

Best Beginnings Council of Yellowstone County

Needs Assessment

Survey of Service Providers

As evidenced in the foregoing section, The Best Beginnings Council of Yellowstone County (the “Council”) is a large group with consisting of twenty-four separate organizations and entities represented by forty-eight individual Council members. The Council was formed in early 2012 and one of the early benefits of this step was the creation of an opportunity for members to learn more about each other and their respective organizations. This process of getting to know each other has already been the catalyst of several discussions on ways the various organizations can work together more effectively to help meet the needs of families with infants and young children. As the Council uses this needs assessment as the starting point for an action plan to implement initiatives that will address those needs on a collaborative basis, the membership will have greater knowledge of other member’s services, programs and priorities. This awareness was enhanced during the needs assessment process by a survey of the Council’s member organizations. Using *SurveyMonkey*, the Best Beginnings Coordinator and the United Way’s Director of Impact polled each of the organizations that have made commitments to participate on the Council and its mission of addressing the needs of families with infants and young children in Yellowstone County on a collaborative basis. Twenty of the twenty-four member entities completed the survey, and the results are summarized below.

- In response to the question “which category best describes your organization,” sixteen respondents indicated they were non-profit corporations, three were government entities, one was for-profit, and one was a civic organization.
- Eighteen of the twenty respondents indicated that they work with children in the 0-3 age group.
- All of the respondents indicated they have staff members who work on programs that serve children age 0-5 and also children in school (age 5-8).
- At a minimum, the organizations participating in the Council work with at least 600 families in Yellowstone County.
- The Council has members who provide a wide variety of services to children age 0-8, including the following:
 - Academic (K-3): 3
 - Preschool: 2
 - Academic (tutoring and remedial education): 2
 - Basic Needs (clothing, food, shelter and transportation): 7
 - Case Management: 6
 - Childcare (before and/or after school programs): 1

- Childcare (enrichment activities such as art, music and playgroups): 2
 - Childcare (daycare): 3
 - Health (dental): 2
 - Health (disabilities): 3
 - Mental Health Services: 2
 - Health (physical health, substance abuse treatment/prevention, vision): 3
 - Home Visiting: 4
 - Mentoring: 2
 - Parent Education: 8
 - Parent Services (employment assistance and job training): 1
 - Parent Services (financial education): 2
- Almost half of the organizations responding to the survey indicated that their programs have persons on a waiting list at least “half the time.” Of those with a waiting list, five organizations indicated they “always” have clients waiting for services.
 - Six programs administered by Council members serve persons with disabilities.
 - With regard to non-governmental funding sources, all programs receive support from individual donors, programs fees and fund-raising events. Eleven private foundations and the United Way of Yellowstone County help support nineteen programs that serve families with infants and young children.
 - The City of Billings provides financial support for six programs administered by Council members and Yellowstone County provides funding assistance to thirteen programs. Eleven programs receive funding from the State Department of Public Health and Human Services.
 - The Federal government provides funding support for fourteen programs in Yellowstone County that provide services to families with infants and young children (such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Administration on Development Disabilities, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Health Resources and Services Administration).
 - When asked “how secure is funding for your programs,” Council members indicated that most of the funding “is not secure” (i.e., one-time grants) for four programs, and “shaky but most is secure” for seven programs. Respondents to the survey expressed their confidence that “funding is secure” for 29 of the programs administered by Council members.

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