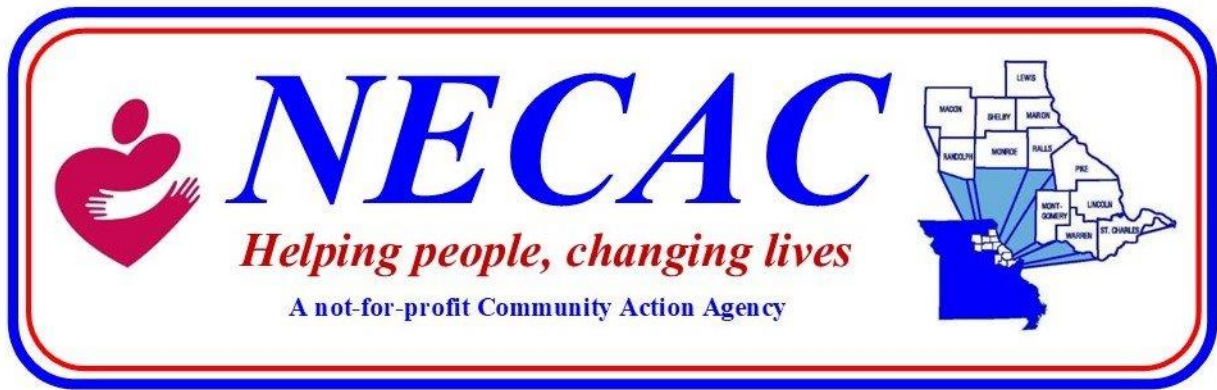
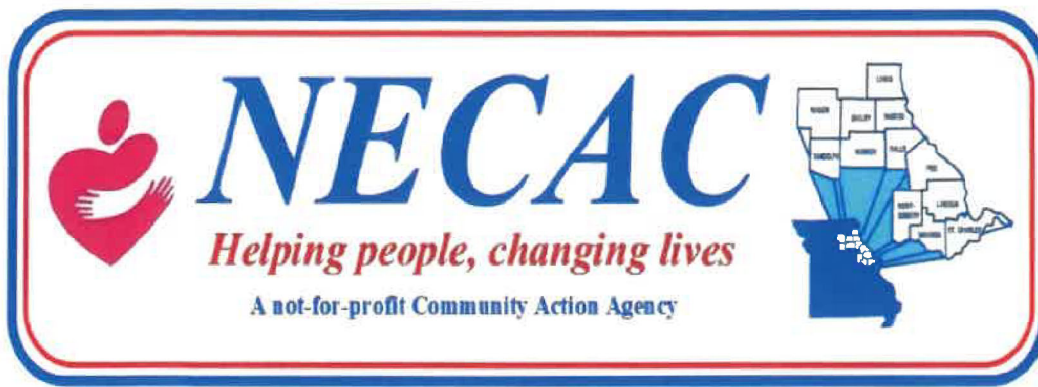




# **North East Community Action Corporation**

## **Community Needs Assessment 2026**

*Board Approved: September 22, 2026*



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September 1, 2026

To whom it may concern,

I have the honor of sharing with you in the attached document, months of research, surveys, meetings, and tabulations which use data to show the current needs of the counties served by NECAC.

The Community Needs Assessment is a three-year tool which shows the priorities of our various communities and allows us to focus our resources to effect change on the highest of priorities. While staff have born the load of reconciling the data, the data comes from you, your neighbors, your friends, amongst a host of others to include politicians, civic organizations and other non-profits in your area-all of which have needs, concerns and burdens that we have faith we might be able to minimize.

Thank you for any part you may have played in the preparation of this document and I trust it will be a resource for you in current duties as we work together to make our communities a better place to live.

**Daniel M. Page**  
**NECAC President & CEO**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## *Community Needs Assessment*

**Letter from Executive Director 2**

**Community Needs Assessment Introduction 4**

**Community Based Data: Collection Process & Results 6–21**

- Assessment Methodology 6
- Community Survey Methodology 6
- Focus Group Methodology 6-7
- Community Partner Participation 7
- Data Collection Process 7
- Assessment Limitations 8
- Community Needs Assessment – Survey Overview 8–14
- Community Needs Assessment – Focus Group Overview 15–21

**NECAC Service Area Overview: Regional Data 23–64**

- Lewis County 23–25
- Lincoln County 26–28
- Macon County 29–31
- Marion County 32–34
- Monroe County 35–37
- Montgomery County 38–40
- Pike County 41–43
- Ralls County 44–46
- Randolph County 47–49
- St. Charles County 50–52
- Shelby County 53–55
- Warren County 56–58
- NECAC Service Area 59–61
- Missouri 62–64

**NECAC Service Area Data: Summary of Findings 65–68**

**NECAC Data Overview: FFY2025 70–72**

- Client Satisfaction Surveys – Outreach Offices 70–72
- Missouri Management Information System (MIS) Data – Clients Served 72–73

**Community Needs Assessment Prioritization of Needs 75–80**

- Executive Summary 73–5
- Priority 1 – Housing 75–76
- Priority 2 – Economic Stability 76–77
- Priority 3: Food Security 77–78
- Cross-Cutting Needs Supporting Priorities 79–80
- Steven’s Amendment 80

**Sources & References 81**

# **North East Community Action Corporation**

## **Community Needs Assessment Introduction**

### **North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC) Overview**

North East Community Action Corporation is a non-profit organization designed to work toward alleviating the causes and conditions of poverty. As the largest of the 19 Missouri agencies in geographic area, NECAC serves low-income individuals in the rural counties of Lewis, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph and Shelby, and the three metropolitan counties of Lincoln, St. Charles and Warren. Throughout the years, programs have been implemented to focus on new issues, modified to meet the changing needs of the community and have spun programs off to other agencies to meet the challenges in NECAC's service area more effectively and efficiently.

### **Our Mission**

NECAC strives to make a difference by empowering people, improving lives and building communities. It is NECAC's purpose - to assist the disadvantaged within our service area in their efforts to rise above poverty by providing needed services to enable each individual to function at his or her own improved financial, physical, mental and social level.

### **Our Vision**

That all community members, including lower income people themselves, will take the responsibility and work together to alleviate the cause of poverty. We are committed to building stronger communities by strengthening families. Our visualization is that all community members, including lower income people, themselves, will take the responsibility and work together to alleviate the causes of poverty.

### **Our Values**

To embrace the ambitious vision of actually eliminating poverty, we have concluded that our work must continue to engage the imagination and commitment of the citizens in our area. However, this goal cannot be accomplished by NECAC alone. All individuals and communities must face the current truths about poverty and join NECAC in developing bold, transformational strategies to address these local issues. To realize its vision and fulfill its mission, NECAC is committed to pursuing its top prioritized strategic initiatives, which have been identified through NECAC's planning process.



# COMMUNITY BASED DATA: COLLECTION PROCESS & RESULTS

## **Assessment Methodology**

The 2026 Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was conducted using a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative survey data, qualitative focus group discussions, and community partner engagement to identify the strengths, needs, and priorities across North East Community Action Corporation's (NECAC) 12-county service area. This methodology provided both statistical data and firsthand community perspectives to ensure a comprehensive understanding of local conditions and emerging trends.

## **Community Survey Methodology**

NECAC developed and distributed a Community Needs Assessment survey using SurveyMonkey to collect input from Community Action Client/Low Income Resident(s), Non-Profit Organizations, Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, For-Profit Business or Corporation, School District, Institution for Secondary Education/Vocational Training, Financial Banking Institutions, Health Service Organizations, and Community Residents- No Affiliations throughout the service area. The survey consisted of **28 questions utilizing multiple-choice, rating scale, and open-ended response formats to collect both quantitative and qualitative information.** Survey questions explored community conditions, household needs, barriers to self-sufficiency, service utilization, awareness of available resources, and priorities for future services. Responses were analyzed through the SurveyMonkey reporting platform at both the county level and across the entire 12-county service area. This approach allowed NECAC to identify local trends while also evaluating common needs throughout the region.

## **Focus Group Methodology**

To supplement survey findings, NECAC conducted in-person focus groups in each of its twelve counties. Participants Community Action Client/Low Income Resident(s), Non-Profit Organizations, Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, For-Profit Business or Corporation, School District, Institution for Secondary Education/Vocational Training, Financial Banking Institutions, Health Service Organizations, and Community Residents- No Affiliations, ensuring representation from individuals with diverse perspectives and firsthand knowledge of local conditions.

Each focus group followed a standardized discussion guide consisting of nine open-ended questions designed to encourage conversation and identify community priorities. Discussion topics included:

- ❖ What poverty in your community looks like?
- ❖ Challenges and barriers preventing low-income households from achieving self-sufficiency (overcoming poverty).
- ❖ The impact of current economic conditions on local households.
- ❖ Barriers Section:
  - Employment

- Obtaining Employment
  - Maintaining Employment
- Education
  - Children Attending School
  - Completing High School
  - Attending Secondary Education
- Housing
  - Heating/Cooling the Home
  - Obtain/Maintain Permanent Housing
- Health & Nutrition
  - Obtaining Health Services
  - Challenges to consuming healthy foods.
- Misc.
  - Obtaining/Maintaining Childcare
  - Transportation
- ❖ The greatest strengths within the community.

Participant responses were documented during each meeting and compiled into county-specific reports. These reports were reviewed to identify recurring themes, unique local issues, and regional trends across NECAC's service area.

### **Community Partner Participation**

Community collaboration was a critical component of the assessment process. Focus groups included participation from representatives of Non-Profit Organizations, Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, For-Profit Business or Corporation, School District, Institution for Secondary Education/Vocational Training, Financial Banking Institutions, and Health Service Organizations. NECAC Board members and individuals with lived experience, including current and former program participants, also contributed valuable perspectives. This collaborative approach ensured that the assessment reflected both professional expertise and the experiences of residents most directly affected by community conditions.

### **Data Collection Process**

The Community Needs Assessment incorporated multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of community conditions. Quantitative data were collected through the community survey and demographic data sources, while qualitative information was gathered through focus group discussions and participant comments. Survey results and focus group findings were analyzed independently and then compared to identify consistent themes, validate findings, and highlight county-specific differences. Demographic and socioeconomic data were also incorporated to provide context for community input and to support identified trends related to population, income, employment, housing, education, and other indicators affecting quality of life throughout the service area.

## **Assessment Limitations**

As with any community assessment, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. Survey participation was voluntary and may not fully represent every demographic group or geographic area within the 12-county service area. Focus group participation reflected the perspectives of individuals who attended scheduled meetings and may not capture the experiences of all residents. Responses were based on participants' perceptions and lived experiences at the time of data collection and may be influenced by current economic conditions and local circumstances. While every effort was made to encourage broad participation and include diverse perspectives, the findings should be considered alongside available demographic and socioeconomic data to provide a comprehensive understanding of community needs.

## **Community Needs Assessment- Survey Overview:**

The 2026 NECAC Community Needs Assessment surveys gathered input from **215 community members representing the agency's twelve county service area**. Respondents included Community Action Client/Low Income Resident(s), Non-Profit Organizations, Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, For-Profit Business or Corporation, School District, Institution for Secondary Education/Vocational Training, Financial Banking Institutions, Health Service Organizations, and Community Residents- No Affiliations. This diverse group provided a broad perspective on the most pressing needs facing local communities.

Overall, the survey responses indicated that **housing, transportation, health care, employment, and child care remain the most significant barriers to economic stability and quality of life** throughout the region. While respondents acknowledged the value of existing services, many believe current resources are insufficient to meet growing community needs.

### **Housing:**

Housing emerged as the community's highest priority. **More than 81% of respondents identified housing as one of the community's greatest needs**, making it the top-ranked issue overall.

Housing affordability continues to be a major concern:

- ❖ **90%** identified a lack of affordable rental housing
- ❖ **68%** cited long waiting lists for subsidized housing
- ❖ **62%** identified a lack of affordable homeownership opportunities
- ❖ **57%** reported a lack of emergency shelters
- ❖ **43%** identified eviction and housing instability as a significant concern

Residents repeatedly described the lack of affordable housing, emergency rental assistance, and housing options for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

### **Representative Quote(s):**

"It would be beneficial to increase the availability of affordable, quality housing and expand funding opportunities that help individuals and families secure stable housing. Many people face barriers such as a lack of income, security deposits, first month's rent, or income requirements that are several times higher than the monthly rent. Additional programs through agencies like NECAC or government housing initiatives could provide assistance with move-in costs for apartments, rent-to-own homes, mobile homes, manufactured housing, or other safe housing options."

"Additional housing and rental assistance programs that can fill gaps when rental assistance or energy assistance has run out"

"Housing is the foundation on which people build their lives. Without a safe, adequate place to stay they cannot achieve any of their other goals."

"Rehabilitating and maintaining homes would make our community safer and more attractive. I also believe stronger action against known drug activity would improve the safety and quality of life in our community."

### **Transportation:**

Transportation was consistently identified as one of the greatest barriers affecting residents. Respondents rated access to reliable transportation at **2.17 out of 5**, the lowest rating among the data collected during the assessment surveys.

The greatest transportation challenges include:

- ❖ **78%** identified no public transportation
- ❖ **70%** cited the cost of fuel and vehicle maintenance
- ❖ **64%** reported distance to services
- ❖ **47%** identified limited routes and schedules for available public transportation
- ❖ **45%** cited a lack of safe walking or biking routes.

