



EAST PROVIDENCE

HEZ

HEALTH EQUITY ZONE

Year 1:
Community
Needs
Assessment



East Providence HEZ

Year 1: Mission and Partners

Mission

The East Providence Health Equity Zone's (HEZ) mission is to engage residents, community organizations, local government, businesses, and health entities to respond collectively to the City's health priorities.

Community Partners

Bradley Hospital
Cape Verdean Progressive Center
City of East Providence, Community Development Office
East Bay Community Action Program (HEZ Backbone Agency)
East Providence Boys and Girls Club
East Providence Chamber of Commerce
East Providence Prevention Coalition
East Providence Public Library
East Providence School Department
East Providence Senior Center
East Urban Core Family Care Community Partnership
HeART Spot
Hope Congregational Church
HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University
Julie Silva, Jules Hope Chest
Liana Cassar, State Representative District 66
Newman YMCA
Pamelia Byrd, Trinity Tabernacle Church
Rhode Island Philharmonic & Music School
Riverside Nutrition



East Providence HEZ

Year 1: Overview

- Hire and Train Staff
- Hold Stakeholder Meetings
- Establish a Steering Committee
- Develop Preliminary Branding to Promote the East Providence HEZ
- Develop Strategy for Community Needs Assessment
- Create Resident Surveys
- Create Provider Surveys
- Host Community Outreach Events
- Disseminate Surveys
- Analyze Response Data
- Identify Top Community Needs
- Create Preliminary Action Plan for Year 2

Year 1 COVID Response:

Year 1 Objectives were substantially interrupted by the pandemic, wherein the Steering Committee was called to respond to the emergency needs of East Providence residents

East Providence HEZ administered the following emergency supports:

- Distribution of gift cards for basic needs, including emergency food support
- Collaboration with EBCAP food pantry and East Providence Senior Center volunteers to deliver food to seniors
- Distribution of masks
- Creation and dissemination of an emergency needs survey



Community Needs Assessment

Data Collection Overview

Review of Existing Data:

East Bay Community Action Program Health Data
Existing Local School Survey Data (Parent/Student)
HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University
Rhode Island Department of Health
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Development of Surveys:

HEZ staff designed Community Needs Assessment Survey with guidance from the Steering Committee
Surveys were available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese

Survey Administration Strategy:

In order to reach a broad sample of residents, surveys were administered using a mixed-methods strategy in collaboration with partner organizations

First Phase: Survey EBCAP Staff (Provider Survey)

Second Phase: Community-wide Meeting at East Providence Senior Center (Community Survey)

- Outreach and engagement event
- In-person surveying of meeting attendees

Third Phase: Dissemination of Community Survey;
12 week data collection period

- Paper surveys distributed through partner organizations
- Online survey link distributed through East Providence HEZ media and partner organizations
- Outreach event at Rumford Towers; surveyed 100 senior residents

Fourth Phase: Youth Survey

- In-person survey administered through youth-serving partner organizations



Resident Survey Response Analysis of the Community Survey & Youth Survey



Resident Survey Sample Analysis

Sample Size and Geography

Community Survey (CS)

N = 446

The Community Survey was disseminated throughout the city, both in-person, online, and via paper surveys.

Youth Survey (YS)

N = 48

The Youth Survey was administered in-person, facilitated in partnership with Steering Committee representatives, whose organizations serve East Providence youth.

