
WARREN-FOREST COUNTIES ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL, INC

2015 Community Needs Assessment

Executive Summary

Purpose | The Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. (EOC) is a private, non-profit Community Action Agency. The EOC, as part of a 43-agency network of Community Action Agencies covering the 67 counties in Pennsylvania, utilizes available funding to provide programs and services focused on reducing the number of individuals and families living in poverty within our community. Since its inception, the EOC has worked tirelessly to empower individuals and families to obtain an improved economic position through services offered while instilling an attitude of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. At present, the EOC has approximately 60 full-time employees, with an annual operating budget of just over \$5 million. The Board of Directors responds to the needs of the local community through its approved program agenda currently offering nearly 30 programs to low-income families and individuals.

The Community Needs Assessment for 2015 has been completed in accordance with agency standards and allows the agency and Board to strategically plan for future endeavors and programming. Assessing the needs of the two-county service area is essential to ensuring that the programs and services offered by the agency address the unique needs of low-income individuals and families in our community. Further, this assessment guides future planning initiatives by identifying not only the current needs of the community but also, current trends affecting area demographics and gaps in service for those in need.

Methodology | The data presented within the Community Needs Assessment was amassed in three ways. Demographics and statistical information was gathered from sources which include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Census Bureau, Northwest Regional Commission Skills Gap Analysis, American Community Survey (ACS), the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce and Economic Development, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), the Pennsylvania State Data Center, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other federal, state, and local government sources. Further, the EOC utilized information obtained through focus group sessions with area social service providers and community organizations. Focus groups have included input from Deerfield Behavioral Health, Warren Forest Hi Ed Council, Warren Public Library, the Housing Authority, Warren Chamber of Commerce, Business, and Industry, Forest-Warren Human Services, Drug & Alcohol, Children & Youth, Warren County School District, Forest County School District, Adagio Health, Experience Area Office for the Aging, and Warren General Hospital to name only a few. A complete listing can be found in Section III of this document. A final measure used in obtaining data included surveys to social service providers, community stakeholders, and clients.

Needs Assessment Findings | A combination of data, focus group discussions, and survey findings worked to reveal the key needs within the community. In general, these needs represent the greatest barriers for low-income individuals and families seeking to become self-sufficient in Warren and Forest Counties. The areas of greatest concern can be broken down into four topics: housing, employment, nutrition, and transportation. Compounding these issues are long-term population declines, a growing elderly population, decreasing numbers of young adults and families, economic dislocation, a strained medical system, and a continuously rising poverty rate.

Housing has been a frequently identified need for several reasons. The first is that there is a lack of subsidized and supportive housing options in the area which is plagued by generational poverty, population decline, and little to no economic growth. People struggle to find and keep affordable housing. Those with additional barriers such as a mental health diagnosis, disability, or addiction are further burdened. The local Housing Authority stated the following:

“There has been a noticeable increase within the last three years in housing for young/disabled persons. A 19% increase has been observed at The Towers (subsidized housing). The primary disability identified is mental health with physical disabilities representing less than 5% of those being housed.”

A long waiting list for subsidized housing regularly forces low-income individuals and families, regardless of situation, to obtain non-subsidized housing. In Warren and Forest County, finding suitable housing that meets the needs of the family and remains affordable is a constant problem. Further, the cost of utility and security deposits consistently poses a challenge to low-income households. It is not common for an apartment to include utilities in the rental cost and thus, an additional household expense is added to the budget of an already struggling household. Last, the age of the housing stock in the service area is older than what is typically found elsewhere. This presents challenges for both owners and renters, particularly low-income households, as the cost to maintain and heat older homes can be significantly higher.

A final need in terms of housing pertains to transitional and emergency housing. There is only one emergency shelter in Warren and Forest Counties which must adhere to guidelines when determining if a household can be served. In this instance, the household must be at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI) which can sometimes disqualify a household in need. Additional challenges include the fact that the service area is rural with a lack of public transportation so the location of the shelter is not ideal for some. Those served by the shelter can only stay for a 30-day period of time. This is sometimes not enough time to obtain employment, establish mainstream benefits / services, or locate a suitable, permanent housing option which is affordable for the client. Last, there appears to be a general lack of awareness on where services are located, what services are available, and how to access them. This point is relevant to not just the emergency shelter but, also all social service programs in the area. In terms of transitional housing, there are available options for those fleeing a domestic violence situation however; there is no transitional housing available for persons exiting the prison system. This is applicable to both the county jails and the State Correctional Institute in Forest County.

Employment is also an oft cited concern for Warren and Forest Counties. Warren and Forest Counties are rural areas where there are no new employers moving into the area. Projected growth within top industries for the area is minimal and primarily due to an aging work force which is likely to retire within the next ten years. It is unclear if there will be qualified persons to replace workers in these positions due to several factors. One is the high number of people who have only a high school diploma, GED, or neither. In the service area this equates to over 60% of the population. While on-the-job training is possible, social service agencies, organizations, and providers are observing a lack of motivation and apathy among their often shared clients. This lack of motivation is further

compounded by a lack of soft skills needed to obtain and maintain good employment within the area. These would include punctuality, self-motivation, and reliability. Further, employers state that finding people willing to take and able to pass a drug test can prove challenging. It should be further noted that substance abuse has been an identified problem in this area in prior Needs Assessments and is one that continues to plague the area despite the presence of multiple providers offering outpatient drug and alcohol services.

There is also a lack of employment opportunities which pay a living wage. Even though the service area has a lower cost of living, assessment findings indicate that there are many people who may be working yet are still not able to cover their basic needs. In the area, wages are lower when compared to other locations. People are often underemployed, unable to obtain a full time position, or not being paid a living wage with benefits. This phenomenon partially explains why the unemployment rate for the area is relatively low yet the poverty rate continues to increase. A final problem related to employment is having affordable childcare. There are many options in the area however; finding child care when working non-traditional hours is often a challenge if friends and family are not an option. As aforementioned, the cost of child care can sometimes be prohibitive if a parent or caregiver cannot earn enough to outweigh the added expense.

Transportation is a problem within the service area which often becomes a barrier to self-sufficiency for low-income households. There is only one means of public transportation within Warren County and no public transportation options in Forest County. Both counties are rural with roadways that often follow the natural terrain of the area and geographic features of the area. Further, there are no major highways or interstates which lead directly to either county. Compounding all of this is the cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle. Households typically rely on having transportation in order to get to medical appointments, run errands, and most important, to get to and from work. Low-income and households that are struggling often have difficulty in securing reliable transportation. This struggle is two-fold. A household lacks the credit history and down payment to purchase a vehicle at a price that is affordable. Second, a household which is already struggling is unable to maintain a vehicle and keep it in good working order long term. Public transportation in Warren County is restricted to a bus system. Multiple routes are offered but these are limited in where they go and on what time schedule. All buses cease running after 6pm so those needing transportation after this time are unable to use the bus system. The lack of reliable transportation and the ability to afford it affects multiple areas of a person's life. Service providers cite transportation as an issue for clients trying to maintain / obtain employment, follow up with necessary medical appointments or services, attend job skill training / GED classes /certification classes, and participate in needed programs or services which may include drug and alcohol counseling, mental health, behavioral, probation, or early intervention services for children.

A final area of concern which was identified through the Needs Assessment is nutrition. Surveys and focus groups have indicated that not only is the rising cost of food prohibitive to families eating nutritious food but that there is a growing lack of knowledge about nutrition. Parents have demonstrated a lack of knowledge in regard to meal planning, preparation of nutritional foods like fruit and vegetables, and what a nutritious diet looks like. As a result, families are eating more fast or pre-packaged food options. Contributing to this is an increase in households that can be identified as the "working poor." In this situation, which includes two-parent households, the family

struggles to meet their basic needs despite working. Additionally, a family where both parents are working will be more rushed and pressured to make meals. The widespread lack of reliable transportation could also play a role as it limits where a family will purchase food. There are fewer grocery stores in the service area and families may be forced, due to budget and transportation, to utilize convenience stores which typically are more expensive and cater to pre-packaged foods. Poor nutrition can ultimately lead to poor health which is in fact being observed throughout the area. Head Start data shows a considerable increase in the enrolled number of children identified with childhood obesity. Long term this can result in heart disease and diabetes, among other complications, however; both heart disease and diabetes have been identified in a 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment as being health problems in the service area.

Summary of Findings | Housing, employment, and transportation have long been problems plaguing the area. While programs and services exist to address these issues they are generally multi-faceted problems where no one solution can provide the answer. Nutrition was not an area of need identified in past assessments but as health problems point toward poor nutrition it is clear that it is one which needs to be recognized as we are already seeing the effects in climbing rates for childhood obesity, Type II diabetes, and heart disease. Recommendations based on assessment findings are as follows:

- Continue offering a variety of housing programs which address the needs of the community. Currently, the Warren-Forest Counties EOC has 29 units of affordable, permanent housing for individuals with a diagnosed mental health condition. The EOC also has a PATH program targeted at providing services to individuals with serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Finally, the EOC runs a Transitional Housing programs for victims of domestic violence and the sole emergency shelter in Warren County. All of these programs should be continued with a continued effort to expand affordable housing options and assist those in our area facing homelessness.
- Housing affordability is another aspect of the housing problem. Utility assistance, rental assistance, and weatherization programs are all offered through the EOC.
- There are no transitional housing options for those exiting the prison system. The lack of stable housing can lead to longer prison stays simply because people have no place to go. The instability can also result in recidivism as people find themselves unable to access supports, find employment, and succeed without a stable home. Identifying funding opportunities, properties, and partnerships which could result in a transitional housing location for this segment of the population could be an avenue for the EOC to pursue.
- There are no new employers in the area however, jobs do exist. A major problem being identified by employers and service providers is the lack of motivation and soft skills. This is particularly true of the younger age cohorts which will need to be prepared to replace older workers as they retire in the next 10 years. The EOC should continue to explore partnerships and programs which would build on soft skills for job seekers. This is already in process partly through programs offered by the local CareerLink and the EOC's Work Ready program. Focus could be placed on pursuing funding and growing these programs to

expand services. Partnerships with area providers and agencies to better promote these types of programs would be beneficial to both providers and job seekers.

- Transportation is difficult in that it ultimately becomes an affordability problem. Low-income households cannot afford to maintain reliable transportation however; not having reliable transportation puts their jobs at risk or limits where they are able to work. Both scenarios negatively impact the household income. A lack of transportation can also limit an individual's ability to improve job skills or employment through class offerings, including GED, at Warren-Forest Hi-Ed Council, the local libraries, or CareerLink.
- The EOC has developed and launched a transportation program. This program should be continued and adjusted as necessary to suit the needs of the target audience. It is a 12 month program and should be evaluated for success as the initial participants complete the program in 2016. Additional funding should be pursued if the program is proving to be successful.
- Nutrition, including the lack of knowledge among area households, is fast becoming an issue in the area. Seeking out grants that would fund educational programming or initiatives such as a community garden is recommended. Additionally, the agency should seek out partnerships within the community to find ways to better educate parents and families on nutrition, food preparation, meal-planning, and budgeting for healthy meals. Education should focus not only on the HOW TO aspect but also WHY nutrition is important and the long term impacts poor nutrition can have on health.

Identified Social / Demographic Trends | Analysis of most recent data combined with survey findings and focus group sessions has identified the following trends which further describe rural Warren and Forest Counties:

- Steady, slow decline in overall population with shrinking numbers of children and adults in the 20 to 34 age range. As these age cohorts decline; the 65 + age cohort is growing as baby boomers enter their mid to late 60s.
- A growing number of households, particularly those with children, living in poverty.
- The impact of generational poverty on individuals who have grown to demonstrate a lack of motivation and apathy toward their situation.
- Strains on the medical system due to a shortage of providers including primary care physicians, dentists, and specialists. This is especially true in Forest County.
- Lack of transportation to available service for clients in need of those services.
- Pronounced substance abuse problems within the area.
- A relatively high number of children with disabilities including developmental, challenging behaviors, and mental health.
- People "falling through the cracks" because of a lack of awareness regarding available organizations and programs, or because of unnecessarily narrow restrictions (i.e. household income or definition of a disability)
- An abundance of social service providers and volunteer organizations that are ready to help low-income families, but often are restricted by funding considerations and a lack of coordinated, long-term planning.

- Lack of transitional or half-way housing for released prisoners or transient/chronic homeless with serious mental health/addiction issues.

Within this environment, the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council has continued to maintain its services. Guided by our diverse Board of Directors, the agency will continue to try new, innovative strategies and seek out recommendations which continue to focus on creative planning and streamlining the service delivery.

A general description of the service area and a detailed accounting of current demographics and statistical information is explored in Section I and Section II. Gaps in services as well as a complete analysis of current program offerings by the agency are provided in detail in Sections III and IV of the Needs Assessment. Section III focuses on findings from surveys and focus groups as well as general discussion and interviews with service providers. Section IV looks specifically at the programs and services offered by the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council.

Section I | Community Overview

Predominately rural, Warren and Forest Counties are located in northwest Pennsylvania. In both counties, a significant portion of all available land is either State Park or National Forest. This is a primary factor contributing the rural nature of the area. In Warren County, the Allegheny National Forest covers approximately 119,000 acres or 26% of the total acreage. Forest County, in comparison, has dedicated 43.5% of its acreage to the Allegheny National Forest or hosting the Cook Forest State Park. Consequently, the population density found across both counties is significantly lower than the 284.80 persons per square mile found on average throughout the State of Pennsylvania. Warren and Forest Counties, both noticeably smaller, have a population density of 46.9 and 11.6 persons per square mile respectively. There is no easy way in or out of the area via a major interstate or thruway. In fact, the highway system follows the topography of the Appalachian Plateau, winding steeply through wooded hillsides and often parallel to the county's creeks and the Allegheny River. Geographically, the Warren County School District is the second largest school district in the state spanning 884.13 square miles but, as mentioned, a large portion of this area is uninhabited.

As is typical of rural areas in traditional "rust belt" states, Warren and Forest Counties have experienced significant population loss over the past several decades, as jobs, especially those in the formerly well paying manufacturing sector, move elsewhere. Typically, service sector jobs that have come to replace these losses do not pay as well and offer fewer benefits. This scenario creates long-term social and economic strains for remaining families in the area. In particular, this impacts families dependent on Head Start and similar services available through the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council and/or other area social service providers.

The City of Warren (also the county seat) is located along the Allegheny River and Conewango Creek. It is the only city and most populated location in the two-county area. It serves as the headquarters for the Allegheny National and the Cornplanter State Forests. The Allegheny Reservoir and Kinzua Dam are located in close proximity to the City and are within Warren County. Warren includes a twenty-eight block Historic District, the largest in State of Pennsylvania, with various entities committed to preserving designated historic structures as the once industry based economy shifts toward one focused on attracting tourism. The County has become well known for its year round outdoor recreation which includes hiking, cycling, boating, fishing, and hunting. Of note, the section of the Allegheny River running from the Kinzua Dam to the City of Warren has been designated a "Recreational Waterway" by the United States Congress.

Under Pennsylvania law, Warren County is comprised of three types of incorporated municipalities. Warren is the sole City. There are then five boroughs: Bear Lake, Clarendon, Sugar Grove, Tidioute, and Youngsville. Smaller than a borough; there are twenty-one recognized townships which include: Brokenstraw, Cherry Grove, Columbus, Conewango, Deerfield, Eldred, Elk, Farmington, Freehold, Glade, Limestone, Mead, Pine Grove, Pittsfield, Pleasant, Sheffield, Southwest, Spring Creek, Sugar Grove, Triumph, and Watson. Akeley, Lander, and Torpedo are not incorporated yet but are considered part of Warren County.

Adjacent Forest County holds the distinction of being the least populous county in the state with nearly 50% of the available acreage dedicated to the State Park and National Forest. Despite a small population, Forest County is famous as a rural retreat touting itself as “Pennsylvania’s Best Kept Secret.” There are no traffic lights, four lane highways, radio stations, or even a daily newspaper. Similar to Warren County, Forest County focuses on promoting itself as a tourist destination for the outdoor enthusiast offering scenic views, year round outdoor recreation, hiking, camping, boating, fishing, and hunting. For residents of Forest County, the economy revolves around natural resources including timber, gas and oil. The construction of the State Correctional Institute – Forest located in Marienville in 2004 led to one of the largest population booms in the counties of Pennsylvania between 2000 and 2013 with a 55.60% net change. Population growth since this point in time has been negligible.

Estimates from the United States Census Bureau and the American Community Survey (2012 Data Release), state that the population of Warren County is 41,429 persons while Forest County is 7,696. These figures indicate a - 5.55% and 55.60% net change for each respective county since the 2000 census data was released. In comparison, the State of Pennsylvania experienced an overall 3.67% increase in population. The population, both historically and at present, is homogenous in its ethnic composition and is predominately white. Data from the American Community Survey, which averages information collected between 2008 and 2012, describes the population as 94.54% white, 3.38% Black, 0.39% Asian, 0.98% mixed, and 0.71% as other. There is little to suggest that the overly homogenous ethnic composition of the area population will change dramatically at any point in the future.

The median household income in Forest County is \$36,556 with per capita income at \$13,646 and the average income per earner \$22,435. In Warren County the median household income was last reported as \$43,764 with per capita income at \$24,179 and the average income per earner \$31,817. An earner is defined as someone 15 years of age or older receiving any type of income (wages, salaries, benefits, or other) while per capita income is best defined as the total personal income in an area divided by the number of people in the area. The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) from 2013 states that the poverty rate is 14.2% for Warren County and 24.5% for Forest County. Averaged together, the poverty rate for the service area as a whole is 15.4%. The poverty rate in the State of Pennsylvania, based on data from the American Community Survey (2009-2013) is estimated to be slightly lower at 13.3%. The poverty line is defined as the level of income below which one cannot afford to purchase all resources and necessities. There is no discretionary income in this situation. In Warren and Forest Counties it is further worth noting that for all persons aged 0-17, 38% in Forest and 23.1% in Warren County respectively were reported as living at or below the poverty line (100% of poverty). The State, by comparison, reports that 19.3% of all persons aged 0-17 are living in poverty during this same time frame.

Section II | Demographics

POPULATION | The two-county service area spans 1,329 square miles. Of that total area, Warren County comprises 898 square miles and Forest County is the remaining 431 total square miles. As aforementioned, a substantial portion of available acreage in both counties is designated as either the Allegheny National Forest in Warren County or the Allegheny National Forest and Cook State Forest in Forest County. The most populated location in both counties, the City of Warren, is the sole city in the rural, two-county service area. According to the most recent US Census data as well as the American Community Survey, the total population is estimated at 49,125 people. Of these, an estimated 41,429 people reside within Warren County (-5.55% change since 2000) and an estimated 7,696 in Forest County (55.60% change since 2000). The large influx of persons in Forest County (2,750 total persons) can be attributed to the construction of the State Correctional Institute – Forest (SCI – Forest) in Meadville in 2004 which has an average inmate population of 2,200 and employs just over 600 people.

Table 1: Population Change 2000-2013

County	Census 2000 Population	ACS 2009 - 2013 Population	Population Change	% Change
Forest	4,946	7,696	2,750	55.60%
Warren	43,863	41,429	-2,434	-5.55%
Report Area	48,809	49,125	316	0.65%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,731,381	450,327	3.67%
National	281,421,906	311,536,591	30,114,685	10.70%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Population Division, Census 2010. Release Date: February 2011 and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2012 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Data released by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) includes an estimate for the current 2015 population of Warren County and an estimate for the next US Census year in 2020. DCED estimates the current population of Warren County as 40,688 which is only a slight decrease from the 41,429. By 2020, the DCED anticipates a continued slow decline in overall population with age distribution remaining relatively consistent. The exception for the estimated future population of 39,641 is a 3% increase in the 65 and older cohort while all other shifts were within a 1% change up or down. This scenario is a result of the baby boomers aging into the 65 and up cohort by this point in time.

Forest County, the least populated county in the state, has an estimated current population of 7,242 for 2015. This estimate, courtesy of the DCED data, predicts a continued decline in the population by 2020. Anticipated losses are primarily in those ages 40 through 59 while, similar to Warren, the DCED predicts a 3% increase in the 65 and up cohort as baby boomers continue to age into this cohort.

According to the American Community Survey, an average of data collected between 2009 and 2013, in the two-county area the ratio of males to females is nearly even. Females make up approximately 47.77% of the population while males comprise the remaining 52.23%. The following charts further describe the male to female ratio by age grouping. In all cohorts for Warren County, the ratio of males to females is close to 50/50 except for the 65+ age group. In this instance, females comprise 57% of the cohort and males the remaining 43%. This is not surprising as females have a longer life expectancy than do males. The ratios are skewed in Forest County when looking at the 18 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 to 44 age cohorts. In these instances males outnumber females by a wide margin. This can primarily be attributed to the inclusion of the all male inmate population at SCI – Forest. For instance, in the 25 to 34 cohort males outnumber females 1,086 to 193.

Table 2: Population by Gender 2009-2013

County	0 to 4		5 to 17		18 to 24		25 to 34	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Forest	81	82	433	236	803	119	1,086	193
Warren	1,046	986	3,372	3,073	1,521	1,431	2,175	2,019
Report Area	1,127	1,068	3,805	3,309	2,324	1,550	3,261	2,212
TOTAL	2,195		7,114		3,874		5,473	

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

County	35 to 44		45 to 54		55 to 64		65 and Up	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Forest	935	267	495	396	597	491	698	709
Warren	2,467	2,392	3,288	3,238	3,174	3,234	3,222	4,362
Report Area	3,402	2,659	3,783	3,634	3,771	3,725	3,920	5,071
TOTAL	6,061		7,417		7,496		8,991	

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Table 2 also shows the age distribution across the two-county service area. The uneven distribution clearly shows an aging population in both counties with the majority of those living in the area being 45 and up. Those 65 and older comprise 20% of the entire population. The next two largest cohorts, those 45 to 54 and 55 to 64, are nearly the same in number and contribute to the trend of an aging population with fewer families. Since the US Census data released in 2000, cohorts for 0 to 4, 5 to 17, 18 to 24, and 25 to 34 have all experienced slow declines over the last decade. The sharp drop when moving from the 5 to 17 to the 18 to 24 cohort could be attributed to younger people

moving out of the area after graduation from high school. It is likely that those pursuing higher education leave the area and pursue employment elsewhere due to the lack of new industry or jobs in the area and the absence of colleges or universities in either county offering 2 and 4 year degrees.

The slow, continued decline in the number of children under the age of 18 indicates that there are fewer families with children living in Warren and Forest Counties than there have been historically. Data collected by the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council indicates that families with young children are more apt to use various programs and services such as Head Start or Pre-K Counts than households without children. They are also more likely to experience financial strain when trying to meet all the basic needs for the household. The elderly, those 65 and older, are another vulnerable population within the community more likely to access different programs offered by social service agencies.

The following conclusions can be made of the population in Warren and Forest Counties:

1. Adults in the 18 to 34 age range, and to a lesser extent the 35 to 44 range, are migrating outside of the Warren-Forest community. The likely scenario, given age and opportunities within the service area, is that these people are moving to pursue higher education or to seek out employment opportunities.
2. Long term, this trend will result in a continued, slow decline in the overall population, particularly young adults and families with children, coupled with a continued increase in the elderly population.
3. The largest cohort within the population is the aging and/or elderly. The 65+ cohort has the highest number of people with the baby boomer population closely following. These populations, particularly the 65 and up, are more likely to require social services in order to meet all of their basic needs.

Race demographics across the two-county area show the population as predominately white. The homogenous composition of the population is not new and is merely a longstanding, continued trend lacking any outside influences that might indicate this would change. There are few, if any, migrant workers in the two-county area. Further, there are not any new industries or jobs moving into the area that would spark an influx of people into the community.

The aforementioned American Community Survey reports the two-county population as 94.54% white, 3.38% Black, 0.39% Asian, 0.71% other, and 0.98% as mixed race. The homogenous nature of the two-county area's population is not new. The one exception to note would be the change in demographics which can be almost fully attributed to the State Correctional Institute – Forest in Marienville. Once construction was complete there was a noticeable jump in the Black population; specifically black males living in Forest County. Data from the 2000 US Census reported 113 Black people living in Forest County. The most recent data, taken after the construction and opening of the prison, reports that there are now 1,466 (1,457 male /9 female) Blacks living in Forest County. Race demographics from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for the State Correctional Institute – Forest (SCI Forest) report that the inmate population is generally over the 2200 person max capacity with over 50% of the inmates reported as being Black.

POVERTY | The number of persons within the two-county area living at or below the poverty line, as determined by the Federal Poverty Guidelines, is 6,940 according to the United States Census (2010) and Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013. This is equivalent to 15.4% of the total population.

Based on the threshold set by the Federal Poverty Guidelines, the poverty rate determined for an area can be misleading and often presents a more positive picture of the area than what may be occurring in reality. In order to understand this phenomena one must first understand how the poverty rate is calculated. The rate is determined using an antiquated formula for determining if a household is in poverty. The calculation is based on the estimated cost of food and assumes that a household spends one third of available resources on this basic necessity. For example, the government takes the estimated cost to feed a family of four for one year and breaks that number down into a monthly cost. The monthly estimated food cost is then multiplied by 3 with the result representing a household at 100% of poverty. Using this calculation method in present times provides an inaccurate measure as it neglects other basic necessities including housing, childcare, transportation, and health care which can often place greater demands on a family's resources. A more accurate calculation would set food costs at one fifth of the household budget. Taking this into consideration; the poverty line is simply a standard of measure used primarily to determine eligibility for services / programs but, in actuality can underestimate the number of households in an area struggling to meet basic needs. Typically, a household living at 100% of poverty (the established poverty threshold as determined by the Federal Poverty Guidelines) would need to make two times the amount of income in order to meet the basic needs of food, shelter, healthcare, childcare, and clothing. It can therefore be assumed, that more than 14.2% of the population is living in poverty in both Warren and Forest Counties. Table 3 is provided to show the most recent poverty guidelines released by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services in January 2013 and represent a household at 100% of poverty.

Table 3: Federal Poverty Income Guidelines, 2013

County	Family / Household Size	Family of 1	Family of 2	Family of 3	Family of 4	Family of 5	Family of 6	Family of 7
Pennsylvania	Poverty Guideline	\$11,490	\$15,510	\$19,530	\$23,550	\$27,570	\$31,590	\$35,610
Pennsylvania	Wage for FT Hours (2080/year)	\$5.52/hr	\$7.45/hr	\$9.38/hr	\$11.32/hr	\$13.25/hr	\$15.18/hr	\$17.12/hr

Source: Annual Update of the Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines, January 2013.

In Warren and Forest Counties, children in the 0 to 17 cohort had the highest percentage living at or below the poverty threshold (Table 4). This indicates that families and/or households with children in the two-county service area are more likely to be facing financial hardship and struggle to meet basic needs. Seniors (those 65 and older), which are the largest segment of the service area population, have fewer people living below the poverty threshold than the recorded national average of 9.4%. In Forest County 8% of seniors live at or below the threshold while 8.3% in Warren County are living in poverty. The average rate of poverty within the state for seniors is roughly the same at 8.4% (Table 5).

A slightly lower percentage is reported by the 2012 American Community Survey (Table 6). The most recent data release from the survey provides estimates for the total number of people living in poverty during 2012. The estimated total percentage calculated for the two-county area was 12.14% which is slightly lower than the 14.2% recorded by the US Census and SAIPE. This percentage also uses the Federal Poverty Guidelines as a benchmark and thus only reflects those living at or below the poverty threshold. Those earning above the established poverty threshold of 100%, even if they are only earning fifty dollars above the threshold are considered **not** living in poverty and therefore not included in the poverty rate.

It can be assumed that the true number of persons within the community facing hardship is greater than both the reported 12.14% or 14.2% as neither reporting includes those earning between the poverty threshold and a true, living wage (approximately 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline). Thus, the target population within our community likely to need, participate, or benefit from programs and services offered by the Agency is not less than 12% and greater than 14% of the population.

Table 4: Poverty, 2013

County	All Ages		Age 0-17		Age 5-17	
	Number of Persons	Poverty Rate	Number of Persons	Poverty Rate	Number of Persons	Poverty Rate
Forest	1,248	24.5%	193	38.0%	118	31.5%
Warren	5,692	14.2%	1,821	23.1%	1,226	20.9%
Report Area	6,940	15.4%	2,014	32.3%	1,344	16.0%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013. Estimates for 2013 were released in December 2014.

Table 5: Seniors in Poverty, 2009 – 2013 (ACS)

County	Seniors, 2009/2013	Seniors in Poverty, 2009/2013	Senior Poverty Rate, 2009/2013
Forest	1,386	136	9.81%
Warren	7,612	682	8.96%
Report Area	8,998	818	9.09%
Pennsylvania	1,924,768	159,230	8.27%
National	40,544,640	3,793,577	9.36%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is an average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Table 6: Poverty Rate (ACS)

County	Poverty Rate for All Persons		
	Total Population	In Poverty	Poverty Rate
Forest	4,803	782	16.28%
Warren	40,464	5,112	12.63%
Report Area	45,267	5,894	13.02%
Pennsylvania	12,318,805	1,638,820	13.30%
National	303,692,064	46,663,432	15.37%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Further review of the data for households in poverty and overall rate change from past reporting years provides a clearer understanding of the current situation faced by households in Warren and Forest Counties. Table 7 provides the total number of households in poverty based on the poverty thresholds established by the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The total number of households used in this table is reported as 19,258 for the two-county area with 2,400 identified as living at or below 100% of poverty. This equates to 12.46% and a mere fraction lower than the 12.76% average reported for Pennsylvania.

