

**FINDINGS FROM THE THIRD ANNUAL
C. J. PEETE COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY
(Winter 1998-99)**

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Overview

Comparison of results from the first CAP-sponsored community-wide C. J. Peete survey (undertaken in Fall 1996), the second survey conducted a year ago (Winter 1997-98), and the recently completed third survey (December '97-January '98), suggests several positive developments:

- ! a smaller proportion of households report receiving TANF;
- ! more households now have someone in the paid labor force; and
- ! real income has risen.

While these trends are very encouraging, the fact remains that the vast majority of households continue to experience deep poverty, remain transfer dependent, and are unprepared to become self-sufficient.

Readers should note that this report is preliminary only and subject to statistical adjustment.

Demographics & Sample

! During the November - January period, we sampled approximately 1 in 4 households in C. J. Peete (N=254). With persistent effort by our resident survey team, we achieved an overall response rate of 92%.

! Unadjusted mean household size is 2.7 persons, the same as it was in previous community surveys.

! Complete household composition data was obtained on 221 households wherein 647 persons (281 adults and 366 children) reportedly reside. Based on this, we project an estimated total population of 3,071 persons (1,334 adults and 1,737 youths).¹

! Seventy-two percent of the sampled Peete households contain children; over half (57%) of the households have children of school age.

! Thirty-five percent of the children living in C. J. Peete are pre-schoolers.

! The vast majority of lease-holding adults at Peete are:

- ! currently unaffiliated, i.e., 6% report being currently married or cohabitating, 26% report being separated, widowed, or divorced, and the remaining 68% are single;
- ! middle-aged (mean age = 41.8 years; standard deviation = 17.2 years);
- ! African-American (100%);
- ! women (91%);
- ! with children (67%).

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¹ The fact that our population estimates are remarkably stable from last year (3,073 persons consisting of 1,324 adults and 1,749 youths) gives us confidence in our sampling procedures.

Labor Force Participation

! In the first C. J. Peete community survey (Fall, 1996), only 25% of the Peete households reported someone in the workforce. A year ago (Winter 1997-98), thirty percent of Peete households contained a single labor force participant while 7% reported having more than one worker. In the current survey, these figures have climbed to 42.3 % and 14.3% respectively. This progress is extremely encouraging and owes to a strong local economy, welfare reform, and other factors.

! While a very positive development, the proportion of persons working full-time has not appreciably changed and continues to hover at just over 60% of those currently employed. Consistent with our previous findings, three-quarters of those working part-time would prefer full-time work, but cannot find it or have responsibilities (e.g., child care) that prevent them from taking on full-time work.

Education and Training

! Average and median educational attainment are 11 and 12 years respectively. This is unchanged from the earlier community-wide surveys conducted in Fall 1996 and Winter 1997-98.

! Fifty-six percent of respondents have earned a high school or graduate equivalency degree. Several respondents have gone on to earn an associate's degree.

! Thirty percent of the women without a high school degree indicate that they did not finish high school due to becoming pregnant.

Poverty, Income, Welfare (see Tables 1-3)

! While the estimated current poverty rate for Peete households still exceeds 90%, the percentage of Peete households reporting annual household incomes of less than \$6000 has continued to decline to just below 60%. (A year ago it was 64% and a year before that it was 73%.) Adding the value of food stamps to household income, the average Peete household lives on \$690 per month -- equivalent to 63%, of the three-person federal poverty guideline. This represents almost a 10% increase in real dollar terms since the last survey.

Table 1 - Reported Income Sources and Amounts, 1995, 1997-98, and 1998-99, By Percent²

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1997-98</u>	<u>1998-99</u>
Less than \$6000	73	64	59
\$6000-7999	15	17	17
\$8000-9999	5	7	10
\$10000-11999	3	3	7
\$12000 plus	3	9	7
Valid cases (N =	235	242	249

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² 1996 survey: "Which category would you place your total 1995 income in--that is, everyone in the household's combined income for last year from all sources before taxes?"

1997-98 and 1998-99 surveys: Total money income in past month X 12

! Per Table 2, households with someone regularly employed (part- or full-time) in the labor force, average \$531 per month in employment earnings, while households without regular participation in the paid labor force average only \$65 per month from work earnings. Approximately sixty percent of this disparity (of \$466) is offset by the latter group's receipt of \$283 more transfer income per month.