Transportation was also one of the most frequently mentioned themes in open-ended responses and was **consistently linked to employment, health care, food access, and housing stability.**

### **Representative Quote(s):**

"Affordable or free public transportation would have one of the greatest impacts on our community. Limited transportation options make it difficult for many residents to access employment, with long walking distances to jobs serving as a significant barrier to obtaining and maintaining work."

"Our community needs reliable public transportation. Without the support of friends and family, many residents would struggle to access basic necessities like grocery stores, as well as essential services such as healthcare."

"Living in a rural community presents significant challenges for many residents. Transportation costs are high, and some small towns have limited or no access to essential services such as grocery stores, gas stations, laundromats, healthcare facilities, and medical supplies. Many individuals must rely on neighbors for transportation to work, medical appointments, or other necessities, while others limit travel due to the high cost of fuel. Improving transportation access and the availability of essential services would greatly enhance quality of life for rural residents."

### **Child Care:**

Affordable child care continues to present significant challenges for working families. Nearly **54%** of respondents reported that quality child care is **not very accessible or not accessible at all**.

Major child care barriers include:

- ❖ **88%** Cost
- ❖ **69%** Limited Availability
- ❖ **69%** Limited Evening and Weekend Hours
- ❖ **45%** Lack of Infant Care
- ❖ **44%** Lack of State-Approved Facilities
- ❖ **38%** Transportation

### **Representative Quote(s):**

"Lack of affordable child care traps families in poverty"

"Having more educated and qualified staff to support families who qualify for Head Start would make a positive difference."

"We need more affordable childcare for children under the age of five."

### **Employment:**

Employment challenges remain **closely connected to transportation, and child care**.

The most frequently identified employment barriers include:

- ❖ **64%** Child Care Needs
- ❖ **62%** Transportation to Workplace(s)
- ❖ **56%** Low Wages

- ❖ **49%** Lack of Job Opportunities
- ❖ **39%** Lack of Stable or Full-Time Employment Opportunities

Additionally, **43%** of respondents indicated they were **not sure** whether adequate workforce development programs are available locally, suggesting both service gaps and limited awareness.

**Representative Quote(s):**

"More assistance is needed for individuals who are unemployed and struggling to find work in today's challenging job market."

"There are not enough employment opportunities or industries in our community to provide stable jobs."

"Unaddressed mental and physical health issues make it difficult for many people to find and maintain employment."

"I have applied for jobs but received little or no response from employers, making it difficult to find employment."

**Nutrition:**

Access to affordable, healthy food remains a challenge for many households. Respondents rated access to healthy, affordable food **3.04 out of 5**, indicating room for improvement.

The leading barriers include:

- ❖ **82%** Cost
- ❖ **60%** Transportation to Grocery Stores
- ❖ **52%** Limited Grocery Store Options
- ❖ **38%** Lack of Awareness of Food Programs
- ❖ **33%** Stigma Associated with Accessing Assistance

Many respondents also expressed concerns about food quality, fresh produce availability, and pantry accessibility.

**Representative Quote(s):**

"Food is hard for me to access because I am unable to leave my home. As a disabled single parent, I don't have food delivery options, and food banks don't come to me, leaving me with very limited resources."

"I stopped using my local food bank because it often provides unhealthy food, very little meat, and at times expired dairy products. I also have several food allergies, and most of the food offered isn't something I can safely eat."

"I am grateful for the support food pantries provide, but I believe the quality of food could be improved. Many pantries primarily distribute heavily processed, canned, and boxed foods, with very little fresh produce or meat. Fresh fruits and vegetables are often limited or poor quality, making it difficult to maintain a healthy diet. I also feel that clients should have more choice in selecting foods that meet their household's needs and dietary restrictions. Improving food quality, increasing fresh and nutritious options, and ensuring all clients are treated fairly and respectfully would better meet the needs of our community."

"I am not eligible for SNAP benefits because of a past drug-related charge, making it difficult to afford enough food."

"People experiencing homelessness often do not have access to food storage or cooking facilities, making it difficult to prepare and eat nutritious meals."

"Many middle-income families do not qualify for SNAP benefits but still struggle with the rising cost of food. Food pantries are an important resource for helping families meet their basic needs."

### **Health Care:**

Health care remains a significant concern, particularly access to behavioral health, dental care, affordable insurance, and specifically medical services.

The most commonly identified service gaps include:

- ❖ **69%** Affordable Health Insurance
- ❖ **63%** Mental Health Services
- ❖ **53%** Dental Care
- ❖ **45%** Substance Abuse Treatment
- ❖ **40%** Chronic Disease Management

The primary barriers to receiving care include:

- ❖ **82%** Cost
- ❖ **65%** Transportation
- ❖ **65%** Limited Insurance Coverage
- ❖ **45%** Provider Shortages
- ❖ **39%** Long Wait Times

Residents frequently noted shortages of specialists, behavioral health providers and affordable insurance coverage.

### **Representative Quote(s):**

"There is a lack of affordable dental care in our area. Long wait times, high costs, and the need to travel long distances make it difficult for many residents to access the care they need."

"Access to healthcare is limited, and many residents must travel to receive care, which is not possible for everyone. Older adults without family support often struggle to meet basic needs and complete everyday tasks."

"Keeping my son in therapy has been a challenge because his therapy coverage is no longer being approved. He is 18 years old and survived a shooting, but the cost of therapy without coverage has made it difficult for him to continue receiving the care he needs."

### **Population Facing the Greatest Barriers:**

Respondents identified several populations experiencing disproportionate barriers to accessing services:

- ❖ **86%** Low Income
- ❖ **59%** People Experiencing Homelessness
- ❖ **57%** People with Disabilities
- ❖ **56%** Seniors
- ❖ **52%** Single Parent Households
- ❖ **48%** Families with Children
- ❖ **40%** Rural Residents

Comments also highlighted the unique challenges faced by individuals with substance abuse disorders, individuals with criminal backgrounds, seniors living alone- single person households, individuals fleeing domestic violence, foster families and aging foster youth, individuals without transportation.

### **Barriers to Accessing Services:**

Residents identified several factors that limit their ability to access available community services:

- ❖ **68%** Transportation
- ❖ **65%** Cost & Affordability
- ❖ **57%** Lack of Information about Available Services
- ❖ **54%** Services Unavailable locally
- ❖ **50%** Long Waitlists
- ❖ **48%** Eligibility Requirements
- ❖ **38%** Stigma or Fear of Seeking Help

Although many respondents reported being somewhat familiar with local resources, awareness gaps remain regarding housing assistance, workforce development, and other available community supports.

### **Overall Survey Assessment:**

The survey assessment demonstrates that while residents recognize the availability of many valuable programs throughout NECAC's service area, existing resources are not sufficient to meet the growing demand. Housing affordability, transportation, behavioral health, child care, employment, and access to affordable health care reaming interconnected challenges that affect economic stability across the region.

The survey also demonstrates that these issues rarely exist in isolation. Transportation affects access to employment, medical care, food, and child care; housing affordability impacts financial stability; and limited access to affordable child care creates additional barriers to workforce participation.

Together, the quantitative findings and resident comments support continued investment in:

- 1) Affordable Housing Development and Housing Stabilization
- 2) Expanding Transportation Services in Rural Communities
- 3) Behavioral and Mental Health Services
- 4) Affordable Child Care
- 5) Workforce Development and Livable Wage Employment
- 6) Improved Coordination and Awareness of Community Resources.

## **Community Needs Assessment- Focus Group Overview:**

NECAC conducted focus groups throughout its twelve-county service area to gather qualitative input from **88 participants** ranging from Community Action Client/Low Income Resident(s), Non-Profit Organizations, Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, For-Profit Business or Corporation, School District, Institution for Secondary Education/Vocational Training, Financial Banking Institutions, Health Service Organizations, and Community Residents with No Affiliations. Participants discussed the challenges facing low-income households, barriers to self-sufficiency, community strengths, and emerging needs. While experiences varied by county, consistent themes emerged throughout the service area.

### **Q1: What does poverty in your community look like?**

#### **Key Findings:**

Participants consistently described poverty as extending far beyond low income. Families are increasingly struggling to meet basic needs despite employment, creating a growing population of working households living paycheck to paycheck

The most common indicators of poverty included:

- ❖ Food insecurity and increased reliance on food pantries
- ❖ Housing instability, homelessness, and couch surfing
- ❖ High utility costs leading to service disconnections
- ❖ Lack of affordable housing
- ❖ Transportation barriers
- ❖ Mental health and substance use challenges
- ❖ Generational poverty
- ❖ Working families unable to meet basic expenses
- ❖ Seniors living on fixed incomes
- ❖ Families forced to choose between rent, food, utilities, and medications

Participants also noted that many households are isolated, lack family support systems, and are unaware of available community resources.

#### **Overall Theme:**

Poverty is increasingly characterized by financial instability, unmet basic needs, and chronic stress rather than unemployment alone.

### **Q2- What challenges and barriers do low-income people in your community face when trying to overcome poverty?**

#### **Key Findings:**

Participants identified multiple interconnected barriers that prevent households from achieving self-sufficiency.

Most frequently identified barriers included:

- ❖ Affordable housing shortages
- ❖ Transportation limitations in rural communities
- ❖ Lack of affordable childcare
- ❖ Mental health services
- ❖ Substance abuse treatment
- ❖ Limited access to healthcare
- ❖ Low wages
- ❖ Lack of living wage employment
- ❖ Difficulty navigating public assistance programs
- ❖ Lack of awareness of available services
- ❖ Technology barriers
- ❖ Limited workforce training opportunities

Participants also discussed the "benefits cliff," where modest wage increases cause families to lose assistance before they can become financially stable.

Many participants emphasized stigma associated with requesting assistance and widespread misconceptions regarding individuals experiencing poverty.

#### Overall Theme

Poverty is maintained by multiple overlapping barriers that require coordinated community solutions rather than isolated services.

### **Q3- How has the economy affected households?**

#### Key Findings:

Across all counties, participants described a significant increase in financial hardship resulting from inflation and rising costs.

Common concerns included:

- ❖ Rising grocery costs
- ❖ Increased rent and mortgage payments
- ❖ Higher utility bills
- ❖ Increased fuel prices
- ❖ Rising healthcare expenses
- ❖ Higher insurance costs
- ❖ Increased childcare expenses

Participants reported that wages have not kept pace with inflation, forcing families to:

- ❖ Use food pantries more frequently
- ❖ Delay medical care
- ❖ Skip prescriptions
- ❖ Accumulate utility debt
- ❖ Double-up housing arrangements
- ❖ Rely on emergency assistance

Many noted that even middle-income households are now seeking services previously associated only with low-income families.

#### Overall Theme

The rising cost of living has expanded financial hardship across the community, increasing demand for assistance programs.

### **Q4: Employment Barriers- Obtaining & Maintaining Employment:**

#### Key Findings:

Employment barriers extended well beyond simply finding available jobs.

Major barriers included:

- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Childcare
- ❖ Limited job skills
- ❖ Lack of work experience
- ❖ Criminal backgrounds
- ❖ Difficulty obtaining required identification documents
- ❖ Limited computer skills
- ❖ Poor interview and communication skills
- ❖ Lack of reliable work clothing
- ❖ Mental health challenges
- ❖ Addiction
- ❖ Limited availability of higher-paying jobs

Participants also discussed the need for stronger soft skills training, life skills education, and employer understanding of generational workforce differences.

#### Overall Theme

Employment success requires supportive services alongside workforce opportunities.

## **Q5- Education Barriers: Children Attending School; Completing High School; Attending Secondary Education (Vocational/Trade/College)**

### **Key Findings:**

Participants expressed concern regarding both youth education and adult workforce preparation.

Common issues included:

- ❖ Bullying
- ❖ Lack of parental support
- ❖ Mental health concerns
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Financial barriers to higher education
- ❖ Lack of local trade schools
- ❖ Students leaving school to support families
- ❖ Generational patterns of dropping out
- ❖ Limited career guidance
- ❖ Lack of workforce readiness skills

Participants consistently recommended expanding vocational education and teaching life skills earlier in school.

### **Overall Theme**

Educational success depends on family stability, workforce preparation, and expanded career pathways.

## **Q6- Housing Barriers: Heating & Cooling Their Home; Obtain & Maintain Permanent Housing:**

### **Key Findings:**

Housing was consistently identified as one of the greatest needs throughout NECAC's service area.

Major concerns included:

- ❖ Severe shortage of affordable housing
- ❖ Long waiting lists
- ❖ Rising rental costs
- ❖ Aging housing stock
- ❖ High utility costs due to inefficient homes
- ❖ High security deposits
- ❖ Poor housing conditions

- ❖ Limited emergency housing
- ❖ Lack of shelters
- ❖ Credit and eviction barriers
- ❖ Lack of landlord accountability

Participants reported that many households spend well above 30% of their income on housing.

#### Overall Theme

Housing affordability and availability remain among the most significant challenges facing low-income households.

### **Q7- Health & Nutrition Barriers: Obtaining Health Services; Eating Healthy Foods:**

#### Key Findings:

Participants described significant barriers to maintaining health.

