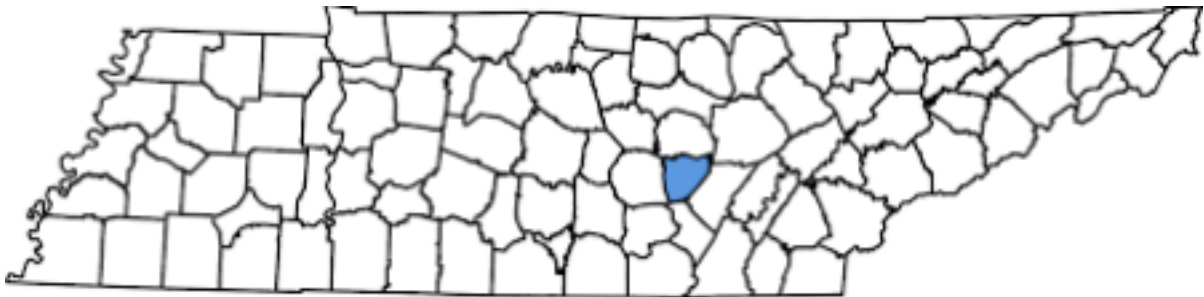




UC HRA
Van Buren County
Head Start

Community Assessment 2019/2024

REVISED 2022/2023



"HAND IN HAND, TOGETHER WE CAN"

Executive Summary	2
Service Area Data	2
Needs of Children and Families	2
Chosen Program Option and Funded Enrollment.....	4
Center and Facilities.....	4
Continuous Improvement.....	4
Technological Advances.....	4
Staff	4
Community Strengths and Weakness.....	5
Making a Difference.....	5
State of Grantee.....	5
Methodology	7
Geography	7
Population and Demographic Data.....	8
Population Growth and Change	8
Racial and Ethnic Characteristics/Language.....	9
Religion.....	9
Sex and Age.....	10
Households.....	11
Grandparents and Grandchildren.....	11
Social and Economic Status.....	12
Economic Features and Trends.....	13
Economy.....	14
Poverty.....	15
Federal Assistance Benefits.....	16
Housing and Homelessness.....	16
Disabilities	19
Oral/Vision Health	19
Health and Wellness.....	19
Nutrition.....	19
Food Insecurities and Food Deserts.....	20
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).....	20
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).....	21
Safety and Crime.....	21
Prevalence of Drug Abuse.....	22
Early Childhood Education Programs.....	23
Identified Needs PIR.....	23
Strengths/Needs of Eligible Children and Families.....	23
Family Needs Data.....	24
Survey Data.....	24
Community Resources	25
Program Goals.....	26
Resources.....	27

Executive Summary 2022

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start

Service and Recruitment Area: 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 to flourish. With a total land area of 275 square miles of mountainous 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 Van Buren County Head Start experiences are limited to no access to 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 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 oftentimes cannot service a child in need due to these circumstances. Additionally, the Amish-Mennonite 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 per their cultural beliefs.

Needs of Children and Families:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 5.6% of Van Buren County's [total population is children ages zero to five years of age](#). 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 in the home language when possible. Spanish is the primary language encountered by the 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 obtaining High School Equivalency, a 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 to go to neighboring towns and counties. Food, health care, and housing costs have continued to skyrocket while wages have become stagnant. 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 have 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 from 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 a 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 continue to be a concern for the community. Families in the community increasingly rely on community programs such as SNAP 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 the 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.

2022-2023 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, 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 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 rise, making travel difficult. Opportunities are also made available at our yearly Jobs, Education, Health, and Awareness Fair to assist and support parents and the community in addressing this hardship.

Chosen program option and Funded Enrollment Slots

Van Buren County Head Start is funded to serve 37 children ages 3-5 in one facility, which spans one county. Van Buren County 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 is an older building and does require continual upkeep. The facility is the only one available for program use in the county.

Continuous Improvement

The Van Buren County 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. Van Buren County 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 Van Buren County Head Start, to be more efficient and reduce man hours and costs. In addition to our automated calling system, website, and Facebook page, all of which allow us to stay in touch with families, staff, 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 at 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 which 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 the 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 a degree

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

- Slower-paced lifestyle, less traffic to move around the county and local communities.
- Crime rates are safer than the Tennessee state average and safer than the national average.
 - Tight knit Community with small-town hospitality.
- 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. The challenges in our community consist of:

- high rates of poverty
- substance abuse
- unemployment with no economic opportunity
- lack of education
- lack of affordable housing

Making a Difference

Every year, Van Buren County 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 (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 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 www.uchra.org/<https://ucdd.org> 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 seeking 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 (WP)** 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:

>**UCHRA Public Transportation** 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 congregate site. Nutrition education is provided monthly to the congregate 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 aged 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

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 County Head Start (VBCHS)** 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

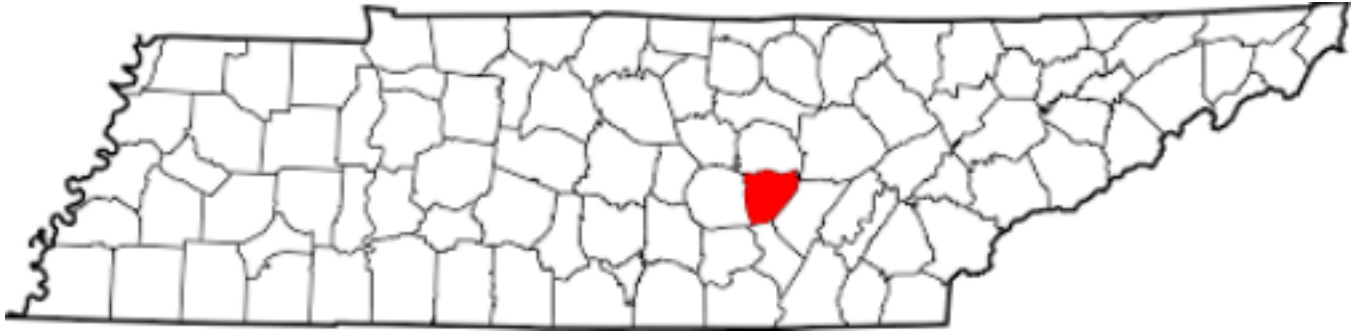
Head Start must conduct a Community Assessment within the service area once every five years. The variety of information was obtained in 2019 through a network of data sources and data gathering techniques, analyzed, and utilized for assessment of the Van Buren County community. Utilizing sources as 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 the 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 the 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

