



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2017

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Introduction: The Northland continues to be one of the fastest growing communities in the Kansas City metropolitan area. While the growth brings great economic strength, it can also challenge the social service network. The Northland Community Foundation commissioned this report to identify current and projected needs in the social, health, and educational sectors. In collecting this information, we hope to continue to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the Northland.

Northland by the Numbers: Community Demographics

Population and Geographic Distribution

In 2015, the population in Clay and Platte Counties totaled just under 324,000 people. Between 2010 and 2015 the counties grew at a rate of 7.1% and 7.5% respectively. (Figure 1) Residents in both counties live predominately in urban communities. Approximately 16% of residents in Clay County and about 10% of those in Platte County live in rural areas. (Figure 2) Population trends suggest that rural communities in Missouri and across the US will continue to see declining population in the coming decades. At the same time, national and state data show that rural communities are seeing a growing concentration of older residents. Meeting the long term needs of this changing population in these often overlooked communities will require thoughtful monitoring and far-sighted planning by Northland leaders.

Figure 1: Population Growth

	Clay	Platte
Total Population Growth 2010-2015	7.1%	7.5%

Figure 2: Geographic Disbursement 2015

Urban and Rural Population	Clay	Platte
Percent Urban	84.2%	90.2%
Percent Rural	15.8%	9.8%

Both counties are home to slightly more women than men. People age 45-64 account for about 40% of the total population in both counties. Children age 14 and under account for 20%. (Figure 3) As is the case across America, the size of the senior population-those over age 65-is expanding rapidly in Northland communities. In 2016 census data places the total percentage of older residents at 11% in both counties. (Figure 4) Census data estimates indicate the population of individuals age 65 and over will double in the US over the next three decades. An analysis by the Mid-America Regional Council suggests that the Kansas City metro area, and Clay and Platte Counties in particular, will see exponential growth in this population. **Using population figures beginning in 2007, the study predicts that by 2030 the senior population in the Kansas City metro area will grow by over 100%, in Clay County by nearly 120% and in and Platte Counties by more than 135%.** (Figure 5)

Figure 3: Population Breakdown by Age & Gender

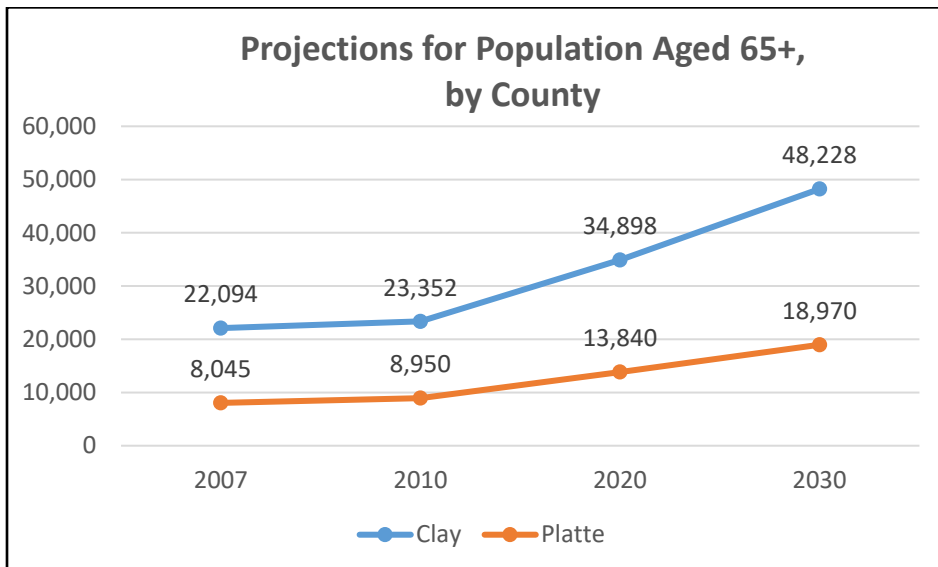
Age Group	Clay		Platte	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<5	3.7%	3.6%	3.2%	3.1%
5-14	7.4%	7.0%	7.1%	6.8%
15-24	6.1%	6.1%	6.2%	6.0%
25-44	14.1%	14.6%	13.5%	13.8%
45-64	12.7%	13.5%	14.2%	14.9%
64-74	2.9%	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%
75 and older	1.8%	3.1%	1.8%	2.9%

Figure 4: Percent of Population Age 65 or Over (2016)

	Clay	Platte
Percent of Population Age 65 or Older (2016)	11.2%	11.2%

Figure 5: Projections for Population Age 65 and Over

	Projections for Population Aged 65+				
	2007	2010	2020	2030	Pct. Change 2007-2030
Clay	22,094	23,352	34,898	48,228	118.3%
Platte	8,045	8,950	13,840	18,970	135.8%
Clay and Platte Total	30,139	32,302	48,738	67,198	123.0%
KC Metro 5-County Total	179,925	190,318	275,455	372,611	107.1%

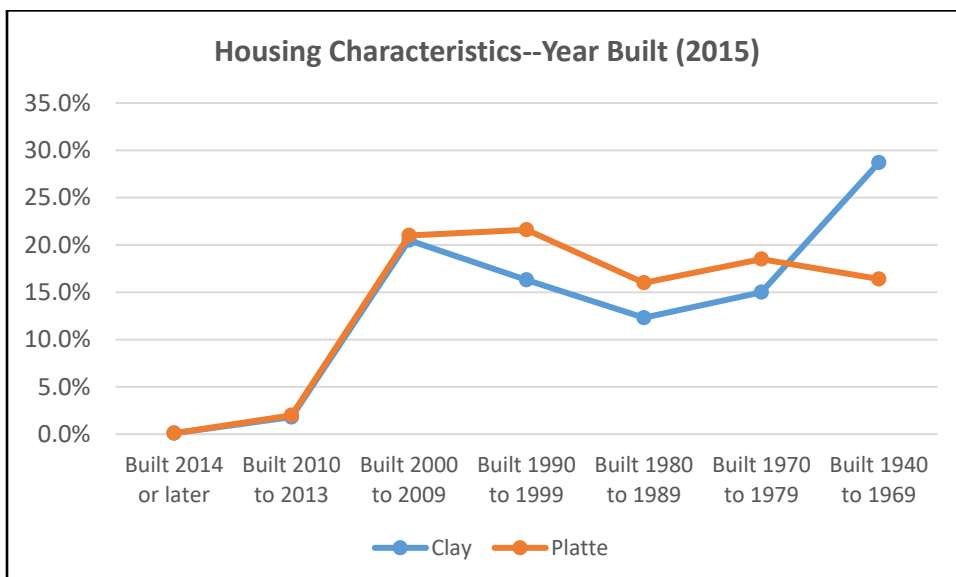


As the size of the senior population increases, issues such as access to health care, housing, and transportation will clearly place new and growing demands on communities. Interviews conducted as part of this Community Needs Assessment revealed that some community leaders in the Northland are concerned these issues are already reaching critical status. The lack of easily available and affordable transportation options for elderly citizens is a daily concern for organizations serving this population. The public transportation routes are limited. Private transportation options are expensive and often difficult-to-access. Our neighborhoods are structured to require driving to grocery stores, medical offices and to access general services. These issues combine to make navigating life in the Northland a challenge for seniors, and especially for poor seniors.

