

*Coconino County Community &  
Family Vitality Survey  
2014*



## ***Coconino County Community & Family Vitality Survey***

### **Acknowledgements**

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### ***Executive Summary***

Community and family vitality is defined in this document as the capacity to live, grow and develop with a purposeful existence. The 2014 Coconino Community Assessment was commissioned by community partners to identify needs and issues for families and citizens with low to moderate incomes in Coconino County. It is intended that information gathered through paper and electronic surveys, and secondary data analysis will guide community partners in funding priorities, collaborations, and strategic development.

The primary goal of the assessment was to identify areas of greatest need that are barriers for Coconino County residents to achieve community and family vitality. The Laboratory for Applied Social Research (*LASR*) at Northern Arizona University worked with a collaborative of community partners to identify areas of interest, including income and work, education, housing, transportation, health, and social support. Survey questions addressing each area were distributed both electronically and by paper. Secondary data was analyzed to address areas of interest.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

To better understand the needs of low to moderate income residents of Coconino County, additional analysis was conducted on survey recipients with an annual household income of \$60,000 or less. Survey results indicate that the area of immediate concern for low to moderate income households is livable wages.

Earning enough household income to meet all basic needs is an area of concern for Coconino County residents. According to the Vitality Survey, nearly half (42%) of low to moderate income respondents reported an annual income of less than \$10,000. When comparing all survey respondents, 52% reported an annual income of \$30,000 or less. With household earnings at these levels, households would not be self-sufficient<sup>16</sup> and would likely rely on social supports to meet their needs. Self sufficiency refers to how much income households of various sizes must earn to meet their basic needs within their community. In Coconino County, the annual self-sufficiency standard for a household of one adult and one preschooler is \$38,787 or 256% of the Federal Poverty Level, according to the Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona.

## OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

The following section is a summary of key findings for the Coconino County community.

### ***Community Attachment***

Coconino County Vitality Survey respondents hold a positive view of their respective communities regardless of income levels.

Close to three quarters *agreed or strongly agreed* to the statement: *I feel like I am a part of the community where I live.*

These results are similar to the Flagstaff 2012 Regional Plan Community Values Survey.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Household & Family***

Coconino County has 45,718 households with an average household size of 2.76. Of the total number of households in Coconino County, 64% are family households. The average family size is 3.33.<sup>14</sup>

The American Community Survey (2008-2012) shows 42% married and 40% never married in the county. The Vitality Survey distribution for the county is 28% married and 43% single for middle-to-low income respondents.

From 2008 to 2011 the number of children 0-5 years old dropped by 1,685. However, the number of children in poverty in the county grew during this same period from 327 to 509.<sup>1</sup>

For respondents in the *middle-to-low income* category, the average number of children is 1.66. Eighteen percent of these stated that they need childcare. Of those who reported paying for childcare, the average monthly cost was \$259 with a standard deviation of \$177. Monthly payments ranged from \$40 to \$850 per month.

Respondents of middle-to-low income, when asked about where they received resources or assistance, answered as follows: 34% identified family assistance and 11% said they received assistance from friends. For childcare, the highest percentage (46%) said that family takes care of the children.

The following section is a summary of overall findings within the interest areas of: income and work, education, housing, transportation, health, and social support.

### ***Income & Work***

The Gini Index is a measure to show income inequality. Zero means all households make the same income and 100 means all income is in one household. The pre-tax Coconino County Gini Index is 45. The United States pre-tax Gini for 2011 is 48. The index for the U. S. has steadily risen from a low in 1969 of just over 38.<sup>11</sup>

Household median income for the county is \$49,615.<sup>14</sup>

**Forty two percent of middle-to-low income Vitality Survey respondents reported less than \$10,000 or no annual income.**

Unemployment in the county is at 6.2% for April 2014 down from a high of 11.2% in January of 2010.<sup>15, 17</sup>

**Forty percent of middle-to-low income Vitality Survey respondents reported not having a job.**

### ***Education***

Educational attainment for the county is similar to that of the state but with a somewhat higher percentage of graduate or professional degrees for the county, 9.7% statewide versus 12.9% in Coconino County.<sup>14</sup>

For the Vitality Survey, all respondents reported a higher percentage with graduate or professional degrees (22%) than Census estimates. Middle-to-low income respondents were similar to the US Census estimates for the county at 12%.

Forty seven percent of Coconino County students were ready for kindergarten.<sup>7</sup> Sixty eight percent of students met or exceeded 3rd grade reading standards. Page & Fredonia were the lowest at 54%.<sup>7</sup>

**Math scores for 8th grade have declined from 61% meeting or exceeding standards in 2008 to 52% for the county in 2012. Again the Page and Fredonia area were the lowest at 42%.<sup>7</sup>**

County high school graduation rates were at 76%.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Housing***

61% of county housing is owner occupied and 39% renter occupied.<sup>14</sup>

For housing units with a mortgage 79% have monthly payments of \$1,000 or more. 30% have payments at \$2,000 or more.<sup>14</sup>

28% of households with a mortgage have reported monthly owner costs that are 35% or more of household income.<sup>14</sup>

**46.5% of households that rent have gross rent that is 35% or more of household income.<sup>14</sup>**

For the Vitality Survey, 69% of middle-to-low income respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their current residence met their needs.

For respondents renting or leasing, 67% said they would want to own a home.

