



COBB COUNTY CDBG PROGRAM OFFICE

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

2024 REPORT ON POVERTY



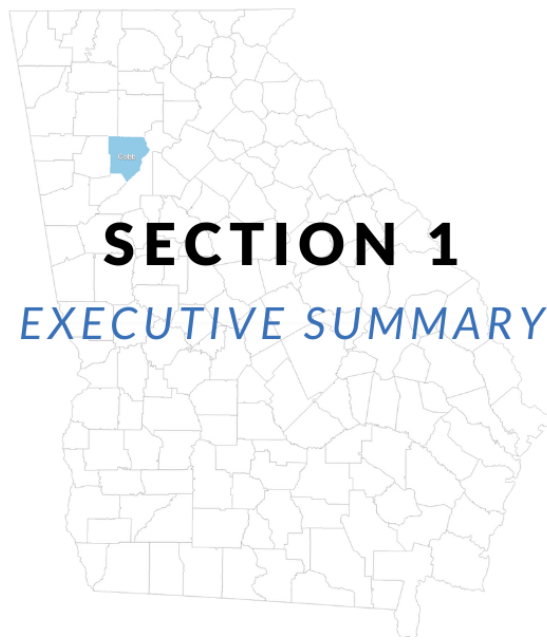
2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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SECTION 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Purpose

This document has been meticulously crafted to serve as a reliable, up-to-date source of actionable insights regarding the barriers to economic stability and self-sufficiency faced by the low-income population within the Georgia community of Cobb County. Developed in alignment with principles from the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) system of organizational management using the Mission Aligned Data Driven (MADD) Approach to Organizational Excellence, this document is designed to act as the cornerstone for all programs and initiatives rendered by the organization. It aims to propel the entity to become an influential force in strategically unifying community resources to effectively address the causes and conditions of poverty and enhance the residents' journey towards self-reliance and an improved quality of life.

Methodology

In order to provide the organization with the most comprehensive assessment possible, a variety of data types were collected and analyzed during the development of this product. Below is a summary of these data types, their sources, and the process used to translate the data into meaningful information.

- **Statistical Research**

Statistical information was gathered through online research from more than five dozen unique data sources (see section 8) demonstrating federal, state, and local data. All data used in the study were the most recent available at the time of project development. Organizational data from the most recently completed CSBG Annual Report was integrated into quantitative research to provide statistics concerning the needs of individuals and families requesting assistance.

- **Surveys**

A total of 69 surveys were collected as a part of the project, drawing largely from community members (48.53%). Other stakeholders include subcontractors (26.47%), other businesses/organizations (11.76%), staff (5.88%), local government (5.88%), and vendors (1.47%).

- **Data Analysis**

The analysis and prioritization of resident needs and barriers to economic security are conducted using a robust, multi-faceted approach. This process begins with data collection from various sources, including surveys, statistical research, and organizational reports. By collecting five years' worth of data whenever possible, trends are identified to determine whether problems are improving or worsening over time. This longitudinal analysis helps to highlight persistent issues and emerging concerns.

Local data is compared to state and national data to pinpoint areas where local situations are particularly problematic. For example, if a particular need shows a significantly higher rate in the region compared to state or national averages, it indicates a critical area requiring focused intervention. Additionally, county-level data within the region is compared to the regional averages, providing a detailed understanding of localized issues and disparities. This granular analysis allows for the identification of specific counties that may require targeted resources and support.

Correlations between each of the metrics and poverty are also analyzed. This involves examining how factors such as food insecurity, housing instability, and access to healthcare

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relate to poverty levels. By understanding these relationships, the agency can better address the root causes of economic insecurity and develop more effective intervention strategies. Four specific metrics are normalized separately to ensure a balanced analysis: the number of individuals experiencing the need in the community, the number of survey respondents identifying the need as a primary concern, the number of survey respondents stating that they have experienced the issue, and the number of survey respondents who experienced the issue but could not find help. These metrics are then combined, ensuring that each metric receives a one-quarter weight in the overall prioritization.

This method provides a more comprehensive analysis by incorporating multiple perspectives and data points. By not relying on a single metric, this approach mitigates potential biases and ensures that the prioritization reflects a holistic view of community needs. For instance, if one were to rely solely on the number of individuals impacted, it might overlook the severity of unmet needs among those who could not find help. Conversely, focusing only on survey responses might not capture the full scope of the issue as reflected in statistical data.

The multi-metric approach ensures that all relevant factors are considered, providing a nuanced understanding of the community's needs. It highlights the most critical issues based on a combination of statistical data, stakeholder input, and the urgency of unmet needs. This comprehensive method allows for strategic decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring that interventions are targeted effectively to address the most pressing concerns. Higher final scores indicate greater priority, reflecting the number of people impacted, the weighted importance of survey responses, and the critical nature of unmet needs. This multi-faceted analysis and prioritization process ensure that the most critical issues are identified and addressed strategically, promoting well-being and movement out of poverty.

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Conclusion

Data indicates that there are an estimated 62,536 local residents with incomes below the nationally recognized poverty level. This represents an estimated 8.30% of all individuals living in the area, a rate that is lower than both the state (13.50%) and national (12.50%) averages. Over the past five years, the poverty rate has decreased by 17%, which is faster than the improvements on state (-15.63%) and national (-11.35%) levels.

The median income in the county stands at \$94,244 annually, an increase of 25.40% over the past five years. The local improvements have outpaced inflation (+16.50%) during this period.

Primary Conditions of Poverty

Although poverty may impact every household and community in a different way, prioritization of basic needs was established through an analysis that included raw scores of respondents weighted by those who experienced the need, with the lack of available resources being used as a multiplier. Based on this data, the greatest concerns were identified as:

- (1) Individuals are housing insecure (F)
- (2) Individuals have poor mental health (F)
- (3) Individuals are at risk of utility disconnection (F)
- (4) Individuals have poor physical health (F)
- (5) Individuals are food insecure (F)

Primary Causes of Poverty

The cause of the poverty problem in the county cannot be attributed to any single factor, but a complex combination of barriers that are deeply rooted in the lives of local residents and the infrastructure of the community. The most prevalent barriers preventing access to basic household needs, as identified by survey respondents, include the following:

- (1) The community lacks an adequate number of affordable housing units (C)
- (2) Individuals have poor health (F)
- (3) Individuals lack financial management skills (F)
- (4) Individuals have inadequate income to secure basic needs (F)
- (5) Individuals are unemployed (F)

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Conditions of Poverty Explained

Individuals are housing insecure (F)

Housing cost burden is a critical issue in Cobb County, Georgia, affecting nearly one-quarter (24.83%) of all households, with approximately 72,310 families spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs, including rent, mortgage, and utilities. Among those cost-burdened households, renters are disproportionately affected, with 41.89% of renters spending an unsustainable portion of their income on housing compared to 16.24% of homeowners. Nearly half of the cost-burdened households (44.19%) are classified as severely cost-burdened, spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs, placing them at high risk of eviction or foreclosure.

Low-income households are the most impacted, particularly those earning less than \$50,000 annually. This income group comprises 23.84% of all households in Cobb County, yet they face the most significant financial strain in meeting basic housing needs. The situation is particularly severe for minimum wage workers, who would need to work an impractical 237 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom rental unit at the average rate of \$1,844 per month. This imbalance between income and housing costs significantly elevates the risk of eviction and financial instability among vulnerable populations.

The high cost of rent and mortgages relative to income drives many households into precarious financial situations, leading to a heightened risk of eviction or foreclosure. For renters, the strain of rising housing costs, coupled with stagnant wages, has made it increasingly difficult to maintain stable housing. A significant portion of Cobb County's population lives paycheck to paycheck, with little to no savings to cover emergencies, such as job loss or medical expenses, which are common triggers for eviction.

The foreclosure risk among homeowners is similarly driven by the high costs associated with mortgages, which average \$1,901 per month in Cobb County. This figure is above both state and national averages, placing additional pressure on households struggling to keep up with payments. For many low-to-moderate income homeowners, unexpected financial burdens like medical bills or job loss can quickly lead to missed payments, escalating the threat of foreclosure.

Several factors contribute to the high levels of housing cost burden and subsequent risk of eviction and foreclosure in Cobb County:

- **Rising Housing Costs:** The cost of housing in Cobb County continues to rise faster than local incomes, making it increasingly difficult for residents to afford basic housing.
- **Low Wages:** A significant portion of the workforce earns less than the income needed to afford the median rent or mortgage in the county, exacerbating the cost burden.
- **Lack of Affordable Housing:** There is a severe shortage of affordable rental units and accessible housing options for low-income families, pushing many into unaffordable and precarious living situations.
- **Limited Access to Financial Support:** Insufficient availability of housing assistance programs leaves many at risk of eviction or foreclosure without a safety net to fall back on during financial crises.

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Individuals have poor mental health (F)

The mental health landscape in Cobb County reveals significant challenges affecting a broad swath of the population. Among adults, 14%, or approximately 82,684 individuals, experience frequent mental distress, which severely impacts their ability to function daily, including maintaining work, relationships, and self-care routines. This high prevalence of mental distress underscores the urgent need for accessible mental health services and community-based interventions to alleviate the burden of mental illness. Mental health issues also vary by age, with notable differences between adolescents and adults. Among individuals aged 12-17, major depressive episodes occur at a rate of 17.4%, and 12.3% report having suicidal thoughts. In adults aged 18 and older, 5.8% experience serious mental illness, 8.2% report major depressive episodes, and 5% have suicidal thoughts. These figures indicate that mental health concerns are significant across all age groups, with adolescents showing particularly high levels of depressive symptoms.

Over the past decade, the prevalence of mental health issues in Georgia has worsened. From 2010 to 2022, serious mental illness among adults increased from 2.6% to 5.8%, and reports of suicidal thoughts grew from 2.1% to 5%. These alarming trends suggest a growing mental health crisis in the community, necessitating immediate attention to enhance mental health support services. Mental health in Cobb County is further complicated by related conditions and contributing factors such as obesity and substance abuse. Obesity is a major health concern, affecting 30% of adults in the county. This condition is often linked to mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, due to factors like poor self-esteem, social stigma, and associated physical health complications.

Substance abuse is another critical factor, with 16% of adults reporting excessive drinking and a significant presence of marijuana and prescription drug misuse. These behaviors frequently co-occur with mental health disorders, compounding the overall health and economic stability of individuals. Access to mental health care in Cobb County remains a significant barrier. The current mental health provider-to-patient ratio is 420:1, which, although better than the state average, still falls short of the optimal standards seen in the best-performing communities. This shortage of mental health professionals means that many residents face delays in receiving the care they need, further exacerbating mental health problems. The economic and social impact of poor mental health in Cobb County is profound, as individuals with mental health issues often experience reduced work productivity, increased healthcare costs, and higher rates of unemployment. Mental distress is also disproportionately prevalent among lower-income groups, deepening existing economic disparities.

To address these challenges, there is a critical need to increase access to mental health services in Cobb County by expanding the availability of mental health professionals and reducing wait times for care. Interventions should be targeted towards at-risk groups, particularly adolescents and low-income residents who exhibit higher rates of mental health challenges. Integrated care approaches that address the interconnected nature of mental health, obesity, and substance abuse can provide more comprehensive support to affected individuals. Furthermore, enhancing community-based programs and outreach can help reduce stigma, encourage help-seeking behavior, and promote mental well-being across all demographics. The growing mental health crisis in Cobb County requires coordinated efforts to improve services and address the complex factors contributing to poor mental health outcomes.

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Individuals are at risk of utility disconnection (F)

In Cobb County, utility costs are a significant factor contributing to the overall housing cost burden, severely impacting both renters and homeowners. The average monthly utility bill in Georgia is \$614.55, which amounts to \$7,374.60 annually. This figure encompasses essential services such as electricity, natural gas, water, and sewer, as well as modern necessities like broadband and phone services. Utility costs are a major financial strain, particularly for households already struggling with high housing expenses, as they consume a substantial portion of the total cost of living.

Utility costs are particularly burdensome in homes that are poorly insulated or substandard. Issues such as inadequate weatherproofing, poor insulation, and inefficient heating and cooling systems are common in older or substandard housing units. These conditions force residents to use more energy to maintain comfortable temperatures, driving up their utility bills. Many homes in Cobb County suffer from these inefficiencies, causing households to pay significantly more for utilities compared to those living in better-insulated homes. For example, the average monthly cost for electricity in Georgia is \$151.25, which is higher than the national average, while natural gas costs \$119.30 per month, also above the national average.

For renters, the combined cost of housing and utilities often consumes an unsustainable share of their income. The average annual cost of rent and utilities for renters in Cobb County totals approximately \$25,794.60. For a minimum wage worker earning \$15,080 per year, these costs would represent 171% of their total income, clearly demonstrating the severe affordability gap faced by low-income renters. Even for those earning closer to the median income, utilities still represent a significant expense, consuming 27.37% of their total income when combined with rent. Homeowners face a similarly challenging scenario. The average annual cost of mortgage payments and utilities for homeowners in Cobb County totals around \$30,186.60. This amount represents 200% of the income earned by a minimum wage worker and 32.03% of the median income, highlighting the unsustainable burden that utilities place on household budgets. These high utility costs make it even harder for homeowners to maintain their properties and keep up with other essential expenses, particularly in homes that are not energy efficient.

The constant struggle to manage high utility costs is a direct result of inadequate housing conditions and contributes significantly to the overall cost burden for many households in Cobb County. Poor insulation, aging infrastructure, and outdated heating and cooling systems exacerbate financial stress, forcing families to choose between paying for utilities or other critical needs. Addressing these inefficiencies through targeted energy efficiency programs, weatherization assistance, and improved access to affordable utilities is essential to alleviate the financial strain on both renters and homeowners, ensuring that all residents can afford to maintain a safe and stable living environment without the threat of utility disconnection.

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Individuals live in poor physical health (F)

In Cobb County, poor physical health significantly affects the community, with 13% of local adults, totaling 76,778 individuals, reporting poor to fair health. Although this rate is slightly better than the statewide average of 18%, it still indicates a pressing concern as it surpasses the nation's best communities, where the rate is 14%. Frequent physical health distress, defined as experiencing more than 14 days of poor health each month, impacts 9% of adults, which equates to 53,154 individuals. This level of distress negatively affects their ability to work, learn, and fully participate in daily activities.

Obesity is a major contributing factor to poor health in Cobb County, affecting 30% of adults, or about 177,179 individuals. While this rate is slightly lower than the state average of 34%, it remains a significant health concern. The prevalence of obesity is highest among adults aged 45 to 64, individuals with lower levels of education, and those with annual incomes below \$25,000. Chronic conditions related to obesity, such as diabetes, which affects 9% of the adult population, as well as hypertension and heart disease, are prominent health issues in the community. Additionally, mental health concerns, which are often interconnected with physical health, show rising trends, with increasing reports of serious mental illness and depressive episodes among both adults and adolescents.

Several factors contribute to the high rates of poor physical health in Cobb County. These include inadequate access to preventive care, poor diet, physical inactivity, and socioeconomic stressors. There is also limited availability of healthcare providers, particularly in mental health services, where the provider-to-patient ratio of 420:1 is below optimal standards and lags behind the best-performing communities, which have a ratio of 320:1.

The high prevalence of poor physical health among Cobb County residents underscores the need for targeted health interventions. The widespread impact of obesity and related chronic conditions is exacerbated by barriers to accessing healthcare services, especially among low-income populations. Addressing these issues through improved access to preventive care, enhanced health education, and the development of community-based wellness programs is crucial to enhancing overall well-being and alleviating the economic burden that poor health places on individuals and the broader community.

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Individuals are food insecure (F)

In Cobb County, food insecurity remains a significant issue affecting the well-being of many residents. Food insecurity refers to the inability of households to provide adequate nutritional food for every member to live a healthy and active life. This issue is closely linked to various health problems, including Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. Moreover, food insecurity also contributes to psychological and behavioral health challenges among affected families.

According to recent data, the food insecurity rate in Cobb County surged to 10.10% in 2022, affecting an estimated 77,610 residents. This represents a troubling increase of 42.25% from the previous year, following a period of decline that had seen the rate drop to 7.10% in 2021. Notably, food insecurity disproportionately affects minority communities, with 21% of Black residents and 18% of Hispanic residents experiencing food insecurity compared to 10% of White residents. This disparity highlights the broader socioeconomic challenges that impact access to nutritious food.

Children are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, with 20,230 children in the county affected, accounting for 26.07% of all food insecure individuals. The consequences for children extend beyond immediate health risks such as asthma and anemia; food insecurity can also impede their educational and social development. Children in food-insecure households are more likely to experience developmental delays, behavioral problems, and academic setbacks.

Senior citizens also face significant challenges related to food insecurity. Although specific local data is limited, it is estimated that approximately 8% of seniors in Georgia are food insecure, placing the state among the top ten in the nation for food insecurity among older adults. Food insecure seniors are more likely to suffer from depression, asthma, and other chronic health conditions, contributing to healthcare costs exceeding \$130 billion annually due to issues related to hunger.

The cost of food continues to strain many households in Cobb County, with the average cost per meal per person reaching \$4.58 in 2022. For a typical family of four, this translates to an estimated food budget of \$1,671.70 per month or \$20,060.40 annually—accounting for over 21% of the median household income. This financial burden forces many families to rely on food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Currently, 17,260 households, or 5.93% of the population, receive SNAP benefits in the county. However, the average SNAP benefit of \$2.15 per meal falls significantly short of the actual cost of food, covering only about 47% of what is needed to meet nutritional needs.

The rising rates of food insecurity in Cobb County underscore the urgent need for comprehensive interventions. Expanding access to food assistance programs, improving nutritional education, and addressing the economic factors that drive food insecurity are critical steps to support vulnerable populations and ensure that all residents have access to the nutritious food necessary for their health and well-being.

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Causes of Poverty Explained

The community lacks an adequate number of affordable housing units (C)

Cobb County faces a significant shortage of affordable housing units, exacerbating housing insecurity and financial strain among its residents. While the U.S. Census Bureau identifies a total of 308,949 housing units available to accommodate the county's 291,171 households, this apparent surplus of 17,778 homes does not accurately reflect the true availability of adequate and affordable housing. Two critical factors must be considered when evaluating housing availability: the condition of the housing units and the affordability of these units relative to residents' incomes.

A substantial portion of the housing stock in Cobb County is substandard, with 24.59% of housing units—totaling approximately 75,960 homes—having at least one substandard condition. Among these, nearly half are classified as having severe substandard conditions, making them unsuitable for safe and healthy living. Substandard conditions often include structural damage, inadequate plumbing, mold, lead, asbestos, and inefficient utility systems, all of which can render these units effectively unavailable for habitation. Renters are disproportionately affected, being nearly four times more likely than homeowners to live in substandard housing.

The affordability of housing is another major barrier. Even when units are physically available, high rental costs place them out of reach for many residents. The median rent in Cobb County stands at \$1,535 per month, which is significantly higher than the state average. To afford a two-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent of \$1,844, a household would need an annual income of \$73,760. This requirement starkly contrasts with the reality that 23.84% of households earn less than \$50,000 per year, far below what is necessary to secure housing without financial distress. Minimum wage workers would need to work 237 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom rental, highlighting the severe affordability gap.

For homeowners, the financial picture is equally challenging. The median monthly mortgage cost in Cobb County is \$1,901, requiring an annual income of \$76,039 to manage comfortably. This figure is higher than the median household income and beyond the reach of many low-income workers, further restricting access to homeownership. The high cost of both renting and owning, combined with substantial utility expenses averaging \$7,374.60 annually, places an unsustainable burden on household budgets, particularly for those with lower incomes.

The dual challenge of substandard housing conditions and high costs means that the actual number of adequate and affordable housing units is far below what is necessary to meet community needs. Addressing this shortage requires not only increasing the number of available units but also improving the condition of existing homes and ensuring affordability through targeted policies and programs. Expanding access to affordable housing and implementing measures to improve housing quality are essential steps to alleviate the housing crisis and support the well-being of Cobb County residents.

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Individuals have poor health (F)

In Cobb County, poor physical and mental health significantly undermines individuals' ability to become self-sufficient, largely influenced by social determinants of health such as socioeconomic status, access to healthcare, and environmental factors. The intertwined nature of these health issues creates a cycle that limits opportunities for stable employment, education, and overall well-being, which are essential for achieving self-sufficiency.

Physical health challenges are prevalent, with 13% of adults reporting poor or fair health, equating to approximately 76,778 individuals. Common chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease are major barriers that prevent people from maintaining steady employment and achieving financial independence. For instance, 30% of adults are classified as obese, and 9% of the population experiences frequent physical health distress. These conditions often stem from inadequate access to healthy food, safe environments for physical activity, and consistent preventive healthcare—key social determinants that heavily impact low-income communities.

Mental health issues also pose substantial barriers. About 14% of adults in Cobb County, or approximately 82,684 individuals, experience frequent mental distress. The prevalence of serious mental illnesses, depressive episodes, and anxiety is exacerbated by factors such as poverty, trauma, and limited access to mental health services. These mental health challenges significantly affect individuals' ability to work, manage daily responsibilities, and make informed decisions about their lives, further entrenching them in economic instability.

The combined impact of physical and mental health issues is compounded by high healthcare costs and limited access to affordable, quality care. Many residents delay or forgo medical treatment due to the costs, which leads to worsening health conditions and increased long-term financial burdens. This is particularly true for those without adequate health insurance, who are often forced to choose between healthcare and other essential needs like housing or food.

Addressing these health challenges through a comprehensive approach that tackles the social determinants of health is crucial. This includes improving access to affordable healthcare services, expanding mental health support, and investing in community resources that promote healthy lifestyles. By focusing on these areas, Cobb County can help its residents achieve better health outcomes, enhance their ability to become self-sufficient, and ultimately improve their overall quality of life.

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Individuals lack financial management skills (F)

Numeracy skills, which involve understanding and working with numbers, are crucial for effective financial management, including budgeting, managing debt, and making informed economic decisions. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 27% of adults in Cobb County, or approximately 165,360 individuals, lack basic numeracy skills. This deficiency hampers their ability to navigate everyday financial tasks, such as calculating expenses, understanding loan terms, or even managing household budgets.

The inability to manage finances effectively is linked to higher rates of poverty and economic instability. Data shows that Cobb County's poverty rate stands at 8.3%, with 62,536 individuals living below the poverty line. The impact of poor financial management skills is particularly evident among those with lower educational attainment; individuals without a high school diploma face a 16.2% poverty rate, significantly higher than those with higher education levels. This emphasizes the crucial role that education, including financial literacy, plays in enhancing employability and economic stability.

Income data further highlights the challenges faced by individuals lacking financial management skills. Among households in the county, a substantial 23.84% earn below \$50,000 annually, placing them at risk of financial hardship. This group often struggles to meet basic needs and manage unexpected expenses, leading to increased reliance on credit, which further exacerbates debt burdens. Poor numeracy and financial skills make it difficult for these individuals to create sustainable budgets, plan for the future, or make informed decisions about loans and investments, often resulting in a cycle of financial mismanagement and poverty.

Improving financial management skills is essential to breaking this cycle. Programs that enhance numeracy and provide financial literacy education can empower individuals to better manage their money, reduce debt, and build economic resilience. By addressing these skill gaps, Cobb County can help residents achieve greater financial security and move closer to self-sufficiency.

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Individuals have inadequate income to secure basic needs (F)

In Cobb County, inadequate income is a significant barrier preventing individuals from securing basic needs such as housing, food, healthcare, and utilities. An estimated 62,536 residents, or 8.30% of the population, live below the national poverty level—a rate lower than the state (13.50%) and national (12.50%) averages. Although the poverty rate has decreased by 17% over the past five years, many residents still struggle to meet their basic needs due to the high cost of living relative to their incomes.

The median income in Cobb County stands at \$94,244 annually, reflecting a 25.40% increase over the past five years, outpacing inflation (+16.50%). However, this income growth does not sufficiently address the challenges faced by low-income and minimum-wage workers. Many families find that wages are insufficient to cover basic expenses. For example, a single adult with two children earning minimum wage would need to work 288 hours per week to meet the household's basic needs—an unattainable expectation that highlights the significant income gap these families face.

A substantial portion of households, approximately 23.84%, earn less than \$50,000 annually, placing them at high risk of financial instability. For these households, any unexpected expense can threaten their ability to maintain basic services such as housing, utilities, or food. Many are burdened by high housing costs, limited access to affordable healthcare, and rising living expenses, all of which contribute to ongoing financial distress.

To effectively address these complex challenges, the use of comprehensive case management services is recommended. By evaluating the various factors contributing to financial instability—such as employment barriers, health issues, and inadequate access to support services—case management can provide tailored responses to meet the specific needs of individuals and families. This approach ensures that interventions are not just reactive but also strategic, addressing root causes and providing long-term support to help residents improve their economic standing.

Implementing comprehensive case management services can help the organization respond more effectively to the multifaceted nature of income inadequacy, guiding residents towards resources that foster self-sufficiency and improve overall well-being. This strategy aims to not only meet immediate needs but also empower individuals to overcome the barriers that keep them trapped in a cycle of poverty.

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Individuals are unemployed (F)

In Cobb County, unemployment remains a critical issue affecting economic stability and community well-being. The county's unemployment rate stands at 4.51%, which is lower than the state average of 5.21% and the national average of 5.30%. Despite this comparatively lower rate, approximately 18,088 individuals are unemployed, reflecting a significant portion of the local labor force that continues to struggle with joblessness. The trend over the past five years shows a fluctuating unemployment rate, with a notable spike during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the recent decline to 4.51% suggests some recovery, though disparities persist among specific populations.

Unemployment disproportionately affects certain demographics within the community. Black residents face the highest unemployment rate at 6.60%, nearly double the rate of White residents, who have a 3.60% unemployment rate. This disparity highlights ongoing structural challenges, including educational inequalities, discrimination in hiring practices, and limited access to well-paying job opportunities for Black individuals. Additionally, young adults aged 16-19 face an unemployment rate of 11.50%, the highest among all age groups, suggesting significant barriers to workforce entry for those just starting their careers. Females also experience higher unemployment rates (5.00%) compared to males (3.70%), reflecting gender-based disparities in job access and stability.

Trends in unemployment show that while overall rates have decreased, certain groups continue to be left behind, indicating the need for targeted interventions. High unemployment among young workers, women, and racial minorities points to systemic barriers that hinder their ability to secure stable employment. These groups often face challenges such as limited access to job training, childcare constraints, and discriminatory hiring practices, which can prevent them from fully participating in the labor market.

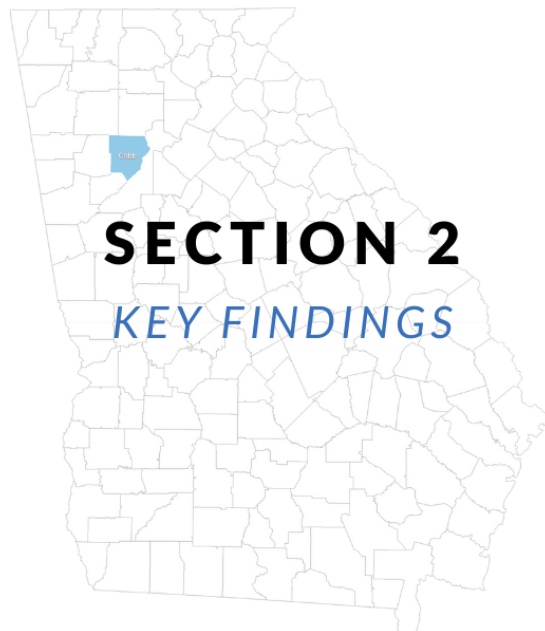
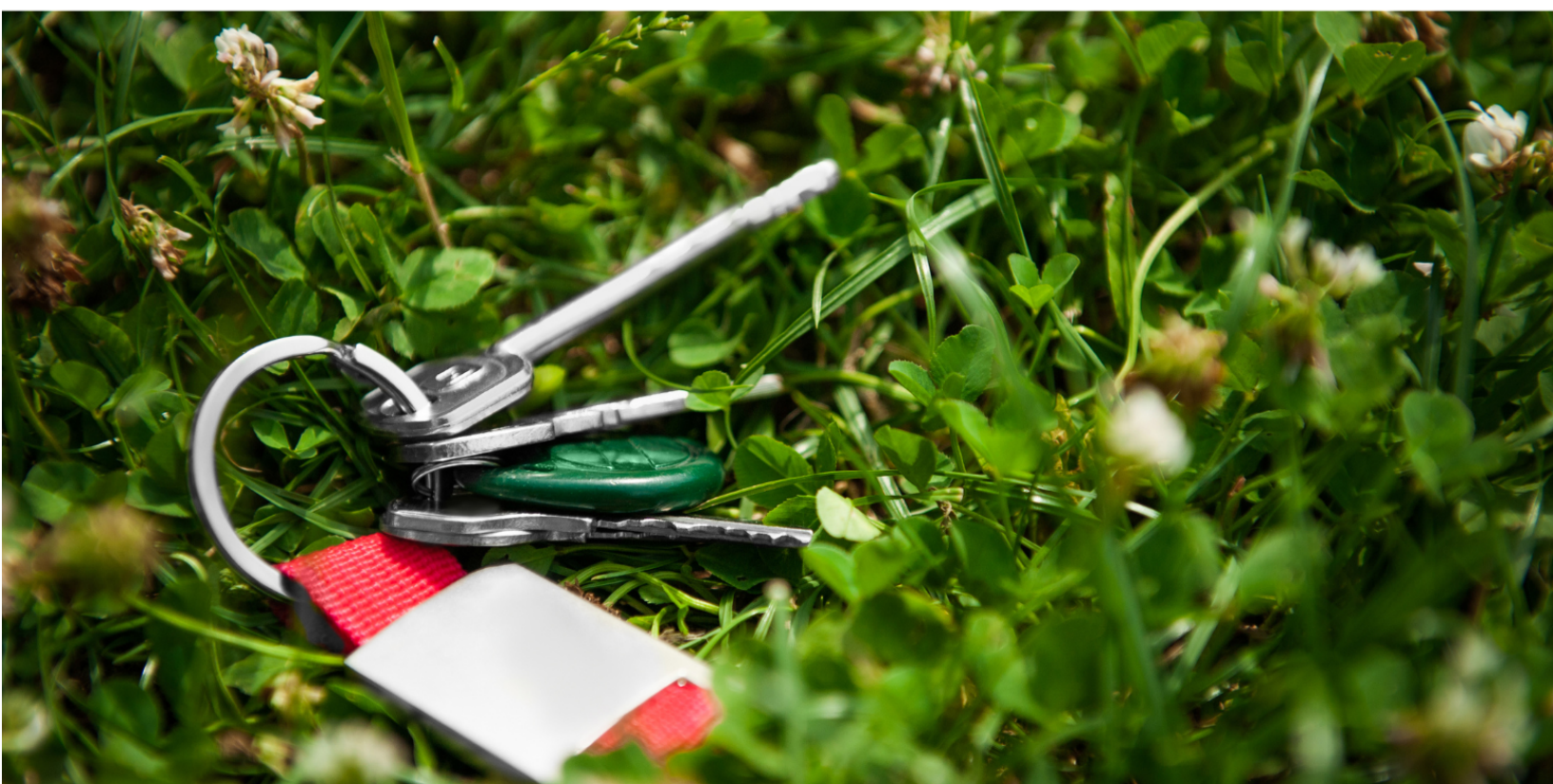
To address these disparities and improve employment outcomes, the community must invest in comprehensive workforce development and case management services. These services can help identify and respond to the specific barriers faced by unemployed individuals, such as skills gaps, access to education, and support needs like childcare and transportation. By providing targeted job training, employment support, and resources tailored to the needs of vulnerable populations, community resources can play a pivotal role in reducing unemployment and fostering economic stability.

Targeting resources towards populations most impacted by unemployment will ensure that all community members have equitable access to employment opportunities, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and inclusive economy. Expanding job training programs, enhancing employment support services, and addressing systemic barriers will be crucial steps in helping individuals secure stable, well-paying jobs and move towards self-sufficiency.

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KEY FINDINGS

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Demographics

The demographic analysis of Cobb County reveals a population of approximately 765,813 individuals residing in 291,171 households, reflecting a 2.79% increase from 2018. This population growth, while modest, indicates economic vitality and an attractive quality of life, contributing to increased demand for housing, education, and healthcare services. The county's population is diverse, with notable shifts in racial and ethnic compositions. The White population remains the largest group but has seen a decline of 8.45% over the past five years, while the Multi-Race category has grown significantly, increasing by 157.92%. The Hispanic population also continues to rise, now accounting for 13.45% of the total population.

Age distribution trends highlight an aging population, with the median age increasing to 37.20 years. There is a notable rise in older adults and senior citizens, which could impact the local economy, healthcare needs, and housing demands. Meanwhile, the proportion of young children and school-aged children has declined, indicating potential future challenges for the education system and youth-focused community services.

Poverty Analysis

The poverty rate in Cobb County stands at 8.30%, representing approximately 62,536 individuals living below the federal poverty level. This rate is notably lower than both the state average of 13.50% and the national average of 12.50%. Over the past five years, Cobb County has seen a 17.00% decrease in its poverty rate, outpacing the state's reduction of 15.63% and the national decline of 11.35%. Despite these improvements, specific demographics remain disproportionately affected by poverty. Women are more likely to live in poverty than men, with a poverty rate of 8.90% compared to 7.70% for males. Racial and ethnic disparities are also evident, with Black and Hispanic populations experiencing higher poverty rates than their White counterparts. Households led by single parents, particularly single mothers, face some of the highest poverty levels.

The median income in Cobb County is \$94,244, which has increased by 25.40% over the past five years but remains below the local living wage requirements for many household types. Households with children and single-income earners struggle the most to meet basic living costs. Despite improvements, the income growth has not fully offset the rising costs of living, leaving many households vulnerable to financial instability. Approximately 160,095 individuals in the county qualify for services under expanded Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) guidelines, illustrating a widespread need for continued support.

Employment

Cobb County's labor force comprises approximately 417,204 individuals, with 12,865 currently unemployed, resulting in an unemployment rate of 3.1%. Over the past five years, the unemployment rate has shown a positive downward trend, decreasing from 4.7% in 2018 to the current rate, reflecting strong economic recovery and resilience. However, this trend has not been uniform across all demographics, with young adults (18-24) and Black residents facing significantly higher unemployment rates compared to other groups.

The county's job market is diverse, with major industries including healthcare, retail, education, and professional services. Despite the range of industries, the job supply does not fully meet the needs of the local labor force, resulting in a gap between available jobs and workers seeking employment. Additionally, a large portion of available jobs offer low wages, with 45% paying below \$50,000 annually and 15% paying under \$20,000. This wage distribution contributes to economic challenges for many residents, even among those who are employed. The county also faces the issue of approximately 16,688 employed individuals (4%) living in poverty, which underscores the need for better alignment between wages and the cost of living.

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Adult Education & Skills Development

Educational attainment in Cobb County plays a critical role in employability and economic stability. In 2022, higher education levels were strongly linked to lower unemployment rates and higher median earnings. For instance, individuals with graduate degrees had an unemployment rate of 3.30% and median earnings of \$90,893, while those without a high school diploma faced a poverty rate of 16.20% and median earnings of just \$29,704. Approximately 49.7% of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher, showing an increase from 46.5% five years ago, suggesting positive trends in educational attainment.

However, challenges persist, especially for those with lower education levels. Around 17% of adults in the county struggle with literacy, and 27% face numeracy deficiencies, significantly impacting their employability and earning potential. Additionally, language barriers affect 52,034 residents, particularly among Spanish speakers, underscoring the need for language proficiency support to enhance economic opportunities.

Child/Youth Education

Cobb County's school-aged population (ages 5-17) includes 131,062 children, segmented into three key age groups: 48,864 children aged 5-9, 50,038 aged 10-14, and 32,160 aged 15-17. Over the past five years, the county has seen a slight decline of 1.12% in the number of school-aged children. This reduction suggests demographic shifts that could impact school enrollment and resource planning. Currently, 13,524 school-aged children live in poverty, facing barriers such as limited access to educational materials, technological tools, and stable learning environments, which affect their academic performance and overall development.

Childcare/Early Education

Childcare in Cobb County plays a crucial role in influencing employment, educational attainment, and economic stability for families. The county has seen a decline in the number of preschool-aged children, dropping by 7.35% from 47,657 in 2018 to 44,153 in 2022. Despite this decrease, significant challenges remain, particularly in meeting the demand for childcare services. Currently, there are only 25,658 childcare slots available for 46,363 children, resulting in a significant shortfall and a ratio of 1.81 children per slot. Additionally, 10.21% of young children, or approximately 4,509, are living in poverty, which underscores the economic challenges faced by many families in the county.

Housing

Cobb County's housing landscape presents significant challenges related to availability, affordability, and quality. In 2022, there were 308,949 housing units available for 291,171 households, leaving a surplus of 17,778 units. However, 24.59% of these units were identified as having at least one substandard condition, with renters being nearly four times more likely to live in substandard housing compared to owners. Affordability is a pressing issue, as 72,310 households (24.83%) are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs, with nearly half of these households severely cost-burdened. The average cost of a two-bedroom unit in the county is \$1,844 per month, requiring an annual income of \$73,760 to be considered affordable, which far exceeds the earnings of minimum-wage workers.

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Health

Health and well-being in Cobb County are influenced by a range of factors, including access to healthcare services, chronic health conditions, and mental health challenges. Approximately 13% of adults (76,778 individuals) report having poor to fair health, which is lower than the statewide average of 18%. However, chronic conditions like obesity affect 30% of adults (177,179 individuals), contributing to high rates of heart disease, diabetes, and other serious health issues. Mental health is also a growing concern, with 14% of adults (82,684 individuals) experiencing frequent mental distress.

While access to primary healthcare providers is generally adequate, mental health services remain critically under-resourced. The current mental health provider-to-patient ratio is 420:1, significantly higher than the best practice ratio of 320:1. To achieve this standard, Cobb County needs an additional 569 mental health providers, underscoring a significant service gap. The availability of healthcare facilities, including 102 health centers and 1,663 hospital beds, supports broad access to medical care, contributing to the county's average life expectancy of 79.5 years, which is higher than the state average of 76.1 years. However, the shortage of mental health resources remains a pressing issue that impacts overall community health.

Nutrition

Cobb County faces ongoing nutrition challenges, with food insecurity impacting a significant portion of the population. In 2022, approximately 77,610 residents, or 10.10% of the population, experienced food insecurity, reflecting a 10.99% increase over the past five years. Although the food insecurity rate had initially decreased to 7.10% in 2021, it surged by 42.25% in 2022, demonstrating the community's vulnerability to economic disruptions. Disparities are evident, with higher food insecurity rates among Black residents (21%) and Hispanic residents (18%) compared to White residents (10%), highlighting the need for targeted support.

Transportation

Transportation in Cobb County significantly impacts residents' ability to access employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services. In 2022, 10,214 households lacked a vehicle, with nearly half of these households containing no working members, making it difficult for them to secure basic needs. For the 5,434 households with working members but no vehicles, transportation barriers significantly affect their ability to maintain employment. Public transportation in Cobb County is primarily provided by CobbLinc, which offers a range of services, including local and express bus routes, FLEX services, ADA paratransit for individuals with disabilities, and a voucher program. However, public transportation is utilized by only 0.58% of commuters, highlighting challenges in reach, accessibility, and reliability.

The fixed-route bus service covers several areas within the county, offering a relatively affordable option for residents. However, limitations such as restricted service hours, infrequent routes, and inconsistent reliability reduce its effectiveness. The ADA paratransit service provides crucial support for residents with disabilities who are unable to use regular bus services, requiring passengers to schedule trips in advance, which can be a barrier for those needing spontaneous travel. Despite these available services, the low usage rate suggests that many residents find public transportation insufficient to meet their daily commuting needs, particularly for accessing jobs outside of regular business hours or in areas not well-served by current routes.

These shortcomings in public transportation availability and efficiency contribute to the broader issue of transportation insecurity in the county, which significantly affects low-income and vulnerable populations who rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation.

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Family Relationships

Approximately 94,522 households, or 32.46%, have at least one child under 18, emphasizing the importance of supportive family dynamics. However, challenges such as domestic violence, single parenting, and custodial grandparenting impact many families. In 2023, there were 129,528 crisis calls related to family violence in Georgia, reflecting a 13% increase from 2021, with 17,682 protective orders issued. Additionally, the county has 17,860 single-parent households, 83.17% of which are headed by women, placing these families at heightened risk of financial instability.

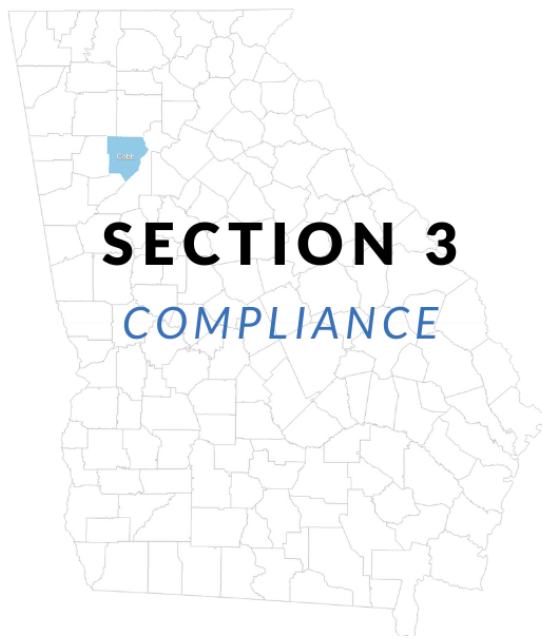
Community Involvement

Community involvement encompasses a range of activities, including social connectedness, volunteerism, and political engagement. According to the 2023 Civic Health Index, 77.9% of Georgians frequently spend time with family and friends, indicating strong personal relationships that foster community bonds. However, only 19.7% of residents engage frequently with neighbors, and just 7.7% regularly exchange favors, showing room for growth in neighborly interactions. Civic participation levels in Georgia are generally below national averages, with the state ranking 45th in volunteerism at 19.9%, and 46% of residents engage in charitable giving. Political engagement is aligned with national trends, but consumption of political news and participation in local elections vary significantly across demographics, reflecting diverse community involvement patterns.

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SECTION 3

COMPLIANCE

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Background

As the primary entity designated by the United States government to identify and eliminate the causes of poverty in local communities through the direct provision of services and coordination with other organizations, Community Action Agencies are held to a high standard of excellence through an accountability framework documented in the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) that requires state funders to establish “performance goals, administrative standards, financial management requirements, and other requirements” (42 U.S.C. 9914). In order to fulfill their required oversight duties, state funding administrators are tasked with adopting, communicating, and evaluating each organization’s ability to meet these basic standards on an annual basis.

Organizational Standards

The following standards are directly associated with the development of a community assessment.

CSBG Standard 1.2: The organization analyzes information collected directly from low-income individuals as part of the community assessment.

During the assessment process, surveys were distributed online and administered directly to low-income individuals. A total of 27 individuals participated in the process that classified themselves as “low-income”.

CSBG Standard 2.2: The organization utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources, during the community assessment process or other times. These sectors would include at minimum: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions.

Multiple individuals representing community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions were invited to participate in the project. The table below provides a summary of the final number of participants representing each group that chose to participate.

Sector Represented	Total
State Government	1
Local Government	4
Faith Based Organizations	2
Domestic Violence Programs	2
Homeless Programs	3
Behavioral Health	1
Other Nonprofit	27

CSBG Standard 3.1: The organization conducted a community assessment and issued a report within the past 3 years.

The Community Needs Assessment was completed in partnership with SA Howell, LLC through a contractual agreement, monitored by the organization’s leadership team. The assessment was finalized and approved by the Board of Directors on _____. The final report will be posted on the organization’s website.

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CSBG Standard 3.2: As part of the community assessment, the organization collects and includes data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area.

During the process of quantitative research, statistical data was collected that identified the impact of poverty on individuals based on gender, age, and race/ethnicity. This data can be found throughout Section 7 of the document.

CSBG Standard 3.3: The organization collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area(s) in the community assessment.

Also known as statistical or numerical data, quantitative data was collected through intensive research of more than 5 dozen unique data sources in ten domains of self-sufficiency. These categories include Income, Employment, Education, Childcare, Housing, Health, Nutrition, Transportation, Community Engagement, and Family Relationships. Data includes statistics for the local communities, the entirety of the service area, Georgia, and the United States. Data sources include but are not limited to the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Low-Income Housing Coalition, M.I.T., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Disease Control, and multiple-choice questions on locally administered surveys.

Qualitative data, often referred to as descriptive or narrative data, was collected through open ended survey questions. This included feedback from agency staff, subcontractors, community partners, and residents of Cobb County, including those with limited incomes.

Four specific metrics were normalized separately to ensure a balanced analysis: the number of individuals experiencing the need in the community, the number of survey respondents identifying the need as a primary concern, the number of survey respondents stating that they have experienced the issue, and the number of survey respondents who experienced the issue but could not find help. These metrics are then combined, ensuring that each metric receives a one-quarter weight.

This method provides a more comprehensive analysis by incorporating multiple perspectives and data points. By not relying on a single metric, this approach mitigates potential biases and ensures that the prioritization reflects a holistic view of community needs. For instance, if one were to rely solely on the number of individuals impacted, it might overlook the severity of unmet needs among those who could not find help. Conversely, focusing only on survey responses might not capture the full scope of the issue as reflected in statistical data.

The multi-metric approach ensures that all relevant factors are considered, providing a nuanced understanding of the community's needs. It highlights the most critical issues based on a combination of statistical data, stakeholder input, and the urgency of unmet needs. This comprehensive method allows for strategic decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring that interventions are targeted effectively to address the most pressing concerns. Higher final scores indicate greater priority, reflecting the number of people impacted, the weighted importance of survey responses, and the critical nature of unmet needs. This multi-faceted analysis and prioritization process ensure that the most critical issues are identified and addressed strategically, promoting well-being and movement out of poverty.

The geographic area evaluated in this study includes Cobb County, Georgia.

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CSBG Standard 3.4: The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.

A report of the key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty can be found in Section 2 of this document. The entity will document agency (A) level needs separately upon completion of the SWOT Analysis during the development of the strategic plan.

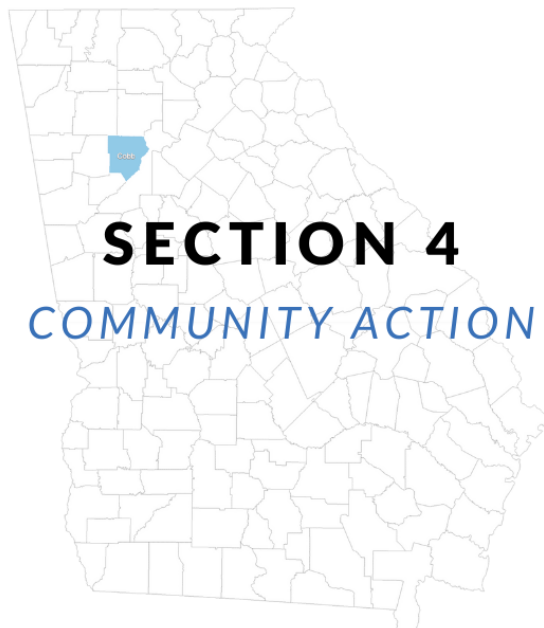
CSBG Standard 3.5: The governing board formally accepts the completed community assessment.

The finalized document was presented to the Board of Directors on _____. A formal acceptance was approved with a vote of _____%.

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COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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SECTION 4

COMMUNITY ACTION

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In January of 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson declared unconditional war on poverty. His strategy consisted of a new cooperative relationship between local citizens, community organizations, local government officials, state legislators, and national leaders.

The flagship of this new initiative was a small program known as Urban and Rural Community Action, whose task was to stimulate a better focusing of all available local, State, private, and Federal resources upon the goal of enabling low-income families, and low-income individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas, to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivations and secure the opportunities needed for them to become self-sufficient.

To carry out this mission, Community Action Agency (CAA) leaders were asked to develop both long-range strategies and specific, short-range plans for using resources (both allocated and leveraged). These plans were to take into account the areas of greatest need, the availability of community resources, and its own strengths and limitations.

One unique element of the Economic Opportunity Act, the law that created the Community Action Network, was a requirement to develop plans and programs with the maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas and members of the groups served. This requirement was established to ensure that the organization's activities were responsive and relevant to the low-income citizens to whom they were addressed.

In 1967, amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act led to additional guidance from the national network by means of the document "Organizing Communities for Action." In this document, specific guidance was provided reminding Community Action Agencies that they are not to be simply a dispenser of welfare or social services to the poor, but to be a source of leadership in identifying and eliminating the causes of poverty in the local community.

In 1973, the network faced its first major battle as President Richard Nixon ordered all Community Action Agencies to close by June. The network joined together and fought a legal battle that resulted in a victory for Community Action, as well as the families and communities it serves.

Realizing that they could not simply close the program down, the Ford Administration focused their attention on reducing the impact of the network by eliminating the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and, thus, the cabinet level position over-seeing the program. Administration of the program was moved to the Department of Health Education and Welfare's Community Service Administration. While the mission of the network remained "to make the entire community more responsive to the needs and interests of the poor by mobilizing resources and bringing about greater institutional sensitivity", the reduction in federal support and public opinion associated with the name change (Economic Opportunity to Community Services) was damaging.

In 1981, President Reagan proposed a \$0 budget for Community Action, this time with the support of Congress. In response to this crisis, David Bradley, a former student of Sargent Shriver, stepped on the scene to negotiate a compromise that led to the creation of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Through CSBG, administrative authority was shifted to the states, which were allocated 5% of program funding for administrative duties. An additional 5% was allocated for discretionary anti-poverty purposes. The remaining 90% was to be used to fund Community Action Agencies.

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During the Clinton Administration, several major laws were passed to reduce and reform anti-poverty efforts in the nation. Among these was the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), enacted due to waste and inefficiency in Federal programs that had led to a lack of confidence of the American people in the government. In this law, multiple new requirements were enacted to ensure accountability among organizations receiving government monies. It was this law, in part, that led to the development of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) system as the mandated management framework for Community Action Agencies, effective in 2001.

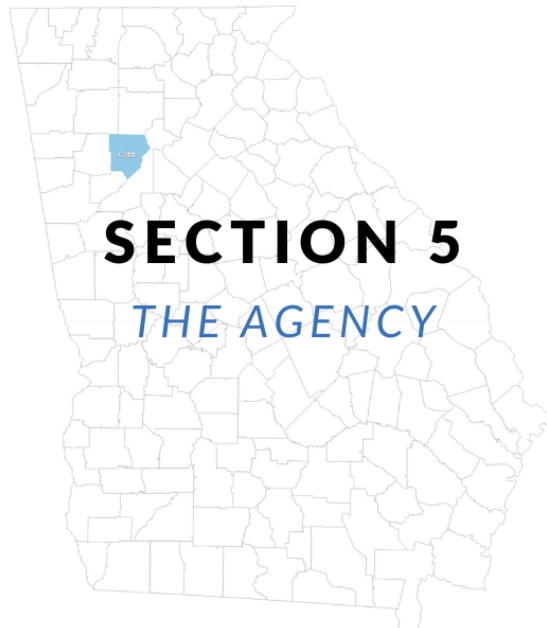
In 2010, the GPRA Modernization led to additional guidance focusing on the coordination of services among community partners, customer satisfaction, and data quality. It was this law that led to the development of a new performance management framework that includes Organizational Standards, State Accountability Measures, Federal Accountability Measures, and ROMA: Next Generation. While the framework does include some new regulations, it primarily holds the network accountable for returning to its roots with a focus on community level activities, an emphasis on addressing the causes of poverty, and ensuring organizations work together to truly impact the lives of customers and the community as a whole rather than simply delivering emergency services.

Today, more than 1,000 organizations across the nation join the Cobb County CDBG Program Office to fulfill the mission of this amazing network.

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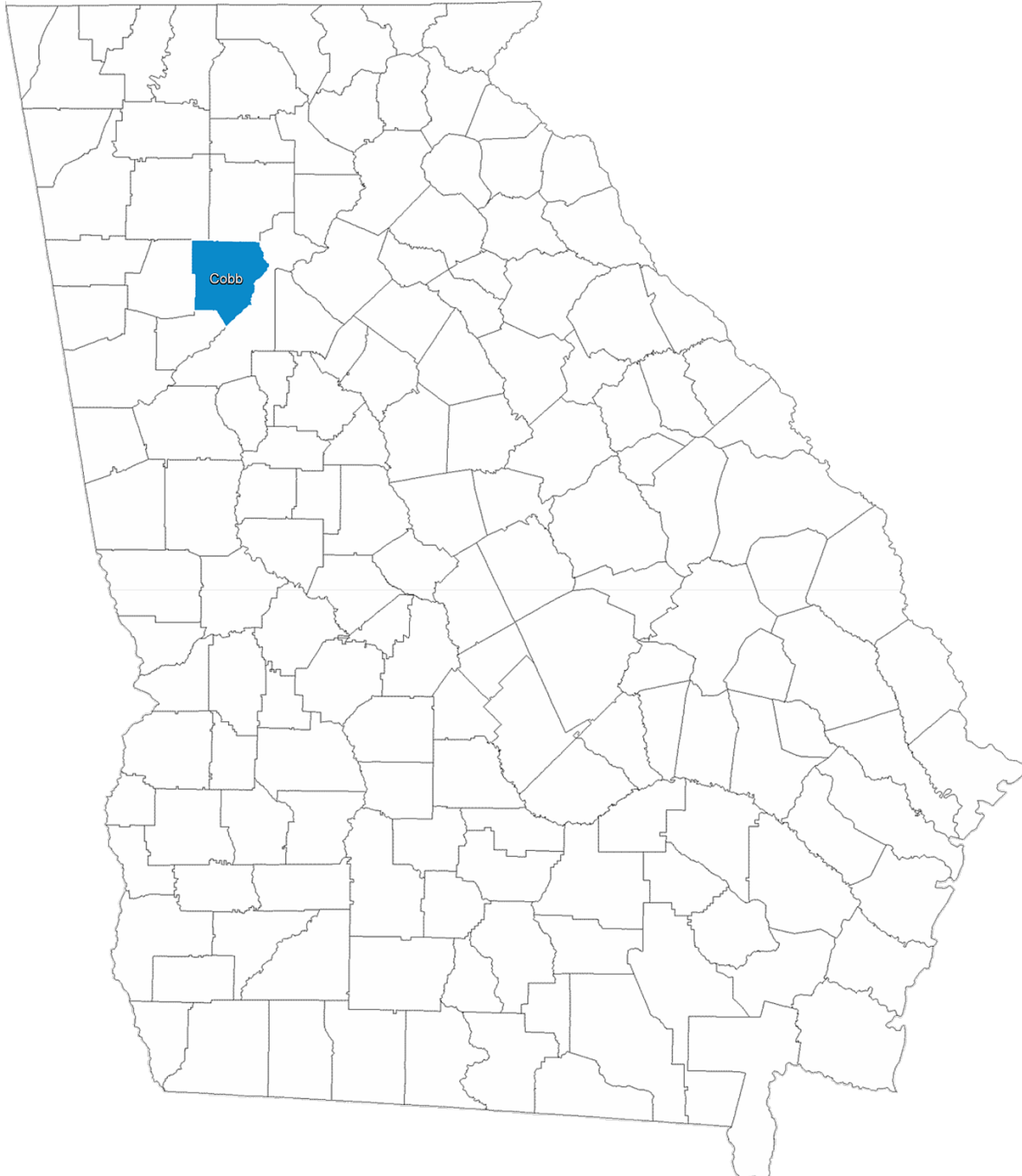
2024 REPORT ON POVERTY



SECTION 5

THE AGENCY

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Service Area

Located in the metro Atlanta area, Cobb County CDBG Program Office strives to improve the quality of life for people in need in Cobb County through programs, services, and referrals that promote economic stability and/or self-motivation.

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Programs

The agency is currently providing funding and oversight for seven programs operated through contractual agreements with 12 partner organizations.

Emergency Assistance

Low-income families and individuals are assisted with the elimination of basic needs through the provision of financial assistance with housing, utilities, and food. Current contractors include Zion Baptist, Cobb Senior Services, Zion Keepers, and St. Vincent De Paul.

Case Management

Low-income families and individuals are provided with individualized case plans designed to eliminate temporary crisis situations and promote improved economic security. Services are currently provided through a contract with the Center for Family Resources.

Substance Abuse Program

Individuals with substance addictions are provided with counseling and housing services designed to promote improved health and well-being. Services are currently offered by The Extension.

Domestic Violence Program

Individuals living in unsafe and/or unhealthy home environments are provided with housing and childcare payments as needed, to promote an escape from abuse or assault. Current services are offered by LiveSafe.

Homeless Assistance

Homeless families and individuals are assisted with the establishment of permanent housing through shelter services, transitional housing, and support services. Current contractors include MUST Ministries and Family Promise.

Mental Health Program

Individuals of Hispanic ethnicity are assisted with mental health counseling designed to promote improved well-being. Services are provided by Ser Familia.

Reintegration Program

Individuals with criminal records are enrolled in a 12-week internship that supports reintegration into society, aimed at providing them with skills and opportunities for stable employment. This program is currently operated by Davis Direction.

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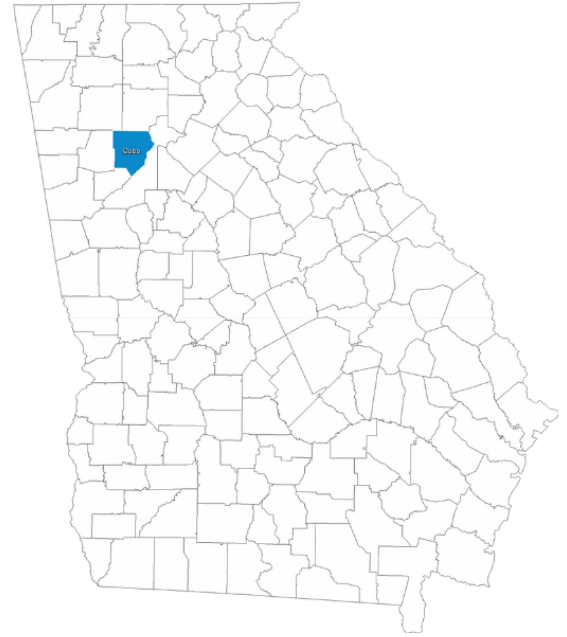
SECTION 6

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

Key Point Summary

Prioritized Resident Needs:

1. *Housing insecurity*
2. *Poor mental health*
3. *Risk of utility disconnection*
4. *Poor physical health*
5. *Food insecurity*



Demographics

- Population: 765,813 (+2.79%)
- Households: 291,171 (+5.03%)
- Births: 8,716
- Deaths: 5,254
- Inward Migration: 61,611
- Outward Migration: 61,760



Population Summary:

37-year-old, White (52.8%), Non-Hispanic (86.55%), Females (51.19%)

Income & Poverty

- Low-Income individuals: 62,536
- 125% Poverty: 84,961
- 200% Poverty: 160,095
- Poverty Rate: 8.30%
- Five-Year Poverty Trend: -17.00%
- Median Income: \$94,244 (+25.40%)
- Five-Year Inflation: +16.50%
- Cost of Living
 - 1 Adult/0 Child: \$55,224
 - 1 Adult/2 Child: \$108,680
 - 2 Adult/0 Child: \$71,573
 - 2 Adult/2 Child: \$94,016

Employment

- Labor Force: 401,011
- Unemployed: 8,562
- Unemployment Rate: 4.51% (-7.01%)
- Jobs: 377,268
- Median Wage: \$72,927
- Working Poor: 19,292

Highlights

- No Diploma: 36,217 (-11.38%)
- Literacy Deficient: 104,115
- Numeracy Deficient: 165,360
- Graduation Rate: 87.1%
- College/Career Readiness: 54.1%
- Childcare Deficit: 20,705 (1.81:1)
- Safe/Affordable Housing Deficit: 58,182
- Housing Cost Burdened HH: 72,310
- Median Rent: \$18,420
- Median Mortgage: \$22,812
- Homeless: 451
- Poor Health: 76,778
- Frequent Physical Distress: 53,154
- Frequent Mental Distress: 82,684
- Disabled: 69,101
- Uninsured: 94,292 (-1.97%)
- Food Insecure: 77,610
- No Vehicle HH: 10,214

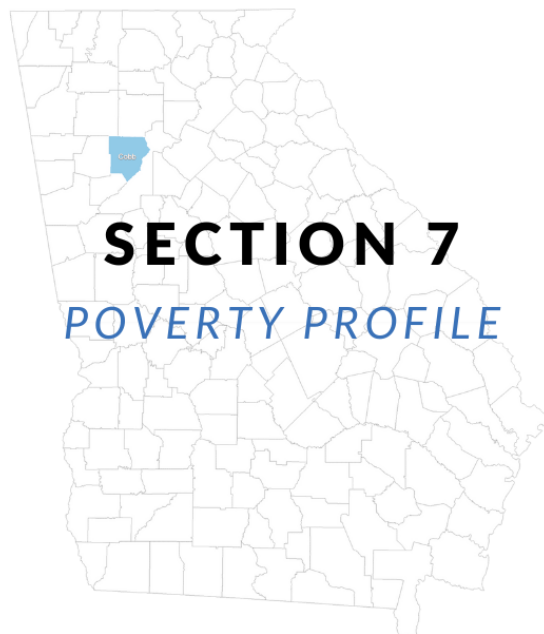
Leading Barriers:

- Community lacks affordable housing (C)
- Individuals have poor health (F)
- Individuals lack financial management skills (F)
- Individuals have inadequate income (F)
- Individuals are unemployed (F)

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SECTION 7

POVERTY PROFILE

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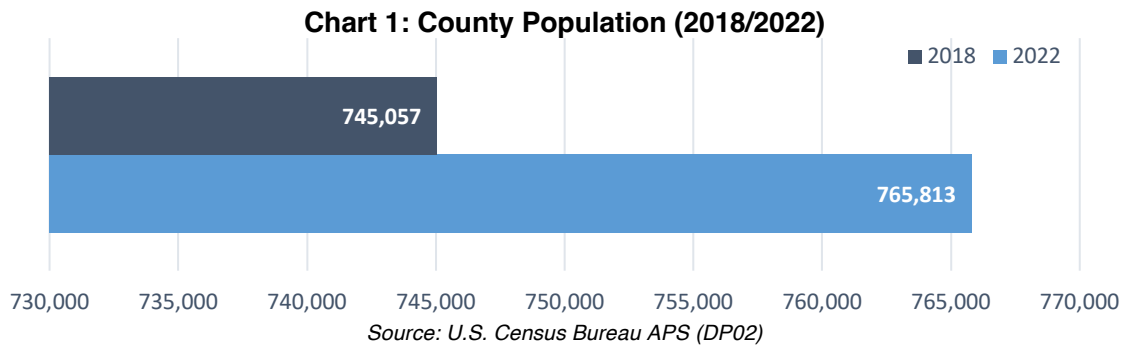
Demographics

Introduction:

Assessing the demographics of a community's residents is a fundamental step in conducting comprehensive research. These demographic insights serve as a foundation to which all other elements can be compared, and a cornerstone for understanding the multifaceted dynamics of the community. Examining population counts, trends in population change, migration patterns, and the distribution of residents by gender, age, race, and ethnicity provides critical context. This data offers a lens through which we can gain valuable insights into how poverty intersects with the broader community, helping to inform targeted strategies and policies that are sensitive to the diverse needs and circumstances of local residents.

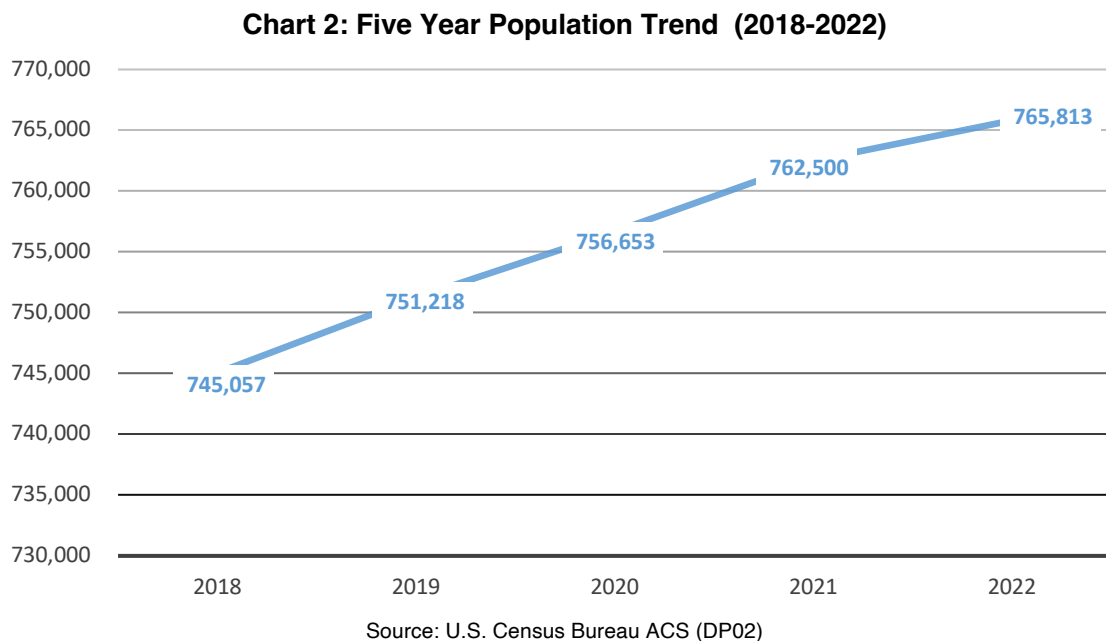
Total Population

According to the most recent data published by the U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey), an estimated 765,813 individuals reside in 291,171 households throughout the county.



Population Change

Over the past five years, the county has experienced an overall population increase of 2.79% from the 2018 estimate of 745,057



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Understanding and monitoring population changes are crucial for several reasons. First, population growth can be an indicator of economic vitality. When a region experiences population growth, it often signals that the area is attractive to individuals and families, potentially due to job opportunities, quality of life, or other factors. For Cobb County, a 2.79% increase over the past five years suggests a positive trend that could reflect improvements in economic conditions, housing availability, and other quality of life factors.

Second, population growth impacts demand for services and infrastructure. An increasing population requires more housing, schools, healthcare facilities, and other essential services. Planning and allocating resources effectively to meet these demands is essential for local government and community organizations. For example, with a growing population, Cobb County may need to invest more in expanding educational facilities and healthcare services to accommodate the needs of its residents.

Population Change Analysis

Migration refers to the movement of people into and out of an area. It is typically separated into two categories:

- **Inward migration**, which is the arrival of people from other areas, states, or countries, and can result in population growth. This might be driven by the availability of jobs, higher education opportunities, or a perceived higher quality of life.
- **Outward migration**, which involves residents leaving for other areas, often due to factors such as employment opportunities elsewhere, cost of living, retirement, or to be closer to family. It can result in a decrease in population.

When analyzing migration, one should look at both the gross migration (the total number of people moving in and out) and the net migration (the difference between the number of people moving in and moving out). Net migration will directly impact the overall population numbers and can provide insights into the area's economic health, social services, and community life.

Natural Growth, on the other hand, is the difference between birth rates and death rates within a community. Key points to consider include:

- **Births**, which reflects the number of live births experienced in the year. Factors that influence birth rates include socioeconomic status, access to healthcare and family planning services, cultural norms, and the age distribution of the population.
- **Deaths**, which reflects the number of deaths in a year. This can be influenced by public health policies, healthcare access, lifestyle choices, and the prevalence of chronic diseases.

