

Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan

2024 - 2025

California Department of Community
Services and Development

Community Services Block Grant



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Federal CSBG Programmatic Assurances and Certification	3
State Assurances and Certification	3
Compliance with CSBG Organizational Standards	4
What's New for 2024/2025?	4
Checklist	6
Community Needs Assessment Narrative	13
Community Needs Assessment Results	29
Part II: Community Action Plan	33
Vision and Mission Statement	33
Tripartite Board of Directors	34
Service Delivery System	35
Linkages and Funding Coordination	38
Monitoring	51
Data Analysis, Evaluation, and ROMA Application	54
Response and Community Awareness	59
Federal CSBG Programmatic Assurances and Certification	62
State Assurances and Certification	65
Organizational Standards	66
Appendices.....	68
Appendix A – Copy of Notices of Public Hearing	69
Appendix B - Low-Income Testimony and Agency's Response	82
Appendix C – Community Action Survey	84
Appendix D – Community Needs Assessment	93
I. Community Profile	95
II. Key Findings – Conditions and Causes of Poverty in Tulare County.....	104
III. Methodology.....	116
IV. Appendices	125
Appendix A – References.....	125
Appendix B – Community Action Survey	127

Introduction

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) has developed the 2024/2025 Community Needs Assessment (CNA) and Community Action Plan (CAP) template for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Service Providers network. Each agency must submit a completed CAP, including a CNA to CSD on or before **June 30, 2023**. Changes from the previous template are detailed below in the “What’s New for 2024/2025?” section. Provide all narrative responses in 12-point Arial font with 1.15 spacing. When the CNA and CAP are complete, they should not exceed 65 pages, excluding the appendices.

Purpose

Public Law 105-285 (the CSBG Act) and the California Government Code require that CSD secure a CAP, including a CNA from each agency. Section 676(b)(11) of the CSBG Act directs that receipt of a CAP is a condition to receive funding. Section 12747(a) of the California Government Code requires the CAP to assess poverty-related needs, available resources, feasible goals, and strategies that yield program priorities consistent with standards of effectiveness established for the program. Although CSD may prescribe statewide priorities or strategies that shall be considered and addressed at the local level, each agency is authorized to set its own program priorities in conformance to its determination of local needs. The CAP supported by the CNA is a two-year plan that shows how agencies will deliver CSBG services. CSBG funds are by their nature designed to be flexible. They shall be used to support activities that increase the capacity of low-income families and individuals to become self-sufficient.

Federal CSBG Programmatic Assurances and Certification

The Federal CSBG Programmatic Assurances are found in section 676(b) of the CSBG Act. These assurances are an integral part of the information included in the CSBG State Plan. A list of the assurances that are applicable to CSBG agencies has been provided in the Federal Programmatic Assurances section of this template. CSBG agencies should review these assurances and certify that they are complying.

State Assurances and Certification

As required by the CSBG Act, states are required to submit a State Plan as a condition to receive funding. Information provided in agencies’ CAPs will be included in the CSBG State Plan. Alongside Organizational Standards, the state will be reporting on [State Accountability Measures](#) in order to ensure accountability and program performance improvement. A list of the applicable State Assurances and the agency certification for them are found in the State Assurances section of this template.

Compliance with CSBG Organizational Standards

As described in the Office of Community Services (OCS) [Information Memorandum \(IM\) #138](#) dated January 26, 2015, CSBG agencies will comply with implementation of the Organizational Standards. CSD has identified the Organizational Standards that are met through the completion of the CAP and the CNA. A list of Organizational Standards that will be met upon completion of the CAP can be found in the Organizational Standards section of this template. Agencies are encouraged to utilize this list as a resource when reporting on the Organizational Standards annually.

What's New for 2024/2025?

Community Action Plan Workgroup (CAPWG). In summer 2022, CSD organized a workgroup to inform the development of the 2024/2025 CNA and CAP. Workgroup members were selected from the CSBG Service Provider network and the ROMA Coalition. The feedback CSD received from the workgroup has informed not only the 2024/2025 template but also the accompanying CAP training scheduled for mid-December 2022.

Public Hearings – Additional Guidance. The public hearing requirement has been modified. Two years ago, we were in an active pandemic due to the COVID-19 virus. The public health guidelines throughout the state advised communities against large gatherings. CSD advised agencies to follow public health protocols and hold public meeting virtually if an in-person meeting was not an option. For the public hearing on the 2024/2025 draft CAP, CSD requests that agencies conduct in-person, virtual, or hybrid public hearings. While transmission rates of COVID-19 remain high in many communities, agencies are requested to follow their local public health guidelines when deciding in which format to conduct the public hearing. For more information, please see the Public Hearing section of this template.

CNA Helpful Resources. The Helpful Resources section in Part I: Community Needs Assessment contains additional data sets and resources. On recommendation of the CAPWG, CSD has added data sets from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Wisconsin, and a point-in-time data set from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. We have also added links to the Local Agencies Portal where you can find examples of completed Community Needs Assessments and project timelines from the CSBG Service Providers network.

Part II: Community Action Plan. The number of questions in the Tripartite Board of Directors, Service Delivery System, Linkages and Funding Coordination, and Monitoring sections has changed. Questions were removed because it was determined that agencies meet these reporting requirements through other CSBG work products such as monitoring and Organizational Standards. In the Service Delivery System and Linkages and Funding Coordination sections, new questions were added. These questions will be covered during the template training webinar.

Sunset of COVID-19 Flexibilities. In the 2022/2023 template, CSD allowed agencies to indicate on selected questions whether there were changes to the response provided in the 2020-2021 CAP or whether agencies would like CSD to accept the 2020-2021 response without adaptations. This option was an effort to reduce administrative burden on agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic. While CSD has retained some of the flexibilities developed in the previous template, the option for agencies to reference responses in their prior CAP has been discontinued.

Response and Community Awareness. This section replaces the “Additional Information” section in the previous template. For 2024/2025 CSD has included questions pertaining to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). The questions about disaster preparedness have been retained from the previous

template. While none of this information is directly mandated by statute, CSD is requesting the information to gauge where the CSBG Service Provider network is as a whole on these topics. Responses to the questions in this section are mandatory.

ROMA Certification Requirement. Under section 676(b)(12) of the CSBG Act, CSD and all CSBG agencies are required to assure that we will participate in a Results Oriented Management and Accountability System “not later than fiscal year 2001.” CSD and the CSBG Service Providers have fulfilled this requirement through various approaches. With respect to the ROMA certification of the network CAPs (Organizational Standard 4.3), CSD has allowed agencies to submit their CAP without the signature of a ROMA trainer or implementer if the agency did not have a ROMA trainer or implementer on staff. CSD staff who had the requisite training would certify those CAPs on behalf of the agencies. This process will still be in place for the 2024/2025 template. However, for the 2026/2027 template, CSD will require that CSBG Service Providers provide their own ROMA certification either by staff who have the required ROMA training or in partnership with another agency or organization. CSBG Service Providers should begin formulating a plan to fulfill this requirement.

Checklist

- Cover Page and Certification**
- Public Hearing(s)**

Part I: Community Needs Assessment

- Narrative**
- Results**

Part II: Community Action Plan

- Vision Statement**
- Mission Statement**
- Tripartite Board of Directors**
- Service Delivery System**
- Linkages and Funding Coordination**
- Monitoring**
- Data Analysis, Evaluation, and ROMA Application**
- Response and Community Awareness**
- Federal CSBG Programmatic Assurances and Certification**
- State Assurances and Certification**
- Organizational Standards**

- Appendices**

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)
2024/2025 Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan

Cover Page and Certification

Agency Name	Community Services & Employment Training, Inc.
Name of CAP Contact	Jeff Forbes
Title	Director of Communication and Information Systems
Phone	559-741-4194
Email	jeff.forbes@cset.org

CNA Completed MM/DD/YYYY:

(Organizational Standard 3.1)

5/18/2023

Board and Agency Certification

The undersigned hereby certifies that this agency complies with the Federal CSBG Programmatic, and State Assurances as outlined in the CSBG Act and California Government Code, respectively for services provided under the Federal Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Community Action Plan. The undersigned further certifies the information in this Community Needs Assessment and the Community Action Plan is correct and has been authorized by the governing body of this organization. (Organizational Standard 3.5)

Gordon McClaskey	E-SIGNED by Gordon McClaskey on 2023-06-23 14:24:35 PDT	June 23, 2023
Board Chair (printed name)	Board Chair (signature)	Date
Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner	E-SIGNED by Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner on 2023-06-23 11:53:16 PDT	June 23, 2023
Executive Director (printed name)	Executive Director (signature)	Date

Certification of ROMA Trainer/Implementer (If applicable)

The undersigned hereby certifies that this agency's Community Action Plan and strategic plan documents the continuous use of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation).

Lily Rivera-Graves	E-SIGNED by Lily Rivera on 2023-06-23 11:43:05 PDT	June 23, 2023
NCRT/NCRI (printed name)	NCRT/NCRI (signature)	Date

CSD Use Only

Dates CAP (Parts I & II)		Accepted By	
Received	Accepted		

Public Hearing(s)

California Government Code Section 12747(b)-(d)

State Statute Requirements

As required by California Government Code Section 12747(b)-(d), agencies are required to conduct a public hearing for the purpose of reviewing the draft CAP. All testimony presented by low-income individuals and families during the public hearing shall be identified in the final CAP. Agencies shall indicate whether or not the concerns expressed by low-income individuals and families have been addressed. If an agency determines that any of the concerns have not been addressed in the CAP, the agency shall include in its response document, information about the concerns and comment as to their validity.

Guidelines

Notice of Public Hearing

1. Notice of the public hearing and comment period must be published at least 15 calendar days prior to the public hearing.
2. The notice may be published on the agency's website, social media channels, and/or in newspaper(s) of local distribution.
3. The notice must include information about the draft CAP; where members of the community may review, or how they may receive a copy of, the draft CAP; the dates of the comment period; where written comments may be sent; date, time, and location of the public hearing; and the agency contact information.
4. The comment period should be open for at least 15 calendar days prior to the public hearing. Agencies may opt to extend the comment period for a selected number of days after the hearing.
5. The draft CAP must be made available for public review and inspection at least 30 days prior to the public hearing. The draft CAP can be posted on the agency's website, social media channels, and distributed electronically or in paper format.
6. Attach a copy of the Notice(s) of Public Hearing as Appendix A to the final CAP.

Public Hearing

1. Agencies must conduct at least one public hearing on the draft CAP.

2. Public hearing(s) will be held in the designated CSBG service area(s).
3. Low-income testimony presented at the hearing or received during the comment period must be memorialized verbatim in the Low-Income Testimony and Agency's Response document and appended to the final CAP as Appendix B.
4. The Low-Income Testimony and Agency's Response document should include the name of low-income individual, his/her verbatim testimony, an indication of whether or not the need was addressed in the draft CAP, and the agency's response to the testimony if the concern was not addressed in the draft CAP.

Additional Guidance

COVID-19 poses unique challenges to fulfilling the public hearing requirement. CSD asks that agencies continue to adhere to state and local public health guidance to slow the spread of the virus and ensure public safety. The health and safety of agency staff and the communities you serve is paramount. Therefore, for the purposes of fulfilling the public hearing requirement on the draft CAP, agencies may conduct the public hearing in-person, remotely, or using a hybrid model (in-person and remotely) based on the public health protocols in place in their communities.

Public Hearing Report

Date(s) of Public Hearing(s)	6/15/2023
Location(s) of Public Hearing(s)	CSET Board Meeting: 312 NW 3 rd Ave, Visalia, CA 93291
Dates of the Comment Period(s)	5/5/2023 – 6/15/2023
Where was the Notice of Public Hearing published? (agency website, newspaper, social media channels)	CSET social media channels; agency website; sent electronically to staff, community contacts, local media outlets; sent electronically to customers
Date the Notice(s) of Public Hearing(s) was published	5/22/2023
Number of Attendees at the Public Hearing(s) (Approximately)	0

Part I: Community Needs Assessment

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(11)

California Government Code Section 12747(a)

Helpful Resources

In 2011, NASCSP published a [Community Action to Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment Tool](#) that supports planning and implementing a comprehensive CNA. The tool lays out design choices, planning steps, implementation practices, analysis, and presentation options.

The National Community Action Partnership has an [Assessment Tool](#) designed specifically for the community needs assessment process. Here you can select from a variety of county-specific data sets.

Examples of Community Needs Assessments and project timelines from agencies within the California CSBG Providers network can be found on the [Local Agencies Portal](#) under the CSBG – Resources tab. If you do not have an account or have not received CSD login credentials, please email CSD at ExternalAccess@csd.ca.gov.

To provide a comprehensive “picture” of the community needs in your service area(s), agencies will collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. Links to several national and state quantitative data sets are given below. Local and agency data also provide information about the needs of the community.

Sample Data Sets			
U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Data	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Economic Data	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Housing Data & Report	
HUD Exchange PIT and HIC Data Since 2007	National Low-Income Housing Coalition Housing Needs by State	National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS	
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator		University of Wisconsin Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings	
California Department of Education School Data via DataQuest	California Employment Development Department UI Data by County	California Department of Public Health Various Data Sets	
California Department of Finance Demographics	California Attorney General Open Justice	California Governor's Office Covid-19 Data	California Health and Human Services Data Portal
CSD Census Tableau Data by County			Population Reference Bureau Kids Data

CommunityNeedsAssessmentNarrative

CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(3)(C), 676(b)(9)

Organizational Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

1. Describe how your agency collected and included current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for your service area. (Organizational Standard 3.2)

Community Services and Employment Training (CSET) collected data specific to poverty and its prevalence as it relates to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for the residents of Tulare County. The following sources were used: the American Community Survey, National Center for Education Statistics, and the National Council on Aging. Additionally, demographic and income information was requested from participants who completed the 2023 Community Action Survey. The CSET 2023 Community Needs Assessment addresses these topics on pages 17-29.

2. Describe the geographic location(s) that your agency is funded to serve with CSBG. If applicable, include a description of the various pockets, high-need areas, or neighborhoods of poverty that are being served by your agency.

Since 1976, CSET has served the children, seniors, and people of Tulare County, California. A diverse region, covering nearly 5,000 square miles, Tulare County is located in the agricultural heart of California, providing fruit, vegetables, nuts, dairy, and beef that feeds the rest of the country and much of the world. Despite a booming agriculture industry, the persistent problems of poverty remain. In a community of 477,544 people, the most recent American Community Survey finds that nearly 42% of all local residents are living below the Federal Poverty Level. To combat the negative effects of living in poverty, CSET provides a wide scope of programs and services to help empower residents to gain access to the tools and resources needed to overcome poverty and become financially stable.

CSET operates eight senior centers, four community offices, two family resource centers, and three Employment Connection centers across Tulare County, strategically located in areas with the highest needs. CSET's physical locations can be found in the communities of Cutler-Orosi, Earlimart, Exeter, Farmersville, Goshen, Lindsay, Pixley, Porterville, Tulare, Woodlake, and Visalia. Every year, thousands of families utilize CSET's suite of services designed to help holistically address the many variables that cause poverty in our region. CSET's "no wrong door" approach ensures anyone entering our offices receives information on all relevant resources and programs which might help improve their quality of life and remove barriers to success. CSET provides many resources such as no-cost income tax preparation assistance, rental assistance, financial education, access to healthy food and home delivered meals for seniors, safe housing, job readiness and work experience opportunities, education pathways, justice system navigation, job training and placement, parenting resources, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, leadership programs for youth, utility assistance and home weatherization, and resources for those who are experiencing homelessness. By establishing physical offices in these rural communities where access to economic resources can be extremely difficult, CSET removes barriers to access for those who are the most in need.

Each office also serves the surrounding even smaller, census-designated places such as Allensworth, Alpaugh, Ducor, Richgrove, Strathmore, Traver, and Yetttem. While these areas face a lack of resources in normal times, when emergencies strike, it can make things all the more difficult. In March 2023, Tulare County faced extreme flooding unlike anything seen in decades. Due to record levels of snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains over the winter, followed by heavy rainfall during the spring, many families have been impacted by dangerous localized flooding, which damaged roads, schools, businesses, and homes. In this region, multiple bridges washed out with roads becoming unpassable, causing residents to become trapped in parts of the county, leaving

many without power or access to crucial supplies. A state of emergency was declared throughout Tulare County, with mandatory evacuation orders issued in the communities of Allensworth, Alpaugh, Cutler, Exeter, Springville, Teviston, Three Rivers, and many others.

Due to the emergency declaration, CSET sprang into action, aiding the many low-income households affected by these events. With the severe storms and subsequent flooding, CSET offered temporary emergency shelter assistance for families, providing supplies such as sleeping bags and blankets for those who have had their homes damaged or destroyed. Often, it is those families and individuals who already have the least access to resources and suffer the most when natural disasters occur. For example, the long dormant Tulare Lake – originally the largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River – has come back to life, threatening residents who had long ago built their homes on or near the dry lake bed. These flooded communities can expect more flooding as the weather warms and melting snow flows into the revived lake. In anticipation, homes have been preemptively “de-energized” by power companies preparing for the forecasted flooding in the coming weeks and months (*“Why PG&E needs to cut power to some homes near Tulare Lake,”* KSEE 24, April 17, 2023).

By having physical locations in communities where access to resources can be scarce, CSET provides a direct lifeline to those who otherwise may not have a way to access the resources needed to survive. CSET recently celebrated the opening of a new office, located in the Cutler-Orosi community. This new office has been of great benefit to the community as those who are affected by flooding events now have a “one stop” center where they can receive information on available resources such as emergency shelter, food, water, clothing, and more. Previously, CSET provided services to the people of this area by sharing office space at the Cutler-Orosi Family Resource Center (COFRC). While the partnership between CSET and COFRC was a fruitful one, CSET is

pleased to have the ability to offer expanded services in our new office. Here, CSET will offer Energy Assistance, youth services, job placement services, and has a partnership with the California Employment Development Department where individuals who are experiencing a disruption in employment will have the opportunity to meet with an EDD representative in person to help manage these disruptions. CSET is proud to work with our partners in the community to provide quality services to the people of Tulare County every day.

3. Indicate from which sources your agency collected and analyzed quantitative data for the CNA. (Check all that apply.) (Organizational Standard 3.3)

Federal Government/National Data Sets

- Census Bureau
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Department of Housing & Urban Development
- Department of Health & Human Services
- National Low-Income Housing Coalition
- National Center for Education Statistics
- Academic data resources
- Other online data resources
- Other

Local Data Sets

- Local crime statistics
- High school graduation rate
- School district school readiness
- Local employers
- Local labor market
- Childcare providers
- Public benefits usage
- County Public Health Department
- Other

California State Data Sets

- Employment Development Department
- Department of Education
- Department of Public Health
- Attorney General
- Department of Finance
- State Covid-19 Data
- Other

Surveys

- Clients
- Partners and other service providers
- General public
- Staff
- Board members
- Private sector
- Public sector
- Educational institutions

Agency Data Sets

- Client demographics
- Service data
- CSBG Annual Report
- Client satisfaction data
- Other

4. If you selected "Other" in any of the data sets in Question 4, list the additional sources.

National Council on Aging, Congressional Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, California High Speed Rail Authority, Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance, Center for American Progress, Tulare County Economic Development Department

5. Indicate the approaches your agency took to gather qualitative data for the CNA. (Check all that apply.) (Organizational Standard 3.3)

Surveys

- Clients
- Partners and other service providers
- General public
- Staff
- Board members
- Private sector
- Public sector
- Educational institutions

Interviews

- Local leaders
- Elected officials
- Partner organizations' leadership
- Board members
- New and potential partners
- Clients

Focus Groups

- Local leaders
- Elected officials
- Partner organizations' leadership
- Board members
- New and potential partners
- Clients
- Staff

 Community Forums **Asset Mapping** **Other**

6. If you selected “Other” in Question 6, please list the additional approaches your agency took to gather qualitative data.

7. Describe your agency’s analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected from low-income individuals and families. (Organizational Standards 1.1, 1.2, 3.3)

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed by CSET to assess the current needs of Tulare County. Analysis was performed by members of CSET’s Communication and Information Systems and Resource Development teams, which informed CSET’s goal setting process and priorities. These results are outlined in the 2024 – 2025 Community Needs Assessment. Quantitative data was collected from 23 independent sources, which are listed in Appendix D of the Community Needs Assessment. A Community Action Survey was conducted to collect qualitative data in March 2023, in which 327 surveys were received from CSET’s diverse base of low-income customers and their families, community partners, staff, and supporters throughout Tulare County. This collective data set has informed CSET’s 2024 – 2025 Community Action Plan and will guide the development of programs and services going forward.

8. Summarize the data gathered from each sector of the community listed below and detail how your agency used the information to assess needs and resources in your agency’s service area(s). Your agency must demonstrate that each sector was included in the needs assessment; A response for each sector is required. (CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(3)(C), 676(b)(9), Organizational Standard 2.2)

A. Community-based organizations

CSET collected data made available from the National Community Action Partnership Network in order to better understand the needs of low-income people and families throughout Tulare County. Additionally, CSET reviewed relevant data made public by Tulare County agencies such as the Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance, Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, local newspapers, and

more who work with the impoverished residents of the Central Valley. These sources provided valuable information on unemployment and poverty rates in Tulare County, with important details on how poverty affects local residents according to age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Variables that affect income such as wage gaps, access to housing, education levels, homelessness, and employment opportunities provided a clearer picture of the causes of poverty in Tulare County.

CSET also sent the Community Action Survey to our wide network of customers, staff, and partners throughout the region – seeking feedback from leadership of local nonprofit organizations who have a unique understanding of the struggles our community faces.

B. Faith-based organizations

The 2024 – 2025 Community Action Survey was sent via email to leaders of the faith communities in Tulare County during the survey collection period in March 2023. On March 15, 2023, CSET conducted a Community Needs Assessment focus group with the members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Visalia, CA. Eleven guests participated in this focus group, who shared their thoughts on the most pressing needs of our community. Leadership from St. Paul's Episcopal Church distributed a link to the Community Action Survey on March 18, 2023, via their weekly newsletter, encouraging the congregation to participate in the survey.

Leaders of the faith community also had the opportunity to participate in the Community Action Survey when receiving communications from CSET and our local partners who have shared links and instructions on how to complete the online form.

C. Private sector (local utility companies, charitable organizations, local food banks)

CSET solicited feedback from the private sector via the Community Action Survey. When distributing

the survey, CSET reached out to contacts in the business community, requesting input on the current state of Tulare County and the needs they are facing. When conducting the Community Needs Assessment, CSET analyzed data from the Center for American Progress, the United States Census Bureau, the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, and the National Center for Farmworker Health to better understand the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community.

Every year, CSET's Workforce Development Department collaborates with members of the business community, schools, and local agencies to provide meaningful work experience opportunities for jobseekers of all ages. CSET works to identify and facilitate job readiness and training programs for young adults, individuals experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, current and former foster youth, people transitioning out of the carceral system, veterans, immigrants, and people who are seeking to become financially secure outside of assistance programs (such as the Next Step program, formerly known as "Welfare to Work"). This department is continually expanding our network of jobsite hosts, upskilling trainers, and educators to provide a wide range of opportunities that lead to good paying, stable employment which in turn creates stability for individuals and families who are struggling financially.

Throughout the year, CSET's leadership participates in several county-wide committees regarding the status of the labor market and needs of our community, such as the Employment Connection Committee, Sequoia Adult Education Consortium, and the Tulare County Regional Task Force on Homelessness. This work provides CSET an opportunity to learn about current trends and developments in the region, while creating a platform to promote our many services and programs to key leaders of the community, further raising the organization's profile in Tulare County.

D. Public sector (social services departments, state agencies)

CSET solicited feedback from local representatives of the public sector by providing access to the Community Action Survey to agencies such as the California Employment Development Department, Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, Visalia Police Department, Tulare County Health and Human Services, and members of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and other local government agencies.

