Guernsey County
Community Health Assessment

January 2025

ILLUMINOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The process followed by *Guernsey County's 2024 Community Health Assessment* reflected an adapted version of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings and Roadmaps: Assess Needs and Resources process.[1] This process is designed to help stakeholders "understand current community strengths, resources, needs, and gaps," so that they can better focus their efforts and collaboration.

The Cambridge-Guernsey Health Department contracted with Illuminology, an Ohio-based research firm that specializes in community health assessment studies, to assist with this work.

The primary phases of the Assess Needs and Resources process, as adapted for use in Guernsey County, included the following steps.

(1) Prepare to assess / generate questions. On February 5, 2024, a group of 22 Guernsey County community members representing a diverse array of public health, health system, social service, and other governmental entities met in-person to discuss the primary topics to be covered in the community health assessment (CHA) effort through primary and secondary data collection.

(2) Collect secondary data. Secondary data for this community assessment came from national sources (e.g., U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Census Bureau), state sources (e.g., Ohio Department of Health's Public DataOhio Portal), and local sources (e.g., OhioHealth Southeast Medical Center, Cambridge-Guernsey County Health Department).

All secondary data sources are identified in the References on page 56. To ensure community stakeholders are able to use this report to make well-informed decisions, only the most recent and reliable data available at the time of report preparation are presented. To be considered for inclusion in the *Guernsey County 2024 Community Health Assessment*, secondary data must have been collected or published in 2019 or later.

(3) Collect and analyze primary data from <u>adult residents</u>. Illuminology created draft and final versions of a Community Survey, which residents were able to complete in paper form and online. The Cambridge-Guernsey Health Department worked with local organizations and businesses to promote the survey throughout Guernsey County. Paper completes were entered into an online survey platform by health department volunteers for analysis by Illuminology.

---

[1] See https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/action-center/assess-needs-resources

In total, 359 Guernsey County adult residents completed the survey. Because this was an opt-in survey (meaning no random sampling was employed), we cannot provide a margin of error around the results and they should be considered as providing directional guidance, similar to what one would expect from qualitative research methodologies. And because the Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center played an important role with survey distribution, the respondents' average age was older than that of the county's adult population. Appendix B displays the final survey instrument and an overview of the survey respondents' demographics.

4) Collect and analyze primary data from <u>community stakeholders.</u> The Cambridge-Guernsey Health Department conducted one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders from the community, including representatives of governmental organizations, health care system leaders, and leaders of social service organizations about what they see as the most important health issues in the County. These interviews included discussion around health service access barriers and needs. Verbatim comments from/analysis of these discussions are included throughout the report in sections labeled "Community Voices."

5) Collect and analyze primary data from <u>community members.</u> Multiple focus groups were hosted with members of the community, facilitated by Illuminology and the Health Department. One group was held with older adults involved in the Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, one group was held with WIC recipients in Guernsey County, and one group was held with individuals who receive services from the County Board of Developmental Disabilities and their Direct Support Professionals. Verbatim comments from/analysis of these discussions are included throughout the report in sections labeled "Community Voices."

6) Share results with the community. This report presents the analysis and synthesis of all secondary, primary, and community outreach data collected during this effort. It will be posted on www.guernseycountyhealthdepartment.org, distributed to organizations that serve and represent residents in the county, and used in subsequent community prioritization and planning efforts.

The Cambridge-Guernsey Health Department acknowledges and thanks the many community organizations that shared their time and expertise with this collaborative effort, including:

- Guernsey County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)
- Mental Health and Recovery Services Board
- Muskingum Valley Health Centers (MVHC)
- South East Area Transit (SEAT)
- Guernsey County Sheriff's Office
- Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center
- Cambridge City Schools
- Rolling Hills Local School District
- City of Cambridge: Office of the Mayor
- Guernsey County Children's Services

- Guernsey County Job and Family Services
- Cambridge Township
- Jackson Township
- Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Guernsey County OSU Extension
- Cambridge Police Department

- Guernsey County Prosecutor's Office
- Guernsey County Board of Commissioners
- Guernsey County Health Department
- OhioHealth-Southeastern Medical Center

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Guernsey County, located in eastern Ohio, was founded over 200 years ago and covers 528 square miles. Since 2000, the county's population has been decreasing, measuring 38,409 in 2022. Cambridge serves as the county seat and is the only designated city in the county, and houses about a quarter of the total population.

Located at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, much of the area consists of varied terrain and rolling hills. Many respondents to the 2024 Community Survey said the natural beauty and resources are what they like most about living in the County. Centrally located Salt Fork State Park, the largest state park in Ohio, provides recreation opportunities like hiking, swimming, and boating. The Great Guernsey Trail also serves as a popular spot for hiking, though parks and other natural areas can be found throughout the county.

Around 50% of the total land area is farmland, which produces primarily livestock, poultry and other products (68% of sales, compared to 32% crop sales). Grains, oilseeds, dry beans and peas make up a large proportion of crop sales.[1] The rural nature and relatively small population size carries a sense of community, small town feeling, and slow lifestyle that many 2024 Community Survey respondents highlighted as features of life in the county they appreciate the most.

Guernsey County has an optimal position for traveling to other parts of the state, as major interstates 70 and 77 intersect near the center of the county. State route 22 also passes through the county, connecting residents southwest to Cincinnati and northeast to Pennsylvania.

As one of the 32 counties that make up the Appalachian region of Ohio, the county's economic strength is continuously evaluated by the Appalachian Regional Commission,

---

[1] United States Department of Agriculture, 2022 Census of Agriculture County Profile.

which uses the unemployment rate, income rate, and poverty rate of counties to determine its classifications. Since at least 2010 the county has been classified "at risk" of becoming economically distressed, meaning it is not among the most economically depressed of the nation's counties, but ranks between the worst 10 percent and 25 percent of counties.[1]

Economic concerns and their impact on health were reflected in the 2024 Community Survey, with many respondents saying the biggest issues in the county were the effects of the cost of living, lack of well-paying jobs, and lack of quality, affordable housing. These economic concerns have a recognized relationship to another major issue identified by residents, that of substance use in the community.

The following pages provide a high-level overview of the data collected during the 2024 Community Health Assessment process, which includes economic factors, physical health indicators, and mental health indicators.

Poverty Status
- 17.0% of the total population and 25% of youth in the county are below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. The median household income is $53,901.
- The unemployment rate is 4.6% in Guernsey, comparable to Ohio's statewide rate. However, only 25% of the population has at least an associate's degree, which can affect how easy it is for residents to find high paying employment opportunities.

Housing Access
- 50% of renter-occupied housing units cost 30% or more of the residents' household income; these households are at or exceeding the threshold for housing costs which reflects being cost-burdened.
- Around half of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey are very or extremely concerned about the cost of housing in the county. 57% of those who own a home do not think they could afford the house they live in now based on current prices.
- Transitional housing, housing for individuals with mental health or substance use issues, and housing that's affordable and accessible for seniors and residents with disabilities were identified in focus groups and stakeholder interviews as needs in the community.

Transportation Needs
- Overall, 6.9% of households do not have a vehicle. For owner occupied households 3.6% do not have access to a vehicle, while for rental households this figure is 16%.
- 16% of respondents to the Community Survey had to reschedule an appointment "once in a while" in the 30 days prior to the survey due to a problem with transportation, and 14% could not get somewhere they wanted or needed to go "once in a while" during that time period.

---

[1] Appalachian Regional Commission, County Economic Status in Appalachia FY 2023.

- South East Area Transit, or the SEAT bus, serves as a public transportation option for residents, however residents may not take advantage of this resource for various reasons, including lack of knowledge about how it works and concerns about safety.

Food Access

- 15% of residents are food insecure, and 19% of children are food insecure.
- While 68% of respondents to the Community Survey could afford to buy fresh fruits and vegetables usually or always, 8% said they could never do this, and 17% said they could do this only once in a while. 9% reported eating less than they felt they should because there wasn't enough money for food.
- Residents and stakeholders identified the lack of restaurants and grocery options available in rural parts of the county as a barrier to food access.

Health Care Access

- Many residents travel outside the county for physical and/or mental health care; 48% of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey said they did this in the 12 months prior to the survey. They traveled for various types of care, including primary care, routine check-ups, and different types of specialists.
- Community stakeholders and residents see a need for increased numbers of specialists in the area for physical health concerns (neurologists, diabetes specialists, among others), and for mental health concerns (counselors, social workers, and psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners licensed to prescribe medication).
- Dental health care access is a concern. Calculated using the eLicense Ohio Professional Licensure Database, the ratio of dentists to residents is 1:2,956. In focus groups, those with government insurance stated that finding pediatric dental care that accepts Medicaid is an issue.

Overall Health

- A majority of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey rated their overall health as good, very good, or excellent (67%).
- Of survey respondents, 39% had no poor physical health days in the 30 days prior to the survey, however 36% had between 1 and 10 poor physical health days. 13% said they had over 20 poor physical health days.
- Heart diseases and cancer are the top causes of death overall for residents; death rates for these issues are higher for the county compared to Ohio overall.

Mental Health Indicators

- Guernsey County has a higher suicide rate than Ohio, at 20.6 per 100,000 population (using 2020-2022 data).
- Of survey respondents, 50% had no poor mental health days in the 30 days prior to the survey, however 32% had between 1 and 10 poor mental health days. 9% said they had poor mental health days for over 20 days.

- 8% of survey respondents felt lonely or isolated usually or always in the 30 days prior to the survey.

Youth Health
- At 8.3 deaths per 1,000 births, Guernsey County does not meet the Healthy People 2030 goal for rate of infant mortality.
- Only 28.5% of children were assessed as "demonstrating" readiness for kindergarten in the 2022-2023 school year, meaning a majority lack some necessary skills and behaviors that are deemed essential to their development and success. By third grade, only around half of students are proficient in reading. Stakeholders say there is a need for earlier educational intervention for children and service intervention for families to improve outcomes.
- Parents' concerns about safety and cleanliness of public recreation facilities can inhibit their ability to make use of these for their children.
- In focus groups, parents recounted issues getting their children adequate nutrition, including the difficulty of getting children to eat school lunches and concerns that children are sensitive to food dyes like Red Dye 40, which they believe negatively interact with children's ADHD.

OBSERVED HEALTH DISPARITIES

Per the Public Health Accreditation Board's standard 1.1.1A, this health assessment identified a number of disparities among the population served by the health department, as well as the factors that contribute to health challenges, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitatively, health status and behavior disparities were explored by Community Survey respondents' age and race as well as by social determinants of health including educational attainment, income, and urban vs. rural residence; the key findings from those analyses are shown in the summary below. Qualitatively, the community interviews provided insight into how residents' health status and behaviors are affected by the above-mentioned social determinants of health; the key findings from those conversations are included throughout this report.

Food Access	• **Differences by income:** those in lower-income households (less than $50,000 annually) are less likely than those in higher income households to say they can "always or usually" afford to buy fresh fruits and/or vegetables (65% vs. 81%, respectively).
Housing Access and Affordability	• **Differences by urban/rural residence:** those in more urban areas of Guernsey County are more likely than those in more rural areas to say they are "extremely or very concerned" about the cost of housing in the County (52% vs. 41%, respectively).

