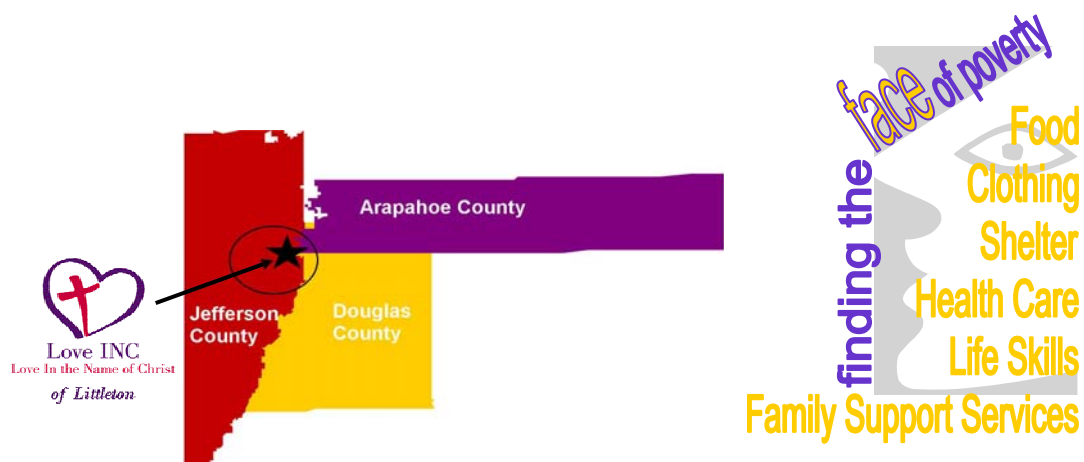


The Face of Poverty in Littleton:

A study of church services and reported needs



Presented to the Love INC of Littleton
Board of Directors

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Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	3
List of Figures	3
I. Executive Summary	4
II. Background	5
III. Purpose of the study	6
IV. Method	6
Subjects	6
Design	7
Procedure	7
Limitations	8
V. Results	9
Current assistance offered through churches:	
Food	9
Clothing	10
Shelter	11
Health care	12
Life Skills	13
Family Support	14
Frequency of requests for assistance in Littleton	15
Ability to meet the requests for assistance	17
Who are the service providers?	18
Who's asking for assistance?	19
VI. Discussion	21
VII. Recommendations	23

APPENDIX A: Survey responses (raw data)

APPENDIX B: List of all churches invited to participate

APPENDIX C: Invitation to participate in survey

List of Tables

- 1 Survey Question 1: What type of food assistance do you offer through your church?
- 2 Survey Question 2: What type of clothing assistance do you offer through your church?
- 3 Survey Question 3: What type of shelter assistance do you offer through your church?
- 4 Survey Question 4: What type of health care assistance do you offer through your church?
- 5 Survey Question 5: What type of Life Skills assistance do you offer through your church?
- 6 Survey Question 6: What type of Family Support assistance do you offer through your church?
- 7 Survey Question 7: How often do you see requests for assistance JUST FROM PEOPLE IN LITTLETON for these six categories?
- 8 Survey Question 8: Overall, to what extent are you able to meet the requests for assistance in the six categories?
- 9 Survey Question 9: Where are you most likely to refer requests for assistance in each of the six areas?
- 10 Survey Question 10: Where are people coming from who are asking your church for food?

List of Figures

- 1 Study boundaries

I. Executive Summary

Although many living in Littleton are affluent (median income level is \$73,000), there are many who are not as fortunate. Statistics for this area also show that there are homeless families, as well as hundreds of people who have called Mile High United Way for various types of assistance -- including rent, utility and shelter assistance.

This study began as a tool to help the nonprofit ministry Love In the Name of Christ (Love INC) of Littleton better understand existing resources available through the churches as well as learn more about the frequency and nature of requests for assistance coming to the churches in preparation for the opening of their Clearinghouse. The hope is that these results could benefit churches, nonprofits and government agencies as they each seek to provide cost effective and efficient human services to the Littleton community.

A 10-questions survey instrument was piloted in April 2008 and finalized in May 2008. The survey was made available online to 57 churches in the Littleton area. Twenty one churches responded (37% return rate).

Responding churches indicated they provided a wide variety of services in each of the six categories: food; clothing; shelter; health care; life skills and family support services. Food pantries, blood drives, health screening and marriage classes were listed as the top services offered. Overall the need for food assistance was ranked as the #1 request for assistance among churches responding, followed by shelter and transportation assistance.

Over half of the churches (61%) reported they were able to meet requests for food, while requests for shelter assistance proved a challenge. Three out of four (77%) of respondents said they were rarely or never able to meet this assistance request. In addition 82% of the churches indicated they were not equipped to meet requests for health care assistance, generally referring these requests to county human services.

Although almost half of the churches indicated they themselves were the top-ranked source to meet requests for food assistance, the number one-ranked referral partner was InterFaith Community Services. In addition, the vast majority of shelter-related requests were reported as being cared for outside the church.

Slightly over half of the requests for assistance (56%) came from those in the churches or from those living in Littleton. The largest number of requests coming from outside Littleton area were for health care assistance (60%). Two out of three (67%) requests coming from churches or from those living in the Littleton area were for life skills assistance. The need for marriage classes and support groups ranked in the top 10.

The tough economy and rising costs (especially transportation and food costs) seem to point to rising need in the community for additional human services. Questions about the current ability to meet the growing demands (especially for food, transportation and shelter assistance) need to be addressed.

Churches are urged to work together and partner with existing agencies to ensure that no one group is being asked to bear the full burden of trying to meet all of the needs in Littleton. In particular, churches are encouraged to explore additional ways in which to engage volunteers to meet growing demands.

II. Background

Many have the perception that there are “no human service needs in Littleton”. Some statistics might reinforce that perception – with the most recent census reporting the median household income in Littleton to be \$73,000. But there’s another side to Littleton. It’s the “Face of Poverty” in Littleton.