A positive natural growth rate occurs when the birth rate exceeds the death rate, while a negative rate occurs when there are more deaths than births.

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Table 1: One Year Population Change Analysis (2021-2022)

Total Change	Births	Deaths	Moved In	Moved Out
+3,313	8,716	5,254	61,611	61,760

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02) | GA Dept of Public Health OASIS

Over the past year, data indicates that the total population increased by 3,313 individuals. There were 5,254 births and 5,254 deaths, reflective of a natural increase of 3,462 residents. This positive natural growth rate could be influenced by a growing young adult population or other factors that may require further investigation.

An estimated 61,611 people moved into the area, and 61,760 people moved out, resulting in a net migration decrease of 149 people, slightly offsetting the natural increase. While both in-migration and out-migration are relatively high, the net effect is negative, meaning more people are moving out of the area than moving in.

Population Migration

Focusing on migration patterns to the county, data indicates that the largest portion of new residents (59.66%) moved from another county within Georgia, with 32.12% moving from another state, and the remaining 8.22% from another country.

Table 2: One Year Population Migration Analysis (2021-2022)

Total	Another County	Another State	Another Country
61,611	36,759	19,790	5,062

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

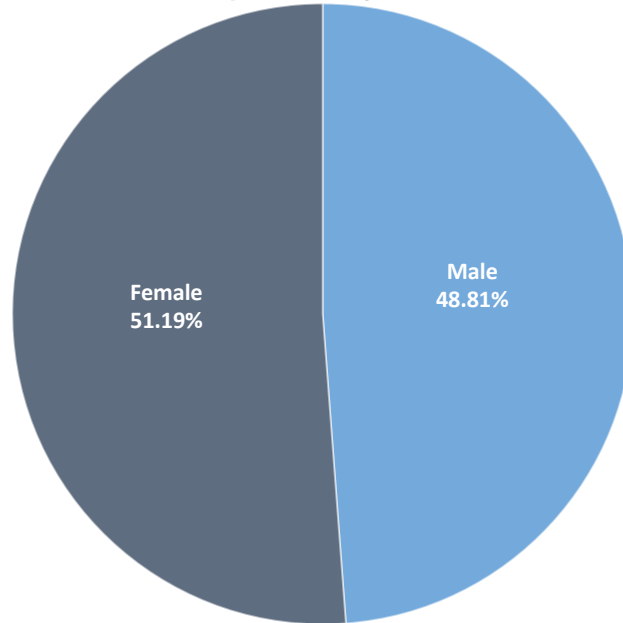
This migration trend suggests that Cobb County is an attractive destination for individuals from surrounding counties in Georgia, likely due to factors such as employment opportunities, quality of life, and other amenities. Understanding these migration patterns is essential for planning infrastructure, services, and community programs that meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.

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Gender

The population data for Cobb County reveals that the county is predominantly female. Of the total population, there are 373,782 males and 392,031 females. This results in a male-to-female ratio of approximately 0.95:1, indicating that there are slightly fewer males than females in the county.

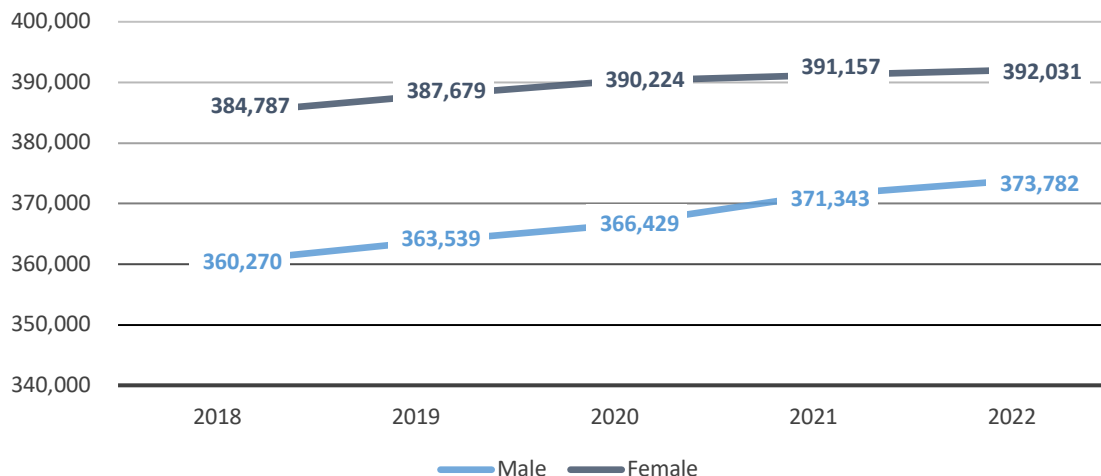
Chart 3: Population by Gender (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

Over the past five years, data indicates that the population of Cobb County has experienced steady growth for both males and females. In 2018, the male population was 360,270, increasing to 373,782 by 2022. This represents a rate of change of 3.75%. Similarly, the female population grew from 384,787 in 2018 to 392,031 in 2022, resulting in a rate of change of 1.88%. Although both populations have increased, the male population has grown at a faster rate than the female population which could indicate a future population shift if the current growth rates continue.

Chart 4: Gender Population Trend (2018-2022)



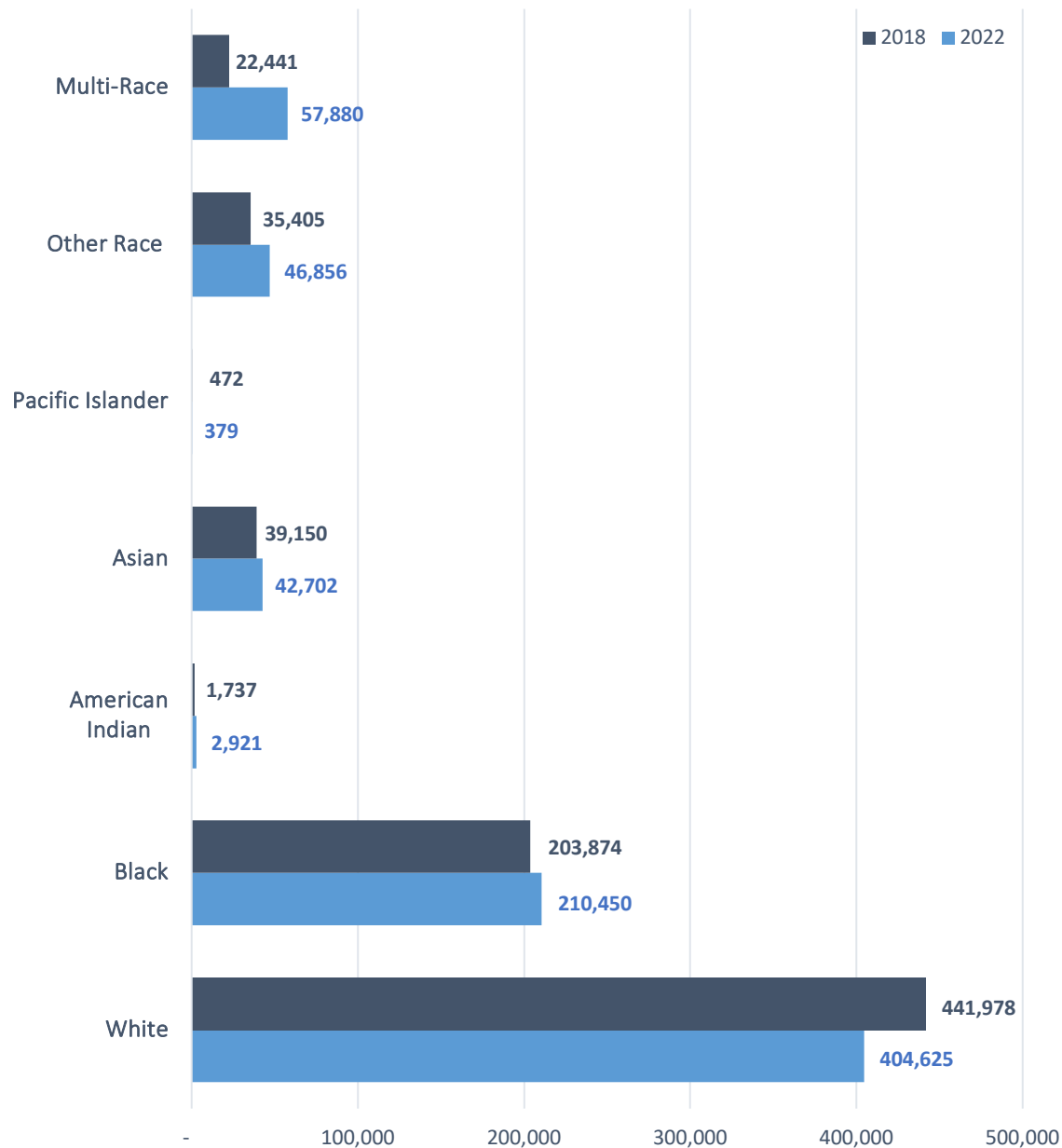
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Race

Race, as a social construct, is an integral aspect to consider in poverty studies due to its profound impact on an individual's access to resources, opportunities, and equitable treatment within societies. Historically and contemporaneously, racial groups have experienced varying degrees of systemic advantage or disadvantage, which can be reflected in differing poverty levels. Establishing a baseline of racial groups among all residents allows researchers to discern patterns and disparities in socio-economic conditions that are often closely linked with race. This baseline is critical for developing targeted interventions and policies aimed at reducing poverty and promoting community-wide economic opportunity. By understanding the racial demographics of a population, stakeholders can better identify and serve the specific needs of each racial group, ensuring that poverty alleviation efforts are both fair and effective.

Chart 5: Racial Profile (2018/2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

In 2022, the racial composition of Cobb County was predominantly White, accounting for approximately 52.8% of the population with 404,625 residents. The Black population made up 27.5% of the total with 210,450 residents. The Multi-Race category constituted 7.6% of the population with 57,880 residents, while those identifying as Other Race made up 6.1% with 46,856 residents. The Asian population was 5.6% of the total with 42,702 residents. American Indians comprised 0.4% with 2,921 residents, and Pacific Islanders were the smallest group at 0.05% with 379 residents.

Over the past five years, the most significant change was observed in the population identifying as Multi-Race, which increased by 157.92%, growing from 22,441 in 2018 to 57,880 in 2022. The American Indian population also saw a notable increase of 68.16%, rising from 1,737 in 2018 to 2,921 in 2022. The individuals identifying as Other Race also experienced a substantial increase of 32.34%, growing from 35,405 in 2018 to 46,856 in 2022. The Asian and Black populations both showed a modest increase of 9.07% and 3.23% respectively.

In contrast, two racial groups saw a decrease in their populations. The Pacific Islander population also saw a substantial decline of 19.70%, falling from 472 in 2018 to 379 in 2022. The White population, which is the largest racial group in Cobb County, saw a decline of 8.45%, decreasing from 441,978 in 2018 to 404,625 in 2022.

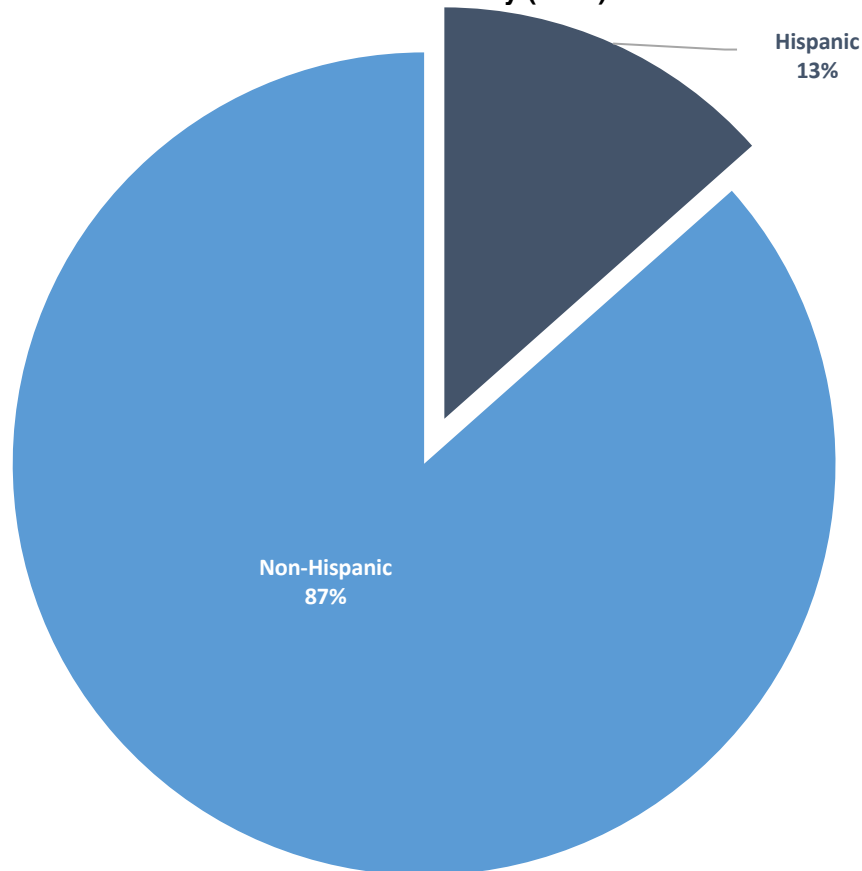
The diversity of Cobb County can be assessed using the Diversity Index (DI), which measures the probability that two people chosen at random will be of different races or ethnicities. Based on 2020 data, the community has a DI score of approximately 64. Compared to the U.S. national Diversity Index of approximately 61, Cobb County is slightly more diverse. Over the past five years, diversity in the county has increased by 2.69%.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to the shared cultural, linguistic, or ancestral characteristics of a group of people. Unlike race, which is associated primarily with physical traits, ethnicity is tied more to social identity and is often linked with a common geographic origin, shared language, religious traditions, and historical experiences. Within the scope of this project, we will narrow our focus to the Hispanic ethnic group, a diverse collection of individuals with cultural and linguistic bonds to Spain and Latin American countries. The Hispanic identity is not defined by race but by a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, including language, traditions, and a collective history.

Chart 6: Ethnicity (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

According to the United States Census Bureau, an estimated 103,006 local residents reported having a Hispanic ethnicity. This represents 13.45% of the county's total population, an increase of 7.73% from the data published five years ago. This increase was significantly slower than the state (+11.36%) trend and slightly faster than the national trend (+7.37%). Increases in this demographic throughout the community could influence various sectors, including education, healthcare, and public services, necessitating a strategic approach to ensure that these services are culturally responsive and linguistically accessible.

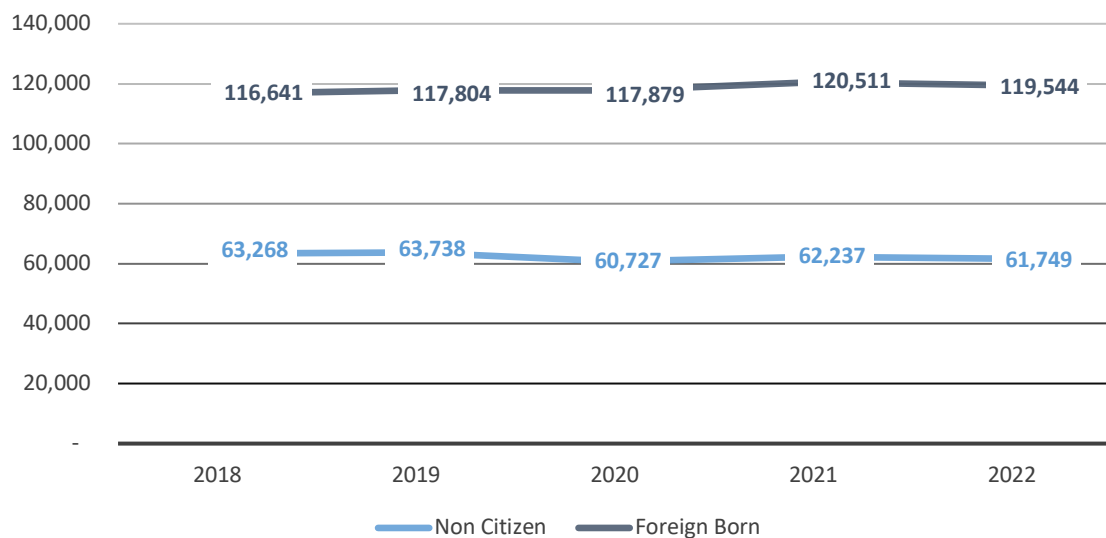
Among those who consider themselves Hispanic, 49.21% report that they were from Mexico, with smaller populations identified from Puerto Rico (11.54%), Cuba (3.73%), and other, non-identified, Latino countries (35.52%).

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Foreign-Born Residents

Tracking data on foreign-born individuals can be crucial in poverty research due to the unique socio-economic challenges these groups may face. Foreign-born residents, including non-citizens, often encounter systemic barriers to employment, healthcare, and education, which can predispose them to higher poverty rates. Their legal status may limit access to public assistance programs and influence their ability to secure stable, well-paying jobs. Additionally, language barriers and unfamiliarity with the host country's cultural and legal systems can further complicate their integration into the economy. By examining the circumstances of these populations, researchers can better understand the full landscape of poverty, identify the specific needs of these vulnerable groups, and inform policies aimed at reducing poverty among all residents.

Chart 7: Foreign Born Residents (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

The most recently published data indicates that an estimated 119,544 local residents, representing 15.61% of the county population, were born in a country outside of the United States. Among these, 61,749 were noted as being non-citizens. Over the past five years, the number of foreign-born residents increased by 2.49%, with the number of non-citizen individuals decreasing by 2.40%.

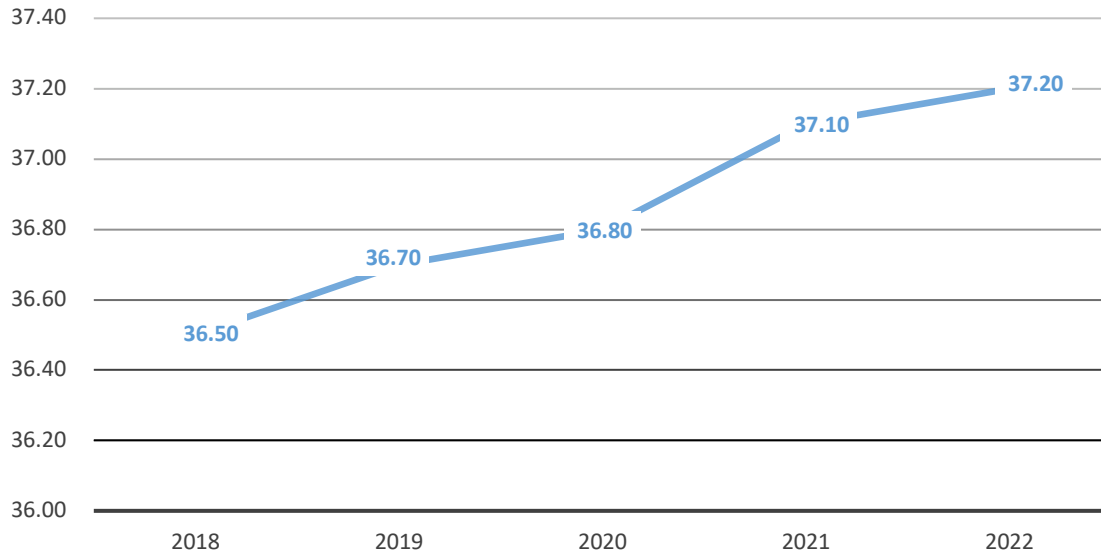
This data reveals a growing foreign-born population in Cobb County, indicating a need for targeted services and policies to support their integration and address the unique challenges they face. The high number of non-citizen residents, in particular, underscores the importance of creating accessible pathways to citizenship and ensuring that these individuals have access to essential resources such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. By addressing these needs, Cobb County can work towards reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for all its residents, including those who are foreign-born.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Age

Age, as a demographic variable, plays a critical role in understanding the dynamics of a population. It can provide insights into the stage of life most residents are in, which in turn affects housing, education, employment, and healthcare needs. Median age serves as a pivotal starting point, offering a snapshot of the population's age distribution by pinpointing the exact middle of the age spectrum.

Chart 8: Median Age Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

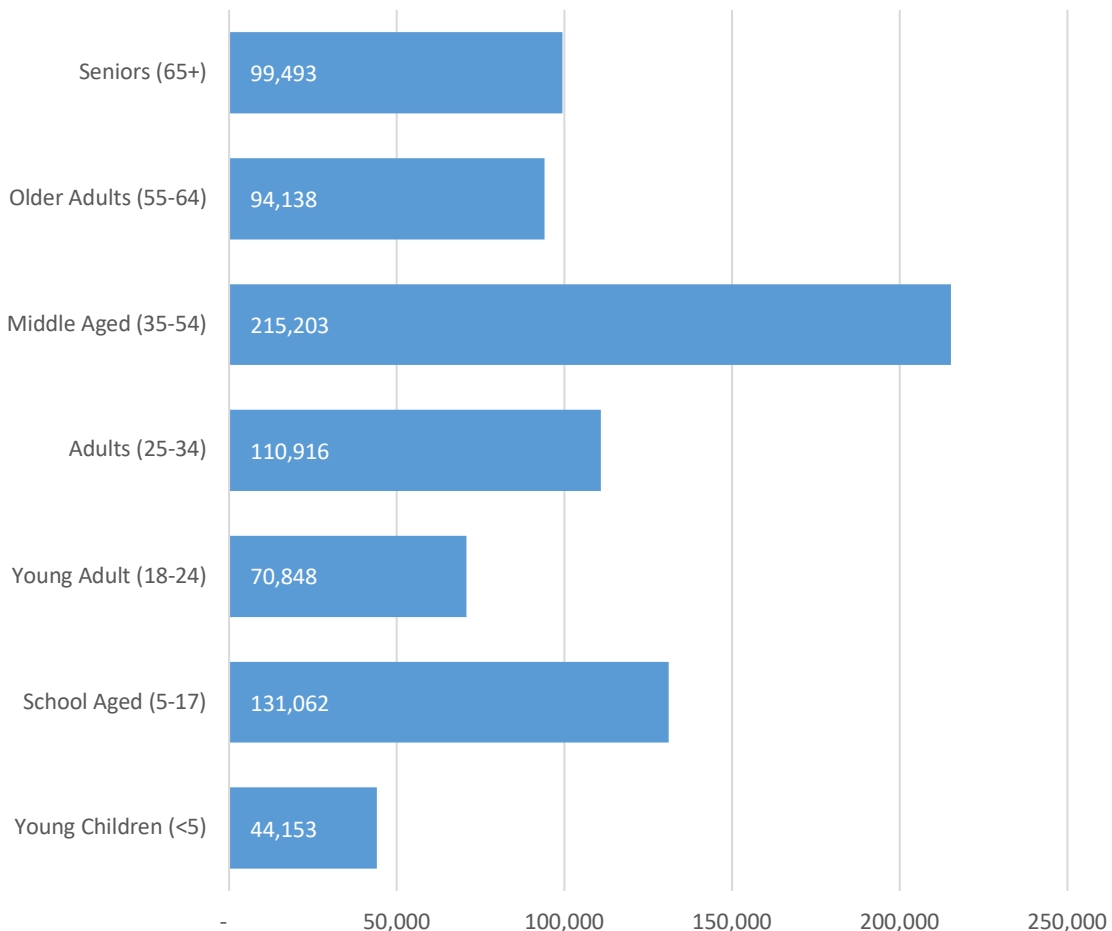
From 2018 to 2022, the median age in the county has experienced an upward trend from 36.50 to 37.20 years, an increase of approximately 1.92%. This rise in the median age suggests a gradually aging population. Such a trend can have several potential impacts on the county:

- **Healthcare:** A rising median age could lead to increased demand for healthcare services, particularly those [pertaining](#) to age-related conditions. Healthcare providers and policymakers may need to adjust resources to meet these demands.
- **Workforce:** An aging population might indicate a shift in the workforce, potentially leading to labor shortages in certain sectors. This could necessitate retraining programs for older workers or efforts to attract younger individuals to the county.
- **Housing:** There may be a growing need for housing options that cater to older adults, including downsizing opportunities and assisted living facilities.
- **Social Services:** As the population ages, there could be a greater need for social services that support senior living, including transportation, community engagement programs, and in-home care services.
- **Economic Impact:** The consumption patterns may shift as the population ages, affecting local economies and possibly prompting a change in the types of businesses and services that are successful in the county.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Analyzing the age distribution from largest to smallest, the following insights can be drawn from the population of Cobb County. The middle-aged group (35-54) is the largest, with 215,203 individuals. This age group is vital for the county's economy, contributing significantly to the labor market and local consumer spending. They are likely to be in their peak earning years and are essential for economic stability and growth. School aged children (5-17) is the second-largest group, totaling 131,062 individuals. This large number indicates a need for a strong education system. Ensuring quality education and after-school programs is critical for the development of this age cohort.

Chart 9: Population by Age Group (2022)



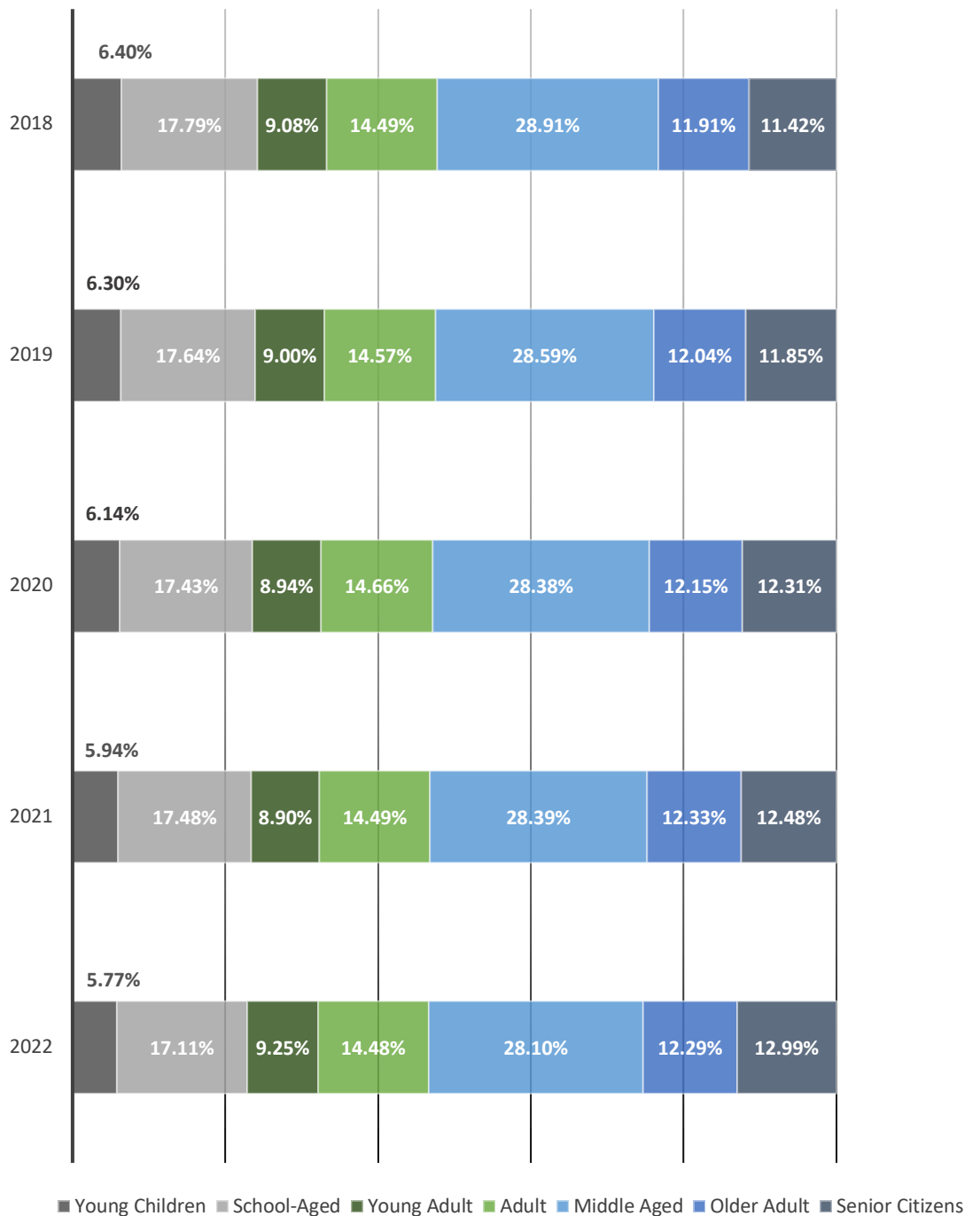
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

The adult group (25-34), comprising 110,916 individuals, represents early career professionals. They are crucial for injecting vitality and innovation into the community, highlighting the need for career development programs and higher education opportunities. The senior population, totaling 99,493 individuals, is a significant population of the county. This large number indicates a need for healthcare and senior services, including medical care, assisted living, and other support services for aging residents. The older adults (55-64) number 94,138 individuals. As they approach retirement, this cohort may start to place greater demands on healthcare services and retirement planning resources. They are also likely to transition into roles that require less physical activity, possibly affecting local labor markets.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The young adults (18-24) group includes 70,848 individuals who are typically in college or starting their careers. They bring energy and innovation to the community and underscore the need for accessible higher education and vocational training programs. The youngest cohort, children under 5, with 44,153 individuals, is the smallest group. This has implications for future educational planning and community services designed for early childhood development. Ensuring that young children have access to quality early childhood education and healthcare is critical for their long-term development.

Chart 10: Age Group Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



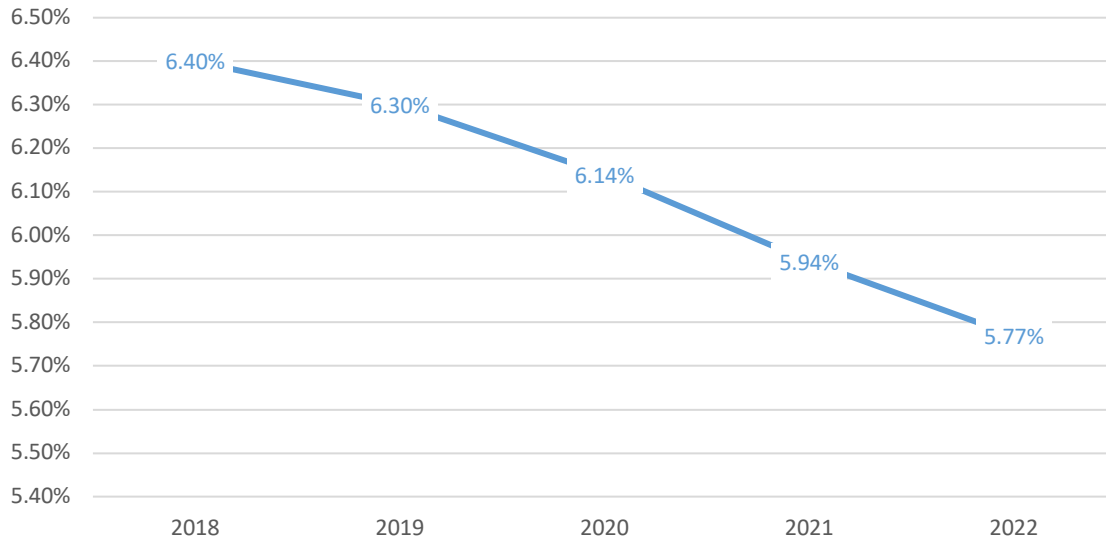
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Young Children (Age 0-4)

Between the ages of birth and four years of age, young children experience rapid cognitive, emotional, and physical development, laying the foundation for future learning and growth. This crucial stage is marked by significant milestones in language acquisition, social skills, and early education, making it a vital period for nurturing and structured learning experiences.

Chart 11: Young Children Population Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

Over the past five years, the young child population has decreased by 9.84% as a share of the total population. This decrease can have long-term implications for the community.

First, early childhood development programs, such as preschools and daycare centers, may see a decline in demand. This can lead to reduced revenues for these services, impacting their sustainability and potentially leading to closures or cutbacks. The availability of early childhood education is critical for cognitive and social development, so any decrease in these resources can have lasting effects on the developmental opportunities for children in the community.

Businesses that cater to young families, such as pediatric services, children's apparel, and toy stores, might also face challenges. A lower number of young children could translate into decreased clientele for such businesses, which could, in turn, impact local economies and job markets. The healthcare sector might also notice shifts, with pediatricians and child health services seeing a drop in demand, which could affect healthcare delivery and resource allocation.

From a demographic perspective, a community with fewer young children may experience a change in housing needs. Neighborhoods that once prioritized amenities like playgrounds and community centers may shift their focus towards other facilities. Housing developments may also adapt, with a possible move away from larger family homes towards housing suited for singles or couples without children.

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In terms of education, lower elementary school enrollment can result in a cascading effect as the population progresses through the educational system. School districts may need to reassess and reorganize resources, potentially consolidating schools or reallocating budgets. Looking ahead, the local workforce pipeline could be impacted, with fewer individuals entering the job market in the future, leading to potential skills shortages and a need to attract young workers from other areas.

For municipal services, fewer young children might mean less strain on certain public services in the short term. However, it also calls for thoughtful urban planning and community services to adapt to a changing demographic profile. The planning of parks, recreational facilities, and community programs might shift focus, potentially investing more in services for other age groups.

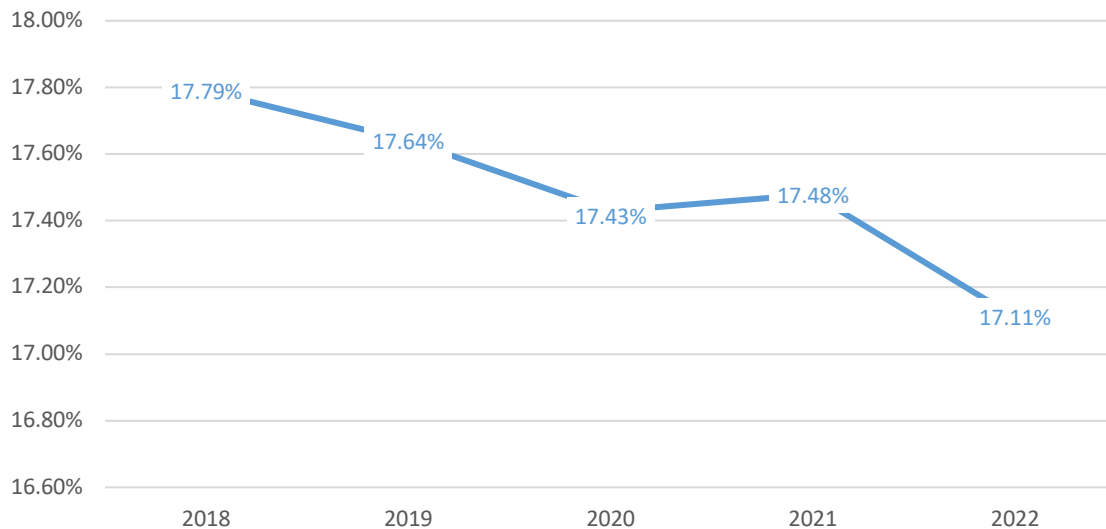
To counteract the potential negative impacts of a decreasing young child population, policymakers might need to develop strategies aimed at making the community more attractive to young families. This could include improving childcare affordability, enhancing parental leave policies, and ensuring there are plentiful and diverse employment opportunities for parents.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

School-Aged Children (Age 5-17)

As children transition from early childhood into their school-age years, they enter a dynamic period of growth that encompasses educational, social, and emotional development. Between the ages of five and eighteen, children embark on a journey through primary and secondary education, where they not only acquire fundamental academic knowledge but also develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a sense of identity. It's a transformative era where peer relationships, extracurricular activities, and increasing autonomy play pivotal roles in shaping their understanding of the world and their place within it. This age group's experiences in the classroom and beyond are instrumental in laying the groundwork for their future endeavors in higher education, vocational pursuits, and personal development.

Chart 12: School-Aged Children Population Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP 05)

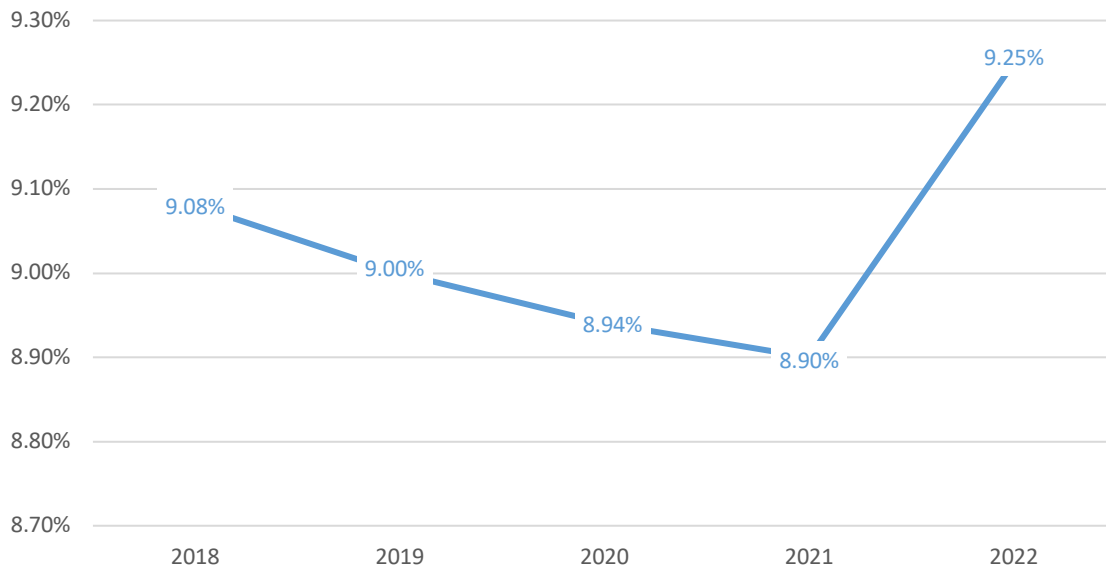
An estimated 131,062 school-aged children reside in the county served by the organization. Over the past five years, this population has experienced a decrease of 3.82%, with a slight increase noted in 2021. This fluctuating trend highlights a broader pattern of gradual decline, suggesting potential demographic shifts such as changes in birth rates, family dynamics, or migration patterns. Despite a brief uptick in 2021, the overall downward trajectory resumed, pointing to ongoing factors affecting the presence of school-aged children in the county. This decline could impact school enrollment and resource planning, underscoring the need for targeted strategies to address the evolving educational and social needs of this critical age group. Understanding these trends is essential for anticipating future demands on educational resources, community services, and economic support systems that directly affect the well-being and development of school-aged children.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Young Adults (Age 18-24)

The years from eighteen to twenty-four are a significant transition phase from adolescence to full-fledged adulthood. Young adults navigate complex life decisions regarding their careers, higher education, and personal relationships. During this pivotal time, they often experience newfound independence, leaving the structured environment of school for the wider arenas of university life or the workforce. It's a time characterized by exploration, self-discovery, and the initial steps towards long-term life goals. The choices made and the experiences gained in this life stage can profoundly shape their future paths and identities.

Chart 13: Young Adult Population Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

An estimated 70,848 young adults reside in the county served by the organization. From 2018 to 2021 the percentage of young adults in the population has seen a downward trend. In 2018, young adults comprised 9.08% of the population. This percentage decreased steadily, reaching 8.90% in 2021. There was a significant increase (+3.93%) to 9.25% in 2022 creating an overall change of +1.87% since 2018.

The presence of young adults significantly influences the vitality of local economies. They often fill entry-level positions and actively participate in the economy as consumers. A decrease in their numbers may pose challenges for businesses seeking employees, while an increase could drive economic growth and boost local markets.

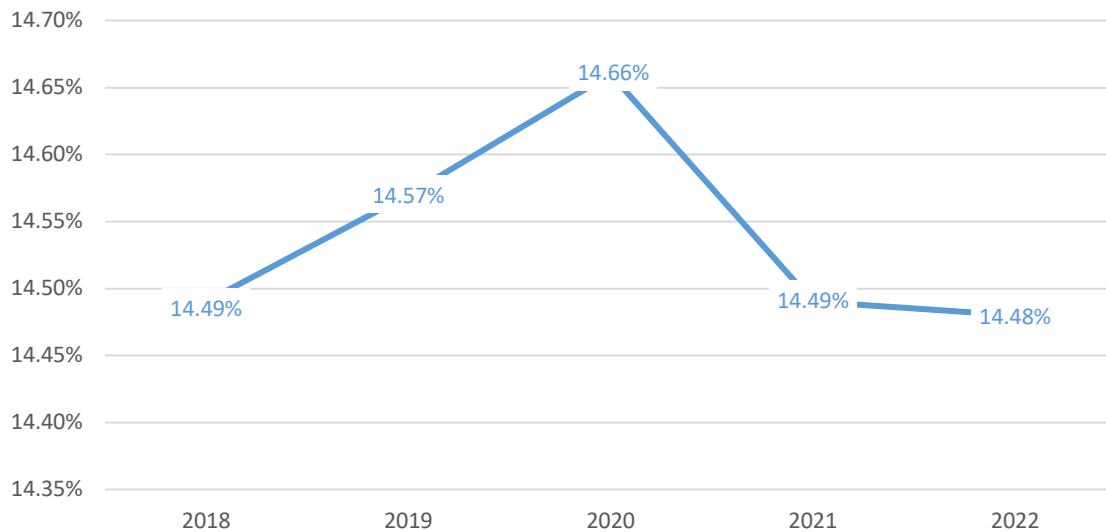
Young adults also play a crucial role in community life through volunteerism and civic engagement. A decline in their population may lead to reduced participation in community initiatives, weakening community-driven efforts. However, an increase could provide a much-needed boost to civic engagement and non-profits in the local area.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Adults (Age 25-34)

This decade in life typically involves significant milestones for many individuals, such as advancing in careers, forming long-term partnerships, or starting families. Adults in this age group are often settling into their chosen career paths, looking for stability, and making strides towards financial independence. This period is also marked by a deeper understanding of personal and professional relationships, as well as the impact of their contributions to society. The focus often shifts towards building a sustainable future and laying down roots, whether through homeownership, community involvement, or starting a family.

Chart 14: Adult Population Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

An estimated 110,916 adults aged 25-34 reside in the county served by the organization. Over the past five years, the percentage of this age group in the population has experienced fluctuations. In 2018, adults aged 25-34 made up 14.49% of the population. This percentage increased to a peak of 14.66% in 2020. However, by 2022, it had decreased to 14.48%. Overall, this represents a decrease of approximately 0.07 percentage points over the five-year period.

Adults in the 25-34 age range are key participants in the real estate market, and a decline in this group may impact demand for housing, particularly first homes and rental properties suitable for young families. Their presence is crucial for sustaining a vibrant housing market and ensuring a steady supply of affordable housing options.

As this is a prime age for starting families, a decrease in this demographic may lead to fewer children entering the local school system, which can affect future school enrollments and the provision of child-focused services. This could have long-term implications for educational planning and resource allocation within the county.

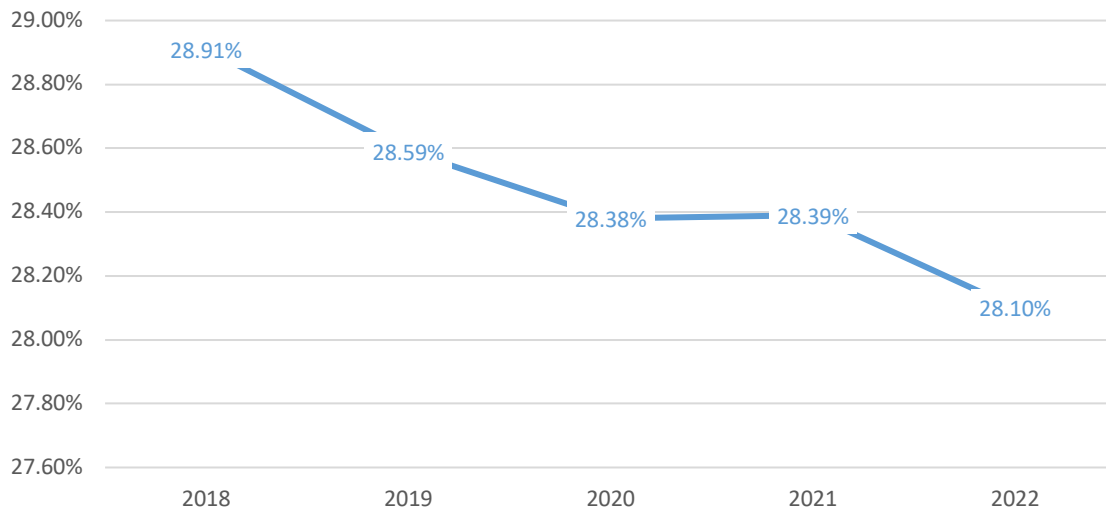
Also, a smaller population in this age group could pose challenges for workforce development. With fewer working-age adults available to replace retiring workers, there may be a shortage of skilled labor, particularly in sectors that require specialized skills or higher education. This could impact the local economy's ability to grow and adapt to changing market demands.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Middle-Aged Adults (35-54)

Often considered the backbone of the workforce and family units, middle-aged adults carry substantial responsibilities in supporting younger and older generations alike. This stage is characterized by peak career development, leadership roles, and the nurturing of families. It's a time where the balance between personal aspirations and commitments to others is finely managed. Health and well-being often come to the forefront, as the effects of aging become more apparent. Community engagement, financial planning for retirement, and supporting children's education or caring for aging parents are common themes in this life stage.

Chart 15: Middle-Aged Adult Population Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

An estimated 215,203 middle-aged adults reside in the county served by the organization. Over the past five years, the percentage of middle-aged adults in the population has experienced a slight decline. In 2018, middle-aged adults comprised 28.19% of the population. By 2022, this percentage had decreased to 28.10%. This represents an overall decline of approximately 2.80 percentage points over the five-year period.

Middle-aged adults typically hold significant experience and often occupy key positions in the workforce. A decrease in their numbers might challenge local industries that rely on this depth of experience, potentially leading to a shortage of skilled professionals and leaders. This could also impact mentorship opportunities for younger workers and the transfer of institutional knowledge.

As established professionals, middle-aged adults are likely to be at their peak earning potential, contributing substantially to the local economy through spending and taxes. A decline in this population may lead to reduced economic activity and a smaller tax base, which could affect public services and infrastructure investment.

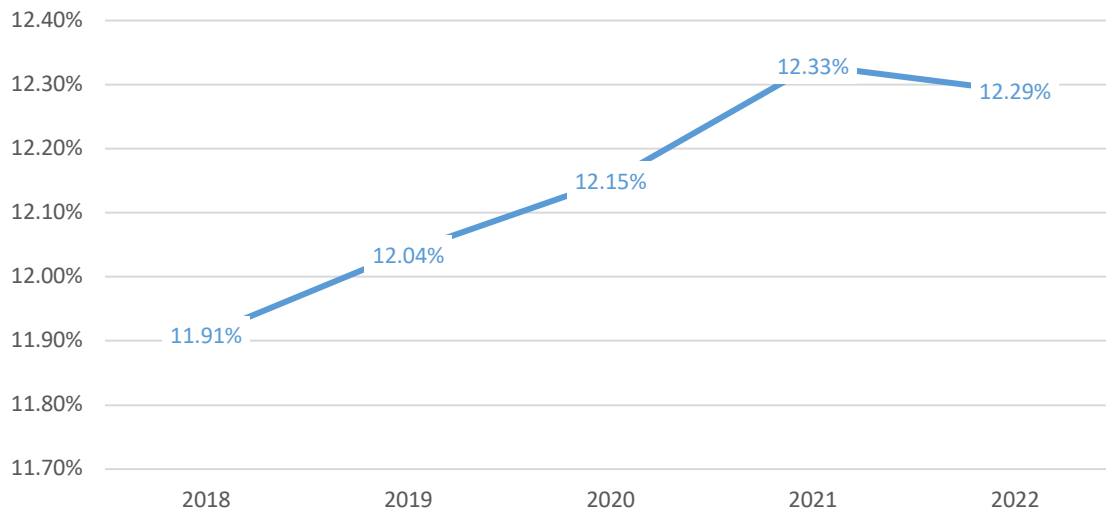
Middle-aged adults are often involved in the care of both their children and aging parents. A decrease in this demographic could lead to less demand for certain educational services and extracurricular activities but may also strain resources for eldercare if the proportion of elderly in the population is growing. This could place an increased burden on social services and healthcare systems.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Older Adults (55-64)

As they approach the traditional retirement age, older adults begin to contemplate life beyond the workforce. It's a phase often associated with reflection on past achievements and the anticipation of a slower-paced life, with a focus on leisure, personal interests, and family. For many, it's also a time to plan earnestly for retirement, both financially and emotionally, and to make adjustments to living arrangements that accommodate changing mobility or health concerns. Despite these changes, many continue to contribute significantly to the workforce, their families, and society, offering experience, wisdom, and mentorship.

Chart 16: Older Adult Population Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

An estimated 94,138 older adults aged 55-64 reside in the county served by the organization. Over the past five years, the percentage of older adults in the population has increased. In 2018, older adults comprised 11.91% of the population. This percentage increased to a peak of 12.33% in 2021 before declining slightly to 12.29% in 2022. This represents an overall increase of approximately 3.19% over the five-year period.

Older adults typically bring significant experience and often occupy senior positions in the workforce. As they transition out of these roles, there can be challenges for local industries that rely on their depth of experience, potentially leading to a shortage of skilled professionals and leaders. Additionally, this demographic shift could impact mentorship opportunities for younger workers and the transfer of institutional knowledge.

As established professionals, older adults are likely to be at a high earning potential before retirement, contributing substantially to the local economy through spending and taxes. A decline in this population may lead to reduced economic activity and a smaller tax base, which could affect public services and infrastructure investment.

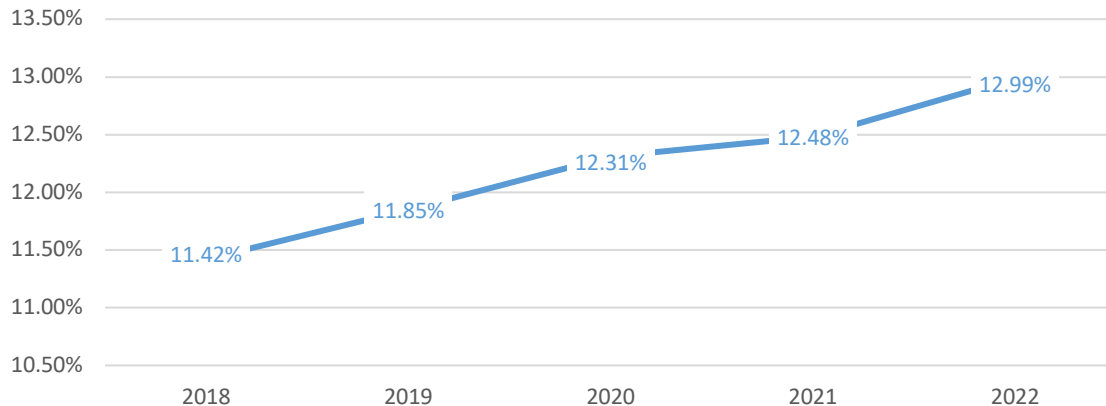
Moreover, older adults often play a crucial role in supporting their families, whether through caregiving for elderly parents or providing financial and emotional support to their children and grandchildren. As their numbers fluctuate, there could be varying demands on social services, healthcare systems, and community support structures. Planning for these demographic changes is essential to ensure that the needs of older adults are met while maintaining the economic and social health of the community.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Senior Citizens (Age 65+)

Entering the senior years, individuals often experience significant lifestyle changes with retirement, changes in health status, and shifts in social dynamics. It's a period that can bring more leisure time and opportunities for travel, hobbies, and community involvement. Seniors may also face challenges such as managing health care needs, maintaining independence, and adjusting to the loss of peers and partners. This age group contributes to society through volunteerism, the transmission of knowledge and cultural values, and as active participants in the lives of their families and communities. Their well-being is influenced by the degree of their social support, economic security, and the quality of health care services they receive.

Chart 17: Senior Citizen Population Percentage Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP05)

An estimated 99,493 senior citizens aged 65 and older reside in the county served by the organization. Over the past five years, the percentage of senior citizens in the population has steadily increased. In 2018, senior citizens comprised 11.42% of the population. By 2022, this percentage had risen to 12.99%. This represents an overall increase of 13.75% over the five-year period.

The growing proportion of senior citizens in the population indicates an aging community, which can have several implications. As more individuals retire, there may be increased demand for healthcare services, senior housing, and community support programs designed to help seniors maintain their independence and quality of life. This demographic shift could also impact the local economy, with a potential decrease in the workforce and changes in consumer spending patterns.

Senior citizens contribute significantly to society through volunteerism and the transmission of cultural values and knowledge. Their involvement in community activities and family life enriches the social fabric of the county. However, the increase in the senior population also means that there will be a greater need for services that support their health and well-being, including access to medical care, transportation, and social services.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Households

A household, as defined by the Census Bureau, consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit, whether they are related or not. This unit could be a house, an apartment, a mobile home, or even a group of rooms that is intended as separate living quarters.

The data from 2022 indicates that there are approximately 291,171 households within the community served, an increase of 5.03% from 2018's estimate of 277,222.

Table 3: Number of Households (2018/2022)

Area	2018	2022	# Change	% Change
<i>Cobb</i>	277,222	291,171	+13,949	+5.03%
<i>State</i>	3,709,488	3,946,490	+237,002	+6.39%
<i>Nation</i>	119,730,128	125,736,353	+6,006,225	+5.02%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

The increase in households in Cobb County, though slightly lower than the state average, exceeds the national growth rate. This suggests a relatively healthy growth in the housing market within the county, driven by factors such as population growth, economic opportunities, and possibly an influx of new residents.

The growth in the number of households has several implications. It may indicate a need for more housing units, potentially leading to new residential developments and construction projects. This growth can also impact local infrastructure, necessitating improvements in utilities, transportation, and public services to accommodate the increasing number of households. Additionally, the expansion of households can influence the local economy by boosting demand for goods and services, contributing to overall economic development.

While both population and household numbers have grown, the average household size in Cobb County has decreased from 2.65 in 2018 to 2.60 in 2022, a decline of 1.89%. This trend is slightly less than state and national patterns, where average household sizes have also decreased. In the state, the average household size dropped from 2.71 to 2.65, a reduction of 2.21%, and nationally, it fell from 2.63 to 2.57, a decline of 2.28%.

Table 4: Average Household Size Comparison (2018/2022)

Area	2018	2022	% Change
<i>Cobb</i>	2.65	2.60	-1.89%
<i>State</i>	2.71	2.65	-2.21%
<i>Nation</i>	2.63	2.57	-2.28%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

The interplay between population growth and household numbers impacts the average household size. Although the population of the community has increased, the number of households has grown at a faster rate, resulting in a decrease in the average household size. This could be due to several factors, including an increase in single-person households, changes in family structures, or a preference for smaller family units.

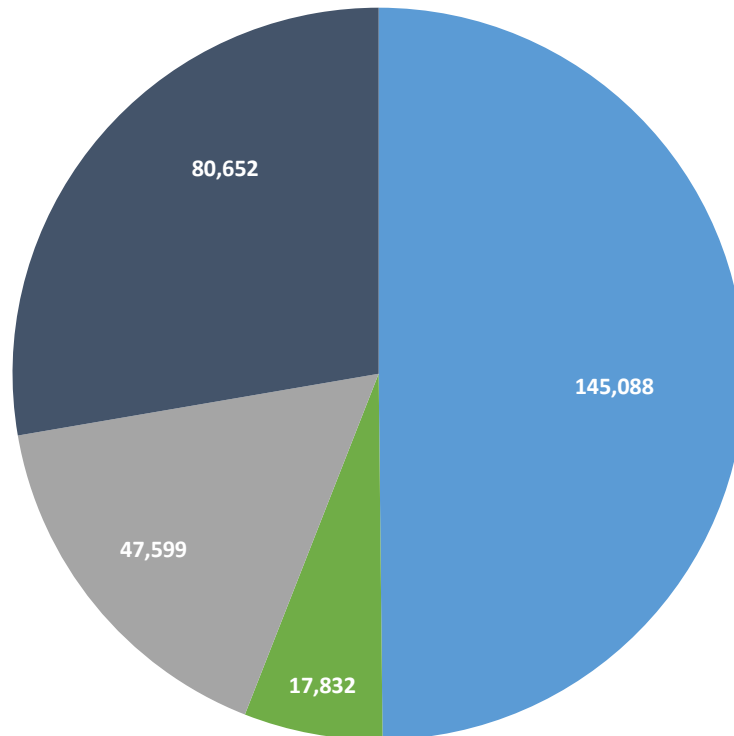
2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Household Profiles

In the analysis of poverty, understanding household composition is critical because different household types often have varying levels of vulnerability and resource needs. By examining the changes in household types, we can gain insights into the socio-economic dynamics of the community and identify which groups may need more support.

Chart 18: Household Type Comparison (2022)

■ Married Couple Families (41.46%) ■ Cohabiting Couple Households (6.82%)
■ Male HOH w/ no Partner or Spouse (19.19%) ■ Female HOH w/ no Partner or Spouse (32.54%)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

The number of married couple families increased from 141,901 in 2019 to 145,088 in 2022, representing a growth rate of 2.25%. The stability typically associated with these households supports a variety of economic activities, from real estate to consumer spending. Nonetheless, it's important to recognize the diversity within this group, including disparities in income, work-life balance, and need for social services, particularly among households with single earners or those caring for elderly relatives.

Cohabiting couple households saw a significant increase from 14,136 in 2019 to 17,832 in 2022, a growth rate of 26.15%. Cohabiting adult households often benefit from shared financial responsibilities and dual incomes, which can buffer against economic hardship. However, they may lack certain legal benefits granted to married couples, highlighting a potential area for legal advocacy and policy development to ensure equitable rights and protections.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The number of male-headed households with no partner or spouse increased from 45,513 in 2019 to 47,599 in 2022, a gain of 4.58%. Single male households, although less impacted by poverty than their female counterparts, are generally more unstable than households with two adults. These households often face significant economic challenges, especially if they are single parents or have lower incomes.

Female-headed households with no partner or spouse increased from 78,824 in 2019 to 80,652 in 2022, representing a growth rate of 2.32%. Single female households often have the highest risk of poverty, especially those with children. This group highlights the importance of targeted interventions to support single mothers and women-led households to improve their economic stability and reduce poverty rates.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Households with Children

Among the various household types in the county, an estimated 94,522 were noted as including at least one child under the age of 18. This is a decrease of 2,653 households (-2.73%) over the past five years. Although increases were noted on state and national levels, they were not significant at +1.13% and +1.02% respectively.

Table 5: Households with Children (2018/2022)

Area	2018	2022	# Change	% Change
<i>Cobb</i>	97,175	94,522	-2,653	-2.73%
<i>State</i>	1,265,807	1,280,171	+14,364	+1.13%
<i>Nation</i>	37,574,321	37,956,469	+382,148	+1.02%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

Households with Seniors

During the same time period, the number of households containing seniors increased from 59,706 to 70,293 (+17.73%). This increase is significantly higher than the state (+15.65%) and national (+12.73%) averages.

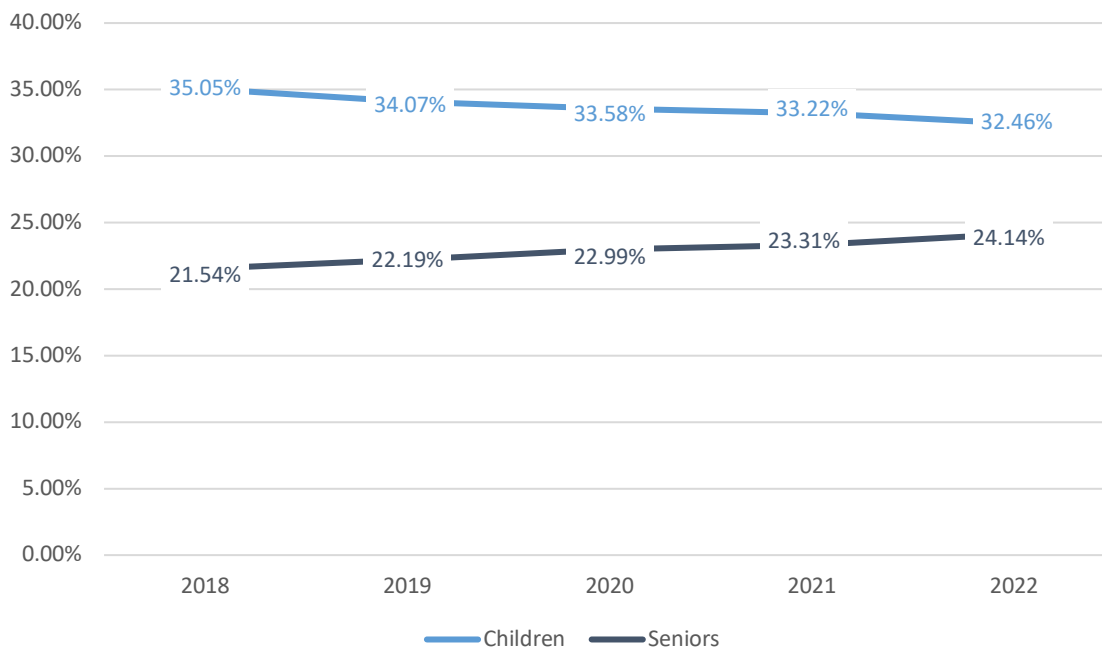
Table 6: Households with Seniors (2018/2022)

Area	2018	2022	# Change	% Change
<i>Cobb</i>	59,706	70,293	+10,587	+17.73%
<i>State</i>	951,751	1,100,720	+148,969	+15.65%
<i>Nation</i>	34,395,751	38,775,247	+4,379,496	+12.73%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

When comparing the data trends associated with households containing children (-7.39%) to those containing senior citizens (+12.07%), it is expected that a demographic shift will occur in 2029, with the number of households with seniors exceeding the number of households with children.

Chart 19: HH with Seniors vs. HH with Children Trend Comparison (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP02)

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Observations:

The demographic analysis of Cobb County reveals that the county's population and household numbers have been steadily increasing. According to the most recent data, Cobb County has a total population of 765,813 individuals residing in 291,171 households, reflecting a population growth of 2.79% and a household increase of 5.03% over the past five years. This growth is driven by economic opportunities and migration patterns, making Cobb County an attractive destination.

The county's demographics show a diverse racial and ethnic composition, with the largest group being White (52.8%), followed by Black residents (27.5%), Multi-Racial individuals (7.6%), and other racial groups. The Hispanic population has grown by 7.73% in the last five years, representing 13.45% of the total population. Cobb County's Diversity Index of 64 is higher than the national average of 61, with an increase of 2.69% over the past five years.

Population trends indicate positive natural growth, with births exceeding deaths and a relatively balanced migration pattern, although there has been a slight net loss due to outward migration. The median age of the population has increased from 36.50 to 37.20 years, suggesting an aging trend. Notably, the number of households with seniors has increased by 17.73%, while those with children have declined by 2.73%.

These demographic shifts point to a significant future change: projections suggest that by 2029, households with seniors will outnumber those with children, driven by a combination of an aging population and declining birth rates. This anticipated shift will likely affect community services, healthcare needs, and social support structures, highlighting the need for strategic planning to address the evolving demographic landscape. As Cobb County continues to grow and diversify, targeted interventions will be essential to meet the needs of its changing population and ensure that both the young and elderly have access to the resources and support they require.

Conclusion: Strengths

Cobb County's population growth and increasing diversity reflect a vibrant and evolving community. The rise in the Multi-Race and Hispanic populations adds to the cultural richness of the area, and overall population growth suggests a robust local economy. The presence of a large middle-aged group supports local economic stability, contributing significantly to the workforce and consumer market. Additionally, the increasing number of households with seniors highlights opportunities for expanding healthcare, senior services, and community engagement programs that cater to older adults.

Conclusion: Potential Concerns

Despite positive growth, there are challenges related to the demographic shifts in Cobb County. The decline in the population of young children and school-aged youth could lead to lower future school enrollments, affecting funding and resource allocation for educational institutions. The aging population may strain healthcare services and increase the need for age-appropriate housing and social support systems. Racial disparities persist, particularly among Black and Hispanic populations, which face higher poverty rates and systemic barriers. The data suggests that more targeted interventions are needed to address the needs of these vulnerable groups and to ensure equitable access to opportunities and resources across all demographic segments.

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Income & Poverty

Introduction

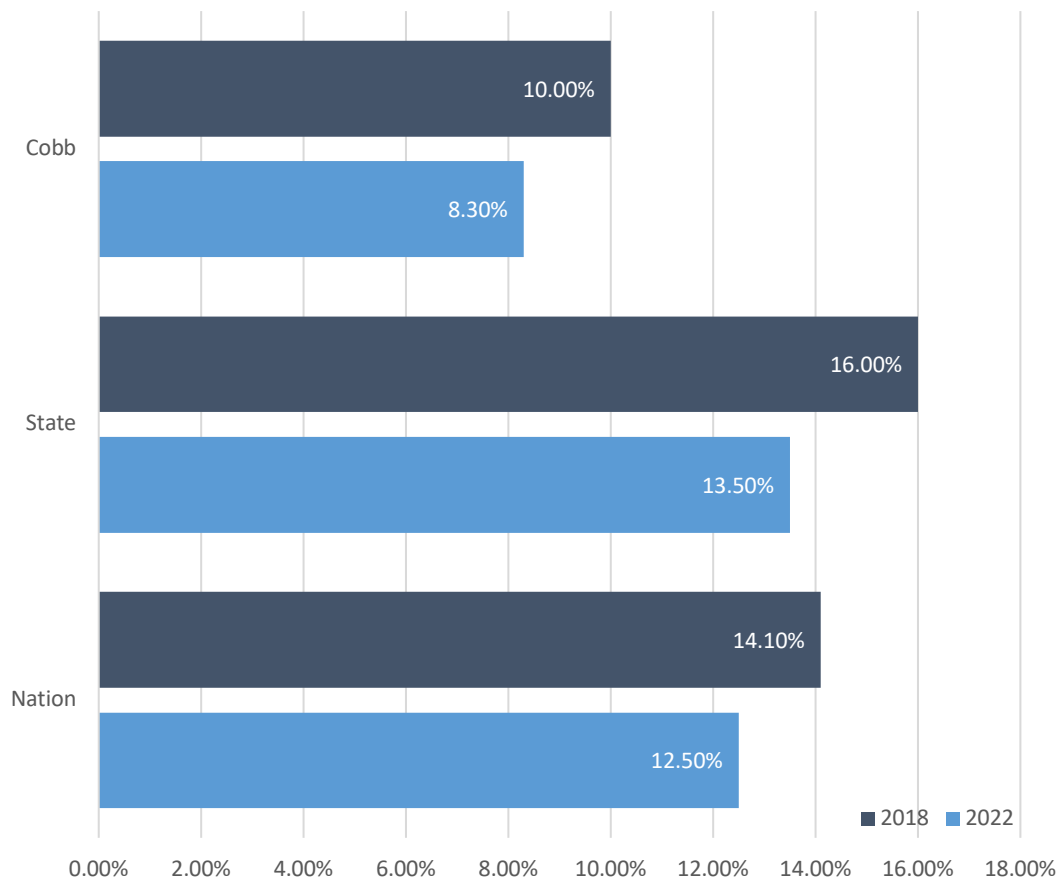
Poverty is simply defined as a state or condition in which a person lacks sufficient financial resources to maintain a minimum standard of living. This insufficiency hinders an individual's ability to secure adequate housing, access clean water, procure healthy food, and receive necessary healthcare. Determining poverty rates involves quantifying this deficit relative to established benchmarks. For the context of this project, these rates will be assessed based on the poverty threshold set by the United States government. This monetary benchmark varies depending on family size and composition to objectively measure and compare the economic well-being of community members.

