

---

Gogebic-Ontonagon  
Community Action Agency  
**2021 Community Needs Assessment**

---



---

## Introduction

---

Gogebic and Ontonagon counties are located on the western end of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Both counties are located on the south shore of beautiful Lake Superior and offer an abundance of recreational opportunities. Both Gogebic and Ontonagon counties are extremely rural.

Gogebic County, the westernmost County in the Upper Peninsula, is approximately 1,100 square miles with a total population of 14,380. The median income is \$38,839 and the US Census Bureau estimates that just over 17% of persons residing in the county live in poverty.

Ontonagon County is more than 3,700 square miles with a total population of 5,816. The median income is \$41,546 and the Census Bureau estimates that 13.3% of people residing in this county live in poverty.

As a recipient of the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency (GOCAA) is required to conduct a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years. The data gathered from the Community Needs Assessment helps the Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency determine the role it can play in addressing the needs in the two counties. The data also helps GOCAA determine if current programs and plans are achieving the strategic goals of the agency.

---

## Methodology

---

GOCAA has used two methods to gather data to prepare the Community Needs Assessment. The primary method of data collection was the use of statistical and program data from our existing database. The Community Assessment includes demographics, statistics, and program descriptions.

The second method employed was the use of data generated from a survey the agency created. Results were tallied and used to identify the greatest needs in both counties. By gathering and analyzing the survey data, we hoped to gain an understanding of issues and trends affecting our community.

---

## Population

---

<b><u>Population</u></b>	<b><u>2018</u></b>	<b><u>2019</u></b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>
Michigan	9,984,072	9,986,857	10,077,331
Gogebic County	15,414	15,061	14,380
Ontonagon County	5,968	5,877	5,816

<b><u>Median Income 2019</u></b>	<b><u>Poverty Rate</u></b>	
Michigan	\$64,119	10.5%
Gogebic County	\$38,839	12%
Ontonagon County	\$41,546	9.1%

<b><u>Unemployment Rates:</u></b>	<b><u>May 2019</u></b>	<b><u>June 2020</u></b>
National	3.5%	8.31%
Michigan	4.1%	9.9%
Gogebic County	5.1%	10.6%
Ontonagon County	7.3%	14.9%

The Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency served 2,517 clients from 10/1/2019 to 9/30/2020. Here is the data collected from these clients.

\*\*\* Please note that COVID19 began during this time frame and people were sheltered at home for many months. \*\*\*

---

## Race, Ethnicity, & Gender

---

### Race:

White	2397
Black or African American	20
Asian	6
American Indian or Alaska Native	48
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	3
Multi-race (any 2 or more of the above)	17

### Ethnicity:

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	26
Not Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	2451

### Gender:

Male	1187
Female	1330

---

## Economics

---

<u>Level of Family Income</u>	<u>#of Families</u>
Up to 50%	745
51% to 75%	181
76% to 100%	227
101% to 125%	207
126% to 150%	123
151% to 175%	85
176% to 200%	40
201% to 250%	18
250% and over	<u>15</u>
<b>Total</b>	1641

<u>Housing</u>	<u># of Families</u>
Own	715
Rent	349
Other Permanent Housing	41
Homeless	<u>114</u>
<b>Total</b>	1219

---

## **Weatherization**

---

The Weatherization Program is a free federally funded, low-income residential energy conservation program. The goal of the program is to reduce energy costs and make the home safe and comfortable in any season.

- Total Houses: 10
- Total Refrigerators: 3
- Total Hot Water Heaters: 3
- Total Insulation Installation: 10

---

## **Housing Support**

---

Homeless Prevention Services include case management, emergency hotel vouchers, help with security deposits, short term rental assistance, and help with past due rent.

- Total number of households assisted to permanent housing: 47
- Total number of individuals sheltered in motels: 63

---

## **Head Start**

---

- Total # of children served: 131

Our Head Start program is required to complete a separate Community Assessment every five years. Their most recent was completed in 2020 and is available to view online.

---

## Commodities

---

To be eligible for both CSFP and/or TEFAP, all persons must be a resident of Gogebic or Ontonagon County and meet the set income guidelines.

### Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

CSFP food packages are distributed monthly to supplement the nutritional Needs of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age who meet income eligibility requirements.