Table 7: Households in Poverty, 2009 – 2013

County	Total Households, 2009/2013	Households in Poverty, 2009/2013	% Households in Poverty, 2009/2013
Forest	2,001	266	13.29%
Warren	17,257	2,134	12.37%
Report Area	19,258	2,400	12.46%
Pennsylvania	4,958,427	632,670	12.76%
National	115,610,216	16,415,984	14.20%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Table 8 addresses the family types for those households living in poverty. Data, showing 20% of all households in poverty are female head of household, implies that female heads of household have a greater likelihood of living in poverty than a male head of household. This could mean that single mothers, much like in other areas of the country, are a vulnerable segment of the population likely to be in need of various social services in order to survive. This trend could partially explain why the percentage of children living at or below the Poverty Threshold in Warren and Forest Counties is higher than any other cohort living in poverty. However, it should also be noted that there are significantly more non-family or single person households (59%) living in poverty than those households with multiple persons (i.e. two adults, one adult + one child, two adults + one child, etc.). This could be a result of several factors including an aging population, lack of well paying jobs, and the slow, continued overall decline in the number of families.

Table 8: Households in Poverty by Family Type, 2009 – 2013

County	Total Households, 2009-2013	Total Households in Poverty	Non-Family Households in Poverty - Including Persons Living Alone	Married Couples in Poverty	Male Head of Household in Poverty	Female Head of Household in Poverty
Forest	1,189	266	163	69	5	29
Warren	11,223	2,134	1,242	393	67	432
Report Area	12,412	2,400	1,405	462	72	461

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Table 9 focuses on the poverty rate by family type. Rather than look at each distinct family type, however, this table looks only at family versus non-family households. Both Warren and Forest Counties show slightly more than 5% of family households in poverty. The rate for non-family households was greater in each county. The poverty rate for households in the two-county area was 12.46% which is nearly the same rate found on average throughout Pennsylvania and less than the rate of poverty for households when analyzed at a national level. Note that the American Community Survey uses a sample of the area and surveys monthly to create a representative sample of what is happening in a geographic area over time. The households surveyed rotate on a pre-determined schedule so that the same households are not interviewed more than 4 consecutive months (as an example). The data, as presented, therefore shows a trend of fewer family households in poverty across the two-county area than at the national level. At the state level the difference in rates is 0.77%. There are more non-family/single person households in poverty in the service area than at both the state and national levels.

Table 9: Household Poverty Rate by Family Type, 2009 – 2013

County	Total Households	Households in Poverty		Family Households in Poverty		Non-Family Households in Poverty	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Forest	2,001	266	13.29%	103	5.15%	163	8.15%
Warren	17,257	2,134	12.37%	892	5.17%	1,242	7.20%
Report Area	19,258	2,400	12.46%	995	5.17%	1,405	7.30%
Pennsylvania	4,958,427	632,670	12.76%	294,546	5.94%	338,124	6.82%
National	115,610,216	16,415,984	14.20%	8,666,630	7.50%	7,749,354	6.70%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

In general, since the 2000 US Census, both counties have experienced an increase in the percentage of people living at or below 100% of poverty (see Table 3 for guidelines used by the Department of Health and Human Services) and unable to afford basic necessities. The poverty rate change is shown in Table 10. At the time of the 2000 census the poverty rates were 13.8% and 9.7% in Forest and Warren Counties respectively. The 2010 US Census and Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013, indicate an increase in the poverty rate of 10.7% in Forest County and

4.5% in Warren County. This results in a two-county average rate of 15.4% which is higher than the Pennsylvania average of 13.7%. The National average is 15.8%.

Table 10: Poverty Rate Change, 2000 – 2013

County	Persons in Poverty, 2000	Poverty Rate, 2000	Persons in Poverty, 2013	Poverty Rate, 2013	% Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 - 2013
Forest	668	13.8%	1,248	24.5%	10.7%
Warren	4,163	9.7%	5,692	14.2%	4.5%
Report Area	4,831	10.1%	6,940	15.4%	5.2%
Pennsylvania	1,135,928	9.5%	1,687,856	13.7%	4.2%
National	31,581,086	11.3%	48,810,868	15.8%	4.5%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013.

The highest incidence of poverty in looking at the population as a whole is with children aged 0 to 17. Tables 11 through 13 explore these findings in detail. In 2000, 15% of children in this community were living at or below the poverty threshold. Data collected from the 2010 census and via the SAIPE indicate that this percentage has increased to 24% with a 13.3% rise in Forest County and a 9.1% rise in Warren County. An additional analysis based off of the 5 year averages collected by the American Community Survey show that for this segment of the population, an average of 18.5% were living in poverty in 2012. It can further be noted that the rise in childhood poverty was a greater increase overall than what was experienced in Pennsylvania (+6.2%) and at the national level (+6.0%). The most dramatic increase in the poverty rate was observed in the 0-4 cohort. In 2000, the percentage of 0 to 4 year olds living in poverty in Forest County was 30.6% while the rate in Warren County was 18.3%. As of 2013, the rate in Forest County has increased to 56.3% and 29.5% in Warren County. Averaged together, the percentage of young children living in poverty is 31.2% for the two-county area. This is a higher rate than both state and national averages which are 23.9% and 25.9% respectively.

Table 11: Child (0 – 17) Poverty Rate Change, 2000 – 2013

County	Children, Ages 0 - 17 years				
	Children in Poverty, 2000	Poverty Rate, 2000	Children in Poverty, 2012	Poverty Rate, 2012	% Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 - 2012
Forest	263	24.7%	193	38.00%	13.9%
Warren	1,417	14.0%	1,821	23.1%	9.1%
Report Area	1,680	15.0%	2,014	24.0%	9.0%
Pennsylvania	372,192	13.1%	513,049	19.3%	6.2%
National	11,587,118	16.2%	16,086,960	22.2%	6.0%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013.

Table 11: American Community Survey, Child (0-17) Poverty Rate, 2009 - 2013

County	Children, Ages 0 - 17 years		
	Total Population	In Poverty	Poverty Rate
Forest	718	200	27.86%
Warren	8,216	1,535	18.68%
Report Area	8,934	1,735	19.42%
Pennsylvania	2,716,032	509,623	18.76%
National	72,748,616	15,701,799	21.58%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Table 12: Child (0 – 4) Poverty Rate Change, 2000 – 2013

County	Children, Ages 0 - 4 years				
	Children 0-4 in Poverty, 2000	Poverty Rate, 2000	Children 0-4 in Poverty, 2013	Poverty Rate, 2013	% Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 - 2012
Forest	112	30.6%	75	56.3%	25.6%
Warren	479	18.3%	595	29.5%	11.2%
Report Area	591	19.8%	670	31.2%	11.3%
Pennsylvania	137,759	18.4%	170,868	23.9%	5.7%
National	4,050,543	20.3%	5,128,728	25.9%	5.6%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013.

Table 13: Child (0 – 4) Poverty Rate (ACS)

County	Children, Ages 0 - 4 years		
	Total Population	In Poverty	Poverty Rate
Forest	161	37	22.98%
Warren	2,015	486	24.12%
Report Area	2,176	523	24.03%
Pennsylvania	713,183	157,748	22.12%
National	19,743,544	4,881,767	24.73%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Children aged 5 to 17, while not as high as the 0-4 cohort, also experienced a marked increase in the incidence of poverty. As shown in Table 14, the two-county report area had an increase from 13.3% in 2000 to 21.5% in 2013. This is higher than both state and national rates. During the 2013 calendar year the ACS reported the percentage of children in this age grouping living in poverty to be 17.93% (Table 15). Note that the rate, when compared to the

national rate, was higher using data collected through the latest Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate and lower than the national rate when referencing the American Community Survey.

Child care could be one factor contributing to the higher percentages of children aged 0 to 4 living in poverty. Single parent households, in particular, who lack supports from family or friends, may not be able to secure full time employment and arrange for childcare. Cost and the time of day also play into this issue as there are few, if any, child care options for second and third shift workers. In two parent households it is possible that the cost of childcare is too much to justify both parents working. Thus, the household attempts to remain self-sufficient on only one income which is nearly impossible for low-income families. For many in the area, skill level and educational attainment limit available employment options which pay a living wage and offer benefits.

Table 14: Child (5 – 17) Poverty Rate Change, 2000 – 2013

County	Children, Ages 5 - 17 years				
	Children 5-17 in Poverty, 2000	Poverty Rate, 2000	Children 5-17 in Poverty, 2013	Poverty Rate, 2012	% Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 - 2013
Forest	151	21.6%	118	31.5%	9.9%
Warren	938	12.5%	1,226	20.9%	8.4%
Report Area	1,089	13.3%	1,344	21.5%	8.3%
Pennsylvania	234,433	11.2%	342,181	17.6%	6.4%
National	7,536,575	14.6%	10,958,232	20.8%	6.2%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2012.

Table 15: Child (5 – 17) Poverty Rate (ACS)

County	Children, Ages 5 - 17 years		
	Total Population	In Poverty	Poverty Rate
Forest	557	163	29.26%
Warren	6,201	1,049	16.92%
Report Area	6,758	1,212	17.93%
Pennsylvania	2,002,849	351,875	17.57%
National	53,005,064	10,820,032	20.41%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

At the opposite end of the age spectrum, Table 16 shows the two-county average percentage of senior citizens living in poverty was slightly higher than the State average of 8.27% and just below the National average of 9.36%. Actual findings place the rate of poverty in seniors at 9.81% in Forest County and 8.96 % in Warren County resulting in a two-county average of 9.09%. As previously noted seniors are typically viewed as a vulnerable segment of the

population likely to be on a fixed income and in need of accessing various social service programs and services to meet all of their basic needs.

Table 16: Seniors in Poverty, 2009 – 2013 (ACS)

County	Seniors, 2009/2013	Seniors in Poverty, 2009/2013	Senior Poverty Rate, 2009/2013
Forest	1,386	136	9.81%
Warren	7,612	682	8.96%
Report Area	8,998	818	9.09%
Pennsylvania	1,891,215	159,230	8.27%
National	39,358,824	3,793,577	9.36%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

EMPLOYMENT | Data released in July 2015 and shown in Table 17 state Warren County's unemployment rate as 5.4% and Forest County as 7.9%. That same month, the State of Pennsylvania had an unemployment rate of 5.9%. While the rate itself is lower than in past years, the continued trend of rising poverty rates indicates that there are still deep rooted problems in the two-county area. These include people being underemployed, lower wages, people not working full time hours, and a lack of living wage employment opportunities for those with minimal education and/or training.

Tables 18 and 19 explore changes and trends in the unemployment rate over a fixed period of time. The peak for unemployment rates since 2010 was the first quarter of 2014 with 9.10% and 6.10% recorded in Forest and Warren Counties respectively. In looking at the past 5 years of unemployment data, the unemployment rate was on average above 6% from 2010 through 2014. The averages in 2013 were 7.4% and 5.5% for Forest and Warren Counties. Beginning in the second quarter of 2014, rates began trending downward reaching a low point in the fourth quarter of 2014. By July 2015 the rates appear to be slowly climbing in Warren County with a larger jump in Forest County. Averaged together the rates are on par with what has been recorded for both state and national levels.

Table 17: Employment / Unemployment Information, July 2015

County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Forest	1,978	1,822	156	7.9%
Warren	20,356	19,247	1,109	5.4%
Report Area	22,334	21,069	1,265	5.7%
Pennsylvania	6,524,441	6,140,243	384,198	5.9%
National	159,648,891	150,718,259	8,930,632	5.6%

Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, September 1, 2015.

Table 18: Change in Unemployment, July 2014 – July 2015

County	Unemployment, July 2014	Unemployment, July 2015	Unemployment Rate, July 2014	Unemployment Rate, July 2015
Forest	169	156	8.50%	7.90%
Warren	1,174	1,109	5.70%	5.40%
Report Area	1,343	1,265	5.95%	5.66%
Pennsylvania	414,553	384,198	6.40%	5.90%
National	10,485,762	8,930,632	6.60%	5.60%

Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, September 1, 2015.

Table 19: Change in Unemployment, September 2013 – September 2014

County	July 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015	Apr 2015	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015
Forest	8.50%	7.90%	6.30%	6.20%	7.10%	7.30%	9.80%	9.40%	9.20%	7.30%	7.80%	7.70%	7.90%
Warren	5.70%	5.50%	4.50%	4.30%	4.50%	4.30%	5.70%	5.70%	5.50%	4.70%	5.20%	5.10%	5.40%
Report Area	5.95%	5.70%	4.68%	4.48%	4.72%	4.60%	6.05%	6.05%	5.80%	4.88%	5.18%	5.30%	5.66%
Pennsylvania	6.40%	6.10%	5.10%	4.90%	4.90%	4.60%	5.90%	5.70%	5.50%	4.70%	5.40%	5.60%	5.90%
National	6.60%	6.30%	5.80%	5.60%	5.60%	5.40%	6.10%	5.90%	5.60%	5.10%	5.40%	5.50%	5.60%

Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, September 1, 2015.

It is important to understand how the unemployment rate is determined when evaluating the data. In Warren and Forest Counties, the poverty rate has increased while the unemployment rate has decreased. This trend could indicate several areas of concern regarding the employment situation in the service area. First, it should be understood that the unemployment rate is not derived by looking at the number of people shown to be collecting unemployment insurance benefits as this would not provide an accurate description of the situation. This is due to several factors including the fact that some people are still unemployed once benefits run out, others do not qualify, and some delay or never apply for benefits. Therefore, data on unemployment insurance benefits is not used in determining the unemployment rate for an area. Instead, a monthly survey using a sample of the population is conducted. At the national level, one fourth of all households in the survey are rotated each month to avoid interviewing a single household more than 4 consecutive months. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics this process ensures that approximately 75% of the sample remains the same from month to month while 50% remains the same for a year. This method enhances the reliability of all reported data.

The survey used to determine the unemployment rate groups people into three main categories: employed, unemployed, and those not considered part of the labor force. The minimum age to be counted is 16 while there is not a maximum age. Those who are institutionalized (i.e. correctional facility or retirement home) are not included as part of the labor force. If a person did any work and received pay or profited from the work they are considered employed. This includes those working part time, temporary, or seasonal jobs. Those determined to be unemployed

are not currently working, could take a job if offered, and have actively been pursuing employment. The rate itself is assessed by looking at the labor force and not the total population of an area. That is, the total when the number of employed versus unemployed persons is added together.

While more people appear to be working or employed, the increased number of people living in poverty since the last census indicates that there are problems with the employment situation despite a seemingly low unemployment rate. The first item to consider is that the estimated civilian labor force for Warren County as of June 2015 is 19,800 people. Recall that this number combines those employed and those unemployed. Of those employed, the number does not differentiate between those working part-time, temporary, or seasonal hours. It further includes anyone 16 years of age and above so it can be assumed that an unknown portion of the employed population is not head of household or earning money to pay for basic necessities. Last, it should be noted that the estimated population of Warren County according to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor is 40,703 while the actual, estimated labor force is 19,800. This means that the unemployment rate is based off of almost 50% of the total population and the other 50% are not included in the labor force. Only those actively seeking employment are considered unemployed while those passively looking or unable to work are determined to be outside of the labor force. If you looked at the entire population of the county only 47% are employed. This could partially explain why poverty is rising as the 53% not employed would include elderly, disabled, and other segments of the population struggling to meet all of their basic needs on fixed incomes.

The rising poverty rate, despite the majority of the estimated labor force being employed, indicates that many area households are still not able to afford basic necessities. An interview with the local WIC office further supports this statement as they have observed a notable increase in the “working poor” seeking assistance. It has become increasingly common in Warren County for households to have two income earners yet still struggle to afford food, shelter, clothing, and health care. In looking at both employment and the potential estimated labor force within the service area this scenario could be attributed to a combination of the following:

1. A portion of the employed labor force is not the head of household and likely to not be contributing to the purchase of basic necessities (i.e. a 16 year old working less than 20 hours per week at a minimum wage job).
2. Primary income earners are unable to find employment with a living wage.
3. People are underemployed and working part time hours where they lack access to benefits such as employer provided healthcare.

Based on number of employees, the top 10 employers in Warren and Forest Counties shows little variance. The following allows for a side-by-side comparison of the top 10 employers for the fourth quarters of 2012 and 2014 for Forest County.

2013 Top Employers – 2nd Quarter	2014 Top Employers – 4 th Quarter
State Government	Cornell Abraxas Group, Inc.
Cornell Abraxas Group, Inc.	Industrial Timber & Land Company
Industrial Timber & Land Company	Windsor, Inc.
Forest Area School District	Forest Area School District
Windsor, Inc.	Pennsylvania General Energy Company
Pennsylvania General Electric Company	Forest County
Federal Government	Joseph Muccio Transportation LLC
Forest County	Seneca Resources Corporation
Hunter Station Golf Course	Lewis Bussing
Cook Riverside Cabins, Inc.	National Forest Products, LLC

This information indicates that the type of employment opportunities in Forest County remain consistent from year to year. The construction of the prison in Marienville completed in 2004 was the last new opportunity to open in the community and provided a set number of jobs. The most recent information released by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) indicates that the top industries, from largest to smallest, are government, hotels and lodging, membership organizations, real estate, health and medical service, banks and financial institutions, and transportation

The most current information provided by the DCED also details the number of employees by occupation. This is in addition to providing insight into the top industries. In Forest County, the estimated labor force in 2015 is approximately 1,389 people. The top occupation includes all administrative roles. This is followed by sales, production, management, protective services (police, prison guard, etc.), education, and food service. Estimates for the year 2020 show little to no change in employment for the area. There is not any anticipated job loss or gain and the DCED predicts, that based on available data, the labor force will be only fractionally smaller than the present one with roughly the same number of people employed. A skills gap analysis for the entire northwestern Pennsylvania region was released in June 2015. In the Northwest Regional Commission Skills Gap Analysis it is estimated that there are 2,294 workers in the Forest County work force with 2,172 employed. It is further estimated that half of those employed are older workers expected to retire over the next ten years. Depending on skill level, this may impact the number of available workers in Forest County in future years.

The Skills Gap Analysis supported the DCED findings for top industries with some variation. According to the Analysis, the top employers included office and administrative support occupations, community and social services,

protective service occupations, construction and extraction, and transportation and material moving. Among those occupations projected to have the greatest job growth through 2019 approximately 80% of these openings will require a high school diploma or equivalent. Some form of on-the-job training will be required for about 80% of openings while 17% of available future openings will require a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

Forest County was identified as a net exporter of workers. This means that of the work force living in Forest County, an estimated 2,481 commute to occupations outside of the County while 1,129 workers commute into the County. Further, this means that only 340 persons comprising the work force actually work in Forest County. The majority of commuters out of the county work in neighboring Clarion, Venango, and Crawford. Those commuting to Forest County for work are coming from Clarion, Warren, and Jefferson.

Wages in Forest County are significantly lower in all industries than what is typically found across the state. It can be further assumed that, on average, wages in rural Forest County are also lower than the average at the National level. According to 2013 data collected and released by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, in the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry, workers in Forest County earn an average annual salary of \$33,213 whereas; the average wage for this industry in Pennsylvania is \$45,099. Similar disparities are seen in other industries as well. Local government pays an average wage of \$32,907 whereas; the average wage in Pennsylvania is \$46,453.

Warren County has a nearly identical scenario though the size of the labor force is significantly larger (19,800 people versus 1,900 in Forest County). The table below shows the essentially unchanged top employers in the area by comparing data from the second quarter of 2013 with that of the fourth quarter in 2014.

2013 Top Employers – 2nd Quarter	2014 Top Employers – 4th Quarter
Blair Payroll LLC	Blair Payroll LLC
Warren County School District	Warren County School District
Northwest Bancshares, Inc.	Northwest Bancshares, Inc.
State Government	Warren General Hospital
United Refining Company	Whirley Industries, Inc.
Warren General Hospital	Rouse Estate
Whirley Industries, Inc.	United Refining Company
Rouse Estate	Betts Industries, Inc.
Betts Industries, Inc.	Superior Tire & Rubber Corporation
Superior Tire & Rubber Corporation	Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.

Aside from ranking, the only difference in top employers between 2013 and 2014 was Wal-Mart Associates, Inc. replacing State Government. This does not indicate a significant loss or gain in jobs and in fact, the number of jobs in the area has remained relatively stagnant. No new industries or employers are entering the area and there are no major expansions for those employers already here. Wages in Warren County are also lower on average than what is typically recorded at the state level. Looking at 2013 data from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, the average wage earned by someone in Health Care/Social Assistance was \$34,433 whereas; that same industry at the state level reported an average annual salary of \$45,099. A similar wage disparity is noted in other employment sectors as well. Slightly different than neighboring Forest County, the top industries in Warren County per the DCED are health and medical service, government, membership organizations, banking and financial institutions, auto service repair, social services, and specialty stores.

The DCED has provided a breakdown in the number of employees by occupation for Warren County as well as a prediction, based on all current data, on the size of the labor force in the year 2020. Looking first at employment, of those working in Warren County, the largest numbers of jobs are in administrative positions. This occupation is followed by production, sales, management, health services, food service, and education. Much like Forest County, the estimated change to the workforce and the related unemployment figures in 2020 are minimal. There is a marginal decrease in the workforce as a whole coupled with a slight decrease in the number of employed as well as total number of people unemployed. This prediction indicates that there is currently nothing that would generate significant changes in the employment landscape for Warren County. Given the age distribution in the area it is likely that the predicted decrease in the labor force is actually due to potential employees leaving the work force as they age and opt to retire. This would also account for the lower number of unemployed persons as this figure is determined by the estimated number of people actively looking for employment. One who has retired and left the work force would not be considered unemployed.

Findings from the Northwest Regional Commission Skills Gap Analysis by Thomas P. Miller & Associates backs up these findings while providing an additional level of detail. Within the section of the report dedicated to Warren County the following statement can be found:

“The largest broad industry sectors in Warren County are Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Transportation & Warehousing. Both Manufacturing and Retail Trade lost a significant number of employees between 2004 and 2009 but have begun to rebound since 2009. Within these broad categories, the largest industries are Warehousing & Storage, Education & Hospitals (Local Government), and Depository Credit Intermediation. Among these, Warehousing & Storage has highest projected growth and should add 170 jobs to the County over the next five years.”

Additionally, the report identified office and administrative support, transportation and material moving, sales and related occupations as the top employment industries in the area. Transportation and material moving are projected to add over 110 jobs to the area. All occupations are predicted to have high annual openings which are most likely due to older employees, which make up a significant portion of the work force, retiring. The older segment of the work force is estimated to account for approximately 6,035 employed persons as of 2014. In the next 10 years it is

anticipated that these people will retire and sustainable planning for workforce development in Warren County will be needed. Almost half of the jobs in the area require a high school diploma or equivalent, over one quarter of high demand jobs require a Bachelor's Degree or higher, and only 20% are low-skill positions. As older workers retiring from these higher skill positions retire a qualified workforce to replace is needed.

The Northwest Regional Skills Gap Analysis which delved into the employment picture in each county more closely found that Warren County is a net exporter of workers. This means that an estimated 12,400 people travel outside of the county to work while less than 4,000 travel into the county to work. This is becoming a typical trend for counties in Northwestern Pennsylvania and particularly for the more rural areas. Of the estimated 12,500 workers employed within Warren County it is believed that approximately 8,800 of those reside in the county. This is equal to 71%. The remaining 29% of the workforce commutes, in general, to Erie and Venango Counties in Pennsylvania or neighboring Chautauqua County in New York State.

Focus group sessions completed as part of the Skills Gap Analysis identified some key points to note regarding Warren County. First, there is a negative perception among both parents and students regarding career paths in manufacturing and vocational training. The belief is that a four-year college degree is needed to be successful. However, generational and situational poverty in the area makes it difficult for people to see past the current situation. Potential students do not want to travel and/or have a limited perception as to how widening travel requirements will increase employment opportunities. The low cost of living in the area is one factor influencing the depressed wages in the area which can make it difficult to recruit professionals. It can also make it difficult to attract those younger adults who grew up in the area and moved away to pursue higher education back to the area. A final observation of focus groups was the lack of soft skills and lower math aptitudes among the work force. The poor soft skills, attendance, punctuality, responsibility for actions, self-motivation, and dependability, are also observed by employers and social service agencies / providers in the area.

There is one Workforce Investment Board (WIB) serving northwest Pennsylvania in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act. Counties served, in addition to Forest and Warren, includes Erie, Venango, Clarion, and Crawford. The WIB directly serves both employers and job seekers through the Northwest PA CareerLink, a collaborative system involving partner agencies throughout the six counties served. The role of the CareerLink centers, one of which is located in the City of Warren and easily accessible via public transportation, is to facilitate communication, provide information (including resumes and job postings), and offer a multitude of assessment, training, and educational services. All counties represented by the WIB, with the exception of Forest County, have a PA CareerLink Center.

Table 20 provides a complete listing of the Economic Development Agencies serving Forest and Warren Counties. Note the following abbreviations: EDC (Economic Development Corporation, ICDA (Industrial and Commercial Development Authority), IDA (Industrial Development Authority), IDC (Industrial Development Corporation), and SBDC (Small Business Development Center).

Table 20: Local Economic Development Agencies

County	Organization Name	Phone Number	Website Address
Forest	Central Electric Cooperative, Inc	(800) 521-0570	www.central.coop
Forest	Clarion University SBDC	(814) 393-2060	web.clarion.edu/sbdc
Forest	Forest County Office of Community & Economic Development	(814) 755-4599	www.co.forest.pa.us
Forest	National Fuel Resources, Inc/Natural Fuel Gas Company	(800) 365-3234	www.nationalfuelgas.com
Forest	Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center, Inc.	(814) 898-6893	www.nwirc.org
Forest	Penelec, a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corporation	(800) 984-9480	www.firstenergycorp.com/Penelec
Forest	PPL	(800) 342-5775	www.pplelectric.com
Forest	Regional Center for Workforce Excellence	(814) 333-1286	www.nwpawib.org
Forest	UGI Utilities, Inc. - UGI Central Penn Gas	(800) 652-0550	www.ugi.com
Forest	Warren Electric Cooperative, Inc.	(814) 563-7548	www.warrenec.coop
Warren	Columbia Gas of PA	(888) 460-4332	www.columbiagaspa.com
Warren	Corry Area RDA, CAIDC, CCDC, CIBA	(814) 664-3884	www.corryidc.org
Warren	Gannon SBDC	(877) 258-6648	www.sbdcgannon.org
Warren	National Fuel Resources, Inc/Natural Fuel Gas Company	(800) 365-3234	www.nationalfuelgas.com
Warren	Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center, Inc.	(814) 898-6893	www.nwirc.org
Warren	Penelec, a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corporation	(800) 984-9480	www.firstenergycorp.com/Penelec
Warren	Regional Center for Workforce Excellence	(814) 333-1286	www.nwpawib.org
Warren	Transystems/Stone Consulting	(800) 835-4627	www.transystems.com
Warren	Warren County Chamber of Business & Industry	(814) 723-3050	www.wccbi.org

Warren	Warren County Development Association	(814) 723-3050	-
Warren	Warren Electric Cooperative, Inc.	(814) 563-7548	www.warrenec.coop

Source: The Pennsylvania State Data Center compiled the above listing of key economic development contacts from a variety of sources.

Income | Wages, on average, in Warren and Forest County are lower than in most other areas of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development recently published the following data provided in Tables 21 and 22 on the household income distribution of both counties.

Table 21: Warren County Household Income Distribution (2015)

Income	Number of Households	Percentage
< \$10k	1,046	5.86%
\$10k - \$20k	2,434	13.63%
\$20k - \$30k	2,351	13.17%
\$30k - \$40k	2,381	13.33%
\$40k - \$50k	1,794	10.05%
\$50k - \$60k	1,545	8.65%
\$60k - \$75k	1,901	10.65%
\$75k - \$100k	2,049	11.48%
>\$100k	2,355	13.19%

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Table 22: Forest County Household Income Distribution (2015)

Income	Number of Households	Percentage
< \$10k	156	6.36%
\$10k - \$20k	529	21.57%
\$20k - \$30k	309	12.6%
\$30k - \$40k	360	14.68%
\$40k - \$50k	316	12.88%

\$50k - \$60k	190	7.75%
\$60k - \$75k	288	11.74%
\$75k - \$100k	181	7.38%
>\$100k	124	5.06%

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

The US Census Bureau uses three types of estimates in looking at income within a designated geographic area such as a country, state, or county. They are the median household, per capita, and average income. Median income is the amount earned by a household at which point half of the households in that area earn more and half earn less. Per capita income is quite different. With this estimate, all income earned by individuals 15 years or older in an area, including wages or salary; net self-employment; interest, dividends, or net rental or royalty income; income from estates and trusts; Social Security or Railroad Retirement; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); public assistance or welfare payments; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and all other income sources, is divided by the total population. Income that is excluded from this calculation would include capital gains, money from the sale of property, food stamps, public housing subsidies, medical care, employer contributions for individuals, etc.; withdrawal of bank deposits; borrowed funds; tax refunds; exchange of money between relatives living in the same household; gifts and lump-sum inheritances, insurance payments, and other types of lump-sum receipts. The third and final measurement is average income per person. This looks at only earned income, wages, and salary. Table 23 shows the most current information for the area regarding all three of the aforementioned measures of income. In all cases, income is lower than what is typically earned throughout Pennsylvania and in national averages.