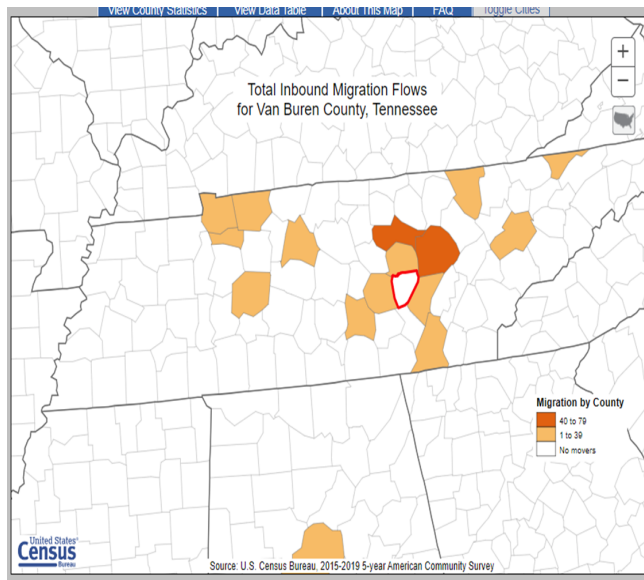
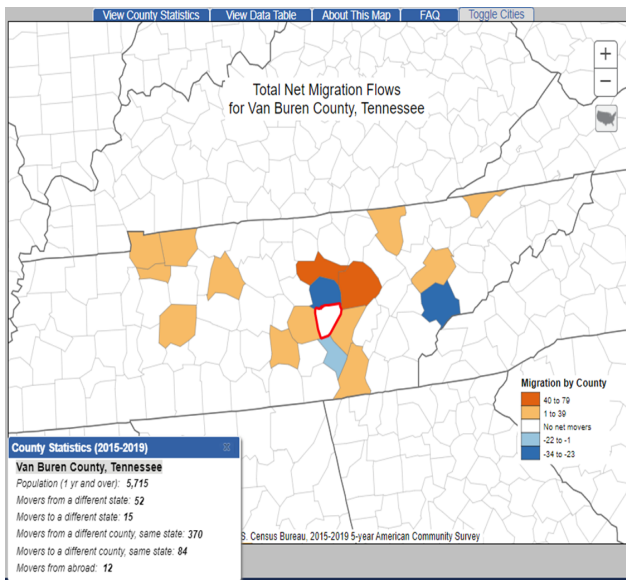
Population Growth and Change

Based on the 2022 Census, the total population of Tennessee was 7,051,339, up 2.0 percent from 6,910,840 in 2020. Census estimates from 2020 indicate that Tennessee's population grew by an additional 0.8 percent (compared with .1 percent for the United States) from 2020 to 2021, reaching more than 6.9 million residents. The population in Van Buren County is 6,324 with a growth rate of 2.5 percent in the past year according to the most recent United States census data. [Census Data VanBuren County](#)

Population	
Population Estimates, July 1 2021, (V2021)	6,324
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020, (V2021)	6,168
Population, percent change - April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2021, (V2021)	2.5%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	6,168
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: [U.S. County Migration Patterns](#) -illustrates the domestic inbound and outbound migration flows for Van Buren County. The top two counties reporting inbound migration included Cumberland County, TN, and Putnam County TN. The top two counties reporting outbound migration included White County, TN, and Sequatchie County, TN.



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 (75.8 percent), 13.6 percent are black/African American, 6.1 percent are Asian, and 2.9 percent identify as having two or more races. In Tennessee 78.2 percent of the population is White; 17 percent are Black/African American, 2 percent are Asian, and 2.2 percent identify as having two or more races. In Van Buren County, the population is predominantly white, 96.7 percent, respectively. The black/African American population only accounts for 1 percent of the population. In the United States, 18.9 percent of the population is Hispanic/Latino; in Tennessee, only 6.1 percent of the population is Hispanic/Latino. In Van Buren County 2.2 percent of the population is Hispanic/Latino.

Statistics for United States, Tennessee and Van Buren County: Race and Hispanic Origin

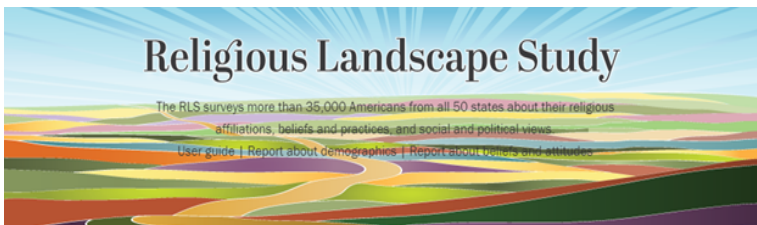
All Topics	United States	Tennessee	Van Buren County, Tennessee
Population Estimates, July 1 2021, (V2021)	332,031,554	6,968,351	6,324
Race and Hispanic Origin			
White alone, percent	75.8%	78.2%	96.7%
Black or African American alone, percent (a)	13.6%	17.0%	1.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a)	1.3%	0.5%	0.6%
Asian alone, percent (a)	6.1%	2.0%	0.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a)	0.3%	0.1%	Z
Two or More Races, percent	2.9%	2.2%	1.4%
Hispanic or Latino, percent (b)	18.9%	6.1%	2.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	59.3%	73.1%	94.9%



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.

