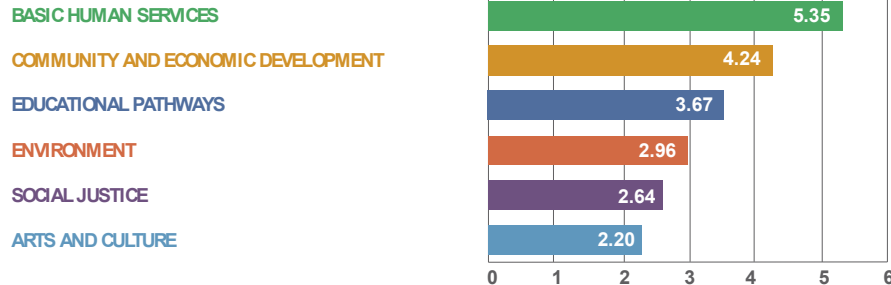# PRIORITIES OF RESPONDENTS

For the 2021 Awards Rounds, we asked respondents for advice about which of six general areas should be our highest priority. The following chart shows the ratings of the 295 respondents' first priorities on a 1 to 6 scale, with 6 the most important. The text blocks below the chart identify what needs fall under each described area.

RATINGS OF FIRST PRIORITIES ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 6

Category	Rating
BASIC HUMAN SERVICES	5.35
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	4.24
EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS	3.67
ENVIRONMENT	2.96
SOCIAL JUSTICE	2.64
ARTS AND CULTURE	2.20

BASIC HUMAN SERVICES INCLUDES
Food insecurity, affordable housing, transportation, child care, mental health/addiction, special needs populations, healthcare, geriatric services, crime prevention, homelessness

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES
Broadband access, farm support, small business/entrepreneurship training, employee and employer recruitment

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS INCLUDES
Preschool, K-12, access to higher education, vocational training

ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES
Land and water usage/conservation, historic preservation, animal welfare, wildlife protection

SOCIAL JUSTICE INCLUDES
Racism, immigrant issues, equal opportunity

ARTS AND CULTURE INCLUDES
Museums, visual and performing arts

The first priority is overwhelmingly "basic human needs", followed by "community and economic development" and "educational pathways." These constitute over 91% of first priorities. These top three priorities are followed by a much more closely grouped together fourth through sixth choices – "environment", "social justice", and "arts and culture," which constitute less than 9% of first priorities. The following graph shows the percentages as parts of the whole.

LOOKING AT THE DATA DIFFERENTLY: FIRST PRIORITY PREFERENCES BY NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS AND RESPECTIVE PERCENT OF THE WHOLE
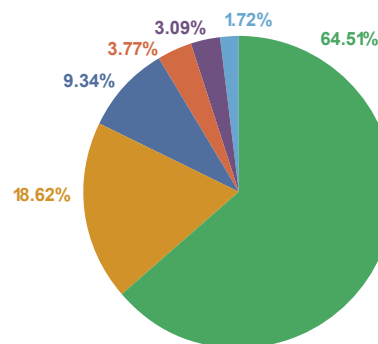
BASIC HUMAN SERVICES: 189 RESPONDENTS

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: 54 RESPONDENTS

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS: 27 RESPONDENTS

ENVIRONMENT: 11 RESPONDENTS

SOCIAL JUSTICE: 9 RESPONDENTS

ARTS AND CULTURE: 5 RESPONDENTS

Pie chart values: 64.51%, 18.62%, 9.34%, 3.77%, 3.09%, 1.72%

Each area covers a wide range of possibilities as to where the Community Foundation might focus its efforts. In order to narrow these down, the next question on the survey asked respondents to list specific themes the Foundation might focus on, specifically referencing the respondent's first priority from the first question.

THE SURVEY IDENTIFIED 27 THEMES FOR AREAS OF CONCERN

A total of 27 "themes" were identified. The majority are about basic human services, while the rest of the areas have fewer themes identified. But there is a lot of overlap among responses, regardless of a respondent's first choice, and several respondents mentioned that, for instance, areas such as economic development and educational pathways are closely tied in with basic human services.

