

LCCAA
LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY
Helping People. Changing Lives.

Lorain County Community Action Agency

Community Needs Assessment 2025

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Introduction

Since 1966, the Lorain County Community Action Agency (LCCAA) has been serving the residents of Lorain County. LCCAA serves and empowers residents in need across the county by providing services and programs that improve quality of life and promote self-sufficiency. To understand the needs of Lorain County, LCCAA regularly engages the community through a needs assessment. LCCAA worked with The Center for Community Solutions in the latter half of 2025 to assess the current needs of the community and anticipate future needs. Findings from the assessment will be carefully considered as future programming and service decisions are made.

The assessment findings in the following pages include secondary data from sources such as the American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census Bureau, Community Health Rankings, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Governor's Office of Workforce Development. These trusted secondary data sources provide an overview of the current community conditions in Lorain County as they relate to income, poverty, employment, education, and health.

Secondary data supplements the primary data collected through a survey mailed to residents, an online survey distributed to community partners, and direct conversations with parents and caregivers of Head Start families. Primary data collection provides the opportunity to query residents and community partners directly about the programs and services offered by LCAAA as well as gaps in service provision found within the county. The combination of secondary and primary data provides a wealth of information that can guide LCCAA as they continuously work toward its commitment to changing people's lives, embodying the spirit of hope, and improving the community.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this community needs assessment provide important insights into the experiences of Lorain County residents.

Poverty

About 39,114, or 13%, of Lorain County's 314,588 residents are living in poverty. Another 46,010 residents are living in *near* poverty, meaning their household incomes are above the poverty line, but below 200% of the federal poverty line.

Poverty is not experienced equally in Lorain County.

Age

Children under the age of 18 (18.8%) were more likely to be living in poverty than residents 18-64 (11.3%), and 65 and older (10.3%)

Gender

Women (15.0%) were more likely than men (10.5%) to be living in poverty

Race and ethnicity

Black/African American (34.5%) and **Hispanic/Latino** (26.5%) residents were more likely to be living in poverty compared to residents of other races/ethnicities

Household Income

The median household income in Lorain County is $70,693, however there is significant geographic variability in incomes throughout the county by municipality.

Three highest median incomes

- → Avon **$126,618**
- → Avon Lake **$110,174**
- → Sheffield Village **$102,384**

Three lowest median incomes

- → Sheffield Township **$45,671**
- → Lorain City **$45,799**
- → Elyria **$53,204**

There is a diverse range of incomes in the County.

The community survey of Lorain County residents allowed LCCAA to hear from residents directly about their concerns and needs, providing key insights to the causes and conditions of poverty:



Housing and neighborhood

- → 70% of respondents reported some level of concern with affording their rent/mortgage
- → 1 in 2 respondents were concerned about having adequate home weatherization
- → 45% were concerned with the safety of their neighborhood
- → 36.9% were worried about having a reliable source of heat



Food insecurity

- → 23% of survey respondents reported that the people in their households did not have enough to eat, indicating a pressing level of need in the community.



Health

- → While a third of respondents reported that their health was average, nearly 40% reported their health as below average.
- → Most respondents (88.9%) reported having a relationship with a health care provider.



Employment

- → 33.1% of respondents were concerned about stable employment
- → 1 in 4 respondents reported being interested in receiving some kind of assistance with seeking employment or securing better employment.
- → The most popular requested employment assistance was software training (49.5%) and resume writing (48.5%).

Knowledge of LCCAA services

80% of community survey respondents were familiar with LCCAA, and amongst those community members they overwhelmingly believed LCCAA provided important services.

The top LCCAA services that respondents reported that they, or someone in their household could benefit from were:

- → Food Pantries 55.1%
- → Utility Payment Assistance 53.4% / Home Weatherization/Insulation 30.5%
- → Car Purchase/Repair 29.5%

Community Partners echoed these top needs, specifically highlighting affording rent/mortgage (65.1%), affording other monthly bills (62.8%), and reliable transportation (53.5%) as the top concerns for most residents in Lorain County.

Lorain County Community Needs

Resident Profile

Lorain County has approximately 314,588 residents living within twenty-eight towns and cities. While the county is less racially diverse than the state overall, Lorain County has the highest percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents in the state. Eighty-eight percent of residents indicate they are white. The next largest racial category is Black which makes up 10.6 percent of the population. Compared to other counties in the state, Lorain has a higher percentage of Hispanic population with almost eleven percent of residents indicating they are Hispanic or Latino. More than half of Hispanic/Latino residents are of Puerto Rican descent.

Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian | Alaskan Native alone or in combination	4,318	1.4%
Asian alone or in combination	6,064	1.9%
Black | African American alone or in combination	33,214	10.6%
Native Hawaiian | Pacific Islander alone or in combination	342	0.1%
White alone, non-Hispanic	239,348	76.1%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	33,992	10.8%
Black | Indigenous | People of Color	75,240	23.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

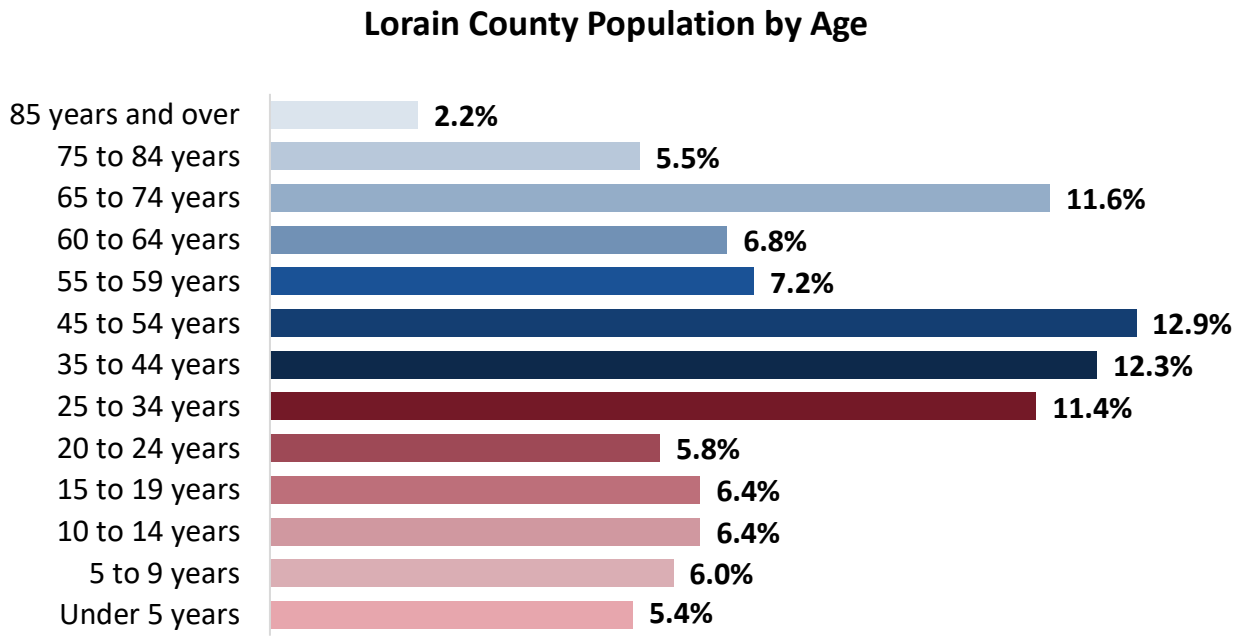
Strengths and Challenges

On the resident survey, respondents shared what they believed were their communities greatest strengths. They most commonly mentioned a feeling of neighbors looking out for one another, especially in times of need. Neighbors are friendly, and help provide a sense of safety as they look out for one another. Another common theme was the sense of safety respondents felt in their communities. Some even described the community as peaceful. Community partners were also asked to share both what they have observed as strengths of Lorain County's communities. Their insights largely aligned with those of the residents, identifying a kindness and unitedness amongst the community. Another common theme from the partners was the benefits of Lorain County being a diverse community (and becoming more diverse). And finally a sense of resilience was mentioned by community partners as a real strength.

Greatest strengths of Lorain County and the residents	
Access to amenities	Parks
Caring for all of its residents	Pride in community
Church communities	Quiet
Closeness	Resilient
Community resources	Resourceful/determined
Cultural diversity	Safe
Family-focused	Schools
Friendly	Small town feel
Helping others	Sense of community
Income diversity	Services are good; police, EMS
Libraries	Stable local government
Looking out for one another	Supportive
Lots of social support programs	Working together
Nature/Lake access	

Age and Trends

Approximately half of the residents of Lorain County are between the ages of 20-59, which is typically considered working age. The other half of the county is evenly split between older adults (26.1 percent) and youth under age 19 (24.2 percent). Based on current trends, it can be expected that the percentage of older adults will continue to rise within Lorain County over the next ten years as the Baby Boomer generation continues to age.



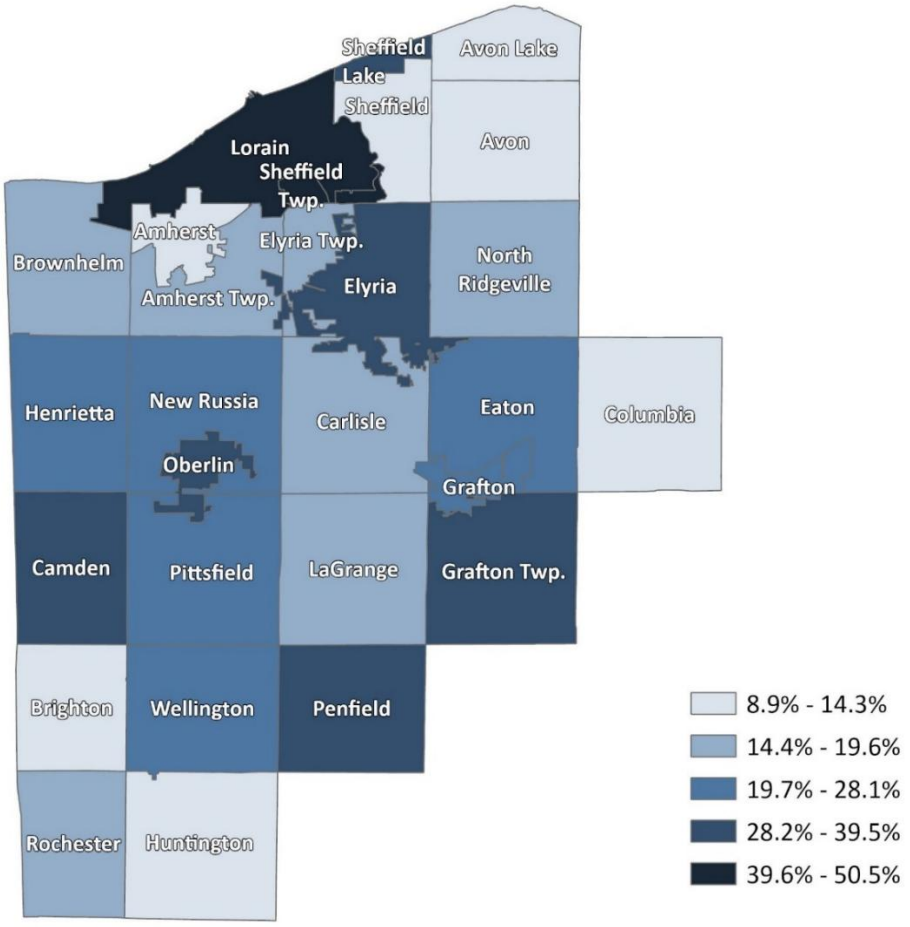
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Financial Stability

In Lorain County, **the median household income is $70,693, higher than the Ohio state median income of $69,680**. The median household income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half with incomes above the median, half with incomes below the median. Median incomes vary widely among municipalities within the county. Nine municipalities (in red) have median incomes below the county median; Sheffield Township, Lorain, Elyria, Camden Township, Elyria Township, Sheffield Lake, Brownhelm Township, Brighton Township, and Pittsfield Township. The municipality with the lowest median income is Sheffield Township, $45,671.

