

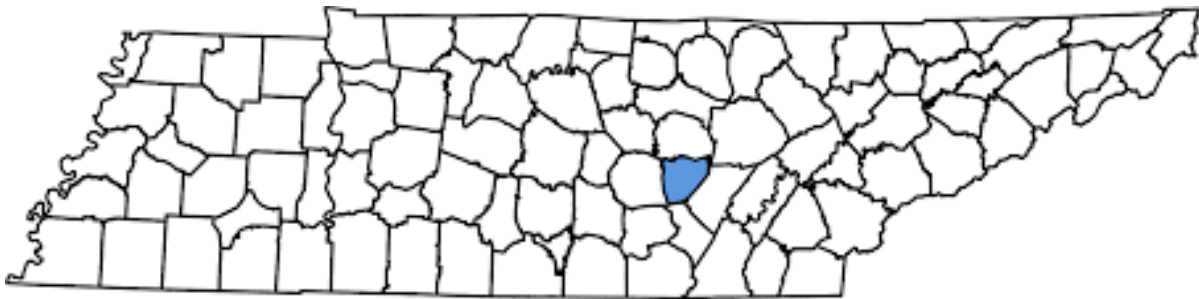


UC*HRA
Van Buren County
Head Start

Community Assessment

2019/2024

REVISED 2020/2021



"HAND IN HAND, TOGETHER WE CAN"

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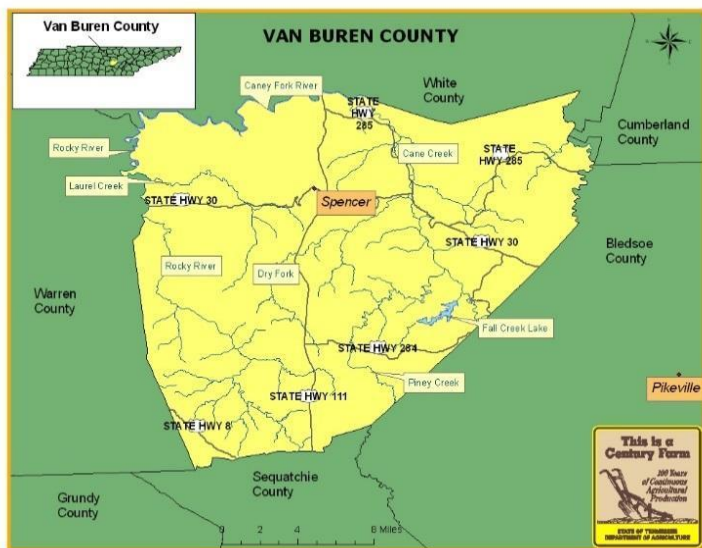


Executive Summary 2020

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start

Service and Recruitment Area: UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start is only one of two options for high-quality early education in Van Buren County. Our community confronts geographical challenges in offering the educational opportunities that young children need in order to flourish. With a total land area of 275 square miles of mountain range, valleys and winding gorges, our county has few homes and the population density is very

low. Parents and busses are required to transport enrolled children from the small town of Spencer down one side of a curvy, steep, narrow and deteriorated mountain road with a small valley before you encounter the other side which entails the same type of terrain before reaching the center at the top of what is known as “Mooneyham Mountain”. This rigorous trip two times a day, 5 days a week is a must in Van Buren County to ensure enrollment and attendance of the children of highest need. Many families enrolled in UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start experience limited to no access of regular transportation. They often do not own, or cannot afford, to operate a vehicle. Families are geographically isolated, with public transit transportation nonexistent for most families the



program serves. Because of the impact on the overall quality of services provided to children and families and to assure them access to services, transportation services provided to the UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start is crucial. With the geographical challenges of our service delivery area, recruiting children for services becomes a rigorous task. Families' proximity, distance, and lack of transportation provide a hardship for families who wish to enroll their children. The program often times cannot service a child in need due to these circumstances. Additionally, the Amish population has migrated and owns 4000 square acres, which is a large portion of Van Buren County. This community sits in the middle of the service delivery area. Our community data will reflect a fluctuation of children age eligible for Head Start, but Amish parents choose to educate their children at home in accordance with their cultural beliefs.

Needs of Children and Families:

5.1% of Van Buren County's total population is children ages zero to five, estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau. UCHRA Head Start gives priority to children with disabilities, children who are homeless, in foster care, or below the poverty threshold. Children with disabilities will participate with their peers in the inclusive Head Start classroom receiving services as determined by their IEP. The needs of dual language learners are addressed through classroom instruction being provided through the home language when possible. Spanish is the primary language encountered by program to date. Families are encouraged to continue to develop skills in English and their home language. Research shows the importance of intentionally supporting families in the process of English and the home language with young children. Our program has systems in place to address adult

education through a program implemented by the State of Tennessee funded through lottery dollars allowing for obtaining High School Equivalency, 2-year degree or certification at no cost to the individual. Because of the problems associated with such a rural, isolated community, the families of Van Buren Co. continue to struggle. People are pressed to find work, to have transportation to get to work, and to afford that transportation. Employment is extremely limited in the county, so there is no choice but going to neighboring towns and counties. Food, health care, and housing costs have continued to skyrocket while wages have stagnated. There are still no jobs becoming available in the community in the foreseeable future. Other counties are a long distance away, and minimum wage jobs do not pay enough to make up for the increased travel expenses. The misuse and abuse of prescription opioids has continually grown as a major threat to the health and well-being of the Upper Cumberland area. The prescription opioid epidemic is damaging to the community and its residents in multiple ways. Users are having their lives severely disrupted, or are losing their lives, as a result of their abuse. Upper Cumberland is also losing the economic benefits associated with a healthy workforce as productivity is lost and taxpayer dollars are expended to pay for expensive hospital visits, incarceration, and custody of children. Another consequence of the prescription drug epidemic that has been detrimental in our area is that 34.5% of children born in Van Buren County suffer Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome is a condition in which a newborn has withdrawal symptoms after being exposed to certain substances in utero. Many times, the newborn is exposed when the mother uses substances such as medications or illicit drugs during pregnancy and after the baby is born, the baby goes through withdrawal. The drug problems, particularly methamphetamine and now heroin, have had resurgence across the Upper Cumberland area. Professionals still do not understand the future ramifications of children being exposed to these drugs being manufactured in their homes. Youth drug and alcohol abuse as well as adult alcohol abuse continues to be a concern for the community. Families in the community increasingly rely on community programs such as food stamps and LIHEAP. Programs helping low-income families are being slashed and families are suffering even more. Early child care is desperately needed; there is no childcare for children aged 0-3 years old provided in Van Buren County. Citizens as well as the families we serve are also concerned about lack of affordable health insurance, affordable and accessible medical care, and employment for adults and teens. Since the State of Tennessee chose not to expand Medicaid, many low-income people still do not have access to health coverage. In the state of Tennessee children of low-income families have access to insurance through the TN-Care insurance program. Most adults in the service area as well as across the state do not have access to a state provided Medicaid system and must rely on Obama care to address this need, which has income stipulations our families do not meet. There is no dentist in Van Buren County, and children needing intensive treatment must travel long distances to receive these services. The COVID 19 virus has also taken a toll on this stressed area.

2019-2020 Family surveys, which are conducted at the beginning of each program year, show the top 2 areas of concern, which are indicated as families in crisis, were as follows:

- **Food:** Many people rely heavily on programs such as WIC and SNAP, which often leaves them short by the end of the month. To aid in addressing this problem and help fill in the gap's parents are encouraged to use the Commodity program administered by the grantee, Bread for Life ministries, Second Harvest ministries, and the food bank on site maintained by the program. Additionally, the program partners with other community programs to provide a snack pack service to enrolled children.
- **Employment:** Partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Career Centers support employment opportunities awareness. Employment opportunities are easily accessible and readily available for the parents/guardians and the community in the form of postings located at the Head Start Center, information being sent home to parents and through requested information contacts. Unfortunately, as you will see from the statistics, there is little opportunity for jobs in this area. This causes difficulty as any jobs that become available are out of the county; so people

must commute some distance to work. Transportation costs are still an issue as fuel costs continue to escalate, making travel difficult. Opportunities are also made available at our yearly Jobs, Education, Health and Awareness Fair to assist and support parents and community with addressing this hardship.

Chosen program option and Funded Enrollment Slots

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start is funded to serve 37 children ages 3-5 in one facility, which spans across one county. UCHRA Head Start program provides services through a center-based option to include but not limited to the size of the service area and as indicated in the Community Assessment to meet the family's needs to obtain work, training to work and lack of child care to hold jobs, and follows the school calendar for the only public school in Van Buren County.

Center and Facilities

The program operates in a building provided by the local school system on an in-kind basis. The facility is maintained by the program and in conjunction with the local school system when applicable. The building is in good repair but an older building and does require continual up keep. The facility is the only available for the program use in the county.

Continuous Improvement

The UCHRA Van Buren Co. Head Start continuously strives for improvement. Our center has earned accreditation from the prestigious NAEYC (National Association of the Education of Young Children), an association that is dedicated to improving the lives of children through quality education and developmental practices. We also participate in Tennessee's STAR licensing program. Through this program, Van Buren Co. Head Start receives a report card and is evaluated on the quality of services. Applicants can receive from one to three stars. UCHRA Van Buren Co. Head Start is proud that it has maintained three stars since the inception of the program.

Technological Advances

We continually incorporate new technology for the UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start, in an effort to be more efficient and reduce man hours and costs. In addition to our automated calling system, website, and Facebook page, all of which allows us to stay in touch with families, staff, the Governing Bodies and all stakeholders, teachers utilize tablets in the classrooms. Interactive whiteboards are available for the children in the classrooms as a teaching tool. Parents and guardians enjoy our Facebook page where they can keep informed about Head Start updates. This has been very popular since they can access the most current news and announcements.

Like us- Van Buren County Head Start. We invite you to check us out at: www.ucvbheadstart.org . The Head Start website provides a parent calendar on our web page which allows parents access to real time scheduling and events. The center also uses Creative Curriculum Gold that allows parents individual access to their child's development progress right from their cellphones/computers at a time that is convenient to them. In addition to accessing their child's ongoing developmental progress through Creative Curriculum Gold parents also receive daily reports that keep them informed of activities and learning experiences that happened during their child's day.

Staff

Our staff continues to strive for improvement, by attending (virtual) seminars and training, held locally and through state, regional or national events, on the latest education trends, requirements and best practices allowing for knowledgeable staff and high-quality services. All lead teaching staff holds degrees and all support teaching staff are required to maintain a child development associate certification and are proactive in furthering

their education. All staff members are actively engaged in their personal staff development focusing on gaining knowledge and skills related to their job performance to ensure that school readiness and program goals are met. At UCHRA Van Buren Co. Head Start, we realize the value of education and how it influences lives.

