



Community Needs Assessment focused on humanitarian needs and nonprofit service opportunities in Lafourche Parish, Terrebonne Parish and Grand Isle, Louisiana

**Data Gathered: August – October 2023
Report Compiled: November 2023**

Funded by grants to Bayou Community Foundation from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation and American Red Cross

Bayou Community Foundation Introduction

The Bayou Community Foundation (BCF) was created in 2012 by a group of business leaders and philanthropists from Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. It is the only community foundation specifically and solely serving Lafourche Parish, Terrebonne Parish, and Grand Isle, Louisiana.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the 2010 Gulf oil spill, these local leaders recognized the need for a community foundation to strengthen human services, education, workforce development, and coastal preservation efforts in our area, as well as to serve as “the community bucket” for national and international grant funding and philanthropic gifts in the aftermath of a future emergency or natural disaster.

In 2012, the Gheens Foundation awarded BCF a 5-year, \$500,000 challenge grant, which, combined with contributions from local donors, provided the seed money for BCF grant-making programs focused on addressing the region’s most critical needs. BCF met the \$1 million Gheens Foundation match in April 2015, nearly two years ahead of schedule.

The Gheens Foundation and many other donors continue to support the work of BCF with their gifts, particularly the organization’s signature annual grants program for nonprofits in Lafourche, Terrebonne, and Grand Isle that are meeting critical needs in our community. Since 2013, the Foundation’s Annual Nonprofit Grants Program has awarded 274 grants totaling over \$2.3 million.

BCF also offers free nonprofit workshops and an annual nonprofit conference to strengthen nonprofit capacity and effectiveness, and hosts community convenings such as the Bayou Region Hunger Summit to advance collaborative solutions to critical issues. Perhaps the greatest impact of Bayou Community Foundation since 2021, however, has been through the Bayou Recovery Fund for Hurricane Ida Relief.

Since the Category 4 storm’s landfall in Lafourche Parish on August 29, 2021, the Foundation has awarded over \$8 million in grants for immediate relief and long-term recovery services, including an expansive housing recovery program in partnerships with volunteer nonprofit



rebuilding groups in Dulac, Grand Isle and southern Lafourche Parish. Through the program, 24 FORTIFIED Gold homes were built and over 350 repaired for Hurricane Ida survivors in Dulac and Grand Isle between 2022-2023, and an additional 20 new homes and up to 100 home repairs are expected to be completed in southern Lafourche and Grand Isle through June 2024.

Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment Process Overview

BCF commenced the strategic planning process in July 2023. In this process, BCF incorporated stakeholder feedback and collaborated with the board in order to create the following plan components:

	Critical Question	Strategic Plan Components
1	Why do we exist?	Vision and Mission
2	How are we performing? What are our strengths and opportunities?	Reflection Summary
3	How do we advance our mission?	Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Priorities
4	How will we monitor our progress?	Goals and Metrics

Key activities in the strategic planning process included:

- Conducted bi-weekly working sessions with Jennifer Armand (BCF Executive Director) and Eileen Chao (Strategic Planning Consultant, Empower for Good LLC)
- Conducted and evaluated desk research (demographic data, reports provided by BCF, white papers, etc.)
- Interviewed 10 key stakeholders including staff, board, grantees, donors and partners
- Administered stakeholder survey to 150 grantees, donors and other community partners to gather feedback on BCF mission, strengths, and growth areas. We received 74 responses representing the following areas:
 - Stakeholders:
 - 29 Grantee / Local Nonprofit
 - 14 Board / Volunteer
 - 14 Staff / Other
 - 10 Community Leaders
 - 4 Program Partners
 - 3 Donors
 - Geographies represented:
 - 54 - Terrebonne
 - 49 - Lafourche



- Conducted four focus groups focused on BCF's Needs Assessments, incorporating feedback from 41 participants representing the Terrebonne, Lafourche and Grand Isle communities
 - [BCF Needs Assessment Focus Group - Participant list](#)
- Facilitated two board working sessions (8/30/23 and 11/14/23)
- More information around the Strategic Planning Process can be found in the board working session presentations:
 - [8/30 Board Strategic Planning presentation](#)
 - [11/14 Board Strategic Planning presentation](#)

Needs Assessment Background:

Bayou Community Foundation conducted a Community Needs Assessment to better understand the emerging and expanding humanitarian needs in our service area since Hurricane Ida's landfall two years ago, identify the nonprofits engaged in filling these needs now and the gaps that remain, and identify possible nonprofit, business and community partnerships that may help fill those gaps. BCF will use the findings of the needs assessment to drive its Annual Grants Program for the next 5 or more years. The grants program currently focuses on filling critical human services, education, workforce development, and coastal awareness needs, but if new or emerging needs are identified in the assessment, this focus may shift beginning in 2024.

In January 2013, at the founding of Bayou Community Foundation, the leadership of BCF conducted its first-ever Community Needs Assessment to determine the scope of its planned nonprofit grants program. This initial assessment included government, civic, business, education, criminal justice, health care, and nonprofit leaders from Lafourche, Terrebonne, and Grand Isle, and concluded with a tremendously valuable report that BCF has used for the past decade to drive its [Annual Nonprofit Grants Program](#).

