



2022 Community Needs Assessment

Counties of Carroll and Grayson and the City of Galax



Table of Contents

Executive Summary and Key Findings	3
Methodology	4
Overview of the Service Area	5
Assessment of Need in the Twin Counties	
Housing	7
Health & Wellbeing	9
Employment & Income	12
Education	14
Child Care	16
Transportation	17
Conclusion	18
Head Start/Early Head Start Data	19
Appendices	20

Policy Council Approval: November 18, 2021

Board of Directors Approval: November 22, 2021



Executive Summary and Key Findings

Rooftop of Virginia Community Action Program is housed in rural southwest Virginia and has served the area since 1965. The agency assists residents in the city of Galax and the counties of Carroll and Grayson. The primary responsibility of Rooftop of Virginia is to understand, document and respond to the community needs in the service area. In order to do so, the agency must engage in a triennial comprehensive needs assessment. This practice is not only mandated for Community Action Agencies but it is essential in order to provide the most needed services and programs to area residents to aid them in reaching goals of economic and social independence. This Community Needs Assessment will not only be an established data source for Rooftop of Virginia; it will also be shared with other non-profits and local governments for their use in serving disadvantaged community members.

Using a wide variety of data collection strategies such as surveys, focus groups and public data, Rooftop of Virginia CAP identified the following top needs for the Twin Counties:

1. Housing: The community lacks quality, affordable units.
2. Mental Health (Substance Abuse): Mentioned numerous times throughout data collection was the notion that mental health and substance abuse issues go hand in hand and it is difficult to make a distinction between the two. There is a lack of treatment providers in the community. Families do not have access to resources to obtain assistance.
3. Employment: There is a need for the community to have better-paying or livable wage jobs. Many open positions do not fully support households. Individuals also lack skills needed in order to obtain jobs that will offer a livable wage.
4. Child Care: The community does not house enough providers to meet the needs of parents or caregivers. There are limited options in all three localities.
5. Transportation: The Twin Counties lack public transportation and families do not have reliable methods of mobility.

In partnership with our communities, Rooftop of Virginia CAP empowers individuals and families by facilitating resources to achieve economic and social independence.

Methodology

Rooftop of Virginia CAP collected data and information during the summer and fall of 2021 which was then used to analyze and determine community needs, resources, and opportunities for change. A consensus method and then an identification of root causes and resources were used to compile needs and information in this report. The Community Needs Assessment Team , Management Team and Board of Directors were responsible for analysis of all data.

Qualitative Data

Statistics are very important to determine needs and areas of concern, but experienced opinions of stakeholders, citizens and more are also necessary to project how that the service region could be improved. The following are methods that the agency used to gather data in a qualitative manner:

Surveys

1. An online Community Member Survey was conducted using the agency's Facebook page. A total of 100 responses were collected.
2. An online Community Stakeholder Survey was sent via email to local governmental officials, agency partners and Rooftop of Virginia CAP Board of Directors. Of the 43 recipients, 25% responded with the majority of responses (9) coming from agency board members.
3. External (those receiving services) and Internal (staff) Customer Satisfaction Surveys were collected during 2021. External surveys are collected in April (121 respondents) and October(). A series of four internal surveys were collected with an average of 62 out of 80 staff responses. The results of these surveys allow Rooftop of Virginia CAP to monitor program effectiveness, identify strengths and weaknesses, and plan for positive change.

Focus Groups

1. A focus group consisting of agency customers representing the three localities in the service area was conducted. This group helped to understand the points of view of customers, their identification of needs and resources, and their impression of Rooftop of Virginia CAP.
2. Agency staff are very knowledgeable about what is going on in the Twin Counties. Most of the over 80 staff participated in an activity to identify the area's top needs and resources.

Quantitative Data

Resources such as the US Census Bureau, Kids Count, Community Commons and more were used to gather statistics and secondary data. This was then used to support primary data and assisted the agency in analyzing how the local service area information compared to state and national data.

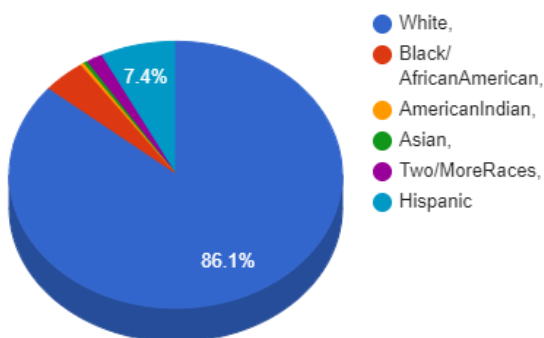


Overview of the Service Area

The Twin County area (city of Galax and the counties of Carroll and Grayson) is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains in rural, Southwest Virginia. The area borders North Carolina and has access to major thoroughfares such as Interstates 77 and 81. According to the 2020 US Census, a total of 51,688 people call the area home. The population has fluctuated in the last 20 years but overall shows a decline of 4% (American Community Survey 2019). Grayson County reports the largest decline of 18% followed by Galax City at 5% and Carroll County at 2%. This is not an unusual occurrence in rural areas. Many other areas like the Twin Counties face outmigration of younger residents who move to more urban areas in search of resources and opportunities not found in their home communities.

Overall, the local population is aging and has a median age of 47. This indicates that the report population as a whole generally trends older than the state, which has a median age of 38.2. This data is based on the latest U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates (CARES CHNA). An aging population can effect the growth of a community and the attractiveness that it offers to potential industries.

Race and Hispanic Origin

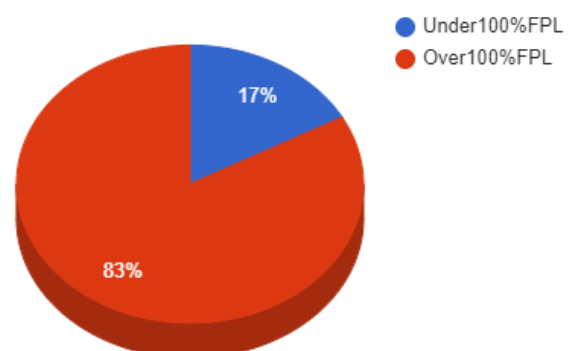


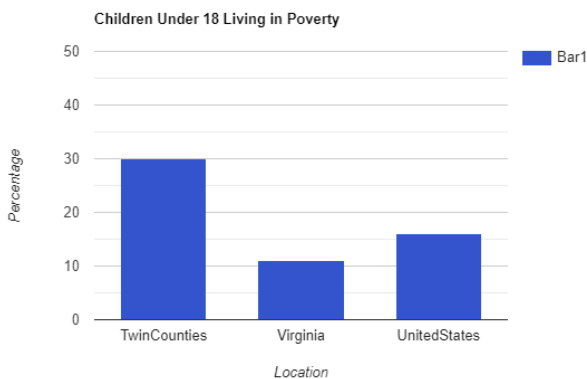
The local service area is composed of predominantly white households (86.1%) followed by black/African American (4.5%). While the Hispanic and Latino communities are not predominant, the population has been increasing over the last decade (6% in 2010, 8% in 2020) and Rooftop of Virginia has seen more individuals and families seeking services. While the majority of families use English as their primary language, there is an increasing amount of those with Spanish as a primary language.