Lorain County Median Household Income	
	Median Household Income
Ohio	$69,680
Lorain County	$70,693
Municipality	**Median Household Income**
Avon City	$126,618
Avon Lake City	$110,174
Sheffield Village	$102,384
Huntington Township	$99,271
Columbia Township	$94,308
North Ridgeville City	$94,234
Amherst City	$93,043
Grafton Township	$92,206
Henrietta Township	$90,458
LaGrange Township	$90,139
Carlisle Township	$89,100
Rochester Township	$89,038
Grafton Village	$88,352
Penfield Township	$87,153
Amherst Township	$84,120
New Russia Township	$81,563
Wellington Township	$77,799
Eaton Township	$73,972
Oberlin City	$73,775
Pittsfield Township	$69,432
Brighton Township	$68,750
Brownhelm Township	$66,566
Sheffield Lake City	$62,065
Elyria Township	$61,489
Camden Township	$54,714
Elyria City	$53,204
Lorain City	$45,799
Sheffield Township	$45,671

Percent of Population below 200% FPL by Lorain County Subdivisions

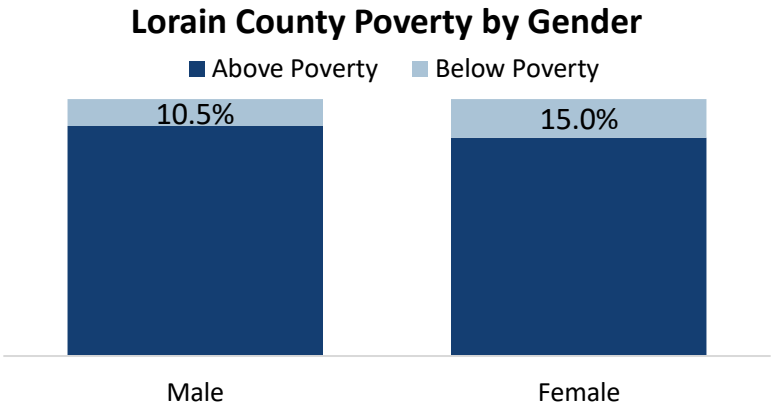


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023 5-Year Estimates

About thirteen percent of the county lives at or below the federal poverty level (FPL), which is approximately 39,114 Lorain County residents. Many assistance programs have eligibility requirements between 100% and 200% of FPL. Residents with incomes at or below 200% of the FPL live throughout the county with higher concentrations of households at this income level found in Sheffield Township, Lorain, Elyria, Camden, Penfield Township, Oberlin, Grafton Township, and Sheffield Lake. In these communities, twenty-nine to fifty-one percent of households may be living at or below a level of income insufficient to meet their needs. Households with incomes at this level often qualify for assistance programs to meet basic needs including housing, food, health insurance and early childhood services.

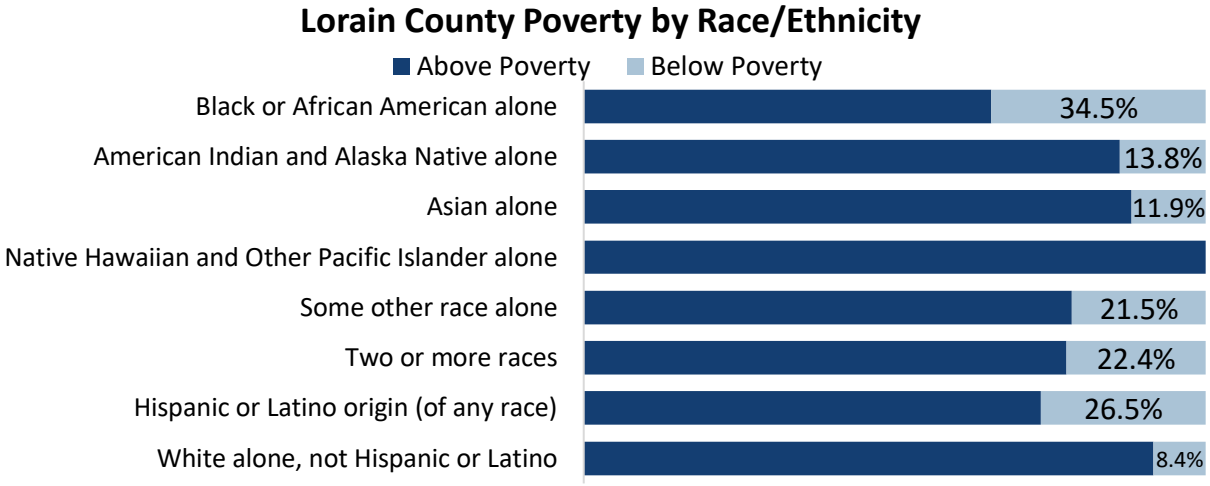
Community partners were asked if, in general, people in Lorain County are able to budget money. Seventy-five percent disagreed with the statement. Similarly, 51.1 percent did not think that people in Lorain County knew how to get the public assistance they need from local services, and an additional 23.3 percent weren't sure.

Poverty does not impact the residents of Lorain County at equal rates. About 23,298 women, or 15 percent of women in Lorain County are living below the Federal Poverty Line, compared to 15,816 men, or 10.5 percent of men.



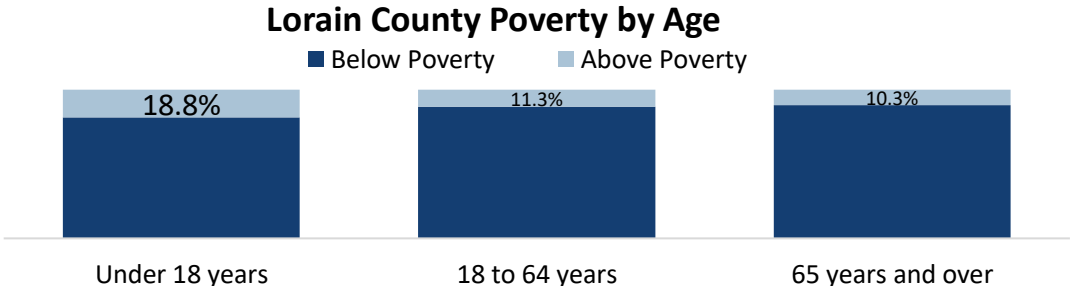
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

The same is true when it comes to poverty and race/ethnicity in Lorain County. The largest number of residents living in poverty by race/ethnicity are Black or African American residents (34.5 percent), followed by Hispanic/Latino residents (26.5 percent).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

Children in Lorain County were the most likely residents by age to be living in poverty.

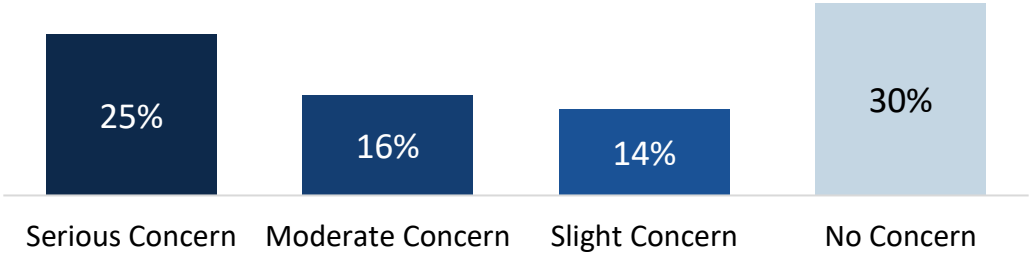


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

Housing

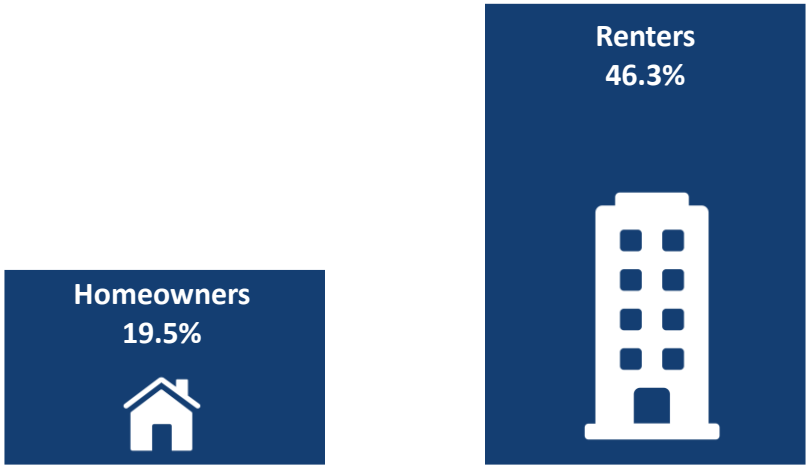
Based on resident survey results, more than half of Lorain County residents have some concern about their ability to pay their rent or mortgage. About fifteen percent of residents indicated paying rent or mortgage did not apply to them. Of those with a rent or mortgage payment, almost half have moderate or serious concerns about their ability to make a payment. Sixty-nine percent of residents indicated difficulty in affording their utilities.

Are you concerned about affording rent/mortgage?



According to the American Community Survey (ACS), renters in Lorain County experience higher rates of unaffordable housing than homeowners. Nearly half of all renters in the county are cost-burdened, meaning more than thirty percent of their income goes towards housing costs. While the cost-burdened rate is lower for homeowners in the county, nearly a fifth of homeowners are in unaffordable housing. Unaffordable housing often leads to housing instability which can have far-reaching impacts on a family's life, including disruptions to employment and education. Utility assistance programs can help reduce housing burden costs for those who meet financial eligibility requirements.

Lorain County Unafforable Housing

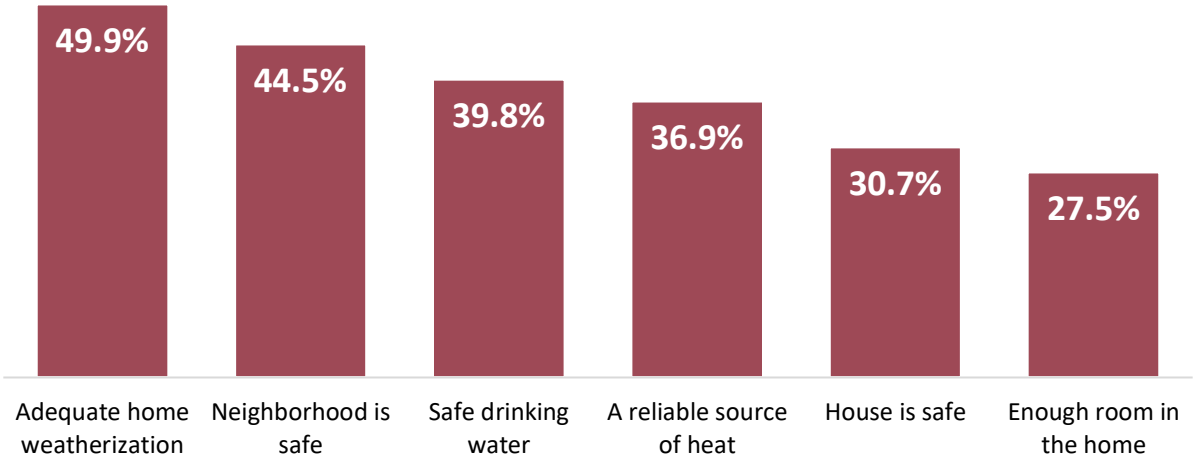


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

Neighborhood and Home Concerns

Resident survey takers were able to indicate whether they had concerns about various aspects of their current housing. The issue that ranked highest among residents' concerns about where they live was whether their homes were adequately weatherized. Roughly thirty percent of the survey takers had utilized the home weatherization assistance program**.** Nearly as many were concerned about the safety of their neighborhood. The area that drew the least amount of concern from residents was whether they had enough room for the number of people living in the home.

Concerns about *where they live*





Ninety-five percent of those who responded to the resident survey have internet access at home. Almost ninety-nine percent of survey takers indicate they are comfortable using the internet.

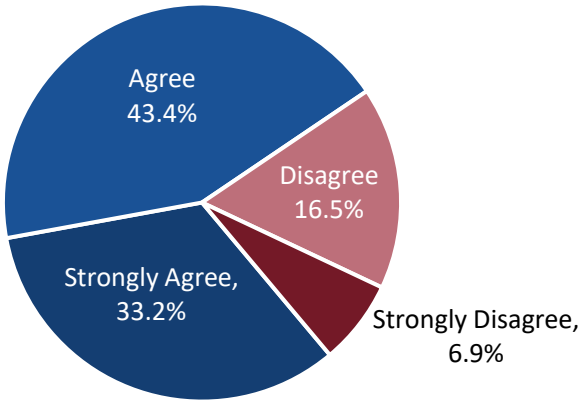
Survey respondents were asked what they enjoy doing most in their community/neighborhoods. The most frequently mentioned activities were centered around outdoor recreation, like visiting the parks and trails, walking in the neighborhood, biking, and visiting Lake Erie. Another common theme was socializing with neighbors and relaxing outside. Others mentioned enjoying the community events such as local festivals and concerts that are available. Respondents also mentioned enjoying local community institutions like the churches, the libraries, and the nearby restaurants and shopping.

Food & Nutrition

Food Insecurity and Assistance

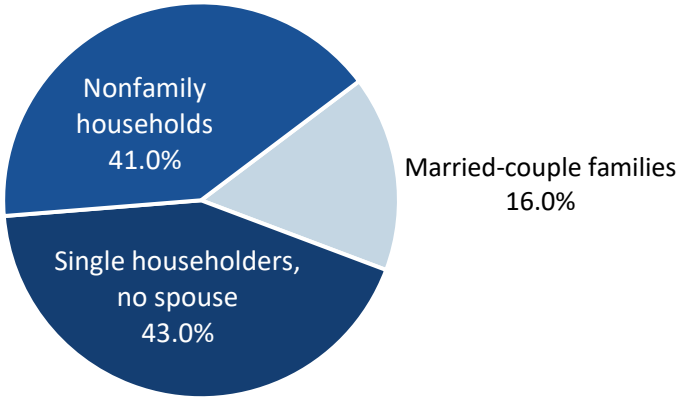
Over fifteen percent of Lorain County residents are considered food insecure, meaning they do not have reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. This rate is higher than the food insecurity rate across the country. Among resident survey takers, almost a quarter (23.4%) of people indicated they do not always have enough to eat. Food pantries, hot meal programs, SNAP enrollment, and food delivery programs all help reduce the food insecurity rates and ensure people have access to the food they need to nourish their families.