Rumford

30% CS

38% YS

Central East Providence

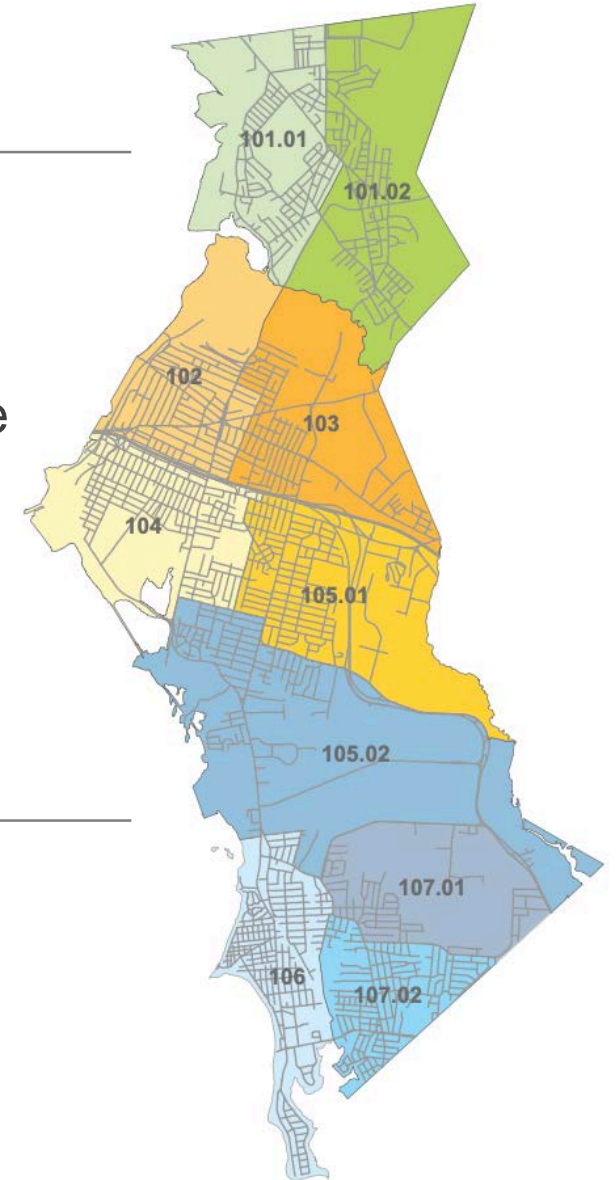
40% CS

54% YS

Riverside

30% CS

8% YS





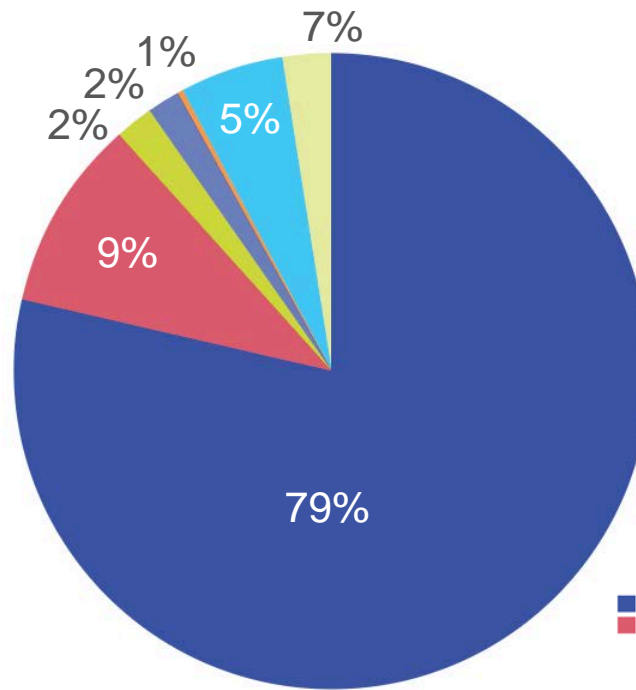
Resident Survey Sample Analysis

Race and Ethnicity

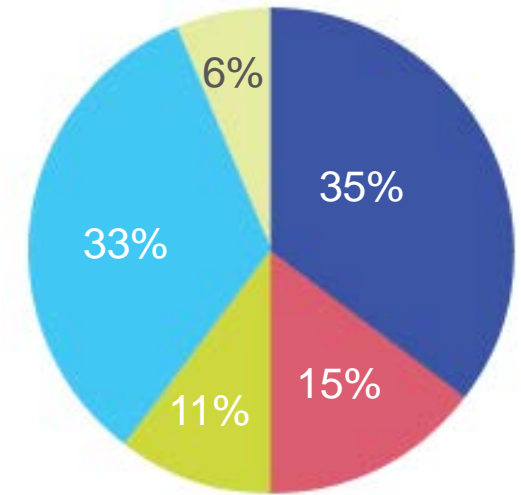
Across the two resident surveys, respondents were representative of the larger population based on identified racial and ethnic categories.

The youth sample was significantly more diverse, with only 35% of respondents identifying as white, compared to 82% for the entire population of the city.

