



United Way of Norman

2020 Community Needs Network Report

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Executive Summary and Assessment Overview

This report presents the findings of the 2019-2020 Norman community assessment questionnaire that was completed by more than 450 residents of Norman, Oklahoma. This community assessment is the first one completed across systems and sectors of Norman in more than 25 years. The assessment was developed with input from the United Way of Norman, University of Oklahoma, and approximately 30-40 different systems, organizations, and community sectors. This group, Community Needs Network (CNN), shares this assessment overview with the community in preparation for phase two of the project. The guiding methodology used for this assessment was Asset-based Community Development (ABCD), which emphasizes the positives within a community, while also identifying potential opportunities for community betterment and improvement. The assessment survey was distributed via an online link and made available in paper format. The survey sought to understand what community factors/services/supports Norman residents most utilize and prioritize in terms of importance, understand how accessible these resources are to residents, and understand how residents rate their level of satisfaction with various community resources and supports. The final results of this survey point to strong overall accessibility and satisfaction with most Norman resources and systems, but also provides evidence of accessibility and satisfaction concerns in several key areas that may provide CNN and the United Way with opportunities to leverage existing assets and through collaboration and partnership, begin to strengthen existing resource gaps within the community.

Overview of Methodology

The CNN collaborative is a community-university partnership established to better understand and address community assessment within Norman and subsequently Cleveland County. In order to promote community building, partner participation and oversight, and synergy between partners, a community-engaged research approach was taken to ensure community investment and voice throughout the process (Jason & Glenwick, 2016). In addition to a community-engaged research approach, Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) was also selected to help guide the assessment work from a strengths-based lens. ABCD is best envisioned as an approach to community development that is geared at both professionals and local community workers/leaders. ABCD is based on the overarching theme that communities are rich, diverse places with many different assets or strengths that must be identified, appreciated, and leveraged in order to address local needs (Checkoway 1995). While many top-down approaches to community development begin interventions with collecting data on needs, prioritize professional perspectives over localized standpoints, and often ignore assets related to diverse cultures and associated arts-rooted strengths, ABCD emphasizes beginning any community-based inquiry with community building efforts that promote inclusivity from diverse groups, highlight the strengths within all sectors of the community, and involves diverse stakeholders of the community (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993). It is for all of these reasons that the CNN collaborative chose ABCD as a guiding approach in the Norman community assessment.

Overview of the Community Needs Network (CNN)

In 2019, the University of Oklahoma in partnership with United Way of Norman and more than 30 partner agencies and governmental offices, including the City of Norman, Cleveland County Sherriff Department, Norman Chamber of Commerce ¹ established the Community Needs Network (CNN) as a community-engaged mechanism to support ongoing community assessment of local assets, strengths, opportunities, and challenges for the purpose of improving collaboration, capacity-building, and accessibility within the greater Norman and Cleveland

¹ See CNN page on OU Community Engagement website for more information about partner organizations. <http://ou.edu/communityengagement/community-needs-network>

County community. This city, county, non-profit, and business sectors and systems are essential in community development and planning efforts in Norman and Cleveland County.

Assessment Design

The overall assessment design utilized by CNN is best summarized as a cross sectional design using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative formatted questions), non-probability purposive sampling, and a combination of statistical and thematic analysis.