Primary concerns included:

- ❖ Cost of healthy food
- ❖ Lack of transportation to grocery stores and food pantries
- ❖ Limited healthcare providers accepting Medicaid
- ❖ Long wait times
- ❖ Limited specialty care
- ❖ Mental health services
- ❖ Dental care
- ❖ High insurance costs
- ❖ Lack of nutrition education
- ❖ Limited cooking skills
- ❖ Childcare affecting healthcare access

Food insecurity was described as both an affordability issue and an access issue.

#### Overall Theme

Health outcomes are closely connected to transportation, affordability, food access, and healthcare availability.

### **Q8- Misc.**

Participants also highlighted several recurring service gaps.

These included:

- ❖ Transportation

- ❖ Childcare shortages
- ❖ Reentry services for justice-involved individuals
- ❖ Mental health supports within correctional facilities
- ❖ Affordable daycare
- ❖ Limited public transportation
- ❖ Lack of emergency housing
- ❖ Need for stronger community awareness of available services

### **Q9- What are the greatest strengths in your community?**

#### **Key Findings:**

Despite numerous challenges, participants consistently emphasized strong community assets.

Most frequently identified strengths included:

- ❖ Strong partnerships between agencies
- ❖ Community collaboration
- ❖ Caring residents
- ❖ Active churches
- ❖ Volunteers
- ❖ Schools working with families
- ❖ Community willingness to help neighbors
- ❖ First responders
- ❖ Parks and recreation
- ❖ Local nonprofits
- ❖ Food pantries
- ❖ Health departments
- ❖ NECAC services

Participants repeatedly noted that agencies communicate well and work collaboratively to solve community problems.

#### **Overall Theme**

The greatest strength across NECAC's service area is a collaborative network of organizations and residents committed to helping one another.

## **Overall Focus Group Themes**

Across all twelve counties, several themes consistently emerged.

### **Highest Priority Needs:**

- 1) Affordable Housing
- 2) Transportation
- 3) Childcare
- 4) Living Wage Employment
- 5) Mental Health Services
- 6) Affordable Healthcare
- 7) Food Security
- 8) Workforce Development
- 9) Utility Assistance
- 10) Increased Awareness of Available Resources

### **Additional Comments: Community Assets**

Participants consistently identified several strengths that position communities to address these challenges:

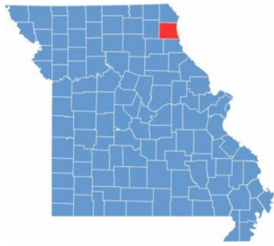
- ❖ Strong interagency collaboration
- ❖ Dedicated nonprofit organizations
- ❖ Faith-based partnerships
- ❖ Community volunteers
- ❖ Schools and local governments
- ❖ Food assistance programs
- ❖ Health departments
- ❖ NECAC programs and services
- ❖ Residents willing to support neighbors during times of need

### **Conclusion:**

The focus group findings reinforce the quantitative survey data collected during NECAC's 2026 Community Needs Assessment. Participants described communities experiencing increasing financial strain due to rising living costs, limited affordable housing, transportation barriers, childcare shortages, and insufficient access to healthcare and mental health services. At the same time, communities demonstrated significant strengths through collaboration, strong partnerships, and a shared commitment to supporting vulnerable residents. These findings will guide NECAC's strategic planning, program development, resource allocation, and advocacy efforts over the next three years.

# NECAC Service Area Overview: Regional Data





## Lewis County, MO

Lewis County is located in northeastern Missouri along the Mississippi River and encompasses approximately 505 square miles of predominantly rural landscape. The county is home to several small communities, including Canton, LaGrange, Ewing, Lewistown, Durham, and Monticello, with Canton serving as the county seat. Agriculture plays a significant role in the local economy, alongside employment in

manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, and public services. The county's dispersed population and rural geography influence access to employment, healthcare, education, and other essential services. The demographic and socioeconomic data presented in this section provide an overview of Lewis County's population, economy, housing, and workforce characteristics and help establish the context for the community needs identified through the 2026 Community Needs Assessment.

### POPULATION:

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**Total Population: 10,032**

Female Population: 4,888

Male Population: 5,144

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 26%

20-34: 17%

35-44: 11%

45-65: 22%

65+: 23%

**Total Households: 3,185**

**Total Families: 1,915**

Married Couples: 1,624

Female, Spouse Absent: 100

Male, Spouse Absent: 191

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**Population by Race:**

White: 9,100

Black/ African American: 383

Hispanic or Latino: 111

Asian: 50

American Indian: 2

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 0

"Some Other": 6

Mixed Race- Two or More: 383

**Veterans: 534**

Veterans- Female: 78

Veterans- Male: 456

**Geographic Mobility: 5.4%**

---

### INCOME:

---

**Median Household Income: \$66,006**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 12.9%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 24.1%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 25.2%**

**Families receiving TANF: 5**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 600**

---

**Poverty Rate: 13.4%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -0.9%**

Households at/below 125%: 16.5%

Households in Poverty: 14.2%

Seniors in Poverty: 14.7%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 7.4%

---

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$824          | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$664</b>           |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$15.85 | Median Home Value: \$149,721                       |
| <b>Housing Units: 4,309</b>           | Homeowners: 2,430                                  |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 3.8%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>-19.75%</b>   |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 0.6%         | Median Home Age: 55 Years                          |
| Homeless Children: 38                 | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 1.1%</b>              |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 1.4%</b>     | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 11.4%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 4.5%</b>            | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                    |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.2%</b> | Drive Alone: 81.1%                            |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 6.9%                                 |
| 1 Adult: \$19.99                          | Public Trans: 0.4%                            |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$33.63                 | Walk/Bicycle: 2.2%                            |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$19.77                 | Taxi/Other: 0.4%                              |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$20.84</b>       | Work from Home: 9%                            |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>         |
| 1) Health Care/ Social Assistance         | Infant/Toddler: \$40.48                       |
| 2) Manufacturing                          | Preschool: \$23.71                            |
| 3) Retail Trade                           | School Age: \$21.09                           |
| <b>Average Daily Commute: 24 Minutes</b>  | <b>Childcare Facilities: 5 (Capacity: 88)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 94.5%</b>    | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 20%         |
| No High School Diploma: 11.5%                | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 45.5%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 45.9%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 12%                               | No High School Diploma: 5.6%             |
| Graduate/Professional: 4.8%                  | High School Diploma Only: 68.4%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 1</b> | Some College: 18.9%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 7.1%                |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 1,739**

MoHealthNet Providers: 105

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 2,350**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 3

**Physicians: 3**

**Dentists: 2**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 6**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 9

Teen Births: 0

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 15.8%**

Food Insecure Children: 15.9%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 324**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 54%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$366

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 39.4%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 2,299**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 150

---

## CRIME:

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 11**

Spouse: 2

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 3

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 0

Total # of Victims: 12

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 98**

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 0

Assault: 0

Robbery: 0

Forcible Rape: 0

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 30

Larcenies: 359

Auto Theft: 30

Arson: 0

---



## Lincoln County, MO

Lincoln County is located in east-central Missouri and is one of the fastest-growing counties within NECAC's service area. Situated along the U.S. Highway 61 corridor, the county includes the communities of Troy, Moscow Mills, Winfield, Elsberry, Hawk Point, and Silex, with Troy serving as the county seat. While agriculture remains an important component of the local

economy, residential growth and proximity to the St. Louis metropolitan area have expanded employment opportunities in manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, construction, and professional services. The county's blend of rural communities and suburban growth influences its population, housing, workforce, and economic characteristics, which are reflected in the demographic data presented in this section.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 65,949**

Female Population: 32,643

Male Population: 33,306

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 26%

20-34: 17%

35-44: 15%

45-65: 23%

65+: 19%

**Total Households: 22,817**

**Total Families: 16,534**

Married Couples: 12,757

Female, Spouse Absent: 2,277

Male, Spouse Absent: 1,500

**Population by Race:**

White: 58,143

Black/ African American: 1,223

Hispanic or Latino: 509

Asian: 203

American Indian: 153

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 72

"Some Other": 581

Mixed Race- Two or More: 2,682

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 161

Veterans- Male: 3,502

**Geographic Mobility: 4.67**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: \$89,278**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 13.2%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 24.4%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 21.2%**

**Families receiving TANF: 27**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 3,840**

**Poverty Rate: 7.9%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -7.8%**

Households at/below 125%:

Households in Poverty: 10.5%

Seniors in Poverty: 14.7%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 9.4%

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$1,215        | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$1,167</b>         |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$23.37 | Median Home Value: \$253,343                       |
| <b>Housing Units: 24,143</b>          | Homeowners: 18,030                                 |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 0.4%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>+61.3%</b>    |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1.3%         | Median Home Age: 27 Years                          |
| Homeless Children: 145                | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.5%</b>              |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 1.8%</b>     | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 17.4%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 4.5%</b>            | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                      |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.4%</b> | Drive Alone: 80%                                |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 8.8%                                   |
| 1 Adult: \$21.61                          | Public Trans: 0.1%                              |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$37.07                 | Walk/Bicycle: 2%                                |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$21.44                 | Taxi/Other: 0.8%                                |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$25.89</b>       | Work from Home: 8.3%                            |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>           |
| 1) Health Care/Social Assistance          | Infant/Toddler: \$43.32                         |
| 2) Manufacturing                          | Preschool: \$26.65                              |
| 3) Construction                           | School Age: \$24.97                             |
| <b>Average Daily Commute: 32 Minutes</b>  | <b>Childcare Facilities: 11 (Capacity: 598)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 96.9%</b>    | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 19.3%       |
| No High School Diploma: 9%                   | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 42.5%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 39.5%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 13.2%                             | No High School Diploma: 3.7%             |
| Graduate/Professional: 5.2%                  | High School Diploma Only: 30.9%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0</b> | Some College: 47%                        |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 18.4%               |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 11,000**

MoHealthNet Providers: 952

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 12,042**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 8

**Physicians: 17**

**Dentists: 11**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 67**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 69

Teen Births: 111

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 14.4%**

Food Insecure Children: 15.8%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 2,420**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 65%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$421

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 33.8%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 12,604**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 694

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 231**

Spouse: 30

Ex-Spouse: 1

Common Law Spouse: 1

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 62

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 17

Total # of Victims: 297

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 735**

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 8

Assault: 251

Robbery: 3

Forcible Rape: 35

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 152

Larcenies: 470

Auto Theft: 148

Arson: 8

---



## Macon County, MO

Macon County is located in north-central Missouri and is characterized by its rural landscape, agricultural economy, and regional commercial services. The county includes the communities of Macon, Atlanta, Bevier, Callao, Excello, and La Plata, with Macon serving as the county seat and primary commercial center. Agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, education, and retail provide the foundation of the local economy, while U.S. Highways 36

and 63 contribute to regional connectivity. The county's demographic, housing, workforce, and economic characteristics provide important context for understanding local conditions and are presented in the following data profile.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 15,163**

Female Population: 7,583

Male Population: 7,561

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 22%

20-34: 17%

35-44: 11%

45-65: 23%

65+: 26%

**Total Households: 6,067**

**Total Families: 3,901**

Married Couples: 3,187

Female, Spouse Absent: 444

Male, Spouse Absent: 270

**Population by Race:**

White: 13,958

Black/ African American: 323

Hispanic or Latino: 126

Asian: 93

American Indian: 23

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 0

"Some Other": 112

Mixed Race- Two or More: 654

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 53

Veterans- Male: 729

**Geographic Mobility: 4.5%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: \$62,357**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 11.6%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 23.6%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 28.6%**

**Families receiving TANF: 4**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 1,120**

**Poverty Rate: 15.9%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): 5%**

Households at/below 125%: 14.5%

Households in Poverty: 12.5%

Seniors in Poverty: 10.4%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 8.4%

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$834          | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$691</b>          |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$16.04 | Median Home Value: \$167,711                      |
| <b>Housing Units: 7,445</b>           | Homeowners: 4,661                                 |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 1.2%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>-5.9%</b>    |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1%           | Median Home Age: 52 Years                         |
| Homeless Children: 24                 | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 1%</b>               |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 2%</b>       | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 9.1%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 4%</b>              | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                    |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.6%</b> | Drive Alone: 78.1%                            |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 9.4%                                 |
| 1 Adult: \$19.64                          | Public Trans: 0.2%                            |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$33.97                 | Walk/Bicycle: 2.2%                            |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$19.79                 | Taxi/Other: 0.3%                              |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$21.13</b>       | Work from Home: 9.8%                          |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>         |
| 1) Health Care/ Social Assistance         | Infant/Toddler: \$40.80                       |
| 2) Manufacturing                          | Preschool: \$20.24                            |
| 3) Retail Trade                           | School Age: \$18.57                           |
| <b>Average Daily Commute: 22 Minutes</b>  | <b>Childcare Facilities: 6 (Capacity:247)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 95.1</b>     | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 20.3%       |
| No High School Diploma: 7.8%                 | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 44.6%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 44.3%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 13.2%                             | No High School Diploma: 11.6%            |
| Graduate/Professional: 6.1%                  | High School Diploma Only: 40.7%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0</b> | Some College: 37.5%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 10.2%               |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 4,093**

MoHealthNet Providers: 382

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 4,050**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 4

**Physicians: 13**

**Dentists: 5**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 6**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 12

Teen Births: 0

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 14.8%**

Food Insecure Children: 16.4%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 631**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 63%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$361

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 43.5%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 4,250**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 455

