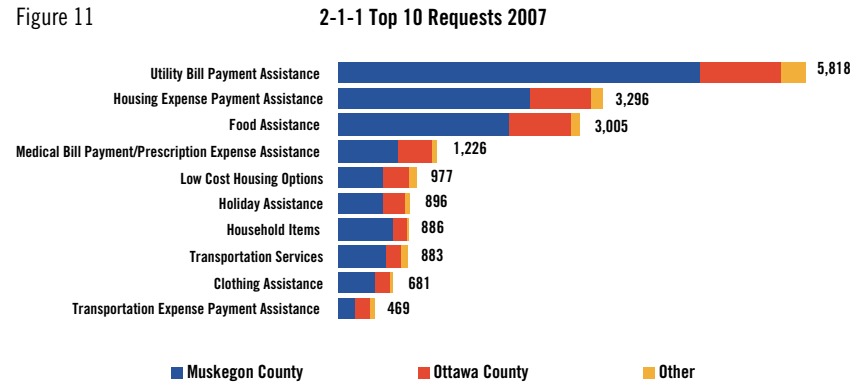
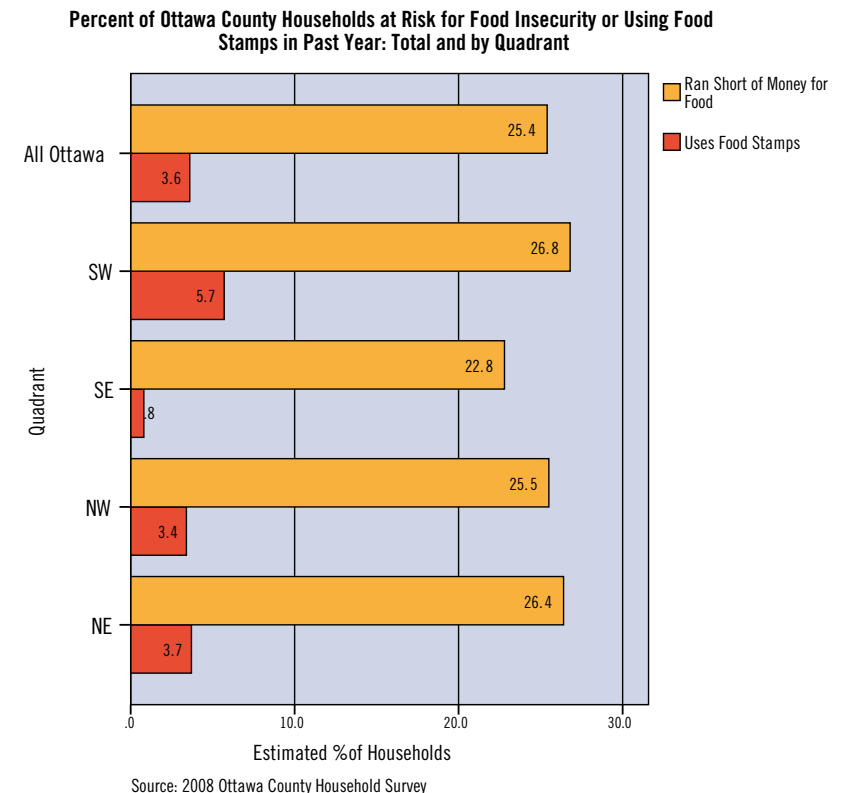


Figure 12



Hunger and Food Security

Compromised food intake (quantity and quality) leads to poor nutrition affecting the health status of many individuals. The CDC points out that the effects go beyond hunger and that, over time, food insecurity may result in decreased ability to grow, work, and learn.

The picture of food insecurity in Ottawa County is truly dangerous. Project data show us that:

- One out of every four households in Ottawa County reported not having enough money for food at least once in the past year, with upwards of 26 percent of households in certain quadrants running short of money for food (Figure 12).
- Referral information for emergency food clearinghouses and food pantries represented the third most common type of request received by Ottawa County's 2-1-1 service in 2007.
- 900 low-income households in the County qualify for the quarterly Emergency Food Assistance Program (Figure 13).
- 430 very low-income individuals qualify for and receive monthly food assistance through the Community Supplemental Food Program (Figure 13).
- 330 seniors benefit from the Meals on Wheels Program.
- The County's largest food assistance program is the federally-funded "Food Stamp" program, operated by the Ottawa County Department of Human Services. During the first quarter of 2008, an average of 6,073 families (a greater than six percent increase from the first quarter of 2007) received monthly food assistance through this program.
- Finally, it is estimated that 1,000,200 pounds of food are distributed to Ottawa County families annually through the County's network of food pantry/emergency food assistance sites.

Despite the availability of these varied forms of food assistance to County residents, it was estimated by the Food Bank Council of Michigan, in reviewing 2006 data, that **only 53 percent of the food assistance need was met by available programs.**

The food stamp program is intended for low-income households and the demographics of those using food stamps reflect eligibility requirements. Eligibility for the program is based on the size of each household, household gross income, and certain expenses, such as housing expenses, child support payments, and childcare costs. These expenses are deducted from a household's gross income to see how much money the household has left for food at the end of the month. Assets are not considered when determining food stamp eligibility.

Rates of food stamp usage are significantly higher in the southwest quadrant (5.7 percent) and lower in the southeast quadrant (.8 percent), (Figure 12), but are woefully short of the 25 percent reported need.

- Initiatives such as local food pantries seek to alleviate economically rooted nutritional hardship. The Michigan Blueprint to End Hunger has documented many of the efforts currently under way in Ottawa County (Figure 13).



Figure 13

Source – Michigan Blueprint to End Hunger

USDA HOUSE COMMODITY PROGRAMS (FY 2006)

Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Households Served by Community Action Agency	900
Projected Pounds of Food per Household	84
Pounds Provided by Community Action Agencies	75,600
Pounds Provided by Food Bank Network	36,234
TEFAP Total Pounds for County	111,834

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Average Number of Participants (monthly)	430
Projected Pounds of Food per Household	19,350
Federal Funding for Household Commodity Food for County	\$131,440

SUMMER NUTRITION PROGRAMS (July 2006 Participation)

Average Daily Participation — National School Lunch Program	7504
Average Daily Participation — Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Lunch	819
Number of Summer Food Service Program Sponsors in County	3
Number of Open Enrollment Sites in County	11
Total Federal Funding for Summer Nutrition Programs	\$59,955

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Figure 14

Ottawa County Households Using Food Stamps by Income, Children 0-5, Employment Status, Ethnicity, and Education Level		
Income Category	Food Stamps	No Food Stamps
Low/Very Low Income	12.5	87.5
Middle/High Income	0.3	99.7
Have Children 0-5		
Yes	9.0	91.0
No	3.4	96.6
Employment Status		
Working and satisfied with your job	2.0	98.0
Working but want a better job	8.1	91.9
Not working but looking for a job	21.7	78.3
Not working and not looking for a job	9.3	90.7
Retired	3.2	96.8
Hispanic		
Yes	16.6	83.4
No	2.9	97.1
Education Level		
High School or Less	9.5	90.5
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	4.2	95.8
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	0.2	99.8

Source: Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Figure 15

Ottawa County Households Experiencing Risk for Food Insecurity* in Past 12 Months by Age, Income, Children 5 & under, Employment Status, and Education Level		
Age Group	Ran out of Money for Food	
	Yes	No
18-24	27.9	72.1
25-44	34.2	65.8
45-64	25.5	74.5
65+	14.1	85.9
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	53.3	46.7
Middle/High Income	16.3	83.7
Have Children 0-5		
Yes	36.6	63.4
No	24.9	75.1
Employment Status		
Working and satisfied with your job	20.4	79.6
Working but want a better job	49.2	50.8
Not working but looking for a job	60.2	39.8
Not working and not looking for a job	46.4	53.6
Retired	16.5	83.5
Education Level		
High School or Less	34.8	65.2
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	32.2	67.8
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	15.0	85.0

Source: Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

ISSUE AREAS:

- Early Childcare and Education
- After-school Opportunities, Including Mentoring and Asset Building
- Family Stability
- Child Abuse, Neglect and Domestic Violence
- Safe and Nurturing School and Community Environments

THINK TANK

Jan Shangle, Great Start Collaborative—Ottawa, Chair

Sharalle Arnold, Grand Valley State University Children's Center

Joyce Bos, Pathways, MI

Joan Meeusen, Pathways, MI

Andy Page, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holland

Craig Schotenboer, Youth for Christ

Vonnie Vanderzwaag, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

FOSTERING STABLE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENTS

Affordable, Accessible, Quality, Early Childcare and Education (ECE)

A cost-benefit analysis conducted by Arthur Rolnick, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and published in what has become a well known and highly regarded study, shows that for every \$1 invested in high-quality early childhood programs, over \$8 are returned to society, with a 16 percent internal rate of return. Other studies have shown as high as a \$17 return for every dollar invested in ECE. The benefit returned to society comes in the form of reduced rates of crime, lower grade retention (“failing”) and special education placements, and increased rates of high school graduation and adult earnings. Or, as James Heckman, University of Chicago Nobel-Prize-winning economist, says;

“The real question is how to use available funds wisely. The best evidence supports the policy prescription: invest in the very young.”

Longitudinal research data are now available that highlight the benefit of ECE. In 1962 a long-term study at the High Scope/Perry Preschool in Ypsilanti, Michigan, began to randomly place 3- & 4-year-olds from low-income families into this quality preschool program. Results showed:

- Those who *did not* attend the program were five times more likely to become chronic offenders, with five or more arrests by age 27, than those who participated in the program.
- By age 40, children left out of the Perry Preschool program were four times more likely to be arrested for drug felonies, and twice as likely to become “career offenders” with more than 10 arrests.
- Those not included in the program were a third less likely to graduate from high school on time.

Given that the average cost of an adult inmate of the prison system is \$30,555 per year, and that each child in the Michigan juvenile system costs \$43,000 per year, the potential economic savings alone are staggering. (State of Michigan Issue Paper, May 2007).

According to a Cornell childcare study, the United States is currently in a crisis of care. Specifically, the study says;

“Childcare is a labor-intensive business where wages make up a high proportion of providers’ total expenses. Providers are unable to cut costs by increasing the number of children that each staff member serves because of state-mandated child/staff ratios. Providers are also unable to raise prices because fees are already as high as most families can afford, exceeding 35 percent of family income in some cases.”

This situation results in very low wages for childcare workers; low returns to providers; and ultimately an inadequate supply of quality, affordable childcare.



In addition to these cost pressures, providers also face curriculum pressures. No longer is childcare for young children simply babysitting. Today, a quality childcare program must offer activities and experiences that will aid in a child's growth and development, and that will help them prepare for school. Trend spotters say that the movement to learning centers is partly due to high parent and school expectations; it's also attributable to research that shows that kids are capable of learning early academics and other skills that previously were not taught until later. The Great Start Collaborative is working on a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) that will rate providers based on curriculum, instead of focusing on the technical and facility areas that are used for licensing.

In Ottawa County, access to affordable, local, quality childcare for children ages 0-36 months and early education from age 3 through entry into Kindergarten is a priority. Think tank members cite the following two items as important places to focus:

- Need to shift parental and provider focus from babysitting to education.
- Ideally, residents should not be dependent on unlicensed providers (families, friends, neighbors).

To better understand the childcare situation in Ottawa County, this study draws upon a considerable amount of existing data as well as data from a new survey of households. The data tell us:

- **Parents in Workforce** — Approximately 66 percent of all Ottawa County children under 6 live in families in which all parents work [2006 American Community Survey]. This represents an estimated 13,638 children.

Figure 1

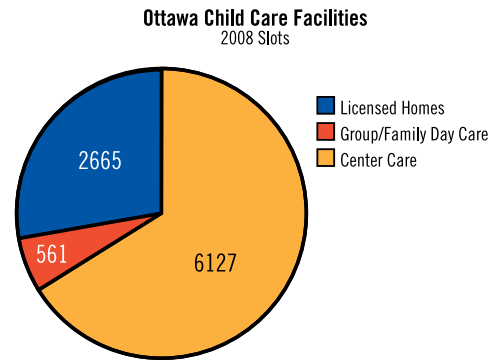
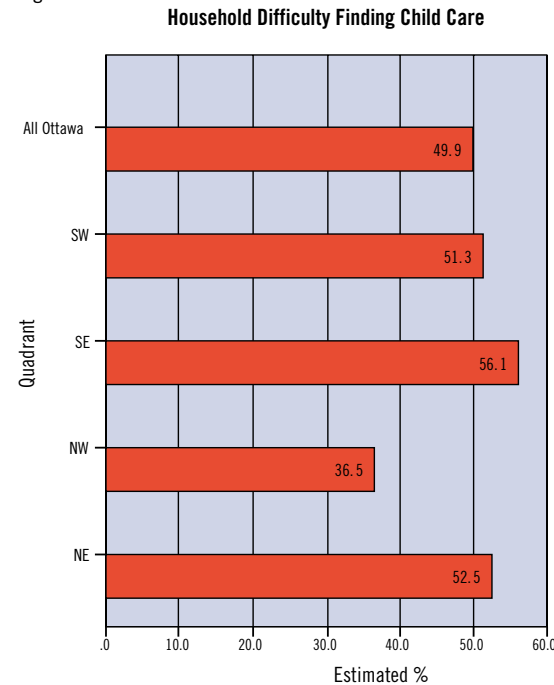
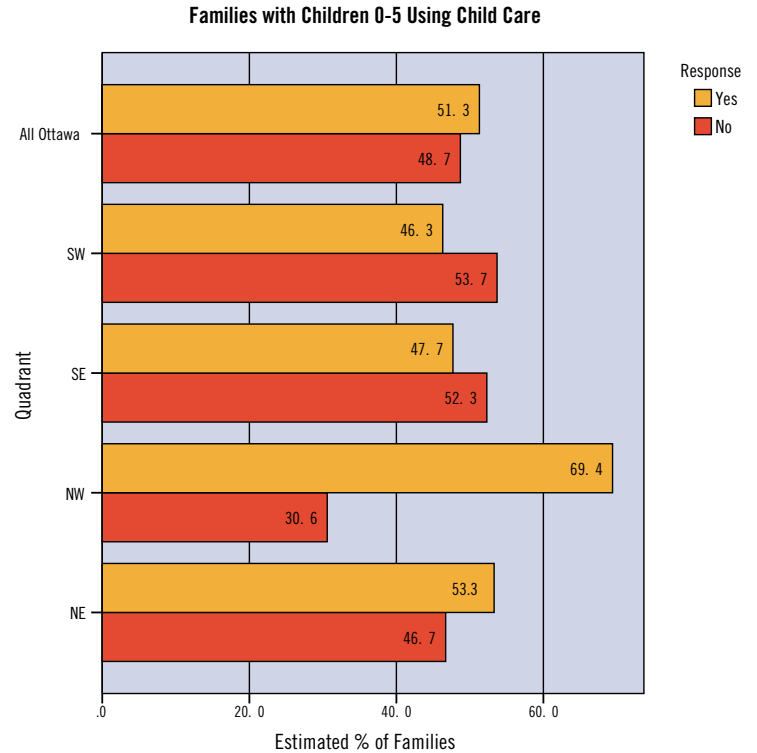


Figure 4



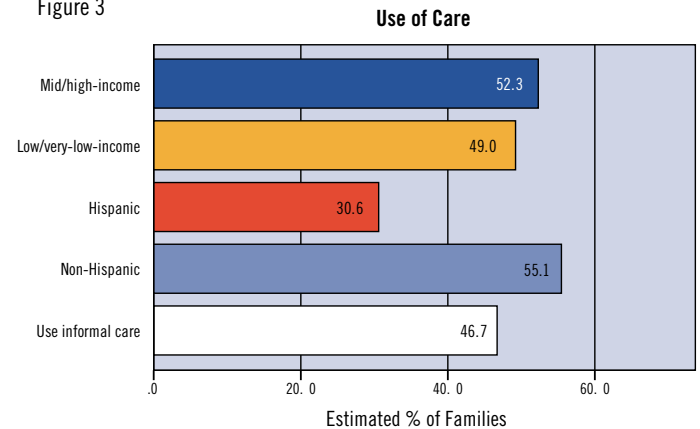
Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey

Figure 2



Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey

Figure 3



Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey

- **Childcare Slots** — A childcare slot accommodates one child in a licensed childcare center, a group family day care home, or a registered family day care home.
 - National standards suggest a minimum of 25 regulated slots per 100 children to ensure basic access.
 - Ottawa County currently has 608 licensed childcare facilities, broken down as 115 licensed childcare centers, 446 homes, and 47 group and family day care centers providing a total of 9,353 childcare slots.

While Ottawa County appears to meet the national standard, it is important to note that not all licensed sites provide full-day childcare (Figure 1). (Michigan 4Cs 2008 Childcare Spaces Report).

- **Use of Care** — 51.3 percent of all Ottawa County families with children 5 and younger use childcare or Early Childhood Education programs (Figure 2).

Figure 3 shows:

- Mid/high-income families were slightly more likely to use outside childcare than low/very-low income families (52.3% vs. 49%).
- Hispanic families were significantly less likely to use outside childcare arrangements than non-Hispanic families (30.6% vs. 55.1%).
- Of those families using outside childcare (i.e., someone other than a parent), approximately 46.7 percent (approximately 2,900 families) rely solely on informal care in the form of relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Another 42.1 percent (approximately 2,600 families) use formal childcare and ECE arrangements such as center-based or group home-based care, preschools, or Head Start; while 11.2 percent use a combination of informal and formal care and education.

- **Reliability of Care**

- 23.9 percent of Ottawa County families have childcare arrangements that are less than “very predictable.”

- **Availability of Care**

- 36 percent of households using outside childcare have had at least some difficulty in finding suitable arrangements.
- Although 60 percent of Ottawa County households using outside childcare had no reported difficulty in finding the arrangement or program they wanted, over 30 percent of households reported more than a little difficulty, with 3.8 percent of households stating that they have not yet been able to find the type of childcare program they want (2008 Ottawa County Household Survey).

- The primary difficulties reported in finding suitable childcare included cost and hours; however, the single most frequently reported difficulty was “other.” Further study will be required to understand the barriers to finding childcare in the county.

- **Cost of Care**—Average weekly cost of full-time childcare in Ottawa County, 2008:

- Homes: \$120.27 (Source: Michigan 4Cs).
- Centers: \$142.37 (Source: Michigan 4Cs).

- **Childcare Capacity Building**—There is a need for lending library & toolkit to assist in the shift to structured childcare curricula. There is also a need to develop a standardized curriculum for informal care. In addition, the awareness of care providers regarding what resources are available is thought to be low.

- **Quality Ratings**—Research is clear about the link between learning environment/ curriculum and overall program quality. In general, there is agreement that child-directed activities, with adult support, in a carefully designed learning environment lead to optimal outcomes for children. Despite this, many of the current childcare quality measures and licensing standards relate more closely to operational practices (such as sanitation methods or sleep arrangements) than they do to curriculum. Think tank members feel it is especially important to develop a way to rate the capacity and quality of informal care providers.

- **Parent Empowerment**—

Ultimately, individual parents are responsible for obtaining quality care for their children. To succeed in this task, parents must have knowledge regarding important aspects of childcare and the tools to aid them in their decisions. Think tank members encourage the following:

- Create a link between parent education services and capacity building for “informal” care providers
- Target community education efforts toward individuals with lower education levels and lower income levels as these groups are statistically more likely to be using family friend and neighbor care, outside the formal system.

As stated before, an investment and focus on ECE is supported on both an economic level and on a quality of life level.





After-School Opportunities, including Mentoring and Asset Building

National research has revealed that one of the biggest windows for child and youth delinquency and victimization occurs after the school bell rings. Safe, quality, after-school programs may be one of the most effective methods to prevent crime by engaging youth in healthy learning, leadership, and enrichment activities (Community Research Institute 2007).

In communities today, 14.3 million children take care of themselves after the school day ends, including almost 4 million middle school students in grades six to eight. Just 6.5 million children are in afterschool programs—but the parents of another 15.3 million children say their children would participate in afterschool activities if a program were available. (America After 3—Afterschool Alliance).

After-School Programs

Locally, half of Ottawa County parents report that their child participates in an after-school program. Families are most likely to have children participating in after-school programming at least one day per week in the northwest quadrant of the county (63.5%); participation rates in other quadrants ranged from 44–50 percent (Figure 5).

Examining participation by select demographic characteristics, we see in Figure 6 that:

- Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanics to participate in after-school programs.
- Those with low or very low incomes are less likely to participate than those with moderate or high incomes.

Again turning to national research for context, studies indicate that youth who participate regularly (three days or more) in after-school programs are less likely to engage in sex, drugs, crime and are more likely to attend and do better in school (Community Research Institute 2007).

As stated earlier, half of Ottawa County’s youth are participating in after-school programs to some extent; although the percent of regular participation (3 days or more) rate drops to 37.7 percent.

While more local data are needed in regards to the effectiveness of after-school programs in Ottawa County, it would appear that community efforts to ensure children have access to quality after-school programs are on the right track, but with more availability and participation needed.