E. Educational institutions (local school districts, colleges)

The Community Action Survey was provided to local educational institutions such as the Tulare County Office of Education, Sequoias Adult Education Consortium, and other teaching institutions. CSET utilizes data obtained from these local entities as well as the National Center for Education Statistics to help guide our program development and offerings so they may be most beneficial to our community. Tulare County is a region plagued with high illiteracy and low advanced education attainment, so identifying how CSET's programs can be tailored to meet the needs of our community is of great importance. Our Youth Department offers programs geared for high school students and young people who are non-traditional students, such as young parents, justice-involved youth, current and former foster youth, and young people who have experienced homelessness. Every year, more than 500 youth participate in CSET's many programs designed to provide work experience and encourage personal development, community involvement, career exploration, and leadership opportunities. To ensure our programming meets the needs of tomorrow's leaders, CSET invites input from these important institutions, in addition to the participants in our youth programs, on how we can best serve local youth and young adults.

9. “Causes of poverty” are the negative factors that create or foster barriers to self-sufficiency and/or reduce access to resources in communities in which low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the causes of poverty in your agency’s service area(s). (Organizational Standard 3.4)

Upon review of a wide range of independent studies and sources regarding poverty in Tulare County and the completion of the 2023 Community Action Survey, CSET has produced a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment. This assessment identifies the causes of poverty in Tulare County and how they continue to negatively impact the quality of life in the community.

The average income for an individual in Tulare County is \$23,706 per year, far less than the national average of \$37,638 and the California average of \$41,276 (United States Census Bureau, 2021).

While there are many causes of poverty in the United States, such as a lack of access to education resources, affordable housing, healthcare costs, racial and gender inequality, age discrimination, language barriers, rampant inflation, and an economy still deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic – poverty is usually the result of a person or family impacted by multiple factors rather than a singular incident. A review of independent sources cited in the Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Survey have revealed some of the main causes of poverty in Tulare County. While these are not the complete list, they include the high costs of housing and a lack of affordable options as well as a lack of good-paying jobs in the region. For the last 47 years, CSET has worked tirelessly to find holistic solutions to these problems our community faces while making lasting change.

Housing Accessibility and Affordability

While the rates of homeownership in Tulare County have grown in the recent years, the homeownership rate is still below the national average (57% as compared to 64%, American Community Survey, 2017 - 2021). With skyrocketing costs of housing for both renters and buyers, it

is becoming more difficult by the day for the average Tulare County resident to meet their monthly shelter costs. An estimated 48% of all Tulare County renters and 36% of all homeowners are paying more than 30% of their monthly income on housing. With a 1.6% rental vacancy rate, many renters have little choice but to shop around to find the few competitively priced housing options (Community Action Partnership Engagement Network, 2021). The most recent American Community Survey found that over 40% of housing units in the region are recorded as having one or more “substandard housing conditions” (ACS, 2021). The National Low-Income Housing Coalition reports a shortage of nearly 1 million affordable rental homes for extremely low-income renters. With the current annual household income needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home at the Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Market Rent estimate of \$81,133 (National Low-Income Housing Coalition, California Key Facts, 2023) and the average household income of a Tulare County household at \$57,000 – finding a home can be extremely difficult. In addition to a lack of affordable housing in general, the current California maximum income rate for a family of four to qualify for most housing assistance programs is \$29,350. This leaves many families caught in a gap of making too much to qualify for public assistance, while still making too little to afford a market rate home. CSET’s Community Initiatives Department has several housing programs to assist families to find safe and appropriate housing, including first time homebuyer education classes, home foreclosure counseling, permanent supportive housing, and a new low-barrier shelter currently under construction for those who are experiencing homelessness. While these are excellent resources for the community, the needs far outpace available resources in the region.

Workforce Development

A persistent issue that plagues Tulare County is the lack of good-paying jobs in the region. The current median household income of a Tulare County household is \$57,394 – far less than the state

and national average. With tremendous inflation affecting workers across the state, a recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California states that while the average worker is earning \$4.50 more today than in January 2020, due to inflation, it feels like a \$0.50 loss (Public Policy Institute of California, October 2022). While Tulare County is home to one of the largest agricultural industries in the world, producing over \$8,000,000,000 in 2021 ("*Tulare County Ag Values Up Nearly \$1 Billion in 2021*," The Business Journal, October 3, 2022), agriculture workers consistently are some of the lowest paid workers in the community. The average farmworker in this region makes \$12.76 per hour, less than the national average of \$14.25 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). While unemployment rates dropped as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lifted, Tulare County is currently seeing an uptick in unemployment claims throughout the area. While the highest paid occupational group in the Visalia Metropolitan Area is "Management," with a mean hourly wage of \$51.39, this only accounts for 4.3% of the entire working population. The mean hourly wage of all occupations in the area is \$24.09 per hour, nearly \$4 less than the national average (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Data, May 2021). CSET is committed to building partnerships across occupational sectors and the business community to provide enriching work experience opportunities, paid internships, apprenticeship programs, work readiness and upskilling trainings, and job placement services to help connect job seekers with employment throughout the community.

10. "Conditions of poverty" are the negative environmental, safety, health and/or economic conditions that may reduce investment or growth in communities where low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the conditions of poverty in your agency's service area(s). (Organizational Standard 3.4)

By conducting the Community Needs Assessment, CSET has the opportunity to identify some of the conditions of poverty that affect the quality of life for Tulare County residents. Upon reviewing a

comprehensive collection of objective data, CSET has found the following most urgent conditions of poverty.

Education Attainment

There is a strong correlation with advanced education facilitating higher earning potential later in life. The Public Policy Institute of California found that the average annual earnings for a person with a bachelor's degree is \$70,000, while those without degrees will earn far less over their lifetimes (*Higher Education and Economic Opportunity in California*, Cuellar Mejia, Johnson, 2020). In Tulare County, 27% of all residents do not have a high school diploma, with only 5% of the population achieving a graduate or professional degree (American Community Survey, 2017 – 2021). In the United States, an estimated 21.8% of the adult population is considered functionally illiterate, while in Tulare County, the rate jumps up to an alarming 46.2% (National Center for Education statistics, 2017). Of completed higher education degrees in the region, the most common awarded degree is an associates degree in Child Care, for which the average is \$54,680 per year (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Completions 2021). In Tulare County, 76% of households are headed by someone with no more than a high school diploma, much higher than the national rate of 58% and state rate of 62% (American Community Survey, 2017 - 2021).

Homelessness

The high costs of housing and a lack of access to good jobs are some of the main contributing factors to a rising homeless problem in Tulare County. Across the state, the fastest growing demographic of people experiencing homelessness are seniors (Cal Matters, 2023). The most recent Point in Time count by the Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance found that white men, ages 45-54 were the largest demographic of people experiencing homelessness in our region. Overall, the rates of homelessness in Tulare County have risen 62% over the last 10 years, with no signs of

slowing down. While there has been a call for the creation of more housing in recent years, especially for those with low incomes, there are residents in Tulare County who are vehemently against the building of housing for low-income families (*"Crowds storms out after council Oks three-story apartments,"* The Sun-Gazette, 2023). Pushback from groups opposed to housing for low-income residents and families slows down future development and exacerbates the problem of a lack of affordable housing options, putting more people at risk of becoming unsheltered.

Access to Resources

Low- and Moderate-Income individuals and families often lack access to crucial resources necessary for health and safety. In addition to a lack of access to affordable housing in Tulare County, many of our rural residents live in areas where amenities such as public transportation, libraries, or internet services are nearly nonexistent; 5% of Tulare County households have no vehicle (American Community Survey, 2017 – 2021). This can make accessing daily needs such as food even more difficult, as 20% of census tracts in the area are identified as food deserts, and 30% of the county overall is identified as "low-access" when it comes to food, far below the state and national averages (Agriculture and Food Access in California, ArcGIS, 2021). In Tulare County, access to healthcare can be difficult as well. In March 2023, neighboring Madera County saw their only general hospital close, leaving 160,000 people without access to emergency or hospital services (PBS Newshour, Health, April 21, 2023). In Tulare County, the largest hospital, Kaweah Health, reported a loss of \$37 million in the last fiscal year, and is now laying off employees, cutting benefits, and is sounding the alarm that they may close as well if it does not receive immediate assistance from the state (*"Kaweah Health CEO writes open letter to Newsom seeking financial help for struggling hospital,"* Gary K. Herbst, Visalia Times-Delta, November 2022). Should the Kaweah Health hospital close, nearly 600,000 residents between Tulare and Kings Counties will also be without access to acute and advanced healthcare.

11. Describe your agency's approach or system for collecting, analyzing, and reporting customer satisfaction data to the governing board. (Organizational Standard 1.3)

Every year, CSET conducts a Customer Satisfaction Survey, which is distributed to all customers, partner agencies, and the community we serve to gain a better understanding of how well CSET is meeting the needs of Tulare County residents. This survey includes questions pertaining to how customers were made aware of CSET's programs and services, did they feel they received accurate and timely information, and did they feel that CSET staff treated them in kind, compassionate, and professional manners. These surveys are posted online via a Google Forms link and is promoted through our various social media channels and email communications.

Participants who were more comfortable submitting a paper form, could provide their anonymous responses on printed copied of the survey, which were collected in sealed boxes located at all CSET offices. CSET solicits this feedback for several weeks, compiling all responses which are analyzed and then shared internally with staff and leadership, as well as made available to the general public. In 2022, this survey was conducted once again and for the third year in a row, customers indicated they were "highly satisfied" with CSET's services overall (scoring 96%, with a 3-year upward trend). A total of 478 customers completed the survey and 89% indicated that they found it was easy to access CSET services; 99% found CSET staff knowledgeable, and the majority of customers contacted the organization to find assistance with employment. This information was shared with the CSET board of directors, and this feedback helps to guide our work as we develop programs and services in the future.

Community Needs Assessment Results

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(11)

California Government Code Section 12747(a)

State Plan 14.1a

Table 1: Needs Table

Complete the table below. Insert row(s) if additional space is needed.

Needs Identified	Level	Agency Mission (Y/N)	Currently Addressing (Y/N)	Agency Priority (Y/N)
Life Skill Classes	Family	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employment skills training and job placement	Family	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rental, utility and food assistance	Family	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transportation assistance/Increased public transit	Community	No	No	No
Parks, waterways and trails	Community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Formation of community service and advocacy groups/how to serve on a community group or government board	Community	Yes	Yes	Yes
More ways to volunteer	Community	Yes	Yes	Yes
After school programs	Family	Yes	Yes	Yes
College and career prep	Family	Yes	Yes	Yes

Needs Identified: List the needs identified in your most recent CNA.

Level: List the need level, i.e., community or family. **Community Level:** Does the issue impact the community, not just clients or potential clients of the agency? For example, a community level employment need is: There is a lack of good paying jobs in our community. **Family Level:** Does the need concern individuals/families who have identified things in their own life that are lacking? An example of a family level employment need would be: Individuals do not have good paying jobs.

Essential to Agency Mission: Indicate if the identified need aligns with your agency's mission.

Currently Addressing: Indicate if your agency is already addressing the identified need.

Agency Priority: Indicate if the identified need will be addressed either directly or indirectly.

Table 2: Priority Ranking Table

List all needs identified as an agency priority in Table 1. Insert row(s) if additional space is needed.

Agency Priorities	Description of programs, services, activities	Indicator(s) or Service(s) Category	Why is the need a priority?
1. Employment skills training and job placement	Includes summer jobs, college and career prep, and life skills classes for youth	FNPI 1a – 2023 CSBG Goal (60) FNPI 1b – 2023 CSBG Goal (50) FNPI 1h – 2023 CSBG Goal (175) FNPI 2h – 2023 CSBG Goal (125) SRV 1a SRV 1b SRV 1c SRV 1g SRV 1h	<p>Providing employment skills training and job placement is a priority for Tulare County because there are many underemployed and low-income jobseekers in the region. With new businesses seeking to set up operations in Tulare County, it is urgent that the local workforce is well-trained and prepared to fill these good-paying and stable positions.</p> <p>By preparing jobseekers for these positions, we are filling the needs of the business community while providing economic opportunities for disadvantaged residents of Tulare County.</p>
2. Rental, utility, and food assistance	Includes rent, mortgage, utility assistance, and Meals on Wheels	FNPI 4b – 2023 CSBG Goal (700) FNPI 4e – 2023 CSBG Goal (240) FNPI 5f – 2023 CSBG Goal (700) FNPI 5g – 2023 CSBG Goal (90) SRV 3e	<p>One of the best preventative measures for addressing homelessness is to keep families housed in the first place. By providing rental assistance, families can stay out of arrears with their landlords and remain in their homes.</p> <p>Providing families with utility assistance ensures that these homes are</p>

		SRV 4c SRV 4d SRV 4e SRV 4i SRV 5II	safe places to live with access to clean water, heat, and other amenities for health. Providing access to food ensures no resident goes hungry and has consistent access to nutritious meals.
3.Life Skill Classes	Includes life skills training for youth through the following programs: WIOA Youth, Youth Transitions, #LEAD/#GROW, Tech Connect, and the Sequoia Community Corps. Youth in these programs receive 1) job readiness and soft skills training, 2) personal skills including how to open a bank account and manage money, and 3) healthy relationships and mental health skills.	FNPI 1a – 2023 Goal (60) SRV 1b SRV 1c SRV 2d SRV 2q SRV 5q	Youth and young adults in Tulare County need life skills classes so they will be prepared to enter the working world and be on the path to financial stability. By providing skills classes such as financial literacy, domestic violence prevention, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, parenting resources, and job training programs, CSET ensures the next generation of Tulare County residents have the tools needed to succeed and live independently.
4.Parks, waterways and trails	Includes Sequoia Community Corps training and performing improvements to parks, waterways and trails such as sidewalks, clearing trails, planting trees, etc. Corpsmembers also learn about opportunities to stay fit using the parks, waterways and trails.	SRV 5q	Access to free, clean, and safe outdoor spaces improve the health and quality of life for Tulare County residents by encouraging outdoor recreation, exploration of our communities, inspires curiosity, and preserves our natural resources for future generations. As cities continue to address environmental concerns such as drought by encouraging water

			conservation via the replacement of water-intensive lawns with drought-tolerant native species landscapes, public parks become the primary means to access green space for sports and recreation. These community spaces become gathering spaces for families and friends to enjoy the outdoors together.
5. Formation of community service and advocacy groups/how to serve on a community group or government board	Includes community awareness and residents volunteering in community events and participating in town councils.	FNPI 6a – 2023 Goal (25) FNPI 6a.1 – 2023 Goal (25) FNPI 6a.2 – 2023 Goal (25) FNPI 6a.3 – 2023 Goal (25)	Civic engagement is key to ensuring the voices of our community are heard by those who are guiding the allocations of our shared resources and contribute to the development of Tulare County.
<p>Agency Priorities: Rank your agency’s planned programs, services and activities to address the needs identified in Table 1 as agency priorities.</p> <p>Description of programs, services, activities: Briefly describe the program, services or activities that your agency will provide to address the need. Identify the number of clients to be served or the number of units offered, including timeframes for each.</p> <p>Indicator/Service Category: List the indicator(s) (CNPI, FNPI) or service(s) (SRV) that will be reported in CSBG Annual Report.</p> <p>Why is this need a priority: Provide a brief explanation about why this need has been identified as a priority. Connect the need with the data. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(A))</p>			

Part II: Community Action Plan

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(11)

California Government Code Sections 12745(e), 12747(a)

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 11, Chapter 1, Sections 100651 and 100655

Vision and Mission Statement

1. Provide your agency's Vision Statement.

CSET's Vision Statement is:

We share a vision for communities and residents to gain the knowledge, skills and resources needed to achieve the American Dream. To achieve this vision, we commit ourselves to these core values:

We strive to assist residents regionally in improving their lives.

We create opportunities for children, youth, parents, and families to be competitive in an increasingly challenging economy.

We continue to strengthen our organization by developing internal leadership, embracing diversity, and maintaining integrity in every venture.

We seek partnerships with other agencies to provide the best possible services to our community.

2. Provide your agency's Mission Statement.

CSET's Mission Statement is: CSET inspires youth, families, and communities to achieve self-reliance through innovative pathways and collaboration.

Tripartite Board of Directors

CSBG Act Sections 676B(a) and (b); 676(b)(10)

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 11, Chapter 1, Section 100605

1. Describe your agency's procedures under which a low-income individual, community organization, religious organization, or representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization or low-income individuals to be inadequately represented on your agency's board to petition for adequate representation. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(10))

CSET's Bylaws, specifically in Article II, establish the requirement that the board is tripartite with one-third of all board seats allocated for public officials, representatives of the poor, and representatives of the private sector. Article III further confirms that selection of four board members must include low-income representatives from designated low-income organizations in Tulare County.

An established procedure is in place to respond in a timely manner if a community representative would like to petition the organization for adequate representation, which is addressed in CSET's Bylaws Article III. A letter is requested from the concerned parties, stating the nature of the inadequate representation and proposed remedy. The letter is also accompanied with signatures of 15 or more residents of Tulare County. The board will then address the petition at the next board meeting including an open hearing with the petitioning group.

Service Delivery System

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(A)
State Plan 14.3

1. Describe your agency's service delivery system. Include a description of your client intake process or system and specify whether services are delivered via direct services or subcontractors, or a combination of both. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(A), State Plan 14.3)

Every year, CSET serves thousands of impoverished and disadvantaged families, seniors, and local residents throughout Tulare County, providing programs and services designed to help empower people to achieve financial stability and to raise the standard of living in our community. An area covering nearly 5,000 square miles, Tulare County is home to nearly 464,000 people from many walks of life. As the Community Action Agency for Tulare County, CSET works to meet needs of our most vulnerable community members. To accomplish this, CSET operates eight senior centers, four community offices, two family resource centers, and three Employment Connection centers (part of America's Job Centers of California). These sites are strategically located throughout our service area, in rural communities with high needs and low access to resources. To reach the widest audience possible, CSET partners with social service agencies across the county to provide resources such as no-cost income tax preparation assistance, financial literacy workshops, work readiness and job upskilling programs, drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs, parenting resources, food distribution, job placement services, litter abatement, homeless services, youth leadership and development, community service opportunities, education pathways, home weatherization, utility assistance, recycling services and more. Programs and materials are offered in English and Spanish, and for those who require assistance in additional languages, all efforts are made to accommodate their needs appropriately.

CSET offices are often co-located with other important services for community members such as the probation department for those who are involved in the justice system, a health clinic in the

community of Pixley, or the California Employment Development Department for individuals who are experiencing an employment disruption. CSET also works closely with our partners in the education system, such as local colleges, school districts, and adult schools. During the COVID-19 pandemic CSET adjusted operations to continue providing uninterrupted services to the community, by incorporating tools such as virtual meetings and improving our internal intake and referral systems to create a seamless flow of appropriate services to our customers. Many of these measures have been adopted into CSET's continued operations as we adjust our offerings to meet the varying needs of those who we serve.

2. Describe how the poverty data related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity referenced in Part I, Question 1 informs your service delivery and strategies in your service area?

Poverty data presented in Part 1, Question 1, as it relates to gender, age, and race/ethnicity, informs CSET's service delivery methods and strategies so that we may be of best service to our community members in need. CSET carefully analyzes the data collected for this section of the Community Action Plan and develops program materials and offerings that are culturally competent and meet the needs of impoverished Tulare County residents. Upon review of the data collected in the Community Needs Assessment, CSET has identified that 18% of all local residents are living in poverty, and of these people, the groups that are most likely to be living in poverty are young Hispanic women and senior citizens. CSET addresses the needs of young Hispanic women in Tulare County by providing access to resources services such as youth leadership and development programs like #GROW and #LEAD, job training and work experience opportunities such as Youth@Work, the Sequoia Community Corps (SCC), and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, parenting resources for those with children, college and career exploration, scholarships for higher learning, and more. Senior citizens of Tulare County are served by the many free and low-cost activities provided at our eight senior centers, which provide

opportunities for socialization, friendship, and community; as well as access to nutritious food and hot meals. These resources help to build independence and financial stability for local residents of Tulare County, while raising the standard of living for everyone.

Linkages and Funding Coordination

CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(1)(B) and (C); (3)(B), (C) and (D); 676(b)(4), (5), (6), and (9)

California Government Code Sections 12747, 12760

Organizational Standards 2.1, 2.4

State Plan 9.3a, 9.3b, 9.4b, 9.6, 9.7, 14.1b, 14.1c, 14.3d, 14.4

1. Describe how your agency coordinates funding with other providers in your service area. If there is a formalized coalition of social service providers in your service area, list the coalition(s) by name and methods used to coordinate services/funding. (CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(1)(C), 676(b)(3)(C); Organizational Standard 2.1; State Plan 14.1c, 9.6, 9.7)

For the last 47 years, CSET has worked to achieve our mission of inspiring the residents of Tulare County to achieve self-reliance through economic opportunities and community building. These goals have been met through the strength of our participants in taking charge of their lives and through our many partnerships and coalitions, braiding resources and knowledge for the benefit of those we serve. CSET prioritizes collaboration to address gaps and avoid duplicative services. The evidence of our success in collaboration is our effective partnerships with many other service organizations, local government agencies, the business community, local schools and post-secondary institutions, healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, vocational training centers, community action agencies, community boards, food banks, roundtables and coalitions, and dedicated volunteers throughout Tulare County. CSET's "no wrong door" approach ensures when a customer comes to our organization for any reason, they receive information and a "warm referral" to any and all appropriate resources they may be eligible to receive.

To best understand the changing needs of the community and advocate for low-income communities, CSET leadership participates in a number of community boards and committees dedicated to addressing the issues of juvenile justice, youth development, homelessness, emergency response, hunger, housing, workforce development, economic development,

community preservation, and many other key issues that affect daily life in Tulare County. In 2022, CSET's Executive Director, Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner served as the Community Action Partnership Annual Conference Chair, assisting in the convening of the annual conference which brought together hundreds of community development professionals for an intensive series of workshops and updates on the best practices of building lasting change in communities of need. CSET continually seeks to expand our network of partners in this important work and currently participates in a number of local, statewide, and national coalitions to advocate on behalf of the people of Tulare County. Examples of our local coalitions include the Tulare County Family Resource Center Network, Tulare County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission, Tulare County Health and Human Services agency emergency task forces, Child Protection Planning Committee, Community Corrections Partnership, Tulare County Homeless Task Force, TC Hope for the Homeless, and the Tulare County Public Health Committee.

2. Provide information on any memorandums of understanding and/or service agreements your agency has with other entities regarding coordination of services/funding. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(9), Organizational Standard 2.1; State Plan 14.1c, 9.6, 9.7)

CSET currently maintains 106 unique service agreements with 37 separate funders. These service agreements allow CSET to provide crucial social services for low-income Tulare County residents in need. These funders include other nonprofit community-based organizations, local government agencies, the Internal Revenue Service, school districts, corporate partners, and private foundations. Additional partners in this work include the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, which funds the operations of our local America's Job Centers of California, and the Sequoias Adult Education Consortium.

3. Describe how your agency ensures delivery of services to low-income individuals while avoiding duplication of services in the service area(s). (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(5), State Plan 9.3a, California Government Code 12760)

CSET ensures services are delivered to low-income individuals by utilizing internal tracking and referral systems, which identify which services different customers have received in an effort to reduce the likelihood of duplicated services. When facilitating linkages to care, CSET shares relevant customer data with partner organizations when making referrals to ensure customers only receive access to benefits for which they are eligible. By utilizing systems such as HMIS, our housing department has the ability to screen for any duplicated services across agencies and can adjust accordingly. By continually auditing our internal records for mistakes and having clear communications with other service providers, CSET acts as a responsible steward of the resources made available to our community through entities such as CSBG and other funders.