Table 23: Income Levels by County, 2009-2013

County	Median Household Income, 2013	Per Capita Income, 2013	Average Income Per Earner, 2013
Forest	\$36,556	\$13,646	\$22,435
Warren	\$43,764	\$24,179	\$31,817
Report Area	no data	\$22,529	\$30,602
Pennsylvania	\$52,548	\$28,502	\$39,066
National	\$53,046	\$28,155	\$40,683

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Table 24 provides the average weekly wages for the third quarter of 2014. This data clearly shows the lower wages typically earned in Warren and Forest Counties compared to what workers earn in other, less rural, areas of Pennsylvania as well as on a national level. According to the Bureau for Labor Statistics, when compared to other counties in Pennsylvania, Warren was among those with the lowest average weekly wages. Forest County ranked in

the middle. On average, workers employed in the private sector earn 25% less than in other areas of Pennsylvania. The disparity between national averages and county wages is approximately the same or roughly 25%.

Table 24: Weekly Wages, Third Quarter 2014

County	Total Employees	Average Weekly Wage	Federal Employees	Average Federal Government Weekly Wage	State/Local Employees	Average State/Local Government Weekly Wage	Private Employees	Average Private Weekly Wage
Forest	2,042	\$828	73	\$975	no data	\$no data	no data	\$no data
Warren	14,935	\$699	161	\$1,132	1,820	\$764	12,954	\$690
Report Area	16,977	\$713	234	\$1,122	no data	no data	no data	no data
Pennsylvania	5,676,185	\$937	95,018	\$1,440	588,208	\$1,002	4,992,959	\$925
National	137,724,117	\$949	2,731,870	\$1,541	18,428,727	\$961	116,563,520	\$940

Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

The estimated living wage for Warren and Forest County is shown in Table 25. Similar to average wages and earned income in the area, the living wage is estimated to be slightly lower than more populated and urban areas throughout Pennsylvania. That said, families still struggle to find safe, affordable housing and full time employment offering a living wage with benefits. This has resulted in an increase, as observed by the Warren County WIC office, in families classified as “working poor”. This term refers to working families still unable to meet basic needs without some form of assistance including, but not limited to, cash assistance (TANF), WIC for households with children 5 and under, and/or food stamps (SNAP). The figures in Table 25 assume that one adult is staying home with the children, there are no child care costs, and the family only has access to one vehicle.

Table 25: County Hourly Living Wage, June 2012

County	One Adult	One Adult, One Child	One Adult, Two Children	One Adult, Three Children	Two Adults*	Two Adults, One Child*	Two Adults, Two Children*	Two Adults, Three Children*
Forest	\$7.75	\$15.90	\$20.99	\$27.12	\$11.96	\$14.48	\$15.87	\$18.58
Warren	\$6.98	\$15.90	\$20.99	\$27.14	\$11.75	\$14.48	\$15.87	\$18.59
Report Area	\$7.37	\$15.90	\$20.99	\$27.13	\$11.86	\$14.48	\$15.87	\$18.59
Pennsylvania	\$8.67	\$17.76	\$22.87	\$29.25	\$13.30	\$16.36	\$17.75	\$20.71

Source: Poverty in America, Living Wage Calculator, June 2012.

Additional sources of household income may include Supplemental Security Income, county assistance funding or temporary assistance to needy families (TANF), and food stamps (SNAP). Reporting for the area however, shows a relatively small segment of the population using these and other mainstream programs. Tables 26 through 31 explore the topics of TANF, SNAP, and Supplemental Security Income as well as reduced school lunches.

Table 26: Number of Individuals Eligible for County Assistance Funding, 2013

County	Total Population	Persons Eligible for Medical Assistance	Percent of Population Eligible	Receiving TANF	Percent of Population Receiving TANF	Eligible for SNAP	Percent Eligible for SNAP
Forest	7,667	911	11.88%	12	0.16%	686	8.95%
Warren	41,146	7,036	17.10%	290	0.70%	5,690	13.83%
Report Area	48,813	7,947	16.28%	302	0.62%	6,376	13.06%
Pennsylvania	12,763,536	2,191,652	17.17%	203,419	1.59%	1,810,990	14.19%

Source: 2012-2013 Average Monthly Unduplicated Number of Persons Eligible for Medical Assistance, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (now Health and Human Services) and Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, 2012-2013.

Table 27: Number of Households Eligible for County Assistance Funding, 2013

County	Total Households	Households Eligible for County Assistance Funding	Eligible for TANF	Percent Eligible for TANF	Eligible for SNAP	Percent Eligible for SNAP
Forest	1,958	373	8	0.41%	365	18.64%
Warren	17,453	2,833	141	0.81%	2,692	15.42%
Report Area	19,411	3,206	149	0.77%	3,057	15.75%

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, 2012-2013. United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013. The 2012 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2008 through 2012.

Table 28: Supplemental Security Income, December 2012.

County	Total Recipients	Amount of Payments (\$1,000)	Average Monthly Payment	Recipients by Age Category		
				Under 18	18 - 64	65 or Older
Forest	162	\$75	\$462.96	27	102	33
Warren	1,011	\$569	\$562.81	235	676	100
Report Area	1,173	\$644	\$549.02	262	778	133
Pennsylvania	376,894	\$213,929	\$567.61	76,179	237,526	63,189

Source: Social Security Administration, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, Supplemental Security Record (Characteristic Extract Record format), 100 percent data, December 2012.

Table 29: Households Receiving SNAP Benefits, 2012-2013

County	Total Households	Households Eligible for SNAP	Total SNAP Payments	Average SNAP Payment per Household
Forest	1,958	365	\$73,396	\$200.85
Warren	17,453	2,692	\$672,953	\$249.94
Report Area	19,411	3,057	\$746,349	\$244.14
Pennsylvania	4,959,633	875,010	\$231,560,291	\$264.64

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, 2012-2013 and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013. The 2012 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2008 through 2012.

Table 30: Households Receiving SNAP by Poverty Status, 2009-2013

County	Total Households Receiving SNAP	Percent	Income Below Poverty	Income Above Poverty	Family has at Least 1 Working Member	Age 60 and Older
Forest	255	12.74%	86	169	62	112
Warren	2,191	12.70%	1,043	1,148	1,011	519
Report Area	2,446	12.70%	1,129	1,317	1,073	631
Pennsylvania	585,892	11.82%	310,208	275,684	277,359	161,064
National	14,339,330	12.40%	7,498,398	6,840,932	7,896,027	3,723,170

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, 2012-2013 and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013. The 2012 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2008 through 2012.

Table 31: Students Participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (Lunches Only), March 2014

County	School District	School Type	Total Enrollment	Free Lunch Eligible	% Free Lunch Enrollment	Reduced Lunch Eligible	% Reduced Lunch Enrollment	% Free and Reduced Lunch Enrollment
Forest	FOREST AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT	Public School	509	268	52.65%	41	8.06%	60.71%
Warren	TIDIOUTE COMMUNITY CS	Public School	300	149	49.67%	25	8.33%	58.00%
Warren	WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	Public School	4,577	1,864	40.73%	307	6.71%	47.43%
Report Area	no data	no data	5,386	2,281	42.35%	373	6.93%	49.28%
Pennsylvania			1,777,447	666,536	37.50%	100,451	5.65%	43.15%

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Food and Nutrition, October, 2014.

Looking closer at the data presented, Table 26 breaks down the number of eligible individuals and compares that to the percentage receiving County Assistance benefits. The numbers are based on monthly averages for the 2012 to 2013 fiscal year. Given the higher rates of poverty and evident problems with both generational and situational poverty; the number of unduplicated individuals who are eligible and receive cash assistance or TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) is less than 1%. This is lower than what is found, on average, at the state level. This chart also looks, on a surface level, at the number of people receiving medical assistance and SNAP. Warren County had higher need for both medical assistance and SNAP than neighboring Forest County with 17.10% eligible in the former and 11.88% eligible in the latter. The state average is 17.17%. In looking at SNAP, nearly 14% of individuals in Warren and almost 9% in Forest County were eligible. The state average in this instance is slightly higher at 14.19%. The percentages shown in Table 27 for the number of unduplicated households eligible for cash assistance are similar to what was seen at the individual level. Less than 1% of all households in Warren County are eligible for TANF. The percentage for SNAP eligibility does rise when looking at households versus the individual. This is particularly true in Forest County where almost 9% of unduplicated individuals are eligible but 18.64% of households are eligible.

Table 28 gives an overview of the number of people in the service area collecting Supplemental Security Income. This is a program primarily for disabled children or adults aged 65+ who have limited resources. However, adults in the 18 to 64 range are also able to collect SSI upon meeting certain established criteria of eligibility. In Warren County, the 1,011 individuals who collect a monthly SSI payment comprise less than 3% of the total population. Forest County, with only 162 recipients but a smaller total population also has less than 3% collecting an SSI payment. In both cases, those aged 18-64 had the largest numbers of SSI recipients.

SNAP recipients are addressed in Tables 29 and 30. The first chart listed is based on the number of households eligible to receive SNAP benefits for the 2012 to 2013 benefit year. To be eligible, individuals must meet established resource and income requirements set by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services. Further, income requirements refer to both gross and net income where a person's gross income cannot exceed 160% of the poverty level and net income cannot exceed 100% of the poverty level. For this particular year, approximately 16% of households in Warren County and 19% in Forest County were eligible. The second chart, Table 30, shows the averages for data collected between 2009 and 2013. Of households receiving SNAP, 43% were households with at least one family member working. The percentage of households receiving SNAP in the service area is less than .5% more than what is reported nationally.

The final chart in this series relates to free and reduced lunch programs at the local school districts. In both counties, the number of students eligible for and enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program is greater than what is recorded at the state level. In Forest County 60% of enrolled students are enrolled in this program. In Warren County the percentage of enrolled students is 47%. In both cases, the percentage of students is greater than the 43% reported at the state level. This is not surprising since the age cohort most affected by poverty seemed to be those aged 0 to 4 and school age children in the 5 to 17 range. This chart provides support for the idea that families in Warren and Forest County face greater difficulty in acquiring all of their basic needs.

The most recent findings released by the U.S. Census Bureau from the American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2009-2013) further describe household income by source for the Warren and Forest County service area. The data released in December 2014 estimates approximately 17,257 households in Warren County. Of these, household income from various sources can be described as follows:

- 71% of households have earned income through employment
- 41% of households have social security income
- 27% of households have retirement earnings
- 6% of households have supplemental security income
- 4% of households receive cash assistance
- 13% of households receive SNAP

The survey estimates that there are 2,001 households in Forest County. Of total households, sources of household income can be described as follows:

- 59% of households have earned income through employment
- 58% of households have social security income
- 35% of households have retirement earnings
- 9% of households have supplemental security income
- 2% of households receive cash assistance
- 13% of households receive SNAP

In summary, wages across Warren and Forest County are less than what is typically found in other locations at both state and national levels. While it is true that the cost of living in this area is less, people are still hard pressed to secure employment where they can earn a living wage and therefore, not require some additional type or form of assistance. Families with children, even those with two wage earners, appear to face greater financial strain while working to procure all of the basic necessities for the household. This could explain why the percentage of those receiving free or reduced lunches is higher than state and national averages.

The top employers and types of industry present in the service area have remained largely unchanged. There is nothing to indicate that new business or job opportunities with the potential to create a large number of new, well paying employment options will move into either Warren or Forest Counties. With the aging population, jobs will come available for younger age cohorts as older workers and those from the baby boomer generation retire from their current positions and leave the workforce. While this creates some opportunity, it is equally as likely that qualified replacements for these openings may come from outside the service counties depending on the qualifications needed for the vacated positions.

HOUSING | A lack of suitable affordable housing in the area is a commonly voiced problem from both consumers and the many social service agencies and organizations. This could be due to a combination of factors which include an older/aging housing stock, the cost of upkeep to maintain older homes, lack of living wage jobs which make affordable housing difficult to secure long term, and an aging population more likely to be living on fixed incomes or

no longer living independently. In Forest County, a location known for recreation and outdoor enthusiasts, many of the vacant properties are not for rent. This is usually due to the properties being designated as seasonal or vacation homes for people living outside of the county. This may include hunting camps and smaller homes or cabins. The following tables provide a clearer understanding of the housing situation in both Warren and Forest Counties.

Table 31 provides information on the number of housing units. As you will see, the number of housing units has remained stagnant with only a slight decrease since 2004. During this same time the area experienced an increase in the senior / aging population but an overall decrease in the population making the need for any new housing construction non-existent. Table 32 provides information on the age of the available housing stock. As previously mentioned, and particularly in Warren County, a large portion of the houses are older than 1960. Older homes can be more costly to maintain, repair, and heat efficiently. This is especially true for renters and homeowners living on a fixed budget. This could also apply to homes occupied by those working yet still struggling to meet basic needs for the household. Just over 54% of the homes in Warren County were built prior to 1960. The national average is just shy of 30%.

Table 31: 2004-2014 Housing Units

County	July 2004	July 2005	July 2006	July 2007	July 2008
Forest	8,869	8,877	8,860	8,837	8,807
Warren	23,368	23,512	23,545	23,583	23,592
Report Area	32,237	32,389	32,405	32,420	32,399
Pennsylvania	5,411,357	5,454,141	5,490,779	5,520,838	5,544,680

Source: United State Census Bureau, Population Division, Housing Unit Estimates for Counties: July 1, 2004 to July 1, 2014, Release Date May 2015

County	July 2009	July 2010	July 2011	July 2012	July 2013	July 2014
Forest	8,779	8,756	8,739	8,719	8,696	8,675
Warren	23,576	23,552	23,511	23,466	23,424	23,375
Report Area	32,355	32,308	32,250	32,185	32,120	32,050
Pennsylvania	5,560,138	5,568,612	5,574,584	5,576,370	5,581,865	5,590,373

Source: United State Census Bureau, Population Division, Housing Unit Estimates for Counties: July 1, 2004 to July 1, 2014, Release Date May 2015

Table 32: Median Housing Unit Age, 2009-2013

County	Housing Units Where Year Built is Known	Median Year built	Housing Units Built				Percent Units Built			
			Newer than 2000	Built 1980 to 1999	Built 1960 to 1979	Built pre 1960	Newer than 2000	Built 1980 to 1999	Built 1960 to 1979	Built pre 1960
Forest	8,719	1972	540	1,521	4,208	2,450	6.19%	17.44%	48.26%	28.10%
Warren	23,465	1957	949	3,856	5,957	12,703	4.04%	16.43%	25.39%	54.14%
Report Area	32,184	no data	1,489	5,377	10,165	15,153	0.00%	4.63%	4.63%	4.63%
Pennsylvania	5,565,653	1961	476,283	1,064,767	1,276,802	2,747,801	8.56%	19.13%	22.94%	49.37%
National	132,057,808	1976	20,157,260	36,735,368	35,676,692	39,488,480	15.26%	27.82%	27.02%	29.90%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Of the total population, 76.7% reside in owner occupied homes according to the US Census, 2010. This is a marginal decrease from the 78.2% reported in the US Census, 2000. The total number of housing units, shown in Table 31, also displays only marginal movements up and down between 2004 and 2014. In July 2004 there were a total of 23,368 units in Warren and 8,869 in Forest County. The change over the last 10 years has been marginal and amounts to a 187 unit decrease. Recent data shows 23,275 units in Warren and 8,675 in Forest. This is a small decrease for both counties. The vacancy rate for rentals and non-rental units in both counties is lower than what is found at state and national levels. The “other” category which accounts for housing designated as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use is significantly higher in both counties. This is especially true for Forest County which has a 75.65% vacancy rate in this category. Recall that Forest County markets itself as, and is, a recreational destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Vacancy rate information can be found in Table 33.

Housing burden is assessed by the American Community Survey on a continual basis. Housing burden is a term that applies to both renters and owners and refers to the percentage of household income being used for rent or mortgage. Data regarding the housing burden in the service area is shown in Tables 34 and 35. Paying more than 30% of the household income is considered a “housing-cost burden” and likely means that the household struggles to financially. In Warren and Forest Counties, when averaged together, the percentage of homeowners carrying a cost burden is less than what is typically found at the state and national levels. However, when looking at each county individually, the percentage of homeowners in Forest County with a cost burden is higher than the state average and slightly less than the national average. In Warren County, by contrast, there are a lower percentage of burdened homeowners than at both state and national levels.

Table 33: Address Vacancies, 2009 – 2013

County	Total Housing Units	Vacant Non-Rental	Vacant Non-Rental Rate	Vacant Rental	Vacant Rental Rate	Vacant Other	Vacant Other Rate
Forest	8,719	91	1.04%	31	0.36%	6,596	75.65%
Warren	23,465	217	0.92%	472	2.01%	5,519	23.52%
Report Area	32,184	308	0.96%	503	1.56%	12,115	37.64%
Pennsylvania	5,565,653	87,387	1.57%	119,768	2.15%	400,071	7.19%
National	132,057,808	2,290,610	1.73%	3,830,007	2.90%	10,326,971	7.82%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Table 34: Housing-Cost Burden (Owners)

County	Total Housing Units	Owners with Mortgages	30 Percent or More of Income with Mortgage	Percent of Owners Spending 30 Percent or More of Income with Mortgage	Owners without Mortgages	30 Percent or More of Income without Mortgage	Percent of Owners Spending 30 Percent or More of Income without Mortgage
Forest	8,719	599	206	34.39%	1,063	121	11.38%
Warren	23,465	6,866	1,806	26.30%	6,414	613	9.56%
Report Area	32,184	7,465	2,012	26.95%	7,477	734	9.82%
Pennsylvania	5,565,653	2,161,939	680,772	31.49%	1,300,573	212,716	16.36%
National	132,057,808	49,820,840	17,636,344	35.40%	25,254,860	3,784,400	14.98%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Table 35: Housing-Cost Burden (Renters)

County	Total Housing Units	Occupied Units Paying Rent	30 Percent or More of Income Paying Rent	Percent of Renters Spending 30 Percent or More of Income with Rent
Forest	8,719	339	101	29.79%
Warren	23,465	3,977	1,498	37.67%
Report Area	32,184	4,316	1,599	37.05%
Pennsylvania	5,565,653	1,495,915	687,895	45.98%
National	132,057,808	40,534,516	19,581,492	48.31%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

To summarize, the housing stock in the service area is older than that typically found in other areas of the state as well as nationally. Older houses present a unique set of challenges and are often more expensive to properly maintain as well as heat/cool due to inadequate insulation, drafts from settlement, non-insulated windows, and other myriad reasons. While the housing cost burden is not out of line than what other areas experience, the wages earned in this area are also not as high as what one might earn outside of the two counties. Finding safe, affordable, and suitable housing is a frequently cited problem in the area. Section 8 housing is limited and the waiting list is currently closed. It had been closed for approximately 2 years prior to opening for a limited amount of time in late 2015. This lasted only a handful of months before the list closed. At the local Housing Authority, the wait list times for low-income individuals and families can vary and has, in the recent year, been as fast as 4 months or as long as 7 months. Available units at the Housing Authority tend to be few and far between. Clients can only be put on the waiting list if they have a good rental history and do not already owe the Housing Authority for back rent or damages.

The severely limited number of available subsidized housing units presents a problem since in most cases, due to the waiting lists, this is often not an option for low-income families and/or individuals. The average rent for a one bedroom apartment typically falls between \$450-\$500 and/or \$525-\$575. In most situations, utilities are not included in the rent and if they are, it is usually only for one bedroom apartments. While the selection of two bedroom apartments is adequate, families struggle in both Warren and Forest Counties to find suitable housing where three or more bedrooms are needed. Not only are these hard to find due to the limited number of available options but they are often unaffordable to low income families. As already stated, wages in the area are often below average and lower than what would be considered a living wage. The lack of available options is further compounded when struggling families have left housing owing money or on bad terms. In a small area where there are a limited number of options, a family can quickly find itself struggling to secure adequate housing at an affordable cost due to a negative reputation with the limited number of landlords/property managers in the service area.

Education | There are two school districts within the service area. The Warren County School District is the second largest in the state in terms of geographic area covered. Neighboring Forest County has a school district comprised of 2 junior/senior high schools and 2 elementary schools. In Warren, the district uses 4 distinct attendance areas: North, Central, East, and West. There is also a Learning Enrichment Center available to gifted students with enrichment programs for those who qualify. In addition, the Warren County School District also offers to students in grades 10 through 12 the opportunity to attend either a morning or afternoon session at the Warren County Career Center which is the area's vocational-technical school. In terms of enrollment, both school districts have small class sizes and total numbers of enrolled students. This is not atypical in more rural locations like Warren and Forest Counties however it is worth noting that both counties have experienced declining enrollment as the number of children and families in the area continues to slowly decrease.

The total public and private school enrollment, as shown in Table 36, for Kindergarten through High School in Warren County was 5,240. This represents a sharp decline from the 8,301 enrolled in Kindergarten through grade 12 as reported by the US Census, 2000. Recent US Census data from the 2010 report states that 449 children were served by early childhood and preschool programs. By comparison, 667 children were served in 2000. Data from Forest

County shows similar trends in declining enrollment as the population of school age children continues to decrease. Unlike Warren County, there are no private schools in Forest County as there is not a population to support one.

Table 36: Public and Non-Public School Enrollment, 2013-2014

County	Enrollment			Elementary			Secondary		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
Forest	515	515	no data	273	273	no data	242	242	no data
Warren	5,240	4,875	365	2,778	2,453	365	2,462	2,422	40
Report Area	5,755	5,390	no data	3,051	2,726	no data	2,704	2,664	no data
Pennsylvania	1,971,759	1,750,059	221,700	1,082,069	926,229	221,700	889,690	823,830	65,860

Source: Public School Enrollment report and Private and Non-Public Schools Enrollments Reports, 2013-2014, The Pennsylvania Department of Education.

According to the US Census, 2010 and the American Community Survey (Table 37), nearly half of adults over the age of 25 have only a high school diploma. An additional 18% in Forest County and 10% in Warren County have no high school diploma or equivalent. In terms of college education, when averaging both counties together, there were 16.5% with some college, 7.94% with an Associate, 10.35% with a Bachelors degree, and 5.87% with a Graduate or Professional degree. Compared to the average educational attainment nationally, the percentage of people with only a high school diploma is 20% higher in the service area. Roughly the same percentage of the population in the service counties have an Associate Degree, fewer have a Bachelors Degree, and fewer have Graduate or Professional Degrees compared with national averages.

Information on high school dropout rates and college bound graduates is provided in Tables 38 and 39. The dropout rate in Warren County is 2.64% and slightly higher than the 2.04% reported for the State of Pennsylvania during that same time frame. The dropout rate in Forest County is significantly less at 0.79%. Combined, the average for both counties is 2.47%. Table 39 shows how many high school graduates continue on to college. In Forest County, this number equates to 50% of the graduating class. Warren County fares slightly better with 60% moving on to college. These figures are less than the 67% who continue on statewide. In looking at the educational attainment, high school dropout, and graduate information, it seems likely that the area will continue to see a growing population of people entering the work force without a college education. Due to lower wages and lack of well paying, professional level jobs found in the area, it further seems likely that young, high school graduates who leave the area to pursue college degrees will be less likely to return to Warren or Forest Counties for employment upon graduation.

Table 37: Percent Attaining Educational Levels, 2009 - 2013

County	Over Age 18 and No High School Diploma	Education Level for Persons over 25					
		No High School Diploma	High School Only	Some College	Associates	Bachelors	Graduate or Professional
Forest	20.57%	18.38%	50.39%	17.72%	5.67%	5.27%	2.57%
Warren	11.27%	10.41%	47.06%	16.28%	8.38%	11.36%	6.52%
Report Area	12.88%	11.72%	47.61%	16.52%	7.94%	10.35%	5.87%
Pennsylvania	11.56%	11.34%	37.05%	16.48%	7.59%	16.85%	10.69%
National	14.20%	13.98%	28.12%	21.25%	7.81%	18.05%	10.79%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Table 38: High School Dropout Rates

County	Total Enrollment Grades 7-12	Dropouts			Dropout Rate
		Male	Female	Total	
Forest	252	2	0	2	0.79%
Warren	2,458	39	26	65	2.64%
Report Area	2,710	41	26	67	2.47%
Pennsylvania	831,595	9,572	7,427	16,999	2.04%

Source: Dropouts Public by School 2011-12, the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Table 39: High School Graduates

County	Total Graduates	College Bound	College Bound %
Forest	36	18	50%
Warren	376	229	61%
Report Area	412	247	60%
Pennsylvania	129,739	87,099	67%

Source: Graduates Public by School 2012-13, the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

According to the Warren County School District's Special Education Supervisor, the school district identified 787 students who were enrolled with Special Education needs for the 2014-2015 school year as of December 1, 2014. This equates to nearly 17% of enrolled students in grades K through 12. As reported in the "Special Education Plan Report" for the Warren County School District (7.1.2015 – 6.30.2018), the enrolled special education student population is described as follows:

"The special education data report from the 2013-2014 school year indicates our percent of special education is at 16.9% which is slightly higher than the state average for that year. This is most likely

attributed to a higher percentage of students identified in the areas of Autism and Speech/Language Impairments. This statistic does however reflect a lower number of students identified during the 2012-2013 school year which was 17.1%. Disproportionalities (+/- 10% discrepancy from the state percentage) were noted in Autism and Speech/Language Impairment which were higher than the state average. Other Health Impairment and Specific Learning Disabilities were lower than the state average. Proactive referrals of students with potential spectrum disorders are done through Early Intervention and school based teams. Students are screened early and follow-up assessments are done with the school psychology staff. We are fortunate to have local support through the Barber National Institute which actively assists with student assessments for Autism. Our speech and language percentage is also higher than the state by 5.8%. In this area we often receive children from the Early Intervention Program with language delays and continue to work with them as they enter school. We have a staff of six speech therapist who provide early screenings and interventions for young students. Other Health Impairment is an area where the district is significantly lower than the state percentage wise. This could be reflective of students with ADHD receiving services through a Chapter 15 Service Plan as opposed to an IEP. There are also times when a co-morbid diagnosis exists and that student is embraced educationally through another identified area. It is also notes that our numbers for Specific Learning Disabilities is lower than the state percentage by 7.4%. Our district percentage in this area has gradually increased over the years.”

In addition to the increasing numbers of students identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder, there has also been a noticeable increase in the number of students enrolled who have a Mental Health diagnosis. For younger children, ages 3 to 4, the school district coordinates services with the Intermediate Unit #5 Early Intervention program as children make the transition into Kindergarten. Services identified in Individual Education Plans (IEP) are tailored to the needs of each child and are typically provided by staff at the Warren Intermediate Unit #5. An IEP could include Speech/Language Support, Occupational and/or Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology, Transportation, or other identified services within the IEP. Children requiring intervention prior to pre-school age can be referred to the Birth to Three Early Intervention Program offered through Forest-Warren Health & Human Services. Services are generally identified via the child’s Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and may include, but are not limited to, special instruction, speech, physical, and occupational therapy. Often, these types of services are provided in the home or at a day care setting. Information on the number of children accessing services through the Birth to Three Early Intervention Program and the Intermediate Unit #5 Early Intervention Program can be found in tables 40 and 41.

Table 40: B-3 Special Education Services in Warren County, 2007-2015

School Year	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
# of Children	110	130	148	No Data	143	138	161	132 to date

Source: Warren-Forest Counties Head Start; Forest-Warren Human Services Early Intervention Program

Table 41: 3 and 4 Year Olds Receiving Special Education Services in Warren County, 2007-2014

	2007- 2008	2008- 2009	2009- 2010	2010- 2011	2011- 2012	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015
Head Start	52	58	49	38	47	41	39	35
IU#5	48	56	44	ND	ND	ND	ND	4
Don Mills	31	ND	27	ND	ND	ND	30	ND

Source: Warren-Forest Counties Head Start; *ND = No Data Available

The Warren Head Start program, the sole Head Start program within the two county service area, has made additional observations regarding the Special Education needs within their particular target population of 3 and 4 year olds. On average, at the onset of the school year there are typically 10-15% of enrolled students with an identified problem whom have been professionally diagnosed with a disability. However, there has been an observed trend of an increasing number of children who may not have a diagnosis but who do have challenging behaviors requiring more individualized instruction and / or interventions throughout the school day. In the 2014-2015 school year, slightly more than 10% of the total enrollment (218 children) had IEPs at the beginning of the school year. As of February 2015, 35 children had IEPs and 31 were identified as having challenging behaviors. Of the 35 children on IEPs, 14 had challenging behaviors; and an additional 17 children were identified with challenging behaviors. It is becoming increasingly common that once the school year begins, challenging behaviors are being identified and additional children are being diagnosed with a disability requiring Special Education services. Local mental health providers can be accessed by the family for children lacking an IEP but who have been identified as having a challenging behavior.

Forest County has no typical preschools. There is a K4 and IU6 program offered through the school district. The IU6 program of Forest County, similar to IU5 in Warren County, had no children enrolled for the 2014-2015 school year. Throughout the last school year, there were 4 children enrolled and therefore, typical 3-year-olds were being brought into the classroom in a reverse mainstream process. This is the result of significantly lower numbers than what was reported in January of 2014. The data collected for the 2014-2015 school year indicated that there were 30 less students requiring services. The K4 program also moved 3-year-olds into the classroom to bring the total class size to 18 students. Due to the low numbers of students, those requiring services are transported to North Clarion.

