



MACF Needs Assessment Top Category Needs

Domains of Well Being

To examine how Midland County is doing compared with Michigan and nationally, data is examined within six key areas of community asset management utilized by other communities: (1) Intellectual and Social Development (2) Economy (3) Health Lifestyles (4) Safety (5) Environment and (6) Social Capital – Civic Engagement; which are similar to the Gallup Well-Being Index measures of six domains of well-being (www.well-beingindex.com). For this assessment, we rely on information from various sources, including but not limited to the federal, state, and regional governments and their agencies; non-governmental groups, committees, and commissioned reports and research.

- **Intellectual and Social Development.** The emergence of the knowledge economy increasingly places more emphasis on mental competencies rather than physical strength and manual skills and abilities. This is true across all sectors from manufacturing to health and business. In short, educational attainment is increasingly important to the success of local businesses to traverse changing markets by adopting new technologies and practices, and to enter a promising emerging economy.
- **Economy.** This section contains key indicators that provide an economic picture of Midland County. They give a framework that allows the community to measure and estimate how any individual piece of economic data may affect the community individually and as a whole, and to then project its effect on the Midland County as whole.
- **Healthy Lifestyle.** This section assesses health factors and outcomes that affect the quality of life in Midland County. Important measures emphasized across the U.S. are access to care services, quality of health-care services, healthy behaviors, physical environment, social environment, chronic disease, mental health, injury, maternal and infant health, tobacco use, substance abuse, and responsible sexual behavior. For this report card, the focus is on key indicators that impact physical, psychological, and emotional health and access to health services for Midland County residents.
- **Safety.** The key indicators in this section provide safety statistics and highlight community safety within Midland County. This is a very important indicator for communities, as it a heavily researched statistics used by real estate agents, job seekers, and persons doing research on a particular community. Much of the data is important to create a "factual picture" of community identity about being safe.
- **Environment.** In this section data are provided that 1) directly affects Midland County; 2) that impacts the Great Lakes Bay Region; and 3) that influences Midland County indirectly (i.e., transportation, dioxin, etc.). Also included are third party databases that collect and analyze regional and local data to formulate a more robust picture of Midland County for comparisons.
- **Social Capital/Civic Engagement.** In late 2012 and early 2013, the Midland Area Community Foundation conducted over 20 focus groups of individuals representing service-providing agencies and government along with the users of these services in the community to provide an in depth and human perspective to the data from the Needs Assessment collected by Saginaw Valley State University in 2012 from publicly available information. This data also included previously collected data from various entities that are part of the Health and Human Services Council including the Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, the Developmental Assets Survey, Midland County Youth Master Plan, and others.



LIST OF COMMUNITY NEEDS (Not listed in order of importance)

The top community needs were compiled based on data collected and feedback from focus groups. The top needs list has been endorsed by the Midland County Health and Human Services Council (community collaborative) and has been compiled in consultation with various organizations and agencies throughout the community.

1. Shortfall in poverty-related learning and educational achievement

Investments in education at all levels (preschool through post-secondary) in Midland County have clearly accelerated learning outcomes among local students. Their performance in commonly used achievement assessments are typically higher than state averages as well as comparable peer groups. However, increases in poverty rates, as indicated by declining income levels and the number qualifying for free and reduced cost lunches, seriously threaten continued progress. Poverty appears to be a leading indicator of low learning and educational achievement in Midland County. The Michigan Educational Achievement Program (MEAP) and Michigan Merit Exam (MME) scores in the County are inversely related to poverty levels, viz., the greater the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches, a strong indicator of poverty, the lower the MEAP and MME scores of the district. For example, while research clearly demonstrates the strong positive relationship between early childhood development and educational success in later life, some children living in poverty have inadequate access to quality preschool programming. Among the issues identified are a growing number of students who need special services, a widening gap between high and low achieving students, a moderate drop in graduation rates, and an increased need for literacy tutoring services for both children as well as adults.

