

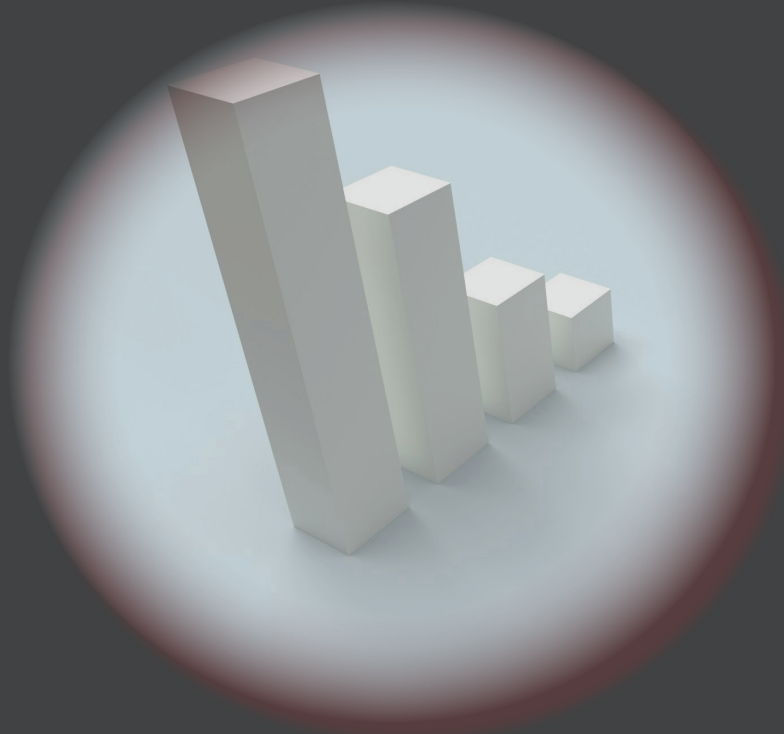


Metropolitan Social Services
Strategic Planning & Research

2023

COMMUNITY NEEDS EVALUATION

The State of Economic & Social Wellbeing
Nashville - Davidson County



FOCUS:
Growth Alone does not
Reduce Disparities

FREDDIE O'CONNELL
MAYOR



RENEE PRATT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
METRO SOCIAL SERVICES

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

Metro Social Services is excited to embark on our 15th year, producing the annual Community Needs Evaluation report.

Our Strategic Planning and Research team has worked diligently throughout the year, collecting key data that tracks and reveals patterns and key points of interest in the demographic and socioeconomic wellbeing of Davidson County residents.

The 2023 CNE delves deep into the impact of rapid growth of Metropolitan Nashville. The aggregate data, collected from multiple sources, presents a singular theme "Growth Alone Does Not Reduce Disparities". A compilation of significant factors – construction and development, traffic, population growth, and a series of natural disasters and a health pandemic - further exacerbated the line between the "Haves & Have Nots" of Metro Nashville.

While Metro Social Services cannot control the ever-swinging pendulum of societal factors and subsequent consequences, we do always stand ready to fulfill the needs of residents impacted by these factors. Our devoted staff provides hope and help to thousands of residents every year who struggle with financial barriers, as they attempt to live stable and independent lives.

I count it a true honor that our department has exclusively and continuously provided this rich data to community stakeholders and elected officials. This information has proven to be quite valuable, as it guides, informs, and undergirds policy and program development and decision making on the highest levels of city management. It is my hope that this data piece can bring out the betterment and advancement of our great city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Renee Pratt".

Renee Pratt
Executive Director
Metro Social Services

The Narrative

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INTRODUCTION

The 2023 Community Needs Evaluation marks a milestone. This is the 15th annual edition of this report. Analysis over 15 years now provides a significant opportunity to take stock of what has occurred in the state of economic security and social wellbeing for Nashville residents during that period. There are numerous important conclusions that can be drawn from the data included in this and previous reports.

In the past decade and a half, Nashville has experienced several unusual events: a major flood, tornadoes, and a pandemic. But Nashville has also experienced an extraordinary level of construction and business relocation and expansion. One might expect economic growth of such a high level to create substantial improvement in the standard of living of Nashville residents. The report that follows relies on data to show that in many ways the standard of living for many Nashvillians has remained the same or has declined during the past years of economic growth. By many measures, the components of standard of living, economic security, and social wellbeing demonstrate marked levels of leaving many Nashville residents and neighborhoods behind.

Economic growth has created affluence for some but has clearly left many others behind. Poverty remains as high as when the growth boom started. High levels of food insecurity and poor health persist. And the ability of many Nashvillians to afford housing has rapidly declined as the economic boom continued. Traffic congestion is far worse than a decade and a half ago. Educational outcomes continue to languish despite the addition of many new jobs and billions of dollars of economic growth.

This report offers three major segments. Segment one states the data record for what a decade and a half has delivered to the lives of Nashvillians. Segment two offers a consideration of what critical matters merit reflection on what the city faces for economic security of residents. Segment three addresses the importance of paradigms in understanding and responding to — changed circumstances and needs.

Part I
Data Tell the Story

Data Tell the Story

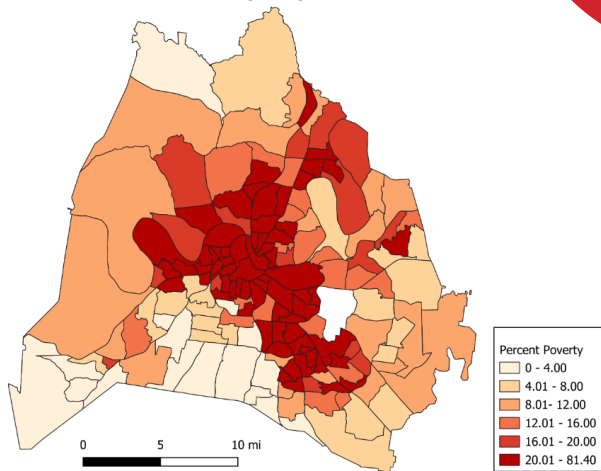
Deep income and wealth inequities exist along racial, ethnic, and neighborhood lines. Over the past decade, poverty has been dispersed into new areas as well as diluted in other areas by in-migration and gentrification. Above all, poverty is only a measure of income — it does not reflect the steep increases in cost of living and the large gaps that have emerged in household ability to afford housing, food, transportation, and other basic needs. While some households may experience modest gains in wages, the gap between income and affordability is greater than ever. By this measure, standard of living is declining for much of Nashville’s population.

THEN
2012

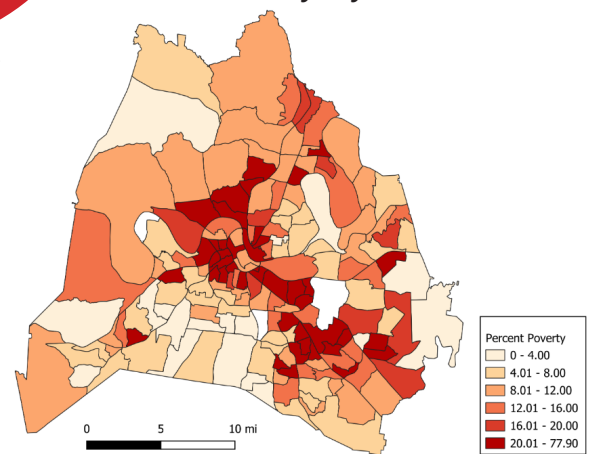
72%
of Nashvillians
see a growing
divide
between
rich and poor

NOW
2022

Percent Poverty by Census Tract



Percent Poverty by Census Tract



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 & 2018-2022; Dr. Wansoo Im, Meharry Medical College

	2012				2022			
	Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	Number in Poverty	Percent in Poverty	Percent of Children in Poverty	Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	Number in Poverty	Percent in Poverty	Percent of Children in Poverty
Asian	20,104	3,632	18.1	20.2	23,812	3,935	16.5	22.0
Black or African American	173,786	46,803	26.9	38.7	172,125	36,629	21.3	33.1
Hispanic or Latino	62,563	20,213	32.3	49.5	76,167	18,536	24.3	34.3
White	386,504	54,989	14.2	19.9	390,197	33,370	8.6	7.7
Total	625,304	118,465	18.9	29.4	687,236	96,175	14.0	22.1

Source: American Community Survey

Data Tell the Story

Nashville has had
higher poverty rates than its peer cities
and the U.S. for most of the past decade.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022
Nashville	18.9	17.9	19.9	16.9	14.8	14.5	15.4	12.4	15.0	14.0
Atlanta	18.3	17.6	16.8	15.3	15.6	14.2	12.9	13.5	13.1	12.7
Tampa	19.2	16.8	16.8	15.7	15.1	15.6	14.8	13.5	14.3	12.9
Louisville	18.0	15.9	16.7	15.1	14.3	13.7	15.4	14.0	14.0	14.7
Charlotte	15.9	15.2	15.0	14.2	12.1	11.1	11.7	10.2	9.9	10.2
Austin	18.4	16.1	17.2	13.3	12.3	11.7	12.1	10.9	11.3	10.1
United States	15.9	15.8	15.5	14.7	14.0	13.4	13.1	12.3	12.8	12.6

Data here refer to the central county in each respective Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: American Community Service

The disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is a hill or high point of vantage, from alone which men see the town which they live in or the age in which they are living.

G.K. Chesterton

Disparity: Who IS left behind?

424,000
Nashville workers,
half of whom earn
less than a living wage

44,000 single
mothers with
children,
almost half
of whom live
in poverty

304,000 renters,
half of whom are
cost-burdened
to afford rent

82,000 MNPS
students,
a third of whom
are economically
disadvantaged

94,000 persons over
65, most of whom
live on fixed income

Sources: American Community Survey, MNPS

Many Nashvillians are left behind

Poverty remains Misunderstood

Half of Nashville workers earn less than a living wage

The continued decline in the real value of wages in Nashville is part of a national trend. But, it also relates to actions to promote industries that directly employ large numbers of lower skill, lower wage jobs such as tourism and to promote industries and business types that require high-skilled workers that are not readily available in Nashville. In the latter case, workers are actively recruited from elsewhere in the country to relocate to Nashville, resulting in a host of adverse outcomes for existing residents of the city. In those cases, influx of affluent workers results in escalation of housing prices and prices of other household budget items. Additionally, many 'downstream' jobs in retail and service sectors are created that are then filled by lower-skilled local residents. Many disordered patterns of gentrification emerge, migration of low paid workers to more distant housing intensifies, and transportation patterns become ever more convoluted. The reality of half of Nashville workers earning less than a living wage is not an accident of nature. Instead, absence of guiding strategies that prioritize raising the standard of living for all Nashvillians appear as foundational to these results.

If you don't pay
your labor
good wages,
how can they
ever afford
to buy what you make?

James Michener

72%
of Nashvillians
see a growing divide
between
rich and poor

Source: Imagine Nashville

What is a **Livable** Income?

A Livable Income is related to a Living Wage for the working age population. The living wage is based on the ability to meet the level of expenses for different household types in Davidson County. This indicates the amount that the household worker must earn to support himself or herself and their family. The calculation assumes that the sole provider is working full-time (2,080 hours per year). The tool provides information for individuals and households with one or two working adults and zero to three children.

Living Wage for Davidson County - February 2024

	1 Adult			2 Adults (1 working)			2 Adults (both working)		
	0 children	1 child	2 children	0 children	1 child	2 children	0 children	1 child	2 children
Food	\$4,687	\$6,908	\$10,362	\$8,592	\$10,695	\$13,774	\$8,592	\$10,695	\$13,774
Child Care	\$0	\$9,210	\$18,419	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,210	\$18,419
Medical	\$3,183	\$9,163	\$9,049	\$6,662	\$9,049	\$9,521	\$6,662	\$9,049	\$9,521
Housing	\$17,233	\$19,872	\$19,872	\$17,700	\$19,872	\$19,872	\$17,700	\$19,872	\$19,872
Transportation	\$9,661	\$11,180	\$14,083	\$11,180	\$14,083	\$16,205	\$11,180	\$14,083	\$16,205
Civic	\$2,165	\$3,810	\$4,795	\$3,810	\$4,795	\$5,553	\$3,810	\$4,795	\$5,553
Internet & Mobile	\$1,886	\$1,886	\$1,886	\$2,466	\$2,466	\$2,466	\$2,466	\$2,466	\$2,466
Other	\$3,903	\$6,966	\$7,407	\$6,966	\$7,407	\$10,238	\$7,407	\$7,407	\$10,238
Required annual income before taxes	\$49,244	\$77,165	\$95,677	\$64,915	\$76,066	\$85,147	\$64,915	\$86,486	\$105,986

Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator

Additionally, since the vast majority of older adults live on a fixed income, they have no ways to boost their spending ability for their household needs. The dramatic rise in costs of rent, groceries, and medical care impact all Nashvillians, and disproportionately the city's older population. The federal poverty rate in many important ways fails to provide a meaningful understanding of economic hardship for the population. With median earnings in Davidson County of \$45,068 a year (2022), it is clear that a very large portion of Nashville residents are unable to live at a "living wage" level. In this regard, it is essential to understand Nashville poverty not as a phenomenon affecting only a small segment but as a widespread hardship shared by many households and workers

Half of Nashville workers earn
less than a living wage

Housing

Large portions of Davidson County’s population are **cost-burdened** for housing, meaning that they pay **30% or more** of their annual income to afford housing.

The problems have **worsened** in the past decade.

Homeownership rate for Black Nashvillians **38.9%**, much lower than **60.9%** rate for whites

Source: American Community Survey

Homebuyers must earn **\$115,000** to afford the typical U.S. home. That’s about **\$40,000** more than the typical American household earns.

Source: Redfin

	2012	2022	Change
Homeowners	27.0%	27.7%	+0.7%
Renters	48.7%	54.1%	+5.4%
Senior homeowners	26.3%	28.7%	+2.4%
Senior renters	52.7%	62.0%	+9.3%

Source: American Community Survey

Only **9%** of Nashville residents believe they can afford a home in their area

Source: Vanderbilt University Poll

26.3% of senior homeowners and **52.7%** of senior renters spent 30% or more of their income on housing in **2012**. **28.7%** of senior homeowners and **62%** of senior renters spent 30% or more of their income on housing in **2022**.

An increase of **9.3%** of senior renters who were cost-burdened by gross rent.

Workforce

Black workers in Nashville are **twice** as likely as Whites to work in **construction**, **4 times** as likely to work in **healthcare support jobs**, and **half** as likely to work in **management, healthcare practitioner, and computer/science/engineering jobs.**

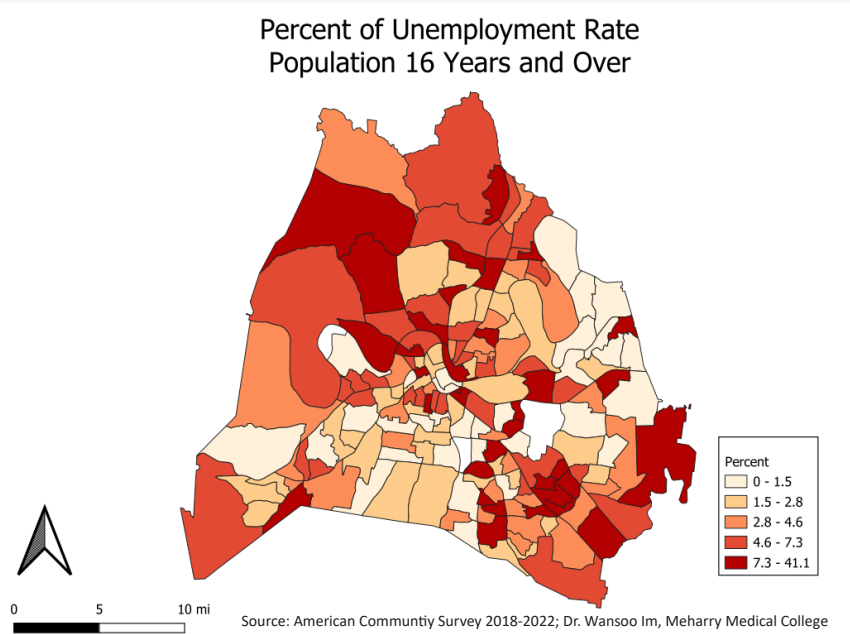
The need for alignment between meaningful opportunity for Nashville residents and practices related to economic growth are greater than ever. After 15 years of reporting in the Community Needs Evaluation, patterns of inequity and imbalance are as pronounced as at the start of record levels of economic investment. Investment and effort directed foremost to the employment needs, interests, skills, and abilities of existing residents of Davidson County may yield different directions for business recruitment, business expansion, and business incentives. The reality of many left behind in terms of economic prosperity points to a fallacy that 'job creation' is undifferentiated with regard to the realities of employment needs of a city's residents.