With COVID and then Hurricane Ida having such tremendous impacts on our Bayou Region over the past 3 years, community needs have changed, and new needs have emerged. As we mark the two-year anniversary of Hurricane Ida's landfall here, we hope this updated needs assessment will help BCF better direct grants to fill emerging and expanding needs as our community continues to rebuild.

Needs Assessment Evaluation

Following the gathering of data from the [Needs Assessment Process](#), Eileen Chao (Strategic Consultant, Empower for Good LLC) and team compiled, analyzed, and synthesized information to create the following:

- [Demographic Research](#)
- [Desk research summary](#)
- Focus Group - Emerging Themes
- Needs Assessment Evaluation - The Needs Assessment Evaluation evaluated all research findings to identify the top needs in BCF communities.



Needs Assessment Findings

From the Needs Assessment Evaluation and through working sessions with Jennifer Armand (Executive Director, BCF), BCF identified the following as the main focus areas in the BCF Needs Assessments:

1. Housing availability/affordability/ recovery
2. Mental health care and addiction recovery
3. Food insecurity and quality nutrition
4. Building equitable and resilient communities where youth and adults can thrive
5. Nonprofit collaborations and community resources

Focus Area #1: Housing Availability, Affordability and Housing Recovery

- **Survey Summary**
 - When survey participants were asked, based on their personal knowledge and/or observations, what the five most critical categories of humanitarian needs are in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle that are traditionally addressed with nonprofit services, **housing recovery from Hurricane Ida** was ranked #3 out of 18 needs, with 37 out of 74 participants ranking it as #3. **Homelessness (not associated with Hurricane Ida)** was ranked #5 out of 18 needs, with 29 out of 74 participants ranking it as #5.
 - When survey participants were asked, based on their opinions or from their observations, what gaps in critical nonprofit services exist in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle, **homelessness and housing insecurity** was ranked #1 out of 9 gaps, with 14 of 53 participants ranking it as #1.
- **Focus Group Summary:** Housing availability, affordability, and housing recovery were mentioned in 23 instances across four focus groups.
 - “Homelessness: we don’t have the resources here to address this issue. We work with students to try to give them “one more month” of housing. Housing affordability is a real challenge - there are no homeless shelters in Thibodaux and there is a lack of affordable housing.”
 - “Homelessness and not having affordable housing options is a reason women do not leave domestic violence situations.”
 - “We are seeing housing shortages and resources for those displaced by the storms.”
 - “Property owners are facing increased insurance costs, so they are forced to raise rent, but that hurts tenants.”
 - “Families who are in FEMA camp can’t afford the deposit for a new place. Housing accessibility is causing stress and mental health issues.”
- **Desk Research**
 - [Start Corporation](#) - PIT Count: During the week of January 16 - 22, 2023, Start Corporation conducted the 2023 [Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Count](#) of homeless individuals in the Houma region. The count was as follows:
 - Unsheltered: 13 individuals
 - Utilizing Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing: 47 individuals

- TOTAL Count: 60(does not include anyone still experiencing homelessness due to home loss or damage during Hurricane Ida)
- [TPCG Community Needs Report](#): The high cost of housing is a driver of economic instability and a root cause of homelessness. There is a large gap between incomes and housing costs, so households experience unsustainable housing cost burdens that can lead to homelessness. COVID-19 has created an impact through loss of income - this has disproportionately affected renters. There aren't enough affordable housing or gov't subsidies available. COVID-19 has reduced rentals and increased costs for landlords and construction. Increased homelessness is likely as relief aid and eviction moratoriums end.
- [ALICE Report](#): Data reveals a disconnect between wages and the high cost of living (housing, transportation, childcare, health care, and other needs). This impacts individuals, families and the overall community. Black households, young households, single-parent households, and rural households had the highest rates below the ALICE Threshold.
- [WSJ - More Americans Are Ending Up Homeless](#): Homelessness data reports that rates are up 11% from 2022, which is the largest jump since 2007. This is occurring across the US. This is due to rising housing costs, a lack of affordable rental units, and the opioid crisis. Housing costs are the largest contributor, largely due to COVID-19 relief policies and funding ends. These policies provided many resources and funds to support access to safe and affordable housing.
- A list of nonprofits or public providers working in this area can be found [here](#). Please note this list may not be all-inclusive and organizations may have changed since this list was compiled for this assessment.

Focus Area #2: Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder

- **Survey Summary**
 - When survey participants were asked, based on their personal knowledge and/or observations, what the five most critical categories of humanitarian needs are in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle that are traditionally addressed with nonprofit services, **mental health care** was ranked #1 out of 18 needs, with 53 out of 74 participants ranking it as #1.
 - When survey participants were asked, based on their opinions or from their observations, what gaps in critical nonprofit services exist in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle, **mental health care** was ranked #2 out of 9 gaps, with 9 of 53 participants ranking it as #1.
- **Focus Group Summary**: Mental health care and substance use disorder were mentioned in 17 instances across four focus groups.
 - "Two students went to the ICU this week due to alcohol abuse. There is a growing number of students with addiction and substance use disorder issues - they must leave the area for treatment and don't always come back."



