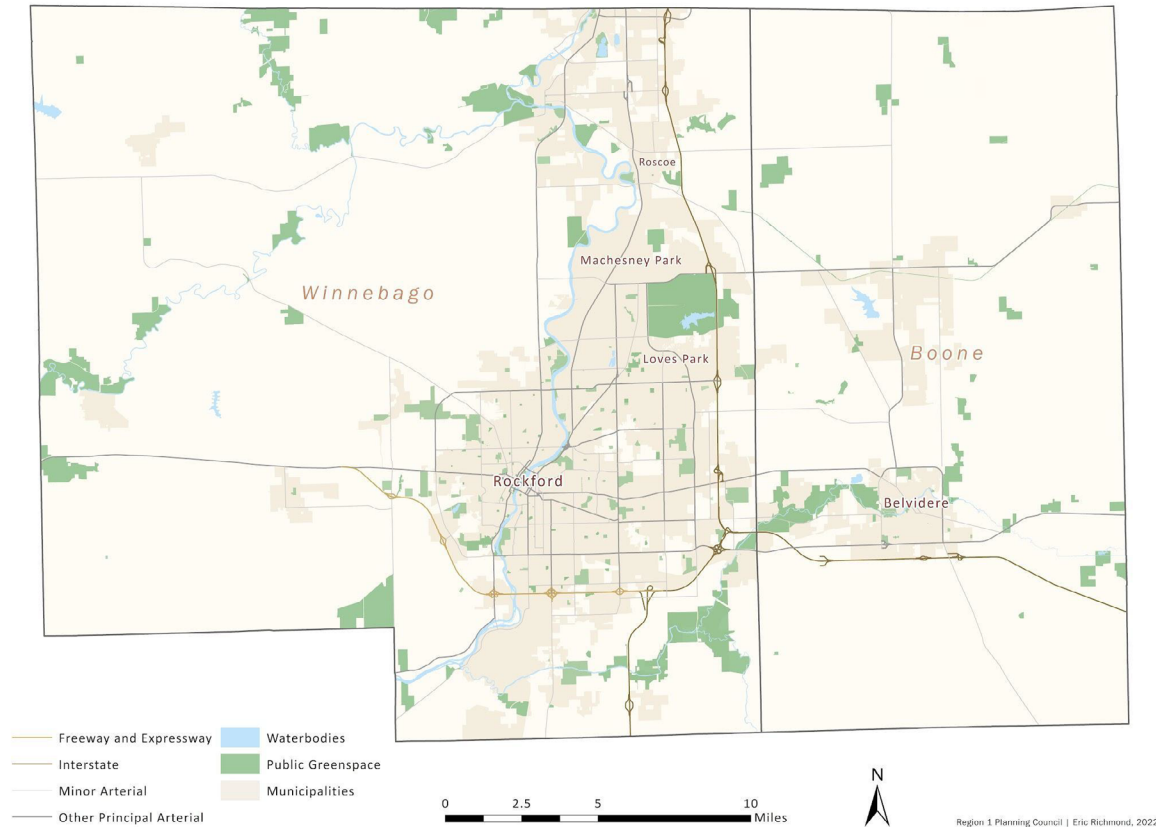


Winnebago & Boone Counties



Community Action Agency of Boone and Winnebago Counties Community Needs Assessment and Plan Comprehensive Update 2022-2025





This report has been prepared by:
Region 1 Planning Council | Community Impact

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Introduction

Community Action Agencies (CAA) were created from an initiative of President Lyndon B Johnson's War on Poverty in 1964. CAAs are a unique Federal program because they require leadership by those most impacted - at least one-third of the CAA Board must be low-income residents.¹ The rest of the Board is made up of local community elected officials, as well as public and private sector stakeholders to make fifteen total board members.