Community Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths

- Lower paced lifestyle, less traffic to move around the county and local communities.
- Low crime rates in relation to gangs, carjacking, gun related crimes, safer schools.
- Tight knit Community with small-town hospitality.
- More support, less competition for local businesses even though they might not always thrive because of low per capita income, but they don't suffer from brand name competition. Around here, the saying is "Shop Local, Support Local."
- Lower cost of living.

Weaknesses

Rural communities are often perceived as serene, rustic and isolated, suggesting they are protected from the problems of the modern world. The reality is very different from these stereotypical impressions. Our community is ridden with:

- high rates of poverty,
- substance abuse,
- unemployment with no economic opportunity, and
- lack of education and affordable housing
- We have very few ethnicities other than Caucasian. In our community members tend to be mono-lingual with no exposure to diversity.

Making a Difference

Every year, UCHRA Van Buren Co. Head Start hosts a Jobs, Education, Health, and Awareness Fair. Much of the focus is on prevention and what people can do to improve their health or to stay healthy, from dental care to nutrition to mental health. People will also find information on educational opportunities from local colleges and forms to apply for FAFSA (the Federal student aid program). In 2011, we began to include a job fair in conjunction with the Health Fair. Head Start maintains the Lending House, with donations for locals who need clothing or household items. The Head Start Parent Committee ensures a scholarship for the Head Start Alumni, awarding it to a deserving Head Start Alumni seeking higher education. We offer training and information not only to our families, but also to the entire community. Our grantee, The Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency, provides services to 14 counties in the Upper Cumberland. Some of these services are the commodity distribution program, transportation, LIHEAP program (utility bill assistance for heating and cooling the home), weatherization program, emergency assistance, senior meals, child and adult care food program, adult protective services and homemaker/aid assistance among others. These services help people across the area, delivering hope to those in need.

State of Grantee

Overview of Services Provided by UCHRA in conjunction UCDD

UCHRA/UCDD serves 14 counties in the Middle Tennessee region. UCHRA/UCDD provides essential resources to the counties to include but not limited to:

In-Home Services:

>**Homemaker Aide/Chore Services** assists elderly and disabled clients in remaining in their own homes rather than seek alternative care in nursing or foster homes. Services provided include light housekeeping, errands, and preparing meals.

>**Adult Protective Service (APS) Homemaker Services** provide services to vulnerable adults who have been abused, neglected or exploited with household chores, errands, budgeting, counseling, etc. to enable them to live independently and without fear of being abused.

>**Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) is a program that provides assistance to low-income families that need help with utility bills, exhausted their fuel supply or have received cut off notices.

>**Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)** provides insulation or other weatherization services to low-income families.

>**Community Service Block Grant Program (CSBG)** provides various services for Vulnerable Populations (age 60 and above or those with a verifiable disability). The program assists with food vouchers, utility payments, and rental or mortgage payments in the event of an unforeseen emergency. CSBG also provides assistance to those who are homebound and under age 60 with home-delivered meals and in-home services. This helps with chores and other supportive services to allow the applicant to remain in their home.

>**Emergency Services Program** provides emergency food, shelter, energy, prescribed drugs, and homeless prevention to eligible households.

>**Information and Referral Services** which helps people in accessing services and resources in the community.

>**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** supplements the costs of food for children enrolled in licensed or registered daycare homes.

Transportation:

>**Upper Cumberland Area Rural Transit System (UCARTS)** provides transportation for our families and the community

>**Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (Vanpool)** is a regional transportation solution RTA offers to help Middle Tennesseans lower their commute costs and extend the life of their personal vehicles.

VanStar, RTA's vanpool provider, manages a fleet of vans, at the ready, to take your friends, co-workers and neighbors from home to work at specific times of day. Vans can carry anywhere from seven to 15 people to their final destination. If you're concerned about being left behind or have an emergency come up, participants are automatically enrolled in a Guaranteed Ride Home program to make sure you get home when life gets in the way.

Nutrition:

>**Congregate Meals** provided at Senior Citizens Centers located in all 14 Upper Cumberland Counties. Anyone age 60 or older is eligible to receive a meal at the congregated site. Nutrition education is provided monthly to the congregated participants and also to the home delivered clients, keeping seniors abreast of updates in the area of nutritional needs and breakthroughs.

>**Home Delivered Meals (Title III, Options, Family Caregiver, Choices, and CSBG)** is designed to assist persons age 60+ and/or the spouse of someone 60+ a nutritionally balanced noon-time meal and thereby avoiding premature institutionalization.

>**Temporary Emergency Food Assistance (Commodities)** provides surplus food to low-income households. It is funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and serves all 14 counties

Residential Services:

>**Chance** group home for girls

>**Indian Mound** group home for boys

Community Intervention:

>**Community Intervention for Juvenile Offenders** helps reduce the number of youths committed to institutions by allowing them to remain in their community under intensive supervision with alcohol and drug treatment, community service work, family and individual counseling, education and employment assistance

>**Adult Community Corrections Program** provides an alternative to incarceration for non-violent felony offenders sentenced by Criminal Court Judges.

>**DUI School** provides education about drug and alcohol use and provides state mandated requirements for license renewal, while serving the courts and the community.

>**Drivers Education** offers driver education classes throughout the year. State certified driver instructors will teach, ages 15 through adulthood, the skills needed to become safe and responsible drivers.

>**Van Buren Head Start (VBHS)** is a system of early childhood development programs serving three to five-year-old children from lower income families in our community. Head Start is an educational and nurturing program which also addresses the emotional and physical needs of each child enrolled. Ten percent of Head Start's enrollment is reserved for children with disabilities. Transportation, medical, dental, nutritional and mental health services are provided for all children.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) CASA volunteers are Judge appointed to assist in the determination of the best possible outcome for abused, neglected, or exploited children on a case by case basis. UCHRA is mandated to keep in constant contact with the changing needs of the residents in each area and is funded through a combination of funds from federal, state and local organizations.

CASA's mission is to speak in the best interests of abused and neglected children. CASA Volunteer Advocates help to assure each child a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.

Methodology

Collection and Analysis of Data

The Head Start must conduct a Community Assessment within the service area once every five years. The variety of information was obtained in 2019 through a network of data sources and data gathering techniques, analyzed and utilized for assessment of the Van Buren County community. Utilizing sources as listed: UCHRA, Kids Count, Van Buren County School system, Van Buren County Sheriff's Department, Van Buren Board of Education, Tennessee Highway Patrol and other community sources. The collected data also includes: In-house

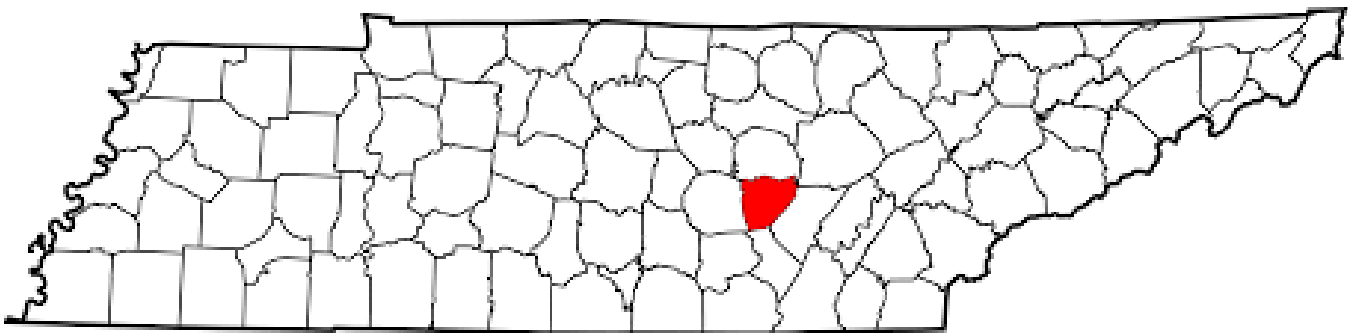
demographics of enrolled children and families, census reports, Tennessee economic reports, Kids Count data and statistics, countywide employment data, as well as other information from agencies serving children and families.

This information will serve as a basis for targeting needs of children and families, choosing program options and determining eligibility for enrollment into the program as well as planning for short- and long-term goals.

Geography

Tennessee is a state located in the southeastern region of the United States. Tennessee is bordered by eight states: to the north by Kentucky, to the northeast by Virginia, to the east by North Carolina, to the south by Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, and to the west and northwest by Arkansas and Missouri. The Appalachian Mountains incorporate the majority of the eastern part of the state, while the Mississippi River forms the state's western border. Tennessee has a total area of 42,143 square miles, which makes it the 36th largest state. With a population of almost 6.8 million, Tennessee is the 20th most densely populated state in the country.

Nashville is both the state's capital and largest city. The state is divided into 95 counties. Van Buren County is ranked 80th smallest county in the state of Tennessee out of 95 counties and has a total area of 275 square miles, of which 273 square miles is land and 1.1 square miles is water. The county straddles the western edge of the Cumberland Plateau, with the eastern portion of the county lying atop the Plateau, and the western portion lying on the lower Highland Rim.