**“Not having a down payment” and “availability in my price range” were the leading reasons that prevented respondents from owning.**

### ***Transportation***

For commuting to work in Coconino county, 68.2 % drive alone, 14.2% carpool, 10.8% use alternate transportation modes, 6.8% walked.<sup>11</sup>

In the Vitality Survey, almost three quarters of middle-to-low income respondents reported owning and operating their own vehicles.

**55% said that upkeep for vehicles was a financial burden.**

45% said they use public transportation at least sometimes.

### **Health<sup>8</sup>**

Access to health care services in outlying areas is a problem due to distance needed to travel, lack of insurance and service costs.

**Food deserts exist in many areas throughout the county rural areas. Access to fresh vegetables is a problem.**

**Obesity-related diseases are a risk factor within the county.**

Native Americans have a higher risk for death from injury, diabetes or liver disease.

Certain sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise, specifically chlamydia and gonorrhea. Treatment and education are needed to prevent these diseases.

### **Social Support**

Work and money issues top the reasons for needing social services in Coconino County.

Vitality respondents cited they rely on family most frequently when in need of assistance or resources.

**Over 75% of respondents reported experiencing barriers in work, housing or social services.**

The most common reported response to survey questions about barriers for work, housing or social services was that *“what I needed was not available.”* Lack of transportation for work was reported by 21% of respondents.

## Introduction to the Community & Family Vitality Survey Results

The Community & Family Vitality survey for Coconino County was developed to understand how middle-to-low income residents experience living within Coconino County. In collaboration with United Way of Northern Arizona, Coconino County Community Services, City of Flagstaff, Goodwill Industries, Coconino County Career Center and the Coconino County Legal Defender, a survey was created and distributed using paper and on-line versions at strategic sites throughout the county. The survey asked residents about several aspects of living within Coconino County including: community attachment, family, work, income, housing, transportation, social support and barriers. In all, over twelve hundred individuals completed the questionnaires. This report examines distributions from all responses and also from a subset of respondents with annual incomes less than \$60,000. We believe that it gives a picture of those Coconino County residents with limited resources in a variety of critical areas for daily living.

### Respondent Feelings Toward Their Community

The survey opened with two items asking residents how they felt about living in their community. Variations on these two items have been used in a variety of studies in an attempt to get a general indication of community attachment. Most recently a random sample of Flagstaff residents for the Flagstaff Regional Plan that included parts of Coconino County yielded similar results in response to similar questions.

The first item required a response to the statement: *“I feel like I am a part of the community where I live.”* Chart 1 presents the distribution for this item. A majority of respondents feel a part of their community, either *“agreeing or strongly agreeing”* to the above statement. For the second item, we can see an even stronger response. Chart 1 and Table 1 show that the majority of respondents *“love living here”* with the distribution diminishing as statements become more negative in character. A comparison of *all responses* to those with *middle-to-low income* shows virtually no differences. Respondents reporting an annual income under \$20,000 a year also showed no significant differences.

What we can take from these two items in terms of community vitality seems quite positive. Respondents with moderate to very limited income clearly favor living in this region of Arizona and this sentiment is in close agreement with a recent random sample of the general population of residential households in the Flagstaff region. Even with some of the limitations and obstacles that this report examines later, respondents hold a positive view of their respective communities.

<b>Table 1. Which of the following statements below best describes how well you like living in your community? Please select only one.</b>	<b>Middle- to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>I love living here.</b>	59%	60%
<b>I would move to another community if I could, but am reluctant to leave here.</b>	17%	16%
<b>It makes no difference to me whether I live here or in another community.</b>	9%	9%
<b>I would probably be more satisfied living in another community.</b>	7%	8%
<b>I would really like to leave this community if I had the opportunity.</b>	8%	7%
<b>Other</b>	1%	1%
<b>Count</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>1,217</b>

## Household & Family

According to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2008-2012, Coconino County has 45,718 households of which 64% are families. Twenty-seven percent of households have children under eighteen. According to these data 36% are nonfamily households with 71% of those living alone. The average household size is 2.76 and the average family size is 3.33. These percentages are similar to the same categories for the state.

The Vitality survey data does not use US Census categories. For this report we focus upon all respondents and those with middle-to-low income. Differences exist for *married* and *single* percentages for the two income categories (Table 2). A significantly higher percentage of the *middle-to-low income* respondents are single. This may be associated with the *middle-to-low* income category being somewhat younger (1.7 years) than the full sample.

<b>Table 2. Are you currently?</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
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<b>Married</b>	28%	35%
<b>Single</b>	43%	29%
<b>Divorced</b>	14%	10%
<b>Domestic Partner</b>	8%	6%
<b>Widowed</b>	3%	2%
<b>Separated</b>	3%	2%
<b>Count</b>	717	1,263

Chart 2 shows that no differences exist for the income categories in terms of the percentage of respondents reporting the need for childcare. For those in the *middle-to-low income* category, the average number of children for the Vitality survey respondents is 1.66. Eighteen percent of these stated that they need childcare. Of those who reported paying for childcare, the average monthly cost was \$259 with a standard deviation of \$177. Monthly payments ranged from \$40 to \$850 per month.

Table 3 reports that relatives take care of the children at the highest percentage for both the *combined* and the *middle-to-low income* categories. In the *middle-to-low income* column, a high percent reported “*other*,” most of these respondents wrote that they take care of their own children.

