



WINTER 2020-2021 PANDEMIC RELATED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

Understanding that the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for agencies in providing the much needed services and aid to our community, CSF continues to explore how to be adaptive and responsive to needs of the funded community partners and ensure appropriate services are delivered to children, youth, and families in St. Louis County while balancing transparency and accountability to the taxpayers.

In December, 2020 CSF staff developed several surveys to solicit information on the present landscape from currently funded partner agencies, County school districts, and key stakeholders from the St. Louis community. Topics covered varied, digging into the leading needs of children, youth and families, to implications of the pandemic on the staffing constraints and financial health, and how CSF might provide further support for agencies in meeting community needs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CSF staff analyzed the results of the 73 complete responses submitted and identified themes across the four sourced surveys. The participation rate for each survey was about half of the possible pool of respondents. Themes from the survey responses are separated into two categories, "Programming Impacts" and "Financial Impacts" below:

PROGRAMMING IMPACTS

- Parents, caregivers, and educators need greater education and support in processing and managing their own mental health and stress in order to be present for children and youth for whom they care
- Anxiety and depression (including social isolation, lack of self-motivation, and grief) are the highest reported issues facing youth
- Long-term concerns in the areas of child abuse, neglect, substance use, and homelessness stemming from the tertiary effects of the pandemic are growing, in addition to the immediate mental health issues identified above. These areas of need represent highly traumatic events that may create lasting effects on the children, youth and families impacted post-pandemic.
- Historical issues of racial and socio-economic inequity have been exacerbated over the last year, with the effects likely to be long-term for some communities
- School-based services face unique challenges to service delivery; referrals for service and access to students are limited as most schools remain utilizing remote learning or a hybrid model
- Services continue to be needed despite barriers and lack of service delivery

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

- Negative effects of the pandemic have not impacted funded partner agencies and service areas equally; smaller, less financially diverse agencies are more likely to be more financially strained
- Caseloads and referrals are down for many programs and “no shows” or cancellations have increased for some direct services
- Layoffs did not occur in 90% of participating agencies’ funded programs, however the implications on staffing constraints has been great (e.g. staffing reallocations, turnover, and vacancies)
 - 47% of participating agencies reported staff vacancies over the last ten months; half of those who reported vacancies are not attempting to fill these vacancies at this time due to lower caseloads. Those who are seeking to fill vacancies are having difficulty recruiting qualified and highly skilled candidates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, the data and information available on the current landscape is limited and does not necessarily reflect all needs and demand for services. Based on the results of the surveys conducted, billing data and other information received through community meetings, CSF staff proposes the following strategies:

- Direct, paid marketing in traditional media and PSA to engage target populations who are not currently aware of or accessing our networks
- Financial support for training for frontline agency staff (trauma responsive, crisis and disaster management etc.)
- Mental health education and training for non-agency adult caregivers (e.g. educators, parents, guardians, mentors, etc.) to give adequate emotional support to children
- Funding for the support and care of adult caregivers (parents, educators, etc.)
- Continuation of expanded access to telehealth units of service
- Allow for shifts in service models and service offerings from the original 2020-2022 Core contract where justification can be made based on community need and the agency’s qualifications & experience
- Flexibility on billing requirements (funding outside the unit of service definition)
- Limited gap funding for agencies unable to deliver or bill for services, where appropriate
- Pool of additional emergency funds

The following pages include summaries of the results from each of the surveys, detailing the responses provided for each question.