People in my household have *enough to eat*



Eleven percent of the estimated 130,167 households in Lorain County are receiving SNAP which represents 13,754 households. Of households receiving SNAP, sixteen percent are married couples, forty-one percent are non-family households and forty-three percent are single householders. Just over half (52%) of the households receiving SNAP in Lorain County have at least one child under eighteen as part of the household and a third of households have a member over the age of sixty.

Lorain County SNAP Eligibility by Household Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2201

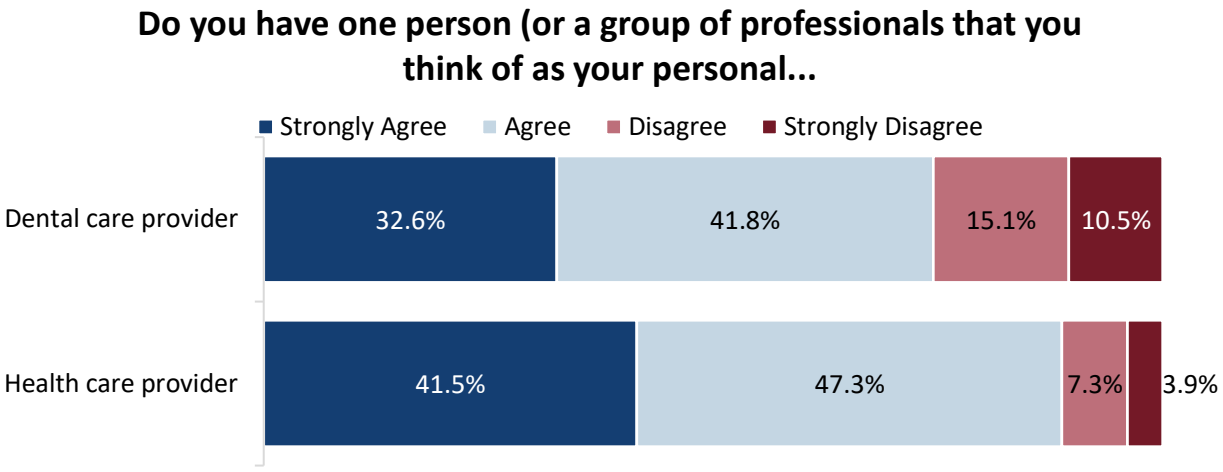
Health

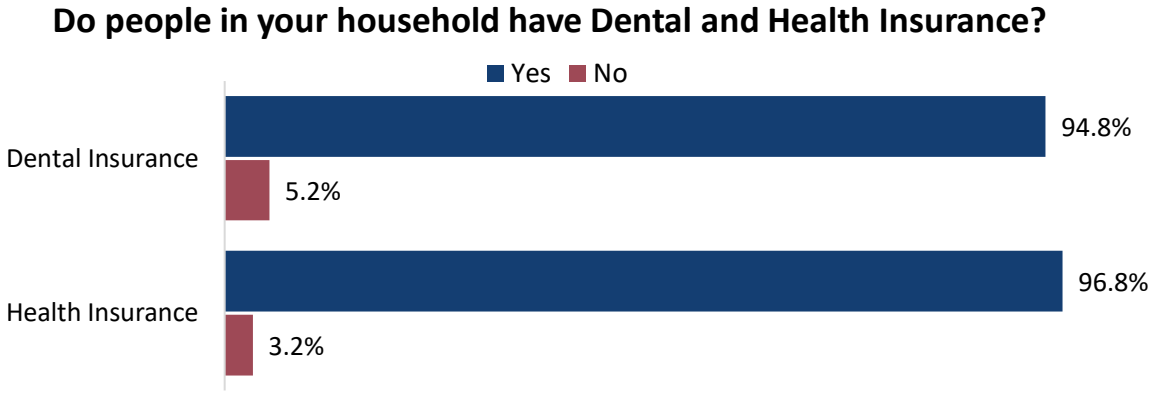
County Health Rankings compares counties across the state and country on various health outcomes and health factors. When compared to the state of Ohio, **Lorain County performs better on access to opportunities to exercise.** The high ranking of opportunities exercise is supported by survey results which indicate ninety percent of residents have access to a park. In all other areas, Lorain County's health ranking is either the same or worse off than the overall rankings in Ohio.

HEALTH OUTCOMES			
Quality of Life			
	Lorain County	**Ohio**	**United States**
Poor physical health days	4.3	4.3	3.9
Poor mental health days	6.3	6.1	5.1
HEALTH FACTORS			
Health Behaviors			
Adult obesity*	40%	38%	34%
Physical inactivity*	28%	24%	23%
Access to exercise opportunities	95%	84%	84%
Food insecurity*	15%	14%	14%
Limited access to healthy foods*	7%	7%	6%
Clinical Care			
Uninsured	7%	7%	10%
Uninsured adults*	8%	8%	11%
Uninsured children*	4%	4%	5%
Primary care physicians	1,940:1	1,330:1	1,330:1
Dentists	2,040:1	1,530:1	1,360:1
Mental health providers	450:1	290:1	300:1
Social & Economic Factors			
Social associations	9.5	10.8	9.1
*denotes additional behaviors not included in summary			

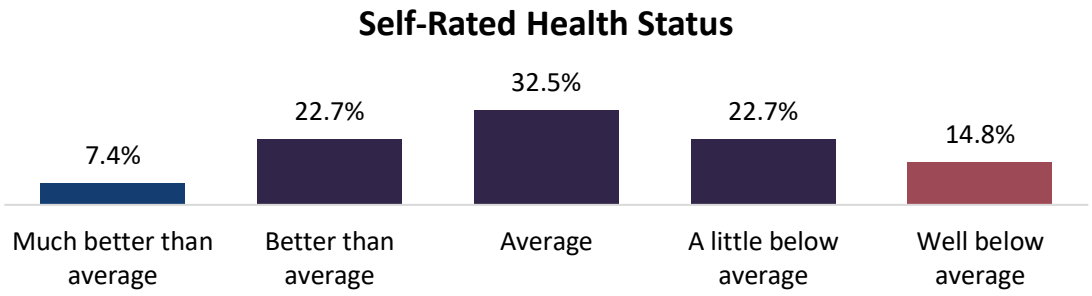
Source: County Health Rankings. Ohio 2025 rankings: Lorain.

Access to primary healthcare and dental care may present challenges to residents of Lorain County based on the ratio of providers to residents. When asked in the resident survey, 26 percent of respondents indicated they do not have someone they consider to be their dental care provider, and five percent do not have dental insurance**.** Among resident survey respondents, eleven percent do not have someone they consider to be their health care provider, and three percent do not have access to health insurance.





In general, the resident survey found that most residents in Lorain County rate their health in the average range. An equal percentage of people ranked their health as better than average and a little below average. Roughly 15 percent of respondents reported that their health was well below average.



Families and Children

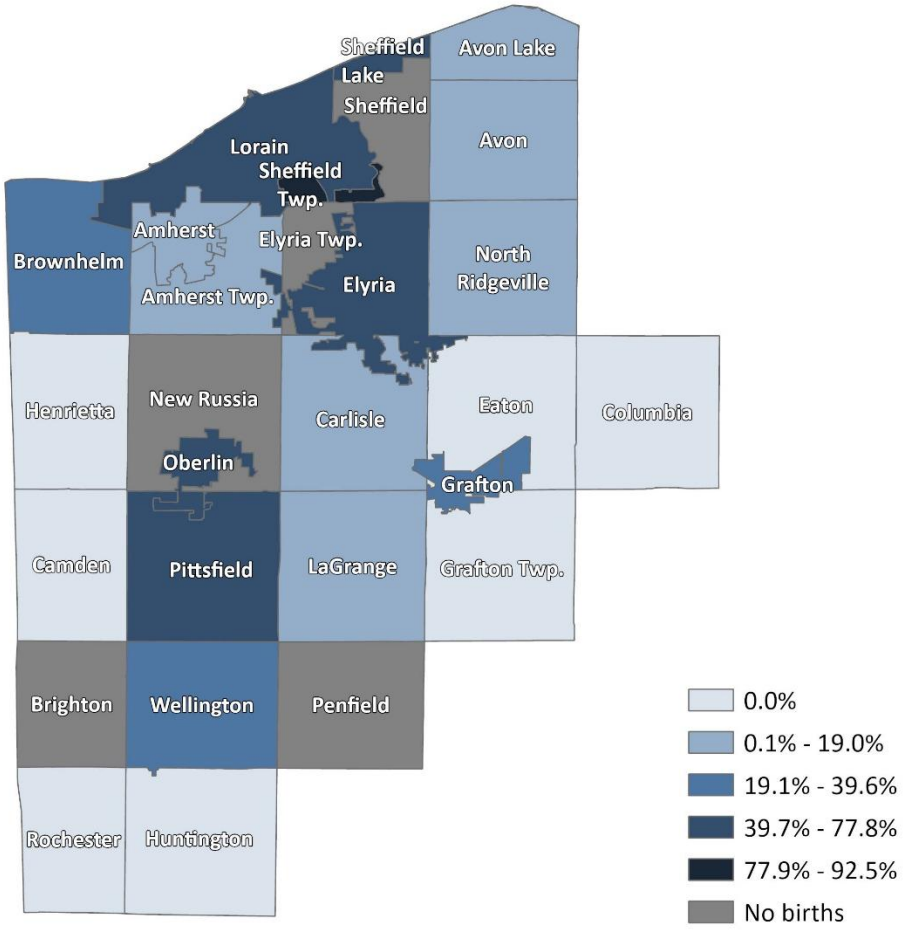
Families can be defined in many ways and any family structure has the potential to provide enriching environments for children being raised in those families. Some families with single-parent households seek out additional assistance from community agencies to prepare their children for success. Approximately thirty-seven percent of families with children are single-parent households, nine percent of the households have a male parent and twenty-eight percent have a female parent. Slightly more than seven percent of children (4,988 children) in Lorain County are being raised by grandparents. Families with kinship care arrangements may be able to receive assistance through the Lorain County Children's Services.

Percentage of Children in Single Parent Households	
 Male Householder, no spouse 9.3%	= 37.6%
 Female Householder, no spouse 28.3%	
Percentage of Children Living with Grandparent	
	= 7.3%

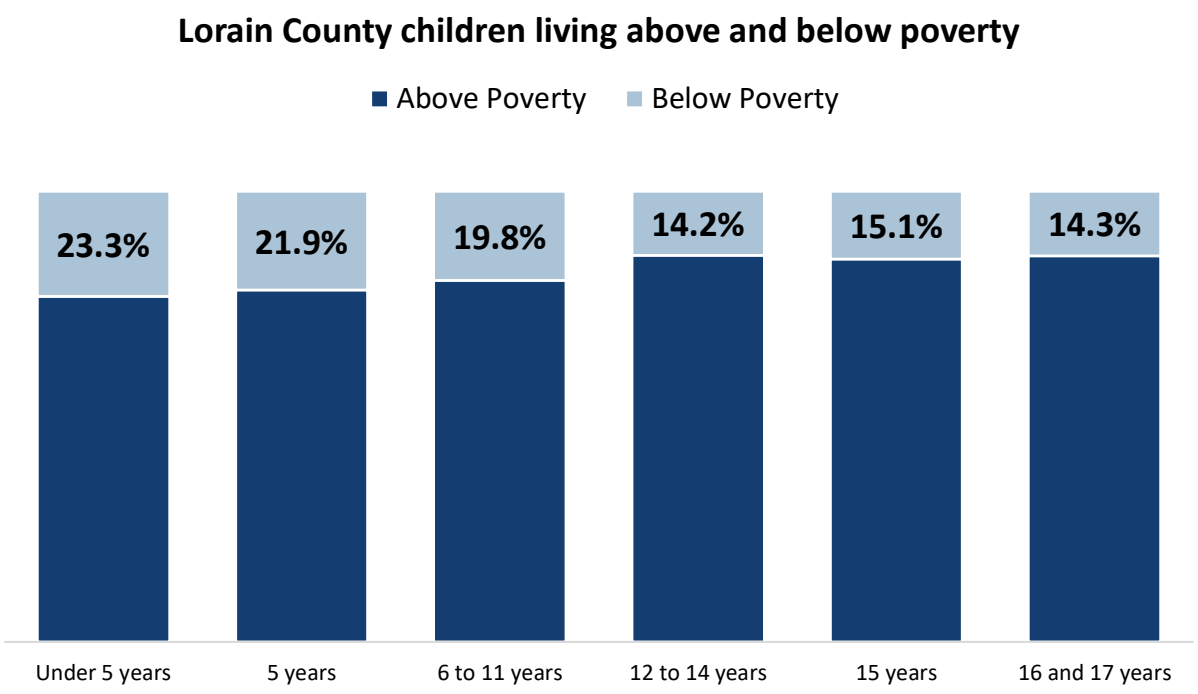
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S0901

An estimated 4,757 women between the ages of fifteen and fifty gave birth in Lorain County in 2023. Across the county, approximately forty-three percent of women who gave birth in the past twelve months had incomes below 200% FPL. The percentage of births at this income level varies by smaller geographies within the county. Sheffield Township has the highest rate of women with incomes below 200% FPL who gave birth in the past 12 months, at ninety-two percent. More than half of the women who gave birth in Lorain, Sheffield Lake, Pittsfield, and Oberlin each had incomes below 200% FPL.