Childcare and Early Childhood Education | According to the 2014 data provided by the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, the average monthly number of children receiving subsidized child care in Warren County was determined to be 206. Out of this number, 24.2% were participating in Keystone STARS for 3 and 4 year olds, 30.3% were in high-quality pre-k programs, and 57.5% were eligible for publicly funded pre-k but are not currently being served.

Data provided by the Child Care Information System (CCIS) of Forest/Venango/Warren Counties shows that during the 2012-2013 school year there were 122 preschool age children who received or were receiving a subsidy. The subsidy provided by CCIS can be used for either child care or early education programming. In the 2014 fiscal year which runs from July 2013 to June 2014 the total number of preschool age children receiving a subsidy in Forest, Warren, or Venango Counties was 128. CCIS also reported that in total there were 441 children receiving additional

subsidized services through all available funding streams (including Low Income, TANF, etc.) at all provider types (Family, Group, Center) and for any unit of care (Fulltime, Part Time, Etc.). There was not a need for a waiting list during the 2014 fiscal year and all eligible families were approved to receive subsidies. It is anticipated that there will be a greater demand during the 2015 fiscal year thus necessitating the need for a waiting list or additional funding.

According to the Pennsylvania Departments of Public Welfare and Education, in Warren County, there are a total of 22 licensed facilities providing child care services with a combined ability to serve a maximum of 788 children. There are 8 child care centers, 1 group day care, and 11 family child care homes. Forest County, by comparison, has only one licensed family child care in a home with the capacity to serve 6 children. By definition, a day care center is defined as a child care facility where 7 or more children who are not related to the operator receive child care. A family child care home is defined, by contrast, as a home where 7 to 12 children unrelated to the caregiver receive care. Last, a group child care home is one where 7 to 12 children of varying age or 7 to 15 children from 4th grade to 15 years old and are not related to the operator receive care. In addition to the licensed child care centers, additional options exist for families. These would include non-licensed options or having friends or family members care for children while the primary caregiver is at work.

In addition to a selection of child care providers, Warren County has several preschool programs as well as a Head Start program. All programs and enrollment information on the last three completed school years is provided in Table 42.

Table 42: Preschool Enrollment in Warren County

Program	2010 to 2011		2013 to 2014		2014 to 2015	
	3 year olds	4 year olds	3 year olds	4 year olds	3 year olds	4 year olds
Creative Preschool	24	17	11	21	11	12
First United Methodist Church	10	16	5	13	8	7
Grace Promise	12	14	12	15	12	16
Imagine Preschool	19	15	12	17	ND	ND
Jefferson DeFrees	16	24	13	21	20	21
Jefferson DeFrees PKC	-	-	1	5	6	
North Warren	11	11	8	15	10	11

Rouse Children's Center	4	7	8	17	13	11
Russell United Methodist	10	5	7	8	12	8
Ruth Smith	4	10	3	5	19	10
Sheffield United Methodist	1	5	Closed		Closed	
YMCA	36	38	16	18	26	14
Head Start PreK Counts (PKC)	0	6	7	13	20	-
Tidioute Charter	0	17	0	17		
Tidioute Presbyterian	9	1	Closed		Closed	
Don Mills Achievement (IU)	11	0	5	10	10	12
Don Mills Pre-School	7	17	12	18		
IU Therapeutic	-	-	3	-	-	4
St. Joes	10	10	12	9	10	10
Head Start	78	110	100	111	96	122
TOTALS	262	323	235	333	273	258
	585	568	531			

Source: Warren-Forest Counties EOC and Head Start

Transportation | Warren and Forest Counties, as previously mentioned, are rural counties with a large portion of land designated as either state or national forest. In addition, neither county is easily accessed by major interstates or highways. Roads and highways typically follow the terrain and topography of the Appalachian Plateau. It is common for roadways to wind through steeply wooded hillsides or run parallel to the county creeks and / or the Allegheny River. This situation, as well as having limited public transportation, has in the past and currently contributed to transportation being a major barrier for low income individuals and families. The cost of owning and maintaining a single vehicle is often prohibitive for households already struggling to meet basic needs. It is common

for a family to only have one vehicle, limited access, or no vehicle. Access to transportation may limit where one is able to work and further compromise a household's ability to earn a living wage by reducing the number of available employment options.

There is only one form of public transportation in Warren County. The Transit Authority of Warren County (TAWC) was organized in 1979 and began operation in 1980. TAWC bus service tries to best serve the needs of the community by providing several variations on services with available resources. In the past, TAWC has reconfigured available routes and times based on client feedback to address transportation needs in the service area to the best of its ability. Currently, TAWC has a fixed route service available to everyone, a shared ride service for those 65 years and older, a complimentary paratransit service for persons with disabilities, and a medical assistance transportation program. In Warren County less than 1% of the work force depends on public transportation to get to work (Table 43). Public transportation in Forest County is non-existent. Approximately 80% of workers use their own transportation to get to work in both counties. This is about 4% higher than the national and state averages and could partially be due to the fixed routes and schedule offered through the TAWC system. As an example, TAWC buses stop running at 6pm therefore workers scheduled to work second or third shift or those not on a regular 9am to 5pm schedule may not be able to use the bus system to get to and from work. Depending on public transportation with children would further complicate the situation making it a far less ideal solution to transportation in the service area for working families.

Over half of the work force in Warren County commutes between 10 and 30 minutes to work. Of the remaining work force, approximately 20% travel more than 30 minutes while nearly 25% live within 10 minutes. Forest County, by contrast, has almost 40% of the work force commuting to work more than 30 minutes away. The average commute time in Forest County is 25.5 minutes compared to 19.1 minutes in Warren County. Additional information regarding estimated commute times can be found in Table 44.

Table 43: Method of Transportation to Work

County	Workers 16 and Up	Method of Transportation to Work (Percent)					
		Drive Alone	Carpool	Public Transportation	Bicycle / Walk	Taxi / Other	Work at Home
Forest	1,732	81.52%	7.51%	0.00%	5.02%	1.50%	4.45%
Warren	18,279	79.86%	9.49%	0.62%	5.77%	1.02%	3.25%
Report Area	20,011	80.00%	9.31%	0.57%	5.70%	1.06%	3.35%
Pennsylvania	5,794,492	76.73%	8.87%	5.41%	4.33%	0.86%	3.80%
National	139,786,640	76.35%	9.75%	5.01%	3.38%	1.19%	4.33%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Table 44: Travel Time to Work, 2009 – 2013

County	Workers 16 and Up	Travel Time to Work (Percent of Workers)				Average Commute Time Minutes
		Less than 10 Minutes	10 to 30 Minutes	30 to 60 Minutes	More than 60 Minutes	
Forest	1,732	33.05%	27.13%	30.82%	9.00%	25.53
Warren	18,279	24.83%	54.48%	16.08%	4.61%	19.19
Report Area	20,011	24.68%	50.39%	16.76%	4.82%	19.74
Pennsylvania	5,794,492	14.04%	49.91%	27.67%	8.38%	24.91
National	139,786,640	13.48%	50.76%	27.64%	8.12%	24.42

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2013.

Nutrition | There are no traditional food pantries in Warren or Forest Counties. Low-income households in the service area rely primarily on SNAP, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Produce Express offered through the regional Second Harvest Food Bank, and meals for seniors delivered to homes or centers through the Area Agency on Aging (Table 45) for any type of nutritional assistance. Additionally, the Salvation Army and several area churches offer meals or food boxes to those individuals or families in need.

The area WIC Office, like WIC locations nationwide, exists to support low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women and their infants and children in obtaining nutritious food. This is done through supplemental food vouchers, programming to promote healthy eating, meal planning, and prep, and referring women to other appropriate agencies for programs and services which they may be eligible for. During the last school year (2014 to 2015), it was estimated by the WIC Program of Warren County that approximately 50% of all Head Start children (208 students) received services under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Additional data provided at that time estimated that each month there are approximately 850 participants in WIC services. An additional assessment of nutritional needs facing low income families by the local WIC office included the following statement provided as part of a survey response:

“Families with young children receiving services typically lack basic parenting skills and exist within an unstable family environment. Poverty and parents working low wage jobs with little to no benefits are still unable to meet basic needs even with BOTH parents working. Parents lack knowledge and skills when it comes to basic cooking, food preparation, and budgeting. There is a noticeable increase in the use of pre-packaged, instant food items which are less costly for the family but not as nutritious.”

This observation made by the WIC office is further corroborated by Head Start staff. Limited or unreliable transportation often further limits access to supermarkets. This trend has encouraged a reliance on convenience stores and similar options where foods tend to be more expensive with a limited selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. The limited area food banks have a tendency to supply cheap and easy-to-store food. Vending machines, area restaurants, and especially fast food restaurants tend to not supply fruit or vegetables. Further compounding

the issue, lower income parents with one or more jobs tend to have little time for cooking and are more likely to view fruits and vegetables as too time consuming to prepare. For some of the same or similar reasons, fast food chains hold greater appeal for many families on the go. In recent years, fast food chains have begun offering a few healthier options. However, the need for better nutrition is clear when considering the rising numbers of childhood obesity and the identification of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease as the major health problems facing the service area population.

Despite rising poverty rates and lower wages, the number of households receiving SNAP is fractionally higher than what is found at the national level and almost 1% higher than what was reported at the state level. This information can be found in Table 46. Produce Express, offered through the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern PA (located in Erie, PA / Erie County) is a monthly distribution of nutritious, fresh, healthy produce to a limited number of needy families. This program requires households to sign up on a monthly basis. Limited spaces are available each month so sign ups are on a first come, first served basis. Seniors, a growing age cohort in the service area, are able to have meals delivered to the home or a center through programs like Meals-On-Wheels offered via the Area Agency on the Aging. During the 2012 – 2013 fiscal year 1,542 meals were provided to those persons in the service area age 60 and up. As shown in Table 45, the majority of meals served were at a center location where multiple people were served at a single time.

Table 45: Services Provided to Persons Age 60 and Older, 2012-2013

County	Additional County(s) Served	Total Congregate Meals	Total Home Delivered Meals
Forest	Warren	512	259
Warren	Forest	512	259
Report Area	no data	1,024	518
Pennsylvania		73,858	30,313

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Table 7-13 A-C. Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

Table 46: Households Receiving SNAP by Poverty Status, 2009-2013

County	Total Households Receiving SNAP	Percent	Income Below Poverty	Income Above Poverty	Family has at Least 1 Working Member	Age 60 and Older
Forest	255	12.74%	86	169	62	112
Warren	2,191	12.70%	1,043	1,148	1,011	519
Report Area	2,446	12.70%	1,129	1,317	1,073	631
Pennsylvania	585,892	11.82%	310,208	275,684	277,359	161,064
National	14,339,330	12.40%	7,498,398	6,840,932	7,896,027	3,723,170

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, 2012-2013 and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013. The 2012 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2008 through 2012.

Health Care | It can be difficult to attract physicians and specialists to rural counties. Warren and Forest County are no exception and neither county has a federally qualified health center or FQHC. In general, a FQHC is any organization receiving grants under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act and qualify for enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid among other benefits. In Warren County, there are 2 hospitals and 3 nursing facilities which accept Medicare and Medicaid. Forest County has no hospitals and boasts only 1 nursing facility and 1 rural health clinic which accept Medicare and/or Medicaid. This information can be found in Table 47.

In Table 48 the number of physicians and physician assistants for the service area is shown. The number of nurses in the area is shown in Table 49. While the State of Pennsylvania is able to average 3.83 physicians per every 1000 persons, Warren and Forest County have noticeably smaller ratios. In Warren County there are approximately 2 (2.21 actual) physicians for every 1000 persons. Forest County, smaller and more rural than Warren, has only 0.13 physicians per every 1000 persons. Averaging the two counties together, the service area has 1.9 physicians for every 1000 persons. This can make it difficult to secure a primary care physician as the practice may not be accepting new patients. It should also be noted that not all providers in the area accept medical assistance which further limits available provider options for low-income families and individuals. This can have the added effect of creating a greater demand on emergency care workers for minor aches / pains, colds, or other illness not typically classified as an actual emergency.

Area physicians surveyed for the 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment by Warren General Hospital were asked what the top concern in terms of patient care was for Warren County residents. The response, overwhelmingly was, that a lack of primary care physician access has contributed to increased utilization of the Emergency Care Center for minor issues. This situation makes treatment less efficient and more costly. Further, in the survey, when asked to make recommendations, many of the physicians suggested the following: “[T]here needs to be better access to specialty physicians, and other options to provide open access for patients, especially patients on a limited income.”

The numbers of mental health professionals, therapists, and specialty health practitioners are provided in tables 50 through 52. Note that the chart shows only one psychologist in Warren County which is an inaccurate picture of available mental health service providers in the area. The following service providers are all located and readily available to persons living in Warren and Forest Counties: Achievement Center, Beacon Light Behavioral Health, Catholic Charities Counseling, Deerfield Behavioral Health, Family Services of Warren County, Forest-Warren Human Services, Forest-Warren County Mental Health Emergency Services, and the Warren State Hospital. There are multiple, qualified mental health professionals employed at all of the aforementioned service providers.

In terms of specialist care, it was noted in the Community Health Needs Assessment that cardiology was one of the leading specialties lacking in Warren County. Other areas of need included dermatologists, nephrologists, interventional radiologist, neurologists, and gastroenterologists. A patient who would require specialty care is often referred to Erie, PA or other areas outside of the service area. This can be particularly troublesome for low-income individuals and families already struggling with reliable transportation and/or under financial strain.

Table 47: Institutional Medicare and Medicaid Providers, 2014

County	Total Institutional Providers	Hospitals	Nursing Facilities	Federally Qualified Health Centers	Rural Health Clinics	Community Mental Health Centers
Forest	2	0	1	0	1	0
Warren	12	2	3	0	0	0
Report Area	14	2	4	0	1	0
Pennsylvania	2,780	257	700	205	69	16

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs. April 2014; and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

Table 48: Physicians and Assistants, April 2014

County	Medical Physicians / Surgeons	Medical Physician Assistants	Osteopathic Physicians / Surgeons	Physicians / Assistants per 1,000
Forest	1	0	0	0.13
Warren	70	17	5	2.21
Report Area	71	17	5	1.89
Pennsylvania	36,371	5,861	6,427	3.83

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureaus of Professional and Occupational Affairs. April 2014; and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

Table 49: Nurses, April 2014

County	Registered Nurses	Practical Nurses	Registered Nurse Practitioners	Clinical Nurse Specialists	Nurses per 1,000 Persons
Forest	45	40	1	0	11.22
Warren	478	299	16	0	19.06
Report Area	523	339	17	0	17.84
Pennsylvania	180,698	55,056	7,609	154	19.18

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs. April 2014; and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

Table 50: Mental Health Professionals, April 2014

County	Psychologists	Psychologist per 1,000 Persons
Forest	0	0
Warren	1	0
Report Area	1	0
Pennsylvania	5,276	0

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs, April 2014; and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

Table 51: Therapists

County	Physical Therapists	Occupational Therapists	Chiropractors	Therapists / Chiropractors per 1,000 Persons
Forest	0	2	0	0.26
Warren	25	12	8	1.08
Report Area	25	14	8	0.95
Pennsylvania	11,455	6,639	3,817	1.73

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs, April 2014; and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

Table 52: Special Health Professionals, April 2014

County	Dietitian-Nutritionists (LDN)	Optometrists	Doctors of Podiatric Medicine	Speech Language Pathologists	Special Health Professionals per 1,000 Persons
Forest	0	0	0	0	0
Warren	9	7	5	15	1
Report Area	9	7	5	15	1
Pennsylvania	3,511	1,868	1,253	6,340	1

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs, April 2014; and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

Access to affordable health insurance is an issue impacting many but this basic necessity is particularly difficult for more vulnerable populations and low-income families. In Warren and Forest County, the number of providers in the area is already more limited than elsewhere. Add to that, not all providers accept medical assistance. This situation, as previously mentioned, has led to overuse of the local Emergency Care Center for minor medical issues rather than emergencies which in turn, compromises the level of care for true emergencies and is more expensive. Table 53 shows the numbers of uninsured persons living in Warren and Forest County. The average for the state is approximately 12% of the population as of 2013. This is the same as what was recorded for Warren County but less than the number of uninsured in Forest County. In Forest County, 15% of the population is uninsured. Data from the

County Assistance Office for the 2012-2013 fiscal year is shown in Table 54. This table provides information on what portion of the population is eligible for medical assistance or Medicaid. For Warren County, this number is roughly 17% of the total population. Forest County data shows that almost 12% of the population is eligible while the average for the state is 17.17%. Medicare, available to seniors aged 65 and older or disabled persons, is shown in Table 55. In Warren County there are 10,165 receiving Medicare. Using the 41,165 person listed for the total population of Warren County in Table 54 this accounts for 25% of the total population. Combining those on Medicaid and Medicare, in Warren County approximately 42% of the total population receives a form of health care assistance. Forest County, with a noticeably smaller population, is similar in terms of the estimated percentage of the population receiving Medicare with 23%. Pennsylvania's Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enrollment is shown in Table 56. The majority of those children enrolled, roughly 83.98%, live in households with incomes less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Table 53: Uninsured Persons, 2013

County	Insurance Population (2013 Estimate)	Number Insured	Number Uninsured	Percent Uninsured
Forest	3,577	3,041	536	15%
Warren	32,209	28,430	3,778	12%
Report Area	35,786	31,471	4,314	12%
Pennsylvania	10,339,423	9,136,193	1,203,230	12%
National	264,843,216	220,365,245	44,477,968	17%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2013 (January 2015 release).

Table 54: Number of Individuals Eligible for County Assistance Funding, 2013

County	Total Population	Persons Eligible for Medical Assistance	Percent of Population Eligible	Receiving TANF	Percent of Population Receiving TANF	Eligible for SNAP	Percent Eligible for SNAP
Forest	7,667	911	11.88%	12	0.16%	686	8.95%
Warren	41,146	7,036	17.10%	290	0.70%	5,690	13.83%
Report Area	48,813	7,947	16.28%	302	0.62%	6,376	13.06%
Pennsylvania	12,763,536	2,191,652	17.17%	203,419	1.59%	1,810,990	14.19%

Source: 2012-2013 Average Monthly Unduplicated Number of Persons Eligible for Medical Assistance, Pennsylvania Department of Health & Human Services, 2012-2013.

Table 55: Medicare Enrollment by County, 2012

County	Persons Over 65 Receiving Medicare	Disabled Persons Receiving Medicare	Total Persons Receiving Medicare
Forest	1,334	364	1,698
Warren	8,138	2,027	10,165
Report Area	9,472	2,391	11,863
Pennsylvania	2,100,850	472,898	2,573,748

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Medicare County Enrollment Report, 2012.

Table 56: Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Enrollment

County	Total Enrollment	Federal Poverty Levels				
		Less than 200%	200% to 250%	250% to 275%	275% to 300%	Greater than 300%
Forest	65	47	12	3	3	0
Warren	503	430	47	9	8	9
Report Area	568	477	59	12	11	9
Pennsylvania	188,452	152,730	22,613	5,780	3,378	3,951

Source: 2013 Annual Report to the Legislature, Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program.

The top three causes of death in the two-county service area are, in no particular order, Cancer, Diseases of Heart, and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease. For both counties, Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease is the third leading cause of death. In Warren County, Heart Disease is the leading cause followed by Cancer while in Forest County; Cancer is the top cause of death with Heart Disease being second. Recall that according to the Community Health Needs Assessment, Warren General Hospital surveys and focus groups indicated that there was a lack of specialty care providers in Warren and Forest Counties. Cardiologists in particular were identified as a medical need for the area. If a person was in need of specialty care it is most likely that that person would need to travel to Erie, PA for care. Table 57 shows the top five leading causes of death for Forest and Warren Counties respectively.

Looking at the deaths and death rates by county there were more deaths than births. This further supports the census data which indicated a steadily decreasing population and results in a natural increase of -173 lives for data collected in 2011. There has not been any migration of people moving to either county so it can be assumed that there has been a continued trend of more deaths than births. This data also supports the identified trend of a continual, slow decrease in school enrollment for both counties as the number of children compared to older age cohorts continues to decrease while older cohorts increase. A detailed breakdown of the birth and death rates is provided in Table 58.

Access to prenatal care can have a significant impact on both maternal and infant health. In the two-county service area nearly 75% of expecting women received care during the first trimester. Less than 5% of women had their first

prenatal appointment in the third trimester. The number of births and birth weights in relation to when prenatal care was first accessed is provided in Table 59. In both counties, 58% of live births were to women aged 20 to 30, 9.72% were to those aged 15 to 19, and the remaining 32% were born to women aged 30 to 40. Table 60 shows the exact breakdown of total births for each age cohort.

Table 57: Top Five Leading Causes of Death – Forest County

Rank	Cause of Death	Total Number
1	Cancer	23
2	Diseases of Heart	18
3	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	9
4	Accidents	6
5	Intentional Self-harm (Suicide)	5

Table 57: Top Five Leading Causes of Death – Warren County

Rank	Cause of Death	Total Number
1	Diseases of Heart	144
2	Cancer	99
3	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	42
4	Diabetes Mellitus	31
5	Stroke	29

Source: 2012 Death Statistics, Pennsylvania Department of Health

Table 58: Number of Deaths and Death Rate, 2011

County	Live Births		All Deaths		Infant Deaths		Neonatal Deaths		Fetal Deaths	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Forest	39	5.1%	101	13.3%	1	no data	1	ND	no data	no data
Warren	392	9.5%	503	12.1%	4	no data	3	ND	4	no data
Report Area	431	no data	604	no data	5	no data	4	no data	no data	no data
Pennsylvania	142,021	11.1%	127,122	10.0%	930	7%	643	%	1,351	9%

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics and Research, 2011.

Table 59: Live Births by Birth Weight and Trimester of First Prenatal Visit, 2012

County	First Trimester			Second Trimester			Third Trimester		
	Under 2500 Grams	Over 2500 Grams	Unknown	Under 2500 Grams	Over 2500 Grams	Unknown	Under 2500 Grams	Over 2500 Grams	Unknown
Forest	0	24	0	1	4	0	0	3	0
Warren	20	272	2	8	50	0	0	18	0
Report Area	20	296	2	9	54	0	0	21	0
Pennsylvania	7,128	90,284	390	2,428	25,993	100	491	6,358	18

County	Unknown Trimester			No Prenatal Care		
	Under 2500 Grams	Over 2500 Grams	Unknown	Under 2500 Grams	Over 2500 Grams	Unknown
Forest	0	1	0	0	1	0
Warren	1	13	5	0	1	2
Report Area	1	14	5	0	2	2
Pennsylvania	976	4,539	363	358	1,419	28

Source: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – Department of Health, Health Statistics and Research, 2012.

Table 60: Births by Females Age Under 15, and 15 to 19, 2011

County	Total Births	Mother Age					
		Under 15	15 to 19	20 to 30	30 to 40	Over 40	Unknown
Forest	39	no data	5	25	8	no data	no data
Warren	392	no data	36	221	127	no data	no data
Report Area	431	no data	41	246	135	no data	no data
Pennsylvania	142,021	149	10,775	72,571	54,508	3,959	59

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics and Research, 2011.

A final component of health care in Warren and Forest Counties is access to dental care. In the two-county service area there is only one dentist accepting the medical access card. The average dentist would see approximately 1,000 patients in the course of a typical year. The lone dentist in this area accepting the medical access cards sees twice the normal amount averaging 2,000 patient visits per year. This makes it difficult to schedule an appointment if this is your only option. According to the Head Start program in Warren County, it can often take as long as a year to schedule an appointment with this dentist. It is also common that a regular cleaning and x-rays would need to occur at separate appointments due to the overwhelming demand. Specialty work, particularly for children, is often referred to Erie, PA. According to Head Start, for low-income families already struggling with transportation or other

issues, the need for scheduling multiple appointments increases the risk that the child may miss one or both. Children who miss appointments have to then wait another year before they can get an appointment rescheduled. Table 61 shows the number of dentists and hygienists in the service area. For Warren County, there is essentially 1 dental professional for every 1,000 persons. In Forest County there are no dental professionals indicating that residents must travel outside of the county to receive treatment / care. The average for the State of Pennsylvania is 1.26 dental professionals per 1,000 people. Therefore, the ratio of dental professionals in Warren County to residents living in Warren County is almost average with that found across the state.

Table 61: Dental Professionals, April 2014

County	Dentists	Dental Hygienists	Dental Professionals per 1,000 Persons
Forest	0	0	0
Warren	13	28	1
Report Area	13	28	1
Pennsylvania	8,179	7,799	1

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs. April 2014; and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Data Release, December 2013.

Section III | Community Input

Throughout 2015 there were several methods used to obtain community insight into the needs of the area. These included several surveys, telephone interviews, and focus groups.

Surveys - Process | There were two basic types of survey used for gathering input. One, a basic customer satisfaction survey, was sent out to clients who had recently taken part in an Agency program or service. The second type of survey used specifically asked other agencies, non-profits, community organizations, and/or providers for their input on community needs and perceived gaps in services. The Head Start program conducts a survey of all parents and caregivers at the close of each school year. This information and all survey results are reviewed along with test results to evaluate overall program effectiveness and the greater impact on not only the students but; the entire family unit.

The customer satisfaction survey was mailed out in two separate batch mailings. In the first mailing, 155 surveys were sent out and 28 were returned for an 18% response rate. The second mailing was smaller with 75 surveys sent and 9 returned for a 13% response rate. Overall, the view of the agency and satisfaction with programs and services offered was overwhelmingly positive. Many of the respondents had applied for and received either weatherization, utility assistance, or had a child in Head Start.

The survey used for agencies and providers seeking to garner greater insight into the observed needs and gaps in services for the Warren and Forest County communities was conducted in two ways. In the first, an electronic version of the survey was sent to all agencies from the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council requesting a response to the survey within a two week time frame. These results were tallied and all comments were compiled. A focus group of survey respondents and other agencies / providers was then held. The survey findings were used to guide discussion and problem solving throughout subsequent sessions. By bringing all agencies and providers together, the EOC was able to hone in on those issues impacting all of the often shared clients among attending providers and work toward pooling resources in a way that would help find viable solutions at a time when funding is scarce and resources for all providers are tested as greater demand is being observed.

As aforementioned, the survey asking specifically for observed needs within the community was circulated twice. The first was via an electronic mailing to community providers and agencies. The second was done during a provider fair which was hosted by the Allegheny Community Center and organized by the Alliance for a Better Community. The Alliance for a Better Community was an initiative spearheaded by the EOC in 2015 to bring together representatives from various agencies, providers, organizations, and/or non-profits that have a vested interest in the provision of social services for low-income families and households within Warren and Forest Counties. The mission statement of the Alliance for a Better Community, which concentrates effort on creating an atmosphere for collaboration by forging strong community linkages, is as follows:

“To facilitate and communicate a county-wide collaboration of private and public partnerships, addressing human needs through an efficient use of shared efforts and resources.”

Participating organizations over the course of 2015 have included, but are not limited to, the following: Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry, Forest-Warren Department of Human Services, Beacon Light Behavioral Health, Deerfield Behavioral Health, Warren County Community Foundation, Housing Authority of Warren County, Warren County School District, Warren General Hospital, CASA of Warren and Forest Counties, Penn State Extension in Warren County, Adagio Health, Warren County Commissioners, Bollinger Enterprises, Department of Health and Human Services, Warren-Forest Hi-Ed Council, Jefferson DeFrees Family Center, Warren/Forest Area Agency on Aging, Warren Alliance Church, Warren Library Association, and Forest Area School District. All of the aforementioned participants have provided insight by survey or in focus group discussion discussed further on. The Provider Fair, coordinated by the Alliance for a Better Community, extended invitations for area organizations and agencies to have an information table at the designated place and time (the Allegheny Community Center). Front line staff from various social services providers were invited to attend to familiarize themselves with current available programs and services. This also gave staff an opportunity to place a “face” with each provider, ask questions, and learn more about different programs or services that may be available options for current and future clients. The second survey which asked specific questions regarding each area of need, for example education, housing, and employment, was made available at the Provider Fair. The EOC was able to collect responses from approximately 25% of attendees.

Survey – Findings | The initial survey utilized by the agency contained a set of general questions aimed at the Agency’s overall performance and client experience for all programs. This survey did little to provide insight into program effectiveness or community need however; the survey findings provided better insight into how the Agency and staff were perceived by the target population of Warren and Forest Counties. These findings were overwhelmingly positive with respondents indicating a positive experience with various departments and staff. With few exceptions, clients indicated that they would come back if needed and would recommend programs and services to other people within the community. Further, clients who left comments were appreciative of the services received. In the upcoming program year, each program or service will have a separate customer satisfaction survey to be completed at the end of the service. This will allow the agency to continuously review targeted feedback on programs offered to determine overall effectiveness and to see if adjustments to the program are needed to obtain more positive results.

The second survey, emailed to providers and also circulated at the October 2015 Provider Fair, was a more direct survey targeted toward identifying the needs within the community. The survey also attempted to narrow in on the greatest need within each area of focus. For example, with housing there were questions asked on if affordability, lack of emergency shelters, or a need for transitional housing were bigger issues within that topic. In general, most respondents identified the same areas of concern therefore; comments by the respondent ultimately provided the greatest level of insight into the needs of the community or in identifying emerging trends. In future needs assessments, it appears likely that interviewing other social service providers and clients of the Agency would be a more efficient way of ascertaining the unmet or most pressing needs affecting the community.