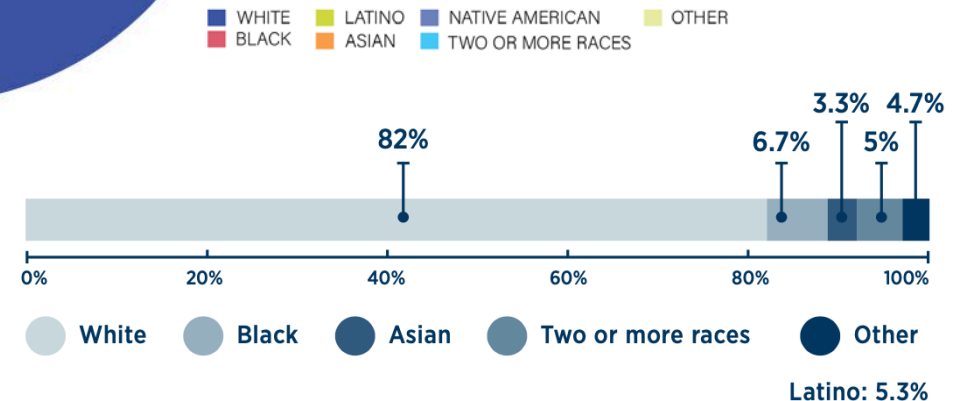
Community Survey



Youth Survey



East Providence Population



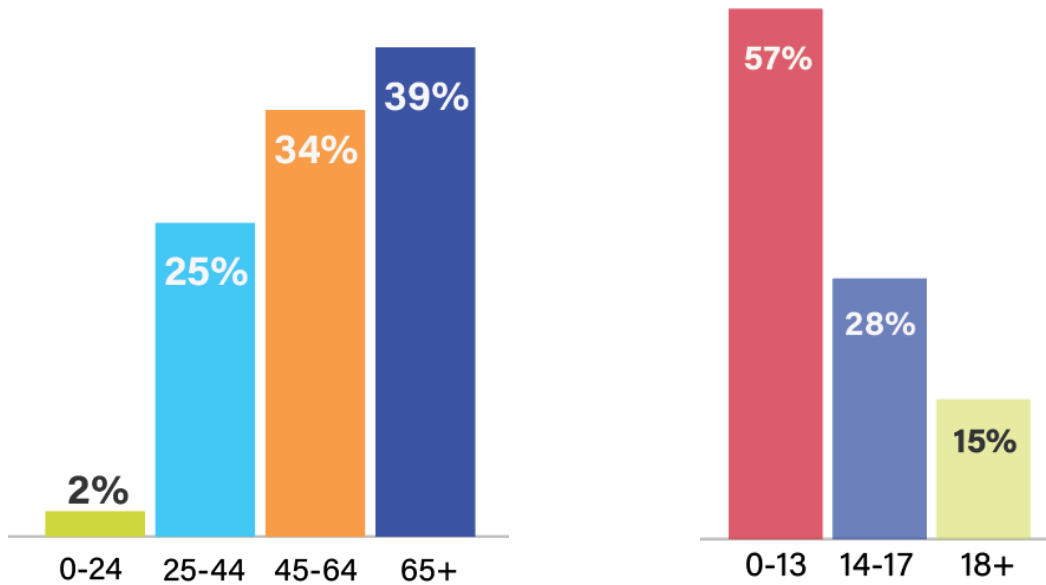


Resident Survey Sample Analysis

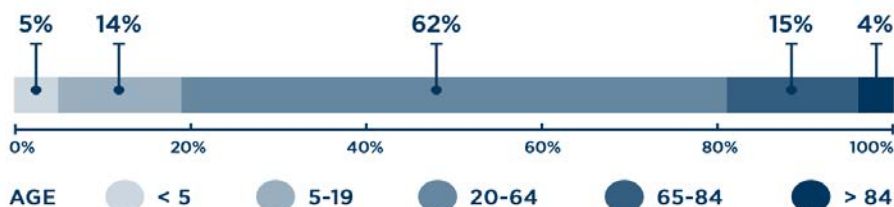
Age and Gender

Age of CS Respondents

Age of YS Respondents



Age of East Providence Population



Majority of survey respondents identified as female.

In comparison to the overall population, our survey captured a greater proportion of responses from East Providence residents aged 65 and older.

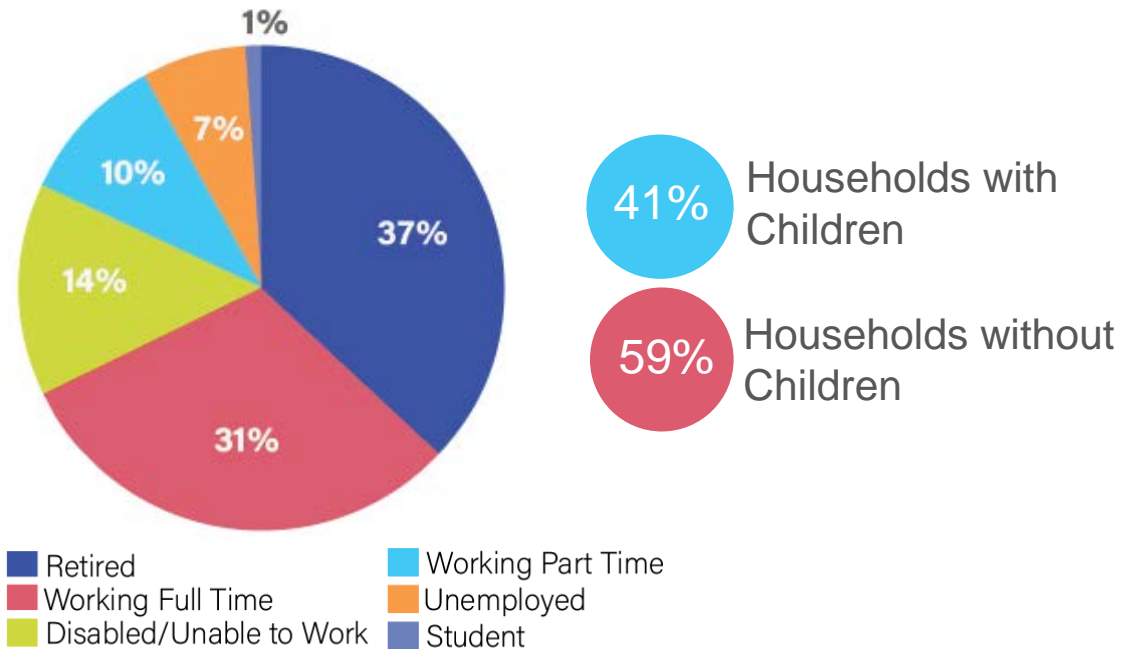
Gender	CS	YS
Female	73%	60%
Male	26%	38%
Other	1%	2%