	• **Differences by age:** those who are younger (under age 65) are more likely than those who are older to say they are "extremely or very concerned" about the cost of housing in the County (58% vs. 45%, respectively).
Transportation Access	• **Differences by income:** those in lower-income households are more likely than those in higher income households to report there was at least one time in the past 30 days when they did not go somewhere they wanted or needed to go because of a problem with transportation (25% vs. 3%, respectively). • **Differences by education:** those with only a high-school degree or GED are slightly more likely than those with at least some college experience to report there was at least one time in the past 30 days when they did not go somewhere they wanted or needed to go because of a problem with transportation (24% vs. 16%, respectively). • **Differences by gender:** those who identify as male are slightly more likely than those who identify as female to report there was at least one time in the past 30 days when they did not go somewhere they wanted or needed to go because of a problem with transportation (27% vs. 18%, respectively).
Health Care Access	• **Differences by gender:** those who identify as male are slightly less likely than those who identify as female to report they have at least one person who they think of as their personal health care provider (80% vs. 87%, respectively). • **Differences by income:** those in lower-income households are less likely than those in higher income households to say they traveled outside of the county to receive physical or mental health care (44% vs. 67%, respectively). • **Differences by education:** those with only a high-school degree or GED are less likely than those with at least some college experience to say they traveled outside of the county to receive physical or mental health care (42% vs. 55%, respectively). • **Differences by urban/rural residence**: those in more urban areas of Guernsey County are slightly less likely than those in more rural areas to say they traveled outside of the county to receive physical or mental health care (45% vs. 55%, respectively).

Overall Health Status	• **Differences by income:** those in lower-income households are less likely than those in higher income households to rate their health status as "excellent" or "very good" (22% vs. 53%, respectively). • **Differences by education:** those with only a high-school degree or GED are less likely than those with at least some college experience to rate their health status as "excellent" or "very good" (18% vs. 42%, respectively). • **Differences by urban/rural residence**: those in more urban areas of Guernsey County are slightly less likely than those in more rural areas to rate their health status as "excellent" or "very good" (25% vs. 34%, respectively).
Mental Health Indicators	• **Differences by income:** those in lower-income households are more likely than those in higher income households to say there were 10-20 days (in the last 30 days) in which their mental health was not good (12% vs. 3%, respectively). Those in lower-income households are more likely than those in higher income households to say there were over 20 days (in the last 30 days) in which their mental health was not good (11% vs. 5%, respectively). • **Differences by age:** those who are younger (under age 65) are more likely than those who are older to say there were 1-10 days (in the last 30 days) in which their mental health was not good (44% vs. 29%, respectively).
Physical Health Indicators	• **Differences by income:** those in lower-income households are more likely than those in higher income households to say there were 10-20 days (in the last 30 days) in which their physical health was not good (14% vs. 8%, respectively). Those in lower-income households are more likely than those in higher income households to say there were over 20 days (in the last 30 days) in which their physical health was not good (15% vs. 6%, respectively). • **Differences by education:** those with only a high-school degree or GED are more likely than those with at least some college experience to say there were over 20 days (in the last 30 days) in which their physical health was not good (19% vs. 8%, respectively).

Social Health Indicators	**Differences by age:** those who are younger (under age 65) are less likely than those who are older to say that the statement "I feel like I belong in Guernsey County," describes them "extremely or very well" (51% vs. 64%, respectively). Those who are younger are slightly less likely than those who are older to say that they feel "extremely or very connected" to the neighbors who live near them (19% vs. 29%, respectively). **Differences by gender:** those who identify as male are slightly less likely than those who identify as female to say that the statement "I feel like I belong in Guernsey County," describes them "extremely or very well" (52% vs. 64%, respectively).

Table of Contents

COMMUNITY PROFILE

This section provides insight into resident and household demographics in Guernsey County and Ohio overall.

Resident Demographics[1]

		Guernsey County	Ohio
Total Population	Total population	38,409	11,774,683
Gender	Male	50.0%	49.4%
	Female	50.0%	50.6%
Age	Under 18	22.1%	22.0%
	18-34	20.1%	22.3%
	35-44	10.9%	12.2%
	45-54	12.4%	12.3%
	55-64	14.7%	13.6%
	65 years +	19.8%	17.6%
	Median age	43	40
One Race	Total	97.2%	95.1%
	White	94.0%	78.8%
	Black / African American	1.9%	12.3%
	American Indian / Alaskan Native	0.1%	0.1%
	Asian	0.4%	2.4%
	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
	Some other race	0.9%	1.3%
Two or More Races	Total	2.8%	4.9%
Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1.2%	4.2%
	Not Hispanic/Latino	98.8%	95.8%
Marital Status*	Never married	27.9%	33.3%
	Now married (not currently separated)	47.6%	47.1%
	Divorced/separated	16.8%	13.4%
	Widowed	7.7%	6.2%

Denominator is population 15 years and over

11

Resident Households[1]

		Guernsey County	Ohio
Total Households	Number of households	16,165	4,789,408
Household Relationships*	**Married-couple family household**	**44.6%**	**45.0%**
	With own children under 18	13.7%	16.5%
	Cohabitating couple household	**8.7%**	**7.5%**
	With own children under 18	3.6%	2.5%
	Male householder, no spouse present	**21.1%**	**19.2%**
	With own children under 18	1.3%	1.3%
	Female householder, no spouse present	**25.6%**	**28.3%**
	With own children under 18	5.4%	5.3%
Grandparents As Caregivers	Number of grandparents living with grandchildren	735	201,925
	Grandparents responsible for grandchildren**	44.2%	42.2%
Household Size	Average household size	2.3	2.4
	Average family size	2.9	3.0
Ages of People Within Household*	Households with 1 or more people under 18 years	27.3%	28.5%
	Households with 1 or more people 65 years and over	34.0%	30.8%
Household Income*	Less than $15,000	10.9%	9.6%
	$15,000 - $24,999	10.2%	7.9%
	$25,000 - $49,999	25.7%	20.4%
	$50,000 - $74,999	19.3%	17.3%
	$75,000 - $99,999	13.7%	13.3%
	$100,000 - $149,999	13.0%	16.5%
	$150,000 - $199,999	4.0%	7.4%
	$200,000 or more	3.1%	7.6%
Transportation*	Households without a vehicle	6.9%	7.4%

Superscripts indicate data source – see the list of sources in References.
*Denominator is total households
**Denominator is number of grandparents living with grandchildren

Residents - Disability Information[1]

		Guernsey County	Ohio
Disability Status*	Total with a disability	17.5%	14.1%
	Under 18 years	1.5%	1.2%
	18 to 64 years	8.8%	7.2%
	65 years and over	7.2%	5.7%
Disability By Type*	Hearing difficulty	30.5%	26.4%
	Vision difficulty	15.3%	16.8%
	Cognitive difficulty	42.7%	39.7%
	Ambulatory difficulty	52.9%	48.7%
	Self-care difficulty	15.7%	17.3%
	Independent living difficulty	31.2%	33.9%

Denominator is civilian noninstitutionalized population
**Denominator is civilian noninstitutionalized population with a disability*

Languages Spoken[1]*****

	Guernsey County	Ohio
Speak only English	96.5%	92.6%
Speak language other than English	3.5%	7.4%
Speak Spanish	0.6%	2.4%
Speak other languages	2.8%	5.1%

Denominator is population age 5 and over

INCOME, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION

Income, Poverty, and Food Access

Economic stability plays an important role in quality of life, with at least one study on this topic showing that those with greater income had greater life expectancy (Chetty et al., 2016).[2] In Guernsey County, **25%** of children are living below 100% federal poverty level (FPL), which is higher than the state of Ohio percentage (18%).

Income and Poverty[1]

		Guernsey County	Ohio
Median household income		$53,901	$66,990
Total persons below 100% FPL		**17.0%**	**13.3%**
	Under 18	25.2%	18.3%
	18-64	16.3%	12.7%
	65 years and over	9.7%	9.1%
Total families below 100% FPL		**13.1%**	**9.3%**
With related children of the householder under 18 years		25.3%	15.4%

In Guernsey County, **15%** of all residents are food insecure, and **19%** of children are estimated to be food insecure. These percentages are slightly higher than the percentages for Ohio as a whole. In Guernsey County, around **17%** of households participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is higher than the state of Ohio percentage (12%).

Food Access

|		Guernsey County	Ohio
Food Insecure[3]	Total residents	14.7%	11.8%
	Children	18.7%	14.8%
	Likely ineligible for federal nutrition programs (incomes above 185% of FPL)*	21.0%	25.0%
SNAP Households[1]*	Total households	16.9%	12.2%
	With one or more people 60 years and over**	32.5%	35.0%
	With children under 18 years%**	46.0%	45.1%

*Denominator is total households participating in SNAP

Some researchers use the food environment index when assessing access to nutritious foods. This index of factors that contribute to a healthy food environment ranges from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). Guernsey County's food environment index score between 2019-2021 (6.4) was lower than Ohio's score (7.0). [4]

Respondents to the 2024 Community Survey were asked about their ability to access fresh fruits and vegetables in terms of affordability. A majority of households responding to the survey could afford to buy these "usually" or "always" (68%).

2024 Community Survey: Healthy food access

How often can your household afford to buy fresh fruits and/or vegetables?

■ Always   ■ Usually   ■ As often as not   ■ Once in a while   ■ Never

41%	27%	7%	17%	8%
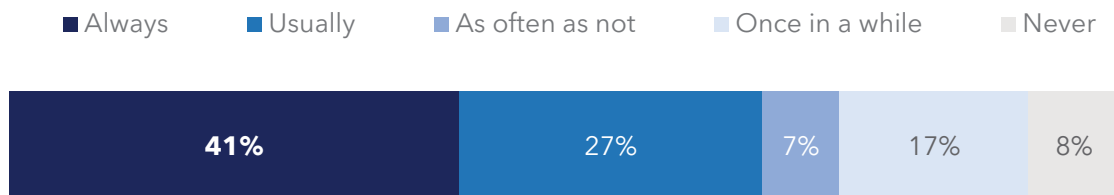
n=345

Community Survey respondents were also asked various questions related to food security. The percentage of respondents who used SNAP to get food or got food from a nonprofit or charitable organization was likely impacted by the number of senior respondents to the survey.

2024 Community Survey: Food insecurity in the past year

In the past 12 months:

Respondents who **ate less than they felt they should** because there wasn't enough money for food.

9%

n=345

Respondents who **got food from a nonprofit or charitable organization**.

24%

n=335

Respondents who **used the Ohio Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** to get food.

20%

n=336

15

Community Voices:
Nutrition Access Issues
Comments from community focus groups

Rural community members have to travel far for food

"Some of the smaller communities, like Cumberland, for example, it's 22 miles one way from Cumberland into Cambridge. And they just closed the Family Dollar there because of inadvertent Internet because they couldn't have good connection to run debit and credit cards. Now, how sad is that? But there's no grocery store, there's no gas station, there's no restaurants in Cumberland."

"I live 18 miles from Walmart and Aldi…And we had one restaurant which has been gone, it's been closed down six, eight months ago."

Desired nutrition resources in the community

"I wish we had access to something like a Whole Foods. There is nothing. The closest we have to a health food store is Aldi. I wish we had something that had more access to organic food."

