



LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
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**Total Action for Progress**

**February 2023**

**Triennial Community Needs Assessment**

**SUMMARY**

Triennial Community Needs Assessment of TAP's service area covering trends from 2019 through 2022.

**Assessment Conducted by the Virginia  
Tech Institute for Policy and Governance**

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## Executive Summary

Every three years, community action agencies are required to update their community needs assessment, which then guides their strategic planning processes. This triennial community needs assessment was conducted during calendar year 2022 and covers Total Action for Progress's (TAP's) service area in Greater Roanoke, Lexington, Rockbridge, and the Alleghany Highlands.

Under the guidance of members of the TAP Board of Directors, the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance conducted the needs assessment by compiling and analyzing secondary data sources, examining administrative data, conducting key informant interviews and focus groups, and by surveying the community, clients, partners and staff. The following highlights are key themes identified throughout the compilation of this report:

### Community Level



**Traumatized Communities:** Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities are experiencing high levels of trauma and stress resulting in a range of adverse social impacts including increased substance use, domestic violence, gun violence, mental health issues, and professional burnout.



**Insecure Housing:** Increased housing costs and low housing supply are raising the housing cost-burdens for many low- to moderate-income households, increasing housing instability, which can lead to increased homelessness.



**Work-Life Balance:** Job seekers are looking for greater work-life balance, reduced workplace stress, greater flexibility such as hybrid positions or a variety of schedules, and better pay and benefits. Residents are not just looking for basic employment; they want good jobs that meet their family needs.



**Educational Disruption:** Primary, secondary and early educational systems, including Head Start, were all disrupted by the pandemic and are still fragile. Children are suffering from learning loss and good teachers are leaving the field. It may take time and investment for education systems and the children they serve to adjust and recover.

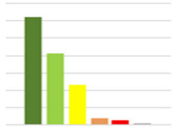


**Health Challenges:** Poor mental and physical health, substance use and community violence were the top health challenges identified. Few TAP programs focus specifically on these issues, but these issues affect many participants across all TAP programs.



**Public Transportation:** Transportation is another issue area that is somewhat outside of TAP's normal programmatic focus. However, a lack of public transportation in rural areas and the shortcomings of existing public transportation systems to meet the needs of workers is a major impediment for families seeking to escape poverty through employment. TAP could play a larger role in building regional partnerships and engaging communities to address this need.

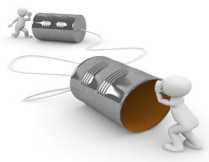
## Agency Level



**Customer Service:** TAP’s customer service is generally positive across all dimensions. Reducing paperwork burden, improving clarity on eligibility requirements for programs, centralizing program information, and improving awareness of who clients need to talk to are potential areas of focus.



**TAP Employees:** TAP struggles to retain talented staff, in part due to low wages and grant turnover. It is sometimes difficult to fill key positions with qualified staff. Quality staff are the lifeblood of an agency like TAP and additional investments in strengthening the TAP workforce will be necessary to maintain effective programming.



**TAP Infrastructure:** TAP’s internal infrastructure (human resources, finance, information technology, facilities, communications, etc.) will require sustained investment to keep up with increasing demands. In a digital age, many key TAP processes and systems are still paper-based and have not evolved with the times.

## How To Use This Report

This report contains extensive information about the region from a variety of primary and secondary sources. If you are interested in a particular subject, the domain reports in **Section 4** contain findings and discussion related to regional demographics, poverty and TAP’s six service domains. In that section, where possible, we report data at the locality level and at the national, state, and/or regional levels for comparison. **Section 5**, Agency Capacity, contains information from interviews and survey data related to TAP’s overall capacity; however, agency capacity issues may also be discussed in the domain reports and locality profiles. **Section 6** contains a more in-depth profile of issues at the local level, and we generally do not repeat information previously reported in the domains section. **Section 7**, Analysis and Preliminary Recommendations, is a compilation and synthesis of key findings from throughout the report categorized at the individual, agency, and community levels, which is intended to be used as a jumping-off point for issue prioritization and strategy development as a part of the strategic planning process.

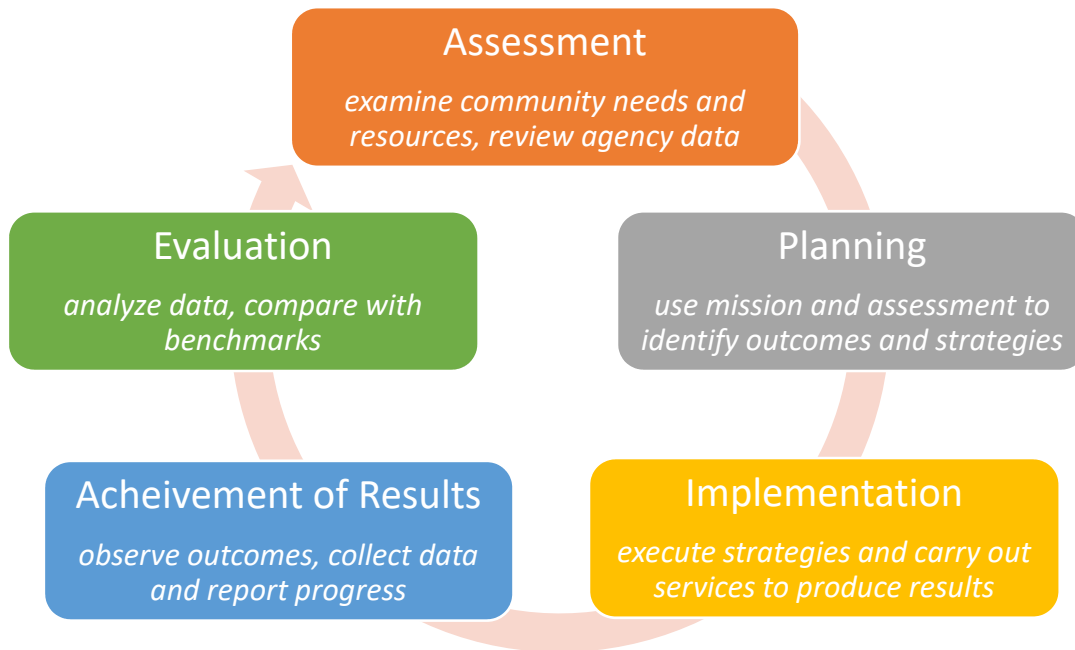
## 1) Background

The Community Action Partnership (2018) describes the process and purpose of the triennial Community Needs Assessment (CNA), which is required of all Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) agencies:

A Community Needs Assessment is a process conducted by all Community Action Agencies every three years to determine the underlying causes and conditions of poverty within the community they serve and identify the available resources to address the unmet needs of the community's most vulnerable residents. The Community Needs Assessment is the first phase of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Cycle, grounding and guiding the work to develop and implement programs and services that lift families and communities out of poverty.

As shown in Fig. 1, TAP will use the assessment as the first step to inform continuous improvement of programs and services based on the ROMA cycle.

**Figure 1. The ROMA Cycle**



Total Action for Progress (TAP) contracted with the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG) to conduct its 2022 CNA, which covers 11 localities—Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Salem, Craig, Botetourt, Rockbridge, Lexington, Buena Vista, Alleghany, Covington and Bath.

Assessment activities began in January 2022 and continued through December 2022. The primary Virginia Tech research team members were Lara Nagle, David Moore, Liz Allen and Sam Rodgers. The research team was assisted and advised by a subcommittee of board members including Leslie Floyd, Lee Clark, Maria Motley-Arnold, Stephanie Clark, Rita Joyce, and Kevin Lockhart.

## 2) About TAP

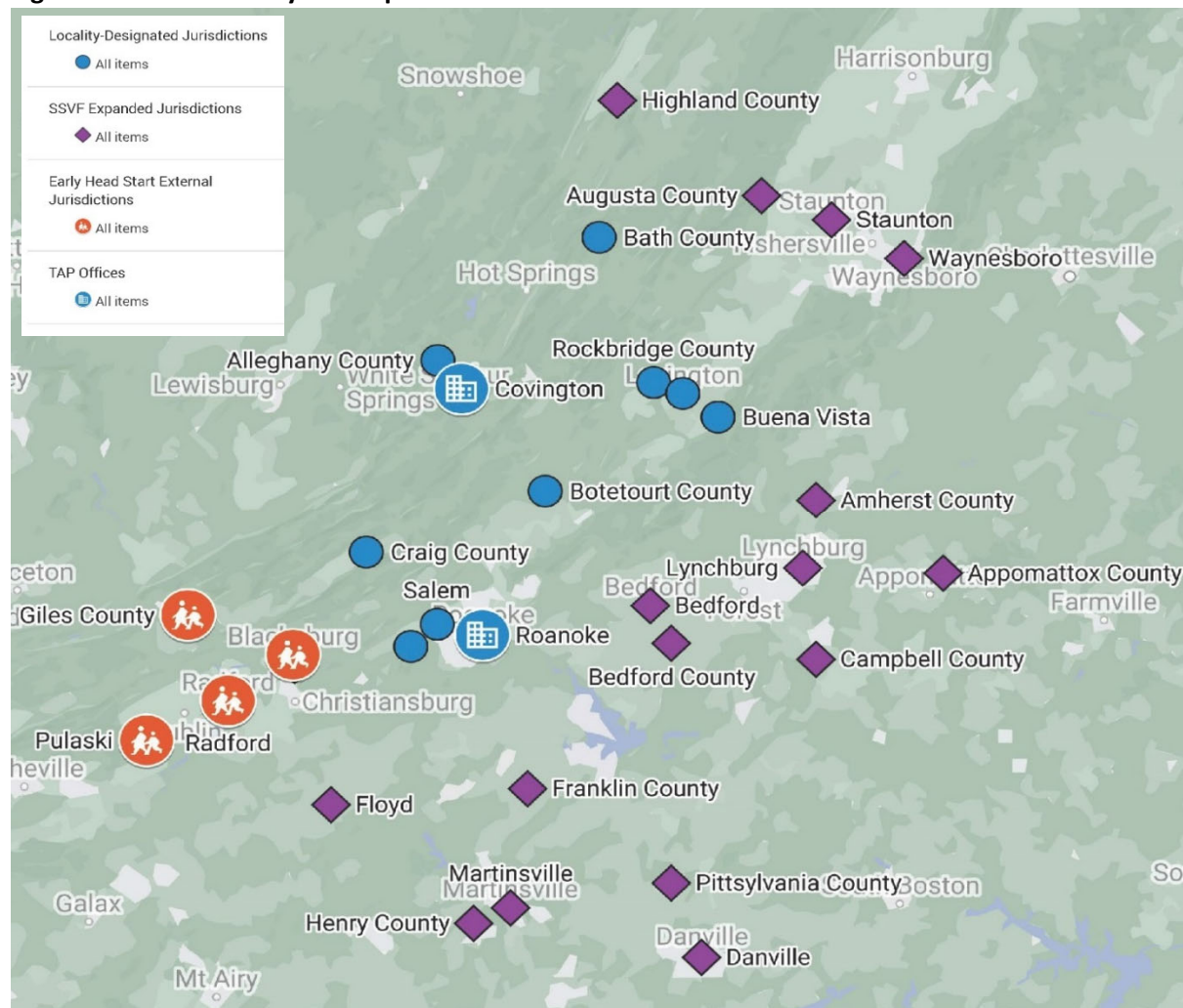
### History

Total Action for Progress, originally known as Total Action Against Poverty, has a rich history dating back over 55 years. The agency was founded by Cabell Brand in 1965 soon after President Lyndon Johnson declared a War on Poverty and the landmark Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was signed into law. Over the next five decades, TAP established itself as an innovative and successful community action agency, currently serving over 4,700 individuals per year across eleven localities with more than 25 programs and an annual operating budget in excess of \$26 million per year.

### Service Area

TAP is the community action agency that serves the eleven localities in the Roanoke Valley and adjacent communities; these include the counties of Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, and Rockbridge, and the cities of Buena Vista, Covington, Lexington, Roanoke, and Salem (see blue icons in Fig. 1a). TAP maintains offices in Roanoke City and Covington, and covers an expanded range for Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) (purple icons) and Early Head Start (orange icons).

**Figure 1a. TAP's Primary and Expanded Service Area**





## Organization

TAP is organized into ten components. Programmatic components include Head Start/Early Head Start, This Valley Works, Housing & Human Services, Financial Services, Real Estate Development and Energy Conservation & Housing Rehab, and Property Management & Maintenance (Fig. 1b). Supporting infrastructure components include the departments of Planning & Resource Development, Human Resources, Finance, and Central Administration.

Figure 1b. High Level Overview of TAP's Services

**Total Action for Progress (TAP)**  
has programs designed to help you  
**improve your life.**

To find out more, contact us at [540.777.HOPE](tel:540.777.HOPE).

**tap**  
Founded 1965

**EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT**

Get on the right track at any age. We offer:

- **Head Start and Early Head Start** (6 weeks–4 years)
- **Education and job training** (youth and adults)
- **Job placement** (youth and adults)
- **College prep** (middle and high school students)

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & FAMILY SERVICES**

Everyone deserves the chance for a new and better future. We can provide:

- **24/7 domestic violence hotline: 540.580.0775**
- **Safety planning and emergency re-housing**
- **Supervised visitation and safe exchange**
- **Re-entry services**

**HOUSING**

Safe housing is a basic human right. We can help with:

- **Veteran family support**
- **Homeless prevention**
- **Home repair and rehab**
- **Mortgage default counseling**
- **Energy efficiency improvement**
- **Homebuyer education**

**FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Learn the essentials of money, banking, and business and pay less for loans through our:

- **Small business loans**
- **Financial coaching**
- **Free tax clinic**
- **Dental health financing**

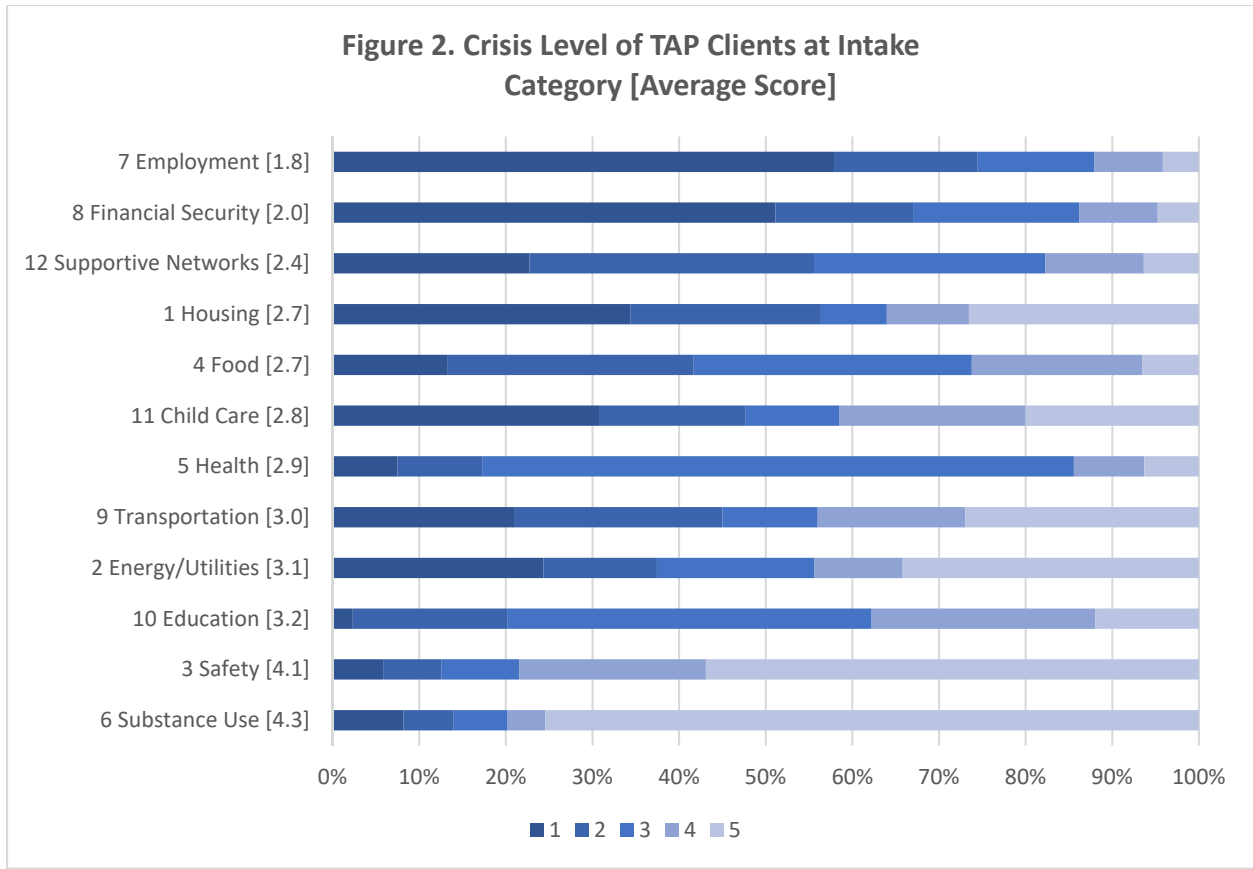
### 3) Summary of Primary Data

#### Interview Summary

Exploratory, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders throughout TAP's service area from February to September 2022 with a 75% response rate. Key stakeholders included TAP staff, representatives of local government and community partners, individuals in poverty and TAP clients (see Appendix A for a more detailed list). These interactions engaged 26 unique entities, totaling more than 100 individuals, including some clients in poverty across TAP's service region of 11 localities. Findings from the interview transcripts were coded by domain and/or locality and by subtopic, and integrated into the report as narrative summaries or direct, deidentified quotes to enrich the secondary data analysis.

#### Crisis-to-Thrive

To understand issues facing TAP clients at intake, we analyzed a snapshot of 559 crisis-to-thrive assessments from households residing in TAP's main service area taken in the 2021-2022 timeframe. In Figure 2 below, we averaged the scores for each subscale and ranked them by level of crisis (low numbers indicate a higher level of crisis, high numbers indicate a higher level of thriving). Employment, Financial Security, and Supportive Social Network were reported with the highest levels of crisis. Safety and Substance Use had the lowest level of crisis; however, due to the sensitive nature of these two subjects, clients may not have felt comfortable disclosing issues on an initial intake assessment. All other items were clustered close to the mean with a score around 3 ( $\pm 0.3$ ). Each subscale is discussed in greater detail in the relevant domain sections below. It is also important to note that not all TAP components require that clients complete the crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake, so results may not be representative of all TAP clients, especially those that only utilize Head Start services.



\*Crisis = 1 to Thriving = 5

### Survey Results

The survey was conducted between August 30 and September 19. There were 370 completed survey responses and 181 partial responses. The largest number of responses came from individuals living or working in Roanoke City (~46%) followed by Roanoke County (~18%). All remaining localities made up between 1 and 7 percent each.

Demographics for the survey respondents are presented in Appendix B. They generally follow the demographics of the region with the exception that approximately 75% of respondents were female and only one respondent was under 18. A majority of respondents reported making under \$45,000 per year, indicating there was fair representation from low-income populations.

Survey information on individual and community issues of concern is discussed in the Domain Reports, below.

## 4) Domain Reports

### Demographics

#### Highlights

- **Population.** According to a 2022 regional overview from Lightcast, the total population within the 11 counties that TAP serves is approximately 320,000. While the population grew 0.6% over the past five years, it is expected to grow by 1.8% over the next five years.
- **Average Demographic Profile.** Compared to the nation, TAP's service area has a lower-than-average number of millennials, a higher-than-average number of people retiring soon, lower racial diversity, and a higher-than-average number of veterans.
- **Growth and Decline.** Most localities in TAP's service area are experiencing slow to moderate growth, while a few localities such as Alleghany/Covington, Bath, and Craig are experiencing population declines that will likely continue.
- **Diversity.** Roanoke City and Covington are the most diverse communities in the region.
- **Household Composition.** The prevalence of single-parent, female-headed households tend to be in urban centers, while the prevalence of grandparents raising grandkids is more prevalent in rural communities.
- **Foster Care.** Foster care caseloads have grown over the past year in the TAP region at a greater rate than the state overall, with the largest increases in Alleghany, Roanoke City, Salem and Buena Vista.
- **Veterans.** Despite the concentration of veteran services in Roanoke City, veteran populations are concentrated in the rural communities of TAP's service area.
- **Immigrants.** Immigrant and non-English speaking populations are concentrated in Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Salem.

#### Interviews and Supporting Secondary Sources

TAP serves a geographically, demographically, and economically diverse region, with variation between and within urban and rural communities. According to one stakeholder, "Roanoke and Southwest Virginia are home to hundreds of nationalities who have chosen to relocate here for a variety of reasons and may find themselves in vulnerable situations from time to time. TAP helps them discover the strength to connect with resources and programs to help them thrive wherever they live." Low-income clients noted that the social fabric of neighborhoods is changing, sometimes for the worse; for example, when seniors are re-located to assisted living facilities, the support network for working parents deteriorates because there are no grandparents or retired neighbors around to help. There is interest in finding ways for seniors to "age in place" through increased access to home health supports, live-in aides, and home maintenance assistance.

According to a 2022 regional overview from Lightcast, the total population within the 11 counties that TAP serves is approximately 320,000. While the population grew 0.6% over the past five years, it is expected to grow by 1.8% over the next five years. Compared to the nation, TAP's service area has a lower-than-average number of millennials, a higher-than-average number of people retiring soon, lower racial diversity, and a higher-than-average number of veterans.

#### *Population Trends – Past and Future*

As shown in Table 1, population growth in the TAP service region has lagged behind Virginia and is projected to continue growing much slower than the state overall. Roanoke County, Botetourt and

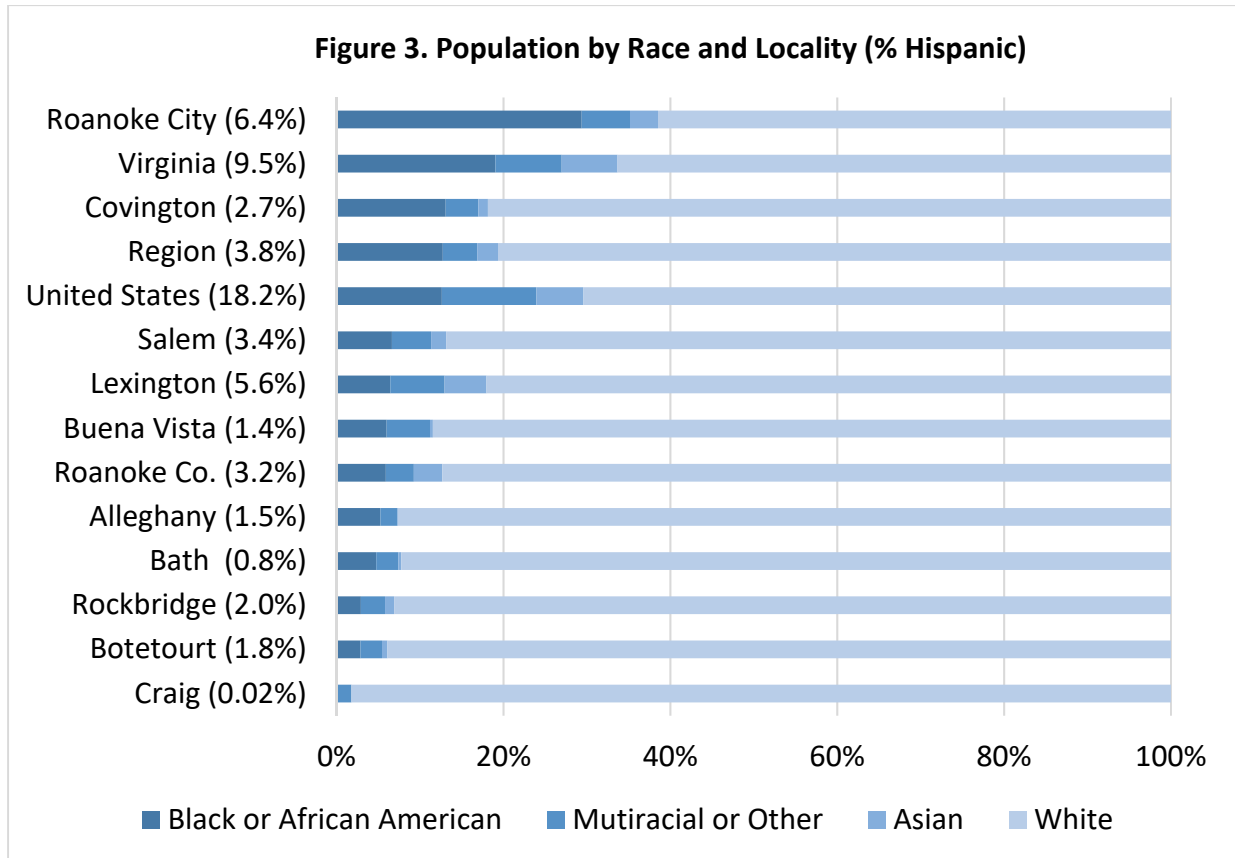
Rockbridge grew the most from 2000 to 2020, but those growth rates are projected to decrease in the future. According to Weldon Cooper data, Bath, Alleghany, Covington and Craig all experienced significant population declines between 2000 and 2020 and those declines are expected to continue and accelerate in the future. Roanoke City and Roanoke County are each home to just under one third of the service area’s population, with all other localities comprising the remaining third.

| Locality     | 2000 <sup>1</sup> | 2010 <sup>1</sup> | 2020 <sup>1</sup> | 2030 <sup>2</sup> | 2040 <sup>2</sup> | 2000-2020 | 2020-2040 |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Virginia     | 7,078,515         | 8,001,024         | 8,631,393         | 9,129,002         | 9,759,371         | 22%       | 13%       |
| Region       | 303,613           | 315,489           | 322,554           | 324,894           | 329,434           | 6%        | 2%        |
| Alleghany    | 17,215            | 16,250            | 15,223            | 13,993            | 12,805            | -12%      | -16%      |
| Bath         | 5,048             | 4,731             | 4,209             | 3,634             | 3,167             | -17%      | -25%      |
| Botetourt    | 30,496            | 33,148            | 33,596            | 33,556            | 34,588            | 10%       | 3%        |
| Craig        | 5,091             | 5,190             | 4,892             | 4,528             | 4,363             | -4%       | -11%      |
| Roanoke Co.  | 85,778            | 92,376            | 96,929            | 100,027           | 104,046           | 13%       | 7%        |
| Rockbridge   | 20,808            | 22,307            | 22,650            | 22,663            | 23,237            | 9%        | 3%        |
| Buena Vista  | 6,349             | 6,650             | 6,641             | 6,537             | 6,584             | 5%        | -1%       |
| Covington    | 6,303             | 5,961             | 5,737             | 5,434             | 5,075             | -9%       | -12%      |
| Lexington    | 6,867             | 7,042             | 7,320             | 7,489             | 7,602             | 7%        | 4%        |
| Roanoke City | 94,911            | 97,032            | 100,011           | 101,514           | 102,529           | 5%        | 3%        |
| Salem        | 24,747            | 24,802            | 25,346            | 25,519            | 25,438            | 2%        | 0%        |

<sup>1</sup> 2000, 2010 and 2020 populations were taken from the U.S. Census  
<sup>2</sup> 2030 and 2040 population projections are Produced by Demographics Research Group of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, July 2022, <http://demographics.coopercenter.org>

*Race and Ethnicity*

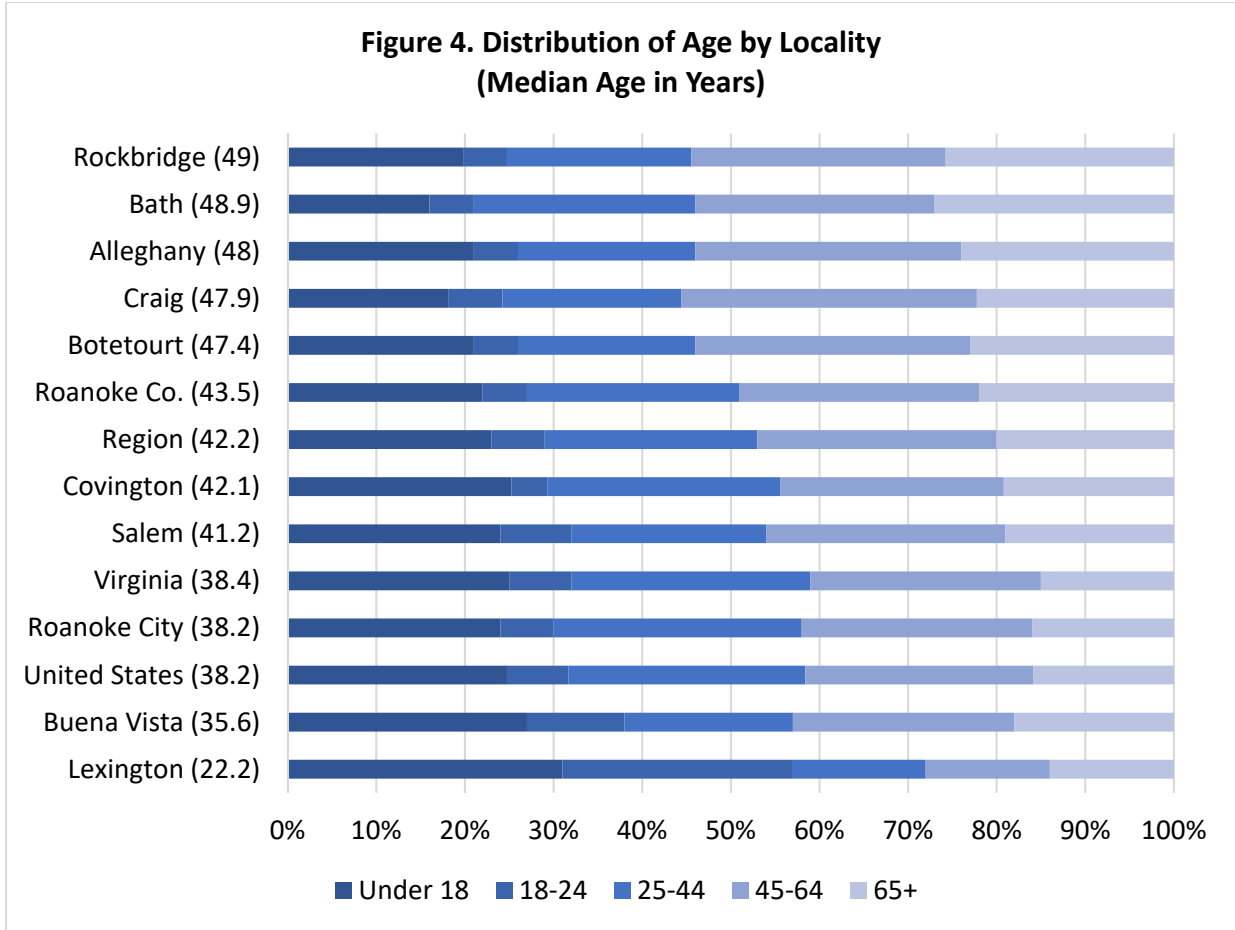
As shown in Figure 3, in descending order of Black/African American population, Roanoke City is the most diverse community in the region, followed by Covington and Lexington. Craig, Botetourt, Rockbridge, Bath, and Alleghany are the least diverse with over 90% of the population in those localities being white. The largest percentages of the Hispanic population are in Roanoke City and Lexington.



U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *Demographic and Housing Estimates, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. <https://data.census.gov>.

*Age*

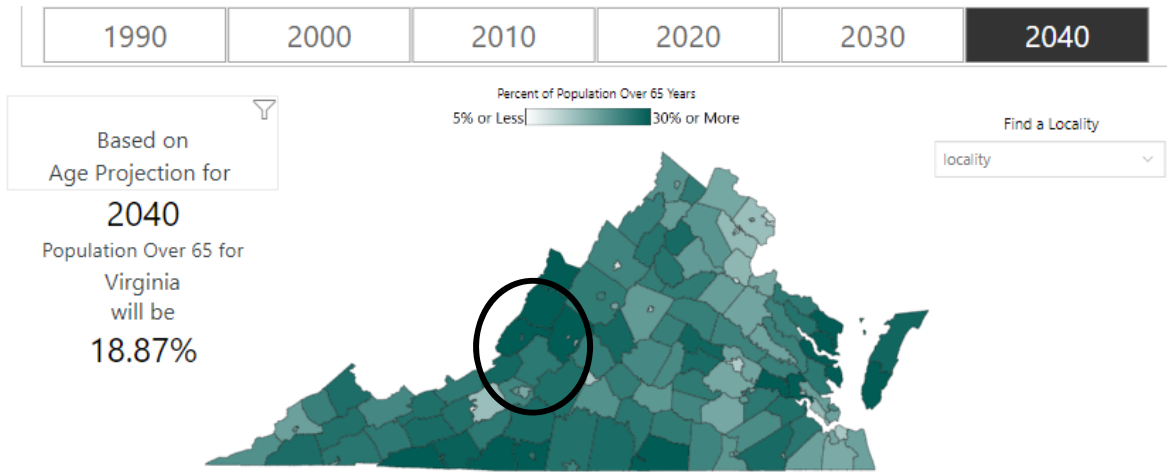
As shown in Figure 4, in descending order of median ages, Lexington, Buena Vista and Roanoke City have the youngest populations in the region. Lexington’s relative youth is likely the result of the presence of several universities increasing the population of 18- to 24-year-olds. Rockbridge, Bath, Alleghany, Craig, and Botetourt have the oldest populations.



U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *Demographic and Housing Estimates, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. <https://data.census.gov>

Older individuals will make up an increasing share of Virginia’s population in the next few decades. By 2040, nearly 19% of Virginia’s population will include individuals over 65 years old. Within TAP’s service area, the percentage will be higher on average, ranging from 18.5% in Roanoke City to 34% in Rockbridge (Fig. 5). This will exacerbate the need for social services for seniors, including housing and lifestyle assistance, case management, and social supports for disabled adults.

**Figure 5. Virginia’s Aging Population in 2040 (Virginia Public Access Project, 2017). Region of focus is circled.**



Notes: 1990, 2000, and 2010 based on [Decennial Census data](#) published by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#). 2020, 2030, and 2040 based on [Virginia Population Projections](#) published by the [Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service \(UVA\)](#). Bedford City numbers included in Bedford County and Clifton Forge City numbers included in Alleghany County.

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*Gender*

In most TAP localities, as in most of the U.S., the number of females exceeds the number of males by a small amount. The exceptions in our region are Lexington, likely due to the presence of Virginia Military Institute, and Bath County, which could be a statistical anomaly due to the small population. Census data does not currently track transgender or gender non-conforming identities.

Stakeholders noted that in low-income families with a single mother as head of household, investing in the mother’s education, healthy autonomy, and economic stability can benefit the next generation. Even more influential may be improving the opportunities of young women before they have children. To serve immigrant Muslim families, special programming must be developed for girls if they are not allowed to participate in co-ed programs.

*Potentially Vulnerable Children*

As shown in Table 2, the number of single-parent, female-headed households with children is in line with the state average, with the highest prevalence of such households being in Roanoke City, Covington, Salem and Buena Vista. The number of grandparent households raising grandchildren is slightly above the state average, with the highest prevalence of such households being in Buena Vista, Bath, Rockbridge, and Alleghany. Counts of small populations at the locality level in the American Community Survey can be subject to large margins of error and the report of zero single-parent, female-headed households in Bath is likely a statistical reporting error. Foster care caseloads have grown over the past year in the TAP region at a greater rate than the state overall, with the largest increases in Alleghany, Roanoke City, Salem, and Buena Vista. Shading in the table indicates localities above the regional average.



**Table 2. Populations of Potentially Vulnerable Children**

| Locality     | Total Households | Female Head of Household with Children |      | Grandparents Raising Grandchildren |      | Children in Foster Care September 2022 (% change since 2021) |       |
|--------------|------------------|--|------|------------------------------------|------|--|-------|
|              | #                | #                                      | %    | #                                  | %    | #  | %Δ    |
| Virginia     | 3,151,045        | 162,385                                | 5.2% | 66,578                             | 2.1% | 5076   | -4%   |
| Region       | 130,143          | 6,822                                  | 5.2% | 3,326                              | 2.6% | 455  | 13%   |
| Alleghany    | 6,600            | 288                                    | 4.4% | 222                                | 3.4% | 30   | 76%   |
| Bath         | 1,801            | -                                      | 0.0% | 76                                 | 4.2% | 0  | 0%    |
| Botetourt    | 13,264           | 363                                    | 2.7% | 294                                | 2.2% | 11   | 10%   |
| Craig        | 2,297            | 81                                     | 3.5% | 74                                 | 3.2% | 14   | 0%    |
| Roanoke Co.  | 38,222           | 1,597                                  | 4.2% | 802                                | 2.1% | 100  | -2%   |
| Rockbridge   | 9,248            | 281                                    | 3.0% | 349                                | 3.8% | 12   | -14%  |
| Buena Vista  | 2,517            | 140                                    | 5.6% | 115                                | 4.6% | 10   | 25%   |
| Covington    | 2,384            | 169                                    | 7.1% | 27                                 | 1.1% | 0  | -100% |
| Lexington    | 2,158            | 45                                     | 2.1% | 65                                 | 3.0% | 0  | -100% |
| Roanoke City | 41,740           | 3,294                                  | 7.9% | 1,064                              | 2.5% | 273  | 26%   |
| Salem        | 9,912            | 564                                    | 5.7% | 238                                | 2.4% | 15   | 25%   |

U.S Census Bureau (2019) *Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov>.  
 Virginia Department of Social Services (2021, 2022) *Foster Care Related Reports – Children Demographics 09-2022 and 09-2021*, Retrieved from <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/fc.cgi>

*Veterans and Those with Disabilities*

As shown in Table 3, the TAP region as a whole has fewer veterans than Virginia overall; however, the highest percentage of veteran populations are in Bath, Botetourt, Rockbridge, and Covington. The TAP region has a higher percentage of non-institutionalized individuals with disabilities, with the highest percentages in Alleghany, Craig, Buena Vista, and Bath.

**Table 3. Civilian Veterans and Non-Institutionalized Individuals with a Disability**

| Locality    | Total Population (2019) | Civilian Veterans |      | Non-Institutionalized Individuals with a Disability |       |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------|---|-------|
|             | #                       | #                 | %    | #   | %     |
| Virginia    | 8,454,463               | 677,533           | 8.0% | 968,651   | 11.5% |
| Region      | 318,179                 | 22,193            | 7.0% | 40,114  | 12.6% |
| Alleghany   | 15,157                  | 1,042             | 6.9% | 2,794   | 18.4% |
| Bath        | 4,307                   | 373               | 8.7% | 618   | 14.3% |
| Botetourt   | 33,343                  | 2,867             | 8.6% | 4,438   | 13.3% |
| Craig       | 5,110                   | 320               | 6.3% | 810   | 15.9% |
| Roanoke Co. | 93,823                  | 6,541             | 7.0% | 10,117  | 10.8% |

**Table 3. Civilian Veterans and Non-Institutionalized Individuals with a Disability**

| Locality     | Total Population (2019) | Civilian Veterans |      | Non-Institutionalized Individuals with a Disability |       |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------|---|-------|
|              | #                       | #                 | %    | #   | %     |
| Rockbridge   | 22,570                  | 1,707             | 7.6% | 3,119   | 13.8% |
| Buena Vista  | 6,484                   | 418               | 6.4% | 955   | 14.7% |
| Covington    | 5,598                   | 418               | 7.5% | 758   | 13.5% |
| Lexington    | 7,241                   | 293               | 4.0% | 912   | 12.6% |
| Roanoke City | 99,229                  | 6,467             | 6.5% | 12,781  | 12.9% |
| Salem        | 25,317                  | 1,747             | 6.9% | 2,812   | 11.1% |

U.S Census Bureau. (2019). *Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. <https://data.census.gov>.

*Foreign Born, Non-Citizen and Non-English Speaking*

As shown in Table 4, the TAP region has a smaller percentage of foreign-born, non-citizen and non-English speaking individuals than does Virginia as a whole. Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Lexington have the highest number of these individuals in the region. Due to the work of the Roanoke Refugee Partnership and Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Roanoke is a regional hub for refugee resettlement; however, limited secondary data is available on refugee resettlement trends in the region.

**Table 4. Foreign-Born, Non-Citizen and Non-English-Speaking Populations**

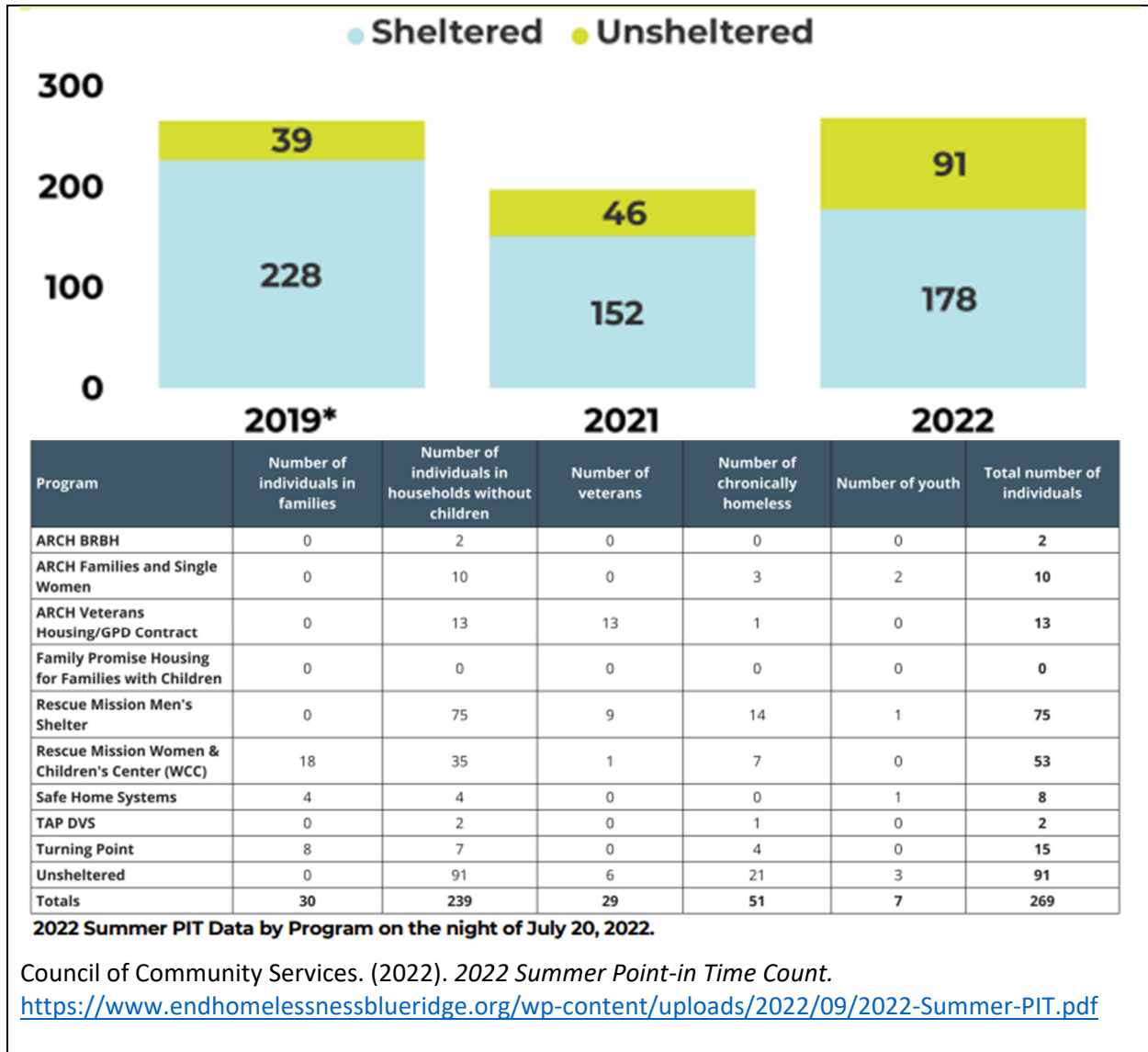
| Locality     | Total Population | Foreign-born |       | Not a U.S. citizen |      | Language other than English |       |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|-------|--------------------|------|-----------------------------|-------|
|              | #                | #            | %     | #                  | %    | #                           | %     |
| Virginia     | 8,454,463        | 1,051,559    | 12.4% | 501,148            | 5.9% | 1,296,959                   | 15.3% |
| Region       | 318,179          | 15,030       | 4.7%  | 8,261              | 2.6% | 18,100                      | 5.7%  |
| Alleghany    | 15,157           | 190          | 1.3%  | 94                 | 0.6% | 264                         | 1.7%  |
| Bath         | 4,307            | 91           | 2.1%  | 80                 | 1.9% | 84                          | 2.0%  |
| Botetourt    | 33,343           | 753          | 2.3%  | 289                | 0.9% | 904                         | 2.7%  |
| Craig        | 5,110            | 12           | 0.2%  | -                  | 0.0% | 34                          | 0.7%  |
| Roanoke Co.  | 93,823           | 5,346        | 5.7%  | 2,195              | 2.3% | 6,206                       | 6.6%  |
| Rockbridge   | 22,570           | 524          | 2.3%  | 198                | 0.9% | 715                         | 3.2%  |
| Buena Vista  | 6,484            | 68           | 1.0%  | 44                 | 0.7% | 169                         | 2.6%  |
| Covington    | 5,598            | 188          | 3.4%  | 41                 | 0.7% | 122                         | 2.2%  |
| Lexington    | 7,241            | 337          | 4.7%  | 175                | 2.4% | 436                         | 6.0%  |
| Roanoke City | 99,229           | 6,664        | 6.7%  | 4,587              | 4.6% | 7,991                       | 8.1%  |
| Salem        | 25,317           | 857          | 3.4%  | 558                | 2.2% | 1,175                       | 4.6%  |

U.S Census Bureau. (2019). *Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. <https://data.census.gov>.

Homelessness

Within the TAP region, only the Blue Ridge Continuum of Care (CoC) tracks rates of homelessness. The CoC report for 2022 (Fig. 6) shows homelessness rates relatively steady, with a slight increase in those being served in shelters due to reduced COVID-19 restrictions, but also with a much larger increase in those who are unsheltered.

Figure 6. Homelessness Point-in Time Data



## Poverty

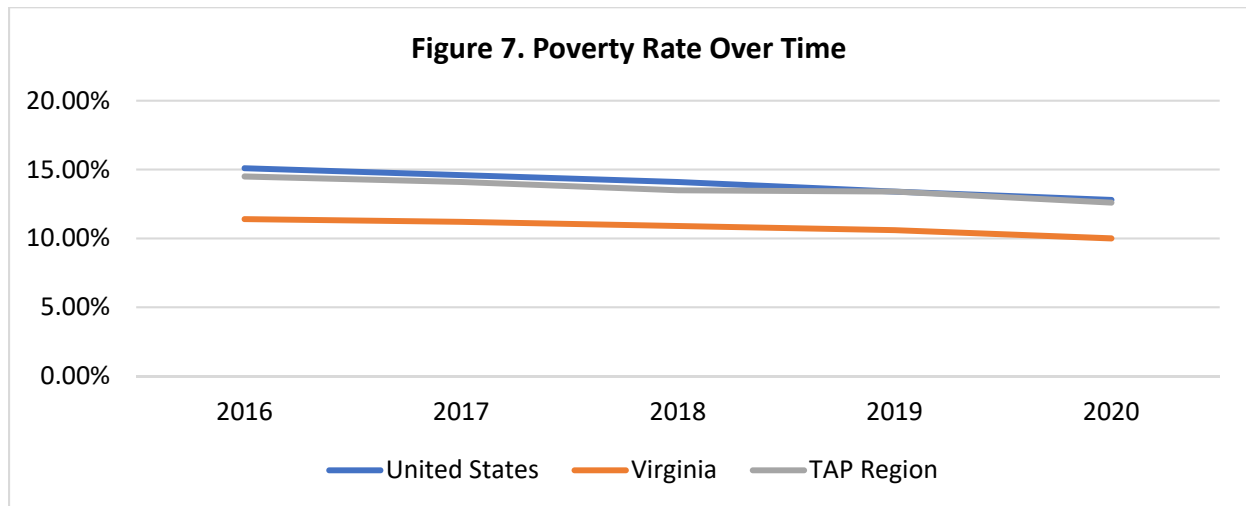
### Highlights

- **Rate of Poverty.** Poverty rates declined steadily from 2016 through 2020. While poverty rates in the TAP region are above the state average, they are in line with national rates.
- **Race.** Black and African American individuals are almost three times as likely to be in poverty, with the greatest disparities existing in Bath, Alleghany, Lexington, and Roanoke City.
- **Benefits Programs.** Roanoke City has the highest percentage of residents utilizing low-income benefit programs, followed by Alleghany/Covington.
- **Medicaid.** Between September of 2020 and October of 2022, Medicaid/FAMIS enrollments grew 21% in the Roanoke-Alleghany Region compared to a 25% increase in Virginia overall. Medicaid Expansion enrollments increased 48% over the same timeframe compared to 50% at the state level.
- **Accessibility.** Unlike some other community-based providers, TAP accepts walk-in clients and has more accessible business hours. TAP serves a critical referral function in this capacity and has maintained services for clients where other programs have shut down.

### Interviews and Supporting Secondary Sources

#### General Poverty Trends

As shown in Figure 7, poverty rates declined steadily from 2016 through 2020. While poverty rates in the TAP region are above the state average, they are in line with national rates.



U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. <https://data.census.gov>.

As shown in Table 5 for the region, poverty overall and poverty by gender are higher than Virginia, but closer to national averages. Within the region, Alleghany, Bath, Craig, Buena Vista, Covington, Lexington, and Roanoke City have higher poverty rates for both genders, while Botetourt, Roanoke County, and Salem have lower poverty rates for both genders. Where the Margin of Error (MoE) is red and bolded, it is too broad for the estimate to be reliable and only the range should be used; in other words, the data should be thought of as qualitative only (high, medium, low).

| Locality      | Overall  |             | Male     |              | Female   |              |
|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
|               | Estimate | MoE         | Estimate | MoE          | Estimate | MoE          |
| United States | 12.6%    | ±0.1        | 11.4%    | ±0.1         | 13.8%    | ±0.1         |
| Virginia      | 9.9%     | ±0.2        | 8.9%     | ±0.2         | 11.0%    | ±0.2         |
| Region        | 12.1%    | ±0.7        | 11.4%    | ±0.9         | 12.8%    | ±0.8         |
| Alleghany     | 14.0%    | ±2.9        | 11.5%    | <b>±3.1</b>  | 16.4%    | ±3.6         |
| Bath          | 19.2%    | <b>±9.5</b> | 23.3%    | <b>±11.4</b> | 14.9%    | <b>±8.5</b>  |
| Botetourt     | 6.7%     | ±1.7        | 5.8%     | <b>±1.7</b>  | 7.7%     | <b>±2.1</b>  |
| Craig         | 14.2%    | <b>±7.2</b> | 14.5%    | <b>±7.5</b>  | 14.0%    | <b>±8.4</b>  |
| Roanoke Co.   | 6.9%     | ±1.1        | 6.5%     | ±1.3         | 7.3%     | ±1.2         |
| Rockbridge    | 10.3%    | ±2.4        | 12.1%    | <b>±3.6</b>  | 8.6%     | <b>±2.3</b>  |
| Buena Vista   | 21.4%    | <b>±9.0</b> | 16.2%    | <b>±7.7</b>  | 25.7%    | <b>±11.0</b> |
| Covington     | 15.8%    | <b>±5.1</b> | 14.5%    | <b>±5.3</b>  | 17.0%    | <b>±7.1</b>  |
| Lexington     | 22.8%    | <b>±8.2</b> | 22.7%    | <b>±13.7</b> | 22.9%    | <b>±7.7</b>  |
| Roanoke City  | 18.4%    | ±1.5        | 17.4%    | ±1.8         | 19.3%    | ±1.7         |
| Salem         | 10.0%    | ±2.1        | 7.6%     | <b>±2.4</b>  | 12.1%    | ±2.7         |

MoE = Margin of Error; Bold Red = Estimate not reliable; qualitative data only; use range  
 Orange Shading = Qualitatively Higher; Green Shading = Qualitatively Lower  
 U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov>.

As shown in Table 6, poverty by age in the region more closely tracks national estimates than those for the state. Poverty is highest for the young; however, as shown in the following section, poverty using standard measures may overrepresent the burden on young children. For more fine-grained population estimates from American Community Survey (ACS) data, localities with smaller populations are likely to be highly unreliable. In the table below, only the Roanoke City estimates are reliable for all categories.

| Locality      | Under 18 years |              | 18 to 34 years |              | 35 to 64 years |              | 65 years and over |              |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
|               | Estimate       | MoE          | Estimate       | MoE          | Estimate       | MoE          | Estimate          | MoE          |
| United States | 17.0%          | ±0.2         | 14.9%          | ±0.1         | 10.0%          | ±0.1         | 9.6%              | ±0.1         |
| Virginia      | 13.0%          | ±0.3         | 12.7%          | ±0.3         | 7.6%           | ±0.2         | 7.6%              | ±0.2         |
| Region        | 15.7%          | ±1.7         | 15.1%          | ±1.5         | 10.4%          | ±0.8         | 8.7%              | ±1.0         |
| Alleghany     | 17.0%          | <b>±7.3</b>  | 10.8%          | <b>±3.7</b>  | 12.0%          | <b>±3.6</b>  | 17.2%             | <b>±5.1</b>  |
| Bath          | 29.3%          | <b>±25.2</b> | 7.6%           | <b>±7.8</b>  | 18.9%          | <b>±9.5</b>  | 23.2%             | <b>±17.2</b> |
| Botetourt     | 8.1%           | <b>±3.6</b>  | 5.7%           | <b>±2.3</b>  | 7.4%           | <b>±2.5</b>  | 5.0%              | <b>±2.2</b>  |
| Craig         | 25.2%          | <b>±17.5</b> | 17.8%          | <b>±12.9</b> | 11.6%          | <b>±8.6</b>  | 7.5%              | <b>±7.2</b>  |
| Roanoke Co.   | 7.3%           | <b>±2.3</b>  | 9.4%           | <b>±2.5</b>  | 6.0%           | ±1.2         | 6.1%              | <b>±1.7</b>  |
| Rockbridge    | 13.7%          | <b>±6.2</b>  | 16.7%          | <b>±7.2</b>  | 9.1%           | <b>±3.0</b>  | 5.7%              | <b>±1.9</b>  |
| Buena Vista   | 24.9%          | <b>±17.6</b> | 23.0%          | <b>±14.4</b> | 20.5%          | <b>±11.2</b> | 17.0%             | <b>±10.3</b> |
| Covington     | 26.5%          | <b>±12.1</b> | 20.2%          | <b>±9.8</b>  | 11.8%          | <b>±4.6</b>  | 7.2%              | <b>±4.2</b>  |

| Locality     | Under 18 years |              | 18 to 34 years |              | 35 to 64 years |             | 65 years and over |             |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
|              | Estimate       | MoE          | Estimate       | MoE          | Estimate       | MoE         | Estimate          | MoE         |
| Lexington    | 6.5%           | <b>±10.1</b> | 54.5%          | <b>±20.0</b> | 9.4%           | <b>±6.4</b> | 6.7%              | <b>±5.6</b> |
| Roanoke City | 24.6%          | ±3.7         | 20.1%          | ±2.5         | 16.2%          | ±1.7        | 12.6%             | ±2.3        |
| Salem        | 14.7%          | <b>±5.3</b>  | 12.2%          | <b>±4.0</b>  | 8.0%           | <b>±2.4</b> | 6.7%              | <b>±2.5</b> |

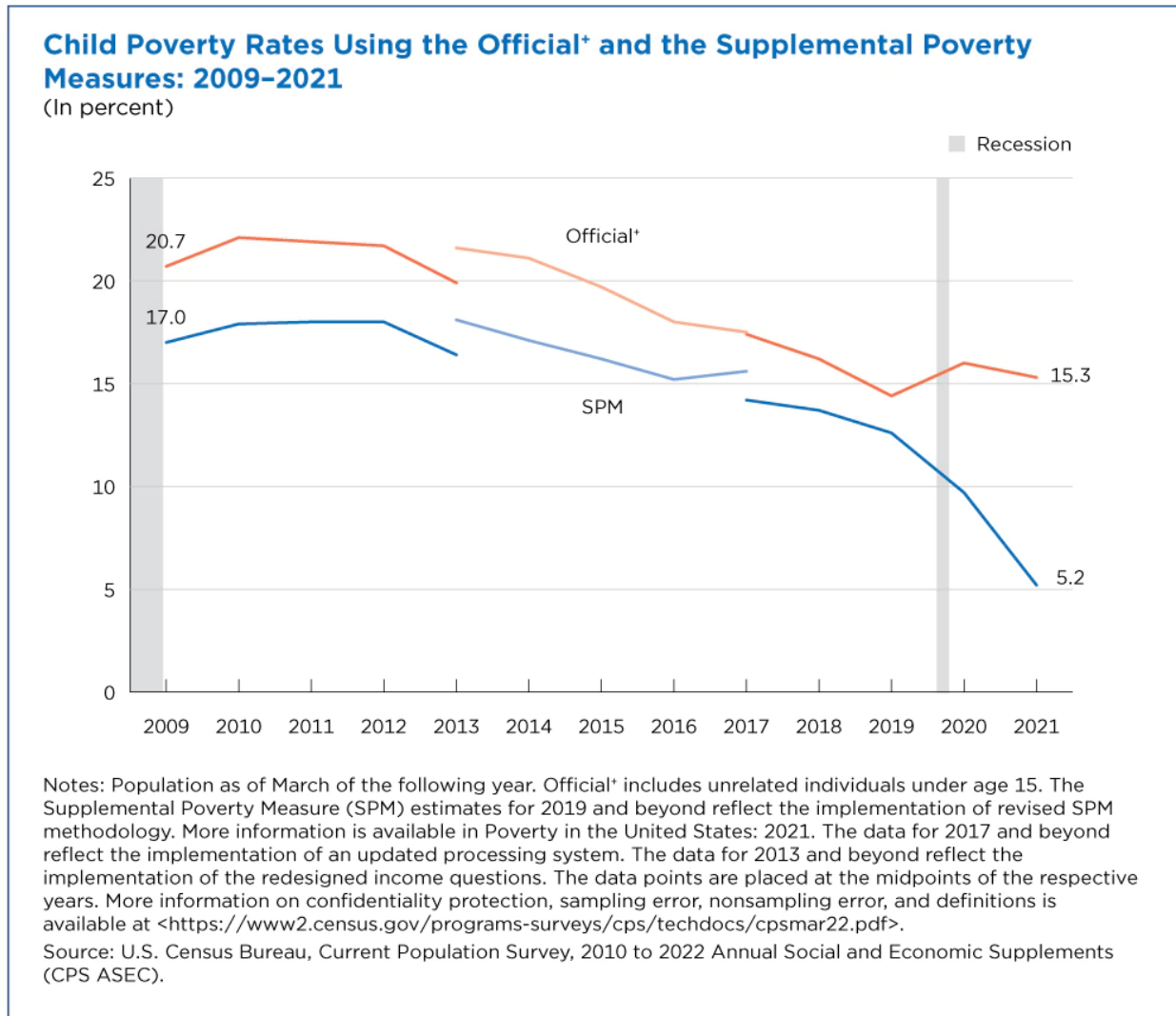
MoE = Margin of Error; Bold Red = Estimate not reliable; qualitative data only; use range  
 Orange Shading = Qualitatively Higher; Green Shading = Qualitatively Lower  
 U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov>.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (Burns et al., 2022),

Child poverty, calculated by the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), fell to its lowest recorded level in 2021, declining 46% from 9.7% in 2020 to 5.2% in 2021, according to U.S. Census Bureau data released today. In contrast, when calculated by the official poverty measure, child poverty declined only 0.7 percentage points, from 16.0% to 15.3%.... In 2020, the two child poverty measures began to diverge due to the impact of large anti-poverty programs established or expanded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the stimulus payments, expansions to SNAP, and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). (para. 1, 2 & 8)

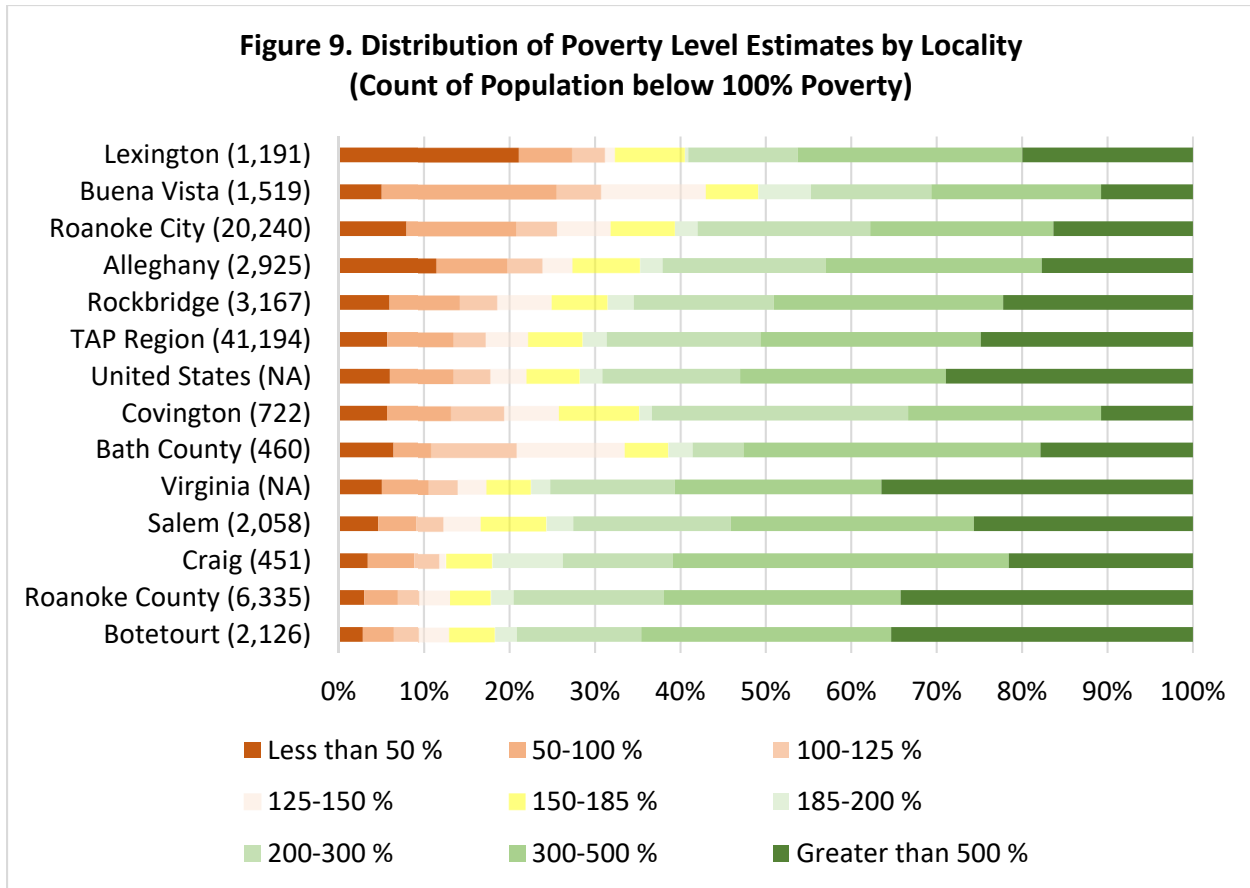
For this reason, the official poverty measure reported at the locality level through the American Community Survey may not accurately reflect lived experience with child poverty in the region; however, trends in the region likely follow national trends as shown in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8. National Child Poverty Rate Trends (Burns et al., 2022, p. 1)



*Poverty Levels*

As shown in Figure 9, the localities with the highest percentages of individuals below 100% of the federal poverty level are Lexington, Buena Vista, Roanoke City, Alleghany, and Rockbridge, which are all above the regional average. The lowest rates of poverty are in Botetourt, Roanoke County, Craig, and Salem, which are all above the state average. In addition to those high-poverty localities mentioned previously, Bath and Covington have relatively high rates of poverty below the 185% level.



U.S. Census Bureau. (2015-2019). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov>.

*Poverty and Race*

Due to the persistent effects of structural racism in the U.S., race has a strong correlation to poverty. As shown in Table 7, Black and African American individuals in the U.S. are twice as likely to live in poverty as whites, a disparity that holds for Virginia as well. In TAP’s service region, however, the disparity is even greater, with Black and African American individuals almost three times as likely to be in poverty, with the greatest disparities existing in Bath, Alleghany, Lexington, and Roanoke City. Similar disparities appear to exist for Hispanics; however, their small populations in small communities may mean that there are large margins of error for those estimates. Shading in the table represents the localities with the highest poverty disparities compared to Whites for both Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Hispanics.

| Locality      | White Alone      | Black or African American Alone | Asian Alone     | Hispanic or Latino Origin (Of Any Race) |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| United States | 25,658,220 (11%) | 9,114,217 (23%)                 | 1,922,319 (11%) | 11,256,244 (20%)                        |
| Virginia      | 475,794 (9%)     | 272,438 (18%)                   | 38,844 (7%)     | 107,325 (14%)                           |
| Region        | 26,907 (11%)     | 11,215 (29%)                    | 553 (8%)        | 2,178 (19%)                             |



**Table 7. Estimates of Poverty by Race**

| Locality     | White Alone | Black or African American Alone | Asian Alone | Hispanic or Latino Origin (Of Any Race) |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Alleghany    | 2,454 (18%) | 354 (42%)                       | 0 (-)       | 39 (17%)                                |
| Bath         | 320 (8%)    | 68 (55%)                        | 0 (-)       | 25 (16%)                                |
| Botetourt    | 2,023 (7%)  | 78 (8%)                         | 7 (3%)      | 15 (3%)                                 |
| Craig        | 451 (9%)    | 0 (-)                           | 0 (-)       | 0 (-)                                   |
| Roanoke Co.  | 5,448 (7%)  | 369 (7%)                        | 107 (4%)    | 333 (12%)                               |
| Rockbridge   | 3,059 (15%) | 56 (8%)                         | 0 (-)       | 127 (30%)                               |
| Buena Vista  | 1,382 (26%) | 0 (-)                           | 123 (100%)  | 14 (15%)                                |
| Covington    | 608 (14%)   | 81 (12%)                        | 0 (-)       | 20 (15%)                                |
| Lexington    | 853 (23%)   | 199 (40%)                       | 34 (33%)    | 127 (52%)                               |
| Roanoke City | 8,816 (15%) | 9,696 (34%)                     | 179 (6%)    | 1,246 (20%)                             |
| Salem        | 1,493 (8%)  | 314 (22%)                       | 103 (27%)   | 232 (33%)                               |

U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. <https://data.census.gov>

*Poverty and Education*

As shown in Table 8, educational attainment also has a strong correlation to poverty. These correlations in the TAP service region tend to be very close to those at the national level. However, in both Buena Vista and Roanoke City, poverty levels are in excess of those predicted by educational attainment across all levels, indicating that the primary causes of poverty may be more strongly related to other factors. In Lexington, higher rates of poverty at higher education levels are likely related to the concentration of institutions of higher education in the community.

**Table 8. Poverty Estimates by Educational Attainment**

| Locality      | Less Than High School Graduate | High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency) | Some College, Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree or Higher |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| United States | 6,341,225 (25%)                | 7,858,253 (14%)                             | 6,042,361 (10%)                | 3,031,326 (4%)              |
| Virginia      | 123,219 (22%)                  | 158,538 (12%)                               | 120,231 (8%)                   | 71,289 (3%)                 |
| Region        | 6,011 (26%)                    | 9,801 (14%)                                 | 5,905 (9%)                     | 2,522 (4%)                  |
| Alleghany     | 522 (35%)                      | 835 (19%)                                   | 414 (12%)                      | 48 (3%)                     |
| Bath          | 69 (24%)                       | 205 (16%)                                   | 48 (5%)                        | 44 (9%)                     |
| Botetourt     | 249 (15%)                      | 573 (7%)                                    | 406 (5%)                       | 174 (3%)                    |
| Craig         | 92 (27%)                       | 124 (9%)                                    | 61 (5%)                        | 0 (-)                       |
| Roanoke Co.   | 1,033 (22%)                    | 1,245 (8%)                                  | 1,367 (7%)                     | 433 (2%)                    |
| Rockbridge    | 403 (18%)                      | 717 (13%)                                   | 361 (8%)                       | 341 (8%)                    |
| Buena Vista   | 243 (33%)                      | 372 (23%)                                   | 137 (14%)                      | 54 (8%)                     |
| Covington     | 79 (16%)                       | 213 (12%)                                   | 109 (10%)                      | 25 (4%)                     |
| Lexington     | 52 (22%)                       | 105 (15%)                                   | 126 (17%)                      | 352 (24%)                   |
| Roanoke City  | 2,858 (31%)                    | 4,992 (21%)                                 | 2,601 (13%)                    | 932 (6%)                    |

**Table 8. Poverty Estimates by Educational Attainment**

| Locality | Less Than High School Graduate | High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency) | Some College, Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree or Higher |
|----------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Salem    | 411 (25%)                      | 420 (9%)                                    | 275 (5%)                       | 119 (3%)                    |

U.S. Census Bureau (2019) *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov>.