Resident Survey Sample Analysis

Household Characteristics of Community Survey Respondents

Employment Status of Respondents



Survey data on households suggest that the sample may be skewed towards a greater representation of lower-income or fixed-income households when compared to the general East Providence population.

There were a greater number of respondents who were renters and housing insecure than the general population.

There were a greater number of unemployed respondents.

Housing Tenure





Resident Survey Findings

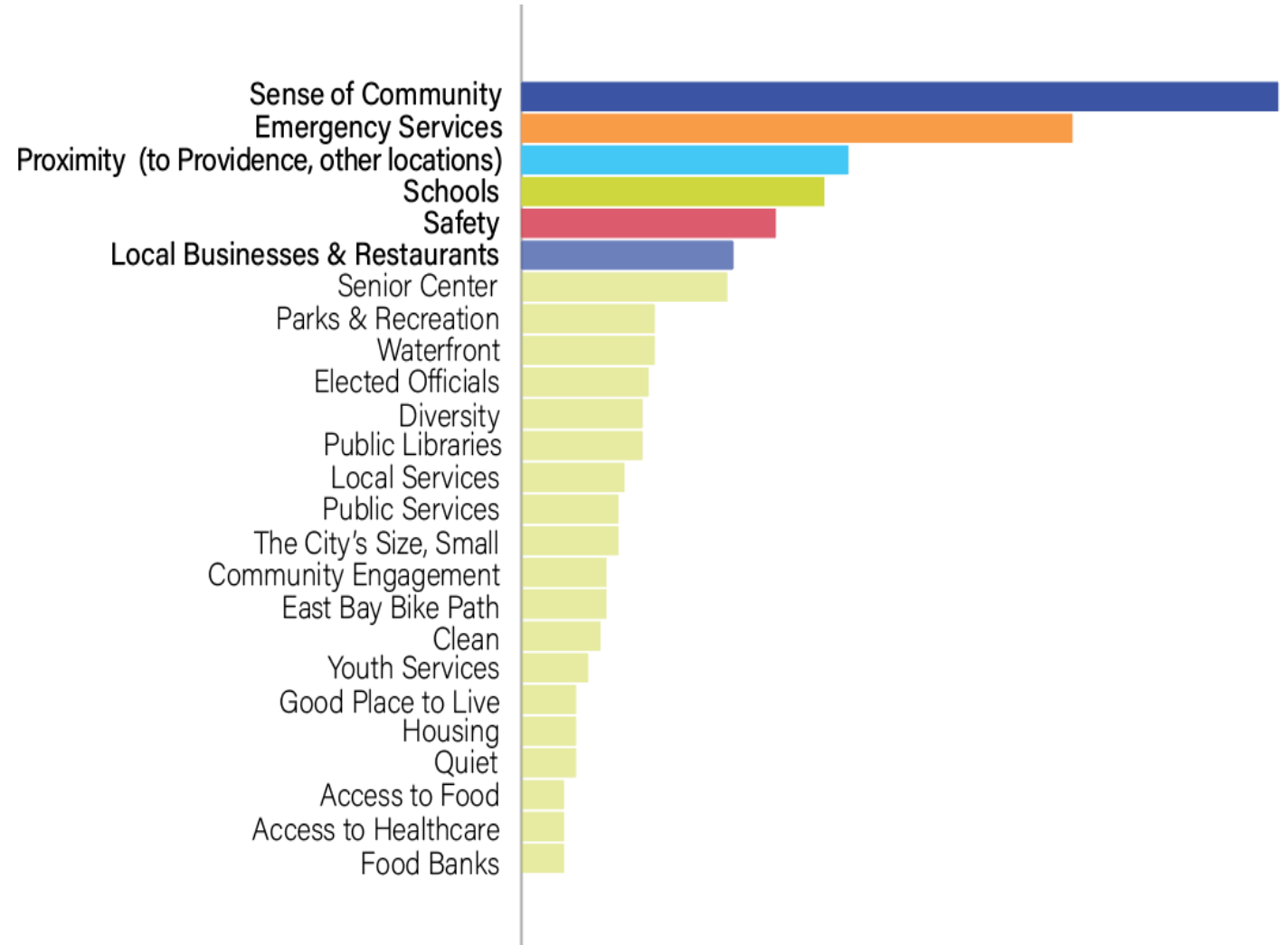
Top Strengths of East Providence

Respondents felt a strong sense of community was the greatest strength.

Community was also one of the top strengths identified by youth; in addition to sports, schools, and local restaurants.

Across the two surveys, many respondents referred to feeling safe, valuing outdoor public spaces, including the waterfront, and appreciating that East Providence feels like a small town even though it is a city.

Identified Strengths





Resident Survey Findings

Health and Wellness

Food Access

Majority of respondents said they have access to food through markets, restaurants, and fast food

40% Felt **healthy food** was available, but **not affordable**

44% Receive **SNAP** benefits

Physical Activity

Majority of respondents noted that they participate in **weekly physical activity**

For majority of youth, **in-school gym class** was their main weekly activity

Most respondents said they enjoy the **East Bay Bike Path** and other outdoor public spaces in the community

Health Indicators

89% of youth said that they, or someone they know, **have been bullied**

62% of respondents said they, or someone in their family, has been diagnosed with a **chronic illness**

51% have been told by a doctor that they need to manage their **weight**



Resident Survey Findings

Substance Use

62% of Community respondents felt there are not enough support services in East Providence

Top 5 Youth Identified Misused Substances

- (1) Cigarettes
- (2) Alcohol
- (3) Marijuana & Vaping
- (4) Prescription Drugs
- (5) Cocaine

70% of Youth respondents felt there is a substance misuse problem in their community

Top 5 Community Identified Misused Substances

- (1) Cigarettes
- (2) Alcohol
- (3) Vaping
- (4) Marijuana
- (5) Prescription Drugs

38% of Adult respondents felt there is a substance misuse problem in their community



