



2025 Sheridan Youth Community Needs Assessment Report

Sheridan Rising Together for Equity

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Introduction

A community needs assessment is an outreach and research effort to identify a community's strengths, weaknesses, existing resources, and needs. The goal of this Sheridan youth community needs assessment is to better understand Sheridan youth and the unique strengths they have and the challenges they face. The results of the research and outreach conducted will be posted to the Sheridan Rising Together for Equity website - sheridanrising.org - and used by the organization to provide better programming and opportunities to youth.

Methodology

Survey questions were left purposefully broad to allow youth room to elaborate without leading. The results of this survey can lead to deeper research and outreach efforts based on specific topics illuminated by youth responses. For most questions, collected responses were coded into categories to identify trends, both the raw data and coded results are available in this report. Survey responses were collected electronically and advertised at Sheridan High School during numerous lunch periods across 2 semesters, participants were incentivized to participate by exchanging a snack for a filled out survey. There were 75 responses total collected over a period of 8 months.

The Health and Well-Being category is intended to gain a deeper understanding of youth mental and physical health and their perception of it. The Education section of the survey is meant to discover how youth perceive their educational performance, environment, and resources and how they might be improved upon. The Personal Finances section is intended to reveal the level of support youth have when it comes to their financial literacy and financial goals so that future programming may better support them. The Community Engagement section of the survey is meant to discover how many and what activities and extracurriculars Sheridan youth are engaged in. This section includes an open ended question about what kind of programming youth would like to see more of in their community to provide guidance to Sheridan Rising Together for Equity in future youth engagement efforts and programs.

Section One: General Demographics and Data

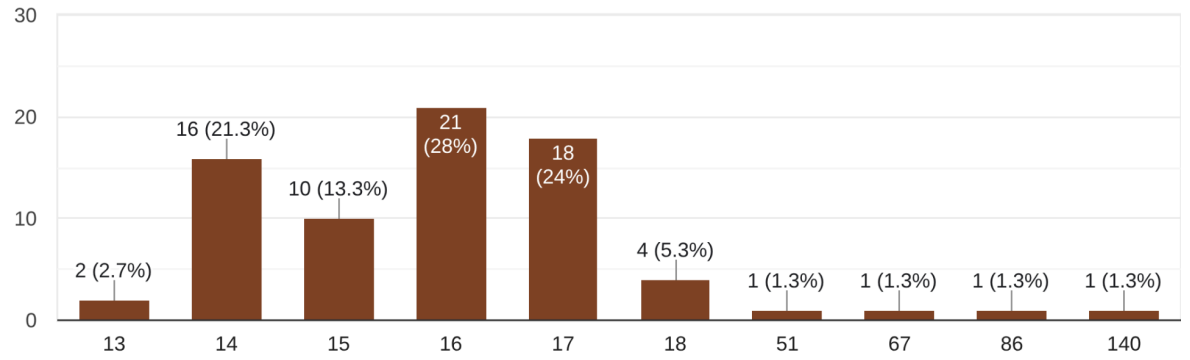
As of 2023, the total population of the City of Sheridan was estimated to be around 6,031, residents under the age of 24 years old account for roughly 34% of the total population. 5% of the population is under the age of 5 years old, around 300. There are approximately 1,145 Sheridan residents between the ages of 6 and 18 years old (19%) and roughly 300 residents are between the ages of 18 and 24 (5%). Of Sheridan youth ages 24 and under, 44% are male and 56% are female ("American Community Survey.")

The first section of the survey included questions about participant demographics such as age, grade, gender, and race and ethnicity to ensure that respondents were representative of as much of the Sheridan youth population as possible.