4. Describe how your agency will leverage other funding sources and increase programmatic and/or organizational capacity. (California Government Code Section 12747)

In a community where the needs of our customers continually outpace resources, CSET has cultivated a portfolio of funding sources intended to meet any gaps in funding that may arise. By working closely with our partners in the community, CSET has developed a series of funding sources such as grants from federal, state, and local entities, private gifts, partnerships, fee-for-service projects, fundraising campaigns, and corporate partnerships. To continually build the strongest team possible, CSET allocates funding from appropriate budgets to invest in the ongoing education of staff by providing access and opportunities to attend workshops and conferences, building their skills and increasing our organizational capacity. All conference attendees are expected to pay it forward and share materials with their colleagues and presenting what they have learned during department meetings. As a best practice, CSET's Resource Development

team curates periodic reports for funders, showcasing the impact their investments are making in the community along with photos and success stories of those who have benefited from the program. The Resource Development team continually seeks new partnerships and opportunities to secure funds that will allow the organization to deliver the highest value of services to Tulare County residents in need. Along with the CSET Marketing Department, the Resource Development team shares these impact statements with the community at large, making a strong case for support throughout Tulare County and beyond via tried-and-true techniques such as social media messaging, local media coverage, presence at local community events such as the Annual Tulare County Job Fair, Chamber of Commerce events, public health fairs, and community events such as Senior Day in the Park and Make a Difference Day.

5. Describe your agency's contingency plan for potential funding reductions. (California Government Code Section 12747)

Since 1976, CSET has continually provided crucial programs and services for our community in need, despite ever changing budgets and funding sources. As the Community Action Agency for Tulare County, we understand the harm that could come to our most vulnerable residents should services become interrupted due to funding changes. To prepare for these possibilities, CSET continually develops a diverse stream of funding sources, while practicing judicious management and independent auditing of our resources such as capital reserves, physical property, offices, vehicles, technology items, and institutional knowledge. In event of a reduction in funding, CSET has a comprehensive contingency plan. This plan includes a Reduction in Force policy as part of a responsible budget adjustment. Planned equipment purchases will be reduced or eliminated. In addition, fee for service projects contribute to CSET's corporate account, which can assist in dealing with funding reductions. CSET also strives to structure lease agreements to include clauses that allow for ending the lease without penalty if funding is decreased.

6. Describe how your agency documents the number of volunteers and hours mobilized to support your activities. (Organizational Standard 2.4)

CSET publishes an annual report to communicate the activities and performance of the prior fiscal year. This report is sent to community partners and funders and is also made available on CSET's website. Within the report is the Board of Director's roster organized by tripartite sectors, a summary of the agency's financial activities, performance organized by each of CSET's program departments, and volunteer recognition. Due to specific contract requirements with program funders, CSET's volunteer procedures may vary to meet requirements. For example, CSET's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) provides thorough volunteer tracking by entering each individual volunteer's weekly hours organized by site. CSET also maintains documentation of the total number of volunteers, which is reviewed each month by the Board of Directors. In addition, volunteer hours are totaled and reported in CSET's Annual CSBG Report. In 2022, CSET engaged 8,510 volunteer hours in support of our many programs.

7. Describe how your agency will address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(1)(B), State Plan 14.1b)

The generational cycles of poverty have a lasting negative effect on the future of our community. To break these cycles and create economic stability for the next generation, CSET facilitates a robust suite of youth programs, designed to help provide engaging opportunities for youth to learn and grow into tomorrow's leaders. Every year, approximately 500 Tulare County youth overcome barriers to success through education, mentorship, life skills, and work experience via CSET's six youth programs. The youth CSET serves through these programs face unique challenges in life caused by the high poverty rates such as justice involvement, parenting at a young age, homelessness, at risk for gang involvement, lack of healthcare or access to food, English language learners, or are current

or former foster youth. CSET's programs also serve young people with disabilities and youth who identify as LGBTQ+.

One program which is of particular benefit to Tulare County youth is the Sequoia Community Corps (SCC). The mission of the SCC is to provide young men and women with job training and education while developing their leadership skills and environmental awareness. A certified local conservation corps, the SCC provides a pathway to successful futures for disadvantaged youth and young adults in our region. The SCC offers vocational hands-on training in the trades of weatherization, urban forestry, conservation education, and recycling, including the recycling of CRV beverage containers, e-waste, used oil, and waste tires. SCC has successfully operated in Tulare and Kings Counties for over 30 years, providing more than 4,000 young adults with valuable job training and educational opportunities. In addition to the services offered to young adults, the SCC also assists local governments, agencies and businesses meet critical community needs such as park development, recycling services, and natural resource conservation in local recreation areas.

A second program of benefit to the low-income youth of Tulare County is Youth@Work. This WIOA program is funded by the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, of which CSET is a selected provider. This program provides paid work experience opportunities for youth and young adults, ages 16-24. Our dedicated workforce professionals empower youth with the tools, resources, motivation, and support needed to navigate successfully into the world of work. We help thousands of youth each year find jobs and learn new skills. With Youth@Work sites throughout the county, young people who are seeking assistance in finding employment have the ability to do so in the communities in which they live. In addition to job training and placement services, youth who participate in this program also receive leadership and mentoring opportunities, career counseling, and college and higher education exploration.

In 2023, CSET was proud to launch a pilot program, #GROW. This program is modeled after the highly successful #LEAD program, which provides career exploration and leadership development activities for youth who are juniors and seniors in high school. The #GROW program has been developed for youth who are freshmen and sophomores in high school and provides an opportunity for young people to gain a better understanding of how our community works and their place in it. #GROW participants receive hands on learning opportunities through a series of life skills workshops covering topics such as financial literacy, career and college exploration, mental health and self-care, practicing good study habits, time management, healthy relationships, and more. #GROW participants also engage in youth-led community service projects and field trips to local government offices which build understanding of how they can make a direct impact in their communities. Programs such as the SCC, Youth@Work, and #LEAD/#GROW provide Tulare County's youth rich opportunities to envision brighter futures and plan for successful lives ahead.

8. Describe how your agency will promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth, and support development and expansion of innovative community-based youth development programs such as the establishment of violence-free zones, youth mediation, youth mentoring, life skills training, job creation, entrepreneurship programs, after after-school childcare. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(1)(B), State Plan 14.1b)

CSET builds strong networks of supportive services for youth and young adults in Tulare County through our continued collaboration with local school districts, law enforcement agencies, local government offices, social service agencies, community service groups, the Tulare County Parks and Recreation department, community boards, taskforces, and roundtables and other civic organizations. Through collaboration, CSET is able to offer the most complete suite of youth services possible to meet the needs of our future leaders. CSET works with our partners to provide innovative opportunities for youth to engage in the community through our signature annual events such as Make a Difference Day and the Student S.T.E.A.M. Summit, a regional conference now in

its 8th year. Our many work experience programs provide paid internships for youth to engage in career exploration.

Youth development programs such as #LEAD, #GROW, and the Youth Action Board for current or formerly homeless youth provide platforms for young people to make meaningful connections with their peers while gaining important life skills that help to prepare them for successful adulthoods later on in life. CSET will continue to build upon these established programs in the future so that we may deliver more effective services and learning opportunities for the young people of Tulare County. One example of these leadership development opportunities we are especially proud of is the Sequoia Community Corps House of Influence. The House of Influence is a Corpsmember leadership council that works on behalf of their fellow SCC Corpsmembers to assist in the development of the program and to give a voice to participants on the decisions that will directly affect them. The House of Influence was started on August 25, 2022 and is established on the three pillars of empowerment, honor, and respect. House of Influence participants learn how to represent and advocate for their peers, while providing valuable feedback to CSET and SCC department directors on the needs and goals of the Corps. Most recently, the House of Influence collaborated with the CSET Resource Development team, providing feedback on a grant being submitted to the United States Department of Forestry, informing the team on what projects would be most appealing to the Corpsmembers to work on. House of Influence leaders also coordinate the annual SCC holiday events and other activities for the children and families of Corpsmembers as they give back to the community.

9. Describe the coordination of employment and training activities as defined in Section 3 of the Workforce and Innovation and Opportunity Act [29 U.S.C. 3102]. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(5); State Plan 9.4b)

CSET provides a wide range of employment and training services to benefit the low-income people

of Tulare County through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. CSET operates the two comprehensive AJCC sites and one affiliate site in Tulare County with WIOA funding, drawing on our long history in WIOA and its predecessors since our incorporation. In addition, CSET participates in the local Workforce Investment Board's proposals to access U.S. Department of Labor and California Employment Development Department's special grants to serve specific populations, including English Language Learners, justice impacted individuals, students with disabilities, dislocated workers affected by natural disasters, and more. Other employment training programs are funded by corporate partners like Bank of America and Union Bank, private foundations, Tulare County Department of Health and Human Services, Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging, and the Tulare County Mental Health Department. To continually provide these valuable services for our community, CSET continually seeks new partnerships to grow and expand these workforce development programs.

10. Describe how your agency will provide emergency supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary, to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among low-income individuals. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(4), State Plan 14.4)

Tulare County has been beset by multiple natural disasters in recent years, such as drought, wildfire, and most recently, major flooding throughout the county. In response, CSET works quickly to respond to the urgent needs of our community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CSET quickly adjusted our senior meals program from congregate offerings to an expanded Meals on Wheels delivery service, which normally is reserved only for homebound seniors. By adjusting these offerings, CSET was able to continue providing nutritious meals for senior citizens in need without a disruption in service delivery. Now that COVID-19 restrictions have lifted, CSET has carefully reopened 75% of our senior centers, resuming regular operations. With the recent severe flooding affecting our community, CSET has started providing emergency assistance to low-income people

in Tulare County who have been displaced and affected by the dangerous rising waters. With the local State of Emergency declaration, CSET had the ability to provide federally funded assistance through the Severe Weather Assistance and Transportation Services (SWEATS) program.

General services through SWEATS include assistance to temporary shelter for up to 5 days per eligible households who have been displaced or experienced severe damage to their homes.

CSET has received support from corporate partners such as Walmart to provide supplies such as bottled water, blankets, and sleeping bags to individuals and families in need. Our local offices have provided accurate and up-to-date information and linkages to care for local residents in need of access to additional supportive services during this time. In addition, CSET leaders participate in countywide coalitions convened to provide a coordinated response across agencies.

11. Describe how your agency coordinates with other antipoverty programs in your area, including the emergency energy crisis intervention programs under Title XXVI, relating to low-income home energy assistance (LIHEAP) that are conducted in the community. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(6))

Every month, CSET assists low-income families in need through several energy crisis intervention programs such as utility assistance and home weatherization services. These programs ensure that vulnerable populations of Tulare County such as senior citizens and young children are protected from the elements during periods of extreme heat during the summers and freezing temperatures during the winter. One CSET program that is of tremendous benefit to the community is the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The LIHEAP program assists families who have utility bills in arrears to catch up on back payments owed to prevent the interruption of electricity services, which power many families' sources of heat, cooling, and safe food storage and preparation appliances.

In addition to LIHEAP, CSET is also the provider of the Low-Income Water Household Assistance program (LIHWAP). Funded through the State of California Community Services and Development

Department, LIHWAP ensures that families in need have access to clean and safe water for drinking, bathing, food preparation, laundry, sewer services, and other household needs. In addition to providing LIHEAP and LIWAP services, CSET provides home weatherization services to help improve energy efficiency in our customers' homes and help protect against the elements. CSET has been an energy assistance provider for over 20 years, helping hundreds of children, families, and senior citizens to stay safe and healthy at home.

12. Describe how your agency coordinates services with your local LIHEAP service provider?

As a LIHEAP provider for Tulare County, CSET works with qualified individuals and families who are in arrears with their utilities to get caught up on bills and prevent disconnection or service termination from utility companies. CSET has the ability to help customers who are behind in their utility payments with Southern California Edison, The Gas Company, Pacific Gas & Electric, propane providers, and city water districts in the area by providing financial assistance once per year (dependent upon funding availability) directly to the utility companies. For customers who have bills in arrears greater than what LIHEAP funds are available, CSET has access to Electricity Assistance Funds (EAF) and Gas Assistance Funds (GAF). These funds are held by the utility companies directly and are allocated to qualified customers' accounts upon coordination with CSET program staff to help close funding gaps and prevent service interruptions with these crucial utilities.

13. Describe how your agency will use funds to support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives, which may include fatherhood and other initiatives, with the goal of strengthening families and encouraging effective parenting. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(D), State Plan 14.3d)

CSET provides an array of supportive services for low-income families across Tulare County including the operation of two Family Resource Centers in the communities of Earlimart and Tulare, which are funded in part through CSBG support. At the Family Resource Centers, customers

develop parenting resources and participate in a activities that cultivate family safety and stability. At the Family Resource Centers, CSET provides an innovative community initiative, named Family Strengthening. Under the Family Strengthening umbrella, families receive access to tools and resources to build stronger families, including the curricula of Differential Response, Parenting Wisely, Safecare, and Substance Use Prevention. Participants can also receive substance abuse prevention education, nutrition classes, employment training, recycling services, community service opportunities, and referrals to other community resources for housing, utility assistance, and more.

In addition, CSET supports local community development by providing technical assistance to a network of town councils in rural areas such as Allensworth, Alpaugh, Earlimart, and Pixley. CSET also takes the initiative in building strong communities by participating in various boards, taskforces, and roundtables. By having an active presence in these key leadership roles, CSET raises the visibility of the organization and the many services we provide, while also accessing up-to-date information on the issues affecting our most vulnerable residents.

14. Describe how your agency will develop linkages to fill identified gaps in the services, through the provision of information, referrals, case management, and follow-up consultations. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(B), State Plan 9.3b)

Low-income residents of Tulare County face a range of difficulties when it comes to accessing services and resources. CSET continually seeks to identify and fill these gaps by providing comprehensive information to all of our customers. When a person come to CSET for any reason, our “no wrong door” approach, connects customers to any and all resources they may be eligible to receive. This is achieved through several tactics. First, all CSET staff are cross-trained to direct customers to the right departments when contacted for services. Upon arrival, all customers are interviewed by CSET intake staff to identify their most pressing needs and are directed to the appropriate service departments. In the event a customer has a need that CSET can’t currently

meet, they are given a “warm handoff” to the agency that can assist. CSET maintains good working relationships with our partners in the community such as the Tulare County Department of Health and Human Services, Tulare County Probation Department, healthcare providers, food banks, domestic violence shelters, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, legal services, Tulare County Mental Health, school districts, and other service providers.

Internally, CSET utilizes a comprehensive data management system, which tracks customers as they are entered into our system, where detailed communication notes and case files are stored, ensuring that our program staff have easy access to their records to track the receipt of services and any follow up tasks to be accomplished. Additionally, CSET staff receive newsletter updates across the organization on program updates and developments, ensuring that all staff have a good working knowledge of what is available to our community.

Monitoring

CSBG Act Section 678D(a)(1)(A) and (B)

1. Describe how your agency's monitoring activities are related to establishing and maintaining the integrity of the CSBG program. Include your process for maintaining high standards of program and fiscal performance.

As the Community Action Agency for Tulare County and the steward of CSBG funds, CSET holds our organization to the highest standards of monitoring program and fiscal performance to ensure funds are put to the highest and best use, while delivering consistently excellent services to our customers. Since 1976, CSET has earned the trust and support of the community by operating transparently and ethically.

With independent fiscal auditing every year, CSET is proud of our sterling reputation in the community and the nonprofit world at large for our consistently effective and responsible execution of CSBG activities. To ensure CSET continues in this good work, our organization has implemented several monitoring processes, which give a clear picture of program and fiscal performance. These processes allow for real-time evaluation and adjustments to services as needed so that the programs we offer stay consistent with the nuanced needs of Tulare County.

CSBG Program Monitoring Activities:

Program-Specific Customer Data Monitoring: CSBG program monitoring is conducted through a multi-step review and reporting process by CSET's Communication and Information Systems Department. Quarterly data is reviewed and uploaded by CIS staff. In the 3rd Quarter, Year to Date (YTD) data is reviewed in preparation for the CSBG Annual Report reporting period. Data review

may include data cleansing (such as removing any duplicates), working with program staff to complete data entry, and discussing any irregularities in collected data.

To ensure data accuracy, an Annual Report Review Tracker is maintained with 4-6 points of review, which allows for a checks and balances on reported results. These steps are taken to validate data and ensure accuracy as well as the integrity of the CSBG program.

Program and Fiscal Performance: Each of CSET's unique funding sources, including state and federal contracts, have specific requirements for reporting, invoicing, and tracking of expenditures and revenues. Accuracy is achieved in all categories by each contract being assigned to a dedicated accountant and adherence to strict internal controls. Abila MIP Fund Analysis and Accounting Software is used to track revenues and expenditures for all funding sources. Funder invoices are prepared during the first 2 weeks of each month. Received funds are deposited daily.

All bank accounts are reconciled monthly and approved by the Controller. Accounts payable are processed weekly and payroll processing occurs every 2 weeks. Program-specific reports are prepared monthly for CSET management and the Board of Directors, who review the reports at monthly board meetings. The dedicated accountant and program staff also thoroughly review the financial statements to monitor budget-to-actual financial performance.

2. If your agency utilizes subcontractors, please describe your process for monitoring the subcontractors. Include the frequency, type of monitoring, i.e., onsite, desk review, or both, follow-up on corrective action, and issuance of formal monitoring reports.

CSET's has an established **Subcontractor Monitoring Procedure** which provides the guidelines to ensure that subcontractors are in compliance with contract/grant requirements determined by Federal, State and other funding sources. Respective CSET program directors provide oversight to any program subcontractors and review documents to ensure contract compliance. CSET's

Finance Director and Compliance Director also provide subcontractor budget and expenditure control as well as random sampling for monitoring reviews. Monitoring processes include onsite or desk reviews, an entrance and exit conference, and a final monitoring report. All subcontractors that provide direct services to clients receive an onsite monitoring. Any issues or observations made in the final monitoring report must be resolved by the subcontractor within 30 days. The program subcontractor monitoring procedure is reviewed and approved every two years; ensuring monitoring processes continue to be effective. The most recent subcontractor monitoring procedure was updated and approved by the CSET Board of Directors on February 16, 2022.

Data Analysis, Evaluation, and ROMA Application

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(12)
Organizational Standards 4.2, 4.3

1. Describe your agency's method for evaluating the effectiveness of programs and services. Include information about the types of measurement tools, the data sources and collection procedures, and the frequency of data collection and reporting. (Organizational Standard 4.3)

CSET employs a number of methods to evaluate programs and services. Some of the methods are organization-wide, while others are specific to an individual program.

Evaluation methods include:

- Monthly performance planned-versus-actual report which measures program effectiveness and determines if programs are on track to meet objectives. This report is reviewed by management staff of the program and the Board of Directors.
- Monthly fiscal report to compare actual versus planned expenditures and determine if program budgets as well as the overall agency budget are on track. This report is reviewed by program management and the Board of Directors.
- Interviews and surveys of customers and staff are solicited to determine satisfaction with programs and services. Results, which are reviewed by program staff and the leadership team, are used to identify gaps in services, quality of customer service, and staff training needs.
- Performance under CSET's Strategic Plan and CAP are reviewed at least annually by board members and the leadership team to determine effectiveness in achieving goals.
- Participation in external evaluations, such as the California Conservation Corps' annual certification process and the WIOA Hallmarks of Excellence Certification of AJCCs.

2. Applying the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation, describe one change your agency made to improve low-income individuals' and families' capacity for self-sufficiency. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(12), Organizational Standard 4.2)

The following improvements resulted from CSET's application of the ROMA cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, results, and evaluation:

E-Waste Recycling

With the statewide ending of COVID-19 restrictions, CSET has expanded our offerings in Tulare County. One such expansion was implemented through the E-Waste program. This program is operated by CSET and its Sequoia Community Corps (SCC). To best serve local residents in need of electronic recycling services, CSET has worked to increase community awareness of this resource while making it easier to access. To accomplish this, CSET has created an online Google Form residents can complete, indicating whether their needs are for residential or business services.

Currently, e-waste recycling services are only available at the Visalia Main Office; however, through this form, participants can request E-waste pickup services, making this important service accessible for the elderly, people living with disabilities, people who live in rural communities, and those who do not have transportation to the Visalia office. Since the rollout of this new service, CSET has assisted 24 businesses and 30 residents to recycle their e-waste. Items collected have included computer towers, computers, monitors, TVs, and laptops, keeping nearly 3,000 harmful items out of our local landfills.

Expanding SCC and John Muir Charter School Enrollment

Vulnerable young people in Tulare County need access to career paths, academic achievement, and vocational training. The Sequoia Community Corps (SCC) program provides the opportunity for young adults to challenge themselves to learn new skills while making a difference in the community.

The John Muir Charter School (JMCS) provides an alternative education pathway for nontraditional students who may have left high school due to becoming a parent, justice involvement, drug or alcohol abuse, or to go to work. In the past, CSET has hosted enrollment orientations one to two times a month, depending on enrollment openings. Recently, there has been a steady increase of interest in both of these programs from the next generation of Tulare County leaders. On average, CSET is seeing an increase of 8 – 10 new applicants every week for these programs, half of which state they need help in obtaining their high school diploma. To meet these increased needs, CSET now hosts new student orientations for SCC and JMCS every Tuesday, with enrollment in both programs growing rapidly. Closer assessment of community needs and interest, combined with strategic planning, has facilitated a consistent approach to conducting orientations, ensuring prospective participants receive all the information they need to successfully enroll in either one or both of these empowering programs.

Marketing Department Advancements

To make accessing information on the SCC, JMCS, e-waste recycling program, and many of CSET's additional services, our internal marketing department has engaged a new tool for delivering program information to our community quickly. Now, for nearly every program and service CSET offers, our marketing department has created Quick Response (QR) codes, which provide immediate links to information for anyone with a smart phone. These QR codes are created for each individual marketing message, facilitating easy access to detailed program information in real time.

3. Applying the full ROMA cycle, describe one change your agency facilitated to help revitalize the low-income communities in your agency's service area(s). (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(12), Organizational Standard 4.2)

The following revitalization effort resulted from CSET's application of the ROMA cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, results, and evaluation:

Revitalizing Low-Income Communities

To help improve the health, safety, and beauty of Tulare County, CSET implemented several litter abatement programs that provide employment opportunities for low-income participants in need of work experience. In November 2021, CSET and the City of Visalia embarked on a litter abatement project together (Clean CA), which is still going strong today. This project provides local jobseekers who have experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness with real-world experience and the opportunity to earn wages, while providing the City with low-cost assistance in completing important projects for the health of our community. This partnership has proven successful leading to its expansion into the City of Porterville.

On February 6, 2023, the City of Porterville began its Litter Abatement Pilot Project, in collaboration and partnership with the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG), California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), and CSET. The project employs individuals experiencing homelessness to conduct beautification activities along State Route 65 and State Route 190 within the city limits, including off ramps and other transportation public right of ways near the State Routes where litter accumulates. The increased litter abatement will accompany planned landscaping projects along the State Routes. This project has been approved for three years to increase cleanup efforts and improve the scenic and unique ecological characteristics of the city. This project includes one CSET crew (through the Sequoia Community Corps) completing two cleaning cycles per month along the designated State Routes. Employment referrals for this Project

are received from agencies such as Turning Point of Central California and Central California Family Crisis Center, who provide individuals experiencing homelessness with case management support and assistance with finding permanent housing. This income earning opportunity builds their work experience and increases the ability to obtain and retain permanent housing. The beautification project also provides participants an opportunity to learn new life skills while giving back to and improving the community.

Response and Community Awareness

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. Does your agency have Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs in place that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, cultures, and sexual orientations?

Yes

No

2. If yes, please describe.

CSET provides programs and services to the historically marginalized people of Tulare County, including youth, senior citizens, immigrants, people with disabilities, people with mental health service needs, English Language Learners, women, people of color, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness. We are proud to be an organization with a diverse staff representative of the people we serve. CSET is committed to providing equal opportunities to all individuals and embraces the experience staff bring with them to cultivate a culture where all employees can bring their best selves to work.

