

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

OUTLOOK SURVEY

2016



Contents: Data by Respondents

Introduction	1
All Respondents	2
Nonprofit Organizations	11
Financial Institutions	14
Community & Economic Development Organizations	18
All Metropolitan Respondents	21
All Rural Respondents	30



www.stlouisfed.org/cdos

Introduction

The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis' Community Development Outlook Survey (CDOS) collects original data that informs and guides the long-term programming of the St. Louis Fed's Community Development staff and informs community development practitioners about trends and outlooks that affect low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities in the Eighth Federal Reserve District. The survey is an annual opinion poll that was sent to 3,619 community stakeholders in the seven states that comprise the Eighth District. Responses were received from 753 of those stakeholders between July 19 and August 17, 2016. The overall survey response rate was 20.8 percent. Please note that percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100 percent.

A variety of community stakeholders were invited to participate in the CDOS, including community and economic development organizations, educational institutions (K-12 and colleges or universities), financial institutions, government agencies, nonprofits, public officials, and other community organizations. The number and type of questions that a respondent received depended on their self-identified type of organization. Responses were grouped into organizational categories (e.g., nonprofits, community and economic development organizations, financial institutions), as well as metropolitan and rural categories.

Respondent Profiles

Survey data is based on 753 responses.

Respondent Breakdown by Place of Employment



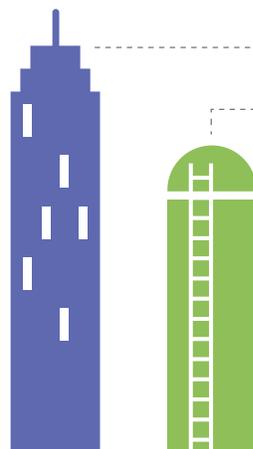
- 31.8%** Nonprofit/community-based organization
- 23.8%** Financial institution
- 12.5%** Community & economic development organization
- 11.7%** Government/public official
- 11.4%** Education
- 8.8%** Other

Respondent Breakdown by States Represented



- 23.6%** Missouri
- 20.5%** Kentucky
- 16.9%** Tennessee
- 15.5%** Arkansas
- 12.2%** Mississippi
- 8.7%** Illinois
- 2.7%** Indiana

Respondent Breakdown by Population Served



- 56.9%** Metropolitan
- 43.1%** Rural



QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY:

All Respondents

The State of LMI Communities Across the Eighth District

In 2016, 17.6 percent of respondents report that general economic conditions for LMI communities are improving, a decrease from 2015 (20.1 percent of respondents). Additionally, 20.9 percent of respondents report a decline in economic conditions for LMI communities as compared with 2015 (16.3 percent). Sixty-one percent of respondents report that economic conditions remained the same for LMI communities in 2016.

In **Arkansas**, 59.8 percent of respondents indicate that general economic conditions are staying the same for LMI communities (compared with 63.8 percent in 2015), while 20.6 percent indicate that they are improving (compared with 19 percent in 2015), and 19.6 percent indicate declining conditions (compared with 17.2 percent in 2015).

In **Illinois**, 51.7 percent of respondents indicate that general economic conditions are staying the same for LMI communities (compared with 71.4 percent in 2015), while 15.5 percent indicate that they are improving (compared with 11.4 percent in 2015), and 32.8 percent indicate declining conditions (compared with 17.1 percent in 2015).

In **Indiana**, 61.1 percent of respondents indicate that general economic conditions are staying the same for LMI communities (compared with 78.9 percent in 2015), while 22.2 percent indicate that they are improving (compared with 15.8 percent in 2015), and 16.7 percent indicate declining conditions (compared with 5.3 percent in 2015).

In **Kentucky**, 58.2 percent of respondents indicate that general economic conditions are staying the same for LMI

communities (compared with 59.3 percent in 2015), while 18.7 percent indicate that they are improving (compared with 35.2 percent in 2015), and 23.1 percent indicate declining conditions (compared with 5.6 percent in 2015).

In **Mississippi**, 56.9 percent of respondents indicate that general economic conditions are staying the same for LMI communities (compared with 61.1 percent in 2015), while 21.5 percent indicate that they are improving (compared with 8.3 percent in 2015), and 21.5 percent indicate declining conditions (compared with 30.6 percent in 2015).

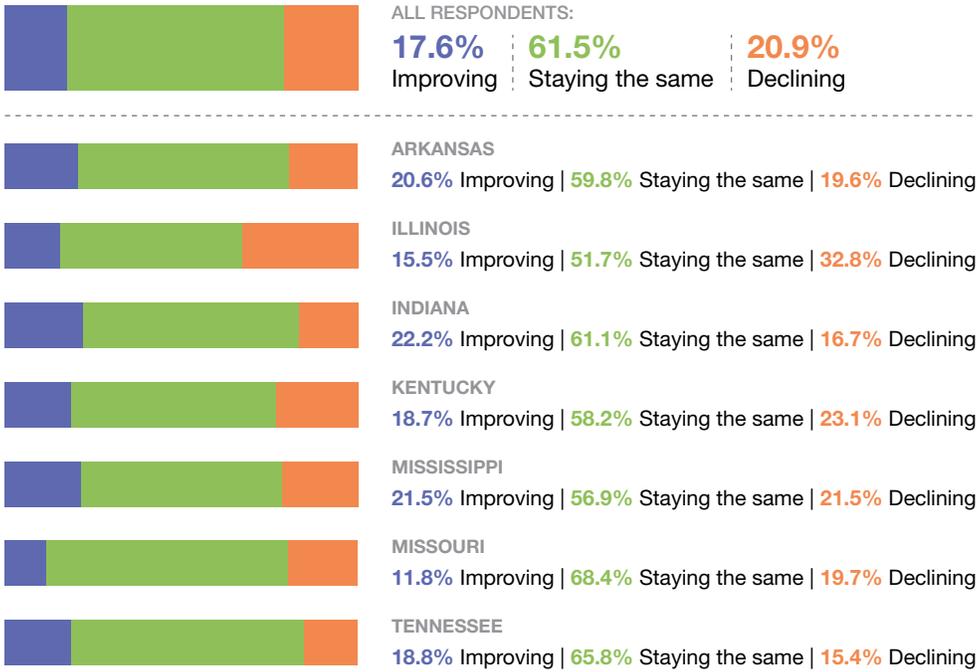
In **Missouri**, 68.4 percent of respondents indicate that general economic conditions are staying the same for LMI communities (compared with 62.9 percent in 2015), while 11.8 percent indicate that they are improving (compared with

16.5 percent in 2015), and 19.7 percent indicate declining conditions (compared with 20.6 percent in 2015).

In **Tennessee**, 65.8 percent of respondents indicate that general economic conditions are staying the same for LMI communities (compared with 60.0 percent in 2015), while 18.8 percent indicate that they are improving (compared with 28.9 percent in 2015), and 15.4 percent indicate declining conditions (compared with 11.1 percent in 2015).

All Respondents

1 Compared with one year ago, general economic conditions of the LMI communities you serve are:



2 Compared with one year ago, the well-being of LMI individuals in your area and their ability to meet basic needs are:



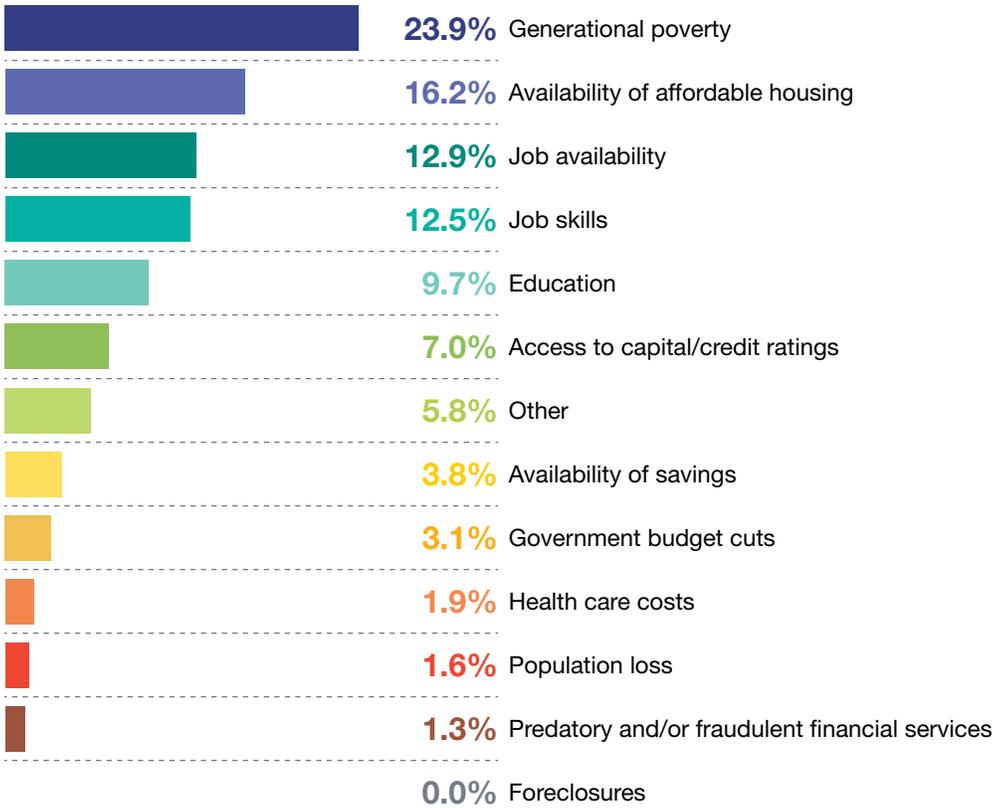
Compared with 2015, more respondents indicate that the well-being of LMI individuals and their ability to meet basic needs are declining (17.2 percent in 2015; 25.7 percent in 2016). Fewer survey respondents note that economic conditions are staying the same compared with one year ago (71.8 percent in 2015; 62.1 percent in 2016).

3 In three to five years, what will be the status of LMI people and households in your community?



All Respondents

4 What issue is having the greatest negative impact on LMI households and communities? Please choose only one.



Generational poverty remains the top issue having the greatest negative impact on LMI households and communities for the second year in a row, indicated by 23.9 percent of respondents. Participants indicating that availability of affordable housing is the top issue has more than doubled, from 7.9 percent in 2015 to 16.2 percent in 2016. Respondents indicate that job availability is having a greater negative impact in rural areas (21.6 percent) than in metropolitan areas (6.7 percent).