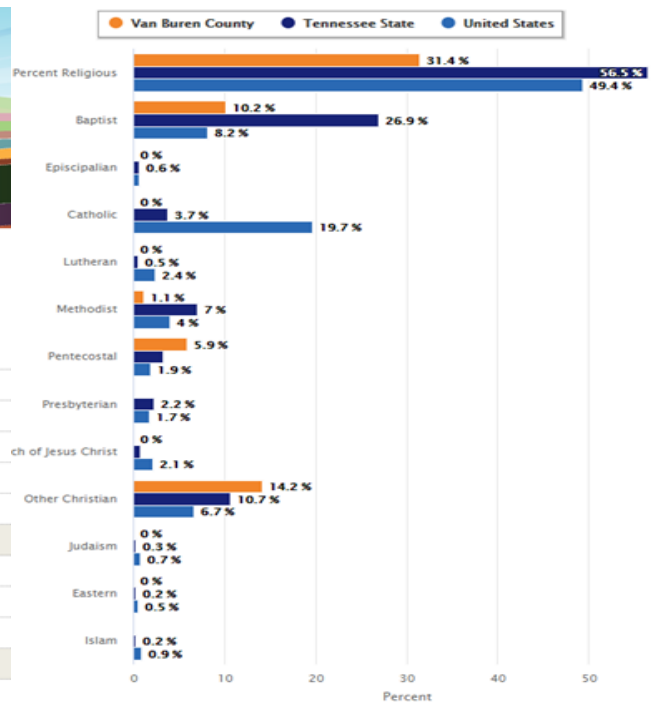
Worship attendance, prayer frequency, belief in God and the self-described importance of religion in one's life were the four measures of religious observance used by Pew Research to determine the rankings. Seventy-eight percent of people in Tennessee say they believe in God with absolute certainty, 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). [Religion in Van Buren County, Tennessee](#)



Religions

Explore religious groups in the U.S. by tradition, family and denomination

Religion	Percentage	Religion	Percentage
Christian	70.8%	Non-Christian Faiths	5.9%
▶ Evangelical Protestant	25.4%	Jewish	1.9%
▶ Mainline Protestant	14.7%	Muslim	0.9%
▶ Historically Black Protestant	6.5%	Buddhist	0.7%
Catholic	20.8%	Hindu	0.7%
▶ Mormon	1.6%	Other World Religions	0.3%
▶ Orthodox Christian	0.5%	▶ Other Faiths	1.5%
Jehovah's Witness	0.8%	Unaffiliated (religious "nones")	25.8%
▶ Other Christian	0.4%	Atheist	3.1%
		Agnostic	4.0%
		▶ Nothing in particular	15.8%
		Don't know	0.6%



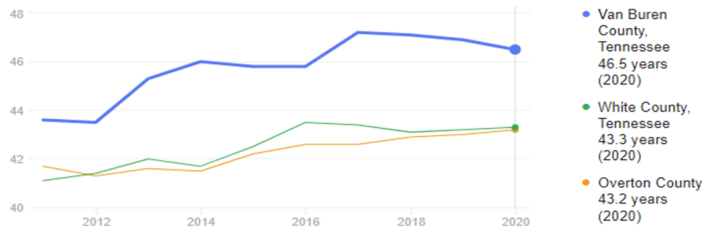
Sex and Age

[U.S. Census Data](#) indicates that approximately 49.5 percent of the United States population is male, and 50.5 percent is female. The youngest residents of Van Buren County, those below the age of 5, make up 5.6 percent and 5.7 percent of the population in the United States. The median age in Tennessee is slightly higher than for the United States overall, 38.8 years, compared with 37.8 years nationally. The median age for Van Buren County is even higher, at 46.5 years.

Age and Sex	United States	Tennessee	Van Buren County, Tennessee
Population Estimates, July 1 2022, (V2022)	333,287,557	7,051,339	NA
Age and Sex			
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.7%	5.8%	5.6%
Persons under 18 years, percent	22.2%	22.1%	20.7%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	16.8%	17.0%	24.0%
Female persons, percent	50.5%	51.0%	49.5%

Van Buren County / Population / Median Age

46.5 years (2020)



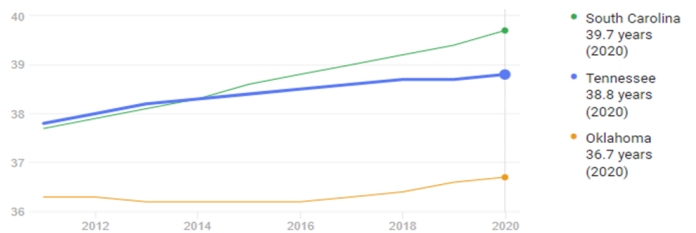
Explore more →

Sources include: United States Census Bureau

Feedl

Tennessee / Population / Median Age

38.8 years (2020)



Explore more →

Sources include: United States Census Bureau

Fee

Households

Of the 2.7+ million households in Tennessee, according to [Data Census.gov](https://data.census.gov) 66.7 percent are married family households with children under age 18; 25.2 percent are single female households with children under age 18; 8.0 percent are single male households with children under age 18. In Van Buren County, 42.1 percent of households are married family households with children under age 18; 26.6 percent are single male households with children under age 18; and 51.8 percent, are single female households with children under age 18.

S1101|HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

2021: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Tennessee				
	Total	Married-couple family household	Male household...	Female householder, no spous...
Label	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
HOUSEHOLDS				
Total households	2,770,395	1,303,575	131,888	347,350
Average household size	2.46	3.11	3.15	3.28
FAMILIES				
Total families	1,782,813	1,303,575	131,888	347,350
Average family size	3.06	3.08	2.78	3.08
AGE OF OWN CHILDREN				
Households with own children of the householder under 18 years	692,832	462,400	55,546	174,886
Under 6 years only	21.9%	22.5%	24.3%	19.4%
Under 6 years and 6 to 17 years	19.4%	20.7%	14.8%	17.5%
6 to 17 years only	58.7%	56.8%	60.9%	63.1%

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, incarceration of parents, substance abuse by parents, illness, disability or death of parents, and parental abuse or neglect. 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 responsibilities 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 adolescents of a different generation can be great. Grandparent-headed households have a significantly higher poverty rate than other kinds of family units."

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

According to the [Data Census](#) in Tennessee, more than 145,000 grandchildren (under age 18) live with their grandparents , of which 46 percent are responsible for the care of their grandchildren. In Van Buren County, 183 grandchildren live with their grandparents, of which 5.4 percent are responsible for the care of their grandchildren.

