EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

- The Acton-Boxborough United Way has conducted a Community Needs Assessment in order to provide insight into the most pressing human service needs in our community, including those that are ‘under the radar’ and may not be the most widely recognized.

- ABUW encourages use of this study by our community:
  - ABUW will use this document to inform our grant making, programmatic, and community activities, to encourage collaboration around critical issues, and to consider appropriate strategic directions.
  - Service providers and Town officials may identify services that need to be better publicized, new services that could be developed, and opportunities for collaboration.
  - Residents should know that if you are struggling, you are not alone. Many community resources are available to you - the ABUW and many agencies are here to help.
  - The broader community can learn more about the very real challenges facing many of us. The needs of our neighbors are often unnoticed or unrecognized. With awareness, we can build an even more compassionate and responsive community.

- While the study is intended to highlight gaps and inadequacies, there is much to celebrate, including the dedicated, competent and caring professionals and volunteers who are committed to providing residents with the help they need.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT STRUCTURE

Acton-Boxborough United Way Board

Community Needs Assessment Planning Committee

Steering Committee

COMMUNITY SCAN
- Demographics
- Socioeconomics
- Housing
- Schools
- Public Safety

SME INTERVIEWS
- Abuse, Neglect & Violence
- Basic Needs
- Family & Economic Stability
- Diversity
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse

FOCUS GROUPS
- Basic Needs/Family & Economic Stability
- Seniors
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health

COMMUNITY SURVEY
- Basic Needs
- Family Stress
- Mental Health
- Neglect, Abuse & Violence
- Substance Abuse

Community Needs Assessment Planning Committee

Steering Committee
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

METHODOLOGY

- The Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was designed to identify the most pressing human service needs in Acton and Boxborough and the service network available to address those needs. Our comprehensive approach was designed to collect as much data and feedback as possible from multiple sources and perspectives.

- Our Methodology:
  - **Formed Steering Committee** – 20 community leaders served as an advisory group and informational resource.
  - **Focused our study** – With informed input from the steering committee, six service categories were explored: Abuse/Neglect/Violence, Basic Needs, Family and Economic Stability, Diversity, Mental Health, Substance Abuse; within four population groups: Children, Youth and Young Adults, Adults, and Seniors.
  - **Community Scan** – Quantitative, replicable, mostly publicly available data in five categories: Demographics, Socioeconomics, Housing Statistics, Schools, Public Safety.
  - **Interviews** – Qualitative discussions with select Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). ABUW conducted 19 interviews with 35 SME’s.
  - **Focus Groups** – Four topics were further investigated: Basic Needs/Family & Economic Stability, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Seniors. We gathered 24 local and state service providers to participate in these facilitated discussions.
  - **Community Survey** – 658 Acton and Boxborough residents completed the on-line survey, a statistically relevant sample of the population. The survey was available in four languages and special efforts were made to include low-income residents.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT TEAM

- Community Needs Assessment Planning Committee
  - Patty Higgins - Community Needs Assessment Chair, ABUW Board
  - Alan Berko - Community Volunteer
  - Rachel Sagan - ABUW Executive Director
  - Ebit Speers - ABUW President

- Carlisle & Company Consultants
  - Ann Budner, Principal, Non-Profit Practice
  - Michael Lohfink, Principal
  - Stephen Murdock, Associate
  - Joy Sun, Associate
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THANK YOU

- ABUW wishes to thank the nearly 100 professionals, human service providers and volunteers who helped in the creation of the Community Needs Assessment
  - With the exception of Steering Committee members, whose names follow this page, individuals are listed in the relevant sections of the full report

- Successful completion of the CNA would not have been possible without:
  - The Steering Committee’s guidance, leadership, and provision of valuable data
  - The professionals and experts in the human service arena who participated in interviews and focus groups
  - Group facilitators and note takers
  - Survey translators
  - Volunteers and organization staff who helped with distribution and survey completion
  - Survey distribution assistance from the Acton-Boxborough school administrators and the towns of Acton and Boxborough
  - Use of the Acton Police Department’s meeting rooms
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STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (1 OF 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Marie Altieri</td>
<td>Director Personal &amp; Admin. Services</td>
<td>AB Regional School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Andy Armstrong</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
<td>Acton Congregational Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mary Ann Ashton</td>
<td>Co-Chair</td>
<td>League of Women Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jennifer Benson</td>
<td>State Representative</td>
<td>MA House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jarod Bloom</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>Sechrest &amp; Bloom LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kelley Cronin</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Acton Housing Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Laura Ducharme</td>
<td>Community Resource Coordinator</td>
<td>Town of Acton</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Les Fox</td>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>Town of Boxborough</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Katie Green</td>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>Town of Acton</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Bernadette Keegan</td>
<td>Program Administrator</td>
<td>AB Community Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Marge Kennedy</td>
<td>Social Policy Chair</td>
<td>League of Women Voters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie Leggett</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Acton Medical Associates</td>
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<tr>
<td>James MacRae</td>
<td>Veteran’s Affairs Officer</td>
<td>Town of Acton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Markiewicz</td>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>Town of Boxborough, ABUW Board of Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy McCarthy</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Danny’s Place Youth Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynne Osborn</td>
<td>Community Volunteer</td>
<td>English at Large, Acton Friends of COA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolyn Randolph</td>
<td>Outreach Committee</td>
<td>AB United Way</td>
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<td>Warren Ryder</td>
<td>Chief of Police</td>
<td>Town of Boxborough</td>
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<td>Michael Tobia</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Mt. Calvary Community Supper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Towell</td>
<td>Pupil Services Liaison</td>
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<td>Frank J. Widmayer III</td>
<td>Chief of Police</td>
<td>Town of Acton</td>
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THEMES – A CHANGING COMMUNITY

- A decade and a half into the 21st century, Acton and Boxborough are becoming more diverse, older, more expensive, better educated, and economically strong for many, but not all residents
- The population has increased only modestly since 2000, but notable shifts indicate significant changes and challenges for meeting the human service needs of our towns

- The Acton and Boxborough communities are diverse
- We are getting older
- We are more educated
- The top income level is better paid, with fewer middle income earners
- Housing is more expensive
- Our towns are economically strong overall, yet with vulnerable populations
- Vulnerable residents include:
  - Senior citizens
  - At-risk teens
  - Young adults
  - Disabled residents
  - Veterans
  - Low-income adults and families
  - Limited-English speaking families
  - Highly mobile families
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THEMES – INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

- Infrastructure limitations are a significant and integral aspect of the findings in this report
- Barriers make it even more difficult to access services when residents need help

Housing
- Inadequate supply of affordable, handicapped accessible, and assisted housing
- Shelter is a struggle for vulnerable individuals and families, seniors aging in place, and the disabled

Transportation
- Residents without access to a car or who lack the ability to drive are less able to access services

Public Schools
- Increasing numbers of special needs children, more financially stressed families, more diversity
- Substance abuse and prevention, cyber bullying, mental health concerns complicate learning environment

Public Safety
- Substance abuse, especially opiate addiction and overdoses, mental illness, domestic violence and financial scams are prominent and daily public safety concerns
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
THEMES – COMMON CHALLENGES ACROSS AGE GROUPS

- Multiple age groups reported similar challenges

Stress is a Big Concern
- When residents were asked about their greatest concerns, stress on young adults, children, and adults/parents were first, third and fourth respectively
- Paying for higher education was the second greatest concern

Isolation, Lack of Connection
- Isolation can be physical, emotional and social, and can be experienced at all age levels
- Isolation and disconnection lead to a host of other problems

Lack of Information
- Though the existing network is deep and broad in most areas, both residents and service providers expressed the need for more timely and comprehensive information about available services, and help accessing them

Difficulty Seeking Help
- Residents don’t seek help when they need it due to stigma or shame, cultural barriers, fear of losing independence, not knowing where to turn, or/and difficulty navigating the system
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CHILDREN – GENERAL FINDINGS

- In this study, we consider children to be from birth through elementary school age
- Birth rates nearly halved in Acton and dropped by a third in Boxborough from 2000 to 2013
- School age numbers have declined steadily since 2011, but more students now require special education services

Primary Areas of Concern

Challenges at school
- Increased special needs
- Language/cultural considerations

Technology concerns
- Managing negative exposure
- Can be source of stress for both children and parents
- Stress from technology is the 8th highest ranked concern for residents

Child care challenges
- Working poor and single parents
- Special needs children

Barriers to Accessing Help

Parental perplexity
- Lack of parenting support and education
- Emerging risks change quickly

Insufficient, poorly funded services
- Lack of affordable, high quality child care options
- Lack of pediatric medication providers, including child psychiatrists

Dual language learners
- Can have trouble accessing social services
- Can find it hard to get involved in school and community activities
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CHILDREN – SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Challenges at School

Increasing special needs
- More children with ADD/ADHD
- More anxiety diagnoses
- More Autism Spectrum Disorders

Language/cultural considerations
- More elementary age English Language Learners (ELL)
  - Over 6% in Acton, nearly 3% in Boxborough
- Asians comprise about 1/3 of the elementary students

Technology Concerns

24/7 availability
- Can lead to incessant social pressure
- Exposure to constant media influences, cyber risks, and bullying, even for young children

Can be invasive and isolating
- Increasingly younger children have Internet access
- Parents unsure how to stay connected with children, manage their exposure and protect from cyber risks

Child Care Challenges

Child Care Voucher program
- Long waits for limited spaces
- Insufficient aid

Before and after school care
- Enrollment in high demand
- For disabled children, programs are expensive and underfunded

Affordable summer camperships
- Crucial for working families
- Scholarship requests up

Lack of transportation
- Greatly impacts child care access

Limited affordable options
- Unlicensed in-home care
- More grandparents watching young children
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
TEENS – GENERAL FINDINGS

- In this study, we consider teens to be in grades 7-12
- Student populations have declined 7.9% at the junior high and 1.7% at the high school since 2008
- High stress and unhealthy coping are common concerns in this age population

Primary Areas of Concern

High stress levels
- Multiple sources of stress
- Ranked as top concern among residents
- Over half of residents don’t know or are unsure where to find help

Mental health
- Increase in referrals
- Teen resilience declining
- Bullying is a persistent concern

Substance abuse
- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Opioids/Heroin (see Adults – Findings)

Barriers to Accessing Help

Limited support and education for parents
- Hard to keep up with emerging risks
- Isolated, especially when in crisis

Limited mental health and substance abuse services
- Lack of psychiatrists and therapists to treat adolescents; long wait lists
- Lack of affordable treatment, especially inpatient and post crisis
- Insurance cost containment measures

Easy availability of alcohol, substances, less aversion to “hard” drugs
### Executive Summary - Teens — Specific Findings

#### High Stress Levels

**Multiple sources**
- Academic, peer, extra-curricular
- Parental and family expectations, bi-cultural considerations
- Material (e.g., expensive technology, tutors)
- Social media

**Teens may cope with stress in unhealthy ways**

#### Substance Abuse

**Alcohol and underage drinking**
- Binge drinking called “epidemic”
- Flavored liquors appeal to underage drinkers
- A top concern for residents

**Cannabis**
- Decriminalized in MA
- Unregulated, more potent than in past
- Arriving by mail from legalized states

**Opiate addiction (see Adults – Findings)**

#### Mental Health

**Increase in referrals and diagnoses**
- ABRHS psych hospitalizations doubled last year, on track to exceed that number in 2014/15
- Over half of MSPP referrals in first six months were for teens
- Anxiety, depression disorders, self-injury (e.g., cutting), eating disorders, suicidal thoughts

**Teen resilience and parenting issues**
- Teens less able to handle stress and disappointment
- Parents often unwilling to allow child’s failure/mistakes
- Parents struggle to keep pace with quickly changing risks and help children build resilience

**Bullying**
- Invasive, non-stop nature of on-line bullying
- Easy escalation into crisis
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ADULTS – GENERAL FINDINGS

In this study, we consider adults to be ages 18-64
Special consideration is given to young adults in this section, considered to be ages 18-25
Although legally adults, young adults are often still supported financially by and living with their families

Primary Areas of Concern

Substance abuse
- Opiates/heroin abuse top concern with professionals
- Overdoses increasing
- Treatment difficult and limited

Mental health
- Rise in involuntary psychiatric hospitalizations
- Anxiety and depression are among residents’ top 10 concerns

Young adults, ages 18 to 25
- Difficult to reach and assess
- Especially vulnerable to substance abuse
- Few services or institutions that serve this population specifically

Barriers to Accessing Help

Personal reasons
- Shame, stigma, fear of consequences
- Denial by abusers and family
- Distorted thinking is part of addiction

Lack of services
- Financially strapped facilities
- Relapses rarely covered by insurance
- Inadequate number of in-patient beds
- Inadequate non-emergency, preventive, and affordable care for ongoing issues

Specific to young adults
- Age group can lack strong connections, relationships
- Parents can’t access their child’s health records without their child’s consent
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADULTS – SPECIFIC FINDINGS

**Substance Abuse**

**Opiates an acute problem**
- Quick escalation from prescription opiates (painkillers, Oxycontin, Percocet) to heroin addiction
- Heroin is cheaper and readily available
- Formerly urban problem now in suburbs
- Alarming spike in occurrence

**Overdoses (OD’s)**
- Caused by illegal and prescription drugs, often opiates
- Adults over age 25 have overdosed most, some intentionally
- Since January 2012, 40 Acton OD calls resulting in 5 deaths
- Since 2012, 7 non-fatal Boxborough OD’s

**Treatment**
- 30-40% of hospital inpatients are substance abusers with mental health issues
- Typically 3-7 days in the hospital to detox only
- Patients released with little community or home support

**Mental Health**

- Spike in involuntary psychiatric hospitalizations
  - Frequent repeat hospitalizations
  - Patients released without sufficient follow-up help
  - Police are starting to partner with mental health experts
- Adult stress is a top concern of residents

**Young Adults, Ages 18-25**

- High school graduates not in college and/or unemployed are disconnected from services
- High risk group
  - Drug dealers target this age group, not necessarily those in college
  - 10 Acton overdoses for this age group since 2012
  - Population is difficult for service providers to reach
  - HIPAA rules prevent parents from obtaining a child’s medical records or from directing their care after the age of 18, except in certain situations
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
FAMILIES — GENERAL FINDINGS

- Like the towns’ general populations, families are now more diverse in terms of culture, language, and make-up
- Economically vulnerable families comprise over 1/5 of our population, despite the two towns’ increasing wealth

Primary Areas of Concern

High stress
- Higher education costs and other financial concerns
  - Residents rank higher education costs as their second greatest concern
- Intergenerational concerns

Vulnerable families
- Housing, rent, food, other monthly bills are particular concerns for these residents
- Veterans
- Mobile and economically unstable families
- Domestic violence rates remain significant

Barriers to Accessing Help

Red tape and bureaucracy
- Difficulty navigating state/federal regulations
- Complex laws and aid requirements

Limited availability
- Housing
- Transportation – most difficult for vulnerable families without a car
- Child care (see Children – Findings)

Cultural challenges
- Multiple languages and cultures
- Service provision more difficult

Financial woes
- High portion of income spent on housing
- Difficulty planning for long-term needs like higher education
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
FAMILIES – SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Sources and Effects of Stress

Financial stresses
- High cost of living, higher education/debt
- Working two jobs to make ends meet

Intergenerational concerns
- Caring for children and aging parents, “sandwich generation,” ranked as fourth highest source of stress among residents
- “Boomerang” children, living at home into 20’s

Vulnerable Family Issues (1)

Veterans
- Increasingly asking for help with basic needs

Mobile and economically unstable families
- Children less ready to enter school
- Schools spend more time case managing

Domestic violence
- Over 200 Acton cases in 2014, 30 Boxborough cases in 2013

Difficulty meeting basic needs

- Financial challenges
  - 20+% of households earn less than $50k per year

- Housing challenges
  - Median house price 2-3x national average
  - Lack of affordable rental housing/greater percent of income covering rent
  - 3 year wait list for 2-bedroom Acton Housing Authority unit
  - 22.8% of Acton households qualify for state-aided housing

- Transportation challenges
  - Impede access to high quality food, medical care, social services, community and family supports, employment, school involvement

- Food and necessity challenges
  - Food insecurity
  - Trading off necessities due to finances
  - Free and reduced lunches have tripled in elementary schools since 2009
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SENIORS – GENERAL FINDINGS

