



## Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.

1106 3rd Avenue  
P.O. Box 787  
Worthington, MN 56187

Telephone: 507-376-4195  
Fax: 507-376-3636  
TTY: 507-372-7279

— " Strengthening our communities through opportunities and service " —

## 2021 Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary

Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc. (SMOC) is a non-profit Community Action Agency, serving the needs of low-income persons in Southwestern Minnesota, specifically in the counties of Nobles, Rock, Murray, and Pipestone. Although these counties receive most of our attention, SMOC does provide specific program offerings in as few as one, and in as many as fourteen counties.

In the Spring of 2021, **1300 surveys** were mailed to random households in the 4 county area. **416 surveys** were completed and returned, which is a 32% rate of return, down slightly from the last Community Needs Assessment.

### Why do we do Needs Assessments?



A product of the New York State Community Action Association

**Respondents were from the following counties:**

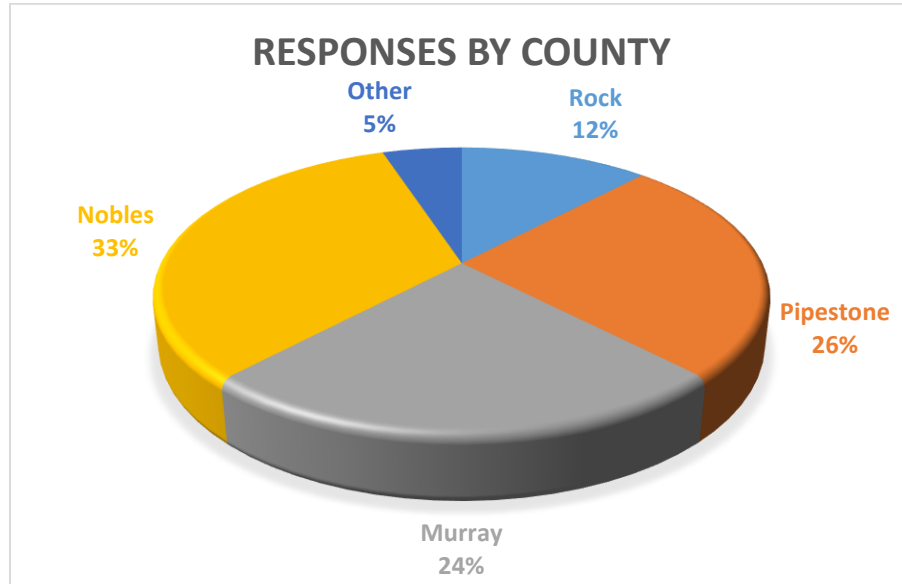
Nobles = 137

Rock = 50

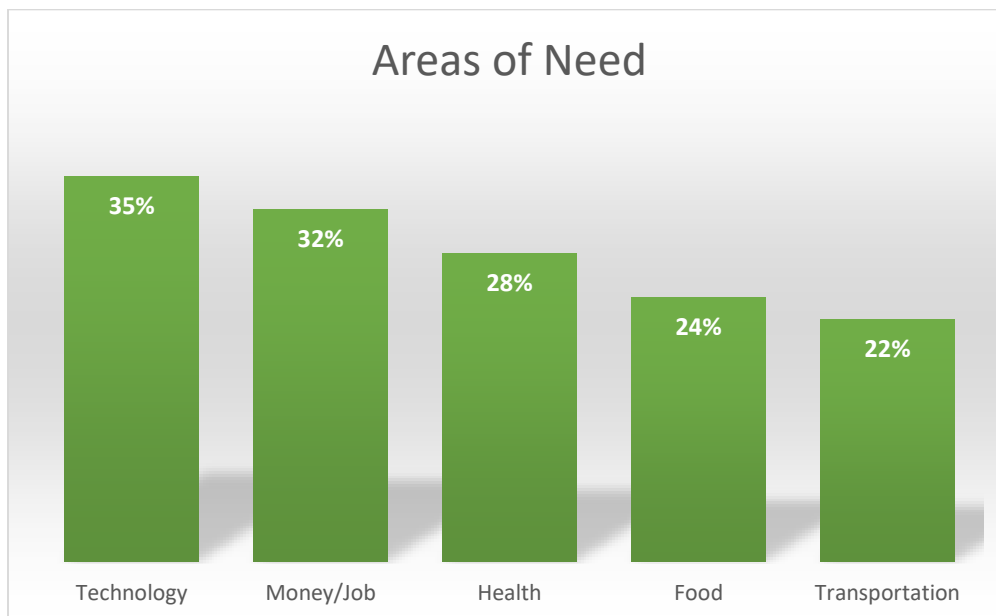
Other or No Answer = 21

Murray = 101

Pipestone = 107



**Top 5 areas of need (in order):**



1. Is TECHNOLOGY a problem for you/your family?
  - 146 responded YES (35%)
2. Is MONEY or GETTING/KEEPING A JOB a problem for you/your family?
  - 135 responded YES (32%)
3. Is HEALTH a problem for you/your family?
  - 117 responded YES (28%)
4. Is FOOD a problem for you/your family?
  - 101 responded YES (24%)