*Other Factors Affecting Poverty*

Several other factors are known to have an influence on poverty. Nationally, females are slightly more likely to live in poverty than are males—14% for females versus 11.6% for males in 2019. A similar level of disparity exists in most localities in TAP’s service area, with the exceptions being Bath and Lexington, perhaps due to unique age demographics in those communities. Employment is also a strong predictor of poverty, with the unemployed generally three to five times as likely to be living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

*Income-Based Benefit Programs*

As shown in Table 9, Roanoke City has the highest percentage of residents utilizing low-income benefit programs, followed by Alleghany/Covington. (Please see Locality profiles for trends in benefit utilization through 2021.) Due to relaxed eligibility and documentation requirements during the COVID-19 crisis, recent increases in benefit utilization may not be sustained in future years.

**Table 9. Use of Benefit Programs**

| Benefit Clients Served in State Fiscal Year 2021 | Benefit Program <sup>1</sup> |      |          |                       |       | Childcare <sup>3</sup> |          |
|--|------------------------------|------|----------|-----------------------|-------|------------------------|----------|
|  | SNAP                         | TANF | Medicaid | Any Prog <sup>2</sup> | % Any | Families               | Children |
| Alleghany/Covington                              | 4419                         | 173  | 7313     | 7777                  | 38%   | 33                     | 51       |
| Bath   | 458                          | 40   | 1197     | 1230                  | 30%   | 0                      | 0        |
| Botetourt  | 2282                         | 101  | 5399     | 5693                  | 17%   | 43                     | 69       |
| Craig  | 592                          | 39   | 1282     | 1342                  | 26%   | 29                     | 46       |
| Roanoke City                                     | 28307                        | 2251 | 42482    | 45521                 | 46%   | 592                    | 1114     |
| Roanoke Co/Salem                                 | 10024                        | 591  | 22029    | 23205                 | 19%   | 291                    | 481      |
| Rockbridge/BV/Lex                                | 4942                         | 263  | 9316     | 9854                  | 27%   | 39                     | 52       |

<sup>1</sup> Data Warehouse, "Client Cross-Program Locality Yearly Analysis" (2012–2016 data from ADAPT; 2017–2021 data from VaCMS). Unduplicated annual count within locality. Refers to "eligible" household members.

<sup>2</sup> Received SNAP, TANF and/or Medicaid during the year.

<sup>3</sup> VaCMS, "Children and Family Counts -- Expenditure by Budget Line" (not available prior to FY 2013).

Virginia Department of Social Services. (2022, April). *Local Department of Social Service Profiles*. [https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency\\_wide/ldss\\_profile/agency\\_caseload\\_expenditures/ldss\\_sfy2021\\_rev2.xlsx](https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile/agency_caseload_expenditures/ldss_sfy2021_rev2.xlsx) downloaded 11/7/22.

As shown in Table 10, between September of 2020 and October of 2022, Medicaid/FAMIS enrollments grew 21% in the Roanoke-Alleghany Region compared to a 25% increase in Virginia overall. Medicaid

Expansion enrollments increased 48% over the same timeframe compared to 50% at the state level. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) suppresses locality specific enrollment numbers for smaller localities in its public reports, so only regional numbers are reported here.

| <b>Table 10. Growth in Medicaid Enrollments</b>  |                       |                 |                 |                           |                 |                 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Region vs. Virginia</b>   | <b>Medicaid/FAMIS</b> |                 |                 | <b>Medicaid Expansion</b> |                 |                 |
|  | <b>Sept 2020</b>      | <b>Oct 2022</b> | <b>% Change</b> | <b>Sept 2020</b>          | <b>Oct 2022</b> | <b>% Change</b> |
| Roanoke-Alleghany  | 170,770               | 207,027         | 21%             | 46,762                    | 69,278          | 48%             |
| Virginia   | 1,672,073             | 2,088,199       | 25%             | 457,356                   | 687,665         | 50%             |
| Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (2022) <i>Medicaid/FAMIS Enrollment</i> . Retrieved from <a href="https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-famis-enrollment/">https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-famis-enrollment/</a><br>Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (2022) <i>Medicaid Expansion Enrollment</i> . Retrieved from <a href="https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-expansion-enrollment/">https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-expansion-enrollment/</a> |                       |                 |                 |                           |                 |                 |

## Employment

### Highlights

- **Social Determinants of Health.** General community challenges, such as lack of affordable housing and quality childcare, limited transportation, increasing gun violence and lack of family support, all contribute to employment challenges for low-income families.
- **Employment Crisis-to-Thriving.** Of TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 58% of those answering indicated that they had no job, and 74% indicated their employment situation was in the crisis range.
- **Childcare Crisis-to-Thriving.** Regarding childcare as a necessary support for parents who are employed, 31% of those answering the crisis-to-thrive assessment indicated that they had no access to affordable childcare, and 48% indicated their childcare situation was in the crisis range.
- **Transportation Crisis-to-Thriving.** Regarding transportation to work, 21% of those answering the crisis-to-thrive assessment indicated that they had no access to transportation and 45% indicated their transportations situation was in the crisis range.
- **Top Three Issues.** The survey of TAP stakeholders found that the top three issues in Employment are the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (37%), increased job stress due to short staffing (35%), and lack of well-paying jobs with benefits (34%).
- **Employment and Labor Force Participation.** Both the number of jobs and the labor force participation rate for the region decreased over the past five years, in contrast to a 1.6% growth in jobs nationally. Unemployment jumped to 6.14% in 2020 and has since decreased to 2.95% in June 2022, close to 2019 levels.
- **Industry Trends.** The largest industries in TAP’s service area exceed the national average for healthcare and social assistance, retail, and manufacturing (Fig. 13). The region is experiencing industry growth in educational services, healthcare, and arts, entertainment, and recreation.
- **Entrepreneurship.** Low-income clients requested more assistance learning how to become an entrepreneur and increase their access to resources, such as business loans, in order to pay staff to help them.
- **Employment Opportunities.** TAP can facilitate access to other employment opportunities, such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, or skilled trade development. On the other end of the spectrum, TAP should explore how to expedite quality employment for highly educated and skilled immigrants who lack English language skills or the appropriate U.S. credentials.

### Crisis-to-Thrive

Of TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 58% of those answering indicated that they had no job and 74% indicated their employment situation was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 11).

| Crisis Level | Answer Text | Count | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0            | No Answer   | 77    | --                  | --                    |
| 1            | No Job.     | 279   | 58%                 | 58%                   |

**Table 11. Employment Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text   | Count  | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|---|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 2              | Temporary, part-time or seasonal; inadequate pay, no benefits.    | 80     | 17%                 | 74%                   |
| 3              | Employed full time; inadequate pay; few or no benefits.           | 65     | 13%                 | 88%                   |
| 4              | Employed full time with adequate pay and benefits.                | 38     | 8%                  | 96%                   |
| 5              | Maintains permanent employment with adequate income and benefits. | 20     | 4%                  | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |   | 482    | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |   | 77/559 | 14%                 |                       |

Lack of affordable childcare is a significant barrier to employment. Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 31% of those answering indicated that they had no access to affordable childcare and 48% indicated their childcare situation was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 12). However, a significant number of clients (77%) selected “No Answer,” which perhaps indicates that childcare is not relevant to their household.

**Table 12. Childcare Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count   | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 429     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | No access to affordable childcare/not available for all children in the household.   | 40      | 31%                 | 31%                   |
| 2              | Unreliable (unreliable family or friend or unlicensed facility).   | 22      | 17%                 | 48%                   |
| 3              | Subsidized, safe childcare, available and satisfied.   | 14      | 11%                 | 58%                   |
| 4              | Safe, affordable unsubsidized childcare available and satisfied.   | 28      | 22%                 | 80%                   |
| 5              | Safe quality care that includes early childhood education from licensed facility is available and affordable (including Head Start, Early Head Start, Center based) safe and reliable care from family or friends. | 26      | 20%                 | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 130     | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 429/559 | 77%                 |                       |

Lack of reliable transportation is also a significant barrier to employment. Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 21% of those answering indicated that they had no access to transportation and 45% indicated their transportation situation was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 13).

**Table 13. Transportation Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count  | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 77     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | No access to transportation, public or private; may have car that is inoperable.                                       | 101    | 21%                 | 21%                   |
| 2              | Transportation is available, but unreliable, unpredictable, unaffordable; may have car but no insurance, license, etc. | 116    | 24%                 | 45%                   |
| 3              | Transportation is available and reliable, but limited and/or inconvenient; drivers are licensed and minimally insured. | 53     | 11%                 | 56%                   |
| 4              | Transportation is generally accessible to meet basic travel needs car is adequately insured.                           | 82     | 17%                 | 73%                   |
| 5              | Transportation is readily available and affordable.  | 130    | 27%                 | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 482    | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 77/559 | 14%                 |                       |

Survey Results

Table 14 shows the survey responses to the question, “If employment is an issue for you or your community, why?” including a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 rankings of responses. For those response options newly added in 2022 (“New”), the change in rank is not available. The responses indicate that the top three issues are the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (37%), increased job stress due to short staffing (35%), and lack of well-paying jobs with benefits (34%). Issues that increased in rank since 2019 include the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours, the high cost or lack of transportation to get to work, lack of knowledge of how to fill out applications, write a résumé, or do an interview for a job, and lack of knowledge of how to start a business. Issues that decreased in rank since 2019 include lack of well-paying jobs with benefits (though this remains a top concern), lack of skills/education to obtain a job, inability to find jobs in the area, employers/jobs are leaving the area, and inability to maintain a job due to factors such as seasonal employment or layoffs.

**Table 14. Survey Responses re: Employment & Employment Services in 2022 vs. 2019**

| If employment is an issue for you or your community, why? (select all that apply) | Count | Percent | 2019 Rank | 2022 Rank* | Change |
|---|-------|---------|-----------|------------|--------|
| High cost or lack of childcare available during work hours                        | 135   | 36.5%   | 3         | 1 (1)      | ↑↑     |
| Increased job stress due to short staffing  | 129   | 34.9%   | New       | 2 (*)      |        |
| Lack of well-paying jobs with benefits  | 125   | 33.8%   | 1         | 3 (2)      | ↓      |
| High cost or lack of transportation to get to work                                | 109   | 29.5%   | 6         | 4 (3)      | ↑↑↑    |
| Lack of employer flexibility around family responsibilities                       | 97    | 26.2%   | New       | 5 (*)      |        |

| <b>If employment is an issue for you or your community, why? (select all that apply)</b> | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>2019 Rank</b> | <b>2022 Rank*</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Lack of advancement opportunities in many jobs   | 87           | 23.5%          | New              | 6 (*)             |               |
| Lack of skills/education to obtain a job   | 78           | 21.1%          | 2                | 7 (4)             | ↓↓            |
| Discrimination and lack of understanding about diversity, equity, and inclusion          | 52           | 14.1%          | New              | 8 (*)             |               |
| Don't know how to fill out applications, write a résumé, or do an interview for a job    | 41           | 11.1%          | 9                | 9 (5)             | ↑↑↑↑          |
| Don't know how to start own business   | 40           | 10.8%          | 11               | 10 (6)            | ↑↑↑↑          |
| Other  | 38           | 10.3%          | New              | 11 (*)            |               |
| Long commute to jobs   | 36           | 9.7%           | 7                | 12 (7)            | --            |
| Unable to find jobs in the area  | 35           | 9.5%           | 4                | 13 (8)            | ↓↓↓↓          |
| Employers/jobs are leaving the area  | 32           | 8.6%           | 5                | 14 (9)            | ↓↓↓↓          |
| Don't know where to look for jobs  | 26           | 7.0%           | 10               | 15 (10)           | --            |
| Unable to maintain job - seasonal employment, frequent industry layoffs                  | 22           | 5.9%           | 8                | 16 (11)           | ↓↓↓           |

\* The number in the parentheses in the 2022 Rank column is the rank excluding new survey options. The difference between that rank versus the 2019 rank is the basis for the arrows displayed in the final column.



For all survey response tables in this report, the number of arrows in the last column indicates how the ranking of the item changed from the 2019 survey for only those items on both surveys. In Table 14 for example, we see that “high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours” was ranked third in 2019 and first in 2022, indicating a Change of two in the rank. However, moving down the table, we see that several new responses in 2022 increase the total number of responses and will affect the overall rank. So, while “don’t know how to fill out applications, write a résumé, or do an interview for a job” was ranked ninth in both 2019 and 2022, it actually went up in rank in 2022 because it remained in ninth place even with the addition of four new responses that were ranked above it in 2022.

### **Open survey comments regarding employment services that are lacking generally covered the following areas.**

#### *Access to and Awareness of Job Services*

Survey respondents recommended anchoring workforce organizations and programs in the communities most in need, so that job seekers can easily walk to access the services. Similarly, several respondents noted that awareness of existing workforce programs could be improved. There is a disconnect between prospective employees and employers that is preventing talent from connecting with a good employer match.

#### *Job Search Assistance*

Several survey respondents commented on the need for assistance navigating the job search process, including résumé and interview preparation, identifying jobs that accept those with a criminal background, and advocating for better salary and benefits by leveraging past work experience. One respondent explained, “I think Roanoke has a good number of job resources, but young people

especially today are not being taught how to climb the so-called ‘corporate ladder,’ like how to negotiate better salary and benefits, and they have developed extremely unrealistic expectations about work and career. Today, there seems to be this idea that you are unable to move up and will instead stay at one level. More education on how to leverage past work and volunteer experience into better pay is key. Just because a job is advertised at \$12 or \$15 per hour, does not mean you can't make a case for more, if your experience calls for it. We need to teach people to have a stronger work ethic and to use their talents, skills, and experience to improve their own situation.”

#### *Job-Related Education and Skills*

Survey respondents noted that language skills, a sense of professionalism, and educational credentials are all barriers for lower-income individuals seeking employment. One respondent noted, “I was just passed up on for a promotion that my boss recommended me for due to the fact that I need to further my education to fulfill requirements.” Functional literacy in reading, writing, and math may also be lacking. Several respondents requested more opportunities for on-the-job training to learn higher-level skills to improve their employment status.

#### *Diversity and Variety*

Survey respondents explained that lack of equal pay and advancement opportunities persist for minorities, and there is a general lack of diversity in workforce options in terms of the type of industries hiring in the region. One respondent envisioned “more job opportunities in the African American community... that way, our jobs are within walking distance to our place of living and we don't have to worry about finding a ride to work. We need a Black Wall Street-type of job atmosphere in our African American communities.”

#### *Entrepreneurship*

Survey respondents requested help starting a business and securing financing by connecting with investors and identifying loan opportunities. One respondent noted, “We've heard from younger adults that they don't want to participate in some of our more traditional job-training programs because they're not interested in the fields or the way the services are delivered. They're really looking for more entrepreneurial training and ways to start their own businesses, but it can be hard for them because they lack credit to get loans. This is sometimes just because they're young, but in a majority of instances, these are also justice-involved youth or returning citizens who have a hard time finding jobs in the first place in order to build their credit.”

#### *Job Supports*

Several survey respondents reflected on how physical pain and other types of disabilities make it difficult for them to work or find jobs that can accommodate their disability. One respondent said an employer “wants to work with my disability” but that they “try to overwork me.” Other requested supports include help with transportation, housing, mental health needs, obtaining equipment like computers, a more compassionate response from employers, work-from-home options, and childcare that covers the full workday.

#### *Pay, Benefits, and Work/Life Balance*

Survey respondents specifically noted the lack of quality jobs available: those that pay the cost of living, that offer benefits including health insurance, and that respect work-life balance. Particularly with the cost of goods and services increasing with inflation, wages and salaries are not keeping pace. Regarding compensation for TAP employees, one respondent noted the issue of “asking an already understaffed



team to perform more than what is in their job title but not compensating those employees for that work. Compensation in the form of money. Also, workers are not compensated for the trauma they are exposed to on the job. Trauma is everywhere, but with the lack of pay for employees, it does not allow them to seek out opportunities outside of the workplace for help with coping. Lack of pay is one of the biggest downfalls of TAP.”

Regarding work-life balance, respondents noted fatherhood programs, part-time jobs for seniors, family-friendly workplaces, and access to counseling through an employer-sponsored program could help employees improve the quality of both their professional and personal lives, which stakeholders report is a higher priority following the pandemic.

#### *Staffing and Work Ethic*

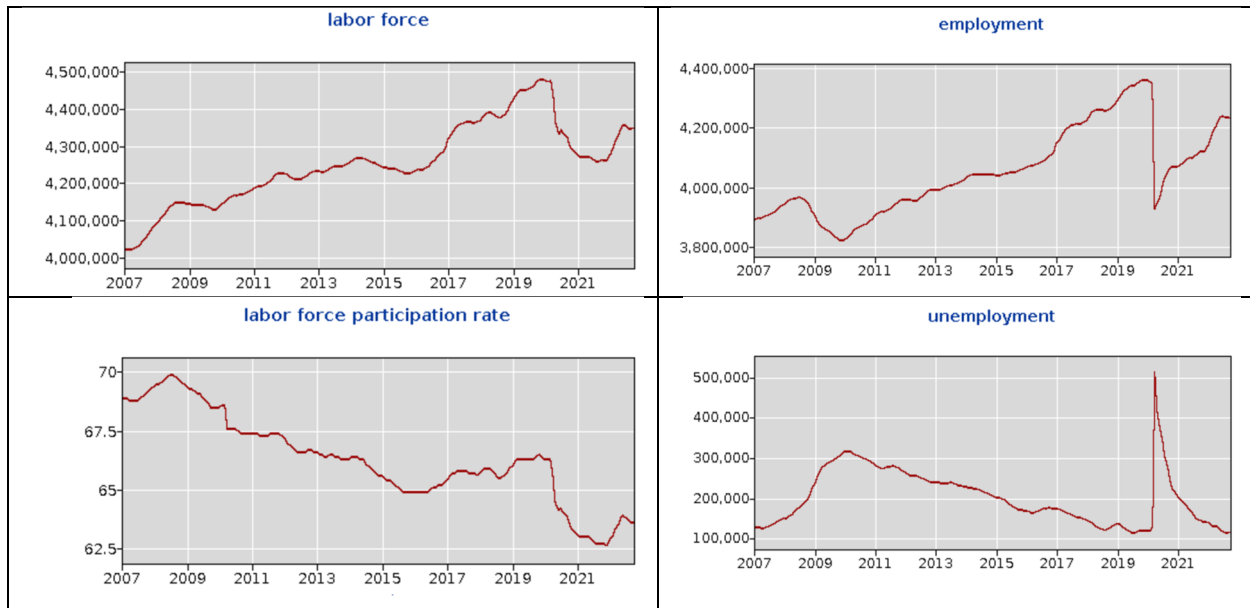
Several survey respondents pointed to the complex combination in 2022 of an abundance of jobs (of varying quality), lack of qualified staff and difficulty finding prospective employees, high turnover, and what some perceive as a lack of motivation to go (back) to work (following the pandemic). One survey respondent said, “I don't think that it is a lack of services. It looks to me as if it is a lack of motivation to want to get a job. Others may not have the computer or internet access to learn or research skills necessary to locate/obtain skills for a profession,” and another noted, “I can't get people that want to work. No one shows up to interviews.”

#### Interviews and Supporting Secondary Sources

##### *Overview of the Workforce in TAP's Service Area*

According to a 2022 Lightcast regional overview covering 11 counties within TAP's service area, both the number of jobs and the labor force participation rate decreased over the past five years, in contrast to a 1.6% growth in jobs nationally. Unemployment jumped to 6.14% in 2020 and has since decreased to 2.95% in June 2022, close to 2019 levels. Lightcast projects that jobs in the region will recover on average to 2019 levels by 2026.

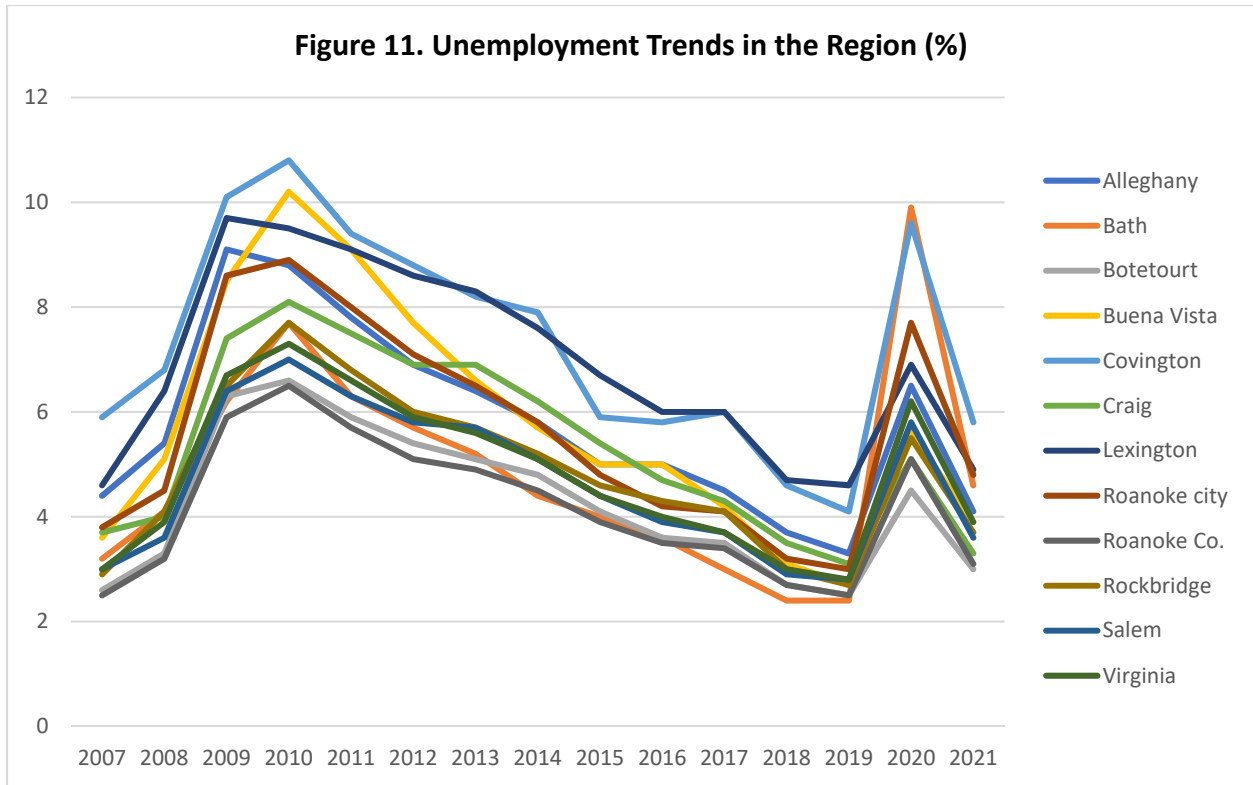
**Figure 10. Labor Force, Labor Force Participation, Employment and Unemployment In Virginia (BLS, 2022a)**



As shown in Figure 10, the labor force in Virginia grew steadily through the recovery period following the great recession up through the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, while over the same period the labor force participation rate experienced steady declines through 2016 as non-institutionalized, working-age civilians left the labor force. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a sharp increase in unemployment which has since returned to pre-pandemic levels, although the employed workforce is still below pre-pandemic levels (BLS, 2022a).

### Unemployment

Unemployment fluctuations in the region tend to follow national trends. As seen in Figure 11, the cities of Covington, Lexington, Roanoke, and Buena Vista tend to have consistently higher unemployment rates than other parts of the region. Roanoke and Botetourt counties are consistently lower. Bath County usually has lower unemployment than the region overall but experienced some of the highest unemployment in the region during the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps because of the reliance on the tourism sector surrounding the Homestead Resort. The City of Covington also experienced unemployment rates much higher than the region during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Unemployment rates have continued to decline across the region into 2022 and are approaching pre-pandemic levels (VEC, 2022).

Unemployment is highest among those aged 25–54, comprising more than 60% of all unemployed people (n=4,614). Fifteen percent more of those unemployed are female versus male. Of the total unemployed population, 61% are white, 37% are Black or African American, and the remaining 2% are Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; roughly 4% of the unemployed are Hispanic. While a third of residents have a high school degree, only 17% have a bachelor’s degree and 11% have an associate degree or a graduate degree. Figure 12 shows that the most jobs in the service region require a high school diploma, whereas there are fewer people available with this level of education; the latter is also true of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree. On the other hand, those with a graduate degree or higher make up nearly twice the number of jobs requiring that level of education, so this population may be underemployed.

**Figure 12. Underemployment in the Service Region (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 28)**

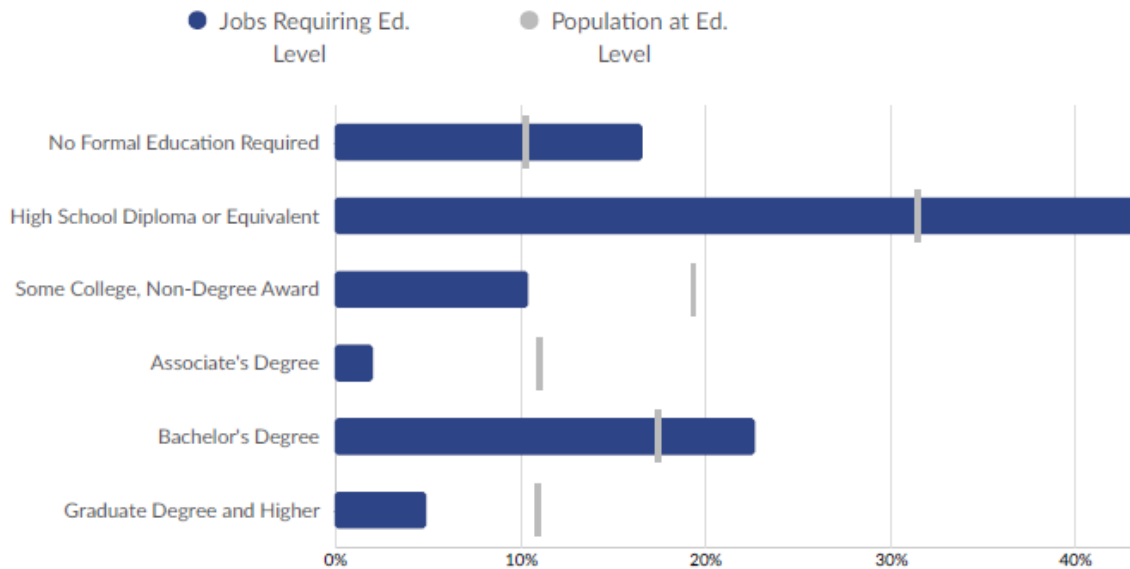


Figure 12 shows that the most jobs in the service region require a high school diploma, whereas there are fewer people available with this level of education; the latter is also true of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree. On the other hand, those with a graduate degree or higher make up nearly twice the number of jobs requiring that level of education, so this population may be underemployed.

*Employment Challenges*

General community challenges, such as lack of affordable housing and quality childcare, limited transportation, increasing gun violence and lack of family support, all contribute to employment challenges for low-income families. Low-income clients are not interested in leaving older dependent children at home in the evenings in order to work second shifts. Many clients could benefit from mental health counseling and family therapy but lack the resources, so they turn to TAP staff to address these concerns. Another barrier is that individuals with a criminal background may be unfairly excluded from employment opportunities, even if their criminal charge occurred years ago and has no direct bearing on their professional performance.

*Establishments and Employment by Locality*

According to Table 15, establishments based in Covington, Roanoke City, and Salem pay the highest average weekly wages in the region, but all are still below the state average. The lowest weekly wages are in Rockbridge, Craig, Alleghany, and Buena Vista. Approximately 72% of all private sector employers are located in Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Salem, which account for almost 80% of private sector jobs. Localities with lower employment location quotients such as Craig, Alleghany, and Lexington may have a larger-than-average public sector employment, particularly in schools. Areas with higher wage location quotients have higher private sector pay than the national average. In Covington, that could be due to the manufacturing hub around Westrock, while in Roanoke City it is likely due to the regional healthcare hub around the hospitals.

**Table 15. Private Sector Employment and Wages, June 2022 (BLS, 2022b)**

| Locality     | Private Sector Establishment Count | June, 2022 Private Sector Employment | Private Sector Average Weekly Wage | Employment Location Quotient | Wage Location Quotient |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Virginia     | 312,453                            | 324,8202                             | \$ 1,311                           | 0.96                         | 0.96                   |
| Alleghany    | 374                                | 2,534                                | \$ 814                             | 0.84                         | 0.86                   |
| Bath         | 228                                | 1,678                                | \$ 995                             | 0.95                         | 0.97                   |
| Botetourt    | 914                                | 9,296                                | \$ 964                             | 1.00                         | 1.02                   |
| Craig        | 131                                | 567                                  | \$ 778                             | 0.80                         | 0.82                   |
| Roanoke Co.  | 2,666                              | 32,918                               | \$ 984                             | 1.02                         | 1.03                   |
| Rockbridge   | 537                                | 4,974                                | \$ 766                             | 0.96                         | 0.94                   |
| Buena Vista  | 134                                | 1,586                                | \$ 854                             | 0.96                         | 0.98                   |
| Covington    | 243                                | 3,178                                | \$ 1,129                           | 1.02                         | 1.06                   |
| Lexington    | 275                                | 3,473                                | \$ 958                             | 0.89                         | 0.91                   |
| Roanoke City | 3,484                              | 55,419                               | \$ 1,060                           | 1.02                         | 1.04                   |
| Salem        | 1,051                              | 15,006                               | \$ 1,022                           | 0.93                         | 0.88                   |

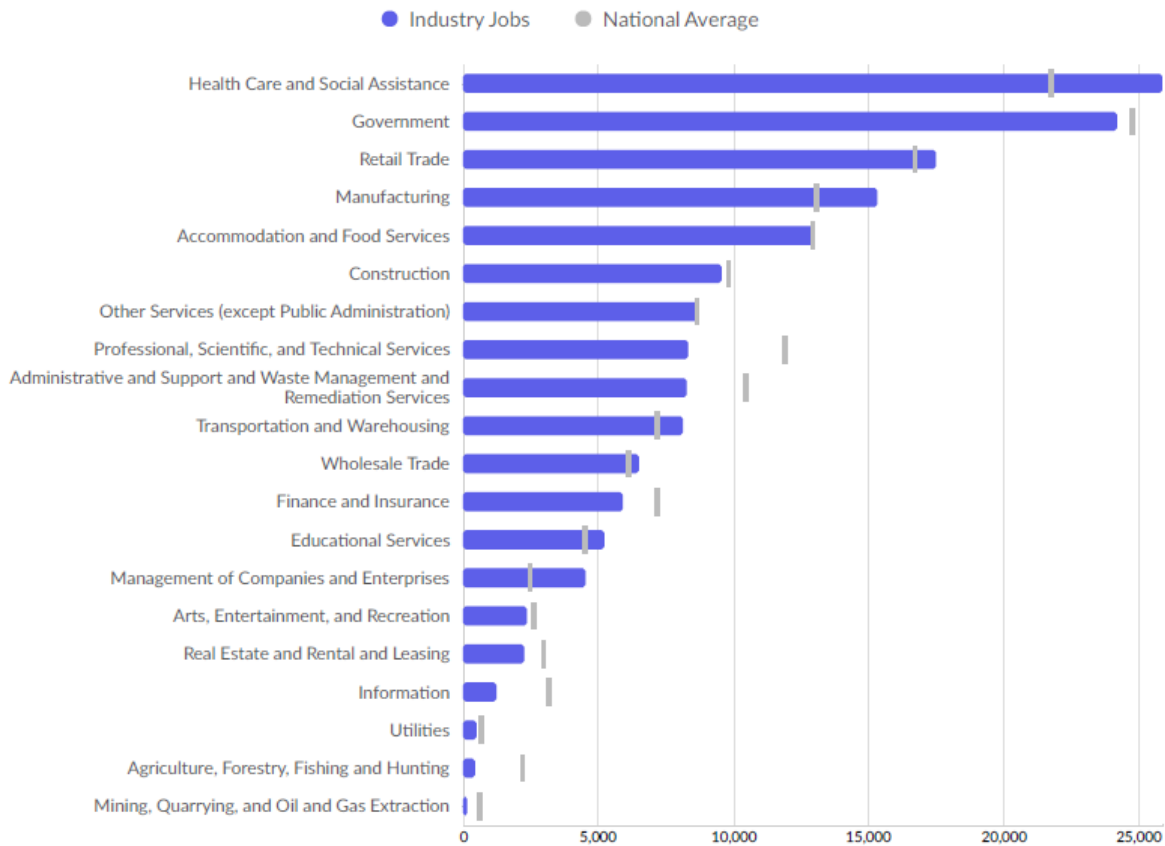


Table 15 presents selected data from the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. The second column shows the number of private sector establishments in the locality followed by the employment by those establishments. For example, a small rural locality such as Craig County has only 131 private employers employing only 567 people. Other local residents may be employed in public sector jobs or in other localities. Column 4 presents the average weekly wage paid by those private sector establishments. Columns 5 and 6 show the ratio of private sector employment and private sector wages to the national average.

*Workforce Trends*

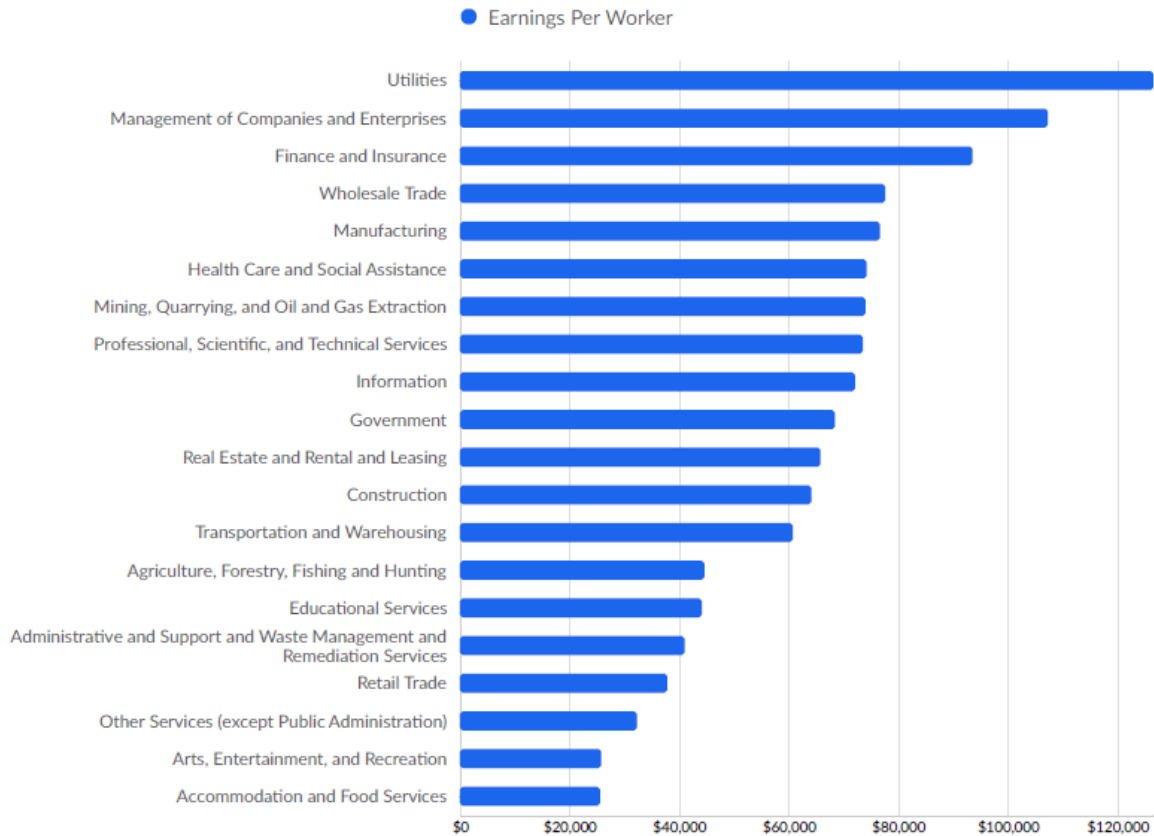
The largest industries in TAP’s service area exceed the national average for healthcare and social assistance, retail, and manufacturing (Fig. 13). The region is experiencing industry growth in educational services, healthcare, and arts, entertainment, and recreation. During the pandemic, rates of employment in healthcare and social services did decrease due to a variety of factors, including vaccine hesitancy, fear of contracting COVID-19, and emotional burnout. For those who remain employed, responsibilities have increased to cover the shortage of staff. Some industries in particular need of workers have altered training and/or employment requirements. For example, the Board of Nursing has waived some training requirements for certified nurse aide (CNA) positions as a temporary emergency measure to increase the workforce. Due to the lack of available workers, schools are hosting job fairs for students as young as 14 years old. Yet, part-time jobs outside of school hours are hard to find for this demographic of young workers.

Figure 13. Largest Industries in the Service Region (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 16)



While TAP endeavors to support its employees, compensation, benefits, and work-life balance for its positions could be improved to provide “quality of life” jobs. On a related note, the availability of government benefits during the pandemic, paired with increased home childcare responsibilities, has made low-wage jobs especially unappealing. Job training is needed for higher-paying occupations and opportunities for advancement are needed in all career tracks. Some of the highest-paying industries in the service region include utilities, management, finance and insurance, wholesale trade, manufacturing, and healthcare and social assistance (Fig. 14).

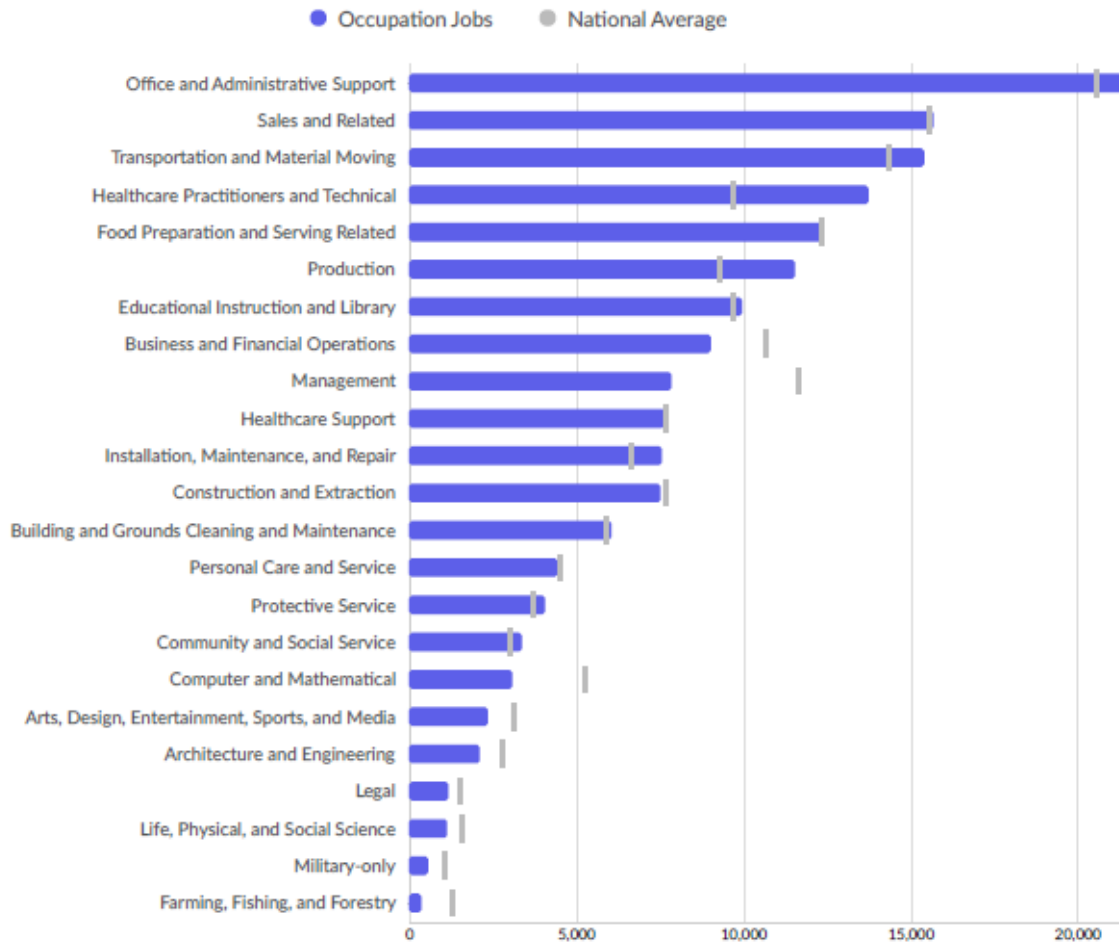
**Figure 14. Top Industry Earnings in the Service Region (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 20)**



Though the “Great Resignation” during the COVID-19 pandemic has presented multiple challenges for employers and jobseekers, it has also given employees time to consider new career opportunities and to experience different work-life balance. On the other hand, many employers are hiring but still not paying a living wage. To be more competitive, TAP can advocate to employers to offer better wages, more hybrid job opportunities, be more creative in how they weight previous work experience with formal education credentials, offer more family benefits such as scholarships for employees’ children, or provide more on-the-job training.

As of the third quarter of 2022, TAP’s service area exceeded the national average in the largest occupations in the areas of office and administrative support, transportation and material moving, and healthcare practitioners and technical services, whereas it lags behind in business and financial operations, management, and computer and mathematical services (Fig. 15). Even so, the service region is seeing the largest occupational growth in business and financial operations and management (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022). Some of the service region’s top occupations may be harder to adapt to ongoing hybrid or remote work preferences, and additional credentialing programs may be needed to grow opportunities in new occupations.

Figure 15. Largest Occupations in the Service Region (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 23)



*Workforce Training Opportunities*

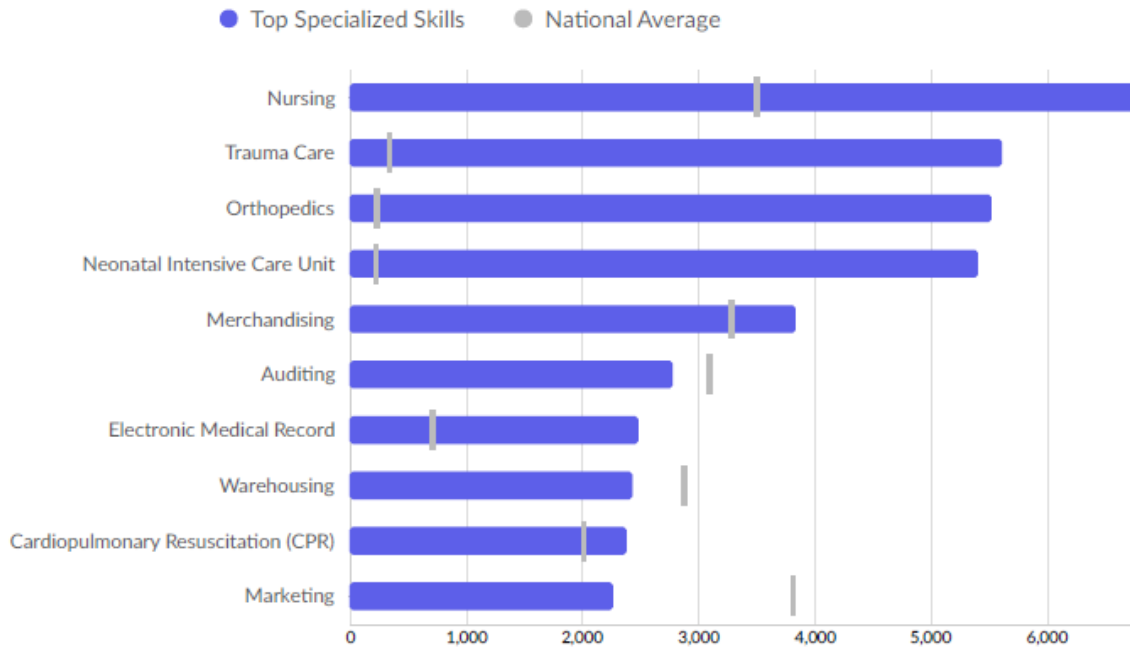
For students who cannot afford or who are not interested in a four-year college degree, TAP can facilitate access to other employment opportunities, such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, or skilled trade development. On the other end of the spectrum, TAP should explore how to expedite quality employment for highly educated and skilled immigrants who lack English language skills or the appropriate U.S. credentials. One stakeholder suggested modeling a program at a peer organization that directly advocates for top immigrant clients among area employers.

One stakeholder noted that there is a population of “pre-entrepreneurs,” such as people baking or catering from a home kitchen, who need business training, computer literacy, funding, and infrastructure to take their business concept to the next level. Low-income clients similarly requested more assistance learning how to become an entrepreneur and increase their access to resources, such as business loans, in order to pay staff to help them.

This Valley Works (TVW) staff report that promising workforce opportunities include job training and careers in healthcare, with potential to expand employment in renewable energy manufacturing and installation if that sector continues to grow in the region. TAP is also piloting a warehousing certification program to keep up with the growing demand.



Figure 16. In-Demand Skills in the Service Region (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 30)



According to Fig. 16, top in-demand, specialized skills in the region are healthcare focused, including nursing, trauma care, orthopedics, and neonatal intensive care unit, well above the national average.

### Program Challenges

According to TVW staff, there is a large gap between TAP’s workforce programs and what is offered by WIOA. While OnRamp has helped to some extent, there is a dearth of support for people who do not qualify for TAP’s services and who cannot navigate mainstream workforce resources. Other challenges for some clients include lack of computer literacy or lack of computer and internet access to apply for services and find resources online. Even so, there is a tendency among service providers to transition all of this information to virtual platforms.

Funding and logistical challenges for workforce programming include TAP’s rural/urban make-up and having trouble qualifying for grants specific to one or the other, as well as having to serve 11 jurisdictions for the service region, in addition to 25 jurisdictions for veterans. Being largely grant-funded, programs are restricted to qualifying clients, are time limited and difficult to plan for long-term, which is one reason that staff retention suffers. Another funding challenge involves combining multiple small grants to support a single program, which leads to multiple reporting requirements and creates an administrative burden for staff. Volunteer and intern capacity for This Valley Works has been very helpful to support the department.

Federal program funding ebbs and flows depending on the political agenda of the current administration rather than addressing trends at the local level. Two successful programs run by TVW, SwiftStart and RESTORE, have ended because the funding ran out, yet the populations served by these programs

continue to need support. Agency-level and statewide advocacy through the Virginia Community Action Partnership (VACAP) may shed some light on this persistent challenge at the federal level.

## Education and Development

### Highlights

- **Social Determinants of Health.** Lower-income student households may lack access to the internet to do homework, transportation to participate in afterhours school functions, preventative healthcare and dental screenings to stay healthy, and nutritious meals to stay focused at school.
- **Mental Health.** Mental health and behavioral issues are increasing among youth, exacerbated by the pandemic and lack of access to social and medical resources.
- **Education Crisis-to-Thriving.** Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 20% indicated their education level was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2), meaning they have no high school degree or GED.
- **Top Three Issues.** According to the TAP stakeholder survey, the top three issues in Education are that good teachers are leaving the field (36%), there is a high cost or lack of childcare for parents to attend school (31%), and there is a need for computer and/or internet access at home for educational purposes (29%).
- **Wrap Around Supports.** Many survey respondents suggested encouraging child and adult education and learning with additional supports such as tuition assistance, childcare, transportation, computer/Internet support, trauma-informed family services, mental health care, afterschool programs, and tutoring.
- **Basic Education Levels.** Almost all of the localities within TAP’s service area have more people in poverty without a high school degree compared with the state rate.
- **Head Start.** Head Start challenges include burdensome paperwork, relatively low pay compared with high expectations, teacher attrition, and lack of partner sites.

### Crisis-to-Thrive

As shown in Table 16, of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), only 2% of those answering indicated that they had less than an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education and 20% indicated their education level was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2), meaning they have no high school degree or GED.

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text   | Count  | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|---|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer   | 48     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | Less than 8th grade education; limited reading/writing ability.                                       | 12     | 2%                  | 2%                    |
| 2              | Completed some High School, no GED  | 91     | 18%                 | 20%                   |
| 3              | High School diploma/GED.  | 215    | 42%                 | 62%                   |
| 4              | Completed High School/GED and some form of post-secondary education or certification.                 | 132    | 26%                 | 88%                   |
| 5              | Advanced degree or completed college and has specialized certification or employed in field of study. | 61     | 12%                 | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |   | 511    | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |   | 48/559 | 9%                  |                       |

Survey Results

Table 17 shows the survey responses to the question, “If education is an issue for you or your community, why?” including a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 rankings of responses. For those response options newly added in 2022 (“New”), the change in rank is not available. The responses indicate that the top three issues are that good teachers are leaving the field (36%), the high cost or lack of childcare for parents to attend school (31%), and the need for computer and/or internet access at home for educational purposes (29%). Issues that increased in rank since 2019 include the lack of school aftercare for school-aged children, the lack of preschool programs that prepare children for kindergarten, and the lack of dropout and truancy prevention. Issues that decreased in rank since 2019 include the high cost of transportation to attend school and the lack of GED or Adult Basic Education classes offered.

| <b>If education is an issue for you or your community, why? (select all that apply)</b>                 | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>2019 Rank</b> | <b>2022 Rank*</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|---|--------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Good teachers are leaving the field   | 132          | 35.7%          | New              | 1 (8)             |               |
| High cost or lack of childcare for parent to attend school  | 115          | 31.1%          | 1                | 2 (1)             | --            |
| Need computer and/or internet access at home for educational purposes                                   | 106          | 28.7%          | 2                | 3 (2)             | --            |
| Lack of school aftercare for school-aged children   | 99           | 26.8%          | 6                | 4 (3)             | ↑↑↑           |
| Students are struggling with transitions between in-person and remote learning                          | 88           | 23.8%          | New              | 5 (*)             |               |
| Poor funding of public education  | 84           | 22.7%          | New              | 6 (*)             |               |
| Education does not instill practical problem-solving and life skills                                    | 81           | 21.9%          | New              | 7 (*)             |               |
| Lack of awareness of educational opportunities due to limited publicity                                 | 80           | 21.6%          | New              | 8 (*)             |               |
| Some educators may not fully understand or recognize the diversity of the communities they serve        | 76           | 20.5%          | New              | 9 (*)             |               |
| High cost or lack of transportation to attend school  | 64           | 17.3%          | 3                | 10 (4)            | ↓             |
| The length of time it takes to complete a degree/credential   | 61           | 16.5%          | New              | 11 (*)            |               |
| Don't know how to apply for financial aid for education   | 56           | 15.1%          | 5                | 12 (5)            | --            |
| Lack of preschools that prepare children for kindergarten   | 55           | 14.9%          | 8                | 13 (6)            | ↑↑            |
| Parent and community feedback is not reflected in the delivery and operation of public school education | 44           | 11.9%          | New              | 14 (*)            |               |
| Not enough GED or Adult Basic Education classes offered   | 41           | 11.1%          | 4                | 15 (7)            | ↓↓↓↓          |
| No dropout prevention/truancy intervention  | 36           | 9.7%           | 7                | 16 (8)            | ↑             |
| IEPs not being followed by teachers   | 36           | 9.7%           | New              | 17 (*)            |               |
| Not enough English as a second language classes   | 27           | 7.3%           | 9                | 18 (9)            | --            |
| Other   | 22           | 6.0%           | New              | 19 (*)            |               |

| Table 17. Survey Responses re: Education & Education Services in 2022 vs. 2019   |       |         |           |            |        |
|--|-------|---------|-----------|------------|--------|
| If education is an issue for you or your community, why? (select all that apply)   | Count | Percent | 2019 Rank | 2022 Rank* | Change |
| * The number in the parentheses in the 2022 Rank column is the rank excluding new survey options. The difference between that rank versus the 2019 rank is the basis for the arrows displayed in the final column. |       |         |           |            |        |

**When asked about where education services might be lacking, survey respondents offered the following comments.**

*Adult Basic Education*

Several respondents identified a lack of services related to adult basic education, GED classes, and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Comments included that there are not enough overall classes, they can be challenging to complete while working, and that adults and seniors may need additional assistance with internet-based instruction. One respondent suggested that “families in the area would benefit from more adult ESL and GED and job training for adults. Child ESL learners are doing better - the kids pick up the language quickly, but the adult family members still struggle.”

*Childcare and Early Education*

There were many comments related to the lack of childcare services and their impact, including affordability, long wait lists, challenges in the enrollment process, the need for full-day, full-year programming, and programs for teen moms in school. One comment, which is likely relevant for TAP’s Head start program, was that there need to be “enough teachers to keep all the centers open so that working parents can put their children into day care and not worry about if they will have a job or not because they don't have day care for their children.” It was also suggested that “there should be more TAP [Head Start] options in the Roanoke County area. There are individuals I know in fact that have contacted TAP to work with them on opening up a location in Vinton and surrounding Roanoke County area. TAP has not reached back out to inquire about the help they can offer....”

*Culture Conflict*

There were a small handful of comments on current cultural conflicts around education, ranging from assertions that schools are teaching socialism and have a bias against Christianity, criticism of attempts at censorship, and recognition of resource disparities based on socio-economic factors.

*Higher Education*

A few survey respondents lamented a lack of preparation for higher education and the high cost. One respondent observed that “the Roanoke Valley could probably stand to have more higher education opportunities. I know we have the higher-ed center and Virginia Western, but it feels like we are hindered by both 4-year colleges in our area being small, private (expensive) schools.”

*Job and Life Skills*

Respondents suggested improving awareness of job training, increasing financial support, and offering more evening courses, especially in rural areas. In addition to job skills, respondents suggested focusing on practical life skills, financial management, and entrepreneurship. One respondent suggested that we focus on “teaching children real life skills. Children growing up in high-risk communities have different struggles. We need to prepare our children for real life, not just what’s in the books.”

*Educational Supports*

Many respondents suggested encouraging education and learning with additional supports such as tuition assistance, childcare, transportation, computer/Internet support, trauma-informed family services, and tutoring. One respondent also observed that “while there is a lack of educators in the classroom, after school student assistance is near nil. Mental health issues [are] being neglected.”

*K-12 Public Education Challenges*

A substantial number of respondents pointed to myriad challenges with public education, including a lack of funding, staffing, time, enrichment programs, amenities, and basic safety. Some respondents suggested educators need to refocus on core educational courses including “basic skills: learn how to read, how to perform basic mathematical functions, how to write and communicate.” Another survey respondent noted, “I fear that if public education in Virginia is not better funded, conservative 'school choice' advocates will get their way and receive a wider spread charter system that is funded with taxpayer dollars without the accountability present in public schools. That could have dire consequences for some of the more vulnerable populations in the state.”

*Teachers*

Several respondents indicated the need for more qualified teachers with better pay and training. One respondent observed that “good teachers are leaving since they are expected to put their lives on the line for their students; teachers are often underpaid...”

*Vocational and Trade Education*

A number of respondents suggested there was a lack of focus on trade and vocational education, which can potentially offer a lot of opportunity to some students. One respondent suggested there is a need for “more emphasis on certificate/trainings that are not all dependent on a university or college degree, more acceptance of different skills and more trust of teachers to do their job.”

*Interviews and Secondary Data*

*Education Levels*

For low-income individuals in poverty, educational attainment throughout TAP’s service area varies in comparison to the state rate. Almost all of the localities have more people in poverty without a high school degree compared with the state (Table 18).

| <b>Location</b> | <b>Less Than High School Graduate</b> | <b>High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)</b> | <b>Some College, Associate Degree</b> | <b>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</b> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Alleghany       | 522 (35%)                             | 835 (19%)  | 414 (12%)                             | 48 (3%)                            |
| Bath            | 69 (24%)                              | 205 (16%)  | 48 (5%)                               | 44 (9%)                            |
| Botetourt       | 249 (15%)                             | 573 (7%)   | 406 (5%)                              | 174 (3%)                           |
| Craig           | 92 (27%)                              | 124 (9%)   | 61 (5%)                               | 0 (-)                              |
| Roanoke Co.     | 1,033 (22%)                           | 1,245 (8%)   | 1,367 (7%)                            | 433 (2%)                           |
| Rockbridge      | 403 (18%)                             | 717 (13%)  | 361 (8%)                              | 341 (8%)                           |
| Buena Vista     | 243 (33%)                             | 372 (23%)  | 137 (14%)                             | 54 (8%)                            |
| Covington       | 79 (16%)                              | 213 (12%)  | 109 (10%)                             | 25 (4%)                            |

**Table 18. Educational Attainment for Those in Poverty (> Age 25); Counts (%) (ACS 5-Year, 2019)**

| Location     | Less Than High School Graduate | High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency) | Some College, Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree or Higher |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Lexington    | 52 (22%)                       | 105 (15%)                                   | 126 (17%)                      | 352 (24%)                   |
| Roanoke City | 2,858 (31%)                    | 4,992 (21%)                                 | 2,601 (13%)                    | 932 (6%)                    |
| Salem        | 411 (25%)                      | 420 (9%)                                    | 275 (5%)                       | 119 (3%)                    |
| Virginia     | 123,219 (22%)                  | 158,538 (12%)                               | 120,231 (8%)                   | 71,289 (3%)                 |



Highlighted cells are equal to or higher than the state percentage.

**Figure 17. Percent of People with Bachelor's Degree or Higher in TAP's Service Area (PolicyMap, 2022)**

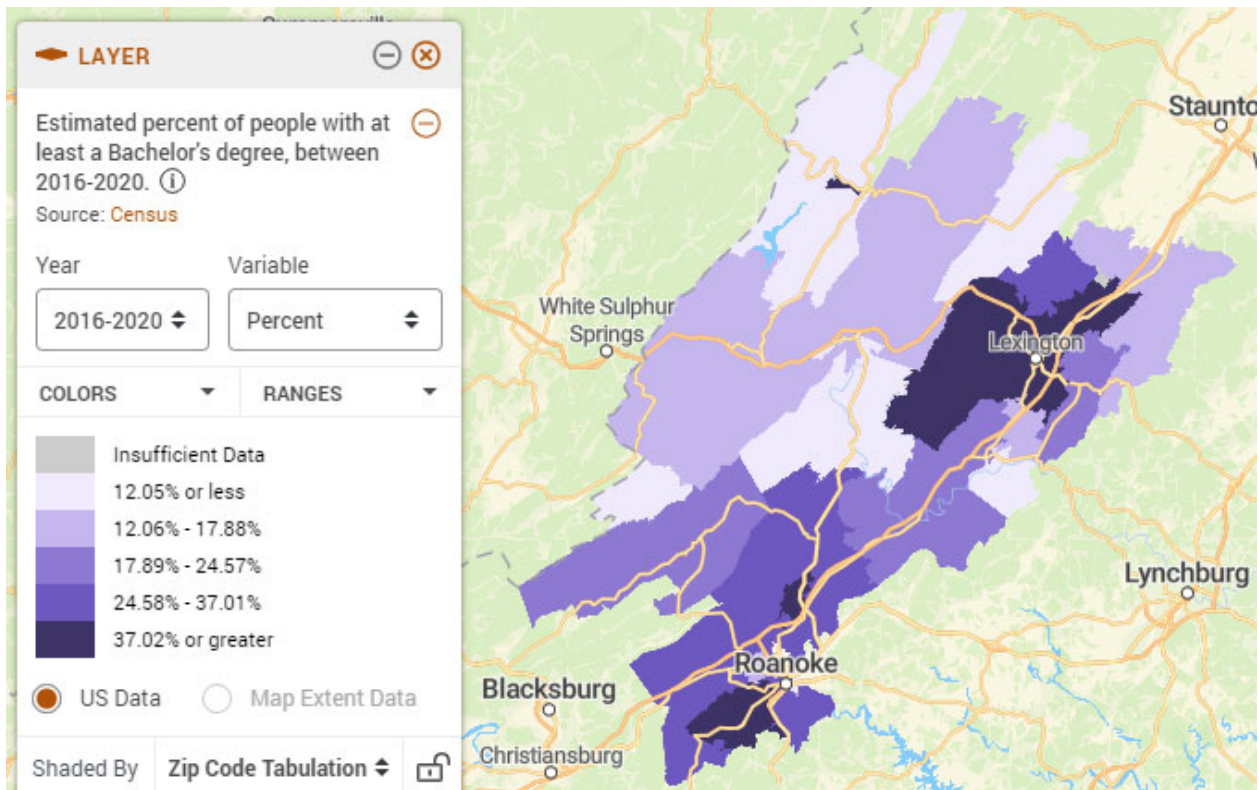


Figure 17 shows higher rates of bachelor's degrees concentrated around Roanoke City and Lexington.

*Early Childhood Education*

The Head Start program serves families impacted by intergenerational poverty and living in low-income areas with higher prevalence of gun and domestic violence, and lower levels of education. The program struggles with challenges including lack of parent participation, and staff attrition. It currently faces 30 vacancies across all position levels despite full enrollment rates. Unable to raise salaries to remain competitive with private childcare providers, the Head Start program experiences high staff turnover and a limited supply of trained teachers. Fundamentally, the program must grapple with the tension of

maintaining high quality federal standards without adequate funding to compensate qualified staff who must have certain educational credentials. The hiring process including the background check can also take 4 – 6 weeks, during which time prospective candidates may find work elsewhere. Staff must wear “multiple hats” to juggle the gaps in personnel capacity.

Head Start staff have found in general that some community childcare facilities will do the bare minimum to remain licensed and need considerable support from TAP to maintain Head Start standards. Even with this assistance and TAP’s willingness to partner, the compliance requirements are too burdensome for some of the private providers. The state standards regarding teacher-child ratios are less stringent and compensate more per child than Head Start; in addition, Head Start curricula is more rigorous and the observations, screenings, and documentation provided for Head Start are time consuming and reportedly too much for some teachers to handle. There is also a concern that with minimum wage increases locally, many families will no longer qualify for Head Start due to use of the federal poverty-level criteria.

Engagement in the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) has fluctuated in several localities since 2015, whereas some localities (Bath, Craig, and Lexington) do not appear to have enrolled in VPI (Table 19). The Virginia Preschool Initiative “distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds unserved by the federal Head Start program. The purpose of the grant is to reduce disparities among young children upon formal school entry and to reduce or eliminate those risk factors that lead to early academic failure. To obtain state funding, localities must develop a written local plan for programs that includes: provision for a quality preschool education; health services; family engagement; facilitation of comprehensive services including health, mental health and nutrition; and a plan for transportation” (Virginia Preschool Initiative, 2022, n.p.).

**Table 19. Count of 4-Year-Olds Served by Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) (KidsCount, 2022)**

| Locality     | 2015   | 2016   | 2017   | 2018   | AY 2019 – 2020 |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Alleghany    | 45     | 45     | 45     | 38     | 34             |
| Bath         | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| Botetourt    | 29     | 26     | 34     | 33     | 33             |
| Craig        | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| Roanoke Co.  | 138    | 150    | 153    | 104    | 104            |
| Rockbridge   | 30     | 31     | 31     | 31     | 36             |
| Buena Vista  | 16     | 0      | 10     | 15     | 14             |
| Covington    | 34     | 35     | 35     | 34     | 34             |
| Lexington    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| Roanoke City | 455    | 517    | 517    | 417    | 434            |
| Salem        | 0      | 18     | 18     | 35     | 37             |
| Virginia     | 18,356 | 18,023 | 17,959 | 17,657 | 18,459         |



*Public School*

Public school leadership reports that the schools often serve as the first point of contact for families to access government and social services, particularly in Roanoke City and other school districts with a large percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price school lunch, as well as immigrant families. Lower-income student households may lack access to the internet to do homework, transportation to participate in afterhours school functions, preventative healthcare and dental screenings to stay healthy, and nutritious meals to stay focused at school. Mental health and behavioral issues are increasing among youth as well, exacerbated by the pandemic and lack of access to social and medical resources.

Stakeholders also report significant reductions in standards of learning (SOL) reading rates throughout COVID-19, due to lack of formal educational infrastructure and parenting support during periods of virtual schooling. Stakeholders also reported higher rates of truancy (Table 20) and absenteeism (Table 21) during the pandemic, however due to virtual schooling environments, data may not be as complete for 2020 – 2021.

**Table 20. Truancy Counts by Locality In Recent Years (School Climate Reports, 2022)**

| Locality     | 2019 – 2020  | 2020 – 2021  | 2021 – 2022  | Average      |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alleghany    | 32           | 33           | 41           | 35           |
| Bath         | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| Botetourt    | 15           | 5            | 28           | 16           |
| Craig        | 2            | 0            | 3            | 2            |
| Roanoke Co.  | 26           | 21           | 60           | 36           |
| Rockbridge   | 63           | 11           | 154          | 76           |
| Buena Vista  | 15           | 14           | 25           | 18           |
| Covington    | 1            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| Lexington    | 0            | 3            | 1            | 1            |
| Roanoke City | 98           | 284          | 128          | 170          |
| Salem        | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| Virginia     | <b>3,875</b> | <b>4,647</b> | <b>4,266</b> | <b>4,263</b> |

Clients report that there is too much emphasis on metrics such as standardized testing, rather than teaching students life skills and providing a wide variety of extracurricular activities. Basic skills, such as writing and reading in cursive, financial literacy, home economics, and others are not being prioritized. Even the standardized curriculum is not being taught effectively, with students going through the motions rather than digesting the material. During a focus group, one parent from another country reflected that the school environment is focused on enforcing rules and not letting kids have fun, which can be an integral component to learning. She also noted that children in other countries are expected to master life skills at a much younger age and must be given opportunities to challenge themselves in real situations, such as grocery shopping for a neighbor or cooking for a large household.

| <b>Table 21. Chronic Absenteeism (2021 – 22) (School Climate Reports, 2022)</b>   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Locality</b>   | <b>All Students (average of K-12)</b> |
| Alleghany   | 41                                    |
| Bath  | 21                                    |
| Botetourt   | 8                                     |
| Craig   | 40                                    |
| Roanoke Co.   | 14                                    |
| Rockbridge  | 29                                    |
| Buena Vista   | 27                                    |
| Covington   | 47                                    |
| Lexington   | 7                                     |
| Roanoke City  | 27                                    |
| Salem   | 19                                    |
| <b>Region AVG (un-weighted)</b>   | <b>25</b>                             |
| Virginia  | <b>20</b>                             |
| <p><i>Note:</i> Chronic absenteeism is calculated using a three-step process. First, a student's end-of-year membership is determined by dividing the student's total days present, absent, and unscheduled by the total days in session for a given school. If the student's average daily membership is 50 percent or greater in a given school year, the student is included in the school's chronic absenteeism calculation. Next, a student is determined to be chronically absent if the rate of their days absent divided by their total days in membership is greater than or equal to 10 percent. Lastly, to determine the school chronic absenteeism rate, the number of students that are absent 10 percent or more is divided by the total number of students with membership greater than or equal to 50 percent of a school's end-of-year membership.</p> |                                       |

In addition, low-income stakeholders explained that teachers lack perspective regarding what disadvantaged students are going through at home, and so do not understand why they have learned negative behaviors. One of the issues may be that school administrators and teachers no longer live in the neighborhoods they serve.

Another unfortunate trend is the politicization of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and events, which has deterred some parents from participating. This lack of participation is troubling because many parents in Roanoke City, for example, were uninformed regarding the reversal of start times for elementary and high school students. With elementary students now let out earlier, parents must scramble to find afterschool care before the workday is over and can no longer rely on older siblings or high school-aged babysitters to cover the difference. This “very unpopular” decision was made without consulting parents with students in the school system. Additional complaints about the school system include lack of support from teachers to implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and the increasing expectation that parents cover the cost of all school supplies where the school system used to do so.

On a more positive note, youth involved in the African American Cultures & Contemporary Issues (AACCI) class at William Fleming High School shared insights into how the class was meaningful for them. Stakeholders listening to these youth reflected on their insights, including that the class

empowered them to be better role models for youth in their community and take on leadership positions. The class helped participating students to learn meditation and conflict mediation techniques to mitigate violent confrontations. Students also took an interest in parks and public spaces in Roanoke as places for programming and positive relationship building, not only within their own communities but in general. They expressed interest in connecting with nature, gardening, and improving their health through better nutrition, as well as having safe, supervised spaces in the evening and opportunities to interact with non-judgmental, supportive adults and mentors.

Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building

Highlights

- **Income Crisis-to-Thriving.** Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 51% of those answering indicated that they had no income, and 67% indicated their financial security level was in the crisis range.
- **Top Three Issues.** From the TAP stakeholder survey, the top three issues identified in this domain are difficulty with money management (47%), budgeting (36%), and lack of knowledge for how to address credit issues (33%). The only issue that increased in rank since 2019 was difficulty preparing/filing taxes.
- **Investments.** Small business lending is highest around the Roanoke area. Similarly, coronavirus state and local fiscal recovery funds were allocated to the localities within TAP’s service area (Table 24), with the largest amounts going to Roanoke City and County.
- **Childcare Costs.** Five of the 11 localities experience childcare cost burden.
- **Connectivity.** Last-mile broadband will likely improve lack of internet connectivity for much of TAP’s service area over the next few years.
- **Transportation.** Lack of access and the limited hours of public transportation options have come up repeatedly throughout the primary and secondary data analysis. Regional solutions to affordable transportation shortages are sorely needed in TAP’s service area.

Crisis-to-Thrive

Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 51% of those answering indicated that they had no income and 67% indicated their financial security level was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 22).

**Table 22. Financial Security Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text   | Count  | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|---|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer   | 74     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | No income.  | 248    | 51%                 | 51%                   |
| 2              | Inadequate income and/or spontaneous or inappropriate spending. | 77     | 16%                 | 67%                   |
| 3              | Can meet basic needs with subsidy; appropriate spending.        | 93     | 19%                 | 86%                   |
| 4              | Can meet basic needs and manage debt without assistance.        | 44     | 9%                  | 95%                   |
| 5              | Income is sufficient, well managed; is able to save.            | 23     | 5%                  | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |   | 485    | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |   | 74/559 | 13%                 |                       |

Survey Results

Table 23 shows the survey responses to the question, “If finances are an issue for you or your community, why?” including a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 rankings of responses. For those response options newly added in 2022 (“New”), the change in rank is not available. The responses

indicate that the top three issues are difficulty with money management (47%), budgeting (36%), and lack of knowledge for how to address credit issues (33%). The only issue that increased in rank since 2019 was difficulty preparing/filing taxes. The only issue that decreased in rank since 2019 was knowing how to obtain or enforce child support.

| <b>If finances are an issue for you or your community, why? (Select all that apply)</b>            | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>2019 Rank</b> | <b>2022 Rank*</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc.  | 173          | 46.76%         | 1                | 1 (1)             | --            |
| Don't know how to create and use a budget  | 135          | 36.49%         | 2                | 2 (2)             | --            |
| No knowledge of how to address credit issues   | 122          | 32.97%         | 3a               | 3 (3a)            | --            |
| Lack of understanding of how predatory interest rates work and trap individuals in escalating debt | 118          | 31.89%         | 3b               | 4 (3b)            | --            |
| Lack of knowledge of possible resources - SNAP, medical coverage, veterans' benefits, etc.         | 89           | 24.05%         | 4                | 5 (4)             | --            |
| Have a difficult time preparing/filing taxes   | 68           | 18.38%         | 7                | 6 (5)             | ↑↑            |
| No knowledge of Earned Income Tax Credit   | 62           | 16.76%         | 6                | 7 (6)             | --            |
| Don't know how to get or enforce child support   | 60           | 16.22%         | 5                | 8 (7)             | ↓↓            |
| Other  | 22           | 5.95%          | New              | 9 (*)             |               |

\* The number in the parentheses in the 2022 Rank column is the rank excluding new survey options. The difference between that rank versus the 2019 rank is the basis for the arrows displayed in the final column.

**Open survey comments regarding financial services that are lacking generally covered the following areas.**

*Financial Education*

Most open comments related to the need for more financial education services, including financial literacy, budgeting, money management, savings, credit management and tax filings. There were also calls for these skills to be taught to people when they are young and for classes to be available in the evenings. Lack of awareness of existing programs and lack of access in rural areas were also cited as issues.

*Income and Expenses*

Some comments recognized a lack of income as the root of financial problems and suggested that financial services should focus on helping individuals increase their income, primarily through better, higher-paying jobs. Some comments also acknowledged the pressure that rising costs of expenses underlie many financial difficulties, particularly for the elderly and working parents. As one commentator explained “the truth is, most people don't have enough time to manage their money because they are too busy trying to manage all of the other things in their lives. Wages must increase, so

that people don't have to work multiple jobs to get by, AND clean and care for their own home, AND take care of children.”

#### *Debt and Credit*

A few comments related to the need for services related to building credit or dealing with poor credit. One commentator recognized that “if a person has bad credit, they get turned down for any type of financial services, housing, etc.”

#### *Direct Assistance*

Some comments suggested expanding financial services that provide direct financial assistance, such as down payment or closing cost assistance, greater access to SNAP benefits as incomes grow, and grants instead of loans.

#### Interviews and Supporting Secondary Data

##### *Challenges to Self-Sufficiency*

Local households face many challenges. Households’ utility bills have steadily increased, and TAP anticipates a flood of requests for utility assistance over the coming year. Planning staff report observing more grandparents raising grandchildren as their primary guardian(s). Those families who do increase self-sufficiency may be threatened by the “benefits cliff.”

Low-income clients report that households are not educated about predatory lenders or the impact of high interest rates when buying cars or large-ticket appliances that can lock families into never-ending debt.

##### *Community and Business Development*

Some New Markets Tax Credit development partners in TAP’s service area include Truist and [VCDC](#). NMTC projects to increase affordable housing and wraparound service centers could be a space for TAP to expand. [People, Inc.](#) is a neighboring community action agency with a New Markets Tax Credit portfolio.

Top challenges for TAP Financial Services include lack of capacity and funding. Some populations are harder to serve than others, such as those released from incarceration who want to start their own business due to challenges getting hired with a criminal background. Staff report that they see on average 25 – 30 clients in this situation who don’t have any credit or collateral, which disqualifies them from receiving assistance from TAP as well as other lenders.

Figure 18. Average Amount of Small Business Loans in TAP’s Service Area (PolicyMap, 2022)

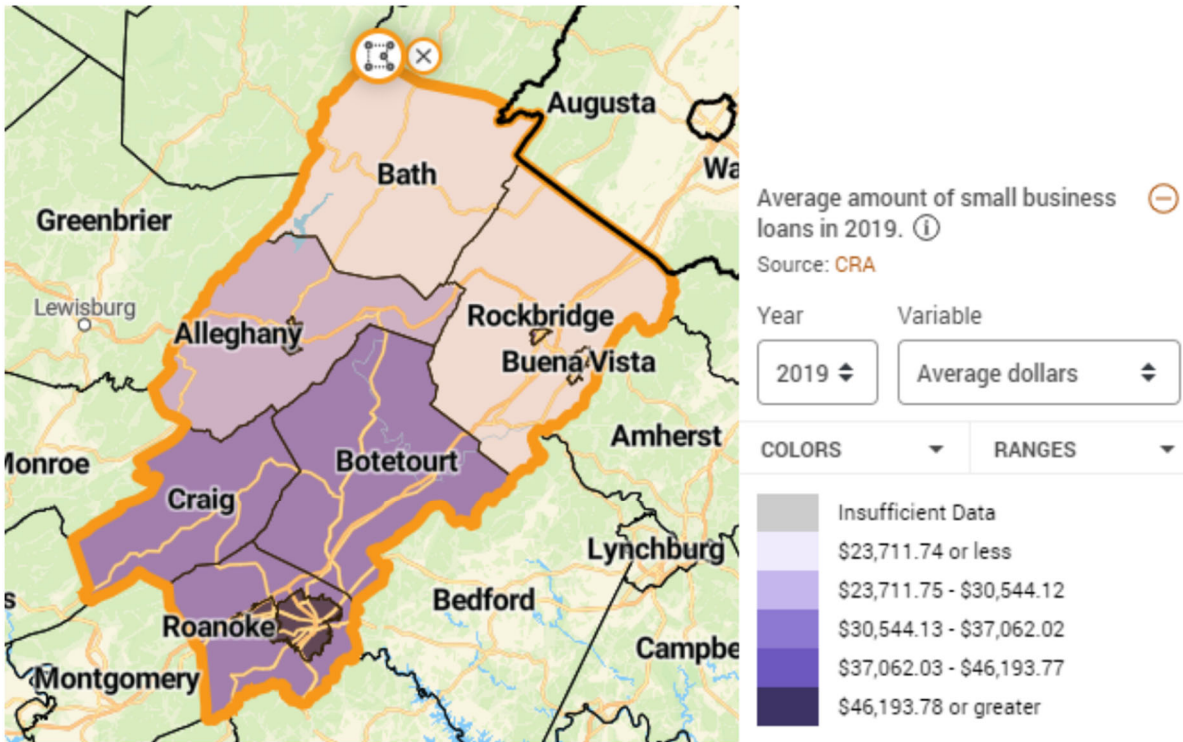


Figure 18 shows that within TAP’s service area, Bath, Rockbridge, Lexington, and Buena Vista are receiving the smallest small business loans.

*Emergency Funding During COVID-19*

Coronavirus state and local fiscal recovery funds were allocated to the localities within TAP’s service area (Table 24), with the largest amounts going to Roanoke City and County. The National League of Cities provides a detailed breakdown of recipients of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding by locality here: <https://www.nlc.org/resource/local-government-arpa-investment-tracker/>

| Table 24. Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds |                  |  |
|---|------------------|--|
| Locality  | Total Allocation | Source   |
| Alleghany   | \$2,886,381.00   | National Association of Counties County Explorer |
| Bath  | \$805,506.00     | National Association of Counties County Explorer |
| Botetourt   | \$6,491,249.00   | National Association of Counties County Explorer |
| Craig   | \$996,637.00     | National Association of Counties County Explorer |
| Roanoke Co.   | \$18,294,526.00  | National Association of Counties County Explorer |
| Rockbridge  | \$4,384,541.00   | National Association of Counties County Explorer |
| Buena Vista   | \$1,258,276.00   | Virginia Municipal League                        |

| Locality     | Total Allocation | Source                    |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Covington    | \$1,075,692.00   | Virginia Municipal League |
| Lexington    | \$1,446,298.00   | Virginia Municipal League |
| Roanoke City | \$19,257,365.00  | Virginia Municipal League |
| Salem        | \$4,914,423.00   | Virginia Municipal League |



Total allocation figures are shaded by range, where darker green indicates larger dollar values.

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans distributed by the Small Business Administration (SBA) helped to cover payroll, rent or mortgage payments, utilities, healthcare, etc. during the pandemic. Within TAP’s service area, the majority of PPP loans over \$150,000 were distributed in the Roanoke region, with clusters also present in Alleghany and Rockbridge (Fig. 19).

**Figure 19. Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loans Over \$150,000 Throughout TAP’s Service Area (PolicyMap, 2022)**

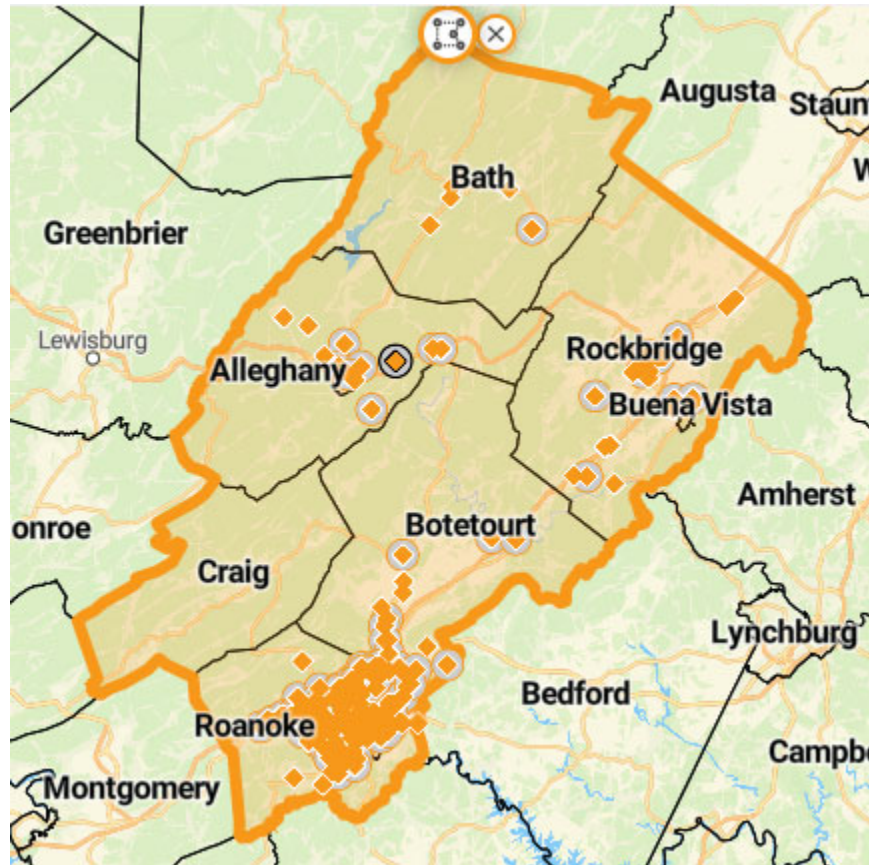


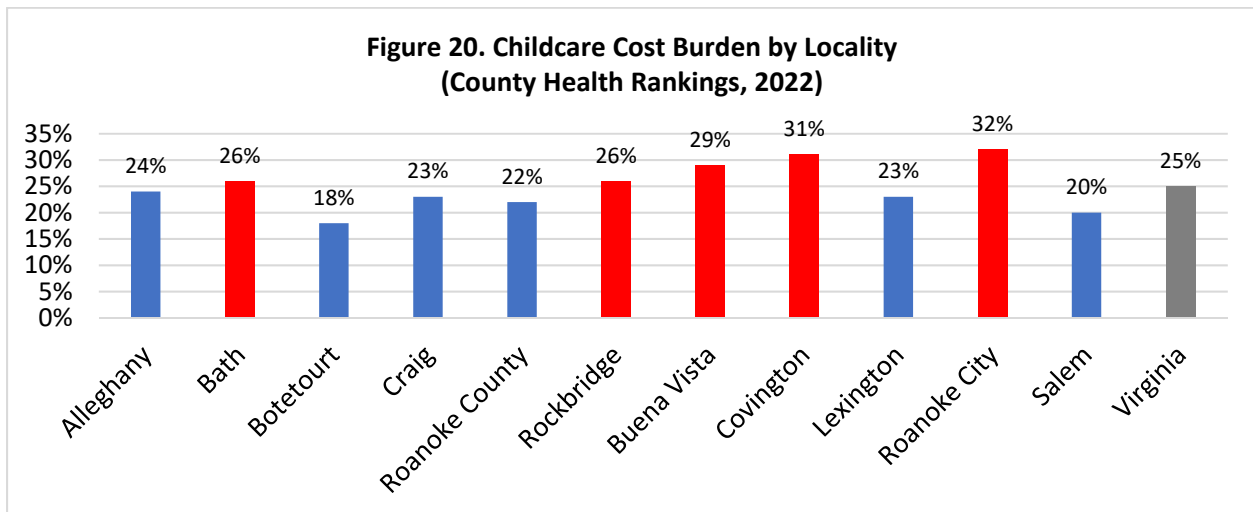
Figure 19 indicates that Craig did not receive any PPP loans greater than \$150,000.



*Education Infrastructure*

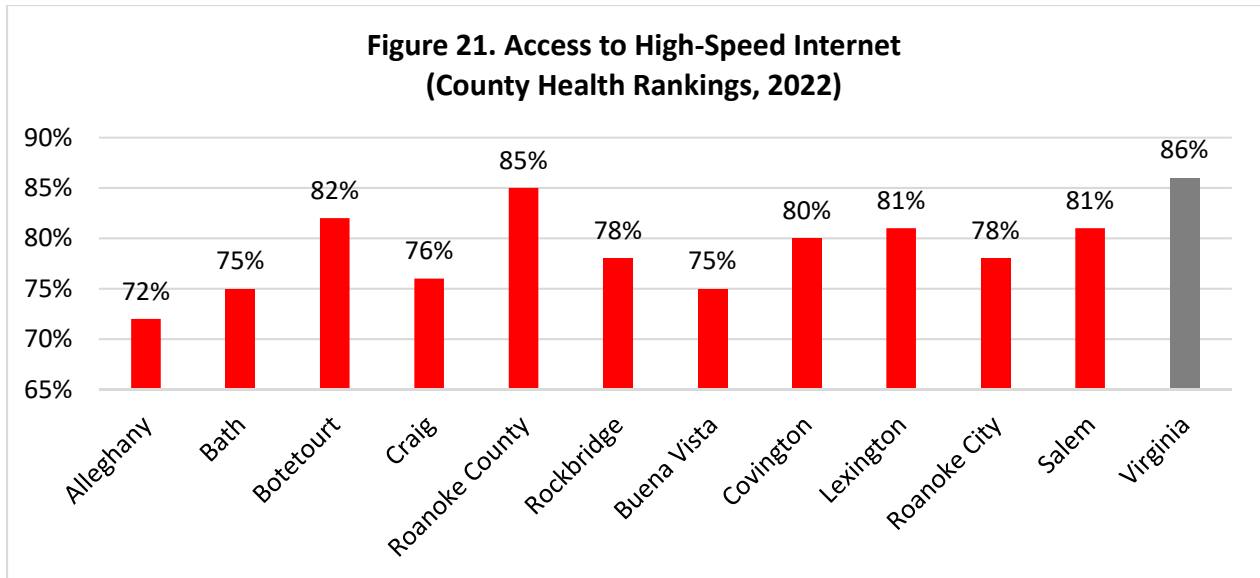
Stakeholders from the school system report challenges completing construction projects for playgrounds and other infrastructure due to supply chain bottlenecks for the materials and lack of personnel within the manufacturing and construction industries. Identifying funding for construction and renovations for more than 50 school buildings in Roanoke City, for example, has proven very challenging, even with emergency pandemic funding. Emergency funding that is available as low-interest loans is not very accessible because it requires a bond referendum and the loans must be restructured for public developments.

The cost of childcare can be a significant barrier for low-income households to juggle work and childcare expenses. Figure 20 indicates that Bath, Rockbridge, Buena Vista, Covington, and Roanoke City all exceed the state rate for childcare cost burden, which is based on childcare costs for a household with two children as a percent of median household income. Some parents may question the value of low-wage employment that cannot cover the cost of formal childcare needed in order to work in the first place.



Localities in red are higher (worse) than the state rate. The state childcare care cost burden rate of 25% is relatively high at the national level. Source: Original data source is from The Living Wage Calculator, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2021 & 2020.

Access to high-speed internet, which is required for online learning, home business development, and access to resources and records for improved quality of life, is lagging behind the state rate in every single TAP locality (Fig. 21). This factor could limit clients’ ability to apply for jobs and services online.

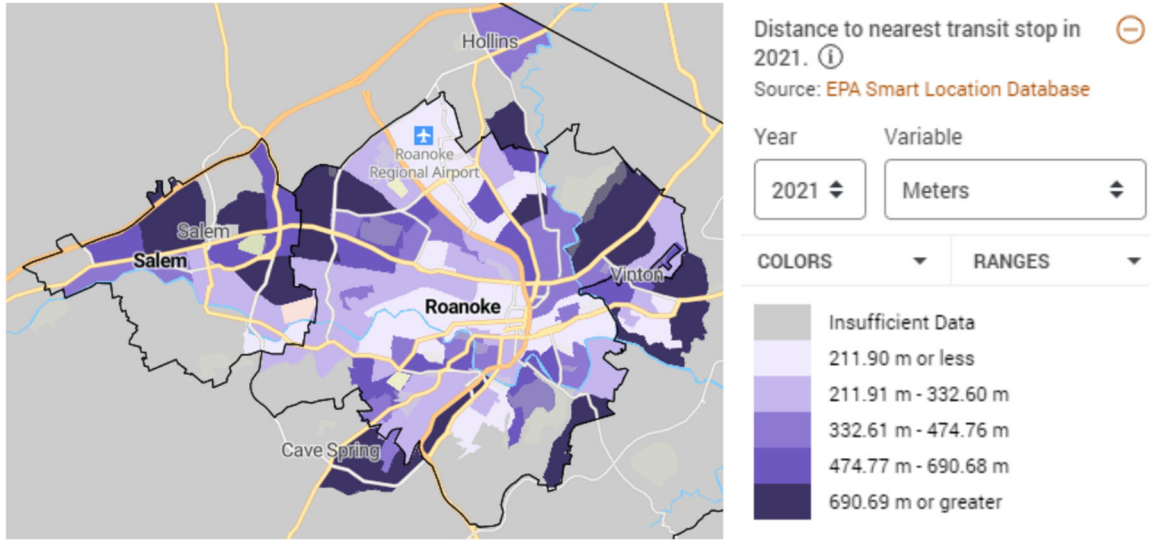


Localities in red are lower (worse) than the state rate. Source: Original data source is from the American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2016-2020. Notably, several stakeholders throughout TAP’s service area explained that last-mile broadband internet capacity is being installed and will be available over the next few years.

### Transportation

Transportation is lacking in both urban and rural communities within TAP’s service area. Public transportation may not exist or covers limited hours and routes. One stakeholder noted that other aspects of the client’s life cannot be addressed without first facilitating access to adequate transportation. Low-income clients who rely on the buses to access employment and other amenities repeatedly express frustration with the limited service hours and lack of bus stops in the coverage area. In Roanoke City and Salem, distance to the nearest public transit stop varies significantly depending on where residents live, particularly along the periphery (Fig. 22). Some clients pointed out that scooters are not a viable form of transportation for adults and can get youth into trouble.

**Figure 22. Distance to Nearest Transit Stop in 2021 in Salem and Roanoke City (PolicyMap, 2022)**



Data on PolicyMap for this metric were insufficient for other localities within TAP’s service area.

Seniors and individuals with disabilities have to navigate dangerous streetscapes that are not ADA accessible or pedestrian-friendly. TAP stakeholders described accidents and fatalities in the community that were due to unsafe sidewalk and road-crossing infrastructure.

*Select Tax Return Data*

Table 25 below presents selected IRS Tax Return Data related to the Earned Income Credit (EIC) for the region. Roanoke City, Covington, and Buena Vista have the highest utilization of the EIC. Alleghany County had a very high number of VITA volunteer-prepared tax returns and a high percentage (19%) of the overall EIC returns were prepared by VITA volunteers.

**Table 25. Selected 2019 Tax Return Information (Dollar amounts are in thousands)**

| Locality     | Number of returns | Number of volunteer-prepared returns |                                 |                                |   | Earned income credit |              |           | Excess earned income credit (refundable) |              |           |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|--------------|-----------|--|--------------|-----------|
|              |                   | Total                                | Number of VITA-prepared returns | Number of TCE-prepared returns | Number of volunteer-prepared returns with EIC | Number of returns    | % of returns | Amount    | Number of returns                        | % of returns | Amount    |
| VIRGINIA     | 4,062,320         | 58,360                               | 28,000                          | 30,360                         | 6,100   | 599,040              | 15%          | 1,393,027 | 526,720                                  | 13%          | 1,219,893 |
| Alleghany    | 6,880             | 1,000                                | 1,000                           | -                              | 230   | 1,220                | 18%          | 2,702     | 1,090                                    | 16%          | 2,513     |
| Botetourt    | 16,630            | 140                                  | 50                              | 90                             | -   | 1,750                | 11%          | 3,609     | 1,500                                    | 9%           | 3,094     |
| Craig        | 2,290             | -                                    | -                               | -                              | -   | 420                  | 18%          | 921       | 370                                      | 16%          | 801       |
| Roanoke Co.  | 46,980            | 550                                  | 110                             | 440                            | 40  | 5,350                | 11%          | 11,371    | 4,740                                    | 10%          | 10,060    |
| Rockbridge   | 10,290            | 130                                  | 30                              | 100                            | -   | 1,740                | 17%          | 3,757     | 1,520                                    | 15%          | 3,323     |
| Buena Vista  | 2,770             | 30                                   | -                               | 30                             | -   | 630                  | 23%          | 1,371     | 570                                      | 21%          | 1,272     |
| Covington    | 2,790             | 460                                  | 460                             | -                              | 110   | 670                  | 24%          | 1,610     | 630                                      | 23%          | 1,523     |
| Lexington    | 2,360             | 20                                   | -                               | 20                             | -   | 300                  | 13%          | 512       | 240                                      | 10%          | 455       |
| Roanoke City | 47,130            | 990                                  | 550                             | 440                            | 240   | 11,560               | 25%          | 28,169    | 10,600                                   | 22%          | 25,726    |
| Salem        | 11,970            | 180                                  | 50                              | 130                            | -   | 1,820                | 15%          | 4,030     | 1,590                                    | 13%          | 3,636     |

VITA = Volunteer Income Tax Assistance; TCE = Tax Counseling for the Elderly; EIC = Earned Income Credit (IRS, 2019).

## Housing

### Highlights

- **Housing Conditions.** Lower-income households may struggle to maintain the physical quality of their housing, including upgrading HVAC systems, addressing mold and contamination issues, affording big-ticket repairs such as a new roof, and weatherizing older homes to reduce the cost of utilities.
- **Housing Affordability.** The affordability of adequate housing is a growing concern within TAP's service area. Without access to stable housing, low-income clients will struggle with employment, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.
- **Eviction and Lack of Housing Availability for Low-Income and Vulnerable Clients.** While eviction rates slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic, eviction moratoria have been lifted and federal emergency rental assistance is winding down. An overall lack of affordable housing stock means long waiting lists for housing, even for clients with vouchers, and increased risk of eviction for clients living in housing they cannot afford.
- **Cost Burden.** Cost burden reflects household income in relation to housing costs, including rent, mortgage payments, utilities, insurance, etc. Cost burden among renters in TAP's service area averages 37%, which is lower than the state and national rates; however, severity of cost burden is locality specific and exceeds the state and federal rates in some places.
- **Vacancy.** Localities outside of the healthy vacancy range may either have too little housing or too much substandard housing. Several localities within TAP's service area are struggling with housing availability for these reasons. Development of more multifamily and accessory dwelling units could help to alleviate housing availability and affordability challenges.
- **Transitional and Recovery Housing.** The continuum of housing supports for those without stable housing should include transitional and recovery housing. For example, a recent study indicates that the Roanoke region needs at least 850 more units of recovery housing to serve a variety of client needs.
- **Market Challenges.** During the pandemic, lack of available labor, the cost of materials due to supply chain shortages, and lack of sufficient funding to cover the cost of development and weatherization projects has limited what TAP and other partners can do to provide home repairs and build new housing. ECHR staff also report recent challenges include insufficient funding for the limited home repair program for areas outside of Roanoke City (\$20,000 per year for the remaining service area), as well as an end to the funding in 2022 for the indoor plumbing and rehabilitation (IPR) program.
- **Workforce and Funding Considerations.** Employment in a housing-related occupation may be an opportunity for some TAP clients, including immigrants and refugees. Some multifamily developments are prioritizing energy efficiency to help low-income residents save on the cost of living.

### Crisis-to-Thrive

Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 34% of those answering indicated that they were either homeless or threatened with eviction and 56% indicated their Housing situation was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 26).

**Table 26. Housing Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count  | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 73     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | Homeless or threatened with eviction.  | 167    | 34%                 | 34%                   |
| 2              | In transitional, temporary, or substandard housing; and/or current rent or mortgage payment is unaffordable (over 30% of income) | 107    | 22%                 | 56%                   |
| 3              | In stable housing that is safe but only marginally adequate.   | 37     | 8%                  | 64%                   |
| 4              | Household is in safe, adequate subsidized housing.   | 46     | 9%                  | 73%                   |
| 5              | Household is safe, adequate, unsubsidized housing.   | 129    | 27%                 | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 486    | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 73/559 | 13%                 |                       |

The ability to maintain utilities is an essential component of secure housing. Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 24% of those answering indicated that one or more utilities were either shut off or would be imminently, and 37% indicated their utility situation was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 27).

**Table 27. Energy/Utility Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count   | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 284     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | One or more utilities shut off or shut off imminent.                               | 67      | 24%                 | 24%                   |
| 2              | Have had a notice that utilities were to be turned off within the last six months. | 36      | 13%                 | 37%                   |
| 3              | Utilities bills are current with a history of late payments.                       | 50      | 18%                 | 56%                   |
| 4              | Utilities bills are current, receives energy assistance.                           | 28      | 10%                 | 66%                   |
| 5              | Utilities current, no energy assistance, no history of late payments.              | 94      | 34%                 | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 275     | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 284/559 | 51%                 |                       |

Survey Results

Table 28 shows the survey responses to the question, “If housing is an issue for you or your community, why?” including a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 rankings of responses. For those response options newly added in 2022 (“New”), the change in rank is not available. The responses indicate that the top three issues are the high cost of rent/house payments (66%), lack of money for a down payment on a house or a security deposit (53%), and that houses in the area are not affordable (53%). Issues that increased in rank since 2019 include housing affordability, a lack of temporary emergency housing, and

lack of understanding of tenant’s rights. Issues that decreased in rank since 2019 include the need for repairs for housing safety, bad credit preventing housing, and a lack of handicapped-accessible housing.

| <b>If housing is an issue for you or your community, why? (select all that apply)</b>  | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>2019 Rank</b> | <b>2022 Rank</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| High cost of rent/house payments   | 245          | 66.2%          | 1                | 1 (1)            | --            |
| Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit  | 197          | 53.2%          | 2                | 2 (2)            | --            |
| Houses in the area are not affordable  | 196          | 53.0%          | 5                | 3 (3)            | ↑↑            |
| Can't buy or rent housing because of bad credit  | 156          | 42.2%          | 3                | 4 (4)            | ↓             |
| Discouragement because good housing seems out of reach for young people  | 131          | 35.4%          | New              | 5 (*)            |               |
| Not enough temporary emergency housing   | 110          | 29.7%          | 6                | 6 (5)            | ↑             |
| Families may not be comfortable with the emergency shelter options available to them   | 110          | 29.7%          | New              | 7 (*)            |               |
| Lack of transitional and recovery housing opportunities  | 107          | 28.9%          | New              | 8 (*)            |               |
| Housing needs repairs to be safe - roof, foundation, etc.  | 106          | 28.6%          | 4                | 9 (6)            | ↓↓            |
| Housing needs weatherization for more affordable utility bills - insulation, storm windows, etc.   | 96           | 25.9%          | 7                | 10 (7)           | --            |
| Senior citizen housing or nursing homes not available or not affordable  | 88           | 23.8%          | 8                | 11 (8)           | --            |
| Mismatch between family size and the size of units available in the marketplace (units too large and unaffordable)   | 80           | 21.6%          | New              | 12 (*)           |               |
| Don't know how to go about buying a home   | 71           | 19.2%          | 9                | 13 (9)           | --            |
| Don't understand tenant rights   | 71           | 19.2%          | 11               | 14 (10)          | ↑             |
| Not enough handicap accessible housing   | 55           | 14.9%          | 10               | 15 (11)          | ↓             |
| Other  | 20           | 5.4%           | New              | 16 (*)           |               |
| * The number in the parentheses in the 2022 Rank column is the rank excluding new survey options. The difference between that rank versus the 2019 rank is the basis for the arrows displayed in the final column. |              |                |                  |                  |               |

**Open survey comments regarding housing services that are lacking generally covered the following areas.**

*Housing Affordability and Supply*

Most open comments related to the need for a greater supply of affordable housing. Some commenters noted that mortgages might be more stable than continuously rising rents, but that people are shut out of purchasing a home due to poor credit or the inability to save for a down payment. Many commenters connect affordability to the poor supply of housing, especially affordable units, subsidized options, and safe locations. One commenter suggested “increasing the amount of permanent supportive housing available, and in general, safe and affordable housing stock that's not concentrated in just one

neighborhood.” Another suggested that “the amount and variety of housing is an issue. Localities need to review zoning regulations that limit the ability to create affordable, dense housing units like apartments and townhomes close to where jobs and amenities are located.”

#### *Housing Quality*

Many commenters noted issues with housing quality, including poor maintenance by absentee landlords, poor climate control, neglect of expensive repairs, and even pest infestations. Many of these commenters also highlighted the need for more services to address housing quality such as financial assistance with repairs, weatherization, and the need for more qualified repair technicians. One commenter noted the interrelation of several of these issues because “landlords are increasing rent, and not keeping properties maintained (such as toilet and drain clogs, parking areas, etc.) that constantly drain the tenants’ limited income (buying Drano and decloggers, etc.) and tenants are afraid to report due to retaliation. Also banks in this area are not helping a lot of residents obtain down payment assistance, or the assistance available has thresholds (such as higher credit scores and income requirements) that many minorities in this area cannot qualify for.”

A respondent elaborated:

There's no accountability or requirements or enforcement for landlords and with housing unavailable, tenants have little bargaining power, not to mention that so many properties are owned by one person or company that they don't even care if they rent them or not, so you just have to agree to their terms. Out of the places we've rented in VA, half of them have been utterly \*filthy\* when we moved in (cat litter in the closets, bathtub may have never been cleaned by previous tenants - or certainly not recently, mold and garbage under the sink, and more), and the only response is, well, you can leave and find somewhere else to live. One of the places we lived in had NO insulation so our electric bill was over \$200 in the winter and we were still cold, and in the summer the heat was insufferable - so bad that we and our kids couldn't sleep. VA is the worst place I've ever lived for renting. And houses are just unreachable in their price, I mean it's a joke to have someone suggest that as an option - even for people with a pretty good income. We tried a couple times to find one, but the ones we could afford just get snatched off the market within 1 – 3 days by someone paying cash - apparently to 'fix them up' and flip them. How are people who live here supposed to \*live\* here?

#### *Specialty Housing*

A number of commenters noted the need for additional specialty housing for populations such as formerly incarcerated individuals re-entering the community (especially women), individuals struggling with substance use disorders seeking treatment in need of recovery housing or sober-living options, and seniors needing improved accessibility.

#### *Shelters and Homelessness*

Some commenters focused on the increasing prevalence of homelessness and the shortage of shelter opportunities, with one commenter noting that “there are too many people living on the streets because shelters are overcrowded. There needs to be more housing or shelters for these homeless people.” Additional shelters are also needed in rural areas and for domestic violence survivors.



Another survey respondent linked multiple housing issues related to the current surge in homeless individuals:

Why can't the city provide housing for people who are homeless? This seems like it should be a \*TOP\* priority. Also, as a way to help everyone out, it would be great to see staffed, 24-hour restrooms downtown, preferably with a shower option. If/until the city can provide housing options for everyone here, at least it would be great for those without a housing option at the moment to have a place where it's safe to use the restroom no matter the time of day, and to be able to take a shower. It should be free so that anyone can use it, and it should be well lit and staffed so that there isn't a risk of violence, and so that there's someone to take care of cleaning, and any plumbing or other issues as needed.

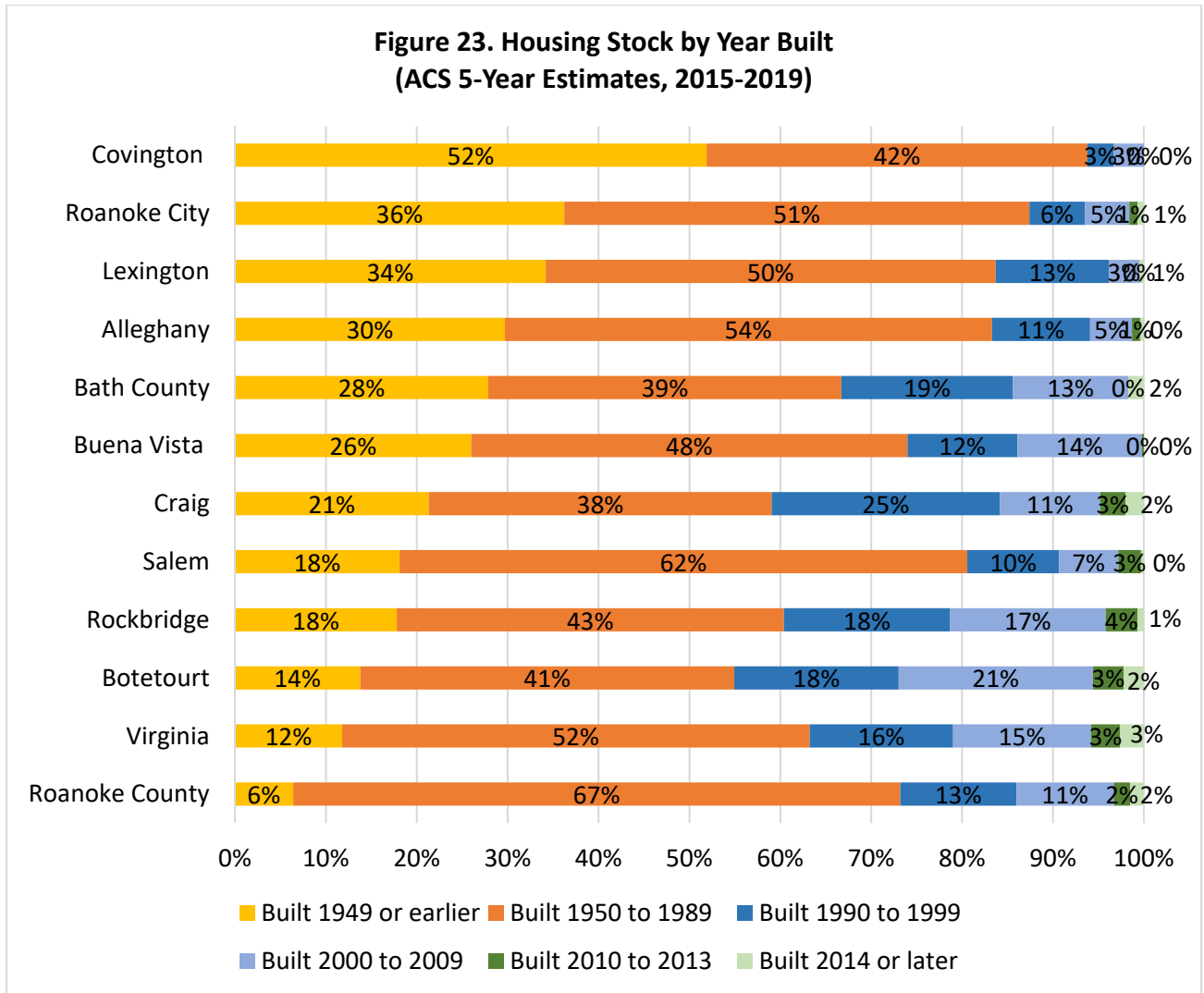
#### *Access, Awareness, and Broader Impacts*

A number of commenters noted a lack of access or awareness of programs to help address housing issues, especially in rural communities. Some noted that home ownership and quality housing are feeling more and more like an impossibility for some people, especially the young, and that they need more information on how to navigate the system to achieve quality stable housing over time. That increased housing insecurity has spillover effects throughout the community. As one commenter explained, "people are increasingly housing insecure, and for those with housing, the cost has risen quite sharply in recent years; the fallout associated with an increasingly cost-burdened and/or housing-insecure community takes time to parse out, but the tension contributes across a number of areas, I'm sure. I suspect there is a link between the lack of affordable housing, gun violence, SMI/SUD folks, and probably health problems throughout the community."

#### *Interviews and Supporting Secondary Data*

##### *Housing Conditions*

Low-income clients may be living in cheaper, older, and more dilapidated housing with high energy and repair costs that they struggle to afford. Repairs may be needed to address health and safety concerns, including old electrical wiring, moisture build-up, leaking roofs, lead paint, inefficient heat pumps, and wood stoves that are hard on people with respiratory problems. In addition to high heating costs in the winter, heat-related health problems may result from poorly-insulated homes with limited temperature regulation during the summer, particularly in urban areas with [heat islands](#), which are concentrated pockets of higher temperatures due to limited foliage in relation to hardscaping and building density. Households may need assistance with the costs of purchasing and running an air conditioner on very hot days. Figure 23 shows the age of the housing stock in each locality by descending age.



Housing typically requires major upgrades and repairs every 20 – 30 years, such as a new roof, updates to plumbing and more efficient HVAC systems, etc. Older homes also may also have lead-based paint, outdated wiring, asbestos, leaking fuel tanks, wood stoves, mold build-up, and other environmental hazards that degrade the quality of life and health of residents. At least 50% of the housing stock in every locality in TAP’s service area was built before 1990, from 55% in Botetourt to 94% in Covington. Funding for home repairs, HVAC upgrades, and environmental clean-up should be directed to localities with older housing stock in particular.

Figure 24 shows the source of home heating used by homes in each locality.

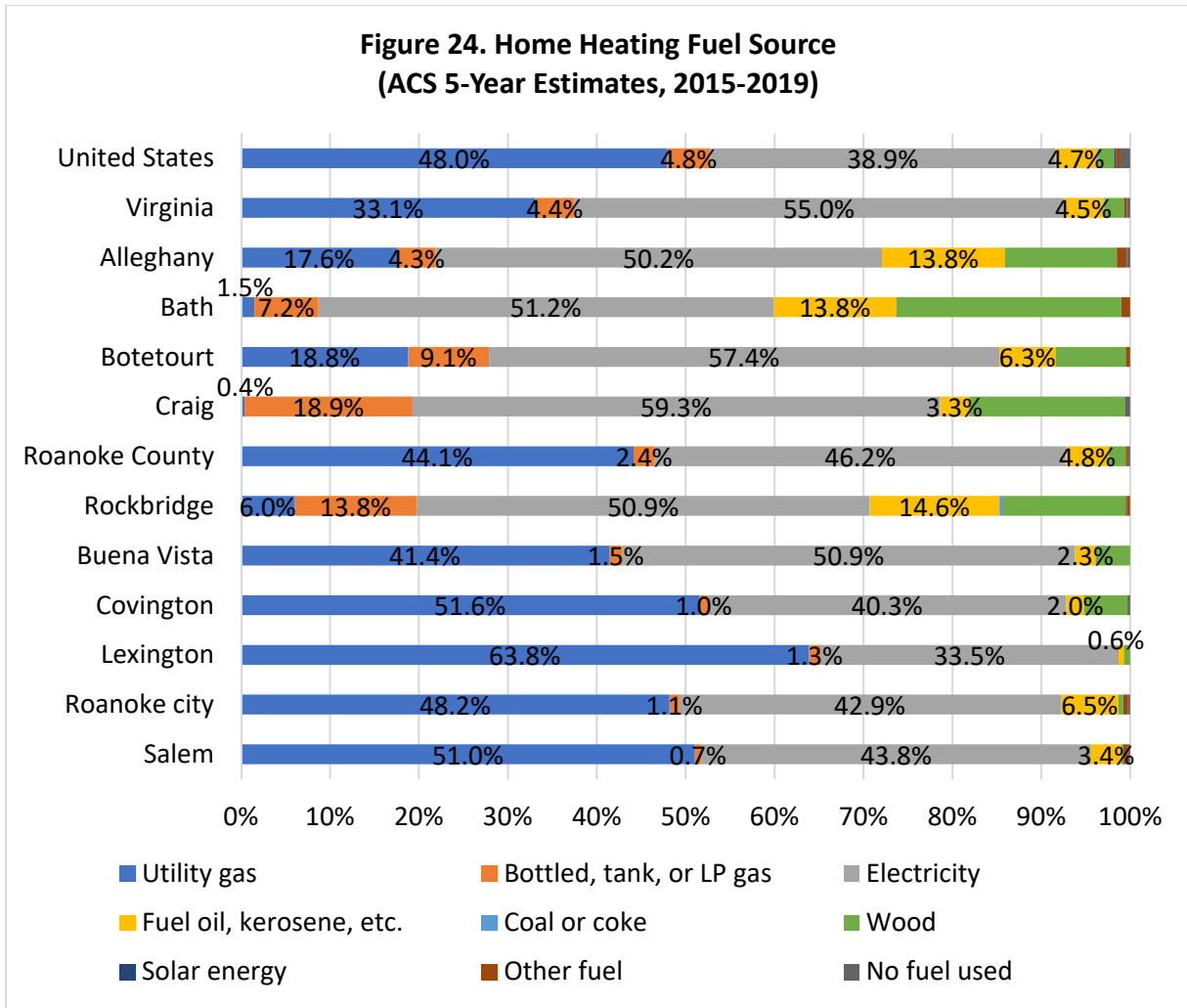


Figure 24 indicates that more than 10% of households in Alleghany, Bath, Craig, and Rockbridge use wood as a home heating fuel source. While homes in rural areas can benefit from back-up fuel sources in the event of a power outage, wood-burning fireplaces and stoves create airborne particulate matter that is harmful to human health.

Notably, solar is a virtually nonexistent fuel source across the service area. There is a need to install solar panel and battery storage for low-income households to decrease the cost of utility bills, harness clean and renewable energy to improve human and environmental health, and increase household self-sufficiency in the event of a power outage.

### Housing Affordability

For households with dependent children, the costs of caring for them paired with monthly rent often meets or exceeds many low-income families’ expendable income. Low-income stakeholders explained that some youth become homeless once they turn 18 because their families kick them out and they cannot afford housing. Clients report that emergency shelters, particularly for those with young kids, take away their autonomy in a traumatizing situation. Stakeholders recommend repurposing vacant apartment buildings into transitional housing with wraparound supports suited to the target needs, whether it’s families with children or clients re-entering society from incarceration. Subsidized housing

programs often impose a work requirement, yet stakeholders point out that an individual who is homeless cannot maintain basic hygiene in order to secure a job. Another frustration for those living in income-based, subsidized housing is that as their income increases, so does their housing payment, which prevents them from accumulating any personal savings to address future financial emergencies.

While it is a small percentage of clients overall, staff report there has been an uptick in the number of homeowners contacting TAP as their house is going into default, rather than reaching out more preventatively for assistance. Many first-time homebuyers work with TAP to acquire down payment assistance and calculate their ability to afford a home; however, other lenders who issue unaffordable loans leave homeowners in a difficult situation once they realize they cannot maintain the mortgage payments. Staff are concerned that the current housing market is unsustainably expensive and default rates may increase in the next few years, and TAP's Financial Services component is preparing to hire two more housing counselors as a result.

#### *Eviction and Lack of Housing Availability for Low-Income and Vulnerable Clients*

Another complication during COVID-19 was clients' inability to receive eviction assistance until they had received an eviction notice, which left little time to remedy the situation before they lost their housing entirely. According to a 2021 report focused on eviction in Roanoke City, "[n]early 1 in 6 renter households experienced at least one unlawful detainer filing in 2019 and the city had a filing rate of 16%. The City of Roanoke had the 11<sup>th</sup>-highest filing rate and eviction rate in the state in the second quarter of 2021" (Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Planning Grant Needs Assessment, 2021, p. 4). The report also notes that with a deficit of 4,500 units for extremely low-income households, eviction pressures remain high if households are forced into housing that they cannot really afford.

Eviction prevention measures include providing financial and housing counseling assistance to families at risk of eviction prior to receiving an eviction notice, as well as court-based interventions that mediate agreements between tenants and landlords, such as incremental payment plans. COVID-19 relief funding to pay for missed rent and utility payments was delivered through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program in 2020 and 2021, with guidance as recent as September 2022 regarding reallocating remaining funding;<sup>1</sup> however, this is not a long-term source of funding assistance.

Stakeholders also report that despite the availability of housing vouchers, some clients cannot find housing. In one case, a single mom with eight kids had a Section 8 voucher that required a 4-bedroom home and an assistance level of \$1,300. Even with a waiver to bump up the assistance, it took 4 months to find a home for her family. In the meantime, they lived in a 1-bedroom hotel room. Section 8 waiting lists are growing because housing is not available and people are being priced out of existing housing. Many apartment complexes have had ownership changes involving dramatic increases in rent with no actual improvements to the property. Stakeholders suggested that housing shortages will intensify over the next few years.

In comparison to the 2019 TAP CNA report, the following localities have experienced a **net gain in housing units**: Roanoke County (230 units), Lexington (199 units), Botetourt (115 units), Rockbridge (89 units), Bath (26 units), and Salem (2 units); whereas the following localities have experienced a **net loss in housing units**: Roanoke City (-73 units), Buena Vista (-23 units), Covington, (-21 units), Alleghany (-20

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<sup>1</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/emergency-rental-assistance-program>

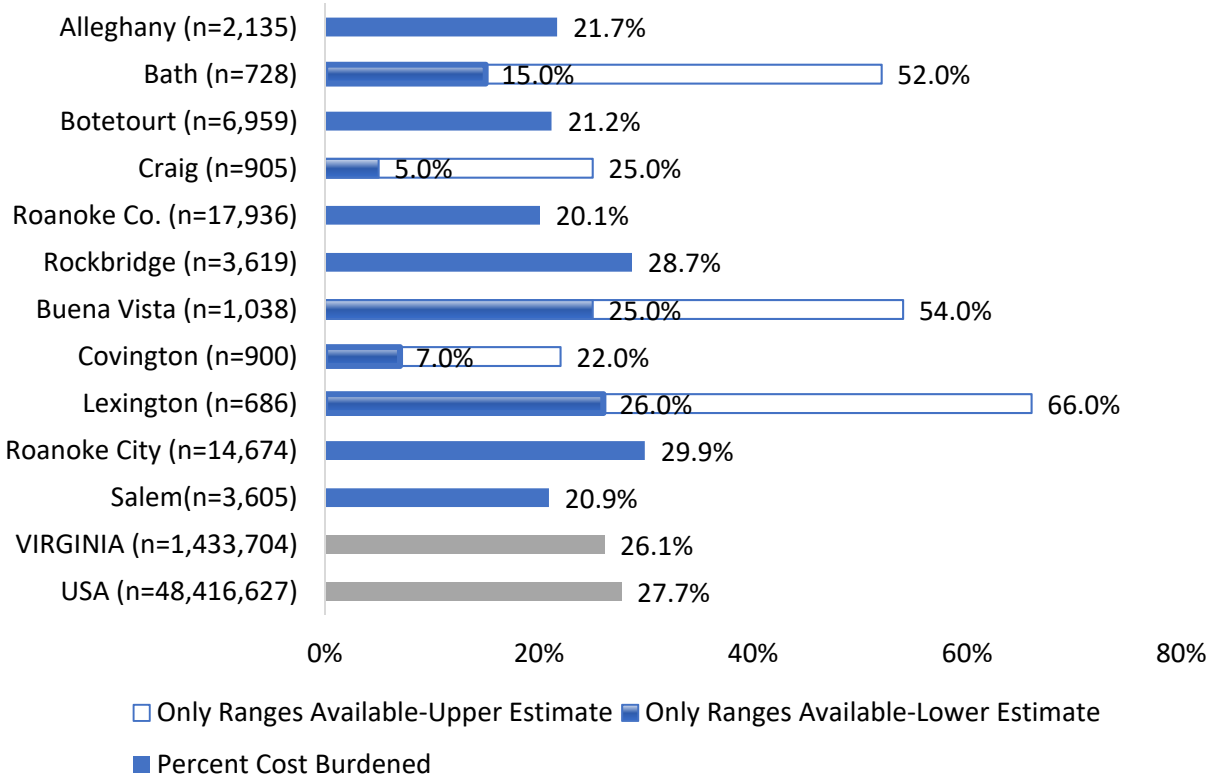
units), and Craig (-3 units) (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019). While localities may be removing housing complexes due to age and other housing quality issues, this infrastructure must be replaced with the same number of housing units at a similar price point to ensure families are not displaced.

Due to high material costs in the housing domain, TAP's reach is limited by economic constraints when it comes to providing more housing supports. From a human services perspective, it is difficult to find willing landlords to support TAP's clientele, and subsidizing temporary shelter in hotels is expensive. Due to increases in the cost of housing, and lack of access to affordable units, the process of identifying housing for clients, such as survivors of domestic violence, has become incredibly labor-intensive for TAP staff. In spite of state directives and the obvious need for the creation of more affordable housing, Planning staff are cognizant of the challenges of combining "hard" (infrastructure development) and "soft" (human services) housing supports under one department due to the variety of expertise and types of funding that would be required.

#### *Cost Burden*

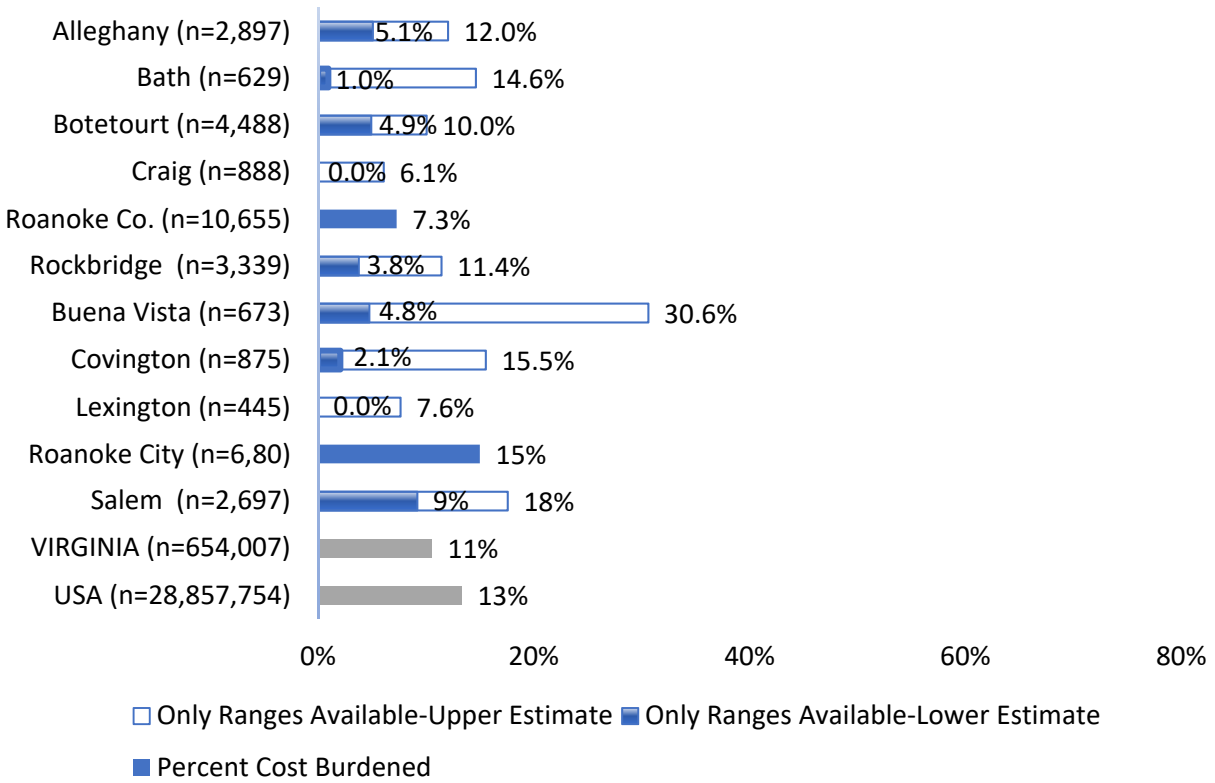
Households that spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs, such as mortgage or rent payments, utilities, insurance, etc., are considered "cost burdened." A cost burden of 30% or more of income spent on housing can tie up a household's ability to pay for other amenities, sometimes forcing households to choose between paying for housing and other goods and services, like food, transportation, childcare, or healthcare. This is especially true for families with dependent children, low-income families, and households in more expensive parts of the country, such as urban centers with a higher cost of living (HUDUser, 2014). The percentage of cost burdened owner- and renter-occupied housing units in a locality can highlight areas with a particularly expensive housing market relative to median income. Figure 25 shows the proportion of owner households with a mortgage that are cost burdened. Figure 26 shows the proportions of owner households without a mortgage that are cost burdened. Figure 27 shows the proportions of renter households that are cost burdened.

**Figure 25. Percent Cost-Burdened Owner Households with a Mortgage (2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates)**

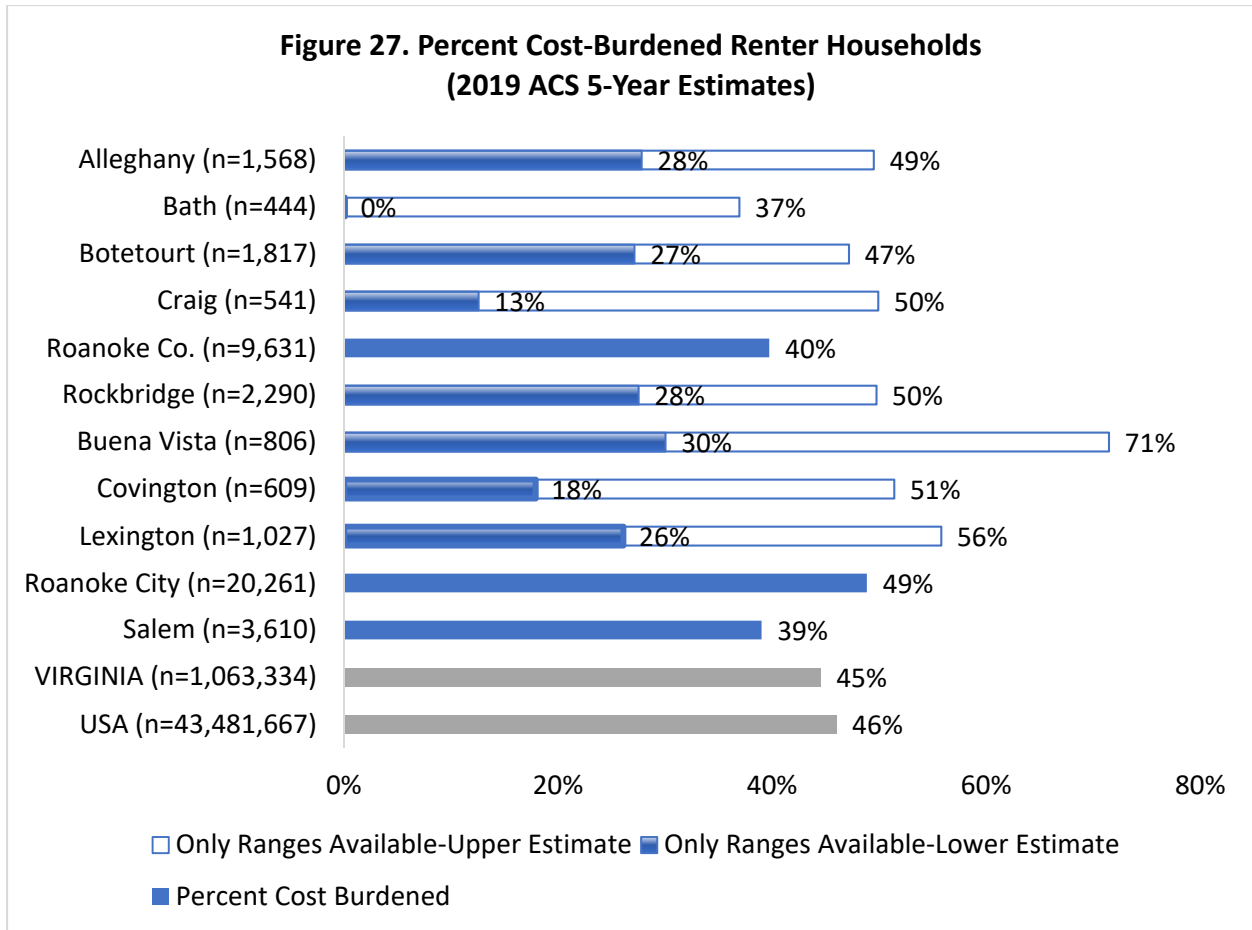


According to Fig. 25, the cost burden for households with a mortgage is above the state and national rate in the cities of Roanoke, Lexington, and Buena Vista, and the counties of Rockbridge and Bath (including upper estimates). Households that cannot keep up with mortgage payments are at risk of default and foreclosure, which can jeopardize their access to stable housing and damage their credit. *Lower and upper estimates are provided for localities where the data are not accurate enough to use a single estimate.*

**Figure 26. Percent Cost-Burdened Owner Households without a Mortgage (2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates)**



According to Fig. 26, the cost burden for households without a mortgage is above the state and national average in the cities of Salem (upper estimate), Roanoke, Covington (upper estimate), and Buena Vista (upper estimate), and the county of Bath (upper estimate). While owner-households without a mortgage don't pay monthly installments toward the purchase of the house, other payments toward utilities, insurance, or the cost of home repairs could impact their housing cost burden as well as the quality and safety of their housing. *Lower and upper estimates are provided for localities where the data are not accurate enough to use a single estimate.*



According to Fig. 27, the cost burden among renters at the state and national levels is nearly 50%. Within TAP’s service area, localities above state and national levels include the cities of Roanoke, Lexington (upper estimate), Covington (upper estimate), Buena Vista (upper estimate), and the counties of Rockbridge (upper estimate), Craig (upper estimate), Botetourt (upper estimate), and Alleghany (upper estimate). *Lower and upper estimates are provided for localities where the data are not accurate enough to use a single estimate.*

*Vacancy*

When cost burden is paired with the vacancy rate of long-term and seasonal housing, this can further inform the availability of housing, which impacts affordability. According to the Virginia Center for Housing Research, a market vacancy rate of 2 – 7% is considered a healthy range. Below 2% indicates the market is too tight and there aren’t enough vacant units to meet demand, and above 7% may indicate there is too much substandard or dilapidated housing. Table 29 presents vacancy rates by locality.

| Locality  | Total Housing Units | Total Vacancies | Market Vacancy Rate | Seasonal Vacancies | Long-term Vacancies |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Alleghany | 8,027               | 1,427           | 1 – 4%              | 5 – 8%             | 6 – 10%             |
| Bath      | 3,379               | 1,578           | 0 – 5%              | 38%                | 1 – 8%              |



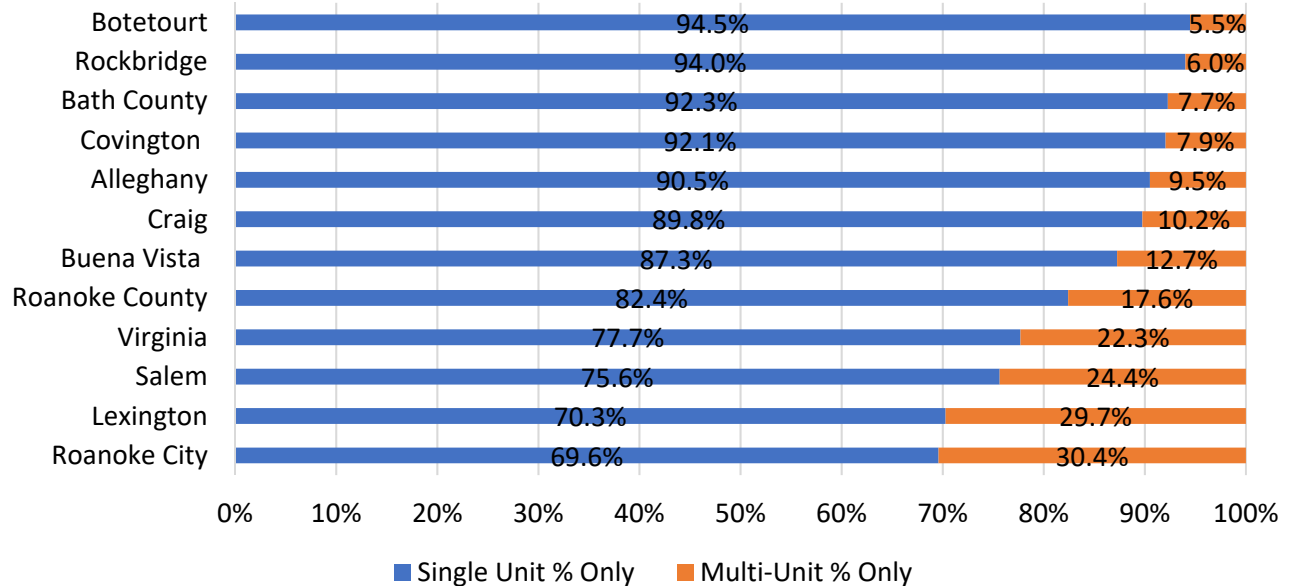
**Table 29. Vacancy Rates by Locality (2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates)**

| Locality     | Total Housing Units | Total Vacancies | Market Vacancy Rate | Seasonal Vacancies | Long-term Vacancies |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Botetourt    | 14,884              | 1,620           | 2 – 4%              | 2 – 4%             | 4 – 6%              |
| Craig        | 2,909               | 612             | 2 – 10%             | 4 – 14%            | 2 – 10%             |
| Roanoke Co.  | 40,924              | 2,702           | 2 – 3%              | 1 – 2%             | 1 – 3%              |
| Rockbridge   | 11,441              | 2,193           | 2 – 5%              | 6 – 11%            | 4 – 7%              |
| Buena Vista  | 2,866               | 349             | 2 – 9%              | 0 – 3%             | 1 – 8%              |
| Covington    | 2,997               | 613             | 3 – 10%             | 0 – 3%             | 8 – 17%             |
| Lexington    | 2,447               | 289             | 0 – 6%              | 0 – 6%             | 2 – 10%             |
| Roanoke City | 47,010              | 5,270           | 6%                  | 0 – 1%             | 4%                  |
| Salem        | 10,840              | 928             | 2 – 5%              | 0 – 2%             | 2 – 5%              |
| VIRGINIA     | 3,514,032           | 362,987         | 3%                  | 2%                 | 4%                  |
| USA          | 137,428,986         | 16,672,938      | 3%                  | 4%                 | 4%                  |



Table 29 indicates that most localities within TAP’s service area have a “healthy” market vacancy rate including homes for rent and for sale, however Alleghany and Bath Counties and the City of Lexington may have less availability relative to other localities. Bath County has the largest percentage of seasonal vacancies whereas its market vacancy rate is lower, which could indicate inadequate housing stock for full-time residents. Craig County and the Cities of Buena Vista and Covington may have more dilapidated or substandard housing relative to other localities.

**Figure 28. Single and Multiple Household Units (2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates)**



Virginia land use preferences for single-family units statewide (Baca, 2020) is evident in Fig. 28. All of the localities in TAP’s service area with a need for affordable and increased housing

stock, whether urban or rural, should prioritize strategies such as multi-family developments and accessory dwelling units on single-family lots.

#### *Transitional and Recovery Housing*

Individuals struggling with mental health issues, substance use, and/or homelessness need safe, stable, and supportive transitional and permanent housing options, and there is not enough of either in the Roanoke Valley. According to a 2021 recovery housing task force study conducted by the Roanoke Valley Collective Response to the Opioid and Addiction Crisis and Virginia Tech, there is a need for at least 850 more units of transitional and recovery housing in the Roanoke Valley. Stakeholders suggested that TAP can provide wraparound supports for these types of housing, including childcare, workforce and job training, and case management for structured housing environments. TAP can also leverage its large network of partners to get more voices to the table to advocate for the creation and repurposing of more supportive and low-barrier housing as the foundation of self-sufficiency.

#### *Market Challenges*

Typically, funding is the most limiting factor in determining how many Energy Conservation and Housing Rehabilitation (ECHR) projects are completed annually. During COVID-19, the number of projects slowed due to risks of contracting and spreading the virus during home visits. ECHR staff also report recent challenges include insufficient funding for the limited home repair program for areas outside of Roanoke City (\$20,000 per year for the remaining service area), as well as an end to the funding in 2022 for the indoor plumbing and rehabilitation (IPR) program. In addition, due to market conditions including the high cost of materials and labor shortages, some project bids with contractors exceeded DHCD's maximum limits to utilize the remainder of the IPR funding. For the weatherization program, lack of labor rather than lack of funding has been the biggest challenge. For a program reliant on grant funding that fluctuates over time, it is difficult to predictably expand staffing or increase wages to attract more skilled workers.

#### *Workforce and Funding Considerations*

Employment in a housing-related occupation may be an opportunity for some TAP clients. For example, an entry-level weatherization tech with ECHR can earn a living wage and receives benefits including a 401k with employer match and medical and vision healthcare coverage. Prospective employees do not need a lot of experience but must be dependable and able to tolerate extreme weather conditions and physical labor. ECHR will provide on-the-job training and compensation even on poor weather days in contrast to some private sector industry employers. Connecting with refugee and immigrant populations may help to alleviate some of the labor shortage challenges and provide employment opportunities for these vulnerable groups.

A promising trend has been regional utilities coming on board to include multi-family energy conservation projects for low-income units, including heat pumps, appliances, light bulbs, low-flow water fixtures, etc. Through federal infrastructure bills, stakeholders also expect a large influx of funds for projects like this, where more staff will be needed to respond.

