Great Lakes Community Action Partnership

Community Needs Assessment

2023

Great Lakes
COMMUNITY ACTION
PARTNERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

A **Community Needs Assessment** (CNA) is a process required and conducted by all Community Action Agencies every three years to provide a snapshot of the underlying causes and conditions of poverty within the community they serve and to identify the available resources to address the unmet needs of the community's most vulnerable residents. The needs assessment focuses on local conditions, analyzing the economic opportunities and barriers for residents who are at risk of remaining or becoming economically insecure. It identifies existing and potential resources to expand opportunities.

The CNA is the first phase of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Cycle, grounding and guiding Great Lakes Community Action Partnership's (GLCAP) work to develop and implement programs and services that lift families and communities out of poverty. The information derived from this process will aid the development of our three-year strategic plan for the period of October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2026.

Why does GLCAP assess community needs and resources?

- To gain a deeper understanding of the community. Each community has its own needs, assets, culture, social structure, and partnership opportunities. Community assessment helps to uncover needs and resources, the underlying culture and social structure to better understand how to address the community's needs and utilize its resources. Also, the needs assessment identifies partnerships in the community that can assist with fulfilling our mission.
- To understand the scope of emerging and ongoing needs of economically insecure residents in the community.
- To educate community residents and leaders about the identified needs and provide input on policies and strategies. A needs assessment encourages community members to consider the community's assets and how to use them, and the community's needs and how to address them.
- To determine the organization's priorities and help clarify specific roles for programs or system improvements.
- To identify needs and resources before initiating a program. We utilize a proactive approach that allows the organization to plan for the unexpected.
- To understand the current community needs and resources and their effects on policy that guides advocacy efforts, allowing us to make credible policy recommendations.

Who does GLCAP involve in assessing local needs and resources?

Participation is needed and sought from a broad range of community stakeholders including community-based organizations, faith-based entities, the private and public sectors, and educational institutions. It is important to provide the opportunity for all points of view to be included in the assessment. There were 349 individuals within the following categories that were targeted to participate in the CNA process.

- *Those who have issues to be addressed.* We involve those who are directly affected by adverse conditions since they know best what effects conditions have on their lives.
- *Health and human service providers.* Community-based organizations have a deep understanding of the community and a strong empathic connection with the populations they serve. They are helpful in sharing their knowledge and recruiting people from marginalized populations to contribute to the assessment.
- *Government officials.* Elected and appointed officials can be helpful for community change effort. Engaging them helps to ensure they will take the effort seriously and work to make it successful.
- *Influential people.* Individuals identified as leaders because of their positions (college presidents, directors of hospitals and other major organizations, corporate CEOs) and doctors, professors, judges, and clergy because they are known to be people of integrity and care about the community.
- *People whose jobs or lives could be affected by the actions taken because of the assessment.* These include teachers, police, emergency room personnel, landlords, and others who might have to react if new community policies or procedures are put in place.
- *Community activists.* People who have been involved in their communities addressing policy or issues important to community members.
- *Businesses, especially those that employ people that are targeted to be served by GLCAP.* The livelihoods of local business owners and their employees could be affected by the results of the assessment.

What methods did GLCAP use to gather information?
The 2023 GLCAP CNA Report contains data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census; the American Community Survey (ACS); the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Labor Market Information; Office of Research, Ohio Department of Development; the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium; Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. These sources provided community demographic data for our primary counties Wood, Sandusky, Ottawa, and Seneca, along with comparative data for the State of Ohio and the U.S. The data sources are located within the appropriate narrative sections and below the charts and graphs.

Staff from our five departments, Adult and Youth Development, Child Development, Community Development, Housing & Energy, and Senior Services & Transportation were instructed to provide hard copies or the electronic link to program participants. This was done via email, during home/office visits and case management sessions. Staff were also instructed to explain the community needs process and provide the survey to advisory groups, coalitions, and committees that partner with our organization. We also collected survey data from members of the community-at-large, which included our Board of Directors, county and city leaders, the faith community, and educational institutions. Respondents were asked to answer survey questions, share their thoughts on the challenges, and discuss issues facing the communities we serve. The information obtained will be used as part of our upcoming three-year strategic planning process to address current and future community needs. We used Survey Monkey to collect and generate survey outcomes. The survey opened on March 13, 2023, and concluded on May 12, 2023, with close to 650 respondents.

How was the strategic analysis conducted and prioritized?

Once the needs assessment was completed, GLCAP management, the Planning and Evaluation Committee, and the Board met to review the results, identify priority areas of need, and to create and accept recommendations for action which will be written into our next three-year strategic plan.

What was the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on our communities?

When the pandemic swept across the nation and demand for emergency services increased dramatically, we responded with force. Just like numerous times before in the face of natural disasters or economic crisis, when the pandemic wreaked havoc on our communities, we pivoted to meet the crisis head on. The pandemic emphasized how crucial it is to assess community needs and resources when preparing an effective community-level response.

We were uniquely positioned and able to mobilize and provide immediate and ongoing community needs support within our service area. Each community faced a separate set of challenges and possessed a different array of resources available to meet those challenges. We were able to leverage our long-standing trust with residents, community partnerships, and flexible federal funding to meet the needs.

Families turned to us to help them weather COVID-19. Within days, we found innovative ways to serve existing participants, as well as the thousands of individuals and families who found themselves newly in need of assistance as their health changed, the economy crashed, and jobs vanished.

Older adults and people with serious underlying medical conditions were at higher risk of experiencing acute symptoms. In addition, Black, Indigenous, and other persons of color were disparately impacted by the health risks and economic consequences of the pandemic, due to factors including high comorbidity rates, their disproportionate role as essential workers, and lack of access to quality, affordable healthcare.[1]

We wielded technology to improve service delivery and communications to address a plethora of challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. A streamlined application process, real-time service needs data, improved the participants' experience and helped the organization respond to increasing demand.

[1] Richard A Oppel Jr., et al., The Fullest Look yet at the Racial Inequity of Coronavirus, N.Y. Times, July 5, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/05US/Coronavirus-latinos-african-americans-cdc-date.html?

COVID-19 required us to prioritize which programs to fund and how to deliver programs in a safe and effective way. We adapted operations by completing online or over the phone application processes. We were engaged in integrating a range of services to provide effective and efficient services.

The organization was faced with regulations, systems, policy, a challenging hiring market, and organizational culture challenges. We worked to overcome these challenges by pursuing new administrative strategies by aligning funding streams, accepting electronic signatures, electronic document submission, and integrating intake and assessment procedures.

We built partnerships, secured, and leveraged both public and private resources, thinking creatively, and moving swiftly. Each year, we administer and manage a range of federal, state, local, and private funding streams, braiding and blending resources to fill gaps in services and to maximize the impact of each dollar. During the pandemic, we received large increases in federal funding, either directly awarded or through state and local government awards. Additionally, we received increases in private donations during the pandemic. From 2020 until 2023, we were approved for 51 COVID Response proposals and received $23,776,298 funding. All this was possible because we had the financial and administrative infrastructure to distribute resources effectively.

The additional funding allowed us to serve more people and increase eligibility levels up to 200% of the federal poverty level starting in March 2020. We were able to reach households and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 economic crisis. Our experience provided the capacity for our communities to quickly receive and disburse funds to those most in need of resources.

We redesigned systems to help households obtain food while using existing resources like Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds, partner relationships, and private funding. All the while, managers sought constant feedback to ensure the changes implemented were working. By collecting and analyzing the local needs, along with talking with current participants, we recognized decreasing food insecurity would allow families and individuals to stay home and stay healthy throughout stay-at-home orders or when people needed to quarantine.

A new food delivery program was created when we assessed our assets and determined what resources could be leveraged to address the demand. At the same time, our nutrition program was mandated to close the congregate meal sites. Instead of in-person dining, we provided a Grab & Go meal option two days a week, with three different meals available for pick up curbside at the Sandusky County Senior Campus. In addition, we partnered with local restaurants to provide meals. These partnerships included CR Juices, El Aguila Bakery, and Casa Fiesta. GLCAP offered a chef salad entrée on Tuesday's and Friday's. Homebound seniors were able to choose from ten entrée options and received a box of seven frozen meals, milk, bread, and juice every week. We also purchased food vouchers and distributed them to eligible families to obtain groceries. Supply kits were distributed which included disinfectant wipes, cleaning supplies, antibacterial soap, hand sanitizers, and masks.

Recognizing social isolation and loneliness are associated with reduced usage of health and social services, staff implemented Senior Centers without Walls; a new format for delivering services in Sandusky County. When seniors are unaware of services to use or when seniors use services as a substitute for companionship, there is potential danger to the senior or unnecessary healthcare costs. To prevent this from occurring, healthy social networks were implemented to guide and facilitate the appropriate health and social service use for seniors. We offered free virtual activities, conversations, book clubs, journal clubs, bingo, food experiences, fitness classes, and support groups for homebound elders and those who were temporarily isolated due to COVID health orders. Participation was through telephone conference calls.

In 2020, GLCAP provided services to 965 seniors. We delivered 42% more meals to isolated elderly senior citizens throughout Sandusky County than the previous year. This was the highest number of meals served in the history of the organization. There were 2,441 nutrition boxes including fruit, vegetable and dairy products delivered to seniors. One hundred and ninety-two activity sessions were held. There were 6,031 wellness calls to at-home seniors to ensure they were safe and feeling well on non-meal delivery days. There were 537 care packages provided to seniors that contained snacks and toiletries. Seniors received 500 entertainment activity packets. Three hundred and thirty-two virtual socialization, health, exercise, and education sessions were conducted to assist seniors in staying connected. One hundred seniors participated in online/distance programming. Newsletters were sent to 1,500 individuals to keep seniors informed on upcoming events. There were 81 Sandusky County senior Facebook group members. Birthday cards were delivered to 818 seniors. There were 20 separate groups (book clubs, bingo, and journaling) actively participating.

"The global COVID-19 pandemic transformed the world and thrust the U.S. into one of the greatest periods of economic, physical and social fragility in modern times," said NCAP CEO Denise Harlow. "During the pandemic, Community Action Agencies kept people fed, housed and safe. They functioned as lifelines across America, helping communities where it was needed most; supporting small businesses, leading vaccination efforts, opening shelters for those experiencing homelessness, aiding students with remote learning and so much more."

We operated a two-week summer program in 2021 and 2022 targeting children who were transitioning to kindergarten, those on an Individual Education Plan and for other children whom staff and families felt the program could benefit. We provided wellness incentives including wellness days and new hire and referral incentives for staff.

We expanded our mental health contracts to support children, families and classroom staff who were identified as needing additional support. We provided supports to centers and to childcare partners including PPE, supplies to enhance indoor and outdoor learning, funds to support recruitment and retention of staff and families and opportunities for staff to attend training and professional development sessions.

The pandemic exacerbated long-standing issues of housing availability and affordability. Safe and stable housing situations became challenging to maintain for rural households. Those experiencing homelessness were especially vulnerable to COVID-19 health risks. We moved quickly and effectively to provide rental and other financial assistance to keep families in their homes, to maintain family stability, and lessen the stress of the situation.

Since October 2020, we received funding to specifically assist those facing barriers to paying their mortgages, taxes, homeowner's insurance, rent, and utilities due to the pandemic. To date, we have operated ten COVID relief programs through county, state, and federal funding sources. Of the $23,776,298, we have spent over $11 million providing housing, homelessness, and utility services in eight counties, and assisting over 4,250 households.

During this trying time, GLCAP was ready to meet families where they were, supported individuals in their time of need, and convened community resources to ensure every resident had a path to opportunity, dignity, and economic mobility.

What We Learned and Where Do We Go from Here

As we look to the future and what lies ahead after COVID-19, the fragility of the economy becomes glaringly apparent as critical supply chains faulter, unemployment surges, and markets vacillate. The labor market has tightened significantly in 2021 and 2022, including unstainable high rates of job creation, an increasing ratio of job openings to unemployed workers, and low level of quits.

There are uncertainties about another virus outbreak leading to further economic downturn with a domino effect on supply chains, bankruptcies, and the movement of people and goods across borders. A prolonged global recession tops the list of most feared risks. We find ourselves in time of unexpected large and sustained shocks to food, housing, and energy prices, unusual distortions in key product markets, strong aggregate demand and shifts in the composition of consumer spending (e.g., from services to durable goods the pandemic combined with constraints on supply in some sectors that created shortages) sectorial price increases, inflation, supply chain issues, and rising interest rates.[2]

Successful organizations gain the ability to respond to changing conditions with greater speed and agility, mitigating the impact of unexpected events, and proactively achieve the organization's mission. GLCAP is using the lessons learned during the

[2] Peterson Institute for International Economics, 23-4 What Caused the U.S. Pandemic -Era Inflation, Hutchins Center on Fiscal & Monetary Policy, The Brookings Institution. Bernanke, Ben and Blanchard, Olivier. https://www.piie.com/publications/working-papers/what-caused-us-pandemic-era-inflation

pandemic to re-envision and reshape organizational functions and services. The goal is to go beyond the challenge of cost efficiency and include resilience as a driver for organizational-related decisions. Digitization and integration will provide the foundation for building more resilient operations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised a host of critical operational questions, while urgent action is needed to stay ahead of longer-term disruptive change. This complex and uncertain environment presents heightened risks, but it is also opening opportunities for innovation and growth. Organizations that adapt faster and execute more efficiently than their competitors are set to reap benefits in the short and long term. This is the time to reassess community and family needs.

GLCAP is continuing to target investments and link local, state, and national resources to programs, services, support, and interventions to counteract the pandemic's direct and indirect impact on children's and families' well-being, to address our local community needs assessment top ranked needs, and to meet the organization's mission.

During the pandemic, thousands of households in our communities fell behind in paying their rent, water, heating, and cooling. As costs for rent and utilities soared, people lost their jobs, families could not pay their bills, and evictions escalated. Lack of affordable housing led to a downward spiral, including families facing homelessness, difficulty finding or maintaining work, and worsened mental health (stress and trauma). At the same time, Ohio's aging and disabled population rose which caused housing options to remain limited for those needing housing.

The economic repercussions of the pandemic, followed by steep rent increases in recent years, drastically impacted the supply of affordable housing. While rent inflation has slowed in 2023, extremely low-income households in our area continue to face significant barriers as housing costs consume a huge percentage of their income and locating available and affordable housing is a tremendous challenge.

The shortage of affordable housing is further elucidated by a report from the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*, which indicates there are only thirty-six affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income households.[3]

Locally, GLCAP recognizes and has documentation of the damaging and deadly effects of housing instability. The 2023 post-pandemic CNA survey results completed with

[3] https://endhomelessness.org/blog/how-cocs-can-engage-local-leaders-on-affordable-housing/?gclid=CjwKCAjw5remBhBiEiwAxL2M90ukQhQ_y_BmEbChYcjs8KsuyPgRd2x9K6aWlEO9PtM6MNT6i9EW7hoCj3sQAvD_BwE
Info in footnote was found in the National Alliance to End Homelessness, *How CoCs Can Engage Local Leaders on Affordable Housing*

the community at-large, and participants ranked homelessness and/or lack of affordable housing within the top three key issues that need addressed. The qualitative and quantitative results further substantiate housing stability as an organizational priority.

GLCAP measures food insufficiency through data gathered on households and children through the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census working with the U.S.D.A., Economic Research Service and other Federal agencies to develop the Household Pulse Survey (HPS). HPS is an online survey on the economic and social effects of COVID-19 on U.S. households. Respondents are asked about educational, employment, health, housing, and food-related outcomes.

Data was collected from April 23, 2020, through February 13, 2023, about food insufficiency. This is defined as a household that did not have enough food to eat sometimes or often in the last seven days. Low food sufficiency means a household did not have enough food to eat sometimes in the last seven days. Very low food sufficiency means a household did not have enough food to eat often in the last seven days. The prevalence of food insufficiency "low and very low food sufficiency" peaked at 13.4 percent in December 2020. As of February 13, 2023, the prevalence of food insufficiency was estimated at 11.4 percent and the prevalence of very low food security was 3.0 percent.

Throughout and post-pandemic, food insecurity continues to affect individuals and families in Northwest Ohio. The pandemic significantly changed the food supply and increased an already existing national hunger crisis. With high unemployment producing long lines at food banks, interruptions in supply chains leaving shelves empty, and lockdowns closing restaurants and prompting stockpiling shelf-stable groceries.

Additionally, post-pandemic, a major change occurred when the federal government adjusted the regulations of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rendering people ineligible for food assistance. This along with inflation, weather impacts, supply chain issues increasing, food costs rising, the number of individuals needing food assistance expanded. In the 2023 CNA, participants ranked food distribution (food boxes and grocery vouchers) as the second highest ranked issue in the health category.

We continue to address food insufficiency in various ways: GLCAP senior centers host daily lunches and monthly evening meals; home-delivered meals are provided for homebound senior citizens; a daily meal and snack is prepared for children in our preschool and childcare programs; breakfast, lunch, and snacks are given to our afterschool and summer program students; there are ongoing food drives conducted to supply local food pantries; and individuals and families are linked to food pantries and local county Department of Job and Family Services to combat hunger.

Also, going into the final phase of COVID-19, the pandemic and its ramifications intensified people's need for jobs that pay a living wage and employers who needed to fill the skills gap that exists in rural counties. Low work participation rates, growing workforce demands, increasing need for jobs for trained workers, and the nature of highly innovative, ever-changing technology within industries are proving current training programs to be insufficient to adequately meet the current workforce demands. Workers are not getting the "job-ready" skills employers say they require. The skills gap goes beyond the well-known shortages within the industry sector partnerships.

GLCAP stepped up to provide services through a contract with the Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). In August 2022, OMA secured a U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Good Jobs Challenge grant. The Good Jobs Challenge program is designed to get Americans back to work and increase wage growth, as well as develop a demand-driven system that will continue to support Americans in securing and retaining quality jobs. A key component is upfront employer engagement, mobilization, and employer commitments to hire workers.