- Top five issues across metropolitan areas:**
1. Generational poverty
 2. Availability of affordable housing
 3. Education
 4. Job skills
 5. Access to capital/credit ratings

- Top five issues across rural areas:**
1. Generational poverty
 2. Job availability
 3. Job skills
 4. Availability of affordable housing
 5. Education

This is the first time since the survey began in 2011 that job availability has not come up as a top-five issue for metropolitan respondents.

“The long-term concentration of poverty in the same neighborhoods and communities has prevented any economic advancement for many households – people are not able to move up the economic ladder.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Job availability and education are significant needs in our community, but you can’t address these needs without stable, decent housing.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Jobs with good wages, benefits and predictable schedules are rare.”

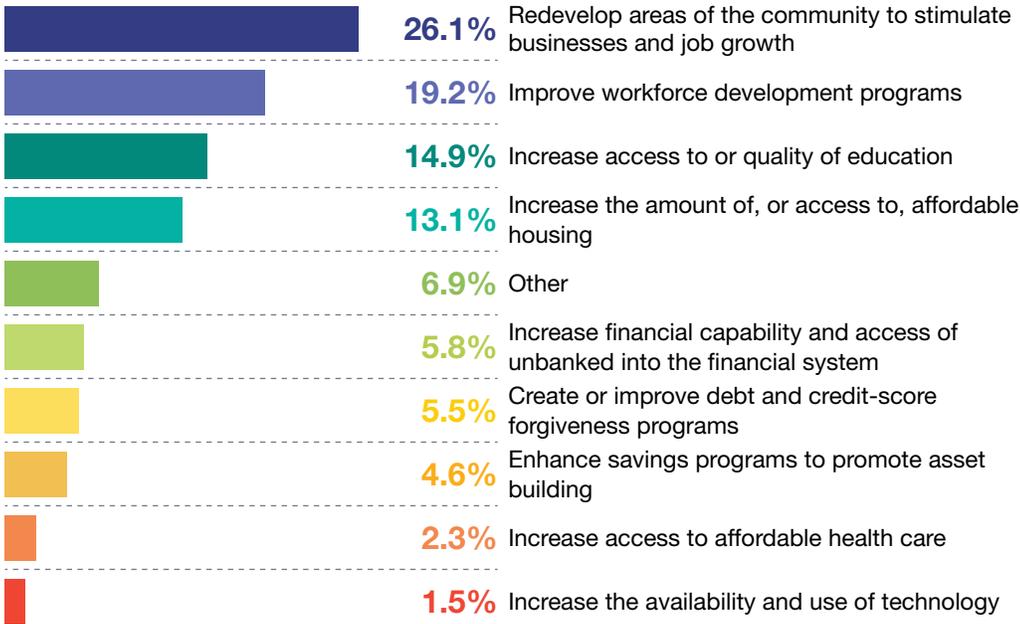
– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Disinvestment is taking place in our community, which is leading to generational poverty and substandard housing.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

All Respondents

5 If funding were not a concern, what one best action could an organization or community take to improve the outlook for LMI individuals?



▶ In 2016, the majority of survey respondents listed redeveloping areas of the community to stimulate business and job growth (26.1 percent) as the one best action an organization could take to improve the outlook for LMI individuals. This replaced improvement of workforce development programs, which fell to 19.2 percent of respondents (down from 27.4 percent in 2015). Increasing the amount of, or access to, affordable housing nearly doubled, from 7.0 percent in 2015 to 13.1 percent in 2016.

“The residents in our LMI neighborhoods do not have access to quality education or stable employment. The young people get trapped in cycles of generational poverty because they are not provided with adequate options to break the cycle.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector**; **College or University** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Strategic investment in neighborhoods should be a priority if we want to improve LMI households. Our community lacks a plan to create jobs and adequately address other needs we have.”

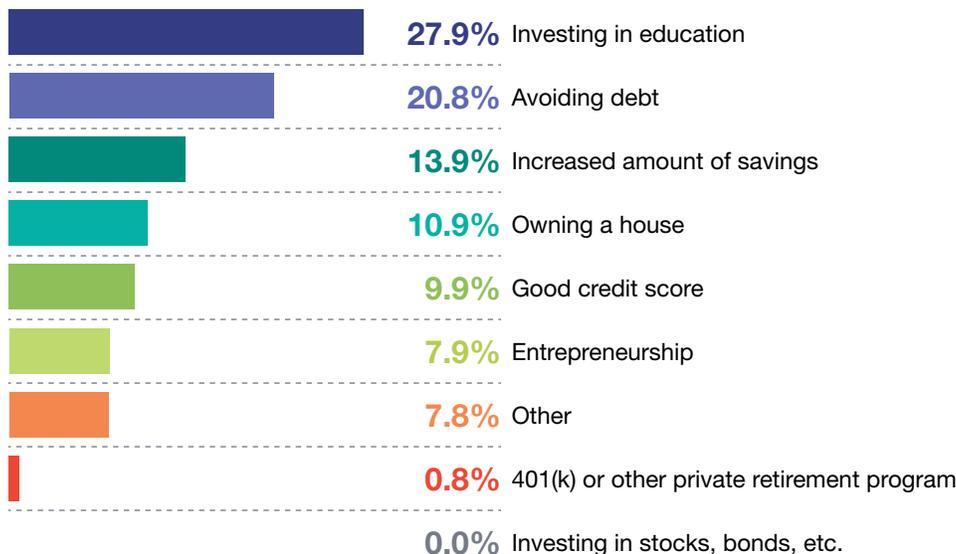
– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“We should create more opportunities for job training in the trades. High schools are required to provide certain hours in mandated areas but they do not have the money or the time in the curriculum to teach vocational education as they once did. This is an area that community colleges have tried to expand; however, recent budget cuts have reduced these programs.”

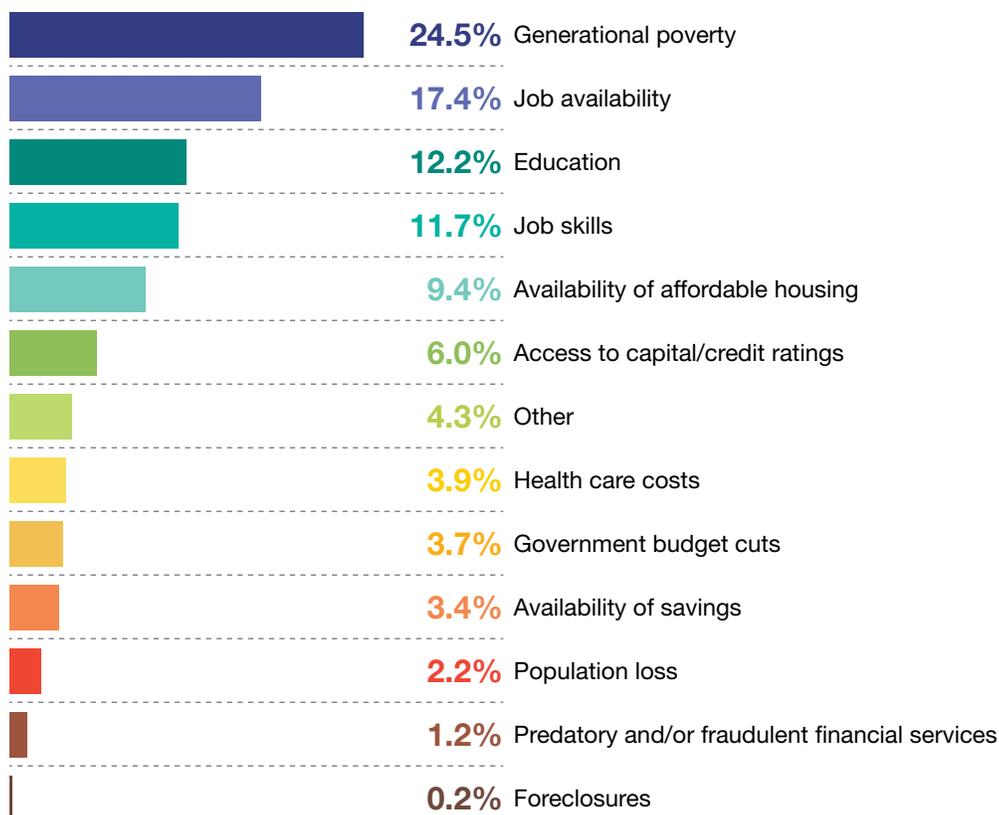
– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

○ All Respondents

6 Which one of the following assets is most important in helping to increase the financial stability of LMI households?



7 What will be the greatest challenge for the next generation in LMI communities? Please choose only one.



“The impact of generational poverty and the related toxic stress it places on the ability to make good decisions, set goals and carry through – combined with lack of access to resources – is an overwhelming obstacle for many in my community.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“With few jobs available for those launching their careers, our town is losing talented young workers to neighboring communities.”

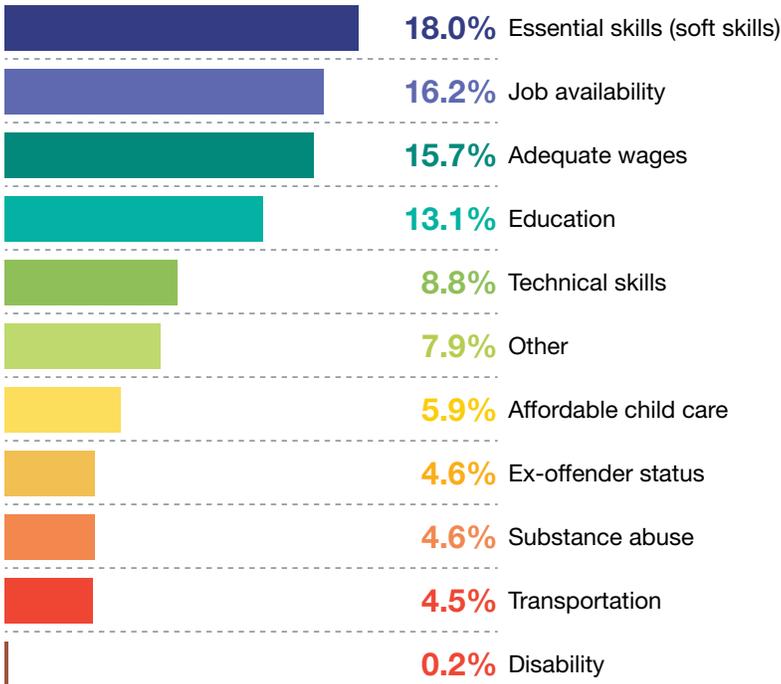
– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ind. – Rural)

“Adequately addressing the systemic reasons for generational poverty continues to be a challenge.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

All Respondents

8 What is the greatest employment barrier facing people living in LMI communities?



Top five employment barriers across metropolitan areas:



1. Adequate wages
2. Essential skills (soft skills)
3. Education
4. Other
5. Technical skills

Top five employment barriers across rural areas:



1. Job availability
2. Essential skills (soft skills)
3. Adequate wages
4. Education
5. Technical skills

9 What is the leading contributing factor to generational poverty in the LMI communities you serve?

“Challenges finding good-paying jobs for those for whom college doesn’t make sense.”