5. Is TRANSPORTATION a problem for you/your family?
  - 91 responded YES (22%)

**Comments regarding the top 5 areas of need:**

TECHNOLOGY: can't afford a computer, don't know how to use it, no internet/money for internet, don't want one, cannot read or write

MONEY or GETTING/KEEPING A JOB: age/medical problems, chronic pain, on disability, retired, mental illness, overweight, poor vision, care for family member (child, spouse),

HEALTH: no dental, insurance is expensive, multiple or chronic health issues, cancer treatment, mental illness, transportation

FOOD: expensive, limited income, county assistance/EBT, dietary restrictions

TRANSPORTATION: unable to drive due to health, health plan pays for rides, no money so I walk, no reliable vehicle/car needs repairs, gas & insurance is expensive, none available for my work hours, more routes

**Other areas measured:**

Housing

Higher Education

Child Care

Public Assistance

Leadership Opportunities

Racism/Discrimination

Voting

Independent Living

**What, if anything, do you need in order to be stable and feel successful?**

More money, a job  
More assistance with paying utilities  
Healthy food  
Transportation, lower cost, availability  
House repairs/winterization  
Help with medical/medication costs  
Access to food (don't qualify/over income)  
Yard work  
Continued good health  
To be treated like a human and with respect  
Increase in food stamps, food is expensive  
Help with internet costs  
Car repairs  
Dental access

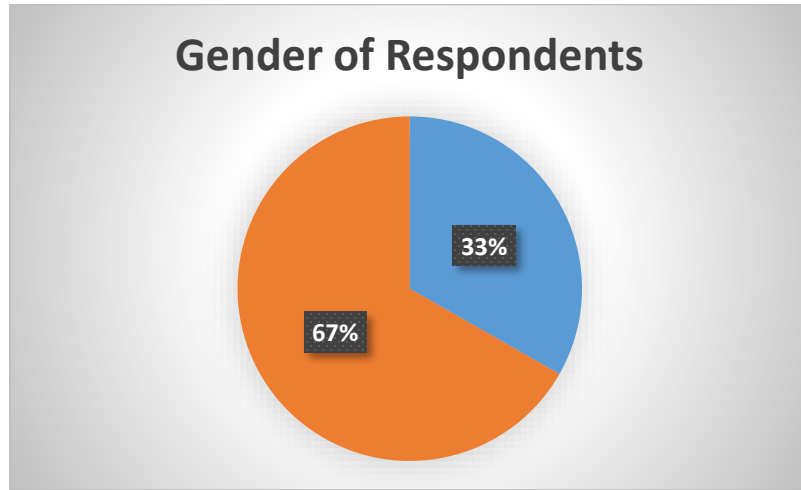
**Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