The results of the surveys relating specifically to needs within the community are described below. The top three responses in each category have been identified as follows:

- **Education** is a problem in this area because
 - Lack of tuition money
 - No high school diploma
 - Lack of affordable child care
- **Nutrition** is a problem in this area because
 - Not enough income to purchase food
 - SNAP runs out before the end of the month
 - Lack of food
- **Housing** is a problem in this area because
 - Cost of rent/mortgage payment
 - Cost of utility and security deposits
 - Housing size doesn't meet family needs
- **Employment** is a problem in this area because
 - People lack skills to obtain a job
 - Lack of living wage jobs with benefits
 - People lack education to obtain a job
- **Income** usage is a problem in this area because
 - Lack of access to affordable credit options
 - Difficulty with money management
 - Lack of knowledge of budgeting
- **Transportation** is a problem in this area because
 - Cost of repairs
 - Cost of buying/down payment
 - Cost of maintaining a car
- **Health Care** is a problem in this area because
 - Lack of resources for mental health treatment
 - Lack of income to pay for prescriptions
 - Waiting list for dental services

The following service providers filled out a survey plus a questionnaire as part of the emailed survey for the needs assessment: New Hope Assistance Dogs, Inc., National Fuel Gas, Forest Area School District, CASA Warren County, Housing Authority for Warren County, Pregnancy Support Center, Beacon Light Behavioral Health, Warren General Hospital, Forest / Warren Department of Health and Human Services, and Children & Youth.

Responses to, "What are the top five unmet needs of the population that your organization serves?" included the following:

- Funding
- Public transportation for evenings and weekends

- Affordability of basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, transportation & utilities
- Access to health services (medical and dental)
- Access to social services
- Employment
- Locally available grocery stores (for fresh/unprocessed food)
- Low functioning and/or drug addicted parents
- Mental Health
- Lack of services for over 55 but under 62
- Affordable childcare
- Affordable housing
- Healthy choices
- Emergency care

Of the above listed responses, housing, access to health care – particularly mental health, and public transportation were the most frequently cited.

Responses to, “What trends or patterns in your customer base that you serve do you feel will need to be addressed over the next five years?” included the following:

- Seeing more veterans and children with special needs
- Increased movement of the middle class into the “working poor”
- Generational poverty
- Children being raised by grandparents / absentee parents
- Employment opportunities
- Increasing numbers of young adults who have no job skills or ability to support themselves
- Increased mental health support
- Increased senior housing
- Increased housing for the general population (non-elderly, non-disabled, non-family)
- Increased homelessness support
- Lack of motivation
- Serving greater numbers of elderly without the funds to match demand

Responses to, “What barriers to becoming self-sufficient and less dependent on government subsidies exist in the population you serve?” included the following:

- Apathy / motivation
- Lack of education
- Intergenerational mindset
- Transportation
- Lack of employment opportunities

- Affordable housing
- Child care / Elder care
- Health care access (including mental health)
- Higher education
- Volume of elderly people entering system and in need of services
- Low wages / lack of income

In summary, throughout the Warren and Forest County communities, housing, employment, wages, transportation, lack of job skills, access to medical care including mental health, and an increasing demand on providers for the aging population. Note that housing would encompass the cost of utilities, utility deposits, and maintenance/upkeep of the aging housing stock in addition to the shortage of affordable housing options for low-income households. Employment, wages, and lack of job skills among lower income households are all somewhat related. Wages in the area are lower than average and there are fewer opportunities which pay employees a true living wage which has resulted in a noticeable increase in the “working poor.” Additionally, a significant portion of the work force lacks education and job skills that would make them more employable and/or eligible for available opportunities.

Focus Groups | While surveys provided a basic understanding and identification of the needs within the community; focus group discussions with community social service providers expanded on the identified areas of concern. Discussions yielded a more in depth understanding of the identified needs. Beginning in the Spring of 2015, the reconvened Alliance for a Better Community Group began meeting to identify unmet needs, developing trends, and gaps in services within the community. Since that time, nine sessions have been held allowing for discussion on a wide range of topics and working as a group to identify potential solutions that could be pursued and thus, better serve our shared target population.

An oft repeated topic was the lack of soft skills in those seeking employment and even extending to those enrolled in elementary, middle, and high school. Soft skills are defined as the personal character traits and qualities a person has. Generally speaking, this skill set is largely comprised of the intangible qualities that define our attitudes, habits, and interaction with others. They aren’t a learned set of skills and are instead acquired through life experience. Some examples include communication, interpersonal skills, problem solving, critical thinking, active listening, organization, professionalism, and time management. As mentioned, this is a deficit being observed in all of the younger generations and beginning with the area’s youngest learners carries on into adulthood. In one focus group, a representative from the local PA CareerLink office stated that placing older, dislocated workers was much easier than placing younger job seekers due to the widespread lack of motivation, soft skills, and apathy displayed by older teens and young adults. The lack of soft skills and motivation has also been observed by employers.

In addition to the lack of soft skills, the levels of educational attainment for the community and the lack of employment opportunities which pay a living wage with benefits both play a role in the employment challenges facing the area. Other topics which were discussed in during focus group sessions involved housing and transportation. Both of these identified needs are often unaffordable for struggling households. In terms of housing, there are limited subsidized housing options, one emergency shelter, and limited transitional housing for domestic

violence survivors. There are no transitional housing options available for those exiting the prison system. Adding to the housing problems are affordable, safe options for larger families. While there are many 1 and 2 bedroom options; apartments that remain affordable and can accommodate larger families are few and far between. Transportation is a two pronged problem. The first part is the limited public transportation which is set on fixed routes and time schedules. This often does not make it a convenient or viable option for many potential consumers. The more frequently cited barrier to having safe, reliable transportation is the long term, continual cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle. During focus group sessions it was frequently stated that low-income households often spiraled when faced with repair costs, maintenance, and upkeep. At one session, a representative from the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry said that employers have frequently stated that a common excuse for missing work is car trouble.

Last, medical access was a problem that many providers saw as a barrier for clients. In particular, access to dental care for low-income families, specialty care, and mental health appointments. With dental care, the problem arises from the fact that there is only one dentist in both counties which accepts a medical access card. Due to this scenario, getting an appointment can often take several months and up to a year. Specialty care or complicated cases often need to be referred to Erie, PA in Erie County. While access to dental care was a major topic of concern in focus group sessions; the awareness of available mental health services and dealing with the stigma on mental health which often contribute to an unwillingness of people to seek out a diagnosis or treatment were also concerns discussed by the group.

Conclusion | Analysis of survey findings and focus group discussion topics has helped to provide greater insight into the needs of the Warren and Forest County communities. Further, the findings support the current data sets for the area and identify the needs of the community as follows:

- Lack of affordable housing (including rent, utilities, maintenance/upkeep on older homes)
- Supportive housing programs; particularly for those with mental health or physical disability
- Lack of employment opportunities paying a living wage
- Lack of qualified workers with necessary education and soft skills
- Aging population placing greater demand on a system with limited resources
- Transportation (including lack of public transportation options and the long term cost of maintaining a vehicle to low income households)
- Nutrition; particularly the affordability and availability of nutritious food

Section IV | Agency Service Data

As the most diversified agency among other area social service providers, the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council provides a valuable community asset for addressing the often multiple needs faced by low-income individuals and families. A systemic set of programs designed to attack poverty through employment and entrepreneurial training, budget counseling, and Head Start are offered by the agency. The EOC further addresses the conditions faced by low-income persons in areas such as housing and utility assistance. While our offerings are diverse there are still service areas that we do not provide direct services for such as mental health or chemical dependencies. In this instance, strong partnerships within the community are maintained by EOC caseworkers who manage an extensive system of linkages to other service providers within the community. Some of the most frequently utilized service partners when working to empower our clients and propel them to maintaining self-sufficiency include A Safe Place, Beacon Light Behavioral Health, Deerfield Behavioral Health, Family Services of Warren County, Forest Area School District, Forest County Board of Assistance, Forest-Warren Health & Human Services, Intermediate Unit #5 and #6, and Warren CareerLink.

Funding for the Warren-Forest EOC activities is coordinated with other public and private sources. Many activities are enhanced through local business and community initiatives, such as Operation Overcoat and the Community Fund. Partners and/or sources of funding in these areas include Warren and Forest Counties, Warren and Forest County school districts, First Energy, Pennsylvania American Water Company (PAWC), National Fuel Gas, UGI, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Since 1965, the Warren-Forest EOC has expanded considerably, and currently employs 60 persons with an annual budget of approximately \$5 million. Among the current listing of over 35 programs administered by the Warren-Forest EOC are the following:

➤ **Employment**

- Work Ready
- Fairweather Lodge Maintenance Crew
- Employment Services under Title I offered via PA CareerLink which include Dislocated Worker, TANF, In-School Youth, and Out-of-School Youth (*Programs are new for FY2016 – No data on numbers served at time of reporting*)

➤ **Education**

- Head Start
- Pre-K Counts
- Pre-K Scholarship

➤ **Housing**

- Commissioners Discretionary Fund for First-Time Homebuyer Program
- Commissioners Discretionary Fund for Housing Rehab
- Faith Inn Emergency Shelter and Rapid Rehousing Program
- HUD Housing Counseling

- Pre-Housing Counseling
- Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)
- Mental Health Permanent Supportive Housing Program
- Mental Health Transitional Housing Program (PATH)
- National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling Program (HEMAP)
- Supportive Housing Program
- Warren Transitional Housing Program for Domestic Violence Survivors
- Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund
- Youngsville Transitional Housing Program for Domestic Violence Survivors
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) / Veteran Homeless Assistance
- State Weatherization Program
- Warm III Program – Penelec
- Furnace and Water Heater Repair / Replacement Program – National Fuel
- Low Income Usage Reduction Program (LIURP) – National Fuel
- LIHEAP Non-Fuel Crisis
- Budget Counseling Program
- **Emergency Services**
 - Columbia Gas Customer Assistance Program (CAP)
 - Dollar Energy Fund
 - Pennsylvania American Water Company H2O Program
 - Neighbor for Neighbor Heat Fund
 - Penelec Customer Assistance Program (PCAP)
 - UGI Central Penn Gas (Operation Share and CAP)
 - Operation Overcoat
 - Community Fund
 - Emergency Food and Shelter
- **Nutrition**
 - Produce Express through Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern PA
- **Transportation**
 - CSBG Discretionary Grant for Client Transportation Program Development & Implementation (*New for the FY2015 & FY2016 Program Years*)

The following section provides greater detail for the efficacy of each identified program and/or service. The tables provided are by service category and show the program, number of applicants who received service within the identified year, and the number of clients who experienced a positive outcome due to the identified program and/or service. Where needed, additional comments or explanation have been provided.

Service Category | Employment

Current Program / Service	Number Served (2014)	Number Served (2015)	Outcomes
Work Ready	9	10	56% successful exits in 2014 70% successful exits in 2015
FairWeather Lodge Maintenance Crew	3	3	All individuals served participated in the program to varying degrees depending on each person's unique situation.
Title I Employment Services (Dislocated Worker, TANF, In-School & Out of School Youth)	N/A	N/A	These are new program offerings and therefore no data is available for 2014 or 2015 as they were not offered under the Warren-Forest EOC

Work Ready is a referral based program through the Department of Human Services. In 2014, there were 14 total referrals with 5 being rejected by the Agency. In 2015, there were 15 referrals with 5 being rejected. The number of referrals remains consistent on a year-to-year basis. Challenges faced with this program are on the client end meaning; it is often difficult to get clients to consistently report for work and follow through with the program in its entirety. Further, the Department of Human Services restricts the activities which participants are allowed to participate in. As an example, if a client is required by DHS to participate in 20 hours of a core activity the client is essentially limited to community service or paid work experience. If, at that particular time, there are no openings available in a government agency or non-profit for work that meets this requirement and would keep the client busy it is not uncommon for participants to then lose focus and no longer show up as scheduled. If there was consistently more work available that met the requirements set by DHS it is likely that the number of positive outcomes would increase. In addition, each client in Work Ready has a unique set of barriers depending on their personal situation which may range from transportation, education, job skills, social skills, and hygiene among others.

The FairWeather Lodge Maintenance Crew refers to individuals living in a Fairweather Lodge operated by the EOC. The number of people served is limited by the number of beds available at that location. To some degree, all individuals in the last two years participated and were employed by the EOC as part of their lease agreement. In the years reported (2014 and 2015) individuals had to leave the program for health reasons (mental health diagnosis).

There will not be data available for the Title I Employment serviced until the 2016 program year. These are offered via the local CareerLink under a subcontract agreement between the Greater Erie Community Action Committee and the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council to provide these services to the service area.

Service Category | Education

Current Program / Service	Number Served (2013-2014 School Year)	Number Served (2014-2015 School Year)	Outcomes
Head Start	211	218	See write up below for full list of outcomes.
PreK Counts	20	20	20 available slots. Children attend 180 days of classroom instruction for 6 hours each day.
PreK Scholarship	103	102	Numbers served refers to the number of students receiving a scholarship for Preschool.

The EOC Head Start program currently serves Warren County through its 5 center locations. At one point in time there was a center location in neighboring Forest County but continuously declining numbers within the target population ultimately meant there was not enough demand for that area. Currently, the Forest County School District addresses the need for a quality early childhood education. The Head Start program remains in close contact with the district and annually assesses if there is a need to have a center location in Forest County again.

The numbers served for each program in the chart above are reflective only of the number of students served by each program however; in actuality the number served would extend to the entire household. In Head Start, the philosophy and understanding is that for our children to be successful we must also serve the family by ensuring that households are given access to additional programs or services that are needed in order to create a positive, healthy environment at home. Head Start emphasizes the role of the parents and/or caregiver as their child's first and most important teacher and seeks to help build relationships that support well-being and positive interactions, engagement, connecting to the community, and encouraging parents to be lifelong educators, learners, advocates, and leaders.

Achievements or outcomes for the 2013-2014 school year are listed below and pertain to both students and impact to the entire household:

- 112 four year olds and 99 three year olds were served. Of these, 68 children were enrolled for their second year in the program.
- 96% of enrolled children received a medical exam.
- 98% of enrolled children received a dental exam.
- 207 children had their immunizations brought up to date.
- 41 children were identified as having a disability and additional services obtained.
- 40,977 meals were served to the children.
- 5,730 volunteer hours logged by 423 program volunteers providing services to 200 families.
- 20% of enrolled families were assisted in obtaining cash benefits through TANF/SSI.

- 45% of enrolled families obtained WIC.
- 61% of enrolled families obtained food stamps (SNAP).
- 70% of households received emergency/crisis intervention to help alleviate immediate needs
- 3% of households faced homelessness and were provided with housing assistance.
- 100% of families received supplemental health and parent education throughout the year.

Achievements or outcomes for the 2014-2015 school year are listed below and pertain to both students and the impact to the entire household:

- 122 four year olds and 96 three year olds were served. Of these 83 children were enrolled for their second year in the program.
- 94% of enrolled children received a medical exam.
- 93% of enrolled children received a dental exam.
- 199 children had their immunizations brought up to date.
- 42 children were identified as having a disability and additional services obtained.
- 42,266 meals were served to the children.
- 5,521 volunteer hours logged by 440 program volunteers. 3,778 volunteer hours were by Head Start parents.
- All 208 families participated in supplemental health and parenting education.
- 50% of all families were assisted with emergency/crisis intervention for various services.
- 5 children from 3 homeless families obtained safe, affordable housing.
- 15 families moved from substandard living to healthy, safe homes.
- 99% of parents felt that their child was socially prepared for school having attended Head Start.

Children served in the PreK Counts program are in two classrooms with Head Start students as well. Families are provided with the same services as Head Start families. This is a state funded program. In the last two school years, the 2014-2015 school year and the current school year, Pennsylvania funded 26 total slots for eligible children. The EOC serves 20 children in the program and the Jefferson DeFrees Family Center serves 6. Children participate in 180 days of instruction, meeting for 6 hours each day which allows for 5 hours of class plus two meals, five days per week.

PreK Scholarship is a program designed to assist families with Pre-K costs. In general, families are not eligible for Head Start or funding through the Department of Human Services. The Warren-Forest Counties EOC is an approved pre-kindergarten scholarship organization and accepts donation from local businesses. Families that apply for the scholarship are awarded funds which may then be used at any of the area pre-k programs. In 2013-2014 there were 103 scholarships awarded, and children attended 14 area pre-k programs. In the 2014-2015 there were 102 scholarships awarded to students attending 13 area pre-k programs.

In an area facing generational poverty and lower wages, programs like Head Start and PreK Counts are a much needed resource for low-income households. Each year, outcomes are overwhelmingly positive with students and families showing marked improvement when looking at each household from the beginning of the year to the end.

The Head Start program performs an annual community assessment used to evaluate the number of funded enrollment slots based on the need of the service area. PreK Scholarship, the success of which is largely dependent on available tax credits offered to participating businesses, helps to meet the needs of working families in the area who may otherwise find the cost of a pre-kindergarten program to be prohibitive.

Service Category | Housing

Current Program / Service	Number Served (2014)	Number Served (2015)	Outcomes
Commissioners Discretionary Fund (First Time Homebuyers & Housing Rehab)	5	1	2014 Five persons purchased their first home out of 11 applications 2015 One person was able to receive assistance for emergency home repairs
Faith Inn Emergency Shelter	72	69	2014 108 Applications / 41 Households Moved In / 27 Positive Move Outs / 14 Negative Move Outs 2015 95 Applications / 40 Households Moved In / 24 Positive Move Outs / 12 Negative Move Outs
HUD Housing Counseling	269 Sessions	146 Sessions	2014 Reflects PHFA counseling sessions FY2014 July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 / Often multiple sessions per client 2015 Reflects PHFA counseling sessions to date for FY2015 July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015 / Often multiple sessions per client
HEMAP	1 Families	3 Families	Provided Information is for Fiscal Years running 7.1 to 6.30
Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)	87	43	
PATH (Mental Health Transitional Housing)	39	22	FY2014 (7.1.13-6.30.14): 61 Applications Received / 22 Denied / 39 Move Ins / 17 Positive Exits / 15 Negative Exits FY2015 (7.1.2014-6.30.2015): 68 Apps Received / 46 Denied / 22 Move Ins / 5 Positive Move Outs
Permanent Supportive Housing (Mental Health)	9	9	Tenants are fairly stable with only one move out occurring in each program year

Supportive Housing Program	32	37	<p>2014 46 applications received / 21 families housed in 12 months with 19 PH apartments</p> <p>2015 34 applications received / 25 families housed in 23 apartments</p>
Transitional Housing for Domestic Violence Survivors	34 People (12 Households)	57 People (17 Households)	<p>2014: 4 Households Exit to Permanent Housing / 3 Households Evicted / 6 People Increased Income / 5 People Increased Earned Income</p> <p>2015: 8 Households Exit to Permanent Housing / 2 Households Evicted & 1 Moved w/o Notice / 5 People Increased Income / 4 People Increased Earned Income</p>
Supportive Services for Veteran Families	10	53	<p>For both program years: Approximately 95% of vets received rental assistance / One third additionally received utility assistance</p> <p>2015: 49 of 53 vets remained permanently housed when checking in after program exit</p>
State Weatherization Program	17	18	<p>2014 50 applications / 33 applications denied / 17 approved</p> <p>2015 136 application / 18 processed and complete / 59 denied or deferred</p>
WARM III – Penelec	108	122	2014 & 2015 All applications processed and job completed
Furnace & Water Heater Repair/Replace Program	3	8	2014 & 2015 All applications processed and job completed
National Foreclosure Mitigation			
Low Income Usage Reduction Program (LIURP) – Nat Fuel	19	56	2014 & 2015 All applications processed and job completed

LIHEAP Non-Fuel Crisis	129	143	<p>2014 149 total applications / 129 applications processed & job completed / 20 denied or deferred</p> <p>2015 167 total applications / 143 applications processed & completed / 24 denied or deferred</p>
Budget Counseling	29	39	<p>Clients in multiple programs utilize general budget counseling. In addition, there is HUD counseling, prepurchase, and other budget counseling programs offered by the agency.</p>

In terms of housing programs, the EOC is unique in that multiple program offerings plus well maintained community sponsors provides us with several options to help each client seeking assistance. No two situations are ever exactly the same and there is never a one size fits all solution. With our range of program offerings we address multiple needs already identified for the service area including the older housing stock and accompanying, high utility costs, a lack of affordable housing options, supportive housing programs for those with a disability or mental health diagnosis, and emergency housing solutions.

HUD Housing Counseling, which covers homeless assistance, rental topics, pre-purchase counseling, and home maintenance/financial management, has had steady demand. Note that the numbers provided in the above chart are reflective of fiscal years running July 1 through June 30. This in turn means that the 2015 year is reflective of only the last 6 months of 2015 and is on track to meet or exceed the prior year. Further note that the number provided is reflective of the number of services and not necessarily the number of people served. Two things to understand with this is that depending on the reason for the counseling session, multiple sessions may be held with the same person. In general there is only one session however there are times when 2 to 3 sessions are needed. Also note that the session is generally held with the head of household and therefore, the service provided may actually impact 2 or more people depending on the size of the household. This program has proven invaluable in that it helps to prevent future crisis situations or alleviate a current homeless incidence. Financial management skills are imperative for all households in the service area but in particular, they are primarily important to low-income households burdened with an older home, high utility costs, and/or the lack of affordable housing options both safe and suitable for the household. Related to HUD Housing Counseling is the general budget counseling program and foreclosure mitigation. General budget counseling sessions are primarily referrals from clients already participating in EOC programs or services such as Head Start families, tenants at the Faith Inn Emergency Shelter, or clients in the transitional housing program for domestic violence survivors. Foreclosure mitigation may have several applications but applicants must meet a particular set of criteria in order to proceed with the mitigation process.

It would be beneficial in future program years to follow up with all clients at a standard amount of time. That is, follow up in 60 or 90 days to determine if financial management has helped stabilize the household or if additional budget counseling should be considered.

The Commissioners Discretionary Fund is a smaller stream of funding ultimately at the discretion of the County Commissioners. The role of the agency is to take applications and submit for approval. In general, the fund is used for one of two ways. It is either provided to eligible applicants to use for closing costs and fees under a First Time Homebuyers program or can be utilized for emergency repairs to a home within the service area. As is often the case in an area stricken by generational poverty, low wages, and an older housing stock repairing a home may not be feasible for the homeowner yet, not repairing the home is no longer an option. Throughout the 2014 calendar year 5 persons purchased their first homes thanks in part to the First Time Homebuyers program. In 2015, while applications were processed there were not any clients able to follow through with the purchase. However, there was one household where an emergency repair was completed utilizing available funds.

The Faith Inn Emergency Shelter is the sole emergency shelter within the two county service area. There are 9 total apartments available to eligible clients determined to be either facing or experiencing homelessness. Tenants are able to stay at the Faith Inn for 30 days beyond which, special considerations or requests would need to be made. It is not uncommon for clients to need a period of time greater than 30 days to secure employments, sign up for available benefits of which they may be eligible for, attend budget counseling, and secure permanent housing that is both affordable and appropriate to the needs of the family. In 2014, out of all applications only 38% were approved and a household moved in. Reasons for denial or being placed on a waiting list include no vacancy, over income, unable to contact applicant, or determined to be appropriately housed at the time of applications. In 2015, 43% of all accepted applications were approved. In 2014, 66% of the move outs were deemed successful with tenants increasing household income, stabilizing, and securing permanent housing. Rapid ReHousing is one component of the Emergency Shelter Grant funding used for the Faith Inn. It is more common for this service area to need short term rental assistance versus long term. Follow-ups completed by the EOC Housing Specialist aid in assessing program effectiveness and evaluating the need for any changes to the service delivery model.

Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) is a program funded by the state and administered within the service area by the EOC and the Salvation Army. In most instances, the EOC utilizes HAP funds to assist families facing crisis situations to stay in their homes. Primarily, this is through the provision of funds to assist in keeping utility services connected or preventing eviction. Funds can also be used to assist with security deposits and first month's rent. The majority of our clients utilize available funds, which are limited and dispersed within a set time frame on a first come first served basis for qualifying clients, for one time emergency service. Note that the numbers provided in the chart above refer to total people served.

The Mental Health Transitional Housing program or PATH is a formula grant to all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. PATH exists to provide services to individuals with serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The numbers shown in the

Housing Services chart above do contain some carry over from year-to-year. Additionally, the program numbers provided are for the fiscal year running July 1 to June 30. Referrals into the PATH program come from a wide variety of sources which include, but are not limited to, jails, walk-ins, family, psychiatric facilities, and hospitals. The EOC Housing Specialist then works with a variety of local agencies and service providers to assist individuals as they transition into stable housing situations. The transitional housing for this program is owned by the State Hospital and located on that campus in Warren, PA. There are 4 houses with separate bedrooms and shared living space.

Permanent Supportive Housing for mental health consumers (clients) in the Housing chart refers to a property with 8 one-bedroom units owned by the HANDS program in Erie County. In this program, tenants are all relatively stable but require permanent supportive housing due to mental illness. The EOC acts primarily as property manager. In each of the prior two years there was only one move out with a new tenant moving in. There is very little turn over within these units.

The need for affordable housing is not new to the service area. In response to this, the Board of Directors supported the pursuit of housing as a main objective for the EOC several years ago as part of the strategic plan and approved direction for the agency. Since that point in time, the EOC has acquired several properties throughout Warren County and one in Forest County and after performing the necessary rehabilitation and/or renovation work made apartment units available for rent to those clients with a mental health diagnosis. This program has been made possible through several community partners including the Department of Human Services, the County Commissioners, and PHARE (Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund). In 2014 there were 19 available apartments. Throughout the year 46 applications were received, 21 families (32 people) housed, and therefore only 2 move outs. In 2015 an additional 4 units were made available for a total of 23 apartments. Of the 34 applications, 25 families were able to be housed (37 people). The EOC continues to pursue opportunities to expand our efforts in this type of affordable housing by acquiring additional properties as funding allows. In February 2016, 6 additional units will be available for rental to clients meeting the eligibility criteria. An additional property has also been purchased to be used as a Fairweather Lodge property and associated business.

The Agency Transitional Housing Program for Domestic Violence Survivors encompasses 8 apartment units. This program is administered by the EOC under the Western Pennsylvania Continuum of Care. Until the recent program year clients had to be referred into the program by A Safe Place Shelter. Naturally, this had the effect of limiting our ability to help all clients fleeing a domestic violence situation and as a result; all 8 units have never been occupied at the same time. Clients in the Transitional Housing program have all been women with the majority also having children. The program allows clients to remain in the housing for a period of 24 months. Within that time, clients work with an EOC Housing Specialist/Case Worker multiple times each week to assist in connecting to services, obtaining employment, acquiring financial management skills, job training, addressing transportation barriers, and assisting in locating and securing permanent housing. Each client is different and has a different set of barriers keeping them from being self-sufficient. The Housing Specialist works to identify these issues and work with the client to overcome them prior to exiting into permanent housing. In 2014 there were 12 households assisted for a total of 34 people (12 women and 22 children). Four households (34%) exited into permanent housing, five households were still participating in the program at the end of the calendar year, and 3 households were evicted for

various reasons. Of all households, 50% increased their income from what they had upon entry. Last, 42% increased earned income by obtaining and maintaining employment. In 2015, there were 17 households throughout the calendar year. In 17 households there were 57 people housed with 17 being women and 40 children under the age of 18. Almost 50% of households (8 total) exited into permanent housing, two households were evicted, one household left without giving notice, and six remained at the close of the program year. There were 5 heads of household who increased the household income from the point of entry and 4 heads of household who obtained and maintained employment while participating in the program. Due to the allowance by the program guidelines for a 24 month stay, roll over does not occur as quickly as it would in a shelter. The average stay is generally 6 to 12 months. The aforementioned lack of referrals is also limiting for the program.

During the project renewal and new project application process for FY2016 it was strongly suggested by the Continuum of Care that the Agency apply to reallocate funding for four of the eight transitional housing units to be permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and/or families per the HUD definition. The four units eligible for a reallocation have never all been full at the same time. As of December 31, 2015, the EOC is still waiting to hear if this new endeavor will be funded.

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families is done in partnership with Chautauqua Opportunities in neighboring New York State. The grant for this program, aimed at ending veteran homelessness, was awarded to Chautauqua Opportunities who then were able to expand the program by partnering with the Warren-Forest Counties EOC. Veteran Caseworkers for the EOC make the SSVF program available to veterans and their families who are at risk for, facing, or experiencing homelessness in Warren, Forest, Crawford, and McKean Counties. In the initial contract the program proved successful and was extended. In the 2015 calendar year, Veteran Caseworkers exceeded their initial goal of reaching 50 veterans. Due to the success, in the current contract/program year the goal of 50 has been increased to 55 throughout all 4 counties.

The last grouping of programs under the Housing service category are the weatherization programs. Some of these are offered in partnership with area utility companies while other programs, such as the State Weatherization Program are offered in partnership with the Department of Energy. These programs are consistently in demand in this area particularly due to the large amount of older housing stock. As mentioned in other sections of the assessment, older homes often become too expensive for homeowners to maintain and heat in the winter. This is particularly true in an area with entrenched and generational poverty plus an aging population typically on a fixed income. In most cases, applicants who are screened and determined to be eligible are served by the various programs. It is less common for the work to be denied or deferred. Note that in the chart the number provided is for the number of applications and not reflective of the number of persons served. Many of the households served were families.