Percent of Births in the last 12 months below 200% FPL by Lorain County Subdivisions



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023 5-Year Estimates

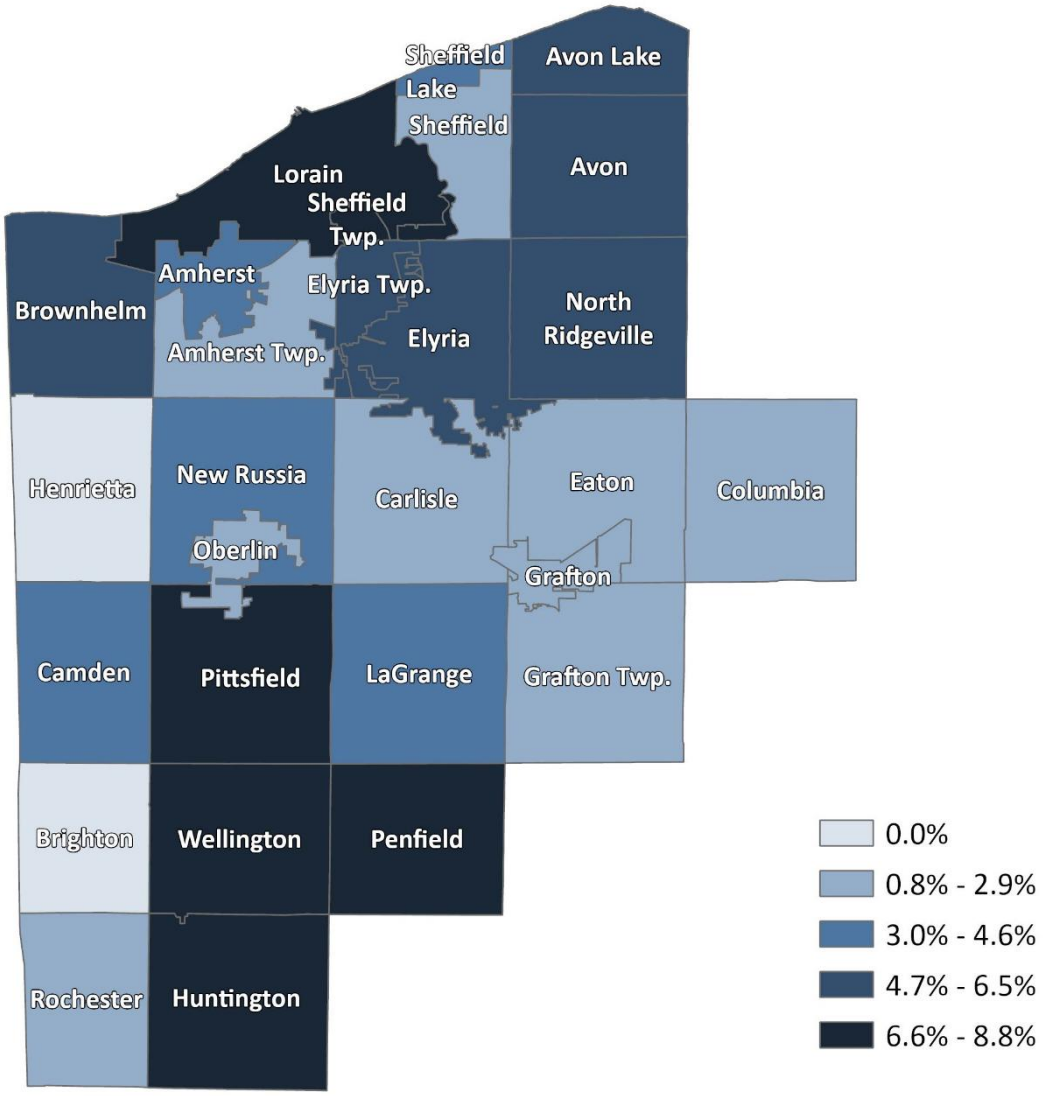


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B17001

Child Poverty

Approximately 12,654 children in Lorain County live at or below the poverty level. The percentage of children living in poverty decreases with age. This is likely an effect of increased family financial stability as childcare needs are reduced and parents' income increases over time. Almost a quarter of all children under five in Lorain County live at or below the poverty level. This represents approximately 3,935 children. It has been well established that early childhood education programs can provide stability and basic need interventions for families with young children living at or below poverty.

Percent of Population Children Under 5 by Lorain County Subdivisions



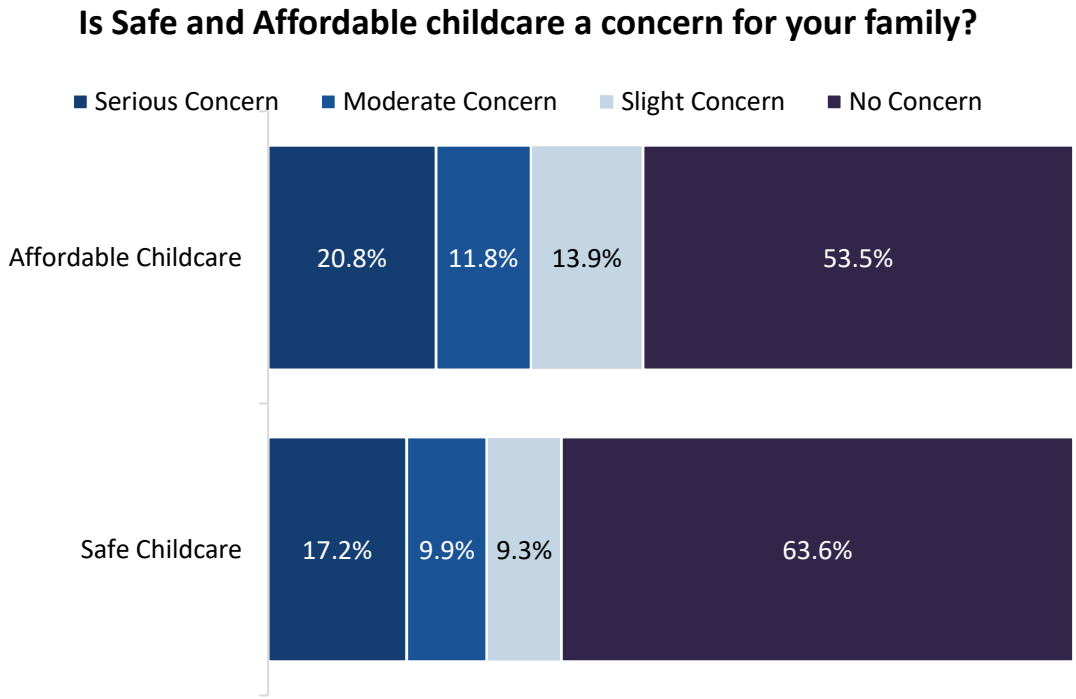
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023 5-Year Estimates

Communities within Lorain County that have the highest rates of children under five are the townships of Wellington, Huntington, Sheffield, Penfield, Pittsfield and the City of Lorain. Communities with the lowest percentage of children under five include Carlisle, Columbia, Eaton, Oberlin, Amherst Township, Grafton, Grafton Township, Brighton, and Henrietta. Population data paired with indicators that demonstrate need at smaller geographies, such as school districts can help guide decision regarding location of services that serve young children living in or near poverty.

Childcare Access and Quality

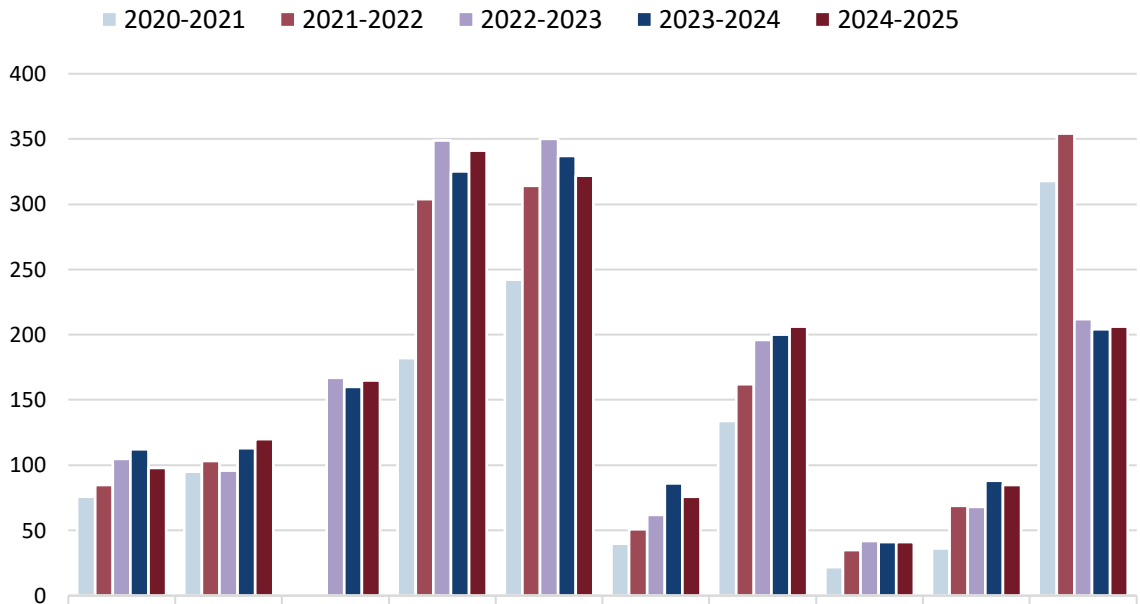
Resident survey respondents had the opportunity to indicate whether safe childcare and affordable childcare were a concern for themselves and their families. Amongst respondents for whom this question applies, close to half (46.5 percent) indicated some level of concern around securing affordable childcare. For about 21 percent of respondents, affordability was a serious concern, and another twelve percent reported that it was a moderate concern for their families.

Slightly fewer respondents (36.4 percent) reported that finding safe childcare was of some level of concern for their families. However seventeen percent of respondents still indicated that this was a serious concern for them, and just under ten percent reported it was a moderate concern.



Since a drop in enrollment during the pandemic, school district preschool enrollment has been growing across the county. Enrollment at Lorain County ESC is the exception, whereas all of the other public preschool programs in Lorain County have seen growth in the past five school years.

Lorain County Preschool Enrollment



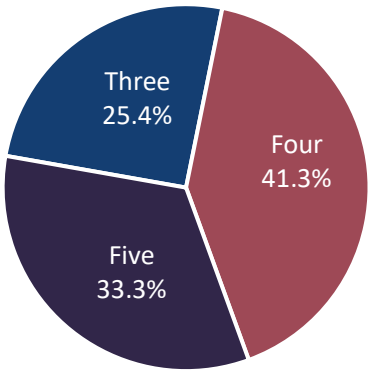
	Amherst Exempted Village	Avon Lake City	Avon Local	Elyria City Schools	Lorain City	Midview Local	North Ridgeville City	Oberlin City Schools	Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City	Lorain County ESC
2020-2021	76	95	0	182	242	40	134	22	36	318
2021-2022	85	103	0	304	314	51	162	35	69	354
2022-2023	105	96	167	349	350	62	196	42	68	212
2023-2024	112	113	160	325	337	86	200	41	88	204
2024-2025	98	120	165	341	322	76	206	41	85	206

Source: Ohio Department of Education

Head Start Families

The resident survey included 50 families with children between the ages of three and five. Of those families, thirteen had multiple children between these ages, so the final sample detailed experiences for 63 children. Of those 50 families, 34.7 percent were eligible to receive childcare through Lorain County Department of Jobs and Family Services, though 44.9 percent were unsure if they were eligible. About a quarter of the children were aged three, 41.3 percent were four, and the remaining third were five years old.

How old is your child?



When asked if their children were behind in any developmental milestones, 59.7 percent said no, 27.4 percent said yes, and 12.9 percent said they were not sure. The families who are unsure of whether their children are behind may need additional support or connections to child-serving agencies to make that determination.

