



Center for Urban Initiatives and Research



Because There's No **One Way**  
To End Poverty

Community Relations - Social Development Commission:  
Community Services Block Grant Needs Assessment

*Chapter II.1:*  
*Survey of Milwaukee County Stakeholders*

Final Report

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## Introduction

This report presents the results of a survey about poverty that was asked of local stakeholders in Milwaukee County. It is one of six research components of a comprehensive needs assessment for the Community Relations-Social Development Commission (CR-SDC), with four goals:

- (1) Identify and quantify the incidence or prevalence of individual need;
- (2) Identify gaps in human service provision;
- (3) Identify barriers to self-sufficiency; and
- (4) Identify strategies for overcoming barriers to self-sufficiency.

The purpose of this component was to gather in-depth, open-ended input from local officials and other community stakeholders from a variety of sectors about poverty. The various sectors include: business/for-profit, education, faith-based, foundation/philanthropy, government, health, legal/judiciary, non-profit, and media. A stakeholder was considered to be someone who has an interest in or direct or indirect involvement with poverty, its causes, effects, and solutions. Overall, the survey was designed to gather input about how stakeholders perceive the issue of poverty in Milwaukee County and ways SDC can help address it, especially from a systemic perspective.

The survey was developed and designed by the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research (CUIR), a local applied research center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. CUIR administered the survey, analyzed the data, and prepared this report.

The survey was conducted using three different methods of collecting data: in-person (or telephone) interviews, an online survey, and a mail survey. Despite the different methods for collecting data, the survey questions themselves were virtually identical. The survey consisted of eight questions, three closed-ended and five open-ended questions. A copy of the mail survey is attached as Appendix A.

A total of 514 stakeholders were identified by both SDC and CUIR staff. Fifty “VIP” stakeholders were identified by SDC for in-person interviews, with the remaining individuals targeted for an online or mail survey, depending on whether an email address was available. If a potential “VIP” stakeholder was unable to participate in an in-person interview, then alternative methods to participate were presented (e.g. telephone, online, or mail survey). All surveys were conducted in January and February of 2010.

A total of 182 surveys were completed (35 in-person surveys, 34 mail surveys, and 113 online surveys) for an effective response rate of 35%. However, the survey results are not meant to be representative of the entire stakeholder community in Milwaukee County, and are purely representative of the group surveyed.

## Respondents and Work Sectors

Almost half of those surveyed (46%) reported to belong to the non-profit sector, and 16% reported to work in government. Twelve percent reported to work in education. See Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Percentage of Respondents Working in Each Sector**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Non-profit	82	46%
Government	27	15%
Education	22	12%
Business / For-profit	16	9%
Foundation / Philanthropy	12	7%
Legal / Judiciary	9	5%
Health	5	3%
Media	4	2%
Faith-based	3	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>100%</i>

## Project Goal #1: Thoughts on Poverty Trends

### Poverty in Milwaukee County is a Serious Problem

Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statement: “Poverty is a serious problem in Milwaukee County.” The response options included: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree (or don’t know). As Table 2 shows, four out of five strongly agree that poverty is a serious problem in Milwaukee County. Very few (2%) either disagree or strongly disagree that poverty is a serious problem.

**Table 2. Perception of Poverty as a Problem**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage<sup>1</sup></b>
Strongly Agree	143	80%
Agree	29	16%
Disagree	2	1%
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Don't Know / Not Sure	2	1%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>178</i></b>	<b><i>100%</i></b>

### Poverty Trends over the Past Three Years

Respondents were also asked whether poverty in Milwaukee County increased, decreased, or has stayed the same in the past three years. Table 3 presents the results. Eighty-seven percent of the stakeholders thought poverty has increased in the past three years.

**Table 3. Perception about Poverty Trends over the Past Three Years**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Increased	155	87%
Decreased	1	1%
Stayed the Same	13	7%
Don't Know / Not Sure	10	6%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>179</i></b>	<b><i>100%</i></b>

Poverty data for the past three years, the period between 2007 and 2010, are not available. However, according to U.S. Census figures, poverty rates in Milwaukee County declined slightly between 2005 and 2008, from 18% of all Milwaukee County residents in 2005 to 17% in 2008. Because the change is slight, it is difficult to draw solid conclusions about its statistical significance. The poverty estimates are explored in more detail in another component of this research project (Chapter I.3). However, overall, given the economic recession beginning in late 2008, the actual state of poverty in the county is likely to have increased between 2007 and 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## **Project Goal #2: Service Needs/Gaps**

### Problems Caused by Poverty

The following text was offered to respondents to help frame the first open-ended question: “We’d like to dig a little deeper into how poverty affects people. People in poverty are affected in areas like employment, education, housing, food and nutrition, transportation, health and healthcare, income, and family and relationships.” Respondents were then asked, “What is the most serious problem affecting people in poverty?”<sup>2</sup>

One hundred seventy respondents offered answers to this question.<sup>3</sup> Even though the question asks for the most serious problem facing people in poverty, nearly all the respondents gave multiple responses. For example, one respondent could mention that people in poverty suffer most from problems with employment, education, and housing problems.