Overview of the CNN Community Assessment Survey

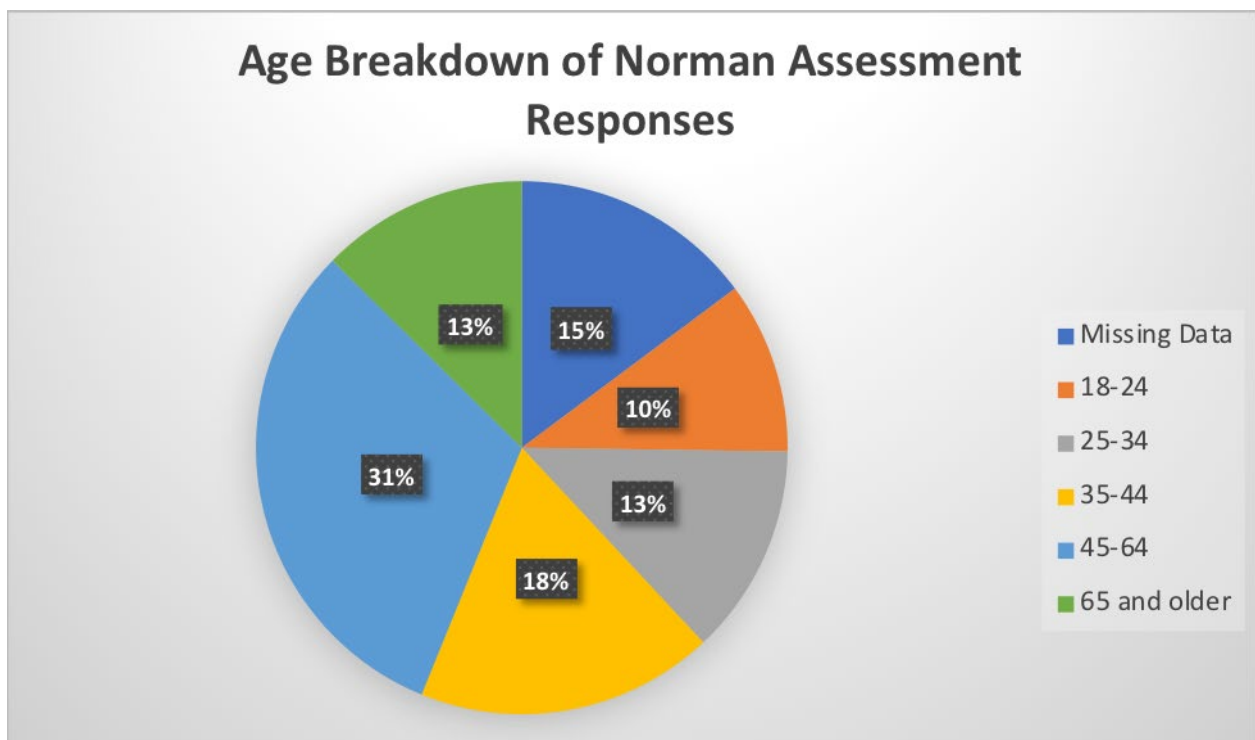
The CNN survey was created with input from more than 30 community partners representing a variety of systems, organizations, and sectors of Norman and Cleveland County, including local residents. CNN partners discussed wanting to know the following information from residents about numerous different community resources, systems, and supports:

1. What resources do Norman residents most utilize within the community?
2. How accessible do Norman residents perceive different resources and supports within the community?
3. How do Norman residents perceive the importance of different community resources and supports?
4. How do Norman residents perceive the quality of different community resources and supports?

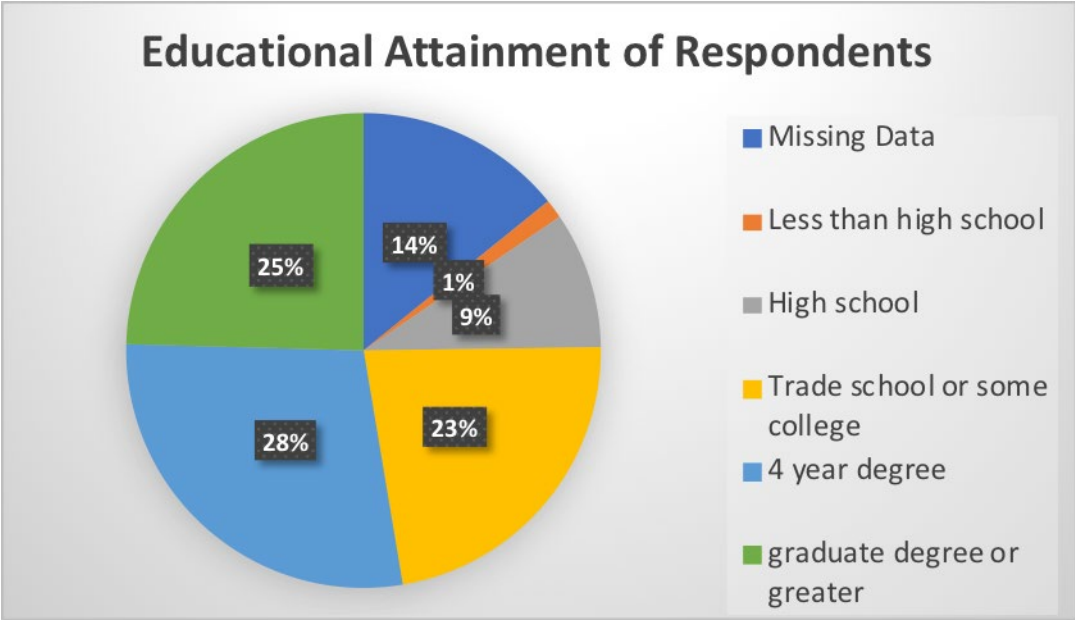
In order to answer the questions above, a matrix style questionnaire was created with 26 questions, but many of the questions asked residents to respond to four different prompts within each question to capture the information described above. The survey was delivered in two ways: online through a link provided and shared to Norman residents by community partners and through distribution of hardcopy surveys to community members whom may not have access to technology or whom may need assistance in filling out the survey. CNN partners and OU social work students assisted with collecting the data.