Resident Survey Findings

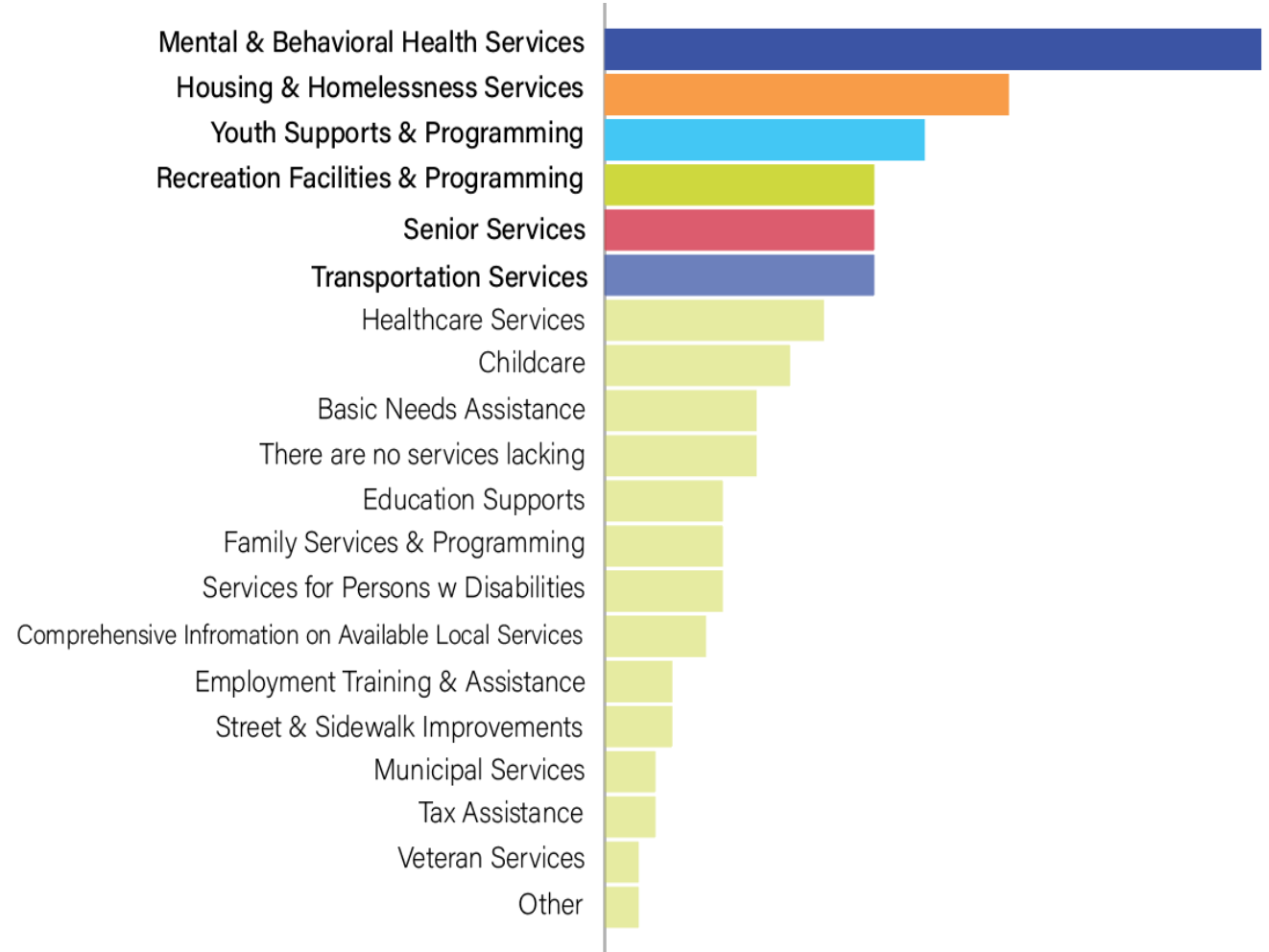
Top Service Needs in East Providence

The clear top needs identified by the Community were Mental & Behavioral Health Services

This category includes responses that wrote substance abuse services or specific substance treatments, like smoking cessation or rehab

The second identified need was Housing & Homelessness Services, which included responses of affordable housing, housing assistance, and shelters

Identified Needs





Provider Survey Response Analysis of EBCAP Staff Survey



Provider Survey Response

Overview

Provider Survey (PS)

N = 61

