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Analysis of the responses to poverty in Harrisonburg, Virginia

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Analysis of the Responses to Poverty in Harrisonburg, Virginia

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An Honors Program Project Presented to

the Faculty of the Undergraduate

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by Kara Jane Krantz

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Abstract

Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty was established in 1964 to eradicate poverty in the United States. There have been great strides towards accomplishing this goal; however, poverty continues to persist. The purpose of this study is to analyze poverty in Harrisonburg, Virginia and how it compares to poverty at the state and national levels. In addition, this study evaluates the services provided by nonprofits and government agencies to the poor in Harrisonburg. Finally, it investigates the interactions among the nonprofits and government agencies. Poverty statistics come from the U.S. Census Bureau. Analysis of the data reflects that the presence of poverty in Harrisonburg exceeds the state and national average. Interviews were conducted with a dozen local nonprofit directors and government workers to discuss how each entity addresses poverty in the city and how each interacts with other organizations. The interviews reveal that Harrisonburg nonprofits have taken great strides to assist those in poverty in the city and are constantly communicating with other nonprofits to best address those in need. While the state and federal government agencies have programs implemented to assist those in poverty, there is more that could be done at the local government level. A greater knowledge and understanding of poverty, combined with a goal of assisting the poor and working together with other nonprofits, allows the nonprofits in Harrisonburg to address more accurately the needs of the community.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Economic inequality has been an important point of discussion politically for several decades. As the middle class continues to shrink, the gap between the rich and poor of the United States continues to widen. An increased growth in the wealthy also means an increased growth of the poor. It is important to recognize this increased presence of poverty in the United States and determine the most efficient ways to decrease these statistics at the national, state, and local levels. According to the United States Census Bureau American Community Survey, in 2014, 15.6% of the total United States population, 11.5% of Virginia's population and 32.5% of the City of Harrisonburg's population lived below the poverty level.

Harrisonburg, Virginia is located in northwestern Virginia, see Figure 1, and home to 43,328 people, with the population increasing seasonally with the influx of 21,227 college students to attend James Madison University every fall (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014;
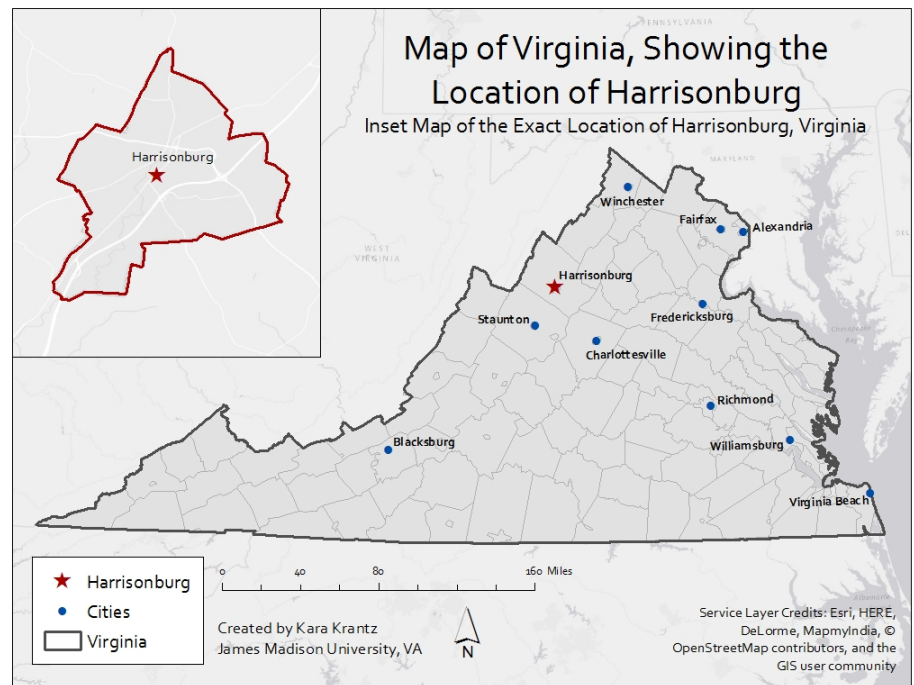
Figure 1 – Map of Virginia showing the location of Harrisonburg.

James Madison University, 2015; Appendix A). The presence of a large student body impacts the official poverty rate because many students living off-campus have no income and are supported by their parents. This large number of students causes the poverty rate of Harrisonburg to be

over-estimated sometimes. When off-campus students are subtracted from the poverty rate for the City, the rate decreases by 16.1% (Bishaw, 2013). The poverty rate excluding off-campus students becomes more in line with the national average but is still higher than that for the state of Virginia. Harrisonburg has a large minority population, with at least 20% of each of these minority groups experiencing poverty (See Appendix B). The poverty statistics for each census tract in Harrisonburg vary, with some census tracts experiencing greater amounts of poverty than others; also, this has varied over the last five years, this variation can be seen in the two population maps below, one representing the percentage below poverty in 2010 and the other representing the percentage below poverty in 2014 (See Appendix C, D, E, F, and G).
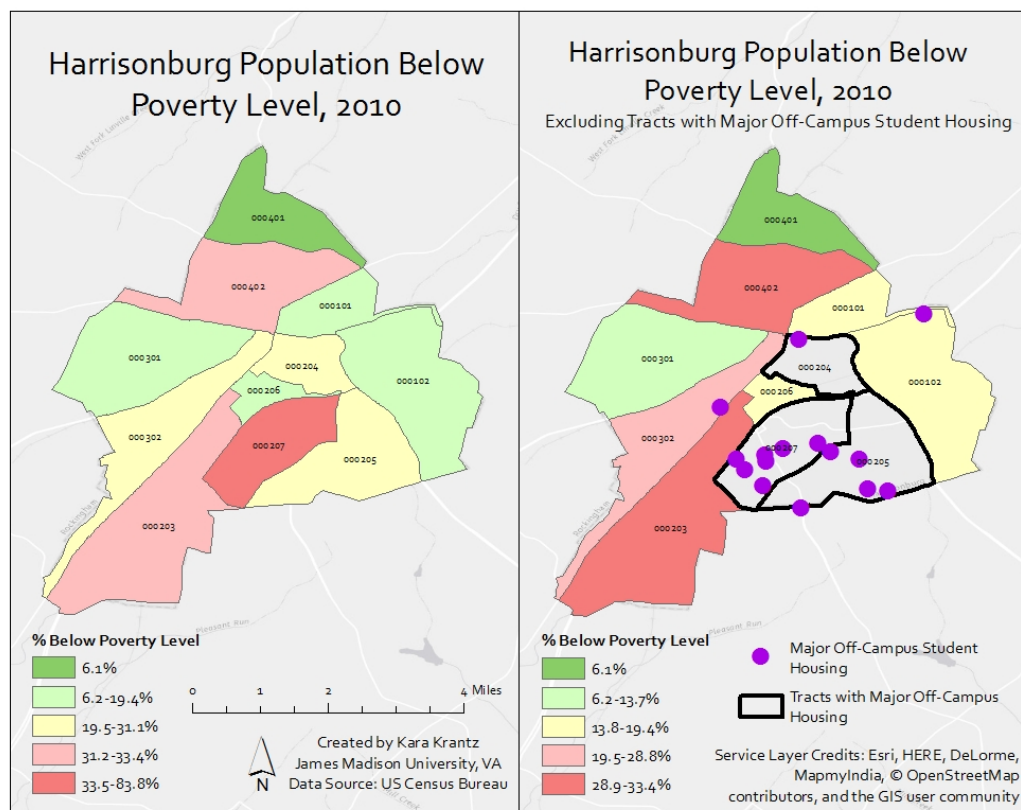
Figure 2 - Map representing the percentage of the population below the poverty level by census tract in 2010.
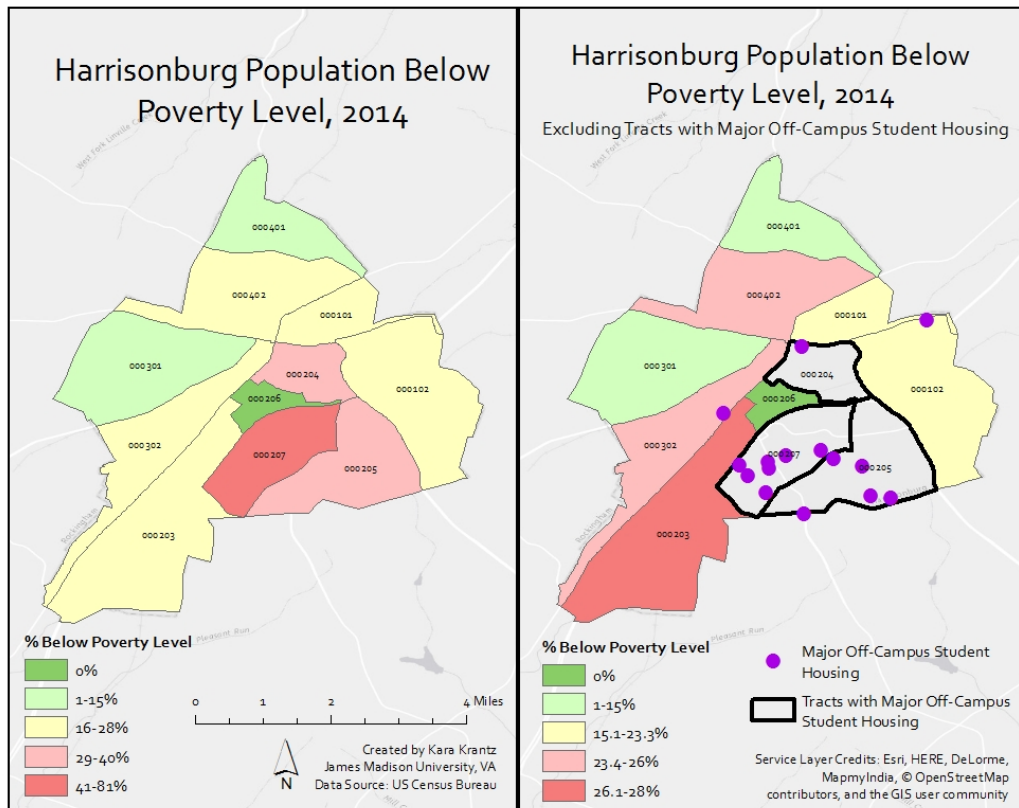
Figure 3 - Map representing the percentage of the population below the poverty level by census tract in 2014.

The poverty in the census tracts varies demographically, and, also varies according to the presence of James Madison University off-campus student housing and low-income housing provided by the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the map to the right shows the locations of the major off-campus student housing, low-income housing, and trailer parks (See Appendix H).

As a student at James Madison University, there have been many opportunities to explore the City of Harrisonburg and observe a variety of

Figure 4 - Map showing the locations of major off-campus student housing, low-income housing, and trailer parks.

different lifestyles and circumstances, including the presence of poverty in the City.

Harrisonburg, Virginia is home to dozens of nonprofit organizations (See Appendix I). Some of these organizations address poverty through basic assistance, education and training, housing, and healthcare.

The purpose was to determine how these nonprofits respond to the poverty in the City and what services they provide for those in need. Numerous government-affiliated agencies – federal, state, and local – address the issues of poverty or are impacted by poverty in their daily activities. Through an examination of nonprofits and government agencies it would enable achievement of the objectives of determining the responses of poverty in the City, comparing how nonprofits and government departments address poverty and the communication level between the two different sectors.

Chapter 2 – Background

Introduction

One of the major steps taken towards addressing poverty occurred in the early 1960s with

Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. Throughout the United States, similar demographic

groups experience poverty. This chapter will provide a synopsis of the poverty in the United

States, including a demographic profile of the impoverished in the country; how poverty status is

determined; an analysis of the War on Poverty, including the programs implemented and the

"success" of those programs; a summary of the poverty in Virginia; and an outline of the poverty

in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Poverty in the United States

Poverty in the United States is defined by the Department of Health and Human Services each year with thresholds that are determined by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (United States Department of Health

Poverty Guidelines	
Persons in Family/Household	**Poverty Guideline**
1	$11,770
2	$15,930
3	$20,090
4	$24,250
5	$28,410
6	$32,570
7	$36,730
8	$40,890
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add $4,160 for each additional person.	
Table 1: The official United States poverty guidelines for 2015.	

and Human Services, 2015). The percentage change between 2013 and 2014 was 1.6%; the

inflation is accounted for and then rounded and adjusted for each family size. An important

factor to consider in these guidelines is that there are no definitions for terms such as "income"

or "family" because there are varying definitions among the programs that use these guidelines.

Using these guidelines for the definition of poverty and the thresholds that are determined, the

United States Census Bureau is able to produce the report that provides statistics on the median income and poverty rates in the country. The thresholds are established based on the number of persons in the family or household, increasing with increasing household size (Table 1).

Poverty Thresholds in the United States

When the War on Poverty was initially launched, there were no government statistics on poverty and no agreement about what it means to be "poor". There was a need for a statistical measure of poverty to indicate how many people were poor, show how prevalent poverty was concentrated among different groups, and enable the tracking of the poor population over time (Haveman et al, 2015). Mollie Orshansky, an economist working for the Social Security Administration, developed the poverty thresholds in 1963 (Fisher, 1992). Her intention was to develop a measure to assess the relative risks of low economic status among different demographic groups of families with children. She developed two thresholds, one from the Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan and one from its somewhat less stringent Low Cost Food Plan. In May 1965, Orshansky's thresholds for the Economy Food Plan were adopted as an official working definition of poverty. The developed thresholds were not a standard budget that could serve as a list of goods and services that a family of a specified size and composition would need to live at a designated level of well being, together with their estimated monthly or annual costs. Except for food, no definitive and accepted standards of minimum need for major consumption items existed then or today. The large variety in family size and composition, combined with each individual families needs beyond food, makes it impossible to establish a standard budget for all families in the United States.

The Low Cost Food Plan is adapted to serve the food patterns of families in the lowest one-third of the income range and has been used by welfare agencies for many years to provide a

basis for food allotments for needy families (Fisher, 1992). However, the actual food allowance for families receiving public assistance was less than that in the Low Cost Plan. Recently, the Department of Agriculture began to issue an Economy Food Plan, costing 75-80% as much as the Low Cost Plan, for emergency or temporary use. However, these thresholds were developed according to the dollar costs of food in the two food plans. The actual foods in both plans were intended to provide a fully nutritious diet. However, families spending for food at the dollar cost level of the Economy Food Plan had a one-in-two chance of getting a fair diet and a one-in-ten chance of getting a good diet.

To shift from measuring the cost of food for a family to the minimum costs for all family requirements, Orshanky followed three steps: define the family size and composition prototypes for which food costs would be computed; decide on the amount of additional income to allow for items other than food, such as medical expenses and housing; and to relate the cash needs of farm families to those of comparable nonfarm families (Fisher, 1992). Families were further classified by sex of the head of household and the number of family members that are related children under age 18. However, even with the attempts at addressing family needs, Orshanky was aware of the inconsistency of applying after-tax thresholds to before-tax income data, but there was no other alternative.

In 1968, the Social Security Administration made a decision to adjust the poverty thresholds for the higher general level of living by using more recent data from the Household Food Consumption Survey (Fisher, 1992). The cost of the Economy and Low Cost Food Plans had increased between 1955 and 1965, which would require an adjustment to the thresholds to keep a similar poverty rate. In 1969, the final changes to the poverty definition were that the annual change in the Consumer Price Index will be the basis for the annual adjustment in the

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poverty thresholds, not the annual change in the per capita cost of foods in the Economy Food Plan, plus, the farm poverty thresholds will be 85% rather than 70% of corresponding nonfarm poverty thresholds.

Further recommendations made in the 1970s include having more frequent studies of household food consumption to permit evaluation of the need for basic adjustment in the poverty threshold at five year intervals; having consistency between the factor by which the food budget is multiplied to obtain the poverty threshold and the income definition used for the overall income distribution; long-term statistical research efforts to provide a basis for the development and evaluation of improvements in the measurement of poverty; and an end to the differentiation between farm and nonfarm poverty thresholds (Fisher, 1992). In 1981, three changes were made to the poverty definition. These changes include eliminating the farm thresholds, giving all families the nonfarm thresholds; establishing one average single set threshold for all families, no longer distinguishing between female head of household families and all other families; and expanding the largest family size category to "nine persons or more" rather than "seven or more persons". Despite all of the changes that have been made to the official definition of poverty, there is room for improvement.

Who are the Poor in the United States?

The Population Report from the United States Census Bureau for 2014 highlights the incomes and poverty levels in the United States, including the demographic discrepancies of income and poverty. According to the report, the official poverty rate of the United States in 2014 was 14.8% of the population or 48.7 million people (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor, 2015). Over the last several years there has not been a drastic fluctuation in the poverty rate throughout the United States; however, this rate is still increasing. In 2010, 13.8% of the total United States

population was below the poverty line; in 2014, this rate increased to 15.6% of the total

population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Between 2010 and 2014, the only demographic group

that experienced a decrease in the percent of the population was the

over 65 in age group. Every other demographic group experienced an increase in the poverty

rate. The United States Census Bureau analyzes the poverty by age, sex, racial groups,

educational attainment, employment status, work experience, living arrangement, nativity and

citizenship status, and disabilities.

The United States Census Bureau poverty statistics for 2010 and 2014 show the demographic categories used for poverty analysis, as well as the overall increase in poverty rates experienced over the last five years (See Appendix J and K). The percent of the population below poverty is an important statistic to consider; however, this statistic does not always represent the large number of people actually in poverty (Table 2). For instance, the White population of the United

	United States (2014)		
Subject	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Race			
One Race	297,389,848	45,959,009	15.5%
White	226,650,973	28,912,690	12.8%
Black/African American	37,874,885	10,351,976	27.3%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	2,480,136	714,053	28.8%
Asian	15,411,979	1,957,794	12.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	520,410	107,874	20.7%
Some Other Race	14,451,465	3,914,622	27.1%
Two or More Races	8,836,546	1,796,597	20.3%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	51,992,888	12,880,559	24.8%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	192,620,083	20,834,824	10.8%

Table 2: United States Census Bureau poverty statistics for the United States by race in 2014.

States has one of the lowest poverty rates, 12.8%, when comparing the total population to the

impoverished population; however, they have the highest number of people, nearly 227 million, in poverty. An individual's work experience and educational attainment directly contribute to their likelihood of being in poverty. Individuals that do not work full time and do not have a high school diploma have a higher poverty rate; the poverty rate decreases with every additional level of educational attainment, as well as with working full time.

The majority of the United States population lives in a married-couple family household, is native to the United States, and does not have a disability. The likelihood of living in poverty greatly increases with female householder families with no husband present, being foreign-born, and having a disability. The U.S. Census Bureau data for these three categories – living arrangement, nativity, and disability status – shows the percentage of those living at less than 50%, 100%, and 125% of the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Characteristics, 2014).

	United States (2014)			
Subject	Total	<50% of the Poverty Level	<100% of the Poverty Level	<125% of the Poverty Level
Living Arrangement				
In Family Households	255,284,279	5.8%	13.8%	18.2%
In Married-Couple Family	183,901,013	2.3%	7.4%	10.7%
In Female Householder, No Husband Present Households	52,320,124	16.4%	33.4%	41.1%
In Other Living Arrangements	50,942,115	12.4%	24.8%	31.2%
Nativity and Citizenship Status				
Native	265,739,853	6.8%	15.1%	19.6%
Foreign Born	40,486,541	7.5%	18.9%	25.3%
Naturalized Citizen	18,622,890	3.8%	11.4%	16.0%
Disability Status				
With any Disability	37,709,398	8.1%	22.3%	29.6%
No Disability	267,810,344	6.7%	14.7%	19.1%
Table 3: United States Census Bureau poverty statistics on living arrangement, nativity, and disability status for the United States in 2014.				