### The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

TEFAP is a quarterly food assistance program that provides commodities to low-income households four times per year. Food packages vary, however, each package includes protein, fruit, and vegetables. Items from each food group are made available at each distribution to assist recipients in maintaining a healthy diet.

- Total # of individuals enrolled in monthly commodities (CSFP) =689
- Total # of individuals enrolled in quarterly commodities (TEFAP) = 840
- Total # of CSFP food boxes distributed = 7,342
- Total # of TEFAP food boxes distributed =2,94

---

## Tax Preparation

---

Tax Preparation Assistance is a free service to any individual or household that is eligible for any program that GOCAA offers. This service includes completion of federal and state taxes as well as Michigan's Homestead Property Tax Credit and Home Heating Credit.

- Total # of individuals assisted: 224

---

## Senior Programs

---

Senior Programs include in-home services, home delivered meals, and congregate meals. In home services are intended to support seniors in maintaining their independence. Home delivered meals are designed to assist home bound seniors in meeting their nutritional needs.

- Total # of individuals assisted with Home Care Assistance: 12
- Total # of individuals assisted with a Homemaker Aide: 37
- Total # of individuals assisted with Respite Care: 19
- Total # of individuals receiving Home Delivered Meals: 332
- Total # of individuals that attended Congregate Meals: 92



---

The Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Needs Assessment Surveys were distributed throughout Gogebic and Ontonagon Counties. The surveys were distributed with CARES packages, commodities, and home delivered meals. They were also available at all three of the Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency sites. The survey that was distributed to the general population is included in the next four pages.

The survey data that we collected shows that the median age of those that returned the survey was 70.4 years of age and 70.1% were female. Of those that completed the survey, 59.4% lived in Gogebic County and 36.5% lived in Ontonagon County. 94% of all respondents were white/Caucasian and 2.1% were American Indian or Alaskan Native.

---

# Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency Community Needs Assessment

---

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: How do you identify?  Man  Woman  Prefer not to answer  Other

What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of people living in household? \_\_\_\_\_

## What is your race/ethnicity?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White or Caucasian      | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American        | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino      | <input type="checkbox"/> Another race                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian American |  |

## What is your marital status?

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single    | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Married   | <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Living with Partner |

## What is the highest level of education completed?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some school          | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Certification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GED                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college         | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral Degree            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree   |   |

## What is your household income?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$15,000                | <input type="checkbox"/> Between \$75,000 and \$99,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between \$15,000 and \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Between \$100,000 and \$150,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between \$30,000 and \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$150,000                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between \$50,000 and \$74,999 |  |

**\*\*\*Please return to GOCAA no later than July 28, 2021\*\*\***

Please drop off at our office or mail to: **Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency**  
**100 S Mill St**  
**Bessemer, MI 49911**

What is your employment status?

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part time | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Self employed |

If unemployed, please select the reasons why:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> COVID related            | <input type="checkbox"/> Layoff or downsizing                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal background      | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence/Sexual assault victim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug/Alcohol Problem     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of transportation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health problems   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of permanent address               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permanently disabled     | <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary physical disability           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of skills/education | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of proper clothing                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other health issues      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                             |

What types of income do you have? (Check all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer wages                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pension/Retirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security                                | <input type="checkbox"/> SSI/SSDI           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VA   | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/friends     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Child support      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TANF (temporary assistance for needy families) |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No income                                      |   |

Have you ever lost a job (or not been able to accept a job offer) because of transportation issues?

- Yes  
 No

What is your current housing status?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Own                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/motel/shelter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rent                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Group home          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staying with friends or family | <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing home or long term care | <input type="checkbox"/> Other               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisted living                |  |

Please rate the physical condition of your current housing.

- |                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Average     | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substandard |                               |

Do you have minor children?

- Yes  
 No

If you have children under your care, what is your family situation?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single mom      | <input type="checkbox"/> Single dad                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two parents     | <input type="checkbox"/> Raising own children and children of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster parent's | <input type="checkbox"/> Raising children of other family members    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shared custody  |  |

Who provides your childcare?

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self    | <input type="checkbox"/> Daycare                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Have to leave children alone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family  |   |

Have you ever lost a job because you didn't have reliable childcare?