Population and Demographic Data

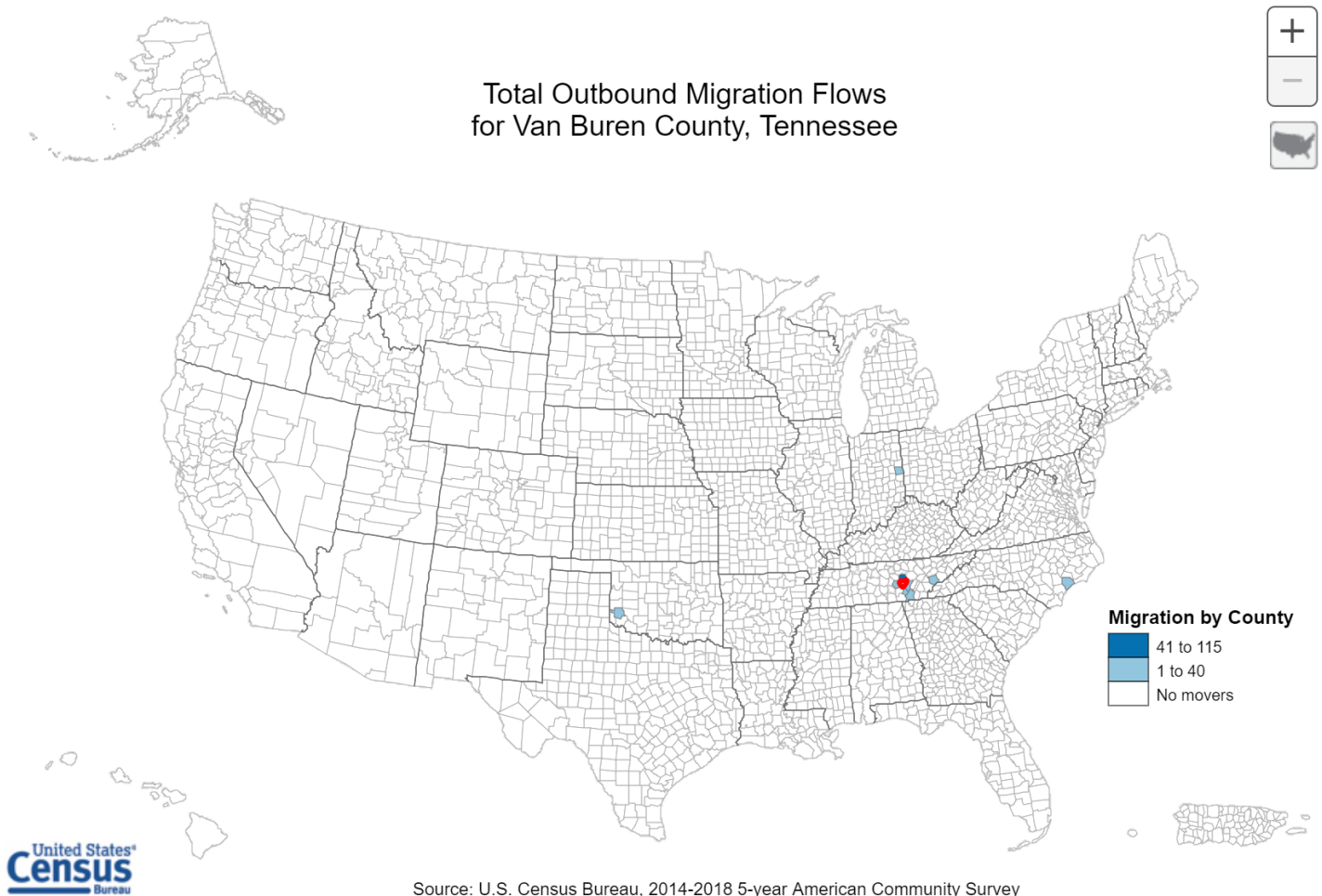
Population Growth and Change

Based on the 2010 Census, the total population of Tennessee was 6,346,105, up 11.5 percent from 5,689,283 in 2000. Census estimates from 2018 indicate that Tennessee's population grew by an additional 6.7 percent (compared with 6 percent for the United States) from 2010 to 2018, reaching more than 6.7 million residents. The population in Van Buren County is 5,872 with a growth rate of 5.6 percent in the past year according to the most recent United States census data.

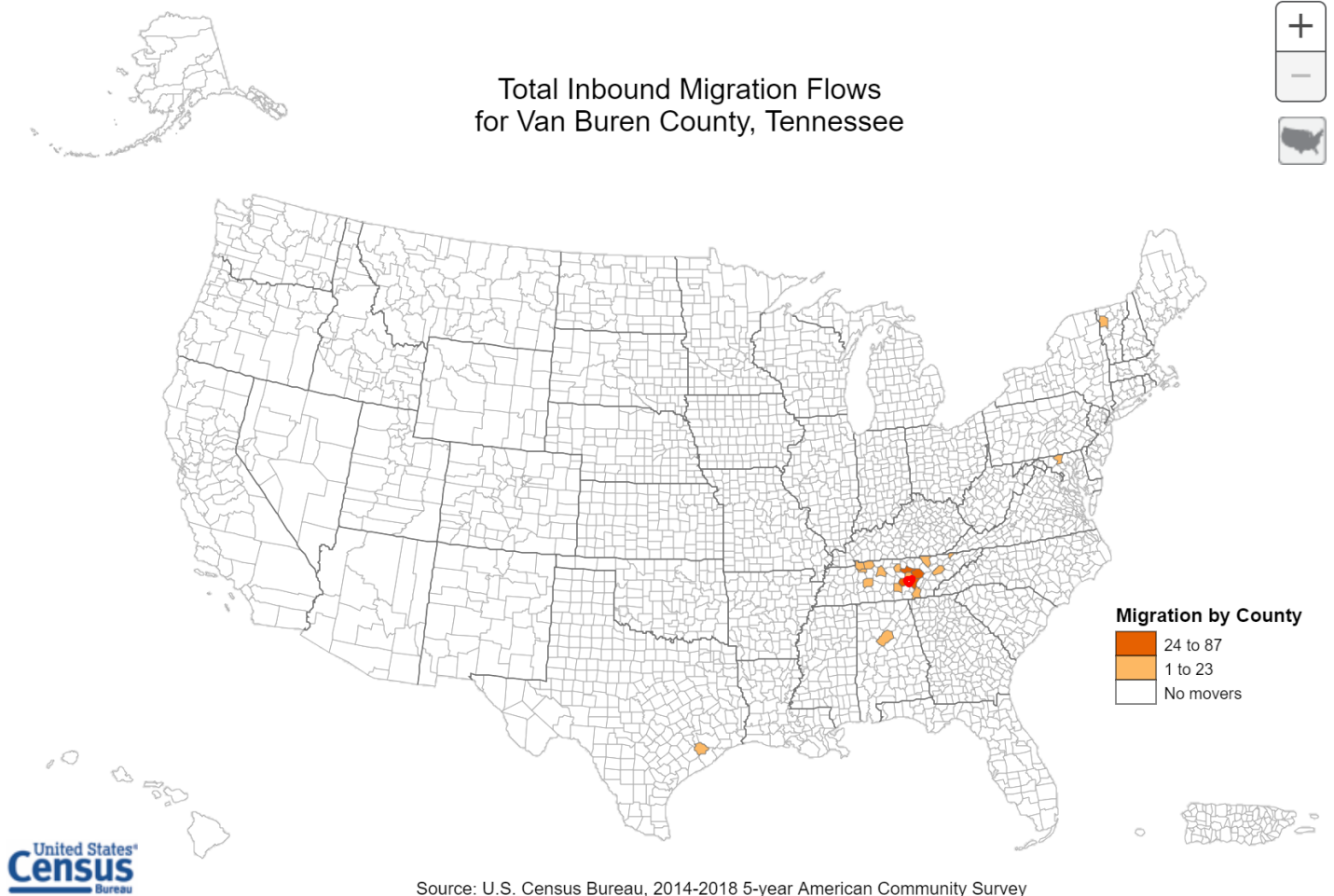
Population	
Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019)	5,872
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2019)	5,558
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2019, (V2019)	5.6%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	5,548

Inbound and Outbound Migration Flows

The following figures show the inbound and outbound flows of Van Buren County. The following data source allows for deeper analysis or exploration of the migration patterns: <https://flowsmapper.geo.census.gov> - illustrates the domestic inbound and outbound migration flows for Van Buren County. The top two counties reporting inbound migration included Putnam County Tn, and Smith County, Tn. The top two counties reporting outbound migration included White County, TN and Jackson County, MS.



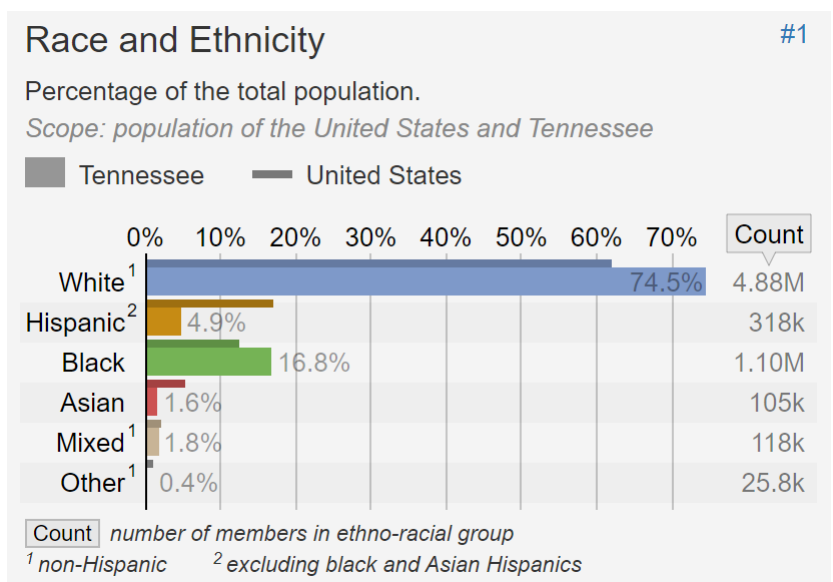
Total Inbound Migration Flows for Van Buren County, Tennessee



Racial and Ethnic Characteristics/Language

The program strives to be more accessible by making accommodations to meet the needs of all cultures. To increase cultural awareness, we provide exposure to classroom activities, stories and food. Spanish is the only language spoken in the home that we have encountered to date, so we have elected to translate all materials into Spanish. Additionally, the program consults with a translator for additional assistance.

In the United States, approximately three out of four residents are white (76.5 percent), 13.4 percent are black/African American, 5.9 percent are Asian, and 2.7 percent identify as having two or more races. In Tennessee 74.5 percent of the population is white; 16.8 percent are black/African American, 1.6 percent are Asian, and 1.8 percent identify as having two or more races.



In Van Buren County, the population is predominantly white, 97percent, respectively. The black/African American population only accounts for 0.8 percent of the population. In the United States, 18.3 percent of the population is Hispanic/Latino; in Tennessee only 5.6 percent of the population is Hispanic/Latino. In Van Buren County 1.6 percent of the population are Hispanic/Latino.

Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019)		5,765
Race and Hispanic Origin		
White alone, percent		97.0%
Black or African American alone, percent (a)		0.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a)		0.4%
Asian alone, percent (a)		0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a)		0.1%
Two or More Races, percent		1.6%
Hispanic or Latino, percent (b)		1.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent		95.5%

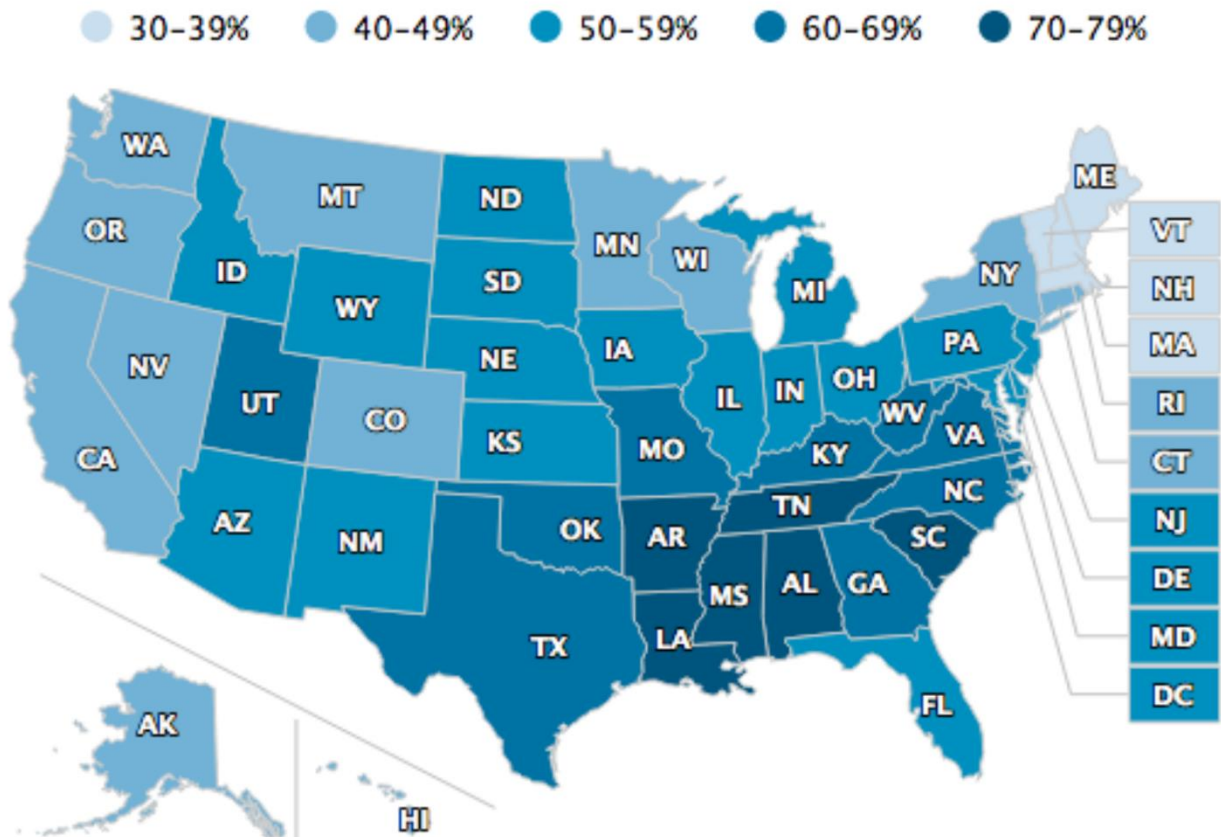


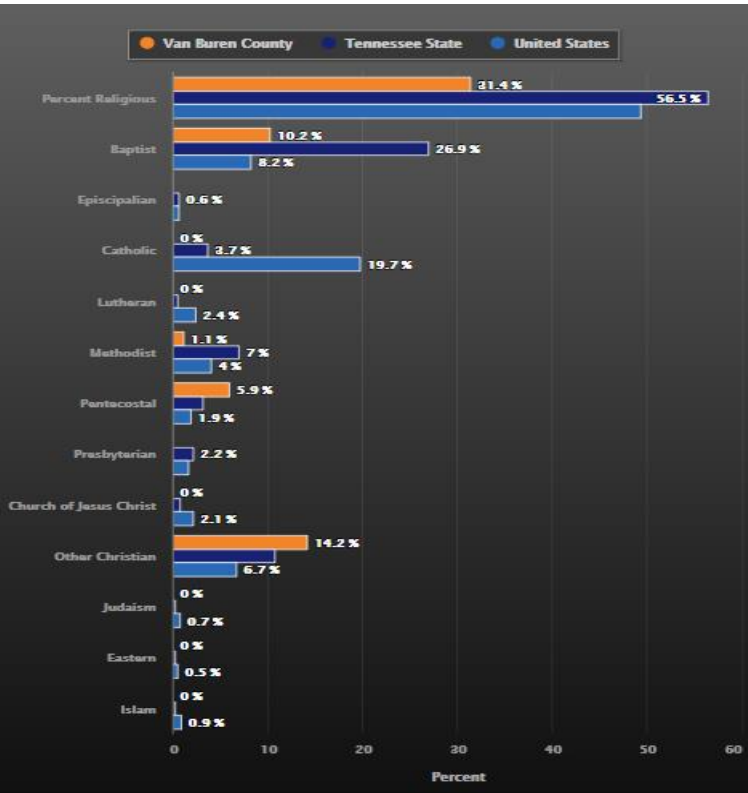
Religion

Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama and other Southern states are among the most highly religious states in the nation, while New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont and Maine in New England are among the least devout, according to some of the key measures used to determine levels of religiosity in the Pew Research Center's most recent Religious Landscape Study.

Overall religiosity by state

% of adults who are "highly religious"





Worship attendance, prayer frequency, belief in God and the self-described importance of religion in one's life were the four measures of religious observance used by Pew Research to determine the rankings. Seventy-eight percent of people in Tennessee say they believe in God with absolute certainty, and 70 percent say they pray daily; Tennessee is the 3rd most religious state overall in the nation. Regarding religions in Tennessee, the overwhelming majority are Christians (81 percent). Of the religious denominations in the state, Evangelical Protestants are the largest group (52 percent).

https://www.bestplaces.net/religion/county/tennessee/van_buren

Sex and Age

U.S. Census data indicate that approximately 49.2 percent of the United States population is male, and 50.8 percent is female. This is not significantly different for Tennessee, and Van Buren County. The youngest residents, those below the age of 5, make up 6.2 percent and 6.1 percent of the population in the United States and Tennessee, respectively. In Van Buren County 5.1 percent, respectively, of the population is below the age of 5. The median age in Tennessee is slightly higher than for the United States overall, 38.6 years, compared with 37.8 years nationally. The median age for Van Buren County is even higher, at 47.2.



	Van Buren County, Tennessee	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Median age --		
Total:	47.2	+/-0.8
Male	45.6	+/-0.4
Female	48.9	+/-1.1

Population by Sex and Age				
Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates				
	Male	Female	Under 5 Years	Median Age (years)
United States	49.2%	50.8%	6.2%	37.8
Tennessee	48.8%	51.2%	6.1%	38.6



Age	Number			Percent			Males per 100 females
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	
Total population	5,548	2,769	2,779	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.6
Under 5 years	284	154	130	5.1	5.6	4.7	118.5
5 to 9 years	333	164	169	6.0	5.9	6.1	97.0
10 to 14 years	328	177	151	5.9	6.4	5.4	117.2
15 to 19 years	343	180	163	6.2	6.5	5.9	110.4
20 to 24 years	243	124	119	4.4	4.5	4.3	104.2
25 to 29 years	245	116	129	4.4	4.2	4.6	89.9
30 to 34 years	333	178	155	6.0	6.4	5.6	114.8
35 to 39 years	355	184	171	6.4	6.6	6.2	107.6
40 to 44 years	341	163	178	6.1	5.9	6.4	91.6
45 to 49 years	406	199	207	7.3	7.2	7.4	96.1
50 to 54 years	465	237	228	8.4	8.6	8.2	103.9
55 to 59 years	466	218	248	8.4	7.9	8.9	87.9
60 to 64 years	464	241	223	8.4	8.7	8.0	108.1
65 to 69 years	347	164	183	6.3	5.9	6.6	89.6
70 to 74 years	254	135	119	4.6	4.9	4.3	113.4
75 to 79 years	156	72	84	2.8	2.6	3.0	85.7
80 to 84 years	119	41	78	2.1	1.5	2.8	52.6
85 to 89 years	43	16	27	0.8	0.6	1.0	59.3
90 years and over	23	6	17	0.4	0.2	0.6	35.3

Households

Of the 2.5 million households in Tennessee, according to [American Factfinder - Results](#) 17.8 percent are married family households with children under age 18, 2.2 percent are single male households with children under age 18, and 7.1 percent are single female households with children under age 18. In Van Buren County, 24.6 percent of households, respectively, are married family households with children under age 18; 2.3 percent, respectively, are single male households with children under age 18; and 4.9 percent, respectively, are single female households with children under age 18.

Subject	Number	Percent
Total households	2,246	100.0
Family households (families) [7]	1,616	72.0
With own children under 18 years	552	24.6
Husband-wife family	1,234	54.9
With own children under 18 years	392	17.5
Male householder, no wife present	119	5.3
With own children under 18 years	51	2.3
Female householder, no husband present	263	11.7
With own children under 18 years	109	4.9
Nonfamily households [7]	630	28.0
Householder living alone	545	24.3
Male	257	11.4
65 years and over	73	3.3
Female	288	12.8
65 years and over	162	7.2
Households with individuals under 18 years	659	29.3
Households with individuals 65 years and over	687	30.6
Average household size	2.43	(X)
Average family size [7]	2.85	(X)

Grandparents and Grandchildren

“An increasing number of children in the united states live in households headed by a grandparent. This trend is due to increasing numbers of single parent families, the high rate of divorce, teenage pregnancies, incorcreation of parents, sustance abuse by parents, illness, disability or death of parents, parental abuse or nelgect. In many of these homes, neither of the child’s biological parents is present. In most cases, children taken care of by grandparents move in with them as infants or preschoolers and remain with them for five years or more. These grandparents are a diverse group, ranging in age from their 30’s to their 70’s. Many grandparents are ready to simplify their lives and slow down. Giving that up and taking over the resposibilities of being a primary caregiver again can stir up many feelings, including grief, anger, loss, resentment and possibly guilt. The transition can be very stressful, and the emotional and financial burdens can be significant. Culture shock at having to deal with children and adolsecents of a different generation can be great. Grandparent-headed households have a signigicantly higher poverty rate than other kinds of family units.”

American Academy of Child and adolescent Psychiatry

According to Data.census.gov in Tennessee more than 160,000 grandparents live with their grandchildren (under age 18), of which 48 percent are responsible for the care of their grandchildren. In Van Buren County, 131 grandparents, respectively, live with their grandchildren, of which 48 percent are responsible for their grandchildren.

GRANDCHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS LIVING WITH A GRANDPARENT HOUSEHOLDER BY AGE OF GRANDCHILD			
Survey/Program: American Community Survey		Product: 2017: ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables	
TableID: B10001		Universe: Grandchildren under 18 living with grandparent householder	
	Van Buren County, Tennessee		
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error	
▼ Total:	116	±52	
Grandchildren under 6 years	41	±39	
Grandchildren 6 to 11 years	37	±29	
Grandchildren 12 to 17 years	38	±30	

Social and Economic Status

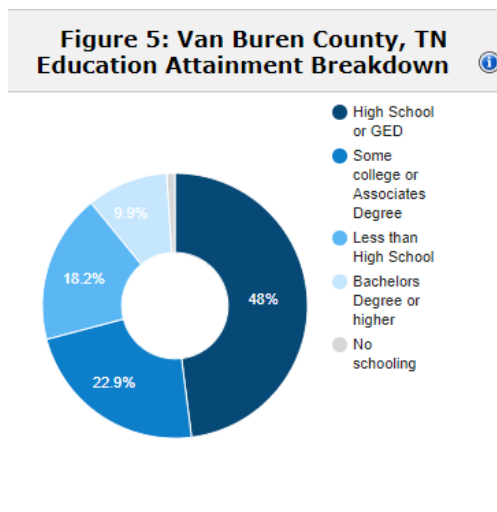
Education

The VBHS is important to the community for not only providing much needed early education to young children in an impoverished community, but also provides needed support to their families. VBHS works with the local school system to prepare children for kindergarten. We start encouraging reading and math skills at an early age. To jump start the process, VBHS teaches parents that they are the child’s most influential and most loved teacher, and assist them by working with parents to teach them to work with their children at home. We are proud of our parent’s commitment in aiding the teachers to meet their child’s individual education goals. Second by fostering important early learning experiences for children ages 3 to 5. Lastly, to instill children with a joy and zest for learning that lasts a lifetime.