"I'd like to see mobile units that go into communities with fresh fruits and vegetables, where we could deliver that to people instead of expecting people to have to go to one specific area."

"Maybe we need to do some community gardens where people grow some of their own vegetables and that kind of stuff and then have it free to people in that community."

The Guernsey County Meals on Wheel Program helps fill nutrition needs of the older adult community, but the cost of groceries and food deserts in the County still pose barriers to adequate access. For the older adult community in particular, mobility issues can make shopping on their own difficult. Additionally, trying to enroll in food services or opportunities for cheaper groceries has become an electronic or online process which adds another barrier for older adults.

Employment

The unemployment rate (2018-2022 estimate) in Guernsey County was similar to that of Ohio, using the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' unemployment definition as those people, 16 years of age and over, who were "actively seeking work, waiting to be called back to a job from which they were laid off, or waiting to report within 30 days to a new payroll job." Those who have stopped looking for a new job (and who have therefore removed themselves from the civilian labor force) are not included in this statistic.

Employment Status[1]

		Guernsey County	Ohio
Unemployment Rate	Annual average unemployment rate*	4.6%	5.0%
Employment Rate of Labor Force	**In labor force****	56.7%	63.2%
	*Civilian labor force****	99.8%	99.8%
	Employed*	95.4%	94.9%
	Unemployed*	4.5%	5.0%
	*Armed forces****	<0.1%	<0.1%
	Not in labor force**	43.3%	36.7%

*Denominator is civilian labor force **Denominator is total area population 16 years and over
***Denominator is total labor force*

The industry which employs the most residents in Guernsey County is educational services, health care, and social assistance, with 23% of residents in those industries.

Residents Employed in Various Industries[1]

	Guernsey County	Ohio
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.3%	24.1%
Manufacturing	13.1%	15.0%
Retail trade	13.1%	15.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10.0%	8.7%
Construction	8.0%	5.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6.6%	9.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6.6%	5.7%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	5.9%	0.9%
Public administration	4.3%	3.9%
Other services, except public administration	3.4%	4.3%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	2.5%	6.5%
Wholesale trade	2.3%	2.4%
Information	0.6%	1.4%

A community focus group with residents who receive services from the County Board of Developmental Disabilities and their Direct Support Professionals [DSPs] explored the topic of employment opportunities in the community. Residents with disabilities and Board staff see opportunities to increase the number of employers who are willing to hire people with disabilities.

Community Voices:
Increasing Employment Opportunities for Residents with Disabilities
Comments from community focus groups

"So there's community employment or you might work in a shelter facility, there's lots of different options [for people with disabilities]. I think the big thing is finding more employers who are willing to work with people with disabilities."

"I'm very fortunate to have an employer currently who's willing to work with me as well as the job coaches. But just the opportunity for some of these people who are ready to move on from the shelter employment and get out into the community."

"We just need a chance."

For these residents who are employed, job coaching is important to their success. They mentioned having checklists of tasks can help them do the job to the best of their ability. Employers who are understanding of the additional support some residents need on the job can help more reach their goals of being employed.

Education

Fewer residents of Guernsey County have a Bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment compared to Ohio overall.

Educational Attainment[1]

	Guernsey County	Ohio
Less than 9th grade	4.4%	2.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	9.3%	5.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	42.6%	32.4%
Some college, no degree	18.6%	19.8%
Associate's degree	10.1%	8.8%
Bachelor's degree	9.7%	18.7%
Graduate or professional degree	5.2%	11.7%

Graduation rates are lowest in the Cambridge City School district. In 2022, the overall graduation rate for Guernsey County students was 93.0%.[5]

Graduation Rates (2022)[6]

	Guernsey County
East Guernsey Local Schools	96.6%
Cambridge City School District	89.0%
Rolling Hills School District	95.3%

Kindergarten Readiness Assessments that evaluate children's skills and behaviors regarding Language and Literacy, Social Foundations, Mathematics, and Physical Well-Being & Motor Development, are used to assess their development and readiness for school instruction. Children who are fully prepared are considered "demonstrating" readiness, while those who are "approaching" or "emerging" lack some of the necessary skills and behaviors that educators consider to be vital to their development and success.

The following table provides the Kindergarten Readiness scores for school districts in Guernsey County. As shown, a greater proportion of children are "emerging" or "approaching" readiness as compared to "demonstrating," and a majority of children overall lack preparedness in language and literacy skills.

Kindergarten Readiness 2022-2023 school year (% of students)[7]

	Overall Readiness Score			Language and Literacy	
	Demonstrating	Approaching	Emerging	On-Track	Not On-Track
East Guernsey Local	37.70%	41.00%	21.30%	50.80%	49.20%
Cambridge City	29.50%	32.90%	37.70%	37.00%	63.00%
Rolling Hills Local	21.90%	35.20%	42.90%	27.60%	72.40%
Guernsey overall	28.50%	35.30%	36.20%	36.50%	63.50%

Around half of third-graders across all Guernsey County school districts are proficient in reading by the end of third grade. The last column of the following table represents third grade students whose proficiency was assessed to be off-track at the beginning of the year who were on track for proficiency judging by their end of year assessment. As shown, fewer students in East Guernsey Local showed improvement in reading proficiency.

Proficiency in Third Grade Reading 2022-2023 school year (% of students) [6]

	Third Graders scoring proficient in reading	Third Graders promoted to fourth grade	Third grade improvement: Third grade students previously off-track who are now on track
East Guernsey Local	60.6%	98.5%	16.7%
Cambridge City	53.2%	100%	56.9%
Rolling Hills Local	51.8%	100%	N/A

Community Voices:
Issues Impacting Youth and Education
Comments from stakeholder interviews

Traumatic home environments

"The environment and mental health because of the drugs in our community…when the kids are in that atmosphere, they don't have a chance to get out of that situation. And if they do, where do they go? And there's a lack of support…Foster care is hard anymore to find."

"The number of kids that are impacted by trauma, the amount of kids who have parents that are in jail, or in rehab, or transitioning out of jail, or transitioning out of rehab. It continues to be extremely challenging for those kids to find academic success when there's no social, emotional or physiological supports at home…you've got to take care of the normal, basic things that many of us had taken care of for us as kids, as young adults, that our kids just don't have. Those basic, fundamental needs are not being met."

Financial instability

"…Epidemic like levels of kids in need. These services, gas, cars, hotel stays. It's astonishing what school districts are providing. We are no longer reading, writing, arithmetic, athletics, and performing arts. We are a full-blown job and family services catch all…From an economic standpoint, schools have always had kids who are economically disadvantaged. Cambridge has always had that population...But that population 20, 30, 40 years ago was 20-30-40%. It's 80%."

Need for early intervention to better educational outcomes

"We are seeing a significant increase in the quantity of disabilities, but then also in the severity of the disabilities walking through our doors. And a lot of it is mental health challenges. Many of it is a lot of lack of social skills…There are a whole variety of reasons why, but these kids are coming in as five-year-olds not ready for kindergarten…I would love to get us to the point that every single kid age three and four has to go to some preschool… we've got to find ways to get services for this birth to five. And then obviously that really goes back into prenatal care working with these moms."

NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Housing

One way housing affordability is measured by the U.S. Census Bureau is through selected monthly ownership costs as a percent of household income (SMOCAPI). Included in monthly ownership costs are payments involved in purchasing a home as well as expenditures for insurance, real estate taxes, utilities, and fuel. Condominium fees and mobile home costs are also included when applicable. A similar measure for renters exists as gross rent as a percentage of household income (GRAPI). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has historically considered families whose housing costs exceed 30% of their income to be cost-burdened.[8]

Cost-Burdened Households[1]

	Guernsey County	Ohio
Owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage	**6,275**	**1,965,593**
30% or more of income spent on housing costs (SMOCAPI)	24.1%	20.5%
Owner-occupied housing units without a mortgage	**5,361**	**1,212,644**
30% or more of income spent on housing costs (SMOCAPI)	7.8%	11.9%
Renter-occupied housing units	**3,778**	**1,470,390**
30% or more of income spent on rent (GRAPI)	50.2%	44.5%

Counts of housing units excludes units for which SMOCAPI or GRAPI could not be calculated.

Around 48% of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey are highly concerned about the cost of housing in the County.

2024 Community Survey: Housing affordability in Guernsey County
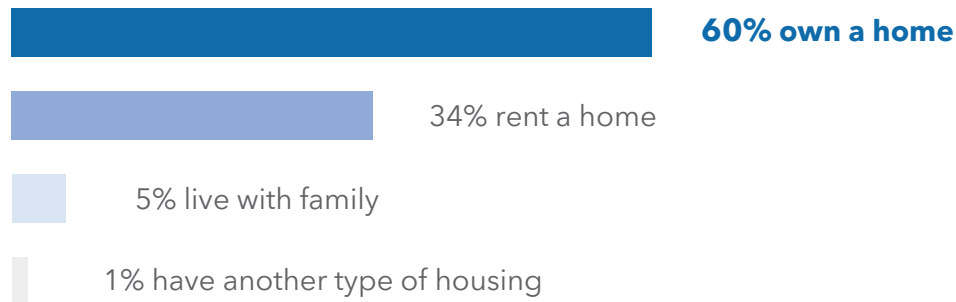
How concerned are you about the cost of housing in Guernsey County?

■ Extremely	■ Very	■ Moderately	■ Slightly	■ Not concerned at all

16%	32%	24%	11%	17%
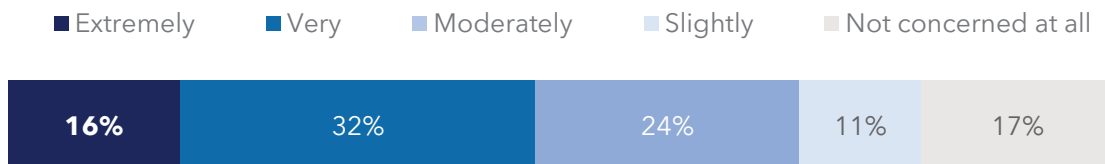
n=327

While a majority of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey own their home, over a third are renters.

Percent of residents who own vs. rent their home

60% own a home

34% rent a home

5% live with family

1% have another type of housing

n=338

43% of those who own a home think they could afford to buy the house they live in now based on current housing prices, **57%** do not.

n=46

Community members participating in stakeholder interviews and focus groups felt access to housing is an issue in the community. While the cost of housing is one part of this issue, they detailed a host of other reasons it is difficult for some community members to find housing that suits their needs.

Community Voices:
Housing Access Issues in the Community
Comments from stakeholder interviews

Housing for individuals transitioning out of jail, or with mental health issues is hard to find

"…transitional housing for people that are getting out of jail, that are trying to go somewhere. That really doesn't exist in this county…And now we have the warming center, but there are rules for the people that are going there, if they don't meet those rules based on the owners of that, they're not getting in."

"You can have somebody that has a mental health issue and addiction, but they are currently clean, they're stabilized with no mental health issues. The landlords know who those people are and will not rent to them. So that leads them to either a live in the woods, behind Sheetz, homeless, or they live with a family member, and we end up arriving when they are not stabilized, and they've done something, and the family member wants them out of their house right now."