Unemployment for Black Nashvillians **8.3%**, **2.3 times higher** than total population **4.6 times higher** than Whites

Source: American Community Survey, 2022

57% of low-income families feel "Left out or excluded from the opportunities and benefits of living in Nashville"

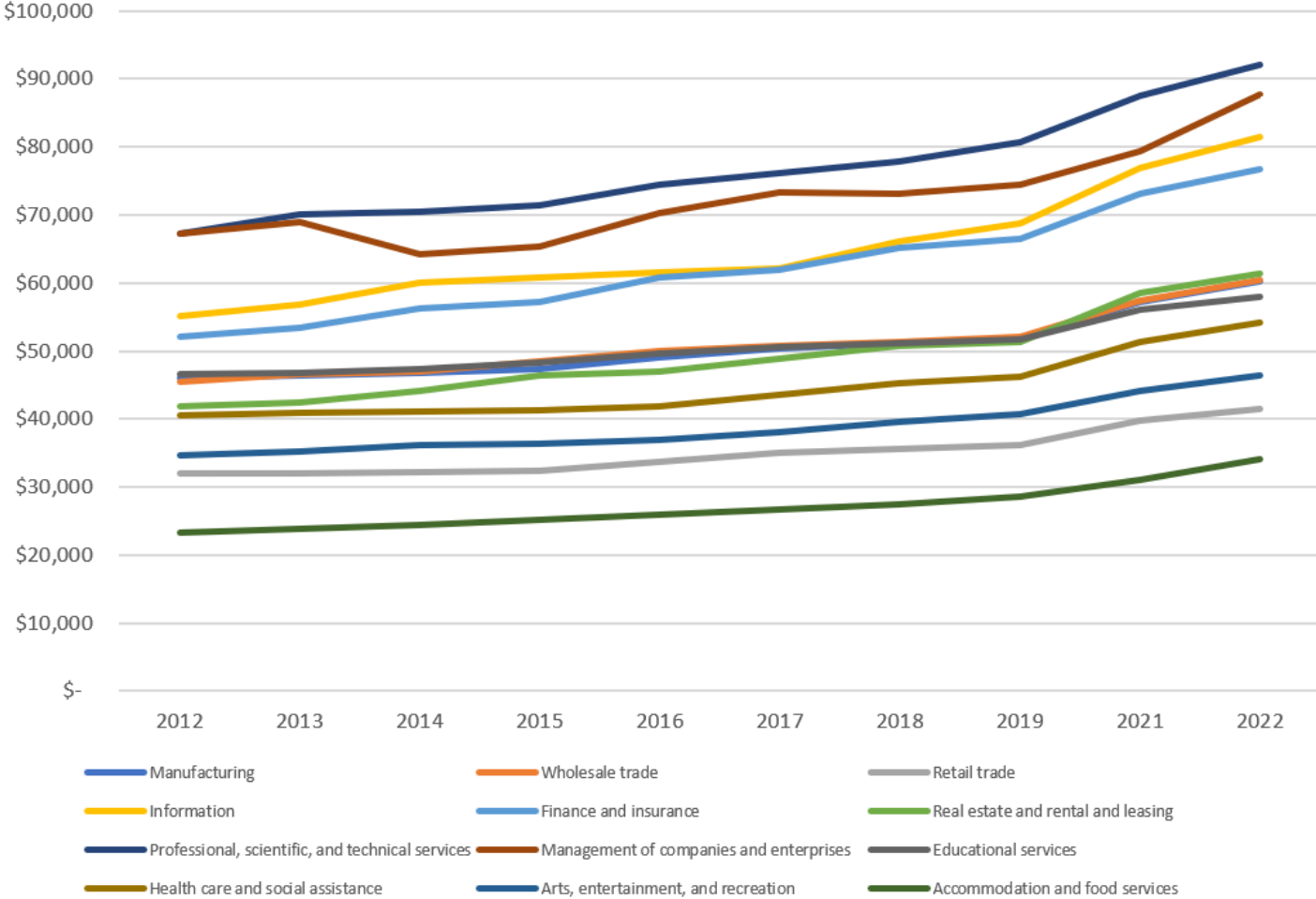
Source: Imagine Nashville



Workforce

Imbalances in earnings in Nashville are highly correlated with industries. Some industries have seen significant increases in median wages over the past decades, while others have seen little change.

Median Earnings of Workers in 2022 (in 2022 inflation adjusted dollars)



Source: American Community Survey

Education

Metro Nashville Public Schools' graduation rate (2022-2023) was only

81.5%,

lower than the statewide graduation rate of **90.6%**.

Source: TN Dept. of Education, 2022-2023

48,459 Nashvillians 18 years and over **do not have a high school diploma**

Source: American Community Survey, 2022

MNPS high school college-going rate for the class of 2022 was

49.5%,

much lower than Williamson County's **81.6%**, and lower than Tennessee's **54.3%**.

Source: Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Education is widely regarded as the key to economic success in the new economy. The main moral problem respecting education policy in the United States is the grossly unequal and inadequate education received by the poor.

Dr. Stephen Macedo, Princeton University

Health

1 in 10 Nashvillians is food insecure

Source: Feeding America, 2021

More than 1 in 10 Nashvillians (11.5%) lacks health insurance


Source: American Community Survey, 2022

ZIP codes with highest rates of food insecurity 37207, 37208, and 37218 – all touching North Nashville.

If access to health care is considered a human right, who is considered human enough to have that right?

Paul Farmer

Who is most vulnerable to displacement?



Persons of Color

People 25 and older without a Bachelor's Degree

Renters

People making at or below 80% Median Family Income

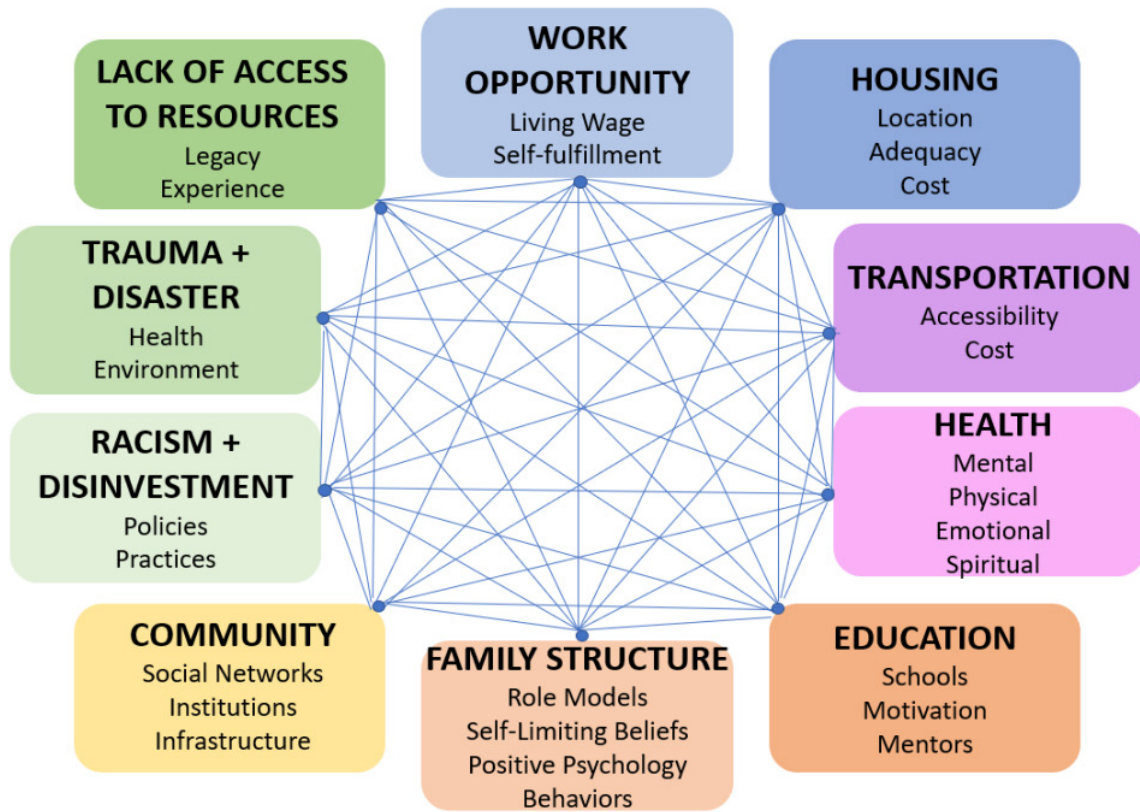
Households with children in poverty

Older adults and persons with disabilities experience a variety of economic, social, and health challenges that differ from the population at large. These populations, along with others, are more likely to be displaced through gentrification.

Source: The Uprooted Project

Poverty is **Interrelated**

Solutions to the dilemma of poverty will not be resolved by treating manifestations of poverty in isolation. Nashville's endemically high poverty rate points to underlying factors that allow poverty to persist despite record levels of economic growth. Failing to holistically understand and address the underlying factors results in endless triage of systemic challenges.



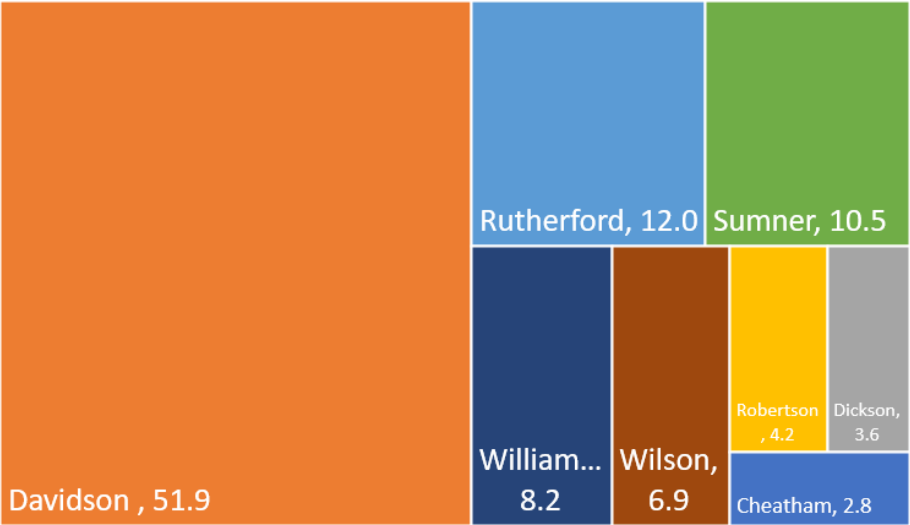
HOUSING
FOOD
TRANSPORTATION
EDUCATION
PUBLIC SAFETY
HEALTHCARE
ELDERCARE
CHILDCARE

PART II

Critical Considerations

A Region Reshaped

Nashville
Metropolitan
Area
Population

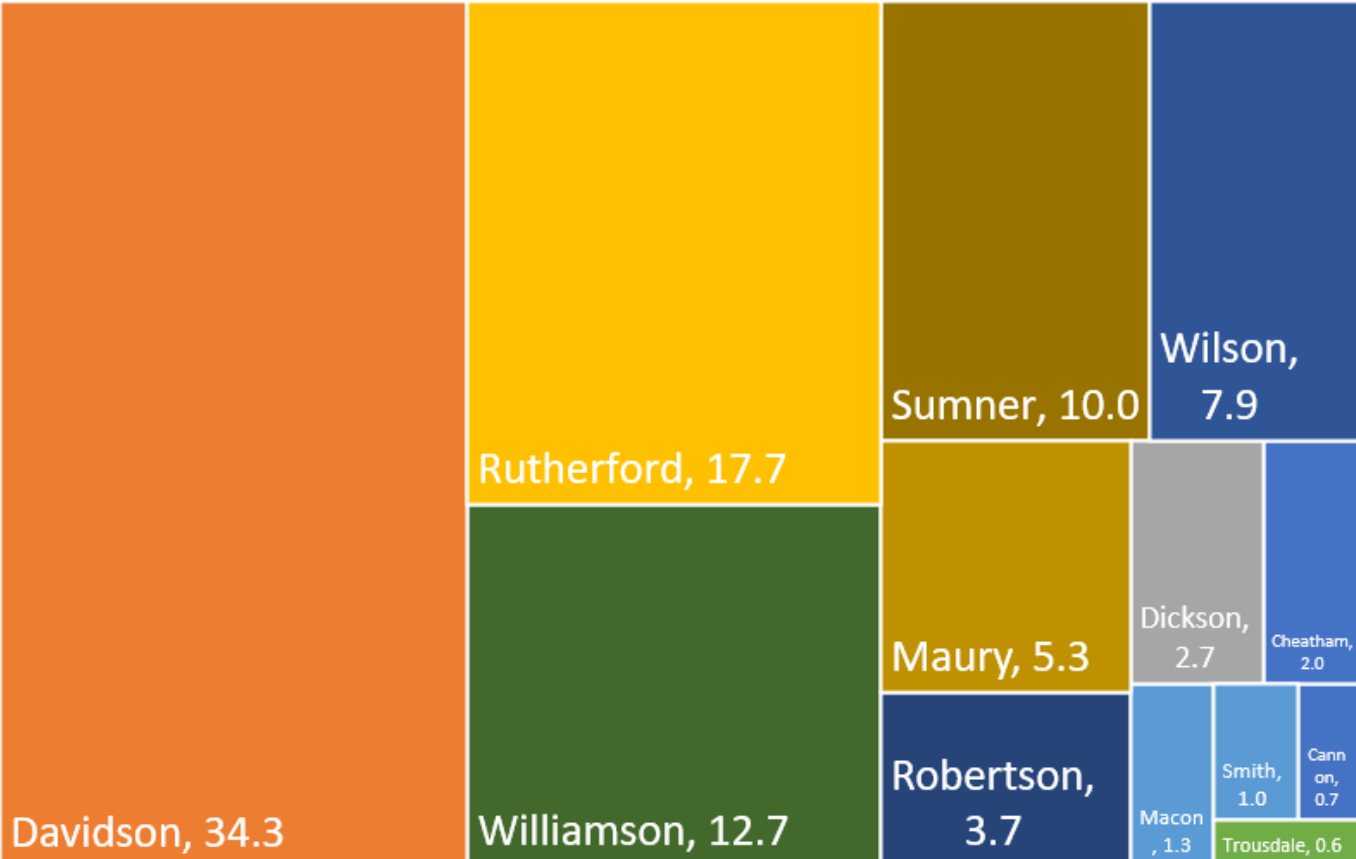


1990
Davidson
51.9%
of Region

Source: US Census

Davidson increase **38%**
Region increase **108%**

2023
Davidson
34.3%
of Region



Growth **Not Sufficient** to Improve Standard of Living

Only 1 in 10
Nashvillians
supports a
"Pro-Growth"
orientation

Source: Imagine Nashville

Synechdoche: A term meaning a part is used to represent the whole.

Example: A rising standard of living for some does not mean a rising standard of living for all.

Economic
growth
doesn't mean
anything if it
leaves
people out.

Senator Jack Kemp

Critical Considerations on Growth

In its simplest sense, the public interest is to be distinguished from factional rule or dominance by one segment of the community.



Dr. Thad Williamson, University of Richmond

Unintended Consequences of Growth

#1

**Worst commute
in the U.S.**

Source: Forbes

**Almost 1 in 4
Nashvillians feels they
“don’t belong”**

Source: Imagine Nashville

Very large apartment rent
increase in five years

Residents displaced
through
gentrification

Small business facing
large increase
in lease rates

Public safety
challenges increase

Growth that continues unabated for years or decades without accompanying social, physical, and process infrastructure will affect more and more aspects of community life that are unexpected, unwelcome, and increasingly difficult to remedy. Unchecked growth that is propelled for growth goals alone without accompanying strategies to improve standard of living and quality of life inevitably will leave more and more people out of opportunities and destinies which they once felt were in their control.

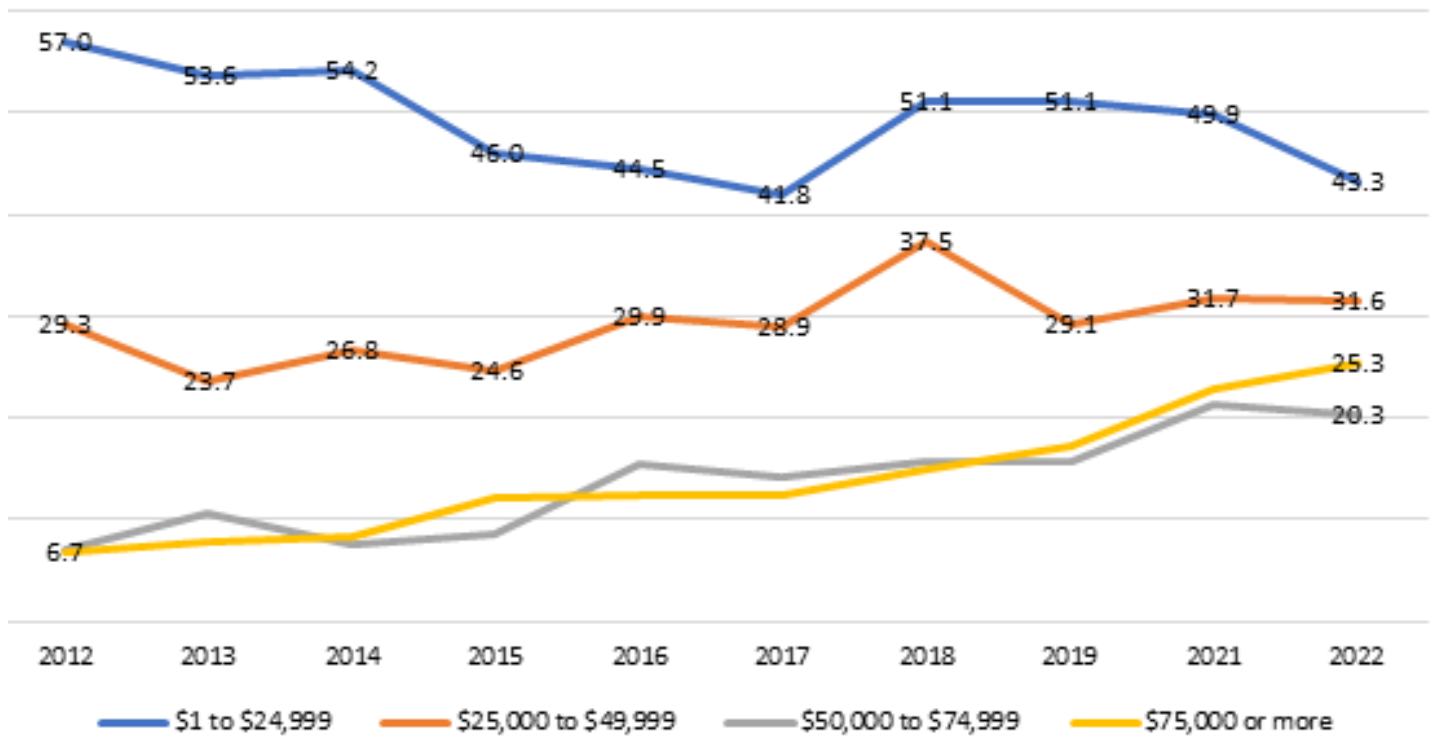
If you don't know
where you are going,
any road
will get you there.

Lewis Carroll



Who Benefits from Growth?