In fact, a common theme for this question was that people in poverty suffer multiple, serious problems, and that there is not one single problem that affects them most, but rather a list of interconnected problems. For example, one respondent suggested that people in poverty do not have a job, which in turn means that they have no money to pay for necessities like food, housing, and healthcare. For example, one person wrote:

“Lack of education. This leads to less or little opportunity to find employment. Lack of education also leads to poor health habits and often violent home life.”

The other themes found in the responses to this question are presented in Table 4, with a more detailed table presented in Appendix B. The three most frequently mentioned problems are related to employment, education, and health and healthcare.

Forty-four percent mentioned employment-related issues as the biggest problem facing people in poverty. Respondents also gave more specific employment-related responses, such as “lack of jobs,” “low wages,” and nonspecific “employment” responses.

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<sup>2</sup> Slight variation in question wording occurred for this question. The mail and online versions of the survey asked the following question: “What is the area that people in poverty are affected by most?”

<sup>3</sup> Respondents here refer to the total number of stakeholders who answered the specific question. The number varies for each question. Furthermore, only the respondents with full, complete responses were included; respondents answering “don’t know” or some variant thereof are not counted.

**Table 4. Problems Most Affecting People in Poverty**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Employment	75	44%
Education	49	29%
Health and healthcare	40	24%
Many problems/inter-related problems	38	22%
Personal	32	19%
Housing	31	18%
Inadequate income/resources	30	18%
Family and relationships	29	17%
Food and nutrition	18	11%
Other	9	5%
Community issues	8	5%
Transportation	6	4%

Twenty-nine percent of all respondents said that education-related problems are the most serious facing people in poverty. For example, these respondents mentioned general “education” as a response, as well as low “quality” education and “lack of access” to educational opportunities. For example, one respondent wrote:

“Education leads to employment. This affects an individuals [sic] income which affects all of the above mentioned areas.”

The third-most frequently mentioned theme was health and healthcare, which was offered by nearly a quarter of all respondents (24%). Most of these responses focused on general health and healthcare, but other responses were more specific, and many respondents thought that the biggest problem facing people in poverty was a “lack of healthcare,” poor health and wellness, and mental health problems.

One other response set is worth mentioning. Several respondents (17%) thought that the most serious problem people in poverty are facing is much more of a personal or “spiritual” problem. These respondents mentioned that people in poverty are faced with a sense of hopelessness or heavy stress, which can often lead to problems in other areas of life.

### Project Goal #3: Barriers to Self-Sufficiency

Respondents were given a brief introduction: “Many barriers or obstacles exist that keep people in poverty in Milwaukee, including alcohol and drug abuse, unhealthy family environments, poor neighborhood conditions, lack of or ineffective community programs, and ineffective government policies or programs,” after which they were asked: “In your opinion, what is the most serious barrier that keeps people in poverty?”

One hundred seventy-seven people answered the question, and Table 5 outlines the responses (see Appendix C for the full table). The three most common themes identified were families and relationships, education, and employment.

**Table 5. Barriers Keeping People in Poverty**

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Families and relationships	47	27%
Education	41	23%
Employment	37	21%
Hopelessness or character issues	24	14%
Government policies	23	13%
Systemic/institutionalized poverty	19	11%
Drugs and alcohol	18	10%
Neighborhood issues	15	8%
Prejudices	14	8%
Community programs	13	7%
Other	4	2%
Health and health care	4	2%

The most common barrier identified by respondents was families and relationships (27%). Among this theme are responses like unhealthy families and relationships in general, poor parenting, lack of role models, and poor family supports (e.g. child care). The inference made by respondents is that people in poverty grew up in poor family environments, in which they were not taught the necessary skills to escape poverty. The respondents do not seem to be suggesting that people in poverty are unable to get support or help from family members – an important distinction.

The next most frequently mentioned barrier was education, mentioned by 23% of respondents. Among these respondents, the majority of them specifically said that a lack of education or educational opportunities was a barrier to escaping poverty. Fewer respondents (3%) mentioned that the barrier to escaping poverty was a lack of a quality education, or poor education. One Milwaukee County Supervisor sums up the theme by saying that many people in poverty are not able to get out because of “inadequate education – both formal (school) and informal (budgeting, civic involvement, etc.).”