The Twin Counties was not immune to the racially-charged events of 2020. The area saw displays of protests and solidarity over the violence against people of color. In the Community Member Survey, some respondents mentioned discrimination of not only color but sexual orientation as a top need or issue. This was the first time that those topics were ever mentioned in collecting data.

The median area income averages \$38,318 annually (US Census 2020). This contributes to 17% of families living under the 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This is actually a decrease of 2% since the last needs assessment report. The median income for the state is \$74,222 and for the country is \$79,900. Most area residents could only dream of reaching those income amounts. Per the Massachusetts Institute of Technology living wage calculator, a single parent with one child would need an annual income of \$55,900 to be fully self-reliant in the Twin Counties. That is virtually unheard of in the local population.

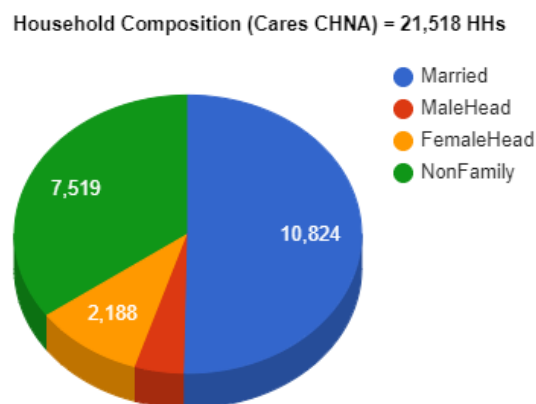
Persons in Poverty





As noted in the graph to the left, the Twin County area has more than double the state and federal rates of children living in poverty (100%FPL). “Child poverty merits attention because a substantial body of research links poverty with lower levels of child well-being. For a variety of reasons, when compared with children from more affluent families, poor children are more likely to have low academic achievement, to drop out of school, and to have health, behavioral, and emotional problems. These linkages are particularly strong for children whose families experience deep poverty, who are poor during early childhood, and who are trapped in poverty for a long time” (Children in Poverty, Kristen Moore PhD, 2009). With 5% of the area’s population under the age of 5, the amount that are in poverty is staggering. Family, early childhood educational, and child care resources have shown to help reduce the effects of poverty. There are currently 2,168 infants, toddlers, preschoolers and pregnant mothers who are currently not receiving but are eligible for early intervention services (Virginia DOE). A discussion of resources took place in a focus group. Participants noted that some households are unaware of resources that they might be eligible for which creates a barrier to services. It was noted that even though Rooftop of Virginia CAP has operated for over 55 years, there are still those in the community that do not fully understand the comprehensive services that are offered.

Household composition in the service area has remained fairly consistent over the years. According to the American Community Survey subject definitions, a family household is any housing unit in which the householder is living with one or more individuals related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. A non-family household is any household occupied by the householder alone, or by the householder and one or more unrelated individuals. Most households are either married or non-family. In reviewing previous agency data, there has been a small but steady increase in the number of single male headed households over the last decade.



Housing



“it is hard to argue that housing is not a fundamental human need. Decent, affordable housing should be a basic right for everybody in this country. The reason is simple: without stable shelter, everything else falls apart.”

— Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*

Quality

In a recent focus group, participants noted that without having stable housing, families and individuals cannot attempt to focus on other needs or goals that might better their current or future situations. That is reflected in the quote above. Housing is the number one issue that continues to arise in all data collection methods for this community needs assessment. There is a community level need for more quality, affordable housing units in the Twin Counties.

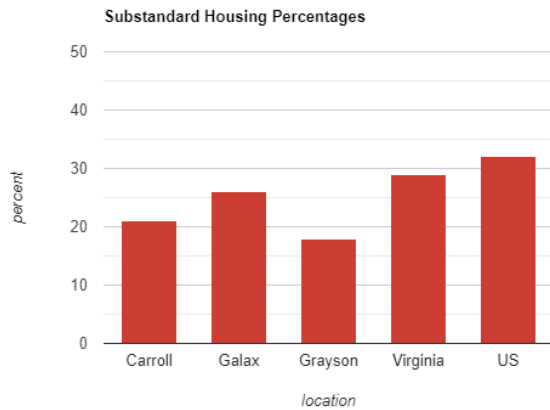
The average median unit age is 1975 (US Census 2015-2019) in the service area. Older homes tend to need more upkeep and can be more costly than newer units. Needs such as inadequate weatherization, outdated plumbing and electrical, safety concerns and more often lead to costly repairs. In an analysis discussion regarding the root cause of needs, it was identified that the rising costs of construction materials, the shortage of skilled laborers and the limited resources of owners leads to a decline in homes. This can then lead to a decrease in property values, less desirable neighborhoods and a decrease in interest of industries evaluating our area for possible business placement.

Affordability

Affordability is also a major concern of most survey respondents and focus group participants. A cost-burdened household is one that must utilize more than 30% of their monthly income for housing needs. For the Twin Counties, an average of 24% of owner-occupied and 39% of renter-occupied households are cost-burdened. While this is under the state (26% owner, 45% renter) and national (28% owner, 46% renter) averages, this affects multiple factors of Twin County living (all data US Census 2020).

Data provided by Housing Forward Virginia indicates that the vast majority of those that are cost-burdened have income of less than \$20,000 annually. These households typically consist of those with fixed incomes such as the elderly or those with disabilities and the unemployed or underemployed. Without social assistance programs like the Housing Choice Voucher program or subsidized housing, some of these families or individuals would be in danger of becoming homeless.