- School readiness: <http://www.midlandcountydashboards.org/school-readiness.html> includes six measures found at: <http://www.midlandcountydashboards.org/data11.html>
- Student Performance: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/student-performance.html> includes two measures found at: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data18.html>
- Education beyond high school: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/education-beyond-high-school.html> also provides measures: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data14.html>
- Homelessness <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/homelessness.html> provides some relevant information: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data20.html>.
- Graduation rates are crucial: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/high-school-graduation-rate.html> and give evidence of economic success: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data9.html> especially when linked to the data in Education beyond high school.
- Infant Mortality: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/infant-mortality.html>; Immunizations: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/childhood-immunizations.html>; Substance abuse: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/substance-abuse.html>; Health Inequities: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/health-inequity.html>; Recreation and Obesity: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/recreation--obesity.html>; and overall Safety are also important factors: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/safety1.html>.



2. Inadequate public transportation

In many cases, educational and learning opportunities are available to Midland County youth but they have limited access to transportation to bring them to the program. While Dial-A-Ride and County Connection are available, they are not always convenient or cost-effective options to get to the desired programs. The issue of transportation exists for the very young (e.g., access to quality preschool programs) as well as for secondary students (e.g., access to career technical and college courses).

Low wage individuals also find themselves unable to access both job skills training courses as well as higher paying jobs, when available, owing to inadequate transportation options. While the currently available alternatives are used, they are not very convenient and are rather expensive for a person earning a minimum wage. Consideration should also be given to a fixed route structure that brings riders into needed areas including shops, medical services, agencies, etc. In addition, transportation options outside of the city are limited.

While the physical environment of Midland is good, accessing some of the programs and sites is limited, especially to low income individuals and families. Local recreational areas and parks have low utilization rates owing to access/transportation issues. In addition, the ongoing integration of non-motorized transportation options is encouraged.

Seniors who no longer drive are also challenged with transportation needs. While Senior Services provides assistance with this, the need will continue to grow as the percentage of seniors in the community increases.

- Also is influenced by Transportation that include implications: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/additional-resources22.html>
- Most of this emerged from the focus groups and Users—not much data in research other than in health inequity: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/health-inequity.html> and the MIHIA and Health County Rankings: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data13.html>
- The Environment Section: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/environment.html> has some implications as well as a larger analysis: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/additional-resources22.html>
- Unintentional Deaths: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/unintentional-injury-deaths.html> are heavily influenced by transportation issues: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data24.html>.
- The growing number of children 0-5 qualifying for programs also impacts transportation. See School readiness: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/school-readiness.html> includes six measures found at: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data11.html>



3. Lack of affordable housing/shelter for low income earners

Poverty and homelessness are not widely acknowledged in the County. There is insufficient capacity for affordable housing for low-income earners who sometimes encounter discrimination based on their economic circumstances. There is also a related lack of shelter and/or transitional housing options for those families undergoing changes in their lives. Of the low cost housing that is available, many units appear to have substandard maintenance and repair issues that tend to drive up the overall cost of occupancy. Heat and electricity bills are especially high in some of these units owing to inferior insulation, poorly fitting doors and windows, and leaking roofs.

- The easiest way to show this is to highlight the economy section and its subsections found here: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/economy.html>
- Also the following sections in Safety: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/safety1.html>
 - Neighborhood Safety: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/neighborhood-safety.html>
 - Child Abuse and Neglect: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/child-abuse-and-neglect.html>
 - Domestic Violence: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/domestic-violence.html>

4. Increased substance abuse

There is increasing substance abuse in Midland County based on hospital admissions data along with anecdotal information gathered in focus groups. While alcohol use is still the primary drug of choice, the use of opiates, including heroin and the misuse of prescription drugs, is a growing concern. While alcohol use is still the primary drug used, the use of opiates, including the misuse of prescription drugs, is a growing concern. In addition, experimentation is occurring with “designer” drugs including the very dangerous family of “bath salts”. The consequences of substance abuse include vehicle crashes, work absenteeism, unwanted pregnancies, abused and neglected children, poor school performance, violence, crimes, and personal medical issues including death.