- “We’re in a mental health crisis. There are extreme waiting times to get in for people in crisis and residents are suffering trauma.”
- “Education is key - we must break the cycle. This may be a role for BCF grants, and education can also help communicate the need and normalcy of counseling for mental health.”
- “Culturally, folks are very resistant to receiving mental health help. When the entire community is experiencing trauma, individuals don’t appreciate the trauma they are experiencing or deal with it because everyone is dealing with it - it is always around them and they don’t realize their specific need, that this is not normal.”
- **Desk Research**
 - [TPCG Community Needs Report](#) a. More families are experiencing mental health issues and with deeper levels of involvement such as depressive symptoms, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm especially during the Covid-19 pandemic b. There has also been an increase in the misuse of opioids and other substances within the state. COVID-19 has worsened this issue which impacts individuals, families, and community safety.
 - [Mental Health America](#) and [State of Mental Health in America 2023](#) a. LA ranks #36 in the US for prevalence. A ranking of 1 - 13 is considered to be low, a ranking of 39-51 indicates a higher rate of substance use disorder and mental health issues and lower access to care (p. 9) b. 21% of adults are experiencing a mental illness, which is equivalent to over 50 million Americans. c. 15% of adults had a substance use disorder in the past year, and 93.5% did not receive treatment.
 - [KFF Mental Health in LA](#) a. From February 1 to 13, 2023, 39.1% of adults in Louisiana reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder, compared to 32.3% of adults in the U.S. b. Drug overdose death rates have increased in Louisiana from 13.5 per 100,000 in 2011 to 55.9 per 100,000 in 2021. Over the same period, drug overdose death rates increased from 13.2 to 32.4 per 100,000 in the U.S.
 - [Lady of the Sea Community Health Needs Assessment](#): When participants were asked what they would consider the top health priorities of themselves, their families, and their community, mental health ranked #3 behind #1, diabetes management, and #2, heart disease/high blood pressure. However, when participants were asked about the most important healthcare issue the community is facing, “access to mental healthcare” received the greatest number of responses. This need was also listed in the 2017 and 2022 CHNA as one of the top three priorities for the community. In response to these Needs Assessments, Lady of the Seat began building its mental health staffing and currently has three licensed counselors and a psychiatric nurse practitioner to help address these needs. Lafourche Parish has a high patient-to-provider ratio for mental health providers 540:1, compared to Louisiana, which is 310:1. However, it was found that Lafourche Parish has a higher incidence of suicide (16/100,000 population) than the national rating (14/100,000 population).



- [Thibodaux Regional Health System: 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment:](#)
The majority of TRHS service area participants in the health needs assessment
- rank their mental health as favorably (Excellent = 23%, Very Good = 30.9%, and Good = 23.8%), 22.1% of participants rank their mental health as “Fair” or “Poor.” This is worse than the national rate of this same level (13.4%) and has significantly increased since 2018. Additionally, a majority of participants (62.5%) listed mental health as a major problem within the community for the following reasons: access to care and services, incidence and prevalence, affordable care and services, cultural and personal beliefs, disease management, COVID-19, lack of providers and teen/young adult usage.
 - Depression: A total of 27.5% of TRHS Service Area adults have been diagnosed by a physician as having a depressive disorder; this is worse than state and national percentages.
 - Chronic Depression: A total of 39.1% of TRHS Service Area adults have had two or more years in their lives when they felt depressed or sad on most days, although they may have felt okay sometimes. This is worse than the national averages and contains disparity as it is more often reported in women, young adults, low-income residents, and participants in communities of color.
 - Stress: A majority of surveyed adults characterize most days as no more than “moderately” stressful. While this is similar to the national average, it was more often found in women, adults younger than 65, low-income residents, and participants in communities of color.
 - Suicide: In the TRHS Service Area, there were 14.1 suicides per 100,000 population (2018-2020 annual average age-adjusted rate), which was higher than the national average but lower than the state average.
 - Mental Health Providers: In the TRHS Service Area in 2021, there were 63.8 mental health providers for every 100,000 population (190 total). This is much lower than the state (138.5 per 100,000 population) and the national level (126.0 per 100,000 population).
 - Access to Mental Health Care: A total of 8.4% of TRHS Service Area adults report a time in the past year when they needed mental health services but were not able to get them; the main reasons were availability of services and lack of transportation.
- A list of nonprofits or public providers working in this area can be found [here](#). Please note this list may not be all-inclusive and organizations may have changed since this list was compiled for this assessment.