In this study, we consider seniors to be ages 65 and older
From 2000 to 2013, the Acton senior population rose 49% and the Boxborough senior population rose 152%. Most are “aging in place”
Seniors are one of the population groups in both towns with the highest rate of poverty

Primary Areas of Concern

Infrastructure issues
- Housing
- Transportation

Health issues
- Physical
- Mental/emotional

Safety issues
- Frauds/scams
- Hoarding

Financial issues
- Fixed and low income
- Services unaffordable

Barriers to Accessing Help

Limited housing
- AHA has a 4 year wait list for senior units
- More supportive housing options needed

Financial management services
- Very limited services
- Unaffordable on fixed income

Services inflexible
- Meals on Wheels, home care and nursing programs often time limited
- Insurance coverage is spotty
- Medicare pays only for strict definition of medical necessity
- Seniors also reluctant to ask for reduced rates
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SENIORS – SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Infrastructure Issues

Housing options and supports very limited
- Needed for aging-in-place, independence
- Very few affordable at-home service options

Transportation very limited
- Not flexible, requires advance reservations
- Limited assistance for disabled
- Limited access for out-of-town appointments
- Acton recently approved fixed route van service
- Boxborough COA offers volunteer drivers

Safety Issues

Scams increasingly victimize seniors
- Lower computer literacy a factor
- Banks, outside helpers identify victims, alert police

Hoarding increasingly recognized as a problem
- Denial is typical; health and safety issue
- Service providers do not have a protocol to deal with it

Health Issues

Medical complications
- Memory loss/dementia
- Medication management

Depression and isolation
- Contributor to self-neglect, hoarding
- Alcoholism, overuse of pain meds a concern
- Caretaker-spouses profoundly affected

Reluctance to seek help
- Cannot force help if senior is mentally competent

Financial Issues

Low and fixed incomes
- Housing and food a frequent struggle
- Seniors represent a large portion of food pantry and community supper attendees

Support services not affordable
- Help is needed with home chores, paperwork, paying bills, and adult day care
# COMMUNITY SCAN

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4. Detailed Results – Boxborough 72

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Demographics
- Acton’s population grew by 9.6% from 2000 to 2013
- Birth rates in Acton nearly halved from 2000 to 2013 and are well below state and national numbers
- Significant demographic changes include
  - Increases in the age 65+ population (49% growth from 2000 to 2013)
  - Increases in the Asian population (144% growth from 2000 to 2013)
- The majority of Acton’s Asian residents are Chinese and Asian Indian

Socioeconomics
- Compared to county, state, and national averages, Acton is an educated and high income community
  - Close to 75% of Acton residents age 25 and over have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to the national average of ~30%
  - Average household income in Acton is $140K, almost double the national average
  - 22% of Acton’s households earn more than $200,000 per year
  - The number of Acton households that earn less than $50,000 exceeds the number of households that earn more than $200,000
- Acton’s unemployment rate has steadily declined since 2009 and is significantly below the state and national averages
- Poverty rates for individuals have been declining and are less than one fifth of the national average. Poverty rates in Acton are the highest for young women, single mothers, and seniors
Housing
- Median housing price in Acton has increased by 35% since 2000, and is ~250% more than the national median
- Petitions for foreclosure of single family houses have declined markedly since 2012 and are at a very low level
- The number of renter occupied housing units increased by 15.7% from 2000 to 2013. In 2013, roughly 25% of Acton’s housing units were renter occupied
- Monthly gross rent levels in Acton are skewed toward the higher ranges and are trending higher
- The percentage of renters who pay more than 30% of their income for rent has increased from 30% to 42%

Schools – Acton Elementary Schools, RJ Grey Junior High and AB Regional High School
- Since 2009, the total number of students declined steadily, by a total of 5.8%
- Number of free and reduced lunches increased notably
- Major changes in the student population include:
  - Increase in number of special education students
  - Increase in the percentage of Asian students across all school levels

Public Safety
- Even though long-term trends are generally falling, the number of arrests, protective custody, domestic violence and juvenile incident cases increased compared to 2013
**Demographics**

- Boxborough’s population grew by 3.7% from 2000 to 2013
- Birth rates in Boxborough dropped by a third from 2000 to 2013 and are below state and national rates
- Significant demographic changes include
  - Decrease in the number of children below 5 years (67.6% decline from 2000 to 2013)
  - Increases in the over 65 population (132% growth from 2000 to 2013)
  - Increases in the Asian population (106% growth from 2000 to 2013)
- The majority of Boxborough’s Asian residents are Chinese and Asian Indian

**Socioeconomics**

- Compared to county, state, and national averages, Boxborough is an educated and high income community
  - Close to 80% of Boxborough residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to the national average of ~30%
  - Average household income in Boxborough is almost $138,000, around double the national average
  - 24% of Boxborough’s households earn more than $200,000 per year
  - Nearly 25% of Boxborough’s households earn less than $50K per year
- Boxborough’s unemployment rate has declined steadily since 2010 and is below the state and national averages
- Poverty rates have been declining and are well below the national average. Very limited data suggests that poverty rates in Boxborough are the highest for young adults, single mothers, and seniors
Housing
- Median housing price has increased by 38% since 2000, and is more than three times the national median
- Petitions for foreclosure have declined since 2012 and are at a very low level
- The number of renter occupied housing units increased by 21.7% from 2000 to 2013. In 2013, roughly one fifth of Boxborough’s housing units were renter occupied
- The majority (72%) of all rental units in Boxborough were below $1,000 per month
- The percentage of renters who are paying more than 30% of their income to rent has increased from 30% to 43%

Schools – Blanchard, RJ Grey Junior High and AB Regional High School
- Total number of students at Blanchard Elementary has declined steadily since 2008
- Number of free and reduced lunches increased notably
- Major changes in the student population include:
  - Increase in number of special education students
  - Increase in the percentage of Asian students

Public Safety
- The number of DUls, protective custody and juvenile incidents cases has been steadily declining over the past 2 to 5 years
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3. Detailed Results – Acton 40

4. Detailed Results – Boxborough 72
Acton-Boxborough United Way (ABUW) engaged Carlisle & Company (Carlisle) to conduct a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CNA) for the communities of Acton and Boxborough.

As the first step in the CNA process, Carlisle prepared a community scan as a snapshot of key characteristics of the Acton and Boxborough (AB) communities and how they have changed from 2000 to the present.

The objectives of this community scan are two-fold:
- Present an overview of key characteristics of Acton and Boxborough
- Provide insights and identify thought starters for the Community Needs Assessment
ABUW and Carlisle identified five data groups for the community scan

- Demographics
- Socioeconomics
- Housing
- Schools
- Public Safety

The community scan was compiled by using the following publicly available data sources

- US Census data for the year 2000 as reference point
- School data from the Acton, Boxborough and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts
- Public safety data from the Acton and Boxborough Police Departments
- Data from other publicly available online sources as well as the Warren Report on housing

Where available, data was reported through 2014

Except for junior high and high school data, and specific pages where noted, all school data is shown separately for Acton and Boxborough

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(1) The ACS is a mandatory, ongoing statistical survey that samples a small percentage of the population every year. It is supported by the US Census Bureau.
Chart Type 1 – Simple Time Series Comparison

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</table>

Annual value of category for Acton or Boxborough

Year
Chart Type 2 – Time Series Comparison with Reference Values

Legend; Color Coding Matches Categories in Chart

- Under 5
- School Age (5-19)
- Adult (20 - 64)
- Senior (65+)

Year

Reference Value for Middlesex County for 2013

Reference Value for Massachusetts for 2013
Chart Type 3 – Time Series Changes over Time

- Relative change of category for indicated time frame
- Absolute change of category; for indicated time frame
- Considered Category for Acton or Boxborough

Under 5: -16%, -244
School Age (5-19): 11%, 509
Adult (20 - 64): 7%, 864
Senior (65+): 49%, 31
Chart Type 4 – Time Series Changes Year over Year

- Relative Year over Year change of Category
- Information on Year over Year Change; here: 2011 to 2012
- Legend; Color Coding matches Categories in Chart
- Call out for Category Value in Case of Axis Cut-Off
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Summary</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overview and Introduction</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Detailed Results – Acton</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Demographics</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Socioeconomics</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Housing</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Schools</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Public Safety</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detailed Results – Boxborough</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FROM 2000 TO 2013, TOTAL POPULATION INCREASED BY 1,960 RESIDENTS OR 9.6%

Comments
- From 2000 to 2013, total population in Acton increased by 1,960 residents from 20,331 to 22,291
- This reflects a population increase of 9.6%
- Since 2009, total population has been consistently increasing

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
Birth rates nearly halved over the past 15 years and are well below state and national averages.

from 2000 to 2013, birth rates dropped from 12.1 births per 1,000 residents to 6.2 births per 1,000 residents, reflecting a decrease of 48.6%

steadily declining since 2009, birth rates in Acton saw their largest year to year drop from 2012 to 2013 (-15.4%)
Over the last 13 years, Acton has seen a notable shift towards older population groups.

### Population Age Groups by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under 5</th>
<th>School Age (5-19)</th>
<th>Adult (20-64)</th>
<th>Senior (65+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,770</td>
<td>12,353</td>
<td>12,614</td>
<td>13,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5,359</td>
<td>12,086</td>
<td>12,614</td>
<td>13,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,551</td>
<td>12,440</td>
<td>12,614</td>
<td>13,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5,587</td>
<td>12,587</td>
<td>12,614</td>
<td>13,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5,377</td>
<td>12,469</td>
<td>12,614</td>
<td>13,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5,279</td>
<td>13,217</td>
<td>12,614</td>
<td>13,217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### % of Total Population by Age Group and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under 5</th>
<th>School Age (5-19)</th>
<th>Adult (20-64)</th>
<th>Senior (65+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Comments

- From 2000 to 2013, the total school age population increased by 509 children or 10.7%. In 2013, 24% of Acton's residents were school age. However, the school age population has been decreasing since 2011.
- During the same 13 year period, the senior population increased by 831 seniors or 48.9%. In 2013, roughly 11% of Acton's residents were 65 years or older.
- Compared to county, state, and national populations, Acton has a greater proportion of school-aged residents and fewer senior residents.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
In 2013, 831 more senior residents lived in Acton than in 2000.

Population Growth by Age Group 2000/2013

- From 2000 to 2013, the school age population increased by 11% or 509 school aged kids.
- During the same period, the senior population increased by 49% or 831 seniors.
- After declining annually from 2009 through 2012, the number of young children under 5 years increased notably from 2012 to 2013 (+9%).
- From 2009 to 2013, seniors have been the only population age group that saw annually increasing numbers.

YoY Changes in Population by Age Group

Comments

- From 2000 to 2013, the school age population increased by 11% or 509 school aged kids.
- During the same period, the senior population increased by 49% or 831 seniors.
- After declining annually from 2009 through 2012, the number of young children under 5 years increased notably from 2012 to 2013 (+9%).
- From 2009 to 2013, seniors have been the only population age group that saw annually increasing numbers.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year

www.abuw.org
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77% of Acton’s residents are white; Asians are the largest minority group

Population by Race and Year

- In 2013, 17,142 Acton residents were white, comprising about 77% of Acton’s total population.
- Since 2000, the proportion of Acton residents who are Asian has more than doubled. In 2013, 19% of Acton’s residents were Asian.
- Compared to national averages, Acton has more white and Asian residents but fewer Black residents.

% of Total Population by Race and Year

Comments

- In 2013, 17,142 Acton residents were white, comprising about 77% of Acton’s total population.
- Since 2000, the proportion of Acton residents who are Asian has more than doubled. In 2013, 19% of Acton’s residents were Asian.
- Compared to national averages, Acton has more white and Asian residents but fewer Black residents.
In 2013, 2,539 more Asian residents lived in Acton than in 2000

- Over the past 13 years, Asians have been the fastest growing racial population group in Acton. From 2000 to 2013, the number of Acton residents who are Asian increased by 144% or 2,539 residents.

- While white residents are still the majority (see prior slide), their number has decreased by roughly 5% or 840 residents since 2000.

- From 2000 to 2013, the American Indian population increased more than twofold (+220%). However, this high relative increase translates to only 33 residents.
The majority of Acton’s Asian residents are Chinese or Indian

In 2013, 4,297 residents of Acton were Asian. Acton’s Asian residents include American-born individuals, immigrants, and adopted children. In 2013, the majority of Asian adults were either Chinese (46%) or Asian Indian (32%).
ACTON IS A HIGHLY EDUCATED COMMUNITY, MOST HOUSEHOLDS HOLDING A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER

% of Households by Level of Education and Year

- From 2000 to 2013, the percentage of households with a graduate or professional degree increased by 8 points, while the percentage with a bachelor’s degree declined by 4 points.
- The proportion of Acton residents with a bachelor’s or graduate degree is 34 percentage points higher than the state and 44 percentage points higher than the national proportions.
- The proportion of the Acton population with less than a bachelor’s degree has slightly declined over time.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
ACTON IS AN INCREASINGLY HIGH INCOME COMMUNITY, WITH A STEADY NUMBER OF LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Households by Income Level and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>$&lt;50,000</th>
<th>$50,000-$99,999</th>
<th>$100,000-$200,000</th>
<th>$&gt;200,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,893</td>
<td>1,652</td>
<td>1,781</td>
<td>2,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>1,611</td>
<td>1,887</td>
<td>2,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,502</td>
<td>2,614</td>
<td>2,452</td>
<td>2,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,616</td>
<td>1,861</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>1,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,677</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>2,834</td>
<td>1,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,902</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of Households by Income Level and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>$&lt;50,000</th>
<th>$50,000-$99,999</th>
<th>$100,000-$200,000</th>
<th>$&gt;200,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

- The number of Acton households with an annual income of at least $200,000 doubled from 2000 to 2013 (+1,002 households). In 2013, roughly 22% of all households had an annual income of $200,000+
- Over the same period, the number of households with an annual income of less than $50,000 stayed constant
- Acton has consistently had more households earning less than $50,000 than those earning more than $200,000 ($50,000 is about 2x the federal poverty level for a family of 4)

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
THE NUMBER OF ACTON HOUSEHOLDS EARNING $200,000+ DOUBLED OVER THE PAST 13 YEARS

From 2000 to 2013, the number of households with an annual income of at least $200,000 increased by 117% or 1,002 households.

The number of households earning less than $50,000 held steady and those earning $50,000 – $99,999 decreased slightly (-9%).

Comments

- From 2000 to 2013, the number of households with an annual income of at least $200,000 increased by 117% or 1,002 households.
- The number of households earning less than $50,000 held steady and those earning $50,000 – $99,999 decreased slightly (-9%).
Both median and mean incomes of Acton households are well above county, state, and national levels.

From 2000 to 2013, Acton’s average household income increased by ~$29,000 from ~$111,000 to ~$140,000.

In 2013, the average household income in Acton was 27% more than the Middlesex County average, 54% more than the state average, and 90% more than the national average.

Since 2000, average (mean) income has risen by 26% while median income has increased by 21%.

**ACTON’S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS DECLINED SINCE 2009 AND REMAINS BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE**

**Unemployment Rate by Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>MA</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YoY Changes in Unemployment Rate**

- 2008: 2.3%
- 2009: 0.5%
- 2010: -0.3%
- 2011: -0.9%
- 2012: -0.4%
- 2013: 0.1%
- 2014: -0.3%

**Comments**

- Unemployment in Acton has decreased almost steadily from 5.9% in 2009 to 4.2% in 2014.
- Acton’s unemployment rate is still far below county (-0.2%), state (-1.8%), and national averages (-2.0%), implying general community economic health.