The location in the United States plays a role in the poverty rate with differences in poverty from one region of the country to another and between rural and urban areas. The Northeast has roughly 7.0 million people in poverty; the Midwest has roughly 8.7 million people in poverty; the South has roughly 19.5 million in poverty; and the West has roughly 11.4 million people in poverty (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor, 2015). The majority of the people in poverty reside in urban areas. There is a greater presence of poverty in metropolitan areas, with 38.4 million people in poverty, compared to outside metropolitan areas, with 8.2 million people in poverty. The increased presence of people in poverty in urban areas is related to the overall greater population in cities compared to the rural areas of the country.

Understanding who the impoverished are is vital in addressing poverty in the United States. This knowledge helps to assist in creating programs that will remedy the problem and decrease the presence of poverty in the country. There have been a multitude of programs established to assist those that are in poverty, many of which originated with the declaration of the War on Poverty in 1964 by Lyndon B. Johnson. In order to reduce the causes of poverty in the United States, there were a variety of programs created to provide benefits to those in need and the general population of the United States.

War on Poverty – The Government Role

The origin of the War on Poverty can be traced to a memorandum for President John F. Kennedy in May 1963 (Haveman et al., 2015). After President Kennedy's assassination, President Lyndon B. Johnson continued this memorandum and in his January 1964 State of the Union address he proclaimed, "This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America" (Rector and Sheffield, 2014). In the 50 years following the beginning of the War on Poverty, the United States has dedicated trillions of dollars on anti-

poverty programs designed to improve education, health, skills, jobs, and access to economic resources for those in poverty (United States Council on Economic Advisors, 2014). The programs created focus on directly providing services to the poor, for example medical and legal services; promoting the development of human capital; and stimulating social and community change (Haveman et al., 2015). These government programs fall into two categories, means-tested programs and social insurance programs (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011).

Means-Tested Programs

Means-tested programs are designed to provide benefits to individuals with low-income or assets and aim to help those with the greatest amount of need (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). These programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and programs for assistance with housing, job training, and childcare.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides cash benefits to families with low income and assets who have children in the household, most frequently going to families where one natural parent of a child is missing (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). The most common recipients of assistance are single mothers. Recipients are able to receive federal funds for no more than five years over his or her lifetime. There are work requirements for the program, requiring that a minimum fraction of a state's adult recipients work at least 20 to 30 hours per week or engage in some job-search or work-related activity. Without participation in these work-related programs, recipients are at risk of benefit reduction penalties and possible termination from the program.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides food assistance to individuals and families with low income and assets (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). This program

differs from TANF because assistance is for a specific consumption good, in this case food, and for all individuals and families rather than cash for all consumption needs and a requirement of children. SNAP is an entirely federally funded program. There are federally established eligibility requirements and most recipients of TANF and Supplemental Security Income are automatically eligible for SNAP.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides cash benefits to low-income, low-asset individuals who are over age 65, or who are blind or disabled adults or children (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). This is a fully federal program and the federal government sets the income and asset eligibility rules, as well as the medical eligibility rules to establish blindness or disability. These recipients are often automatically eligible for Medicaid.

Medicaid provides subsidized medical care for families with low-income and assets (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). The greatest recipient group is low-income mothers and children; similar to the population receiving TANF benefits. Low-income elderly are also eligible for benefits that are not provided by Medicare. Both the state and federal government operate Medicaid. The federal government pays a share of the state's costs and regulates the medical services that states must provide. Most of the time, recipients receive a full set of medical services with a zero copayment, as long as their income and assets keep them below the established threshold. People will lose benefits if their income and assets rise above the eligibility point.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides benefits to individuals and families who have earnings below a certain threshold (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). These benefits are given in the form of a credit in federal income taxes, thereby requiring recipients to file an income tax return to receive the credit. The credit increases according to the number of children in a family,

for up to three children. This credit is proportional to earnings up to a cutoff point and declines with higher earnings, eventually reaching zero. Similar to Supplemental Security Income, states are able to supplement the federal EITC with their own EITC programs.

There are a variety of different programs implemented in the United States with the goal of assisting all of those in need; there is no one comprehensive program. Through this patchwork system, the programs are able to cover many of those in need of assistance. However, with this patchwork system, there is also the possibility that people can fall through the cracks and not be eligible to receive any benefits or may not be covered under certain programs (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011).

Social Insurance Programs

Social insurance programs provide benefits to the population as a whole and are intended to protect individuals against the risk of unemployment, disability, and old and inability to work (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). These programs include the Social Security retirement program, Social Security Disability Insurance program, Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Compensation, and Medicare. Eligibility for these programs requires contributions through tax payments made from individual earnings or from employers. Therefore, poor families with unskilled workers and scattered employment history might be less likely to qualify for these programs. Even with eligibility for social insurance programs, benefit levels are based on past earnings; those that have higher earnings receive greater benefits. However, there are some programs that have a progressive benefit formula that rewards higher earnings with smaller benefits and a lower "return" on lifetime earnings.

Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) Trust Fund, more commonly called Social Security is the largest of the social insurance programs and provides monthly cash payments to

individuals that have made sufficient contributions to the system through their earnings over their lifetime (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). Individuals are eligible to receive benefits starting at age 62, but may defer until age 70. This program is entirely federally funded and Congress establishes all eligibility rules and benefits levels. The benefit level is progressive, providing proportionately higher benefits per dollar of lifetime earnings to those with lower levels of those earnings. Higher income retirees must include their social security benefits as taxable income under the federal income tax. This program is financed by a regressive payroll tax on all covered workers; taxes on current workers are used to pay benefits to current recipients and finance a fund that will support future recipients.

Medicare provides medical assistance to those over 65 and to Social Security Disability Insurance recipients under 65 (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). These benefits provide payments for hospital expenses, prescription drugs, and physician charges. This program, similar to OASI, is entirely federally funded, through a payroll tax, with rules and benefits set by Congress.

The Social Security Disability Income (DI) provides cash assistance to workers who have experienced a mental or physical disability that is expected to last at least 12 months and prevents them from engaging in significant work (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). Financial eligibility requires sufficient history of earnings in the system, which depends on the age when the disability occurs. Recipients are typically made eligible for Medicare benefits after a 24-month waiting period.

The Workers' Compensation system is state-based and provides cash and medical benefits to those experiencing a temporary or permanent work-related injury, as well as survivors' benefits to dependents of workers whose death resulted from a job-related accident or illness (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). Unemployment Insurance is a state-level program that

provides cash payments to the unemployed who have been involuntarily discharged and have adequate pre-unemployment employment and earnings histories in "covered industries". Benefits are paid for fixed amounts of time, typically six months; however, the federal government subsidizes payments for longer periods of time during economic downtowns. This program is financed by a state tax on employers.

Was the War on Poverty a Success or Failure?

The effectiveness of these programs can be determined by whether or not they reduce poverty, or raise the incomes of the low-income population. The impact of most individual programs on overall poverty is not large; they are often targeted toward specific demographic groups and have a greater impact there. The system has the largest impacts on the disabled and elderly, largely due to the old age Social Security program, Disability Insurance, and Social Security Disability Income (Ben-Shalom et al., 2011). There are also significant reductions for single parent families, largely due to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, food stamps, housing assistance, and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

There are reductions for poverty for some demographics; however, poverty as a whole has not been reduced, rather the consequences of poverty have been reduced. The intention of the War on Poverty was to eliminate the causes of poverty; this goal has not been achieved because there is still a large portion of the United States population that is considered impoverished (Rector and Sheffield, 2014). Many of the people that have benefited from these means-based and social insurance programs have become less self-sufficient than when the War on Poverty began.

When looking at the poverty rates for the last 50 years, it is interesting to see that the poverty rate today is almost the same as the rate in 1967; three years after the War on Poverty

began. The poverty rate has increased and decreased with positive and negative economic times but, overall, the rates have remained relatively constant in contrast to the ever-increasing welfare spending (Rector and Sheffield, 2014). The increasing welfare spending and consistent poverty rates can be easily explained. According to Rector and Sheffield, "The Census Bureau counts a family as 'poor' if its income falls below specific thresholds, but in counting 'income,' the Census omits nearly all of government means-tested spending on the poor. In effect, it ignores almost the entire welfare state when it calculates poverty. This neat bureaucratic ploy ensured that welfare programs could grow infinitely while 'poverty' remained unchanged."

One of the predominant differences between those in poverty in 1964 and in 2014 is the living conditions and amenities that are offered. With the increased number of government programs that have been implemented, there is a greater amount of economic resources available to lower-income households, enabling them to spend $2.60 for every $1 earned on their reported income (Rector and Sheffield, 2014). What was once considered a luxury to those in poverty is now considered standard and is found in nearly 50% of the impoverished homes. This includes air conditioning, Internet, television, personal computers, cable, cars and trucks, and microwaves. Additionally, the majority of those in poverty today do not experience hunger or food shortages. In contrast to decades ago, the poor children of today have access to the same amount of protein, vitamins, and minerals as middle-class children and often consume more meat than higher-income children. Another common misconception about the poor is that they are homeless or living in poor housing. On the contrary, over the course of a year only 4% of the poor become temporarily homeless and only 9.5% live in mobile homes. Approximately half live in single-family homes and 40% live in apartments.

According to *The War on Poverty After 50 Years* by Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, despite the higher standards of living, the War on Poverty is still unsuccessful for two reasons: first, the incomes and living standards of poor Americans were rising before the War on Poverty and, second, the original goal was to attack the causes not just the consequences of poverty. President Johnson was not planning to create an ever-expanding system of welfare benefits; he wanted a "new generation capable of supporting themselves out of poverty without government handouts". The United States is often seen as the land of economic opportunity; however, in reality, only about half of those that are in poverty make it out of this low-income bracket over a 20-year period. In addition to the relatively low percentage of people that escape this low-income bracket, there are strong lingering effects of poverty in children that grow up in low-income houses. With lingering effects on the children that grow up in poverty, it furthers the poverty cycle and contributes to the failing goals of the War on Poverty – a failure to create a system that pulls people out of poverty rather than keeping people in it.

Initially, there was a large decline in the poverty rates between 1965 and 1970, after the War on Poverty was first launched. However, this cannot be directly attributed to the programs launched by the War on Poverty. Instead this decline in the poverty rate and increase in self-sufficiency can be explained by improvements occurring before 1965 – a rise of wages and education levels (Rector and Sheffield, 2014). Despite the intention of increasing self-sufficiency and eliminating the causes of poverty, the War on Poverty resulted in a massive "expansion of the welfare state that has weakened the capacity for self-sufficiency among many Americans by eroding the work ethic and undermining family structure".

There are several factors that can lead to the lack of self-sufficiency, including an increased number of single parent households, deterrents for marriage in low-income areas, and

providing economic rewards to able-bodied adults that do not work. Since the launching of the

War on Poverty, the number of single parent households has increased, which contributes to the

lack of self-sufficiency because single parent households are nearly four times more likely than

married couple families to be officially poor and lack self-sufficiency (Rector and Sheffield,

2014). In low-income communities, marriage has been discouraged because the low-income

couples were penalized when they married by eliminating or substantially reducing the benefits

that they were eligible to receive. As a result, many of these low-income couples opted, not to

get married and when one of the parents left the home, the need for more welfare to support the

single parent increased. "The War on Poverty created a destructive feedback loop: Welfare

promoted the decline of marriage, which generated the need for more welfare" (Rector and

Sheffield, 2014). This has directly contributed to the greater number of children from single

parent households that are in poverty. Another contributor to the lack of self-sufficiency stems

from the economic rewards that are available to able-bodied adults who do not work or work

minimally. If in a household, one adult works full-time, the number of families that would be

considered impoverished would drastically decline.

To summarize the failures of the War on Poverty and the welfare system that was created,

"Welfare wages on social capital, breaking down the habits and norms that lead to self-reliance,

especially those of marriage and work. It thereby generates a pattern of increasing

intergenerational dependence. The welfare state is self-perpetuating: by undermining productive

social norms, welfare creates a need for even greater assistance in the future" (Rector and

Sheffield, 2014). Those that receive welfare benefits should be required to work, or at least

search for jobs, and anti-marriage penalties should be removed in an attempt to encourage

rebuilding of families in low-income communities rather than fostering the growth of single parent households.

In *The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report,* many of the programs that have been implemented that help to strengthen economic security and increase opportunity remain essential in keeping millions of Americans out of poverty and move their way into the middle class (Rector and Sheffield, 2014). With the increased number of recipients of Social Security, the poverty rate of those aged 65 and older has drastically decreased since the beginning of the War on Poverty. A variety of programs involving food and healthcare have been beneficial to the impoverished population. The Head Start program has some of the greatest long-term effects through its implementation, helping to lead to higher educational attainment, employment, and earnings among youth, as well as lower teen pregnancy rates and crime. Programs and improvements that are made toward raising economic growth and speeding up economic recovery help to ensure that the benefits of the growing economy are within reach of all Americans. These programs have helped to reduce the presence of poverty on the surface, but still help to establish a reliance on these programs and contribute to the "failure" of the War on Poverty because the poor have become less self-sufficient.

Poverty in Virginia

In 2009, more than 10% of Virginians lived below the poverty level (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). While the poverty rate is below the national average for state poverty rates, the extent of poverty in Virginia is increasing. While the poverty rate has remained consistent in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of people in deep poverty. Individuals in deep poverty have an income that is 50% below their poverty threshold (Farrigan, 2014). It is believed that the poverty rate will rapidly increase over the next few years

because of the recession and then gradually come back to current levels by 2022 (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). The current economic state compounds the challenges of poverty, with more families being pushed into poverty and others coming closer to entering poverty as unemployment rises. The lower than national average poverty rate for Virginia can be attributed to its strengths in economic diversity, policy, and programs that support economic and social well-being of its residents. However, this rate is still relatively high because there are areas that these programs are not as successfully implemented – the programs must be expanded to benefit all communities and allow all residents to benefit from the results. One of the largest issues with determining the poverty rate in Virginia is the difference in the cost of living between Northern Virginia and the remainder of the state; it is exponentially more expensive to live in Northern Virginia.

Who are the Poor in Virginia?

Official poverty statistics are based on a selection of the total population, not including individuals living in military barracks, living in college dormitories, living in nursing homes, prison inmates, minors living alone, and the homeless (Cable and Tippett, 2012). According to this portion of the population, in 2014 Virginia's poverty rate is 11.5%. However, this number alone does not accurately reflect the poverty statistics in the state of Virginia. Virginia has a total population of nearly 8 million people; 5% of these individuals are in deep poverty and another 6% are near poor, struggling to live economically secure and healthy lives. The poverty statistics for Virginia are categorized into a variety of demographic characteristics to highlight the differences in poverty across demographics (See Appendix L).

Nationally, the poverty rates are higher for children, less educated adults, African Americans, Hispanics, female-head of household families, and families with no working adults (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). These are also the more vulnerable populations in Virginia (Table 4). White Virginians make up 58% of the poor population, but there are some minority groups that are over represented in the poor population (Cable and Tippett, 2012). Asian Virginians have the lowest poverty rate, reflecting their better-paying occupations and typically higher levels of educational attainment. In contrast, Black and Hispanic Virginians have higher poverty rates to reflect the differences in educational attainment, employment opportunities, and household composition across

		Virginia (2014)	
Subject	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Race			
One Race	7,691,439	880,170	11.40%
White	5,520,140	505,667	9.20%
Black/African American	1,501,394	301,972	20.10%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	22,245	3,094	13.90%
Asian	467,627	38,712	8.30%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4,966	544	11.00%
Some Other Race	175,067	30,181	17.20%
Two or More Races	247,893	34,067	13.70%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	670,202	105,665	15.80%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	5,089,616	439,744	8.60%
Table 4: United States Census Bureau poverty statistics by race for Virginia in 2014.			

racial and ethnic groups. There are regional differences in the social and demographic characteristics of poor individuals and households.

When comparing poverty statistics to the official poverty guidelines, it is important to note that these guidelines do not consider the regional differences in the cost of living. Additionally, majority of poor population lives in urban and suburban areas (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). Therefore, a higher poverty rate in the Northern Virginia area can be attributed to the increased cost of living, compared to the rest of the state, and the larger concentration of urban and suburban areas with higher populations, including higher poor populations.

Marital status and employment status are two important predictors of poverty. Female-headed households in Virginia have a 60% chance of being in poverty; female-headed households with one worker reduces the chance of being in poverty to 18%; married families with one worker have a likelihood of 2% (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). The typical Virginian below the poverty line is a "white, female, head of household, age 25 to 34, with less than a high school education, with children, who works.

The poverty rate among children is higher than that of working-age adults, with over one in five children in or near poverty in Virginia (Cable and Tippett, 2012, Table 5). As a result, these children have worse health outcomes, poorer cognitive development, and suffer from greater degrees of social isolation. These factors work together to

		Virginia (2014)		
Subject	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Age			
Under 18 Years	1,836,803	279,359	15.2%
Related Children Under 18 Years	1,829,821	272,913	14.9%
18 to 64 Years	5,067,608	555,771	11.0%
65 Years and Over	1,034,921	79,107	7.6%
Table 5: United States Census Bureau poverty statistics by age for Virginia in 2014.			

create long-term consequences for these children, including, lower educational attainment, lower lifetime earnings, and the risk of putting their children in poverty and suffering these outcomes.

These effects of poverty on children impact the state of Virginia, threatening the health of the state and the United States through a loss in productivity, a reduced tax base, and a greater demand for social safety net programs.

The elderly are another vulnerable population, with a large amount of variation between ages. Poverty rates rise with age. For those aged 65 to 84, the rate is 11%, for those aged 85 and older, the rate is 27% (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). These older individuals tend to work less and spend more of their savings, increasing the poverty rate, as they get older – with a greater likelihood of not working and spending more of their savings in their absence of work. Elderly women have a greater likelihood of being poor, which can be attributed to a greater life expectancy. Living longer means spending more money; therefore increasing the chances of being in poverty. Women are less likely to have worked in the past or for long periods of time, causing them to not be qualified for maximum social security benefits that could increase their income. As the baby boomer generation continues to approach retirement age, there will be a greater proportion of the population aged 65 and older, that combined with the decline in Social Security coverage and pension benefits, will contribute to an increased poverty rate for the elderly.

Virginia Poverty Measure

The Virginia Poverty Measure (VPM) is a proposed improvement to the United States Census Bureau established official poverty guidelines. This measure would account for regional differences in the cost of living; updated income thresholds based on contemporary consumption patterns; family resources from in-kind government transfers; taxes and credits; and necessary medical expenses (Cable, 2013). Comparing the VPM and the official poverty measure reveal a similar overall estimate for Virginia in 2011; however there are significant differences among

population subgroups and different regions of the state. In 1999, the Census Bureau began experimenting with alternative poverty measures that incorporate a broader array of resources in family income, and subtracted necessary expenses, such as health care or childcare.

The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) defines the thresholds using updated Consumer Expenditure Survey consumption data on food, clothing, shelter, and utilities (FCSU) as the basis for necessary spending (Cable, 2013). These base thresholds vary according to family size and composition and further according to whether a family owns a home with a mortgage, owns a home free and clear, or rents their home in order to better capture the different spending needs across these groups. The VPM thresholds start with the SPM thresholds with an addition to account for necessary medical costs, thereby creating FCSUM thresholds – food, clothing, shelter, utilities, and out of pocket medical costs. Another variation between the SPM and the VPM is that the VPM accounts for regional differences in the costs of all major goods and services, rather than just for housing. After making geographic adjustments, the VPM poverty thresholds are complete, defining poverty by accounting for cost differences across regions, medical expenses, family size and composition, and updated spending patterns among American families.