Consider the fact that in the city of Littleton almost one in ten women live alone – many of them raising children under 18 years of age. Just in the city of Littleton there are also over one in ten (11%) households with the main householder age 65 or older.

The census also reported one percent of the Littleton population (over 600 individuals) living in group quarters (both institutionalized and noninstitutionalized).

Recent analysis of the Mile High United Way (211) requests for assistance (from Littleton area) showed among the top 10 requests for assistance were: rent (23%), food (11%), utilities (11%), shelter (7%) and medical screening (6%). And many of those requesting assistance had requests for more than one type of assistance (e.g., rent AND utility assistance).

Additional statistics show that in the unincorporated South Jefferson County portion of Littleton alone, over 200 students are in the schools, listed as homeless. Just over 1,700 students in the same geographic area were receiving government free or reduced-cost lunches at their school.

In the same area of Littleton (unincorporated South Jefferson County) the last census also showed 116 families and 516 individuals living in poverty.

Not many people think of diversity when they think of Littleton. However, from 1980 to 2000, the number of foreign-born residents of Littleton increased from approximately three percent to 13.2 percent. In 1998 Littleton Public Schools offered ESL (English as a second language) classes to 176 students. In addition, the labor force just in Littleton zip code 80120 was 25% Hispanic.

This study began as the search for “**The Face of Poverty**” in Littleton. Conducted on behalf of Love in the Name of Christ (Love INC) of Littleton, this study was seen as a necessary starting point for Love INC of Littleton.

With a mission to mobilize the church to transform lives and the community in the name of Christ, Love INC ministry needed to begin with a good understanding of the local needs. How could Love INC enhance its ability to recommend ministries and help churches pool resources to meet local needs without a comprehensive understanding of existing services and needs?

Some key questions seemed evident. Who are the poor in Littleton? What assistance are they asking for? How are churches responding to the needs?

With these questions in mind, this study was launched.

III. Purpose of the study

The hope is that the results of this study could be used by churches, nonprofits and government agencies to better understand the needs for assistance in Littleton – resulting in better ability to make decisions about programs and ministries to meet the needs.

For churches specifically, these results could provide key data in developing volunteer opportunities as well as maximizing opportunities to offer cost-effective and efficient services to meet the exact needs. In addition, these results – when shared -- can help minimize duplication or overlap of services in the community.

The purpose of this study was to identify:

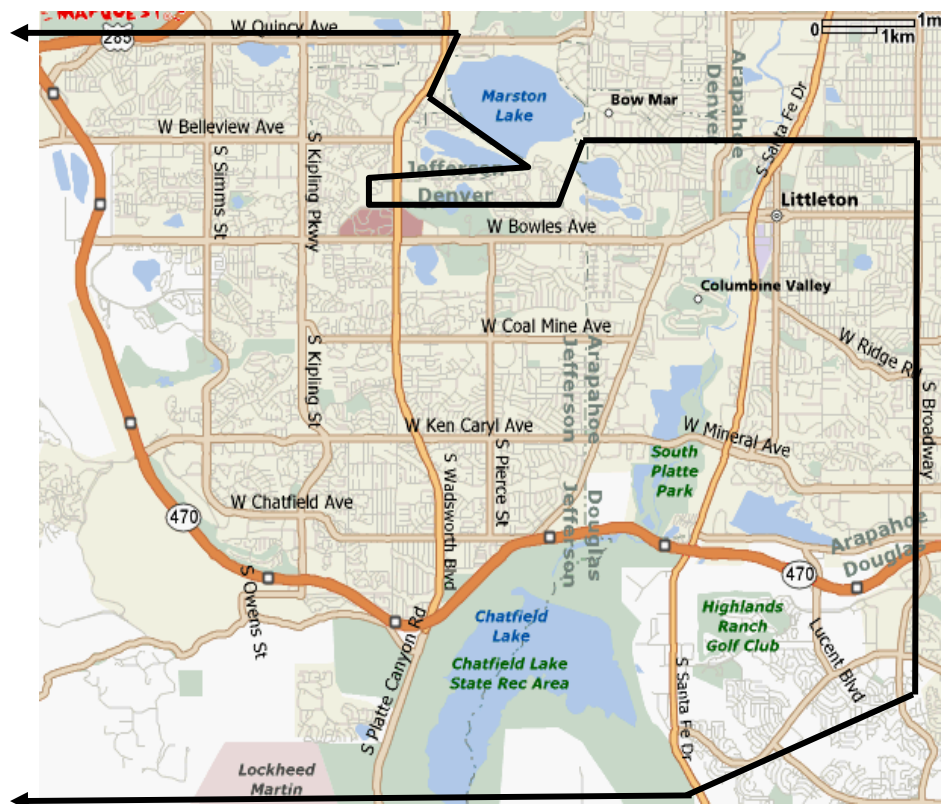
1. Current outreach and assistance ministries offered through the Littleton-area churches.
2. The (extent and type of) need for assistance in Littleton.
3. Where churches refer requests for assistance.

IV. Method

SUBJECTS

For this study, 57 Christian churches in the Littleton area were invited to participate in the survey (full list of churches provided in Appendix B). For purposes of this study, the Littleton area was defined as boundaries for Love INC of Littleton. Map is provided here in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Study boundaries



Of the 57 churches invited to participate, 21 churches responded (37% return rate). Of those responding, almost half (42%) were pastors.

Survey returns were received from the following churches:

1. Ascension Lutheran Littleton
2. Centennial Covenant Church
3. Christ Lutheran Church
4. Columbine United Church
5. Deer Creek Church
6. Faith Community Church, Littleton
7. First Presbyterian Church of Littleton
8. GracePoint Community Church
9. Heritage United Methodist Church
10. Hosanna Lutheran
11. Ken Caryl Baptist Church
12. Light of the World Catholic Church
13. Littleton Seventh-day Adventist Church
14. Living Way Fellowship
15. Southern Gables
16. St. James Presbyterian Church
17. St. Mark Catholic Church
18. St. Philip Lutheran
19. Trinity Christian Center (Church for All Nations)
20. Valley View Christian Church
21. WaterStone Community Church

DESIGN

A survey instrument was developed, using both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The survey was designed to identify both existing service offerings as well as perception of need.