Community Voices:
Older Adults on Housing Needs in the Community
Comments from community focus groups

Seniors say access to housing options that suit their needs is inadequate

"My sister just recently lost her home that she'd had for 13 years, and I took her to every apartment complex in Guernsey County that I could think of, and some had a waiting list of five years. They were subsidized apartments because her income is very low."

"Senior housing has suddenly become just low-income housing which brings in people in their mid-20s, 30s, 40s when it was originally built and intended to be for senior housing. And I think that kind of takes away a lot of spaces for seniors when you go giving them to low impact or low income or disability. I think they kind of need to be two separate things."

Community Voices:
Parents on Housing Issues in the Community
Comments from community focus groups

Low income parents face issues with application requirements and finding homes big enough for their families

"I applied for HUD [assistance] and they told me I couldn't get it because I'm a felon. I said, but my felonies are 20 and 30 years old and I don't associate with nobody no more. It doesn't matter."

"To find places, that's really hard too. Or having options…Because my sister, it's been horrible for her to try to find somewhere to live and be able to afford it because she's becoming a single mom."

"Finding something that's big enough for all six of us...or having a yard for your kids to play or you can't have dogs…I got my dog [for protection]. So it's hard to find stuff to accommodate all around."

In one focus group, residents with developmental disabilities mentioned that finding housing in apartments near the city center is ideal for them because it allows them to be able to walk to places like the library and post office without having to rely on others for transportation. While one resident we spoke to was able to find housing like this, they believe options in the community that are central enough and affordable enough are limited.

The County Board of Developmental Disabilities purchases homes when they can to increase the stock of affordable and accessible housing in the community, however their ability to do this depends on their budget.

Transportation

Vehicles Available in Households[1]

	Guernsey County	Ohio
Total housing units	**16,165**	**4,789,408**
No vehicles available	6.9%	7.4%
One vehicle available	29.1%	33.4%
Two or more vehicles available	63.9%	59.1%
Owner-occupied housing units	**11,737**	**3,200,314**
No vehicles available	3.6%	3.0%
One vehicle available	23.0%	25.6%
Two or more vehicles available	73.4%	71.5%
Renter-occupied housing units	**4,428**	**1,589,094**
No vehicles available	15.7%	16.4%
One vehicle available	45.5%	49.2%
Two or more vehicles available	38.7%	34.3%

Most respondents to the Community Survey have not had to reschedule an appointment or been unable to get somewhere they wanted or needed to go because of issues with transportation. However, over 10% had this happen once in a while.

2024 Community Survey: How often residents experienced transportation issues

How often did you have to reschedule an appointment because of a problem with transportation? (past 30 days)

Never happened

80%

Once in a while

16%

Only 3% had to reschedule an appointment usually (2%) or as often as not (1%). No respondents answered they "always" had to reschedule appointments due to transportation issues.

n=343

How often did you not go somewhere you wanted or needed to go because of a problem with transportation? (past 30 days)

Never happened

79%

Once in a while

14%

Only 7% could not get somewhere they wanted or need to go always (1%), usually (3%), or as often as not (2%).

n=343

Respondents to the Community Survey were also asked how many times in the past 30 days they were unable to get where they wanted to go due to transportation issues. A majority of respondents said this never happened to them. However, a small number of respondents (5) said this happened to them more than 10 times.

2024 Community Survey: How many times residents experienced transportation issues

How many times residents were unable to get where they wanted to go because they did not have a way to get there (past 30 days)

0 times	88%
1 to 10 times	11%
11 to 20 times	1%
Over 20 times	1%
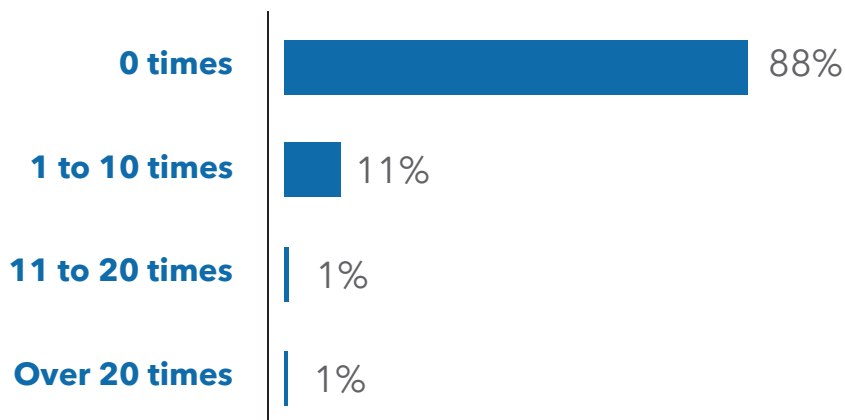
n=320

Community Voices:
Transportation Barriers
Comments from stakeholder interviews

Transportation barriers as indicators of multiple needs

"If transportation is a barrier, we have found out that they need a wheelchair ramp to get out of the house. They may need a wheelchair. They may need some other type of social service or social determinants. So what we're finding out is transportation is just one barrier of several different things."

Public transportation limitations

"Individuals want to know why [SEAT: South East Area Transit] can't provide transportation earlier or longer on Saturdays or on Sundays. It's all about the funding and the resources that are available. We may get some funding for that, 50%, but then there's that other 50% that we have to come up with on our own that just isn't enough for us to be out there on that Saturday and Sunday."

In general, getting where they want or need to go is difficult for residents with disabilities due to restrictions on how much time and mileage service providers like the Board of Developmental Disabilities can spend transporting them.

Community Voices:
Transportation Access for Residents with Disabilities
Comments from community focus groups

Transportation waiver restrictions make it difficult for residents to do the activities they want to do.

"For her mileage and what time she had, we only had enough time in a scenario to stay right here in Guernsey county and do things."

"I've got one individual that has 200 miles a month, but he likes to go out and do stuff. We go to Zanesville and that's 50 miles round trip. Then he has bowling and that's 62 miles round trip. So by the time you do all that, it doesn't leave you much if he wants to go somewhere here in town or he wants to go out to eat, and it makes it very hard sometimes that you can't go where you want to go."

While providers think that some health-related transportation will not count towards allotted time/mileage on Medicaid waivers, there is uncertainty about this

"Say one of our individuals only has so much mileage. Then us DSPs [Direct Support Professionals] are stuck because they're calling us or asking, can you take me to the doctor? And I'm like, you don't have the mileage for that. And then that's not fair to them because it's only going to the doctor's office. So sometimes there has to be a little bit of a leeway there for that to happen."

South East Area Transit, or the SEAT bus provides fixed route transportation around Guernsey County as well as on demand transportation to other places in Ohio. Participants in community focus groups explained why residents may not be utilizing this service to its full potential.

Community Voices:
Concerns with Utilizing Public Transportation Services
Comments from community focus groups

Concerns about safety and overall lack of knowledge about SEAT

"If you don't have a vehicle, you're walking. Or you have to try and use a SEAT bus or medical card for transportation or doctor appointments and a lot of people are hesitant on that or even using MVHC transportation…people are always nervous about putting their kids in cars with people that don't know how to drive."

"I don't think I fully understand the SEAT bus, because where I'm at, one day I thought I needed to use it to get to Job and Family Services and it was a two hour walk for me to get to the first stop. They don't come door to door…The thing is it's not really understandable unless you call… it gives me anxiety calling somebody and not knowing what questions to ask. I would be panicking because I'm like, I don't know what to ask them. I don't want to sound stupid on the phone. So, I wouldn't call, I would just say alright, I'm walking."

"Just [need] the opportunity to be able to learn about when the buses are normally running, how to not only schedule a ride, but how to transition from one stop to another so that I didn't have to worry about constantly getting lost."

Needing to be flexible with time for public transportation, and rules that make using this for errands difficult

"And then a lot of the times, it has to be at this time. And you're like, okay, I'll reschedule my appointment. Oh, I can't reschedule it three times."

"There's only two stops per day that you're allowed. One of them is the grocery store. I believe you're only allowed to take two bags back with you. If you need to go get groceries [you can't] put everything in two bags for your one trip a day…"

In focus groups with residents with disabilities, support professionals mentioned the usefulness of having public transportation that runs for longer hours, which would make it easier for residents to go see movies and socialize more with each other. They also expressed a need for more affordable public transportation. One support professional said her client pays an average of $9 a trip for transportation from her home to the places she goes in the community.

Physical Accessibility of the Community

The focus group with residents with disabilities revealed many ways that accessibility in the community could be improved for them.

Community Voices:
Making Community Spaces Accessible for People with Disabilities
Comments from community focus groups

"Adult changing tables. If you go somewhere really fun and then someone needs changed and there's not a place to change them, they almost have to go right back home."

"No steps. Just make it all one floor"

"The handicap door buttons. They're on the outside, but not on the inside to go out."

"For some of the people who have a hard time getting around, just having rails that way they're not worrying about falling."

"Wider doors for wheelchairs."

"It doesn't matter where I go, there's never enough handicapped parking…they have to have a safe place to get out, and to get the wheelchair out."

Neighborhood Safety

A majority of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey feel highly safe in their neighborhood during the daytime (85%). Over two-thirds also feel highly safe in their neighborhood during nighttime.

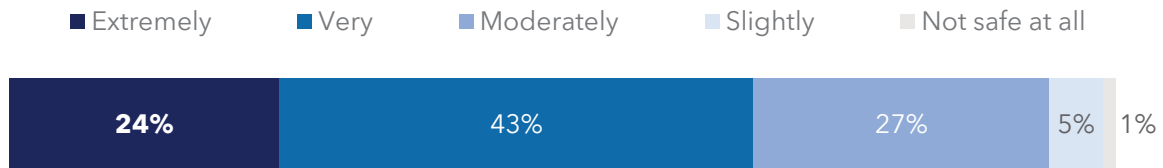_2024 Community Survey: How safe residents feel in their neighborhood_

How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the daytime?

■ Extremely   ■ Very   ■ Moderately   ■ Slightly   ■ Not safe at all

39%	46%	12%	2%	1%
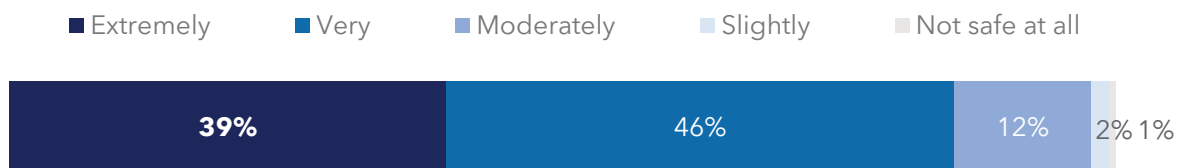
n=355

How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the nighttime?

■ Extremely   ■ Very   ■ Moderately   ■ Slightly   ■ Not safe at all

24%	43%	27%	5%	1%

n=345

The following table represents crime data reported by Guernsey County law enforcement agencies to the Ohio Incident-Based Reporting System (OIBRS). Because participation in the system is voluntary, the following crime data may be considered incomplete. Rates are unstable and not reported here.

Crime in Guernsey County: Selected Indicators[9]

		Guernsey County Count
Crimes Against People	Aggravated Assault	18
	Intimidation	57
	Simple Assault	25
	Kidnapping/Abduction	1
	Robbery	1
	Rape	5
	Statutory Rape	1
Crimes Against Property	Burglary/Breaking & Entering	7
	Theft From Building	24
	Theft From Motor Vehicle	6
	Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories	1
	Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property	9
	Motor Vehicle Theft	2
	Stolen Property Offenses	2

Internet Access

Approximately 12% of households in the County do not have access to a computer, and 17% do not have access to the internet.