Poverty Rates

The poverty rate is a statistical measure used to assess the prevalence of poverty within a specific population or geographic area. It quantifies the proportion of individuals or households living below a certain income threshold, known as the poverty line.

During the most recently completed Census study, an estimated 62,536 members of the county's population, or 8.30% of all individuals, were identified as having incomes below 100% of the national poverty level. It should be noted that this rate is lower than both the state (13.50%) and national (12.50%) averages.

Chart 20: Poverty Rates (2018/2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S1701)

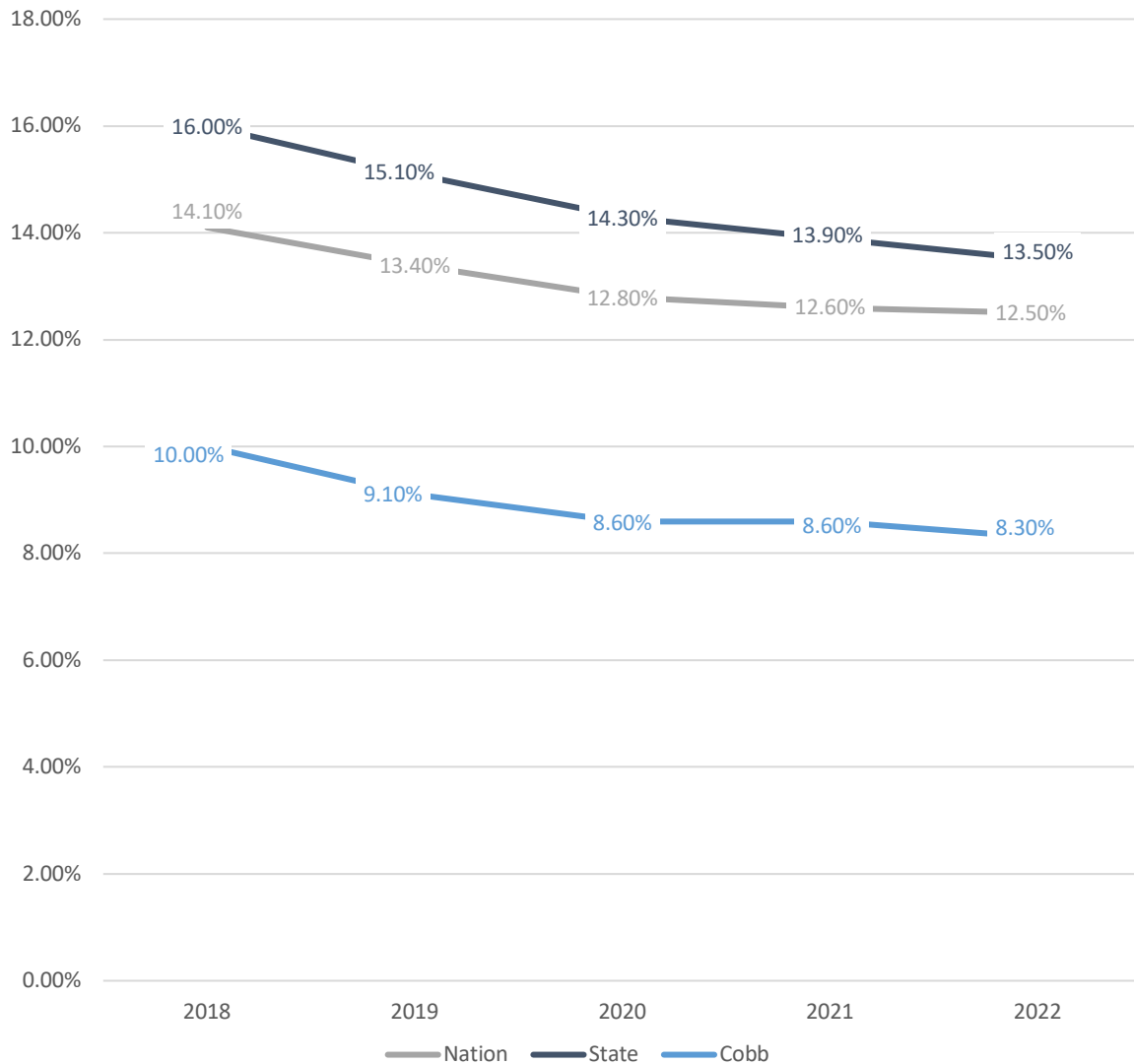
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Poverty Trend

Understanding poverty trends is crucial for both comprehending current economic challenges and anticipating future conditions. Historical poverty data can reveal patterns and trajectories, allowing us to predict whether economic circumstances for low-income populations are likely to improve or worsen. By analyzing these trends, we can proactively address potential issues, adapt strategies to emerging needs, and implement effective solutions aimed at reducing poverty. This foresight is vital for shaping policies and programs designed to enhance economic stability and support those in need.

Between 2018 and 2022, Cobb County's poverty rate experienced a net decrease of 17.00%, dropping from 10.00% to 8.30%. Similarly, both the state and national averages experienced significant decreases, with the state rate dropping by 15.63% and the national rate by 11.35%. Cobb County's poverty rate is significantly lower than the state and national averages and continues to drop at a faster rate.

Chart 21: Poverty Rate Trend (2018—2022)



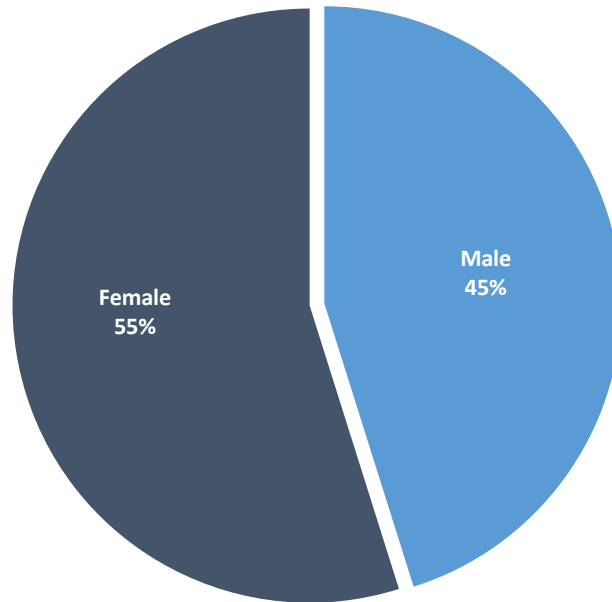
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S1701)

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Poverty by Gender

Evaluating poverty rates by gender provides insight into potential barriers that can contribute to economic disparities. This knowledge can inform the development of targeted policies and programs that address unique challenges faced by men and women, such as wage gaps, employment opportunities, access to education, and healthcare. Recognizing these nuances ensures that anti-poverty strategies are equitable and effective, promoting gender equality and empowering all individuals to achieve financial stability and self-sufficiency.

Chart 22: Percentage of Population in Poverty by Gender (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S1701)

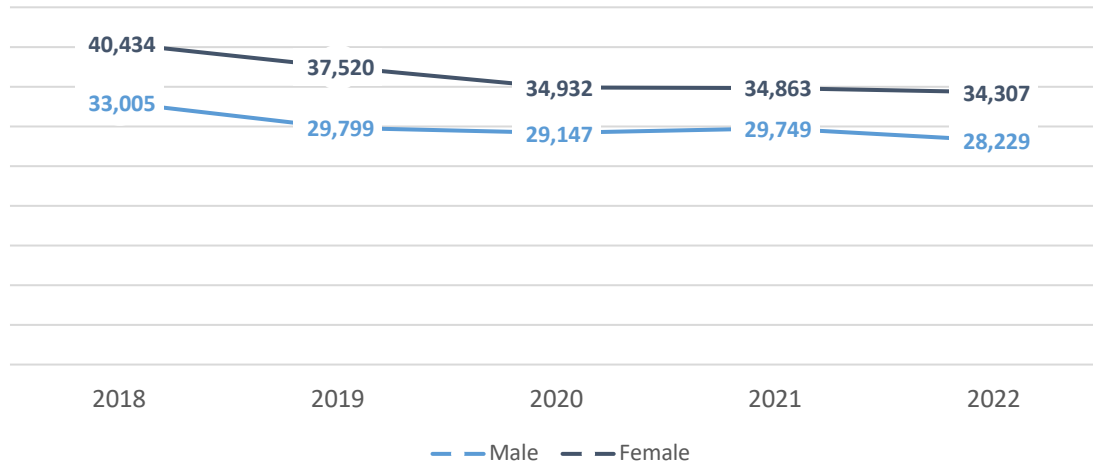
The data indicates that the largest portion of the low-income population (54.86%) are women, with 45.14% identifying as male. Women are also more likely to live in poverty, with a rate of 8.90% as compared to 7.70% for their male counterparts.

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Poverty Trend by Gender

Between 2018 and 2022, the number of males living in poverty decreased from 33,005 to 28,229. This represents a net decrease of 4,776 individuals over the five-year period, with a rate of change of approximately 14.47%. In comparison, the number of females living in poverty decreased from 40,434 in 2018 to 34,307 in 2022. This represents a net decrease of 6,127 individuals over the same period, with a rate of change of approximately 15.15%.

Chart 23: Population in Poverty Trend by Gender (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S1701)

The data indicates that the number of females living in poverty has decreased at a slightly higher rate, suggesting that the gap between males and females in poverty is decreasing. The continued gap highlights the persistent economic challenges faced by women, which may include lower wages, higher childcare responsibilities, and a greater likelihood of being single parents.

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Poverty by Age

Understanding poverty rates by age is crucial as it highlights the distinct economic vulnerabilities experienced at different life stages. Young children in poverty may face developmental challenges, while working-age adults may struggle with employment stability. Elderly individuals may confront inadequate retirement resources, affecting their quality of life. By analyzing poverty through an age-based lens, interventions can be designed to provide age-appropriate support, such as child nutrition programs, job training for adults, and income security for seniors, ensuring that each age group receives the focused assistance they need to overcome the specific challenges of poverty they face.

Table 7: Poverty Data by Age Group Comparison (2018/2022)

Age Group	2018		2022		Change	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
<5	6,554	13.90%	4,509	10.40%	-2,045	-31.20%
5-17	17,638	13.50%	13,524	10.40%	-4,114	-23.32%
18-34	21,997	13.00%	19,710	11.20%	-2,287	-10.40%
35-64	21,972	7.20%	18,056	5.90%	-3,916	-17.82%
65+	5,278	6.30%	6,737	6.90%	+1,459	+27.64%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S1701)

Among the youngest members of the community, children under 5 years old had 4,509 low-income individuals in 2022, with a poverty rate of 10.40%. This group saw the most substantial decrease in poverty, with the rate dropping by 31.20% from 13.90% in 2018, indicating the positive impact of early intervention programs. Children aged 5-17 also experienced notable improvements, with 13,524 individuals living in poverty in 2022 and a poverty rate of 10.40%, down 23.32% from 13.50% in 2018. These reductions reflect the effectiveness of educational support, after-school programs, and family assistance services in supporting school-aged children.

Young adults aged 18-34 reported 19,710 low-income individuals in 2022, with a poverty rate of 11.20%, a decrease of 10.40% from 13.00% in 2018. While this group continues to face economic challenges related to early career instability and high living costs, the downward trend in poverty rates suggests some economic stabilization. Adults aged 35-64 had 18,056 low-income individuals with a poverty rate of 5.90% in 2022, reflecting a 17.82% decrease from 7.20% in 2018. This demographic, representing the core of the workforce, benefited from improved employment opportunities and economic resilience, although ongoing efforts are needed to address underemployment and rising living costs.

In contrast, senior citizens aged 65 and older saw an increase in poverty rates, with 6,737 individuals in poverty and a rate of 6.90% in 2022, up 27.64% from 6.30% in 2018. This growing economic vulnerability among seniors highlights significant challenges, such as fixed incomes, healthcare expenses, and insufficient retirement savings, which require targeted support through healthcare assistance and social security benefits.

Overall, young adults aged 18-34 have the highest poverty rate at 11.20%, while adults aged 35-64 have the lowest rate at 5.90%. The greatest improvement was observed in children under 5 years old, with a 31.20% decrease, while senior citizens experienced a worsening situation. These findings illustrate the need for continued, age-specific interventions to support vulnerable groups and sustain progress in poverty reduction efforts across the community.

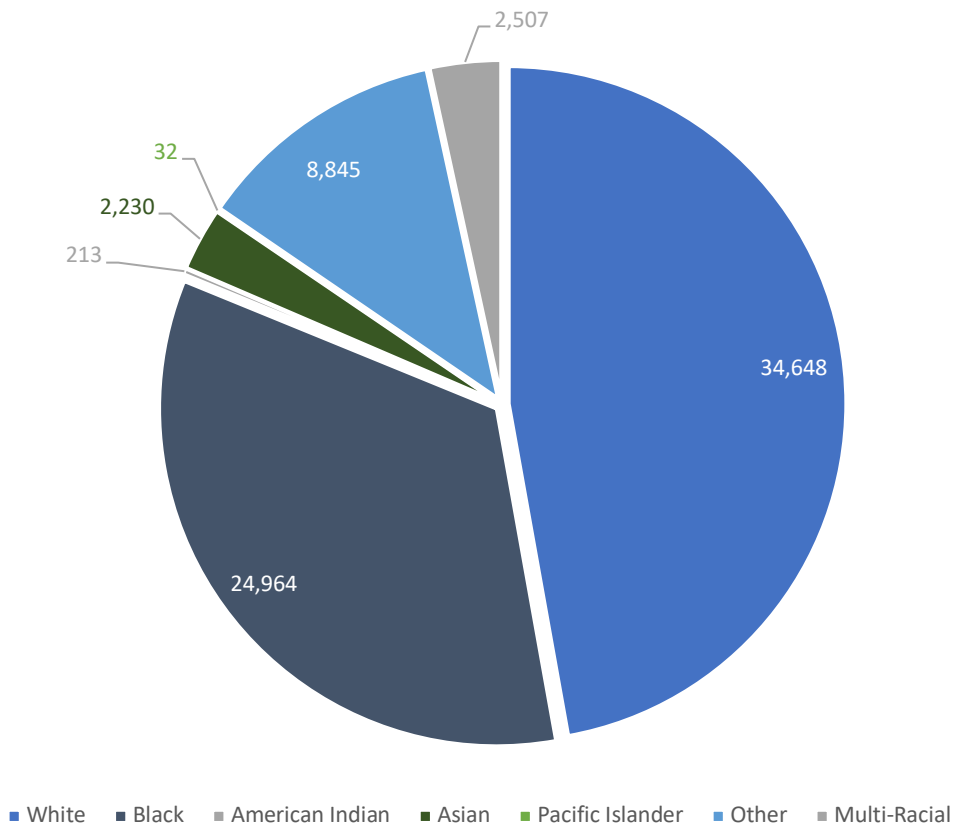
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Poverty by Race

Analyzing poverty rates by race reveals the systemic inequalities that contribute to disparate economic conditions among different racial groups. This data can guide targeted policies and programs to address the specific barriers that minority populations often face, including discrimination, unequal access to education, and job opportunities. It helps in ensuring that efforts to alleviate poverty are equitable and effective, promoting social justice and economic inclusivity.

When considering the race of those living in poverty, the largest portion identified as White (77.21%), followed by those identifying as Black (55.63%), and much smaller portions that identify as a race not specified in the survey (19.71%), multi-racial (5.59%), Asian (4.97%), American Indian (0.47%). The remaining 0.07% identified as Pacific Islander.

Chart 24: Population in Poverty by Race (2022)

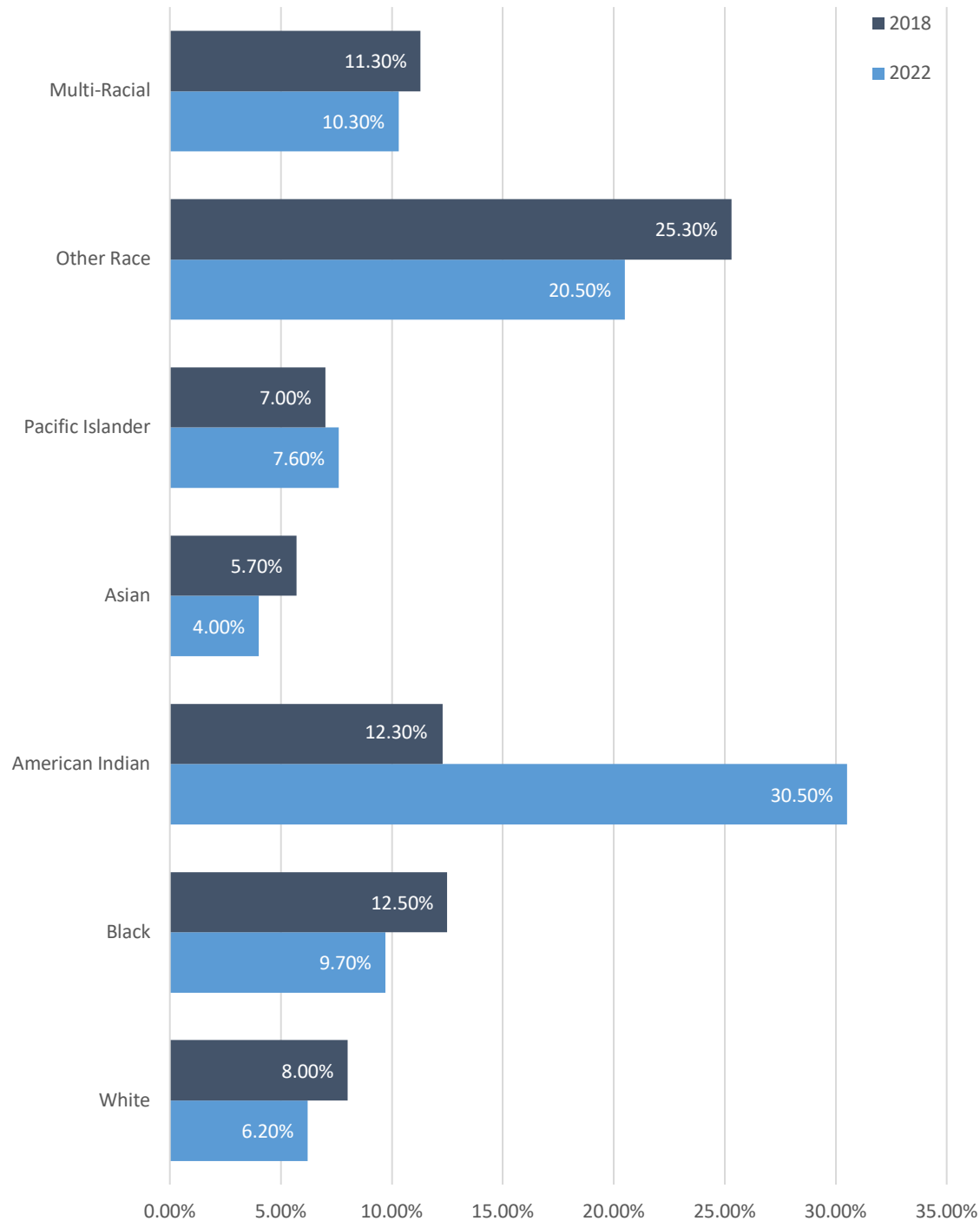


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S1701)

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When examining poverty by race, it's crucial to differentiate between the number of individuals in poverty and the poverty rate within each racial group. The number of individuals in poverty provides a raw count of affected persons, while the poverty rate indicates the proportion of each racial group living in poverty. Both factors are essential for understanding the full scope of economic disparities.

Chart 25: Average Poverty Rates by Race (2018/2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S1701)

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Analyzing the number of individuals in poverty highlights which racial groups are most affected by poverty in absolute terms. For instance, White individuals represent the largest portion of the population in poverty at 77.21%. However, this figure alone does not account for the relative size of each racial group within the overall population.

On the other hand, the poverty rate provides insight into the relative risk of poverty within each racial group. It shows the percentage of each group that is living in poverty, which can reveal systemic inequalities and highlight which groups are disproportionately affected. For example, even though White individuals form the largest absolute number of people in poverty, Black individuals have a much higher poverty rate, indicating a higher relative risk.

According to the data, American Indian individuals face the highest poverty rate at 30.50%, which is nearly 1 and one-half times higher than the rate in 2018, indicating significant economic disparities and systemic barriers that need to be addressed. Individuals identifying as some other race also face a high poverty rate of 20.50%, and experience considerable economic challenges. Those identifying as multi-racial have a lower poverty rate of 10.30% but may also struggle with diverse socio-economic issues. Although Black individuals have the second largest number of people in poverty, their poverty rate is comparatively lower at 9.70%, yet they still face notable economic challenges. Pacific Islanders face a relatively lower poverty rate (7.90%) yet are one of only 2 groups whose rate has increased in the past five years. Individuals identifying as White have one of the lowest poverty rates (6.20%) despite being the largest number in poverty, indicating significant economic benefits. Asians have the lowest poverty rate at 4.00% compared to other minority groups, yet they still face notable economic challenges.

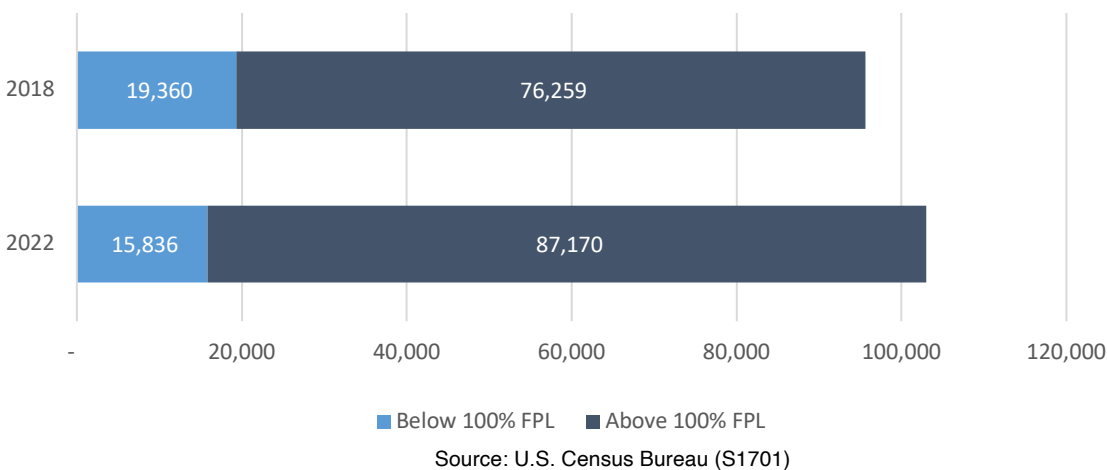
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Poverty by Ethnicity

Similar to other demographics, ethnic disparities in poverty can reveal underlying issues such as discrimination, unequal access to education and employment opportunities, and cultural barriers that affect economic stability. By examining these differences, we can develop targeted policies and programs that address the specific needs of various ethnic communities, ensuring that anti-poverty efforts are both equitable and effective.

In this study, we will focus on the differences between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic populations, following the categorization used in the U.S. Census data. This approach allows us to identify and address the distinct economic conditions experienced by Hispanic individuals, who often face unique challenges related to immigration status, language barriers, and cultural integration, compared to their Non-Hispanic counterparts.

Chart 26: Low-Income Hispanic Count Comparison (2018/2022)



The most recently published data identified 15,836 individuals of Hispanic ethnicity in the county living below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), a poverty rate of 15.37%. This data point is crucial because it not only reflects the current state of economic hardship within the Hispanic community but also influences the planning and allocation of community resources such as educational programs, healthcare, housing assistance, and other vital social services.

Over the past five years, the data indicates some positive changes with the number of low-income Hispanics decreasing by 18.20%, and the poverty rate among this demographic decreasing by 24.10%.

Hispanics living in poverty may face a range of challenges that extend beyond economic hardship. Language barriers are a significant issue, as those with limited English proficiency can struggle to access government services, healthcare, and employment opportunities. This can impede their ability to obtain assistance, receive quality medical care, and secure jobs that offer a living wage and the potential for advancement.

Additionally, Hispanics in poverty might confront cultural obstacles that affect their integration and participation in community programs designed to aid low-income individuals and families. There might be a lack of culturally appropriate services or a shortage of service providers who understand the cultural nuances of the Hispanic community, which can result in a disconnect between available resources and those in need of them.

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Furthermore, legal status can play a critical role. Undocumented individuals may avoid seeking help due to fear of deportation, leading them to remain in the shadows, which further exacerbates their poverty by limiting their access to jobs and social services. For those in mixed-status families, where some members are citizens and others are not, there may be additional stress and complexity in accessing public assistance or other poverty alleviation programs.

To truly support Hispanics living in poverty, interventions must be sensitive to these additional layers of complexity. There is a need for inclusive policies, multilingual and multicultural service provision, and community outreach programs that ensure this demographic is not only reached but also served in ways that recognize and respect their unique circumstances.

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Poverty Benchmarks

Among the 62,536 low-income residents, nearly half (45.56%) were noted as living in deep poverty, defined as earning less than 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This is a particularly vulnerable group as they often struggle with the most basic needs like food, shelter, and healthcare. Living in deep poverty can mean making difficult choices daily between essential needs, and it can have long-term effects on mental and physical health, education outcomes, and overall well-being. In 2022, 28,489 individuals found themselves in this dire situation, which, while representing a decrease of 17.70% since 2018, still underscores the critical need for robust support and intervention.

Table 8: Poverty Benchmark Count Comparison (2018/2022)

Poverty %	2018	2022	Change
< 50%	34,617	28,489	-17.70%
50 - 100%	38,822	34,047	-12.30%
100 - 125%	27,896	22,425	-19.61%
125 - 150%	26,362	22,626	-14.17%
150 - 200%	57,533	52,508	-8.73%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S1701)

The next category, 50-100% of the FPL, includes individuals who are considered to be living in poverty, but not deep poverty. In 2022, 34,047 individuals in the county fell into this bracket. This category experienced a significant 12.30% decrease from the 38,822 individuals documented in 2018.

For the 100-125% poverty bracket, which includes 22,425 individuals, these residents exceed the official definition of poverty but still face financial hardship. They meet the traditional Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) eligibility criteria, indicating a need for support services like food assistance, housing, and utility aid to help stabilize their economic situation. Since 2018, this category has experienced an 19.61% decrease.

Individuals in the 125-150% poverty range are those often eligible for additional support programs. In 2022, there were 22,626 individuals in this category, a significant decrease of 14.17% from 2018. Programs may provide services to these residents, who, despite earning slightly more, often still require assistance to meet all of their basic needs and maintain a modest living standard.

Finally, those within the 150-200% range are considered under the expanded CSBG guidelines, initially associated with CARES funding. This range is critical as it captures many of the county's working poor who may be employed but still struggle to cover living expenses. In 2022, an estimated 52,508 residents fell into this bracket, a decrease of 8.73% since 2018.

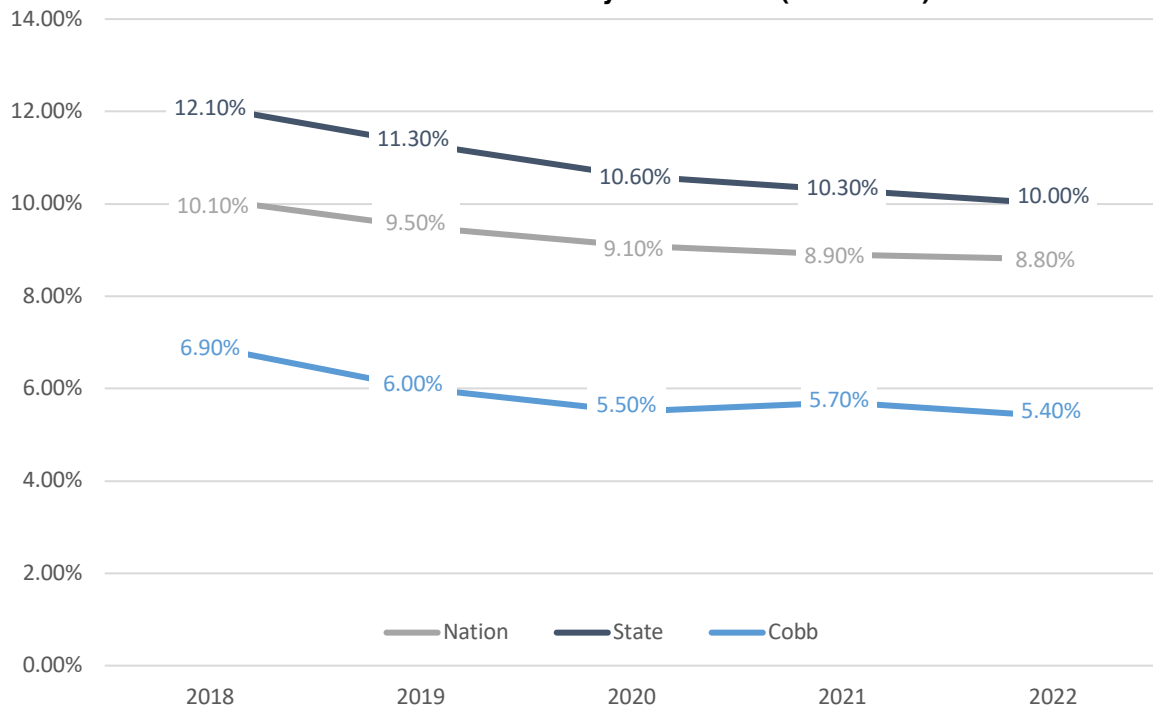
Overall, 62,536 individuals were noted as living in poverty, with 84,961 being eligible for traditional CSBG funding guidelines and 160,095 being eligible for services under expanded CSBG guidelines.

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Households in Poverty

Evaluating household poverty rates is crucial in addition to individual poverty rates because it provides a broader understanding of economic challenges facing family units or shared living arrangements. While individual poverty rates reflect the number of people earning below a certain income, household poverty rates can reveal the extent to which entire families or households struggle to meet basic needs. This is particularly important because a household's combined resources and expenses, economies of scale, and shared burdens of costs like housing and utilities are more accurately reflected. Moreover, policies and programs are often designed to support households as units, making household poverty rates a critical measure for planning and resource allocation.

Chart 27: Household Poverty Rate Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S1702)

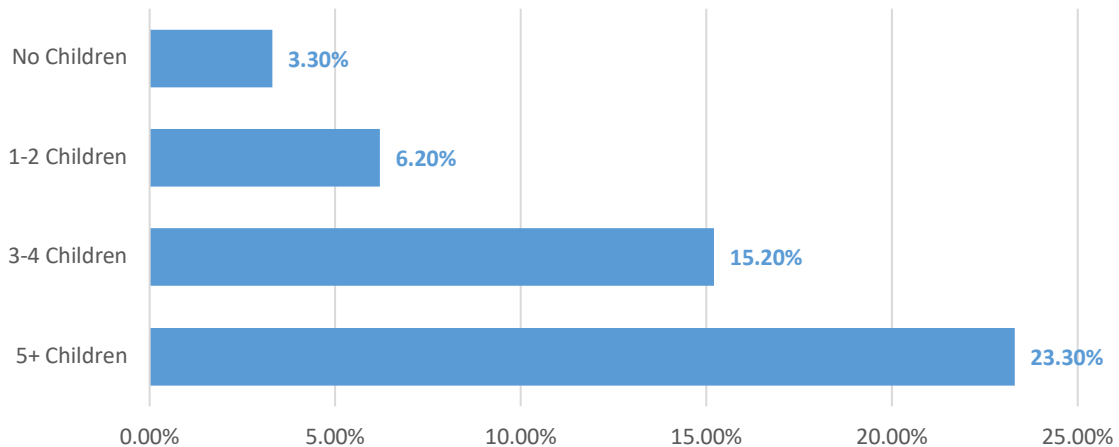
In Cobb County, an estimated 15,723 households were identified as living in poverty. This is a rate of 5.40%, which is notably lower than the state (10.00%) and national (8.80%) averages. Over the past five years, the household poverty rate in the county has decreased by 21.74% while state (-17.36%) and national (-12.87%) averages also experienced steady decreases.

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Not only were households with children (7.80%) noted as having significantly higher poverty rates than those without children (3.30%), but poverty rates were also noted to have a correlation with the number of children living in the home. Families with five or more children were the most affected, with a high poverty rate of 23.30%, which underscores the compounded financial challenges that come with larger family sizes. The poverty rate for households with three to four children was lower at 15.20%.

In contrast, families with one to two children experienced a lower poverty rate of 6.20%, suggesting that smaller family units may find it somewhat easier to navigate financial pressures. The rate of poverty in households without children was markedly lower, indicating that child-rearing is a significant factor influencing economic vulnerability.

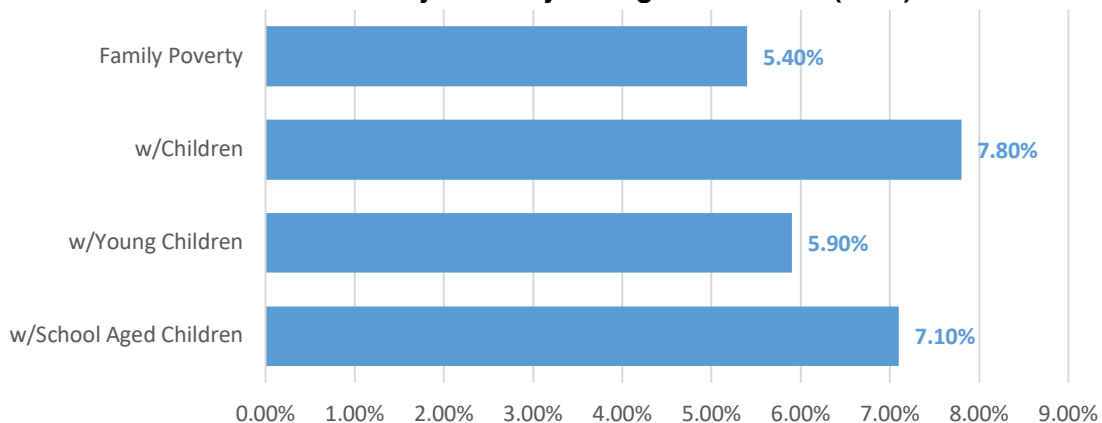
Chart 28: Poverty Rates by Number of Children (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S1702)

The impact of having children on household poverty is further nuanced when considering the age of the children. Households with young children reported a poverty rate of 5.90%, compared to those with school-aged children at 7.10%.

Chart 29: Poverty Rates by the Age of Children (2022)



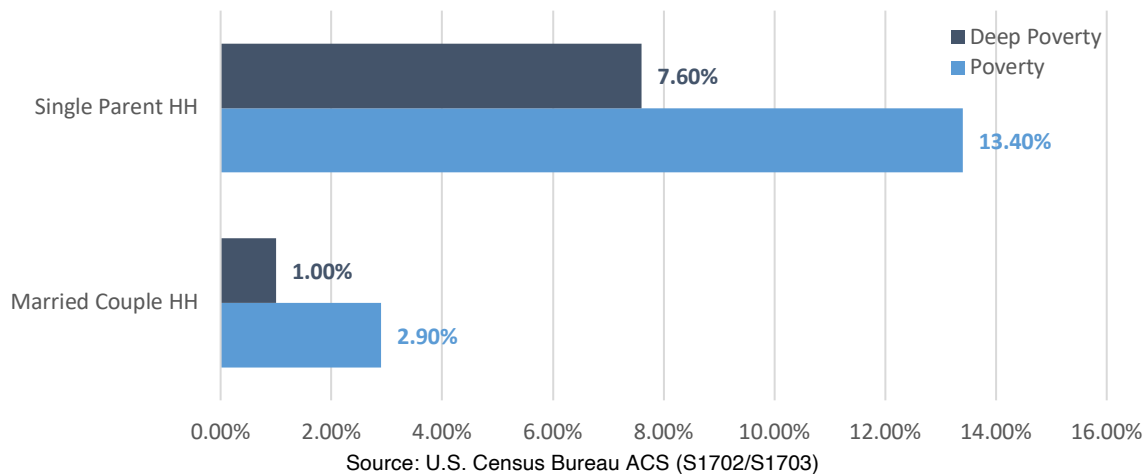
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S1702)

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Another major risk factor regarding the likelihood of poverty in local families was the structure of the household. Single-parent households have a markedly higher poverty rate at 13.40% compared to married couple households, which stand at 2.90%. This substantial difference points to the economic vulnerability that single-parent families face, often shouldering the full economic burden with a single income.

When evaluating deep poverty rates, which represent households living with incomes below half of the poverty threshold, single-parent households again exhibit a disproportionately higher rate at 7.60%, in contrast to married couple households, which have a deep poverty rate of 1.00%. This suggests that single parents are not only more likely to fall below the poverty line but are also more likely to experience severe economic deprivation.

Chart 30: Poverty Rates by Household Types with Children (2022)



Several factors may contribute to this disparity. Single-parent households typically have one income earner, limiting their financial resources compared to dual-earning married couple households. Additionally, single parents may face greater challenges in securing employment that accommodates their childcare responsibilities, often leading to underemployment or employment in lower-paying jobs. The costs of childcare, healthcare, and other necessary services without the support of a partner can quickly consume a disproportionate amount of a single parent's income, pushing these families closer to or deeper into poverty.

Moreover, systemic issues such as the gender wage gap, the availability of affordable childcare, and access to comprehensive social support programs significantly affect single-parent households. Therefore, understanding the structure of the household is vital when designing economic policies and assistance programs to ensure that the interventions meet the specific needs of these at-risk families and help bridge the gap in poverty rates.

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Median Income

The Household Median Income, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, represents the average amount of income received by members of a pre-identified area. As opposed to the mean income, which sums up all incomes and divides it by the number of people in the report area, median income represents the line where half of the residents make more, and half make less.

Table 9: Median Income Comparison (2018/2022)

Area	2018	2022	\$ Change	% Change
<i>Cobb</i>	\$75,153	\$94,244	+\$19,091	+25.40%
<i>State</i>	\$55,679	\$71,355	+\$15,676	+28.15%
<i>Nation</i>	\$60,293	\$75,149	+\$14,856	+24.64%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP03)

In the area served by the organization, the average median income is \$94,244 per year. The rate has increased by 25.40% over the past five years and remains higher than the state (\$71,355) and national (\$75,149) averages, yet it is increasing at a slower pace (+25.40%) than the statewide (+28.15%) trend.

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Living Wage Equivalent (LWE)

While the U.S. Census Bureau determines poverty status by using an official poverty measure (OPM) that compares pre-tax income against a threshold that is set at three times the cost of a minimum food diet in 1963 and adjusted for family size, a more accurate reflection of economic hardship of local residents can be found by comparing the median income to living wage amounts.

The living wage takes into account the average cost for food, childcare, medical care, housing, transportation, and other necessary expenses within a specific community.

Table 10: Median Income vs. Living Wage (2022)

Area	FT Min Wage	Median Income	1 Adult 0 Child	1 Adult 1 Child	1 Adult 2 Child	2 Adult 0 Child	2 Adult 1 Child	2 Adult 2 Child
<i>Cobb</i>	\$15,080	\$94,244	\$55,224	\$87,506	\$108,680	\$71,573	\$84,427	\$94,016
<i>State</i>	\$15,080	\$71,355	\$48,651	\$77,938	\$95,992	\$64,501	\$76,856	\$86,154

Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator | Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP03)

Unfortunately, a comparison of the median income and cost of living indicates that the inability to meet financial obligations is a concern for more individuals than are officially classified as living in poverty. For households on fixed incomes, earning minimum wage, or working in part-time positions, the situation is even more dire. For example, a single mother with two children earning minimum wage in the agency's service area would have to work approximately 288 hours per week to meet the household's basic needs. As there are only 168 hours in each week, this is clearly impossible. This stark comparison highlights the significant gap between minimum wage earnings and the actual cost of living, underscoring the necessity for comprehensive support and policy interventions to assist those struggling to achieve financial stability. This analysis does not take into account commute times, time for sleep, or the need for parents to spend time with their children, further illustrating the dire economic conditions faced by low-income families. Further, the cost doesn't account for school supplies and other unexpected expenses that may occur (i.e., illness that necessitates missing work, car breakdowns, and unexpected healthcare costs).

Over the past five years, the cost of living has increased at a rate of 16.50%. During the same period, the median income in the county has risen by 25.40%. While this income growth is positive for many households, it does not alleviate the struggles faced by residents on fixed incomes or those earning minimum wage, who continue to suffer from the rising costs.

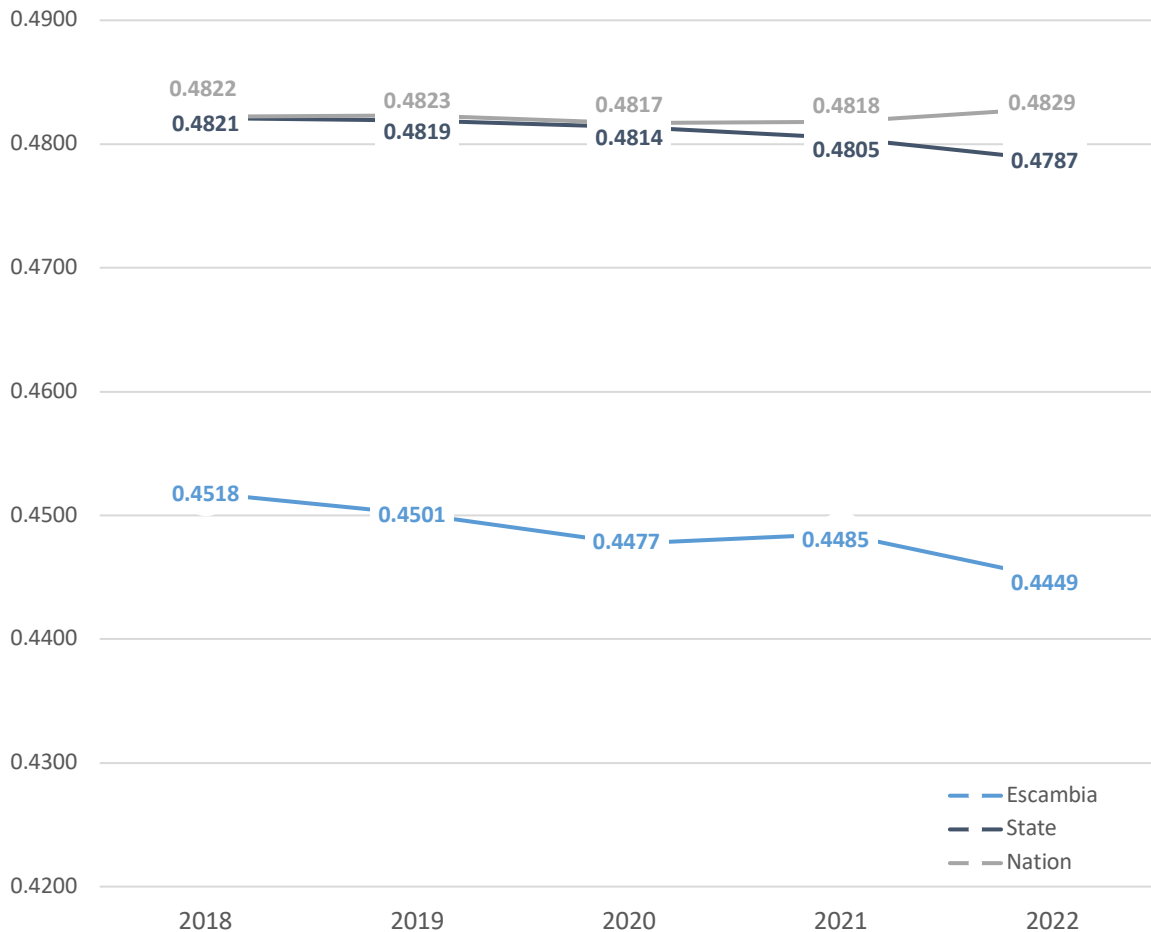
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Income Inequality

Income inequality is a critical issue because it affects various aspects of societal well-being, including access to education, healthcare, and opportunities. High levels of income inequality are often associated with a range of social and economic problems, such as higher rates of health and social issues, reduced social mobility, and increased political instability. The Gini Coefficient, or Gini Index, is a measure used to assess the extent of income disparity in a given area. It provides a single figure that summarizes the degree of inequality, where a Gini Coefficient of 1 would indicate that all wealth in a given area is held by a single person, and a Gini Coefficient of 0 would reflect an equal distribution among all members.

Analyzing the Gini Coefficient trend from 2018 to 2022 reveals a notable decrease in income inequality in Cobb County. In 2018, the Gini Coefficient for Cobb County was 0.4518, and by 2022, it had dropped to 0.4449. This decrease suggests a shrinking gap between the highest and lowest income earners in the county. Comparatively, the state and national Gini Coefficients have remained relatively stable, albeit notably higher, with the state's coefficient around 0.4787 and the national average hovering around 0.4829.

Chart 31: Income Inequality Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (B19083)

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In order to help visualize the significance of this data, the table below documents the number of people with income levels at three thresholds. According to living wage data, any household with children making less than \$80,000 would experience difficulty meeting financial obligations. Any single person living in the county would struggle to meet financial obligations with an income below \$50,000. Incomes lower than \$15,000 represent households earning less than the amount of that which is normally paid by a full-time job at the nationally mandated minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour).

Table 11: Household Income Benchmarks (2022)

\$25K - \$50k	\$15k - \$25k	< \$15k
42,238	12,164	15,013

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP03)

Based on this data, an estimated 69,415 households, or 23.84% of the population, have incomes that place them at risk of economic hardship, especially when they face unexpected expenses or a loss of income. This is significantly higher than the 5.40% of the households who are officially recognized as living in poverty.

Among these, 27,177 households (9.33% of the total population) would struggle even if no children reside in the home. Approximately 5.16% of all households in the region (15,013) have incomes lower than would be earned by a full-time job paying the nationally mandated minimum wage.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Income Types

When looking at the types of income received by the households in the area, the majority of households (85.71%) derive their income from wages, with a significant median annual wage of \$124,993. This figure is indicative of the predominant role that employment plays in the financial well-being of the area's residents.

Social Security benefits are another substantial source of income, with 23.10% of households receiving an average payment of \$25,528 annually. This demonstrates the program's critical role in providing financial stability to a substantial portion of the population, particularly older adults and disabled individuals.

Table 12: Income Types (2022)

Measure	Wages	SSA	Retirement	SSI	TANF
<i>Number</i>	249,556	67,233	58,251	7,689	3,653
<i>Avg. Amount</i>	\$124,993	\$25,528	\$32,464	\$11,233	\$4,091

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP03)

Private retirement income is also a key component of the financial picture, with 20.01% of households benefiting from an average of \$32,464 per year. This reflects the importance of retirement savings and pension plans in securing the financial futures of retirees in the county.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is received by 2.64% of households, amounting to an average annual benefit of \$11,233. SSI is designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people who have little or no income, providing cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.

Finally, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), often referred to as "welfare," provides temporary financial assistance to qualifying families. In Cobb County 1.25% of all households, which accounts for 23.23% of the low-income population, receive TANF benefits, with an average annual support of \$4,091. TANF is intended to assist families in need to achieve self-sufficiency through a variety of support services, including job preparation and work assistance. This program plays a vital role in offering a safety net to the most vulnerable families, emphasizing its temporary nature, as the main goal is to foster independence and facilitate a transition to employment.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Community Feedback

Community feedback from the survey reveals that a significant barrier to securing basic needs is the lack of income, combined with inadequate financial management skills. According to survey responses, 75% of participants identified a lack of income as a primary obstacle, directly affecting their ability to afford essentials like housing, utilities, and food. This financial strain is compounded by underemployment and unemployment, which limit the earning potential of many households. For instance, 26.47% of respondents pointed to underemployment as a barrier, while 30.88% cited unemployment as a significant factor contributing to their financial instability. This economic fragility makes it challenging for families to manage their financial obligations, where even minor financial setbacks can have severe consequences.

Qualitative feedback further illuminates these struggles, with many residents expressing that financial instability is not just about income levels but also about managing their finances effectively. One respondent shared, “Even when we have income, it doesn’t seem to stretch far enough because of poor planning and unexpected costs.” This highlights the broader issue of financial literacy, where a lack of budgeting skills, difficulty managing debt, and limited access to financial resources exacerbate the challenges faced by low-income residents. A notable 26.47% of respondents specifically identified a lack of financial management skills as a critical barrier, reflecting a widespread need for education on basic financial principles.

Several respondents voiced concerns about the complex interplay between income challenges and rising living costs. As one participant noted, “Everything is more expensive now, and it’s hard to keep up when your paycheck doesn’t grow.” This sentiment was echoed by others who cited the high costs of housing and utilities as ongoing burdens that strain their already tight budgets. Additionally, 41.18% of survey participants reported that the risk of utility loss is a significant concern, while 57.35% highlighted food insecurity as a major issue, underscoring how income limitations impact everyday life.

Many residents also expressed frustration with their limited ability to save or prepare for unexpected expenses. One participant described, “I want to save, but it’s impossible when you’re living paycheck to paycheck. One emergency can set me back months.” This quote encapsulates the lived experiences of many low-income households, where financial setbacks are not easily overcome. Furthermore, some respondents emphasized a need for accessible financial education, with one stating, “I need help understanding how to manage my money better, but I don’t know where to start.” Such comments point to a critical gap in support services that could help residents develop the skills needed to navigate their financial challenges more effectively.

Overall, the data underscores a pressing need for comprehensive interventions that address both income generation and financial management skills. Expanding access to stable employment opportunities, coupled with targeted financial literacy programs, can empower residents to better manage their finances and achieve greater economic stability. By equipping individuals with the tools and knowledge to make informed financial decisions, the community can help reduce the economic vulnerabilities that prevent many from meeting their basic needs.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Agency Data

During the fiscal year 2023, the organization served 1,795 individuals and 1,132 households, reflecting a decrease of 0.50% from the 1,804 individuals served in 2020. Interestingly, the number of households served remained somewhat stable, showing no significant change over the three-year period. However, demographic shifts within the customer base highlight evolving needs and trends in service delivery.

Gender distribution remained relatively balanced, with 52.44% of those served being male and 47.06% female, a slight shift from previous years where females were slightly more represented. Age distribution experienced an increase in the proportion of adults aged 24-44, now accounting for 31.21% of the population served, up from prior years, indicating a growing need among working-age adults. In contrast, the proportion of children aged 6-11 years (11.09%), and teenagers aged 12-17 years (10.31%) remained consistent, suggesting steady demand for family-related services.

Ethnic and racial demographics show that the majority of those served were Black or African American (59.65%), followed by White (32.98%), with smaller representations from other racial and ethnic groups. Notably, Hispanic or Latino representation increased slightly to 16.52%, indicating a need to address language and culturally specific barriers.

Family composition trends highlight a continued prevalence of single-person households, which accounted for 74.82% of families served, underscoring the challenges faced by individuals living alone. Single-parent households, particularly those led by females, comprised 16.61% of the total, reflecting ongoing economic vulnerability in this demographic.

Income data reveals that a significant proportion of households (67.76%) were living at or below 50% of the federal poverty level, illustrating persistent economic hardship. Only 39.84% of families reported having one or more sources of income, predominantly from employment, social security, and unemployment insurance, highlighting the reliance on public assistance.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Income Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
Center for Family Resources	770-428-2601 info@thecfr.org	Provides credit counseling services to low-income residents with dependent children living in the home.
Child Support Enforcement	844-694-2347 Marietta_parkcse@dhs.ga.gov	Provides assistance with the receipt of child support.
Cobb County Cooperative Extension Services	770-528-4070 uge1067@uga.edu	Provides personal financial management education
Consumer Credit Counseling	800-487-5303	Provides assistance with debt consolidation for individuals with poor credit.
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services	770-528-7683	Provides monthly cash assistance with an employment service component for low-income families with children under the age of 18.
Jewish Family & Career Services	770-677-9300 info@jfcsatl.org	Provides personal financial counseling. (Fees may apply)
Money Management International	866-550-8004	Provides credit counseling services, bankruptcy counseling, financial management counseling, and predatory lending awareness services (fees may apply)
Operation Hope	404-941-2919	Provides credit counseling to battered women, disabled veterans, seniors, military personnel, and individuals with low incomes
Positive Transition Services, Inc.	678-298-6140 info@ptsga.org	Provides case management/referrals, credit counseling, representative payee services, and benefit application assistance (fees may apply)
Turning Point Enterprises	770-528-6262 turningpointprogram@gmail.com	Provides credit counseling to low-income individuals, women, children, and families.
United Way Atlanta	404-527-7200	Provides one-on-one coaching and financial education services.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Conclusion: Strengths

Cobb County has made significant strides in reducing its poverty rate, with a faster decline compared to state and national trends. The county's median income has also increased over the past five years, which helps improve the financial stability of some households. The decrease in poverty rates among young children and working-age adults suggests that targeted programs, such as early childhood interventions and job training, have been effective. The overall income levels and employment opportunities in the county are relatively strong, contributing to a lower-than-average poverty rate.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Despite these gains, significant barriers to financial stability remain for many households. Single-parent households, particularly those headed by women, continue to face high poverty rates, with single mothers often earning significantly less than their two-parent counterparts. Racial and ethnic minorities, including Black and Hispanic populations, experience higher poverty rates, reflecting systemic inequalities in access to education, employment, and economic opportunities. Additionally, the growth in median income has not kept pace with the rising cost of living, particularly for low-wage workers and families with children. A significant portion of the population remains dependent on public assistance, highlighting the ongoing need for comprehensive support programs to bridge the gap between income and living costs.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Employment & Industry

Introduction

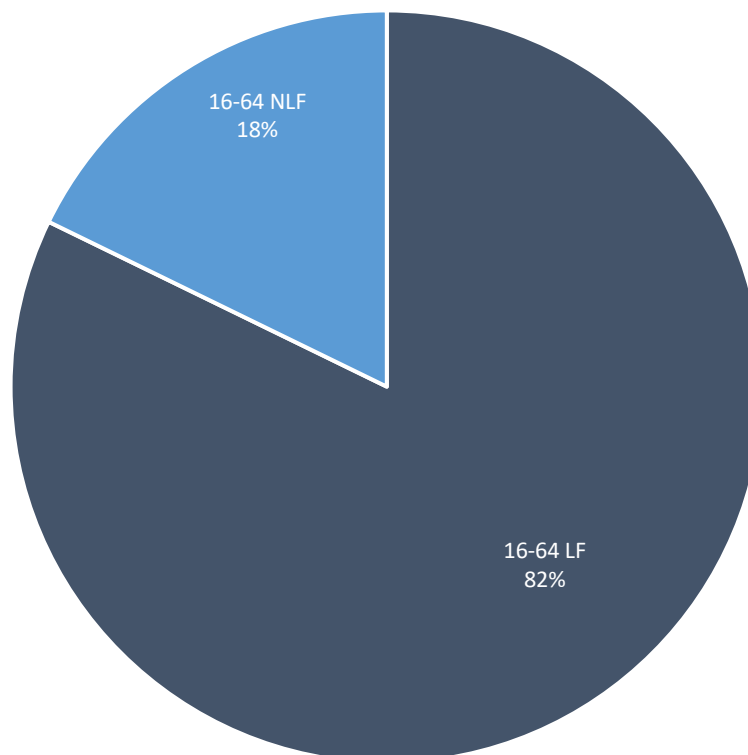
The study of employment is a fundamental aspect of poverty research because job availability and the nature of employment directly influences economic stability. By examining employment patterns, researchers can pinpoint where job scarcity or low-wage employment may be perpetuating poverty. This evaluation can help to shed light on the structural and systemic factors affecting the labor market, guiding effective policymaking to foster job creation, skill development, and equitable economic growth, ultimately aimed at poverty alleviation.

Labor Force

Understanding the number of individuals in the labor force within a community is pivotal for gauging its economic health and workforce potential. It allows for an assessment of the active working population that contributes to the local economy and is a key indicator of labor market strength. This knowledge aids in identifying the level of unemployment, underemployment, and the need for workforce development programs. It also helps in planning for future economic development strategies, including education and training programs, which are essential for matching skills with job opportunities and promoting sustainable economic growth.

In the local service area, a total of 401,011 local residents were noted as being a part of the labor force. This represents 82.22% of all individuals between the ages of 16 and 64.

Chart 32: Labor Force (2022)



Source: US Census Bureau (C18120)

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is a key economic indicator that measures the percentage of people within the labor force who are actively seeking employment but currently do not have jobs. It reflects the extent to which individuals in the workforce are able to secure meaningful employment. A high unemployment rate suggests a larger portion of the labor force is experiencing joblessness, potentially leading to financial hardships.

Assessing the current unemployment rate holds significant importance because it directly impacts poverty levels within a community. Elevated unemployment rates often result in higher poverty rates as individuals without jobs may struggle to meet their basic needs due to a lack of financial resources.

Comparing local unemployment rates to state and national averages provide valuable context for understanding the economic conditions of a specific community within a broader framework. This comparison aids in determining whether a locality is performing better or worse than larger community, influencing decisions regarding resource allocation, job development initiatives, and employment support services.

The Cobb County unemployment rate stands at 4.51%, which is lower than the state average of 5.21% and the national average of 5.30%.

Table 13: Labor Force Employment Status (2022)

Labor Force	Unemployed	Rate
401,011	18,088	4.51%

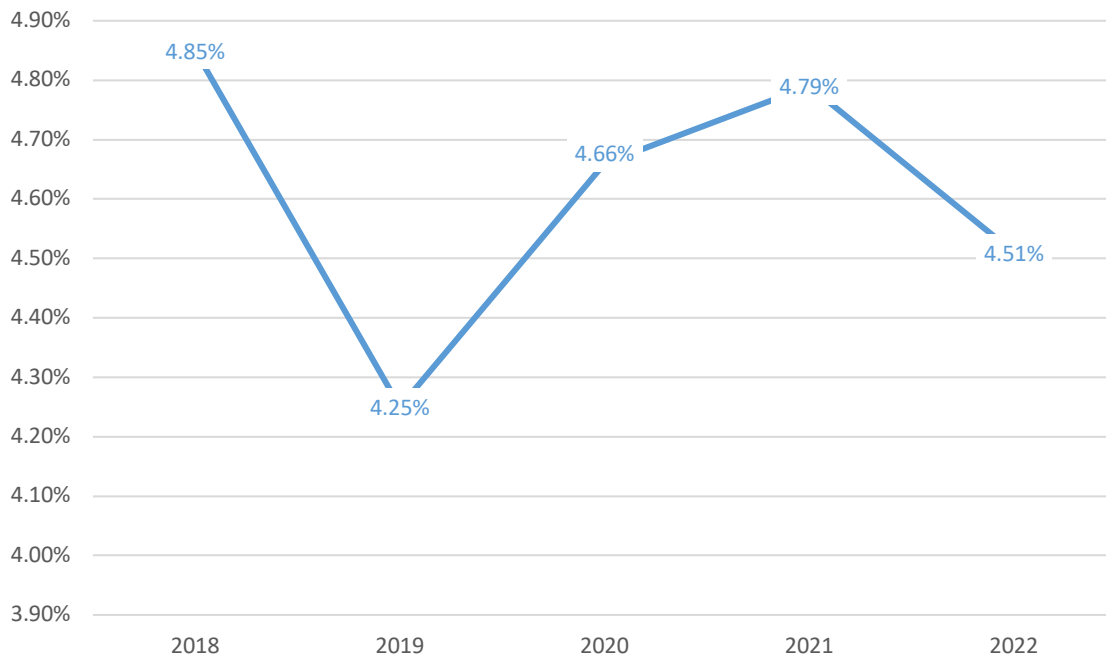
Source: US Census Bureau (C18120)

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Unemployment Trend

The five-year unemployment trend in the county shows an encouraging trajectory despite the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, the unemployment rate stood at 4.85%. This figure dropped to 4.25% in 2019, indicating initial positive progress. However, the onset of the pandemic in 2020 saw a rise in unemployment to 4.66%, reflecting the economic disruptions caused by the global health crisis. In 2021, the rate continued to increase to 4.79%, demonstrating the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the unemployment rate dropped significantly to 4.51%, signaling a recovery of employment within the county. This trend suggests effective local economic strategies and a resilient workforce, which are crucial for continued economic stability and growth.

Chart 33: Unemployment Trend (2018-2022)



Source: US Census Bureau (C18120)

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Unemployment Rate by Select Demographics

Comparing unemployment rates for select demographics such as age, race, ethnic groups, and gender is critical as it sheds light on the inequalities and challenges faced by different segments of the population. This knowledge can guide the development of targeted employment programs and policies that address specific barriers to workforce entry or advancement. It can also reveal systemic issues that contribute to unemployment disparities, such as access to education, discrimination, or economic shifts impacting certain industries. By examining these rates, stakeholders can work towards creating a more equitable labor market that offers equal opportunities for all community members.

Table 14: Unemployment Rates by Race/Ethnicity (2022)

White	Black	Am. Indian	Asian	Multi	Hispanic
3.60%	6.60%	2.00%	3.60%	4.80%	4.50%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2301)

When considering race, data indicates that the Black community experiences the highest unemployment rate at 6.60%. This is almost double the White community's rate of 3.60%. This substantial difference underscores the urgency to explore and address the factors contributing to such a high unemployment rate among Black residents, including potential educational inequalities, discrimination in hiring practices, and a lack of job opportunities in sectors with a higher concentration of Black workers.

The unemployment rate for individuals identifying as multi-racial is 4.80%, while Hispanic residents face an unemployment rate of 4.50%. The figures suggest that, while close to the county unemployment rate, these individuals still face notable challenges compared to the broader labor market. Asian and White residents have an unemployment rate of 3.60%, which is significantly lower than that of Black individuals. American Indian residents face an unemployment rate of 2.00%, the lowest among the racial groups considered. Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions that consider the unique barriers faced by each demographic group, promoting a more inclusive and equitable employment landscape.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Analyzing unemployment rates by age gives critical insight into the economic engagement of different generations and is essential for tailoring workforce development initiatives to specific age groups. Each group faces unique challenges and opportunities in the labor market, which can inform targeted support, whether it's job training programs for younger individuals or employment retention strategies for older workers.

The youngest age group, 16-19 years old, experiences the highest unemployment rate at 11.50%. This group faces significant challenges in securing employment, possibly due to factors such as limited work experience and the need to balance education and work responsibilities. These high rates indicate that this age group is at the greatest risk of unemployment among all age brackets.

Table 15: Unemployment Rates by Age (2022)

16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64
11.50%	8.00%	5.20%	4.80%	3.20%	3.50%	4.00%	4.50%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S2301)

Young adults aged 20-24 have an unemployment rate of 8.00%, which remains relatively high compared to older groups. This suggests that individuals in this age range continue to face challenges in the job market, although slightly less so than the youngest workers.

Unemployment rates continue to decrease for the 25-29 age group, with a rate of 5.20%, and further down to 4.80% for those aged 30-34. The rates drop further among those aged 35-44 (3.20%) and 45-54 (3.50%), indicating lower unemployment risks as individuals progress in their careers. These age groups appear to have greater stability in employment, likely due to accumulated experience and skills.

Older workers, aged 55-59, have a slightly higher unemployment rate at 4.00%, and this trend continues with a rate of 4.50% for those aged 60-64. While these rates are lower than those of younger workers, they are higher than those of the core working age groups, suggesting that older individuals might face increasing barriers to maintaining or securing employment as they approach retirement age.

Overall, the data highlights that the highest unemployment risks are concentrated among the youngest workers (16-24 years old), while the lowest risks are observed among individuals aged 35-54. However, there is a slight uptick in unemployment rates among older workers (55-64), suggesting potential challenges in employment retention as individuals near retirement age.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Unemployment rates by gender reveal notable disparities in economic engagement between men and women. In 2022, the unemployment rate for males stood 3.70%, compared to 5.00% for females. This difference suggests that women in the community might encounter higher barriers to employment. These barriers could be influenced by factors such as industry-specific job volatility, educational disparities, and systemic issues related to race and ethnicity. Understanding these multifaceted challenges is crucial for developing targeted employment policies and support programs. Such initiatives can address the unique needs of both men and women in the workforce, ensuring equitable access to job opportunities and economic stability for all residents.

Table 16: Unemployment Rates by Gender (2022)

Male	Female
3.70%	5.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2301)

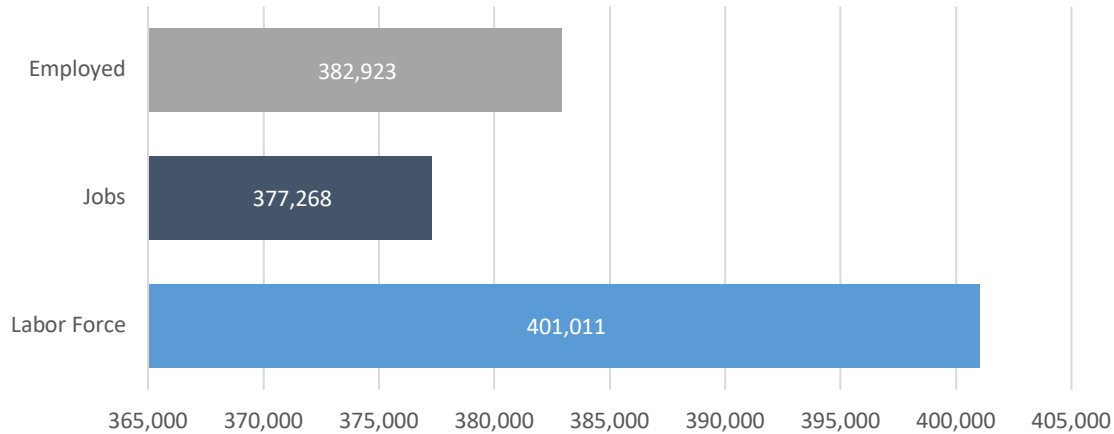
Unemployment rates by gender reveal notable disparities in economic engagement between men and women. In 2022, the unemployment rate for males stood 3.70%, compared to 5.00% for females. This difference suggests that women in the community might encounter higher barriers to employment. These barriers could be influenced by factors such as industry-specific job volatility, educational disparities, and systemic issues related to race and ethnicity. Understanding these multifaceted challenges is crucial for developing targeted employment policies and support programs. Such initiatives can address the unique needs of both men and women in the workforce, ensuring equitable access to job opportunities and economic stability for all residents.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Job Availability

Job availability is a crucial component of a healthy economy, demonstrating the capacity of a community to provide suitable employment for its local labor force. The data indicates that there are 377,268 jobs available in the community, against a labor force of 401,011. This suggests that there is a deficit of approximately 23,743 jobs, assuming that one job is adequate to meet a person's financial needs. However, the availability of jobs alone does not provide a full picture of the employment landscape and its impact on the community.

Chart 34: Employment Infrastructure vs Labor Force (2022)



Source: US Census Bureau (C18120) | Bureau of Labor Statistics

First, the adequacy of job pay is a significant consideration. Even if jobs are available, they may not offer wages sufficient to meet the basic needs of households. The cost of living, including housing, food, healthcare, and other essentials, must be balanced against wages. Jobs that do not provide a living wage may force individuals to seek multiple jobs or rely on public assistance to make ends meet, perpetuating a cycle of economic instability.

Second, the cost of working, such as childcare and transportation, can be substantial barriers. For many families, the expense of reliable childcare can consume a large portion of their income, particularly if they have young children. Transportation costs, including vehicle maintenance, fuel, and public transit fees, also add to the financial burden.