The final survey instrument included 10 items, using a multiple choice and short answer format. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix A.

PROCEDURE

A pilot of the survey instrument was distributed to all nine of the Love INC of Littleton Board members. Feedback was used to make modifications.

On April 30, 2008, a focus group of key church partners in the Littleton area was invited to also provide feedback on the study method and survey instrument. The focus group included representatives from: Jefferson County Human Services; Interfaith Community Services; North Littleton Promise; Littleton Immigration Integration Initiative; Ken Caryl Baptist; Valley View Christian; Faith Community; Deer Creek Community. Three board members were also present, representing South Suburban, Southern Gables and Centennial Covenant. Again, their feedback was used to make appropriate modifications to the survey instrument.

In early May 2008, invitations to participate in the survey were sent to the 57 Christian Churches in the Littleton area. Love INC of Littleton board members were each asked to follow up with a list of invitees in hopes of enhancing the return rate.

On May 10, 2008 the survey was offered online, using the Constant Contact survey development tools. The survey ran "live online" from May 10, 2008 through July 14, 2008.

Results of the survey were compiled using simple, descriptive statistics – including percentages, rank order and averages.

LIMITATIONS

This study is a beginning, exploratory study that relied primarily on the reports of church representatives responding to the survey questions. The findings of this study were meant to be a single "snapshot in time" for this particular community, as seen by the responding churches (a "good beginning baseline").

Although a 37% return rate was encouraging, readers are cautioned not to generalize results of this study to the entire (57 church) population. While certain trends are evident, no attempts to include a rigorous (inferential) statistical analysis were done as part of the study.

Ongoing efforts to validate these findings are encouraged.

V. Results

Current assistance offered through the churches

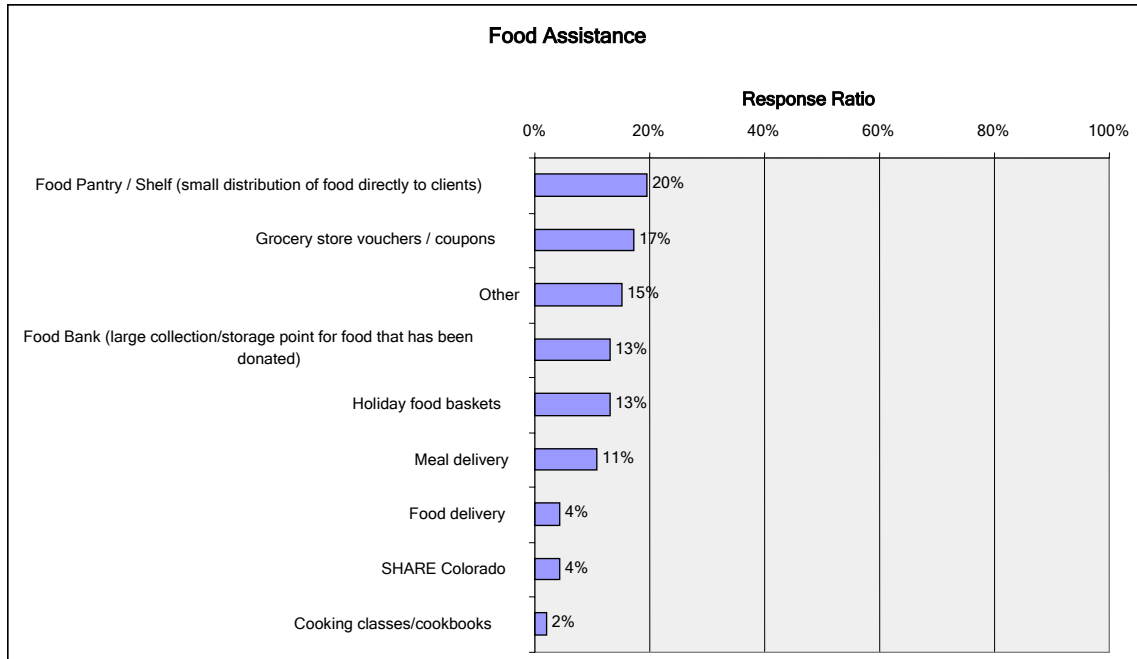
The first six survey items asked about current assistance offerings in six categories: food, clothing, shelter, health care, life skills and family support services. Churches reported offering a wide variety of services in each of the six categories.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

Churches reported offering a wide variety of food assistance – with each of the 21 responding churches listing some type of food assistance. Food pantries were listed as the top offering for food assistance – with one in five (20%) of the responding churches having this type of assistance. Grocery store coupons were listed as the second-ranked item for food assistance, with 17% of responding churches offering them.

In addition to the food assistance listed on the survey, 15% of churches also reported offering other assistance including: food drives; participation in “Angel Food Ministries” (a food ministry, based in Georgia); providing food as part of participation in Interfaith Hospitality Network; making Thanksgiving meals for international students. A few noted that food delivery was made available only to church members in need. Table 1 provides actual survey responses.

TABLE 1
Survey Question 1: What type of food assistance do you offer through your church?