<b>Table 3. Who takes care of the children?</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>Relatives</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Friends</b>	16%	19%
<b>Child Care Service</b>	19%	22%
<b>Baby Sitter</b>	15%	22%
<b>School</b>	20%	27%
<b>Older Children</b>	9%	7%
<b>No One</b>	9%	7%
<b>Other</b>	25%	5%
<b>Count</b>	122	175

For those respondents of *middle-to-low income*, 34% reported receiving assistance from family and 11% from friends. When asked about why they needed social services, 7% reported domestic violence, 6% divorce and 4% family conflict.

## Income & Work

The US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008-2012, Selected Social Characteristics for Coconino County showed household median income of \$49,615. The income distribution for the respondents at the strategic sites was substantially less. **Table 4 shows over 40% reporting no current annual income or making less than \$10,000.** This makes some sense given those frequenting these sites may have very limited resources, 52% of all respondents reported earning less than \$30,000. In addition, when asked about how respondents felt about their household income, **80% with middle-to-low income felt either “severely” or “somewhat” limited in what they could do (Table 5).** Also, some 65% of these same respondents worry “frequently or all the time” about debt or bills (Chart 3).

Table 4. What is your current household annual income?	Middle-to-Low Income < \$60,000	All Cases
I have no current annual income.	18%	13%
Less than \$10,000	24%	17%
\$10,00 to \$19,999	15%	11%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	16%	11%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	10%	7%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	11%	8%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	6%	4%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	--	5%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	--	4%
\$80,000 to \$89,000	--	3%
\$90,000 to \$99,999	--	5%
\$100,000 or More	--	12%
<b>Count</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>989</b>

<b>Table 5. Which statement is true about your household income?</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>It severely limits what I can do.</b>	47%	33%
<b>It somewhat limits what I can do.</b>	33%	33%
<b>My income is adequate for me.</b>	14%	18%
<b>It allows me to do what I wish.</b>	4%	10%
<b>My income is more than enough for my needs.</b>	2%	6%
<b>Count</b>	668	1,021

The data show that over half of the respondents reported not having credit card debt that carries over month-to-month (Chart 3a above). Seventeen percent reported carrying credit card debt between \$500 but less than \$3,000. Credit card debt of \$3,000 to \$7,499 was reported at 11% and 8%, respectively. Lastly, 11% and 10% reported having debt carrying over at or above \$7,500. When asked about the type of loans that they had, student loans at 39% and 31% respectively were by far the highest percentage (Table 6).

<b>Table 6. Do you currently have any of these kinds of loans?</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>Pay Day Loan</b>	4%	3%
<b>Title Loan</b>	8%	6%
<b>Student Loan</b>	39%	31%
<b>Home Equity</b>	3%	6%
<b>Pawnshop</b>	6%	4%
<b>Personal or Family</b>	12%	9%
<b>Other</b>	9%	8%
<b>Count</b>	707	1263

<b>Table 7. Do you currently have a job?</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60%	69%

No	40%	31%
Count	700	1,111

Among the *middle-to-low income* respondents, 60% reported currently having a job. Of those who did have a job, the average number of hours worked was 35 with a standard deviation of 13 hours. About 67% reported having one job, with 25% reporting having two jobs and the remainder more than two jobs. Table 8 presents the work benefits by type for respondents with jobs. Fewer than half of *middle-to-low income* respondents have any benefits from work. For those, the most common benefit is paid time off followed by sick leave and personal health insurance. Not surprisingly, *all cases* (which includes all income levels) report higher percentages across the benefit categories.

Table 8. Benefits for Workers.	Middle-to-Low Income < \$60,000	All Cases
Personal Health Insurance	39%	50%
Family Health Insurance	21%	34%
Personal Dental	36%	46%
Family Dental	21%	32%
Personal Vision	35%	43%
Family Vision	18%	32%
Paid Time Off	43%	52%
Retirement Benefits	39%	54%
Time-Based Raises	10%	9%
Life Insurance	33%	47%
DES Job Service		24%
Sick Leave	40%	54%
Temp Agency		15%
Other Case Management		2%
Craigslist		37%
Goodwill Job Connection		8%
Vocational Rehabilitation		4%
Want Ads		40%
Monster or Internet Service		28%
Quality Connections		5%
Other		15%
Total		707

For the respondents asked about whether they know where to get help to look for jobs, 48% answered either *No* or *Yes & No*. Table 9 presents the sources. *Want Ads*, *Craigslist* and *Monster or internet service* lead the list. Those who listed *other* listed several sources. Frequently mentioned were *MAJ*, friends, contacting businesses, word of mouth and *Incus*.

## Educational Attainment

State and County data on educational attainment are presented in Table 10 with the Vitality survey on education in Table 11. For *all cases*, the Vitality survey closely resembles the Census distributions. However, for *middle-to-low income*, the Vitality data shows a higher percentage of respondents with *college degrees* and a higher percentage with *some college*. Also for *middle-to-low income*, the Vitality survey shows 18% of respondents with education beyond a Bachelor's degree, which is again somewhat higher than the US Census data. The higher percentage of college attendees may explain the student loan debt previously described.