Programs that we have in place that encourage diverse participation include our #LEAD and #GROW youth programs, daily activities at our eight senior centers, resources for young parents, mortgage and rental payment assistance to help keep families housed, community service projects such as Make a Difference Day, financial education and first-time homebuyer programs, programs such as Back2Work and ECO which provide job opportunities for people with little to no work experience, the Sequoia Community Corps and John Muir Charter School for out-of-school youth and young adults, NextStep (formerly “welfare to work”), emergency food and shelter services for the unhoused, and justice system navigation for those who are exiting incarceration. CSET

supports the women of Tulare County by providing access to healthcare, housing, family strengthening and parenting resources, healthy food, scholarships and educational pathways, mental health services, financial literacy workshops and first-time homebuyer programs. We are proud to work with educational institutions and social services agencies throughout the county to provide cross-referrals for individuals in need such as The Dream Center, which provides services for current and former foster youth; The Source, which serves the LGBTQ+ people and those who are living with HIV/AIDS in the Central Valley; and the Access and Ability Center for students with disabilities at the College of the Sequoias. CSET is honored to partner with these organizations to provide a wide range of services for those in need, and we continually seek new partnerships to meet the many needs of Tulare County's residents.

3. Does your agency have Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies in place that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, cultures and sexual orientations?

Yes

No

4. If yes, please describe.

See question 2 response.

Disaster Preparedness

1. Does your agency have a disaster plan in place that includes strategies on how to remain operational and continue providing services to low-income individuals and families during and following a disaster? The term disaster is used in broad terms including, but not limited to, a natural disaster, pandemic, etc.

Yes

No

2. If yes, when was the disaster plan last updated?

In light of recent natural disaster incidents such as wildfires, flooding, and the COVID-19 pandemic, CSET is in the process of completing a comprehensive disaster plan which will guide the organization in the event of future incidents. Currently, CSET works closely with the Tulare County Office of Emergency Services to coordinate disaster relief services to help our community during a severe time of need. Currently, CSET utilizes a Business Continuity Plan (last updated in December 15, 2016) to ensure minimally interrupted services for the community of Tulare County. This plan was put to the test during COVID-19, as we were able to keep our doors open while continuing to provide services safely and quickly.

3. Briefly describe your agency's main strategies to remain operational during and after a disaster.

In the event of a disaster, CSET will work to ensure all sites stay fully operational as possible, while providing clear and consistent information to our community regarding our service operations and relevant emergency information as provided by the county Office of Emergency Services. CSET leadership and the Board of Directors will take all necessary steps to stay in communication with one another, with department leadership responsible for disseminating pertinent information to their teams. Offices will open and provide services in accordance with the most recently available public health guidance, as issued by city, county, and state agencies.

Federal CSBG Programmatic Assurances and Certification

CSBG Act 676(b)

Use of CSBG Funds Supporting Local Activities

676(b)(1)(A): The state will assure “that funds made available through grant or allotment will be used – (A) to support activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals, including families and individuals receiving assistance under title IV of the Social Security Act, homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farmworkers, and elderly low-income individuals and families, and a description of how such activities will enable the families and individuals--

- i. to remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency (particularly for families and individuals who are attempting to transition off a State program carried out underpart A of title IV of the Social Security Act);
 - ii. to secure and retain meaningful employment;
 - iii. to attain an adequate education with particular attention toward improving literacy skills of the low-income families in the community, which may include family literacy initiatives;
 - iv. to make better use of available income;
 - v. to obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment;
 - vi. to obtain emergency assistance through loans, grants, or other means to meet immediate and urgent individual and family needs;
 - vii. to achieve greater participation in the affairs of the communities involved, including the development of public and private grassroots
 - viii. partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, local housing authorities, private foundations, and other public and private partners to
-
- I. document best practices based on successful grassroots intervention in urban areas, to develop methodologies for wide-spread replication; and
 - II. strengthen and improve relationships with local law enforcement agencies, which may include participation in activities such as neighborhood or community policing efforts;

Needs of Youth

676(b)(1)(B) The state will assure “that funds made available through grant or allotment will be used – (B) to address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs that support the primary role of the family, give priority to the prevention of youth problems and crime, and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth, and support development and expansion of innovative community-based youth development programs that have demonstrated success in preventing or reducing youth crime, such as--

- I. programs for the establishment of violence-free zones that would involve youth development and intervention models (such as models involving youth mediation, youth mentoring, life skills training, job creation, and entrepreneurship programs); and
- II. after-school childcare programs.

Coordination of Other Programs

676(b)(1)(C) The state will assure “that funds made available through grant or allotment will be used – (C) to make more effective use of, and to coordinate with, other programs related to the purposes of this subtitle (including state welfare reform efforts)

Eligible Entity Service Delivery System

676(b)(3)(A) Eligible entities will describe “the service delivery system, for services provided or coordinated with funds made available through grants made under 675C(a), targeted to low-income individuals and families in communities within the state;

Eligible Entity Linkages – Approach to Filling Service Gaps

676(b)(3)(B) Eligible entities will describe “how linkages will be developed to fill identified gaps in the services, through the provision of information, referrals, case management, and follow-up consultations.”

Coordination of Eligible Entity Allocation 90 Percent Funds with Public/Private Resources

676(b)(3)(C) Eligible entities will describe how funds made available through grants made under 675C(a) will be coordinated with other public and private resources.”

Eligible Entity Innovative Community and Neighborhood Initiatives, Including Fatherhood/Parental Responsibility

676(b)(3)(D) Eligible entities will describe “how the local entity will use the funds [made available under 675C(a)] to support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of this subtitle, which may include fatherhood initiatives and other initiatives with the goal of strengthening families and encouraging parenting.”

Eligible Entity Emergency Food and Nutrition Services

676(b)(4) An assurance “that eligible entities in the state will provide, on an emergency basis, for the provision of such supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among low-income individuals.”

State and Eligible Entity Coordination/linkages and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Employment and Training Activities

676(b)(5) An assurance “that the State and eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services, and [describe] how the State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities, as defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, in the State and in communities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce development systems under such Act.”

State Coordination/Linkages and Low-income Home Energy Assistance

676(b)(6) “[A]n assurance that the State will ensure coordination between antipoverty programs in each community in the State, and ensure, where appropriate, that emergency energy crisis intervention programs under title XXVI (relating to low-income home energy assistance) are conducted in such community.”

Community Organizations

676(b)(9) An assurance “that the State and eligible entities in the state will, to the maximum extent possible, coordinate programs with and form partnerships with other organizations serving low-income residents of the communities and members of the groups served by the State, including religious organizations, charitable groups, and community organizations.”

Eligible Entity Tripartite Board Representation

676(b)(10) “[T]he State will require each eligible entity in the State to establish procedures under which a low-income individual, community organization, or religious organization, or representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization, or low-income individuals, to be inadequately represented on the board (or other mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation.”

Eligible Entity Community Action Plans and Community Needs Assessments

676(b)(11) “[A]n assurance that the State will secure from each eligible entity in the State, as a condition to receipt of funding by the entity through a community service block grant made under this subtitle for a program, a community action plan (which shall be submitted to the Secretary, at the request of the Secretary, with the State Plan) that includes a community needs assessment for the community serviced, which may be coordinated with the community needs assessment conducted for other programs.”

State and Eligible Entity Performance Measurement: ROMA or Alternate System

676(b)(12) “[A]n assurance that the State and all eligible entities in the State will, not later than fiscal year 2001, participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability System, another performance measure system for which the Secretary facilitated development pursuant to section 678E(b), or an alternative system for measuring performance and results that meets the requirements of that section, and [describe] outcome measures to be used to measure eligible entity performance in promoting self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization.”

Fiscal Controls, Audits, and Withholding

678D(a)(1)(B) An assurance that cost and accounting standards of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are maintained.

- By checking this box and signing the Cover Page and Certification, the agency’s Executive Director and Board Chair are certifying that the agency meets the assurances set out above.**

State Assurances and Certification

California Government Code Sections 12747(a), 12760, 12768

For CAA, MSFW, NAI, and LPA Agencies

[California Government Code § 12747\(a\)](#): Community action plans shall provide for the contingency of reduced federal funding.

[California Government Code § 12760](#): CSBG agencies funded under this article shall coordinate their plans and activities with other agencies funded under Articles 7 (commencing with Section 12765) and 8 (commencing with Section 12770) that serve any part of their communities, so that funds are not used to duplicate particular services to the same beneficiaries and plans and policies affecting all grantees under this chapter are shaped, to the extent possible, so as to be equitable and beneficial to all community agencies and the populations they serve.

- By checking this box and signing the Cover Page and Certification, the agency's Executive Director and Board Chair are certifying that the agency meets the assurances set out above.**

For MSFW Agencies Only

[California Government Code § 12768](#): Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) entities funded by the department shall coordinate their plans and activities with other agencies funded by the department to avoid duplication of services and to maximize services for all eligible beneficiaries.

- By checking this box and signing the Cover Page and Certification, the agency's Executive Director and Board Chair are certifying that the agency meets the assurances set out above.**

Organizational Standards

Category One: Consumer Input and Involvement

Standard 1.1 The organization/department demonstrates low-income individuals' participation in its activities.

Standard 1.2 The organization/department analyzes information collected directly from low-income individuals as part of the community assessment.

Standard 1.3 (Private) The organization has a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and reporting customer satisfaction data to the governing board.

Standard 1.3 (Public) The department has a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and reporting customer satisfaction data to the tripartite board/advisory body, which may be met through broader local government processes.

Category Two: Community Engagement

Standard 2.1 The organization/department has documented or demonstrated partnerships across the community, for specifically identified purposes; partnerships include other anti-poverty organizations in the area.

Standard 2.2 The organization/department utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources, during the community assessment process or other times. These sectors would include at minimum: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions.

Standard 2.4 The organization/department documents the number of volunteers and hours mobilized in support of its activities.

Category Three: Community Assessment

Standard 3.1 (Private) Organization conducted a community assessment and issued a report within the past 3 years.

Standard 3.1 (Public) The department conducted or was engaged in a community assessment and issued a report within the past 3-year period, if no other report exists.

Standard 3.2 As part of the community assessment, the organization/department collects and includes current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area(s).

Standard 3.3 The organization/department collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area(s) in the community assessment.

Standard 3.4 The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of

poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.

Standard 3.5 The governing board or tripartite board/advisory body formally accepts the completed community assessment.

Category Four: Organizational Leadership

Standard 4.1 (Private) The governing board has reviewed the organization's mission statement within the past 5 years and assured that:

1. The mission addresses poverty; and
2. The organization's programs and services are in alignment with the mission.

Standard 4.1 (Public) The tripartite board/advisory body has reviewed the department's mission statement within the past 5 years and assured that:

1. The mission addresses poverty; and
2. The CSBG programs and services are in alignment with the mission.

Standard 4.2 The organization's/department's Community Action Plan is outcome-based, anti-poverty focused, and ties directly to the community assessment.

Standard 4.3 The organization's/department's Community Action Plan and strategic plan document the continuous use of the full Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle or comparable system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation). In addition, the organization documents having used the services of a ROMA-certified trainer (or equivalent) to assist in implementation.

Appendices

Please complete the table below by entering the title of the document and its assigned appendix letter. Agencies must provide a copy of the Notice(s) of Public Hearing and the Low-Income Testimony and the Agency’s Response document as appendices A and B, respectively. Other appendices such as the community need assessment, surveys, maps, graphs, executive summaries, analytical summaries are encouraged. All appendices should be labeled as an appendix (e.g., Appendix A: Copy of the Notice of Public Hearing) and submitted with the CAP.

Document Title	Appendix Location
Copy of the Notice(s) of Public Hearing	A
Low-Income Testimony and Agency’s Response	B
2023 Community Action Survey	C
2023 Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment	D

Appendix A – Copy of Notices of Public Hearing

Notice of Public Hearing 2023



Community Services Employment Training, Inc.
312 Northwest Third Avenue Visalia, CA 93291

www.cset.org

CSET Public Hearing Notices 2023

Documentation of CSET Public Hearing Notices (see following pages):



Lily Rivera <lily.rivera@cset.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: CSET Conducting Community Needs Assessment of Tulare County

Micaela Lara-Lopez <micaela.lara-lopez@cset.org>
Bcc: everyone@cset.org

Mon, Mar 6, 2023 at 9:00 AM

MEDIA CONTACT

Micaela Lara-Lopez
Sr. Marketing & Communications Coordinator
micaela.lara-lopez@cset.org | (559) 741-4662



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 6, 2023

CSET Conducting Community Needs Assessment of Tulare County

Seeking feedback on the issues important to Tulare County residents.

[Tulare County, CA] - Over the next three weeks, residents of Tulare County will have the opportunity to help Community Services Employment Training (CSET) identify the most pressing needs of the community. Tulare County residents are invited to participate in a countywide survey to identify gaps in services and suggest strategies that combat poverty in Tulare County.

The survey is part of a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment CSET conducts every two years to identify and report key needs in the community. The survey results help CSET assess needs of the community and formulate the Community Action Plan; a detailed bi-annual plan to deliver the programs and services individuals and families need most in Tulare County.

During the survey process, CSET facilitates community forums and reviews surveys from Tulare County residents. This year, we strive to receive more than 1,000 surveys from members of the public. Survey results will be shared at an upcoming public hearing along with an analysis of resident needs and priorities. Residents are welcome to submit their feedback online until March 24, 2023 at www.cset.org/communitysurvey.

Thank you in advance for sharing your feedback and recommendations for strengthening services in Tulare County. For more information on the CSET Community Needs Assessment, please contact Lily Rivera-Graves at (559) 732-4194 or lily.rivera@cset.org.

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) inspires youth, families and communities to achieve self-reliance through innovative pathways and collaboration. Since 1976, CSET has been the Community Action Agency for Tulare County. To learn more about CSET's services and impact in Tulare County, please visit www.cset.org or call (559) 732-4194.



Micaela Lara-Lopez, MSW (she, her, ella)
Sr. Marketing & Communications Coordinator Communication & Information Systems
312 NW 3rd Avenue Visalia, CA 93291 Office: 559-732-4194 | Direct: 559-741-4662



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Lily Rivera <lily.rivera@cset.org>

Mission Monday - Community Action Survey

cset marketing <csetmarketing@cset.org>
To: everyone@cset.org

Mon, Mar 6, 2023 at 12:00 PM

This #MissionMonday we welcome the community to share their feedback on the most important services needed in Tulare County.



Over the next three weeks, residents of Tulare County will have the opportunity to help Community Services Employment Training (CSET) identify the most pressing needs of the community. Tulare County residents are invited to participate in a countywide survey to identify gaps in services and suggest strategies that combat poverty in Tulare County.

The survey is part of a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment that CSET conducts every two years to identify and report key needs in the community.

Residents are welcome to submit their feedback online until March 24, 2023 at www.cset.org/communitysurvey.

For more information on the CSET Community Needs Assessment, please contact Lily Rivera-Graves at (559) 732-4194 or lily.rivera@cset.org.



Communication & Information Systems
312 NW 3rd Avenue Visalia, CA 93291
Office: 559-732-4194 | Direct: 559-372-0376



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If you live or work in Tulare County, we want to hear from you!



If you have not completed the [Community Needs Assessment Survey](#) yet, please do before the end of the day!
Thank you!



Lily Rivera-Graves
Analyst/Senior Program Coordinator Contracts & Agreements,
Report Processing, Participant Data, Apricot Administrator & Special Projects
Communication and Information Systems
312 NW 3rd Avenue Visalia, CA 93291
Office: 559-732-4194 | Direct: 559-741-4615



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Lily Rivera <lily.rivera@cset.org>

Share Your Feedback on the CSET Community Needs Assessment

2 messages

cset marketing <csetmarketing@cset.org>
To: everyone@cset.org

Wed, Mar 15, 2023 at 8:28 AM

Good Morning CSET Team,

A friendly reminder that you may [share your feedback](#) on the most important services needed in Tulare County through the [CSET Community Action Survey](#). You are welcome to submit your feedback online by **March 24, 2023** at www.cset.org/communitysurvey.

With your feedback, you help pinpoint the most pressing needs of the community by identifying gaps in services and suggest strategies that combat poverty in Tulare County. The survey is part of a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment that CSET conducts every two years to report key needs in the community.

For more information on the CSET Community Needs Assessment, please contact Lily Rivera-Graves at (559) 732-4194 or lily.rivera@cset.org.

 **FINAL - English 2023.png**



CSET Marketing
Communication & Information Systems
312 NW 3rd Avenue Visalia, CA 93291
Office: 559-732-4194 | Direct: 559-372-0376

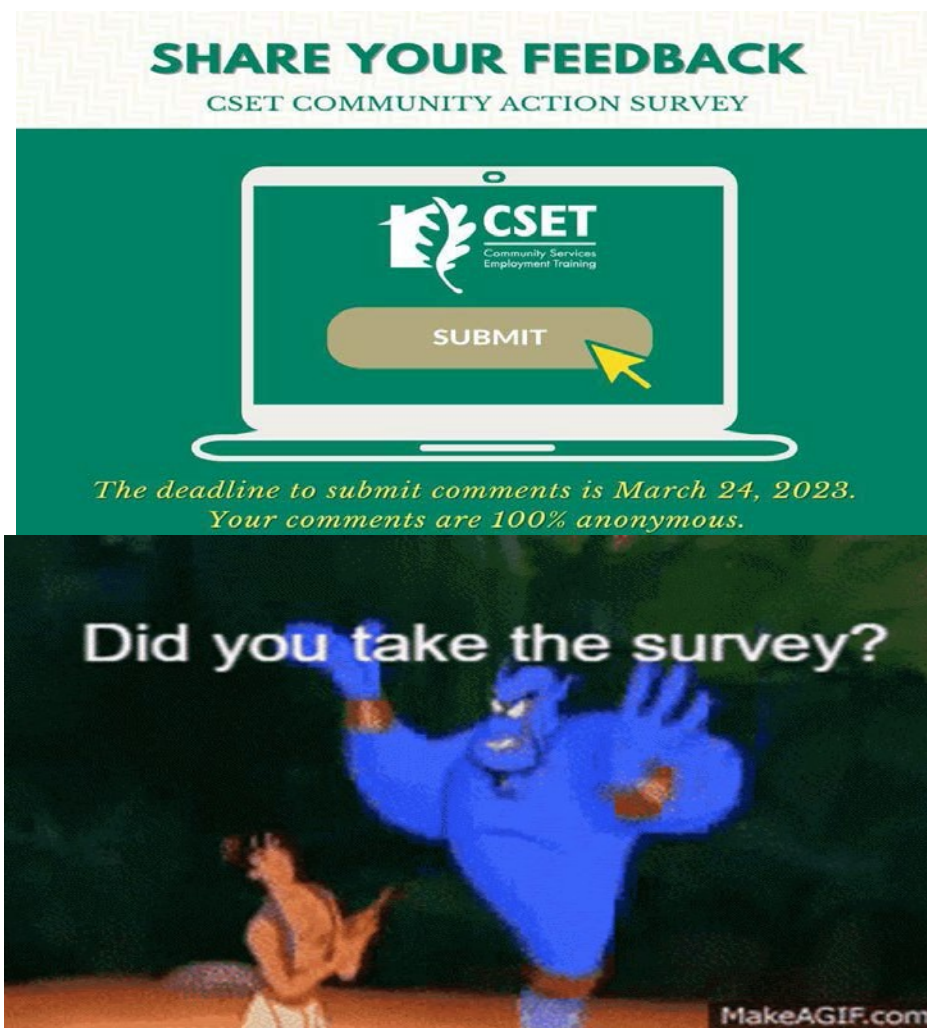


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Lily Rivera <lily.rivera@cset.org>
To: cset marketing <csetmarketing@cset.org>
Cc: everyone@cset.org

Thu, Mar 23, 2023 at 2:12 PM

ONLY 2 more days left!



THANK YOU!



Lily Rivera-Graves
Analyst/Senior Program Coordinator Contracts & Agreements,
Report Processing, Participant Data, Apricot Administrator & Special Projects

Communication and Information Systems
312 NW 3rd Avenue Visalia, CA 93291
Office: 559-732-4194 | Direct: 559-741-4615



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[Quoted text hidden]



Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan

Every other year, CSET develops a Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan. The Community Needs Assessment collects feedback and information from the community and helps us ensure we are providing services that meet the needs of the community. This year, nine community forums were held with more than 125 people, and CSET collected surveys from nearly 300 individuals.

The information collected through the Community Needs Assessment informs our Community Action Plan. Utilizing information and feedback from the Community Needs Assessment, the Community Action Plan guides CSET's programs and services for the next two years.

Below is the full draft of the Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan.

Public Hearing on Community Needs

CSET's Board of Directors invites Tulare County residents to attend a Public Hearing on the draft Community Action Plan to share their input on community needs and goals. The hearing will be held on Thursday, June 15 at 6:00 pm at CSET's main office in Visalia located at 312 NW 3rd Ave., Visalia.

Evaluación de las Necesidades de la Comunidad y Plan de Acción de la Comunidad

Cada dos años, CSET desarrolla una evaluación de las necesidades de la comunidad y un Plan de Acción Comunitario. La Evaluación de las necesidades de la comunidad recopila comentarios e información de la comunidad y nos ayuda a asegurarnos de que estamos brindando servicios que satisfagan las necesidades de la comunidad. Este año, se realizaron nueve foros comunitarios con más de 125 personas y CSET recopiló encuestas de casi 300 personas.

La información recopilada a través de la Evaluación de necesidades de la comunidad informa nuestro Plan de Acción Comunitario. Utilizando información y comentarios de la Evaluación de necesidades de la comunidad, el Plan de Acción Comunitario guía los programas y servicios de CSET para los próximos dos años.

A continuación se muestra el borrador completo de la Evaluación de las necesidades de la comunidad y el Plan de Acción Comunitario.

Audiencia Pública Sobre Las Necesidades De La Comunidad

La Junta Directiva de CSET invita a los residentes del Condado de Tulare a asistir a una Audiencia Pública sobre el borrador del Plan de Acción Comunitario para compartir su opinión sobre las necesidades y objetivos de la comunidad. La audiencia se llevará a cabo el jueves 15 de junio a las 6:00 p. m. en la oficina principal de CSET en Visalia ubicada en 312 NW 3rd Ave., Visalia.

[COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN](#)

[SUBMIT FEEDBACK](#)





Facebook: www.facebook.com/cset.info



Community Services Employment Training - CSET

Yesterday at 8:05 AM ·

We value your voice! CSET's annual Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan are available for your input. Help us understand the needs of the community and shape our services accordingly. Visit www.cset.org/CAP to review and share your feedback. #CommunityAction

#CommunityVoice



Like

Comment

Share



Instagram: @cset_tulareco


cset_tulareco • [Follow](#)



cset_tulareco Have a say in your community's future! CSET's Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan are now open for review. Share your thoughts and help us better serve the community. Visit www.cset.org/CAP to view and provide feedback. [#CommunityAction](#) [#CommunityEngagement](#)

6d

3 likes
6 DAYS AGO

 Add a comment...

[Post](#)



MEDIA CONTACT:
Micaela Lara-Lopez
Sr. Marketing & Communications Coordinator
micaela.lara-lopez@cset.org | (559) 741-4662

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 6, 2023

CSET Conducting Community Needs Assessment of Tulare County
Seeking feedback on the issues important to Tulare County residents.

[Tulare County, CA] - Over the next three weeks, residents of Tulare County will have the opportunity to help Community Services Employment Training (CSET) identify the most pressing needs of the community. Tulare County residents are invited to participate in a countywide survey to identify gaps in services and suggest strategies that combat poverty in Tulare County.

The survey is part of a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment CSET conducts every two years to identify and report key needs in the community. The survey results help CSET assess needs of the community and formulate the Community Action Plan; a detailed bi-annual plan to deliver the programs and services individuals and families need most in Tulare County.

During the survey process, CSET facilitates community forums and reviews surveys from Tulare County residents. This year, we strive to receive more than 1,000 surveys from members of the public. Survey results will be shared at an upcoming public hearing along with an analysis of resident needs and priorities. Residents are welcome to submit their feedback online until March 24, 2023 at www.cset.org/communitysurvey.

Thank you in advance for sharing your feedback and recommendations for strengthening services in Tulare County. For more information on the CSET Community Needs Assessment, please contact Lily Rivera-Graves at (559) 732-4194 or lily.rivera@cset.org.

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) inspires youth, families and communities to achieve self-reliance through innovative pathways and collaboration. Since 1976, CSET has been the Community Action Agency for Tulare County. To learn more about CSET's services and impact in Tulare County, please visit www.cset.org or call (559) 732-4194.