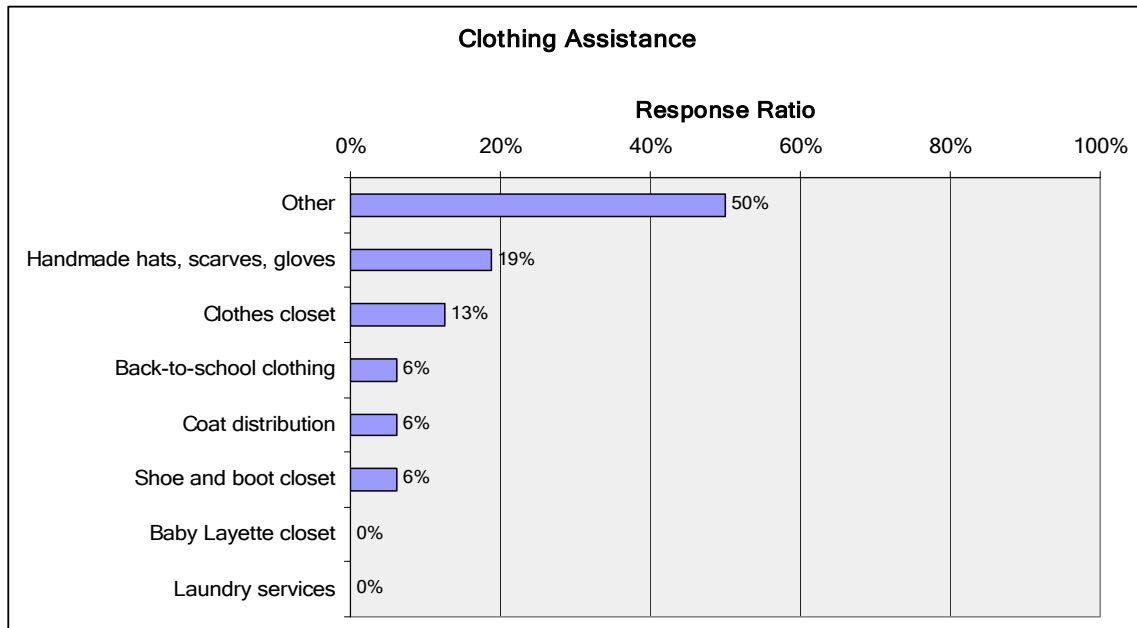
CLOTHING ASSISTANCE

The survey results did not show any clear trend regarding types of clothing assistance offered by the churches. The “other” category included: donating clothing items to thrift shops; making quilts; making items for the Alternative Pregnancy Center; soliciting clothes from church members as needs arise.

One church indicated they hold an open house once a month to allow those in need of clothing to pick up items. Another church reported discontinuing the clothing ministry due to lack of space. One church also said they offered cash reimbursement on a limited basis as well as children’s clothing exchange.

Table 2 provides the survey responses to this question.

TABLE 2
Survey Question 2: What type of clothing assistance do you offer through your church?



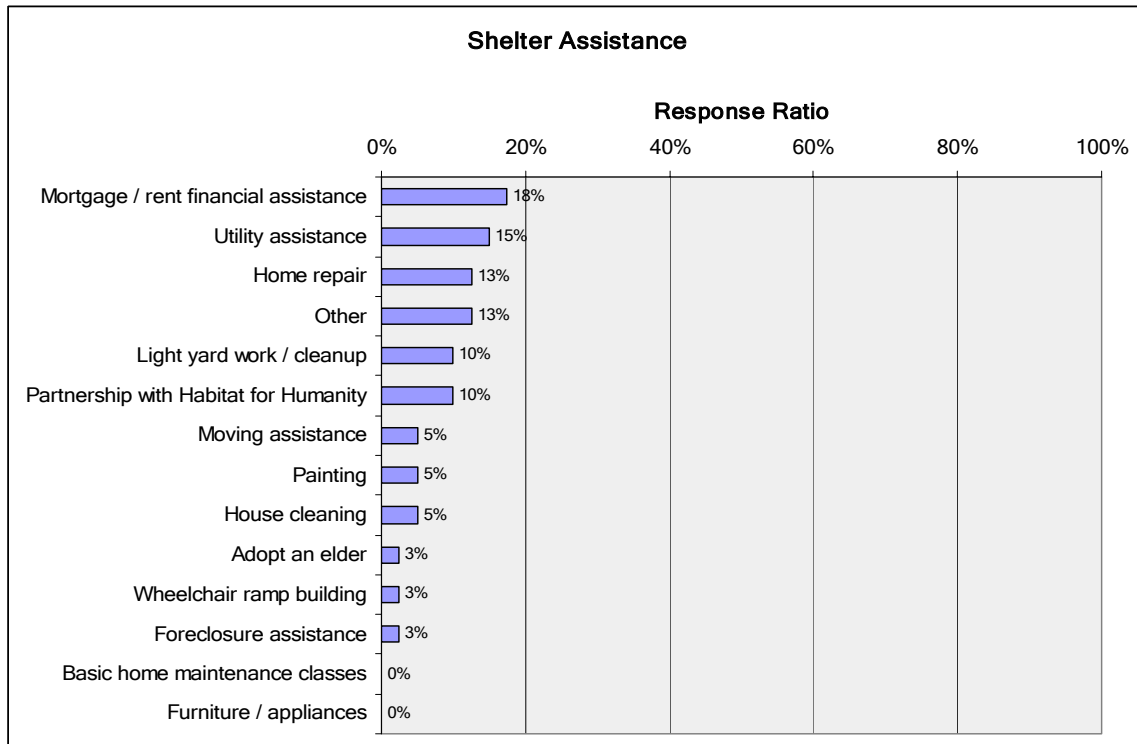
SHELTER ASSISTANCE

Although no clear trend was noted with regard to shelter assistance, almost one in five churches responding (18%) indicated they provided financial assistance to help with rent or mortgage payments. Only 3% indicated providing foreclosure assistance. Overall, out of the 40 responses to this item, almost a third (32%) indicated offering financial assistance for rent and/or utilities.

Several of the churches listed participation in Interfaith Hospitality Network. For the most part, comments indicated that (with the exception of Interfaith Hospitality Network) shelter assistance was primarily reserved for church members.

Table 3 provides details of responses to this question.

TABLE 3
Survey Question 3: What type of shelter assistance do you offer through your church?