Table 2 - Income Sources and Mean Monthly Amounts of Households With & Without Someone Regularly Employed in Labor Force

<u>Income Source</u>	<u>With LFP*</u>	<u>Without LFP*</u>
Employment	\$ 531	\$ 65
Cash Transfers	\$ 102	\$ 341
Food Stamps	\$ 102	\$ 146
Other	\$ 27	\$ 21
Total	\$ 762	\$ 573
Annualized Total	\$9144	\$6876
Valid cases (N =	115	139

*LFP = labor force participation

! Only 25% of Peete households report current receipt of TANF, a substantial and continuing decline from the first two surveys. More than half the households reported receiving AFDC in Fall 1996. A year later, the figure had declined to 34%. Among those who continue to receive TANF, the average remaining eligibility is less than five months.

! A year ago, approximately 70% of Peete households reported receiving some form(s) of government cash transfer (e.g., TANF, Social Security, SSI, SSDI) with mean household benefits of \$364 in the preceding month. The current survey indicates that these figures have fallen to 58% and \$233 dollars respectively.

! Sixty percent of Peete households still report receiving food stamps in the previous month. Last year, the corresponding figure was 67%. Fourteen months before that, three-quarters of Peete households reported receipt of food stamps. Among those households receiving food stamps, the mean monthly benefit level has risen from \$151 to \$209.³

! Less than 10% of the sample reported receiving income via private transfers (from friends or family members living elsewhere) and/or from "off-the-books" activities during the preceding month. In a few exceptional cases, income from the former exceeded several hundred dollars, while the latter resulted in over a thousand dollars. Excluding the reports of these "outliers", the reported means (among those acknowledging these forms of income) were \$86 and \$166 dollars respectively.

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! Compared to a year ago, substantially more income is coming into the community. Amongst our 1998-99 sample, approximately \$163,000 in income and food stamps comes into the community each month, an absolute increase of about \$12,000 a month over last year's sample.

3 The rise in average benefits does not owe to increasing benefit levels, but rather to the fact that smaller households (especially those with fewer "dependent" members) have exited the food stamp rolls at a higher rate. The exact reason for this demographic differential is not understood, but we speculate that it may stem from a combination of two things: the fact that adult members of households with small children have an easier time retaining benefits, but also face increased barriers to gaining sufficient outside employment.

- ! Assuming a 1:4 sample to population ratio, these data suggest that an additional \$48-50,000 in family income (and assistance) is coming into the community each month -- or well over a half million dollars a year.
- ! A higher proportion of the community's aggregate income comes from employment: 43% now vs. 30% a year ago.
- ! Depending upon the origins of private household transfers and including the value of food stamps, our data indicate that 51-57% of the money coming into Peete households is in the form of government transfers. A year ago, this figure was 64-68%, indicating a substantial reduction in the level of welfare dependence.

Table 3 - Household Income Over Past Month, Winter 1997-98 vs. Winter 1998-99*

Income Source	% Receiving Any Income from Source		\bar{X} Dollar Amount Received from Source**		Total Community Income*** (1000s of \$s)	
	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99
Employment	29.8	42.3	\$599	\$655	\$ 43.7	\$ 70.1
Unemployment Comp	---	.8	---	538	---	1.1
Social Security	23.5	19.7	434	401	25.2	19.7
SSI	18.6	17.7	338	290	15.5	14.5
AFDC, TANF	33.7	25.2	196	196	16.5	12.8
Other Govt. Transfers	2.8	4.3	157	163	3.8	2.9
Private Transfers	15.9	8.6	121	86	5.0	2.8
"Off-the Books"	7.2	9.0	262	166	4.7	6.5
Mean Income/Household/Month			\$507	\$562	\$114.4	\$130.4
Mean Income/Household/Year			\$6078	\$6744		
Food Stamps****	69.5	59.1	\$218	\$209	\$36.0	\$32.4
Total with reported income and/or food stamps****	98.3%	98.8%	Month \$ 628 Year \$7537	\$ 690 \$ 8280	\$150.4	\$162.8

* Totals do not sum due to different income streams

** Among those receiving income from source

*** Unweighted

****Face value of stamps

! Despite extremely promising trends with respect to increasing employment income and decreasing welfare, the community remains dependent on governmental transfers for half or more of its income.
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Income Needs

! Per Table 4, rent, groceries, and telephone bills are the largest monthly household expense reported by residents. Almost half (47%) the respondents identify rent as their single largest expense while better than 3

out of 4 (78%) indicate it is one of their top three expenses. Reported rent paid ranges from \$0 to \$360 and averaging \$125 per month.

