

Community Needs Assessment Annual Update

Purpose

Every three years, WCCA is required to conduct a Community Needs Assessment. This comprehensive assessment includes surveys, discussions, and meetings that gather information from community members. The most recent WCCA comprehensive assessment was conducted in 2022. Additionally, WCCA is also required to conduct an annual update to meet the Head Start Performance Standards. For this reason, many elements of the annual update are related to children and families.

Head Start Performance Standards

1302.11 Determining community strengths, needs, and resources:

(2) A program must annually review and update the community assessment to reflect any significant changes including increased availability of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten- (including an assessment of how the pre-kindergarten available in the community meets the needs of the parents and children served by the program, and whether it is offered for a full school day), rates of family and child homelessness, and significant shifts in community demographics and resources.

Methodology

Using the Community Action Partnership's Data Hub, WCCA staff pulled the Needs Assessment report and compared the data to the previous year. Additionally, reports from the MN Department of Human Services provided information on the number of childcare spots available. As a group, the staff discussed the significant changes.

Service Area

WCCA's Head Start Program serves the western portion of Hennepin County. These communities are also assessed. Hennepin County communities include Corcoran, Dayton, Greenfield, Hanover, Independence, Long Lake, Loretto, Maple Plain, Medina, Minnetrista, Mound, Orono, Rogers, St. Bonifacius, and Spring Park.

Findings

Income Levels

The number of individuals living below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL) continues to decline throughout the county. However, this isn't because we are decreasing the number of people experiencing poverty. The growing population rate brings more people with higher incomes into

the county and it reduces the percentage.

Definition	Wright County Rates	Wright County Numbers	Hennepin County Rates	Hennepin County Numbers
Below 100% of Poverty	4.89%	6,767	5.16%	3,404
Below 125% of Poverty	6.67%	9,243	6.97%	4,596
Below 185% of Poverty	12.93%	17,971	10.23%	6,747

The Wright County rates of poverty (below 100%) are different depending on the race of the individual.

- 14.05% of the Multiple Race population
- 12.81% of the Hispanic population
- 12.61% of the Native American or Alaska Native population
- 10.44% of the Some Other Race population
- 5.01% of the Asian population
- 4.52% of the White population
- 2.18% of the Black or African American

The Hennepin County service area rates of poverty (below 100%) are different depending on the race of the individual.

- 36.48% of the Native American or Alaska Native population
- 26.6% of the Some Other Race population
- 20.08% of the Hispanic population
- 9.89% of the Black or African American
- 5.30% of the Multiple Race population
- 4.89% of the White population
- 2.21% of the Asian population

Poverty Rate by City

Wright County Cities	
Montrose	12.46%
Annandale	7.89%
Monticello	7.43%
Rockford	7.19%
Clearwater	6.81%
Howard Lake	6.59%
Buffalo	5.77%
Cokato	5.54%
Maple Lake	5.42%
South Haven	5.29%
Hanover	5.09%
Waverly	4.33%
Saint Michael	3.36%
Delano	3.30%
Albertville	1.08%

Hennepin County Cities	
Maple Plain	11.15%
Mound	5.8%
Crystal Bay	5.53%
Loretto	4.99%
Minnetonka Beach	4.52%
Dayton	2.89%
Hamel	2.66%
Rogers	1.92%

***Data is pulled using ZCTA and the 2017-2021 ACS*

Poverty Levels in Children Under the Age of 5

According to the American Community Survey (2017-2021), an average of 4.6% percent of children ages 0-4 lived in a state of poverty during the survey calendar year. On page 68 of the Community Action Report, a map shows a higher concentration of these children living near the Montrose and Annandale communities. In our Hennepin County service area, an average of 3.7% percent of children ages 0-4 lived in a state of poverty during the survey calendar year. There does not appear to be one area that is more concentrated than the others.

Furthermore, the data shows that the race of children under the age of 5 plays a role in their likelihood of living in a state of poverty. The data below represents the Wright County service area. Our Hennepin County Service area does not have enough data to be able to calculate to this granular level.