Source: mass.gov/lwd

YoY: Year-over-Year
AFTER INCREASING FROM 2000 TO 2009, POVERTY RATES HAVE BEEN DECLINING

% of Individuals below Poverty Level by Year

- 2000: 2.8%
- 2009: 3.9%
- 2010: 3.8%
- 2011: 3.4%
- 2012: 2.9%
- 2013: 2.4%

Individuals below Poverty Level - YoY Changes

- County: 8.1% → 11.4% → 15.4%
- MA: 0.3%
- National: -5%

Comments

- Since 2009, poverty rates have declined from 3.9% to 2.4% of the population
- In 2013, 2.4% of Acton's residents had below poverty level incomes
  - 2014 Federal Poverty Guidelines are as follows: 1-person household = $11,770; 2-person household = $15,930; 3-person household = $20,090; 4-person household = $24,250
- The poverty rate in Acton is 5.7 points lower than the county (8.1%), 9.0 points lower than the state (11.4%) and 13.0 points lower than the national (15.4%) poverty rates

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
POVERTY RATES ARE HIGHEST FOR YOUNG WOMEN, SENIORS AND SINGLE MOTHERS

By looking at different variables such as sex, age, and family status, additional insights can be drawn regarding the most vulnerable population groups in Acton:

- 8.9% of young females (18 to 24 years) and 7.5% of 55–64 year old men, 4% of 65-74 year old men and 2.5% of over 75 year old men are below the poverty level.
- 7.5% of single females and 25.7% of all single mothers are affected by poverty in Acton.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
SINGLE FAMILY HOME PRICES INCREASED FROM 2000 TO 2007, THEN STABILIZED

- From 2000 to 2014, the median price of a single family home in Acton has increased by 34.6%, from $389,900 to $525,000.
- Prices for single family homes increased 25% from 2000 to 2007 and have been fairly stable ever since.
- The median price of a single family home in Acton is 19% more expensive than the median for Middlesex County, 59% more expensive than Massachusetts, and 253% more expensive than the national median.

Source: thewarrengroup.com and realtor.org
YoY: Year-over-Year
2014: Jan - Oct
PETITIONS FOR FORECLOSURE PEAKED IN 2012 AND HAVE DECLINED NOTABLY EVER SINCE

The number of petitions for foreclosure was reasonably stable from 2007 to 2011 and spiked in 2012. Petitions for foreclosure increased by more than 50% from 2011 to 2012 but have stabilized at a fairly low level ever since.

Comments
The number of housing units is increasing; 24% of Acton’s housing units are rentals.

From 2000 to 2013, the number of owner occupied and renter occupied housing units increased.

In 2013, roughly ¼ of Acton’s housing units were renter occupied while ¾ of all housing units were owner occupied.

Compared to county, state, and national fractions, Acton has more owner occupied and less renter occupied housing units.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
Compared to 2000, proportionally more units tend to be rented rather than owned

From 2000 to 2013, the number of owner occupied and renter occupied housing units increased

- Owner occupied: +702 units or 12.3%
- Renter occupied: +282 units or 15.7%

Comments

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
SINCE 2009, THE NUMBER OF LOWEST-COST RENTAL UNITS HAS DECLINED RELATIVE TO ALL RENTAL UNITS

From 2000 to 2013, the number of available rental units with a monthly gross rent below $1,000 has decreased markedly by 52% or 643 units.

- “Gross rent” is monthly rent charges plus estimated monthly utility costs.
- Over the same period, the number of rental units with a monthly gross rent above $2,000 has increased by 975%.
- Compared to state and national percentages, Acton has fewer housing units with a monthly gross rent of below $1,500 and more housing units with a monthly gross rent of over $2,000.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
OVER THE PAST 13 YEARS, THE NUMBER OF UNITS WITH A MONTHLY GROSS RENT OF $2,000+ INCREASED BY 975%

From 2000 to 2013, the number of housing units with a monthly gross rent of $1,000 and up increased notably

- $1,000 to $1,499: +480 units or +131%
- $1,500 to $1,999: +307 units or +465%
- $2,000 and above: +195 units or +975%

Comments

- YoY: Year-over-Year

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Compared to 2000, more renters are using a higher portion of their income for rent.

- In 2000, 30% of renters (530) reported paying 30% or more of their income to rent; in 2013 more than 42% of renters (842) paid 30% or more towards rent.
- In 2013, one fifth of Acton renters paid half their income on rent.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
COMPARSED TO 2000, 68% MORE RENTAL HOUSEHOLDS PAID 50%+ OF THEIR INCOME TOWARDS RENT IN 2013

- From 2000 to 2013, the number of rental households who are paying more than 30% of their income to rent has increased by 312 households or 59%.
- This increase was primarily driven by the increase in households who are paying 50% or more of their monthly income on rent (+68% or 157 households), a situation that increased markedly from 2009 to 2010.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
HH: Household(s)
ACTON SCHOOL DATA REFLECTS THE FIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND ALL STUDENTS IN THE JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOLS

- School data was obtained from Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools as of school year 2014/2015

- Unless otherwise indicated, elementary school data in this section is shown for the five elementary schools in Acton only and does not include Blanchard Elementary School, even for the 2014/2015 school year

- Though the Boxborough and Acton School Districts merged as of the 2014/2015 school year, the data for Blanchard is presented separately on pages 94-101 of the Scan. This was done to ensure that data compares the same schools from year to year

- The data for RJ Grey Junior High School and AB Regional High School is identical in the Acton and Boxborough sections of the Scan
**Since 2009, the total number of students has decreased by 5.8%**

- The total number of students decreased from 5409 in 2009 to 5095 in 2014, representing a 5.8% decline in student population.
- Since 2009:
  - Enrollment at elementary schools has declined 8.1%.
  - Enrollment at the junior high school has declined 7.9%.
  - Enrollment at the high school has declined 1.7%.

**Comments**

---

**Students per School Type and Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acton Elementary Schools</th>
<th>RJ Grey JHS</th>
<th>AB RHS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,657</td>
<td>1,399</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5,374</td>
<td>1,892</td>
<td>1,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5,409</td>
<td>1,906</td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,380</td>
<td>1,964</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5,284</td>
<td>1,930</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5,266</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5,195</td>
<td>1,928</td>
<td>915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5,095</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
THE ACTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL POPULATION HAS DECLINED EVERY YEAR SINCE 2009

- From 2009 to 2014, the school population at every level shows an overall declining trend, but the elementary and junior high level population exhibits the greatest decline.
- In 2014 fewer students attended elementary (-1%), junior high (-2%), and high schools (-3%) than in 2013.

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
YoY: Year-over-Year
THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS INCREASED BY ONE THIRD FROM 2000 TO 2014

- Since 2000, the number of special education students increased by 30.2% or 229 students, from 759 in 2000 to 988 in 2014.
- Since 2009, the number of special education students increased by 12%.
- Note: Data points for this page are for all Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools and also include Blanchard Elementary School.
IN 2014, SCHOOLS SERVED MORE THAN TWICE THE NUMBER OF FREE AND REDUCED LUNCHES AS IN 2008

- From 2009 to 2014, the total number of free and reduced lunches increased by 170% from 128 to 346
- In 2014, roughly 8% of all elementary school students, 6% of all junior high students, and 6% of all high school students received free or reduced lunches

**Comments**

- From 2009 to 2014, the total number of free and reduced lunches increased by 170% from 128 to 346
- In 2014, roughly 8% of all elementary school students, 6% of all junior high students, and 6% of all high school students received free or reduced lunches
Over the past 6 years, all school types saw notable increases in the number of free and reduced lunches.

- From 2009 to 2014, the number of free and reduced lunches increased across all school types:
  - Elementary schools: +117 free and reduced lunches or +209%
  - Junior high: +31 free and reduced lunches or +127%
  - High school: +69 free and reduced lunches or +145%

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
YoY: Year-over-Year
In 2013, 6.1% of elementary school students were English Language Learners (ELL).

- From 2009 to 2013, the number of ELL students increased by 3.0 points for elementary level and 0.1 point for junior high and high school level.
- In 2013, 6.1% of all elementary and 0.8% of junior high and high school students were English Language Learner students.
AS OF 2014, ASIAN STUDENTS COMPRISE ABOUT ONE THIRD OF THE STUDENT POPULATION

Student Ethnicity – Acton Elementary Schools

- Since 2000, White and Asian students have consistently been the two biggest ethnicities in all three school levels.
- Compared to 2000, the proportion of Asian students in the district has increased:
  - Acton elementary schools: from 11% to 33%, a 22 point increase
  - RJ Grey Junior High School: a 26 point increase
  - AB Regional High School: a 17 point increase

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
ARRESTS, PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND JUVENILE CASES ROSE SINCE 2013

# of Arrests

# of DUIs

# of IPH

# of Protective Custody

# of DV Calls

# of Juvenile Incidents

Source: Acton PDIPH – Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalizations
DV – Domestic Violence
Juvenile Incidents – Anyone under the age of 17

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From 2000 to 2013, total population increased by 180 residents or 3.7%.

- From 2000 to 2013, total population in Boxborough increased by 180 residents, or 3.7%, from 4,868 to 5,048.
- After declining 3.6% from 2009 to 2010, the number of Boxborough residents has increased steadily.
Birth rates dropped by one third over the past 13 years and are below state and national averages

From 2000 to 2013, birth rates have dropped notably from 12.5 births per 1,000 residents to 8.1 births per 1,000 residents, a 35.2% decrease in the birth rate.

Contrary to the long-term decline, birth rates from 2012 to 2013 increased by 23.5%.

Comments

- From 2000 to 2013, birth rates have dropped notably from 12.5 births per 1,000 residents to 8.1 births per 1,000 residents, a 35.2% decrease in the birth rate.
- Contrary to the long-term decline, birth rates from 2012 to 2013 increased by 23.5%.

Source: mass.gov and cdc.gov
YoY: Year-over-Year
Over the last 13 years, Boxborough has experienced a shift towards older population groups.

From 2000 to 2013, the number of children below 5 years of age dropped substantially by 242 children or 67.6%. During the same period, the senior population increased by 304 seniors or 132%.

In 2013, about 11% of Boxborough's residents were 65 years or older.

Compared to county, state, and national populations, Boxborough has a greater proportion of school-aged residents, fewer children under the age of 5, and fewer seniors over the age of 65.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
In 2013, 242 fewer pre-school and 304 more seniors lived in Boxborough than in 2000.

From 2000 to 2013, the number of children below 5 years dropped substantially by 242 children or 67.6%.

During the same period, the senior population increased by 132% or 304 seniors.

From 2009 to 2013, young children under 5 years were the only age group that saw declining numbers every year.

Comments

- From 2000 to 2013, the number of children below 5 years dropped substantially by 242 children or 67.6%.
- During the same period, the senior population increased by 132% or 304 seniors.
- From 2009 to 2013, young children under 5 years were the only age group that saw declining numbers every year.
82% OF BOXBOROUGH’S RESIDENTS ARE WHITE; ASIANS ARE THE LARGEST MINORITY GROUP

- In 2013, 4,129 Boxborough residents were white, comprising approximately 82% of Boxborough's total population.
- Since 2000, the proportion of Boxborough residents who are Asian has more than doubled. In 2013, 17% of Boxborough's residents were Asian.
- Compared to national averages, Boxborough has more white and Asian residents but fewer Black residents.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year

Comments:
- In 2013, 4,129 Boxborough residents were white, comprising approximately 82% of Boxborough's total population.
- Since 2000, the proportion of Boxborough residents who are Asian has more than doubled. In 2013, 17% of Boxborough's residents were Asian.
- Compared to national averages, Boxborough has more white and Asian residents but fewer Black residents.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
In 2013, 436 more Asian residents lived in Boxborough than in 2000.

- Over the past 13 years, Asians have been the fastest growing population group in Boxborough. From 2000 to 2013, the number of Asian Boxborough residents increased by 106% or 436 residents.

- While white residents are still the majority (see prior slide), their number has decreased by 195 residents or about 5% since 2000.

Comments:

- Over the past 13 years, Asians have been the fastest growing population group in Boxborough. From 2000 to 2013, the number of Asian Boxborough residents increased by 106% or 436 residents.

- While white residents are still the majority (see prior slide), their number has decreased by 195 residents or about 5% since 2000.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year

YoY: Year-over-Year
THE MAJORITY OF BOXBOROUGH’S ASIAN RESIDENTS ARE INDIAN OR CHINESE

In 2013, 849 residents of Boxborough were Asian. Boxborough’s Asian residents include American-born individuals, immigrants, and adopted children. In 2013, the majority of Asian adults were either Asian Indian (57%) or Chinese (33%).

Source: 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
BOXBOROUGH IS A HIGHLY EDUCATED COMMUNITY, MOST HOUSEHOLDS HOLD A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER

From 2000 to 2013, the percentage of households with a graduate or professional degree has increased by 12 points, while the percentage of households with a bachelor’s degree has declined by 6 points.

The proportion of Boxborough residents with a bachelor’s or a graduate degree is 39 percentage points higher than the state and 49 percentage points higher than the national proportions.

The proportion of the Boxborough population with less than a bachelor’s degree has slightly declined over time.

Comments

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
Boxborough is a high income community, yet ~25% of households earn less than $50,000 per year.

- The number of Boxborough households with an annual income of at least $200,000 more than doubled from 2000 to 2013 (+321 households). In 2013, roughly 24% of all households had an annual income of $200,000+
- Over the same period, the number of households with an annual income of $50,000 or less increased as well.
- As of 2013, Boxborough has about the same number of households earning over $200,000 as those earning less than $50,000.

Comments:

- The number of Boxborough households with an annual income of at least $200,000 more than doubled from 2000 to 2013 (+321 households). In 2013, roughly 24% of all households had an annual income of $200,000+
- Over the same period, the number of households with an annual income of $50,000 or less increased as well.
- As of 2013, Boxborough has about the same number of households earning over $200,000 as those earning less than $50,000.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AN ANNUAL INCOME OF $200,000 MORE THAN DOUBLED SINCE 2000

- The number of households with an annual income of at least $200,000 increased by 149% or 321 households from 2000 to 2013.
- Over the same period, the number of households with an annual income of $50,000 or less slightly increased as well by 9% or 44 households.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
Median and mean incomes of Boxborough households are well above county, state, and national levels

- From 2000 to 2013, Boxborough’s average household income increased by ~$37,000 from ~$101,000 to ~$138,000
- In 2013, the average household income in Boxborough was 25% more than the Middlesex County average, 51% more than the state average, and 87% more than the national average
- Since 2000, the average (mean) income has risen by 37% while median income has increased by 16%

Comments

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
**Unemployment Rate by Year**

- 2000: 1.6%
- 2007: 3.1%
- 2008: 3.5%
- 2009: 6.1%
- 2010: 6.3%
- 2011: 5.4%
- 2012: 5.0%
- 2013: 5.3%
- 2014: 4.0%

- County: 4.7%
- MA: 6.0%
- National: 6.2%

**YoY Changes in Unemployment Rate**

- 2008: -0.4%
- 2009: 2.5%
- 2010: 0.2%
- 2011: -0.8%
- 2012: -0.4%
- 2013: 0.2%
- 2014: -1.2%

**Comments**

- Unemployment in Boxborough has decreased almost steadily from 6.1% in 2009 to 4.0% in 2014.
- Boxborough’s unemployment rate is far below county (-0.7%), state (-2.0%), and national averages (-2.2%), implying general community economic health.

Source: mass.gov/lwd

YoY: Year-over-Year
After increasing from 2000 to 2010, Boxborough’s poverty rates have been steadily declining.

- Since 2010, poverty rates have declined notably, with 2.7% below the Federal Poverty Guideline in 2013.
  - 2014 Federal Poverty Guidelines are as follows: 1-person household = $11,770; 2-person household = $15,930; 3-person household = $20,090; 4-person household = $24,250.
- The poverty rate in Boxborough is 5.4 points lower than the county (8.1%), 8.7 points lower than the state (11.4%) and 12.7 points lower than the national (15.4%) poverty rates.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
POVERTY RATES ARE HIGHEST FOR YOUNG ADULTS, SINGLE MOTHERS, AND SENIORS

By looking at different variables such as sex, age, and family status, additional insights can be drawn to identify the most vulnerable population groups in Boxborough:

- 8.3% of young females (18 to 24 years) and 8.1% of young males (18 to 24 years) have below poverty level incomes
- 42.9% of single females living alone and 20.2% of single moms are affected by poverty

Note: Above comments and numbers are indicative only, due to very small sample size and high margin of error.

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year

www.abuw.org

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Prices for single homes in Boxborough have seen notable annual fluctuations since 2000

From 2000 to 2014, the median price of a single family home in Boxborough increased by 38.1%, from $466,000 to $643,333.

Prices for single family homes have seen annual fluctuations of up to +/- 30%.

The median price of a single family home in Boxborough is 46% more expensive than the median price in Middlesex County, 95% more expensive than Massachusetts, and 310% more expensive than the national median.

Source: thewarrengroup.com and realtor.org

YoY: Year-over-Year

2014: Jan - Oct
SINCE 2013, PETITIONS FOR FORECLOSURE IN BOXBOROUGH HAVE BEEN AT A LOW LEVEL

From 2007 to 2012, the number of petitions for foreclosure fluctuated notably between 21 in 2007 and 8 in 2011.