**Table 10. US Census Bureau Educational Attainment Estimates for Arizona & Coconino County**

	State		County	
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	4,149,955	Percent	78,132	Percent
<b>Less than 9th grade</b>	268,884	6.5%	3,931	5.0%
<b>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</b>	335,252	8.1%	6,151	7.9%
<b>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</b>	1,012,503	24.4%	17,398	22.3%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	1,088,815	26.2%	20,123	25.8%
<b>Associate's degree</b>	339,398	8.2%	6,579	8.4%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	702,007	16.9%	13,847	17.7%
<b>Graduate or professional degree</b>	403,096	9.7%	10,103	12.9%

**Table 11. Which category below best represents your educational level?**

	Middle-to-Low Income < \$60,000	All Cases
<b>8th Grade or Less</b>	2%	2%
<b>Some High School</b>	5%	4%
<b>High School Diploma</b>	14%	11%
<b>GED</b>	5%	4%
<b>Some College</b>	33%	26%
<b>College Degree</b>	22%	25%
<b>Some Graduate Study</b>	7%	7%
<b>Masters Degree</b>	7%	12%
<b>Beyond Masters</b>	2%	3%
<b>Ph. D. or Ed. D.</b>	1%	5%
<b>Medical Degree</b>	1%	1%
<b>Law Degree</b>	0%	1%
<b>Total</b>	696	1,032

## Housing

Over half of respondents live in an apartment or single family home. A much higher percent of *all cases* live in single-family houses than those with *middle-to-low income*. Fifteen percent with *middle-to-low income* report living in a mobile home. A relatively high percent (14%) of those reported *other* with the response most frequently specified living with family. Respondents also used “other” to describe how long they had lived at their present address. In this case, the most common answer referred to several years at their current residence (Table 13).

<b>Table 12. Where do you currently live?</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>Apartment</b>	23%	17%
<b>Condominium</b>	2%	2%
<b>A Shelter</b>	4%	3%
<b>Townhouse</b>	5%	4%
<b>Single Family House</b>	32%	49%
<b>Camping Outside</b>	1%	1%
<b>Mobile Home</b>	15%	11%
<b>Dormitory</b>	2%	3%
<b>Motel</b>	1%	1%
<b>Other</b>	14%	11%
<b>Totals</b>	707	1,134

<b>Table 13. How long have you been living there?</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>A Few Days</b>	2%	2%
<b>Less than a Month</b>	3%	3%
<b>About a Half Year</b>	15%	13%
<b>About a Year</b>	6%	5%
<b>More than a Year</b>	12%	10%
<b>More than Two Years</b>	40%	47%
<b>Other</b>	22%	22%
<b>Totals</b>	701	1,135

The majority of Vitality respondents reported that their current residence meets their needs, although statistically significant percentages of respondents in both categories either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement (Chart 5).

For those with *middle-to-low income*, the data on how many adults and children live at the residence showed an average of 2.7 adults and 2.08 children. This figure was adjusted by removing responses for group homes. Fifty five percent of these same respondents rent or lease and 29% own, with about 15% of respondents marking *does not apply*. Of the respondents making payments, 81% percent reported paying monthly, 3% paid weekly or daily. Sixteen percent responded *other* which included those without payments and those who said they lived at home. The average monthly payment, for those who make monthly payments is \$710 with a standard deviation of \$335. For those who currently rent or lease, 67% said they would want to own a home but mentioned a number of reasons preventing them (Table14). *Not having a down payment* and *availability in my price range* were the leading reasons that prevented respondents from owning.

In examining recent data on home prices published for Flagstaff and the Flagstaff Metro area, the median home value was \$272,800 with the median for listed homes at \$339,000. The housing market has fluctuated substantially over the past several years and last year prices rose 11% with predictions that home values will increase by 2% in the next year. Home foreclosures for the Flagstaff area are lower than the national average. Delinquent mortgages are also lower in Flagstaff (3.4%) than the nation at 8%.

<b>Table 14. Obstacles to Owning a Home.</b>	<b>Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>Availability of homes for sale in my price range.</b>	48%	47%
<b>What I could afford would not meet my current needs.</b>	33%	33%
<b>Ability to qualify for a loan.</b>	43%	39%
<b>I don't know how to get started.</b>	31%	27%
<b>I lack the necessary down payment.</b>	56%	53%
<b>Nothing is preventing me.</b>	6%	7%
<b>Other</b>	18%	17%
<b>Totals</b>	400	497

These data suggest a more robust market in the Flagstaff region. Of course, this makes it very difficult for lower income individuals to afford a home. A traditional loan requires a 20% down payment, something few with limited resources can afford. In addition, the monthly payments against the loan are usually unrealistic for someone with limited resources. **Prospects for home ownership for most respondents to the Vitality survey are not favorable.**

### Transportation (Middle-to-Low Income < \$60,000 only)

Almost three-quarters of respondents own and operate their own vehicles (Chart 6) and 69% report they mostly rely upon their vehicles to get around (Table 15). Walking and rides from friends and relatives are the next forms of transportation the respondents stated they rely upon. **Over half report that the upkeep of their vehicles presents a financial burden for them (Chart 7).**

Table 15. What forms of transportation do you most rely on?	Middle-to-Low Income < \$60,000
<i>My own car</i>	69%
<i>Rides from relatives/friends</i>	26%
<i>Walk</i>	36%
<i>Bus</i>	24%
<i>My own motorcycle</i>	1%
<i>Taxi</i>	4%
<i>Bicycle</i>	15%
<b>Total (Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000 only)</b>	<b>707</b>

When asked about public transportation, 26% reported relying upon public transportation at least *sometimes* with 19% saying yes to relying upon it (Chart 8). When asked what prevented them from relying upon public transportation, over a quarter responded it was not available in their area (Table 16). About another fifth of the respondents said that they do not often need it. About the same percentage said they received rides from friends and family members or that they walked long distances.