Sample Discussion and Demographics

In order to hypothesize some degree of representativeness of the survey findings across the community of Norman, a sample size estimate of at least 383 responses was calculated based on a 95% confidence level (5% error rate) for the population of Norman, which is estimated to be 123,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The final sample size for this assessment was 452 responses, however some questions varied in response rates compared to others, so results should be interpreted cautiously and with some level of scrutiny. Further effort went into trying to stratify the sampling by targeting specific areas of Norman that may be underrepresented in many other assessments. These areas may include higher populations of persons of color, older adults, and lower income households. The sampling used for this assessment was both purposive and convenience oriented in nature. The final demographic make-up of the CNN community assessment is illustrated below:

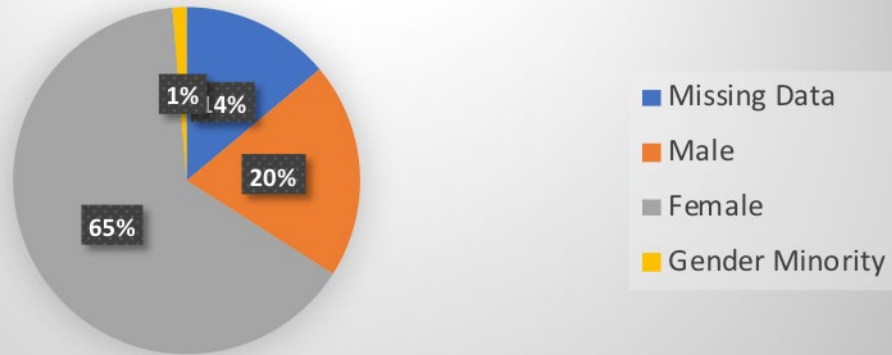


The age breakdown of survey responses indicates that the average respondent was between 45-64 years of age, however Census data suggests a mean age of 30 years old for Norman residents, due to the large number of college students and families with children that reside in the city. Additionally, due to ethical reasons, those under the age of 18 were not included in the CNN survey.



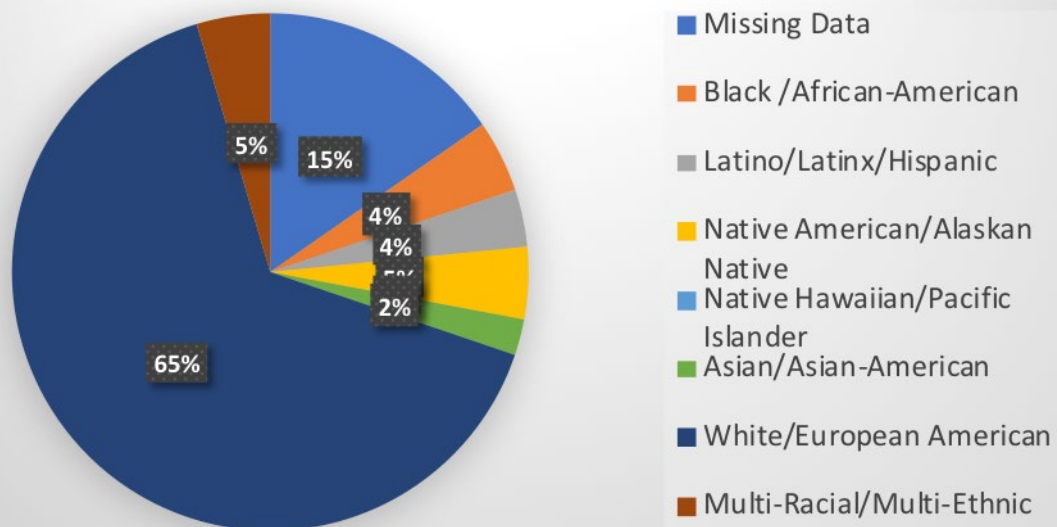
The chart above illustrates that more than 52% of survey respondents in Norman have a 4-year degree or greater level of education with only 1% of respondents indicating less than a high school education. Given the presence of the University of Oklahoma and Moore-Norman Technology Center, the high educational level of respondents is similar to the true population education of Norman residents when compared to Census estimates for 2010, which indicates less than 5% of Norman residents having less than a high school level of education and more than 43% with a 4 year degree or greater.