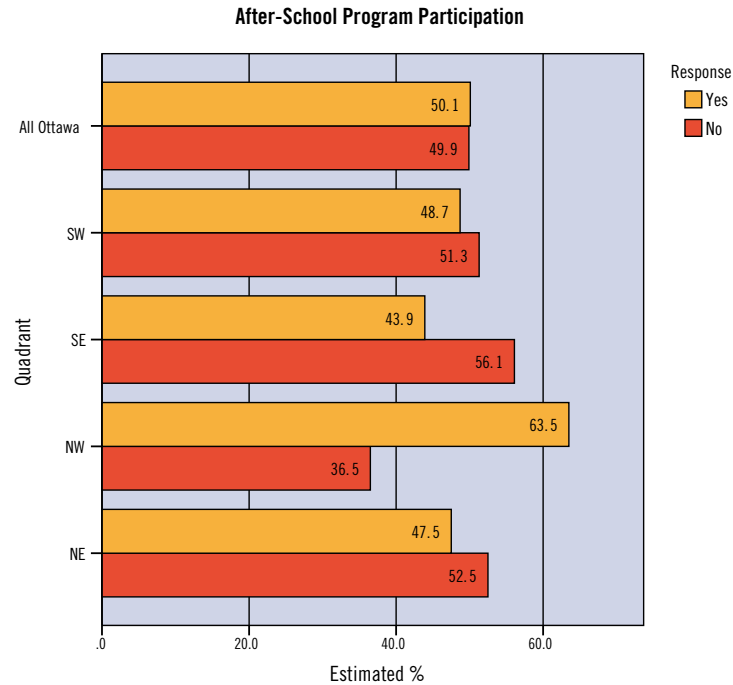
Mentoring

The Search Institute has identified “adult role models,” “supportive relationships with three or more other adults,” and “adults in community valuing youth” as essential to the health and well-being of a community’s youth. Unfortunately, many adolescents fail to form connections with caring adults. This is not surprising, given that traditional opportunities—extended families, schools, and neighborhoods—have changed in ways that have dramatically reduced the availability of caring adults.

To address the problems associated with the reduced availability of natural mentors, volunteer mentoring programs are springing up around the U.S. (Rhodes 2001). These mentoring programs bring numerous benefits to all participants.



Figure 5



Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey

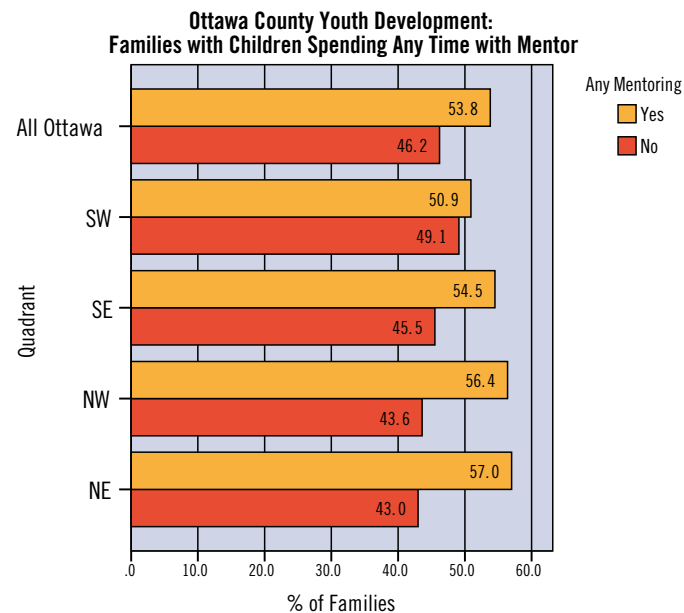
Figure 6

After-School Program Participation By Hispanic vs Non-Hispanic and Income		
	No	Yes
Hispanic		
Yes	35	65
No	52	48
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	56.8	43.2
Middle/High Income	44.1	55.9

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.



Figure 7



Source: Ottawa County Household Survey

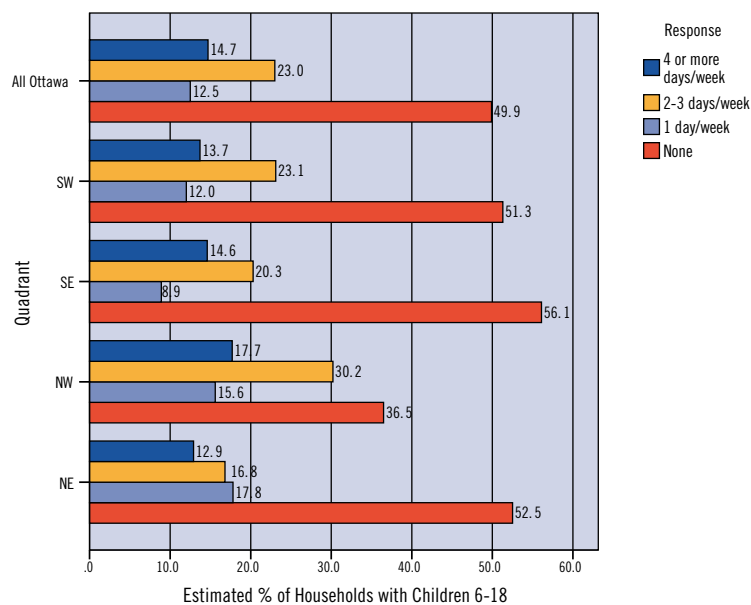
For youth, the benefits can be particularly powerful in the areas of educational achievement, health, and social and emotional development. Specifically, youth who take part in mentoring programs have been proven to experience positive academic returns in the areas of attendance, attitude towards school, and enrollment in postsecondary education.

In relation to health, national studies have shown that youth involved in mentoring programs are far less likely to begin abusing drugs and alcohol. In the area of social and emotional development mentoring appears to positively impact friendships and social skills such as communication. (Child Trends 2002).

- In Ottawa County, over half of parents say their kids (ages 6-18) spend time with an adult mentor (Figure 7).
- Non-Hispanic households and those with middle or high incomes were more likely to participate in mentoring than Hispanic households and those with low or very low income (Figure 6).

Programmatically, the amount of time Ottawa County youth are spending with mentors is spread widely. Think tank participants feel that parent education relating to the value of mentoring is needed in this area, and that this type of education might be one way to close the gap. Members also suggest that there are issues with program suitability, with access and affordability contributing to the gap. In light of the fact that Hispanic families in Ottawa County appear more likely to have their children participating in after-school programs, further exploration may be needed to understand the relative availability and/or appeal of these two types of youth asset-building programs to Hispanic families.

Figure 7
Number of Days/Week Children Spend 1+ Hours in After-School Programs



Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey

Figure 8

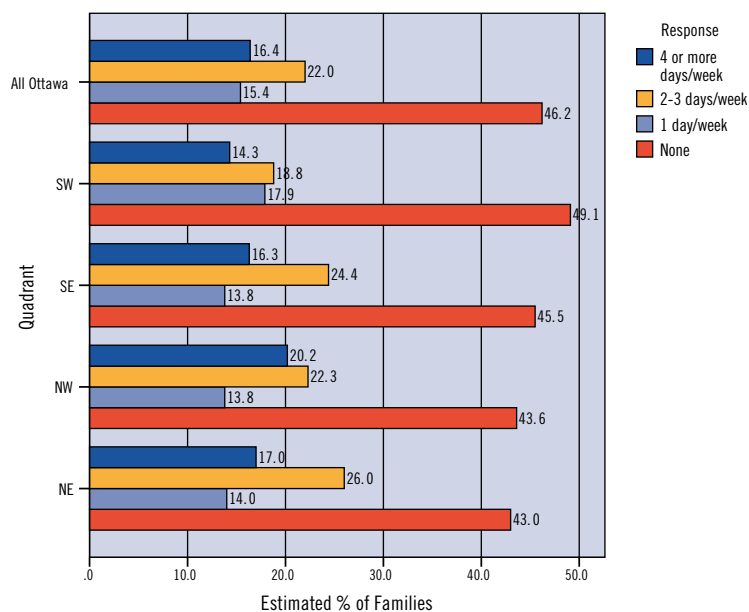
Families with Child(ren) Participating in After-School Programs Number of Days/Week		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
None	Estimated #	12,821	1,510	1,871	4,212	5,228
1 day/week	Estimated #	3,206	513	802	672	1,220
2-3 days/week	Estimated #	5,913	484	1,550	1,526	2,352
4 or more days/week	Estimated #	3,772	370	909	1,099	1,394

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County families with children aged 6-18

Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are NOT significant at the p=.05 level

Figure 9
Number of Days Each Week Youth Spend 1+ Hours with an Adult Mentor Other Than a Parent



Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey

Figure 10

Families with Child(ren) Spending 1+ Hours with an Adult Mentor Other Than a Parent By Sex, Hispanic vs Non-Hispanic, Employment Status, and Income				
Hispanic	None	1 day/week	2-3 days/ week	4 or more days/week
Yes	68.4	14.0	11.4	6.2
No	43.4	15.6	23.3	17.7
Employment Status				
Working and satisfied with your job	41.8	17.4	20.9	19.9
Working but want a better job	51.6	8.4	31.2	8.8
Not working but looking for a job	65.5	1.7	15.7	17.1
Not working and not looking for a job	52.9	18.8	18.0	10.3
Retired	29.7	21.2	49.1	0.0
Income Category				
Low/Very Low Income	55.5	12.1	24.4	8.0
Middle/High Income	38.7	19.3	22.7	19.4

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the p=.05 level.

Family Stability

Having a stable family environment is a key factor in the overall resilience and success of youth. In this assessment, we explore three components of stability for Ottawa County young people: youth runaway activity, stable and supportive family structures, and household transience.

Youth runaways and homelessness

- Approximately 17 percent of students in 8th–12th grades, up from 10 percent in 2005, reported having been a runaway, homeless, or kicked out of the home.
- Students of Hispanic or Latino ethnic background were significantly more likely than students of non-Hispanic or Latino ethnic background to indicate they had been a runaway, homeless, or kicked out of the home (Source: 2007 Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey).

Stable, supportive family structure

Youth have the most opportunity to thrive in family environments that support them with appropriate structure, rules, and boundaries. However, most recent survey data on Ottawa County youth found that:

- 43.1 percent of students were classified as at-risk on the “parenting practices and family management scale,” which describes students’ perception of the extent of parental oversight and rule-making, and;
- 48.9 percent of students were classified as at-risk on the “poor family discipline scale,” which describes students’ perception of whether they would be caught by parents if they misbehaved.
- In addition, 49.7 percent of students classified as at-risk in the “family conflict scale,” which describes students’ perception of the extent of arguments within the family.

(Source: 2005 Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey)

Similarly, an assets study conducted with 4th-grade students in the Grand Haven area found that;

- Only 39 percent of students reported that parent(s), other adults in the family, and non-family adults model positive, responsible behavior.
- 59 percent of students indicated that their families have clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitor their whereabouts

(Source: Grand Haven Area Public Schools 2007 Search Institute Report)

Given that these figures represent the level of oversight offered to children at age nine, it may be anticipated that, once Ottawa County children reach adolescence, those numbers may be lower still.

Transient Families

One factor contributing to instability in some families is the need to move frequently. Moving is a difficult experience for many children, especially when it involves losing contact with neighborhood friends. Moreover, moves that require changing schools can put children out of step with their classmates in terms of the curriculum.

Children in particular who have not had secure housing or ongoing education find it difficult to develop social skills, and the impact of transience on families can have an effect long after they stop moving [Amato, 2005].

Household survey data indicate that;

- 5.9 percent of Ottawa County adults report moving two or more times over the course of the past two years, or an average of at least once per year. This amounts to more than 11,000 individuals, approximately 6,600 (or 59.2%) of whom are parents of children under 18 years of age.
- Approximately 2.5 percent of the population reports moving three or more times in two years.

Frequent moves are often associated with economic hardships, magnifying the stress of these transitions on local families. In Figure 11, we see:

- Survey findings show that adults with low or very low income levels are 4.8 times as likely to move frequently compared with those of middle/high income.
- Not surprisingly, younger adults (aged 18-24) were less settled than those in older age groups, with 16.6 percent moving more than twice in two years.

- Findings also suggest that Ottawa County residents' home stability is connected with the stability and satisfaction of their employment situation. The single highest demographic of frequent movers was composed of those who were out of work and looking for a job, with 27.9 percent of these adults reporting frequent moves.

Child Abuse, Neglect, and Domestic Violence

Surveys in Ottawa County reveal in Figure 12:

- Ottawa County key stakeholders indicate that child abuse and neglect is a pressing concern in the county. Kids Count 2007 data show that more than 41 of every 1,000 children are investigated for suspicion of abuse and/or neglect.
- Although confirmed cases of abuse/neglect are below state levels (at approximately 10-11 cases per 1,000 children in Michigan and approximately five cases per 1,000 children in Ottawa County), incidence of child abuse and neglect is expected to grow as increased economic pressures and related stressors put heavy strains on some Ottawa County families.
- The Department of Human Services in Michigan received more than 120,000 complaints through Child Protective Services in 2007. This is approximately 330 per day. This number was lower than 2006, but the percentage of confirmed cases increased over 2006. (DHS, Ottawa County, MI)
- Substance abuse is often associated with child abuse and neglect. For analysis of substance abuse patterns in Ottawa County, see the "Healthy Lifestyles" section elsewhere in this Assessment.



Figure 11

Ottawa County High Transience By Age, Income, Marital Status, Employment Status, and Education		
Age Group	High Transience	Not High Transience
18-24	16.6	83.4
25-44	8.3	91.7
45-64	2.6	97.4
65+	0.7	99.3
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	13.9	86.1
Middle/High Income	2.9	97.1
Employment Status		
Working and satisfied with your job	3.6	96.4
Working but want a better job	9.3	90.7
Not working but looking for a job	27.9	72.1
Not working and not looking for a job	9.4	90.6
Retired	2.7	97.3
Education		
High School or Less	11.5	88.5
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	4.2	95.8
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	2.1	97.9

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Figure 12

Child Abuse/Neglect

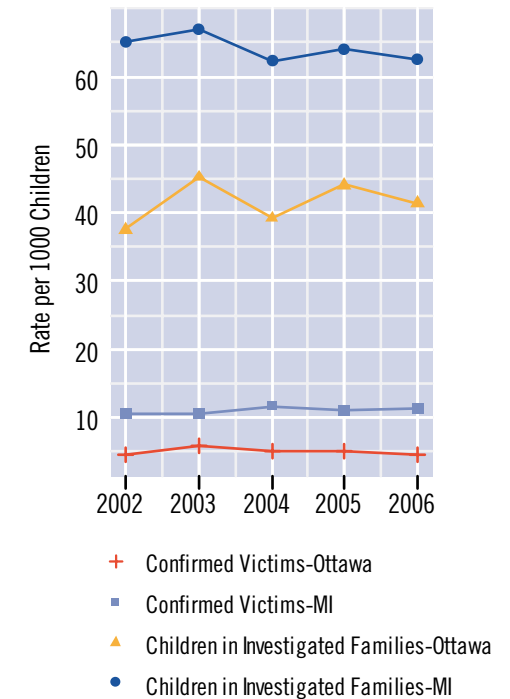
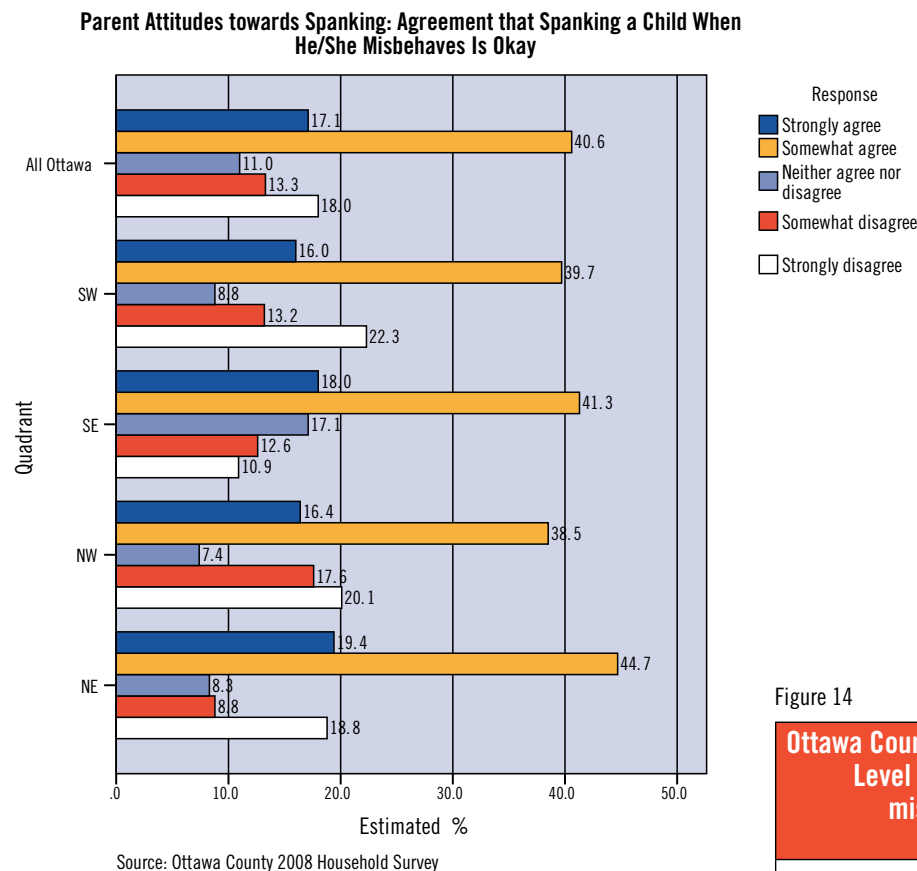




Figure 13



While less serious than outright child abuse or neglect, harsh parenting practices such as spanking can have negative consequences for our community's children. Research has determined that spanking actually increases aggressive, antisocial, and delinquent behavior in children; and spanking also carries significant potential to turn into child abuse (Gershoff, 2002).

Household Survey data showed;

- Nearly 58 percent of Ottawa County parents expressed favorable attitudes towards spanking, indicating that they somewhat (40.6%) or strongly (17.1%) agree that spanking a child is appropriate when the child misbehaves (Figure 13).
- Parent attitudes towards spanking did not differ significantly across demographic subgroups such as county quadrant, Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic origin, parent age, marital status, income category, or education level (Figure 14).

Think tank members felt these findings may suggest that many Ottawa County parents lack knowledge or understanding of the potential harmful effects of harsh parenting practices, of age-appropriate expectations for child behavior, or of effective alternatives for maintaining family discipline.

For further analysis of the issue of domestic violence in Ottawa County, see the "Community Support & Care Systems" section of this Assessment.

Figure 14

Ottawa County Parents' Attitudes Towards Spanking Level of agreement with: "When a child misbehaves... spanking is okay" By Parent Gender		
	Sex	
	Male	Female
Neutral/Disapprove Total	35	49
Strongly disagree	14	21.6
Somewhat disagree	10.1	16.2
Neither agree nor disagree	10.9	11.2
Approve Total	65	51
Somewhat agree	42.4	39
Strongly agree	22.7	12

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the p=.05 level.

Safe and Nurturing School and Community Environments

All Ottawa County children deserve to feel safe where they live and go to school. However, data suggest that our schools and neighborhoods can be and feel distinctly unsafe for far too many youth. Aspects of school and community safety explored in this assessment include school bullying and violence, safe neighborhoods, and strong school-family connections.

Safe School Environment

Bullying and school conflict can result in both physical harm and severe emotional distress on the part of bullying victims, creating negative feelings about school and in some cases leading students to truancy as a means of avoiding unpleasant or unsafe situations. According to the 2007 Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey;

- Approximately 4 percent of students, down from 6 percent in 2005, indicated that they did not go to school on one or more days in the last month because they felt unsafe at school.
- This corresponds with current Household Survey data indicating that an estimated 6.8 percent of Ottawa County parents are “very worried” that their child could get bullied at school, and approximately 55.7 percent who indicate that they are at least a little worried about this real or potential issue (Figure 15).

What is not yet known from the available data is the extent to which students, parents, and schools have the knowledge and resources to effectively combat this problem; this is an issue that may lend itself to further exploration in the community.