	Tennessee	Van Buren County, Tennessee
Label	Estimate	Estimate
▼ Total:	146,422	183
▼ Grandparent householder responsible for own grandchildren under 18 years:	82,535	45
Parent present	44,495	35
No parent present	38,040	10
Grandparent householder not responsible for own grandchildren under 18 years	63,887	138

Social and Economic Status

Education

The Van Buren County Head Start is important to the community for not only providing much-needed early education to young children in an impoverished community but also providing 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, Van Buren County Head Start teaches parents that they are the child's most influential and most loved teacher, and assists them by working with parents to teach them to work with their children at home. We are proud of our parent's commitment to 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 in children joy and zest for learning that lasts a lifetime.

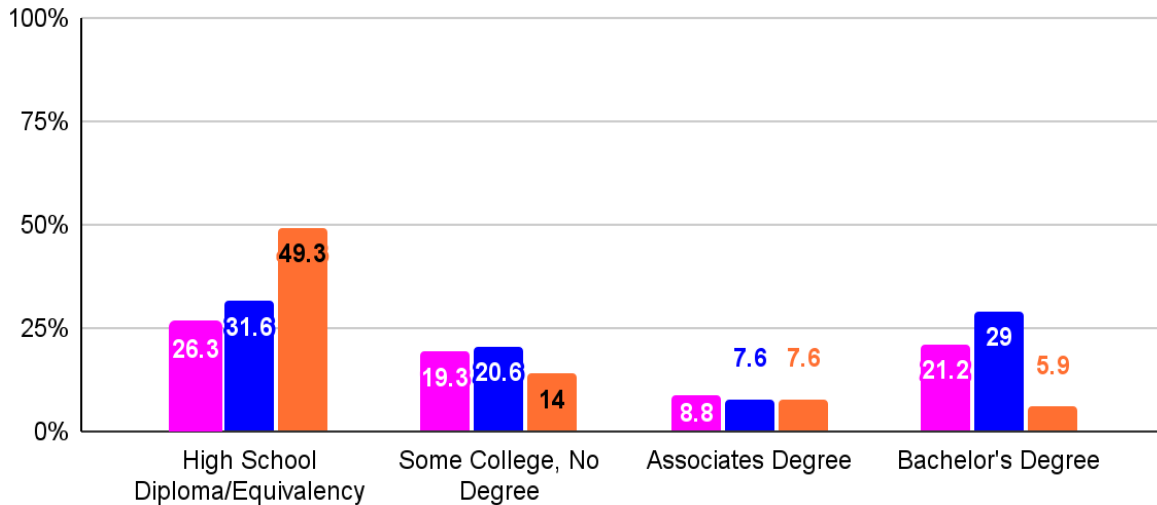
Van Buren County Head Start advocates for reading programs. We have 13 literacy programs at Head Start. Through these programs, we emphasize the importance of reading to families and strive to get the whole family involved. We refer parents to the local Adult Education program to aid parents in obtaining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

In addition to Van Buren County Head Start, Van Buren County has a preschool program, one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. The 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 has to travel short distances outside the county to attend.

According to the Educational Attainment Population Age 25+ (2021 ACS 1-Year Estimates) [Census Data](#) in the United States approximately 26.3 percent of the adult population age 25+ have a high school diploma or equivalency; Tennessee approximately 31.6 percent of the adult population age 25+ have a high school diploma or equivalency; in Van Buren County, rates are higher, at 49.3 percentage. The percentage of the adult population with a bachelor's degree in the United States 21.2 percent and Tennessee 29 percent. In Van Buren County, the percentage of the population, age 25 and older, with a bachelor's degree or higher is much lower than in Tennessee, at 5.9 percent.

Tennessee & Van Buren County, Tennessee ACS 5-Year Estimates Educational Attainment

■ United States ■ Tennessee Educational Attainment Breakdown
■ Van Buren County, Tennessee Educational Attainment Breakdown



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 the county, so people must travel a great 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 the community with addressing this need. Vendors providing employment opportunities include but are not limited to Bledsoe County Corrections Complex, Generations Nursing Home/Rehabilitation center, Sunkote, Acument Global Technologies, Onin Staffing, and 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 by Age			
Population Age	Labor Force Rate %	Employment Rate %	Unemployment Rate %
16 to 19 years	42.4	32.8	22.5
20 to 24 years	75.9	75.9	0

25 to 29 years	67.5	58.2	13.8
30 to 34 years	72.1	72.1	7.6
35 to 44 years	70.2	64.9	0.0
45 to 54 years	73.2	73.2	2.9
55 to 59 years	55.4	53.8	0.0
60 to 64 years	54.4	54.4	0.0
65 to 74 years	12.6	12.6	0.0



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 percent 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.

Acument Global Technology: Employs 136 people. These are mostly machine-operating jobs. Hourly pay rates are approximately \$12.49 to \$16.00 per hour. Approximately 80 percent 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 \$12.95 for unskilled work (dishwasher, prep cook, room set-up, etc), \$14.25 for skilled line cooks per hour to salaried staff and management positions up to \$30 per hour. Approximately 56 percent of these are seasonal or 6-9-month positions and one-half of the total 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 percent of the staff is Van Buren County residents.