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 33**

Spouse: 4

Ex-Spouse: 1

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 2

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 2

Total # of Victims: 43

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 183**

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 0

Assault: 106

Robbery: 0

Forcible Rape: 19

**Property Crimes:**

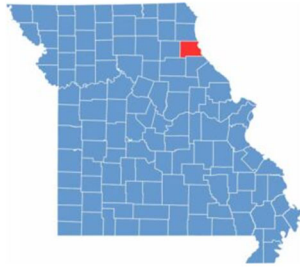
Burglaries: 159

Larcenies: 537

Auto Theft: 79

Arson: 0

---



## Marion County, MO

Marion County is located in northeastern Missouri along the Mississippi River and serves as a regional center for commerce, healthcare, education, and industry. The county includes the communities of Hannibal, Palmyra, Monroe City, and Philadelphia, with Palmyra serving as the county seat and Hannibal functioning as the area's largest population and employment center. The local economy is supported by manufacturing, healthcare, education, tourism, transportation, retail, and agriculture. Marion County's combination of urban and rural communities contributes to diverse demographic, workforce, housing, and economic characteristics that are reflected in the following county profile.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 28,356**

Female Population: 14,522

Male Population: 13,834

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 24%

20-34: 18%

35-44: 12%

45-65: 23%

65+: 23%

**Total Households: 11,323**

**Total Families: 7,337**

Married Couples: 5,079

Female, Spouse Absent: 1,653

Male, Spouse Absent: 605

**Population by Race:**

White: 25,370

Black/ African American: 1,192

Hispanic or Latino: 125

Asian: 228

American Indian: 68

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 0

"Some Other": 150

Mixed Race- Two or More: 1,449

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 166

Veterans- Male: 1,529

**Geographic Mobility: 4.7%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: \$62,903**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 14.8%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 24.4%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 25.1%**

**Families receiving TANF: 19**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 2,140**

**Poverty Rate: 14.1%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -3.9%**

Households at/below 125%: 18.2%

Households in Poverty: 16.3%

Seniors in Poverty: 13.5%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 14.4%

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$866          | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$701</b>           |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$16.65 | Median Home Value: \$206,125                       |
| <b>Housing Units: 12,970</b>          | Homeowners: 7,847                                  |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 2.7%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): 0.9%             |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1.2%         | Median Home Age: 53 Years                          |
| Homeless Children: 138                | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.1%</b>              |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 1.5%</b>     | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 18.1%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                          |                                                |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 3.9%</b>           | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                     |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): -0.5        | Drive Alone: 77.5%                             |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                      | Carpool: 9.5%                                  |
| 1 Adult: \$20.03                         | Public Trans: 0.4%                             |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$34.75                | Walk/Bicycle: 4.4%                             |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$20.17                | Taxi/Other: 1.1%                               |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$24.45</b>      | Work from Home: 7.3%                           |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>           | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>          |
| 1) Health Care/ Social Assistance        | Infant/Toddler: \$40.48                        |
| 2) Manufacturing                         | Preschool: \$23.71                             |
| 3) Retail Trade                          | School Age: \$20.96                            |
| <b>Average Daily Commute: 18 Minutes</b> | <b>Childcare Facilities: 18 (Capacity:848)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 89.6%</b>    | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 20%         |
| No High School Diploma: 9.4%                 | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 44.6%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 40.6%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 14.67%                            | No High School Diploma: 7%               |
| Graduate/Professional: 10%                   | High School Diploma Only: 40.1%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 1</b> | Some College: 30.4%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 22.5%               |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 6,954**

MoHealthNet Providers: 1,351

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 6,939**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 12

**Physicians: 135**

**Dentists: 15**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 23**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 24

Teen Births: 0

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 16%**

Food Insecure Children: 19%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 1,805**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 56%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$372

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 48.9%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 8,564**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 455

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 150**

Spouse: 5

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 1

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 48

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 0

Total # of Victims: 160

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 323**

---

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 3

Assault: 182

Robbery: 14

Forcible Rape: 17

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 203

Larcenies: 1,639

Auto Theft: 70

Arson: 24

---



## Monroe County, MO

Monroe County is located in northeastern Missouri and is primarily rural, with agriculture serving as a cornerstone of the local economy. The county includes the communities of Paris, Monroe City, Stoutsville, and Holliday, with Paris serving as the county seat. Employment opportunities are found in agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, and public services, with many residents commuting to neighboring communities for work. The county's rural landscape, small-town character, and population distribution influence its demographic and economic profile, which is summarized in the following data section.

### POPULATION

---

**Total Population: 8,703**

Female Population: 4,294

Male Population: 4,409

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 23%

20-34: 15%

35-44: 11%

45-65: 24%

65+: 29%

**Total Households: 3,468****Total Families: 2,137**

Married Couples: 1,664

Female, Spouse Absent: 288

Male, Spouse Absent: 185

**Population by Race:**

White: 8,101

Black/ African American: 309

Hispanic or Latino: 74

Asian: 34

American Indian: 37

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 0

"Some Other": 32

Mixed Race- Two or More: 221

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 47

Veterans- Male: 582

**Geographic Mobility: 3%**

---

### INCOME

---

**Median Household Income: \$54,516**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 14.6%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 25.3%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 28.7%****Families receiving TANF: 3****Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 620****Poverty Rate: 12.4%****Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -3.4%**

Households at/below 125%: 18.8%

Households in Poverty: 16.4%

Seniors in Poverty: 17.2%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 17.1%

---

## HOUSING

Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$824  
Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$15.85

**Housing Units: 4,469**

Vacant Rental Rates: 1%

Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 2%

Homeless Children: 44

**Over-Crowded Housing: 2.1%**

**Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$564**

Median Home Value: \$195,953

Homeowners: 2,577

Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): **-10.4%**

Median Home Age: 48 Years

**Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.7%**

**> 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 9.9%**

## EMPLOYMENT

**Unemployment Rate: 3.8%**

Unemployment Change (25-26): **-0.3%**

**Living Wage:**

1 Adult: \$19.77

1 Adult, 1 Child: \$32.82

2 Adult, 1 Child: \$19.24

**Average Hourly Wage: \$20.22**

**Employment by Industry:**

1) Health Care/ Social Assistance

2) Manufacturing

3) Retail Trade

**Average Daily Commute: 26 Minutes**

**Travel- Employment:**

Drive Alone: 80.3%

Carpool: 7.8%

Public Trans: 0.2%

Walk/Bicycle: 6.8%

Taxi/Other: 1.2%

Work from Home: 3.9%

**Average Childcare Cost- Daily:**

Infant/Toddler: \$40.80

Preschool: \$20.24

School Age: \$18.57

**Childcare Facilities: 6 (Capacity:151)**

## EDUCATION

**High School Graduation Rate: 86.5%**

**Educational Attainment:**

No High School Diploma: 8%

High School Diploma Only: 49.6%

Bachelors: 14.5%

Graduate/Professional: 4.3%

**Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0**

**Adult Literacy:**

At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 17.7%

At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 46.8%

**Educational Attainment- Veterans:**

No High School Diploma: 10%

High School Diploma Only: 41.1%

Some College: 23.6%

Bachelors or Higher: 25.3%

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 1,971**

MoHealthNet Providers: 159

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 2,338**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 3

**Physicians: 3**

**Dentists: 0**

**Licensed Professional Counselors:**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 5

Teen Births: 1

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 16.5%**

Food Insecure Children: 18.3%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 378**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 52%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$367

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 42.3%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 2,614**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 148

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 12**

Spouse: 1

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 3

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 1

Total # of Victims: 13

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 11**

---

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 0

Assault: 231

Robbery: 11

Forcible Rape: 34

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 57

Larcenies: 568

Auto Theft: 23

Arson: 0

---



## Montgomery County, MO

Montgomery County is located in east-central Missouri between St. Louis and Columbia along the Interstate 70 corridor. The county includes the communities of Montgomery City, Wellsville, Jonesburg, Bellflower, and New Florence, with Montgomery City serving as the county seat. Agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, healthcare, education, and retail contribute to the local economy, while the county's strategic location provides access to

regional employment opportunities. The demographic and economic information presented in this section provides an overview of Montgomery County's population, workforce, housing, and community characteristics.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 11,566**

Female Population: 5,694

Male Population: 5,872

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 21%

20-34: 15%

35-44: 12%

45-65: 24%

65+: 27%

**Total Households: 4,640**

**Total Families: 3,176**

Married Couples: 2,338

Female, Spouse Absent: 495

Male, Spouse Absent: 343

**Population by Race:**

White: 10,635

Black/ African American: 97

Hispanic or Latino: 57

Asian: 9

American Indian: 71

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 15

"Some Other": 44

Mixed Race- Two or More: 555

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 60

Veterans- Male: 767

**Geographic Mobility: 4.8%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: 83,368**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 15.1%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 25.3%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 28.7%**

**Families receiving TANF: 8**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 860**

**Poverty Rate: 12.2%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -3.9%**

Households at/below 125%: 17.2%

Households in Poverty: 15%

Seniors in Poverty: 10.3%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 17.3%

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$824          | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$772</b>           |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$15.85 | Median Home Value: \$231,275                       |
| <b>Housing Units: 4,309</b>           | Homeowners: 3,408                                  |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 2.7%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>-9.1%</b>     |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 2%           | Median Home Age: 46 Years                          |
| Homeless Children: 22                 | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.4%</b>              |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 2.5%</b>     | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 14.9%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 3.2%</b>            | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                   |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.6%</b> | Drive Alone: 75.4%                           |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 10.9%                               |
| 1 Adult: \$20.20                          | Public Trans: 0%                             |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$34.01                 | Walk/Bicycle: 2.9%                           |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$19.89                 | Taxi/Other: 1.7%                             |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$23.72</b>       | Work from Home: 9%                           |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>        |
| 1) Manufacturing                          | Infant/Toddler: \$40.80                      |
| 2) Retail Trade                           | Preschool: \$20.24                           |
| 3) Health Care/Social Assistance          | School Age: \$18.57                          |
| <b>Average Daily Commute: 29 Minutes</b>  | <b>Childcare Facilities: 4 (Capacity:87)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 95.3%</b>    | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 23.1%       |
| No High School Diploma: 11.3%                | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 44.5%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 41.5%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 12.9%                             | No High School Diploma: 5.1%             |
| Graduate/Professional: 4.8%                  | High School Diploma Only: 49.9%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0</b> | Some College: 32.2%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 12.8%               |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 2,536**

MoHealthNet Providers: 172

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 3,127**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 4

**Physicians: 3**

**Dentists: 1**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 7**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 15

Teen Births: 0

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 16.4%**

Food Insecure Children: 19.4%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 540**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 51%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$364

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 42.6%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 3,124**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 170

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 37**

Spouse: 4

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 5

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 7

Total # of Victims: 53

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 188**

---

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 0

Assault: 61

Robbery: 0

Forcible Rape: 8

**Property Crimes:**

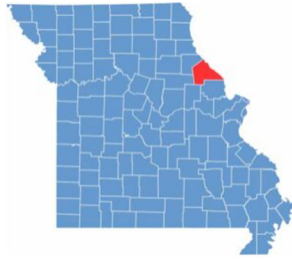
Burglaries: 104

Larcenies: 400

Auto Theft: 87

Arson: 0

---



## Pike County, MO

Pike County is located in northeastern Missouri along the Mississippi River and is known for its agricultural heritage, historic communities, and scenic rural landscape. The county includes the communities of Bowling Green, Louisiana, Clarksville, Curryville, and Frankford, with Bowling Green serving as the county seat. Agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, education, tourism, and retail support the local economy. The county's rural character and geographic diversity contribute to its demographic, housing, and workforce characteristics, which are presented in the following county profile.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 17,850**

Female Population: 8,199

Male Population: 9,651

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 23%

20-34: 18%

35-44: 13%

45-65: 25%

65+: 21%

**Total Households: 6,424**

**Total Families: 4,307**

Married Couples: 2,999

Female, Spouse Absent: 753

Male, Spouse Absent: 555

**Population by Race:**

White: 15,843

Black/ African American: 878

Hispanic or Latino: 103

Asian: 60

American Indian: 84

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 30

“Some Other”: 15

Mixed Race- Two or More: 801

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 105

Veterans- Male: 790

**Geographic Mobility: 6%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: \$68,560**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 10.8%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 22.6%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 25%**

**Families receiving TANF: 13**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 1,240**

**Poverty Rate: 15.9%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -3%**

Households at/below 125%: 20.3%

Households in Poverty: 14.9%

Seniors in Poverty: 13.7%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 20.8%

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$835          | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$636</b>           |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$16.06 | Median Home Value: \$169,316                       |
| <b>Housing Units: 7,760</b>           | Homeowners: 4,709                                  |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 0.1%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>-1.4%</b>     |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1.8%         | Median Home Age: 53 Years                          |
| Homeless Children: 77                 | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.9%</b>              |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 1.6%</b>     | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 15.3%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                                |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 4.3%</b>            | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                     |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.3%</b> | Drive Alone: 81.2%                             |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 10.4%                                 |
| 1 Adult: \$20.01                          | Public Trans: 0.2%                             |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$34.13                 | Walk/Bicycle: 3.2%                             |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$19.90                 | Taxi/Other: 0.7%                               |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$21.60</b>       | Work from Home: 4.4%                           |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>          |
| 1) Health Care/Social Assistance          | Infant/Toddler: \$40.80                        |
| 2) Manufacturing                          | Preschool: \$20.24                             |
| 3) Construction                           | School Age: \$18.57                            |
| <b>Average Daily Commute: 23 Minutes</b>  | <b>Childcare Facilities: 14 (Capacity:616)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 91.6%</b>    | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 24.1%       |
| No High School Diploma: 12.6%                | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 45.4%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 51.9%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 11.1%                             | No High School Diploma: 8.3%             |
| Graduate/Professional: 5.6%                  | High School Diploma Only: 47.3%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0</b> | Some College: 22.4%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 21.9%               |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 5,073**