Through industry sector partnerships, GLCAP engages employers and individuals in earn-and-learn and deploys incumbent upskilling programs for high-demand positions. This provides support for the worker to advance from entry-level to middle skill roles, to prepare workers for Industry 4.0 aligned careers, and to activate new automation and robotics training programs.

This is an era of workplace change. Employees' number one concern is work-life balance. In June 2022, GLCAP initiated a compressed work week, made base rate adjustments, increases to our pay scale, and updated the organization's personnel policies and procedures (providing additional or revised benefits such as vacation leave accruals, holiday pay, and time off increments).

Compiling and analyzing the data available, we are guiding the reshaping of our social norms, systems, and practices to address changes needed to remain competitive. We are exploring and creating tailored experiences that strengthen employees' purpose, ignite energy, and elevate organizational-wide performance. The shift allows our organization to put its workers first by exploring and responding to how they view us, then delivering tailored interventions that focus on maximizing satisfaction, performance, and productivity.

Research shows that people who report having a positive employee experience have sixteen times the engagement level of employees with a negative experience, and they are eight times more likely to want to remain at an organization.[4] We are focusing on

[4] McKinsey & Company - https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/this-time-its-personal-shaping-the-new-possible-through-employee-experience

employee experiences to retain and excite the best people for GLCAP, creating value and maintaining a competitive edge.

Secondly, the pandemic increased the pace of initiating the organization's technological capabilities and dramatically increased the speed digital is changing business in a rapidly evolving landscape. Technology is driving changes in working and creating the need to focus on capabilities that promote agility. Organizations need to adopt digital technologies in months versus over a span of years. At the same time taking into consideration, participants, employees, funders, and community partners have all increased their use of technology.

We are rethinking the role of digital technology in our business strategy and how to conduct business at a pace that is needed to operate. To meet new demands and to strategically differentiate ourselves from competitors, we need to continue to make digital and technology investments. Better overall technological capabilities, talent, leadership, and resources are linked to better economic outcomes.

We propose to continue operating the programs outlined in this document in section, "Description of GLCAP", pages 12 through 14. The programs are addressing the key issues outlined in section, "Survey Questions and Ranked Results" and "Service Area Issues", pages 43 to 58.

In 2023, GLCAP is strategically planning for the future of the organization taking into consideration the important lessons learned from experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, the results of the 2023 Community Needs Assessment Survey, our Board of Director's strategic planning session, and input from our employees.

We are prioritizing efforts, determining effective resource allocation, aligning the Board and employees with the organization's goals, and ensuring goals are backed by data and sound reasoning. We are proactively strategizing in response to a changing environment and our strengths and challenges.

DESCRIPTION OF GREAT LAKES COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP), with over 57 years' experience, is a highly diversified non-profit organization with a total annual budget of over $62,000,000, employing over 500 employees. GLCAP manages more than 160 contracts from local, state, and federal sources that provide funding for services to over 13,000 children, families, and communities.

GLCAP operates several programs to assist individuals and families that include housing counseling programs, job training initiatives for youth and adults, a full array of child development (Pre-K – 8) services, emergency assistance programs, rural transit, senior services, energy efficiency and housing rehabilitation projects, affordable housing development, community development training and technical assistance, and water and sewer services.

The corporation has five departments focused on different goals and outcomes: Child Development, Community Development, Housing and Energy, Adult and Youth Development, Senior Services and Transportation. To support the efforts of the departments, administrative services are provided including planning and development, accounting, public relations, human resources, secretarial, building maintenance, reporting, communication, information technology services and upper management responsibilities.

The Housing and Energy Department provides direct housing services such as housing rehabilitation, home weatherization services and lead hazard reduction. We have written, administered and operated Community Housing Impact & Preservation Programs (CHIP) totaling more than $68.5 million in Sandusky County with cities of Fremont, Clyde and Bellevue; Seneca County with cities of Tiffin and Fostoria; Ottawa County with the City of Port Clinton; Allen County with the City of Delphos; Huron County with the City of Norwalk; Erie County with cities of Sandusky, Vermilion and Huron; Lucas County with cities of Oregon and Maumee; Lorain County with cities of Sheffield Lake, Oberlin, and North Ridgeville; Hancock County with the City of Findlay; Crawford County with the cities of Bucyrus and Galion; and Putnam County.

We engage in new affordable housing development through our Planning and Development Department. We have partnered as a co-developer and non-profit owner in 12 Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects. Additionally, our Planning and Development team has facilitated the housing development process for local non-profits to develop affordable housing for their respective clients.

The Adult and Youth Development Department provides housing and emergency supportive services, homebuyer assistance, financial counseling, and employment and training for individuals and families. We offer assistance for those who need help with rent, are facing eviction or homelessness, or are currently homeless. Housing support helps homeless residents get back on their feet. Also, we have homeless assistance specifically designed to meet the needs of Veterans. Our Financial Opportunity Center provides financial counseling to help better manage income and build wealth through workforce development training, financial literacy education, home buyer counseling, and other income support to help with needs.

Housing Counseling assists and educates potential homebuyers with credit problems, budgeting, and savings. Employment programming assists adults with accelerated educational and occupational training, job placement, case management and supportive services. We connect participants with advanced manufacturing, healthcare, marine trades, logistics and other in-demand careers available throughout the region.

Child Development provides no-cost and low-cost childcare and preschool options for children ages birth through five, as well as free afterschool programs for school-age youth. Services include providing multiple no-cost options for infant and toddler care for families who are seeking quality childcare. Home-based learning options that provide quality education are available to prepare children for kindergarten. We believe parents and families are children's first and most important teachers, and a child's home is his/her primary learning environment. We assist parents in creating a positive home environment for their children's growth and development. We offer regular playgroup sessions for all families in our Home-Based program and cover language and physical development and along with nutrition services.

At four locations throughout Ohio (Shiloh, Napoleon, New Carlisle, and Fremont), we have educational development opportunities for migrant and seasonal agriculture workers with children ages birth through five. Centers provide educational development opportunities, a daily meal and snack, along with hands-on activities. In addition, children are provided with medical, mental health, nutrition, and dental services.

Our Afterschool program provides opportunities for children who come from economically disadvantaged families and attend low-performing schools to receive academic support. The program focuses on reading, mathematics, positive youth development, and parent and family engagement. Children participate in a wide array of enrichment activities in sports, science, technology, and arts and crafts.

Senior Services focuses on the wide-ranging needs of senior citizens addressing health/nutrition, emotional, and social wellness. Our senior centers host daily lunches, education, socialization activities, medical assessments, and other services for seniors ages sixty and over. GLCAP Meals on Wheels offers weekday, home-delivered lunches for eligible Sandusky County seniors ages 60 and older. Senior Helping Hands helps with health and safety related household issues that prevent seniors 60 years and older from receiving other needed services. This program identifies ways to eliminate barriers, fix areas in need of repair, work with contractors, provide financial assistance, and provide other needs. The goal is to help seniors remain in their homes, live safely and independently.

Transportation services include our TRIPS and Mobility Management services. TRIPS provides low-cost rides for Sandusky County residents for shopping trips, doctors' appointments and anywhere they may need to go within the county. TRIPS Fremont Shuttle services include a green line shuttle that serves Fremont's west side and an Orange Line shuttle that serves Fremont's east side. Shuttles travel in hourly loops throughout the city and intersect at a target point once per hour so passengers may transfer from one shuttle to another. Our Mobility Management program educates the public on local transportation resources, provides travel training, and conducts other services to coordinate and improve access to transportation.

The Community Development department operates the Great Lakes Rural Community Assistance Program (Great Lakes RCAP) that is part of a national network of regional non-profit agencies that provide technical assistance to help small communities address their drinking water, wastewater, and community development needs. Great Lakes RCAP stretches across a seven-state area of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Through its RCAP work, GLCAP serves approximately six hundred communities annually in its seven-state region with a focus on project development and sustainable management of these utility systems. Staff are knowledgeable about local government, including common issues, networks, available resources, project financing, and community dynamics.

RCAP assists communities with facilities development and maintenance, asset management, grant administration, regional collaboration, and shared services, lead service inventories, and operates a GIS collaborative, among other services. Services to individual households occurs with the department's well assessment program, household sewage treatment system program, and decentralized water and wastewater loan program.

Community Development also provides entrepreneurial services to communities through its comprehensive community development program and an international program that serves participants from various European countries. Curriculum is developed and delivered in regular training programs via classroom style, self-paced on-line, field days, and virtually. Last year alone, the department provided training to over 3,900 local government officials, utility personnel, and other participants.

PROFILE OF THE SERVICE AREA

Our rural service area in northwest Ohio is Wood, Sandusky, Ottawa, and Seneca Counties. While agriculture is the predominant land use throughout this area, there remains a healthy manufacturing sector, boosted by the area's access to the Ohio Turnpike (I-80/90), the major east-west route through Ohio's northern tier which connects Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and East Coast destinations to Chicago and the Midwest, and I-75, the predominant north-south route connecting Detroit to Florida.

Although the heritage of the region's rural and farming work ethic remains within the workforce, the area is challenged by limitations within the available labor pool to meet growing needs for additional employees by the area's manufacturers, construction firms, retail and commercial outlets, and other employers. Workforce shortage is a development constraint when employers are competing for the same dwindling labor pool.

Significant industrial clusters in the area include the automotive industry, with suppliers, household appliances (by virtue of the presence of Whirlpool's washing machine manufacturing and distribution center in the City of Clyde), agribusiness and food processing.

While unemployment rates have reached small numbers in recent years, the area is not without its social challenges, including the incursion of opioids and drug abuse, persistent poverty, and underemployment resulting in low-and moderate-income households.

The population in this area is 286,588 individuals. According to the U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, between 2010 and 2020 the population in the report area grew by 1,973 persons, a change of .69%. A significant positive or negative shift in total population over time impacts healthcare providers and the utilization of community resources.[5]

Close to 18% of the population or 51,530 are ages 65+. This is the largest age group listed, followed by individuals aged from 5-17. There are 18% or 45,116 people in this age group.[6] There are 38,679 individuals or 13.66% of the population are disabled. This indicator is relevant because disabled individuals are a vulnerable population that requires targeted services. Of those disabled, 19,481 fall in the age bracket of 18-64. This was more than 3,175 people above the aged 65+.[7]

[5] United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population and Housing Data. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/data.html
[6] United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021 Five Year Data Release. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2022/acs-5-year.html
[7] ibid

In the four-county area, 90.61% are White/Caucasian; 2.3% are Black/African American; 1.06% Asian; .28% Native American/Alaska Native; .05% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 4.23% are Multiple Races; and 1.47% are in the other category. The estimated population that is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin is 18,980. This represents 6.62% of the total report area population, which is less than the national rate of 18.44%.[8]

In this report area, there are 5,489 families living in poverty. Of this number, 1,612 are families with married couples, 553 are male householders, and 3,178 are female householders. There are 19,272 children living in households with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. This indicator is relevant because poverty creates barriers to access including health services, healthy food, and other necessities that contribute to poor health status.[9]

[8] ibid
[9] United States Census Bureau, Poverty. https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html

Wood County

Wood County is the most diverse of the four GLCAP counties, extending from the Toledo suburbs of Northwood, Rossford, and Perrysburg to the north, to Bowling Green, the county seat and home to the University that bears its name, to the smaller, agricultural, and more rural southern portions of the county.

Wood County has benefited economically from its location at the critical crossroads of the Ohio Turnpike I-80/90, with I-75, providing interstate highway access in all directions and to large, metropolitan destinations. This location has brought the siting of manufacturing and distribution centers.

Additional developmental assets include the research, educational, and product commercialization capabilities of Bowling Green State University, and investments in rail transportation. Also located within the county are Owens Community College and Penta Career Center, two institutions that play crucial roles in preparing the area's workforce and matching their skills with the needs of local employers.

Wood County's largest employers include Bowling Green State University, Amazon, FedEx Ground, Magna International, First Solar, Home Depot, Wood County Government, Owens Community College, NSG Group, and the Wood County Hospital.[10]

As GLCAP's largest county served, both in population and land area (with 617 square miles); Wood County had a population of 125,956 in 2010,[11] and has grown 5.2% up to 132,472 in 2020.[12] For comparison, the U.S. population grew 7.3% and Ohio's population grew 2.1% during that period.[13] Of the 132,472 people living in Wood County, there are 49.42% or 65,196 males and 50.58% or 66,734 females living in Wood County.[14]

Wood County's population increased ten out of the eleven years between 2010 and 2021. Its largest annual population increase was 1% between 2011 and 2012. The county's largest

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[10] Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research. 2021 Ohio County Profile
[11] United States Census Bureau, 2010 Census – Population and Housing Unit Counts. https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2012/dec/cph-2.html
[12] United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population and Housing Data. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/data.html
[13] USA Facts, Our Changing Population Ohio. https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/ohio/?endDate=2021-01-01&startDate=2010-01-01
[14] United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021 Five Year Data Release. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2022/acs-5-year.html

decline was between 2014 and 2015. Between 2010 and 2021, the county grew by an average of 0.5% per year.

In 2021, the largest racial or ethnic group in Wood County was the white (non-Hispanic) group, which had a population of 115,690. Between 2010 and 2021, the Hispanic/Latino population had the most growth, increasing by 2,343 from 5,738 in 2010 to 8,081 in 2021.[15]

Wood County's population is 89.92% White, with 2.04% African American, 1.76 Asian, .20% Native American/Alaska Native, .09% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 4.74% Multiple Raced, and 1.25% are Other. Hispanic ethnicity makes up 5.86% of the population or 7,734 individuals.

In 2021, Wood County was more diverse than it was in 2010. In 2021, the white (non-Hispanic) group made up 87.3% of the population compared with 90.1% in 2010. Between 2010 and 2021, the share of the population that is Hispanic/Latino grew the most, increasing 1.5% points to 6.1%. The white (non-Hispanic) population had the largest decrease dropping 2.7% points to 87.3%.[16]

The median age is 35.1 (the lowest among the four counties, driven down by the presence of a large university). There are 21,289 people (16.1%) are 65 years of age or older. The 65+ group was the fastest growing between 2010 and 2021 with its population increasing 37.6%. The 50-64 age group declined the most dropping 4.5% between 2010 and 2021. In 2021, there were 23,235 people 50-64. In the 35 to 49 age brackets, there are 22,754 individuals; 32,242 ages 20-34; 26,497 ages 5 to 19; and 6,635 (5%) are under 5 years old.[17] The 0 to 4 years old population decreased from 5.4% in 2010 to 5% in 2021. [18]

The average household income is $87,859, and the median income level is $66,337**.** There are 17.23% that earn under $25,000, 20.38% earn $25,000 - $49,999, 31.76%, earn $50,000 - $90,999, 23.16% earn $100,000 - $199,999, and 7.47% earn $200,000. The average weekly wage in Wood County was $1,041 in 2022.[19]

The poverty rate for the area has declined 3.0% from 2011 to 2021 compared to a national change of -3.1%. However, there are 7,185 or 13.6% of Wood County households living in poverty. Within the families, there are 2,994 children or 11.3% living in a state of poverty in Wood County. This is below the state (18.6%) or national (17%) averages for children living poverty.[20]

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[15] USA Facts, Our Changing Population Ohio. https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/ohio/?endDate=2021-01-01&startDate=2010-01-01
[16] USA Facts, Our Changing Population Ohio. https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/ohio/county/wood-county/
[17] United States Census Bureau, Wood County Quick Facts. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/woodcountyohio/PST045222
[18] USA Facts, Our Changing Population Ohio. https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/ohio/?endDate=2021-01-01&startDate=2010-01-01
[19] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; "Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages;" http://www.bls.gov/cew/datatoc.htm >County High-Level, 2012 & 2017
[20] United States Census Bureau, Poverty. https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html

Median housing value is the highest in the area at $177,000, and median gross rent is also the highest, at $845.[21] There are 12,582 or 23.74% cost burden households where housing costs are 30% or more of total household income. This indicator provides a measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data serves to aid in the development of housing programs to meet the needs of people at different economic levels. Additionally, there were 484 housing units constructed in 2020 (increase from 320 in 2019).[22]

In terms of economic growth, in 2022, Wood County saw another successful year for economic development with $1 billion in new private sector investments and a commitment for over 800 new jobs. ("Business is booming in Wood County - Sent-trib") Long time Wood County business, First Solar held a groundbreaking for a 1.5 million square foot research and development facility. First Solar also announced a $185 million investment to upgrade and expand its Northwest Ohio manufacturing footprint. IMCO Carbide Tool began a $39 million expansion project that will result in 92 jobs, nearly doubling their operations. Scannell Properties constructed two 200,000 square foot multi-tenant industrial buildings. The Wood County Port Authority is to leverage over $2 million in federal grants to fund a rebuild of Deimling Road on the boundary of the Amazon site. UPS purchased a 400,000 square foot building and will begin operations in 2023 bringing approximately 600 jobs to the facility. Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative announced plans to build a 100,000 square foot spec building. Bowling Green secured an investment from Scannell Properties to construct a 250,000 square foot facility for a FedEx Ground distribution center. ("WOOD COUNTY, OHIO") It has been announced Abbott Laboratories formula plant will invest over $500 million and create 450 jobs when completed.[23]

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[21] United States Census Bureau, Wood County Quick Facts.
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/woodcountyohio/PST045222

[22] Building Permits Surveys [machine-readable database] / prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC: the Bureau [producer and distributor], 2014 to 2018. http://www.census.gov/construction/bps/.

[23] Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research, Wood County Profile, 2021 Edition.
https://devresearch.ohio.gov/files/research/C1088.pdf

Sandusky County

East of Wood County is Sandusky County. This county benefits from the presence of the Ohio Turnpike, with interchanges at State Route 53 near Fremont and State Route 51 at Elmore, connecting to western portions of the county.