Service Category | Emergency Services

Current Program / Service	Number Served (2014)	Number Served (2015)	Outcomes
Columbia Gas Customer Assistance Program (CAP)	59	64	Numbers for both years reflect the number of applications approved and are not reflective of total number of people served.
Dollar Energy Fund	43	35	Numbers for both years reflect the number of applications approved and are not reflective of total number of people served.
Pennsylvania American Water Co. H2O Program	-	74	In FY2014 (7.1.2014 – 6.30.2015) this program was available. It was not renewed for the FY2015 program year therefore, the numbers served in 2015 are from the FY2014.
Neighbor for Neighbor Heat Fund	48	38	Numbers for both years reflect the number of applications processed and are not necessarily reflective of total number of people served. This is also a fee for service contract.
Penelec Customer Assistance Program (PCAP)	216	246	Numbers for both years reflect the number of applications processed and/or recertified and are not necessarily reflective of the total number of people served by the provided service.
UGI Central Penn Gas (Operation Share and CAP)	88	51	Numbers for both years reflect the number of approved applications and are not reflective of total number of people served
Operation Overcoat	203	189	These numbers reflect the number of people who received help via this program. More units were given away than people as one person may have received a coat, hat, and gloves while another may have only needed a coat. Donations are free to those in need.
Community Fund	-	-	Only offered for emergencies if funds are available.
Emergency Food and Shelter Program	13	22	Generally used for emergency utility assistance when funding is available. Sometimes no funding.

Primarily the programs listed under Emergency Services are all utility assistance programs. Many of these are fee for service contracts and therefore, the numbers tracked reflect only processed applications. Utility assistance is a perennial need in the service area due to a combination of the lack of living wage employment options, older housing stock, increasing numbers of “working poor”, an aging population, and entrenched poverty. In general, the demand for a program like Neighbor-for-Neighbor seems highest in the fall. This is particularly true for September through November as the weather gets colder and clients realize they will need heat. Strained household budgets often mean that people let their gas bills go in the summer and wind up getting shut off. Once the weather cools help is needed and calls are consistent until tapering off with the beginning of the LIHEAP program in November. UGI offers a CAP program which annually is primarily re-certifications for existing customers which allows them to have their payment regulated by averaging costs over the year rather than having it fluctuate radically from one month to the next. The Share program, also under UGI, is a grant program where eligible clients can receive up to \$800 to pay delinquent balances and avoid shut offs. These programs remain relatively consistent throughout the year. The greatest obstacle in serving clients with National Fuel programs is within the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and Neighbor-for-Neighbor. With the former, the funds are limited and with Neighbor-for-Neighbor the eligibility requirements are very restrictive which eliminates many potential clients who may need the service.

The Penelec CAP program is steady throughout the year and faces many of the same challenges already mentioned. Dollar Energy is a program that fluctuates throughout the year with a large volume with funds are first available until LIHEAP opens in November. Customers are required to first apply for LIHEAP prior to applying for Dollar Energy. Another challenge with Dollar Energy is that the program eligibility changes throughout the year depending on what the program is funding at the time. At different points throughout the year accepting applications for open, shut-off’s only, and then off’s only.

Operation Overcoat is an annual program where the EOC asks for donations of gently used or new winter coats and gear. It is also common that local businesses and organizations present monetary donations that are then used to purchase new coats. As winter clothing is collected, the gently used items are laundered by a local dry cleaner before all items are made available to the public. Items are all free to anyone in need. The program runs from November through February each year with an average of 300+ items given to needy families each year.

Service Category | Nutrition

In 2015, the EOC agreed to help in administering a Produce Express food distribution provided by the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania. The EOC role in this program is very simple and straightforward in that the EOC manages the monthly sign ups. The food distribution occurs one time each month and there are 120 slots available. Slots are filled on a first come / first served basis. The EOC ensures that there is a process for this, lets Second Harvest and the local church where pick-ups occur know when sign ups are full, and schedules pick-ups.

While the EOC does administer this program there is currently no interest in growing efforts in this service category. Several churches as well as the Salvation Army address food needs for low-income individuals and families.

Service Category | Transportation

In FY2015, the Warren-Forest EOC was awarded discretionary funding to develop a new program that would address transportation; one of the greatest barriers for low-income individuals and families working toward self-sufficiency. A Community Builder was hired to spearhead the initiative which involved researching potential program models, developing program eligibility and screening criteria, and program guidelines.

The transportation program was largely developed during the first half of 2015. In this program, the Agency utilizes available funding to purchase used vehicles in good working order. A screening process is then launched to find an eligible client who must be at 125% of the Federal Poverty Guideline and in danger of losing their job or could improve their situation if reliable transportation was available. Using a screening tool that is distributed to case workers at various social service agencies; the EOC selects program participants who first attend a budget counseling session to determine if the cost of insuring and maintaining a vehicle plus a monthly program fee are affordable to the household. Clients who are approved then must secure insurance and are placed in a vehicle. The EOC maintains a lien on the title for a 12-month period of time during which the client meets with the Community Builder every 90 days at a minimum to review employment and any education goals, budget, and ensure that the car is being kept in good working order. Each month the client pays a program fee determined by a sliding scale which looks at family size and household income. At the end of 12 months, upon successful completion of the program, the title is signed over to the client in full.

To date, 5 households have been served by this program. One household had to have the car reclaimed by the agency due to failure of the client to comply with program requirements. An additional six to eight households will participate in the 2016 calendar year.

Section V | Resources

The Warren Forest EOC has consistently acted as a catalyst in the community working to strengthen and build new partnerships, pioneer business economic development/incubators, and administering regional Main Street Programs. The idea of working together with other agencies is not new and in this spirit, the EOC worked to reconvene the Alliance for a Better Community which encourages the sharing of information, forging of new partnerships, and team approaches to community needs among area social service providers, agencies, and stakeholders in monthly round table meetings. Another example is the newly spearheaded, working in conjunction with Forest-Warren Health & Human Services, Beacon Light Behavioral, Warren County Jail, Forest and Warren County Sheriff Departments, and Forest and Warren County Probation Departments in transforming the way in which mental health services for those in the criminal justice system are delivered. The EOC is working, with this and other endeavors, to be a true “consumer first” agency which puts the traditional ideas of how to do something aside in order to best serve those in our community.

Community Resources | While the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) offers many programs which are focused on addressing these needs, problems still persist. The agency is only one COG in a multi-oriented social service delivery system for the area. Traditionally, the Warren-Forest EOC has been the most diversified agency, providing services to consumers that range from pre-school to elderly. The EOC’s varied program offerings address multiple areas of need including housing, education, nutrition, transportation, emergency services, and employment. The EOC also maintains strong relationships with other area social service agencies and providers to provide low income persons with the best combination of programs to address each unique situation. We strive to build a stronger community by helping clients achieve self-sufficiency as they overcome any barriers they may face. As funding declines, the agency, as well as other non-profits, is investigating ways to meet increasing needs with decreasing funds. Cooperation and coordination are the norm, rather than the exception. The current system, and the EOC’s place within this system, can generally be described as follows based on area of need:

Food / Nutrition | The Warren Salvation Army, County Assistance Offices, Saint Joseph Soup Kitchen, First Presbyterian Church Sharing Place, County Ministries, and Sheffield Food Cupboard provide emergency food and food pantry services. The WIC Program is available to qualifying families with children under 5 and Meals on Wheels offers services to seniors. The Produce Express offered via the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern Pennsylvania is a program launched in 2014 for the service area and has a limited number of distributions available through various local congregations. The EOC administers the sign-ups for each monthly distribution and will continue to do so for 2016.

Employment / Job Training | The local PA CareerLink, Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Warren-Forest Hi-Ed Council, and the County Assistance Office provide assistance/training to individuals aimed at helping clients obtain and/or retain employment.

Education | The Warren County School District and Forest Area School District each provide transitional K-12 services for their respective counties. Early childhood education is well represented where there are over 10 programs, including the EOC Head Start Program, YMCA, and Jefferson DeFrees Family Center, serving 3 and 4 year olds. Early

intervention services are offered for children 0 to 3 while preschoolers who are severely handicapped and/or have intellectual deficiencies are served by the Intermediate Unit 5 in Warren County, Intermediate 6 in Forest County, and the Don Mills Center.

Housing | The Warren County Housing Authority provides safe, affordable housing to the elderly, disabled, and low-income families of the area. The Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council provides transitional housing to victims of domestic violence, permanent housing for chronic mental health consumers, and emergency housing for homeless individuals and families. The domestic violence program is done in partnership with A Safe Place shelter. Forest-Warren Health and Human Services is a partner in housing those with chronic mental health conditions. These are just two of many area partners and organizations that provide a true continuum of care for clients needing housing.

Emergency Services | The Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council provides emergency utility assistance while the Salvation Army and County Assistance Offices provide emergency hotel vouchers when necessary.

Mental Health Services | Beacon Light Behavioral Health, Deerfield Health, and Warren General Hospital all provide case management and related services to the population of clients in need of mental health services.

Transportation | The Transit Authority of Warren County provides medical transportation and fixed route schedule transportation. Forest County Transportation is limited to a service for seniors and disabled clients who need to go to an appointment. The request for service must be done one working day in advance and the client must also be willing to share the ride with other passengers.

Elderly | The Warren Forest Area Agency on Aging (Experience Incorporated) provides services to the elderly including case management and operation of the senior citizen centers throughout the service area.

In an ongoing effort to provide the best service to our clients through communication and strong relationships with area social service providers and/or groups; the Warren-Forest EOC sought out grant funding for the 2015 program year to launch the Community Engagement Program. In this effort, the EOC worked to become a catalyst for discussion and change in how social services were and are being delivered in Warren and Forest Counties. As part of this effort, the Alliance for a Better Community (ABC) group was re-invigorated. The ABC had been inactive for several years and an initial meeting was held in March 2015 to gauge interest among service agencies. The ABC group met monthly throughout 2015 and has moved to a bi-monthly meeting schedule to begin addressing joint project goals and opening up communication channels between agencies with a goal of better understanding and addressing the needs of our often shared clients in Warren and Forest Counties.

On average, 20 senior staff representative from member organizations have been able to attend meetings. Several topics of concern impacting all members have been brought up with the discussion ultimately moving toward potential solutions that will ultimately result in better service delivery to clients. ABC meetings thus far have served to improve communication, garner support for member agency initiatives, learn about new program offerings before they launch, and discuss the issues most often encountered by clients and which negatively impact low-income and

vulnerable populations. This initiative, begun by the EOC, is still an active program which concentrates efforts on creating an atmosphere of collaboration by forging strong linkages. The mission statement incorporated into the project embodies this concept perfectly:

“To facilitate and communicate county-wide collaboration of private and public partnerships, addressing human needs through an efficient use of shared efforts and resources.”

Organizations which have participated thus far include, but are not limited to, the following: Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry, Forest-Warren Department of Health & Human Services, Beacon Light Behavioral Health, Deerfield Behavioral Health, Warren County Community Foundation, Housing Authority of Warren County, Warren County School District, Warren General Hospital, CASA of Warren and Forest Counties, Penn State Extension in Warren County, Adagio Health, Warren County Commissioners, Bollinger Enterprises, Department of Public Welfare, Warren-Forest Hi-Ed Council, Jefferson DeFrees Family Center, Warren /Forest Area Agency on Aging, Warren Alliance Church, Warren Library Association, Venango Training and Development Center, and the Forest Area School District. Please note that this list is not all inclusive and that the efforts of the Alliance for a Better Community continue to generate interest prompting participation from other area social service providers and agencies. The EOC strongly believes that bringing everyone together will create an atmosphere where sharing ideas, solving common issues, breaking down communication barriers, and learning what each provider does, allows everyone’s meager resources to better serve and also serve more families.

Physical Resources | The Warren-Forest EOC manages and utilizes multiple properties throughout the service area for our programs. Many of our properties are for our various housing programs and include an emergency shelter, transitional housing units, and permanent housing. The type of property and use are described below and represent the physical buildings owned and/or managed by the EOC.

- **McClintock Center** | Located in downtown Warren, the McClintock Center has three classrooms. One is all Head Start children and two are mixed classrooms with PreK Counts and Head Start students. Additionally, the main administrative offices for the Executive Director, Fiscal Operations, Grant Administration, Community Development, Weatherization, and Head Start.
- **Faith Inn Emergency Shelter** | Also located in downtown Warren, the Faith Inn is the only emergency shelter in both Warren and Forest Counties. The Faith Inn has 3 efficiency apartments, 4 one bedroom, and 2 two bedroom apartments. Temporary housing for up to 30 days and Rapid Re-Housing Assistance for those transitioning into permanent affordable housing. The EOC also maintains office space at this location for the Housing Director and staff as well as the Community Service Department which handles utility assistance programs, Work Ready, budget counseling, Veterans Homeless Assistance Program, and more.
- **Head Start Centers** | The Head Start program has 5 center locations with the McClintock Center and its three classrooms being one. The other four locations include the Seneca Center (5 classrooms), Youngsville High School (2 classrooms), Lottsville Center in the Freehold Township Building (1 classroom), and the Allegheny Valley Center (1 classroom). The EOC owns the Seneca Center however the other center locations are leased by the Agency for the Head Start program.

- **Transitional Housing Properties** | The EOC oversees nine transitional housing properties. Note that this number includes the Faith Inn Emergency Shelter. Four of the remaining eight properties are located on the Warren State Hospital grounds and used by participants in the PATH program. PATH provides services to individuals with serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The other four properties are currently used as transitional housing for domestic violence survivors.
- **Permanent Housing** | The EOC manages a total of 10 permanent housing units throughout Warren County and 1 in Forest County. Throughout all of the units there are a total of 29 apartment units available to our clients with a mental health diagnosis, transitioning/aged out youth, and forensic mental health consumers. It is anticipated that in October 2016, 2 of the transitional housing properties (4 units total) will be converting to Permanent Supportive Housing with priority given to those meeting the HUD chronically homeless definition.

Financial Resources | Funding for the Warren-Forest EOC activities is coordinated with other public and private sources. Many activities are enhanced through local business and community initiatives, such as Operation Overcoat and the Community Fund. Partners and/or sources of funding in these areas include Warren and Forest Counties, Warren and Forest County school districts, First Energy, Pennsylvania American Water Company (PAWC), National Fuel Gas, UGI, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Annual audits for all programs and services are posted to the EOC website once the audit has been completed and presented to the Board of Directors. Additional forms of funding, other than those aforementioned, include the Neighborhood Assistance Program, Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund, private donations (both monetary and in-kind goods or services), and discretionary competitive block grant funding.

Systemic Resources | The following operational procedures, administrative systems, and controls outlined below are provided to further illustrate how available program and service offerings are delivered in a fair and effective manner.

The **Executive Director** is responsible for overseeing the total Agency, including all programs and activities.

The **Head Start Director** manages Warren-Forest EOC's Head Start Program.

The **Community Services Director** manages all direct service programs with the exception of Head Start, Weatherization, and Housing. The position supervises Case Managers who do the intake, eligibility, and service provision for emergency services. In addition, this department is responsible for homeless case management system formation and implementation as well as a variety of employment and training programs.

The **Housing Director** and **Community Development Director** share the responsibility for the oversight of the Agency's Housing Programs. The Community Development Director manages the physical aspects (buildings) while

the Housing Director supervises the (soft) case management aspects. They work together to ensure that consumers achieve their housing objectives.

Selection of Participants | All clients who receive services directly from Warren-Forest EOC programs must adhere to that individual program's eligibility criteria. Those receiving general services from the Agency must meet the 125% of poverty guidelines criteria. Outreach efforts will be coordinated to maximize productivity. All clients must participate in the EOC's management information system, which includes the certification of eligibility and enrollment procedures.

Client income will include all salaries, wages, dividends, interest, unemployment compensation or other cash receipts for the ninety-day (90) period immediately preceding the date of application for services. The federal poverty level is based on annual income, which is derived by multiplying income for the previous ninety (90) days by four (4). Specifically excluded from considerations as income are TANF payments, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) payment and training program stipends.

Salary or wage statement, W-2 forms, signed statements from the Warren or Forest County Assistance Offices, Social Security Office, or signed certification of the participant, or parent/guardian in the case of minors, shall be adequate documentation of income eligibility. Documentation of participant income obtained more than ninety (90) days prior to the provision of services is not acceptable.

Coordination | The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) proposal was developed with relevant input from many organizations and individuals within the community, including low-income persons and organizations. Among those persons with input through the Warren-Forest Board of Directors are the following: John Bortz, Warren County Commissioner; Karen Davis, City of Warren; Norman Wimer, Forest County Commissioner; Barbara Beach, Forest County Commission Representative; Barb Litten, Barbara C. Litten, Esq.; Hon. Maureen Skerda, Warren County Courthouse; and Stephanie Freitag, Northwest Savings Bank. In addition, six target area representatives that represent the neighborhoods and communities that are served.

Warren-Forest EOC takes a proactive approach to community planning and development. Existing and emerging community problems are identified through existing data sources as well as continual feedback from Agency staff, partnering agencies, and the clients we serve. An example of this is the extended contract initiated by the Agency with Chautauqua Opportunities in neighboring New York State to serve Homeless Veterans.

Financial Controls and Auditing | The Warren-Forest EOC uses a modified accrual method of accounting and a double-entry accounting system prepared for the Agency by the Grants Management System (GMS). The GMS Accounting and Financial Reporting System is a complete and comprehensive system designed to conform to State and Federal financial management standards and audit requirements. Backups of the financial files are prepared at the end of every month on disks. One set of disks is placed in the Safety Deposit Box at First Niagara by the Director of Fiscal/Operations. Another set is kept in the Fiscal Office. Complete system backups are done every six months. Independent program audits are performed on an annual basis by the Mauthe, Yutzey, Gabler, and Troxell, P.C.,

Certified Public Accountants. Audits are conducted in accordance with accepted auditing standards and the specific standards contained in *Government Auditing Standards*.

The 2012-2013 Agency-wide audit was advertised for proposal. The Request for Proposal was posted in the *Warren Times Observer* as a legal notice. Due to our isolated geography and stringent audit requirements, only one firm responded. The Agency retained the audit firm from the previous year, Mauthe, Yutzey Gabler, and Troxell, P.C. Audit services are typically put out for proposal every 3 to 5 years.

Evaluation Procedures | Program information is entered by each program into Outcome Results System (ORS), a client tracking software system that the Agency first began using in 2010. The data is analyzed on at least a quarterly basis, in order to determine how the numbers measure up against the projected goals. In addition, ORS allows for access to up-to-date information, so that program staff can assess program performance on demand or on an as needed basis.

Program evaluation and self-monitoring will include both computerized program data and client feedback through program surveys and/or case management follow-up. Staff is required to produce monthly project reports detailing progress on stated objectives.

Information is presented to the Board of Directors at the regularly scheduled meetings. Any input from the Board is used to further strengthen programs. The input from the low-income members is especially helpful since most have either utilized or are utilizing Agency programs.

A client satisfaction survey has been developed to assess the experience of clients to the Agency in general. These surveys are periodically sent out, responses recorded, and surveys kept in a file by the Grants Administrator. Program specific client satisfaction surveys are also used to evaluate a program's effectiveness. These are maintained on file by the appropriate program director.

Section VI | Summary

The 2015 Community Needs Assessment did not reveal any major surprises. Many of the identified trends have been long term ones that have been steadily occurring over a long period of time. As a result, with a substantial number of social service agencies serving the area needs are generally being met however, more could always be done. In some cases, such as housing, social service providers have been able to pool resources and create partnerships to help meet the various housing needs.

The main needs impacting the service area and creating barriers for low-income individuals and households are primarily affordable housing, employment, transportation, and nutrition. Descriptions of each category of need are provided in greater detail in the following sections.

Housing | Affordable housing is a large barrier for many in Warren and Forest Counties. There is a severe lack of subsidized housing options which often leaves already struggling households with few options. In many cases, families ultimately end up staying in poorly maintained apartments that are often too small for the size of the family. In addition, the large proportion of older homes frequently mean higher utility bills, particularly for heating, than what a family is able to afford. It is rare for an apartment to include utilities and if it does; it is generally a one bedroom unit.

The Warren-Forest Economic Opportunity Council, having identified this need within the community early on has partnered with multiple organizations to offer several different housing programs. These include an emergency shelter that allows for a 30-day stay, Rapid ReHousing, transitional housing for those with mental health diagnosis and/or co-occurring chemical dependencies, transitional housing for domestic violence survivors, Fairweather Lodge programs for clients with a mental health diagnosis, and permanent supportive housing programs for individuals with mental health diagnosis. In addition to actually helping address the physical address / housing needs of our clients the Agency also administers multiple weatherization programs available to homeowners and landlords to assist in improving utility costs for low-income households. This work might entail energy audits, boiler replacement, and other related activities to address issues resulting in excessive heat loss in a home which can ultimately affect the health of the household.

The Agency, based on the findings of this assessment should continue to offer these programs as well as create affordable housing opportunities for qualified clients as funding is available. A potential future need related to housing which is not being addressed is the need for transitional housing available to those exiting the prison system and re-entering the community.

Employment | Increasing numbers of households described as the “working poor”, rising poverty rates, depressed wages, and an increased demand for social service programs all point toward employment needs within the service area. No new employers are entering the area and there is no significant projected growth within existing industries, trades, or employers. These facts coupled with low educational attainment across the area have resulted in rising numbers of households struggling to secure and maintain long term, full time employment which pays a living wage.

These opportunities are few and far between meaning that households are more likely to be under-employed in the service area and require some form(s) of social service programming in order to meet their basic needs.

Another element to understand in looking at the employment crisis facing the area is that there are essentially two problems. Employers with available openings often state that they are willing to train people. The frequently cited problem is finding potential employees with strong soft skills and the ability to pass a drug test. Soft skills might include punctuality, self-motivations, independent worker, communication skills, and responsibility. This lack of soft skills among a significant portion of the labor force is also being observed by various social service providers in their clients. For example, the Adult/Dislocated Worker Coordinator with the Warren County PA CareerLink has stated that it is difficult to get clients needing work to keep their appointments and follow through various programs aimed at aiding clients in obtaining and securing employment.

The Agency has in the past and currently worked to address employment needs within the area. In upcoming program years, the EOC will continue this work. Programs include the Work Ready program based on referrals of TANF clients from the County Assistance Office. The Case Manager for this program often assists clients with things like resumé building, interview skills, and budgeting. In 2015, the EOC was subcontracted to work with the local CareerLink in administering Title I employment programs which include dislocated worker, TANF program, out-of-school youth, and in-school youth. Job training and addressing the lack of soft skills in the current labor force will become key needs for the service area. This is particularly true as members of the aging population move out of the work force and enter retirement. In most cases, these people held higher up positions which will need to be replaced by qualified candidates. There are likely opportunities to coordinate resources among various agencies, organizations, and providers in this effort which should be pursued.

Transportation | The combination of a lack of public transportation options and the rural landscape of the service area both impact transportation. Depending on where a person lives, the lack of transportation can severely limit available employment options. This is especially true for households lacking other natural supports such as friends or family able to assist with rides. Long term, the cost of operating and maintaining a vehicle so that it continues to be safe and reliable is a barrier for low-income households already struggling to meet basic needs throughout the month. One example of ways that providers seek to alleviate this barrier is by offering rides for clients to needed medical appointments or with Head Start, offering door-to-door drop offs and pick ups or coordinating carpools with other Head Start parents.

The EOC has long been aware of the barrier that transportation presents to many of our clients. With that in mind, the EOC secured a discretionary grant for the 2015 fiscal year. A significant portion of the proposed grant funded project was the development of a transportation program for clients. In this program, the EOC utilized available funding to purchase used vehicles in good working order that were then paired with clients meeting the eligibility criteria. Clients had to be referred by a Case Manager, be at 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, and be at risk of losing their job due to transportation issues OR have the opportunity for a better employment option if transportation was not a factor. A screening tool was developed and a process for selecting clients. Clients first receive budget counseling to determine long term affordability. Approved clients are assigned a monthly program

fee, based on a sliding scale, which they are responsible to pay for a 12-month period of time. Clients have the car registered in their name and maintain the insurance and upkeep. The Agency maintains a lien on the vehicle title while the client is in the program. Every 90 days, at minimum, the client meets with the Agency Community Builder to assess where they are with financial management and employment goals. The program was recently awarded funding through September 2016.

Nutrition | The cost of eating healthy is beginning to have impacts throughout all age demographics in the community. Not only is the cost viewed as prohibitive but; there is also a lack of understanding on how to make and prepare nutritious foods, what good nutrition is, and the importance of eating well. There are few grocery stores and for low-income families lacking transportation options may be further restricted to convenience stores. Additionally, fast paced life styles, particularly in homes where two parents are working result in a reliance on cheap, fast food options for meals.

Long term, the impact of poor nutrition has been observed and identified in Community Health Assessments. The primary diseases afflicting residents of the service area include heart disease and diabetes. Both of the aforementioned diseases can be caused by poor nutrition and obesity. In fact, these are listed as top causes of death in the service area. The rise in obesity rates is not just among the older age demographics but being observed in children as well. This can result in an unhealthy community placing greater strains on an already maxed out health care system.

It is recommended that the Agency seek out opportunities to provide better nutrition education, promote active lifestyles, or partner with other organizations, providers, or agencies also working on this issue. This can be initially implemented by growing this type of education available to Head Start families.

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INTRODUCTION

Program Overview | The Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. (EOC) Head Start program believes that all children share certain needs, and that each child is a unique, valuable human being with the potential to succeed. Going further, we believe that young children benefit most from a comprehensive program offering a broad range of services that fosters school readiness, literacy, physical development, and mental wellness. The child's family, as well as the Community as a whole, must be involved to maximize the strengths and weaknesses of each child. Through individual and group activities qualified teachers, who hold four year degrees in education, work closely with classroom aides, who minimally hold the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, to not only prepare our community's young children for school but to address health, nutrition, social, and other needs for each child and family based on a family needs assessment.

Our program serves children at five Head Start centers located throughout Warren County. Center locations are based on areas with the highest concentrations of eligible children. There are twelve total classrooms. Of these, eight meet Tuesday through Friday for five hours per day each week. The four remaining classes are double session and operate for 3.5 hours per day, Tuesday through Friday. This amounts to 128 class days for Head Start children. The following is a listing of Head Start locations and the number of classrooms found at each:

- The McClintock Building, located in Warren, PA, houses three classrooms.
- The Head Start Seneca Center, located in Warren, PA, houses five classrooms.
- Youngsville High School, located in Youngsville, PA, hosts two classrooms.
- The Lottsville Center (Freehold Township Building), located in Lottsville, PA, has one classroom.
- The Allegheny Valley Center, located in Clarendon, PA, has one classroom.

For our children to be successful we ensure that families have access to additional programs or services that they may need in order to create a positive, healthy environment at home. Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher and works to build relationships with families that support well-being and positive interactions, engagement in transition, connections to the community, and helping become lifelong educators, learners, advocates, and leaders.

Opportunities are provided throughout the course of each school year to encourage family engagement as a unit and as part of the community. Parents are encouraged to participate during the school year as classroom volunteers, on field trips, by attending curriculum themed celebrations, attending parent/staff, conferences, joining parent committees at various Head Start centers, monthly parent/child activities, and attending training workshops designed to meet the specific needs and interests of our parents. EOC Head Start teachers regularly use newsletters to keep the lines of communication between teachers and parents or caregivers open. Home visits are done as needed by our team of Family Resource Assistants and finally, special activities throughout the year encourage dads, grandfathers, or other male role models in the child's life to get involved.

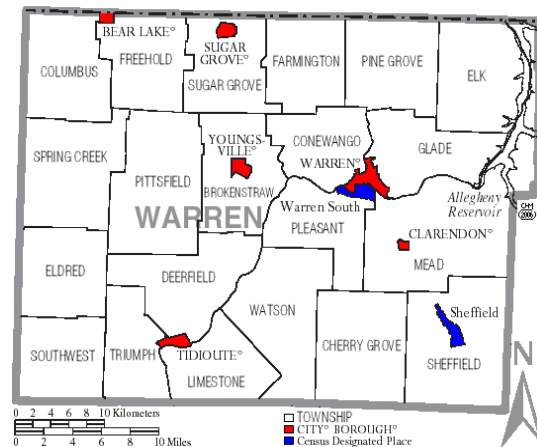
Purpose | The purpose of the Community Assessment is to meet Head Start Performance Standard 1305.3 – Determining Community Strengths and Needs. This year, it is done in conjunction with the Community Needs Assessment completed by the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. The information presented is intended for use in setting the long and short-term program objectives, identify the services most needed, and provide partner organizations and governing bodies with relevant information about the service area.

Methodology | All information presented was acquired from the most recent, relevant data sources including, but not limited to, the United State Census Bureau, American Community Survey, and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates in addition to surveys.

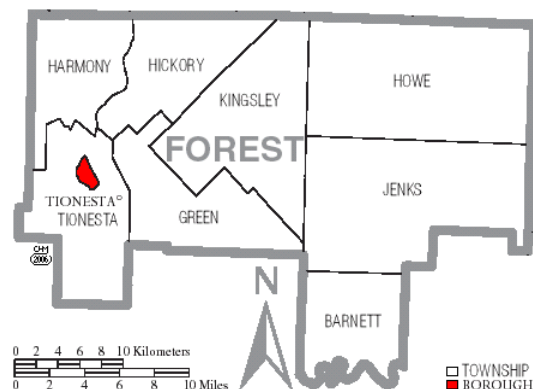
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE FOR SERVICE AREA

Predominately rural, Warren and Forest Counties are located in northwest Pennsylvania. The City of Warren is the single, most populated location and sole city within the two-county service area. A significant portion of the available area within Warren County is the Allegheny National Forest, the only National Forest in the State of Pennsylvania, accounting for 26% of the total acreage. Forest County, by comparison, has 43.5% of the available acreage dedicated to the Allegheny National Forest and hosting Cook Forest State Park. This is a primary factor contributing to the rural nature of the area. As is typical for rural locations in traditional “rust belt” states, Warren and Forest County have experienced a continued population loss, as jobs, especially those in the formerly well paying manufacturing sector, move elsewhere. Typically, the service sector jobs replacing these losses do not pay as well and offer fewer benefits. This scenario has created long-term social and economic strains for remaining families in the area. This is particularly true of families dependent on Head Start and other similar services offered by the Warren-Forest EOC or other social service providers.