Population 15 Years and Over
Moving to Davidson County by Income Level
2012 - 2022 (percentage)

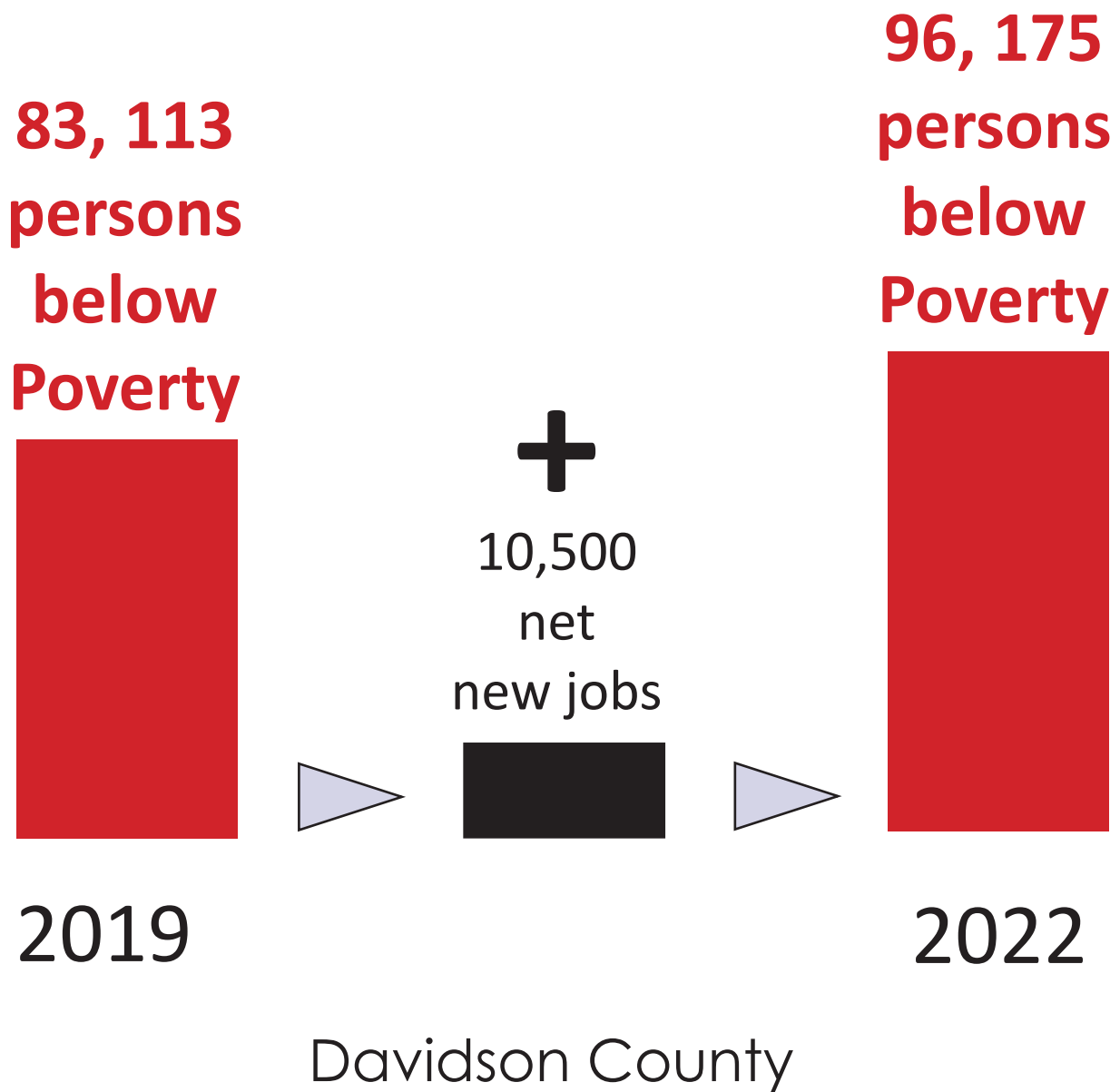


Source: American Community Survey

\$50,000 to \$74,999 : Increase from 6.9% to 20.3%
\$75,000 or more : Increase from 6.7% to 25.3%

A clear upward trend of
 people with higher incomes
disproportionately moving to Davidson County

Inequities of Growth



In many instances, there have been net increases in total jobs in Davidson County while the number of persons in poverty has also increased. This suggests that job creation may often not be prioritizing the needs and skills of all residents of Davidson County. Similarly, local residents may simply be the beneficiary of ‘downstream’ poverty wage jobs that are created in response to recruitment of business and workers for high skill occupations to the city. Alignment of workforce strategies and business recruitment that prioritizes less skilled workers likely could enhance Nashville’s opportunities to address poverty.

GDP

A False Measure for Wellbeing

Growth in GDP doesn't show how income is split across a population. Rising GDP often can result from the richest getting richer, rather than everyone becoming better off.

BBC - GDP fails to be a good measure of economic performance

Scientific American - Why GDP Is a Terrible Metric for Success and Wealth

TIME - GDP Is a Wildly Flawed Measure for the Digital Age

Harvard Business Review - Why GDP is a poor measure of progress

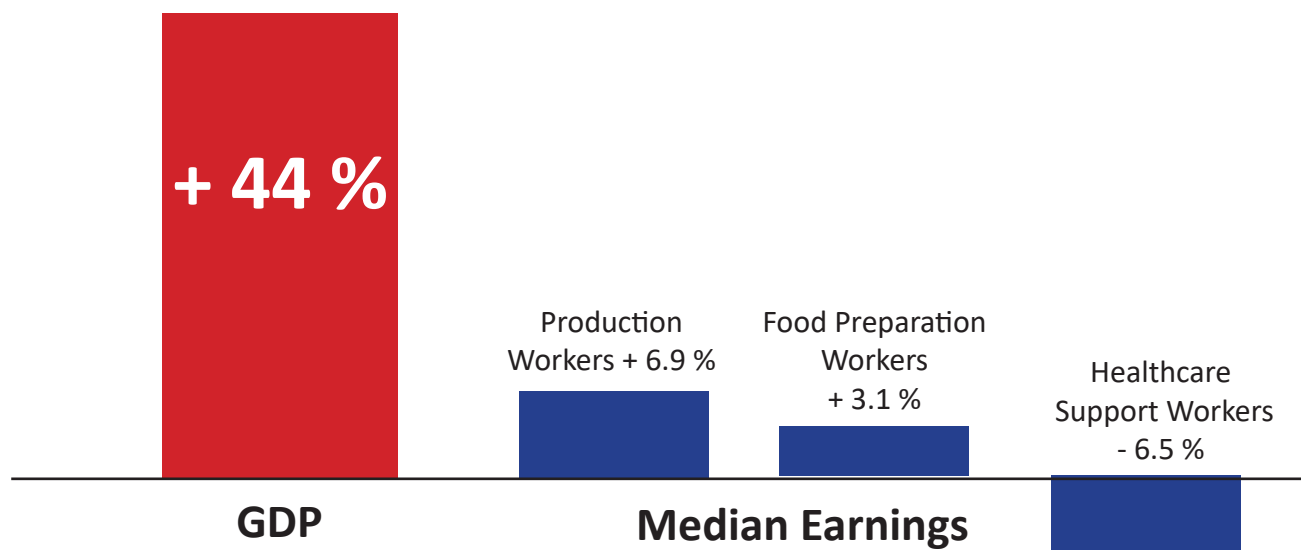
The Economist - The great GDP swindle

The Guardian - GDP Is a Terrible Way to Measure a Country's Economy

Slate - Poor Measurement of GDP Hides Falling Living Standards



Davidson County 2017 - 2022



all values adjusted for inflation

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis; American Community Survey

PART III
Paradigms

Blindspots

Recognizing the Unseen



- Population growth is very low in Davidson County. Since 2020 Nashville has **lost 3,725 people**, for **negative change of -0.52 percent**.

Source: US Census

- In much of Davidson County, 75 to 99 percent of students **attend public schools**, while in the southwestern quadrant of the county, between 60 to 75 percent of students **attend private schools**.

Source: American Community Survey

- More than half of Nashvillians are in **living wage poverty**.

Source: American Community Survey; MIT Living Wage Calculator

- Maintaining existing affordable housing is cheaper than building new; instead, **9,549 housing units have been demolished since 2010**.

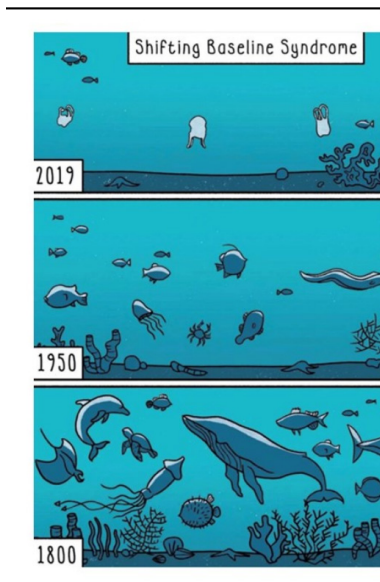
Source: Metro Codes Department

“Voting with your feet” is not a way that poor people can effectively hold governments accountable, but it is often a way that better-off people hold governments accountable to their interests at the expense of the poor.

Dr. Stephen Macedo, Princeton University

Shifting Baseline Syndrome

A change in how a system is measured, usually against previous reference points (baselines), which themselves may represent significant changes from an even earlier state of the system.



Shifting Baseline Syndrome occurs when conditions of the environment gradually degrade over time, yet people falsely perceive less change because they do not know, or fail to recall accurately, how the environment looked in the past.

Then

Now



Cost of Development

Environmental Impact

- Vehicle Emissions
- Urban Heating

Economic Cost

- Time Lost to Commuting
- Productivity Losses

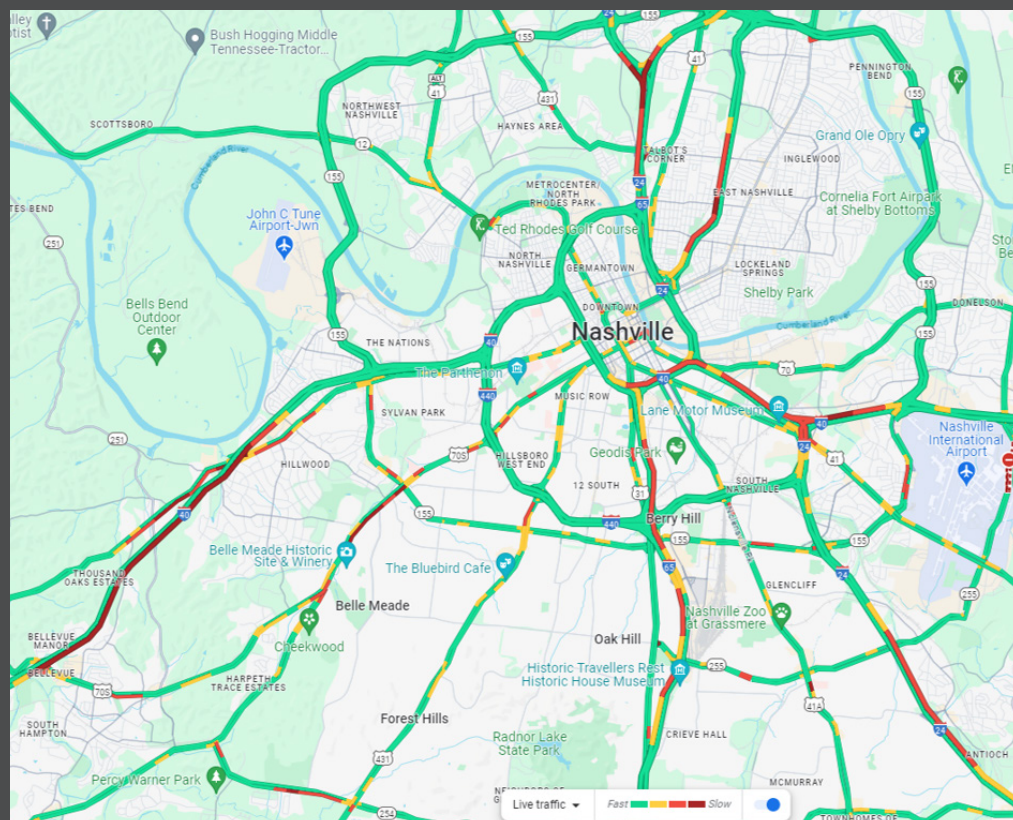
Wellbeing Cost

- Physical, Mental, and Emotional Toll on Residents
- Safety Decline

Man walks in a straight line because he has a goal and knows where he's going.

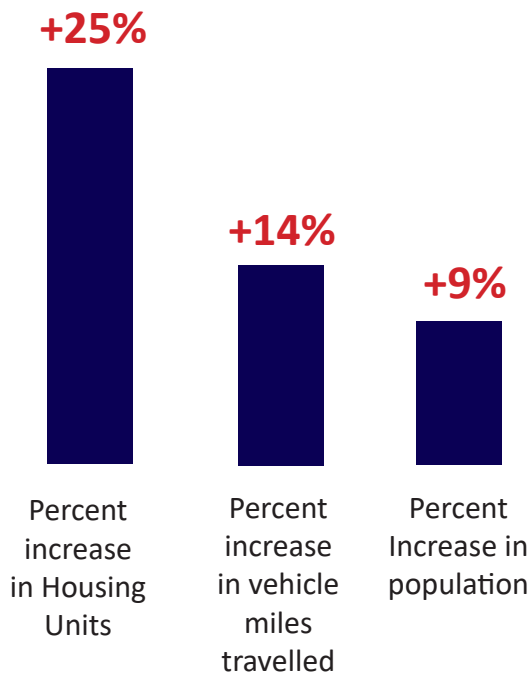
Le Corbusier
The City of Tomorrow

Urban and Regional Traffic Congestion on all Corridors



Unaligned & Shifting Parts of the Whole

2012 to 2022
Davidson County



Source: American Community Survey; Tennessee Dept. of Transportation

Over half (56%)
of residents
believe growth
has made
Nashville worse

Source: Imagine Nashville

Fostering economic growth fueled through selective components of the life of a city without attention to other accompanying infrastructure results in accumulating challenges to remedy the ill effects of those mismatches. Congruence in economic growth is a necessity of achieving improvement rather than deterioration in the standard of living and quality of life for city residents.

The politics of social investment means something quite different from reliance on market efficiency to meet our needs. It calls for the construction of a set of political relationships capable of dealing with both a need for collective support and the risk of future uncertainty.

Dr. Clarence Stone, George Washington University

What **Must** Accompany Growth

Strategy to Support Consequences

- Modelling and Simulation
- Innovation & Experimentation
- Best Practices Globally
- Community Engagement

Infrastructure to Support Change

- Physical infrastructure
- Technological Infrastructure
- Process Infrastructure

Consistent Evaluation of Strategy

- Information loop to assess impacts
- Fiscal and human impacts

Growth is
an idol of
our
present
system

Dr. Herman Daly,
former senior
World Bank economist

Frenzied growth is akin to
malignancy in nature -
uncontrolled proliferation that corrodes
the environment it develops in

Growth \neq Development

We've tried to make a distinction between development and growth. When something grows, it gets bigger physically by accretion or assimilation of material. When something develops, it gets better in a qualitative sense. It doesn't have to get bigger. An example of that is computers. You can do fantastic computations now with a small material base in the computer. That's real development. And the art of living is not synonymous with "more stuff." People occasionally glimpse this, and then we fall back into more, more, more.

New York Times Magazine, July 17, 2022

The high concentration of rich versus poor across American metropolitan areas is not simply the consequence of individual market choices. Local laws and background institutions facilitate the sorting of Americans by race and class.

American Apartheid

If the public does not understand a policy (or even worse, misunderstands it), they may accept or reject it based on misinformation. To begin to tackle this issue, we test an approach called a "**refutation text**" meant to correct people's misconceptions about an issue. While refutation texts have been widely used to correct misconceptions about controversial science issues (e.g., global warming, GMOs), to our knowledge they have never been tested to correct misconceptions about policy.

Brookings Institution
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/when-public-opinion-on-policy-is-driven-by-misconceptions-refute-them/>

Asking Critical Questions

Consistently asking **WHY ?**

Asking **good questions** is an essential part of critical thinking. By gathering more information, clarifying our thoughts, challenging assumptions, and stimulating creativity, we become more effective at critical thinking to find better understanding of issues and solutions to problems.

How can we **distinguish between fact and opinion** in information presented to us?

What **assumptions underlie the arguments** presented in the matter?

How might **different cultural or historical contexts** change our understanding of an issue?

What **alternative explanations or viewpoints** might exist for a situation?

How can we evaluate the **credibility and reliability of sources** used to support an argument?

What **ethical considerations** are relevant to a issue, and how might they affect our thinking?

What are **potential consequences**, both positive and negative, of a decision or action?

What **evidence can we gather to support or challenge** a claim or hypothesis?

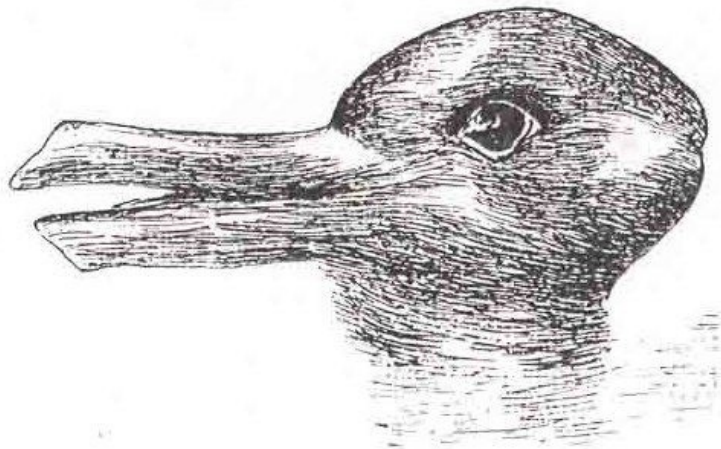
How might **biases or assumptions** be affecting our thinking on an issue?

What are the **potential unintended consequences** of a particular course of action, and how can we mitigate them?

Paradigms

A **paradigm shift** means a new way of understanding an existing situation.

As half of Nashville households struggle financially, a paradigm shift offers new directions in understanding and approaching this and other community needs. Fostering economic security and social wellbeing depends on adhering to community values, evidence-based policies and programs, and alignment of perception of solutions to challenges with lived experiences of the population.



How to See Things Differently

Poverty is not
an accident.
Like slavery and
apartheid, it is
man-made and
can be removed
by the actions
of human beings.

Nelson Mandela

Theory of Change

Theory of change refers to a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. Simply wishing that economic security for low-wage workers emerges from recruiting high end jobs does not fulfill a logical theory of change. In fact, evidence demonstrates otherwise.

Over the past decade:

- Davidson County has seen **aggregate investment in construction of nearly \$9 billion.**
- Dozens of **corporate headquarters moved** to Nashville and many expanded their operations.
- Davidson County saw **high levels of population in-migration.**

Meanwhile:

- Federal poverty rates in Nashville **never dropped below 12%.**
- Nashville's largest job growth was in **low wage workers in retail, healthcare services, and tourism.**
- MNPS graduates ready to succeed in post-secondary education often **remained around 25%.**
- African American population **decreased by 3,270** since 2012.