! Despite the fact that fewer respondents identify grocery and food expenses as their single largest monthly expense (26.4%), average grocery expenses of \$215 were reported.

! As reported above, average household monthly income (including food stamps) is \$690, an annualized total of \$8230, which represents an 8-10% increase over the previous year. However, when asked "... approximately how much total income does your household need to get by on each month (?)", the largest number of respondents indicate a figure in the neighborhood of \$1000, a figure well in line with the federal poverty threshold for a three-person household. As such, the modal perception of need suggests an income deficit of \$310 per month, which is approximately 50% higher than it was a year ago.⁴

Table 4 - Largest Household Expense During the Past Month

Expense	% Indicating Expense As Largest	% Indicating Expense As 1 of 3 Largest	Mean Reported Amount*
Rent	47.2	78.3	\$126
Groceries/Food	26.4	67.6	215
Phone	13.8	61.2	--
Clothing	2.0	19.5	--
School Expenses	1.6	7.2	47
Child Care	1.2	5.3	96
Transportation	0.0	5.6	44

*Among households reporting any out-of-pocket expense

Welfare Reform

- While almost half (47%) have regular contact with a caseworker of some sort, slightly less than a third (31.4%) of respondents report actually having been advised or notified of pending or possible changes in eligibility and/or benefit levels either in writing or via conversation with the caseworker.
- Only 17% report themselves or someone else in their household having actually experienced a recent change in welfare (i.e., AFDC, food stamps, or other benefits) status. This suggests that a substantial part of the shift from welfare-to-work is anticipatory and owing to expanded job availability in an expanding economy -- a phenomenon widely observed throughout the city, state, and country.

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- Compared to a year ago, resident perceptions of the impact of welfare reform have become decidedly more negative. Perusal of Table 5 (below) indicates that a year ago, the majority of Peete residents foresaw welfare changes making little difference in people's lives. In the ensuing year, many Peete residents have come to define welfare reform as having a negative impact on various groups.

4 Sufficient evidence is not yet available to speak to this apparent increasing disparity in income and need, but it suggests the possibility of an increasing expectations-achievement gap, something we will want to explore carefully.

- Interestingly, the least shift in opinions about the impact of welfare reform has occurred in respondent's assessments of how they themselves would be effected. Positive assessments have declined from 20% to 14% and negatives from 24% to 19%. In both cases, the shifting 5% has moved over to the "not much difference" column.
- With regard to every other population group -- ranging from other household members and the community to American society at large -- a larger proportion of Peete residents now perceive welfare changes as exerting a negative impact. A majority of Peete residents now see welfare reform as having a negative impact on their community, welfare recipients, and African-Americans.

Table 5 - Perceived Impact of Changes in the Welfare System, Winter 1997-98 vs. Winter 1998-99, %

Impact On	Positive		Negative		Not Much Difference		
	97-98	98-99	97-98	98-99	97-98	98-99	
Respondent	20	14	24	19	56	67	
Other household members	26	14	20	23	53	63	
Your Community	36	21	26	60	38	19	
Welfare Recipients in General	40	33	27	55	34	13	
African Americans	39	34	28	56	32	11	
White Americans	46	43	23	29	30	28	
New Orleans		44	37	30	41	26	22
American Society	46	38	29	38	25	24	

Neighborhood Satisfaction & Safety

- Most Peete residents indicate that they feel safe at home during the day (81%) and at night (67%), in Peete (74%), in the surrounding neighborhood (67%), and in the city-at-large (63%).
- Approximately one in ten respondents reports having been robbed and/or burglarized. Two-thirds of those crime victims claim to have reported the incident to the police.
- Most residents (55%) have burglar bars and have put in extra locks (63%) in an effort to protect their home. Slightly more than one in five respondents (22%) report having a firearm.
- Respondents indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the availability and price of local services, so high in fact that we are left to ponder whether the positive expression owes to interviewer and survey effects, low expectations, or "true" satisfaction. As indicated in Table 6 (below), a clear majority of residents expressed satisfaction (i.e., where "extremely satisfied" + "satisfied" = "Satisfied") with every single service.