Focus Area #3: Food Insecurity and Quality Nutrition

- Survey Summary



- When survey participants were asked, based on their personal knowledge and/or observations, what the five most critical categories of humanitarian needs are in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle that are traditionally addressed with nonprofit services, **food insecurity** was ranked #2 out of 18 needs, with 43 out of 74 participants ranking it as #2.
- When survey participants were asked, based on their opinions or from their observations, what gaps in critical nonprofit services exist in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle, **food insecurity** was ranked #5 out of 9 gaps, with 4 of 53 participants ranking it as #5.
- **Focus Group Summary:** Food insecurity and quality nutrition were mentioned in 8 instances across four focus groups.
 - “Food insecurity is the highest need. Families struggle with fresh food, the cost of food, and transportation.”
 - “We need to be distributing quality food at food banks; we should be providing food that we want to eat, food that can be cooked on a stove, fresh fruits and vegetables.”
 - “There is a food and housing shortage; inflation and supply chain issues are creating rising costs for food, which is increasing food insecurity.”
- **Desk Research**
 - [Feeding Louisiana](#): An estimated 683,110 people in Louisiana live with food insecurity, 234,120 are children (this equates to 1 in 7 people struggling with food insecurity).
 - [Center for Planning Excellence: State of Hunger in LA \(2021\)](#): COVID-19 has had an impact on food security across the US. In LA, since the start of the pandemic, the number of food-insecure households in Louisiana has increased by 44%. Of these households, 69% have not had access to nutritionally adequate food in the past week. 1 in 7 urban households (which includes Jefferson, Orleans, and East Baton Rouge Parish) are food insufficient. That number rises to 1 in 5 for rural families (such as households in East Carroll Parish.) “Insufficient” is defined as sometimes or often not having enough to eat. 23% of Black Louisiana households reported not having enough food in the past week, compared to 7% of white households. Nationally, 16% of households are food insecure, and 10% are food insufficient. In Louisiana, those numbers are significantly higher -- 21% of households are food insecure, and 15% are food insufficient.
 - [America's Health Rankings: Food Insecurity in LA](#): Louisiana ranks 48 of 50 in food insecurity. 14.5% of households are unable to provide adequate food for one or more household members due to a lack of resources.
 - [Second Harvest Food Bank: Food Insecurity in the Bayou Region](#)
 - Second Harvest defines food insecurity as the: 1) lack of consistent access to food for an active, healthy lifestyle; 2) lack of financial resources for food at the household level; and 3) temporary or longstanding for families. Additionally, hunger and food insecurity are related, but they are two



distinct concepts. Hunger occurs on the individual level whereas food insecurity is a more economically-driven measure at the household level.

- Drivers of food insecurity include poverty, unemployment, low-waged jobs, fixed incomes, the economy (depressions, recessions, and inflation), health, disability, natural disasters, and pandemics. There are also factors that influence food insecurity including affordability, accessibility, adequacy, acceptability, agency, time, and transportation.
- Data
 - Louisiana has a rate of 14.8% food insecurity versus the national rate of 10.4%. Louisiana also has the highest rate of senior hunger/food insecurity in the nation at 13.4%.
 - In the Bayou Community, the food insecurity rate is 13.4% (27,980 people). Lafourche Parish has a food insecurity rate of 12.9% (12,620 people) and Terrebonne Parish has a food insecurity rate of 13.9% (15,360 people). Food insecurity rates can also be viewed by race: Black population: 23%; Hispanic population: 17%; and White, non-Hispanic population: 10%. By age, children have a 16% rate of food insecurity and seniors have a 13.4% rate of food insecurity.
 - Food insecurity by block groups: Lafourche: 26%, Terrebonne: 26%, and Grand Isle: 32%.
- Trends and Actions
 - Second Harvest collaborates with two dozen location organizations in Lafourche, Terrebonne, and Grand Isle to provide support to the community facing food insecurity. In the fiscal year 2023, this network provided 2.5 million pounds of food to the Bayou region.
 - There are several food challenges that resulted in a decrease in the amount of food donated including food received from the USDA decreased by 48% and food donated by retailers, manufacturers, and individuals decreased by 14%. Supply chain issues and inflation negatively impacted food donations from all donor streams.
 - Second Harvest is hopeful this situation will improve as the retail/manufacturing donations are beginning to improve and the USDA is planning for fiscal year 2024 to improve deliveries and announced the investment of an additional \$1 billion in The Emergency Food Assistance Program.
 - Second Harvest has also taken several strategic actions to address the challenges of food inventory in the short- and long-term including purchasing food and investing in a Food Sourcing Team by hiring additional personnel to expand efforts to source food from South Louisiana.



- Second Harvest is also taking a systems-level approach to address food insecurity through a number of programs at the federal, state, and local levels.
- **Hunger Summit**
 - BCF hosted the 2023 Bayou Region Hunger Summit on October 12, 2023, with 101 registrations and 78 participants.
 - Food banks and pantries serving food insecure residents in Lafourche, Terrebonne, and Grand Isle, as well as other nonprofit organizations, churches, and government agencies who provide other services to under-resourced residents who may also be food insecure. Food banks and parties represented include 49 local partners of Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana.
 - A recap of the summit can be found in the [Appendix](#).
- A list of nonprofits or public providers working in this area can be found [here](#). Please note this list may not be all-inclusive and organizations may have changed since this list was compiled for this assessment.