Starting in 2013, petitions for foreclosure have stabilized at a low level.
MORE AND MORE HOUSING UNITS TEND TO BE OWNED RATHER THAN RENTED

From 2000 to 2013, the number of owner occupied housing units increased while the number of renter occupied housing units decreased.

In 2013, roughly 20% of Boxborough’s housing units were renter occupied, while 80% of all housing units were owner occupied.

Compared to county, state, and national percentages, Boxborough has more owner occupied and fewer renter occupied housing units.

Comments

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
COMPARED TO 2000, 22% FEWER HOUSING UNITS WERE RENTER OCCUPIED IN 2013

- From 2000 to 2013, the number of owner occupied housing units increased by 406 units or 31.0%
- Over the same period, the number of renter occupied housing units declined by 118 units or 21.7%

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
IN BOXBOROUGH, MOST RENTAL UNITS COST LESS THAN $1,000 PER MONTH

Rental Units by Gross Rent Level and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>&lt;$1,000</th>
<th>$1,000 - $1,499</th>
<th>$1,500 - $1,999</th>
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<td>472</td>
<td>198</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>134</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>79</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
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% of Rental Units by Gross Rent Level

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<th>$1,000 - $1,499</th>
<th>$1,500 - $1,999</th>
<th>&gt; $2,000</th>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

- From 2000 to 2013, the number of available rental units with a monthly gross rent below $1,000 decreased by 35% or 165 units
  - “Gross rent” is monthly rent charges plus estimated monthly utility costs
- Starting in 2010, the number of low rent housing units has been steadily increasing
- In 2013, 72% of all available rental housing units in Boxborough were below $1,000 per month

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
**COMPARSED TO 2000, RENTERS ARE USING A HIGHER PORTION OF THEIR INCOME TOWARDS RENT**

While in 2000, only 20% of renters (102) reported paying 30% or more of their income to rent, in 2013 more than 43% of renters (184) are paying this percentage towards rent.

In 2013, more than 30% of renters used 40% or more of their income to pay rent.

*Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year*
Compared to 2000, 82 more households paid 30% or more of their income for rent than in 2013.

- From 2000 to 2013, the number of households who pay more than 30% of their income toward rent has increased by 82 households or 80%.
- This increase was primarily driven by households who are paying between 30% and 50% of their monthly income towards rent (+96% or 69 households).

Comments

- From 2000 to 2013, the number of households who pay more than 30% of their income toward rent has increased by 82 households or 80%.
- This increase was primarily driven by households who are paying between 30% and 50% of their monthly income towards rent (+96% or 69 households).

Source: 2000 US Census, 2009-2013 ACS 5-year
YoY: Year-over-Year
SCHOOL DATA IS SHOWN FOR BLANCHARD ELEMENTARY, RJ GREY JUNIOR HIGH AND AB REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

- School data was obtained from Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools through school year 2014/2015
- School data presented in the Boxborough section of the Community Scan contains information ONLY for Blanchard Elementary School (unless noted otherwise). The 5 Acton elementary schools are discussed in the Acton section
- The data for RJ Grey Junior High School and AB Regional High School are identical in the Acton and Boxborough sections of this Scan
- Data for the Acton Regional School District (without Blanchard data) can be found on pages 63-70
Since 2000, the number of Blanchard Students dropped 41% (from 625 to 368)

Since 2009:
- The number of students at Blanchard Elementary dropped 23%
- The number of students at RJ Grey Junior High School fell by 8%
- The number of students at AB Regional High School rose then fell by about 2%
BLANCHARD’S STUDENT POPULATION DECREASED EVERY YEAR SINCE 2008

Since 2009:
- Blanchard Elementary’s student population declined every year
- RJ Grey Junior High School’s student population declined every year but one
- AB Regional High School’s student population growth peaked from 2009 to 2010
- In 2014 fewer students attended Blanchard (-2%), RJ Grey Junior High (-2%), and AB Regional High School (-3%) than in 2013

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
YoY: Year-over-Year
THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS INCREASED BY ROUGHLY 30% FROM 2000 TO 2014

Since 2000, the number of special education students increased by 30.2% or 229 students, from 759 in 2000 to 988 in 2014.

Since 2009, the number of special education students increased by 12%.

Note: Data points for this page are for all Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools and also include Blanchard Elementary School.

Comments
In 2014, schools served almost three times as many free and reduced lunches as in 2008.

- In 2014, roughly 10% of all Blanchard students, 6% of all junior high students, and 6% of all high school students received free or reduced lunches.
- In 2014, 104% more free and reduced lunches (+18) were served at Blanchard than in 2013.
- From 2009 to 2014, the number of free and reduced lunches served increased 167% at Blanchard, 127% at RJ Grey Junior High and 145% at AB Regional High School.

Comments:

- In 2014, roughly 10% of all Blanchard students, 6% of all junior high students, and 6% of all high school students received free or reduced lunches.
- In 2014, 104% more free and reduced lunches (+18) were served at Blanchard than in 2013.
- From 2009 to 2014, the number of free and reduced lunches served increased 167% at Blanchard, 127% at RJ Grey Junior High and 145% at AB Regional High School.

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
Over the past 6 years, all school types saw notable increases in the number of free and reduced lunches.

- From 2009 to 2014, the number of free and reduced lunches increased across all school types:
  - Blanchard Elementary School: +23 free and reduced lunches or +167%
  - Junior high: +31 free and reduced lunches or +127%
  - Elementary schools: +69 free and reduced lunches or +145%
- From 2013 to 2014, the number of free and reduced lunches served by Blanchard more than doubled.

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
YoY: Year-over-Year
In 2013, 2.8% of Blanchard elementary students were English Language Learners (ELL).

From 2009 to 2013, the number of ELL students increased by 1.6 points for elementary level and 0.1 point for junior high and high school level.

In 2013, 2.8% of all elementary and 0.8% of junior high and high school students were English Language Learner students.
Asian Students Comprise 36% of Blanchard's Student Body Population

Since 2000, White and Asian students have been the two largest ethnicities in all three school levels.

Compared to 2000, the percentage of Asian students has increased across the board:
- Blanchard Elementary: +12 points (2010 to 2014)
- RJ Grey Junior High: +26 points
- AB Regional High School: +17 points

Source: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
BOXBOROUGH POLICE REPORT DECLINES IN DUIS, PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, AND JUVENILE INCIDENTS IN LAST 2-5 YEARS

# of Arrests

# of DUIs

# of IPHs

# of Protective Custody

# of DV Calls

# of Juvenile Incidents

Source: Boxborough PD

IPH – Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalizations
DV – Domestic Violence
Juvenile Incidents – Anyone under the age of 17

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Abuse, Neglect, and Violence

- Bullying among youth and young adults is a persistent problem that has increased in frequency and severity due to the internet.

- The number of online and phone scams are increasing and a disproportionate number are targeted at seniors. The effectiveness of information and warnings about scams as currently disseminated is unknown.

- Domestic violence reports in AB are higher than in other area towns. Victims of domestic violence Acton and Boxborough benefit from a strong partnership between the police departments and Domestic Violence Services Network (DVSN), which helps increase referral rates. Safe shelter/housing options are very limited. DV victims are primarily looking for transportation, legal assistance, immigration assistance, and secure housing.

- Cultural influences may prevent some DV violence victims from asking for or accepting help.

- An increasing number of seniors exhibit self-abuse behaviors such as hoarding, a lack of good hygiene, self-medication or abuse of prescription and/or non-prescription drugs.
Basic Needs and Family and Economic Stability

- The lack of access to transportation is a significant barrier to many people and especially to the most vulnerable
  - Limited access to food pantries and grocery stores
  - Limited access to employment opportunities
  - Limited access to medical services and social opportunities, particularly a problem for the seniors
  - Food insecurity and increased requests for fuel assistance indicate a persistent problem for vulnerable populations, including low income seniors

- Financial illiteracy including the inability to manage personal finances seems to be a problem, particularly for veterans

- For many low-income families and single moms, a lack of affordable child care and long wait times for federal child care vouchers tends to be a big problem

- For the seniors, affordable and accessible housing is insufficient or unavailable

- Student loan debts are a major problem for families due to the pressure of sending their children to good and expensive colleges and universities

- Pride and different cultural norms may make it hard for individuals and families to accept help
Diversity

- Language barriers are more problematic for adults and are obstacles for accessing services, becoming involved in the community, finding better jobs.
  - Language barriers in senior population groups exacerbate senior isolation.
  - East and Southeast Asian residents tend to be particularly isolated.
  - English language learning opportunities exist, but organizations are over capacity with long wait lists.
- It is difficult to assess undocumented workers and families.
- Cultural barriers might prevent people in need to go out and request assistance.
- Brazilians living in this community usually work here as well. The greatest needs are health care and drivers licenses, along with information in Portuguese about available services.
Mental Health

- Mental health is an increasing concern for numerous population groups
  - Youth and Young Adults – Academic, social and home pressures contribute to increasing mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and suicidal behaviors; autism spectrum and other special needs among the elementary school population is increasing
  - Veterans – Many veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression
  - Seniors – Many seniors suffer from mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression
- Mental health seems to be the biggest concern for students – the hospitalization rate for high school students doubled last year
- Schools have realized this increasing trend interferes with students’ ability to learn and implementing prevention and intervention programs for staff, faculty and students
- With regards to the service network, the most acute problems seem to be a lack of
  - Sufficient psychiatric in-patient, out-patient and medication services for children
  - Respite services for families of the chronically mentally ill, disabled and seniors
  - Residential placements and adult day care for disabled adults
Substance Abuse

- Overall, substance abuse seems to be a growing trend
  - Youth and Young Adults – Increasing trend in marijuana availability and consumption
  - Adults – Alcohol and prescription drug abuse remains a consistent problem, though it is not perceived to be increasing
  - Seniors – Self-medication and alcoholism is a problem that is primarily driven by mental health issues and social isolation
- When available, many services for substance abuse are expensive, not covered by health insurance programs and hard to access
- There seems to be a lack affordable post-detox services beyond 12-step programs
ABUW and Carlisle conducted interviews with 35 select Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to gather as much qualitative information as possible.

All interviews were directly related to the six service categories\(^{(1)}\) and four population groups\(^{(2)}\) that are covered by the community needs assessment.

From October through November 2014, ABUW and Carlisle conducted 19 interviews with 32 SMEs:
- 9 group interviews
- 10 one-on-one phone interviews

The ABUW wishes to thank all of the SME’s for their helpful participation and their significant contributions to the findings in this document.

\(^{(1)}\) Abuse, Neglect and Violence, Basic Needs, Family and Economic Stability, Diversity, Mental Health, Substance Abuse

\(^{(2)}\) Children, Youth and Young adults, Adults, Seniors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marie Altieri</td>
<td>Dir. of Personnel &amp; Administrative Services</td>
<td>AB Regional School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jaqueline Apsler</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Services Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Andy Armstrong</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
<td>Acton Congregational Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Ann Ashton</td>
<td>Co-Chair, League of Women Voters</td>
<td>Acton Community Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jared Bloom</td>
<td>CPA, CFP</td>
<td>Sechrest &amp; Bloom, LLC</td>
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<td>Rich Burrows</td>
<td>Deputy Chief</td>
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<td>Joan Butler</td>
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<td>Minuteman Senior Services</td>
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<td>JoAnn Campbell</td>
<td>Principal</td>
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<td>Todd Chicko</td>
<td>Chair, Counseling Services</td>
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<td>Kelley Cronin</td>
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<td>Laura Ducharme</td>
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<td>John Fallon</td>
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<td>Friends of Boxborough COA</td>
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<td>Jean Goldsberry</td>
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<td>League of Women Voters</td>
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<tr>
<td>James MacRae</td>
<td>Veteran Service Officer</td>
<td>Acton Veteran Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty McManus</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Doli Atamian Campership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Mercurio</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Acton Council on Aging</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Mintz</td>
<td>Rabbi</td>
<td>Congregation Beth Elohim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyn Osborn</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>Friends of Acton COA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Parish</td>
<td>Director of Development</td>
<td>Minute Man ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Randolph</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
<td>ABUW Outreach Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren B. Ryder</td>
<td>Chief of Police</td>
<td>Town of Boxborough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunanda Sahay</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>AB Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Shen</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>RJ Grey Jr. High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ira Smith</td>
<td>Co-Founder and Co-Director</td>
<td>Household Goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsey Sweet</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>ABHL Early Childhood Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Widmayer</td>
<td>Chief of Police</td>
<td>Town of Acton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Overview and Introduction</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Detailed Interview Summaries</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
SME Interviews
Details - Abuse, Neglect, and Violence

Category: Abuse, Neglect, and Violence

Participants: A. Armstrong
R. Burrows
C. Randolph
S. Sherman

Facilitator: A. Budner

Note Taker: E. Speers

Problems, Issues, and Trends

- Bullying is a problem that doesn’t go away
  - Begins in elementary school
  - Continues relentlessly on the Internet
  - Parents need to monitor kids’ activity on the Internet
- Domestic violence reports in Acton are higher than in other area towns. However, DV does not appear to be an unmet service need in AB due to strong DVSN/police collaboration and clear protocols. Still, the number of unreported cases might be high
- Online and telephone scamming is a problem, particularly amongst seniors
- When hoarding is a problem there is no specific protocol
  - Who do you call?
  - Who has leverage to intervene, especially when an elder refuses help?

Service Network

- Effective response protocols for DV incidents are well established
- The PD works closely with Domestic Violence Services Network (DVSN)
- Limited housing options are available for DV victims
- Online scamming: monthly newsletters with warnings, police educating at senior centers, bank tellers who are trained to recognize potential financial scams

Additional Comments

- A new hoarding task force was created 6-8 months ago with Sharon Mercurio, Kelly Cronin, and representatives from the board of health, fire department, and animal control
With regards to domestic violence, four main needs have been identified:

1. **Transportation**
   - Getting to job, court house, etc.

