Tioga County Partnership for Community Health: Building a Better Community

Community Resources Overview

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This report is best understood in conjunction with the original Quality of Life Survey and

quantitative analysis prepared by Eric Larson, Seth Tanner, Al Luloff of AEL and Associates

and with the Qualitative Report for "Needs" Responses prepared by Dr. Nicolle Mayo at the

Psychology Department at Mansfield University

Introduction

Five-hundred-and-five Tioga County residents completed the Tioga County

Partnership for Community Health Community Survey in 2015. The survey was comprised

of several sections including questions about Community Resources, Community Activities,

Community Support, and Environment.

Method

The current report focuses on the Community Resources portion of the overall

survey. This portion of the survey includes 17 questions regarding topics such as the

education system, safety, housing, childcare, jobs, and recreational activities (see Appendix A). Participants rated how well each category meets their needs on a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning "I don't know about these services" and 5 meaning "meets my needs." The purpose of this report is to examine how various predictors influence the extent to which residents' needs are being met. The predictor variables include "feeling at home in the community", "being interested in the community", gender, income, education, relationship status, employment status, age, housing status, and borough of residence.

The outcome variable is a sum of the participants' responses on the 17 Community Resources items. To obtain an overall Community Resources Rating, the responses to all questions were summed into one score to represent how well needs are being met. For example, if someone chose "1 – I don't know about these services" for all seventeen items, the total score would be 17. This would indicate a complete lack of knowledge about any of the community resources we asked about. If someone chose "5" for every answer, indicating that needs are being met, the total for all 17 items would be 85. Therefore, the Community Resources Rating could range from 17-85, with a higher score indicating that residents' needs are being met at a higher rate.

Overall, the entire sample had an average total Community Resource Rating of 63.16 (standard deviation = 9.16). The mid-point of the scale would be 51, so a score of 63.16 indicates that on average Tioga County residents are in the upper half of the scale. However, there are still areas of improvement needed for many subgroups. This report, as well as subsequent reports, will explore those areas of greatest need.

A note about statistical significance: When comparing groups on their average Community Resource Rating, we found that often groups were significantly different from

each other in terms of their average scores. By "significantly different" it is meant that the groups did not differ merely due to chance, random factors, or happenstance. Rather, a statistically significant difference indicates that the group itself had a meaningful influence on the overall score. In other words, being a member of the group significantly affected whether or not needs were being met.

Do You Feel at Home in Your Community?

The first question examined was "Do you feel at home in your community?" Participants could choose from the categories "not at all, somewhat, very much, and completely." The average responses for each group are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1
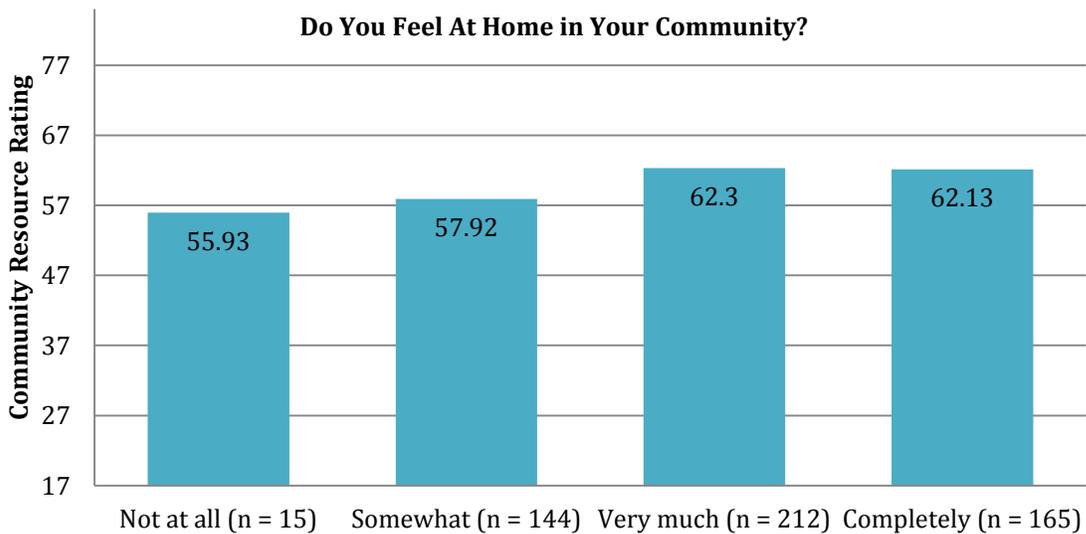
The average rating for the groups who reported being "not at all" and "somewhat" at home did not significantly differ from each other. However, these groups both reported significantly lower Community Resources scores than those who feel "very much" at home and those who feel "completely" at home in Tioga County. This indicates that individuals