###

Notice of Public Hearing: June 9, 2023



MEDIA CONTACT:
Jeff Forbes, Director of Communication
(559) 741-4661; jeff.forbes@cset.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: June 9, 2023

CSET CONDUCTING PUBLIC HEARING ON COMMUNITY NEEDS AND COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

VISALIA, CA – The Community Services Employment Training (CSET) Board of Directors invites Tulare County residents to attend a Community Action Plan Public Hearing to share their input on important community needs, issues and goals. The hearing will be held on Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at CSET's main office in Visalia located at 312 NW 3rd Avenue.

CSET requests assistance from the public to identify gaps in services and seeks to implement strategies that support economic advancement and increase resources for local residents. CSET conducts a countywide survey, community forums and public hearing every two years to gather feedback on services in Tulare County. The results of the survey and comments gathered from the Public Hearing formulate CSET's Community Action Plan, a bi-annual detailed plan to deliver the programs and services communities are in need of most.

"The Community Action Plan Public Hearing is an important part of gathering input from the community," said Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner, CSET's Executive Director. "The hearing provides residents the opportunity to share their opinions and concerns about significant issues and services available in their communities."

During the survey process, CSET conducted nine community forums throughout Tulare County and reviewed nearly 350 surveys from Tulare County residents. Survey results will be shared at the Public Hearing along with an analysis of resident needs and priorities. The draft Community Action Plan is available to review and provide anonymous feedback at www.cset.org/cap. For more information, please contact Lily Rivera-Graves at (559) 741-4615 or lily.rivera@cset.org.

###

Twitter: @CSET

CSET CSET
@CSET · Follow

We value your voice! CSETs annual Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan are available for your input. Help us understand the needs of the community and shape our services accordingly. Visit cset.org/CAP to review and share your feedback #CommunityAction

The graphic features a dark green background with a pattern of stylized human silhouettes. At the top left is the CSET logo, which includes a stylized house and tree icon, the text 'CSET', and the tagline 'Community Services Employment Training Where community happens'. To the right is a pink icon of two hands holding a heart. The main text 'COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT' is centered in large, bold, white and light green letters. Below this, a white text block states: 'The Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan are available for review.' Underneath is a white icon of two speech bubbles with a thumbs-up gesture. A light green button with the text 'SUBMIT FEEDBACK' is positioned below the icon. At the bottom, the URL 'WWW.CSET.ORG/CAP' is displayed in white.

8:05 AM · Jun 5, 2023



Reply .!., Share

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Appendix B - Low-Income Testimony and Agency's Response

Public Hearing Low-Income Testimony and Agency Response 2023



Community Services Employment Training, Inc.
312 Northwest Third Avenue Visalia, CA 93291

www.cset.org

Public Hearing Low-Income Testimony and Agency Response 2023

On 6/15/2023, Community Services Employment Training (CSET) conducted a public hearing at the CSET Visalia Main Office (Located at 312 NW 3rd Ave, Visalia CA 93291) to further assess the needs of low-income individuals and families in Tulare County. At this hearing, a draft of the CSET proposed Community Action Plan (CAP) was presented to the public for the purpose of collecting important feedback from the community we serve on the challenges we are facing and our plans to address them going forward. During this hearing, CSET opened the floor for comments and feedback from community members to consider while finalizing the 2024 – 2025 CAP.

On 5/22/2023, CSET posted notice of this public hearing via our social media channels, website, email communications, and press releases in order to let the general public know when it would be held and how they can participate. This notice included information about the purpose of the CAP, how community members may review it and receive a copy, dates of the comment period and submission guidelines, and CSET’s contact information. Additional information on the CSET Notice of Public Hearing can be found in Appendix A.

Participant Testimony – N/A

Name:

Verbatim Testimony:

Needs Addressed:

Agency Response:

Appendix C – Community Action Survey

Community Action Survey - English Version 2023



Tulare County Community Survey 2023

Dear Tulare County Stakeholders,

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) has served as the Community Action Agency for Tulare County since 1984 with the mission to inspire youth, families, and communities to achieve self-reliance through innovative pathways and collaboration.

You are invited to share your ideas about the most important services needed in Tulare County. Your personal information will not be shared with any other party and will only be reported anonymously with other responses received. Thank you for completing this survey.

Sincerely,

Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner Executive Director

Saludos Residentes del Condado de Tulare,

Community Services Employment Training, Inc. (CSET) ha servido como la agencia de acción comunitaria para el Condado de Tulare desde 1984 con la misión de inspirar a la juventud, familias y comunidades y ayudar a reducir las causas de la pobreza y mantener la visión de comunidades saludables, prósperas y seguras.

Usted está invitado en compartir sus ideas sobre los más importantes servicios necesitados en el Condado de Tulare. Su información personal no será compartida con otros y solo se incluirá en conjunto con otras respuestas recibidas. ¡Gracias por compartir su opinión en esta encuesta!

Sinceramente,

Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner Directora Ejecutiva

ACTUAL SURVEY BEGINS ON PAGE 3

Thank you for completing this survey! We appreciate your feedback.

Tell Us About Yourself – This Survey is Anonymous.

Where do you live and work? Check all that apply.

- I live in Tulare County I work in Tulare County I go to school in Tulare County
 I work for a Public/Social Service Agency in Tulare County Other (please specify): _____

I live in: Visalia Porterville Tulare Lindsay Dinuba Other (please specify): _____

Race/Ethnicity: Check all that apply.

- White/Caucasian Black/African-American Hispanic/Latino
 Asian
 Native American/Alaska Native Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Other (please specify): _____

Age: Under 18 years 18 to 30 years 31 to 59 years 60 to 69 years 70 years or older

Sex: Male Female Non-Binary

Number of people in your home: _____ **Total Gross Annual Household Income (before taxes):** \$ _____

Which of the following categories describe your employment status? Check all that apply

- Full-time (32 hours or more) Part-time (less than 32 hours) Self-employed Unemployed
 Retired Disabled Student
Other: _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Not completed high school High school diploma/GED Associates Degree
 Prof/Tech Certificate or License Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree
 Doctorate

Which of the following categories best describes your housing status?

- Homeowner Renter Living free with someone Homeless Transitional housing
Other: _____

Which of the following categories best describes your household composition?

- Live alone Single-parent, children under 18 Two parents, children under 18
 Two or more adults, no children Grandparent(s) raising grandchildren Other: _____

Did you receive public benefits in the last 2 years? Check all that apply.

- Food Stamps WIC CalWORKs Healthy Families/Medicaid/MediCal
- Unemployment Disability Income (SSDI) Social Security
 Social Security Income (SSI)
- Subsidized housing/Rental Assistance (HUD/Section 8) CalFresh

Has anyone in your household been served by a CSET Program within the last 2 years? Check all that apply.

- Job Training Utility Assistance
- Home Weatherization Sequoia Community Corps
- Housing Counseling Free tax preparation
- Youth Workforce Earlimart) Community office (e.g., Pixley,
- After School Programs Senior Services (e.g., Meals on Wheels)
- Homeless Services
- Other: _____

Which of the following barriers prevent you from seeking assistance with your basic needs? Check all that apply.

- Not eligible for assistance Have to work during service hours
- No transportation Don't know where to go for help
- I don't want to ask for help community Services not available in my
- Prior bad experience with service No childcare while receiving assistance
- Don't speak the language Felonies/criminal record
- Health/disability Other: _

Which of the following services are readily available to you and your family? Check all that apply.

- Smartphone Computer Internet Access
- None of these

What are your Needs?

Please select your **TOP THREE** issues and concerns for **EACH QUESTION**.
Place your selections (**LETTER**) in the boxes to the right.

What services are <u>most needed</u> for YOUTH in your community?		First Choice
A	After school programs	Second Choice
B	High school dropout prevention	
C	College and career preparation	Third Choice
D	Life skills classes	
E	Gang prevention	
F	Pregnancy prevention	
G	Nutrition and summer food	
H	Summer jobs	
I	Other (please specify):	
What services are <u>most needed</u> for FAMILIES in your community?		First Choice
A	Employment skills training and job placement	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Self-employment training and counseling	
C	High school diploma or GED attainment	Second Choice
D	Rental, utility, and food assistance	
E	Homebuyer education, foreclosure prevention, and financial counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	Homeless prevention and housing	
G	Parenting skills training	Third Choice
H	Domestic violence counseling	
I	Wellness and nutrition education	
J	Substance abuse recovery programs	
K	Mental health counseling	
L	Other (please specify):	
What services are <u>most needed</u> for SENIORS in your community?		First Choice
A	Recreation, arts, and crafts	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Computer classes	
C	Wellness and nutrition education	Second Choice
D	Meals and food distribution	
E	Adult day care	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	Elder abuse prevention	
G	Transportation assistance	Third Choice
H	Home visitation and check-in	
I	Volunteer and community service	
J	Other (please specify)	
What services are <u>most needed</u> to improve the LIVABILITY OF YOUR COMMUNITY?		First Choice
A	Increased public transit	
B	Parks, waterways and trails	

C	How to serve on a community group or government board	Second Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Third Choice <input type="checkbox"/>
D	Formation of community service and advocacy groups	
E	More ways to volunteer	
F	Other (please specify):	



Condado de Tulare

Encuesta Comunitaria 2023

Saludos Residentes del Condado de Tulare,

Community Services Employment Training, Inc. (CSET) ha servido como la agencia de acción comunitaria para el Condado de Tulare desde 1984 con la misión de inspirar a la juventud, familias y comunidades y ayudar a reducir las causas de la pobreza y mantener la visión de comunidades saludables, prósperas y seguras.

Usted está invitado en compartir sus ideas sobre los más importantes servicios necesitados en el Condado de Tulare. Su información personal no será compartida con otros y solo se incluirá en conjunto con otras respuestas recibidas. ¡Gracias por compartir su opinión en esta encuesta!

Sinceramente,

Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner
Directora Ejecutiva

Dear Tulare County Stakeholders,

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) has served as the Community Action Agency for Tulare County since 1984 with the mission to inspire youth, families, and communities to achieve self-reliance through innovative pathways and collaboration.

You are invited to share your ideas about the most important services needed in Tulare County. Your personal information will not be shared with any other party and will only be reported anonymously with other responses received. Thank you for completing this survey.

Sincerely,

*Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner
Executive Director*

ENCUESTA COMIENZA EN PÁGINA 3

¡Gracias por completar esta encuesta! Agradecemos sus comentarios.

Por Favor Díganos Acerca de Usted – Esta Encuesta es Anónima.

¿Cuál es su relación con el Condado de Tulare? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Vivo en el Condado de Tulare Trabajo en el Condado de Tulare Atiendo una escuela en el condado
 Trabajo para una agencia de servicios públicos/sociales en el condado Otro (favor de explicar): _____
Yo vivo en: Visalia Porterville Tulare Lindsay Dinuba Otra (favor de indicar): _____

Raza/Origen Étnico: Marque todas las que se aplican

- Caucásica/Blanco Negro/Afro-americano Hispano/latino Asiático
 Indio/Nativo de Alaska Nativo de Hawái/Isla Pacífica Otro (favor de indicar): _____

Edad: Menos de 18 años 18 a 30 años 31 a 59 años 60 a 69 años 70 años o mayor

Sexo: Masculino Femenino Género no Binario

¿Cuántas personas viven en su hogar? _____

Ingresos Brutos Anuales para todos en el hogar (antes de impuestos): \$ _____

¿Cuál(es) describe(n) su situación en el empleo? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Tiempo completo (32 horas o más) Tiempo parcial (menos de 32 horas) Propio negocio Desempleado
 Retirado Deshabilitado Estudiante Otro: _____

¿Cuál es el nivel educativo más alto que ha completado?

- No termino la escuela secundaria Diploma de escuela secundaria Grado asociado
 Certificado licencia técnica Licenciatura Maestría Doctorado

¿Cuál mejor describe el estado de su vivienda?

- Dueño de casa Rentero
 Viviendo gratis con alguien Sin hogar Vivienda transitoria Otro: _____

¿Cuál mejor describe su composición de su familia?:

- Vivo solo(a) P/Madre solo(a), niños menores de 18 Dos padres, niños menores de 18
 Dos o más adultos, ningún niño Abuelos criando a sus nietos Otro: _____

¿Recibió alguno de los siguientes beneficios públicos en los últimos 2 años? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Cupones para alimentos WIC CalWORKs Healthy Families/Medicaid/MediCal
 Desempleo Ingresos de Seguro Social para Discapacidad (SSDI) Ingresos de Seguro Social (SSI)
 Vivienda con subsidio/Asistencia con la Renta (HUD/Section 8) CalFresh

¿Alguien en su familia ha sido servido por un programa de CSET dentro de los últimos 2 años? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Entrenamiento de empleo Asistencia con la cuenta de energía
 Programa de climatización Sequoia Community Corps
 Consejería de viviendas Programa de asistencia con preparación de impuestos
 Desarrollo de trabajo para jóvenes Centro comunitario rural (e.g. Pixley, Earlimart)
 Programas extracurriculares Servicios para Personas Mayores (e.g. Meals on Wheels)
 Servicios para Personas sin Hogar Otro: _____

¿Cuál de los siguientes obstáculos le impide buscar ayuda con sus necesidades básicas? Marque todas las que se aplican

- No califico para asistencia Tengo que trabajar durante las horas de servicio
 No tengo transportación No sé a dónde ir para ayuda
 No quiero pedir ayuda Servicios no están disponibles en mi comunidad

Mala experiencia anterior

Idioma de servicios

Salud/deseabilidad

No hay cuidado de niños durante la asistencia

Ofensas criminales

Otro: _____

¿Cuáles de los siguientes servicios están disponibles para usted y su familia? Marque todas las que se aplican

Teléfono

Computadora

Acceso al Internet

Ninguno de estos

POR FAVOR DIGANOS ACERCA DE SU COMUNIDAD

Por favor seleccione sus **TRES PRINCIPALES** problemas y preocupaciones de **CADA PREGUNTA**.

Coloque sus selecciones (**LETRA**) en las cajas a la derecha.

¿Qué programas se <i>necesitan más</i> para los JÓVENES en su comunidad?		Primera Opción
A	Programas extracurriculares	<input type="text"/>
B	Prevención de deserción escolar de secundaria	
C	Preparación para el colegio o carrera	Segunda Opción
D	Clases de habilidades de vida y/o relación	
E	Programas de prevención de pandillas	<input type="text"/>
F	Programas de prevención del embarazo	
G	Programa de alimentos de verano y nutrición	Tercera Opción
H	Empleo de verano	
I	Otro (favor de explicar):	
¿Qué programas son <i>más necesarios</i> para FAMILIAS en su comunidad?		Primera Opción
A	Habilidades de empleo capacitación y asistencia de colocación	<input type="text"/>
B	Asesoramiento y capacitación de empleo por cuenta propia	
C	Educación alternativa para la obtención de un diploma o GED	Segunda Opción
D	Programas de asistencia financiera (asistencia de alquiler, utilidades y de comida)	
E	Educación para compradores de viviendas; consejería de embargo hipotecaria o de financiera	<input type="text"/>
F	Programas de realojamiento y prevención de falta de vivienda	
G	Entrenamiento y asesoramiento de habilidades para padres	Tercera Opción
H	Consejería de violencia doméstica	
I	Educación de salud y nutrición	
J	Programas de recuperación de la drogadicción	
K	Programas de consejería de salud mental	
L	Otro (favor de explicar):	
¿Qué tipo de programa se <i>necesitan más</i> para personas MAYORES en su comunidad?		Primera Opción
A	Actividades recreativas, de artes y artesanía	<input type="text"/>
B	Clases para computadoras	
C	Programas de salud y bienestar	Segunda Opción
D	Comidas y distribución de alimentos	
E	Programas de guarderías para adultos	<input type="text"/>
F	Programas de prevención de maltrato a personas mayores	
G	Asistencia de transporte	Tercera Opción
H	Visitas domiciliarias y programas de apoyo para padres	
I	Programas de servicio voluntario y de comunidad	
J	Otro (favor de explicar):	
¿Qué programas son <i>más necesarios</i> para MEJORAR LA CALIDAD DE VIDA DE SU COMUNIDAD?		Primera Opción
A	Aumento del servicio de transporte público	
B	Proyectos ecológicos urbanos (por ejemplo, cursos de agua, senderos y árboles)	
C	Entrenamientos de liderazgo de la comunidad	Segunda Opción
D	Formación de grupos de servicio y defensa de la comunidad	
E	Más oportunidades de ser voluntario	
F	Otro (favor de explicar):	Tercera Opción

Appendix D – Community Needs Assessment

Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment 2023

Community Services Block Grant



Community Services Employment Training, Inc.
312 Northwest Third Avenue
Visalia, CA 93291

www.cset.org

May 5, 2023

Table of Contents

I.	<u>Community Profile</u>	95
II.	<u>Key Findings – Conditions and Causes of Poverty in Tulare County</u>	
	A. Poverty as it Relates to Age, Gender, and Race/ Ethnicity.....	104
	B. Key Survey Findings.....	108
III.	<u>Methodology</u>	116
	A. Quantitative Data.....	116
	i. Community Action Surveys.....	116
	ii. Summary of Survey Responses.....	117
	B. Qualitative Data.....	121
	i. Focus Groups.....	121
	1. City of Porterville.....	122
	2. Census-designated Place, Pixley.....	123
	3. City of Visalia.....	123
IV.	<u>Appendices</u>	125
	A. Appendix A – References.....	125
	B. Appendix B – Community Action Survey.....	127
	i. 2023 English Version.....	127
	ii. 2023 Spanish Version.....	131

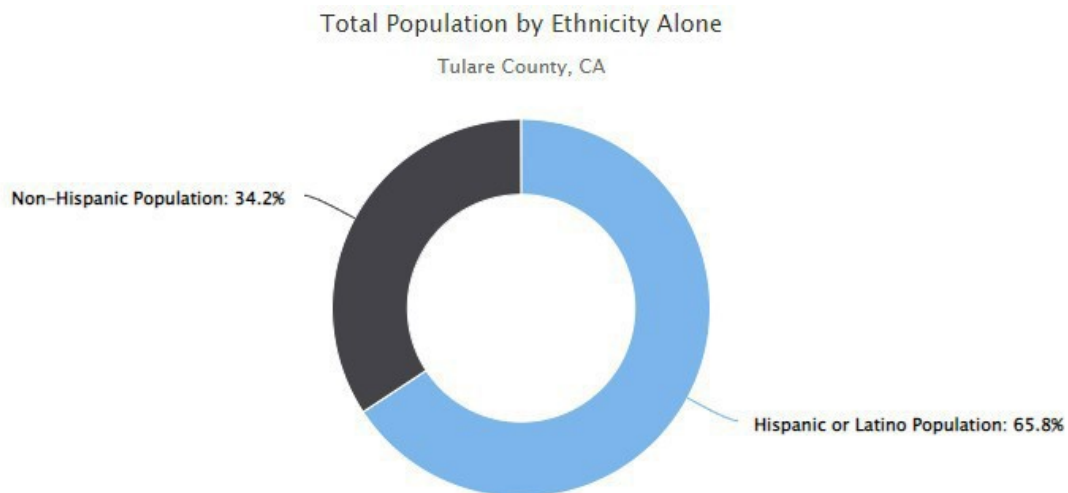
I. Community Profile

As the Community Action Agency for Tulare County, Community Services and Employment Training (CSET) provides youth, seniors, and local residents with access to the resources needed to live healthy and prosperous lives. At CSET, we share a vision for communities and residents to gain the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to achieve the American Dream. We accomplish these goals by partnering with local leaders, community agencies, educational institutions, the business community, service organizations, healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, and dedicated volunteers to provide a wide range of programs and services to meet the needs of the historically underserved people in our region.

Established in 1976, CSET was founded by a small group of volunteers, determined to create greater opportunities for youth in need. CSET later expanded its role to serve as the Community Action Agency for our community in 1984. Every year, our organization serves more than 11,000 local residents through a wide variety of services including job training and placement, family services, home weatherization, utility assistance, homebuyer counseling, housing assistance, youth leadership, justice system navigation, education pathways, food security, nutrition assistance for seniors, income tax preparation assistance, and more.

In 2021, CSET began work to assist in the collaborative work to create the region's first Low Barrier Navigation Center, TC Hope, which is scheduled to open in 2024. This center will provide crucial services for children, families, and seniors who are experiencing homelessness in Tulare County. Thanks to our many partners in the fight against poverty, CSET has continually expanded our scope of services, addressing the changing needs of our community.

As a recipient of CSBG funds, CSET develops a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) and Community Action Plan (CAP) every 2 years. The CNA is a useful tool for our organization as we analyze the best ways to leverage our resources and partnerships in the community to effectively meet the needs of those we serve. Information contained within this CNA is gathered from a variety of sources, including the most recent U.S. Census, the California Department of Education, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data collected within this CNA shapes CSET's vision for the future, as we adjust our program and service offerings to meet the changing needs of Tulare County.



Source: Community Action Partnership, CAP Engagement Network, Tulare County 2017-2021

Home to 477,544 residents, Tulare County is the 7th largest county in California, covering nearly 5,000 square miles in the San Joaquin Valley (2020 Decennial Census). The population in Tulare County has risen steadily, 442,517 people in 2010 to an expected 500,568 people by 2026 (California Department of Finance, 2023). Due to the high number of jobs in the agricultural industry, Tulare County draws in many migrant farmworker families who come to the area seeking employment; **23% of local residents are born outside of the United States, and of these people, 65% report that they are not a U.S. citizen** (2021 American Community

Survey 1-Year Estimates). Over 65% of all residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 49% report that they speak a language other than English at home.

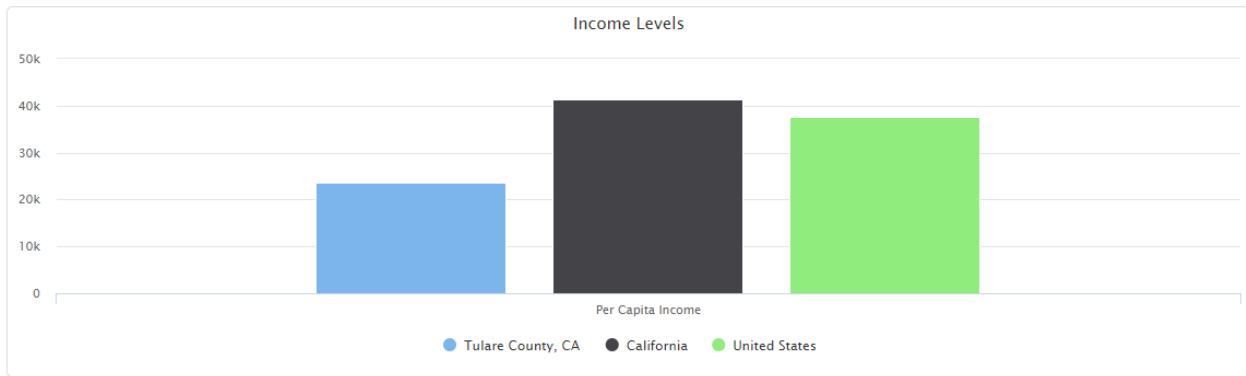
2021 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES	
Measure	Value
English Only	49.5%
Spanish	46.5%
Other Indo-European Languages	1.3%
Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	2.2%
Other Languages	0.5%

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Tulare County is the agricultural heart of California. In addition to the large dairy and beef production here, local farmers also grow a tremendous number of vegetables, fruits, grains, and nuts. Almonds, walnuts, pistachios, oranges, peaches, apricots, grapes, lemons, kiwi, and plums are just a few of the 120 different crops that are grown here. A 2021 report states that there are over 4,000 farms in Tulare County alone, more than twice the number as Kern and Monterey Counties. An estimated 50,000 farmworkers in Tulare County provide the labor for harvesting and processing these crops (National Center for Farmworker Health, 2021).