With funding from the Federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), CAAs create and implement local programs to improve quality of life and reduce poverty in the communities they represent. This includes conducting a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years, which provided the data in this document.² The CNA collects information about housing, child care, employment, health/mental health, education, food/nutrition, financial issues, and transportation in detail in order to understand where residents have had success and where they may need additional support from CAA programs. These assessments are the foundation of local Community Action planning efforts and are done in order to understand the root causes of poverty and to identify services and strategies that will make a positive impact for families, individuals, and communities.

Health Equity

Health equity is attained when individuals have equal opportunities to live their healthiest life, regardless of race, place, or circumstance.³ When factors such as class, race, ethnicity, gender, or other social circumstances limit an individual's ability to reach their full health potential, it leads to health inequity. Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are characterized as non-biological factors that affect an individual's health including the conditions in which one is born, lives, learns, works, and plays.⁴ Addressing the uneven distribution of SDOH such as unemployment, transportation, poverty, and racism, is a primary approach in the reduction of health inequities. The importance of SDOH cannot be overlooked, and understanding them is essential in order to take steps in the right direction to improve community and population health.

Social Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health (SDOH) assert that a person's health is determined by more than just doctor visits. The majority of someone's health is determined by their physical environment and the social factors of their daily life. Realizing this is vital to building an accurate understanding of public health. To assist in this understanding, a system was devised to categorize the many things which can affect

someone's health: the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). This report is organized in adherence to the principle that to understand health one must understand every factor that influences it.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services along with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention categorize the multitude of factors which can influence someone's health into five categories: Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Healthcare Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context. These categories should be seen as coequal; each person's health can be affected by any of them and any can be the main cause of poor health.

Methodology

In order to learn about the needs and challenges of Boone and Winnebago County residents, the Community Action Agency developed the Community Services Survey to measure what areas of need were most common among residents. The survey inquired about housing, child care, employment, health/mental health, education, food/nutrition, financial issues, and transportation and asked respondents to list their greatest challenge as an individual or a household.

Materials and Procedure

The Community Services Survey was originally developed as a Microsoft Word document and then transcribed into an online survey tool called Google Forms, a free survey tool provided by Google, to make it more accessible. Google Forms was chosen because it is accessible by the internet, it provides a link to the survey, that link can be shared, and the process of transcribing the survey was simple. Google Forms can also be connected to Google Sheets, where the response data is automatically compiled. At the end of the survey, a submission message was provided to respondents with a link to the contact form on Alchemer, a survey creation platform, so that they could enter their information to qualify for an incentive after completing the Community Services Survey. The survey and contact form were made on separate platforms to separate respondents' answers from their contact information, thus maintaining anonymity.

To encourage residents to complete the survey, incentives were developed. The first 200 people to complete the survey could be eligible to receive a \$10 Amazon gift card, and everyone who completed the survey could be eligible for the sweepstakes to receive one of four \$100 Amazon gift cards. The contact form was not required but was offered if respondents would like to qualify for an incentive. Respondents were asked to enter their first name, last name,

email, and address in the contact form to be eligible for the gift cards. The form also included reCAPTCHA, a service from Google that protects websites from spam and bots.

Respondents

The Community Services Survey was advertised online through social media to residents that live in Winnebago or Boone county since they were the targeted population for the survey. The survey was also available in paper format that could be picked up from the Region 1 Planning council office. The Community Services Survey was available to complete from June 7th to June 27th. Those who did not live in either county were not included in the survey results and analysis. The survey received a total of 462 valid responses with 87.4% living in Winnebago and 12.6% living in Boone. When it came to gender, 73.4% of respondents were female and 23.8% were male. For age the majority (53.0%) of the respondents were between 25 and 44 years old, this majority was the top two age groups. The top age group was (26.8%) 35-44 years old then (26.2%) 25-34 years old. The remaining age groups were (16.5%) 44-54 years old, (15.0%) 55-54 years old, (10.8%) 65 years and older, and (3.2%) 18-24 years old. 76.4% of respondents were white followed by 13.2% black, 3.1%, 2.2% Asian, 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.4% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. 7.4% of respondents identified as Hispanic, Latino/a/x or Spanish origin.