Fourteen percent of respondents mentioned that employment issues are a barrier keeping people in poverty. The majority of responses in this category centered on a lack of available jobs or employment opportunities. The availability of jobs with a fair or family-sustaining wage was another factor mentioned by several respondents. In addition, 5% said that a lack of job skills or training was also an important issue to consider.

Other barriers are mentioned by respondents and listed in Table 5, but one theme deserves mention – hopelessness. While this theme was not in the top three most frequently mentioned barriers, several respondents either wrote or spoke about this problem enough to mention it in this report. Respondents said that people in poverty don't have the same outlook on life as people outside of poverty. People in poverty do not think that "hard work" will be rewarded, or that things will "get better." Rather, people in poverty think that their futures are bleak and that it is virtually impossible to escape poverty. According to several respondents, this attitude can often lead to several other problems, such as homelessness, violence, and/or drug use.

## Project Goal #4: Solutions and Strategies to Reduce Poverty

### Strategies to Reduce Poverty (General)

Respondents were asked: “What is the most important thing that can be done to help reduce poverty in Milwaukee County?”<sup>4</sup> One hundred seventy respondents provided answers, shown in Table 6. The top three themes for solutions include education, employment, and job training. A table with a full listing of responses can be found in Appendix D.

**Table 6. Solutions for Reducing Poverty**

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Education	99	58%
Employment	67	39%
Job Training	37	22%
Additional Resources/Programs	34	20%
Family and Relationships	24	14%
Comprehensive/Coordinated Efforts	17	10%
Government Policies/Actions	16	9%
Community/Societal Strategies	11	6%
Housing	7	4%
Transportation	6	4%
Character/Attitudes	6	4%
Health and Healthcare	6	4%
Income/Money Management	4	2%
Food and Nutrition	2	1%

Respondents most frequently reported that education-related solutions as the most important thing that can be done to reduce poverty (58%). Specific responses in this category include education in general, improving public schools, and creating better educational opportunities and/or access. One respondent wrote:

“Lack of knowledge and education is common in those who find themselves in poverty. Educating our families and continue [sic] to emphasize the importance of education, I think will help reduce poverty.”

The next most frequently mentioned solution for reducing poverty was employment, mentioned by 39% of respondents answering this question. More specifically, respondents cited “creating jobs” or “more jobs,” higher (family-sustaining) wages, and jobs or employment in general terms. Within this category, many respondents thought that the government should be directly involved in creating

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<sup>4</sup> Mail survey respondents were also given an introduction with the following text: “Poverty is a complex issue, and the solution needs to include a wide cross-section of the community.”

new jobs (similar to the public works projects during the New Deal). Some people providing this response also seemed to de-emphasize the importance of job training. As one respondent said in an interview, there are not enough available jobs for people looking for work; job training efforts will only translate into skilled people standing in the unemployment line.

Another frequently mentioned solution was job training (22%), which includes both education- and employment-related themes. While many referenced job training in tandem with either employment or education, the authors of this report decided to code job training separately, simply because it was referenced differently by respondents; some thought job training to be more of an education issue and others thought it to relate more with employment. At any rate, respondents said that job training or job skills in general are important solutions for reducing poverty. Many also referenced how providing soft skills (e.g. interviewing skills, training about employee interactions, and resume writing) is an important solution. Lastly, vocational or technical training was another common response. As one respondent noted, “education and job training helps create opportunities for people and helps build self-esteem.”

Additional resources and programs was another highly cited theme worth mentioning (20%). Although the responses were varied, many respondents were very specific. The majority of respondents citing this theme desired “additional” or “more” resources for people in poverty. Some other recommendations include “better access” to programs and/or resources, increasing SSI payments to the disabled, creating a transitional jobs program for the unemployed (e.g. CETA), and creating a “wraparound” approach to helping people in poverty. Using “best practices” or proven methods of poverty reduction was another major response in this category.

### SDC and Reducing Poverty

Respondents were asked a short question about solutions to poverty with respect to SDC in particular: “What else do you think SDC could do to help reduce poverty in Milwaukee County?”

One hundred thirty-nine valid respondents answered this question. The ten most frequently cited responses are listed in Table 7 (see Appendix E for the full table). Each theme listed refers to a particular focus that the respondents thought SDC could work on or improve. Specifically, the three most cited SDC solution themes were education, advocacy/leadership, and comprehensive/strategic programming.

One in five respondents (21%) said that SDC should focus on or improve education as a way to help reduce poverty. Responses in this theme include continuing/expanding the Head Start program and other early childhood education, focusing on education in general, and focusing on MPS educational outcomes such as high school graduation rates. Many people realized that even though SDC’s role was not education *per se*, SDC’s role in promoting (quality) education would help reduce poverty.