MoHealthNet Providers: 527

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 4,123**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 9

**Physicians: 23**

**Dentists: 1**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 16**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 20

Teen Births: 0

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 16.7%**

Food Insecure Children: 21.2%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 900**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 56%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$377

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 45%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 5,456**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 233

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 35**

Spouse: 6

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 7

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 1

Total # of Victims: 47

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 90**

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 0

Assault: 180

Robbery: 10

Forcible Rape: 5

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 169

Larcenies: 448

Auto Theft: 49

Arson: 0

---



## Ralls County, MO

Ralls County is located in northeastern Missouri along the Mississippi River and is predominantly rural, with agriculture playing a significant role in the local economy. The county includes the communities of New London, Center, Perry, and Saverton, with New London serving as the county seat. Additional employment opportunities are found in manufacturing, education, healthcare, retail, and public services, with many residents commuting to neighboring counties. The county's population distribution, housing characteristics, workforce, and economic conditions are reflected in the demographic information presented in this section.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 10,457**

Female Population: 5,080

Male Population: 5,377

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 21%

20-34: 16%

35-44: 11%

45-65: 26%

65+: 27%

**Total Households: 3,970**

**Total Families: 2,823**

Married Couples: 2,400

Female, Spouse Absent: 283

Male, Spouse Absent: 140

**Population by Race:**

White: 9,688

Black/ African American: 187

Hispanic or Latino: 128

Asian: 17

American Indian: 6

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 0

“Some Other”: 47

Mixed Race- Two or More: 483

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 33

Veterans- Male: 657

**Geographic Mobility: 2.4%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: \$69,737**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 13.7%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 22.3%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 27.6%**

**Families receiving TANF: 4**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 640**

**Poverty Rate: 15.9%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -3%**

Households at/below 125%: 14.5%

Households in Poverty: 13.1%

Seniors in Poverty: 19.6%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 7.1%

## HOUSING

Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$845  
Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$16.25  
**Housing Units: 3,395**  
Vacant Rental Rates: 1.9%  
Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1.4%  
Homeless Children: 15  
**Over-Crowded Housing: 0.8%**

**Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$660**  
Median Home Value: \$192,955  
Homeowners: 3,395  
Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): **+10.6%**  
Median Home Age: 44 Years  
**Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.6%**  
**> 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 7.6%**

## EMPLOYMENT

**Unemployment Rate: 3.4%**  
Unemployment Change (25-26): **-0.6%**  
**Living Wage:**  
1 Adult: \$20.69  
1 Adult, 1 Child: \$35.05  
2 Adult, 1 Child: \$20.47  
**Average Hourly Wage: \$25.17**  
**Employment by Industry:**  
1) Health Care/ Social Assistance  
2) Retail Trade  
3) Manufacturing  
Average Daily Commute: 22 Minutes

**Travel- Employment:**  
Drive Alone: 80.7%  
Carpool: 6.7%  
Public Trans: 0%  
Walk/Bicycle: 4.3%  
Taxi/Other: 0.8%  
Work from Home: 7.6%  
**Average Childcare Cost- Daily:**  
Infant/Toddler: \$40.48  
Preschool: \$23.71  
School Age: \$20.09  
**Childcare Facilities: 5 (Capacity:142)**

## EDUCATION

**High School Graduation Rate: 100%**  
**Educational Attainment:**  
No High School Diploma: 8.1%  
High School Diploma Only: 47.8%  
Bachelors: 10.6%  
Graduate/Professional: 6.3%  
**Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0**

**Adult Literacy:**  
At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 18.7%  
At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 46.5%  
**Educational Attainment- Veterans:**  
No High School Diploma: 8%  
High School Diploma Only: 43.7%  
Some College: 40.1%  
Bachelors or Higher: 8.3%

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 2,259**

MoHealthNet Providers: 52

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 2,648**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 2

**Physicians: 0**

**Dentists: 0**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 7**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 3

Teen Births: 2

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 14.6%**

Food Insecure Children: 14.7%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 353**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 56%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$365

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 33.7%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 2,626**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 86

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 15**

Spouse: 3

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 5

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 1

Total # of Victims: 16

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 59**

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 9

Assault: 38

Robbery: 9

Forcible Rape: 19

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 38

Larcenies: 271

Auto Theft: 38

Arson: 0

---



## Randolph County, MO

Randolph County is located in north-central Missouri and serves as an important regional center for healthcare, education, manufacturing, and agriculture. The county includes the communities of Moberly, Huntsville, Cairo, Higbee, and Renick, with Huntsville serving as the county seat and Moberly serving as the largest population and employment center.

Transportation, manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, and agriculture provide a diverse economic base. The county's demographic, housing, workforce, and economic characteristics presented in the following section provide context for understanding local conditions.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 23,918**

Female Population: 11,440

Male Population: 12,478

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 22%

20-34: 18%

35-44: 14%

45-65: 24%

65+: 22%

**Total Households: 9,247**

**Total Families: 5,987**

Married Couples: 4,314

Female, Spouse Absent: 1,314

Male, Spouse Absent: 359

**Population by Race:**

White: 21,611

Black/ African American: 1,203

Hispanic or Latino: 612

Asian: 50

American Indian: 16

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 6

“Some Other”: 102

Mixed Race- Two or More: 1,377

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 87

Veterans- Male: 1,149

**Geographic Mobility: 3.8%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: \$57,371**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 13.7%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 22.3%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 22.9%**

**Families receiving TANF: 24**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 1,930**

**Poverty Rate: 12.8%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -5.5%**

Households at/below 125%: 19%

Households in Poverty: 14.2%

Seniors in Poverty: 10.8%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 25.4%

## HOUSING

---

|                                  |                                                    |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$824     | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$782</b>           |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$ | Median Home Value: \$196,741                       |
| <b>Housing Units: 10,953</b>     | Homeowners: 6,601                                  |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 1.1%        | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>-0.5%</b>     |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 0.5%    | Median Home Age: 50 Years                          |
| Homeless Children: 169           | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.6%</b>              |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 1%</b>  | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 11.6%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 3.7%</b>            | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                    |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.6%</b> | Drive Alone: 81%                              |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 8.9%                                 |
| 1 Adult: \$19.23                          | Public Trans: 0.2%                            |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$32.78                 | Walk/Bicycle: 0.8%                            |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$19.12                 | Taxi/Other: 2.2%                              |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$23.86</b>       | Work from Home: 7%                            |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>         |
| 1) Retail Trade                           | Infant/Toddler: \$40.48                       |
| 2) Health Care/ Social Assistance         | Preschool: \$23.71                            |
| 3) Manufacturing                          | School Age: \$21.09                           |
| Average Daily Commute: 22 Minutes         | <b>Childcare Facilities:15 (Capacity:713)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 95%</b>      | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 21.2%       |
| No High School Diploma: 10.2%                | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 38.3%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 42.6%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 13.2%                             | No High School Diploma: 2.4%             |
| Graduate/Professional: 5.3%                  | High School Diploma Only: 41.1%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 2</b> | Some College: 38.4%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 18%                 |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 8,184**

MoHealthNet Providers: 900

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 5,590**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 6

**Physicians: 28**

**Dentists: 9**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 23**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 24

Teen Births: 10

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 17.2%**

Food Insecure Children: 22.1%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 1,600**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 53%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$370

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 49.6%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 7,917**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 454

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 40**

Spouse: 5

Ex-Spouse: 1

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 11

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 6

Total # of Victims: 47

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 490**

---

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 8

Assault: 316

Robbery: 20

Forcible Rape: 24

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 210

Larcenies: 673

Auto Theft: 68

Arson: 8

---



## St. Charles County, MO

St. Charles County is located in eastern Missouri within the St. Louis metropolitan region and is the most populous county in NECAC's service area. The county includes the communities of St. Charles, St. Peters, O'Fallon, Wentzville, Lake Saint Louis, and several smaller municipalities. Its economy is supported by healthcare, education, manufacturing, financial services, technology, retail, logistics, and professional services. As a rapidly growing suburban county, St. Charles County has demographic, housing, and workforce characteristics that differ significantly from NECAC's more rural service areas, providing important context for the data presented in this section.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 430,754**

Female Population: 217,707

Male Population: 213,047

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 23%

20-34: 18%

35-44: 14%

45-65: 24%

65+: 20%

**Total Households: 161,311**

**Total Families: 111,939**

Married Couples: 91,156

Female, Spouse Absent: 14,004

Male, Spouse Absent: 6,779

**Population by Race:**

White: 348,354

Black/ African American: 21,335

Hispanic or Latino: 17,405

Asian: 12,632

American Indian: 333

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 187

"Some Other": 5,181

Mixed Race- Two or More: 23,513

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 1,563

Veterans- Male: 19,654

**Geographic Mobility: 5.6%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: \$112,016**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 9.8%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 21.2%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 20.2%**

**Families receiving TANF: 60**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 15,730**

**Poverty Rate: 6.3%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -0.5%**

Households at/below 125%: 6.7%

Households in Poverty: 5.7%

Seniors in Poverty: 6.3%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 5.9%

## HOUSING

Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$1,215  
Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$ 23.37  
**Housing Units: 172,409**  
Vacant Rental Rates: 1.4%  
Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 0.6%  
Homeless Children: 707  
**Over-Crowded Housing: 1%**

**Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$1,546**  
Median Home Value: \$350,248  
Homeowners: 129,898  
Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): **+55.82%**  
Median Home Age: 30 Years  
**Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.3%**  
**> 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 19.1%**

## EMPLOYMENT

**Unemployment Rate: 3.2%**  
Unemployment Change (25-26): **-0.4%**  
**Living Wage:**  
1 Adult: \$23.42  
1 Adult, 1 Child: \$42.24  
2 Adult, 1 Child: \$24.03  
**Average Hourly Wage: \$28.90**  
**Employment by Industry:**  
1) Health Care/ Social Assistance  
2) Manufacturing  
3) Retail Trade  
Average Daily Commute: 25 Minutes

**Travel- Employment:**  
Drive Alone: 73.8%  
Carpool: 5.9%  
Public Trans: 0.1%  
Walk/Bicycle: 0.9%  
Taxi/Other: 1.3%  
Work from Home: 18%  
**Average Childcare Cost- Daily:**  
Infant/Toddler: \$64.09  
Preschool: \$32.18  
School Age: \$27.93  
**Childcare Facilities: 151 (Capacity:13,337)**

## EDUCATION

**High School Graduation Rate: 94.7%**  
**Educational Attainment:**  
No High School Diploma: 4.3%  
High School Diploma Only: 22.8%  
Bachelors: 26.9%  
Graduate/Professional: 15.8%  
**Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 5**

**Adult Literacy:**  
At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 11.1%  
At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 30.2%  
**Educational Attainment- Veterans:**  
No High School Diploma: 5.2%  
High School Diploma Only: 46.8%  
Some College: 32.8%  
Bachelors or Higher: 15.2%

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 47,359**

MoHealthNet Providers: 10,887

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 82,637**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 14

**Physicians: 550**

**Dentists: 181**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 767**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 7

Teen Births: 85

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 10.9%**

Food Insecure Children: 9.6%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 7,222**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 79%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$411

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 19.4%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 50,573**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 2,256

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 1,316**

Spouse: 154

Ex-Spouse: 12

Common Law Spouse: 5

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 261

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 97

Total # of Victims: 1,738

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 1

Assault: 113

Robbery: 9

Forcible Rape: 26

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 55

Larcenies: 629

Auto Theft: 80

Arson: 2

---



## Shelby County, MO

Shelby County is located in northeastern Missouri and is characterized by its rural landscape, agricultural economy, and small-town communities. The county includes the communities of Shelbyville, Clarence, Shelbyville, Bethel, and Leonard, with Shelbyville serving as the county seat. Agriculture remains a primary economic driver, complemented by manufacturing, education, healthcare, retail, and public services. The county's rural

geography, population distribution, and workforce characteristics contribute to the demographic and economic profile presented in the following section.