Gender Breakdown of Respondents



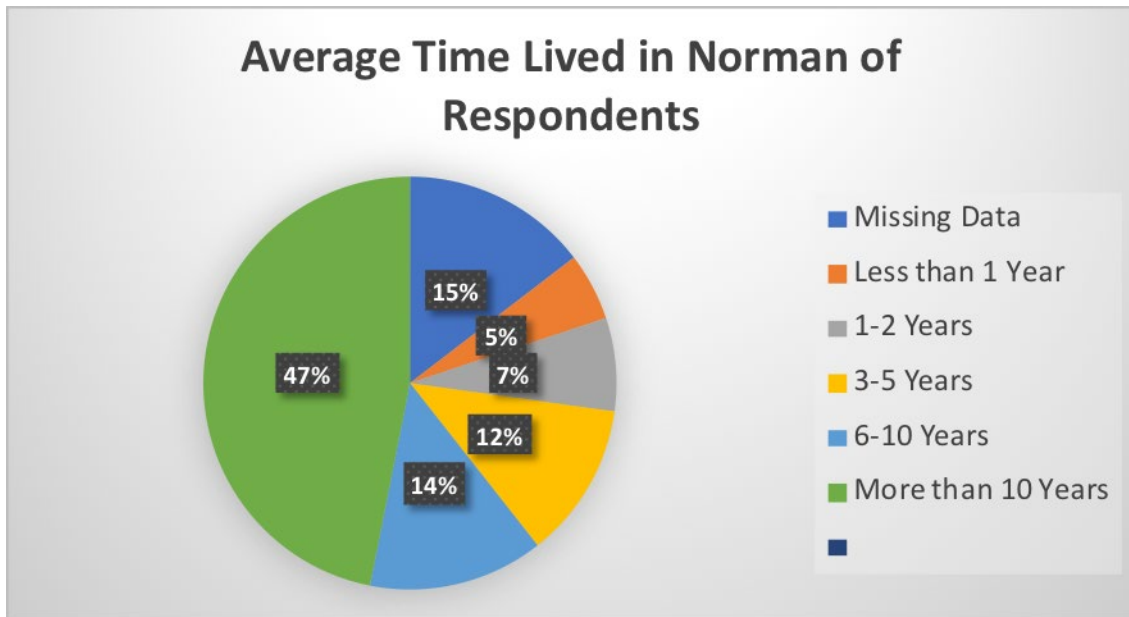
In terms of gender composition of survey respondents, more than 65% identified as female while 20% identified as male. Only 1% identified as a gender minority group member. Census data indicates a much closer 50/50 composition of residents identifying as males and females than this survey illustrates, but this question also did not receive responses from 14% of those taking at least a portion of the survey.

Race and Ethnicity Breakdown of Respondents



Norman is an overwhelmingly white community compared to the larger cities of Oklahoma City and Tulsa. This is also illustrated in the CNN survey responses, which included 66%

white/European American respondents, 4% Black/African Americans, 4% Latino/Latinx, 5% Native American/Alaskan Native, and 2% Asian/Asian-American. Comparatively, the U.S. Census 2020 estimates indicate that the city of Norman is 71% white/non-Latinx, 4.7% African American, 3.6% Native American, 4.8% Asian, and 5.7% Latinx/Hispanic (U.S. Census, 2020). Given the challenges, but extra consideration for collecting survey responses from a racially and ethnically diverse sample of Norman, the CNN results closely mirror U.S. Census projections.