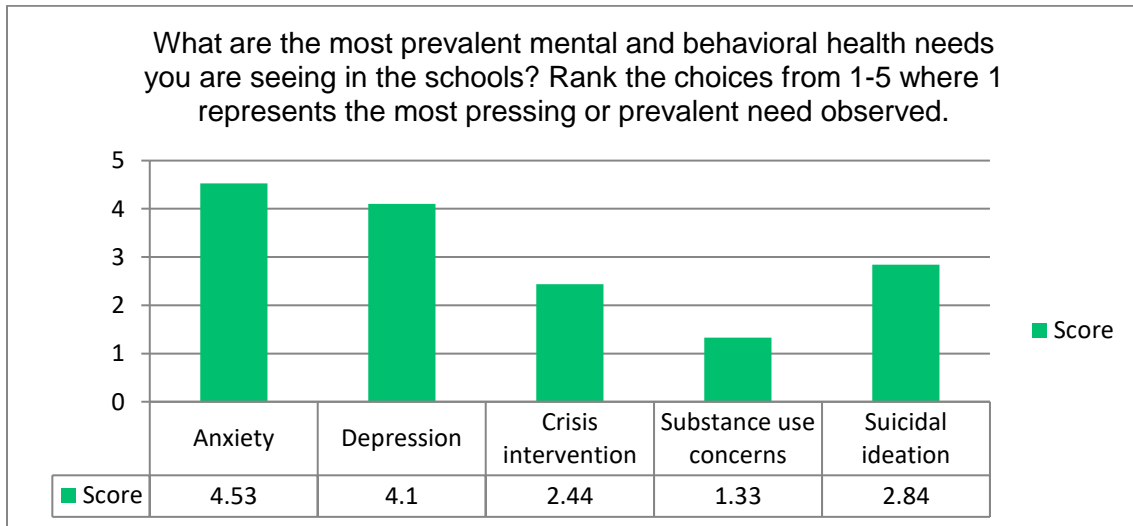
SCHOOL DISTRICT DATA
 COMPLETE RESPONSES: 20 (10/23 DISTRICTS)

Participating Districts:
 Affton (9) Maplewood Richmond Heights
 Ferguson-Florissant Mehlville
 Hancock Place Parkway
 Kirkwood Riverview Gardens
 Ladue University City
 Lindbergh Webster Groves

- **Does your district track student referrals to mental health providers?**
 Yes = 11 / No = 9

- **Have you experienced a reduction in referrals to school-based mental health partners due to virtual schooling?**
 Yes = 10 / No = 10 (If yes, estimate: responses varied: 30% – 75% reduction)

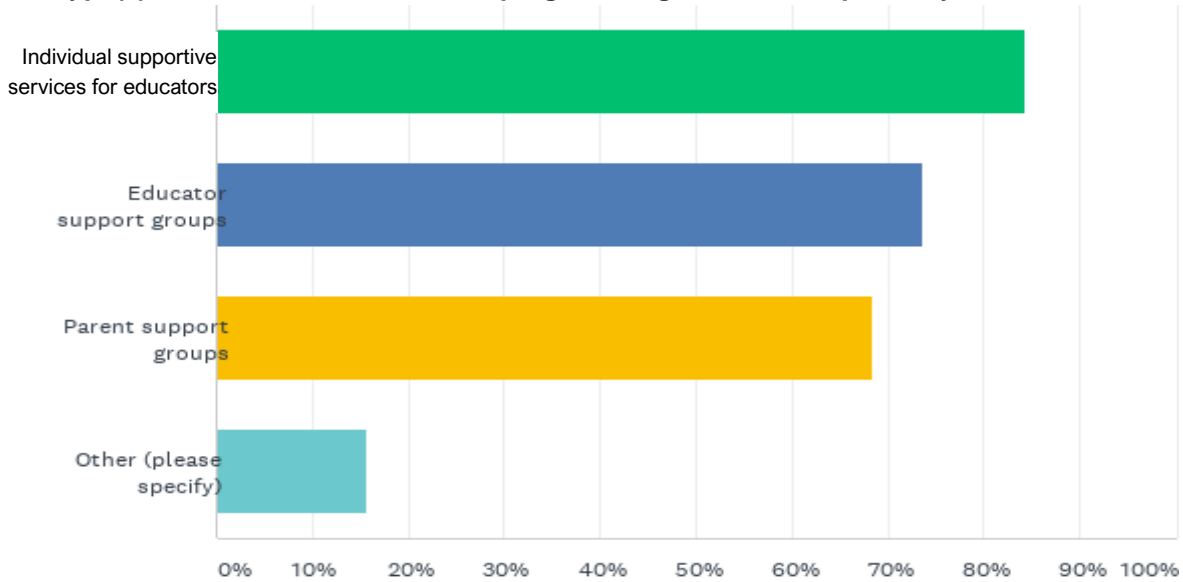
- **Have technology issues/concerns limited partner provider agency's ability to provide school-based services?**
 Yes = 7 / No = 13



Raw Count	1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety	12	5	2	0	0
Depression	6	11	2	1	0
Crisis intervention	1	0	5	12	0
Substance use concerns	0	1	0	3	14
Suicidal ideation	1	3	10	2	3



What type(s) of additional mental health programming would be helpful for your district?



