

Angel Foundation Program Participant Survey

Key Findings of Participant Needs and Program Satisfaction

Introduction

The burden of cancer care and the associated financial toxicity to families is immense. A systematic review found that 40% to 50% of U.S. patients experienced material or psychological stressors related to the cost of treatment.¹ Angel Foundation is a Twin Cities-based nonprofit that provides support to adults with cancer and their families. They contracted with Wilder Research in January 2021 to design, administer, and report on a survey of participants within two of their programs: Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) and Facing Cancer Together (FCT). The EFA program provides financial grants to adult cancer patients to help them pay for basic, non-medical expenses, such as rent and mortgage, utilities, food, and fuel.



Angel Foundation aims to reduce patients' anxiety by relieving these financial burdens, which in turn allows patients to focus on their cancer treatment and general well-being. The FCT program provides free education and support to children, teens, and young adults who have or have had a parent, grandparent, or caregiver with cancer. They provide programming, including monthly activities and phone consultations, and resources, such as AngelPack backpacks with toys and art supplies for children to use during their parents' cancer treatments. Through the FCT program, Angel Foundation seeks to relieve participants' fear and anxiety about their family's cancer experience and provide families with new coping skills.

A disproportionate financial burden may be placed on families of color due to disparities in income, thereby exacerbating other stressors. Although the Affordable Care Act has led to larger coverage gains for people of color, disparities in coverage persist.² The program participant survey aims to understand participants' level of need across a variety of basic needs categories, as well as their satisfaction with the programming Angel Foundation provides. In 2020, 38% of clients served by Angel Foundation identified as African American/Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Other/Two or More Races. Angel Foundation is conducting this survey as a component of a larger diversity, equity, and inclusivity initiative they have launched at the organization. The survey aims to address these areas not only for program participants generally, but also to examine similarities and differences in level of need and satisfaction across different racial and ethnic groups. The findings will inform program implementation, as Angel Foundation seeks to tailor outreach and programming to meet the needs of a variety of families.

¹ Altice, C. K., Banegas, M. P., Tucker-Seeley, R. D., & Yabroff, K. R. (2017). Financial hardships experienced by cancer survivors: a systematic review. *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 109(2).

² Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. (March 5, 2020). *Changes in Health Coverage by Race and Ethnicity since the ACA, 2010-2018*. <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/changes-in-health-coverage-by-race-and-ethnicity-since-the-aca-2010-2018/>

Methods

Angel Foundation and Wilder Research collaborated to develop a survey tool in January 2021. Wilder Research programmed the web survey using Voxco's Acuity, a web survey platform. Angel Foundation staff shared contact information and application information with Wilder for participants from the EFA and FCT programs for the previous three years (2018-2021). Wilder launched the survey using this sample on February 10, 2021 and closed the survey on March 1, 2021. Survey respondents received three reminders via email to complete the survey before the data collection window closed. Respondents were informed that by completing the survey, they would be entered to win one of five \$100 Target gift cards. Of the 2,130 Angel Foundation participants in the sample (EFA clients=1,688, FCT clients=361, both EFA and FCT clients=81), 649 completed the survey for an overall response rate of 30%.



Angel Foundation shared demographic information for the survey sample with Wilder Research; this information came from program application forms completed by participants as they began their participation in Angel Foundation programming. Wilder Research connected respondents' survey responses to their demographic information to allow for comparison across demographic groups of interest. For the purposes of this report, differences in responses by key demographics (i.e., race/ethnicity) are noted in a figure if the difference is 15% or greater.

Survey results

Participant demographics

The majority of respondents were EFA program participants. Most identified as female and were age 45 or older. Sixty percent identified as Caucasian and 19% as African American/Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Caucasian, other/two or more races, with the remainder choosing not to provide this information. Slightly more than half lived in a household of 2 to 5 people, with an annual household income under \$25,000 (Figure 1).

1. Survey respondent demographics

Characteristics	N	%
All programs (N=649)		
Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA)	518	80%
Facing Cancer Together (FCT)	100	15%
Both EFA and FCT	31	5%

Note: Category totals may vary from 100% due to rounding.