## Health/Social Behavioral Development

### Highlights

- **Health Crisis-to-Thriving.** Only 8% of those answering indicated that they have an immediate health need and only 17% indicated their health situation was in the crisis range. Approximately 68% indicated a stable level of health concerns are being covered by federal or state health insurance programs.
- **Food Crisis-to-Thriving.** 42% indicated their food security was in the crisis range. Child food insecurity, low quality food access, and obesity rates are higher than state rates in several TAP localities.
- **Social Support Crisis-to-Thriving.** 23% of those answering indicated that they do not have any family or friends to rely on for support and 56% indicated their supportive social network was in the crisis range. Lack of social supports can worsen mental health and substance use disorders.
- **Top Three Issues.** The TAP stakeholder survey indicated that the top issues in this domain are the increase of mental health problems, especially among young people (54%), substance use in the community causing crime and violence (43%), overdoses (36%) and family disruptions (34%), and a general increase in gun/violence in the community (42%).
- **Accessibility and Specialized Care.** Waiting lists for a limited number of providers of affordable care for dental and primary medical care, as well as professional mental health and SUD treatment, can exacerbate health conditions.
- **Health Insurance.** While most of TAP's localities have higher insurance coverage than the state rate, most of those localities have higher rates of Medicare or publicly insured individuals. Medicaid enrollment by clients served increased from 2020 to 2021 throughout TAP's service area.
- **COVID-19.** Most of TAP's localities experienced higher rates of COVID-19 and lower rates of vaccination compared to the state rate.
- **Mental Health Services.** Certain localities are especially under-resourced in terms of mental health providers, including Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, and Rockbridge, which all rank in the fourth (worst) quartile in the state.
- **Environmental Justice.** Environmental justice concerns are concentrated in the more densely populated areas within TAP's service area.

### Crisis-to-Thrive

The crisis-to-thrive instrument covers several domains relevant to health/social development including health, safety, food security, substance use, and supportive social networks.

Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), only 8% of respondents indicated that they have an immediate health need and only 17% indicated their health situation was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 30). Approximately 68% indicated a stable level of health concerns being covered by federal or state health insurance programs.

**Table 30. Health Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count  | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 67     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | Have immediate unmet health needs and/or no insurance health coverage for all family members. No means to fill prescription. | 37     | 8%                  | 8%                    |
| 2              | No medical insurance coverage but no current health needs.   | 48     | 10%                 | 17%                   |
| 3              | All are covered by federal or state insurance programs.  | 336    | 68%                 | 86%                   |
| 4              | Covered by some form of private health insurance with some budget strains.   | 40     | 8%                  | 94%                   |
| 5              | Covered by private insurance with no budget strains.   | 31     | 6%                  | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 492    | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 67/559 | 12%                 |                       |

Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), only 6% of respondents indicated that their home was not safe and only 13% indicated their safety was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 31). Approximately 57% indicated the highest level of thriving where the home environment was both safe and stable. However, some clients may be uncomfortable disclosing dangerous home situations on an initial screening, so numbers could be under-reported.

**Table 31. Safety Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text   | Count  | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|---|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer   | 81     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | Home or residence is not safe; immediate level of harm is extremely high; possible child protective services involvement. | 28     | 6%                  | 6%                    |
| 2              | Safety is threatened/temporary protection is available; level of harm is high.  | 32     | 7%                  | 13%                   |
| 3              | Current level of safety is minimally adequate; ongoing safety planning is essential.                                      | 43     | 9%                  | 22%                   |
| 4              | Environment is safe, however, future of such is uncertain; safety planning is important.                                  | 103    | 22%                 | 43%                   |
| 5              | Environment is safe and stable.   | 272    | 57%                 | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |   | 478    | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |   | 81/559 | 14%                 |                       |

Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), only 13% of respondents indicated that they had no food or means to prepare it, yet 42% indicated their food security was in the

crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 32). Only approximately 7% indicated the highest level of thriving where they can choose to purchase any food the household desires.

**Table 32. Food Security Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count   | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 101     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | No food or means to prepare it; relies to a significant degree on other sources of free or low-cost food | 61      | 13%                 | 13%                   |
| 2              | Without food stamps or other food subsidies, would often not have enough food to eat.                    | 130     | 28%                 | 42%                   |
| 3              | Household is on food stamps and can meet basic food needs but requires occasional food assistance.       | 147     | 32%                 | 74%                   |
| 4              | Can meet basic food needs without assistance.  | 90      | 20%                 | 93%                   |
| 5              | Can choose to purchase any food the household desires.   | 30      | 7%                  | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 458     | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 101/559 | 18%                 |                       |

Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), only 8% of respondents indicated that one or more family members had a serious issue with substances and only 14% indicated their safety was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 33). Approximately 75% indicated the highest level of thriving where substances are used appropriately, minimally, or not at all. However, some clients may be uncomfortable disclosing substance use issues on an initial screening, so numbers could be under-reported.

**Table 33. Substance Use Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count   | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 266     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | One or more family members have a Severe abuse of alcohol and/or drugs; chemical dependency or alcoholism.                         | 24      | 8%                  | 8%                    |
| 2              | Significant abuse of substances, resulting in chronic family/work difficulties.  | 17      | 6%                  | 14%                   |
| 3              | Occasional abuse of substances; usage of chemicals has a tendency to lead to an abuse pattern, resulting in negative consequences. | 18      | 6%                  | 20%                   |
| 4              | Occasional misuse of alcohol and/or prescription drugs, generally uses in an appropriate manner.                                   | 13      | 4%                  | 25%                   |
| 5              | Uses alcohol and prescription drugs in an appropriate manner (minimal to no usage).  | 221     | 75%                 | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 293     | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 266/559 | 48%                 |                       |

Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake (n=559), 23% of respondents indicated that they do not have any family or friends to rely on for support and 56% indicated their supportive social network was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2) (Table 34). Only 6% reported the highest level of thriving where they have a healthy/expanding support network, a household that is stable, and communication is consistently open. Given the importance of supportive social networks for self-sufficiency and general well-being, this finding is particularly alarming.

**Table 34. Supportive Social Networks Crisis Level of TAP Clients at Intake**

| Crisis Level   | Answer Text  | Count   | Percent of Answered | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------|--|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 0              | No Answer  | 102     | --                  | --                    |
| 1              | Do not have any family or friends to rely on for support.  | 104     | 23%                 | 23%                   |
| 2              | Family/friends may be supportive, but lack ability or resources to help; family members do not relate well with one another. | 150     | 33%                 | 56%                   |
| 3              | Some support from family/friends.  | 122     | 27%                 | 82%                   |
| 4              | Strong support from family or friends; household members support each other's efforts.                                       | 52      | 11%                 | 94%                   |
| 5              | Has healthy/expanding support network; household is stable and communication is consistently open.                           | 29      | 6%                  | 100%                  |
| Total Answered |  | 457     | 100%                |                       |
| Not Answered   |  | 102/559 | 18%                 |                       |

Survey Results

Table 35 shows the survey responses to the question, “If health, wellbeing or safety is an issue for you or your community, why?” including a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 rankings of responses. For those response options newly added in 2022 (“New”), the change in rank is not available. The responses indicate that the top issue regarding mental health problems is that they are increasing, especially among young people (54%), in addition to substance use in the community causing crime and violence (43%), overdoses (36%) and family disruptions (34%), and a general increase in gun/violence in the community (42%). Issues that increased in rank since 2019 include lack of access to doctors and dentists near respondents, the expense of doctor/dentist visits, convenient access to food resources, lack of transportation to access food resources, and general lack of availability of food resources. Issues that decreased in rank since 2019 include lack of time to prepare meals (a very big drop), lack of education about nutrition, and SNAP eligibility concerns.

| <b>If health, wellbeing or safety is an issue for you or your community, why?</b>  | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>2019 Rank</b> | <b>2023 Rank*</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people   | 199          | 53.8%          | New              | 1 (*)             |               |
| Substance use in the community - crime and violence  | 158          | 42.7%          | New              | 2 (*)             |               |
| Gun/violence in the community  | 156          | 42.2%          | New              | 3 (*)             |               |
| Going to doctor/dentist is too expensive   | 149          | 40.3%          | 2                | 4 (1)             | ↑             |
| Substance use in the community - overdoses   | 133          | 35.9%          | New              | 5 (*)             |               |
| Substance use in the community - family disruptions  | 124          | 33.5%          | New              | 6 (*)             |               |
| Lack of health/dental insurance  | 122          | 33.0%          | New              | 7 (*)             |               |
| Unable to afford medications   | 107          | 28.9%          | New              | 8 (*)             |               |
| Lack of transportation to get to grocery store, food pantry or other food resources  | 99           | 26.8%          | 3                | 9 (2)             | ↑             |
| Lack of education in nutrition: how to prepare meals, proper eating habits, money management for healthy diet, how to read labels  | 89           | 24.1%          | 1                | 10 (3)            | ↓↓↓           |
| Food resources are not convenient (food pantries, meal programs)   | 71           | 19.2%          | 6                | 11 (4)            | ↑↑            |
| Not eligible, or don't know if eligible for SNAP   | 63           | 17.0%          | 4                | 12 (5)            | ↓             |
| High rates of smoking  | 63           | 17.0%          | New              | 13 (*)            |               |
| High injury deaths, like suicide, homicide, or motor vehicle deaths  | 63           | 17.0%          | New              | 14 (*)            |               |
| Food resources are not available (i.e., senior citizen meals, Meals on Wheels, garden plots, food pantries, etc.)  | 51           | 13.8%          | 7                | 15 (6)            | ↑             |
| No doctor or dentist near me   | 36           | 9.7%           | 10               | 16 (7)            | ↑↑↑           |
| SNAP allotments have run out   | 33           | 8.9%           | 8                | 17 (8)            | --            |
| Hours that the grocery store, food pantry are open are inconvenient  | 32           | 8.6%           | 9                | 18 (9)            | --            |
| Other  | 18           | 4.9%           | New              | 19 (*)            |               |
| Lack of kitchen appliances (i.e., stove top, oven, refrigerator)   | 14           | 3.8%           | 11               | 20 (10)           | ↑             |
| Don't have time to prepare meals   | 0            | 0.0%           | 5                | 21 (11)           | ↓↓↓↓↓↓↓       |
| * The number in the parentheses in the 2022 Rank column is the rank excluding new survey options. The difference between that rank versus the 2019 rank is the basis for the arrows displayed in the final column. |              |                |                  |                   |               |

**Open survey comments regarding health, wellbeing or safety services that are lacking generally covered the following areas.**

*Awareness, Affordability and Access*

Many commenters noted the need for more services addressing the affordability of health, mental health, and dental services, including assistance with medications, women’s health products, and wellness classes. Other obstacles cited by respondents that limit access to health services were transportation, lack of acceptance of Medicaid, limited access to specialists, few providers in rural areas, and long wait times. For example, one commenter states that “many dentist and doctor offices in this area do not accept a lot of types of insurance, and if [they do], they are not accepting new patients, or they have a long wait list, where the problem gets worse for the patient while waiting.” Even when services are available, many people may not be aware of them.

*Limited Mental Health, Dental, and Substance Use Treatment Options*

Commenters identified mental health, dental and substance use disorder services as especially lacking in the community. For mental health services, one commenter observed a lack of “Information about mental health, explanations concerning mental health and how to receive help without feeling ashamed, due to being informed correctly.” Relating to dental services, another commenter stated that “Medicaid has expanded dental services but it is impossible to find a place with openings that accept it. There is absolutely nobody who does oral surgery for all Medicaid clients.” One resident stated that the lack of interest in treatment among people who need it leads to other community problems: “Gun violence is out of control. Young men are on drugs or dealing drugs and the gunfire has become second nature to them. Addicts will break into your home and steal whatever they can get in order to get a high. There are some services (maybe not enough) for drug addiction but it appears that there is no desire to get off of the drugs.”

*Public Safety*

There was widespread concern among commenters about increased violence in the community and a lack of responsiveness to known issues. Some see policing as ineffective while others think law enforcement officers are asked to do too much. Dangerous community conditions affect the workplaces of front-line human service workers because “in Roanoke City, the gun violence and the gang violence, which encompasses drugs, is exponentially getting worse, putting staff workers who work in the field in Roanoke City in even higher danger.... It goes back to the fact that staff workers are not compensated anywhere close [to what they deserve] for the situations and work that they do where their safety is jeopardized.”

*Interviews and Supporting Secondary Data*

*Health and Wellness Among Youth*

This Valley Works has performed conflict mediation for its youth clients, and increasingly enrolls high-risk, hard-to-serve youth. Staff report that there are few organizations willing to work with this population. Regarding physical health issues, stakeholders report that overreliance on electronics and other sedentary activities to engage children in extracurricular activities, paired with unhealthy eating, has led to a lack of physical activity and development of health problems among children, such as obesity. A national study of a diverse group of adolescents primarily aged 12 to 13 found that average screen time during the pandemic, excluding school-related work, was nearly 8 hours per day, spent on multiple-player gaming, single-player gaming, texting, social media, video chatting, browsing the



internet, and watching or streaming movies, videos, or television shows (Nagata et al., 2022). Average daily screen time was 1.5 hours longer for children in households with an annual income less than \$75,000, and children with fewer coping behaviors and more perceived stress had longer daily screen times.

Parts of Roanoke City in particular are above state and federal childhood obesity rates. A lack of quality childcare and virtual schooling in the recent past has exacerbated this trend. Child food insecurity, manifesting as limited access to healthy foods and/or adequate nutrition, is above the state average in a majority of TAP’s localities, including Alleghany, Bath, Craig, Rockbridge, Buena Vista, Covington, and Roanoke City (Table 36). Roanoke City ranks particularly poorly, in the fourth quartile of all localities in the state.

**Table 36. Child Food Insecurity (Map the Meal Gap, 2021)**

| Locality     | Number  | Percent | Rank Within State (out of 133 localities) |
|--------------|---------|---------|---|
| Alleghany    | 450     | 15.8%   | 83  |
| Bath         | 100     | 15.2%   | 77  |
| Botetourt    | 320     | 5.0%    | 12  |
| Craig        | 110     | 12.2%   | 54  |
| Roanoke Co.  | 1,320   | 7.0%    | 19  |
| Rockbridge   | 550     | 13.5%   | 65  |
| Buena Vista  | 170     | 12.8%   | 57  |
| Covington    | 220     | 17.4%   | 93  |
| Lexington    | 50      | 8.5%    | 26  |
| Roanoke City | 4,770   | 21.7%   | 107                                       |
| Salem        | 440     | 9.4%    | 33  |
| Virginia     | 182,170 | 9.7%    | NA  |



Percentages in red are higher than the state rate. Rankings in red are in the fourth quartile (the worst) for the state.

According to Table 37, teen births exceed the state rate in several localities for females as young as 15 years old. Both rural and urban localities within TAP’s service area are experiencing this trend.

**Table 37. Teen Birth Rate by Locality (Virginia Department of Health, Division of Health Statistics, 2020)**

| Total number of live births to females per 1,000 females. | Age group |      |         |
|---|-----------|------|---------|
|   | Locality  | < 15 | 15 – 17 |
| Alleghany   | 0.0       | 0.0  | 34.7    |
| Bath  | 0.0       | 0.0  | 96.8    |
| Botetourt   | 0.0       | 3.1  | 36.8    |

**Table 37. Teen Birth Rate by Locality** (Virginia Department of Health, Division of Health Statistics, 2020)

| Total number of live births to females per 1,000 females. | Age group |      |         |
|---|-----------|------|---------|
|   | Locality  | < 15 | 15 – 17 |
| Craig   | 0.0       | 0.0  | 55.6    |
| Roanoke Co.   | 0.0       | 4.0  | 11.9    |
| Rockbridge  | 0.0       | 5.5  | 14.3    |
| Buena Vista   | 0.0       | 7.4  | 16.5    |
| Covington   | 0.0       | 9.4  | 66.7    |
| Lexington   | 0.0       | 14.5 | 6.5     |
| Roanoke City  | 0.3       | 14.5 | 108.4   |
| Salem   | 0.0       | 4.2  | 4.4     |
| Virginia  | 0.1       | 5.1  | 24.1    |



Rates in red are higher than the state rate for that age group. Counts smaller than 10 are suppressed, but their rates are still reported.

A related metric, infant mortality, indicates that five of the localities in TAP’s service area are in the fourth quartile for the state and have some of the highest rates of infant mortality (Bath, Craig, Roanoke County and City, and Buena Vista) (Table 38).

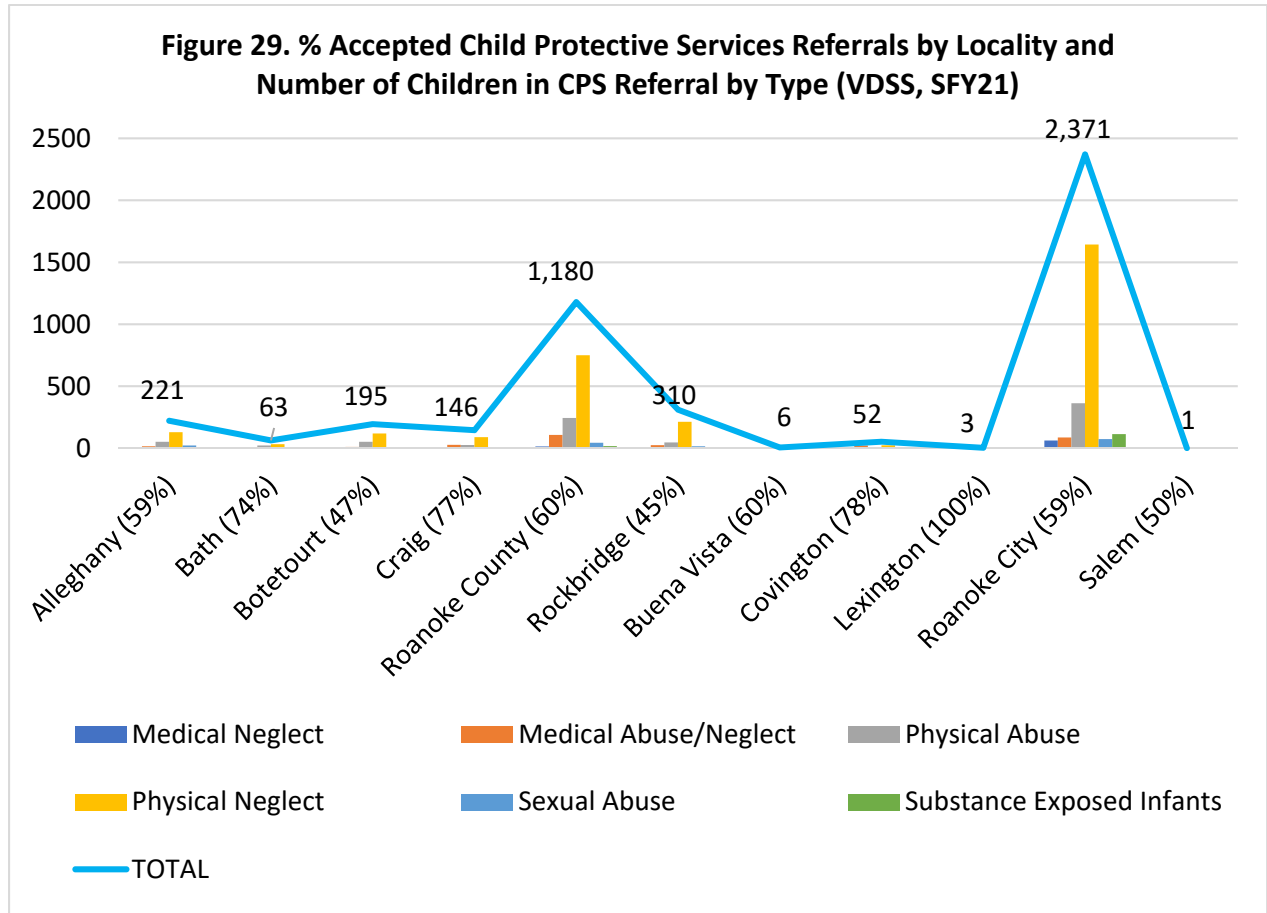
**Table 38. Infant Mortality Rate by Locality** (Virginia Department of Health, Division of Health Statistics, 2020)

| Locality     | Rate per 1,000 births | Rank within State (out of 133 localities) |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| Alleghany    | 0                     | 1   |
| Bath         | 23.8                  | 130                                       |
| Botetourt    | 4.3                   | 62  |
| Craig        | 23.3                  | 129                                       |
| Roanoke Co.  | 12.6                  | 115                                       |
| Rockbridge   | 0                     | 1   |
| Buena Vista  | 22.2                  | 128                                       |
| Covington    | 0                     | 1   |
| Lexington    | 0                     | 1   |
| Roanoke City | 10.1                  | 105                                       |
| Salem        | 3.7                   | 53  |
| Virginia     | 5.8                   | NA  |



Rates in red are higher than the state rate. Counts smaller than 10 are suppressed, but their rates are still reported. Rankings in red are in the fourth quartile (the worst) for the state.

Figure 29 shows the percentage of child protective services (CPS) referrals accepted among those received within each locality in SFY21. It also shows the number of children involved in each type of referral. For example, Alleghany County accepted 59% of the referrals received, totaling 221 children involved primarily in cases of physical abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse.



Roanoke County and City had the highest CPS referral totals within TAP’s service area, with physical neglect occurring at the highest frequency, followed by physical abuse and medical abuse/neglect.

*Healthcare Coverage*

Adequate healthcare coverage can increase household stability through increased use of preventative medical care and insurance in the event of a medical emergency. Table 39 indicates that Bath, Buena Vista, and Roanoke City have a higher-than-state rate of residents without health insurance. Certain localities, such as Alleghany, Bath, Craig, Rockbridge, Buena Vista, Covington, and Roanoke City also have a higher percentage of people insured through Medicare and public insurance, rather than private insurance, compared to the state rate.

**Table 39. % Health Insurance Coverage by Type** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

| Locality     | With Health Insurance | Without Health Insurance | Medicare Insured | Private Insurance | Public Insurance |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Alleghany    | 94.48                 | 5.52                     | 29.84            | 65.3              | 45.38            |
| Bath         | 90.31                 | 9.69                     | 33.97            | 54.4              | 52.21            |
| Botetourt    | 94.99                 | 5.01                     | 25.25            | 79.43             | 32.16            |
| Craig        | 94.84                 | 5.16                     | 26.86            | 73.18             | 41.35            |
| Roanoke Co.  | 94.93                 | 5.07                     | 23.47            | 78.83             | 31.97            |
| Rockbridge   | 93                    | 7                        | 27.59            | 70.91             | 41.32            |
| Buena Vista  | 90.65                 | 9.35                     | 20.75            | 66.74             | 36.55            |
| Covington    | 92.79                 | 7.21                     | 29.54            | 64.84             | 43.47            |
| Lexington    | 95.23                 | 4.77                     | 14.84            | 87.03             | 21.52            |
| Roanoke City | 88.86                 | 11.14                    | 19.5             | 59.75             | 40.76            |
| Salem        | 93.96                 | 6.04                     | 19.03            | 79.23             | 28.29            |
| Virginia     | 91.77                 | 8.23                     | 17.08            | 75.82             | 29.1             |



Percentages highlighted in red are higher than the state rate.

Data from the Virginia Department of Social Services indicates that Medicaid enrollment by clients served increased from 2020 to 2021 throughout TAP's service area (Table 40).

**Table 40. Medicaid Enrollment** (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2021)

| Locality                         | Benefit Clients Served |        | Households (Cases) Served |        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------|
|                                  | 2020                   | 2021   | 2020                      | 2021   |
| Alleghany/Covington              | 7,033                  | 7,313  | 4,229                     | 4,424  |
| Bath                             | 1,092                  | 1,197  | 621                       | 685    |
| Botetourt                        | 5,090                  | 5,399  | 3,330                     | 3,525  |
| Craig                            | 1,262                  | 1,282  | 860                       | 870    |
| Roanoke Co./Salem                | 20,756                 | 22,029 | 13,482                    | 14,286 |
| Rockbridge/Buena Vista/Lexington | 8,983                  | 9,316  | 5,307                     | 5,524  |
| Roanoke City                     | 41,002                 | 42,482 | 25,707                    | 26,948 |

### COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, Head Start and other service provider partners, such as the dentists who conduct the program's dental screenings, are experiencing staff shortages and a subsequent loss of capacity to provide programming. Prospective Head Start teachers were also more hesitant to return to in-person workplace settings and some are not vaccinated. Cases of COVID-19 have led to classroom- or total facility-shutdowns, which have created disruptions for all involved, including teachers, parents, and the children enrolled. Some Head Start partner facilities have not complied with vaccine and mask mandates, requiring the program to identify new partners. Head Start management has maintained services for families throughout the pandemic, which has placed a mental, emotional, and physical toll

on staff without reprieve. Staff self-care and mental health have suffered. Most of TAP’s localities have experienced more COVID-19 cases compared to the state (Table 41) since the onset of the pandemic.

**Table 41. COVID-19 Cumulative Cases Since the Pandemic Started** (Mayo Clinic, October 2022)

| Locality      | Total Cases | Rate per 100,000 People |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Alleghany     | 4,080       | 26,691                  |
| Bath          | 1,045       | 23,788                  |
| Botetourt     | 9,238       | 27,807                  |
| Craig         | 1,417       | 27,714                  |
| Roanoke Co.   | 25,991      | 27,773                  |
| Rockbridge    | 4,703       | 20,894                  |
| Buena Vista   | 2,147       | 33,552                  |
| Covington     | 1,757       | 31,476                  |
| Lexington     | 2,658       | 37,384                  |
| Roanoke City  | 26,155      | 26,255                  |
| Salem         | 6,931       | 27,160                  |
| Virginia      | 2,108,317   | 25,058                  |
| United States | 95,261,409  | 29,022                  |



Rates in red are higher than the state rate.

Vaccination rates by locality of residence in TAP’s service area have lagged behind the state rate for all people as well as the adult population (Table 42). This could partially explain the higher-than-state rates of cases of COVID-19.

**Table 42. People Vaccinated by Locality of Residence and Vaccination Status - Rate per 100,000 Population** (Virginia Department of Health, October 2022)

| Locality     | Vaccine Doses Administered | Percent of the Population with At Least One Dose | Percent of the Population Fully Vaccinated | Percent of the Adult Population with At Least One Dose | Percent of the Adult Population Fully Vaccinated |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Alleghany    | 21,912                     | 62%  | 54%  | 71%  | 63%  |
| Bath         | 6,210                      | 60%  | 55%  | 68%  | 62%  |
| Botetourt    | 55,943                     | 67%  | 62%  | 75%  | 70%  |
| Craig        | 6,581                      | 51%  | 47%  | 58%  | 54%  |
| Roanoke Co.  | 178,198                    | 74%  | 69%  | 83%  | 76%  |
| Rockbridge   | 37,857                     | 64%  | 60%  | 71%  | 66%  |
| Buena Vista  | 9,660                      | 63%  | 57%  | 73%  | 67%  |
| Covington    | 7,630                      | 59%  | 50%  | 70%  | 61%  |
| Lexington    | 11,891                     | 63%  | 56%  | 64%  | 57%  |
| Roanoke City | 158,463                    | 66%  | 60%  | 77%  | 69%  |
| Salem        | 44,904                     | 71%  | 67%  | 78%  | 74%  |
| Virginia     | 17,203,741                 | 83%  | 73%  | 93%  | n/a  |



Percentages in red are lower than the state rate.

*Mental Health*

According to Table 43, every locality within TAP’s service area is higher than the state average for the number of mentally unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days, and all are in the fourth (worst) quartile for the percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of mental distress. Certain localities are also under-resourced in terms of mental health providers, including Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, and Rockbridge, which all rank in the fourth quartile in the state. On the other hand, Roanoke County and City, Covington, Lexington, and Salem are in the first quartile regarding patient-to-mental-health-provider ratios.

**Table 43. Mental Health Rates (County Health Rankings, 2022)**

| Location     | Frequency and % of Mental Distress* |          |                                 | Mental Health Providers**    |                             |                              |          |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
|              | + Mentally Unhealthy Days per month | Quartile | ++ > 14 Days of Mental Distress | # of Mental Health Providers | Mental Health Provider Rate | Mental Health Provider Ratio | Quartile |
| Alleghany    | 5.2                                 | 4        | 17%                             | 5                            | 34                          | 2940:1                       | 4        |
| Bath         | 5.3                                 | 4        | 18%                             | 1                            | 24                          | 4119:1                       | 4        |
| Botetourt    | 4.5                                 | 2        | 15%                             | 15                           | 45                          | 2242:1                       | 4        |
| Craig        | 4.7                                 | 2        | 15%                             | ?                            | ?                           | ?                            | ?        |
| Roanoke Co.  | 4.4                                 | 1        | 14%                             | 260                          | 275                         | 363:1                        | 1        |
| Rockbridge   | 4.9                                 | 3        | 16%                             | 1                            | 4                           | 22757:1                      | 4        |
| Buena Vista  | 5.7                                 | 4        | 19%                             | 5                            | 78                          | 1280:1                       | 3        |
| Covington    | 5.1                                 | 4        | 17%                             | 19                           | 337                         | 297:1                        | 1        |
| Lexington    | 4.9                                 | 3        | 16%                             | 50                           | 687                         | 146:1                        | 1        |
| Roanoke City | 4.9                                 | 3        | 16%                             | 343                          | 346                         | 289:1                        | 1        |
| Salem        | 4.6                                 | 2        | 15%                             | 213                          | 841                         | 119:1                        | 1        |
| Virginia     | 4.2                                 | NA       | 13%                             |                              | NA                          | NA                           |          |

+ Average Number of Mentally Unhealthy Days reported in past 30 days;  
 ++% of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental distress;  
 \* Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2019)  
 \*\*Source: CMS, National Provider Identification (2021)



Values in red are higher than the state rate. Quartiles in red are in the fourth (worst) quartile in the state, whereas quartiles in green are in the first (best) quartile in the state.

*Physical Activity and Wellness*

Table 44 indicates that Botetourt, Roanoke County, Rockbridge, and Salem have a lower percentage than the state rate in terms of the percentage of the population with adequate access to locations for physical activity. Despite being in the first (best) quartile within the state for access to exercise opportunities, localities such as Bath and Buena Vista are in the fourth (worst) quartile for physical inactivity, which is reflected by the percentage of adults aged 18 years and over reporting no leisure-time physical activity (age-adjusted). Adult obesity rates, reflecting the percentage of the adult

population (age 18 and older) that reports a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (age-adjusted), are higher than the state rate in Alleghany, Bath, Rockbridge, Buena Vista, Covington, Lexington, Roanoke City, and Salem.

**Table 44. Access to Exercise Opportunities (County Health Rankings, 2022)**

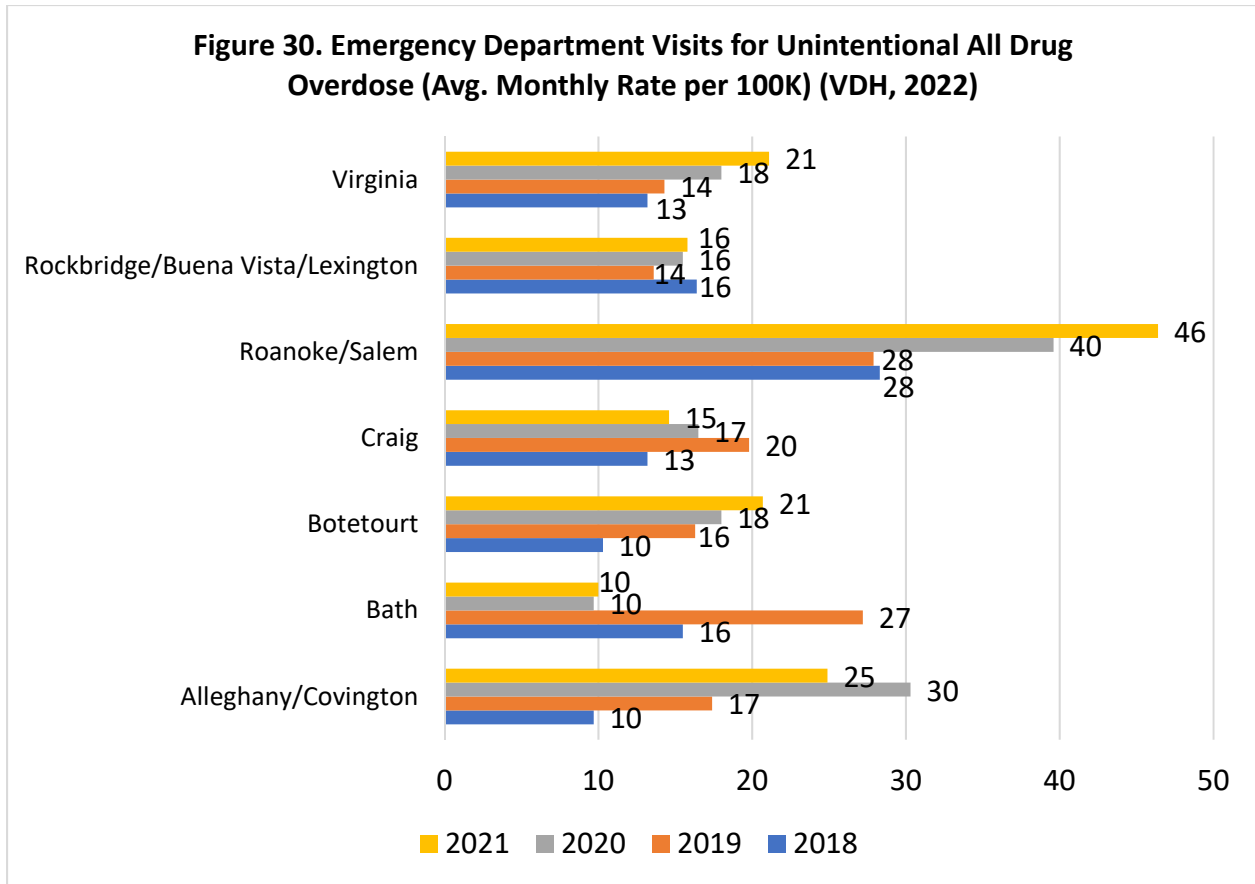
| Locality     | Access to Exercise Opportunities | Quartile | Physical Inactivity | Quartile | Adult Obesity | Quartile |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------------|----------|
| Alleghany    | 100%                             | 1        | 31%                 | 3        | 36%           | 3        |
| Bath         | 100%                             | 1        | 33%                 | 4        | 35%           | 3        |
| Botetourt    | 65%                              | 2        | 26%                 | 1        | 31%           | 1        |
| Craig        | 95%                              | 1        | 26%                 | 1        | 31%           | 1        |
| Roanoke Co.  | 71%                              | 2        | 26%                 | 1        | 29%           | 1        |
| Rockbridge   | 49%                              | 3        | 28%                 | 2        | 33%           | 1        |
| Buena Vista  | 89%                              | 1        | 35%                 | 4        | 37%           | 3        |
| Covington    | 100%                             | 1        | 31%                 | 3        | 35%           | 2        |
| Lexington    | 100%                             | 1        | 29%                 | 2        | 35%           | 3        |
| Roanoke City | 91%                              | 1        | 32%                 | 3        | 36%           | 3        |
| Salem        | 72%                              | 2        | 26%                 | 2        | 33%           | 1        |
| Virginia     | 78%                              | NA       | 25%                 | NA       | 32%           | NA       |



Values in red are worse than the state rate. Quartiles in red are in the fourth (worst) quartile in the state, whereas quartiles in green are in the first (best) quartile in the state.

*Substance Use Disorder (SUD)*

Specific localities within TAP’s service area have seen a dramatic increase in substance-related incidents in the past few years. For emergency department visits for unintentional, all-drug overdose, Roanoke City, Salem, and Roanoke County have experienced more than double the state rate from 2018 to 2021 (Fig. 30).



According to the nationwide Recovery Ecosystem Index (2022), Salem and Covington rank in the best cohort nationally and within TAP’s service area for the provision of SUD treatment, continuum of SUD support, and infrastructure and social supports for people recovering from SUD. Strong recovery ecosystems include a full suite of treatment services, recovery residences, harm reduction organizations, employment opportunities, and prevention organizations. Bath, Craig, and Buena Vista rank among the localities with the fewest resources contributing to a recovery ecosystem (Table 45).

**Table 45. Recovery Ecosystem Index Scores for TAP’s Service Area (Recovery Ecosystem Index Map, 2022)**

| Locality    | Overall Score | SUD Treatment | Continuum of SUD Support | Infrastructure and Social Supports |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Alleghany   | 3             | 3             | 4                        | 3                                  |
| Bath        | 4             | 4             | 4                        | 3                                  |
| Botetourt   | 3             | 4             | 4                        | 1                                  |
| Craig       | 4             | 4             | 4                        | 3                                  |
| Roanoke Co. | 2             | 3             | 3                        | 2                                  |
| Rockbridge  | 3             | 4             | 4                        | 2                                  |
| Buena Vista | 5             | 4             | 4                        | 4                                  |
| Covington   | 1             | 3             | 1                        | 1                                  |
| Lexington   | 3             | 3             | 2                        | 4                                  |



**Table 45. Recovery Ecosystem Index Scores for TAP’s Service Area** (Recovery Ecosystem Index Map, 2022)

| Locality     | Overall Score | SUD Treatment | Continuum of SUD Support | Infrastructure and Social Supports |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Roanoke City | 2             | 2             | 1                        | 4                                  |
| Salem        | 1             | 2             | 1                        | 2                                  |



1 = Strongest to 5 = Weakest Recovery Ecosystem

Stakeholders report an increase in substance use disorder (SUD) among a variety of socioeconomic populations, in part due to isolation during the pandemic as well as longer-term factors like regional job loss and overprescribing practices for pain management. The prevalence of fentanyl and other highly potent, synthetic substances within the illicit drug trade has caused an increase in overdose rates as well. Polysubstance use is common and more difficult to treat than an opioid disorder due to lack of medication assisted treatment (MAT) options. For clients who request access to treatment for SUD, waiting lists and lack of immediate assistance can increase their risk of a potentially fatal overdose. Longer-term treatment and recovery systems that bridge medical and social services need to be strengthened in TAP’s service area through initiatives such as the Roanoke Valley Collective Response (RVCR), a multi-stakeholder working group that is now focused on launching a peer network and increasing recovery housing options.

Stakeholders also report that the HOPE Initiative with Bradley Free Clinic, as well as Carilion Clinic, have made efforts to hire bilingual staff to better support the Hispanic community in need of healthcare and other services.

*Safety*

While it is difficult to define trends comparing 2016 and 2020 crime data (Table 46), Botetourt, Roanoke County, and Rockbridge had an increase in reported robberies during that time frame. Alleghany, Rockbridge, Lexington, and Roanoke City had an increase in reported rapes. Roanoke City had an increase in reported murders. Bath, Botetourt, Roanoke County, Covington, Roanoke City, and Salem all had an increase in reported motor vehicle thefts. Only Craig had an increase in reported burglaries and larcenies. Alleghany, Botetourt, Roanoke County, Rockbridge, Buena Vista, and Roanoke City all had increases in reported aggravated assaults.

| Locality     | Robberies |      | Rapes |      | Murders |      | Motor Vehicle Thefts |       | Burglaries & Larcenies |       | Aggravated Assaults |       |
|--------------|-----------|------|-------|------|---------|------|----------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
|              | 2016      | 2020 | 2016  | 2020 | 2016    | 2020 | 2016                 | 2020  | 2016                   | 2020  | 2016                | 2020  |
| Alleghany    | 6.1       | 0    | 24.6  | 74.7 | NA      | 6.7  | 110.7                | 54.3  | 1,520                  | 592   | 62                  | 122   |
| Bath         | NA        | 0    | 21.1  | 0    | NA      | 0    | 42.2                 | 48.9  | 951                    | 367.1 | NA                  | 98    |
| Botetourt    | 9         | 20.9 | 9     | 8.9  | NA      | 2.9  | 51.2                 | 71.8  | 1,014                  | 568.5 | 72.4                | 86.7  |
| Craig        | NA        | 0    | NA    | 0    | NA      | 19.5 | NA                   | 39    | 423.8                  | 722.6 | NA                  | 19.5  |
| Roanoke Co.  | 16.2      | 27.5 | 25.9  | 23.3 | 7.5     | 0    | 41.1                 | 98.6  | 1,569                  | 1,299 | 90.9                | 195.1 |
| Rockbridge   | 8.9       | 17.7 | 13.4  | 31   | 4.4     | 0    | 53.7                 | 26.5  | 1,430                  | 943.3 | 26.8                | 172.7 |
| Buena Vista  | NA        | 0    | 30.4  | 0    | NA      | 0    | 15.2                 | 0     | 821                    | 247.7 | 30.4                | 46.4  |
| Covington    | NA        | 0    | NA    | 36.4 | NA      | 18.2 | 17.9                 | 91    | 2,154                  | 1,548 | 323.1               | 109.2 |
| Lexington    | NA        | 13.3 | 27.5  | 40   | NA      | 0    | 13.7                 | 13.3  | 1,322                  | 707.8 | 110.1               | 93.4  |
| Roanoke City | 117       | 90.6 | 36    | 39.2 | 14      | 19.1 | 226                  | 344.2 | 3,980                  | 3,450 | 248                 | 306   |
| Salem        | 23.6      | 15.7 | 19.6  | 3.9  | N/A     | 7.8  | 145.6                | 177.6 | 1,941                  | 1,722 | 51.1                | 27.6  |



Cell values highlighted in green decreased between 2016 and 2020, whereas cell values highlighted in red increased between 2016 and 2020. An increase or decrease cannot be determined if the 2016 data is not available (NA).

Table 47 also indicates that most of the localities within TAP’s service area had a higher-than-state rate for suicide in 2020, and with the exception of Bath, Roanoke County, and Lexington, all localities within TAP’s service area had a higher-than-state rate for all gun-related deaths.

| Locality     | Suicide Deaths | Suicide Rate | ALL Gun-Related Deaths | ALL Gun-Related Deaths Rate |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alleghany    | 3              | 20.4         | 3                      | 20.4                        |
| Bath         | 1              | 24.3         | 0                      | 0                           |
| Botetourt    | 8              | 23.8         | 6                      | 17.8                        |
| Craig        | 3              | 59.1         | 5                      | 98.5                        |
| Roanoke Co.  | 7              | 7.4          | 9                      | 9.5                         |
| Rockbridge   | 7              | 30.8         | 8                      | 35.2                        |
| Buena Vista  | 1              | 15.6         | 1                      | 15.6                        |
| Covington    | 2              | 35.5         | 1                      | 17.7                        |
| Lexington    | 2              | 27.5         | 1                      | 13.7                        |
| Roanoke City | 20             | 20.2         | 23                     | 23.2                        |
| Salem        | 6              | 23.7         | 4                      | 15.8                        |
| Virginia     | 1,147          | 13.4         | 1,180                  | 13.7                        |

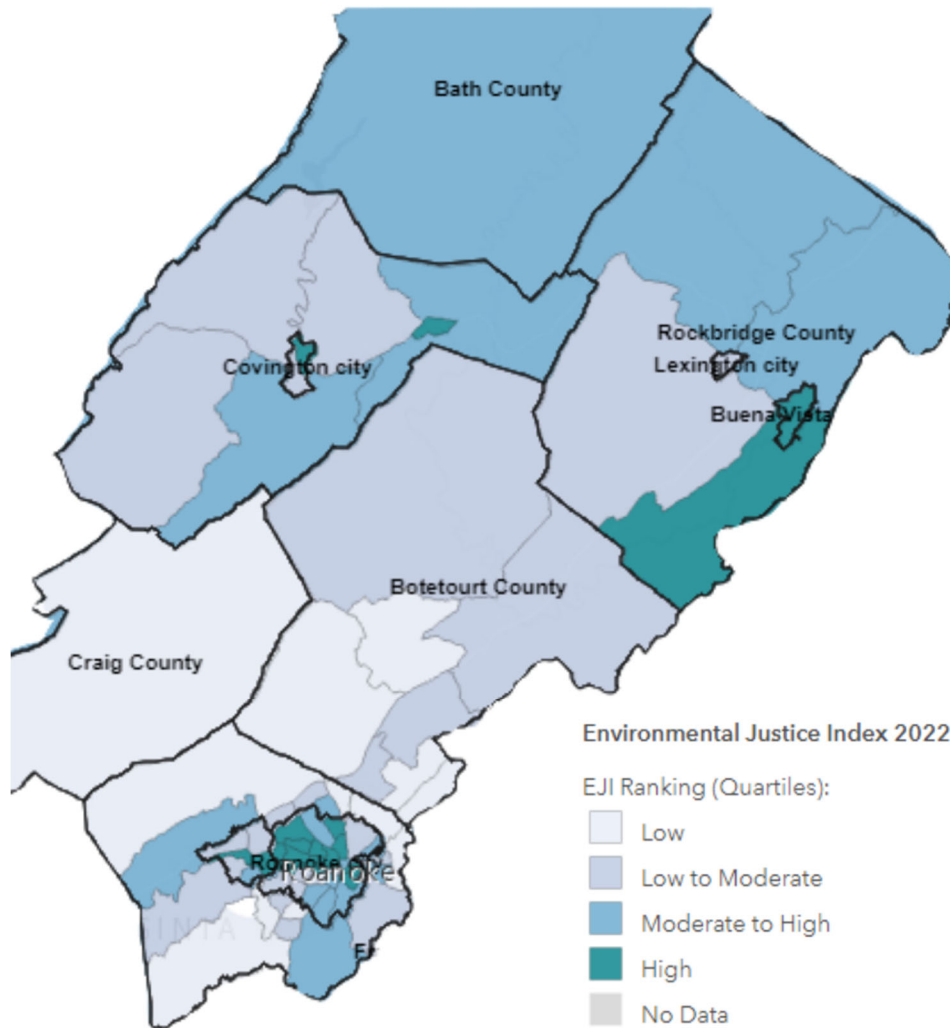


Values in red are higher than the state rate.

*Environmental Justice*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has compiled a composite of metrics to rank localities throughout the United States based on 36 environmental, social, and health factors to determine environmental justice risk. Localities with higher ranks experience more “cumulative impacts of environmental burden and injustice equal to or lower than a tract of interest. For example, an EJ ranking of 0.85 signifies that 85% of tracts in the nation likely experience less severe cumulative impacts on health and well-being than the tract of interest, and that 15% of tracts in the nation likely experience more severe cumulative impacts from environmental burden” (CDC, 2022). Fig. 31 indicates that parts of Roanoke and Salem Cities, Buena Vista and Rockbridge, and Alleghany and Covington rank in the highest (worst) quartile nationally.

Figure 31. Environmental Justice Index (EJI) Rankings for TAP’s Service Area (CDC, 2022)



**EJI Vulnerabilities in Roanoke and Salem Cities** include older housing, high-volume roads, airports in close proximity, minority status, poverty, lack of basic education, unemployment, cost-burdened households, aging populations, lack of health insurance, lack of internet access, and high estimated prevalence of asthma, high blood pressure, diabetes, and poor mental health.

**EJI Vulnerabilities in Buena Vista and Rockbridge** include lack of walkability, lack of basic education, unemployment, lack of health insurance, lack of internet access, aging populations, civilians with a disability, prevalence of mobile homes, and high estimated prevalence of cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and poor mental health.

**EJI Vulnerabilities in Alleghany/Covington** include the presence of EPA risk management plans for high-risk facilities that produce, use, or store significant amounts of certain highly toxic or flammable chemicals; older housing stock, lack of basic education, unemployment, housing tenure, presence of railways, lack of health insurance, lack of internet access, civilians with a disability, aging populations, prevalence of group quarters and mobile homes, and high estimated prevalence of asthma, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and poor mental health.

## Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

### Highlights

- **Top Three Issues.** According to the TAP stakeholder survey, the top three issues regarding civic engagement and community involvement are discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (40%), lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate (37%), and no knowledge of how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups, or similar organizations (33%).
- **Trends.** Survey respondents described a series of trends impacting social networks, including a lack of a sense of social cohesion at the neighborhood or local level, a lack of time and/or trust to engage with formal civic processes, a need for more information about how to engage, and the need to strengthen formal engagement programs to meet people where they are and improve services.
- **Public Leadership.** Some stakeholders perceive that public leaders only show up when something is going wrong, rather than supporting preventative initiatives. Reconciliation, community intervention, and violence prevention programs could help to repair relationships between community members and law enforcement and may encourage the next generation to fill vacancies on the force.

### Crisis-to-Thrive

As noted above (see Table 34), analysis of the crisis-to-thrive assessment indicates TAP clients have relatively weak social networks, which could inhibit civic engagement and community involvement. It was the third-highest level of crisis out of the 12 subscales, behind only employment and financial security.

### Survey

Table 48 shows the survey responses to the question, “If community engagement is an issue for you or your community, why?” including a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 rankings of responses. For those response options newly added in 2022 (“New”), the change in rank is not available. The responses indicate that the top three issues are discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (40%), lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate (37%), and no knowledge of how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups, or similar organizations (33%). The only one issue that increased in rank since 2019 was no knowledge of how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups, or similar organizations. The only issue that decreased in rank since 2019 was that people don’t understand local government processes for providing input - when and how meetings are advertised, how to be prepared for a meeting, how to run for office, etc.

| <b>If community engagement is an issue for you or your community, why? (select all that apply)</b> | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>2019 Rank</b> | <b>2022 Rank*</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities         | 144          | 38.9%          | New              | 1 (*)             |               |
| Lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate   | 138          | 37.3%          | New              | 2 (*)             |               |

**Table 48. Survey Responses re: Community Engagement in 2022 vs. 2019**

| If community engagement is an issue for you or your community, why? (select all that apply)   | Count | Percent | 2019 Rank | 2022 Rank* | Change |
|---|-------|---------|-----------|------------|--------|
| No knowledge of how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups or similar organizations   | 123   | 33.2%   | 2         | 3 (1)      | ↑      |
| The inter-generational social fabric that used to exist in neighborhoods has deteriorated   | 118   | 31.9%   | New       | 4 (*)      |        |
| Don't understand local government processes for providing input - when and how meetings are advertised, how to be prepared for a meeting, how to run for office, etc. | 112   | 30.3%   | 1         | 5 (2)      | ↓      |
| Lack of knowledge of leadership development opportunities   | 95    | 25.7%   | 3         | 6 (3)      | --     |
| Lack of citizenship classes   | 44    | 11.9%   | 4         | 7 (4)      | --     |
| Other   | 10    | 2.7%    | New       | 8 (*)      |        |

\* The number in the parentheses in the 2022 Rank column is the rank excluding new survey options. The difference between that rank versus the 2019 rank is the basis for the arrows displayed in the final column.

**Open survey comments regarding community engagement that are lacking generally covered the following areas.**

*Apathy and Lack of Social Cohesion*

Some commenters noted that social cohesion has degraded, while apathy has increased, with few people willing to attend public meetings. One commenter observed that “neighbors don’t talk to each other anymore. People are so scared that someone might be a kidnapper or serial killer that we’ve destroyed our neighborhood connections. Also, it’s nearly impossible to make friends as an adult after you have completed school. With everything online, nobody talks to anyone anymore. We have created a generation of lonely introverts who are terrified to talk to each other in public. This makes it very difficult to create healthy community engagement.” Another commenter suggested that “to engage, those in authority positions have to come to the community, not wait for the community to show up for them. People in the community think they are forgotten and that no one cares what happens to them; it would mean everything to them if leaders approached them where they are comfortable to actively listen to them and actively seek their involvement.” A third respondent commented that “there is a breakdown in the family unit and neighbors looking out for one another.”

*Lack of Time and Trust*

Several commenters attributed a lack of community engagement to a lack of time or trust. Potential solutions suggested included bringing more meetings into the community, scheduling meetings in the evening, and greater responsiveness and interest from community leaders. One commenter observed that “it would be nice to see programs that are actually for the community. Community engagement is more than just having good ideas and good intentions. You have to follow through.” Another offered that “politicians are only interested in their own agendas, I personally do not have time to get involved.”

*Access, Awareness and Education*

Some commenters suggested expanding access, awareness and educational opportunities around community engagement including reinvigorating civics education in the public schools, reopening Roanoke City's leadership class, providing conflict resolution classes, producing a community newsletter, making meetings more accessible to those with disabilities, and promotion of how to apply and serve on community boards and commissions.

*Interviews and Supporting Secondary Data*

The [Social Capital Atlas](#) attempts to measure economic and social connectedness of localities across the United States, to estimate potential for upward mobility and the strength of the civic fabric of the community. The measure of social capital (Fig. 49) includes: 1) economic connectedness, which is the degree to which low-income and high-income people are friends with each other, measured by exposure between high- and low-income people and their friending bias across income levels; 2) cohesiveness, which is the degree to which social networks are fragmented into cliques, measured by clustering of common friends and the frequency of shared mutual friends; and 3) civic engagement, which captures rates of volunteering and density of and participation in community organizations.

|              | Economic Connectedness       |                |                | Cohesiveness |               | Civic Engagement   |                                |
|--------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Location     | Rank Based on Current Income | Exposure       | Friending Bias | Clustering   | Support Ratio | Volunteering Rates | Density of Civic Organizations |
| Alleghany    | Low (28th)                   | Low (22nd)     | Average (47th) | High (96th)  | High (94th)   | Average (53rd)     | Low (21st)                     |
| Bath         | Average (52th)               | Low (35th)     | Low (76th)     | High (95th)  | High (75th)   | Low (33rd)         | High (93rd)                    |
| Botetourt    | High (68th)                  | High (75th)    | Low (55th)     | Low (36th)   | Low (11th)    | High (58th)        | High (65th)                    |
| Craig        | High (58th)                  | Average (45th) | Low (84th)     | High (87th)  | High (81st)   | High (57th)        | High (83rd)                    |
| Roanoke Co.  | High (59th)                  | High (68th)    | High (42nd)    | Low(22nd)    | Low(13th)     | Average (52th)     | Low (9th)                      |
| Rockbridge   | Average (45th)               | Low (44th)     | High (6th)     | High (73rd)  | High (72nd)   | Low (21st)         | Low (8th)                      |
| Buena Vista  | Average (45th)               | Low (44th)     | High (6th)     | High (73rd)  | High (72nd)   | Low (21st)         | Low (8th)                      |
| Covington    | Low (28th)                   | Low (23rd)     | Average (47th) | High (96th)  | High (94th)   | Average (53rd)     | Low (21st)                     |
| Lexington    | Average (45th)               | Low (44th)     | High (6th)     | High (74th)  | High (72nd)   | Low (21st)         | Low (8th)                      |
| Roanoke City | Low (20th)                   | Low (25th)     | High (4th)     | Low (25th)   | Low (31st)    | Low (41st)         | High (73rd)                    |
| Salem        | High (59th)                  | High (68th)    | High (43rd)    | Low (22nd)   | Low (13th)    | Average (52th)     | Low (9th)                      |



Percentile ranks are compared to the country as a whole. Table 49 indicates that social capital by locality varies widely, with no clear pattern between economic connectedness, cohesiveness, and civic engagement. Interestingly, Craig County ranks “high” for five of these measures, the most of any locality within TAP’s service area.



### *Agency Fundraising*

One potential silver lining to the pandemic has been TAP's shift away from an events-based fundraising model to conducting more annual fundraising campaigns. This shift has allowed TAP to reduce costly resource- and staff-intensive event planning in favor of more targeted fundraising, which has been as successful without such a large upfront investment.

### *Perceived Impacts*

Some stakeholders are concerned that public officials and some community leaders show up in response to acute events to make an appearance, and then are not seen again, rather than engaging regularly with their community. Community members also feel leaders don't really listen to suggestions for proactive programming to prevent an issue from escalating; rather, they reactively put out the fires. This can demotivate community members and organizations who are putting a lot of effort into community programs yet who don't feel supported in the work. There is also a perception among residents living in lower-income areas that public events in their neighborhood are not well-funded or staffed, including clean bathrooms and trash stations, in contrast to public events hosted by local government elsewhere in the region. Some disheartened citizens also feel that "in this democracy, we don't have power. The decision-makers do what they want" and "engagement doesn't matter."

### *Relationship with Law Enforcement*

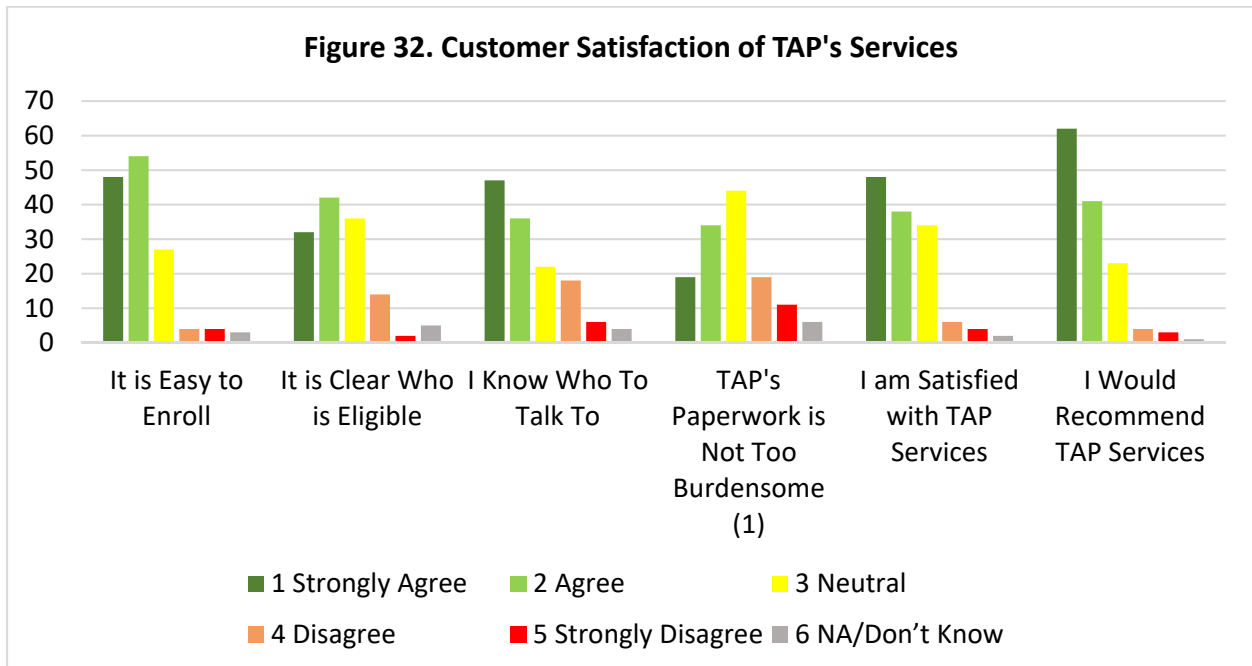
As communities grapple with the trauma from violence against people of color by law enforcement officials, there is a growing need to implement reconciliation and Community Violence Intervention (CVI) programs. Crime analysts within the police department can use data to pinpoint high risk individuals to conduct preventative interventions where possible, as well as work with affected families to learn what support they need. In addition, careers in law enforcement may not pay well enough or offer enough job satisfaction to attract a steady workforce, particularly among younger people and people of color who could help to change the narrative from within the force. Lack of interest in law enforcement careers among young people is a challenge.

## 5) Agency Capacity

As a part of the Community Needs Assessment, we looked at the agency’s needs and capacities to deliver programs. We collected feedback from current and past clients on TAP’s customer service and from employees on the agency’s strengths and weaknesses. We were also informed of agency needs through qualitative interviews with staff and stakeholders.

### Customer Service Feedback

Approximately 140 TAP clients provided customer service feedback through the survey. As seen in Figure 32, feedback was generally positive across all dimensions. Reducing paperwork burden, improving clarity on eligibility requirements for programs, and improving awareness of who clients need to talk to are three potential areas of focus for TAP.



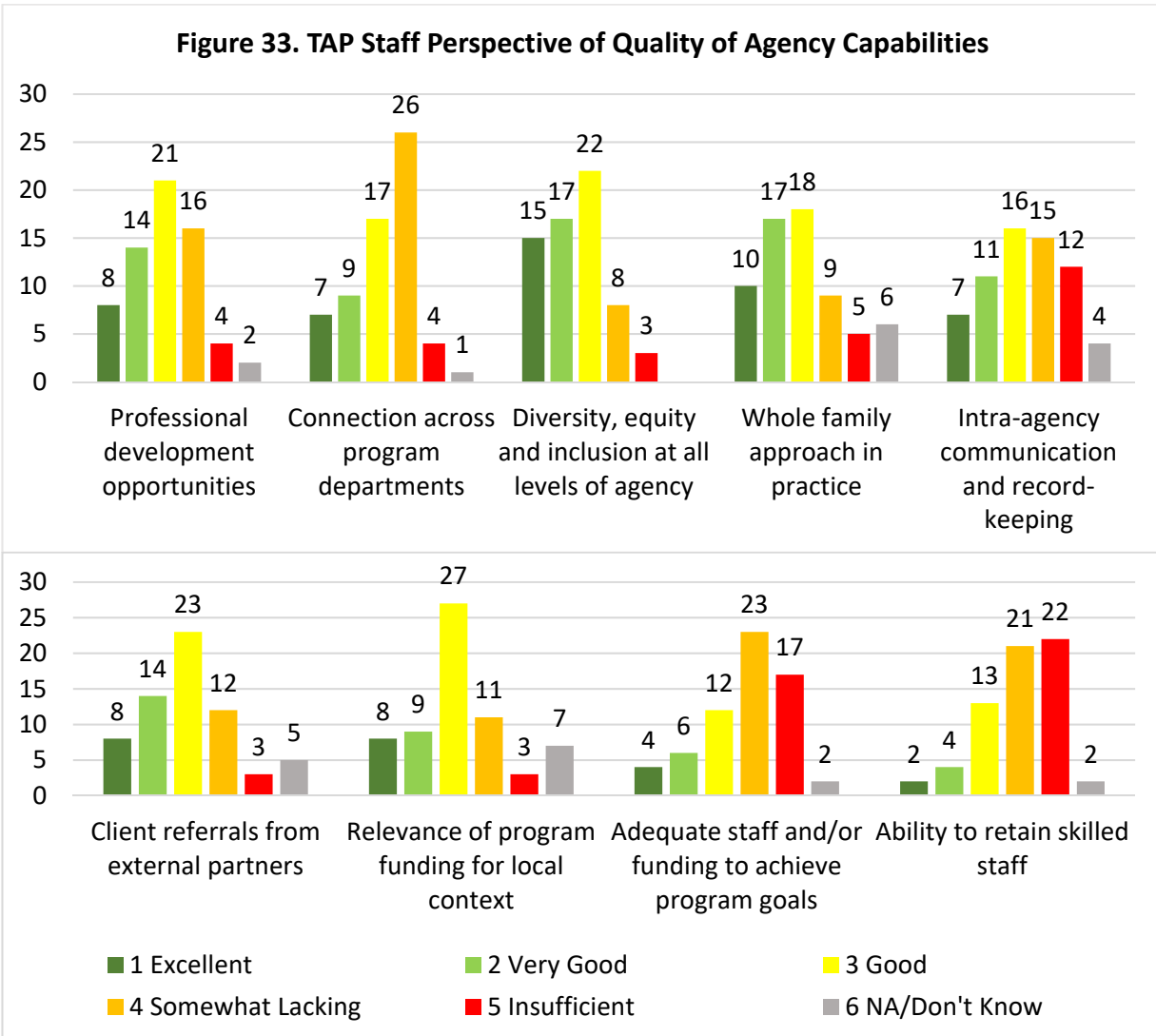
(1) For the paperwork question, on the survey it was phrased as “There is Too Much Paperwork.” We reworded to make agreement indicate a positive assessment and flipped the responses to make it visually consistent with the scales used for the other items.

### Agency Capacities

Sixty-five TAP employees completed the questions on the quality of agency capacities and needs. Among respondents, 35 were front-line program staff and 30 were in management or administrative roles. Responses from both groups were similar, with individuals in management and administrative roles rating items slightly lower than front line staff, perhaps because of greater awareness of agency issues.

As seen in Figure 33, responses tended to cluster around the middle, which on this scale indicates that most agency capacities are perceived as “Good,” with some dimensions skewing positive and others negative. Perhaps not surprisingly, adequate staff and/or funding to achieve program goals and the ability to retain skilled staff were identified as the most lacking or insufficient. Connection across program departments and intra-agency communication and record-keeping are also areas that may require focus for improvement. Across the board, respondents were more likely to evaluate

performance as good rather than excellent or very good. The most Excellent or Very Good responses were for TAP’s diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the agency.



Eight front-line staff provided additional substantive comments, which tended to focus on poor or inequitable pay. For example, one commenter pointed out that “Head Start teachers are grossly underpaid, yet they are the backbone of the program.” Another staff member observed that “from a staff perspective, the pay for the amount of work that employees do is bare minimum. It feels as if the amount of money that is allotted to staff workers is the least amount that they can achieve from the grant.”

Thirteen management or administrative staff provided additional substantive comments, which tended to focus on pay, staffing, and corporate culture. One manager observed that “salaries need to increase to make positions competitive with other agencies. Salaries need to increase to keep up with cost of living increases.” And another pointed at potential inequities, stating “TAP pay is lacking and needs to be looked into. We can’t keep good staff because other agencies have the ability to offer more pay for less

work. Depending on where in the agency you work, an inline worker can make more than a manager of another program just because of the funding source.”

### Additional Feedback from Staff and Stakeholder Interviews

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Funding.** Limited grant cycles and funding criteria make it difficult for TAP to provide reliable programming.
- **Staff.** Staff retention is a major issue right now, partly due to low-wage positions and burnout.
- **Emergency Needs.** TAP clients lack access to basic needs, which can force TAP into the position of being an emergency service provider without additional coordination with other community organizations.
- **Housing Rehab.** The lack of labor and cost of materials has reduced TAP’s efficacy in the housing rehabilitation space.
- **Regional Needs.** Accessible transportation and affordable housing are two major areas of need that will require a regional, systematic, and coordinated strategy.
- **Opportunities for Growth.** New resource centers with the housing authority, school system, and local government present opportunities for TAP to partner to expand its footprint by sharing physical space with other organizations. Alternatively, TAP can consider opening new satellite office locations or operating mobile service units on a regular schedule, to reach more communities within its service region.

### TAP Workforce Programs

This Valley Works has expanded to include not only adult job training and education, but youth-oriented and homelessness programs. While the fundamental goal of the program is to prepare workers for sustainable employment, that is a long-term outcome rather than a short-term possibility for many clients. For youth in particular, This Valley Works endeavors to raise awareness about career opportunities and how to get there, helping at-risk youth consider more productive paths. TVW stakeholders include clients, employers, local government and community organizational partners, and the advisory board. TVW has created job-training programs at the request of employers and has taken on grant proposal development and program implementation at the request of local government.

Though TAP formally provides fewer emergency services programs than it did in the past, This Valley Works staff must regularly address the basic needs of clients, including access to food, clothing, childcare, and housing. With a Whole Family focus and a tendency to stay in touch with clients to address their needs over the long term, TVW is somewhat unique among workforce development programs for providing these wraparound supports.

TAP clients are better served and TAP is better known when physical office and satellite locations are spread out throughout the service area, whereas this makes staff supervision and program and logistical management more difficult for TVW supervisors. In the case of serving sex offenders, physical separation is required from other clients, and homeless clients may not feel comfortable receiving services at certain TAP locations, such as the Roanoke Higher Education Center. Generally, however, TVW staff communicated that referrals to their programs are strong due to TAP’s established reputation and the diverse populations served, including youth, veterans, re-entry clients, those who are homeless

or at risk of homelessness, and a large base of need for Head Start (whether single- or two-parent households).

According to This Valley Works staff, there is a large gap between TAP's workforce programs and what is offered by WIOA. While OnRamp has helped to some extent, there is a dearth of support for people who do not qualify for TAP's services and who cannot navigate mainstream workforce resources. Other challenges for some clients include lack of computer literacy or lack of computer and internet access to apply for services and find resources online. Even so, there is a tendency among service providers to transition all of this information to virtual platforms.

Funding and logistical challenges for workforce programming include TAP's rural/urban make-up and having trouble qualifying for grants specific to one or the other, as well as having to serve 11 jurisdictions for the service region, in addition to 25 jurisdictions for veterans. Being largely grant-funded, programs are restricted to qualifying clients, are time limited and difficult to plan for long-term, which is one reason that staff retention suffers. Another funding challenge involves combining multiple small grants to support a single program, which leads to multiple reporting requirements and creates an administrative burden for staff. Volunteer and intern capacity for This Valley Works has been very helpful to support the department.

Federal program funding ebbs and flows depending on the political agenda of the current administration rather than addressing trends at the local level. Two successful programs run by This Valley Works (TVW), SwiftStart and RESTORE, have ended because the funding ran out, yet the populations served by these programs continue to need support. Agency-level and statewide advocacy through the Virginia Community Action Partnership (VACAP) may shed some light on this persistent challenge at the federal level.