Figure 15

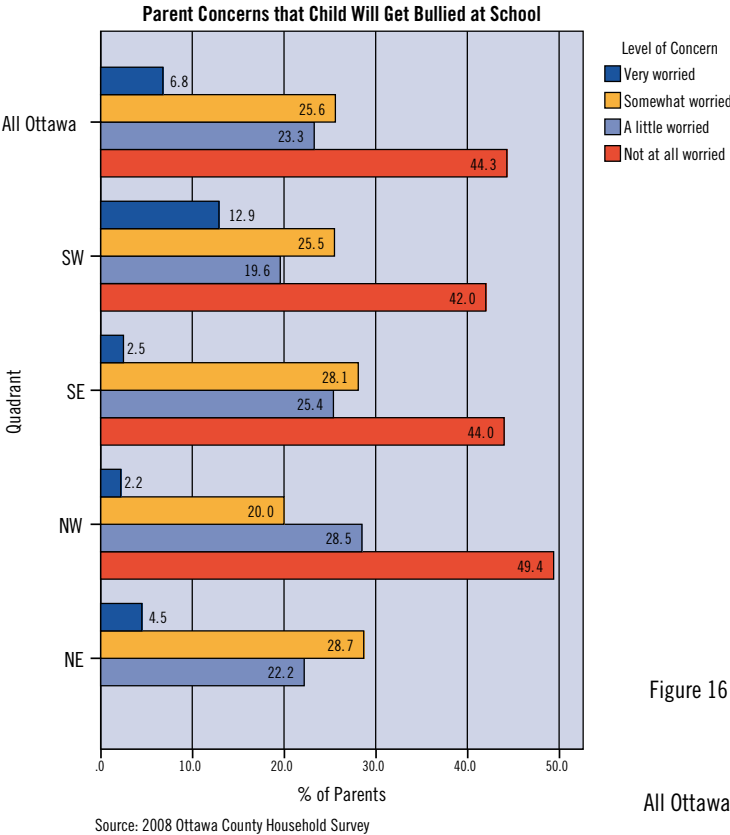
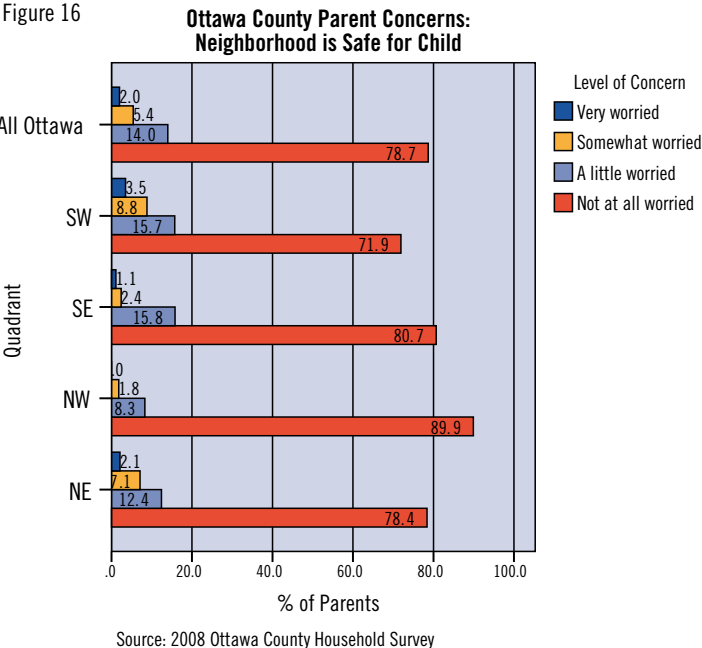


Figure 16



Available data do suggest that a considerable number of Ottawa County youth may be at risk for engaging in or being the victim of violent acts. In the 2007 Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey it was revealed that:

- Approximately 15 percent, down from 16 percent in 2005, of students indicated that they had carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club in the past 30 days.
- 9.7 percent, down from 12 percent in 2005, said they had been threatened or injured with a weapon one or more times in the past year.
- In addition, approximately 25 percent of all students indicated that it was somewhat to very easy for them to access a handgun.

Safe Neighborhood Environments

- Overall, Household Survey findings suggest that the vast majority (78.7%) of Ottawa County parents are “not at all worried” that their neighborhood is unsafe for their child (Figure 16).

However, it is unclear whether parents’ beliefs correspond with youth experiences of their own neighborhoods: In the 2005 OCYAS study, nearly 48 percent of students were classified as at risk on the “community disorganization scale,” which assesses neighborhood attributes such as graffiti, fights, drug selling, and feeling safe.

There were statistically significant differences in parent worries about neighborhood safety across quadrants and by ethnic origin:

- Parents in the southwest quadrant were most likely to report that they were at least a little worried about their children’s safety in the neighborhood, while those in the northwest quadrant were least likely to be worried (Figure 16).
- An estimated 32.9 percent of Hispanic parents are worried about neighborhood safety compared with 19.2 percent of non-Hispanic parents (Figure 17).
- A 2007 Search Institute Survey completed in the northwest quadrant of the county reported that 34 percent of 4th graders did not feel safe at home, school, or in their neighborhood.

Although parents generally felt their neighborhood was safe for their children, fewer were confident that their children were completely safe from the influences of gangs or drugs:

- 42.5 percent indicated that they were at least a little worried about this possibility (Figure 18).

Such concerns may not be unfounded: In the 2005 OCYAS study, 46 percent of school students were classified as at-risk on the “perceived availability of drugs and handguns scale,” which describes the students’ perception of availability of or access to alcohol, drugs, or firearms.



This study also found that 12 percent of youth in 8th–12th grades had smoked marijuana in the past month.

- Hispanic parents reported that they were “very worried” about gangs and drugs nearly four times as often as non-Hispanic parents (26.8% vs. 7.6%). Additionally, 18.8 percent of low/very-low income parents reported being very worried about gangs and drugs, compared with only 4.3 percent of middle/high income parents. 23.1 percent of parents with no college education reported being very worried, compared with 10.2 percent of those with some college and 2 percent of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher (Figure 19).
- In addition, slightly over 39 percent of parents indicated that they were at least a little worried that their child’s peers may be a bad influence (Figure 20).

Family-School Connections

Active parent engagement in a child’s education and positive family-school relationships are potential protective factors that can help children succeed. In some ways, Ottawa County appears to be doing well in this regard: Over 88 percent of parents indicated that, if they had concerns about their children, they were confident they could get help from their schools. There were no significant differences across quadrants or any demographic subgroups, although data suggest that the confidence in schools may be even higher among Hispanic parents than among non-Hispanic parents (Figures 22-23).

Figure 17

Ottawa County Parent Concerns: Neighborhood is Safe for Child By Hispanic vs. Non-Hispanic and Education		
Hispanic	Not Worried	Worried
Yes	67.1	32.9
No	80.8	19.2
Education		
High School or Less	73.6	26.4
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	72.7	27.3
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	88.6	11.4

“Worried” = responses indicating at least “a little worried” on original item scale.

Figure 19

Ottawa County Parent Concerns: Child Exposure to Gangs/Drugs By Income, Hispanic vs. Non-Hispanic and Education				
	Not at all worried	A little worried	Somewhat worried	Very worried
Income Category				
Low/Very Low Income	51.6	18.9	10.8	18.8
Middle/High Income	59.7	16.0	19.9	4.3
Hispanic				
Yes	46.4	8.3	18.5	26.8
No	59.5	18.2	14.7	7.6
Education				
High School or Less	45.6	13.0	18.4	23.1
Some College/ 2-Yr Degree or Certificate	56.9	20.6	12.3	10.2
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	66.7	15.2	16.1	2.0

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Note the difference in concern between parents with a high-school education and parents with a 4-year college education in the ‘very worried’ column.

Figure 18

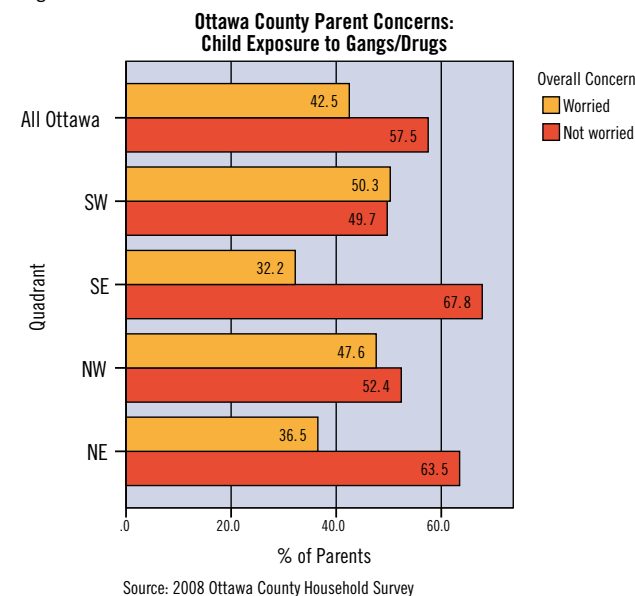


Figure 20

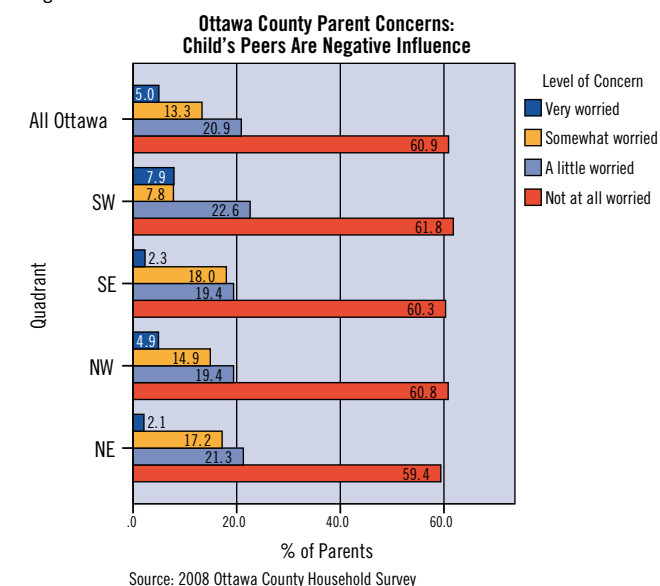




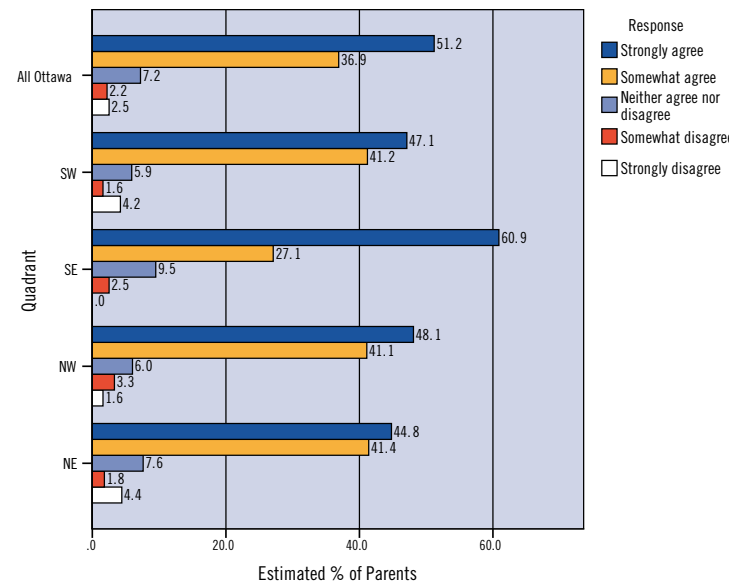
Figure 21

Percent of Ottawa County Students (8 th , 10 th , and 12 th Grades) Reporting Drug and Alcohol Use in the Past Month by Type of Substance	
Drug/Alcohol Consumption	Percent reporting use within past 30 days
Alcohol – 1 or more drinks	30%
Alcohol – 5 or more drinks in a row (binge drinking)	17%
Marijuana	12%
Inhalants	7%
Amphetamines	5%
Cocaine	3%
Hallucinogen	3%
Methamphetamines	2%

Source: Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey, 2005

Figure 22

Parent Level of Agreement: "If I had a concern about my child, I am confident that I could go to his/her school for help."



Source: Ottawa County 2008 Household Survey

Figure 23

Level of confidence that parent could go to their child's school for help with concerns		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Strongly agree	Estimated #	41,973	4,495	7,198	15,356	14,923
	Estimated %	51.2%	44.8%	48.1%	60.9%	47.1%
Somewhat agree	Estimated #	30,183	4,151	6,146	6,831	13,054
	Estimated %	36.9%	41.4%	41.1%	27.1%	41.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	Estimated #	5,911	763	891	2,399	1,858
	Estimated %	7.2%	7.6%	6.0%	9.5%	5.9%
Somewhat disagree	Estimated #	1,832	179	495	642	516
	Estimated %	2.2%	1.8%	3.3%	2.5%	1.6%
Strongly disagree	Estimated #	2,008	437	235	0	1,335
	Estimated %	2.5%	4.4%	1.6%	.0%	4.2%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County parents

Cross-Area Linkages

Family economics is covered in more detail in the "Basic Needs and Financial Stability" section

Issues of abuse/neglect are explored further in the "Community Support and Care Systems" section

Resident awareness of and means of accessing information about services in the community are explored in the "Community Infrastructure" section

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ISSUE AREAS:

- Transportation
- Service Systems Coordination and Duplication of Services
- Agency Capacity Building

Thank you to the following municipal leaders for attending the initial meeting that set the direction for this section:

Pat VerDuin, formerly of Ottawa County Juvenile Services, Host

Alan Vanderberg, County of Ottawa, Host

James Beelen, Allendale Charter Township

Craig Bessinger, City of Ferrysburg

Bill Cargo, Grand Haven Charter Township

Mayor Donald Van Doeselaar, City of Hudsonville

Susan Howell, Community Access Line of the Lakeshore

Timothy Klunder, City of Zeeland

Connie Langeland, Polkton Charter Township

Arthur Lucas, Polkton Charter Township

Patrick McGinnis, City of Grand Haven

Joanne Marcetti, Grand Haven Charter Township

Mayor Al McGeehan, City of Holland

John Nash, Spring Lake Township

Steven R. Patrick, City of Coopersville

Stuart Visser, Park Township

Todd Wolters, Olive Township

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

This assessment addresses a wide array of issues, ranging from economic self-sufficiency to healthcare access, healthy lifestyles, special needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and providing strong foundations for our community's young people. However, certain broad issues cut across these various domains and have a great deal of influence on how these issues can be dealt with at the community level. This section addresses three of these areas: (1) transportation; (2) service systems coordination; and (3) the capacity of local agencies to meet community needs.

Transportation

Access to reliable sources of transportation has become a necessity of modern life in order to travel to and from work, shopping, medical appointments, and other errands. The U.S. Census and 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey data indicate that the majority of Ottawa County residents rely on their cars to meet their daily transportation needs (Figures 1 and 2). While Household Survey findings indicate that car use predominates across all demographic subgroups, those most likely to report *not* driving included those with low or very low income levels (13.8% non-drivers compared with 1.3% of those with middle/high income) and those aged 18–24 (22.7% of whom are non-drivers compared with 2.4–8.5% of other age groups). Of note, the lowest rates of car usage among subgroups examined were reported among those who indicated they were currently not working but looking for a job. Over one-third of this group in Ottawa County (34.3%) indicated that they do not use a car for their daily transportation needs. In contrast, only 7.3 percent of those who are not employed and *not* looking for a job indicated that they don't drive. This difference raises questions about the extent to which lack of reliable transportation may be inhibiting efforts by out-of-work Ottawa County residents to find new employment.

Figure 1

Modes of Transportation Used by Ottawa County Adults to Meet Everyday Transportation Needs		
Mode of Transportation	Estimated Number Using	Percent
Drive	179,509	94.2%
Walk	17,104	9%
Rides from Friend/Relative	13,347	7%
Bike	7,594	4%
Carpool	7,515	3.9%
Public Transportation	2,775	1.5%
Other	1,082	0.6%
Ride Service	883	0.5%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: All adults aged 18 and older

Figure 2

Means Of Transportation to Work for Ottawa County Workers Aged 16 and Older	
Car, truck, or van	92.90%
Drove alone	84.40%
Carpooled	8.50%
In 2-person carpool	7.10%
In 3-person carpool	0.60%
In 4-or-more person carpool	0.80%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.50%
Walked	2.40%
Bicycle	0.40%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	0.70%
Worked at home	3.10%

Source: 2006 American Community Survey
Universe: Employed individuals aged 16 and older





Although the car is the predominant mode of transportation in Ottawa County, the ongoing existence and expansion of viable alternatives to driving is likely to play an important role in both the quality of life of residents as well as the ongoing economic health of the community. With gasoline prices and supply being extremely volatile, more and more Americans are contemplating ways of reducing their car use. Ottawa County residents are no exception, with an estimated 67 percent of adults who currently drive indicating that they would consider an alternative to driving—such as carpooling, bicycling, or walking—at least two days per week (Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey).

Public Transportation in Ottawa County

According to the American Public Transportation Association, Ottawa County has only two public transit options, which are limited to two of the four Ottawa County quadrants: Harbor Transit in Grand Haven and Max Transit in the Greater Holland area. Within Harbor Transit and MAX Transit, service is somewhat limited, both in geographical area and schedule times. Both systems offer some form of “on-demand” service, and MAX (Holland) offers set routes. However, with over 270,000 individuals in the county, the needs for expanded local transportation systems and the addition of regional transportation options are of primary concern, especially to low income families.

While some social service agencies also offer assistance with transportation, these are often not well known or available to the public at large. These include Grand Rapids Area Transit Authority, Allegan County Transportation, Ambucab, Georgetown Senior Center, Good Samaritan Ministries, Hope Network, Last Call Ministries, Life Services System, Love INC (Allendale and Hudsonville), North Ottawa County Council on Aging, and Tri-Cities Ministries.

In 2007, Call 2-1-1 staff reported that one of the primary unmet needs in Ottawa County was “transportation expense payment assistance,” indicating that there are Ottawa County residents who have difficulty paying for transportation. A 2007 MAX transportation study of the Greater Holland area estimated that 4,890 people had unmet transportation needs. The study went on to say that due to this unmet need:

- 44.4 percent of agencies reported inability to provide needed services
- 39.5 percent of agencies reported decreased participation in programs
- 18.5 percent reported clients lost jobs

Although there is clearly a need for public transportation in Ottawa County and the economic and environmental benefits of public transportation are well known, actual public transportation usage in Ottawa County is only 0.78 percent of workers over 16 by 2006 American Community Survey estimates and 1.5 percent of all residents over 18 per the 2008 Household Survey.

Improving Public Transportation in Ottawa County

When considering the cost/benefit of public transportation, municipalities often refer to low usage numbers as a reason to not add or expand services, and focus instead on road repair due to the large percentage of their populations who rely on cars as their primary mode of transportation. This dynamic drives a transportation dilemma in Ottawa County: To make public transportation affordable to both the municipality and the population, it must have higher usage numbers. However, local residents indicate that the current system needs additional improvements in order to become an attractive option for frequent use. Specifically, the 2008 Household Survey data reveals that an estimated 25,199

Figure 3

Desired Changes to Public Transportation by Those Who Currently Do Not Use and Those Who Currently Use, by Rank and Percentage				
Changes That Would Make Public Transportation More Accessible	Don't Currently Use but Would Consider Public Transportation	Rank	Currently Use Public Transportation	Rank
More/Better Routes	41.3%	1	1.4%	9
Other	16.9%	2	5%	4
Bus Stop More Convenient or Easier to Get to	14%	3	42.5%	1
No Changes	11.5%	4	21.6%	2
More Frequent Schedule	8.1%	5	4.8%	6
Later Hours	2.5%	6	1.4%	9
Cost	2.5%	7	14.3%	3
Improved Safety on Bus or at Bus Stop	1.9%	8	5%	4
Better Information about the Bus	1.4%	9	1.6%	8
Earlier Hours	0%	10	0%	10
More Comfortable	0%	10	0%	10
Cleaner	0%	10	2.3%	7

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: All adults aged 18 and over



people, or 13.2 percent of Ottawa County's population, who currently do not use public transportation would consider it if it were more accessible (Figure 6).

The 2003 study conducted by the Lakeshore Center for Independent Living found that more than 60 percent of low income families responding reported that they would use MAX to ride to work, to grocery and retail shopping stores, and to medical appointments if a new MAX route opened within one-fourth mile of their residence. In the Greater Holland area these responses were strongest in Olive Township, Zeeland Township, and the City of Holland.

An April 2007 MAX survey showed that 48 percent of the respondents said that bus routes do not cover the necessary geography, and 31 percent of the respondents said that the frequency of bus schedule times was insufficient. These findings are echoed in the 2008 Household Survey, which found that among the untapped market for public transportation (i.e., those who do not currently use public transportation but would consider it two or more days per week), more and/or better routes was the most desirable improvement cited by respondents, followed by "other" unspecified factors and making the bus stop more convenient or easier to reach (Figure 3). In contrast, Ottawa County residents who currently use public transportation are generally satisfied with the routes, but frequently cited the ease/convenience of reaching bus stops as a desired change.

Regional linkages are particularly important for transportation systems in areas such as Ottawa County because of the economic interdependence of our area with other locations in the West Michigan metropolitan area. According to 2006 American Community Survey figures, over one-third of employed Ottawa County residents work in another

Michigan county (see Figure 4), and only 10.3 percent of residents both live and work within a particular Ottawa County city or village recognized by the Census¹. The high percentage of residents spread across the county's townships and the need for many residents to commute extensively within or outside the county for work are key considerations in planning and operating the county's transportation infrastructure.

Further Transportation Alternatives

Finding Efficiencies through Carpooling

The percentage of Ottawa County residents willing to consider carpooling was highest for those in the 18–24 age group (46.9%), decreasing to 35 percent of those age 25–44 and 31 percent of those between 45 and 64 years of age. Female residents are also somewhat more likely to consider carpooling (37%) than males (28.2%).

The population of Ottawa County is comparable to that of Kalamazoo and Saginaw counties. Compared with these counties, Ottawa County ranks highest in carpool usage (and eighth among all counties in the state). Public transportation usage in Ottawa is less than that of Kalamazoo County but significantly higher than Saginaw County. (Figure 5).