Other: Social/emotional learning for students; professional development for teachers; parent support

- **How has the pandemic impacted your district's staffing? (e.g. staff testing positive, contact tracing, lack of subs, staff retirements/leaving the profession, mental health issues, etc.)**
 - Mental health concerns, stress
 - Staff burnout
 - High demand and lack of substitute teachers with quarantine, contact tracing/positive cases

- **What do you foresee as the long-term impact of the pandemic on school-based mental health services?**
 - Widened equity gaps
 - Increases in demand & need for on-site mental health providers
 - Increase need for universal and preventative mental healthcare
 - Staff burnout
 - Anxiety of families returning
 - Social/emotional issues and heightened anxiety of students currently lacking socialization while is isolation now

- **How might CSF further support your district in meeting community needs during the pandemic?**
 - Increase funding to school-based resources
 - Provide accurate and updated info from providers on waitlist/wait time in real-time
 - (Free) professional development and educational information for supporting families; frameworks or recommendations on supporting families
 - Support for staff
 - Basic needs for families (hygiene, food, clothing)



SCHOOL-BASED PROVIDER DATA

COMPLETE RESPONSES: 15/26

Participating Agencies:

Behavioral Health Response

Better Family Life, Inc.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri

Bilingual International Assistant Services

Compass Health Center

Great Circle

Jewish Family Services of St. Louis

Lutheran Family and Children Services

NAMI St. Louis

Preferred Family Healthcare, Inc.

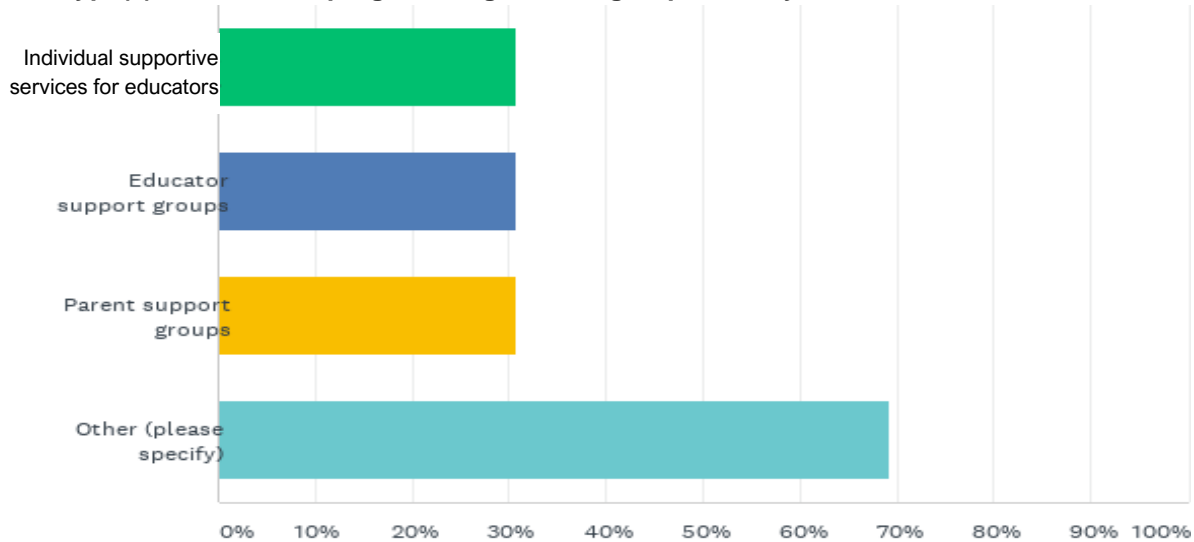
Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services