2. **Legal assistance**
   - MetroWest Legal Services is “fabulous” but has capacity issues
   - Pro-bono attorneys have limited time
   - Need more trained assistance at restraining order hearings

3. **Immigration assistance**
   - Victim is often dependent on abuser’s green card or visa; abuser will threaten victim with deportation
   - Victims need to understand their rights, requires specialized legal assistance and often an interpreter

4. **Housing**
   - Safe options are limited. Likelihood of space in a local shelter is very low. Waltham is closest but has no beds available. Affordable, secure housing is needed

**Service Network**

- Service network offers “discrete modules of help” but nobody is looking at it all
- Acton residents go to Concord District Court. DVSN advocates are there three days/week
- Boxborough residents go to Ayer District Court and the court house has a victim witness advocate
- SafeLink offers centralized shelter info

**Additional Comments**

- A center is needed, where lawyers would be available to DVSN and other agencies
- More teens abusive of parents and each other. Humor is used in such a hurtful way. Healthy relationship conversations need to happen at an early level
- Acton is far more pro-active than other towns. “Police view us as partners” and send DVSN “anything at all that is problematic.”
**SME Interviews**

**Details - Basic Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
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**Steering Committee**

- **Participants:**
  - M.A. Ashton
  - J. Bloom
  - L. Ducharme
  - B. Keegan

- **Facilitator:** J. Sun
- **Note Taker:** A. Berko

**Additional SMEs**

- **Participants:**
  - J. Calabria
  - B. McManus
  - I. Smith
  - B. Sweet

- **Facilitator:** J. Sun
- **Note Taker:** P. Higgins
  - M. Lohfink

**Problems, Issues, and Trends**

- Overall, transportation seems to be the biggest problem
  - Limits access to services such as the food pantry
  - It is also a big problem for the seniors who need it for medical appointments, daily life

- Financial illiteracy also seems to be a problem as people overspend in a culture of consumption

- Low income/minimum wage a concern
  - Lack of affordable childcare options
  - Long waits for federal childcare vouchers
  - # of campership scholarships up

- The homeless population is put into motels, but from there, they have no way of leaving and getting help

- Veterans are a vulnerable population

**Service Network**

- Current transportation services do not meet needs
  - No standard route/schedule
  - Long waiting times
  - No transportation evenings/weekends

- Lack of sufficient funding for child care scholarships
- Open Table has some capacity challenges

**Additional Comments**

- One possible idea is to implement a standard bus route to Food Pantry/Market Basket/Asian Market Littleton
- Mobile pantries is a new trend in this area
**Category:** Basic Needs; Veterans

**Participants:** J. MacRae

**Facilitator:** M. Lohfink

**Note Taker:** M. Lohfink

### Problems, Issues, and Trends

- Acton Veteran’s Services (AVS) currently serves roughly a couple of dozen veterans
- In 2013, AVS issued financial benefits to veterans of roughly USD 120,000
- The three most critical needs veterans are facing right now are
  - Financial stability
  - Ability to manage money
  - Transportation; primarily the ability to get to the employment opportunities
- Drug and alcohol abuse remains a consistent problem, though it is not perceived to be increasing
- Many veterans are struggling with (mental) health issues
  - Post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression
  - General health problems caused by “Agent Orange”

### Service Network

- The service network for veterans is generally well established
  - On a regional level, veterans can take advantage of good service network
  - On a national level, a high claim backlog and bureaucratic obstacles make it hard for veterans to receive services

### Additional Comments

- By law, each community must have veteran’s officer that informs veterans about their benefits. This officer has to be full-time for communities with more than 12,000 residents
- Veterans who are struggling financially and/or have mental health or substance abuse issues are reluctant to ask for help
- Over the next decades, the number of veterans is expected to decrease notably
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>D. Halley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator:</td>
<td>A. Budner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note Taker:</td>
<td>A. Berko, A. Budner, P. Higgins</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Problems, Issues, and Trends**

- Transportation is a unique challenge in the suburbs; people get locked in their subdivisions, especially seniors and 12-16 year olds
- Seniors on fixed incomes need access to healthy food, doctors. Asian seniors often don’t drive
- Ideally, each ride would carry 8-10 passengers, but it now runs more like a door-to-door taxi service. The obstacle to a more efficient fixed bus route is funding
- “The need is so great we can’t keep pace. If we put a new van out there, it would be fully utilized in a week, but there would only be one person riding at a time.”
- Acton doesn’t have the use patterns for ride sharing. However, bus runs weekly to Market Basket from Sachem Way, Windsor Green, and COA, and frequently to Emerson Hospital
- Most vulnerable populations: seniors, special needs and disabled, affordable housing residents, DV victims
- Acton and Boxborough serviced by different Regional Transit Authorities

**Service Network**

- Four services cost ~$260K/year
  - Crosstown Connect – dispatch service with 5 towns, public/private partnership
  - Council on Aging Van
  - Minute Van “Dollar Ride”
  - LRTA Road Runner Senior Services Van
- Prediction: a new van would serve 60-70 riders per day

**Additional Comments**

- Acton will propose a meals tax at spring town meeting to help support a fixed route shuttle
- We need regional solutions with multiple partners and towns working together
- Those who want to preserve the towns’ “bucolic” feel may resist public solutions
- “People have to accept that public transportation has to have a subsidy – it’s for the good of the community”
SME Interviews
Details - Diversity

Category: Diversity

**Steering Committee**

Participants: M.A. Ashton
M. Kennedy
L. Osborn

Facilitator: P. Higgins
Note Taker: A. Berko

**Additional SMEs**

Participants: Rabbi L. Mintz
E. Kreischer
S. Sahay
S. Sherman

Facilitator: J. Sun
Note Taker: M. Lohfink
A. Berko

**Problems, Issues, and Trends**

- Language barriers are more problematic for adults and are obstacles for accessing services, becoming involved in and supported by community, finding better jobs
- It is difficult to assess undocumented workers and families
- Language barriers in senior population groups exacerbate senior isolation
- East and Southeast Asian immigrants tend to be particularly isolated; Indians tend to be not as isolated because of language similarities; Brazilian population difficult to assess
- Cultural barriers might prevent people in need to go out and request assistance
  - Being aware of services
  - The “shame” of reaching out for help

**Service Network**

- English language learning opportunities exist, but organizations are over capacity with long wait lists
  - Main constraint is number of volunteers
- Schools provide translation and additional language programs to improve skills

**Additional Comments**

- Minuteman Senior Services served 50 clients who were Indian in 2011, 500 in 2014
- Friends of Boxboro COA was fairly successful in contacting Indian/Pakistan seniors; yet had very low success with East Asian seniors
- Coaching and networking groups may reach those who are more resistant
Problems, Issues, and Trends

- Estimates 1,000 Brazilian families live in AB and local area, including Maynard
  - 70% have immigration issues
- Most people do work, so they can afford rent, food, utilities, car but they can’t get drivers licenses
- People live in this area because we have jobs. Others are reverse commuting here from Framingham and Cambridge, where fewer jobs.
- Jobs include house cleaning and landscaping
- Greatest needs are health care and drivers licenses
  - Unclear whether people without social security are eligible for health care
  - Must have social security card to get a drivers license
- Need an association that serves the Brazilian community, as there is in Marlborough and Framingham
  - People are too busy to help each other in Acton and Boxborough
  - Unaware of town social workers, ABUW service directory

Service Network

- Sunday nights – Brazilian church service held at West Acton Baptist Church (Pastor Dalton)
- Wednesday nights– bible classes held at Acton Congregational Church
- “The Book” - rotates to different churches, identifies needs of families so that people can help
- Maynard offers limited free English classes

Additional Comments

- Genie Lamb is the unofficial social worker for the Brazilian community in AB
  - People find out about her through word of mouth
- Service information in Portuguese would be helpful
- An informational meeting with Laura Ducharme at the church on a Sunday night would also help
SME INTERVIEWS
DETAILS - FAMILY AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

Category: Family and Economic Stability

Participants:
M.A. Altieri
A. Armstrong
J. Bloom
L. Ducharme
B. Keegan
S. Sherman

Facilitator: A. Budner
Note Taker: E. Speers

Problems, Issues, and Trends

- Student loan debts are a major problem for middle and upper income families
  - Long term financial impact
  - High pressure to get kids in good (and expensive) schools
- Limited transportation service network seems to be a problem for the most vulnerable families
  - Infrastructure missing to get to groceries, train station, thrift shop, food pantry, doctor, jobs
- In 2013, applications for fuel assistance increased by 25%
- Food, rent and affordable child care demands always an issue, especially for per diem hourly workers
- Free and reduced school lunches increased significantly
  - 2008: 2.3% of students
  - 2014: 6.4% of students
- Before and after school enrollment up
- Teens and young adults unemployed and at home. “Down time is bad news.”

Service Network

- Sechrest & Bloom is teaching people how to manage debt and offering programs in schools
- Acton Safety Net emerged from Acton Congregational Church group

Additional Comments

- A small bus with a fixed route could provide a great service
- One-stop shop needed with the “trifecta:” access to services in one place, information, and collaboration among agencies

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### SME Interviews Details - Mental Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>Mental Health</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Participants: | M. Altieri  
K. Cronin  
C. Leggett |
| Facilitator: | P. Higgins |
| Note Taker: | M. Lohfink |

#### Problems, Issues, and Trends
- The general feeling is that mental illness is an increasing issue in Acton and Boxborough due to increased stressors on children, families, and the seniors.
- Video gaming addiction is increasing for youth and young adults.
- Hospitalization rates for high school students doubled last year.
- School refusals are increasing; most refusals are linked to anxiety and substance abuse.
- The biggest growing trends are eating disorders, self-injury, and suicidal ideation, especially among junior high and high school students.

#### Service Network
- The general sentiment is that there are not enough services provided: in-patient beds, out-patient options.
- There seems to be a lack of services for very young patients.
- There seems to be a strong need for parental education – know warning signs, how to get help.
- New parenting skills program now available and very needed.

#### Additional Comments
- There is a new program that teaches parenting skills.
- There seems to be a “lost generation” in AB (e.g., young adults who finished high school and failed in everything else).
- One idea is to establish a partnership between schools and service providers.
SME INTERVIEWS
DETAILS - ELIOT MENTAL HEALTH CENTER (EMHC)

Category: Mental Health

Participants: D. Garfield
Facilitator: A. Budner
Note Taker: A. Budner, P. Higgins

Problems, Issues, and Trends

- Primary diagnoses are mood disorders such as depression and bi-polar as well as anxiety disorders
  - Influx of elementary-age children with anxiety – sufferers getting younger
    - Possible causes: economic stressors and unemployment, families in situations they've never been in, has a ripple effect on kids
  - “We see a lot of ADD and ADHD” - many pediatricians will medicate for ADHD but often want psychiatric prescriber to review the medications but are not comfortable medicating for more complex disorders
  - In next 5 years, federal model pushing for “medical homes” that provide an array of preventive services, incl. health care, behavioral care, case management. Unclear what the model will pay for
  - Pediatric services, including medication providers, are really hard to find
  - Biggest need is continued collaboration between clinicians, pediatricians, and schools so children aren’t treated in a vacuum. Time and insurance rules sometimes inhibit collaboration

Service Network

- EMHC is only full-service mental health center in the area
- Eliot is not at capacity but does have a wait list. If emergency, they’ll get people in
- Sliding fees, but can serve uninsured residents from Acton or Boxborough
- Eliot runs one group home for adults with mental illness in Acton/Littleton; others located throughout the State. Must be a DMH client to qualify for resident services

Additional Comments

- A lot of stigma around obtaining mental health services, including cultural issues that add to shame. The more it’s talked about, the more it’s normalized. Schools help with prevention and referrals
- Hoarding has become a bigger issue among the seniors than people realized
- Form October 2013 - October 2014, Eliot served 1,450 people; 249 of these people were from Acton and Boxborough

(1) Of these 249 people, 16% (39) were children; 76% (190) were adults; 8% (20) were elders. Of these 249 people, 59% (146) had some type of Medicaid
**SME Interviews**  
**Details - Minute Man Arc (MMARC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>J. Goldsberry</td>
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<td>S. Parish</td>
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<td>Facilitator:</td>
<td>A. Budner</td>
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<td>A. Budner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>P. Higgins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Sun</td>
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### Problems, Issues, and Trends
- Increase in cases of autism
  - New DDS\(^{(1)}\) rule defining disabilities is increasing the rates of diagnosis and doctor referrals for services
- Public funding for Early Intervention (EI) doesn’t cover costs, have to supplement with private funding
  - EI has long-term benefit - 52% of EI clients don’t need further services
- Recreational services for teens and adults are completely privately funded
  - Adult respite and after school programs for school-age children especially needed
- Abuse and neglect is sometimes an underlying concern for families who are not getting services they need
  - Exhausted caretakers may discipline adults as children

### Service Network
- Insufficient, inadequately funded services for very young children
- Insufficient respite services for junior high and high school students
- Not enough residential services for adults
  - All MMARC slots are filled, nothing else nearby\(^{(2)}\)
  - If state funding were available, MMARC would open 2 more group homes/year

### Additional Comments
- MMARC runs the only pediatric hearing loss program in the state
- State waiting list for residential slots is a mystery – DDS keeps it a secret
- MMARC serves 250 children and 250 adults/year. 16% from Acton, 6-9% from Boxborough

\(^{(1)}\) DDS: Mass. Department of Developmental Services  
\(^{(2)}\) 20 group home slots, 30 adult foster care slots
SME Interviews
Details - Seniors

Category: Seniors

Participants: J. Butler
E. Johnson
J. Fallon
S. Mercurio

Facilitator: J. Sun

Note Taker: P. Higgins
M. Lohfink

Problems, Issues, and Trends

- AB senior population grew significantly over last couple years and are “aging in place”
- Self-abuse/ self-neglect is a problem
  - Personal hygiene
  - Hoarding
  - Self-medication/alcoholism
- Mental health is a big concern: isolation, self-medication, alcoholism, anxiety and depression
- Seniors refusing services is a persistent problem
- Transportation does not meet the needs of the seniors
- Lack of affordable, accessible housing
- Online scamming has risen significantly
- Males living alone could be potentially more vulnerable because of lack of support network
- One spouse (mentally or medically impaired) bringing down other spouse’s level of functioning; need for respite for caretaking spouse

Service Network

- Mental health and hoarding services are needed
- Personal and daily living Services that aren’t free are too expensive for many seniors to access
- A monthly newsletter is sent to all seniors with events, scamming updates, services
- Addressing isolation: Meals on Wheels brings food to seniors at home; COA’s have volunteers visit seniors

Additional Comments

- Service organizations have found it easier to reach Indian/Pakistani seniors and harder to reach East and Southeast Asians
- Minute Man Senior Services served 50 clients whose primary language wasn’t English in 2013, and 500 in 2014
- Adult day care is not affordable for middle class
**Category:** Substance Abuse

**Participants:**
- R. Burrows
- K. Cronin
- C. Leggett
- C. Randolph

**Facilitator:** J. Sun

**Note Taker:** M. Lohfink

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**Problems, Issues, and Trends**

- Overall, substance abuse seems to be a growing trend, with extensive and easy supply of substances; prescription drugs and opiate abuse have significantly risen.
  - Documentation shows that there have been 24 overdoses in the region since 2012. Three were deadly.
  - Overdoses were caused by illegal drugs (such as methamphetamine and heroin) and prescription drugs.
- Biggest trend is marijuana consumption among young adults.
  - Trend seemed to have increased in severity ever since marijuana has been decriminalized.
- Heroin and prescription drug abuse is problem primarily among young adults.
- Alcohol abuse among young adults is a problem in Acton and Boxborough. Yet, the issue is not reported as increasing in frequency or severity.

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**Service Network**

- For substance abuse, services such as 12-step programs are available.
- Most acute and in-patient services are very expensive, not covered by health insurance and hard to access.
- There seems to be a lack of access to post-detox services beyond 12-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

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**Additional Comments**

- The police reports becoming a “service provider” by default for substance abuse and mental health.
- One factor possibly causing substance abuse among the youth is the pressure to perform well in a highly competitive school environment.
**SME Interviews**

**Details - RJ Grey Junior High School**

**Category:** Young Adults

**Participants:** A. Shen

**Facilitator:** A. Budner

**Note Taker:** A. Budner, M. Lohfink

**Problems, Issues, and Trends**

- Mental health is a concern. The junior high school is monitoring it, but crisis moments are emerging more at the HS.
  - “We’re bordering on something. We should not just be reactive but reflect on how we are addressing it. More psychological services might not address it. Soul searching is needed.”
  - “We haven’t seen anything that suggests mental [illness] is less stigmatized. If JHS identifies the issue, families are willing to get help.” Shen worries about the ‘dog that doesn’t bark,’ i.e. the cases that the school doesn’t notice.
- A growing trend, and a top priority for Shen, is families with economic instability. Frequent mobility means kids are even less prepared for AB school work. May not qualify for special education or free lunch but on the cusp. JHS serving as case managers, social workers. “They are very challenging cases right now.”
- Re: diversity - peer pressure, judgments, expectations, and generational issues, re: academics is the main thing.

**Service Network**

- Two school resource officers are a “main lifeline”
- Each JHS counselor has a caseload of 225 students – it works because instructional teams do initial triaging
- Shen appreciates the work of the PTO and ABUW in bringing in topical speakers
- MSPP Interface is a very important resource, needed by counselors and teachers

**Additional Comments**

- If he had more money and staffing, Shen would focus on better serving economically unstable students
- “To what degree is our job to educate parents about how we view a well-rounded education?”
- “What does it mean that one elementary school's demographics is 64% students of color? We have to wrestle with these issues.”
**SME Interviews**
**Details - AB Regional High School**

**Category:** Young Adults

**Participants:**
- J. Campbell
- T. Chicko

**Facilitator:**
- M. Lohfink

**Note Taker:**
- P. Higgins
- M. Lohfink

**Problems, Issues, and Trends**
- Stress levels for many students are self-reported as being high and further increasing due to academic, extracurricular, peer and home pressures.
- Mental health issues for some students are increasing in number: eating disorders, anxiety and depression, suicidal ideation, self-injurious behaviors.
- Number of psychiatric hospitalizations have doubled from 2012 to 2013 and are on track to again eclipse 2013 in 2014.
- A change in demographic is reported by some to contribute to an increase in pressure to put more resources into top achieving students.
- Drug and alcohol abuse remains a consistent challenge for some students, though it is not perceived to be increasing dramatically.
- On-line and social media bullying is an ongoing issue.
- Needs of students from low income families may not be as well met as those from more affluent families.