The largest city, Fremont, had a 2021 population of 15,825.[24] Fremont, bisected by the Sandusky River, is home to Terra State Community College, which provides two-year degrees and provides workforce training services for the area's employers.

Also, located in Fremont (as well as Tiffin in Seneca County) is the Vanguard-Sentinel Career and Technology Center (VSCTC), which is heavily involved in workforce development. VSCTC is located adjacent to Fremont's middle and high schools. Two other cities, Bellevue, population (8,198), with half in Sandusky County, Clyde, (6,321) and the Village of Woodville, (1,955) are located along the U.S. Route 20 corridor. The village of Gibsonburg, (2,445) is just south of Route 20 in the western portion of the county. [25]

Sandusky County has a variety of large manufacturers, topped by the Whirlpool plant in Clyde, along with such disparate products as ketchup (Heinz), batteries (Crown Battery), and a plethora of plastics manufacturers supplying Whirlpool and the automotive industry, as well as other sectors. Additional larger employers include Revere Plastics, Sandusky County Government, Crown Battery, Fremont City Schools, ABC INOAC, Sunrise Cooperative, GLCAP, ProMedica, and Tower Automotive. Agribusiness is also a major sector; cultivated crops comprise three fourths of the county's 408 square miles of land.

Sandusky County had a population of 60,886 in 2010; it has witnessed a slow-but-steady decline since then, reaching 58,715 in 2021.[26] For comparison, the U.S. population grew 7.3% and Ohio's population grew 2.1% during that period.

Sandusky County's population increased one out of the eleven years between 2010 and 2021. Its largest annual population increase was 0.5% between 2019 and 2021. The county's largest decline was between 2012 and 2013 when the population dropped 0.7%. Between 2010 and 2021, the county decreased by an average of 0.3% per year.

Sandusky County's population is 88.68 % or 52,333 White, with 1,680 or 2.85% African American, 0.51% Asian, .38% Native American/Alaska Native, .04% Native

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[24] United States Census Bureau, Quick Facts, City of Fremont, Ohio. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fremontcityohio/PST045222

[25] United States Census Bureau, Poverty. https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html

[26] USA Facts, Our Changing Population Ohio. https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/ohio/county/sandusky-county/

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 5.68% Multiple Raced, and 1.87% are Other. Hispanic ethnicity makes up 10.36% of the population or 6,114 individuals.

In 2021, the largest racial or ethnic group in Sandusky County was the white (non-Hispanic) group, which had a population of 48,825. Between 2010 and 2021, the Hispanic/Latino population had the most growth increasing by 832 from 5,451 in 2010 to 6,283 in 2021.[27]

The median age is 42.1; 11,166 (18.92%) are aged 65 or older, and 3,255 (5.52%) are under 5 years old. The share of the population that is 0 to 4 years old decreased from 6.2% in 2010 to 5.4% in 2021. The share of the population that is 65+ increased from 15.3% in 2010 to 19.8% in 2021.The 65+ group was the fastest growing between 2010 and 2021 with its population increasing 24.3%. The 35 to 49 age group declined the most dropping 12.5% between 2010 and 2021.[28]

The average household income is $72,745, and the median income level is $56,414**.** There are 18.88% that earn under $25,000, 25.33% earn $25,000 - $49,999, 33.72% earn $50,000 - $90,999, 18.9% earn $100,000 - $199,999, and 3.17% earn $200,000. The average weekly wage in Sandusky County is $901 in 2022.[29]

The poverty rate for the area has declined 1.1% from 2011 to 2021 compared to a national change of -3.1%. In Sandusky County, there are 3,020 or 12.7% of households living in poverty. Within the families, there are 2,228 children or 17.2% living in a state of poverty. This is below the state (18.6%) average for children living in poverty. However, Sandusky County is slightly over the national (17%) average.[30]

Median housing value is $124,700, and median gross rent is $719. There are 5,013 or 21.07% cost burden households where housing costs are 30% or more of total household income. This indicator provides a measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data serves to aid in the development of housing programs to meet the needs of people at different economic levels. Additionally, there were only 49 housing units constructed in 2020 (down from 50 in 2019).[31]

In terms of economic growth, Sandusky County has been recognized as one of the top 20 micropolitan regions in the country for business investment and expansion. Sandusky County had a total of 48 projects and $183 million in Capital Investment, resulting in 1,811 retained and 262 new positions.[32]

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[27] ibid
[28] ibid
[29] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; "Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages;" http://www.bls.gov/cew/datatoc.htm >County High-Level, 2012 & 2017
[30] United States Census Bureau, Poverty. https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html
[31] Building Permits Surveys [machine-readable database] / prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC: the Bureau [producer and distributor], 2014 to 2018. http://www.census.gov/construction/bps/.
[31] Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research, Sandusky County Profile, 2021 Edition.
https://devresearch.ohio.gov/files/research/C1088.pdf
[32] Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation, https://www.sanduskycountyedc.net/5-year-sandusky-county-comprehensive-plan/

Ottawa County

Comprising only 255 square miles of land, Ottawa County borders Lake Erie and is home to a vibrant tourism industry, which produces a large volume of seasonal employment and activity. Ottawa County borders Ontario, Canada across Lake Erie. There are 330 square miles of water or 56% of Ottawa County is water.

There are seasonally occupied "second homes" in the county. The lure of the lake has led to a large service sector, which can present challenges when the upward push of property values and the cost of living is met with the typically depressed wage levels in the service, accommodation, food establishment, and entertainment sectors.

The largest community is the city of Port Clinton, with a population of 5,978 in 2021.[33] Port Clinton is the county seat. The city and an area just east comprise the commercial center for the county. The next largest communities are the Villages of Oak Harbor (2,807) and Genoa (2,196), both to the south and west of Port Clinton and the lakefront area. The Village of Elmore (1,359) joins Genoa in the southwest corner, with development opportunities deriving from access to the Ohio Turnpike.[34]

The ten largest employers in Ottawa County are Materion Corporation, Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, Magruder Hospital, United States Gypsum Company, Luther Home of Mercy, LogistiQ, Bassett's Market, Avery Dennison, Northern Manufacturing, and Riverview Industries.

Ottawa County had a population of 41,359 over its 255 square miles in 2010. In 2021, the population of Ottawa County is down to 40,104, a decrease of 3%. For comparison, the U.S. population grew 7.3% and Ohio's population grew 2.1% during that period.[35] Ottawa County's population increased two out of the 11 years between 2010 and 2021. Its largest annual population increase was 0.4% between 2017 and 2018. The county's largest decline was between 2018 and 2019 when the population dropped 0.7%. Between 2010 and 2021, the county decreased an average of 0.3% per year.[36]

Ottawa County's population is 93.75% or 37,949 White, with 444 or 1.10% African American, 0.29% Asian, 0.24% Native American/Alaska Native, .01% Native

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[33] United States Census Bureau, Quick Facts, Port Clinton, Ohio. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/portclintoncityohio,sanduskycountyohio/PST045222?
[34] ibid
[35] USA Facts, Our Changing Population Ohio. https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/ohio/county/ottawa-county/
[36] ibid

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 4.23% Multiple Raced, and 1.47% are Other. Hispanic ethnicity makes up 5.26% of the population or 2,129 individuals.[37]

In 2021, the largest racial or ethnic group in Ottawa County was the white (non-Hispanic) group, which had a population of 36,817. Between 2010 and 2021, the Hispanic/Latino population had the most growth increasing by 382 from 1,773 in 2010 to 2,155 in 2021. In 2021, Ottawa County was more diverse than it was in 2010. In 2021, the white (non-Hispanic) group made up 91.8% of the population compared with 93.6% in 2010. Between 2010 and 2021, the share of the population that is Hispanic/Latino grew the most, increasing 1.1% to 5.4%. The white (non-Hispanic) population had the largest decrease dropping 1.8% to 91.8%.[38]

Ottawa County's median age is 49.6. There are 10,578 (26.4%) of the population age 65 or older. The 65+ group was the fastest growing between 2010 and 2021 with its population increasing 34.4%. The share of the population that is 0 to 4 years old decreased from 4.8% in 2010 to 4.1% in 2021.[39] There are 1,650 children (4.1%) under 5 years old. The 35 to 49 age group declined the most dropping 20.8% between 2010 and 2021. There are 6,355 individuals in this age bracket in 2021. There are 6,348 ages 5 to 19; 6,355 ages 20-34; and 9,505 people ages 50-64.

The average household income is $90,346, and the median income level is $64,463**.** There are 14.37% that earn under $25,000, 23.34% earn $25,000 - $49,999, 32.18% earn $50,000 - $90,999, 24.70% earn $100,000 - $199,999, and 5.41% earn $200,000. The average weekly wage in Ottawa County is $1,022 in 2022.[40]

The percentage of population below the poverty line in Ottawa County has declined. The poverty rate in 2012 was 10% and has decreased -1.7% down to 8.3%. In Ottawa County, there are 1,513 households living in poverty. Within the families, there are 863 children or 11.7% living in a state of poverty. This is below the state (18.6%) and national (17%) average for children living poverty.[41],[42]

Median housing value is $160,500, and median gross rent is $774. There are 3,413 or 19.04% cost burden households where housing costs are 30% or more of total household income. This indicator provides a measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data serves to aid in the development of housing programs to meet the needs of people at different economic levels. Additionally, 139 housing units were constructed in 2020 (an increase from 136 in 2019).[43]

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[37] ibid
[38] ibid
[39] ibid
[40] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; "Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages;" http://www.bls.gov/cew/datatoc.htm >County High-Level, 2012 & 2017
[41] United States Census Bureau, Poverty. https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html
[42] Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED); https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/S1701ACS039123
[43] Building Permits Surveys [machine-readable database] / prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC: the Bureau [producer and distributor], 2014 to 2018; http://www.census.gov/construction/bps/.
[43] Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research, Ottawa County Profile, 2021 Edition.https://devresearch.ohio.gov.files.research

In 2022, Ottawa County received confirmation that 50 businesses plan to expand, modernize, or renovate their businesses and equipment which will allow them to add jobs within the next 12 months. The local Chamber of Commerce have completed eleven small business ribbon cuttings.[44]

[44] Ottawa County, Ohio; 2022 Annual County Profile. https://www.co.ottawa.oh.us/Archive.aspx?ADID=200

Seneca County

Adjacent to and south of Sandusky County, and beside Hancock, Wood, and Crawford Counties is Seneca County. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2021, the county is home to 54,906 people. The population of Seneca County in 2021 was 54,906, 3% down from the 56,619 who lived there in 2010. For comparison, the U.S. population grew 7.3% and Ohio's population grew 2.1% during that period.

The county has a total of 551 square miles of land. Almost 80% of the county's total area is agricultural land, with 10% covered with forest and allocated for pastureland.[45]

While Seneca County does not have a four-lane or limited access highway, it is served by a network of state and federal two-lane highways, including U.S. Routes 224 (east-west access to Findlay and I-75 to the west, and Akron and I-71 to the east) and 23 (north to Toledo and south to Columbus), and State Routes 4 and 53, providing a connection between central Ohio and the Lake Erie vacationland area, as well as the Ohio Turnpike.

Seneca County is home to large private employers based in Tiffin and Fostoria, including Mercy Tiffin Hospital, Ameriwood Industries, Church & Dwight, Heidelberg University, Mennel Milling, National Machinery, ProMedica Fostoria Community Hospital, Seneca Medical, St. Francis Community, Tiffin University, Toledo Molding & Die, WalMart Supercenter, and Webster Industries. As with all northwest Ohio rural counties, agribusiness is a vital sector in Seneca County, with 79.99% percent of its land area in cultivated crops.[46]

The largest city, county seat, and commercial and service center for the county is Tiffin, with a population of 17,953 in 2020.[47] Tiffin is home to Heidelberg and Tiffin Universities, as well as Sentinel Career and Technical Center, and manufacturers.

Another city, Fostoria (population 9,036 in 2020) straddles the western county line, with smaller portions in Wood and Hancock Counties.[48] Fostoria was previously a manufacturing center, with strong ties to agribusiness and railroad transportation. There are smaller

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[45] Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research (2007): Ohio County Profiles: Seneca County Archived 2007-06-21 at the Wayback Machine.
[46] 2016 National Land Cover Data Set, created by the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium. https://www.mrlc.gov.
[47] Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research (2007): Ohio County Profiles: Seneca County Archived
[48] ibid

villages in the county, including Green Springs, (also in Sandusky County) population 1,426, Bettsville (593), Attica (875), Republic (548), Bloomville (1,004), and New Riegel (281).[49]

Seneca County's population is 92.04% or 1,645 White, with 130 or 3.19% African American, 0.56% Asian, .39% Native American/Alaska Native, .0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 2.57% Multiple Raced, and 1.25% are Other. Hispanic ethnicity makes up 5.44% of the population or 3,003 individuals.[50]

However, in 2021, Seneca County was more diverse than it was in 2010. In 2021, the white (non-Hispanic) group made up 88.8% of the population compared with 91.2% in 2010. Between 2010 and 2021, the share of the population that is Hispanic/Latino grew the most increasing 1.2% to 5.7%. The white (non-Hispanic) population had the largest decrease 2.4% to 88.8%.[51]

Seneca County's median age is 40.5. [52] There are 10,388 (18.9%) of the population age 65 or older. The 65+ group was the fastest growing between 2010 and 2021 with its population increasing from 14.9% to 18.9%. The share of the population 0 to 4 years old decreased from 6.2% in 2010 to 5.5% in 2021.[53] There are 9,638 children (5.5%) under 5 years old. The 50 to 64 age group declined the most dropping 9.1% between 2010 and 2021. There are 10,811 individuals in this age bracket in 2021. There are 10,803 children 5 to 19; 10,268 age 20-34; and 10,811 people ages 35-49.

The average household income is $71,630, and the median income level is $56,043**.** There are 18.64% that earn under $25,000, 25.51% earn $25,000 - $49,999, 34.69% earn $50,000 - $90,999, 18.80% earn $100,000 - $199,999, and 2.37% earn $200,000.[54] The average weekly wage in Seneca County is $866 in 2022.[55]

In Seneca County, there are 2,566 or 11.7% of households living in poverty. Within the families, there are 2,048 children or 17.3% living in a state of poverty. This is below the state (18.6%) average for children living poverty. However, Seneca County is slightly over the national (17%) average.[56]

Median housing value is $113,000, and median gross rent is $740. There are 4,217 or 19.29% cost burden households where housing costs are 30% or more of total household income. This indicator provides a measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data serves to aid in the development of housing programs to meet the needs of

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[49] World Population Review https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/new-riegel-oh-population
[50] USA Facts, Our Changing Population Ohio. https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/ohio/county/seneca-county/
[51] ibid
[52] United States Census Bureau, Seneca County Quick Facts. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/senecacountyohio/PST045222
[53] ibid
[54] United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-21.
[55] US Bureau of Labor Statistics https://www.bls.gov/regions/midwest/news-release/countyemploymentandwages_ohio.htm#QCEW_ohio_chart3
[56] United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-21.

people at different economic levels.[57] Additionally, 26 housing units were constructed in 2020 (down from 83 in 2019).[58]

In the latest report completed by the Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership, there were 38 investment projects totaling $76 million that would be occurring in Seneca County. These businesses will be making retention and expansion investments: WIN Waste Innovations $40,000,000; Tiffin Metal Products, Inc. $9,650,000; American Fine Sinter Co LTD $5,000,000; National Machinery LLC $4,500,000; Grammer $4,000,000; Sonoco Products Co $3,000,000; Quick Tab II Inc. $350,000; Tiffin Foundry & Machine Inc. $321,923; Big Dipper $250,000; and Arlington Acres $250,000. These businesses will be making an investment: Independent Pallet $2,600,000; and The VC – Tiffin $300,000. There is a community development project planned for Aqua Ohio, $2,700,000 investment, a real estate acquisition for Miller Investment Fund $560,000, and a business acquisition for Centricity Automation LLC, $500,000.[59]

[57] ibid

[58] Building Permits Surveys [machine-readable database] / prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC: the Bureau [producer and distributor], 2014 to 2018; http://www.census.gov/construction/bps/

[59] Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research, Seneca County Profile, 2021 Edition. https://devresearch.ohio.gov.files.research.

[60] Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership, Annual Report 2021, https://www.tiffinseneca.org/news/seneca-county-ranks-10th-nationally-economic-development

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SERVICE AREA

Disclaimer: The Census Bureau's own research on data quality has concluded that the national total in the 2020 census was largely accurate, but has estimated miscounts for some states and demographic groups. The latest research, released in May 2022, found that the 2020 census overcounted household populations in eight states while undercounting household populations in six others. The states with overcounts were Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Utah.

POPULATION OVER TIME, 1980-2020

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Wood	107,372	113,269	121,065	125,488	132,248
Sandusky	63,267	61,963	61,792	60,944	58,896
Ottawa	40,076	40,029	40,985	41,428	40,364
Seneca	61,901	59,733	58,683	56,745	55,069
Area	272,616	274,994	282,525	284,605	285,577

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Over the period covered above, two counties increased in population while the other two experienced a decrease. Overall, the four-county area increased by almost 13,000 people, due primarily to growth in Wood County, with smaller growth experienced in Ottawa County. Wood is the largest of the four counties. The GLCAP area's population grew .4% between 2010 and 2020, far less than the national growth rate of 4.8% over the same period.