– Respondent, Other Sector (Ark. – Rural)

“Families need access to financial literacy and the ability to pass it on to the next generation.”

– Respondent, Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“It is difficult to identify one contributing factor, but to make a positive change there needs to be an increased focus on reading readiness for Pre-K. The young brain develops rapidly at this age and the children who are not exposed to reading and words before school start at a disadvantage that is difficult to make up as he or she progresses through the school system.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ark. – Rural)

“Education inequality and high unemployment in urban areas are the leading factors for generational poverty.”

– Respondent, Financial Institutions Sector (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Being unable to see the possibility and receiving the encouragement to strive for something else.”

– Respondent, Other Sector (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Institutional and systematic discrimination (racism) and lack of better educational opportunities.”

– Respondent, Education Sector; College or University (Miss. – Rural)

“Acceptance of the status quo as all that is attainable.”

– Respondent, Government/Public Official Sector (Ky. – Metropolitan)

○ All Respondents

Question 9 cont.

“Lack of financial education early on when habits are able to be more easily shaped toward savings and financial responsibility. Quality education to maximize employment potential.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Lack of suitable employment for those without college degrees, high rates of teen and young adult pregnancy, poorly performing public schools.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“The availability of living-wage employment.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The physical (neurological) and psychological impacts of the toxic stress of poverty (violence, hunger, constant insecurity, lack of resources, etc.) on executive functioning and the ability to set and achieve goals.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of access to the mainstream economy, no credit.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector; College or University](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Isolation of the poor (concentrated poverty areas), with limited to no economic diversity in neighborhoods.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Poorly structured and inadequate government assistance and educational/training programs that seem to trap individuals in poverty.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Tenn. – Rural)

“Lack of a male role model in many of the households. Also, lack of education with many individuals who did not complete high school. Also, lack of job skills that prepare individuals for employment.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of education and, at times, programs are structured to sustain people in poverty rather than help move them out of poverty.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Not enough access to educational resources for parents or students.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Lack of economic activity in the areas of greatest concentrations of poverty. Younger generations cannot find jobs, and certainly not good ones.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of available employment coupled with lack of overall opportunity and banking resources.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Inability to save money and invest in transferable assets (homeownership) or enduring assets (education). Racial disparities in wealth indicate structural issues as the root cause.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector; College or University](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Changes in family structure as reflected by a nonmarried birthrate of nearly 40 percent.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The availability of government subsidies to families causing them to rely on government assistance rather than working.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Not having a savings account.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Decline in manufacturing jobs and the inability of service-sector jobs to keep pace with the cost of living.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Lack of job opportunities in the community.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector; K-12](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“A general mistrust of the banking and reputable lending industry. As our focus over the last several years has shifted to the youth market, we have found parents to be our biggest obstacle in changing cycles of financial behaviors. The parents of our youth, although they are not added as custodians or joints, often feel we are taking advantage of their children and by proxy, them or their household. The slightest missed expectation and the fear and paranoia of fraud come into play. They have become much more comfortable using their “trusted” resources, such as payday lenders and check cashers. The outcomes are known, even if they aren’t healthy or beneficial. Financial institutions are unknown and therefore a threat.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

○ All Respondents

Question 9 cont.

“Lack of opportunity for adequate education, training and employment.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“The legacy and ongoing impact of institutional racism and segregation that limits opportunity and mobility due to multidimensional barriers, including lack of good jobs, education, low income, living in a poor locale and lack of health insurance.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“It’s difficult to choose only one factor contributing to generational poverty. It’s a self-perpetuating cycle if not broken. People need to have hope; otherwise, apathy prevails. Sometimes apathy leads to substance abuse, and substance abuse leads to even greater apathy. I believe rural communities must grow their own entrepreneurs. I believe it can be done, but doing so will require educating LMI residents that entrepreneurship is attainable, and ensuring capital is available to startup companies at terms they can afford.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Remoteness. Isolation. Individuals and families often do not have adequate transportation to move around for health care, jobs, education, etc.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Criminal records limit job options.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; K-12** (Mo. – Rural)

“Predatory lending and nontraditional financial services (pawnshop, check cashers).”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Poor educational system and poor child care support for single parents. Fix access to these two crucial items and I believe we would see improvements in our LMI communities in the next 5 years.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“The perpetuation of systematic conditions that blame the victim and continue to encourage adverse childhood and adult experiences that lead to adverse environments.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Transportation and child care. Both are the top two barriers to entry in the workforce in the 34 counties we serve in Kentucky. There are plenty of jobs, just no way to get there. Once they solve the transportation issue, there is a lack of child care providers that are available on second and third shift where most of the jobs reside.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Years of structural racism that has prevented access to capital (for housing, businesses). Lack of investment in communities of color.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Too many programs that allow it to survive. We’ve thrown the same programs at this problem for 40 years and it only gets worse. These programs do not work.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Better housing and adequate income.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; K-12** (Miss. – Rural)

“Many families want better for their children but don’t know how to achieve that when they do not own vehicles and there is no mass transit.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Lack of cultural competency around generational poverty.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“State government budget crisis.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ill. – Rural)

“Generational poverty is the leading contributing factor to generational poverty. But beyond that, there seems to be an inability to develop a program that is realistic about A) what it takes and B) how long it takes, to change culture, to change expectations, to change the trajectory of a family. No one program is going to fix generational poverty—and especially not in less than 5 years, which is about as long as any significant antipoverty interventions last. And if we want to use any method other than just giving direct cash assistance with no strings attached, it is also going to be expensive. (There is a lot of good research that shows that when you give families cash, unrestricted, they use it productively.) Also, blaming people and punishing people for being poor are not helpful.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

○ All Respondents

Question 9 cont.

“Affordable educational opportunities that will lead to careers versus jobs.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Mo. – Rural)

“Historical redlining of certain areas—access to capital, education, health care; overall lack of social and capital investment in LMI communities.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of job opportunities that provide livable wages.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“The inability of individuals to accumulate net worth.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Family structure changes. Single parenthood continues to be a strong predictor of parental and children’s poverty.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The lack of meaningful employment opportunities, particularly for the uneducated or undereducated, continues to fuel generational poverty in this region. This dynamic may be exacerbated by the political standoff and budget crisis in Illinois that are causing new business and industry to look beyond this state.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

“Depressed coal mining area.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

“Disempowered mindset.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Tenn. – Rural)

“Ineffective approaches that keep systemic issues the same. Lack of innovation, not enough collective impact around outcomes, competing nonprofits.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Low wages do not allow for accumulation of assets to set example or to pass on to next generation.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of wealth passed from generation to generation, each generation in LMI communities has had to begin their adult life with fewer resources than other, more well-off members of society.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Access to quality education. Well-educated children will break the cycle.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of education; too much access and availability to payday lending keeping community bogged down in expensive debt.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Tenn. – Rural)

“Early childhood environment—frequent moving, neglect, poor nutrition, lack of an enriched supportive home environment to supplement education, lack of a sense of community in neighborhoods of poverty, lack of male role models, fragmented social environment where parents piece livelihoods together out of multiple part-time jobs and under-the-table work just to get by. Kids see all of this and it becomes their model. They also see numerous examples of failed efforts to work within the system.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

“Illegal drug activity, lack of homeownership opportunities and access to job opportunity.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ind. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of community support for black-controlled institutions (media, education, family, church, commerce). These institutions form the basic network of any community. Integration into ‘white space’ has proven to be unsuccessful. Allow black institutions under black leadership to blossom and flourish.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Generational poverty continues because of the isolation of these communities and the lack of sustained ongoing services and support for its community members of all ages—from infants to senior citizens—including health care, community environment (crime, poor housing stock, lack of adequate areas such as parks, green space, retail/grocery), poor education.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)



QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY:

Nonprofit Organizations

10 Compared with one year ago, how would you describe the demand by LMI individuals and households for the services your organization offers?



▶ The majority of nonprofit respondents reporting that the demand for their organization's services is increasing significantly jumped from 52.2 percent in 2015 to 71.2 percent in 2016.

11 Compared with one year ago, how would you describe your organization's ability to provide direct assistance to the LMI community?



12 Compared with one year ago, have your funding sources:

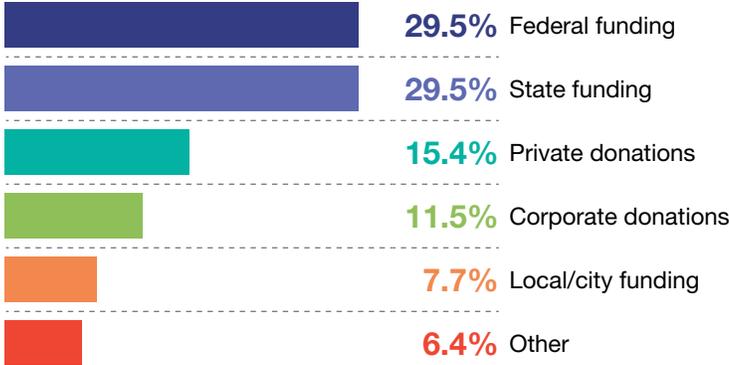


▶ 19.6 percent of nonprofit respondents report an increase in funding sources. This is a significant increase from 2015, when 4.3 percent of nonprofit respondents reported an increase in funding. The number of respondents reporting funding as staying the same compared with a year ago dropped from 56.5 percent in 2015 to 38.4 percent in 2016.