VBHS advocates for reading programs. We have 13 literacy programs at Head Start Through these programs, we emphasize the importance of reading to the families and strive to get the whole family involved. We refer parents to the local Adult Education program to aid parents in obtaining their GED. UCHRA not only values the education of the children we serve, we also value it for the parents and community where they live,

In addition to VBHS, Van Buren County has a preschool system, one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Van Buren County School System has a unique situation where Early Bird Pre-School, Spencer Elementary, and Van Buren County High are all housed on one campus. As a small school system, we believe that knowing our kids can and do make a difference in every aspect of their education. The area is fortunate to have access to higher education, with several community colleges and trade schools but have to travel short distances outside the county to attend.

According to the Educational Attainment Population Age 25+ (2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates) in the United States and Tennessee, approximately 87.3 and 86.5 percent of the adult population over age 25, respectively, is, at a minimum, a high school graduate; in Van Buren County, rates are lower, at 48 percent respectively. The percentage of the adult population with a bachelor's degree in the United States and Tennessee is 30.9 and 26.1 percent, respectively. In Van Buren County, the percentage of the population, age 25 and older, with a bachelor's degree or higher is much lower than Tennessee, at 9.9 percent.



Tennessee State Report Card



Economic Features and Trends

Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Employment: the table below shows that unemployment still runs high in Van Buren County. Referring families to the Tennessee Department of Labor, Workforce Development UCDD, and Career Centers employment opportunities will be easily accessible in the form of postings located at the Head Start Center, sent home to parents and through requested information, all readily available for the parents/guardians and the community. Unfortunately, as you can see below, there is little opportunity for jobs in this area. This causes difficulty as any jobs that become available are out of county, so people must commute distance to work, which makes travel difficult due to fuel costs continuing to be expensive. Opportunities are also made available at our yearly Jobs, Education, Health and Awareness Fair to assist parents and community with addressing this need. Vendors providing opportunities for employment include but are not limited to Bledsoe County Corrections Complex, Generations, Nursing Home/Rehabilitation center, Sunkote, Accument Global Technologies, Onin Staffing, Edward Jones. Vendors providing higher education services include but are limited to Fortis Institute, Motlow State Community College, TECTA Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance, and Tennessee Tech University.

Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Trends for Van Buren County

Labor Force Compared Over Time

Not seasonally adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data in Van Buren County

Time Period	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary
November, 2019	2,061	1,982	79	3.8%	No
October, 2019	2,087	1,998	89	4.3%	No
November, 2018	2,030	1,940	80	4.0%	No
November, 2018	2,060	1,970	90	4.5%	Yes
2018	2,050	1,950	100	4.7%	No

Source: US Census Bureau
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Head Start partners with the following places to find employment:

Bledsoe County Correctional Complex: Employs 593+ people (in the process of hiring more since the complex has expanded operations) with 20 percentage being from Van Buren County. Salaries range from approximately \$1,777 to almost \$4,000 monthly. Men mostly occupy the position of correctional officers with salaries averaging almost \$2,500 monthly.

Accument Global Technology: Employs 136 people. These are mostly machine operating jobs. Hourly pay rates are approximately \$14.12 per hour. Approximately 80 percentage of employees are from Van Buren County.

Fall Creek Falls State Resort Park: Employs 52 full time employees and 29 seasonal employees with hourly and salary positions. Pay rates range from hourly positions such as housekeeping, food service and maintenance at \$8.21 per hour to salaried staff and management positions up to \$30 per hour. Approximately 56 percentage of these are seasonal or 6-9-month positions and one-half of totals positions are held by Van Buren County residents.

Van Buren County School System: Employs 194 people. These include 78 certified personnel with teaching degrees. Of the 194, 134 are regularly scheduled employees with the balance being substitute cooks, teachers, bus drivers, janitors and custodians. 80 percentage+ of the staff is Van Buren County residents.

Generations of Spencer: Employs 90 people with approximately 75 percentage of staff from Van Buren County. Hourly rates of pay are \$7.25 to \$8 per hour. Others are comparable rates of LPN and RN staff. Most positions are hourly.

Economy

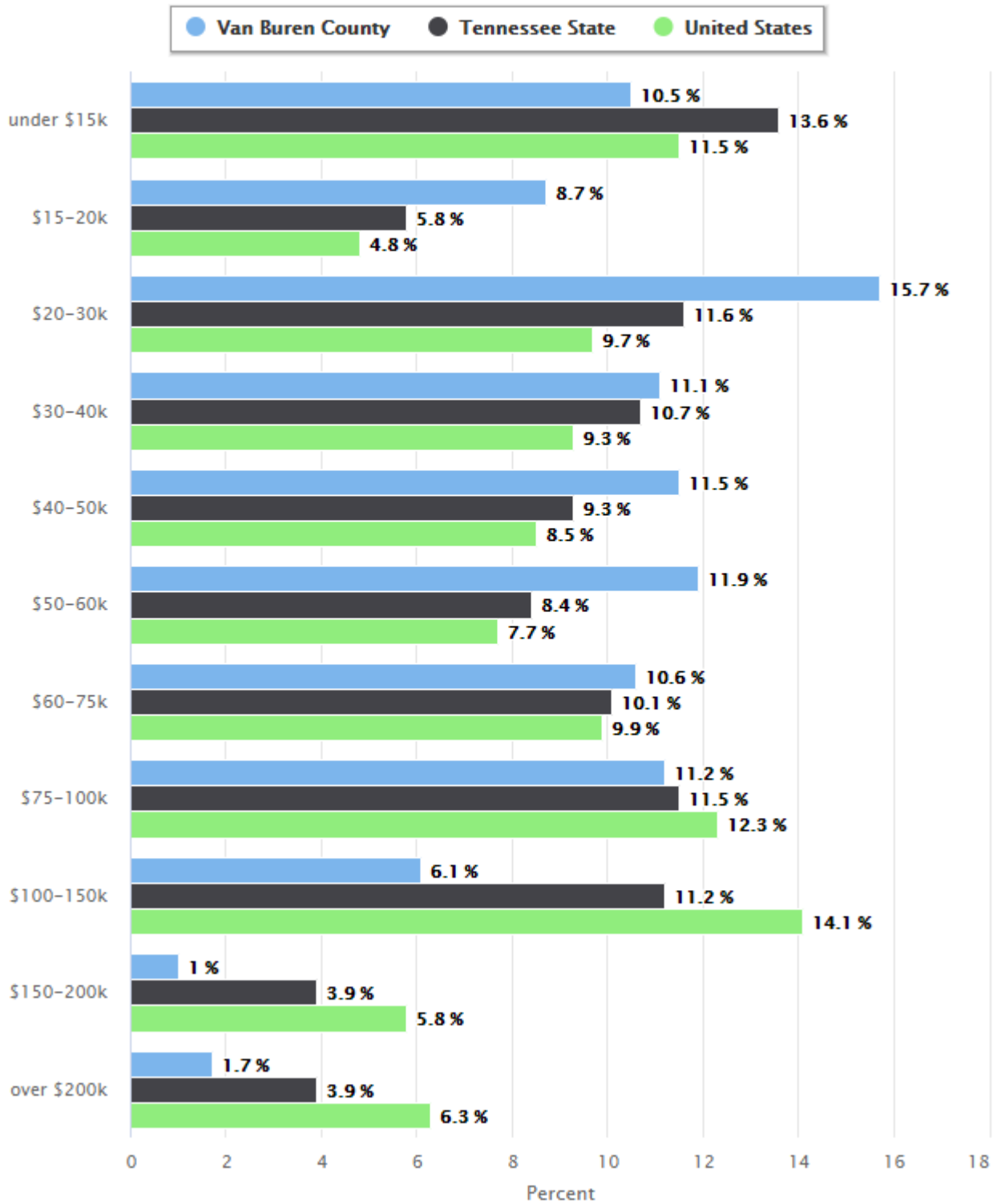
Van Buren County has an unemployment rate of 6.9 percentage. The US average is 6.0 percentage. Van Buren County, Tennessee Economy data shows that Van Buren County has seen the job market decrease by 1.3 percentage over the last year. Future job growth over the next ten years is predicted to be 33.0 percentage, which is lower than the US average of 33.5 percentage. The Sales Tax Rate for Van Buren County is 9.8 percentage. The US average is 7.3 percentage. The average income of a Van Buren County resident is \$19,945 a year. The US average is \$28,555 a year. The Median household income of a Van Buren County resident is \$34,250 a year. The US average is \$53,482 a year.

https://www.bestplaces.net/economy/county/tennessee/van_buren

Income and Salaries for Van Buren County

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- The Median household income of a Van Buren County resident is \$34,250 a year. The US average is \$53,482 a year.

INCOME BY POPULATION PERCENT



Poverty

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov) issues the Federal Poverty Guidelines in the [Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines](#). The Poverty Guidelines for a family of four in 2019 is \$25,750. Research suggests that a family of four requires at least double that amount to make ends meet. The measurement only accounts for the family's annual gross income; it does not include other aspects of economic status such as housing, debt, assets, or property. The calculation used today was originally developed in the 1960s based on the amount of money spent by families on food. The poverty level was reached by multiplying that dollar amount (money spent by families on food) times three. Nowadays, families not only spend approximately one-seventh of their annual income on food, but the cost of child care, transportation, and healthcare have increased dramatically over the past 50 years.

2019 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia	
Persons in Family/Household	Poverty Guidelines
1	\$12,490
2	\$16,910
3	\$21,330
4	\$25,750
5	\$30,170
6	\$34,590
7	\$39,010
8	\$43,430

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,420 for each additional person.