Focus Area #4: Building Equitable and Resilient Communities Where Adults and Youth Can Thrive

- **Survey Summary**
 - When survey participants were asked, based on their personal knowledge and/or observations, what the five most critical categories of humanitarian needs are in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle that are traditionally addressed with nonprofit services, they responded:
 - **Mentoring and/or academic enrichment for At-Risk Youth** was ranked #6 out of 18 needs, with 23 out of 74 participants ranking it as #6.
 - **Workforce development and retention in the Bayou Region** was ranked #10 out of 18 needs, with 18 out of 74 participants ranking it as #10.
 - **Early Childhood Education** was ranked #8 out of 18 needs, with 20 out of 74 participants ranking it as #8.
 - **Access to Quality Health Care and Medication** was ranked #7 out of 18 needs, with 22 out of 74 participants ranking it as #7.
 - When survey participants were asked, based on their opinions or from their observations, what gaps in critical nonprofit services exist in Lafourche, Terrebonne, or Grand Isle:
 - **Education and Youth-Related Services** was ranked #7 out of 9 gaps, with 2 of 53 participants ranking it as #7.
 - **Job Training** was ranked #9 out of 9 gaps, with 1 of 53 participants ranking it as #9.
 - **Health needs** was ranked #6 out of 9 gaps, with 3 of 53 participants ranking it as #6.
- **Focus Group Summary**
 - **Youth-Related Challenges and Issues** were mentioned in 9 instances across four focus groups.

- “We must have positive recreation opportunities for youth including preventative services, opportunities, and alternatives for youth.”
 - “We see a lot of school attendance issues and dropouts because of their housing issues or since COVID - it’s impossible to break the cycle.”
 - “We have seen the positive impact of academic enrichment programs on at-risk youth.”
 - “Young people and minorities are leaving - everyone younger than 25 is “moving to Texas.” Some people don’t have a choice to leave or not to leave and can only rely on the services we have here.”
 - **Access to Healthcare** was mentioned in 8 instances across four focus groups.
 - “Access to health care is an issue for those without transportation.”
 - “We are struggling with getting specialists down the Bayou. Others commented that people don’t trust telehealth. People who struggle with transportation might not have an alternative - telehealth could help.”
 - “There is a severe shortage of medical support staff - Ochsner is working in the schools to promote careers in the medical field.”
 - **Workforce Development** was mentioned in 2 instances across four focus groups.
 - “There is a group of people who can’t get a job because they won’t pass a drug test, or they have a rap sheet or problems with background checks. This is where the education piece comes in for employers with regard to background checks - it may require legislation to change. There are some people who might be great employees, but background check stops them from being hired.”
 - Workforce development - residents need resources - graduate high school and then sit at home.”
- **Desk Research**
 - **Mentoring and/or academic enrichment for At-Risk Youth**
 - [WalletHub: At-Risk Youth Statistics \(2023\)](#): Louisiana is ranked #1 for the most at-risk youth. Louisiana is also in the top 3 for % of disconnected youth and % of youth without a high school diploma.
 - [DCFS March 2023 Report](#) (TB parish on p. 11): Doubling the federal cash benefit for Louisiana’s most vulnerable families propelled the state from 48th in the nation to the national average. These funds included addressing poverty and the most vulnerable populations, achieving permanency for children, stabilizing the DCFS workforce, and responding to and recovering from disasters.
 - [PBS: Why LA counseling centers are seeing a rising in kids with grief \(2022\)](#): Before the pandemic, Louisiana ranked near last – 48th – in well-being overall for children, according to a Kids Count Data Book report based on 2019 data. In Louisiana, though, the impact of COVID/mental health crisis may be more profound for a generation of kids experiencing poverty, a lack of resources, and trauma stemming from destructive hurricanes. Counselors at a grief support center in the rural Acadiana



region, two hours west of New Orleans, have seen what happens when bereaved children are left alone in their grief in an already isolating experience throughout the pandemic. In a rural area where nearly one in five people lives in poverty and access to services is limited, grief around losing those who provided stability, confidence, and care is amplified by anxiety about the future.

- **Workforce development and retention in the Bayou Region**
 - **[TPCG Community Needs Report](#):** There needs to be more training and availability locally for living wage jobs. People are steered toward lower-wage jobs that are not transportation and childcare-friendly. Lack of childcare is a huge barrier to work - women are leaving the workforce due to lack of job opportunities/lack of childcare. Many jobs require higher education and education assistance is needed to create opportunities for better-paying jobs for low-income families. Funding sources allow families to receive financial assistance to be trained to be put to work or obtain higher-paying jobs.
 - **[ALICE Report](#):** For households that struggle to make ends meet across all demographic groups, the crux of the problem is a mismatch between earnings and the cost of basics. 75% of these top 20 jobs still paid less than \$20 per hour. Earning less than \$20 hourly wasn't enough for many workers to keep pace with the rising costs of essentials. In 2021, with two full-time workers in two of Louisiana's most common jobs - retail salesperson and cashier - and multiple pandemic supports, a family of four's income still fell short of the minimum cost of basics by over \$17,000.
 - **[LA Workforce Commission: LA Occupational Information System \(LOIS\)](#):** This tool is a live dashboard that updates regularly. June 2023 Unemployment rate is 3.4%; US rate is 3.5%. July 2023 TB unemployment rate: 4.2% // July 2023 LF unemployment rate: 4.0% // JP unemployment rate: 4.0%
 - **[Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - LA State Plan](#) (2020 - 2023):** Adults: The WIOA Title I Adult program provides workforce activities that increase, (particularly for individuals with barriers to employment), the employment, retention, earnings, and attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials of adults age 18 and older, and as a result, improving the quality of the workforce, reducing dependency on public assistance and increasing economic self-sufficiency. Dislocated worker services are custom-tailored to meet an individual worker's specific needs. Working one-on-one with a case manager, workers are guided through the process of developing an Individualized Employment Plan that includes as a minimum: 1) Career planning and counseling, 2) Job search and placement, 3) Approved training, which includes Registered Apprenticeship programs, 4) Other needed support services.
- **Early Childhood Education**