As Figure 6 shows, over 30 percent of Ottawa County adults—approximately 58,000 individuals—indicate that they would consider carpooling two or more days per week. Given this interest, greater education about and promotion of carpooling options may significantly reduce the economic and environmental burden of driving for local families. Several different web sites and options to join a car

¹ Census-designated places within Ottawa County include: the towns of Allendale, Beechwood, and Jenison; the village of Spring Lake; and the cities of Coopersville, Ferrysburg, Grand Haven, Holland, Hudsonville, and Zeeland.



Figure 4

Location of Place of Work: Ottawa County Employed Residents Aged 16 and Older	
Place Of Work	%
Ottawa residents working in Michigan	99.50%
Ottawa residents working in Ottawa	62.10%
Ottawa residents working outside Ottawa	37.40%
Ottawa residents working outside Michigan	0.50%
Ottawa residents living in a census-designated place (CDP) within Ottawa	34.80%
Ottawa residents living in a CDP and working in the same CDP	10.30%
Ottawa residents living in a CDP and working outside that CDP	24.50%
Ottawa residents not living in a CDP	65.20%

Source: US Census Bureau; 2006 American Community Survey

Figure 5

Ottawa County Percent and Rank of Carpool and Public Transportation Usage by Working Population over 16					
County	Working Population (over 16 yrs)	% Using Carpool	Statewide Rank	%Using Public Transportation	Statewide Rank
Kalamazoo	128,665	8.7%	16	1.09%	5
Ottawa	119,755	9.8%	8	.78%	10
Saginaw	87,623	6.5%	26	.44%	19

Source: US Census Bureau
2006 American Community Survey

Figure 6

Alternative Transportation in Ottawa County: Adults Who Would Consider Using Shared or Non-Automotive Transport 2+ Times/Week		
Would Consider 2 or More Days per Week:	Estimate	Percentage
Carpool	58,073	30.5%
Walk	43,410	22.8%
Bike	39,313	20.6%
Public Transportation	25,199	13.2%
Would Consider at Least One of the Above and...		
Currently Drive	121,070	67.4%
Don't Currently Drive	7,582	68.4%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: All adults aged 18 and over

Figure 7

Alternative Transportation in Ottawa County: Subgroup Differences in Willingness to Consider Shared or Non-Automotive Transport		
Don't Currently Use But Would Consider...	Subgroups More Likely to Consider Subgroup (% who would consider)	Subgroups Less Likely to Consider Subgroup (% who would consider)
Carpooling	English speakers (34.3%) Younger adults (aged 18-24) (46.9%) Females (37%)	Predominantly Spanish speakers* (8.8%) Adults age 65 and older (19.6%) Males (28.2%)
Bicycling	Adults under 65 (22- 29%) Males (28.0%)	Adults age 65 and older (14.3%) Females (19.2%)
Walking	Females (33%) Non-Hispanics (31.5%) Adults 65 and older (40%) and those 45-64 years old (32.8%)	Males (26.8%) Hispanics (19.8%) Younger adults (17.7% of those aged 18-24)
Public Transportation	Younger adults aged 18-24 (27.9%)	Adults aged 25 and older (10.8 – 14.9%)

*Individuals who opted to take the survey in Spanish rather than English.

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: All adults aged 18 and over



or van pool exist, but resident awareness of these may be low. For example, the Rapid transportation service in Grand Rapids offers vanpool options, (www.ridetherapid.org/vancarpooling/); and websites such as erideshare.com, carpoolworld.com, and carpoolconnect.com offer a means for those looking to form or join carpools to connect with others who share compatible routes and schedules.

Moving on Our Own Power: Walking and Cycling

In addition to carpooling, 36.8 percent of adults who currently drive indicate that they would consider adding walking and/or biking as part of their transportation routine. While we do not have the data to determine how best to encourage residents to translate this interest into action, the fact that so many residents are considering human-powered transportation may be good news for the physical health of the community. As Figure 7 shows, walking and cycling appeal somewhat differently to males and females, and adults over 65 were more than twice as likely as those under 25 to indicate that they would consider walking as a significant mode of transport.



Also of note, adults of Hispanic origin were significantly less likely to indicate an interest in walking than were non-Hispanic adults. This difference may be due to any combination of cultural norms, safety concerns, disparities in the walkability of particular neighborhoods, or other factors. Those seeking to promote walking and physical activity among the Hispanic residents of Ottawa County may wish to examine these issues more closely.

Coordination of Community Service Systems

Public Knowledge of and Access to Community Services

For individuals and families needing help, the first step to getting assistance is in knowing where to look for it. And, for those public and nonprofit agencies seeking to reach out to their target populations, knowing the natural channels that local residents use to address their problems can help to communicate and market their services more effectively.

Several information and referral specialists exist in Ottawa County, including the 2-1-1 helpline, which takes calls 24 hours a day, has certified call specialists, and has a large database including client qualification requirements. However, as indicated in Figure 8 below, less than 3 percent of the Ottawa County respondents at large indicated that they would turn to 2-1-1 for help. Further examination of the reasons behind the lack of local awareness of 2-1-1 and communication and education campaigns about this resource may help local residents to more consistently and effectively connect with programs and services. In addition, because 2-1-1 call volume and type of calls is often used as a proxy indicator of community need, providers should be educated that 2-1-1 information may only currently be scratching the surface of needs in Ottawa County.

Household Survey findings indicate that, when faced with personal or family trouble, nearly 28 percent of Ottawa County adults overall report that they don't know where to turn, slightly less than would turn to their church or congregation. Further, over 33 percent of low-income residents—the segment of the population who may most often need the basic need services of food, shelter and clothing—indicated that they do not know where they would turn for help (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Where Ottawa County Adults Would Turn for Help			
Where Would You Turn for Help?	Overall Percent	Subgroups More Likely to Use... Subgroup (% who would use)	Subgroups Less Likely to Use... Subgroup (% who would use)
Don't Know	27.8%	Males (31.6%) Non-Parents (33.6%) Low/very low income (33.5%) Education level high school or less (39.7%)	Females (24.2%) Parents (20.7%) Middle/high income (25.3%) Some college or college graduate (21 and 22.6%, respectively)
Church/ Congregation	26.2%	Southeast Quadrant (36.0%) Adults with at least some college or a 4-year degree (29-30%)	Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest quadrants (22.4, 19.3, and 24.3%, respectively) Adults with no college (18.5%)
Friend or Relative	16.6%	Hispanic (24.8%) Some college (21.8%) or college graduate (17.1%)	Non-Hispanic (15.5%) High school or less (10.8%)
Doctor	12.8%	Females (15.2%) Adults with some college (16.7%)	Males (10.2%) Adults with no college (9.2%) or with a 4 year college degree (12.2%)
Internet	11.4%	25-64 age group (approximately 13%) Parents (14.6%) Employed (13.6-15.9%) Some college (14.7%) or college graduate (13%)	65 or older (4.2%) 18-24 year olds (9.1%) Non-parents (8.8%) Not employed (5.9 – 8.9%) High school or less education (6.6%)
Other	9.4%	Parents (11.6%), especially parents of children under 5 (14.7%)	Non-parents (7.5%)
Nonprofit Agency	5.5%	Hispanic (12.7%) Low/very low income (9.1%)	Non-Hispanic (4.4%) Middle/high income (4.6%)
2-1-1	2.9%	Parents (4.5%), especially parents of children aged 0 through 5 (6.2%)	Non-parents (1.7%) or parents without children aged 5 and younger (2.0%)
Yellow Pages	2.9%	No significant differences across subgroups	

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: All adults aged 18 and over

Informal and non-agency resources were the most commonly mentioned sources of help. Those Ottawa County residents who could identify a source they would turn to most frequently identified their church or congregation. Congregations are historically a central aspect of community life for many Ottawa county residents; given this tendency, campaigns to raise awareness of 2-1-1 and other community programs and services at the congregation level may be an efficient strategy for reaching a large segment of the public. Of note, only about 11 percent indicated that they would use the internet to seek out information on addressing their needs. While nonprofit organizations and agencies are increasingly developing an internet presence, it is clear that providers must engage in active non-internet outreach as well.

Certain population subgroups within Ottawa County may be more or less likely to seek service information from various sources (Figure 8). For the most part, differences in resident preferences for seeking service information were not affected by county quadrant of residence, although southeast quadrant residents were more likely to indicate they would use their congregation to identify sources of help. Providers should familiarize themselves with the information-seeking preferences of the population subgroups they are engaged with in order to craft the most effective outreach and information strategies for the areas they serve.

As noted throughout this assessment, many economic, social, and health issues are intertwined. For example, a client with a need for food assistance is also likely to experience issues with housing, utility bill payment, access to healthcare, and more. Clients approaching an agency for one type of service often need an efficient pathway for accessing a range of other services as well. However, the process of dealing with multiple agencies, each with individual intake procedures and qualification standards, can contribute to a sense of being overwhelmed and potentially discourage clients from approaching agencies for assistance.

Part of this confusion lies within the variety of approaches to service delivery across the county. In the Key Stakeholder Survey for this study, local experts felt that many residents are unclear about the extent of health and human services resources available within their municipality. This notion was reinforced at a meeting of municipal leaders who agreed that the historical philosophies on who does and does not offer direct service or funding differ considerably among the many municipalities represented in Ottawa County. For the typical Ottawa County resident, a lack of knowledge about the types of services offered in one's area can add to the confusion in understanding how and whether to access help.

Duplication of Services

Adding to the confusion of understanding where to turn for services is the fact that certain services are offered by a multitude of organizations. Respondents in the Key Stakeholder Survey perceived duplication of services to be the biggest infrastructure issue, and indicated that a concerted effort toward regional collaboration and coordination would be worthwhile.

For example, the Lakeshore Center for Independent Living Study on Transportation found only two public mass transit systems in the county, but more than a dozen non-profit groups offering some type of transportation assistance. Collaboration and pooling of resources in this area may yield significant efficiencies while better serving the local population.



Figure 9

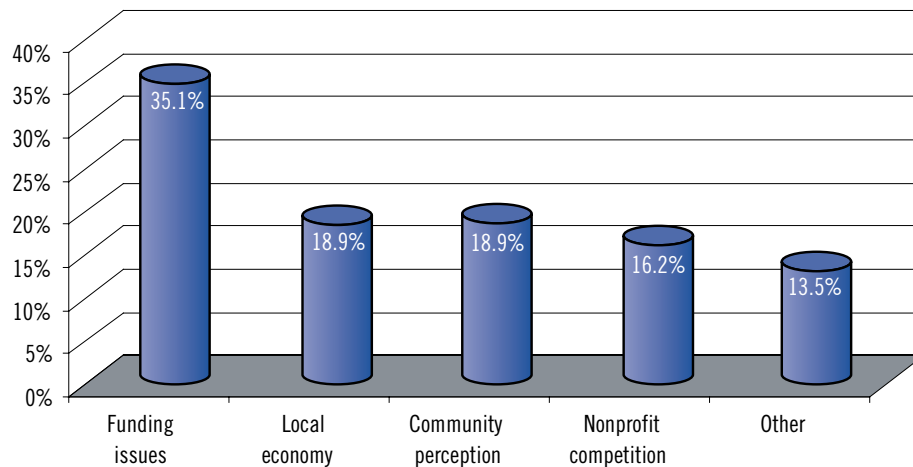
Top Issues Facing Ottawa County Nonprofit Sector

Issue Area	Response	Percent	Percent of Responses
<i>Note: Organizations could write in an unlimited number of responses for this question. Percentages were calculated using two methods.</i>		Out of 46 total responses	Out of 37 total organizations
Funding issues	13	28.3%	40.6%
Local economy	7	15.2%	21.9%
Community perception	7	15.2%	21.9%
Nonprofit competition	6	13.0%	18.8%
Other	5	10.9%	15.6%
Volunteer management	2	4.3%	6.3%
Nonprofit collaboration	2	4.3%	6.3%
Fundraising	2	4.3%	6.3%
Meeting demand	2	4.3%	6.3%
Total	46	100.0%	124.3%

Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

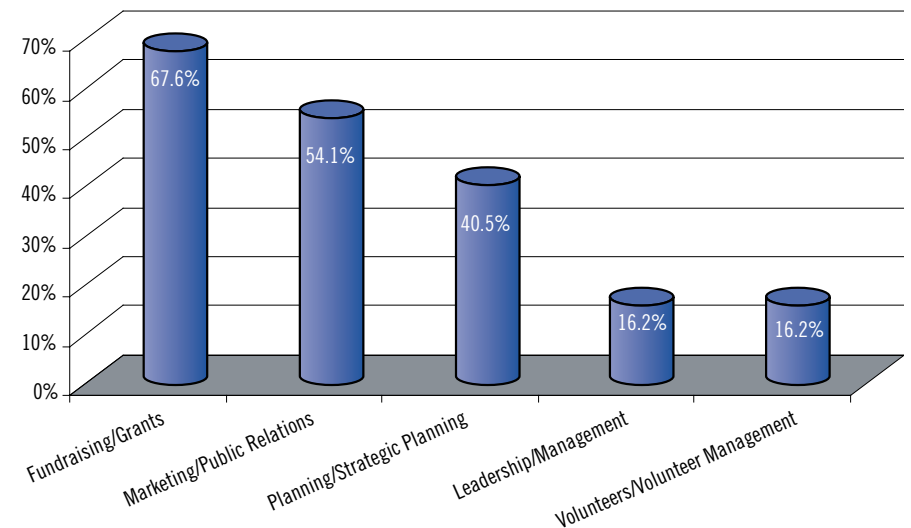


Figure 10 **Top 5 Reported Issues Facing Ottawa County Nonprofit Sector**



Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

Figure 12 **Top 5 Ottawa County Nonprofit Critical Areas of Need**



Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

Figure 11

Reported Nonprofit Critical Areas of Need in Ottawa County

Need Area	Responses	Percent	Percent of Responses
<i>Note: Organizations could choose up to three responses for this question. Percentages were calculated using two methods.</i>		Out of 106 total responses	Out of 37 total organizations
Fundraising/Grants Development/Advancement	25	23.6%	67.6%
Marketing/Public Relations	20	18.9%	54.1%
Planning/Strategic Planning	15	14.2%	40.5%
Leadership/Management	6	5.7%	16.2%
Volunteers/Volunteer Management	6	5.7%	16.2%
Board Development/Governance	5	4.7%	13.5%
Financial Management/Budgeting	5	4.7%	13.5%
Evaluation/Outcome Measurement	4	3.8%	10.8%
Research Community Needs	4	3.8%	10.8%
Operations	4	3.8%	10.8%
Technology/Computers/Internet	3	2.8%	8.1%
Facilities	3	2.8%	8.1%
Personnel/Human Resources	2	1.9%	5.4%
Legal	2	1.9%	5.4%
Advocacy	2	1.9%	5.4%
Risk Management	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total	106	100.0%	286.5%

Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

Agency Capacity Building

In order to successfully serve the community, Ottawa County nonprofit organizations must make sure they stay viable and responsive to the public. To do this, they must continue to address their own financial and organizational requirements, stay sensitive to public need, comment, and criticism, and market themselves toward public awareness. The following section looks at concerns addressed by Ottawa County nonprofit groups, taken from the 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, published by the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University.

Nonprofit groups also express concern about needed funds for survival, as well as apprehension about the current economy. These two issues, in addition to community perception of nonprofits, top the list of current issues facing Ottawa County's nonprofit sector (Figures 9 and 10).

The Johnson Center reports that the most crucial need expressed by Ottawa County nonprofit groups is for fundraising and grant development (Figures 11 and 12). In addition to their need for funds, Ottawa county nonprofits also indicate needs in the area of public relations and marketing. This interest among nonprofits in raising public awareness of nonprofit programs and services corresponds with the scattered approaches to obtaining information about services noted by respondents to the 2008 Household Survey.

In addition to current needs, the Johnson Center survey asked Ottawa County nonprofit organizations to project what their needs would be in three–five years. The top responses continue to be in the areas of fundraising, public relations, and planning (Figures 13 and 14).

In business and industry, it takes successful training to ensure a capable and competent workforce. The same applies to nonprofit groups, who need to make sure that they use their resources wisely and efficiently. The 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile reports that the three top training needs for nonprofit groups are in marketing, fundraising, and management (Figure 15 and 16). The responses suggest that a considerable portion of nonprofits' focus is on continuing to stay receptive in the public eye, as well as making sure that funds are procured and that agencies are managed appropriately.

Given the broad range of services that nonprofit agencies contribute to community life, it is essential that these organizations continually build their capacity to address the community's challenges. Capacity building helps nonprofit personnel stay attuned to current procedures and technology, connected to other similar groups in the nonprofit sector, and informed about best practices in their areas of programming. The 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile reports that the greatest concern to Ottawa County nonprofit organizations is funding for capacity building, as well as coaching services for the executive director (Figure 17). Responses also included a desire for more workshops and opportunities for networking, which can benefit those within nonprofit agencies, and ultimately the community.



Figure 13

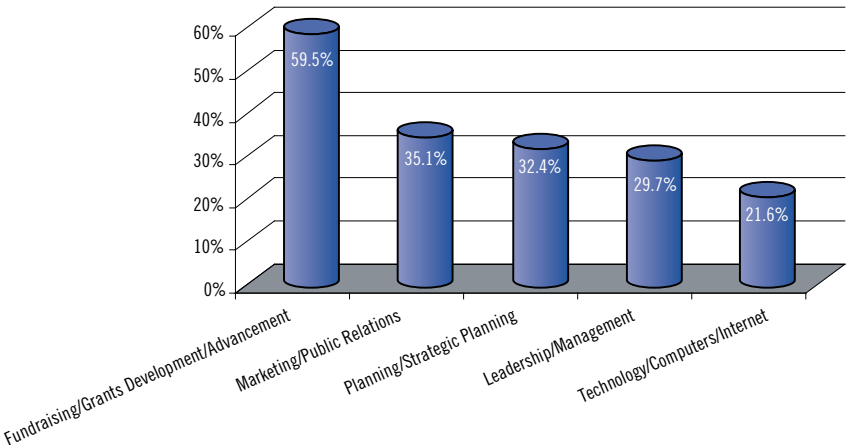
Ottawa County Nonprofit Compelling Needs in 3-5 Years

Need Area	Responses	Percent	Percent of Responses
<i>Note: Organizations could choose an unlimited number of responses for this question. Percentages were calculated using two methods.</i>		Out of 107 total responses	Out of 37 total organizations
Fundraising/Grants Development/Advancement	22	20.6%	59.5%
Marketing/Public Relations	13	12.1%	35.1%
Planning/Strategic Planning	12	11.2%	32.4%
Leadership/Management	11	10.3%	29.7%
Technology/Computers/Internet	8	7.5%	21.6%
Personnel/Human Resources	6	5.6%	16.2%
Volunteers/Volunteer Management	5	4.7%	13.5%
Board Development/Governance	5	4.7%	13.5%
Evaluation/Outcome Measurement	5	4.7%	13.5%
Operations/Program Delivery	5	4.7%	13.5%
Financial Management/Budgeting	4	3.7%	10.8%
Research/Community Needs	4	3.7%	10.8%
Advocacy	3	2.8%	8.1%
Facilities/Equipment Management	2	1.9%	5.4%
Risk Management	1	0.9%	2.7%
Legal/Taxes	1	0.9%	2.7%
Total	107	100.0%	289.2%

Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

Figure 14

Top 5 Ottawa County Nonprofit Compelling Needs in 3-5 Years



Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

Figure 15

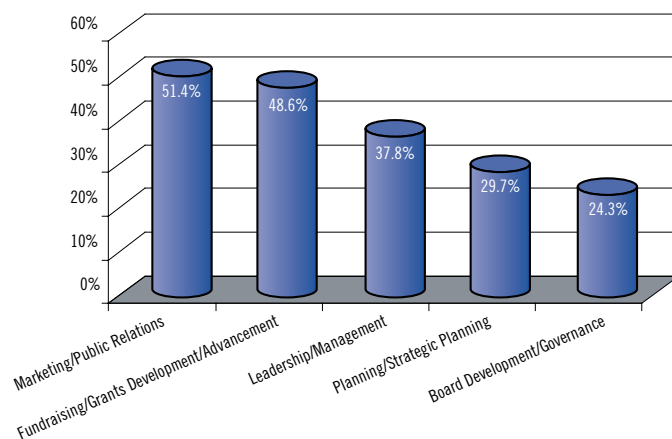
Ottawa County Nonprofit Training Needs

Need Area	Responses	Percent	Percent of Responses
<i>Note: Organizations could choose an unlimited number of responses for this question. Percentages were calculated using two methods.</i>			
		Out of 128 total responses	Out of 37 total organizations
Marketing/Public Relations	19	14.8%	51.4%
Fundraising/Grants Development/Advancement	18	14.1%	48.6%
Leadership/Management	14	10.9%	37.8%
Planning/Strategic Planning	11	8.6%	29.7%
Board Development/Governance	9	7.0%	24.3%
Evaluation/Outcome Measurement	8	6.3%	21.6%
Research/Community Needs	8	6.3%	21.6%
Personnel/Human Resources	7	5.5%	18.9%
Financial Management/Budgeting	7	5.5%	18.9%
Volunteers/Volunteer Management	6	4.7%	16.2%
Risk Management	5	3.9%	13.5%
Technology/Computers/Internet	4	3.1%	10.8%
Operations/Program Delivery	3	2.3%	8.1%
Legal/Taxes	3	2.3%	8.1%
Advocacy	3	2.3%	8.1%
Facilities/Equipment Management	3	2.3%	8.1%
Total	128	100.0%	

Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

Figure 16

Top 5 Ottawa County Nonprofit Training Needs



Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU

Figure 17

Ottawa County Nonprofit Needs for Capacity Building

Capacity Building Resources	Response	Percent	Percent of Responses
<i>Note: Organizations could choose an unlimited number of responses for this question. Percentages were calculated using two methods.</i>			
		Out of 65 total responses	Out of 37 total organizations
Grants for capacity building	17	26.2%	45.9%
Coaching services for Executive Director	16	24.6%	43.2%
Increased workshops	12	18.5%	32.4%
Networking Opportunities	11	16.9%	29.7%
Online Resources	8	12.3%	21.6%
Other	1	1.5%	2.7%
Total	65	100.0%	175.7%

Source: 2006 Nonprofit Needs Assessment Ottawa County Profile, Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU



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ISSUE AREAS:

- Meeting the Needs of Elderly Residents and People with Disabilities
- Caregivers
- Social Isolation
- Domestic Abuse

THINK TANK

Larry Erlandson, Evergreen Commons, Chair

Dina Anaya, Ottawa County Community Mental Health

Martha Cook, North Ottawa County Council on Aging

Pam Curtis, Senior Resources

Amy Florea, Senior Resources

Pam Haverdink, Georgetown Senior Center

Darcy Komejan, Children's Advocacy Center

Sindee Maxwell, American Red Cross

Gail Ringelberg, North Ottawa County Council on Aging

Ruth Stegeman, Lakeshore Disability Network

Charlie VanderBroek, Resthaven

Linda VanOpynen, ARC Advocacy Resource Center

Jo VerBeek, Evergreen Commons

COMMUNITY SUPPORT and CARE SYSTEMS

One measure of the strength and effectiveness of Ottawa County's communities is the extent to which adequate supports are in place to help our elderly residents and those with disabilities live full lives, to help those who bear the responsibility to care for an elderly or disabled family member, and to ensure that no person has to endure abuse. In addition, part of having a strong and supportive community means that community members should not feel isolated and instead should have adequate social contact with and support from others.