Poverty in Tennessee. Per the 2017 [SAIPE State and County Estimates for 2017](#), 15 percent of the population in Tennessee lives in poverty (more than 980,000 individuals), and 21.1 percent of children, ages 0-17, live in poverty (more than 313,000 children). More than 94,000 Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children, ages 0 to 4, live in poverty in Tennessee. In Van Buren County, 29.28 percent, respectively, of the population lives in poverty and 27.7 percent, respectively, of children between the ages of 0 to 17 live in poverty. [KIDS COUNT Data Center from the Annie E. Casey Foundation](#)

Children In Poverty (Percent & Number)

Location	Data Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Tennessee	Number	355,680	333,899	313,432	322,616	286,752
	Percent	24.1%	22.6%	21.1%	21.8%	19.4%
Van Buren	Number	327	342	299	300	264
	Percent	30.9%	31.9%	27.4%	27.7%	23.5%

Federal Assistance Benefits

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Based on data from [KIDS COUNT Data Center from the Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), there were a total of 2.7 percent of children in 2018 in Tennessee who received Families First assistance (Tennessee’s TANF). In Van Buren County, children, respectively, 1.4 percent received assistance.

Location	Data Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Van Buren	Number	28	38	43	56	53	40	23	15	14	14
	Percent	2.6%	3.5%	4.1%	5.3%	4.9%	3.7%	2.1%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%

DATA PROVIDED BY
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

[Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\) Benefits](#), or SSI, provides monthly financial payments to low-income adults that are blind, disabled, or age 65 and older. Disabled or blind children are also eligible to receive SSI benefits. Families receiving SSI are categorically eligible for Head Start services, providing the family an additional benefit and supportive resource. In 2018, 176,395 children under age 18 received SSI benefits in Tennessee, of which 14 children were in Van Buren County https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_sc/2018/tn.pdf

Number of SSI Recipients by Age (Dec 2018) Source: ssa.gov				
Total		Age		
		< 18	18–64	65+
United States	8,128,652	1,148,038	4,714,234	2,266,380
Tennessee	176,395	22,022	121,408	32,965
Van Buren County	170	14	110	46

NOTE: Data regarding WIC and SNAP participation is located in the Nutrition section of this document.

Housing and Homelessness

According to the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#), in 2019 34 percent of Tennessee's households were renters; the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom home in Tennessee is \$862/month. To be able to rent a two-bedroom home, without exceeding 30 percent of one's income, a renter must earn \$34,492 annually; yet the median income for a renter in Tennessee is \$32,199. With a median income of \$32,199, a renter is able to afford \$805 for a home, \$57 less than the fair market rental value of a two-bedroom home.

It is critical to point out that Head Start families do not earn wages typical of an average renter in the state. The NLIHC considers those who earn 30 percent of the annual median income (AMI) defined as extremely low income. For Tennessee this amount is \$19,457, \$2,547 more than the Poverty Guidelines level for a family of two (which is \$16,910). The rent that someone defined as extremely low income can afford is only \$486 per month, \$376 less than the fair market value of a two-bedroom home. There is data stats with an extreme lack of affordable housing across the Upper Cumberland area.

Homelessness

The biggest challenge our program faces are the type of homeless families we typically encounter which is "Homeless with a Roof". They are harder to identify and provide services to. Homeless trends for the program have shown on average 30 percentage of children who received services were homeless. We face a number of barriers in serving our homeless population due to being in a rural location and sadly, federal priorities and programs tend to be awarded to more urban areas, leaving our area with a lack of funding and support for things such as affordable housing and additional homeless shelters. Unfortunately, in our service delivery area the nearest homeless shelters are 45 minutes to 1 hour away and they do not provide services to families as a whole and are often overcrowded or full. We have limited public transportation, job opportunities, and affordable housing options available in our service delivery area which adds more challenges to the families we serve and the resources we can assist families in receiving. Our most major success has been providing effective professional development to ensure staff is receptive of families who are experiencing homelessness and are diligent in identifying them correctly during the initial interview/application process. We must identify and prioritize this underserved population because they have a higher need for Head Start services, we can impact the trajectory of a child and family's health and well-being, and help them regain stability through resources and services we provide.

McKinney-Vento

McKinney-Vento is the primary piece of federal legislation dealing with the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in U.S. public schools. It was reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002.

The McKinney-Vento program is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under this program, State Educational Agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youth. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

Children and youth who are:

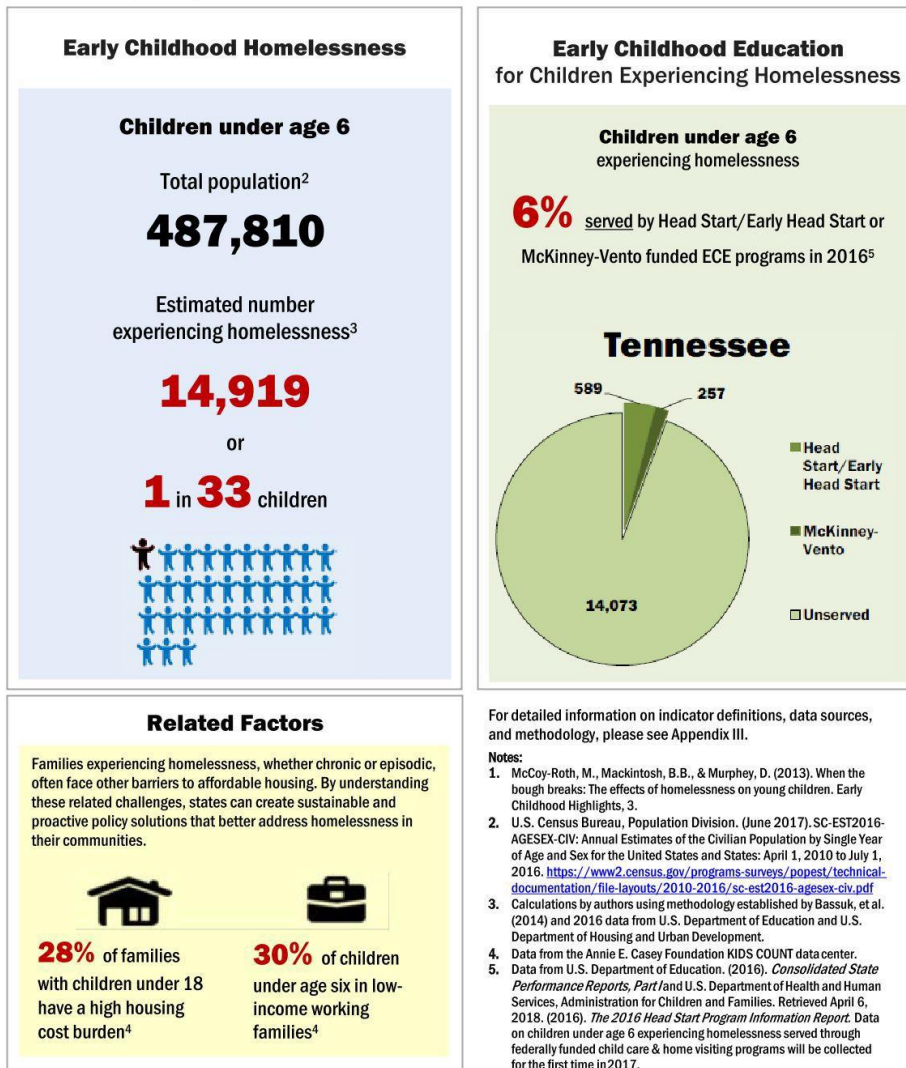
- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up);

- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals; or
- awaiting foster care placement
- children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

The figure below offers an infographic from the Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile report issued by the Administration of Children and Families in December 2018, using data 2015-16 US Department of Education Data. The report indicates that in Tennessee almost 15,000 children under the age of 6 were identified as homeless.

Early Childhood Homelessness: Tennessee (2015-2016)

Early childhood experiences with homelessness have long lasting impacts on a child's well-being. Access to educational services can help mitigate some of these negative effects.¹ Federally funded early childhood education (ECE) programs are only able to serve a small portion of children who experience homelessness. Taking action to mitigate the impacts of early childhood homelessness is critical to ensuring all young children have the opportunity to thrive.



Disabilities

The percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in VBHS at the middle of the 2018-2019 school term equaled 10.81 percentage. Past years have shown percentages as high as 34 percentage. The Head Start program has never fallen below the required 10 percentage. The current percentage is projected to increase due to many unknown health effects and factors related to methamphetamines, its use by pregnant mothers and used in homes with small children and the increase in diagnosis of disabling conditions such as autism. The Van Buren County School System provides disability services to 16.17 percentage of their currently enrolled children as of February 2013, information provided by the Director of Special Education in Van Buren Co. school system. These children are considered to be learning disabled with speech and language being the main focus at the elementary school level. For the School Year 18-19 with an estimated enrollment of 773, the types of disabilities served are as follows:

0 percentage Autism	0 percentage Developmentally Delayed
0 percentage Emotionally Disturbed	23.1 percentage Health Impaired
0 percentage Intellectual Disability	43.3 percentage Language Impaired
67.8 percentage Learning Disability	27.4 percentage Other Disabilities.

Students receiving special education services by type in Van Buren County

[Raw Data](#) [Definition & Sources](#)

Location	Disability	Data Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Van Buren	Learning disability	Number	51	63	54	51	46	47	47	43
		Rate	68.5	85.0	75.0	69.5	64.1	67.1	67.8	59.7
	Language impaired	Number	33	23	33	39	38	40	30	36
		Rate	44.4	31.0	45.8	53.1	52.9	57.1	43.3	50.0
	Health impaired	Number	18	20	18	23	20	18	16	16
		Rate	24.2	27.0	25.0	31.3	27.9	25.7	23.1	22.2
	Developmentally delayed	Number	2	0	0	7	7	8	0	8
		Rate	2.7	0.0	0.0	9.5	9.7	11.4	0.0	11.1
	Intellectual disability	Number	2	0	6	0	6	6	0	0
		Rate	2.7	0.0	8.3	0.0	8.4	8.6	0.0	0.0
	Autism	Number	1	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
		Rate	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
	Emotionally Disturbed	Number	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Rate	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other disabilities	Number	6	0	15	0	8	3	19	12
		Rate	8.1	0.0	20.8	0.0	11.1	4.3	27.4	16.7

DATA PROVIDED BY
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Oral/Vision Health

Although TennCare has been revised, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in place, there are still issues at hand regarding insurance for the unemployed and for people whose jobs do not include health insurance. Since the State of Tennessee did not expand Medicaid many people in Tennessee and in Van Buren County still have no health insurance coverage because they are financially under income to apply for ACA. There is no plan at all for adult dental or vision. The Van Buren Health Department provides dental at Head Start twice a year if needed.