**Service Network**
- ABRHS offers prevention and interventions through school counselors, psychologists, social workers, faculty training, child study teams, and a faculty mental health committee.
- Mental health is of primary interest for ABRHS. The school implemented a multi-year plan to address aspects of mental health and learning.
- ABRHS now has access to MSPP Interface as referral service for students and families to use for MH issues.
- It is reported by some that Asian students and parents are less likely to express need for help.
- ABRHS points to its mandate as educator and not as a human service provider. The school’s primary goal is to establish a healthy environment that encourages students to learn.

**Additional Comments**
**Category:** Overall

**Participants:**
- W. Ryder
- F. Widmayer
- R. Burrows

**Facilitator:** P. Higgins

**Note Taker:**
- A. Berko
- P. Higgins

### Problems, Issues, and Trends

#### Substance Abuse
- Acton and Boxborough PD have seen significant rise in opioid overdoses
  - Easy access to prescription medications and availability of heroin are part of explanation for increase in drug overdoses and death from overdose
  - Decriminalization of cannabis also creating easier access of youth
- Designer and synthetic drugs (e.g. LSD spice) are a threat
  - Since 2012, Acton has responded to 40 overdoses, five resulting in death, and Boxborough has responded to seven non-fatal overdoses
- Alcoholism remains a consistent and persistent issue, not seen as increasing

#### Domestic Violence
- Remains a significant issue in the community
- DVSN works well and was result of an identified need through a prior ABUW CNA

### Service Network
- Acton and Boxborough Police both carry Narcan as antidote for opioid overdose. Acton has made five ‘saves’ with Narcan
- People often not aware of being able to use Section 35 to allow a judge to "involuntarily commit someone whose alcohol or drug use puts themselves, or others, at risk"
- Current drug awareness program through the APD is aimed at elementary and middle school students

### Additional Comments
- Police are serving an ever greater role in the areas of substance abuse, mental health and issues specific to seniors
- They continue to play a major role in interventions and referrals for domestic violence
- Crime versus social issues is a line often and increasingly blurred and is creating unique demands in police work
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>W. Ryder, F. Widmayer, R. Burrows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note Taker:</td>
<td>A. Berko, P. Higgins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Problems, Issues, and Trends**

**Mental Health**
- Involuntary psychiatric hospitalizations are increasing
  - Police have begun to track numbers of incidents due to their significance
  - Suicide attempts are not tracked separately from other psychiatric hospitalizations
- Possible explanations for increasing hospitalizations is the lack of aftercare and lack of alternatives to institutionalization

**Seniors**
- Scams are on the rise; seniors are very vulnerable to scams
- Seniors often refuse services and help; cultural considerations may be part of refusals
- Hoarding among the senior population has received more notice and often becomes a safety issue in both homes and cars

**Service Network**
- Without supportive housing and assistance with daily living, the mentally ill often become re-hospitalized due to medication non-compliance
- Often the only way to obtain supportive services is if patients are arrested and have the court mandate med compliance and supportive care

**Additional Comments**
- Acton PD is looking into a program, in collaboration with Elliot Mental Health, in which a mental health worker accompanies police on calls involving mental health issues
### SME INTERVIEWS
**OVERDOSES IN ACTON FROM 2012 - APRIL, 2015 (1 OF 2)**

#### 2012

1. **Apr** - 56yr old female, sleep medication, intentional
2. **Jun** - 28yr old male, heroin
3. **Jun** - 20yr old male, ecstasy and 60 Adderall
4. **Jul** - 27yr old female, 55 Methadone pills, **DIED**
5. **Aug** - 21yr old male, heroin, **NARCAN Saved**
6. **Nov** - 25yr old female, blood pressure pills
7. **Nov** - 25yr old male, cough suppressant
8. **Nov** - 27yr old male, heroin
9. **Dec** - 61yr old female, heroin, intentional
10. **Dec** - 27yr old male, Klonopin and alcohol
11. **Dec** - 58yr old female Hydromorphone, Zolpidem and Loraepam, **DIED intentional**

#### 2013

1. **Jan** - 20yr old female, heroin, cocaine and alcohol
2. **Mar** - 37yr old female, Clonodine and Xanax, intentional
3. **Mar** - 15yr old male, snorting Ritalin and taking Xanax
4. **May** - 18yr old female, Percocet
5. **Aug** - 52yr old male, heroin
6. **Sep** - 29yr old female, Benzodiazepine and alcohol
7. **Oct** - 44yr old female, Klonopin, intentional
8. **Nov** - 26yr old male, heroin

Source: Acton Police Department
**SME Interviews**

**Overdoses in Acton From 2012 - April, 2015 (2 Of 2)**

### 2014

1. Jan - 18yr old female, Cymbalta, Hydrocodone
2. Jan - 17yr old female, Ibuprofen
3. Feb - 45yr old male, heroin **DIED**
4. Mar - 18yr old female, Naproxen, Celexa, intentional
5. Mar - 25yr old female, heroin
6. Jun - 51yr old female, Klonopin, intentional
7. Aug - 28yr old female, Metaprolol, intentional
8. Aug - 38yr old female, unknown pills, intentional
9. Aug - 18yr old male, hashish oil
10. Sep - 27yr old male, heroin
11. Nov - 41yr old male, Lorazapam and alcohol
12. Nov - 43yr old male, unknown meds **DIED**, intentional
13. Nov - 60yr old male, Lorazapam

### 2014 (cont’d)

14. Nov - 70yr old female, Klonopin and alcohol
15. Nov - 70yr old female Alprazolam, Tramadol, Anatrozele, Klonopin
16. Nov - 26yr old male, heroin **DIED**
17. Nov - 47yr old male, Dilaudid, crack cocaine **NARCAN Saved**
18. Dec - 55yr old female, Temazepam, Alpraxolam, alcohol intentional

### 2015

1. Jan - 53yr old female, Suboxone, **NARCAN saved**
2. Jan - 32yr old male, unknown opioid, **NARCAN saved**
3. Feb - 50yr old male, heroin, **NARCAN saved**

*No overdoses in March and April*

Source: Acton Police Department
# Details of SME Interviews: Acton Police Department – Recent Scams and Risk Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Financial Loss</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2014</td>
<td>78 year old male</td>
<td>$293,000</td>
<td>Scam from Ghana and Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2014</td>
<td>58 year old male</td>
<td>$79,000</td>
<td>Bank Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>71 year old male</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>Check Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>71 year old female</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>Ring stolen, Caretaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>53 year old female</td>
<td>$9,285</td>
<td>Ring stolen, Contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>50 year old female</td>
<td>$8,050</td>
<td>Escrow Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2013</td>
<td>58 year old male</td>
<td>$8,400</td>
<td>Bank/Wire Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>95 year old female</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>Ring Necklace, Caretaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2013</td>
<td>95 year old female</td>
<td>$2,700</td>
<td>Jewelry, Caretaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2013</td>
<td>86 year old male</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>Cash, Caretaker</td>
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## FOCUS GROUPS

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**FOCUS GROUPS**

**SUMMARY (1 OF 2)**

**Basic Needs**
- Lack of affordable, accessible and appropriate-sized housing for seniors, disabled and low income families
- Limited transportation for the most vulnerable and isolated individuals and families affects access to services of all kinds
- Financial constraints for low income and fixed income families and seniors impacts all aspects

**Mental Health**
- Lack of services following mental health emergencies
- Isolating and invasive nature of technology is a unique and ongoing stressor for individuals
- Lack of accurate and timely information about services and treatment options for acute and ongoing mental health needs
Focus Groups
Summary (2 of 2)

Seniors
- Lack of awareness of available services and options
- Difficulty negotiating the process of seeking help
- Need to break through fear and resistance
- Lack of transportation

Substance Abuse
- Opiate abuse, addiction, and overdosing (especially among 18-25 year-olds) and easy escalation into addiction from prescription opiates to heroin addiction
- Alcohol abuse, especially binge drinking, being called epidemic among high-school-aged and young adults
- Cannabis, its ubiquitous and unregulated nature, especially after decriminalization in MA
FOCUS GROUPS

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FOCUS GROUPS
OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

- ABUW conducted four focus groups to explore selected topics in more detail
  - Basic Needs, January 20·2015
  - Mental Health, January 21, 2015
  - Seniors, January 29·2015
  - Substance Abuse, February 04·2015

- Each focus group was led by one ABUW volunteer and one additional volunteer took detailed notes
  - Thanks to our facilitators: Karen Herther, Patty Higgins, Elizabeth Markiewicz, Carolyn Randolph
  - Thanks to our note takers: Mary Ann Ashton, Karen Coll, Shelley Sherman, Lisa St. Amand

- During the focus groups, we wanted to achieve the following three objectives
  - Identify the three to four most critical issues for each topic
  - Discuss barriers to the existing service network
  - Identify and discuss potential ideas to address the identified issues and barriers

- The ABUW wishes to thank the following Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) for their helpful participation and their significant contributions to the findings in this document
## Focus Group Participants (1 of 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Beilman, Mary</td>
<td>CLC Director</td>
<td>First Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Carriker, Christy</td>
<td>Director, Emergency Psychiatric Services - East</td>
<td>Advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chicko, Todd</td>
<td>Chair, Counseling Services, Grades 7-12</td>
<td>AB Regional Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cogan, Jim</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Acton Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cronin, Kelley</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Acton Housing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fallon, John</td>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Household Goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Flanagan, Jim</td>
<td>Coordinator, Youth Ministries</td>
<td>St. Elizabeth’s of Hungary Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Flannery, Kathy</td>
<td>Clinical Manager</td>
<td>Acton Nursing Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Frost, Martha</td>
<td>School Social Worker</td>
<td>AB Regional High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Garfield, Deborah</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Eliot Community Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Goldsberry, Jean</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Minute Man ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Jacobsohn, Lorrie</td>
<td>Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialist</td>
<td>Massachusetts General Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Focus Groups
### Focus Group Participants (2 of 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leggett, Carrie</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Acton Medical Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNeece, Anne</td>
<td>Community Volunteer</td>
<td>Town of Boxborough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNeece, Rob</td>
<td>Community Volunteer</td>
<td>Town of Boxborough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikkola, Peg</td>
<td>Nutrition Specialist</td>
<td>Minuteman Senior Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Brien, Warren</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>Boxborough Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinhardt, Michael</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>Reinhardt &amp; Reinhardt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scurfield, Tom</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>National Alliance on Mental Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon, Debbie</td>
<td>Pediatrician</td>
<td>Acton Medical Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soule, Betsey</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>MetroWest Legal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stern, Robert M.</td>
<td>Director, Behavioral Health Services</td>
<td>Emerson Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summers, Cathleen</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>Bay State Elder Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tavernier, Nancy</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Acton Community Housing Corp.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# FOCUS GROUPS CONTENT

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<th>Page</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Detailed Focus Group Summaries</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOCUS GROUPS
DETAILS BASIC NEEDS

Additional Topics Discussed

Additional Problem Areas

- Increasing diversity, including low income and undocumented people in the community; multiple language and cultural considerations add to service barriers
- Barriers to service also include difficulty with red tape and understanding forms and benefits
- Domestic violence and exploitation of seniors
- Lack of community gathering place for AHA families
- Veterans increasingly accessing services to meet basic needs

Meeting needs of children and seniors is most important

Ideas for Addressing Service Gaps

- Develop and distribute a resource book
- Better networking and collaboration opportunities among providers
- Create a community center
- Hold community resource fairs

Top Three to Four Issues

- Lack of affordable, accessible and appropriate-sized housing for seniors, disabled and low income families
- Limited transportation for the most vulnerable and isolated individuals and families affects access to services of all kinds
- Financial constraints for low income and fixed income families and seniors impacts all aspects

Details

- Topic: Basic Needs
- Date: January 20th
- Participants: 5 SMEs
- Facilitator: Carolyn Randolph
FOCUS GROUPS
DETAILS BASIC NEEDS - AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- The Acton Housing Authority owns 159 units and has 178 vouchers for a total of 337 subsidized housing units in and around Acton.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Type</th>
<th>Total on List</th>
<th>Total Local</th>
<th>Application Date for Local Top of List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One bedroom over 60</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2/24/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One bedroom under 60 disabled</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12/13/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two bedroom</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7/10/2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three bedroom</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3/11/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8</td>
<td>160,804</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>2/6/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>161,827</strong></td>
<td><strong>391</strong></td>
<td><strong>N/A</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Type</th>
<th>AHA(1) Units Available</th>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Income Limits for State-Aided Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One bedroom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>$47,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two bedroom</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 person</td>
<td>$54,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three bedroom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 person</td>
<td>$61,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4 person</td>
<td>$67,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td>5 person</td>
<td><strong>$73,200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Roughly 22.8% or 1,818 households are income eligible for Acton Housing Authority State-Aided Housing.

(1) Number of available units in past 12 months
AHA = Acton Housing Authority
Source: Acton Housing Authority
Focus Groups
Details Mental Health

Details
- Topic: Mental Health
- Date: January 21st
- Participants: 11 SMEs
- Facilitator: Patty Higgins

Additional Topics Discussed

Additional Problem Areas
- Lack of care following hospitalizations
- Stigma and lack of public awareness of mental health prevalence
- Youth stress, isolation, and technology
- Lack of knowledge about where to turn
- Prevention or lack thereof
- Dual diagnosis (people with both mental illness and substance abuse)
- Special needs children are a growing population
- Seniors mental health problems

Ideas for Addressing Service Gaps
- Parenting support, education around limit setting, technology, fostering resilience in their children
- Drop-in center for community gathering, socializing and mutual support; ongoing events involving entire community
- Follow up for self-identified youth asking for help
- Reliable, accurate and up-to-date data base of services/resource network for families and providers

Top Three to Four Issues
- Lack of services following mental health emergencies
- Isolating and invasive nature of technology is a unique and ongoing stressor for individuals
- Lack of accurate and timely information about services and treatment options for acute and ongoing mental health needs
FOCUS GROUPS
DETAILS SENIORS

Details

- **Topic:** Seniors
- **Date:** January 29th
- **Participants:** 6 SMEs
- **Facilitator:** Liz Markiewicz

Top Three to Four Issues

- Lack of awareness of available services and options
- Difficulty negotiating the process of seeking help
- Need to break through fear and resistance
- Lack of transportation

Additional Topics Discussed

Addition Problem Areas

- Lack of income to meet basic needs
- Lack of appropriate assisted housing options
- Mental health related issues such as depression
- Reluctance to ask for/accept help, fear of losing their independence or ability to remain in their homes, and pride, including an unwillingness for parents to ask their children for help
- Scams and defrauding targeted at seniors
- Substance abuse and medication management

Ideas for Addressing Service Gaps

- More support personnel
- More emphasis on helping seniors maintain a sense of control
- More appropriate housing options
- Better transportation
- Better communication of services available
### Details

- **Topic:** Substance Abuse
- **Date:** February 4th
- **Participants:** 4 SMEs
- **Facilitator:** Karen Herther

### Additional Topics Discussed

#### Additional Problem Areas
- Poor service network, not enough treatment options or availability; existing services hard to find
- Shame/stigma/denial
- Lack of connection/meaningful relationships for youth

#### Ideas for Addressing Service Gaps
- Better prevention/education efforts that reach and educate community, parents, youth and children at early ages (far less costly than treatment)
- Better knowledge of and publicity of available resources
- Treatment approaches that are community based, creating connection and belonging

### Top Three to Four Issues

- Opiate abuse, addiction, and overdosing (especially among 18-25 year-olds) and easy escalation into addiction from prescription opiates to heroin addiction
- Alcohol abuse, especially binge drinking, being called epidemic among high-school-aged and young adults
- Cannabis, its ubiquitous and unregulated nature, especially after decriminalization in MA
## COMMUNITY SURVEY CONTENTS

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COMMUNITY SURVEY  
SUMMARY SURVEY RESULTS (1 OF 5)

Demographics
- Overall, 658 survey responses were completed by Acton and Boxborough residents
- With an overall potential of 10,650 respondents (= households) in Acton and Boxborough, roughly 380 responses were needed to draw statistically significant results from the survey (confidence level 95% and margin of error of 5%)
- Most participants were Caucasian (76%); 14% identified as Asian
- Females completed 73% of the surveys
- 45% of respondents reported income over $125,000 per year

Basic Needs
- The issues of most concern to respondents were i) costs of higher education, ii) housing, and iii) child care
- Less than half of survey respondents would know where to find help for food and clothing
- Less than 1/3 of survey respondents were aware of resources for basic needs such as rent/mortgage, monthly bills, medical expenses, transportation and child care
Family Stress

- The three issues of most concern for all respondents were i) stress for young adults, ii) stress for children, and iii) stress for adults/parents
- Over half of survey respondents would not know where to find help for stress or isolation related issues

Mental Health

- The three most concerning mental health issues were i) children with mental health needs, ii) anxiety affecting daily living, and iii) depression
- 42% of the vulnerable population were not sure or would not know where to find resources for mental health issues
COMMUNITY SURVEY
SUMMARY SURVEY RESULTS (3 OF 5)

Neglect, Abuse, and Violence

- The three issues most concerning to all survey respondents about neglect, abuse and were i) bullying, ii) scamming, and iii) domestic violence.
- The majority (63%) of survey respondents would know where to find help for domestic violence.
- Hoarding (43%) and self-neglect by elders (34%) are areas where people would struggle finding help.
- Scamming and bullying were high concerns for respondents however only 40% were aware of resources to find help.