Stakeholder Survey

Stakeholder Demographics

The stakeholders come from many organizations with the most being human and social services (42.9%), housing organizations (19.0%), and local government (14.3%), while the remaining are medical organizations, law enforcement and other organizations (23.8%). Most of the stakeholders serve Boone and/or Winnebago county (94.73%) and the four most common populations they serve are all residents (25%), low-income residents (12.5%), other populations (12.5%), and the homeless (10.41%).

Resident's Challenges and Needs According to Stakeholders

The following list is what the Community Action Agency stakeholders believe to be the issues that Winnebago and Boone residents face:

- Greatest challenge(s) for low-income residents: housing (50%), financial issues (15%), and education (15%).
- Top three health issues for low-income residents: mental health treatment (23.7%), paying for medical

expenses (22.0%) and finding affordable health or dental care (15.3%).

- Top three housing issues for low-income residents: finding affordable housing (31.6%), paying rent/ mortgage/other housing fees (28.1%), and know renter's rights/ responsibilities/ education (12.3%)
- Top three employment issues for low-income residents: finding childcare (27.3%), training/ education for job (21.8%), and obtaining appropriate clothing/equipment (14.5%).
- Top three adult education issues for low-income residents: getting a high school diploma/GED/HSED (27.8%), improving communication/language skills (18.5%), and information about technical school programs or apprenticeships (16.7%).
- Top three childcare/child development issues for low-income residents: finding affordable/quality child care (33.3%), finding child care for evening/ nighttime/weekend, or before/after school (25.5%), and paying for child care (21.6%).
- Top three financial/legal (income management) issues for low-income residents: budgeting and managing money (24.6%), paying unexpected/ emergency expenses (21.1%), and paying bills such as utilities or credit cards (15.8%).
- Top three food and nutrition issues for low-income residents: learning how to shop/cook for healthy eating/dietary restrictions (34.4%), getting food or food assistance (29.1%), and getting meals delivered for senior or disabled individuals (14.5%).
- Top three family support issues for low-income residents: having access to transportation (26.7%), learning how to set goals/plan for family (16.7%), and access to mental health/substance treatment (16.7%).
- Top three crime and safety issues for low-income residents: domestic violence (28.8%), drug activity (28.8%), and gun violence (19.2%).
- Top barriers to service for low-income residents: lack of transportation (25.4%), location of services (19.7%), and time between appointment and receiving services is too long (19.7%).

Challenges for Seniors

According to the respondents, the greatest challenges that seniors/elderly face in Boone and Winnebago counties are health, financial, and social challenges. The most common challenge respondents believed that the elderly face were health challenges such as access to food, personal care items, transportation to the doctor, receiving adequate care while family is away, and assistance with dental and hearing needs. The second most common challenge respondents believed that the elderly face were financial challenges such as living with a fixed income, paying for medication/medical care. The

third most common challenge respondents believed that the elderly faced were social challenges such as loneliness and family support.

Challenges for Teens

Respondents reported that they believed the greatest challenges teens in Boone/Winnebago face are social, health, independence, and safety challenges. Social challenges included, safe relationships, family conflict in LGBTQ, lack of non-sport enrichment activities, having a role model/guidance, and peer pressure exacerbated by social media. Health challenges included access to behavioral health care, lack of access to tools for health living skills, and STI and pregnancy. Independence challenges included preparing for independent living and being adequately prepared for work. Safety challenges were general safety and unstable living situations.

Needed Services

When it came to what services respondents think low-income, teens, or seniors needed in Boone/Winnebago county, many said housing, clothing/personal care, and health services. Housing services respondents suggested were emergency housing, affordable housing, housing for vulnerable people, and help with home repair.