Meeting the Needs of Elderly Residents and People with Disabilities

The United States is experiencing a shift in its demographics as the baby boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) transitions into older adulthood. Many of the nation's issues are affected, such as healthcare, Social Security, and retirement age. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the percentage of the population 65 years and older is expected to increase by nearly a third in the next decade. This larger shift affects Ottawa County as well. Between 2000 and 2006, the percentage of

Ottawa County's population 55 and older has more than tripled, growing from 6.4 percent to over 20 percent (Figure 1), and a rapidly growing segment of the population is over 70 years of age. An aging population brings increased demand for affordable elder housing and support services such as meal delivery, transportation assistance, and in-home care.

Those of us who are healthy take for granted how easy it is to care for ourselves. We arise in the morning, shower or bathe, dress, feed ourselves, care for our children and pets, and prepare to meet the day's challenges. However, there are a significant number of us who are not able to engage in these simple actions for reasons of disability, illness, or advancing age. The ability to manage self-care is fundamental to our sense of independence and well-being. Thus, it is imperative that those who have difficulty caring for themselves receive assistance so that they are able to maintain a basic level of good health and happiness.

Figure 1

Ottawa County Population over 55 by Age Group 2000 vs. 2006			
Age	Percent of Total Population 2000	Percent of Total Population 2006	Percentage increase 2000-2006
All Over 55	6.4	20.3	217%
55 to 59 years	2.1	5.4	157%
60 to 64 years	0.7	4.0	471%
65 to 69 years	0.7	3.3	371%
70 to 74 years	1.1	2.3	109%
75 to 79 years	0.9	1.9	111%
80 to 84 years	0.5	1.7	240%
85 years and over	0.4	1.7	325%

Sources: U.S. 2000 Census, 2006 American Community Survey



The 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that approximately 3.1% of residents 16 and older have a go-outside-the-home disability (representing approximately 1.8% of residents 16–64 years of age, and 12% of those 65 years and older). (Figure 2).

According to the 2008 Household Survey, an estimated 6,274 adults in Ottawa County (3.3%) experience trouble with daily self-care activities such as fixing meals, taking a bath or shower, or dressing themselves (Figures 3 and 4).

Survey findings also indicate that there are a considerable number of adults who report a need for daily care assistance but do not receive it (Figure 6). Of those with difficulties with daily activities such as preparing meals, bathing, or dressing, an estimated 17.6 percent (1,739 individuals across the county) do not receive help.

Mobility is an important factor in helping us feel independent and connected in the greater community. We travel to work, shopping, school, church and vacation. In spite of the trend to connect with others through the Internet, most people still physically move about to accomplish everyday tasks and interact with others. It is important to look at the number of people who are experiencing limited mobility and to provide the assistance they need to stay connected to others, as well as to make sure they are getting their meals, medical supplies, household provisions, and other basic needs met.

- According to the 2008 Household Survey findings, an estimated 5.1 percent of Ottawa County adults are unable to leave their homes due to a physical or medical condition (Figure 7).
- Across quadrants, the southwest is most heavily represented, with 7.1 percent of the population experiencing conditions that limit their ability to leave the home.



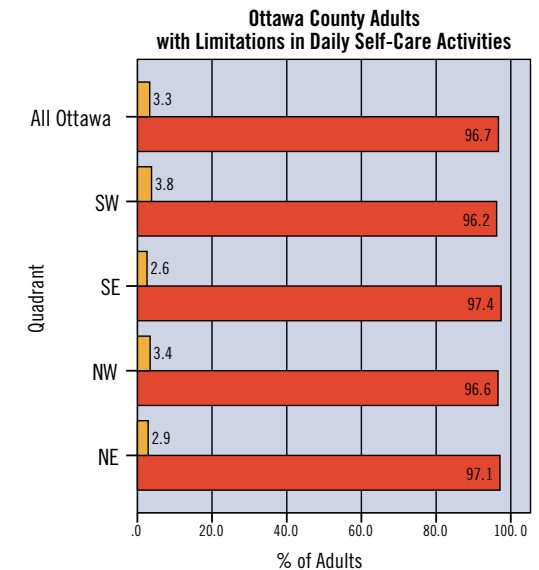
COMMUNITY SUPPORT and CARE SYSTEMS

Figure 2

Ottawa County Residents With a Disability – 2006 By Disability Type and Age Group	Age Group		
	5-15 years	16-64 years	65 years and older
Population Estimate	42,030	170,190	26,426
Estimated percent with any disability	5.0%	8.7%	32.5%
With a sensory disability	1.6%	2.3%	15.7%
With a physical disability	0.4%	4.0%	24.5%
With a mental disability	3.5%	4.1%	8.4%
With a self-care disability	0.2%	1.2%	6.4%
With a go-outside-home disability	--	1.8%	12.0%
With an employment disability	--	4.8%	--

Source: US Census Bureau — 2006 American Community Survey

Figure 3



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Difficulty with
Daily Activities

Yes

No

Figure 4

Ottawa County Adults with Limitations in Daily Self-Care Activities		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
No self-care limitation	Estimated #	184,144	23,251	38,005	49,970	72,917
	Estimated %	96.7%	97.1%	96.6%	97.4%	96.2%
Self-care limitation	Estimated #	6,274	704	1,342	1,318	2,911
	Estimated %	3.3%	2.9%	3.4%	2.6%	3.8%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older

Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are not significant at the p=.05 level



Figure 5

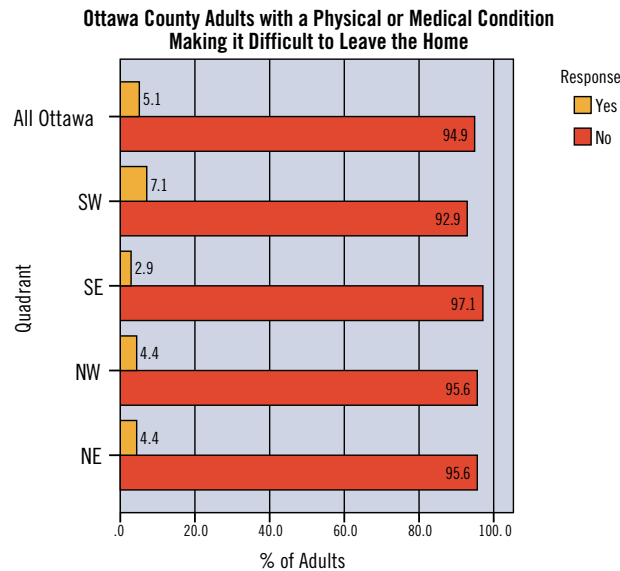
Most Frequently Reported Needs Of Adults Reporting Difficulties with Activities of Daily Living	
Reported difficulty	Percent of Adults with self-care difficulty reporting this need
House Cleaning	62.2
Shopping	44.8
Other Activities	43.8
Bathing/Hygiene	17.7
Meals	13
Dressing	4.7
Health Monitoring	4.3
Medicine	2.8

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older who report difficulties with activities of daily living

Note: Due to small unweighted cell sizes, reported estimates are considered unstable and should be interpreted cautiously.

Figure 7



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Figure 6

Adults Receiving Help for Self-Care Challenges		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Not receiving help	Estimated #	1,739	201	464	477	597
	Estimated %	17.6%	27.3%	34.6%	36.2%	20.5%
Receiving help	Estimated #	4,566	534	878	841	2,314
	Estimated %	72.4%	72.7%	65.4%	63.8%	79.5%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older

Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are not significant at the p=.05 level

Certain population subgroups were significantly more likely to report these challenges (Figure 8):

Not surprisingly, older residents reported go-outside-the-home disabilities more frequently than younger residents. 2008 Household Survey estimates indicate that 12.5 percent of Ottawa residents aged 65 and older have a condition that makes it difficult to leave home (Figure 8). This roughly corresponds to estimates from the 2006 American Community Survey (12.0%) (Figure 2).

Also shown in Figure 8, 10.2 percent of low/very low income residents report a go-outside-the-home disability, in contrast with 2.8 percent of those of middle/high income.

One of the most striking disparities in disability status was that found between Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents of Ottawa County. Overall, an estimated 9.8 percent of Hispanic adults report a disability that makes it difficult to leave home, in contrast with 4.4 percent of non-Hispanic adults (Figure 8). This disparity becomes more pronounced when looking at these differences within age group shown in Figure 9. An estimated 40 percent of Hispanic adults over 65 in Ottawa County have a health condition that makes leaving the home difficult—a rate over 3.5 times as great as for older non-Hispanic adults. The rate for Hispanic adults under 65 is 2.8 times that reported by non-Hispanic adults under 65.

These findings raise further questions about the level, nature, and underlying causes of health disparities between Ottawa's Hispanic and non-Hispanic population groups. The disparity in reported go-outside-the-home disability may be a function of both significantly poorer overall health among the Hispanic population and of more limited access to supportive resources that assist in reducing and managing physical limitations. Given the potential for cultural and language

barriers to compound the isolation of Hispanic residents with physical limitations, close attention to outreach services for this population may be warranted.

Caregivers

According to a study from the Caregiver Alliance, there are an estimated 50 million people nationwide who provide care for a disabled, sick, or elderly loved one each year. In Michigan, there are an estimated 993,928 caregivers. Although supporting their loved ones may give caregivers a sense of satisfaction, and both of the participants a deeper relationship, research suggests that caregivers are at higher risk for depression and mental health problems.

2008 Ottawa County Household Survey findings reveal that there are an estimated 10,387 adults (5.5%) who provide daily care for a loved one (Figure 10).

Caregiving roles are disproportionately borne by Ottawa County residents with lower incomes. Adults in low- or very low-income households are nearly twice as likely to indicate that they provided daily care for an older or disabled family member than those in middle- or high-income households (8.2% vs. 4.3%, respectively) (Figure 11). There were no other significant differences in caregiving by any other demographic subgroup such as age, gender, ethnicity, or education level.

Ottawa County Household Survey findings reveal that almost half of those who give care do not feel that they need additional support to perform their caregiving role. Of those who reported needing assistance, respite care, help with care and ‘other’ were the most frequently mentioned (Figure 12).

Figure 8

Adults with a Physical or Medical Condition Making it Difficult to Leave Home By Age Group, Hispanic vs Non-Hispanic, and Income		
Age Group	Yes	No
18-24	1.9	98.1
25-44	2.8	97.2
45-64	5.5	94.5
65+	12.5	87.5
Hispanic		
Yes	9.8	90.2
No	4.4	95.6
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	10.2	89.8
Middle/High Income	2.8	97.2

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the p=.05 level

Figure 10

Ottawa County Adults Providing Daily Assistance to Older Adult or Person with a Disability		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Non-Caregiver	Estimated #	180,126	22,936	38,010	49,056	71,124
	Estimated %	94.5%	95.6%	93.7%	95.8%	93.8%
Caregiver	Estimated #	10,387	1,050	2,475	2,158	4,704
	Estimated %	5.5%	4.4%	6.3%	4.2%	6.2%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older
Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are not significant at the p=.05 level

Figure 9

Adults with a Physical or Medical Condition Making it Difficult to Leave Home Differences in Rates between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Adults by Age Group	
	Percent with Physical/Medical Condition Making It Difficult to Leave Home
Over 65 and...	
...Hispanic	40.0
...Non-Hispanic	11.4
18 to 65 and...	
...Hispanic	8.4
...Non-Hispanic	3.0

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the p=.05 level

Figure 11

Ottawa County Adults Providing Daily Assistance to Older Adult or Person with a Disability by Income		
Income Category	Yes	No
Low/Very Low Income	8.2	91.8
Middle/High Income	4.3	95.7

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the p=.05 level



Figure 12

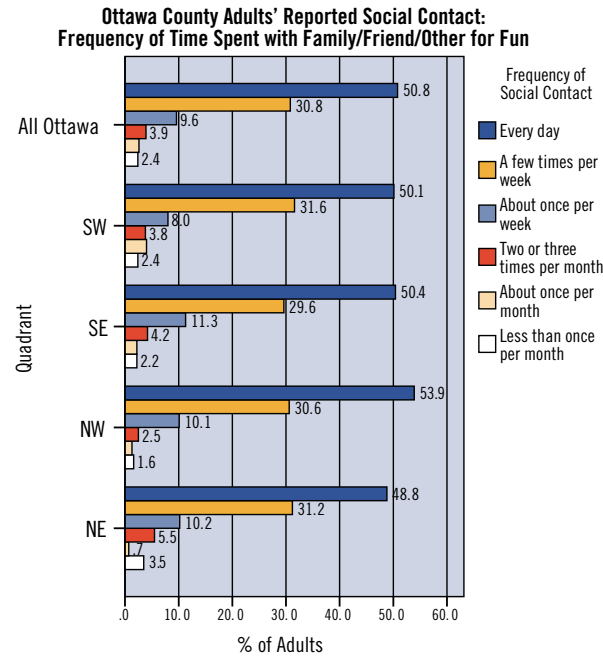
Types of Assistance Needed for Caregivers	Percent of Caregivers Indicating Need for Assistance
None	46.9
Respite Care	14.6
Other Help	14.0
Help with Care	13.3
Help With Perm. Living Situation	7.4
Training	6.6
Education/Job Help	6.5

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older who provide daily care for an older adult or person with a disability

Note: Due to small unweighted cell sizes, reported estimates are considered unstable and should be interpreted cautiously.

Figure 13



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Figure 14

Ottawa County Adults' Reported Social Contact: Frequency of Time Spent with Family/Friend/Other for Fun		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Less than once per month	Estimated #	4,485	836	641	1,153	1,855
	Estimated %	2.4%	3.5%	1.6%	2.2%	2.4%
About once per month	Estimated #	4,882	179	500	1,153	1,855
	Estimated %	2.6%	.7%	1.3%	2.2%	4.0%
Two or three times per month	Estimated #	7,394	1,316	997	2,177	2,904
	Estimated %	3.9%	5.5%	2.5%	4.2%	3.8%
About once per week	Estimated #	18,283	2,445	3,975	5,799	6,064
	Estimated %	9.6%	10.2%	10.1%	11.3%	8.0%
A few times per week	Estimated #	58,699	7,494	12,092	15,160	23,952
	Estimated %	30.8%	31.2%	30.6%	29.6%	31.6%
Every day	Estimated #	96,946	11,716	21,280	25,848	38,002
	Estimated %	50.8%	48.8%	53.9%	50.4%	50.1%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older

Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are not significant at the $p=.05$ level

Social Isolation

One of the most vital elements of the human experience is enjoying the company of others for intimate conversation, support, debate, leisure, recreation, and simply having fun. Adults in America have become more socially isolated in the last 20 years, and individuals with extensive networks of friends are not as widespread as they used to be.

2008 Ottawa County Household survey findings indicate that the vast majority (91.2%) of Ottawa County adults have social contact with others at least once per week, and over 50 percent (96,946) of residents have social contact on a daily basis. However, an estimated 8.9 percent of adults—16,500 people—have social contact less than once per week, and approximately 4,400 adults see others socially less than once per month (Figures 13 and 14).

Although degree of social contact or isolation is often a personal choice, other factors may limit the opportunities available to residents to forge and maintain strong community and social connections. Level of social contact was further examined by demographic characteristics, comparing adults who reported social contact at least once per week with those who reported social contact less frequently than once per week. This analysis found no significant differences in level of social contact by gender, age group, marital status, parenting status, Hispanic origin, employment status, or education level. However, there was a pronounced difference in level of social contact between adults in low- or very-low-income households and those in middle- or high-income households. Lower-income adults are more than twice as likely to have social contact less than once per week than those with middle or high incomes (15.4% vs. 6.3%) (Figure 15). One interpretation of this finding is that Ottawa County adults who are struggling to stay

afloat financially may also lack the time or leisure to maintain strong social connections. Given the many stressors associated with low income, this lack of social connection may place these residents at further risk for associated mental health burdens such as anxiety and depression.

While older residents were not inherently less likely to have weekly social contact than younger ones, Ottawa County residents with limited mobility are less likely to report weekly social contact than those without conditions limiting their ability to leave the home. According to 2008 Household Survey estimates, only 82.9 percent of adults with a medical/physical condition limiting mobility report weekly social contact, in contrast with 91.6 percent of those without this limitation. Those with mobility limitations lacking weekly social contact represent an estimated 1,640 Ottawa County adults who may be shut-in and largely isolated from others.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a problem that affects tens of thousands of individuals and families across the state. Abuse extends beyond physical violence to include all attempts to establish and exert control over another person through fear and intimidation. As such, domestic violence can and often does include both physical, emotional/psychological, financial, and sexual abuse as well. Abusive environments take their toll on all family members experiencing and witnessing the abuse, including children. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, children witnessing domestic abuse may suffer similar trauma to those who have themselves been abused and experience long-term psychological effects.

Patterns in domestic abuse cases reported to law enforcement authorities in Ottawa County from 2003–2005 are shown in Figure

COMMUNITY SUPPORT and CARE SYSTEMS

Figure 15

Ottawa County Adults' Reported Social Contact: Frequency of Time Spent with Family/Friend/Other for Fun By Income and Go-Outside-Home Disability		
Income Category	Less than once/week	Once/week or more
Low/Very Low Income	15.4	84.6
Middle/High Income	6.3	93.7
Medical/Physical Condition Limiting Mobility Outside the Home		
Yes	17.1	82.9
No	8.4	91.6

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the p=.05 level



Figure 16

Ottawa County Reported Domestic Abuse Incidents 2003–2005 Assault, Sexual, and other Offenses by:	Offense Type								
	Assault Offense			Sexual Offense			Other Offense		
	N	% of Row	% of Column	N	% of Row	% of Column	N	% of Row	% of Column
Victim Age Group									
0–5 yrs	65	33.5%	1.8%	118	60.8%	21.7%	11	5.7%	12.5%
6–11 yrs	83	34.7%	2.2%	151	63.2%	27.8%	5	2.1%	5.7%
12–17 yrs	423	65.7%	11.5%	216	33.5%	39.7%	10	1.6%	11.4%
18–24 yrs	788	95.9%	21.3%	33	4.0%	6.1%	16	1.9%	18.2%
25–44 yrs	1,845	98.7%	49.9%	23	1.2%	4.2%	34	1.8%	38.6%
45–64 yrs	459	99.4%	12.4%	3	.6%	.6%	12	2.6%	13.6%
65+ yrs	31	100.0%	.8%	0	.0%	.0%	0	.0%	.0%
Victim Relationship to Offender									
Victim is Current/Former Intimate Partner	2,289	94.6%	62.0%	128	5.3%	23.5%	49	2.0%	55.7%
Victim is Minor Child of Offender or of Current/Former Partner	317	62.2%	8.6%	172	33.7%	31.6%	21	4.1%	23.9%
Victim is non-Minor Child of Offender or of Current/Former Partner	108	89.3%	2.9%	13	10.7%	2.4%	0	.0%	.0%
Victim is Otherwise Related	1,011	79.5%	27.4%	260	20.5%	47.8%	19	1.5%	21.6%
Victim Gender									
Female	2,561	85.1%	69.3%	442	14.7%	81.2%	59	2.0%	67.0%
Male	1,124	90.9%	30.4%	98	7.9%	18.0%	28	2.3%	31.8%
Unknown	9	64.3%	.2%	4	28.6%	.7%	1	7.1%	1.1%
Total	3,694	86.7%		544	12.8%		88	2.1%	

Source: FBI, National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data, 2003–2005. Offenses counted as “domestic abuse” include any offenses committed by a person who was known by and related to the victim by way of an intimate or blood relationship.