Sources: US Bureau of Economic Analysis; American Community Survey, MNPS

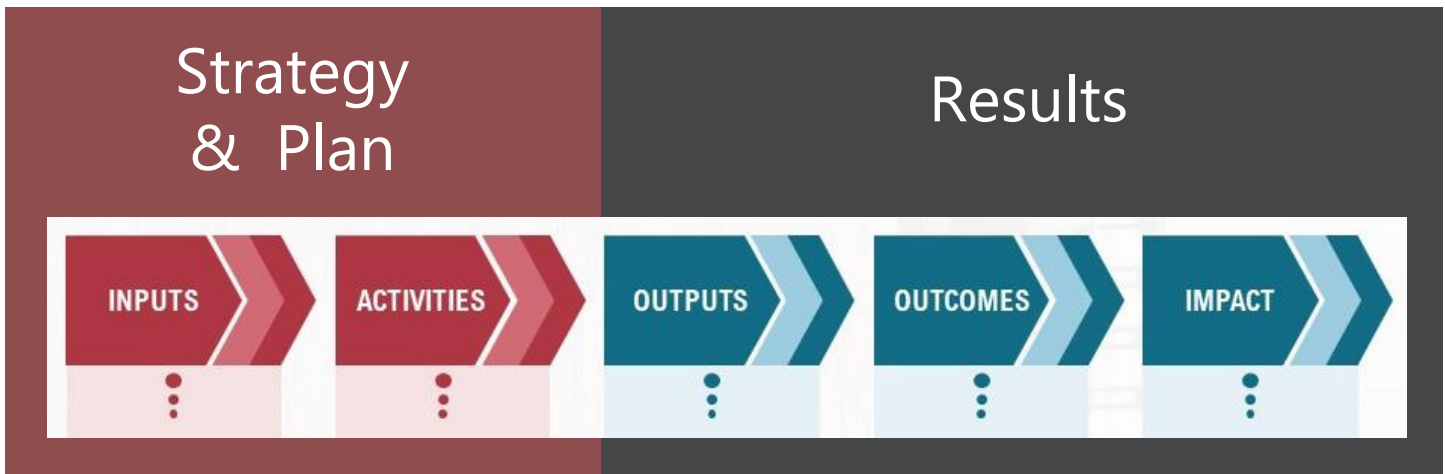
These events point to the conclusion that economic development not aligned to the needs of the population cannot be expected to resolve the challenges facing the population. Rather, Nashville has seen an exceptional dichotomy of activity: historically high investment in construction and business development and languishing and declining economic vitality for a large portion of the city's workforce.

A Theory of Change requires anchoring actions to evidence. When the evidence over many years illustrates that desired change is **not occurring**, or is even impeded by actions, wisdom suggests a recalibration is timely.

Theory of Change

General Features of a Theory of Change:

- Gives the **big picture**, including issues related to the environment or context that you can't control.
- Shows all the different pathways that might lead to change, even if those pathways are not related to a particular program, effort, or activity.
- Describes **how and why you think change happens**.
- Could be used to complete the sentence “if we do X, then Y will change because...”
- Is presented as a diagram with narrative text It helps to **visualize processes**.
- The **diagrams are flexible** and don't have a particular format—they can include cyclical processes, feedback loops, and one box could lead to multiple other boxes.
- Describes **why you think one box will lead to another box** (e.g., if you think increased knowledge will lead to behavior change, is that an assumption or do you have evidence to show it is the case?)



The process for developing a Theory of Change usually starts with asking the question '**What is our long term goal or outcome?**' Not only does the Theory of Change show the outcomes/preconditions, it also outlines the causal linkages in an intervention between the shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes. The identified changes are mapped—as the “outcomes pathway”—showing each outcome in logical relationship to all the others, as well as chronological flow.

Additionally, many Theory of Change outcome pathways include an '**accountability ceiling**'. This is often represented by a dashed line drawn across the pathway that separates outcomes the organisation will monitor and claim credit for attaining, from the higher-order outcomes that are beyond its power to achieve.

Source: USAID

A Theory of Change requires anchoring actions to evidence. When the evidence over many years illustrates that desired change is **not occurring**, or is even impeded by actions, wisdom suggests a recalibration is timely.

Community Engagement Community Empowerment

Community Engagement is a form of Citizen Science where residents became active participants in the ongoing process of sustaining communities that are shaped by a stable and rising standard of living for residents. Key components of community engagement include:

- Collaborative decision-making
- Civic skill-building
- Utilization of local insights
- Enhanced community resilience
- Growth of social capital
- Equitable community development
- Increased community ownership
- Resource alignment and efficiency
- Innovation cultivation
- Long-term community sustainability

Our lives
begin to end
the day we
become silent
about things
that matter.

Dr. Martin Luther King



What is Community Engagement & Community Mapping?

Definition

"Community Mapping" is a collaborative process for generating geospatial data through group work, using mapping technology to identify, understand, analyze, resolve, and disseminate community issues.

– Drs. Wansoo Im & David Tullock

Process

Involves members of a community working together to create a map of their local area, highlighting features that are important to the community and gathering local knowledge, stories, and perspectives.

Empowerment

Empowers community members to actively participate in decision-making processes and promotes a deeper understanding of the local environment.

Engagement


Engages diverse stakeholders, such as residents, community organizations, and local authorities, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for addressing community concerns.

Safe Routes to School Community Mapping, Nashville - Dr. Wansoo Im

90.3 wpln news Nashville's local news and NPR station

Mapper Who Plotted Gas Shortages and NYC's Best Bathrooms Now Helps Nashville Kids Walk To School

TONY GONZALEZ | SEPTEMBER 19, 2016



Nashville families do un-rated walking conditions near two elementary schools and plugged their findings into an interactive map that will inform safer route finding. Credit: Courtesy of Wansoo Im

Nashville is now home to a notable mapmaker whose projects have had a tendency to go viral. One of his first local mapping efforts began this weekend, as he coached families on how to find safe walking routes to their schools.

THE TENNESSEAN

GALLATIN

Gallatin, Meharry students map safe places to walk

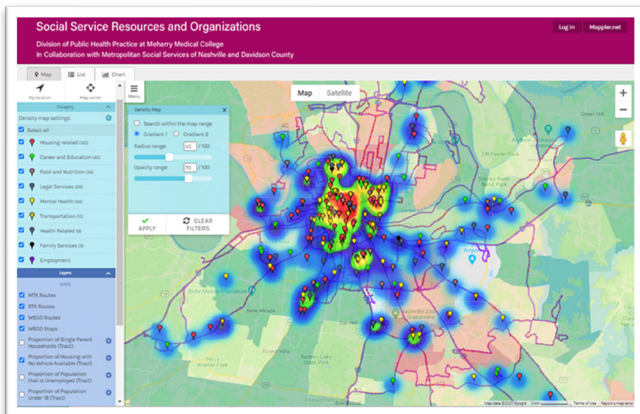
Jan Todd
The Tennessean
Published 2:57 pm CT Dec 4, 2017



Students from Meharry and Gallatin and Station Camp high schools walked around Gallatin Dec. 2 to find safe walking and crossing areas for the mMe app. Mappers Submitted

Students from Gallatin and Station Camp high schools walked Gallatin Saturday, cell phones in hand, to mark any dangers for walkers or bikers in the area.

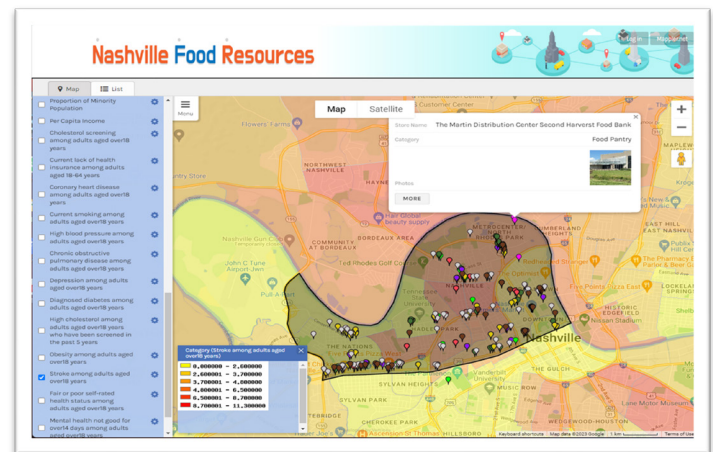
Citizen Science Community Engagement & Community Mapping



Social Services Resources and Organizations
An interactive community resource map created in partnership with Metro Social Services during COVID-19.

Nashville Food Resources

A project in collaboration with The Nashville Food Project, focused on collecting and updating local food resource information to evaluate food accessibility in North Nashville.



Nashville Tornado 2020 Resilience Community Mapping

This project maps the resilience efforts following the 2020 Nashville tornado, utilizing Google StreetView and field surveys.



Benefits of Community-Driven Data Initiatives

- Inclusive Perspectives and Comprehensive Data
- Improved Data Precision and Contextual Relevance
- Strengthened Community Trust and Engagement
- Recognition of Localized Issues
- Data Integrity and Minimization of Errors
- Sustained Data Gathering and Oversight
- Promotion of Data Co-Stewardship
- Advancement of Community Data Proficiency

PART IV
Way Forward

Paradigm Shift: Inclusive Community Development

Rising Economic Hardship

Economic insecurity and declining standard of living have become common and widespread in Nashville. A number of complex issues contributed to this outcome, including a focus on growth and development without evaluating their human and community impacts. In short, systemic challenges require systemic solutions. Economic development with the strategic purpose of advancing and maintaining the standard of living of residents will not happen by itself. Representation that engages neighborhood groups, civic leaders, faith groups, academia, and Metro Government working together is essential to charting a new path. This path requires a paradigm shift where human need and community flourishing is given priority over economic growth that is disconnected from those objectives.

The work of social scientists suggests the usefulness and importance of an approach that encompasses innovation, strategies, policies, and practices that guide this new paradigm and continuously assess systemic impacts.

Designing and Steering Growth that Benefits Standard of Living.

Conclusions from the Data

Fifteen years of research on economic and social wellbeing of Nashville residents point to a need to reorient the direction and purpose of growth. Likewise, there is a need for institutional ownership of steering growth and economic and community development to this new direction.

As the steward of the population of Nashville and Davidson County, the role and actions of Metropolitan Government impact the lives of residents and communities in countless ways. Incentives for unchecked growth and development as well as inattention to actions that promote human wellbeing both contribute to high and rising costs, directly and indirectly, to the people and communities that are left behind. While these growth-oriented intentions may be to improve the “quality of life” of our community through job creation, their specific interests rarely align with the interests of life-long and long-time residents of our community. Alongside many years of incentivized growth has been a sharp rise in population not earning a living wage, resulting in ever greater challenges to city government and nonprofit organizations to provide services in education, housing, health, and transportation.

It is then imperative that Metropolitan Government and the entire community reevaluate this focus on growth and development. Augmenting this focus requires embracing a paradigm where clarity of purpose, engagement of community, and strategic policy alignment all contribute to meaningfully enhancing the standard of living and quality of life across the population.

Paradigm Shift: How to Address Poverty

Resolving economic hardship for Nashvillians requires a different approach. Rather than focusing on short-term actions that address only manifestations of poverty, a focus on the root causes of increasing financial distress is needed. It is critical to diagnose the root causes of hunger, housing inadequacy, poor health, education and workforce talent gaps, lack of access to childcare and eldercare, and many other aspects of struggle. Only then can steps be taken to overcome conditions that create and perpetuate poverty. Evidence shows that there are new ways for local government to evaluate forces that contribute to intergenerational poverty. These approaches would create economic opportunity and mobility for Nashville residents requires assessment of the impacts of growth patterns as well as innovative service approaches.

An Ecosystem that Focuses on Communities and People

Support family business, small business, and local business

Small businesses play an important role in thriving communities through job creation and the cultural and environmental impacts they support. Without one the other cannot survive. A symbiotic relationship between local communities and small businesses must exist. There must be sufficient commitment by local leaders to support the activities that help small business, family business, and local business to grow and prosper if the neighborhoods around them are to grow and prosper as well.

Initiatives that provide technical assistance, tax relief and incentive, and ongoing targeting counseling and workshops are important to support small business. Evidence suggests that local governments have a vital role in removing barriers to local business and small businesses and to meaningfully include these in all economic development projects. This type of support strengthens the community's economic base as small businesses are significant job creators and contribute directly to local tax revenue. Furthermore, they add vibrancy and character to a place, making it a desirable community that is anchored by stakeholders whose priorities align with the community and a rise in standard of living for residents.

Support Non-profit Service Organizations

It is undeniable that nonprofit organizations have played and continue to play an indispensable role in providing essential services that fill critical gaps to people in need in our communities. Many of these needs have been exacerbated by unaligned growth in recent years. As a result, many citizens must benefit from their services, who for one reason or another do not obtain services from private or public sectors.

Nonprofit organizations are now leading renewed focus on reducing the racial wealth gap, which is re-enforcing the vicious cycle of poverty and perpetuate these disparities that engulfed many communities of color. This is so true for nonprofits that brought services to the heart of these communities and engage in the service design phase. Financial struggles are a constant reality for many nonprofits and spend a chunk of their leadership time navigating complex systems to secure funds. Local government can be a catalyst to bring attention to role of nonprofits and promote strategic partnerships that can bring national and state resources to local communities.

Engage with State Government Resources

Lastly, but importantly, local government can benefit its residents through continuing positive interrelationship between efforts to serve the needs of the population. Targeted resources and programs delivered by the federal, state, and local government share many objectives and processes that, when aligned well and operate collaboratively, can offer enhanced results to maintain and raise the standard of living and quality of life for all residents.

Values to Guide Community Decisions

Misunderstanding the concept of poverty hinders action. A perspective that only sees the symptoms of poverty inevitably will overlook the root causes of poverty. The manifestations of a condition are not the same as the reasons that the condition exists. Feeding a hungry person through charity does not change what forced the person to seek assistance. Diagnosing root causes of hunger, housing inadequacy, poor health, education gaps, workforce misalignment, and lack of access to childcare and eldercare is essential to address the very structures that create and perpetuate these conditions.

A lack of continuity hinders action. Commitment to responsible analysis and reporting on the manner in which poverty occurs and persists is essential. These insights can lead to new paradigms that lead to serious understanding of issues, honest acknowledgement of causes of financial hardship, and action directed to these issues. Concern over human flourishing with no responsible owner leads to no meaningful solution; yet, poverty through diffused causation requires collective ownership for real results.

Economic and community development efforts not aligned with human needs hinder action. Structuring an economy and labor force requires policy that can best shape opportunity for existing residents, rather than intensifying their displacement. Land use policy aligned with wellbeing will prioritize maintaining and improving neighborhoods over development interests that may erode equitable, inclusive outcomes. Continuously reinforcing lopsided labor market outcomes often do not deliver adequate income levels for broad community vitality and growing aggregate economic outputs.

Local decisions have enormous influence in advancing action for wellbeing. Land use policy, economic and workforce development priorities, transportation systems, zoning and permitting of businesses, and many other aspects of local governance are the vital factors that shape quality of life for local residents. Intentional approaches to this governance provide a coherent outcome for the population while policies that act in opposition to one another simply intensify costs and challenges. Development actions at the same time displace communities and homes, resulting in gentrification. Jobs with skill requirements unmatched to local talent do little to advance labor market opportunities for existing workers. Housing markets that are disrupted by opportunistic investors that make housing unaffordable do not occur in a vacuum -- they are determined and governed by local decisions.

Accepting proven results and rejecting disproven approaches advance action. Recognizing harmful impacts of “trickle-down” economic policies on the population is a first step to rejecting false narratives of economic growth that is simply development-oriented rather than people-oriented. These false narratives simply erode and stifle real solutions. The enduring belief that uncoordinated, unfocused, unmeasured growth will benefit everyone fails to leave room for needed investigation of new and better alternatives. Research that disproves failed approaches has resulted in meaningful criminal justice reform, rising concern over corporate welfare, and greater importance of human flourishing as the ultimate metric of community success.

Data Summary

Economic Security & Social Wellbeing

American Community Survey 2022

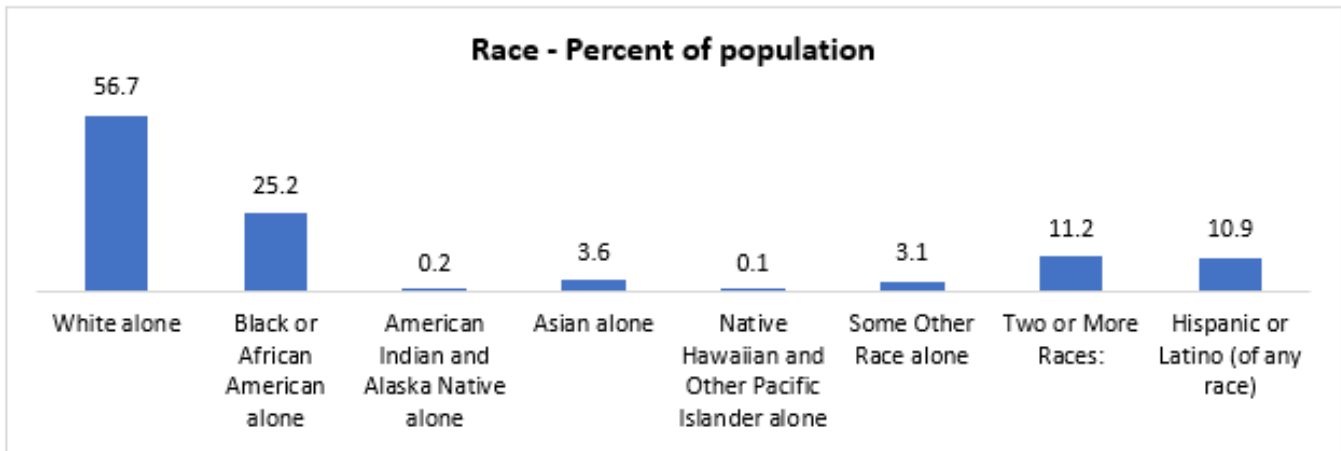
American Community Survey Data for Davidson County

The following data were extracted from the 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, the most recent census data available. The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

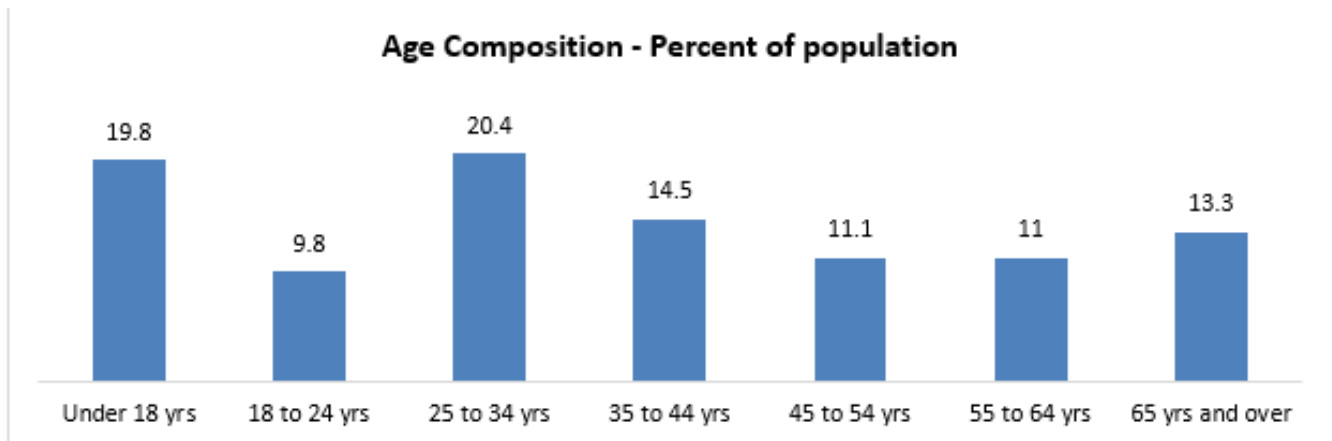
RACE

Population	Percent							
	White	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Some other race alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
708,144	56.7	25.2	0.2	3.6	0.1	3.1	11.2	10.9