Households' Internet Access Availability[1]

		Guernsey County	Ohio
Access to a Computer	**Households with a computer**	88.5%	92.8%
	Desktop or laptop	66.0%	76.7%
	Desktop or laptop with no other type of device*	4.6%	3.9%
	Smartphone	79.7%	85.8%
	Smartphone with no other type of device	14.3%	9.5%
	Tablet or other portable wireless computer*	52.6%	61.9%
	No other type	1.5%	1.1%
	Households without a computer	11.5%	7.2%
Access to Internet Subscription	**With an internet subscription**	83.0%	87.8%
	Dial-up only**	0.7%	0.2%
	Cellular data with no other type of internet**	17.6%	10.5%
	Broadband (i.e., cable, fiber optic, or DSL)**	58.3%	73.4%
	Satellite internet service**	8.1%	6.1%
	Without an internet subscription	17.0%	12.2%

*Denominator is total number of households with a computer
**Denominator is total number of households with an internet subscription

OVERALL OPINIONS ABOUT GUERNSEY COUNTY

What Residents Like About Life in Guernsey County

Guernsey County residents who participated in the 2024 Community Survey were asked to identify, in their own words, what they liked the most about living in the County. These responses were coded by researchers into categories.

Overall, the most common responses among adults were:

- **The sense of community and friendliness of its people** (19% of adults said this).
- **The small town feeling** (16% of adults said this).
- **The natural beauty and resources: lakes, trails, etc.** (13% of adults said this).
- **Proximity to family and friends** (9% of adults said this).
- **The quiet and peacefulness of a slow lifestyle** (8% of adults said this).
- **The convenience, in proximity to places they need to go and lack of traffic** (8% of adults said this).

n=359

Other responses included safety/being free of crime (4% said this), and places in the community such as shops and the Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center (4% said this). Nearly 17% gave a general positive response about living in Guernsey County: "It's a good place to live." 23% of respondents did not provide an answer, including a very small number who said "Nothing."

What Adults Like Most About Living in Guernsey County
Verbatim comments from the Community Survey

Sense of Community

"The feeling of community, everyone knows each other, a great sense of belonging."

"Good, friendly, honest people."

Small Town Feeling

"Small town atmosphere."

"Small town life is so much better than in a big city. People are very supportive of each other and so are communities."

Natural Beauty & Resources

"The amount of outdoor activities and beautiful landscape. Salt Fork has trails and a beach, Seneca has a beach. You can fish, hike, or swim."

"The Great Guernsey Trail, the wildlife near my home."

Problems Facing Guernsey County

Respondents to the 2024 Community Survey were asked about the most important issues facing Guernsey County residents. Combined, economic indicators appear to be the biggest concern for residents: the economy and cost of living, jobs and housing, as well as poverty in general. Substance use in the community is also a top concern for residents.

In response to the open-ended question, Community Survey respondents identified the following as the biggest issues facing adults in Guernsey County:

- **The economy and cost of living** (18%).
- **Substance use, drugs in particular** (13%).
- **Lack of well-paying jobs** (11%).
- **Lack of quality, affordable housing** (10%).

Percent of adult respondents who identified issue as the **most important issue**	(n=359)
The economy, cost of living, taxes	**18.1%**
Substance use, particularly drugs	**12.8%**
Lack of well-paying jobs	**10.6%**
Lack of quality, affordable housing	**10.0%**
Poverty and difficulty making ends meet	8.6%
Access to affordable, healthy food	6.4%
Inadequate public transportation	4.2%
Crime	3.3%
Lack of recreational activities	3.1%
Mental Health and Resources	2.0%
Other	12.3%
Don't know/blank responses	30.9%

HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND UTILIZATION

Health insurance status and type of coverage impacts health care affordability and utilization. About 10% of Guernsey County residents don't have health insurance, higher than this percentage for Ohio overall. Guernsey County does not meet the Healthy People 2030 goal for people under age 65 with health insurance (89.4% vs 92.4%).[10]

Health Insurance Coverage[1]

		Guernsey County	Ohio
Health Insurance Coverage	**Total with health insurance**	90.3%	93.6%
	Age 18 and under	94.7%	95.4%
	Adults age 19-64	85.5%	91.2%
	Adults age 65 and over	99.3%	99.5%
Private Health Insurance (alone or in combination)	**Total with private health insurance coverage**	59.5%	68.6%
	Employer-based*	48.4%	58.6%
	*Age 18 and under**	48.7%	58.6%
	*Adults age 19-64**	54.4%	66.3%
	*Adults age 65 and over**	30.4%	32.3%
	Direct-purchase*	12.7%	12.0%
	*Age 18 and under**	5.1%	5.3%
	*Adults age 19-64**	8.0%	8.8%
	*Adults age 65 and over**	36.0%	32.1%
Public Health Insurance (alone or in combination)	**Total with public health insurance coverage**	46.4%	37.7%
	Medicaid/means-tested*	26.9%	20.7%
	*Age 18 and under**	48.9%	36.5%
	*Adults age 19-64**	23.6%	17.5%
	*Adults age 65 and over**	10.1%	9.8%
	Medicare*	21.7%	19.1%
	*Age 18 and under**	0.0%	0.5%
	*Adults age 19-64**	4.8%	4.1%
	*Adults age 65 and over**	97.5%	96.1%

*Of total population **Of total population in that age range. Note that other types of health coverage (TRICARE, VA) are not shown in this table.*

2024 Community Survey: Residents with a personal care provider

Do you have at least one person that you think of as your personal health care provider, or do you not have that?

■ Have that   ■ Do not have that

86%	14%

n=344
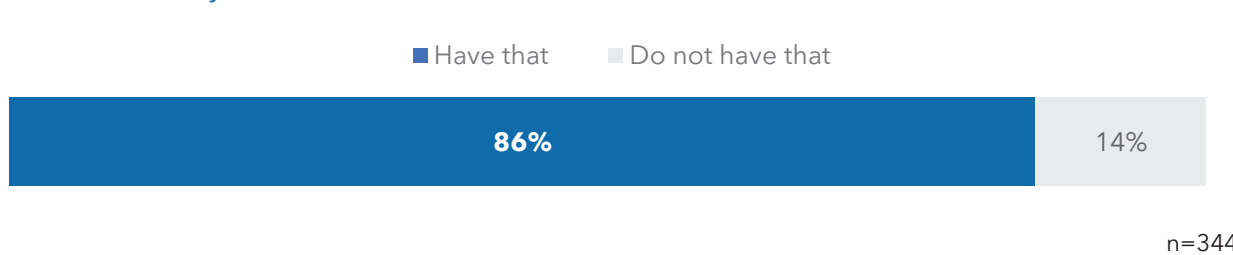
Health Care Resource Availability

Nearly half **(48%)** of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey traveled outside of Guernsey County to receive physical or mental health care in the past 12 months. Roughly 12% of those who did so traveled for primary care/their family doctor, including routine check-ups/annual physicals or "all care" (unspecified). Residents also commonly traveled to receive heart care (approximately 12%), OBGYN services (9%) and eye care (7%). Overall they traveled for various types of care, including for Dermatology, Endocrinology, Rheumatology, Neurology, among other specialties, and for surgeries, various tests/scans, cancer treatments and mental health care.

Lack of health care service providers in a particular area are one factor leading individuals to travel for care. The next table shows the ratios of health practitioners to residents in Guernsey County. The ratio of Guernsey County physicians (both MDs and DOs) is 1 to every 1,130 residents. Note that the specific ratio of primary care physicians to residents was unable to be verified but is likely a much larger figure. There are far fewer dentists for the population in Guernsey County.

Counts and ratios of psychiatrists and psychologists to residents could not be verified and were unable to be presented below, as well as comparable ratios for the state of Ohio overall.

Ratio of Providers to Population

	Guernsey County Ratio
Licensed MDs & DOs[11]	1:1,130
Licensed dentists[12]	1:2,956
Licensed chemical dependency counselors[13]	1:506
Other mental health professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists)	*

*Data are from 2024 *Unable to verify data*

Community Voices:
Health Resources Needed in the Community
Comments from stakeholder interviews

Needed specialty health care services

"[We need] those specialists, because you take a community that doesn't like to travel. They don't like to travel to shop, let alone for health care. And especially if they've had a bad experience, the last thing that they want to do is drive to Columbus."

"We've lost a lot of access to specialty physicians in the last five years. And I know one that we have been talking about quite a bit lately has been diabetic counseling, diabetic education."

"I think Neuro is a big gap in this. We see a lot of strokes. Unless you're in that 30-minute golden window, the care you're going to get here locally is no different than the care you're going to get if you go to Riverside. So how do we leverage those system relationships so more people can stay local and then get any intervention they need on an outpatient basis? It's better for the family."

Need for more mental health care professionals

"Mental health and especially medication prescribing. That's one of the biggest gaps."

"We have four prescribers that cover a six-county area. And they are trying to prescribe or provide services to over about 225,000 residents in our six-county area. And they are aging. So they are your older physicians who are either close to or past retirement age, some dealing with physical health issues themselves that limit their availability to provide care. And recruiting to this area is extremely difficult because of these salary demands that these individuals want."

"The mental health system right now is broken…we've got the community mental health partners that aren't able to find staff. We're losing counselors. Not only losing them, but they are going home and doing telehealth. Not even in the state of Ohio. Not only are we losing them in our particular entities, but they're out of the area completely."

"What happens is that the counselors are so overstaffed that when the hour is up, that person's not done talking, but they're shuffling them out of the room to get to their next appointment. There has to be that genuine support network from the medical providers or you quickly know that we're just another number…And the first time an addict or somebody with mental health issues does not think they're valued, then that could cause suicides."

Need for social workers

"We could employ probably ten social workers if we could find them. That's the other issue. Social work is a really scarce skill set that we rely on a lot, especially in the emergency department."

Needed youth health resources

"I you think about that peds population, we've got two pediatricians right now, and then you've got medical associates who aren't taking new patients anymore. So there is a tremendous amount of kids in Guernsey County that don't have primary care."

"[Schools] can do the screenings, but it's actually the follow through, or it's the financials, or it's a variety of reasons of getting them into the eye exam, then getting the glasses ordered, then getting them fitted, then getting the kids to wear them and then not break them, needing a new pair."

"Eight out of ten kids walk through the doors at Cambridge City schools living at or below the federal poverty guideline. In most instances, you're going to qualify for the Medicaid medical card, which means you don't have traditional health care insurance…If there's not a dentist in town who accepts the medical card, parents have to pay out of pocket. If we're already at or below the federal poverty guidelines, how many parents aren't able to financially fund good quality dental care?"

Emergency transport service needs

"We support and pay for any type of emergency transportation that has to happen for individuals with mental illness that has to go to a hospital. We can't do inpatient treatment at Genesis, so we need to send them to Columbus or another hospital…we do that with law enforcement. I know it's very limited. If we need ambulance support, what's available, almost nonexistent…If you think it's hard to find nurses, it is exponentially harder to find paramedics…this is a crisis, and at some point, I don't know that we'll be able to staff it. So I think that's going to be a gap in service."