Note: Because some victimizations include a combination of offense types, percentage values may not consistently add to 100%



16. Offenses considered in this analysis included any offense in which the offender was related to the victim by a blood relationship or current or former intimate/romantic partnership (either directly with the victim or with someone whom the victim is related to, such as a parent). Offenses in which the victim was the child of either the offender or of the offender's current or former romantic partner (e.g., victim was stepchild, child of boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.) are further identified by whether the victim was a minor at the time of the incident.

Key patterns to note include:

- The majority (over 60%) of offenses reported for victims aged 11 and younger were cases of sexual, not physical, abuse. Reported incidents of sexual offenses by someone related to the victim peaked for the 12–17 age group (40% of recorded victims were between these ages), then dwindled for older victims. However, more detailed analysis suggests that in a substantial proportion (43%) of reported sexual offenses among this age group, the victim identified the offender as a boyfriend or girlfriend (Figure 16).
- The extent of reported assaults by an intimate partner or family member increased dramatically between the 12–17 age group and the 18–24 age group, indicating that young adults are particularly at risk. However, the fact that a large number of physical assaults also occurred for adults between 25 and 44 years of age highlights that all age groups are at risk. In 62 percent of all physical domestic abuse cases reported, the victim was currently or formerly involved in an intimate relationship with the offender. In the majority of remaining physical abuse cases, the offender was a non-parental family member.

It is important to recognize that official police report data on abuse are inherently limited, as the majority of cases of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse go unreported. However, these findings underscore the need for school and community efforts to help youth develop healthy and appropriate relationship attitudes and boundaries while still in their early teens, to increase awareness of the potential for abuse and of available resources, and to match prevention programs with the age and circumstances of risk for abuse.

As mentioned above, national studies suggest that the vast majority of domestic abuse goes unreported. As shown in Figure 16, 3,694 physical abuse victimizations were reported to police between 2003 and 2005—an average of 1,231 per year, or approximately 4.8 in every 1,000 Ottawa County residents. In contrast, 2008 Household Survey findings suggest an even darker picture: an estimated 9,946 adults (5.2%) in Ottawa County think that someone they know may currently be experiencing abuse or neglect (see Figures 17 and 18). This rate did not vary significantly across either county quadrants or any population demographic subgroup examined, suggesting that domestic abuse/neglect is a problem that cuts across cultural and class backgrounds in Ottawa County.

As important as it is to recognize the signs of abuse, it is also important to know what to do when abuse is suspected. To ensure strong community supports for abuse victims, information and resources need to be publicized and readily available both for those who are victimized, as well as for those who suspect there is abuse but are hesitant to speak out. According to the 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey, the vast majority (91.5%) of adults feel that they would know what to do if they thought someone were experiencing abuse or neglect. The remaining 8.5 percent of adults were uncertain or disagreed that they knew what to do in cases of suspected abuse.



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COMMUNITY SUPPORT and CARE SYSTEMS

Figure 17

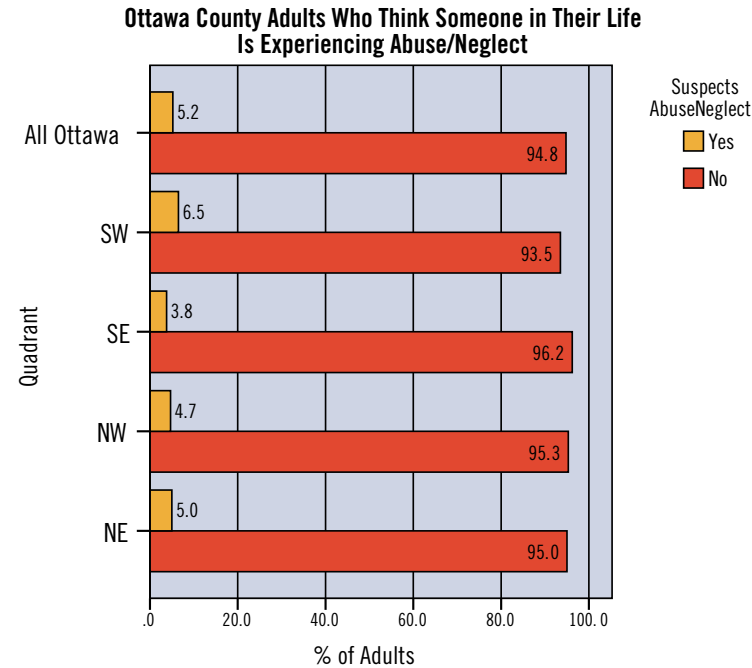


Figure 18

Ottawa County Adults Who Think Someone in their Life is Experiencing Abuse/Neglect	Quadrant				
	All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Estimated #	9,946	1,194	1,874	1,970	4,909
Estimated %	5.2%	5.0%	4.7%	3.8%	6.5%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

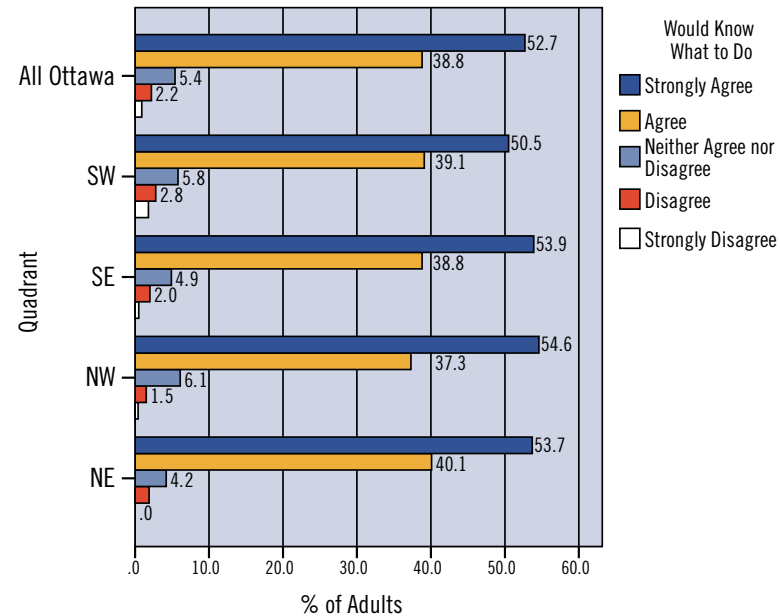
Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older

Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are not significant at the p=.05 level



Figure 19

Would Know What to Do if Suspected Someone Was Being Abused/Neglected



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Figure 20

Would Know What to Do if Suspected Someone Was Being Abused/Neglected		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Strongly Disagree	Estimated #	1,750	0	169	250	1,332
Disagree	Estimated #	4,168	446	587	1,025	2,110
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Estimated #	10,340	1,019	2,420	2,488	4,413
Agree	Estimated #	73,953	9,629	14,744	19,905	29,675
Strongly Agree	Estimated #	100,376	12,892	21,565	27,621	38,297

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults 18 and older

Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are not significant at the $p=.05$ level



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ISSUE AREAS:

- Comfort Level with Other Cultures
- School and Community Segregation
- Equality of Opportunities

THINK TANK

Mike VandenBerg, formerly of Good Samaritan Ministries, Co-chair

Jeanette Hoyer, Pathways, MI, Co-chair

Ortencia Bos, Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance

Wayne Coleman, Learning Enhancement Achievement Program

Gail Harrison, Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance

Ron James, Antioch Christian Center

Roberto Jara, Latin Americans United for Progress

Eleanor Lopez, Holland Hospital

Beatriz Mancilla, Office of Congressman Pete Hoekstra

Janie Briones, City of Holland

DJ Peck, Haworth

Ana L. Ramirez-Saenz, La Fuente Consulting

Marjorie Rosario, Good Samaritan Ministries

Melissa Villarreal, Hope College

Marvin Younger, Community Member

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY and CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The news of recent years has been peppered with stories of globalization and a shrinking world as technology, communications, and travel bring diverse economies, peoples, and ideas together. These phenomena affect communities as historically separated populations begin living together. Ottawa County has experienced such diversification in recent decades. According to the United States Census Bureau, the demographics of the county changed dramatically from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, Ottawa County was 96 percent White, 2 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent Asian. Ten years later, those numbers shifted to 89 percent White, 7 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Asian. In that decade, the Hispanic population grew by over 300 percent, and the Asian community more than doubled.

As communities become more culturally rich, there is an increased need to include diverse voices in the day-to-day workings of a community. Inclusivity is not only a matter of respecting fellow community members; it is also an opportunity to share the knowledge and insights of other cultures. Ottawa County stakeholders appreciate that there is a need for increased cultural competency incorporating a better understanding of diverse languages and worldviews. Think tank members cited a need for cultural competency on many levels but said that leaders and managers may be the ones in greatest need of increased understanding. They hypothesized that there is a general lack of cultural competency in Ottawa County and that such a lack of understanding can lead to overt and aversive racism.

The following section of this report looks at the current state of cultural interaction and perception in Ottawa County.

Comfort Level with Other Cultures

The 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey asked several questions related to diversity and cultural interaction. One of these questions asked participants how frequently they interact with persons of another cultural or social background. Figures 1 and 2 show that the majority of residents interact with culturally/socially diverse populations on a daily or nearly daily basis. There is very little geographic difference in this statistic, as 48–53 percent of all four quadrants of the county answered in this way. While geography was less of a factor, age plays a large role in the frequency of a resident's interaction with persons of diverse cultures or social backgrounds. Figure 3 shows that 69.5 percent of residents age 18–24 interact with persons of a different cultural or social background daily or almost daily, while 21.8 percent of residents age 65 and over have such frequent contact. Parents also indicated interacting with culturally and socially diverse groups more often than non-parents (see Figure 4). The workplace appears to be a key venue for interaction with diverse others. Fully 61.5 percent of residents who are currently employed interact with diverse groups daily or almost daily; in contrast, only 38.7 percent of those who are currently unemployed and 22.2 percent of those who are now retired had that level of interaction. Similarly, residents with middle or high income were more likely to have weekly or daily interaction with diverse populations, and residents with education levels of high school or less were more likely to be culturally isolated. (Figure 5).



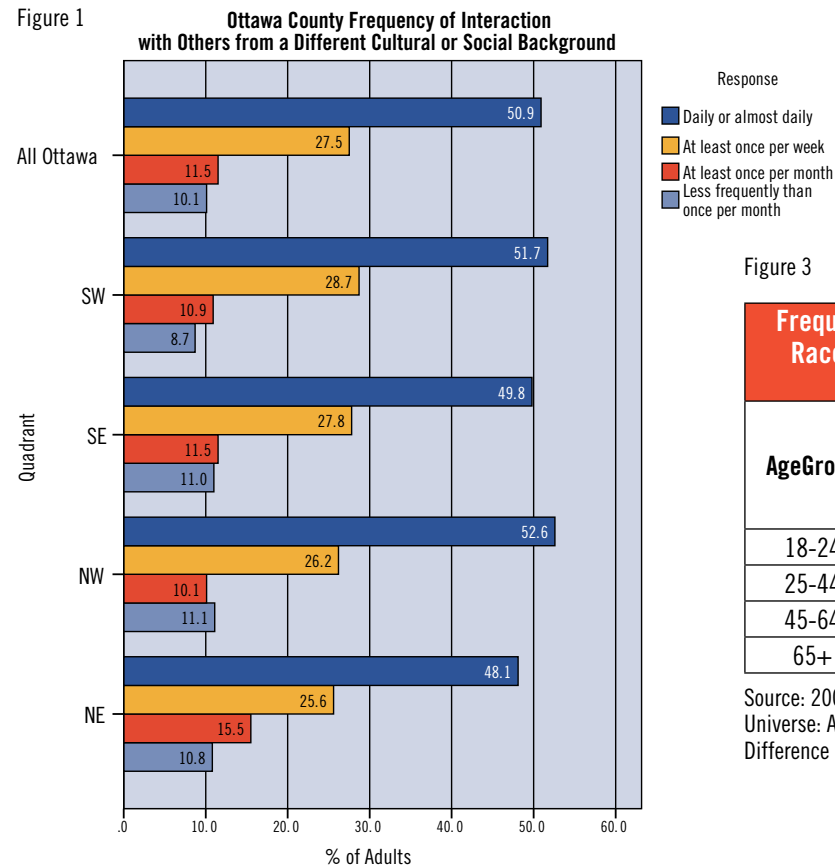
After understanding the ways in which a community currently interacts, it is important to examine the community's perception of diversity. These two elements (interaction and perception) may create the foundation upon which the community can base its strategies to increase cultural competency. The West Michigan Chamber Coalition's *Strategies for a Culturally Competent Region* suggests that residents in the Grand Haven/Ferrysburg/Spring Lake area have a good idea of what diversity should look like and agree that their community is not very diverse. That same publication reports that there is a dichotomy of opinion in the Holland area, with some residents indicating that the area is friendly, while others do not feel accepted (especially relating to acceptance of diverse sexual orientation). The West Michigan Chamber Coalition points to Holland's religious conservatism as a major barrier to diversity.

The 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey asked residents how important it is to them to live in a community that has a wide diversity of people from different backgrounds or cultures is to them. Figures 6 and 7 show that over 46 percent of Ottawa County residents believe that it is "very" or "extremely" important to live in a diverse community. Residents in the west part of the county placed the highest value on living in a diverse community; in contrast, residents on the east side of the county were most likely to rate living in a diverse community "not particularly important" or "a little important." These quadrant differences in response patterns were statistically significant. Hispanic and non-white residents are significantly more likely to place a high value on diversity than white residents (see Figure 8). In particular, Hispanic and non-white residents rate living in a diverse community "very" or "extremely" important much more often (44.6% and 22.5%, respectively) than white residents (28.8% and 13.6%, respectively) (Figure 8).



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY and CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Figure 1



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Figure 2

Ottawa County Frequency of Interaction with Others from a Different Cultural or Social Background		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Less frequently than once per month	Estimated #	18,866	2,539	4,328	5,518	6,481
At least once per month	Estimated #	21,489	3,658	3,933	5,764	8,134
At least once per week	Estimated #	51,622	6,043	10,179	13,945	21,455
Daily or almost daily	Estimated #	95,473	11,347	20,476	25,008	38,643

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County Adults

Note: Differences in patterns across quadrants are not statistically significant at p=.05 level.

Figure 3

Frequency of Interaction with Others of a Different Race, Ethnicity, Social or Economic Background by Age Group				
AgeGroup	Less frequently than once per month	At least once per month	At least once per week	Daily or almost daily
18-24	2.4	3.4	24.8	69.5
25-44	7.6	11.8	26.7	53.9
45-64	10.1	10.5	25.4	54.1
65+	22.3	18.5	37.4	21.8

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Adults over 18

Difference in pattern of responses is significant at the p=.05 level



Figure 4

Frequency of Interaction with Others of a Different Race, Ethnicity, Social or Economic Background by Parent Status				
Parent	Less frequently than once per month	At least once per month	At least once per week	Daily or almost daily
No	13.0	11.9	29.1	46.0
Yes	6.5	11.0	25.7	56.8

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Adults over 18

Difference in pattern of responses is significant at the $p=.05$ level

The survey also asked residents to rate how important it is to live in a community that is welcoming to all persons regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background. Figures 9 and 10 show that 78 percent of residents indicated that living in a welcoming community is extremely or very important. Hispanic residents of Ottawa County are significantly more likely to feel that living in a community that is welcoming to diverse groups is “very” or “extremely important” than their non-Hispanic counterparts (see Figure 11). Furthermore, younger residents of Ottawa County are more likely to value a welcoming community environment than older residents are (see Figure 12). Approximately 56 percent of Ottawa County residents aged 18–24 indicated that it is “extremely important” to live in a community that is welcoming to diverse groups; in contrast, only 22 percent of residents aged 65 and older answered this way.

Figure 5

Frequency of Interaction with Others of a Different Race, Ethnicity, Social or Economic Background by Income, Employment, and Education				
Income Category	Less frequently than once per month	At least once per month	At least once per week	Daily or almost daily
Low/Very Low Income	10.8	16.6	24.7	47.9
Middle/High Income	9.4	8.4	28.0	54.2
Employment Status				
Working and satisfied with your job	6.9	7.3	24.3	61.5
Working but want a better job	3.3	18.2	17.5	61.0
Not working but looking for a job	17.2	13.1	31.0	38.7
Not working and not looking for a job	10.5	15.0	36.0	38.5
Retired	21.9	18.4	37.4	22.2
Education Level				
High School or Less	13.7	15.8	22.9	47.6
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	8.2	8.7	27.3	55.8
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	8.3	10.0	32.5	49.1

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Adults over 18

Difference in pattern of responses is significant at the $p=.05$ level





Figure 6

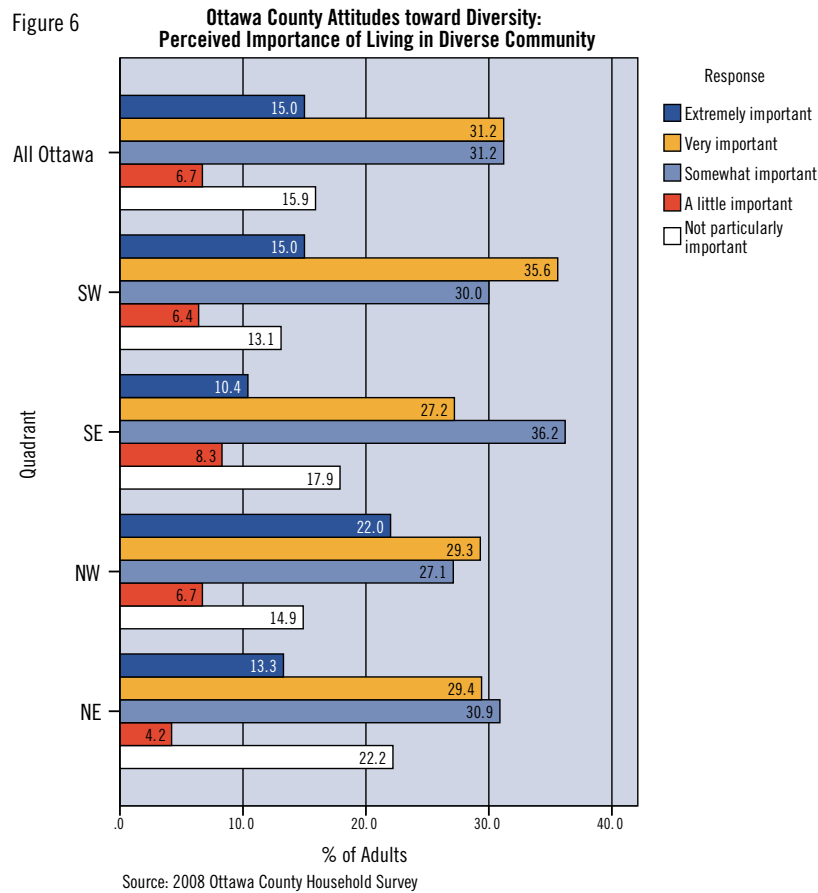


Figure 7

Ottawa County Perceived Importance of Living in a Diverse Community		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Not particularly important	Estimated #	29,847	5,171	5,847	9,072	9,758
A little important	Estimated #	12,593	**	2,634	4,225	4,762
Somewhat important	Estimated #	58,571	7,205	10,674	18,349	22,343
Very important	Estimated #	58,720	6,860	11,520	13,809	26,531
Extremely important	Estimated #	28,242	3,113	8,645	5,303	11,181

Source: 2008 Ottawa Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa County Adults
Note: Differences in patterns across quadrants are statistically significant at $p=.05$ level.