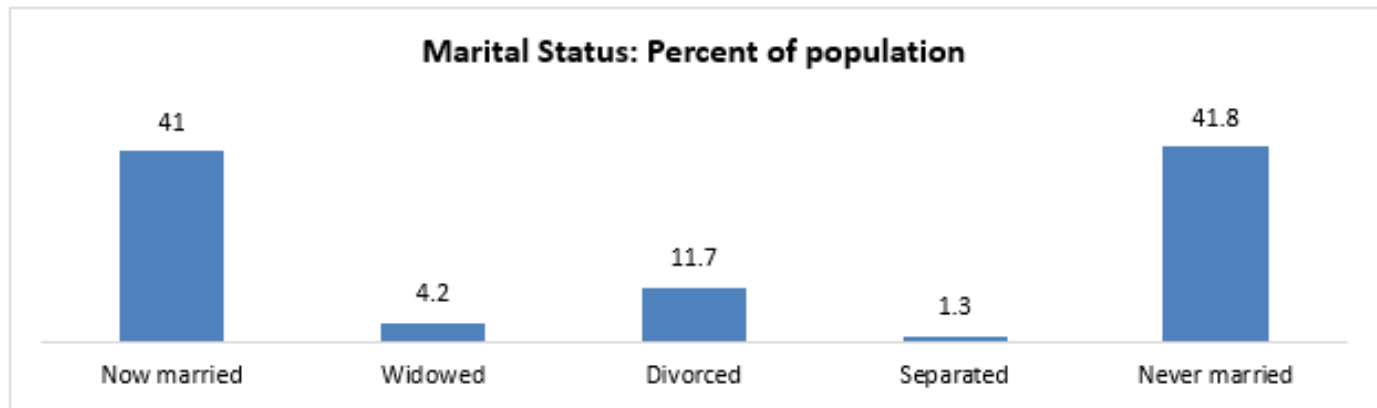
AGE AND SEX

Population	Median age	Percent by Age Group							Percent by Sex	
		Under 18 yrs	18 to 24 yrs	25 to 34 yrs	35 to 44 yrs	45 to 54 yrs	55 to 64 yrs	65 yrs and over	Male	Female
708,144	35.0	19.8	9.8	20.4	14.5	11.1	11.0	13.3	48.3	51.7



MARITAL STATUS

Population 15 years and over	Percent				
	Now married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never married
589,227	41.0	4.2	11.7	1.3	41.8

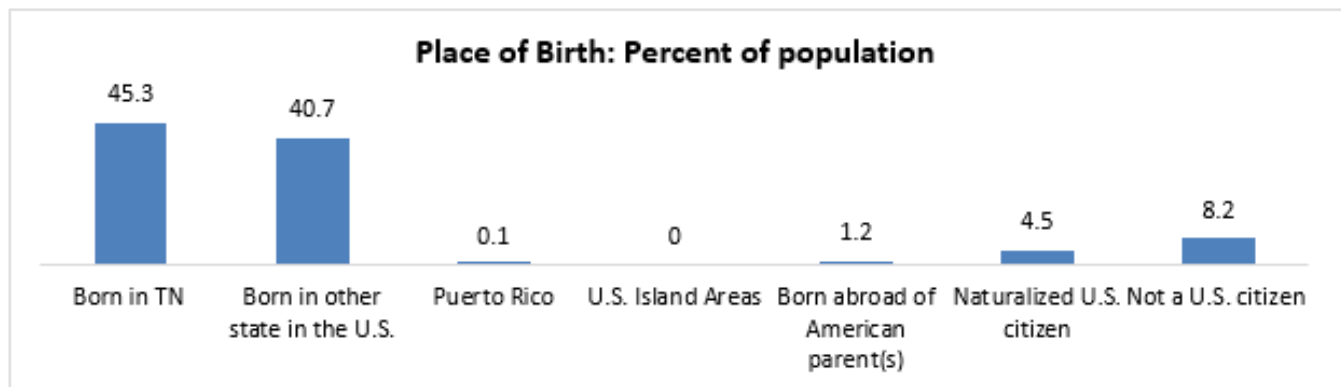


HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Total households	Percent						Average household size
	Male householder living alone		Female householder living alone		Households with one or more people under 18 years	Households with one or more people 65 years & over	
	Total	65 years & over	Total	65 years & over			
327,791	17.8		20.0		23.6	21.6	2.1

PLACE OF BIRTH

Total	Percent						
	Native		Born outside the United States			Foreign born	
	Born in TN	Born in other state in the U.S.	Puerto Rico	U.S. Island Areas	Born abroad of American parent(s)	Naturalized U.S. citizen	Not a U.S. citizen
708,144	45.3	40.7	0.1	0.0	1.2	4.5	8.2



GRANDPARENTS

Grandparents living with own grandchildren under 18 years	Percent				
	In labor force	Female	Income in the past 12 months below poverty level	Householder or spouse responsible for grandchildren with no parent of grandchildren present	Foreign born
11,832	59.8	56.3	9.5	17.3	19.1

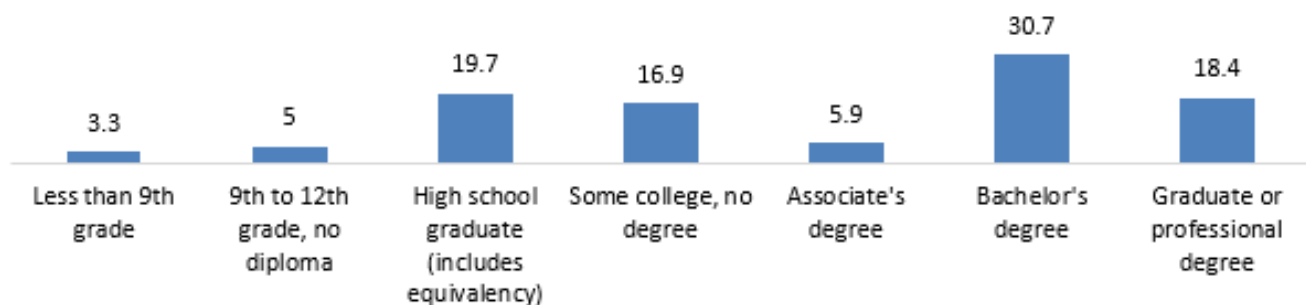
COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

Total households	Percent			
	With dial-up Internet subscription alone	With a broadband Internet subscription	Without an Internet subscription	No computer
327,791	0.0	88.9	7.9	3.2

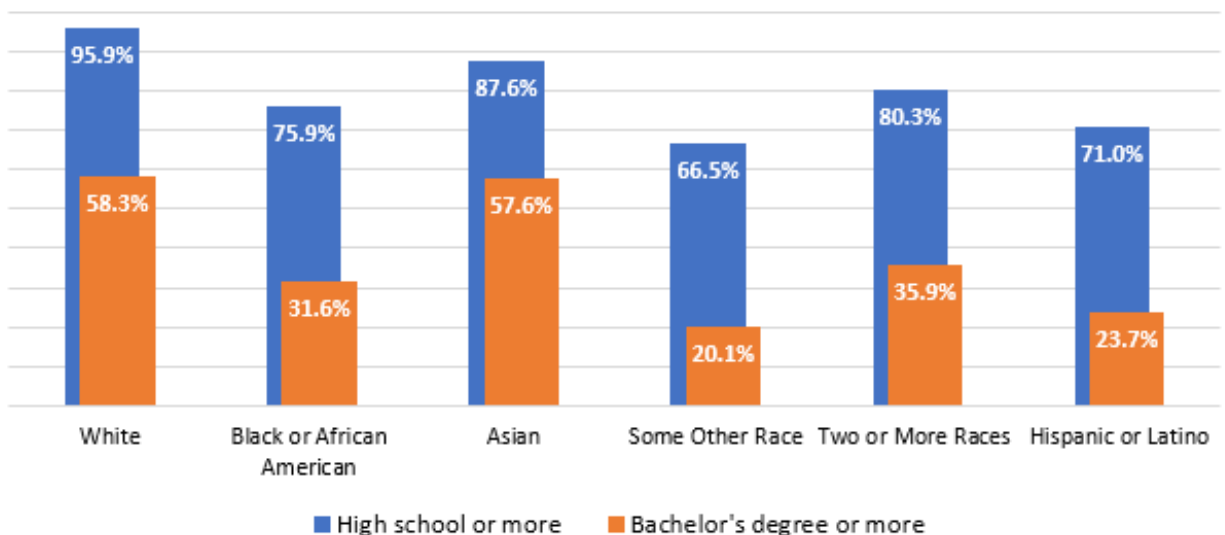
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Population 25 years & over	Percent						
	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
498,062	3.3	5.0	19.7	16.9	5.9	30.7	18.4

Educational Attainment: Percent of adults age 25 and over

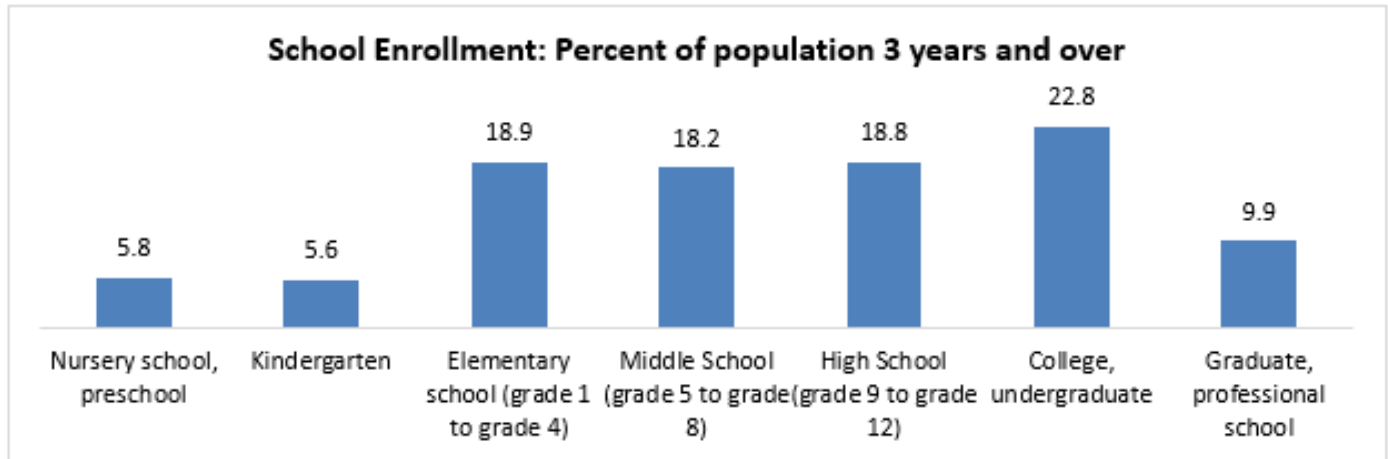


Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity



ENROLLMENT OF ALL PERSONS IN SCHOOL

Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	Percent						
	Nursery school, preschool	Kindergarten	Elementary school (grade 1 to grade 4)	Middle School (grade 5 to grade 8)	High School (grade 9 to grade 12)	College, undergraduate	Graduate, professional school
152,253	5.8	5.6	18.9	18.2	18.8	22.8	9.9



MOBILITY/MIGRATION – FROM THE PRIOR YEAR

Population 1 year and over	Percent				
	Same house	<u>Moved;</u> within same county	Moved; from different county, same state	<u>Moved;</u> from different state	<u>Moved;</u> from abroad
697,070	80.6	10.3	2.4	5.9	0.7

DISABILITY STATUS

Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	Population with a disability						
	Total population with a disability	Percent by age group					
		Under 5 years	5 to 17 years	18 to 34 years	35 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	75 years and over
703,265	89,374	1.9	6.7	7.9	13.8	24.0	45.1

SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE AT HOME

Population 5 years and over	Speak a language other than English at home				
	Total population	Percent			
		5 to 17 years old	18 to 64 years old	65 years old and over	Below poverty level
663,264	108,772	21.6	72.7	5.7	18.7

ECONOMIC PROFILE

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

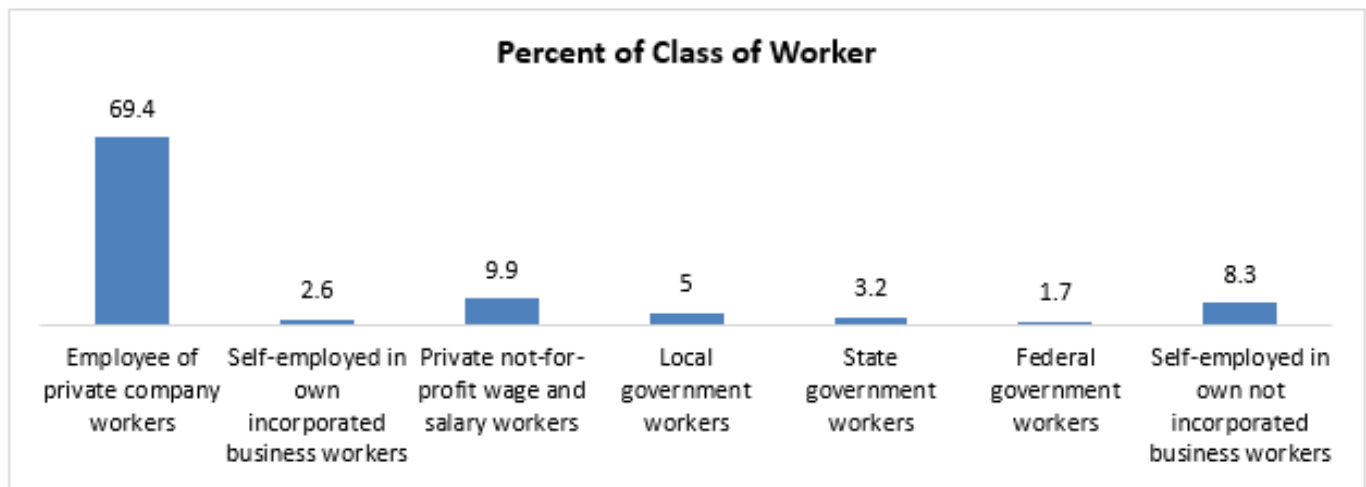
Population 16 yrs and over		Females 20-64 yrs with own children under 18 yrs		Population 20-64 yrs with any disability		Population 25-64 yrs less than high school graduate		Population 25-64 yrs high school graduate (includes equivalency)	
Labor force participation rate	Unemployment rate	Labor force particip rate	Unempl l rate	Labor force particip rate	Unempl rate	Labor force particip rate	Unempl rate	Labor force particip rate	Unempl rate
72.4%	3.6%	74.6%	3.0%	57.9%	9.9%	65.0%	4.9%	76.4%	5.5%

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

People in labor force	Percent					
	Car, truck, or van - drove alone	Car, truck, or van - carpooled	Public transportation (excluding taxicab):	Walked	Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, walked, or other means	Worked from home
397,501	65.8	6.9	1.4	1.7	2.2	21.8

CLASS OF WORKER

Civilian employed population 16 years & over	Percent						
	Employee of private company workers	Self-employed in own incorporated business workers	Private not-for-profit wage and salary workers	Local government workers	State government workers	Federal government workers	Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers
404,987	69.4	2.6	9.9	5.0	3.2	1.7	8.3

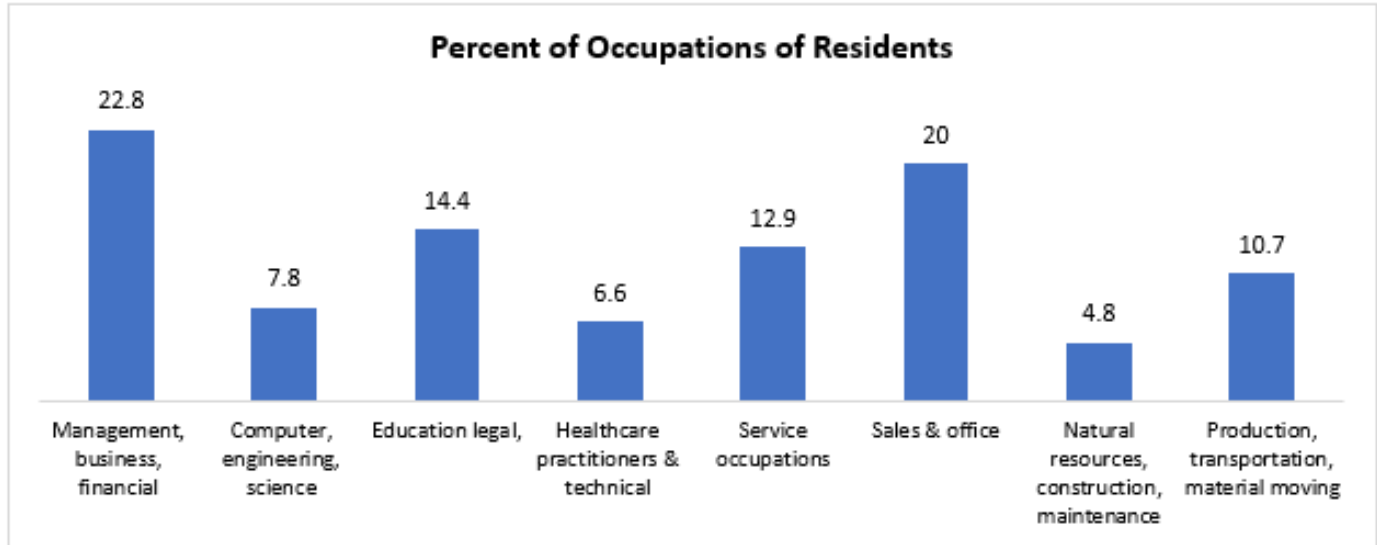


OCCUPATIONS

Civilian employed population 16 years & over	Percent							
	Management, business, financial	Computer, engineering, science	Education legal, Community service, arts, media	Healthcare practitioners & technical	Service occupations	Sales & office	Natural resources, construction, maintenance	Production, transportation, material moving
404,987	22.8	7.8	14.4	6.6	12.9	20.0	4.8	10.7