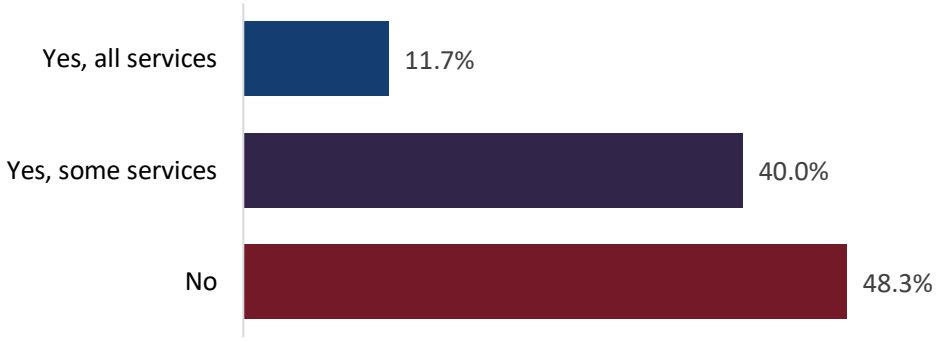
I have been told my child is behind in one or more developmental milestones



Families with children between three and five varied in their preference for whether they preferred receiving services for their children in their home. A near majority of respondents (48.3 percent) preferred that services were *not* provided in the home, however forty percent indicated that they'd like *some* services provided in the home. Only 11.7 percent indicated that they'd prefer all services provided at home. This is a departure from the last time this survey was conducted in 2022, during the Covid-19 pandemic, where around 25 percent of respondents wanted all services provided in the home.

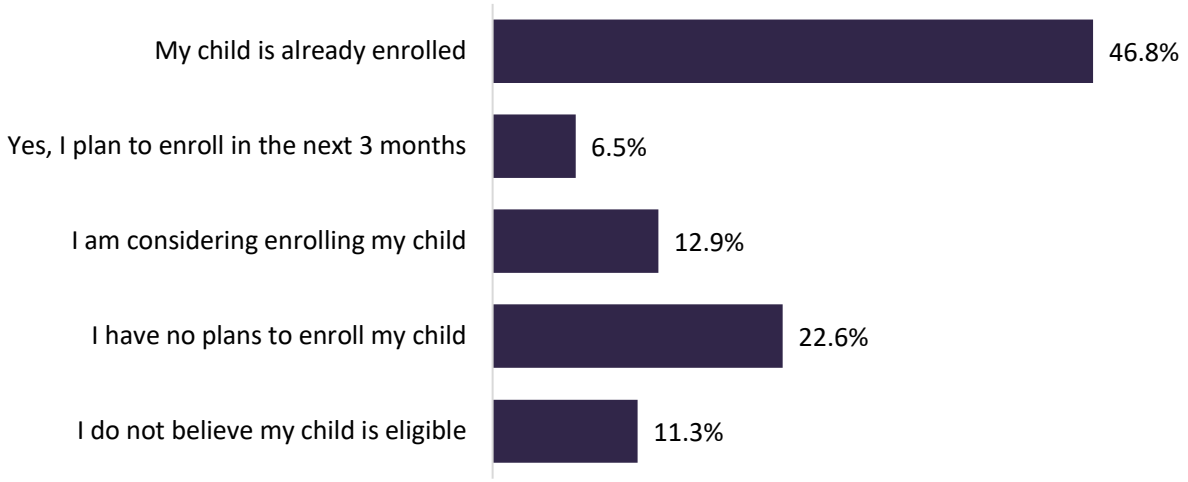


Do you prefer services for your child in your home?



Of the resident sample, just under half (46.8 percent) of the respondents' children were already enrolled in Head Start. This mirrored the 2022 assessment, where 44 percent of children were already enrolled. Nearly twenty percent of respondents indicated that they either had plans, or were considering to enroll their child. About eleven percent reported that they didn't believe their child was eligible for Head Start.

Do you plan to enroll your child in Head Start?



Parents and caregivers of children enrolled in Head Start programs in Lorain County were invited to share their experiences related to the head start program through conversations with a researcher at The Center for Community Solutions. Notes from conversations were combined and analyzed for themes of which several emerged.

Parents consistently expressed strong satisfaction with Head Start and related LCCAA services. Many highlighted positive relationships with teachers, noting consistent staffing, supportive attitudes, and effective home-based visits when needed, especially for children with medical or developmental needs. Families appreciated structured curriculum, weekly home visits, supplies for learning, and opportunities for their children to build social skills, emotional regulation, and school readiness. Parents shared that Head Start provided valuable resources, conferences at home and school, and services such as speech therapy. Additionally, the Pathways program and energy services were noted as especially helpful during times of unemployment, contributing to job placement and family stability. Overall, parents felt their children thrived in Head Start and preferred it over previous preschool experiences. Many parents expressed enthusiasm for staying involved with the program and were interested in attending future parent meetings to learn more.

A few parents offered minor suggestions to improve Head Start, such as reducing the number of days off during the school year. One parent emphasized the need for better communication about program registration, noting that limited outreach made enrollment difficult.

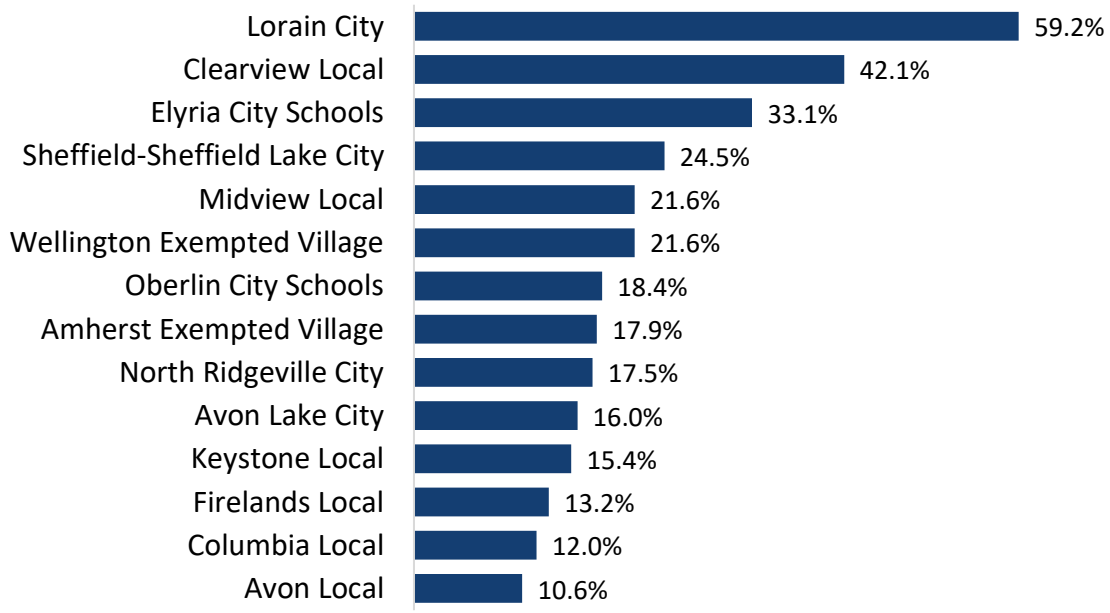
Parents discovered LCCAA and Head Start through multiple channels, often tied to their own or their older children's past experiences with the program. Many learned through friends, family members, or coworkers whose children had attended Head Start. Others found the program through community events, such as the Lorain County Fair, or through social media advertisements. Some parents came across the program while searching for preschools or after receiving guidance from family advisors or school district staff. A few interacted with LCCAA representatives at local events or picked up flyers through their workplaces. Overall, parents were informed about LCCAA through a mix of personal recommendations, community outreach, prior experience, and public visibility.

When asked about coordinating childcare for their young children, parents discussed facing substantial challenges, though experiences varied depending on family size, health needs, and support networks. Some parents had to quit jobs due to lack of medical or specialized care, while others rely on extended family, or the Head Start programs. High costs, limited hours, transportation difficulties, and concerns about child safety were common themes. Some families reported being able to manage due to strong family support or flexible work arrangements, but many described a constant struggle balancing employment, childcare, and household responsibilities.

School-aged Concerns

Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing two or more school days a month, can be an indicator of familial instability within a community. Children whose families do not have economic, or housing stability often miss school at a higher rate than their more stable peers. Chronic health conditions can also lead to increased absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism has been on the rise since the instability of schooling during the pandemic. In the 2024-2025 school year, Lorain City had the highest rate of chronic absenteeism, affecting more than half of the students, followed by Clearview and Elyria City.

Lorain County Public School Districts Chronic Absenteeism 2024-2025



Source: Ohio Department of Education

Schools provide free or reduced-price lunch to students whose household income is at or less than 130% of the USDA established poverty guidelines or if the student receives food stamps or Ohio Works First (OWF) benefit. They may also qualify for free and reduced lunch if they attend a school in a community that qualifies for universal free lunch under the community eligibility provision which applies to schools in high poverty areas. As the table details below, the percent of children eligible for free and reduced lunch varies greatly throughout the county. All of the students in Lorain City School District qualify for the benefit.

2024-2025 Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility	
School District	**Percent Eligible**
Amherst Exempted Village	
Amherst Junior High School	33.5%
Marion L Steele High School	29.1%
Powers Elementary School	35.8%
Walter G. Nord Middle School	33.7%
Avon Local	
Avon East Elementary School	16.3%
Avon Heritage Elementary School	16.7%
Avon High School	14.3%
Avon Middle School	15.9%
Avon Middle School – Annex	59.3%
Avon Village Elementary School	15.9%
Avon Lake City	
Avon Lake High School	14.5%
Eastview Elementary School	13.3%
Erieview Elementary School	9.8%
Learwood Middle School	14.3%
Redwood Elementary School	14.7%
Troy Intermediate Elementary School	16.3%
Westview Elementary School	25.2%
Clearview Local	
Clearview High School	100.0%
Durling Middle School	100.0%
Vincent Elementary School	100.0%
Columbia Local	
Columbia High School	26.6%
Columbia Middle School	29.5%
Elyria City	
Eastern Heights Middle School	90.2%
Ely Elementary School	100.0%
Elyria Early College at LCCC	60.7%
Elyria High School	87.3%
Hamilton Elementary School	100.0%
Northwood Middle School	81.6%
Westwood Elementary School	100.0%
Westwood Middle School	98.2%
Firelands Local	
Firelands Elementary School	44.7%

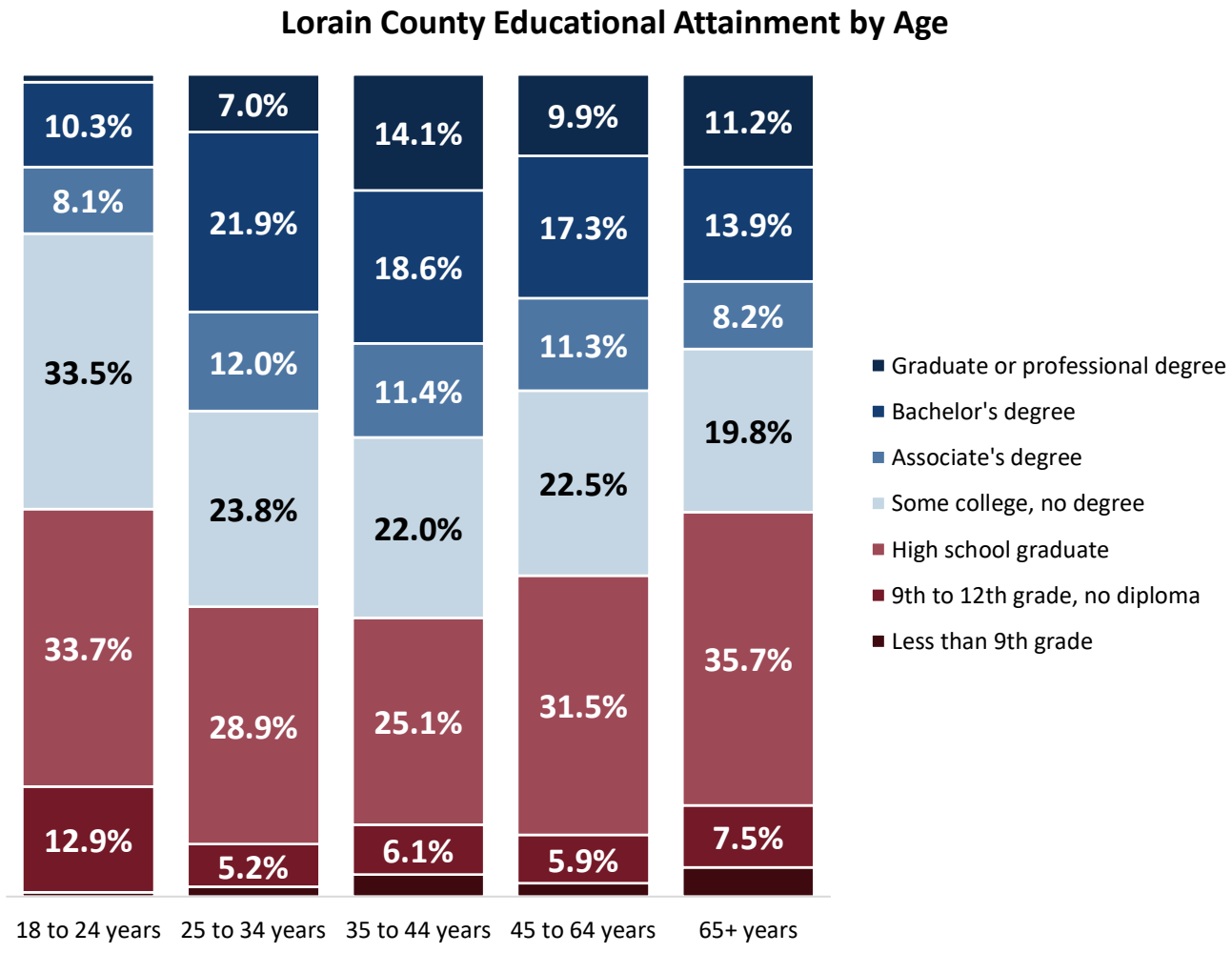
Firelands High School	45.3%
South Amherst Middle School	42.2%
Keystone Local	
Keystone Elementary School	33.9%
Keystone High School	28.0%
Keystone Middle School	34.5%
Lorain City	
Admiral King Elementary School	100.0%
Frank Jacinto Elementary	100.0%
Garfield Elementary School	100.0%
General Johnnie Wilson Middle School	100.0%
Hawthorne-Irving Elementary	100.0%
Helen Steiner Rice Elementary	100.0%
Larkmoor Elementary School	100.0%
Longfellow Middle School	100.0%
Lorain High School	100.0%
New Beginnings Academy	100.0%
Palm Elementary School	100.0%
Southview Middle School	100.0%
Steven Dohanos Elementary	100.0%
Tony Wofford Morrison Elementary	100.0%
Washington Elementary School	100.0%
Lorain County JVS	
Lorain County JVS	52.0%
Midview Local	
Midview East Elementary School	47.4%
Midview High School	39.6%
Midview Middle School	44.4%
Midview North Elementary School	48.2%
Midview West Elementary School	52.1%
North Ridgeville City	
Liberty Elementary School	31.8%
North Ridgeville Academic Center	31.6%
North Ridgeville Educ Ctr Ele Sch	25.4%
North Ridgeville High School	27.5%
North Ridgeville High Tech Academy	14.7%
Oberlin City	
Langston Middle School	47.6%
Oberlin Elementary School	80.7%
Oberlin High School	41.4%
Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City	
Brookside High School (BHS)	37.4%