Provider Survey was administered via email and asked EBCAP staff to respond based on their work with East Providence residents

25% of Providers surveyed were East Providence residents

Providers identified local services that make East Providence a healthy place to live

The top responses were:

- (1) East Bay Bike Path
- (2) Parks & Public Spaces
- (3) EBCAP
- (4) Access to Quality Healthcare
- (5) Local Services
- (6) Community Engagement



Provider Survey Findings

Top Health Concerns of East Providence Clients

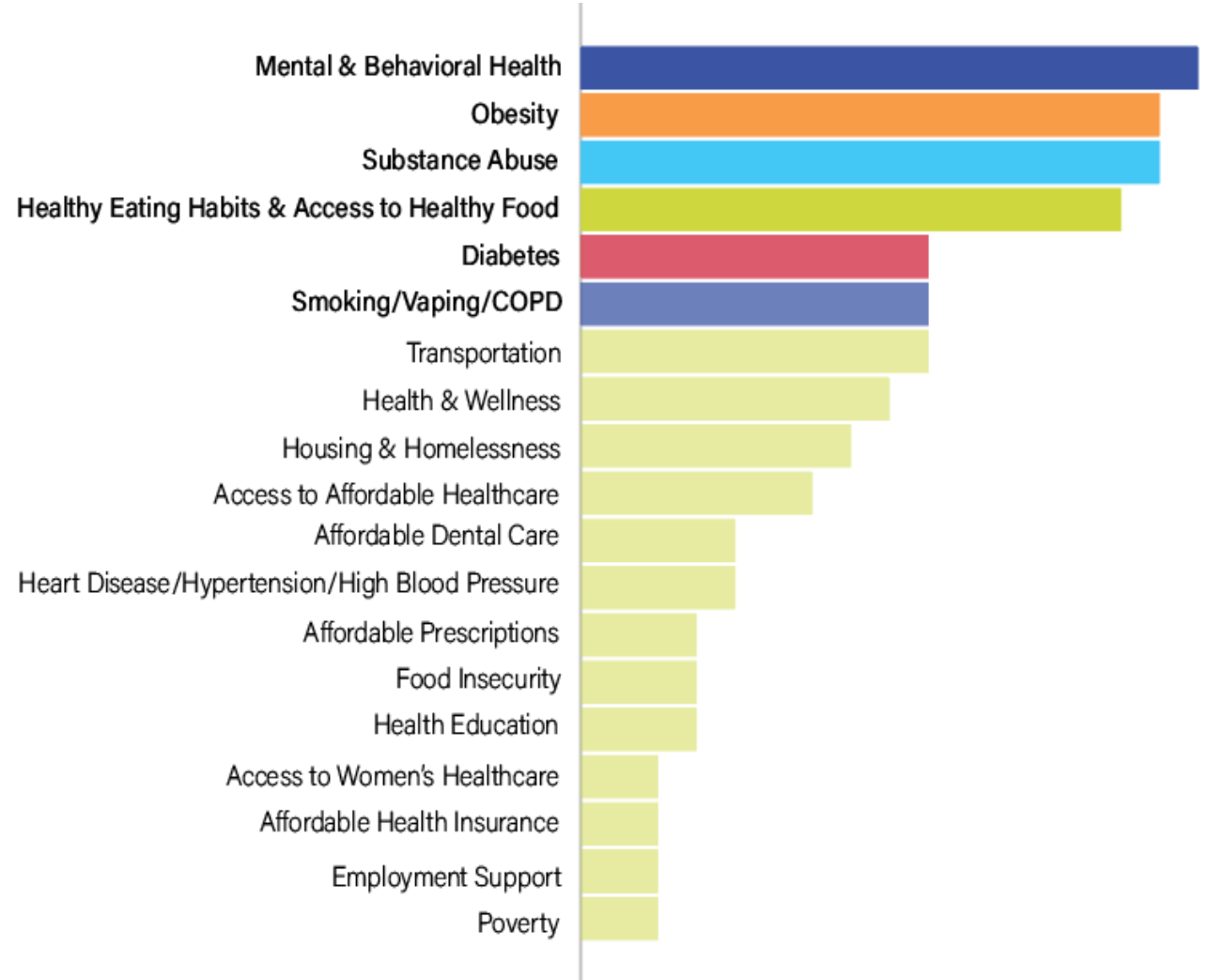
Provider respondents identified the same top need as the Resident respondents:

Mental & Behavioral Health

The next five categories could arguably reinforce the need for Behavioral Health services, as they identify the top most common health issues in the community

Three of those issues can be seen as interrelated: Obesity, Healthy Eating Habits & Access to Healthy Food, and Diabetes

Provider Identified Health Concerns





Provider Survey Findings

Barriers to Wellness and Service Gaps

Provider Identified Client Barriers to Achieving Wellness

- (1) **Transportation:** Transportation issues was the clear number one barrier for East Providence clients in improving their health; this included transportation to services, issues with RIPTA and other ride services, and accessible transportation options
- (2) **Lack of Financial Resources**
- (3) **Unaware of Support Services**
- (4) **Lack of Affordable Housing**
- (5) **Educational Barriers**

Provider Identified Gaps in Services to Assist in Achieving Wellness

- (1) **Health & Wellness Education + Programming:** Respondents referred to the lack of understanding of the importance of health and wellness, healthy eating habits, how to cook healthy foods, the importance of physical activity, and described an overwhelming need for education + programming
- (2) **Transportation**
- (3) **Lack of Affordable Fitness Memberships**
- (4) **Access to Substance Use Services**
- (5) **Affordable Dental Care**



East Providence HEZ Priority Areas

Synthesis of What We Learned



Analysis of Cumulative Findings

SWOT Analysis of Survey Responses

Strengths

Survey Response

- Strong sense of community, safety, and “small town” feel
- Outdoor public spaces, including waterfront and bike path
- Access to healthy food

Survey Process

- Survey respondents represent racial/ethnic diversity of city
- Survey yielded a greater response from historically under-represented groups at higher risk of health disparities when compared with the population of the city; including: people of color, low-income, seniors, housing insecure, un- and underemployed

Weaknesses

Survey Response

- Lack of information about available resources
- Few resources related to housing needs
- Clear concern about behavioral health needs across the lifespan
- Affordability of healthy food
- Youth report high rate of bullying

Survey Process

- Survey under-represented younger adult residents, particularly young families
- Survey completed pre-COVID; probably would not significantly change needs, but instead highlights them more dramatically



Analysis of Cumulative Findings

SWOT Analysis of Survey Responses

Opportunities

- Increase accessibility and knowledge of existing services and supports
- Build upon the strengths of community cohesion, public spaces, other assets to address identified community needs
- Implement Family Navigator services, under the PDG grant, to help families with young children and expectant families access array of holistic early childhood/parenting supports
- Improve access to services and supports through Rhode Island Diabetes Health Equity Challenge; promoting the integration of clinical and population health to address equity issues for people with diabetes during pandemic
- Enhance residents' sense of community through engagement in the RIDOH Community Resilience Grant; an opportunity to build community systems of support through resource sharing in times of emergency, creating greater place-based resiliency