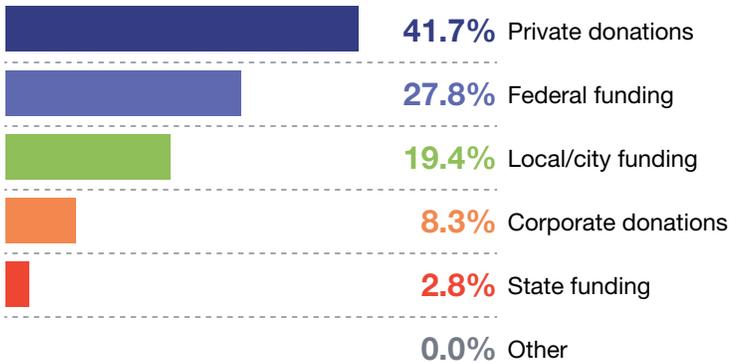
Nonprofit Organizations

Question 12 cont.

12A.) Which decreased funding source has had the greatest negative impact on your organization’s ability to help the LMI community?

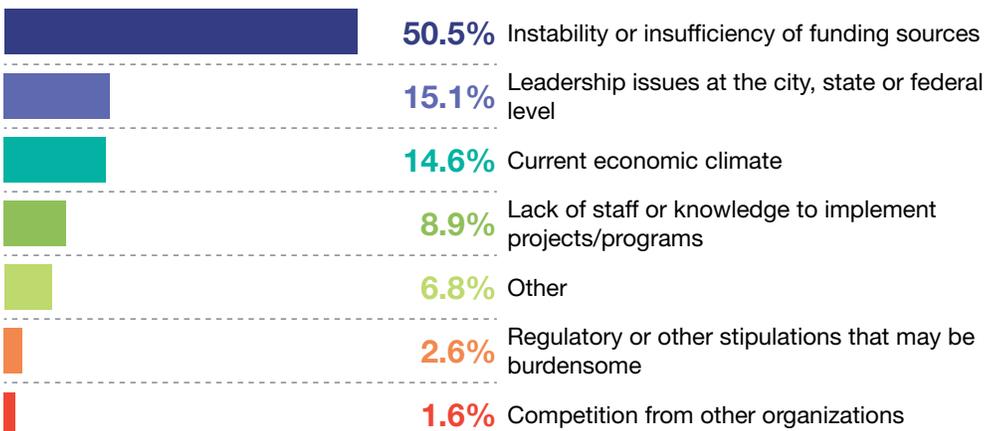


12B.) Which increased funding source has had the greatest positive impact on your organization’s ability to help the LMI community?



▶ In 2016, 19.4 percent of nonprofit respondents report that increased local/city funding has had the greatest positive impact on their organization’s ability to help the LMI community, a significant increase from 0.0 percent of respondents in 2015.

13 What is the greatest barrier your organization encounters in increasing the economic stability of LMI households and communities?



▶ The number of non-profit respondents who indicated that instability or insufficiency of funding sources is the greatest barrier the organization encounters in increasing the economic stability of LMI households and communities increased from 37.5 percent in 2015 to 50.5 percent in 2016. Additionally, respondents who indicated that regulatory or other stipulations that may be burdensome were the greatest barrier fell from 12.5 percent in 2015 to 2.6 percent in 2016.

Nonprofit Organizations

14

To what degree is your organization collaborating with others to deliver programs or services?



81.8%

My organization has collaborated with other organizations to deliver **multiple** projects, programs, or services within the past year.



14.6%

My organization has collaborated with another to deliver **one** project, program or service within the past year.



3.7%

My organization **has not** collaborated with any other organization to deliver programs, projects or services in the past year.



QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY:

Financial Institutions

15

Compared with one year ago, how would you describe the demand for loans for community and/or economic development projects in the LMI communities your institution serves?



ALL RESPONDENTS:

33.1% Increasing | **49.3%** Staying the same | **10.6%** Decreasing | **7.0%** Unknown



METROPOLITAN RESPONDENTS:

38.5% Increasing | **43.6%** Staying the same | **7.7%** Decreasing | **10.3%** Unknown



RURAL RESPONDENTS:

26.6% Increasing | **56.3%** Staying the same | **14.1%** Decreasing | **3.1%** Unknown

16

How would you characterize the current access to credit?



ALL RESPONDENTS:

4.9% Excellent | **48.6%** Good | **38.0%** Fair | **7.8%** Marginal | **0.7%** Poor



METROPOLITAN RESPONDENTS:

5.1% Excellent | **51.3%** Good | **33.3%** Fair | **8.9%** Marginal | **1.3%** Poor



RURAL RESPONDENTS:

4.9% Excellent | **48.6%** Good | **38.0%** Fair | **7.8%** Marginal | **0.7%** Poor

17

Do you find it a challenge to meet requirements of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) in your communities?



ALL RESPONDENTS:

35.2% Yes | **48.6%** No | **16.2%** Uncertain



METROPOLITAN RESPONDENTS:

35.2% Yes | **48.6%** No | **16.2%** Uncertain



RURAL RESPONDENTS:

29.7% Yes | **54.7%** No | **15.6%** Uncertain

Financial Institutions

Question 17 cont.

17A.) Why did you answer this way?

“It is difficult to ascertain what activities, even though most if not all are needed, will actually qualify under CRA to meet the requirements. I would argue that any activity that promotes job growth in LMI communities should qualify as a CRA loan.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“If you make strong relationships with community service groups, they can help connect you with LMI communities. CRA becomes less of a challenge.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ill. – Rural)

“Regulations are not updated to accurately reflect the bank’s options to address the issue.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“We are very community-oriented.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Rural)

“It is difficult to meet regulatory standards for loan underwriting documentation and lending in LMI areas, particularly mortgage.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The availability of qualifying investment test opportunities other than simple contributions seems very limited.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“There are many opportunities in the underserved community. Bankers need to be creative and find programs that will assist LMI communities, such as second-chance programs.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Metropolitan)

“It is difficult to find loans in LMI communities and maintain credit quality but we are working hard to find loans in those communities.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“We are a small institution. The examiners keep changing the requirements and qualifications.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Seventy-five percent of community groups want money and complain, and 25 percent are truly servicing the community and will use funds to support true CRA activity.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Credit quality issues.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Rural)

“There are limited LMI tracks in our assessment area. We do not have a presence in those LMI areas. They are going to bank close to where they live.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“We are fortunate to have many good partners in our footprint to achieve our CRA goals.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“We exceed our mutually agreed (SLEHCRA) mortgage goal every year and we’ve had second-chance products available for six years.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“We provide financial education.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Metropolitan)

“There are plenty of opportunities.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“CRA measures a bank’s performance against that of other banks. Without knowing how the aggregate is performing until after the fact, it’s impossible to guarantee that what the bank has accomplished will be enough to exceed peers.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“We are a mission-focused bank and we are always looking for opportunities.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“We serve everyone if we can.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“We have significant opportunities but are always looking for more.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“As a CDFI, it is less difficult for us to meet CRA.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“It is challenging to consistently produce CRA loans of all categories as peer level. We consistently try very hard to accomplish this.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Considering all the regulations one has to comply with, the board of the institution is usually concerned from a safety and soundness perspective.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

Financial Institutions

Question 17 cont.

“It is sometimes difficult to qualify buyers in the LMI community, which has a negative effect on CRA lending. There is a fine line between having safe and sound banking practices and originating loans just to satisfy CRA requirements.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Expectations of local nonprofits regarding HMDA lending activity are unreasonable.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Competition is fiercely driven by captive product providers from small businesses, government loan programs for small farmers, and limited loan applicants for consumer housing.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ill. – Rural)

“We try to help as many citizens in our community as possible.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ind. – Rural)

“We do brainstorm and allocate funds to truly assist LMI people and run into unintended consequences, such as avoiding debt and becoming house-poor. It is hard to make a real difference from the credit side alone without adequate jobs and/or education. It is not a challenge to meet the CRA requirements, but it is difficult to design products that truly make a big difference even though the products are not designed to be profitable.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“We have strong partnerships that we are able to leverage to meet our obligations under CRA.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“We are a small rural bank on the line between an MSA county and rural county. Unfortunately, we are judged by the impossible standard of the MSA.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ill. – Rural)

“Our institution is a long-time provider of financial services in our community and attuned to credit needs.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“The small number of home loans available in low-income communities are snapped up by institutions with HUD or DOJ agreements; we can’t compete with special portfolio products since we serve multiple markets and our products are standardized.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Credit scores are typically lower for LMI borrowers.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Rural)

“With us being a smaller bank, the requirements are not as burdensome. If we were larger, the answer would be yes.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Finding opportunities is hard, but it can be done.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“The bank spends an inordinate amount of time, talent and money in regulatory compliance from many directions.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“The income divide is increasing, the cost of housing is rising rapidly and LMI wages are stagnant, making it difficult to purchase a home.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“The financial institution is quick to adapt and develop products as the market demands them.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ill. – Metropolitan)