Provident Behavioral Health

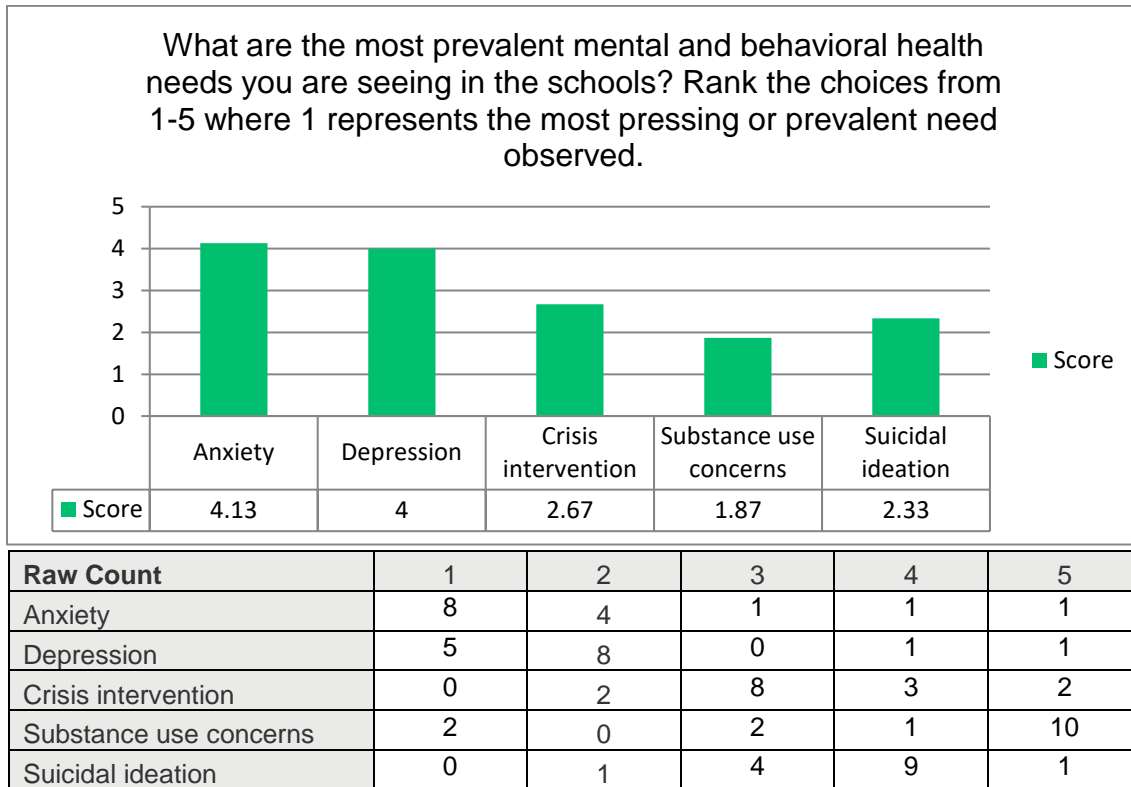
Safe Connections

St. Francis Community Services

What type(s) of additional programming are being requested by schools? Check all that apply.



Other: Parents have demonstrated enthusiasm for new group services being offered
 Support to help families/students engage in remote learning
 Requests for presentations and interventions on MH, trauma-informed education for teachers, stress, and coping.



- **If there is a highly prevalent mental/behavioral health need you are observing not listed above, please describe it here.**
 - Grief
 - Social skills
 - Housing transition
 - Loneliness
 - PTSD
 - Managing relationships
 - Motivation, inattentive behavior
 - Limited access to psychiatry and medications

- **Have you experienced a reduction in referrals for services due to virtual schooling?**
 Yes = 15 / No = 0
If yes, estimate: responses varied, 5% – 90% reduction with prevention skewing higher

- **Have technology issues/concerns limited your agency's ability to provide school-based services?**
 Yes = 10 / No = 5



-
- **How has the pandemic impacted your agency's school-based staffing? (e.g. staff turnover, vacancies, etc.)**
 - Three participants responded that they have been able to maintain staffing
 - Three participants responded that they vacancies they are not attempting to fill at this time due to low caseloads and productivity
 - High rates of staff leave and turnover in a few participating agencies/programs
 - Productivity and billing concerns identified as growing or continuous concerns by several

 - **How have school-based caseloads been impacted? Can you quantify the increase/decrease your agency has experienced in school-based services activity this school year?**
 - Responses across the board indicated caseloads are down; responses vary in range from 5% - 90%
 - More intense cases, greater need from the clients that are referred, however the number of referrals is lower
 - Two agencies stated case management referrals have increased, which tends to be a service with lower demand (noting the reimbursement rate is actually lower for this service than the other services they provide)

 - **Has virtual schooling had a significant impact on your agency's financials?**

Yes = 10 / No = 5

Ability to bill for services is down in school-based services; this impacts some agencies' overall financial state more than others depending on their diversity of revenue and programming

 - **Are you experiencing a high level of "No Shows" for school based virtual clients?**