** Due to high coefficient of variation or low unweighted counts for these cells, point estimates are considered too unstable to report. Percentage values are left in for reference but should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 8

Importance of Living in a Community that Has a Wide Diversity of People from Different Backgrounds and Cultures Ratings by Race/Ethnicity: Non-white vs. White		
	Non-white	White
Not particularly important	9.6	16.8
A little important	6.7	6.6
Somewhat important	16.6	34.3
Very important	44.6	28.8
Extremely important	22.5	13.6

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: Adults over 18
Difference in pattern of responses is significant at the $p=.05$ level

Figure 9

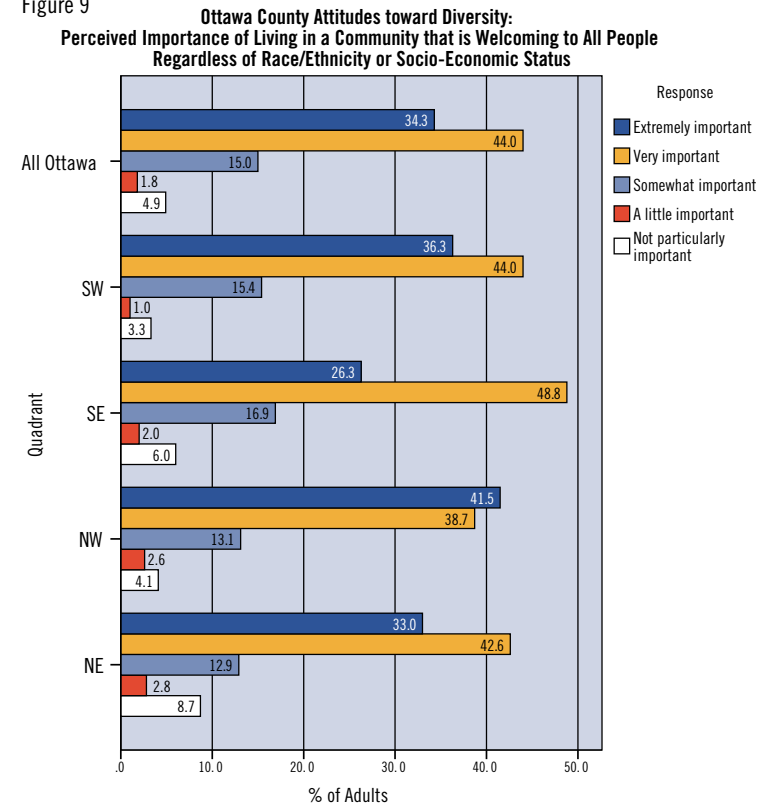




Figure 10

Ottawa County Perceived Importance of Living in a Community that is Welcoming to All People Regardless of Race/Ethnicity or Socioeconomic Status		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Not particularly important	Estimated #	9,166	2,074	1,603	3,023	2,466
A little important	Estimated #	3,422	**	**	**	**
Somewhat important	Estimated #	28,246	3,054	5,108	8,551	11,533
Very important	Estimated #	82,868	10,116	15,066	24,768	32,918
Extremely important	Estimated #	64,546	7,820	16,162	13,362	27,202

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County Adults

** Due to high coefficient of variation or low unweighted counts for these cells, point estimates are considered too unstable to report. Percentage values are left in for reference but should be interpreted with caution.



Figure 11

Importance of Living in a Community that is Welcoming to All People		
Ratings by Ethnicity: Hispanic vs. Non-Hispanic		
Response	Hispanic %	Non-Hispanic %
Not particularly important	1.6	5.3
A little important	3.2	1.6
Somewhat important	4.3	16.5
Very important	53.5	42.7
Extremely important	37.3	33.8

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Adults over 18

Difference in pattern of responses is significant at the $p=.05$ level

Figure 12

Importance of Living in a Community that is Welcoming to All People	Ratings by Age group			
	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Not particularly important	6.4	3.7	4.6	8
A little important	1.3	2.9	0.8	1.5
Somewhat important	9	14.6	16.8	15.7
Very important	27	45.7	43.3	52.5
Extremely important	56.3	33	34.6	22.3

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Adults over 18

Difference in pattern of responses is significant at the $p=.05$ level



School and Community Segregation

Children in segregated schools are denied the benefits of an integrated education. According to ERASE Racism, a regional advocacy organization, a few of these benefits include reductions in racial prejudice and stereotyping, and preparation of students to live and work in our increasingly multicultural and international society. ERASE goes further by saying, “When communities integrate their schools, the overwhelming result is improvement in academic achievement for children of color previously isolated in segregated schools, with no loss in academic achievement for white students. Low-income black children who move to low poverty suburban neighborhoods are less likely than those who stay in high poverty neighborhoods to drop out of school, and more likely to take college track classes and attend two-year or four-year colleges” (www.eraseracismny.com).

Ottawa County think tank members intuitively feel that locally people are leaving areas because of an influx of people of color and that this leads to increased segregation. In addition, they are concerned that people may feel that diversity will not meet with success in their community.

Figure 13 illustrates the fact that some schools in Ottawa County are rapidly changing. However, the data within the table do not allow us to see a “white flight” pattern. Further research may be needed to determine the extent to which the “white flight” perception is accurate in Ottawa County. Once the realities of the situation are known, an education strategy can be designed for youth and those in decision-making positions.

What is currently known is that in Michigan the graduation rate for non-Hispanic students is 76.6 percent, while the Hispanic student rate is 36.6 percent. In the future it will be important to monitor graduation rates by race, especially in Holland where unofficial population projections estimate that 50 percent of the Holland city population under 18 is Hispanic.

Additionally, a study conducted by the Holland/Zeeland Community Foundation ranked education (graduation rates, diverse schools) as the number one priority for their area. Specifically, results stated, “Participants prioritized how important each of these was to achieving the aspiration statement and also to evaluate how well the community is doing (compared to how well it needs to be doing) today. The results showed that education, economic development/funding, and leadership were the three most important. Because the education ratings had also showed a high rate for expanding diversity education and language development, it was combined with this group for strategy development.” The study further discussed strategies to help achieve the aspiration of providing all students access to “world-class education.” These strategies are: parental support, ethnic diversity in leadership, National Education Association support system (language barriers, culture sensitivity training), assess student readiness, teach cultural heritage, and collaboration among schools. The groups that can have an impact are community agencies, businesses, churches, school boards, PTA, OAISD, and teachers’ union. Metrics are increased enrollment in postsecondary education, improved performance in state assessments, decreased drop-out rate, and all ethnic groups improving graduation rates. Specifically, education is a top priority in the area of diversity/inclusion.



Figure 13

Hispanic Student Population as a Percentage of Total Enrollment

School District:	YEAR		Percentage Increase (Decrease)
	2000/2001	2006/2007	
Allendale Public School District	4%	7%	75%
Black River Public School	19%	9%	(53%)
Coopersville Public School District	2%	5%	150%
Eagle Crest Charter Academy	13%	14%	8%
Grand Haven Area Public Schools	3%	4%	33%
Holland City School District	33%	40%	21%
Hudsonville Public School District	2%	2%	0%
Jenison Public Schools	3%	2%	(33%)
Ottawa Area ISD	5%	12%	140%
Spring Lake Public Schools	1%	1%	0%
Vanderbilt Charter Academy	25%	46%	84%
Walden Green Day School/Montessori	0%	1%	
West MI Academy of Arts and Academics	2%	1%	(50%)
West Ottawa Public School District	14%	25%	79%
Zeeland Public Schools	7%	8%	14%

Source: Michigan Department of Education, Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), Headcount data



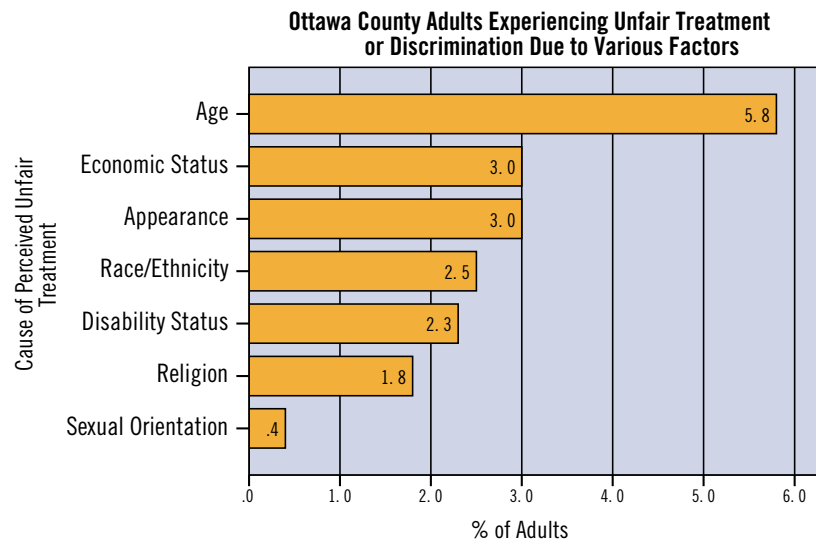


Equality of Opportunities

In a community setting, diversity can be a treasure box of possibilities. The United Nations points out that, “the wealth of views and experiences of a diverse community gives rise to varied ideas, perspectives, knowledge and skills that can significantly enhance a community’s ability to prosper. However, the realization of the potential benefits of diversity on development depends on the degree to which a community is cohesive. Diverse societies that achieve a high level of social cohesion are well-positioned to realize their full social and economic potential” (2007 Community Survey, Holland/Zeland Community Foundation). In Ottawa County, think tank members defined a comfortable community as a place that fosters cultural intermixing. Going further, they added that community-wide commitment is needed to achieve the vision of a comfortable community.

Contributing to the vision for the future, a report published by the West Michigan Chamber Coalition (WMCC) attempts to lay out features that might be found in a comfortable community. The report says, “There are many commonly cited characteristics of an ideal and comfortably integrated society: respect, open-mindedness, tolerance, acceptance, celebration, and sensitivity, among others. Cultural competence also implies an ability to move within and among different cultures with ease. Citizens of a culturally competent society welcome and embrace the existence of various cultures and understand that their culture is one of many.” In addition, “There is easy access to products and services of various ethnic origins. People work together through participation and collaboration without barrier and it is welcoming, non-judgmental, and respectful.” The report goes further to say, “There is a slight problem

Figure 14



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

A survey of key stakeholders brought forward several examples of discrimination taking place in the community.

Figure 15

Relevant Quotes from Key Stakeholder Survey

Promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination in the workplace and housing

Minorities do not get a fair shake when it comes to hiring and promotion practices.

Need to develop inexpensive ways to hold employers accountable when it comes to following the law.

Need to promote the benefits of hiring diverse groups, people with cognitive impairments, etc.

“Passage of Proposal 2 reflects intolerance of W. Michigan toward fair employment practices towards minorities.

It reflects a return to hiring within the West Michigan ‘Good Ole Boy’ network.”

with cultural competency, as people feel that Michigan is socially cliquish. In spite of this, Michigan does still offer Institutes for Healing Racism or other education programs at local universities, Chambers of Commerce, or social justice organizations. There are ethnic restaurants, diverse church groups, and various volunteer groups that promote periodic programs designed for children and adults to grow their individual cultural competence.”

Study results show:

- Approximately 2.5 percent of Ottawa County adults perceive that they have been treated unfairly due to their race or ethnicity. Overall, 9.5 percent of Hispanic residents feel they have been treated unfairly due to their ethnicity in comparison with 1.5 percent of non-Hispanics.
- Ottawa County adults perceiving that they have been treated unfairly due to their age are predominantly younger (18–24 years of age).

The trends towards increasing diversity of Ottawa County and a growing concentration of Hispanic residents are also apparent in the birth rates of Hispanic mothers. Compared to the state of Michigan as a whole, over 30 percent of births in Holland have been to Hispanic mothers over the past several years, approximately seven times the state average. The rate of births to Hispanic mothers has decreased slightly, from 35.7 percent in 2002 to 32.3 percent in 2006. This contrasts with an overall trend towards a slight increase in the rate of births to Hispanic women in Michigan as a whole.

Sources Cited

Community Survey, Holland/Zeland Community Foundation, 2007.

“Strategies for a Culturally Competent Region,” a Report of the West Michigan Chamber Coalition.



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY and CULTURAL COMPETENCY



ISSUE AREAS:

- Physical Activity
- Nutrition Habits
- Behavioral / Environmental Issues
- Internal Asset Development
- Consequences of Unhealthy Lifestyle

THINK TANK

Brian Bieber, formerly Ottawa County Health Department, Co-chair

Sandra Boven, Ottawa County Health Department, Co-chair

Kelley Adkin, Zeeland Community Hospital

Randy Boss, Ottawa-Kent Insurance

Dixie Dreyer, Visser Family YMCA

Jodi Goglin, Holland Hospital

Marcia Knol, Ottawa County Health Department

Kim Kooyers, Ottawa County Health Department

Leigh Moerdyc, Pathways, MI

Lisa Uganski, Ottawa County Health Department

Barb VerCande, Holland Hospital

Becky Young, Ottawa County Health Department

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

This section of the assessment focuses on several touchstones of a healthy lifestyle: physical activity, healthy eating patterns, weight management, and the links between these factors and emotional health.

The extent of the challenges in addressing the lifestyle components of community health can seem daunting. While 100 percent of key stakeholder survey respondents indicated that Ottawa County was ready to address many health promotion challenges (such as smoking cessation and disease education), only 55 percent felt that the community was prepared to take on the magnitude of this issue. In particular, stakeholders cited the sheer numbers of overweight and unhealthy children and adults in the county and the lack of perceived motivation and readiness of the population coupled with budget cuts to schools as factors. This suggests that a concerted and coordinated effort may be required to overcome these challenges.

Physical Activity

The benefits of regular exercise are well documented. To protect against heart disease, diabetes, and other illnesses, doctors recommend 30 minutes of moderate exercise daily. This can include exercise as basic as a brisk walk, a bike ride, or even intense housework. The advantages of regular exercise include increased energy, higher metabolism, improved muscle tone, and increased overall good health. Exercise also provides stress release and can result in higher self-esteem. It is well known that regular exercise is an important aspect of a healthy lifestyle.

Physical Activity among Ottawa County Adults

How physically active are Ottawa County adults? Overall, an estimated 37 percent, approximately 71,000 adults, don't get the recommended amount of physical activity per week (see Figure 1). Most adults at risk for inactivity come from low-income households, are those with lower levels of education, and/or are those who stated that they were currently employed but desired a better job (see Figure 2). Specifically:

- Adults with middle or high income were more likely to exercise than those with low/very low income (64.4% vs. 55.5%). This finding concurs with a similar finding from the Ottawa Behavioral Risk Factor survey that indicates that Ottawa residents who make less than \$20,000 are more likely to indicate that they do not exercise for at least 30 minutes three or more days per week compared to those who earn \$75,000. Adults with at least some college education were more likely to indicate that they were physically active (64.6% and 68.5% for two-year and four-year college education levels, respectively) than were those with no college education (54.9%).
- The respondents who were least likely to report exercising at least 30 minutes three days per week were those who also reported that they were currently employed but wanted a better job. While inconclusive by itself, this finding may provide some support for the notion that work stress and/or lack of work-life balance may, for some Ottawa County residents, be part of larger patterns of unhealthy lifestyles.





Figure 1

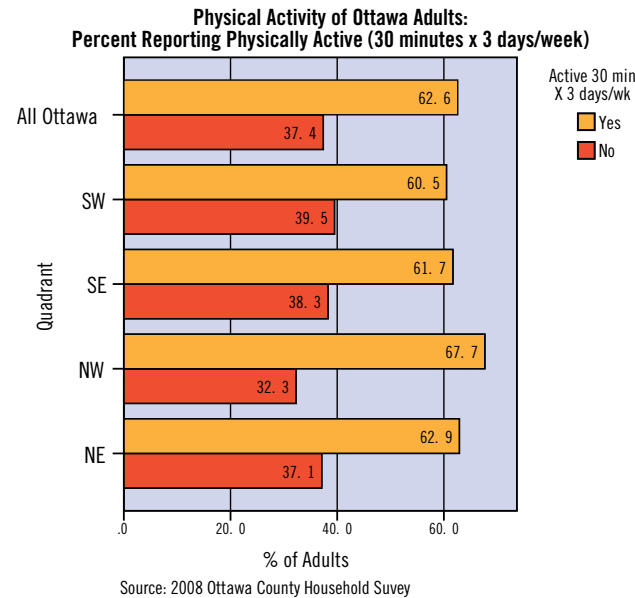


Figure 3

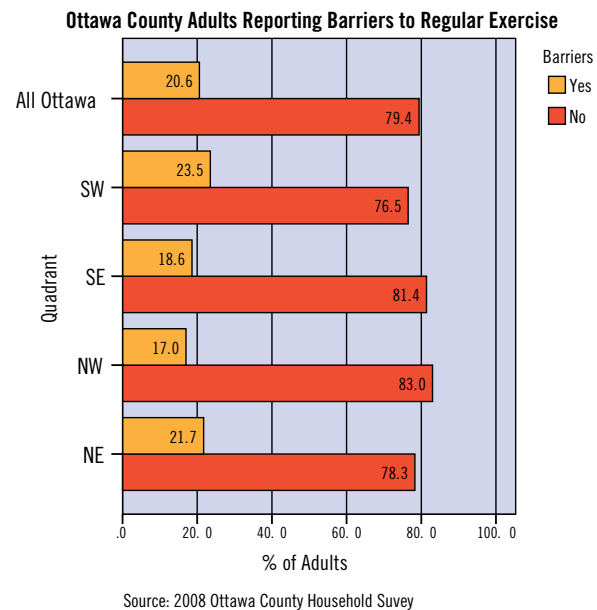


Figure 2

Physical Activity of Ottawa Adults: Percent Reporting Physically Active (30 minutes x 3 days/week) By Income, Employment Status, and Education		
	Physically Active	
	Yes	No
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	57.8	42.2
Middle/High Income	66.4	33.6
Employment Status		
Working and satisfied with your job	66.6	33.4
Working but want a better job	48.3	51.7
Not working but looking for a job	68.7	31.3
Not working and not looking for a job	56.9	43.1
Retired	59.7	40.3
Education		
High School or Less	54.9	45.1
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	64.6	35.4
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	68.5	31.5

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Figure 4

Percent of Ottawa County Adults Reporting Barriers to Regular Exercise Total and by Age Group, Income, and Children 0-5		
	Yes	No
All	20.6%	79.4%
Age Group		
18-24	13.7	86.3
25-44	26.2	73.8
45-64	18.0	82.0
65+	16.1	83.9
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	28.1	71.9
Middle/High Income	17.7	82.3
Have Children 0-5		
Yes	32.9	67.1
No	17.0	83.0

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Barriers to Physical Activity among Adults

- Across Ottawa County, only 20.6 percent of adults report that they experience barriers to regular exercise.
- This rate did not vary significantly across quadrants of the county. However, adults aged 25–44, those from lower-income households, and parents of young children were most likely to report barriers (see Figures 3 & 4).
- Of those who do report barriers to regular exercise, the greatest barriers are (Figures 3):
 - Lack of time (50.4%).
 - Medical condition (13.1%)
 - The remaining 36 percent of adults with barriers report unspecified or other barriers, including a small percentage for whom cost, transportation, safety, or lack of social support were considered factors preventing them from being active.

Figure 5

Greatest Barrier to Exercise among Adults Reporting Exercise Barriers		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Health Problem/Medical Condition	Estimated %	13.1%	19.1%	6.9%	12.5%	13.6%
Lack of Time	Estimated %	50.3%	50.2%	50.3%	58.3%	45.7%
Other Reason	Estimated %	36.6%	30.7%	42.8%	29.2%	40.7%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults

Note: Differences in response patterns across quadrants are not significant at the $p=.05$ level

Figure 6

Greatest Barrier to Exercise among Adults Reporting Exercise Barriers by Parental Status, Income, and Education			
	Health Problem/Medical Condition	Lack Of Time	Other Reason
Parent			
No	34.6	29.6	35.8
Yes	15.2	57.4	27.4
Income Category			
Low/Very Low Income	36.4	40.7	22.9
Middle/High Income	9.0	51.7	39.4
Education			
High School or Less	36.0	32.5	31.5
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	26.5	51.0	22.6
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	8.2	53.3	38.5

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.



Perhaps more striking than the number of adults reporting barriers to exercise is the number of adults who do not exercise on a regular basis *and* report that they experience no barriers to exercising.

While 29 percent of those adults who do not exercise regularly report that they experience barriers, nearly 71 percent do not. Furthermore, 15.5 percent of the adults who do exercise regularly do so in spite of reported barriers.

This suggests that promoting increased physical activity among Ottawa County adults will involve not just addressing specific barriers to exercise but also working to understand and alter local mindsets toward physical activity.

Collectively, these findings suggest that while access to suitable recreation opportunities and the affordability of recreational options themselves may be a concern, a predominant challenge may be helping Ottawa County residents integrate regular doses of physical activity into stressed and busy lives, developing more family-centered approaches to recreation that help parents and their young children engage in physical activities together, and promoting opportunities for fitness that are attractive to lower-income residents and residents with health challenges that may limit their participation in traditional modes of exercise (Figure 6).

Physical Activity among Ottawa County Youth

How physically active are Ottawa County youth?

- Over 20 percent of households with children aged 6–18 report that, in a typical week, there are no days in which their children spend at least one hour playing active games or sports.
- Nearly 18 percent report their children are this active only one day per week.
- In all, approximately 9,600 families have children who are active 0–1 days per week.
 - In contrast, 24.1 percent of families report that their children are very active, engaging in one or more hours of active games or sports four or more days per week (Figure 7).
- Interestingly, there was no association between any household demographic characteristics (e.g., county quadrant, age group, income level, Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic ethnicity) and the level of physical activity among children.

Figure 7

Frequency of Physical Activity, Ages 6–18

Response	Percent
None	20.3
1 day/week	17.9
2–3 days/week	37.7
4 or more days/week	24.1

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Universe: Ottawa County households with children aged 6–18

Issues and challenges

- One factor in the sedentary lifestyles among Ottawa County youth may be the prevalence of electronic entertainment options and the large amount of time youth spend watching TV, playing video games, and sitting at a computer. These activities add up to large amounts of time that youth are spending sitting in front of screens rather than being physically active.
 - Household survey results indicate that a full 23.5 percent of Ottawa County households with children aged 6–18 indicate that their children spend four or more hours each day watching television, playing video games, or on the computer (Figure 8).
 - The combined group of 2–3 hours and 4+ hours of electronic entertainment per day is a staggering 76.5 percent of all Ottawa County youth aged 6–18 (Figure 9).
 - Interestingly, child use of electronic entertainment resisted categorization: There were no significant differences between any subgroups explored, including quadrant, age group, parent education level, income category, or Hispanic/non-Hispanic.
- Diminished attention to physical education in the schools may also be contributing to less active lifestyles among our youth. In the Ottawa County Key Stakeholder Survey, respondents expressed concern that Ottawa schools could do more to provide and emphasize proper nutrition and to place a higher priority on physical education and activity.
 - The 2007 Youth Assessment Survey conducted by the Ottawa County Health Department found that only 43 percent of students reported participating in a physical education program at least one day per week, while nearly 63 percent reported playing on one or more sports teams in the past 12 months.