1. Survey respondent demographics (continued)

Characteristics	N	%
Race/Ethnicity (N=649)		
Caucasian	390	60%
Black, Indigenous, and people of color ^a	121	19%
Did not disclose	138	21%
Age (N=618)		
24 and younger	15	2%
25-34	43	7%
35-44	120	19%
45-54	142	23%
55-64	175	28%
65 and older	123	20%
Gender (N=649)		
Female	552	70%
Male	197	30%
Relationship status (N=649)		
Single	192	30%
Married	246	38%
In a relationship	20	3%
Separated or divorced	103	16%
Widowed	20	3%
Did not specify	68	10%
Household size (N=599)		
1 individual	186	31%
2-5 individuals	345	58%
5 or more individuals	68	11%
Household income (N=423)		
Less than \$25,000	227	54%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	157	37%
\$50,000 or more	39	9%

Note: Category totals may vary from 100% due to rounding.

^a Categories from administrative database included African American/Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Caucasian, Other/Two or More Races, Prefer not to answer. Respondents who selected something other than Caucasian and Prefer not to answer were grouped together as black, Indigenous, and people of color.

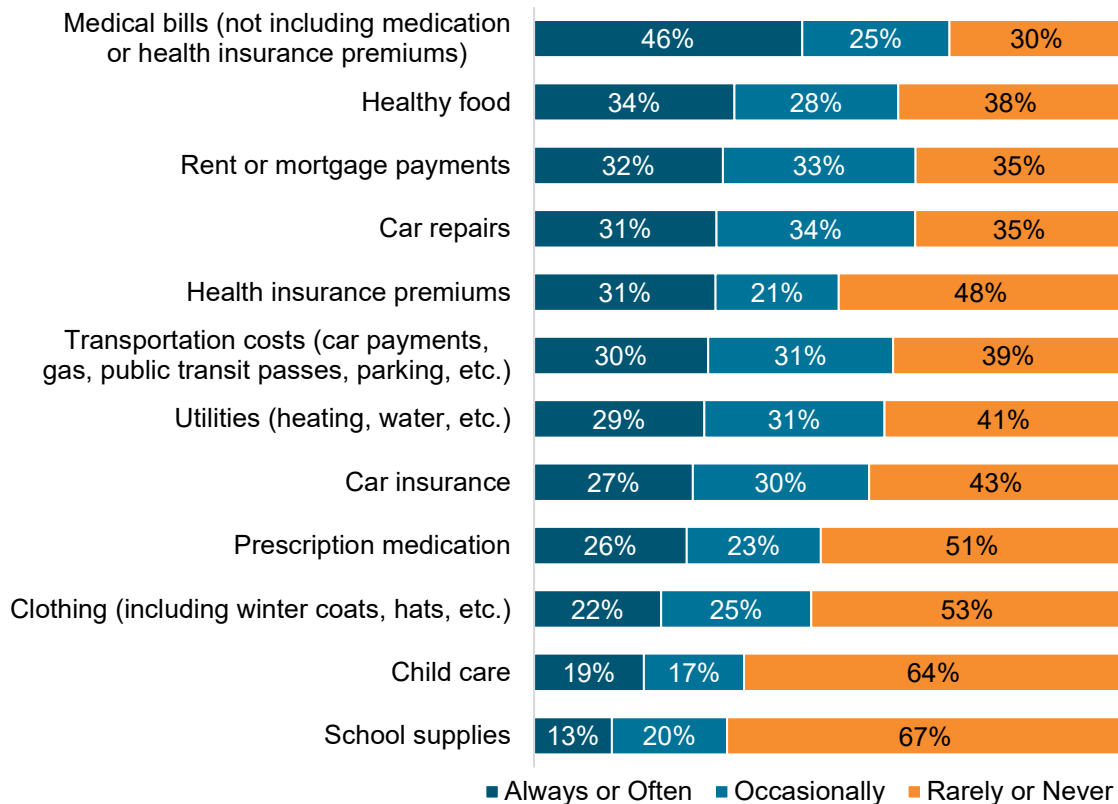
Key findings

Basic needs

More than one-third of participants are frequently struggling to afford medical bills and healthy food for themselves and their family.