Finally, additional barriers may be present, including inadequate childcare facilities, insufficient transportation options, and a mismatch of skills. Inadequate childcare services can prevent parents, particularly single parents, from entering the workforce. Similarly, without reliable and affordable transportation, workers may be unable to commute to job locations. A mismatch of skills, where the local labor force does not possess the skills required by available jobs, can also lead to unemployment or underemployment. This highlights the need for workforce development programs that provide training and education to align workers' skills with market demands.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Industry and Wage Study

The study of industry and wage dynamics is paramount for a comprehensive socioeconomic analysis. It offers insights beyond mere job availability, diving into whether the employment opportunities in a community adequately support its residents' economic welfare. Examining the variety of industries present and analyzing the wages they offer sheds light on the economic viability and the potential for sustainable livelihoods within the county. This nuanced understanding is critical, as it pinpoints sectors that underpin the local economy and identifies gaps where economic interventions could be most effective.

Table 17: Industry and Wage Study (2022)

Industry	Jobs	Avg. Wage
<i>Agriculture</i>	118	\$58,916
<i>Utilities</i>	1,097	\$115,492
<i>Construction</i>	30,802	\$88,556
<i>Manufacturing</i>	19,942	\$94,380
<i>Wholesale</i>	21,215	\$102,388
<i>Retail</i>	39,728	\$47,684
<i>Transportation</i>	17,662	\$50,544
<i>Information</i>	9,521	\$102,960
<i>Finance/Insurance</i>	17,885	\$102,232
<i>Real Estate</i>	7,961	\$85,354
<i>Professional/Technical</i>	38,055	\$115,232
<i>Management</i>	12,977	\$126,152
<i>Administrative/Waste Management</i>	28,691	\$49,868
<i>Education</i>	4,897	\$48,256
<i>Health/Social</i>	45,075	\$75,764
<i>Arts/Entertainment</i>	6,134	\$66,352
<i>Accommodation/Food Service</i>	35,369	\$27,612
<i>Federal Government</i>	2,896	\$91,260
<i>State Government</i>	6,399	\$64,480
<i>Local Government</i>	25,090	\$63,180
<i>Other</i>	3,746	\$19,864
<i>Unclassified</i>	2,008	\$80,756
TOTAL	377,268	\$72,927

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

In 2022, leading industries in the community are health care/social assistance, retail sales, and professional/technical. Health care/social assistance employs a total of 45,075 individuals (11.24% of the labor force) with an average wage of \$75,764 annually. In contrast, retail sales employs 39,728 residents (9.91% of the labor force), but with a much lower rate of \$47,684. The professional/technical sector employs 38,055 residents (9.49% of the labor force.) with a substantially higher average wage of \$115,232.

The highest paying industries in the county include management (\$126,152), utilities (\$115,492), and professional/technical (\$115,232). The lowest paying industries were found in the classification of other (\$19,864), accommodation and food service industry (\$27,612), and retail sales (\$47,684). Overall, an estimated 29.80% of all jobs were noted as paying less than \$50,000 annually.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Under-Employment

Under-employment is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of labor statistics. It occurs when individuals are working, yet the income they earn is insufficient to meet the cost of living in their community. Although a community's employment rates may appear robust, under-employment may signal a mismatch in the labor market, highlighting the need for economic strategies that foster job creation in line with the living wage standards and skill levels of the workforce.

Table 18: Working Poor Count and Percent of Labor Force/Low-Income Adults (2022)

Working Poor	% of LF	% of LI Adults
19,292	4.81%	51.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S1701, S2301)

In 2022, there were 19,292 individuals classified as working poor in the county, which constitutes 4.81% of the labor force. This segment of the labor force faces the paradox of employment without the benefit of economic security, highlighting the stark reality that having a job does not always correlate with financial stability.

The second percentage, 51.10%, indicates that more than half of all low-income adults between the ages of 18 and 64 are classified as working poor. This figure represents more than just a statistic; it signifies a substantial demographic within the adult working population that earns wages yet remains disadvantaged by the gap between their income and the cost of living.

It's crucial to acknowledge that the classification of the working poor, as described, solely accounts for individuals below the 100% federal poverty level, which does not adjust for varying local costs of living or inflationary increases. This means the true extent of economic hardship could be substantially underestimated. The federal poverty level is a uniform threshold that doesn't factor in the often-higher cost of living in different counties, nor does it reflect the changing purchasing power of money in light of inflation. Consequently, many individuals and families who earn above the federal poverty level but below the local living wage remain invisible within this metric, even though they too may struggle to afford basic needs and maintain financial stability.

This data underscores the need for interventions that do more than simply create jobs. There must be a concerted effort to ensure that these jobs offer wages that are not just minimum but living — meaning they are sufficient for individuals and families to afford a basic but decent standard of living without requiring additional financial assistance. It also points to the necessity for targeted support services, such as affordable childcare, healthcare, and transportation, which can significantly impact one's ability to earn a living wage.

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Community Feedback

The survey data highlights significant employment challenges in the community, specifically focusing on unemployment, underemployment, lack of job opportunities, and low wages. According to the survey, 30.88% of respondents identified unemployment as a key barrier, while 26.47% pointed to underemployment, indicating struggles to secure full-time, stable work that provides sufficient income. Many respondents voiced concerns about the scarcity of well-paying jobs, with 41.94% citing a lack of job opportunities as a major impediment to securing meaningful employment. One respondent emphasized the issue, stating, “There are not enough stable jobs in this area, especially ones that pay enough to live on.”

Low wages were repeatedly noted as a critical concern, with multiple participants sharing that even full-time work often fails to cover basic expenses. As one resident commented, “Working full-time still doesn’t guarantee that you can pay all your bills.” These experiences reflect broader community struggles with job security and economic stability, exacerbated by limited access to jobs that offer both adequate pay and benefits.

This feedback underscores the need for targeted interventions, such as creating more job opportunities and advocating for fair wages to improve economic conditions for residents. Addressing these barriers through comprehensive workforce development strategies could significantly enhance employment outcomes and provide a more sustainable path to financial stability for the community.

Agency Data

In 2020, 22.11% of households served (273) received earned income, compared to only 15.35% (251 households) in 2023, reflecting a rate of decrease of approximately 30.6%.

In 2023, the average age of members of the labor force receiving services was 41.68 years. This group included diverse and vulnerable populations, such as 1 troubled youth, 25 veterans, and 560 homeless individuals, underscoring the broad scope of employment barriers among those seeking assistance.

Income data for households with full-time employees showed modest growth over the years. In 2023, the average monthly income was \$3,230, translating to an annual income of \$38,760. In 2020, the average was \$2,379 per month or \$28,548 annually, marking an increase of 35.8% from 2020 to 2023. Looking further back, in 2018, the average income was even lower at \$2,132 per month, or \$25,584 annually, illustrating a gradual upward trend in household earnings for those employed full-time despite ongoing economic pressures.

Among the unemployed customers, those identifying as Black made up 59.65% of the group, significantly higher than other racial groups, reflecting a higher likelihood of unemployment within this demographic. Hispanic individuals accounted for 16.52% of the unemployed, with Hispanic females particularly affected. Females overall were more likely to be unemployed than males, with 47.06% of unemployed individuals being female, and Black females facing the highest rates within their racial group. Homelessness was another critical factor, with 31.25% of the unemployed population being homeless, indicating a strong link between lack of stable housing and unemployment.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Employment Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
Bobby Dodd Institute	678-365-0071	Provides job placement services to individuals with physical and mental disabilities.
Career Connection Jewish Family Services	770-677-9490 info@jfcatl.org	Provides career coaching, resume' writing assistance, interview coaching, networking opportunities, and job placement assistance services.
Center for Family Resources	770-428-2601 info@thecfr.org	Provides job interview training, resume' preparation assistance, and job interview training to low-income residents with dependent children living in the home.
Cobb Works	770-528-4300 information@cobbworks.org	Provides career counseling, interview training, job search, and other employment services to dislocated workers and economically disadvantaged persons.
The Edge Connection	770-499-3228 info@theedgegeorgia.org	Provides micro-business training to help the unemployed and under-employed create jobs for themselves and others.
Georgia Department of Labor	770-528-6100	Provides job search assistance to unemployed and under-employed individuals.
Georgia Fatherhood Program	844-694-2347	Provides job search and placement services to non-custodial parents with court ordered child support responsibilities.
Goodwill of North Georgia	678-766-8173 careerservices@ging.org	Provides apprenticeship training, career counseling, career exploration, interview training, and other employment support services
Latin American Association	404-638-1800	Provides job interview training job placement assistance to Hispanic individuals and those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
MUST Ministries: Marietta	770-427-9862	Provides career assessments, interview training, and resume' development assistance.
MUST Ministries: Smyrna	770-436-9514	Provides career assessments, interview training, and resume' development assistance.
Operation Hope	404-941-2919	Provides small business empowerment services to battered women, disabled veterans, seniors, military personnel, and individuals with low incomes
Tommy Nobis Center	770-427-9000 angela.christian@tommynobiscenter.org	Provides career assessment and job placement services.
Turning Point Enterprises, Inc.	770-528-6262 turningpointprogram@gmail.com	Provides job assistance services to low-income residents.
Urban League of Greater Atlanta	404-659-1150 info@ulgatl.org	Provides career counseling and job search assistance.
Wounded Warrior Program	404-974-9234	Provides job search assistance to unemployed veterans.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Conclusion: Strengths

The unemployment rate in Cobb County has decreased consistently over the past five years, dropping from 4.7% in 2018 to 3.1% in 2022. This improvement suggests a strong recovery and resilience in the local job market. The healthcare and education sectors have seen particular growth, contributing to job stability and economic diversification. Community resources, including job training and employment assistance programs, have are available to help residents gain access to employment opportunities, particularly in emerging industries.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Despite the overall decline in unemployment, certain demographics continue to face significant challenges in the labor market. Young adults aged 18-24 have an unemployment rate of 9.2%, and Black residents face a 7.8% unemployment rate, both significantly higher than the county average of 3.1%. This indicates ongoing disparities in employment opportunities for these groups.

The prevalence of low-wage employment is another critical issue. Approximately 45% of jobs in Cobb County pay less than \$50,000 annually, and 15% offer wages under \$20,000, making it difficult for many workers to achieve financial stability. This is further reflected in the fact that about 10% of employed individuals live in poverty, underscoring that having a job does not always mean escaping economic hardship.

Resources such as job training and employment support services exist, but it appears that are not reaching all populations effectively, particularly vulnerable populations like young adults and Black residents. Expanding these programs and ensuring they are accessible to high-risk groups is essential for addressing these employment challenges and supporting a more inclusive labor force.

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Skills and Qualifications

Adult Education levels

Education serves as the bedrock upon which individuals can build a secure financial future. Data drawn from the Bureau of Labor Statistics undeniably illustrates the strong link between educational attainment and employability. In 2022, a cross-sectional analysis of unemployment rates, median earnings, and poverty incidence revealed a clear trend: as education levels rise, earnings increase and the likelihood of living in poverty diminishes.

Table 19: Educational Impact on Employment/Wages (2022)

Education Level	Unemployment Rate	Median Earnings	Poverty Rate
<i>Graduate Degree</i>	3.30%	\$90,893	2.50%
<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>		\$70,648	
<i>Associate degree</i>	4.80%	\$45,336	6.30%
<i>Some College (No Degree)</i>			
<i>High School Diploma/GED</i>	4.70%	\$37,373	10.70%
<i>No High School Diploma</i>	4.50%	\$29,704	16.20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2301, S1701, S1501)

Individuals with higher levels of education, particularly those with graduate or bachelor's degrees, enjoy the most significant economic benefits, including the lowest unemployment rates and highest median earnings. A total of 94,578 individuals hold a graduate degree, with a low unemployment rate of 3.30%, median earnings of \$90,893, and a poverty rate of just 2.50%. Similarly, the 163,719 individuals with a bachelor's degree also experience a low unemployment rate of 3.30% and earn a median income of \$70,648, with a poverty rate matching that of graduate degree holders. These groups highlight how higher education contributes to financial stability and lower poverty risk.

However, the economic advantages diminish as educational attainment decreases. For the 38,418 individuals with an associate degree, the unemployment rate rises to 4.80%, and median earnings drop to \$45,336, with a poverty rate of 6.30%. This group illustrates that while some college education can improve job prospects, the benefits are less substantial compared to those with higher degrees. Similarly, 94,395 individuals who have attended some college but did not complete a degree face similar economic challenge, emphasizing the importance of degree completion for maximizing employment outcomes.

Those with only a high school diploma or GED, totaling 92,423 individuals, experience higher unemployment at 4.70%, lower median earnings of \$37,373, and a poverty rate of 10.70%. This group demonstrates that while high school education provides some economic stability, the financial rewards are significantly limited compared to post-secondary education. The most impacted group comprises the 19,422 individuals without a high school diploma, who face an unemployment rate of 4.50%, the lowest median earnings at \$29,704, and the highest poverty rate at 16.20%. These findings underscore the critical role of education in enhancing employability, increasing income, and reducing poverty, highlighting the need for educational support and access to higher education as vital pathways to economic security.

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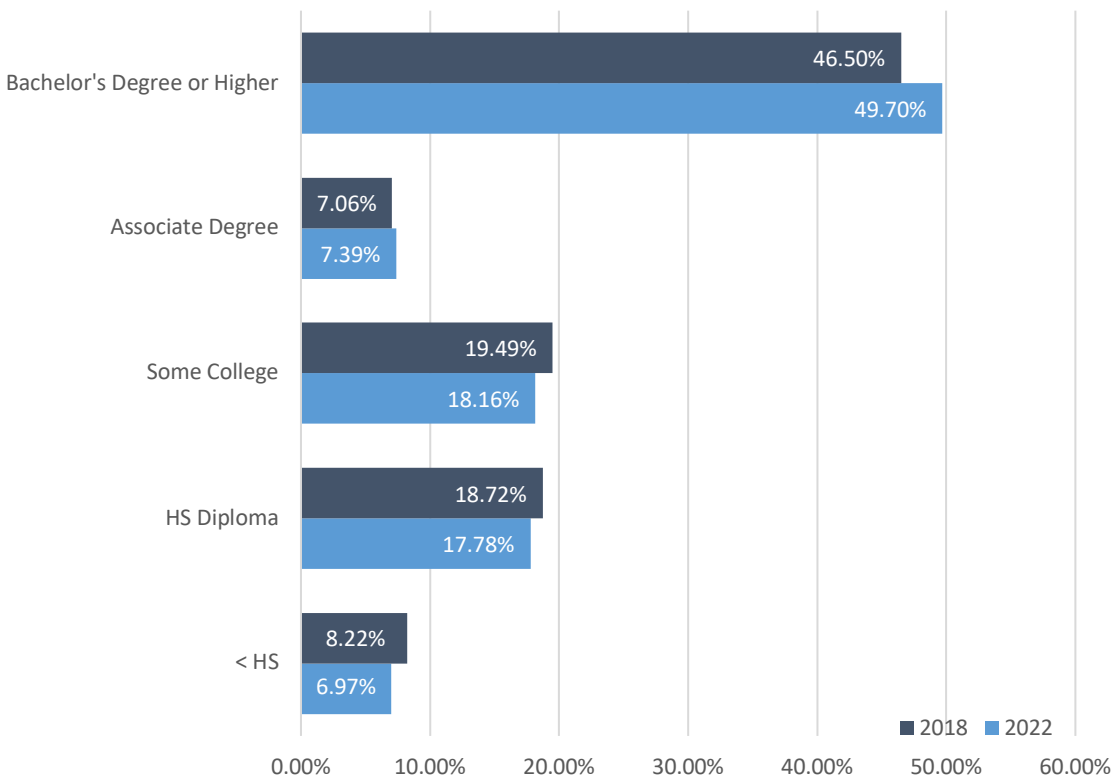
Table 20: Adult Educational Attainment Level (2022)

No HS	No Diploma	HS Diploma	Some College	Assoc. Degree	Bach. Degree	Grad. Degree
19,422	16,795	92,423	94,395	38,418	163,719	94,578

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DP02)

Over the past five years, there are indications of positive change in education levels within the community. The percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased from 46.50% to 49.70%, reflecting a growth rate of 6.88%. This suggests a favorable trend in higher educational attainment, likely leading to improved economic outcomes for these individuals.

Chart 35: Adult Educational Attainment Comparison (2018/2022)



Similarly, there has been an improvement among those with an associate degree, with the percentage rising from 7.06% to 7.39%, indicating a growth rate of 4.67%. This highlights the increasing recognition of the value of associate degrees in enhancing employability and earning potential.

For adults with some college education but no degree, the percentage has decreased slightly from 19.49% to 18.16%. This decrease could reveal that these individuals are completing their degree path before entering the workforce.

Overall, these positive educational changes suggest that more adults in the community are attaining higher education levels. This trend can lead to better job prospects, higher earnings, and reduced poverty rates. The increase in college degree attainment underscores the importance of continued investment in educational opportunities and support systems to further enhance educational outcomes.

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Literacy

The significance of literacy extends far beyond the ability to read and write; it is a foundational element for participation in the labor market and for the economic prosperity of individuals and communities alike. High literacy levels correlate strongly with the potential for securing stable, well-compensated employment, as many professions demand proficiency in comprehending and processing written material. On the contrary, insufficient literacy can severely restrict job prospects and confine individuals to lower-wage positions, potentially leading to persistent unemployment and perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

Table 21: Literacy Deficient Individuals/Rate (2013-2017 Avg.)

Count	Rate
104,115	17.00%

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics

In Cobb County, an estimated 104,115 adults were noted as facing literacy barriers. According to Pro-Literacy, a national advocacy organization, almost half of all individuals with low literacy skills are living beneath the federal poverty threshold. Moreover, the economic repercussions of low literacy, encompassing diminished productivity in the workforce, increased criminal activity, and the subsequent loss of tax revenue, cost the U.S. economy a staggering \$225 billion annually.

In a community where nearly one-fifth of all adults struggle with basic literacy, the impact is multifaceted. It can lead to higher unemployment rates, as those with inadequate literacy skills are often sidelined from the workforce or confined to low-paying positions. Consequently, this can result in a higher dependence on social assistance programs, increased health issues due to the inability to understand health-related information, and a greater likelihood of interactions with the criminal justice system.

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Numeracy

Numeracy is as vital as literacy in assessing an individual's readiness for the workforce and their ability to navigate daily financial tasks. Adults lacking numeracy skills, meaning they struggle with basic arithmetic and cannot effectively manage tasks involving numerical understanding, are significantly disadvantaged in the labor market. This deficit affects not only their employability but also their capacity for financial management, contributing to higher rates of poverty. The inability to understand and manipulate numbers can exclude individuals from many job opportunities, particularly those that require handling cash, budgeting, or interpreting data. As such, strengthening numeracy skills is a key element in education and workforce development programs aimed at reducing unemployment and poverty rates.

Table 22: Numeracy Deficient Individuals/Rate (2013-2017 Avg.)

Count	Rate
165,360	27.00%

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, there are an estimated 165,360 adults in Cobb County who fall below the basic level of numeracy, which constitutes 27% of the adult population. This is a substantial portion of the workforce that could be limited in their job prospects and more vulnerable to economic instability. Numeracy skills are essential not just for employment but also for comprehending and making informed decisions based on numerical data, which is an indispensable part of everyday life and modern work environments.

Moreover, individuals with low numeracy are more likely to struggle with managing household finances. This includes budgeting, understanding loan agreements, and making informed decisions about savings and investments. Poor numeracy skills can lead to financial mismanagement, resulting in debt accumulation and difficulty in maintaining economic stability. Therefore, improving numeracy education can have a profound impact on reducing poverty and enhancing the overall financial health of the community. Strengthening these skills can empower individuals to better manage their finances, make informed economic decisions, and improve their quality of life.

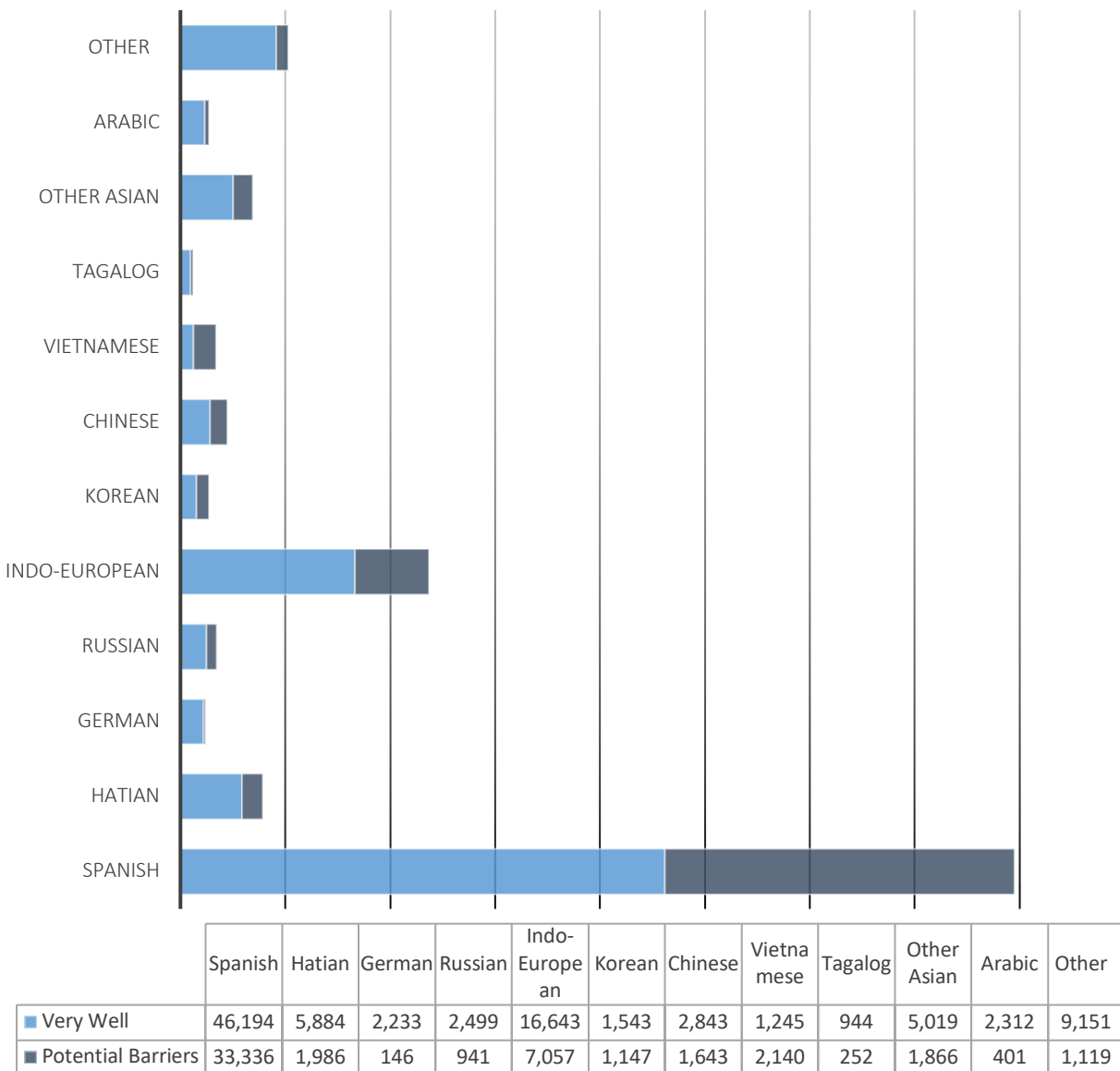
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English Proficiency

A study conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau concluded that people who speak languages other than English at home are less likely to be employed, less likely to find full-time work when employed, and, even having found full-time employment, experience lower median earnings than those who speak English. In addition, among those who speak another language, employment, work status, and earnings vary in direct correlation with their language proficiency. On average, workers who speak English earn \$5,600 more than those who speak another language.

In the evaluated community, there are an estimated 148,544 individuals who [primarily](#) speak a language other than English. Although 96,510 of these individuals report speaking English “very well”, 52,034 residents report having language barriers. Among these, Spanish speakers constitute the largest group, with 33,336 individuals impacted.

Chart 36: Resident Primary Language with Proficiency Barriers (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (C16001)

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Community Feedback

The survey data highlights several significant barriers related to employment qualifications and skills. A lack of required qualifications was identified by 45.16% of respondents as one of the greatest challenges in securing meaningful employment, underscoring a skills gap within the community (Cobb (24)). Additionally, specific skills deficiencies were highlighted, with 75% of respondents noting that language proficiency and soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem-solving) were major obstacles. Other critical barriers included office skills such as Microsoft Office and data entry (75%), and technical skills relevant to the local job market (62.50%).

Several community members also emphasized literacy challenges, with 50% identifying it as a key factor hindering employability. Educational attainment barriers, such as the lack of high school education and insufficient vocational training, were noted by 37.50% of participants. These findings suggest that enhancing education and training resources, especially those focused on job-relevant technical and soft skills, is crucial to improving employment outcomes in the area.

Agency Data

In 2023, the organization served 1,641 adults aged 24 and older, reflecting a diverse range of educational attainment that highlights ongoing barriers to employment. Among those served, 1.89% had completed only up to 8th grade, 15.30% had some high school education but did not graduate, and 19.74% were high school graduates or had a GED. A quarter of the population (25.47%) had some post-secondary education, but only 7.50% held a two- or four-year college degree. This distribution suggests that while some individuals have pursued education beyond high school, the majority have not attained levels of education typically associated with higher employability and economic stability.

In 2020, the educational profile of the 1,143 adults aged 24 and older served by the organization showed more pronounced barriers. At that time, 2.97% had completed only up to 8th grade, 16.89% had some high school education but did not graduate, and a significant 34.12% were high school graduates or had obtained a GED. The percentage of those with some post-secondary education was 25.63%, similar to 2023, but notably, 14.87% held a two- or four-year college degree—double the percentage seen in 2023.

The data suggests a mixed trend in educational attainment over time, with slight reductions in the lowest education levels indicating some progress. However, there is a concerning decline in the proportion of individuals achieving college degrees, suggesting that despite some improvements in basic educational attainment, many individuals are not advancing to levels of education that significantly enhance employability. This trend reflects persistent barriers to accessing and completing higher education, which could limit long-term employment opportunities and economic advancement for the population served.

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Adult Education/Skills Development Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
Bobby Dodd Institute	678-365-0071	Provides job skills training to individuals with physical and mental disabilities.
Center for Family Resources	770-428-2601 info@thecfr.org	Provides GED test instruction to low-income residents with dependent children living in the home.
Chattahoochee Technical College	770-528-4545 adulted-ged@chattahoocheetech.edu	Provides ABE/GED test instruction/administration, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and technical skills education.
Cobb County Adult Education Center	678-594-8011	Provides GED, adult literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.
Cobb County School District	770-426-3300	Provides ABE/GED test instruction and administration.
Cobb County Senior Services	770-528-5355	Provides computer literacy training to senior citizens.
CobbWorks	770-528-4300 information@cobbworks.org	Provides ABE/GED test instruction, adult literacy education, and job skills training services.
Construction Education Foundation of Georgia	678-801-9100	Provides construction trade skills development services.
Georgia Fatherhood Program	844-694-2347	Provides adult literacy and job training assistance to non-custodial parents with court ordered child support responsibilities.
Goodwill of North Georgia	678-766-8173 careerservices@ging.org	Provides job skills training in multiple areas.
Latin American Association	404-638-1800	Provides citizenship education, technology classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to Hispanic individuals and those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
MUST Ministries: Marietta	770-427-9862	Provides job skills training services
MUST Ministries: Smyrna	770-436-9514	Provides job skills training services
Tommy Nobis Center	770-427-9000 angela.christian@tommynobiscenter.org	Provides job skills training in the areas of call center operations, computer operations, and forklift operations.
Urban League of Greater Atlanta	404-659-1150 info@ulgatl.org	Provides computer literacy training, GED test instruction, and job skills training services
Vocational Rehabilitation	770-528-3435	Provides skills development services to individuals with disabilities.

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Conclusion: Strengths

There has been an overall positive shift in educational attainment in Cobb County, with the percentage of adults holding a bachelor's degree or higher rising to 49.7%. The county's focus on improving access to education and skills training has contributed to these gains. Programs offered by local institutions, such as GED instruction, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and job skills training, have helped many residents improve their qualifications. The increase in associate degrees (up 4.67%) further demonstrates growing recognition of the value of post-secondary education in securing better employment outcomes.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Despite improvements, a significant portion of the population faces educational and skill deficiencies that limit economic opportunities. Around 104,115 adults (17%) have low literacy skills, and 165,360 adults (27%) have numeracy deficiencies, severely restricting their job prospects and financial stability. The high rate of poverty among individuals without a high school diploma (16.20%) highlights the critical need for increased access to basic education.

Language barriers also pose a major challenge, affecting 52,034 residents who report difficulties with English proficiency. This limits their employment options and often relegates them to lower-paying jobs. Community feedback indicates that lack of required qualifications and soft skills, such as communication and teamwork, are major obstacles to employment. Resources aimed at addressing these issues are available but need expansion and greater outreach to effectively meet the needs of those most impacted by educational deficiencies.

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Child/Youth Education

Introduction

The importance of education in alleviating long-term poverty cannot be overstated. Access to quality education from a young age equips children with critical skills, increasing their future economic opportunities and potential to break the cycle of poverty that may have affected their families. The Urban Institute reports that education is a crucial element in disrupting the persistence of poverty across generations. By providing the tools for academic and personal success, society can create pathways for children to not only achieve financial stability but also contribute to the broader economic health of their communities.

School-Aged Children (Age 5-17)

In Cobb County, the age distribution of school-aged children highlights the diverse needs and educational stages within the community. For the 48,864 children aged 5-9 years, typically in kindergarten through fourth grade, the focus is on nurturing foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, which are critical for their academic journey. The challenges for this group often involve adapting to a structured learning environment and developing the social skills necessary for educational success.

Table 23: School-Aged Children by Age Group (2022)

5-9 Years	10-14 Years	15-17 Years	TOTAL (5-17)
48,864	50,038	32,160	131,062

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP05)

The largest segment, consisting of 50,038 children aged 10-14 years, generally corresponds with middle school, a period where students are transitioning from elementary-level education to more complex subjects and greater autonomy in learning. The challenges here include fostering critical thinking and adapting to different teaching styles and expectations.

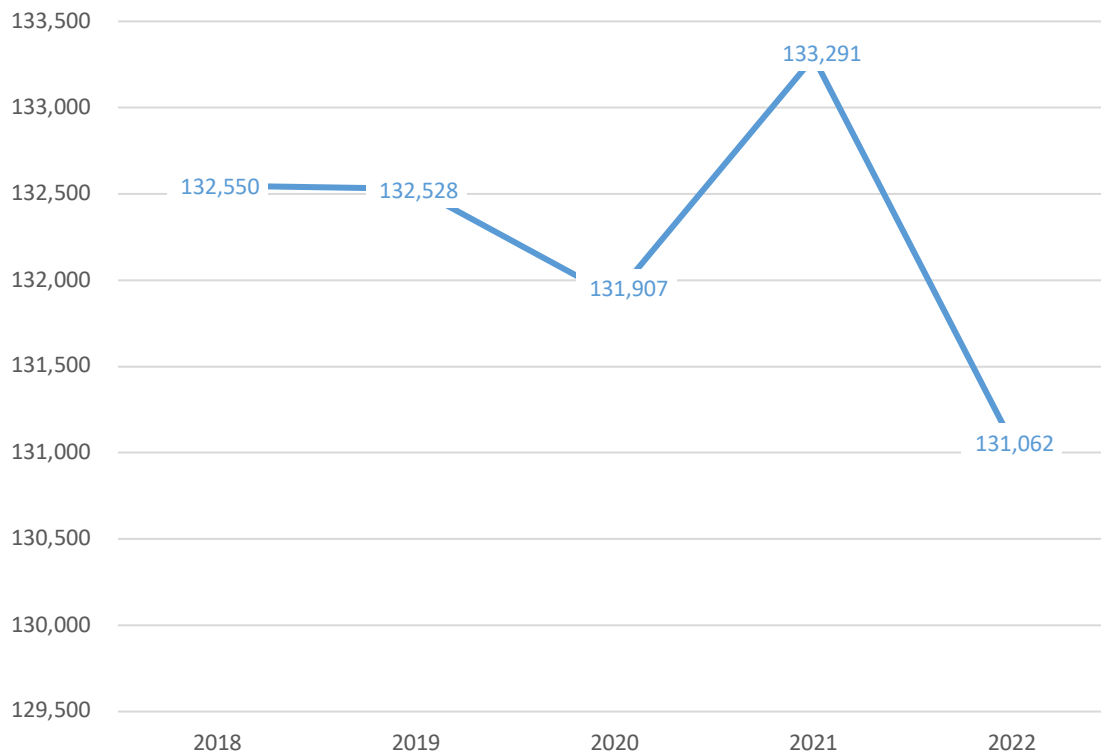
The 32,160 children aged 15-17 years are typically navigating high school, facing decisions that will significantly impact their future, such as college applications, vocational training opportunities, or entering the workforce after graduation. This group encounters challenges such as preparing for standardized tests, securing post-secondary education or employment, and developing a sense of independence and responsibility.

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Over the past five years, the county has witnessed a 1.12% decrease in the number of school-aged children, dropping from 132,550 in 2018 to 131,062 in 2022. This decline reflects a gradual reduction with fluctuations, including a temporary peak in 2021 at 133,291 before a sharper decrease in 2022. The declining trend in the school-aged population suggests potential demographic shifts, such as lower birth rates, changing family dynamics, or migration patterns impacting the community.

This reduction in youth population may significantly affect school enrollment, resource allocation, and the planning of educational services. The largest group, children aged 10-14, corresponds with the middle school years—a critical period for developing academic and social skills. A decline in this age group could challenge schools to adapt their resources, teaching strategies, and support services to address the evolving needs of a smaller student body.

Chart 37: School-Aged Children Count Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP05)

Furthermore, the shrinking population of high school students aged 15-17, who are on the brink of entering college or the workforce, underscores the need for targeted educational and career readiness programs. Addressing this demographic shift proactively is essential for maintaining robust educational environments that support students' academic growth and long-term economic potential, ensuring that current and future generations are well-prepared to contribute to the community's overall health and prosperity.

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School-Aged Children in Poverty (Ages 5-17)

Among the local children in this age group, it is estimated that 13,524 are currently living in poverty. Children in poverty often encounter barriers that impede their learning journey: limited access to essential educational materials, technological tools, and enrichment experiences outside of school. These challenges are compounded by factors such as food insecurity, unstable housing, and less access to healthcare, which can result in frequent absences, difficulty concentrating, and delayed cognitive development. The stress associated with living in poverty can also have profound effects on mental health, affecting children's academic performance and social development.

Table 24: School-Aged Children in Poverty (2018/2022)

2018 #	2022 #	Change
17,638	13,524	-23.32%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S1701)

The five-year trend demonstrates a 23.32% decrease in the number of impoverished school-aged children since 2018. This significant drop highlights the effectiveness of recent policy changes and targeted interventions. It's important to continue to provide programs that offer nutritional support, affordable housing, access to healthcare, and educational resources to help mitigate the adverse effects of poverty on children. Additionally, schools and community organizations must collaborate to create supportive environments that address the holistic needs of these students, fostering resilience and enabling them to succeed academically and socially despite the challenges they face.

Student Barriers

In Cobb County, multiple school districts collectively face significant challenges related to economic disadvantage, disabilities, and limited English proficiency among students. Across all districts, a total of 54,646 students are economically disadvantaged, highlighting the widespread impact of financial hardship on students' ability to access educational resources, participate in extracurricular activities, and meet basic needs such as nutrition and transportation.

Table 25: Student Barriers to Educational Success (2023)

School District	Economically Disadvantaged	Disability	Limited English
<i>Cobb</i>	48,601	14,930	16,518
<i>Marietta City</i>	5,476	1,037	2,211
<i>Amana Academy of West Atlanta</i>	28	8	5
<i>Destinations Career Academy of Georgia (Virtual)</i>	222	65	12
<i>International Academy of Smyrna</i>	215	40	63
<i>Northwest Classical Academy</i>	104	85	28

Source: Georgia Department of Education

Additionally, there are 16,165 students identified as having disabilities, requiring specialized instruction, accommodations, and support services to address their unique learning needs. Without adequate resources and tailored educational plans, these students may struggle to achieve their full potential, leading to lower academic outcomes and reduced opportunities for future success.

Language barriers also pose significant challenges, with 18,837 students across the county identified as having limited English proficiency. These students face difficulties engaging with the curriculum, participating fully in classroom activities, and understanding educational content, necessitating comprehensive language support programs to help bridge these gaps.

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These barriers are present across all school districts within Cobb County, including traditional public schools, virtual academies, and charter schools, highlighting the widespread impact of these challenges. Resolving these barriers through targeted interventions and robust support systems is essential to ensure that every student, regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, or language proficiency, has access to the resources they need to succeed academically and thrive within their educational environments.

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Educational Infrastructure

A strong educational infrastructure serves as the cornerstone of societal progress and individual development. It is the engine that drives economic growth, innovation, and workforce readiness, creating a skilled and adaptable labor force that can compete in a globalized world. Furthermore, education is the primary pathway to breaking the cycle of poverty, offering individuals the knowledge and skills needed to secure better job opportunities and higher incomes. Beyond its economic role, a robust educational system fosters informed and engaged citizens, strengthening democratic societies, and promoting social cohesion. It also contributes to improved public health outcomes, as education correlates with healthier lifestyles and access to better healthcare.

Table 26: School District Averages (2023)

District	Schools	Ratio	Grad %	College/ Career Readiness %
<i>Cobb County</i>	112	14:1	87.7%	57.4%
<i>Marietta City</i>	11	12:1	86.4%	50.8%
<i>Amana Academy of West Atlanta</i>	1	10:1	No Data	No Data
<i>Destinations Career Academy of Georgia (Virtual)</i>	1	27:1	No Data	No Data
<i>International Academy of Smyrna</i>	1	11:1	No Data	No Data
<i>Northwest Classical Academy</i>	2	14:1	No Data	No Data

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics | Georgia Dept of Education

In the evaluated community, the educational landscape consists of 128 schools across various districts, reflecting a diverse and comprehensive educational system. The overall student-to-teacher ratio averages around 14:1, which is in line with favorable educational standards, suggesting a supportive learning environment conducive to student engagement and success.

Cobb County, the largest district with 112 schools, maintains a ratio of 14:1 and boasts a graduation rate of 87.7%. Marietta City, with 11 schools, has an even lower ratio of 12:1 and a graduation rate of 86.4%. Both districts demonstrate strong graduation rates that exceed national averages, indicating that a significant majority of students are completing their high school education, which is essential for accessing further education and employment opportunities.

College and career readiness rates, however, show a need for improvement. Cobb County reports a readiness rate of 57.4%, while Marietta City stands at 50.8%. These figures suggest that while many students are graduating, fewer are fully prepared for the demands of college, or the workforce compared to national standards. Addressing these gaps is critical to enhancing post-secondary outcomes and ensuring that students are equipped with the skills necessary for future success.

For smaller districts, including Amana Academy of West Atlanta, International Academy of Smyrna, and Northwest Classical Academy, specific data on graduation rates and college readiness are not available. This lack of data highlights the need for better tracking and reporting across all educational institutions to fully understand and support student achievement in the community.

Overall, while the student-to-teacher ratios and graduation rates in the larger districts reflect a positive educational environment, the lower college and career readiness rates point to a need for targeted interventions. Enhancing college and career preparation programs will be crucial to aligning student outcomes with the community's broader economic and workforce development goals.

A listing of all of the county schools is available on the following pages.

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Table 27: Cobb County School District

School Name	School ID
Ackworth Intermediate School	GA-633-0302
Addison Elementary School	GA-633-0289
Allatoona High School	GA-633-0209
Argyle Elementary School	GA-633-2050
Austell Elementary School	GA-633-0207
Awtrey Middle School	GA-633-4050
Baker Elementary School	GA-633-0189
Barber Middle School	GA-633-0407
Bells Ferry Elementary School	GA-633-5050
Belmont Hills Elementary School	GA-633-1052
Betty Gray Middle School	GA-633-0309
Big Shanty Elementary School	GA-633-0504
Birney Elementary School	GA-633-0173
Blackwell Elementary School	GA-633-0399
Brumby Elementary School	GA-633-5052
Bryant Elementary School	GA-633-0592
Bullard Elementary School	GA-633-0104
Campbell High School	GA-633-1054
Campbell Middle School	GA-633-0290
Chalker Elementary School	GA-633-0198
Cheatham Hill Elementary School	GA-633-0298
City View Elementary School	GA-633-0102
Clarkdale Elementary School	GA-633-0117
Clay-Harmony Leland Elementary School	GA-633-0809
Cobb Horizon High School	GA-633-0808
Compton Elementary School	GA-633-3556
Cooper Middle School	GA-633-0502
Daniell Middle School	GA-633-4056
Davis Elementary School	GA-633-0388
Devereux Ackerman Academy	GA-633-0807
Dickerson Middle School	GA-633-0281
Dodgen Middle School	GA-633-0275
Dowell Elementary School	GA-633-0190
Due West Elementary School	GA-633-5056
Durham Middle School	GA-633-0299
East Cobb Middle School	GA-633-1056
East Side Elementary School	GA-633-0114
Eastvalley Elementary School	GA-633-5068
Fair Oaks Elementary School	GA-633-3058
Floyd Middle School	GA-633-5058
Ford Elementary School	GA-633-0292
Frey Elementary School	GA-633-0297
Garrett Middle School	GA-633-1060
Garrison Mill Elementary School	GA-633-0185
Green Acres Elementary School	GA-633-0397
Griffin Middle School	GA-633-2560
Harrison High School	GA-633-0192
Hayes Elementary School	GA-633-0194

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Hendricks Elementary School	GA-633-0402
Hightower Trail Middle School	GA-633-0394
Hillgrove High School	GA-633-0707
Hollydale Elementary School	GA-633-4560
Keheley Elementary School	GA-633-0187
Kell High School	GA-633-0103
Kemp Elementary School	GA-633-0203
Kennesaw Elementary School	GA-633-0404
Kennesaw Mountain High School	GA-633-0101
Kincaid Elementary School	GA-633-0273
King Springs Elementary School	GA-633-2062
LaBelle Elementary School	GA-633-3062
Lassiter High School	GA-633-0381
Lewis Elementary School	GA-633-0287
Lindley Middle School	GA-633-0202
Lost Mountain Middle School	GA-633-0499
Lovinggood Middle School	GA-633-0607
Mableton Elementary School	GA-633-0118
Mabry Middle School	GA-633-0178
McCall Primary School	GA-633-0107
McCleskey Middle School	GA-633-0184
McClure Middle School	GA-633-0507
McEachern High School	GA-633-1064
Milford Elementary School	GA-633-3064
Mount Bethel Elementary School	GA-633-0278
Mountain View Elementary School	GA-633-0288
Murdock Elementary School	GA-633-0375
Nicholson Elementary School	GA-633-0391
Nicajack Elementary School	GA-633-0199
North Cobb High School	GA-633-2056
Norton Park Elementary School	GA-633-1066
Osborne High School	GA-633-2066
Palmer Middle School	GA-633-0602
Park Street Elementary School	GA-781-2052
Pearson Middle School	GA-633-0816
Pebblebrook High School	GA-633-4066
Pickett's Mill Elementary School	GA-633-0109
Pine Mountain Middle School	GA-633-0280
Pitner Elementary School	GA-633-0204
Pope High School	GA-633-0188
Powder Springs Elementary School	GA-633-0489
Powers Ferry Elementary School	GA-633-1067
Riverside Elementary School	GA-633-0307
Rocky Mount Elementary School	GA-633-0378
Russell Elementary School	GA-633-3067
Sanders Elementary School	GA-633-0398
Sawyer Road Elementary School	GA-781-0104
Sedalia Park Elementary School	GA-633-5067
Shallowford Falls Elementary School	GA-633-0291
Simpson Middle School	GA-633-0389
Smitha Middle School	GA-633-0294

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Smyrna Elementary School	GA-633-0214
Sope Creek Elementary School	GA-633-0478
South Cobb High School	GA-633-3056
Sprayberry High School	GA-633-0373
Still Elementary School	GA-633-0180
Tapp Middle School	GA-633-0475
Teasley Elementary School	GA-633-4068
Timber Ridge Elementary School	GA-633-0491
Tritt Elementary School	GA-633-0181
Varner Elementary School	GA-633-0191
Vaughan Elementary School	GA-633-0197
Walton High School	GA-633-0175
Wheeler High School	GA-633-1069

Sources: Georgia Department of Education | National Center for Education Statistics

Table 28: Marietta City School District

School Name	School ID
A.L. Burruss Elementary School	GA-781-0188
Dunleith Elementary School	GA-781-0194
Emily Lembeck Early Learning Center	GA-781-0408
George W. Hartmann Center	GA-781-0207
Hickory Hills Elementary School	GA-781-3050
Lockheed Elementary School	GA-781-0294
Marietta Center for Advanced Academics	GA-781-0106
Marietta High School	GA-781-0101
Marietta Middle School	GA-781-0203
Marietta Sixth Grade Academy	GA-781-0303
West Side Elementary School	GA-781-5052

Sources: Georgia Department of Education | National Center for Education Statistics

Table 29: State Specialty School Districts

School Name	School ID
Amana Academy West Atlanta	GA-7830643-0643
Destinations Career Academy of Georgia	GA-7830642-0642
International Academy of Smyrna	GA-7830619-0619
Northwest Classical Academy	GA-7830636-0636

Sources: Georgia Department of Education | National Center for Education Statistics

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Community Feedback

Survey data reveals critical feedback regarding student performance and the challenges they face within the school system. Comments indicated that some students struggle with the transition between different levels of education due to skill deficiencies. One respondent noted, "Many kids just don't have the basic reading skills they need by the time they hit middle school. It's like they start behind and never really catch up." These insights underscore the necessity of early interventions to bridge skill gaps and prevent long-term educational setbacks. Without addressing these barriers, students are likely to continue facing academic challenges that could limit their future opportunities, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted support to improve foundational skills from an early age.

Agency Data

In 2022, the organization provided services to 648 school-aged children, representing 24.04% of all customers served that year. This marks a notable increase from 2020 when 386 school-aged children were served, accounting for 21.40% of the total customer base. The growing proportion of school-aged children among those receiving services highlights the increasing need for support within this demographic, underscoring the importance of addressing educational and socio-economic challenges faced by families. This upward trend suggests that more families with children are seeking assistance, pointing to ongoing barriers that may impact children's educational success and overall well-being.

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Other Child/Youth Educational Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
Boys and Girls Club of Metro Atlanta	770-427-0418	Provides tutoring services to children between the ages of 6 and 18. (Fees may apply)
Center for Children and Young Adults	770-333-9447	Provides assistance with literacy, SAT/ACT preparation, college/vocational school counseling, and basic computer skills.
Center for Pan-Asian Community Services	770-936-0969 cpacs@cpacs.org	Provides study skills assistance to individuals with low incomes.
Covenant House Georgia	404-589-0163	Provides assistance with subject tutoring and entrance exam preparation to youth ages 18 to 24.
Girls Incorporated of Greater Atlanta	678-686-1740 info@girlsincatl.org	Provides education supports and youth literacy counseling to girls between the ages of 6 and 18.
LaAmistad, Inc.	404-842-5873 info@laamistadinc.org	Provides Latino elementary, middle, and high school students living near Peachtree Presbyterian Church assistance with tutoring services in the areas of academics, English as a Second Language (ESL), and youth literacy.
Redeemed Christian Church of God	770-944-1401	Provides tutoring services and technology training.

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Conclusion: Strengths

Over the past five years, Cobb County has seen a 23.32% decrease in the number of school-aged children living in poverty, dropping from 17,638 in 2018 to 13,524 in 2022. This significant reduction highlights the effectiveness of targeted interventions, such as nutritional support, affordable housing, and access to healthcare. Educational infrastructure is relatively strong, with Cobb County School District having a favorable student-to-teacher ratio of 14:1 and a high graduation rate of 87.7%. Such supportive learning environments contribute to students' academic success and readiness for post-secondary opportunities.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Despite overall strengths, challenges persist. The declining school-aged population suggests potential future impacts on school resources and educational planning. Additionally, approximately 54,646 students in the county are economically disadvantaged, 16,165 have disabilities, and 18,837 face limited English proficiency. These barriers can severely impact educational outcomes, with many students struggling to engage fully in the curriculum and extracurricular activities. Feedback from the community highlights gaps in foundational skills, particularly in literacy, as students often struggle to keep pace with grade-level expectations, underscoring the need for early interventions to bridge these skill gaps.

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Childcare and Early Education

Introduction

Childcare plays a crucial role in shaping employment outcomes, educational achievements, and the prevalence of poverty, with a significant impact on individuals, families, and society. Accessible and affordable childcare services are closely intertwined with these pivotal aspects of human development and socio-economic well-being, as demonstrated in several studies.

First and foremost, the availability of quality childcare services profoundly influences employment, particularly for parents and predominantly mothers. Research from the Center for American Progress underscores how a lack of affordable childcare can hinder a mothers' participation in the labor force. High childcare costs and the unavailability of suitable arrangements have been identified as key factors leading mothers to make career sacrifices, reduce working hours, or exit the workforce entirely. Consequently, this wage gap and the career interruptions experienced due to childcare responsibilities can have long-term implications for mothers' earnings and economic security.

Second, the impact of childcare on educational attainment is notable, particularly for parents seeking to advance their education or job skills. CAP's research indicates that accessible and affordable childcare services enable parents to engage in educational opportunities that enhance their qualifications, leading to improved career prospects and higher earning potential. Conversely, the lack of adequate childcare options can be a significant barrier for parents aspiring to pursue further education or skill development, limiting their upward economic mobility.

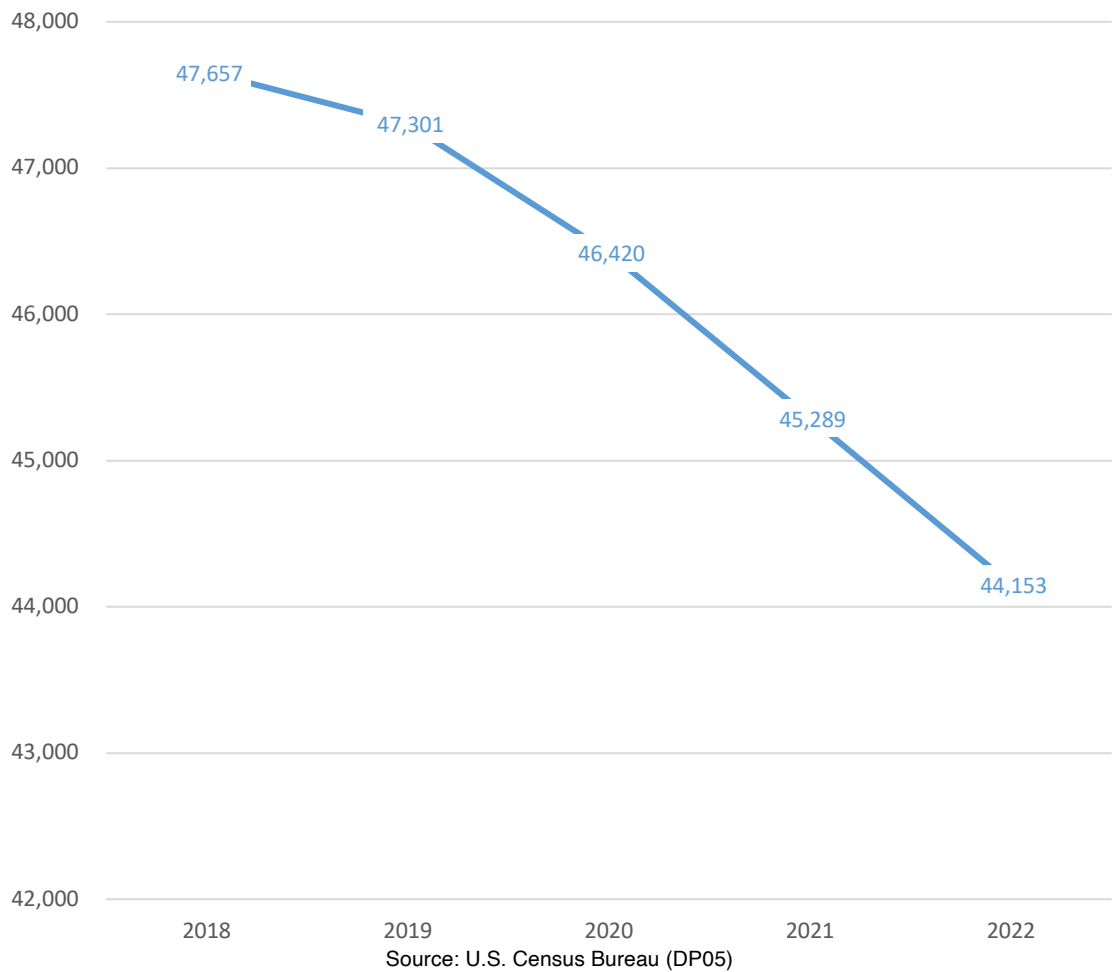
Finally, the relationship between childcare and poverty is evident, with significant implications for families' economic well-being. Data from the Institute for Women's Policy Research highlights how caregiving responsibilities, including difficulties in securing affordable childcare, contribute to financial hardship for families with young children. High childcare costs can strain family budgets, potentially pushing them into poverty. Additionally, parents who are compelled to leave the workforce or reduce working hours due to childcare challenges may experience a substantial decline in their income, exacerbating the persistence of poverty among families with young children.

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Preschool-Aged Children

Over the past five years, the number of young children in Cobb County has seen a steady decrease from 47,657 in 2018 to 44,153 in 2022, representing a rate of change of -7.35%. This decline in the young child population has important implications for the county's childcare structure and early education planning.

Chart 38: Young Children Count Trend (2018-2022)



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Young Children in Poverty

An estimated 4,509 of the county's young children, (10.21%), were identified as living in poverty. This rate is a substantial indicator of the economic challenges facing the youngest and most vulnerable members of the community. A poverty rate of nearly one-tenth of the child population is a cause for concern, as early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, social, and emotional development. Economic hardship during these formative years can have long-term detrimental effects on a child's educational outcomes and future earning potential. The rate suggests that a segment of the population may not be receiving the foundational support necessary to thrive in later stages of education and into adulthood.

Table 30: Young Children in Poverty (2022)

Children	Low-Income	Rate
44,153	4,509	10.21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S1701)

This figure also provides a lens through which the effectiveness of current social support systems and poverty alleviation programs can be evaluated. It indicates that despite efforts, there remains a high proportion of children who are growing up in circumstances that may limit their access to essential resources, such as nutritious food, stable housing, and quality educational materials, all of which are critical for healthy development and academic success.

The data points toward the need for targeted interventions that can provide relief and support to these young children and their families. Policies that could address this issue might include increasing access to affordable childcare, offering food assistance programs, and enhancing the availability of early childhood educational services. Moreover, these interventions could help in breaking the generational cycle of poverty by ensuring that children have the necessary tools and opportunities to improve their socioeconomic status in the future.

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Childcare Infrastructure

With only 25,658 childcare slots to accommodate 46,363 children, there is a deficit of 20,705 slots available. This discrepancy results in a ratio of 1.81 children for every available slot, highlighting a gap in early childhood education and care services within the community.

Table 31: Childcare Capacity vs Demand (2022)

Slots	Children	+/-	Ratio
25,658	46,363	-20,705	1.81:1

Source: Center for American Progress | National Center for Educational Statistics

This shortfall means that for every two children placed in a childcare setting, at least one is potentially left without access. Such a deficit can place significant strain on families, particularly impacting those who cannot afford private care or who do not have the flexibility in their employment to manage without such services. The repercussions of this gap may lead to difficult decisions for parents, including the possibility of leaving the workforce, which can affect household incomes and potentially increase the rates of poverty.

The impact of this deficit extends beyond individual families, with potential implications for the county's workforce participation, economic growth, and future educational outcomes for a large segment of the community's children. It stresses the importance of investing in childcare infrastructure as a means to support working families, promote gender equality in the workforce, and foster early childhood development.

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According to the Center for American Progress (CAP), a childcare desert is defined as any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no childcare providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed childcare slots. Excluding school-operated pre-school programs, 46 of the 114 census tracts (40.35%) were identified as childcare deserts.

Table 32: Childcare Desert Classification and Ratio by Census Tract (2022)

Tract	Ratio (:1)	Desert	Tract	Ratio (:1)	Desert
301.01	0.84	No	304.11	4.40	Yes
301.03	0.94	No	304.12	72.33	Yes
301.04	38.33	Yes	304.13	1.78	No
301.06	2.89	No	304.14	N/A	Yes
301.07	49.50	Yes	305.02	0.80	No
302.14	1.56	No	305.04	3.37	Yes
302.15	140.33	Yes	305.05	5.66	Yes
302.18	29.19	Yes	305.06	0.10	No
302.19	0.55	No	305.07	4.85	Yes
302.20	24.17	Yes	306.01	6.85	Yes
302.22	4.25	Yes	306.02	1.16	No
302.23	0.66	No	307.00	0.30	No
302.24	1.89	No	308.00	6.80	Yes
302.26	1.66	No	309.01	2.38	No
302.27	0.45	No	309.02	5.12	Yes
302.28	1.93	No	309.04	27.00	Yes
302.29	0.13	No	309.05	1.74	No
302.30	2.82	No	310.01	4.25	Yes
302.31	1.00	No	310.02	1.84	No
302.32	N/A	Yes	310.04	0.70	No
302.33	44.00	Yes	310.05	1.09	No
302.34	63.83	Yes	311.01	1.18	No
302.35	1.68	No	311.06	0.94	No
302.36	1.06	No	311.08	2.18	No
302.38	63.83	Yes	311.10	1.22	No
302.39	0.94	No	311.11	3.78	Yes
303.10	2.93	No	311.12	17.95	Yes
303.11	65.83	Yes	311.15	2.94	No
303.12	0.87	No	311.16	0.78	No
303.13	1.97	No	311.17	1.88	No
303.14	1.93	No	311.18	0.69	No
303.18	0.55	No	312.05	N/A	Yes
303.19	N/A	Yes	312.06	2.96	No
303.20	1.49	No	312.07	N/A	Yes
303.27	N/A	Yes	312.08	1.28	No
303.28	0.40	No	312.09	2.03	No
303.29	0.47	No	312.11	31.50	Yes
303.30	1.47	No	312.12	N/A	Yes
303.31	N/A	Yes	313.06	0.98	No
303.32	0.56	No	313.07	1.66	No
303.33	48.83	Yes	313.08	0.95	No
303.34	2.23	No	313.09	1.56	No
303.35	N/A	Yes	313.10	2.27	No

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303.36	0.96	No
303.37	N/A	Yes
303.39	2.63	No
303.40	25.67	Yes
303.41	37.83	Yes
303.42	1.23	No
303.43	33.33	Yes
303.44	1.24	No
303.45	N/A	Yes
304.05	2.88	No
304.07	1.06	No
304.08	37.50	Yes
304.09	N/A	Yes
304.10	N/A	Yes

313.11	2.09	No
313.12	3.04	Yes
313.13	1.49	No
314.04	1.86	No
314.05	3.02	Yes
314.06	1.05	No
314.08	1.79	No
314.09	1.10	No
315.03	1.50	No
315.05	1.63	No
315.06	1.09	No
315.07	78.17	Yes
315.08	N/A	Yes
315.09	6.88	Yes

Source: Center for American Progress

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Childcare Affordability

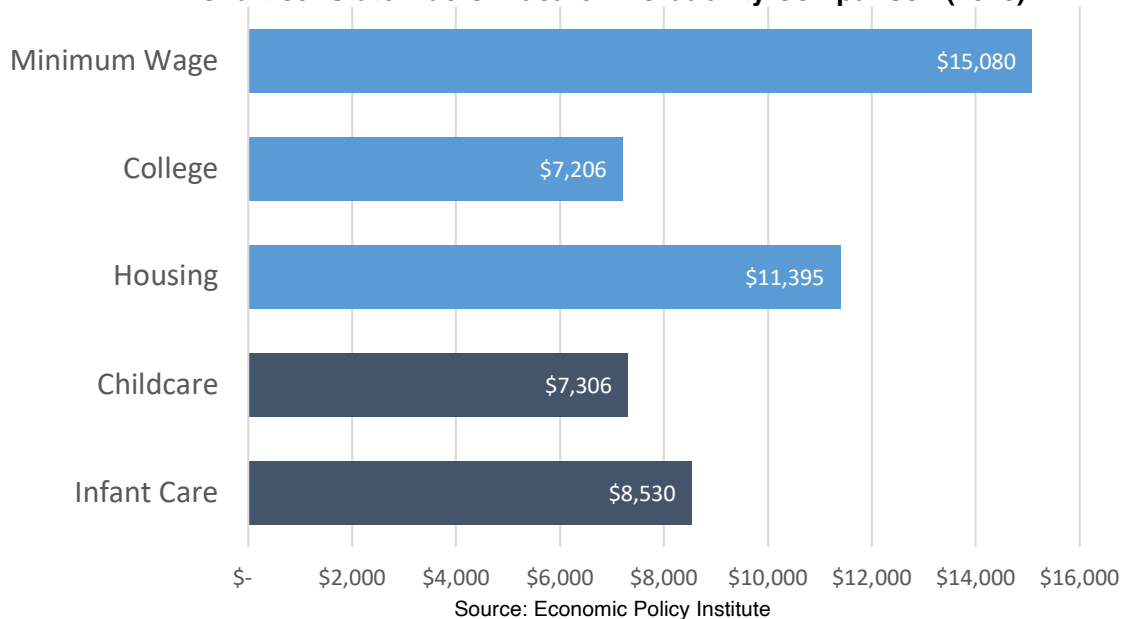
For families who have access to childcare, cost is a secondary factor that can prevent them from using the resource. According to the Economic Policy Institute, the average cost of infant care in Georgia is \$8,530 per year (\$710.83 per month). For older children, the cost is slightly lower at \$7,306 each year (\$606.83 per month). With these rates, infant care is 18.40% more than an in-state tuition for a four-year public college and 74.86% of the average rent cost.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), childcare is considered affordable if it costs no more than 7% of a family's income. For a family with a median income in Georgia, infant care for one child consumes a notable 15.50% of their earnings, which is more than double the 7% threshold. In practical terms, only 16.80% of Georgia families can comfortably afford infant care without it being a financial strain.

Families with two children (or more) face an even larger burden. For two children, an infant and a four-year-old, the average cost of childcare would be \$15,836 per year (\$1,320 per month). That is 28.00% higher than the state's average rent. A typical family with this structure would spend more than 28.70% of their annual income on childcare alone.

For low-wage workers, childcare is completely out of reach. A minimum wage worker in Georgia would need to work full-time for 29 weeks simply to pay for childcare for one infant.

Chart 39: Statewide Childcare Affordability Comparison (2020)



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Community Feedback

Survey feedback highlighted significant challenges related to childcare, which greatly impact parents' ability to work and maintain stable employment. According to the data, 55% of respondents reported being unable to find childcare, while 30% cited being unable to afford childcare as a major barrier. These barriers directly affect parents' capacity to work regular hours, attend job training, or seek better employment opportunities.

One respondent shared, "Without affordable childcare, it's impossible to work a full-time job, let alone try to get ahead." This reflects a common sentiment among surveyed residents, emphasizing the urgent need for accessible and affordable childcare solutions to support working families. Without addressing these barriers, parents may continue to face employment instability, limiting their financial security and opportunities for advancement.

Agency Data

In 2023, the organization served 240 children under the age of 5, accounting for 8.90% of all clients served. This represents a significant increase compared to 2020, when only 60 young children were served, making up just 3.33% of the total clientele. This sharp rise in the number of young children receiving services highlights a growing need for early intervention and support among families with very young children. The data indicates that more families with infants and toddlers are facing challenges that require assistance, emphasizing the critical importance of early childhood support programs in mitigating long-term socio-economic impacts on these vulnerable families.

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Conclusion: Strengths

The decline in the young child population may reduce some immediate pressure on childcare services, potentially allowing providers to focus resources more effectively. Additionally, the increase in families seeking early childhood support, as reflected by the rise in young children served by local agencies from 3.33% in 2020 to 8.90% in 2023, suggests growing awareness and utilization of available resources. These early interventions can play a critical role in supporting vulnerable families and mitigating long-term socio-economic impacts on children.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Cobb County faces a substantial deficit in childcare infrastructure, with 20,705 fewer childcare slots than needed to accommodate the local population of young children. This shortfall is particularly concerning given that nearly 40.35% of the county's census tracts are classified as childcare deserts, where access to licensed childcare is severely limited. The cost of childcare further exacerbates these challenges, with average annual expenses for infant care at \$8,530, consuming 15.50% of a typical Georgia family's income—more than double the affordability threshold set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For families with two children, childcare costs can exceed 28.70% of their annual income, making it unattainable for many, particularly low-wage workers. Survey data revealed that 55% of respondents were unable to find childcare, and 30% could not afford it, significantly impacting their ability to maintain stable employment. These barriers emphasize the urgent need for expanded and more affordable childcare options to support working families and ensure the healthy development of young children.

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Housing and Energy

Introduction

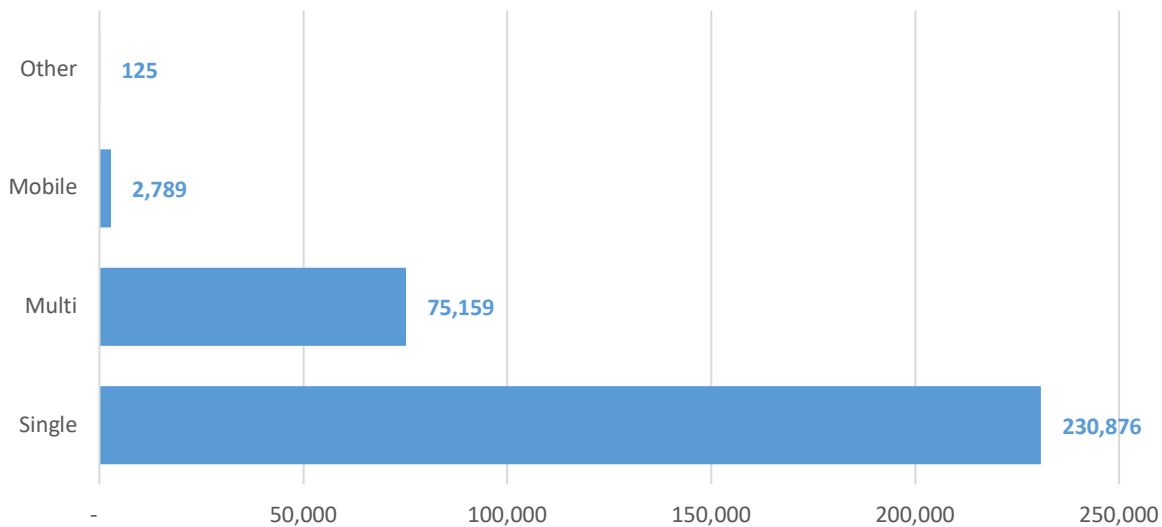
Housing and energy are fundamental pillars of a household's well-being and economic security, playing pivotal roles in determining the quality of life and overall stability of individuals and families. Adequate housing provides shelter, security, and a sense of belonging, while access to affordable energy sources is essential for maintaining a comfortable living environment. However, the relationship between poverty and these basic needs is intricate and mutually reinforcing. Poverty often leads to inadequate and unstable housing arrangements, causing individuals and families to face homelessness or live in substandard conditions.