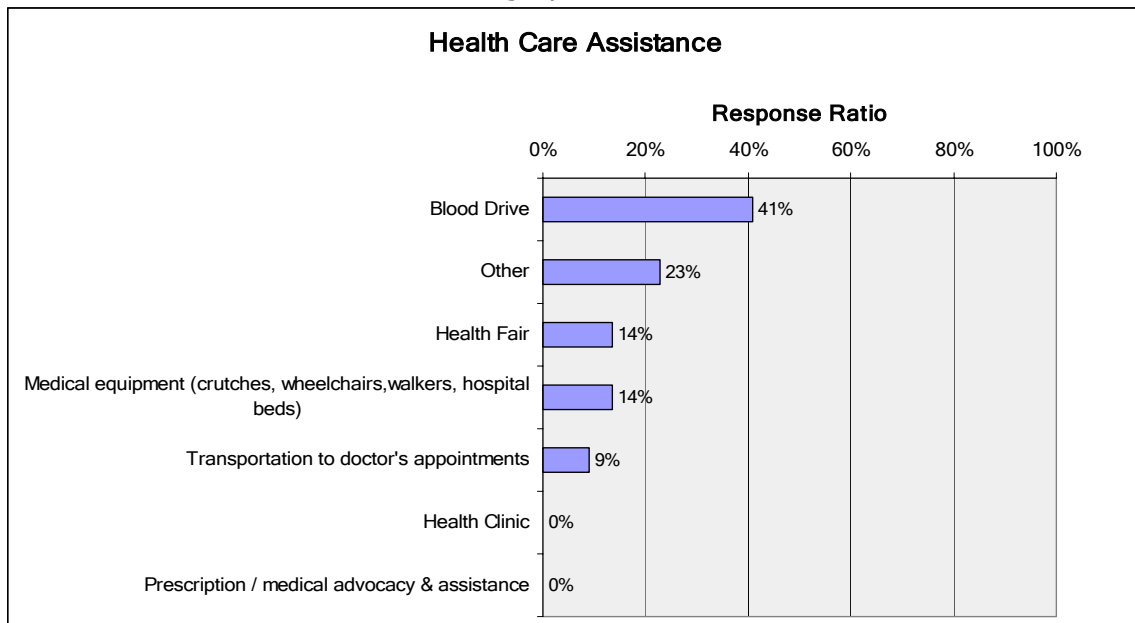
HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE

Blood drives were reported as the most frequently-mentioned health care assistance. Almost half of the churches (41%) indicated having a blood drive as part of their health care assistance programs.

Preventative services, including immunization and Life Line screening were listed second, with 23% of churches providing this type of health care assistance. One church indicated their health screening services were only available to their church members – especially the elderly members. Another mentioned providing transportation to medical appointments.

Table 4 provides details of all responses.

TABLE 4
Survey Question 4: What type of health care assistance do you offer through your church?



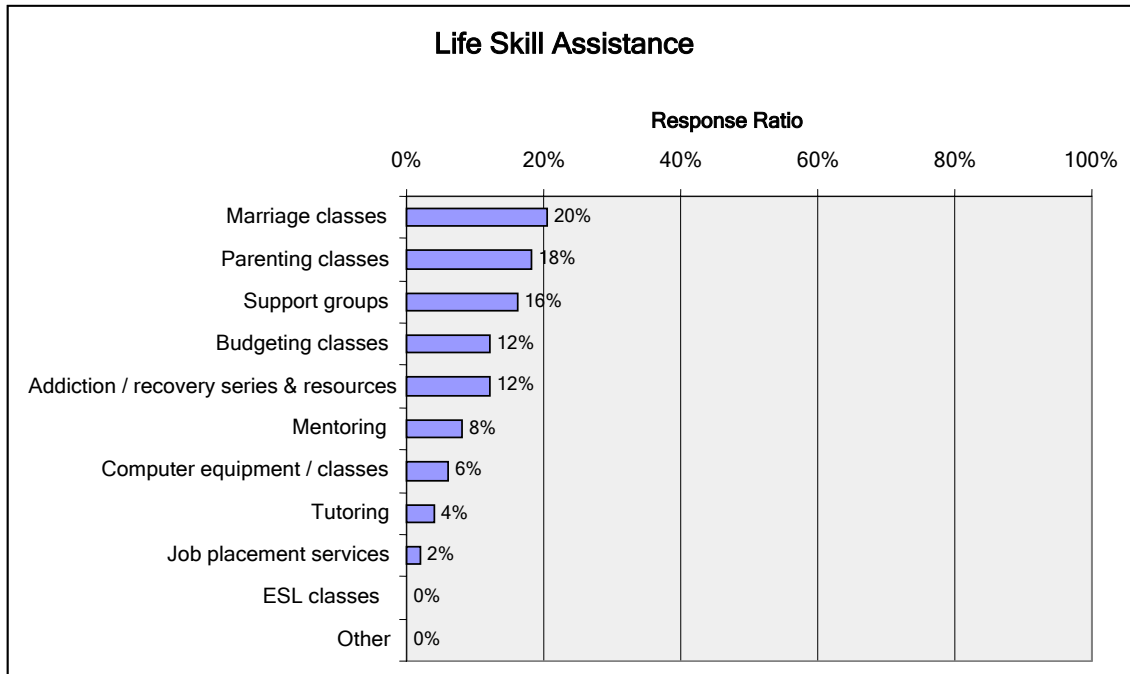
LIFE SKILLS ASSISTANCE

The top offering for Life Skills Assistance was marriage classes – with one in five churches (20%) indicating they provided this type of help. A close second was parenting classes (18%), followed by various support groups (16%). Two churches listed the 13-session “Financial Peace University” as a consistent offering.

Churches also indicated a preference for partnering with other agencies to provide assistance in this area. Specifically mentioned were participation in the Whiz Kids program and partnering with Denver Works.

Table 5 provides details.