who are not feeling at home have more needs that are unmet. Individuals who feel at home are reporting significantly higher Community Resource Ratings, indicating that their needs are more satisfactorily met.

Are You Interested in Your Community?

The next question asked "Are you interested in your community?" Response categories included "not at all, somewhat, very much, and completely." The average rating for each group is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2
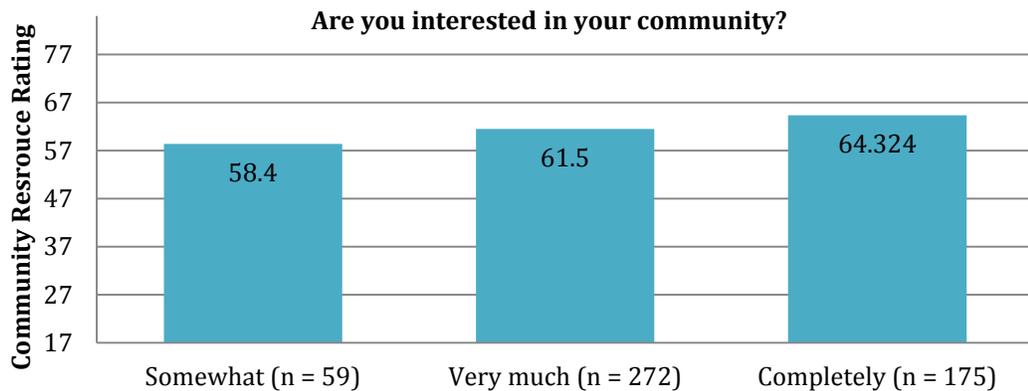
The average rating for the group who indicated being "somewhat" interested had a significantly lower rating compared to those who reported being "very much" interested and those who feel "completely" interested in their community. This indicates that people who take a personal interest appear to not only know more about services offered but to also take advantage of them. As interest in the community increases (as indicated by group membership), higher Community Resource Ratings are reported.

Action steps: The next step would be to determine why some people are only somewhat interested in their communities. Perhaps a lack of interest is due to a lack of knowledge about community resource and how to get in involved in the community. Upcoming reports (based on data we have already collected) will focus on specific areas where the groups differ the most.

Gender

Next, males and females are compared on their community resource rating. The average rating for males and females are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3
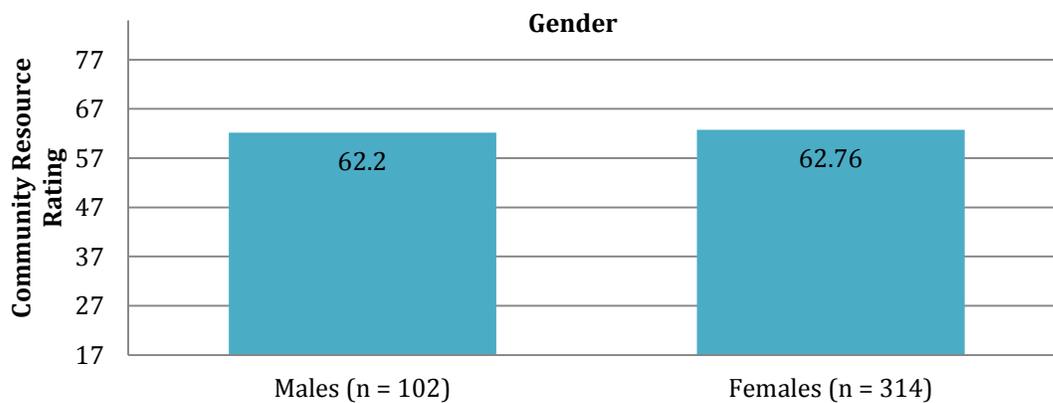
Gender does not appear to influence whether or not needs are being met in Tioga County. Males and females did not significantly differ in their overall community resource rating, meaning that both males and females scored very similarly.