1. Age

Age

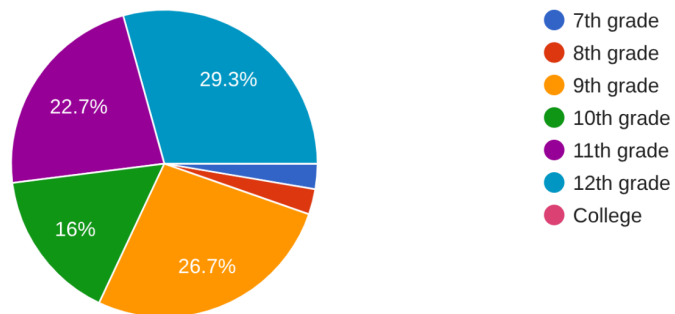
75 responses



2. Grade

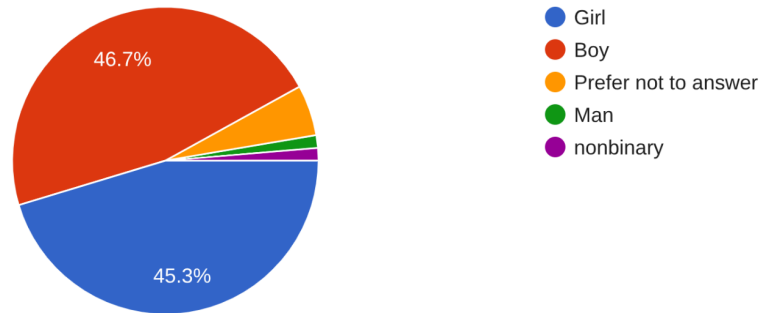
Grade

75 responses



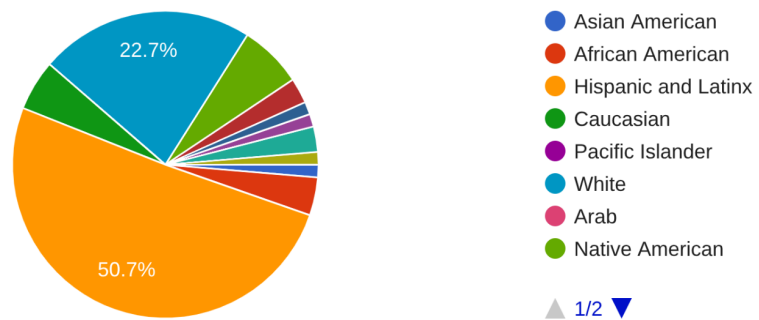
3. Gender

Gender
75 responses



4. Race/Ethnicity

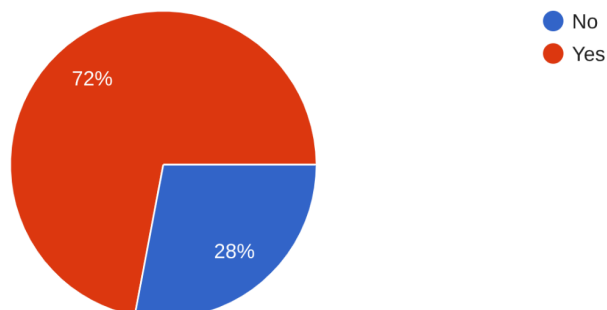
Race/Ethnicity
75 responses



5. Do you live in Sheridan?

Do you live in Sheridan?

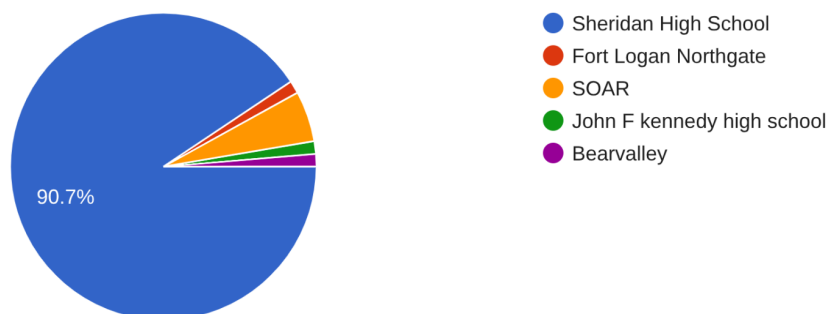
75 responses



6. Where do you go to school?

Where do you go to school?