Brookside Intermediate School (BIS)	49.5%
Brookside Middle School (BMS)	41.8%
Forestlawn Elementary School	33.7%
Knollwood Elementary School	43.4%
Wellington Exempted Village	
McCormick Middle School	45.4%
Wellington High School	40.7%
Westwood Elementary School	51.0%

Source: Ohio Department of Education FY-2025 Data for free and reduced-price meals

Employment

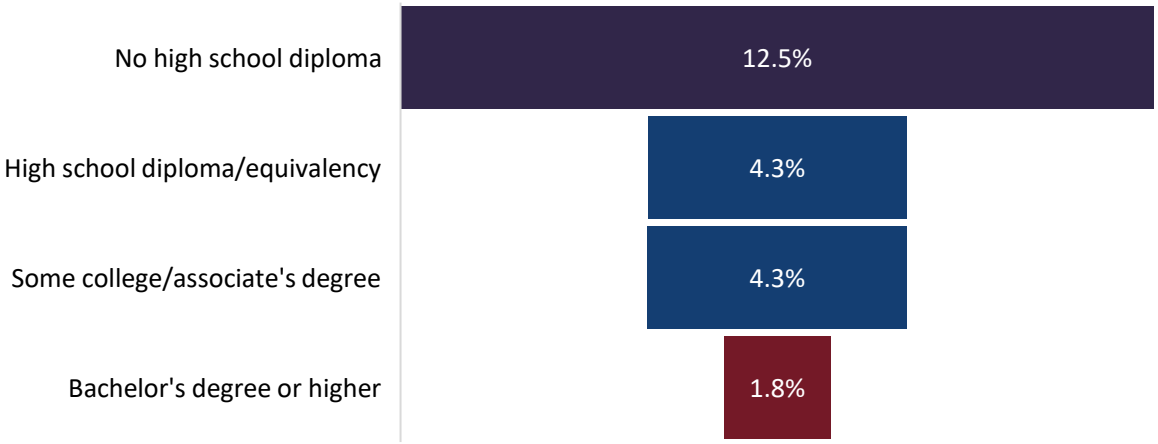
The age group with the highest educational attainment in Lorain County are those between the ages of 35 to 44, of which forty-four percent have attained an associate's degree or higher.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B15001

Educational attainment and employment to be closely linked, on average individuals with higher levels of formal education report lower levels of unemployment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 6.2 percent of people with less than a high school diploma are unemployed, compared to 4.2 percent of people with a high school diploma, and 2.5 percent of people with a bachelor's degree. Similar patterns are found in Lorain County,

Percent of Unemployed Civilians in the Labor Force by Education in Lorain County



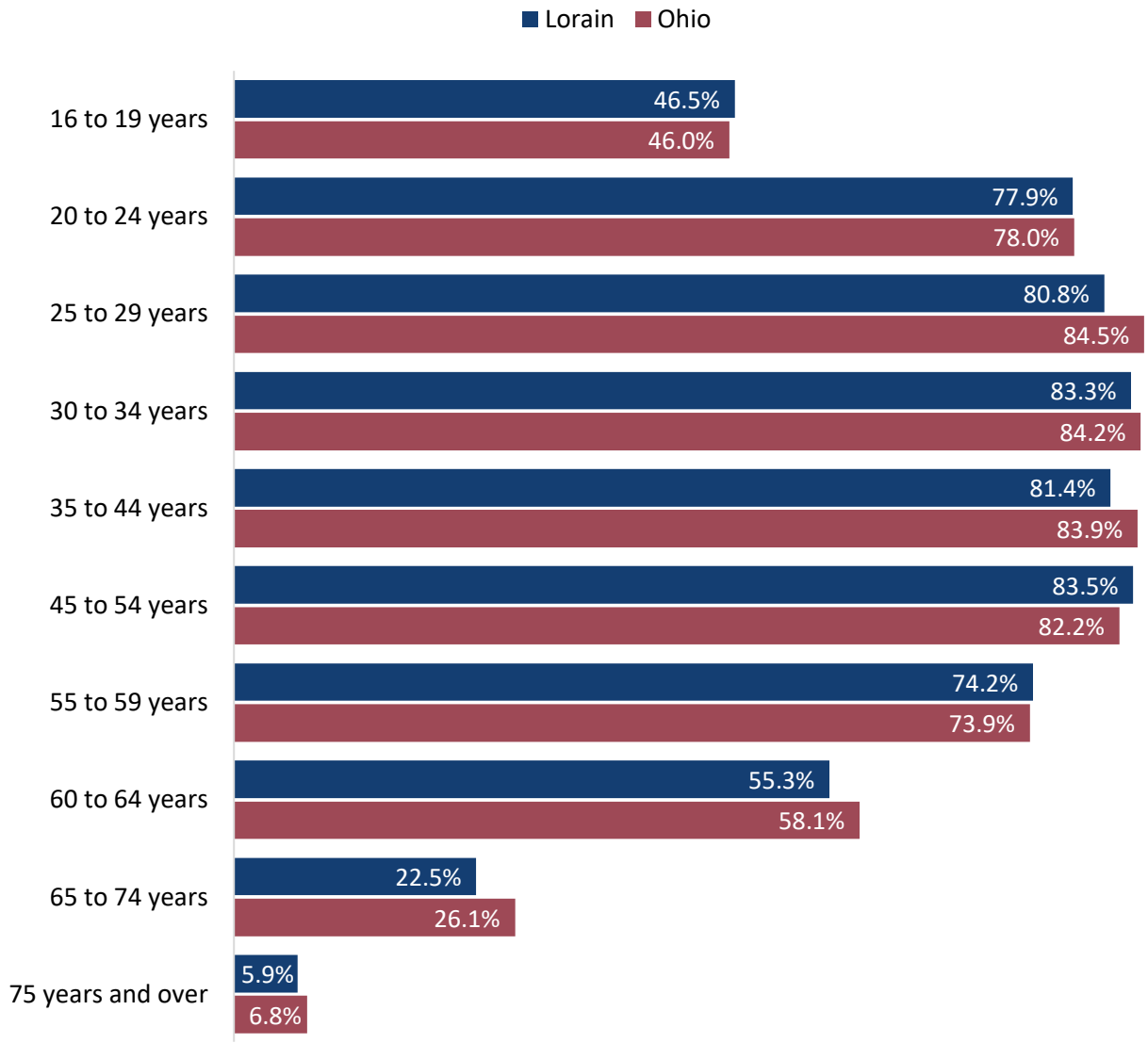
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B23006

Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate is a measurement of individuals working or actively looking for work. Lorain County's labor force participation rate largely mirrors Ohio's rates. There are a few differences to note by age group. Compared to the state, a smaller percentage of 25 to 29-year-old individuals in Lorain County are engaged in the labor force, a different of about four percentage points. A similar difference exists with older adults 60-74, where fewer Lorain County residents in this age group are in the labor force.

By the age of 20, nearly 80 percent of adults in Lorain County are participating in the labor force. This rate climbs to a plateau of around 83 percent for adults between the ages of 30 and 54. By age 60, the percent of adults who are participating in the labor force has declined to 55.3 percent of residents ages 60-64, and 22.5 percent of residents ages 65-74.

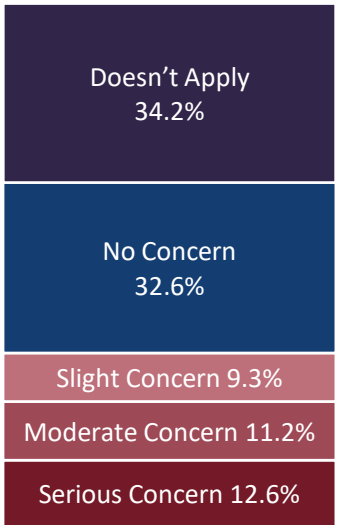
Labor Force Participation Rate by Age in Lorain County and Ohio



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2301

Of the resident survey respondents, a third indicated some level of concern about stable employment for their families. Another third indicated that that this was not a concern to them. It's important to note that 34.2 percent of respondents said that this question doesn't apply to them. This means that if this question was only analyzed by the respondents who indicated that this question *did* apply to them, then 50.4 percent of respondents reported having some concern with stable employment. Of which 19.2 percent reported that this was a serious concern.

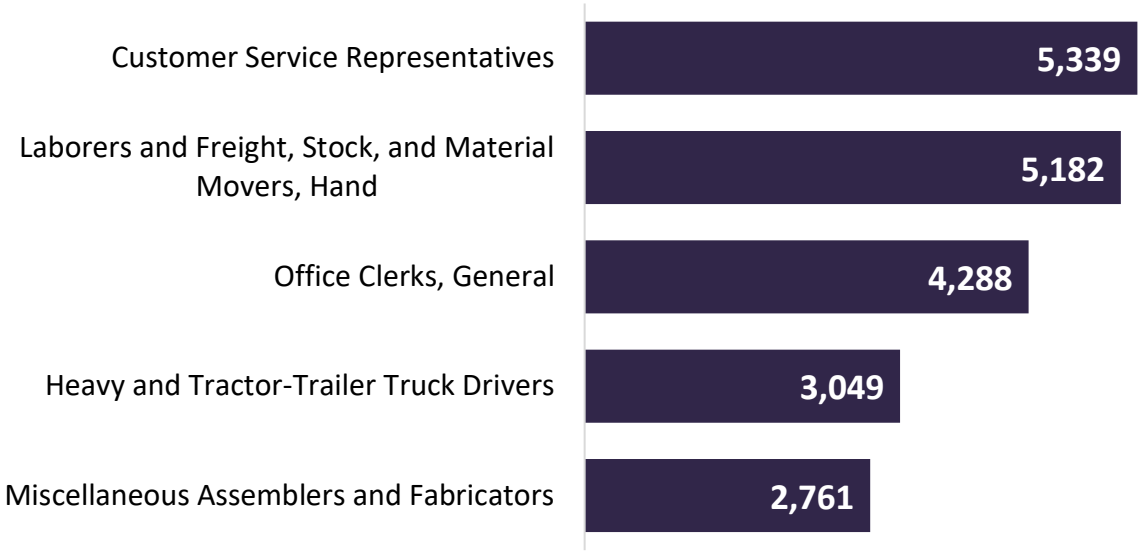
Are you concerned about *Stable Employment* for you or your family?