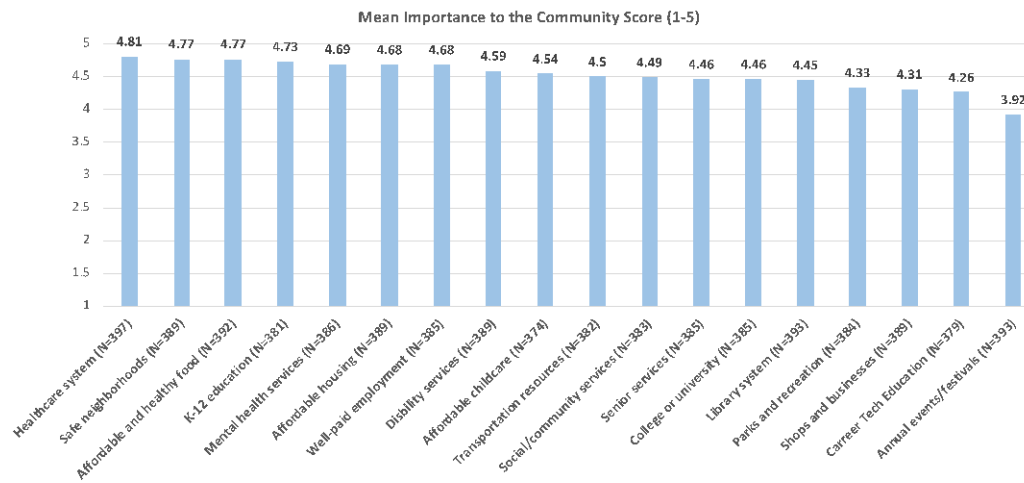


The CNN assessment indicated that most respondents have lived in Norman for more than 10 years (47%), while 14% of respondents have lived in Norman for 6-10 years. This question also included 15% missing data cases, which likely impacts and skews the percentages some, especially given the presence of a major university that includes many residents whom have not lived in Norman for very long.

Abbreviated Survey Results

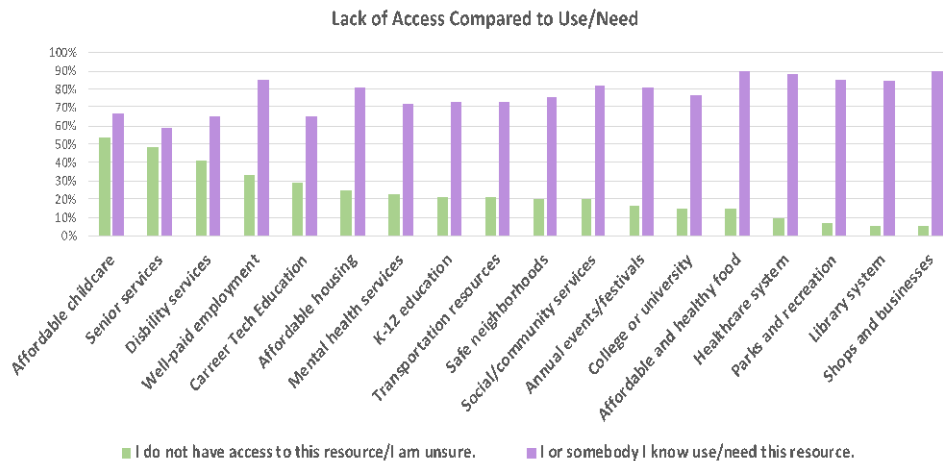
The results of the CNN survey will be discussed in terms of accessibility, importance, and perceived quality, based on resident responses. Given the scope of the survey, results will be summarized and discussed in each section below:

Mean Importance to the Community Score



The graph above illustrates how Norman residents whom completed the CNN survey rank the importance of various resources to the community. The highest mean importance scores are on the left with lower importance resources to the right of the graph. On this graph, the highest scores for importance related to healthcare (4.81), safe neighborhoods (4.77), food access (4.77), K-12 education (4.73), and mental health care (4.69). The lowest rated mean importance scores according to respondents were: annual events (3.92), career tech services (4.26), shops and businesses (4.31), and parks and recreation (4.33). Although most people ranked most resources fairly high, there is definitely a prioritizing of health and human service oriented resources, K-12 education, safety, and food resources, which is complimentary to human needs literature that impresses upon organizations and communities the importance of prioritizing basic human needs over resources that benefit more well-resourced residents (Doyle & Gough, 1984; Maslow, 2013).