#### TAP Housing Programs

Typically, funding is the most limiting factor in determining how many Energy Conservation and Housing Rehabilitation (ECHR) projects are completed annually. During COVID-19, the number of projects slowed due to risks of contracting and spreading the virus during home visits. ECHR staff also report recent challenges include insufficient funding for the limited home repair program (\$20,000 per year for the entire service area), as well as an end to the funding in 2022 for the indoor plumbing and rehabilitation (IPR) program. In addition, due to market conditions including the high cost of materials and labor shortages, some project bids with contractors exceeded DHCD's maximum limits to utilize the remainder of the IPR funding. For the weatherization program, lack of labor rather than lack of funding has been the biggest challenge. For a program reliant on grant funding that fluctuates over time, it is difficult to predictably expand staffing or increase wages to attract more skilled workers.

#### TAP Head Start

Due to COVID-19, Head Start and other service provider partners, such as the dentists who conduct the program's dental screenings, are experiencing staff shortages and a subsequent loss of capacity to provide programming. Prospective Head Start teachers are also more hesitant to return to in-person workplace settings and some are not vaccinated. Cases of COVID-19 have led to classroom- or total facility-shutdowns, which have created disruptions for all involved, including teachers, parents, and the children enrolled. Some Head Start partner facilities have not complied with vaccine and mask mandates, requiring the program to identify new partners. Head Start management have maintained

services for families throughout the pandemic, which has placed a mental, emotional, and physical toll without reprieve. Staff self-care and mental health have suffered.

The Head Start program struggles with challenges including lack of parent participation, and staff attrition. It currently faces 30 vacancies across all position levels despite full enrollment rates. Unable to raise salaries to remain competitive with private childcare providers, the Head Start program experiences high staff turnover and a limited supply of trained teachers. Fundamentally, the program must grapple with the tension of maintaining high quality federal standards without adequate funding to compensate qualified staff who must have certain educational credentials. The hiring process including the background check can also take 4 – 6 weeks, during which time prospective candidates may find work elsewhere. Staff must wear “multiple hats” to juggle the gaps in personnel capacity.

#### TAP Planning Department

TAP’s Planning department performs myriad functions, including grant proposal development and some implementation and administrative follow-up, content creation and communications, liaising with IT support, COO functions, strategic planning, and topic research on best practices, broader trends, and ideas for new programs at TAP. Particularly with ARPA and CARES Act funding, the planning department has stepped up to support an unexpectedly large amount of post-award, administrative reporting. Staff report that grant proposals tend to fund new initiatives about 60% of the time, and support existing or ongoing programs about 40% of the time. The planning staff communicate with department directors to prioritize project needs and align staff capacity, and to identify relevant funding opportunities. Some programs, such as CareerForge in the Covington area, were developed directly due to results from previous needs assessments. TAP is also periodically approached by external partners, such as the City of Roanoke, to apply for grant programs such as the [Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot \(VERP\)](#) in 2021.

The planning department staff cannot feasibly pursue every relevant grant opportunity at all times due to finite capacity; in the past few years, grant implementation related to COVID-19 relief funding has intensified with the number of proposals increasing in addition to short turn-around times to complete them. Federal agencies in general over time, and during the pandemic in particular, have been announcing funding opportunities increasingly throughout the year, which means planning staff are consistently working at a high intensity.

## 6) Key Findings by Locality

Additional insights from stakeholder interviews and the secondary data review are shared below, organized by locality and domain, where relevant. The information in this section may be combined with locality-level demographic, poverty, risk-factors, and social service information provided in the Virginia Department of Social Services Local Department Social Service Profiles.<sup>2</sup>

### Alleghany & Covington

- The main issues facing the communities of Alleghany and Covington include lack of affordable housing, lack of qualified childcare providers, lack of public transportation, and lack of job training programs leading to livable wage employment.
- “Middle-class jobs” that may be more accessible to people with transferable skills are hard to find.
- Labor force participation rates are not expected to rebound back to 2019 levels until 2026.
- Small-scale, tailored workforce training programs for those with criminal backgrounds and other vulnerable groups are considered effective by stakeholders, in addition to partnerships with employers to address wraparound supports, like the need for childcare and transportation to get to work.
- Food and housing insecurity, including evictions when the federal moratorium on rent is lifted, were cited as additional issues compounding the challenges faced by low-income families.
- COVID-19 has stalled or reduced community programming and other basic supportive services.

### Survey Results

Table 50 presents the top 10 issues identified from the survey for Alleghany/Covington (n=27), plus the top issues for the finance, transportation, and engagement issue areas that were not represented in the top 10. Further discussion of survey results is included in the subsections below. Overall, housing concerns rank highest, including the high cost and lack of access to funding to pay for housing.

| Rank | Issue   | Count | Percent | Issue Area |
|------|---|-------|---------|------------|
| 1    | High cost of rent/house payments                              | 20    | 74%     | Housing    |
| 2    | Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit | 20    | 74%     | Housing    |
| 3    | Good teachers are leaving the field                           | 17    | 63%     | Education  |
| 4    | Lack of well-paying jobs with benefits                        | 17    | 63%     | Employment |
| 5    | Increased job stress due to short staffing                    | 17    | 63%     | Employment |

<sup>2</sup> The DSS profiles can be found online:

[https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency\\_wide/ldss\\_profile.cgi](https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile.cgi).

Updated data for State Fiscal Year 2022 is expected to be published in January/February 2023.

**Table 50. Top Survey Issues in Allegheny/Covington (n=27)**

| Rank | Issue  | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|--|-------|---------|----------------|
| 6    | Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people                                 | 16    | 59%     | Health         |
| 7    | Houses in the area are not affordable  | 16    | 59%     | Housing        |
| 8    | Can't buy or rent housing because of bad credit  | 16    | 59%     | Housing        |
| 9    | Lack of health/dental insurance  | 15    | 56%     | Health         |
| 10   | Housing needs repairs to be safe - roof, foundation, etc.  | 15    | 56%     | Housing        |
| 12   | Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc.  | 14    | 52%     | Finances       |
| 13   | Lack of understanding of how predatory interest rates work and trap individuals in escalating debt | 14    | 52%     | Finances       |
| 14   | Public transportation doesn't have convenient hours or routes                                      | 14    | 52%     | Transportation |
| 25   | Lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate   | 13    | 48%     | Engagement     |
| 26   | Discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities         | 13    | 48%     | Engagement     |
| 27   | The inter-generational social fabric that used to exist in neighborhoods has deteriorated          | 13    | 48%     | Engagement     |

*Demographics & Poverty*

According to a 2022 Q3 Lightcast Economy Overview, the population in Allegheny County has declined 4.6% since 2016, with expectations it will continue to decrease by 1.3% over the next five years. Median household income is \$48,500, which is \$16,500 below the national average.

The City of Covington has a population of 5,676 people and a median household income of \$41,000, which is \$24,000 below the national average. The population is expected to increase by 4% over the next five years following a very slight decline of 0.1% since 2016. Covington has about the same number of millennials and veterans as the national average of similarly-sized areas, slightly more people retiring soon, and is less racially diverse.

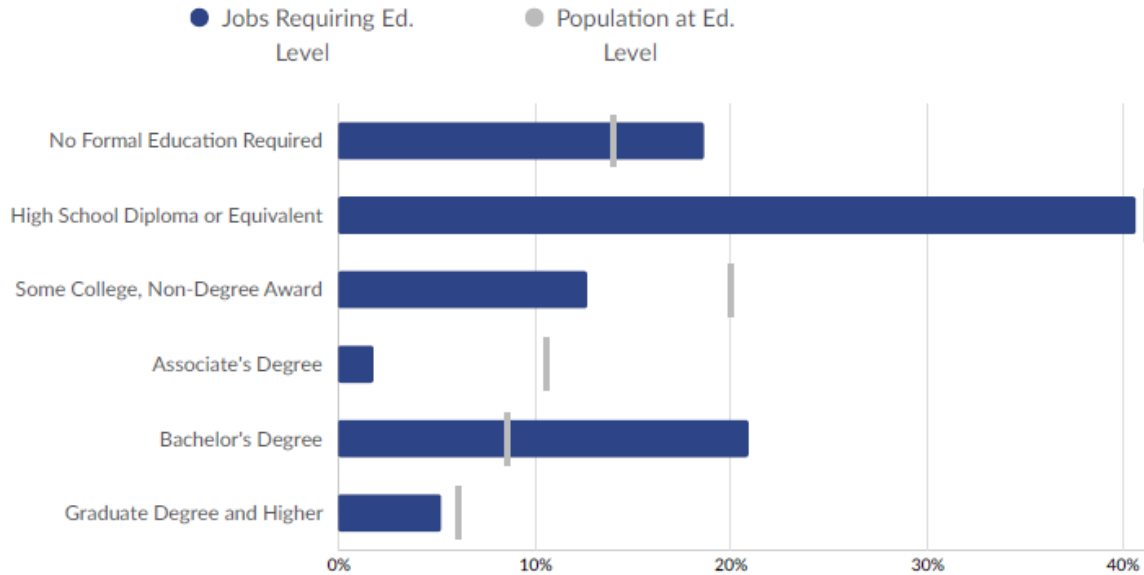
*Employment*

According to the survey results from Allegheny/Covington (n=27), the top two employment issues were the lack of well-paying jobs and increased job stress due to short staffing, which were both in the top 10 of overall issues with 63% of responses each. These concerns were followed by lack of advancement opportunities in many jobs (48%) and the high cost of childcare available during work hours (44%). These results tracked with regional trends toward desire for greater work-life balance and quality employment. The top transportation issues, which are closely related to employment, are that public transportation does not have convenient hours or routes (52%) followed by three issues related to obtaining/maintaining a vehicle with 48% each—no money for a down payment, inadequate credit for a purchase, and not enough money for repairs.



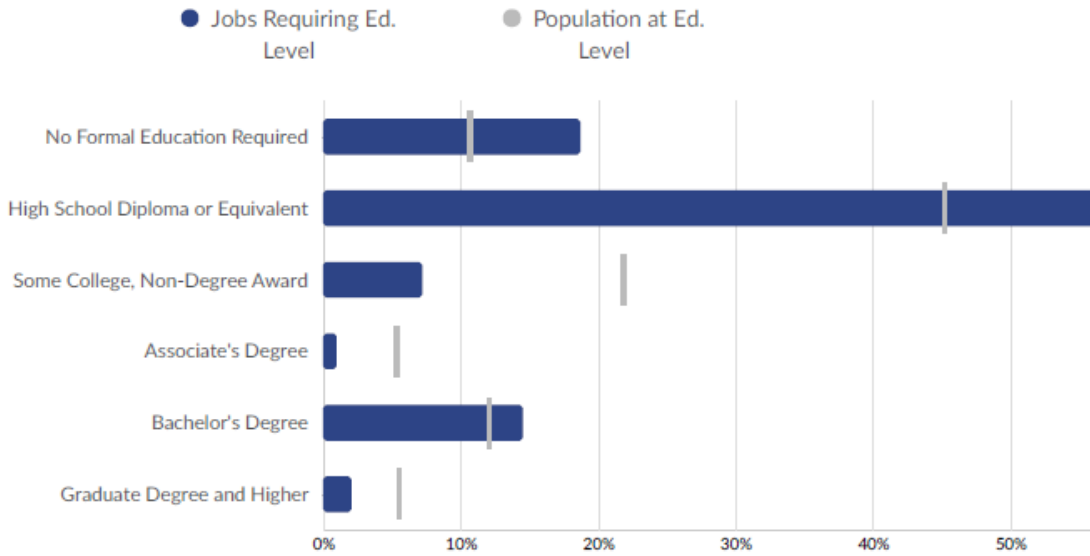
Employment and labor force participation rates in Allegheny County have decreased over the past five years. Jobs declined by 8.9% from 2016 to 2021 and are not expected to rebound to 2019 levels until 2026. Of those unemployed (n=213) in June 2022, the highest percentage are aged 35 to 54 years, and two thirds are female. The unemployment rate as of June 2022 was 3.1%, which is lower than 2019 levels before the pandemic hit. Underemployment by education (Fig. 34) indicates that there are more jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree than workers with that level of education in the workforce. On the other hand, there are more people with associate degrees than jobs requiring that level of education.

**Figure 34. Underemployment in Allegheny County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022)**



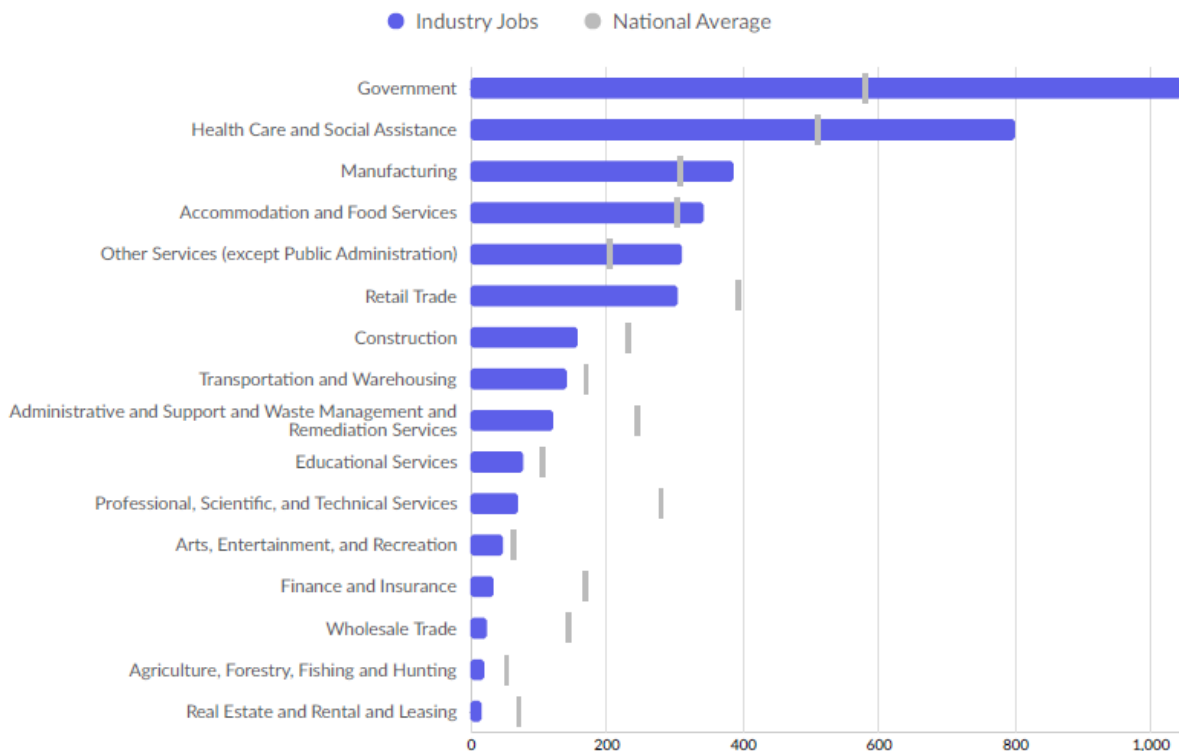
In Covington, jobs declined by 7.9% from 2016 to 2021 and the labor force participation rate also decreased by about 2%. Job growth by 2026 is not expected to meet pre-COVID-19 levels. The unemployment rate in Covington in June 2022 was 3.88% and of those unemployed (n=94), the majority are aged 35 to 54 years, and there are 10% more males unemployed than females. Underemployment may be occurring for those with associate and graduate degrees (Fig. 35).

**Figure 35. Underemployment in the City of Covington, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 28)**



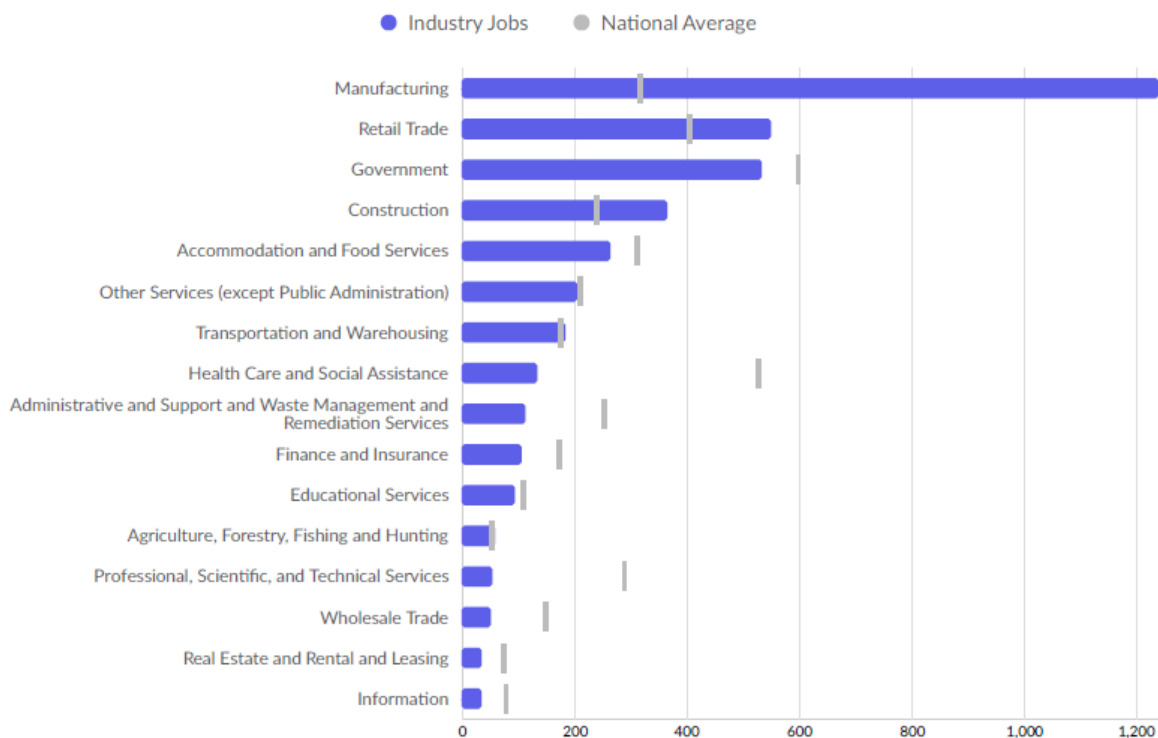
The top three industries in Allegheny County are government, healthcare and social assistance, and manufacturing (Fig. 36). Top industry growth is occurring in Educational Services (+50 jobs), and top growing occupations are in management, business, and financial operations. The highest-earning jobs (over \$60,000 per year) are in transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, real estate and leasing, and professional, scientific, and technical services.

**Figure 36. Largest Industries in Allegheny County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 16)**



The top three largest industries in Covington are manufacturing, retail trade, and government (Fig. 37), and top growing industries include agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, administrative and support and waste management and remediation services, and healthcare and social assistance. Manufacturing far outpaces other regional industries for largest gross regional product, above \$400 million. Top industry earnings per worker occur in manufacturing (above \$100,000/year), finance and insurance (about \$80,000/year), agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, and construction (above \$60,000/year). The largest occupations are in production and transportation and material moving, both above the national average, followed by office and administrative support. Top occupation earnings in Covington are in architecture and engineering (above \$40/hour), management (above \$35/hour), and computer and mathematical (above \$30/hour).

**Figure 37. Largest Industries in the City of Covington, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 17)**



Without accessible childcare or transportation, individuals may not be able to work. For those who do work, stakeholders noted that local job options tend to fall on two extremes – entry-level, low-wage positions that require little to no experience versus higher-wage positions that require some or a complete college education at the bachelor’s level or higher. For the many individuals with skilled work experience but lacking a formal degree or certification, these job options don’t account for their skills and professional value. As one stakeholder stated, “there are few who can sustain a middle-class life” in the area; when a job cannot cover the cost of the childcare and transportation required to work, some individuals choose not to work, at the expense of their professional development and interests.

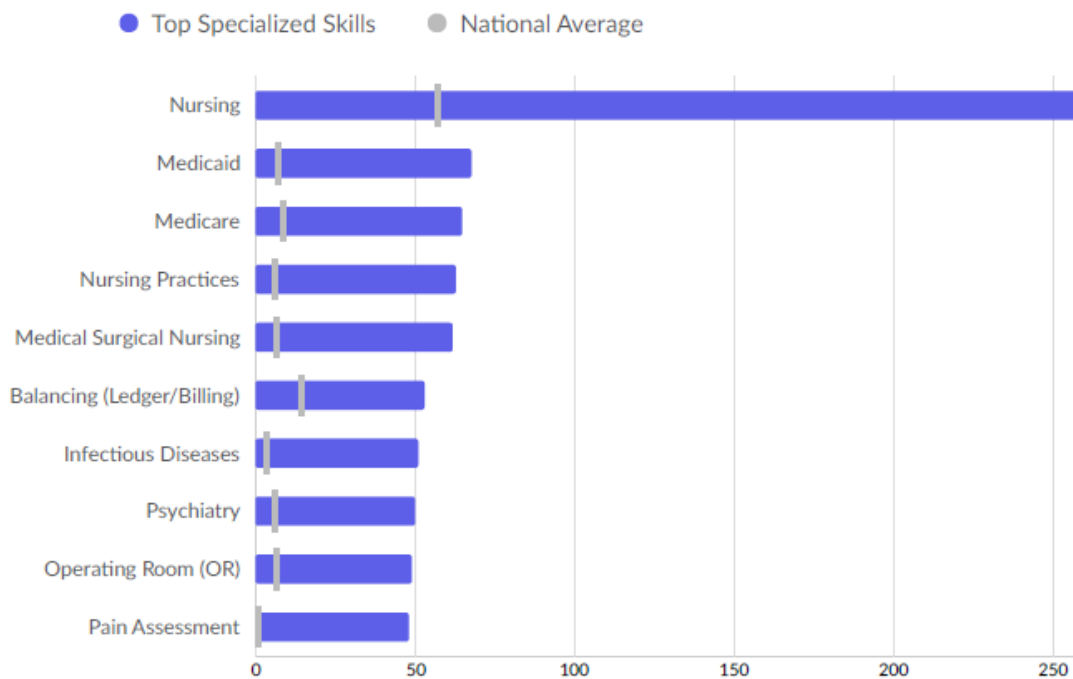
Additional factors impacting employment success include if an individual has a criminal background or a substance use disorder (SUD), making it difficult for them to pass background checks and/or drug

screens to qualify for the job. Child sex offenders were cited as having a very difficult time identifying employment opportunities outside of options such as CDL truck driver.

TAP and Mountain Gateway Community College recently coordinated A Second Chance Act grant, a welding training program for individuals re-entering the community from incarceration, with eight participants each earning two certificates with the option of continuing their education to gain higher-level skills. Other recent workforce training programs in the area supported by TAP include CareerForge and RESTORE. According to the Lightcast Economy Overview (2022), the educational workforce pipeline from Mountain Gateway Community College generates more certificates than associate degrees, and that the pipeline has shrunk by 4% since 2016.

Stakeholders noted that the approach of identifying the needs of small cohorts and tailoring a program specifically for those needs, including creative fundraising, partnerships, and out-of-the-box thinking, has been successful. Several stakeholders expressed interest in working more closely with employers to strengthen employment pipelines, and to explore opportunities to partner to address challenges related to childcare, transportation, criminal backgrounds, and SUD. According to the Lightcast Economy Overview (2022), the top specialized skills in demand in Allegheny County are in healthcare (nursing, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.), well above the national average (Fig. 38).

**Figure 38. In-Demand Skills in Allegheny County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022)**



Top in-demand, specialized skills in Covington include distance learning, academic standards, and merchandising (Fig. 39).

**Figure 39. In-Demand Skills in the City of Covington, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 30)**

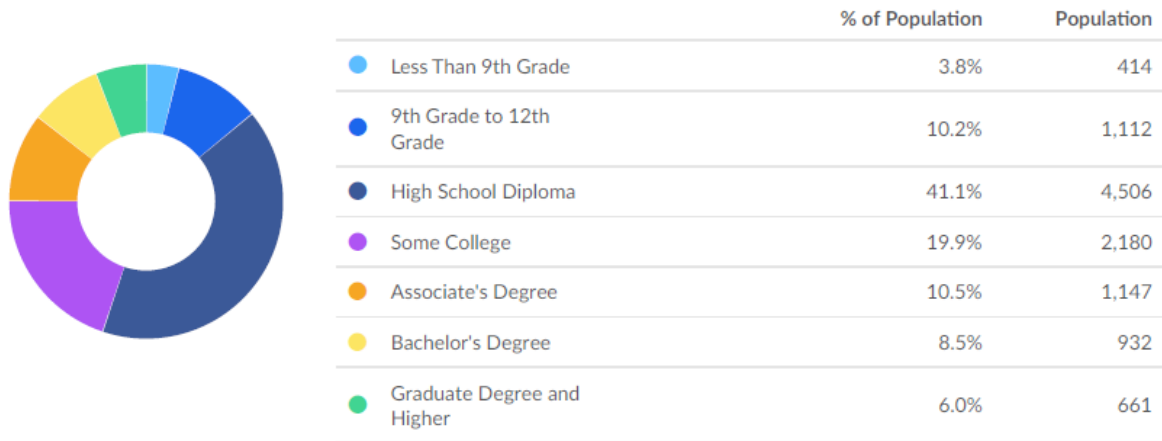


*Education and Development*

According to the needs assessment survey (n=27), the top educational concern for Alleghany/Covington is good teachers leaving the field (63%), which is also the top concern regionwide. Other educational concerns include students struggling with transitions between in-person and remote learning (52%) and the high cost of childcare for a parent to attend school (48%).

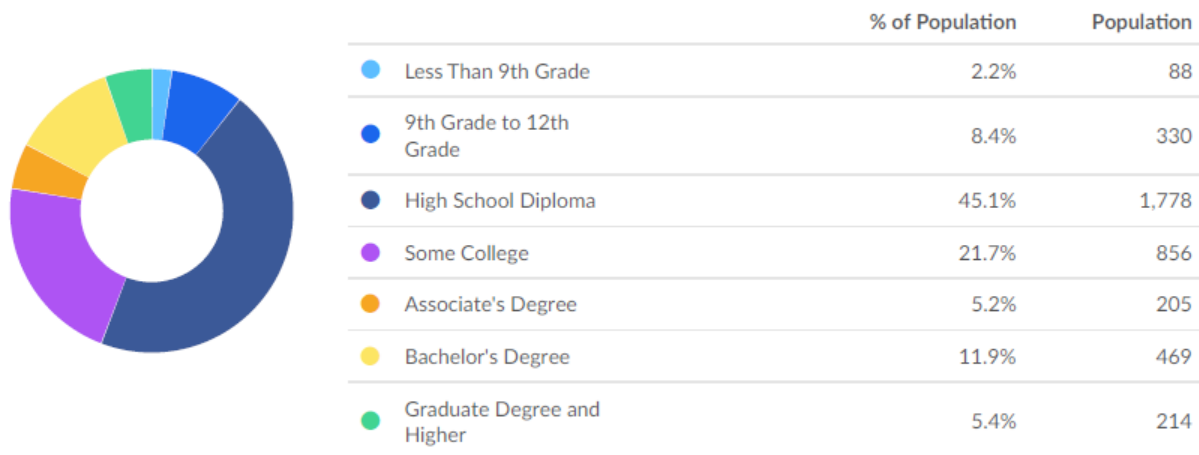
The largest educational group in Alleghany County are those who have a high school diploma, followed by some college and an associate degree (Fig. 40). Notably, less than 10% of individuals have a bachelor’s degree and even fewer have a graduate degree or higher.

**Figure 40. Educational Attainment in Alleghany County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022)**



The largest educational group in Covington are those who have a high school diploma, followed by some college and a bachelor’s degree (Fig. 41). Notably, only 5% of individuals have an associate or graduate degree.

**Figure 41. Educational Attainment in City of Covington, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



*Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building*

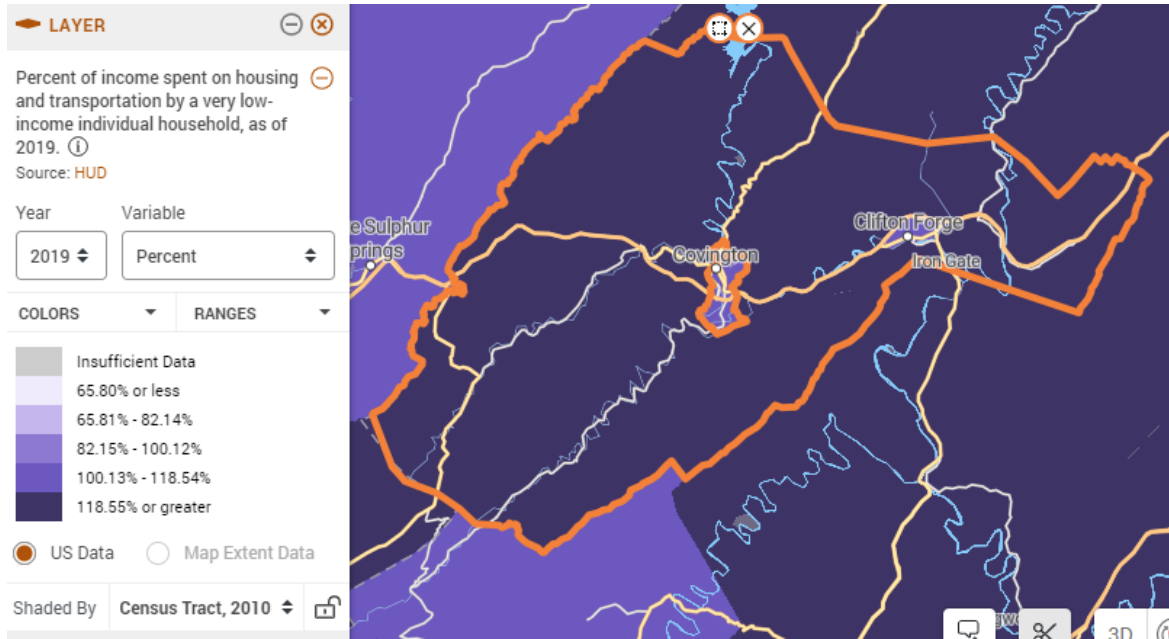
According to the survey results for Alleghany/Covington (n=27), the top two financial concerns that could inhibit asset building are difficulty with money management, and lack of understanding of how predatory interest rates work (52% each).

While only 22% of respondents indicated that they had no public transportation options in their area, 52% indicated that what is available doesn’t have convenient hours or routes.

Regarding transportation, the public bus service runs during business hours Monday – Friday but does not provide service on evenings or weekends. Without transportation coverage during these times, individuals who work second shift or weekend jobs, who attend evening classes, or who need to run essential errands outside of business hours must rely on personal vehicles, carpooling with friends or

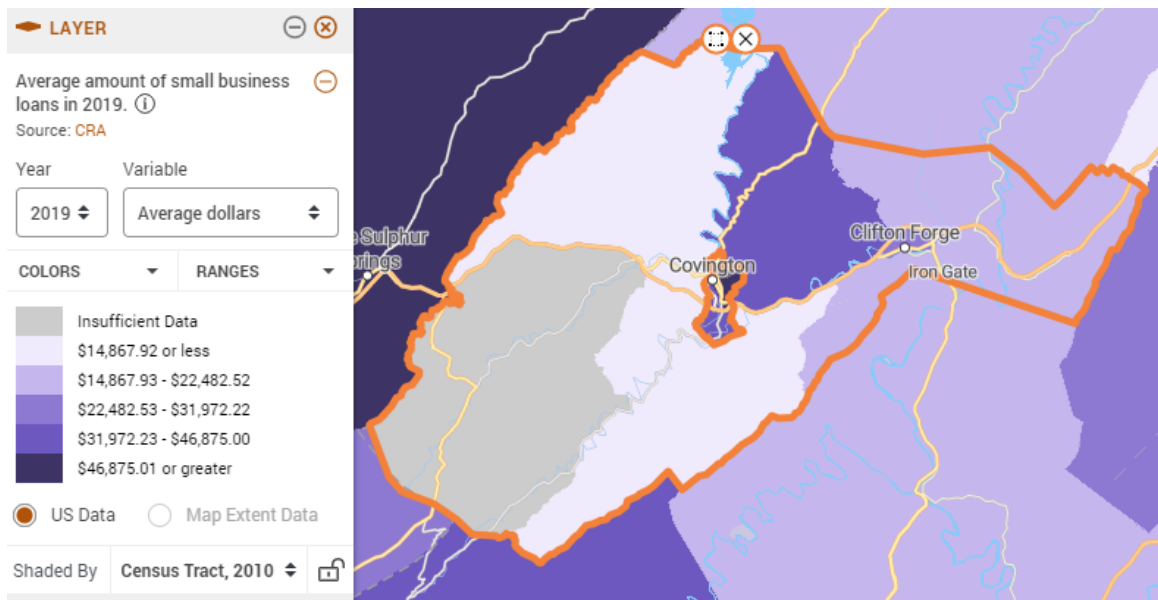
family, etc. The cost of gas and vehicle maintenance may be beyond reach for low-income households. For very low-income households, virtually all of Allegheny-Covington is unaffordable when combining housing and transportation costs (Fig. 42).

**Figure 42. Percent of Income Spent on Housing and Transportation for Very-Low Income Households in Allegheny-Covington (PolicyMap, 2022)**



Average small business loans were highest in parts of Covington and between Covington and Clifton Forge (Fig. 43). Cultivation of more local, small businesses could increase employment opportunities for low-income households.

**Figure 43. Average Small Business Loans in Allegheny County (PolicyMap, 2022)**



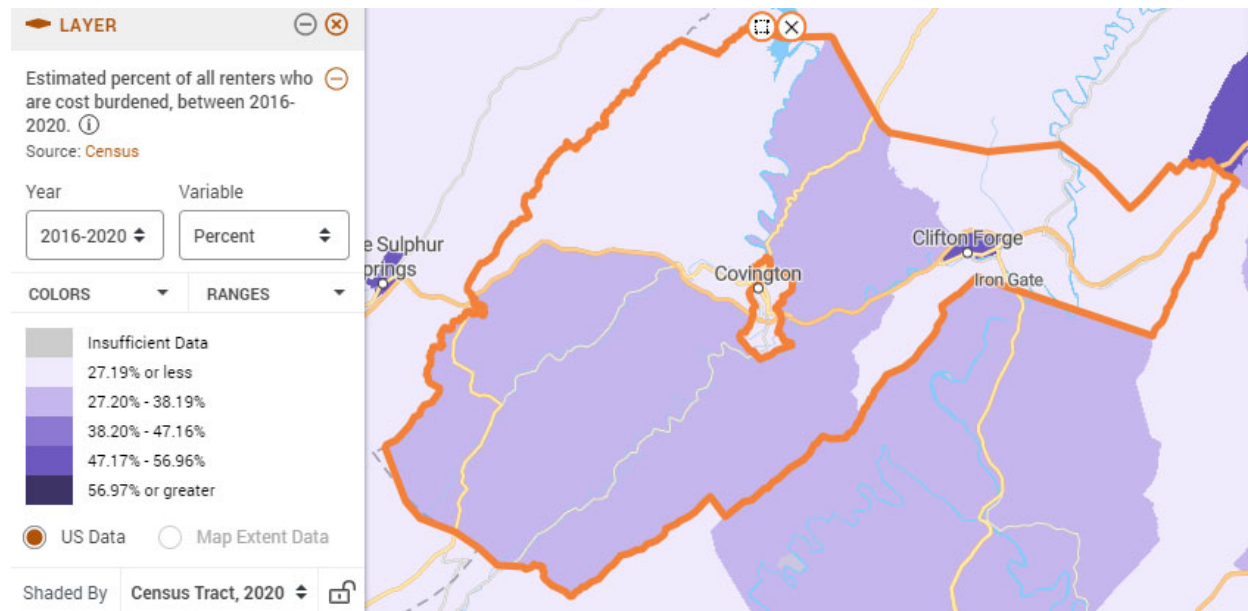
*Housing*

According to the survey results from Alleghany/Covington (n=27), five of the top ten issues of concern were related to housing (see Table 50, above). These included, in order of concern, high rent/house payments (74%), lack of money for a down payment or closing costs (74%), the unaffordability of houses in the area (59%), inability to get housing due to bad credit (59%), and the need for repairs to make a home safe (48%).

One survey commenter noted that, “even with the raising of minimum wage, people are paying over a quarter of yearly income just to rent a place. I don’t believe most landlords have ever had to scrape just to get by; what seems like a small amount to them is an unbelievable amount of money to have at one time.” A homeowner reflected that their housing situation was not bad, but that their residence “does need new windows/insulation/roof and some plumbing issues fixed. Look around and you will see lots of older homes and most need repairs that are highly visible as you go by. I feel sure the interiors also need some major repairs just given the few I looked at when I was looking to purchase a home in this area. Wheelchair accessibility had to be done after we purchased a home.”

Renter cost-burden, which is the percentage of renters paying 30% or more of their household income on rent, is more than 50% of the population around Clifton Forge, and over 30% throughout Alleghany County (Fig. 44). Cost-burdened households often have to make difficult decisions about paying for housing instead of other amenities. Parts of Covington and Clifton Forge may also be experiencing residential vacancy rates above 12% (PolicyMap, 2022), which could indicate need for home repair and rehabilitation programs to upgrade dilapidated housing stock.

**Figure 44. Renter Cost Burden in Alleghany-Covington, VA (PolicyMap, 2022)**



*Health/Social Behavioral Development*

According to the survey results from Alleghany/Covington (n=27), two of the top ten issues of concern were mental health issues, including that mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people (59%) and the lack of health/dental insurance (56%). Tied for 13<sup>th</sup> were the expense of



medical/dental care and three issues related to substance use in the community—family disruptions, overdoses, and crime and violence.

Regarding childcare, stakeholders explained that Head Start and the YMCA offer the only licensed childcare programs and accept subsidized childcare vouchers through the Department of Social Services (DSS). Parents who work may not qualify for the subsidized care, yet they cannot afford the full price of childcare. Private home-based childcare providers are not licensed and are generally unwilling to become licensed due to the safety code regulations. For this and other reasons, parents may be reluctant to use private providers. TAP’s experience in other localities, such as Roanoke, regarding expanding Head Start programming could be a useful asset.

#### *Civic Engagement and Community Involvement*

According to the survey results from Alleghany/Covington (n=27), issues related to engagement ranked lower than concerns in other domains. The top three issues tied at 48% each were lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate; discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities; and that the inter-generational social fabric that used to exist in neighborhoods has deteriorated.

Organizations operating in the area include TAP, the YMCA, Mountain Gateway Community College, Community Alternatives for Positive Prevention (CAPP), Jackson River Technical Center, ministries such as Looking Up Employment, and area food pantries. The community college will open a Mountain Gateway satellite campus in 2023 – 2024.

#### *Related Resources*

Alleghany County, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set. [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

Bath Community Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment. (2021, December). <https://bathhospital.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Bath-Community-Hospital-COMMUNITY-HEALTH-NEEDS-ASSESSMENT-December-2021.pdf>

City of Covington. (2019). Covington Comprehensive Plan. <https://public.3.basecamp.com/p/UmJw2ghsfpj3enw4RDLGN43f>

Jaxtheimer, S. (2022, July 1). The end of an era: Two local school districts merge to create Alleghany Highlands Public Schools. WSLs. <https://www.wsls.com/news/local/2022/07/01/the-end-of-an-era-two-local-school-districts-merge-to-create-alleghany-highlands-public-schools/>

The Allegheny Foundation. (2022). Vision 2025. <https://alleghenyfoundation.org/vision-2025/>

Bath County

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Key Takeaways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two major areas of need within the county are home maintenance and rehabilitation, and childcare.</li> <li>• Bath County is expected to experience population decline over the next five years and has a more remote, aging population.</li> <li>• Two of the largest employers in the county (Omni Homestead Resort and the public schools) are having trouble finding local, qualified employees.</li> <li>• There are more jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree than there are workers with that level of education in Bath County.</li> <li>• Expanded GED programs could serve more people in need of this credential.</li> <li>• Market vacancy in Bath suggests that a combination of substandard housing and a push to create short-term rentals has limited primary residence housing options.</li> <li>• Grandparents raising grandchildren need extra support to keep up with the demands of providing childcare as seniors.</li> </ul> |
|--|

*Survey Results*

Table 51 presents the top 13 issues identified from the survey for Bath County (n=7) and at least the top response for all seven of the issue areas. Further discussion of survey results is included in the domain subsections below. Overall, concerns about employment rank highest, including the cost of wraparound supports to remain employed relative to the benefits of the job.

| Rank | Issue  | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|--|-------|---------|----------------|
| 1    | High cost or lack of childcare available during work hours                                       | 6     | 86%     | Employment     |
| 2    | High cost or lack of transportation to get to work   | 6     | 86%     | Employment     |
| 3    | Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people                               | 6     | 86%     | Health         |
| 4    | High cost of rent/house payments   | 6     | 86%     | Housing        |
| 5    | Lack of well-paying jobs with benefits   | 5     | 71%     | Employment     |
| 6    | Increased job stress due to short staffing   | 5     | 71%     | Employment     |
| 7    | High cost or lack of childcare for parent to attend school                                       | 5     | 71%     | Education      |
| 8    | Some educators may not fully understand or recognize the diversity of the communities they serve | 5     | 71%     | Education      |
| 9    | Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit                                    | 5     | 71%     | Housing        |
| 10   | Houses in the area are not affordable  | 5     | 71%     | Housing        |
| 11   | Discouragement because good housing seems out of reach for young people                          | 5     | 71%     | Housing        |
| 12   | No public transportation options in my area  | 5     | 71%     | Transportation |
| 13   | Discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities       | 5     | 71%     | Engagement     |

| Rank | Issue   | Count | Percent | Issue Area |
|------|---|-------|---------|------------|
| 22   | Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc. | 4     | 57%     | Finances   |

*Demographics & Poverty*

Bath County is comprised of different subpopulations, including affluent second homeowners, an aging population, and low-income households with and without dependent children. Bath County stakeholders cite lack of funding and lack of local partners as two main impediments to addressing the community’s needs. Residents are somewhat isolated by the lack of a major interstate through the county, where stakeholders note that, “If you live here, you have to want to be here. There are not a lot of opportunities for people to get the help they need, even if they could afford it.” Two major areas of need within the county are home maintenance and rehabilitation, and childcare.

According to a 2022 Lightcast Economy Overview, the population of Bath County was 4,075 in 2021, with a median household income of \$55,500, which is \$9,500 below the national average. Bath County’s population has declined by 1.4% since 2016, with expectations it will further decrease by 5.6% by 2026. Compared to the national average of similarly sized localities, Bath County has a lower number of millennials, more people retiring soon, notably lower racial diversity, and more veterans.

*Employment*

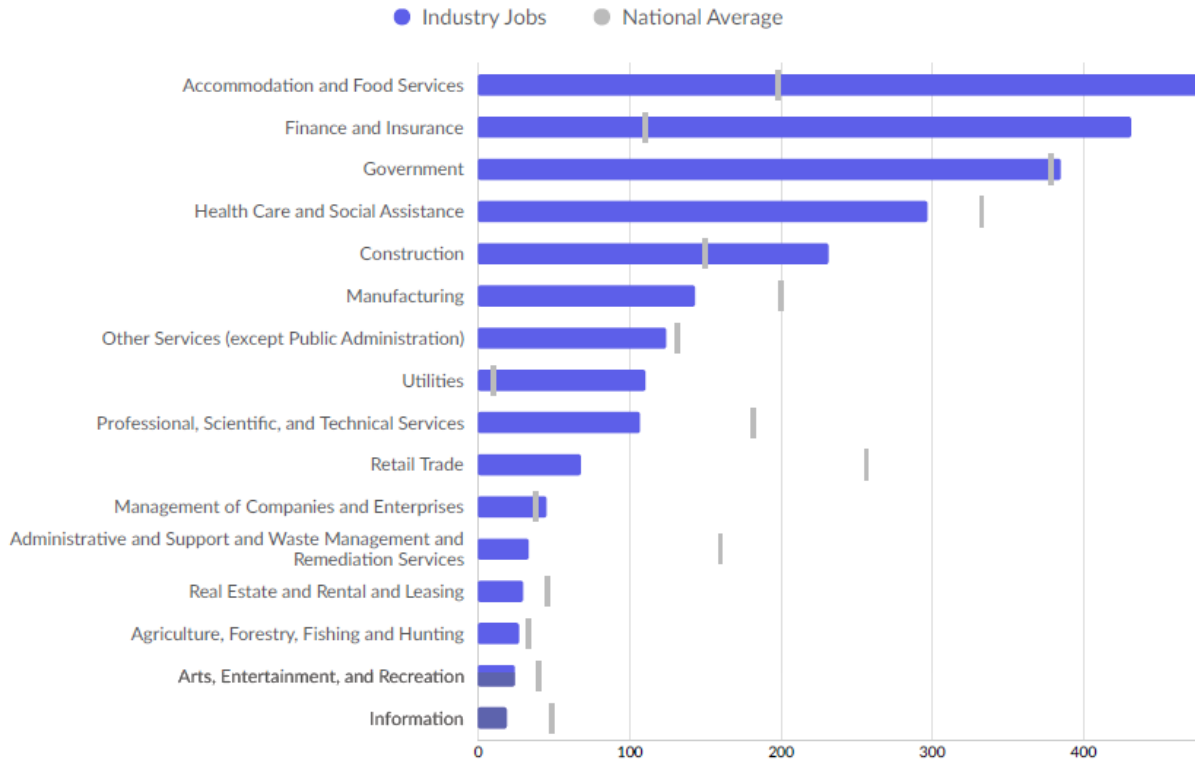
According to the survey results from Bath County (n=7), the top two issues facing the county are employment issues: the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours and the high cost or lack of transportation to get to work, with 86% of responses each. These responses in conjunction with the top issue related to transportation, no public transportation options in the area (71%), illustrate a lack of services to support employment that are common to many rural localities in the region. Two additional employment issues in the top ten are the lack of well-paying jobs with benefits and increased job stress due to short staffing, with 71% of responses each. These results also tracked with regional trends toward desire for greater work-life balance and quality employment.

One survey commenter identified a need for “community knowledge and engagement for employment connection; transportation is a big issue and transport to work, too.” Others cited needs for better-paying jobs, assistance with résumés and interviews, and support for individuals with disabilities.

According to a 2022 Lightcast Economy Overview, the county’s labor force participation rate was 65.1% in 2021. While unemployment is overall low at 2.58% in 2022, it is highest among the age group 35 – 54 years (n=62) and only slightly higher among females than males. Jobs are expected to surpass 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels by 2026 but labor force participation rates will not. The top three largest industries in the County are accommodations and food services, finance and insurance, and government, all above the national average (Fig. 45). The top three growing industries are finance and insurance, manufacturing, and healthcare and social assistance. Top industry earnings are acquired in Utilities (over \$120,000 per year), Professional, Scientific and Technical services (over \$110,000 per year), and Information (over \$80,000 per year). Over a third of local businesses are small (1 to 4 employees). The top three occupations in Bath County are Sales, Office and Administrative Support, and Building Grounds

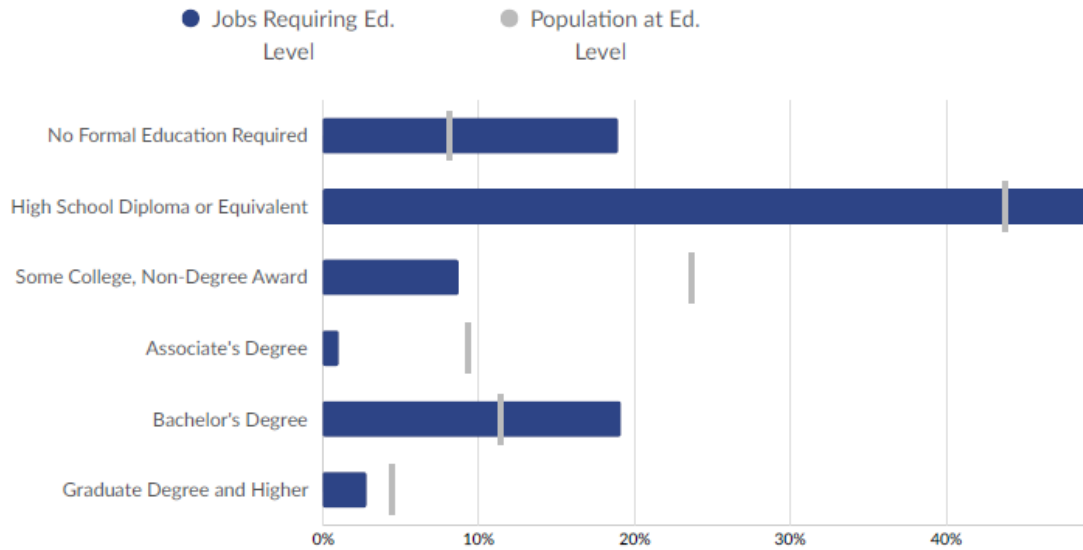
Cleaning and Maintenance, all above the national average. Top in-demand skills include Restaurant Operation, Housekeeping, Merchandising, and Fire Alarm Systems.

**Figure 45. Largest Industries in Bath County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 16)**



The major employers in the county include the Omni Homestead Resort, the local hospital, and the public-school system. Stakeholders reported that the resort faced major setbacks during the pandemic and continues to source temporary and international labor due to the lack of a local workforce to fill vacancies. Many employers are reporting a shortage of prospective employees, from entry level to highly skilled positions. At the same time, stakeholders have noticed that unemployment rates are not that high. While older workers may be taking early retirement, there is also a population of younger people who have stopped looking for work and it remains unclear to stakeholders how they are supporting themselves. Underemployment by education may be an issue for those with an associate degree or graduate degree (Fig. 46). Otherwise, jobs requiring a high school diploma or a bachelor’s degree may have more trouble finding employees with these levels of education.

**Figure 46. Underemployment in Bath County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 27)**



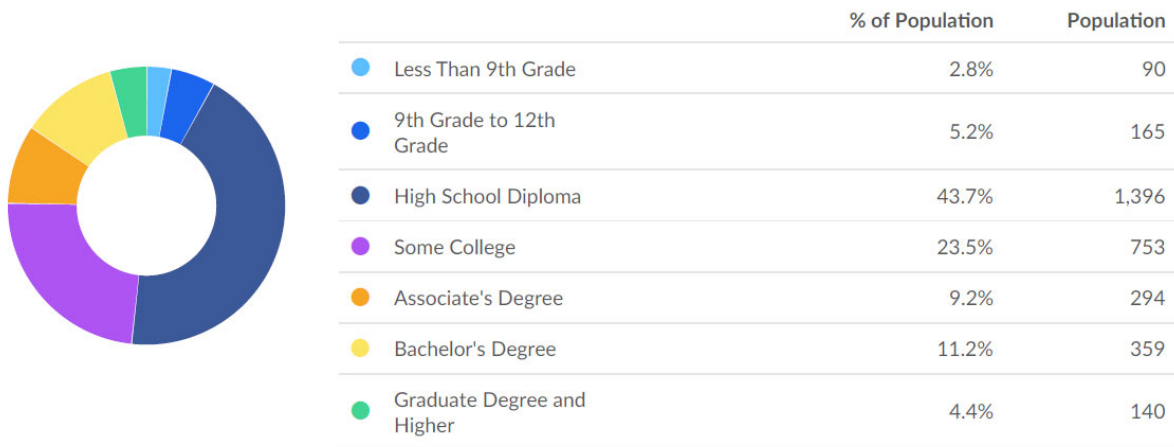
*Education & Development*

Two of the top ten issues identified in the survey for Bath County (n=7) were in the educational domain—the high cost or lack of childcare for parent to attend school and the fact that some educators may not fully understand or recognize the diversity of the communities they serve, both with 71% of responses.

According to stakeholders, Bath County is the only locality in the state without a certified childcare provider. Households with dependent children with parents who are employed are in “desperate need” of quality childcare options. In particular, there is a need for preschool programs in addition to the private, faith-based options that are currently offered. There is also now a waiting list for the Virginia Preschool Initiative program, which has not been the case in the past.

According to Fig. 47, a majority of Bath County residents have a high school degree and some college. Slightly more than 10% of residents have a bachelor’s degree, which is 9% below the national average.

**Figure 47. Educational Attainment in Bath County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



Due to lack of local teachers available following pandemic shutdowns, the county schools were required to hire virtual instructors for core classes, such as science. In general, high school graduation rates average around 90%, and there is also a school-based program for adults pursuing their GED; stakeholders note this GED program could be expanded to serve more people in need.

*Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building*

According to the survey results for Bath County (n=7), the top financial concern that could inhibit asset building is difficulty with money management (57%). Other top financial issues include a lack of understanding of how to create or use a budget, and no knowledge of how to address credit issues, each with 43% of responses.

A complete lack of public transportation was identified as the top transportation issue by a wide margin (71%).

By 2024, due to regional and federal funding for Highland and Bath Counties, local government will build out broadband internet connectivity along the “last mile” to enhance internet coverage for more households.

*Housing*

The top three issues identified from the survey (n=7) regarding housing in Bath County are a lack of money for a down payment on a house or security deposit, lack of affordable housing in the area, and discouragement because good housing seems out of reach for young people, each with 71% of responses.

Especially due to the pandemic and inflation, low-income households need assistance with home repairs, utilities, and maintenance costs. Some households in the county do not have indoor plumbing, so partners have worked with TAP’s Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation program to connect residents with a relevant resource. For outlying areas in the county, stakeholders suggested that lack of a public water supply may be preventing new home construction. The largest percentage of households using wood as a heating source in TAP’s service area live in Bath County. Bath County has the largest

percentage of seasonal vacancies whereas its market vacancy rate is lower, which could indicate inadequate housing stock for full-time residents.

CDBG and other funding sources will not always cover the cost of a new heating system if the condition of the house is otherwise not up to code, and there is usually not enough money to build new housing outright. Therefore, families living in substandard housing cannot receive financial assistance for improvements or move into a new unit. State and federal funders need to recognize that funding is necessary to tear down blighted structures and replace them with new housing units. Equally important is funding that can be used for scattered-site, single-property demolitions in rural areas such as Bath County, whereas currently, stakeholders say there is only neighborhood-level funding to demolish multiple blighted properties, which are more commonly found in urban areas.

Increasing access to affordable housing is another target area that needs to be addressed. Bath County does not have a local Habitat for Humanity chapter or a chapter in a neighboring locality that has been able to serve Bath as well. There is at the same time a local trend of affordable housing being bought up for conversion to Airbnb and short-term rental properties. While the county benefits from this through a hotel tax and increased tourism, the planning commission is working on finalizing a health and safety ordinance to regulate these properties more carefully.

#### *Health/Social Behavioral Development*

The top health issue from the survey for Bath County (n=7) is that mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people, which was the third-highest ranked issue overall. Other health issues of concern include the inability to afford medications and family disruptions resulting from substance abuse, each with 57% of responses.

Due to substance use rates among parents, some children are being raised by grandparents, who may not be prepared for or capable of providing time-intensive care. Additional wraparound supports should be available to these families, in partnership with the county's social services department.

#### *Civic Engagement and Community Involvement*

The top two engagement issues identified from the survey for Bath County (n=7) were discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (71%), and that the inter-generational social fabric that used to exist in neighborhoods has deteriorated (57%).

Stakeholders note that “we do struggle.... Being an older, aging population, we don't have a lot of civic organizations anymore; we do have Ruritans, but they're not real active or engaged. Churches sometimes will try to fill a void when helping people in emergencies, for example, when a home burns down.” The county collaborates with TAP, Valley Associates for Independent Living (VAIL), and also with Mountain Gateway Community College, which has provided EMT training for local volunteer agencies.

A local government stakeholder said, “I think TAP does a marvelous job when you reach out for help. A couple years ago, TAP received a grant to do some home modifications for low- to moderate-income families, and together, we rehabbed 6 homes in Bath County under that grant.”

*Related Resources*

Bath County, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set. [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

Bath Community Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment. (2021, December). <https://bathhospital.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Bath-Community-Hospital-COMMUNITY-HEALTH-NEEDS-ASSESSMENT-December-2021.pdf>

Bath County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report FY21. (2021, December). <https://bathco.hosted.civillive.com/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=18269839>

Housing Needs Assessment & Market Analysis Study: Bath County, VA. (2020, March). Camoin 310. [https://bathco.hosted.civillive.com/public\\_information/housing\\_needs\\_assessment\\_market\\_analysis](https://bathco.hosted.civillive.com/public_information/housing_needs_assessment_market_analysis)

Ralston, B. (2021, December 15). Bath And Highland Counties Receive Grant To Bring Universal Broadband Coverage. *Allegheny Mountain Radio*. <https://www.alleghenymountainradio.org/bath-and-highland-counties-receive-grant-to-bring-universal-broadband-coverage/>

Yancey, D. (2022, February 4). One county in Virginia has no day care. *Cardinal News*. <https://cardinalnews.org/2022/02/04/one-county-in-virginia-has-no-daycare/>



Botetourt County

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Key Takeaways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Botetourt’s lower-income communities are located in the less-developed areas in the northern part of the county, such as Eagle Rock, Buchanan, and Acadia, areas including more agricultural production and fewer job options.</li> <li>• Botetourt has a technical education center that facilitates intern/externships and a nationally certified welding program through the public school system. Partnerships focused on 3-D printed housing and electric vehicle infrastructure position Botetourt for the creation of jobs in advanced manufacturing.</li> <li>• The top in-demand skill in Botetourt County is in criminal corrections.</li> <li>• Last-mile broadband and a rail-trail infrastructure project with Craig County will provide quality of life improvements in the next few years.</li> <li>• Botetourt County is building out multifamily housing, though it is not necessarily affordable.</li> <li>• Households in rural parts of the county struggle with limited transportation options and a waning EMS volunteer base.</li> </ul> |
|---|

Survey

Table 52 presents the top 15 issues identified from the survey for Botetourt County (n=21), which include at least the top response for all seven of the issue areas. Further discussion of survey results is included in the domain subsections below. Overall, with the exception of lack of public transportation, the top concerns are focused on quality employment and affordability of housing and childcare.

| Rank | Issue   | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|---|-------|---------|----------------|
| 1    | No public transportation options in my area   | 16    | 76%     | Transportation |
| 2    | Increased job stress due to short staffing  | 15    | 71%     | Employment     |
| 3    | Houses in the area are not affordable   | 15    | 71%     | Housing        |
| 4    | High cost or lack of childcare available during work hours  | 14    | 67%     | Employment     |
| 5    | High cost of rent/house payments  | 14    | 67%     | Housing        |
| 6    | Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit                                     | 14    | 67%     | Housing        |
| 7    | High cost or lack of transportation to get to work  | 13    | 62%     | Employment     |
| 8    | Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people                                | 13    | 62%     | Health         |
| 9    | Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc. | 13    | 62%     | Finances       |
| 10   | Good teachers are leaving the field   | 12    | 57%     | Education      |
| 11   | Going to doctor/dentist is too expensive  | 11    | 52%     | Health         |
| 12   | Gun/violence in the community   | 11    | 52%     | Health         |
| 13   | Substance use in the community - overdoses  | 11    | 52%     | Health         |

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Issue</b>  | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Issue Area</b> |
|-------------|---|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 14          | Substance use in the community - crime and violence | 11           | 52%            | Health            |
| 15          | Lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate  | 11           | 52%            | Engagement        |

*Demographics & Poverty*

According to the Lightcast Economy Overview (2022), Botetourt County has a population of 33,831, which reflects growth over the past five years of 533 people, with expectations of continued growth of 655 people over the next five years. Household median income in Botetourt County is \$73,000, which is above the national average by \$8,000.

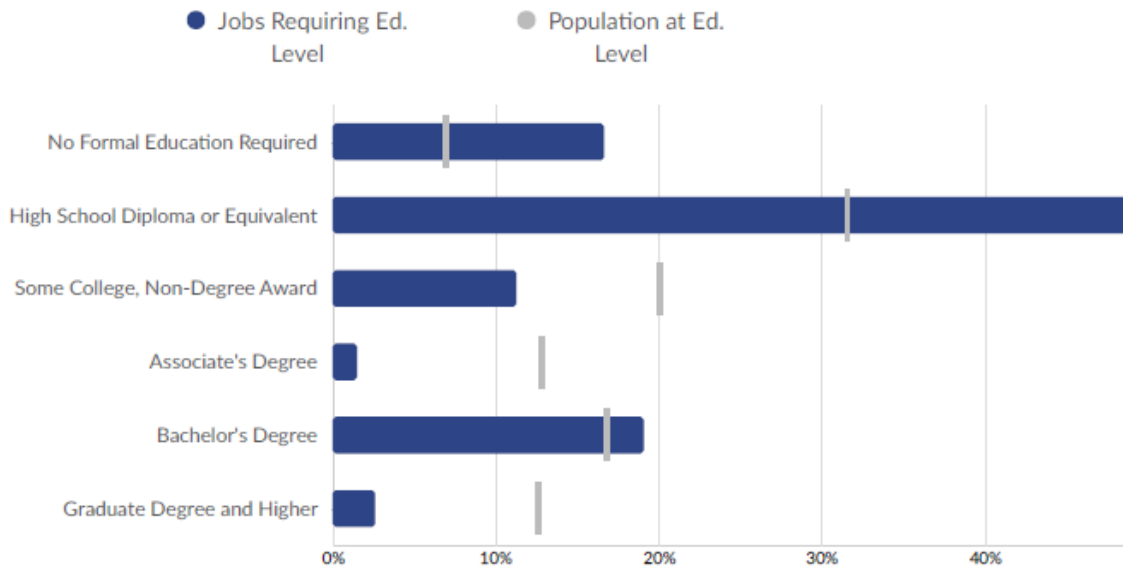
Compared to localities of the same size in the nation, Botetourt County has a lower-than-average population of millennials, more people retiring soon and veterans, and much lower racial diversity. According to stakeholders, Botetourt is one of the more affluent localities in TAP’s service area, with well-established family estates that have deep historical ties to the founding of the country. However, variation within the locality includes less-developed communities in the northern part of the county such as Eagle Rock, Buchanan, and Acadia, including more agricultural production and fewer job options.

*Employment*

According to the survey results for Botetourt County (n=21), three of the top ten issues facing Botetourt County are in the employment domain, and the number one issue was lack of public transportation, which can be an essential employment support for individuals in poverty. The top three employment issues are increased job stress due to short staffing (71%), the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (67%), and the high cost or lack of transportation to get to work (62%).

According to the Lightcast Economy Overview (2022), job growth over the past five years has outpaced the national rate by 1.0%, however the labor force participation rate decreased slightly by 2% from 2016 – 2021. Jobs grew by 339 over the past five years and are projected to continue to grow by 794 over the next five years. Unemployment as of June 2022 was 2.58%, decreasing from 3.48% five years prior. Of those unemployed (n=442), 5% more are male than female and most are aged 25 – 54 years. Underemployment (Fig. 48) indicates that those with some college, an associate degree, or a graduate degree may be underemployed. Jobs requiring just high school graduates may be in greater supply than demand.

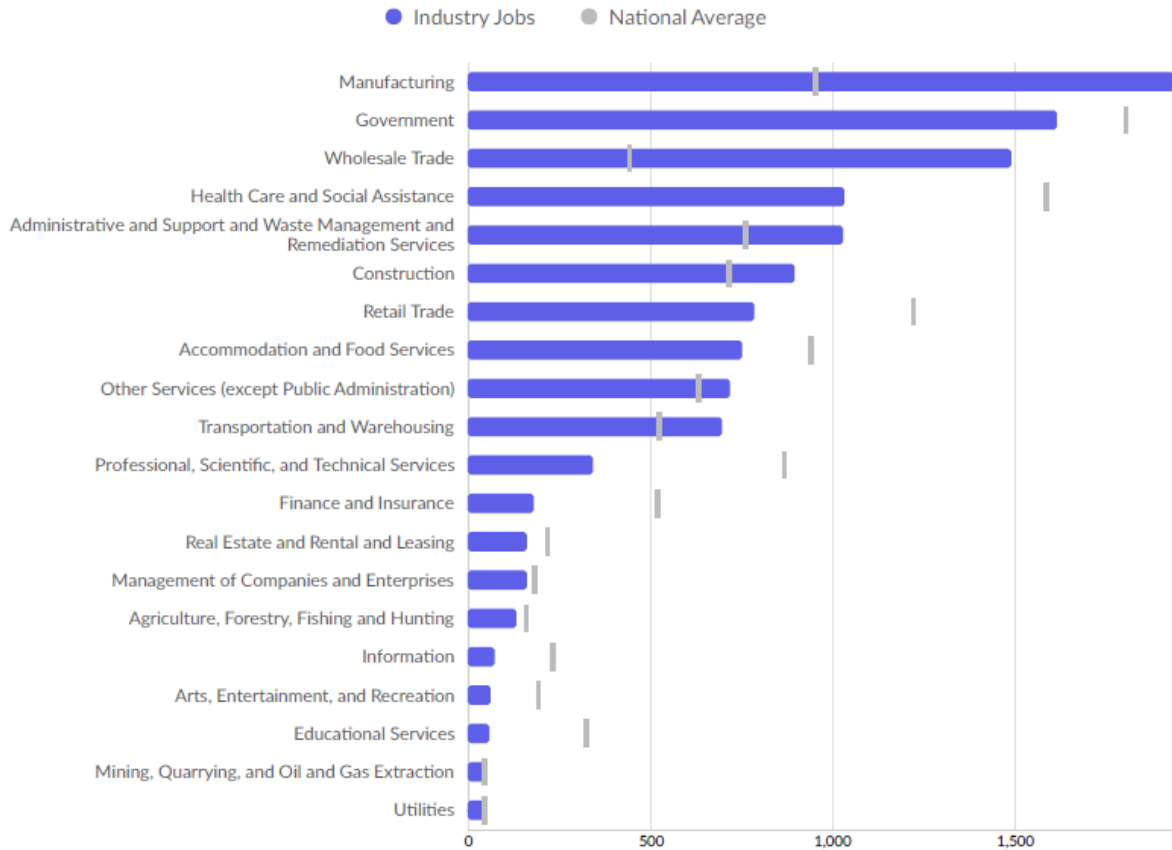
**Figure 48. Underemployment in Botetourt County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 28)**



Recent trends include a push toward more career and technical education opportunities, specifically for students who don't want to take on a lot of debt to earn a 4-year college degree that may or may not lead to a well-paying, full-time job upon graduation. Botetourt has a technical education center that facilitates intern/externships that sometimes lead to job offers with the participating companies upon high school graduation. In some cases, these companies will also help employees pay for a college degree while they remain employed. Botetourt also has a nationally certified welding program through the public school system that sets graduates up for employment or continued education in fields such as engineering.

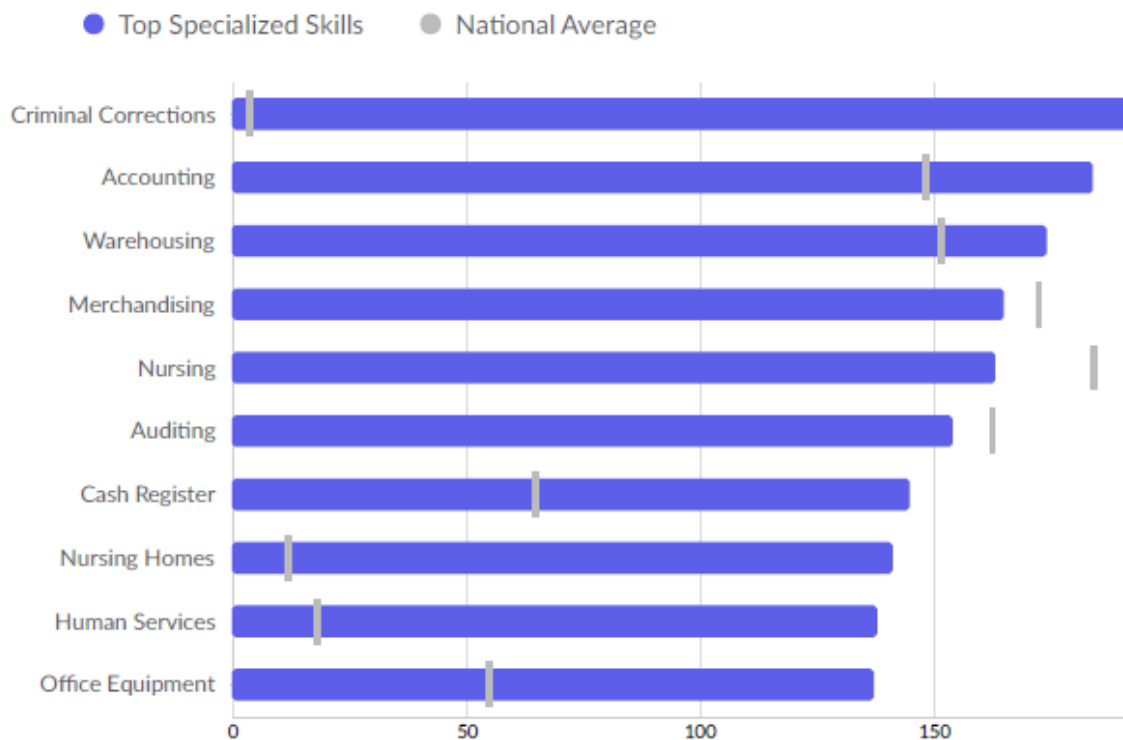
Top industries in the county include manufacturing (above the national average), government, and wholesale trade (above the national average) (Fig. 49). According to the Lightcast Economy Overview (2022), the largest growing industries include wholesale trade, other services (except public administration), and healthcare and social assistance.