As more seniors “age in place” their ability to maintain their homes has become a very real problem in Northland neighborhoods, particularly those in the southern part of the community. Not only is the number of seniors in the Northland growing, but the housing stock itself is aging as well. **Over one-third of homes in Platte County and 44% of those in Clay County are 47 years old or older.** (Figure 6) Construction quality varies widely, meaning many older homeowners find themselves trying to stay ahead of both general maintenance and major structural issues. Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. a grassroots community development organization, invests hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in home repair services for low income citizens, many of whom are seniors. Demand for this program is so high there is a one-year waiting list for service. Maintaining the quality and integrity of Northland neighborhoods will require focused attention and investment

Figure 6: Age of Northland Housing Stock

Housing Characteristics—Year Built (2015)	Clay	Platte
Built 2014 or later	0.1%	0.1%
Built 2010 to 2013	1.8%	2.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	20.5%	21.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	16.3%	21.6%
Built 1980 to 1989	12.3%	16.0%
Built 1970 to 1979	15.0%	18.5%
Built 1940 to 1969	28.7%	16.4%



Race and Ethnicity

Clay and Platte Counties are home to a predominately white population. (Figure 7) Yet data makes clear the demographics of the Northland communities are changing. The Mid-America Regional Council *2015 Regional Health Assessment Report* presented data showing racial and ethnic diversity is growing in the Kansas City metro, and in the Northland, at a faster rate than the national average. **While the metro area is less diverse overall than the national average, between 2000 and 2013, nonwhite populations grew by 37% in the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical area compared to 32% in the US. During the same time period, nonwhite populations in Clay County grew by 113% and in Platte County by 96%.** (Figure 8) As was noted previously, the senior population in the metro area and the Northland is growing rapidly. MARC's 2013 Equity Profile of the Kansas City Region presented data demonstrating that the white population is at the head of this growth curve. (Figure 9) At 39, whites in the KC metro area have the highest median age, while the median age in the Hispanic population is 26. In 2013, minorities accounted for 36% of the metro area population under age 18, and that number is expected to rise to more than 50% by 2040.

Figure 7: Percent of Population by Race/Ethnicity by County

Race/Ethnic Group	Clay	Platte
White	87.5%	87.2%
Black/African American	5.2%	5.9%
Hispanic/Latino	5.9%	5.0%
Native American/Alaska Native	0.5%	0.5%
Asian	2.1%	2.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.3%
Other Race	1.8%	1.3%

Figure 8: Percent Growth in Nonwhite Population

	Clay	Platte
Percent Growth/Change in Nonwhite Population 2000-2013	113.0%	96.0%

Figure 9: Median Age by Race/Ethnicity

KC Metro Median Age by Race/Ethnicity (2013)	
White	39
Black	31
Hispanic	26
Asian/Pacific Islander	32
Native American	35
Other	17

While still a small overall percentage as the Northland population as a whole, the growing size and visibility of minority residents in the Northland has already had ramifications on the cultural, social, economic and health dynamics in the community. As will be addressed in later sections of this report, these residents experience poverty at higher rates than their white counterparts and are more likely to be medically vulnerable. As community leaders pointed out during interviews as part of this assessment process, the Northland will

benefit from leadership that engages these vibrant communities in identifying both opportunities and challenges and in planning for future.

Northland by the Numbers: Community Economics

Household Income

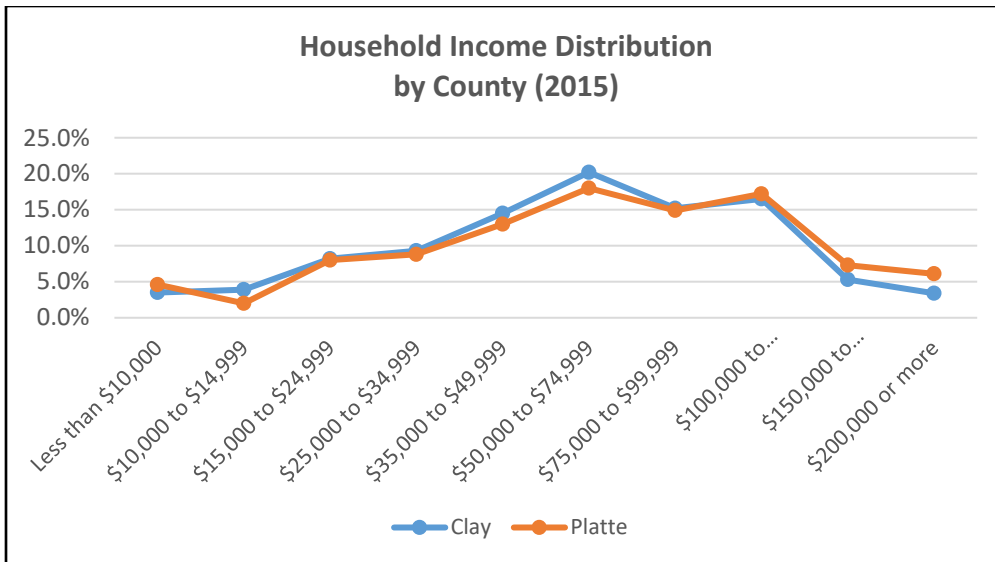
Both the per capita income and median income of households in Clay and Platte Counties is above that of Missouri and the U.S. (Figure 10). **Nearly 40% of households in Clay County and more than a third of households in Platte County make less than \$50,000.** (Figure 11). According to new Federal Poverty Level guidelines for 2017, households with four people and an income of \$24,600, and individuals with income of \$12,060, are considered to live in poverty. **In Clay County nearly 16% of households in Clay and just over 15% of households in Platte County have annual income of under \$25,000.** As the 2015 Northland Community Health Assessment pointed out, multiple studies have demonstrated that low income households have higher overall mortality rates and greater incidence of chronic disease than those with higher socio-economic status, a reality with obvious financial implications for health care providers and the community in general. Issues related to access to care, low educational attainment, language barriers, and disability are complicating factors that social service agencies, health care providers, and government agencies will need to consider to address this disparity.

Figure 10: Per Capita & Median Income

Household Income Distribution (2015)	Clay	Platte	Missouri	US
Per Capita Income (2015 \$)	\$29,793	\$35,666	\$27,937	\$25,384
Median Household Income (2015 \$)	\$62,099	\$68,254	\$46,931	\$52,250

Figure 11: Household Income Distribution

Household Income Distribution (2015) — Percent of Total	Clay	Platte
Less than \$10,000	3.5%	4.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.9%	2.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	8.2%	8.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.3%	8.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	14.5%	13.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.2%	18.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	15.2%	14.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16.5%	17.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5.3%	7.3%
\$200,000 or more	3.4%	6.1%



While the majority of households in both counties receive income through employment, it is worth noting that nearly half of households in Clay County (46%) and more than 40% in Platte County receive income through Social Security and/or retirement income. The mean income from social security is \$18,735 in Clay County, \$19,964 in Platte County. The mean retirement income is just over \$22,000 in both counties. (Figure 13) As the percentage of the senior population continues to grow in relation to the total population in the Northland, it will inevitably raise questions about future economic development, including issues about school funding and general tax base. How will resources in the counties be impacted by the growing number of people living on fixed or retirement incomes? Discussions like these will be complicated by rising demand for services to meet the needs of the aging population.