Community Action Agency

77.27% of respondents said that the Community Action Agency is doing an excellent or good job, while the remaining 22.73% said they are doing a fair job. Those that said the Community Action Agency is doing a fair job cited needs for more staff, limited resources/funding, and that the speed of assistance is slow.

Suggestions to the Community Action agency can be broken down into two themes: staffing and services. Those whose suggestions fell under staffing called for an increase in staff, an increase in staff pay, and specific staff to be points of contact to designate clients to appropriate services. As for services, some suggested increasing funding for classes and projects that serve marginalized groups of people (low-income families, LGBTQ), while others suggested an increase in local services such as emergency transport.

Issues Raised by Stakeholders

The largest issues stakeholders said they would like to see addressed was housing, safety, and health. Many responses wanted to acknowledge housing in general, while others mentioned specific housing such as homeless, emergency and domestic violence shelters. Other responses were concerned with general safety, violence, domestic violence,

and teen domestic violence. As for health, stakeholders were concerned with mental health, behavioral health, trauma-informed approaches, and food insecurity.

Demographics

Boone and Winnebago County are home to 333,000 people total, with 53,000 living in Boone County, 280,000 living in Winnebago County, and 147,711 living in Rockford.⁵ Of the 462 valid responses to the survey, 87.4% of respondents reported living in Winnebago and 12.6% reported living in Boone. This represents a higher percentage of Boone County residents than Winnebago County residents in terms of the actual proportions of people living in each county. The following sections will give general demographic data of both counties, the city of Rockford, and how they compare to the State of Illinois and the survey respondents.

Race and Ethnicity

Table 1.1 shows the racial and ethnic makeup of Illinois, Boone County, Winnebago County, and the City of Rockford. 61% of Illinois residents, 73% of Boone county residents, 67% of Winnebago county residents, and 65.1% of Rockford residents identify as White.

Only 2% of Boone County residents identify as Black or African American, while the state of Illinois and Winnebago County are both closer to 14%. Rockford, at 22.3%, has the highest number of residents that identify as Black or African American alone.

All four areas have low populations of American Indian and Alaska Native populations (all just under 1%) and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (all under 0.1%). Boone County has 1% Asian residents, Winnebago has 3%, and Rockford has 3.6%, which are all lower than Illinois at 6%.

Just over 17% of Illinois residents identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino/a/x, while Boone County was 22% and Winnebago County was 13%. Rockford has the highest percent of residents that identify as Hispanic or Latino/a/x at 18.3%. Most of these residents also identified White as their race.⁶

Across the survey, the distribution of people was similar to the makeup of the counties as a whole, with 77.3% white, 13.6% Black/African American, and 2.2% Asian. The number who reported themselves as Hispanic or Latino/a/x was underrepresented in the survey response as compared to the population of this demographic within the two county region.

Table 1.1: 1.1a Race and 1.1b Ethnicity Data.

Note: Total population is different based on how the Census calculates it for each one.

1.1a Race

	Illinois	Boone County, Illinois	Winnebago County, Illinois	City of Rockford
Total	12,812,508	53,448	285,350	147,711
White alone	61.41%	72.53%	66.98%	65.10%
Black or African American alone	14.11%	2.33%	13.72%	22.30%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.75%	0.93%	0.57%	0.10%
Asian alone	5.89%	1.23%	2.82%	3.60%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.04%	0.04%	0.03%	0.00%
Some Other Race alone	8.86%	11.56%	6.68%	9.98%
Population of two or more races:	8.94%	11.38%	9.20%	5.80%

1.1b Ethnicity Data

	Illinois	Boone County, Illinois	Winnebago County, Illinois	City of Rockford
Total	12,770,631	53,537	284,819	147,711
Hispanic or Latino	17.12%	21.80%	12.77%	18.30%

Figure 1.1: Comparative Percent of Race between Boone and Winnebago County and the Survey Respondents.