Household Income	Cost Burdened Owners		Cost Burdened Renters	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
< \$20,000	139	49.6%	360	81.6%
\$20,000 – \$34,999	147	31.6%	69	30.8%
\$35,000 – \$49,999	35	12.8%	0	0.0%
\$50,000 – \$74,999	28	8.6%	0	0.0%
\$75,000 or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
All Incomes	349	19.2%	429	45.5%



Substandard housing is an issue in the Twin Counties. The chart to the left reports the number and percentage of owner- and renter-occupied housing units having at least one of the following conditions: 1) lacking complete plumbing facilities, 2) lacking complete kitchen facilities, 3) with 1 or more occupants per room, 4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, and 5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%. Selected conditions provide information in assessing the quality of the housing inventory and its occupants. This data is used to easily identify homes where the quality of living and housing can be considered substandard. (CARES CHNA)

The global pandemic in 2020 affected rental housing in the area. Low turnover of rental stock, increasing rents to recoup costs and income, loss of income to pay rent, and inability to access materials for repairs are just some of the examples of issues that arose. Gross rents (rent plus estimated utilities) prior to the pandemic averaged \$650-700 but now are closer to \$800-950 (per agency housing data). This paired with the poor-quality of units results in the need for more or updated units. Survey results reported that more safe, affordable housing is in one of the top needs noted by community members and stakeholders.

There are resources in the area that will help with housing needs. Rooftop of Virginia CAP offers programs for rental assistance, weatherization, home purchasing and repair, savings for home purchasing, and emergency home repair. The agency is constantly evaluating the needs of the Twin Counties and would like to expand services to include providing more rental units and homes for purchase by those with lower incomes. This requires resources of which the agency is still researching. Partner agencies such as HOPE Inc. and subsidized apartment complexes in the area are also able to assist with limited needs.



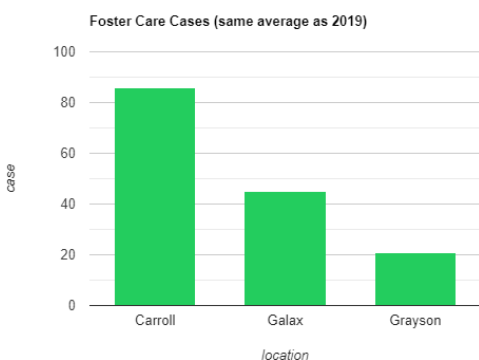
Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health & Substance Abuse

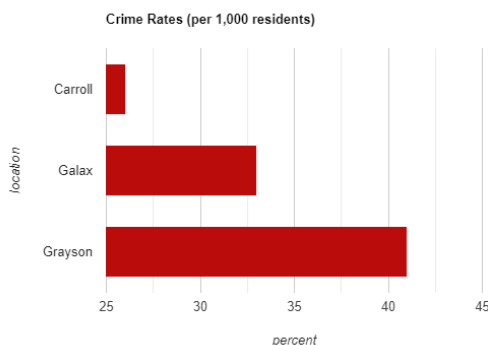
Mental Health and substance abuse issues were at the forefront of all information collected during the needs assessment process. Most participants of focus groups or analysis activities noted that mental health needs arise from substance abuse problems and vice versa. Most agreed that the two are so entwined that the need to group them as one issue is apparent. It was determined that the community lacks providers that are available to provide services to those living in the community. Mount Rogers Community Service and a handful of private providers offer services as well as the Life Center of Galax. The area is also home to Celebrate Recovery programs that promote peer recovery. These organizations do not seem to have the ability to meet all needs.

The conditions and effects of mental health and especially substance abuse issues have a ripple effect across the community. Directors of the three local Departments of Social Services all report that the majority of the foster care cases have resulted from parents or caregivers with substance abuse problems. This puts a strain on the resources of localities in that these cases cost valuable dollars in annual budgets. Criminal activity is present resulting in an overloaded case log in court systems and the need for more law enforcement. Individuals cannot obtain employment due to drug testing results or inability to perform duties while incapacitated. Household incomes are lower and basic needs cannot be met. These issues create an underlying source of despair for households.

The effects of COVID-19 were not only physical but mental as well. More people reported feelings of isolation and fear for health in the Community member Survey. Studies have shown that an increase in doctor visits due to mental health, increase in substance abuse, disruptions of sleep and eating habits are only some of the problems that have occurred since early 2020.



These case numbers have not changed very much from the last needs assessment data collected in 2019. Total for 2021, 152 cases. Total for 2019, 169 cases. There is an assumption in the social service community that statistics are affected by the pandemic. School personnel are often the ones that notice problems with children and are required to report concerns. Schools were conducting virtual learning in 2020 which might have allowed children living in crisis conditions to remain in the home.

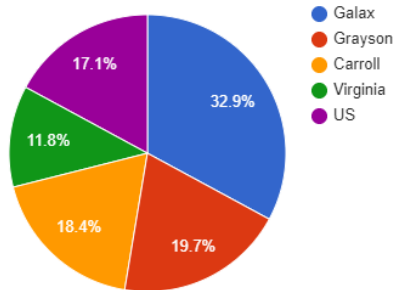


The figures to the left indicate both violent and property crime. This data was provided by www.crimegrade.com. This website grades communities based on their crime rates. Both Grayson and Galax received a score of C- while Carroll scored a B+.

Medical Care

With an average of 14% of the community still uninsured, it is not a surprise that 24% of respondents have poor or fair health in the County Health Rankings data report (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). Insurance costs were noted as the top issues in regards to accessing healthcare by participants in the Community Member Survey provided by Rooftop of Virginia CAP. Access to healthcare providers due to limited transportation was also mentioned. With an aging community and about 15% of the local population under the age of 65 having a disability (US Census), accessibility and affordability of medical care is a major concern.

SNAP Recipients



The above chart indicates that the recipients of SNAP benefits in the Twin County area are higher than the state and national recipients.