Angel Foundation program participants often have difficulty affording basic needs (Figure 2).

2. How frequently have you and your family struggled to afford the following basic needs in the past 12 months?

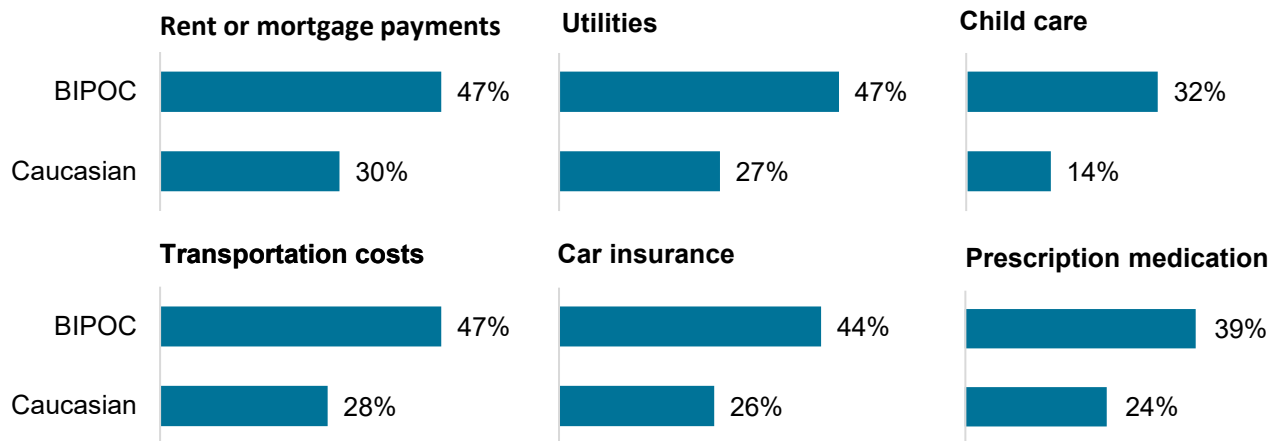


Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. Analysis does not include 'Not applicable' responses.

A greater proportion of BIPOC (black, Indigenous, and people of color) participants are struggling to afford basic needs compared with Caucasian participants.

A greater proportion of BIPOC respondents indicated they were “always” or “often” struggling to afford each basic need listed in the survey compared with Caucasian respondents. The greatest difference between BIPOC and Caucasian respondents was in response to how frequently they struggle to afford housing payments (rent or mortgage, utilities), transportation costs and car insurance, child care, prescription medication, and school supplies (Figure 3). These disparities may reflect wealth and income gaps resulting from current and historical discriminatory policies that have led to disinvestment in communities of color.

3. Percent of participants who “always” or “often” struggled to afford [basic need] in the past 12 months by race

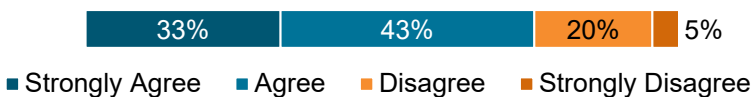


COVID-19 has had a significant impact on participants’ ability to afford basic needs, particularly for BIPOC participants.

The majority of participants reported increased difficulty affording basic needs due to the impact of COVID-19 (Figure 4). A greater proportion of BIPOC participants reported increased difficulty due to COVID-19 compared with Caucasian participants (Figure 5).