<b>Table 16. What prevents you from relying on public transportation?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
It isn't available in my area.	26%
I try to avoid it.	7%
It is too expensive	5%
I use it when I can Afford it.	5%
I don't often need transportation.	19%
I get rides from friend/family.	12%
I walk long distances.	10%
<b>Total (Middle-to-Low Income &lt; \$60,000 only)</b>	<b>707</b>

### **Social Support & Barriers (Middle-to-Low Income < \$60,000 only)**

Respondents were asked to report how they found outside support and also what major barriers they experienced at work, in housing and social services. Work and money issues top the reasons for needing social services in Coconino County. In the list for Table 17, only three of the eleven reasons were not related to either work or finances. In Table 18, when in need of assistance or resources we see that family is counted on by the highest percentage of respondents, followed by food assistance programs and then medical assistance.

<b>Table 17. Reasons for Using Social Services. (N = 707)</b>
<b>1. Could not find work (17%)</b>
<b>2. Lived paycheck to paycheck (17%)</b>
<b>3. Couldn't earn enough money (16%)</b>
<b>4. Utility costs too high (12%)</b>
<b>5. Got sick or injured (10%)</b>
<b>6. Lost my job (10%)</b>
<b>7. Mental illness/emotional issues (8%)</b>
<b>8. Bad credit history (8%)</b>
<b>9. I was a domestic violence victim (7%)</b>
<b>10. Lost transportation (7%)</b>
<b>11. Couldn't find housing (7%)</b>

<b>Table 18. Sources for Assistance &amp; Resources* (N = 707)</b>	
<b>Family (34%)</b>	
<b>Food Stamps/SNAP (28%)</b>	
<b>Food Banks (28%)</b>	
<b>AHCCCS (Medicaid) (22%)</b>	
<b>Friends (11%)</b>	
<b>I sell things (10%)</b>	
<b>Churches (7%)</b>	
<b>Social Security Disability (7%)</b>	
<b>Medicare (6%)</b>	<b>*All others &lt; 5%</b>

The final table presents information from these respondents on barriers encountered while *seeking work* or assistance in *housing* or *social services*. Over 75% reported experiencing barriers in these areas. The most common response across these three areas was that “*what I needed was not available.*” “*Lack of transportation*” for work was marked by 21% of respondents. Work hours and childcare issues were also of significance in the Work category, as were “*lack of information*” and the reported availability of only occasional help from agencies for housing and social services.

<b>Table 19. Type of Barriers Encountered</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Social Services</b>
<b>What I needed was not Available</b>	34%	27%	14%
<b>Lack of Transportation</b>	21%	8%	10%
<b>Physical Disability</b>	7%	4%	6%
<b>Child Care Issues</b>	12%	4%	6%
<b>The Hours I work</b>	16%	5%	4%
<b>Lack of Identification</b>	3%	4%	4%
<b>Lack of Information</b>	9%	10%	11%
<b>Lack of Education</b>	9%	5%	5%
<b>Citizen Issues or Problems</b>	3%	3%	3%
<b>Substance Use: Drugs</b>	3%	4%	4%
<b>Language Barrier</b>	3%	2%	3%
<b>Racial or Ethnic Discrimination</b>	7%	5%	4%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	2%	1%	2%
<b>Religious Orientation</b>	3%	2%	3%
<b>Mental Health Issues</b>	7%	4%	8%
<b>Hygiene Issues</b>	3%	4%	3%
<b>Substance Use: Alcohol</b>	4%	4%	5%
<b>Legal Trouble</b>	5%	6%	7%
<b>Agencies/ Organizations Help Only Occasionally</b>	8%	10%	11%
<b>I don't Experience Any Barriers</b>	23%	24%	23%
<b>Bad Experience with an Agency/Organization</b>	6%	7%	9%

Middle-to-Low Income < \$60,000 only

## Conclusion

This report describes economic, social and cultural welfare from individuals who responded to a survey placed at strategic sites throughout Coconino County. The data presented here were aggregated. Differences that may exist among ages, men and women, income variations, living place or other distinctions have not been explored.

The survey assessed how individuals and families were faring in various aspects of their daily lives. Future efforts should be made to address data gaps to further understand community needs in ensuring family vitality. By having a better understanding, next steps can be established to promote family vitality for all Coconino County citizens.

Potential next steps based off of the findings in this report include the following:

### Income and Work

Forty two percent of middle – to – low income Vitality Survey respondents reported less than \$10, 000 or no annual income. However, despite the hardships that many of the respondents reported, most felt quite positive about living in their respective communities. For most, they feel a part of their communities and love living there. We have not assessed what might be called the *opportunity structure* in the job market. Jobs paying a living wage and the opportunity for full-time employment seem to be lacking. When asked about barriers, respondents most frequently reported that what they needed was not available in terms of work and housing.

Not surprisingly, the common theme that may be taken from responses in other aspects of the respondent lives is a lack of resources. Employment was a dramatic problem for *middle-to-low income* respondents: Forty percent of them reported that they did not have jobs and of those who were employed, the average hours worked per week was thirty-five. In addition, over half reported annual earnings under \$20,000 and less than half had any job benefits. These conditions create a constant worry about debt and bills. 80% with *middle-to-low income* felt either “*severely*” or “*somewhat*” limited in what they could do. 65% of these same respondents worry “*frequently or all the time*” about debt or bills. Childcare, housing, home ownership and transportation are all influenced by this lack of resources.