The Virginia Poverty Measure achieves the intended goal of providing poverty estimates that better reflect the actual population in economic distress in Virginia. This measure improves upon the Census Bureau definition by accounting for regional differences in the cost of living; updated income thresholds based on contemporary consumption patterns; family resources from in-kind government transfers; taxes and credits; and necessary medical expenses (Cable, 2013). The VPM further improves the Supplemental Poverty Measure by using the American Community Survey to allow for local-level estimates; controlling program participation and

benefit amounts to state administrative records; and using the Regional Price Parities for the geographic adjustments.

Virginia Poverty Reduction Task Force

The Commonwealth of Virginia initiated the Virginia Poverty Reduction Task Force in 2009 and after the first year of operation they published a report summarizing their intensive analysis of poverty in the state, its causes and potential solutions (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). The Task Force focuses on the necessary role of government in assisting those who are the least equipped to achieve their greatest potential for self-sufficiency. The recommendations made by the Task Force are to achieve a balanced course of action that is consistent with the research on successful policy and program practice.

The Virginia Poverty Reduction Task Force recommendations on poverty include goals, with suggested steps and recommendations to achieving these goals. The first goal is to "increase opportunities for future economic security by investing in children and their education", realizing the value of early childhood programs in providing children with a strong foundation for future educational achievement and economic success (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). Children should have access to services that assist them in earning a high school diploma, which will help them become better educated and have access to higher earning jobs, which will in turn contribute to the tax base of the Commonwealth. Research on how higher educational attainment impacts poverty reveals a nearly 100,000 person reduction in poverty; an increase in net earning; and a decline in demand for social, health, and criminal justice services for adults who participated in high quality early childhood education programs as children.

The second goal is to "enhance workforce readiness by expanding access to career development programs and employment supports"; having a skilled workforce is critical to

reducing poverty and continuing Virginia's economic prosperity (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). The Task Force believes that with the current economic recession, this is the prime opportunity to capitalize the workforce infrastructure and allow those that are underemployed or unemployed to acquire more skills. This goal will build upon the results of goal one. By increasing educational attainment, the poverty rate can be decreased by 15%; by furthering skills beyond high school education, there is a greater chance for income stability and workforce competitiveness. The primary recommendations made to achieve this goal include: expanding educational credentialing programs; increasing support for subsidized child care to retire waiting lists; and allowing more post-secondary education to satisfy VIEW work activity requirements.

The third goal is to "enhance family financial resources by increasing the return on work, and promoting family savings and diversified asset accumulation" (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). The intentions of this goal would be to lower the tax burden for families with marginal incomes to help prevent further financial strains, as well as provide financial education. Currently, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, as a cash refund to working families, lifts more than 25% of children out of poverty. Making Virginia's Earned Income Tax Credit and dependent child care tax credits refundable, enhances the number of people lifted out of poverty.

The fourth goal is to "expand the safety-net opportunities for families in crisis" (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2010). Contrary to the other goals that would work on reducing the number of people in poverty, this goal serves more to mitigate the effects of living in poverty. The primary recommendations include: improving Virginia's unemployment insurance program; not increasing the minimum earnings requirement; providing unemployment insurance

coverage to part-time workers; providing unemployment insurance coverage to workers engaged in certain training and education activities; modifying assets tests in basic public assistance programs, increasing Medicaid parent eligibility; and expanding access to nutrition programs. These goals combined would help to reduce poverty overall throughout the state, providing Virginians with the necessary tools to escape poverty, rather than cushioning the effects of poverty.

Poverty in Harrisonburg, Virginia

Harrisonburg, Virginia was cited as the poorest locality in Virginia in 2012 according to the United States Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program, comparing the city to other cities throughout the state and focusing on comparing Harrisonburg to similar localities (Porter, 2013). With a poverty rate of 37.5%, nearly four in ten residents fell below the poverty line. "The estimates are based on information from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey combined with aggregate data from tax information, administrative records on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participation, 2000 and 2010 Census statistics, and annual population estimates". An issue with the statistics is that they tend to account for college students as poor, since most of these students have a low income. This can be seen in several of the other poorest localities in the state, with these localities being college towns.

Discussing poverty in Harrisonburg requires drawing on information regarding poverty in college towns and poverty in small towns. The number of college students residing off campus alters the poverty rates in college towns, similar to Harrisonburg. The impact of off-campus college students varies by the size and location of the school. In smaller communities, where college students comprise a considerable portion of the local population, the socio-economic

characteristics of the communities are directly affected by the characteristics of the student population (Bishaw, 2013). According to the Census Bureau, poverty status is determined for all people except those living in institutional group quarters, military barracks, college dormitories, and children under 15 years of age and not related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Therefore, for college students not living in dormitories, poverty status is determined based on their family income, if they live with their families, or personal income, if they live in a nonfamily household or group quarters which is often the case for college students.

Analyzing poverty statistics at the state-level, excluding college students not living with a family member, results in small but significant changes in the poverty rates for most states (Bishaw, 2013). These changes vary at the state and county level, especially at the county level when considering population sizes in the county. For counties with populations between 20,000 and 65,000 with significant changes in poverty rates after excluding off-campus college students from 2009 to 2011, Harrisonburg City, Virginia was the second most impacted county, with a decrease of 16.3% in the poverty rate. James Madison University and its students play a large role in the large poverty rate in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The poverty rate in Harrisonburg varies throughout the city, with certain census tracts consisting of large amounts of low-income housing. Each of these census tracts has poverty data categorized by demographic characteristics in the same format as the United States and Virginia. The poverty rates for Harrisonburg have changed over the last five years, with some of the tracts experiencing an overall increase in the percent of the population in poverty and others experiencing a decrease (See Appendix D, E, F, and G). Analyzing the poverty data for Harrisonburg at the census tract level helps to localize the poverty in Harrisonburg, rather than assuming the entire city is in the same amount of poverty.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

In the development of the methodology for this study, it was critical to determine the most successful route for collecting as much information about poverty in Harrisonburg, from the perspectives of those involved with organizations that address poverty, as possible. The following steps were taken in creating the methodology:

1)   Determine who will provide information on poverty – the poor themselves or organizations that serve the poor.

2)   Determine the proper data analysis – quantitative or qualitative.

3)   Select organizations.

4)   Create Questions.

5)   Conduct Interviews.

Acquiring this information involved either creating and distributing a survey to a variety of organizations or interviewing leaders or representatives of these organizations. Regardless of the method chosen, it was necessary to create a set of questions that would provide the desired information about poverty in Harrisonburg. Rather than choosing to perform a quantitative analysis and providing participants with a scale to rank their opinions, a qualitative analysis was selected where participants would provide detailed answers.

A multitude of questions were created for these organizations. The result was developing two sets of questions, one for government representatives and one for nonprofit directors. Two sets were created because the role in the community of nonprofits is different from that of government offices. There were similarities in some of the questions posed; however there were obvious differences in other questions. The similarities include the definition of poverty, the services provided, and determining the communication between nonprofits and local

government. The additional questions for government representatives were developed to gauge the government knowledge of poverty in Harrisonburg and how poverty can be seen in the eyes of the government throughout the city. The other questions to nonprofits addressed the accuracy of the official definition of poverty, the dependence on the welfare system, and the organization's funding (See Appendix M). These two different sets of questions help provide an analysis of the poverty in Harrisonburg from two different sectors.

Rather than sending a survey to a multitude of nonprofit organizations and government departments, it was decided that interviewing a select number of organizations and representatives would help to narrow down the results. Additionally, it was critical that each of the organizations and departments interviewed had a role that directly dealt with the poverty in Harrisonburg. With dozens of nonprofits in Harrisonburg to choose from, it was challenging to select the organizations that would provide the most comprehensive view of poverty in Harrisonburg according to the aspect of poverty that they interact with (See Appendix I). The nonprofits selected address each of the major aspects of poverty – homelessness, health care, limited food supply, education, and children. To keep the participants comparable, the government departments selected work with the poor – the Department of Social Services – and some have contact – the police department and school system. By selecting participants that address similar issues, it made it possible to compare the answers and overall response to poverty in Harrisonburg.

Conducting the interviews involved contacting the selected organizations and informing the potential participants of the topic of the project and what would be asked of them. If the potential participants were interested after learning of the project topic, an agreeable date and time were determined for the interview. The interviews were conducted at either the nonprofit or

government department office. The participants were informed again the topic of the study and were given a site letter and consent form to sign, prior to the beginning of the interview.

Once all thirteen interviews were completed, the interview answers were compiled. Next, the responses were analyzed to determine if there were trends among the answers from nonprofits, and trends among the government offices. Finally, the trends and differences were highlighted to compare how each sector addresses the poverty in Harrisonburg.

Chapter 4 – Discussion of Results

Thirteen surveys were conducted in Harrisonburg, from February 9 to March 23. From the survey results, it is evident that there is a great deal of poverty in the city and that all of the organizations involved are trying to work towards addressing this issue.

The organizations and departments selected for interviews include representatives from a variety of groups that address a variety of issues related to poverty. The representatives from the nonprofits were: The United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, Skyline Literacy, People Helping People, Open Doors, formerly known as HARTS, Our Community Place, Mercy House, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic, the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Food Pantry, and Big Brothers Big Sisters Harrisonburg-Rockingham. The issues addressed by these nonprofits include education, medical needs, homelessness, limited food supply, and children. The representatives for government-affiliated departments were: Harrisonburg-Rockingham Social Services (federal program), Harrisonburg City Schools, the Harrisonburg Police Department, the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (federal program).

Organization's Definition of Poverty vs. Federal Definition of Poverty

Among the more interesting results were from these two questions the organization's definition of poverty and whether or not the United States Census Bureau's definition of poverty was an accurate representation of the term poverty. The Census Bureau's definition is:

> "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include

capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)"

(United States Census Bureau, 2015, "How the Census").

The nonprofits that follow the federally established poverty guidelines are: The United Way of

Harrisonburg-Rockingham County, People Helping People, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free

Clinic, the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Food Pantry, and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Skyline Literacy, Open Doors, Our Community Place, and Mercy House had more

individualized definitions of poverty that are more applicable to their organizations and their

missions. Pairing the definitions given with the answers to whether or not the federal definition is

accurate revealed contradictory information.

The representative from the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Food Pantry was the

only interviewee that agreed with the federally established definition of poverty. All of the other

nonprofits interviewed disagreed with this definition, feeling that there are many factors that

should be included in this definition that are not currently considered. Some of the issues they

mentioned were: factoring in all of the subsidies that people are receiving, factoring in the cost of

housing, factoring in medical expenses, individualizing the definition, lowering the guidelines,

factoring in the cost of living, and making it a statewide definition rather than a national

definition. Many of the interviewees said it would be surprising if this definition would be able

to catch everyone that is in poverty. Poverty is such a complex issue it is difficult to draw the line

of who is in poverty. Many interviewees thought that this definition serves as a start to defining

poverty and that it would be difficult to come up with anything better. Additionally, some of the

nonprofits indicated that in order to effectively define and address poverty there needs to be an

understanding of why these individuals are in poverty. There is no way to address the poverty in

Harrisonburg without understanding the circumstances and providing the best resources to help with that individual or households' circumstances.

The government-affiliated organizations tend to follow the federally established guidelines. The Department of Social Services and Harrisonburg City Schools utilize these guidelines in determining who is eligible for their programs. The Harrisonburg Police Department indicated they do not have a definition of poverty; they have an observation of the poverty in Harrisonburg. The Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority chooses to operate according to a percentage of the median income of Harrisonburg, rather than using the federal guidelines. Using the median income enables program eligibility to be determined based on the particular area rather than a national measure; this helps to most effectively address the needs of the community.

Services Provided by Nonprofits and Government-Affiliated Departments

Nonprofit and government-affiliated representatives were both asked what services they provide to the poor. From the results of the survey, it is evident that there are a multitude of different services being provided for those in need.

- United Way – Acts as a community leader and community fundraiser by providing grant funding to a variety of nonprofits throughout the City to address poverty and other important issues.

- Skyline Literacy – Provides educational services to their clients, offering classes in English for non-native speakers, reading, writing, job skills, computer literacy, math tutoring, citizenship preparation, and acquiring a GED.

- People Helping People – Serves as a crisis organization, giving financial assistance for prescription medicine, fees at the free clinic, and fees at the Department of Motor Vehicles for obtaining an ID or birth certificate, and utilities when at risk of being cut off.

- Open Doors, formerly known as HARTS – Is a homeless shelter that also provides two meals everyday and offers resources to their guests to connect them with other resources that would be helpful to them in the area.

- Our Community Place – Provides meals, laundry machines, outside storage lockers, a place to be out of the elements, and a place to feel a part of a community.

- Mercy House – Is a family homeless shelter, caring for the homeless and their dependent children; provides funds to acquire housing, case management services, transportation, child care, assistance with medication and doctors visits when it inhibits their residents ability to be successful in an interview or job; provides programs that help to maintain a sense of normalcy for the children staying at the shelter.

- Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic – Serves as a comprehensive doctor's office.

- Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Food Pantry – Is a temporary emergency assistance program that provides groceries for two/three days for a family once a month; provides food to the homeless in Harrisonburg once a week.

- Big Brothers Big Sisters – Provides one-on-one mentoring for children aged four to eighteen using volunteer mentors.

All of these programs and services that are offered throughout the city help those that are in poverty on a variety of scales; helping those that need a little more assistance than others; helping those that need educational assistance; helping those that need a roof over their head; and helping the children that are in these situations.

Nonprofit organizations do a great deal in addressing the needs of the impoverished in Harrisonburg. Additionally, the government-affiliated organizations in Harrisonburg provide programs for those in need.

- Department of Social Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); help individuals find jobs, write resumes, and other job related skills; works with the jail to hold life skills classes, mental health classes, and therapy.

- Harrisonburg City Schools – Provides services to maximize their students education, acknowledging that poverty is not an excuse for poor education achievement. Services include: an early childhood program for four-year olds, breakfasts and lunches, small class sizes, training staff to meet student's social and emotional needs, transportation, and technology.

- Harrisonburg Police Department – Works with a variety of groups in the City that provide substance abuse education.

- Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority – Provides decent, safe, affordable housing to those in need; owns 249 units – 120 units are leased to elderly and disabled, 129 are multifamily units, 30 of these units provide permanent support, 15 are for homeless veterans, and 15 are for the chronically homeless.

Percentage of Harrisonburg in Poverty

The government-affiliated interviewees were asked what percentage of the city population lives in poverty. This question was selected to gauge the government knowledge of the presence of poverty in Harrisonburg. The results of this question vary significantly. The Department of Social Services representative stated that 18% of Harrisonburg and Rockingham

County are in poverty and that this figure does not include college students. The Harrisonburg City Schools representative stated that 23% of children in Harrisonburg are in poverty, 7% above the state average of 16%; however was unfamiliar with the poverty rate for the whole population of Harrisonburg. The Harrisonburg Police Department representative knew that there was a large percentage of the population in poverty, however did not have a specific number. The Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority representative based the prediction of the poverty in Harrisonburg on the number of rental units that earn an income of 50% or less of the median income, indicating that with the college student population the poverty rate would be high. There is contradictory information between the Department of Social Services and the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority regarding whether or not college students are considered in the poverty statistics.

There are three colleges in or surrounding Harrisonburg: Bridgewater College, Eastern Mennonite University, and James Madison University. Bridgewater College and Eastern Mennonite University would not play a large role in skewing the statistics; however, James Madison University with a student body of roughly 20,000 students would greatly alter the poverty statistic in Harrisonburg. According to research, college students living in dormitories are not factored into the poverty statistics because their income is reported based on their family income (Bishaw, 2013). However, students living off-campus would be factored into the poverty statistics because their income is reported according to their personal income. Most college students do not have jobs, and if they do they are typically service-oriented jobs earning minimum wage. Therefore, with such a large student body population is can be determined that James Madison University greatly alters the poverty statistic for Harrisonburg.

The Manifestation of Poverty in Harrisonburg, Virginia

The government-affiliated interviewees were asked how poverty manifests itself in the city. The Department of Social Services and Harrisonburg Police Department representatives both mentioned that poverty is a cycle and often generational. Those that are currently in poverty tend to have grown in poverty, learning from their experiences as a child and continuing this in their adult life. The Department of Social Services representative, similar to some of the nonprofit interviewees when asked the federal definition of poverty, stated that there needs to be an understanding of why these individuals are in poverty in order to remedy the situation. The Harrisonburg City Schools representative stated that poverty manifests itself through increased drop out rates; people with medical, physical, and health needs; homelessness; disruptive housing situations; crime; and substance abuse. The Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority representative stated that poverty is seen through homelessness, dilapidated housing, and the large amounts of youth that are exposed to poverty and have significantly lower academic achievement. Among both government-affiliated organizations and nonprofits, it can be seen in the responses that poverty is a cycle that is difficult to break and education and acquisition of skills are key ways to attempt to break the cycle.

The Dependence on the Welfare System

It is often argued that the dependence on the welfare system is greater than intended, especially since the War on Poverty was established to reduce the causes of poverty rather than just the consequences (Rector and Sheffield, 2014). The nonprofit representatives were asked what needs to be done in order to reduce the dependence on the welfare system and there were mixed responses. However, there is a trend that education and training is a much more efficient and effective way to reduce the presence of poverty than helping financially. The Skyline

Literacy interviewee believed that provision of holistic services to the family unit and educating parents will help to encourage their children to succeed and break the poverty cycle in their family. The Big Brothers Big Sisters representative mentioned that training and education helps to provide more opportunities and helps to provide hope, opportunity, and motivation to leave their situation. The United Way interviewee stated that preventative programming, empowerment, and teaching skills is a more effective way to get people out of poverty than simply writing a check. Other educational skills that were deemed useful in reducing the dependence on the welfare system include money management education, developmental trauma education, and computer education. At Our Community Place, finding ways for these individuals to get more involved in their own healing and economic recovery is stressed over relying on the government.

While education is greatly beneficial to reducing the dependence on welfare services, there is more to the solution than simply educating impoverished individuals. The representative from Big Brothers Big Sisters mentioned the increased need for mental health services. The People Helping People interviewee had the most straightforward answer in addressing the dependence on welfare, stating simply that there needs to be a $15 per hour minimum wage and free health care. The People Helping People representative further elaborated by saying that if working a minimum wage job leaves someone below the poverty line, the poverty line is either too high or the minimum wage is too low; people should be able to earn a reasonable living based on the minimum wage salary.

Others from the nonprofits discussed that the welfare system can get in the way of a true road to recovering from poverty. One interviewee said that welfare and disability services could get in the way of helping people because the government is providing an easy solution to their

financial state. Another stated that people in poverty are often faced with the decision between working a part-time minimum wage job and struggling to make a living or choosing disability income. One representative believes people need to be incentivized to work, choosing instead to use a part-time job to supplement the income they receive through disability income. Another representative believes that the "bootstrap idea" needs to be gotten rid of, that people are not always able to fix themselves, and that this cannot be expected as a strategy to get rid of poverty. Finally a response completely different from the others was that a dependence on welfare is not completely a bad thing and people need to act neighborly. Overall, it can be seen in the nonprofit responses that the current dependence on the welfare system is not a solution to poverty; instead, there needs to be a greater focus on education for people to be able to provide for themselves and more funding on mental health issues.