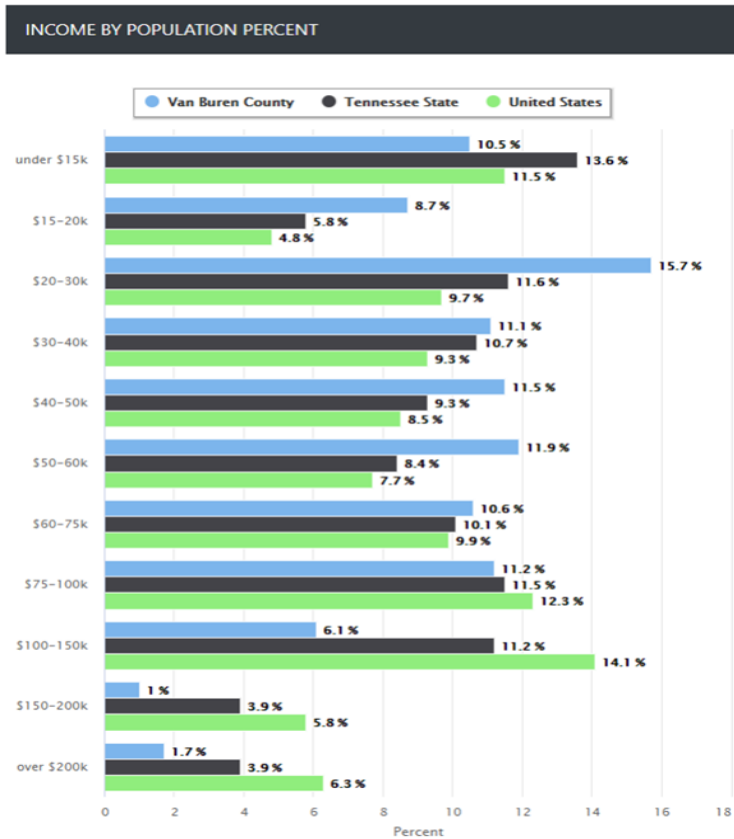
Generations of Spencer: Employs 90 people with approximately 75 percent of staff from Van Buren County. Hourly rates of pay are \$9.25 to 12.50 per hour. Others are comparable rates of LPN and RN staff. Most positions are hourly.

Economy

Van Buren County has an unemployment rate of 6.9 percent. The US average is 6.0 percent. [Van Buren County, Tennessee Economy Data](#) shows that Van Buren County has seen the job market decrease by -6.6 percent over the last year. Future job growth over the next ten years is predicted to be 33.0 percent, which is lower than the US average of 33.5 percent. The Sales Tax Rate for Van Buren County is 9.8 percent. The US average is 6.2 percent. The average income of a Van Buren County resident is \$20,672 a year. The US average is \$31,177 a year. The Median household income of a Van Buren County resident is \$51,014 a year. The US average is \$70,850 a year.

Income and Salaries for Van Buren County

- 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.



Poverty

[The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) issues the Federal Poverty Guidelines in the Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines. The Poverty Guidelines for a family of four in 2023 is \$30,000. 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 has increased dramatically over the past 50 years.

Poverty in Tennessee. Per the [U.S. Census Bureau 2021 Poverty Status](#) 13.6 percent of the population in Tennessee lives in poverty (more than 927,587 individuals), and 18.1 percent of children, ages 0-18, live in poverty (more than 272,142 children). More than 72,041 Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children, ages 0 to 5, live in poverty in Tennessee. In Van Buren County, 17.3 percent of the population lives in poverty, and 13.4 percent of children between the ages of 0 to 18 live in poverty. More than 300 Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children, ages 0 to 5, live in poverty in Van Buren County.

Federal Assistance Benefits

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Based on data from [Kids Count Data Center](#), there were a total of 1.7 percent of children in 2021 in Tennessee who received Families First assistance (Tennessee's TANF). In Van Buren County, children, .8 percent received assistance.

Location	Data Type	2021
Van Buren	Number	9
	Percent	0.8%

DATA PROVIDED BY
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits, or SSI, provide 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 2021, 21,804 children under age 18 received SSI benefits in Tennessee, of which 12 children were in Van Buren County.

Number of SSI Recipients by Age (Dec 2021) Source: ssa.gov				
Total		Age		
		< 18	18–64	65+
United States	8,128,652	1,148,038	4,714,234	2,266,380
Tennessee	166,783	21,804	111,416	33,563
Van Buren County	147	12	91	44

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 2022, 28 percent of Tennessee's households were renters; the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom home in Tennessee is \$709/month. To be able to rent a two-bedroom home, without exceeding 30 percent of one's income, a renter must earn \$28,377 annually, yet the median income for a renter in Tennessee is \$31,509. With a median income of \$31,509, a renter can afford \$461 for a home, \$248 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 \$18,460, \$150 more than the Poverty Guidelines level for a family of two (which is \$18,310). The rent that someone defined as extremely low income can afford is only \$461 per month, \$248 less than the fair market value of a two-bedroom home. There are data stats with an extreme lack of affordable housing across the Upper Cumberland area.

GEO	ST	STNAME	COUNTY/METRO	Total households (2016-2020)	Renter households (2016-2020)	% of total households that are renters (2016-2020)	Two bedroom FMR	Annual AMI	30% of AMI	50% of AMI	Estimated median renter household income	Rent affordable at 30% AMI	Rent affordable at 50% AMI	Rent affordable at median renter household income	Income needed to afford 2 bdrm FMR
NONMETRO	TN	Tennessee		579,455	160,766	28%	\$709	\$61,533	\$18,460	\$30,767	\$31,509	\$461	\$769	\$788	\$28,377
COUNTY	TN	Tennessee	Van Buren County	2,242	449	20%	\$676	\$58,200	\$17,460	\$29,100	\$22,027	\$437	\$728	\$551	\$27,040

Homelessness

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 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 May 2021, using data from 2018-2019 [US Department of Education Data](#). The report indicates that in Tennessee almost 19,000 children under the age of 6 were identified as homeless.

Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles: Tennessee (2018-19)

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.

Early Childhood Homelessness

Children under age 6

Total population²

491,248

Estimated number
experiencing homelessness³

18,692

or

1 in **26** children

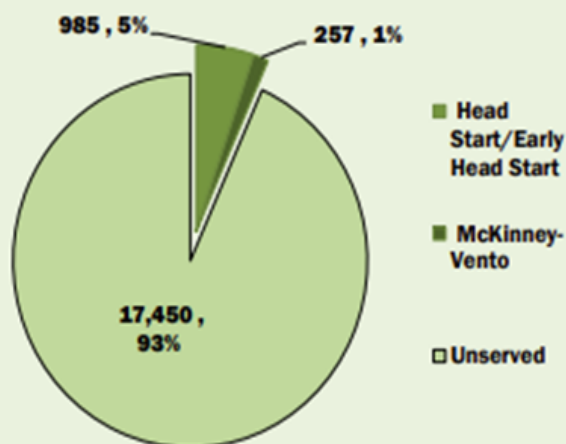


Early Childhood Education for Children Experiencing Homelessness

Children under age 6
experiencing homelessness

7% served by Head Start/Early Head Start or
McKinney-Vento funded ECE programs in 2019⁵

Tennessee



Related Factors

Families experiencing homelessness, whether chronic or episodic, often face other barriers to affordable housing. By understanding these related challenges, states can create sustainable and proactive policy solutions that better address homelessness in their communities.