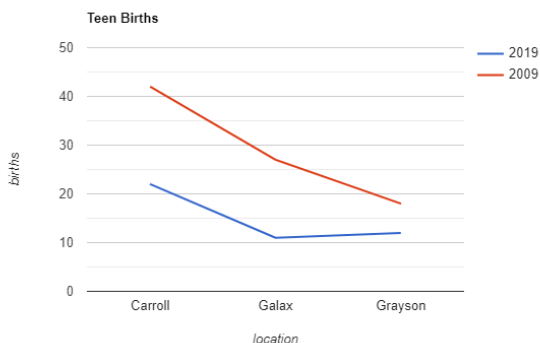
Food and Nutrition

In the Community Member Survey, 31% of respondents had income of less than \$20,000 annually. A total of 18% noted that they had gone hungry in the last 12 months due to not being able to get enough food. Food scarcity was very evident in 2020 during the height of the pandemic due to COVID-19. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits increased which helped with access to food. There are multiple resources in the area such as food donation boxes, church provided meals, food box giveaways and child backpack programs that offer food on the weekends or when school is not in session.

Youth Wellbeing

The local area's children are a valuable asset. They are the future taxpayers, business owners, governmental representatives and more. Ensuring that their wellbeing is addressed should be a priority.

In the Community Member Survey, respondents noted that 8% of their children had experienced bullying problems, 16% exhibited behavioral and emotional issues, and 16% were at unhealthy weights. All of these issues have been ever present in the community but they have been compounded by the pandemic. In the last Community Needs Assessment completed in 2019, Rooftop of Virginia CAP identified one of the top needs being positive activities for youth. While this was not deemed a "top need" in this needs assessment, it is still mentioned throughout surveys and focus groups. Hinderances to children participating in positive activities are a lack of opportunities, lack of transportation, and inability to participate if costs are involved.



Another issue that can occur when youth are not provided access to positive activities is the increase in teen pregnancies. While pregnancy rates have been declining, the Twin County area is still ranked high in the state for teen births (Virginia Department of Health).

Rooftop of Virginia CAP has recognized the need to address the needs of older youth. Offering Camp SPARK to middle school children promotes high school and career readiness as well as choosing positive assets and behaviors. The agency currently promotes the Draw the Line program and is also planning to conduct the Teen Outreach Program (TOP). These programs have sexual education , promotion of positive growth, and community service involvement.



Camp SPARK participants getting ready to go on the zipline.

Senior Citizen Wellbeing

In the data collection for this needs assessment, it was noted numerous times that there are needs in the community for senior citizens. Adult day care, medical transportation, affordable medications, and access to resources were mentioned. The impact of COVID-19 also played a huge role in the health and wellbeing of our older population. Seniors were advised to quarantine themselves since they are at a greater risk for suffering major illness and complications from the virus. This led to isolation and sometimes an inability to access needs. There are agencies such as Rooftop of Virginia CAP, District III, and recreation centers that offer services and assistance to seniors but they are still unable to fully meet all of the needs noted by respondents in surveys and focus groups.



Some members of the Senior Citizens group at Rooftop of Virginia CAP enjoy activities such as planting herbs.

Employment and Income

Wages and Opportunities

Manufacturing jobs were once the backbone of the Twin Counties. Area factories provided income to multiple generations until those jobs were lost over the last 20 to 25 years. While there are still some factories in the area, they often do not pay a wage that will fully support a household. Especially in times of inflation like what our country has been experiencing since 2020 (The New York Times). Underemployment, or not having a wage that fully meets needs, contributes to poverty in that it affects all aspects of a household's life; mental and physical health, substance abuse, transportation, quality housing and more. As mentioned on page 5 of this assessment, average median incomes in Galax, Grayson and Carroll do not meet the requirements for a "livable wage". This was determined to be one of the top needs identified in the area.

Since 2020, there has been an abundance of jobs in the Twin Counties. Employers are understaffed and have difficulty obtaining employees. Not all of these jobs provide a livable wage. A lot of open positions are in the retail or food service sectors which have historically paid lower wages. An issue that arises with those with lower incomes is that even if they obtain a job position, the wages that they earn could effect their eligibility for assistance programs such as rental or food assistance. The social programs do not have a "buffer" time that allows a household to be fully self-reliant before decreasing or ending assistance. Families or individuals must evaluate what will better support their households and often end up choosing between the assistance or low wage employment.

Skill Attainment

Another need that has been identified that affects employment is the fact that some people that could be in the labor force or are underemployed do not have the skills needed for certain positions that would meet the needs of their household. Specific training, certifications, credentials, soft skills (i.e. attendance, attire, etc.) and experience are needed to boost the employability of area residents. Having a trained, highly skilled workforce would not only provide more opportunities for families, it would also help to attract potential employers and industries to the Twin Counties. Organizations such as People Inc., the Virginia Employment Commission, and Wytheville Community College have programs that will assist with credential or skill attainment.



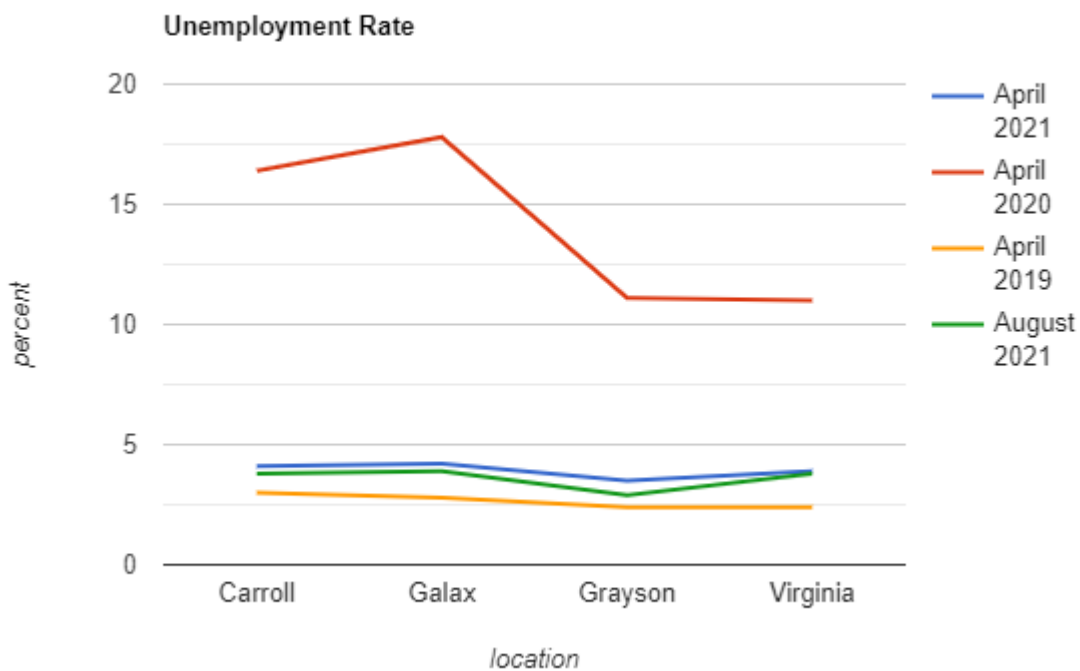
The Crossroads Institute in Galax houses Wytheville Community College classes and services, is the location of local People Inc. office, and also offers small business development services.

