2015 Community Counts

The Community Foundation Impact
Community Counts 2015 Introduction

Community Counts serves as a scorecard on the quality of life for the Shreveport-Bossier City MSA, which includes Bossier, Caddo, DeSoto and Webster Parishes. By tracking progress in a broad array of socio-economic indicators in five major categories—Population, Economic Well-Being, Human Capital, Health, and Social and Physical Environment— and comparing our outcomes to peer communities of similar demographics and median household income, community leaders and citizens can make informed decisions to prioritize resources or direct volunteer hours toward our area’s most urgent needs.

Comparative Data

Population

Economic Well-Being
- Income
- Poverty
- Public Assistance
- Credit Worthiness

Human Capital
- Education
- Workforce

Health
- Health Coverage
- Health Habits
- Health Outcomes

Social and Physical Environment
- Housing
- Crime
- Civic Engagement
- Municipal Finance
- Creative Industries
- Air Quality

Comparative Communities

Chattanooga, TN-GA
Columbus, GA-AL
Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO
Huntsville, AL
Jackson, MS
Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX
Lafayette, LA
Montgomery, AL
Roanoke, VA
Our MSA ranked in the bottom half overall in each of the major categories and in almost all of the minor categories. Our best average ranking was 5.8 in the Social and Physical Environment category, which covered housing, crime, civic engagement, creative industries, and air quality. Our worst average ranking was 7.8 in the Health category, which included health coverage, health habits, and health outcomes. The poor showing in the Health category—particularly with regard to health habits and health coverage—is probably the most significant issue demanding attention from this report.

There were bright spots in terms of voter participation, households with cash public assistance, health insurance for children, unemployment rate, and per capita GDP where our MSA ranked among the top three in each case. But these bright spots are overshadowed by major shortcomings in household income, wages, poverty, labor force participation, adults (including working adults) without insurance, health habits, health outcomes, housing, and education beyond high school. Each of these low performing indicators represents a major obstacle to improved economic vitality and quality of life for the people of Shreveport-Bossier.

**Bottom Line**

Considering all indicators and all categories, the overall combined ranking for our MSA was 6.9 or 7th out of 10. Since there were some changes in the report this year from previous years including three different peer communities and additional indicators, the outcomes of previous reports are not always directly comparable. For the most part the new peer communities were slightly higher performing that the ones they replaced, and the additional indicators simply deepened the analysis. So a general comparison can be made in terms of the broader rankings.

In the last two reports, the overall ranking of the Shreveport-Bossier MSA was 8th out of 10. The best news in this year’s report is that the overall ranking for our MSA improved one slot to 7th out of 10. That is significant and not likely a fluke. It is more than likely the result of deliberate efforts by individuals and organizations in the Shreveport-Bossier community—informned in part by previous Community Counts reports—to address areas of weakness and target them for improvement. That is the intended result of the report and hopefully this year’s version will stimulate the same types of community enhancement efforts.

To view all indicators and results, view visit The Community Foundation’s website www.cfnla.org/communitystudies.
Poverty as measured by income or some other indicator of purchasing power is a fundamental element of a local community and local economy. The interplay between poverty, health, education, crime, and economic opportunity is one of the most pressing issues of our time, if for no other reason than the impact it has on the lives of children born into poverty. Communities that take a proactive approach to assessing and addressing the causes and impacts of poverty can see significant benefits in economic development and quality of life.

### Overall Poverty Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>Poverty Rate</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roanoke, VA</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huntsville, AL</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11.2%</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Shreveport-Bossier City, LA</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.4%</strong></td>
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<td>Montgomery, AL</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbus, GA-AL</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackson, MS</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates at http://factfinder2.census.gov*
The Shreveport-Bossier MSA ranks 7th of our 10 comparative communities in overall poverty rate (4th highest rate), but it has the 2nd highest rate of poverty for families with children under 5 years of age. One quarter of families with children under 5 years of age in our MSA were living in poverty in 2013.