Income Level

Survey respondents self-selected into various income categories. These income categories reflected all sources of income including wages, unemployment, welfare,

disability, and retirement. The income groups were compared on their community

resource rating and the averages for each group are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4
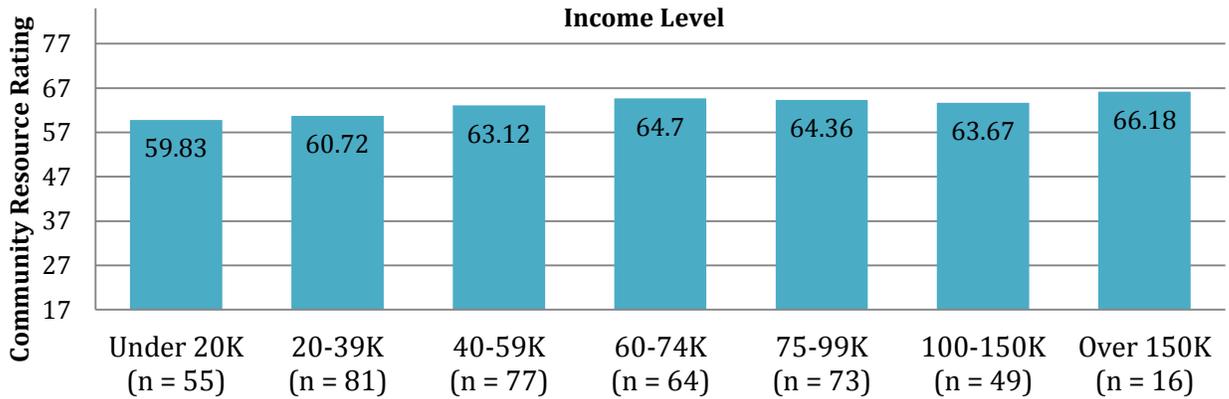
There were very clear differences in Community Resource Rating when looking at

the various income levels. The "under 20K group" did not significantly differ from the "20-

39K group." However, these two lowest income groups did significantly differ from all

other income groups, indicating that their needs are being met at a much lower rate than

the higher income groups or that they are simply unaware of resources available to them.

Furthermore, the "over 150K group" had a significantly higher Community Resource Rating

than all other groups.

Action plan: There is a need to determine why those in the lowest income categories

have such a low level Community Resources Rating. Upcoming reports will focus on those

areas in which the highest income groups differ from the lowest income groups.

Education

Participants reported their level of education in various predetermined categories. The education groups were compared on their community resource score and the averages for each group are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5
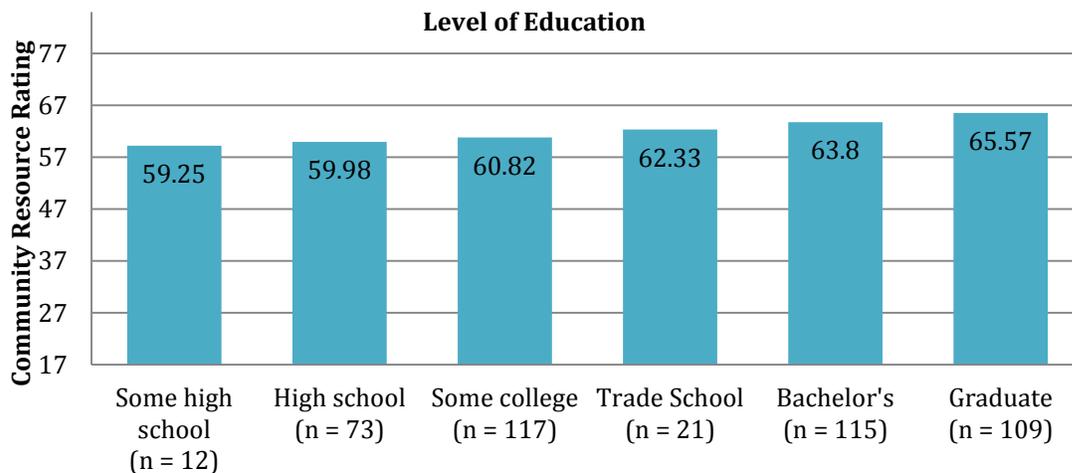
Education level affected the perception of whether or not needs are being met. These results follow a similar pattern that we observed among the income categories. The lowest level of education group, "some high school" had the lowest ratings along with the "high school group." These two groups differed significantly from every other education group. Again, similar to the income groups' results, those with the highest level of education, "graduate" reported the highest Community Resource Rating.