Figure 12: Household Earnings by Income Source

Household Earnings by Income Source	Clay	Platte
Labor earnings	82.9%	83.0%
Social Security (SS)	27.7%	25.1%
Retirement income	18.4%	18.6%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	3.6%	3.0%
Cash public assistance income	2.0%	1.4%
Food Stamp/SNAP	8.6%	6.1%

Figure 13: Mean Annual Household Income by Source

Mean Annual Household Earning by Source	Clay	Platte
Mean earnings	\$76,778	\$86,544
Mean Social Security income	\$18,735	\$19,964
Mean retirement income	\$22,370	\$22,562
Mean Supplemental Security Income	\$9,223	\$10,007
Mean cash public assistance income	\$3,452	\$3,327

Poverty in the Northland

The poverty rate in Clay and Platte Counties is below that of Missouri and the US. (Figure 14) However, when viewed in terms of growth as a percentage of total population, **between 2000 and 2013 Clay and Platte Counties saw some of the greatest increases in the number of people living in poverty in the Kansas City metro area.** According to research conducted as part of the MARC 2015 Health Status Report, during that time period, **Clay County saw a 100% increase in the population living in poverty and Platte County saw a 92% increase.** In actual numbers, the MARC report calculates that as an addition of 10,000 people living in poverty in Clay County and 3000 more people in Platte County. Much of the growth comes from the increase in the number of children living in poverty. Approximately 11% of children in Clay and Platte Counties live in poverty (Figure 15), greater than the 9% of total population living in poverty in Clay County and 8% in Platte County.

Figure 14: Percent of People/Families Below Poverty

People and Families Living in Poverty (2015) — Percent of Total	Clay	Platte	Missouri	US
People Below Poverty	8.8%	7.7%	14.8%	13.5%
Families below poverty	6.2%	5.7%	---	---

Figure 15: Poverty by Age

Poverty by Age (2015)	Clay	Platte
Under 18 years	10.7%	10.7%
65 years and older	4.6%	3.9%

While African Americans account for 5-6% of the total population in Clay and Platte Counties, more than 20% of their households live below the Federal Poverty Level. (Figure 16) Households headed by females, especially those with children under age 18, are at significant risk of living in poverty. **Nearly a third of these female-headed households in Platte County live below the Federal Poverty Level, and quarter of them in Clay County do.** (Figure 17)

Figure 16: Poverty by Race/Ethnicity

Percentage of People by Race, Ethnicity Who Are Below Poverty	Clay	Platte
White alone	7.6%	6.3%
Black or African American alone	22.6%	21.2%
American Indian alone	12.3%	3.9%
Asian alone	12.4%	13.9%
Native Hawaiian & Oceanic alone	29.9%	14.9%
Some other race alone	15.6%	18.2%
Two or more races alone	11.8%	12.4%
Hispanic or Latino alone	15.0%	17.7%
Non-Hispanic/Latino alone	7.2%	5.7%

Figure 17: Poverty by Family Type

Poverty by Family type (2015)	Clay	Platte
Families with related children < 18 years	9.9%	9.7%
Married couple families	2.9%	1.4%
with children < 18 years	4.6%	1.6%
Female householder, no husband present	19.3%	26.3%
with children < 18 years	24.7%	31.8%

Additional Pressures on Economic Stability: Housing and Food Costs

The day to day challenge of simply meeting basic needs for food and shelter are a reality for a significant portion of the community. Housing experts agree the desired ratio of housing expense to before tax income is 30%. **40% of renters and 23% of homeowners in Clay and Platte County spend more than 30% of their income on rent and monthly mortgage costs.** (Figure 18)

Figure 18: Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

Housing Costs as % of Household Income (2015)	Clay	Platte
Monthly cost <15% of household income	23.9%	25.7%
Monthly cost >30% of household income	22.9%	22.9%
Gross rent <15% of household income	14.1%	16.1%
Gross rent >30% of household income	39.1%	41.8%

According to the *Missouri Hunger Atlas 2016*, residents in both counties spent about 13% of total income to meet basic household food needs. (Figure 19) About **14% of residents in both counties are considered food insecure**, defined by the US Department of Agriculture as not having access at all time to enough food for an active, healthy life. 7% are labeled as very food uncertain, meaning the food intake of some household members was reduced and their normal eating patterns were disrupted because of the lack of money and other resources. The numbers regarding food insecurity for children under age 18 are more concerning. **In Clay County 18% of children, and in Platte County 17% of children, are considered food insecure.** (Figure 20)

Figure 19: Percent of Income to Meet Basic Household Food Needs

	Clay	Platte
Percent of income required to meet basic household food needs (2014)	12.5%	13.1%

Figure 20: Levels of Food Insecurity

Percent of Individuals with Food Uncertainty	Clay	Platte
Percent of individuals food uncertain	13.6%	13.8%
Percent of individuals food uncertain <18	18.1%	17.0%
Percent of individuals food uncertain with hunger	6.4%	6.5%

Low-income households feel the pinch of increasing food costs, especially healthy foods like fresh fruit and vegetables, more deeply than higher income households, a reality that often significantly limits food choices.

These households often rely on the support of public and private food assistance programs. **In 2016 one-third of students attending Clay County schools, and more than a quarter of those attending Platte County schools were eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch programs. Just over 75% of those eligible students participated.** (Figures 21) Feed Northland Kids, a community service organization providing support to families in Clay and Platte County school districts provides BackSnacks, backpacks filled with nutritious, kid-friendly food for children to eat during the weekend. Feed Northland Kids provided food for over 2000 students a week during the school year. Churches and other social service organizations also provide support through this program. A third of children under age 4 in Clay County are eligible for WIC; 25% in Platte County. More than 15% of children under age 18 are receiving SNAP or Food Stamp benefits in Clay County, over 10% in Platte County. (Figure 22)

Figure 21: Free and Reduced Price Lunch

Free & Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) & WIC Participation	Clay	Platte
Students eligible for FRPL	34.3%	27.3%
Eligible students participating in FRPL	78.4%	77.0%
Children under age 4 eligible for WIC	32.1%	25.2%

Figure 22: SNAP/Food Stamps & WIC Participation/Eligibility

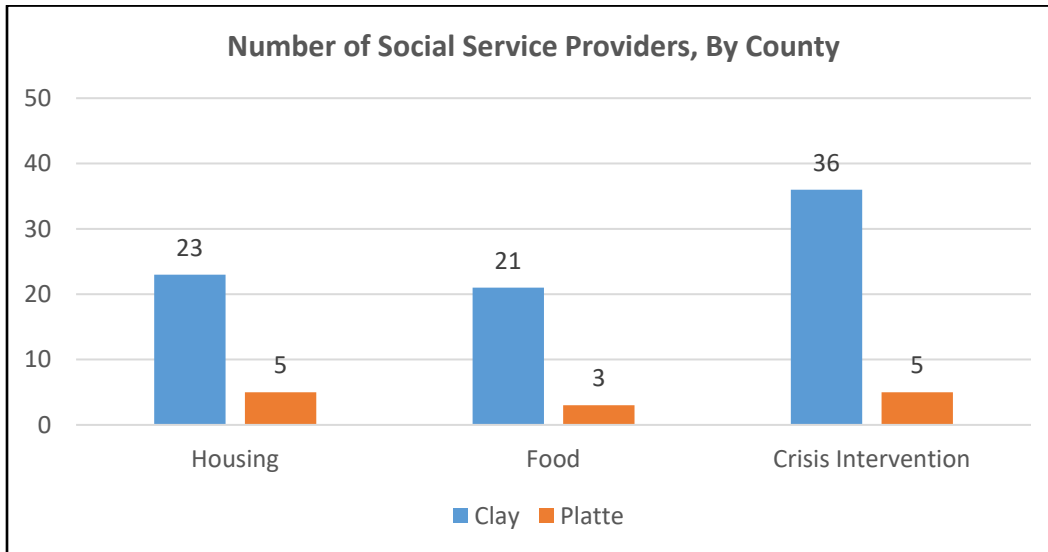
SNAP/Food Stamps & WIC Participation	Clay	Platte
Percent of county population participating SNAP/Food Stamps	8.3%	5.6%
Percent of youth under age 18 participating-SNAP/Food Stamps	15.4%	11.6%
Children under age 4 eligible for WIC	32.1%	25.2%