Recognizing the profound impact of poverty on housing and energy is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies aimed at improving the well-being of vulnerable populations, addressing disparities, and fostering economic security for all. This research explores the intricate interplay between poverty, housing, and energy, shedding light on the challenges faced by marginalized communities and proposing strategies to enhance their living conditions and economic prospects.

Housing Availability

The U.S. Census Bureau identified a total of 308,949 housing units available to accommodate the county's 291,171 households in 2022, leaving surplus of 17,778 homes available. An estimated 94.25% of these units were occupied at the time of the survey, with a strong majority (74.73%) of the total units being single occupancy homes. Other primary residence types included both multi-family units (24.33%) and mobile homes (0.90%). The remaining 125 units (0.04%) included campers, boats, and other places not generally designed for long-term housing.

Chart 40: Housing Infrastructure by Type (2022)

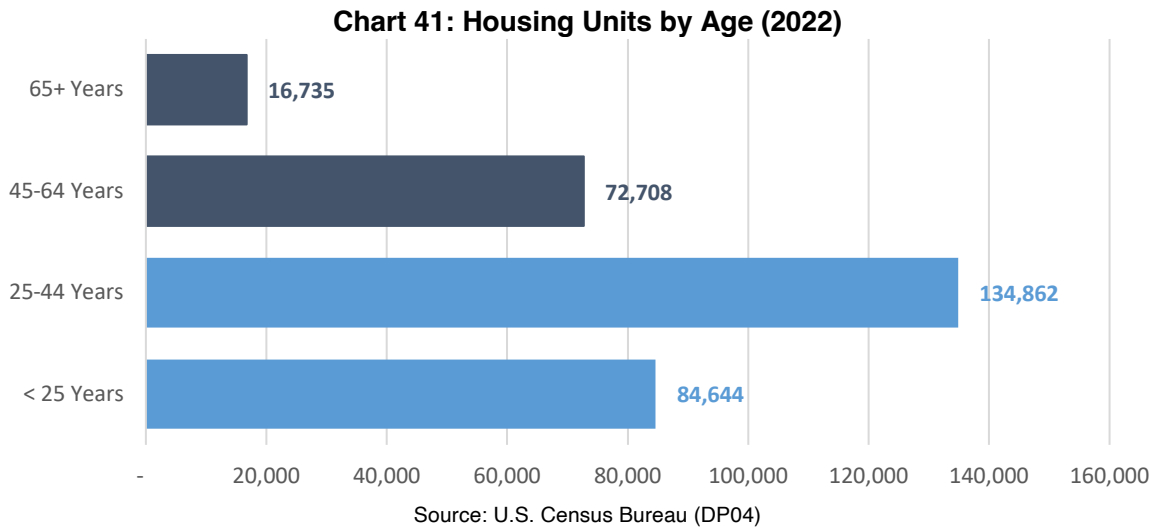


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP04)

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Housing Condition

While this is encouraging, it is always important to consider the condition of these homes. This is especially important in counties with a large number of older homes. According to Money Crashers, as a general rule of thumb, homes less than 40 years of age are considered “newer”, and homes built before 1920 are considered “antique.” In the agency’s service area, an estimated 28.95% of all housing units were found to be more than 45 years old, with 71.05% being considered “newer”.



Money crashers explains that housing age can be subjective but are generally based on a number of factors. The most important of these factors include:

- **Construction style and quality.** Prefabricated and mobile homes are generally constructed to lower quality standards than solidly built Tudors, craftsman, or colonial styles. Mass-produced houses, which tend to be newer, can have quality issues as well. However, custom-built new homes may be constructed even more solidly and durably than older homes. Ultimately construction quality comes down to the quality of the materials used and the skill of the builder.
- **Climate and Geology.** Climate, particularly humidity, temperature extremes, and storms, accelerate the aging process. Homes in the eastern half of the United States are more likely to experience problems attributable to these issues, such as roof damage and basement or foundational moisture, than homes in coastal California cities like San Francisco and Oakland. Geological factors that can accelerate the aging process include seismic activity, sinkholes, limestone geology, and high water tables.
- **Renovations.** In some cases, antique homes are updated so dramatically that it is difficult to define their age any longer. In some cases, the only original components may be the foundation or basement and a few structural supports rising above the home’s footprint. For these homes, it may not be accurate to attribute the construction to its original build date.

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According to Money Crashers, even well-maintained older homes can present problems that owners of newer homes do not have to worry about. These include health hazards (asbestos, mold, etc.), serious pest problems that can lead to structural issues, and issues with utility systems (wiring, plumbing, etc.).

1. **Lead and Asbestos**

Lead and asbestos are two hazardous materials that were used in residential applications until relatively recently. Lead is a neurotoxic metal that's particularly harmful to children. It is commonly found in exterior and interior paint made before 1978. It is also found in substantial quantities in pre-World War II plumbing systems and in smaller quantities in waterpipes installed before the mid 1980s.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material that causes a serious form of lung cancer and other respiratory problems. It was used in insulation and fireproofing materials until the mid-1970s. Although the EPA banned most asbestos applications by the 1980s, they never required building owners to remove existing asbestos. Accordingly, many older crawlspaces, walls, and pipes may still contain asbestos insulation.

2. **Termite Damage**

Over time, termites can devastate the wooden components of a home, including floors, structural supports, and drywall. The problem is particularly acute in the southern half of the country, where termites are active for most or all of the year. Older homes are more likely to have termite infestations due to compromised foundations or drywall.

Depending on the length and severity of the infestation, termite damage repairs can range from cosmetic fixes that cost a few hundred dollars to structural remediation costing \$10,000 or more.

3. **Mold and Mildew Damage**

Over time, homes exposed to excessive moisture often develop mold and mildew problems. Though particularly common in basements and bathrooms of wet-climate homes, moisture-related microorganism growth can occur anywhere. The problem is more likely to occur in older homes because moisture more readily seeps through cracked foundations and leaky pipes. However, since infestations can start inside of walls, it is possible to walk through a mold-infested home without realizing there is a problem.

While small amounts of indoor mold growth are permissible and even expected, uncontrolled growth can exacerbate allergies and existing respiratory problems (such as asthma) in healthy children and adults. More serious infections can develop in the very young, the very old, and those with compromised immune systems.

Also, mold eats away at its host surfaces, particularly wood, drywall, grout, and other porous or semiporous substances. Unchecked infestations can cause structural damage and render a home uninhabitable.

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4. **Plumbing Problems**

The biggest danger of an old or substandard plumbing system is the possibility of a pipe failure that floods the home or causes major water damage in the walls and floors. A serious failure can temporarily render the home uninhabitable and cost tens of thousands of dollars to clean up, though the damage is often covered by homeowners' insurance if the occupants are able to afford it. It can also lead to longer-term issues, such as mold infestations.

Understanding the materials used in the construction of the home is important. While brass and copper pipes typically last 50 years or more, steel pipes can wear out after as little as 20 years. Pipes made from PEX, an increasingly common plastic material, typically last 40 to 50 years.

Root damage is another issue attributed to many older homes, especially those in heavily vegetated neighborhoods. Over time, tree roots work their way into older drainage pipes under or outside of the home's foundation, busting through pipe joints and tapping the year-round supply of water.

5. **Foundation or Structural Problems**

Older homes are prone to a variety of foundational and structural problems. This may include major cracks in the slab or perimeter foundation wall, corrosion, dry rot, or moisture damage in pilings or concrete foundation supports, damaged piers/support footings, and dry rot/moisture damage in above-ground studs. Signs of foundation or structural damage include doors that fail to latch, visible cracks in walls, cracked tile or concrete floors, persistently stuck windows, and floors that are uneven.

6. **Radon**

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in certain types of bedrock. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that radon tends to persist at higher concentrations in the Northeast, Midwest, and Intermountain West, but can occur anywhere.

Radon enters homes through cracks in the foundation perimeter and basement walls, which are more common in older homes. The gas then circulates throughout poorly ventilated houses over time. Though it is not toxic when encountered intermittently and in small doses, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for nonsmokers, and exposure over the generally accepted safe concentration is not recommended for a longer period.

7. **Roof Problems**

Older homes generally have older, possibly deteriorating roofs. This presents numerous problems, including pest infestations, interior water damage, and less-effective insulation. Problems stemming from a compromised roof, particularly once interior leaks begin occurring regularly, can cost tens of thousands of dollars to fix and may not be covered by homeowners' insurance.

8. **Inefficient Windows**

Old homes are more likely to have older, inefficient windows. The primary downside of inefficient windows is a higher electricity bill because the home's climate control system has to work harder to compensate for leaks. According to the Federal Government's Energy Star program, installing the most efficient class of windows in your entire home can reduce your electric bill by as much as \$600, depending on the size of your home and where you live.

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9. **Inadequate or Unsafe Electrical Systems**

Electrical problems generally fall into two categories: convenience and safety.

Unless electrical systems have been updated, older homes may lack sufficient numbers of electrical outlets to address the resident's electronic devices.

More importantly, the lifespan of electrical wiring itself is limited by the lifespan of the wire's insulation. Wiring installed before 1960 lasts roughly 70 years, while newer wiring is estimated to last at least 100 years. Once the insulation deteriorates to the point that the actual wire is exposed, the risk of an electrical fire, shocks, short circuits, and localized power failures increase dramatically.

Electrical service panels and circuit breakers are also prone to deterioration. Service panels last 60-70 years, while breakers last 30-40 years. Failing panels and breakers can cause shock, power failure, fire, and other dangers.

It should also be noted that water damage, fire, pest infestation, and other unusual events can harm some or all of an electrical system's components, necessitating repair or replacement long before they reach their life expectancy.

10. **Failing or Inefficient Mechanicals and Appliances**

Older homes are more likely to have old mechanical equipment, such as water heaters, furnaces, and air conditioning units, as well as older household appliances. Mechanical and appliance lifespan varies by item, brand, and workload. Equipment near the end of its useful life is more prone to failure, raising the possibility of an inconvenient or dangerous situation – such as the loss of heat in winter or an electrical fire. It should also be noted that older equipment is generally less energy efficient, resulting in high utility costs.

11. **Unhelpful, Unfinished, or Outdated Updates**

While many older homes retain the charm and function of their original construction, others have experienced a host of unhelpful or anachronistic updates that detract from the homeowner's experience and potentially add to the cost of ownership.

Residents should be aware of the safety concerns associated with the home and consider how it may impact young children, senior citizens, or disabled residents. Some unfinished projects also provide easy access to insects and rodents, which can impact the health of those living in the home.

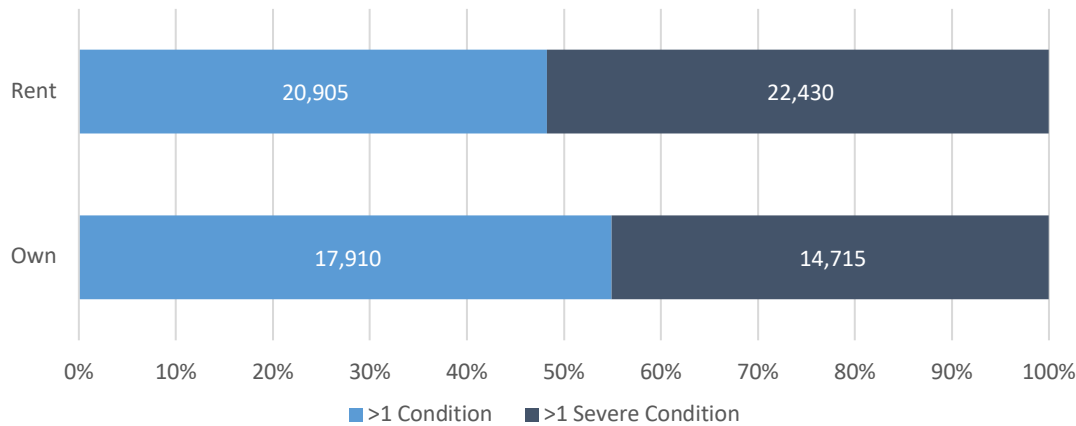
12. **Substandard or Unsafe Features**

Depending on the style, location, and history of the home, some original features may be obsolete, not up to building codes, or simply unsafe. These may include laundry chutes, servant staircases, staircases leading to nowhere, steep staircases, low ceilings, blocked off chimneys, and non-working fireplaces.

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United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in coordination with the U.S. Census Bureau, publishes annual estimates of housing units with substandard conditions. In the service area, an estimated 75,960 housing units (24.59%) were noted as having at least one substandard condition. A further observation is that renters (44.42%) are nearly four times as likely to live in homes with sub-standard conditions than those in owner occupied residences (11.69%). Among the housing units that were reported as having substandard conditions, nearly half (48.90%) were noted as having at least one severe sub-standard condition.

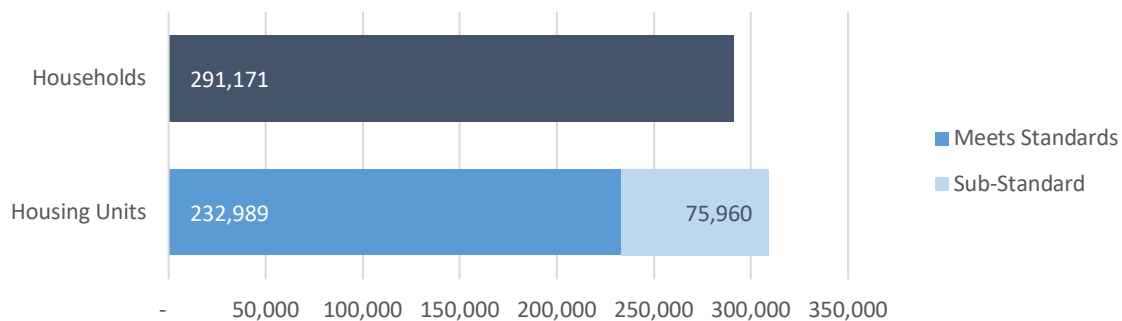
Chart 42: Substandard Housing Count by Occupancy Type (2020)



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

When comparing the total number of housing units to the total population, taking the units with sub-standard conditions into account, it is estimated that at least 58,182 households are living in homes with poor conditions throughout the county.

Chart 43: Housing Units vs Households (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (DPO3, DP05)/ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Among the conditions specifically identified as problem areas, an estimated 1,420 homes in the county were noted as lacking cooking facilities. This represents more than an inconvenience, it is a barrier that prevents residents from preparing nutritious meals, leading to long-term health implications and developmental concerns for children.

A total of 507 homes were identified as having inadequate plumbing, depriving residents of the means to maintain basic hygiene and sanitation, which is critical for preventing disease and promoting public health.

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Table 33: Notable Housing Conditions (2022)

Sub-Standard Condition	Severe Conditions	No Kitchen	Inadequate Plumbing	No Telephone	No Broadband
75,960	37,145	1,420	507	1,389	13,433

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development | US Census Bureau (DP04)

The absence of a telephone in 1,389 households cuts off a lifeline for many, hindering emergency services access, the ability to seek employment, manage healthcare needs, and maintain social connections, which are particularly vital for the elderly or those with chronic conditions.

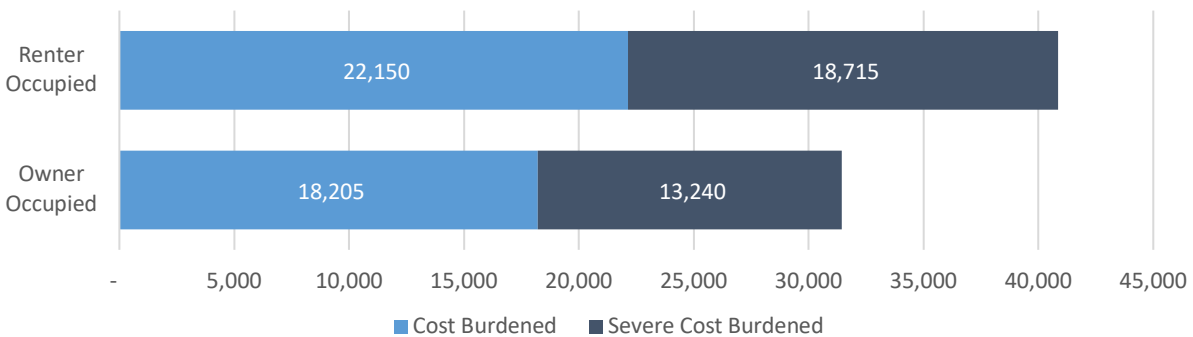
Finally, in today's digital age, the lack of broadband access in 13,433 homes extends far beyond a simple luxury. The pandemic underscored the necessity for internet connectivity as it became an essential service for remote work, online learning, and digital commerce. Without access, children and adults alike are at a severe disadvantage educationally and economically, unable to participate fully in an increasingly digital world.

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Housing Affordability

In addition to housing availability and condition, the factor of affordability must also be taken into consideration when evaluating the housing infrastructure in a local community. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, an estimated 72,310 families are currently housing cost burdened. This simply means that they spend more than 30% of their household income on rent/mortgage and utilities combined. To put this number in perspective, it accounts for 24.83% of the total households, which is more than the number of households who are living in poverty (5.40%). This data also indicates that renters (41.89%) are much more likely to be cost burdened than owners (16.24%). Among those that were cost burdened, nearly half (44.19%) were classified as severe cost burdened, meaning that they spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs.

Chart 44: Cost Burdened Resident Count by Occupancy Type (2020)



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Expanding on this data, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition's Out of Reach Report indicates that the average 2-bedroom Fair Market Rent for residents of Georgia is \$1,507 per month. In order to maintain housing, this would require a household income of \$60,271 per year. The average rate for a one-bedroom rental is \$1,643 per month. At this rate, a minimum wage worker would be required to work 140 hours per week simply to afford housing.

Table 34: Median Rent Cost by Unit Size (2024)

Area	1 Bdrm	2 Bdrm	3 Bdrm	4 Bdrm	Median
Cobb	\$1,643	\$1,844	\$2,230	\$2,707	\$1,535
State	\$1,320	\$1,507	\$1,872	\$2,242	\$1,221

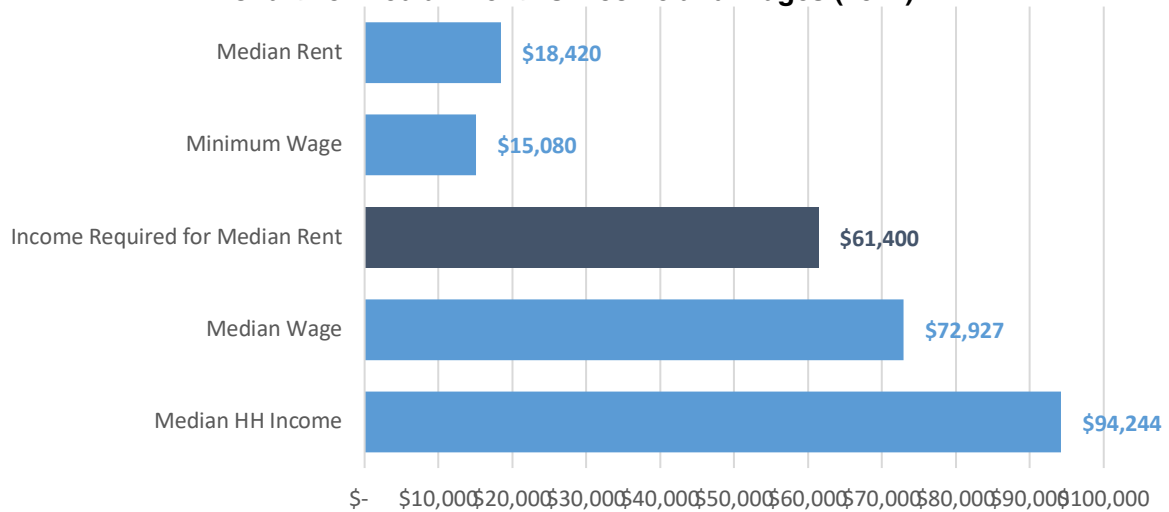
Source: National Low-Income Housing Coalition | US Census Bureau

In the evaluated community, the cost of housing is higher than the state average. With a rate of \$1,844 per month, a minimum wage worker would be required to work 237 hours in order to afford housing in a two-bedroom unit. A one-bedroom home would require a salary of \$65,720 per year in order to be considered affordable. A two-bedroom unit would require a salary of \$73,760 per year, A three-bedroom unit would require a salary of \$89,200 per year, and a four-bedroom unit would require a salary of \$108,280 per year.

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The ability of local residents to afford housing is a pressing concern, particularly for those earning lower incomes. With the median rent standing at \$18,420 annually, the financial viability of housing for residents, especially those earning minimum wage, comes into sharp focus. The United States Census Bureau reports that an estimated 69,415 households in the county (23.84%) earn below \$50,000 annually. This income bracket is significantly less than the annual amount needed to afford median rent, indicating that a number of households may be struggling with the cost of housing.

Chart 45: Median Rent vs Income and Wages (2022)



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development | US Census Bureau (DP04)

These households, earning less than \$50,000 a year, are confronted with a stark reality where securing housing could mean allocating an unsustainable portion of their income to rent, leaving little room for other expenses. This scenario is particularly burdensome for those at the minimum wage level, who may find it nearly impossible to manage housing costs without additional financial stress. The high percentage of income that goes towards housing for these residents underscores the need for supportive housing policies, such as increased availability of affordable housing units and potential adjustments to local minimum wage levels, to ensure that all residents have access to safe, affordable housing.

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Table 35: Cobb County Affordable Housing Units

Facility Name	Programs	City
Abbingdon Manor	LIHTC	Acworth
Abbingdon Trail Apartments	LIHTC	Powder Springs
Acquisition and Rehabilitation Devereaux	HOME	Marietta
Alta Ridenour Senior Apartments	LIHTC	Kennesaw
Ashton Arbors Apartments	LIHTC	Marietta
Barrington Square Apartments	Section 202 (Elderly)	Acworth
Benson Manor	Section 202 (Elderly)	Smyrna
Branson Walk	Public Housing	Marietta
Butterfield House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Marietta
Cassies Corner	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
Caswyck Trail Apartments	LIHTC	Marietta
Charleston Trace Apartments	LIHTCA	Marietta
Cherokee Summit Apartments	LIHTC	Acworth
Cobblestone Apartments	LIHTC	Marietta
Cobblestone Landing Apartments	LIHTC	Kennesaw
Concord Crossing Apartments	LIHTC, HOME	Smyrna
Country Pines	LIHTC	Marietta
Crestwood Park Apartments	LIHTC	Marietta
Galleria Manor of Smyrna	LIHTC	Smyrna
Gregory Lane	LIHTC	Acworth
Gregory Lane Apartments, Phase 2	LIHTC	Acworth
Harmony Meadows Apartments	LIHTC, HOME	Marietta
Harmony Terrace	LIHTC	Marietta
Heritage at Walton Reserve	LIHTC	Austell
Highland Court Senior Residences	LIHTC	Kennesaw
Highland Ridge	LIHTC	Austell
Hunters Grove	LIHTC	Austell
Ivywood Park Apartments	LIHTC	Smyrna
Kingsley Village	LIHTC	Austell
Lakeside Vista Apartments	LIHTC	Kennesaw
Laurels Edge	Section 202 (Elderly)	Kennesaw
Legacy at Walton Heights	LIHTC	Marietta
Legacy at Walton Overlook	LIHTC, Section 8	Acworth
Legacy at Walton Terrace	LIHTC	Acworth
Louise Place	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
Marietta Cobb Winter Shelter	LIHTC, HOME	Marietta
Orchard. Mill	LIHTC	Austell
Parkland Manor Apartments	LIHTC	Austell
Peaks at Bells Ferry	LIHTC	Acworth
Pine Grove Apartments Harmony Grove	LIHTC	Marietta
Rosewood Park Apartments	LIHTC	Austell
Sedgefield Apartments	LIHTC	Marietta
Smyrna Towers	Section 202 (Elderly)	Smyrna
Sweetwater Cove Apartments	LIHTC	Mableton
The Arc House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Smyrna
The Arc Lighthouse	Section 811 (Disabled)	Mableton
The Bauer Apartments	LIHTC	Acworth
The Cobb Arc House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Marietta
The Coleman Drive House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Marietta
The Eighteenth House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Marietta
The Enclave at Depot Park	LIHTC	Kennesaw
The Gordon House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Greenbrook House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Greenbrook House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Grindle House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Marietta
The Kephart House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Legacy at Walton Park	LIHTC, Section 8	Acworth
The Legacy at Walton Ridge	Section 8, FHA	Marietta
The Legacy at Walton Village	LIHTC	Marietta
The Lewis Road House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Powder Springs
The Michael S Huff House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Mableton

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The Mulberry House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Paschal House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Retreat at Dorsey Manor	LIHTC	Marietta
The Sara Fera House, Inc.	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Sweetwater House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Austell
The Twelfth House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Marietta
The Willow House	Section 811 (Disabled)	Marietta
Towers at Dorsey Manor	LIHTC	Marietta
Walton Crossing	LIHTC	Austell
Walton Renaissance on Henderson	LIHTC, Section 8	Marietta
Walton Reserve Apartments	LIHTC	Austell
Walton Ridenour Apartments	LIHTC	Kennesaw
Walton Ridge	LIHTC	Marietta
Walton Village	LIHTC, HOME	Marietta
Walton Village Apartments	LIHTC	Marietta
Wisteria Place	LIHTC	Mableton

Source: Affordable Housing Online

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HOME Investment Partnership (HOME)

In projects with five or more HOME-assisted units, at least 20% of the units must be occupied by families earning 50% or less of the area median income (AMI). All other HOME-assisted units must be occupied by families earning 80% or less of the AMI, but in practice most are reserved for families earning 60% or less of the AMI.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

Since the property has received funding in part through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, a certain number of units are set aside for lower income households. Households must earn either less than 50% or 60% of the area median income (AMI), depending on the set-aside option chosen by the property owner to qualify for the units. Rents in these units are capped at a maximum of 30% of the set-aside area median income (adjusted for unit size). Some rental units in the property may not be subject to LIHTC and therefore have higher rents and no maximum household income requirements.

Public Housing

Since the property is owned and managed by a Public Housing Authority, all of the rents at the property are based off of tenant incomes. Tenants will make a monthly contribution toward the rent equal to 30% of their adjusted income. A housing authority may establish a minimum rent of up to \$50.

Section 202 (Supportive Housing for the Elderly)

Since the property was built or renovated using funding from HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program, residency is usually restricted to households earning 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less with at least one member aged 62 years or older. Tenants pay rent based on household income. This rent is usually the highest of the following three amounts: either 30% adjusted monthly income, or 10% unadjusted monthly income, or, if receiving welfare assistance, the housing costs portion of this assistance.

Section 515 Rural Rental Housing

This property has received funding in part through the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing (Section 515) program. Very low-, low-, and moderate-income families, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities are eligible to live at this property. Persons or families living in substandard housing have priority for tenancy.

Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance

Since the property has a Project-Based Section 8 contract with HUD, some or all of the rents at this community are based on tenant incomes. Tenants leasing units participating in the Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance program typically contribute less than 30% of their adjusted income towards rental costs.

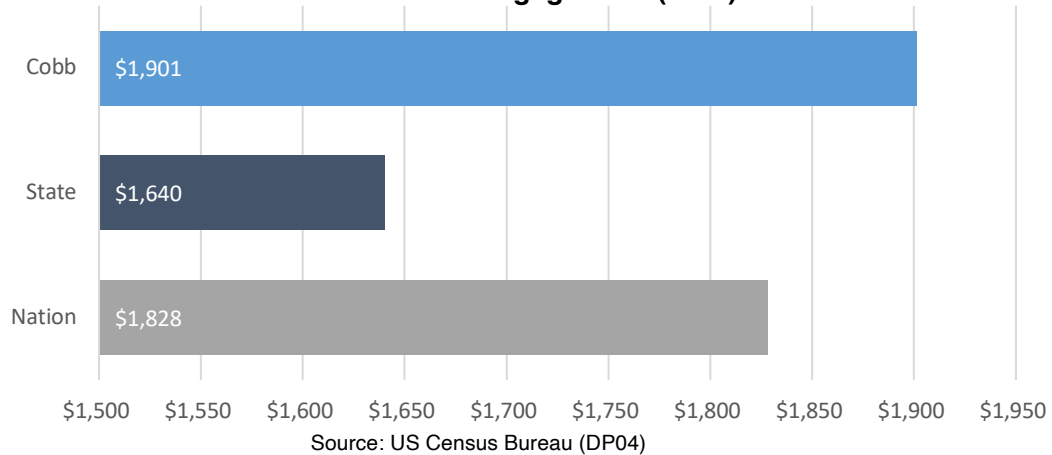
Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (SHPD)

Since the property was built or renovated using funds from HUD's current Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program or legacy Section 202 program, residency is usually restricted to households earning 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less with at least one adult member with a disability. Tenants pay rent based on household income. This rent is usually the highest of the following three amounts: either 30% adjusted monthly income, 10% unadjusted monthly income, or, if receiving welfare assistance, the housing costs portion of this assistance.

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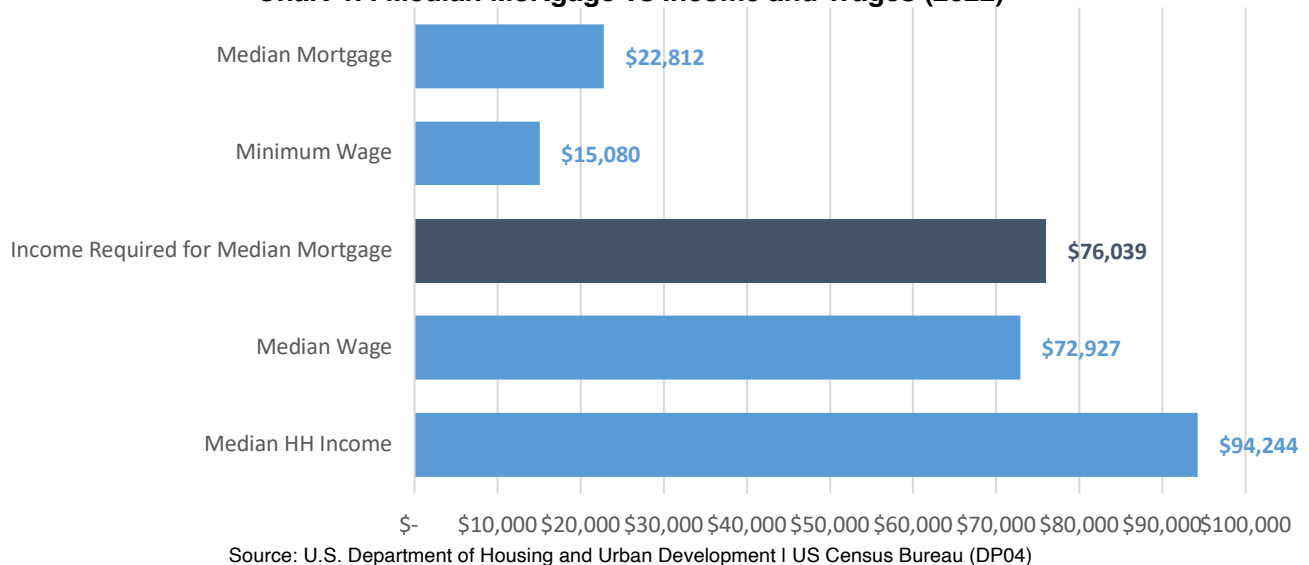
For individuals who own their homes, the financial landscape of home ownership in the county presents its own set of economic challenges. The median monthly mortgage cost for local residents stands at \$1,901, higher than both the state average of \$1,640 and the national average of \$1,828, which constitutes a significant financial commitment for homeowners.

Chart 46: Median Mortgage Cost (2022)



With an annual median mortgage cost of \$22,812, the cost of a home ownership appears well below the median wage of \$72,927. However, [a more subtle](#) financial picture emerges when we consider the income required to comfortably manage the median mortgage, which stands at \$76,039. This figure is higher than the median wage, indicating that for many, just meeting the median mortgage requirements could not be affordable.

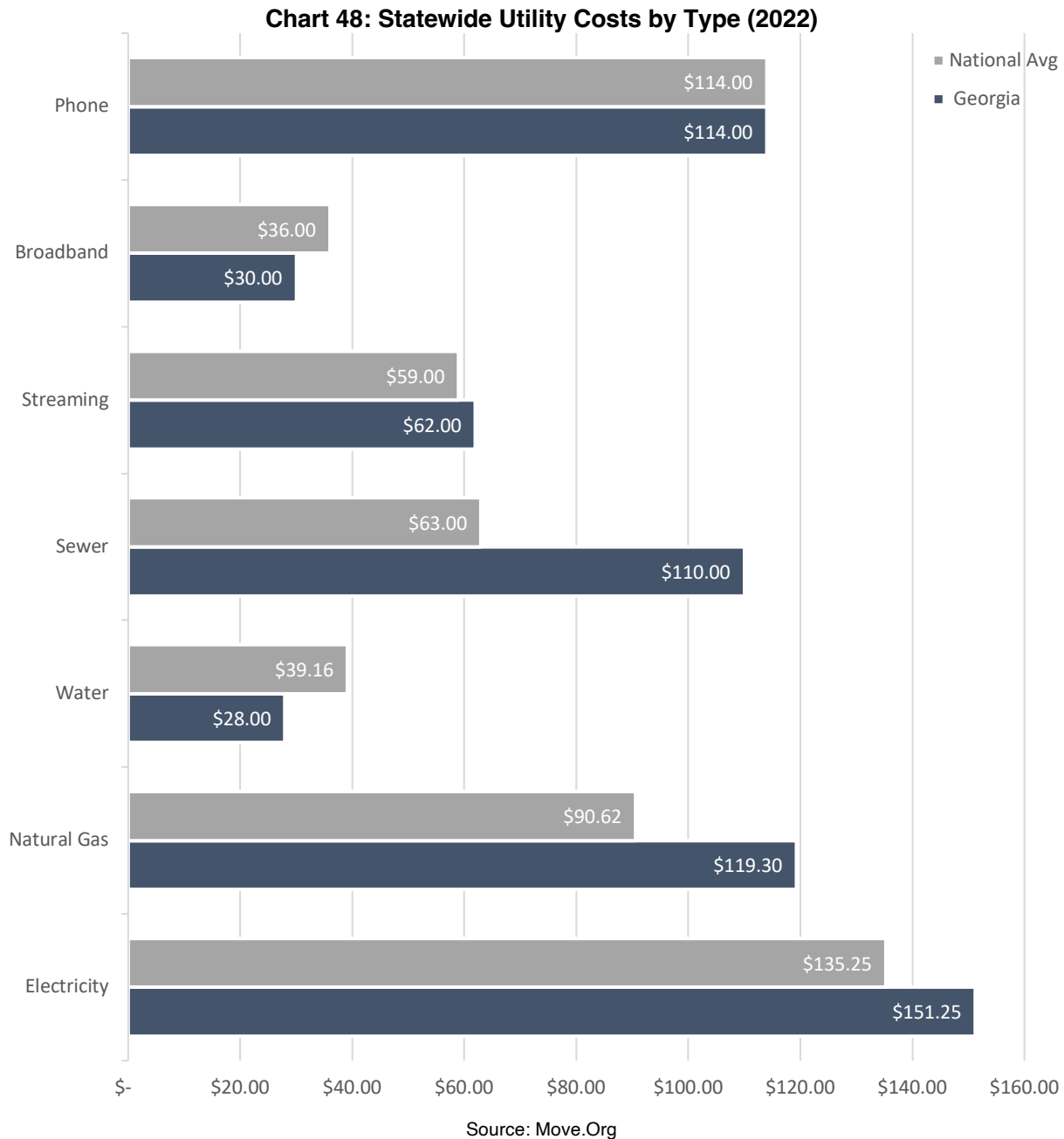
Chart 47: Median Mortgage vs Income and Wages (2022)



For those [receiving](#) minimum wage, the disparity is even more pronounced. With an annual income of \$15,080, securing a mortgage becomes a distant impossibility, highlighting the affordability gap that precludes many low-income workers from home ownership. The amount needed to support the median mortgage cost far exceeds what a minimum wage worker can afford, emphasizing the precarious nature of housing security for individuals in this wage bracket and underscoring the urgent need for affordable housing solutions.

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In addition to rent and mortgage amounts, the average cost of utility bills is a significant factor in a household's financial stability. In Georgia, residents face an average monthly utility bill of \$614.55, or \$7,374.60 annually. This includes costs for essential services such as electricity, natural gas, water, and sewer, alongside modern necessities like broadband and streaming services.



Electricity and natural gas are the lifeblood of a home's functionality, powering appliances, heating, and cooling systems. In Georgia, the average monthly cost for electricity is \$151.25, which is higher than the national average of \$135.25. The natural gas cost is \$119.30, above the national average of \$90.62. These utilities ensure the home environment is safe and comfortable, directly impacting residents' quality of life.

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Water and sewer services, costing Georgia residents an average of \$28.00 and \$110.00 respectively, are fundamental to sanitation and health. While water costs are slightly lower than the national average of \$39.16, those for sewer services are significantly higher than the national average of \$63.00. These costs can add to the monthly financial obligations of households.

Communication utilities like phone and broadband are essential for connectivity and access to information. Georgia's average of \$114.00 for phone services matches the national average, and the broadband cost at \$30.00 is slightly lower than the national average of \$36.00. Streaming services, a newer category of utility costs, average at \$62.00 in Georgia, just above the national figure of \$59.00.

For renters, the cost of housing and utilities is \$25,794.60. When compared to the annual income of a minimum wage worker at \$15,080, those expenses would require 171% of their earnings. This also accounts for 27.37% of the median income. For homeowners, the annual cost of housing and utilities expenses totals \$30,186.60. This is 200% of the income earned by a minimum wage worker and 32.03% of the median income.

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Homelessness

The ultimate consequence of a housing cost burden is homelessness. Not only does homelessness impact the quality of a person's life, but a lack of housing can impact health and the ability to secure meaningful employment.

In the county served by the organization, a total of 451 persons were identified as being homeless in 2019, 71.84% of which were sheltered at the time of the count. Among the homeless population, 34 veterans, 12 youth, and 58 chronically homeless individuals were identified.

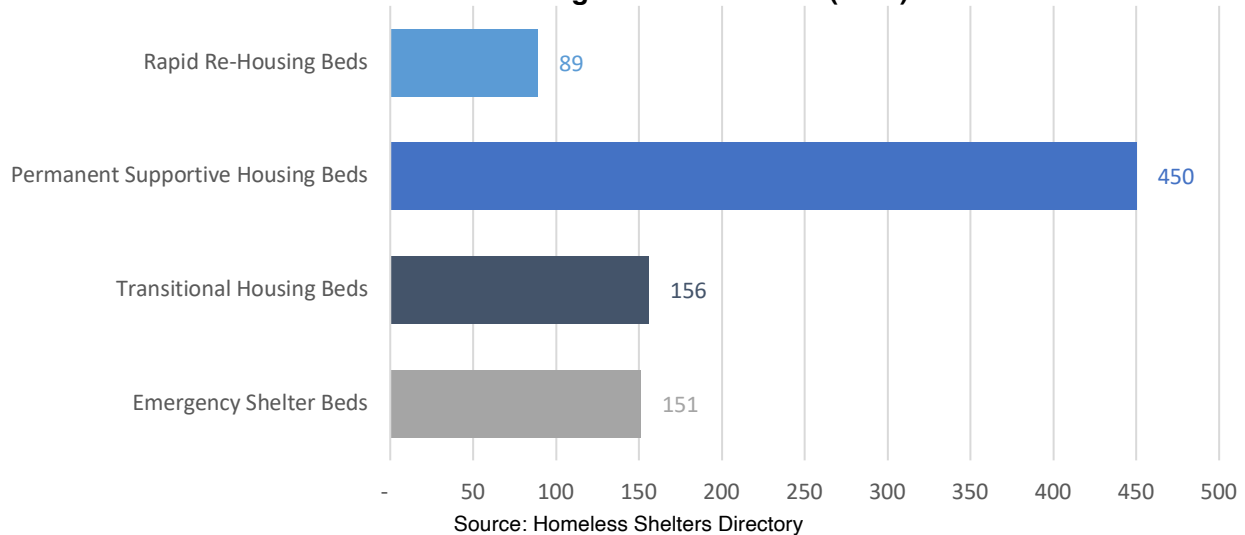
**Table 36: Cobb
County Point-In-Time Homeless Count (2022)**

Demographic	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total
<i>Total Persons</i>	127	324	451
<i>Chronically Homeless</i>	47	11	58
<i>Veterans</i>	18	16	34
<i>Youth</i>	4	8	12

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

In order to assist the county's homeless individuals, a total of 846 beds are available through local organizations. This includes 151 emergency shelter beds (providing immediate shelter in cases of sudden housing loss), 156 transitional housing beds (intended for temporary care for the displaced and chronically homeless population), 450 permanent supportive housing beds (a long-term service for elderly/vulnerable populations struggling to stay above the poverty line), and 89 Rapid Re-Housing Program beds (designed to quickly help homeless individuals and families increase self-sufficiency and stay housed).

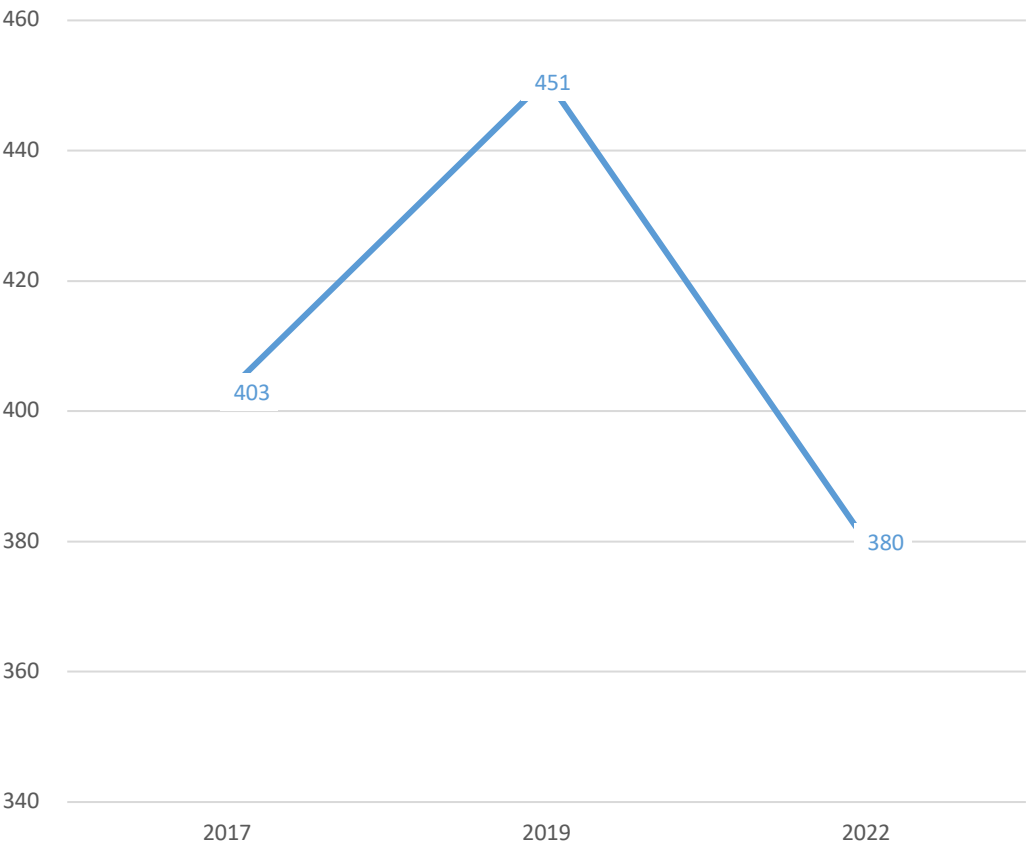
Chart 49: Housing Assistance Beds (2019)



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Between 2017 and 2022, the number of homeless individuals in the county has decreased. There was a notable increase of 11.91% in 2019 followed by a decrease of 15.74% in 2022. This resulted in an overall drop of 5.71% in the last 6 years. When comparing the number of available shelter beds to the total number of individuals who lack housing, the county has a surplus of 466 beds.

Chart 50: Homeless Trend (2017-2022)



Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

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Community Feedback

Housing insecurity was identified by 94.12% of respondents as a major concern, reflecting widespread struggles to maintain stable and affordable housing. Many respondents specifically mentioned the burden of high rent or mortgage payments, which often consume a large portion of household income, leaving little room for other essential expenses.

Utility costs emerged as another critical barrier, with 41.18% of participants reporting the risk of utility loss due to unpaid bills. High utility costs are particularly burdensome for households in poorly insulated or substandard housing, where inadequate weatherproofing, poor insulation, and inefficient heating systems drive up energy consumption. One respondent shared, "My utility bills are often more than my rent. It's impossible to keep up, especially when the house isn't properly insulated." This quote reflects the compounded financial pressure many families experience due to the interplay between housing conditions and utility expenses.

The condition of housing units was frequently cited as a significant problem, with 22.06% of respondents mentioning poor quality housing as a barrier to stability. Common issues included mold, rodent infestations, and structural damage such as leaks and inadequate insulation. These conditions not only pose health risks but also increase living costs, as poorly maintained homes are less energy efficient, leading to higher utility bills. One respondent described their struggle: "The windows don't seal properly, and we spend a fortune just trying to keep the place warm in winter."

Additionally, concerns about overcrowding were noted, with respondents pointing to the lack of affordable housing options that meet the needs of larger families. This situation forces many to live in cramped conditions, often in subpar housing that fails to provide a safe and healthy environment. A respondent highlighted, "We have seven people in a two-bedroom apartment because it's all we can afford. The rent keeps going up, but the quality stays the same."

Overall, the data paints a concerning picture of the housing situation in the community. The combination of high costs, poor conditions, and the constant threat of utility loss creates a precarious living environment for many families. Addressing these challenges through targeted housing assistance, energy efficiency programs, and improved access to affordable, quality housing is essential to reduce the financial strain on households and improve overall well-being.

Agency Data

In 2023, the organization served a predominantly homeless population, with 86.41% of clients (1,418 individuals) identified as homeless, a substantial increase from 73.41% in 2020. The percentage of clients who rented their homes significantly decreased from 19.26% in 2020 to just 9.45% in 2023, while those who owned their homes dropped from 3.45% in 2020 to only 0.73% in 2023. Clients categorized as "other" housing arrangements remained relatively stable, with a slight decrease from 1.86% in 2020 to 1.04% in 2023. The average household size for homeless individuals also increased slightly, from 1.36 in 2020 to 1.51 in 2023, indicating a growing trend of individuals experiencing homelessness as single-person households. These shifts highlight a concerning trend of increasing homelessness among clients, underscoring the urgent need for housing support and interventions to address this escalating crisis.

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Housing Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
AID Atlanta	404-872-0600	Provides housing search assistance to individuals with HIV/AIDS
Center for Family Resources	770-428-2601	Provides housing search assistance to low-income residents with dependent children living in the home.
City of Refuge	404-874-2241	Provides shelter services for women, pregnant women, and women with children.
Cobb County Senior Services	770-528-5355	Provides emergency rent and utility assistance to low-income seniors
Cobb Street Ministries	770-424-9154	Provides emergency shelter services to homeless individuals
Family Promise	678-594-3150	Provides transitional shelter services to homeless families with children
Gateway Homeless Service Center	404-215-6600	Provides emergency shelter and housing placement services to homeless individuals
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	404-679-4840	Provides counseling and loans to assist first time buyers with the purchase of a home. Income restrictions apply.
Harmony House	770-514-1046	Provides housing and transitional support services to recently released, homeless ex-offenders
HOPE Atlanta	678-370-0543	Provides permanent supportive housing services to veterans.
Latin American Association	404-638-1800	Provides rent and utility assistance to Hispanic individuals and those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
Making A Way Housing	404-799-9652 Info@makingawayhousing.org	Provides shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing services.
MUST Ministries	770-790-3926	Provides emergency assistance with rent and utilities to low-income individuals and those impacted by COVID-19.
My Sister's House	404-367-2465 info@atlantamission.org	Provides emergency shelter services to women, pregnant women, and children with children (boys aged 11 and under).
Northwest Metro Atlanta Habitat for Humanity	770-432-7954	Provides minor home repair assistance for seniors, veterans, or disabled adults who own their home.
Operation Hope	404-941-2919	Provides homebuyer workshops to battered women, disabled veterans, seniors, military personnel, and individuals with low incomes.
Positive Transition Services, Inc.	678-298-6140	Provides transitional housing for men, veterans, and older adults.
Saint Vincent De Paul House of Dreams	770-425-2939	Provides transitional housing services to homeless women in Smyrna, Georgia
Safe Care Homes Group	866-982-1952	Provides housing search assistance, shelter, and transitional housing services to low-income individuals, veterans, seniors, ex-offenders, couples without children, transgenders, and gay/lesbian couples
Salvation Army	404-486-2888 yamira.valentin@uss.salvationarmy.org	Provides rent and utility assistance to low-income individuals in need.
Ser Familia	678-363-3079	Provides emergency assistance with rent, mortgage, and utility payments to those impacted by COVID-19, with priority given to Latinos.
Sheltering Grace Ministries	678-337-7858	Provides temporary housing services to homeless pregnant women
Shepherd's Inn	404-367-2493 info@atlantamission.org	Provides emergency shelter services to men.
Star-C Corporation	404-698-3781	Provides emergency assistance with rent to individuals at risk of eviction
Sweetwater Mission	770-819-0662	Provides emergency rent assistance to low-income individuals and those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Tallatoona Community Action	678-721-9391 cobbenergy@tallatoonacap.org	Provides winter heating subsidies to low-income individuals and families

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Urban League of Greater Atlanta	404-659-1150 info@ulgatl.org	Provides homebuyer counseling services
VEO of Georgia	404-889-8710	Provides emergency shelter, transitional, and permanent housing services to veterans
Zaban Paradise Center	404-872-2915 info@zabanparadiescenter.org	Provides shelter services to homeless couples.
Zion Keepers	678-698-5087 info@zionkeepers.org	Provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing services for men recovering from addictions.

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Conclusion: Strengths

The availability of 17,778 surplus housing units indicates that, at a basic level, the county has sufficient housing stock to accommodate its households. Cobb County also offers a range of housing resources, including 846 shelter beds across various emergency, transitional, and supportive housing programs, which provide crucial support for vulnerable populations. The county has seen a decrease in homelessness, with a 5.71% reduction over the past six years, thanks in part to available beds and support services that help individuals regain stability.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Despite the surplus in housing units, quality and affordability remain critical concerns. About 75,960 housing units (24.59%) have at least one substandard condition, affecting 58,182 households. Renters are particularly vulnerable, with 44.42% living in substandard conditions, compared to 11.69% of owners. High housing costs exacerbate these issues; the average rent for a two-bedroom unit requires 237 hours of work per month at minimum wage, making it unattainable for many low-income residents. Additionally, the county's high utility costs, averaging \$614.55 per month, further strain household budgets, particularly for those in poorly insulated or inefficient homes.

Affordability challenges are further highlighted by the 72,310 cost-burdened households, 44.19% of which are severely burdened, spending over half of their income on housing. The lack of affordable options forces many to live in substandard conditions or face homelessness, emphasizing the urgent need for expanded affordable housing and energy-efficient improvements to reduce costs for residents.

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Health & Well-Being

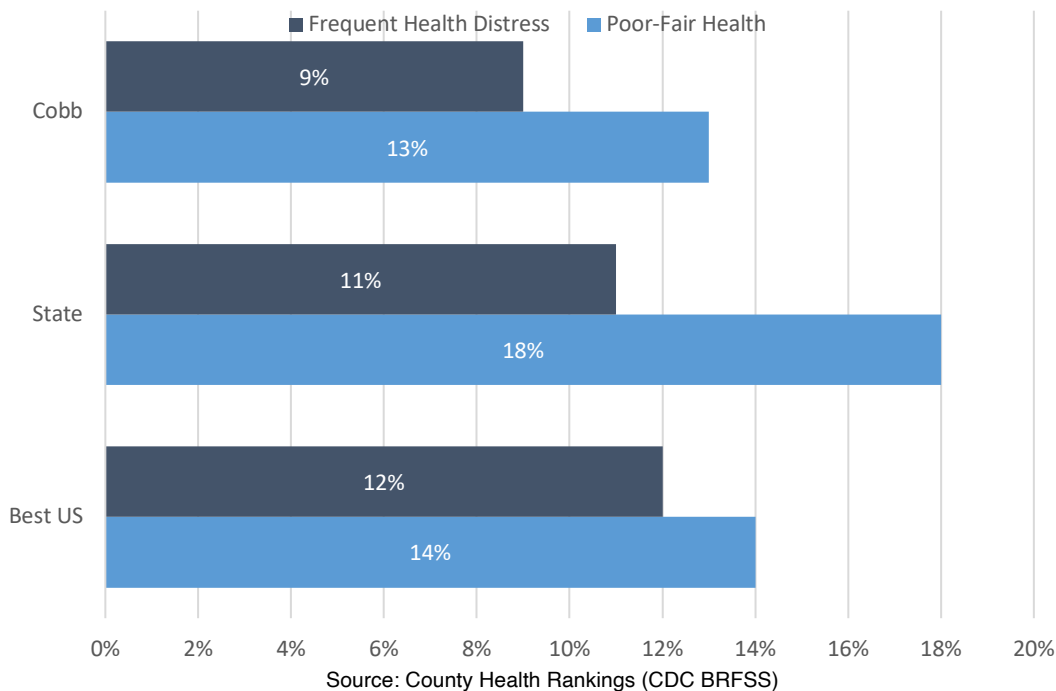
Introduction

Access to healthcare and overall well-being are critical components in the fight against poverty. Good health is a fundamental building block for economic stability and prosperity, enabling individuals to work, learn, and engage fully in their communities. Unfortunately, poverty often exacerbates health issues and can lead to inadequate housing, food insecurity, and limited access to preventative care—all factors that contribute to poorer health outcomes.

General Health

In the county served by the organization an estimated 13% of all local adults (76,778) were noted [as](#) having poor to fair health. In comparison, the statewide average is 18%, which is higher than the county and the nation's best communities (14%).

Chart 51: Percentage of Adults with Poor Health (2024)



Among the residents with poor health, many struggle with severe conditions that impact their quality of life on a regular basis. The most recently published data indicates that 53,154 local adults, representing 9% of the population over the age of 18, suffer from more than 14 days of physical health distress each month.

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When considering the factors that promote poor physical health, obesity is one of the greatest influencing factors. While the term simply implies that a person has too much body fat, a diagnosis of obesity is actually based on a Body Mass Index calculation of 30 or higher. With 30% of the county's adults (177,179 individuals) suffering from obesity, it ranks as a tremendous health concern in the county. It should be noted that this rate is lower than the state average of 34%.

Not only does obesity in itself lead to a general feeling of poor health, but it also increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high cholesterol, joint problems, trouble breathing (including sleep apnea), and gallstones.

Obesity is a complex condition that can impact anyone. Contributing factors to obesity include social and physical environments, genetics, medical history, and behaviors such as poor diet and physical inactivity. Childhood maltreatment has also been identified as a risk factor for obesity. The prevalence of obesity is highest among adults ages 45-64, those with lower levels of educational attainment, and with incomes of less than \$25,000 per year.

Table 37: Major Health Conditions (2022)

Area	Obesity	Diabetes	STI Infections
<i>Cobb</i>	177,179	53,154	3,285
<i>State</i>	2,791,325	903,076	51,648

Source: County Health Rankings (CDC BRFSS, NCHHSTP)

High Blood pressure, also known as Hypertension, is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Although county-level data was not available, the American Heart Association reports that nearly one-half (46.7%) of all adults in the United States have been diagnosed with Hypertension. The most recent report states that the death rate associated with high blood pressure has increased by 91.2% over the past decade. Data indicates that a person's age, income, education, employment, and social status are directly linked to the risk of high blood pressure. Populations with higher prevalence of hypertension include men (as compared to women), adults ages 65 and older, individuals identifying as Black (likely associated with socio-economic stress factors), and low-income individuals.

An estimated 9% of all adults (53,154 individuals) in the organization's service area have been diagnosed with Diabetes. This disease occurs when a person's blood glucose (blood sugar) is too high. Blood glucose is a person's main source of energy and is generated by food. This disease can not only put a person's life at risk, but it is also often associated with fatigue, decreased ability to heal, reduced sex drive, erectile dysfunction, urinary tract infections, yeast infections, and dry skin. Of the three types of Diabetes, Type 2, is directly associated with obesity and is more common among individuals with low incomes.

With an estimated 3,285 adults impacted, sexually transmitted infections are not a prominent concern in the county, however, it is important to monitor these conditions closely on an ongoing basis as they can often spread quickly when left unchecked, impacting the economic well-being of infected persons and, in some cases, the health of community members they come in contact with.

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Mental Health

Mental health is the level of psychological well-being that allows a person to maintain an appropriate functioning of their emotional and behavioral abilities. Mentalhealth.org, a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, reports that mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood, as it impacts how a person thinks, feels, acts, handles stress, relates to others, and makes informed decisions. The 2022 report states that there are many factors that contribute to mental health problems, including biological factors (brain chemistry), life experiences (trauma and/or abuse), and family history of mental health problems.

The 2022 data from the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality shows distinct patterns in mental health concerns across different age groups. Among individuals aged 12-17, data reveals a significant prevalence of major depressive episodes at 17.4% and suicidal thoughts at 12.3%. While specific data on serious mental illness for this age group is unavailable, these figures underscore a critical area of concern for adolescent mental health.

Table 38: Georgia Residents Reporting Mental Health Concerns by Age Group (2022)

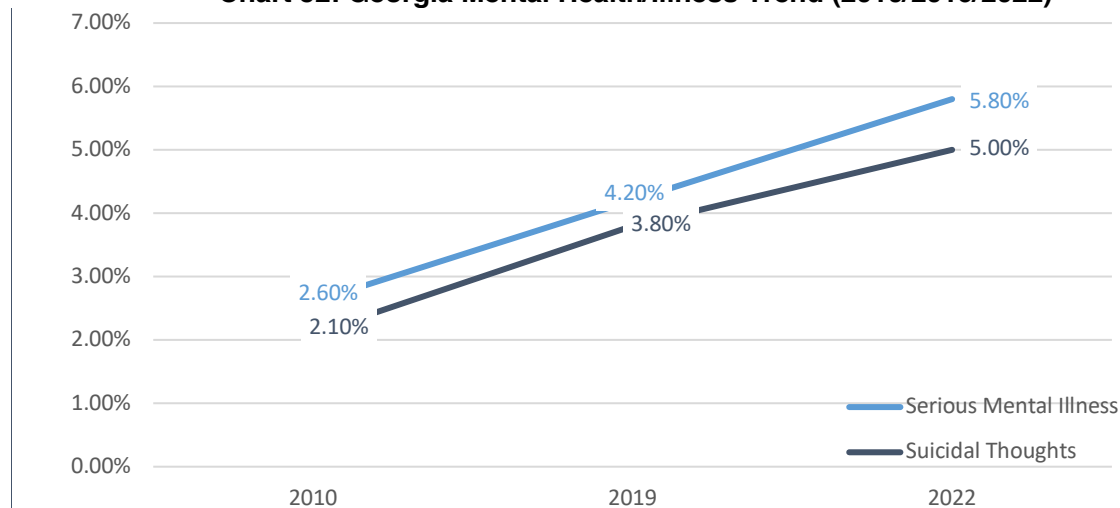
Ages	Serious Mental Illness	Major Depressive Episode	Suicidal Thoughts
12-17	No Data	17.4%	12.3%
18+	5.8%	8.2%	5.0%

Source: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality

For adults aged 18 and older, the prevalence of serious mental illness stands at 5.8%, with 8.2% reporting experiencing major depressive episodes, and 5.0% indicating suicidal thoughts. These statistics highlight the ongoing mental health challenges faced by adults, reflecting the need for comprehensive mental health services and support systems.

An examination of the mental health trend from 2010 to 2022 indicates a concerning increase across several metrics. The percentage of individuals reporting serious mental illness has increased from 2.60% to 5.80%, and reports of suicidal thoughts have grown from 2.10% to 5.00% during the same period. These upward trends suggest a growing mental health crisis that necessitates urgent attention and intervention to prevent further escalation and to provide adequate support to those affected.

Chart 52: Georgia Mental Health/Illness Trend (2010/2019/2022)



Source: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality

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In 2024, data from the County Health Rankings indicated that 14.00% of adults in Cobb County experienced frequent mental distress, equating to approximately 82,684 individuals. Frequent mental distress can significantly impact daily functioning, affecting an individual's ability to work, maintain relationships, and engage in self-care. The high prevalence of mental distress emphasizes the need for accessible mental health services and the implementation of community-based interventions aimed at reducing the burden of mental illness.

Table 39: Adults with Frequent Mental Distress (2024)

Number	Percent
82,684	14.00%

Source: County Health Rankings (CDC BRFSS, NCHHSTP)

According to the Mental Health National Outcome Measures (NOMS) Report for Georgia in 2019, a total of 143,475 individuals accessed mental health services. Of those, 50.9% were female and 49.0% were male. The largest age groups were 25 to 44 years (40.4%) and 45 to 64 years (34.6%), indicating a significant portion of those accessing services are adults in their prime working years. In terms of living situations, 85.0% of individuals lived in private residences, 5.0% were homeless or in shelters, 0.4% were in correctional facilities, and the remainder were in other types of institutional or undefined living arrangements.

Racially, the majority of individuals were White (48.9%) and Black or African American (43.1%), with smaller percentages identifying as Asian (1.1%), American Indian or Alaska Native (0.2%), and other racial or multi-racial groups.

These demographics highlight the diverse population accessing mental health care in Georgia and the need for tailored interventions to support individuals in various living conditions, especially those experiencing homelessness or other unstable housing situations.

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Disability Status

Data indicates that an estimated 9.08% of the local population, or 69,101 individuals, were classified as disabled in 2022. This rate is lower than both the state (12.69%) and national (12.86%) averages.

Table 40: Disabled Individuals by Age Group (2022)

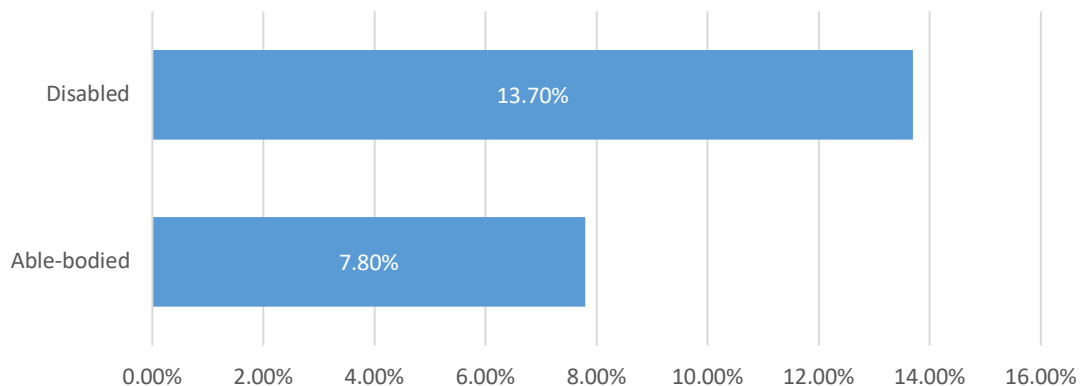
Young Children	School Aged Children	Adults	Seniors	TOTAL	Percent
460	5,914	34,876	27,851	69,101	9.08%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP02, S1810)

As would be expected, a large portion of the disabled population (40.30%) is over the age of 65. This accounts for nearly one-third (28.45%) of all seniors living in the county. For these individuals, a disability can decrease their quality of life and increase medical expenses.

Approximately half of all disabled individuals (50.47%) are between the ages of 18 and 64. This accounts for 7.15% of the total population in this age group. For this portion of the population, a disability status not only impacts the quality of life, but also hinders the ability to secure meaningful employment that would help to promote economic security. As this age group is more likely to have dependents, it also has the potential of impacting the economic well-being of an entire family. Data indicates that individuals in the service area with a disability are nearly twice as likely to be living in poverty (13.70%) than those without a disability (7.80%). Nearly one-in-ten (6.30%) of the county's disabled population were noted as living in deep poverty.

Chart 53: Able-Bodied vs Disabled Person Poverty (2022)



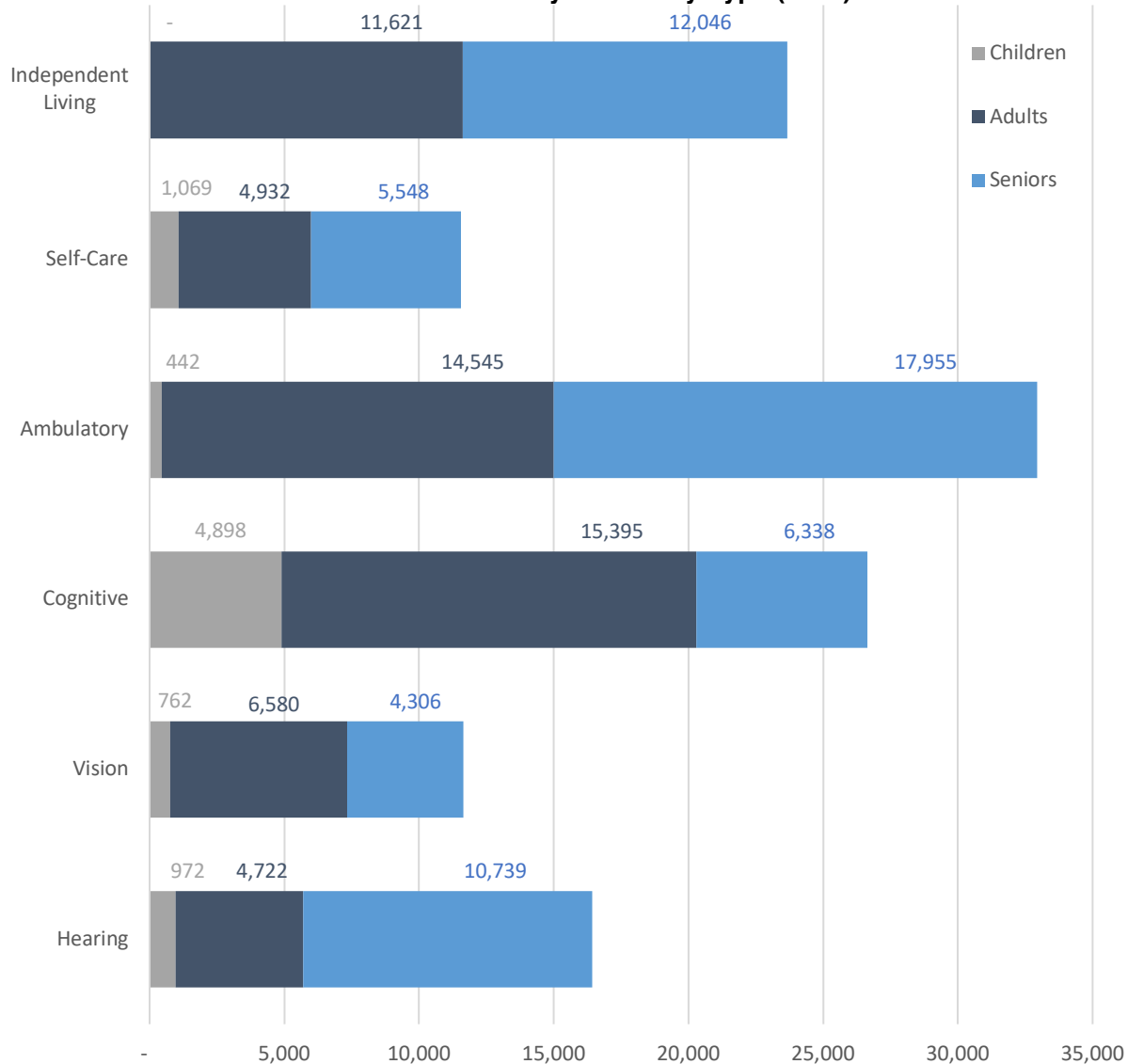
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2301, S1703)

Although disabilities in children do not specifically impact the ability to secure income, the additional medical costs associated with the condition can impact the financial well-being of the household. Additionally, a long-term disability puts children at a higher risk of living in poverty once they reach adulthood. An estimated 6,374 children (3.64% of the child population) in the county were identified as being disabled. Among these, only 460 were under the age of five.