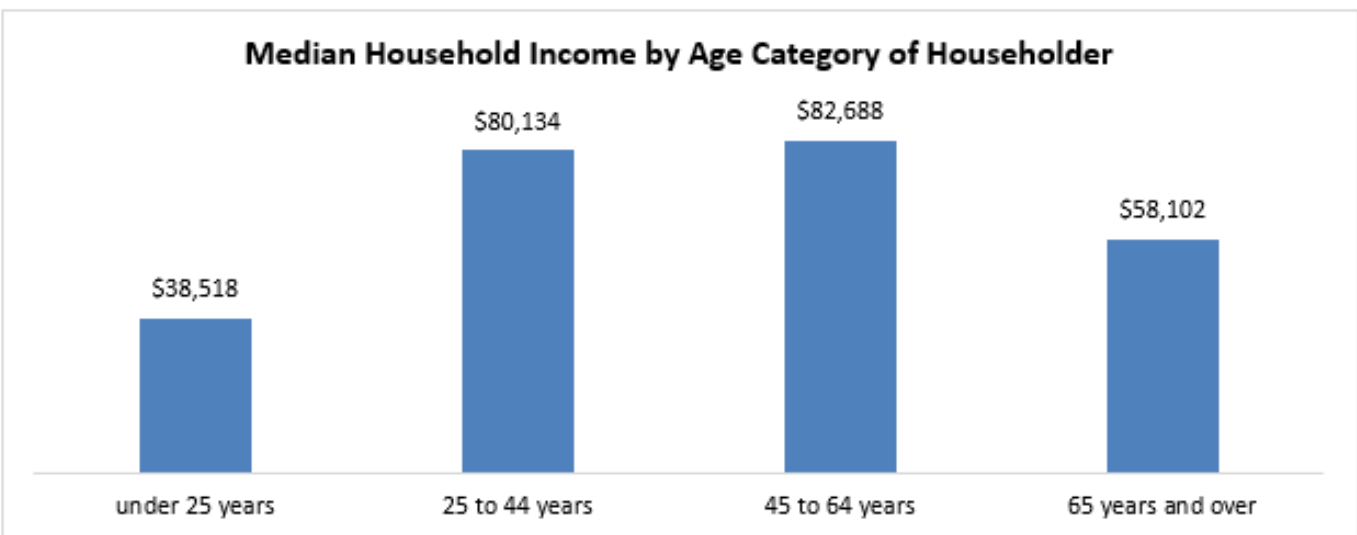
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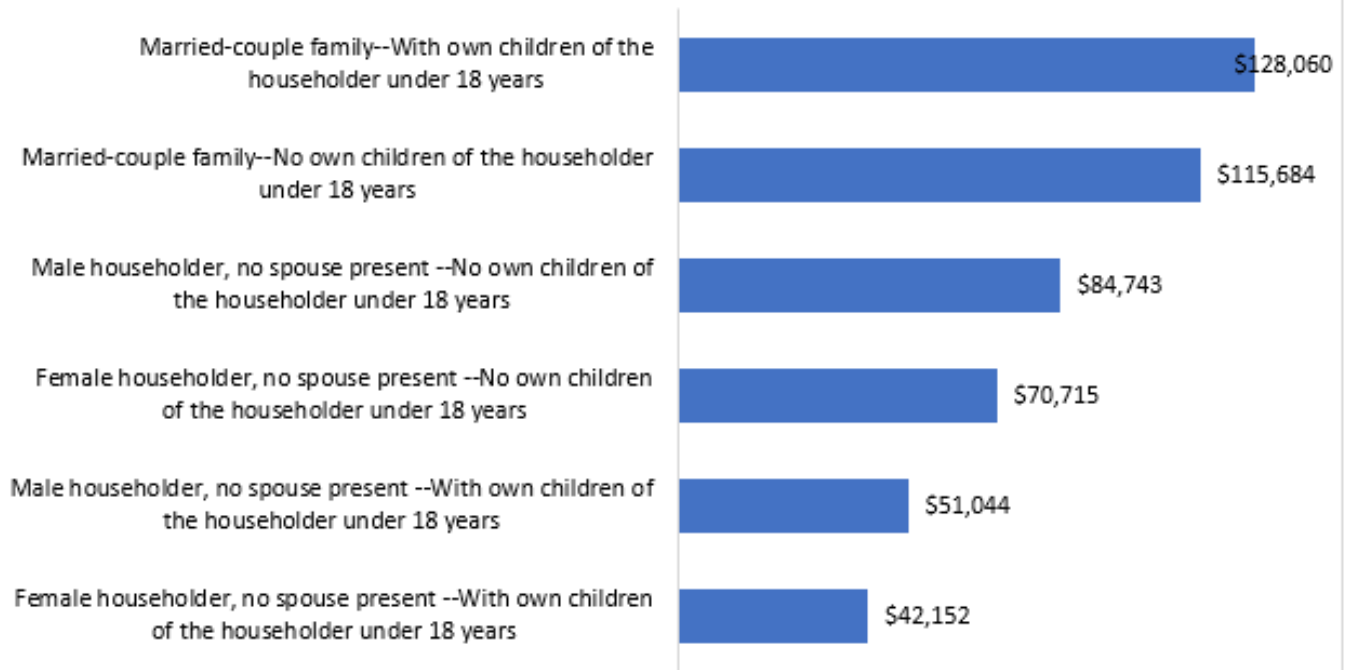


INCOME

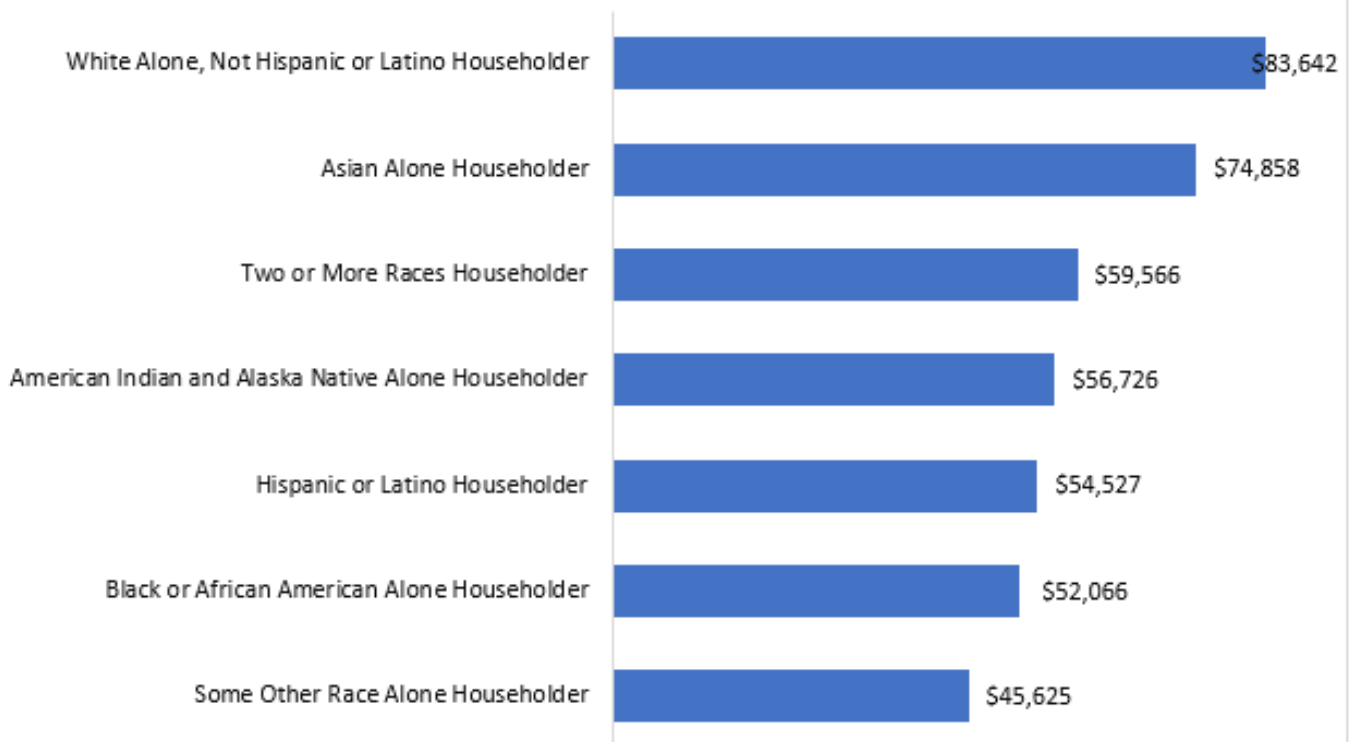
Median household income	Mean household income	Median family income	Mean family income	Per capita income
\$72,473	\$106,423	\$95,250	\$132,367	\$48,105



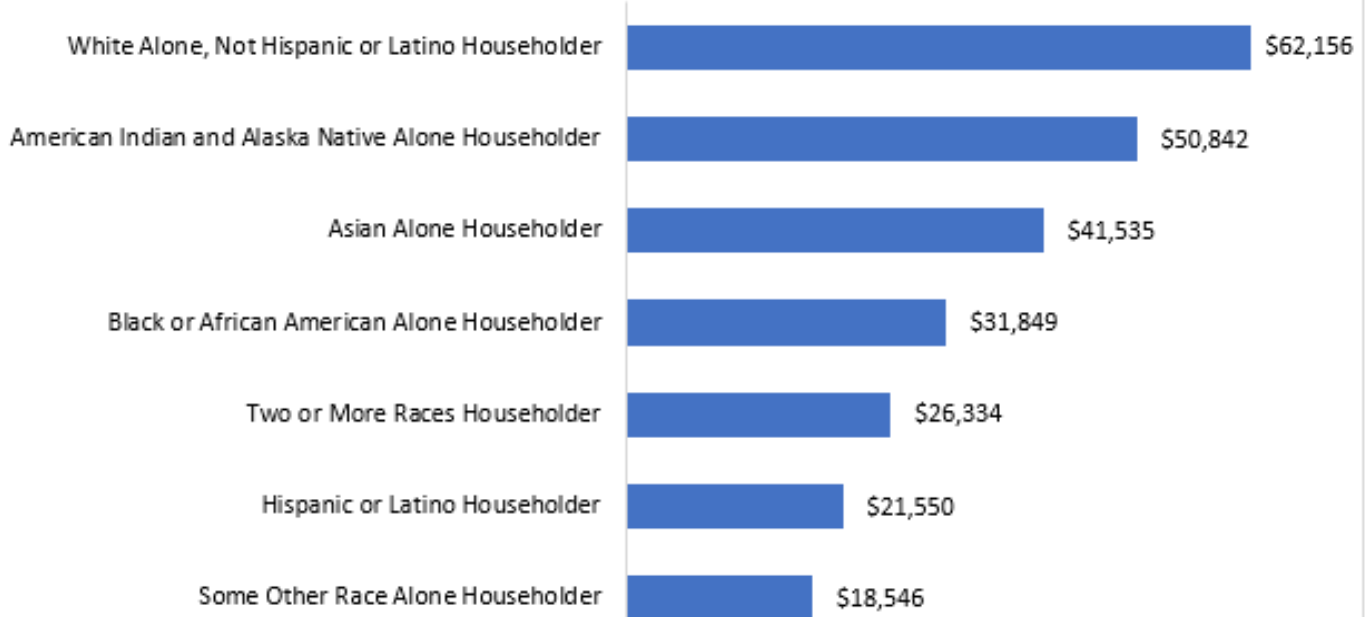
Median Household Income by Family Type by Presence of Own Children Under 18 Years



Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



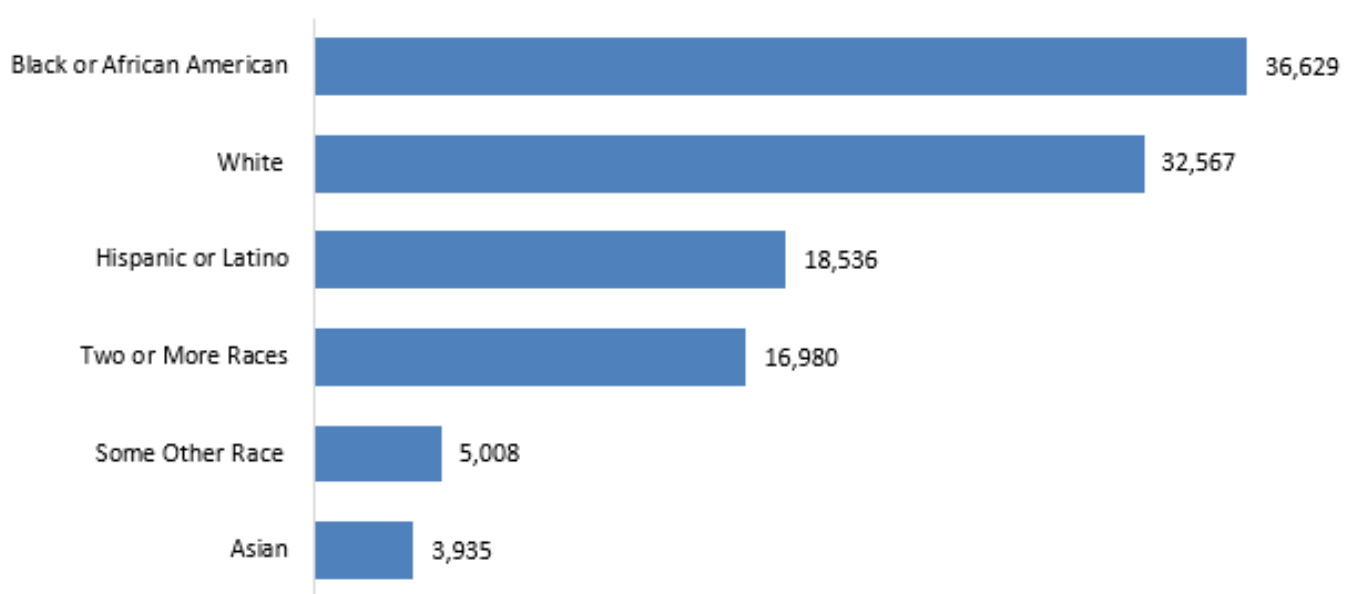
Per Capita Income by Race/Ethnicity

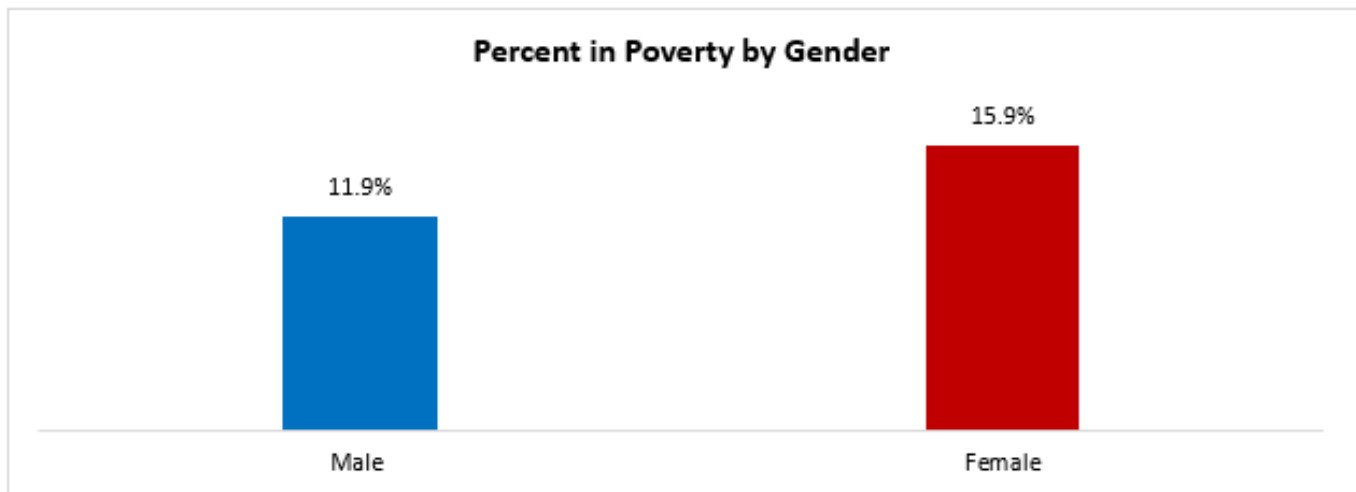
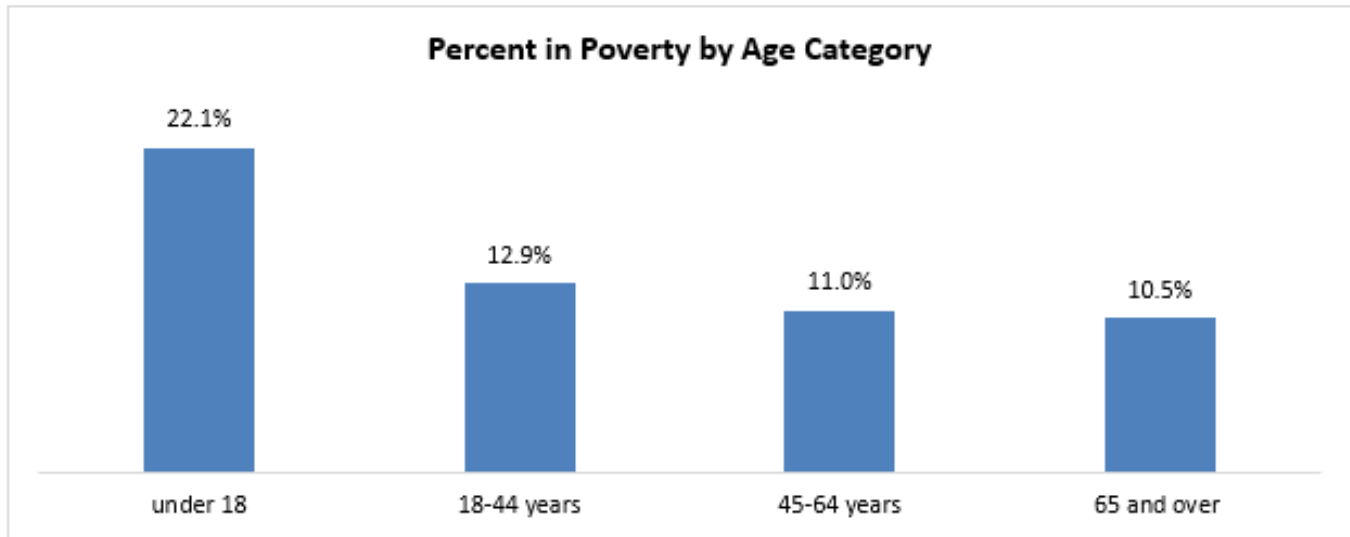


POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

Population poverty rate	Poverty Rate by Age Group					By Gender	
	Under 5 years	5 to 17 years	18 to 34 years	35 to 64 years	65 years and over	Male	Female
14.0	20.1	23.1	15.1	10.0	10.5	11.9	15.9