POPULATION BY RACE

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Total	136,510	59,299	42,197	57,555	12,005,497	369,146,414
White	118,625	52,333	37,949	50,775	9,374,538	224,789,109
	89.92%	88.67%	93.76%	92.04%	79.65%	68.16%
African-American	2,695	1,680	444	1,760	1,452,530	41,393,012
	2.04%	2.85%	1.10%	3.19%	12.34%	12.55%
Native American	96	227	152	214	18,416	2,722,661
	0.20%	0.38%	0.24%	0.39%	0.16%	0.83%
Asian	2,322	300	119	310	276,828	18,782,924
	1.76%	0.51%	0.29%	0.56%	2.35%	5.70%
Native Hawaiian	124	21	6	0	3,899	615,557
	0.09%	0.04%	0.01%	0.00%	0.03%	0.19%

Other Race	1,655	1,102	762	691	141,320	18,382,796
	1.25%	1.87%	1.88%	1.25%	1.20%	5.58%
Multiple Races	6,251	3,350	889	1,103	502,392	23,039,422
	4.74%	5.68%	2.72%	2.57%	4.27%	6.99%

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2017-21

While the minority populations of the GLCAP counties are proportionately small in contrast to state and national percentages, they are still important groups to spotlight, as they are often subject to significantly high distress in terms of income or unemployment. The Census found 7,000 African Americans within the four counties, with another 9,370 people claiming to be of two or more races. The largest population group among those reported above is that of Hispanic ethnicity (which can be of any race), making up between 3.9 and 10.1% of a county's population. The Census counted 18,535 persons of Hispanic ethnicity in our service area.

VETERAN POPULATION

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca
Civilian Population over 18	103,953	45,473	33,050	43,200
Number of Veterans	6,588	3,606	3,291	3,374
Percentage Veterans	6.34%	7.93%	9.96%	7.81%
Number of Veterans in Poverty	419	316	199	326
Percent of Veterans in Poverty	0.43%	0.70%	0.61%	0.81%

World Population Review. https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/oh/wood-county-US; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2014-18; USCensuspopulationhttps://data.census.gov/table?tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P1&g=050XX00US39173

The preceding table quantifies the number of Veterans and those in poverty in each of the four counties. The rate of poverty amongst veteran households is actually lower than that for non-veteran households (6.6% compared to 13%, according to measurements conducted in 2017).[60] In spite of its lower prevalence, poverty in the veteran population still warrants attention because of its consistent association with homelessness, which has continued to affect veterans disproportionately for at least the last four decades. [61]

In examining Veteran poverty and the contextual factors that surround it, distinct trends and connections have emerged:

- Affordable housing for Veterans is another widespread issue that is often tied to poverty. Over 460,000 Veterans spend more than 50% of their income on rent.[62]

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[60] Pew Research Center; U.S. veterans have higher household incomes than non-vets, less poverty | Pew Research Center

[61] National Library of Medicine; Risk Factors for Homelessness Among US Veterans - PMC (nih.gov)

[62] Veteran Homelessness Facts | Green Doors. https://www.greendoors.org/facts/veteran-homelessness.php#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20primary%20cause,considered%20at%2Drisk%20of%20homelessness.

- Even though Veterans are less likely to experience poverty than the general population, about 1.5 million Veterans still live below the federal poverty level—a number that represents an increase from that recorded in 2000.[63]
- Food insecurity, which is linked with poverty, is difficult to measure among Veterans. However, many factors often associated with food insecurity (such as disability and mental health issues) are more common in the Veteran population. While no definitive data has been released, the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to increased food insecurity among Veterans.[64]
- Younger Veterans (those between the ages of 18 and 34) have a higher poverty rate than other age groups.[65]

DISABLED POPULATION

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
People with a Disability	15,753	8,858	6,243	7,932	1,612,446	40,786,461
Percent of people with a disability	12.17%	15.31%	15.57%	14.61%	14.02%	12.69%

The disabled population is another group that experiences challenges to self-sufficiency and success. The preceding table is a snapshot of the size of the area's disabled population, which is the same proportion to total population as it is nationally and statewide. There are 38,786 disabled throughout the four counties.

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Total Households	50,645	23,825	18,240	21,759	4,717,226	122,354,219
Family households (families)	31,468	15,737	11,836	14,335	2,956,437	79,849,703
	62.7%	66.3%	67.7%	66.7%	63.8%	65.9%
With own children under 18	13,357	6,455	3,890	5,614	1,236,620	33,552,189
	26.6%	27.2%	22.2%	26.1%	26.7%	28.2%
Married couple family	23,479	11,556	9,258	10,563	2,150,233	57,459,352
	46.4%	48.7%	52.9%	49.1%	46.4%	48.4%
With own children under 18[66]	9,299	3,971	2,521	2,255	783,215	22,736,641
	18.4%	16.8%	14.4%	15.0%	16.7%	18.8%

[63] Rand Corporation; Food Insecurity Among Veterans: Veterans' Issues in Focus | RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA1363-2.html
[64] ibid
[65] National Veteran Foundation; The Ugly Truth of Veteran Poverty in the United States. https://nvf.org/veteran-poverty-united-states/
[66] USA.com at http://www.usa.com/wood-county-oh-population-and-races.htm#HouseholdandFamily

Male householder, no wife	10,134	4,036	3,799	4,298	888,176	21,780,170
	20.0%	16.9%	20,8%	19.8%	18.8%	17.8%
With own children under 18[67]	711	363	179	369	61,019	1,536,353
	1.4%	1.5%	1.0%	1.7%	1.3%	1.3%
Female householder, no husband	13,027	6,175	4,118	4,956	1,341,679	33,808,399
	25.7%	25.9%	22.6%	22.8%	28.4%	27.6%
With own children under 18	1,896	1,219	680	783	263,760	6,453,219
	3.7%	5.2%	3.8%	3.6%	5.6%	5.3%
Households with seniors, 65 years and over	14,142	7,548	7,087	6,876	1,433,685	37,491,224
	7.20%	7.26%	7.17%	7.23%	7.08%	7.30%
Households with 1 or more 65 and over	5,478	2,847	2,792	2,637	591,440	13,888,306
	10.33%	11.96%	15.57%	12.06%	12.44%	11.20%
Average Household Size	2.45	2.48	2.33	2.47	2.46	2.63
Average Family Size	3.06	3.09	2.84	3.02	3.14	3.32

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2016-20

The households in the GLCAP service area resemble the state and country in terms of composition. Married couple families represent approximately 40% of all households throughout the area. However, married couple families with children of their own under 18 years old, make up just under one in four households. Nonfamily households represent slightly more than one third of the total, and elderly (65 years and over) persons living alone range from 9.6 to 13.9% of all households, totaling 12,975 in the service area. There are 11,151 female headed households with no husband present.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND NUMBER UNEMPLOYED

	Number Unemployed April 2022	Number Unemployed April 2023	Unemployment Rate April 2022	Unemployment Rate April 2023	Rate Change
Wood	2,132	1,958	3.1%	2.8%	-0.3%
Sandusky	1,094	991	3.7%	3.3%	-0.4%
Ottawa	973	950	4.9%	4.6%	-0.2%

[67] ibid

Seneca	887	855	3.4%	3.2%	-0.2%
Ohio	214,429	183,399	3.7%	3.2%	-0.6%
U.S.	5,543,125	5,212,540	3.4%	3.1%	-0.2%

US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2023 - April.

One standard measure of a community's well-being is the unemployment rate. While unemployment rates in the GLCAP service area have diminished with the recovery from the recession in 2008, and the 2019 COVID Pandemic, thousands of people are still counted as unemployed in the area (with an estimated 4,700 unemployed in 2023). While three counties have experienced a similar unemployment rate than the State as a whole, Ottawa County has stayed at a higher rate, due to the prevalence of seasonal, tourism-related businesses and job opportunities among the lakefront communities.

COMMUTING TO WORK

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Workers, 16 years and over	62,317	26,238	17,501	25,356	5,099,813	140,223,271
Drive Alone	82.8%	86.9%	85.6%	81.5%	79.8%	73.2%
Carpool	6%	7.5%	5.5%	8.2%	7.5%	8.6%
Public Transportation	0.1%	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	1.3%	4.2%
Walk or Bicycle	3.5%	1.7%	1.0%	5.2%	2.4%	3.0%
Taxi or Other	0.7%	0.8%	2.3%	1.4%	1.0%	1.4%
Work at Home	6.9%	2.7%	5.1%	3.4%	8.0%	9.6%
Mean travel time to work (min.)[68]	20.2	19.9	23.8	21.7	23.7	25.6

U.S. Census Bureau (2017-2021). *American Community Survey 5-year estimates.* Retrieved from https://censusreporter.org

[68] IndexMundi : https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/ohio/average-commute-time#map – info originally came from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) and Puerto Rico Community Survey (PRCS), 5-Year Estimates.

INCOME

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio
Median Household Income	$66,337	$56,414	$64,463	$56,043	$61,938
Median Family Income	$88,058	$73,582	$84,937	$68,398	$79,470
Per Capita Income	$36,047	$29,904	$40,728	$28,992	$34,526

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2016-20

Of the four counties, Wood and Ottawa have more than Ohio's median income, whereas Seneca is less than Ohio's. Median family incomes are consistent in relation to Ohio's, with Wood County being significantly higher and Seneca County falling well below state median. Per capita incomes are lowest in Sandusky and Seneca Counties and exceed the state figures in Ottawa County.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Total Households	53,010	23,797	17,930	21,862	4,754,161	124,010,992
Less than $10,000	2,863	1,356	645	1,159	294,758	6,820,605
	5.4%	5.7%	3.6%	5.3%	6.2%	5.5%
$10,000 to $14,999	1,908	880	538	853	199,675	4,836,429
	3.6%	3.7%	3.0%	3.9%	4.2%	3.9%
$15,000 to $24,999	4,400	2,261	1,399	2,055	413,612	9,672,857
	8.3%	9.5%	7.8%	9.4%	8.7%	7.8%
$25,000 to $34,999	4,347	2,641	1,829	2,252	470,357	10,168,901
	8.2%	11.1%	10.2%	10.3%	9.1%	8.2%
$35,000 to $49,999	6,467	3,379	2,367	3,323	432,629	14,137,253
	12.2%	14.2%	13.2%	15.2%	12.7%	11.4%
$50,000 to $74,999	9,860	4,569	3,263	4,438	855,749	20,833,857
	18.6%	19.2%	18.2%	20.3%	18.0%	16.8%
$75,000 to $99,999	6,997	3,451	2,510	3,148	627,549	15,873,407
	13.2%	14.5%	14.0%	14.4%	13.2%	12.8%
$100,000 to $149,999	8,641	3,546	3,245	3,301	736,895	20,213,792
	16.3%	14.9%	18.1%	15.1%	15.5%	16.3%
$150,000 to $199,999	3,658	952	1,183	809	299,512	9,672,857
	6.9%	4.0%	6.6%	3.7%	6.3%	7.8%
	3,976	762	968	525	294,759	11,781,034

$200,000 or more	7.5%	3.2%	5.4%	2.4%	6.2%	9.5%

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021

Based on the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, within the four counties, 6023 households (5.65%) earned less than $10,000 in household income; 4,179 (3.55%) earned $10,000 to $14,999; 10,114 (8.75%) earned $15,000 to $24,999; and 11,069 (9.95%) earned $25,000 to $34,999.

Regarding the household's source of income, the 2018 ACS 5-year estimates, documents a total of 113,348 households within the four counties, 84,438 (73%) had labor earnings, while 37,114 (34.6%) received Social Security; 25,301 (23.3%) received retirement income; 5,877 (5.5%) obtained Supplemental Security Income (SSI); 2,280 (2.2%) received public assistance income; and 11,582 (11%) received Food Stamps/SNAP.[69]

FAMILIES IN POVERTY

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
All families	31,819	15,408	11,678	14,081	2,964,953	80,755,759
All Families in Poverty	2,151	1,289	564	1,485	275,595	7,181,779
	6.8%	8.4%	4.8%	8.4%	9.3%	8.9%
Married Couple Families	781	383	143	305	78,328	2,658,265
	36.3%	29.7%	25.4%	25.8%	28.4%	37.0%
Male Householder	247	139	13	154	31,696	774,828
	11.5%	10.8%	2.3%	13.0%	11.5%	10.8%
Female Householder	1,123	767	563	725	165,571	3,748,686
	52.2%	59.5%	72.3%	61.2%	60.1%	52.2%

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021

The above table depicts the percentage of families in poverty for the GLCAP service area. It is estimated that 7.1% of all households were living in poverty within the service area, compared to the national average of 8.9%. Of the households in poverty, female headed households represented 58.3% of all households in poverty compared to 31.1% and 10.7% of households headed by males and married couples, respectively. Among the four counties, none had a rate for families that exceeded the state and national percentages. Sandusky and Seneca were tied at the highest percentage of 8.4. Ottawa and Wood were lower.

Families with children and female head of household with no husband present, experience the highest incidence of poverty, with over half of Seneca and Sandusky Counties' households in poverty. This subset of families is prone to poverty.

[69] **U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2014-18**

POVERTY BY AGE

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Age 0-4 Total Population	6,714	3,197	1,599	2,921	675,153	19,064,128
Age 0-4 In Poverty	814	739	146	707	144,327	3,535,591
Age 0-4 Poverty Rate	12.1%	23.1%	9.1%	24.2%	21.4%	18.5%
Age 5-17 Total Population	19,849	9,735	5,747	8,910	1,905,689	53,931,937
Age 5-17 In Poverty	2,180	1,489	717	1,341	336,014	8,907,833
Age 5-17 Poverty Rate	11.0%	15.3%	12.5%	15.1%	17.6%	16.5%
Age 65 and up Total Population	19,585	10,586	10,058	9,373	1,940,447	51,705,664
Age 65 and up In Poverty	1,474	932	756	649	165,480	4,938,116
Age 65 and up Poverty Rate	7.5%	8.8%	7.5%	6.9%	8.5%	9.6%

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021

The previous table breaks poverty down by age group. In many cases, the counties had poverty rates that approached the state or national averages. Notable cases of higher rates include those for people under five years old in Seneca County. The senior population had a lower incidence of poverty than the larger state or national population, with the exception in Sandusky County where the percentage was 8.8 as compared to the state average of 8.5%.

POVERTY BY GENDER

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Male	7,464	3,474	1,573	3,433	731,317	19,737,151
	12.25%	12.06%	7.89%	13.19%	13.23%	12.80%
Female	8,901	4,398	2,608	4,247	914,669	24,520,829
	14.33%	15.04%	12.92%	16.20%	15.79%	15.26%

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021

Seneca County had the highest incidence of poverty among the four counties, and this holds true for males and females. The other three counties had lower percentages in poverty than either Ohio or the country. This table indicates a substantial number of people in poverty, with 36,098 persons in poverty.

The following table depicts disparities between races and ethnicities. While minority groups do not exist in considerable number in any of the counties, members suffer from inordinately high rates of poverty. This is true of African Americans in at least three of the four counties, with Seneca County's incidence of poverty reaching over 60%. High percentages are also noted among the small groups of Asians in Seneca County, native

Hawaiians in Wood County, and those of two or more races in Seneca and Sandusky counties. In every case, the incidence of poverty is higher among every minority group than it is within the white majority.

POVERTY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Total Population	123,052	58,050	40,123	52,243	11,319,092	314,943,184
Total Persons in Poverty	16,365	7,872	4,181	7,680	1,645,986	44,257,979
	13.30%	13.56%	10.42%	14.70%	14.54%	14.05%
White	14,173	6,071	3,846	6,331	1,062,495	26,730,734
	12.42%	11.54%	10.01%	12.81%	11.48%	11.64%
Black/African American	828	565	132	600	428,990	9,490,587
	32.61%	33.16%	30.41%	61.99%	31.18%	24.19%
Native American/Alaska native	44	11	0	91	5,981	273,665
	19.82%	6.96%	0.00%	53.53%	26.34%	25.84%
Asian	274	60	0	140	33,845	1,989,768
	13.26%	30.00%	0.00%	48.78%	13.95%	11.55%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific islander	43	0	2	0	1,053	103,304
	72.88%	0.00%	66.67%	0.00%	30.33%	18.29%
Other Race	377	393	91	37	28,913	3,497,625
	31.84%	21.74%	16.98%	13.07%	26.98%	22.58%
Two or More Races	626	772	110	481	84,709	1,772,296
	22.13%	49.02%	18.84%	51.33%	26.91%	17.51%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	1,158	1,086	340	529	108,209	11,849,315
	17.20%	19.09%	16.91%	20.66%	25.85%	21.02%

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021

The poverty rates for those of Hispanic and Latino ethnicity are consistently higher than for all Whites, but the area's percentages are lower than the state and national percentages.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Estimate	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Total Housing Units	56,515	26,460	28,540	23,946	5,232,733	139,647,020
Occupied Housing Units	53,010	23,797	17,930	21,862	4,754,161	124,010,992
Vacant Units	3,505	2,663	10,610	2,084	478,572	15,636,028
Vacancy Rate	3.1%	1. 0%	3.7%	8.7%	9.1%	1.2%
Owner Occupied	34,040	17,344	14,528	15,868	3,165,935	80,152,161
Percent Owner Occupied	64.21%	72.88%	81.03%	72.58%	66.59%	64.63%
Renter Occupied	18,970	6,453	3,402	5,994	1,588,226	43,858,831
Percent Renter Occupied	35.78%	27.11%	18.97%	27.42%	33.41%	35.37%
Median Year House was Built	1960	1980	2000	1980	2000	1950
Lacking Complete Plumbing	49	109	42	42	15,497	474,563
Lacking Complete Kitchen	379	312	185	319	42,929	1,013,832
No Telephone Service Available	243	431	127	217	53,221	1,451,132
Median Value, Owner Occupied	$177,000	$124,700	$160,500	$113,000	$159,900	$244,900
Median Gross Rent	$845	$719	$774	$740	$770	$1,163

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021

The preceding table presents a variety of metrics regarding the housing stock within our service area.

Wood County has a high percentage of renter-occupied units, owing in part to the need to house students at Bowling Green State University. Wood County's proportion of rental housing is closer to the state and national norm than the other three counties, where rental housing is harder to find. The housing stock in Wood County is aged, with the median years of construction six decades ago. This compared to the national statistic.

Median housing values for owner-occupied units are low in Sandusky and Seneca Counties. Wood and Ottawa Counties are higher than the state median. Wood County includes affluent Toledo suburbs and Ottawa County includes properties that are lakefront and vacation properties. Median gross rents are low in Sandusky and Seneca Counties compared to the State and National median. Wood County's rental structure is driven by the Toledo metropolitan area and the demand for college student housing in Bowling Green.