When considering individuals of all ages who were classified as disabled, the largest portion faced ambulatory difficulties, which refer to severe mobility challenges. A total of 32,942 individuals, or 47.67% of all disabled persons, were impacted by this condition. Within specific age groups, ambulatory difficulties affected 10.72% of disabled children, 54.78% of disabled adults, and 87.10% of disabled seniors. This high prevalence among seniors highlights the significant mobility challenges faced by older adults.

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Chart 54: Disability Counts by Type (2022)



Source: US Census Bureau (S1810)

The second largest group experienced cognitive difficulties, impacting 26,631 individuals or 38.54% of the disabled population. Cognitive difficulties refer to serious problems with concentration, memory, or decision-making due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition. Among those affected, 76.84% were children, 44.14% were adults, and 22.76% were seniors. The high percentage among children underscores the need for targeted educational and developmental support for young individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Independent living difficulties were the next most common, defined as severe difficulties doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition. A total of 23,667 individuals, or 34.25% of the total disabled population, reported limitations with independent living. This condition was present in 33.32% of disabled adults and 43.25% of disabled seniors, emphasizing the impact on the autonomy of these age groups.

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Hearing difficulties were reported by 16,433 individuals, or 23.78% of the disabled population. This condition affected 15.25% of disabled children, 13.54% of disabled adults, and 38.56% of disabled seniors. The prevalence among seniors points to age-related hearing loss as a major concern for this age group.

Vision difficulties were reported by 11,648 individuals, representing 16.86% of the disabled population. Vision impairment impacted 11.95% of disabled children, 18.87% of disabled adults, and 15.46% of disabled seniors, indicating a relatively even distribution across age groups.

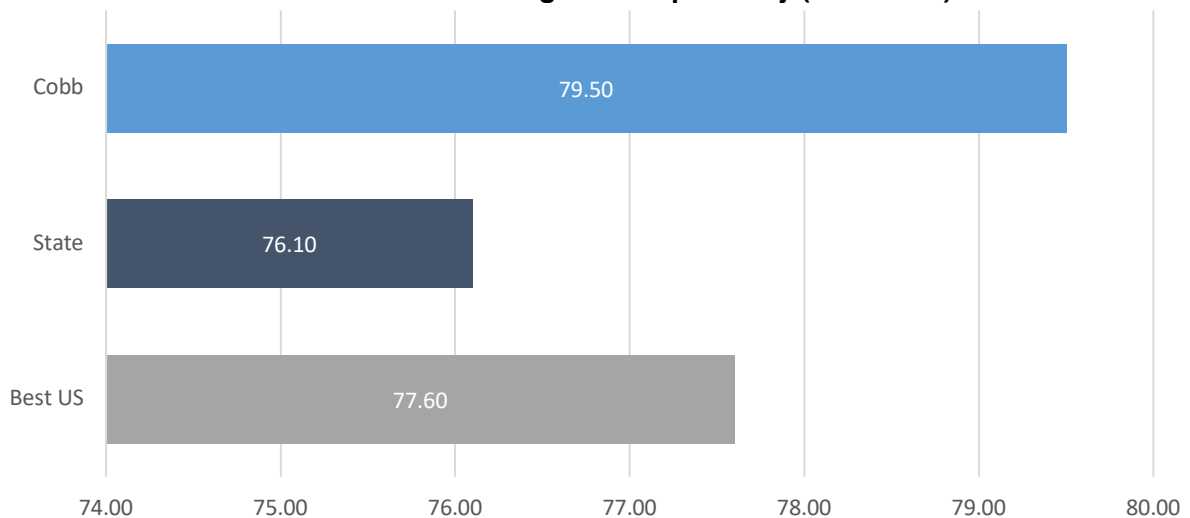
Self-care difficulties, which involve significant challenges in bathing or dressing, affected 11,549 individuals or 16.71% of the disabled population. This condition was noted in 16.77% of disabled children, 14.14% of disabled adults, and 19.92% of disabled seniors, highlighting the need for assistance with daily living activities across all age groups.

Understanding the distribution and specific challenges of each type of disability is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems to improve the quality of life for disabled individuals across all age groups.

Life Expectancy

One potential consequence of poor health is a shortened life span. By exploring a county's data related to the length of life along with environmental and behavioral health factors, communities can isolate factors that can help improve the quality of life for its citizens on a long-term basis. The average life expectancy for the service area is 79.50 years. This is significantly longer than the statewide average of 76.10 years.

Chart 55: Three-Year Average Life Expectancy (2022-2024)



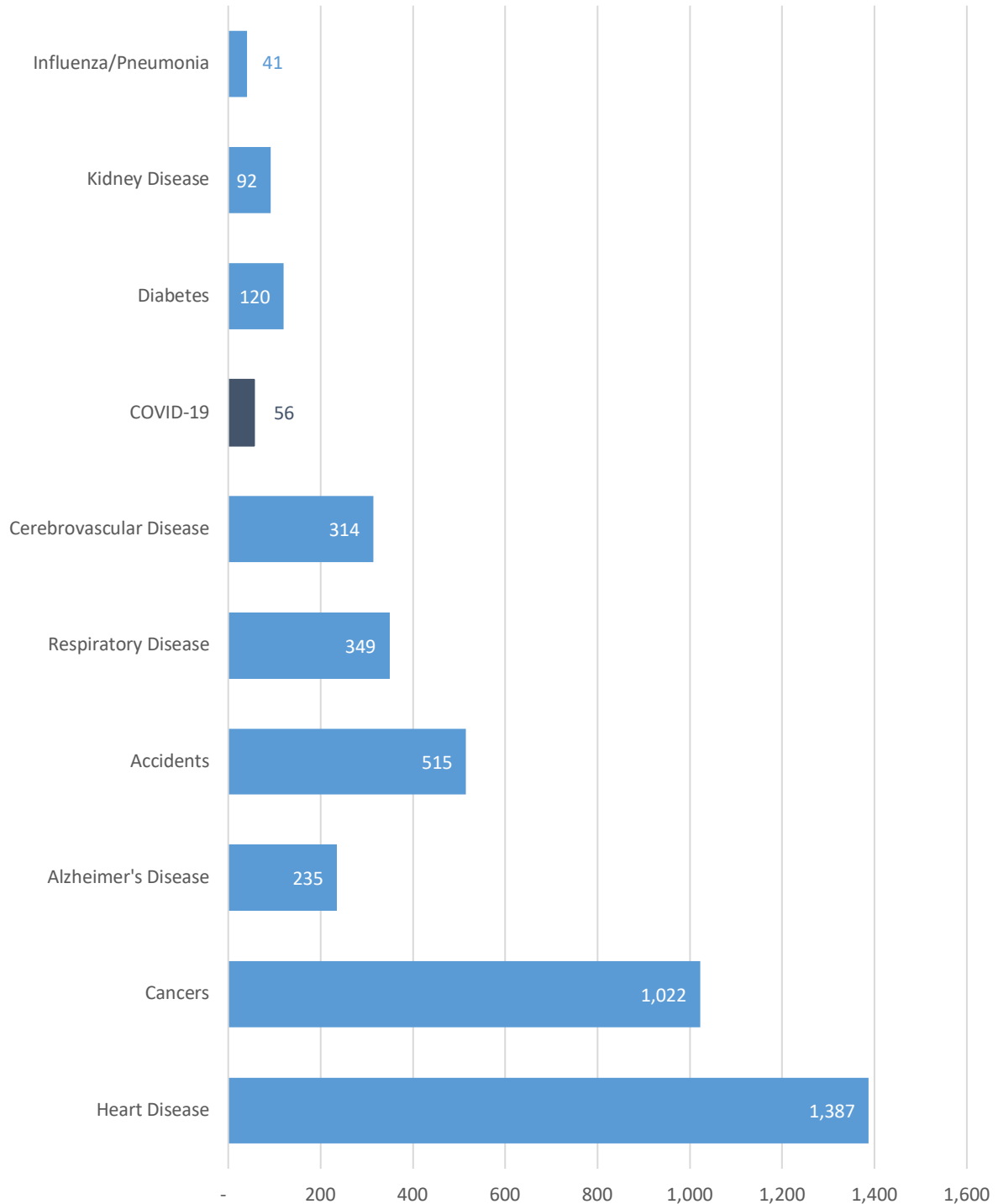
Source: County Health Rankings

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Causes of Death

An examination of the Georgia Department of Public Health database found that the majority of the county's deaths can be directly associated with general health concerns previously identified in this section, many of which are impacted by the economic well-being of local residents.

Chart 56: Leading Causes of Death (2023)



Source: Georgia Dept of Public Health OASIS

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- **Heart Disease**

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in Cobb County, resulting in 1,387 deaths. This condition encompasses various types of heart issues, including coronary artery disease (CAD), which can lead to heart attacks, as well as arrhythmias, heart failure, and heart valve problems. Heart disease can significantly impair the heart's ability to pump blood efficiently, leading to symptoms such as fatigue and shortness of breath, and can be fatal if not managed properly.

The risk factors for heart disease include age, family history, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, smoking, and diabetes. Many of these factors are preventable or manageable through lifestyle changes like adopting a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding tobacco use. Additionally, managing stress and undergoing regular health screenings can help detect and address risk factors early.

- **Cancers**

Cancer is a multifaceted adversary in the realm of public health, accounting for 1,022 deaths in Cobb County. This disease is characterized by the abnormal growth of cells that have the ability to invade or spread to other parts of the body. Various forms of cancer stem from mutations in different tissues, each with its own set of characteristics, treatment responses, and prognoses.

A myriad of factors contributes to cancer risk, including genetics, lifestyle choices, environmental exposures, and, in certain cases, infections. Some cancers, like lung and skin cancer, are highly correlated with environmental factors such as tobacco use and UV exposure, respectively. Other types, like colorectal and breast cancer, have been linked to diet, exercise, and body weight as well as genetic predispositions.

Prevention and early detection are critical in reducing cancer morbidity and mortality. Regular screenings, such as mammograms for breast cancer and colonoscopies for colon cancer, increase the likelihood of catching cancer early when it is most treatable. Vaccinations, such as the HPV vaccine, offer a preventive measure against certain cancers. Avoidance of tobacco, moderation of alcohol consumption, protection against UV radiation, and maintenance of a healthy weight through diet and exercise are proactive steps individuals can take to lower their risk.

- **Alzheimer's Disease**

Alzheimer's disease is a neurodegenerative condition that has resulted in 235 deaths throughout the county. This progressive disorder is characterized by the deterioration of cognitive functions, memory, and the ability to perform simple daily tasks. As a leading cause of dementia, Alzheimer's disease primarily affects older adults, although early-onset cases can occur. The disease involves the accumulation of amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles in the brain, leading to neuronal damage and brain atrophy.

Risk factors for Alzheimer's disease include advancing age, family history, and genetic predisposition, with certain genes like APOE-e4 being linked to an increased risk. While there is currently no cure, several lifestyle factors can potentially reduce the risk or delay the onset of Alzheimer's, such as regular physical activity, a healthy diet, cognitive engagement, and maintaining cardiovascular health. Managing these lifestyle factors may help reduce the risk or delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

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Early diagnosis and intervention are critical in managing Alzheimer's disease. Treatments typically focus on slowing disease progression and managing symptoms, including medications that may temporarily improve or stabilize memory and cognitive functions. Supportive therapies, such as cognitive training and physical activity, can also enhance the quality of life for those affected.

Public health initiatives play a crucial role in supporting Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. Community programs providing education, support services, and resources can significantly ease the burden on families dealing with this challenging condition. Moreover, promoting research and awareness about Alzheimer's disease can lead to better understanding and potentially more effective treatments in the future.

- **Accidents**

Accidents, classified as unintentional injuries, are a substantial cause of mortality in Cobb County, claiming 515 lives. Accidents encompass a wide range of events such as traffic collisions, falls, poisonings, and drownings. Many of these incidents are preventable and are not the result of deliberate intent.

Traffic accidents, often due to distracted driving, speeding, or driving under the influence, are among the most common fatal accidents. Implementing educational campaigns that focus on road safety, the dangers of driving under the influence, and the importance of seat belt use can reduce these occurrences.

Falls are another significant contributor to accidental deaths, particularly among the elderly. Enhancing public and private spaces with safety features, and promoting physical activities that improve balance and strength, can help prevent these kinds of accidents.

Poisonings, including drug overdoses, have also become a leading cause of accidental deaths. This points to the need for increased awareness around medication safety, the proper storage of chemicals, and the growing opioid epidemic. Community programs that provide education on substance abuse and proper medication disposal can help mitigate these risks.

Public safety measures such as the enforcement of safety regulations in the workplace, community-based injury prevention programs, and the promotion of safer product designs are critical strategies for reducing accidental deaths.

To effectively decrease the rate of accidental fatalities, it is crucial for public health initiatives to not only enforce regulations and provide education but also to foster environments where personal vigilance is a cultural norm. Creating awareness about the common causes of accidents and teaching individuals how to respond to potential dangers can empower residents to take proactive steps to protect themselves and others, ultimately reducing the prevalence of unintentional injuries.

- **Respiratory Diseases**

In Cobb County, respiratory diseases, encompassing both chronic and acute conditions, accounted for 349 fatalities. Chronic respiratory diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) often develop over many years, with smoking being the most significant risk factor. COPD is characterized by the restriction of airflow into and out of the lungs, leading to symptoms like chronic bronchitis and emphysema. This progressive

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disease diminishes the quality of life, making activities that require breathing effort, like walking or climbing stairs, increasingly difficult.

Acute respiratory infections, including pneumonia, represent a serious health risk, especially for the elderly and those with weakened immune systems. Pneumonia can rapidly deteriorate lung function and can be fatal if not treated promptly, particularly in vulnerable populations.

Preventive strategies for respiratory diseases are critical, with smoking cessation being the most impactful. Quitting smoking can halt the progression of COPD and improve lung function over time. Public health efforts that focus on anti-smoking campaigns, assistance in cessation programs, and education about the risks of secondhand smoke are vital. Reducing exposure to lung irritants, such as air pollution, industrial dust, and household chemicals, is also important. Individuals can minimize their risk by avoiding known pollutants when possible and using protective equipment when exposure is unavoidable. Additionally, vaccinations against respiratory infections like influenza and pneumococcal pneumonia are essential preventive measures, especially for the elderly and other at-risk groups.

Respiratory health is also affected by overall wellness, including regular exercise, a healthy diet, and the management of comorbidities such as allergies or asthma. Access to quality healthcare that includes preventive measures, early diagnosis, and effective management of symptoms is necessary to reduce the mortality and morbidity associated with respiratory diseases.

- **Cerebrovascular Disease**

Cerebrovascular disease accounted for 314 deaths. This category includes various conditions that affect the blood vessels and blood supply to the brain, with strokes being the most common and impactful manifestation. Strokes occur when the blood flow to a part of the brain is interrupted or reduced, depriving brain tissue of oxygen and nutrients, which can lead to brain damage or death.

Strokes are primarily classified into two types: ischemic and hemorrhagic. Ischemic strokes, caused by blockages such as blood clots in the brain's blood vessels, are the most prevalent type. Hemorrhagic strokes occur when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, leading to bleeding in or around the brain. The immediate treatment and long-term management of strokes are critical in preventing severe outcomes, including disability or fatality.

Risk factors for cerebrovascular diseases include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, obesity, and a sedentary lifestyle. These factors contribute to the development of atherosclerosis, a condition characterized by the hardening and narrowing of arteries, which increases the risk of stroke. Additionally, atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heartbeat, can lead to the formation of clots that may travel to the brain, causing an ischemic stroke.

Preventive measures are essential in reducing the incidence of strokes and other cerebrovascular diseases. These include managing blood pressure and cholesterol levels, maintaining a healthy weight, quitting smoking, and engaging in regular physical activity. Public health campaigns should emphasize the importance of these lifestyle changes, along with educating the public about the symptoms of a stroke, such as sudden numbness or weakness, confusion, trouble speaking, and severe headache.

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Early intervention can significantly improve outcomes for stroke patients. The acronym "F.A.S.T."—Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, Time to call emergency services—helps individuals recognize the symptoms and act quickly. Rapid medical response and treatment, including medications and surgical interventions, can reduce the extent of brain damage and improve recovery prospects.

Supporting stroke survivors through rehabilitation services and ensuring access to appropriate medical care are vital components of public health strategies to address cerebrovascular diseases. These efforts aim to reduce the burden of disability and improve the quality of life for those affected.

- **COVID-19**

COVID-19, the infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has impacted Cobb County, leading to 56 deaths. The virus, which can cause severe respiratory illness, continues to affect populations worldwide, with the elderly and those with underlying health conditions most at risk.

The continued fatalities emphasize the need for robust public health strategies. Vaccination remains a cornerstone of the county's defense against COVID-19, reducing the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Public health interventions, such as mask-wearing in crowded or indoor spaces, social distancing, and the promotion of hand hygiene, also play a vital role in mitigating the spread of the virus.

Despite a decline in deaths, the presence of COVID-19 highlights the importance of ongoing surveillance, research, and adaptation of public health measures to respond to new variants and changing circumstances. It underscores the need for community resilience, the ability to access care, and the importance of maintaining public health infrastructure capable of responding to such health crises.

COVID-19's persistence in causing fatalities, despite the availability of effective vaccines and treatments, serves as a reminder of the virus's unpredictability and the potential for infectious diseases to profoundly affect public health. It also brings attention to the broader implications of the pandemic, including the strain on healthcare systems, the economic impact, and the importance of equitable access to healthcare resources to ensure that all community members can receive the care and protection they need.

- **Diabetes**

Diabetes, a chronic health condition that affects how the body processes blood sugar, was responsible for 120 deaths in Cobb County. The disease primarily manifests in two forms: Type 1 diabetes, where the body fails to produce insulin, and Type 2 diabetes, where the body becomes resistant to insulin or does not produce enough of it. Both forms can lead to serious health complications, including cardiovascular diseases, kidney failure, vision problems, and nerve damage if not properly managed.

The risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include obesity, physical inactivity, poor diet, and genetic predisposition. It is more common among adults, although increasing numbers of children and adolescents are being diagnosed due to rising obesity rates. Type 1 diabetes, on the other hand, is less understood and is not typically linked to lifestyle factors.

Management of diabetes requires a comprehensive approach that includes monitoring blood glucose levels, adopting a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and taking

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medications or insulin as prescribed. Education on diabetes management is crucial, as it empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their health and reduces the risk of severe complications.

- **Kidney Disease**

Kidney disease, encompassing a range of conditions that impair kidney function, resulted in 92 deaths in Cobb County. The kidneys play a vital role in filtering waste and excess fluids from the blood, maintaining electrolyte balance, and regulating blood pressure. When kidney function deteriorates, it can lead to the accumulation of harmful substances in the body, causing a range of health issues, including end-stage renal disease (ESRD), which requires dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is often caused by long-term conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure, which can damage the blood vessels in the kidneys. Other risk factors include age, family history, and certain genetic disorders. CKD progresses over time and can lead to kidney failure if not properly managed.

Preventive strategies for kidney disease include managing underlying conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, maintaining a healthy diet low in sodium and processed foods, staying physically active, and avoiding tobacco use. Regular screenings are crucial for early detection, especially in individuals with risk factors, as CKD often develops without noticeable symptoms until it reaches an advanced stage.

- **Influenza/Pneumonia**

Influenza and pneumonia are significant respiratory infections that led to 41 deaths in Cobb County. Influenza, often referred to as the flu, is a viral infection that can impact the respiratory system, leading to symptoms that range from mild to severe. It is particularly dangerous because it can result in complications such as pneumonia, especially among high-risk groups including the elderly, young children, and those with compromised immune systems. Pneumonia, which inflames the air sacs in the lungs, can be caused by various pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi.

These respiratory infections are especially perilous for vulnerable populations, as they can quickly escalate to severe respiratory distress and, in some cases, be fatal. Influenza can also facilitate secondary bacterial infections like pneumonia, a major cause of hospitalizations and fatalities, particularly among the elderly.

Vaccination remains the most effective strategy for preventing influenza and certain types of pneumonia. The annual influenza vaccine significantly lowers the risk of flu infection and its subsequent complications, while pneumococcal vaccines provide protection against common bacterial causes of pneumonia. Public health efforts should focus on enhancing vaccination coverage, particularly among those at high risk.

Aside from vaccinations, additional preventive measures include maintaining good hygiene practices, such as regular handwashing and avoiding close contact with infected individuals. Public health education should highlight the importance of these practices, alongside promoting awareness of the symptoms of influenza and pneumonia and the necessity of timely medical intervention.

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Behavioral Risks

Data indicates that many of the county's health concerns, including the causes of death, can be greatly impacted by behavioral change.

Table 41: Common Behavioral Risks (2024)

Smoking	Excessive Drinking	Insufficient Sleep	Physically Inactive
12%	16%	35%	21%

Source: County Health Rankings

One behavior that heightens the risk of poor health and premature death is the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Although socially accepted, the most commonly abused substance in the county is tobacco. Throughout the service area, an estimated 70,872 adults (12%) smoke tobacco. According to the CDC, smoking can contribute to health conditions that impact a person's quality of life and is directly associated with many of the leading causes of death (Heart Disease, Stroke, Respiratory Disease, Diabetes, Cancer).

According to recent data, people with low incomes are more likely to smoke and typically consume more cigarettes than those in higher income brackets. This population faces significant challenges due to limited access to healthcare, leading to delayed diagnoses of smoking-related health conditions. The financial burden of smoking is substantial, with the cost averaging about \$223 per month nationally, and reaching as high as \$383 per month in states with higher tobacco taxes. This cost includes only the price of cigarettes and does not account for additional expenses related to healthcare and lost income due to illness. The financial strain imposed by smoking severely impacts household economic security, making it crucial to address smoking cessation as a public health priority.

The cost of smoking itself is not the only contributing factor associated with poverty. National statistics indicate that smokers are 24% less likely to obtain a job within a year than non-smokers, even when other factors are eliminated, and earn an average of 20% less. Employers attribute this to the loss of productivity among smokers, resulting in an additional average annual cost of more than \$4,056 per employee using the substance .

An estimated 94,496 individuals, or 16% of the county's adult population, are reported to regularly drink alcohol excessively. This behavior can significantly impair cognitive functions, including problem-solving skills, judgment, concentration, reaction times, and coordination, leading to various physical, mental, economic, and social health issues.

Research indicates that individuals with lower socioeconomic status (SES) are disproportionately affected by alcohol use disorders. National statistics show that those in lower-income groups are more likely to engage in heavy drinking and face alcohol-related problems compared to their higher-income counterparts. This disparity is often attributed to factors such as financial stress, limited access to healthcare, and environments with fewer support resources. Additionally, unemployment is closely linked with increased substance use, including alcohol. Unemployed individuals are more likely to consume alcohol at higher rates and encounter difficulties in finding employment due to alcohol-related issues, creating a bidirectional relationship between substance use and economic hardship.

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Economic challenges for heavy drinkers are substantial. Employers may hesitate to hire excessive drinkers due to their increased risk of involvement in workplace accidents, tendencies toward aggression, frequent absences, and lower work quality. Consequently, excessive drinkers often end up in low-paying jobs or face higher unemployment rates, which can exacerbate poverty and financial instability.

The healthcare costs associated with excessive drinking are another significant concern. These individuals are more prone to illnesses and injuries, including long-term conditions such as heart disease, hypertension, liver disease, cancer, and various mental health disorders. Moreover, excessive alcohol use heightens the risk of poisoning, violence, and vehicle accidents, further escalating healthcare burdens and the social consequences of alcohol abuse.

These findings highlight the complex interplay between alcohol consumption, socioeconomic status, and economic stability. In addition to the health risks, there are substantial economic implications, such as increased healthcare costs and decreased productivity, which further exacerbate poverty and unemployment issues. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive public health strategies that consider the socioeconomic factors influencing alcohol consumption and provide targeted support to affected communities.

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), drug use can have a wide range of health consequences. The impact of the drug, however, can differ drastically based on the specific substance that is used, the method of use, the dosage, existing health conditions, and other factors. Short-term impacts may include a loss of appetite, changes in sleep patterns, increased/decreased heart rate and blood pressure, mood changes, heart attack, stroke, psychosis, overdose, and death. Unfortunately, the user may experience one or more of these side effects after only a single use.

Extended exposure can lead to Heart Disease, Lung Disease, Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, multiple types of mental illness and, while addiction is not experienced by all users, it is a major risk associated with long-term use, which changes the way brain circuits work. This can interfere with how a person experiences normal pleasures in life, such as food and sex, their ability to control stress levels, basic decision making, their ability to learn and remember, etc. These changes make it much more difficult to stop using the substance, even when they are aware of the negative impact on their lives, and they want to quit.

Table 42: Statewide Self-Reported Substance Abuse Rates (2022)

Ages	Marijuana	Cocaine	Heroin	Meth	Opioid	Rx Pain Med
12-17	10.28%	0.13%	No Data	0.13%	1.78%	1.77%
18+	18.41%	1.61%	0.44%	0.88%	3.40%	3.15%

Source: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality

Marijuana emerges as the primary drug of choice across both age groups in Georgia, with 18.41% of adults and 10.28% of individuals aged 12-17 reporting use. Its prevalent use can have varied health effects, including potential impacts on cognitive development in adolescents, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and in some cases, it may affect lung health due to smoke inhalation. The use of marijuana often intersects with socioeconomic factors, with some evidence indicating higher usage rates in lower-income neighborhoods. Note that rate for teenagers has increased by 16.42% since the 2019 report.

Prescription drug misuse, particularly opioids, is the second most reported category for adults in Georgia at 3.15% and also significant for those 12-17 years at 1.77%. Misuse of these drugs can

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lead to addiction, overdose, and chronic health problems, including neurological and gastrointestinal issues. The opioid crisis has particularly affected impoverished areas where healthcare and addiction support services may be less accessible. Note that the rates have decreased by 16.67% among adults and increased by 10.63% since the 2019 report.

Cocaine use is reported by 1.61% of adults, reflecting its presence as a substance of abuse. Cocaine can lead to serious health issues, including heart attacks, stroke, and mental health disorders. Its use is often higher in urban settings and can be associated with both poverty and affluence, impacting a wide range of demographic groups. This is a decrease of 9.04% from the 2019 report.

Meth use, although less prevalent than marijuana and prescription drugs, is reported by 0.88% of adults. Methamphetamine is highly addictive and can cause severe dental decay, skin sores, and increased risk for infectious diseases. It's often associated with lower socioeconomic status due to its relatively low cost and high availability. Methamphetamine use is also linked to significant strain on healthcare resources, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Over the past three years, the rate has increased by 3.53%.

Heroin use in Georgia is the least reported among the substances listed for adults at 0.44%, an increase of 22.22% from the past three years. This substance carries a high risk of overdose and infectious diseases like HIV and hepatitis. Heroin use is often tied to prior prescription opioid misuse, reflecting the broader opioid epidemic. It can affect all socioeconomic groups; however, the impacts and recovery options might differ significantly, with some racial groups facing more barriers to accessing treatment than others.

Each of these substances has complex social determinants and a range of health implications. Addressing their use requires a multifaceted approach that includes public health interventions, accessible treatment programs, and policies that consider the socioeconomic and racial disparities related to substance use and healthcare.

When looking specifically at the impact of these substances in the workplace, Quest Diagnostics, the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services, recently reported that positive drug tests in the nation were slightly lower in 2020 (4.4%) than the sixteen-year high documented in 2019 (4.5%). This rate was, however, 10% higher than the 2016 rate. As positivity for most drug categories, other than marijuana, declined or remained flat in the US workforce over the past five years, amphetamines (including methamphetamine) persisted at 1.1% positive each year.

Positive urine drug test results in the United States workforce declined in eight drug categories. Positivity for cocaine declined by 18.50% to 0.22% (a ten-year low), semi-synthetic opiates (hydrocodone/hydromorphone) declined 10.80%, oxycodone opiates (oxycodone/oxymorphone) declined 14.70%, and benzodiazepines declined by 9.3%. While the positivity for MDMA/MDA (commonly known as ecstasy) increased by 25% and has demonstrated small annual increases over the years, the positivity rate remains very low at 1 in every 10,000 tests.

Marijuana, the most commonly identified drug in employment tests, experienced an average increase of 57.9% (to 3.0%) over the past ten years in states with no medical or recreational marijuana statutes. States with recreational use statutes experienced a 118.2% increase (to 4.8%), and those with medical marijuana statutes experienced increased positivity rates by 68.4% (to 3.2%).

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When considering the industries most likely to experience positive drug tests, Quest Diagnostics found that retail trade (6.2%) and accommodation and food services (6.2%) have the highest overall positive drug rates. This indicates that drug use may be higher among lower-wage employees.

A publication by Robert Kaestner at the National Bureau of Economic Research also explains that there is a connection between drug use and poverty. While drug use has negative impacts on physical and cognitive abilities, resulting in lower productivity, the greater connection is related to the determinants of poverty: education, human capital investments, marriage, and fertility. Interestingly, data also indicates that drug use is encouraged by reduced education levels, poor returns on human capital, and lack of meaningful relationships. Thus, areas with limited economic opportunity generally have higher usage rates and more affordable drugs.

A secondary behavioral concern in the county, contributing to the predominate obesity epidemic experienced by nearly one-third (30%) of the population, is physical inactivity. County Health Rankings reports that 124,026 individuals (21%) report a lack of physical activity on a regular basis. The CDC reports that these individuals are at an increased risk of Heart Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, multiple cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon), Hypertension, high cholesterol, Stroke, Liver Disease, Gallbladder Disease, Sleep Apnea, Osteoarthritis, and gynecological problems (abnormal periods, infertility, etc.).

Ensuring children are physically active is extremely important to promote development of strong bones and muscles. The CDC also documents an association between physical activity in children and cognition (i.e., academic performance, memory) performance. Some studies also indicate that regular exercise reduces the likelihood of depression.

The CDC reports that one-third of all U.S. adults are sleep deprived. Local statistics confirm the issue, finding that 35% of the county's citizens (206,709) are not receiving the amount of rest necessary for proper functioning of the body. Not only does a lack of sleep contribute to vehicle accidents and mistakes at work that lead to injury, but studies also indicate that there are direct links between sleep and conditions such as Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Disease, and depression.

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Provider Access

The availability of healthcare providers in a community is essential for ensuring that residents have access to the medical services they need. A commonly used benchmark for this is the provider-to-patient ratio, which varies by state and facility. For instance, Arizona mandates that medical facilities maintain a ratio of no more than 1,200 patients per provider. This serves as a useful benchmark when examining the adequacy of healthcare provider distribution elsewhere.

Table 43: Medical Providers to Population Ratio (2024)

Area	Physicians	Dentists	Mental Health Professionals
<i>Cobb</i>	1,280:1	1,390:1	420:1
<i>State</i>	1,520:1	1,860:1	560:1

Source: County Health Rankings

In Cobb County, the ratio of patients to primary care physicians is 1,280:1, which is below the state's average of 1,520:1 and the nation's best community rate of 1,330.

For dental care, Cobb's ratio of 1,390:1 aligns closely with the best community rate (1,360:1), indicating that access to dental services is on par with the nation's top-performing areas. This is also notably better than the state average of 1,860:1, reflecting a strong presence of dental professionals in the county.

In terms of mental health services, Cobb County has a provider-to-patient ratio of 420:1, which, while better than the state average of 560:1, still falls short of the nation's best rate of 320:1. This indicates a need for more mental health professionals to reach an optimal standard of care, ensuring comprehensive mental health support for residents.

Overall, while Cobb County performs better than state averages in all three categories, striving towards the nation's best community ratios should be a priority. Enhancing the availability of healthcare providers, particularly in mental health services, would significantly improve the quality of care and accessibility for the county's population.

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There are 102 health centers located throughout the county, with an estimated 1,663 hospital beds.

Cobb County Medical Facilities

Facility Name	Category	Sub-Category	Beds
AUSTELL SURGERY CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
A.G. RHODES HOME, INC - COBB	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
AFFINITY HOSPICE	Hospice		N/A
ALLIANCE SURGERY CENTER AT AUSTELL	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
ALLIANCE SURGERY CENTER AT MARIETTA	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
AMEDISYS HOSPICE CARE OF KENNESAW	Hospice		N/A
AMITY CARE	Hospice		N/A
ANDERSON MILL CENTER FOR NURSING AND HEALING LLC	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
ASUCH SURGERY CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
ATLANTA HAND SPECIALIST SURGERY CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
ATLANTA SURGERY CENTERS	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
AUTUMN BREEZE HEALTH AND REHAB	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
AVEANNA HOME HEALTH	Home Health Agency		N/A
BELLEMEADE DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
BETTERSELF COMMUNITY CARE, LLC	Community Mental Health Center	Community Mental Health Center	N/A
Bristol Hospice Georgia LLC	Hospice		N/A
CARPUS SURGERY CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
CENTER FOR SPINE INTERVENTIONS ASC 3 LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
Center for Spine Procedures LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
Centerwell Home Health	Home Health Agency		N/A
COBB COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICE BOARD	Community Mental Health Center	Community Mental Health Center	N/A
COBB DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
COBB FOOT AND LEG SURGICAL CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
COBBLESTONE SURGERY CENTER INC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
COMPASSUS-KENNESAW	Hospice		N/A
CONCERTO GEORGIA LLC	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
CORNERSTONE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE OF GEORGIA	Hospice		N/A
DELMAR GARDENS OF SMYRNA	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Distinct Part)	Title 18/19	N/A
DEVEREUX ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GEORGIA	Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility	Psychiatric Residential Treatment	N/A
EAST COBB CENTER FOR NURSING AND HEALING LLC	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
EAST COBB PODIATRY SURGERY CTR	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
EAST-WEST SURGERY CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
EMORY REHABILITATION OUTPATIENT CENTER- MARIETTA	Outpatient Physical Therapy/Speech Pathology	Opt or Speech Pathology	N/A
ENHABIT HOME HEALTH	Home Health Agency		N/A
ENHABIT HOSPICE	Hospice		N/A
FAMILY HEALTH CENTER AT COBB, THE	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
Family Hospice	Hospice		N/A
FIDELITY HOME DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
FOOT SURGERY CENTER THE	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
FRESENIUS KIDNEY CARE EAST MARIETTA	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A

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FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE ACWORTH	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE HIGHLANDS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE OF POWDER SPRINGS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE SOUTH COBB	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
GA UROLOGY PA COBB AMBULATORY SURGERY CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
GEORGIA SURGICAL CENTERS INC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
GI DIAGNOSTICS ENDOSCOPY CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
GOOD SAMARITAN HEALTH CENTER OF COBB	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
HERITAGE HOSPICE INC	Hospice		N/A
HYOX MEDICAL TREATMENT CENTER,	Comprehensive Outpatient Rehab Facility	Comprehensive Outpatient	N/A
KENNESTONE DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
Ladahma Hospice LLC	Hospice		N/A
LEGACY CENTER FOR SPINAL SURGERY	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
LEGACY HEALTHCARE SERVICES, INC	Outpatient Physical Therapy/Speech Pathology	Opt or Speech Pathology	N/A
MACLAND DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
MARIETTA ADVANCED SURGERY CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
MARIETTA CENTER FOR NURSING AND HEALING	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Distinct Part)	Title 18/19	N/A
MARIETTA EYE SURGERY	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
MARIETTA SURGICAL CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
MEDCURA HEALTH, INC	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
MEDICI SURGICAL CENTER COBB LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
MOBILE MEDICAL DIAGNOSTICS INC	Portable X-Rays Supplier	X-Ray	N/A
NORTHWEST ATLANTA VASCULAR CARE LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
NORTHWEST ENDOSCOPY CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
NORTHWEST GA ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATES, INC	Outpatient Physical Therapy/Speech Pathology	Opt or Speech Pathology	N/A
PIEDMONT DIALYSIS NORTH	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
Pinnacle Orthopaedics Surgery Center - Austell LL	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
POWDER SPRINGS CENTER FOR NURSING & HEALING	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
PREMIER AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
PRESBYTERIAN VILLAGE	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
PRUITTHEALTH - AUSTELL	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
PRUITTHEALTH - MARIETTA	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
RENAL CARE CENTER OF MARIETTA BMA	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
RIDGEVIEW INSTITUTE	Hospital	Psychiatric	188
ROOSEVELT CIRCLE HEALTH CENTER	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
ROQUIN PAIN CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
ROSELANE HEALTH CENTER BY HARBORVIEW	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
ROSS MEMORIAL HEALTH CARE CTR	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Distinct Part)	Title 18/19	N/A
ROSWELL EYE SURGERY CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
ROSWELL NURSING & REHAB CENTER	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
ROSWELL PAIN SURGICAL CENTER LLC	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
SAINT JOSEPH'S MERCY CARE MUST MINISTRIES	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
SANDY PLAINS DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
SERENE TRANSITIONAL HOSPICE	Hospice		N/A

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SKIN CANCER SPECIALISTS SURGERY CENTER	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
SOUTHSIDE MEDICAL CENTER, INC -- WINDY HILL	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
SUNCREST HOME HEALTH	Home Health Agency		N/A
TANGU INC- WATERS PLACE	Community Mental Health Center	Community Mental Health Center	N/A
TOWER ROAD POST ACUTE, LLC	Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility (Dually Certified)	Title 18/19	N/A
Traditions Health	Hospice		N/A
US RENAL CARE COBB COUNTY DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
US RENAL CARE KENNESAW DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
US RENAL CARE NORTHWEST GEORGIA HOME DIALYSIS	End Stage Renal Disease Facility	End Stage Renal Disease	N/A
WELLSTAR COBB MEDICAL CENTER	Hospital	Short Term	387
WELLSTAR COMMUNITY HOSPICE	Hospice		N/A
WELLSTAR HOME HEALTH LLC	Home Health Agency		N/A
WELLSTAR KENNESTONE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER	Hospital	Short Term	662
WELLSTAR WINDY HILL HOSPITAL	Hospital	Long Term	426
WEST END CENTERS AT CDCSB	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
WEST END MEDICAL CENTERS AT COUNTY SERVICES	Federally Qualified Health Center	Federally Qualified Health Center	N/A
WESTSIDE ENDOSCOPY CENTER P C	Ambulatory Surgical Center		N/A
TOTAL			1,663

Source: Health Resources & Services Administration

Ambulatory Surgical Center:

These are modern health care facilities focused on providing same-day surgical care, including diagnostic and preventive procedures that do not require an overnight hospital stay.

End Stage Renal Disease Facility:

This type of facility provides life-sustaining dialysis treatment to patients suffering from severe kidney failure, also known as end-stage renal disease.

Federally Qualified Health Center:

These are community-based healthcare providers that receive funds from the HRSA Health Center Program to provide primary care services in underserved areas. They offer sliding fee scales for individuals with limited financial means.

Home Health Agency:

Organizations under this category provide in-home medical services for individuals recovering from an illness or injury, or those needing special medical care at home.

Hospice:

A service that provides palliative care for the terminally ill and support to their families, focusing on quality of life rather than curative treatment.

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Hospital:

A complex healthcare institution that provides patient treatment with specialized medical and nursing staff and medical equipment.

Intermediate Care Facility:

This facility caters to individuals who require a level of care between hospital acute care and lower levels of residential care, often for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Outpatient Physical Therapy/Speech Pathology:

These centers offer therapeutic and rehabilitation services for individuals recovering from physical injuries or dealing with speech and language disorders.

Rural Health Clinic:

A clinic located in a rural, medically underserved area that provides primary care services; it may also offer additional services such as on-site lab and x-ray services.

Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Facility:

Facilities that provide a high level of medical care provided by licensed nurses, including both short-term rehabilitative services and long-term care for chronic conditions or disabilities.

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Insurance Coverage

While access to medical treatment is highly dependent on the availability of medical centers, the ability to afford care is a secondary concern. For this reason, health insurance is a critical component of a person's well-being. Not only does it allow individuals to receive emergency intervention, but also preventative care. Data suggests that individuals without insurance are far more likely to postpone or forego regular doctor visits and/or treatments. For these individuals, the consequences can be severe, particularly when preventable conditions or chronic diseases go undetected. Failure to participate in regular blood pressure checks, blood sugar screenings, cholesterol tests, pap smears, mammograms, and colon cancer screenings can lead to serious health complications and, in some cases, even death.

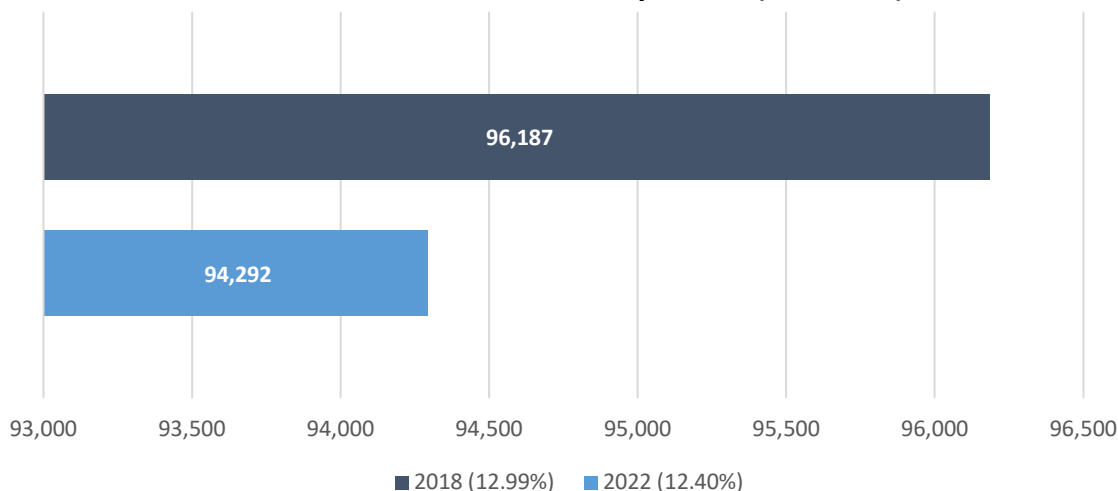
According to a report issued by Families USA entitled "Dying for Coverage," more than 18,000 Americans between the ages of 25 and 64 died in the year 2000 due to a lack of health insurance. During the economic downturn, millions lost their jobs and healthcare coverage, and rising health insurance premiums resulted in even higher rates with 26,100 deaths due to lack of insurance in 2010. This is the equivalent of 72 people per day, or three people per hour, losing their life due to a lack of medical care access.

Recent studies show that individuals without health insurance have a 40% higher risk of death than those with coverage, amounting to approximately 30,000 preventable deaths annually. These deaths occur largely because uninsured individuals are less likely to receive timely medical care, including necessary screenings, treatment for chronic illnesses, and emergency care. The absence of insurance leads to delayed medical attention, resulting in advanced disease stages at diagnosis and poorer health outcomes.

This ongoing crisis underscores the critical importance of healthcare access for all Americans, highlighting the need for continued efforts to expand coverage and reduce the number of uninsured individuals. Public health policies must prioritize affordability and accessibility to prevent unnecessary loss of life due to lack of healthcare services.

Over the past five years, the number of uninsured individuals in the county has decreased by 1,895, or 1.97%.

Chart 57: Uninsured Population (2018/2022)

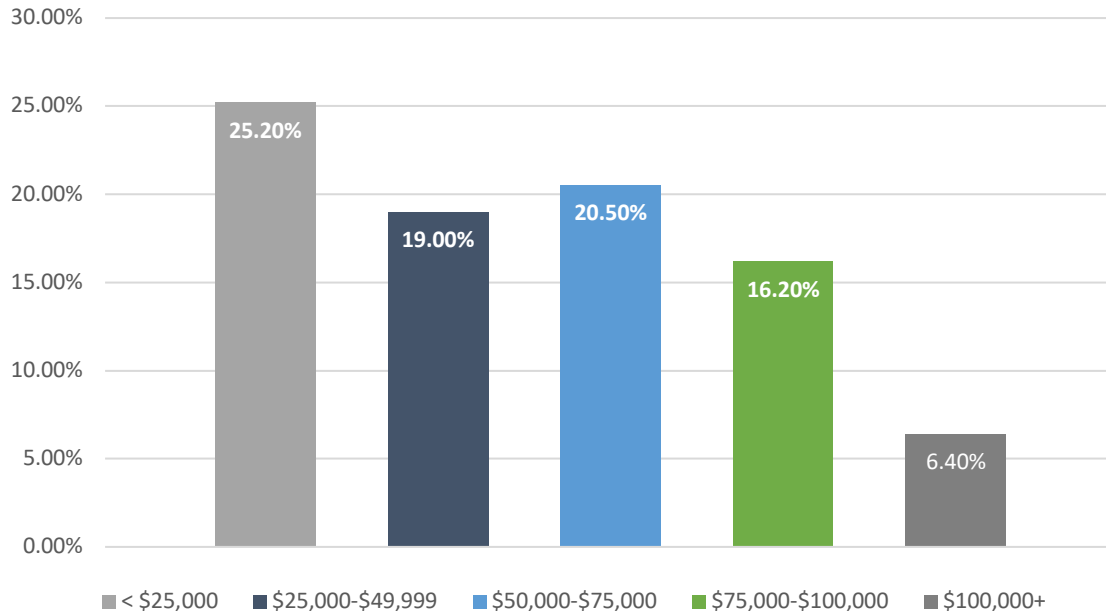


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2701)

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The chart detailing uninsured rates by income level in 2022 provides a clear illustration of the correlation between income and the likelihood of being uninsured. Notably, individuals in the lowest income bracket ($\leq \$25,000$) have the highest uninsured rate at 25.20%. This high rate suggests that affordability is a key barrier to obtaining insurance for those earning the least.

Chart 58: Uninsured Rates by Income Level (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2701)

As income levels increase, the uninsured rates generally decrease. The second income bracket (\$25,000-\$49,999) sees a rate of 19.00%, indicating a slight improvement in access to health insurance as income rises. For those in the middle-income bracket (\$50,000-\$75,000), the uninsured rate peaks again to 20.50%, an anomaly that may require further investigation to understand specific circumstances in this range that affect insurance coverage.

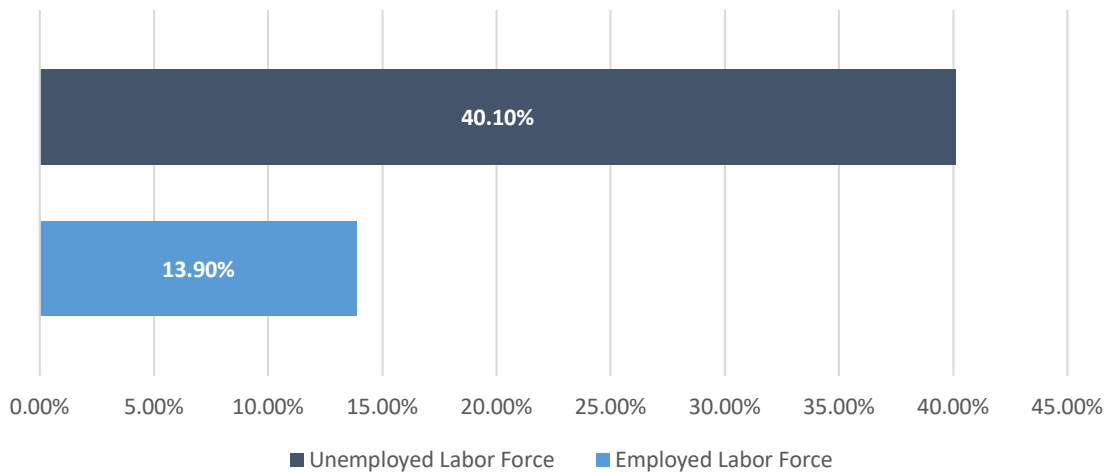
The trend resumes as we look at higher income levels, with those earning \$75,000-\$100,000 showing an uninsured rate of 16.20%, and the rate dropping significantly for individuals with incomes over \$100,000, at 6.40%. These lower rates in higher income brackets underscore the significant role that financial resources play in obtaining health insurance.

The disparity in uninsured rates across income brackets highlights the challenges faced by lower-income individuals in accessing healthcare. For those with limited financial means, health insurance may be deemed a lower priority compared to other immediate necessities, despite its importance in accessing healthcare services. This suggests a need for targeted policy interventions, such as subsidies or expanded eligibility for government-assisted programs, to increase health insurance coverage among the lower-income population and reduce the overall uninsured rate.

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In 2022, the uninsured rate for the employed labor force stood at 13.90%, which is notably lower than the 40.10% uninsured rate for the unemployed labor force. This stark contrast underscores employment as a pivotal factor in health insurance coverage, often due to employer-provided health benefits. While employed individuals may have access to employer-sponsored insurance plans, unemployed individuals are likely to face financial barriers that prevent them from purchasing private health insurance. This group may also face eligibility restrictions for state or federally funded insurance programs, further compounding the challenge of obtaining health coverage.

Chart 59: Uninsured Rates by Employment Status (2022)



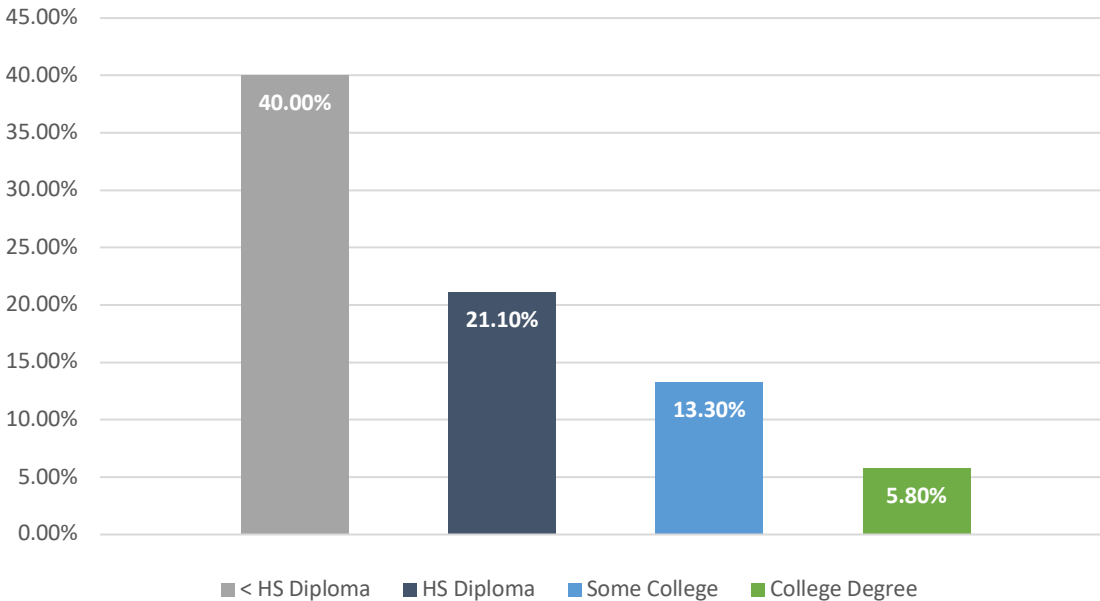
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2701)

The data highlights the vulnerability of the unemployed population in securing health insurance, indicating a critical need for supportive measures. Strategies such as extending Medicaid coverage, creating more affordable insurance options, or offering subsidies could be instrumental in reducing the uninsured rate among the unemployed. Additionally, this disparity suggests the importance of employment stability and job creation initiatives as means to improve health insurance coverage rates.

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When considering education levels as a factor, the highest uninsured rate is among individuals without a high school diploma, at 40.00%, suggesting that lower education levels are correlated with higher rates of uninsured individuals. This could be due to a variety of factors, including lower-income potential and reduced access to employer-sponsored insurance plans.

Chart 60: Uninsured Rates by Education Level (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2701)

The uninsured rate for individuals with a high school diploma is 21.10%, and it drops further, to 13.30%, for those with some college education. This trend continues with the rate significantly decreasing 5.80% for individuals with a college degree. The data indicates that higher educational attainment is associated with better access to health insurance, potentially due to increased employment opportunities and higher earning potential, which can facilitate access to private insurance and reduce reliance on public health insurance.

The chart highlights the importance of educational achievement not only as a determinant of employment prospects and income but also as a crucial factor influencing health insurance coverage. The findings suggest that efforts to increase education accessibility and completion rates could contribute to lowering the number of uninsured individuals. It also underscores the potential impact of educational programs tailored to raise awareness about the importance of health insurance and how to obtain it.

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For children under six years old, an uninsured rate of 5.20%, while lower than the state average, is slightly above the national average. This lack of insurance can hinder access to essential preventive care, vaccinations, and treatments for common childhood illnesses, potentially leading to long-term health issues that could have been prevented with timely medical attention. For children aged 6-18 years, the uninsured rate of 9.50% exceeds the state and national averages, indicating that a considerable number of school-aged children may lack access to necessary healthcare services, including dental care and mental health support. This can affect their physical health, academic performance, and overall well-being.

Table 44: Uninsured Rates by Age Group (2022)

Area	<6 Years	6-18 Years	19-64 Years	65+ Years	Disabled
<i>Cobb</i>	5.20%	9.50%	16.40%	1.00%	9.60%
<i>State</i>	5.70%	7.80%	18.10%	1.00%	9.50%
<i>Nation</i>	4.40%	5.70%	12.20%	0.80%	5.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2701)

For adults aged 19-64, the uninsured rate in Cobb County is 16.40%, notably higher than the national average. This age group typically comprises the working population, and a lack of health insurance can lead to delayed treatment, unmanaged chronic conditions, and higher out-of-pocket medical expenses. It also poses significant economic burdens, as these adults may forgo necessary medical care, leading to worsened health outcomes and decreased productivity. The high uninsured rate among adults can also have ripple effects on families, as parents without insurance are less likely to seek medical care for their children due to costs.

The uninsured rate for seniors aged 65 and older in Cobb County is significantly lower at 1.00%, reflecting the broader national trend of low uninsured rates in this age group. This is largely due to Medicare coverage, which provides health insurance to individuals aged 65 and older, ensuring access to necessary medical services. The slightly lower rate compared to the state average suggests good access to Medicare services in the area.

Among disabled individuals, the uninsured rate stands at 9.60%, higher than both state and national averages. While many disabled individuals may qualify for Medicaid, particularly if they have low incomes, the higher uninsured rate suggests gaps in coverage, possibly due to variations in eligibility, application processes, or availability of supplemental insurance. For this vulnerable group, lack of insurance can exacerbate health disparities, limiting access to necessary treatments, therapies, and support services.

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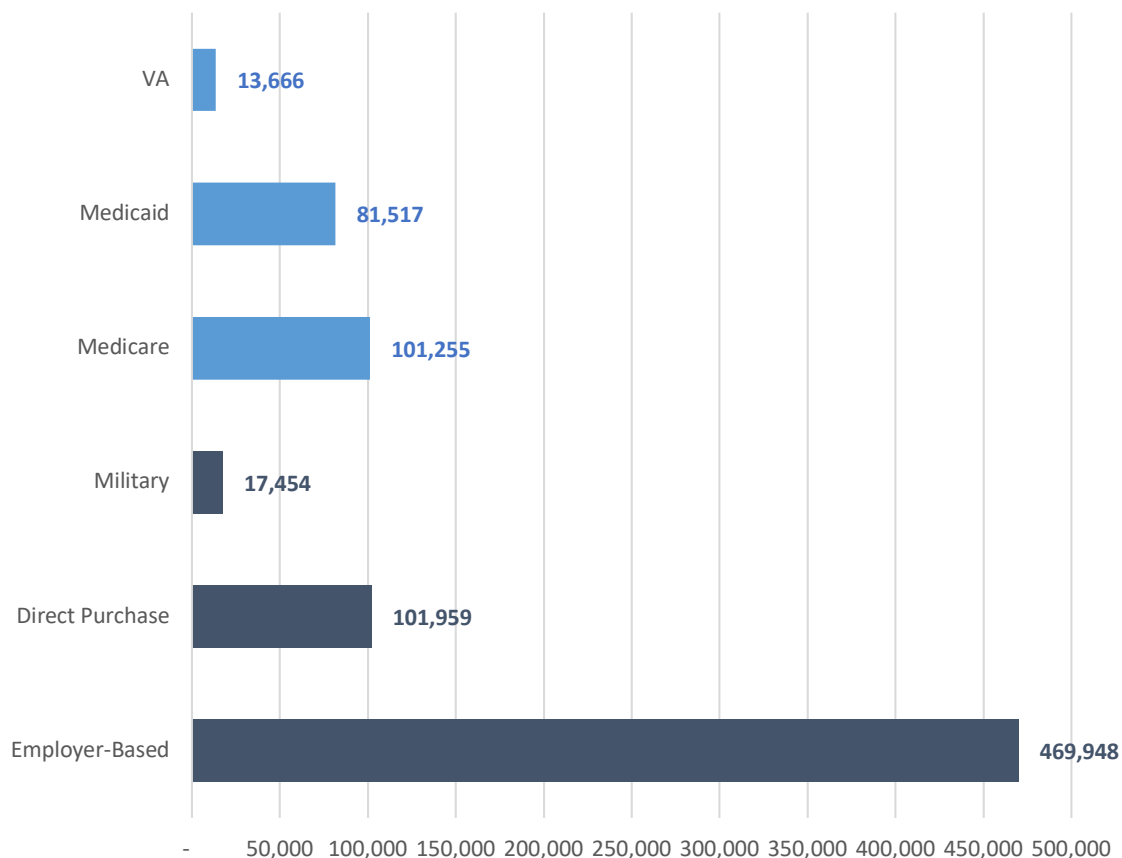
When considering the 738,129 local residents with insurance, an estimated 177,898 were covered by public insurance. These programs cater to various segments of the population based on eligibility criteria, which often include income levels, age, and specific needs such as disabilities or veteran status.

Medicare, with 101,255 beneficiaries, is primarily aimed at adults over the age of 65, offering coverage for a range of health services from routine screenings to hospital care.

Medicaid, closely following with 81,517 enrollees, provides health coverage to low-income families and individuals, including children, pregnant women, parents, seniors, and people with disabilities.

VA healthcare services are utilized by 13,666 individuals, highlighting the commitment to providing for the healthcare needs of veterans who have served in the military.

Chart 61: Population Receiving Insurance by Type (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2703, S2704)

An estimated 560,231 were enrolled in private insurance plans. Private health insurance is a form of health coverage provided through various plans, often organized by employers, or purchased directly by individuals.

Among these, a substantial 469,948 residents have employer-based insurance plans, which are often offered as part of employee benefit packages, indicating a strong employment sector capable of providing such benefits.

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Direct purchase insurance, where 101,959 individuals buy their insurance directly from a private insurer rather than receiving it from an employer or a government program, suggests a segment of the population is self-employed or prefers the flexibility of choosing their insurance provider.

Finally, military insurance, covering 17,454 individuals, is typically provided to military personnel, retirees, and their families through programs like TRICARE, ensuring healthcare support for those serving or who have served in the armed forces and their dependents.

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Community Feedback

The survey data reveals significant barriers related to health, including access to mental health services, substance use, and insurance coverage. Many residents identified a lack of insurance (85.71%) and inadequate insurance (42.86%) as primary barriers to accessing health services. Additionally, the high cost of medical care was a concern for 85.71% of respondents, highlighting the economic challenges associated with securing adequate health care.

Qualitative feedback from the survey supports these findings, with one participant stating, “It’s nearly impossible to afford health care when you don’t have good insurance. Even basic visits and medications are too expensive.” Another respondent noted the lack of mental health services, commenting, “There aren’t enough mental health providers in our area, and the wait times are ridiculous. It’s hard for people to get the help they need when they need it”.

Substance abuse, including alcohol and drugs, was identified as a major concern impacting residents' ability to maintain their health and secure basic needs, with respondents selecting alcohol and drugs as the most significant addictions. Tobacco use was also noted by 40% of respondents as a major concern.

Agency Data

In 2023, access to healthcare among those served by the organization was limited, with only 58 out of 2,696 individuals (2.15%) having health insurance, while a staggering 2,638 individuals (97.85%) were uninsured. This lack of insurance highlights significant barriers to accessing necessary healthcare services within the community. Additionally, 307 individuals, or 11.39% of the total served, were living with a disability, further emphasizing the compounded challenges faced by a substantial portion of the population.

Comparatively, in 2020, 86 out of 1,804 individuals served were insured, representing 4.77% of the population, while 1,718 individuals (95.23%) were uninsured. The data from 2020 also indicated that 373 individuals, or 20.68%, were disabled, which was a higher percentage compared to 2023. These figures reflect a troubling decline in insurance coverage over time and a slight reduction in the percentage of those living with disabilities. The consistently high rates of uninsured individuals reveal persistent and growing health access issues, underscoring the critical need for expanded healthcare coverage and support services for those with disabilities within the community.

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Health Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
Access Services	770-422-0202	Provides comprehensive outpatient alcohol and drug use treatment to pregnant women and women with children. (Fees may apply)
Alzheimer's Association	404-728-1181	Provides Alzheimer's education and support.
A Better Life Treatment Center	404-890-0822	Provides a wide range of mental health and substance abuse services. This includes residential and outpatient alcohol/drug treatment, alcohol/drug evaluations, DUI residential and outpatient alcohol/drug treatment, alcohol/drug evaluations, DUI assessments, DUI risk reduction, and anger management. (Fees may apply)
Ascensa Health	404-874-2224	Provides residential medically monitored detoxification services. (Fees may apply)
Care and Counseling Center of Georgia	404-636-1457 smullins@cccgeorgia.org	Provides a wide variety of counseling and support services.
Center for Family Resources	770-428-2601	Provides life skills education to low-income residents with dependent children living in the home.
Cobb and Douglas Public Health	770-514-2300	Provides a wide range of health-related services, screenings, and tests. Children between the ages of 2 and 18 are also eligible for dental services.
Community Advanced Practice Nurses	404-815-1811 capnurses@mindspring.com	Provides free counseling to homeless and medically underserved individuals and families.
CURE Childhood Cancer	770-986-0035 info@curechildhoodcancer.org	Provides support groups, workshops on cancer, medical care and prescription expense assistance for pediatric cancer patients and their families.
Family Health Center of Georgia	404-752-1400	Provides a wide variety of physical health services. (Fees may apply)
Forever Free Outreach Ministries	770-971-7471	Provides anger management and residential substance abuse recovery assistance to individuals ages 18 and older.
Georgia Department of Behavioral Health	678-903-5197	Provides opioid detoxification services.
Georgia Lion's Lighthouse Foundation	404-325-3630	Provides eyeglasses, contacts, hearing screenings, eye surgeries/examinations, and hearing aids to the uninsured and working poor.
Good Samaritan Health Center of Cobb	770-419-3120 info@goodsamhc.org	Provides a variety of physical health services.
Hartmann Center	770-429-5000	Provides counseling, self-help instruction, medical case management, and substance abuse residential programs to children and adolescents with mental health or substance abuse disorders. (Fees may apply)
HEALing Community Center	404-564-7749 kdubois@hccatlanta.org	Provides a wide variety of physical and mental health care services to medically underserved and at-risk individuals.
Hopequest Ministry Group	678-391-5950 info@hopequestgroup.org	Provides a variety of services designed to treat mental health conditions, substance abuse, and anger management issues to males over the age of 18. (Fees may apply)
Jewish Family & Career Center	404-881-1858 bmdc@jfcatl.org	Provides comprehensive, quality dental care to low and no income individuals.
Mercy Care at MUST Marietta	678-843-8600	Provides a wide variety of medical services to homeless, low-income, and underserved individuals without health insurance. (Fees may apply)
Planned Parenthood of Georgia	404-688-9300	Provides gynecological services, breast exams, STD screening/treatment, and HIV/AIDS testing. (Fees may apply)
Positive Transition Services, Inc.	678-298-6140	Provides mental health assessments and services for men, veterans, and older adults
Prevent Blindness Georgia	404-266-2020	Provides vision screenings, ophthalmology referrals, eyeglasses, contacts, glaucoma screenings, and eye exams to individuals unable to afford eye care.
Ridgeview Institute	770-434-4567 adavis@ridgeviewinstitute.com	Provides treatment for eating disorders, substance abuse, and mental health disorders. (Fees may apply)
Right from the Start Medicaid Project	877-427-3224	Provides and processes applications for Right from the Start Medicaid and PeachCare insurance coverage for children and pregnant women.
Someone Cares, Inc.	678-921-2706	Provides holistic support and interventions to the LGBTQ, and underserved, marginalized, homeless populations.
Turning Point Enterprises, Inc.	770-528-6262 turningpointprogram@gmail.com	Provides substance abuse prevention services to low-income residents

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Vision Rehabilitation Services of Georgia	770-432-7280	Provides diabetes management, braille instruction, walking aid instruction, low-vision aids, and independent living skills to blind and low-vision individuals.
Visiting Nurse Health System	404-215-6000	Provides home health and end-of-life care. (Fees may apply)
WellStar Cobb Behavioral Health	470-732-3789 generalinfo@wellstar.org	Provides drug/alcohol day treatment services and psychiatric aftercare services.

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Conclusion: Strengths

Cobb County's health indicators, such as the percentage of adults reporting poor health (13%), are better than the state average (18%), reflecting relatively better access to health services and preventative care. The county's ratio of healthcare providers to patients is generally favorable, with access to primary care physicians and dentists close to national best practices. The availability of healthcare facilities, including 102 health centers and 1,663 hospital beds, supports broad access to medical services, contributing to the county's average life expectancy of 79.5 years, which is higher than the state average of 76.1 years.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Cobb County faces significant health challenges, particularly in addressing chronic diseases and mental health needs. Obesity affects 30% of adults, increasing the risk of conditions such as diabetes, which impacts 9% of the population (53,154 individuals). Mental health issues are also prevalent, with 14% of adults experiencing frequent mental distress. Access to mental health care is a critical weakness; the county's current provider-to-patient ratio is 420:1, falling short of the national best practice of 320:1. To meet this standard, Cobb County would need approximately 2,393 mental health providers, an increase of 569 providers from the current number. This shortage highlights the urgent need to expand mental health services to adequately support the community. Additionally, 12% of adults (70,872) smoke tobacco, contributing to preventable health issues such as heart disease and cancer, which further strain healthcare resources and negatively impact overall community health.