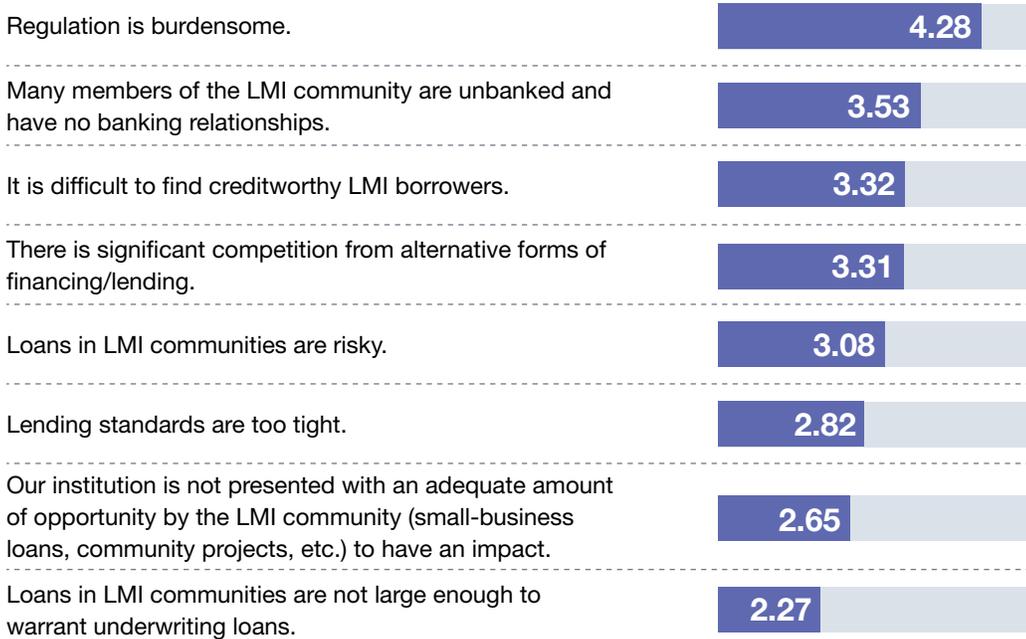
“Because we actively seek to get involved with community development activities.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

Financial Institutions

18

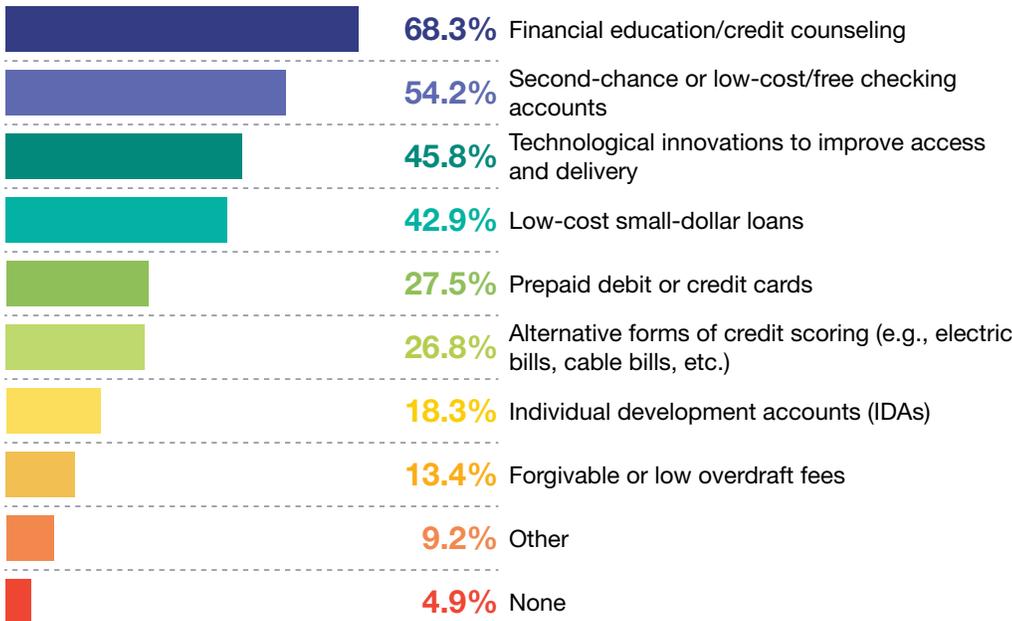
Indicate the measure to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (1 = completely disagree; 5 = completely agree)



19

What types of LMI financial products or services is your institution offering or planning to offer? Check all that apply.

Note: Each value for products or services is out of a possible 100 percent.



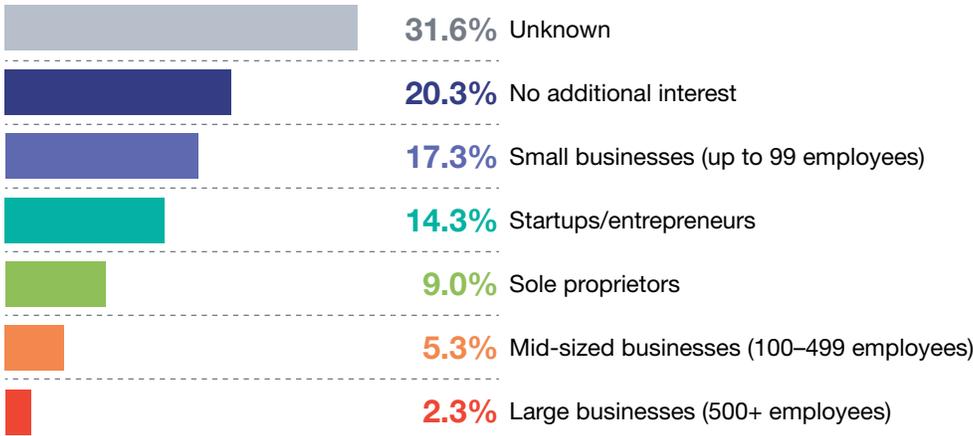
Compared with 2015, more financial institution respondents indicated they are offering financial education/credit counseling (49.1 percent in 2015; 68.3 percent in 2016), second-chance or low-cost/free checking accounts (45.3 percent in 2015; 54.2 percent in 2016), technological innovations to improve access and delivery (35.8 percent in 2015; 45.8 percent in 2016), prepaid debit or credit cards (15.1 percent in 2015; 27.5 percent in 2016) and individual development accounts (IDAs) (7.5 percent in 2015; 18.3 percent in 2016).

QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY:

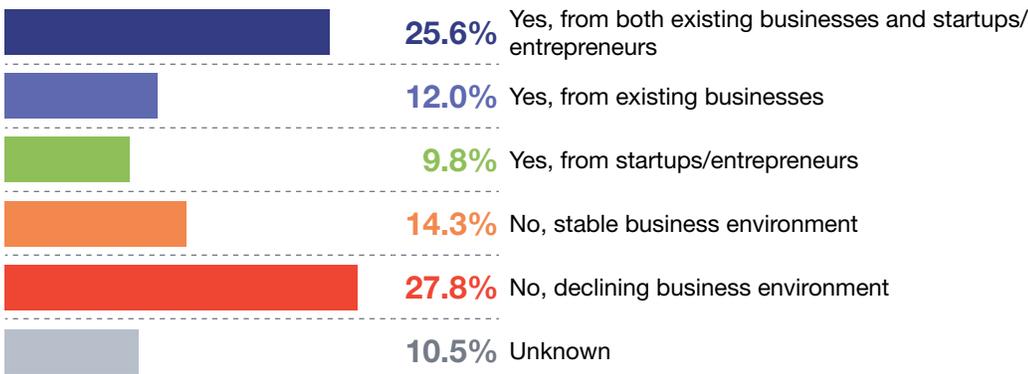


Community & Economic Development Organizations

20 In the LMI areas you serve, do you receive more interest about potential relocation from:



21 Have there been any recent business expansions and job additions in the LMI areas in your community?



22 Overall, how would you assess the business and job outlook for your LMI communities during the next year?



23 What is needed for communities to take advantage of economic globalization?

“Supporting entrepreneurship and financial investment in the community.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Miss. – Rural)

“A strong local government that has a high priority for growth in LMI areas.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Prioritize public education and align with anticipated workforce needs.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Miss. – Rural)

“Work collaboratively across communities to fill a niche, train and employ blue-collar workers, shift of trickle-down economics thinking, shift of attraction-based economics.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Mo. – Rural)

“Low-interest credit.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Infrastructure, access to technology, government leaders who are knowledgeable and responsive to LMI needs.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Tenn. – Rural)

“More education, more acceptance by communities of change (past, present, future), serious attention to drug issues.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Access to broadband.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Educational pipeline and partnerships.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Tenn. – Rural)

“Connections with large community development entities to bring in larger partners. We have the potential, for instance, to establish a new industrial park.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Better trained workforce.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“More New Markets Tax Credit funding engines; more access to capital. Dodd-Frank runs to the other side of the boat and adversely impacts the population it is trying to protect with regulation.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Education and job skills.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“The availability of affordable and fast broadband infrastructure. This enables global work to be done in a rural location. Because this work isn’t appropriate for all, a diversified economy with more manufacturing opportunities is important. To make all this possible, strong workforce, community and economic development organizations need to work together.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Infrastructure – particularly high-speed internet access.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Cultural shift in attitude toward entrepreneurship as a means of income and access to technology.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Reliable, affordable access to broadband technology and entrepreneurial mindset.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Community leadership to work cooperatively with business community to ascertain needs to achieve export potential. Leadership could also initiate networking to best learn of opportunities worth supporting.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ind. – Rural)

“Until communities can become stable themselves, they have little need for globalization.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Miss. – Rural)

“Targeted workshops and improved K-12 education.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Miss. – Rural)

“First and foremost to realize that a fundamental shift has been underway in the nature of jobs and that jobs once held by LMI citizens are being rapidly replaced, both through globalization and the increasing use of automated devices. LMI people may sense these changes but I do not think they understand the magnitude of nor the rate of change in occupations.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Miss. – Rural)

“Education, neighborhood involvement, pride and change in negative attitudes.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

Community & Economic Development Organizations

Question 23 cont.

“Adapting and understanding technologies emerging in the workplace.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Access to capital, ability to inject capital education, and access to innovation programs.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Education, workforce development, credit repair.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Leadership.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Education would benefit many, but would wind up driving the qualified away due to wage and job prospects.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ill. – Rural)

“Skilled worker availability.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Pride.”

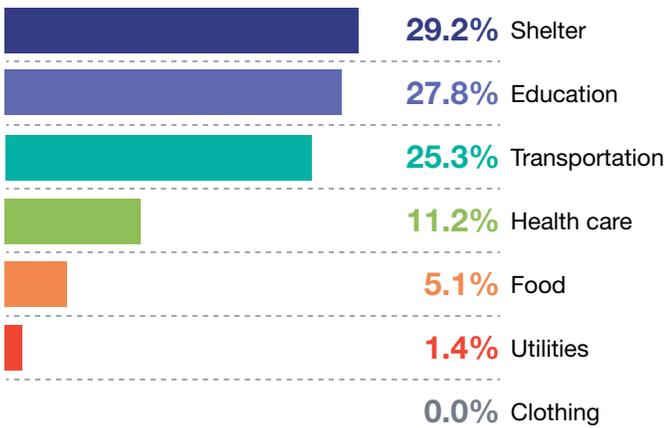
– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)



QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY:

All Metropolitan Respondents

24 Which of these basic needs is most difficult for metropolitan LMI households to adequately access? Please choose only one.