**Figure 49. Largest Industries in Botetourt County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 16)**



Top industries by worker earnings include Management of Companies and Enterprises (over \$100,000 per year), Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (over \$80,000 per year), and Information (over \$80,000 per year). Largest occupations are in Production (above the national average), Transportation and Material Moving (above the national average), and Office and Administrative Support. Top growing occupations are focused in Business and Financial Operations, Management, and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair. County jobs paying over \$30/hour include those in Life, Physical, and Social Science; Management; Computer and Mathematical; Legal; and Architecture and Engineering. Top in-demand, specialized skills (Fig. 50) include criminal corrections, accounting, and warehousing, all above the national average.

**Figure 50. In-Demand Skills in Botetourt County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 30)**

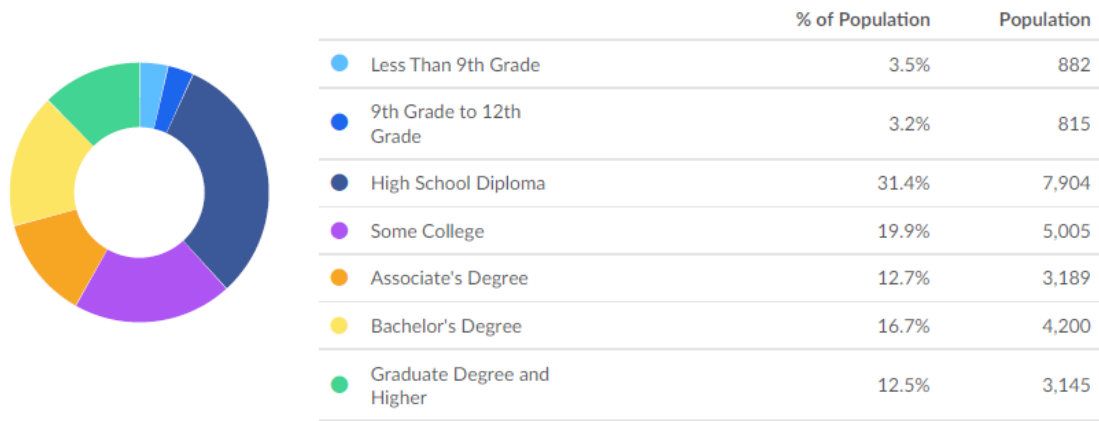


*Education & Development*

According to the survey (n=21), the most significant issue facing Botetourt County, by a substantial margin, is good teachers leaving the field (58%).

According to Figure 51, 16.7% of Botetourt residents possess a bachelor’s degree (3.6% below the national average), and 12.7% hold an associate degree (4.0% above the national average). Nearly a third of the population only has a high school diploma.

**Figure 51. Educational Attainment in Botetourt County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



Although the county’s K – 12 school facilities were built more than 50 years ago and need upgrades and/or replacement, local government stakeholders estimated that the cost to replace its two high schools could cost millions of dollars, especially with the higher cost of labor and materials in the last few years.

*Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building*

According to the survey results for Botetourt County (n=21), the top financial concern that could inhibit asset building is difficulty with money management (62%). Other top financial issues include no knowledge of how to address credit issues (48%), lack of understanding of how to create and use a budget (43%), and lack of understanding of how predatory interest rates work and trap individuals in escalating debt (43%). The number one issue overall for Botetourt County is the lack of public transportation options (76%).

While Botetourt has been recognized at the state and national level for its production facilities focused on electric vehicle infrastructure, its more remote locations lack transportation solutions for low-income and senior passengers. The less-developed areas are also experiencing a waning volunteer base to provide emergency services such as fire and EMS. In order to provide the best emergency services moving forward, these communities are requesting paid staff and support for continued training. The county also expects to have county-wide fiber internet broadband by December 2023, with one stakeholder noting that universal access to “fiber is the equivalent of bringing electricity in our modern day.”

Stakeholders are excited about an infrastructure project in the Eagle Rock area, which would entail a shared commitment between Craig and Botetourt counties to fund a rail-trail project, with a \$2.5 million match from the state budget (Firebaugh, 2022). This project could increase tourism and local economic development in the northern part of Botetourt County once the trail is completed.

### *Housing*

Three of the top ten issues identified from the survey for Botetourt County (n=21) were from the housing domain, including the unaffordability of houses in the area (71%), the high cost of rent/house payments (67%), and a lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit (67%).

Local government stakeholders noted that a housing summit held in 2017 that brought together a variety of developers and related partners set a goal of producing 500 new units, a goal which has been exceeded, to 1,100 units and counting. While some of the residential housing created through this economic development initiative would not be considered affordable by federal poverty level standards, it does fulfill the need for white collar and skilled workforce housing for some households in the county and can help to open up more affordable units by directing residents to other options. However, stakeholders note that for creating more housing for entry-level salaries and one-earner households, “no one knows how to crack that nut, because of land costs, and the cost of housing, materials, labor have all gone up. It’s a math equation that is not working out right now.” The county is trying to attract more apartment-style housing development, rather than subsidized or affordable housing, to serve this population. However, Botetourt is the county within TAP’s service area with the most single-family housing.

In partnership with Alquist, Botetourt may be in a unique position to launch a 3-D-printed housing initiative due to the county’s regional cement production capacity, which lowers the cost of transporting the material for building. The foundations of Alquist homes are 3-D printed with cement, and the homes often also feature a solar panel and battery storage, making them both more affordable at the time of purchase as well as on the cost of utilities over time. Alquist has committed to producing 200 homes in Virginia and to date has begun this work in Pulaski (Project Virginia, 2022).

### *Health/Social Behavioral Development*

The top health issue identified from the survey for Botetourt County (n=21) is that mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people (62%). Other top health issues include the expense of doctor/dentist visits, guns/violence in the community and the impacts of substance use on overdoses, violence, and family disruptions.

Stakeholders report that substance use disorder (SUD) is of increasing concern because of its multifaceted impacts on families and the community more broadly, leading to more pressure on the foster care and healthcare systems. On a positive note, the EMS departments that are well-staffed are able to provide mobile health services, such as COVID-19 vaccination during the pandemic. Countywide broadband by 2023 is expected to facilitate better access to telehealth and virtual healthcare services.

### *Civic Engagement & Community Involvement*

The top engagement issue facing Botetourt County according to the survey (n=21) is lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate (52%), followed by discouragement because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (43%).

Stakeholders in local government noted that despite some of the positive impacts of social media to increase public engagement, negative use of social media to spread false information about local development projects has exacerbated unfavorable opinions about local leadership. “Social media is

being used to attack local government, and government in general. We are closer to the people, we get attacked quite a bit, with bizarre, inaccurate information. We spend way too much time trying to correct inaccurate information. There is no trust that the government, in any form, is actually doing something positive.” This perception may be impacting the type and level of citizen involvement and could impact how residents seek out services or support local projects and partnerships.

*Related Resources*

Botetourt County, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set. [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

Dwyer, S. (2017, March 6). Botetourt County packs house for housing summit. WDBJ7. <https://www.wdbj7.com/content/news/Botetourt-County-packs-house-for-housing-summit-415527523.html>

Firebaugh, A. (2022, August 3). Craig Valley Railroad bed committee set for Rails to Trails. *The Botetourt Bee*. <https://thebotetourtbee.com/2022/08/03/craig-vallet-railroad-bed-committee-set-for-rails-to-trails/>

Project Virginia. (2022). Alquist 3-D. (2022). <https://www.alquist3d.com/projectva>



Craig County

Key Takeaways:

- Stakeholders report that the populations in greatest need are seniors and lower-income families lacking employment options, as well as those struggling with substance use disorder such as addiction to methamphetamines.
- Workforce development and infrastructure investments in outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism were cited as unique opportunities.
- Jobs in Craig County increased by 13.9% over the past five years, outpacing national growth by 12.1%.
- Twice as many females are unemployed.
- Due to the large senior population, there is a great need to build up the workforce providing in-home care and related services for seniors. Stakeholders with the county DSS would like to partner with TAP to offer CNA training classes on site or at partner locations, such as the library, to grow the number of local nurse aides who live and work in Craig County.
- A local offering of YouthBuild could encourage youth who have been unsuccessful in more traditional tracks to avoid unemployment and related problems.
- The top in-demand specialized skills include curriculum development, lesson planning, and special education, followed by truck driving.
- The cost of gas and utilities increased during the pandemic, which created hardship for low-income households to travel to work and heat their homes.
- Low-income renters and seniors may be living in substandard or poorly maintained properties and basic services like curbside trash pick-up are not available, which leads to seniors being unable to keep their houses uncluttered.
- Long waitlists and high staff turnover in mental health care, as well as varied perceptions of the need for mental health care, are particular challenges as mental illness among youth and adults was exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Stakeholders report that generally, volunteerism is strong in the county when a request is made for help.

Survey

As shown in Table 53, from the survey results (n=21), three of the top ten issues facing Craig County are in the health issue area, although the number one issue was lack of public transportation and transportation was an access-limiting factor in several domains.

**Table 53. Top Survey Issues for Craig County (n=21)**

| Rank | Issue   | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|---|-------|---------|----------------|
| 1    | No public transportation options in my area   | 18    | 86%     | Transportation |
| 2    | Substance use in the community - family disruptions                                 | 15    | 71%     | Health         |
| 3    | Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people                  | 15    | 71%     | Health         |
| 4    | High cost or lack of transportation to get to work                                  | 14    | 67%     | Employment     |
| 5    | Lack of transportation to get to grocery store, food pantry or other food resources | 14    | 67%     | Health         |
| 6    | High cost of rent/house payments  | 14    | 67%     | Housing        |
| 7    | Don't know how to create and use a budget   | 14    | 67%     | Finances       |

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Issue</b>  | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Issue Area</b> |
|-------------|---|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 8           | Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit                                     | 13           | 62%            | Housing           |
| 9           | Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc. | 13           | 62%            | Finances          |
| 10          | Don't have money to operate a car/vehicle - gas, inspections, insurance, etc.                     | 13           | 62%            | Transportation    |
| 17          | High cost or lack of childcare for parent to attend school  | 11           | 52%            | Education         |

*Demographics & Poverty*

Craig County has a total population of 5,140 people, which is expected to grow by 231 (4.5%) over the next five years. The median household income is \$57,800, which is \$7,000 below the national average. The county has fewer millennials on average compared to localities of similar size nationwide, more people retiring soon and slightly more veterans, and much lower racial diversity compared to the national average.

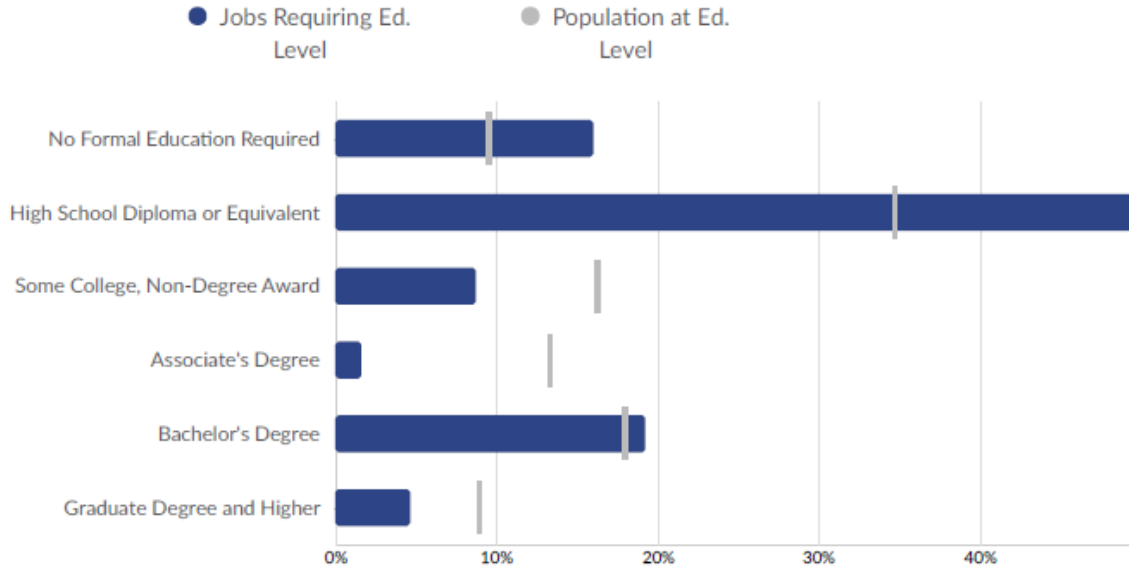
Stakeholders report that the populations in greatest need are seniors and lower-income families lacking employment options, as well as those struggling with substance use disorder, such as methamphetamine addiction. The county is more rural than some others in TAP’s service region, which exacerbates access to services and limits recreational and employment opportunities for youth and older residents.

*Employment*

The top three employment issues from the survey for Craig County (n=21) are the high cost or lack of transportation to get to work (67%), the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (57%), and the long commute to jobs (43%), indicating that these barriers may be keeping able workers out of the workforce.

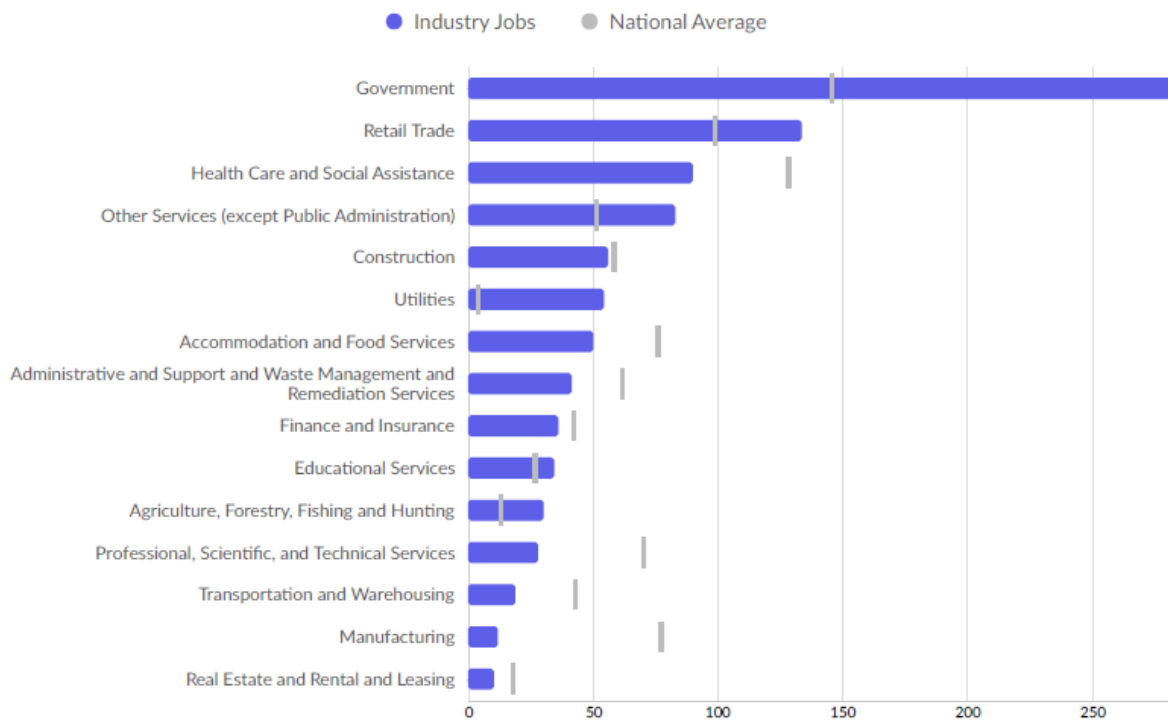
According to the Lightcast Economy Overview for Craig County (2022), labor force participation rates fell by 2% in 2020 and have yet to return to 2019 levels, before the pandemic began. However, unemployment as of June 2022 was 3.07%, which is lower than the rate five years ago. Jobs in Craig County increased by 13.9% over the past five years, outpacing national growth by 12.1%. Among the unemployed (n=69), twice as many are female, and the majority are aged 25 – 54 years. Underemployment (Fig. 52) may be occurring for those with associate or graduate degrees.

**Figure 52. Underemployment in Craig County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 27)**



The largest industries in Craig County include Government, Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance (Fig. 53). Top growing industries include Other Services (excluding public administration), Accommodation and Food Services, and Government. Top industry earnings per worker occur in Utilities (over \$200,000), Transportation and Warehousing (over \$100,000), and over \$50,000 for Real Estate and Rental and Leasing; Finance and Insurance; and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. Top occupation earnings (above \$20/hour) are occurring in Management; Business and Financial Operations; Healthcare Practitioners and Technical. The largest occupation types in the county are focused in Office and Administrative Support; Educational Instruction and Library (above the national average); and Sales and Related. The top growing occupations in the county include Food Preparation and Serving Related; Management; and Production.

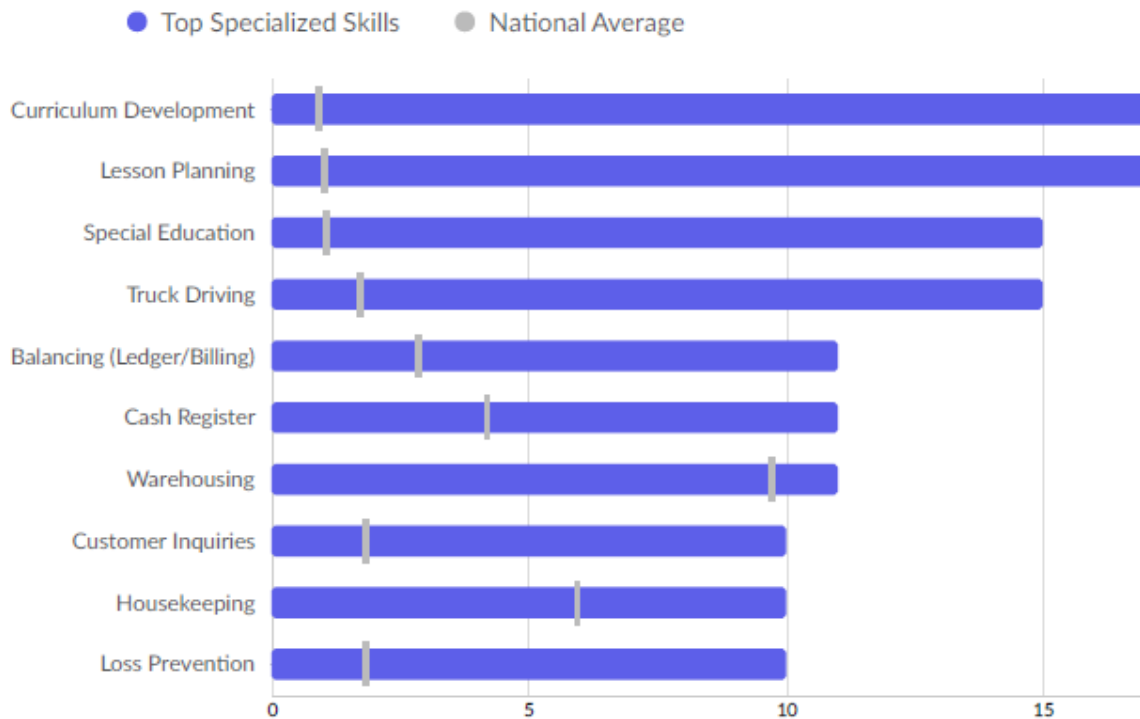
**Figure 53. Largest Industries in Craig County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 16)**



Stakeholders explained that with a large percentage of the county undevelopable because it is managed by the U.S. Forest Service (Craig County Comprehensive Plan, 2018), opportunities for employment might best be expanded through outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism.

In addition, due to the large senior population, there is a great need to build up the workforce providing in-home care and related services. Stakeholders with the county DSS would like to partner with TAP to offer CNA training classes on site or at partner locations, such as the library, to grow the number of local nurse aides who live and work in Craig County. It is difficult for participants to attend trainings in Roanoke, so a local class should be provided. Similarly, a local offering of YouthBuild could encourage youth who have been unsuccessful in more traditional tracks to avoid unemployment and related problems. The top in-demand specialized skills include curriculum development, lesson planning, and special education, followed by truck driving, balancing (ledger/billing), and cash register (Fig. 54).

**Figure 54. In-Demand Skills in Craig County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 29)**



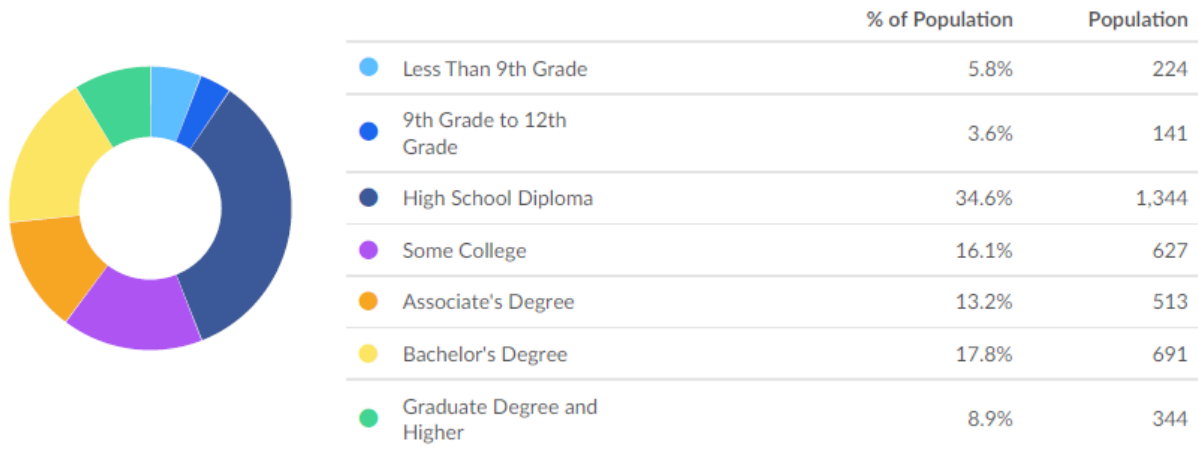
The county DSS has also experienced a severe staffing shortage throughout the pandemic. Employment challenges also include the high cost of gas for those who commute to Roanoke and neighboring localities for work. Stakeholders noted that residents are choosing to keep themselves out of the workforce because of the lack of viable job options locally and the opportunity cost of traveling to Roanoke and spending significant wages on the cost of gas. “If you’re only making \$15 an hour, that is expensive for gas. On the other hand, minimum wage is increasing in Roanoke, and higher-paying jobs are available because it’s hard to find help. But when gas prices went up, that one month was scary for people who have to rely on lots of travel to get to work. They need gas and a car to start the job or find the job. And if they need equipment or clothing to start the job, but can’t pay for it without a salary, it becomes a vicious cycle.”

*Education & Development*

The top three education issues from the survey for Craig County (n=21) are the high cost or lack of childcare for a parent to attend school (52%), good teachers leaving the field (48%), and the need for computer and/or internet access at home for educational purposes (43%).

Education attainment in Craig County (Fig. 55) indicates that a third of residents only have a high school diploma, and approximately 40% of the population has an associate, bachelor's, or graduate degree.

**Figure 55. Educational Attainment in Craig County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



While stakeholders would like to see more childcare options in addition to the one qualified center that hosts Head Start, the department of social services reports that there are slots still available, indicating that those in need of the service are not connecting with it.

There are no vocational programs in Craig for youth like those in neighboring Botetourt, and there are limited academic and recreational extracurricular programs for young people. Virtual schooling during the pandemic also set students back, particularly for students who lacked at-home support and internal motivation to stay focused, in addition to the lower quality of education.

*Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building*

According to the survey results for Craig County (n=21), the top financial concerns that could inhibit asset building are difficulty with money management (67%) and no knowledge of how to address credit issues (62%). The number one issue overall for Craig County is the lack of public transportation options (86%).

Like other counties in TAP’s service region, Craig is receiving state funding to expand fiber internet broadband throughout the locality to address an important gap in connectivity.

The cost of utilities during the pandemic, particularly during periods of high unemployment, were sometimes too high for households to afford and for any one organization to relieve. Some residents still use wood-burning heaters, but stakeholders suggested that may be by choice.

The county lacks physical locations for certain services; for example, the DMV services the county twice a month using a mobile model. Coordinating client schedules with these mobile visits is part of the challenge of delivering the service.

Transportation is a major constraint for lower-income households to access employment and other necessities. There is limited public transit, though rideshare may provide some new transportation opportunities. VDOT has also made several road improvements over time to convert gravel roads to paved surfaces in more remote areas.

### *Housing*

The top four housing issues from the survey for Craig County (n=21) are the high cost of rent/house payments (67%), a lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit (62%), housing repairs needed for safety (57%) and bad credit preventing housing (57%).

Craig County faces a lack of adequate, affordable housing. The existing affordable housing stock for seniors and low-income households is in various states of disrepair and aging. An out-of-state landlord neglects a set of rental apartments and refuses to fix obvious hazards. For example, a DSS client had water running continuously in his bathtub because the landlord refused to fix a broken water main connection. When the tenant requested it be fixed, the landlord threatened to evict him. Unfortunately, if deteriorating housing is condemned, there is no other housing available to accept the tenants who have to move out. Lack of weatherization and improper maintenance also leads to higher utility bills for tenants. Stakeholders in Craig County report that TAP has not been able to fulfill the weatherization needs for clients lacking heat and proper insulation.

A related problem is that the county does not have public trash pickup, which leaves seniors unable to dispose of waste that piles up at home and reduces their quality of life. One stakeholder noted that the “housing around Craig looks very worn and uncared for, with trash building up. Seniors especially are embarrassed, they want help getting their trash taken out.”

### *Health/Social Behavioral Development*

Three of the top ten issues identified through the survey for Craig County (n=21) are in the health and wellness domain. These include substance use in the community – family disruptions (71%), that mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people (71%), and a lack of transportation to get to the grocery store, food pantry or other food resources (67%).

One commenter suggested that “we need therapist and mental health programs in New Castle. Most people can't get to Roanoke for services.” Another commenter indicated a need for “substance abuse programs; [to address] both preventative and ongoing issues.” Finally, another commenter said that there are “no services for children with disabilities; mental health services unavailable or too far away; and the cost of food is too expensive in town but transportation to the city is unavailable.”

Stakeholders connect lack of viable employment options with mental health issues leading to drug addiction and other illnesses of despair. The county is grappling with a “huge meth epidemic” paired with a lack of resources to help those with addiction, whether mental health services or drug addiction treatment programs. DSS is treating mental health conditions in younger children, sometimes starting in elementary school, and increased mental health conditions in parents who are not working but still have

bills to pay. A stakeholder said, “I don’t blame COVID-19 for the increasing mental health challenges, but the pandemic shined a light on mental health issues that were hidden and buried.”

While there is a therapist available to see patients at the Monroe Center, this position must juggle a long waitlist of clients and has seen regular turnover because the salary is not attractive to qualified professionals. Turnover in this field is particularly devastating for children participating in therapy because it takes time to develop trust. Mainstream Mental Health Services, Inc. has signed an agreement with the schools to provide mental healthcare, and DSS is trying to partner with Mainstream to retain a local therapist in Craig County for adults as well. Stakeholders report that neighboring community service boards are no longer accepting referrals from the county, despite grant funding allocated to serve clients from Craig.

A stakeholder with the county DSS noted that, “I’ve witnessed and been part of a situation where a child was suicidal and DSS took that child into custody and had to rotate staff to sit with that child for a week to wait for a bed to open. Because Craig County is so far out and isolated, it’s really an issue here. We also have some families that are old school and feel that therapy isn’t needed, which is another issue entirely.”

Because there is no hospital in Craig County and some residents live in remote locations, the wait and transit time in response to a medical emergency can be life-threatening. For non-medical treatment needs, telehealth has filled some gaps in services but may not be ideal for certain conditions or for younger patients who need in-person observation to build up trust with their medical provider.

#### *Civic Engagement & Community Involvement*

According to the survey, the top two engagement issues facing Craig County (n=21) are a lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate and discouragement because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities, both with 52% of respondents.

The county’s department of social services (DSS) operates a variety of social services in coordination with community partners, including a food pantry. Residents are allowed to come once a month, no questions asked. Key partners include the school system, Sherriff’s department, Monroe Health Center, and the library. Stakeholders from the county DSS note that “we have a lot of organizations that are willing to step up and help, for example, the veterans group and the 4-H center. With the community food pantry, I get checks from people to put into the pantry or community welfare fund, which is a fund the community has set up to help families who don’t qualify as seniors or children where DSS can help, or who are over the income limit but have a financial emergency.” Additional partners include the churches who organize drives to collect food, hygiene, and cleaning products for the food pantry.

Generally, volunteerism is strong in the county when a request is made, such as a quilting group that makes blankets for foster care youth or local businesses who donate money and time for a foster care Christmas party. There is a unifying sense of community and reliance on friends and family in Craig County.

#### *Related Resources*

Craig County, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set.  
[www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)



Craig County Comprehensive Plan. (2018). Craig County, VA. <http://craigcountyva.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CraigCountyComprehensivePlan120618.pdf>

Rockbridge, Lexington & Buena Vista

| <i>Key Takeaways</i> |  |
|----------------------|--|
| •                    | While the population in the county overall is expected to decrease slightly over the next five years, growth in Buena Vista (5.4%) and Lexington (13%) is projected.   |
| •                    | A variety of employers are having trouble hiring at all levels of experience, even for well-paying positions in manufacturing, food service, social work and community services, and education. In some cases, the jobs may be within walking distance, but lack of childcare is a limitation. |
| •                    | For local residents living adjacent to blighted properties, they are concerned by lowered property values. Aesthetic improvements such as mowing the grass, repainting the exterior, and repairing the front porch could be cost-effective ways to address some of these concerns.             |
| •                    | TAP can serve as a liaison between lower-income neighborhoods and local government to connect residents with resources to repair and weatherize housing to address community members’ concerns about blighted properties and lack of maintenance.  |
| •                    | Stakeholders in Lexington suggested that while there are programs facilitating access to health services such as lower cost medications or health insurance, residents are either unaware of or not interested in utilizing them.  |
| •                    | The presence of institutions of higher education and business networks in Lexington increases civic engagement and community involvement.  |

*Survey*

As shown in Table 54 from the survey results (n=26), four of the top ten issues facing Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista are in the housing issue area and four are in the employment issue area for eight of the top ten responses. Overall, issues in these areas include the cost of housing and job quality. Additional discussion is provided in each of the subsections below.

| Rank | Issue   | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|---|-------|---------|----------------|
| 1    | High cost of rent/house payments  | 20    | 77%     | Housing        |
| 2    | Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit                                     | 17    | 65%     | Housing        |
| 3    | Houses in the area are not affordable   | 17    | 65%     | Housing        |
| 4    | Increased job stress due to short staffing  | 15    | 58%     | Employment     |
| 5    | Lack of well-paying jobs with benefits  | 14    | 54%     | Employment     |
| 6    | Can’t buy or rent housing because of bad credit   | 14    | 54%     | Housing        |
| 7    | High cost or lack of childcare available during work hours  | 12    | 46%     | Employment     |
| 8    | Lack of advancement opportunities in many jobs  | 12    | 46%     | Employment     |
| 9    | Good teachers are leaving the field   | 12    | 46%     | Education      |
| 10   | Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people                                | 12    | 46%     | Health         |
| 11   | Don’t have money to pay for car repairs   | 12    | 46%     | Transportation |
| 12   | Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc. | 11    | 42%     | Finances       |

| Rank | Issue  | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|--|-------|---------|----------------|
| 13   | Don't have money to buy or make the down payment on a vehicle                              | 11    | 42%     | Transportation |
| 14   | Public transportation doesn't have convenient hours or routes                              | 11    | 42%     | Transportation |
| 15   | Discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities | 11    | 42%     | Engagement     |

*Demographics & Poverty*

The City of Buena Vista has a population of 6,500 people and a median household income of \$36,600, which is \$28,400 below the national average. While the city's population declined slightly over the past five years (0.5%), it is expected to increase by 5.4% over the next five years, adding approximately 350 people. Like Rockbridge County, Buena Vista has fewer millennials compared to the national average of similarly-sized areas, and slightly more veterans and individuals retiring soon. It also has lower racial diversity compared to the national average (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022).

The City of Lexington has a population of 7,485 people and a median household income of \$51,000, which is \$14,300 below the national average. The city's population increased nearly 5% over the past five years and is expected to increase 13% by 2026. Lexington has fewer veterans and people retiring soon compared to the national average of similarly sized localities, which is unlike other localities within TAP's service area.

Rockbridge has a population of 22,272 people and a median household income of \$54,000, which is \$11,000 below the national average. The population increased by 1.2% since 2016 and is expected to decrease by 1.1% over the next five years.

*Employment*

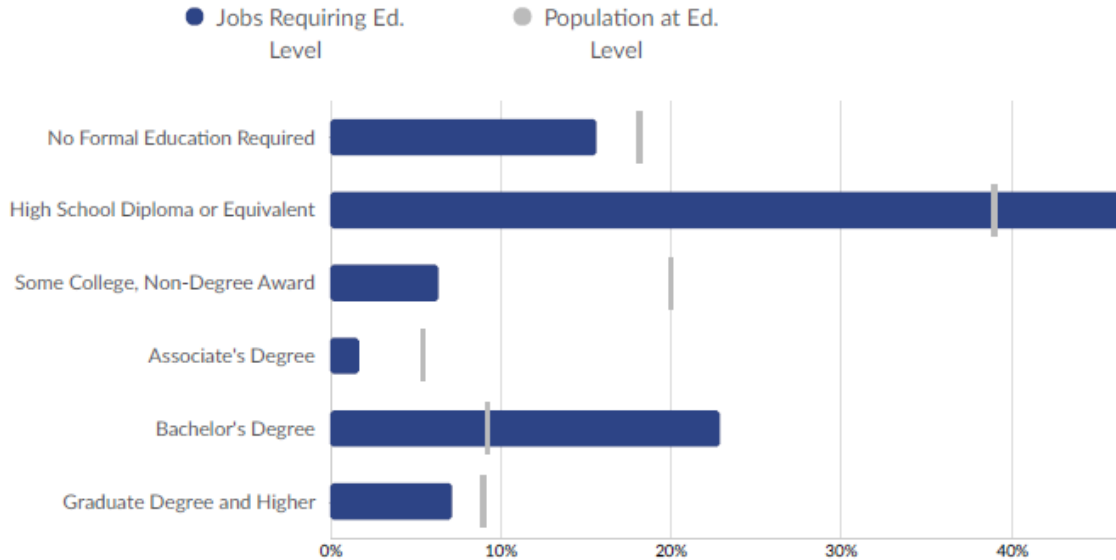
Four of the top ten issues raised for Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista from the survey (n=26) include increased job stress due to short staffing (58%), a lack of well-paying jobs with benefits (54%), the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (46%), and a lack of advancement opportunities in many jobs (46%).

Employment service issues raised in the survey comments section included the need for transition supports, childcare to support employment, and more assistance obtaining jobs. One commenter suggested providing more "opportunities to address other barriers to employment like: purchasing uniform, tools, arrears/debt, etc.; and provision of family supports until the first few paychecks arrive." Another commenter suggested that "in my community, there are no observable employment services, these are lacking. There are plenty of part-time and full-time jobs."

According to the Lightcast Economy Overview (2022) for Buena Vista, over the past five years, jobs declined by 1.8%, but are projected to increase back to pre-pandemic levels by 2026. Among the unemployed in Buena Vista (n=100), the majority are aged 25 – 54 years and 10% more females are unemployed. Labor force participation dropped significantly in 2020 – 2021 and is currently 60.1% in contrast to 68% in 2019. As of June 2022, unemployment in Buena Vista was 3.17%, which is lower than

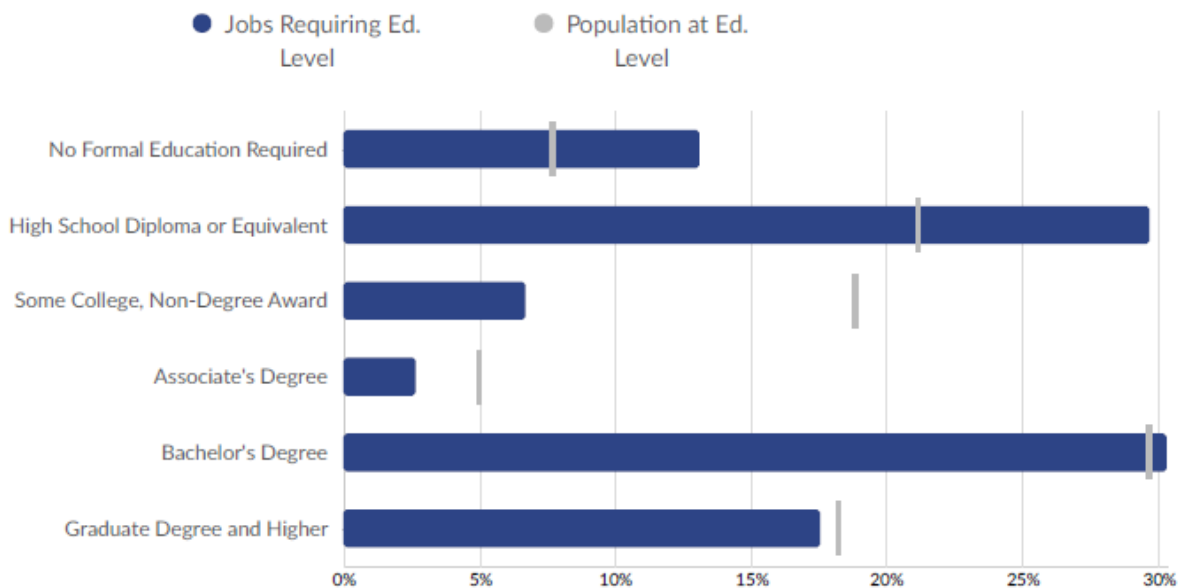
five years ago. There are more jobs in Buena Vista requiring either a high school degree or bachelor’s degree than the workforce provides (Fig. 56).

**Figure 56. Underemployment in the City of Buena Vista (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 27)**



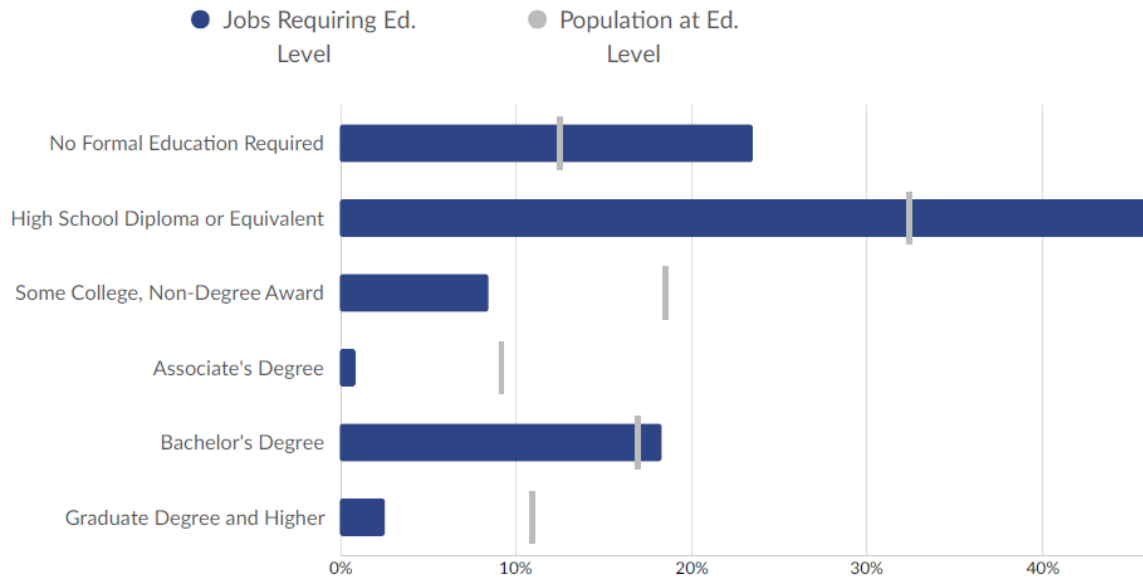
In Lexington, jobs have declined by 2% since 2016, and the labor force participation rate fell from 45% to 32% between 2016 and 2022. The city had an unemployment rate of 4.42% in June 2022 and of those unemployed (n=100), most were aged 25 – 54 years, with twice as many females unemployed than males. Regarding underemployment (Fig. 57), Lexington does appear to have a sufficiently educated workforce for the jobs available, though it’s unclear what jobs might be appropriate for those with some college, non-degree awards.

**Figure 57. Underemployment in the City of Lexington, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 28)**



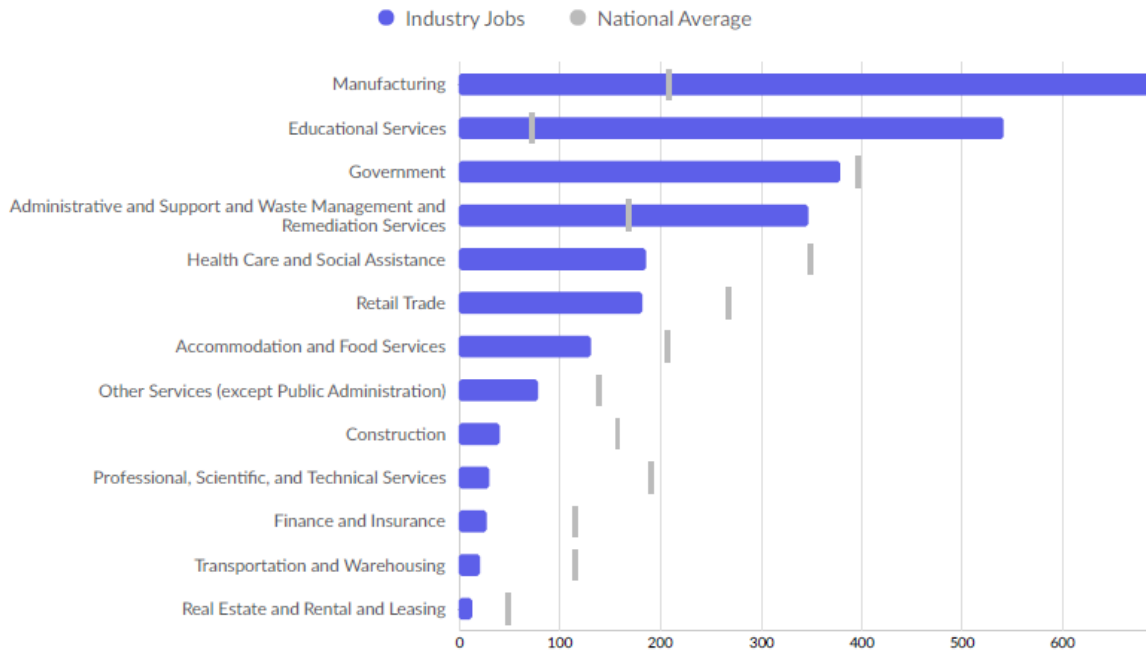
In Rockbridge County more generally, employment increased faster than the national average over the past five years (3.6% in contrast to 1.8%), and the 2022 labor force participation rate has also increased beyond 2019 levels. The county had an unemployment rate of 2.71% in June 2022 and of those unemployed (n=311), most were aged 25 – 54 years, with about 10% more females unemployed than males. Underemployment trends may be occurring for those with associate and graduate degrees (Fig. 58).

**Figure 58. Underemployment in Rockbridge County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 28)**



The largest industries in Buena Vista are Manufacturing (above national average), Educational Services (above national average), and Government (Fig. 59). The top growing industries include Educational Services, and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, including Protective Service. Top industry earnings per worker (over \$60,000/year) can be found in Transportation and Warehousing; Manufacturing; Government; Finance and Insurance; and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing. The top median hourly earnings (over \$40/hour) are in Architecture and Engineering, and Management. Top in-demand specialized skillsets in Buena Vista include Equipment Operation (above the national average), Advertisement (above the national average), and Housekeeping (above the national average). Top in-demand skills in Buena Vista include equipment operation, advertisement, and housekeeping, all well above the national average.

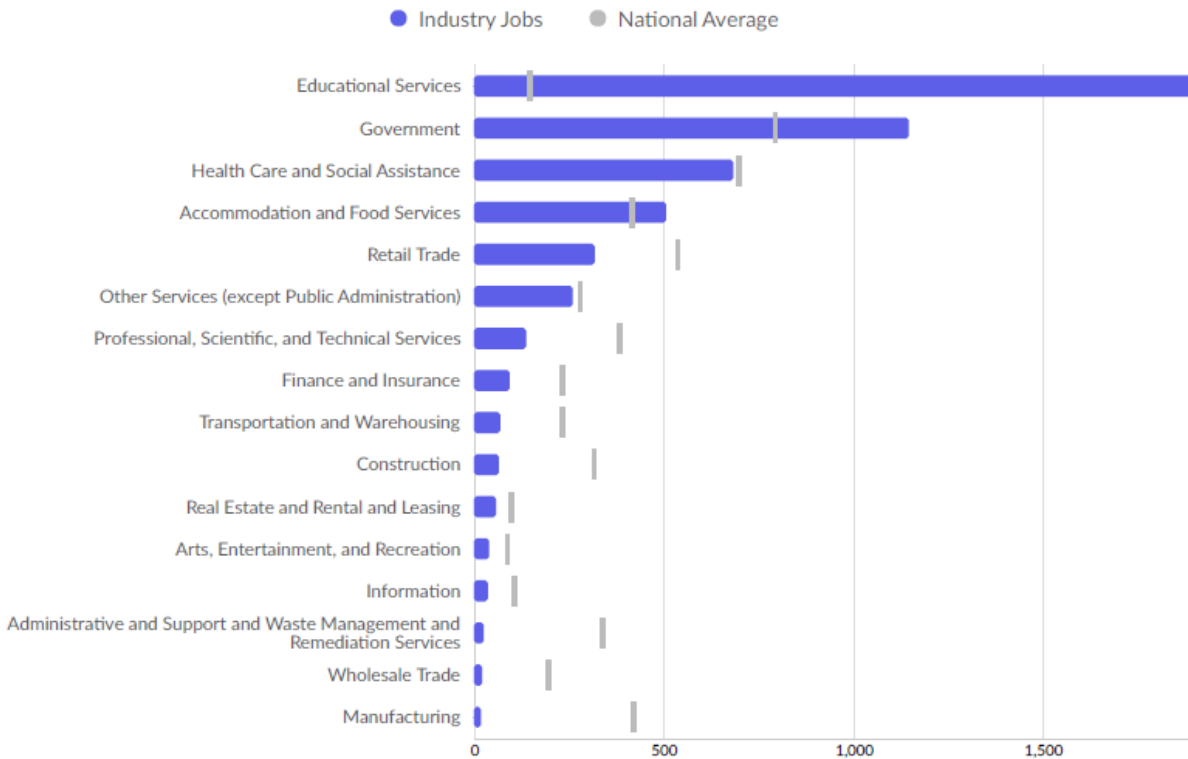
**Figure 59. Largest Industries in the City of Buena Vista (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 17)**



The largest industries in Lexington are educational services, far above the national average, as well as government and healthcare and social assistance (Fig. 60). Top industry job growth continues in educational services with the top employers including Washington and Lee and the Virginia Military Institute. Washington and Lee has seen an increase in enrollment in the past couple years, with a total of 728 graduates in 2020 (mostly bachelor’s degrees, with some master’s students).

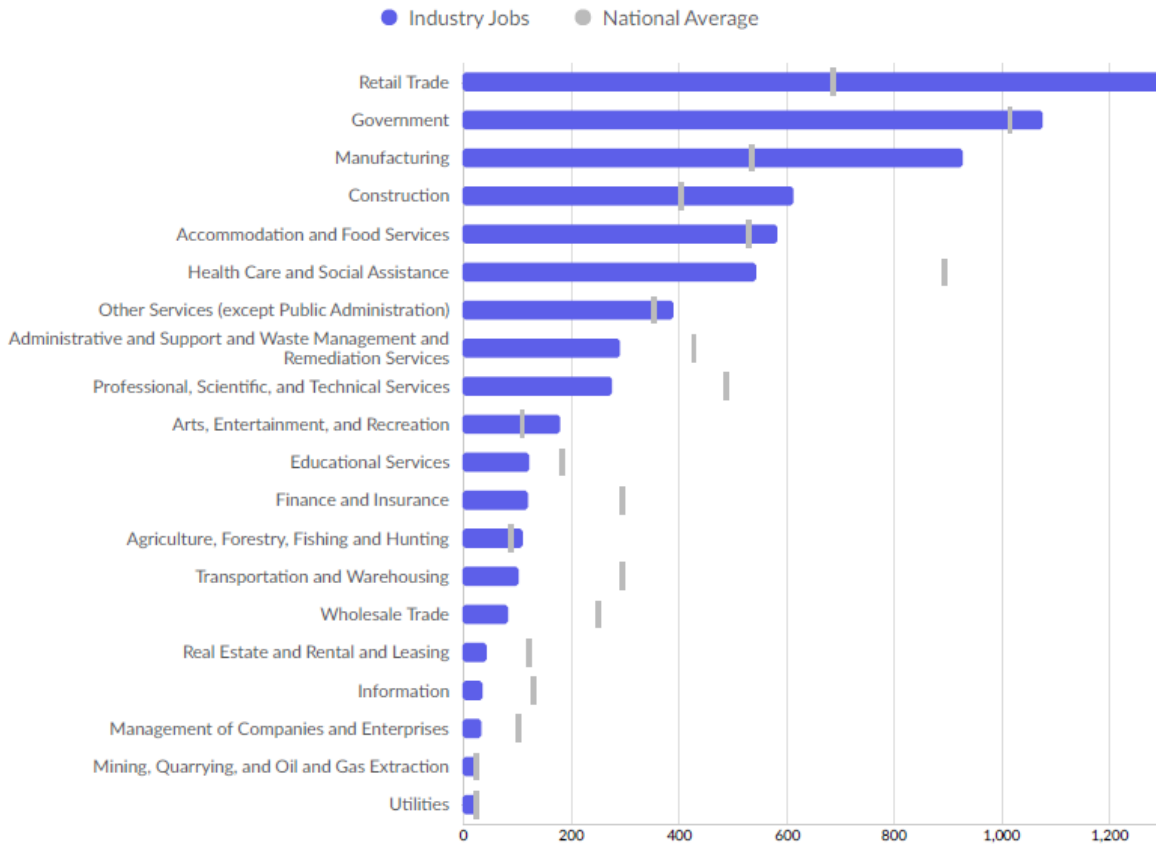
While Library and Educational Instruction is the top growing occupation, it is the seventh highest-paying occupation, after management, architecture and engineering, computer and mathematical, business and financial operations, etc. Top industry earnings in Lexington include jobs in finance and insurance (over \$80,000/year), healthcare and social assistance (over \$60,000/year), and government (over \$60,000/year). Top in-demand specialized skills in Lexington include merchandising, trauma care, and neonatal intensive care unit, all above the national average.

Figure 60. Largest Industries in the City of Lexington (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 17)



The largest industries in Rockbridge County are retail trade, government, and manufacturing, all exceeding the national rate (Fig. 61). Top industry job growth is occurring in professional, scientific, and financial services, administrative support and waste management and remediation services, and retail trade. Top industry earnings in Rockbridge County are in utilities (over \$100,000 per year), real estate and rental and leasing (over \$75,000 per year), and wholesale trade (over \$60,000 per year). Top occupation earnings occur in management, legal, and architecture and engineering (all over \$30/hour). Top growing occupations in the county are focused in management, healthcare practitioners and technical service, and architecture and engineering. The three top in-demand, specialized skills in Rockbridge County are in restaurant operations, cash register work, and caregiving.

Figure 61. Largest Industries in Rockbridge County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 17)



Stakeholders report that wages for jobs in the public sector cannot compete with private sector peers and as a result, local governments find it challenging to hire high quality employees to do a variety of jobs in public works, infrastructure, etc. A variety of employers are having trouble hiring at all levels of experience, even for well-paying positions in manufacturing, food service, social work and community services, and education. In some cases, the jobs may be within walking distance, but lack of childcare is a limitation.

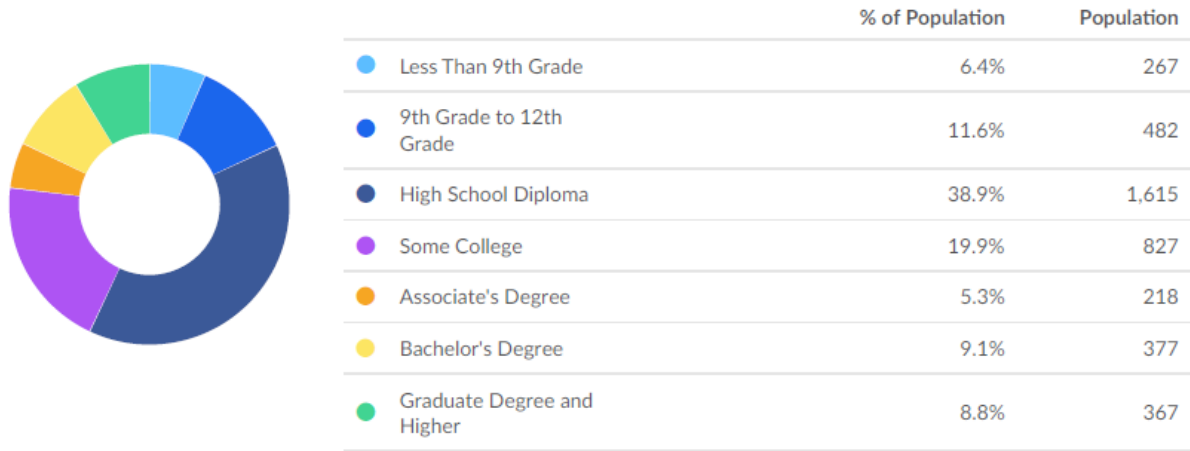
*Education & Development*

The top education issue facing Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista according to the survey (n=26) is that good teachers are leaving the field (46%). This is followed by a need for computer and/or internet access at home for educational purposes, the high cost or lack of childcare for parents to attend school, and the lack of school aftercare for school-aged children, which were all at 35%.



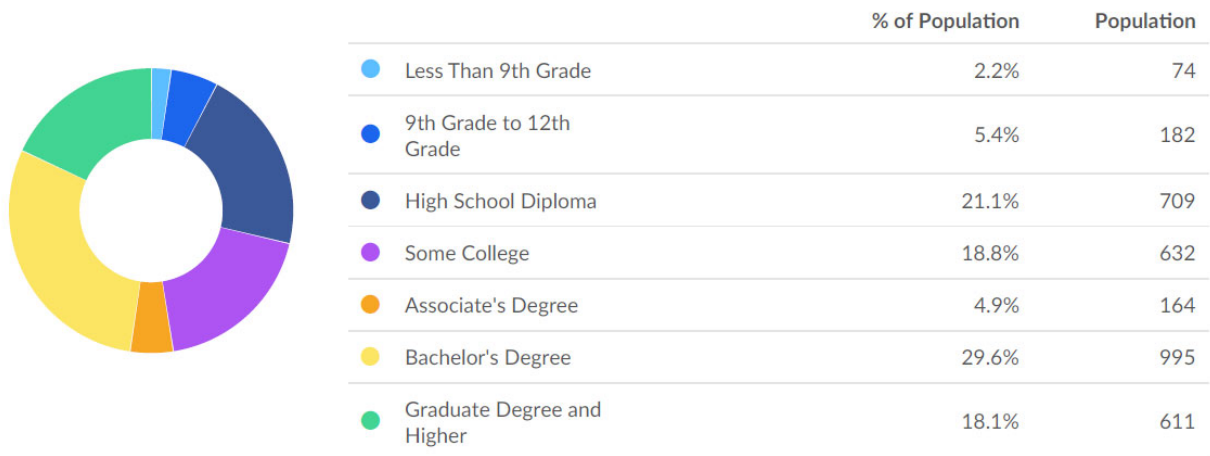
Less than a quarter of Buena Vista residents have completed an associate, bachelor’s, or graduate degree (Fig. 62). In 2020, there were 184 graduates in Buena Vista from Southern Virginia University. This pipeline has grown by 70% over the last 5 years. The highest share of these graduates completed studies in Business/Commerce, Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, and English Language and Literature. In Rockbridge County, rates of higher education are higher (Fig. 64).

**Figure 62. Educational Attainment in the City of Buena Vista (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



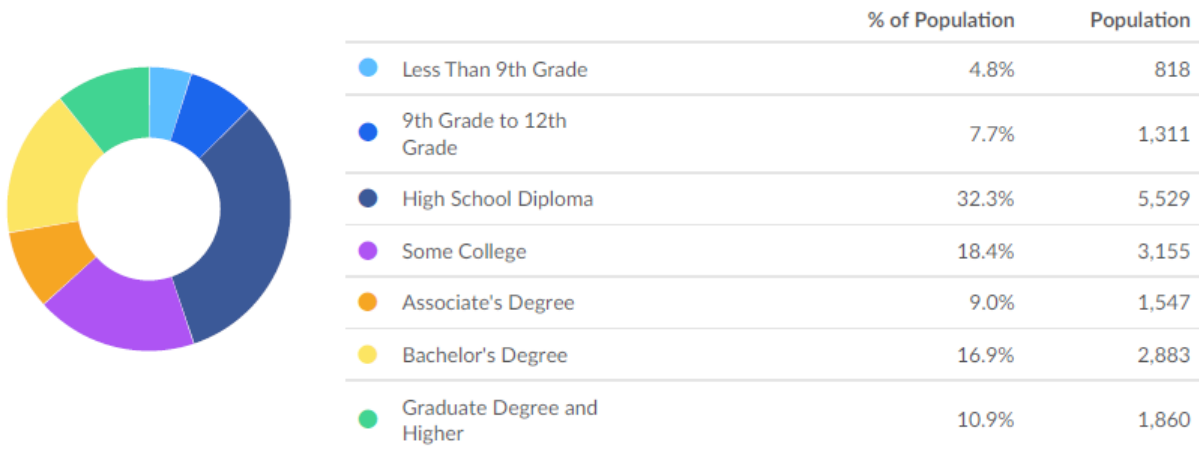
Lexington ranks above the national average by 9.2% for residents with bachelor’s degrees, with nearly a third of the population possessing this degree (Fig. 63). Lexington is home to a few institutions of higher education, including Washington and Lee and the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). This brings a younger demographic to the city and influences local economic development patterns. In addition to Head Start, afterschool programs and summer camp provided by the city of Lexington can support parents who work. However, affordable daycare is a “weak link” for low-income parents. TAP and the YMCA are key partners in addressing this need, in addition to private providers who are expanding their services. While the public school system does face a teacher shortage, Lexington continues to attract good teachers due to the quality of living.

**Figure 63. Educational Attainment in Lexington, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



As shown in Figure 64, a third of residents in Rockbridge County have a high school diploma, with about another third possessing a degree in higher education (associate, bachelor’s, or graduate degree). Notably, nearly 20% of residents in each locality have only completed some college, which may indicate there are issues completing the degree.

**Figure 64. Educational Attainment in Rockbridge County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**

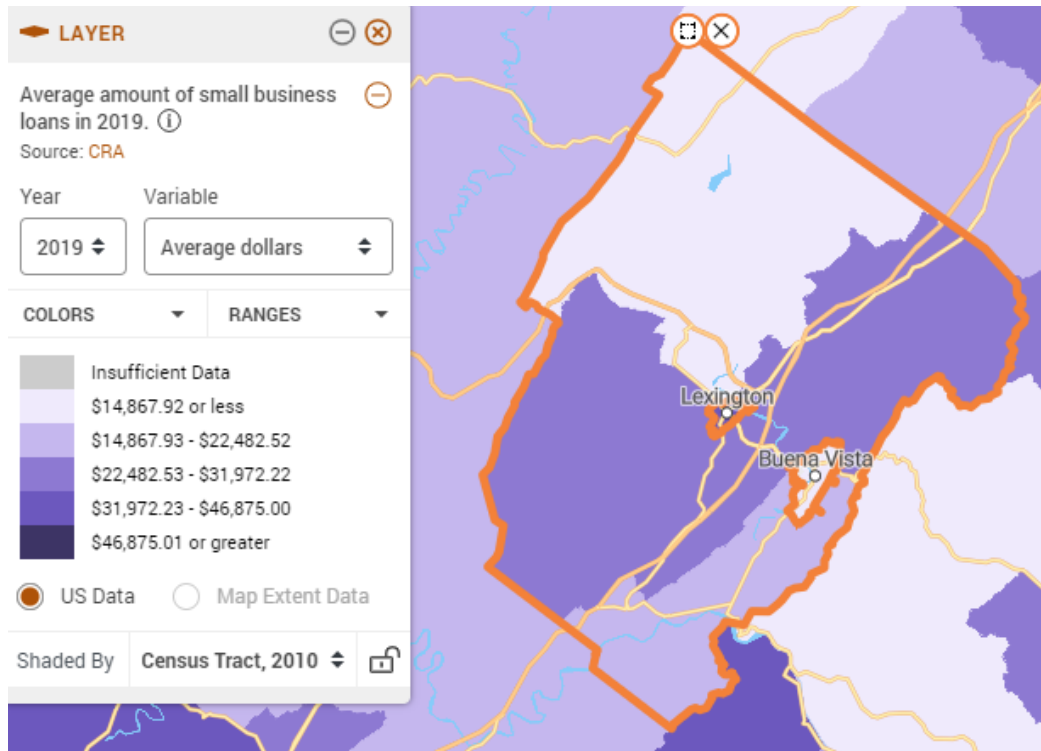


*Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building*

According to the survey results for Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista, the top financial concerns that could inhibit asset building are difficulty with money management (42%) and no knowledge of how to address credit issues (31%). Only 27% indicated that there were no public transportation options in their area and 42% indicated that public transportation does not have convenient hours or routes.

The City of Lexington is replacing a significant amount of public water and sewer infrastructure to better serve neighborhoods on the east side of town. In general, these neighborhoods include more traditional, walkable streets; however, lots are smaller and narrower streets make parking and driving more difficult. The city also received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to improve sidewalk, curb, and gutter infrastructure in the Diamond Hill neighborhood to keep homes safe from flooding and to maintain neighborhood walkability.

Within Rockbridge County, the highest average amount distributed for small business loans occurred in Lexington and east and west of it (Fig. 65). Notably, Buena Vista received, on average, \$13,850 in small business loans in 2019. Average travel to work is 38 minutes for those living in the northernmost part of Rockbridge County (PolicyMap, 2022).

**Figure 65. Average Amount of Small Business Loans (PolicyMap, 2022)**

### *Housing*

Four of the top ten issues identified through the survey for Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista (n=26) were in the housing domain, including the high cost of rent/house payments (77%), a lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit (65%), a lack of affordable housing in the area (65%), and bad credit preventing buying or renting housing (54%).

Housing service issues raised in the survey comments section included affordability, maintenance and repairs, and the need for shelters. One commenter highlighted several issues, stating that “as people age, they really need the resources to make their homes accessible. Most of our clients don't understand landlord/tenant rights until our program explains that to them. Rent has become beyond accessible for those on social security and SSD. Families want to be together in shelter even if they aren't married... we are losing young professionals because of the accelerating housing costs.” Another commenter suggested there is a need for “increasing the number of permanent supportive housing [units] available, and in general safe and affordable housing stock that's not concentrated in just one neighborhood.”

Lexington, like other small communities around Virginia, is not immune to the inflated housing market driven in part by the pandemic. External buyers looking to purchase vacation rentals or second homes are driving up the price of homeownership and gentrifying lower-income neighborhoods. Some of these buyers are parents and alumni of VMI who will improve the housing stock, but these properties rarely go back onto the market because they are sold to other friends and families in the VMI network. Second home and short-term rentals in gentrifying neighborhoods can also mean this housing sits vacant throughout the year or is turned into rental housing that is managed by absentee landlords. Another

issue is that local homes are owned by family members who do not live in Lexington and so cannot keep up the property, but who also do not want to sell. For local residents living adjacent to these properties, they complain of blight and lowered property values. Aesthetic improvements such as mowing the grass, repainting the exterior, and repairing the front porch could be cost-effective ways to address some of these concerns.

#### *Health/Social Behavioral Development*

The only health issue in the top ten issues for Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista from the survey (n=26) is a concern that mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people (46%). This is followed by two concerns related to cost, including that going to doctor/dentist is too expensive (35%) and that some are unable to afford medications (31%). These were followed by concerns about the impacts of substance use including family disruptions, overdoses, and increased crime and violence.

Lower-income families struggle to take care of their health and the health of their children due to high costs, lack of insurance, and juggling busy schedules with few resources, particularly among single-parent households. Stakeholders in Lexington suggested that while there are programs facilitating access to health services such as lower cost medications or health insurance, residents are either unaware of or not interested in utilizing them.

#### *Civic Engagement & Community Involvement*

According to the survey (n=26), the top engagement concern in the Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista community is discouragement because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (42%).

A local government stakeholder noted that the communities of Rockbridge, Lexington, and Buena Vista work together to share resources and coordinate services. Due to the small scale of these localities, local government may seem more accessible to citizens living in these places. Even so, stakeholders noted that residents in lower-income and minority neighborhoods, such as those in Lexington, may be more hesitant to voice concerns regarding infrastructural or community needs because of historical underrepresentation and discrimination. Residents in the more affluent west side of Lexington are more outspoken about their needs.

Stakeholders report that some partners in the region include Habitat for Humanity to construct new housing, the Rockbridge Area Relief Association (RARA) for food distribution, the health departments to address code, health and safety issues, the SPCA to address pet hoarding and neglect, the community service boards to help with mental health and substance use issues, the RADAR bus to address some transportation needs, and TAP, although stakeholders in Lexington noted that because they are not in TAP's core service area, they "don't get the attention that other communities get." One suggestion is that TAP can serve as a liaison between lower-income neighborhoods and local government to connect residents with resources to repair and weatherize housing to address community members' concerns about blighted properties and lack of maintenance.

A grassroots initiative that launched in 2020 called the [Walker Program](#) is working to provide a structured facilitation process and mentoring to promote the creation of new businesses owned by people of color. Additionally, with the presence of Washington and Lee, stakeholders note that "we have a lot of civically engaged individuals, faculty and students, because the institution values that and

promotes it. A lot of resources focused on community issues, awareness, there is an active NAACP chapter; there's always been a strong network out there trying to support individuals in the neighborhood who need support."

*Related Resources*

City of Buena Vista, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set. [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

City of Lexington, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set. [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

Rockbridge County, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set. [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

PolicyMap. (2022). <https://www.policymap.com/>

Roanoke County/Salem

*Key Takeaways*

- Stakeholders in Roanoke County see TAP as a key resource and partner in the areas of childcare, through programs such as Head Start, and housing, by providing housing assistance and counseling.
- Vulnerable groups within the county include people with substance use disorder, lower-income families lacking affordable housing, transportation and social supports, people with disabilities, and immigrants.
- Top growing industries in Roanoke County, in addition to healthcare, include arts, entertainment, and recreation. In Salem, top industry job growth is occurring in construction and wholesale trade.
- Stakeholders report that burnout and attrition are straining the public health workforce, including social services. Cultivating a qualified workforce will include creating internship programs, hiring candidates with relevant experience who may not have all of the formal credentials, expanding the allowable fields in which a candidate can have experience, and strengthening the pathway between 4-year degree programs and job placements immediately following graduation.
- Employers need to be more flexible regarding offering remote/hybrid work opportunities.
- The education pipeline in Salem has shrunk by 9% over the past five years.
- School referrals for mental health services for students are facing waiting lists and delays.
- Multi-county transportation options that can connect with resources such as the RADAR bus are needed.
- Stakeholders in Roanoke County report there is a need for additional domestic violence and homeless shelter capacity. Lack of affordable housing and waitlists for people who have housing vouchers are compounding the problem.
- Public awareness of the existing resources could be improved. Professional stakeholders with the Roanoke County DSS also noted that regular agency-wide meetings would be a great venue for TAP to visit and share information about its programs and resources. All DSS social workers also meet quarterly if TAP wanted to target information to frontline staff.