Threats

- Pervasive concern about substance misuse across the lifespan and perception of insufficient resources
- Rate of chronic diseases, including diabetes and need for more awareness and education
- Lack of affordable housing, housing assistance, and shelters
- Affordability of healthy food
- Limited options for affordable health and wellness programs
- Insufficient transportation options, specifically for vulnerable populations



Action Area Year 2

Build Awareness

Objectives:

1. Increase awareness within the community of available social, health, educational, and financial resources
2. Increase community awareness of East Providence HEZ

Actions:

- Establish a Community Engagement/Communications Workgroup
 - Workgroup will lead efforts to identify existing gaps in resource information, and prioritize populations in greatest need of increased access to information
 - Workgroup will recommend a strategic communications plan to the Steering Committee
 - Workgroup will oversee East Providence HEZ branding and strategize around increasing visibility of the HEZ



Action Area Year 2

Promote Resiliency

Objectives:

1. Increase community resilience through enhancing social cohesion
2. Increase community resilience through addressing housing instability

Actions:

- Develop a Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program to build a place-based emergency needs network among residents
- Establish a workgroup focused on Housing & Homelessness
 - Workgroup will assess existing housing concerns, as well as the impact of COVID-19 related issues on housing insecurity throughout the community
 - Workgroup will identify potential action areas where the East Providence HEZ could focus resiliency efforts
 - Expand existing partners to include the East Providence Housing Authority, and any Community Development Corporations (CDCs) working in the community



Action Area Year 2

Improve Access to Health Services

Objectives:

1. Increase access to existing health services and supports, with specific focus on mental and behavioral health

Actions:

- Participate in the Rhode Island Diabetes Health Equity Challenge
 - Promote integration of clinical and population health to address equity issues for people with diabetes during pandemic
- Establish a workgroup to address behavioral health disparities
 - Collaborate closely with the East Providence Prevention Coalition, Bradley Hospital, and EBCAP – among other partners – to prevent duplication, and promote coordination of resource development
 - Develop a strategy to assess the barriers for accessing services
 - Workgroup will present findings and recommendations for action to the Steering Committee



Action Area Year 2

Support Health & Wellness

Objectives:

1. Increase Health & Wellness programming to residents across the lifespan
2. Establish one initiative that East Providence HEZ could lead to advance access to affordable Health & Wellness programming

Actions:

- Provide Family Navigator services for families with young children and expectant families to increase access to evidence-based maternal and childhood services through the PDG initiative
- Establish a workgroup focused on the Health & Wellness of Seniors
 - Collaborate closely with East Providence Senior Center leadership in identifying one area where East Providence HEZ could make an impact
- Establish a workgroup focused on the Health & Wellness of Youth
 - Collaborate closely with Family Care Community Partnership (FCCP), YMCA, the Boys & Girls Club, and East Providence Recreation Department to assess gaps in programming where East Providence HEZ could make an impact
 - Establish one goal or project to present to the Steering Committee



Action Area Year 2

Strengthen EP HEZ Capacity/Structure

Objectives:

1. Increase the capacity of the East Providence HEZ
2. Establish governance structure for the East Providence HEZ

Actions:

- Utilizing the strengths and expertise of Steering Committee members, develop workgroups to oversee specific action areas and related goals
- Develop a governance structure for decision making and operations of the HEZ
- Develop an evaluation strategy for incremental assessment of all East Providence HEZ initiatives
 - Conduct an annual self-assessment of Steering Committee members
 - Establish a review schedule of incremental progress for Steering Committee
- Conduct outreach to key community partners and residents who are not currently represented on the Steering Committee, but who represent communities or organizations directly aligned with action areas and goals



Current East Providence
HEZ Projects
Bridging Year 1 & Year 2



Ongoing East Providence HEZ Initiatives

We All Count! R.I. Census 2020: Support census outreach initiatives in collaboration with community partners

Pre-School Development Grant (PDG): HEZ implementing new position of Family Navigator to help families with young children and expectant families access array of integrated early childhood/parenting supports

RI Diabetes Health Equity Challenge: HEZ/EBCAP participation in 7-month initiative to promote integration of clinical and population health, centering people with lived experience, to address equity issues for people with diabetes during pandemic

RIDOH Community Resilience Grant: Opportunity to build on sense of community and “small town feel” to address emergency situations, improve communication about resources, strengthen the role of faith-based organizations, and build resilience

COVID Emergency Response Services: Ongoing distribution of gift cards to address residents’ basic needs and masks to promote health and safety during pandemic. Continued food delivery to seniors in need. Respond to additional needs based on ongoing feedback from resident emergency needs surveys and other communication



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[East Providence HEZ Website](#)

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HEALTH EQUITY ZONE

Analysis and Presentation Created by HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University
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