The Shreveport-Bossier MSA ranks 6th of our 10 communities in the percentage of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. SNAP is a nutrition program, not a cash welfare program, where eligibility depends on family size, citizenship status, household income, and certain expenses. About 75% of SNAP benefits go to households with children, 16% to households with disabled persons, and 9% to households with senior citizens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Under 18 Living in Households With Some Form of Public Assistance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shreveport-Bossier City, LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roanoke, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montgomery, AL</td>
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Source: Calculated by author based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates at http://factfinder2.census.gov

Our MSA has the 2nd highest percentage (37%) of children under 18 living in households with some form of public assistance. Creating opportunities for these children to be successful despite the obstacles they face represents a significant issue to be addressed in our region.
Moving the Needle on Poverty

Of those adults over 25 years of age who are in poverty, 63.6% had less than a Bachelor’s degree and 31% did not work at all during the prior year. Lack of education and lack of connection to the labor market are related; and both are major factors for adults in poverty. This is further evidence that access to quality education and living wage job opportunities are critical to attacking the poverty problem in any community. Policies and investments to support those goals should be high on the list of priorities.

The trend analysis for the Shreveport-Bossier MSA is a bit more complicated this year because some of the change in indicators is partly a result of adding Webster parish to the MSA. Median Household Income saw a substantial drop from $44,118 to $41,583 in one year mainly due to falling income in Caddo and Bossier Parishes, but also partly due to the addition of Webster to the MSA.

Even with the drop in median income across the MSA, there was a substantial turnaround of the national economy during 2013 that helped push the poverty rate and the rate of SNAP usage among households down during that year. That is a significant drop over a one-year time frame. On the other hand, that drop has left the households in the region that are receiving some form of public assistance more concentrated among households with children under 18. The high percentage of children under 18 living in households receiving public assistance should represent a high priority for program and policy development initiatives in the MSA.

We have seen some movement worth noting in some other data. The share of occupied housing units that are owner-occupied dropped 5% from 2005 to 2012, then rose two points to 64% in 2013. So that rate of owner-occupied housing has dropped three points since 2005, and that is something we would like to see on the rise because of the broad array of individual and community benefits of home ownership.
Examples of our 2014 community investments include:

**Goodwill of North Louisiana’s Job Placement Program helps individuals gain and maintain employment.** The program provides intensive work readiness training, job placement services and retention services to disadvantaged job seekers who have barriers to employment. Barriers include previous incarceration, generational poverty, lack of education, and physical, mental or emotional disabilities. Work readiness training offers instruction in job seeking skills, interviewing and resume writing. Intensive training is offered in a classroom setting, as well as, through one-on-one coaching. A Client Service Specialist (CSS) provides the client with job leads that match their interests and qualifications. Other placement services include onsite employer prescreening, job fairs, and ongoing access to computer based learning modules. In 2014, the Job Placement Program placed 741 individuals into competitive employment.

**The Providence House is a shelter designed to help families break the cycle of homelessness and move to independent living.** The program addresses common obstacles to overcoming poverty and homelessness, such as lack of education, employment, affordable housing, child care, and transportation. The program works to help each family reach their highest level of self-sufficiency and sustain independence. The Child Development Center provides quality care and early education for children ages 2 months to 5 years, allowing parents to focus on maintaining employment or furthering their education. Working to Learn, an incentive-based
adult education program, allows residents to focus full-time on attaining a GED while learning job skills and earning income to meet their family’s needs. Teaching basic life skills is a primary focus of the program. Responsibilities of all residents include: completing daily chores, family and individual counseling, parenting education, and maintaining a budget and saving a portion of their income. When residents meet the initial program milestones, they transition into subsidized or affordable apartments throughout the community. Clients progressively contribute to the cost of rent and utilities until they are completely stable and independent, at which time they graduate from the program with the resources and skills necessary to be successful long-term. Since 1993, over 400 families have graduated from the program. To date 85% of those families continue to live independently.

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana’s Back Pack Program puts food directly in the hands of children in need. The Back Pack Program is designed to meet the needs of hungry children at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends and school vacations. Students who meet the definition of “chronically hungry” are referred to the program by their teachers. Backpacks filled with food are discreetly distributed to program participants before weekends and holidays. The food provided is child-friendly, nonperishable, easily consumed and vitamin fortified. In addition to improved nutrition, the Food Bank reports that children who participate in the program demonstrate improved attendance and greater attention in class. Over 500 students are served annually.

Other funded organizations working in this field include Dress for Success, Fuller Center for Housing, Highland Center Corporation, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army and The Renesting Project.
A lack of health insurance has significant deleterious effects on the health of individual patients, creates substantial financial pressure on health care institutions, dampens productivity, reduces earnings, and increases the overall cost of the healthcare system to everyone. There is a substantial public interest in maximizing the share of the population with adequate health insurance.