Employment Openings

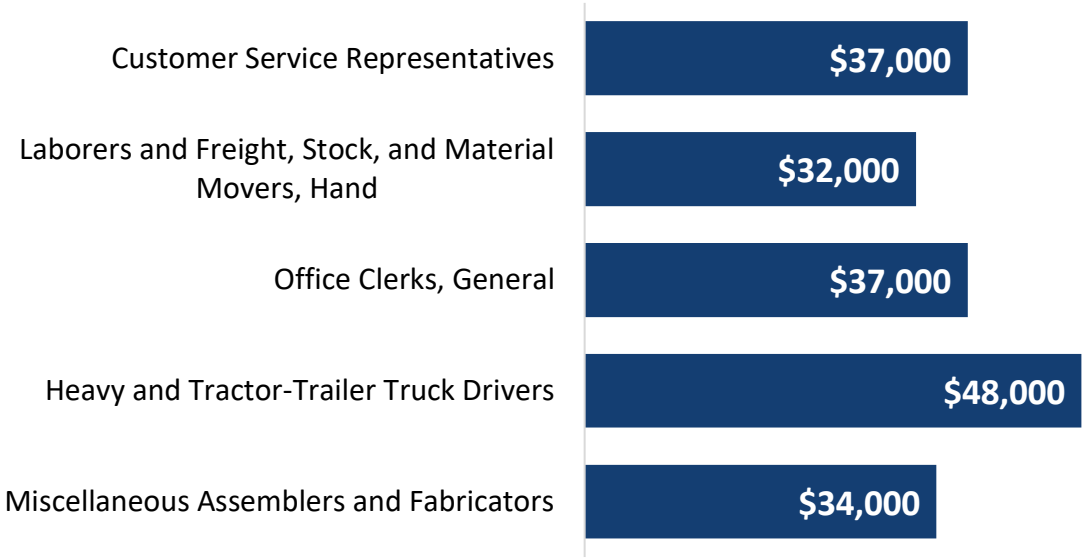
The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation tracks the top job categories and the median salary for the state of Ohio. In the northeast region of the state which includes Lorain County, the top five jobs with the most openings are customer service representatives, laborers, office clerks, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, and assemblers and fabricators. These job openings largely mirror the openings from the 2022 needs assessment report, The only difference between 2022 and 2025 is registered nurses being the fifth job with the most openings, instead of assemblers and fabricators.

Top 5 Jobs with Most Openings in Northeast Ohio
Number of Openings



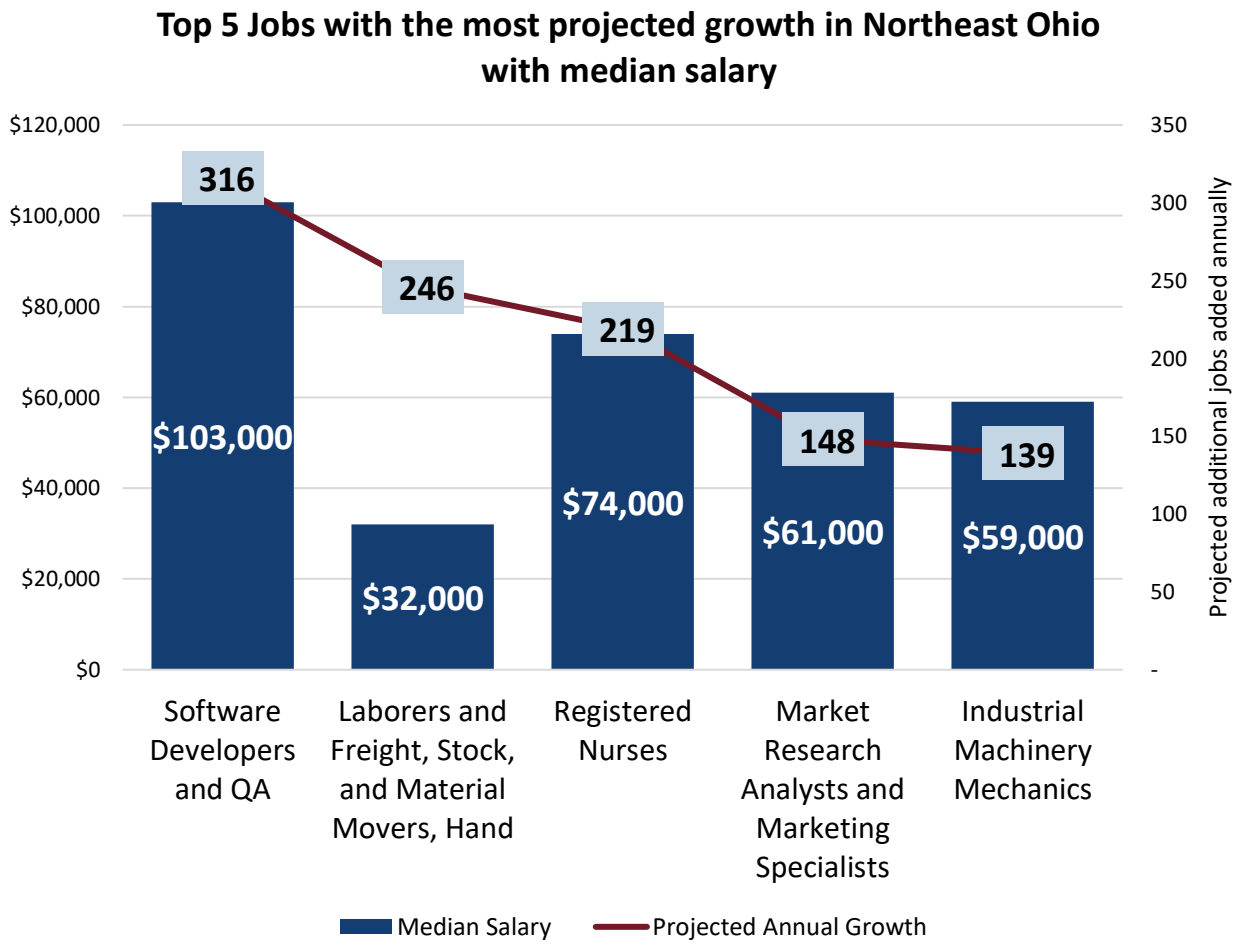
None of the jobs with the most openings have a median salary higher than the current median income of **$70,693** within the county.

Top 5 Jobs with Most Openings in Northeast Ohio
Median Salary



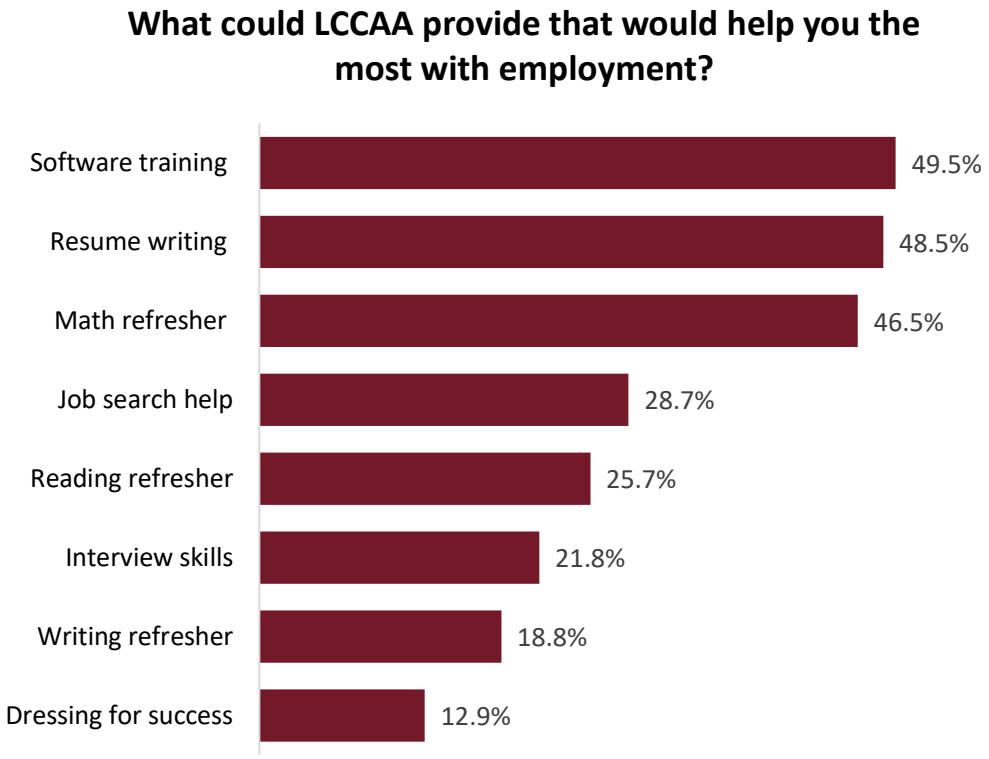
Source: Ohio, The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, Ohio's Top Jobs List. Dashboard accessed November 2025

Within the region, two of the top five jobs with the most expected annual growth are in health care; home health and personal care aids and registered nurses. Growth is also expected in laborer, software developer, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver positions. Of these high growth positions, software developers have the highest median income followed by registered nurses. The two highest growth positions have a median income that is less than half the current median income of the county.



Source: Ohio, The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, Ohio's Top Jobs List. Dashboard accessed November 2025

About 26 percent of survey respondents indicated that they'd be interested in receiving help of some kind with seeking employment or seeking better employment. When asked specifically what LCCAA could provide that would help most, software training (49.5 percent), resume writing (48.5 percent), and math refresher (46.5 percent) were the most popular answers. Although the numbers were smaller, other common assistance preferences included help with job searching, a reading refresher and help with interview skills.



LCCAA Services

When asked about familiarity with LCCAA in the resident survey, 67.5 percent of respondents reported being familiar with LCCAA. Of the community partners surveyed, the majority (87.2 percent) were either very or extremely familiar with LCCAA, and the remaining 12.8 percent were somewhat familiar with the organization.

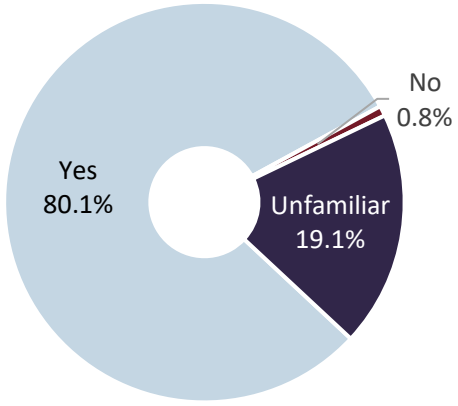
The most common way that resident survey respondents learned about LCCAA's programs was through word of mouth from friends/family/neighbors. It was also common to learn about LCCAA through using energy assistance programs for weatherization, HEAP, PIPP, and Head Start. Residents also learned about services through internet searches, as well as through mailed flyers.

LCCAA services previously used by resident survey takers	
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) or Utility assistance	67.0%
Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP)	61.3%
The Food Produce Center	31.8%
Head Start/Early Head Start	29.5%
Money Management Classes	7.7%
Emergency Home Repair	4.2%
Technology Training	3.8%
ByCar (Car Purchasing Program)	1.9%

When resident survey takers were asked if they believe LCCAA provides important services, 19.1 percent of respondents weren't familiar enough with the services to say if they were important. Of those aware of the services nearly all said the services were important.

Resident survey respondents who were not familiar with LCCAA and its programs shared ways that the availability of services could be better advertised. The most frequently mentioned approaches were direct mail & printed materials, social media & online ads, and outreach via community partners (churches, libraries, schools, hospitals).

Do you think the LCCAA provides important services?



What Types of Services are Helpful?

Resident survey takers were also asked what types of services someone within their household could use. The food pantry and utility services were the most often selected services, followed by home weatherization, car purchasing/repair, and emergency home repair. Services selected least often by survey takers included substance abuse services, adult day care, and foreclosure counseling. Residents also shared ideas on how LCCAA could better help them. Most commonly, respondents indicated expanding the utility assistance programs to cover more of their expenses. Other respondents mentioned that they could use more housing/rental assistance, as well as transportation assistance.

LCCAA Services	
Food pantry	55.1%
Utility payment assistance	53.4%
Home weatherization/insulation	30.5%
Car purchasing/Repair	29.5%
Emergency home repair	20.0%
Mental health services	19.0%
Transportation for Doctors App.	14.4%
Tax return preparation	14.4%
Computer skills training	14.1%
Furnace Repair/Replacement	12.8%
Head Start	12.5%
Homebuyer training	12.1%
After school programs	11.1%
Hot water tank repair/replacement	10.8%
Help starting a small business	10.2%
Job-hunting training	10.2%

Home Health Care	7.9%
Matched savings program	7.9%
Childcare full-day	7.2%
Childcare part-day	5.9%
GED instruction	4.9%
Childcare with alternative hours	4.3%
Adult daycare	3.3%
Foreclosure counseling	3.0%
Substance abuse services	2.0%

Input from Community Partners

Community partners were asked a similar open-ended question about programs and services in Lorain County. The most common theme from the responses centered around housing assistance. This included rental assistance, more services for people experiencing homelessness, help with utilities home repairs, and obtaining necessary appliances. Transportation assistance was another frequently mentioned need for Lorain County residents. This included increased access to public transportation options. Some other identified programs/services that could benefit Lorain County included Job placement/training services, budgeting/financial management classes, family-oriented services like safe spaces for children of all ages after school, and parenting classes.

Community partners were asked to share their observations on how concerning various issues are for residents of Lorain County. Affordable housing, affording monthly bills, reliable transportation, and affordable childcare, all rank high in areas of concern. Some of these highly concerning areas have direct matches with services and programming offered by LCCAA, while others will be better suited to be addressed by other social service or governmental agencies.