Lack of Access Compared to Use/Need

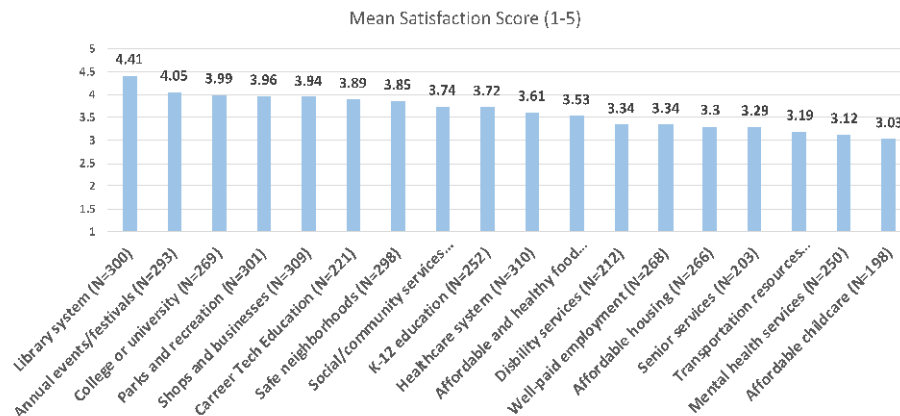


The graph above illustrates that there is also a stark difference between how Norman residents perceive the importance of community resources versus their perception or knowledge of accessibility to specific resources. In this depiction, respondents had less difference in their perceptions of need and accessibility with regard to shops and businesses, the library system, healthcare system, food access, and higher education. In contrast, residents indicated the greatest differences or voids in accessibility and need with regards to affordable childcare, senior services, disability services, and well-paid employment. Most other resources were somewhere in the middle with regards to challenges in accessibility despite being a priority need for residents. Further inquiry is likely needed to better understand if community members can truly not access local resources, or if local systems/organizations need to work harder on providing visibility of resources and processes to community members. It is also important for partners and planners to consider if highly accessible resources can be used to help address other resources that people need but may not be able to fully access.

Norman Resident Perceptions of Quality and Satisfaction of Resources

One of the dimensions captured in the CNN survey related to overall resident assessment of the quality of various community resources.

Mean Satisfaction Score

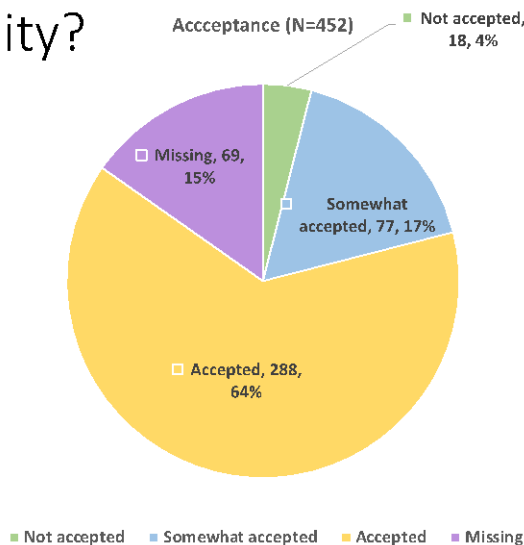


The above graph illustrates the mean satisfaction scores across community resources/sectors. Scores are ranked from highest to lowest and flow from left to right on the graph above. Overall, Norman residents were most satisfied with the library system (4.41), annual events (4.05), and college and university (3.99). Subsequently, residents were least satisfied with affordable childcare (3.03), mental health (3.12), transportation (3.19), and senior services (3.29). Affordable housing (3.3) and access to well-paid employment (3.34) also scored fairly low in terms of community member satisfaction. It is important to consider the above results alongside how residents rated accessibility and importance of resources. While Norman residents rate resources such as the library system, parks, annual events, and shops with high levels of satisfaction, they also comparatively rate them lower in terms of importance as compared to mental health, senior services, employment, and housing, which they rank lower in overall satisfaction according to the survey results.