Of Note...

In analyzing data and results from surveys and focus groups, a correlation between the amount of people in the labor force and the population was identified. On page 5, it was noted that the service area is home to an aging population and one that is declining in number. The labor force percentages noted on page 12 are lower than state and national data. This could be because of the age or disability of residents and their inability to work. One could conclude that due to the population statistics and labor information, the Twin County area needs to conduct economic development activities in order to retain or attract younger employees. This will assist in maintaining or increasing the population and will provide a strong workforce for current and/or future employers. These factors will only strengthen the local community.

COVID-19 and Employment

With the onset of the global pandemic in early 2020, many families and individuals suffered job loss and a reduction in income. Already at-risk, those with lower incomes endured even more set-back. They were suddenly dealing with even less income, children participating in virtual learning due to school closures, and the stress and anxiety of living in fear of becoming ill. Unemployment rates skyrocketed after being the lowest ever in 2019 since 2010 (Virginia Employment Commission). The Twin Counties were able to bounce back quicker than some other localities in the country and service organizations or local governments rallied to try to provide for the needs of citizens. Except for the shortage in employees, the area seems to be returning to a semblance of the “normal” that everyone has craved since 2020.

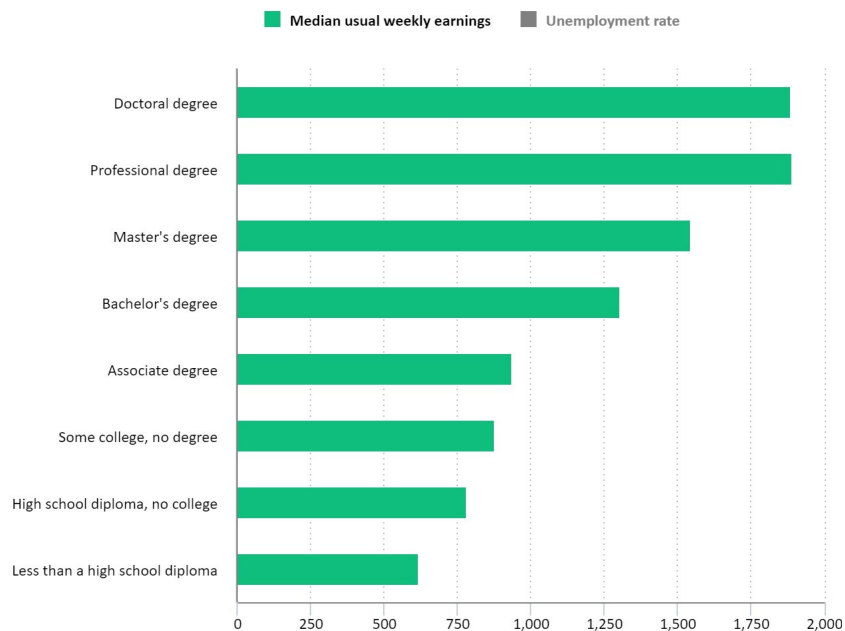


Education

In the Community Member Survey conducted for this report, early childhood and adult education were ranked as the 2nd and 3rd highest rated service or program that would be helpful in the community. Higher levels of education and attainment of credentials often lead to greater earnings and financial stability. While local high school graduation rates are equal to the state's graduation rate of 87%, there are still 21% of people over the age of 25 in the Twin Counties that do not have a high school diploma (US Department of Education). The number of people that do not have a high school diplomas doubles what the state of Virginia's rate is at 10%. The lack of diploma leads to an inability to obtain gainful employment. It can hinder the amount of earnings over the lifetime of an individual and it can ultimately lead to multigenerational poverty.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2020

Click legend items to change data display.



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

The local area is home to multiple resources that can help one obtain higher education. Resources like GED classes offered through New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board will help to gain the foundation upon which one can build the rest of their educational pursuits. College degrees are not for everyone and some prefer to seek certifications or licensures. Many of these trades such as plumbing, electrical and construction are in high demand in the area and as well as the state. These types of job positions provide comfortable wages and are valuable in the community. Wytheville Community College offers Associate Degree programs as well as many certificate programs. Their presence in Galax at The Crossroads Institute makes it easier for local residents to take advantage of the classes and credentials offered by the school. A more educated workforce will also assist in attracting new industry to the area.

Since the beginning of the global pandemic, many resources have been developed to help individuals obtain better skills that will allow them to secure more stable employment that is not as readily affected by a crisis. Programs like Virginia Careerworks, GO Virginia, and more offer the ability to attend school with little to no costs. This is especially attractive to those that want a shorter turnaround time between beginning training and obtaining employment.

Early Education

Childhood education plays an important role in development and future socioeconomic success. Currently (fall 2021), there is a national movement to ensure more children have access to pre-school and quality education. This ensures higher school readiness, encourages continued learning and credential attainment , and often leads to higher earnings in the workforce.



There are currently 1,012 children ages 3-4 living in the Twin Counties. Only 37% of those children are enrolled in preschool education programs. These programs are located in local school districts or in Head Start and Early Head Start centers throughout the service area. This is well below the state (49%) and national (48%) averages. All data is provided by the US Census American Community Survey 2015-2019.

School readiness is a large focus of preschool programs. Rooftop of Virginia CAP understands the importance of this and developed a new program to address the needs of children heading to Kindergarten. The Head Start to Kindergarten program is offered in the month of June to help children with fine and gross motor skills, communication and listening, and social skills. Children participating in 2021 increased their skills from the 61st percentile to the 95th percentile. With more funding and resources provided for expansion of services, more children will have the access they deserve in order to obtain a head start on their education.