25 Compared with one year ago, has there been any loss of funding in your area that has affected your ability to help the LMI community?



25A.) How does this loss of funding impact the quality of life for LMI individuals in your metropolitan community?

“Little or no access to funds to help with financial shocks.”

– Respondent, Other Sector (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Reduces the amount of foreclosure prevention work.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“It directly restricts the opportunities for growth and development of LMI households in the community.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Decrease in asset-building opportunities.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Reduces the number of financial education programs and the number of clients that can receive one-on-one advocacy and guidance.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“It negatively impacts the options and opportunities to become educated with the information to assist with economic mobility for LMI individuals in challenged communities.”

– Respondent, Financial Institutions Sector (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“It has widened the gap to develop safe, decent and affordable housing.”

– Respondent, Other Sector (Ky. – Metropolitan)

All Metropolitan Respondents

Question 25 cont.

“No housing counseling available through local city housing authority. No central source of education for LMI families.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“It decreases the amount of block grant resources available to invest in LMI neighborhoods.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Federal funding for housing assistance has been cut. The waitlist for subsidized housing is so long that most have no hope. HUD is shifting funding from emergency and transitional housing to rapid rehousing, but the affordable housing stock is not sufficient nor are supported services.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Harder to produce affordable housing.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Without the proper, consistent funding, programs suffer turnover and the inability to fill staffing positions.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“We have had a major blow to transitional housing though the loss of a HUD grant to a major service provider.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“We have less flexibility to deploy human resources to specific geographies where funding loss has occurred.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Unable to assist with more hands-on training and apprenticeship programs that include work readiness and skills training.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Delays families’ likelihood of obtaining safe and affordable housing – funding is quite limited for housing development and much is being channeled away from family-sized homes into senior and special needs homes.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Fewer options for those who want to buy a home to do so.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“It limits the amount of funding to serve each family as well as the number of families served, which increases the waiting list.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“It creates more instability as rent and utility bills are nearly 80 percent of income; without funding to help in times of crisis or loss of income, more clientele are at risk for homelessness.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“They lose supports and can never seem to work their way out of poverty.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Loss of transitional housing for young adults.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Individuals in the metro community are unable to afford proper housing and health care.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; K-12** (Miss. – Metropolitan)

“It weakens the safety net for LMI individuals.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“We cannot focus on the type of issues that LMI populations have if we don’t have the funds to do so.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Increase in homelessness.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Limits jobs and growth.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Decrease in funding to help people earn basic, interim credentials that help them stop leaping from one ‘survival job’ to another. Instead, we need to guide them in climbing a career ladder by providing training that will prepare them for good-paying, middle-skills jobs that produce financial independence.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Less money for educating our youth.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; K-12** (Miss. – Metropolitan)

“We subsidize the funding; however, that impacts our ability to grow other programming.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“It does not impact the quality of life for LMI individuals. It limits benefits for the organizational staff.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Additional competition for a smaller amount of dollars.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ind. – Metropolitan)

All Metropolitan Respondents

Question 25 cont.

“Affects the organizational capacity to provide support to these communities.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Less funding for housing rehab so very old housing stock continues to decline.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“No available grants to allow homeowners without savings to make expensive home repairs.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“HUD withdrew funding for transitional housing programs in the area and that has impacted a number of families and individuals.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The loss of funding means there are less case workers to service the hundreds of thousands of people in need of our services.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Inadequate access to mental health.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Dramatically. Infrastructure rehab, maintenance and enhancement have basically come to a standstill in Kentucky. This has negatively affected all aspects of life in LMI communities.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“A reduction in the ability to implement training programs for business owners.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Makes financial security more elusive.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Our area lost the funding for several housing programs.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ind. – Metropolitan)

“We scale down outreach and seek other ways to leverage our activity (e.g., networking).”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Accessing quality child care is difficult for residents who depend on subsidies by state government for child care.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The lack of funding to address mental health issues, alcohol/substance abuse issues and affordable housing. Individuals cannot sustain employment when these issues challenge them.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ind. – Metropolitan)

“Cannot meet the needs of the community.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ind. – Metropolitan)

26

How would you assess the current ability of an LMI individual or household in your metropolitan area to progress to a better economic situation?



All Metropolitan Respondents

27 What specific obstacle is affecting economic progress for LMI households and neighborhoods in your metropolitan community?

“Quality education and asset building.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Decent paying jobs for people without college degrees.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Job skills versus job availability, and we need funding for criminal records to be expunged.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Transportation to jobs.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Classism.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of financial resources and coordinated services to address multiple social and economic challenges faced by LMI households.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of jobs, lack of child care and inadequate public transportation for those who have second- and third-shift jobs, lack of living-wage jobs.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Jobs are available, but there is difficulty for employers in finding people who can pass drug tests and avoid absenteeism. Our public school system is in distress, our municipal government is in turmoil and we have a declining tax base that can’t keep up with the infrastructure needs.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Credit education and understanding what it takes to get approval for home loans.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Inadequate wages that prevent access to adequate health care, housing, etc.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Hopelessness.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of basic financial education.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Job opportunities, transportation and credit.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Metropolitan)

“Generational and situational poverty makes it very hard to overcome the despair that comes from having no hope and no help. There are exceptions because some people do get the help but, as a whole, there are many who find it very difficult to overcome the poverty mentality that is created by years of struggle, fear and pain.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of cohesive economic plan for the area.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“The need for better education and job training. It is my understanding that jobs are available but individuals are not qualified to do the work or choose not to do the work. There needs to be an incentive for those people to find work and to be a part of the workforce. However, businesses and individuals in the communities need to be involved and help educate and train these individuals. I have recently become aware of a number of initiatives in Memphis that are aimed toward doing just that.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of education. Jobs are available but labor force is underskilled.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Racial segregation.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Crime has risen, which is directly related to the drug issue. Many resources are being directed to help with what is an all-consuming issue that impacts the LMI communities and the community at large. LMI neighborhoods are in this vicious cycle of poverty because people who might help lift up a neighborhood will not move into troubled areas because of fear of crime. It is difficult to try to sell new homes in these neighborhoods, even with many concessions, due to the crime or the perception of crime because of location.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Poor educational opportunities, starting with public schools and carrying through to job skill providers.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Ability to get a stable job and obtain their first loan to establish credit before their credit history is ruined by medical collections, judgments and high-risk lenders.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

All Metropolitan Respondents

Question 27 cont.

“People in the area seem to have little to no skill to offer, combined with little job availability tied to limited access to other areas via public transit.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Financial literacy and education.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“The ability to obtain affordable rental or permanent housing.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Drug/alcohol addiction and lack of motivation. We are in a high-intensity drug trafficking area. We have a significant drug epidemic in our area.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Social issues like domestic violence and community violence/unsafe neighborhoods. Lower socioeconomic neighborhoods that lack banks and credit unions and have more predatory lending companies. The neighborhoods may have more convenience stores and not many grocery stores that are easy to access by walking or bus. Lack of adequate and affordable housing also is an issue for LMI households.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Severe housing cost burden (LMI households should be paying no more than 30 percent of their income for housing). Minimum-wage and low-wage jobs do not provide sufficient income to afford the area median rent. Need to access postsecondary education runs a close second. LMI individuals cannot afford (in terms of time or money) to invest in education even though it would improve their future prospects significantly.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of liquidity.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“We need more programs geared toward LMI households for single mothers. Single mothers who want to work and go to school are challenged in the workplace with little or no assistance.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Obstacles affecting economic progress for LMI households and neighborhoods often include not having the right people at the table. Those who feel they know how to better serve our communities (overlapping, attempts to change the community name, divide-and-conquer tactics), slumlords, predatory behavior, those in power overlooking blighted residential and commercial properties and leaving communities in a declining position, payday loan businesses, used car lots, and community gardens are not always the desire of the community.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Generational poverty and lack of relationships with people outside generational poverty. Upwardly mobile people need to involve themselves in a highly relational way with LMI households.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of affordable housing causes cost-burdened LMI households to struggle financially.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of transportation, insufficient education (access to and knowledge of), inherent will to do better (generational poverty mentality), lack of savings (and money to save), predatory lending institutions that oversaturate low-income neighborhoods.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Access to sufficient financial aid to cover the cost of education.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Need for accountability and leadership in the LMI community.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Quality education is the only sure path to breaking generational poverty. LMI families tend to be transient in pursuit of affordable housing. Education funding is tied to real estate value, so poor children and families are most often served by poorer performing school districts. There is a great lack of consistency of access to quality education and soft skill development at all levels across the region. Even where school choice is an option, the region’s poor public transportation system would limit exercise of that option. So, there is no single policy fix as the region’s policies are interactive and often at cross purposes.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

All Metropolitan Respondents

Question 27 cont.

“Child care for families, high school graduation and literacy, availability of jobs, and challenges around stable housing and segregated neighborhoods.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“No funding and no support to return business to the areas. We should offer a majority company tax free for several years and give them reasons to relocate. When they do, other companies that support them will locate near the major cities and create jobs. Restaurants will support company.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Our largest focus is on auto lending and transportation. We see this as being a catalyst for better job, education and health opportunities. However, our LMI households have such storied credit, we often struggle finding opportunities to fit them in a loan product to serve them well. Because of St. Louis geographic sprawl and being that the higher-paying jobs are often a great distance from the lower-income markets, we believe transportation is a huge obstacle affecting economic progress in our area.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Poor schools and high dropout rates continue the cycle of poverty. Job skills are low in the lowest-income areas.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“For many LMI people and especially people of color, they face multiple obstacles to economic progress, including lack of jobs with good wages, benefits and predictable schedules; low income; living in a poor locale that lacks social capital and neighborhood amenities; lack of education; and lack of health insurance. We still have over 10 million unbanked people (FDIC survey) who pay more for alternative financial services and do not have assets or a way to save for immediate or long-term needs.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Access to affordable, safe and accessible rental housing.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Job skills/education and felony restrictions, transportation to and from work.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“A strong vehicle to move those without education and job skills to viable jobs that pay a living wage with benefits. We are also dealing with a heroin epidemic that impedes people’s ability to be successful.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Too much emphasis in our community is on economic development through increases in the presence of large businesses rather than equal attention being given to producing jobs that pay ‘livable wages’ to LMI individuals currently in the workforce. There should be a balance of the two.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Lack of knowledge of finances at a young age.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Systemic inequality of education, housing, health care, the justice system, and so and so on.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; K-12** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Racism and its effects across a variety of educational, political and social structures.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Poor education leads to lack of skills for higher education or specific ‘trade skill’ training. Lack of a fair wage to pay for housing, utilities and food for LMI households places them at risk of homelessness. Lack of tax incentives for land developers or redevelopers to go into poor communities and start rebuilding years before the city becomes so run-down and poor that developers get property at pennies on the dollar.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Programs do not address the foundation of problems but continue to address or treat only the symptoms. Generational poverty has strong roots and long branches that affect all areas of our community, and the same organizations addressing problems they don’t understand or choose not to address perpetuate the continued economic decline in low-income communities.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

All Metropolitan Respondents

28 What specific opportunity holds the most promise for affecting economic progress for LMI households and neighborhoods in your metropolitan community?