Warren County is comprised, under Pennsylvania law, of three types of incorporated municipalities. As aforementioned, Warren is the sole City and most populated area within the county. Additionally, there are five boroughs: Bear Lake, Clarendon, Sugar Grove, Tidioute, and Youngsville. There are 21 recognized townships which include the following: Brokenstraw, Cherry Grove, Columbus, Conewango, Deerfield, Eldred, Elk, Farmington, Freehold, Glade, Limestone, Mead, Pine Grove, Pittsfield, Pleasant, Sheffield, Southwest, Spring Creek, Sugar Grove, Triumph, and Watson. Akeley, Lander, and Torpedo are not incorporated yet, are part of Warren County.



Forest County is comprised of one borough, Tionesta, which also functions as the county seat. There are 8 recognized townships which include Barnett, Green, Harmony, Hickory, Howe, Jenks, Kingsley, and Tionesta. Marienville, also the location of a state prison with an average population of 2,200 inmates, is listed as a census-designated place. Note that the construction of the prison and the creation of 650 jobs in 2004 resulted in a population increase. The majority of the population increase was the prison population and thus not families with children likely to depend on Head Start or similar services.



Population

The population of Warren County has experienced an overall change of -5.55% since the United States Census Data reported in 2000. In 2000 the total population was reported as 43,863 persons. According to the American Community Survey which averages data over a five year time period (2009 to 2013), the estimated population of Warren County is now 41,429. This is a net loss of 2,434 people over a 13 year time span. By contrast, Forest County has experienced a 55.60% increase in population since the US Census, 2000, primarily due to the construction of the State Prison in Marienville. In 2000 the population was 4,946. Since that time it has increased by 2,750 people (the inmate population is 2,200 on average with the prison employing over 500 people) to 7,696 (Table 1). In comparison, the State of Pennsylvania has reported a 3.67% increase in the population. The population density in Warren and Forest County is significantly lower than the average found elsewhere across the state. In Warren County there are approximately 46.9 people found per square mile. Forest County, by comparison

has 11.6 people per square mile while the State of Pennsylvania estimates that there 284.80 people per square mile on average.

Table 1: Population Change 2000 to 2013

	Census 2000 Population	ACS 2009 - 2013 Population	Population Change	% Change
Forest	4,946	7,696	2,750	55.60%
Warren	43,863	41,429	-2,434	-5.55%
Report Area	48,809	49,125	316	0.65%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,731,381	450,327	3.67%
National	281,421,906	311,536,591	30,114,685	10.70%

Source: United State Census Bureau, Population Division, Census 2010. Release Date: February 2011 and United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5 year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Of the total county population, 52.23% are male and 47.77% are female with a median age of 44 years old. The aged 0 to 4 cohort comprises 4.51% of the population, those aged 0 to 17 comprise 19.14%, and those 65 and older comprise 18.49% of the total population. Projected growth for the county is slow as the number of live births each year is not enough to outweigh the number of deaths. The age distribution of the population (Table 2) shows an uneven distribution. Note that the largest segment of the population by age grouping is the 65 and up cohort. This group is followed by those aged 55 to 64 and 45 to 54 respectively. In each of the aforementioned cohorts, there are three times as many people than the 2,195 (2,032 in Warren and 163 in Forest County) found in the 0 to 4 cohort.

Table 2: Population by Age and Gender, 2009 to 2013

County	0 to 4		5 to 17		18 to 24		25 to 34	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Forest	81	82	433	236	803	119	1,096	193
Warren	1,046	986	3,372	3,073	1,521	1,431	2,175	2,019
Report Area	1,147	1,068	3,805	3,309	2,324	1,550	3,261	2,212

County	35 to 44		45 to 54		55 to 64		65 and Up	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Forest	935	267	495	396	597	491	698	709
Warren	2,467	2,392	3,288	3,238	3,174	3,234	3,222	4,362
Report Area	3,402	2,659	3,783	3,634	3,771	3,725	3,920	5,071

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 20 14.

The population of Warren County has experienced a -5.55% loss since 2000. Forest County is the third-least populous county in Pennsylvania. The age distribution clearly indicates that the population is aging with the number of young children and families slowly declining. Without new industry or jobs to inspire an influx of younger adults and their families we can expect to see a continuation of current trends.

Head Start Population Estimates

Data from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning shows a continued decrease in the total population of 3 and 4 year olds living in Warren County. The most recent data from the 2012 to 2013 school year indicates that 834 children aged 3 and 4 lived in the Head Start service area. Of the 834 children, 449 were served through early childhood programming including Head Start, Early Intervention, and Pre-K Counts (Table 3). By comparison, data from the US Census, 2000, states that 667 children had been served by pre-school and early learning programs.

Neighboring Forest County, which faces many of the same challenges as Warren County and is also serviced by the Agency, has an even smaller population of 3 and 4 year olds. Compared to the 834 living in Warren County, Forest County had a total of 73. Of those, 14 were served by Head Start centers in Warren County, 32 were served by the school district's pre-school program, and 26 by Early Intervention during the 2013-2014 school year. The decreasing population of young children in Forest County is perhaps more noticeable than in Warren County. During the 2014-2015 school year the district struggled to fill classrooms. The number of elementary school age children in the County is rapidly decreasing and has been noted by the school district. There are few, if any, families moving into the county and the population continues to decline despite small boost credited to the construction of the state prison.

Table 3: Early Childhood Programming and Head Start Participation, 2012 - 2013

County	Number of Children		Children Served		Age 0-2 Only Participants		Age 3-4 Only Participants	
	Ages 0-2	Ages 3-4	Ages 0-2	Ages 3-4	Nurse Family Partnership	Healthy Families America	Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts	School Based Pre-K
Forest	109	73	9	64	0	0	0	32
Warren	1,254	834	226	449	0	0	26	0
Report Area	1,363	907	235	513	0	0	26	32

Table 3: Early Childhood Programming and Head Start Participation, 2012-2013 continued

County	Age 0-4 Participants				Head Start Program Participants	
	Parent-Child Home Program	Parents as Teachers	Early Intervention	Keystone STARS	Early Head Start (Age 0-2)	Head Start (Age 3-4)
Forest	0	1	26	0	0	14
Warren	0	0	306	157	0	186
Report Area	0	1	332	157	0	200

Source: Departments of Education and Public Welfare, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Reach and Risk Report, 2012 – 2013.

Since 2000, the total number of 3 and 4 year olds served by Early Childhood Programming, including Head Start, has decreased by 218 children or 33%. The total number of children in Forest County has continued to dramatically decline making it difficult to fill classes at the preschool and elementary level.

Race

Of those reporting one race, 94.54% are White; 3.38% are Black or African American; and 0.39% are Asian. All other races combined make up the remaining 1.69%. There is no data to suggest that the ethnic composition of the area would change dramatically at any point in the future.

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2010. American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2009 through 2013.

Households and Families

According to the most recent US Census data, there are 17,767 households in Warren County. This has been a marginal increase of 71 households since the 2000 census with an overall decrease in homeownership of 4%. Of all households, 64.4% are families and 35.6% are non-families. Additionally, of all households, 25.9% have children under the age of 18 present. These findings show a 4% decrease in the number of family households and a 4% increase in the number of non-family households. Of the family households, 51% are married, 4.8% are male householder, 8.6% are female householder, and 23.7% have children under the age of 18. The majority of non-family households are individuals living alone with no children present.

Dramatic shifts in households and families when comparing the US Census, 2000 to the US Census, 2010 include the following:

- The total number of family households with children under 18 decreased by 1,063.
- The total number of husband-wife households decreased by 863.
- The total number of husband and wife households with children under 18 decreased by 1,079.
- Non-family households where the householder (either male or female) was living alone increased by 753.

There was a negligible change in the average family size. In 2000 this was documented as 2.93 and in 2010 the average was 2.85. As evidenced by the data, there has been an overall decrease in the number of households with children under the age of 18. This is further supported by population and age distribution data which shows a continual decrease in those aged 0 to 17 in Warren County since 2000.

In comparison, Forest County has 2,511 households; an increase of 511 households since 2000. Of these, 59.3% are families and 40.7% are non-family. While the total number of households has increased, note that the number of family households has dropped from 66.4% in 2000 to the 59.3% documented in 2010. Family households with children under 18 have also decreased in number since 2000. The current data states that 392 households (15.6%) have children as opposed to the 464 households (23.2%) documented in 2000. The average family size dropped from 2.81 to 2.67 and average household size has dropped from 2.29 to 2.08.

Single parent households account for 7.6% of family households with children in Warren County. Of these, 4.9% (863 households) are female head-of-household.

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.
United States Census Bureau, 2010.

Income/Poverty

In 2013, the median household income was \$43,764 in Warren County and \$36,556 in Forest. Per capita income was reported as \$24,179 in Warren County and \$13,645 in Forest County. The average income per earner was listed as \$31,817 and \$22,435 (Tables 4 and 5). An earner is defined as someone 15 years of age or older receiving any type of income (wages, salaries, benefits, or other) while per capita income is best defined as the total personal income in an area divided by the number of people in the area. Note, that the amounts reported for Warren and Forest Counties are less than income levels reported on average in the State of Pennsylvania and at a national level.

The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) from 2013 report the poverty rate, those living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines, as 14.2% and 24.5% in Warren and Forest Counties respectively. In comparison, the average rate for the State of Pennsylvania is 13.7%. This is a 4.5% increase in Warren County in the number of persons living in poverty since 2000. Forest County reports a poverty rate increase of 10.7% (Tables 6 and 7). The poverty line is defined as the level of income below which one cannot afford to purchase all resources and necessities. There is no discretionary income for a person in this situation. Further, note that the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines and the slightly different, Poverty Thresholds are used for statistical purposes when measuring the rate of poverty in a geographical area. In reality, for most communities a family needs to earn twice, or 200%, of the amount listed for 100% of poverty based on family size in order to move from poverty into a stable, self-sufficient situation where a living wage is being earned.

Table 4: Income Levels by County

County	Median Household Income, 2013	Per Capita Income, 2013	Average Income Per Earner, 2013
Forest	\$36,556	\$13,646	\$22,435
Warren	\$43,764	\$24,179	\$31,817
Pennsylvania	\$52,548	\$28,502	\$39,066
National	\$53,046	\$28,155	\$40,683

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Table 5: Median Household Income by Family Size

County	Median Household Income						
	Household of One	Household of Two	Household of Three	Household of Four	Household of Five	Household of Six	Household of Seven
Forest	\$18,169	\$41,941	\$46,071	\$75,729	\$57,083	No data	No data
Warren	\$22,321	\$50,386	\$62,756	\$70,679	\$66,091	\$57,500	\$52,273
Pennsylvania	\$26,077	\$58,295	\$71,793	\$82,418	\$80,082	\$74,894	\$70,641
National	\$27,980	\$59,456	\$67,084	\$77,607	\$71,624	\$67,546	\$69,240

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Table 6: Poverty 2013

County	All Ages		Age 0-17		Age 5-17	
	Number of Persons	Poverty Rate	Number of Persons	Poverty Rate	Number of Persons	Poverty Rate
Forest	1,248	24.5%	193	38.0%	118	31.5%
Warren	5,692	14.2%	1,821	23.1%	1,226	20.9%
Report Area	6,940	15.4%	2,014	32.3%	1,344	16.0%
Pennsylvania (2012)	1,688,364	13.7%	527,373	19.6%	354,232	17.9%
National (2012)	48,760,123	15.9%	16,396,863	22.6%	11,086,537	21.0%

Source: United State Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013. Estimates for 2013 were released in December 2014.

In Forest County, Table 6 estimates that there are 75 children ages 0 to 4 (193 minus 118). The EOC Head Start recruits in this county but there are not enough children in the target population to justify an additional center location and Pre-K education is handled by the school district.

Table 7: Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 – 2013

County	Persons in Poverty, 2000	Poverty Rate, 2000	Persons in Poverty, 2013	Poverty Rate, 2013	% Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 - 2013
Forest	668	13.8%	1,248	24.5%	10.7%
Warren	4,163	9.7%	5,692	14.2%	4.5%
Pennsylvania	1,135,928	9.5%	1,687,856	13.7%	4.2%
National	31,581,086	11.3%	48,810,868	15.8%	4.5%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013.

The average number of households in poverty between 2009 and 2013 was 2,134 or 12.37% in Warren County (Table 8). The much smaller Forest County had a rate of 13.29% for the number of households in poverty. Of these, 5.17% were families. Recall that poverty is the 100% threshold and that this number reflects those living at or below this mark. It is therefore a likely assumption that there are more households facing hardship when trying to afford basic needs than what is represented in Table 8. Of the households living in poverty, 19.21% were female head of household, 58.54% were non-family, and 19.25% were married couples (Table 9).

Table 8: Household Poverty Rate by Family Type

County	Total Households	Households in Poverty		Family Households in Poverty		Non-Family Households in Poverty	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Forest	2,001	266	13.29%	103	5.15%	163	8.15%
Warren	17,257	2,134	12.37%	892	5.17%	1,242	7.20%
Pennsylvania	4,958,427	632,670	12.76%	294,546	5.94%	338,124	6.82%
National	115,610,216	16,415,984	14.20%	8,666,630	7.50%	7,749,354	6.70%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Table 9: Households in Poverty by Family Type

County	Total Households, 2009-2013	Total Households in Poverty	Non-Family Households in Poverty - Including Persons Living Alone	Married Couples in Poverty	Male Head of Household in Poverty	Female Head of Household in Poverty
Forest	1,189	266	163	69	5	29
Warren	11,223	2,134	1,242	393	67	432
Pennsylvania	3,212,046	632,670	338,124	92,661	31,423	170,462
National	76,744,360	16,416,984	7,749,354	3,148,540	923,063	4,595,027

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

Overall, the highest incidence of poverty for the two-county service area is among children aged 0 to 17. Since 2000, findings from the US Census and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates show that Warren County has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of children living in poverty rising from 14% in 2000 to 23.1% in 2012. The rate in Forest County has gone from 24.7% to 38.0% which equates to a 13.3% increase (Table 10). Perhaps more troubling, those in the aged 0 to 4 cohort experience an 11.3% increase moving from 19.8% in 2000 to 31.2% of those in the service area living in poverty (Table 11).

Table 10: Change in Childhood (0-17) Poverty Rate, 2000-2013

County	Children, Ages 0 - 17 years				
	Children in Poverty, 2000	Poverty Rate, 2000	Children in Poverty, 2013	Poverty Rate, 2013	% Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 - 2013
Forest	263	24.7%	193	38.0%	13.3%
Warren	1,417	14.0%	1,821	23.1%	9.1%
Pennsylvania	372,192	13.1%	513,049	19.3%	6.2%
National	11,587,118	16.2%	16,086,960	22.2%	6.0%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013

Table 11: Poverty Rate Change for Children under Five, 2000 -2013

County	Children, Ages 0 - 4 years				
	Children 0-4 in Poverty, 2000	Poverty Rate, 2000	Children 0-4 in Poverty, 2013	Poverty Rate, 2013	% Change in Poverty Rate, 2000 - 2013
Forest	112	30.6%	75	56.3%	25.6%
Warren	479	18.3%	595	29.5%	11.2%
Pennsylvania	137,759	18.4%	170,868	23.9%	5.7%
National	4,050,543	20.3%	5,128,728	25.9%	5.6%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2013

The rate of poverty in Forest County experienced a large increase of 25.6%. It is important to note that while the percentage living in poverty increased; the actual number of children as a whole has decreased. The most recent data for the 2012-2013 school year suggests that there were only 73 children in the 3 and 4 year old population. Of those, 64 participated in early childhood programming.

The rate of poverty for children in the target age range is higher than that found in the State of Pennsylvania and throughout the United States.

Transportation

Warren County, in terms of geographic area, is the second largest school district in the State of Pennsylvania covering 884.13 square miles. Highways and roads typically follow the terrain and topography of the Appalachian Plateau. They often wind through steeply wooded hillsides or parallel to county creeks and the Allegheny River. Many current Head Start students and families find transportation to be a major barrier in receiving services. It is common for people to live on unpaved roads which restrict access to public transportation. Further adding to this complication, lower income families often only have one vehicle, limited access, or no vehicle.

The Transit Authority of Warren County (TAWC) was organized in 1979 and began operations in 1980. It is the sole provider of public transportation operating in Warren County. To try and best serve the needs of the community TAWC offers a few variations on their services. There is a fixed route service open to everyone, a shared ride

service for those 65 years and older, a complimentary paratransit service for persons with disabilities, and last, a medical assistance transportation program.

In surveying other social service providers and organizations, transportation is a commonly brought up issue. The combination of factors leads to an ever increasing need for more ways to help move past this barrier. The terrain of the rural area and distance to downtown business areas, places of employment, or appointments to obtain services commonly sought by Head Start families is one part of the problem. Also contributing is the limited coverage offered by the public transportation system and the difficulty in accessing a vehicle for lower income families.

Source: <http://www.tawcbus.com>

Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. (Head Start Program)

Education

Based on findings reported in the United State Census, 2010 and the American Community Survey, 2012, 47.98% of those over 25 years of age had only a high school diploma in the two-county area. There were 12.01% who never earned their High School diploma, 10.13% earning a Bachelor's Degree, and 5.76% earning graduate or professional degrees (Table 12).

Table 12: Percent Attaining Educational Levels

County	Over Age 18 and No High School Diploma%	Education Level for Persons over 25					
		No High School Diploma	High School Only	Some College	Associates	Bachelors	Graduate or Professional
Forest	20.57%	18.38%	50.39%	17.72%	5.67%	5.27%	2.57%
Warren	11.27%	10.41%	47.06%	16.28%	8.38%	11.36%	6.52%
Report Area	12.88%	11.72%	47.61%	16.52%	7.94%	10.35%	5.87%
Pennsylvania	11.56%	11.34%	37.05%	16.48%	7.59%	16.85%	10.69%
National	14.20%	13.98%	28.12%	21.25%	7.81%	18.05%	10.79%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 Data Release, December 2014.

The total public school enrollment for Kindergarten through High School in Warren County was 5,240. This is a sharp decline from the 8,301 enrolled in Kindergarten through grade 12 in 2000. Recent data pulled from the US Census, 2010, as well as the states that 449 children were served by early childhood and preschool programs like Head Start (Table 13). In comparison, the US Census, 2000, states that 667 children were served by preschool, early childhood, or Head Start. Going further, total enrollment at the time of the 2000 census was greater for Kindergarten through high school than the 5,240 students documented in 2012. Recent data from Forest County shows a similar trend of declining enrollment as the population of school age children continues to decrease. The total enrollment in 2012 was 515 with 273 in elementary (excluding Kindergarten) and 242 in secondary school. This is nearly a 55% decrease from the 941 students enrolled at the time of the 2000 census date. Enrollment for children in preschool programs was slightly lower than the current figures. There were 47 students participating in programming in 2000 compared to the 64 of 73 children participating during the 2012-2013 school year. The total number of children in the 0 to 4 range has remained relatively consistent with 178 children and 182 in 2000 and 2012 respectively.

Table 13: Early Childhood Programming and Head Start Participation, 2012-2013

County	Number of Children		Children Served		Age 0-2 Only Participants		Age 3-4 Only Participants	
	Ages 0-2	Ages 3-4	Ages 0-2	Ages 3-4	Nurse Family Partnership	Healthy Families America	Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts	School Based Pre-K
Forest	109	73	9	64	0	0	0	32
Warren	1,254	834	226	449	0	0	26	0
Report Area	1,363	907	235	513	0	0	26	32

County	Age 0-4 Participants				Head Start Program Participants	
	Parent-Child Home Program	Parents as Teachers	Early Intervention	Keystone STARS	Early Head Start (Age 0-2)	Head Start (Age 3-4)
Forest	0	1	26	0	0	14
Warren	0	0	306	157	0	186
Report Area	0	1	332	157	0	200

Source: Departments of Education and Public Welfare, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Reach and Risk Report, 2012-2013.

Since 2000, total school enrollment has decreased 36%. For early childhood services, like Head Start and PreK Counts, there was a 33% decrease since 2000 in the total number of children served.

Housing

Since the data presented by the US Census, 2000, there has been little change in the overall housing picture. Of the total population, 76.7% reside in owner occupied homes according to the US Census, 2010, compared to the slightly higher 78.2% that lived in their own home in 2000. The total number of units was 23,310 as of July 2003. This quantity peaked in July of 2008 at 23,592 before trending back down to 23,209 in July 2013. Approximately 75% are occupied and the remaining 25% are classified as vacant. It should be noted however, that of the vacancies, 18.5% are categorized as seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Of the population in Warren County renting, 37.57% carry a housing cost burden. That is, the cost of their rent is more than 30% of their income. This is actually lower than the average at both the state and national levels. Homeowners carrying a housing cost burden were found to be 27.30%. Again, this is slightly less than both the state and national averages.

Warren County has an older housing stock than what is typically found at both state and national levels. The median age is 1955 versus 1961 and 1975 respectively. This creates a unique set of challenges as low-income earners attempt to continuously maintain and improve properties. This is one reason for the identified need for additional safe, affordable housing units in the area.

Forest County markets itself primarily as an outdoor recreational area. As such, the majority of the available housing units are vacation or seasonal rentals / homes. In total, there are 8,760 available units with 28.7%

occupied on a permanent basis. This equates to 2,511 units occupied year round. There are 6,249 units listed as vacant. Of these, 5,962 are seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of the 2,511 occupied units, 2,061 are owner occupied and only 450 are renter occupied.

Source: US Census, 2000 and US Census, 2010

OTHER CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDCARE RESOURCES

Note the purpose of the information provided in this section is to meet the requirement of 1305.3(2): Other child development and childcare programs that are serving Head Start eligible children including publicly funded state and local pre-school programs, and the approximate number or Head Start eligible children served by each.

Children Eligible for Childcare Financial Assistance

According to the 2014 data provided by the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, the average monthly number of children receiving subsidized child care in Warren County was determined to be 206. Of the 206, 24.2% were participating in Keystone STARS for 3 and 4 year olds, 30.3% were in high-quality pre-k programs (such as Head Start), and 57.5% were eligible for publicly funded pre-k but not being served.

Data provided by the Child Care Information System (CCIS) of Forest/Venango/Warren Counties states that during 2012 through 2013 there were 122 preschool age children who had received or were receiving a subsidy. The subsidy from CCIS can be used for either child care or early education programming. In the 2014 fiscal year which runs from July 2013 to June 2014 the total number of preschool age children receiving a subsidy was 128. This number, which refers specifically to children in the target age range, is 30% of the total number of children in Warren County receiving a subsidy. In total, there were 441 children receiving subsidized services through all available funding streams (including Low Income, TANF, etc.) at all provider types (Family, Group, Center) and for any unit of care (Fulltime, Part Time, Etc.). There was not a waiting list for the 2014 fiscal year and all eligible families received subsidies. It is anticipated that there will be greater demand in the current fiscal year (2015) thus creating a need for a waiting list or additional funding.

Another option, aside from CCIS, offering aid to families with preschool age children is the PreK Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded by the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council. Each year, local businesses and organizations contribute to the program. Funding is then used to assist families with Pre-K costs. Families targeted are those not income eligible for Head Start or Pennsylvania PreK Counts Program. In the 2013-2014 school year, \$174,644.80 was awarded to 103 students attending 14 different area facilities.

Source: Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. – PreK Scholarship
Child Care Information System (CCIS) of Forest, Venango, and Warren Counties

Childcare Availability

According to the Pennsylvania Departments of Public Welfare and Education, in Warren County, there are a total of 22 licensed facilities providing child care services with the ability to serve a maximum of 788 children. There are 8 child care centers, 1 group day care, and 11 family child care homes. By definition, a day care center is defined as a child care facility where 7 or more children who are not related to the operator receive child care. A family child care home is defined, by contrast, as a home where 7 to 12 children unrelated to the caregiver receive care. Last, a group child care home is one where 7 to 12 children of varying age or 7 to 15 children from 4th grade to 15 years old and are not related to the operator receive care. In addition to the licensed child care centers, additional options exist for families and are often used. These include non-licensed options or children being cared for by family members while the primary caregiver is at work.

The Maximum Child Care Allowances (MCCA) is determined by the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth (DHS) and is the maximum base amount paid by Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies for child care assistance made available to eligible families enrolled in the program. The rates included with this assessment are current as of January 1, 2013. Periodically, DHS does a rate assessment of providers to determine the MCCA rate. The 75th percentile of actual child care provider costs in the county by type and age range cared for is used to ultimately determine rates (Table 15).

Table 15: Child Care Ceiling Rates

County	Type of Provider	Full Time Care					
		Infant	Young Toddler	Old Toddler	Pre-School	Young School-Age	Old School-Age
Forest	Child Care Center	\$26.05	\$25.65	\$25.65	\$25.45	\$25.45	\$25.45
Forest	Group Child Care Home	\$20.35	\$20.35	\$20.35	\$17.45	\$17.45	\$17.45
Forest	Family Child Care Home	\$23.65	\$23.65	\$23.65	\$19.65	\$19.65	\$19.65
Forest	Unregulated	\$11.00	\$11.00	\$11.00	\$10.32	\$10.32	\$10.32
Warren	Child Care Center	\$26.09	\$24.15	\$24.15	\$22.61	\$21.25	\$21.25
Warren	Group Child Care Home	\$24.65	\$24.65	\$24.65	\$24.65	\$24.65	\$24.65
Warren	Family Child Care Home	\$19.65	\$19.65	\$19.65	\$19.65	\$18.05	\$18.05
Warren	Unregulated	\$11.00	\$10.32	\$10.32	\$10.32	\$10.32	\$10.32

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Child Care Works Subsidized Child Care Program

In the two-county service area there are multiple licensed child care providers as well as a selection of un-licensed providers. Data collected from Head Start families enrolled in the program over the past several years also indicates that many families use friends and/or extended family. The following charts provide a listing of licensed options in the service area which are subsidy eligible.

Option A: Family Daycare Provider

	Daily Rate	Curriculum	Hours (M-F)	Keystone STARS Quality Rating
Susan Nielsen	\$24 FT / \$13 PT	Informal	7am – 11pm	1
Warren, PA				
Tracy Morrison	\$18 FT / \$12.50 PT		7am – 4:30pm	
Youngsville, PA				
Barb Sullivan	\$17 FT / \$10 PT		6:30am – 11:30pm	
Warren, PA				
Lucinda Benner	\$25 FT / \$12.50 PT		6am – 6pm	
Titusville, PA				
Joann Gazdak	\$26 FT / \$20 PT		7:30am – 4pm	1

Warren, PA				
Marina Yeager	\$20 FT / \$11.25 PT	Letters, Numbers, Shapes	7am – 5pm	1
Marienville, PA				
Sandra Benedict	\$20 FT / \$14 PT		5:30am – 5pm	1
Pittsfield, PA				
Lori Johnson	\$20		6:30am – 5pm	
Warren, PA				
Rita S. Kelly	\$20		7am – 4:30pm	2
Russell, PA				
Kelley Saulsgiver	\$17.50		6:15am – 6pm	
Warren, PA				
Christina Steele	\$18		5am – 11:30pm	
Warren, PA				

Option B: Child Care Center

Program	Capacity	Daily Rates (3 & 4 y.o)	Curriculum	Hours (M-F)	Keystone STARS Quality Rating
Henry R. Rouse Children's Center Youngsville, PA	79	\$26.50 FT / \$27.50 PT Preschool		6am – 6pm	2
Grace United Methodist Church	71	\$110/week FT; \$50-80 PT	Teacher Choice	6:30am – 5:30pm	1
Warren, PA					
Ruth Smith Center Sheffield, PA	111	\$80/Week FT; \$68/Week PT	Beginning uses ABCs	6:30am – 5pm	
Jefferson DeFrees Family Center	126	\$25 FT / \$28 PT		6:15am – 5:30pm	4
Warren, PA					
Russell Methodist Church	83	\$125 FT		6:30am – 5:30pm	2
Russell, PA					
North Warren Presbyterian	N/A	\$24.50 FT /		6:45am – 6pm	

Community Day Care		\$5/hr PT		
North Warren, PA				
Sugar Grove Free Methodist	N/A	\$20 FT	6:45am – 6pm	
Sugar Grove, PA				
YMCA of Warren	N/A	\$115/Week FT	6:30am – 4:30pm	1
		3yrs;	(3yrs)	
Warren, PA		\$105/Week FT	12pm – 5pm	
		4yrs	(4yrs)	

Childcare Quality

According to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), the Keystone STARS program has the greatest reach across the state as an investment. Services are provided to an estimated 14% of all children age 5 and under in the state of Pennsylvania. As of June 2013, there were 3,905 child care providers within the Keystone STARS system. The STAR initiative seeks to improve, support, and recognize continuous quality improvement efforts in child care settings. STARS stands for Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources, and Support. The highest level is a STAR 4. Each level builds on the previous one using research-based best practices to promote quality early learning environment producing positive child outcomes.