The themes were identified in review of all responses to "open-ended" questions, where respondents offered narrative explanations of what they saw as priorities. For example, 31% mentioned Food/Necessities in their written survey responses.
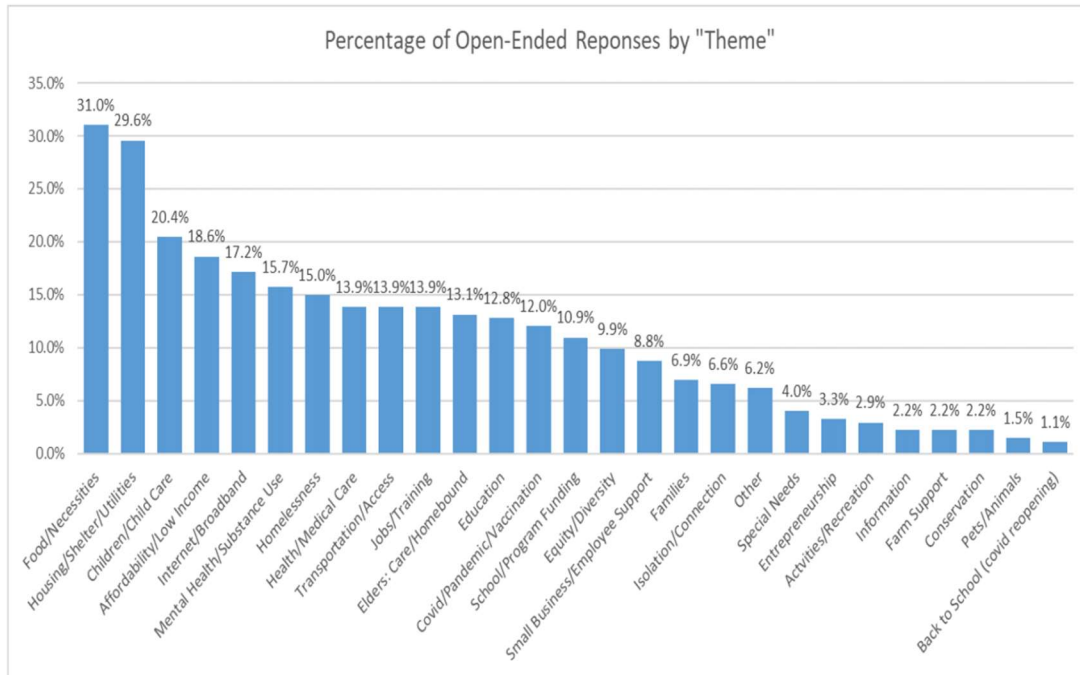
Note: this graph represents the percentage of the total number of responses given (n=274) that were coded for each theme/category. As such, the percentages do not sum to 100% given that each responses could have had multiple themes that were coded.

BASIC HUMAN SERVICES THEMES

"Food/Necessities" and "Housing/Shelter" were the two most common themes, with 31% and nearly 30% of the responses mentioning these issues respectively. These themes were the most common for those who selected "basic necessities" as their first choice of area. Rounding out the top five themes are "children/child care," "affordability/low income," and "internet/broadband." This may suggest a definite need for focusing future efforts on low income populations in Otsego County.

For the most common response theme, "Food/Necessities," it appears that most respondents were focusing on access and availability of food, especially for those who are in need, with many referencing food banks and other programs. "Housing/Shelter" also appears to fall along the lines of affordability in its most common thematic usage, with a number of respondents also mentioning the quality/safety and availability of housing as well as cost.

For "Children/Childcare," affordability and availability, especially for working parents and in rural areas, were among the most common usages.

"Internet/broadband" was often tied in with statements regarding accessibility, cost and speed, as well as the potential benefits, such as to business and education. Many of those who listed Internet as a theme noted that improvement in this resource would benefit many other areas in Otsego County.

Other themes that were commonly used by those who had selected "basic human needs" as their first choice area included "mental health/substance use," "homelessness," "health/medical care," "transportation/access," and "elders: care/homebound."