29% of families
with children under 18
have a high housing
cost burden⁴



11% of children
under age six had no
resident parent in the
U.S. labor force⁴

For detailed information on indicator definitions, data sources, and methodology, please see Appendix III.

Notes:

- McCoy-Roth, M., Mackintosh, B.B., & Murphey, D. (2012). When the bough breaks: The effects of homelessness on young children. *Early Childhood Highlights*, p. 3. <https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/2012-08EffectHomelessnessChildren.pdf>
- U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. (June 2020). SC-EST2019-AGESEX-CIV: Annual Estimates of the Civilian Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States and States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-detail.html>
- Calculations by authors using methodology established by Bassuk, et al. (2014) and 2019 data from U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT data center.
- Data from U.S. Department of Education. (2020). *Consolidated State Performance Reports, Part I* and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved July 23 2020. *Program Information Reports*. Data on children under 6 experiencing homelessness served through Federally-funded child care & home visiting programs collected for the first time in 2017. Percentages in the pie chart may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Disabilities

The percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in Van Buren Head Start in the middle of the 2022-2023 school term equaled 10 percent. Past years have shown percentages as high as 34 percent. The Head Start program has never fallen below the required 10 percent. The current percentage is projected to increase due to many unknown health effects and factors related to methamphetamine, opioids, heroin and fentanyl use by pregnant mothers and used in homes with small children and the increase in the diagnosis of disabling conditions such as autism. The Van Buren County School System provides disability services to 16.1 percent of their currently enrolled children as of December 2022, the information provided by the Director of Special Education (Virginia Baker) in the 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.

Total District Enrollment: 789, Students With Disabilities: 16.1%, Dec. 1, 2022 Report

Autism: 10%

Developmental Delay: 9%

Emotionally Disturbed: 2%

Other Health Impairment: 12%

Intellectual Disability: 2%

Speech/Language Impairment: 30%

Specific Learning Disability: 29%

Hearing Impairment: 2%

Orthopedic Impairment: 1%

Multiple Disabilities: 2%

Visual Impairment: 1%

Oral/Vision Health

Although TennCare has been revised, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is 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 Van Buren County still have no health insurance coverage because they are financially under income to apply for the 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 a 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 the health and dental care not only for our families but for the community as well. Concerned about the lack of recreational programs, we work in conjunction with other organizations to provide low-cost activities.

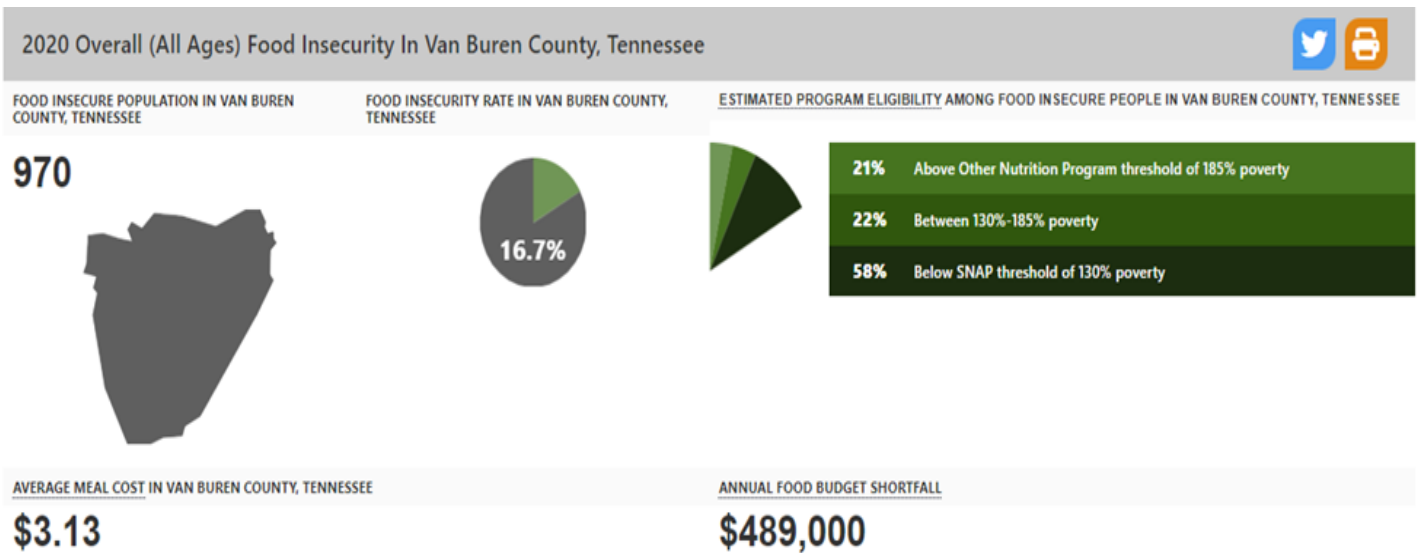
Nutrition

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 standard 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 poorer overall health status and a compromised ability to resist

illness (Such as elevated occurrences of stomach aches, headaches, colds, and ear infections). Undernourishment can also be the cause of higher levels of aggression, hyperactivity, and anxiety, as well as passivity, impaired cognitive functioning, 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 well-being. 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 inner-city problems. 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 are very limited. If a family does not have transportation, they may have to rely on the local convenience market to provide food, with very limited choices 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 percent of children in Van Buren County are living with food insecurity.