*Survey*

As shown in Table 55, from the survey results (n=110), four of the top ten issues facing Roanoke County/Salem are in the housing issue area and four are in the health issue area for eight of the top ten responses. Overall, these concerns are related to the cost of housing and SUD, gun violence, and mental health issues.

| Rank | Issue  | Count | Percent | Issue Area |
|------|--|-------|---------|------------|
| 1    | High cost of rent/house payments                                   | 80    | 73%     | Housing    |
| 2    | Houses in the area are not affordable                              | 69    | 63%     | Housing    |
| 3    | Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people | 68    | 62%     | Health     |

**Table 55. Top Survey Issues for Roanoke County/Salem (n=110)**

| Rank | Issue   | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|---|-------|---------|----------------|
| 4    | Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit                                     | 67    | 61%     | Housing        |
| 5    | Gun/violence in the community   | 64    | 58%     | Health         |
| 6    | Substance use in the community - crime and violence   | 63    | 57%     | Health         |
| 7    | Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc. | 58    | 53%     | Finances       |
| 8    | High cost or lack of childcare available during work hours  | 55    | 50%     | Employment     |
| 9    | Substance use in the community - overdoses  | 55    | 50%     | Health         |
| 10   | Can't buy or rent housing because of bad credit   | 51    | 46%     | Housing        |
| 11   | Increased job stress due to short staffing  | 50    | 45%     | Employment     |
| 12   | Lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate  | 50    | 45%     | Engagement     |
| 13   | Going to doctor/dentist is too expensive  | 48    | 44%     | Health         |
| 14   | Don't have money to pay for car repairs   | 48    | 44%     | Transportation |
| 15   | Good teachers are leaving the field   | 47    | 43%     | Education      |

*Demographics & Poverty*

The population of Roanoke County is 315,204 people, reflecting an increase of 0.8% over the past five years, with projections for growth of 1.5% over the next five years. The median household income is \$57,600, which is \$7,400 below the national median income. Compared to localities of a similar size, Roanoke County has on average slightly fewer millennials, slightly more people retiring soon, less racial diversity, more veterans, less violent crime, and more property crime.

The population of Salem is 25,365 people, reflecting an increase of 0.4% over the past five years, and is projected to grow by 0.5% over the next five years. The median household income is \$63,400, which is \$1,600 below the national median income. Compared to localities of a similar size, Salem has on average slightly fewer millennials, slightly more people retiring soon, less racial diversity, more veterans, less violent crime, and slightly more property crime.

Stakeholders note that while Roanoke County is perceived as being a relatively wealthy county overall, there are pockets of poverty that overlap in some cases with more rural areas. The biggest challenges facing lower-income families are lack of affordable housing, public transportation, social support networks, and an increasing rate of substance use disorder. Immigrant communities, notably Vietnamese, exist but may keep to themselves and avoid engaging with needed services due to concerns regarding citizenship documentation status and/or language barriers. For disabled adults without family supports, social services and the court system may have to manage the care plans for these individuals, which can lead to overwhelming caseloads for too few attorneys and case managers, which can then compromise care and quality of life.

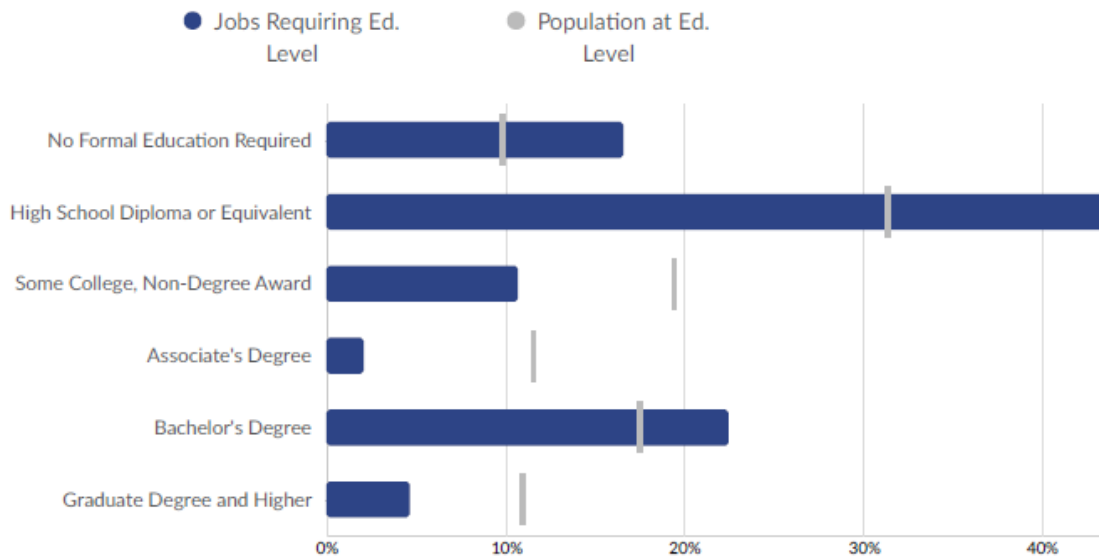
*Employment*

According to the survey (n=110), employment did not rank highly as an issue of concern for Roanoke County/Salem. Two of the top employment issues from the survey were related to accessing

employment, including the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (50%) and the high cost or lack of transportation to get to work (37%). The other top employment concerns revolved around work-life balance and quality employment, such as increased job stress due to short staffing (45%), lack of well-paying jobs with benefits (38%), lack of employer flexibility around family responsibilities (35%), and lack of advancement opportunities in many jobs (34%).

Unemployment in Roanoke County in June 2022 (n=4,503) was 2.93%, concentrated among those aged 25 – 54 years, with 15% more females unemployed than males. Jobs declined by 3.9% over the past five years and labor force participation rates dropped approximately 3% since 2019 and have yet to bounce back. Underemployment may be occurring for those with an associate or graduate degree (Fig. 66).

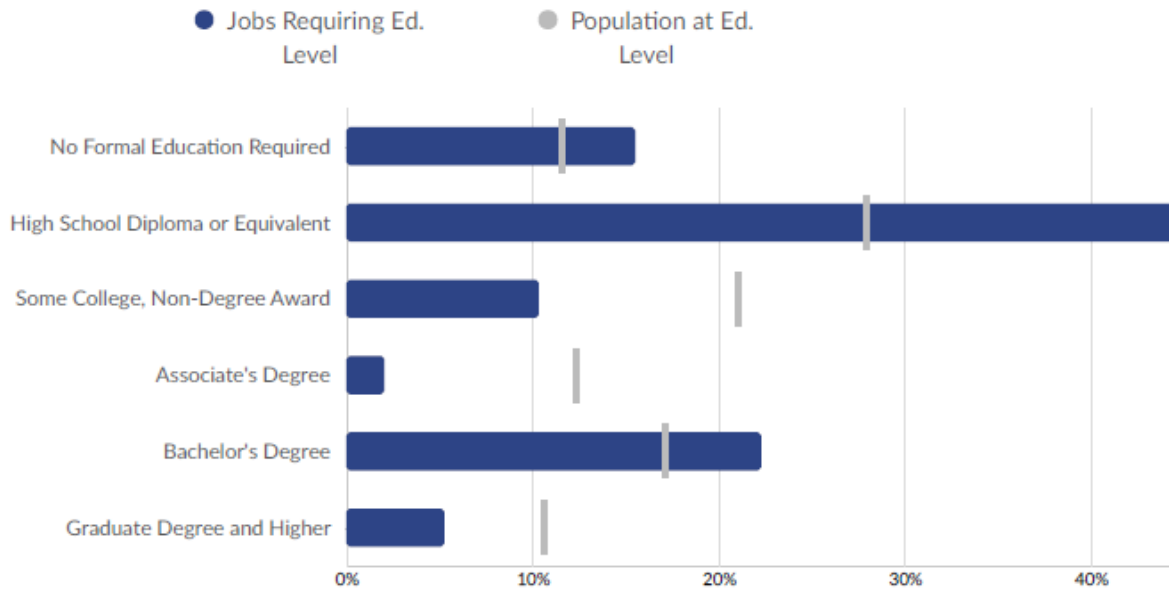
**Figure 66. Underemployment in Roanoke County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 28)**





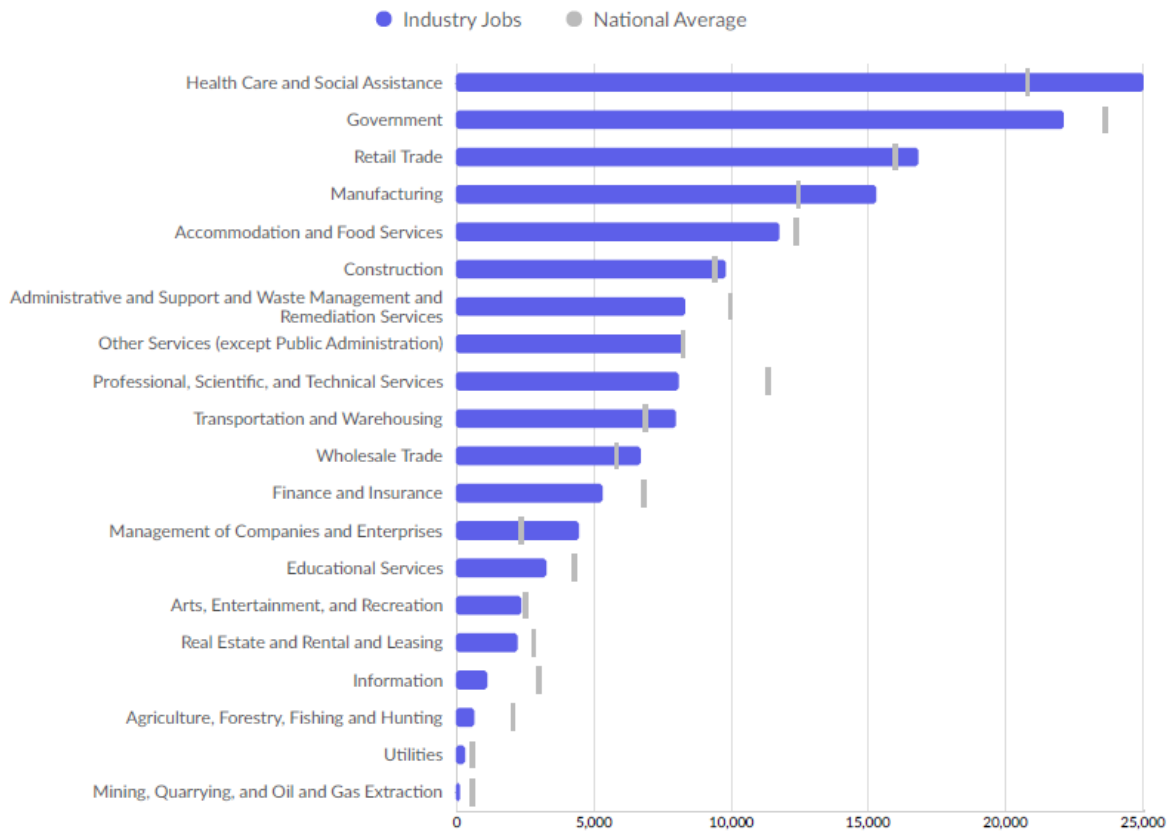
Unemployment in Salem in June 2022 (n=367) was 2.94%, also concentrated among those aged 25 – 54 years, with roughly equal unemployment between males and females (about 5% more females). Jobs in Salem declined by 8.1% since 2016 and are not expected to return to 2016 levels by 2026, hovering around 20,000 jobs. Similarly, labor force participation rates declined since 2019 and have not recovered as of June 2022. Underemployment may be occurring for those with associate or graduate degrees (Fig. 67).

**Figure 67. Underemployment in Salem, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 27)**



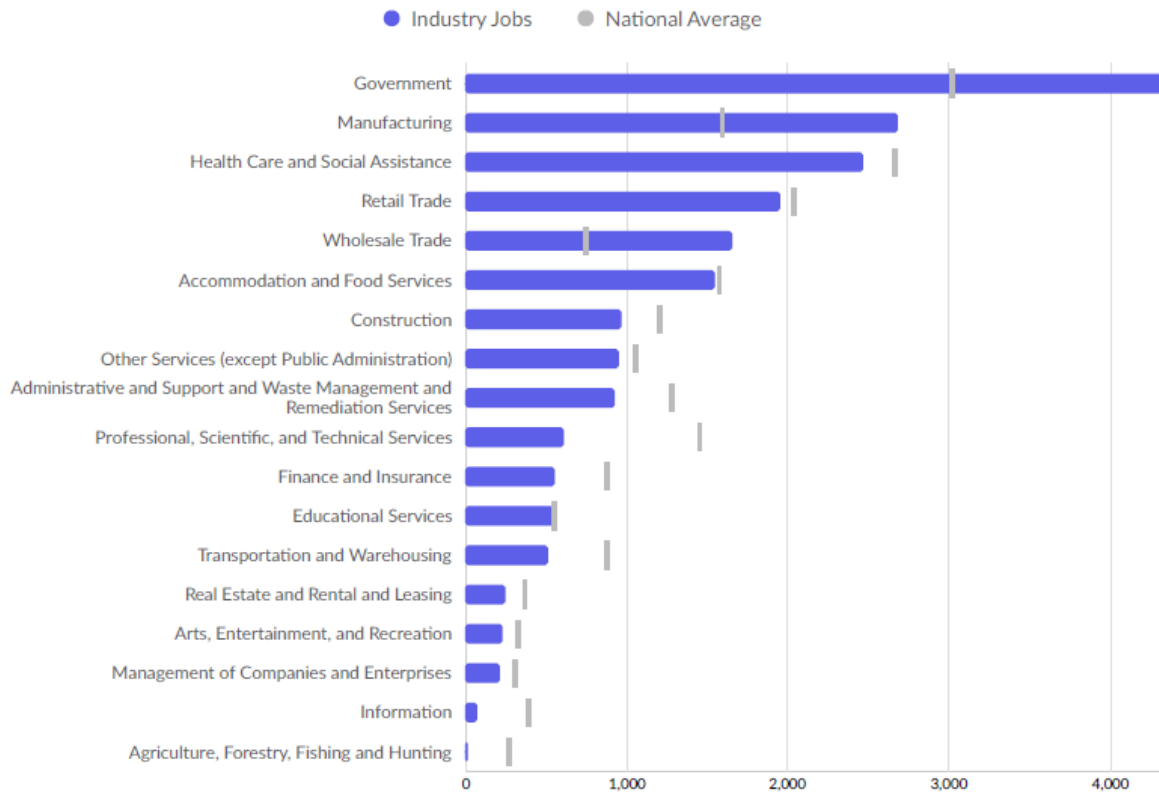
The largest industries in Roanoke County (Fig. 68) are healthcare and social assistance (with a gross regional product over \$2 billion), government, and retail trade. Top growing industries, in addition to healthcare, include arts, entertainment, and recreation. Top industry earnings occur in utilities (over \$120,000), management of companies and enterprises (over \$100,000), and finance and insurance (over \$80,000). The largest occupation types are office and administrative support, transportation and material moving, and sales and related services. Top growing occupations are occurring in management, business and financial operations, and healthcare practitioners and technical. The lowest median hourly earnings are in food preparation (\$11/hour), building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (\$12/hour), and personal care and service (\$12/hour).

**Figure 68. Largest Industries in Roanoke County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 16)**



The largest industries in Salem are government, manufacturing, and healthcare and social assistance (Fig. 69). Top industry job growth is occurring in construction and wholesale trade. Top industry earnings occur in government, wholesale trade, professional, scientific, and technical services, finance and insurance, and manufacturing (all over \$80,000/year). Largest occupations are in office and administrative support, production, and transportation and material moving. Top growing occupations are in management, business and financial operations, and construction and extraction. Top median hourly earnings are concentrated in management (over \$40/hour), computer and mathematical, and architecture and engineering (both over \$30/hour). The lowest median hourly earnings are in food preparation and serving, personal care and service, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (over \$10/hour). Top in-demand skills in Salem include auditing, blueprint reading, and blueprinting, all well above the national average.

Figure 69. Largest Industries in Salem, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 16)



The Roanoke County Department of Social Services (DSS) reports that all service departments have grown without increasing staff, which has increased the need to hire more people to cover the growing demand and avoid stretching existing staff too thin. At the same time, organizations like DSS are dealing with high vacancies and lack of qualified candidates due to employment challenges caused by the pandemic, such as burnout. Peer organizations are competing for a limited pool of candidates, which is driving up salaries to improve job offers and retention of qualified staff. Higher salaries may be necessary, but stakeholders report this has led to instability as staff jump from job to job chasing the better offer. Cultivating a qualified workforce will include creating internship programs, hiring candidates with relevant experience who may not have all of the formal credentials, expanding the allowable fields in which a candidate can have experience, and strengthening the pathway between 4-year degree programs and job placements immediately following graduation.

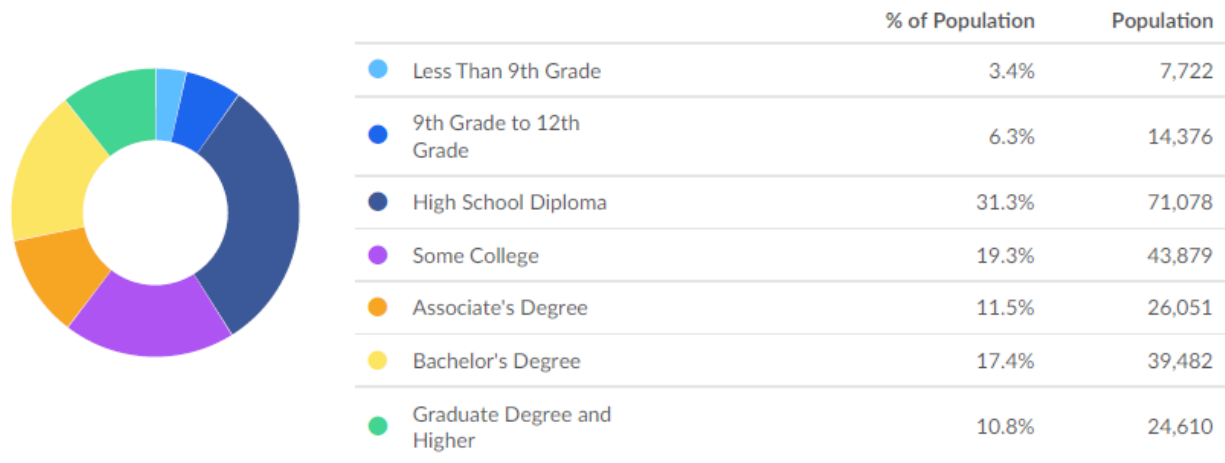
One silver lining to the pandemic has been increased acceptance of hybrid and remote work set-ups; in fact, one stakeholder noted that, “I would probably lose half my staff if I didn’t allow telework. If I decided I wasn’t going to allow it, they could go elsewhere and telework 100%. So it’s important to be flexible as an employer right now. Remote work can be a challenge for new people, but it is a good option for more experienced workers.”

*Education & Development*

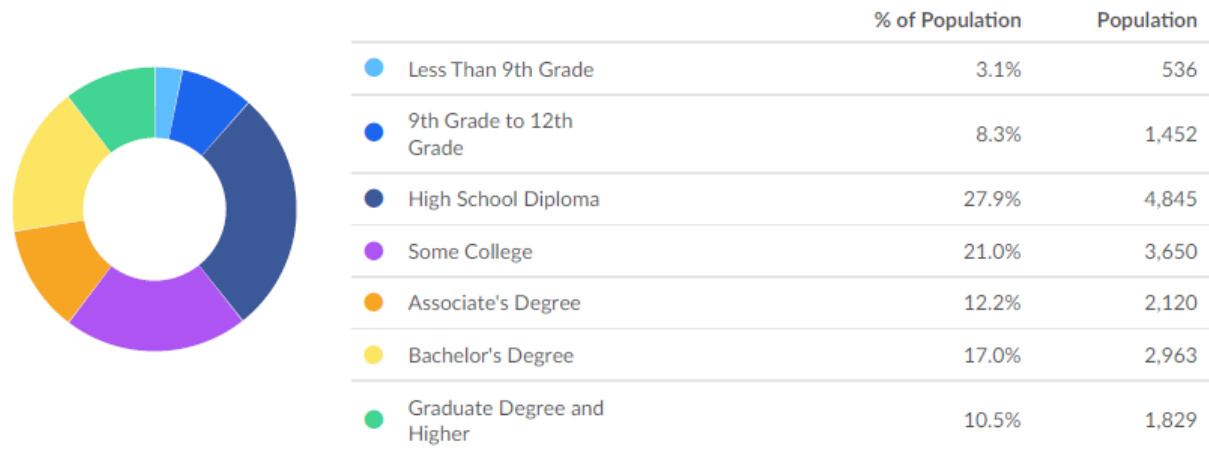
According to the survey (n=110), education issues did not rank too highly compared to other concerns for Roanoke County/Salem. The top response for the education domain was that good teachers are leaving the field (43%).

Educational attainment in Roanoke County and Salem (Figs. 70, 71) indicates that nearly a third of residents only have a high school degree, and more than a third have some type of higher education (including associate, bachelor’s, or graduate degrees). The education pipeline in Salem has shrunk by 9% over the past five years; in 2020, Roanoke College generated nearly 500 bachelor’s degree graduates, and American National University graduated 336 degrees including a majority of certificates, with some associate, bachelor’s, and graduate degrees. The most common fields of study were in business administration, medical/clinical assistant, and phlebotomy technician/phlebotomist.

**Figure 70. Educational Attainment in Roanoke County (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



**Figure 71. Educational Attainment in the City of Salem, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



Stakeholders noted that lack of teacher appreciation during the pandemic, insufficient staff and teacher salaries, the politicization of masks and educational topics, and public pressure on the school board have all compounded to reduce the quality of education in Roanoke County. There is a connection between public education settings and healthcare providers related to the topic of youth mental illness, where school referrals for mental health services for students are facing waiting lists and delays.

#### *Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building*

According to the survey results for Roanoke County/Salem (n=110), the top financial concerns that could inhibit asset building are difficulty with money management (53%), lack of knowledge on how to create or use a budget (39%), and no knowledge of how to address credit issues (36%). Only 31% of respondents indicated that there were no public transportation options in their area, and 37% indicated that public transportation does not have convenient hours or routes.

Multi-county transportation options that can connect with resources such as the RADAR bus are needed to facilitate employment-based mobility needs between Roanoke and other counties.

#### *Housing*

Four of the top ten issues raised in the survey for Roanoke County/Salem (n=110) were in the housing domain, including the high cost of rent/house payments (73%), lack of affordable housing in the area (63%), a lack of money for a down payment on a house or security deposit (61%), and the fact that many can't buy or rent housing because of bad credit (46%).

Regarding housing services, one survey responder noted there is a "lack of collaboration amongst builders, investors, financial practitioners, and the like." Another suggested that "affordable houses are often near vacant/derelict structures that deter people from purchasing available houses... need to get rid of derelict structures to encourage sales/improvements of other houses." Another commenter observed that housing challenges are a national rather than a local trend, stating "pandemic-related inflation has been very discouraging as someone who had previously been in the market to be a first-time homebuyer. Now, houses in rougher parts of town are selling for what houses in more desirable parts of town were selling for prior to the pandemic. I am fortunate to have housing myself, though. I don't know if the statistics back this up, but it feels like the other thing that has been rising in conjunction with rents/house prices is the number of people experiencing homelessness. It seems like the density of persons experiencing homelessness is reaching new highs, and there are no easy solutions for them to be housed since prices continue to grow. Both of these are national issues, though, and are not specific to the TAP service area."

Stakeholders with the Roanoke County Department of Social Services have seen a significant amount of homelessness, explaining that there are long waiting lists for vouchers, due in part to the lack of housing stock in general and the lack of subsidized housing in safe neighborhoods. While regional shelters can help to alleviate immediate housing needs, some policies in the past have been more punitive than rehabilitative, which has driven clients away despite their need for safe shelter. New leadership at shelters such as the Roanoke Rescue Mission show promising signs of improving their approach.

A stakeholder who previously participated on TAP's IPR board noted that it has been dissolved due to funding issues not covering the cost of the building rehabilitation. "I love that board, and served on it for

two years. Until further notice, it has been dissolved. At the last meeting, we reflected on how positive that small, dedicated group of people has been.”

#### *Health/Social Behavioral Development*

Four of the top ten issues raised in the survey for Roanoke County/Salem (n=110) were in the health domain, including concerns that mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people (62%), there is gun/violence in the community (58%), and concerns related to substance use in the community resulting in crime and violence (57%) and overdoses (50%).

Many survey respondents echoed similar concerns, such as “crime in Roanoke is an issue and it is difficult to hire more qualified officers. Substance abuse is increasing. More mental health counseling is needed.”

While domestic violence shelters are staffed with hard-working and dedicated staff, stakeholders in Roanoke County report there is a need for additional DV shelter capacity. Key partners working in health in the county include Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare (BRBH), DePaul Community Resources, Intercept Health, Family Services of the Roanoke Valley, and Youth Advocate Programs (YAP).

Stakeholders note challenges serving a growing population of youth and adults suffering from mental health issues and/or SUD. Lack of capacity has forced some foster youth to wait for inconvenient periods of time to find suitable temporary shelter while a longer-term placement is determined. While the pandemic increased isolation and stress for some families, it has also fostered a reprioritization of family values, including better life-work balance. For healthcare and social service providers, use of virtual meeting software and telehealth has also eased the logistical burden for some clients to participate in services.

#### *Civic Engagement & Community Involvement*

The top two engagement issues identified in the survey for Roanoke County/Salem (n=110) are a lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate (45%), and discouragement because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (42%).

Public awareness of the existing resources could be improved. Professional stakeholders with the Roanoke County DSS also noted that regular agency-wide meetings would be a great venue for TAP to visit and share information about its programs and resources. All DSS social workers also meet quarterly if TAP wanted to target information to frontline staff. Partner organizations note that they get a lot of requests each week from residents inquiring about TAP-related benefits through their website.

Foster programs are supported by local church groups that organize to make blankets, and a partner provided funding for foster kids to receive backpacks with school supplies. Other community partners provide free haircuts to kids. Civic networks are recovering since the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, however stakeholders report that increasingly vitriolic political divides are pushing people away from certain types of community advocacy.

#### *Related Resources*

City of Salem, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set.  
[www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

Roanoke County, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set.  
[www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

Roanoke City

Key Takeaways:

- In addition to healthcare and social assistance, top growing industries in Roanoke City include arts, entertainment, and recreation. The top growing occupations can be found in management, business and financial operations, and healthcare practitioners and technical services.
- Small business development and investment in local community organizations continues to be an area for TAP to support.
- Local government and social service agencies report challenges finding qualified personnel to fill a large number of vacancies. Top in-demand, specialized skills include those in healthcare: trauma care, orthopedics, neonatal intensive care unit, and nursing.
- The public school system plans to open a community empowerment and education center to provide a one-stop center to access programs such as Head Start and early education, English language and literacy, naturalization instruction, tutoring, GED classes, etc.
- Stakeholders report a decrease in test and school performance, and higher rates of truancy during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to virtual learning and developmental setbacks.
- More clarity and discussion are needed among stakeholders to address a lack of awareness and connection across organizations with similar missions.
- Employment and social programs for low-income youth aged 18 – 24 years are needed to prevent gang and gun violence, but difficult to deliver. Age-appropriate venues and peer-based programming are recommended.
- The library serves as a community center for several communities in Roanoke, offering a variety of services, programs for all ages, and gathering spaces for afterschool needs and community organizing. Sometimes the library is the only place for kids to go after school or where seniors can access the internet and receive assistance using a computer.
- Affordable and transitional housing for immigrants and low-income families is not available in the quantity needed.
- High child obesity rates in low-income neighborhoods are due to unhealthy eating behaviors, food deserts, poor quality or nonexistent pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, and lack of public transportation to access healthy foods.
- TAP can continue to collaborate with local government initiatives such as community violence interventions, and citizenship and public leadership academies, to increase civic involvement.

Survey

As shown in Table 56 from the survey results (n=223), four of the top ten issues facing Roanoke City are in the health issue area and three are in the housing issue area for seven of the top ten responses.

| Rank | Issue  | Count | Percent | Issue Area |
|------|--|-------|---------|------------|
| 1    | High cost of rent/house payments                                   | 162   | 73%     | Housing    |
| 2    | Mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people | 133   | 60%     | Health     |
| 3    | Houses in the area are not affordable                              | 130   | 58%     | Housing    |
| 4    | Gun/violence in the community                                      | 127   | 57%     | Health     |



**Table 56. Top Survey Issues for Roanoke City (n=223)**

| Rank | Issue   | Count | Percent | Issue Area     |
|------|---|-------|---------|----------------|
| 5    | Lack of money for down payment on a house or security deposit                                     | 125   | 56%     | Housing        |
| 6    | Substance use in the community - crime and violence   | 114   | 51%     | Health         |
| 7    | Have a difficult time with money management - credit card debt, checking account management, etc. | 111   | 50%     | Finances       |
| 8    | High cost or lack of childcare available during work hours  | 109   | 49%     | Employment     |
| 9    | Don't have money to pay for car repairs   | 107   | 48%     | Transportation |
| 10   | Going to doctor/dentist is too expensive  | 106   | 48%     | Health         |
| 15   | Discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities        | 96    | 43%     | Engagement     |
| 21   | Good teachers are leaving the field   | 88    | 39%     | Education      |

*Demographics & Poverty*

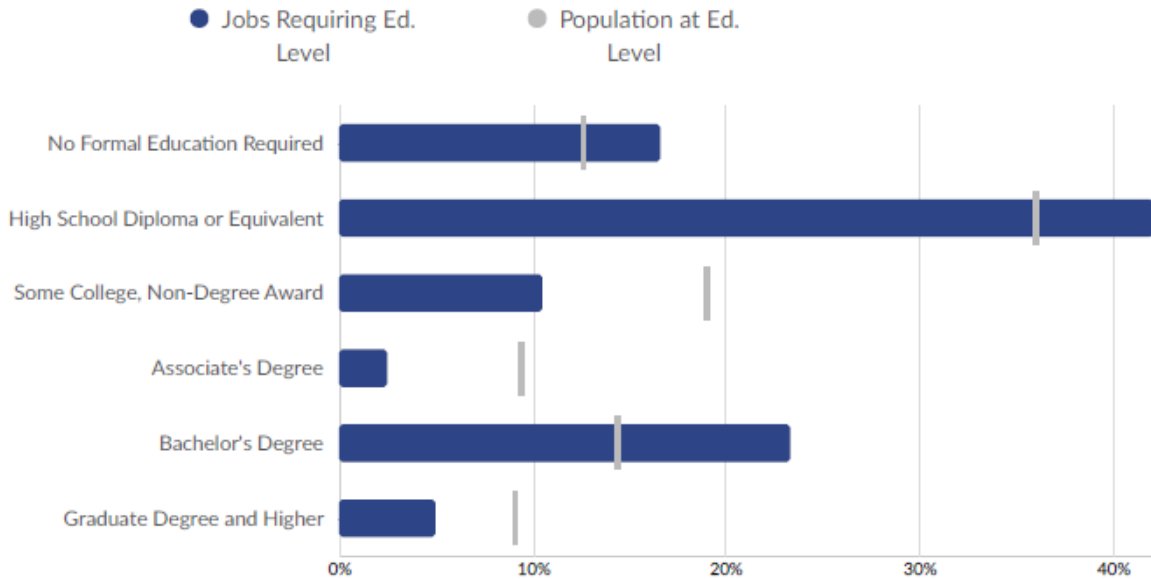
The population of Roanoke City in 2021 was 99,612 people, which represents a 0.2% increase since 2016; the population is projected to grow by 2% by 2026. The median household income is \$45,700, which is \$19,300 below the national median income of \$65,000. Unlike some other localities within TAP’s service area, Roanoke City has slightly more millennials and racial diversity than the national average of areas of a similar size; as well as more violent and property crime. Like other TAP localities, Roanoke City has higher-than-average number of veterans and people retiring soon.

*Employment*

According to the survey (n=223), employment did not rank highly as an issue of concern for Roanoke City. Two of the top employment issues from the survey were related to accessing employment, including the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (49%), and the high cost or lack of transportation to get to work (38%). The other top employment concerns revolved around work-life balance and quality employment, such as increased job stress due to short staffing (43%), lack of well-paying jobs with benefits (42%), lack of employer flexibility around family responsibilities (34%), and lack of advancement opportunities in many jobs (27%).

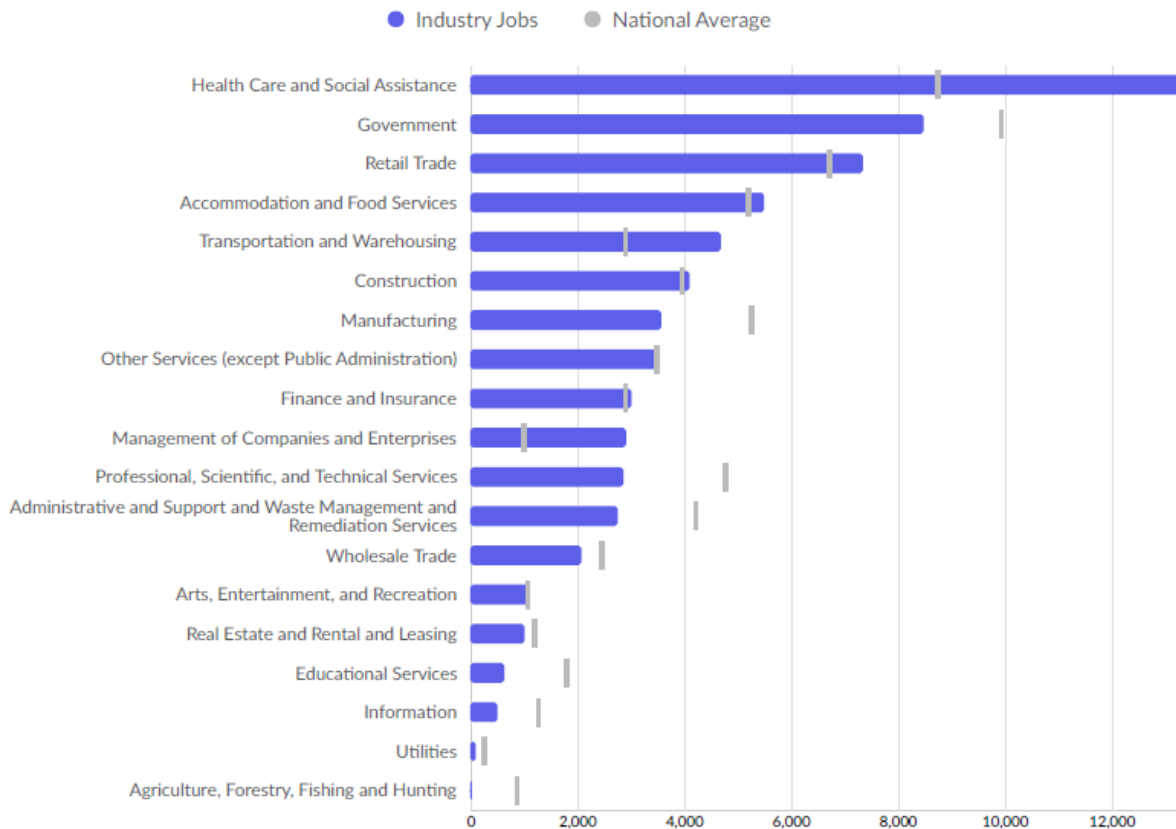
The majority of those unemployed in June 2022 (n=1,596) were aged 25 – 54 years, and 17% more were female. Jobs declined by 6.5% in Roanoke City since 2016, and both jobs and labor force participation rates are not projected to return to pre-pandemic levels by 2026. Unemployment was 3.36% in June 2022. Underemployment may be occurring for those with associate and graduate degrees (Fig. 72).

**Figure 72. Underemployment in Roanoke City (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 29)**



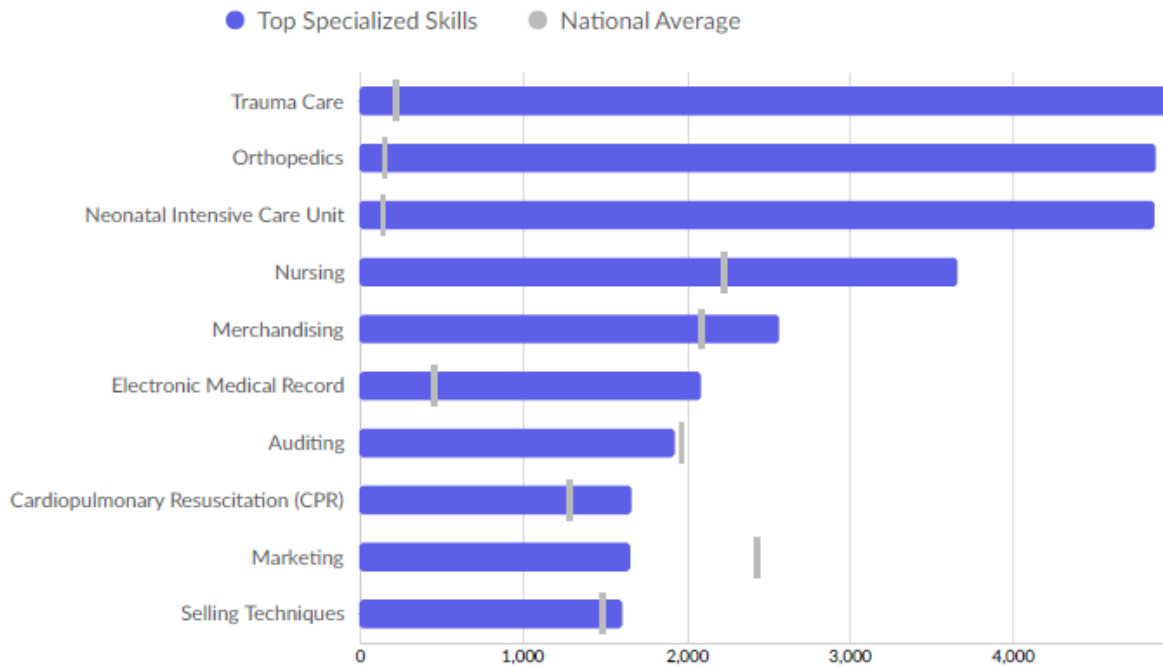
The largest industries in Roanoke City are healthcare and social assistance, government, and retail trade (Fig. 73). In addition to healthcare and social assistance, top growing industries include arts, entertainment, and recreation. The top industry earnings occur in finance and insurance (above \$100,000/year), utilities (above \$90,000/year), and management of companies and enterprises (above \$90,000/year). The largest occupations occur in office and administrative support, healthcare practitioners and technical services, and transportation and material moving, all above the national average. The top growing occupations can be found in management, business and financial operations, and healthcare practitioners and technical services. Top median earnings in Roanoke city are in management (above \$40/hour), computer and mathematical, and legal (above \$30/hour).

**Figure 73. Largest Industries in Roanoke City, VA (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 17)**



Stakeholders described that a co-lab shared office space is being developed in the Williamson Road area of Roanoke, with aims to serve immigrant and low-income populations who have entrepreneurship and business plans. Small business development and investment in local community organizations continues to be an area for TAP to support. Local government and social service agencies report challenges finding qualified personnel to fill a large number of vacancies. Top in-demand, specialized skills include those in healthcare: trauma care, orthopedics, neonatal intensive care unit, and nursing (Fig. 74).

**Figure 74. In-Demand Skills in Roanoke City (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 31)**



*Education & Development*

According to the survey (n=223), education issues did not rank too highly compared to other concerns for Roanoke City. The top response for the education domain was that good teachers are leaving the field (39%).

While graduation rates have improved over the last decade, stakeholders report that students in school today are being raised by parents who did not have a good experience when they were in the public school system, which may impact their children’s perspective on the importance of education.

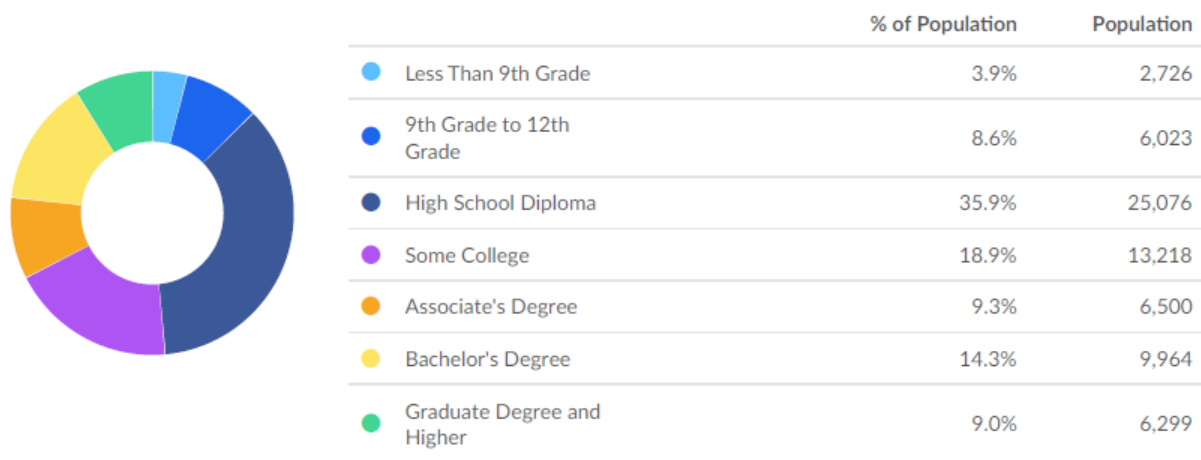
The Roanoke City Public Schools system is undergoing nearly 40 construction projects in the summer of 2022, to update wiring and technology in several buildings, some of which are over 100 years old. Schools embedded within neighborhoods are landlocked and do not have space or land area to expand outwards, so the only way to expand the building is to build up. Additional needs to improve the educational environment include improved teacher pay to attract the best teachers, and better teacher to student ratios in the classroom.

The Roanoke City Public School system has recently opened the [Local Impact for Tomorrow \(Lift\) Center](#), which is a health clinic that will serve the Southeast community at the local Fallon Park Elementary School. A United Way health survey identified poor dental health and lack of access to dental healthcare as being a primary detractor from a student having a good educational experience. The Lift Center, staffed by Carilion Clinic, includes a dental clinic and nurse practitioner who can make referrals for physical health issues and will be open all summer, multiple days a week. Carilion also recently partnered with Delta Dental to launch a new pediatric dental residency program that aims to increase trained specialists who may serve at the Lift Center and who can generally serve more pediatric dental patients (Williams, 2023).

Similarly, the school system plans to open a community empowerment and education center at the current location of its administrative offices, which will move downtown. The plan is to provide a one-stop center to access programs such as Head Start and early education, English language and literacy, naturalization instruction, tutoring, GED classes, etc. The City and TAP worked together to launch the Coaching Boys Into Men program, and its sister program for girls, Athletes as Leaders, in the public schools.

Stakeholders report a decrease in test and school performance, and higher rates of truancy during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to virtual learning and developmental setbacks. Education levels overall (Fig. 75) indicate that more than a third of residents in Roanoke City only have a high school degree, and less than 10% have a graduate or associate degree.

**Figure 75. Educational Attainment in Roanoke City (Lightcast Economy Overview, 2022, p. 3)**



The Youth Services Advisory Committee Employment workgroup discussed the need for increasing youth awareness about training and workforce programs, and the opportunity to set up an employment mentoring program for 18 – 24-year-olds. Roanoke City Council also runs a youth services board; there is interest among stakeholders to connect and align priorities to ensure employment is represented. Similarly, it would be helpful to add school representatives and employers to the youth advisory task group.

The Youth Activities workgroup expressed concerns regarding young people aged 18 – 26, who are no longer school-aged but who may not be gainfully employed. This population is both difficult to connect with through formal channels and more vulnerable to getting involved with crime or gun violence. Gun violence has been occurring during the day, and students in school have explained that a big motivation to having a gun is for protection. Suggestions were made to meet young people where they are, such as at nightclubs and event venues, to listen to their needs and share information about programs that could be of interest. Programs could help to connect at-risk youth with peers who have “made it,” to share their experiences.

Stakeholders also suggested that a resource directory is needed to compile information about all of the programming available to youth in the Roanoke region. Some programs mentioned were the Each One, Teach One gardening model, the Reset Team, Project Discovery at TAP, local dance studios, etc. In

parallel, a marketing campaign is needed to reach young people in order to share this information. Stakeholders considered ways to engage youth in the design process, such as a high school competition to design a mobile app that features the resource directory.

The Safe Spaces work group discussed the need for more education and awareness of resources regarding alcohol consumption at prom, proper use of gun locks in the home, and intimate partner violence prevention. The dearth of safe housing might be addressed through TAP's land bank initiative and the opportunity to acquire vacant properties to house vulnerable groups, which could be paired with social services.

The Mental Health workgroup similarly discussed the challenge of serving 18 – 29-year-olds to address higher rates of suicide and the need to engage with the Suicide Prevention Council better. There is also interest in training more community health navigators who look like the community they serve to promote healthy living. To address the grief and loss woven throughout experiences of trauma and violence, there is an opportunity to engage and revitalize the Grief/Loss Collaborative in the community. Finally, the group discussed the need for training opportunities for service providers to better understand the stigma related to mental health.

#### *Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building*

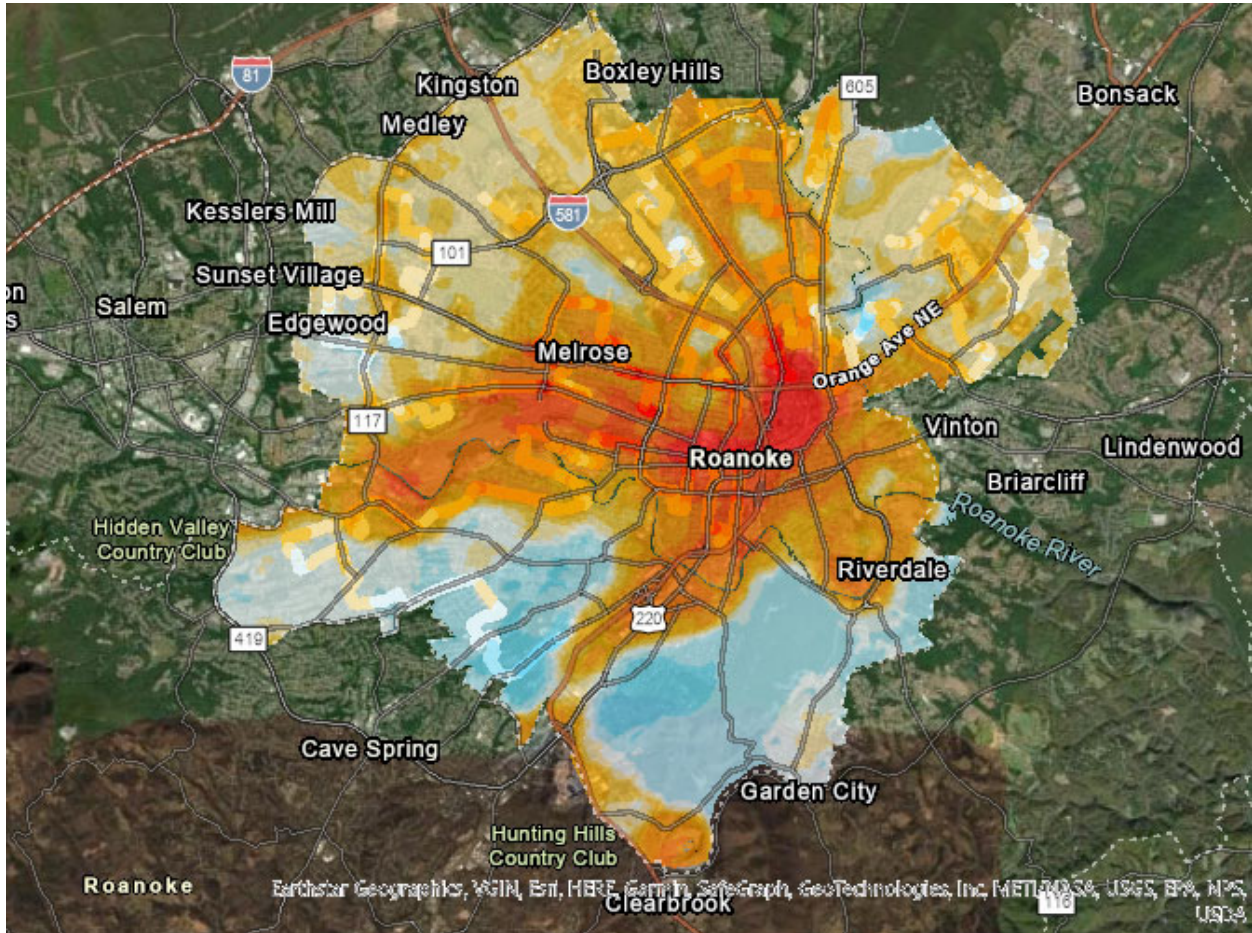
According to the survey results for Roanoke City (n=223), the top financial concerns that could inhibit asset building are difficulty with money management (50%), lack of knowledge on how to create or use a budget (43%), and no knowledge of how to address credit issues (38%). Only 23% of respondents indicated that there were no public transportation options in their area, and 43% indicated that public transportation does not have convenient hours or routes.

The Roanoke parks system has a lot of outdated infrastructure and has directed significant funding towards parks in the northwest and southeast quadrants of the city to catch up on deferred maintenance. ARPA funding is being used to renovate the community center in Eureka Park; however, due to inflation and the cost of construction, the value of the funding has diminished in 1.5 years. As this facility expands, Parks and Recreation anticipates a need for 4 – 5 more staff to address an increase in daytime, afterschool, and evening programs. The City is working on a 10-minute walk plan, where every resident has access to a park within a 10-minute walk. There is increased emphasis on building nice playgrounds and libraries in historically underserved neighborhoods. The library serves as a community center for several communities in the Roanoke region, offering a variety of services, programs for all ages, and gathering spaces for afterschool needs and community organizing. Sometimes the library is the only place for kids to go after school or where seniors can access the internet and receive assistance using a computer.

A study conducted in August 2020 by the City of Roanoke Office of Sustainability identified urban heat islands where extreme heat and high temperatures may be occurring during the summer months (Fig. 76). Extreme heat can increase and exacerbate health problems and can be mitigated through infrastructural improvements at the individual and community level, such as helping low-income households install and pay for air conditioning and planting more trees on urban streets. "The study used over 30,000 data points and found a variation in temperature of 15 degrees F across the City, with the temperatures highest in downtown and low-income neighborhoods. Heat concentrated by the density of buildings and concrete in the downtown area appear to warm the surrounding residential

areas as well. The temperatures were lowest in the parks and shaded residential areas” (City of Roanoke, n.d.).

**Figure 76. Roanoke City Heat Mapping (August 2020) (City of Roanoke, n.d.)**



Stakeholders relayed findings from community focus groups regarding limitations to existing public transportation options in Roanoke City. For example, residents cannot work evening shifts at Valley View Mall due to lack of bus service. One stakeholder suggested that the city can build trust with residents of Melrose by providing an all-day trolley service in that neighborhood free of charge, traveling a route with stops for local social service and community amenities, as well as connecting to other transit hubs.

### *Housing*

Three of the top ten issues from the survey for Roanoke City (n=223) are in the housing domain, including the high cost of rent/house payments (73%), the unaffordability of housing in the area (58%), and a lack of money for a down payment on a house or security deposit (56%).

Regarding housing, one survey respondent offered that “there are too many people living on the streets because shelters are overcrowded. There needs to be more housing or shelters for these homeless people.” Another indicated that the “cost of housing surmounts income levels of many working families and they are stuck in housing that is not up to code or is run down.”

More housing is needed for refugee families within Roanoke City, particularly because adjacent localities have not been as welcoming to this vulnerable population. During the evacuation of American troops from Afghanistan last year, stakeholders report that the City accepted 50 refugee families but could not find housing for them other than hotels and substandard public housing with higher levels of crime. The same issue applies to lower-income families with a housing voucher who cannot find safe housing. Single mothers with young and impressionable kids “feel trapped” by the lack of options other than low-income, high-crime areas such as northwest Roanoke. Stakeholders also pointed out that some of the subsidized housing created through the HUD target area investments in Roanoke City is not accessible to many low-income citizens due to lack of household financial literacy and their inability to qualify for housing due to employment or credit criteria.

Affordable senior housing is also an issue. According to one stakeholder, “I hear about it once a week – seniors’ inability to downsize. One guy is not able to maintain his property now, but can’t afford to downsize. In this market, you’re going to sell high and buy even higher, and there is a lack of senior assisted living. Even if you do have access and you’re on a waiting list, it’s an exorbitant cost, and seniors can’t afford that on a fixed income.”

#### *Health/Social Behavioral Development*

Four of the top ten issues from the survey for Roanoke City (n=223) are in the health domain, including that mental health issues are increasing, especially among young people (60%), there is gun/violence in the community (57%), there is substance use in the community leading to crime and violence (51%), and there is concern about the expense of going to the doctor or dentist (48%).

Regarding health and safety, one survey respondent suggested that stakeholders should be “increasing access to health care throughout the city, and there needs to be deeper engagement of the community in restoring safety.” Another offered the following suggestions: “Allowing and encouraging small personal family food gardens; and daily walks. Removing public housing residents who have guns. Known guns are reported but nothing is done. Families are afraid.” Another reinforced this, saying that there is “so much violence in the community, I don’t want to come out after dark.”

Stakeholders working on gun and violence prevention in Roanoke City report that the community is reeling from trauma due to violence against people of color, as evidenced through the Black Lives Matter movement and related events. Some of the underlying reasons for increased violence include racism, poverty, lack of education, family structure and parenting skills, a need to better connect with one’s heritage and creating better role models for youth. Recent gun violence is not necessarily tied to gang activity but rather, younger individuals resolving disputes with guns. (Additional findings are available from a [2021 study](#), “City of Roanoke, Virginia Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment: Final Project Report.”) Through the City’s Gun Violence Commission and the recently funded Gun Violence Prevention grant, Roanoke is interested in introducing a [Community Violence Intervention \(CVI\)](#) initiative, pairing grassroots agencies with the local police department, to change the narrative and work collaboratively. Other initiatives, such as [National Night Out](#) that brings together community members and law enforcement at an annual block party event, have been helpful.

The Roanoke City youth and gang violence prevention unit offers several programs with which TAP could partner or continue to support. These include an afterschool outreach program for young men in the 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> grade called “Rights of Passage” to become a man, which provides a holistic view of how to deal



with conflict. This program has a long waiting list due to increased interest. Related to this, the “Reset Team” has an apprenticeship program for high-risk teens to get experience working in any department of local government including a wage of \$15/hr., which can help to build their résumés and facilitate employment offers in local government in the future. A third program promotes self-mastery for those in alternative education middle and high schools. The program teaches respect for authority and oneself, with a focus on improving one’s education and centering personal growth. To date, this is one of the only programs serving this particular population. The unit is also working to develop an Empathy Project to recognize victims of gun violence.

Stakeholders also report substance use among youth, some as young as middle school-aged.

A stakeholder conducting public health research, particularly among the student population in Roanoke City, explained that researchers are starting to see a shift in health disparities from northwest to northeast and southeast Roanoke, but historically, the pockets that are under-resourced and lower income have fared worse over time. These quadrants experience childhood obesity from kindergarten to 5th grade at higher rates than the total population, around 50%, which is reportedly very high for this age group. Barriers to social connectivity among students and families struggling with obesity is a primary factor, which can include refugee populations. Food deserts, poor quality or nonexistent pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, and lack of public transportation to access healthy foods are additional factors. According to the Roanoke Valley Healthy School Index, the most frequently requested infrastructure improvement in the Melrose neighborhood is better sidewalks, followed by better grocery stores.

#### *Civic Engagement & Community Involvement*

The top two engagement issues identified in the survey for Roanoke City (n=223) are discouragement because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (43%), and a lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate (39%).

Neighborhood Services fields questions from citizens and facilitates access to different departments within local government. Stakeholders report that citizens typically request additional clarification about the budgeting process and how decisionmakers allocate resources, which streets will be paved and why, where new sidewalks will be placed, and transparency around police response.

Stakeholders with Roanoke City local government noted that:

“Roanoke has been compared to a broken mirror, where every service provider has their little piece, they just sit in the corner looking at how good a job they’re doing, meanwhile the person next to them has that other piece that fits. The pieces need to fit better. Over the last five years, through efforts such as the Gun Violence Commission, those providers and agencies are finally sitting together, including the housing authority, TAP, CHIP, etc. It’s been really cool to see, because historically it hasn’t been that way; it’s been a fight for resources, a fight for grants, but you’re really just addressing one element of the problem, not holistically. For example, you’re providing housing, but you’re not in the position to address substance use, job training, or transportation.”

Stakeholders did point to positive efforts by the City of Roanoke to engage the public in neighborhood improvement planning, Leadership College, My City Academy for immigrants, Roanoke Neighborhood

Advocates, and that the identification of targeted HUD funding over extended periods of time has concentrated improvements in a particular neighborhood in a prolonged way. However, it is difficult for the most marginalized citizens to participate in these activities due to lack of capacity. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, citizen engagement and volunteerism dropped significantly and doesn't appear to be rebounding to pre-pandemic levels.

A stakeholder involved with Star City Reads explained that through the growth of the program, several disparate youth-oriented organizations have come together and are able to share more information about what they do, which has improved organizations' ability to collaborate to better serve youth. The feeling persists among some stakeholders that there is a lack of awareness and connection across organizations with similar missions.

*Related Resources*

City of Roanoke. (n.d.). Roanoke's Heat Island Mapping. <https://www.roanokeva.gov/2722/Roanokes-Heat-Island-Mapping>

City of Roanoke, VA. (2022). Lightcast Economy Overview: Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set. [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

## 7) Analysis and Preliminary Recommendations

The primary purpose of a community action agency's needs assessment under the ROMA system is to inform the strategic planning process and identify means of measuring progress toward addressing those needs. The variety and volume of information contained in this assessment report can be overwhelming. The data about needs can often inform this process, but it rarely offers clear priorities or actions. In this section, we offer a rubric for organizing and synthesizing this information for use in the strategic planning process. This means beginning to think about not just the needs identified herein, but how those needs might be prioritized and addressed. Under the ROMA process, CAAs are encouraged to conceive of needs at the individual, agency, and community levels. For the purposes of our analysis, we connect these **different levels of analysis to different types of action** that TAP could take to address those needs.

- **Individual Level:** Every individual or family that comes to TAP for assistance has a unique set of needs. Regardless of the program in which that individual/family is involved, program staff must consider and address those needs to be able to assist them in meeting their goals. One primary means of addressing individual needs is for TAP programs to build in supports and processes proactively for those with particular needs. For example, do job training program participants have transportation or childcare barriers that might inhibit them from being successful? How can the program better support those needs? Does an early education program have participants traumatized by domestic violence at home? What assessments and policies can be put in place to identify and address those issues? Do clients seeking housing assistance have the education to move into a higher-paying job? How can emergency assistance programs help put recipients onto a better path toward self-sufficiency? Individual-level needs are ones that TAP could primarily seek to address through strategic program design or by dual enrollment with complementary programs.
- **Agency Level (programmatic):** Sometimes the prevalence of a particular need requires new programming to begin to address that need. The agency must sometimes look across various community needs that warrant additional focus and resources and decide which ones it may reasonably be able to address. Akin to this, the agency should periodically examine existing programs to evaluate if their efforts continue to be warranted.
- **Agency Level (infrastructure):** In addition to programmatic issues that require an agency-level response, the agency itself may have needs in order to be effective in delivering programming across the mission spectrum. Can the agency retain staff with the qualification and skills to meet the needs of program participants? Is information able to flow across the agency to address issues in a coordinated fashion? Do agency systems support program managers and coordinators, freeing them to lead and innovate, or are they a burden that distracts staff from focusing on clients?
- **Community Level:** Many needs are beyond the ability of any one program or agency to address. What needs require TAP to be engaged with businesses, governments, and other community partners to begin to address issues that require broad-based, coordinated, cross-sector solutions? Where should TAP raise the temperature on important issues that are languishing? Where can TAP serve as a voice for the powerless in the halls of power?

For some of the findings in this report, the level of response is more obvious, for others it is less so. Ultimately, it is the strategic planning process that will sort out those priorities and responses.

On a related note, TAP serves a broad and diverse set of communities. While needs do vary across these communities, often they actually have very similar needs, but with different local flavors. What can vary significantly between communities is the best response or approach to addressing the issue. Even prioritizing needs based on the information available in a needs assessment can be problematic. Which is more important, the needs of veterans or foster children? Which is a higher priority, transportation or childcare? Any estimation of the importance of one set of needs over another means confronting sometimes incommensurable values and limited input from a non-representative sample of informants.

Finally, issues may cut across domains, and they may be more pressing in some localities compared to others. Some issues identified during the assessment are strengths that can be built on rather than needs that could be addressed. Sometimes, a single strategy may be able to address a range of needs.