As with the top five themes, these were also often listed in conjunction with other themes. For instance, affordability and availability of care for the elderly population, and other programs to support these needs, including health and medical care, were often cited. Mental health/substance use, homelessness, and medical care were often listed along with mentions of the current pandemic/Covid-19, as issues that have been made more challenging under this situation.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THEMES

This next major area also had a number of themes that were most commonly used by those who selected this as their first area/priority. The main theme used in this area was "Internet/broadband". This was one of the top five themes used overall, and was often used in conjunction with other themes in this area, including "small business/employee support." "Covid/pandemic" and "education" were also mentioned, the former as something which has caused issues with the later, and with the Internet something that could help in this regard; i.e. school, and working from home being hindered by a lack of high speed Internet access.

"Jobs/training" was the other major theme in this area, and mentioned by others who had not selected this as their first choice. Respondents mentioned a need for more jobs in the area, and training/education in order to suit the workforce to current needs.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS THEMES

For the next main area, educational pathways, the main focus was on the education of children. While 20% of all responses mentioned children, some 65% of the comments in this area were focused on this theme. The other main theme in this area was the funding of schools and other programs such as tutoring and other support services.

ENVIRONMENT THEMES

The environment was the next major area. Of those who selected this area as their first choice, the responses focused on four main themes: "conservation," "activities/recreation," "pets/animals," and "mental health/substance use." It appears that many of these responses were focused on a combination of using environmental factors, like outdoor recreation or pets, to improve the wellbeing of the residents of Otsego County.

SOCIAL JUSTICE THEMES

In the area of social justice, "equity/diversity," appears to be at the forefront, used with other themes including the elderly, health and medical care, and education. Those who selected this area as their first option appear to want many of the same things as other respondents, but with a focus on equal application of efforts to resolve those issues.
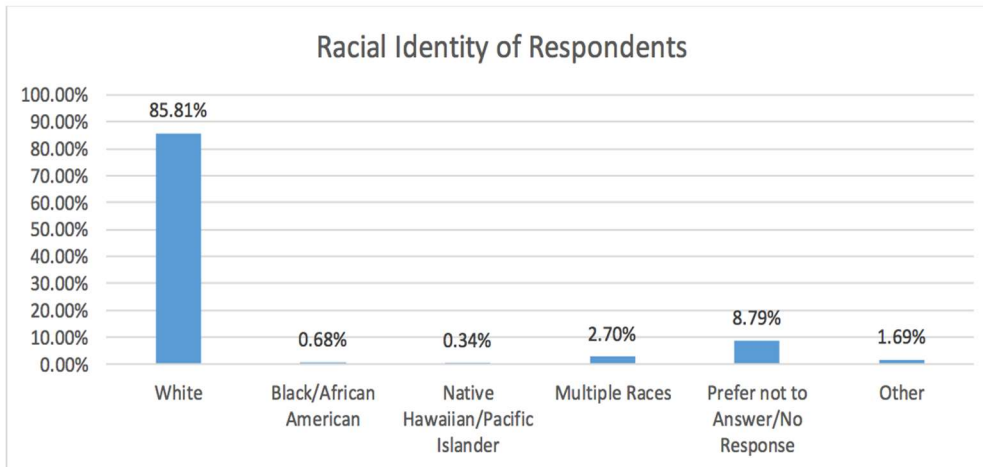
ARTS AND CULTURE THEMES

The final area, arts and culture, had the fewest respondents selecting this as their first choice, Of those responses, there were a few patterns, with "school/program funding" and "children/child care" being mentioned by many of the respondents.

The following chart offers samples of theme words, phrases and statements.