Organization's Challenges

In every organization there are challenges in working to achieve the main goal. It can be seen throughout the nonprofit responses that one of the biggest challenges is having a goal bigger than the resources provide. These nonprofits have goals to make a vast impact on the poverty in Harrisonburg and wish they had the ability to help everyone; however, this is not possible. People Helping People operates completely by volunteers and they are only open for a small amount of time to achieve a large amount of work. People Helping People has a desire to achieve more, but cannot see asking the volunteers to do more than they currently do because what they do is already so much. Open Doors is short-staffed and this impacts the organizations' ability to expand to help more of the homeless population in Harrisonburg. The staff of Our Community Place is challenged with the realization that it is not possible to help everyone and the staffs' personal wellness cannot be neglected in their effort to help. The Mercy House staff struggles

with finding resources that are available consistently to meet the needs of those being served, and with figuring out the best ways to utilize the scarce resources available to serve those in need effectively. Similar to Mercy House, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic staff struggles to have the maximum impact on patients and the community while continuing to grow as an organization. The greatest challenge for the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Food Pantry is managing their donations and groceries to ensure there is enough food and choice for everyone that comes into the pantry. Big Brothers Big Sisters has an increased demand in their services and a decreased amount of funding, which results in the number of children served decreasing and the waitlist for services increasing. The nonprofit responses indicate a clear trend in their challenges, the biggest being a lack of resources with an increased demand in services.

The government-affiliated departments also have challenges in addressing poverty in Harrisonburg. The Department of Social Services is faced with large amounts of substance abuse and mental illness among their clients. Sometimes these clients can become impatient, and these are difficult challenges to the point where there is now a greater issue of safety for the staff. The Social Services workers are more frequently put in unsafe situations and the police are being called in more frequently. Harrisonburg City Schools has the challenge of bringing education to children, recognizing that some of these children need much more time, support, and resources than others to achieve academically. An observation by the representative from the Harrisonburg Police Department is repeat offenders are often people in poverty. The biggest challenge of the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority is the extensive waitlist of 1100 people. It will take nine years under the current circumstances for housing to be provided to those at the end of the list. There is an increased demand in services; however, there cannot be an investment in new infrastructure without an increase in funding.

Communication

A key question in this study involved the level of communication between nonprofits and government-affiliated departments. Through the responses it is clear that the nonprofits frequently interact with other nonprofits, but not as frequently with government-affiliated departments. The communication between nonprofits and government was often in relation to funding or building maintenance. Despite the already large amount of communication among nonprofits, many interviewees indicated there is room for improvement in communication among nonprofits, as well as between nonprofits and government-affiliated departments.

It was discussed by several nonprofits that there is already good communication between nonprofits; however there is an increased need for strategic communication. Many of the nonprofits get together for meetings, but each organization discusses what they are doing individually rather than what could be done collectively to make the greatest impact. There are some instances where nonprofits are not aware of what each organization is working to achieve and there is some overlap among these organizations. Overlap between the goals is good, however, would be more successful and time efficient if these organizations worked together to achieve one goal, rather than a variety of closely related individual goals.

The nonprofit and government-affiliated department communication is where the greatest improvements need to be made. The Open Doors representative mentioned that there is a complete disconnect in the city's understanding of a mobile shelter and this inhibits Open Doors' ability to fully function, increasing the communication could potentially remedy this situation. The Open Doors representative discussed the possibility of having the three local homeless shelters sit down with the City Council and discuss everything that these organizations do for the residents of Harrisonburg. The Mercy House interviewee also mentioned a disconnect regarding

priorities and what is to be expected between the City and the organization, for example the funding given versus the organization's need. It was also stated that the City's elected officials could do a better job working with nonprofits to be more successful in addressing goals. The Big Brothers Big Sisters representative discussed the establishment of a relationship where the nonprofit organizations are able to talk to city officials, stating that there are currently not enough coalitions that sit down with government and nonprofits to analyze and truly address the issues. The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic interviewee pointed out a communication gap between people as a whole, having a tendency to only interact with people that are similar to them. The Free Clinic works to minimize this gap, bringing together people from a variety of backgrounds that would otherwise not communicate with each other. The Free Clinic representative mentioned that it would be beneficial to get local government officials to the clinic to see the operations and interactions and realize the impact the clinic has on residents of Harrisonburg.

One of the more interesting responses was by the People Helping People representative. It was stated that poverty is not a localized problem, it is a national problem, and there is not much that the City of Harrisonburg can do to address the poverty. Additionally, the Our Community Place interviewee had a different response from majority of the nonprofits, stating that the communication between nonprofits and governments is already good and the City is responsive to the needs of the organization. This is contradictory to the other responses that felt there was not nearly enough communication between nonprofits and government and there needs to be an improvement. Overall, the communication in Harrisonburg among nonprofits and between nonprofits and government-affiliated departments would greatly benefit from increased collaboration.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The majority of the representatives from the nonprofits that were interviewed disagree with the federal definition of poverty and had suggestions for modification. However, there were also several nonprofits that felt that this definition had a purpose and that it would be difficult to come up with a better method to define poverty for the entire country. Based on some of the responses, it is evident that there is a need for a modification of the official definition, that needs to address more of the daily challenges faced by those in the poverty and the costs associated with these, including housing and medical costs.

Overall, it was surprising that there are such a variety of services being provided for those in need and that there are multiple nonprofits in existence to address each aspect of poverty. However, it appears that the communication among these nonprofits has room for improvement and increased collaboration would benefit all of them. Despite the need for increased collaboration, the nonprofits appear all to have knowledge of each other and a basic understanding what other organizations are doing. At almost every interview, the interviewee asked who else had been interviewed and provided suggestions for additional people that would be beneficial in providing information, eager to assist in obtaining information about the poverty in Harrisonburg.

These interviews illustrate the knowledge that poverty is a complex issue. It is not an issue that can be easily tackled and it takes more than just government services to come close to addressing the needs of the impoverished population, even in a relatively small city like Harrisonburg, Virginia. However, there are some relatively simple steps that could be taken to improve how poverty is addressed in this city. If the organizations worked together more, a larger impact could be made. The representative from the United Way had a statement that was

insightful, stating that it is more important to make a big impact in a few locations, rather than a small impact in a variety of locations. This can be applied to Harrisonburg – if the nonprofits that address similar issues collaborated in a more meaningful way than they are now, they would be able to impact a larger number of people, rather than addressing similar issues individually.

Changes to the Study

After conducting the interviews and organizing the results, it became apparent that having two different sets of questions was not as beneficial as intended. The nonprofit representatives were asked more questions than the government-affiliated agency representatives, and when it came time to analyze the interview results there was not as much information from the government-affiliated point of view. A change that would be made to the questions would be increasing the number of questions asked to government-affiliated agencies. Increasing the number of questions, while keeping them similar to the nonprofit questions, would enable a more direct comparison. There were a few questions asked to nonprofit representatives that would have been interesting to see the government perspective.

Another change that would be beneficial for the study would be increasing the government-affiliated agency representation. Both government-affiliated departments and nonprofits are impactful in addressing poverty in Harrisonburg, and it would have been advantageous to select additional departments to gain additional perspective. The nonprofits that were selected cover a wide range of issues within the realm of poverty; however, it would have been valuable to include a nonprofit that interacts with the elderly and a nonprofit that interacts with the disabled. These are both population demographics that have a tendency to be susceptible to being in poverty; therefore, having a point of view from a representative from one of these organizations would have been great.

Obtaining information about the statistics of the population served by each nonprofit and agency would have provided another outlet for comparison. With dozens of nonprofits in Harrisonburg and fewer government agencies, it would be interesting to compare the number of people served by each represented organization. Most nonprofits apply for grants, and they have this information readily available. This would be an addition to the questions for both sectors.

While some changes could be made to increase the success of the study, overall, valuable information was collected. The number of representatives eager to participate in the study was much higher than expected and every nonprofit and agency that was contacted completed an interview.

Recommendations from the Study

The main recommendations are more collaboration among all involved, and, for the City of Harrisonburg to increase their focus on addressing poverty. One way to do that might be to coordinate a meeting or conference for nonprofit and government-affiliated representatives to get together and discuss what each organization is working to achieve and where other organizations could assist. Several of the nonprofit representatives mentioned the need for a meeting. Not only would this benefit the nonprofit organizations, as a whole, but it would hopefully improve the communication between the nonprofits and government-affiliated departments. If the government-affiliated departments knew the effort nonprofits put in to addressing these issues, and knew ways that the government could assist, the nonprofits would have the potential to have a greater impact on poverty in Harrisonburg.

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Appendix A – Map of Virginia Showing the Location of Harrisonburg

Locator Map of Harrisonburg, Virginia
Inset Map of the Exact Location of Harrisonburg, Virginia

★ Harrisonburg
• Cities
▭ Virginia

Created by Kara Krantz
James Madison University, VA

Service Layer Credits: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community
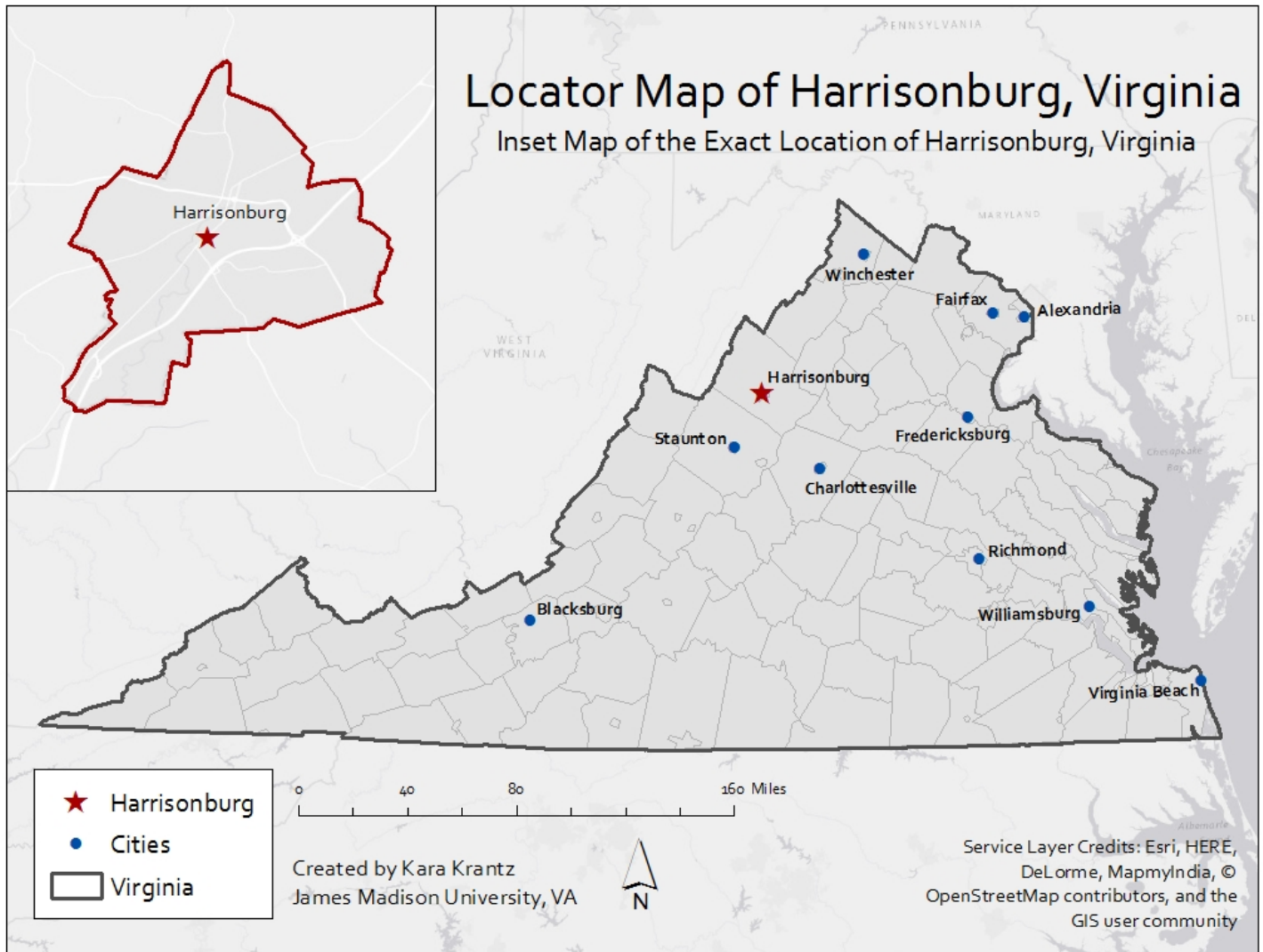
Appendix B – United States Census Bureau Poverty Statistics for Harrisonburg, 2010

Subject	Harrisonburg, VA (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	38,643	12,649	32.7%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	6,839	1,304	19.1%
Related Children Under 18 Years	6,678	1,178	17.6%
18 to 64 Years	28,292	10,973	38.8%
65 Years and Over	3,512	372	10.6%
SEX			
Male	19,028	5,694	29.9%
Female	19,615	6,955	35.5%
Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin			
One Race	38,030	12,443	32.7%
White	32,395	10,348	31.9%
Black/African American	2,852	1,342	47.1%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	65	11	16.9%
Asian	1,700	601	35.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	87	87	100.0%
Some Other Race	931	54	5.8%
Two or More Races	613	206	33.6%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	6,589	1,703	25.8%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	27,134	8,839	32.6%
Educational Attainment			
Population 25 Years and Over	19,751	2,781	14.1%
Less than High School Graduate	4,262	1,193	28.0%
High School Graduate (includes	4,786	623	13.0%
Some College, Associate's Degree	3,979	653	16.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	6,724	312	4.6%
Employment Status			
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	19,904	4,235	21.3%
Employed	18,799	3,727	19.8%
Male	9,493	1,290	13.6%
Female	9,306	2,437	26.2%
Unemployed	1,105	508	46.0%
Male	572	238	41.6%
Female	533	270	50.7%
Work Experience			
Population 16 Years and Over	32,631	11,494	35.2%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the past 12 Months	11,058	630	5.7%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the past 12 Months	14,068	7,691	54.7%
Did Not Work	7,505	3,173	42.3%

Appendix C – United States Census Bureau Poverty Statistics for Harrisonburg, 2014

Subject	Harrisonburg, VA (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	43,328	14,087	32.5%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	7,725	1,550	20.1%
Related Children Under 18 Years	7,701	1,543	20.0%
18 to 64 Years	31,948	12,214	38.2%
65 Years and Over	3,655	323	8.8%
SEX			
Male	20,868	6,524	31.3%
Female	22,460	7,563	33.7%
Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin			
One Race	42,087	13,620	32.4%
White	36,671	11,613	31.7%
Black/African American	2,982	1,106	37.1%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	87	31	35.6%
Asian	1,661	751	45.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	30	30	100.0%
Some Other Race	656	89	13.6%
Two or More Races	1,241	467	37.6%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	8,454	1,761	20.8%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	29,370	10,005	34.1%
Educational Attainment			
Population 25 Years and Over	22,793	2,996	13.1%
Less than High School Graduate	3,562	792	22.2%
High School Graduate (includes	6,086	896	14.7%
Some College, Associate's Degree	4,855	826	17.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8,290	482	5.8%
Employment Status			
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	23,403	5,307	22.7%
Employed	21,920	4,683	21.4%
Male	11,007	2,027	18.4%
Female	10,913	2,656	24.3%
Unemployed	1,483	624	42.1%
Male	932	411	44.1%
Female	551	213	38.7%
Work Experience			
Population 16 Years and Over	36,296	12,637	34.8%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the past 12 Months	13,169	641	4.9%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the past 12 Months	14,283	7,936	55.6%
Did Not Work	8,844	4,060	45.9%