"Sometimes they have to call the squad or the sheriff to transport folks from the group home, either to be medically cleared or stabilized at the hospital and or evaluated…response time is challenging."

Difficulty of increasing health resources in a rural community

"What's got us into the situation we're in with emergency services, lack of physicians, lack of appropriate treatment. We are rural. We can't, as a community, justify the cost of having an interventional catheterization lab at this hospital…And I understand why…we're just big enough that we need some of these things, but we're also small enough we can't justify it. And that makes it difficult processing grants, too. We're at that midline population where we should be able to get something, but we don't quite qualify for it one direction or the other."

During the community focus group with older adults in Guernsey County, they seconded the need for more health specialists in the community, specifically hematologists, dermatologists, cardiologists, and hand surgeons. Some had to travel as far as Akron to get care from a specialist surgeon, as their doctor recommended. Others mentioned long waits to get into the dermatologist, or a lack of quality care from providers they had seen in the area.

And during the community focus group with parents, they spoke about how finding vision and dental providers who take Medicaid is a problem. For vision, many think Walmart is the only option. While they can get children's teeth cleaned through MVHC, they have to travel if their child needs oral surgery.

Reasons for Delaying Health Care

2024 Community Survey: Health care access issues

How many residents delayed getting health care in the past 12 months for the following reasons:

Did not have transportation	8%
Could not afford the copay	7%
Did not have health insurance	6%
Could not schedule an appointment soon enough	5%
Did not know where to get care	5%

Average n=349

Community Voices:
Older Adults on Difficulties Accessing Care
Comments from community focus groups

Trouble finding closer care, and having to rely on others for transportation

"When I needed my heart surgery, they told me at the local hospital that I needed to go to Columbus. And I'm like, isn't there any place closer? No. I went online and found my own place closer in Zanesville. Because driving as many times you have to go back and forth, and my son hates driving in Columbus and he's the one that has to drive me because I don't do interstate anymore."

Insurance acceptance often means needing to travel for care

"We do have good access to health care and that is important. Very important. But you can only get to that healthcare depending on what insurance you have."

"Now I can't go to Columbus [with my insurance]. When I had cancer, I went up to James Cancer Center. Now I have to go to Cleveland. Which is twice as far. That was just to keep my regular doctor. Anything happens to me, I gotta go to Cleveland rather than Columbus."

"There's a couple of the major insurance Medicare supplemental policies that last year said 'We would no longer cover if you go to Zanesville (Genesis Hospital).'"

Sheer cost of services

"People our age [seniors] have a hard time getting tooth extractions in Guernsey County because you either have to have $1,800 up front, or your insurance doesn't cover it, or they ship you to Barnesville or somewhere else do it. He's been waiting almost two years to get two teeth extracted…"

According to the focus group with residents who have developmental disabilities, traveling for health care is especially difficult. In many cases residents with disabilities cannot drive themselves and have to rely on family members or others to drive them. If public transportation is available, some residents still need to coordinate trips with someone else because they are unable to travel independently with their health conditions.

Community Voices:
Parents on Difficulties Accessing Care
Comments from community focus groups

Some parents may struggle to recognize particular health issues, or knowing how to find help

"A lot of times you don't even know where to start and having the ability to know who to call. My oldest was just diagnosed autistic and so just even knowing. If you're not a parent on top of it, it can really slide through…"

Feelings of guilt and logistical difficulties prevent them from taking time for health

"I'm not going to take off time of work to go to the doctor because that's not for me. But yeah, I'll take my kids. I don't want to go get my medicine. I don't want to figure out how I'm going to go to the doctor and pick up my kid from school, how long you're going to sit in the doctor's office for. And you're like, okay, it's 2:15, I got to go."

"The guilt of dropping them off somewhere. If you have to go to a doctor's appointment, you have to have somebody watch your kids. I feel bad because now they're watching my kids and I'm going to the doctor. Even though I know it's needed."

"If you can give yourself two hours to yourself, you're gonna be a better mom…But everyone tells us, well, do it yourself. It's okay to take a sick day and send all the kids to school. There's nothing wrong with that. But that's not how we've been taught."

Taking children to appointments doesn't work for many parents

"We do have several counseling agencies that are wonderful, but transportation is an issue for a lot of families…and the child care portion. Because if you're getting JFS daycare, you have to be at work or school to drop your kids up there. So if you're not doing those things, you have your child and take them to the grocery or to the doctors. It's hard for families."

"And to go to counseling with a six-year-old trying to tell the counselor what your problem is while you're trying to take care of your children, that doesn't work. Don't try it."

"I went to Southeastern Ohio counseling when I had my six nieces. And they came to my house because I was like, how am I going to take all five kids to this counseling center? I couldn't just pack them up in my three-seater car. And so that was very helpful for me, we had case management, we had family counseling."


Accessing government insurance can be confusing

"I think government healthcare is really hard for some people. Trying to understand the forms and understanding those interim reports and I'm sitting here like what do they want me to sign? Oh my God, I missed the page….I think that it's really hard to sit down and understand what you're reading and what you're seeing. And a lot of people just don't do it, like I'm just not going to do it and I'm not going to get insurance, or your life is so busy you have that 30 days and then you forget."

"They were like, 'Oh, you need to do these last two pages.' What last two pages? That wasn't there, I'm telling you right now. Once that piece of paper's gone, it's gone. Where'd it go? Like out of sight, out of mind."

2024 Community Survey: Prescription access issues

How many residents did not fill a prescription in the past 12 months for the following reasons:

Did not have transportation — 6%

Did not have health insurance — 5%

Could not afford the copay — 3%
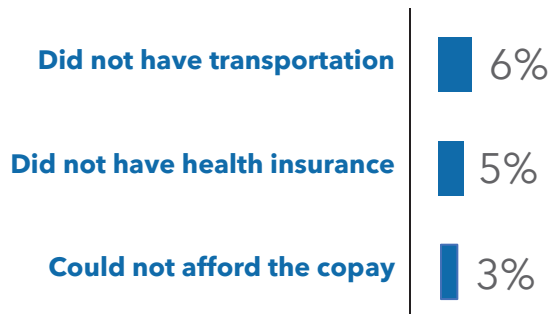
Average n=349

Community Voices:
Key Stakeholders on Why Residents Delay/Don't Seek Care
Comments from stakeholder interviews

Attitudes about health

"Prior to 2020, it was sheer stubbornness for not seeking care as the first part. The older generation, and some of them are very much still this way, if they didn't feel like it was killing them in that minute, there was no reason to go seek help."

"We've got a lot of younger parents in that 18 to 25 category who are not seeking appropriate care or seeking it timely for the adolescent juvenile population that probably should be getting their vaccinations on time. They're not getting their regular checkups, medical or dental, any of that stuff. It's just simply not being paid attention to because of that younger parentage."

Insurance and affordability

"Money to afford care. Many people will skip their yearly physical checkup, or a woman may skip her annual physical or mammogram, because they can't afford it. And if they're on Medicaid, that process has been somewhat daunting for them, and there's something wrong with the paperwork."

Transportation issues

"If you have to have [meals delivered], you probably need your healthcare delivered, too…I know metropolitan Franklin County, they have a couple of community paramedicine programs that are in effect. OhioHealth in Columbus actually has protocols and a program in place for community paramedicine. So that would be a huge step in the right direction. That would fill in all those gaps between the services."

Awareness of services

"[Some patients] didn't realize that we served private insurance [at MVHC]."

"My staff spends a lot of time specifically with the elderly population, because if you refer them to somebody, how likely is someone that's 84 years old going to be able to work the phone tree to get the services and understand what they need?"

Impact of COVID-19 on health care utilization

"We see a lot of advanced disease. So people are not doing screenings the way they used to. And some of it's the lack of that screening where they're not taking care of their health in the same way that they did pre COVID. COPD is bad around here. Diabetes is bad, heart disease is bad…Cancer rates are pretty high…"

"We spent two years telling people to stay away. The first year of COVID it was, we don't want you to come here and get sick. The second year was, we don't have staff and beds. So a lot of times we see people that hit the door and they're sicker than they were a few years ago."

MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH

Respondents to the 2024 Community Survey had a median of 1 poor mental health day in the 30 days prior to the survey, with an average of 5.8 poor mental health days.

2024 Community Survey: Poor Mental Health Days

Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, anxiety, depression, and problems with emotions, for about how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?

Category	Percentage
0 days	50%
1 to 10 days	32%
10 to 20 days	9%
Over 20 days	9%
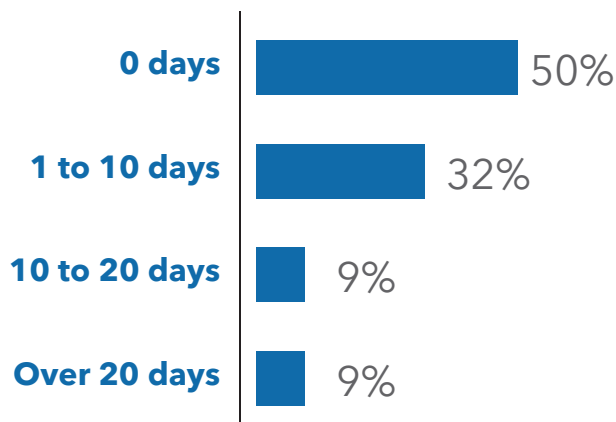
n=325

Community Voices:
Older Adults on Mental Health Issues
Comments from community focus groups

Impacts on older adults' mental health

"Alzheimer's. That's a terrible thing to watch somebody you love go through. It's hard on the family."

"I would say depression is a very big one. Especially when you have health issues and mobility issues and just everything. It's hard to get around."

Barriers to accessing mental health care

"I think sometimes the people who need this service don't really know they need the service."

"Everything I've read has been like so many people don't have access. Whether it's through insurance they don't have access, or they don't have insurance and don't have access, or they do have insurance and there's not quantity of or quality of providers available."

"It takes a while to build a rapport with a counselor and a lot of times the counselor, right when you're getting comfortable, they leave and go to another facility and you get a new counselor. You have to start the whole process over again, and that's not beneficial to anybody."

"[My husband], he's got [depression] and I'm his [caregiver]. I signed up for it a long time ago, but, you know, I'm 80 years old too, and I don't even know where you would go to find it around here."

When asked about what they would do if they needed to find mental health care, some focus group participants said they would use the internet or ask their primary care provider. One mentioned that they might be able to link to services through Job and Family Services.

The next table presents suicide deaths from 2020-2022. The suicide rate for Guernsey County was higher than the rate for Ohio during that time frame.

