

Head Start of Washington County, Inc.

2022 Community Assessment Update

Methodology:

According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards, a program must conduct a community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period (completed June 2020). In addition, a program must annually review and update the community assessment to reflect any significant changes (45 CFR 1302.11(b)(2)). Below are the additions/revisions to the 2020 Community Assessment. These data points were used to submit the agency's annual Refunding Application to the Regional Office and will be used for grant writing purposes as needed.

Healthy Washington County published their FY2022 Community Needs Assessment in May 2022. The majority of the data HSWC uses when writing the annual Refunding Application is also collected in the FY2022 Community Needs Assessment. Furthermore, the data has been substantiated by the Community Solutions Hub, an online collection of local and state data. All data points below are sourced from the Community Solutions Hub (www.communisolutionshub.org) as of 10/13/2022, unless otherwise noted.

Community Demographics:

- Estimated population of Washington County is 154,937
- There is an estimated 21.1% of all families living below the poverty level in Washington County. This is compared to Maryland's overall rate of 5.9%
- There is estimated to be 8,367 children between the ages of birth through age 5 living within Washington County.
- Of these, 20.7%, or 1,732 children live below the poverty line
- On average 45% of all births within the county are under the Medical Assistance umbrella
- In Hagerstown city, 34.4% of children under the age of five fall below the poverty level.

COVID-19 Trends:

- COVID-19 continues to have an impact on the Washington County community.
- The unemployment rate in June 2022 was 4.8% in Washington County; compared to 4.7% in Maryland and 3.8% throughout the United States.
- Homelessness has decreased slightly throughout the families enrolled in the HSWC program. According to the agency's PIR reports, the program had 24 homeless children during the 2021-2022 program year. This is a decrease from the previous year when the agency reported 31 homeless children.
- Staffing shortages and the willingness of prospective employees to join the early childhood field has been an ongoing struggle.

Community Health:

- Drug overdoses have been increasing in Washington County throughout the past few years. During 2020, there were 110 fatal overdoses. (Source: Maryland Department of Health, 2021). As of June 30, 2022, there have been 80 overdose deaths within the county. The fatality rate increased significantly during the pandemic, a trend that is continuing.
- Obesity continues to be a community wide focus as Meritus Health has implemented the Go For Bold challenge of losing a million pounds in 10 years. 41.6% of adults in Hagerstown are considered obese, compared to 37.3% of Washington County residents.