Number of People Below Poverty by Race/Ethnicity

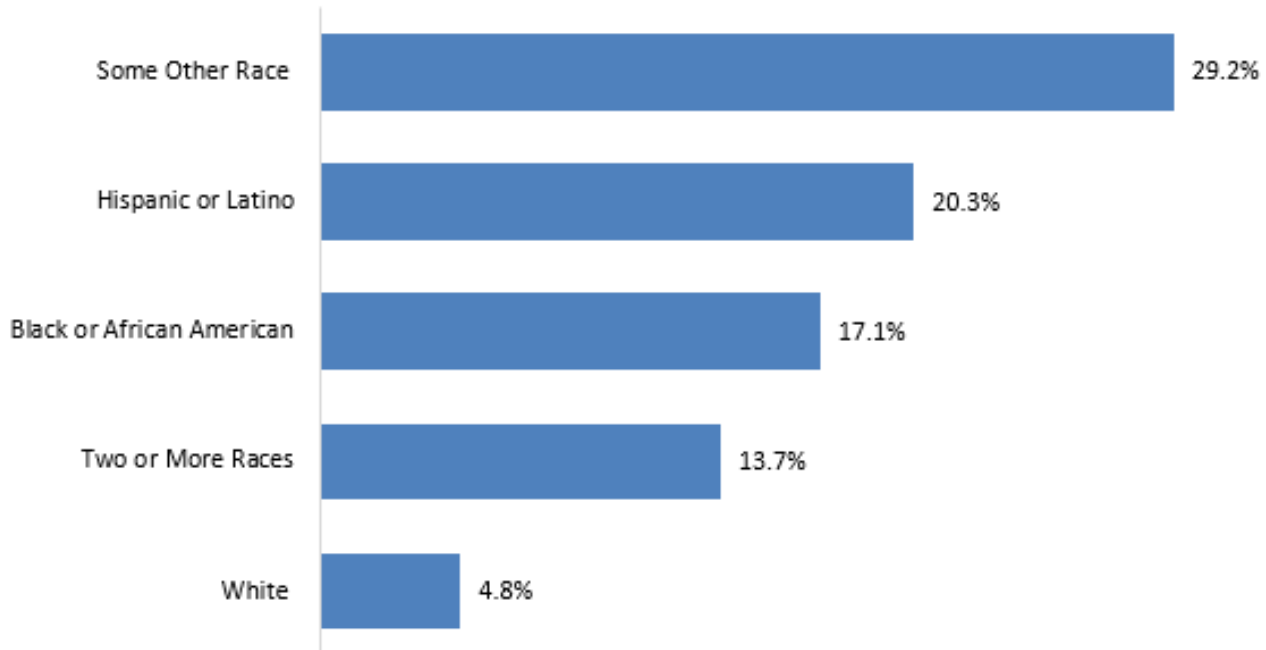




FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

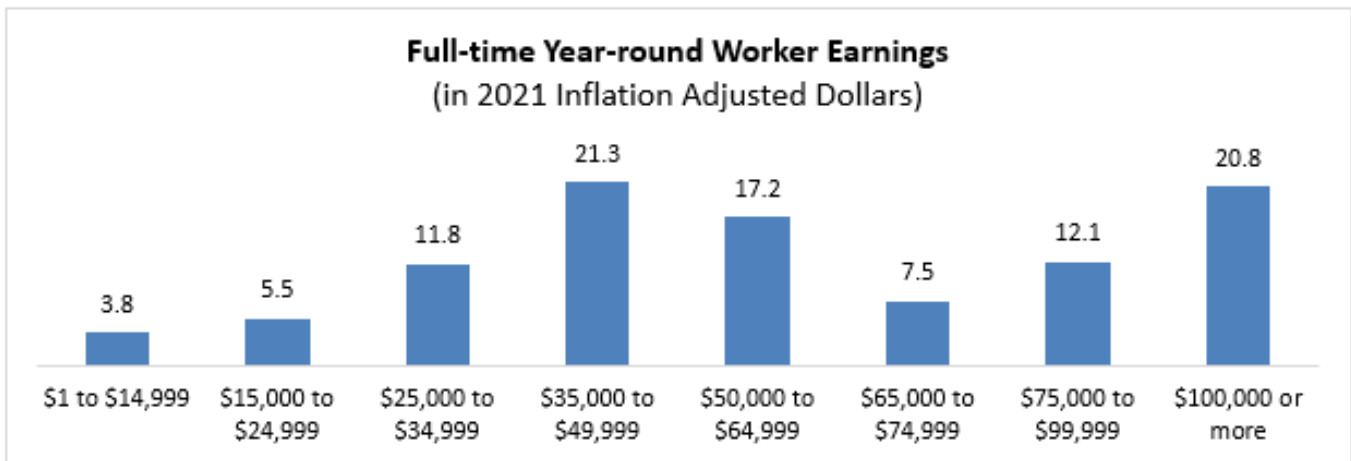
Total families below poverty level	Percent					
	Married-couple family		Male householder, no spouse present		Female householder, no spouse present	
	With related children under 18 yrs	No related children	With related children under 18 yrs	No related children	With related children under 18 yrs	No related children
15,906	16.2	13.6	5.2	2.1	55.0	7.9

Percent of Families Below Poverty by Race/Ethnicity



FULL-TIME YEAR-ROUND WORKER EARNINGS

Full-time, year-round workers with earnings	Median earnings	Percent							
		\$1 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$64,999	\$65,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or more
296,524	\$56,489	3.8	5.5	11.8	21.3	17.2	7.5	12.1	20.8



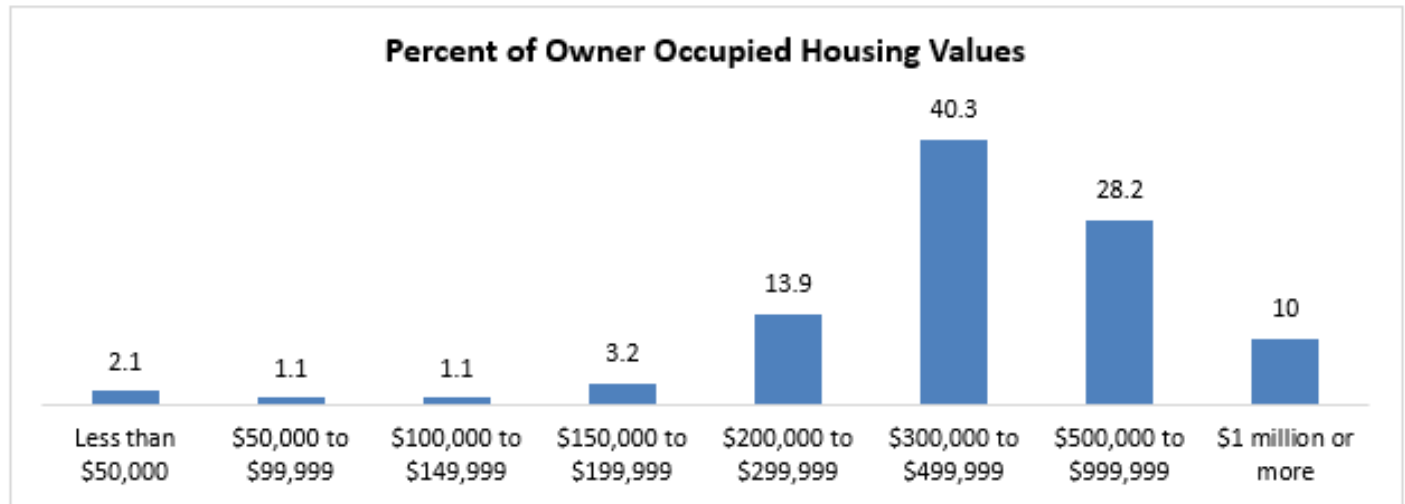
HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Age Group	Under 19 years	19 to 34 years	35 to 64 years	65 years and over
Total Population	149,617	203,130	257,813	92,705
Insured Rate	92.5%	83.5%	86.6%	98.3%
Uninsured rate	7.5%	16.5%	13.4%	1.7%

HOUSING PROFILE

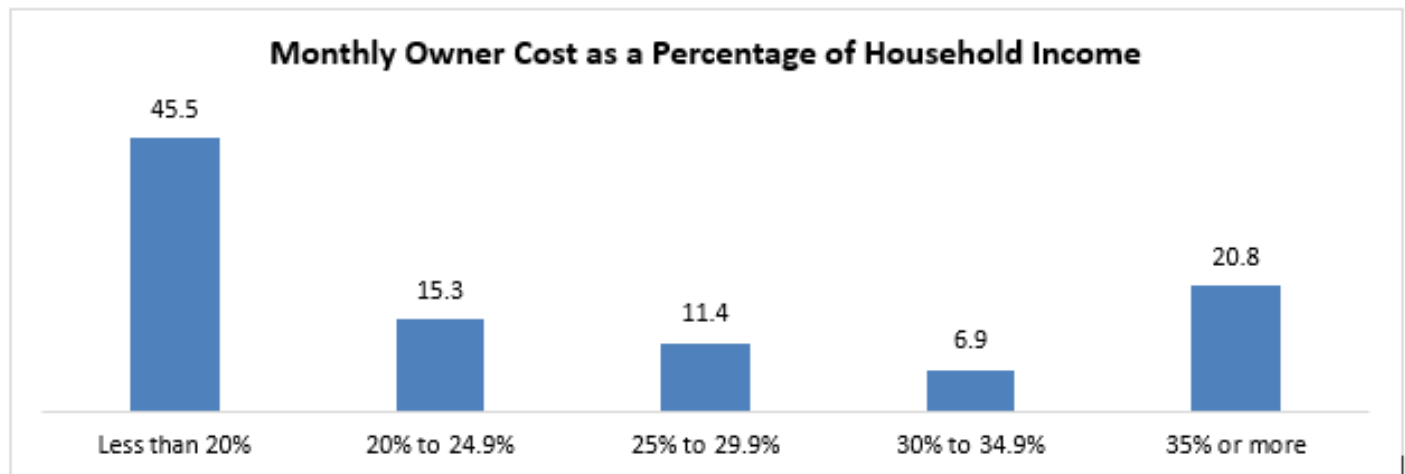
HOUSING VALUES

Owner-occupied units	Percent								Median value
	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 to \$499,999	\$500,000 to \$999,999	\$1 million or more	
172,239	2.1	1.1	1.1	3.2	13.9	40.3	28.2	10.0	\$434,700

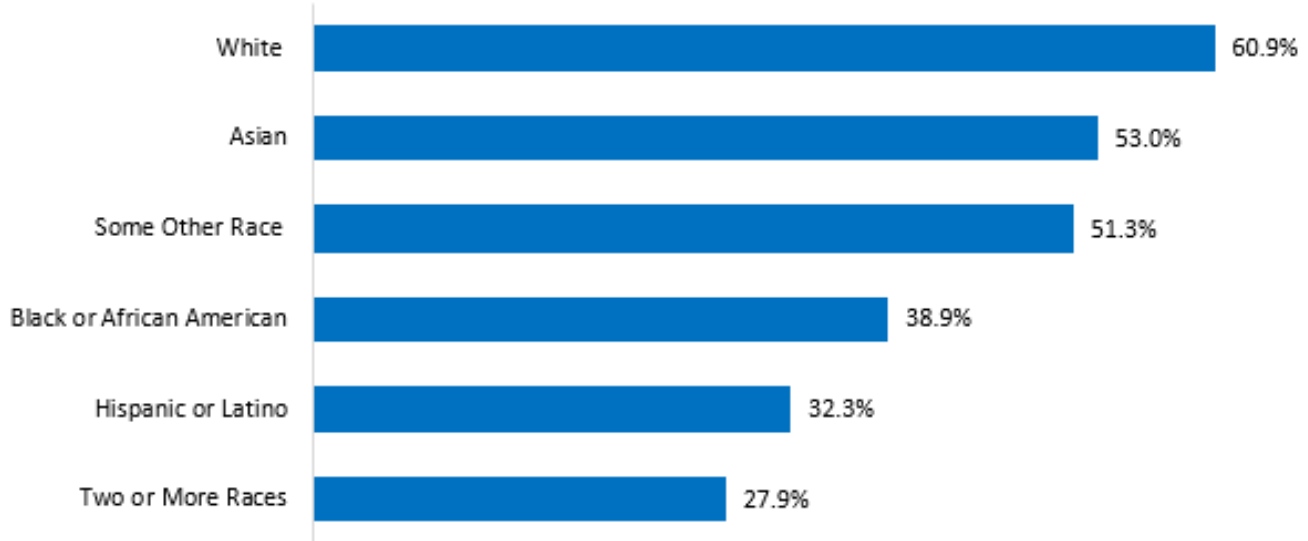


OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS WITH A MORTGAGE, COST AND COST-BURDENED

Owner-occupied units	Percent housing units with a mortgage	Median monthly owner cost with a mortgage	Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income				
			Less than 20%	20% to 24.9%	25% to 29.9%	30% to 34.9%	35% or more
172,239	67.3	\$1,768	45.5	15.3	11.4	6.9	20.8



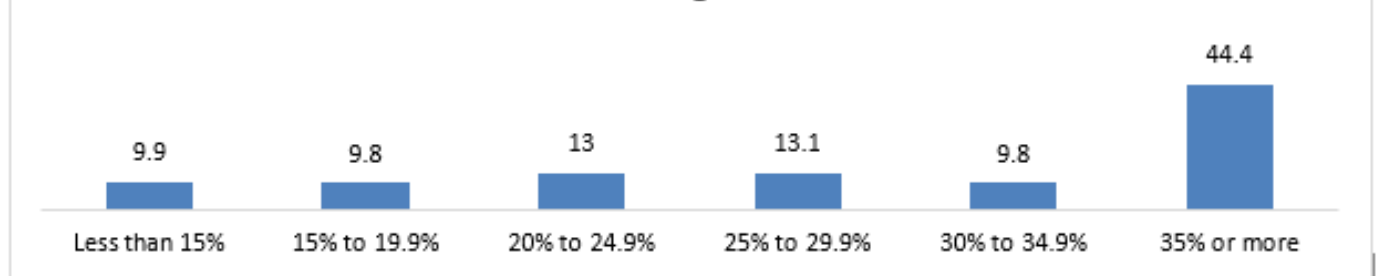
Percent of Owner Occupied Housing Units by Race/Ethnicity



RENTER HOUSING UNITS, COST AND COST-BURDENED

Renter-occupied housing units	Median monthly rent	Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income					
		Less than 15%	15% to 19.9%	20% to 24.9%	25% to 29.9%	30% to 34.9%	35% or more
148,108	\$1,463	9.9	9.8	13.0	13.1	9.8	44.4

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

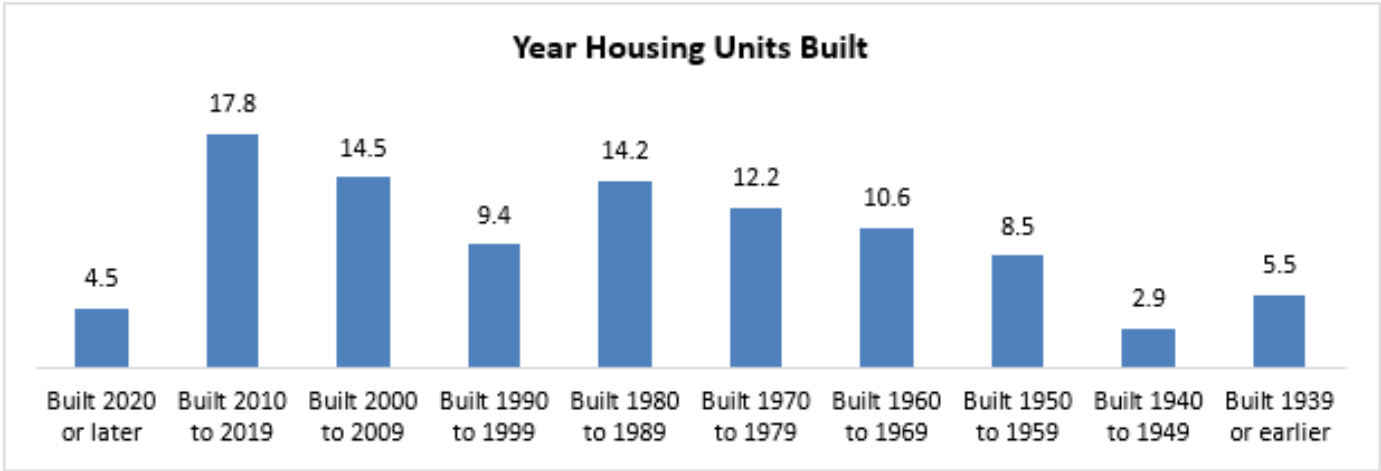


HOUSING OCCUPANCY/VACANCY

Total housing units	Percent			
	Occupied housing units	Vacant housing units	Homeowner vacancy rate	Rental vacancy rate
358,163	91.5	8.5	0.8	5.1

YEAR HOUSING UNITS BUILT

Total housing units	Percent									
	Built 2020 or later	Built 2010 to 2019	Built 2000 to 2009	Built 1990 to 1999	Built 1980 to 1989	Built 1970 to 1979	Built 1960 to 1969	Built 1950 to 1959	Built 1940 to 1949	Built 1939 or earlier
358,163	4.5	17.8	14.5	9.4	14.2	12.2	10.6	8.5	2.9	5.5



HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE

Total housing units	Percent						
	1, detached	1, attached	2 apartments	3 or 4 apartments	5 to 9 apartments	10 or more apartments	Mobile home or other type of housing
358,163	50.2	9.5	3.1	3.0	6.6	26.6	1.0

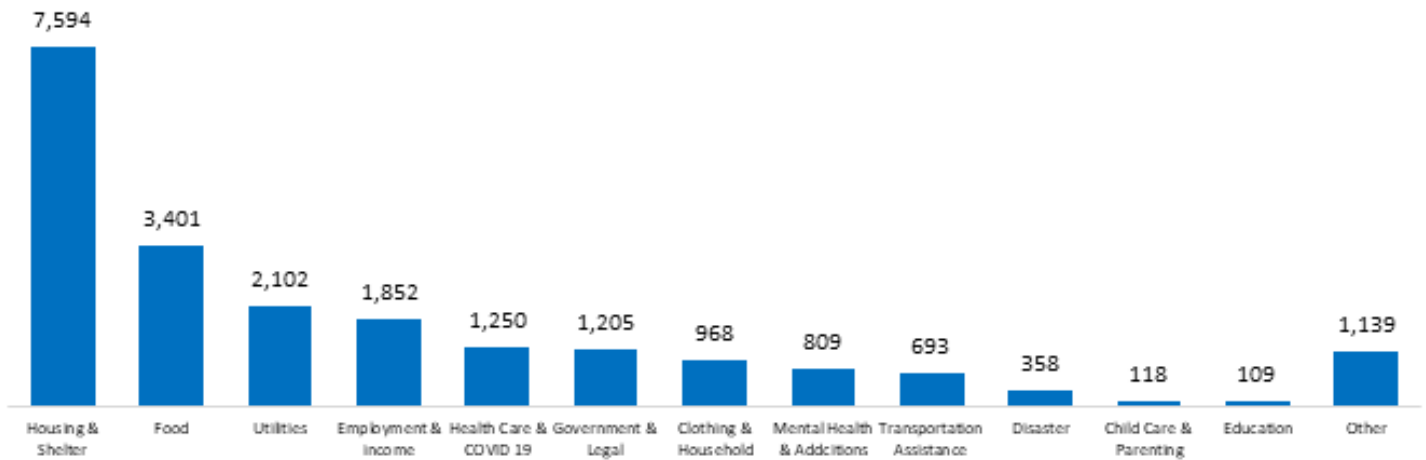
YEAR MOVED IN

Total population in occupied housing units		Percent					
687,340		Moved in 2019 or later	Moved in 2015 to 2018	Moved in 2010 to 2014	Moved in 2010 to 2014	Moved in 1990 to 1999	Moved in 1989 or earlier
Owner occupied	382,627	9.8	23.6	28.0	19.4	10.9	8.3
Renter occupied	304,713	42.2	35.6	16.8	3.5	0.6	1.3