### Percent Uninsured

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percent Uninsured</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roanoke, VA</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Montgomery, AL</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Jackson, MS</td>
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*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates at [http://factfinder2.census.gov](http://factfinder2.census.gov)*

The Shreveport-Bossier MSA ranks 9th among our peers in the percent of people uninsured. This is a very high number of uninsured, especially considering we are 3rd overall—right near the top—in our rate of insuring children under 18.
In addition to insurance and access to healthcare to enable regular check-ups and prudent medical attention, healthy habits such as exercise, healthy eating, and quitting smoking are all highly correlated with better health. These habits help control weight, improve mood, combat disease, boost energy, and improve longevity. For a community, these practices mean a more productive workforce, less strain on healthcare and social service resources, and a generally happier populace. The Shreveport-Bossier MSA generally fares poorly relative to our peers on all of the measures of healthy habits examined here.

Our MSA ranks:
- 9th in the percent of the population who exercise frequently
- 9th in the percent of the population who eat produce frequently
- 3rd in the percent of the population who smoke

One would expect a community with relatively poor health habits and high rates of uninsured adults—including working adults—to have relatively poor health outcomes. And that is generally the case for most of the measures of health outcomes examined in this report.

Other Shreveport Bossier MSA Health Outcomes:
- 9th in mortality rate
- 8th in the percent of the population that is obese
- 8th in the percent of the population that has daily stress
- 8th in the overall well-being index

**Moving the Needle on Health**

Over the last decade there is not been much positive movement in terms of health indicators in the Shreveport-Bossier MSA. Indicators of insurance coverage, mortality, health behaviors, and health outcomes have maintained a poor rating over time with the notable exception of health outcomes—and to a lesser extent health behaviors—in Bossier Parish.

The overall percentage of uninsured people in the MSA population has remained relatively steady since 2005, including the employed and uninsured. This will be particularly important to look at in next year’s report as the national figures for the uninsured are falling significantly. We would hope to see some movement in the MSA figure which we have not seen since at least 2005.
While the data are generally gloomy on health for the Shreveport-Bossier MSA, the capacity exists in the healthcare sector and the non-profit sector within the region to begin addressing the problems. It will take a concerted community effort over an extended time period to begin bringing them down.

Examples of our 2014 community investments include:

**Martin Luther King Health Clinic provides primary health care to patients who are uninsured or under-insured and who are not covered by private or government sponsored insurance programs.** The center emphasizes “health” rather than disease and serves as a “health home” that provides comprehensive, coordinated medical care. The center’s programs include primary care, pharmacy services, medical case management, health literacy coaching, and wellness programs. The center also offers specialty clinics for respiratory disease, diabetes, women’s health, HIV/AIDS, geriatric care, and heart disease. In 2014, over 86% of enrolled patients regularly attended their scheduled appointments and 50% demonstrated an enhanced understanding of the concepts of self-care and medication management. MLKHC provides over $1.7 million of donated medical services and pharmaceuticals annually.

**As a charitable pharmacy, the Northwest Louisiana Interfaith Pharmacy serves as a safety net for individuals with chronic disease who have no prescription insurance and individuals who are homeless.** By providing free medicines, the Interfaith Pharmacy helps to keep workers working and individuals living independently.
This program’s main focus is to help clients better manage their health. In addition to dispensing medicines on a monthly basis, clients are encouraged to attend “Healthy Living Classes.” The daily decisions made by patients with chronic diseases have a significant impact on their health outcomes and quality of life. The “Healthy Living Classes” were developed to help motivate clients to take charge of their health. Clients are provided with program guides that easy to read and understand on topics such as “Living with Diabetes” or “Caring for your Heart.” These guides also include pictures to aid understanding for patients with low literacy levels. Clients set small attainable goals, for example managing medications, managing mealtimes, making better food choices, exercising, or stopping or reducing smoking. When clients pick up their medicine, they also check in with a Health Coach to assess their progress in meeting their goals. Each year, the Northwest Louisiana Interfaith Pharmacy serves an average of 400 individuals and dispenses over $2 million of donated pharmaceuticals.