“Expansion of public transportation.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Innovative financial offerings – low-cost bank accounts, affordable small loans, savings assistance.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Cooperation within the neighborhood to improve economic conditions, job training, education and cooperation of the city.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Increase in minimum wages.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Improved quality of educational opportunities throughout the continuum from cradle to career.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Rebuilding neighborhoods in a way that does not ‘price’ or ‘outclass’ LMI households right out of the community. Quality jobs that don’t require degrees to get them; removal of payday loan companies; small-business growth.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Increasing the minimum wage to \$15.00.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Leveraging impact investments with private capital, grants and below-market loans for economic and community development.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Less segregation.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Metropolitan)

“Many organizations are trying to work together to solve the problems instead of trying to solve them alone. There still needs to be someone in the lead who can help move things forward, but collaboration is key.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Summer job opportunities (e.g., STL Youth Jobs) for young adults.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Financial education, quality job opportunities and economic investment.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Increasing the knowledge base of the community through various financial and pre-purchase programs.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Programs to help rehabilitate anyone who has a drug or alcohol addiction. A balanced government assistance program that offers aid but also requires a form of service in the community; drug testing should be incorporated into the qualifications for such programs. In failed cases, there needs to be a plan to help the individual overcome their addiction. No one should be cut off of assistance without being offered some form of personal development and rehabilitation.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Investment in CDCs and community agencies that are run by community members would be the most effective in assisting in the economic progress for LMI neighborhoods and families.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“One thing happening is that public housing residents will be able to participate to have rent payments affect their credit scores positively. This is a group to watch to see if this makes things better or worse for them – use to their advantage, or become prey.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Expungement reform.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Make affordable housing available across the community (not just in certain ‘parts’ of the community).”

– Respondent, **Education Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The opportunity to have a mentor from a different social circle walk alongside an LMI household to build a relationship of care and trust. Without a relationship, very few, if any, low-income families choose to trust or take advantage of mainstream financial products (savings accounts, mortgages) used by most of the banked population to build and manage wealth.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Cracking down on payday lenders.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“I believe it would be getting financial education back into the school system and starting people on healthy financial habits at a young age.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Metropolitan)

All Metropolitan Respondents

Question 28 cont.

“Asset development programs like BankOn, IDA programs, matched savings.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“The most promising opportunities for progress are better educational options with summer enrichment. It would also be beneficial for young people to have access to more summer jobs and for adults to receive job training for emerging careers.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Regionwide commitment and follow-through on educational equity priorities.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Increased need-based financial aid.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“CRA.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Get kids the quality they need during the five most high-impact years of their brain development; better quality early care and education for more children will have the highest short- and long-term impacts.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Banks are continuing to focus on helping LMI households understand the need for savings plans and to focus on positioning themselves to begin/continue to save.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Improved transportation options would give people better access to decent paying employment.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Brownfields redevelopment.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The opportunity for industries to locate in this area holds the most promise for affecting economic progress.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#) (Miss. – Metropolitan)

“Community-based housing and economic development. Growth of community development corporations that create opportunity and wealth in LMI neighborhoods.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Placing more affordable housing units in middle- and upper-income communities to break up the density of affordable housing units in low-income neighborhoods.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Revitalize the communities and create opportunities, especially for small businesses in the area.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Rental assistance, utility assistance, transportation assistance and child care.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Metropolitan)

“Better urban planning, incentivizing social entrepreneurs, encouraging the creation of more community development corporations, opening greater access to loans under \$100,000.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Small-dollar mortgage loans.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Education in specific professions and job skills, rather than merely a broad education that does not qualify individual candidates for a profession or needed job skill.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“Job training, good jobs, affordable/clean housing.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ind. – Metropolitan)

“Fixing up vacant abandoned properties.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“The great divide we have in St. Louis creates the greatest opportunity if people will begin listening to each other and working together.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

“There is more emphasis in our community now on connecting job training to available jobs. There is more focus on entrepreneurship programs. And making the transit system better connect individuals and neighborhoods to job centers.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Access to mainstream financial services through children’s savings accounts.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Mo. – Metropolitan)

All Metropolitan Respondents

Question 28 cont.

“Highly resourced and long-term education, beginning with Pre-K and including serious field-based learning with inspirational components, mentoring, and practical consequences for workforce development and career building.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [College or University](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“More financial counseling. More attention to revitalization of inner core neighborhoods.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Tenn. – Metropolitan)

“Investment in inner-city housing stock might induce some families to move to such communities which, in turn, might attract businesses.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Metropolitan)

“Community engagement and collaboration; we are seeing more organized efforts to tackle the challenges collectively.”

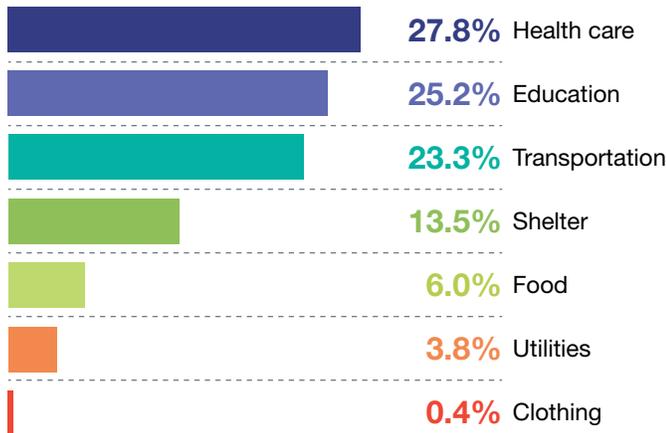
– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ill. – Metropolitan)



QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY:

All Rural Respondents

29 Which of these basic needs is most difficult for rural LMI households to adequately access? Please choose only one.



30 Compared with a year ago, has there been any loss of funding in your area that has affected your ability to help the LMI community?



30A. How does this loss of funding impact the quality of life for LMI individuals in your rural community?

“It decreases our capacity to serve by not having funds available for adequate staffing, technology to document progress toward client goals, assist with funding to overcome barriers to education, employment, etc.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ind. – Rural)

“Limits the city’s ability to expand public transportation offering.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ark. – Rural)

“Funds to help obtain and maintain affordable housing are more difficult to access.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ark. – Rural)

“Social services are greatly utilized and cuts in areas of child care and mental health have hurt many.”

– Respondent, Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector (Ill. – Rural)

“Not enough funding to assist individuals with utility assistance.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ark. – Rural)

“Families who have credit issues or eviction history can’t access safe, decent housing.”

– Respondent, Government/Public Official Sector (Mo. – Rural)

All Rural Respondents

Question 30 cont.

“The service delivery for programs is either eliminated or the capacity is greatly reduced.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“We are less able to fund the nonprofits that provide direct assistance. We also have less rental assistance subsidy to meet the need.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Availability of service safety net.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Takes away hope.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Lack of funding then creates lack of housing for LMI.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Mo. – Rural)

“IDA savers who will be denied cash out with their savings and match one month short of reaching their asset goal.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Illinois’ budget issues have significantly impacted social services, health care, education, entrepreneurial development and more.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ill. – Rural)

“Cuts in SNAP benefits.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Loss of grant funding reduces the ability to organize community redevelopment projects.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“It kills momentum.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“School funding has declined, having a negative effect on our education system. Additionally, federal funding for after-school programs has essentially gone away, making after-school educational opportunities for kids nonexistent.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Takes away opportunity to establish savings for asset development.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“No training for jobs.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Many programs supporting LMI individuals have closed or reduced benefits.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

“Creates a barrier to housing and supportive services.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Tenn. – Rural)

“Community organizations are sometimes less able to provide immediate assistance for those in crisis, and also less able to provide the kind of supportive case management that could help families become more stable.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Lack of educational/health/recreational opportunities.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Funding cuts in Illinois have hurt LMI individuals in terms of access to and availability of transportation services, health care, educational opportunities, quality day care and overall opportunities for employment. The ongoing Illinois budget crisis affects LMI individuals first and worst, and creates problems of greater magnitude and duration.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

“More difficult for families to obtain safe, decent, affordable housing; lack of good-paying jobs.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Arts-based programming was reduced. The housing program most suited to extremely low-income homeowners was discontinued.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Reduced housing opportunities/choices; loss of training for youth, summer youth program, literacy training.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Tenn. – Rural)

“Less funds to help create jobs.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“The town is not able to keep up with city maintenance (e.g., streets).”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Organization has lost staff due to funding.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“It slows down the amount of giving locally.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Ky. – Rural)

All Rural Respondents

Question 30 cont.

“People who are in poverty are getting deeper in trouble: loss of what little they had to start with.”

– Respondent, Other Sector (Tenn. – Rural)

“Affects the number of people who can be assisted.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ark. – Rural)

“We are not able to provide the amount of support service assistance in terms of money and time to successfully help clients complete their education and/or continue to arrive to work every day. Clients would like to attend college and are not able to afford transportation back and forth.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Mo. – Rural)

31 How would you assess the current ability of an LMI individual or household in your rural area to progress to a better economic situation?