75 responses



Section Two: Health & Well Being

In 2021 the Healthy Kids Colorado survey found that 40% of Colorado high school students feel persistent sadness or hopelessness that interferes with their usual activities. 17% of students reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, of this percentage 13% reported making a plan to do so, and 7% actually attempted suicide. While the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth mental health are still being studied, it is generally considered an adverse experience and may have contributed to an already concerning trend in youth mental health challenges. For more information and the demographic breakdowns of this data please reference the 2021 Healthy Kids Colorado report.

For the purposes of better understanding the mental and physical health and well being of Sheridan youth some survey questions were open ended and free response. Free response questions were then sorted or coded into response categories such as positive, negative, or

neutral. Some of the questions in this section also deal with matters of physical safety in conjunction with another community research effort being currently undertaken by Sheridan Rising staff. The survey questions were:

1. How would you describe your general health?

Positive	Negative	Neutral
85%	10%	5%

2. Have you experienced any challenges with your mental health or well-being?

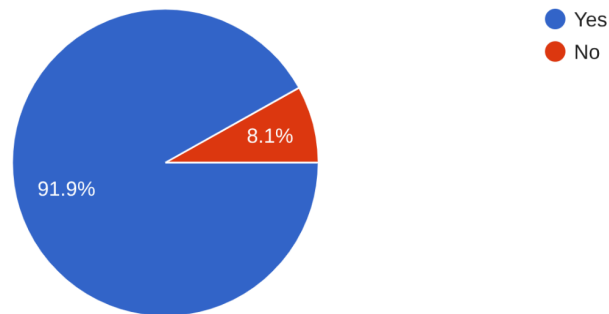
Yes	No
26%	74%

- 3.

4. Do you feel safe in your community?

Do you feel safe in your community?

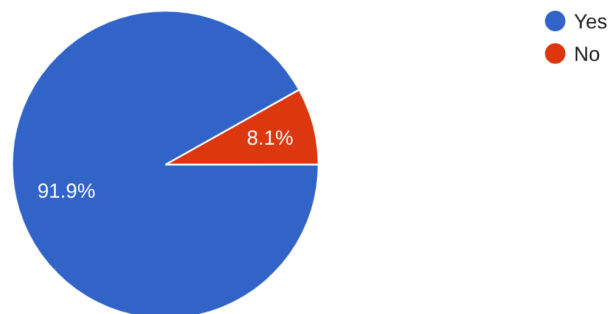
74 responses



5. Do you feel safe at school?

Do you feel safe at school?

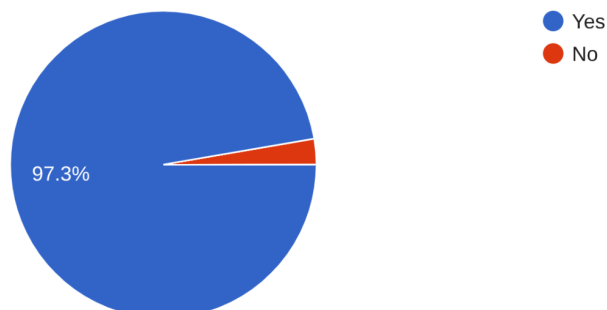
74 responses



6. Do you feel safe at home?

Do you feel safe at home?

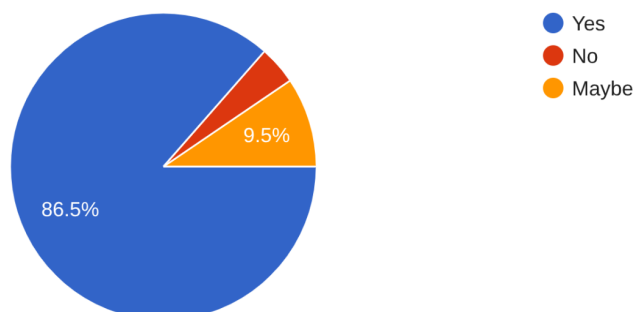
74 responses



7. Do you feel safe at public resources such as the library, recreation center, and parks?

Do you feel safe at public resources such as the library, recreation center, and parks?