The following tool may help to illustrate the overlapping and interrelated priority needs and action items that TAP can take to serve the individual/household, agency, and community levels. While Table 57 has been started based on findings from this needs assessment, **the table should be refined by TAP during its strategic planning process.**

| Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) & Community (C) |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Response Level  |   |   | Need/Issue   |
| I   | A | C |  |
| <b>Cross-Cutting Issues</b>   |   |   |  |
|   | ✓ |   | Stakeholders reported that they are seeing an intergenerational pattern of use of TAP’s services, indicating that TAP has not yet successfully broken the cycle of poverty. The suggestion was made to look critically at TAP’s mission and goals and explore what needs to be updated or refreshed.   |
|   | ✓ |   | There is a concern that as pandemic response funding ends, community needs for housing, healthcare, and employment-related supports such as job training and transportation will continue to worsen before households can fully recover from the effects of COVID-19. Unrestricted funding is all the more important in this context.  |
|   | ✓ |   | For families in poverty, the quality and dedication of their case manager makes a big difference. According to one stakeholder, “I think that a family’s strengths and access to services is only as strong as the case manager working with them, who does their due diligence to find what is needed, a phone call or two can get to the right person. Too often, we will send a family to TAP or BRBH or another community stakeholder, the family will buckle under the process. This sets them up for failure and if you’re already dealing with a fragile, distrustful client, why leave them on their own? Instead, walk them through that.” TAP should endeavor to provide professional development support and fair compensation to its case management staff and expand staffing where possible. |

| Response Level |   |   | Need/Issue  |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| I              | A | C |   |
|                |   | ✓ | There is also a concern that clients think of TAP as an emergency service provider, whereas TAP is better positioned to refer clients to emergency services partners and focus its programming on longer-term goals to lift clients out of poverty permanently. With the recent local ordinance to fine homeless individuals sleeping on the streets in downtown Roanoke, staff point out that some individuals don't want to utilize emergency services such as homeless shelters. The client perspective is needed to understand why that is. |
| ✓              |   | ✓ | Older individuals will make up an increasing share of Virginia's population in the next few decades. By 2040, nearly 19% of Virginia's population will include individuals over 65 years old. Within TAP's service area, the percentage will be higher on average, ranging from 18.5% in Roanoke City to 34% in Rockbridge. This will exacerbate the need for social services for seniors, including housing, case management, and social supports for disabled adults.   |
| ✓              | ✓ | ✓ | Stakeholders noted that in low-income families with a single mother as head of household, investing in the mother's education, healthy autonomy, and economic stability can benefit the next generation. Even more influential may be improving the opportunities of young women before they have children. To serve immigrant Muslim families, special programming must be developed for girls if they are not allowed to participate in co-ed programs.   |
| ✓              |   |   | Foster care caseloads have grown over the past year in the TAP region at a greater rate than the state overall, with the largest increases in Alleghany, Roanoke City, Salem, and Buena Vista.  |
| ✓              | ✓ |   | The highest percentage of veteran populations are in Bath, Botetourt, Rockbridge, and Covington. The TAP region has a higher percentage of non-institutionalized individuals with disabilities, with the highest percentages in Alleghany, Craig, Buena Vista, and Bath.  |
| ✓              | ✓ | ✓ | Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Lexington have the highest number of foreign-born, non-citizen and non-English speaking individuals in the region. Due to the work of the Roanoke Refugee Partnership and Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Roanoke is a regional hub for refugee resettlement.  |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | In TAP's service region, Black and African American individuals are almost three times as likely to be in poverty than white people, with the greatest disparities existing in Bath, Alleghany, Lexington, and Roanoke City. There are also disparities between whites and Hispanics.   |
| ✓              |   |   | Employment is a strong predictor of poverty, with the unemployed generally three to five times as likely to be living in poverty.   |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
|  | ✓        |          | Additional capacity is needed in the TAP Planning department for a full-time organizational fundraiser, an IT director, as well as a COO. Fundraising and IT-related functions, such as crafting cyber security policy, currently take up considerable bandwidth of the Planning staff. A dedicated content writer and part-time designer would also strengthen TAP’s communications functions. More administrative program capacity is needed for components such as Housing and Human Services. The Planning department could also benefit from another full-time grant writer primarily responsible for securing Head Start funding.   |
|  | ✓        |          | There is a need to strengthen TAP’s family development services, including addressing high staff turnover that has limited program capacity. Some staff are hesitant to get vaccinated against COVID-19, or can find better-paying jobs elsewhere, which has compromised TAP’s staff retention. There is also a sense that some staff who remain have become complacent and need additional professional development opportunities to increase their motivation.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Regarding better compensation for TAP employees, one respondent noted the issue of “asking an already understaffed team to perform more than what is their job title but not compensating those employees for that work. Compensation in the form of money. Also, workers are not compensated for the trauma they are exposed to on the job. Trauma is everywhere, but with the lack of pay for employees, it does not allow them to seek out opportunities outside of the workplace for help coping. Lack of pay is one of the biggest downfalls of TAP.”  |
| <b>Employment</b>  |          |          |   |
|  | ✓        |          | TAP not only teaches job skills but could potentially hire qualified clients once they are trained. One avenue to explore further is training parents who currently work entry-level and low-wage jobs to become childcare teachers and providers, to address the dual challenge of parents working underpaid positions and a lack of qualified childcare staff in the region. However, for this to truly succeed long-term, TAP will need to provide a living and competitive wage and invest in its employees.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Moving forward, This Valley Works (TVW) staff may need to offload emergency housing supports, such as rent relief payments, to the auspices of the Eviction Prevention Collective Impact group that recently formed in Roanoke City. In addition, staff recommend shifting the housing work they do to TAP’s existing department, Housing and Human Services, to handle homelessness supports, housing counseling, and potentially also youth services in a more intentional and strategic way. Another possibility would be to outsource these services to an external provider. Longer term, a permanent Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) or related service could be a signature program of TVW. Time-limited, restricted government funding and retention of qualified personnel continue to be major hurdles in realizing these goals. |

| Response Level |   |   | Need/Issue   |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| I              | A | C |  |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | While it is difficult to forecast workforce trends in advance, TAP can communicate with economic development research centers and employers to anticipate what training needs and partnerships should be developed in the future. TVW has a close working relationship with Virginia Career Works and WIOA staff to get an external view of the employment landscape, and to connect clients to more permanent sources of employment support. Goodwill has recently become more of a partner as it defines its 5-year strategic plan and seeks to combat poverty collaboratively with other organizations, like TAP. TAP is also partnering with United Way to co-lead a new whole health and wellness initiative based on findings from the most recent Carilion Clinic triennial community health needs assessment process. This will dovetail with the CoC strategic task force’s efforts to bolster core data entry. |
| ✓              |   | ✓ | Regarding childcare as a necessary support for parents who are employed, 31% of those answering the crisis-to-thrive assessment indicated that they had no access to affordable childcare, and 48% indicated their childcare situation was in the crisis range.  |
| ✓              |   | ✓ | Regarding transportation to work, 21% of those answering the crisis-to-thrive assessment indicated that they had no access to transportation and 45% indicated their transportations situation was in the crisis range.  |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | The region is experiencing industry growth in educational services, healthcare, and arts, entertainment, and recreation.   |
| ✓              | ✓ | ✓ | Survey responses indicate that the top three employment issues are the high cost or lack of childcare available during work hours (37%), increased job stress due to short staffing (35%), and lack of well-paying jobs with benefits (34%).   |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | Survey respondents recommended anchoring workforce organizations and programs in the communities most in need, so that job seekers can easily walk to access the services. Similarly, several respondents noted that awareness of existing workforce programs could be improved. There is a disconnect between prospective employees and employers that is preventing talent from connecting with a good employer match.   |
| ✓              |   |   | Several survey respondents commented on the need for assistance navigating the job search process, including résumé and interview preparation, identifying jobs that accept those with a criminal background, and advocating for better salary and benefits by leveraging past work experience.  |
| ✓              |   |   | Several respondents requested more opportunities for on-the-job training to learn higher-level skills to improve their employment status.  |
|                |   | ✓ | One respondent envisioned “more job opportunities in the African American community... that way, our jobs are walking distance to our place of living and we don’t have to worry about finding a ride to work. We need a Black Wall Street-type of job atmosphere in our African American communities.”  |
| ✓              |   |   | Survey respondents requested help starting a business and securing financing by connecting with investors and identifying loan opportunities.  |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | Other requested supports include help with transportation, housing, mental health needs, equipment like computers, compassion from employers, work-from-home options, and childcare that covers the full workday.   |
|  | ✓        |          | Regarding work-life balance, respondents noted fatherhood programs, part-time jobs for seniors, family-friendly workplaces, and access to counseling through an employer-sponsored program could help employees improve the quality of both their professional and personal lives, which stakeholders report is a higher priority following the pandemic.   |
| ✓  |          |          | TAP can facilitate access to other employment opportunities, such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, or skilled trade development. On the other end of the spectrum, TAP should explore how to expedite quality employment for highly educated and skilled immigrants who lack English language skills or the appropriate U.S. credentials.   |
| ✓  |          |          | Prospective employees may not have the computer or internet access to learn or research skills necessary to locate/obtain skills for a profession.  |
|  |          | ✓        | The cities of Covington, Lexington, Roanoke, and Buena Vista tend to have consistently higher unemployment rates than other parts of the region.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Most jobs in the service region require a high school diploma, whereas there are fewer people available with this level of education; the latter is also true of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree. On the other hand, those with a graduate degree or higher make up nearly twice the number of jobs requiring that level of education, so this population may be underemployed. It’s worth examining if associate degrees are not that useful, that more 4-year college graduates are needed, and that there are more people with graduate degrees than jobs requiring them. A high school degree is the minimum requirement for employment. |
|  | ✓        |          | Due to the lack of available workers, schools are hosting job fairs for students as young as 14 years old. Yet, part-time jobs outside of school hours are hard to find for this demographic of young workers. Are there opportunities for paid apprenticeships at TAP in social work-related fields, to expose students to career options?   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Job training is needed for higher-paying occupations and opportunities for advancement are needed in all career tracks.   |
|  |          | ✓        | To be more competitive, TAP can advocate to employers to offer better wages, more hybrid job opportunities, be more creative in how they weight previous work experience with formal education credentials, offer more family benefits such as scholarships for employees’ children, or provide more on-the-job training.   |



| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
|  | ✓        |          | One stakeholder noted that there is a population of “pre-entrepreneurs,” such as people baking or catering from a home kitchen, who need business training, computer literacy, funding, and infrastructure to take their business concept to the next level. Low-income clients similarly requested more assistance learning how to become an entrepreneur and increase their access to resources, such as business loans in order to pay staff to help them.   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Top in-demand, specialized skills in the region are healthcare focused, including nursing, trauma care, orthopedics, and neonatal intensive care unit.  |
|  | ✓        |          | According to TVW staff, there is a large gap between TAP’s workforce programs and what is offered by WIOA. While OnRamp has helped to some extent, there is a dearth of support for people who do not qualify for TAP’s services and who cannot navigate mainstream workforce resources. Other challenges for some clients include lack of computer literacy or lack of computer and internet access to apply for services and find resources online. Even so, there is a tendency among service providers to transition all of this information to virtual platforms.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Two successful programs run by TVW, SwiftStart and RESTORE, have ended because the funding ran out, yet the populations served by these programs continue to need support. Agency-level and statewide advocacy through the Virginia Community Action Partnership (VACAP) may shed some light on this persistent challenge at the federal level.   |
| <b>Education and Development</b>   |          |          |   |
|  | ✓        |          | While Head Start staff report that current facilities and materials are satisfactory, many of their partner sites have small classrooms. They noted that larger, multi-functional spaces would allow the program to grow. The Head Start Policy Council also identified a need for more slots in the Early Head Start program, which serves children aged 0 – 3 years, as well as additional capacity to serve pregnant women.  |
|  | ✓        |          | There were many comments related to the lack of childcare services and their impact, including affordability, long wait lists, challenges in the enrollment process, the need for full-day full-year programming, and programs for teen moms in school. One comment which is likely relevant for TAP’s Head start program was that there need to be “enough teachers to keep all the centers open so that working parents can put their children into day care and not worry about if they will have a job or not because they don’t have day care for their children.” It was also suggested that “there should be more TAP options in the Roanoke County area. There are individuals I know in fact that have contacted TAP to work with them on opening up a location in Vinton and surrounding Roanoke County area. TAP has not reached back out to inquire about the help they can offer...” |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
|  | ✓        |          | Unable to raise salaries to remain competitive with private childcare providers, the Head Start program experiences high staff turnover and a limited supply of trained teachers. Fundamentally, the program must grapple with the tension of maintaining high quality federal standards without adequate funding to compensate qualified staff who must have certain educational credentials. The hiring process including the background check can also take 4 – 6 weeks, during which time prospective candidates may find work elsewhere. Staff must wear “multiple hats” to juggle the gaps in personnel capacity. |
|  |          | ✓        | The responses indicate that the top three issues are that good teachers are leaving the field (36%), the high cost or lack of childcare for parents to attend school (31%), and the need for computer and/or internet access at home for educational purposes (29%).  |
|  |          | ✓        | Several respondents identified a lack of services related to adult basic education, GED classes and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Comments included that there are not enough overall classes, they can be challenging to complete while working, and that adults and seniors may need additional assistance with internet-based instruction.   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Respondents suggested improving awareness of job training, increasing financial support, and offering more evening courses, especially in rural areas. In addition to job skills, respondents suggested focusing on practical life skills, financial management and entrepreneurship.   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | One respondent suggested that we focus on “teaching children real life skills. Children growing up in high-risk communities have different struggles. We need to prepare our children for real life, not just what’s in the books.” Similarly, basic skills, such as writing and reading in cursive, financial literacy, home economics, and others are not being prioritized in the standardized school curricula.   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | More afterschool enrichment programs are needed for dependent children.   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Lower-income student households may lack access to the internet to do homework, transportation to participate in afterhours school functions, preventative healthcare and dental screenings to stay healthy, and nutritious meals to stay focused at school.  |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | Mental health and behavioral issues are increasing among youth as well, exacerbated by the pandemic and lack of access to social and medical resources.   |
|  |          | ✓        | Low-income stakeholders explained that teachers lack perspective regarding what disadvantaged students are going through at home, and so do not understand why they have learned negative behaviors. One of the issues may be that school administrators and teachers no longer live in the neighborhoods they serve. Could TAP provide a Poverty and Trauma 101 outreach course to local teachers?   |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |  |
|--|----------|----------|--|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>  |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |  |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | On a more positive note, youth involved in the African American Cultures & Contemporary Issues (AACCI) class at William Fleming High School shared insights into how the class was meaningful for them. The class helped participating students to learn meditation and conflict mediation techniques to mitigate violent confrontations. Students also took an interest in parks and public spaces in Roanoke as places for programming and positive relationship building, not only within their own communities but in general. They expressed interest in connecting with nature, gardening, and improving their health through better nutrition, as well as having safe, supervised spaces in the evening and opportunities to interact with non-judgmental, supportive adults and mentors. |
| <b>Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building</b>   |          |          |  |
|  | ✓        |          | By expanding its satellite office locations and increasing supervisory staff in underserved localities, TAP has an opportunity to grow its service capacity, increase awareness of its programs, and reach underserved populations, notably those in Craig, Bath, Rockbridge, and western Botetourt. The successes achieved over several years in Covington regarding expanding services into a more rural area are attributed in large part to TAP having a physical presence and office building in that community. Partner organizations suggested that TAP could implement a mobile office or further decentralize its services by sharing space with other community-based organizations.   |
|  | ✓        |          | As an agency more generally, staff recommend investing in HR, finance, and supervisory and manager roles to improve professional development, succession planning, and to grow organizational capacity. In addition, staff recommend transitioning TAP to electronic payroll and administrative systems to increase efficiency and modernize the workflow.   |
|  | ✓        |          | TAP has contracted for the completion of a tone and voice guide, to continue to refine TAP’s branding and communications standards. This will help communications staff to deliver consistent content across TAP’s components. Similarly, dedicated staff to set up and maintain an intranet and compatible electronic signature software across the organization would make communication and administrative management more efficient.   |
|  | ✓        |          | With the influx of ARPA and CARES Act funding, there is an opportunity to evaluate how this funding has been implemented across each of TAP’s components, including whether it funded new programs or bolstered existing ones, to better understand future funding needs.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Three additional staff members in the Financial Services department could facilitate more tax assistance, housing counseling, and business services to keep up with the growth of new clients, as well as expand capacity for relationship building and partnership development with financial institutions and outreach to the business community.  |

| Response Level |   |   | Need/Issue  |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| I              | A | C |   |
|                | ✓ |   | TAP staff are investigating mechanisms to set up a funding or loan pool specifically for individuals with a criminal background who cannot qualify for small business assistance; loans of even a few thousand dollars could help an individual to purchase tools, equipment, supplies, and other materials they need for self-employment or as an independent contractor on a job.   |
|                | ✓ |   | Other concerns include lack of visibility of the financial services programs, as well as seasoned leaders retiring from the National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) and the Virginia chapter, VACAF, and uncertainty regarding who will step up to represent TAP and other community action agencies at the state and national level.   |
|                | ✓ |   | Stakeholders expressed support for new and existing community fundraising campaigns as a way for TAP to supplement restricted, time-limited state and federal funding, and to create programs tailored to local needs, such as a façade improvement grant program for local businesses.   |
|                |   | ✓ | Transportation is a challenge in both urban and rural communities within TAP’s service area. Public transportation may not exist or covers limited hours and routes. One stakeholder noted that other aspects of the client’s life cannot be addressed without first facilitating access to adequate transportation. Regarding the recurring question of how to increase public transportation options, one stakeholder said that “even though TAP and other organizations work well together regionally, transportation seems to be the thing where regional cooperation stops.” |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | The “benefits cliff” is an ongoing challenge for low-income families striving to become self-sufficient. TAP can continue to advocate for flexible funding and programming that bridges the gap for families who are employed but still unable to make ends meet.   |
| ✓              |   |   | From the TAP stakeholder survey, the top three issues identified in this domain are difficulty with money management (47%), budgeting (36%), and lack of knowledge for how to address credit issues (33%).  |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | Most open comments related to the need for more financial education services, including financial literacy, budgeting, money management, savings, credit management and tax filings. There were also calls for these skills to be taught to people when they are young and for classes to be available in the evenings. Lack of awareness of existing programs and lack of access in rural areas were also cited as issues.   |
| ✓              |   |   | Low-income clients report that households are not educated about predatory lenders or the impact of high interest rates when buying cars or large-ticket appliances that can lock families into never-ending debt. Include financial literacy education in every program for older youth and adult participants.  |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
|  | ✓        |          | Top challenges for TAP Financial Services include lack of capacity and funding. Some populations are harder to serve than others, such as those released from incarceration who want to start their own business due to challenges getting hired with a criminal background. Staff report that they see on average 25 – 30 clients in this situation who don’t have any credit or collateral, which disqualifies them from receiving assistance from TAP as well as other lenders. Within TAP’s service area, Bath, Rockbridge, Lexington, and Buena Vista are receiving the smallest small business loans. Can TAP target areas other than Roanoke for small business development? |
|  |          | ✓        | Bath, Rockbridge, Buena Vista, Covington, and Roanoke City all exceed the state rate for childcare cost burden, which is based on childcare costs for a household with two children as a percent of median household income. How might TAP provide more childcare assistance in these localities?   |
| <b>Housing</b>   |          |          |   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | TAP has a strong presence at regional leadership meetings and is a trusted partner for bringing the community together to address issues such as youth gun violence. Increasing pride in place by encouraging home ownership was cited as a way to combat gun violence. TAP can continue to expand its housing counseling and first-time homebuyer programming to increase home ownership and housing stability among its clients.  |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Though not a recovery housing provider, TAP can partner with organizations such as Oxford House, Pinnacle Treatment, and other recovery housing services to ensure that residents in recovery are connected to workforce development programs and other wraparound social supports. Group recovery homes integrated into the community may face opposition from local residents, despite protections under the ADA and Fair Housing Act. Social service organizations such as TAP can join the Roanoke Valley Collective Response (RVCR) to learn more about how to support recovery housing for clients in need.   |
|  | ✓        |          | The Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority maintains a variety of programs for its residents, including Family Self-Sufficiency, ROSS (Resident Opportunities for Self-sufficiency), and Jobs+. RRHA has opened an <a href="#">EnVision Center</a> that will provide a suite of one-stop services through partnerships with Family Services Roanoke Valley (FSRV), the Financial Empowerment Center (FEC), Region 5 Adult Education, Carilion, Virginia Career Works, and Virginia Western Community College. The Housing Authority would like to explore ways for TAP to become a partner with a presence at the EnVision Center.   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | An overall lack of affordable housing stock means long waiting lists for housing, even for clients with vouchers, and increased risk of eviction for clients living in housing they cannot afford.  |
|  |          | ✓        | Development of more multifamily and accessory dwelling units could help to alleviate housing availability and affordability challenges.   |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Employment in a housing-related occupation such as building construction and rehabilitation, as well as energy retrofitting, may be an opportunity for some TAP clients, including immigrants and refugees. TAP can provide jobs and jobs training in housing industry.   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | Of those TAP clients completing a crisis-to-thrive assessment at intake, 24% of those answering indicated that one or more utilities were either shut off or would be imminently, and 37% indicated their utility situation was in the crisis range.  |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | The survey responses indicate that the top three issues are the high cost of rent/house payments (66%), lack of money for a down payment on a house or a security deposit (53%), and that houses in the area are not affordable (53%).  |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | “Also banks in this area are not helping a lot of residents obtain down payment assistance, or the assistance available has thresholds (such as higher credit scores and income requirements) that many minorities in this area cannot qualify for.” TAP now offers down payment assistance (DPA) through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | A number of commenters noted the need for additional specialty housing for special populations such as formerly incarcerated individuals re-entering the community (especially women), individuals struggling with substance use disorders seeking treatment in need of recovery housing or sober-living options, and seniors needing improved accessibility.   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | In addition to high heating costs in the winter, heat-related health problems may result from poorly insulated homes with limited temperature regulation during the summer, particularly in urban areas with heat islands, which are concentrated pockets of higher temperatures due to limited foliage in relation to hardscaping and building density. Households may need assistance with the costs of purchasing and running an air conditioner on very hot days. |
|  |          | ✓        | Notably, solar is a virtually nonexistent fuel source across the service area. There is an opportunity to install solar panel and battery storage for low-income households to decrease the cost of utility bills, harness clean and renewable energy to improve human and environmental health, and increase household self-sufficiency in the event of a power outage.  |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Stakeholders recommend repurposing vacant apartment buildings into transitional housing with wraparound supports suited to the target needs, whether it’s families with children or clients re-entering society from incarceration.   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Staff are concerned that the current housing market is unsustainably expensive and default rates may increase in the next few years. The Financial Services department is preparing to hire two more housing counselors as a result.  |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Due to high material costs in the housing domain, TAP’s reach is limited by economic constraints when it comes to providing more housing supports. From a human services perspective, it is difficult to find willing landlords to support TAP’s clientele, and subsidizing temporary shelter in hotels is expensive. Due to increases in the cost of housing, and lack of access to affordable units, the process of identifying housing for clients, such as survivors of domestic violence, has become incredibly labor-intensive for TAP staff. In spite of state directives and the obvious need for the creation of more affordable housing, Planning staff are cognizant of the challenges of combining “hard” (infrastructure development) and “soft” (human services) housing supports under one department due to the variety of expertise and types of funding that would be required. |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | ECHR staff also report recent challenges include insufficient funding for the limited home repair program for areas outside of Roanoke City (\$20,000 per year for the remaining service area), as well as an end to the funding in 2022 for the indoor plumbing and rehabilitation (IPR) program. In addition, due to market conditions including the high cost of materials and labor shortages, some project bids with contractors exceeded DHCD’s maximum limits to utilize the remainder of the IPR funding. For the weatherization program, lack of labor rather than lack of funding has been the biggest challenge. TAP can continue to pursue funding for home maintenance and energy efficiency assistance.   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | A promising trend has been regional utilities coming on board to include multi-family energy conservation projects for low-income units, including heat pumps, appliances, light bulbs, low flow water fixtures, etc. Through federal infrastructure bills, stakeholders also expect a large influx of funds for projects like this, where more staff will be needed to respond.  |
| <b>Health/Social Behavioral Development</b>  |          |          |   |
|  | ✓        |          | TAP has recently formed a trauma-informed workgroup to guide the development of a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) steering committee among TAP leadership, to meet the strategic goal of making TAP a trauma-informed organization over the next five years. The workgroup has provided TIC micro-training sessions to program directors and aims to define the top five pillars that will guide TAP’s trauma-informed plan and approach. Getting buy-in at all levels of the organization, and across administrative and programmatic departments, will ensure TAP clients and staff are integrated into a trauma-informed system. Similarly, Integration of DEI values into TAP’s workflow will require the agile and responsive support of leadership, clear channels of communication, and well-defined staff roles and responsibilities to address DEI issues.                                    |

| Response Level |   |   | Need/Issue  |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| I              | A | C |   |
|                | ✓ |   | Whole Family is overseen by TAP’s Housing and Human Services (HHS) department. Prior to the Whole Family initiative and TAP’s adoption of the EmpowOR client database, the co-case management and multidisciplinary team met to discuss clients in need of multiple types of services within TAP as well as with external partners. While the Whole Family approach is facilitating some of this coordination of services, staff recommended continued multidisciplinary discussions to address particularly challenging client needs, in order to eliminate missed opportunities and reduce redundant efforts to serve the client. The agency should also standardize its program response to supporting those with a mental health or substance use disorder; the integration of peer specialists into the case management process is one approach to consider. These peers could network with other peers within the service area through initiatives such as the Roanoke Valley Collective Response, to better facilitate client referrals across partners. |
|                | ✓ |   | Interns have proven to be extremely helpful in increasing staff capacity across programmatic and administrative functions. Bolstering avenues for interns and dedicating TAP staff to oversee an internship program agency-wide could be beneficial to growing this resource. Interns with specialties in social work and public health could be recruited from area academic institutions including Roanoke College, Virginia Tech, Radford University, etc.   |
|                | ✓ |   | There is an opportunity to provide more educational classes and curricula that teach youth about healthy relationships and educate them on forms of abuse and dating violence. Several years ago, the Roanoke Valley Violence Prevention Council partnered with TAP to provide such school-based programming. More funding should be directed to youth-oriented violence prevention programs. There is also an opportunity to better understand from youth whether programs like YALE and Youthbuild meet their expectations and if not, what other kinds of supports would be a better fit.  |
|                | ✓ |   | Partnering with violence prevention groups targeting adults aged 18 – 29 years could provide valuable access to better understand this population in need. In addition, violence prevention programs could benefit from TAP’s financial assistance to help enroll participants of that age range in workforce development programs, such as BuildSmart, as well as provide wraparound supports such as childcare and transportation assistance, where needed.   |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | With additional staff and expansion of Sabrina’s Place, the HHS component could serve more families and victims of violence; and with additional funding, the program could subsidize additional shelter and transitional housing for more people. At the time of the study, a week of shelter cost \$800 per person, with an average stay of 60 – 90 days. Staff also suggested creating a regional “ <a href="#">family justice center</a> ” to provide victim services, family visitation, legal aid, and law enforcement resources at a single location.  |



| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |  |
|--|----------|----------|--|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>  |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |  |
|  | ✓        |          | In addition to early childhood education through programs such as Head Start, TAP can facilitate healthy eating and exercise behaviors among early childhood populations to combat high rates of childhood obesity. Researchers with the Roanoke Valley Healthy School Index at Roanoke College could partner with Head Start to better understand the health and wellness of children participating and to support strategies to address childhood obesity. |
|  |          | ✓        | Local government funding dedicated to youth violence often targets prevention activities or provides services for victims. There is little dedicated funding and very few programs that will work with violent youth offenders.  |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Serving more rural locations has been difficult, in part because of cultural barriers and client hesitation to seek out services. There is an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with local law enforcement offices to better facilitate DV referrals in rural areas.  |
| ✓  |          |          | 42% of TAP clients who took the crisis-to-thriving survey indicated their food security was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2).  |
| ✓  |          |          | 56% indicated their supportive social network was in the crisis range (Levels 1 and 2)   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | The survey responses indicate that the top issues are that mental health problems are increasing, especially among young people (54%), substance use in the community is causing crime and violence (43%), overdoses (36%) and family disruptions (34%), and there is a general increase in gun/violence in the community (42%).   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Many commenters noted the need for more services addressing the affordability of health, mental health, and dental services, including assistance with medications, women’s health products, and wellness classes. Could TAP support general wellness and family planning initiatives?   |
|  |          | ✓        | TAP staff report that there are few organizations willing to work with hard-to-serve youth.  |
| ✓  |          |          | There is a need to engage low-income youth in healthy eating and physical activity programs to reduce obesity rates and overreliance on sedentary activities and too much screen time.   |
|  |          | ✓        | Roanoke County and City had the highest CPS referral totals within TAP’s service area, with physical neglect occurring at the highest frequency, followed by physical abuse and medical abuse/neglect.   |
|  | ✓        |          | Head Start management have maintained services for families throughout the pandemic, which has placed a mental, emotional, and physical toll without reprieve. Staff self-care and mental health have suffered.  |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
|  |          | ✓        | Longer-term treatment and recovery systems that bridge medical and social services need to be strengthened in TAP’s service area through initiatives such as the Roanoke Valley Collective Response (RVCR), a multi-stakeholder working group that is now focused on launching a peer recovery network and increasing recovery housing options.   |
| <b>Civic Engagement and Community Involvement</b>  |          |          |   |
|  | ✓        |          | More marketing is needed to promote TAP’s programs at major community events, with other organizations such as the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) and at regular gathering places, such as churches. Linkages need to be further improved to connect TAP clients to all the services for which they qualify and can benefit. TAP’s limited infrastructure and presence in the more rural service areas has also contributed to lower client engagement and awareness of TAP’s programming. However, recent physical improvements to the office in Covington were mentioned as a contributor to the longevity of TAP’s good reputation among clients in that area. |
|  | ✓        |          | A one-stop webpage listing all of TAP’s current programs and services could also facilitate more comprehensive access to information. Similarly, other organizations have noted they don’t know who to contact at TAP to refer clients to specific programs, and that clients report that some referrals fall through the cracks. Better follow-up and communication are needed across social service organizations.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Staff noted that some of TAP’s components have outdated strategic plans, so there is an opportunity for the Planning department to facilitate a structured strategic planning process for each component.   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | TAP clients have relatively weak social networks, which could inhibit civic engagement and community involvement. It was the third highest level of crisis out of the 12 subscales behind only employment and financial security.   |
|  |          | ✓        | The top three issues are discouragement, because decision-makers are not responsive to the needs of all communities (40%), lack of interest, time, or capacity to participate (37%), and no knowledge of how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups, or similar organizations (33%).  |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | “Also, it’s nearly impossible to make friends as an adult after you have completed school. With everything online, nobody talks to anyone anymore. We have created a generation of lonely introverts who are terrified to talk to each other in public. This makes it very difficult to create healthy community engagement.” Could TAP facilitate social groups and clubs focused on financial literacy, mentorships, or some related topic that also help people expand their social network?   |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |  |
|--|----------|----------|--|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>  |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |  |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Several commenters attributed a lack of community engagement to a lack of time or trust. Potential solutions suggested included bringing more meetings into the community, scheduling meetings in the evening, and greater responsiveness and interest from community leaders.   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Some commenters suggested expanding access, awareness, and educational opportunities around community engagement including reinvigorating civics education in the public schools, reopening the Roanoke City’s leadership class, conflict resolution classes, producing a community newsletter, making meetings more accessible to those with disabilities, and promotion of how to apply and serve on community boards and commissions.   |
|  |          | ✓        | As communities grapple with the trauma from violence against people of color by law enforcement officials, there is a growing need to implement reconciliation and Community Violence Intervention (CVI) programs. Crime analysts within the police department can use data to pinpoint high-risk individuals to conduct preventative interventions where possible, as well as work with affected families to learn what support they need. In addition, careers in law enforcement may not pay well enough or offer enough job satisfaction to attract a steady workforce, particularly among younger people and people of color who could help to change the narrative from within the force. Lack of interest in law enforcement careers among young people is a challenge. |
| <b>Locality Issues – Alleghany/Covington</b>   |          |          |  |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | The main issues facing the communities of Alleghany and Covington include lack of affordable and qualified childcare, lack of public transportation, and lack of job training programs leading to livable wage employment.   |
| ✓  |          |          | “Middle-class jobs” that may be more accessible to people with transferrable skills are hard to find.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Labor force participation rates are not expected to rebound back to 2019 levels until 2026.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Small scale, tailored workforce training programs for those with criminal backgrounds and other vulnerable groups are considered effective by stakeholders, in addition to partnerships with employers to address wraparound supports, like the need for childcare and transportation to get to work.  |
| ✓  |          |          | Food and housing insecurity, including evictions when the federal moratorium on rent is lifted, were cited as additional issues compounding the challenges faced by low-income families.   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | COVID-19 has stalled or reduced community programming and other basic supportive services.   |
| <b>Locality Issues – Bath County</b>   |          |          |  |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Two major areas of need within the county are home maintenance and rehabilitation, and childcare.  |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |  |
|--|----------|----------|--|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>  |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |  |
|  | ✓        |          | Bath County is expected to experience population decline over the next five years and has a more remote, aging population.   |
|  | ✓        |          | Two of the largest employers in the county (Omni Homestead Resort and the public schools) are having trouble finding local, qualified employees.   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | There are more jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree than there are workers with that level of education in Bath County.  |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Expanded GED programs could serve more people in need of this credential.  |
|  |          | ✓        | Market vacancy in Bath suggests that a combination of substandard housing and a push to create short-term rentals has limited primary residence housing options.   |
| ✓  |          |          | Grandparents raising grandchildren need extra support to keep up with the demands of childcare as seniors.   |
| <b>Locality Issues – Botetourt County</b>  |          |          |  |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Botetourt’s lower-income communities are located in the less-developed areas in the northern part of the county, such as Eagle Rock, Buchanan, and Acadia, areas including more agricultural production and fewer job options.   |
|  |          | ✓        | Botetourt has a technical education center that facilitates intern/externships and a nationally certified welding program through the public school system. Partnerships focused on 3-D printed housing and electric vehicle infrastructure position Botetourt for the creation of jobs in advanced manufacturing. |
|  | ✓        |          | The top in-demand skill in Botetourt County is in criminal corrections.  |
|  |          | ✓        | Last-mile broadband and a rail-trail infrastructure project with Craig County will provide quality of life improvements in the next few years.   |
|  |          | ✓        | Botetourt County is building out multifamily housing, though it is not necessarily affordable.   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Households in rural parts of the county struggle with limited transportation options and a waning EMS volunteer base.  |
| <b>Locality Issues – Craig County</b>  |          |          |  |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Stakeholders report that the populations in greatest need are seniors and lower-income families lacking employment options, as well as those struggling with substance use disorder such as addiction to methamphetamines.   |
|  |          | ✓        | Workforce development and infrastructure investments in outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism were cited as unique opportunities.  |
|  |          | ✓        | Jobs in Craig County increased by 13.9% over the past five years, outpacing national growth by 12.1%.  |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Twice any many females are unemployed.   |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Due to the large senior population, there is a great need to build up the workforce providing in-home care and related services for seniors. Stakeholders with the county DSS would like to partner with TAP to offer CNA training classes on site or at partner locations, such as the library, to grow the number of local nurse aides who live and work in Craig County. |
|  | ✓        |          | A local offering of YouthBuild could encourage youth who have been unsuccessful in more traditional tracks to avoid unemployment and related problems.  |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | The top in-demand specialized skills include curriculum development, lesson planning, and special education, followed by truck driving.   |
| ✓  |          |          | The cost of gas and utilities increased during the pandemic, which created hardship for low-income households to travel to work and heat their homes.   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Low-income renters and seniors may be living in substandard or poorly maintained properties; basic services like curbside trash pick-up are not available, which leads to seniors unable to keep their houses sanitary.   |
|  |          | ✓        | Long waitlists and high staff turnover in mental health care, as well as varied perceptions of the need for mental health care, are particular challenges as mental illness among youth and adults was exacerbated by the pandemic.   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | Stakeholders report that generally, volunteerism is strong in the county when a request is made for help.   |
| <b>Locality Issues – Rockbridge, Lexington, Buena Vista</b>  |          |          |   |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | A variety of employers are having trouble hiring at all levels of experience, even for well-paying positions in manufacturing, food service, social work and community services, and education. In some cases, the jobs may be within walking distance, but lack of childcare is a limitation.  |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | For local residents living adjacent to blighted properties, they are concerned by lowered property values. Aesthetic improvements such as mowing the grass, repainting the exterior, and repairing the front porch could be cost-effective ways to address some of these concerns.  |
|  |          | ✓        | TAP can serve as a liaison between lower-income neighborhoods and local government to connect residents with resources to repair and weatherize housing to address community members’ concerns about blighted properties and lack of maintenance.   |
|  | ✓        |          | Stakeholders in Lexington suggested that while there are programs facilitating access to health services such as lower cost medications or health insurance, residents are either unaware of or not interested in utilizing them.   |
| ✓  |          | ✓        | The presence of institutions of higher education and business networks in Lexington increases civic engagement and community involvement.   |
| <b>Locality Issues – Roanoke County/Salem</b>  |          |          |   |

| <b>Table 57. Response Levels for Strategic Planning – Individual (I), Agency (A) &amp; Community (C)</b> |          |          |   |
|--|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Response Level</b>  |          |          | <b>Need/Issue</b>   |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>C</b> |   |
|  | ✓        |          | Stakeholders in Roanoke County see TAP as a key resource and partner in the areas of childcare, through programs such as Head Start, and housing, by providing housing assistance and counseling.   |
| ✓  |          |          | Vulnerable groups within the county include people with substance use disorder, lower-income families lacking affordable housing, transportation and social supports, people with disabilities, and immigrants.   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | Top growing industries in Roanoke County, in addition to healthcare, include arts, entertainment, and recreation. In Salem, top industry job growth is occurring in construction and wholesale trade.   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Stakeholders report that burnout and attrition are straining the public health workforce, including social services. Cultivating a qualified workforce will include creating internship programs, hiring candidates with relevant experience who may not have all of the formal credentials, expanding the allowable fields in which a candidate can have experience, and strengthening the pathway between 4-year degree programs and job placements immediately following graduation. |
|  |          | ✓        | Employers need to be more flexible regarding offering remote/hybrid work opportunities.   |
|  |          | ✓        | The education pipeline in Salem has shrunk by 9% over the past five years.  |
|  |          | ✓        | School referrals for mental health services for students are facing waiting lists and delays.   |
|  |          | ✓        | Multi-county transportation options that can connect with resources such as the RADAR bus are needed.   |
| ✓  | ✓        | ✓        | Stakeholders in Roanoke County report there is a need for additional domestic violence and homeless shelter capacity. Lack of affordable housing and waitlists for people who have housing vouchers are compounding the problem.  |
|  | ✓        | ✓        | Public awareness of the existing resources could be improved. Professional stakeholders with the Roanoke County DSS also noted that regular agency-wide meetings would be a great venue for TAP to visit and share information about its programs and resources. All DSS social workers also meet quarterly, if TAP wanted to target information to frontline staff.  |
| <b>Locality Issues – Roanoke City</b>  |          |          |   |
| ✓  | ✓        |          | In addition to healthcare and social assistance, top growing industries in Roanoke City include arts, entertainment, and recreation. The top growing occupations can be found in management, business and financial operations, and healthcare practitioners and technical services.  |
|  | ✓        |          | Small business development and investment in local community organizations continues to be an area for TAP to support.  |

| Response Level |   |   | Need/Issue  |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| I              | A | C |   |
| ✓              | ✓ |   | Local government and social service agencies report challenges finding qualified personnel to fill a large number of vacancies. Top in-demand, specialized skills include those in healthcare: trauma care, orthopedics, neonatal intensive care unit, and nursing.   |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | In addition to the <a href="#">Lift Center</a> , the Roanoke City school system plans to open a community empowerment and education center at the current location of its administrative offices, which will move downtown. The plan is to provide a one-stop center to access programs such as Head Start and early education, English language and literacy, naturalization instruction, tutoring, GED classes, homeownership education, etc. TAP can partner to support referrals to wraparound supports and related services. |
|                | ✓ |   | The City and TAP can continue to focus on the launch of the Coaching Boys Into Men program in the schools.  |
| ✓              |   | ✓ | Stakeholders report a decrease in test and school performance, and higher rates of truancy during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to virtual learning and developmental setbacks.  |
|                |   | ✓ | More clarity and discussion are needed among stakeholders to address a lack of awareness and connection across organizations with similar missions.   |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | Employment and social programs for low-income youth aged 18-24 are needed to prevent gang and gun violence, but difficult to deliver. Age-appropriate venues and peer-based programming is recommended.   |
|                | ✓ | ✓ | The library serves as a community center for several communities in Roanoke, offering a variety of services, programs for all ages, and gathering spaces for afterschool needs and community organizing. Sometimes the library is the only place for kids to go after school or where seniors can access internet and assistance using a computer.  |
| ✓              | ✓ | ✓ | Affordable and transitional housing for immigrants and low-income families is not available in the quantity needed.   |
| ✓              | ✓ | ✓ | High child obesity rates in low-income neighborhoods are due to unhealthy eating behaviors, food deserts, poor quality or nonexistent pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, and lack of public transportation to access healthy foods.   |
|                |   | ✓ | TAP can continue to collaborate with local government initiatives such as community violence interventions, and citizenship and public leadership academies, to increase civic involvement.   |

## Appendix A: Methodology

The 2022 TAP community needs assessment was conducted using a mixed methods approach, including collection of primary and secondary data and an iterative analytical process. Spanning approximately 12 months, the needs assessment endeavored to collect perspectives from a variety of stakeholders and sources that would best illuminate the general needs of low-income households across TAP’s region, as well as locality-specific trends where possible. The assessment organized the findings across six domains including Employment, Education and Development, Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building, Housing, Health/Social Behavioral Development, Civic Engagement and Community Involvement, as well as cross-cutting factors regarding Poverty and Demographics. In alignment with TAP’s mission to offer direct services, working with individuals and families, to help them overcome their problems and improve their lives, the findings strive to clarify what those problems are and what kinds of programs and resources might be needed to improve the lives of low-income households through direct services and empowering programming.

### Mixed Methods

Mixed methods studies combine quantitative and qualitative data analysis in an effort to illuminate broad trends from representative data, as well as enrich the context for those trends from case studies and individual experiences. This approach helps to draw conclusions about *what* is impacting the target population, as well as *why* and *how*. The mixed method approach for the TAP needs assessment used the following data collection and analysis methods:

- Primary stakeholder discovery/exploratory interviews (qualitative)
- Secondary data and report analysis (quantitative, qualitative)
- Primary stakeholder surveys (quantitative, qualitative)

The research team collated secondary data and primary perspectives in an iterative way, going back and forth between data sources to confirm, verify, or question findings. It was possible to compare survey responses from 2019 with the new 2022 responses to identify changes over time. The team also conducted three meetings with a subgroup of TAP’s board to share findings to date and get feedback on the accuracy and relevance of the information.

More information about the data collection and analysis process can be found below.

### Interviews

Exploratory interviews were conducted with key stakeholders throughout TAP’s service area from February to September 2022 (Table A-1). Individual and group interviews lasted 1–2 hours and were mostly held virtually via Zoom, while a few were in-person. In one case, the research team merely observed a standing working group meeting, which did not follow an interview script.

| <b>Affiliation</b>                         | <b># of Participants</b> | <b>Geographic Area</b> |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Bath County Local Government               | 1                        | Bath County            |
| Botetourt County Local Government          | 1                        | Botetourt County       |
| Craig County Department of Social Services | 1                        | Craig County           |
| City of Lexington Local Government         | 1                        | City of Lexington      |



| <b>Affiliation</b>  | <b># of Participants</b> | <b>Geographic Area</b>              |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority                         | 1                        | Roanoke City                        |
| Low-Income Community Members (focus group)                                  | 13                       | Roanoke Valley                      |
| Roanoke City Public Libraries   | 1                        | Roanoke City                        |
| Roanoke City Neighborhood Services & Community Engagement                   | 1                        | Roanoke City                        |
| Roanoke City Public Schools   | 1                        | Roanoke City                        |
| Roanoke City Youth and Gang Violence Prevention                             | 1                        | Roanoke City                        |
| Roanoke College (Healthy Schools Index)                                     | 1                        | Roanoke City                        |
| Roanoke County Department of Social Services                                | 1                        | Roanoke County                      |
| Roanoke Valley Collective Response to the Opioid and Overdose Crisis (RVCR) | 1                        | Roanoke Valley                      |
| TAP Alleghany-Covington Commission  | 14                       | Alleghany-Covington                 |
| TAP Board (3 focus groups)  | 5                        | All                                 |
| TAP Energy Conservation and Housing Rehabilitation (ECHR)                   | 3                        | All                                 |
| TAP Financial Services  | 1                        | All                                 |
| TAP Head Start  | 4                        | All                                 |
| TAP Housing and Human Services (HHS)  | 4                        | All                                 |
| TAP Planning  | 8                        | All                                 |
| TAP Youth Advisory Board (observation only)                                 | 30+                      | Roanoke Valley                      |
| TAP This Valley Works (TVW)   | 3                        | All                                 |
| TAP TVW Board   | 5                        | All                                 |
| United Way of Roanoke Valley  | 1                        | Roanoke Valley                      |
| Virginia Career Works   | 3                        | Roanoke Valley; Alleghany Highlands |
| Virginia CARES  | 1                        | All                                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>107+</b>              |                                     |

In the interview, stakeholders described their experience, how they think about the different populations that TAP serves, their relationship to TAP, community needs within the six domains and, where relevant, they suggested ways to strengthen partnerships with TAP. Generally, stakeholders were identified for interviews if they had professional responsibilities requiring an overarching view of needs within one or more domains that would impact low-income residents, and in some cases, snowball sampling was used to identify additional recommended interviewees. An effort was made to interview at least one stakeholder in each locality as well as subject matter experts, however some people did not respond to multiple interview requests. Nonetheless, the response rate was over 75%. Key findings from interview transcripts were integrated into the report based on their relevance to a domain and/or locality. Where possible, secondary data was added to reinforce or provide a different perspective to the findings from the interviews.

Other Reports

Other relevant reports are cited and referenced throughout the Domain and Locality summaries to reinforce or provide more detail regarding specific topics and trends. See Appendix D for more information.

Secondary Data

Secondary data sources were identified based on previous TAP needs assessments, as well as in response to trends and topics that arose from the survey, stakeholder interviews, and crisis-to-thriving results. Where possible, the research team endeavored to find the most recent data on a wide range of topics by domain, however not all items of interest have been quantified at the locality or regional scale and some data points were not available at all following an online search. Aggregated databases such as PolicyMap, Kids Count, and the County Health Rankings, while helpful for providing a more coherent, centralized source of related data points, may reference data points from a variety of sources and dates.

A list of the main external secondary data sources is available below (Table A-2). Supplemental data files are available upon request.

| Source                     | Data Topic   | Year | URL   |
|----------------------------|--|------|---|
| Bureau of Labor Statistics | Latest Numbers - Virginia 2007-2022, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.   | 2022 | <a href="https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LASST510000000000003">https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LASST510000000000003</a>   |
| Bureau of Labor Statistics | QCEW County High-Level Quarterly Layout, 2022, Quarter 2 [Data set]. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.         | 2022 | <a href="https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/files/2022/xls/2022_all_county_high_level.zip">https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/files/2022/xls/2022_all_county_high_level.zip</a> |
| Bureau of Labor Statistics | States and selected areas: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population, 1976 to 2021 annual averages | 2022 | <a href="https://www.bls.gov/lau/staadata.zip">https://www.bls.gov/lau/staadata.zip</a>   |
| City of Roanoke, VA        | Roanoke's Heat Island Mapping  | 2020 | <a href="https://www.roanokeva.gov/2722/Roanokes-Heat-Island-Mapping">https://www.roanokeva.gov/2722/Roanokes-Heat-Island-Mapping</a>                                 |

| <b>Table A-2. TAP Needs Assessment Secondary Data Sources</b>                       |   |             |   |
|---|---|-------------|---|
| <b>Source</b>   | <b>Data Topic</b>   | <b>Year</b> | <b>URL</b>  |
| Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner | Number and Rate of Homicide Deaths: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) Annual Report | 2020        | <a href="https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/18/2022/04/Annual-Report-2020-FINAL-1.pdf">https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/18/2022/04/Annual-Report-2020-FINAL-1.pdf</a>   |
| Council of Community Services   | 2022 Summer Point-in Time Count   | 2022        | <a href="https://www.endhomelessnessblueridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-Summer-PIT.pdf">https://www.endhomelessnessblueridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-Summer-PIT.pdf</a>   |
| County Health Rankings  | Varied  | 2022        | <a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/compare-counties?compareCounties=51005%2051017%2051023%2051045%2051161%2051163%2051530%2051580%2051678%2051770%2051775&amp;year=2022">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/compare-counties?compareCounties=51005%2051017%2051023%2051045%2051161%2051163%2051530%2051580%2051678%2051770%2051775&amp;year=2022</a> |
| FBI UCR & DOJ (Policy Map)  | FBI Uniform Crime Reports   | 2005–2020   | <a href="https://vt-policymap-com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/data/dictionary#FBI%20Uniform%20Crime%20Reports%20%E2%80%93%20Hate%20Crime%20Statistics">https://vt-policymap-com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/data/dictionary#FBI%20Uniform%20Crime%20Reports%20%E2%80%93%20Hate%20Crime%20Statistics</a>   |
| Fletcher Group, NORC and ETSU Launch Substance Use Recovery Tool                    | Recovery Ecosystem Score  | 2022        | <a href="https://rei.norc.org/">https://rei.norc.org/</a>   |
| Internal Revenue Service  | SOI Tax Stats County Data for Virginia  | 2019        | <a href="https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-soi/19incyva.xlsx">https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-soi/19incyva.xlsx</a>   |

| Table A-2. TAP Needs Assessment Secondary Data Sources |  |      |   |
|--|--|------|---|
| Source   | Data Topic   | Year | URL   |
| KIDS Count   | Teen Birth Rate, Virginia Department of Health, Division of Health Statistics  | 2020 | <a href="https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3235-teen-birth-rate-per-1000-by-age-group?loc=48&amp;loct=5#detailed/5/6815,6821,6825,6830,6841-6842,6882,6919-6921,6924/true/574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/2712,179,180/12641,21650">https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3235-teen-birth-rate-per-1000-by-age-group?loc=48&amp;loct=5#detailed/5/6815,6821,6825,6830,6841-6842,6882,6919-6921,6924/true/574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/2712,179,180/12641,21650</a> |
| KIDS Count   | Infant Mortality, Virginia Department of Health, Division of Health Statistics   | 2020 | <a href="https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3236-infant-mortality?loc=48&amp;loct=5#ranking/5/any/true/574/any/14138">https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3236-infant-mortality?loc=48&amp;loct=5#ranking/5/any/true/574/any/14138</a>   |
| KIDS Count   | Map the Meal Gap: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level. Feeding America.                                  | 2021 | <a href="https://datacenter.kidscount.org/">https://datacenter.kidscount.org/</a>   |
| Lightcast  | Lightcast Economy Overview   | 2022 | <a href="http://www.economicmodeling.com">www.economicmodeling.com</a>  |
| Local Department of Social Services Profile Report     | Medicaid Enrollment - Data Warehouse, "Client Cross-Program Locality Yearly Analysis" (2012-2016 data from ADAPT; 2017-2021 data from VaCMS) | 2021 | <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile.cgi">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile.cgi</a>   |
| Mayo Clinic  | COVID-19 Cumulative Number of cases since pandemic started   | 2022 | <a href="https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/map/virginia">https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/map/virginia</a>   |

| <b>Source</b>  | <b>Data Topic</b>  | <b>Year</b> | <b>URL</b>  |
|--|--|-------------|---|
| National Association of Counties County Explorer     | Coronavirus State And Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Total Allocation (Includes Consolidated Funds). | 2022        | <a href="https://ce.naco.org/?dset=Coronavirus%20State%20And%20Local%20Fiscal%20Recovery%20Funds&amp;ind=Total%20Allocation">https://ce.naco.org/?dset=Coronavirus%20State%20And%20Local%20Fiscal%20Recovery%20Funds&amp;ind=Total%20Allocation</a>   |
| National League of Cities                            | American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding by locality  | 2022        | <a href="https://www.nlc.org/resource/local-government-arpa-investment-tracker/">https://www.nlc.org/resource/local-government-arpa-investment-tracker/</a>   |
| Opportunity Insights                                 | Social Capital Atlas   | 2022        | <a href="https://socialcapital.org/?dimension=EconomicConnectednessIndividual&amp;dim1=EconomicConnectednessIndividual&amp;dim2=CohesivenessClustering&amp;dim3=CivicEngagementVolunteeringRates&amp;geoLevel=county&amp;selectedId=06037">https://socialcapital.org/?dimension=EconomicConnectednessIndividual&amp;dim1=EconomicConnectednessIndividual&amp;dim2=CohesivenessClustering&amp;dim3=CivicEngagementVolunteeringRates&amp;geoLevel=county&amp;selectedId=06037</a> |
| Policy Map   | Varied   | 2022        | <a href="https://www.policymap.com/">https://www.policymap.com/</a>   |
| The Annie E. Casey Foundation                        | KIDS COUNT Data Center   | 2022        | <a href="https://datacenter.kidscount.org/">https://datacenter.kidscount.org/</a>   |
| The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) | Environmental Justice Index (EJI) Explorer   | 2022        | <a href="https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/#/eji-explorer">https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/#/eji-explorer</a>   |
| U.S. Census Bureau                                   | Demographic and Housing Estimates, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates                      | 2020        | <a href="https://data.census.gov">https://data.census.gov</a>   |
| U.S. Census Bureau                                   | Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates                   | 2019        | <a href="https://data.census.gov">https://data.census.gov</a>   |
| U.S. Census Bureau                                   | Annual Social and Economic Supplements   | 2010–2022   | <a href="https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-asec.2021.html#list-tab-9E61MSYZPAC2QXAJSM">https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-asec.2021.html#list-tab-9E61MSYZPAC2QXAJSM</a>   |

| <b>Table A-2. TAP Needs Assessment Secondary Data Sources</b>                                  |  |             |   |
|--|--|-------------|---|
| <b>Source</b>  | <b>Data Topic</b>  | <b>Year</b> | <b>URL</b>  |
| U.S. Census Bureau   | Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | 2019, 2020  | <a href="https://data.census.gov">https://data.census.gov</a>   |
| U.S. Census Bureau   | Housing, Vacancy Rates, etc.   | 2010–2022   | <a href="https://data.census.gov">https://data.census.gov</a>   |
| University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute  | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps  | 2022        | <a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/compare-counties?compareCounties=51005%2051017%2051023%2051045%2051161%2051163%2051530%2051580%2051678%2051770%2051775&amp;year=2022">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/compare-counties?compareCounties=51005%2051017%2051023%2051045%2051161%2051163%2051530%2051580%2051678%2051770%2051775&amp;year=2022</a> |
| VDSS, Division of Family Services, VCWOR ("Child Demographics Annual Report -- All Referrals") | Child Protective Services (CPS)  | 2021        | <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile.cgi">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile.cgi</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Education   | School Climate Reports   | 2022        | <a href="https://doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/school_climate/index.shtml">https://doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/school_climate/index.shtml</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Education   | Virginia Preschool Initiative. Commonwealth of Virginia.   | 2022        | <a href="https://doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/preschool/vpi/index.shtml">https://doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/preschool/vpi/index.shtml</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Education   | Childcare Subsidy Program Guidance Manual. Division Of Early Childhood Care And Education        | 2022        | <a href="https://doe.virginia.gov/cc/files/child-care-subsidy-guidance-manual.pdf">https://doe.virginia.gov/cc/files/child-care-subsidy-guidance-manual.pdf</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Health (VDH)  | Quarterly Emergency Department Visits for Unintentional Drug Overdose among Virginia Residents   | 2022        | <a href="https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/opioid-data/monitoring-surveillance/">https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/opioid-data/monitoring-surveillance/</a>   |

| Table A-2. TAP Needs Assessment Secondary Data Sources    |  |            |   |
|---|--|------------|---|
| Source  | Data Topic   | Year       | URL   |
| Virginia Department of Health (VDH)                       | COVID-19 Vaccination Rates   | 2022       | <a href="https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/s ee-the-numbers/covid-19-in-virginia/covid-19-vaccine-summary/covid-19-vaccine-demographics/">https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/s ee-the-numbers/covid-19-in-virginia/covid-19-vaccine-summary/covid-19-vaccine-demographics/</a> |
| Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) | Medicaid Expansion Enrollment  | 2022       | <a href="https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-expansion-enrollment/">https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-expansion-enrollment/</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) | Medicaid/FAMIS Enrollment  | 2022       | <a href="https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-famis-enrollment/">https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/data/medicaid-famis-enrollment/</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Social Services                    | Foster Care Related Reports – Children Demographics 09-2022 and 09-2021  | 2021, 2022 | <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/fc.cgi">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/fc.cgi</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Social Services                    | Child Demographics Annual Report   | 2021       | <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile.cg">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile.cg</a>   |
| Virginia Department of Social Services                    | Local Department of Social Service Profiles  | 2022       | <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile/agency_caseload_expenditures/ldss_sfy2021_rev2.xlsx">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile/agency_caseload_expenditures/ldss_sfy2021_rev2.xlsx</a>                   |
| Virginia Department of Social Services Data Warehouse     | Local Department of Social Service Profiles-Medicaid Counts - 2012-2016 data from ADAPT; 2017-2021 data from VaCMS | 2022       | <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile/agency_caseload_expenditures/ldss_sfy2021_rev2.xlsx">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile/agency_caseload_expenditures/ldss_sfy2021_rev2.xlsx</a>                   |

| Source  | Data Topic  | Year | URL   |
|---|---|------|---|
| Virginia Department of Social Services Data Warehouse | Local Department of Social Service Profiles-Medicaid  | 2022 | <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile/agency_caseload_expenditures/ldss_sfy2021_rev2.xlsx">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/about/reports/agency_wide/ldss_profile/agency_caseload_expenditures/ldss_sfy2021_rev2.xlsx</a> |
| Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)                  | Employment and unemployment estimates reported from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program | 2022 | <a href="https://virginiaworks.com/_docs/Download-Center/labforce/labforce.zip">https://virginiaworks.com/_docs/Download-Center/labforce/labforce.zip</a>   |
| Virginia Municipal League                             | Metropolitan Cities (allocations)   | 2022 | <a href="https://www.vml.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Metropolitan-Cities.pdf">https://www.vml.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Metropolitan-Cities.pdf</a>   |
| Virginia Public Access Project                        | Virginia’s Aging Population   | 2017 | <a href="https://www.vpap.org/visuals/visual/aging-population-2017/">https://www.vpap.org/visuals/visual/aging-population-2017/</a>   |
| Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service               | 2030 and 2040 population projections  | 2022 | <a href="https://demographics.coopercenter.org/virginia-population-projections">https://demographics.coopercenter.org/virginia-population-projections</a>   |

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2022), the 2020 decennial census faced several challenges, such as having to limit data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic and controversy about the inclusion of a citizenship question, which may have deterred some people from participating. The decennial census undercounted Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Some Other Race, and Hispanic or Latino groups, and overcounts were estimated for White, Non-Hispanic White Alone, and Asian groups. The 2020 Census also undercounted renters, however this has occurred in previous censuses. The latest census also undercounted people under the age of 50, adult males, and young children (aged 0 to 4). As a result of these issues, the needs assessment study uses 2019 Census data in some cases.

### Surveys

To complement the interviews and secondary data sources, we conducted a broad survey of TAP clients, stakeholders, employees, and other community members. We asked all groups to identify issues and challenges that affected themselves or their community related to employment, education, health and wellbeing, housing, finances, transportation, community engagement and emergency services. We also asked current and past TAP clients about their customer service experience with TAP, and we asked TAP employees about their perspectives on agency functions. Finally, we asked basic demographic



information to be able to evaluate the representativeness of the sample and to be able to break results down by each locality. See Appendix B for more detail regarding the survey results.

## Appendix B: Survey Demographics

The survey was conducted between August 30 and September 19. There were 370 completed survey responses and 181 partial responses. The largest number of responses came from individuals living or working in Roanoke City (~46%) followed by Roanoke County (~18%). All remaining localities made up between 1 and 7 percent each.

### Race

Of survey respondents answering the race question, 60% were White, 28% Black or African American, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 1% Asian. The remaining 10% reported some other undisclosed race or preferred not to answer.

### Ethnicity

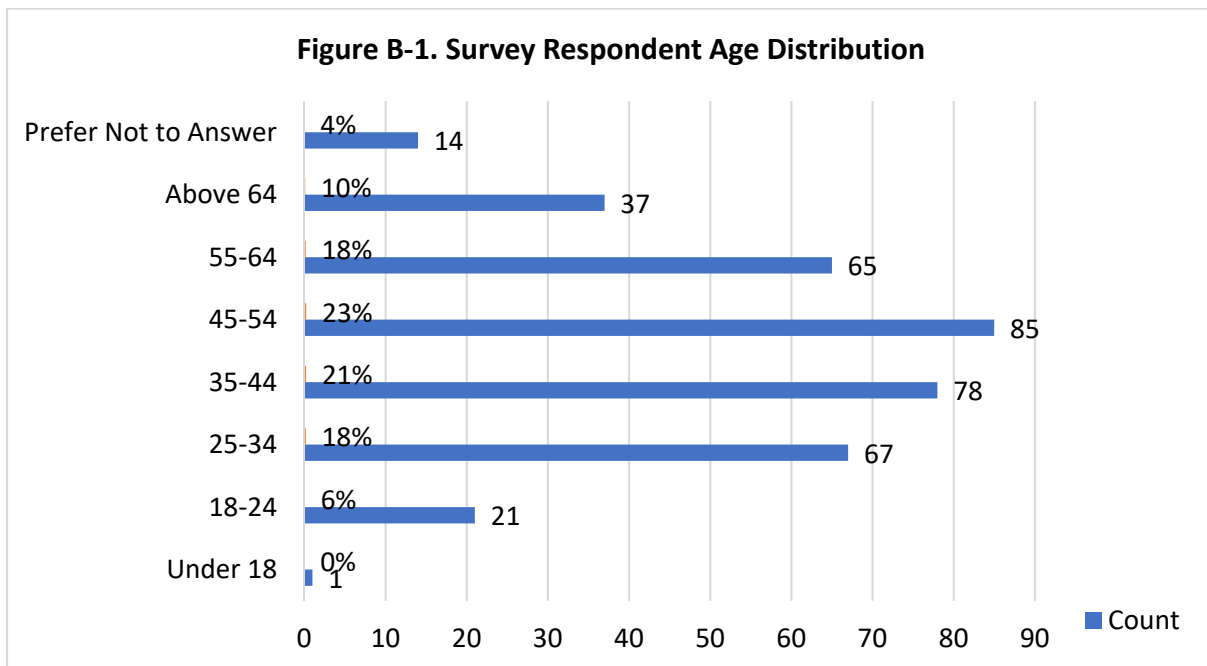
Six percent of survey respondents indicated a Hispanic ethnicity and 86% reported that they are Non-Hispanic. Eight percent preferred not to answer.

### Gender

Seventy-five percent of survey respondents reported being female, a much larger percentage than in the general population. Only 21% reported being male. Less than 1% reported being transgender or gender non-conforming. Four percent preferred not to answer.

### Age

As shown in Figure B-1, all adult age categories were well-represented in the survey responses. However, there was only one response from a youth under 18.



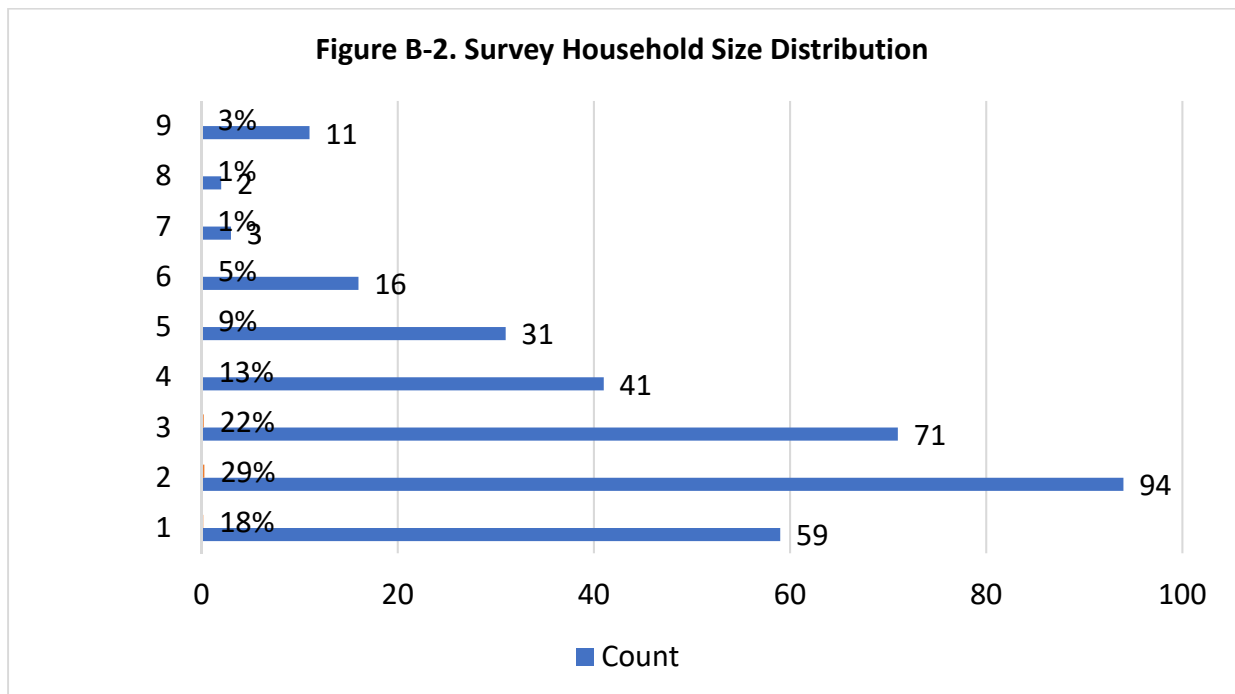
### Income

As shown in Table B-1, Approximately 62% of survey respondents reported household income below \$45,000 per year. There was even representation across all low-income categories indicating that the survey was effective in including the perspectives of the low-income population.

| Household Income Range | Count | Percent |
|------------------------|-------|---------|
| Under \$12,000         | 41    | 11%     |
| \$12,001-17,000        | 22    | 6%      |
| \$17,001-22,000        | 23    | 6%      |
| \$22,001-26,000        | 18    | 5%      |
| \$26,001-31,000        | 27    | 7%      |
| \$31,001-36,000        | 26    | 7%      |
| \$36,001-40,000        | 19    | 5%      |
| \$40,001-45,000        | 20    | 5%      |
| \$45,001 or more       | 118   | 32%     |
| Prefer Not to Answer   | 54    | 15%     |
| Total                  | 368   | 100%    |
| Less than \$45,000     | 196   | 62%     |
| More than \$45,000     | 118   | 38%     |

### Household Size

Almost half of survey respondents were in 1, 2 or 3-person households, but larger households were also well represented in the survey. See Figure B-2 below.



## Appendix C: Additional Detail from Interviews

### ***TAP This Valley Works***

This Valley Works has expanded to include not only adult job training and education, but youth-oriented and homelessness programs. While the fundamental goal of the program is to prepare workers for sustainable employment, that is a long-term outcome rather than a short-term possibility for many clients. For youth in particular, This Valley Works endeavors to raise awareness about career opportunities and how to get there, helping at-risk youth consider more productive paths. TVW stakeholders include clients, employers, local government and community organizational partners, and the advisory board. TVW has created job training programs at the request of employers and has taken on grant proposal development and program implementation at the request of local government.

Though TAP formally provides fewer emergency services programs than it did in the past, This Valley Works staff must regularly address the basic needs of clients, including access to food, clothing, childcare and housing. With a Whole Family focus and a tendency to stay in touch with clients to address their needs over the long term, TVW is somewhat unique among workforce development programs for providing these wraparound supports.

TAP clients are better served and TAP is better known when physical office and satellite locations are spread out throughout the service area, whereas this makes staff supervision and program and logistical management more difficult for TVW supervisors. In the case of serving sex offenders, physical separation is required from other clients, and homeless clients may not feel comfortable receiving services at certain TAP locations, such as the Roanoke Higher Education Center. Generally, however, TVW staff communicated that referrals to their programs are strong due to TAP's established reputation and the diverse populations served, including youth, veterans, re-entry clients, those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and a large base of need for Head Start (whether single- or two-parent households).

### ***TAP Energy Conservation and Housing Rehabilitation (ECHR) Program***

TAP's ECHR program provides three major programs: weatherization, indoor plumbing and rehabilitation, and limited home repair in the City and County of Roanoke. Within those projects, the program provides weatherization deferral repair (WDR) to repair the homes that would be deferred and then receive weatherization. The program also contracts with Dominion Energy to provide energy conservation services in Covington and Lexington in addition to projects in AEP's service area. ECHR endeavors to improve the living environment for low-income clients and reduce their energy bills. Importantly, ECHR services can help older, less able, and/or low-income homeowners remain in their homes and communities and benefit from healthier, safer living conditions.

The program's most significant stakeholders include funding sources, such as HUD, DOE, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), DSS, HHS, DCHD, the State Corporation Commission (SCC), Dominion and AEP, local governments, as well as clients themselves, who provide constructive feedback regarding their needs and the quality of the work. Funding is determined in part based on demographic and poverty levels for the service region. TAP ECHR is also engaged with the Healthy Homes Roanoke

initiative, which includes Renovation Alliance, Lead Safe Roanoke, Blue Ridge Independent Living Center and others, with funding provided by Roanoke Gas and Carilion Medical Center.

ECHR relies on word of mouth and recommendations from contractors, other nonprofits and local government stakeholders to grow its client base, in addition to social media, newspaper ads, and flyers posted throughout the service area. Through TAP's Whole Family approach, ECHR staff will recommend other program resources to clients during home visits if other issues are identified, such as connecting with the real estate program or domestic violence services.

### ***TAP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Workgroup***

DEI started as a staff training and topic area of interest for This Valley Works, leading TAP to adopt this initiative agency-wide through the formation of a DEI leadership committee. This work aligns with the Virginia Department of Human Resources' strategic plan for inclusive excellence, One Virginia. It also provides additional infrastructure for TAP staff to increase DEI values in their outreach and program delivery efforts for groups such as minorities, refugees, and other diverse populations. TVW and Virginia Career Works have created a DEI task force representing Roanoke, Alleghany/Covington, and Franklin County, and are pursuing ongoing training opportunities for a variety of staff taught by experienced consultants and local community colleges.

### ***TAP Head Start***

TAP Early/Head Start programs seek to serve low-income families, to empower and advocate for them, and to help families come out of poverty through self-sufficiency and making good choices for themselves and their children. The program provides kindergarten readiness and oversees quality childcare facilities and Head Start slots at partner sites throughout the service area, increasing the quality of private childcare providers. Enrollment is coordinated across multiple partners such as United Way, the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), as well as across TAP's programs through the Whole Family approach. The program is publicized via community centers, social media, and through local partners. Head Start coordinators in each locality supervise family services and monitor the activities of the teachers on a monthly basis to ensure compliance with program standards. More than half of the Head Start clientele is located in Roanoke City.

Children and families are assessed throughout the year in how they are meeting their goals, and what outcomes and gains have been made over time. Each family works with a Head Start specialist to document health history, involvement in services, program attendance, and communication with parents. The program provides a Whole Family approach to connect the clients to a multidisciplinary team of supports, including connecting with external partners such as Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare. Head Start may also help parents access services for their older children who are not directly enrolled in Head Start.

The Head Start program provides hearing and dental screens to children to help identify health conditions that could compromise early childhood learning and development. The program also offers mental health resources, nutrition guidance, financial planning and parenting classes, including a program specific for pregnant women regarding the pregnancy process and early developmental benchmarks for infants and young children. The Head Start Policy Council includes parents and provides feedback to the program regarding needs and recommendations for improvement. In addition, Head

Start staff can identify trends in the family assessment data regarding challenges such as transportation, in order to troubleshoot solutions.

***TAP Housing and Human Services (DV; Sabrina's Place)***

The survivor services program was formerly provided under the Family Transition program at TAP, then was integrated into the Housing and Human Services department. The program provides transitional housing and shelter for people fleeing violence, a 24-7 regional hotline, as well as supervised visitation services, and addresses other basic needs for survivors of domestic violence (DV) and sexual trafficking. Sabrina's Place offers free, evidence-based visitation services that attract families from out of state. In addition, HSS provides youth mentoring in Roanoke, and in Covington to address trauma and impacts of substance use in the family. The program is able to provide rapid response to meet survivors at the Magistrate's office and can fill gaps in services that otherwise would not be available, such as cell phone replacements for survivors whose abusers attempt to cut off their ability to communicate.

Measures of success include prevention of further harm, safe visitation rates, and clients' ability to leave abusers, make a fresh start, and find and maintain employment and self-sufficiency. Some individuals require intensive case management including employment supports, and some will stay in touch with program staff for years, to engage periodically with additional services. Clients report that the program offers a helping hand that leads to autonomy, and staff note that supervised visitation services take some of the burden off of the court system to mediate parental rights. Opportunities for safe visitation are also important for childhood development and family attachment. Program partners include landlords, the Department of Social Services (DSS), faith-based services, Casa Latina, SARA, Salvation Army and its physical shelter, Rescue Mission to receive non-DV referrals, Safe Home Systems to transfer individuals across localities, RAM House, which picks up the remaining coverage for financial assistance, and Family Services of the Roanoke Valley for mental health services.

***TAP Planning Department***

TAP's Planning department performs myriad functions, including grant proposal development and some implementation and administrative follow-up, content creation and communications, liaising with IT support, COO functions, strategic planning, and topic research on best practices, broader trends, and ideas for new programs at TAP. Particularly with ARPA and CARES Act funding, the planning department has stepped up to support an unexpectedly large amount of post-award, administrative reporting. Staff report that grant proposals tend to fund new initiatives about 60% of the time, and support existing or ongoing programs about 40% of the time. The Planning staff communicate with department directors to prioritize project needs and align staff capacity, and to identify relevant funding opportunities. Some programs, such as CareerForge in the Covington area, were developed directly due to results from previous needs assessments. TAP is also periodically approached by external partners, such as the City of Roanoke, to apply for grant programs such as the [Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot \(VERP\)](#) in 2021.

The Planning department staff cannot feasibly pursue every relevant grant opportunity at all times due to finite capacity; in the past few years, grant implementation related to COVID-19 relief funding has intensified with the number of proposals increasing in addition to short turn-around times to complete them. Federal agencies in general over time, and during the pandemic in particular, have been announcing funding opportunities increasingly throughout the year, which means Planning staff are consistently working at a high intensity.

The Planning team has shifted more of its focus towards gun and violence prevention programs, to address community members' concerns about their safety. A 2021 report, "[City of Roanoke, Virginia Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment](#)," including surveys and interviews with community members and key stakeholders, highlighted these concerns.

### ***TAP Financial Services***

TAP's Financial Services programs are focused on helping clients to attain and retain assets, including in the areas of housing counseling and homeownership, tax credits, and obtaining financial support for a business. Staff report that TAP and Habitat for Humanity are the only two providers in the Roanoke Valley providing down payment assistance (DPA), however unlike Habitat, TAP doesn't develop properties that homeowners must purchase to receive the DPA. Financial Services also oversees the TAP Books program that resells used books to raise money for TAP and employs individuals in poverty.

The Business Seed program, which encompasses several services, supports small business owners with marginal credit who don't qualify for conventional loans and also provides business classes, requiring clients to obtain a business license and insurance and be current on a payment plan, as well as invest some of their own money into the venture. The program includes resources such as a COVID-19 loan of \$3,000–5,000 in partnership with the City of Roanoke, CDFI loans above \$100,000, and SBA loans of \$50,000 or less. Fifty clients in the City of Roanoke also receive technical assistance annually. A fairly new program for women and minority-owned businesses in Appalachia is a loan pool of regranted funding to support five loans per year and technical assistance.

Program goals and annual targets are defined by the funding source; for example, HUD and Virginia Housing set targets for number of clients educated as first-time homebuyers, number of default and pre-purchase clients who are served, and TAP internally sets an annual goal for the amount of down payment assistance provided. Staff report that TAP consistently meets and exceeds program targets, including keeping its default rate low for business loans, though usage of the free tax clinic fell during COVID-19 (historically, the tax clinic returns \$1.2 million in earned income tax credits for 1,000 clients per year). Partners such as community organizations and local banks will refer clients to TAP for many of these financial services. TAP is also the HUD-approved certified housing counseling agency for the region.

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