Yes = 8 / No = 7

 - **Has your agency had to shift resources to other programs from school-based services due to an inability to bill CSF for service units?**

Yes = 10 / No = 5

 - **What do you foresee as the long-term impact of the pandemic on school-based services?**
 - Increased need and demand for school-based services
 - Continued use of telehealth in post-pandemic life
 - Continued need for flexibility in models of service delivery
 - Increased need and importance of case management services for children and families when life begins to shift back post-pandemic
 - Heighted need to increase staffing upon quick uptake in demand coming off low staffing levels, vacancies, and staff who have moved to part-time



- **How might CSF further support your agency in meeting community needs during the pandemic?**
 - Provide funded training opportunities for agency staff to meet the coming needs post-pandemic while staff have hours available during this low productivity period
 - Continued access and support for telehealth units
 - Small pool of gap funding (not as broad as PRO); advance payments
 - Flexibility and openness in allowing programs to shift models and services outside of the original Core contract in the short-term to meet demand
 - Aid with marketing (paid, traditional media)
 - Additional funding for technology and devices for students

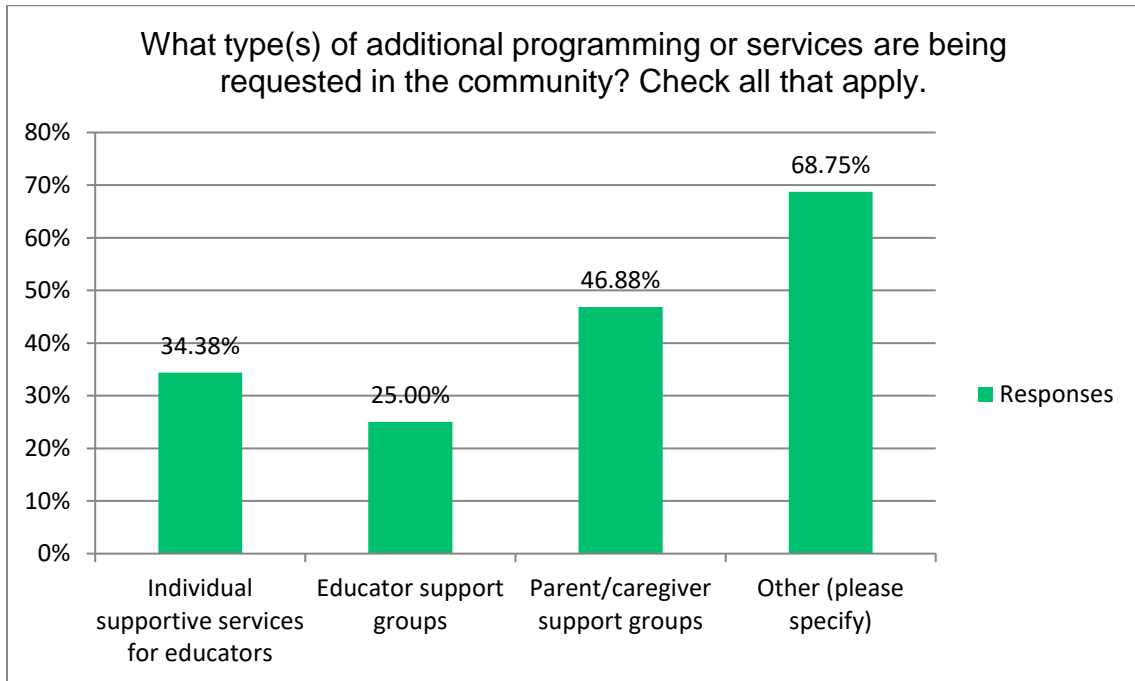


CORE PARTNER (COMMUNITY/IN-HOME) DATA

COMPLETE RESPONSES: 36

Participating Agencies:

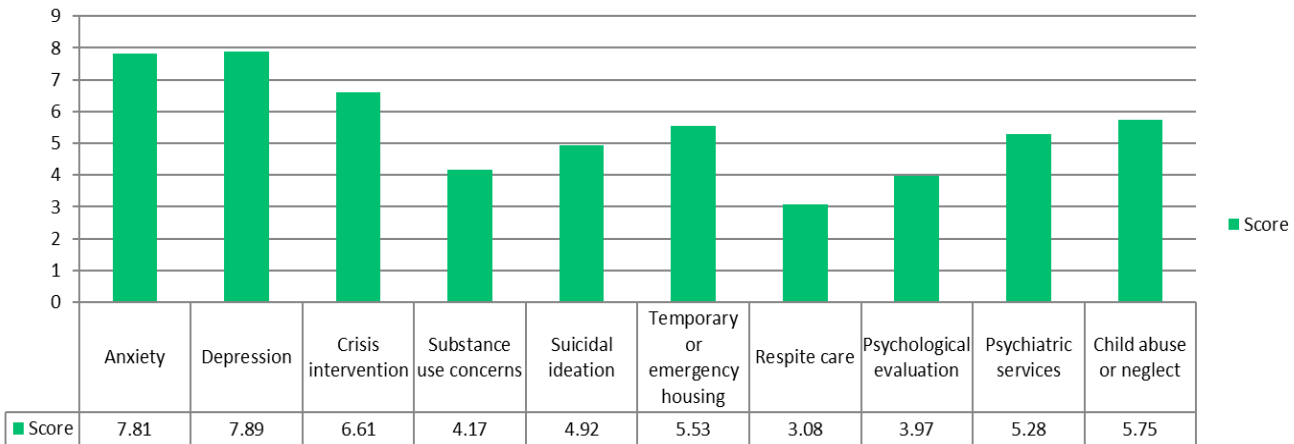
- | | |
|---|---|
| ALIVE | Lydia's House |
| Almost Home | Marygrove |
| Behavioral Health Response | Mercy |
| Bethany Christian Services | NAMI St. Louis |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri | Our Lady's Inn |
| CASA of St. Louis | Preferred Family Healthcare |
| CHADS | Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services |
| Children's Advocacy Services of Greater St. Louis | Provident Behavioral Health |
| College Bound (A Million Stars) | Room at the Inn |
| Covenant House Missouri | Saint Louis Counseling |
| Easterseals Midwest | St. Louis Children's Hospital |
| Epworth Children and Family Services | St. Louis County Human Services |
| FamilyForward | The SPOT |
| Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition | UMSL - Center for Behavioral Health |
| Good Shepherd Children and Family Services | Washington University - The SYNCHRONY Project |
| Kids In The Middle | Washington University - WERC |
| Legal Services of Eastern Missouri | Youth in Need |
| Lutheran Family and Children's Services | |



Other: Parent support; housing assistance; family case management, stress management



What are the most prevalent mental and behavioral health needs you are seeing in the community?
Rank the choices from 1-10 where 1 represents the most pressing or prevalent need observed.



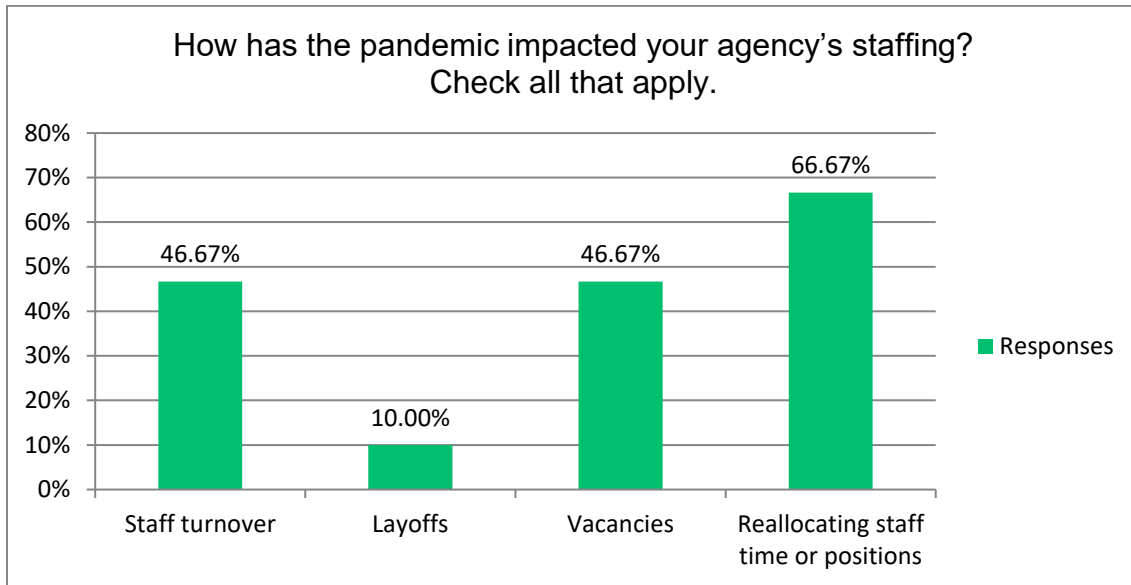
Raw Count	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Depression	3	17	6	3	2	2	1	2	0	0
Anxiety	13	5	7	2	2	2	1	2	2	0
Crisis intervention	3	6	4	7	5	4	3	3	1	0
Child abuse or neglect	5	3	5	1	4	6	3	1	6	2
Temporary housing	8	1	2	2	1	4	7	4	7	0
Psychiatric services	1	2	2	4	8	9	2	3	3	2
Suicidal ideation	1	0	4	8	4	1	6	6	2	4
Substance use concerns	0	0	1	5	5	4	8	5	2	6
Psychological eval	1	1	3	2	4	1	4	7	7	6
Respite care	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	3	6	16