- Substance Abuse: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/substance-abuse.html> and information that includes primary drug used at admission: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data16.html>, age of first use and at admission (mean): <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/age-at-admission-and-first-use-by-primary-drug.html>; and characteristics/comparisons of users in the region: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/common-statistical-comparison-of-users.html>.
- Teen pregnancy rates (although low are also impacted): <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/teen-pregnancy.html> and <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data28.html>; as well as infant mortality: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/infant-mortality.html> and natality: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/natality-by-race-of-mother.html>



5. Declining access to health care for all/increasing demand

While Midland County is significantly growing its medical treatment facilities, access to health care is declining. This impacts a wide range of individuals including young professionals and others moving to the area, the economically disadvantaged and the elderly. Owing to complex economic factors favoring specialists, the number of primary care physicians is declining while demand for their services is increasing in part because of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. In addition, limited transportation options are reducing access to health care among the poor. Dental care for the economically disadvantaged has improved through the Helping Hands Clinic, now operating under the Midland County Health Department, but it is available only to Medicaid-eligible patients. Access to dental care for low income children is available through programs such as Healthy Kids Dental and “Adopt a Child Smile”.

- Health Care access: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/health-care-access-and-coverage.html> and data: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data8.html>.
- Health related quality of life: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data8.html> and data: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data4.html>
- Mental Health: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/mental-health.html> and Data: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data12.html>.
- Also impacted is school readiness and data: School readiness: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/school-readiness.html> includes six measures found at: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data11.html>

6. Obesity rates among children and adults

Obesity rates among both children and adults are increasing in Midland County. Various factors are contributing to this issue including the lack of exercise, poor dietary practices, and increased sedentary lifestyles. The consequences of obesity include increases in cardio-vascular disease, diabetes, and ultimately, shortened life-spans.

- Obesity rates: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/recreation--obesity.html> and data: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data10.html>

7. Access to mental health services

There is a need for increased access to mental health services. While those individuals who qualify to receive services from Community Mental Health are obtaining care, those who are economically disadvantaged and do not qualify find themselves with very few if any options.

- Mental Health: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/mental-health.html> and Data: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data12.html>.
- Also, Persons in Group Quarters: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/persons-living-in-group-quarters-2005-2009.html>



8. Need for senior services

More than 20% of Midland County's population is older than 60 year old and is growing fast. The corresponding need for senior services is also increasing rapidly. Most of the required services are related to quality of life issues and include nutrition, finances, transportation, physical and mental health care, housing, and socialization. In addition, as Midland's population of seniors increases, there has been an increase in the number of scams perpetrated on them. Most perpetrators take advantage of the presumed solid financial situation of seniors and their dependency and decline in cognitive functioning. Increased law enforcement and education programs can address the issue.

- Data from Focus Groups.
- Poverty Rates by Age: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/poverty1.html> and data: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data27.html>
- Job growth in professions dealing with the elderly is also seen in Knowledge Economy: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/knowledge-economy.html> shows the current growth in jobs in Midland aligns with assessment: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data5.html>
- Health Factors: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/health1.html> including:
 - [Health Care Access and Coverage](#)
 - [Life Expectancy](#)
 - [Health Inequity](#)
 - [Health-Related Quality of Life](#)
 - [Mental Health](#)
 - [Disabilities](#)

9. Concern for continuing community safety

The number of law enforcement officers in the county has been reduced significantly owing to budgetary issues. While crime rates are still quite low in Midland County, there is a growing concern among law enforcement officers that crime rates will increase owing to the shortage of staff. There also is concern that crime is becoming a regional issues and that Midland is not immune from some of the crime issues that exist in neighboring communities. Regional concerns will almost certainly, in time, become Midland's. There also are concerns that not every school in the County has a school resource officer available. This is especially troubling given the recent school shootings in the country.

- Data in Safety: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/safety1.html> and Health: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/health1.html> supports not just adding more law enforcement but "social workers and counselors" as well. See Data in:
 - [Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
 - [Domestic Violence](#)
 - [Youth Crime](#)
 - [Violent Crime](#)
 - [Neighborhood Safety](#)
 - [Suicide Prevention](#)
 - [Substance Abuse](#)
 - [Mental Health](#)



10. Better coordination of services

While Midland County has a wide range of services available to low income individuals and families, they often find themselves involved in a myriad of “red tape”. Several described the process as running in a maze. Entry into the 211 system is convenient but once agencies are contacted, individuals are given multiple forms to be completed, often containing identical information, several individuals need to be called for interviews, the individual is required to travel to a number of locations, and needed services are provided in a piecemeal fashion. The availability of an advocate/mentor to provide “one-stop shopping”, to simplify the qualification process, to cut through the “red tape” would considerably streamline the process and hasten the provision of the needed services without the perception of a run-around.