*St. Luke’s Mobile Medical Ministry provides access to health care to underserved individuals in rural communities in Caddo and Bossier parishes through a mobile medical van.* This project is a collaborative effort with the Martin Luther King Health Center (MLKHC). The project combines St. Luke’s mobile capacity with MLKHC’s strong infrastructure and pharmacy to serve 400 clients in rural areas annually. The program consists of monthly mobile clinics that provide preventive health screenings for common chronic diseases and on site primary care services. Other services include resolving minor acute health issues such as infections, basic eye and dental care, case management, help with applications for insurance and prescription assistance programs, referrals for follow-up care, and patient education on disease management and prevention. Healthy eating and active living habits are encouraged and over 100 clients will be provided access to fresh produce through a mobile food market.

Other funded organizations working in this field include the HIGO Collaborative, Mothers Against Drugs, Philadelphia Center, and Shreveport Green.
There is strong evidence showing that young children who participate in high-quality pre-k programs enter school more ready to learn than their peers. The national Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Cohort shows that students who attended a pre-k program scored higher on reading and math tests than children receiving parental care. Students who attended a child care center or other preschool program also showed gains, although former pre-k students exhibited the greatest achievement.

### Percent of 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>Percent Enrolled in School</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackson, MS</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roanoke, VA</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery, AL</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shreveport-Bossier City, LA</strong></td>
<td><strong>44.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, GA-AL</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huntsville, AL</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lafayette, LA</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
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<td>Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
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<td>Chattanooga, TN-GA</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>10</td>
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In 2013 our MSA ranked 4th among our comparative communities with 44.5% of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in pre-K. Jackson, MS had the highest rate with 55.4%, and Fayetteville the lowest with 36.7%. This measure includes formal public and private pre-k programs. In the United States, adults without a high school diploma or equivalency have a significantly higher likelihood of unemployment and poverty and longer durations of both. Also, they earn less when they do work, and there is significant evidence that the high school equivalency does not do much to improve those prospects.
The Shreveport-Bossier MSA ranks 7th with 14.7% of the 25 and older population having less than a high school diploma or equivalency. The Killeen MSA has the lowest figure at 10% and Lafayette the highest figure at 19%.

For those that complete high school or a GED, in addition to better labor market prospects, the other opportunity that opens up is for post-secondary and higher education. The Shreveport-Bossier MSA ranks low among the comparative communities on most measures of post-secondary and higher education. Our MSA ranks 9th in the percentage of the population over 25 with an associate’s degree and 6th (but much closer to the bottom than the top) in the percentage of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher.
Our MSA has the 3rd highest percentage (69.9%) of the population with something less than a post-secondary degree (associate’s degree or higher). Huntsville is the best performer in this category with 45.4% of its population over 25 with a bachelor’s degree or higher. For our region this represents a significant obstacle to fielding a competitive workforce for a 21st century economy and merits considerable attention from policy makers in the region.

**Moving the Needle on Education**

The share of the population with a bachelors’ degree or higher in our region has grown slightly since 2012 and has grown more measurably since 2005. But this is clearly an area that needs to improve over time for our MSA. Expanded education and employment opportunities are key.

Looking at the trends in education, we see that the Shreveport-Bossier MSA is continuing to improve our cohort graduation rate, but the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds in pre-K dropped significantly. All three parishes in the original MSA have seen an increase in their cohort graduation rate, and adding Webster Parish to the MSA only helped this figure. On the other hand, the drop in the share of kids enrolled in pre-K is largely due to a decline in Bossier.

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**Our Goal**

High quality public education is accessible to all children and youth. Residents are more educated and skilled.

**Our Investment**

In 2014, the Community Foundation invested $1.5 million in education programs and scholarships.
Examples of our 2014 community investments include:

**Step Forward is a regional collaboration committed to driving student success, productive citizenship, and global competitiveness.** The goals of Step Forward are that every child is:
- prepared for school
- supported inside and outside school
- academically successful
- equipped with tools to become an effective and productive citizen
- enrolls in post-secondary education
- graduates and enters a career

For the 2013-14 academic year the cohort high school graduation rate for all three parishes in our MSA increased. Step Forward is working with stakeholders to help continue these positive trends.

**The mission of Career Compass is to remove the obstacles that keep students from pursuing a post-secondary education and to increase the number of students in Louisiana who attend a post-secondary institution upon high school graduation.** Trained coaches conduct first semester assessments with every senior enrolled in the high school, gathering information pertinent to their intended post-secondary studies and assessing where each student stands in the process of continuing their education after high school.

Over the past five years at least 98% of 12th grade students in Career Compass schools successfully applied to and attended a post-secondary institution upon high school graduation (technical, community or four-year universities). Last year, 30 to 40 percent entered a four-year university, while 45% entered community or technical colleges. The remainder attended private schools, out-of-state schools or other post-secondary options. Career Compass serves an average of 2800 students annually, at 16 high schools in Caddo and Bossier parishes.