Survey Responses



County Populations



- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Two+
- White

Age and Sex

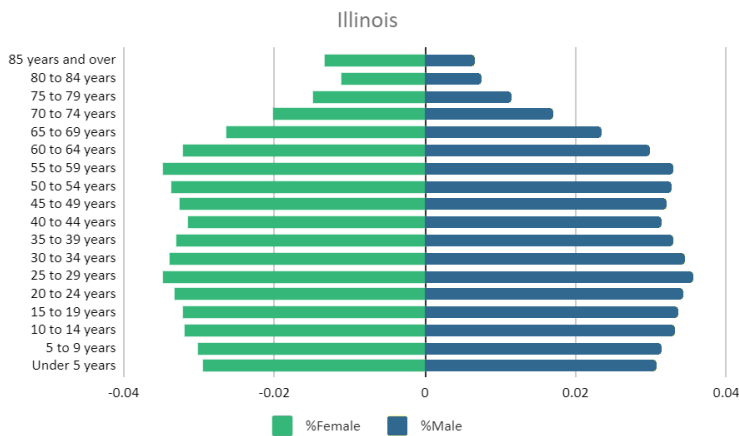
The graphs below show age and sex as a percentage of total population. All four graphs have similar shapes, with two larger age cohorts at around 50-60 years and 20-30 years. All four graphs also show a slightly decreasing total population as the number of people under 18 is less than other age cohorts. Age cohorts are generally split evenly between male and female, although there are slightly more male people than female people under 18, and slightly more female people than male people over age 70.⁷

Of those who answered the survey, the largest percentage of people fell into the 25- 34 and 35- 44 age ranges at 26.2% and 26.8% respectively.

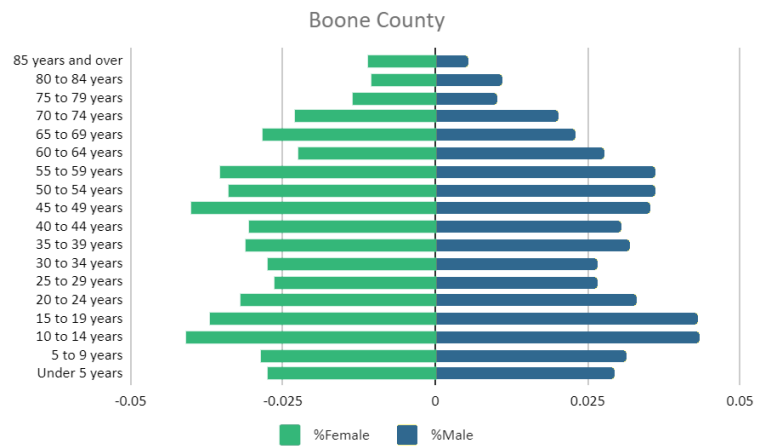
The survey was overwhelmingly answered by people identifying themselves as female at 73.4%. Of the remaining amount, 23.8% identified as male and the rest preferred not to answer or chose an alternative gender option.

Figure 1.2: Population Statistics of Illinois (1.2a), Boone County (1.2 b), Winnebago County (1.2c) & the City of Rockford (1.2d)