Appendix D – United States Census Bureau Poverty Statistics for

Harrisonburg Census Tracts, 2010

Subject	Census Tract 1.01 (2010)			Census Tract 1.02 (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for whom poverty status is determined	4,281	806	18.8%	4,085	768	18.8%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	1,080	330	30.6%	1,027	233	22.7%
Related Children Under 18 Years	1,001	251	25.1%	1,027	233	22.7%
18 to 64 Years	2,935	455	15.5%	2,610	503	19.3%
65 Years and Over	266	21	7.9%	448	32	7.1%
SEX						
Male	1,994	255	12.8%	2,049	337	16.4%
Female	2,287	551	24.1%	2,036	431	21.2%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	4,168	767	18.4%	3,997	768	19.2%
White	2,815	589	20.9%	3,567	625	17.5%
Black or African American	919	178	19.4%	154	77	50.0%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	0	0	-
Asian	0	0	-	232	66	28.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some Other Race	434	0	0.0%	44	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	113	39	34.5%	88	0	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	1,461	358	24.5%	752	263	35.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	1,862	231	12.4%	2,875	362	12.6%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	2,558	305	11.9%	2,563	145	5.7%
Less than High School Graduate	786	55	7.0%	567	46	8.1%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	594	116	19.5%	623	52	8.3%
Some College, Associate's Degree	562	79	14.1%	638	47	7.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	616	55	8.9%	735	0	0.0%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	2,628	391	14.9%	2,302	241	10.5%
Employed	2,524	353	14.0%	2,242	202	9.0%
Male	1,130	60	5.3%	1,230	97	7.9%
Female	1,394	293	21.0%	1,012	105	10.4%
Unemployed	104	38	36.5%	60	39	65.0%
Male	104	38	36.5%	22	22	100.0%
Female	0	0	-	38	17	44.7%
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	3,340	593	17.8%	3,183	535	16.8%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	1,660	98	5.9%	1,331	58	4.4%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	1,146	266	23.2%	1,112	296	26.6%
Did Not Work	534	229	42.9%	740	181	24.5%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	175	(X)	(X)	680	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	1,001	(X)	(X)	871	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	1,267	(X)	(X)	982	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	1,859	(X)	(X)	1,339	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	1,907	(X)	(X)	1,447	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty Status for Individuals	18.4%	(X)	(X)	41.1%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 2.03 (2010)			Census Tract 2.04 (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for whom poverty status is determined	1,346	449	33.4%	3,170	986	31.1%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	200	0	0.0%	641	104	16.2%
Related Children Under 18 Years	200	0	0.0%	606	104	17.2%
18 to 64 Years	1,024	443	43.3%	2,357	859	36.4%
65 Years and Over	122	6	4.9%	172	23	13.4%
SEX						
Male	762	291	38.2%	1,361	186	13.7%
Female	584	158	27.1%	1,809	800	44.2%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	1,340	449	33.5%	3,170	986	31.1%
White	1,326	449	33.9%	2,834	847	29.9%
Black or African American	0	0	-	246	82	33.3%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	0	0	-
Asian	14	0	0.0%	90	57	63.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some Other Race	0	0	-	0	0	-
Two or More Races	6	0	0.0%	0	0	-
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	68	25	36.8%	1,006	268	26.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	1,264	424	33.5%	2,035	622	30.6%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	674	29	4.3%	1,705	344	20.2%
Less than High School Graduate	94	0	0.0%	533	217	40.7%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	68	0	0.0%	311	23	7.4%
Some College, Associate's Degree	123	7	5.7%	137	32	23.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	389	22	5.7%	724	72	9.9%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	669	154	23.0%	1,581	219	13.9%
Employed	620	144	23.2%	1,475	205	13.9%
Male	388	96	24.7%	853	60	7.0%
Female	232	48	20.7%	622	145	23.3%
Unemployed	49	10	20.4%	106	14	13.2%
Male	9	0	0.0%	59	0	0.0%
Female	40	10	25.0%	47	14	29.8%
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	1,163	449	38.6%	2,623	893	34.0%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	304	0	0.0%	1,008	30	3.0%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	494	276	55.9%	985	503	51.1%
Did Not Work	365	173	47.4%	630	360	57.1%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	405	(X)	(X)	669	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	461	(X)	(X)	1,115	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	545	(X)	(X)	1,517	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	547	(X)	(X)	1,577	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	637	(X)	(X)	1,760	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty Status for Individuals	32.8%	(X)	(X)	33.8%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 2.05 (2010)			Census Tract 2.06 (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for whom poverty status is	4,027	1,211	30.1%	191	37	19.4%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	600	0	0.0%	19	0	0.0%
Related Children Under 18 Years	600	0	0.0%	19	0	0.0%
18 to 64 Years	3,087	1,184	38.4%	156	37	23.7%
65 Years and Over	340	27	7.9%	16	0	0.0%
SEX						
Male	1,867	438	23.5%	151	37	24.5%
Female	2,160	773	35.8%	40	0	0.0%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	3,951	1,196	30.3%	191	37	19.4%
White	3,562	1,148	32.2%	191	37	19.4%
Black or African American	44	22	50.0%	0	0	-
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	0	0	-
Asian	186	0	0.0%	0	0	-
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some Other Race	159	26	16.4%	0	0	-
Two or More Races	76	15	19.7%	0	0	-
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	537	153	28.5%	0	0	-
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	3,199	1,036	32.4%	191	37	19.4%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	2,028	298	14.7%	72	0	0.0%
Less than High School Graduate	239	124	51.9%	0	0	-
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	401	19	4.7%	16	0	0.0%
Some College, Associate's Degree	597	80	13.4%	0	0	-
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	791	75	9.5%	56	0	0.0%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	2,100	396	18.9%	83	19	22.9%
Employed	2,004	352	17.6%	64	0	0.0%
Male	1,080	43	4.0%	39	0	0.0%
Female	924	309	33.4%	25	0	0.0%
Unemployed	96	44	45.8%	19	19	100.0%
Male	68	34	50.0%	19	19	100.0%
Female	28	10	35.7%	0	0	-
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	3,458	1,211	35.0%	172	37	21.5%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12	1,091	26	2.4%	15	0	0.0%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12	1,630	923	56.6%	131	19	14.5%
Did Not Work	737	262	35.5%	26	18	69.2%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	962	(X)	(X)	19	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	1,519	(X)	(X)	55	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	1,673	(X)	(X)	55	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	1,885	(X)	(X)	74	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	1,885	(X)	(X)	92	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty Status for Individuals	32.4%	(X)	(X)	79.3%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 2.07 (2010)			Census Tract 3.01 (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for whom poverty status is determined	5,114	4,284	83.8%	3,065	419	13.7%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	165	43	26.1%	744	0	0.0%
Related Children Under 18 Years	165	43	26.1%	744	0	0.0%
18 to 64 Years	4,928	4,241	86.1%	1,929	404	20.9%
65 Years and Over	21	0	0.0%	392	15	3.8%
SEX						
Male	2,814	2,312	82.2%	1,519	174	11.5%
Female	2,300	1,972	85.7%	1,546	245	15.8%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	5,025	4,195	83.5%	3,025	419	13.9%
White	4,215	3,428	81.3%	2,924	388	13.3%
Black or African American	326	317	97.2%	38	20	52.6%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	38	11	28.9%
Asian	389	363	93.3%	0	0	-
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	87	87	100.0%	0	0	-
Some Other Race	8	0	0.0%	25	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	89	89	100.0%	40	0	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	457	146	31.9%	250	0	0.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	3,808	3,324	87.3%	2,674	388	14.5%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	419	156	37.2%	1,904	45	2.4%
Less than High School Graduate	139	0	0.0%	147	35	23.8%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	89	59	66.3%	568	0	0.0%
Some College, Associate's Degree	78	58	74.4%	368	0	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	113	39	34.5%	821	10	1.2%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	1,468	951	64.8%	1,444	112	7.8%
Employed	1,328	877	66.0%	1,386	79	5.7%
Male	624	387	62.0%	640	10	1.6%
Female	704	490	69.6%	746	69	9.2%
Unemployed	140	74	52.9%	58	33	56.9%
Male	78	34	43.6%	49	24	49.0%
Female	62	40	64.5%	9	9	100.0%
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	4,949	4,241	85.7%	2,455	419	17.1%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	553	175	31.6%	941	11	1.2%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	3,420	3,175	92.8%	823	318	38.6%
Did Not Work	976	891	91.3%	691	90	13.0%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	3,114	(X)	(X)	285	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	4,372	(X)	(X)	769	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	4,466	(X)	(X)	910	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	4,508	(X)	(X)	1,018	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	4,883	(X)	(X)	1,018	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty Status for Individuals	47.4%	(X)	(X)	53.3%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 3.02 (2010)			Census Tract 4.01 (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for whom poverty status is determined	5,175	1,492	28.8%	1,957	120	6.1%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	947	152	16.1%	307	0	0.0%
Related Children Under 18 Years	947	152	16.1%	307	0	0.0%
18 to 64 Years	3,762	1,198	31.8%	944	62	6.6%
65 Years and Over	466	142	30.5%	706	58	8.2%
SEX						
Male	2,672	774	29.0%	854	0	0.0%
Female	2,503	718	28.7%	1,103	120	10.9%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	4,976	1,431	28.8%	1,957	120	6.1%
White	3,921	1,214	31.0%	1,857	107	5.8%
Black or African American	314	100	31.8%	76	13	17.1%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	0	0	-
Asian	543	89	16.4%	0	0	-
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some Other Race	198	28	14.1%	24	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	199	61	30.7%	0	0	-
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	1,156	137	11.9%	85	13	15.3%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	2,990	1,132	37.9%	1,831	107	5.8%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	2,489	385	15.5%	1,597	94	5.9%
Less than High School Graduate	568	211	37.1%	169	29	17.2%
High School Graduate (includes	647	54	8.3%	451	54	12.0%
Some College, Associate's Degree	449	106	23.6%	292	0	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	825	14	1.7%	685	11	1.6%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	2,932	682	23.3%	898	37	4.1%
Employed	2,712	643	23.7%	898	37	4.1%
Male	1,369	294	21.5%	468	0	0.0%
Female	1,343	349	26.0%	430	37	8.6%
Unemployed	220	39	17.7%	0	0	-
Male	83	8	9.6%	0	0	-
Female	137	31	22.6%	0	0	-
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	4,368	1,340	30.7%	1,698	120	7.1%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	1,440	71	4.9%	594	0	0.0%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	1,980	930	47.0%	429	37	8.6%
Did Not Work	948	339	35.8%	675	83	12.3%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	962	(X)	(X)	57	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	1,787	(X)	(X)	173	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	2,245	(X)	(X)	319	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	2,625	(X)	(X)	509	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	2,903	(X)	(X)	522	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty Status for Individuals	32.0%	(X)	(X)	19.5%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 4.02 (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for whom poverty status is determined	6,232	2,077	33.3%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	1,109	442	39.9%
Related Children Under 18 Years	1,062	395	37.2%
18 to 64 Years	4,560	1,587	34.8%
65 Years and Over	563	48	8.5%
SEX			
Male	2,985	890	29.8%
Female	3,247	1,187	36.6%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO			
One Race	6,230	2,075	33.3%
White	5,183	1,516	29.2%
Black or African American	735	533	72.5%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	27	0	0.0%
Asian	246	26	10.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-
Some Other Race	39	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	2	2	100.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	817	340	41.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	4,405	1,176	26.7%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Population 25 Years and Older	3,742	980	26.2%
Less than High School Graduate	1,020	476	46.7%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	1,018	246	24.2%
Some College, Associate's Degree	735	244	33.2%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	969	14	1.4%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	3,799	1,033	27.2%
Employed	3,546	835	23.5%
Male	1,672	243	14.5%
Female	1,874	592	31.6%
Unemployed	253	198	78.3%
Male	81	59	72.8%
Female	172	139	80.8%
WORK EXPERIENCE			
Population 16 Years and Over	5,222	1,656	31.7%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	2,121	161	7.6%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	1,918	948	49.4%
Did Not Work	1,183	547	46.2%
All Individuals below:			
50% of Poverty Level	1,374	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	2,290	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	2,700	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	3,386	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	3,574	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED			
Poverty Status for Individuals	35.3%	(X)	(X)

Appendix E – United States Census Bureau Poverty Statistics for

Harrisonburg Census Tracts, 2014

Subject	Census Tract 1.01 (2014)			Census Tract 1.02 (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	4,561	1,062	23.3%	4,536	1,054	23.2%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	851	219	25.7%	1,006	180	17.9%
Related Children Under 18 Years	851	219	25.7%	999	173	17.3%
18 to 64 Years	3,457	781	22.6%	3,193	867	27.2%
65 Years and Over	253	62	24.5%	337	7	2.1%
SEX						
Male	2,197	453	20.6%	2,034	350	17.2%
Female	2,364	609	25.8%	2,502	704	28.1%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	4,435	1,040	23.4%	4,377	1,022	23.3%
White	3,359	804	23.9%	3,593	704	19.6%
Black or African American	865	236	27.3%	600	214	35.7%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	25	0	0.0%
Asian	69	0	0.0%	121	83	68.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	21	21	100.0%
Some Other Race	142	0	0.0%	17	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	126	22	17.5%	159	32	20.1%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	1,103	149	13.5%	965	136	14.1%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	2,534	655	25.8%	2,847	568	20.0%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	3,267	714	21.9%	2,544	206	8.1%
Less than High School Graduate	498	119	23.9%	254	50	19.7%
High School Graduate (includes	954	296	31.0%	549	49	8.9%
Some College, Associate's Degree	855	197	23.0%	611	63	10.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	960	102	10.6%	1,130	44	3.9%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	2,782	389	14.0%	2,729	483	17.7%
Employed	2,718	346	12.7%	2,588	419	16.2%
Male	1,328	160	12.0%	1,264	173	13.7%
Female	1,390	186	13.4%	1,324	246	18.6%
Unemployed	64	43	67.2%	141	64	45.4%
Male	47	26	55.3%	46	28	60.9%
Female	17	17	100.0%	95	36	37.9%
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	3,839	892	23.2%	3,703	881	23.8%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	1,860	8	0.4%	1,585	24	1.5%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	1,150	443	38.5%	1,309	573	43.8%
Did Not Work	829	441	53.2%	809	284	35.1%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	369	(X)	(X)	689	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	1,539	(X)	(X)	1,337	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	1,677	(X)	(X)	1,508	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	2,183	(X)	(X)	1,598	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	2,261	(X)	(X)	1,824	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty status for individuals	39.3%	(X)	(X)	35.9%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 2.03 (2014)			Census Tract 2.04 (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	1,612	448	27.8%	3,805	1,519	39.9%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	317	13	4.1%	648	152	23.5%
Related Children Under 18 Years	317	13	4.1%	631	152	24.1%
18 to 64 Years	1,150	413	35.9%	2,914	1,367	46.9%
65 Years and Over	145	22	15.2%	243	0	0.0%
SEX						
Male	782	206	26.3%	1,797	737	41.0%
Female	830	242	29.2%	2,008	782	38.9%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	1,608	448	27.9%	3,778	1,519	40.2%
White	1,519	419	27.6%	3,070	1,118	36.4%
Black or African American	52	0	0.0%	218	146	67.0%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	0	0	-
Asian	29	29	100.0%	479	244	50.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some Other Race	8	0	0.0%	11	11	100.0%
Two or More Races	4	0	0.0%	27	0	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	75	48	64.0%	971	241	24.8%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	1,456	371	25.5%	2,219	923	41.6%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	854	139	16.3%	1,763	294	16.7%
Less than High School Graduate	174	61	35.1%	348	167	48.0%
High School Graduate (includes	184	0	0.0%	438	23	5.3%
Some College, Associate's Degree	144	53	36.8%	173	58	33.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	352	25	7.1%	804	46	5.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	880	220	25.0%	1,949	413	21.2%
Employed	839	196	23.4%	1,903	396	20.8%
Male	442	93	21.0%	1,007	276	27.4%
Female	397	103	25.9%	896	120	13.4%
Unemployed	41	24	58.5%	46	17	37.0%
Male	31	21	67.7%	10	6	60.0%
Female	10	3	30.0%	36	11	30.6%
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	1,324	435	32.9%	3,274	1,388	42.4%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	579	61	10.5%	1,184	115	9.7%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	436	226	51.8%	1,319	802	60.8%
Did Not Work	309	148	47.9%	771	471	61.1%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	276	(X)	(X)	832	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	542	(X)	(X)	1,592	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	542	(X)	(X)	1,963	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	583	(X)	(X)	2,150	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	650	(X)	(X)	2,242	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty status for individuals	50.1%	(X)	(X)	52.8%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 2.05 (2014)			Census Tract 2.06 (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	5,961	2,378	39.9%	144	0	0.0%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	917	221	24.1%	63	0	0.0%
Related Children Under 18 Years	917	221	24.1%	63	0	0.0%
18 to 64 Years	4,709	2,157	45.8%	59	0	0.0%
65 Years and Over	335	0	0.0%	22	0	0.0%
SEX						
Male	2,647	962	36.3%	74	0	0.0%
Female	3,314	1,416	42.7%	70	0	0.0%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	5,812	2,279	39.2%	144	0	0.0%
White	5,456	2,101	38.5%	144	0	0.0%
Black or African American	104	53	51.0%	0	0	-
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	0	0	-
Asian	193	88	45.6%	0	0	-
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some Other Race	59	37	62.7%	0	0	-
Two or More Races	149	99	66.4%	0	0	-
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	817	0	0.0%	24	0	0.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	4,639	2,101	45.3%	120	0	0.0%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	2,856	309	10.8%	81	0	0.0%
Less than High School Graduate	367	36	9.8%	10	0	0.0%
High School Graduate (includes	768	117	15.2%	22	0	0.0%
Some College, Associate's Degree	758	128	16.9%	16	0	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	963	28	2.9%	33	0	0.0%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	3,027	861	28.4%	44	0	0.0%
Employed	2,795	780	27.9%	44	0	0.0%
Male	1,313	165	12.6%	34	0	0.0%
Female	1,482	615	41.5%	10	0	0.0%
Unemployed	232	81	34.9%	0	0	-
Male	206	55	26.7%	0	0	-
Female	26	26	100.0%	0	0	-
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	5,056	2,157	42.7%	88	0	0.0%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	1,733	94	5.4%	33	0	0.0%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	2,122	1,516	71.4%	19	0	0.0%
Did Not Work	1,201	547	45.5%	36	0	0.0%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	1,844	(X)	(X)	0	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	2,849	(X)	(X)	0	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	3,461	(X)	(X)	24	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	3,538	(X)	(X)	27	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	3,538	(X)	(X)	92	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty status for individuals	32.2%	(X)	(X)	30.0%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 2.07 (2014)			Census Tract 3.01 (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	4,608	3,737	81.1%	3,243	487	15.0%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	214	120	56.1%	701	40	5.7%
Related Children Under 18 Years	214	120	56.1%	701	40	5.7%
18 to 64 Years	4,313	3,609	83.7%	2,164	424	19.6%
65 Years and Over	81	8	9.9%	378	23	6.1%
SEX						
Male	2,505	2,073	82.8%	1,669	277	16.6%
Female	2,103	1,664	79.1%	1,574	210	13.3%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	4,480	3,645	81.4%	3,157	486	15.4%
White	3,954	3,230	81.7%	2,955	448	15.2%
Black or African American	289	204	70.6%	30	0	0.0%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	44	31	70.5%
Asian	192	192	100.0%	51	0	0.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	9	9	100.0%	0	0	-
Some Other Race	36	10	27.8%	77	7	9.1%
Two or More Races	128	92	71.9%	86	1	1.2%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	395	247	62.5%	472	43	9.1%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	3,601	2,993	83.1%	2,552	412	16.1%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	473	124	26.2%	1,951	127	6.5%
Less than High School Graduate	84	12	14.3%	182	40	22.0%
High School Graduate (includes	119	38	31.9%	664	48	7.2%
Some College, Associate's Degree	75	28	37.3%	290	18	6.2%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	195	46	23.6%	815	21	2.6%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	1,993	1,334	66.9%	1,958	311	15.9%
Employed	1,732	1,149	66.3%	1,916	300	15.7%
Male	890	547	61.5%	1,021	177	17.3%
Female	842	602	71.5%	895	123	13.7%
Unemployed	261	185	70.9%	42	11	26.2%
Male	131	91	69.5%	11	0	0.0%
Female	130	94	72.3%	31	11	35.5%
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	4,410	3,633	82.4%	2,582	447	17.3%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	374	64	17.1%	1,233	70	5.7%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	3,039	2,661	87.6%	862	303	35.2%
Did Not Work	997	908	91.1%	487	74	15.2%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	3,054	(X)	(X)	231	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	3,875	(X)	(X)	559	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	3,949	(X)	(X)	825	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	4,086	(X)	(X)	855	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	4,268	(X)	(X)	892	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty status for individuals	48.5%	(X)	(X)	36.4%	(X)	(X)

Subject	Census Tract 3.02 (2014)			Census Tract 4.01 (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	4,947	1,224	24.7%	2,752	321	11.7%
AGE						
Under 18 Years	1,064	202	19.0%	421	42	10.0%
Related Children Under 18 Years	1,064	202	19.0%	421	42	10.0%
18 to 64 Years	3,437	929	27.0%	1,434	213	14.9%
65 Years and Over	446	93	20.9%	897	66	7.4%
SEX						
Male	2,478	519	20.9%	1,213	147	12.1%
Female	2,469	705	28.6%	1,539	174	11.3%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
One Race	4,635	1,021	22.0%	2,632	303	11.5%
White	4,032	927	23.0%	2,172	179	8.2%
Black or African American	248	70	28.2%	108	9	8.3%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0	-	0	0	-
Asian	138	0	0.0%	279	115	41.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some Other Race	217	24	11.1%	73	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	312	203	65.1%	120	18	15.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	1,343	260	19.4%	223	50	22.4%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	3,010	750	24.9%	2,025	136	6.7%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Older	2,769	381	13.8%	2,102	187	8.9%
Less than High School Graduate	697	155	22.2%	166	33	19.9%
High School Graduate (includes	719	87	12.1%	520	50	9.6%
Some College, Associate's Degree	479	64	13.4%	466	58	12.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	874	75	8.6%	950	46	4.8%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	2,671	438	16.4%	1,227	80	6.5%
Employed	2,382	362	15.2%	1,158	67	5.8%
Male	1,327	155	11.7%	552	39	7.1%
Female	1,055	207	19.6%	606	28	4.6%
Unemployed	289	76	26.3%	69	13	18.8%
Male	171	76	44.4%	56	13	23.2%
Female	118	0	0.0%	13	0	0.0%
WORK EXPERIENCE						
Population 16 Years and Over	3,963	1,029	26.0%	2,331	279	12.0%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	1,456	62	4.3%	716	16	2.2%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	1,299	410	31.6%	594	75	12.6%
Did Not Work	1,208	557	46.1%	1,021	188	18.4%
All Individuals below:						
50% of Poverty Level	749	(X)	(X)	159	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	1,503	(X)	(X)	484	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	2,008	(X)	(X)	716	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	2,802	(X)	(X)	952	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	2,879	(X)	(X)	1,059	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED						
Poverty status for individuals	20.0%	(X)	(X)	27.1%	(X)	(X)

| Subject	Census Tract 4.02 (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	7,159	1,857	25.9%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	1,523	361	23.7%
Related Children Under 18 Years	1,523	361	23.7%
18 to 64 Years	5,118	1,454	28.4%
65 Years and Over	518	42	8.1%
SEX			
Male	3,472	800	23.0%
Female	3,687	1,057	28.7%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO			
One Race	7,029	1,857	26.4%
White	6,417	1,683	26.2%
Black or African American	468	174	37.2%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	18	0	0.0%
Asian	110	0	0.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-
Some Other Race	16	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	130	0	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	2,066	587	28.4%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	4,367	1,096	25.1%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Population 25 Years and Older	4,133	515	12.5%
Less than High School Graduate	782	119	15.2%
High School Graduate (includes	1,149	188	16.4%
Some College, Associate's Degree	988	159	16.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	1,214	49	4.0%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	4,143	778	18.8%
Employed	3,845	668	17.4%
Male	1,829	242	13.2%
Female	2,016	426	21.1%
Unemployed	298	110	36.9%
Male	223	95	42.6%
Female	75	15	20.0%
WORK EXPERIENCE			
Population 16 Years and Over	5,726	1,496	26.1%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the Past 12 Months	2,416	127	5.3%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the Past 12 Months	2,134	927	43.4%
Did Not Work	1,176	442	37.6%
All Individuals below:			
50% of Poverty Level	1,136	(X)	(X)
125% of Poverty Level	2,051	(X)	(X)
150% of Poverty Level	2,715	(X)	(X)
185% of Poverty Level	3,291	(X)	(X)
200% of Poverty Level	3,727	(X)	(X)
PERCENT IMPUTED			
Poverty status for individuals	44.4%	(X)	(X)