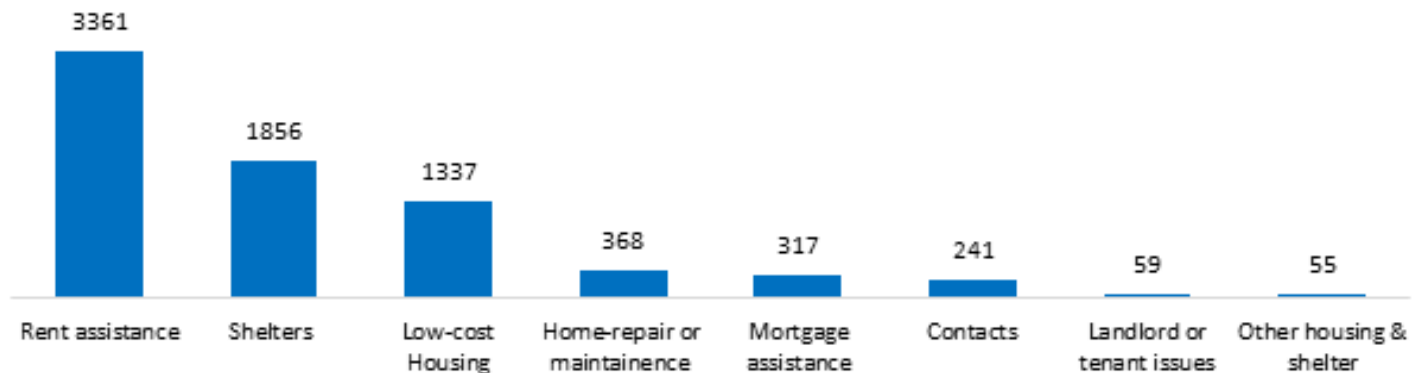
211 Calls

The 211 Helpline is a 24/7, 365-day information and referral helpline provided by United Way of Greater Nashville. The service offers assistance to individuals in need with help in times of crisis and beyond. The 211 helpline serves 42 counties in Middle Tennessee. The following data displays the category and number of calls received from Davidson County in 2023

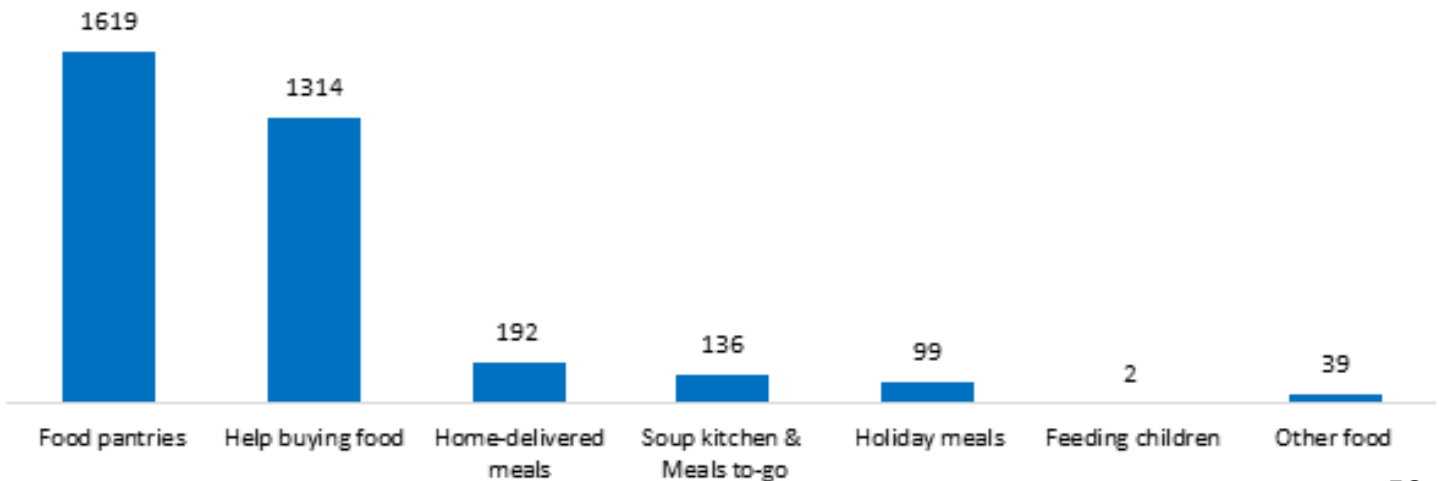
Top Request Categories(N=21,598)



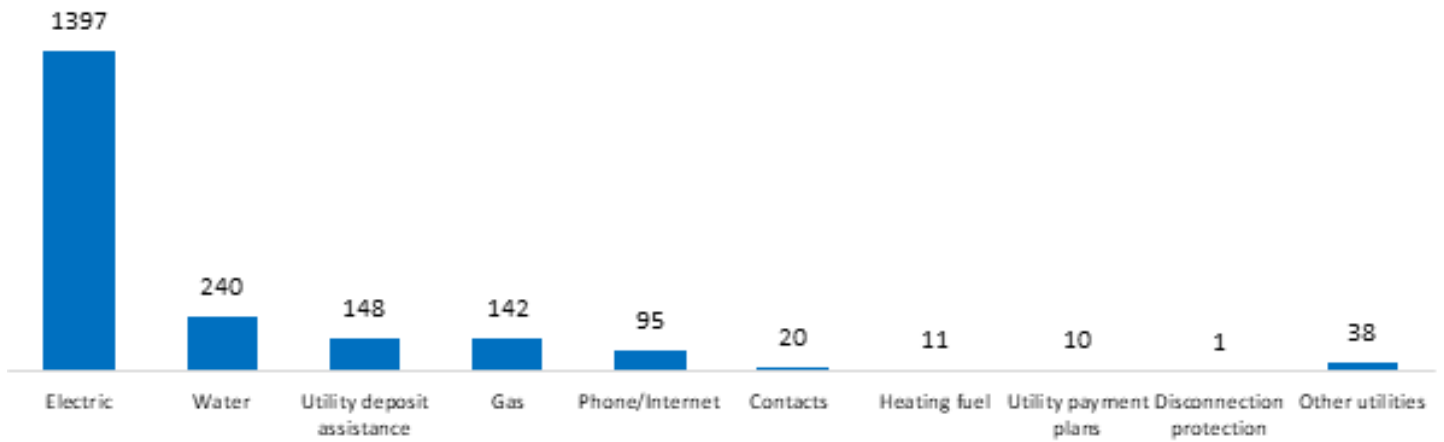
Housing & Shelter Requests(N=7,594)



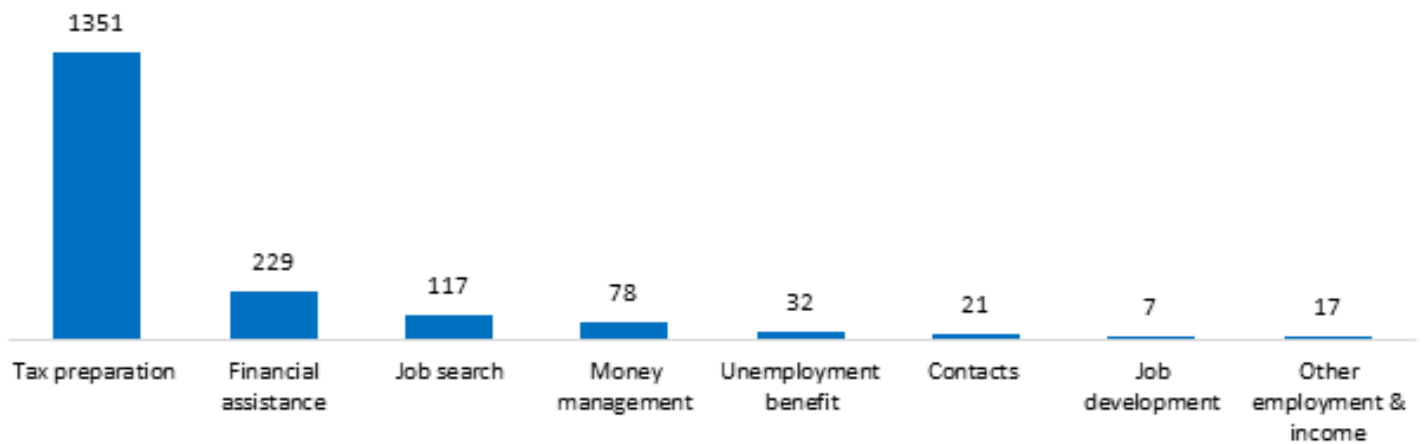
Food Requests(N=3,401)



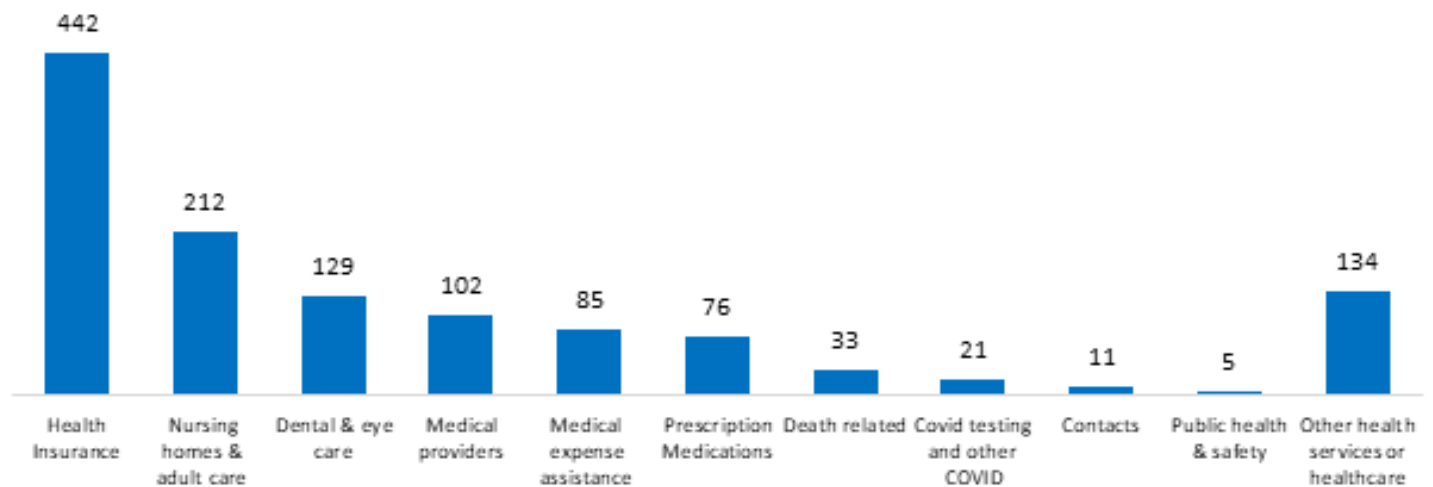
Utilities Requests(N=2,102)



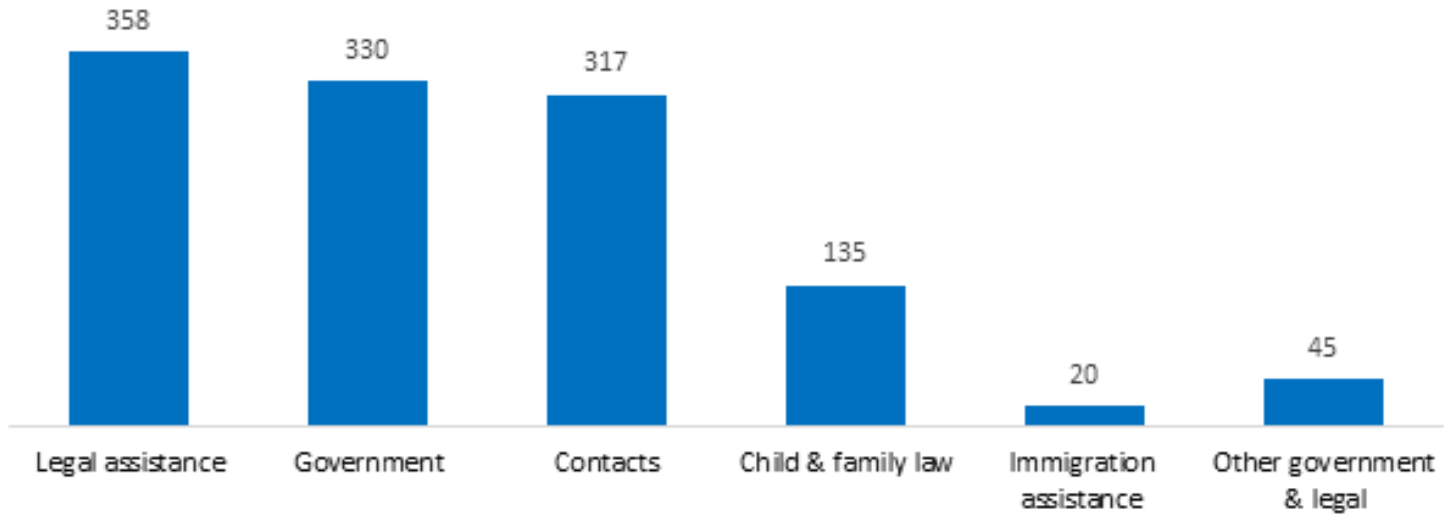
Employment & Income Requests(N=1,852)



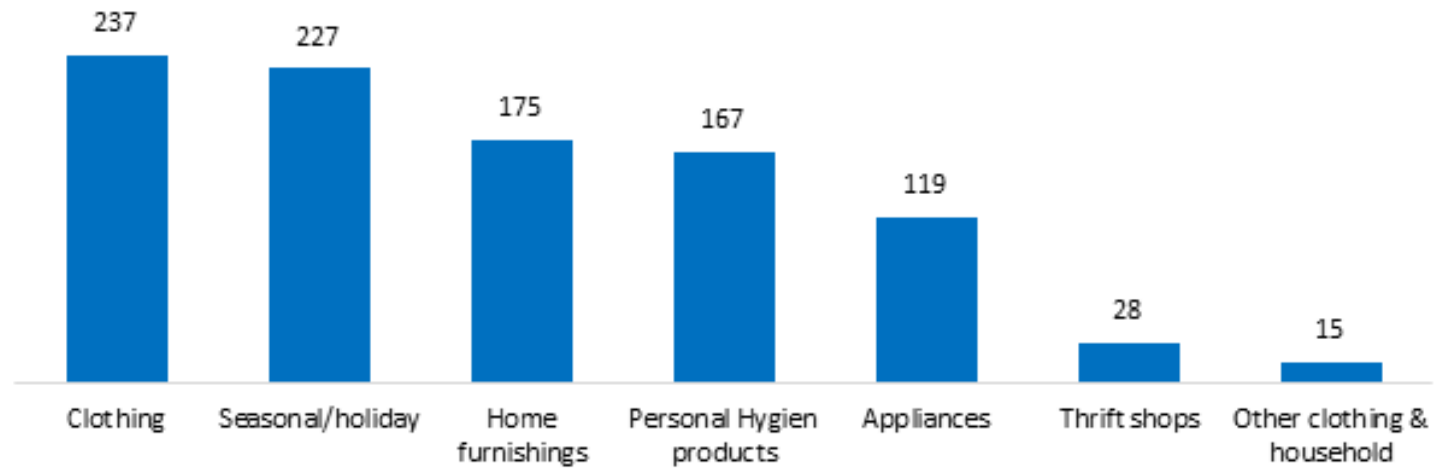
Health Care & COVID-19 Requests(N=1,250)



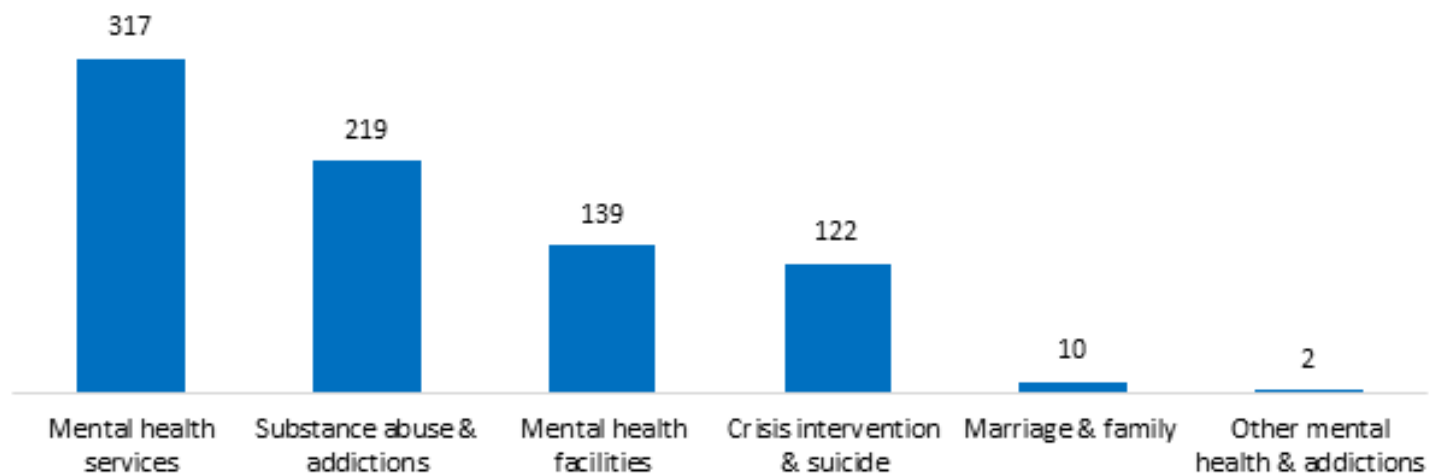
Government & Legal Requests(N=1,205)



Clothing & Household Requests (N=968)



Mental Health & Addictions Requests(N=809)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Metropolitan Social Services **Guiding Economic and Social Wellbeing**

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The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt



Metropolitan Social Services

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