74 responses

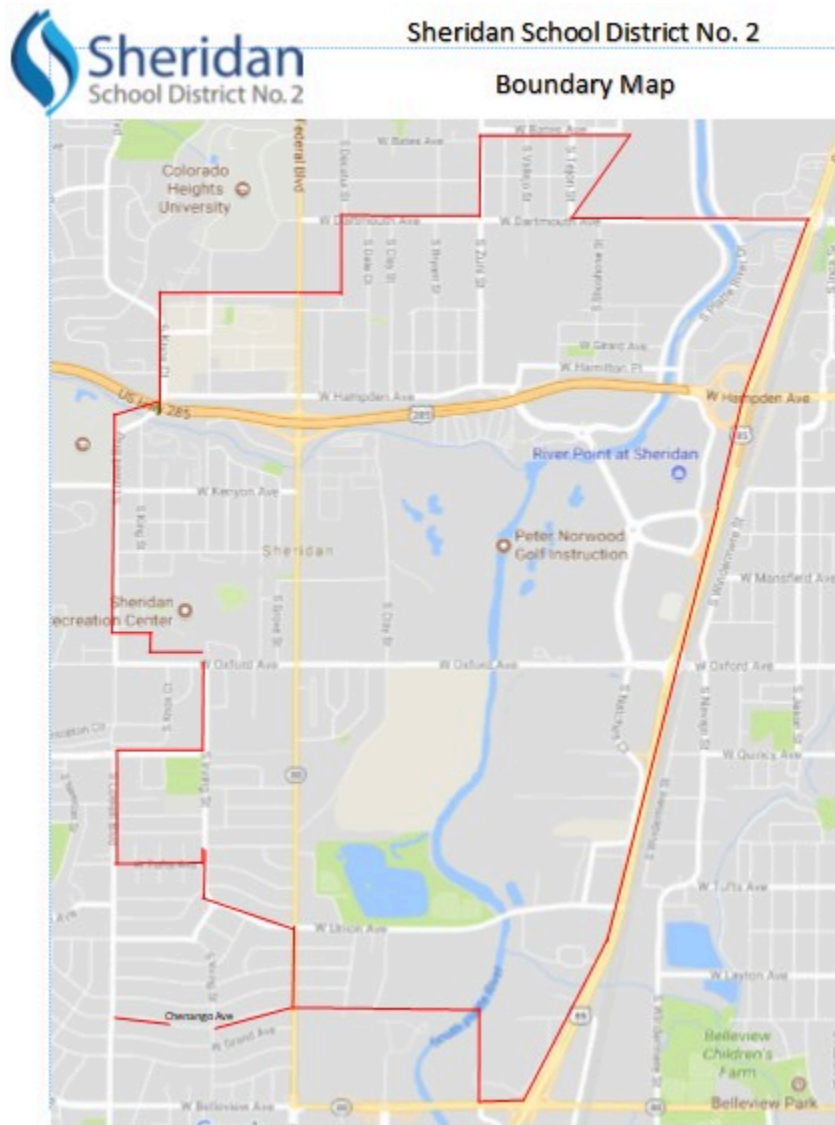


Of the youth surveyed, 85% reported feeling positively about their physical health, 10% felt negatively about it, and 5% felt neither positively nor negatively. This indicates that the majority of Sheridan teenagers have adequate access to physical activity resources. However, in a later section of the survey more physical activity and sports programming was a frequent request. 26% reported having experienced a mental health or well-being challenge at some point in their lives. This indicates that the youth community could benefit from additional mental health programming and support.