Appendix F – Percentage of Population Below Poverty Level, 2010
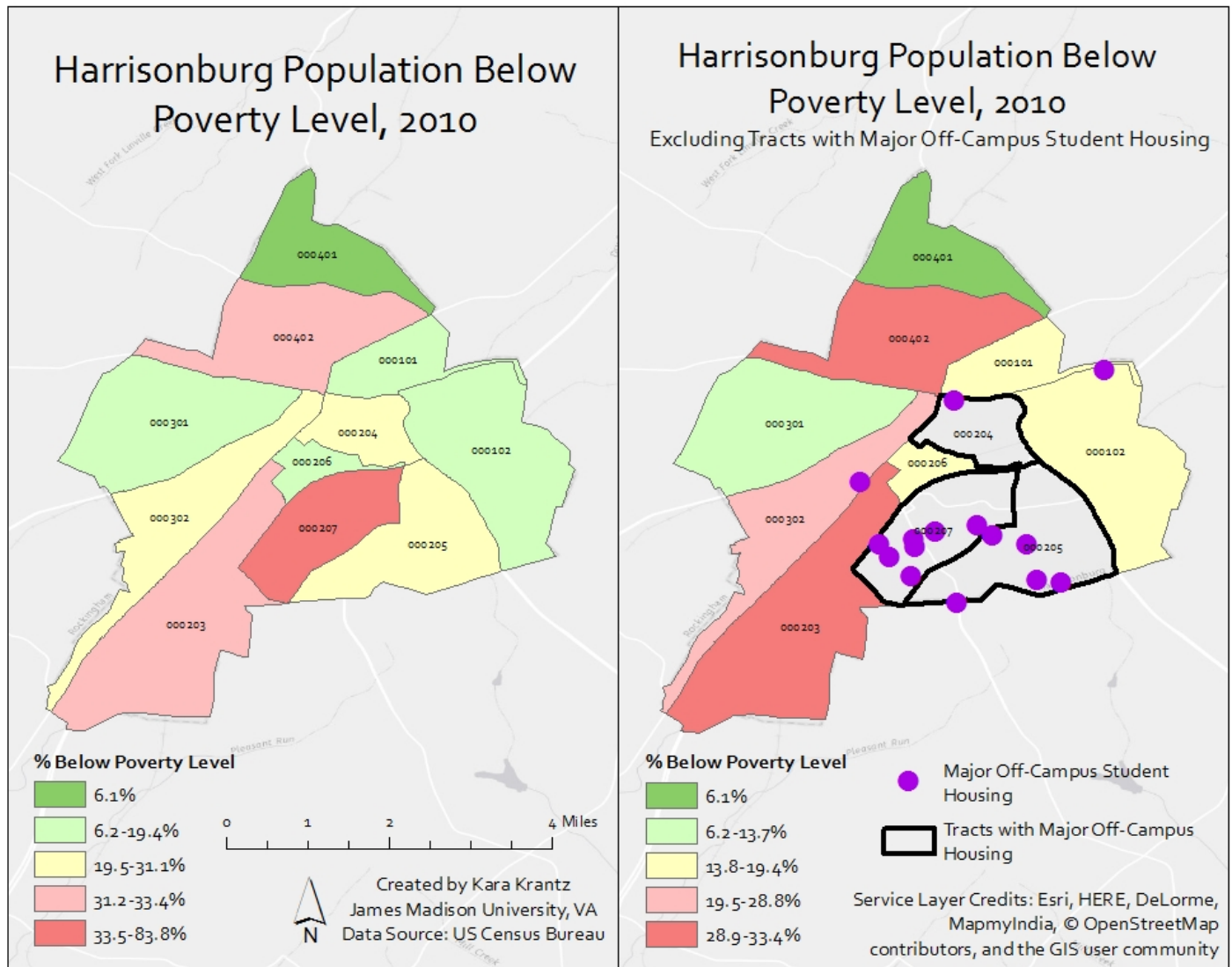
Appendix G – Percentage of Population Below Poverty Level, 2014
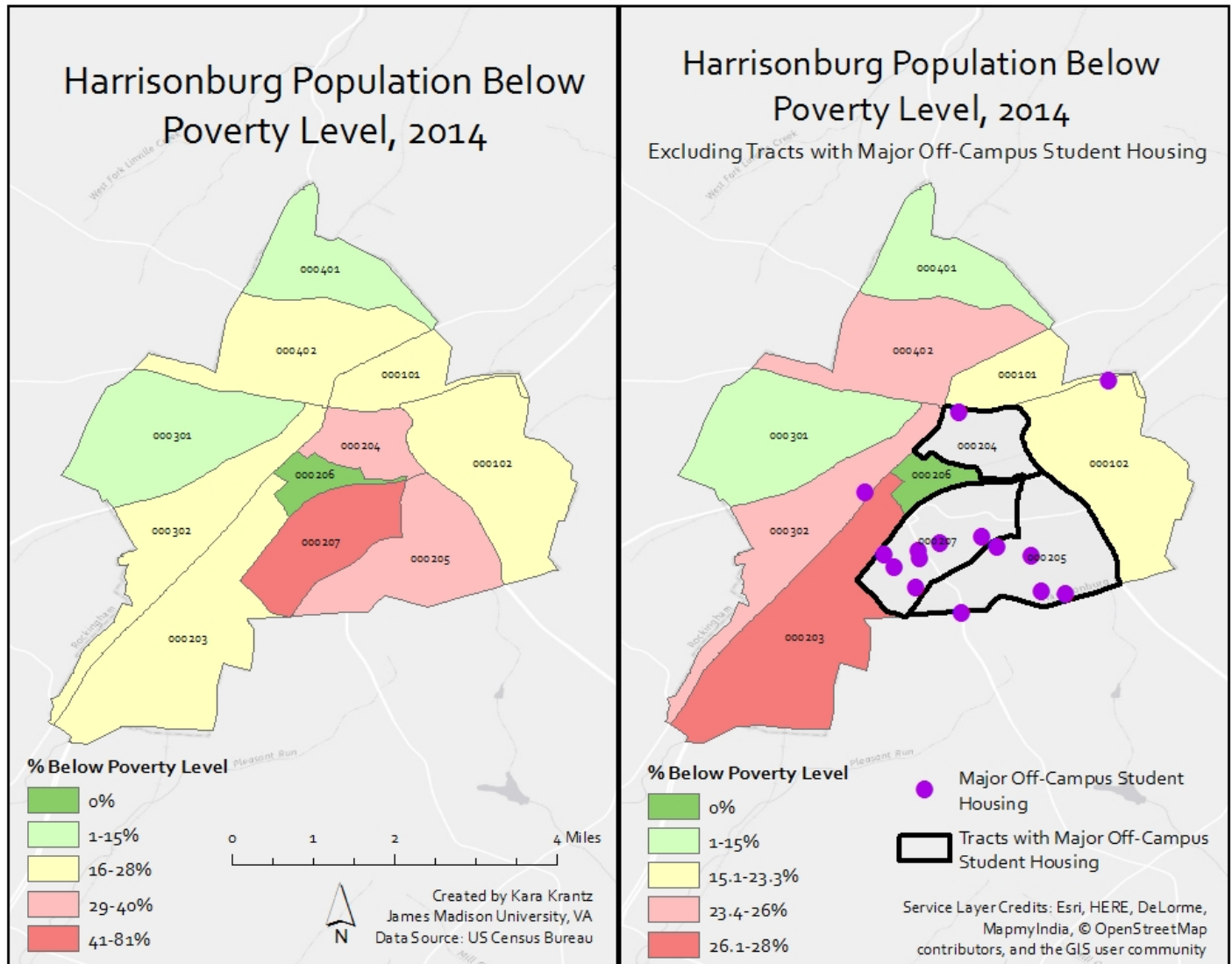
Appendix H – Low-Income Housing Map

Low Income Housing in Harrisonburg, Virginia
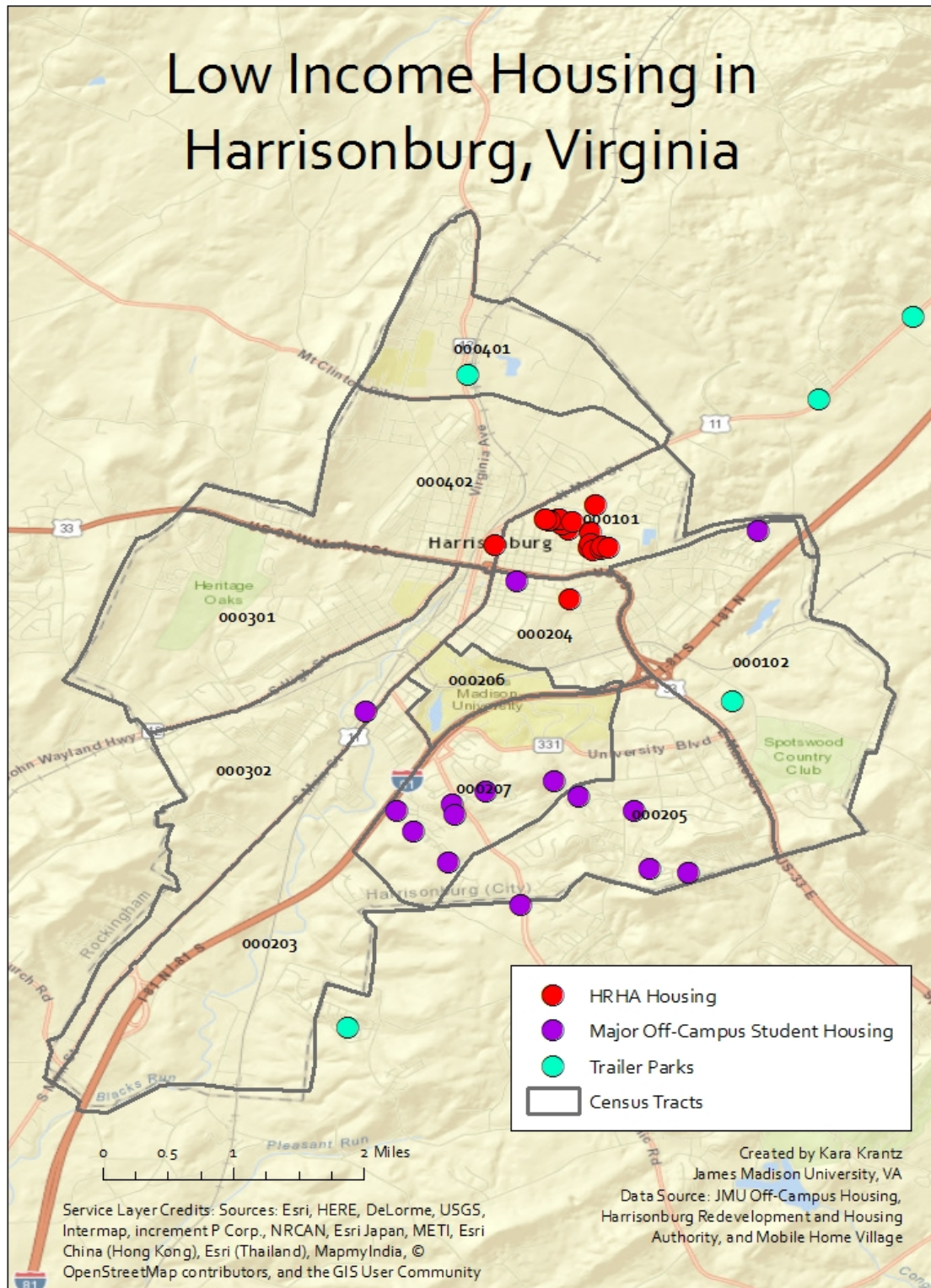
Appendix I – Table of Nonprofits in Harrisonburg

Organization Name	Services Provided	Year Established
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Children (ages 6-12), Children (ages 13-18) Education/Training	1976
Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Network	Basic Assistance	1981
Blue Ridge Legal Services, Inc.	Basic Assistance, Disabilities, Healthcare, Legal Assistance	1980
Boys & Girls Clubs of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County	Children (ages 6-12), Children (ages 13-18), Education/Training	1996
Center for Marriage and Family Counseling	Family Counseling, Mental Health	1972
Central Valley Habitat for Humanity	Housing	1976
Collins Center	Children (all ages), Family Counseling, Healthcare, Mental Health	1987
Crossroads to Brain Injury Recovery, Inc.	Disabilities, Family Counseling, Healthcare	2005
DePaul Community Resources	Children (all ages), Disabilities	2005
Fairfield Center	Civic/Community Development, Family Counseling, Legal Assistance	1982
First Step, A Response to Domestic Violence	Basic Assistance, Family Counseling, Legal Assistance	1980
Friendship Industries	Basic Assistance, Disabilities, Education/Training	1964
Hand-in-Hand Resource Mothers	Children (ages 13-18), Education/Training, Healthcare	1988
Harrisonburg Community Health Center	Healthcare	2007
Harrisonburg Education Foundation	Children (all ages), Education/Training	1994
Harrisonburg-Rockingham Dental Clinic	Healthcare	1993
Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic	Healthcare	1991
Harrisonburg-Rockingham Office on Children and Youth	Children (all ages), Education/Training	1988
Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach	Faith-based Initiatives, Family Counseling	1977
Mercy House	Basic Assistance, Children (all ages), Education/Training	1988
New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center	Basic Assistance, Education/Training, Immigrant Resources/Services	2000
Open Doors (formerly HARTS)	Basic Assistance	2007
Our Community Place	Basic Assistance, Civic/Community Development	1999
People Helping People	Basic Assistance, Faith-based Initiatives	2001
Pleasant View Homes	Disabilities, Faith-based Initiatives	1971
Rebuilding Together	Aging/Older Adults, Disabilities, Housing	2001
Roberta Webb Child Care Center	Children (pre-school), Education/Training	1994
Salvation Army	Basic Assistance, Disaster Relief, Faith-based Initiatives, Family Counseling	1925
Shenandoah Valley Economic Education	Children (ages 6-12), Children (ages 13-18), Civic/Community Development,	1972
Skyline Literacy	Education/Training, Immigrant	1987
The Arc of Harrisonburg and Rockingham	Disabilities, Family Counseling	1960
United Way of Harrisonburg & Rockingham	Civic/Community Development	1957
Valley AIDS Network	Basic Assistance, Family Counseling, Healthcare	1989
Valley Associates for Independent Living	Disabilities, Housing	1987
Valley Program for Aging Services	Aging/Older Adults	1974

Appendix J – United States Census Bureau Poverty Statistics for the United States, 2010

Subject	United States (2010)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	296,141,149	40,917,513	13.8%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	72,850,300	13,980,497	19.2%
Related Children Under 18 Years	72,473,525	13,640,835	18.8%
18 to 64 Years	185,890,088	23,382,725	12.6%
65 Years and Over	37,400,761	3,554,291	9.5%
SEX			
Male	144,764,929	18,063,626	12.5%
Female	151,376,220	22,853,887	15.1%
Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin			
One Race	289,051,832	39,652,496	13.7%
White	219,692,744	24,378,350	11.1%
Black/African American	36,312,908	9,180,061	25.3%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	2,390,948	631,614	26.4%
Asian	13,933,639	1,580,505	11.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	477,078	78,712	16.5%
Some Other Race	16,244,516	3,803,254	23.4%
Two or More Races	7,089,317	1,265,017	17.8%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	46,732,482	10,470,990	22.4%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	191,908,684	18,334,837	9.6%
Educational Attainment			
Population 25 Years and Over	196,177,660	20,620,448	10.5%
Less than High School Graduate	28,614,958	7,069,902	24.7%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	56,566,408	6,787,324	12.0%
Some College, Associate's Degree	55,536,078	4,665,628	8.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	55,460,216	2,097,594	3.8%
Employment Status			
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	153,042,356	12,499,303	8.2%
Employed	140,987,096	9,051,382	6.4%
Male	74,288,301	4,090,168	5.5%
Female	66,698,795	4,961,214	7.4%
Unemployed	12,055,260	3,447,921	28.6%
Male	6,609,832	1,691,233	25.6%
Female	5,445,428	1,756,688	32.3%
Work Experience			
Population 16 Years and Over	231,971,810	28,374,127	12.2%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the past 12 Months	97,019,220	2,514,030	2.6%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the past 12 Months	62,238,053	10,047,418	16.1%
Did Not Work	72,714,537	15,812,679	21.7%

Appendix K – United States Census Bureau Poverty Statistics for the United States, 2014

Subject	United States (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	306,226,394	47,755,606	15.6%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	72,637,885	15,907,395	21.9%
Related Children Under 18 Years	72,309,509	15,602,305	21.6%
18 to 64 Years	191,717,262	27,921,992	14.6%
65 Years and Over	41,871,247	3,926,219	9.4%
SEX			
Male	149,818,815	21,461,752	14.3%
Female	156,407,579	26,293,854	16.8%
Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin			
One Race	297,389,848	45,959,009	15.5%
White	226,650,973	28,912,690	12.8%
Black/African American	37,874,885	10,351,976	27.3%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	2,480,136	714,053	28.8%
Asian	15,411,979	1,957,794	12.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	520,410	107,874	20.7%
Some Other Race	14,451,465	3,914,622	27.1%
Two or More Races	8,836,546	1,796,597	20.3%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	51,992,888	12,880,559	24.8%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	192,620,083	20,834,824	10.8%
Educational Attainment			
Population 25 Years and Over	205,506,884	24,673,779	12.0%
Less than High School Graduate	27,452,851	7,563,592	27.6%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	57,087,850	8,093,816	14.2%
Some College, Associate's Degree	60,044,867	6,281,106	10.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	60,921,316	2,735,265	4.5%
Employment Status			
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	156,944,857	15,120,703	9.6%
Employed	142,603,400	10,482,346	7.4%
Male	74,791,464	4,789,958	6.4%
Female	67,811,936	5,692,388	8.4%
Unemployed	14,341,457	4,638,357	32.3%
Male	7,821,682	2,314,964	29.6%
Female	6,519,775	2,323,393	35.6%
Work Experience			
Population 16 Years and Over	241,926,342	33,404,762	13.8%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the past 12 Months	99,645,338	2,973,051	3.0%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the past 12 Months	59,371,773	10,981,679	18.5%
Did Not Work	82,909,231	19,450,032	23.5%

Appendix L – United States Census Bureau Poverty Statistics for Virginia, 2014

Subject	Virginia (2014)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	7,939,332	914,237	11.5%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	1,836,803	279,359	15.2%
Related Children Under 18 Years	1,829,821	272,913	14.9%
18 to 64 Years	5,067,608	555,771	11.0%
65 Years and Over	1,034,921	79,107	7.6%
SEX			
Male	3,867,034	397,066	10.3%
Female	4,072,298	517,171	12.7%
Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin			
One Race	7,691,439	880,170	11.4%
White	5,520,140	505,667	9.2%
Black/African American	1,501,394	301,972	20.1%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	22,245	3,094	13.9%
Asian	467,627	38,712	8.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4,966	544	11.0%
Some Other Race	175,067	30,181	17.2%
Two or More Races	247,893	34,067	13.7%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	670,202	105,665	15.8%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	5,089,616	439,744	8.6%
Educational Attainment			
Population 25 Years and Over	5,404,333	478,440	8.9%
Less than High School Graduate	636,381	143,760	22.6%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	1,339,909	155,977	11.6%
Some College, Associate's Degree	1,468,928	116,735	7.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	1,959,115	61,968	3.2%
Employment Status			
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over	4,201,547	293,043	7.0%
Employed	3,913,469	210,121	5.4%
Male	2,022,515	87,618	4.3%
Female	1,890,954	122,503	6.5%
Unemployed	288,078	82,922	28.8%
Male	154,806	40,020	25.9%
Female	133,272	42,902	32.2%
Work Experience			
Population 16 Years and Over	6,308,499	662,321	10.5%
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round in the past 12 Months	2,904,934	56,283	1.9%
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year in the past 12 Months	1,464,894	230,468	15.7%
Did Not Work	1,938,671	375,570	19.4%

Appendix M – Interview Questions

Nonprofit Interview Questions

1) How does your organization define poverty?