WIC

The [Women Infants 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 benefits from Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program in Van Buren

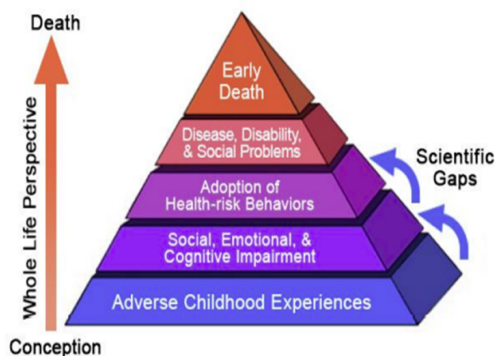
Location	Data Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Van Buren	Number	219	208	175	170	144	154	154	164	136	107
	Percent	91.6%	84.6%	75.1%	68.5%	48.8%	48.4%	47.5%	50.6%	40.8%	30.4%

DATA PROVIDED BY
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

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. When children are exposed to chronic stressful events, their neurodevelopment can be disrupted. As a result, the child’s cognitive functioning and/or ability to cope with negative or disruptive emotions may be impaired. Over time, and often during adolescence, the child may adopt unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as substance use or self-harm. Eventually, these coping mechanisms can contribute to disease, disability, and social problems, as well as premature mortality.

Lifespan Impact of ACEs



Safety and Crime

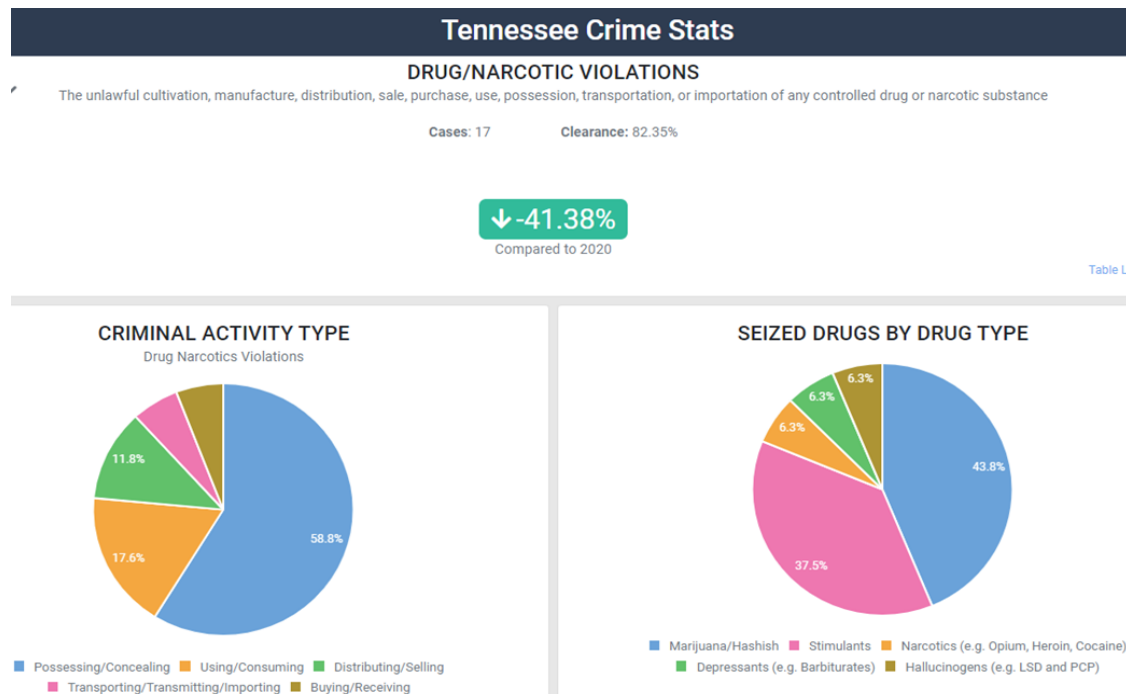
According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in Tennessee, more than 555,000 crimes were reported in 2020, of which more than 2,000 crimes were in Van Buren County. The table below details the crimes reported, for more detailed data, please visit: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Date & Last Updated: This data reflects the 2020 calendar year and was released from the FBI in September, 2021; this is the most current data available.

Statistic	Reported Incidents	Spencer /100k People	Tennessee /100k People	National /100k People
Total crime	12	706	3,166	2,346
Murder	0	0.0	9.6	6.5
Rape	0	0.0	38.9	38.4
Robbery	0	0.0	81.0	73.9
Assault	1	58.8	543.2	279.7
Violent crime	1	59	673	388
Burglary	1	58.8	384.5	314.2
Theft	9	529.4	1,802.0	1,398.0
Vehicle theft	1	58.8	306.4	246.0
Property crime	11	647	2,493	1,958

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 that 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 Crime Stats](#), indicates the drug violations have decreased at a rate of 41.38 percent since 2020.



Childcare

The only existing child care facilities in Van Buren County consists of UCHRA Van Buren Head Start with 40 child care spaces available and Van Buren County Board of Education's Early Bird Preschool with 50 child care spaces available. These existing programs allow for a total of just 90 regulated child care spaces with 33.7 percent of Van Buren County children being served. There is also no available daycare in the county for any children from 0-3 years old, which continues to be a concern and is needed desperately.

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 28 percent, State 26.15 percent, and National 34.60 percent. Percentages of children enrolled less than 45 days are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 8 percent, State 4.2 percent, and National 3.89 percent. 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 percent, State 14.49 percent, and National 10 percent. 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 either to remove this growing epidemic from their child's life or because they have become addicted and need to move away from 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 the enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 98 percent, State 96 percent, and National 94 percent.

Percentages of children with health insurance at the end of the enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 96 percent, State 95. percent, and National 95 percent.

Percentages of children with a medical home at the beginning of the enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 94 percent, State 93 percent, and National 92 percent.

Percentages of children with a medical home at the end of the enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 98 percent, State 96 percent, and National 94 percent.

Percentages of children with a dental home at the beginning of the enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 54 percent, State 69 percent, and National 85 percent.