- [Partners for Family Health LA \(Winter 2021 report\)](#): 73,228 children live in the 32 parishes that are classified as either Moderate-High or High Risk, representing approximately 23.8% of all children under age 5 in Louisiana. Black children face more disadvantages on average than White children. While certain parishes are considered higher-risk environments for young children, it should be noted that 98% of all Louisiana parishes (63 out of 64) are rated as “High Risk” on at least one indicator. Conversely, 97% of all Louisiana parishes (62 out of 64) are rated as “Low Risk” on at least one indicator.
- [2023 Kids Count Databook](#): See p. 21 (overall child well-being): The Foundation derives a composite index of overall child well-being for each state by combining data across four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health, and (4) Family and Community. These composite scores are then translated into a state ranking for child well-being. Louisiana ranks in 49th place in the "Worst" category. Louisiana ranks 50 in economic well-being, 43 in education, 49 in health, and 49 in family and community.
- [Early Success: LA Fact Sheet](#): Approximately 49% (267,000) of the state’s children 0-8 live in households below 200% FPL. This number represents a decrease from 53% (294,000) in 2015. Non-White children 0-8 are significantly more likely to be living in households below 200% FPL. In 2022, the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund and early childhood programs gained a \$84 million historic amount of funding. Lawmakers passed a bill that allows certain parishes to invest in early care and education as a juvenile justice prevention effort. The legislature passed a bill that requires school districts to work toward offering year-round, full-day pre-kindergarten to all 4-year-olds.
- [LA Policy Institute for Children](#): Over 80% of 4-year-olds in Louisiana attend free public pre-K in schools or Head Start programs. For children under age 4, quality early care and education are severely underfunded and out of reach for most low-income, working families. There are 173,000 total in-need children from birth through age 3 in Louisiana and 114,000 in-need children without access to a high-quality early care and education program in Louisiana. \$760M annual loss faced by Louisiana employers from employee absences and turnover due to childcare issues
- **Access to Quality Health Care and Medication**
 - [LA Illuminator: LA's rural healthcare anemic for minorities, poor and elderly \(Nov 2022\)](#): 73% of state residents live in areas that are understaffed medically. Louisiana’s high poverty rate, combined with critical shortages of providers in the public health sector, exacerbates chronic issues in a largely rural state. 50 of 64 parishes are at least 92% rural with a pop of 1.2 million residents combined - the majority of whom are minorities, elderly, and live in poverty. Federally Qualified Health Centers are usually the only facilities in a community that accept patients



with Medicaid or who have no health insurance; 1 million residents in LA have coverage under Medicaid, and most are children.

- [Rural Healthcare: A Pandemic to Prosperity White paper](#) (June 2020): Prepared for Resilient Louisiana Commission by the Rural Development Taskforce: In 2019, 16% of LA's population lived in rural communities. Rural communities face healthcare access barriers that contribute to a disproportionate level of disease and mortality. The people living in rural communities tend to be sicker and older than in urban communities. They

have higher rates of cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, and obesity. While the pandemic had an impact on access to healthcare, rural communities struggled with this prior to the pandemic. There were four challenges addressed to barriers to healthcare: 1) workforce shortages, 2) transportation, 3) telehealth barriers, and 4) lack of stable funding for the rural healthcare system.

- [Thibodaux Regional Health System: 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment](#): Participants taking this survey listed Access to Health Care as a moderate problem within the community. Those who rated it as a major problem gave the following reasons: general access to care, transportation, and specialty care.
 - Health Care Coverage: A total of 51.2% of TRHS Service Area adults aged 18 to 64 report having health care coverage through private insurance. Another 40.6% report coverage through a government-sponsored program (e.g., Medicaid, Medicare, military benefits). Among adults aged 18 to 64, 8.2% report having no insurance coverage for health care expenses; this is higher than the LA percentage (13.6%) but found to be lowest in Black participants and men.
 - Difficulties Accessing Services: A total of 45.4% of TRHS Service Area adults report difficulty or delay in obtaining health care services in the past year. This is higher than the national percentage and has significantly increased since 2018; it is more often reported in adults younger than 65 and low-income participants.
 - Barriers to Health Care Access: Of the tested barriers, appointment availability impacted the greatest share of TRHS Service Area adults. Additionally, since 2018, difficulty in accessing healthcare has increased for the following reasons: appointment availability, difficulty finding a physician, and transportation; all of these are higher than the national percentage.
 - Health Care for Children: A total of 9.2% of parents say there was a time in the past year when they needed medical care for their child but were unable to get it, which represents a significant increase since 2018 and is slightly higher than the national average (8.0%).