Figure 23: Food Bank Distribution-Pounds

	Clay	Platte
Pounds of food distributed via food banks (2016)	2,793,392	759,214

Poverty and hunger are very real in the Northland and children are particularly affected. It is well known that children who grow up in impoverished homes are more likely to suffer from chronic health problems and perform less well in school than fellow students from homes with higher incomes. These are issues that affect not just their lives, but the health and success of the community overall. There are social service providers in place to support the needs of impoverished citizens in the Northland. The question is whether there are enough of them, and whether they have adequate resources to meet the growing demand for support. (Figure 24) **The Mid-America Head Start 2017-18 Community Assessment Report found that Platte County has just three social service organizations providing food support, five providing crisis intervention, and five addressing housing needs.** The exponential increase in the number of individuals and families living in poverty the Northland strongly suggests that collaborative leadership is needed to guide serious discussion about how planning and implementing programs and support services to meet the needs of this sector of the community.

Figure 24: Social Service Providers by County



Northland by the Numbers: Homelessness Among Children and Youth

The Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education defines homeless children and youth as “Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” This includes children and youth who are:

- sharing the housing of other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- living in motels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private space not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings.

There is good news regarding the rate of homelessness among students attending Clay and Platte County school districts. The number of homeless students generally decreased by between the 2009-10 and 2015-16 school years, with the number of homeless students decreasing by nearly 50% in the North Kansas City School District. The exception was the Excelsior Springs School District which saw homelessness among its students mushroom during the same timeframe. (Figure 25) In interviews for this report, leaders from North Kansas City, Kearney, Park Hill and Liberty school districts raised the challenges they face in meeting the needs of homeless students. These range from supporting students who routinely suffer from fatigue, poor health, and hunger, to securing resources to provide them with school supplies, clothing and transportation. A central concern expressed by all school districts was the lack of support needed to help these students navigate the emotional crisis and mental health issues they struggle with daily. The ability of Northland school districts to meet the mental and behavioral health needs of students in general is a major topic of concern for Northland school districts and may be rapidly reaching a crisis point.

Figure 25: Homeless Students in Clay and Platte County School Districts

	Homeless Students in Platte and Clay County School Districts						
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Kearney R-I School District	0	12	15	15	13	39	49
Liberty Public School District	210	129	226	216	139	118	135
North Kansas City Schools	670	528	371	401	389	292	329
North Platte R-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Park Hill School District	133	133	125	127	115	138	60
Platte County R-3 School District	41	93	101	98	66	44	49
Smithville R-II School District	0	26	48	65	69	94	88
West Platte R-II School District	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Excelsior Springs 40	15	12	55	44	106	166	157
Total	1069	933	942	966	897	891	867

Northland by the Numbers: Educational Attainment and Employment

Early Childhood Education

Depending on where a family lives in the Northland, access to child care, and especially to high quality early childhood education programs, can be a significant challenge. Figure 26 lists the number of slots available in licensed early learning sites in each school district. These sites include school district and private centers, and Head Start locations. In the Park Hill District there are nearly six children for every licensed child care slot available in the district. In the West Platte County School District there are four children for every slot available. **In every school district but North Platte County, the population of children under age six living in the district exceeds the number of licensed child care slots by two to three times.** (Figure 26)

Figure 26: Child Care Capacity Within School Districts

Child Care Capacity Within Clay and Platte County School Districts	Population Under Age 6	Child Care Slots Available	Number of Children per Available Slot
Excelsior Springs	1,396	416	3.36
Kearney	1260	584	2.16
Liberty	4,323	1,542	2.80
N. Kansas City	11,059	2,984	3.71
N. Platte County	168	182	0.92
Park Hill	5,016	849	5.91
Platte County	1,949	1,375	1.42
Smithville	1,026	584	2.23
W. Platte County	331	78	4.24

Low income families face even greater obstacles to enrolling their children in child care and early learning programs. Only one school district, Excelsior Springs, has preschool slots available through the Missouri Pre-School project. And only five have pre-kindergarten slots available through the Missouri Title I program. **All together Clay and Platte County low income residents have access to 750 seats in publicly funded pre-school programs.** (Figure 27)

Figure 27: Publicly Funded Pre-School Programs/Slots

Publicly-Funded Pre-School Programs, Within Clay and Platte County School Districts	Number of Missouri Preschool Project Slots	Number of Missouri Pre-K Title I Slots
Excelsior Springs	40	20
Kearney	0	0
Liberty	0	240
N. Kansas City	0	384
North Platte County	0	0
Park Hill	0	60
Platte County	0	0
Smithville	0	10

From a community perspective a greater concern is the diminishing access families have to high quality early childhood education programs in Clay and Platte Counties. There is a distinction between licensed childcare programs that are required to meet only basic health and safety requirements and accredited Early Learning Centers that meet accreditation standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or the Missouri Accreditation of Programs for Children and Youth. These accrediting bodies examine health and safety standards but also examine education quality indicators such as educational materials, curriculum and teacher training. **According to the 2017-18 Mid-America Head Start Assessment report, there is a combined total of 461 slots available in accredited early childhood education centers in Clay and Platte Counties.** (Figure 28) The population of children under the age of six within the boundaries of the eight school districts tops 25,000.

Figure 28: Accredited Early Learning Centers

Accredited Early Learning Centers	Clay	Platte
Capacity of Accredited Programs (2105-16)	319	142
Number of Accredited Early Learning Centers (2010)	16	3
Number of Accredited Early Learning Centers (2015)	12	5

There is broad recognition that preparing children to be successful in school begins with their experiences in early childhood education. The data about the Northland underscores the challenges to accessing early childhood education outlined by the leadership of Mid-America Head Start program in interviews for this report. Some of the greatest challenges are: 1. Physical access-meaning there are early childhood education

slots available in facilities near where the family lives or works; 2. Financial access—particularly for low income families—meaning there are slots available in early childhood programs for those with limited ability to pay; and 3. Access to quality—meaning families have access to high quality programs that prepare their children to be successful when they start school. Head Start leadership also raised the potential for significant financial changes for families of infants and toddlers as more school districts begin offering pre-kindergarten programs. Child care providers and centers typically use the tuition from older children to help offset the higher costs of providing care for infants and toddlers. If school district programs draw an increasing number of these older children away from other child care providers in the community, those providers will likely find themselves having to raise monthly child care fees on infants and toddlers in order to sustain their businesses. With infant and toddler care in the metro area already ranging from \$8,000 to \$14,000 a year, it is easy to imagine the impact higher tuition rates could have on Northland families. The long term success of children, adults and the Northland community as whole suggests the issue of early childhood education deserves priority consideration.