Healthy Eating

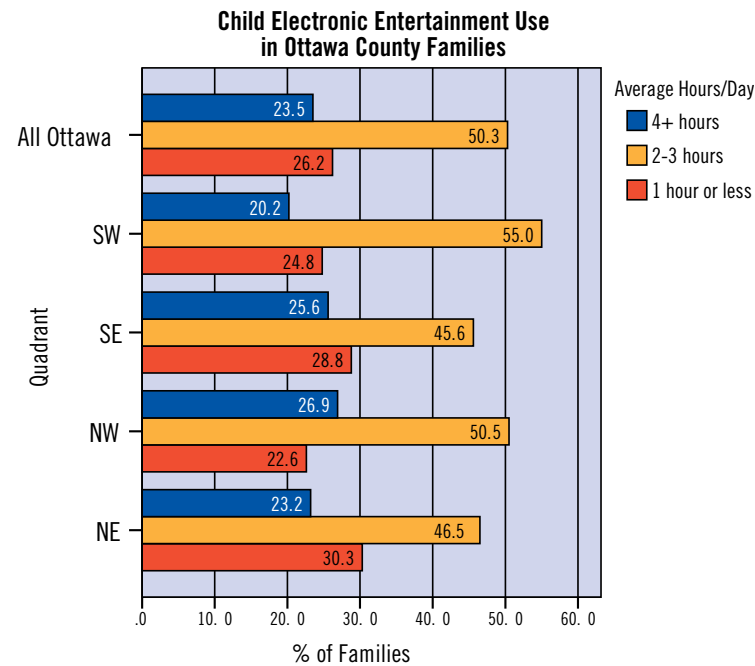
Healthy eating is an important part of a well balanced life. Eating patterns established in childhood continue on into adulthood and can mean the difference between a vital middle and later adulthood, or an adulthood filled with chronic illness. As the lifespan progresses, diet-related illnesses are well documented, including heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Healthy eating can counter these chronic illnesses. The rewards of healthy eating are increased energy, strong immunity, appropriate weight level, and mental alertness. Healthy eating is a critical component of a healthy lifestyle.

Is Ottawa County Eating Well?

One indicator is the extent to which fast food is consumed. Household survey findings indicate that across Ottawa County;

- 78.5 percent of residents eat at least one meal per week from a fast food restaurant,
- With 11.6 percent (approximately 22,800 adults) consuming fast food three or more times per week (Figure 10).
- The northwest and southeast quadrants of the county were the heaviest consumers of fast food, with 13.5–14 percent consuming three or more fast food meals per week (Figure 10).
- Residents in the southwest quadrant were the most likely to respond that they “never” eat fast food (19.3%). This finding corresponds with the patterns of fast food consumption among Hispanic residents of the county (Figures 10 & 11).
- Overall, Hispanic residents tended to be split—while many more Hispanics than non-Hispanics indicated that they never eat fast food (20.9%, vs. 12.4%), those who did eat fast food tended to eat it more often (74% indicating at least once per week vs. 67.6% for non-Hispanics) (Figure 11).

Figure 8



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

- This suggests a pattern in which increased focus on middle and high school sports teams may provide opportunities for some youth to be physically active during certain seasons, but limit required and “drop in” recreational opportunities for ongoing physical fitness and for less-athletic youth.
- As the Youth Assessment Study findings also indicate that those students who reported not participating in a physical education class were also more likely to be overweight or at risk for becoming overweight, the potential long-term health impacts of these reduced options are clear. Collectively, these findings may point towards a need for activities and programs that can capture the interest of a broad range of Ottawa County’s young people while promoting physical activity.

Figure 9

Level of Typical Daily Electronic Entertainment Usage by Children in Ottawa County Households

Daily time spent with TV, video games, and computer		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
1 hour or less	Estimated %	26.2%	30.3%	22.6%	28.8%	24.8%
2–3 hours	Estimated %	50.3%	46.5%	50.5%	45.6%	55.0%
4+ hours	Estimated %	23.5%	23.2%	26.9%	25.6%	20.2%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County households with children aged 6–18

Note: differences across quadrants are not significant at the $p=.05$ level.

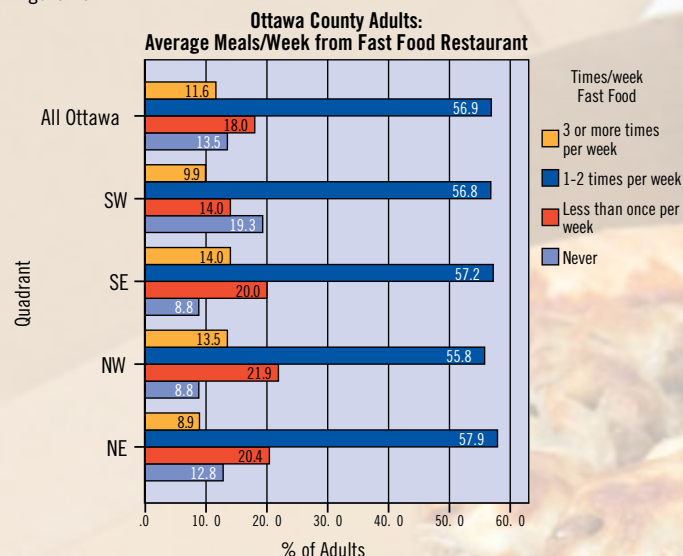
- Males are nearly four times as likely to report eating fast food three or more times per week than females (18.5% vs. 5%), and parents report eating fast food more frequently than non-parents (Figure 11).
- The most notable demographic for high levels of fast food consumption is adults aged 18–24. Nearly 20 percent of residents in this age bracket are estimated to consume fast food three or more times per week. It is unclear whether this increased consumption is situational or whether it represents a generational trend towards normalization of fast food as a regular part of one's diet (Figure 11).

Barriers to healthy eating

- Across Ottawa County, an estimated 11.8 percent of adults report barriers to being able to eat a healthy diet on a regular basis; of these, 23.8 percent indicate that they eat fast food three or more times per week (Figure 12).
- This contrasts with the 10 percent of adults who report no barriers to eating nutritiously but still report eating fast food three or more times per week. This suggests that, while specific barriers are important to examine and address, a sizeable proportion of Ottawa's adult population may lack education about or incentive to make healthier eating choices.
- Adults in the 18–24 age bracket as well as those who are unemployed but looking for a job most frequently reported barriers to healthy eating (Figure 13).
- **Time to prepare find healthy food** was the most frequently cited barrier to eating healthfully (indicated by 48.6% of adults with reported barriers). This finding adds to evidence suggested by other findings in this report that many Ottawa county residents are leading lifestyles that are or feel overworked and overscheduled. (Figure 14).



Figure 10



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Figure 11

Ottawa County Adults: Average Meals/Week from Fast Food Restaurants by Quadrant, Sex, Age Group, Hispanic vs. Non-Hispanic, and Education				
	Never	Less than once per week	1–2 times per week	3 or more times per week
Sex				
Male	10.3	14.9	56.3	18.5
Female	16.5	21.0	57.4	5.0
Age Group				
18–24	3.7	10.6	66.0	19.7
25–44	12.1	16.1	59.8	12.0
45–64	14.3	19.5	55.4	10.8
65+	21.9	24.9	46.0	7.2
Parent				
No	16.0	20.6	52.7	10.7
Yes	10.5	15.0	61.8	12.6
Hispanic				
Yes	20.9	4.7	60.4	14.0
No	12.4	20.0	56.3	11.3
Education				
High School or Less	17.7	17.2	52.2	12.9
Some College/2-Yr Degree or Certificate	9.2	14.7	64.2	11.8
Baccalaureate Degree or Higher	13.8	22.5	53.6	10.1

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the p=.05 level.

Figure 12

Ottawa County Adults Reporting Barriers to Healthy Eating		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
No	Estimated %	88.2%	87.6%	89.2%	89.3%	87.1%
Yes	Estimated %	11.8%	12.4%	10.8%	10.7%	12.9%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults

Note: differences across quadrants are not significant at the $p=.05$ level.

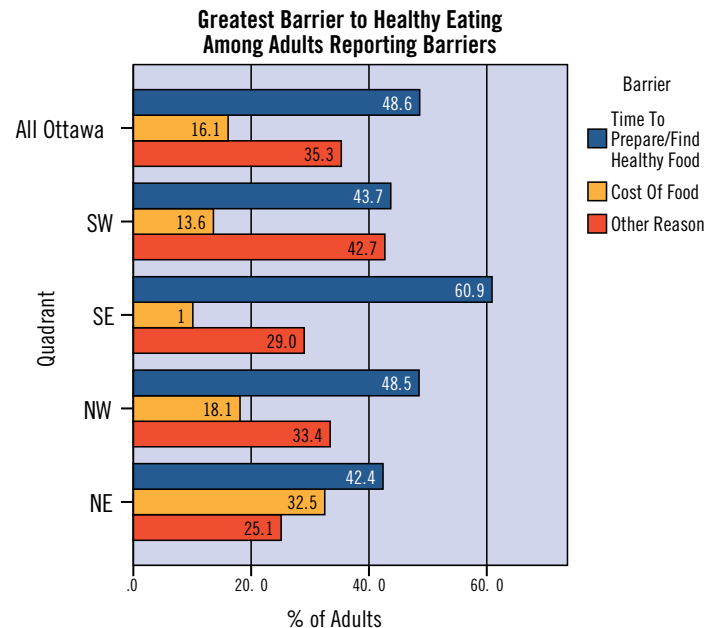
Figure 13

Ottawa County Adults Reporting Barriers to Healthy Eating by Age Group, Income, and Employment Status		
	Yes	No
Age Group		
18–24	25.4	74.6
25–44	13.5	86.5
45–64	10.1	89.9
65+	2.7	97.3
Income Category		
Low/Very Low Income	16.5	83.5
Middle/High Income	9.1	90.9
Employment Status		
Working and satisfied with your job	11.4	88.6
Working but want a better job	17.0	83.0
Not working but looking for a job	25.4	74.6
Not working and not looking for a job	16.1	83.9
Retired	3.6	96.4

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Figure 14



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

- **Affordability.** For residents with lower incomes, access to healthy food choices is often affected by financial limitations. For example, limited transportation options can make it difficult for some residents to shop at full service grocery stores. Residents who must use food pantries often face limited availability of fresh foods. For these reasons, respondents in the Key Stakeholder survey emphasized the need for efforts to reach WIC and other low-income households with programs to help promote good nutrition. Low/very-low income adults were nearly twice as likely to report barriers to healthy eating as those from mid/high-income households (16.5% vs. 9.1%, respectively) (Figure 13).

The challenges inherent in addressing the trends toward increasingly unhealthy diets in Ottawa County are complicated by a host of interrelated influences in our society as a whole:

- Research evidence confirms that typical portion sizes have increased over the past few decades, with the most marked increase in portion sizes occurring at fast food establishments (Young & Nestle, 2002; Nielsen & Popkin, 2003). This “portion distortion” creates a negative cycle in which our expectations for how much we “should” eat are skewed towards unhealthy amounts of food.
- Food is promoted as a reward for good behavior or as a treat to lift the spirits, fostering unhealthy patterns of emotional eating in adults and children alike. Using food as a reward encourages overeating food high in sugar and fat, and teaches kids to link food to moods. Using exercise as punishment teaches kids to dislike physical activity, which is part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, food promotion and advertising is pervasive, and children are especially vulnerable to these suggestions.

According to the Center for Weight and Health at UC Berkeley, children view an average of one food ad for every five minutes of television viewing, and more than half of the advertisements aimed at children promote candy, fast food, soda, and other unhealthy foods.

- One of the greatest challenges facing the community may be identifying ways to help make food choices more conscious among residents and to identify ways to make it easier to opt for healthful eating. According to the Center for Weight and Health at UC Berkeley, traditional educational approaches have not been effective by themselves in changing eating patterns, and more integrated approaches to shape the availability and awareness of healthier options are required. In addition, the multicultural nature of Ottawa County will require approaches that help residents find their way to more healthy lifestyles while still being respectful of cultural food norms and views about physical appearance and body type.



Figure 15

Greatest Barrier to Healthy Eating among Adults Reporting Barriers		Quadrant				
		All Ottawa	NE	NW	SE	SW
Other Reason	Estimated %	35.3%	25.1%	33.4%	29.0%	42.7%
Cost Of Food	Estimated %	16.1%	32.5%	18.1%	10.1%	13.6%
Time To Prepare/Find Healthy Food	Estimated %	48.6%	42.4%	48.5%	60.9%	43.7%

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Universe: Ottawa County adults

Note: differences across quadrants are not significant at the $p=.05$ level.

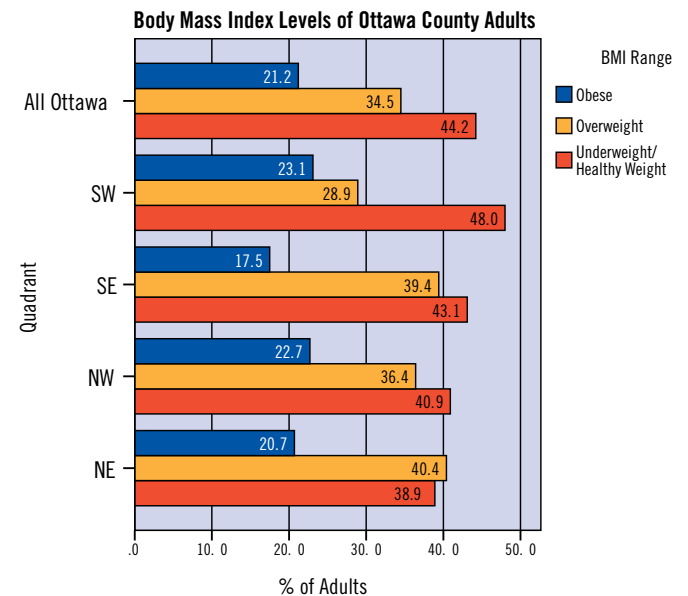
Figure 16

Greatest Barrier to Healthy Eating Among Adults Reporting Barriers by Income and Hispanic vs. Non-Hispanic			
	Cost Of Food	Other Reason	Time To Prepare/Find Healthy Food
Income Category			
Low/Very Low Income	23.3	49.0	27.7
Middle/High Income	6.5	25.1	68.4
Hispanic			
Yes	24.5	57.0	18.5
No	14.0	29.9	56.1

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

Figure 17



Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey

Behavioral/Environmental Issues for Youth and Adults:

Youth: Beyond the picture of physical activity and healthy nutrition, youth are encountering other health risks related to lifestyle choices. According to the 2007 Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey;

- 83.2 percent of Ottawa County youth rarely or never wear a helmet while riding a bicycle (down from 86.7 in 2005).
- 12.7 percent have driven drunk recently (up from 8.5% in 2005).
- 23.3 percent have ridden with a drunk driver (down from 24.2 in 2005).

The risk for unintentional injuries from these activities is high. The percentage of youth engaging in those risky behaviors has strong correlation to academic grade attainment. In every case, the lower the grade point average the higher the percentage that engaged in the behavior.

Youth also are at risk of experimenting with drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.

- 28.6 percent of Ottawa County youth have smoked cigarettes (down from 45.2 percent in 2005).
- 35.8 percent of those that do or have smoked reported onset of smoking before age 13 (down from 40.42 percent in 2005).
- 42.5 percent of youth smokers had tried to quit (down from 47.3 percent in 2005).
- 58 percent felt it was easy to get cigarettes (down from 64 percent in 2005).
- 48.4 percent of Ottawa County youth have drunk alcohol (up from 48.2 percent in 2005).
- Of those 28 percent reported onset of use before age 13 (down from 32.5 percent in 2005).
- 19.5 percent reported binge drinking recently (up from 16.7 percent in 2005).
- 62.2 percent reported it was easy to get alcohol (up from 60.2 percent in 2005).
- 25 percent of Ottawa County youth have used Marijuana (down from 26.7 percent in 2005).
- Of those 27.5 percent reported onset of use before age 13 (up from 24.8 percent in 2005).
- 35.7 percent reported it was easy to get marijuana (down from 36.9 percent in 2005).
- Uses of harder drugs such as cocaine, inhalants, methamphetamine, steroids, ecstasy, and amphetamines ranged in “ever used” from 3.1 percent to 13.7 percent.
- Onset of use before 13 years of age for these hard drugs ranged from 35 percent to 55 percent.
- 16.6 percent of Ottawa County youth reported that it was easy to access hard drugs.

(2007 Youth Assessment Survey, OCHD)

It is heartening to note that, regardless of these results, 78.2 percent of youth reported that they were “committed to a drug free life.” However this is down from 82.5 percent in 2005. (Youth Assessment Survey, Ottawa County 2007)

The statistics of physical activity and nutritional habits are evidenced by the statistics of overweight. However, the damage to health does not come just from the physical side. The mental and emotional strain of body image also needs to be taken into consideration. The Youth Assessment Survey also reports the following;

- 29.2 percent of Ottawa County youth thought that they were overweight (up from 26.4 percent in 2007).
- 45 percent were currently trying to lose weight, with almost 5 percent consuming weight loss products and almost another five percent vomiting or using laxatives as a way to lose weight (up from 42.5 percent in 2005).

Consequences of Unhealthy Lifestyles

Unhealthy lifestyles are having serious consequences on the health of Ottawa County residents:

- **Impacts on overall health.** The Ottawa County Behavioral Risk Factor survey estimates that 23.4 percent of respondents have been told by a health professional that they have high blood pressure.
- **Childhood obesity.** Childhood obesity is a growing problem. The Ottawa County Health Department has collected Body Mass Index (BMI) data among youth and found 32 percent of Ottawa County children to be overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. Nationally, obesity in children has tripled over the past 20 years, leading to sharp increases of diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease

diagnoses in adolescents. Financially, obesity-related illnesses account for direct and indirect costs of \$9 billion annually in the state of Michigan.

- **Adult obesity.** According to self-reported height and weight figures in the 2008 Ottawa County Household survey, approximately 34.5 percent of adults in the county have BMI levels in the “overweight” range, with another 21.2 percent classified as “obese.” This represents approximately 72,000 adults who are at an unhealthy weight (See Figure 17). The percentage of adults categorized as underweight or at a healthy weight consistently decreased across the age of the population, from 57.2 percent of 18–24 year olds at a healthy weight to only 32.8 percent of those aged 65 and older at a healthy weight. Income levels also play a significant role in the obesity rate among Ottawa County adults, with low/very-low income adults being more than 1.6 times at risk for obesity than mid/high-income adults (Figure 18).
- **Body image issues and eating disorders.** Although little is known about the prevalence and long-term effects of body image issues and eating disorders in Ottawa County, the data do exist to point to the extent of these problems among our youth.
- **Healthcare and financial stability.** The future cost of health care to treat the outcomes of an unhealthy lifestyle will continue to increase if the trends in this study continue. The effect of these continually rising costs will put further strain on a family’s ability to remain financially stable.
- It is clear from the data in the Youth Assessment Survey that we are not improving in the area of youth healthy lifestyles.

Cross-Cutting Issues

The emotional health of Ottawa County residents is also connected to their physical activity and nutrition. For example, Household Survey findings show that adults who exercise are also significantly less likely to indicate probable depressive symptoms. The relationship between mental health and lifestyle is complex, however; while depressed adults may be especially vulnerable to a lack of motivation for exercise or recreation, research also supports the positive mental health benefits of physical activity.

The Youth Assessment survey stated that 22.9 percent of Ottawa County youth had felt sad and hopeless every day for almost two weeks or more during a year, and that 7.1 percent had attempted suicide.

Throughout this section of the assessment, findings—while inconclusive—do support an intuitive sense that the time and life demands on many Ottawa County residents may not only be causing considerable stress but may in fact encourage them to put healthy eating, exercise, and ultimate health and quality of life on the back burner. This suggests that an overall approach to promoting healthy lifestyles in Ottawa County may benefit from a holistic view of Ottawa families, the stressors they face, and their needs for coping mechanisms, social connectedness, and life balance.

Emotional health and substance abuse issues are addressed in in greater detail in the “Access to Health Services” Section.

Figure 18

Body Mass Index Levels of Ottawa County Adults by Sex, Age Group, and Income			
	Underweight/ Healthy Weight	Overweight	Obese
Sex			
Male	36.5	40.5	22.9
Female	52.7	27.9	19.4
Age Group			
18–24	57.2	15.3	27.5
25–44	49.8	33.1	17.1
45–64	37.5	38.1	24.5
65+	32.8	46.1	21.1
Income Category			
Low/Very Low Income	42.4	30.4	27.2
Middle/High Income	45.9	37.5	16.5

Source: 2008 Ottawa County Household Survey
Differences in response patterns within reported subgroup breakouts are statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

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