- 19.83% of the Some Other Race population
- 17.79% of the Multiple Race population
- 17.54% of the Hispanic population
- 6.54% of the Black or African American
- 3.41% of the White Non-Hispanic population

Preschool Access

In Wright County, 42.44% (1,752) of 3-to-4-year-olds are enrolled in preschool. This number is 50% in our Hennepin County service area. The state average is 45.91%. Historically, in 2019, the Wright County rate was 41.74% (1,780).

Since 2019, the availability of publicly funded pre-kindergarten in Wright County has increased by 84 slots or about 15%. 30 of these slots were reserved for students receiving services from the Meeker and Wright Special Education Co-Op and 38 were in the St. Michael school district. The school districts that serve our Hennepin County service area grew by 2% or 10 slots during that same time.

Childhood Homelessness

The data collected in the 2022 Community Assessment remains the most current data available. However, the HUD Point-In-Time (PIT) Count resulted in a significant increase in surveys collected. In 2022, the county only collected 8 surveys. In 2023, a collaborative group worked with several partners and was able to collect 98 surveys. The organizations involved in a newly created Homeless Barriers and Solutions work group all agreed that while that data shows a significant change, the actual levels in the community didn't change. "We've always had homelessness here in Wright County," a member of the group shared. "The PIT count was not as focused or collaborative in the past. Now that we have so many people working together, we are getting more accurate data."

That Community Action Report tool did report childhood homeless rates however, the data

appears to be corrupted. The report location represents 1/3 of the Hennepin County land, but only 5% of the population. The Homeless Children and Youth data table shows more students in our report location than in the entirety of Hennepin County.

Childcare Capacity

Hennepin County reduced by 365 slots, while Wright County increased by 456 slots. This is most likely due to the proximity of the slots to the county lines. While the data came from the State of Minnesota, the county/city data is not always accurately reflected. Overall, the capacity of childcare in our service area increased by 91 slots.

Median Age and Households with Children

The data also shows that the median age of the Non-Hispanic or Latino population is 38.5 while the average median age of Hispanic or Latino populations is only 28.1. Similar data trends can also be observed when looking at the data by race alone. Additionally, about 50% of White households have children compared to an estimated 75% of BIPOC households. This may indicate that programs serving young children, such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and WIC, will see more diversity among their program participants.

Due to the limited communities and ACS responses, the median age data was not available for the Hennepin County service area. However, when looking at the county map provided on page 10 of the Hennepin County Community Action Partnership Report, you can see the average county age of 36.9 represents our service area well.

SNAP Payments

Both of our service areas (Wright County and select communities in Western Hennepin) indicate that the number of households living in poverty have low utilization of SNAP benefits. In Wright County, 2,124 households with income levels below the poverty level were not receiving SNAP payments. In our select Communities of Hennepin County, these numbers were 1,143 (74%) households with income levels below the poverty level were not receiving SNAP payments.

This may be due to the lower rate of SNAP Authorized dealers, especially in cities with higher poverty rates. In Wright County, 20.23% of the low-income population has low food access and this increases to 24.5% in our select communities of Hennepin County. There are only 4.78 SNAP-authorized retailers per 10,000 people in Wright County and 4.55 in our Hennepin County service area.

Uninsured Children

The lack of health insurance is considered a key driver of health status. Lack of insurance is a primary barrier to healthcare access including regular primary care, specialty care, and other health services that contribute to poor health status. The data found on page 114 was pulled from the

Small Area Health Insurance Estimates of 2020. In a post-pandemic world, these numbers may be very different. However, 5.22% of (or 2,104) Wright County Children ages 0-18 did not have insurance. This is compared with only 3.5% of similar-aged children in the state of Minnesota. The Hennepin County service area is only 3.01%.

Adult Mental Health

When we look at the adult population as a whole, 13.10% of adults 18 and older reported poor mental health in the past month. Poor mental health is based on individuals who report 14 or more days during the past 30 days during which their mental health was not good. This has increased 1.5% since the previous report. The select communities we serve in Hennepin County showed 12.6% of adults with poor mental health.

Supplemental Information

A digital copy of the data reviewed during this process can be found on WCCA's website or upon request. This collection of data sources is called 2023 CNA Supplemental Documentation.