Theme	Sample Words/Phrases	Example Statement
Food/Necessities	Food, food banks, food insecurity, hygiene	"Provide fresh food to those in need. Matching farmers with food pantry and institutions"
Housing/Shelter/Utilities	Housing, shelters, utility payment	"Housing for all socioeconomic classes."
Children/Child Care	Child care, youth, children,	"...affordable daycares through out the county especially in rural small towns where families tend to struggle to find childcare..."
Affordability/Low Income	Affordable, low income residents, reduced rate	"affordable, safe housing access to affordable, high quality childcare"
Internet/Broadband	Internet access, broadband	"Rural Broadband now! This issue, if resolved, snowballs into helping more on this list."
Mental Health/Substance Use	Mental health, addiction, substance use, mental illness	"Mental health and drug addiction services readily available without a lot of criteria"
Homelessness	Homeless, homelessness	"Homeless housing - not shelters, but permanent housing"
Health/Medical Care	Medical service, healthcare, physical wellbeing	"Medical services in rural areas..."
Transportation/Access	Transportation, public transportation, access, accessibility	"Better access to Hannaford and other grocery stores - i.e., the overpass has NO walkways"
Jobs/Training	Jobs, employment, job training, staff	"People need jobs. The unemployment aid is great but they need jobs to get back to life on the whole."
Elders: Care/Homebound	Senior citizens, elderly, homebound, aging	"Helping aging seniors age at home with good care, food and shelter."
Education	Educated, education, schools, academic, students	"BOCES, vocational training, other education pathways besides for college"
Covid/Pandemic/Vaccination	Covid-19, pandemic, vaccinations, Covid testing	"...especially due to increased needs in these areas due to the pandemic..."
School/Program Funding	Support, funding, programs, funding for schools	"providing funding and manpower for a community wide Covid-19 vaccination program"
Equity/Diversity	For all, regardless of social standing, equal opportunity, diversity	"Creating supportive mechanisms for BIPOC and non-traditional farmers to access and succeed in agricultural business"
Small Business/Employee Support	Small businesses, support for staff, employees	"By supporting small businesses... we can hire more employees which in turn supports more families".
Families	Families, family	"Resources for young mothers and families in crisis, as well as supports for families"
Isolation/Connection	Isolation, social connection, social support	"Isolation is very challenging, especially for the elderly and the children with no school open and with parents working."
Other	All responses/suggestions that do not have a "match" with others	"Bereavement Services"; "Historic preservation should be addressed before it is gone"; "Crime prevention"
Special Needs	Disability, disabled, handicap, special needs	"housing for special needs (people transitioning from corrections, etc.)"
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship, business incubation, starting, setting up	"Small business incubation and entrepreneurships"
Activities/Recreation	Activities, recreation, extracurricular	"Focusing more on offering [young adults] safe activities to do outside of the home that isn't drinking or doing drugs would be really ideal especially for the addiction rates in Otsego County.
Information	Information, awareness	"the information must repeatedly be disseminated through print and online media."
Farm Support	Farm support, farms, farmers	"...helping farmers to be able to produce crops"
Conservation	Clean water, environment, energy conservation	"Connecting physical and emotional health and well being with a healthy environment, clean water, fresh air. "
Pets/Animals	Animals, service animals, dogs and cats	"Services for animal shelters and spay/neuter programs to reduce the overwhelming homeless animal population"
Back to School (Covid reopening)	Schools open, attend safely with Covid	"Due to Covid it is essential for schools and childcare centers to be open. Focus must first be on schools."

RACIAL IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS

Almost 86% identified as white. The second most common response was "prefer not to answer." The U.S. Census describes Otsego County as 94% white and 2.5% Black. It's possible respondents who did not identify their race included a higher percentage of racial minorities, but there is no way to be sure. The survey also asked respondents about their ethnic identity and 3.38% identified as Hispanic/Latino. Census estimates put the Hispanic/Latino population of Otsego County at around 3.8%, which makes these results representative of the larger population.

Racial Identity of Respondents

Category	Percentage
White	85.81%
Black/African American	0.68%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.34%
Multiple Races	2.70%
Prefer not to Answer/No Response	8.79%
Other	1.69%

GENDER IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS

72.30% of respondents identified as female, 20.95% identified as male, 1.02% identified as non-binary or "other", and the remaining 5.74% preferred not to answer or gave no response. Respondents to this survey are far more female than the Otsego County population (51.5% per the US Census estimates).

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

The median age group of respondents was 50-59 years old. The distribution of respondents may line up better with the population that keeps up to date with a community foundation, though not necessarily with the larger Otsego County population. As such, the results should be recognized as being more representative of Otsego County residents above the age of 40, and less representative of those below 40.

Respondent Age Distribution

Age Group	Percentage
17 or Younger	0.34%
18-20 yrs old	0.34%
21-29 yrs old	5.07%
30-39 yrs old	12.16%
40-49 yrs old	15.54%
50-59 yrs old	17.91%
60-69 yrs old	25.34%
70+ yrs old	18.24%
Prefer not to answer	5.06%