**Table 7. Recommendations for how SDC can Help Reduce Poverty**

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Education	29	21%
Advocacy/Leadership	24	17%
Comprehensive/strategic/coordinated programming	22	16%
Outreach	20	14%
Family supports/parenting/child care	19	14%
Collaboration with nonprofits	17	12%
Jobs/employment	15	11%
Update anti-poverty mission/goals	14	10%
Job training/skills	13	9%
Youth programming	11	8%

Next, 17% of respondents made references to increasing SDC’s advocacy and leadership. In particular, respondents mentioned that SDC could increase its advocacy of anti-poverty causes or become a “stronger leader” in anti-poverty policies. Several people expressed disappointment that SDC used to but is no longer a vocal advocate of anti-poverty issues. Several respondents also suggested that SDC could do more direct lobbying of state government officials. Lastly, other respondents suggested that SDC be more visible in the public’s eye.

The third most frequently cited recommendation for SDC related to offering coordinated services. Responses in this category include such recommendations as encouraging SDC to “coordinate” service delivery with other organizations (since people in poverty often receive other kinds of assistance), and offering “comprehensive” assistance to people in poverty (i.e. services which address the entire spectrum of problems facing people in poverty). For example, a few respondents mentioned that simple welfare benefits are not enough. People in poverty need a wide spectrum of personalized programming to escape poverty, including everything from educational help to better healthcare and family counseling. As one respondent noted: “SDC should change its name from Social Development Commission to Strategic Development Commission.”

### SDC and Reducing Black Male Joblessness

One last open-ended question was asked of respondents: “Black male joblessness is an area of particular interest for SDC. With this in mind, what do you think could be done to help reduce this problem?”

One hundred fifty-nine respondents gave valid responses to the question, and the top ten most common themes given are listed in Table 8. The top three most frequently mentioned recommendations for reducing black male joblessness focus on job training and skills, education, and jobs/employment. Appendix F provides a complete table with all coded responses.

**Table 8. Recommendations about how to Reduce Black Male Joblessness**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Job training/skills	58	36%
Education	54	34%
Jobs/employment	39	25%
More private sector involvement	29	18%
Change character/attitudes	20	13%
Reentry/felon programming/criminal justice system	20	13%
Transportation/transit	15	9%
Youth programming/outreach	13	8%
Reduce discrimination/racism or improve diversity	13	8%
Focus efforts (city of Milwaukee, neighborhoods, concentrated areas of poverty)	12	8%

Over one-third of those surveyed gave job training and skills as a recommendation for reducing black male joblessness (36%). Recommendations in this category include offering more job training for (unemployed) black men, providing more opportunities for vocational or technical training (or apprenticeships), and providing programs for developing “soft skills” such as interviewing, workplace conduct, etc. One respondent was particularly reflective of the general sentiment with this group of responses: “Encourage apprenticeships, job shadowing opportunities, after school programs and any other ways that young black males can acquire job skills that will increase their chances at being successful in the workplace.”

Education was the next most frequently mentioned theme for reducing black male joblessness, offered by 34% of respondents. Within this theme were rather vague statements about (quality) schools and education in general, but also included more specific recommendations for providing more/improved adult education opportunities and improving high school graduation rates of young black men. Furthermore, there were many respondents who tied education and jobs skills development together. For example:

“Partner with schools to keep youth & young men connected to the educational system. Provide tangible skill training (either in school-based or out of school programs) such as construction, woodworking, job shadowing, surveying/drafting, etc.”

The third most common theme was jobs and employment, given by one quarter of the respondents answering this question. The most popular recommendation within this theme was creating jobs (especially transitional jobs).

Another theme that arose from this question is worth mentioning: 13% of respondents suggested that there needs to be a better reentry program for felons to rejoin the workforce. These respondents noted how having a felony is often an immediate disqualification for a job. Respondents suggested that there needs to be improved programming for felons reentering society

to be linked with appropriate jobs. Other responses within this category also questioned the fairness of the criminal justice system, which respondents thought “institutionalized” black men with criminal lifestyles, and did not allow for rehabilitation.

## **Conclusions**

This report provides the results of a poverty survey of Milwaukee County stakeholders. Over 180 stakeholders were surveyed via mail, online, telephone, or in-person. Stakeholders are those people thought to be leaders in their organization and/or have some familiarity with poverty issues. They were strategically sampled from nine various sectors of the workplace, including government, nonprofits, businesses, and education.

### Poverty is Perceived as a Serious Problem and on the Rise

Almost all stakeholders (96%) agreed or strongly agreed that poverty is a serious problem in Milwaukee County. Similarly, nearly nine of ten stakeholders (87%) surveyed thought that poverty had increased in Milwaukee County in the past three years.