HEALTH INSURANCE **AND MEDICARE**

	Wood	Sandusky	Ottawa	Seneca	Ohio	U.S.
Persons Over 65 Receiving Medicare[i]	22,751	12,187	11,042	10,897	1,961,108	52,234,691
Disabled Persons Receiving Medicare	2,630	1,946	1,129	1,687	316,277	7,723,275
Total Persons Receiving Medicare	25,382	14,133	12,171	12,584	2,438,587	65,007,351
Insurance Population-2017 Estimate	129,504*	59,559*	40,769*	55,549*	11,609,756*	317,787,650*
Number Insured	125,977	44,648*	28,589*	40,516*	10,853,520	298,685,665
Number Uninsured	5,427	3,265*	1,991*	2,871*	757,709	28,226,882
Percent Uninsured	4.1%	7.3%	7.1%	7.2%	6.5%	8.6%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2021.pdf>. and
*U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates. http://data.census.govU.S. Census Bureau 2018.

This section analyzes the degree to which various forms of assistance are utilized in the GLCAP service area, beginning with an examination of the number of people without access to health insurance. The preceding table covers the civilian non-institutionalized population of each geographic area. Within our area, 13,936* people were identified as having no health insurance. The incidence of those lacking insurance is less in all four counties than for the state and nation.

Nationally, more people were insured in 2021 than 2020. In 2021, 8.3% of people, or 27.2 million, did not have health insurance at any point during the year, representing a decrease in the uninsured rate and number of uninsured from 2020 (8.6% or 28.3 million). Of the subtypes of health insurance coverage, employer-based insurance was the most common, covering 54.3% of the population for some or all of the calendar year, followed by Medicaid

(18.9%), Medicare (18.4%), direct-purchase coverage (10.2%), TRICARE (2.5%), and VA and CHAMPVA coverage (1.0%).[70]

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INCOME

	Households Receiving Public Assistance Income	Mean Assistance $ Received*	Household with Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months
Wood County	204	$3,151	3,833
Sandusky County	162	$2,552	3,123
Ottawa County	92	$1,501	1,801
Seneca County	159	$2,286	3,247
GLCAP Area	617	$2,373	12,004
Ohio	72,181	$2,902	765,810

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Caseload Summary Statistics Report. March 2023. http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocomm/index.stm
And *U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2014-18

The Public Assistance Income table depicts the number and percentage of households receiving public assistance income. This includes General Assistance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). This does not include Supplemental Security Income or noncash benefits such as Food Stamps. Percentages range from 3.42 in Seneca County down to 1.58 in Ottawa County; area-wide, just over 2% of households are receiving assistance, averaging $2,942.

CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH – (2018 – 2019)

	Total Students	Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligible	Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligible %
Wood County	18,785	4,985	26.5%
Sandusky County	9,179	3,324	36.2%
Ottawa County	5,452	1,875	34.4%
Seneca County	6,237	2,329	37.3%
GLCAP Area	39,653	12,513	31.6%
Ohio	1,694,341	417,644	24.6%
United States	50,744,629	25,124,175	49.5%

National Center for Education Statistics, NCES- Common Core of Data. 2018-19

For the 2018 through 2019 period, more than 12,500 students in our service area are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches based on income; this represents over one third of the students regionally and is more than the state average. Seneca County has 37.3%, the

[70] Marino, F.A (2022). Health insurance, access, and usage among adults aged 18-64. Ohio Population News, 44. Center for Family & Demographic Research. https://bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/center-for-family-demographic-research/ohio-population-news.html

highest percentage in the area. All four counties exceed the State average. Updated information has not been released; no additional data is available.

FOOD INSECURITY RATE

	Total Population	Food Insecure Population, Total	Food Insecurity	Child Food Insecurity
Wood County	129,760	16,220	12.50%	16.50%
Sandusky County	59,580	7,090	11.90%	19.00%
Ottawa County	40,847	5,190	12.8%	20.20%
Seneca County	55,736	7,190	12.90%	20.80%
GLCAP Area	285,923	35,320	12.35%	18.42%
Ohio	11,668,345	1,691,910	14.50%	19.60%
United States	325,717,422	41,133,950	12.63%	18.21%

Hunger in America 2014. Westat and the Urban Institute. https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america#:~:text=Hunger%20in%20America%202014%20was,children%20and%207%20million%20seniors.

Food insecurity, or the financial inability to afford adequate nutrition, is a notable problem in our area, where 13.49% of the population and almost one-fourth of its children are in the "food insecure population," according to the 2014 research of Feeding America.[71]

People in all 3,143 counties and 436 congressional districts in all 50 states and D.C. experience food insecurity. "However, levels of food insecurity vary by population and place." ("Map the Meal Gap Reports | Feeding America") Variations reflect differences in factors such as unemployment and poverty, and often reflect systems and policies that prevent certain households and communities from accessing the food they need.

In response to these challenges, multiple interventions have been shown to reduce food insecurity. For example, national food insecurity would have been much higher in 2020 and 2021 if not for the unprecedented collective response by the charitable and public sectors to the public health and economic crises caused by COVID-19. In 2021, there was a 20% increase in the Thrifty Food Plan which led to large increases in benefits for all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients.

Approximately 13% (1 in 8) children across the U.S. experience food insecurity. Food insecurity is more prevalent among children than it is among the total population. The consequences and costs of food insecurity for children of all ages make addressing the issue an economic and social imperative. Research demonstrates links between food insecurity and poor child health and behavioral outcomes.[72]

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[71] Hunger in America 2014. Westat and the Urban Institute. https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america#:~:text=Hunger%20in%20America%202014%20was,children%20and%207%20million%20seniors.

[72] Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2023. Tom Summerfelt, Chief Research Officer.

HEALTH INDICATOR: POPULATION TO PROVIDER RATIOS

	Primary Care Physician Ratio	Dentists Ratio	Mental Health Provider Ratio
Wood County	1480:1	2780:1	590:1
Sandusky County	2040:1	1780:1	890:1
Ottawa County	2260:1	2260:1	1270:1
Seneca County	2400:1	2400:1	820:1
Ohio	1310:1	1610:1	410:1

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2020

Aside from hunger, other indicators provide a picture of public health among our area's population and highlight the extent to which they lack basic components of health care.

The number of primary care physicians, dentists, and mental health providers is small in three of the counties, and much larger in Wood County, which extends into suburban Toledo. The ratios of care physicians to population were significantly less in Wood County. All four county percentages are higher than the state ratio, reflecting relative inaccessibility of care providers, or the need to travel out of the area for care.

HEALTH INDICATORS: HEALTH BEHAVIORS

	Adult Smoking	Adult Obesity	Physical Inactivity	Excessive Drinking	Drug Overdose Deaths*
Wood County	17%	34%	24%	21%	15
Sandusky County	20%	35%	26%	19%	34
Ottawa County	17%	34%	28%	17%	30
Seneca County	19%	34%	28%	17%	22
Ohio	21%	32%	26%	20%	38

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2020. *Number of Drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 population

The preceding table represents various human behaviors that adversely affect the health of citizens in the GLCAP counties. All these behaviors except drug overdose deaths are in line with the State. Our counties are lower than the State average.

ACCESS TO BROADBAND

With our four-county service area being rural, 84.77% of all residents have access to Fixed Broadband with speeds greater than 25/3 MBPS.[73]

The following Ohio Indicators of Broadband Needs map was created by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications, and Information Administration (NTIA). The map uses different data sources to show information on broadband availability throughout the United States. The map was created using data sourced from the American Community Survey collected by the U.S. Census, Measurement Lab (M-Lab), Ookla, Microsoft and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The following data shows households without internet access; computers, smartphones, or tablets; and median Mbps within the four counties.[74]

Wood County, Ohio*	
Population (FCC 2020 Estimate):	131,108
ACS Percentage of Households without Internet Access:	8.80%
ACS Percentage of Households without Computer, Smartphone, or Tablet:	6.30%
M-Lab Speed Test Median (Mbps):	56.98/6.69
Ookla Speedtest Median (Mbps):	73.68/10.53

Sandusky County, Ohio*	
Population (FCC 2020 Estimate):	58,351
ACS Percentage of Households without Internet Access:	16.00%
ACS Percentage of Households without Computer, Smartphone, or Tablet:	11.30%
M-Lab Speed Test Median (Mbps):	54.30/8.89
Ookla Speedtest Median (Mbps):	63.88/11.32

Ottawa County, Ohio*	
Population (FCC 2020 Estimate):	40,253
ACS Percentage of Households without Internet Access:	15.70%
ACS Percentage of Households without Computer, Smartphone, or Tablet:	8.80%
M-Lab Speed Test Median (Mbps):	41.10/6.97
Ookla Speedtest Median (Mbps):	59.81/10.87

[73] Federal Communications Commission, National Broadband Map, Last updated June 15, 2023
[74] * BroadbandOhio.
https://broadbandusa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=50c64e2c028d46a58247125e4bcdcdc8

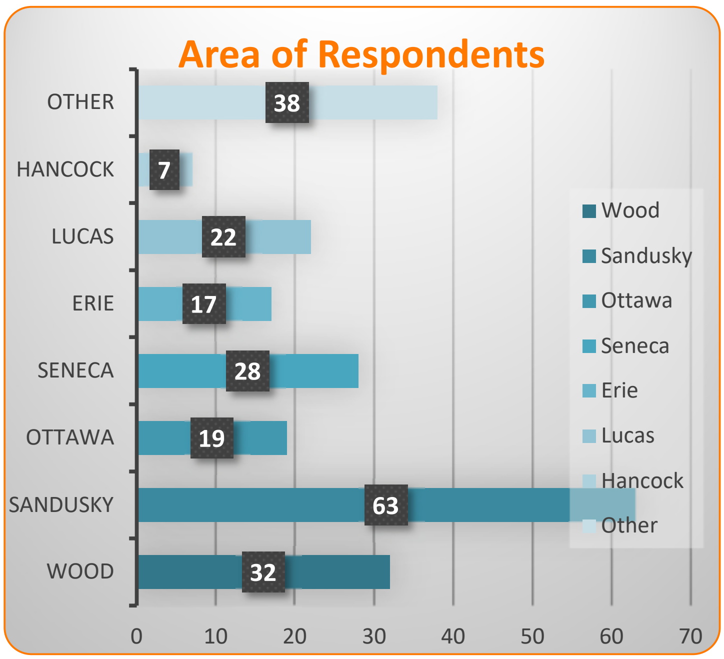
Seneca County, Ohio*	
Population (FCC 2020 Estimate):	54,938
ACS Percentage of Households without Internet Access:	14.20%
ACS Percentage of Households without Computer, Smartphone, or Tablet:	10.50%
M-Lab Speed Test Median (Mbps):	55.62/9.26
Ookla Speedtest Median (Mbps):	60.79/11.40

Community Needs Assessment Surveys Results

As a vital component of the needs assessment, GLCAP surveys direct program participants and members of the community-at-large. The online survey instrument captures demographic information and then guides respondents through a series of questions to determine their perspective on the most critical needs in their community. The following is a summary of the results of the two surveys.

Demographics: Community-At-Large

This survey reached 226 members of the community, including 32 from Wood County, 63 from Sandusky, 19 from Ottawa, 28 from Seneca, 17 from Erie, 22 from Lucas, 7 from Hancock, and 38 from "other". Of these respondents, 170 were female, 55 were male and 1 other. Broken down by age group, there were 11 respondents aged 18-25, 49 ages 26-35, 47 ages 36-45, 50 ages 46-55, and 69 ages 55 and over. Answering demographic questions was optional.



Of the 224 that responded to marital status, 113 were married, 67 single, 23 divorced, ten widowed, and 11 living with a partner. Broken down by race, 184 were White/Caucasian, 21 were Black/African American, one was Native American, eight were multiracial, and seven are other. Fifteen are of Hispanic ethnicity.

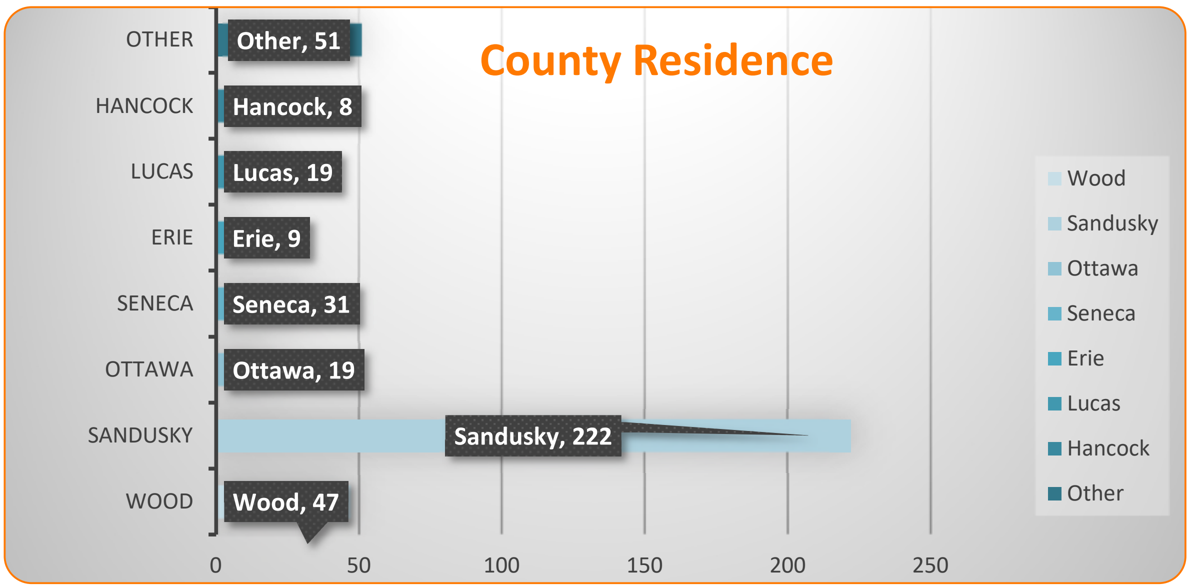
Regarding the highest level of educational attainment, one completed middle school, 62 achieved a high school degree, five obtained a General Educational Development (GED) certification, 22 have vocational/ technical school degrees, 27 have associate degrees, 57 have bachelor's degrees, 43 have master's degrees, and five have Doctoral degrees.

Regarding employment, 169 were employed, 13 self-employed, 18 unemployed, 21 retired, and ten selected other. Within the comment section, these individuals indicated they are disabled and not working. Seventeen respondents were Veterans. Three ex-offenders were identified, and there were no migrant or seasonal farmworkers in the sample.

Annual household income ranges reported: 22 people receive less than $10,000, 45 indicated $10,000 to $29,999, 34 responded $30,000 to $49,999, $50,000 to $69,999 was reported by 23 individuals, and 92 of the 216 households that provided a response for this question stated their annual household income is $70,000 and over. Most respondents were in the most affluent income range listed.

Demographics: Participants

The sample size for participants was larger than the community-at-large, 406 individuals responded to the participant survey. There were 222 respondents or 54.68% from Sandusky County. The second largest number of respondents, 47 or 11.58%, were from Wood County. Answering demographic questions was optional.



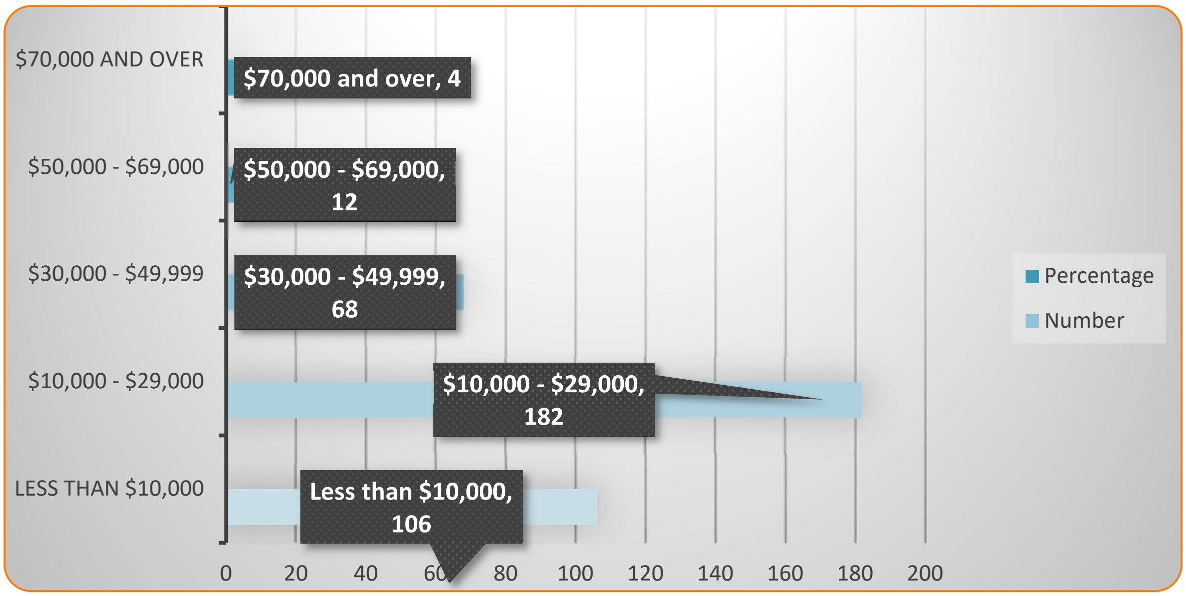
Of 403 gender responses, 313 were female, 88 were male and two identified as other. Age groups reflected primarily the 55+ age group of the population. There were 30 ages 18-25, 66 ages 26-35, 63 ages 36-45, 34 ages 46-55, and 210 ages 55 and over. There were 401 responses to the marital status question: 117 were married, 132 single, 59 divorced, 72 widowed and 21 living with a partner.