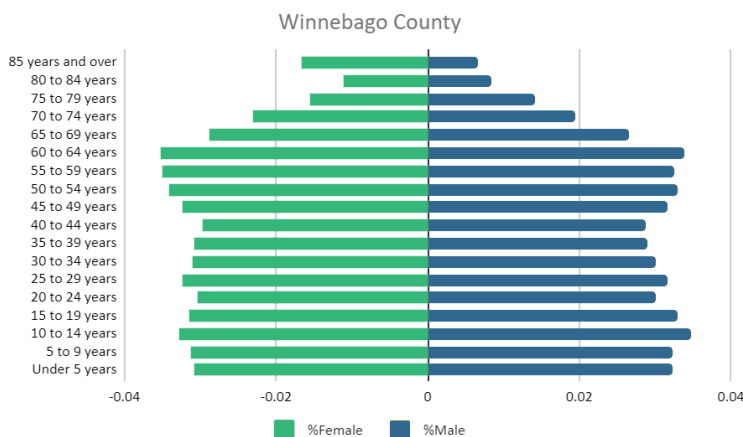
1.2a Population Statistics of Illinois



1.2b Population Statistics of Boone County



1.2c Population Statistics of Winnebago County



1.2d Population Statistics of City of Rockford

Rockford

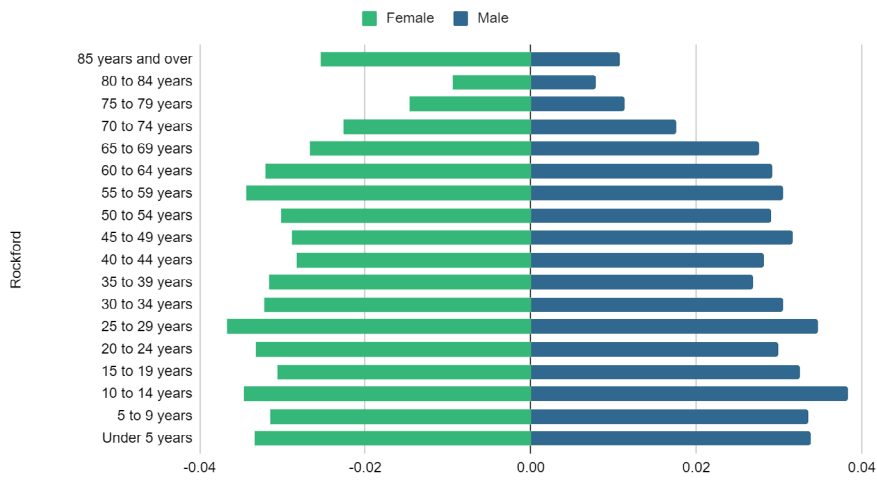


Figure 1.3: Age of Survey Respondents

What is your age?

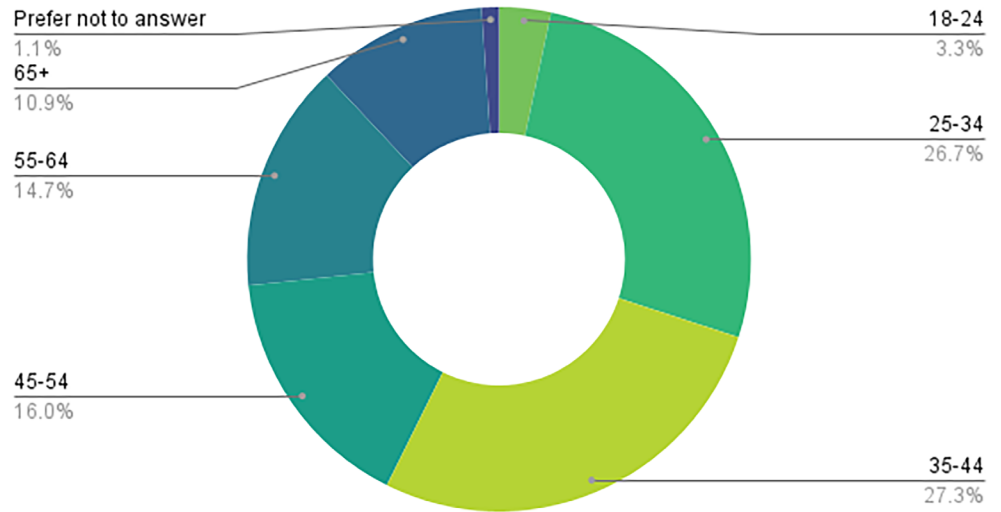


Figure 1.4: Sex of Survey Respondents

Survey Responses



County Populations



Female Other
Prefer Not to Answer Male

Households

Households are identified in the Census by householder and characteristics of people living there. The State of Illinois and Winnebago County have similar ratios of householders by householder, but Boone County has slightly different ratios. Married couples account for 47% of the State of Illinois, 57% of Boone county, 45% of Winnebago county, and 35.5% of Rockford. Male householders with no spouse or partner present accounted for about 15% of Boone county, Winnebago county, and the state of Illinois, but accounted for 22.3% of Rockford. Each region had a similar percentage, (6%), of cohabiting couple households. Female householders with no spouse or partner present were 29% for the State of Illinois and Winnebago County, 21% for Boone County, and 35.5% for Rockford.⁸