### Employment and Education are Major Factors Related to Poverty

Overall, respondents were found to offer employment- and education-related responses when asked about the various aspects of poverty. Education and employment-related responses were consistently found among the top three most frequently cited responses for each open-ended question asked. Specifically, education- and employment related themes were consistently found to be the most frequently mentioned problems, barriers, and solutions associated with poverty.

### People in Poverty Face Multifaceted Problems

When asked about the biggest problems facing people in poverty, the top three areas were problems related to employment, education, and health and healthcare. However, another common theme for this question was that people in poverty suffer multiple, serious problems, and that there is not one single problem that affects them most, but rather a list of interconnected problems. For example, one respondent suggested that people in poverty do not have a job, which in turn means that they have no money to pay for necessities like food, housing, and healthcare.

### Recommendations for How SDC Can Reduce Poverty

Respondents were asked a short question about solutions to poverty with respect to SDC in particular: “What else do you think SDC could do to help reduce poverty in Milwaukee County?” The top three most cited recommendations were related to education (21%), advocacy/leadership (17%), and comprehensive/strategic programming (16%).

### Reducing Black Male Joblessness

Researching issues related to black male joblessness is of particular interest for SDC, and a question regarding this issue was included in the survey. When asked about what can be done to reduce black male joblessness in Milwaukee County, stakeholders’ most popular responses focus on job training and skills (36%), education (34%), and jobs/employment (29%). Improved programming for felons/reentry was another responses highly discussed by stakeholders, especially in the “VIP” interviews.

It is important to make note of another finding that the research uncovered: the top strategy for reducing poverty in general differs somewhat from the top strategy for reducing joblessness among black men. While not directly comparable, 29% of respondents thought jobs skills and training was crucial in reducing black male joblessness, while only 22% of respondents thought jobs skills and training was important in reducing poverty in general. This finding may suggest that stakeholders perceive the problem of black male joblessness to be the result of a lack of job skills among black men, or at least more so than for the general population in poverty.

### Other Major Themes

While education and employment issues were consistently mentioned top themes, other themes were also consistently mentioned without being among the top three responses. These other themes include: (1) transportation/transit, (2) hopelessness, and (3) coordinated/strategic service delivery.

First, many respondents noted that the jobs available within the region (especially in the suburbs) were not ideally linked via transit with available workers (in the central city). Many central city workers – especially those who live in poverty – cannot afford to buy a car and rely on public transportation. Without adequate transit links, workers cannot get to available jobs. Several respondents said they viewed the transit system as lacking in this respect. For respondents, improving the region’s transit system would thus help reduce the problem of poverty in general, but also the phenomenon of black male unemployment. Also within this theme was the idea of driver’s license policy reforms. Respondents asserted that a disproportionate percentage of black men did not have or have had their driver’s licenses revoked, and therefore limited their ability to get to work. Some said that while efforts in Milwaukee Municipal Court improved this situation, more needed to be done.

Second, “hopelessness” was perceived by stakeholders as both a major problem and a barrier for people in poverty. Several stakeholders addressed the effect of poverty on one’s psyche and the need for programs to address this fact. Respondents said that people in poverty don’t have the same outlook on life as people outside of poverty. People in poverty do not think that “hard work” will be rewarded, or that things will “get better.” Rather, people in poverty think that their futures are bleak and that it is virtually impossible to escape poverty. According to several respondents, this attitude can often lead to several other problems, such as homelessness, violence, and/or drug use.

Third, many respondents mentioned the benefits of coordinated/strategic service delivery. Many encouraged SDC to “coordinate” service delivery with other organizations (since people in poverty often receive other kinds of assistance), and offering “comprehensive” assistance to people in poverty (i.e. services which address the entire spectrum of problems facing people in poverty). For example, a few respondents mentioned that simple welfare benefits are not enough. People in poverty need a wide spectrum of personalized programming to escape poverty, including everything from educational help to better healthcare and family counseling. As one respondent noted: “SDC should change its name from Social Development Commission to Strategic Development Commission.”

Appendix A: Stakeholder Survey (Mail Version)

**KEY STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY - COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

As part of a comprehensive needs assessment, the Community Relations- Social Development Commission (SDC) is interested in obtaining input from local stakeholders about poverty in Milwaukee County. This information will be used to advise and guide SDC as they plan programming for low-income individuals.

We ask that you please complete the following questionnaire. It only takes about 10 minutes to complete, and we will not ask for your name or any other identifying questions at any time. Your feedback is essential in helping SDC provide the services and resources to reduce poverty in Milwaukee County.

If you have any questions, please contact Scott Davis at UWM, at (414) 229-4847 or email at [davisgs@uwm.edu](mailto:davisgs@uwm.edu), or Steve Schultz at SDC at (414) 906-2727 or email at [sschultz@cr-sdc.org](mailto:sschultz@cr-sdc.org).

Thank you.