- Yes  
 No

Of those listed below, what are the three most important community concerns right now for you and/or your family?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult day care                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Home delivered meals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child care                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior services      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Assistance                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran services     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-home services                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Home weatherization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tax assistance                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality employment opportunities |   |

What do you feel are the barriers to getting resources/assistance in your community? Check all that apply.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of transportation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distrust of the process | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know where to begin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much paperwork      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____               |

Of the services listed below, please rate the top five services you would MOST like to see continued in our community, with "1" being your most important and "5" being the least important of your top five choices. Choose only five.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Congregate meals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Community mental health services
- \_\_\_\_\_ Home delivered meals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Weatherization
- \_\_\_\_\_ Housing assistance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Homeless prevention
- \_\_\_\_\_ In-home service
- \_\_\_\_\_ Veteran Assistance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal care services
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tax preparation services
- \_\_\_\_\_ Commodity Supplemental Food Program/TEFAP
- \_\_\_\_\_ Head Start
- \_\_\_\_\_ Substance Abuse
- \_\_\_\_\_ Utility bill assistance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Food pantries

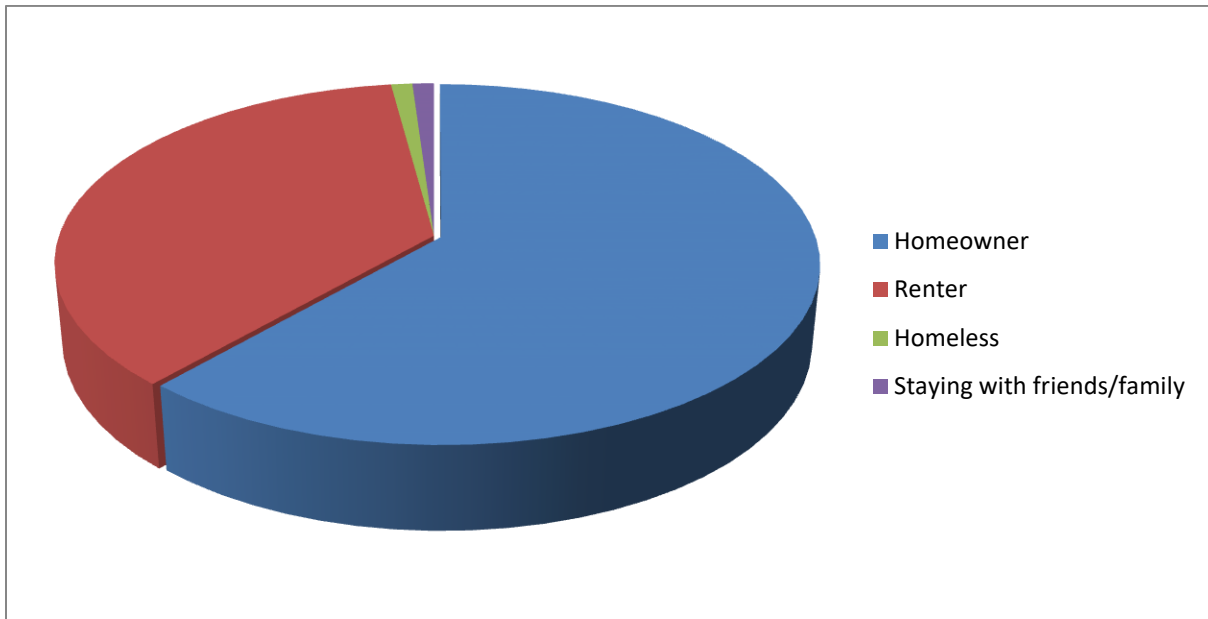
Do you have needs or concerns that your community does not meet? Check all that apply

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A place to live                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Job placement/better jobs      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day care (child or adult)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Job training                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing               | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health services         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug or alcohol abuse assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition education assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food assistance                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home care services               | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran assistance             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                      |   |