TABLE 5
Survey Question 5: What type of Life Skills assistance do you offer through your church?



FAMILY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE

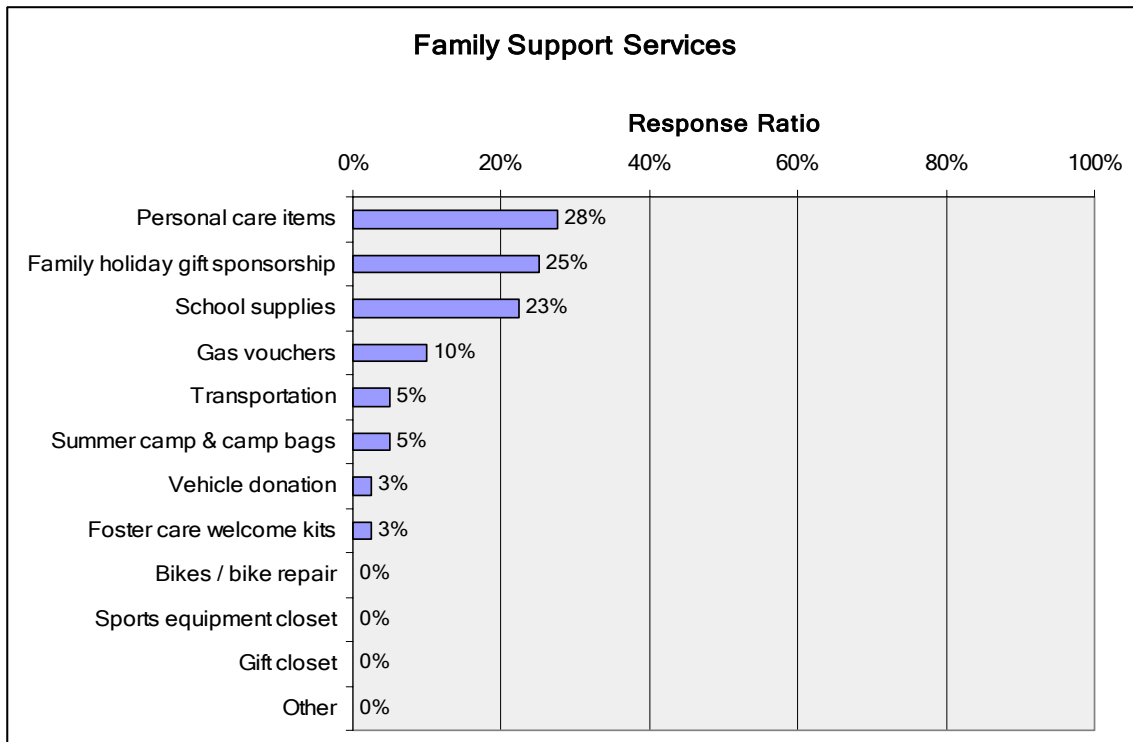
Personal care items topped the list of family support assistance (28%), followed closely by family holiday gift sponsorship (25%) and school supply drives (23%).

As with Life Skills assistance, churches indicated partnering with other agencies to provide family support. Examples included working with InterFaith Community Services, "Chuck's Kids", "Pack to School", and "Operation Christmas Child".

One church reported offering hair cuts as part of the food distribution day.

Full responses are provided in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6
Survey Question 6: What type of Family Support assistance do you offer through your church?



Frequency of requests for assistance in Littleton

For the purpose of this survey, respondents were asked to identify how often they see requests for assistance in each of the six categories. For consistency, a rating scale was provided as follows:

- 1 = NEVER (we have not seen this type of request)
- 2 = RARELY (... less than once/month)
- 3 = SOMETIMES (... about once/month)
- 4 = FREQUENTLY (... more than once/month)
- 5 = CONSTANTLY (...at least once/week)

The need for food was ranked as the #1 request for assistance among churches responding. Over half (55%) of churches said they had requests for food “frequently” or “constantly” from people in Littleton.

Second highest ranking in terms of frequency of request was for shelter assistance. Half (50%) reported receiving requests for shelter assistance “frequently” or “constantly”. In the overall rankings, the request for this type of assistance ranked #2, behind food requests.

Third highest ranking in terms of frequency of request was for transportation assistance and/or gas vouchers. Only 26% of churches reported never or rarely seeing this type of request. Conversely, 58% of churches indicated they receive this type of request at least once / month, with 5% indicating they see this request at least once/week.

The need for clothing assistance not seen as very prevalent (ranked 9 out of 24 assistance offerings). A large majority of respondents (90%) reported receiving requests for clothing once a month or less.

Health care assistance ranked 12th overall – about in the middle of the list.

Among the bottom five needs, in terms of frequency of request were family support services, including sports equipment, foster care welcome kits, gift closets, bikes/bike repair, and vehicle donation.

All responses are provided in Table 7 (next page).

TABLE 7

Survey Question 7: How often do you see requests for assistance JUST FROM PEOPLE IN LITTLETON for these 6 categories?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.		1	2	3	4	5
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Constantly	
Food	0 0%	4 20%	5 25%	6 30%	5 25%	
Clothing	3 15%	11 55%	4 20%	2 10%	0 0%	
Shelter (including requests for rent/mortgage assistance)	2 10%	3 15%	5 25%	7 35%	3 15%	
Health Care	4 20%	11 55%	5 25%	0 0%	0 0%	
Life Skills						
- Budgeting	7 37%	7 37%	3 16%	2 11%	0 0%	
- Job placement	6 32%	9 47%	2 11%	1 5%	1 5%	
- ESL classes	10 53%	7 37%	1 5%	1 5%	0 0%	
- Tutoring	8 42%	8 42%	3 16%	0 0%	0 0%	
- Parenting help	5 26%	6 32%	7 37%	1 5%	0 0%	
- Marriage classes	4 21%	6 32%	7 37%	1 5%	1 5%	
- Addiction / recovery resources	5 25%	6 30%	5 25%	4 20%	0 0%	
- Support groups	4 20%	7 35%	6 30%	3 15%	0 0%	
- Computer equipment / classes	8 42%	8 42%	3 16%	0 0%	0 0%	
- Mentoring	5 26%	6 32%	8 42%	0 0%	0 0%	
Family Support						
- School supplies	6 33%	7 39%	5 28%	0 0%	0 0%	
- Personal care items	3 17%	5 28%	8 44%	1 6%	1 6%	
- Transportation or gas vouchers	0 0%	5 26%	11 58%	2 11%	1 5%	
- Vehicle donation	7 39%	11 61%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	
- Bikes / bike repair	10 56%	8 44%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	