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Nutrition

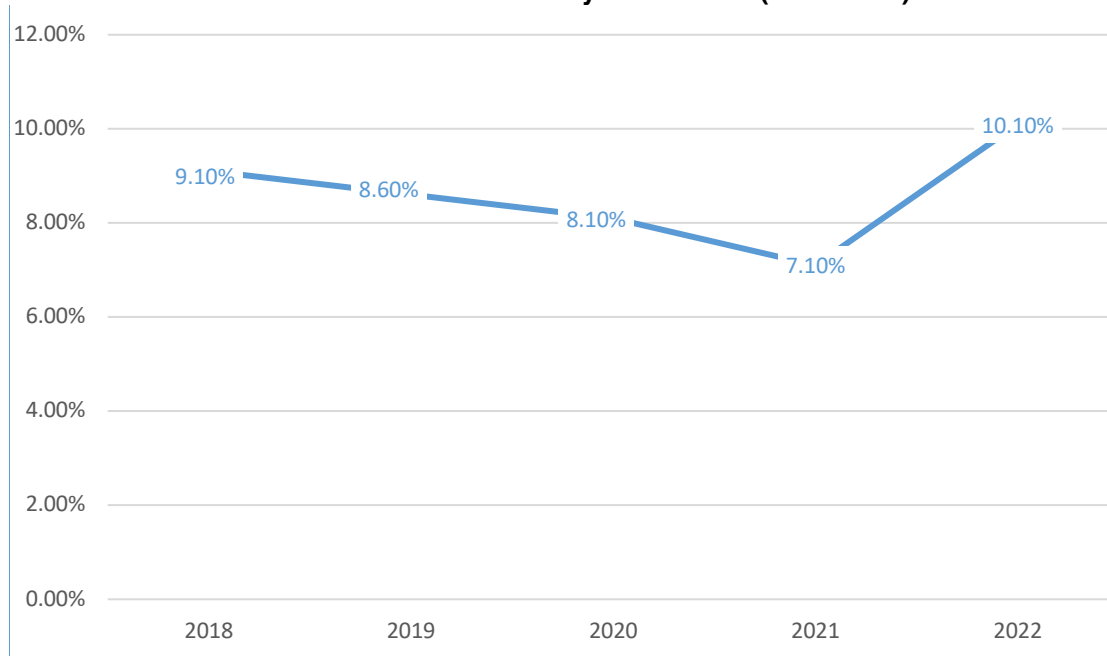
Food Insecurity

Food insecurity describes a household's inability to provide adequate nutritional foods for every person to live an active, healthy life. Food insecurity and health are deeply connected, as studies indicate that people who are food insecure are disproportionately affected by illnesses such as Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. Further, family members in food insecure households are also known to struggle with psychological and behavioral health issues.

Feeding America, a national advocacy group focusing on nutrition explains that one “bad month” can be enough to plunge a household into food insecurity. An employment layoff, unexpected vehicle break down, or accident on the job can suddenly force a family to choose between buying food and paying bills. According to the organization, this is why many working Americans, including thousands of households who don't qualify for federal nutrition assistance programs, depend on local food banks.

Over the past five years, the portion of the population impacted by food insecurity has increased by 10.99% to an estimated 77,610 residents. The food insecurity rate started at 9.10% in 2018 and experienced a decline to 7.10% by 2021, a decrease of 21.98%. However, in 2022, the rate surged to 10.10%, reflecting a significant rate of change of approximately 42.25% from the previous year. This recent spike indicates a troubling increase in the number of individuals and families struggling with food insecurity, highlighting a growing concern for access to adequate nutrition in the community.

Chart 62: Food Insecurity Rate Trend (2018-2022)



Source: Feeding America

It should [also](#) be noted that individuals identifying as Black experienced a significantly higher food insecurity rate (21%) than those identifying as White (10%). An estimated 18% of those identifying as Hispanic were found to be food insecure.

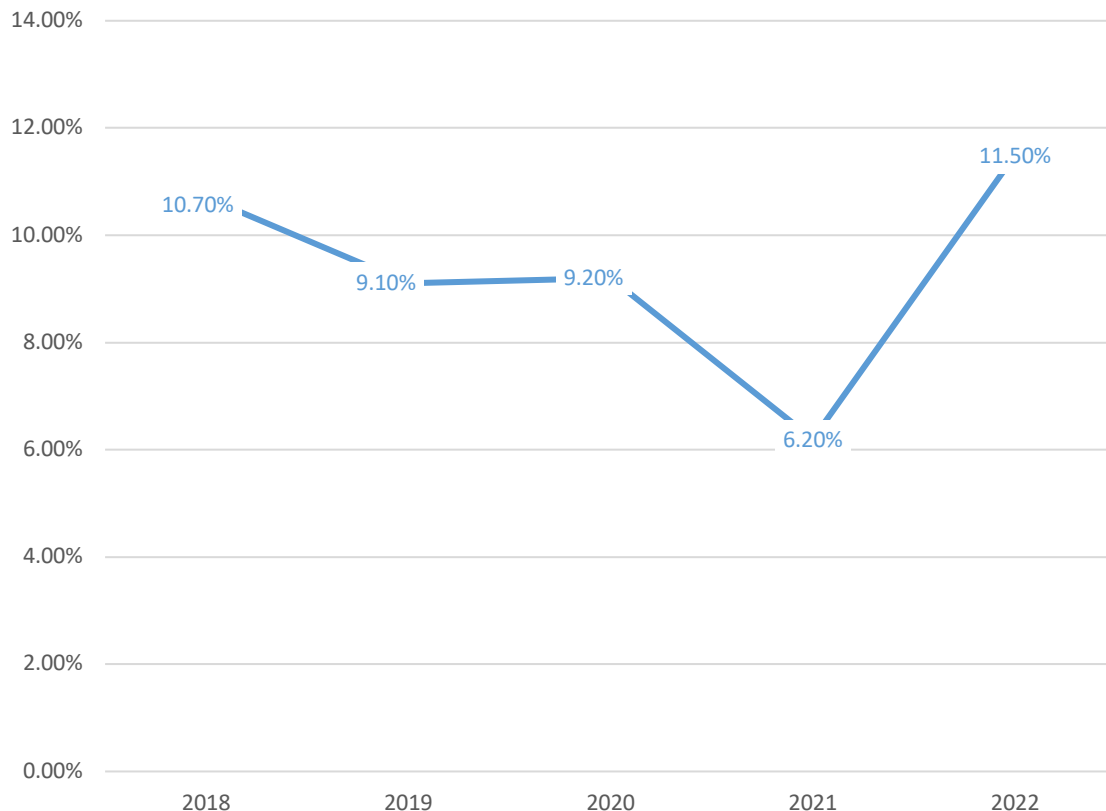
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Child Food Insecurity

For children, food insecurity can be even more damaging. Not only can a lack of nutrition lead to health concerns such as asthma and anemia, but it can also impact their future education through developmental delays (language, motor skills, etc.). Feeding America reports that food insecure children are more likely to fail a grade in school, and often have behavioral problems that lead to difficulty in social interactions with others.

Between 2018 and 2021, the child insecurity rate decreased by 42.06%, with a drastic increase of 85.48% being experienced in 2022. Overall, the rate has increased by 7.48% over the past five years.

Chart 63: Child Food Insecurity Rate Trend (2018-2022)



Source: Feeding America

In terms of actual numbers, 20,230 children in Cobb County were affected by food insecurity, which constitutes 26.07% of all food insecure individuals in the county. This proportion points to the critical need for targeted food assistance programs and nutritional education that specifically address the needs of children, ensuring they have access to the necessary resources to grow, learn, and thrive.

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Senior Food Insecurity

Another vulnerable population that should be considered when looking at the possibility of food insecurity is senior citizens. According to national statistics, nearly 1 in every 4 seniors in America faces the threat of hunger and/or malnutrition. This applies to those who aren't sure where their next meal is coming from as well as those who do not have access to healthy food options. The issue is so severe that the AARP reports that seniors face healthcare costs of more than \$130 billion each year due to medical issues stemming from hunger.

Although limited data is available for this age group, Feeding America reports that 8.00% of Georgia seniors were food insecure in 2021. This means that Georgia is ranked in the top 10 in the number of food insecure seniors in the nation.

According to research, food insecure seniors are 233% more likely to suffer from depression, 90% more likely to experience asthma, 57% more likely to experience congestive heart failure, 32% more likely to experience limitations in activity, and 19% more likely to experience high blood pressure.

Estimated Food Insecurity Counts (All Ages)

Overall, it is estimated that among the 151,300 food insecure residents, 17,622 are senior citizens, 54,080 are children, and 79,598 are adults.

Table 45: Food Insecurity Estimates by Age (2022)

Area	Children	Adults	Senior	Total
<i>Cobb</i>	20,230	49,421	7,959	77,610

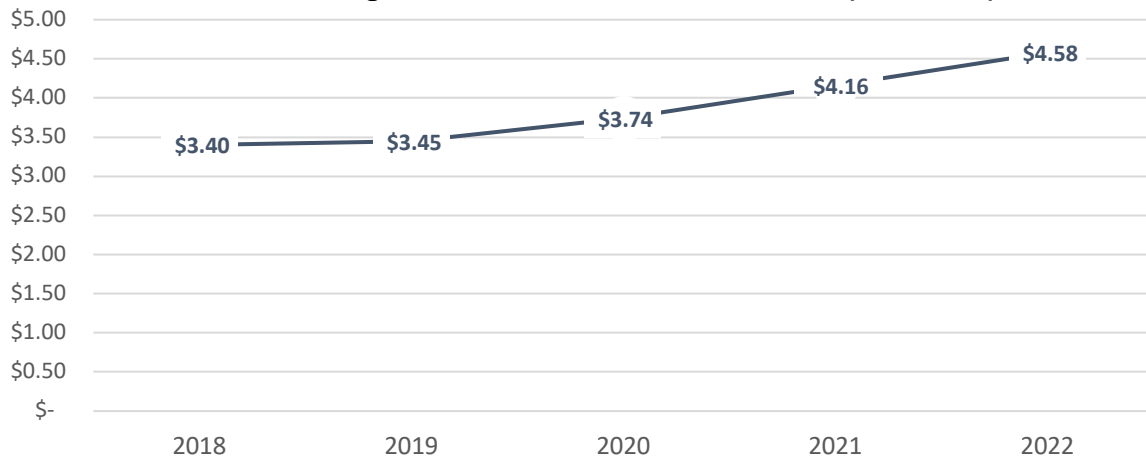
Source: Feeding America

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Food Affordability

The average cost per meal per person in the county is \$4.58. To put this cost into perspective, an average family of four spending \$4.58 per meal per person would need to budget an estimated \$1,671.70 per month on food or \$20,060.40 annually. This is 21.29% of the median household income and 133% of the minimum wage salary.

Chart 64: Average Price Per Person Per Meal Trend (2018-2022)



Source: Feeding America

At these rates, economically disadvantaged households are forced to seek outside subsidies in order to survive. The primary subsidy, utilized by 17,260 households, or 5.93% of the population, is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Formerly known as Food Stamps, this program provides low-income residents with a monthly allocation of funds that can be used exclusively for the purchase of food.

Table 46: SNAP Recipient Households (2022)

SNAP Recipients	Percentage of All HH
17,260	5.93%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (S2201)

Among the households receiving SNAP benefits, 34.80% have at least one worker in the home, 57.62% have at least one child in the home, 42.64% have at least one disabled household member, and 37.65% have at least one senior citizen in the home.

SNAP recipients were noted as being predominately Black (52.50%) and White (30.95%). Only 2,571 residents identifying as Hispanic (14.90% of all SNAP recipients) were noted as receiving SNAP benefits.

While SNAP subsidies are extremely beneficial for low-income families, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that the average benefit is \$2.15 per person per meal. This is only 46.94% of the amount needed to sustain the nutritional needs of a person living in the service area.

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Community Feedback

The survey data revealed significant concerns about food and nutrition in the community. A critical finding is that 57.35% of respondents identified food insecurity as one of the top conditions of poverty, illustrating widespread challenges in accessing adequate and nutritious food. One respondent shared, "It's hard to keep healthy food on the table when prices keep going up, and assistance just doesn't stretch far enough." This sentiment reflects the impact of rising food costs, a common theme among many participants.

Interestingly, food assistance services were identified as one of the most frequently provided supports, with 51.85% of the participating service providers offering help in this area. This highlights the community's reliance on supplemental programs to meet basic nutritional needs. While this is encouraging, the data suggests that food insecurity and high food costs are persistent barriers that contribute to financial strain, particularly for low-income families. Without addressing these challenges, the long-term effects could include negative health outcomes and further economic instability for affected households .

Agency Data

In 2023, 20.57% of the 1,798 households served received food stamps, indicating a reliance on supplemental nutrition assistance among a significant portion of the community. This marks a very slight increase compared to 2020, when 20.26% of the 1,214 households received food stamps. Although the percentage increase is modest, the data highlights ongoing food insecurity issues and the critical role of food assistance programs in supporting vulnerable households over time.

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Food and Nutrition Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
Antioch Urban Ministries	404-524-9775	Provides emergency food to individuals ages 16 and older.
Center for Family Resources	770-428-2601	Provides emergency food to low- income residents with dependent children living in the home.
Cobb and Douglas Public Health	770-514-2300	Provides food subsidies through the WIC program.
Cobb County Cooperative Extension Services	770-528-4070 uge1067@uga.edu	Provides nutrition education and gardening instructions.
Cobb County Senior Services	770-528-5355	Provides congregate and home delivered meals to senior citizens.
Cobb Vineyard	No Data	Provides emergency food distributions twice per month.
Family Life Restoration Center	770-944-1066 luther_flrc@yahoo.com	Provides emergency assistance with food.
First Christian Church Food Pantry	770-428-3125	Provides emergency food from 9am to 1pm every Monday.
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services		Provides food subsidies through the SNAP Program.
GraceLife Church - Joseph's Storehouse	770-971-4232	Provides emergency assistance with food.
MUST Ministries – Marietta	770-790-3926	Provides emergency assistance with food.
MUST Ministries – Smyrna	770-436-9514	Provides emergency assistance with food.
New Beginnings Food Outreach	678-365-8122 stephaniebass81@gmail.com	Provides emergency assistance with food.
Peace of Kindness	No Data	Provides emergency food from noon to 5pm every Wednesday.
Redeemed Christian Church of God	770-944-1401	Provides emergency assistance with food.
Salvation Army	770-724-1640 yamira.valentin@uss.salvationarmy.org	Provides emergency assistance with food/mass feeding services.
Schaffer Road Church of Christ	770-437-9047 info@schafferroad.org	Provides emergency assistance with food.
Survivors Outreach Center	404-532-9016 survivorsoutreach@gmail.com	Provides emergency assistance with food.
Turner Chapel AME Church	770-422-6791	Provides emergency assistance with food.
Victory International Center	No Data	Provides emergency food the first Saturday and Sunday of each month.

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Conclusion: Strengths

Despite the challenges, Cobb County has several strengths in addressing food insecurity. Programs like SNAP provide crucial support to 17,260 households, or 5.93% of the population, including 34.80% of households with a working member, 57.62% with children, and 37.65% with seniors. This safety net helps bridge the gap for many families, ensuring access to essential nutrition. Community resilience is further demonstrated by the ongoing support of food assistance initiatives that address immediate needs and work to mitigate the impact of rising food costs on economically vulnerable populations.

Additionally, the community's proactive approach in maintaining nutritional assistance has provided a critical buffer during times of economic strain. These efforts have contributed to helping residents maintain access to food, especially during difficult economic periods, showcasing the strength of local support networks.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

However, food insecurity remains a significant concern in Cobb County, particularly for children and seniors. In 2022, 20,230 children were affected by food insecurity, representing 26.07% of all food-insecure individuals, underscoring the urgent need for targeted food assistance programs for youth. The rising cost of food is a substantial barrier, with the average meal costing \$4.58, pushing annual food expenses for a family of four to approximately \$20,060, or 21.29% of the median household income.

SNAP benefits, while providing essential support, only cover 46.94% of the average meal cost, leaving families to make up the difference, which can be difficult for those already struggling to make ends meet. These gaps in nutritional support highlight the ongoing need for expanded programs and resources to ensure that all residents, particularly the most vulnerable, have consistent access to affordable and nutritious food.

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Transportation

Transportation Availability

While transportation can be a major barrier to self-sufficiency by limiting access to employment and education, it can also impact a person's quality of life by preventing them from securing healthcare, food, and other life necessities. An article in the New York Times titled "Transportation Emerges as Crucial to Escaping Poverty" reports that the impact of transportation on social mobility is stronger than many other factors, such as crime, elementary-school test scores, or the percentage of two-parent families in a community.

The article, based on studies conducted by Harvard University and New York's Rudin Center of Transportation, emphasized the strong link between the availability of public transportation systems and income. Researchers compared neighborhoods by accessibility to mass transit and the number of jobs within an hour's commute. Residents of the areas least served by mass transit relied on personal vehicles. Those with some, but insufficient, access to transportation had the highest unemployment rates and the lowest incomes.

In 2022, the U.S. Census Bureau identified 10,214 households in the service area without a vehicle. While nearly half (46.80%) do not contain a member of the labor force, these households could struggle to obtain basic needs. For the remaining 5,434, the lack of transportation impacts their ability to secure/maintain employment.

Table 47: Number of Vehicles per Household (2022)

0	1	2	3	4+
10,214	89,232	124,409	48,170	19,146

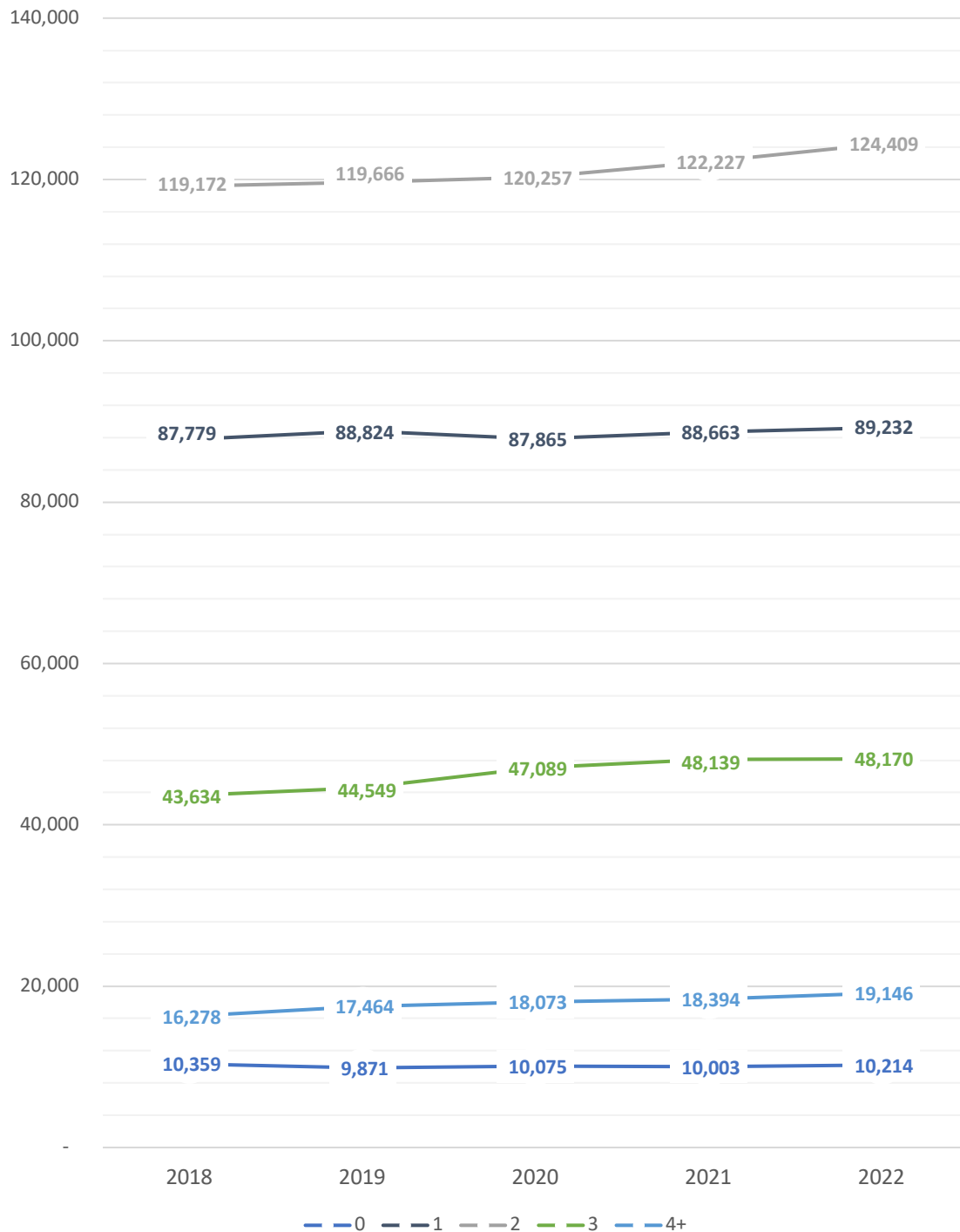
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (B08203)

An additional 89,232 households were identified as having only one vehicle in the home. Of these, an estimated 10,131 had more than one family member working in the home. While these households would have access to basic necessities unless the condition of the vehicle produced a barrier of some type, secondary household members may face difficulties improving education/skills and securing employment due to a lack of transportation. Overall, 20,186 were found to have transportation barriers that impact employment to some degree.

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Over the past five years, the number of households without a vehicle has decreased by a minimal 1.40%, indicating a possible need for assistance with transportation services in this community.

Chart 65: Vehicle Ownership Trend (2018-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (B08203)

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Public Transportation

In the absence of personal transportation, public transportation becomes critical for survival. In Cobb County, Georgia, public transportation is primarily provided by CobbLinc. CobbLinc offers local and express bus routes, FLEX service, paratransit, and a voucher program. The fixed-route bus service operates on several routes throughout the county, providing safe, convenient, and affordable transportation for residents.

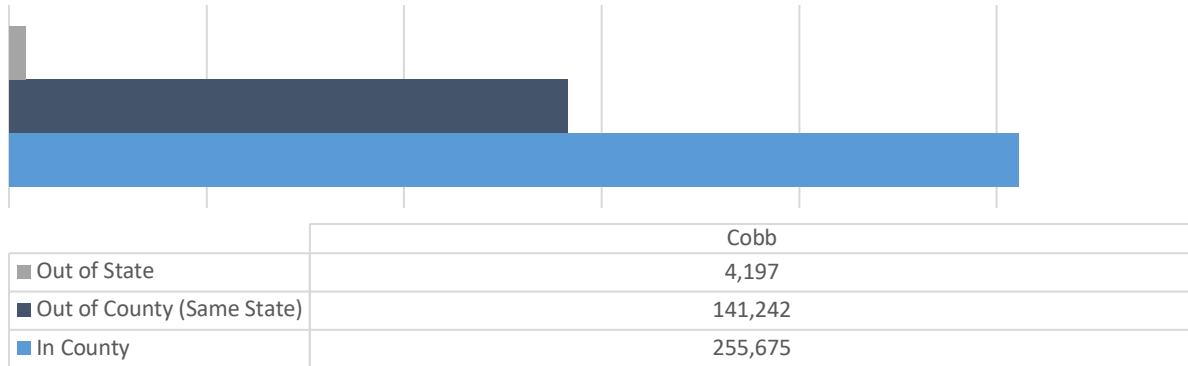
For individuals with disabilities who cannot use the standard bus routes, CobbLinc offers ADA paratransit services. To use this service, passengers must have an ADA ID card and schedule their trips in advance.

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Commutes

Access to transportation is critical for working individuals. In the service area, an estimated 145,439 individuals (18.99%) travel outside of their county of residence for employment. Among these, 141,242 travel out of the county in the same state and 4,197 travel to another state.

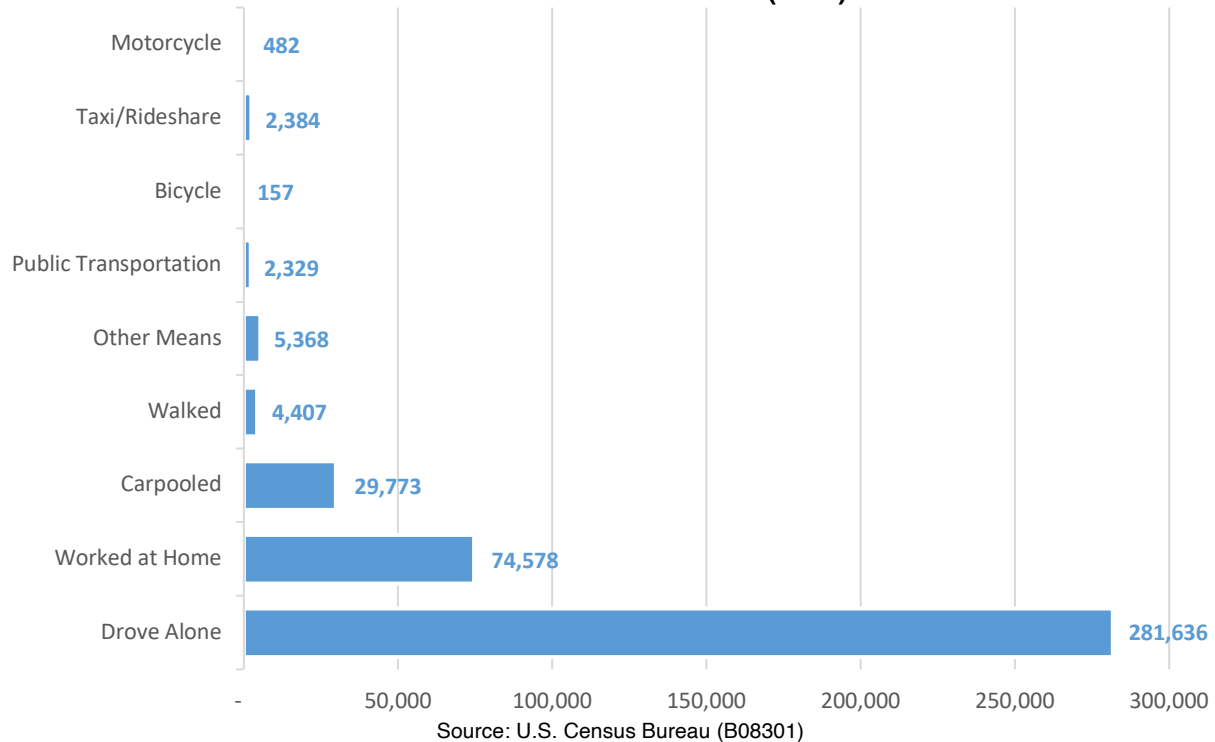
Chart 66: Commute by County and Geography (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (B08007)

The transportation habits within the service area highlight various dynamics that impact individuals and the broader community. A vast majority of the workforce, 70.21% or 281,636 individuals, opt to drive alone to work, a mode of transport offering convenience and flexibility but contributing significantly to environmental concerns like carbon emissions.

Chart 67: Commute Method (2022)



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The trend of working from home has marked a significant change in the labor force dynamics of the service area, with a notable 74,578 individuals or 18.59% of the workforce now engaging in this modern work arrangement. This substantial 139.97% increase from the 31,078 residents working from home in 2018 suggests that factors such as technological advancements and the transformative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have reshaped the employment landscape. Not only does this shift demonstrate adaptability but it also contributes positively to the environment by reducing the number of commuters on the road, thus lessening both traffic congestion and emissions.

In addition to the insights provided, the commute data highlights that carpooling is the third most common method of commuting, with 7.42% or 29,772 individuals participating. This practice not only reduces individual commuting costs but also lessens the environmental impact by decreasing the number of vehicles on the road, contributing to reduced traffic congestion and lower carbon emissions. Carpooling also fosters community interaction and can be a practical solution for those without personal vehicles.

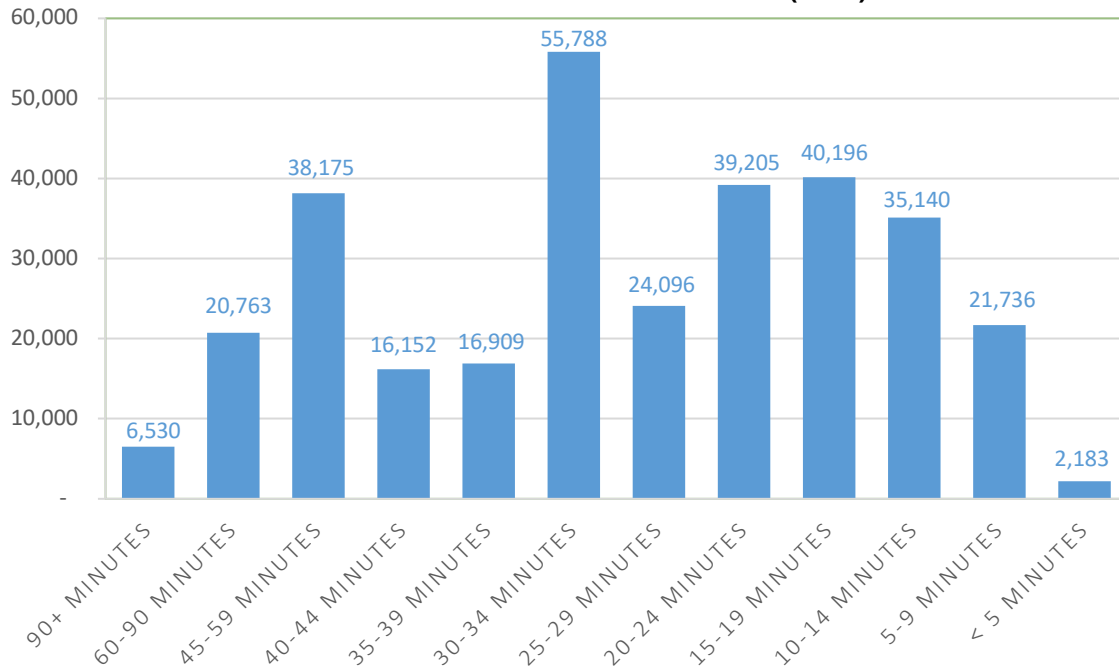
Moreover, the 1.10% of the workforce who walk to work, approximately 4,407 individuals, demonstrate a commitment to more sustainable and health-conscious commuting methods. However, walking as a primary mode of transportation can be limiting due to factors such as distance from work, lack of pedestrian infrastructure, and individual health constraints.

The use of public transportation, accounts for only 0.58% or 2,329 individuals, which is a decrease of 44.18% over the past five years.

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The average commute time for the county is 29.70 minutes. This is longer than the state average of 28.40 and national average of 26.70. Overall, an estimated 154,317 individuals commute 30 minutes or more each way to work, with 27,293 commuting more than one hour and 6,530 commuting more than one and a half hours.

Chart 68: Commute Times in Minutes (2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (B08303)

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Community Feedback

A notable 52.54% of respondents reported that many vehicles in use have major mechanical issues, making them unreliable or unsafe, while 37.29% noted minor issues like aging brakes and old tires that could impact vehicle reliability. High repair costs are a major concern, with 62.71% indicating this as a significant financial strain. Additionally, 42.37% of respondents noted that many do not have valid insurance due to the associated costs, further compounding transportation challenges.

Frequent vehicle breakdowns also contribute to job loss or missed opportunities, affecting 40.68% of the surveyed population. The lack of access to affordable and trustworthy mechanic services was cited by 33.90%, illustrating the ongoing struggle to maintain reliable personal transportation. One respondent emphasized, “Transportation is a constant struggle—if your car breaks down, you might as well kiss your job goodbye.”

Public transportation also faces significant issues. About 75.00% reported limited routes, and 66.67% cited restricted hours of operation, making it difficult for residents to rely on public transit for daily commutes. Unreliable service, including frequent delays and cancellations, was a concern for 25.00% of respondents. Such constraints on both personal and public transportation limit access to employment, education, and essential services, thereby exacerbating the challenges low-income residents face in achieving economic stability

Agency Data

In 2023, transportation access among households served by the organization was varied, with a small percentage (0.77%) of households having no transportation at all. A significant portion of households, 1.92%, relied on friends or family for transportation, highlighting a dependency on informal networks. The majority of households (64.81%) utilized public transportation, reflecting a heavy reliance on this service for daily mobility. Meanwhile, 32.18% of households owned their vehicle, providing a more stable and reliable means of transportation. A minor group, 1.21%, either walked or used an unknown type of transportation, indicating a lack of accessible or reliable options. This data underscores the diverse transportation needs within the community and the critical importance of maintaining and expanding public transportation and other mobility services to support these households.

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Transportation Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Description
CobbLinc	https://www.cobbcounty.org/transportation/cobblinc	Fixed route public transportation.

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Conclusion: Strengths

Cobb County offers various public transportation options through CobbLinc, which provides essential services, including local and express bus routes, paratransit for individuals with disabilities, and a voucher program. These resources are critical for residents who lack personal vehicles, helping to connect them to employment, healthcare, and other necessary services. Additionally, the number of households without a vehicle has slightly decreased by 1.40% over the past five years, reflecting some improvement in transportation access. The rise in remote work, with 74,578 individuals working from home—a 139.97% increase since 2018—has also reduced the daily commute burden for many residents, contributing positively to both traffic congestion and environmental impact.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Despite the available transportation resources, Cobb County faces significant challenges. With 10,214 households lacking a vehicle, many residents struggle with daily mobility, and those without reliable transportation face barriers to employment and access to essential services. Public transportation use is minimal, with only 0.58% of commuters relying on it, a 44.18% decline over the past five years. Issues such as limited routes, restricted hours, and unreliable service further reduce the effectiveness of public transit as a viable option.

Additionally, 52.54% of surveyed residents reported major mechanical issues with their vehicles, making them unsafe or unreliable, while 62.71% cited high repair costs as a significant financial burden. For many, these vehicle-related challenges result in job loss or missed opportunities. The community feedback underscores the need for expanded and more reliable transportation options, improved vehicle repair assistance, and better public transit services to ensure that all residents can access the opportunities and services they need to thrive.

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Family Relationships

In 2017, the National Institute of Health (NIH) reported that family relationships play a central role in the shaping of an individual's well-being. Family members are linked in important ways through each stage of life, and these relationships are an important source of social connection and social influence. The quality of these relationships can influence well-being through psychosocial, behavioral, and physiological pathways. Further, the article explains that negative relationships can produce stress, which undermines the health and well-being by impairment of immune function, impacting cardiovascular health, and increasing the risk of depression.

Domestic Violence

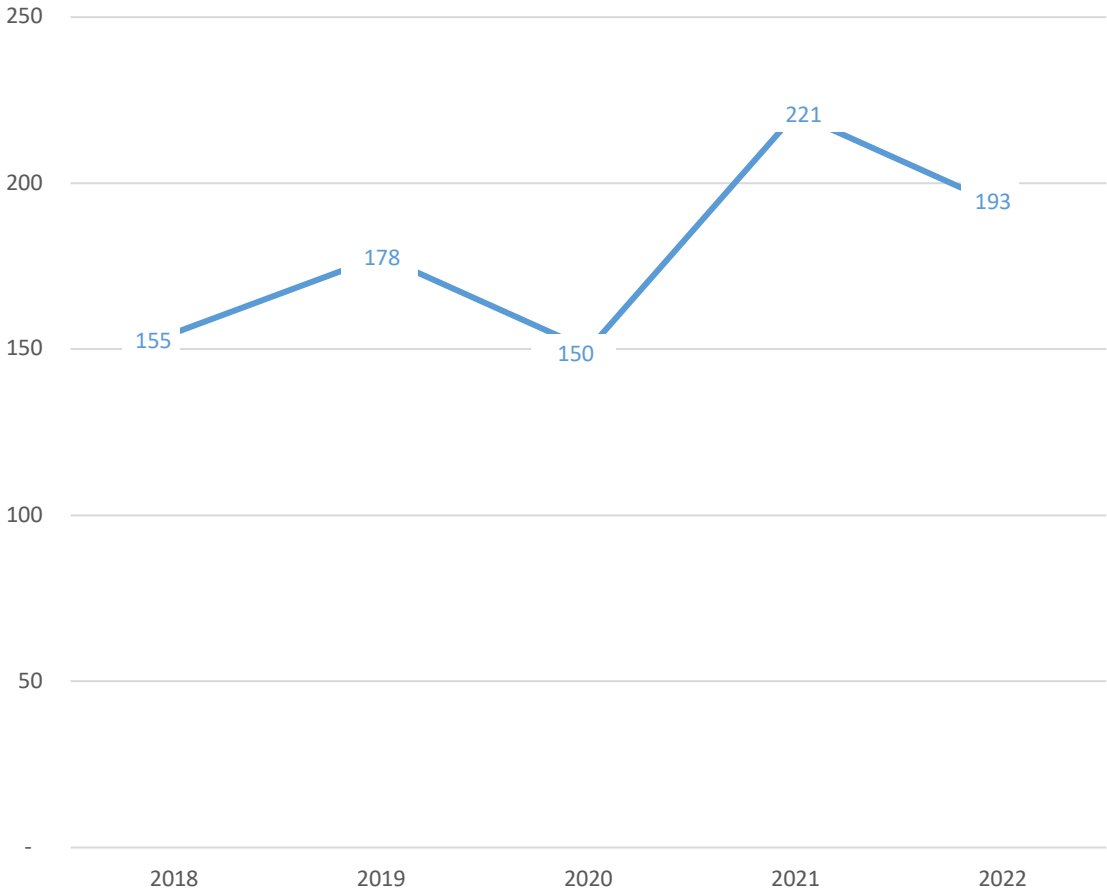
The NIH study concludes that romantic relationships are one of the most important types of relationships, defining life context and impacting well-being throughout adulthood. A happy relationship is generally associated with increased mental and physical health due to strong social support, enhanced self-esteem, improved health behaviors, and a better ability to cope with stress. Individuals in relationships full of conflict, however, are more likely to report depressive symptoms and poor health. In fact, a number of studies suggest that the negative aspects of poor relationships have a stronger impact on well-being than the positive aspects of good relationships.

A 2023 study conducted by the Georgia Commission on Family Violence found that there were 129,528 crisis calls to Georgia's certified family violence and sexual assault agencies, a 13% increase from 2021 crisis calls. Further, there were 17,682 family violence and Ex Parte Temporary Protective Orders (TPOs) issued during this year.

The report continued to explain that 897 Georgia citizens lost their lives due to domestic violence in the past five years. While the data indicates that the number of deaths fluctuates, the overall trend shows an increase of 24.52% during this time. Firearms were the cause of death in 81% of these cases.

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Chart 69: Georgia Domestic Violence Deaths (2018-2022)



Source: Georgia Commission on Family Violence

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Parenting

Even in the strongest of relationships, couples who have children often struggle to provide a healthy environment that meets a child's need for emotional, social, cultural, educational, and relational security. The National Institute of Health specifically addressed the complexities of parent-child relationships, finding that parenthood generates rewards and stressors, both of which have important implications for well-being. While parenthood can increase social integration, it also has the potential of producing stress and diminishing well-being. In the service area, a total of 94,522 households (32.46%) have at least one child under the age of 18 living in the home.

According to the Office of Head Start (OHS), development of a positive, goal-oriented relationship between educators, family members, and children built on a mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer is a critical component for success. The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement framework (PFCE) was developed by OHS to promote positive progress using outcome benchmarks to measure success. Family outcome measures include the establishment of a safe and healthy home environment, development of strong parent/child relationships, parental promotion of education, parental participation in educational advancement, family support in life transitions, community/social interaction, and parental advocacy for child success.

Births

Cobb County documented a total of 8,640 births in 2023. Based on five-year averages, it is estimated that 8,651 women are pregnant during any given year.

Table 48: Annual Births (2019-2023)

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Avg.
8,685	8,490	8,726	8,716	8,640	8,651

Source: FL Health Charts

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Single Parent Households

For single parents, especially those without a strong external support system, the emotional and financial stress can be overwhelming. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are an estimated 17,860 single parents in the local service area, a strong majority of which (83.17%) are headed by a female householder.

Table 49: Single Parent Households (2022)

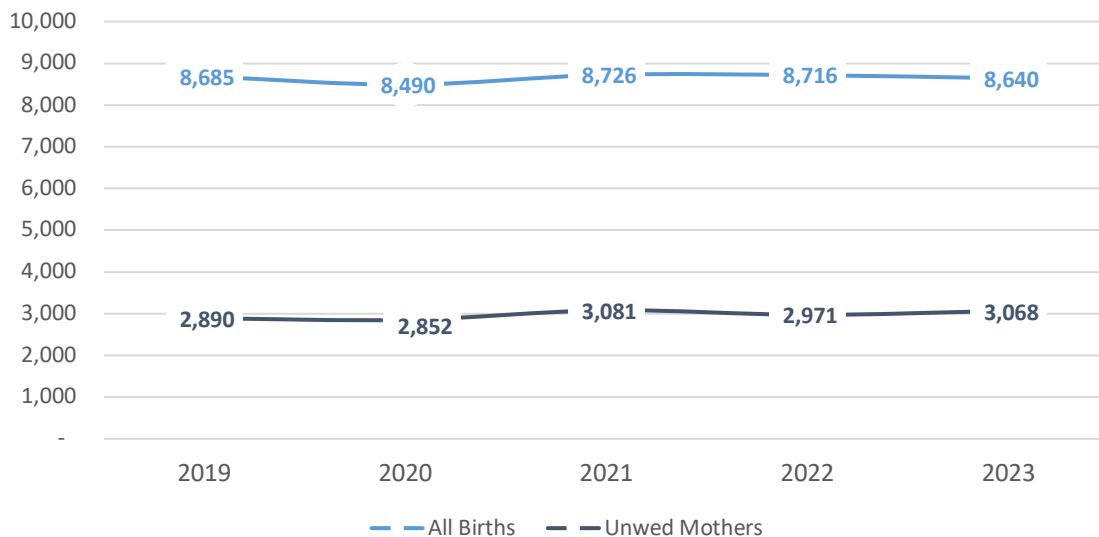
Male HOH	Female HOH
3,006	14,854

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (DP02)

These households have a heightened poverty risk due to employment barriers that are generally associated with childcare. Although single parent households can be caused by a variety of circumstances (divorce, death of a spouse, etc.), it should be noted that unwed mothers account for more than one-third (35.51%) of all births in the county. These households are generally much more likely to have no prenatal care than married couple parents and are significantly more likely to use Medicaid to pay for birthing than married couple parents.

While the number of total births has decreased by 0.52% in the county over the past five years, the number of unwed mother births has increased by 6.16%, indicating potential family structure changes in the local community during the evaluated period.

Chart 70: Trend of Total Births and Unwed Mother Births (2019-2023)



Source: FL Health Charts

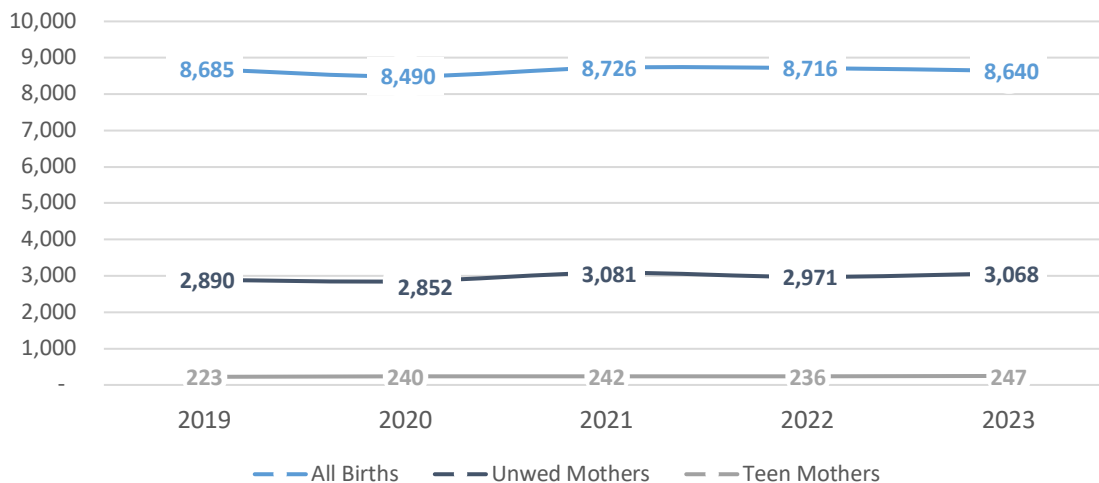
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Teenage Mother Births

While it is often assumed that a large number of single parent births are associated with teenage mothers, data indicates that this is not necessarily the case in the county served by the organization.

According to state records, an estimated 8.05% of unwed mother births in the county are to adolescents. Although accounting for a small number of births each year, research indicates that these children have a heightened risk of health complications (low-birth rate, anemia, high blood pressure, infant mortality, and cephalopelvic disproportion) and long-term academic deficiencies. Further, young mothers are more likely to suffer from mental health issues such as depression, substance abuse, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These families are also more likely to be impoverished and reside in communities that are socially and economically disadvantaged.

Chart 71: Teenage Birth Trend vs. Unwed Mother and Total Births (2019-2023)



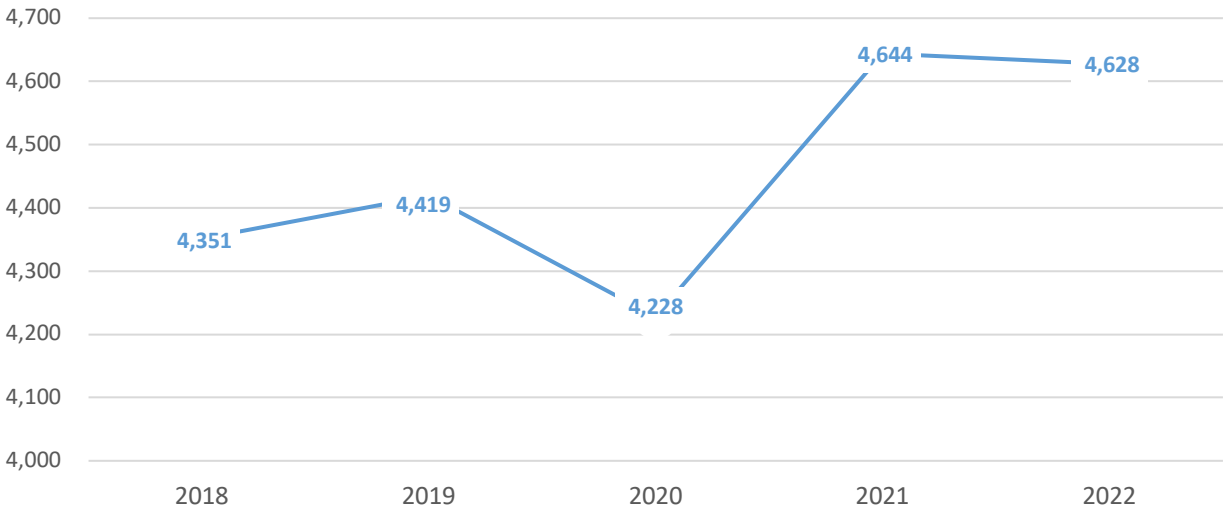
Source: FL Health Charts

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Custodial Grandparents

Grandparents who take on the primary caregiving role often face unique challenges, including financial strain, as they may be living on fixed incomes or retirement savings. Furthermore, they may encounter health issues related to aging and experience increased stress from managing the demands of raising children later in life. This situation can also affect the children involved, as they may require additional support to cope with the absence of their parents and adjust to living with older caregivers. In the service area, data indicates that 4,628 grandparents are solely responsible for raising children. Over the past five years, the number of custodial grandparents has increased by 6.37%.

Chart 72: Custodial Grandparent Trend (2018-2022)



Source: US Census Bureau (DP02)

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Foster Children

For some children, the lack of nurturing relationships leads to an advanced level of instability due to removal from their home. Although in the best interest of the child, the removal from a home can be devastating and confusing. Once in foster care, data indicates that 54% of all children are in placement for more than 12 months. The longer the child is in placement, the more likely they will be moved from one home to another, placing them at risk of multiple negative social and emotional outcomes due to disrupted relationships with siblings and other relatives, friends, classmates, teachers, coaches, and religious leaders. Studies have proven that these early experiences can impact a child's brain development and lead to stress disorders that will continue into adulthood.

From March 2023 to March 2024, data suggests that a total of 189 children were removed from their homes into foster care. Overall, 640 children were served during this time.

Table 50: Cobb County Foster Children Counts (March 2024)

Mar 2023 In Care	Mar 2024 In Care	Removals
451	446	189

Source: Fostering Court Improvements

The largest portion of the children removed from their homes were entered into the foster care system due to caretaker substance abuse (50). This was followed by abandonment (26), caretaker incarceration (25), inadequate housing (23), child behavior (18), neglect (18), physical abuse (15), and the inability of caretaker inability to cope (6), with no removals due to sexual abuse.

Table 51: Reasons for Removal (2022)

Reason	Count
<i>Caretaker Substance Abuse</i>	50
<i>Neglect</i>	18
<i>Inadequate Housing</i>	23
<i>Caretaker Inability to Cope</i>	6
<i>Physical Abuse</i>	15
<i>Caretaker Incarceration</i>	25
<i>Child Behavior</i>	18
<i>Abandonment</i>	26
<i>Sexual Abuse</i>	0

Source: Fostering Court Improvements

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Community Feedback

A notable percentage of respondents indicated that they have experienced or observed abuse or neglect within family settings, highlighting a critical area of concern for community well-being. For instance, 25% of respondents identified unsafe home environments as a critical condition of poverty, emphasizing the need for supportive interventions in these households .

Qualitative feedback from the survey includes comments that reflect these difficulties. One respondent shared, "The constant tension at home makes it hard for the kids to focus on school, and it feels like there's no real support." These insights underscore the profound impact that family instability can have on children's emotional and academic performance, potentially leading to long-term effects on their future opportunities .

Moreover, the data points to the presence of custodial grandparents and multi-generational households, often created as a result of unstable family situations. Single-parent families, particularly those led by women, constitute a significant portion of the community, with 24.32% of households falling into this category, often indicating a higher burden of caregiving and economic strain .

Agency Data

In 2023, 18.07% of the households served were single-parent households, which faced significant financial difficulties. The median annual income for single-parent households was \$9,201, a sharp decline of 26.5% from the 2020 median income of \$12,512.94. Additionally, the average household size for single-parent families slightly decreased from 3.08 in 2020 to 3.06 in 2023, reflecting minor changes in family composition.

Two-parent households also experienced financial setbacks, with the median income dropping by 52.1%, from \$24,236.79 in 2020 to \$11,599.78 in 2023. The average household size for two-parent households also declined slightly from 4 in 2020 to 3.77 in 2023.

These trends highlight the increasing financial instability among both family types, with single-parent households particularly vulnerable due to their lower income levels. The data underscores the escalating economic pressures facing families, making it increasingly challenging to achieve financial stability, especially for single-parent households struggling to make ends meet.

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Family Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Counties Served
Cobb and Douglas Public Health	770-974-3330 webmaster@cobbcountypublichealth.org	Provides birth control counseling
First Care Women's Clinic	770-590-9361 info@firstcarewomensclinic.com	Provides pregnancy tests, parenting education/support groups, and sexual abstinence programs to pregnant women and women with children.
Georgia AGAPE	770-452-9995	Provides adoption evaluation/placement services, foster care home placement, and pregnancy counseling.
Georgia DFCS	770-528-7683 cobbdfcs@dhr.state.ga.us	Provides adoption evaluation/placement services. Conducts child abuse investigations and foster care placements.
Georgia G-CAPP Program	404-524-2277	Provides teen pregnancy prevention education workshops, doula services, and parent supports.
Girls Incorporated of Greater Atlanta	678-686-1740; info@girlsincatl.org	Provides pregnancy prevention education to girls ages 6 to 18. (Fees may apply)
House of Grace	770-514-1046	Provides transitional housing or victims of domestic violence.
LiveSafe Resources	770-427-2902	Provides shelter and support for victims of domestic violence
Planned Parenthood of Georgia	404-688-9300	Provides pregnancy counseling and emergency contraception. (Fees may apply)
Safe Path Children's Advocacy Center	770-801-3465	Provides professional, evidence-based services for children such as therapy, crisis intervention, forensic interviews, forensic evaluations, support, and case management.
Someone Cares, Inc.	678-921-2706	Provides safer sex education services.
Women's Pregnancy Center – Marietta	770-514-1080; wpc@roswellstreet.com	Provides parenting skills education, pregnancy testing, maternity clothing, and baby supplies to women with pregnancy-related questions/concerns.
Young Family Community Resource Center	770-514-1046	Provides a variety of supports to teen parents.

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Conclusion: Strengths

Cobb County has several resources and programs designed to support family stability. The presence of various organizations, including Cobb and Douglas Public Health, Planned Parenthood, and LiveSafe Resources, offers critical support such as counseling, parenting education, and crisis intervention, providing a safety net for families in need.

Additionally, the county's community-oriented approach helps foster positive family dynamics, contributing to improved educational outcomes and social integration. Programs targeting teen pregnancy prevention, parenting skills, and domestic violence prevention are crucial in supporting at-risk families and promoting healthier family environments.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

Despite these strengths, many families in Cobb County continue to face significant challenges. Domestic violence remains a critical issue, with 897 deaths due to domestic violence in Georgia over the past five years, an increase of 24.52%. Single-parent households, particularly those led by women, are especially vulnerable, facing higher rates of poverty due to employment barriers and childcare responsibilities. Unwed mothers account for 35.51% of all births in the county, and these families often lack access to prenatal care and rely more heavily on Medicaid.

The number of custodial grandparents, who often face financial and health-related challenges while raising grandchildren, has increased by 6.37% over the past five years, with 4,628 grandparents currently in this role. The prevalence of foster care placements due to issues such as substance abuse, neglect, and inadequate housing also highlights the ongoing instability faced by many families. In 2023 alone, 189 children were removed from their homes, indicating the profound need for enhanced support services to address the root causes of family disruption and ensure the well-being of children and caregivers.

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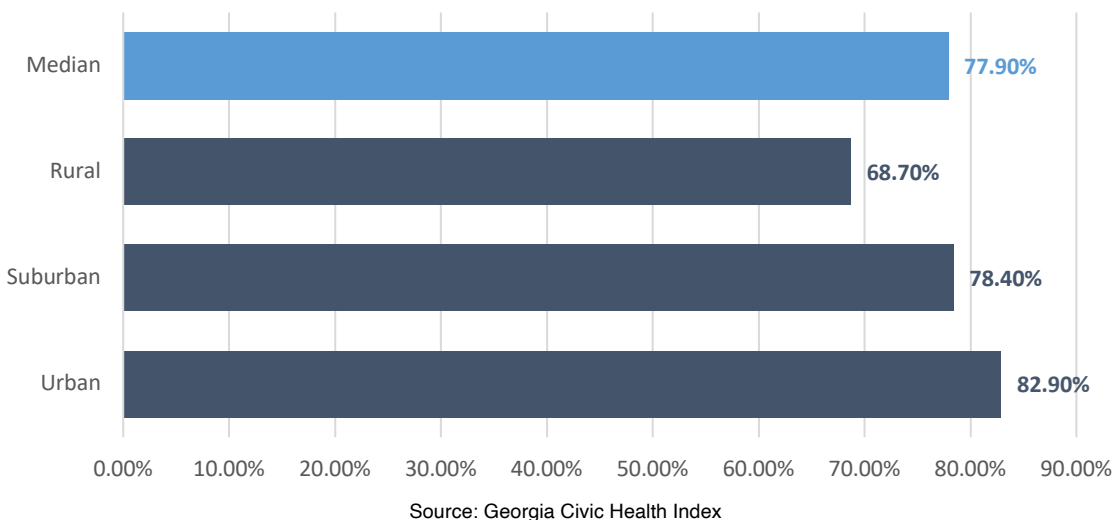
Community

The National Conference on Citizenship conducted a study on civic health in Georgia during 2023, building on the foundation set by earlier editions in 2013 and 2019. This report dives into the dynamics of how Georgians engage within their communities and political spheres, revealing changes in civic participation patterns and how these vary by demographics and geography. It benchmarks Georgia's civic engagement against other states and national averages, serving as a catalyst for discussions and actions aimed at enhancing civic life. The report covers social connectedness, community involvement, political action, and confidence in institutions, underscoring the importance of civic participation for societal and community welfare.

Social Connectedness

Engagement with friends and family is a key indicator of social connectedness. In Georgia, a high percentage of individuals (77.90%) frequently spend time with their social circles, suggesting strong personal relationships. This pattern of interaction plays a vital role in fostering community bonds and individual well-being. Urban residents, with an 82.9% engagement rate, tend to interact more than their suburban (78.4%) and rural (68.7%) counterparts. Females were also slightly more inclined to spend time with family and friends (79.80%) than males (75.80%).

Chart 73: Georgian's Spending Time with Family and Friends (2023)

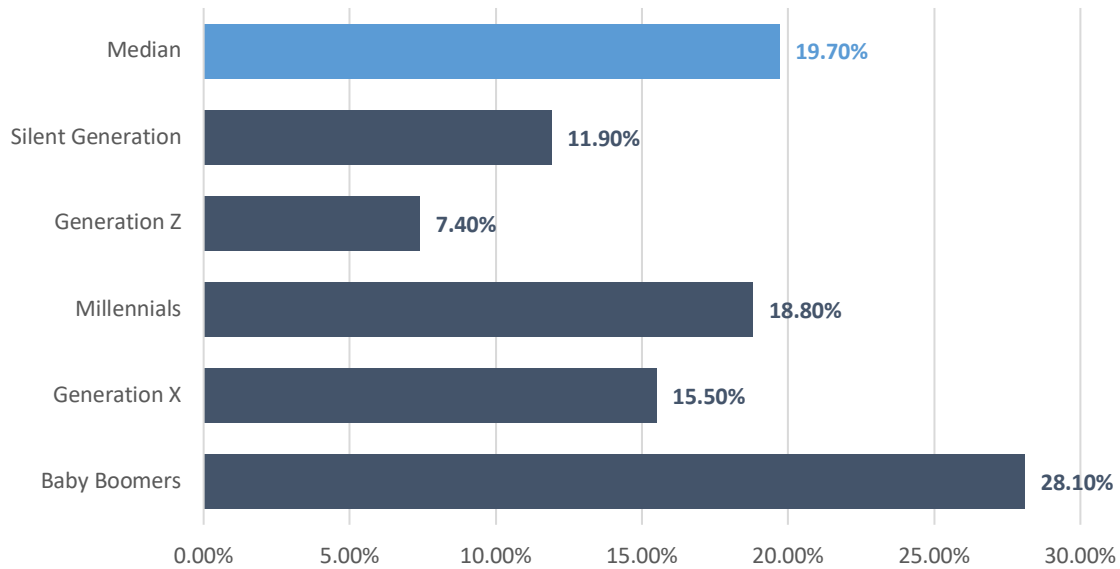


Income levels were also noted as a factor, with 72.80% of individuals and families with incomes below \$35,000 reporting frequent time with family and friends as opposed to 82.1% of those with incomes greater than \$75,000.

In Georgia, social engagement with neighbors is lower than the national average, with 19.7% interacting frequently compared to 26.9% nationally. The older generations report more neighborly interaction, particularly those born between 1931-1945, with 29.6% engaging with neighbors. This rate declines across younger generations. Geographically, rural residents (20.2%) interact more with neighbors than urban (16.4%) and suburban (18.1%) counterparts. Lower-income individuals tend to have slightly more neighborly engagement than those with higher incomes.

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Chart 74: Georgia Neighborly Interactions by Age Group (2023)



Source: Georgia Civic Health Index

Georgia residents were noted as being less likely to discuss political, societal, or local issues with neighbors than they are with family and friends. Only 6.2% of the Georgian's report frequent engaging with neighbors in this way, compared to 31.60% who discuss these issues with family and friends.

The practice of exchanging favors with neighbors was noted as being less common, with only 7.7% reporting they often do so. This is slightly lower than the 10% seen nationally. The older, Silent Generation is more inclined to help out neighbors (13.80%) than Baby Boomers (12.00%), Generation X (6.80%), Generation Z (4.6%), and Millennials (4.3%). Exchanging favors was also more common among those in rural areas (12.70%) than those in urban (8.00%) and suburban (5.50%) communities.

An estimated 14.50% of all residents were noted as working with neighbors to improve the community, which is lower than the national average of 18.00%. Education levels were noted as being a factor for this indicator, with nearly one-quarter (24.30%) of college graduates reporting engagement of this type as compared to 15.90% of those who attend some college and 8.90% of those who have a high school diploma, but without any college education.

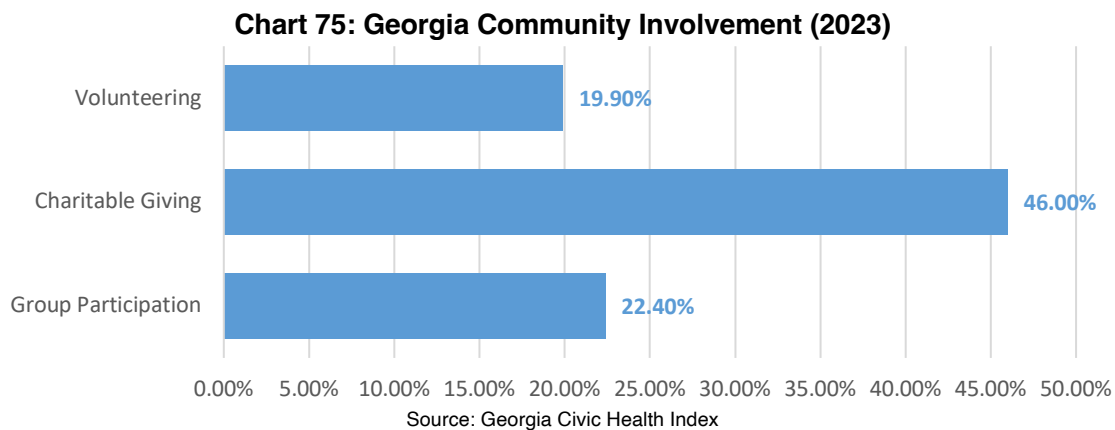
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Community Involvement

Community involvement refers to the efforts of local residents to contribute to the welfare and progress of their communities through volunteerism, charitable giving, and group participation. Georgia's engagement levels fall below the national average, highlighting an opportunity for innovative strategies to motivate and enable residents to actively shape their communities into more connected and dynamic environments.

The data suggests that Georgia ranks 45th in the nation for volunteerism, a decrease from the previous report when the state ranked 44th. Only 19.90% of the state's residents report involvement in volunteer activities, a 24.91% decrease from the 26.5% documented in the 2019.

Volunteerism was noted as varying across demographics. Generation X leads with 27.1% participation, outpacing Millennials and Generation Z, who volunteer at rates of 19.7% and 18.3%, respectively. Women are more active volunteers at 22.3%, compared to 17.2% of men. By race, 21.9% of White citizens volunteer, slightly more than the 17% of those identifying as Black/African American. Geographically, suburban residents volunteer the most at 22.1%. This reflects a shift from 2017, where urban volunteerism was higher.



Charitable giving in Georgia, encompassing financial support to various organizations and causes, increased slightly from 45% in the previous report to 46% in 2023. Despite the improvement, Georgia is ranked 41st nationally in this area. Notably, the state has a marginally higher rate of political donations than the national average. Contributions are more prevalent among the Silent generation and higher-income, more educated demographics, with females donating slightly more than males.

Older generations, particularly the Silent Generation, demonstrates a higher propensity for donating, with 58.2% contributing to charitable or religious organizations, in contrast to just 18.2% of Generation Z. Gender differences are also evident, with 48.7% of females donating compared to 43% of males. Finally, 49.9% of White residents donate, a higher rate than the 36.7% of those identifying as Black/African American.

Group participation in Georgia stands at 22.4%, ranking 38th nationally and showing improvement from 49th in 2017. Participation trends upwards with increases in age, income, and education. Women are slightly more likely to be involved in groups than men, 23% versus 21.6%. Also, there's a notable difference in participation based on race and location, with 25.9% of White, non-Hispanic residents involved in groups compared to 15.2% of Black, non-Hispanic residents, and suburban areas showing higher participation rates than rural and urban areas.

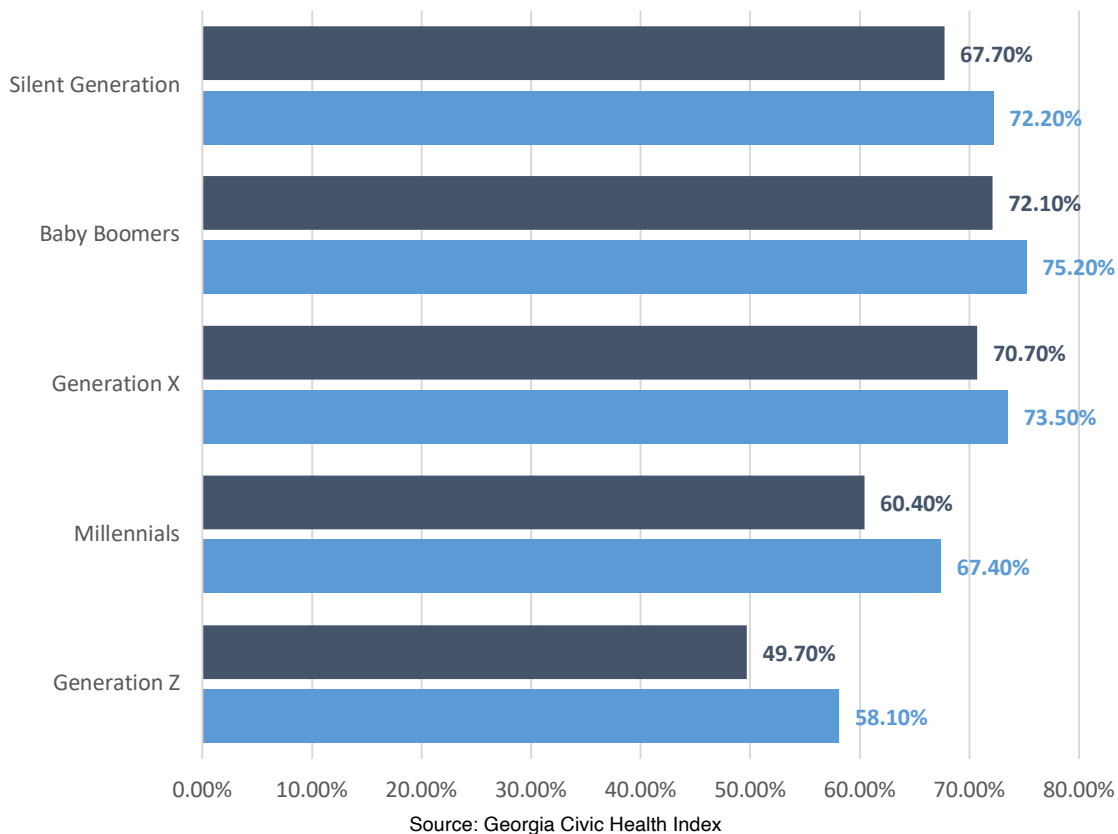
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Political Action

Georgia's political action, including voter registration and turnout, has aligned with national averages this year, marking an improvement. However, Georgians show lower engagement in consuming political news and using consumer power for political or societal reasons. Political engagement correlates positively with higher education and income levels. There's notable variation in political activities among different generations and urbanization levels, with mid-life generations showing the most engagement.

The recent report revealed significant progress in Georgia's voter engagement, with registration at 70.7%, up from 62% in 2010, and a 66.1% voting rate. These figures align closely with national averages and mark an improvement in state rankings for both voter registration and turnout. Voter engagement correlates with higher income and education levels. Notably, older generations exhibit higher turnout rates, with variances across demographics indicating diverse participation patterns.