---

## Housing Status

---



### Housing Status

Homeowner	58.3%
Renter	34.4%
Homeless	1.0%
Staying with friends/family	1.0%

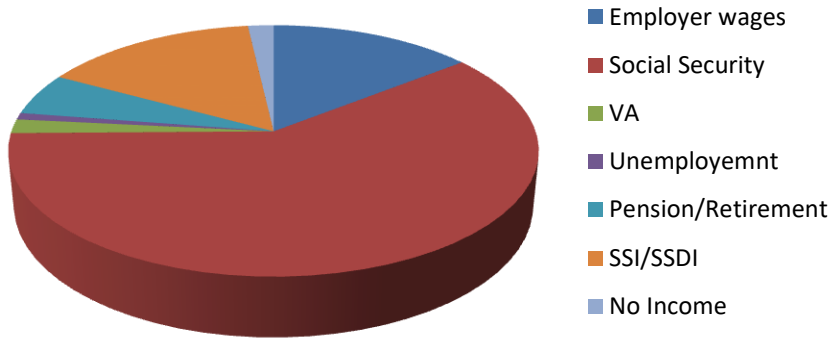
The survey data also shows that affordable housing is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important community concern right now. Both counties struggle to find quality affordable housing for clients.

---

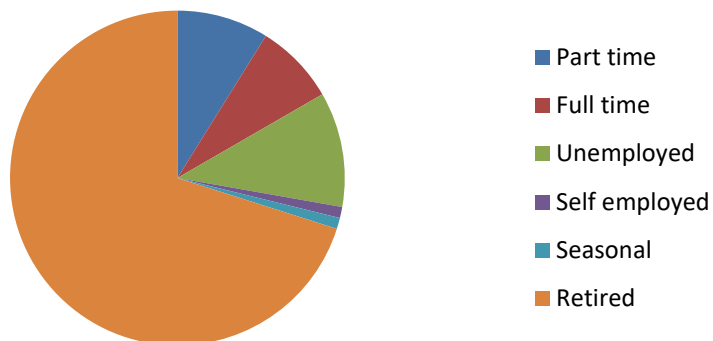
## Source of Income

---

### Types of Income



### Employment Status



The average age of our survey respondents was 70.4 years of age. The data shows that the majority of those that returned the survey were retired and living solely on Social Security. The survey showed that 10.4% were unemployed and that most of those were unemployed due to a permanent disability.

One of the survey questions asked, “What are the most important community concerns right now for you and/or your family? “ The responses in order from most important to least important are as follows:

- Food Assistance
- Affordable Housing
- Senior Services
- Home Weatherization
- Transportation
- In-home Services
- Home Delivered Meals
- Quality Employment Opportunities
- Tax Assistance
- Veteran Services
- Child Care
- Homelessness
- Adult Day Care



Another survey questions asked “What are the top 5 services you would most like to see continued in our community?” Those answers in order from most important to least important are as follows:

1. Commodities
2. Utility bill assistance
3. Transportation
4. Home delivered meals
5. Weatherization
6. In-home services
7. Food pantry
8. Congregate Meals
9. Community mental health services
10. Housing Assistance
11. Personal care
12. Veteran assistance
13. Tax preparation services
14. Homeless prevention
15. Substance abuse

---

## Summary

---

In summary, the data collected shows that the Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency is focused on the needs of the communities it serves. The programs currently offered by the agency meet the top needs in both counties. We will continue to analyze data and survey results to identify any new or changing needs in the community.

---

Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency receives many thank you cards and letters from clients. The following are just a few words from some of those correspondences.....

*"I just wanted to say an extra "Thank You!" to everyone that helps people. I really value the kindness and additional help. "*

*"Thanks so much. All of you workers are so nice and helpful."*

*"We need more people like you in this world! You were immensely so very helpful when I needed a hand. Thank you so much."*

*"At this time I want to thank you for all the help my brother was given. He is doing fine right now and is now able to pay for propane without help. Thank you."*

*"Thanks again for everything. I truly appreciate it."*

There are also many client stories. The following is part of Marilyn's story. She is a 92 year old client that was part of our neighborhood enhancement program.....

*"She was hoping she would be picked for the home rehab grant. She said that her house really needed a paint job but she couldn't afford to have it painted. She stated that her husband always kept their house in good shape. Her eyes started to water and she said she feels so bad that she hasn't been able to keep up her home like her husband did and that he always kept up with the painting. She was very excited when her name was chosen. After her home was completed (new siding, a few windows and repairs of both porches), she said she went to the cemetery to tell her husband that their home was beautiful and asked him not to be mad that it wasn't white. (She chose silver gray, but her husband always liked white)..... She was*

*smiling from ear to ear and thanked us several times and said "Now I can enjoy my beautiful home."*