Education in a Global Pandemic

No one has escaped the negative barriers and problems that arose with the pandemic. Least of all the area's children. School closures began March 13, 2020 and virtual learning commenced soon thereafter. Most of the area schools returned to either a hybrid schedule or full classes in the fall of 2020. All schools resumed regular learning in fall of 2021. While long-term effects of the pandemic are unknown at this point, immediate effects were felt in most households. Concerns over child care, issues with internet connectivity, access to nutritious foods while school is not in session, and the disconnect teachers and students felt with virtual learning was at the forefront of focus group discussions. At-risk students, such as those disabilities or receiving special education services (16% of children age 0-22), suffered greatly since they were unable to access the learning and services needed.



Child Care

Availability and Affordability

In the last decade, the number of child care centers have drastically decreased. This includes center-based, religious, and in-home locations. Grayson County is virtually a child care desert in that it has the least amount of available child care than the other two localities in the service area. The ability to obtain quality child care with convenient times and hours has been an issue in the area but is more evident now than ever. This is especially in response to the effects of the global pandemic. Most stakeholders and survey respondents noted that child care is the top service that would be helpful in the community.

Location	Center	In-Home	Available Slots (October 2021)
Galax	3	4	Part-time unlicensed preschool has
Carroll	7	4	11
Grayson	2	1	5

The table above notes available child care options. It includes Head Start and Early Head Start centers.



Per the Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, 66% of local children ages 6 and under live in households where all parents are in the work force. Without enough child care slots available, parents must often choose between work and caring for their children. This is also the case when it comes to paying for child care. In a local poll, the average cost of child care in the Twin Counties ranges from \$75 to over \$100 per week per child. These kinds of costs can seriously cut into already tight budgets for families. Departments of Social Services (DSS) offers subsidies for eligible families but with the lack of availability, not all subsidies are being utilized. Especially in Grayson County (per DSS). Services that are free to eligible families such as Head Start and Early Head Start are limited in capacity due to budget constraints and lack of available space for centers and/or classrooms.

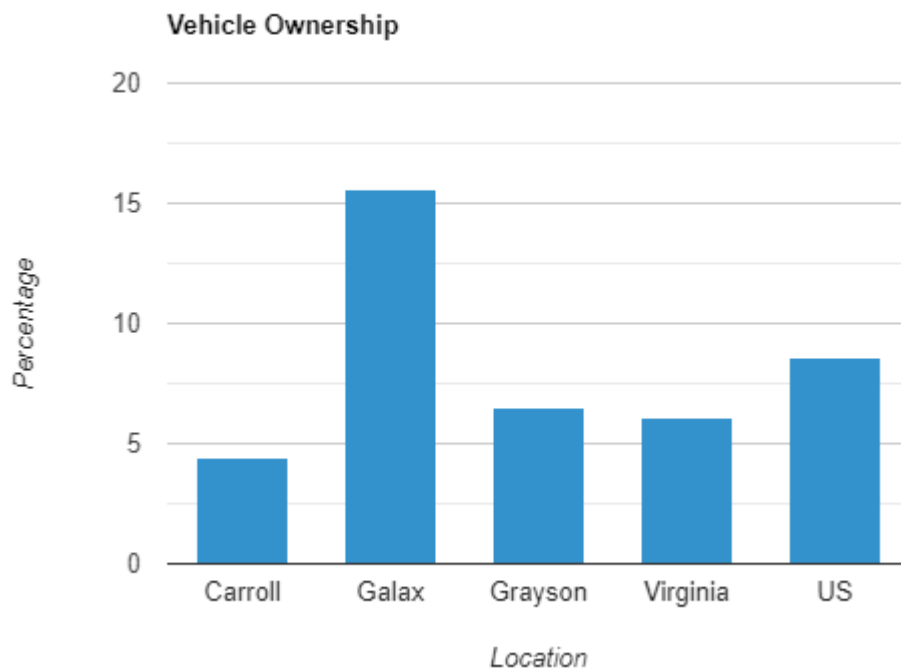
Rooftop of Virginia CAP (RTOV), in partnership with United Way of Southwest Virginia, began offering a mixed delivery classroom in fall 2021 in Grayson County. This will allow for full day/full year care for three to four year old children. Slots are limited to 10 due to funding and space. RTOV created the Igniting Futures Academy to implement this program with hopes of future expansion to all localities in the service area.

Transportation

Transportation has long been a repeated need in past Community Needs Assessments for the Twin Counties. Due to the rural area and lack of funding or resources, public transportation is a need that is difficult to address. There are currently no taxi or ride services like Uber or Lyft in the area. The city of Galax offers the Lynx service which is affordable at \$.50 per one way ride but it only operates on the weekdays during workday hours. Grayson and Carroll Counties do not offer public transportation.



Families often lack the ability to have their own reliable transportation. Costs such as payments, insurance and upkeep hinder owning a vehicle per the analysis completed by the Community Needs Assessment Team. Some families must rely on others for rides and that not only hinder mobility but can also hinder the ability to work or train.



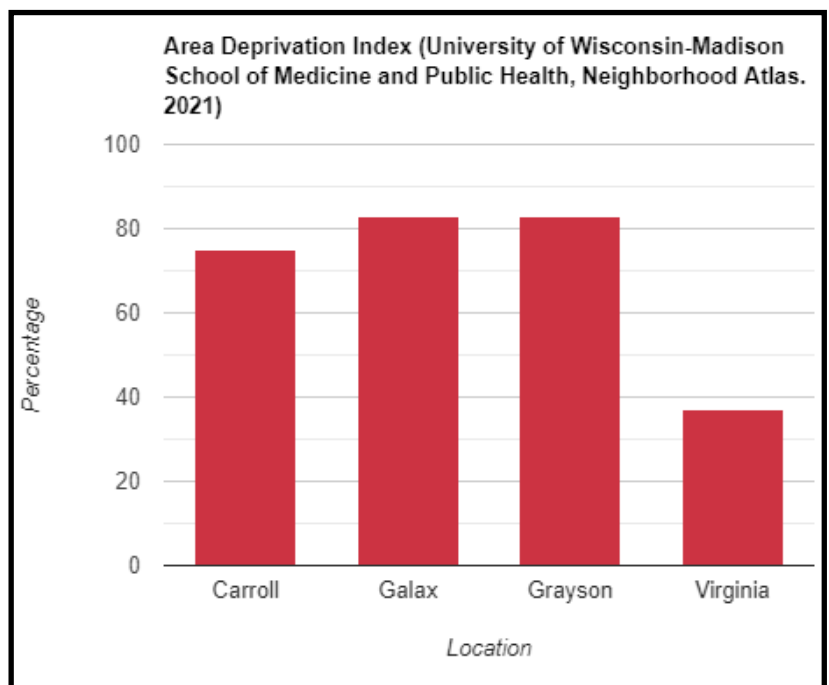
The chart above indicates the amount of residents that do not have their own vehicles. Carroll and Grayson are fairly close to the state and national averages but Galax is more than double in the percent of households without a vehicle. Its helpful that public transportation is provided in Galax even if it is limited. Galax also is only 8.3 square miles which also makes walking and biking to access resources easy than the counties which are considerably larger.