Grouped by race, 306 of the 398 respondents or 76.88% were White/Caucasian, 37 were Black/African American; seven were multiracial, three were Native American, and 45 selected other. There were 59 or 16.03% of respondents identifying as Hispanic and six or 1.63% reported being Latino.

Among the 390 respondents, their highest level of education achieved was at the elementary school level for 14 (3.59%) individuals, middle school for 10 (2.56%), high school for 192 (49.23%), 45 (11.54%) obtained a General Educational Development (GED) certification, Vocational/Technical education for 47 (12.05%), an Associate Degree for 48 (12.31%), a Bachelor Degree for 24 (6.15%), a Master Degree for eight (2.05%), and a Doctorate for two (.51%) individuals.

Regarding individuals' employment status, 124 (31.47%) were employed, with another 12 self-employed, 67 (17.01%) were unemployed, 158 (40.10%) were retired, and 38 (9.64%) selected other. Of those 38 that selected other, 32 noted they are disabled. Forty-one individuals or their spouse are Veterans or active in the military. Fourteen respondents identified as migrants or seasonal farmworkers. There were five ex-offenders in the sample.

Respondents fell into the following income levels:



The following pages represent the questions that were asked in the survey. The responses were tallied and ranked between the two community sectors that were surveyed.

Service Area's Top 5 Key Issues Identified

Which of the following do you see as key issues in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Depression/Mental Health
2. Homelessness/Lack of Affordable Housing
3. Alcohol/Substance Abuse
4. Single Parent Households
5. Low-paying Jobs

Participants:

1. Depression/Mental Health
2. Low-paying Jobs
3. Homelessness/Lack of Affordable Housing
4. Alcohol/Substance Abuse
5. Lack of Recreational Activities

KEY ISSUES	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Access to Healthy Food Options	69	8	72	8
Alcohol/Substance Abuse (Opioids)	130	**3**	103	**4**
Crime	62	9	69	9
Depression/Mental Health Issues	147	**1**	139	**1**
Homelessness/Lack of Affordable Housing	131	**2**	113	**3**
Illiteracy	12	21	23	19
Incarceration	17	19	30	16
Lack of Diversity and Inclusion	39	16	25	18
Lack of Education	45	15	38	14
Lack of Recreational Activities	47	13	81	**5**
Lack of Skilled Labor	54	11	28	17
Low Paying Jobs	78	**5**	124	**2**
Obesity	70	7	67	10
Poor Nutrition	46	14	59	12
Public Health Issues	29	17	34	15
Single Parent Households	80	**4**	76	6
Suicide	58	10	46	13
Teen Pregnancy	24	18	38	14
Unemployment	49	12	73	7
Violence/Domestic Violence	76	6	63	11

Other*	13	20	17	20
*Responses to Other: Water bill and housing assistance; more help for felons (housing); discrimination, violence, and bullying of students of color in school; poverty; public transportation, transportation for preschool age children, and lack of robust infrastructure connecting communities across the country; childcare and affordable child care facilities for working families; lack of parenting education; home repairs (ramps); dental services for children, and a dentist that accepts Medicaid; places to shop, work, homeless and domestic violence shelters providing assistance with getting a job, budget management, and homemaking skills; drug rehabilitation facility; Fostoria water needs better purify cation; road repairs; medication assistance; and activities for children in Fostoria; diabetes assistance; low cost funerals; more community options for seniors; medical assistance; lack of skilled social workers; life guidance, and dealing with technology addictions among teenagers and young adults.				

Top 5 Employment Needs Identified

Which of the following employment needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Training (Vocational, On-the-Job, Apprenticeship/Internship)
2. Job Readiness (Interview Skills, Resume Development, Coaching)
3. Job Referrals/Placement Assistance
4. Pre-employment Physical or Background Check Financial Assistance
5. Employment Supplies (Tools, Clothing)

Participants:

1. Training (Vocational, On0the-Job, Apprenticeship/Internship)
2. Job Readiness (Interview Skills, Resume Development, Coaching)
3. Job Referrals/Placement Assistance
4. Employment Supplies (Tools, Clothing)
5. Pre-employment Physical or Background Check Financial Assistance and Self-Employment Skills Training

EMPLOYMENT	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Employment Supplies (tools, clothing)	49	**5**	80	**4**
Job Readiness (Interview Skills, Resume Development, Coaching)	112	**2**	117	**2**
Job Referrals and/or Placement Assistance	83	**3**	86	**3**
Pre-employment Physical or Background Check Financial Assistance	51	**4**	57	**5**
Self-Employment Skills Training	45	6	57	**5**
Training (Vocational, On-the-Job, Apprentice/Internship)	114	**1**	125	**1**
Other*	17	7	14	6

*Responses to Other: Transportation; childcare and care options; financial assistance for those 30+ wanting to complete certificate programs; addressing how COVID-19 impacted the job market; jobs that provide benefits; commitment to want to work and people motivated to work, too much freeloading; soft skills; additional workers; higher wages and better work hours; proper screening for qualified and capable candidates; housing; encouraging youth to want to work; generational families not supporting themselves; household assistance for single families until they are on their feet and obtain the education they need; healthy aged on welfare should be working and screened. Reassess drug test rules since so many are on legal cannabis; higher paying job, cost of living keeps going up but not pay; help with record expungements.

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RANKED RESULTS - EDUCATION

Top 5 Education Needs Identified

Which of the following education needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Childcare
2. Before and After School Activities
3. Parenting Supports
4. Summer Youth Recreation and Education Activities
5. Behavior Improvement Programs

Participants:

1. Before and After School Activities
2. Behavior Improvement Programs
3. Child Care
4. School Supplies (textbooks, computer assistance, and financial resources)
5. Summer Youth Recreation and Education Activities

EDUCATION	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Before and After School Activities	106	**2**	127	**1**
Behavior Improvement programs	89	**5**	118	**2**
Child Care	118	**1**	106	**3**
College Readiness Prep/ Support	56	11	63	10
Early Childhood Education: birth-3 yrs.	50	14	47	13
Early Childhood Education: 3-5 yrs.	55	12	53	11
Early Childhood Education: birth-5 yrs. of migrant and seasonal farmworkers	27	18	37	16
Education & Support Services K-12	64	9	67	18
Financial Literacy Education	83	6	65	9
High School Equivalency Classes	31	16	49	12
Home Visit Services	30	17	46	14
Leadership Training	53	13	44	15
Literacy/English Language Ed Classes	22	19	37	17
Mentoring	76	7	67	8
Parenting Supports	100	**3**	98	6
Post-Secondary Prep/Support	32	15	20	18
Scholarships	58	10	78	7
School Supplies, Textbooks, Computer Assistance, Financial Resources	65	8	102	**4**

Summer Youth Recreation and Education Activities	91	**4**	101	**5**
Other*	8	20	11	19

*Responses to Other: kids need supplies not purchased; elderly with modern technology; whole school system; city needs to keep the public pool open, keep kids out of trouble; school safety; skilled trades training at all ages; Internet access is a big problem for students – assignments on Chrome books with in-home Internet; technology not obtainable; improved training of teachers on diversity, poverty, understanding the lives of students of color; addressing the language barriers of students; respecting students and their parents; serve more people; additional arts programs; social skills awareness; childcare with children with special needs; free and affordable tutors; screen time management for youth; higher pay for childcare teachers with insurance; classes that are available in evening and weekends for the population that works day shift and cannot attend 8-5 p.m. classes.

Top 5 Financial Needs Identified

Which of the following financial needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Financial Management
2. First Time Homebuyer Counseling
3. Retirement Planning
4. Obtaining/Maintaining Health Insurance
5. Savings Accounts/Other Asset Building Accounts

Participants:

1. Financial Management Programs
2. First Time Homebuyer Counseling
3. Obtaining Public Assistance Benefits
4. Obtaining/Maintaining Health Insurance
5. Retirement Planning

FINANCIAL	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Financial Management Programs	144	**1**	110	**1**
First Time Homebuyer Counseling	105	**2**	101	**2**
Foreclosure Prevention Counseling	73	7	62	8
Obtaining/Maintaining Child Support	53	9	50	10
Obtaining/Maintaining Health Insurance	85	**4**	86	**4**
Obtaining Public Assistance Benefits	80	6	93	**3**
Retirement Planning	89	**3**	81	**5**
Saving Accounts/IDAs/Other Asset Building Accounts	83	**5**	66	7
Small Business Start-up/Development Counseling/Financial Assistance	64	8	78	6
VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), EITC, or Other Tax Preparation	44	10	52	9
Other*	8	11	7	11

*Responses to Other: Student loans; rent and deposit assistance; equality; teaching skills so public assistance is not needed; estate planning, wills, and life insurance; support for single dads with support and custody issues; help elderly with modern technology; cost of winter heating; obtain a job; teen money information and safety; education for college students/young adults regarding predatory lenders and how to make reasonable decisions about student loans.

Top 5 Housing Needs Identified

Which of the following housing needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Home Repair
2. Financial Coaching/Counseling
3. Energy Efficiency Improvements
4. Rent/Deposit/Mortgage Payments
5. Temporary/Transitional and Permanent Housing

Participants:

1. Home Repair
2. Energy Efficiency Improvement
3. Home Improvement to Remain Independent
4. Healthy Home Services
5. Rent/Deposit/Mortgage Payments

HOUSING	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Energy Efficiency Improvements	106	**3**	141	**2**
Financial Coaching/Counseling	109	**2**	89	7
Healthy Homes Services (Lead, Radon, CO2, Fire Hazard, Electrical Issues)	90	9	97	**4**
Home Improvements to Remain Independent	95	7	103	**3**
Home Repairs	115	**1**	147	**1**
Landlord/Tenant Mediation or Education	96	6	84	8
Rent/Deposit/Mortgage Payments	105	**4**	96	**5**
Rental/Eviction Counseling	94	8	62	10
Temp/Transitional/Permanent Housing	104	**5**	66	9
Utility Payments/Deposit	77	10	94	6
Other*	13	11	9	11

*Responses to Other: Fair housing; affordable rentals for young families barely above poverty; improving rental standards of slum landlords; more housing options; rental units are too expensive and hard to find; change rules about getting help with rent and deposit; help with services in conjunction with financial counseling and wrap around services; true transitional housing; housing for felons; more affordable housing stock; home health makers coming in and helping disabled; hire inspectors so grants for seniors can be utilized since home inspections are required; cost of winter heating; solar power; lower rent rates; shelter and transitional housing; transitional housing for young (non-drug addicted) adults with mental health issues and low life skills.

Top 5 Health Needs Identified

Which of the following health needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Adult Dental Screenings/Exam Services
2. Child Dental Screenings/Exam Services and Mental Health Assessment/Counseling/Support Group
3. Substance Abuse Screenings/Counseling/Detoxification Services
4. Wellness, Exercise, and Fitness Educational Classes
5. Family Mentoring and/or Parenting Educational Classes

Participants:

1. Adult Dental Screenings/Exam Services
2. Food Distribution (Food boxes, grocery vouchers)
3. Child Dental Screenings, Exams, and Services
4. Home Delivered Meals for the Elderly and Disabled
5. Prescription and/or Doctor Visit Payments

HEALTH	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Adult Dental Screenings/Exam/Services	110	**1**	155	**1**
Child Dental Screenings/Exams/Services	100	**2**	98	**3**
Crisis or Call-in Response Services	56	11	58	16
Developmental Delay Screening	48	14	43	19
Domestic Violence Programs/Support	81	6	91	6
Family Mentoring/Parenting Sessions	84	**5**	77	10
Family Planning Classes/Contraceptives	61	10	58	16
Food Distribution (Food Boxes, Grocery Vouchers)	67	8	120	**2**
Health Insurance Option Counseling	68	7	70	13
HIV Screening/Prevention Counseling	25	19	37	20
Home Delivered Meals for Elderly, Disabled	53	13	97	**4**
Hygiene Facility Utilization	53	13	64	14
Immunizations and/or Physicals	40	16	74	12
In-Home Care (Nursing, Chores)	55	12	80	9
Mental Assessments/Counseling/Support Group	100	**2**	88	7
Nursing Care	31	18	57	17
Prenatal Health Care	44	15	50	18

Prescription and/or Doctor Visit Payments	63	9	94	**5**
Skills Classes (Gardening, Cooking)	81	6	83	8
Wellness/Exercise/Fitness Classes	87	**4**	83	8
Substance Abuse Screenings/ Counseling/Detoxification Services	97	**3**	76	11
Visual Screening	36	17	61	15
Other*	11	20	5	21
*Responses to Other: Eyewear; more things for new parents and resources; education about diabetes, heart disease, cancer; assist more people; clinical therapy; community activities; detox; dental providers that accept Medicaid & provide treatment; mental health rehab, safe haven for recovering addicts, better access for dental and vision for elderly and youth; year round access to restrooms at parks; someone to declutter and organize homes and help disabled with chores; critical thinking classes.				

Top 5 Community Involvement Needs Identified

Which of the following community involvement needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Getting Ahead Classes
2. Leadership Training
3. Voter Education and Access, and Citizenship Classes
4. Volunteer Training
5. Citizenship Classes

Participants:

1. Getting Ahead Classes
2. Leadership Training
3. Volunteer Training
4. Voter Education and Access, and Citizenship Classes
5. Other

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Citizenship Classes	39	**5**	56	**4**
Getting Ahead Classes	93	**1**	100	**1**
Leadership Training	88	**2**	88	**2**
Volunteer Training	66	**4**	76	**3**
Voter Education and Access	67	**3**	56	**4**
Other	4	6	7	**5**
*Responses to Other: Crime; help with the issues regarding train traffic and the landfill; ways to help community (importance of involvement in volunteering and caring for communities); elderly with modern technology; financial stability; mental health education; and shelters for homeless.				

Top 5 Transportation Needs Identified

Which of the following transportation needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Work
2. Medical Appointments Outside of Sandusky County
3. Shopping
4. School (K-12)
5. Senior Centers

Participants:

1. Work
2. Medical Appointments outside of Sandusky County
3. Medical Appointment within Sandusky County and Shopping
4. Senior Centers
5. School (K-12)

TRANSPORTATION	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Work	139	**1**	128	**1**
School (K-12)	75	**4**	82	**5**
Higher Education	51	7	61	6
Medical Appts. (Within Sandusky Co.)	47	8	99	**3**
Medical Appts. (Outside Sandusky Co.)	85	**2**	121	**2**
Senior Centers	70	**5**	85	**4**
Shopping	80	**3**	99	3
Government Offices	65	6	45	7
Other* (please specify)	12	9	17	8

*Responses to Other: Lower price of gas; expand transportation services to serve more people; financial assistance; shuttle service routes are too lengthy; need transportation to local courthouses; preschool transportation; pre-k; since we have no department stores to shop for family clothing, you must drive out of town and not everyone has transportation; ride allowance coupons for low-income; and public transportation services and dispatching.

Top 5 Other Needs Identified

Which of the following other needs do you feel should be addressed in your community?

Community at Large:

1. Transportation Services (bus/taxi passes, auto purchase/repair assistance)
2. Legal Assistance
3. Information and Referrals to Community Resources
4. Assistance Acquiring Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards, Driver's License, Criminal Record Expungement
5. Childcare Subsidies/Payments

Participants:

1. Legal Assistance and Transportation Services (bus/taxi passes, auto purchase/repair assistance)
2. Information and Referrals to Community Resources
3. Assistance Acquiring Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards, Driver's License, Criminal Record Expungement
4. Emergency Clothing Assistance
5. Child Care Subsidies/Payments

OTHER	Community-At-Large		Participants	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Adult Daycare Centers	60	6	69	6
Assistance Acquiring Birth Certificates, Social Security Card, Driver's License, Criminal Record Expungement	70	**4**	85	**3**
Case Management	50	7	39	9
Child Care Subsidies/Payments	65	**5**	71	**5**
Digital Divide	28	10	18	10
Emergency Clothing Assistance	50	7	83	**4**
Information & Referrals to Community Resources	85	**3**	89	**2**
Immigration Support Services Relocation, Food, Clothing	29	9	42	8
Legal Assistance	86	**2**	120	**1**
Mediation/Customer Advocacy Intervention Services	31	8	43	7
Transportation Services (Bus/Taxi Passes, Auto Purchase, Repair Assistance)	123	**1**	120	**1**

Other* (please specify)	6	11	8	11
*Responses to Other: There is only one shelter for domestic violence, there needs to be more help; food banks; eviction expungement; need rides for Head Start children; summer programs for children and family; maintaining your home, responsibilities for your community, volunteering, being a good community member; childcare; box spring and mattress replacement for elderly and disabled; counseling services; mental health emergencies; drug and tobacco prevention; extend TRIP services to help worker's with nights, weekends, and holiday needs; there needs to be a direct parental support position that could assist with outreach and support for those struggling to regain custody and more assistance educating parents on the system; immigration assistance; more activity options for young adults or children; student loan support and education; assistance with housing, clothing, transportation, and funding to help obtain birth certificates; assistance for the increase in homeless youth being kicked out of a caregiver's home; need an agency to be the starting point for homeless or precariously housed to assess the person's immediate situation, then have shelter available along with access to food, until a person can meet with an agency to access long-term assistance; lack of affordable housing and safe housing; changes are needed to get help with rent, deposits, and being homeless; agencies need to address the root causes of the needs so the need is not perpetual; need to market local resources so those who need the service can access; public transportation; mental health services are lacking; need much more school counseling, too many unloved, undisciplined children who have no guidance from adults at home and no skills to help themselves; homeowner septic system repair/replacement assistance; mental health and screen time management for youth; affordable housing in Seneca County is severely lacking and landlords are unwilling to rent to individuals with felonies or prior evictions; there is no assistance available for rental application fees; mental health and suicide prevention is needed; dental is a hardship. Many low-income people are without insurance or Medicaid. Lack of proper dental care can lead to more health concerns. There is no pool in the city and families cannot afford or attend the YMCA during the timeframe swim is available; many families cannot afford healthy activities or bikes for their children; suggesting police, sheriff, and fire department programs to have children learn about their jobs, what it takes to become one of them; and to bring the community together for education and healthy activities; because we have crossed the line with assistance programs, enabling our community, there is no responsibility felt other than complaining. Volunteering, helping yourself, and independent thinking are now needed.				