Other: Social isolation/loneliness; Trauma/stress/mental health; caregiver support; basic needs; self-injury

- **Have you experienced a decrease in referrals for services due to pandemic?**
 - Yes = 16 (Reported a decrease in at least one funded program)

- **Have technology issues/concerns, by either clients or the agency, limited your agency’s ability to provide services?**
 - Yes = 28 / No = 7

- **Have you experienced an increase in “No Shows” and/or cancellations during the pandemic?**
 - Yes = 13 / No = 21



Comments: Staff turnover is high; those choosing to fill vacancies stated that recruitment has proven challenging, especially for clinical positions

- **Has your agency reallocated financial resources from other sources to support CSF funded services due to your inability to bill CSF?**
Yes = 16 / No = 19

- **What has been the overall financial impact of the pandemic on your agency? Please explain.**

 - Fee for service = loss in revenue
 - Greater administrative burden with delivering telehealth services, leading to less billable hours
 - Cancellation of events and fundraisers hurting revenue
 - Loss of the state tax credit program leading to declined fundraising revenue
 - Additional spending for COVID-19 related expenditures; some were able to fundraise or received grants for all added expenses
 - Few were in a secure financial position with limited financial impact
 - Many highly concerned about 2021

- **What do you foresee as the long term impact of the pandemic on your agency and the types of services you provide?**

 - Looking at more specific type of programs to address trauma related disorders resulting from the pandemic
 - Foresee difficulty recruiting highly skilled, qualified clinical staff as demand increases
 - Increase if demand for housing services
 - Increase in foster children and demand for foster and host families
 - Increase in abuse and neglect cases



- Increase in divorce and marital issues causing increased trauma and social/emotional issues for children
- May change eligibility guidelines for program entry
- Continued use of telehealth

- **How might CSF further support your agency in meeting community needs during this pandemic?**
 - Additional PRO or similar gap funding
 - Marketing
 - Continued use of telehealth
 - Fund and offer staff training
 - Flexibility with use of funds
 - Funding hazardous pay
 - Additional funds for those who utilized all funds in 2020 (meet needs of child welfare)
 - Emergency funding
 - Connect us with resources or fund additional technology for families/clients
 - No credit memos of PRO funds
 - Additional community resources for housing assistance

- **Please provide any additional information you think might be relevant for CSF consider in addressing community needs.**
 - It has already been determined that abuse and neglect cases are increasing as well as depression and suicide rates. The number of homeless have increased due to lost jobs. Mental health and substance abuse co-occurring disorders are also on the increase.
 - Homelessness is likely to increase significantly as the pandemic continues. There is a strong nexus between housing instability and negative mental health outcomes. CSF could be a valuable resource to address this looming crisis facing children, youth, and families in St. Louis County.
 - Please process our invoices in a more timely manner
 - A CSF grant model would be much preferred over fee-for-service. Fee-for-service causes staff to spend time billing, rather than providing direct service. It also costs our agency thousands of dollars of administrative time.
 - We found the PRO process to be extremely important and helpful in allowing us to support families through the uncertainty during the pandemic and let them engage in services in a way that fit with the increased stressors and family demands of the pandemic. CSF continues to provide us the opportunity to offer vital services to children and families experiencing abuse and neglect which is essential during the current instability in their lives. Families continue to thank us for our services and often comment that it has been the sole source of stability and consistency in their lives during this time.
 - Internet access is a huge need