Health and wellness

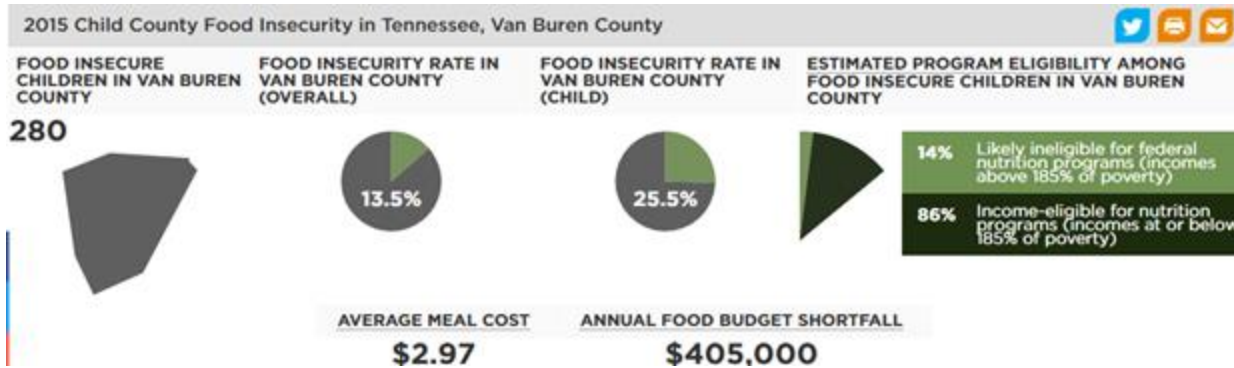
Health and Wellness VBHS prioritizes drug awareness education in our community by incorporating information in parent classes, informational flyers and brochures provided to families and the public. Addressing the health care situation, CoverKids (provides free health care for children under 18, with low co-pay for medical services) did return to accepting applications in March 2010. TennCare also holds open enrollments from time to time, but it still leaves many citizens lacking health care. VBHS will continue to advocate for health and dental care not only for our families but the community as well. Concerned about the lack of recreational programs, we work in conjunction with other organizations to provide low-cost activities.

Nutrition

An on-site cook provides food for the VBHS. Our program offers breakfast, lunch and snacks. Children eat in a family style setting socializing in a relaxed atmosphere. Our program strictly follows state and Head Start regulations regarding meals. The meals must be balanced according to State, Federal, and Head Start with USDA setting the standards nutritional guidelines. VBHS makes every attempt to make considerations for cultural preference, ethnic restrictions, identified needs, and nutritional requirements in menu preparation. Poor Nutrition can result in a poorer overall health status and a compromised ability to resist illness (Such as elevated occurrences of stomach aches, headaches, colds, and ear infections). Under nourishment can also be the cause of higher levels of aggression, hyperactivity, and anxiety, as well as passivity, impaired cognitive functioning and diminished capacity to learn lower test scores and poorer overall school achievement, increased school absences, tardiness, and school suspensions.

Food Insecurities and Food Deserts

Food insecurity means that people do not have enough nutritious food in the household to maintain health and wellbeing. Food deserts are places in the country where the availability of fresh, nutritious food is severely restricted. In the past, the main discussions of these two issues were primarily thought to be an inner-city problem. But it is a major problem in rural areas, too. The geographical demographics of Van Buren County alone assure that the area is a food desert. Within the isolated community, there is only one actual grocery store, and the quality and availability of fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods is very limited. If a family does not have transportation, they may have to rely on the local convenience market to provide food, with a very limited choice and high prices. Food insecurity is also a real problem. Many people rely heavily on programs such as WIC and SNAP, which often leaves them short by the end of the month. To aid in addressing this problem parents are encouraged to use the commodity program administered by the grantee, Bread for life ministries and the program maintains a food bank on site to fill the gaps. According to [Feeding America](#) 25.5 percentage of children in Van Buren County are living with food insecurity.



WIC
The Women Infant and Children (WIC) program provides nutrition education, approved supplemental food and formula, breastfeeding education and support to families with incomes based on 185 percent of the Federal Poverty level or below. Head Start eligible families meet the financial criteria to qualify for WIC. During program enrollment, each participating family is informed about the WIC program and referred for services as appropriate. VBHS provides nutritional education to parents and caregivers. All enrolled children receive a nutritious breakfast, hot lunch, and a snack.

Infants and children receiving WIC benefit in Van Buren

[Change Indicator](#)

Table | Map | Trends | Bar

SELECT TABLE TYPE: Detailed | Sort / Rank

SELECTIONS

Year(s): 2011-2020 | Data Type: All

[Raw Data](#) | [Definition & Sources](#)

Location	Data Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Van Buren	Number	266	219	208	175	170	144	154	154	164	136
	Percent	109.5%	91.6%	84.6%	75.1%	68.5%	48.8%	48.4%	47.5%	50.6%	40.6%

DATA PROVIDED BY
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are a significant risk factor for substance use disorders and can impact prevention efforts. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. They may also include household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have [substance use disorders](#). ACEs are strongly related to the development and prevalence of a wide range of health problems throughout a person's lifespan, including those associated with substance misuse. (<https://www.samhsa.gov/>)

ACEs include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Intimate partner violence
- Mother treated violently
- Substance misuse within household
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member



Safety and Crime

According to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, in Tennessee more than 555,000 crimes were reported in 2018, of which more than 853 crimes were in Van Buren County. The table below details on the crimes reported, for more detailed data, please visit: <https://www.areavibes.com/spencer-tn/crime/>

Spencer, TN Crime

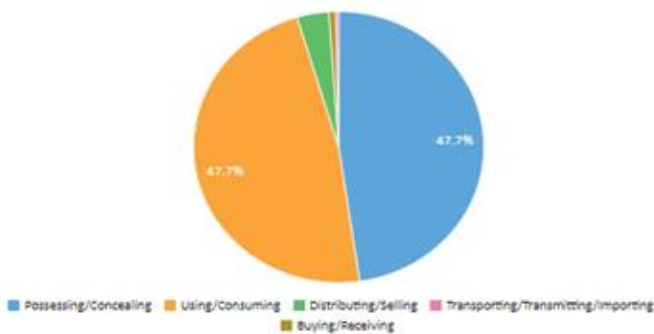
Date & Last Updated: This data reflects the 2019 calendar year and was released from the FBI in September, 2020; this is the most current data available.

Statistic	Reported incidents	Spencer /100k people	Tennessee /100k people	National /100k people
Total crime	12	729	3,248	2,489
Murder	0	0.0	7.3	5.0
Rape	0	0.0	41.2	42.6
Robbery	0	0.0	90.1	81.6
Assault	2	121.5	456.7	250.2
Violent crime	2	122	595	379
Burglary	0	0.0	437.4	340.5
Theft	8	486.0	1,934.4	1,549.5
Vehicle theft	2	121.5	280.9	219.9
Property crime	10	608	2,653	2,110

Prevalence of Drug Abuse

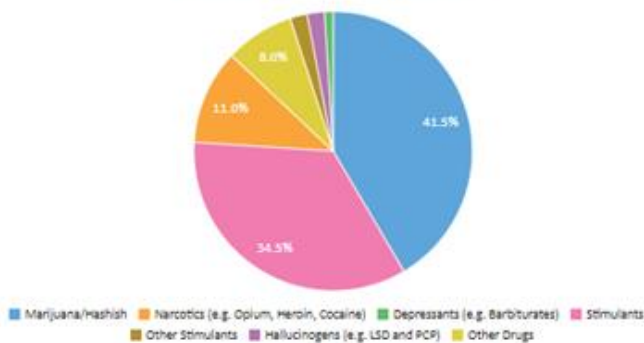
Tennessee has been gripped by a prescription opioid epidemic for some time. In 2008, the state ranked number one in the nation for opioid prescription drug abuse. Opioid-based painkillers are the most commonly cited drugs among rehab treatment admissions in Tennessee. In 2014, there were twice as many fatal overdoses from opioid prescription drugs than from motor vehicle accidents in Tennessee. Other substances contribute to the state's admissions, including marijuana, cocaine, stimulants, methamphetamine and heroin. A major reason why opioid prescription pills are so widely abused is because they're easy to get. Many people obtain the pills from others who were prescribed the drug. Others buy them from a dealer or steal from friends or relatives. To some, it may seem safer to get high off prescription drugs because they were prescribed by a doctor in the first place. But oftentimes, that turns out to be a fatal mistake. Despite fast-growing addiction rates, Tennessee residents have realized they need help and are turning to treatment. However, according to [Tennessee Inpatient Drug Rehab and Addiction](#) 2014, roughly 6.5 percent of adults ages 18 to 25 needed – but did not receive – treatment for a drug addiction. In Van Buren County Drug/narcotic violations have risen 48.93 percentage since 2017.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY TYPE
Drug Narcotics Violations

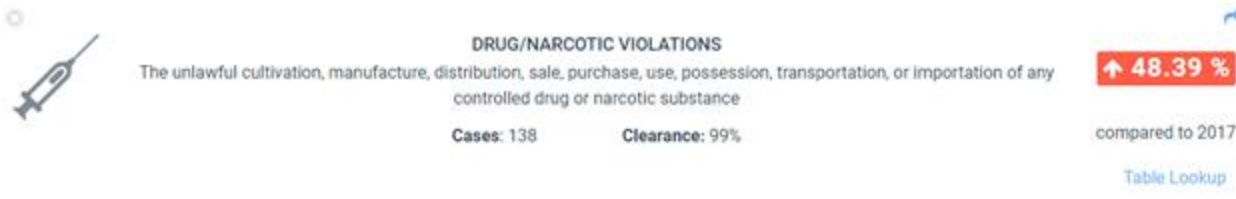


[Table Lookup](#)

SEIZED DRUGS BY DRUG TYPE

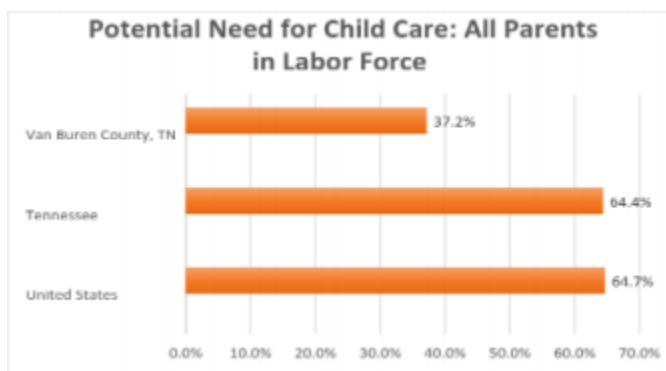


[Table Lookup](#)



Childcare

The only existing child care in Van Buren County consists of UCHRA VBHS with 40 child care spaces available and Van Buren County Board of Education’s Early Bird Preschool with 45 child care spaces available. These existing programs allow for a total of just 85 regulated child care spaces. There is no available daycare in the county for any children from 0-3 years old, which continues to be a concern and needed desperately with 85 percentage of Head Start children being served.