No longer feel safe/secure  
Costs are going up, expensive  
Hard to live on disability or SS  
Want fast food restaurant choices  
New businesses in town  
I would like to find a job  
Food assistance options and more help for Seniors/Elderly  
Home repairs/utility costs  
I hope dial-a-ride is permanent, need public transportation, longer hours for bus  
Taxes are too high  
Access to dental  
Need help with home repairs  
Thank you for all you do/your help



**Demographic breakdown:**

Male = 135    Female = 271



**Age:**

Under 18 = 1

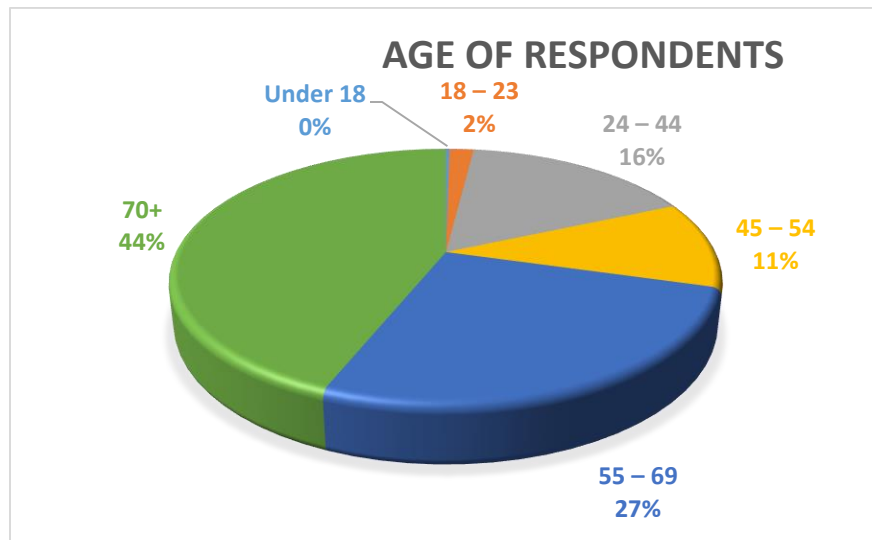
18 – 23 = 7

24 – 44 = 67

45 – 54 = 45

55 – 69 = 109

70+ = 179



Race/Ethnicity:

White = 331

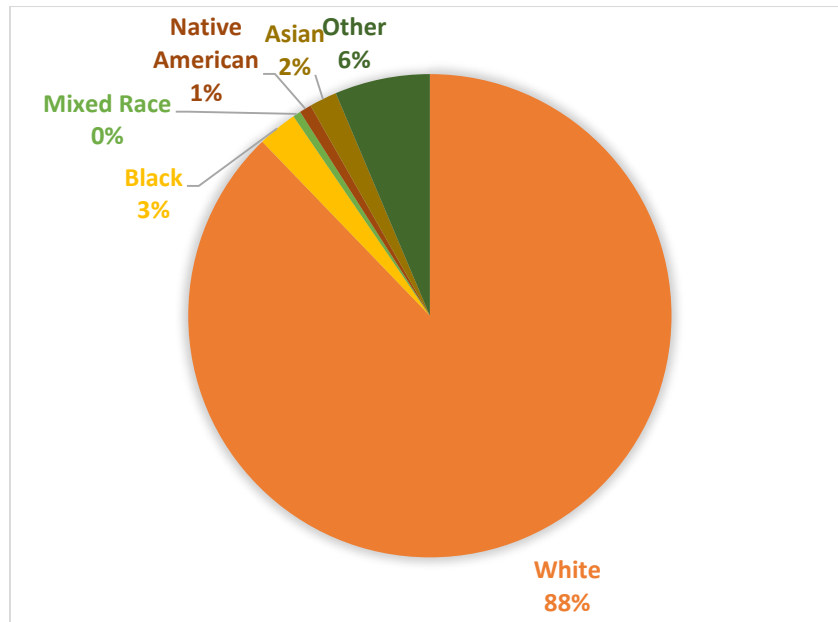
Black = 10

Mixed Race = 2

Native American = 3

Asian = 7

Other = 24



English is primary language:

Yes = 359

No = 25