2) What services does your organization provide?

3) Do people pay for these services?

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

> "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)."

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

8) What has been the greatest reward?

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

Government Interview Questions

1) Does the City of Harrisonburg have a definition of poverty? If so, what is it?

2) What percentage of the city population lives in poverty?

3) How does your department address the issues of poverty in the city?

4) How does poverty manifest itself in the city (i.e. crime, homelessness, etc.)?

5) What challenges does your department face in addressing poverty?

6) How frequently does your department interact with local nonprofits in working to address poverty in Harrisonburg?

Appendix N – Interview Answers

Interview with the Representative from United Way

1) How does your organization define poverty?

Uses the poverty guidelines and determines it by community for the cost of living. Often shy away from using the poverty statistics for Harrisonburg because of the large JMU student population.

2) What services does your organization provide?

Focuses on high level community issues and how to address them. United Way brings a diverse group of people to the table to address these issues. They focus on what the groups can do to have a collaborative impact. They fundraise and invest back in the community to address these issues. There are some fundraising events hosted that require mobilizing volunteers and the rest of the community to help.

3) Do people pay for these services?

People do not pay for anything that is directly done by United Way.

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

> "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

Including public housing would make it seem like people have more income, since public housing is not including and the numbers are still low than no it is not an accurate representation.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

There needs to be an investment in preventative programming and empowerment. There needs to be a focus on teaching skills, not just writing a check. There will always be people viewing welfare services as something for people to take advantage of. We need to look into why people are in these situations to begin with to help them get out of them.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

Decreased. The majority of United Way's revenue goes back out to grant funding to local nonprofits, so with the decreased funding the amounts of these grants have decreased. The amount has been spread thinner, with the same number or more organizations benefiting from these grants. The grand director is suggesting switching this focus in order to make a big impact in a few locations rather than a small impact in a lot of locations.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

United Way has experienced a shift in identity. They were created in the 1950s as a community fundraiser. Now people and companies are more inclined to give directly to nonprofits, rather than giving to United Way for United Way to distribute funds. United Way is now acting more as a community leader than a community fundraiser.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

One of the greatest rewards has been the ability to get to know local businesses and executive directors. Another reward is trying to bring together people from all different fields to work on one issue. Advocating for many causes in the community is rewarding. Bringing the message of United Way to other people when interacting with a variety of groups has also been rewarding.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

Interacts with both groups all the time. United Way interacts more often with nonprofits and has recently been collaborating more with government. This communication has not been done intentionally, it just sort of happens.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

Yes, increased communication is always good. There can sometimes be situations where one group does not know what another does, so increasing communication would be beneficial to work together to make a greater impact.

Interview with the Representative from Harrisonburg Rockingham Social Services
1. Does the City of Harrisonburg have a definition of poverty? If so, what is it?

The Department of Social Services operates according to the federally established poverty guidelines, with food stamps being given to those that are at 180% of the poverty level. Each of the programs for social services has a different percentage of poverty to determine eligibility for the program. The benefits and services provided attempt to ensure the minimal standard of living in care. The Department of Social Services follows the federal policy and protects individuals (children, the elderly, and disabled) from abuse and neglect. Poverty comes in to play with the benefits that are given, rather than the services provided. People are assisted to become independent of social services. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, is available to individuals that need it; however there is a five year maximum in a lifetime to receive it – two years receiving, one year not, two years receiving, one year not, one year receiving. In addition to the restrictions on time, individuals must be in the employment and training program in order to receive a check.

2. What percentage of the city population lives in poverty?

18% of Harrisonburg/Rockingham County is in poverty. The poverty numbers in Harrisonburg are higher than in the county. College students are not included in these statistics unless they come to college as an independent.

3. How does your department address the issues of poverty in the city?

   The Department of Social Services addresses poverty in the city by providing services. Social Services has established relationships with other resources that benefit those they serve. There are workforce groups that help individuals find jobs, write resumes, and other job related skills. Social Services works with the jail – there are life skills classes, mental health classes, and therapy. Social Services is trying to benefit their clients in addition to the federal requirements and have a greater involvement in the community.

4. How does poverty manifest itself in the city (i.e. crime, homelessness, etc.)?

   In the Department of Social Services, poverty can often be traced to the relationship an individual has with their mother or grandmother – this can be seen in child protective services, foster care, and mental illness. Poverty has a generational presence. Often those in poverty have a lack of knowledge and social skills, and often have a substance abuse, mental illness, or experience domestic abuse. Poverty is a lifestyle that is a trap, in order to help people out of the trap it must be determined what these individuals are addicted to, what their family expectations were, and how they view their self-worth. It is difficult to pull apart the elements that cause poverty and it is hard to see what came first to cause this poverty.

5. What challenges does your department face in addressing poverty?

   Substance abuse and mental illness are frequent problems for social services. Many of the people that social services works with are impatient. Safety has become more of an issue, workers are more frequently in unsafe situations and the police are being called more frequently. Television is hurting people, they are getting bad ideas and then acting on these things they see on television.

6. How frequently does your department interact with local nonprofits in working to address poverty in Harrisonburg?

   The Department of Social Services interacts with nonprofits on a daily basis – working with First Step, Open Doors, Salvation Army, United Way, the hospital, Healthy Families, churches, Girl Scouts. Many of the social services workers volunteer with these nonprofits.

Interview with the Representative from Skyline Literacy
1) How does your organization define poverty?

   Skyline Literacy defines poverty as the underserved, including people with limited financial resources. These people include those that have to work more than one job at minimum wage or below. Individuals that struggle to have access to services that lift themselves out of poverty – these services include improving literacy, computer literacy, English skills that would help acquire better jobs. However, there is a shortage of time to improve these skills, it is easy to fall further into the cycle of poverty making it more difficult to get out. This serves as their definition of the term poverty; however, the term poverty is not frequently used with Skyline Literacy.

2) What services does your organization provide?

Skyline Literacy provides classes for English for non-native speakers, with class levels for individuals that know no English to those that have a more advanced knowledge. There are classes for reading, writing, and job skills – skills that help to prepare individuals to go into job training programs. Many individuals are not able to qualify for the training programs, so these courses are necessary to help prepare them. There are classes in computer literacy, math tutoring, citizenship preparation, and to finish acquiring a GED. The classes are offered in small groups and one-on-one, the obstacles faced by the individual in learning and knowledge determines the amount of interaction in the class.

3) Do people pay for these services?

There is a $30 registration fee that includes an assessment and materials. However, no one is turned away from Skyline Literacy and if they cannot afford the registration fee they are still eligible to receive help.

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

> "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

The representative does not feel that this is a definition of poverty; there are too many additional factors that should be included in a definition of poverty. Every family has different circumstances, for instance medical needs. The definition of poverty should be more individualized, more than just numbers on a page. Factors need to be taken into consideration to help determine why people are in poverty and how to get these people out of poverty.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

There needs to be a greater focus on holistic services for the family unit, specifically parents. Currently, children are the recipients of these services and are able to learn to read; however, there is no assistance for the parents. If parents had these skills it could change the home life and encourage parents to help their children in their education, which could help to break the poverty trap for their children. Placing a greater focus on the family level could increase parental support educationally and teachers do not have to act as both a teacher and parent during the school day.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

The funding for Skyline Literacy has increased and decreased over the last five years. Some of the decline in funding can be attributed to large grants – Skyline Literacy applies for large grants that are temporary. The federal and state grants that are applied for are unstable, causing instability in the funding of the organization. However, despite the fluctuations in funding, Skyline Literacy has been able to build a stronger community based support through working

with other organizations. Rather than looking at what each organization works to achieve, the organizations need to work together to see the big picture and the connections in their clients.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

The biggest day-to-day challenge is time management with all of the varying priorities, figuring out which of the current priorities should be placed highest on the list. Communication can be a challenge – communicating with the stakeholders, the volunteers, and the staff. Additionally, face-to-face communication can be challenging.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

The greatest reward at Skyline Literacy is seeing when someone has truly been helped and the organization has impacted their life, being there for someone else.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

Skyline Literacy does not interact with other nonprofits frequently enough. The organization talks with other organizations in terms of the needs and accessibility; however, they are not doing enough to implement changes today that would help work on the big picture of poverty and assistance.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

Yes, strategic communication would be beneficial. Rather than just talking about what the organization is doing, it would be beneficial to find agencies that Skyline Literacy can more closely align. The organizations get together occasionally, but the meetings are not as productive as they could be. Organizations tend to be operating individually, when they should be operating collectively – the organizations need to collectively and efficiently work towards lifting people out of poverty.

Interview with the Representative from Harrisonburg City Schools

1. Does the City of Harrisonburg have a definition of poverty? If so, what is it?

Free and reduced lunches are provided to children whose families are economically disadvantaged. Harrisonburg City Schools provides free or reduced lunch to 75% of their children; the state average is 40%. The Census Bureau has a standard for different thresholds for children in poverty; this is a more accurate definition. The Census Bureau guidelines are used to determine if children are eligible for free or reduced lunches.

2. What percentage of the city population lives in poverty?

The child poverty rate for Harrisonburg is 23%; the state average is 16%.

3. How does your department address the issues of poverty in the city?

There is an early childhood program for four-year-olds. Breakfasts and lunches are provided to 4000 students. There are small class sizes to help children have a good access to education. There are high expectations held for all children. Poverty is not an excuse for poor educational achievement. There are often social and emotional needs for these children and the staff is trained to deal with these. There is transportation and technology available for all students. Money is not a reason for children to not take advanced courses or to get textbooks. The school system accommodates based on need.

4. How does poverty manifest itself in the city (i.e. crime, homelessness, etc.)?

There are higher drop out rates; people with chronic medical, physical, and health needs; homelessness; disruptive housing situations; crime; and substance abuse. There is a widening gap between children that go to post-high school education. This is a cycle that needs to be broken; children need hope, support, and resources.

5. What challenges does your department face in addressing poverty?

Bringing education to children is challenging. Schools must recognize that not all kids are equal; there are some that need more time, support, and resources. There are some households where the parents might not be able to read or help kids with homework. For the parents that are not able to attend parent-teacher meetings, there are home visits to meet the parents and discuss their kids. They acknowledge children's background and try to get kids to see this as a good educational experience and might not struggle financially in the future.

6. How frequently does your department interact with local nonprofits in working to address poverty in Harrisonburg?

They interact with nonprofits pretty often, interacting with United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs, the health department, Community Services Board, churches, and the Salvation Army. Children have challenges 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year; the schools must work on children's strength. There are financial challenges that might surface and the schools need to try to make sure these don't become an issue. They are working towards keeping schools open on snow days so that kids can eat – there are kids that do not have access to food when the schools are not open. They are working towards keeping schools open later to give kids access to technology to do their homework. The schools are trying to individualize and have special accommodations based on financial needs.

Interview with the Representative from Harrisonburg Police Department
1. Does the City of Harrisonburg have a definition of poverty? If so, what is it?

There is an observation rather than a definition for the police department. The police department works to address the issue to the best of their abilities through enforcement and the community resources offered for those in need.

2. What percentage of the city population lives in poverty?

No idea, just knows that there is an alarming percentage. There are specific areas that are more low-income, particularly the northern side of the city.

3. How does your department address the issues of poverty in the city?

They assist people that overlap with those in poverty; these individuals that the police department interacts with are often in poverty. They work with Sentara RMH and their STARS program, which is a health promotion program. The program addresses addiction and substance abuse for people with children, helping these people work through their issues to keep their children or get them back. The police department works with Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services, as well as the Elder Alliance Group. The groups they work with are not specifically focused on poverty; they are groups that address those in poverty and help them with their circumstances. Often the people that are repeat offenders are those that are not trying to better themselves. These people are given a resource list and encouraged to seek out these resources, but the police department cannot make people utilize these resources. The police department as a whole could do better to address poverty.

4. How does poverty manifest itself in the city (i.e. crime, homelessness, etc.)?

Poverty is often a cycle; growing up people learn from what they now and grew up in and often repeat the cycle. Poverty is sometimes a result of circumstances, individuals that had something and then lost it. There have been instances where people have been trying to do better, get put in jail, have to pay fines once they get out of jail but do not have the money, get a job, finally pay off their fines, then get caught driving with an expired license and put back in jail, causing their cycle to repeat.

5. What challenges does your department face in addressing poverty?

The police department faces challenges with the things that come with poverty. The challenges are often repeat offenders, people not wanting to better themselves, associated crimes with both of these types of individuals.

6. How frequently does your department interact with local nonprofits in working to address poverty in Harrisonburg?

The resource officers interact with each other. They have interacted with some nonprofits around Harrisonburg; whenever the police department is invited they always attend.

Interview with the Representative from People Helping People
1) How does your organization define poverty?

People Helping People serves people that are at 100% of the poverty level; they follow the federal guidelines in determining this.

2) What services does your organization provide?

People Helping People is a crisis organization that serves people who are facing their utilities being cut off. They do not provide rent; there is no organization in Harrisonburg that provides rent assistance. They provide direct financial aid, directly to the necessary companies. Majority of the clients are those that are dealing with their utilities being disconnected. They provide assistance in obtaining an ID or birth certificate. They provide money for work shoes,

prescription medicine, and fees at the free clinic. There is a limit of $100 per six months per household. They will only pay for utilities that are going to be cut off, not any utility bill.

3) Do people pay for these services?

No

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

> "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

This is not even close to being an accurate definition of poverty. Social Security Income is only $778 per month. If people receiving SSI are below the poverty guidelines, they guidelines should be lowered or SSI should be higher. The cost of living is absurd; people cannot earn a living wage on a minimum wage job. There are language barriers that contribute to getting in the way of being able to maintain a job, especially one that is not just a service-oriented job.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

There needs to be money management education, $15 per hour minimum wage, and free health care. Some people need to learn to be more responsible. One family cannot possibly afford rent by themselves on minimum wage. The issue is that a minimum wage salary is less than the lowest poverty level.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

There are 67 churches that are generous and have through a collaborative effort raised money for People Helping People. People Helping People was formed in response to a social worker realizing that not enough help is being provided; there needed to be a form of tracking the people being helped and what they receive. Gross income figures are used to determine if help can be provided; however the net income can be drastically lower. By helping with utilities, People Helping People hopes that people are able to have more money to put towards rent in their month of need.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

People Helping People operates completely by volunteers. There is only a small amount of time for a large amount of work. The organization cannot see asking volunteers to do more than they currently do. The hours have always been only two hours a day because they share the office with other agencies. There is a large amount of need and there are not enough time and resources to fulfill the need.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

Avoiding disconnections for a client and knowing that someone can keep their utilities on for another month is the greatest reward.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

People Helping People interacts with nonprofits and government on a daily basis. They share an office with another nonprofit. They call Social Services and the Housing Authority every day. They refer clients to other agencies so that they can get more help.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

There is not a lot that the city can do; this is not a localized problem, this is a national problem. It is really expensive to be poor. The water company tacks on a fee for every day they are late, making it even more expensive.

Interview with the Representative from Open Doors
1) How does your organization define poverty?

Open Doors does not define poverty; the services are available to anyone regardless of their circumstances. The general intake for Open Doors is individuals that are in extremely low poverty; this information is used when applying for grants.

2) What services does your organization provide?

Open Doors is a homeless shelter, predominantly an emergency shelter. They only accept adults, 99% of those that stay with them are single adults. They provide two meals everyday and offer resources to their guests to connect them with other resources in the area.

3) Do people pay for these services?

No

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

> "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

The representative was unsure how they could come up with anything better; this definition is a start in defining poverty. The issue with this definition is how is someone supposed to live on that low of an amount of money. There should be statewide measures rather than a national measure and the definition needs to factor in the cost of living in an area.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

The representative believes that a dependence on welfare is not completely a bad thing; there is a time and place for welfare in society. People need to take care of each other and act like neighbors. The Development Block Grant gets distributed and Open Doors receives a portion of this, but the rest of the money used to operate is private funding. Harrisonburg is probably better than many other places in acting neighborly and helping those in poverty.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

Funding has increased in recent years. There are receiving fewer grants, but this is largely due to internal reasons – there are not as many grants that are being applied for because there are not enough staff workers. The budget for Open Doors is $100,000 annually. They are establishing themselves to be well known. The capacity for Open Doors is expanding, as well as the length of their season. However, the money from the city is not expanding. Money from the city is roughly 10% of the annual budget; the rest comes from individuals, businesses, and civic organizations.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

There is only one full time staff worker, who is on call 24 hours, seven days a week. Being short staffed greatly impacts the ability of the organization to expand. Open Doors wants to do more to help, but realizes that what they do now is already a stretch of the abilities of the organization.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

When people hold up a key and show that they are moving in to their apartment; knowing that Open Doors has been a small part in their change.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

Open Doors interacts with nonprofits on a daily basis. They are part of the Continuum of Care, which has a monthly meeting where the nonprofits touch base and become aware of what the other organizations are doing. Open Doors works with the other three homeless shelters in the city to ensure that people are in the correct location and receive the most help. Open Doors works with the city building inspector on a regular basis. There is a disconnect between the some of the city officials and the organization. The city officials do not know what it is like to be homeless; they say that they are doing their job and enforcing the rules, while Open Doors is working to keep people alive – but these objectives do not always coincide.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

Yes, people need to be more aware of the issues – there are some people that are aware and there are others that are blissfully ignorant. The representative is curious what it would be like if the shelters in Harrisonburg got together and talked to the city council about everything that these

organizations do for residents of Harrisonburg. There is a complete disconnect on the city's understanding of a mobile shelter and this gets in the way of Open Doors ability to full function – increased communication could possibly remedy this situation.