(table cont'd on next page)

(Table 7 cont'd)

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.		1	2	3	4	5
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Constantly	
- Sports equipment	12 67%	5 28%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	
- Foster Care welcome kits	13 72%	5 28%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	
- Summer camp and camp bags	9 50%	6 33%	3 17%	0 0%	0 0%	
- Family holiday gift sponsorship	3 16%	9 47%	5 26%	2 11%	0 0%	
- Gift closet	10 56%	8 44%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	

Ability to meet the requests for assistance

Over half of churches (61%) indicated they were able to meet requests for food “often” or “always”.

No one reported being able to *always* meet the need for clothing. For the others, meeting the (small) need for clothing was split, with 50% indicating they were able to meet the need less than half the time – and 50% indicating they were able to meet the need more than half the time.

Meeting the needs for shelter assistance seemed problematic for those responding. Over three out of four (77%) indicated they were rarely or never able to meet the assistance request. No one reported meeting this type of need all of the time.

Meeting the requests for health care ranked at the lowest, with 82% indicating they “rarely” or “never” meet the need for these requests.

Details are provided in Table 8 (next page).

TABLE 8

Survey Question 8: Overall, to what extent are you able to meet the requests for assistance in the six categories?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	3				
	1 Never	2 Rarely	Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
Food	2 11%	0 0%	5 28%	3 17%	8 44%
Clothing	6 33%	3 17%	6 33%	3 17%	0 0%
Shelter	4 24%	9 53%	2 12%	2 12%	0 0%
Health Care	7 41%	7 41%	2 12%	1 6%	0 0%
Life Skills	5 29%	6 35%	5 29%	1 6%	0 0%
Family Support Services	4 24%	5 29%	8 47%	0 0%	0 0%

Who are the service providers?

Overall, Interfaith Community Services was mentioned most as a referral source for assistance. Of those responding, 27% indicated using Interfaith for referrals in the six categories. The churches themselves ranked 2nd in referrals -- with 25% saying they referred needs to their own church. Jeffco Action was ranked third (20%) as a referral source.

Survey responses indicated that churches have been using a variety of resources to meet the need for food. However, almost half (42%) said the churches themselves were the top-ranked source to meet requests for food assistance.

Unlike food requests, which were often cared for through the church, the vast majority of clothing requests were reported being cared for outside of the church. The key nonprofit partners Jeffco Action Center and Interfaith Community Services accounted for 73% of referrals. The top referral for all categories (47%) was to Interfaith Community Services for clothing assistance.

The vast majority of shelter-related requests were reported being cared for outside of the church. As with clothing, the key nonprofit partners accounted for over half (53%) of referrals. Unlike clothing requests, however, county human services were listed as a source referral for this type of need.

County Human Services received the most referrals for health care assistance – with 35% indicating they referred those with health-care related needs to the county.

Table 9 provides details (next page).

TABLE 9

Survey Question 9: Where are you most likely to refer requests for assistance in each of the six areas?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Our Church	Jeffco Action	Interfaith Community Services	County Human Services	Other (please specify below)
Food	8 42%	4 21%	2 11%	0 0%	5 26%
Clothing	3 16%	5 26%	9 47%	0 0%	2 11%
Shelter	2 12%	4 24%	5 29%	2 12%	4 24%
Health Care	2 12%	2 12%	5 29%	6 35%	2 12%
Life Skills	6 35%	3 18%	4 24%	2 12%	2 12%
Family Support Services	5 29%	3 18%	4 24%	2 12%	3 18%

Who’s asking for assistance?

Study participants were asked to provide information about where those asking for assistance were coming from. Three categories were provided: (a) requests coming from their own church members; (b) requests coming from those in Littleton but NOT in their own church, and; (c) requests coming from OUTSIDE the Littleton area.

Churches reported that just over half of the requests for assistance (56%) came from those in their church or from those living in Littleton. At the same time, the survey results showed that just under half of requests came from those living outside Littleton (42%).

Over half of those requesting food (59%) came either from their own church or from the Littleton area. Just over half (51%) of the requests for clothing reported coming from the church or from the Littleton area.

Worthy of note is the fact that 2 out of 3 (67%) requests coming from churches or from those living in Littleton were for Life Skills assistance. Ranked second for church and Littleton requests was Family Support services (63%).

The largest number of actual requests (15) was from those living outside the Littleton area, asking for shelter assistance. Overall, just over half (53%) of shelter assistance requests came from churches or Littleton area.

For health care requests, 60% came from beyond the Littleton area.

Some churches did indicate that the needs were so infrequent they did not keep any records of where those in need were coming from.

Table 10 (next page) provides details).

TABLE 10

Survey Question 10:

Where are people coming from who are asking your church for food?