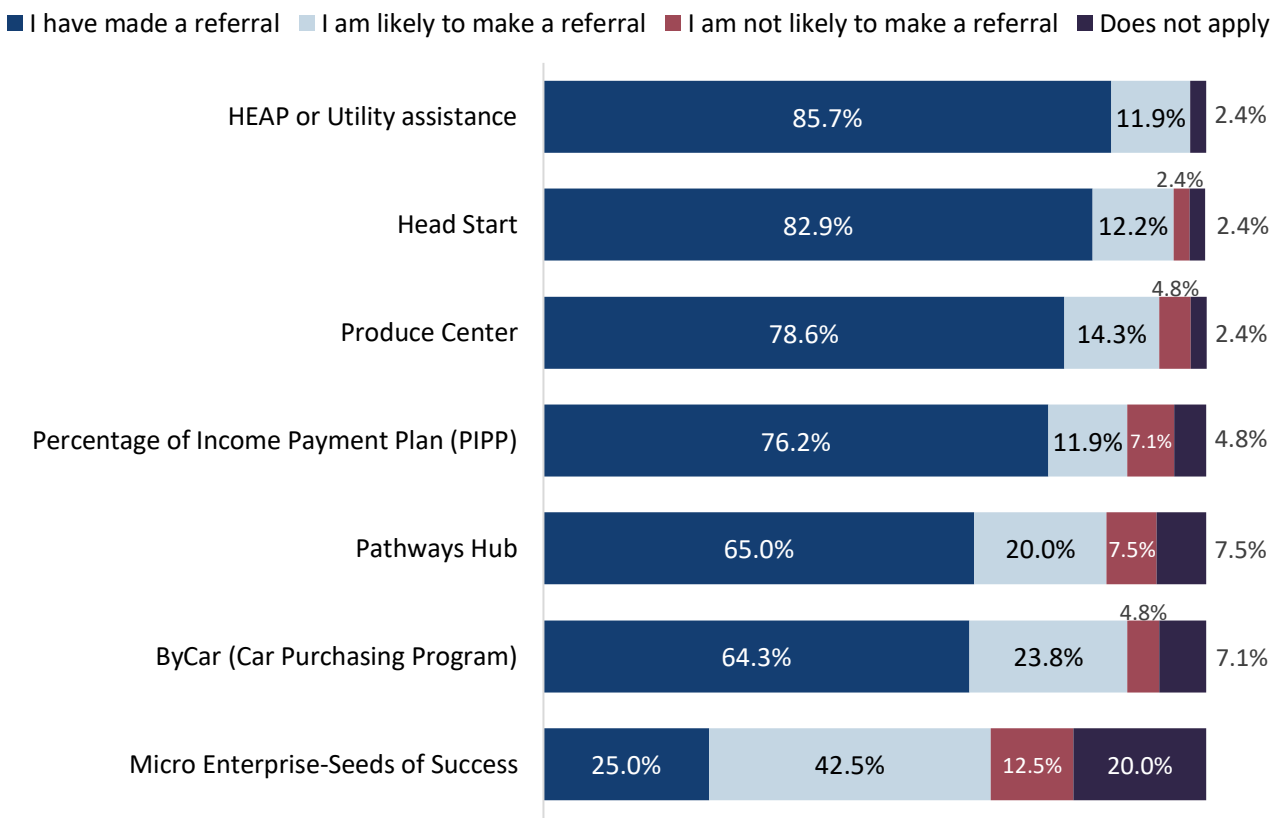
	Not a concern for any residents	A concern for a few residents	A concern for some residents	A concern for most residents
Affording rent/mortgage	2.3%	0.0%	32.6%	65.1%
Affording other monthly bills	2.3%	2.3%	32.6%	62.8%
Reliable transportation	2.3%	4.7%	39.5%	53.5%
Affordable childcare	5.0%	5.0%	42.5%	47.5%
Safe Neighborhood	2.3%	11.6%	41.9%	44.2%
A reliable source of heat	4.8%	26.2%	31.0%	38.1%
Stable employment	2.4%	7.1%	54.8%	35.7%
Safe Home	5.0%	22.5%	40.0%	32.5%
Safe Childcare	4.8%	11.9%	52.4%	31.0%
Safe drinking water	28.6%	33.3%	16.7%	21.4%
Adequate home weatherization	4.7%	32.6%	44.2%	18.6%
Enough room in the home	7.3%	39.0%	36.6%	17.1%

What Process Improvements Should be Made?

Residents who were previously familiar with LCCAA's programs shared some ways that they could be better served by the organization. Suggestions included improved communication to help spread awareness of services, sometimes it was difficult for some respondents to find clear information about available programs, as well as if they qualified for them. Related to communication, some participants also mentioned that sometimes it was difficult to connect with LCCAA, specifically struggling to get in touch with of someone over the phone. A few mentioned that they wished processing of information and status updates happened quicker for applications.

Community partners were asked what LCCAA services they have or would be likely to refer someone to use. Seventy-two percent of community partners refer people to LCCAA often, and another 22.5 percent refer people occasionally**.** HEAP and Head Start were two programs that most community partners reported referring people to in the past. The produce center and PIPP were also particularly common services that a majority of community partners reported making referrals to.

The Micro Enterprise program, Seeds of Success, had the fewest number of partners who had ever referred to it. However, of note, it also had the most community partners reporting that they are likely to make a referral to the program in the future. So, despite low referrals at this time, there is certainly interest in the program from partners.



Methodology

Secondary Data

Secondary data sources were used to provide a demographic profile of residents of Lorain County. Topics covered include income, poverty, health, educational attainment, labor force participation, employment opportunities, and K-12 education. The data sources used in this report are listed below.

American Community Survey (ACS)

The ACS is a nationwide survey that collects and produces information on social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics of our nation's population every year. This information provides an important tool for communities to use to see how they are changing. Every year, the Census Bureau contacts over 3.5 million households across the country to participate in the ACS. It is a nationwide, continuous survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely social, economic, housing, and demographic data every year. Since its start, the ACS has been providing a continuous stream of updated information for states and local areas and has revolutionized the way statistics are used to understand our communities.
https://www.census.gov/en.html

Ohio Department of Education

The Ohio Department of Education is a diverse team of passionate, education-focused professionals dedicated to fulfilling the vision established in *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio's strategic plan for education. The vision is, "In Ohio, each child is challenged to discover and learn, prepared to pursue a fulfilling post-high school path, and empowered to become a resilient, lifelong learner who contributes to society." ODE Advanced Reports are available for people interested in taking a deeper look at the Ohio Department of Education's data. With the advanced reports, you can:

- Find data for more than one Ohio school district or building
- Find the "numbers behind the data"
- Print standard reports and graphs
- Download or save the reports on your computer

https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/advanced

County Health Rankings

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, (CHR&R) a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, works to improve health outcomes for all and to close the health disparities between those with the most and least opportunities for good health. This work is rooted in a deep belief in health equity, the idea that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, income, location, or any other factor. The CHR&R program provides data, evidence, guidance, and examples to build awareness of the multiple factors that influence health and support community leaders working to improve health and increase health equity. The Rankings are unique in their ability to measure the health of nearly every county in all 50 states and are complemented by guidance, tools, and resources designed to accelerate community learning and action.
https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/

The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation
The Office of Workforce Transformation's mission is to connect Ohio's business, training, and education communities to build a dynamically skilled, productive, and purposeful workforce. The Office is continuing to create opportunities for more Ohioans to earn in-demand skills needed to advance their career while building a stronger workforce for our state. Ohio's Top Jobs List is a customizable, online tool to help guide Ohioans on career pathways that meet their individual needs and goals and allow them to take advantage of employment opportunities available in our state.
https://workforce.ohio.gov/home

Primary Data

Primary data was collected from residents of Lorain County through a resident survey, a community partner survey, and conversations with a researcher.

Conversations

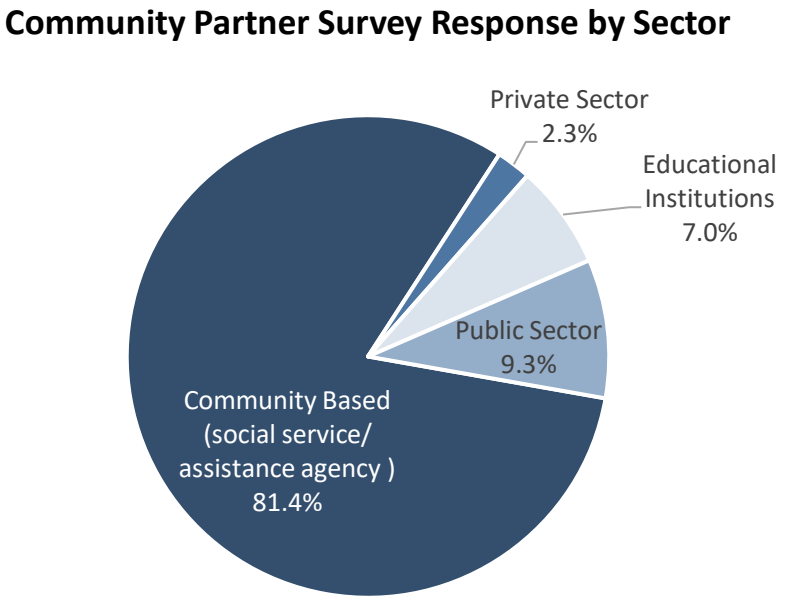
Parents and caregivers of children enrolled in Head Start and other LCCAA programs were contacted at random by a Community Solutions researcher. If contact was made, the resident was introduced to the project, and offered to answer a series of questions. If contact was not made, a voicemail was left when possible. Participants were informed that participation was anonymous and voluntary, and they would be incentivized with a $20 gift card. Gift cards were delivered either by mail or digitally, at the participant's preference. Ten parents of children enrolled in Head Start, and five residents actively or recently receiving services from LCCAA, were interviewed for this process.

Resident survey

A seven-page survey was mailed to 5,000 residents of Lorain County. Approximately a third (32.5 percent) of these residents were chosen at random using public Ohio voting records data for Lorain County. The remaining sample was pulled from residents who had either recently received services from LCCAA (42.1 percent) or were parents of children in Head Start (25.4 percent). Survey takers were given the option to complete a form to enter a raffle for four $100 gift cards. The entry forms were immediately separated from the survey upon receipt by Community Solutions. Survey responses remain anonymous. Three-hundred and eighty-four surveys were returned within the allotted time frame for analysis.

Community Partner Survey

A link to an online survey for community partners was sent via email to partners in the following sectors: community based (social service or assistance agency); private (private business); educational institutions (K-12, university, college, vocational school); public (local, regional or state government agency or elected position); and faith-based (church, temple, synagogue or organization with a faith-based mission). Forty-three individuals responded to the survey.



Community Partner Outreach by Sector

Community Based Partners	Private Sector Partners	Educational Institutions	Public Sector Partners	Faith Based Partners
Aetna	Allstate Insurance	Academy of Arts and Sciences	Amherst City Council	Common Ground Center
Bott Law Firm	BASF Corp	Amherst Exempted Village Schools	Avon City Council	Humility of Mary Housing Faith House
Centene Corporation	Emerge Inc	Avon Schools	City of Amherst	Salvation Army
Child Care Resource Center	Lorain County Chamber of Commerce	Clearview Schools	City of Avon	St. Andrews Episcopal Church
Community Foundation Lorain County	Minick Public Relations	Educational Service Center of Lorain County	City of Avon Lake	St. Andrews Episcopal Church Children and Youth Ministries
Habitat for Humanity	New Sunrise Properties	Elyria City Schools	City of Elyria	
Junior Achievement Greater Cleveland	Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development	Firelands Schools	City of Lorain	
Linking Employment Ability and Potential (LEAP)	Riveon Health and Recovery	Horizon Education Centers	City of North Ridgeville	
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland	Ross Medical	Kent State University	City of Oberlin	
Lorain Community Action Agency	SEIU District 1199	Keystone Schools	City of Sheffield Lake	
Lorain County Urban League	SQP Print Center	Lake Ridge Academy	City of Vermillion	
Murray Ridge Center	United Properties	Lorain City Schools	Elyria City Council	
Nord Family Foundation	WOBL/WDLW Radio	Lorain County Community College	Elyria Library	
Nordson Corporation Foundation		Lorain County JVS	Internal Revenue Service	
Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development		Lorain County School District	Lorain County Auditor	

Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy		Midview Schools	Lorain County Board of Commissioners	
Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio		National Head Start Assoc.	Lorain County Board of Mental Health	
Stocker Foundation		North Ridgeville Schools	Lorain County Domestic Relations Court	
Vocational Guidance Services		Oberlin City Schools	Lorain County Health Department	
Wingspan Care Group		Oberlin College	Lorain County Office on Aging	
YMCA		Oberlin Kids	Lorain County Port and Finance Authority	
YWCA		Ohio Business College	Lorain County Prosecutor's Office	
		Ohio Head Start Association Inc.	Lorain County Public Health	
		Ross Medical Education Center	Lorain Metropolitan Housing Authority	
		Sheffield Schools	ODJFS	
			Rural Lorain County Water	
			Sheffield Village	
			Veterans' Affairs	
			Village of Grafton	
			Village of LaGrange	
			Village of Wellington	