Interview with the Representative from Our Community Place

1) How does your organization define poverty?

    Poverty is not a term that is used often for OCP; the language is not accurate for what is done. Ron discussed how wealthy people could be poor in the community and the financially poor can be rich. Poverty would be people without access to the things they need to live a happy and full life.

2) What services does your organization provide?

    OCP provides meals, laundry machines, outside lockers, movie nights, game nights, guest speakers, a place to be out of the elements, a morning worship time, and a bible study. They welcome people to participate with membership and meet with staff to set policies for the organization. Everyone is welcome at OCP; no one is turned away. They are launching food industries where two people will work each day. People have the opportunity to participate in a workday where they will work on the building and improve their interpersonal skills. OCP works to provide a sense of family and community rather than simply offering programs to people. They want to help people learn they have value and a place in the community.

3) Do people pay for these services?

    People pay $3 per month for the outside lockers. By participating in the workdays, people can earn "stars" which serves as a form of currency to buy OCP hats and sweatshirts. OCP has found that there is a more positive effect and impact on people's lives by asking something of them in return. The foundation of the organization was that anyone could come and receive their services, this is slowly shrinking and rules are being established to make the programs more beneficial.

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

    "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

    The representative could understand why this definition is in place and said that it makes sense in many ways. However, categorizing people in this way is not helpful. The question remains how else could you define poverty, where does the line get drawn with so many different areas and economies in the country.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

The representative is reading a book called Toxic Charities, which discusses the debilitating effects of welfare. People that have been severely abused as children and never had anyone to trust live in a permanent state of fear and cannot learn and grow. There needs to be a greater concern on how individuals can get involved in their own healing and economic recovery. People are not simply lazy and they are not just victims; these people are in a paralysis of fear and not capable of learning to get out of their situation. Welfare and disability services can get in the way of helping these people, providing an easy solution to their financial state. There needs to be a focus on learning about developmental trauma. OCP wants to become a trauma knowledgeable organization and help people become self-determining people. Ron was not sure that this is a government problem; government cannot necessarily solve it. The American Psychiatric Institute needs to listen to organizations dealing with development trauma and implement healing practices in the jails to deal with the problem. There need to be restorative rather than punitive changes in psychiatry and the penal system.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

OCP's funding has been on the rise. The organization is now more focused on what they are doing rather than spreading out. By spreading out too much, the organization was trying to do too much and actually not doing much to help. Now OCP is more focused on their goal and cutting some of their programming and making more programming in other areas. The public is responding to these new changes.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

People are in a state of crisis, whether real or imagined. OCP staff needs to learn to have discernment and keep their personal boundaries in place. There needs to be self-care in an organization in the community that deals with people in a state of crisis. The staff is in very different situations than those that are being helped and there is a challenge of not being able to help everyone.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

Seeing someone get in touch with their self-worth and gain confidence, relaxing or becoming more playful depending on the person; seeing someone who felt isolated and useless become engaged and realize their self-worth.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

OCP interacts with other nonprofits everyday in some way or another and has a good relationship with most of these nonprofits. OCP operates with some city money.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

The representative believes that the communication is already pretty good. He thinks that the city is responsive to their needs and that the nonprofits have good communication through the Continuum of Care.

Interview with the Representative from Mercy House

1) How does your organization define poverty?

   Poverty guidelines are concerned with the literal definition of poverty. Their definition stems from their funders. Mercy House does not deal with all poverty, only with homelessness, so their measures are more subjective than the general poverty guidelines. Mercy House looks to address the impacts of poverty, which do not have a direct measure. There are specific measures for certain programs, for instance reaching a certain level of the median area income. The federal poverty guidelines are more concerned with the "diagnosis of poverty", Mercy House is concerned with the "cure of poverty".

2) What services does your organization provide?

   Mercy House is a Core Family Homeless Shelter; they care for dependent children and the homeless that have no other options of places to go. Homeless Prevention program is designed to sustain current housing, ensuring that if their clients were to be evicted they would have somewhere to go. Rapid Rehousing, for those that are literally homeless (living in their cars, etc.), is a program that helps to provide funds to acquire housing and Mercy House might assist by contributing a security deposit or first months rent. There are case management services that are provided for those in housing prevention, designed to help individuals sustain their current housing. Transportation services are offered; Mercy House works with Way To Go, which helps to ensure transportation to jobs and interviews. Child Care is provided on site in the shelter. Mercy House works towards supportive employment – with many of the individuals working in their thrift stores being those that Mercy House helps. Mercy House will assist with medication and doctors visits, depending on the insurance situation for each resident – providing glasses, dentures, and other health related items that would inhibit their residents ability to be successful in an interview or job. There are a variety of programs that help to create a sense of normalcy for the children that reside there, assisting financially to enroll children in camps, dance classes, sports camps, etc. Mercy House provides services from a comprehensive standpoint for the family, rather than just addressing their homelessness.

3) Do people pay for these services?

   No payment is required for these services. However, the shelter has a mandatory savings requirement – 50% of each paycheck or entitlement check must be put in to savings. This is designed to encourage residents to invest in their futures.

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

   > "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

   The federal guidelines are a general direction; they are not fully applicable or accurate because each community has different needs, costs, and factors that contribute to the presence of poverty.

These guidelines do not factor in children having special needs or mental health issues, which has a greater time and money cost for the families. These guidelines serve a purpose of drawing the line somewhere because there is no way to establish guidelines that please everyone throughout the whole country.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

Mercy House and other similar organizations believe that the answer lies in working with individual families to move beyond their current situation – helping each family with finding stable employment, providing child care, providing transportation, equipping them with the necessary interview skills, as well as encouraging and incentivizing people to work. The presence of accessible and sustainable employment in the United States has nearly disappeared with many of the "working class", manufacturing jobs being outsourced; this leaves service jobs that tend to pay minimum wage. The welfare services that are provided are no longer the root issue, it stems from social security and disability income. Many people are faced with choosing between a part-time minimum wage jobs where they will struggle to make a living, or choosing disability income – many are choosing disability instead of working and being unproductive in society. People need to be incentivized to use both a part-time minimum wage job to supplement their income received from disability income.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

Mercy House has been fortunate enough to have relatively level funding over the last several years, though there was a decrease between 2013 and 2014 that is attributed to a large amount of private money that was a one-time occurrence. The thrift stores help to level the funds. Most nonprofits are impacted by inconsistent funding and as a result have to be more creative in their services and acquiring funds. With constantly changing governance, there are constantly changing priorities – the funding and resources change based on the current timing. For instance, this year there was a large push towards "effectively ending" veterans' homelessness in Virginia. A large amount of funding was given to organizations that would help to reach this goal; however, unless this is the same goal next year, those organizations will not receive the same amount of funding and will have to come up with new ways to address the situation.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

Funding is always an issue; however, the greatest issue is finding resources that are able to consistently meet the needs of those that are being served. Money and space are an issue, so there are struggles to find the best ways to utilize the scarce resources available to effectively serve those in need. Mercy House also struggles with the public's perception of those being served, assuming that the homeless are people with drug issues, mental health problems, or don't want to work – this is not the case at all. Mercy House is working with the working poor, the struggles come from the economic reality that these individuals are not able to make ends meet and they often have not had a role model to show them budgeting, what it takes to be a good tenant, etc.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

The greatest consistent reward is seeing a circumstance where Mercy House has been able to improve a family or child's life and it has been sustained – they have been able to bend the downward curve and put those they serve back in the right direction. The goal is to help individuals and have them take the opportunities that were given to them, turn things around, and then be able to help others in need. The government has to deal with equity and fairness, not being able to exclude anyone from their services – this dilutes the resources available and often the system then does not work for anyone. Mercy House believes that impacting fewer clients in a large way is better than giving them a check and sending them on their way and not providing them with the skills needed to be more successful.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

Mercy House is consistently interacting with other nonprofits and government – working with nonprofit in Harrisonburg and the valley region, working with every level of government. Mercy House is a member of the Western Virginia Continuum of Care, which is a collection of organizations that do similar work in the Shenandoah Valley. Mercy House partners with a variety of organizations in Harrisonburg, including the Harrisonburg Housing and Redevelopment Authority. They are a United Way certified organization and work with the United Way in Harrisonburg. Mercy House also works with JMU and has other educational connections. They work with the school districts, as well as social services and child services. Mercy House regularly works with the City of Harrisonburg, using block grant from the city towards building maintenance.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

More communication is always better, but Harrisonburg is blessed with a good community connection. The connections between agencies in Harrisonburg is better than seen in other areas that the representative has previously worked in; there is a greater level of integration with the community and the nonprofits. Occasionally, there are disconnects between the city and Mercy House regarding the priorities and what is to be expected between the city and Mercy House. For instance, the funding that is given versus the need; the ability to get the message conveyed in these situations has room for improvement. The elected officials could be a better job working with the nonprofits to be more successful.

Interview with the Representative from Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority

1. Does the City of Harrisonburg have a definition of poverty? If so, what is it?

   For the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, they operate at 50% of the median income and many of the programs function at 30% or less of the median income. Poverty is seen with any issues that affect the ability to have gainful employment. There is no clear definition for the city; there is a different eligibility criterion for different programs.

2. What percentage of the city population lives in poverty?

   Counting students, the poverty level in Harrisonburg is pretty high. Out of the rental units in the city, 50% of them earn income at 50% or less of the median income, this includes students. The

university brings a large number of service-oriented jobs, which puts most people largely in the $8-12 per hour pay rate. There needs to be job diversity, there is no job growth outside of service jobs.

3. How does your department address the issues of poverty in the city?

Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority provides decent, safe, affordable housing. There is a 10-year plan to end homelessness. They manage the point time count of homelessness. The Housing Authority is the lead grant coordinator for the Continuum of Care. They provide a safety net for extremely low poverty individuals. The Housing Authority owns 249 units that they lease out; 120 units are for the elderly and disabled, 129 are multifamily units with one to five bedrooms. There are 30 units that provide permanent support; 15 are for homeless veterans and 15 are for the chronically homeless. Chronically homeless are determined by having a disabling condition; they are homeless for one year in a three-year period.

4. How does poverty manifest itself in the city (i.e. crime, homelessness, etc.)?

Poverty manifests itself through homelessness – there is dilapidated housing and sub-standard housing throughout the city. There are large amounts of school age youth that are exposed to poverty and have significantly less academic achievement. Parents that need to work are not able to provide as much support for their children. Harrisonburg is a transient community, with 67% rental properties in the city.

5. What challenges does your department face in addressing poverty?

There is a challenge of balancing the demand and resources available. There is an increased demand for services. The Housing Authority has a waiting list of 1100 to 1200 people; it will take nine to ten years to get off the waiting list. Federal funding with the large amount of national debt is not able to invest in more infrastructure. There are funding cuts administratively and in the ability to provide services.

6. How frequently does your department interact with local nonprofits in working to address poverty in Harrisonburg?

The Housing Authority works with nonprofits on a daily or weekly basis. They have close relationships with service providers and there is a procedure to support those in the homeless shelters. There is ongoing communication and partnerships with organizations in the city. There is a time limit on participation in the programs based on the income level – if someone has too much income they are removed from the program. There are expectations for people while they are in the program.

Interview with the Representative from Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic
1) How does your organization define poverty?

The free clinic operates for patients that are at 200% of the federal poverty line.

2) What services does your organization provide?

The free clinic is a comprehensive doctor's office – there are general doctors, specialists, a pharmacy, a lab, behavioral health counseling, and patient education.

3) Do people pay for these services?

   Patients are eligible for a one-year membership for $20 and can receive a 30-day prescription for $2. There is assistance for those that cannot afford these fees; however 95% of the patients pay their fees. People Helping People is a partner and the clinic works with Bernie's Purse Assistance Program.

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

   "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

   This definition is usable but it standardizes poverty. If an individual meets these criteria, they hands down need assistance. It would be surprising if these guidelines were able to catch everyone in poverty.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

   There is a portion of the population where self-sufficiency is not their goal. There needs to be a safety net to assist people that do not have a goal of functioning "independently". The bootstrap idea needs to be gotten rid of; people cannot always fix themselves and this cannot be expected as a strategy to get rid of poverty.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

   The free clinic's funding has increased; donors have increased contributions because of recognition of the increased need. All of the money that the clinic uses comes from donors, except the money from the membership fees from patients.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

   Maximizing the impact of this organization on patients and the community, balancing the needs of both of these groups. The free clinic serves the hospital by serving patients – without the clinic there would be more people going to the hospital and these people would be left with large medical bills that they would never be able to pay. The clinic is a growing organization and they must maximize the ability to demonstrate value in these areas.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

   Seeing everything work

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

The free clinic interacts daily with nonprofits, including the hospital and institutes of higher education. The free clinic interacts with the government roughly twice a month. The government is a source of funding and frustration; the frustration often stems from the government not supporting downtown commerce and leaving snow on the sidewalks.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

People involved with the free clinic are able to get to know patients frequently on a first name basis, people that they otherwise might not have ever interacted with. The clinic causes connections where there otherwise might not be connections. There is a communication gap in general between people; people have a tendency to interact with people that are similar to them. It would be good to try to get the local government to the clinic to be able to see the operations and interactions.

Interview with the Representative from Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Food Pantry

1) How does your organization define poverty?

This food pantry is a Feeding America food pantry. They follow the Feeding America established guidelines, serving people at 150% of the poverty level.

2) What services does your organization provide?

They give groceries; they do not cook meals. The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church has a soup kitchen on Wednesdays with a hot lunch. The Church sponsors the facility for friendship house with a dinnertime meal on Thursdays with food provided by other churches. They provide food for transitional people (homeless). There are "blue book" bags that include snacks, drinks, and something like tuna – allows people to not advertise they are homeless when asking for food. The homeless are able to come once a week.

3) Do people pay for these services?

No

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

"The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

Yes, because if someone has a nest egg it does not go against him or her when being considered for poverty. They track people's incomes when they come in and their family size since these factors are constantly changing. These guidelines are pretty clear.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

People want to work; there are situations where people are not necessarily comfortable to apply for opportunities. There is a large drop in customers when switching from a paper to computer-based program. Each family can come once a month for USDA food. Non-USDA food can be given in emergency situations. The food pantry partners with Wal-Mart, Kroger, and Martin's through Feeding America – they get a large portion of their food from these grocery stores. They act as a temporary emergency assistance program and provide food for two/three days and give 50/58 pounds of food per family.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

There is no funding; the food pantry is totally supported by parishioners. The income fluctuates incredibly through donations. They apply for grants. The money that is donated or received in grants goes towards purchasing milk, meat, and peanut butter – the staples. This is the second largest pantry in the Shenandoah Valley.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

Managing income to make sure we have enough food and choice for clients. In the summer there is a larger selection of produce because farmers will bring excess food to the pantry.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

It takes 75 volunteers to run the pantry; the volunteers are generous in time and money. If the volunteers see that the pantry is low in something they will go and buy the items to restock the pantry.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

They interact with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank in Verona every day; this food bank is the partner services coordinator and keeps the pantry up to date on inspections. They are a high priority organization; dealing with food insecurity is a high priority issue. The Verona Food Bank coordinates some events that enable communication with other nonprofits. Hope Distributed at the Church of Nazarene has a paid coordinator for their pantry. Hope Distributed has a backpack program that is done every week, it gives kids backpacks with food so they have something to eat on weekends; they also provide groceries and have a clothing and furniture store.

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

Yes, everyone is doing their own thing and not communicating with each other. The pantries communicate, but they do not communicate greatly enough with other nonprofits. The food pantry is starting an education program. The pantry is giving food to people, but if they do not know what to do with it then it is of no use to the family or individual receiving it. This education

program has been successful in the mobile pantry; this is the pilot pantry for a stationary location. There are multiple modules for the pantry to go through.

Interview with the Representative from Big Brothers Big Sisters Harrisonburg-Rockingham

1) How does your organization define poverty?

   Big Brothers Big Sisters follows the Census Bureau defined poverty guidelines, and reports at 125-150% below the poverty rate. Majority of the children, 75%, fall below the poverty threshold.

2) What services does your organization provide?

   Big Brothers Big Sisters provide one-on-one mentoring for children aged four to eighteen using volunteer mentors. Each child is matched with a volunteer who is responsible for meeting with them on average once a week either in a community based (home interaction) or school based (school interaction) program.

3) Do people pay for these services?

   There is no cost to participants.

4) Do you think that the current U.S. government definition of poverty is an accurate representation?

   > "The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)." (https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html)

   Poverty exists outside of the economic guidelines; there are families that fall right outside these parameters and these children do not have the same advantages as children in families with more means. The threshold for poverty is really low and plays more towards the working poor, rather than the chronically poor.

5) What changes do we as a country need to make in order to reduce dependence on welfare services?

   Those that are on welfare need access to training and education that helps to provide more opportunities to be gainfully employed or employed in a place where they are able to support their families. There needs to be an increased number of mental health services, especially services that can help women with depression that feel stuck in their situation. Checks and food stamps are a step towards alleviating poverty, but education provides hope, opportunity, and drive to leave a situation and can be more beneficial towards those in poverty.

6) Has your organization's funding increased or decreased in recent years? If it has decreased, how has your organization adjusted?

Funding for Big Brothers Big Sisters has decreased recently. Federal funding via grants has been greatly reduced, so Big Brothers Big Sisters has been reaching out and building a stronger local donor base that has helped to supplement the funding.

7) What is the biggest day-to-day challenge faced by the organization?

The biggest challenge of Big Brothers Big Sisters is the meet the growing needs of the children being served, with a decreased amount of funding the number of children able to be served must be decreased. There are more people wanting the services of Big Brothers Big Sisters and the organization is having to turn more children down – there are less kids being served in the county than in the city. There is a waitlist of 100 children to be served in the community. It is harder to get volunteers out in the county, causing fewer referrals from the schools in the county because of the lack of volunteers. With the large number of kids in the city being served, majority of the funding comes from the city. There are referrals from families who have kids in the program and know the positive impacts, which contribute to the challenge of more children needing to be served.

8) What has been the greatest reward?

The kids served are the greatest reward – knowing that the program makes a huge difference to these children's lives; seeing the light and excitement in children upon receiving a big; knowing that the big will make a large difference to the child.

9) How often does your organization interact with other nonprofits and with the local government in addressing poverty?

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a member of a coalition of organizations that works towards serving the youth. However, the organization needs to look for ways to truly partner with these organizations rather than just being a member of the coalition. Big Brothers Big Sisters has a great partnership with the schools – there is a school liaison at every school and a staff person assigned to every school. There is great support from the schools for the program, working to alleviate the time frame of meeting at lunch for the mentors. Since there is work being done in the schools with the children, they receive city and county funding. Big Brothers Big Sisters interacts with the city council and city and county officials to tell them what is going on with the program to continue the support. With the schools, Big Brothers Big Sisters "would be dead in the water".

10) Would increased communication between both nonprofits and government be beneficial to addressing poverty in Harrisonburg? Why?

Yes, communication is key to everything. A relationship should be established where the organizations are able to talk to officials. There are not enough coalitions that sit down with the government and nonprofits to analyze the issues and truly address the issue – more collaboration and coordination could occur. With the large number of avenues that play into poverty, an increased amount of collaboration would be beneficial to address the poverty in the city.