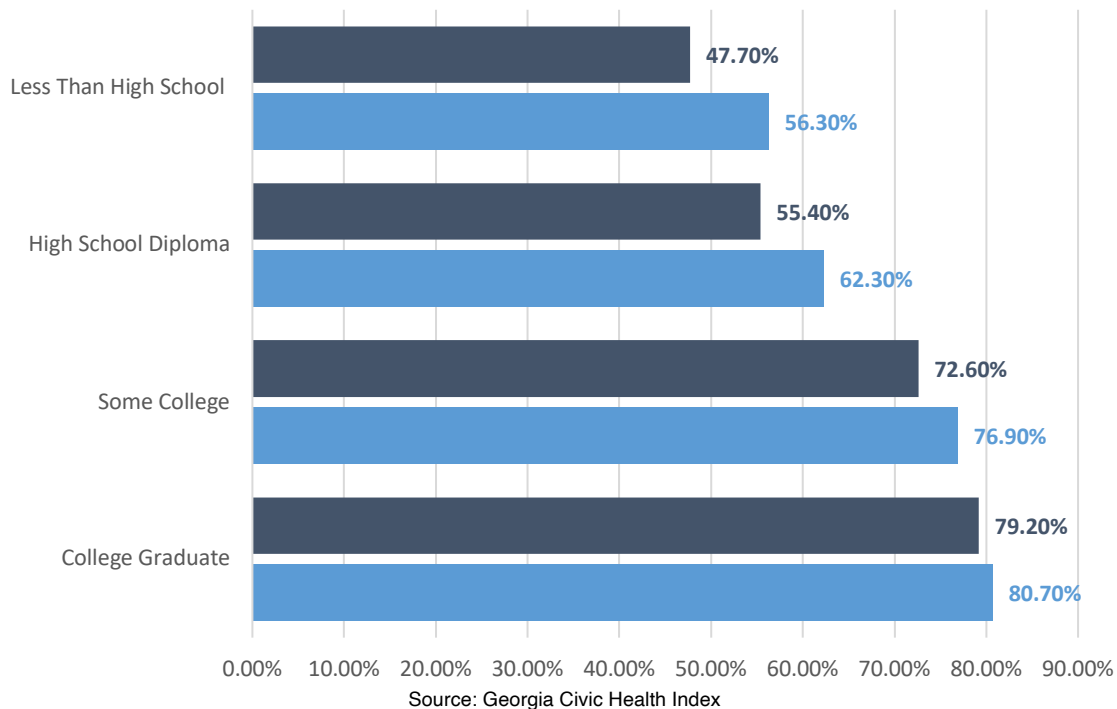
Chart 76: Georgia Voting by Age Group (2023)



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Education levels were also noted as a factor, with college graduates being much more likely to register (80.70%) and vote (79.20%) than those with lower levels of educational attainment.

Chart 77: Georgia Voting by Age Group (2023)



An estimated 8.2% of residents attend public meetings, aligning with the national average. Engagement in contacting public officials rose to 9.6% in the latest report, improving Georgia's rank from 49th to 35th nationally. Trends show higher participation among those with more education and income. The state faces challenges in digital access, affecting communication with officials. Demographic trends reveal variations in engagement, with higher rates among older generations, men contacting officials more than women, and suburban residents being more active than their urban and rural counterparts.

Data indicates that more than half (54.3%) of the state's residents participate in local elections. Voting in local elections correlates with age, education, income, and urbanization. Baby Boomers exhibit the highest participation rate (61.7%), while Generation Z shows the lowest (30.1%). Similarly, individuals with higher education levels and incomes are more likely to vote locally, with 74% of those holding a bachelor's degree or higher participating compared to 42.9% of high school diploma holders. Additionally, those earning \$75,000 or more have a higher local election turnout (64.8%) compared to those earning less than \$35,000 (40.9%). Notably, rural residents demonstrate lower participation rates (51%) compared to their urban (69.5%) and suburban (57.4%) counterparts.

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In recent years, Georgia's engagement in sharing political, societal, or local views online or on social media has mirrored or fallen below the national average. Only 5.4% of Georgians frequently engage in this manner, compared to 6.2% nationally, ranking Georgia 35th in this indicator. Similarly, Georgia lags behind the national average in frequently reading, watching, or listening to news about political, societal, or local issues, with only 60% engaging in this activity compared to the national rate of 67.6%. This places Georgia 51st in the nation for this indicator. Engagement in these activities tends to increase with age, income, and education levels.

Among generational groups, Generation Z is more likely to post and share political information frequently (7.8%) compared to Millennials (4.1%) and Generation X (3.9%). However, Baby Boomers (6.4%) and the Silent Generation (5%) exhibit higher rates of frequent online posting compared to some younger generations. Education level also plays a role, with those holding a bachelor's degree (5.7%) more likely to post frequently than those with a high school diploma (3.2%). Additionally, urban residents (6%) are more likely to post frequently than suburban (4.8%) or rural residents (4.6%).

In terms of consuming news about political, societal, or local issues, suburban residents are more active than urban or rural residents, with white residents (65.5%) more likely to engage in this manner compared to black residents (51.1%). These trends suggest variations in online engagement based on demographic factors such as age, education, race, and urbanization.

In Georgia, there is a slightly lower rate of engaging in political actions such as buying or boycotting a product or service compared to the national average. Approximately 14.4% of Georgians report participating in this form of political action, ranking the state 42nd nationally, while the national average stands at 17.1%. The likelihood of buying or boycotting a product or service tends to increase with income and education levels. For instance, 8.2% of residents with a high school education engage in this activity, whereas 24.5% of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher do so.

There are notable differences based on race, with white Georgians (16.4%) being more likely to participate in buying or boycotting compared to black Georgians (10.4%). Geographically, urban residents are the most likely to engage in this form of political action, with 15.8% reported participation, while rural Georgians are the least likely, at 8.5%.

These patterns may be influenced by factors such as age and education, with younger and more educated individuals potentially being more inclined to participate. Additionally, access to information and resources in rural areas and among lower-income populations may play a role in their lower rates of engagement in buying or boycotting as a political action.

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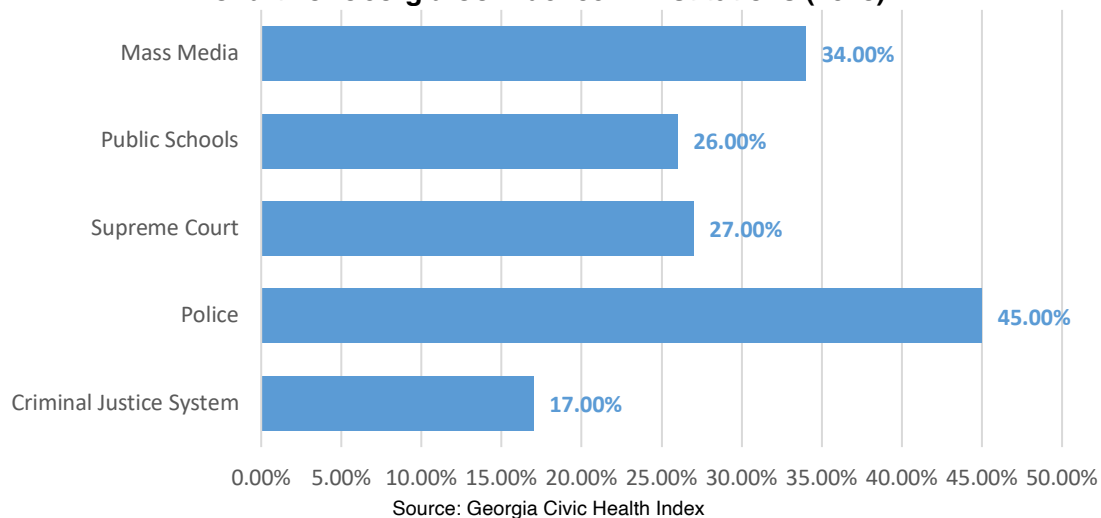
Confidence in Institutions

Over the past two decades, public trust in institutions has been on a decline, reaching an all-time low in 2023. Particularly, confidence in the federal government has seen a significant dip, with all three branches—presidency, Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court—reaching record lows. Despite modest improvements in 2023, none of these institutions experienced substantial shifts.

Furthermore, trust in other key institutions, including big business, large technology, police, and public schools, either tied or dipped below their previous record lows in 2023.

According to Gallup data, Americans' confidence in public and private institutions declined significantly in 2022, with no improvements observed in 2023. Confidence in Congress dropped from 12% in 2021 to 7% in 2022, showing only a slight improvement to 8% in 2023. Similarly, confidence in the U.S. Supreme Court and the presidency experienced significant declines from 2021 to 2022 but rebounded slightly in 2023.

Chart 78: Georgia Confidence in Institutions (2023)



Polling by the Pew Research Center highlights public dissatisfaction with the U.S. government's handling of taxpayer money and its responsiveness to the needs of ordinary Americans and specific demographic groups. The majority of Americans feel that the government does too little for middle- and lower-income individuals, children, retired people, people with disabilities, and rural residents. Conversely, most believe that the federal government does too much for higher-income individuals. Despite widespread dissatisfaction with the federal government, trust in state and local governments remains relatively higher. Gallup data show that Americans are much more trusting of their state and local governments compared to any branch of the federal government. This trend is consistent with perceptions of how things are going at the state and local levels, where satisfaction levels are significantly higher than those at the national level.

Pew data also reveal skepticism among Americans regarding political candidates' motivations for seeking office, with a majority believing that many candidates run for office to serve their own interests rather than the community's. These trends underscore the challenges faced in rebuilding public trust in institutions and restoring confidence in the political process.

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From 2021 to 2022, confidence in the criminal justice system dropped by six percentage points, from 20% to 14%, with a slight rebound to 17% in 2023. Similarly, confidence in the police experienced an eight-point decline over the same period, falling from 51% in 2021 to 43% in 2023. This represents an all-time low in confidence in the police since Gallup began measuring it.

The U.S. Supreme Court also saw a significant decline in public confidence, with only 25% of Americans expressing "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in 2022, the lowest percentage on record. While there was a slight improvement to 27% in 2023, this is down from 36% in 2021 and a high of 56% in 1988. Additionally, a growing number of Americans, 45% in 2022, believe the Supreme Court has too much power, compared to 25% in 2020.

The data further reveal notable disparities in opinion about the U.S. Supreme Court across political, racial, and age groups. The partisan gap in favorable views of the Supreme Court is at its widest point in 35 years of polling, with only 38% of black Americans holding a favorable view compared to 52% of Hispanics, 49% of whites, and 46% of Asians. Moreover, older adults are more likely than younger adults to have favorable views of the Supreme Court, with approximately six in 10 Americans aged 50 and older viewing the court favorably, compared to 44% of those aged 30 to 49 and 32% of adults under 30. These disparities underscore the deepening divisions in public perception of key institutions and highlight the challenges in restoring public trust and confidence.

Confidence in public schools experienced a significant decline in recent years, particularly following a double-digit increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. After reaching a peak of 41% in 2020, confidence dipped to 28% in 2022 and further decreased to tie an all-time low of 26% in 2023. This represents a notable decrease of 15 percentage points from 2020 and six percentage points from 2021. Historically, the highest level of confidence in public schools was recorded in 1975 at 62%, while the lowest level was observed in 2014.

The data also reveal a stark partisan divide regarding confidence in public schools. In 2023, only 9% of Republicans expressed "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in public schools, compared to 43% of Democrats. This disparity underscores the polarization surrounding perceptions of public education and highlights the challenges in fostering widespread trust and support for educational institutions.

Confidence in mass media, including newspapers, television, and radio, experienced a decline in recent years, with just 34% of Americans expressing "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of confidence in their reporting of the news in 2022. Additionally, more than one-third of Americans (38%) reported having no confidence in the media that year. This trend highlights a significant level of skepticism and mistrust among the public regarding the accuracy and fairness of media reporting.

The data also reveal a substantial partisan gap concerning confidence in mass media. In 2022, while 70% of Democrats reported having high levels of confidence in mass media, only 14% of Republicans expressed the same sentiment. Furthermore, a majority of Republicans indicated that they had no trust at all in the media for the third consecutive year. This polarization underscores the challenges in fostering trust and credibility across different political ideologies.

When examined by medium, confidence in newspapers and TV news saw declines, with only 16% of Americans expressing confidence in newspapers and 11% in TV news in 2022. While there was a slight rebound in confidence for TV news in 2023 (14%), it remained below the levels reported in 2021. These percentages represent all-time lows for both institutions, highlighting a broader trend of declining confidence in traditional media sources. Despite historical peaks of confidence in

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newspapers (51% in 1979) and TV news (46% in 1993), the recent data indicate a notable erosion of trust in these mediums over time.

Veterans

Although not included in the Civic Health Index Report, there can be no greater form of civic engagement than participation in military services. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 38,812 veterans reside in the service area. This accounts for 6.57% of all adults in the county. Among the veterans living in the county, 53.05% participated in the Gulf Wars, 30.79% participated in Vietnam, 4.39% participated in the Korean Conflict, and 0.87% participated in World War II.

Table 52: Veteran Counts by Age Group (2022)

Area	18-34	35-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
<i>Cobb</i>	4,123	10,278	8,346	8,736	7,329	38,812

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (S2101)

The region's veterans were primarily male (86.06%), White (60.81%), non-Hispanics (95.54%) between the ages of 35 and 54 (26.48%) and 65 to 74 (22.51%).

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Crime Rates

Crime rates are a critical aspect intertwined with poverty, reflecting the complex interplay between socioeconomic factors and community well-being. High crime rates often coincide with areas experiencing economic hardship, exacerbating the challenges faced by individuals and families living in poverty. This correlation arises from various underlying factors, including limited access to educational and employment opportunities, inadequate social services, and strained community resources. Also, crime can perpetuate a cycle of poverty by hindering economic development, deterring investment, and eroding social cohesion.

Beyond its direct impact on individuals and families, crime rates also significantly influence community engagement. Heightened concerns about safety and security can undermine residents' trust in local institutions, dampen civic participation, and impede efforts to foster a sense of belonging and collective responsibility within neighborhoods. Therefore, understanding and addressing this barrier is an essential component of comprehensive strategies aimed at alleviating poverty and promoting thriving, inclusive communities.

According to the most recent Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Crime Index Report, there is one crime index offence occurring every 2 minutes and 35 seconds in the state. When broken down by category, the report highlights the prevalence of both violent and non-violent crimes, with a violent crime occurring approximately every 14 minutes and 19 seconds, while a non-violent crime occurs roughly every 3 minutes and 10 seconds. The report further dives into specific types of crimes, such as murder, robbery, rape, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, and human trafficking, providing insights into the frequency of each offense.

For instance, murder incidents are reported at a rate of approximately one every 10 hours and 37 minutes, while robberies occur approximately every 2 hours and 4 minutes. Similarly, aggravated assault incidents happen at a rate of about one every 18 minutes and 48 seconds, highlighting the prevalence of violent crimes in the state. On the other hand, property crimes like burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson also contribute significantly to the overall crime index, occurring at various intervals throughout the day.

The data further breaks down the reported crimes by type and provides the percentage of total crimes represented by each category, along with the rate per 100,000 residents. For example, murder accounts for 0.41% of total crimes, with a rate of 8.2 per 100,000 residents. Rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and human trafficking are also analyzed in a similar manner, offering a comprehensive overview of the crime landscape in Georgia. Overall, the data underscores the importance of addressing crime rates to ensure public safety and enhance community well-being.

The crime rate is a statistical measure that represents the number of reported crimes per 1,000 population within a specified area over a given period, typically a year. A higher crime rate suggests a greater risk of criminal incidents occurring, which can negatively impact residents' safety and overall well-being. Conversely, a lower crime rate indicates a safer environment with fewer reported criminal offenses.

The regional crime rate of 17.16. This is slightly higher than the median rate of 13.03 for all Georgia counties, suggesting the region is somewhat less safe than other areas in the state.

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Table 53: Crime Rates and Index Crimes (2022)

Area	Crime Rate	Index Crimes
<i>Cobb</i>	17.16	13,240

Source: GBI Crime Index Report

Index crimes, often referred to as "Part I" crimes, are a collection of eight specific crimes that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has designated for inclusion in its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program to serve as an indicator of the overall crime rate in the United States. These crimes are divided into two categories: violent crimes and property crimes. A total of 13,240 index crimes were committed in the county during 2022.

Table 54: Violent Index Crimes by Type (2022)

Area	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Assault
<i>Cobb</i>	31	279	247	1,279

Source: GBI Crime Index Report

Violent crimes, a serious category of offenses within the index crimes, are characterized by the use of force or the threat of force. These offenses not only threaten the safety of individuals but also the stability of communities. The impact of such crimes can be seen in the statistical data collected across various regions, which emphasizes the prevalence and distribution of these criminal acts.

Murder and non-negligent manslaughter, the most severe of violent crimes due to the irreversible act of taking a life, have been reported a total of 31 times in the region. Rape, an invasive crime that severely impacts the lives of survivors, had 279 reported instances. Robbery, an offense combining theft with the element of fear or force, was reported 247 times across the county. Assault, representing attacks intended to cause serious bodily harm, stands out as the most frequently reported violent crime, with a regional total of 1,279 instances.

Table 55: Property Index Crimes by Type (2022)

Area	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Theft	Arson
<i>Cobb</i>	1,181	9,029	1,140	31

Source: GBI Crime Index Report

Property crimes represent a category of offenses that primarily involve the unlawful appropriation of property belonging to another, typically without force or threat against the victim. These crimes, which are integral to the index crimes tracked for statistical purposes, consist of four main types:

Burglary is the unlawful entry into a structure, such as a home or business, with the intent to commit a theft or felony. This crime is considered a severe violation due to the breach of privacy and the sanctity of personal or commercial premises. In the area served by the organization, a total of 1,181 offenses occurred in 2022.

Larceny-Theft is characterized by the illegal taking of property from another person without direct confrontation or the use of force. This category is quite broad and includes various forms of theft, such as shoplifting, stealing from a building, and bicycle thefts, but excludes person-to-person crimes like pickpocketing or purse snatching. In the county, a total of 9,029 instances of larceny-theft were reported, indicating that this type of property crime is a considerable concern in that area.

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Motor Vehicle Theft entails the unauthorized taking or attempted taking of a motor vehicle, such as cars, motorcycles, and trucks. The impact of these thefts is significant due to the value of vehicles and their role in personal and commercial activities. The county data shows a total of 1,140 motor vehicle thefts in the area.

Arson involves the intentional setting of fire to structures, vehicles, or other personal property, potentially motivated by reasons ranging from vandalism to insurance fraud. This crime is particularly dangerous due to the risk it poses to human life and property. The county reported a total of 31 arson cases.

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Community Feedback

The data indicates that residents recognize community engagement as essential, but actual participation levels vary across different forms of involvement. For instance, engagement in volunteerism and political activities appeared limited. One respondent noted, “There’s a lot of talk about getting involved, but not enough action when it comes to volunteering or attending community meetings.”

Quantitative data from the survey shows that 48.53% of respondents identified as community members, suggesting a general awareness and willingness to engage, although the specific actions taken by these individuals were not detailed extensively. Issues like voter participation, crime prevention, and engagement with veteran services were noted but not deeply elaborated on in the survey responses .

Agency Data

In 2023, the organization served 32 veterans, a slight decrease from the 38 veterans served in 2020. This reduction may reflect evolving needs or barriers faced by veterans in accessing services, but it continues to highlight the persistent challenges such as housing instability, mental health issues, and employment difficulties that veterans encounter.

Additionally, the organization served two troubled youth in both 2020 and 2023, showing that while the numbers remain small, the need for specialized interventions for this group is still present. The consistency in service levels for both veterans and troubled youth underscore the ongoing importance of maintaining targeted support to address their unique challenges. These figures emphasize the critical need for continued and adaptive community programs that are equipped to provide the necessary resources and assistance to help these vulnerable populations achieve stability and integration into the community.

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Community Resources

Resource Name	Contact Information	Counties Served
Boy Scouts of America	770-989-8820	Prepares boys to make ethical and moral choices through a variety of trainings, activities, and programs that promote community engagement.
Boys and Girls Club	770-427-0418	Provides youth recreational activities to support community engagement.
Cobb County Senior Services	770-528-5355	Provides community engagement opportunities to senior citizens at local centers.
County Parks and Recreation Department	770-528-8800	Provides recreational facilities and activities that promote community engagement.
Girl Scouts of the USA	770-702-9100	Prepares girls to empower themselves through a variety of trainings, activities, and programs.
Habitat for Humanity	770-432-7954	Provides volunteer opportunities that promote social interaction while improving the housing infrastructure of the local community.
Kiwanis Club	770-432-1760	Promotes social interaction and involvement in meeting community needs.
YMCA	770-977-5991	Provides youth recreational activities to support community engagement.

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Conclusion: Strengths

Cobb County has a robust network of community organizations that actively support civic engagement and social connectedness. Resources such as Cobb County Senior Services, the Boys and Girls Club, and Habitat for Humanity provide structured opportunities for community involvement, offering volunteer activities, social programs, and recreational facilities that promote active participation. Statewide data indicates that Georgia has a relatively high rate of charitable giving at 46%, reflecting strong community support for local causes. Efforts to engage residents through targeted programs have contributed to increasing local group participation, with the county showing improvements from previous years in fostering a sense of belonging and collective responsibility.

Conclusion: Weaknesses

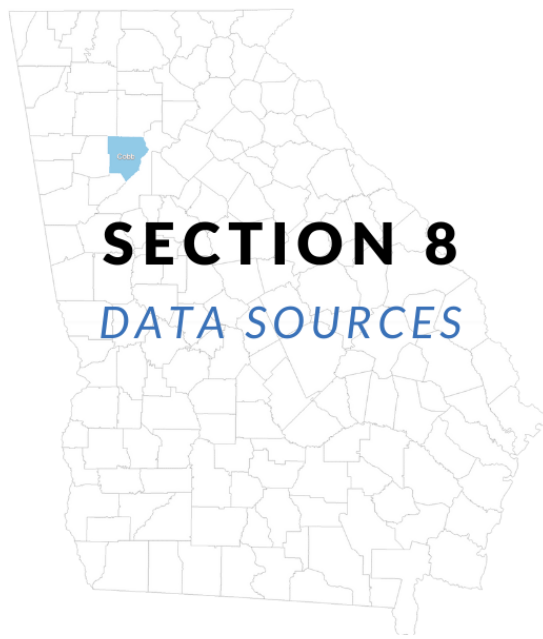
Despite available resources, overall community involvement in the state remains below national averages, particularly in volunteerism and neighborly engagement. Only 19.9% of residents participate in volunteer activities, and just 14.5% work with neighbors to improve their community, both significantly lower than national rates. Political engagement, while on par with national trends, shows disparities among different age, income, and education groups, with younger and less educated residents participating less frequently in local elections and civic activities.

Additionally, confidence in institutions such as public schools and the criminal justice system is at an all-time low, with only 26% of residents expressing trust in public schools and 17% in the criminal justice system. This erosion of trust contributes to a lack of engagement and highlights the need for improved community outreach and efforts to rebuild confidence in local institutions. The data suggest a critical need for innovative strategies to increase civic participation, enhance neighborhood interactions, and foster a stronger sense of community cohesion.

COBB COUNTY CDBG PROGRAM OFFICE

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

2024 REPORT ON POVERTY



SECTION 8

DATA SOURCES

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Research and Statistical Data

Demographic Profile

Personal Demographics: Census Bureau ACS Tables DP02-DP05

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Diversity Index: Census Bureau

<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html>

Household Demographics: Census Bureau ACS Tables DP02, S1101

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Senior Citizen Demographics: Census Bureau ACS Tables DP02, S0103

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Median Age: Census Bureau ACS Table DP05

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Citizenship Status: Census Bureau ACS Table DP02

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Population Migration: Census Bureau ACS Table DP02

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Birth Statistics: Georgia Department of Public Health - OASIS

<https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryBirth.aspx>

Death Statistics: Georgia Department of Public Health - OASIS

<https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryMortality.aspx>

Income and Poverty

Poverty Data: Census Bureau ACS Tables S1701-1703

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Median Income: Census Bureau ACS Table DP03

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Living Wage: MIT University

<https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

Income Inequality: US Census Bureau ACS Table B19083

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Household Incomes: Census Bureau ACS Table DP03

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Gender Wage Studies: US Census Bureau PUMS

<https://census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/pums.html>

Child Poverty Consequences: Urban Institute

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/65766/2000369-Child-Poverty-and-Adult-Success.pdf>

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Deep Poverty: The Urban Institute

<https://www.urban.org/features/unwaged-war-deep-poverty>

Employment & Industry

Labor Force/Employment Statistics: Census Bureau ACS Table C18120

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Labor Force/Employment Statistics: Census Bureau ACS Tables S0802, DP03, S2301

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Industry Data: Georgia Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://explorer.gdol.ga.gov/industrymix/>

Living Wage: MIT University

<https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

Under-Employment/Working Poor: Census Bureau ACS Tables S1701, S2301

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Adult Education

Adult Education: Census Bureau ACS Tables DP02, S1701, S1501, S2301

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Adult Literacy: National Center for Educational Statistics

<https://nces.ed.gov/naal/estimates/StateEstimates.aspx>

Adult Literacy/Numeracy: National Center for Educational Statistics

<https://nces.ed.gov/piaac/skillsmap>

English Proficiency: Census Bureau ACS Table C16001

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Education's Impact on Employment: Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm>

Fastest Growing Occupations: Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/fastest-growing-occupations.htm>

Percentage of Labor Force by Educational Attainment: Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2017/educational-attainment-of-the-labor-force/pdf/educational-attainment-of-the-labor-force.pdf>

Increasing Importance of Education in Workforce: University of Virginia

<http://statchatva.org/2019/05/10/a-greater-number-of-jobs-require-more-education-leaving-middle-skill-workers-with-fewer-opportunities/>

County Literacy Data: Pro Literacy

<https://www.proliteracy.org/>

Language vs. Employment: U.S. Census Bureau Research

https://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/acs/PAA_2005_AbilityandEarnings.pdf

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Child/Youth Education

Households Statistics: Census Bureau ACS Tables DP05

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Child Poverty Statistics: Census Bureau ACS Table S1701

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Education's Impact on Generational Poverty: Urban Institute

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/32756/412659-Child-Poverty-and-Its-Lasting-Consequence.PDF>

School System Data: Georgia Department of Education: 2023 CCRPI

https://ccrpi.gadoe.org/Reports/Views/Shared/_Layout.html

Health and Economic Impacts of Education: Alliance for Exceptional Education

<https://all4ed.org/publications/>

Homelessness and Education: Stop Child Homelessness

<https://all4ed.org/publications/>

School/School System Data: National Center for Education Statistics

https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/district_detail.asp?ID2=1301290&details=

Childcare and Early Education

Childcare and Employment: Center for American Progress

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/03/28/467488/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>

Why School Readiness Matters: First Five Year Fund

<https://www.ffyf.org/why-it-matters/school-readiness/>

Households Statistics: Census Bureau ACS Table DP05

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Child Poverty Statistics: Census Bureau ACS Table S1701

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Childcare Costs: Economic Policy Institute

<https://www.epi.org>

Childcare Deserts: Center for American Progress

<https://childcaredeserts.org>

Housing

Housing Infrastructure: Census Bureau ACS Table DP04

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Housing Age: Census Bureau ACS Table DP04

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Housing Conditions: Census Bureau ACS Table DP04

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

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Substandard Conditions: HUD Consolidated Planning CHAS Database

<https://huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp>

Housing Quality: HUD Consolidated Planning/CHAS Data

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>

Common Problems with Older Homes: Money Crashers

<https://www.moneycrashers.com/buying-old-house-problems-costs-benefits/>

Common Problems with Older Homes: America's First Choice Home Club

<https://afchomeclub.com/buying-an-old-house-common-problems-hidden-costs-benefits>

Common Problems with Older Homes: Forbes Magazine

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/houzz/2015/10/30/the-hidden-problems-in-old-homes/#5f7615ff5331>

Housing Cost Burdened Households: HUD Consolidated Planning CHAS Database

<https://huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp>

Median Housing Cost: Census Bureau ACS Table DP04

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Median Housing Cost: National Low-Income Housing Coalition

<https://nlihc.org>

Affordable Housing Units: Affordable Housing Online

<https://affordablehousingonline.com/>

Utility Types: Move.org

https://www.move.org/utility-bills-101/#Cost_by_state

Energy Efficiency: Environmental Protection Agency

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/affordable_housing.pdf

Homelessness: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

<https://www.dca.ga.gov/node/4094/documents/11>

Homelessness: Homeless Shelters Directory

<https://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/>

Homelessness: HUD AHAR to Congress

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

Homelessness: National Alliance to End Homelessness

<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/>

Homelessness: One Roof

<https://www.oneroofonline.org/point-in-time-data>

Health

General Health Data: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

Obesity Statistics: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

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Obesity Research: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org>

Diabetes Statistics: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

Diabetes Research: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org>

Diabetes Research: Healthline

<https://www.healthline.com/health/diabetes>

Diabetes Research: Live Science

<https://www.livescience.com/43477-diabetes-symptoms-types.html>

Hypertension Statistics: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

Hypertension Research: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org>

Hypertension Research: Obesity Action

<https://www.obesityaction.org/community/article-library/hypertension-and-obesity-how-weight-loss-affects-hypertension/>

STI Statistics: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

Mental Health Data: SAMHSA NOMS

<https://pdas.samhsa.gov/saes/state>

Mental Health Data: SAMHSA Health Barometer

<https://pdas.samhsa.gov/saes/state>

Mental Illness Data: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

mentalhealth.org

Disability Demographics: Census Bureau ACS Table DP02, S1703, S1810, S2301

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Life Expectancy: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

Death Statistics: Georgia Department of Public Health - OASIS

<https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryMortality.aspx>

Morbidity Research: CDC WONDER

<https://wonder.cdc.gov/>

Cancer Research: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org>

Heart Disease Research: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org>

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Respiratory Disease Research: National Institute of Health

<https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/respiratory-disease>

Alzheimer's Disease Research: Alzheimer's Association

<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-alzheimers>

Alzheimer's Disease Research: Alzheimer's Association

<https://www.usagainstalzheimers.org/>

Alzheimer's Disease Research: Alzheimer's Association

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24598707>

Alzheimer's Disease Research: Atlanta Journal Constitution

<https://www.ajc.com/news/national/how-does-alzheimer-disease-kill-you/G86og0asuVjgPhv5nSto8N/>

Cerebrovascular Disease Research: Medical News Today

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/184601.php#causes>

Influenza Research: Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm>

COVID Research: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org/health-topics?topics=category-15>

COVID Research: Center for Disease Control

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org/health-topics?topics=category-15>

COVID Research: The COVID Tracking Project

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-and-research.html>

COVID Data & Research: Mayo Clinic

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/map/>

Vehicular Deaths/DUI Death Research: National Highway Traffic Administration

<https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/>

Alcohol Statistics: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org>

Alcohol Research: Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/alcohol.htm>

Alcohol Research: World Health Organization

https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/globalstatusreportalcohol2004_socproblems.pdf

Alcohol Research: Alcohol Think Again

<https://alcoholthinkagain.com.au/Alcohol-Your-Community/Alcohol-the-Workplace/Workplace-Resources/Facts-about-Alcohol-and-Workplace-Issues>

Tobacco Statistics: America's Health Rankings

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org>

Tobacco Research: Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/low-ses/index.htm>

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Tobacco Research: JAMA International Medicine

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2513450>

Marijuana Research: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<https://www.samhsa.gov/marijuana>

Cocaine Research: Midwest Detox Center

<https://www.midwestdetoxcenter.com/rehab-blog/5-dangers-of-cocaine-addiction/>

Substance Abuse Statistics: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<https://pdas.samhsa.gov/saes/state>

Substance Abuse Statistics: Quest Diagnostics

<https://www.questdiagnostics.com/dms/Documents/Employer-Solutions/DTI-2019/quest-diagnostics-drug-testing-index-2019-press-release/quest-drug-testing-index-press-release-2019.pdf>

Substance Abuse Research: Seacliff Recovery Center

<http://seacliffrecovery.com/addiction-recovery-blog/the-connection-between-poverty-and-drug-abuse/>

Substance Abuse Research: National Bureau of Economic Research

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w6406.pdf>

Substance Abuse Research: Quest Diagnostics

<https://www.questdiagnostics.com/home/physicians/health-trends/drug-testing>

Substance Abuse Research: Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index Map

<http://www.dtidrugmap.com/>

Substance Abuse Research: National Institute of Health

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/health-consequences-drug-misuse>

Physical Inactivity Research: Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/physical-activity.htm>

Physical Inactivity in Children Research: Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/guidelines.htm>

Sleep Research: Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html>

Physician-to-Patient Ratio Data: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

Physician-to-Patient Ratio Research: George Washington University's Milken Institute of Public Health

<https://publichealth.gwu.edu/research/main>

Health Insurance Coverage: Census Bureau ACS Table S2701-S2703, B27010, S2703, S2704

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Healthcare Facilities: Health Resources and Services Administration

<https://data.hrsa.gov/>

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Hospitals: American Hospital Directory

<https://www.ahd.com/search.php?clear=1>

Health Insurance Research: Health insurance.org

<https://www.healthinsurance.org/>

Health Insurance Research: Families USA

<https://familiesusa.org/resources/dying-for-coverage-the-deadly-con>

Health Insurance Data: Census Bureau ACS Table S2701, S2703, S2704

<https://familiesusa.org/resources/dying-for-coverage-the-deadly-con>

Nutrition

Food Insecurity: Feeding America

<https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

Child Food Insecurity: Feeding America

<https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

Senior Food Insecurity: Feeding America

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/state-senior-hunger>

Food Costs: Feeding America

<https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

SNAP Recipients: Census Bureau Table S2201

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Average SNAP Benefit Amounts: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/a-closer-look-at-who-benefits-from-snap-state-by-state-fact-sheets#Georgia>

Transportation

Transportation Access: Census Bureau ACS Table B08203

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Commute Times: Census Bureau ACS Table B08303

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Commute Methods: Census Bureau ACS Table B08301

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Commute Geography: Census Bureau ACS Table B08007

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Family Relationships

Domestic Violence Research: National Institute of Health

<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/02/do-social-ties-affect-our-health>

Domestic Violence Research: National Institute of Health

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3777640/>

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Domestic Violence Research: National Institute of Health

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5293605/>

Domestic Violence Research: National Institute of Health

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5954612/>

Domestic Violence Statistics: Georgia Commission on Family Violence

<https://gcfv.georgia.gov/family-violence-fatality-review/current-publications>

Birth Statistics: Georgia Department of Public Health - OASIS

<https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryBirth.aspx>

Single Parent Households: Census Bureau APS Table DP02

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Teen Parenting Research – Child Development: National Institute of Health

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12265630>

Teen Parenting Research – Child Outcomes: National Institute of Health

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK219236/>

Teen Parenting Research: American Pregnancy

<https://americanpregnancy.org/unplanned-pregnancy/teen-pregnancy-issues-challenges/>

Teen Parenting Research – Mental Impact: Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/10/09/parenting-struggling-teenager-is-devastatingly-lonely-it-doesnt-have-be/>

Teen Parenting Research - Depression: Vice

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mg9pqq/teen-moms-are-more-likely-to-get-depressed

Grandparent as Parents: Census Bureau APS Table DP02

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Foster Children Research: Casey Family Programs

<https://www.casey.org/state-data/>

Foster Children Statistics: Fostering Court Improvements

<https://fosteringcourtimprovement.org/ga/>

Community Involvement

Civic Engagement: National Conference on Citizenship

<https://ncoc.org/category/research/state-reports/>

Veteran Data: Census Bureau ACS Tables S2101

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Criminal Record Data: Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Index Report

<https://gbi.georgia.gov/services/crime-statistics>

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Survey Data

Question 1: How would you classify yourself? – 68 Responses

Board of Directors	0
Staff	4
Subcontractor/Partner	18
Vendor	1
Local Government	4
Community Member	33
Other	8

Question 2: Which of the following sector do you represent on this body? (Board Members Only) – 0 Responses

Community Members	0
Government	0
Local Businesses or Organizations	0

Question 3: Which option best classifies your role in the organization? – 3 Responses

Executive Admin Team	0
Finance Staff	1
Human Resources Staff	0
Public Relations Staff	0
Technology (IT/Analytics) Staff	0
Program Management	1
Program Staff (any program/dept)	1
Facilities/Maintenance Staff	0
Other	0

Question 4: Please select any of the following that are relevant: – 69 Responses

I live in Cobb County	55
I work in Cobb County	43
I neither live in nor work in Cobb County	1

Comments: Cobb County Community Partner

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Question 5: What is the name of the entity (business, government, organization) you represent? (Stakeholders Only) – 31 Responses

- Anchor of Hope, Inc
- City of Acworth Parks, Recreation, and Community Resource Department
- City of Marietta
- Cobb County District Attorney
- Cobb Senior Services
- CobbWorks, Inc
- Cole Street Development Corp.
- Davis Direction Foundation
- Family Promise Cobb
- Food Security for America
- Habitat for Humanity of Northwest Metro Atlanta
- LiveSafe Resources
- MUST Ministries
- Reflections of Trinity
- Rhema Housing Inc/Always Care for You
- Ser Familia, Inc.
- St. Vincent de Paul Georgia
- Sweetwater Mission
- The Center for Family Resources
- The Extension, Inc
- YELLS, Inc

Question 6: Which of the following best represents the classification of your entity? (Stakeholders Only) – 30 Responses

State Government	1
Local Government	4
Faith Based Organization	2
Domestic Violence Program	2
Other Organization	21

Comments: Non-profit Organization & Service Provider
Nonprofit (x6)
Humanitarian Organization
Affordable Housing (x2)
Homeless Services Provider (x3)
Training and Educational Programs, federally funded
Non-Profit Food Pantry
Non-Profit Social Services Organization (x2)
Care Manager at Cobb Senior Services
Mental Health for Latino Community
Community Based Afterschool Program
Behavioral Health

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Question 7: What type of services do you provide in the community? (Stakeholders Only)

– 27 Responses

Case Management	16
Income Management Services	9
Employment Services	12
Adult Education Services	2
Adult Skills Development Svcs	5
Child/Youth Education Services	5
Childcare	1
Emerg. Housing/Utility Assistance	11
Homeless/Transitional Housing Svcs	13
Housing Development	2
Physical Health Services	2
Mental/Emotional Health Services	7
Behavioral Health Services	3
Domestic Violence Services	4
Food Assistance	14
Resource Coordination (Referrals)	15
Resource Application Assistance	8
Parent Supports	5
Other	9

Comments: Legal Advocacy, Emergency Shelter
 Personal Care Support
 Seasonal Feeding
 Victim Advocacy
 SUD Treatment
 Rent and Utility Assistance
 Workforce Development Resources and Services
 Services for Seniors 55+
 Legal Assistance (TPO)

Question 8: Please feel free to provide a deeper description of the services you provide in the area below: (Stakeholders Only) - 11 Responses

- *We specifically provide wrap around services for Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health challenges.*
- *LiveSafe Resources is committed to making the following services accessible to all who need it. We work with women, men and children—regardless of sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, religion, race, or ethnicity—who have been affected by domestic violence, sexual assault or elder abuse. LiveSafe Resources assist with emergency shelter, transitional housing, sexual assault programs, forensic sexual assault nurse examinations (SANE), elder abuse programs, Latino Outreach, counseling, and temporary protective orders.*
- *Anchor of Hope Inc engages and supports individuals & families in need of housing stability.*
- *the Victim Witness Unit of the Cobb DA Office provides support and notification services to victims of crime as they enter the court system as a result of being a victim of crime,*

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- *GED classes, training programs, employment resources, resource referrals,*
- *We help families remain in their homes when they find themselves having difficulty in paying rent and/or utilities. We partner with the tenant and the landlord to help keep the family in a stable home environment.*
- *Cobbworks provides comprehensive workforce development resources and services coupled with robust wrap around services. All programs and initiatives prioritize populations with barriers to employment, including but not limited to: opportunity youth, low-income adults, veterans, persons with disabilities, etc. Our programs and initiatives support individuals in the journey to become economic self-sufficiency.*
- *Our resources are specifically allocated to those who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or elder abuse. We offer a safe shelter program, as well as housing programs (transitional housing, rapid rehousing, TBRA), and outreach programs (which may be able to assist with rental assistance, food assistance, medical assistance, support groups, etc.) Within our outreach programs, we have a specific Latino Outreach Coordinator, who helps Latino/Hispanic clients who may struggle with English proficiency, as well as maintain relationships with other Latino/Hispanic centered organizations in our community. Clients admitted into these programs are provided with a case manager who assists with developing/tracking goals, assisting with applications, making appropriate referrals, and maintaining a relationship with the client through their journey toward freedom, as well as a child advocate who assists clients with children and their specific needs- childcare, education, fun family activities. We also have a legal advocacy program, in which our advocates assist clients with applying for TPOs and making appropriate referrals to Legal Aid. Additionally, we offer a sexual assault program, which includes access to free SANE exams available 24/7. Many of our clients are also enrolled in our free counseling program, where they can benefit from individualized counseling or support groups. Lastly, we offer an emergency 24/7 crisis line, where clients can reach out whenever they need assistance and to receive referrals to any of our programs.*
- *Family Promise gives shelter for Families in Cobb county with children under 18 , must have a car .. will provide services needed to be rehomed successfully*
- *FPCC provides transition housing to families who are unhoused. Many families who join FPCC do not have a working wage job and have not applied for any assistance. We provide free housing while they look for jobs, apply for assistance, create budgets, schedule therapy (when needed), provide food, and provide weekly check ins. Average stay in our shelter is between 90-100 days.*
- *YELLS's mission is to empower youth to rise as active, healthy, and productive servant-leaders within their communities. We envision communities where youth have voice and value and ensure they possess the leadership skills, confidence, character, and collaborative networks needed to shape their world. Marietta YELLS is a call to action for all kids, teens, parents, and neighbors who want to have a voice and a role in shaping their community. YELLS's asset-based model educates, equips and mobilizes youth and their families as the solutions to the challenges they face. At YELLS we know that by empowering community members to take ownership of change, the whole community can grow together. We can turn challenges into stories of success and pride. It's a chance to stretch yourself and discover all you can accomplish – within your own life and for your community.*

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Question 9: Do you consider yourself to be low-income? – 69 Respondents

Classification	Yes	No
Board of Directors	0	0
Staff	0	4
Subcontractor/Partner	0	18
Vendor	1	0
Local Government	0	4
Community Member	23	10
Other/Unspecified	3	6
TOTAL	27	42

Question 10: What is your age range? – 37 Responses

18-24	0
25-44	15
45-54	8
55-59	5
60-64	5
65+	4

Question 11: Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic? – 37 Responses

Yes	2
No	35

Question 12: What is your race? – 37 Responses

Black	23
White	11
Asian	0
Pacific Islander	0
American Indian	1
Other	2

Comments: Black & White

Question 13: What is your family type? – 37 Responses

Single Individual	9
Adults with Children	11
Two Adults, No Children	6
Single Parent (Female)	10
Single Parent (Male)	0
Multi-Generational	1
Other	2

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Question 14: Do you have any pre-school aged children? –27 Responses

Yes	5
No	22

Question 15: Are you familiar with Cobb County CSBG Program? – 64 Responses

Yes	56
No	8

Question 16: Do you consider yourself to be a partner with the Cobb County CSBG Program? (Stakeholders Only) – 31 Responses

Yes	27
No	4

Question 17: Please select any of the Cobb CSBG Subcontractors that you have received services through during the past twelve months. (Low-Income Only) – 24 Responses

Cobb Works	3
YELLS	8
Zion Baptist Church	4
The Extension	3
LiveSafe	2
MUST Ministries	4
Family Promise	0
Ser Familia	0
Cobb Senior Services	8
Zion Keepers	2
Davis Direction	0
Anchor of Hope	0
Advocates for Children	0
The Center for Family Resources	4
Other	1

Question 18: How would you rate the services you received from these CSBG funded organizations? (Low-Income Only) – 23 Responses

1 Star	0
2 Stars	0
3 Stars	0
4 Stars	1
5 Stars	22

Average rating: 4.96

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Question 19: Did you experience any barriers when trying to access services from these organizations? (Low-Income Only) – 23 Responses

Inadequate information from staff	0
Difficult application process	2
Inadequate funding	1
Services did not meet needs	0
Lack of dignity and respect by staff	0
Building difficult to access	0
Location not convenient	0
None	18
Other	2

Comments: The timing of funds approval; caused eviction filing and fees. However, after approval we were compensated for eviction fee and late charges.
Process quickly with all required documents

Question 20: From your perspective, which of the following are the most critical conditions of poverty in your local community? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 68 Respondents

Food Insecurity	39
Housing Insecurity	64
Risk of utility loss	28
Poor physical health	11
Poor mental health	29

Unsafe home environments	17
Inadequate clothing	3
None/Unknown	3
Other	7

Question 21: Which of the following barriers most impact the ability of residents to address these needs? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 68 Respondents

Lack of income	51
Lack of financial mgmt. skills	18
Unemployment	211
Under-employment	18
Lack of affordable housing	54
Poor quality housing	15
Poor health	5
Lack of education/skills	9
Lack of personal transportation	16
Inadequate community transport.	12

Lack of childcare	8
Childcare cost	15
Discrimination	6
Criminal records	3
Addictions	5
Domestic abuse	3
Lack of social support	12
Inadequate health service access	7
None/Unknown	1
Other	0

Question 22: Which barriers have the greatest impact on individuals trying to secure meaningful employment in your community? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 31 Respondents

A lack of job opportunities	13
Discrimination	4

Criminal records	8
Addictions	6

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A lack of required qualifications	14
A lack of transportation	17
A lack of childcare	11
Insufficient networking opport.	6

Poor health	4
Unknown	1
Other	3

Comments: Restrictions due to disability
Finite amount of resources to support workforce development

Question 23: Which skills and/or qualifications do you feel present the biggest barriers to employment for individuals in your community? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 8 Respondents

Literacy	4
Language	6
Office skills	6
Lack of high school education	3
Lack of college/vocational training	3
Soft skills	6

Technical skills relevant to jobs	5
Certification/licensure requirements	4
Digital skills	4
Unknown	0
Other	0

Question 24: What are the most significant barriers that adults in your community face when attempting to enhance their skills/qualifications for local employment opportunities? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 8 Respondents

A lack of educational/skills development resources	6
A lack of awareness of existing resources	3
The cost of education/skills programs is too high	4
A lack of transportation	3
A lack of childcare	4
Discrimination	0

A lack of time	3
A lack of online/remote learning opportunities	3
Inadequate computer/internet access	2
Unknown	1
Other	1

Comments: Strict eligibility requirements causes gaps in services

Question 25: What are the most common issues that contribute to poor-quality housing? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 12 Respondents

Rodent or insect infestation	8
Sagging/leaking roof	3
Inadequate insulation	5
Missing siding	0
Lead-based paint	1
Broken windows/doors	2
Openings in walls, floors, ceilings	5

Exposed wiring	2
Inadequate heating units	3
Foundation issues	2
Mold	8
Asbestos	1
Unknown	2
Other	2

Comments: Overcrowding in apartments

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Question 26: What aspects of community transportation are inadequate in your area? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 12 Respondents

No public transportation available	6	Lack of accessibility for disabled individuals	2
Limited routes	9	Poorly maintained vehicles/stations	2
Limited hours of operation	8	Unknown	0
Unreliable service	3	Other	3
High cost	2		
Safety Concerns	3		

Comments: Poor bus waiting area. Dark areas, no lighting especially at dawn.
No benches/proper waiting areas.
Bus will not get a family around this county.

Question 27: Which types of addictions have the greatest impact on the inability of residents to secure basic needs? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 5 Respondents

Alcohol	5	Internet/Video game	1
Drugs (prescription or illegal)	5	Shopping	0
Tobacco	2	Work	0
Pornography	1	Unknown	0
Gambling	1	Other	0
Food	1		

Question 28: What barriers most contributed to inadequate health service access? (SELECT NO MORE THAN THREE) – 7 Respondents

No insurance	6	Lack of specialized medical svcs	1
Inadequate insurance	3	Inaccessibility for disabled individuals	0
Shortage of primary care providers	1	Cultural or language barriers	4
Insufficient mental health resources	5	Unknown	0
High cost of medical care	6	Other	0
Long waiting times for appts	0		

Question 29: Which of the following options is closest to the average time you need to drop your children off for childcare? (Low-Income with Children Only) – 4 Respondents

6:00am	1
7:00am	2
4:00pm	1

Question 30: Which of the following options is closest to the average time you need to pick your children up from childcare? (Low-Income with Children Only) – 4 Respondents

5:00pm	1
6:00pm	2
7:00pm	1

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Question 31: What barriers have you witnessed associated with childcare in the community – 3 Respondents

None	3
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Question 32: Which of the following situations below are relevant to personal transportation used by low-income residents? – 59 Respondents

The majority are in good working condition	4	Frequent breakdowns lead to job loss/missed opportunities	24
Minor issues that impact reliability	22	High repair costs lead to financial strain	37
Major mechanical issues; unsafe or unreliable	31	Lack of access to affordable/trustworthy mechanics	20
Older models, lacking safety features or fuel efficiency	12	Other	5
No valid insurance due to cost	25		

Question 33: Which of the following situations have you personally struggled with over the past twelve months? (Low-Income Only) – 21 Respondents

Situation	Assistance Unavailable	Assistance Received
Job Search	9	3
Need for uniforms/tools for work	3	1
Budget Mismanagement	3	3
Lack of education/skills for work	3	1
Inability to pay off loans/debt	11	1
Difficulty affording rent payments	10	4
Eviction	6	2
Difficulty affording mortgage payments	2	0
Foreclosure	0	0
Homelessness	3	1
Relocation due to inability to afford housing	5	0
Difficulty affording utility payments	9	4
Loss of utility service	3	1
Family members needed medical care	5	1
Felt socially isolated	8	0
Depression	6	3
Consideration of suicide	1	0
Needed assistance applying for SSI, TANF, etc	6	0
Experienced abuse or neglect	1	0
Poor housing condition	4	0
Poor home insulation	4	0
Transportation limitations	8	0
Food Insecurity	6	3
Unable to find childcare	1	0
Unable to afford childcare	2	0

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Struggled with parenting skills	2	0
Limited by criminal record	0	0
Struggled with an addiction	1	0

Income and Poverty Comments:

- The rapid and dramatic rise in rental rates over the past few years coupled with inflation in the costs for other goods and services has severely impacted lower wage earners and families with children. Wages have not kept up with the costs of basic living expenses and many households that were just getting by are now unstably housed and many others have already lost their permanent housing.*
- When there is a loss of income, an individual is forced to give up on certain necessities for daily living such as food and housing. When conditions continue to deteriorate, it directly impacts their mental health (including depression and loss of hope).*
- Critical conditions of poverty in Cobb County regarding families with minor children are housing and employment based*
- Housing insecurities- when you're unstable with your financial circumstances it leads to a break down in your confidence to the point of anguish, anxiety & anger.*
- When you are struggling financially it bleeds over into the family structure. Which causes a person or family in need to seek government help. And when dealing with the county or government, they take you through an application process, once you finish that, you have to wait to get approved/ denied. Which then causes worry, uncertainty, and fear of your situation becoming worse with time, which then takes a mental toll on your mind and body. Causing one to feel unsure about life, and making it a life that's sustainable.*
- Being a single parent and not being able to qualify for food stamps. Increase in rent. Not being able to pay bills on time do to the cost of living increase.*
- I could check 5 more - childcare, addiction services, poor quality housing, lack of education and skills, transportation. . . they all play major roles in keeping a family in poverty.*
- Not enough financial assistance available for those who might have experienced a recent financial hardship.*
- Budgeting is recommended; however, when income is scarcity there's little to no room for rationalizing where the monies should go. From utilities, to maintain adequate food supply; there's long enough to budget.*

Employment Comments:

- Many people are employed but do not seem to understand how to seek jobs that will provide sufficient income to support them independently. They do not always see the value of connecting to employment resources and this can impact their ability to search for and locate gainful employment.*
- There are job opportunities available, but oftentimes individuals are missing required qualifications which pose as a barrier to securing meaningful employment.*
- Lack of childcare and quality public transportation are two very limiting factors when it comes to finding employment.*

Adult Education/Skills Comments:

- CobbWorks believe that a root cause of poverty is a low-wage employment as a result of low skills and low education levels. It is for this reason, that youth and adults struggle to break cycles of poverty. With effective workforce development strategies and support services youth and adults can improve their economic outcomes and achieve economic self-sufficiency.*

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Housing Comments:

- *Housing insecurity is top of the list. Once someone loses housing it is incredibly difficult to recover and move forward. Affordable housing is limited and the fees for moving in are cumbersome. Once someone has an eviction on their record or has been branded a "non-desirable" tenant securing their next residence can be nearly impossible. There are very limited options to prevent housing loss and few options for emergency shelter.*
- *80+ percent of our population is homeless according to the McKinney Act.*
- *There is a lack of affordable housing in Cobb county. More homes are being built and the people that actually live in Cobb can't afford them.*
- *Rent is too expensive, rental housing is inadequately maintained by landlords and apartment complexes, cost of utilities is high due to inadequate maintenance by landlords and apartment complexes*
- *More than 70% of Cobb county households spend over 30% of income on housing !*
- *We have so many households who are rent-burdened, and there literally is no affordable housing to buy or rent. There is also voucher discrimination, such that families with Section 8 vouchers cannot find landlords who will accept them. The Marietta Housing Authority is rarely present in community conversations (other than the small FSS program that has a community advisory panel). People constantly call our office looking for rental assistance and they say that phone calls are not returned or they're not eligible for programming. There seems to be little money for utility assistance. People say the Salvation Army never returns calls and Tallatoona only has so much money.*
- *If clients are not provided the basic needs of safe, affordable, and adequate housing and food needs, any other need they have is secondary.*
- *Housing in Cobb County is very expensive, limiting a person's ability to save money.*
- *Housing market for rent are too high to where single parents can barely afford*
- *There should be more low income housing or a way for families with low income to be accepted at apartment complexes. Also, there should be a safe haven or somewhere for the homeless people to go, so sad to see them and them not having any help.*
- *Most are renters and rent prices in Georgia are unfair!*
- *In 2023, The Center for Family Resources received 13,954 requests for assistance including 7,150 requests for rental assistance valued at almost \$6.8 million; 1,717 requests for utility assistance valued at over \$349,000; 2,686 requests for shelter.*
- *There is little, to no affordable housing in the county and a large number of households are rent-burdened.*
- *Housing costs have risen so much that it's hard to keep a roof over our heads. We need more high-quality affordable housing options for all ages; families with children; people before the age of 62 years old need affordable housing too and older adults all need affordable housing. Current affordable housing in Cobb County has a wait list of 3 years (maybe more) and that is if you can get an application submitted for the Wait List. Applications are only submitted online. No paper applications. I have clients who don't use computers and can't see. They have no one to help them submit an application to Marietta Housing Authority. Only senior adults have more affordable housing, but all people can benefit from this, especially now with the rising costs of all goods and services. I am*

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concerned for myself too. I am a "renter" because buying a home has become impossible even with my fiancé and I both working full time; we still can't buy a home.

- There are more people who does not have housing than it actually looks like.*
- With the cost of living increasing its harder to get rent paid*
- On my commute to Cobb County, I see individuals that appear to be homeless. An individual that is homeless would have food insecurities and poor health.*
- Affordable housing continues to be a challenge in Cobb Co.*
- Not enough available low-rent or income based housing in Cobb County. Section 8 in not even an option do to considerable long wait list or lottery options.*
- I see homeless women with children and people needed help in my area*
- I am on section 8 and recently I had to add my father because he had no were to go In doing this my rent went up and with 2 people in household my utilities went up also making it harder to maintain household*
- But housing that average income people can afford seems to be fading away all over the country. But we are seeing it here in Cobb County too. My rent has increased over \$500 in the past 5 years where I live in Marietta. Some clients are paying very high utility bills in very small studio apartments and other clients live in poor conditions because that is all they can afford and know they would be homeless if they had to find another place to live; so, they stay.*
- Affordable housing in Cobb is a major issue. Families and seniors are facing homelessness due to the rent is higher than their income.*
- Affordable housing is disappearing in Cobb county , When teachers , RN , engineers , and county employees are part of my demographic , it's time for the community to start looking at solutions*
- Homeless numbers seem to be increasing as rents rise and affordable housing options are limited.*
- The housing market is crazy and the percentage of home costs to income is probably around 50%. Paying that much in housing and trying to keep with other expenses such as utilities, food, clothing leaves no money for health care.*
- No affordable, safe housing in Cobb.*
- Affordable housing is always an issue with rising rent and mortgage driving more and more into crises.*
- A goodnight sleep is a panacea for well-being as well as a good start if every day; hence housing is vitally important*
- Rental control - More affordable rent options would help families live more comfortably without having to move too often.*
- There is a tremendous need for the development of affordable housing (rental and home ownership) in Cobb for lower wage earners. Many rental communities have been sold to developers and are now beyond reach of working families. Many families who lose their permanent housing turn to hotels/motels because they cannot qualify/afford other permanent housing. Due to the high cost of the hotel/motel, they become trapped and cannot afford to move back to permanent housing.*
- We have a serious problem with families losing housing. When they experience hardship of any kind, one of the first thing that is impacted is housing. This leaves them vulnerable to homelessness and a host of other problems. We need more funds to be able to serve the many individuals who are struggling with housing insecurity.*
- Affordable housing does not exist in Cobb County - 3x rent is a huge barrier.*
- Cobb needs to look at finding housing that the working class we need to run this county have a place to live*

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- *Cobb County needs affordable housing for the families who work in Cobb but can't afford to live in Cobb.*
- *We need more affordable housing in Cobb and by affordable housing that people making very low incomes can afford. More senior affordable housing along with families for those with young children*

Childcare Comments:

- *When there is an inability to get proper childcare that's affordable, this is also a barrier to getting employment. You can't work if you have no one to watch your child or children.*
- *Restrictions with CAPS and subsidized childcare, especially employment requirements, means one cannot find employment without CAPS, but cannot get CAPS without employment.*
- *Lack of adequate or available childcare makes employment difficult. In turn, this makes housing nearly impossible.*

Health Comments:

- *Many of our participants do not have money for food/housing/clothing and basic needs due to being in early recovery from drugs and alcohol.*
- *Mental Health, anxiety, depression, often exacerbate the situation and can lead to poor choices or a fundamental break down in a person's resiliency and ability to persevere.*
- *With no food, no housing and unsafe environments, those three factors leave people in desperate situations which will trigger poor physical and mental health issues.*
- *Mental health is REAL; however it is frowned upon in the African American Community, which stops people who need help from seeking it. Co-pays are very expensive, again making it prohibitive for many to get help they need. Perhaps more online/virtual options would reduce the shame in attaining the help that is needed.*
- *The absence of awareness regarding the mental health status of community members stands as the paramount health determinant driving the necessity for social services.*
- *Poor mental health- results from being overwhelmed by financial challenges to the point it leaves One in despair, hopelessness and depression. In addition to seeking professional Therapy to learn tools to cope.*
- *Clients I work with are often struggling to pay their rent, get groceries and keep their homes clean after having health problems*
- *Additionally, we understand that there is a correlation between mental health concerns in domestic violence/sexual assault. Whereas violence can exacerbate mental health, disabilities-such as mental health conditions- can increase vulnerability, as well, making these clients more likely to experience violence. We get calls every day from abuse survivors who also are struggling with severe psychiatric conditions that are likewise experiencing patterns of violence and housing insecurity.*
- *Many people in poverty develop serious health problems that make it difficult to work and it becomes a vicious cycle.*
- *Not enough sliding scale treatment for mental health.*
- *Cobb County is not immune to the mental health epidemic, especially among young people. Access to affordable an adequate health care impacts all areas of life, including the ability to work and contribute back.*
- *The prevalence of drug use as a barrier for motivation & self -improvement.*
- *My health is at risk due to the level of stress conditions I have.*

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Nutrition Comments:

- *Food is still costly, preventing residents from selecting healthier choices in the supermarket. We need a wider variety of healthy option restaurants to choose from. (fast food is NOT Healthy, just cheaper).*
- *In 2023, The Center for Family Resources received over 1,000 requests for food assistance.*
- *Rising food costs and general costs make *quality* food options hard to find or difficult to afford.*
- *With the cost of living increasing its harder to keep food on the table*
- *Also, seniors are facing food insecurity due to not qualifying for SNAP and choosing to pay for utilities, medicine and rent.*
- *I only receive \$67.00 dollars in food stamps and is challenging throughout the month.*

Transportation Comments:

- *Transportation is a huge problem for all people of every age, if you don't have a car. Many people I work with can't ride the bus, don't use a computer, need help filling out applications due to vision problems, illiterate, can't afford a ride share service (Uber, Lyft) or need an escort for safety due to cognitive loss or mental health problems. We need a better transportation system for all of the metro area. One system for all the metro area and more busses and more trains and better access for everyone. Having multiple and different transit systems in each county makes a hardship for anyone traveling since they have to transfer busses, pay another fare, usually wait hours for the next bus and often this is an all day trip if they have to leave their home county to see a Physician or Specialist in another county.*
- *Not all areas of Cobb are reachable on public transportation.*
- *Also, if you lack transportation or if your transportation is not reliable, this will also affect your ability to successfully get and keep a job.*
- *Transportation in Cobb County is very limited. It does not go to certain parts - Powder Springs, Austell, etc.*
- *Many depend on the bus system of Uber. We provide bus passes and Uber to essential services but cannot Uber back and forth to jobs.*
- *A reliable and cost effective transportation is always a welcome solution for workforce development .*
- *IF there was a network available where people could commute together. If Uber was more affordable.*
- *Same as above, without reliable transportation, it makes it impossible to sustain employment. Especially when most available jobs are several miles away and there is limited public transportation.*
- *Many gig workers, reliant on platforms like Lyft, Uber, or Door Dash, struggle to attain a sustainable income, often hindered by unreliable transportation. This predicament frequently leaves them unable to meet financial obligations, necessitating urgent assistance.*
- *The struggles pertaining to up cost of mechanical upkeep various due to the nature of most Mechanics. Some of them take advantage of women seeking Assistance for how to maintain transportation. I was rear ended doing deliveries for Uber Eats and upon taking vehicle in for repairs my car caught on fire and was evaluated as a Total Loss. The enormous amount of stress this has caused is overwhelming.*
- *Transportation is a huge issue in our area. Many individuals lack access to personal transportation due to a variety of reasons, including cost.*
- *Many of our clients do not have personal transportation at all. In fleeing from abusive situations, they often were isolated and therefore did not have personal transportation or leave their personal transportation behind for fear of retaliation by their abusers.*

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Elder/disabled clients also struggle with transportation that is equipped to accommodate their specific needs, such as being wheelchair accessible.

- *Many do not have personal transportation at all. In south Cobb County where the population is largely disadvantaged, there are not enough bus routes for people to use as transportation as work, shopping for food, etc. Uber can be expensive and a drain on income. Lack of stable, reliable transportation is another barrier of poverty.*
- *It seems like issues with personal transportation always keep families close to the edge of crisis. All it takes is one thing to need a repair (which are usually costly), to set a series of unfortunate events into motion. (can't get to work, lose job, etc.).*
- *Public transportation is a massive problem.*

Family Comments:

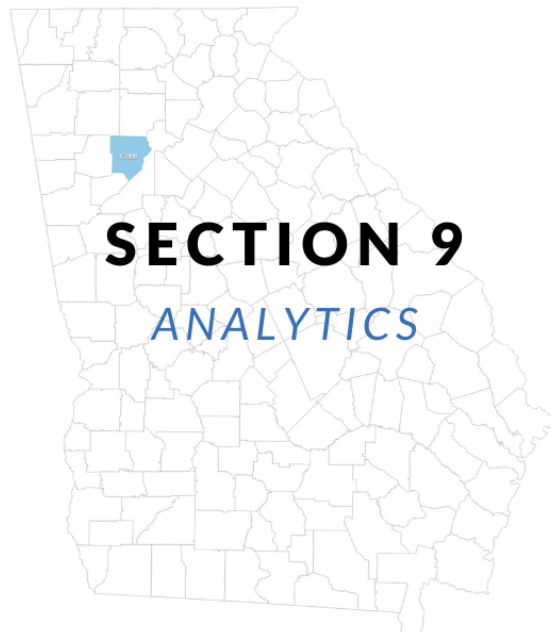
- *When people have no family or friends to check on them as they age, what do they do? I call these people elder orphans. They have either no family, they have all moved away or died, they are all estranged from each other, they have mental illness and need someone to help them or check on them. Who do those people call for help other than 911? These people have no support systems and often don't have a church they belong to because they can't get to a church (even if they wanted to go because they don't drive or have a car).*
- *So many children in the world but not enough stability*
- *Many clients reach out to us as they are leaving abuse situations, where violence and neglect are commonplace, in search of safe shelter and/or housing programs. Use of our safe shelter services is limited to room availability, and we are almost always at capacity. When space becomes available, it is gone typically within a couple days at most. Housing programs likewise fill up quickly and resources outside of our specific programs are scarce. Because of this, our clients struggle to get out of abusive situations and relocate to safety, which can cause further emotional/mental health damage.*

Community Comments:

- *Social determinants of health largely impact low-income communities of color and need to be addressed.*
- *The community I live and work in is a disadvantaged community that is vulnerable to life crisis (loss of job, child sick and has to stay home with child, loss of family member, hours cut) plus economy problems, pandemics, etc.*
- *Help the community help themselves, provide affordable homes for sale, better paying jobs in the community. Provide a way for the people to get to the resources available. If we know better, we do better.*
- *We need more community resources and assistance*
- *More financial assistance for those who may experience an unforeseen/unexpected hardship/crisis.*
- *I would have chosen many more than three in each category. Working with non-profits serving families in crises for the past 15 year, situations are deep, complex, and require multiple avenues and strategies to address. The needs in Cobb mirror many other communities, even though Cobb is seen as an affluent community. The disparities between neighborhoods, some sitting side-by-side, are wide and deep, and sometimes not talked about or hidden from public view. There is absolutely a 'tale of two Cobbs.'*

COBB COUNTY CDBG PROGRAM OFFICE

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT 2024 REPORT ON POVERTY



SECTION 9 ANALYTICS

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Resident Need (Conditions) Prioritization Scores

#	Resident Needs	Total Score	Impacted	Score	Surveys	Score	Experienced	Score	Unserved	Score
1	Housing Insecurity	281	188,006	78	64	100	16	85	12	18
2	Poor Mental Health	225	214,978	100	29	4	18	100	15	21
3	Risk of Utility Loss	195	188,006	78	28	38	13	63	9	16
4	Poor Physical Health	167	138,200	47	11	10	6	10	100	100
5	Food Insecurity	93	77,610	10	39	63	6	10	3	10

Barriers (Causes) Prioritization Scores

#	Resident Needs	Total Score	Impacted	Score	Surveys	Score	Experienced	Score	Unserved	Score
1	Lack of Aff Housing	277	188,066	43	54	100	16	70	12	64
2	Poor Health	256	199,622	46	5	10	24	100	20	100
3	Financial Mgmt Skills	191	429,936	100	18	34	6	33	3	24
4	Lack of Income	178	62,536	14	51	94	12	55	1	15
5	Unemployment	158	47,028	10	21	38	13	59	9	51
6	Lack of Transportation	100	90,838	20	16	30	8	40	0	10
7	Poor Quality Housing	98	151,274	35	15	28	4	25	0	10
8	Lack of Education/Skills	87	94,164	21	9	17	4	25	3	24
9	Childcare Cost	77	95,511	21	15	28	2	18	0	10
10	Addictions	76	184,267	42	5	10	1	14	0	10
11	Under-Employment	65	50,159	11	18	34	0	10	0	10
12	Lack of Childcare	52	53,833	12	8	16	1	14	0	10

2024 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Survey Feedback

Cobb	#	Condition	Percent	Cause	Percent	Overall	Percent
68	1	Individuals are housing insecure	94.12%	The community lacks affordable housing units	79.41%	Individuals are housing insecure	94.12%
	2	Individuals are food insecure	57.35%	Individuals have a lack of income	75.00%	The community lacks affordable housing units	79.41%
	3	Individuals have poor mental health	42.65%	Individuals are unemployed	30.88%	Individuals have a lack of income	75.00%
	4	Individuals are at risk of utility loss	41.18%	Individuals lack financial management skills	26.47%	Individuals are food insecure	57.35%
	5	Individuals live in unsafe home environments	25.00%	Individuals are under-employed	26.47%	Individuals have poor mental health	42.65%