#### Next Steps:

- Community conversations to better understand needs and concerns of citizens. This assessment can be used as guidance for such conversations.
- Convening of stakeholders and community leaders to address the greatest needs of citizens to promote financial stability.
- Working to ensure that middle-to-low income individuals and families, as well as their family and friends, are aware of resources for income support, housing, and employment.

## Housing

Stable housing provides more than just a roof over and individual or families head. It is a place of stability for families and children, promotes physical safety and security, and promotes physical and mental health. Ensuring that housing meets the needs of individuals and families is essential to promoting family vitality. From the Vitality Survey, 69% of middle-to-low income respondents agreed that their current residence met their needs. Access to affordable housing is important to note and explore as 46.5% of renters responded that their rent is 35% or more of their household income.

### Next Steps:

- Community conversations to better understand needs and concerns of citizens. This assessment can be used as guidance for such conversations.
- Collection of data detailing housing conditions of residents would provide a better understanding of what respondent needs are as well promoting the increase in the percentage of people with access to decent, stable housing.
- Discussion between the correlations of livable wages and employment with stable and affordable housing.

Overall, the data taken at these sites suggests that focusing on economic issues would be a priority in any attempt to increase community and family vitality in Coconino County. Follow up to the report should include a deeper conversation in regards to these topics before discussing next steps in increasing community and family vitality for Coconino County residents.

## Appendix A

### Research Design

The method of distribution for the paper-booklet surveys was modeled after the 2007-2010 “Bi-Annual (Winter and Summer) Survey Count of Homeless Families and Individuals” in Coconino County. During this count, a survey was disseminated at the reception areas of roughly thirty-five social service agencies, government agencies, non-profits and businesses in Coconino County. This was largely successful, providing a means to access a “hidden population” at a relatively low cost. However, there are challenges including:

1. The possibility that individuals might find survey forms at multiple locations and fill them out,
2. The potential bias generated by local staff members to selectively distribute the surveys
3. A lack of overall fidelity in the process of local distribution
4. A disconnect between program managers (directors, etc.), who served as the primary contacts for the survey distribution, and staff.
5. Issues associated with passing along “best practices of survey distribution” to a heterogeneous array of community partners.

*LASR* implemented this strategy attempting to control for the above issues. The design included both paper and electronic versions of the survey. We began with email distribution to the Coconino County Continuum of Care listserv and to the Page Community Resource Group listserv as depicted on the next page.

The logo for the invitation letter [upper-left] was designed after the logo used during the 2007-2010 count efforts. This was an attempt to semantically link the CCCFVS with these past efforts. The originally mentioned \$5.00 Goodwill voucher was later changed by Goodwill to a 25% off coupon. The last paragraph was composed by United Way staff and designed to foster agency interest. The assumption behind this invitation letter was to not only recruit agencies throughout Coconino County but to also potentially recruit organizations and individuals not active in Continuum of Care. There was also a period of personal outreach and recruitment where *LASR* researchers visited social service, non-profit and governmental agencies as a means to promote the CCCFVS dissemination effort. The electronic version of the survey was promoted throughout these visits, often suggested as a back-up means by which an agency could participate.

Wherever someone would respond to these recruitment efforts, *LASR* would send out detailed instructions for how an agency might disseminate the survey. *LASR* researchers offered to provide on-site training and to host volunteers at participating sites. These offers were not as successful and few questions were asked by participating agencies during the survey distribution phase. Our successful collection of paper-

booklet data is a testament to the dedication and willingness to collaborate that is at the core of Coconino County's Continuum of Care.



**To:** Non-profits, Social Service and Government Agencies, and Businesses Throughout Northern Arizona.  
**From:** [The United Way of Northern Arizona](#) partnering with the [NAU Laboratory For Applied Social Research \(LASR\)](#).  
**Re:** The 2013 Coconino County Community and Family Vitality Survey needs your help!

The "2013 Coconino County Community and Family Vitality Survey" is scheduled to take place October 21<sup>st</sup> Through November 9<sup>th</sup>.

[United Way of Northern Arizona \(UWNA\)](#) is working to improve community conditions in northern Arizona by investing in three building blocks for success: Education, Income, and Health. In order to ensure that the most critical needs are being addressed, UWNA is partnering with NAU, Coconino County Community Services, the Public Defenders

Office, the Career Center, Goodwill, and City of Flagstaff to conduct a *Community and Family Vitality Survey* for residents of Coconino County. The results of this survey will not only demonstrate the areas of critical need but also guide UWNA Income goals and impact areas. As a valued partner, UWNA would like your support by helping us conduct this survey with your clients, staff, and community members. **If your organization can assist, we would ask that you distribute our survey booklets to the people you serve in the course of your normal operations – at your front desk areas, in your lobbies, as you engage with customers.**

We will print copies of the survey booklets for you to distribute (although please let us know if you can help us do this). [Goodwill Industries of Northern Arizona](#) has *graciously* offered to provide a \$5.00 gift certificate to their Flagstaff thrift store to anyone completing the survey (one per family). These certificates will be provided to any organization distributing the survey booklets to customers who can access the Goodwill store.