Substance Abuse

- The three most concerning issues about substance abuse for all survey participants were i) alcohol abuse, ii) prescription drug abuse, and iii) illegal drug abuse.
- 42% of survey respondents were not sure or would not know where to access help for substance abuse issues.
Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following struggles to meet basic needs are a concern.
If you, a family member or friend were struggling with one or more of the basic needs listed, would you know where to get help?
## CONTENTS

1. Summary

2. Overview and Introduction
   - A. Background and Objective
   - B. Methodology
   - C. Thank You
   - D. How to Read the Charts

3. Detailed Survey Results

4. Appendix
COMMUNITY SURVEY
BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

- Acton-Boxborough United Way (ABUW) engaged Carlisle & Company (Carlisle) to conduct a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CNA) for the communities of Acton and Boxborough.

- As a last step in the CNA process, ABUW and Carlisle designed and conducted a community survey for residents of Acton and Boxborough.

- The objectives of this community survey were two-fold:
  - Get a better understanding of what residents perceive to be the most significant concerns in Acton and Boxborough.
  - Gather information about the residents’ knowledge of the existing service network.
    - The survey did NOT measure whether residents feel adequate help would be available if they request it.
COMMUNITY SURVEY

METHODOLOGY

- The community survey was designed collaboratively by ABUW and Carlisle and was structured into six sections
  - Basic Needs
  - Family Stress
  - Mental Health
  - Neglect, Abuse, and Violence
  - Substance Abuse
  - Demographics

- The survey was available in four languages: English, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Spanish

- Conducted as an online tool, the survey was open for five weeks. ABUW Outreach members visited various community agencies and civic organizations to assist respondents in completing the survey electronically. In rare cases, if respondents were very uncomfortable with technology, they were allowed to use paper-versions of the survey. These answers were later entered into electronic form by ABUW volunteers.

- Only Acton and Boxborough residents were able to complete the survey. All surveys were completely anonymous and no identifying information was gathered on participants. 658 Acton and Boxborough residents completed the on-line survey, a statistically relevant sample of the population

- Vulnerable Populations - The survey analysis strictly defines “vulnerability” based on income and household size:
  - All respondents earning less than $25,000 per year or households of 3 or more people earning between $25,000 and $74,999 per year
  - 73 respondents, or 11% of the overall group, fit these criteria
COMMUNITY SURVEY
THANK YOU

- ABUW is grateful to the many people and organizations (too numerous to mention) who helped ensure wide public participation by electronically distributing the community survey.

- Special thanks to those who provided on-site assistance with survey completion:
  - Wendy Baker
  - Alan and Peggy Berko
  - Tarana and Tina Bhatia
  - Jane Brown
  - Cathy Casteletta
  - Kelley Cronin
  - Laura Ducharme
  - Catherine Longwell
  - Elizabeth Markiewicz
  - Carolyn Randolph
  - Shelley Sherman
  - Ebit Speers
  - Lisa St. Amand
  - Mike Tobia

- An additional thank you to our translators: Mario Castaneda, Renatha Daher, and XinXing Yang.
Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following struggles to meet basic needs are a concern.

Chart Type 1 – Level of Concern

- Significant Concern
- Some Concern
- No Concern

Corresponding survey question:
- No Opinion
- No Concern
- Some Concern
- Significant Concern

Sample size: N = 658

Average ‘Level of Concern’

Percentage distribution of survey responses
Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following struggles to meet basic needs are a concern.
COMMUNITY SURVEY
HOW TO READ THE CHARTS – CHART TYPE 3

Chart Type 3 – Awareness of Resources

If you, a family member or friend were struggling with one or more of the basic needs listed, would you know where to get help?

Corresponding survey question

Sample size: N = 658

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Area</th>
<th>Yes, I would</th>
<th>I am not sure</th>
<th>No, I would not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Expenses</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent or Mortgage</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Financial</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Bills</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and clothing</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY SURVEY
HOW TO READ THE CHARTS – CHART TYPE 4

Chart Type 4 – Level of Concern vs. Awareness of Resources

Low priority issues (no concern and knowledge about service network)

High priority issues (significant concern and lack of knowledge about service network)

Level of Concern vs. Awareness of Resources

Sample size

N = 658

Note: The colored stripes are not precise, but meant simply to indicate lower and higher priority areas.
## COMMUNITY SURVEY CONTENTS

1. Summary  
2. Overview and Introduction  
3. Detailed Survey Results  
   A. Demographics  
   B. Basic Needs  
   C. Family Stress  
   D. Mental Health  
   E. Neglect, Abuse, and Violence  
   F. Substance Abuse  
4. Appendix  

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Overall, 658 survey responses were completed by residents of Acton and Boxborough.

Survey Participants Overall

- 622 responses (47%)
- 658 responses (49%)
- 50 responses (4%)

Survey Participants by Town

- Acton: 570 responses (81%)
- Boxborough: 88 responses (12%)
- Other: 50 responses (7%)

N=1,330 (total number of survey participants)
N=708 (total number of survey responses by town)
Most participants were Caucasian and over 40 years old; females completed the survey more often than males.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Family Stress</th>
<th>Mental Health</th>
<th>Neglect, Abuse &amp; Violence</th>
<th>Substance Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>478</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 658</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Age Groups   |             |               |               |                           |                |
| < 20         | 2           |               |               |                           |                |
| 20 - 30      | 11          |               |               |                           |                |
| 31 - 40      | 75          |               |               |                           |                |
| 41 - 50      | 248         |               |               |                           |                |
| 51 - 65      | 230         |               |               |                           |                |
| > 65         | 84          |               |               |                           |                |
| N = 650      |             |               |               |                           |                |

| Income Levels |             |               |               |                           |                |
| Less than $25,000 per year | 38 | 0% | 6% | 11% | 16% | 45% | 23% | N = 658 |
| $25,000 - $74,999 per year | 73 | 11% | | | | | | |
| $75,000 - $124,999 per year | 102 | 16% | | | | | | |
| $125,000+ per year | 295 | 45% | | | | | | |
| I prefer not to answer | 150 | 23% | | | | | | |

| Ethnicity     |             |               |               |                           |                |
| African American | 6 | 1% | | | | | | |
| Asian         | 91          | 14%           |               |                           |                |
| Caucasian     | 503         | 76%           |               |                           |                |
| Hispanic      | 6           | 1%            |               |                           |                |
| Other         | 15          | 2%            |               |                           |                |
| I prefer not to answer | 37 | 6% | | | | | | |
| N = 658      |             |               |               |                           |                |
Over 50% have a family of 4 or more members and have lived in Acton/Boxborough for 15 years or more.

Residency Length:
- Less than five years: 80 (12%)
- Five to fourteen years: 220 (33%)
- Fifteen to twenty years: 150 (23%)
- More than twenty years: 208 (32%)

Household Size:
- I live alone: 43 (7%)
- Two members: 132 (20%)
- Three members: 113 (17%)
- Four members: 241 (37%)
- More than four members: 129 (20%)

Children:
- Yes, I have children in the area: 500 (76%)
- No, I do not: 158 (24%)

Home Ownership:
- I or a family member own my residence: 591 (90%)
- I or a family member pay rent on my residence: 67 (10%)
The vulnerable population is more concerned about housing, rent, food, clothing, and other monthly bills.

**Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following struggles to meet basic needs are a concern.**

**Average Level of Concern by Issue**

- **Significant Concern**
  - Higher Education
  - Housing
  - Child care
  - Transportation
  - Medical Expenses
  - Rent or Mortgage
  - Basic Financial Literacy
  - Other Monthly Bills
  - Food and clothing

- **Some Concern**
  - Overall

- **No Concern**
  - Overall

**Total Population**

**Vulnerable Population**

Overall Results

N = 658
VULNERABLE POPULATION GROUPS ARE LESS LIKELY TO KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP FOR SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS

Level of Concern vs. Awareness of Resources

N = 658

Percent Able to Find Help

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

Less Concern Some Concern More Concern

Average Level of Concern

Total Population Vulnerable Population
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT PAYING FOR THE COSTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Overall Level of Concern by Issue

Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following struggles to meet basic needs are a concern.

- No Opinion
- No Concern
- Some Concern
- Significant Concern
45% OF RESPONDENTS ARE AWARE OF FOOD & CLOTHING SERVICES; 22% KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP FOR RENT PAYMENTS

Overall Awareness of Basic Needs Resources

If you, a family member or friend were struggling with one or more of the basic needs listed, would you know where to get help?
EXCEPT FOR FOOD AND CLOTHING THERE IS A SHARED CONCERN FOR ALL ISSUES AND ONLY MODERATE ABILITY TO FIND HELP

Overall Level of Concern vs. Awareness of Resources

Food and clothing, Basic Financial Literacy, Other Monthly Bills, Transportation, Rent or Mortgage, Medical Expenses, Child care, Housing, Higher Education

Average Level of Concern

Percent Able to Find Help

Less Concern, Some Concern, More Concern

N = 658
The vulnerable population is most concerned with paying for housing and rent/mortgage.

Vulnerable Population Level of Concern by Issue

Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following struggles to meet basic needs are a concern.

- Significant Concern
- Some Concern
- No Concern
- No Opinion

Basic Needs: Housing, Rent or Mortgage, Education, Food and clothing, Other Monthly Bills, Transportation, Medical Expenses, Child care, Basic Financial Literacy.
Compared to total population, vulnerable groups are more aware of resources for imminent needs

Vulnerable Population Awareness of Basic Needs Resources

If you, a family member or friend were struggling with one or more of the basic needs listed, would you know where to get help?
VULNERABLE GROUPS CONCERNED ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION AND RENT/MORTGAGE ISSUES, BUT NEED MORE INFORMATION

Vulnerable Population Level of Concern vs. Awareness of Resources

N = 73

Less Concern | Some Concern | More Concern

Percent Able to Find Help

Basic Needs | Financial Literacy | Transportation | Medical Expenses | Food and clothing | Other Monthly Bills | Housing | Rent or Mortgage | Higher Education

Average Level of Concern

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OVERALL, HIGH STRESS IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS IS OF MOST CONCERN FOR RESPONDENTS

Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following stress and isolation issues are a concern.

Total Population
Vulnerable Population

N = 658
VULNERABLE POPULATION GROUPS ARE LESS LIKELY TO KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP FOR STRESS OR ISOLATION

Overall Awareness of Stress or Isolation Resources

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with stress or isolation, would you know where to get help?

N = 658

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Vulnerable Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I would</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I would not</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PARTICIPANTS ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT HIGH STRESS IN YOUNG ADULTS; LEAST CONCERNED WITH FEELING ISOLATED**

Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following stress and isolation issues are a concern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Significant Concern</th>
<th>Some Concern</th>
<th>No Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Stress Young Adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Stress Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Stress Adults/Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for Children/Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress from Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Stress Senior Citizens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Isolated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following stress and isolation issues are a concern.*
Almost half of all respondents would know where to turn to get help for stress related issues

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with stress or isolation, would you know where to get help?

- Yes, I would: 47%
- No, I would not: 23%
- I am not sure: 30%

N = 658
SIMILAR TO THE OVERALL POPULATION, VULNERABLE GROUPS ARE MOST CONCERNED WITH HIGH STRESS IN YOUNG ADULTS

Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following stress and isolation issues are a concern.
41% of vulnerable respondents would know where to find help for stress or isolation.

Vulnerable Population Awareness of Stress or Isolation Resources

- Yes, I would: 41%
- No, I would not: 30%
- I am not sure: 29%

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with stress or isolation, would you know where to get help?
TOTAL AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS ASSESS MENTAL HEALTH RELATED CONCERNS SIMILARLY

Average Level of Concern by Issue

- Significant Concern
- Some Concern
- No Concern

Issues:
- Children with mental health needs
- Anxiety affecting daily living
- Depression
- Chronic mental illness
- Thoughts or incidents of physically hurting oneself

Total Population and Vulnerable Population

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following mental health issues are concerns.
The majority of all respondents know where to find help for mental health related issues.

Overall Awareness of Mental Health Resources

N = 658

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with a mental health concern, would you know where to get help?

Overall Results

Yes, I would
63%
23%
14%

I am not sure
58%
19%

No, I would not
23%
**CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION RANK AMONG THE TOP CONCERNS FOR RESIDENTS**

**Overall Level of Concern by Issue**

- **Significant Concern**
  - Children with mental health needs
  - Anxiety affecting daily living
  - Depression
  - Chronic mental illness
  - Thoughts or incidents of physically hurting oneself

- **Some Concern**

- **No Concern**

---

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following mental health issues are concerns.
63% OF ALL RESIDENTS KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP FOR MENTAL HEALTH RELATED ISSUES

Overall Awareness of Mental Health Resources

- Yes, I would: 63%
- No, I would not: 14%
- I am not sure: 23%

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with stress or isolation, would you know where to get help?
THE VULNERABLE POPULATION IS MOST CONCERNED WITH ANXIETY AFFECTING DAILY LIVING AND DEPRESSION

Vulnerable Population Level of Concern by Issue

- **Anxiety affecting daily living**
- **Depression**
- **Children with mental health needs**
- **Chronic mental illness**
- **Thoughts or incidents of physically hurting oneself**

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following mental health issues are concerns.
**MOST VULNERABLE RESPONDENTS KNOW WHERE TO RECEIVE HELP FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

Vulnerable Population Awareness of Mental Health Resources

- **Yes, I would**: 58%
- **No, I would not**: 23%
- **I am not sure**: 19%

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with stress or isolation, would you know where to get help?
Both population groups expressed similar levels of concern about neglect, violence and abuse issues.

Average Level of Concern by Issue

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following neglect and abuse issues are concerns.
Both population groups had similar awareness about where to find help for significant concerns.

Level of concern vs. Awareness of Resources

- Demographics
- Basic Needs
- Family Stress
- Mental Health
- Neglect, Abuse & Violence
- Substance Abuse

Overall Results

N = 658

- Neglect of children
- Neglect of elders
- Scamming
- Bullying
- Domestic Violence
- Self-neglect by elders
- Hoarding

Percent Able to Find Help

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

Less Concern | Some Concern | More Concern

Average Level of Concern

Total Population

Vulnerable Population
BULLYING AND SCAMMING WERE THE NEGLECT, ABUSE & VIOLENCE ISSUES OF MOST CONCERN TO PARTICIPANTS

Overall Level of Concern by Issue

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following neglect and abuse issues are concerns.
OVER 60% OF RESPONDENTS ARE AWARE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES; ONLY 15% ARE AWARE FOR HOARDING

Overall Awareness of Neglect and Abuse Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Yes, I would</th>
<th>I am not sure</th>
<th>No, I would not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scamming</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-neglect by elders</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect of elders</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect of children</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoarding</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with one or more of the issues listed above, would you know where to get help?
SCAMMING AND BULLYING WERE HIGH CONCERNS IN THE COMMUNITY, HOWEVER ONLY 40% ARE AWARE OF RESOURCES

Overall Level of Concern vs. Awareness of Resources

- Neglect of children
- Neglect of elders
- Self-neglect by elders
- Domestic Violence
- Scamming
- Bullying
- Hoarding

Percent Able to Find Help

Less Concern | Some Concern | More Concern

Average Level of Concern

N = 658

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SIMILAR TO THE OVERALL POPULATION, VULNERABLE RESPONDENTS ARE MOST CONCERNED WITH BULLYING AND SCAMMING

Vulnerable Population Level of Concern by Issue

**N = 73**

**Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following neglect and abuse issues are concerns.**

- Bullying
- Scamming
- Domestic Violence
- Self-neglect by elders
- Neglect of elders
- Neglect of children
- Hoarding

- No Opinion
- No Concern
- Some Concern
- Significant Concern

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OVER 67% OF VULNERABLE RESPONDENTS KNOW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES; ONLY 21% KNOW HOARDING RESOURCES

Vulnerable Population Awareness of Neglect and Abuse Resources

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with one or more of the issues listed above, would you know where to get help?