- [Terrebonne General Health System: 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment:](#) This CHNA found that access to health care was a major focus area for numerous reasons including health insurance coverage, physician availability, affordability, health literacy, and transportation. Additionally, more physicians are needed, but TGS recommends healthcare facilities should explore telemedicine opportunities; however, this increases the need for residents to have adequate access to computers, laptops, phones, and high-speed internet.
 - Listening to the Community
 - Community Stakeholders
 - The top three barriers for people not receiving care are transportation (66.7%), affordability (66.7%), and availability of services (52.4%)
 - Limited service available (80.9%) and attitudes/beliefs about public transit (38.1%) contribute to transportation issues.
 - Quality of life would be improved by: having access to behavioral health services (77.3%), transportation (59.1%), and community health education and health literacy (31.8%).
 - 38.1% of participants said that providing transportation is the best solution to help the vulnerable population
 - Key Informants
 - The top three barriers for people not receiving care are affordability (77.8%), health literacy (77.8%) and transportation (75.6%).
 - Challenges contributing to transportation issues include limited-service availability (75.6%) and lack of community education around available resources (60%).
 - The best solutions to help vulnerable populations meet health needs include providing mobile health services (35.6%) and providing transportation (15.6%).
 - Primary Care and Access to Physicians: The patient-physician ratio for Terrebonne Parish is higher than state and nation, indicating the need for more physicians. These are the rates of physicians per patient in 2022; it is anticipated that another 392 physicians will be required by 2030.
 - TB: 2,350
 - LA: 1,430
 - US: 1,310



- In county health rankings, a score of 1 is the healthiest and a score of 64 is the least healthy. TB ranked 28 in 2016, 48 in 2019, and 43 in 2022.
- Health Insurance
 - In Terrebonne Parish, 9.41% do not have health insurance. The rate of uninsured individuals in the parish exceeds the state average of 8.7%. This results in a lack of access to healthcare including primary and specialty care.
 - In reviewing uninsured status by race, the highest percentage is “some other race” (53.4%) whereas “Asian” is the lowest (5.9%).
 - In 2022, 29.9% of the TB population received Medicaid as opposed to 27.7% in LA and 20.1% in the US.
- Telemedicine: The use of telemedicine increased throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as it provides virtual access to healthcare education, communication, and connection with physicians and medical staff.
 - Roughly one-third of adults (37.0%) used telemedicine in the past 12 months. Telemedicine usage was utilized more by women 65 years of age and older (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Women are more likely to use telemedicine than men and the use over age groups demonstrates that adults 65 years and older are more likely to use telemedicine than younger adults.
 - White adults (39.2%) were more likely than Hispanic (32.8%), Black (33.1%), and Asian (33.0%) adults to have used telemedicine in the past 12 months. American Indian or Alaska Native adults (40.6%) were more likely to use telemedicine than Hispanic, Black, and Asian adults.
 - The percentage of adults who used telemedicine increased with education level, from 28.7% among adults with less than a high school diploma or GED to 43.2% among adults with a college degree or higher.

Focus Area #5: Nonprofit collaboration and community resources

- **Survey Summary**
 - “BCF has proven its ability to forge strong partnerships to tackle big problems. The success of the Hurricane Ida Housing Recovery Program and its partnership with MDS proves that BCF has the ability to focus resources and meet the most dire of needs.” -Staff
 - “As the community grows, there will be the need for new programs, for existing programs to grow, as issues become more populated. Continuing to build relationships with organizations, corporations, and donors is important”. - Grantee/local nonprofit



BAYOU COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

- “The greatest opportunity for growth for BCF is to capitalize on its prior experience with handling the community needs following Hurricane Ida.” -Board member/volunteer
- **Focus Group Summary:** Non-profit collaboration and community resource was mentioned in 6 instances across four focus groups.
 - “There is a breakdown between agencies working together that are supposed to be helping.”
 - “Everyone is doing what they can - we need to work together and collaborate so everyone will know what services are offered and who.”
 - “BCF could fund services education/resource lists at the local/community level.”

5. Appendix

a. Hunger Summit Recap

2023 Bayou Region Hunger Summit

October 12, 2023

Recap of Discussion

Trends and Gaps:

In the last 3 years, what trends have we seen in food insecurity among the people we serve?

1. An increase in the individuals who are facing housing insecurity and homelessness
2. Those coming for help are more desperate
3. There are not enough volunteers to help with food distribution
4. The price of resources (especially food) is higher and people who once could afford food are now struggling
5. Government benefits have not kept up with inflation and the current cost of living
6. There is an increased number of at-risk seniors
7. Marginalized communities hesitate to reach out for services for fear of reprisals (LGBTQ+ and non-English speakers especially)
8. There are larger numbers of single-parent homes with multiple children
9. There is a lack of transportation to access resources
10. Fewer and fewer individuals have emergency funds/savings as a result of pandemic and natural disasters
11. Hurr Ida damaged many stores; many did not reopen. So, we see more food deserts. We see food insecurity moving up the social/economic ladder. Many who before now did not have issues before are now having trouble due to a number of contributing factors, including inflation, housing issues from the storm, increased costs of insurance, and interest rates.

Are there gaps in food distribution capacity, services, service areas, and/or populations served?