Section Three: Education

There are 5 schools in the Sheridan School District; the Early Childhood Center is the only preschool, Alice Terry Elementary and Fort Logan Northgate at elementary schools and Fort Logan Northgate also has a middle school, and the district's high schools are Sheridan

High School and SOAR Academy. The School District serves approximately 1,125 students (*Sheridan School District No. 2 - U.S. News Education*).



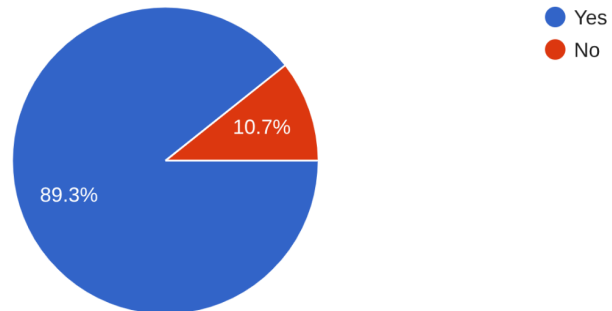
(picture from SSD website)

The survey questions relating to education focused on outside influences on youth education, the questions were;

1. Do you have reliable access to a computer?

Do you have reliable access to a computer?

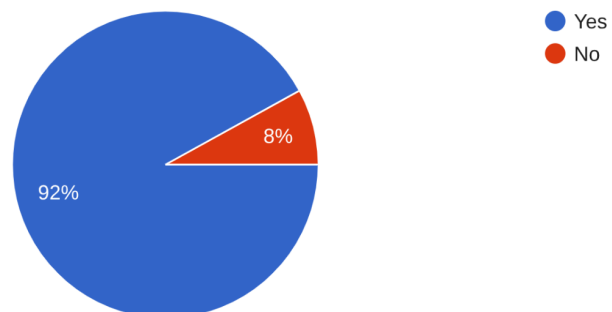
75 responses



2. Do you have reliable access to the internet?

Do you have reliable access to the internet?

75 responses



3. How would you describe your school experience?

Positive	Negative	Neutral
82%	14%	4%

4. How would you describe your school performance?

Positive	Negative	Neutral
75%	8%	17%

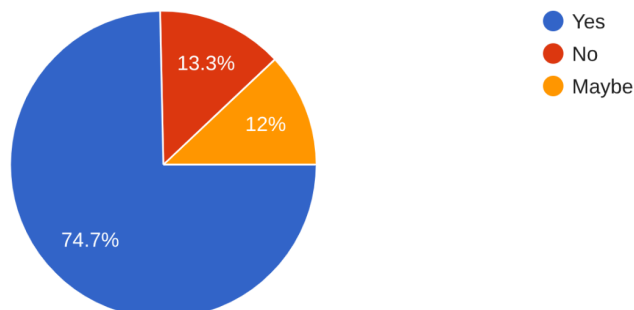
5. What challenges or barriers are you facing in your education?

Notable answers included: teacher turnover and lack of time management skills.

6. Are there enough resources to help you succeed at school?

Are there enough resources to help you succeed at school?

75 responses



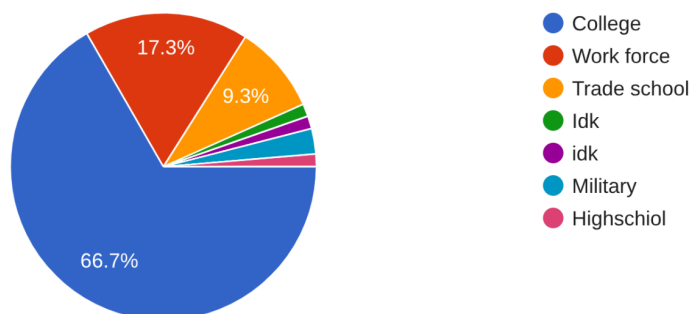
7. If not, what additional resources would be helpful?