- Bullying: 36% Yes, 14% No
- Scamming: 32% Yes, 26% No
- Domestic Violence: 67% Yes, 19% No
- Self-neglect by elders: 30% Yes, 32% No
- Neglect of elders: 48% Yes, 29% No
- Neglect of children: 58% Yes, 27% No
- Hoarding: 21% Yes, 42% No
THE VULNERABLE GROUP IS CONCERNED ABOUT SCAMMING AND BULLYING. HOWEVER, RESOURCE AWARENESS IS LIMITED.

Vulnerable Population Level of Concern vs. Awareness of Resources

- Domestic Violence
- Neglect of children
- Neglect of elders
- Self-neglect by elders
- Scamming
- Bullying
- Hoarding

Less Concern | Some Concern | More Concern

Average Level of Concern

N = 73
The levels of concern about substance abuse issues are similar within the population.

Average Level of Concern by Issue

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following substance abuse issues are concerns.
OVER HALF OF ALL RESPONDENTS ARE ABLE TO FIND RESOURCES TO HELP WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES

Overall Awareness of Substance Abuse Resources

N = 658

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with an alcohol or substance abuse problem, would you know where to get help?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Vulnerable Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I would</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I would not</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESPONDENTS SHARE SIMILAR LEVELS OF CONCERN FOR ALL SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES

Overall Level of Concern by Issue

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following substance abuse issues are concerns.
If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with an alcohol or substance abuse problem, would you know where to get help?

- Yes, I would: 58%
- No, I would not: 17%
- I am not sure: 25%

N = 658
THE VULNERABLE POPULATION IS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT ILLEGAL AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Vulnerable Population Level of Concern by Issue

Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following substance abuse issues are concerns.
53% of vulnerable respondents know where to find help for substance abuse related issues.

Vulnerable Population Awareness of Substance Abuse Resources

- Yes, I would: 53%
- No, I would not: 25%
- I am not sure: 22%

If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with an alcohol or substance abuse problem, would you know where to get help?
## COMMUNITY SURVEY CONTENTS

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OVERALL: PARTICIPANTS USED THE COMMENTS SECTION TO PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHTS AND FEEDBACK FOR THE ABUW (1 OF 3)

Some found that the survey increased their awareness.

- “I was surprised by the questions because I didn't think that a lot of these things are present in a community like AB. If these are problems in my community, then I wish I knew it so I could be more helpful and sympathetic to what people around me are dealing with.”

- “I think many middle-and-upper income people would be shocked to know how many people in these towns struggle to meet basic needs.”

- “The question of where to get help for these issues is an interesting one. Until you asked I did not realize how many things I really am not sure where to turn to help for!”

- “There seems to be an assumption in our community that "need" is economic. It would be helpful if, as a community, we recognized that there are many kinds of needs (as your survey clearly shows), that people in our own community may need help in ways that aren't obvious, and that there isn't shame in admitting that. That's a tall order. Thank you for your work on this.”
OVERALL: PARTICIPANTS USED THE COMMENTS SECTION TO PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHTS AND FEEDBACK FOR THE ABUW (2 OF 3)

Others provided recommendations for the ABUW...

- “We need a dialogue on community expectations, and how this impacts wellness. Need to make it OK not to be perfect family with kids going to Harvard or other Ivy League. Needs to be room for dropouts, trades, veterans, artists. Not everyone needs to grow into a professional.”

- “In my opinion it would be great if ABUW or another group were to compile a list of diverse resources available in town for all of the issues you have raised, and to distribute widely and publicly the list and contact information. The ABUW could mount such a list in public restrooms, libraries, anywhere they could be seen, and in all the languages represented in Acton.”

- “You need to publicize the services that are available to those in need more effectively.”

- “Please ensure that a priority be placed on transparency in how the money raised by the United Way and all of its agencies is spent.”

- “A website or something for residents that provided info would be great but the important part is something that is updated regularly.”
And still others provided feedback on the survey itself...

- “This survey is important, and I'm thankful to ABUW for undertaking it. I look forward to the results. Until now, I didn't know you have a detailed service directory on your website!”

- “Your results will vary greatly on who is completing the survey. Comfortable residents with graduated kids can only speculate at what is going on and needed in the community; I found this very difficult to complete!”

- “I don't actually understand this survey. I think all these things are likely to be of concern to at least some people in Acton/Boxborough. I would expect you to know whether or not they actually are.”

- “This survey doesn't distinguish between 'high levels of concern' and 'high levels of need'. High levels of concern could indicate people who are worried about something which is rare or unlikely (due to media coverage, for example). Other issues may be a higher need (more prevalent) but have a lower level of 'concern'.”
Finding Affordable Youth Activities

- “Physical activity facilities, including playgrounds, public swimming - options are good, but limited in some areas or pricey.”
- “Affordable after school activities, like music, sports, dance, and also affordable summer programs.”
- Affordable school vacation/summer activity options for children instead of weekly camps offered by community ed.”

Paying Property Taxes

- “Real Estate Tax Rate in Acton is EXCESSIVE!! Significantly higher (the highest) versus neighboring metro-west towns, with arguably a higher income. This burden needs to be addressed as it will impact long-term planning and sustainability for the community.”
- “Property taxes that senior have to pay are a significant concern.”
- “Taxes [are] too high, Regional school is spending too much with no control from town.”
Paying for Elder Care and Elder Support Services

- “Elder support services: In home assistive living support - affordable services and adaptive aids. High costs of cable TV, internet and phone services to fixed income residents.”
- “Helping our senior population remain part of the community.”
- “Paying for and finding care for senior parents and eventually, ourselves.”

Additional Public Services

- “Getting job is very difficult for a English is second language for those woman.”
- “Given our section 8 population and families immigrating to our country and specifically moving to Acton, we need additional social workers in the town. One is not enough.”
- “Need work that the disabled can do from home. Many like myself with chronic illness have trouble keeping a normal work schedule due to poor health, but are able to perform duties that would benefit companies...”
- “I know where to ask for help finding affordable housing, but there isn’t any even if I ask.”
FAMILY STRESS: THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ABILITY TO GET HELP WERE REOCCURRING STRESS-RELATED CONCERNS (1 OF 2)

Acton/Boxborough School System

- “The school system in Acton-Boxboro has been described as a ‘pressure cooker’ by some school personnel and I know that it affects students negatively. Not sure why it has to be this way.”

- “The competitive culture at the high school creates extremely high levels of stress. AB administration needs to define and hold the line between high school and college level classes, and to limit the homework to 3 hours per night maximum. I have real concerns about the mental health and physical safety of high school students at AB.”

- “There are many school assignments that require technology and computers, and yet there are many families who do not have access to WIFI and computers so assignments are very hard to complete for many students.”
GETTING HELP FOR STRESS AND ISOLATION

“\textbf{I have been in Acton for one year, and as a SAHM parent I often feel very isolated, particularly in winter. There are few non-paying options for places to take my children other than the library. In the summer and fall we visit parks and playgrounds, but we felt quite trapped this winter without money to pay for classes, etc.}”

“\textbf{Why do the agencies (health connector, food stamps, etc.) all keep referring people to apply online? Don’t they understand if you have limited income, internet and a computer or smart phone is not cheap!}”

“There is a difference between knowing where to get information, and understanding how to take personal action. I feel that sometimes information is available, but I don’t always feel able to take advantage of proposed options (e.g. not knowing how to get started, or who specifically to approach, or not understanding all of the process requirements .... which can seem overwhelming!)”
Recommendations by Residents

- “The social service agencies could publicize their offerings more broadly and make access available through multi-media.”

- “The information is out there. I think it needs to be available in more ways, e.g. both in flyers at the Sr. Center and on a Sr. Center Website.”

- “Hope that Acton and Boxborough can increase hours and/or staffing of community services coordination as well as advertise availability of services.”

- “It would be great to have a one-stop shopping resource where all above needs could be addressed. COA does that somewhat for the seniors but what about those that are in need and not seniors?”

- “I can afford professional help, have good insurance, know the government agencies. But again, I wonder about the extent to which these programs can help. Strengthening local neighborhoods and creating a sense of fun and community seems useful.”
MENTAL HEALTH: MANY EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

Mental Health Concerns

- “Conversations with Acton Medical have alerted me to the fact that there is a dearth of psychiatric providers to refer people to. I have heard that people needing methadone treatment have to travel into the city, and I wish there were places here and sufficient transportation to get them there.”

- “As a psychologist who works locally in private practice, I am turning away referrals for children and adolescents almost every week. There is a dearth of providers who work with children, who also take insurance. Many individuals and families in our community are struggling.”

- “I would try to go through my health insurance, though I have done that in the past and was unable to find a provider that was covered and had availability. Very frustrating when you have a mental health issue and you cannot find anyone to see you...”

- “A place in Acton that accepts Mass Health would benefit so very many.”

- “There are so many specialists these days that it is very confusing to try to get connected with exactly the right resource you need. And, when you do attempt to make a connection, the process of getting help can be very bureaucratic and off-putting, just adding to the stress levels.”
Neglect, Abuse, and Violence Concerns

- “These things are no more or less of a concern in Acton/Boxborough than they are anywhere else.”

- “I don't see these as challenges particular to A/B (and I don't have personal experience with any of them), but there are people struggling everywhere and it's important for all to have access to services!”

- “To say no concern for any of these would be disingenuous. The problems must exist even if they're hidden.”

- “My children and I went to ABRHS. I know kids can be cruel no matter where you go. Thank goodness my time was before the electronic age...”

- “Above issues often remain hidden - so the issue that concerns me is making more residents aware of them in order to increase willingness to fund services”
Substance Abuse Concerns

- “I am concerned that teenagers have few social outlets in this area. There isn't even a movie theater in our town or adjoining towns. This leaves them with few places to socialize and more time to go down the ‘wrong’ path.”

- “I have two teens. Drug access is very easy in this community. Judging by watching students smoking cigarettes on the corner lot of the high school, it doesn't look like the cigarette law of 18 or over is enforced. I believe many parents of older teens condone drinking, and it can be a gateway to a drinking problem.”

- “I graduated from ABRHS last spring, and from my experience many of the dangerous activities that happen (drunk driving, abuse of alcohol/drugs) arise from a lack of a place for kids to safely hang out. Parents don't want drinking happening in their house, and the town has no place where kids feel comfortable spending time at night, so kids end up doing reckless things like drinking and driving aimlessly around town.”
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Acton-Boxborough United Way
Community Needs Assessment – Community Survey

The Acton-Boxborough United Way, a local non-profit organization, is pleased to invite your participation in the ABUW Community Needs Assessment survey for all residents of Acton and Boxborough. With your help, we will identify the most pressing human service needs in our community.

This survey is anonymous and answers are not traceable to any particular response or person. The final report will only include a summary of all the results we receive. We greatly appreciate your candid responses and thank you for your time. [Note to Carlisle: Insert “Learn More” button here with link to ABUW website.]

Place of Residence
1. This survey is intended for Acton and Boxborough residents only. Where do you live?
   • Acton
   • Boxborough
   • Other (end survey)
**Basic Needs**

2. Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following struggles to meet basic needs are a concern in Acton or Boxborough. These issues may not necessarily apply to you or your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>YOUR LEVEL OF CONCERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents who struggle to:</td>
<td>Significant Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for rent/mortgage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for food and clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay other monthly bills such as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electricity, gas/oil, cable, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for medical expenses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find affordable transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find affordable/accessible housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find affordable, high quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand basic financial literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., budgeting, planning for the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for higher education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (explain):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with one or more of the basic needs listed above, would you know where to get help? We are asking this question in detail because the service providers in this category are so diverse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO FIND HELP?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents who struggle to:</td>
<td>Yes, I would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for rent/mortgage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for food and clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay other monthly bills such as electricity, gas/oil, cable, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Understand basic financial literacy (e.g., budgeting, planning for the future)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for higher education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (explain):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ABUW Community Needs Assessment Survey (4 of 10)

## Family Stress

4. Please indicate the degree to which you feel that the following stress and isolation issues are a concern in Acton or Boxborough. These issues may not necessarily apply to you or your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>YOUR LEVEL OF CONCERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High stress levels for children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High stress levels for young adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High stress levels for adults/parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High stress levels for senior citizens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress caused by technology’s impact on daily life (e.g., constant distractions, social media expectations, 24/7 news cycle, cyber bullying)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress caused by caring for children and aging parents at the same time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling isolated, like there’s no one to turn to for help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with stress or isolation, would you know where to get help?
   - Yes, I would
   - No, I would not
   - I am not sure
   Please feel free to tell us more:
### Mental Health

6. Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following mental health issues are concerns in Acton or Boxborough. These issues may not necessarily apply to you or your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>YOUR LEVEL OF CONCERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with special mental health needs (e.g., autism and ADD/ADHD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety that affects daily living (e.g., constant worry, tension, nervous feelings, problems sleeping)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression (e.g., low mood, sadness, low self-esteem, feeling worthless)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts, plans or incidents of physically hurting oneself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic mental illness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (explain):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with a mental health concern, would you know where to get help?
   - Yes, I would
   - No, I would not
   - I am not sure
   Please feel free to tell us more:
### Neglect, Abuse and Violence

8. Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following neglect and abuse issues are concerns in Acton or Boxborough. These issues may not necessarily apply to you or your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>YOUR LEVEL OF CONCERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Some Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect of children by adult caregivers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect of elders by caregivers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-neglect by elders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoarding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scamming by email, mail, or phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying (electronic or physical)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence (emotional, economic, psychological, sexual, or physical abuse)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (explain):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with one or more of the issues listed above, would you know where to get help? We are asking this question in detail because the service providers in this category are so diverse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO FIND HELP?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, I would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect of children by adult caregivers</td>
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<td>Domestic Violence (emotional, economic, psychological, sexual, or physical abuse)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (explain):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please feel free to tell us more:
Substance Abuse

10. Please indicate the degree to which you feel the following substance abuse issues are concerns in Acton or Boxborough. These issues may not necessarily apply to you or your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>YOUR LEVEL OF CONCERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of alcohol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use and abuse of marijuana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of prescription medications, (e.g., ADHD, anti-anxiety and pain killers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use and abuse of illegal drugs (e.g., heroin, LSD, ‘club’ drugs, methamphetamines)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (explain):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. If you, a family member or a friend were struggling with an alcohol or substance abuse problem, would you know where to get help?

- Yes, I would
- No, I would not
- I am not sure

Please feel free to tell us more:
Demographics

12. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

13. What is your age?

14. What is your ethnicity?
   - African American
   - Asian
   - Caucasian
   - Hispanic
   - Other (please specify)
   - I prefer not to answer

15. What is the primary language spoken in your household?
   - English
   - Korean
   - Mandarin
   - Portuguese
   - Spanish
   - Other (please specify)
   - I prefer not to answer

16. How long have you lived in Acton or Boxborough?
   - Less than five years
   - Five to fourteen years
   - Fifteen to twenty
   - More than twenty years

17. What is the size of your household?
   - I live alone
   - Two members
   - Three members
   - Four members
   - More than four members

18. Do you have children living in Acton or Boxborough?
   - Yes
   - No

19. Do you rent or own your home?
   - I or a family member pay rent on my residence
   - I or a family member own my residence

20. What is your annual household income?
   - Less than $25,000 per year
   - $25,000 - $74,999 per year
   - $75,000 - $124,999 per year
   - $125,000+ per year
   - I prefer not to answer
Open Response
Please take this space to tell us more about any of the issues discussed in this survey, or any additional issues that are a concern to you.

Thank you very much for completing this survey! The Acton-Boxborough United Way greatly appreciates your helping us to serve our community better.

For more information or assistance, please contact the United Way at 978-253-1777 or www.abuw.org. On our website, you will find a detailed service directory listing many resources in and around our community. You may also find free, private, confidential help, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 2-1-1 or visiting www.mass211.org. This free information and referral service is provided for Massachusetts residents through a collaboration of United Ways across the state.