Percentages of children with a dental home at the end of the enrollment year are as follows: VBCHS 66 percent, State 75 percent, and National 85 percent. The percentages here indicate the need for more doctors in our rural area. Van Buren County is so small, oftentimes 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 the beginning of enrollment year are as follows: VBCHS 68 percent, State 79 percent, and National 91 percent. Percentages of children with up-to-date immunization, all possible immunizations to date or exempt at the end of enrollment year are as follows: Van Buren County Head Start 64 percent, State 78 percent, and National 93 percent. [2022 PIR National Snapshot Report](#)

Strengths/Needs of Eligible Families and Children Family Needs Data

Needs of Children and Families VBCHS's 2021-2022 Program Information Report shows data that reflects its services provided and the need thereof. PIR data is as follows: 45 families were served last year including those enrolled and withdrawn. 50 children services at Head Start, (2 were eligible, 3 were recipients of public assistance, 34 were homeless, 1 was 100-130 percent above the poverty level, and 0 were over the income guidelines). Children were prioritized according to eligibility, disability, and family problems/needs. 45 received Medicaid (TennCare)/CHIP, 4 private insurances. 11 children were served for

the second year, 3 for 3 or more years, and 36 children attended for the first time. Income ranged from \$0 to \$5,5717 with a median of \$12,409.76.

Children from two-parent homes: 26

> 30 had one parent working

> 5 had both parents working

>15 had no parents working

Children from one-parent homes: 19

>10 had a working parent

>9 did not have a working parent

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

>0 had less than a high school education

>31 had a high school diploma or GED

>10 associate's degrees, vocational or some college

>1 had an advanced degree

Enrollment by ethnicity was as follows:

>47 White, Non-Hispanic, or Non-Latino Origin

>1 White, Hispanic, or Latino Origin

>2 Biracial/Multiracial

100 percent of the children completed medical screenings and 98 percent completed dental examinations.

4 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 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 the community in 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 towns in Tennessee, and continues to climb in known cases. Testing continues to be sketchy. As of April 2020, unemployment surged to 14.7 percent. Cases of the illness continue 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/neglected, 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 needs. 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

Rural communities have a slower paced lifestyle, less traffic to move around the county and local communities, crime rates are safer than the Tennessee average and safer than the national average, tight-knit community with small-town hospitality, and 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 ideologies. The challenges in our community consist of high rates of poverty, substance abuse, unemployment with no economic opportunity, lack of education, and lack of affordable housing. .

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

- Pg. 2 U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/vanburencountytennessee/PST045221>
- Pg. 4 Van Buren County Head Start
<https://www.ucvbheadstart.org/>
- Pg. 5 Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency
<https://uchra.org/>
- Pg. 8 U.S. Census Bureau: Quickfacts Van Buren County, Tennessee
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/vanburencountytennessee>
- Pg. 8 U.S. Census Bureau: Van Buren County, Tennessee Migration Pattern
<https://flowsmapper.geo.census.gov/map.html#>
- Pg. 9 U.S. Census Bureau: Quickfacts
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US_TN_vanburencountytennessee/PST045222#PST045222
- Pg. 9 Best Places: Religion in Van Buren County, Tennessee
https://www.bestplaces.net/religion/county/tennessee/van_buren
- Pg. 10 U.S. Census Bureau: Quickfacts
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US_TN_vanburencountytennessee/PST045222#PST045222
- Pg. 11 U.S. Census Bureau: Families and Household
<https://data.census.gov/table?q=Families+and+Household+Characteristics&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S1101>
- Pg. 12 U.S. Census Bureau: Grandparents and Grandchildren
https://data.census.gov/table?q=Grandparents&g=0400000US47_0500000US47175&y=2021&tid=ACSST5Y2021.B10001&moe=false
- Pg. 12 U.S. Census Bureau: Educational Attainment
https://data.census.gov/table?q=Educational+Attainment&g=0400000US47_0500000US47175
- Pg. 13 U.S. Census Bureau: Employment and Labor Force Status
<https://data.census.gov/table?t=Employment+and+Labor+Force+Status&g=0500000US47175&tid=ACSST5Y2021.S2301&moe=false>
- Pg. 14 Best Places: Economy in Van Buren County, Tennessee
https://www.bestplaces.net/economy/county/tennessee/van_buren
- Pg. 15 ASPE: HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2023
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>
- Pg. 15 U.S. Census Bureau: Poverty Status and Employment and Labor Force Status
https://data.census.gov/table?q=poverty&t=Employment+and+Labor+Force+Status&g=0400000US47_0500000US47175&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S1701&moe=false
- Pg. 16 Kids Count Data Center: Children Receiving Families First Grants (TANF) in Tennessee
<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/2983-children-receiving-families-first-grants-temporary-assistance-to-needy-families-tanf?loc=44&loct=2#detailed/2/any/false/2048/any/13220,10111>
- Pg. 16 Social Security: SSI Recipients by State and County, 2021
https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_sc/2019/tn.html
- Pg. 16 National Low Income Housing Coalition
<https://nlihc.org/oor/state/tn>
- Pg. 17 U.S. Department of Education Data: Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/homeless/early-childhood-homelessness-state-profiles-2021.pdf>
- Pg. 19 U.S. Department of Education Data: Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/homeless/early-childhood-homelessness-state-profiles-2021.pdf>
- Pg. 20 Kids Count Data Center: Students Age 3 to 21 Receiving Special Education Services by Type in Tennessee
<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/8368-students-age-3-to-21-receiving-special-education-services-by-type#detail/2/any/false/2048.1729.37.871.870.573.869.36.868/4331.4332.4333.4400.4397.3728.4398.4336/16961.16962>
- Pg. 21 Feeding America: Food Insecurity Among Overall (All Ages) Population in Van Buren County
<https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/tennessee/county/van-buren>
- Pg. 21 Kids Count Data Center: Infants and Children Receiving Benefits from WIC Program in Van Buren
<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/2999-infants-and-children-receiving-benefits-from-women-infant-and-children-wic-program#detailed/5/6507/false/2048.574.1729.37.871.870.573.869.36.868/any/13222.10115>
- Pg. 22 Areavibes: Spencer, TN Crime
<https://www.areavibes.com/spencer-tn/crime/>
- Pg. 22 MNPRC: ACEs Behavioral Health Problems
<https://mnprc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/aces-behavioral-health-problems.pdf>
- Pg. 22 Tennessee Crime Stats
<https://crimeinsight.tbi.tn.gov/tops/report/drugs-dui/van-buren-county-sheriffs-office/2018>
- Pg. 23 2022 PIR National Snapshot Report
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/service-snapshot-all-programs-2021-2022.pdf>