Academic Proficiency: Elementary and High School

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has set a goal to be among the top 10 states in MAP Proficiency Scores by 2020. In 2015, students in Clay and Platte Counties scored above both the Missouri average and the average posted by the number one scoring state in the nation. (Figure 29) This is news to celebrate. It is also important to note that 30-40% of students in both counties scored as less than proficient in math and language arts. Less than three-quarters of high school students scored proficient or above in algebra. Among the things Northland leaders must consider as they look to the future is how to ensure these children are prepared for successful careers in the changing US economy.

Figure 29: MAP Proficiency

MAP Proficiency Scores (2015)	Clay	Platte	Missouri	# 1 State
3rd Grade English/Language Arts	70.7%	68.6%		
4th Grade Math	61.6%	59.6%	38.4%	53.9%
8th Grade English/Language Arts	62.7%	68.6%	36.3%	45.7%
Algebra Proficiency	62.7%	68.6%		

Educational Attainment and Implications on Household Income

Educational attainment is strongly correlated with income in the United States. In Clay and Platte Counties, over 90% of residents are high school graduates. About 40% of residents hold associate’s or bachelor’s degrees, (Figure 30) which aligns with U.S. Census figures on educational attainment nationally. (Note: There is no Missouri data reflecting the number of high school graduates who enroll in vocational training programs post-graduation.)

Figure 30: Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Clay	Platte
No high school degree	8.0%	4.7%
High school graduate	92.0%	95.3%
Associates degree	8.4%	7.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	31.0%	40.4%
Bachelor's degree	21.0%	25.0%
Graduate or professional	9.9%	15.5%

These education levels may have interesting correlation to the types of occupations held by Clay and Platte County residents. (Figure 31) **Nearly 40% of people employed in the two counties work in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, wholesale or retail trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities, fields widely viewed as having declining job opportunities and may be at greatest risk for disruption by technology.**

Figure 31: Employment by Industry

Employment by Industry (2015)— Percent of Total	Clay	Platte
Ag, forestry, fishing & hunting, mining	0.5%	0.9%
Construction	5.2%	5.1%
Manufacturing	11.2%	8.8%
Wholesale trade	3.7%	3.4%
Retail trade	11.5%	11.8%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	6.1%	7.2%
Information	2.4%	2.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate	7.4%	8.0%
Prof, scientific, mgmt, admin, & waste mgmt	11.4%	12.6%
Education, health care, & social assistance	21.8%	20.6%
Arts, entertain., rec., accommodation, & food	9.4%	9.0%
Other services, except public administration	4.5%	4.2%
Public administration	4.7%	5.4%

As the nature of the U.S. economy has changed, those with only a high school diploma have experienced a growing gap in earnings potential between themselves and those with higher academic credentials. (Figure 32) This ever-widening gap is sending a message that a high school diploma is no longer enough to ensure economic security. Supporting schools and families in delivering this message to children, and ensuring community members of all ages have access to post-secondary education and career training programs will be essential to the long term economic health of the Northland.

Figure 32: Median Household Income by Academic Achievement Level

Level of Academic Achievement	Median Household Income
High School Graduate (included GED)	\$42,047
Associate’s Degree	\$62,485
Bachelor’s Degree	\$87,991
Master’s Degree	\$101,323
Professional Degree	\$136,640
Doctorate	\$121,244

2015 US Census Data

Input derived through an interview with the leadership at Metropolitan Community College-Maplewoods, suggests that, as the population in Clay and Platte Counties continues to grow, meeting this need will stress the educational system. State law limits MCC-Maplewoods’ ability to increase tuition or the mill levy that supports the school. The school has the highest enrollment rate of all MCC campuses (5400 students) and with buildings dating from the 1970s, the campus faces maintenance and replacement issues. The ability to expand enrollment or add new programs, especially career training programs, is limited by the financial picture. As state and local government funding is unlikely to increase in the near term, expanding philanthropic support for the college may be the best option for positioning it to meet the future education and training needs of the community.

Northland by the Numbers: Physical and Mental Health

In 2015, Clay County Public Health Department and Platte County Health Department engaged their fellow members in the Northland Health Care Alliance in an assessment of the overall health of the Northland community. This effort included gathering and analyzing data about health status, quality of life, and health risk factors in the community, and conducting surveys and focus groups to gather perceptions about health issues and priorities from a spectrum of residents across the two counties. The nearly year-long assessment process resulted in the identification of three community health priorities:

- Access to Care
- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Chronic Disease

The information provided on the following pages offers clarifying insight into why these issues were selected as community health priorities. It also suggests opportunities for community investment that could produce powerful impact on the health and quality of life of Northland residents.

Obesity and Chronic Disease

With 31.7% of the adult population having a BMI of 30 or more in 2016, the state of Missouri ranked 17th in the nation for obesity. The obesity rates in Clay and Platte Counties are slightly lower, but reflect the reality that about one-third of the adult population in both counties is obese. (Figure 33) Obesity is closely aligned with chronic diseases such as diabetes, and according to data reported in the 2015 MARC Regional Health Assessment Report, the number of Northland residents diagnosed with diabetes has been growing at an alarming rate. **Between 2004 and 2011, the incidence of diabetes in Clay County jumped by over 50%, and by nearly 30% in Platte County.** The news regarding the death rate from diabetes is mixed. During roughly the same time period, the death rate from diabetes dropped by 50% in Clay County, and by significant

percentages in other counties in the metro area as well. Platte County, however, was an exception. There, the death rate from diabetes actually increased by 10%. (Figure 34) According to Missouri Hospital Association data, hospitalization rates for hypertension and diabetes, considered preventable diseases, more than doubled between 2003 and 2012. And **while hospitalization rates for chronic conditions dropped for white patients between 2002 and 2012, they increased by 20% for black patients, 41% for Hispanic patients, and 24% for Asian patients, figures demonstrating significant disparities by race and ethnicity.**

Figure 33: Obesity and Diabetes Incidence

Rates of Incidence for Obesity and Diabetes	Clay	Platte
Obesity	29%	31.0%
Diabetes	10.4%	11.3%

Figure 34 (Diabetes Prevalence and Death Rates)

Change in Diabetes Prevalence and Death Rates	Clay	Platte
Diabetes prevalence (per 100,000 population) 2004-2011	+56%	+29%
Diabetes death rates (per 100,000 population) 2003-2013	-50%	+10%

Obesity and chronic disease are directly correlated to nutrition, physical activity and smoking. The Northland Community Health Assessment revealed that about 80% of adults in Clay and Platte Counties do not eat an adequate diet of fruits and vegetables, and more than a quarter of adults reported they engaged in no leisure time physical activity. Missouri continues to have one of the highest smoking rates in the nation, with smokers representing 21% of the adult population. Promoting consumption of a healthy diet, encouraging residents of all ages to engage in healthy activities and exercise, and advancing tobacco cessation and smoke-free air laws present immediate opportunities for addressing obesity and chronic disease rates in the community.

Chronic disease, cancer, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes are the leading causes of death in the Northland. It is interesting to note that **respondents to the community health survey administered as part of the Community Health Assessment ranked obesity, heart attack and stroke, and high blood pressure as top health problems in the community.** The broad acknowledgement of these issues underscores the impact they are having on the overall health of the Northland, and presents opportunities for engaging the community as a whole in efforts to address them.