Conclusion

While the needs identified in this Community Needs Assessment are not new to the area, analysis of data states that the impact of COVID-19 and the global pandemic have exacerbated the issues in the Twin Counties. When the virus began to arrive in the Twin Counties, not one could have predicted that the small, rural area would make state and national news for the number of positive cases per capita. Galax was listed at the number one locality in the state for deaths (US Department of Health and Human Services). Carroll was number 23 but Grayson has suffered the least amount of deaths and did not even make the top 25 in the listing. It is unknown at this point as to what the lasting effects of the COVID –19 virus will be on the Twin Counties.

In all focus groups and analysis activities, it was noted that all needs are so entwined together that the ripple of one will create an effect on another. Families cannot hope to meet self-reliance goals when they are worried about safe and affordable housing. If they do not have child care, they cannot work which hinders their ability to pay for basic necessities like shelter and transportation. When they struggle to pay for food or healthcare, they cannot focus on furthering their education or obtaining skills for better employment.

The graph to the right indicates the Area Deprivation Index. This index ranks neighborhoods and communities relative to all neighborhoods across the state. The ADI is calculated based on 17 measures related to four primary domains (Education; Income & Employment; Housing; and Household Characteristics). The overall scores are measured on a scale of 1 to 100 where 1 indicates the lowest level of deprivation (least disadvantaged) and 100 is the highest level of deprivation (most disadvantaged). The Twin County area is ranked in the most disadvantaged communities in the state.



Change can be made and can make a lasting difference in the lives in the community. A positive thing that has occurred because the pandemic is that there has been a shift in resources and traditional assistance programs. The response to COVID-19 has created a need to be more innovative and intentional in approaches to helping families and individuals reach goals of social and economic independence thus allowing them to better weather storms and crises. Strengthening the households in the Twin Counties will create a thriving, more attractive community.

Head Start/Early Head Start Data

Effective Fall 2021

Center	Location	Number of Children Enrolled
Galax Head Start	105 Rosenwald Felts, Galax	36 center, 13 home based
Galax Early Head Start	8342 Carrollton Pike, Galax	16 center, 30 home based
Cana Head Start	231 Flower Gap Road, Cana	17 center
Hillsville Head Start	205 Oak Street, Hillsville	14 center, 2 home based
Hillsville Early Head Start	205 Oak Street, Hillsville	15 center, 22 home based
Independence Head Start	911 East Main Street, Independence	12 center, 11 home based
Independence Early Head Start	911 East Main Street, Independence	7 center, 13 home based

1. The Head Start program currently has a waiting list of 10 children and Early Head Start has a waiting list of 14. Most families prefer center-based services but space and funding hinders the ability to meet those needs. The home-based option is currently under enrolled.
2. Average daily attendance rates are 65% for Early Head Start and 64% for Head Start.
3. There are currently 12 Early Head Start and 11 Head Start families being served that are considered “over-income” (over 100% of Federal Poverty Line). Programs can serve a percentage of families that fall within the 130% of FPL.
4. In the 2020-2021 program year, a total of 6 foster children and 3 homeless children were enrolled in services.
5. There are currently (fall 2021) a total of 11 children being served that have an identified disability (speech and developmental delay). Services are being provided by Mount Rogers Mental Health Support and a local provider.
6. There are about 2,168 families (expectant mother, infants, toddlers and preschool age) in the Twin Counties that are potentially eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services.



New Head Start, Early Head Start and Igniting Futures Academy opened in the fall of 2021 in Grayson County.

Appendix

Rooftop of Virginia CAP Demographic Data 7/1/20-6/30/21.

Age	Count	% Total
0-5	340	12.56
6-13	385	14.22
14-17	160	5.91
18-24	226	8.35
25-44	687	25.37
45-54	268	9.9
55-59	155	5.72
60-64	147	5.43
65-74	226	8.35
75+	114	4.21
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	.04
Asian	7	.26
Black/African American	211	7.79
White	2,326	85.89
Other Race	46	1.7
Multi Race	115	4.25
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	321	11.85
Non-Hispanic/Not Latino	2,387	88.15
Disability		
Disabled	422	15.58
Not Disabled	2,246	88.15
Pending Disability	39	1.44

Education Level	Count	% Total
0-8th grade	953	35.19
12= Some Post Secondary	235	8.68
9-12 non Graduate	472	17.43
Associate's Degree	105	3.88
Bachelor's Degree	65	2.4
Completed High School	801	29.58
GED	44	1.62
Industry Recognized Certification	10	.37
Master's Degree	5	.8
Employment Status		
Employed Full Time	523	19.31
Employed Part Time	241	8.9
Not In Labor Force	378	13.96
Retired	257	9.49
School/Job Training Program	13	.48
Seasonal/Temporary Employment	6	.22
Unemployed < 6 months	126	4.65
Unemployed > 6 months	234	8.64
Gender		
Female	1,525	56.31
Male	1,183	43.69
Veteran Status		
Active Military	3	.11
Never Served	1,720	63.52
Unknown	10	.37
Veteran	69	2.55

Marital Status	Count	% Total
Divorced	216	7.98
Married	563	20.79
Partners	142	5.24
Separated	62	2.29
Single	713	26.33
Widowed	94	3.47
Health Insurance		
Insured Employer Provided	236	8.71
Insured Medicaid	1,642	60.64
Insured Medicare	268	9.9
Insured Private Pay	25	.92
Insured State Health Insurance for Adults	2	.07
Insured Unknown Type	97	3.58
Insured VA Medical Service	9	.33
No Health Insurance	290	10.71
Multi Health Insurance	138	5.1
Family Type		
Multi Generation	64	4.82
NonRelated Adults with Children	16	1.21
Single Parent (Father figure w/Partner)	2	.15
Single Parent (Father only)	15	1.13
Single Parent (Mother figure w/Partner)	10	.75
Single Parent (Mother only)	188	14.17
Single Person	739	55.69
Two Adults No Children	86	6.48
Two parent	173	13.04
Family Type Not Entered	28	2.11

Housing Status	Count	% Total
Homeless with Roof	18	1.36
Homeless without Roof	2	.15
Homeowner	484	36.47
Other	73	5.5
Other Permanent Placement	6	.45
Rent	711	5.58
Status Not Entered	31	2.34
Income—% to Poverty		
0-50%	356	26.83
50.01-75%	220	16.58
75.01-10%	196	14.77
100.01-125%	127	9.57
125.01-150%	96	7.23
150.01-175%	63	4.75
175.01-200%	51	3.84
Over 200%	168	12.66

Total Households 1,327

Total of Participants 2,708

Staff Focus Group August 6, 2021—Identifying top needs of the Twin Counties and available resources.