32 What specific obstacle is affecting economic progress for LMI households and neighborhoods in your rural community?

“The cost of education is outrageous. Even if these kids manage to cover it through student loans, the job market in our area is devoid of many real opportunities for anyone. So they’re getting out of school with a \$40,000 degree earning \$28,000 a year with it. The combination of how out-of-hand we’ve allowed the higher education machine to become along with the less-than-ideal job market is enough of a burden to ensure that the majority of people at least feel like they don’t have many prospects and are discouraged from doing anything beyond ‘making do’ with their situation.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ky. – Rural)

“Lack of employment opportunities after significant job loss in the region.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ky. – Rural)

“Disinvestment, moving jobs to another city, racism and discrimination, lack of access to basic services.”

– Respondent, Education Sector; College or University (Miss. – Rural)

“Increased cost of living driven by housing costs. The rental burden for LMI families in our area is unsustainable.”

– Respondent, Education Sector; College or University (Miss. – Rural)

“People cannot get out from the debt they have (caused by many factors) with their existing expensive costs (e.g., basic housing, clothing, food) to move out of and above the situation they are in. No, they are not saving as they should; but most will tell you they have nothing to save once the above is paid.”

– Respondent, Other Sector (Ky. – Rural)

“Limited access to public transportation (city bus stops at 6:00 p.m. each day) inhibits a person’s ability to acquire and maintain employment. Our city has very little affordable housing available, many predatory businesses.”

– Respondent, Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector (Ark. – Rural)

“Generational poverty, absent parents (physically or mentally), uneducated decision-making, poor work ethic, perception of being unwanted by the community, perception of being labeled as a failure before growing out of adolescence, lack of respect for elders or community involvement, warranted skepticism of political leaders and political processes, unprepared for real world after high school.”

– Respondent, Education Sector; College or University (Mo. – Rural)

All Rural Respondents

Question 32 cont.

“Longstanding, institutional and systematic discrimination against minorities that expresses itself in fewer (and lesser-quality) educational and economic opportunities. An outmoded perspective on ‘handouts’ (e.g., food banks) that only increases stigma and prevents people from receiving real help. Young people who are qualified and interested in creating progress for these neighborhoods are also leaving at a drastic rate; little infrastructure in place for recent graduates.”

– Respondent, **Education Sector; College or University** (Miss. – Rural)

“Lack of jobs and declining population due to the inability to obtain a good job opportunity. This is particularly true for students bound for college.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

“Lack of income and ample savings to address emergency needs, which also limits ability to achieve homeownership and build net worth. Net worth is a major key to people being able to move out of poverty.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Transportation to and from work and school; lack of affordable housing and mental health services, including but not limited to substance abuse and support.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ill. – Rural)

“There are no affordable housing options for family and low-income groups, just college students.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Illegal drug use and illegal drug trade.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Transportation and utility assistance.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Poor credit/lack of credit history or eviction history.”

– Respondent, **Government/Public Official Sector** (Mo. – Rural)

“The most specific obstacle is current government cuts in the state budget and in state spending, cutting what little resources there were for these communities to begin with.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Lack of businesses moving into the area, and some businesses closing/leaving the area.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Shortage of capital and the mindset of generational poverty. No quick fix. The work ethic is truly terrible but probably fixable with the next generation. There is a deep-rooted spirit of entrepreneurship that needs to be cultivated and grown.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Sense of hopelessness and lack of pride in the community. In many cases, it appears that outsiders are the ones making the most effort to create economic progress.”

– Respondent, **Other Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“General scarcity of jobs, and mismatch of job skills to jobs that are available.”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ky. – Rural)

“Lack of adequate local government leadership and lack of funding from both government and private sectors. Our water lines are broken; we have one well and we will be in great crisis if that well goes out. We are losing over half of our water to the broken pipes.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Shortage of access to local physicians and quality health care services is a problem impacting some of Arkansas’ poorest counties.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Loss of affordable housing, little availability of public pre-K.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Miss. – Rural)

“Apathy. LMI communities have little hope for change and little confidence in their own ability to make things better for themselves and their families.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Credit is not accessible.”

– Respondent, **Financial Institutions Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“Lack of local-level sustainable economic development for jobs in the global economy.”

– Respondent, **Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

“No reason to stay in the community. No houses or good education!”

– Respondent, **Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector** (Ark. – Rural)

All Rural Respondents

Question 32 cont.

“The biggest obstacle is unemployment due to the lack of training and skills.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [K-12](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Jobs are in short supply; self-employment with online startups, marketing, sales, seems to be a key to economic progress for LMI households and neighborhoods in our rural communities from central Arkansas all the way to the Louisiana border.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“The lack of a budget in Illinois has had the most impact (negative). After that, the increasing age of the population and difficulties attracting and retaining youth to rural areas. Poverty continues to climb, with younger, well-educated youth leaving only the uneducated and poor in the rural areas. The closing of most of the small-business development centers in rural Illinois will also have a huge impact in the future, with no one to support small business and entrepreneurial development.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [College or University](#) (Ill. – Rural)

“Education is a major issue. But also, predatory lending makes conventional banking extremely difficult and gives LMI individuals a negative perception of the financial system as a whole.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Reliable transportation.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Availability of living-wage jobs, matched savings program and transportation.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Local, state and federal financial support needed to increase productivity within the community.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [K-12](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Lack of access to capital.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Motivation to continue education, work and continued dependence on government. Also, racial reconciliation.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [College or University](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Available jobs and having the skills match the workers who are available to fill them.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Ill. – Rural)

“The rural communities we serve have issues with transportation as the No. 1 barrier across the board. There are good students and good potential employees who have the skills but cannot get to the locations of the training or jobs.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Burdensome regulations and lack of financial education.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Poor public schools and a lack of cohesiveness between education, job skills and training.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [College or University](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“The negative perceptions of the South and Mississippi are making potential employers hesitant to look at the state as a whole for their business expansions. This provides less opportunity for our citizens.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Inadequate funding for emergency shelters, supportive transitional housing and permanent subsidized housing for people with disabilities.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Tenn. – Rural)

“Financial instability. Anytime there is just one thing that does not go according to plan, it can really upset the balance. Helping families have even a small amount of savings to maintain stability in case the car needs a repair, or the winter is very cold and the heating bill is higher than usual, or someone cannot work due to illness for a few days. Stability in these instances could go a long way.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Lack of broadband, lack of access to gas/grocery stores and affordable housing.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Racism and stagnant leadership at county and city level.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Lack of opportunities for gainful employment. This is caused in part by the lack of confidence in the Illinois economy and also by the reduction in training programs at community colleges.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ill. – Rural)

All Rural Respondents

33 What specific opportunity holds the most promise for affecting LMI households and neighborhoods in your rural community?

“Technological availability coupled with entrepreneurship.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Stronger education system (investment in education), creating an incubator for jobs.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [College or University](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Affordable housing trusts, tax credit financed housing, etc.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [College or University](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Retraining; creating new job opportunities; giving people hope, tools and skills to empower them to be self-sufficient, healthy and experience a better quality of life. Without it, this population will be less educated, sicker and more disadvantaged than others living blocks away.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Apprenticeship programs, business succession programs, real world learning opportunities for teens, wraparound services for at-risk youth, small-business incubator for young adults, involving young adults in civic duties and processes, positive youth-adult partnerships.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector](#); [College or University](#) (Mo. – Rural)

“Adequate vocational education and life education skills for multigeneration assistance recipients.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ill. – Rural)

“Providing development services, such as financial education pertinent to customer concerns, credit counseling and affordable financial products.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Statewide workforce skills development initiatives.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Programs to help households build capital or work through poor or low credit scores.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Mo. – Rural)

“Telehealth in rural communities in Mississippi continues to hold the most promise for economic progress.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Our bank offers financial education classes, homebuyer education classes and business development classes. All have monetary opportunities attached.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Job creation across a broad spectrum of skills.

Those with low skill levels need family-supporting job opportunities while we need to work to find opportunities for those with higher skills in our rural communities.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Retirement of a high percentage of the workforce over the next 5-10 years and job availability for the next LMI generation.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Improvement in access to high-speed Internet, which can allow more businesses to locate in the area regardless of transportation issues or availability of local services.”

– Respondent, [Other Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Building successful entrepreneurial ecosystems.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“While improving rural health care is a focus for a number of organizations and advocacy groups in Arkansas, there is a need for information sharing and collaboration among these entities to improve health outcomes for rural Arkansans.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“LMI folks being trained for the jobs available and then keeping those jobs with the soft skills.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Mo. – Rural)

“Affordable housing.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Workforce development programs with Pell grants for education in higher skills; not necessarily college degrees right away.”

– Respondent, [Government/Public Official Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Funding to help transition existing manufacturers into new industries.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

“Financial education.”

– Respondent, [Financial Institutions Sector](#) (Mo. – Rural)

“Developing an entrepreneurial mindset.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ky. – Rural)

All Rural Respondents

Question 33 cont.

“Extending water and/or sewer to individuals and affordable housing.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Matched savings program and child savings accounts.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Ark. – Rural)

“Empowering community members to make change in regard to supporting existing businesses, building business networks, working together to improve the entire area, sharing information on what makes a thriving entrepreneurial community and improving the leadership capacity within these communities. Addressing these challenges allows more business job opportunities for existing LMI population; assistance in adult education can be the step in the right direction.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector; College or University](#) (Ind. – Rural)

“A well-trained workforce. Jobs that are not in the service sector paying minimum wage or below.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector; K-12](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Entrepreneurial network development.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Ill. – Rural)

“A large business (factory, etc.) will have to take a leap of faith and start creating jobs here in the county. Compounding the problem, however, is a lack of qualified workforce—those who can work may not have the skills (both social and technical) to function in a work environment.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector; College or University](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Understanding credit.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Enhanced educational opportunities, especially in regard to higher education, would hold the most promise for affecting economic progress.”

– Respondent, [Nonprofit/Community-based organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“Racial reconciliation.”

– Respondent, [Education Sector; College or University](#) (Miss. – Rural)

“The economic development strategy of growth from within and attracting entrepreneurs is paying dividends for our community. We cannot be reliant on outside organizations for projects; we must generate these from within by attracting individuals and retaining graduates with entrepreneurial aspirations.”

– Respondent, [Community & Economic Development Organizations Sector](#) (Miss. – Rural)



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If you have questions about this report or would like to participate in future surveys, please contact:

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