Community Belonging and Acceptance

One survey question asked respondents to rate their level of acceptance in the Norman community. This question is also one that is important as CNN partners, the United Way, and OU consider how to play an increased role in promoting community belongingness and inclusivity for all residents, regardless of racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, or sexual identities. Given the local, statewide, and national level movements targeting injustices and discrimination, it is imperative to consider how all members of the Norman community are treated by organizations, systems, and sectors.

How accepted do you feel in the Norman community?



According to the graph above, 64% of respondents feel accepted or strongly accepted in the Norman community, while 17% of respondents feel only 'somewhat accepted'. Furthermore, 4% of respondents do not feel accepted in the community. In other words, given the large percentage of missing data (15%), it is fairly likely that somewhere between 20-25% of community members in Norman, have some perceived challenges in Norman that impact their level of acceptance in community spaces.

Qualitative Results

The CNN community assessment survey asked residents two specific open-ended questions related to what keeps, or will keep them living in the Norman community, and what could be changed in Norman to improve the community.

Norman Living Themes

When asked the question, “why do you or will you continue to live in the Norman community, if you plan to?” The major themes identified from respondent responses include the following:

- Family location/family reasons – 74
- Getting my Education – 62
- Own Home – 47
- Work Reasons – 41
- Love the community feeling - 30

By far the largest reasons for living and staying in Norman, based on frequency of themes are ‘family and location’ and ‘education’. Many folks in Norman have grown up here, relocated to be near family, and/or are pursuing their education at the University of Oklahoma. Additional themes with high frequency responses include home ownership and work, both of which also are likely tied to the presence of the University of Oklahoma and major hospital systems that provide opportunities for employment and the capital resources for home ownership. More than 30 responses provided, also indicated that some people appreciate the community feel of Norman for various reasons.

An Improved Norman

When asked about one improvement residents would like to see in Norman, respondents provided the following feedback:

- Improved social services/resources and awareness – 112
- Better transportation services (Bus stops, hours, older adult transportation) – 49
- Greater inclusion efforts and education – 29
- Improved affordability -25
- More Just policing - 17

By far the most frequent response for how to improve Norman as a community related to bettering social services through improved capacity and awareness of resources (112). Additionally, improved transportation services, especially public transit and accessible public transit services for older adults (49) was also a major focus of survey respondents. Improving the inclusivity of education in Norman for K-12 was also a theme in survey responses (29). While many residents highly rated education in Norman, some residents of color and families with children with disabilities indicated less satisfaction with K-12 education in the community. Finally, the affordability of living in Norman (25) and the policing practices (17) were also cited as areas for improvement in the community. While Norman has a high mean household income compared to other cities in Oklahoma, there is still a large gap between high income earners and those struggling to get by, which is also supported in Census data that indicates a major divide between higher income earners (60-65%) and lower income earners (23-26%) in Norman. The policing practices have often been called into question by advocates for individuals experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges, along with non-white residents. More community policing, the removal of police officers from schools, and less emphasis and spending on military grade weapons were cited in resident responses.

Implications and Next Steps

- Norman is rich in many community assets that have very high accessibility and satisfaction ratings. Consider how we can better leverage assets such as; the libraries, parks and recreation, annual events, shops and businesses, etc., to help address existing gaps or challenges.
- Many community members were unsure about access to resources, while others stated that they did not have access. Identify whether some resources and supports have

opportunity to improve accessibility through promoting greater awareness within the community.

- What can we do as a community to help improve opportunities for Norman residents with regards to: affordable childcare, older adult services, disability services, transportation, affordable housing, and mental health care?
- How might some of these gaps/needs in local services be magnified greater during COVID-19 and other emergencies?
- How can we strengthen local capacity and infrastructure moving forward, given the strain that COVID-19 has placed on all levels of systems?

Next Steps

- Within your systems and organizations, consider the CNN data, current experiences during COVID-19, and how we as a coalition of providers and systems, can maximize our use of existing and future data collection to better strengthen our community, organizations, and sectors?
- How can we leverage our data and partner for grant opportunities to support additional research/assessment/and resource needs?
- How can we use CNN to create more synergy to begin using existing assets to address local challenges?
- How and when can we expand our work from Norman to encompass all of Cleveland County?
- How can we begin to see this work within our systems as integrated community work, rather than isolated organizational/systems work?

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