4. Impact of COVID-19 on ability to afford basic needs

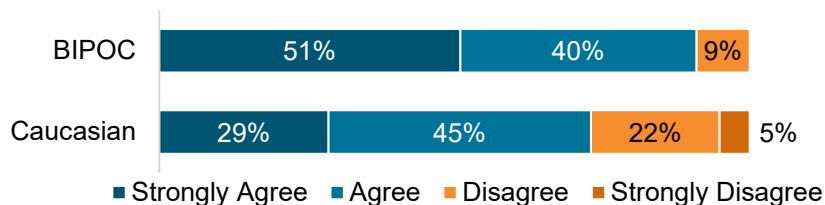
COVID-19 has made it harder for me to afford basic needs for my family.



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

5. Impact of COVID-19 on ability to afford basic needs by race

COVID-19 has made it harder for me to afford basic needs for my family.



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. Analysis does not include respondents who chose not to disclose their race.

In addition to challenges affording basic needs, 80% of participants reported that COVID-19 has increased their financial stress in general. Responses did not vary substantially by race related to financial stress due to COVID-19.

Program satisfaction

Overall, participants feel positively about Angel Foundation staff and feel that the programming provided is welcoming and inclusive. Responses related to program satisfaction did not vary substantially by race.

Participants were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of Angel Foundation staff and how they feel treated by them (Figure 6).

6. Participant perceptions of Angel Foundation staff and programming



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The greatest difference in response by race was regarding a question about Angel Foundation staff’s understanding of participants’ culture. Eighty-two percent of Caucasian respondents agreed and 71% of BIPOC respondents agreed that staff understand their culture.

Participants reported that the Angel Foundation has been helpful in connecting them to resources that will help pay for basic needs; responses did not vary substantially by race.

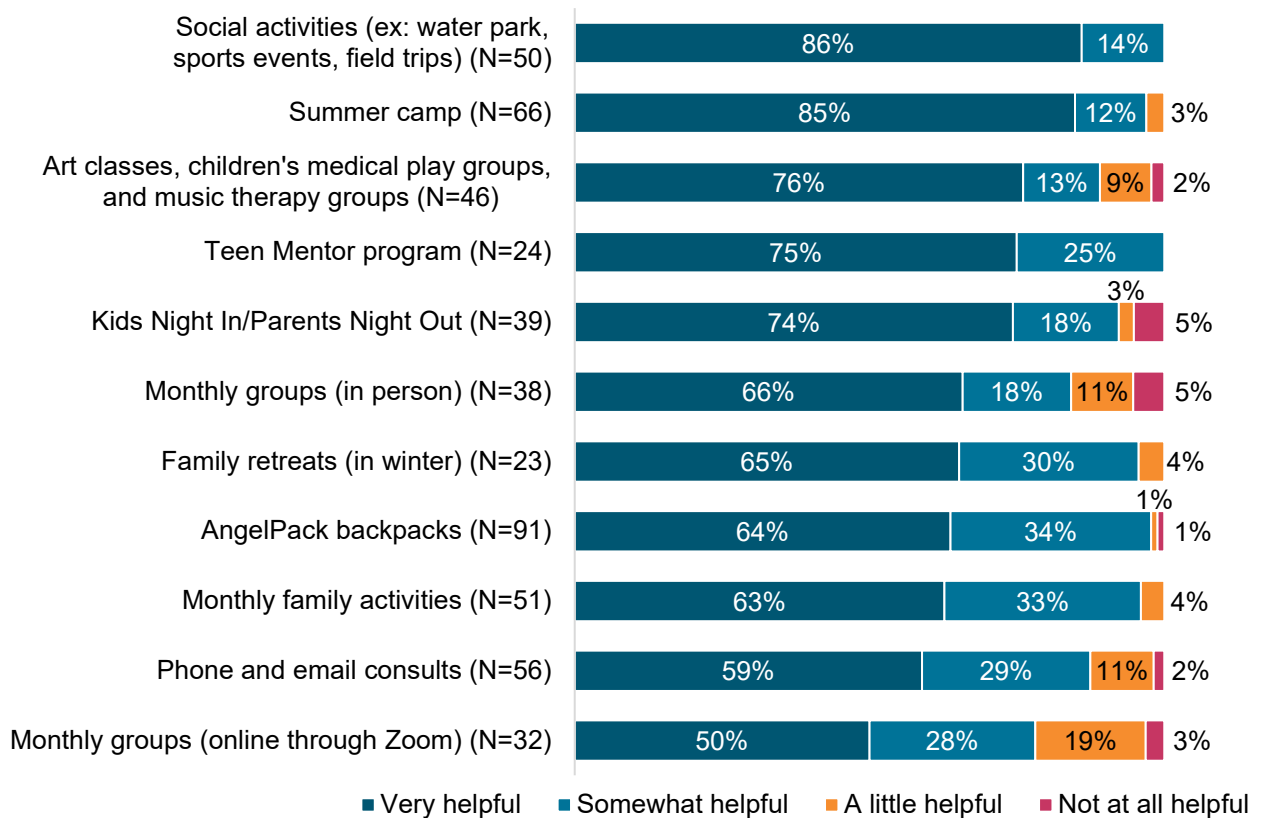
Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) reported that Angel Foundation has been “very helpful” and 22% reported that the Foundation has been “somewhat helpful” in connecting them to resources to help pay for basic needs. Responses did not vary substantially by race.