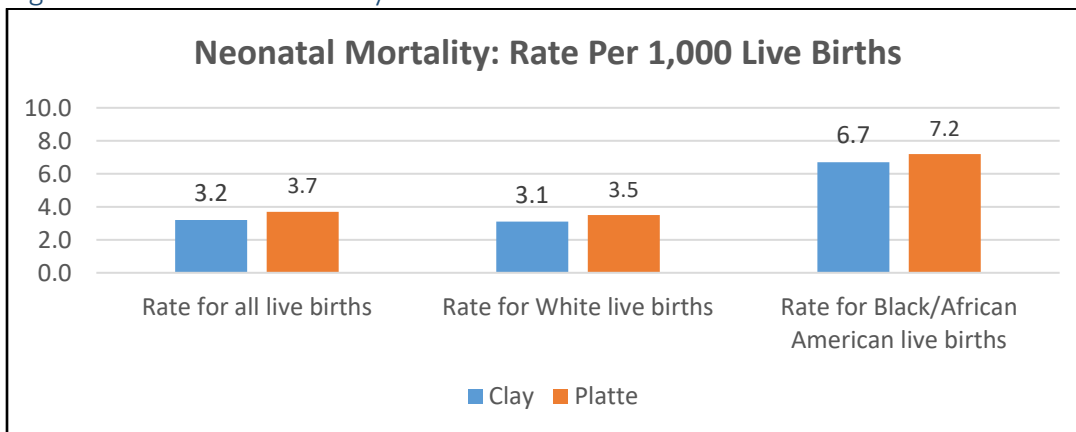
Disparities in Maternal and Child Health

Low birth weight is the leading cause of neonatal mortality (death before 28 days of age). Infants born with low birth weight are more likely to experience physical and developmental problems, or to die during the first year of life, than infants of normal weight. Data from the 2015 Community Health Assessment reveals there is a significant disparity in infant birth weight between white and non-white mothers in Clay and Platte Counties. (Figure 35) The numbers for neonatal mortality is even more alarming. **The neonatal mortality rate for nonwhite infants in Clay and Platte counties is double the rate for white infants.** (Figure 36) While a host of factors can play into neonatal mortality, it is clear that social determinants such as poverty and racial disparities can impact the health status of a mother as well as her ability to access medical care. As the population of low income and minority residents continues to grow in the Northland, so too will the need to monitor and support women in these communities through pregnancy and childbirth.

Figure 35: Low Birth Weight

Low Birth Weight: Percent of Total Live Births (2008-2012)	Clay	Platte
All live births	6.8%	6.9%
White live births	6.3%	6.6%
Black/African American live births	11.6%	9.1%

Figure 36: Neonatal Mortality



Access to Care

When individuals and families are unable to access health care services, particularly preventive care, the impact is felt community wide. Delays in diagnosis of serious illness lead to increase costs stemming from more expensive and invasive treatment, higher hospitalization rates, and increased mortality rates. These issues in turn impose severe financial and economic strains on individuals and families, and ultimately, on support resources in the community. Those living in poverty feel the impact of limitations on access most gravely. The poor are more likely to develop multiple illnesses, more likely to become injured, more likely to become disabled, and more likely to die early. Not only does poverty adversely affect health, but poor health also increases the likelihood that someone will be poor. National data makes clear, low income individuals, and in particular low income non-white individuals, tend to suffer chronic diseases at higher rates, experience neonatal mortality at higher rates, and be sicker and have less access to health providers than the general population. This is the reality faced by thousands of citizens in Clay and Platte Counties, and by the health care and community safety net organizations struggling to support them.

More specifically, access to mental health care is a significant concern in the Northland. **In 2015 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration, identified Clay and Platte Counties as Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) for Mental Health.**

Determining how to fill this gap will require collaboration across the community, health care providers, law enforcement, business, schools, government and social service agencies.

Rate of Health Insurance

The MARC Regional Health Assessment revealed that the advent of the federal health insurance marketplace resulted in declines in the rate of uninsured residents across the metro area as well as in Clay and Platte

Counties. Clay County went from 13% uninsured in 2012 to 10% uninsured in 2014. The number of uninsured in Platte County declined from 11% to 8%. (Figure 37) The uncertain future of the Affordable Care Act makes predicting how these rates might change in the years ahead, and planning for how to address those changes, extremely difficult.

One of the interesting insights gained through the data on the uninsured is the profile MARC was able to create defining the most common characteristics of the uninsured in Kansas City. More than half (53%) of the uninsured population is white. More than half (52.8%) are employed, many working in industries/businesses that offer lower wages, require fewer skills, and frequently only offer less than full time work. 30% have annual incomes under \$25,000 and the majority are between the ages of 18 and 44. This information may be useful for challenging perceptions in the community about the uninsured.

Figure 37: Percentage Uninsured

Change in Percentage of Uninsured	2012	2014
Clay County	12%	10%
Platte County	11%	9%

The statistical information on access to care is supported by the feedback received from Northland residents. **One-third of respondents to the community health needs survey said they did not think there was enough access to medical care for low income residents in the community.** Medical costs are a barrier to access in the Northland; **30% of respondents said they chose not to receive health services because of cost.** And while it is well understood that having an ongoing relationship with a primary care provider promotes delivery of integrated health care and delivers better health outcomes, just under 20% of survey respondents said they did not have their own doctor. (Figure 38)

Figure 38: Community Health Assessment Survey: Access to Care

There is enough access to medical care for low income residents in our community	33% Strongly Disagree/Disagree
In the last year I chose not to receive health care services due to costs	30% Strongly Agree/Agree
I have my own doctor I see whenever I am sick	17% Strongly Disagree/Disagree

Mental Health

Data collection on mental health is limited, but there are a few measurements that help provide insight into the state of mental health in the Northland. Between 2006 and 2012, Residents in Clay and Platte Counties self-reported having between three and four mentally unhealthy days in the past 30 days. (Figure 39) Between 2010 and 2013, though, those self-reported figures showed dramatic increases. Data gathered through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, an annual county-level survey of health status and behavior conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, showed that **between 2010 and 2013 the number of self-reported poor mental health days in the last 30 days jumped by 9% in Clay County and by 27% in Platte County.** Not surprisingly, hospital discharge rates for mental health disorders for both adults

and youth also rose during this time period. In 2016 alone, publically funded facilities provided treatment for serious mental illness to nearly 2700 individuals in Clay County and to 700 individuals in Platte County.

Figure 39: Number of Mentally Unhealthy Dates

	<u>Clay</u>	<u>Platte</u>
Average Number of Mentally Unhealthy Days Reported in the Past 30 Days (Age Adjusted) 2006-2012	3.4	4.0

ER visits and hospitalizations for mental illness grew at a dramatic rate between 2012 and 2014 in the Northland. **According to statistics from the Missouri Department of Mental Health the number of emergency room visits in which patients were treated for mental illness as either the primary or secondary diagnosis jumped by 22% in Clay County and by 13% in Platte County.** (Figure 40) Hospitalizations for mental illness increased by the same rate (13%) in Platte County and by 14% in Clay County over the same time period.

Figure 40: Percent Change in ER Visits for Mental Illness

	2012 ER Visits	2014 Visits	% Growth
Clay County	6375	7788	22%
Platte County	1836	2078	13%

Suicide

While death rates for chronic disease such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes dropped in the metro area between 2003 and 2013, deaths from suicide increased by nearly 30%. The data on suicide in Clay and Platte Counties reveal notable increases in death by suicide during the same timeframe. More recent data from the Missouri Department of Mental Health reveals an even more alarming increase in suicides in Clay County between 2013 and 2015. (Figure 41) **While 39 suicides were recorded in 2013, 56 county citizens took their own lives in 2015, an increase of over 40%, one of the highest suicide rates in the state. Clay County citizens between the ages of 25 and 44 and those age 65 and over had the highest suicide rates.** The rate of suicide among seniors across Missouri was 17.8 per 100,000 population. In Clay County the rate was 35.56 per 100,000. While the Department of Mental Health cautions that the “n” this rate is based on is small, the rate is disproportionately high compared to state data and bears watching.