Other funded organizations working in this area include the Alliance for Education, Biomedical Research Foundation, Volunteers of America, Youth Enrichment Program, Junior Achievement, Cyber Innovation Center, Sci-Port, Bernstein Development, and The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club.
Creative and cultural industries typically cover areas such as advertising, art crafts, audio-visual/film, cultural heritage, design, entertainment software such as video games, fashion, music, publishing, performing arts, and visual arts. A report from the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis found that arts and culture contributed more than $698 billion to the economy in 2012 – exceeding preliminary estimates of $504 billion. The sector is becoming increasingly international and growth rates in the sector are consistently higher than the average of the economy.

Currently this sector represents a small segment (3.0%) of the overall economy in the Shreveport-Bossier MSA in terms of total businesses, but it is a sector with significant potential for innovation and economic development in our region. Furthermore, these are economic activities that have the potential to generate revenue from outside the local economy (i.e., export sectors), which is what contributes most to economic growth. These industries have received a lot of attention and investment from policy makers, educational institutions, and entrepreneurs over the last decade; and that has positioned our MSA well to take advantage of growth opportunities in the creative sector.

Moving the Needle on Creative Industries

As our community continues to move in a positive direction in this indicator there are three places to see greater impact in this area. One, our community needs to continue to increase accessibility to the arts. Second, our community needs to improve the downtown area and continue forward movement in redeveloping old properties and providing cultural opportunities in the downtown area. A vibrant downtown is key to retaining young professionals to our area. Finally, continued and increased support of the entrepreneurship will lend itself to attracting young professionals and improving economic development.
Examples of our 2014 community investments include:

**Shreveport Opera Xpress (SOX) brings opera to K-12 students through in-school performances of age-appropriate original works that address current social issues.** The productions help students increase their knowledge and understanding, not only of opera, but also of issues such as bullying, diversity and maintaining proper health. The operas are performed by rising young opera singers, who are chosen each year through a highly competitive audition process held in New York City. The artists - a soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone and pianist - move to the Shreveport/ Bossier City area, where they are provided housing, to live and work for the nine months of the program.

SOX is the only opera education outreach program in the state of Louisiana. Each year 30,000 to 45,000 students are exposed to the beauty and magic of opera through this program.
The Robinson Film Center Teen Film Council is composed of students, in grades 10-12, who participate in weekly seminars where they study, question, produce and exhibit original short films. The primary aim of Teen Film Council is to transform teens into active producers and critical viewers, rather than passive consumers, of digital media. In 2013-14:

- all 15 students who enrolled in the program finished production of their five-minute short films and screened them to the public on May 24
- all eight of the high school years who participated in the program are currently attending college, and three are majoring in film studies.
- six of the students collaborated after the conclusion of the program to produce a submission for the Louisiana Film Prize.
- one student’s short film was screened at the Tower of Youth Film Festival in Sacramento, Calif., and Digifest, a multimedia festival programmed by Bossier Arts Council

The Louisiana Film Prize is a short film competition in which independent filmmakers compete for the nation’s largest cash prize of $50,000 for a short film. This is a national competition, however, filmmakers are required to create their films in Northwest Louisiana. In 2014, 105 filmmakers converged in Northwest Louisiana to create short films. Almost 70% of filmmakers were from outside the region and required hotel accommodations, dining, and entertainment. They also hired local cast and crew, stimulating economic impact and increasing available jobs.

Creators of the Louisiana Film Prize believe the event has the potential to help Northwest Louisiana become a mecca of creativity and a beacon for the creative class. Since filmmaking is a multidisciplinary art form, the competition has the potential to draw not only filmmakers, but also entrepreneurs, technologists, and other creative individuals to Northwest Louisiana. The Louisiana Film Prize is more than just a film competition; it is about nurturing the creative community and energizing the Shreveport-Bossier area to become the next creative arts and media destination in the United States.
Annually, The Community Foundation provides Community Counts as a report card on the quality of life in Shreveport-Bossier. Our hope is that the vital information contained in this report will be used by individuals, organizations and government agencies to better inform their actions and investments in improving our community. It should also be used to recognize and celebrate the things we are doing well here!

View all of the indicators and results at www.cfnla.org/communitystudies.