Program experience

Overall, FCT participants reported that they find the resources, events, and activities Angel Foundation provides to be helpful, particularly social events and activities aimed at children (e.g., summer camp).

Participants of FCT were asked about the helpfulness of various Children and Family Services resources, events, and activities. The majority of respondents said that these services were either “very helpful” or “somewhat helpful”. The greatest proportion of respondents indicated that the social activities and summer camp provided by Children and Family Services were “very helpful” (Figure 7).

7. Helpfulness of resources, events, and activities provided by Children and Family Services (or FCT)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Barriers to participation for FCT families are transportation issues, inconvenient times, and lack of knowledge about activities available.

Sixty percent of FCT families indicated having experienced barriers to accessing resources, events, and activities. The most common barriers included transportation (23%), inconvenient times (21%), and lack of knowledge about what activities are available (17%). Participants also specified challenges related to their busy schedules and their inability to attend events due to COVID-19 restrictions. A few respondents commented on the location of events as a barrier to participation (i.e., too far away).

Among all Angel Foundation participants, financial assistance for food, gas, and housing are the most helpful services to them and their families.

When asked an open-ended question about the most helpful services provided by the Angel Foundation, the largest number of participants mentioned financial support. Specifically, participants mentioned food assistance, followed by gas assistance, housing assistance, and general financial assistance (including financial guidance) as most helpful for their family. As two respondents noted:

The gift cards and help with utilities was a huge help. I continued to work and my boss was very accommodating. I may have slowed down a little with work towards the end, hence smaller checks, so the financial help was an enormous help.

You will never know how blessed we felt when we received those coupons during our time of need. We had no idea of what all we were facing at the time, what kind of finances would be needed, and how the cancer stuff would change our lives. We are now almost a year out from my transplant and with the help of insurance, a great family support system, and Angel Foundation, as well as great doctors and care teams; we are looking at the light at the end of the tunnel.

Participants would like a wider variety of activities and more opportunities to engage in programming.

When asked an open-ended question about what other types of resources, activities, or events the Angel Foundation could provide, the largest number of participants mentioned offering a wider variety of activities and more opportunities to engage in programming. Specifically, respondents mentioned the desire for activities specific to families with kids and activities that allowed them to give back to others in need. Participants also mentioned the desire for activities and events held in locations outside of the Twin Cities metro area. Respondents also suggested the Angel Foundation provide more resources around social support and mental health, such as support groups. Several respondents mentioned that it would be helpful to provide more services, like transportation and help navigating financial assistance.



Connection to services

The majority of participants heard about Angel Foundation from their health care provider.

Eighty-two percent of respondents reported that their health care provider referred them to the Angel Foundation. Twelve percent heard about the Angel Foundation from family, a friend, or general word of mouth and 6% were referred in some other way (internet search, another Angel Foundation client/participant, local ad, social media, or something else). Participants could check all that apply.

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