Identified Needs

Program Information Report (PIR) Comparison of Our Head Start, State, and National

PIR percentages for children enrolled for multiple years are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 22 percentage, State 26.15 percentage and National 34.60 percentage. Percentages of children enrolled less than 45 days are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 7 percentage, State 4.2 percentage, and National 3.89 percentage. Percentages of children and pregnant women (if EHS) who left the program and did not re-enroll are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 18 percentage, State 14.49 percentage, and National 14.63 percentage. These percentages reflect how transit Van Buren County is, due to the severe rural area in which we are located. There are not many job opportunities in which families can better themselves financially. Families are forced to move out of town where they can find better paying jobs closer to their homes and also be easier to transit to and from work. There is also an unsettling increased rate of drug manufacturing and distribution, due to this increase families are moving to either remove this growing epidemic from their child’s life or because they themselves have become addicted and need to move away from any and all drug related activities. Van Buren County is a small community which would make it hard for these individuals to move and be completely away from any negative influences that may impact their recovery. Percentages of children with health insurance at the beginning of enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 96 percentage, State 97.31 percentage, and National 96.93 percentage. Percentages of children with health insurance at end of enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 96 percentage, State 97.80 percentage, and National 96.93 percentage. Percentages of children with a medical home at beginning of enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 100 percentage, State 97.73 percentage, and National 95 percentage. Percentages of

children with a medical home at end of enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 100 percentage, State 98.57 percentage, and National 97.02 percentage. Percentages of children with a dental home at beginning of enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 46 percentage, State 99.02 percentage, and National 86.03 percentage. Percentages of children with a dental home at end of enrollment year are as follows: VBCHS 100 percentage, State 88.37 percentage, and National 92.91 percentage. The percentages here indicate the need for more doctors in our rural area. Van Buren County is so small often times we do not have enough economic growth to sustain any new doctor offices, so that pushes the community to have to go outside the county to find health care or dental care. Percentages of children with up-to-date immunization, all possible immunizations to date or exempt at beginning of enrollment year are as follows: VBCHS 98 percentage, State 98.05 percentage, and National 97.1 percentage. Percentages of children with up-to-date immunization, all possible immunizations to date or exempt at end of enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 98 percentage, State 98.53 percentage, and National 97.1 percentage.

Strengths/Needs of Eligible Families and Children

Family Needs Data

Needs of Children and Families VBCHS's 2018-2019 Program Information Report shows data that reflects its services provided and the need thereof. PIR data is as follows: 43 families were served last year including those enrolled that withdrew. Forty-six (46) children 14 were eligible, two were recipients of public assistance, 17 were homeless, 4 were 100-130 percentage above the poverty level, and 4 were over the income guidelines. Children were prioritized according to eligibility, disability and family problems/needs. Forty (40) received Medicaid (TennCare)/CHIP, 4 private insurances, 0 were enrolled in state funded insurance, 8 children were served for the second year, two for 3 years and 36 children attended for the first time. Income ranged from \$0 to \$5,5717 with a median of \$12,409.76. [PIR data for the 2019-2020 school term was not required due to the COVID-19 epidemic.](#)

Children from two parent homes:

- >14 had one parent working
- >2 had both parents working
- >5 had no parents working

Children from one parent homes:

- >15 had a working parent
- >7 did not have a working parent

The educational status of the family members enrolled is as follows:

- >3 had less than high school education
- >32 had high school diploma or GED
- >8 associate's degree, vocational or some college
- >0 had advanced degree

Enrollment by ethnicity was as follows:

- >48 White, Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino Origin
- >2 White, Hispanic or Latino Origin
- >1 Biracial/Multiracial

100 percentage children completed medical screenings and 98 percentage dental examinations. Three children were in the program for less than 45 days.

Survey Data

Characteristics of Respondents to Head Start Community Survey:

Issues defined as a result of a community wide survey:

1. Drug abuse: Adult
2. Shortage of affordable housing: families
3. Lack of child care: Infant Toddler (0-3)
4. Hunger
5. Lack of accessible and affordable medical care
6. Drug abuse: Youth
7. Homeless-Families
8. Shortage of recreational programs
9. Inadequate public transportation
10. Underemployment

19/20 Family surveys, which are conducted at the beginning of each program year, foreshow the top two areas of concern, which are indicated as families in crisis, were as follows:

- **Food:** Many people rely heavily on programs such as WIC and SNAP, which often leaves them short by the end of the month. To aid in addressing this problem and help fill in the gap's parents are encouraged to use the Commodity program administered by the grantee, Bread for Life ministries, Second Harvest ministries, and the food bank on site maintained by the program. Additionally, the program partners with other community programs to provide a snack pack service to enrolled children.
- **Employment:** Partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Career Centers support employment opportunities awareness. Employment opportunities are easily accessible and readily available for the parents/guardians and the community in the form of postings located at the Head Start Center, information being sent home to parents and through requested information contacts. Unfortunately, as you will see from the statistics, there is little opportunity for jobs in this area. This causes difficulty as any jobs that become available are out of the county, so people must commute some distance to work. Transportation costs are still an issue as fuel costs continue to escalate, making travel difficult. Opportunities are also made available at our yearly Jobs, Education, Health and Awareness Fair to assist and support parents and community with addressing this hardship.

In addition, key informant responses from the Van Buren County Health Council Priorities:

- >Tobacco use/smoking
- >Teen pregnancy
- >Heart conditions
- >Diabetes
- >Obesity
- >Cancer
- >Dental health
- >Teen alcohol and drug abuse
- >Adult alcohol and drug abuse

COVID 19 Epidemic

The COVID-19 epidemic has had a profound effect on the state, counties and town in Tennessee, and continues to climb in known cases. Testing continues to be sketchy. As of April 2020, unemployment surged to 14.7 percentage. Cases of disease continues to climb as businesses start to reopen.

Community Resources and Strengths

Resources, Collaborative/Formal Agreements and Partnerships utilized to address the focus of identified community issues as identified above are listed below but not limited to.

Tennessee Department of Children’s Services: Provides case management and social services to children adjudicated dependent/neglect, unruly or placed on Juvenile Justice Probation.

Tennessee Department of Human Services: Provides services including Families First, Food Stamps, TennCare and Emergency Services. Although these services are provided as a resource to the families and community, VBCHS has become a liaison for resources needed and used.

Cumberland Family Care Clinic: A medical facility that offers medical services through appointments or walk in need. These providers accept TennCare and Medicaid.

Van Buren County and Regional Health Department: Child Health, Immunization Shots, Primary Care, Family Planning, STD Control, Tuberculosis Control, Nutrition WIC (Woman, Infant and Children), Children Special Services, Prenatal, HUG (Help Us Grow), Vital Records, Health Education, General Environmental Health, Voter Registration Program, TennCare Outreach. They will see insured and uninsured adults and children, using a pay-scale measure and also offering assistance to obtain insurance.

University Of Tennessee

TNCEP Coalition- Tennessee Nutrition Consumer Education Program.

Head Start Program Resource Guide Resources families and community can access within the Upper Cumberland Region and referrals to services under the umbrella of the Grantee.

Strengths

Slower paced lifestyle, less traffic to move around the county and local communities.

Low crime rates in relation to gangs, carjacking, gun related crimes, safer schools.

Tight-knit Community with small-town hospitality.

More support, less competition for local businesses even though they might not always thrive because of low per capita income, but they don’t suffer from brand name competition. Around here, the saying is “Shop Local, Support Local.”

Lesser cost of living.

Weaknesses

Rural communities are often perceived as quiet, rustic and isolated, suggesting they are protected from the problems of the modern world. The reality is very different from these stereotypical ideologies. The challenges in our community consist of high rates of poverty, substance abuse, unemployment with no economic

opportunity, and lack of education. The composition of our community is predominately Caucasian with little or no exposure to diversity.

Program goals are as follows:

Goal 1: To advocate for and provide high-quality mental health services that are respectful and responsive through strengths-based and family-centered approaches to parents/children who have to ensure awareness and identification of the effects of Adverse Childhood Trauma and ensure a foundation of resilience is established for later developmental outcomes.

Goal 2: Professional Development Head Start programs must ensure all staff, consultants, and contractors have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and competencies to fulfill the roles and duties of their position. gaining new knowledge, skills, and abilities, along with experience and competencies that relate to one's profession, job responsibilities, or work environment.

Resources

1. Mother's Education Significant to Children's Academic Success, <https://news.umich.edu/mothers-education-significant-to-children-s-academic-success/>
2. Unemployment Rates by County (not seasonally adjusted) <https://data.bls.gov/map/MapToolServlet?survey=la>
3. United States Department of Labor, https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/data_views/data_views.htm#tab=Tables
4. The National Center for Children in Poverty <http://nccp.org/>
5. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
6. SSI Recipients by State and County, <https://www.ssa.gov/>
7. Out of Reach, <HTTPS://REPORTS.NLIHC.ORG/OOR/TENNESSEE>
8. HUD Programs datasets, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/assthsg.html#2009-2016_data
9. HUD Exchange, <https://www.hudexchange.info/>
10. U.S. Department of Education Guidance: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html>
11. National Center for Homeless Education, <http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=50>
12. Broadband Now, <http://broadbandnow.com/Tennessee>
13. TN Department of Education, <https://www.tn.gov/education/data/data-downloads.html>
14. Annie E Casey, Kids Count Data Center: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
15. Center for Parent Information and Resources, <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/categories>
16. IDEA Data, <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html>
17. Leading Causes of Death, <https://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10.html>
18. County Health Rankings, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/tennessee/2019/rankings/outcomes/overall>
19. State of Obesity, <http://stateofobesity.org/resources/>
20. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
21. Oral and Dental Health, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/dental.htm>
22. Children's Oral Health, <http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/childrens-oral-health-policy-issues-overview.aspx>
23. Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health, <http://childhealthdata.org/browse/survey>
24. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>

<http://everywomannc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Kessner-and-Kotelchuck-overview-provider-handout.pdf>

25. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
TN Department of Health, <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/statistics/health-data/birth-statistics.html>
26. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
27. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
28. USDA WIC Program, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wicmain.htm>
29. TN Department of Education, School Nutrition, <https://www.tn.gov/education/health-and-safety/school-nutrition.html>
30. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
31. Feeding America, <http://feedingamerica.org/>
32. Food Deserts, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert/>
33. Crime Statistics, <https://crimeinsight.tbi.tn.gov/public/Browse/browsetables.aspx>
34. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/maps/rxcounty2017.html>
35. TN Department of Health, <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/pdo/pdo/data-dashboard.html>
36. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
37. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>
38. Fostering Court Improvement, https://www.fosteringcourtimprovement.org/state_websites.php
39. The U.S. and the High Cost of Child Care: A Review of Prices and Proposed Solutions for a Broken System, <http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/research/costofcare/>
40. U.S. Census. American Community Survey, www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/