It is ok to distribute surveys to anyone – in fact, we have found that the survey process works best if you just ask all of your customers to fill them out. This way, no one feels like they are being singled-out or treated differently. We have found that leaving surveys in boxes or stacks on front desks doesn't work too well, even if these piles are labeled. Survey booklets can be offered to clients in the 20 day (3 week) period starting October 21<sup>st</sup> and ending at midnight on November 9<sup>th</sup>. **It is perfectly acceptable (and interesting) to help your customers fill out the surveys.**

If you need help distributing and collecting surveys at your location, please let us know so we can try to schedule volunteers to assist. At some participating locations, we anticipate setting up a table at which we hand out survey booklets and help customers complete them. At most participating locations, we anticipate that your staff can do this for us. **The results of the survey will be available to every organization that participates, and to every respondent who is interested in receiving them.**

**There will also be an electronic version of the survey available (More details on this to come..)**

If you would like to assist us (and **PLEASE** do!) by distributing survey booklets at your place of business, please contact **Michael Van Ness** by E-mail: [mevanness@gmail.com](mailto:mevanness@gmail.com) or by phone at **928-380-8854**.

UWNA is thankful for our continued partnership. We look forward to working together to help address the most critical needs in our community. Your participation in this survey is very important and valuable to us in addressing the most crucial community needs. Should you have any questions or would like additional information please contact **Sarah Benatar** at [sbenatar@nazunitedway.org](mailto:sbenatar@nazunitedway.org)

*Thank You Very Much! PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO YOUR COCONINO COUNTY CONTACTS!!*

LASR researchers benefitted from a Northern Arizona University graduate research methods class that was willing to volunteer with the project. One of the key elements of the chosen distribution method is routine following up of each participating site's progress and these students were instrumental in this process.

Table 1. Partner Organization	Booklets Received
Association For Supportive Childcare	45*
<b>BOTHANDS</b>	65* [and 5 in Spanish]
Catholic Charities Community Services – Flagstaff	50*
Child and Family Support Services (CFSS) – Flagstaff	20*
Circle of Page and Page Salvation Army Outpost	50*
Coconino County Community Services	400* [and 40 in Spanish]
Department of Economic Security (DES) Tuba City	30*
DNA People's Legal Services	55* [and 10 in Spanish]
Flagstaff Family Food Center and Food Bank	50* [and 10 in Spanish]
Flagstaff Goodwill Industries of N. Arizona	117*
Flagstaff Salvation Army	20*
Flagstaff Shelter Services	90* [and 5 in Spanish]
Flagstaff Social Security Administration	13* [requested for staff only]
Halo House	35* [and 5 in Spanish]
NACA	40* [and 5 in Spanish]
North Country Health Care – Flagstaff	82*
Northern Arizona Veterans Resource Center (NAVRC)	20*
Parenting Arizona (CPLC)	15*
Page Public Library	50*
Page Regional Domestic Violence Services (PRDVS)	20*
Sharon Manor	25*
Sunshine Rescue Mission	90* [and 5 in Spanish]
TANIF Workers: Tuba City	17*
Tuba City Public Library	57*
Williams Food Bank	25*
Williams Public Library	43*
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1524 [85 Spanish]</b>

\*Goodwill Industries of Northern Arizona provided a stack of “25% Off” vouchers to their Flagstaff Main Thrift Store to this partner for anyone who completed the survey.

The survey launched on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 in both paper-booklet and electronic formats. Booklets were provided to the organizations listed in Table 1 above. Goodwill Industries of Northern Arizona provided “25% Off” vouchers for their Flagstaff Main Thrift Store to selected partner agencies for anyone who completed the survey.

The survey closed on December 31, 2013. In all, 1263 were completed. Of those, 445 were the paper version and 819 were electronic. The electronic version used Qualtrics as the software platform. Both the paper and electronic forms offered a Spanish version.

Of the 1524 English-language and 85 Spanish-language booklets distributed to partner agencies, a total of 288 survey booklets were returned to LASR researchers with some partially completed. There were no Spanish-language booklets returned with data. Nineteen percent of the English-language survey booklets were returned with data.

The percent of surveys returned metric is dependent on the number of surveys each partner agency was allocated. If fewer booklets were allocated, the percent returned tended to be higher. For future survey efforts, higher survey response rates would be achieved with:

1. More research staff devoted to monitoring the survey effort.
2. Increased levels of routine agency follow-up during the survey effort.
3. More on-site training of client-level staff on how to properly disseminate the survey, including in-depth question and answer sessions.
4. The development of a “quick reference card” that partner sites could use as a guide when questions such as “who do we ask questions to?” or “how do we return completed surveys?” arise.
5. A social media component designed to centralize information relevant to survey distribution, including a forums/discussions section.
6. Incentives offered to partner agency staff for participation.
7. Heightened incentives for survey respondents.
8. More active and routine methods of survey distribution, such as “every client coming up to the window receives one” or group-activity approaches.
9. More overall buy-in from direct client service staff.

Paper-booklet surveys were also distributed at strategic sites using [1] teams of NAU Sociology Graduate Students lead by a LASR researcher, [2] the individual efforts of partner-agency staff (such as the Williams School District Homeless Liaison). The results of these efforts are described in Table 2 below.

Table 2.	Strategic Venue	Booklets Collected
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Cameron Deli	1
Hopi Nation Veteran's Day Event	9
Page [and Fredonia] Coconino County Community Services	3
Page Library	21
Page United Methodist Church	6
Tuba City Library	48
Williams Coconino County Community Services	4
Williams Food Bank	54
Williams United School District: Homeless Liaison	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>155</b>

### Electronic Survey Distribution Methods

Running parallel to the paper-booklet survey distribution was an electronic survey hosted through the Qualtrics online survey platform (see <http://qualtrics.com/>). Spanish and English versions of the Qualtrics electronic survey were made available, accessible through a hyperlink that took the respondent (via either a standard web browser or a mobile device) to the survey.