Figure 41: Change in Death Rate by Suicide

Death rate per 100,000 population	2003	2013	2015
Clay	10.2	16.8	23.7
Platte	9.8	15.7	14.55

In 2015, the Missouri Student Survey asked 6th through 12th graders in participating Clay and Platte County school districts about their mental health, and included questions about suicide. **More than 10% of students reported that they had considered suicide during the last year, and just under 10% reported having actually made a plan.** (Figure 41) Numbers that are certain to create deep concern among parents, school officials and community leaders alike.

Figure 42: Missouri Student Survey Suicide Responses

	Considered	Made a Plan	Attempted
Clay	11.8%	9.1%	1%
Platte	12.3%	8.8%	1.3%

Substance Abuse

County-level data about substance abuse is limited, however, the Missouri Hospital Association 2015 report on opioid Use in Missouri reported that **between 2005 and 2014, hospital inpatient and emergency room visits for opioid overuse increase by 137%**. 2017 data presented by the association showed that while white citizens ages 25-54 make up 41% of the population, they accounted for 59% of overdose deaths between 1999 and 2015. **In 2016, white males age 55 and over accounted for 23% of all opioid-related overdose deaths in Missouri hospitals, and white females in the same age category accounted for 30%. 50% of hospital patients who died from an opioid-related overdose were Medicare recipients.** Research suggests a strong link between opioid abuse and heroin addiction with some studies suggesting three out of four prescription opioid abusers will eventually use heroin as a less expensive alternative. Missouri is in the top 10 states with the highest heroin fatality rates.

The Missouri Student Survey provides insight into use and availability of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. The 2015 survey reveals that:

- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance by youth in Clay and Platte Counties, and 50% of students in both counties think it would be easy to get. The average age for first use of alcohol is 13. About 40% of students report having at least one friend who uses alcohol.
- 40% of students think it is easy to get cigarettes. The average age of first use of cigarettes is 13.
- While the majority of students in both counties believe misusing prescription drugs is risky, 29% of them believe getting these drugs would be easy. Prescription drugs that are misused are typically acquired from a friend or family member.
- Nearly a third of students in both counties believe marijuana is easy to get and that is slight or no risk in using it. The average age of first use is 14.

The Northland Community Health Survey identified mental health problems as one of the top three problems in the community. More than 42% of respondents identified substance abuse, often linked to mental health problems, as a top priority for the community.

Concerns about mental and behavioral health were raised in the majority of interviews conducted for this report. School district leaders in particular emphasized the struggles school staff face every day in trying to manage and support children and youth coping with mental illness individually and/or within their families. These leaders made clear in no uncertain terms that the scope and depth of mental health issues within the student population is growing. They also stressed their deep and growing concern about the availability of resources needed to address the problem currently, much less in the future. Several wondered about the potential for creating a “mobile” mental health solution perhaps using the Miles of Smiles dental program as a model.

Children’s Services Fund

The 2017 passage of the Children’s Services Fund in Clay County offers the potential to effect significant positive change on the mental and behavioral health of children and youth living in the county. The fund, supported by a small sales tax, will be used to support one-year grants for behavioral and mental health

services. It will be administered by an appointed board and the goal is to begin funding grant applications in the summer of 2018. It is anticipated that the fund will distribute \$7-\$9 million annually. One of the leaders of the coalition that promoted the creation of the Children's Services Fund emphasized in an interview for this report that the fund is intended to fill an identified \$150 million gap in children's services. Current dollars provided through government funding, grants, and philanthropy need to be maintained in order to meet the need.

Summary and Conclusions

The Northland, like every community in America, faces a wide variety of social, economic and health challenges. Decisions about what to do and where to invest community resources must necessarily be influenced by factors ranging from age, race and ethnicity, and education, to diet, physical environment, and life expectancy. As the data presented in this report make clear, many of the issues facing the Northland are deeply intertwined. As the community looks to the future, it's long term health and success will depend greatly on how effectively the citizenry, government, social service providers, educators, and faith-based organizations work together to address five central issues.

1. Mental and Behavioral Health issues are a large and growing concern in the Northland.

Hospitalizations and ER visits for mental health reasons are skyrocketing. Suicide rates have climbed, and the suicide rate for Clay County seniors are among the highest in the state. While little data is available regarding substance abuse rates at the county level, the death toll from opioid overdose among middle age white citizens in particular is growing at an alarming rate. Perhaps most concerning, Northland citizens and communities are chronically underserved in terms of mental health providers.

- Between 2012 and 2014 the Missouri Department of Mental Health reported the number of emergency room visits in which patients were treated for mental illness as either the primary or secondary diagnosis jumped by 22% in Clay County and by 13% in Platte County.
- Between 2003 and 2013 deaths from suicide increased by nearly 30% in the Northland.
- Between 2013 and 2015 suicide rates jumped by 40% in Clay County.
- In 2015 the suicide rate among those age 65 and over in Clay County was the highest in the state of Missouri.
- More than 10% of 6th-12th grade students responding to the Missouri Student Survey in participating Clay and Platte County school districts reported that they had considered suicide during the last year, and just under 10% reported having actually made a plan to commit suicide.
- County-level data about substance abuse is limited, however, the Missouri Hospital Association 2015 report on opioid Use in Missouri reported that between 2005 and 2014, hospital inpatient and emergency room visits for opioid overuse increase by 137%.
- In 2016, white males age 55 and over accounted for 23% of all opioid-related overdose deaths in Missouri hospitals, and white females in the same age category accounted for 30%.

- 50% of hospital patients who died from an opioid-related overdose were Medicare recipients.
- In 2015 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration, identified Clay and Platte Counties as Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) for Mental Health.
- Serious concerns raised about mental health issues by school district leaders as well as by organizations serving the elderly. Northland Community Health Survey identified mental health problems as one of the top three problems in the community.

2. The rapidly expanding senior population in the Northland will demand new levels of community support and has the potential to impact the economic future of county governments.

As the size of the senior population increases, issues such as access to health care, housing, and transportation will clearly place new and growing demands on communities. Interviews conducted as part of this Community Needs Assessment revealed that some community leaders in the Northland are concerned these issues are already reaching critical status. The lack of easily available and affordable transportation options for elderly citizens is a daily concern for organizations serving this population. The aging housing stock in legacy neighborhoods, particularly those in the southern portions of the two counties, are creating home repair and maintenance problems for elderly residents struggling to age in place. The growing aging population in rural communities poses real concerns about how to provide access to care and supportive services. As the percentage of the senior population continues to grow in relation to the total population in the Northland, it will inevitably raise questions about future economic development, including issues about school funding and general tax base. How will resources in the counties be impacted by the growing number of people living on fixed or retirement incomes? Discussions like these will be complicated by rising demand for services to meet the needs of the aging population.