These difficult and necessary jobs keep the economy of California strong, while also providing nutritious food for the rest of the United States. **While there are many different careers in this industry available to jobseekers, over half of those employed in our region are working in support activities for crop production, for which the average wage**

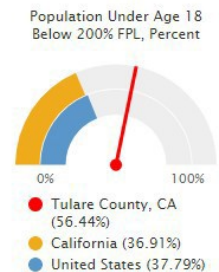
is **\$12.76 per hour** (Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, Agri-Business Industry Sector Profile, 2023). This is significantly less than the national average rate of \$14.25 an hour for farmworkers and laborers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). The average income of a person in the United States is \$37,638, while a person living in California earns \$41,276. **For single individuals living in Tulare County, the per capita income average is \$23,706.**



Source: Community Action Partnership Report, Tulare County, April 2023

Income levels are no for better Tulare County residents who live in a household with more than one person. **The California average household income is just over \$84,000 per year, while households in Tulare County earn only \$57,000.** Poverty has been and still remains a persistent problem in our community, with the most recent American Community Survey reporting that 18% of all households in Tulare County are living in poverty. More than 80,000 children in Tulare County, or **56% of all children in this region are living in poverty, compared to the national average of 37%** (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021).

Report Area	Total Population Under Age 18	Population Under Age 18 Below 200% FPL	Population Under Age 18 Below 200% FPL, Percent
Tulare County, CA	142,779	80,581	56.44%
California	8,849,437	3,266,719	36.91%
United States	72,996,065	27,587,656	37.79%



Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-21. Source geography: Tract → Show more details

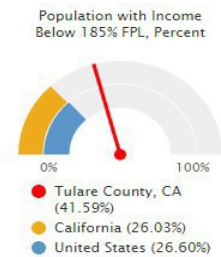
Source: Community Action Partnership report, Tulare County, April 2023

In addition to 18% of all households in poverty, the most recent American Community Survey states that nearly 42% (193,319) of all Tulare County residents are living below the Federal Poverty Line (American Community Survey, 2017 -2021). This is far greater than the California and national average of 26%.

Report Area	Total Population	Population with Income Below 185% FPL	Population with Income Below 185% FPL, Percent
Tulare County, CA	464,801	193,319	41.59%
California	38,701,352	10,075,419	26.03%
United States	321,897,703	85,630,280	26.60%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-21. Source geography: Tract → Show more details



Source: Community Action Partnership report, Tulare County, April 2023

To help combat the negative and lasting effects of poverty on children, **CSET provides an array of programs and services to support impoverished youth in need.** CSET offers our signature youth leadership programs, #LEAD and #GROW, which are designed to provide college and career readiness curriculum to prepare our next generation for the real world. Participants in these programs receive educational workshops on the topics of study habits, financial literacy, time management, mental health, healthy relationships, and more. Participants have the opportunity to go on field trips to learn about local government operations and how they can help shape the future they want to see for Tulare County. Students also participate in career exploration activities, and those who complete the program have an opportunity to earn wages through our work experience program, which can assist young people as they prepare to enter college or other vocational training pathways.

In addition to these leadership programs, **CSET offers services for parenting youth, justice-impacted youth, young people with disabilities, homeless youth, and those who are battling with substance abuse and addiction.** Our many partners in the county such as the

Probation Department, Health and Human Services Agencies, school districts, colleges, healthcare providers, and law enforcement offices help CSET to address the multifaceted needs of young people in our community so they have the resources needed to succeed and thrive. For many young people, achieving a high school diploma is the first step in becoming financially secure in the future.

Currently, **Tulare County has a 12% high school non-graduation rate** (California Department of Education), with a 77% overall literacy rate, making Tulare County the second lowest rate in the state of California. The National Center for Education Statistics states that **Tulare County has a 41% functionally illiterate rate**, nearly double the California rate of 23% (*“Tulare County, Valley lead the Nation in Illiteracy,”* The Sun-Gazette, 2022). To address this challenge, CSET has curated partners who are dedicated to providing educational opportunities for youth, families, and adults here in Tulare County.

In February 2023, CSET received a \$2,000 grant from the United Way of Tulare County via The Literacy Project. These funds will be used to purchase children’s books for the Earlimart and Tulare Family Resource Centers. **Our Family Resource Centers function as one-stop shops for local parents in need of resources and help to keep their families healthy and safe.** Children will be able to read these books while their parents visit the centers for various meetings or classes. These books will help to inspire a generation of children to develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime. For our older scholars, CSET hosts the John Muir Charter School and Sequoia Community Corps at our Visalia Main Office, that provide educational pathways for nontraditional students so they can achieve their dreams.



CSET'S Family Resource Centers in Tulare and Earlimart are important hubs in the community

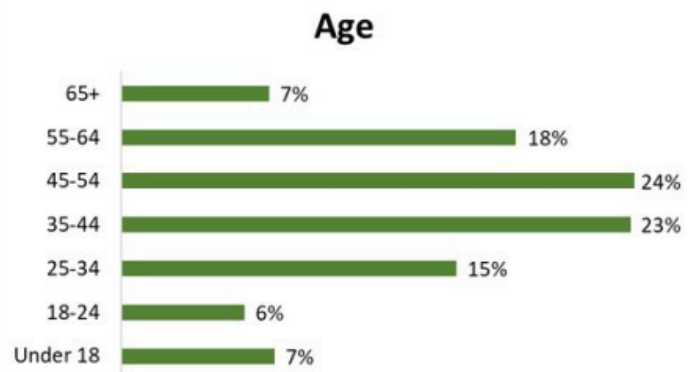
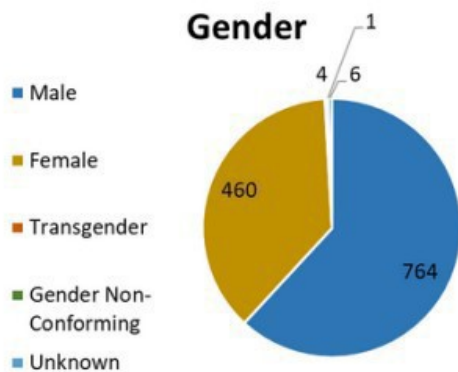
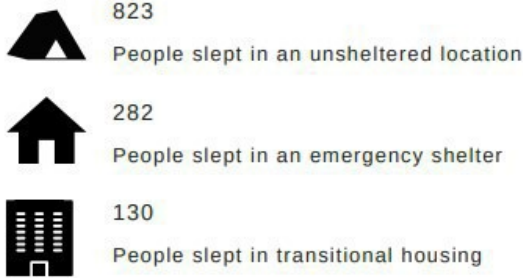
Overall, unemployment rates in Tulare County are on a historic decline. **In January 2021, over 28,000 people in Tulare County filed for unemployment benefits, with these numbers jumping above 30,000 by March 2021 to a historic low of 7,225 in September 2022.** Since the start of 2023, there has been a slow, yet steady incline of unemployment claims filed in our region, with 12,078 claims in January (California Employment Development Department). According to a local news publication, unemployment rates are on the rise due to more people looking for work. “There are nearly 5,000 more people in the workforce as of February, a 2.8% increase from last year, all of them in nonfarm sectors” (“*Businesses continue to labor with workforce shortages,*” The Sun-Gazette, 2022).

A number of large businesses have recently opened or are scheduled to open in this region, such as Amazon, Ikea, Costco, and a new children’s hospital, with the promise of many jobs to follow (Visalia Times-Delta, 2022). The ongoing construction of the new California High Speed Rail

continues to bring new jobs to the Central Valley. This project has created more than 10,000 construction jobs since the start of the project, with **1,000 jobs created in Tulare County alone (California High Speed Rail Authority, February 2023)**. CSET continues to support jobseekers in Tulare County through our many workforce development partnerships, including the **Employment Connection, which has locations throughout the county in the cities of Visalia, Porterville, Tulare, and Dinuba.**

The promise of new jobs on the horizon will bring economic relief to Tulare County. The most recent Point-in-Time report by the Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance (KTHA) states that overall homelessness in our region has increased 60% since 2012, with 12% of people reporting they are homeless with children (KTHA Point-in-Time, 2022). **As of the time of this report, there were at least 1,235 people experiencing homelessness in our community, with nearly 41% stating they are living with a disability.**

KINGS AND TULARE COUNTIES

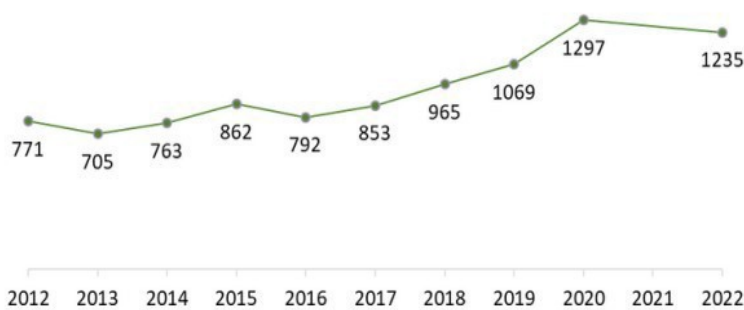


KINGS AND TULARE COUNTIES

1,235 people experiencing homelessness

327 people are chronically homeless

2012-2022 PIT Count Trend



Possible reasons for decline recorded in recent report:

- Changes in PIT methodology of street canvassing in lieu of centralized events
- Increased numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness who are living in their cars
- Efforts to disperse homeless encampments

“The Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance... does not think there was an actual decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Kings and Tulare Counties.”
- PIT Report 2022

Source: Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance
Point-in-Time Report, 2022

This data provides a snapshot of who is experiencing homelessness in the region, and shows that the majority of those who are homeless are men, ages 35-54. This report also shows a slight dip in the number of people experiencing homelessness in 2022, after 5 years of growth. However, the KTHA states that this is most likely due to how the data were collected, a higher number of unsheltered people now living in their cars, therefore making it more difficult to count, and the continued efforts of public agencies to disperse homeless encampments. "... (these efforts) make an accurate PIT count especially challenging as individuals are no longer residing in centralized locations." (Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance, Point in Time Report, 2022).

II. Key Findings – Conditions and Causes of Poverty in Tulare County

While there are multiple reasons why the problem of poverty remains in our community, CSET seeks to find the most pressing issues that are affecting low- and moderate-income residents, so that we may identify and develop programs that best serve those in need. After careful research of multiple sources and in-depth community conversations, CSET has identified the following major conditions and causes of poverty in Tulare County.

A. Poverty as it Relates to Age, Gender and Race/Ethnicity

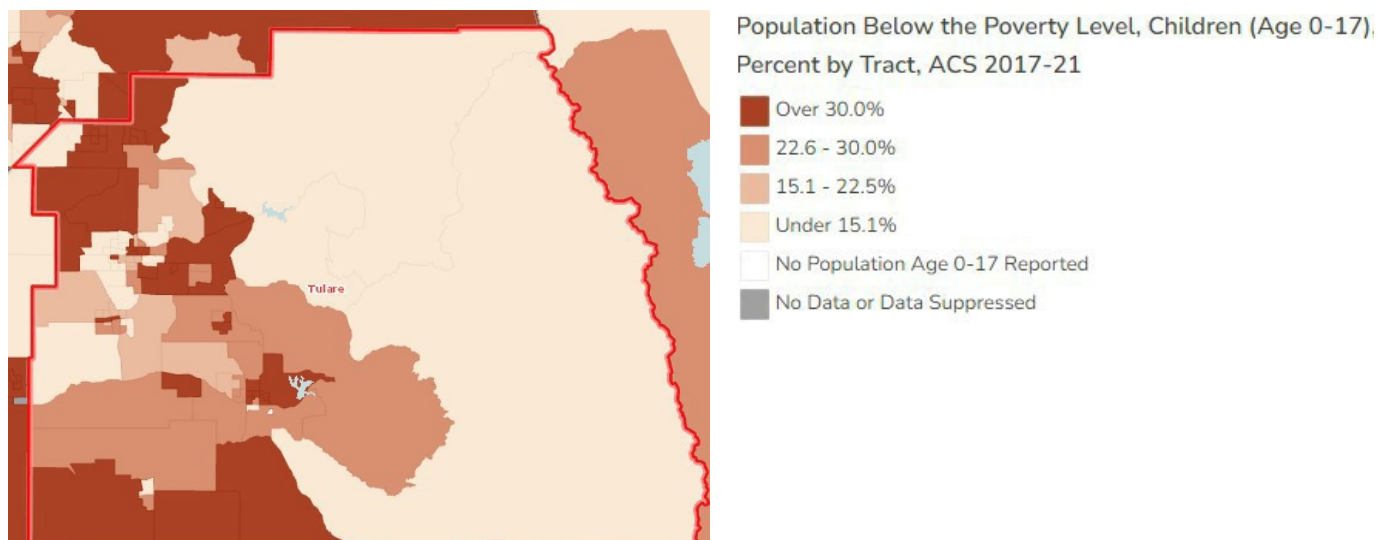
Gender

In Tulare County, where 18% of the population overall are living in poverty, women are greatly affected by economic factors which limit their opportunities for growth. Across the country, women are at higher risk for poverty due to low wages, a lack of supportive services for family caretaking responsibilities, and the gender wealth gap which can negatively affect the ability for women to enter into higher earning careers, overcome student loan debt, or even purchase a home (Center for American Progress, 2020). Here, the largest demographic of people living in poverty are women, ages 15-24, with the highest racial or ethnic group of this population being Hispanic (American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate, 2017 - 2021). In 2020, local college enrollment

rates of women in Tulare County were greater than men, with the student population at 37% men and 63% women (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Despite these high levels of college enrollment, women in Tulare County are still earning less than men in this region, with the median yearly earnings of women reported at \$27,000, while the median yearly earnings of men in the area is \$34,000 (American Community Survey, 2021).

Age

With the COVID-19 pandemic emergency subsiding across the country, the ramifications of this unprecedented global event are still felt in Tulare County. Currently, over 40% of local residents are living in poverty – 193,319 individuals – over 1.5 times the state and national averages (American Community Survey, 2017-2021). Of these residents, over 37,000 are children, 26.3% of the total population ages 0-17 years old. The majority of these impoverished children live in the northern communities of Tulare County such as Dinuba, Sultana, and Cutler-Orosi. In the southern part of Tulare County communities, such as Allensworth, Richgrove, and Earlimart, all have higher concentrations of children in poverty as compared to the central and eastern parts of the county (Community Action Partnership, CAP Engagement Network 2021).



Source: American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates 2017 – 2021

Over 51,000 Tulare County residents are senior citizens, 12.6% of which are living in poverty. According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), women are more likely to live in poverty than men, as a result of wage discrimination and caregiving duties which often force them to take time out of the workforce. (www.ncoa.org). **The nonpartisan Public Policy Research Institute states that in 2021, 5.8 million seniors were living in poverty, and almost 90% of all national Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) assistance benefits are received by aged persons who are living below federal poverty thresholds** (Congressional Research Service, 2022). As a result of high poverty, many seniors are at risk for malnutrition and food insecurity.

To help care for our local low-income senior citizens in need, CSET operates eight senior centers across the county. Each center provides congregate meals, special programs, and activities that build community and play an important role in the well-being of older adults, which help them to stay healthy and independent for as long as possible. These centers are strategically located throughout Tulare County in the areas of highest need, such as Woodlake, Earlimart, and Farmersville.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent severe weather, CSET temporarily stopped operations at these centers to help prevent the spread of illness and protect our customers and staff. Now that many pandemic restrictions have been lifted, CSET is happy to report that five of our eight locations are now open and providing services as usual. There are plans to carefully reopen the remaining three centers in the near future as soon as it is safe to do so.



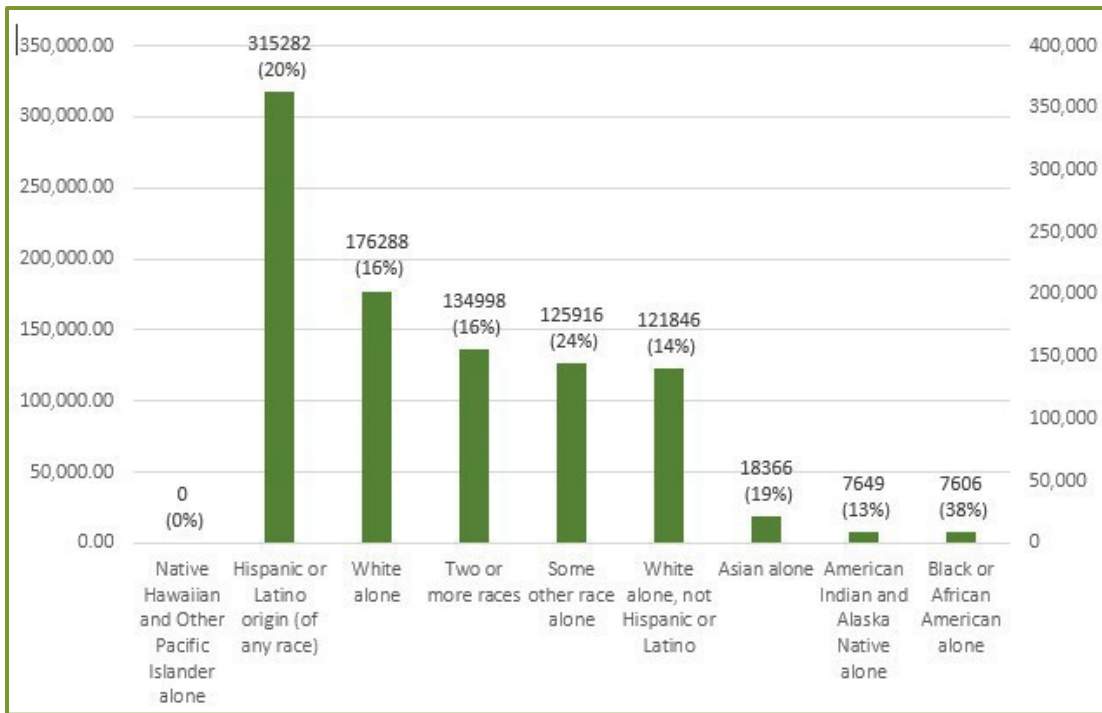
Tulare County's golden generation deserves the very best.

We are dedicated to providing our local senior citizens with services that remind them that they are important. Nutritious meals, warm conversations and a smile do just that.

For low-income seniors who are homebound due to illness or injury, CSET provides home-delivered meal service through our Meals on Wheels (MOW) program. CSET offers temporary or long-term service to those 60 years and older who, due to chronic illness or recent hospitalization, cannot prepare nutritious meals for themselves and/or do not have friends, relatives, or paid help to provide assistance. This program helps housebound individuals maintain adequate nutrition and ensures that our elders receive the care they deserve.

Race/Ethnicity

The most recent American Community Survey shows poverty levels in Tulare County by race/ethnicity (American Community Survey Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2021). As was found in previous years, the highest levels of poverty in Tulare County correlate with the most populous race/ethnic groups in the community, Hispanic and Caucasian. Of those Tulare County residents living in poverty, 20% identified as Hispanic, followed by 16% who identified as White (alone, non-Hispanic). The American Community Survey did not reflect poverty levels of statistical significance of those who identified as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone. However, the 2021 Decennial Census of Tulare County shows that there are indeed people who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone, with 511 reported in 2021.



Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months

B. Key Survey Findings

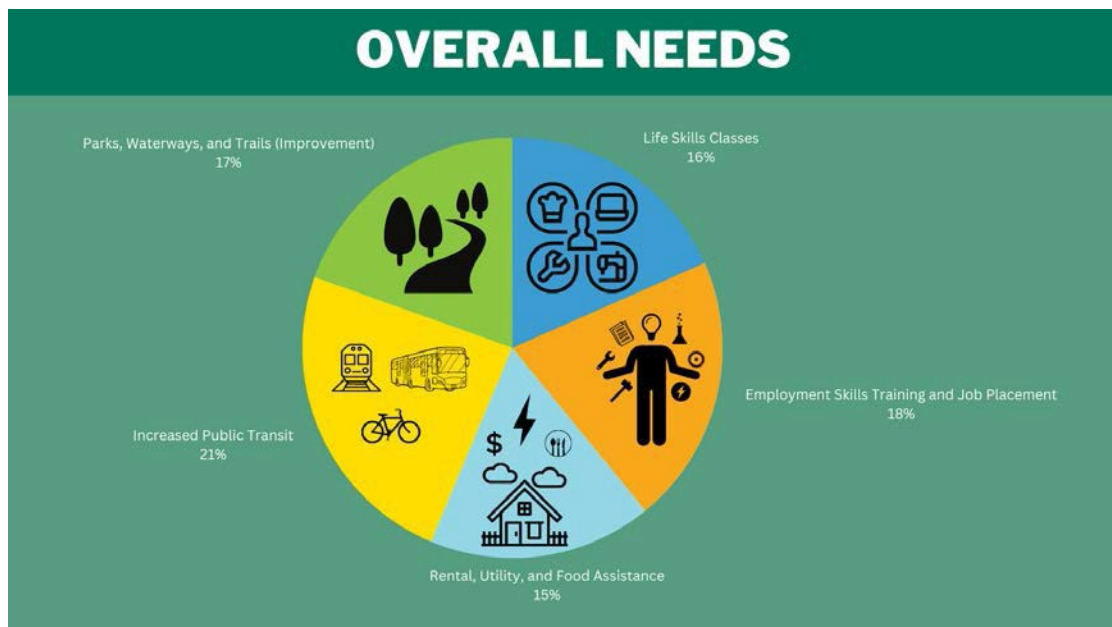
For the last 47 years, CSET has continually adjusted our many program offerings and services to quickly meet the needs of our community. CSET has conducted this detailed review of the current issues the residents of Tulare County face. This Community Needs Assessment is informed by a detailed review of well-respected sources such as the American Census Bureau, California Department of Education, and the National Center for Farmworker Health, in addition to many more. While these reports and studies provide important information on how the community is faring as a whole, it is crucial that we hear directly from those we serve and include their voices in this process. As the disability rights activists during the 1990s said, “Nothing about us, without us”.

In 2023, CSET conducted a survey which provided our customers and the community at

large the opportunity to share their highest concerns for the youth, families, seniors, and communities of Tulare County. This survey was widely distributed throughout our network of community partners, local agencies, and customers. These surveys were distributed through email, social media, and printed copies were available for customers to anonymously complete. Additionally, CSET hosted a series of focus groups in key parts of our service area, ensuring that the voices of youth, seniors, and other marginalized groups were heard. In total, nine focus groups were held throughout the county, ensuring that community members from some of our most rural areas were included, such as those who live in Pixley, Porterville, Farmersville, and Earlimart. Through this research CSET has identified the top five concerns of our community.

Top 5 Community Concerns

In addition to these concerns, other issues like homelessness were identified through a series of community focus groups, surveys, research, and our connections with other community collaboratives. The CSET 2023 – 2024 Community Needs Assessment finds that the top five concerns of our community are: a need for increased public transit (21%), employment skills and job placement (18%), improvement of our parks, waterways, and trails (17%), life skills classes (16%), and rental, utility, and food assistance for those in need (15%).



CSET is honored to be part of the good work being done to address these problems in holistic and effective ways.

Community Concern 1: Increased public transit

Raising up through the ranks of community concerns, the topic of public transit has now reached the number 1 position in the list of most pressing issues to survey respondents, climbing from number 3 in the previous Community Needs Assessment in 2021. While the percentage of Tulare County residents without a vehicle is lower than the state and national averages (5.6%, 5.9%, 8.3%, respectively), this continues to be an area of concern (American Community Survey, 2017 – 2021). Many residents in the southern region of our county live in an area identified as a “food desert,” defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as any neighborhood that lacks healthy food sources due to income level, distance to supermarkets, or vehicle access. There are nearly 80,000 residents who live in food deserts in Tulare County (USDA, 2019). Consistent access to healthy food is just one of the many reasons why increased public transit service is needed in our community.

Community Concern 2: Employment skills, training, and job placement

For 47 years, one of CSET’s core offerings has been the many job training and placement programs we offer to youth and young adults, people experiencing homelessness, veterans, people with disabilities, justice-impacted, and others across the county. Our partnerships with local businesses and social service agencies create opportunities for career exploration, vocational training, paid internships, job readiness and interviewing, upskilling of previous knowledge, and many other services for our community members who desire to achieve financial stability. With the many ups and downs of the labor market in the post-pandemic world we live in, these services are consistently important in Tulare County. The community knows we are always here and ready to help in their employment journey.