SUMMARY

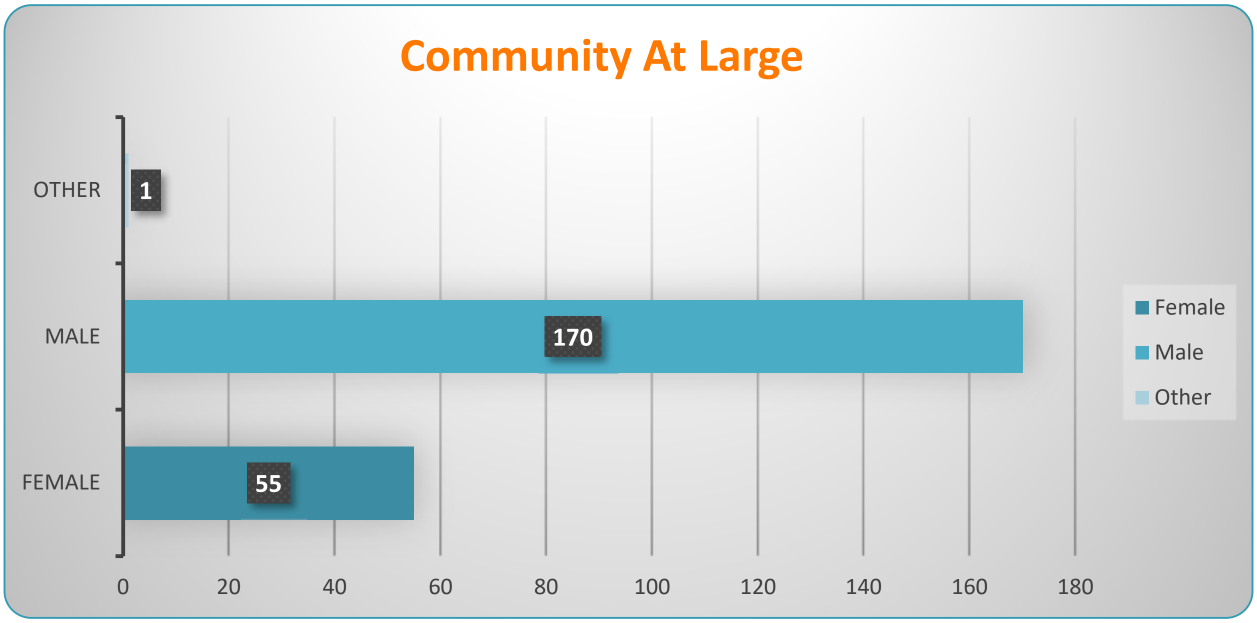
The Community Service Block Grant (CSBG), Community Needs Assessment provides data which GLCAP and other community-minded organizations use to guide future programs and initiatives. The assessment provides thorough demographics of Wood, Sandusky, Ottawa, and Seneca counties, as well as a comprehensive overview of public opinion regarding key issues that concern residents of these counties and steps that might be taken to address these concerns. The document is part of the groundwork from which solid community action initiatives are developed to assist people with their most pressing need.

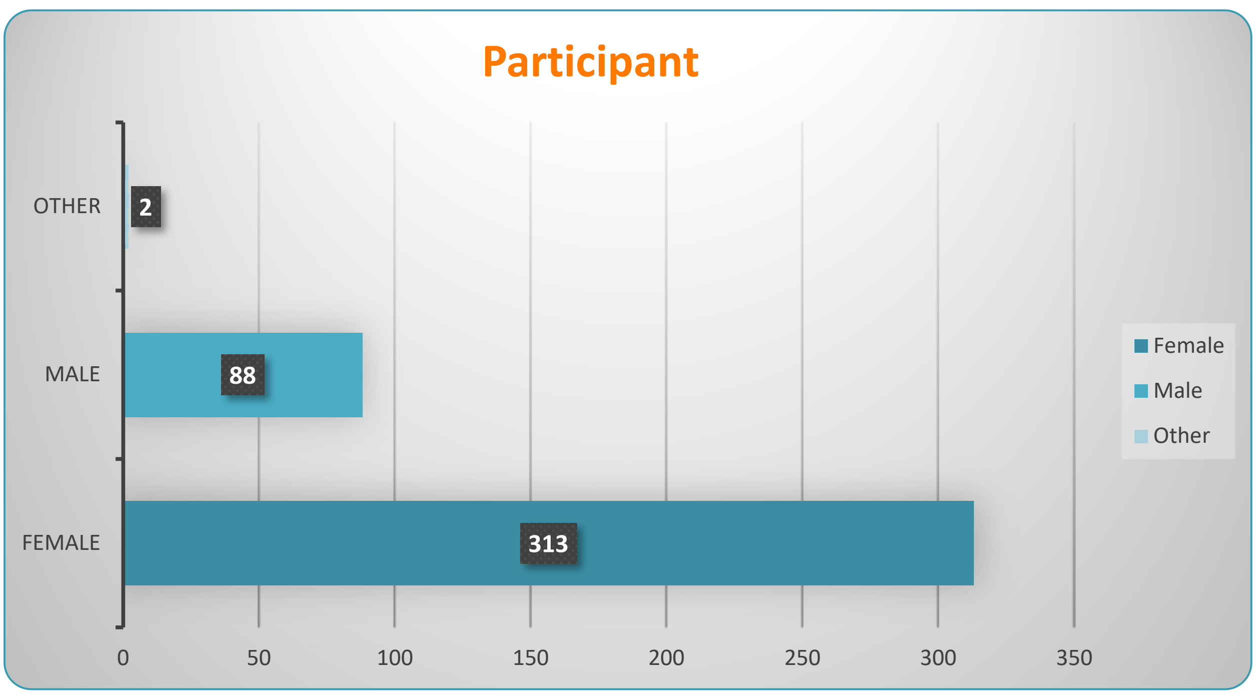
A pertinent point to be made is the survey data within the report is subject to interpretation, and different interpretations can lead to different courses of action. For example, data demonstrating public concern about a lack of affordable childcare options may reflect a true absence of affordable childcare or may instead reflect a lack of awareness about existing available childcare options. Different interpretations of the data generate different responses (expanding affordable childcare programming or coordinating better childcare marketing efforts), with only one response providing the most effective solution, depending on the reality behind the data. Thoughtful consideration of assessment data, along with further exploration of topics at hand prevents wasted effort and results in the most effective and relevant approaches to community needs.

Overall, the Community Needs Assessment allows us to better understand our service area through demographic data, as well as the needs, issues or problems that are of genuine concern within our communities. The report is a useful tool GLCAP, and other organizations can effectively and efficiently use to assist those we are here to serve.

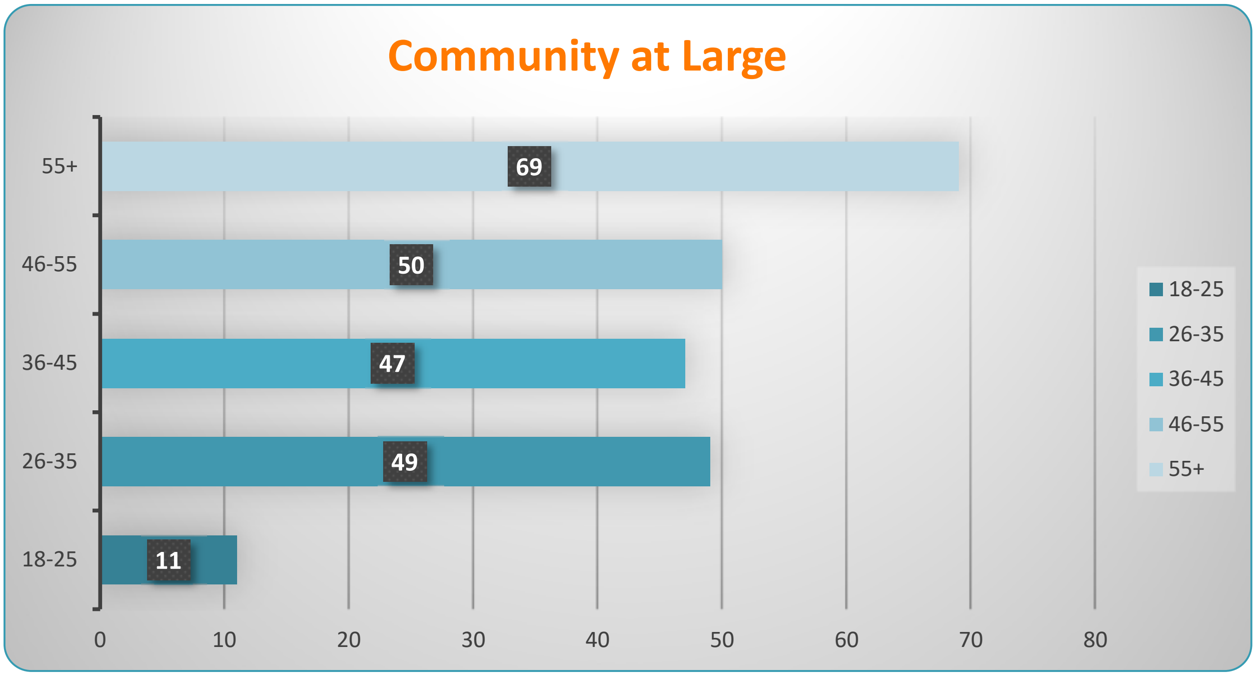
2023 Survey Demographics Side by Side

GENDER

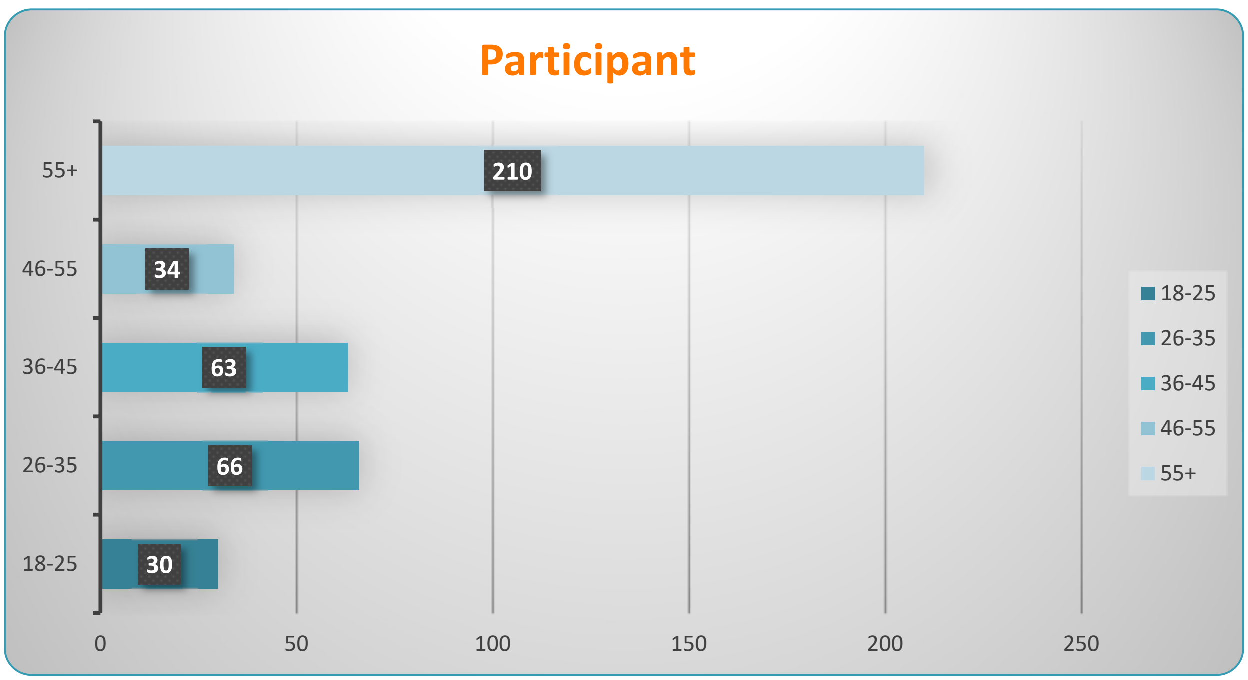




AGE GROUP

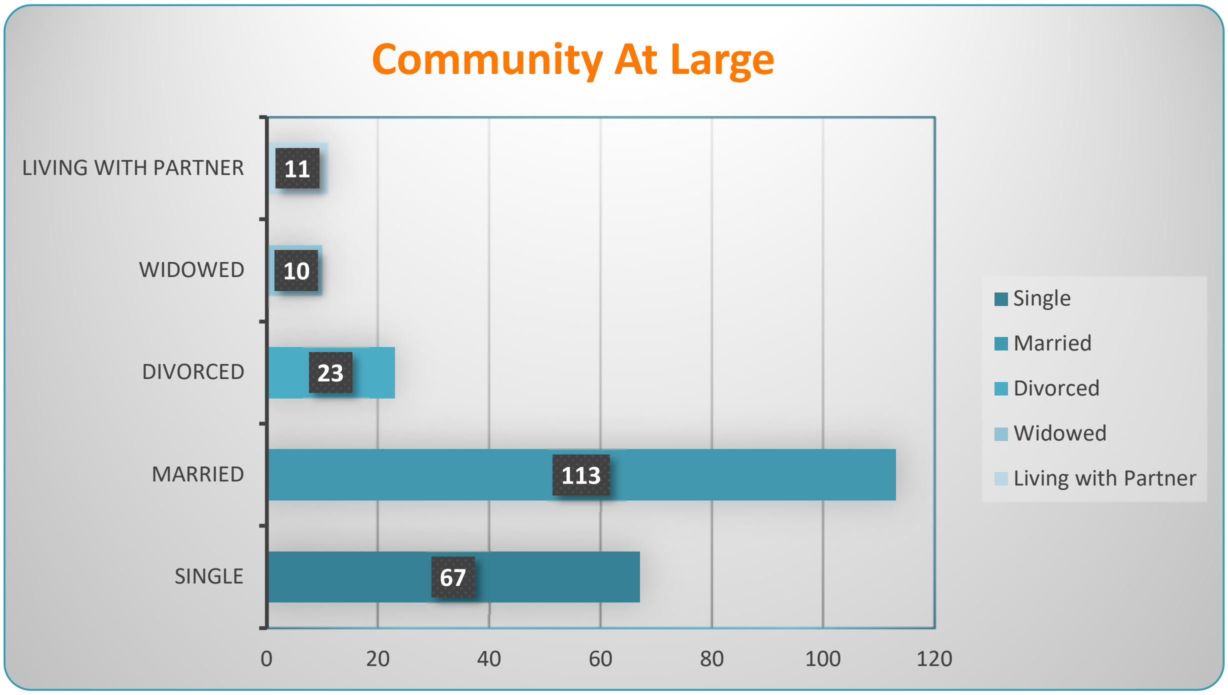


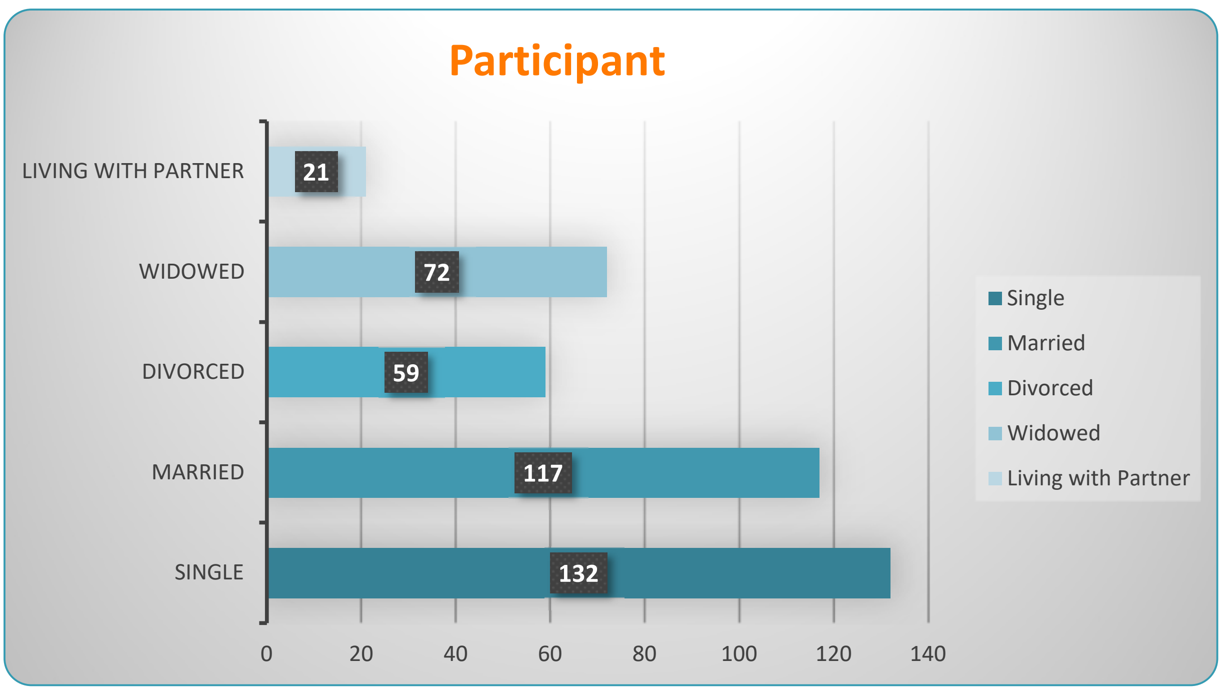
Community at Large
55+
46-55
36-45
26-35
18-25
69
50
47
49
11
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
18-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
55+