- Civic Engagement: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/civic-engagement.html> - summaries of the Focus Groups.

11. Insufficient career technical educational opportunities for secondary students, nontraditional students, and the working poor

While Midland County public schools offer a broad range of career technical opportunities, there appears to be a perceived need for additional options for secondary students. While most Midland County graduates pursue post-secondary education at colleges and universities, many would prefer to have access to enhanced career technical courses in middle and high school. State curriculum requirements somewhat restrict the flexibility to enroll in these courses but demand exists to expand career technical course offerings. Collaborative arrangements with Delta College, the Bay-Arenac Skills Center, the Saginaw Career Center, Associated Building Contractors, MITECH+ and other area agencies have helped to provide additional offerings for students interested in these courses. Two new “hands on” curricular offerings have begun in Meridian Public Schools (New Tech) and in the Coleman Public Schools (Agro-science program) that are helping to address the demand for relevant options. New Tech in particular is a project-based learning methodology that also provides an early college experience for participating students.

In addition, a strong need was identified regarding non-traditional students and adults seeking training, professional development, or re-training in employable skill areas. The principal issues appear to be similar to those encountered by traditional secondary school students and include access to and affordability of existing career technical programs as well as curricular development and alignment with emerging higher employment areas. The working poor in Midland County typically have limited educations and low value job skills. This condition predictably leads to minimum to low wage employment for many. These income levels are insufficient to support a family and lead individuals to seek and become dependent on supplemental assistance for basic human needs such as food, shelter, health care and the like. Data supports the need for wages in the neighborhood of \$12-15/hour as the minimum necessary to provide family stability. To achieve these incomes, there is a demonstrated and urgent need to provide job training opportunities for these low skilled individuals in order to increase their value in the labor market. Strengthened college/post-secondary preparedness, acclimation, and access services also are needed for this population and for prospective first-generation post-secondary candidates.



- Impacts Intellectual and Social Development:
 - School readiness: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/school-readiness.html> includes six measures found at: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data11.html>
 - Student Performance: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/student-performance.html> includes two measures found at: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data18.html>
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 - Homelessness <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/homelessness.html> provides some relevant information: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data20.html>.
 - Graduation rates are crucial: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/high-school-graduation-rate.html> and give evidence of economic success: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data9.html> especially when linked to the data in Education beyond high school. Knowledge Economy: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/knowledge-economy.html> shows the current growth in jobs in Midland aligns with assessment: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data5.html>
- Also is influenced by Transportation that include implications: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/additional-resources22.html>
- Knowledge Economy: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/knowledge-economy.html> shows the current growth in jobs in Midland aligns with assessment: <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/data5.html>

12. Aging infrastructure/maintaining community assets

A modern economy requires state-of-the-art infrastructure including roads, water, electrical grid, high speed internet access, and air/rail transportation. With diminishing tax revenues available to both the city and county governments, some of the required upgrades/updates have been deferred resulting in still higher costs to address some of the aging issues. In addition, Midland County is blessed with extensive assets in terms of parks, recreational facilities and more. Maintaining those assets is an area of concern as budget concerns impact municipalities and nonprofits. Not every location in the County has access to high speed internet and modern, high speed limited access highways are needed as approaches to MBS airport from I-75 and US-10 to stimulate economic growth in the region.

- Also from focus groups in terms of data.

13. Expansion of non-motorized trails and improved use of outdoor assets

Continued development of non-motorized trails throughout the city and county was encouraged. As mentioned previously, outdoor assets (i.e. parks, recreation areas) are not well utilized. Finding ways to promote and possibly further develop these areas is an area for consideration.

- See Above and Focus Groups
- Regional Studies are included in Civic Engagement, Transportation, and Health and Safety under additional resources.
- <http://midlandcountydashboards.org/additional-resources22.html>