The Warren Head Start program does not offer childcare. However, the program does collaborate with area child care providers for Head Start eligible children and their families to attend and receive Head Start services in addition to receiving child care during the school year.

Preschool Programs in Warren County

In addition to a large selection of child care providers, Warren County has several preschool programs in addition to Head Start. All options, as well as information on current enrollment, including Head Start, are shown in the following chart (Table 16).

Table 16: Preschool Enrollment in Warren County

Program	2010 to 2011		2013 to 2014		2014 to 2015	
	3 year olds	4 year olds	3 year olds	4 year olds	3 year olds	4 year olds
Creative Preschool	24	17	11	21	11	12
First United Methodist Church	10	16	5	13	8	7
Grace Promise	12	14	12	15	12	16
Imagine	19	15	12	17	ND	ND

Preschool						
Jefferson DeFrees	16	24	13	21	20	21
Jefferson DeFrees PKC	-	-	1	5	6	
North Warren	11	11	8	15	10	11
Rouse Children's Center	4	7	8	17	13	11
Russell United Methodist	10	5	7	8	12	8
Ruth Smith	4	10	3	5	19	10
Sheffield United Methodist	1	5	Closed		Closed	
YMCA	36	38	16	18	26	14
Head Start PreK Counts (PKC)	0	6	7	13	20	-
Tidioute Charter	0	17	0	17		
Tidioute Presbyterian	9	1	Closed		Closed	
Don Mills Achievement (IU)	11	0	5	10	10	12
Don Mills Pre-School	7	17	12	18		
IU Therapeutic	-	-	3	-	-	4
St. Joes	10	10	12	9	10	10
Head Start	78	110	100	111	96	122
TOTALS	262	323	235	333	273	258
	585		568		531	

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The purpose of this section is to meet the requirement of 1305.3 (3): The estimated number of children with disabilities four years or younger, including the types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies.

Special Education Child Count Data

According to the Warren County School District's Special Education Supervisor, the school district has identified 787 students currently enrolled with Special Education needs as of December 1, 2014. In looking solely at the 2014-2015 school year, this number represents nearly 17% of enrolled students (K through 12). This number is slightly higher to the current average for the State of Pennsylvania and can likely be attributed to the increased number of students identified with Autism and Speech/Language Impairments.

In addition to increasing numbers of students identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the Warren County School District has noticed an increase in the number of students enrolled who have a Mental Health diagnosis. For young children within the target population for Head Start, the school district coordinates services with the Intermediate Unit #5 Early Intervention program as children transition into Kindergarten. It should also be noted that while not all children necessarily have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) used for children receiving Special Education services, it has been noted that behavioral issues are standing out among students in the classroom setting.

Focusing on the target population, there are two programs based in Warren County to perform early intervention services to children under 5. The Birth to Three Early Intervention Program is offered through Forest-Warren Human Services and provides special education services to eligible children age birth to three. Services are identified via the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and may include, but are not limited to, special instruction, speech, physical, and occupational therapy. Often, services in this program are provided in the home or at a day care setting (Table 17).

Table 17: B-3 Special Education Services in Warren County, 2007-2015

School Year	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
# of Children	110	130	148	No Data	143	138	161	132 to date

Source: Warren-Forest Counties Head Start; Forest-Warren Human Services Early Intervention Program

During the 2011 to 2012 school year there were an estimated 1,254 children aged 0 to 3. The estimated percentage of children receiving special education services for this year is therefore 12%.

A second program in Warren County is available and concentrates efforts on children in the 3 to 5 year old population in need of Special Education services. The aforementioned, Intermediate Unit #5 provides services identified through Individual Education Plans (IEP) which are tailored to the needs of each child. An IEP could include Speech/Language Support, Occupational and/or Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology, Transportation, or other services identified within the IEP (Table 18).

Table 18: 3 and 4 Year Olds Receiving Special Education Services in Warren County, 2007-2014

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Head Start	52	58	49	38	47	41	39	35
IU#5	48	56	44	ND	ND	ND	ND	4
Don Mills	31	ND	27	ND	ND	ND	30	ND

Source: Warren-Forest Counties Head Start *ND = No Data Available

The Warren Head Start program has made some additional observations regarding the Special Education needs within the target population. On average, at the onset of the school year there are typically 10-15% of enrolled students with an identified problem whom have been professionally diagnosed with a disability. However, there has been an observed trend of an increasing number of children who may not have a diagnosis but who do have challenging behaviors requiring more individualized instruction and / or interventions throughout the school day. In the current school year, slightly more than 10% of the total enrollment (218 children) had IEPs at the beginning of the school year. As of February 2015, 35 children have IEPs and 31 have been identified as having challenging behaviors. Of the 35 children on IEPs, 14 have challenging behaviors; and an additional 17 children have been identified with challenging behaviors. It is becoming increasingly common that once the school year begins, challenging behaviors are being identified and additional children are being diagnosed with a disability which requires Special Education services. Provided by the Intermediate Unit, children not on an IEP but identified with challenging behaviors local mental health providers may be accessed by the family.

Forest County contains no typical preschools. There is a K4 and IU6 program offered through the school district. The IU6 program of Forest County, similar to IU5 in Warren County has no children. This school year there were 4 children enrolled and therefore, typical 3-year-olds were being brought into the classroom in a reverse mainstream process. This is due to significantly lower numbers than what was reported in January of 2014. Current numbers are approximately 30 less students requiring services. The K4 program also moved 3-year-olds into the classroom to bring the total class size to 18 students. Due to the low numbers of students, those requiring services are transported to North Clarion.

Disability Categories

The following table shows data collected from 2003 to the current school year on the special needs of children in the Warren-Forest Counties Head Start Program. All children with disabilities eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) are included (Table 19).

Table 19: Children Receiving Special Services by Primary or Most Significant Disability, 2004-2015

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Health Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Emotional/Behavioral Disorder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speech or Language Impairment	0	14	13	11	14	23	18	12	16	18	19
Mental Retardation / Intellectual Disability	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

Hearing Impairment Including Deafness	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Visual Impairment Including Blindness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Disabilities	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	0
Autism	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	3	2
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non Categorical/ Developmental Delay	37	40	40	39	44	36	30	33	22	19	11
Multiple Disabilities Including Deaf-Blind	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total With Disabilities	38	57	55	51	58	66	54	47	41	41	35
Total Head Start Children	215	216	214	212	207	215	220	213	218	211	218
Percent with Disability	17.7%	26.4%	25.7%	24%	28%	31%	25%	22%	19%	20%	16%

Source: Head Start Program Information Reports and Data

The percentage of student receiving special education services for Head Start in the current school year is 16%. This is nearly the same percentage seen at the Kindergarten through high school level for the current 2014–2015 school year. The Warren County School District has a rate of 16.9%.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HEAD START CHILDREN

The purpose of this section is to meet the requirements of 1305.3(3) and (5): Data regarding the education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of Head Start eligible children and their families; the education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of Head Start eligible children and their families as defined by families of Head Start eligible children and institutions in the community that service young children.

Age Distribution

The total number of children being served by Head Start is 218. Of the total number of children served, 56% are 4 years of age and the remaining 44% are 3 years of age. Additionally, the program has two mixed classrooms with an additional 20 children participating in the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program. These are all 3 year olds.

There are currently 83 children enrolled who are second year participants. This equates to 38% of the total children enrolled in Head Start.

Source: Warren Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council; Head Start Program

Center Enrollment

All Head Start Center locations for the program are currently in Warren County. While the program actively recruits in Forest County there are not enough Head Start eligible children to warrant an additional center. As previously mentioned, there are five centers in Warren County. They are listed below and recruit from the following locations:

- Lottsville Center enrolls from Pittsfield, Sugar Grove, Bear Lake, Columbus, and Spring Creek
- Youngsville Centers enroll from Pittsfield, Youngsville, Garland, Grand Valley, Spring Creek, Irvine, Tidioute, and Pleasantville
- Allegheny Valley Center enrolls from Clarendon, Sheffield, and Tiona
- Warren Centers (McClintock and Seneca) enroll from Russell, Warren, and Sugar Grove

The chart below shows the number of children recruited from the aforementioned areas each school year beginning with the 2008-2009 year (Table 20).

Table 20: Head Start Enrollment and Locations 2008 – 2015

Location	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Clarendon	9	8	9	7	15	16	6
Endeavor	2	0	2	1	2	0	0
Pittsfield	14	13	11	13	14	13	10
Russell	5	7	12	8	11	13	7
Sheffield	10	10	13	16	8	18	17
Sugar Grove	10	7	9	8	11	11	15
Chandlers Valley	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Tidioute	3	3	3	0	0	1	1

Tionesta	8	10	11	11	7	0	0
Warren	112	103	96	102	106	109	114
West Hickory	1	2	3	0	3	0	0
Youngsville	21	30	24	27	32	20	24
Bear Lake	2	2	4	6	1	2	6
Columbus	4	7	6	4	0	0	1
Garland	2	5	5	2	2	1	4
Grand Valley	2	2	2	2	0	0	1
Spring Creek	3	6	1	1	0	4	5
Tiona	2	1	0	0	1	0	1
East Hickory	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Irvine	2	1	1	3	2	3	5
Pleasantville	2	2	0	1	1	0	0
TOTAL	212	220	212	213	218	211	218

Source: Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start PIR

Family Educational Characteristics

The majority of 2014-2015 Head Start families have at least one parent with a High School diploma as their highest level of education. The complete breakdown is listed below. There are 208 families represented by this data. When looking at two-parent households, the parent with the highest level of education was counted (Table 21).

Table 21: Educational Attainment within Head Start Families, 2014-2015

Level Attained	# of Families	% of Families
Less than High School Diploma	22	11%
High School Diploma	118	57%
GED	22	11%
Vocational School	16	8%
Associate's Degree	22	11%
Bachelor's Degree	8	4%

Source: Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start PIR

When looking at all parents, and not just the highest level of education attained within the family, there are 44 parents of current Head Start children lacking a GED or High School Diploma. The following information is provided

as a comparison between Head Start families and educational attainment levels for the entire two-county service area (Table 22).

Table 22: Comparison of Educational Attainment for Head Start Families and Service Area

Level Attained	% of Head Start Families	% within Two-County Report Area
Less than a High School Diploma	11%	12%
High School Diploma / GED	68%	47.98%
Some College / Vocational School	8%	16.36%
Associate's Degree	11%	7.75%
Bachelor's Degree	4%	10.13%

Source: Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start PIR; American Community Survey, 2008 – 2012, Data Release December 2013

The percentage of those holding only a high school diploma or equivalent is much higher within the population of Head Start families than what is observed at the county levels. Those attending some college or receiving a Bachelor's degree are fewer when looking at Head Start families however, the percentage of families where minimally one parent or caregiver holds an Associate's Degree is higher than what is observed at a county level.

The lack of education among Head Start parents and caregivers compounds the entrenched poverty seen among families. Based on program information, 75% of Head Start families have at least one person employed while 25% are listed as unemployed (Table 23). However, it can be inferred that many of those working are in low-paying jobs with few, if any, benefits such as health insurance due to a lack of education which would aid in securing some of the higher earning jobs within the area.

Table 23: Employment Status of Head Start Families

	# of Families	% of Families
Two Parent Families	104	
Two Parents / Guardians Employed	30	15%
One Parent / Guardian Employed	62	30%
Both not working (Unemployed)	12	6%
One Parent Families	104	
Employed	64	31%
Unemployed	40	20%

Source: Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start PIR *Percentages are based on total number of families (208)

Health Indicators

Of the 208 families participating in the Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start program it is estimated that approximately 50% received services under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). This estimate was provided by the WIC Program of Warren County. Additional data provided by the

WIC Program indicates that there are currently 206 children aged 3 and 4 enrolled in the program. Each month, there are approximately 850 total participants.

The WIC Program of Warren County reports that families with young children receiving services typically lack basic parenting skills and exist within an unstable family environment. Poverty and parents working low wage jobs with little to no benefits are still unable to meet basic needs even with BOTH parents working. Parents lack knowledge and skills when it comes to basic cooking, food preparation, and budgeting. There is a noticeable increase in the use of pre-packaged, instant food items which are less costly for the family but not as nutritious.

This observation is further backed by data which shows an increase in the number of enrolled children with obesity as a chronic health condition. In fact, obesity is the number one medical condition seen in current Head Start students (Table 24). Observations by the Head Start staff also corroborate what is being seen at the WIC Program. That is, limited transportation in turn limits access to supermarkets. This trend has encouraged a reliance on convenience stores and similar options where foods tend to be more expensive with a limited selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, many area food banks tend to supply cheap and easy-to-store food. Vending machines, many restaurants in the service area, and especially fast food restaurants tend to not supply fruit or vegetables either. Compounding the issue, lower income parents with one or more jobs tend to have little time for cooking and are more likely to view fruits and vegetables as too time consuming to prepare. For some of the same or similar reasons, fast food chains hold greater appeal for many families on the go. In recent years, fast food chains have begun offering few healthy options on their menus. In conclusion, all of these factors, especially when combined with lack of physical exercise, tend to create a scenario where lower income persons, especially children, are increasingly becoming overweight and obese.

Table 24: Children Receiving Treatment for Specific Medical Conditions, 2003-2015

	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	2006- 2007	2007- 2008	2008- 2009	2009- 2010	2011- 2012	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015
Anemia	7	2	2	1	1	11	8	8	4	6	7
Sickle Cell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High Lead Levels	0	0	1	3	4	5	6	6	2	34	39
Hearing Difficulties	13	21	11	19	11	29	12	17	16	19	15
Vision Problems	3	9	14	13	8	22	10	26	18	15	27
Diabetes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Seizure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Overweight / Obesity	5	2	15	19	22	32	28	79	79	70	73
Underweight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	11	8
Asthma	9	14	12	22	21	20	8	15	10	18	15
Child Abuse & Neglect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 referrals

Total Receiving Medical Treatment	37	48	55	77	67	119	72	111	134	176	184
Total Head Start Children	201	215	218	215	216	214	212	213	218	211	218
Percent Receiving Medical Treatment	17.2%	22.2%	25.7%	36.3%	31%	55.6%	34%	53%	62%	84%	85%

Source: Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start PIR

Note we only have information on the number of referrals for the child abuse and neglect categories. Also, note that the number of children indicated as having high lead levels in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 is based on the CDC level of 5-9. If using the State of Pennsylvania's level of 10 the number of children affected for the current school year (2014-2015) would be 2.

Primary Care Access

Residents of Warren and Forest Counties are limited in terms of access to primary care. In looking solely at Physicians and Assistants, as of April 2014, there were 2.21 primary care providers per 1,000 people. This is lower than the State of Pennsylvania average of 3.83 providers for every 1,000 persons. Forest County fares even worse with only 1 primary care physician in the area. This equates to 0.13 providers for every 1,000 persons.

Compounding the issue, for Head Start families more likely to be reliant on medical assistance, many area providers are not accepting new patients and/ or do not accept assistance.

Another barrier in accessing medical care is transportation. Public transportation is not easily accessible to all of Warren and Forest Counties. Additionally, many families have only one vehicle. It should be assumed that Forest County residents must travel to Warren or other surrounding counties to access medical care.

These broad observations are backed by the findings of the Community Health Needs Assessment recently completed by Warren General Hospital. Within the assessments, 64 physicians in Warren County were surveyed. Responses are detailed below:

- When asked, "Within your practice, what barriers do you face regarding patient care specialty access?" physicians responded that cardiologists and neurologists are the top specialties missing in Warren County. Access is limited and patients needing more specialized care often have to drive too far in order to receive it. In addition to cardiology and neurology, physicians cited a lack in dermatologists, nephrologists, and interventional radiologists.
- When asked, "What do you feel the top concern is in Warren County in terms of patient care?" physicians responded that a lack of a primary care physician has contributed to an increased use of the Emergency Care Center for minor issues. This results in a less efficient treatment and is often more costly. Note, this is a concern that likely affects and / or applies to Head Start families.
- Physicians identified obesity, diabetes, and drug use as developing trends for Warren County.
- Recommendations by physicians suggests that there needs to be greater access to specialized care as well as **other options to provide open access for patients, particularly those on a limited income.**

Additionally, adequate mental health services and access to care are a concern for many area providers of social services including the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council and Head Start program.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs. April 2014.
United States Census Bureau
American Community Survey
Community Health Needs Assessment, 2012 from Warren General Hospital

Dental Care

Forest County has no dentists or dental hygienists. The situation in Warren County mirrors that found at the state level with 1 dentist per 1,000 people. While there are options, the most significant barrier to accessing dental care is cost and inability to pay. There is only one dentist in all of Warren County that accepts assistance in lieu of dental insurance. This makes getting an appointment or even being accepted as a new patient increasingly difficult. The majority of Head Start children have never been to a dentist prior to enrolling in the program.

Additionally, fluoride, a substance found naturally in a water supply is noticeably lacking in Warren County. Fluoride is well known for the role it plays in helping to prevent and even reverse early stages of tooth decay. If tooth decay is not stopped or treated it can lead to pain, tooth loss, and potentially infection. Tooth decay is also one of the most common childhood diseases making access to dental care from an early age important in maintaining overall good health.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs. April 2014.

<http://kidshealth.org>

United States Census

Free and Reduced Lunch

In the two-county service area nearly 50% of enrolled students were eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch program as of March 12, 2014. This number is reflective of public, private, and parochial schools as well as residential child care institutional figures. Total, there are 2,654 eligible student equating to 49.28%. The State of Pennsylvania, by comparison, has an average rate of 42.94% (Table 25).

Table 25: Students Participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (Lunches Only), March 2014

County	School District	School Type	Total Enrolled	Free Lunch Eligible	% Free Lunch Enrollment	Reduced Lunch Eligible	% Reduced Lunch Enrolled	% Free and Reduced Lunch Enrolled
Forest	FOREST AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT	Public	509	268	52.65%	41	8.06%	60.71%
Warren	TIDIOUTE COMMUNITY CS	Public	300	149	49.67%	25	8.33%	58.00%
Warren	WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	Public	4,577	1,864	40.73%	307	6.71%	47.43%
Report Area	no data	no data	5,386	2,281	42.35%	373	6.93%	49.28%
Pennsylvania			1,777,447	666,536	37.50%	100,451	5.65%	43.15%

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Food and Nutrition, October, 2014.

Public Assistance

Only 7% of currently enrolled Head Start families receive cash benefits. This number includes those receiving benefits under TANF. An additional 12% of current families receive SSI. This results in a total of 19% of all 208 families enrolled receiving public assistance.

Source: Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start PIR

Services Requested

All families enrolled in the EOC Head Start program receive assistance and support from the Family Services component. Partnerships are formed and each family is looked at on an individual basis to best determine what the needs of the family are and ensure that these needs are met as efficiently as possible (Table 26).

Service	2008-2009	2009-2010	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Emergency/Crisis Intervention (Immediate Need)	133	72	77	59	138	99
Housing Assistance	92	84	91	56	6	12
Transportation Assistance	57	45	40	25	14	12
Mental Health Services	51	52	47	53	3	0
English as a Second Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Education (GED, etc.)	22	22	19	15	1	208
Job Training	21	1	3	12	0	0
Substance Abuse Prevention or Treatment	8	2	10	7	0	1
Child Abuse and Neglect Services	21	16	12	7	0	0
Domestic Violence Services	2	2	5	1	1	0
Child Support Assistance	52	44	53	35	10	0
Health Education	199	202	199	200	200	208
Assistance to Families of Incarcerated Individuals	12	14	15	16	1	0
Parenting Education	199	202	199	200	200	208

Source: Head Start Program Information Reports and Data

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The purpose of this section is to meet the requirement of 1305.3 (6): Resources in the community that could be used to address the needs of Head Start eligible children and their families.

The Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start Program partners with numerous government and community agencies to support the needs of low-income families and children. The following listing is arranged by category of service and includes a brief description of what can be provided by each partnering group or organization.

Family Income and Poverty

Low paying jobs with few, if any, benefits create a situation where many families in Warren and Forest Counties are earning less than the average income seen in other areas of the state and at a national level. This has created a situation of entrenched and generational poverty, especially for those without job skills. However, several programs are available to help low-income persons enter and better prepare for the job market.

- **Partners for Progress** | Works with the PA CareerLink system and the Workforce Investment Act to provide employability services to job seekers; assists in seeking, securing, and retaining permanent unsubsidized jobs.
- **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation** | Provides vocational counseling and employment preparation services for persons with sever/multiple employment handicaps. This organization is especially committed to assisting the severely disabled person in accessing the job market.
- **Warren County Career Link** | Provides basic job applicant and employer services which include interviewing, counseling, testing, job development, selection, referrals, supportive services, job placement, and unemployment compensation.
- **Warren County School-To-Work Program** | A partnership composed of citizens, educators, business and government agencies that offer knowledge, training and guidance to all students to enable them to be competitive members of the workforce.
- **Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council Community Services Program** | Offering assistance with developing a workable household budget as well as various job training programs.
- **Warren Forest Higher Education Council** | Works to identify, implement, and coordinate educational and employment opportunities for the citizens of Warren and Forest Counties.

Family and Child Health

- **Adagio Health** | Provides health care services to more than 100,000 women and their families throughout western Pennsylvania each year. Services include obstetrics and gynecology, birth control, STD testing and treatment, breast and cervical cancer screening, nutrition counseling, teen pregnancy prevention, HIV prevention, sexuality education for teens, community education, parent education, and professional training.
- **Automated Health Systems** | Located in Pittsburgh, this service ensures that children from birth to age 20, who currently have a Medical Card, have their EPSDT screenings. Reminders and information to consumers and agencies regarding services are provided through the service.
- **Hospice of Warren County** | Care for patients with life limiting illness.
- **March of Dimes, Northwest Pennsylvania Chapter** | Seeks to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality through a combination of targeted public and professional education, research, advocacy, and community service.
- **Pennsylvania Department of Health Forest County State Health Center** | Provides public health education, preventative nursing services, community empowerment as mandated by the State of Pennsylvania legislation. Also provides adult and child immunizations, HIV/AIDS counseling-referral and health resources.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Health, Warren County State Health Center** | Provides immunizations, public health education, communicable disease surveillance and investigation, HIV testing and counseling, and other nursing services as mandated by the State of Pennsylvania.
- **Pine Grove Lions Club** | Pine Grove, PA branch of the Lions Club International which actively promotes a spirit of engaged interest in the civic, cultural, social, and moral welfare of the communities in which a club exists.
- **Pregnancy Support Center** | Provides support, services, practical help, and hope for women with crisis pregnancies.
- **Warren General Hospital** | Located in Warren, PA, the hospital provides a wide range of services including a walk-in clinic for non-life threatening health issues and financial assistance.
- **Warren Lioness Club**
- **Warren Lions Club** | Warren, PA branch of the Lions Club International which actively promotes a spirit of engaged interest in the civic, cultural, social, and moral welfare of the communities in which a club exists.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Since North Warren is home to Warren State Hospital, a state mental hospital facility, there are a large number of organizations and programs that address the issues of substance abuse and/or mental health. Many are located on or near the Warren State Hospital campus.

- **Alcoholics Anonymous** | A fellowship of men and women sharing their experience, strength, and hope in order to recover from alcoholism.
- **Beacon Light** | Offers a continuum of services for children and adolescents with emotional or behavioral problems. Group and individual counseling available at the Warren, PA location.
- **Cornell Abraxas I** | Provides an alternative to incarceration for male offenders ages 14 – 18 who have drug and alcohol histories.
- **Deerfield Behavioral Health of Warren County, Outpatient Services** | Provides individual, couple, and family therapy, medication assessment and management, psychological evaluations and therapy, adolescent psychiatry, geriatric consultation, substance abuse evaluations, outpatient intensive and partial services.
- **Deerfield Behavioral Health of Warren County, Inpatient Services** | 24/7 acute psychiatric treatment facility for persons 14 years old and above. Provides psychiatric evaluation, treatment, medication management, and stabilization for psychiatric emergencies.
- **Family Services of Warren, Inc.** | Professional counseling for couples, individuals and families, employment assistance, groups for anger management, domestic violence offenders, consultation to schools and community education. Coordination of Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth, a positive youth development initiative.
- **Friendship House** | Provides mental health consumers with opportunities for recreation, socialization, education, and empowerment.
- **Narcotics Anonymous, Chautauqua Area Service Committee** | NA is a non-profit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. Recovering addicts meet regularly to help others in recovery stay clean.
- **Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance, Region IX** | Exists to aid students in trouble with drugs, alcohol, abuse, divorce or suicide by getting the student to appropriate counseling services through the school system. Monitors school for the Drug Free Schools Program.
- **Phoenix House, Inc.** | Located in Warren, PA, Phoenix House is a residential halfway house program for men who need a safe place to live while attending a drug and/or alcohol recovery program.
- **Warren County DUI Program** | Provides DUI offenders with alcohol evaluations, alcohol highway safety school, the victim impact panel and intervention group services.

Disabilities

The Lions Clubs provide much assistance particularly to persons with visual disabilities and were already listed under the Family Child and Health section. Also missing from this list are support groups organized around specific conditions or diseases that may result in disabilities.

- **Community Resources for Independence** | Seeks to improve the quality of life for all people with disabilities. Services include, but are not limited to, information and referral, peer support, advocacy, independent living skills, and attendant care services.
- **Farrah Grotto** | Supports projects which aid disabled children with emphasis on dentistry for the disabled and cerebral palsy research.
- **Forest Area Disability Council** | Provides support and advocacy to people with disabilities and offers them various resources to help them meet their needs.

Child Abuse

- **Parents Anonymous of Forest County** | Support group for parents.
- **Warren County Human Services Intake** | Provider of holistic assessment, service planning, and referral services to individuals and families. The basic intake assessment which includes a basic child abuse investigation and other brief services is completed by this group. Further, they are responsible for providing 24-hour services for mental health crisis or emergency.
- **CASA of Warren & Forest Counties** | This is the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program which works to train volunteers to objectively advocate for children and youth in the court system.

Juvenile Delinquency and Crime

- **A Safe Place/Forest County Branch** | Provides support counseling services for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, prevention/education programs, legal advocacy, assistance to clients with the court system, accompaniment to hospitals, police, etc. and support groups.
- **Forest County Probation Office** | Oversees adult and juvenile probation, pre-sentence investigations, pre-parole plans, court-related criminal actions, counseling, job placement assistance, CRN testing, DUI suspension, intermediate punishment program, community service programs, and Student Accountability to the Community (SAC) community service program.
- **Safe Place** | Similar to the Forest County branch, A Safe Place offers supportive counseling services for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Prevention/education programs, legal advocacy and assistance within the court system, accompaniment to hospitals, police, etc., are provided. Last, support groups and shelter for victims and their children.
- **Warren County Adult Probation Department** | Investigations for the court, probation, and parole supervision. Restitution for victims of crime is also collected by this entity.
- **Warren County District Attorney's Victim Witness Program** | Provides support services to crime victims, including support groups, counseling, information and referral, orientation to the criminal justice system, crisis intervention, case status information. This program also provides accompaniment for victims to court and provides assistance in filing a crime victim compensation claim under Pennsylvania law.
- **Warren County Jail Office for Counseling Services** | Provides assessment and treatment for individuals and in group settings (counseling and therapy), life skills training, drug and alcohol counseling, GED preparation and testing, referral services, community work release, vocation skills training, sexual additions counseling, HIV testing, and both pre and post counseling for inmates.
- **Warren County Juvenile Probation Department** | This department works specifically with juveniles who have been charged with misdemeanors and felonies. Each child's supervision plan is aimed at restoring the victim, protecting the community, and building competencies in the young offender which will help him/her to remain crime free in the future.

Education

Major educational institutions (such as school districts) and individual schools and colleges are generally omitted from this list although; they do all provide and represent an important resource within the community.

- **Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5** | Provides consultant services to Warren County School District for gifted programs, work-study programs, vocational-special education liaison. Services for preschool children with suspected development disabilities. This resource also works with the school district providing programs for school-age children with mental retardation, learning and/or physical disabilities, and learning and/or emotionally impaired and socially and/or emotionally disturbed.

Housing and Homelessness

Excluded from the list in this section are those organizations with a primary focus on providing senior housing services. Individual apartment buildings or housing developments are also not included unless they provide affordable housing and/or on-site supportive services.

- **Community Concern, Inc.** | Subsidized housing for low-income adults sponsored by a group of area churches. There is a divided apartment house for mentally challenged individuals which provides separate rooms for 4 adult males and 4 adult females.
- **Faith Inn Shelter** | Owned and operated by the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, the shelter provides emergency housing and supportive services to homeless persons and families.
- **Housing Authority of the County of Warren** | Operates all federally subsidized housing for low-income families, elderly, and the physically and mentally challenged.
- **Lincoln Woods Apartments** | Safe, clean, and affordable housing at a 44 family apartment complex with both 1 and 2 bedroom units. Applicants must qualify for rental assistance. Section 8 is accepted.
- **Salvation Army** | Provides emergency shelter, clothing and food for men, women, and children in need, visitations and gifts for shut-ins, spiritual counseling, socialization programs, information, and referral services. The Salvation Army of Warren also runs the Cobham Youth Program, which provides day camps as well as before and after school care.
- **Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council** | Assistance with utilities as well as offering housing and homelessness prevention programs.
- **Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council** | The weatherization program provides assistance for elderly, disabled, and low-income homeowners in weatherizing their homes.