The English version was located at this URL:

[https://naus.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_4HicXuWQCdWVMZdb](https://naus.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_4HicXuWQCdWVMZdb) The Spanish version was located at this URL: [https://naus.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_8ld93Um90ymkRIX](https://naus.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8ld93Um90ymkRIX)

The electronic version of the survey was designed to be as close to the paper-booklet format as possible, with the following addendums:

- As the electronic version of the survey was publicized, with the survey link readily accessible on the Internet, a question was added as the initial question of the electronic survey: “Do you currently live in Coconino County?”
- The inclusion of *radio buttons*, *check boxes*, and other forms of electronic survey logic in the Qualtrics survey necessarily forced the respondent to limit their responses in predetermined ways – responses were far less restricted as recorded in paper booklet data where, for example, respondents could check as many boxes as they wanted even when asked to select only one.
- Design features in Qualtrics allowed for the use of interactive *sliders* and *drop-down boxes* in questions that in the paper booklet version were fill-in-the-blank.
- Electronic survey parameters allowed respondents to stop taking the survey, and to return later to complete it, assuming they used the same ISP) up until the close of the survey. In the event the respondent did not return, the partial response was recorded as data. This flow was not as readily facilitated in the paper booklet version of the survey where respondents were often encouraged to complete the survey in one session. Taking the booklet home dramatically reduced the odds of return.

- The aesthetic character of the Qualtrics version of the survey was unmatched by paper booklet version in terms of color scheme e.g. the booklets were black and white to save on costs.
- The inclusion of form-fields for text entry in the Qualtrics version of the survey – especially in the back-end, open-ended question section – better facilitated responses *and respondent creativity*.

The Qualtrics survey was widely advertised and readily accessible via the following formats: [1] email invitations with the links to the two language versions, [2] Craigslist ads, [3] partner agency web sites including the AZ Daily Sun Community Calendar, [4] an aggressive social media campaign, [5] the Job Connection computer workstations at Goodwill Industries of Northern Arizona and [6] in the electronic periodical AmigosNAZ which heavily promoted the Spanish-language version of the survey (see <https://www.facebook.com/AmigosNAZ> ).

Craigslist Ads were strategically placed throughout Craigslist-Flagstaff/Sedona in the following sections: throughout the “Community” section, in the Personals – Rants and Raves which is kind of a grab-bag section, on the event calendar and in several threads of the “Discussion Forums”. Links to the English and Spanish versions of the survey were hosted on the Coconino County web site, the Utility For Utopian Undertakings web site (see [www.u4uu.org/](http://www.u4uu.org/) ), and on the City of Flagstaff web site. Below is a list of the diverse Facebook pages the survey invitation (and URLs) appeared in:

NAU Anthropology, NAU Sociology (two pages), Sechrist Hall, ASNAU, Flagstaff Hullabalo, Flagstaff Project Connect (both pages), Flagstaff Pride, Flagstaff Medical Center, Friends of Flagstaff’s Future (both versions), Twin Arrows Resort, Navajo Times (requested), Navajo-Hopi Observer, Navajo Language Renaissance, Williams Dairy Queen, Grand Canyon Railway, Cruiser's Route 66 Café (in Williams), Lost Canyon – A Young Life Camp (in Williams), Head 2 Toe Salon (Fredonia), Eye Love Make-up (in Fredonia), Red Pueblo Museum (in Fredonia), Museum of N. Arizona, Sonic of Tuba City, Leupp-Grand Falls-Cameron, AZ; NAU Residence Hall Association; Tuba City Regional healthcare Corporation; Grand canyon Trust, Lake Powell Resorts and marinas, Antelope Point marina, Colorado river discovery, Majave Community College – Colorado City, Masada Charter School – Colorado City, Jacob Lake Inn, Jacob Lake & DeMotte Campgrounds, Antelope Canyon Tours, Hualapai Tourism, Hualapai Nation Police Dept., Havasupai Falls, Utility for Utopian Undertakings.

Thus, a wide electronic net was cast, yielding a total of 819 electronic responses: 786 were gathered from the English-version and 33 were collected from the Spanish-language version [between 10-13-13 and 12-31-13]. A total of 674 responses included a “Yes” response, or a non-response with a Coconino County Zip Code, or no Zip Code to the question: “Do You Currently Live In Coconino County?”. Thus, overall we collected 674 electronic + 433 paper booklet = 1107 individual valid responses to the survey,

exceeding the project goal of 500 responses by a factor of 2.2.

It is worth noting that the 2013 CCCFVS has essentially laid the foundation for conducting HUD-mandated and Arizona Department of Housing required homeless survey count efforts in Coconino County for the 2014-2016 Winter and Summer seasons. Thus, the investment made by the United Way of Northern Arizona, Coconino County Community Services, Goodwill Industries of Northern Arizona, The City of Flagstaff, and the Coconino County Legal Defender's Office to conduct this project will likely have positive benefits for many years to come for housing and homeless services in Coconino County. These future survey projects can tap into the same network of partner agencies created by the 2013 CCCFVS and should draw insight from the efforts detailed in this report.

The responses were skewed toward female, well educated and moderate to low income respondents. In addition, the unemployed percentage was high. The high female response percentage may be due to two factors. First, the cooperating organizations may have a higher proportion of female clients and second, females may have been more willing to complete the survey. The high unemployment percent and the income level probably reflect the nature and mission of the cooperating organizations.

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