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Table 6 - Satisfaction With Neighborhood Services, % (N=247)

Service	Availability		Price	
	% Satisfied	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied	% Dissatisfied
Banking	64	36	66	34
Beauty/Barber Shops	83	17	65	35
Child Care	67	33	57	42

Clothing Stores	61	39	52	48
Drug Stores	57	43	55	45
Dry Cleaning/Laundries	81	19	63	37
Elder Care	56	44	52	48
Fire Protection	83	17	--	--
Fresh Produce	71	29	63	37
Trash Pickup	56	44	--	--
Health Care	63	37	61	39
Parks	64	36	--	--
Police Protection	63	37	--	--
Public Transit	89	11	70	30
Recreation	53	47	63	37
Restaurants	73	27	67	33
Supermarkets	69	31	53	47
Cultural Activities	60	40	62	38
Housing Maintenance	53	47	--	--
Particular Housing Unit	71	29	--	--

- One possible explanation for the observed high levels of satisfaction with the neighborhood may be that residents perceive their community as providing a safer and higher quality of life than many of the alternatives. As Table 7 (below) documents, many residents do identify numerous contemporary problems as being serious in the neighborhood. However, in almost every case, a higher proportion of Peete residents identify the problem as being more serious in the city as a whole.

Table 7 - Respondents Indicating Issue or Problem As Serious or Very Serious, %

	<u>In Neighborhood</u>	<u>In City</u>
Gangs	31	61
Domestic Violence	55	74
Drugs	90	89
Abandoned Buildings	71	80
Crime	62	83
Child Abuse	31	60
Rundown Housing	69	78
Lead Paint	67	63
Teen Pregnancy	79	89
Pollution	63	75
Rape	40	66

- Three-quarters of the sample express satisfaction with life in Peete, with 70% indicating that they would be dissatisfied if HANO forced them to move to another development.
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- Respondents are about equally split in their perceptions of whether things in Peete are better or worse than they were a year ago. About a fifth of the respondents answered better, a fifth said worse, and the remainder indicated that things were about the same.

! Two years ago, more than half (55%) the sample indicated a preference for living elsewhere (see Table 8). Last year, amidst the emergence of a great deal of confusion and uncertainty regarding the future of Peete and resident options, 70% expressed a preference to live elsewhere. Current data indicate relative stability in this regard, i.e., 68% continue to prefer to rent or own elsewhere.

- From 1996 to 1997-98, the percent of respondents indicating that continuing to rent at Peete was the least desirable of four housing options increased from 9% to 47%. Since then, this figure has dropped back to 13%. During the same two year period, the percent indicating that they least wished to own at Peete was nearly as volatile -- bouncing from 29% down to 18% and then up to 49%.

Table 8 - Expressed Housing Preferences: Changes From Fall 1996 to Winter 1997

Option	Per Cent Choosing the Indicated Option As					
	<u>Most Desirable</u>			<u>Least Desirable</u>		
	1996	97-98	98-99	1996	97-98	98-99
Continue to rent at Peete	22	19	20	9	47	13
Own a unit at Peete	23	11	13	29	18	49
Rent a place elsewhere	8	8	9	23	17	30
Own a place elsewhere	47	62	59	39	18	8
	$\overline{100\%}$	$\overline{100\%}$	$\overline{101\%*}$	$\overline{100\%}$	$\overline{100\%}$	$\overline{100\%}$

* exceeds 100% due to rounding

Miscellany

! Just under half (48%) the respondents report having heard of PeeteWorks Central with half of this group indicating that they have actually visited it

! Sixty-four percent of the sample name crack as the community's number one drug problem, but 20% identify heroin as the biggest drug problem.

! When asked about program implementation priorities, residents identified the following three areas as most needed: (1) Kid's After School Programs, (2) Career Services, and (3) Substance Abuse Information, Referral, and Treatment.

! One-third of the sample has lived in Peete for five years or less. Another third has lived in Peete for twenty or more years.

! The average (mean) interview took 64 minutes, with a standard deviation of 11 minutes.