- A Mid-America Regional Council study predicts that by 2030 the senior population in Clay County will grow by nearly 120% and in and Platte Counties by more than 135%.
- Approximately 16% of residents in Clay County and about 10% of those in Platte County live in rural areas. National and state data show that rural communities are seeing a growing concentration of older residents.
- Over one-third of homes in Platte County and 44% of those in Clay County are 47 years old or older. Construction quality varies widely, meaning many older homeowners find themselves trying to stay ahead of both general maintenance and major structural issues.
- Nearly half of households in Clay County (46%) and more than 40% in Platte County receive income through Social Security and/or retirement income. The mean income from social security is \$18,735 in Clay County, \$19,964 in Platte County. The mean retirement income is just over \$22,000 in both counties.

3. Finding ways to promote the health and wellness of all citizens in the Northland continues to require focus and attention.

The physical health of citizens is deeply connected to the social, economic and cultural health of a community. The mix of state-wide and county specific data in this report underscore that while improvements have been made in some areas, there is room for significant improvement in the overall health of Northland citizens. As the racial and ethnic population in the Northland diversifies and the number of nonwhite citizens continues to grow the data strongly suggests health disparities are a real and growing issue in the community.

- Between 2004 and 2011, the incidence of diabetes in Clay County jumped by over 50%, and by nearly 30% in Platte County. During roughly the same time period, the death rate from diabetes dropped by 50% in Clay County but increased by 10% in Platte County.
- The neonatal mortality rate for nonwhite infants in Clay and Platte counties is double the rate for white infants.
- One-third of adults in Clay and Platte Counties is obese. The state of Missouri is ranked 17th in the nation for obesity.
- 80% of adults in Clay and Platte Counties do not eat an adequate diet of fruits and vegetables, and more than a quarter of adults reported they engaged in no leisure time physical activity.
- Missouri continues to have one of the highest smoking rates in the nation, with smokers representing 21% of the adult population.
- While hospitalization rates for chronic conditions dropped for white patients between 2002 and 2012, they increased by 20% for black patients, 41% for Hispanic patients, and 24% for Asian patients, figures demonstrating significant disparities by race and ethnicity.
- Respondents to the 2015 community health survey administered as part of the Community Health Assessment ranked obesity, heart attack and stroke, and high blood pressure as top health problems in the community.

4. Work to ensure Northland children, students, and adults are prepared to fulfill the demands of the economy of the future must be an ongoing community focus.

Preparing young children to succeed in school and positioning students for the careers of the future are critical to the long term success of the Northland. So, too, is ensuring that adults who seek re-training for new jobs and careers have access to education and training resources. The data presented in this report reveals that getting access to high quality early childhood education is a significant issue for many families and in many areas of the community. The information it presents about the current state of educational attainment and the economic ramifications of education on Northland citizens will be useful for advancing discussions about the existing gaps and future opportunities in education and training, and helpful for setting an agenda for collaborative planning efforts engaging business, education, community, and government leaders.

- The population of children under the age of six within the boundaries of the eight school districts tops 25,000.

- In every school district but North Platte County, the population of children under age six living in the district exceeds the number of *licensed child care* slots by two to three times.
- According to the 2017-18 Mid-America Head Start Assessment report, there is a combined total of 461 slots available in *accredited early childhood education centers* in Clay and Platte Counties.
- Clay and Platte County low income residents have access to a total of 750 seats in publicly funded pre-school programs. Only one school district, Excelsior Springs, has preschool slots available through the Missouri Pre-School project. And only five have pre-kindergarten slots available through the Missouri Title I program.
- In Clay and Platte Counties, over 90% of residents are high school graduates. About 40% of residents hold associate's or bachelor's degrees, which aligns with U.S. Census figures on educational attainment nationally.
- Nationally the median household income for individuals with a high school degree (including GED) is \$42,047. For individuals with a bachelor's degree it is \$87,991. This gap in earnings is only expected to widen as the demand for skills and training beyond high school continues to accelerate.
- Nearly 40% of people employed in the two counties work in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, wholesale or retail trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities, fields widely viewed as having declining job opportunities and at greatest risk for disruption by technology.

5. The face of the Northland is changing. Helping the community understand and meet the needs inherent in that change will require an ongoing commitment of ideas, energy and financial resources.

The Northland has experienced significant growth in the diversity of its population as it has become home to a growing number of citizens of different races and ethnicities. It is also home to a growing number of children, adults, and families living in poverty. In light of these changes, everything from addressing the broad implications of prejudice, resolving health, social and economic disparities, and determining how best to support low income citizens and families will inevitably be subjects on the community's agenda. Adapting to and resolving the issues related to the changing dynamics of the Northland--demographic, economic, social and cultural--will demand ongoing data gathering and thoughtful outreach. Collaborative leadership and inclusive, open-minded discussion will be needed to guide serious planning and implementation of programs and support services to meet the needs the community now and in the future.

- While the metro area is less diverse overall than the national average, between 2000 and 2013, the nonwhite populations in Clay County grew by 113% and in Platte County by 96%.
- The poverty rate in Clay and Platte Counties is below that of Missouri and the US, however, when viewed in terms of growth as a percentage of total population, between 2000 and 2013, Clay County saw a 100% increase in the population living in poverty and Platte County saw a 92% increase.
- Much of the growth in poverty comes from the increase in the number of children living in poverty. Approximately 11% of children in Clay and Platte Counties live in poverty, greater than the 9% of total population living in poverty in Clay County and 8% in Platte County.

- While African Americans account for 5-6% of the total population in Clay and Platte Counties, more than 20% of their households live below the Federal Poverty Level.
- Nearly a third of these female-headed households in Platte County live below the Federal Poverty Level, and quarter of them in Clay County do.
- According to new Federal Poverty Level guidelines for 2017, households with four people and an income of \$24,600, and individuals with income of \$12,060, are considered to live in poverty. In Clay County nearly 16% of households in Clay and just over 15% of households in Platte County have annual income of under \$25,000.
- 40% of renters and 23% of homeowners in Clay and Platte County spend more than 30% of their income on rent and monthly mortgage costs.
- 18% of Clay County children, and 17% of Platte County children, are considered food insecure
- In 2016 one-third of students attending Clay County schools, and more than a quarter of those attending Platte County schools were eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch programs. Just over 75% of those eligible students participated.
- One-third of children under age 4 in Clay County and 25% of those children in Platte County are eligible for WIC assistance.
- More than 15% of children under age 18 in Clay County and over 10% of those children in Platte County are receiving SNAP or Food Stamp benefits.
- The Mid-America Head Start 2017-18 Community Assessment Report found that Platte County has just three social service organizations providing food support, five providing crisis intervention, and five addressing housing needs.

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Interview Participants

- Jovannah Rohs, Mid-America Head Start
- David Warm, Mid-America Regional Council
- Deb Hermann, Northland Neighborhoods Inc.
- Robin Winner, Synergy Services
- Dr. Utpal Goswami, Metropolitan Community College-Maple Woods
- Dr. Daniel Clemens, North Kansas City School District
- Dr. Bill Nicely, Kearney School District
- Dr. Jeannette Cowherd, Park Hill School District
- Dr. M. Jeremy Tucker, Liberty School District
- Dr. Mike Reik, Platte County School District
- Tony Reinhart, Ford Motor Company
- Bruce Cramer, Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce Chairman, 2015
- Alicia Stephens, Platte County Economic Development
- Jim Hampton, Clay County Economic Development
- Tina Uridge, Clay County Senior Services
- Kelly Kent, Aging in Place Demonstration Project
- Tom Petrizzo, Tri-County Mental Health