Community Concern 3: Improvement of Parks, Waterways, and Trails

Tulare County is home to a tremendous part of our national agricultural industry, two national parks, and many other outdoor attractions. The future of our community relies on the protection of our natural resources. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many families began to utilize our local parks and open spaces more for social distancing. It is evident now more than ever the benefits of having safe outdoor spaces to enjoy. With recent spikes in homelessness throughout the county, several of the local parks have had amenities such as restrooms and water fountains close; with benches and playground equipment being completely removed in some areas for health and safety reasons. CSET encourages residents to get out and enjoy our parks and open spaces through our annual activities, Make a Difference Day and Senior Day in the Park. CSET also supports the development and rehabilitation of parks through fund development and the work of our local conservation corps, the Sequoia Community Corps.

Community Concern 4: Life skills classes

Ranked as the 4th most pressing need of the community once again since the last Community Needs Assessment, many of the seniors and parents we spoke to during this survey stated their desire for youth to have access to life skills classes so they are better prepared for the adult world. CSET provides educational presentations for our youth leadership participants on financial literacy, healthy living, parenting resources, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, mental health, civic engagement, and offers paid work experience opportunities. CSET continues to incorporate new programs to reach young people in need, such as the Youth Action Board, which serves youth and young adults who have experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness.

Community Concern 5: Rental, utility, and food assistance

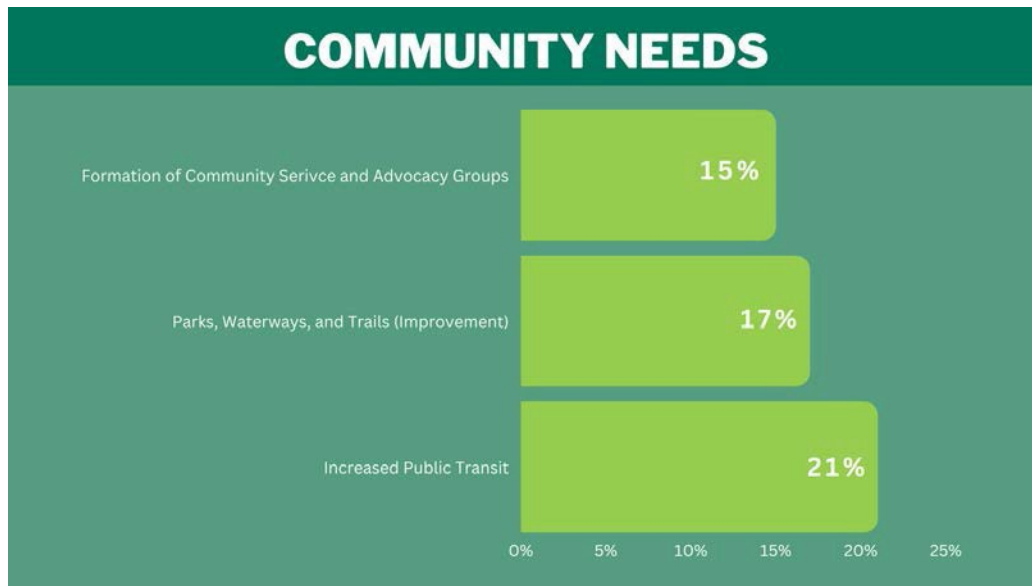
The financial effects of inflation, a shifting job market, housing scarcity, and a lack of good-paying jobs in Tulare County have put enormous pressure on seniors and families who are in need. For the last 10 years, there has been a steady increase of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in this region. There are many causes of this outcome, specifically the rising costs of

rent and barriers to home ownership. For those who are hurting financially, CSET offers rental and mortgage payment assistance, utility assistance, free income tax preparation services, food distribution, nutrition programs such as Meals on Wheels, and information on food stamps, WIC, and other supports. With the recent impact of natural disasters in our community due to wildfires and floods, providing access to emergency food resources has become more important than ever.

Needs Identified by Subgroup

Focus group attendees amplified the needs identified in the survey responses, providing examples and context critical to informing our Community Action Plan. Both survey and focus group input also identified other needs in addition to the top five previously presented. They are organized by community, family, seniors, and youth needs.

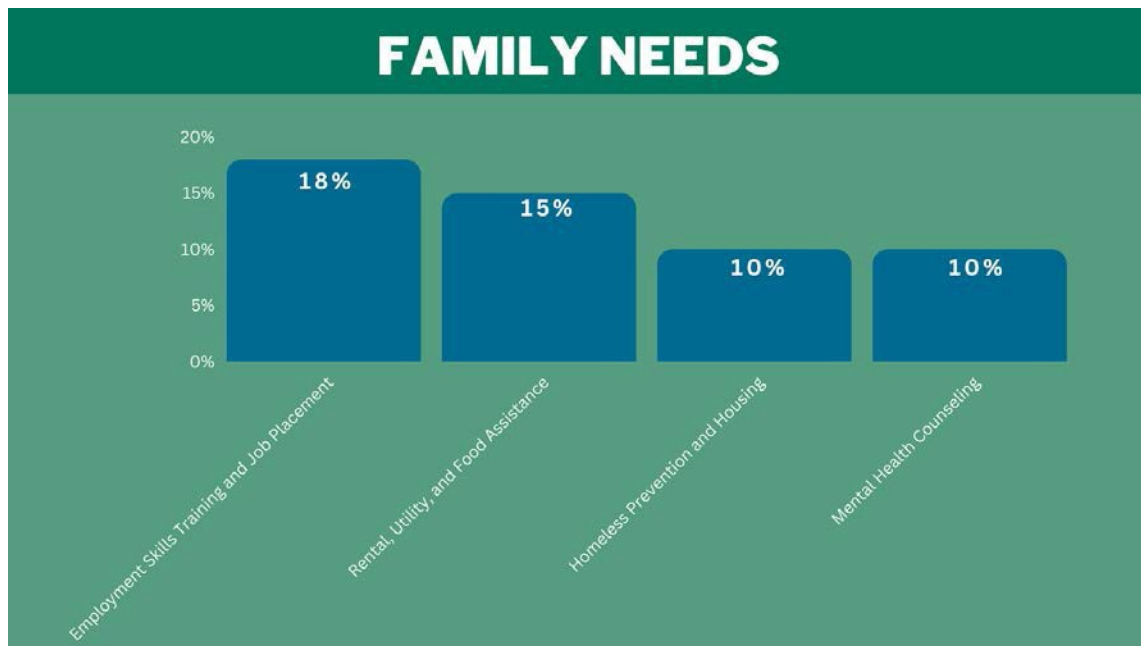
Community Needs



During a focus group at the Porterville Senior Center (Porterville Senior Center Focus Group, March 7, 2023), an elderly gentleman who spoke very little English said he wanted to take English Language Learner classes, but the closest place he could find one was in Visalia. Without a vehicle, it is nearly impossible for him to do so. Additional concerns shared by participants were a need to improve our parks, waterways, and trails, and also the formation of community service and advocacy groups. Many of our residents who live in rural areas say they feel

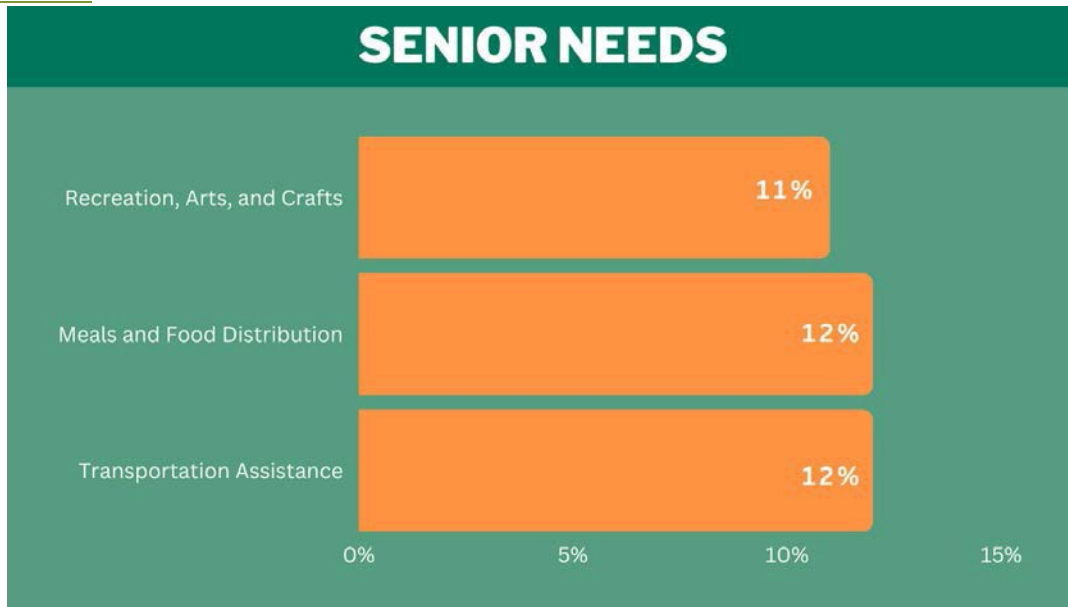
a lack of connection to their community and the decisions that shape its future.

Family Needs



When connecting with our customers and community, one question of great importance was to ask participants to identify what families are most in need of in Tulare County. These surveys were mostly collected prior to the unprecedented flooding events that our region has recently suffered, and a survey completed now might show a different slate of responses. Regardless, the top response we received in this category was the need for employment skills, training, and job placement. This was listed as the second highest need in the community overall, demonstrating that the people of Tulare County are eager to improve their job prospects and abilities. Good-paying and personally fulfilling jobs create stronger, more stable families and reduce the risk for abuse, neglect, and harm towards children (United States Children’s Bureau “Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect Fact Sheet,” 2018). CSET is proud to offer a wide variety of programs and services at our Family Resource Centers, located in the communities of Earlimart and Tulare, in addition to our Employment Connection sites in Visalia, Porterville, and Tulare as well as youth services in Cutler-Orosi.

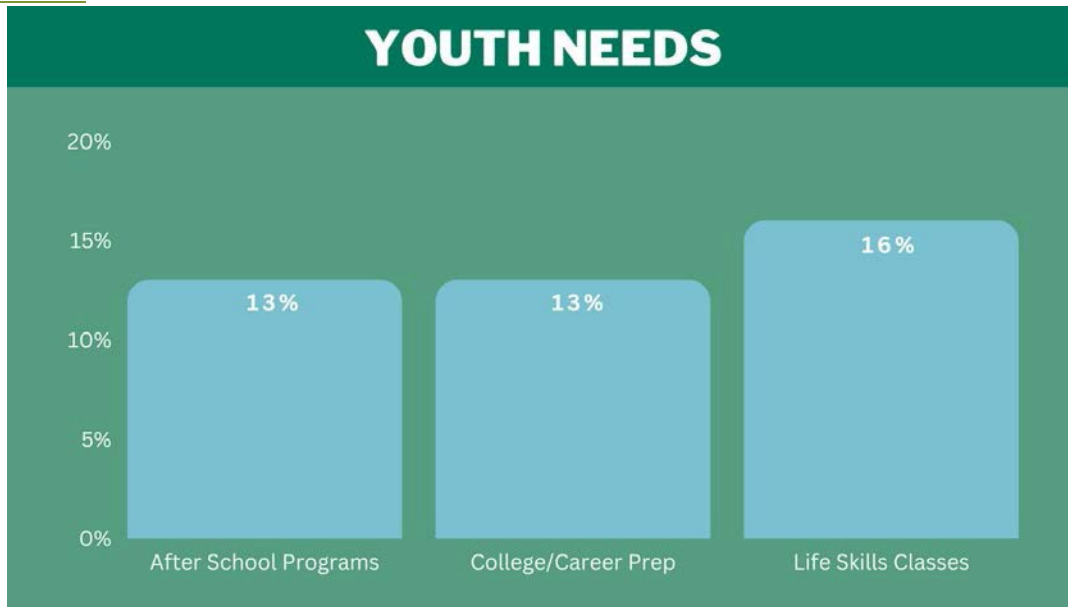
Senior Needs



Low-income senior citizens in Tulare County are some of our most vulnerable residents. With many of our rural communities having sparse access to public transportation and healthy food, it can be very difficult for seniors to obtain the resources needed to live independent lives. When conducting this part of our survey, responses were distributed across many categories, with respondents often adding in suggestions in the “other” response section such as patriotic education, medical access, or additional comments related to their specific and personal needs. CSET takes these suggestions into consideration when planning programs and services to benefit the community as a whole. Of the survey responses collected, two categories tied for top importance were the need for meals and food distribution along with transportation assistance.

In the previous Community Needs Assessment, meals and food distribution was identified as the top priority for seniors, while transportation assistance ranked third. CSET recognizes the importance of nutrition for seniors, which drove our reopening 75% of our senior centers, which offer healthy congregate meals for those in need. CSET aims to be at 100% senior center operations as soon as possible.

Youth Needs



The need for life skills classes ranked as the number four concern for Tulare County residents overall, but ranked as the number one need for local youth. In 2023, CSET launched a new youth leadership program, #GROW. This program is geared for young people who are freshmen or sophomores in high school, and provides an enriching experience that prepares young people to be tomorrow's leaders. #GROW is modeled after our successful #LEAD program, which is geared for juniors and senior students. These programs provide youth the opportunity to engage in activities such as college and career exploration, financial education, mental wellness and self-care, community service, job readiness, paid work experiences, and financial education.

Participants engage with local leaders and professionals to gain a better understanding of how our community works and how they can become part of the future development of Tulare County. Youth and young adults who are students in the John Muir Charter School stated in a focus group their desire for access to mental health services as well as no-cost or low-cost activity centers that could provide a safe space to relax and spend time with friends. One young person in this group shared that when he was younger, he would go to the playground at a local park with his siblings. He stated that due to the increasing rates of homelessness, there has been sanitation and

safety issues at this park, and as a result, almost all of the equipment has been removed by the city. In addition, several participants shared their frustration with visiting our local parks, often finding amenities such as water fountains and restrooms closed for similar reasons.

Recently, CSET received several donations from our local Walmart stores to support these programs for youth. This year, CSET has also implemented the start of our homeless youth advocacy program, the Youth Action Board. Every year, over 500 young people participate in CSET's youth services, helping to prepare them for brighter tomorrows.

III. Methodology

CSET collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive and integrated review of poverty in Tulare County.

A. Quantitative Data

Twenty-three objective, verifiable data sources provided relevant quantitative data that were collected and analyzed to assess poverty related needs in Tulare County. Sources cited throughout this needs assessment include reports from the United States Census Bureau, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the California Employment Development Department, the National Council on Aging, and many more. These sources may be found in Appendix A.

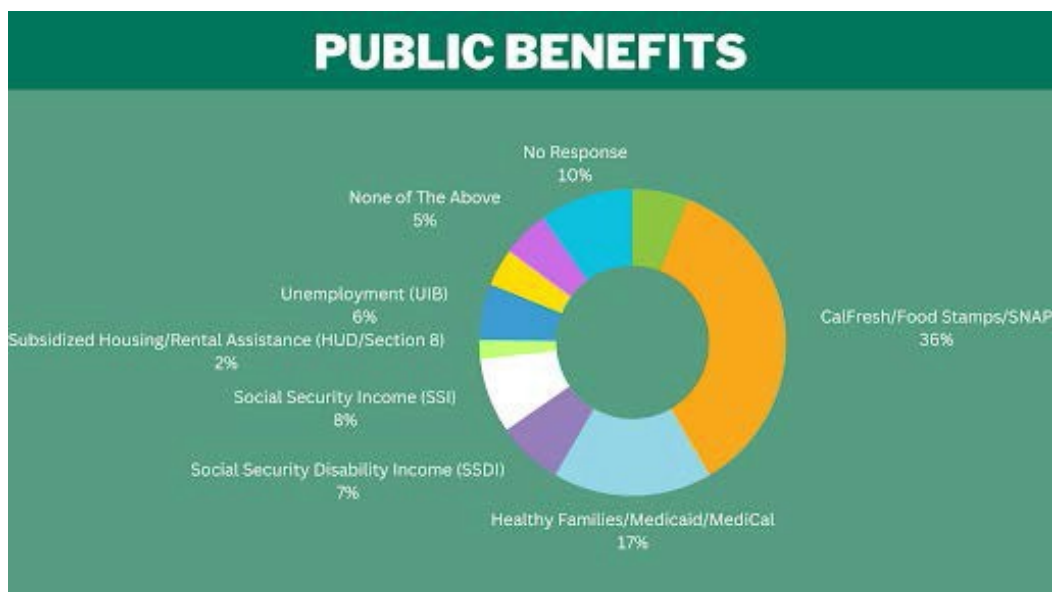
Community Action Surveys

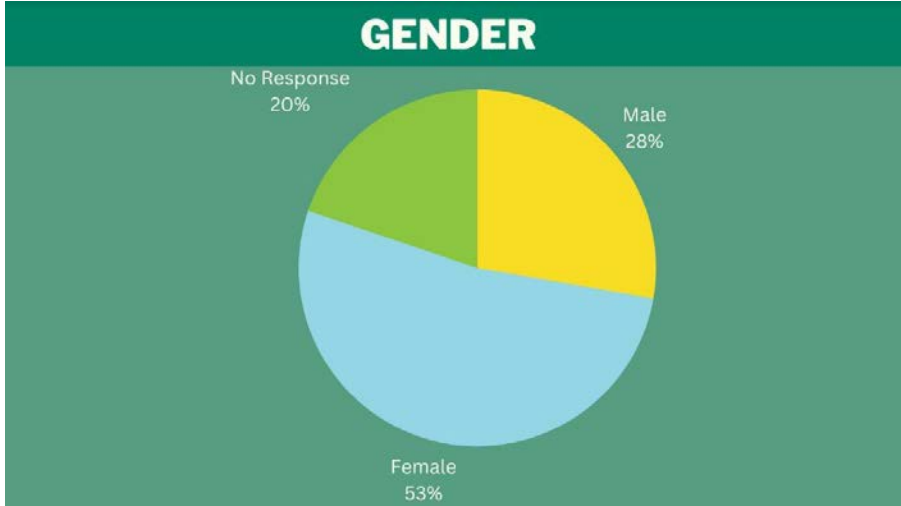
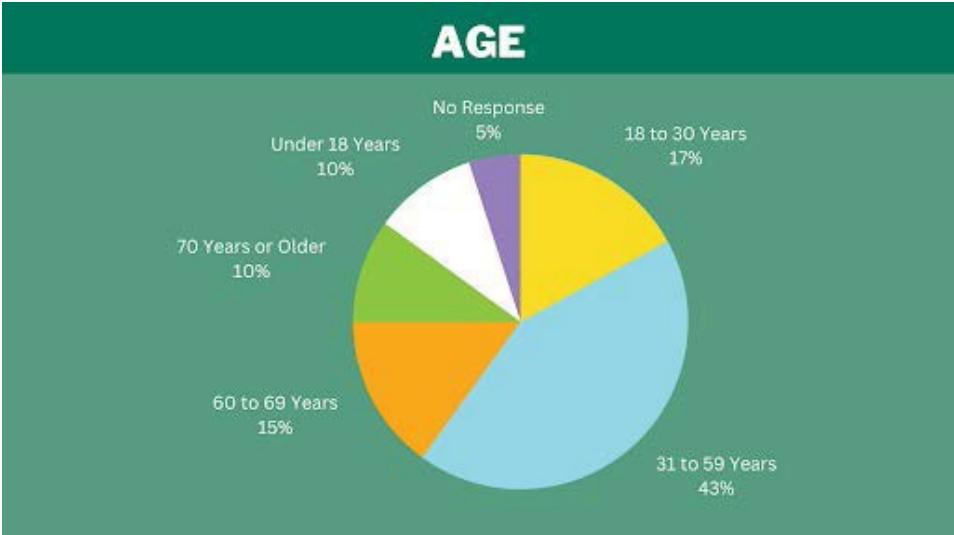
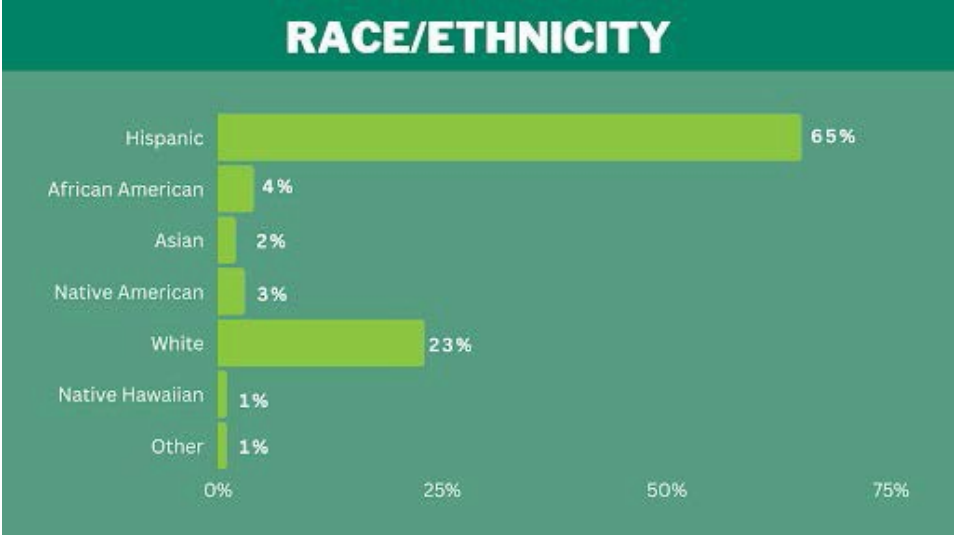
As an important component of this assessment, CSET issued a community survey to our customers, partners, and contacts throughout Tulare County. This survey can be found in Appendix B. Copies of this survey were available in both English and Spanish, with identical questions for each. Surveys asked respondents demographic questions as well as questions on what they felt were the biggest challenges our community is facing.

Surveys were made available to the general public through an anonymous Google Form that could be completed online, or paper copies were available in all CSET offices. Paper copies were

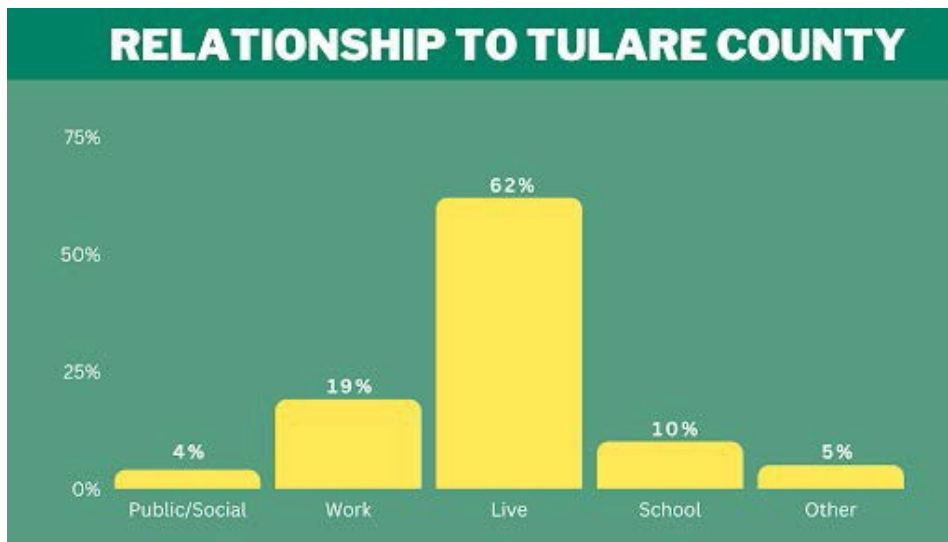
also submitted anonymously. CSET sent a link to the online survey through several emails to staff, customers, and partners, and was promoted on all CSET social media channels, encouraging people to participate and make their voices heard. Surveys were also distributed at all community focus group meetings. Responses from the survey were collected over a period of 3 weeks and were recorded by the CSET Communication and Information Systems (CIS) team, which securely stores all CSET organizational information. In total, 327 surveys were completed. Of these, 48 were in Spanish and 279 were in English. The majority of these were paper forms, submitted in person, with 95% of respondents indicating that they or a family member have received public benefits in the last 2 years. This is quite a large difference from the previous survey, for which only 44% of respondents stated they or a family member had utilized public services in the last 2 years. The COVID-19 pandemic surely is one of the causes of this increase, with the category of Food Stamps/SNAP/EBT usage reported by 26% of respondents (Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Transformed the U.S. Federal Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape,” October 4, 2021).