Action plan: There is a need to determine why participants in the lowest level of education groups have the lowest level of needs being met. These results surely correspond to those of the income analysis; lower levels of education are associated with lower paying jobs. It makes intuitive sense that these results would show the same

patterns. Next, upcoming reports will focus on exactly where the groups differ in terms of specific community resources.

Relationship Status

Participants reported on their marital/relationship status using predetermined categories. These relationship categories included single, cohabitating, married, divorced, or widowed. The relationship groups were compared on their community resource rating and the averages for each group are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6
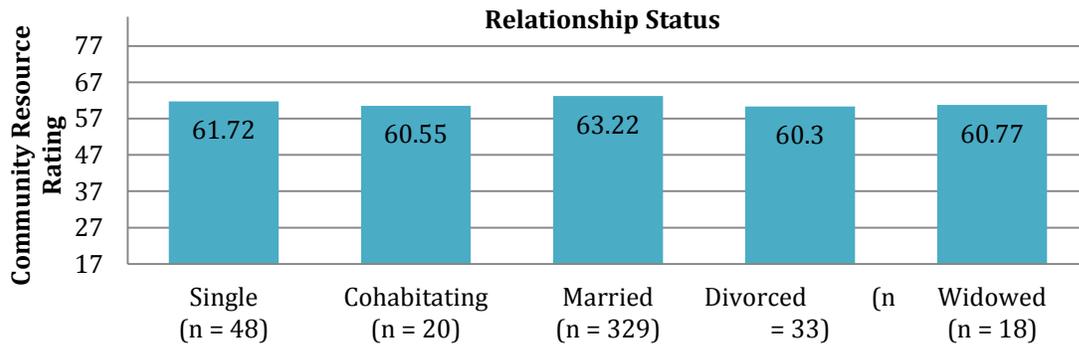
There were no significant differences in Community Resource Rating among the different relationship status groups. All ratings were quite similar to each other. The married group's average rating was slightly higher than the others, but the statistical analysis did not indicate that this difference was large enough to be deemed a significant difference.

Action plan: The different relationship groups will be compared on each individual community resource variable. The single group had a significantly younger average age (M = 44.43 years, SD = 18.00) compared to the divorced (M = 53.08 years, SD = 13.75) and the

widowed (M = 74.00, SD = 10.28). Therefore we might see some differences due to not specifically the relationship status, but due to the average age of each group.