### POPULATION

---

**Total Population: 6,032**

Female Population: 2,944

Male Population: 3,088

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 24%

20-34: 16%

35-44: 10%

45-65: 23%

65+: 26%

**Total Households: 2,456****Total Families: 1,488**

Married Couples: 1,141

Female, Spouse Absent: 220

Male, Spouse Absent: 127

**Population by Race:**

White: 5,625

Black/ African American: 98

Hispanic or Latino: 139

Asian: 21

American Indian: 2

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 0

"Some Other": 18

Mixed Race- Two or More: 222

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 60

Veterans- Male: 380

**Geographic Mobility: 3.6%**

---

### INCOME

---

**Median Household Income: \$62,246**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 10.6%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 20.7%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 26.9%**

**Families receiving TANF: 2**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 420**

**Poverty Rate: 15.6%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -1%**

Households at/below 125%: 25.6%

Households in Poverty: 14.9%

Seniors in Poverty: 18.6%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 18%

---

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$824          | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$657</b>          |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$15.85 | Median Home Value: \$124,138                      |
| <b>Housing Units: 2,937</b>           | Homeowners: 1,853                                 |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 1.7%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>-9.6%</b>    |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1.1%         | Median Home Age: 53 Years                         |
| Homeless Children: 8                  | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.2%</b>             |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 0.5%</b>     | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 7.1%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 3.1%</b>            | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                   |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.6%</b> | Drive Alone: 79.2%                           |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 6.5%                                |
| 1 Adult: \$19.74                          | Public Trans: 0%                             |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$32.39                 | Walk/Bicycle: 7.3%                           |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$18.99                 | Taxi/Other: 0.4%                             |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$21.23</b>       | Work from Home: 6.6%                         |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>        |
| 1) Health Care/ Social Assistance         | Infant/Toddler: \$40.80                      |
| 2) Manufacturing                          | Preschool: \$20.24                           |
| 3) Educational Services                   | School Age: \$18.57                          |
| Average Daily Commute: 21 Minutes         | <b>Childcare Facilities: 2 (Capacity:60)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 97.6%</b>    | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 17%         |
| No High School Diploma: 9.6%                 | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 45.1%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 44.6%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 13.6%                             | No High School Diploma: 6.4%             |
| Graduate/Professional: 4.9%                  | High School Diploma Only: 50.7%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0</b> | Some College: 34.9%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 8%                  |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 1,766**

MoHealthNet Providers: 196

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 1,643**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 1

**Physicians: 4**

**Dentists: 3**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 2**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 201

Teen Births: 11

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 16.8%**

Food Insecure Children: 20.9%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 238**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 40%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$353

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 43.1%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 2,364**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 155

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 7**

Spouse: 1

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 2

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 0

Total # of Victims: 9

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 79**

---

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 0

Assault: 17

Robbery: 0

Forcible Rape: 68

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 34

Larcenies: 289

Auto Theft: 153

Arson: 0

---



## Warren County, MO

Warren County is located in east-central Missouri along the Interstate 70 corridor and is characterized by a blend of rural communities, agricultural land, and continued residential growth. The county includes the communities of Warrenton, Wright City, Truesdale, Marthasville, and Innsbrook, with Warrenton serving as the county seat. Agriculture remains an important economic sector, while manufacturing, construction, healthcare, education, retail, and transportation also contribute significantly to the local economy. The county's location within commuting distance of the St. Louis metropolitan area influences its population growth, workforce, housing, and economic characteristics, which are reflected in the following demographic profile.

### POPULATION

**Total Population: 39,549**

Female Population: 19,534

Male Population: 20,015

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 24%

20-34: 16%

35-44: 14%

45-65: 23%

65+: 23%

**Total Households: 13,845**

**Total Families: 10,048**

Married Couples: 8,022

Female, Spouse Absent: 1,339

Male, Spouse Absent: 687

**Population by Race:**

White: 33,491

Black/ African American: 407

Hispanic or Latino: 1,530

Asian: 159

American Indian: 168

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 2

“Some Other”: 393

Mixed Race- Two or More: 2,629

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 168

Veterans- Male: 2,475

**Geographic Mobility: 7.5%**

### INCOME

**Median Household Income: 77,683**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 10.6%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 21.5%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 24.6%**

**Families receiving TANF: 12**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 2,150**

**Poverty Rate: 8%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -4.8%**

Households at/below 125%: 12.8%

Households in Poverty: 9.3%

Seniors in Poverty: 7.3%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 8.2%

## HOUSING

---

|                                       |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$1,215        | <b>Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$1,212</b>         |
| Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$23.37 | Median Home Value: \$271,558                       |
| <b>Housing Units: 16.895</b>          | Homeowners: 11,110                                 |
| Vacant Rental Rates: 0.9%             | Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): <b>+45.61%</b>   |
| Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1.6%         | Median Home Age: 26 Years                          |
| Homeless Children: 158                | <b>Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.1%</b>              |
| <b>Over-Crowded Housing: 2.2%</b>     | <b>&gt; 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 13.3%</b> |

---

## EMPLOYMENT

---

|                                           |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate: 3.4%</b>            | <b>Travel- Employment:</b>                    |
| Unemployment Change (25-26): <b>-0.4%</b> | Drive Alone: 80.5%                            |
| <b>Living Wage:</b>                       | Carpool: 9.5%                                 |
| 1 Adult: \$21.32                          | Public Trans: 0.2%                            |
| 1 Adult, 1 Child: \$36.24                 | Walk/Bicycle: 0.4%                            |
| 2 Adult, 1 Child: \$21.07                 | Taxi/Other: 0.5%                              |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage: \$24.34</b>       | Work from Home: 9%                            |
| <b>Employment by Industry:</b>            | <b>Average Childcare Cost- Daily:</b>         |
| 1) Manufacturing                          | Infant/Toddler: \$43.32                       |
| 2) Health Care/ Social Assistance         | Preschool: \$26.65                            |
| 3) Retail Trade                           | School Age: \$24.97                           |
| Average Daily Commute: 32 Minutes         | <b>Childcare Facilities: 12(Capacity:465)</b> |

---

## EDUCATION

---

|                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>High School Graduation Rate: 96.2%</b>    | <b>Adult Literacy:</b>                   |
| <b>Educational Attainment:</b>               | At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 18.7%       |
| No High School Diploma: 9.5%                 | At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 38.5%       |
| High School Diploma Only: 38.1%              | <b>Educational Attainment- Veterans:</b> |
| Bachelors: 14.5%                             | No High School Diploma: 5.2%             |
| Graduate/Professional: 5.7%                  | High School Diploma Only: 46.8%          |
| <b>Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 0</b> | Some College: 32.8%                      |
|                                              | Bachelors or Higher: 15.2%               |

---

## HEALTH

---

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 8,079**

MoHealthNet Providers: 475

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 8,591**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 3

**Physicians: 8**

**Dentists: 7**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 27**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 20

Teen Births: 0

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 13.5%**

Food Insecure Children: 15.6%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 1,291**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 60%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$411

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 40.6%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 7,263**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 498

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 56**

Spouse: 11

Ex-Spouse: 0

Common Law Spouse: 0

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 11

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 6

Total # of Victims: 69

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 326**

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 0

Assault: 122

Robbery: 2

Forcible Rape: 27

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 72

Larcenies: 580

Auto Theft: 94

Arson: 13

---



## NECAC SERVICE AREA

NECAC's **12-county** service area encompasses a diverse mix of rural, small-town, agricultural, and growing suburban communities across northeastern and eastern Missouri. The region includes counties along the Mississippi River, rural agricultural counties in north-central Missouri, communities located along major transportation corridors such as Interstate 70 and U.S. Highway 61, and the more densely populated suburban communities of St. Charles County.

Agriculture remains an important component of the regional economy, while manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, construction, transportation, public services, and professional industries contribute to employment throughout the service area. Population size, density, housing characteristics, economic activity, and access to regional employment centers vary considerably among the counties. Some communities are experiencing residential and population growth due to their proximity to the St. Louis metropolitan area, while others maintain smaller, predominantly rural populations. Together, these geographic, demographic, and economic differences create a diverse 12-county service area, and the county-level data presented in the following sections provide a more detailed picture of the individual communities that make up NECAC's service region.

## POPULATION

### **Total Population: 646,963**

Female Population: 324,172

Male Population: 308,458

### **Population by Age:**

0-17: 23%

18-34: 20%

35-44: 13%

45-64: 26%

65+: 18%

### **Total Households: 248,688**

### **Total Families: 171,592**

Married Couples: 136,681

Female, Spouse Absent: 23,170

Male, Spouse Absent: 11,741

### **Population by Race:**

White: 559,847

Black/ African American: 27,635

Hispanic or Latino: 23,468

Asian: 13,556

American Indian: 963

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: 312

"Some Other": 6,681

Mixed Race- Two or More: 37,969

### **Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 2,581

Veterans- Male: 32,670

### **Geographic Mobility: 5.4%**

## INCOME

### **Average Household Income: \$71,475**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 10.7%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 27.9%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 21.7%**

**Families receiving TANF: 196**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 31,290**

### **Poverty Rate: 7.9%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -2.25%**

Households at/below 125%: 9.9%

Households in Poverty: 8.2%

Seniors in Poverty: 8.5%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 8.6%

## HOUSING

Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$928.75

Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$17.86

**Housing Units: 275,166**

Vacant Rental Rates: 1.3%

Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 0.9%

Homeless Children: 1,537

**Over-Crowded Housing: 1.3%**

**Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$893**

Median Home Value: \$209,090.33

Homeowners: 196,519

Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): **+39.3%**

Average Home Age: 45 Years

**Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.3%**

**> 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 17.2%**

## EMPLOYMENT

**Unemployment Rate: 3.3%**

Unemployment Change (25-26): **-0.4%**

**Living Wage:**

1 Adult: \$20.47

1 Adult, 1 Child: \$34.92

2 Adult, 1 Child: \$20.32

**Average Hourly Wage: \$23.45**

**Employment by Industry:**

1) Health Care/ Social Assistance

2) Manufacturing

3) Retail Trade

Average Daily Commute: 25 Minutes

**Travel- Employment:**

Drive Alone: 75.7%

Carpool: 6.9%

Public Trans: 0.1%

Walk/Bicycle: 1.4%

Taxi/Other: 1.1%

Work from Home: 14.8%

**Average Childcare Cost- Daily:**

Infant/Toddler: \$43.05

Preschool: \$23.00

School Age: \$21.00

**Childcare Facilities: 249 (Capacity: 17,352)**

## EDUCATION

**High School Graduation Rate: 94.6%**

**Educational Attainment:**

No High School Diploma: 6.2%

High School Diploma Only: 29.8%

Bachelors: 22%

Graduate/Professional: 12.3%

**Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 9**

**Adult Literacy:**

At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 14.3%

At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 34.6%

**Educational Attainment- Veterans:**

No High School Diploma: 4.5%

High School Diploma Only: 31.8%

Some College: 36.6%

Bachelors or Higher: 27.1%

## HEALTH

**Uninsured Rate: 5.5%**

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 106,998**

MoHealthNet Providers: 16,158

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 136,078**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 69

**Physicians: 787**

**Dentists: 235**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 954**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 409

Teen Births: 220

## NUTRITION

**Food Insecurity Rate: 12.5%**

Food Insecure Children: 12.5%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 17,702**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 69.7%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$378.17

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 27.1%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 109,654**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 5,524