1. There is a need for unscheduled food distribution – to meet on-demand needs
2. There is a need for transportation for those living in rural areas to access services



BAYOU COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

3. There is a need for a grocery shopping program for seniors and other individuals who are homebound and depend on “meals on wheels”
4. There is a lack of awareness of organizations available to help clients with needs that our organizations do not address
5. There is a lack of knowledge of educational opportunities
6. There is an increase in the number of food deserts
7. Sustainability for nonprofits and volunteer groups is becoming more difficult
8. There is a need for more awareness concerning the types of food items donated and their accessibility to those obtaining donations (for example: pop-top can goods, including can openers with those that are not, microwave access for cold/frozen meals)
9. There's just not enough funding to go around. It's also difficult to get to appointments, food banks, etc. due to a lack of personal and public transportation.
10. There are severe inadequacies with regard to the consistency, type, quantity, and quality of food sent to the distribution pantries.

11. Transportation to food distribution sites creates a barrier and challenge. Also, educating the public on where services and distribution sites are located would help. We may need to get a bit creative in marketing these locations and services.

Why? What is contributing to these trends and/or gaps?

1. Individuals are hesitant to come forward because of embarrassment
2. The non-English-speaking community faces barriers to service without interpreters or social security numbers
3. The immigrant community is hesitant to reach out for services out of fear of legal consequences
4. There is a lack of transportation for individuals to access resources
5. There is a lack of knowledge of available resources
6. The pandemic and natural disasters have amplified the gaps
7. The lack of employment, lack of proper education to find employment (several of the people I work with don't have a high school diploma or a GED), lack of affordable childcare to find employment (being able to afford it as well as finding a daycare with availability).
8. Hurr Ida caused many stores to close. Residences of Pointe aux Chenes now must travel 20 minutes + to get to a store.

Are any of these factors addressable at the community level?

1. We need more collaboration across agencies
2. We need to develop a way to keep informed of available resources and educational opportunities
3. We need a way to educate the public of available resources
4. We need to develop a ready list of supplies needed for donors

Impacts:

Beyond hunger, how is food insecurity impacting the people you serve? What other struggles are they experiencing?

1. Clients are unable to afford medication



BAYOU COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

2. Seniors are in need of in-home care
3. Most seniors live on fixed incomes. Depending on their life circumstances and income, they may struggle between spending their dollars on food or medication, food or rent, food or incontinence supplies, food or utility bills, etc.
4. Clients are facing a difficult time accessing mental health services
5. Clients are facing unemployment (both gaining and keeping employment)
6. There is a lack of affordable childcare
7. There is a lack of affordable housing
8. Clients who are suffering from drug addiction and mental illness
9. Clients are unable to pay utility bills, rent, or for basic needs
10. Some individuals are choosing to turn to criminal activity in order to make sure that they have the funds to put food on the table (so to speak). This impacts not only the individual and their families but also the community and public safety.

What Can We Do About It?

1. We need to remember that we are all working together and not Us vs. Them
2. We need a resource directory and a way to easily access resources that other organizations offer
3. We need more understanding of services offered and networking with Second Harvest, Catholic Charities, and TCU Food Bank
4. We need open-door policies for pantries with no income requirements or other requirements
5. We need to ensure that everyone handling food understands safe food policy and procedure
6. We need partnerships with outside programs to offer a more holistic approach to client's needs
7. We need organizations to employ outreach staff to access current community needs and work on ways to address them
8. We need to build more effective collaboration efforts
9. We need to remember to have empathy for those who are struggling
10. We need to remember what the goal is
11. We need to take into account other causes of hunger...it's a symptom of the bigger problem

What is not working? Are there organizational efforts or community initiatives that are not effective?

1. We need transportation/ bus passes to enable clients to get to us
2. There is a lack of accessibility (sidewalks/walkability) for clients to safely get to us
3. Some of the homeless population is looking for resources (food, clothing, temporary shelter) but not long-term solutions to find permanent housing
4. The needs are bigger than the resources available
5. Mental health and substance use disorder resources available are not sufficient
6. We do not meet in person enough / current working groups and committee meetings by Zoom are not as effective as they can be



BAYOU COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

7. There is not enough communication between agencies
8. We feel like we are putting a band-aid on a wound but not solving the core problems – especially regarding homelessness
9. Building awareness for resources so that those who need it can find it easily
10. Our outreach efforts to certain high-risk populations need to expand
11. A lot of organizations say they provide certain services such as utility assistance but when they are called, they don't have the funding or that they don't qualify even though they have little to no income.

Community/Multi-Agency Action Plan:

Short-Term Action Plan (30 days) with resources/partnerships/next steps needed

1. Create a working group that will meet more often and set the first meeting date
2. Creation of a resource guide that would be included with food distributions
3. Create a “snapshot” of summit participant’s organizations that include resources and services

4. Partner with local libraries to host educational programming for the public
5. We can all take a more active role in becoming familiar with agencies and resources

Long Term Action Plan (6 months) with resources/partnerships/next steps needed

1. A community calendar for organizations that need volunteers
2. Connect organizations that need volunteers to corporate businesses and other groups that require volunteer hours
3. A resource guide of agencies and services offered that is updated on a regular basis
4. A way for us to share our successes and celebrate together
5. Establishing more satellite locations for resources by partnering with other agencies that serve those in need of resources

[Second Harvest Lafourche Parish snapshot](#)

[Second Harvest Terrebonne Parish snapshot](#)