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**1. In which sector do you work?**

- Business
- Education
- Faith-based
- Foundation / Philanthropy
- Government
- Health
- Legal / Judiciary
- Media
- Non-profit
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Poverty in Milwaukee County**

**2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

***Poverty is a serious problem in Milwaukee County.***

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know / Not Sure

**3. In the last three years, do you think poverty in Milwaukee County has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?**

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the Same
- Don't Know / Not Sure

**Problems Caused by Poverty**

We'd like to dig a little deeper into how poverty affects people. People in poverty are affected in areas like employment, education, housing, food and nutrition, transportation, health and healthcare, income, and family and relationships.

**4. What is the area that people in poverty are affected by most?**

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**Barriers that Keep People in Poverty**

Many barriers or obstacles exist that keep people in poverty in Milwaukee, including alcohol and drug abuse, unhealthy family environments, poor neighborhood conditions, lack of or ineffective community programs, and ineffective government policies or programs.

**5. In your opinion, what is the most serious barrier that keeps people in poverty?**

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**Strategies to Help Reduce Poverty**

**6. What is the most important thing that can be done to help reduce poverty in Milwaukee County?**

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7. What else do you think SDC could do to help reduce poverty in Milwaukee County?

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8. Black male joblessness is an area of particular interest for SDC. With this in mind, what do you think could be done to help reduce this problem?

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On behalf of SDC and UWM, thank you for participating in this survey.

Please place this survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope  
and drop it in the mail.

Have a great day!



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## Appendix B: Problems

### Question #4 Full Table: Problems Most Affecting People in Poverty

<b><i>THEME / Sub Theme</i></b>	<b><i>Freq / Count</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
General / Nonspecific	40	11.0%
Lack of Jobs	13	3.6%
Low Wages / Lack of Good Paying Jobs	13	3.6%
Lack of Job Skills	3	0.8%
Job Losses	2	0.5%
Lack of Access to Jobs	2	0.5%
Lack of Job Training	2	0.5%
<b>EDUCATION Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>13.4%</b>
General / Nonspecific	24	6.6%
Low Quality Education	8	2.2%
Lack of / Limited Access to Educational Opportunities	7	1.9%
Lack of Education	7	1.9%
Truancy / Drop-outs	2	0.5%
Lack of Education	1	0.3%
<b>HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>11.0%</b>
General / Nonspecific	20	5.5%
Lack of Healthcare	5	1.4%
Health and Wellness	4	1.1%
Mental Health Issues	3	0.8%
Physical Health Issues	3	0.8%
Access to Healthcare	1	0.3%
Addiction	1	0.3%
Disparities in Healthcare	1	0.3%
Health Development of Children / Youth	1	0.3%
Mental Health	1	0.3%
<b>ALL ARE ISSUES Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
All Issues are Interconnected	32	8.8%
General / Nonspecific	6	1.6%
<b>PERSONAL Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
Hopelessness	8	2.2%
Stress	7	1.9%
Lack of Self-Esteem	2	0.5%
Loss of Self-Respect	2	0.5%
Motivation	2	0.5%
Anger	1	0.3%
Despair	1	0.3%
Disenfranchisement	1	0.3%
Lack of Personal Responsibility	1	0.3%

Lack of Work Ethic	1	0.3%
Mind Set	1	0.3%
Poor Decisions	1	0.3%
Sense of Entitlement	1	0.3%
Social Distance	1	0.3%
Spiritual Health	1	0.3%
Survival Mode	1	0.3%
<b>HOUSING Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
General / Nonspecific	17	4.7%
Lack of Affordable Housing	3	0.8%
Losing Homes / Foreclosure	3	0.8%
Unstable Housing	3	0.8%
Homelessness	1	0.3%
Lack of Decent Housing	1	0.3%
Lack of Housing	1	0.3%
Lack of Safe Housing	1	0.3%
Transience	1	0.3%
<b>INADEQUATE INCOME / RESOURCES Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8.2%</b>
General / Nonspecific	19	5.2%
Difficulty in Meeting Basic Needs	11	3.0%
<b>FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7.9%</b>
General / Nonspecific	9	2.5%
Unstable / Dysfunctional Families	7	1.9%
Lack of Family Support / Structure	4	1.1%
Generational Poverty	3	0.8%
Breakdown of Families	2	0.5%
Child Development Issues	2	0.5%
No Role Models in Family	2	0.5%
<b>FOOD AND NUTRITION Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
<b>OTHER Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
Inadequate / Ineffective Govt Programs / Resources	6	1.6%
Poor / Declining Quality of Life	3	0.8%
<b>COMMUNITY ISSUES Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
Crime / Lack of Public Safety	6	1.6%
Lack of Sense of Community	1	0.3%
Segregation	1	0.3%
<b>TRANSPORTATION Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
General / Nonspecific	2	0.5%
Deteriorating Transit System	1	0.3%
Lack of Access	1	0.3%
Lack of Driver's Licenses	1	0.3%
Lack of Transportation	1	0.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Appendix C: Barriers