Employment Status

Participants reported their employment status using predetermined categories. These income categories included working for employer, self-employed, retired, being out of work, homemaker, college, unable, or out of work. The income groups were compared on their community resource rating and the averages for each group are presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7
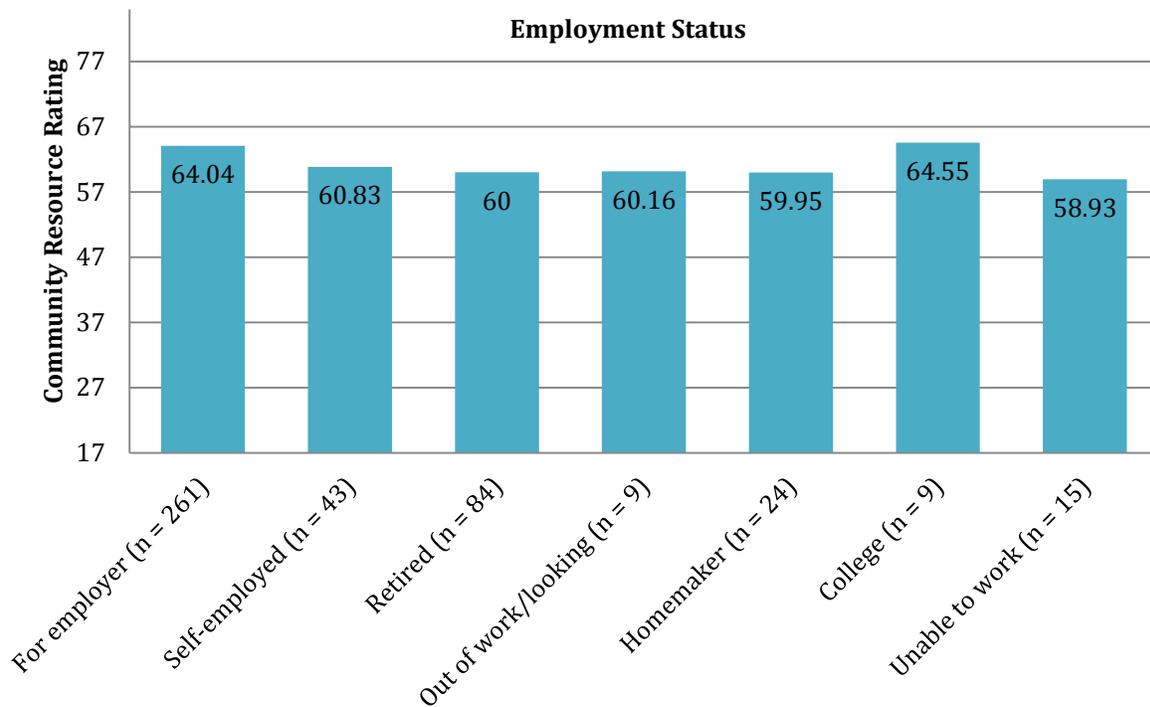
When examining employment status, there were striking differences among the groups.   Participants who reported working for an employer had a significantly higher

overall Community Resources Rating compared to self-employed, retired, homemaker, and unable to work groups. They did not significantly differ from the college group, although it is important to note the small college sample size. Perhaps the higher ratings reflect a higher level of community involvement among those working for an employer and those going to college. Self-employed, retired, disabled, and stay at home workers might not have the same community connections that others enjoy and therefore would lack knowledge of community resources.

Action steps: Identifying specific areas of need reported by the disabled, self-employed, and homemaker groups is needed. Upcoming reports will examine these differences.

Housing Status: Living Alone or Not

Participants were compared on whether or not they live alone. These groups were compared because we hypothesized that individuals who live alone might be more disconnected from their communities than those who live with friends or relatives. The two groups were compared on their community resource rating and the averages for each group are presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8
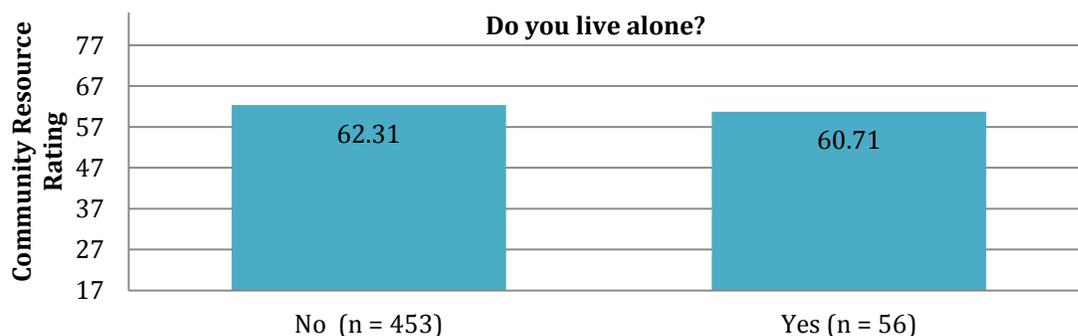
Participants who live alone did not score significantly different on the Community Resource Scale compared to those who do not live alone. The results did not differ when males and females who live alone were differentiated. Furthermore, the results did not differ when we looked at older and younger adults' living arrangements. Apparently living alone does not significantly affect whether or not needs are being met.