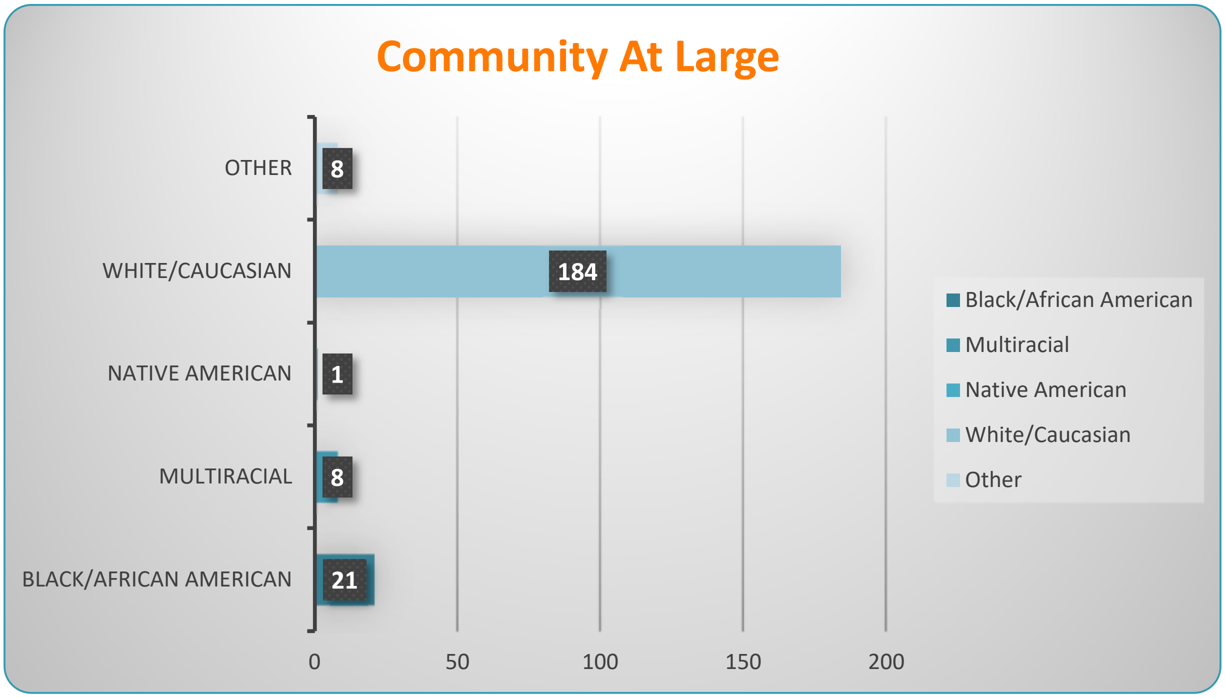
Participant
55+
46-55
36-45
26-35
18-25
210
34
63
66
30
0
50
100
150
200
250
18-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
55+

MARITAL STATUS

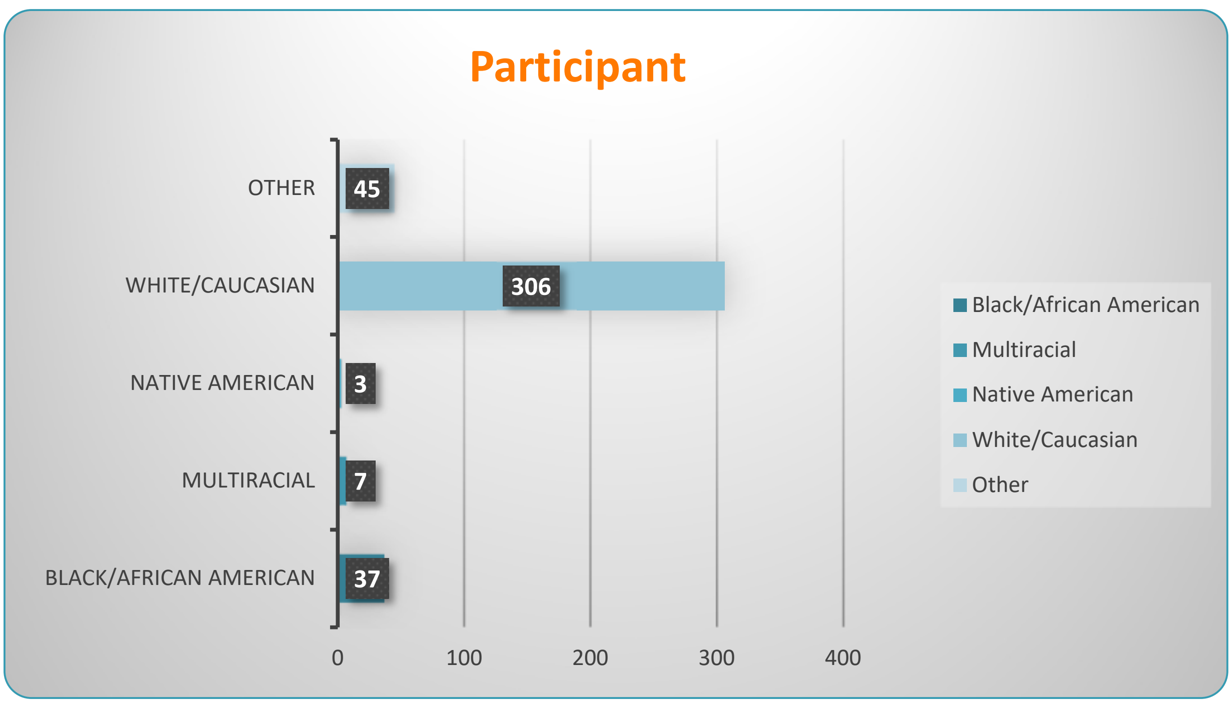




RACE

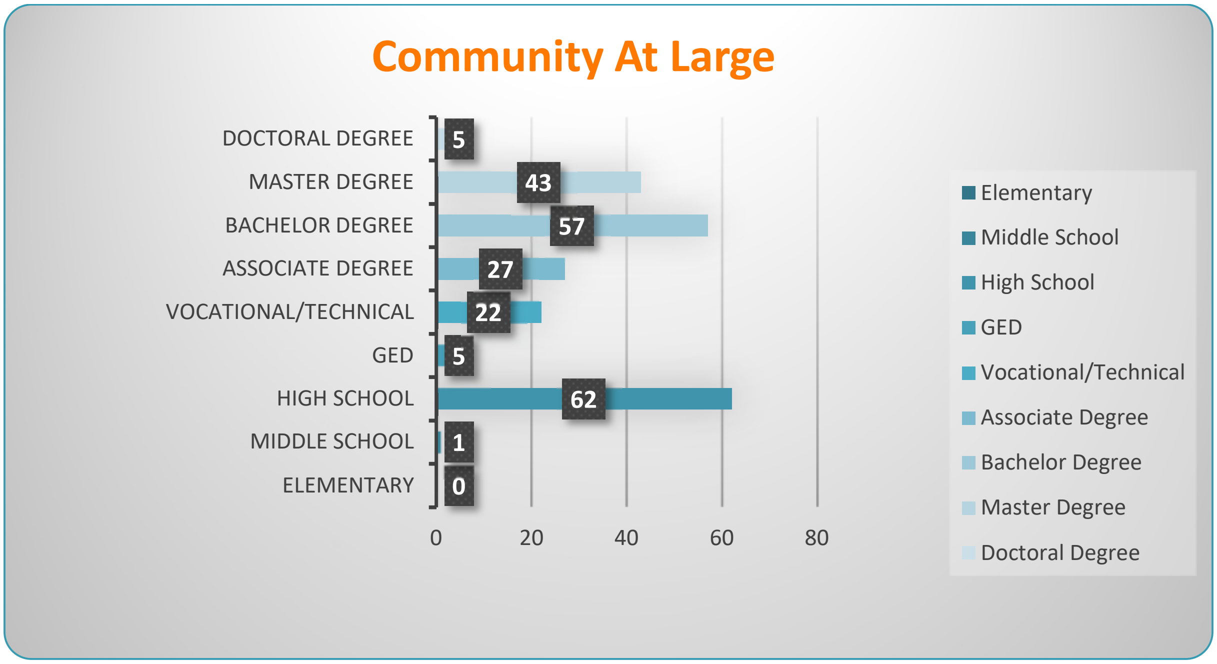


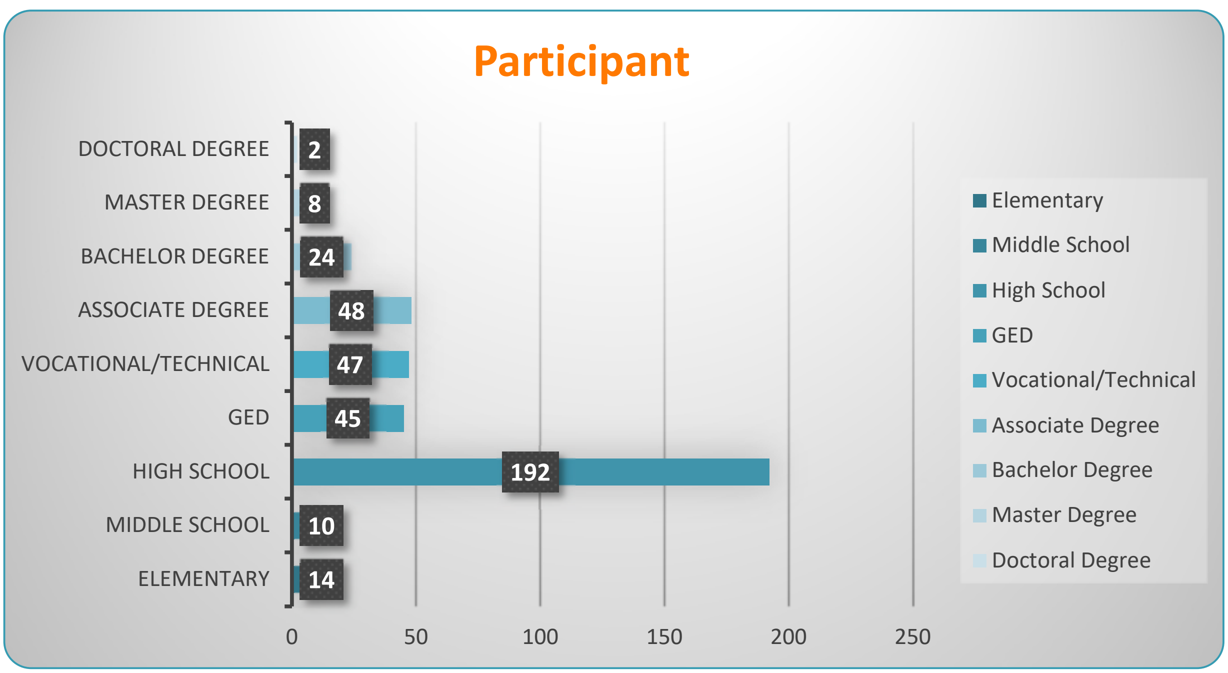
Community At Large
OTHER
WHITE/CAUCASIAN
NATIVE AMERICAN
MULTIRACIAL
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
8
184
1
8
21
0
50
100
150
200
Black/African American
Multiracial
Native American
White/Caucasian
Other



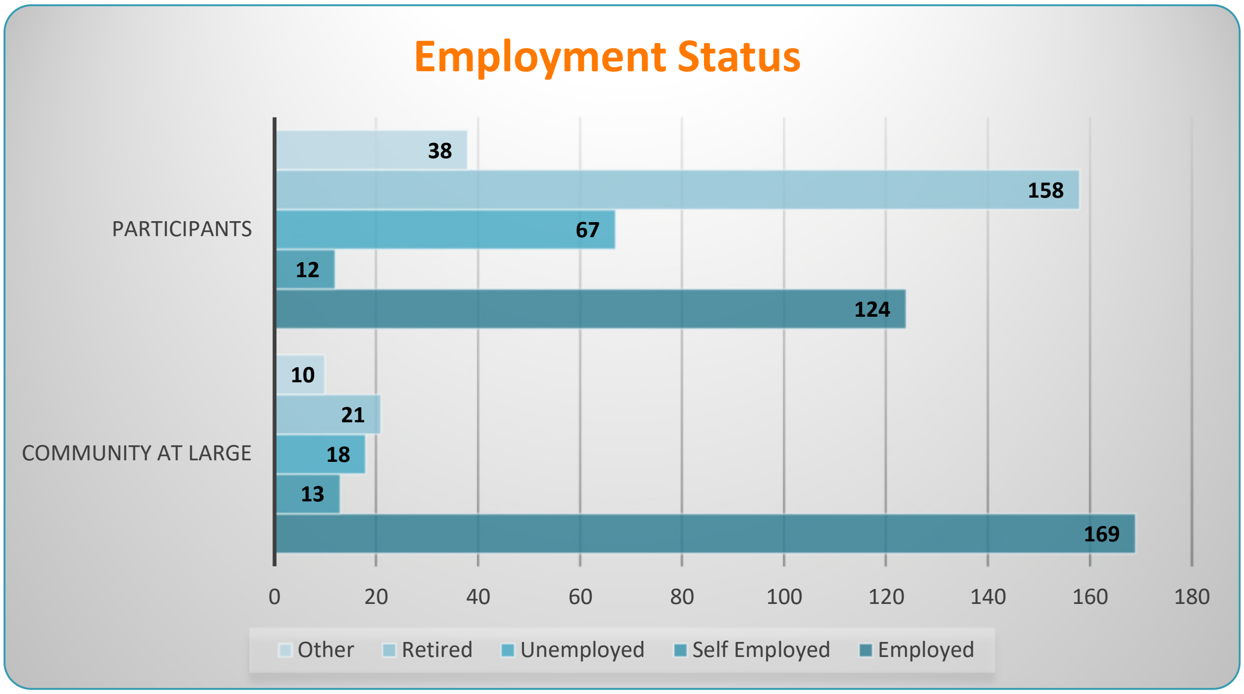
Participant
OTHER
WHITE/CAUCASIAN
NATIVE AMERICAN
MULTIRACIAL
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
45
306
3
7
37
0
100
200
300
400
Black/African American
Multiracial
Native American
White/Caucasian
Other

EDUCATION

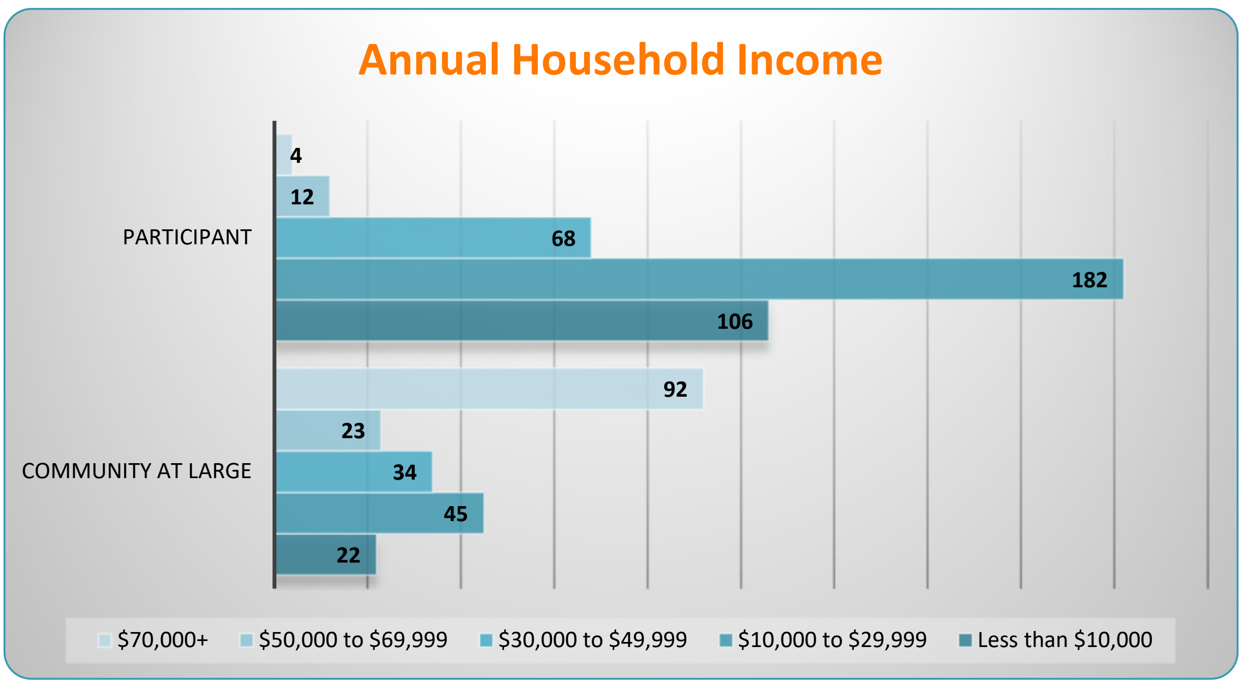

Community At Large
DOCTORAL DEGREE
MASTER DEGREE
BACHELOR DEGREE
ASSOCIATE DEGREE
VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL
GED
HIGH SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
ELEMENTARY
5
43
57
27
22
5
62
1
0
0
20
40
60
80
Elementary
Middle School
High School
GED
Vocational/Technical
Associate Degree
Bachelor Degree
Master Degree
Doctoral Degree


Participant
DOCTORAL DEGREE
MASTER DEGREE
BACHELOR DEGREE
ASSOCIATE DEGREE
VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL
GED
HIGH SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
ELEMENTARY
2
8
24
48
47
45
192
10
14
0
50
100
150
200
250
Elementary
Middle School
High School
GED
Vocational/Technical
Associate Degree
Bachelor Degree
Master Degree
Doctoral Degree

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



INCOME



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[i] Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. 2013-17