## CRIME

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 1,943**

Spouse: 226

Ex-Spouse: 15

Common Law Spouse: 7

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 420

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 138

Total # of Victims: 2,504

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 29

Assault: 1,617

Robbery: 78

Forcible Rape: 282

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 1,283

Larcenies: 6,863

Auto Theft: 919

Arson: 55



## MISSOURI:

### POPULATION

---

**Total Population: 6.3 Million**

Female Population: 3.2 Million

Male Population: 3.1 Million

**Population by Age:**

0-19: 23%

20-34: 19%

35-44: 13%

45-65: 23%

65+: 22%

**Total Households: 2,414,521**

**Total Families: 1,558,009**

Married Couples: 1,166,368

Female, Spouse Absent: 275,666

Male, Spouse Absent: 115,975

**Population by Race:**

White: 76%

Black/ African American: 11%

Hispanic or Latino: 6%

Asian: 2%

American Indian: 1%

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander: <1%

"Some Other": 2%

Mixed Race- Two or More: 7%

**Veterans:**

Veterans- Female: 30,591

Veterans- Male: 316,952

**Geographic Mobility: 6.4%**

---

### INCOME

---

**Median Household Income: 75,934**

30% Median Gross Income- HH: 13%

50% Median Gross Income- HH: 24.7%

**Individuals receiving SSA: 22.3%**

**Families receiving TANF: 4,294**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): 435,420**

**Poverty Rate: 12.2%**

**Poverty Rate Change (2014-2024): -3.3%**

Households at/below 125%: 16.5%

Households in Poverty: 12.9%

Seniors in Poverty: 10.4%

Children (0-5) in Poverty: 17.4%

---

## HOUSING

Fair Market Rent- 2BR: \$920.21  
Housing Affordability (2 BR): \$21.61

**Housing Units: 5,717,206**

Vacant Rental Rates: 1.8%

Vacant Non-Rental Rates: 1.1%

Homeless Children: 35,637

**Over-Crowded Housing: 1.7%**

**Median Housing Cost- Owned: \$1,087**

Median Home Value: \$264,642

Homeowners: 1,708,413

Homeowners- % Change (2000-2024): **+10.8%**

Median Home Age: 43.4 Years

**Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes: 0.4%**

**> 50% of Income Paid Towards Rent: 20.5%**

## EMPLOYMENT

**Unemployment Rate: 3.7%**

Unemployment Change (25-26): **-0.5%**

**Living Wage:**

1 Adult: \$21.27

1 Adult, 1 Child: \$37.17

2 Adult, 1 Child: \$21.44

**Average Hourly Wage: \$30.74**

**Employment by Industry:**

1) Health Care/ Social Assistance

2) Retail Trade

3) Manufacturing

Average Daily Commute: 24 Minutes

**Travel- Employment:**

Drive Alone: 74.9%

Carpool: 8.1%

Public Trans: 0.8%

Walk/Bicycle: 2%

Taxi/Other: 1.2%

Work from Home: 13%

**Average Childcare Cost- Daily:**

Infant/Toddler: \$55.00

Preschool: \$35.00

School Age: \$30.00

**Childcare Facilities: 3,768**

*(Capacity:247,370)*

## EDUCATION

**High School Graduation Rate: 93.1%**

**Educational Attainment:**

No High School Diploma: 8.1%

High School Diploma Only: 30.2%

Bachelors: 19.8%

Graduate/Professional: 12.6%

**Number of Secondary Edu Facilities: 138**

**Adult Literacy:**

At or Below Level 1 (16-74): 18.9%

At or Below Level 2 (16-74): 34.9%

**Educational Attainment- Veterans:**

No High School Diploma: 5.1%

High School Diploma Only: 31.5%

Some College: 36.9%

Bachelors or Higher: 26.4%

## HEALTH

---

**Uninsured Rate: 7.2%**

**MoHealthNet Recipients: 1,550,797**

MoHealthNet Providers: 809

**Individuals receiving Medicare: 1,330,661**

Medicare/Medicaid Providers: 189,263

**Physicians: 16,048**

**Dentists: 2,781**

**Licensed Professional Counselors: 7,101**

Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents: 3,242

Teen Births: 1,760

---

## NUTRITION

---

**Food Insecurity Rate: 15.1%**

Food Insecure Children: 18.2%

**Households Receiving SNAP: 324,974**

Food Insecure Households Ineligible  
for SNAP Benefits: 57.1%

Average SNAP Monthly Benefit: \$402

**Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollments: 49.2%**

**WIC Eligible Population: 1,621,156**

WIC Participation- Infant/Child: 85,989

---

## CRIME

---

**Domestic Violence Offenses: 29,727**

Spouse: 2,646

Ex-Spouse: 270

Common Law Spouse: 68

Boyfriend/Girlfriend: 6,721

Ex-Boyfriend/ Ex-Girlfriend: 2,272

Total # of Victims: 37,483

**Violent Crimes:**

Homicide: 2,613

Assault: 107,364

Robbery: 15,491

Forcible Rape: 1,599

**Property Crimes:**

Burglaries: 78,364

Larcenies: 411,021

Auto Theft: 121,392

Arson: 4,602

---

**Number of Juvenile Court Referrals: 43,874**

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## NECAC Service Area Data: Summary of Findings

### Overview

NECAC's 12-county service area encompasses **646,963 residents and 248,688 households**, representing a diverse combination of rural, small-town, agricultural, and growing suburban communities. Although the counties differ substantially in population, income, housing costs, and access to services, the data demonstrates several common conditions affecting economic stability throughout the region. The most significant themes are **housing affordability, food insecurity, transportation limitations, childcare costs and availability, healthcare access, and the gap between household wages and the cost of meeting basic needs**.

The county-level data also demonstrates why needs cannot be evaluated solely by looking at the overall service-area average. For example, St. Charles County has substantially higher household incomes and greater access to healthcare and childcare resources than many of NECAC's rural counties, while several rural counties experience considerably higher poverty, food insecurity, limited healthcare providers, and fewer childcare facilities. Consequently, the data supports both **regional priorities and county-specific strategies**.

### Income and Poverty

The service area has an average household income of approximately **\$71,475**, but this figure masks significant differences among counties. Poverty rates range from **6.3% in St. Charles County to approximately 15–16% in several rural counties**, including Macon, Pike, Ralls, and Shelby. The service area also includes substantial numbers of households living close to or below the poverty level, demonstrating that financial vulnerability extends beyond households formally classified as living in poverty.

Several counties report particularly high percentages of households at or below 125% of the poverty level. Shelby County, for example, reports **25.6%**, while Pike County reports **20.3%** and Randolph County **19.0%**. This reinforces the Community Needs Assessment finding that many households may be employed or receiving income but remain unable to consistently meet basic household expenses.

The data also shows a substantial reliance on Social Security and other fixed-income resources, particularly in counties with older populations. This creates additional vulnerability to inflation, housing costs, transportation expenses, and utility costs.

### Housing Affordability and Stability

Housing is one of the clearest areas of concern in the data. Across the service area, the **2-bedroom Fair Market Rent is approximately \$928.75**, while the calculated housing affordability wage is **\$17.86 per hour**. More than **17% of renters are paying over 50% of their income**

**toward rent**, placing these households at significant risk of housing instability. The service area also reports **1,537 homeless children**.

Housing pressures are particularly pronounced in the growing counties surrounding the St. Louis metropolitan area. St. Charles, Lincoln, and Warren counties have higher housing costs and substantially higher Fair Market Rents than many rural counties. St. Charles County's 2-bedroom Fair Market Rent is **\$1,215**, while Lincoln and Warren also report \$1,215. At the same time, St. Charles County reports **19.1% of renters paying more than 50% of income toward rent**.

Rural counties experience a different but equally important housing challenge. Older housing stock, limited rental inventory, low vacancy rates, and declining homeownership in some counties may restrict affordable housing options even when median rents are lower.

These findings strongly support the focus-group feedback identifying **affordable housing, deposits, rent costs, housing quality, and housing availability** as major barriers to stability.

### **Employment, Wages and Transportation**

The service-area unemployment rate is relatively low at **3.3%**, suggesting that the primary workforce challenge is not simply lack of employment opportunities. Instead, the data indicates a potential **employment-quality and accessibility issue**.

The average hourly wage across the service area is approximately **\$23.45**, while a household with one adult and one child requires approximately **\$34.92 per hour** to meet the identified living-wage standard. This gap demonstrates why employment alone does not necessarily result in self-sufficiency.

Transportation further complicates employment access. Approximately **75.7% of workers drive alone**, and public transportation accounts for only **0.1%** of commuting. In many rural counties, public transportation is essentially nonexistent. Average commute times range from approximately 18 to 32 minutes, but distance is only one aspect of the transportation barrier; residents without reliable vehicles may have difficulty reaching employment, healthcare, childcare, grocery stores, and other essential services.

This data directly supports focus-group findings that **transportation costs, lack of public transportation, vehicle reliability, and distance from employment and essential services** are barriers to self-sufficiency.

### **Childcare**

Childcare represents another significant economic barrier. Across the service area, infant/toddler care averages approximately **\$43 per day**, while preschool care averages approximately **\$23 per day** and school-age care approximately **\$21 per day**. These costs can

represent a substantial portion of household income, particularly for low-wage or single-parent households.

Availability varies dramatically by county. Some rural counties have only **two to five childcare facilities**, while St. Charles County has a much larger supply. Even where facilities exist, capacity and affordability remain important considerations.

The data supports the community survey and focus-group finding that **affordable childcare, particularly for infants and toddlers, is a significant barrier to employment and family stability.**

### **Education and Workforce Development**

The region has relatively strong high school graduation rates, with the service-area rate reported at approximately **94.6%**. However, educational attainment and adult literacy data identify continuing challenges for adults seeking higher-paying employment.

Approximately **6.2% of adults lack a high school diploma**, while adult literacy data indicates that approximately **14.3% are at or below Level 1** and **34.6% are at or below Level 2**.

These findings suggest that workforce development strategies should extend beyond job placement and include **adult education, literacy, vocational training, credential attainment, and skills development** that can help residents move into higher-paying employment.

### **Healthcare and Mental Health Access**

Healthcare access varies substantially across the service area. While larger counties have significantly more physicians, dentists, and behavioral health providers, several rural counties report **very limited or no physicians or dentists**.

For example, the data reports **zero physicians and zero dentists in Ralls County**, while other rural counties report only a handful of providers serving relatively dispersed populations.

This geographic disparity supports focus-group findings that residents may need to travel outside their communities for medical, dental, and behavioral health services. Transportation barriers can make these shortages even more significant for low-income households, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

### **Food Insecurity**

Food insecurity is consistently elevated throughout the rural portions of the NECAC service area. The service-area data reports a **12.5% overall food insecurity rate and 12.5% food insecurity among children**, but numerous counties report substantially higher rates.

Several counties report food insecurity rates exceeding **16%**, with child food insecurity exceeding **20%** in some areas. Importantly, the data also indicates that a significant percentage of food-insecure households are **ineligible for SNAP**, ranging from approximately 40% to 65% in individual counties.

This is particularly important for the CNA because it demonstrates that food insecurity is not limited to households receiving public benefits. There is a population experiencing food insecurity whose income may be **too high for SNAP eligibility but still insufficient to consistently purchase adequate food**.

### **Overall Findings and Implications for NECAC**

Taken together, the county-level data validates the concerns identified through NECAC's community surveys and focus groups. The most significant finding is that **poverty and economic hardship manifest differently throughout the service area**.

In rural counties, residents face limited access to healthcare, childcare, transportation, employment opportunities, and other essential services. In the rapidly growing counties, residents may have greater access to employment but face significantly higher housing, childcare, and transportation costs. Across both environments, households can experience financial hardship despite employment.

The data therefore supports continued NECAC investment in:

- ❖ Affordable housing and housing stabilization
- ❖ Utility and emergency assistance
- ❖ Food security and nutrition assistance
- ❖ Transportation solutions
- ❖ Affordable childcare and family supports
- ❖ Employment and workforce development
- ❖ Adult education and skills training
- ❖ Healthcare, dental, and behavioral health access
- ❖ Services for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- ❖ Domestic violence and safety-related supports

### **Conclusion**

The county-level data confirms that NECAC's 12-county service area contains both **persistent and emerging conditions that can prevent households from achieving long-term self-sufficiency**. While the overall region has relatively low unemployment and several counties demonstrate economic growth, these positive indicators do not eliminate poverty or financial instability. High housing costs, food insecurity, childcare expenses, transportation limitations, limited rural healthcare access, and the gap between wages and living costs continue to affect low-income households.



# Agency Data Overview:

## FFY2025

## Client Satisfaction Surveys- Outreach Offices

### Overview

NECAC collected 1,093 client satisfaction surveys across its 12-county service area during FY2025 to evaluate client experiences, service accessibility, staff professionalism, and overall program effectiveness. Survey responses consistently demonstrate a high level of client satisfaction with NECAC services, particularly regarding staff interactions, respect, confidentiality, and overall customer service. The survey also identified opportunities to improve communication, accessibility, and referrals when funding limitations prevent direct assistance.

Overall, the data reinforces NECAC's mission of providing respectful, compassionate, and effective services while highlighting operational improvements that can further strengthen client outcomes.

### Organizational Strengths:

**Clients overwhelmingly reported positive experiences with NECAC staff.** Across more than 1,000 responses per question, nearly all respondents indicated that staff:

- ❖ Treated them with honesty and respect.
- ❖ Maintained confidentiality.
- ❖ Were easy to communicate with.
- ❖ Created welcoming office environments.
- ❖ Would be recommended to friends or family.
- ❖ Helped clients work toward greater self-sufficiency.
- ❖ Were accessible during office hours.

The strongest theme throughout the survey was **staff compassion and professionalism**. Open-ended comments repeatedly described employees as:

- ❖ Respectful
- ❖ Kind
- ❖ Patient
- ❖ Knowledgeable
- ❖ Supportive
- ❖ Non-Judgmental
- ❖ Willing to go Above and Beyond

Many respondents specifically recognized individual staff members for exceptional customer service and life-changing assistance.

Representative comments include:

- ❖ "Everyone here is polite and welcoming. They make this experience comfortable and you don't feel judged."
- ❖ "Respectful, non-judgmental. Compassionate."
- ❖ "The staff is absolutely amazing and truly care."
- ❖ "Without all the help I've received from NECAC...I know I couldn't make it."

Several respondents credited NECAC with helping them remain housed, maintain utilities, obtain food, or navigate difficult personal circumstances.

- ❖ "When I had the biggest adversity of my life...She saved my life."
- ❖ "NECAC services are a lifesaver for me at times."

These responses demonstrate that NECAC's greatest organizational strength continues to be its staff's ability to build trust while delivering compassionate, client-centered services.

### **Areas for Improvement**

Although overall satisfaction is exceptionally high, survey responses identified several recurring opportunities for improvement.

**Communication and accessibility** emerged as the most common concern. A small number of respondents reported difficulty reaching staff by phone or delays receiving callbacks during periods of high demand.

Examples include:

"A little hard to reach the energy assistance department...once you get ahold of them, they are awesome."

Some respondents also described experiences where funding was unavailable but they did not receive referrals or follow-up information.

Other comments reflected frustration with funding limitations rather than dissatisfaction with staff. Clients expressed ongoing unmet needs related to:

- ❖ Affordable Housing
- ❖ Rental Assistance
- ❖ Utility Assistance
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Long-Term Financial Stability

These comments suggest continued community demand exceeds available resources and reinforce findings from NECAC's Community Needs Assessment regarding housing affordability and financial hardship.

### **Conclusion:**

FY2025 client satisfaction results demonstrate that NECAC continues to provide high-quality, compassionate services across its service area. Clients consistently report feeling respected, welcomed, and supported by staff, with many indicating that NECAC has had a meaningful impact on their ability to meet basic needs and improve household stability. The strong recommendation rates and overwhelmingly positive feedback highlight staff professionalism as one of the agency's greatest strengths.

The survey also identifies important opportunities for continuous improvement. Enhancing communication during peak service periods, strengthening referral practices when funding is unavailable, and expanding resources to address unmet housing and utility needs will further improve the client experience. These findings align with broader community assessment data and provide valuable guidance for future strategic planning, program development, staff training, and resource allocation.