Top 4 Needs Identified by Majority	Resources	Comments
Mental health needs in relation to substance abuse (providers, recovery services).	Mt Rogers Celebrate Recovery Recovery Court	Need more on-going services. Reduction of stigma. Lack of providers/affordability.
Lack of transportation (public, reliable).	Lynx in Galax	No county public transit. Restricted hours for city.
Housing (emergency and affordable)	RTOV-S8/Emergency Vouchers	Limited local shelters. Expensive rent. Not enough decent housing stock.
Employment needs in relation to skills needed to secure employment (soft, certifications/specific).	WIOA – People Inc. RTOV-Whole Family classes	

Notable mentions:

Affordable child care – limited facilities/slots/costs.

Dental care – lack of providers accepting Medicaid/free services.

Activities for youth – positive activities outside of sports/church, no venues to socialize, no mentoring programs.

Internet – lack of broadband in certain areas.

Customer Focus Group—October 2021

What are the strengths/resources in the Twin Counties?

Food resources, Faith-Based Community, Chestnut Creek School of the Art, Recreation Centers, Transit in Galax, Quality schools, Farmers Markets, Access to Educational Resources

What are the weaknesses/needs?

Housing (TOP NEED): lack of units, older homes, high rent.

Mental Health/Substance Abuse (TOP NEED): no treatment providers, substance abuse is rampant, stigma.

Transportation (TOP NEED): no public transit in counties, too expensive to own car on limited income.

Lack of child care. Employment needs like training and higher wage jobs. No broadband internet in some areas. Rising costs such as food and gas. No supportive service cushion to “get on your feet”.

What are your ideas for change?

More services for youth and senior citizens. More rental units. Agency needs marketing of services to reach more people.

Renovate empty homes or businesses to provide housing. Budget classes.

What is your overall impression of the agency (Rooftop of VA CAP)?

Wonderful services. Needs more marketing. Convenient facilities. Needs more parking. Be aware of customer service.

Partner and Stakeholder Survey—Fall 2021—Online link provided via email.

What do you feel is the single greatest need for the Twin County area?

Housing

- affordability
- not enough rental units

Child Care

- availability
- affordability

Substance Abuse

- not enough rehab providers
- more people using substances

Employment

- better wages

COVID Issues

- health

Youth

- services and activities

Please select the programs and services that are important or helpful to the community (results are most helpful to least):

Affordable, quality child care

Early childhood education

Safe & affordable rental housing

Substance abuse services

Transportation

Adult education

Assistance with utilities

Job training assistance

Affordable health & dental care

Better paying jobs

Small business development

Mental health services

More job options

Activities for youth

Access to internet

Homeless services

Access to nutritious food options

Home repair

Homeownership preparation assistance

53% from Carroll County 35% from Grayson County 12% Galax City

58% RTOV Board 29% Local Government 5% Local DSS 8% Other Local Stakeholder

Community Partner Survey—Fall 2021—Online Link distributed through Facebook

Residents: 46.5% Carroll, 28.3% Grayson, 25.3% Galax

People in Household: 30.3% three, 29.3% two, 18.2% four, 9.1% one, 9.1% five, 2% six, 2% seven

Annual Income: 19.2% \$60,000+ 18.2% \$10,000-19,999 18.2% \$20,000-29,999 13.1% less than \$10,000
11.1% \$30,000-39,999 11.1% \$40,000-49,999 9.1% \$50,000-59,999

Primary Language: 97% English 3% Other

Highest Level of Education: 28.3% HS Diploma/GED 23.2% Some College 22.2% Associate's 18.2% Bachelor's
6.1% Technical School Certificate 1% Some High School 1% Graduate Degree

Single greatest need facing your family:

Housing

-affordability
-not enough rental units
-utility costs

Child Care

-availability
-affordability

Income

-higher costs
-insurance and medical bills
-debt

Employment

-better wages
-job security
-transportation

Health

-COVID issues
-access to care
-more providers

Youth

-services and activities

Senior Services

-assistance and care

Single great need facing the community:

Housing

-affordability
-not enough rental units
-utility costs

Child Care

-availability
-affordability

Income

-higher costs
-insurance and medical bills
-debt
-poverty

Employment

-better wages
-job security
-transportation
-more skills training
-more workers

Health

-COVID issues
-access to care
-more providers
-substance abuse
-mental care

Youth

-services and activities

Senior Services

-assistance and care

Discrimination

-race and sexual orientation

Households with children under 18: 54.5% yes, 45.5% No

Ages of Children: 36.6% N/A, 30.1% 6-13, 16.3% 14-17, 11.4% 3-5, 5.7% 0-2

Have you experienced any of the following issues with your children in the last 12 months?

40.7 % N/A, 15.7% Unhealthy Weight, 15.7% Emotional/Behavioral Problems, 7.9% Bullying, 5.7% Drug Use, 5.7% Alcohol Use, 5% Other, 3.6% Trouble with Law Enforcement

In the last 12 months, have you or anyone in your household gone hungry because you were unable to get enough food?

81.8% No, 18.2% yes

Do you face any of the following issues when accessing healthcare?

27.6% Out of pocket expenses are too high, 24.3% Health premiums are expensive, 21.7% Difficulty finding a provider/getting an appointment, 15.1% N/A, 11.2% Difficulty in getting transportation to a medical appointment

Have any of your household members experienced any of the following situations because of COVID-19?

26.5% Increase concern for health, 18.4% feeling more alone/isolated, 14.1% N/A, 11.4% friend or family died from COVID, 10.8% layoff/furlough from job, 10.3% Not having enough food, 8.6% inability to pay rent/mortgage/utilities