### Question #5 Full Table: Barriers Keeping People in Poverty

<b>THEME / Sub Theme</b>	<b>Freq / Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Family/Relatives</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18.1%</b>
Unhealthy Family Environments/Relationships	30	11.6%
Poor Parenting/Poor decisions by Parents	11	4.2%
No positive Role Models in family	3	1.2%
Poor Support For Families/Lack of Childcare	3	1.2%
<b>Education</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>15.8%</b>
Lack of Education or the Opportunity for One	36	13.9%
Education Obtained is Poor	5	1.9%
<b>Employment</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
Lack of Good Jobs or Opportunities	28	10.8%
Poor Job Skills/No Training	9	3.5%
<b>Character Issues</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
Feeling of Hopelessness	13	5.0%
Poor Personal Ability/Poor Work Ethic	5	1.9%
Lack of Ideas or Creativity/Personal Vision	3	1.2%
Lack of Personal Responsibility	2	0.8%
Survival situation	1	0.4%
<b>Govt. Policies</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
Govt. Policies are ineffective or impractical	22	8.5%
Taxes	1	0.4%
<b>Systemic or institutionalized Poverty</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
Poverty is Institutionalized or Systemic (Near Verbatim)	9	3.5%
Incarceration/Criminal Records	5	1.9%
Capitalism or Private Sector Flaws	4	1.5%
Globalization	1	0.4%
<b>Drugs and Alcohol</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
Abuse of or dependence on chemicals	18	6.9%
<b>Neighborhood Issues</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
Poor Neighborhood Conditions	13	5.0%
Neighborhood don't have access to resources	2	0.8%
<b>Prejudices</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5.4%</b>
Racism or Racial Inequality	13	5.0%
Sexism	1	0.4%
<b>Community Programs</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
Lack of or Ineffective Community Programs	11	4.2%

Poor coordination	2	0.8%
<b>Other</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Housing	1	0.4%
Lack of Viable Transportation Opportunities	3	1.2%
<b>Health/Health Care</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Lack of Health Coverage or Access to Healthcare	3	1.2%
Mental Health Problems	1	0.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Appendix D: Strategies

### Question #6 Full Table: Solutions for Reducing Poverty

<b>THEME / Sub-Theme</b>	<b>Freq / Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>EDUCATION Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>29.20%</b>
General / Nonspecific	18	5.31%
Improve School System / Public Schools	18	5.31%
Better Opportunities / Access	13	3.83%
Improve Educational Quality / Effectiveness	13	3.83%
Decrease Drop-Outs	7	2.06%
Early Childhood Education	7	2.06%
Increase HS Graduation Rate	6	1.77%
More Financial Support	5	1.47%
Improve Educational Achievement / Outcomes	3	0.88%
Improve Educational Commitment	3	0.88%
Increase College Graduation Rate	3	0.88%
Better Attendance	1	0.29%
Increase Family Involvement	1	0.29%
Neighborhood Schools	1	0.29%
<b>EMPLOYMENT Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>19.76%</b>
More Jobs / Create Jobs / Increase Availability	25	7.37%
Higher / Family Sustaining Wages	17	5.01%
General / Nonspecific	7	2.06%
Transitional Jobs	5	1.47%
Jobs in Central City	3	0.88%
Public Jobs Program / WPA	3	0.88%
Better Access / Opportunities	2	0.59%
Entry Level Jobs	2	0.59%
Stable / Long-Term Jobs	2	0.59%
With Benefits	1	0.29%
<b>JOB TRAINING Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>10.91%</b>
General / Nonspecific	17	5.01%
Job Skills / Employability / Soft Skills	8	2.36%
Skilled Trades / Specific Vocation	6	1.77%
Career Planning / Vocational / Technical Education	3	0.88%
Job Mentoring	2	0.59%