Suicide[14]

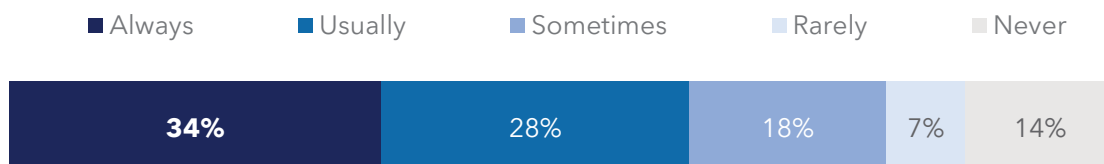|	Guernsey County		Ohio	
	Count	Rate*	Count	Rate*
Suicides	25	20.6	5,205	14.4

Rate per 100,000 population, age-adjusted

Social Health

Respondents to the Community Survey were asked about the extent they feel socially supported and connected in their communities. A majority of respondents usually or always get the social or emotional support they need (61%), and very few respondents felt lonely or isolated a majority of the time (8%). A majority of respondents also rate their feelings of belonging in Guernsey County positively, however, fewer respondents feel highly connected to neighbors close to them.
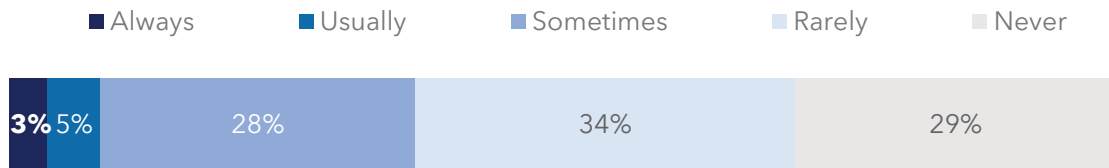
2024 Community Survey: Social Support and Connection

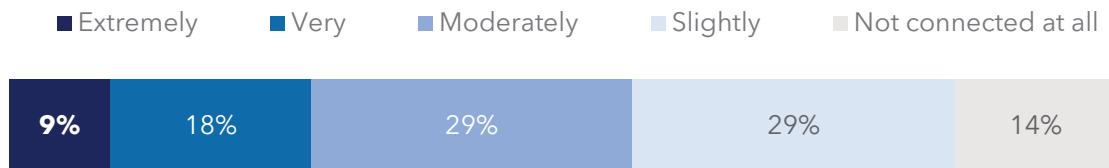How often, if ever, do you get the social and emotional support you need?

■ Always	■ Usually	■ Sometimes	■ Rarely	■ Never

34%	28%	18%	7%	14%

n=353

How often, if ever, do you feel lonely or isolated?

Legend: Always | Usually | Sometimes | Rarely | Never

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
3%	5%	28%	34%	29%

n=352

How connected do you feel to the neighbors who live near you?

Legend: Extremely | Very | Moderately | Slightly | Not connected at all

Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Not connected at all
9%	18%	29%	29%	14%

n=352

How well does the following statement describe you? *"I feel like I belong in Guernsey County."*

Legend: Extremely well | Very well | Moderately well | Slightly well | Not well at all

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
24%	38%	25%	9%	4%
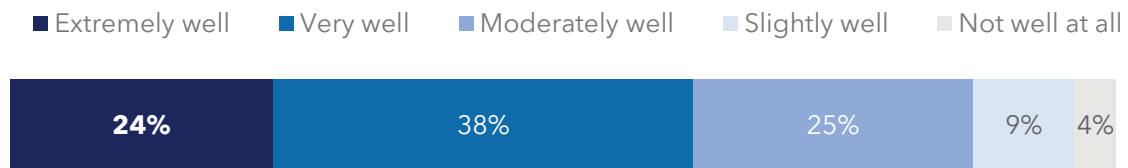
n=349

Domestic Violence

The following table provides counts of domestic violence victims in Guernsey County for the year 2023.

Domestic Violence Victims[15]

	Guernsey County Count
Victim With Injury	10
Victim With No Injury	12
Victim Fatal Injury	0
Total	**22**

SUBSTANCE USE

Overdoses

The following table displays counts of drug overdose deaths in Guernsey County and Ohio, as reported in the State of Ohio Integrated Behavioral Health Dashboard. At the time of reporting, the most recent data available is from the year 2022. While death rates are not provided for the 2022 data, the most recent Unintentional Drug Overdose Report from the Ohio Department of Health presents a rate of 45.7 deaths from unintentional overdose per 100,000 for Guernsey County in 2023, compared to Ohio's rate of 39 deaths per 100,000.[16]

Deaths From Unintentional Drug Overdose[17]

	Guernsey County Count	Ohio Count
Total drug overdose deaths	17	4,939
Opioid OD deaths(all)	11	4,063
Involving any benzodiazepines	4	316
Involving any form of cocaine	3	1,319
Psychostimulants other than cocaine	4	1,084
Involving heroin	1	83
Involving non-methadone synthetic opioids	10	3,828

In 2023, a total of 84 Naloxone administrations were provided by EMS in Guernsey County.[18]

Community Voices:
Accessing Substance Use and Addiction Resources
Comments from stakeholder interviews

Addiction and mental health

"I think it has been my experience that many people with addiction also have underlying undiagnosed mental health issues, so it runs hand in hand. There are some people that have mental health issues that are addicts because of their mental health."

Stigma

"We're still having discussions in 2024 of people complaining that we Narcan people… so community awareness and community support [is needed]."

"If you live in Columbus, Ohio, or Houston, Texas, you are in an ocean…there's a lot of people there. And so your privacy is often protected. We have HIPAA, and we have all these things. But this is a

very small community, and as soon as somebody walks into somewhere to get addiction services, in this community, it is automatically known who's doing that, because that stigma then is, if you go to get addiction and mental health services and you are in a struggling marriage, that is allowed to be used in court against you, even though you're trying to find help."

Resources lacking in the community

"Out of that total 54,483 trips [by SEAT in 2023], 16,100 of those are for two addiction recovery locations. That's 29% of our transportation. There's no [inpatient] addiction recovery in Cambridge or Guernsey County. So all of those are leaving the county."

"Say [the Sheriff's department] arrives at 02:00 in the morning with somebody in mental health crisis. We get them to the hospital, say they do get pink slipped in, and three days later, there is nowhere to put them. So they'll commit a crime, they go to the jail."

Issues impacting addiction recovery

"There is access. I feel happy with the accessibility, whether it's the Health Department, Cedar Ridge, Guernsey Health Choices, Southeastern Counseling, Hickory Behavioral. But, if you're going to a for profit, you have to have your insurance pretty locked on tight for those services to be paid for. And sometimes your insurance will only pay for a certain amount of sessions. So once you reach that last session, you may not be in a strong or stabilized position that you relapse or you stop your medication or your mental health support groups."

"So you have this inmate that comes out, they are given 72 hours' worth of their medication. But now the doctor has 30 days to get you on medication. Well, that's too late. There has to be, 'I'm transitioning out of jail with these meds, and I'm meeting this doctor, and they are giving me these drugs,' and that does not happen."

Alcohol and Drug Related Motor Vehicle Accidents

The following counts of alcohol and drug related motor vehicle accidents are from 2023.

OVI Crashes and Arrests[19]

	Guernsey County Count
Fatal Crashes (OVI related)	4
Serious injury suspected crash	5
Minor injury suspected crash	11
Injury possible crash	5
OVI Arrests	101

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Between 2019 and 2023 a total of 2,165 live births were recorded for Guernsey County, with 409 recorded for 2022. The infant mortality rate calculated from the five-year period is higher in Guernsey County compared to Ohio. Neither meets the Healthy People 2030 goal of 5.0 per 1,000 live births.[20] A higher percentage of births were pre-term in Guernsey County compared to Ohio overall in 2022.

Infant Mortality and Health Indicators[21]

		Guernsey County		Ohio	
		Count	Rate	Count	Rate
Infant Mortality	2019-2023*	18	8.3	4,566	6.9
	2022	5	**	914	7.1
Birth Indicators (2022)	Low Birth Weight <2500g	36	8.8%	N/A	**
	Pre-term births	55	13.4%	13,886	10.8%

*2023 data is preliminary, rate calculated is subject to change. **Rate is unstable/cannot be calculated.

Availability and affordability of childcare impacts the ability of parents to seek health services, maintain employment, and do things to benefit their own mental health and overall health of their families. The following table shows estimated child care costs for infant center-based care in Guernsey County.

Childcare Costs[22]

	Guernsey County
Median price in 2018 dollars	$7,482
Median price in 2023 dollars (estimated)	$8,806
Price as share of median family income	**13.9%**

In the community focus group with parents, they spoke to general concerns for their children's mental health as they grow, with parents mentioning issues of bullying in school as well as worries that children may inherit mental health disorders present in their families. Parents also spoke about issues that impact the ability of children to get adequate nutrition and physical activity.

Community Voices:
Parents on Meeting Children's Nutrition Needs
Comments from community focus groups

Difficulty avoiding problematic foods, and getting children to eat enough

"It's hard to find stuff without sugar and red dye."

"My son's one and he only has one kidney so he can't have any sugar or any salt. So it's hard to find stuff that has none. I have to make my own spaghetti sauce because of the sugar in that, the red dye in that. And so I think that's hard too."

"So even though they're not supposed to have it, if you don't have a doctor's note, [the school] will give it to them if they ask for it. So that's what I'm running into because my daughter can't have red dye. It messes with her stomach."

"Every day in the drop off line, we check the lunch menu so we can think ahead. What are you going to try? And if they don't like anything, then I know they're not going to eat…"

Community Voices:
Parents on Problems Getting Physical Activity
Comments from community focus groups

Parents' concerns for their children's safety

"Safety. Like when I go take my kids to the park, I'm the hovering mom because I don't trust other people's kids…I'm not enjoying it… But even now I'm like, 'You don't go past there because I don't know what's down there.' That's my issue. But I think it's my anxiety more than anything."

"Cleaner playgrounds. I think the one in Cambridge is nasty, all dirty and there's always trash everywhere. I can't take my two-year-old there. She'll pick up the pop can and try to put her finger in it."

Not enough local activities/events for all ages

"I would like more local events, if there were more local events, like art walks or, just something for kids that's for everyone. Because Early Head Start did it, but it was only for Early Head Start kids. And it's like, okay, but it has to be this time, this day. Well, you know, I worked that day. If there were more evening activities, I think it would be really good."

"I try to hit up all the events but my one-year-old can't do the things that my seven-year-old can."

Parents' lacking time to prioritize physical activity for themselves and their family

"For my physical activity, it's time. I know that even just being local in a small town, we have the ability. And I'll take walks around the block, but for me it's the time with so many kids."

"My [issue] is the motivation. Do I want to go take this nap or do I want to go walk down this big old hill? Let me think. Do I want to strap my baby down, have my mean dog with his muzzle?…what do I want this hour to be? Does he get dinner or do we go on a walk?"

GENERAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Few respondents to the Community Survey gave their overall health the highest rating of excellent (7%), but a majority responded their health was good or very good.

2024 Community Survey: Overall Ratings of Health

Would you say that in general your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

■ Excellent ■ Very good ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

| 7% | 22% | 38% | 29% | 4% |
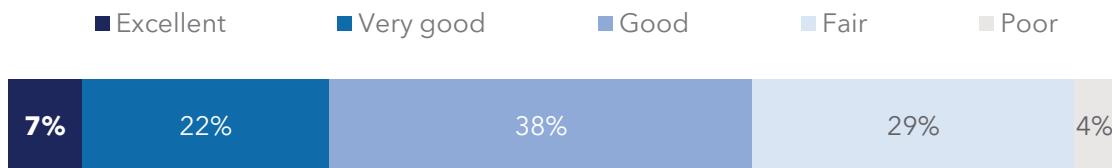
n=358

Respondents to the 2024 Community Survey had a median of 3 poor physical health days in the 30 days prior to the survey, with an average of 7.5 days.