10(a) Food assistance

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
From our church	6	18%
From the Littleton area, but NOT from our church	14	41%
From OUTSIDE the Littleton area	14	41%

10(b) Clothing assistance

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
From our church	2	7%
From the Littleton area, but NOT from our church	12	44%
From OUTSIDE the Littleton area	13	48%

10(c) Shelter assistance

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
From our church	6	19%
From the Littleton area, but NOT from our church	11	34%
From OUTSIDE the Littleton area	15	47%

10(d) Health Care assistance

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
From our church	1	5%
From the Littleton area, but NOT from our church	7	35%
From OUTSIDE the Littleton area	11	55%
Other	1	5%

10(e) Life Skills assistance

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
From our church	10	42%
From the Littleton area, but NOT from our church	6	25%
From OUTSIDE the Littleton area	7	29%
Other	1	4%

10(f) Family Support services

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
From our church	9	33%
From the Littleton area, but NOT from our church	8	30%
From OUTSIDE the Littleton area	9	33%
Other	1	4%

VI. Discussion

The churches responding to the survey offered a wide variety of assistance in all of the six categories. With regard to food assistance, just over one in three churches (37%) offer food pantry or grocery coupons. At the same time, the need for food was ranked as the #1 request for assistance in this survey. Over half (55%) of churches said they had requests for food “frequently” or “constantly” from people in Littleton.

Over half of churches (61%) indicated they were able to meet requests for food “often” or “always”. Almost half (42%) said the churches themselves were the top-ranked source to meet requests for food assistance. In a separate study (Fiscal Year 2006-07), Inter-Faith Community Services showed that 1,634 clients from Littleton were helped through their food bank.

Given the tough economy (especially rising fuel costs) the need for affordable food seems certain to continue to grow. Families may well need to make difficult choices between putting gas in the car to get to work and putting food on the table.

Perhaps food banks and food pantries will see a rise in demand as people seek to reduce costs wherever they can. It’s hard to predict if churches will see a strain on existing food pantries, although the trends seem clear.

The same Inter-Faith Community Services study showed 93 new clients from Littleton for FY 2006-07, or about 8 new clients each month. How are agencies and churches preparing to meet the growing demand for assistance?

Second highest ranking in terms of frequency of request was for shelter assistance – AND three out of four (77%) of churches indicated they were rarely or never able to meet this type of assistance request. While a third of churches reported offering financial assistance for rent and/or utilities, they seem to be saying that the need for shelter assistance is growing faster than the resources.

The trends in housing continue to beg difficult questions. Interfaith Community Services reported that they provided financial assistance to 685 Littleton clients for FY 2006-07 (total cost of \$37,655). In this study, just over half (53%) of shelter assistance requests came from churches or from the Littleton area.

Again, what can be done to keep people in their homes? Does it make sense to provide short-term rent assistance? How can people avoid foreclosure? How can financial assistance be best used to help with shelter needs? What is an appropriate role for the church with regard to this type of assistance? Perhaps churches can come together to discuss “creative ways” to help those needing emergency shelter. How many families or individuals in the churches have homes with vacant rooms? Who might be open to offering temporary shelter – perhaps in return for some light housework or chores, or elder care?

In this survey, 58% of churches indicated they receive transportation / gas voucher requests at least once / month, with 5% indicating they see this request at least once/week. As mentioned previously, with rising fuel costs, families are being asked to make difficult decisions. Alternative transportation, gas vouchers, more fuel-efficient cars, and moving closer to work have all been suggested. Again, the questions remain – what are the trends and what is the best role for churches in providing this type of assistance?

With regard to health care assistance, churches reported offering some preventative health care screening as well as immunization. In this study, health care assistance was not seen as a high need in the area. Worthy of note is the fact that 82% of churches said they “rarely” or “never” could meet the needs for these types of requests. The most frequent partner for referrals with regard to health care was County Human Services.

On the other hand, it’s hard to pick up the newspapers or watch the evening news without some reference to the rising cost of health care. Affordable health insurance and help for the underinsured have been subjects of much discussion recently. Questions remain for those in the Littleton area. “What is the appropriate role for churches with regard to health care assistance (e.g., is there an untapped pool of retired health care professionals in the Littleton churches who might be able to provide assistance in some areas of health care)? What will be the trends for health care? What will be the demand?

While the need for clothing was not ranked as a high need in Littleton, no one reported being able to *always* meet the need for clothing. The key nonprofit partners Jeffco Action Center and Interfaith Community Services accounted for 73% of referrals. The top referral for all categories (47%) was to Interfaith Community Services for clothing assistance. In FY 2006-07, InterFaith Community Services served 581 Littleton clients with clothing assistance.

Results of this study do show that just over half of the requests for assistance (56%) came from those in their church or from those living in Littleton. Again, the exact trends are hard to predict, although during this time of economic recession (or “slow down”) people are finding it hard to make ends meet.

Also worthy of note is the fact that 2 out of 3 (67%) requests for Life Skills assistance are coming from churches or from those living in Littleton are. How can the church grow the ability to meet the demand for these types of services? How can churches better partner with other churches as well as with agencies and government to ensure that no one group bears the burden of trying to meet all the needs in this area?

VII. Recommendations

With requests for assistance on the rise, no one agency or church can be expected to bear the full burden of meeting the growing demands for services. The results of this study point to the need for churches to work together and to deepen partnerships with existing agencies in order to better meet the needs.

Specifically, the following activities are recommended for Love INC of Littleton in preparation for the opening of the Clearinghouse:

1. Collecting "time and talent" inventory from churches:

While it is desirable to collect information about the full spectrum of volunteer interests, special attention should be paid to identifying volunteer capacity in the areas of:

- i. Food collection and distribution.
- ii. Professional services (especially marriage classes, health care and support groups).
- iii. Transportation assistance (ability to give rides to those in need).

2. Partnering with other nonprofits and agencies:

- i. Work closely with nonprofit partners to further understand the needs – especially for clothing assistance -- and identify ways in which church volunteers can be more proactive helping with collection and distribution.
- ii. Work with county agencies to identify health care assistance that might be appropriately cared for by church volunteers.
- iii. Identify opportunities to provide shelter assistance (e.g., utility assistance and/or mortgage assistance). Although providing rent and utility assistance is often a clear financial matter, churches are encouraged to work closely with other agencies and local businesses to identify creative solutions to this growing problem.