Business Creation / Entrepreneurship	1	0.29%
<b>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES / PROGRAMS Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>10.91%</b>
Use of Best Practice / Proven Methods	11	3.24%
More (nonspecific)	5	1.47%
Better Access to Programs / Resources	4	1.18%
More Awareness / Connection to those in Need	4	1.18%
Wraparound Services	3	0.88%
Income Support (Transition)	2	0.59%
CETA Program	1	0.29%
Increase SSI	1	0.29%
More Outreach	1	0.29%
Increase EITC Program	1	0.29%
W2 More Comprehensive	1	0.29%
Work to Earn Services / Resources	1	0.29%
<b>FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7.08%</b>
Positive Family Development / Functioning	10	2.95%
Reduce Teen Pregnancy	4	1.18%
More Role Models / Mentoring for Youth	3	0.88%
Life Skills Training	2	0.59%
Services for Single Parent Families	2	0.59%
Childcare for Families in Work / Education	1	0.29%
Development	1	0.29%
More Emotional Supports	1	0.29%
<b>COMPREHENSIVE / COORDINATED EFFORTS Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5.01%</b>
Increase Partnerships / Coordination / Collaboration between CBO, Government, etc.	11	3.24%
Develop Community Improvement Plan	4	1.18%
Advocate Policies re: Poverty Issues	2	0.59%
<b>GOVERNMENT POLICIES / ACTIONS Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4.72%</b>
Economic Development w CBO, Businesses, etc	5	1.47%
Limit Benefits / Eligibility	3	0.88%
Better Policies / Programs re: Poverty Issues	3	0.88%
Eliminate Waste / More Effective Govt Programs	3	0.88%
Better Policy on Job Creation	2	0.59%
Progressive Tax Policy	1	0.29%
Tax Credits for Business / Job Creation	1	0.29%

<b>COMMUNITY / SOCIETAL STRATEGIES Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3.24%</b>
Increase Community / Neighborhood Involvement	5	1.47%
Increase Public Safety / Decrease Crime	2	0.59%
Change Culture	1	0.29%
Eliminate Racism	1	0.29%
Grassroots Efforts	1	0.29%
Neighborhood Revitalization	1	0.29%
<b>HOUSING Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.06%</b>
More / More Affordable Housing	4	1.18%
Energy Efficient Housing	1	0.29%
General / Nonspecific	1	0.29%
Safe Housing	1	0.29%
<b>TRANSPORTATION Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.77%</b>
Improve Public Transportation	3	0.88%
Expand Public Transportation	2	0.59%
General / Nonspecific	1	0.29%
<b>CHANGES IN CHARACTER / PERSONALITY Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.77%</b>
Incentives for People to Change	2	0.59%
Reduce Sense of Entitlement / Dependency	2	0.59%
Increase Positive Outlook / Motivation	1	0.29%
Work Ethic	1	0.29%
<b>HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.77%</b>
Improve Access to AODA / MH Treatment	2	0.59%
Universal Health Coverage	2	0.59%
Improve Health and Wellness	1	0.29%
Reduce AODA Issues	1	0.29%
<b>USE OF INCOME / MONEY MANAGEMENT Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.18%</b>
Asset Building	2	0.59%
Money Management / Budgeting	2	0.59%
<b>FOOD AND NUTRITION Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.59%</b>
Increased Access to Healthy Food	1	0.29%
More Food Programs	1	0.29%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Appendix E: SDC Strategies

### Question #7 Full Table: Recommendations for SDC about Reducing Poverty

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Education	29	21%
Advocacy/Leadership	24	17%
Comprehensive/strategic/coordinated programming	22	16%
Outreach	20	14%
Family supports/parenting/child care	19	14%
Collaboration with nonprofits	17	12%
Jobs/employment	15	11%
Update anti-poverty mission/goals	14	10%
Job training/skills	13	9%
Youth programming	11	8%
Foster personal responsibility	11	8%
Specific programming (e.g. W2, EITC, weatherization)	10	7%
SDC doing good job overall	9	6%
More resources/income	9	6%
Housing/homelessness	7	5%
Injustice/discrimination/ignorance	6	4%
Other	5	4%
Collaboration with business	4	3%
Economic development	4	3%
Healthcare	4	3%
Community assessments	4	3%
AODA	3	2%
Crime	3	2%
Transportation/transit	3	2%
Targeted services (e.g. to unemployed black men)	2	1%

## Appendix F: Black Male Joblessness

### Question #8 Full Table: Recommendations about Reducing Black Male Joblessness

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Job training/skills	58	36%
Education	54	34%
Jobs/employment	39	25%
Increase private sector involvement	29	18%
Improve character/attitudes	20	13%
Reentry/felon programming/criminal justice system	20	13%
Transportation/transit	15	9%
Youth programming/outreach	13	8%
Reduce discrimination/racism or improve diversity	13	8%
Focus efforts (city of Milwaukee, neighborhoods, concentrated areas of poverty)	12	8%
Family/parenting/fatherhood initiatives/relationships	11	7%
More resources/incentives	10	6%
Role models/mentors	10	6%
Drug dealing/AODA issues	9	6%
Other	7	4%
Hopelessness/positivity	6	4%
Focus on <u>all</u> people	6	4%
Health & healthcare (including mental health)	5	3%
Conduct assessment	5	3%
Political will/policy changes	5	3%
Collaboration	4	3%
Increase awareness/outreach	3	2%
Housing	3	2%
Regional collaboration (i.e. city-suburbs)	2	1%