Overall, the FY2025 Client Satisfaction Survey confirms that NECAC is viewed as a trusted community resource while identifying practical areas where service delivery can continue to evolve to meet the growing needs of the communities it serves.

## **Missouri Management Information System (MIS) Data- Clients Served:**

### **Overview**

NECAC's FY2025 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) client data provides a demographic profile of the households and individuals served across the agency's 12-county service area. During the reporting period (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025), NECAC served **8,031 unduplicated households** representing **16,604 unduplicated individuals**. This data demonstrates that NECAC primarily serves households experiencing significant economic hardship while supporting diverse populations across all age groups, family compositions, and housing situations. The information helps identify the populations most frequently accessing services and guides agency planning, resource allocation, and future program development.

### **Analysis of Agency Data**

Agency data indicates that NECAC serves a large number of families with children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and single-adult households. Approximately **61% of individuals served were female**, while nearly **39% were male**, reflecting the higher utilization of community action services by women and female-headed households. Adults ages **25-44** represented the largest age group served, followed by children ages **6-13**, demonstrating that working-age adults with dependent children continue to be the agency's primary service population. Older adults (ages 60 and above) also account for a substantial portion of individuals served, highlighting continued needs related to aging, fixed incomes, housing stability, and utility assistance.

Household data further reinforces these trends. Nearly **47% of all households served consisted of single-person households**, while **single-parent families represented over 32% of households**, the vast majority led by females. These demographics suggest that many households accessing services have limited financial and social support systems, increasing their vulnerability to housing instability, food insecurity, and utility hardships.

Income data confirms that NECAC serves households experiencing significant financial hardship. More than **70% of households reported incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines**, with nearly one-third living below **50% of poverty**. Only a small percentage of households reported incomes above 150% of poverty, demonstrating that agency resources are reaching households with the greatest economic need.

Housing characteristics indicate that **approximately 59% of households rent their homes**, compared to **35% who own their homes**. While only a small number of households were identified as homeless, the high percentage of renters reflects increased vulnerability to rising housing costs, eviction, and housing instability. These findings align with community feedback identifying affordable housing as one of the region's most significant unmet needs.

Employment information shows that many adults served are unemployed, retired, or not participating in the labor force, although reporting limitations resulted in a substantial number of unknown responses. Household income sources further demonstrate reliance on fixed-income benefits and public assistance. Many households receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security benefits, or other non-employment income, while **LIHEAP** was the most frequently reported non-cash benefit received. These findings illustrate the critical role NECAC plays in supporting households with limited earned income and individuals living on fixed incomes.

The data also shows that **3,914 individuals reported having a disabling condition**, emphasizing the continued need for accessible services, supportive case management, transportation assistance, and programs designed to promote independent living and long-term stability.

## **Conclusion**

The FY2025 CSBG client characteristic data confirms that NECAC is effectively reaching households experiencing the greatest economic challenges throughout its service area. The agency primarily serves individuals and families living at or below the federal poverty level, including single-parent families, seniors, individuals with disabilities, renters, and households relying on fixed or public assistance income. These findings demonstrate NECAC's continued strength in targeting resources toward populations with the highest levels of need.

The data also highlights several opportunities for continued growth. The large number of renter households, prevalence of extremely low-income families, and significant population living with disabilities reinforce the need to expand affordable housing initiatives, employment and workforce development services, financial stability programs, and supportive services that promote long-term self-sufficiency.



# Community Needs Assessment

## Prioritization of Needs

## **Community Needs Prioritization**

### **Executive Summary**

The 2026 NECAC Community Needs Assessment utilized multiple sources of information to identify the most significant needs throughout the agency's 12-county service area. The assessment incorporated community surveys, county-level focus groups, which included community partner participation, NECAC agency and client data, and quantitative data from various sources outlined on the "Sources & Reference" section.

Across these sources, three priorities emerged as the most significant and interconnected needs throughout the service area: **Housing, Employment/Economic Stability, and Nutrition/Food Security**. These priorities were identified not only because of the frequency with which residents and community partners reported them, but also because county-level data demonstrates measurable conditions that contribute to household instability.

The assessment also demonstrates that these needs do not exist independently. Housing instability is often affected by insufficient income, employment barriers, lack of transportation and childcare, high utility costs due to increased energy rates and aged housing stock in many rural counties. Likewise, households experiencing food insecurity may be forced to choose between purchasing food or paying for essential needs such as rent, utilities, and prescription medications. NECAC therefore approaches these priorities through a combination of direct assistance program(s) offered by NECAC, case management services, workforce development program(s), and referrals to other local agencies/services through partnerships.

The purpose of the prioritization process is not simply to identify community problems, but to determine where NECAC can have the greatest impact by strengthening existing services, expanding partnerships, developing new initiatives, and pursuing additional resources.

### **1) Community Need Safe & Affordable Housing**

Housing was consistently identified as the **highest-priority community need** through the survey and focus group process. Community members identified high rental costs, limited affordable housing stock, lack of available assistance for security deposits, poor housing quality, and difficulty maintaining housing as significant barriers to household stability.

County-level data reinforces these findings. Across NECAC's service area, approximately 17.2% of renters are paying more than 50% of their income toward rent, while the region reports 1,537 homeless children. Housing costs also vary substantially across the service area, with particularly high Fair Market Rents in several growing counties.

NECAC currently addresses housing needs through multiple programs and approaches, including:

- ❖ **CSBG Case Management**, which works with households to identify barriers to stability and develop individualized plans toward self-sufficiency.
- ❖ **Emergency Programs**, which can provide short term assistance for individuals facing a housing crisis such as eviction.
- ❖ **Utility assistance**, which can help households maintain housing by preventing utility disconnection.
- ❖ **Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher services**, supporting access to affordable rental housing.
- ❖ **Homeownership programs**, supporting households working toward sustainable homeownership.
- ❖ **Weatherization**, helping eligible households improve energy efficiency and reduce ongoing housing-related expenses.
- ❖ **In-Home services**, supporting eligible individuals and households in maintaining independence in their homes.
- ❖ **Referrals to local community partners** when a household's needs extend beyond NECAC's available resources.

NECAC's existing housing services provide both **crisis intervention and longer-term stabilization**. The assessment indicates, however, that the demand for affordable and stable housing continues to exceed available resources.

**Future direction:** NECAC will use the CNA findings to explore opportunities to expand housing stabilization resources, strengthen affordable housing partnerships, increase access to affordable housing units through development projects, and identify additional funding opportunities that can address both immediate housing crises and longer-term housing stability.

## 2) Families Need Economic Stability

The assessment demonstrates that **employment and income are fundamental factors affecting the ability of households to achieve self-sufficiency**. Although the regional unemployment rate is relatively low, the data indicates that employment does not necessarily provide sufficient income to meet household needs.

The service area's average hourly wage is approximately \$23.45, while the identified living wage for a household consisting of one adult and one child is approximately \$34.92 per hour. This disparity illustrates the difference between being employed and being economically stable.

Community survey and focus group participants identified barriers including transportation, childcare, lack of available employment opportunities, inadequate wages, educational limitations, and physical barriers that can make maintaining employment difficult.

NECAC currently addresses these barriers through:

- ❖ **CSBG Case Management**, including individualized assessment and goal planning.
- ❖ **Workforce Development Program-SkillUp**, includes assessment and goal planning for eligible customers seeking living wage employment. Program includes supportive services and training cost assistance to support customers with obtaining and maintaining employment.
- ❖ **Life Skills Classes**, on site classes to increase customer soft skills, resume building, budgeting and other valuable educational opportunities.
- ❖ **Connecting customers with NECAC program applications** to address utility, housing, and emergency assistance, which can stabilize households sufficiently for an individual to pursue or maintain employment.
- ❖ **Referrals to local community partners** when a household's needs extend beyond NECAC's available resources.

NECAC recognizes that addressing employment barriers often requires addressing the underlying circumstances that prevent a person from working successfully. A household facing eviction, utility disconnection, lack of childcare, transportation problems, or food insecurity may be unable to focus on employment or education without first addressing those immediate needs.

**Future direction:** NECAC will use the CNA to strengthen employment and economic mobility strategies, with emphasis on connecting clients to living wage employment, education, training, supportive services, and resources that can help households move beyond crisis assistance toward sustainable income and self-sufficiency.

### 3) Families Need Improved Food Security

Nutrition and food security emerged as a significant concern through community surveys, focus groups, and county-level data. Residents identified food affordability, limited access to fresh and nutritious foods, rural transportation barriers, and limitations of existing food resources.

The county-level data reports a 12.5% food insecurity rate across the NECAC service area, with child food insecurity also at approximately 12.5%. Several counties experience substantially higher rates, with some reporting food insecurity above 16% and child food insecurity above 20%.

An important finding is that food insecurity affects households that may not qualify for traditional public assistance. County data indicates that significant percentages of food-insecure households are ineligible for SNAP, demonstrating a gap between household income and the actual cost of meeting nutritional needs.

NECAC currently addresses nutrition needs through several programs and strategies:

- ❖ **WIC services** in Warren & St. Charles Counties, providing nutritional support to eligible women, infants, and children.
- ❖ **CSBG Case Management**, including assessment of household needs and referrals to food and nutrition resources.
- ❖ **Zero Balance Brigade**, a CSBG initiative currently operating in Marion and Ralls Counties to address past-due school meal balances and provide up to 30 days of school meals for eligible students.
- ❖ **Ralls County Food Pantry**, food service provided on site through partnership with the Northeast Food Bank, local retailers and share the harvest.
- ❖ **Emergency Assistance**, utilizing available United Way resources and community donations when appropriate.

The **Zero Balance Brigade** represents an example of NECAC using assessment findings to develop a targeted response to an identified community need. By addressing school meal debt and ensuring students have access to meals, the program addresses food insecurity while also reducing a financial burden on families, supporting children's ability to participate successfully in school, and aid students in obtaining high school diplomas through school debt elimination. NECAC will also connect eligible families with Free & Reduced lunch and SNAP program applications for on-going supports, while also providing budgeting classes and case management to assist families with long-term solutions.

**Future direction:** NECAC will use the CNA findings to evaluate opportunities to expand nutrition services, strengthen food partnerships, pursue additional nutrition funding, and identify sustainable approaches to address food insecurity among households that may fall outside traditional benefit eligibility.

## Cross-Cutting Needs Supporting Priorities

The assessment identified several additional needs that directly affect NECAC's ability to address the three primary priorities.

### Transportation

Transportation was repeatedly identified as a barrier to employment, healthcare, education, food access, and other essential services. Rural communities have particularly limited public transportation options. NECAC will continue utilizing referrals and community partnerships while exploring opportunities to strengthen transportation-related resources.

### Childcare

Childcare affordability and availability, particularly for infants and toddlers, directly affect employment and economic stability. NECAC will continue connecting families with available childcare resources and partnerships while considering opportunities to incorporate childcare barriers into employment and self-sufficiency planning.

### Healthcare and Mental Health

Limited access to healthcare, dental care, and behavioral health services was identified throughout the assessment, particularly in rural communities. NECAC's case management and referral network provide an important mechanism for connecting clients with available providers and community resources. NECAC recognizes this is an opportunity to increase partnerships and relationships with local providers to increase our network of referrals.

### Utility Stability

Utility costs are closely connected to both housing and economic stability. NECAC addresses utility emergencies through LIHEAP, including Emergency Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) as well as emergency utility assistance through vendor utility programs such as Ameren Dollar More, and Ameren New Start. When traditional program resources are insufficient, NECAC may utilize "gap" resources such as United Way funding and community donations when available.

### Education and Life Skills

Education and skill development are important components of long-term economic stability. CSBG Life Skills Classes, case management, SkillUp, and partnerships provide opportunities for clients to develop skills and connect with resources that support self-sufficiency.

### Conclusion:

Overall, the findings demonstrate that **the needs identified are interconnected and often reinforce one another**. Limited income can make it difficult to afford housing, food, transportation, childcare, and utilities simultaneously. Housing instability can affect

employment, education, and family well-being, while transportation and childcare barriers can prevent individuals from accessing employment opportunities. Food insecurity can further reduce a household's ability to meet other basic needs. At the **family level**, the assessment identified needs related to stable housing, adequate income, food security, transportation, childcare, healthcare, education, employment, and assistance with unexpected financial hardship. At the **community level**, findings identified gaps in affordable housing, transportation, childcare, healthcare, food access, employment opportunities, and available resources. At the **agency level**, the assessment provides information regarding the populations served, the conditions affecting clients and communities, and areas of continued need identified through multiple sources of community and agency data. Taken together, the findings provide consistent evidence that **economic stability remains a significant challenge throughout the NECAC service area**, with housing, employment and economic stability, and nutrition/food security representing the most prominent areas of need. The consistency of these findings across multiple data sources provides a strong foundation for understanding the current conditions experienced by individuals, families, and communities throughout the 12-county service area.

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#### Data Use & Methodology Note

*Unless otherwise noted, demographic, population, socioeconomic, housing, and related community-level statistics presented throughout this Community Needs Assessment were obtained from the **U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey**. Community perspectives were collected through NECAC's **community surveys and county-level focus groups**. Internal agency data were analyzed to supplement external data and provide additional insight into the needs, strengths, and service gaps experienced throughout NECAC's 12-county service area.*