Notable answers included: tutoring programs and better technology.

8. What are your plans for after high school?

What are your plans for after high school

75 responses



Survey responses indicate a need for additional resources and access to technology such as computers and internet access.

Section Four: Personal Finances and Financial Literacy

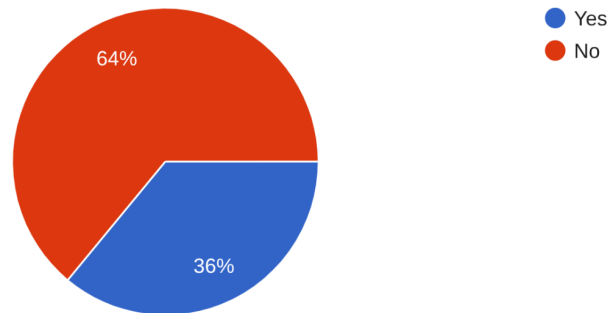
Measuring the financial state and literacy of youth is a difficult task. Beyond identifying existing resources available to youth it is hard to gauge their impact and reach. A survey conducted by Wakefield Research in 2024 found that 32% of teens are concerned, 24% are scared, 18% are sad, and 13% are mad about how money impacts their lives. Of these teens, 42% report having taken classes in school on how to manage money and 73% said they would

likely take a course on money management if given the opportunity. (“Survey: Money Worries Weigh on America’s Teens; Education Key Path to Financial Wellness.”). The survey questions around personal finance and economics were;

1. Do you have a job?

Do you have a job?

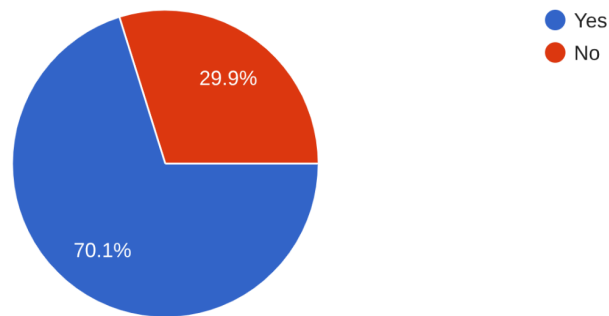
75 responses



2. If not, are you looking for a job?

If not, are you looking for a job?

67 responses



3. Are there any barriers to achieving your career/job goals? If so, what are they?

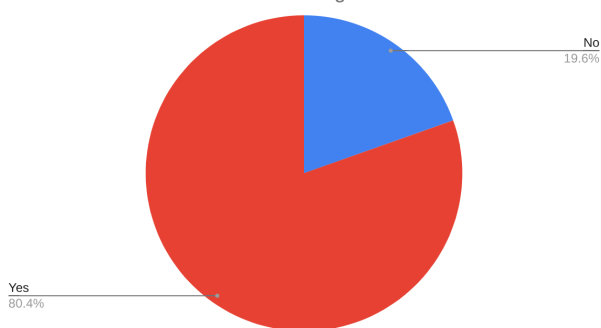
Notable answers included lack of necessary paperwork and being responsible for family or younger siblings.

4. What financial resources and financial literacy resources are available to you?

Most common answers were nothing and parents.

5. Do you think these resources are enough?

Count of Are these resources enough?



These responses indicate that the Sheridan youth community does not currently require additional programming around topics of financial literacy and personal finances.