Summary of Survey Responses

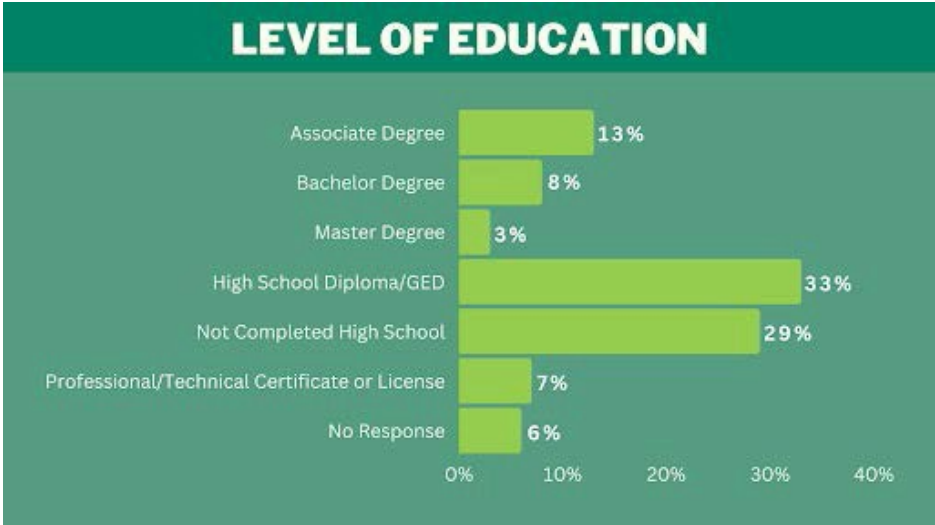




Survey responses on race/ethnicity, age, and gender were found to be aligned with the results of the most recent decennial census: 65% of respondents indicated their race/ethnicity to be Hispanic, while the recent census found this number to be at 65.1%. The second greatest number of responses indicated their race/ethnicity as White was 23%, whereas the census finds this number to be 27.8%. Responses regarding age also aligned with census findings, with the 2020 median age recorded as 31.2 years and 43% of the CSET survey respondents indicated their age group to be 31–59 years old at 43%. In addition, 62% of all respondents stated that they live in Tulare County, with 29% stating they work full-time.



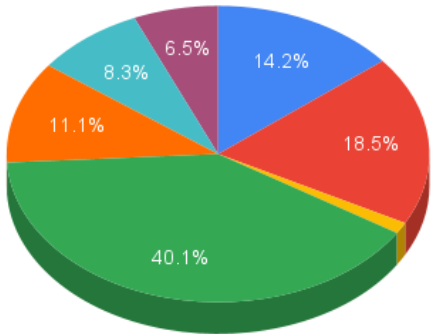
Education achievement levels have shifted considerably since the last survey, with the largest change being in the category of individuals who report having a bachelor’s degree dropping from 18.5% down to only 8%; as well as an increase in respondents stating that they have not completed high school at 29%, when it previously was 8.3%. Analysis of survey responses indicate that 25% of respondents were high school age, which may have affected the large changes in the outcomes recorded.



2023 Community Action Survey Reponses: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Associates Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Doctorate
- High school diploma/GED
- Master's Degree
- Not completed high school
- Professional/Technical Certificate or License



2021 Community Action Survey Responses: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

B. Qualitative Data

Focus Groups

While conducting this needs assessment, CSET held a series of focus groups throughout the county, reaching out to a wide range of residents, including those who live in rural areas, senior citizens, parents, youth and young adults, those who are experiencing homelessness, and members of the faith community. These focus groups were conducted on the following dates.

- 3/7/2023 Porterville Senior Center
- 3/8/2023 John Muir Charter School, Visalia
- 3/8/2023 Porterville #LEAD Meeting
- 3/10/2023 Pixley Family Resource Center
- 3/13/2023 Farmersville Senior Center
- 3/15/2023 St. Paul's Church, Visalia
- 3/21/2023 Back2Work/ECO program, Visalia
- 3/22/2023 Farmersville #GROW Meeting
- 3/23/2023 Tech Connect, Cutler-Orosi High School

These focus groups were conducted by pairs of CSET staff who opened the meetings by giving a brief overview of CSET's mission and the purpose of the Community Needs Assessment.

Participants were provided with snacks and water during the meetings, and CSET presenters held a raffle during each meeting where participants received a ticket upon arrival. Prizes for the raffle were CSET-branded lunch bags which contained a keychain lanyard and stress ball.

Overall, 146 community members participated in these focus groups. Each meeting was useful in gaining perspectives of local residents. The following paragraphs share a few highlights from a sample of these focus groups. A brief description of the communities in which these focus groups were held prefaces the meeting summaries.

City of Porterville

A city of 59,000 residents, Porterville is a small community nestled in the agricultural hub of Tulare County. Surrounded by orange groves, the average household income is just over \$44,000 per year. The most recent census has indicated a rise in the household income of 0.621%. Home ownership in this region is at 50.4%, less than the national average of 64.4%, with the average property value estimated at \$182,100. In total, 23% of all Porterville residents are living in poverty (13,000 residents), with the highest demographic of this group being Hispanic female children, ages 6-11 years old. Home to two colleges, San Joaquin Valley College and Porterville College, the most common job groups by number of people living in Porterville are office and administrative support occupations (2,903 people), followed by farming, fishing, and forestry occupations (American Community Survey, 2021).

Porterville Senior Center – Daily Congregate Lunch

CSET team members hosted a focus group during lunch at the Porterville Senior Center. The Porterville Senior Center is operated by CSET and provides a healthy congregate lunch for low-income seniors facing food insecurity. During these lunches, a nominal donation is requested, but no qualified senior will be denied a meal due to a lack of ability to contribute. Twenty guests attended this meeting and participated in the focus group. At the start of the meeting, Community Action Surveys were distributed in English or Spanish and guests received instructions on how to complete their surveys. During this focus group, participants stated they would like to see more options for exercise for seniors (such as yoga, dance, or Zumba), and said there was a need for prevention programs in the community to address needs such as drug use for youth and senior

abuse.

Census-Designated Place, Pixley

One of the smallest communities in Tulare County, Pixley was first settled in 1882, making it one of the oldest communities in our region. One of the many farming communities, Pixley is home to a robust dairy industry, as well as croplands producing cotton, alfalfa, beans, grains, and more (Tulare County Economic Development Department, 2023). An estimated 4,322 live in Pixley, the majority of whom are employed in the farming, fishing, and forestry occupations. The median household income of families in Pixley is \$32,209, the home ownership rate is 44%, and 31% are living below the federal poverty line (American Community Survey, 2021).

Pixley Family Resource Center

A focus group was held at the Pixley Family Resource Center (part of the Pixley School District Office) at 9:00 am during the week. This meeting time was chosen to make it as easy as possible for parents to attend after dropping their children off at school. Eight parents attended this meeting and were offered water and snacks from CSET, as well as coffee and breakfast items from the Pixley Family Resource Center. Participants during this meeting shared that a major need for the community is a food pantry, along with rental housing options.

Participants shared lack of housing options has caused a group to move to an area outside of Pixley, where they are living in a collection of dilapidated trailers without electricity. Participants expressed concern about the safety of those who are living there. Additionally, participants shared that they would like larger companies to come and do business in Pixley, such as Walmart or Family Dollar, but feel that they are blocked from doing so by others who want to support the small businesses of Pixley that are already there. Attendance at this meeting was low, most likely due to the inclement weather and localized flooding during that time.

City of Visalia

The largest city in Tulare County, the average income and property values are far greater

than in the communities of Porterville and Pixley, with the most recent census showing the average household income is \$66,668. The median property value in Visalia is \$254,600. There is a 59% home ownership rate in this community and 14.5% of residents are identified as living in poverty.

Back2Work/ECO Program – CSET Visalia Main Office, Visalia, CA

CSET held a focus group, engaging job training participants from several of its job readiness, training, and placement programs. CSET recognizes the nuanced yet different needs people have in order to overcome barriers to employment. One of these programs is Back2Work, which provides second chance paid transitional employment opportunities for underserved adults with a priority on recruiting veterans. Another program is ECO (Environmental Cleanup Opportunities), which aids in litter abatement projects throughout Visalia. The ECO program is a paid work experience program for participants who are currently homeless or have recently experienced homelessness. During our focus group with participants of these programs, participants shared their suggestions on how to address homelessness in Tulare County and how to share information on available resources for those in need. More transitional housing, life skills classes, and access to substance abuse prevention programs were identified as needed resources in the community. Participants also shared the need for help in clearing up court records (such as paying fines, completing community service, attending parenting classes, and more). Justice-involved individuals stated that it is difficult to find employment when they have so much debt in the court system.

IV. Appendices

Appendix A – References

1. *2020 Decennial Census*, www.census.gov
2. *2021 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates*
3. *2021 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates*
4. *Community Action Partnership, CAP Engagement Network, Tulare County – 2017-2021*
5. *National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc. Farmworker COVID-19 Community Assessments: Monterey, Kern, Tulare Counties, California Profile, August – October 2021*
6. *Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, Agri-Business Industry Sector Profile, accessed April 2023*
7. *United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, NACIS 11: Earnings by Occupation, Farmworkers and laborers, crop, nursery, and greenhouse, 2021*
8. *United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021, Poverty Children Below 200% FPL in Tulare County*
9. *California Department of Education, 2021 – 2022 Five Year Cohort Graduation Rate, Tulare County, accessed April 2023*
10. *“Tulare County, Valley lead the nation in illiteracy,” Reggie Ellis, The Sun-Gazette, May 23, 2022*
11. *California Employment Development Department, Claimants by Zip Code with County, Report BLS041, accessed April 2023*

12. *"Texas Roadhouse, Panda Express, to bring 230 new jobs to Visalia," Lauren Jennings, Visalia Times-Delta, October 24, 2022*
13. *"Photo Release" California High-Speed Rail Celebrates Creating 10,000 Construction Jobs," California High Speed Rail Authority, February 14, 2023*
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15. *Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance, Point-in-Time report, 2022*
16. *National Council on Aging, "Get the Facts on Economic Security for Seniors," July 15, 2022, www.ncoa.org*
17. *Congressional Research Service, "Poverty Among the Populations Aged 65 and Older," December 6, 2022*
18. *"The Basic Facts About Women in Poverty," Center for American Progress, 2020*
19. *National Center for Education Statistics, Fall Enrollment Report, Tulare County: Age category, gender, attendance status, and level of student: Fall 2021*
20. *American Community Survey Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2021*
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22. *United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, USDA Food Research Atlas 2019*
23. *Tulare County Economic Development Department, <https://tularecountyeconomicdevelopment.org/communities/pixley/>, accessed April 21, 2023*

Appendix B – Community Action Survey

Community Action Survey - English Version 2023



Tulare County Community Survey 2023

Dear Tulare County Stakeholders,

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) has served as the Community Action Agency for Tulare County since 1984 with the mission to inspire youth, families, and communities to achieve self-reliance through innovative pathways and collaboration.

You are invited to share your ideas about the most important services needed in Tulare County. Your personal information will not be shared with any other party and will only be reported anonymously with other responses received. Thank you for completing this survey.

Sincerely,

Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner
Executive Director

Saludos Residentes del Condado de Tulare,

Community Services Employment Training, Inc. (CSET) ha servido como la agencia de acción comunitaria para el Condado de Tulare desde 1984 con la misión de inspirar a la juventud, familias y comunidades y ayudar a reducir las causas de la pobreza y mantener la visión de comunidades saludables, prósperas y seguras.

Usted está invitado en compartir sus ideas sobre los más importantes servicios necesitados en el Condado de Tulare. Su información personal no será compartida con otros y solo se incluirá en conjunto con otras respuestas recibidas. ¡Gracias por compartir su opinión en esta encuesta!

Sinceramente,

*Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner
Directora Ejecutiva*

ACTUAL SURVEY BEGINS ON PAGE 3

Thank you for completing this survey! We appreciate your feedback.

Tell Us About Yourself – This Survey is Anonymous.

Where do you live and work? Check all that apply.

- I live in Tulare County I work in Tulare County I go to school in Tulare County
- I work for a Public/Social Service Agency in Tulare County Other (please specify): _____

I live in: Visalia Porterville Tulare Lindsay Dinuba Other (please specify): _____

Race/Ethnicity: Check all that apply.

- White/Caucasian Black/African-American Hispanic/Latino
- Asian
- Native American/Alaska Native Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Other (please specify): _____

Age: Under 18 years 18 to 30 years 31 to 59 years 60 to 69 years 70 years or older

Sex: Male Female Non-Binary

Number of people in your home: _____ **Total Gross Annual Household Income (before taxes):** \$ _____

Which of the following categories describe your employment status? Check all that apply

- Full-time (32 hours or more) Part-time (less than 32 hours) Self-employed Unemployed
- Retired Disabled Student Other: _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Not completed high school High school diploma/GED Associates Degree
- Prof/Tech Certificate or License Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree
- Doctorate

Which of the following categories best describes your housing status?

- Homeowner Renter Living free with someone Homeless Transitional housing Other: _____

Which of the following categories best describes your household composition?

- Live alone Single-parent, children under 18 Two parents, children under 18
- Two or more adults, no children Grandparent(s) raising grandchildren Other: _____

Did you receive public benefits in the last 2 years? Check all that apply.

- Food Stamps WIC CalWORKs Healthy Families/Medicaid/MediCal
- Unemployment Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) Social Security

Income (SSI)

Subsidized housing/Rental Assistance (HUD/Section 8)

CalFresh

Has anyone in your household been served by a CSET Program within the last 2 years? Check all that apply.

Job Training

Utility Assistance

Home Weatherization

Sequoia Community Corps

Housing Counseling

Free tax preparation

Youth Workforce

Community office (e.g., Pixley,

Earlimart)

After School Programs

Senior Services (e.g., Meals on Wheels)

Homeless Services

Other: _____

Which of the following barriers prevent you from seeking assistance with your basic needs? Check all that apply.

Not eligible for assistance

Have to work during service hours

No transportation

Don't know where to go for help

I don't want to ask for help

Services not available in my community

Prior bad experience with service

No childcare while receiving assistance

Don't speak the language

Felonies/criminal record

Health/disability

Other: _

Which of the following services are readily available to you and your family? Check all that apply.

Smartphone

Computer

Internet Access

None of these

<u><i>What are your Needs?</i></u>	
Please select your TOP THREE issues and concerns for EACH QUESTION . Place your selections (LETTER) in the boxes to the right.	
What services are <u>most needed</u> for YOUTH in your community?	
A	After school programs
B	High school dropout prevention
C	College and career preparation
D	Life skills classes
E	Gang prevention
F	Pregnancy prevention
G	Nutrition and summer food
H	Summer jobs
I	Other (please specify):
First Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
Second Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
Third Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
What services are <u>most needed</u> for FAMILIES in your community?	
A	Employment skills training and job placement
B	Self-employment training and counseling
C	High school diploma or GED attainment
D	Rental, utility, and food assistance
E	Homebuyer education, foreclosure prevention, and financial counseling
F	Homeless prevention and housing
G	Parenting skills training
H	Domestic violence counseling
I	Wellness and nutrition education
J	Substance abuse recovery programs
K	Mental health counseling
L	Other (please specify):
First Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
Second Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
Third Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
What services are <u>most needed</u> for SENIORS in your community?	
A	Recreation, arts, and crafts
B	Computer classes
C	Wellness and nutrition education
D	Meals and food distribution
E	Adult day care
F	Elder abuse prevention
G	Transportation assistance
H	Home visitation and check-in
I	Volunteer and community service
J	Other (please specify)
First Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
Second Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
Third Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
What services are <u>most needed</u> to improve the LIVABILITY OF YOUR COMMUNITY?	
A	Increased public transit
B	Parks, waterways and trails
First Choice <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	

C	How to serve on a community group or government board	Second Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Third Choice <input type="checkbox"/>
D	Formation of community service and advocacy groups	
E	More ways to volunteer	
F	Other (please specify):	

Community Action Survey – Spanish 2023

Condado de Tulare

Encuesta Comunitaria 2023

Saludos Residentes del Condado de Tulare,

Community Services Employment Training, Inc. (CSET) ha servido como la agencia de acción comunitaria para el Condado de Tulare desde 1984 con la misión de inspirar a la juventud, familias y comunidades y ayudar a reducir las causas de la pobreza y mantener la visión de comunidades saludables, prósperas y seguras.

Usted está invitado en compartir sus ideas sobre los más importantes servicios necesitados en el Condado de Tulare. Su información personal no será compartida con otros y solo se incluirá en conjunto con otras respuestas recibidas. ¡Gracias por compartir su opinión en esta encuesta!

Sinceramente,

Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner
Directora Ejecutiva

Dear Tulare County Stakeholders,

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You are invited to share your ideas about the most important services needed in Tulare County. Your personal information will not be shared with any other party and will only be reported anonymously with other responses received. Thank you for completing this survey.

Sincerely,

*Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner
Executive Director*

ENCUESTA COMIENZA EN PÁGINA 3

¡Gracias por completar esta encuesta! Agradecemos sus comentarios.

Por Favor Díganos Acerca de Usted – Esta Encuesta es Anónima.

¿Cuál es su relación con el Condado de Tulare? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Vivo en el Condado de Tulare Trabajo en el Condado de Tulare Atiendo una escuela en el condado
 Trabajo para una agencia de servicios públicos/sociales en el condado Otro (favor de explicar): _____
Yo vivo en: Visalia Porterville Tulare Lindsay Dinuba Otra (favor de indicar): _____

Raza/Origen Étnico: Marque todas las que se aplican

- Caucásica/Blanco Negro/Afro-americano Hispano/latino Asiático
 Indio/Nativo de Alaska Nativo de Hawái/Isla Pacífica Otro (favor de indicar): _____

Edad: Menos de 18 años 18 a 30 años 31 a 59 años 60 a 69 años 70 años o mayor

Sexo: Masculino Femenino Género no Binario

¿Cuántas personas viven en su hogar? _____

Ingresos Brutos Anuales para todos en el hogar (antes de impuestos): \$ _____

¿Cuál(es) describe(n) su situación en el empleo? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Tiempo completo (32 horas o más) Tiempo parcial (menos de 32 horas) Propio negocio Desempleado
 Retirado Deshabilitado Estudiante Otro: _____

¿Cuál es el nivel educativo más alto que ha completado?

- No termino la escuela secundaria Diploma de escuela secundaria Grado asociado Doctorado
 Certificado licencia técnica Licenciatura Maestría Doctorado

¿Cuál mejor describe el estado de su vivienda?

- Viviendo gratis con alguien Sin hogar Vivienda transitoria Dueño de casa Rentero
 Otro: _____

¿Cuál mejor describe su composición de su familia?:

- Vivo solo(a) P/Madre solo(a), niños menores de 18 Dos padres, niños menores de 18
 Dos o más adultos, ningún niño Abuelos criando a sus nietos Otro: _____

¿Recibió alguno de los siguientes beneficios públicos en los últimos 2 años? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Cupones para alimentos WIC CalWORKs Healthy Families/Medicaid/MediCal
 Desempleo Ingresos de Seguro Social para Discapacidad (SSDI) Ingresos de Seguro Social (SSI)
 Vivienda con subsidio/Asistencia con la Renta (HUD/Section 8) CalFresh

¿Alguien en su familia ha sido servido por un programa de CSET dentro de los últimos 2 años? Marque todas las que se aplican

- Entrenamiento de empleo Asistencia con la cuenta de energía
 Programa de climatización Sequoia Community Corps
 Consejería de viviendas Programa de asistencia con preparación de impuestos
 Desarrollo de trabajo para jóvenes Centro comunitario rural (e.g. Pixley, Earlimart)
 Programas extracurriculares Servicios para Personas Mayores (e.g. Meals on Wheels)
 Servicios para Personas sin Hogar Otro: _____

¿Cuál de los siguientes obstáculos le impide buscar ayuda con sus necesidades básicas? Marque todas las que se aplican

- No califico para asistencia Tengo que trabajar durante las horas de servicio
 No tengo transportación No sé a dónde ir para ayuda
 No quiero pedir ayuda Servicios no están disponibles en mi comunidad

Mala experiencia anterior

No hay cuidado de niños durante la asistencia

Idioma de servicios

Ofensas criminales

Salud/deseabilidad

Otro: _____

¿Cuáles de los siguientes servicios están disponibles para usted y su familia? Marque todas las que se aplican

Teléfono

Computadora

Acceso al Internet

Ninguno de estos

POR FAVOR DÍGANOS ACERCA DE SU COMUNIDADPor favor seleccione sus **TRES PRINCIPALES** problemas y preocupaciones de **CADA PREGUNTA**.Coloque sus selecciones (**LETRA**) en las cajas a la derecha.

¿Qué programas se <i>necesitan más</i> para los JÓVENES en su comunidad?		Primera Opción
A	Programas extracurriculares	<input type="text"/>
B	Prevención de deserción escolar de secundaria	
C	Preparación para el colegio o carrera	
D	Clases de habilidades de vida y/o relación	Segunda Opción
E	Programas de prevención de pandillas	<input type="text"/>
F	Programas de prevención del embarazo	
G	Programa de alimentos de verano y nutrición	
H	Empleo de verano	
I	Otro (favor de explicar):	Tercera Opción
		<input type="text"/>
¿Qué programas son <i>más necesarios</i> para FAMILIAS en su comunidad?		Primera Opción
A	Habilidades de empleo capacitación y asistencia de colocación	<input type="text"/>
B	Asesoramiento y capacitación de empleo por cuenta propia	
C	Educación alternativa para la obtención de un diploma o GED	
D	Programas de asistencia financiera (asistencia de alquiler, utilidades y de comida)	Segunda Opción
E	Educación para compradores de viviendas; consejería de embargo hipotecaria o de financiera	<input type="text"/>
F	Programas de realojamiento y prevención de falta de vivienda	
G	Entrenamiento y asesoramiento de habilidades para padres	
H	Consejería de violencia doméstica	
I	Educación de salud y nutrición	Tercera Opción
J	Programas de recuperación de la drogadicción	<input type="text"/>
K	Programas de consejería de salud mental	
L	Otro (favor de explicar):	
¿Qué tipo de programa se <i>necesitan más</i> para personas MAYORES en su comunidad?		Primera Opción
A	Actividades recreativas, de artes y artesanía	<input type="text"/>
B	Clases para computadoras	
C	Programas de salud y bienestar	
D	Comidas y distribución de alimentos	Segunda Opción
E	Programas de guarderías para adultos	<input type="text"/>
F	Programas de prevención de maltrato a personas mayores	
G	Asistencia de transporte	
H	Visitas domiciliarias y programas de apoyo para padres	
I	Programas de servicio voluntario y de comunidad	Tercera Opción
J	Otro (favor de explicar):	<input type="text"/>
¿Qué programas son <i>más necesarios</i> para MEJORAR LA CALIDAD DE VIDA DE SU COMUNIDAD?		Primera Opción
A	Aumento del servicio de transporte público	<input type="text"/>
B	Proyectos ecológicos urbanos (por ejemplo, cursos de agua, senderos y árboles)	
C	Entrenamientos de liderazgo de la comunidad	Segunda Opción
D	Formación de grupos de servicio y defensa de la comunidad	<input type="text"/>
E	Más oportunidades de ser voluntario	
F	Otro (favor de explicar):	Tercera Opción
		<input type="text"/>