2024 Community Survey: Poor Physical Health Days

Thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for about how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good?

0 days	39%
1 to 10 days	36%
10 to 20 days	11%
Over 20 days	13%
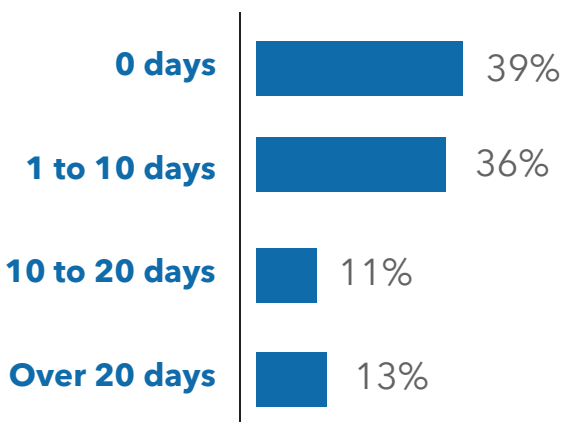
n=322

During community focus groups, older adults mentioned physical health issues like heart problems, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, prostatitis, balance issues, and knee problems as those that affect their population. Young adults with developmental disabilities mentioned many of the same issues, including joint pain, balance issues, or feet problems, as well as heart conditions resulting from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

DEATH, ILLNESS, AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The following tables provide the leading causes of death (overall) and for working age adults (ages 15-64) in Guernsey County and Ohio from the year 2022. Heart diseases and cancers are leading causes of death for each group in both geographies.

Leading Causes of Death[23]

	Guernsey County		Ohio	
	Count	Rate**	Count	Rate**
Total Deaths	**605**	**1560.1**	**138,037**	**1,180.5**
Heart diseases (I00-I09,I11,I13,I20-I51)	121	312.0	30,006	256.6
Cancer (Malignant neoplasms; C00-C97)	108	278.5	24,589	210.3
COVID-19 (U071)	54	139.3	9,329	79.8
Chronic lower respiratory diseases (J40-J47)	53	136.7	6,803	58.2
Accidents (UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES) (V01-X59,Y85-Y86)	30	77.4	9,647	82.5
Diabetes mellitus (E10-E14)	28	72.2	4,263	36.5
Alzheimer's disease (G30)	18	46.4	4,947	42.3
Cerebrovascular diseases (I60-I69)	14	36.1	7,195	61.5
Influenza and pneumonia (J09-J18)	14	36.1	1,904	16.3
Essential (primary) hypertension and hypertensive renal disease (I10,I12,I15)	10	25.8	1,618	13.8
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis (N00-N07,N17-N19,N25-N27)	10	25.8	2,546	21.8
Intentional self-harm (suicide) (*U03,X60-X84,Y87.0)	10	25.8	1,797	15.4
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (K70,K73-K74)	7	18.1	2,006	17.2
Septicemia (A40-A41)	5	12.9	1,981	16.9
Not a leading cause	93	239.8	21,363	182.7

**Crude rates, not age-adjusted

Leading Causes of Death Among Adults ages 15-64[23]

	Guernsey County		Ohio	
	Count	Rate*	Count	Rate*
Total deaths ages 15-64	**148**	**760.4**	**34,010**	**465.2**
Cancer (malignant neoplasms; C00-C97)	28	117.2	6,471	86.6
Heart diseases (I00-I09,I11,I13,I20-I51)	17	71.1	5,653	75.6
Chronic lower respiratory diseases (J40-J47)	6	25.1	1,209	16.2
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (K70,K73-K74)	5	20.9	1,235	16.5
Accidents (UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES) (V01-X59,Y85-Y86)	12	50.2	6,487	86.8
COVID-19 (U071)	12	50.2	1,936	25.9
Not a leading cause	18	75.3	4,141	55.4

*Crude rates, not age-adjusted

Cancer

The following incidence and mortality data for leading types of cancer uses data from the years 2016-2022. Compared to Ohio overall, Guernsey County has a higher incidence and mortality rate for cancer overall, and all types shown below except for prostate cancer.

Cancer Incidence and Mortality[24]

	Guernsey County		Ohio	
	Incidence Rate	Mortality Rate	Incidence Rate	Mortality Rate
Overall	**498.5**	**181.1**	**465.3**	**161.1**
Lung and Bronchus	90.5	58.5	64.7	42.9
Breast	97.9	11.8	129.5	21.0
Colon & Rectum	50.0	16.3	39.1	14.5
Prostate	105.6	18.7	114.1	19.3

Infectious Disease

Guernsey County has a lower rate of people living with HIV compared to Ohio overall, as well as a lower rate of Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis. The County has similar incidence rates for Hepatitis B and C compared to Ohio overall.

Infectious Disease Incidence

	Guernsey County		Ohio	
	Count	Rate*	Count	Rate*
AIDS/HIV in 2023 (persons living with a diagnosis of HIV infection)[25]	39	102.4	25,590	217.1
Diagnosed with HIV in 2023[25]	N/A	*	861	7.3
Hepatitis B (Acute)[26]	0	0.0	74	0.6
Hepatitis B (Total)[26]	5	13.1	1,901	16.1
Hepatitis C (Acute)[27]	1	2.6	113	1.0
Hepatitis C (Total)[27]	35	91.4	10,795	91.6
Chlamydia[28]	117	305.6	54,509	462.7
Gonorrhea[29]	19	49.6	22,987	195.1
Syphillis[30]	9	23.5	5,306	45.0

N/A= no cases were reported. *Rate unstable/unable to be calculated. Rates based on counts less than 10 should be interpreted with caution.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT UTILIZATION

The following data comes from OhioHealth Southeastern Medical Center in 2023.

Top Reasons for Visiting Emergency Department[31]

	Number of Patients	% of ED Patients Admitted 2023
Total Number of ED Patients	**18,300**	**14%**
Total Patients Admitted	**2,552**	
Top 20 Complaints	**Number of Patients**	**% of Total Visits**
Abdominal Complaint - Adult	1877	10.3%
Respiratory Complaint	1661	9.1%
Chest Pain	1306	7.1%
Extremity Complaint - Lower	1025	5.6%
Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea	842	4.6%
Fall Injury	784	4.3%
Skin Complaint	647	3.5%
Extremity Complaint- Upper	629	3.4%
Urogenital Complaint - Female	613	3.3%
Neuro Complaint / Weakness	579	3.2%
Wound/Laceration	504	2.8%
General - Adult	476	2.6%
Back Complaint	446	2.4%
Urogenital Complaint - Male	409	2.2%
ENT Complaint - Adults	345	1.9%
Abdominal Complaint - Ped	303	1.7%
Upper Respiratory Complaint	295	1.6%
Headache	294	1.6%
HEENT Complaint - Ped	285	1.6%
Altered Mental Status	283	1.5%
Mental Health Complaints	**Number of Patients**	**% of Total Visits**
Suicidal/Homicidal	200	1.1%
Overdose	109	0.6%
Psychiatric Complaint	93	0.5%
Anxiety	66	0.4%
Alcohol	34	0.2%
Total Mental Health Complaints	502	2.7%

SUMMARY

The 2024 Guernsey County Community Health Assessment provides a comprehensive overview of the community's health status, illuminating areas of strength as well as areas in which there could be improvement.

Consistent with Public Health Accreditation Board requirements and IRS regulations, the Cambridge-Guernsey County Health Department will use this report to inform the development and implementation of strategies to address these findings. It is intended that a wide range of stakeholders will also use this report for their own planning efforts.

Subsequent planning documents and reports will be shared with community stakeholders and with the public. For example, Appendix A of this report includes a preliminary list of community assets and resources that could possibly be mobilized and leveraged to address the priority health issues identified by this process. This list will be reviewed and (if necessary) revised by the Cambridge-Guernsey County Health Department and its partners after the health department's Community Health Improvement Plan is formulated.

Readers are encouraged to send feedback and comments that can help improve the usefulness of this information when future editions are developed. Questions and comments about the 2024 Guernsey County Community Health Assessment may be directed to:

Kylie Jones, Cambridge-Guernsey County Health Department
740-439-3577 ext. 7252 | kjones@guernseycountyhd.org

Orie Kristel, PhD, Illuminology
614-447-3176 | orie@illuminology.net

References

1 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022

2 Chetty, R., Stepner, M., Abraham, S., Lin, S., Scuderi, B., Turner, N., Bergeron, A. & Cutler, D. (2016). The association between income and life expectancy in the United States, 2001-2014. *Jama*, *315*(16), 1750-1766

3 Feeding America Map the Meal Gap, 2021

4 University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps 2023

5 Ohio Department of Education. Report Portal, 4-year longitudinal graduation rate

6 Ohio Department of Education. School Report Cards, 2022

7 Ohio Department of Education. District Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Data 2022-2023. https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/download

8 PD&R Edge Magazine. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R). Accessed via https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_092214.html

9 Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, Ohio Incident-Based Reporting System 2022

10 Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Healthy People 2030 Objectives: Increase the proportion of people with health insurance – AHS-0

11 State Medical Board of Ohio. Licensed Physician Roster. Updated 2024.

12 eLicense Ohio License Look-Up Dentist Search. Accessed September 2024.

13 Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board Mailing List. Accessed June 2024.

14 Ohio Department of Health. 2022 Suicide Annual Report. Average Age-Adjusted Rate of Suicide Deaths by County of Residence, Ohio, 2020-2022.

15 Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. Victims of Domestic Violence by County, 2023.

16 Ohio Department of Health, 2023 Unintentional Drug Overdose Annual Report

17 State of Ohio Integrated Behavioral Health Dashboard, 2022 data.

18 Ohio Emergency Medical Services, EMS Naloxone Administration by County, 2023. https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/ems.ohio.gov/links/EMSNaloxoneAdminByCounty2023.pdf

19 Ohio State Highway Patrol. Guernsey County OVI Activity Year 2023. https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/statepatrol.ohio.gov/statistics/statdocs/OVI_23/Guernsey_OVIstops23.pdf

20 Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Healthy People 2030 Objectives: Reduce the rate of infant deaths – MICH-02

21 Ohio Department of Health, DataOhio Portal. Birth dataset. Accessed September 2024. https://data.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/data/home

22 U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau: Childcare Prices as a Share of Median Family Income by Age of Children and Care Setting. Data Visualization using National Database of Childcare Prices 2016-2018

23 Ohio Department of Health, DataOhio Portal. Mortality dataset. Accessed September 2024.

24 Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Annual Cancer Report 2023

25 Ohio Department of Health, HIV Surveillance Data Tables, 2023

26 Ohio Department of Health, Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Program Data reported through 8/14/2023. Hepatitis B: Five year Status Report, 2022

27 Ohio Department of Health, Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Program Data reported through 8/14/2023. Hepatitis C: Five Year Status Report, 2022

28 Ohio Department of Health, STD Surveillance Program. Chlamydia: Five Year Report, 2022

29 Ohio Department of Health, STD Surveillance Program. Gonorrhea: Five-Year Report, 2022

30 Ohio Department of Health, STD Surveillance Program. Syphilis: Five-Year Report, 2022

31 OhioHealth Southeastern Medical Center, 2023