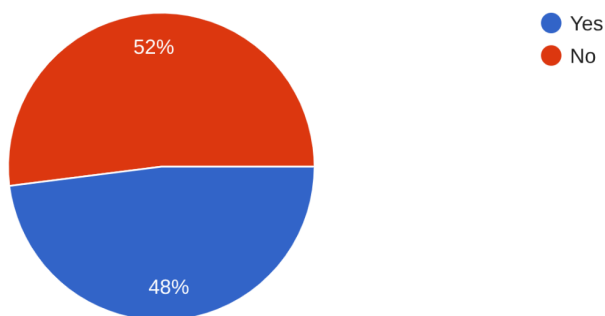
Section Five: Community Engagement

This section of the survey is meant to provide direction and guidance to Sheridan Rising Together for Equity and other local organizations when it comes to youth programming and engagement. It is meant to provide insight into what Sheridan youth really want to see more of in their community and what resources they actually want. The questions were;

1. Are you involved in any school clubs/organizations?

Are you involved in any school clubs/sports or organizations?

75 responses



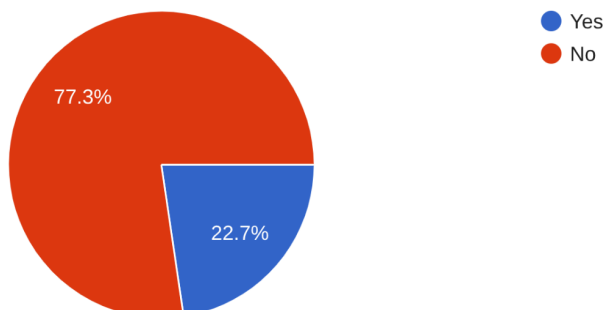
2. If so, which ones?

List includes school sports such as cheer, soccer, track, football and more as well as band, cooking club, black alliance, yearbook, and the National Honors Society (NHS)

3. Are you involved in any community groups or organizations?

Are you involved in any community groups or organizations?

75 responses



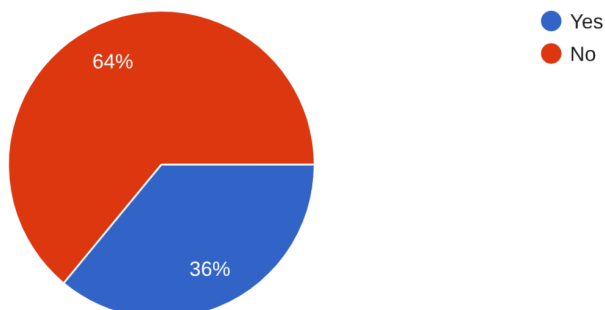
4. If so, which ones?

Answers included the Sheridan Rising Youth Council, church groups, and Groundwork Denver.

5. Do you participate in any volunteer activities?

Do you participate in any volunteer activities?

75 responses



6. What community resources do you use (like the library, recreation center, health clinic)?

Answers included resources such as the Library, Recreation Center, and the Health Clinic.

7. Which community resources do you use the most?

Top 2 mentioned were the Sheridan Library and the Sheridan Recreation Center

8. Which community resources do you use the least?

Top 2 mentioned were the Sheridan Health Clinic and the Sheridan Recreation Center

9. What do you think are the biggest needs for young people in Sheridan?

Notable answers included mental health, help with education goals, and awareness of resources.

10. What kind of programs would you like to see in Sheridan? Such as, more active programs (sports, hikes, etc.), career and financial education, college prep, mental health, etc.

Notable answers included different sports or physical activities, arts based programming such as music and cultural exploration, food support, and financial literacy education.

The youth community in Sheridan is very active and tight-knit, it is important that youth-serving organizations work together to better support and celebrate these young individuals.

Conclusion

This Youth Community Needs Assessment was an attempt at better understanding the youth community in Sheridan and learning more about the resources already at their disposal as well their needs so that youth-serving organizations may begin to fill any gap between said resources and needs. As the first formalized attempt by Sheridan Rising Together for Equity there are bound to be mis-steps in the methodology that may be improved upon in future attempts. One such future improvement could be a way to account for or even prevent sarcastic or joke responses submitted by participants. Regardless of survey findings, outreach efforts also had an impact in general youth engagement and served to build a relationship between the youth community and Sheridan Rising Together for Equity, which can hopefully be expanded upon in the future with similar outreach and engagement efforts.

Bibliography

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