Township Comparisons

Participants were asked to report which borough or township they live in. We received answers from 35 separate towns and boroughs. The reported information was matched up to one of six Tioga County planning regions (see Table below). The results for the average community resource score per region are presented in Figure 9.

Cowanesque Valley	Liberty	Northeast	Mansfield	Tioga	Central
Chatham	Liberty	Jackson	Arnot	Lawrenceville	Charleston
Deerfield	Morris	Millerton	Blossburg	Tioga	Duncan
Elkland	Union	Rutland	Covington		Shippen
Farmington	Ward	Roseville	Hamilton		Wellsboro
Knoxville		Sullivan	Mansfield		Whitneyville
Nelson			Putnam		Middlebury
Osceola			Richmond		Holliday
Clymer					Delmar
Brookfield					
Westfield					
n = 54	**n = 25**	**n = 29**	**n = 107**	**n = 20**	**n = 205**

Figure 9
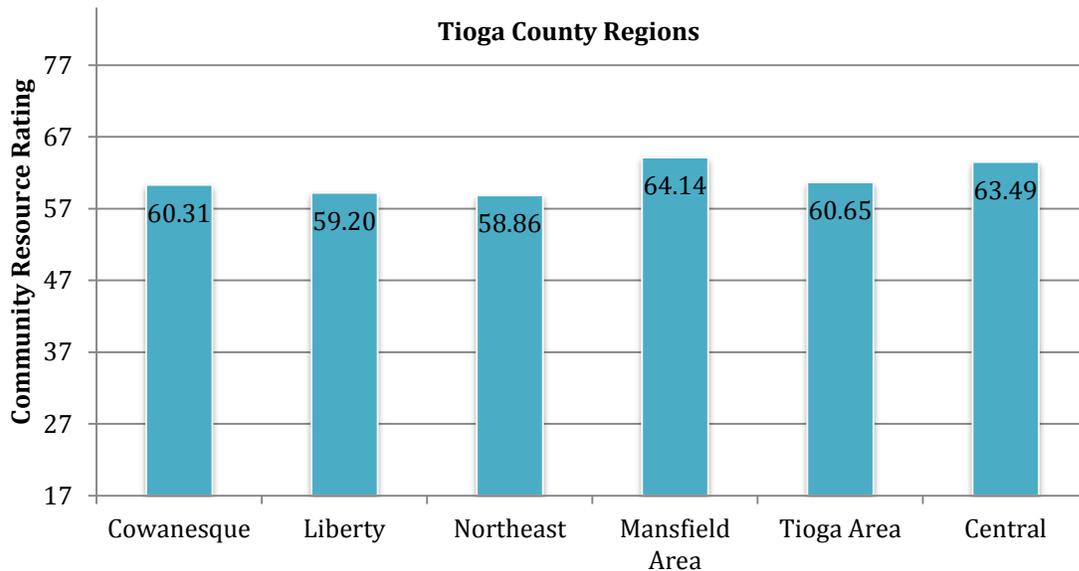
Although the ratings for each region are very similar, there were some significant differences among the groups. The Mansfield Area and Central (Wellsboro) areas did not significantly differ from each other; the ratings are nearly identical. However, the Mansfield Area and Central each had significantly higher ratings than the Cowanesque, Liberty, and Northeast areas. No other areas significantly differed from each other. This pattern of results makes it clear that participants who live in the more rural areas of the county either are unaware of or have difficulty obtaining community resources. Residents of the Mansfield Area and Central areas do not have these kinds of issues.

Conclusion

This sub-report addressed knowledge of community resources and whether or not needs are being met. While residents of Tioga County generally are aware of community resources, more could be done to get the word out about services offered. Residents who are employed, have a higher level of education, a higher income, and who live in the more

populated areas of the county are more aware of and utilize community resources to a

greater extent than their counterparts. Upcoming reports will examine these issues in more

depth in an attempt to isolate areas of greatest need.