Households with people under 18 account for 31% of households in the State of Illinois, 39% of Boone County, 30%

of Winnebago County, and 29.4% of Rockford. Households with people over 65 are similar between the regions; 28% of the State of Illinois, 30% of Boone county, 30% of Winnebago County, and 30.4% of Rockford.⁹

The majority of survey respondents were from households with 2 or 3 people. Average household size was approximately 3 people (this is an estimate due to the incomplete data above 4 people per household).

Disability

Each region has similar percentages when it comes to those aged under 5-17, however, the city of Rockford has higher percentages for those who are over 65 with a disability (40.7%).¹⁰ Rockford may have a higher percentage of those over 65 with a disability due to elder care housing such as nursing homes or retirement homes.

Figure 1.5: Household Types by Main Householder

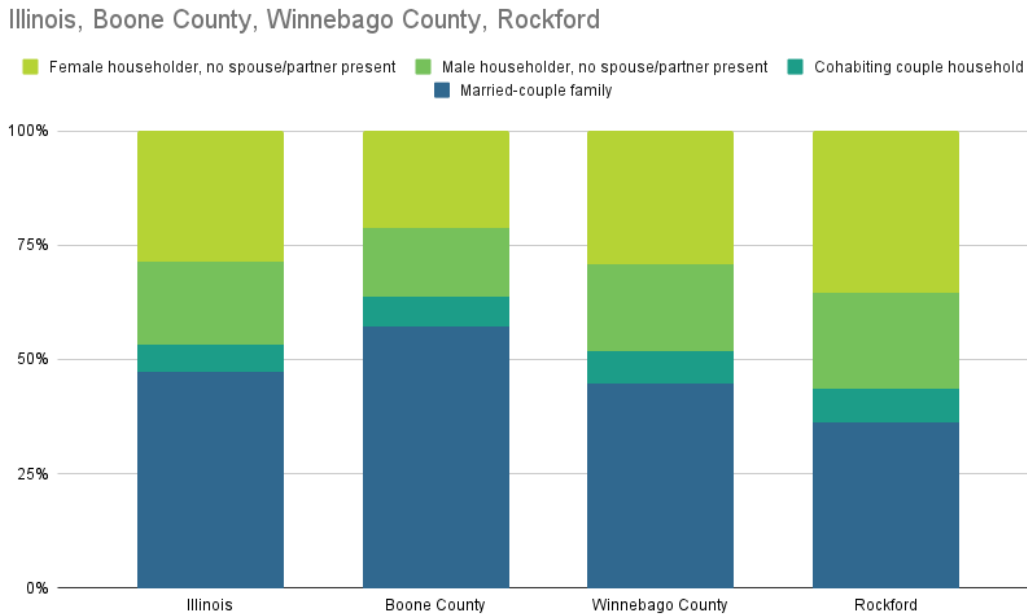


Table 1.2: Household with People under 18, over 65, and Average Household and Family Size

	Illinois	Boone County, Illinois	Winnebago County, Illinois	City of Rockford
Total households	4,846,134	18,571	114,779	62,011
Households with one or more people under 18 years	30.55%	38.50%	30.36%	29.40%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	28.35%	30.28%	29.95%	30.40%
Average household size	2.57	2.86	2.44	2.32
Average family size	3.23	3.31	3.03	3.01

Figure 1.6: Survey Respondents Number of People per Household

How many people live in your household?

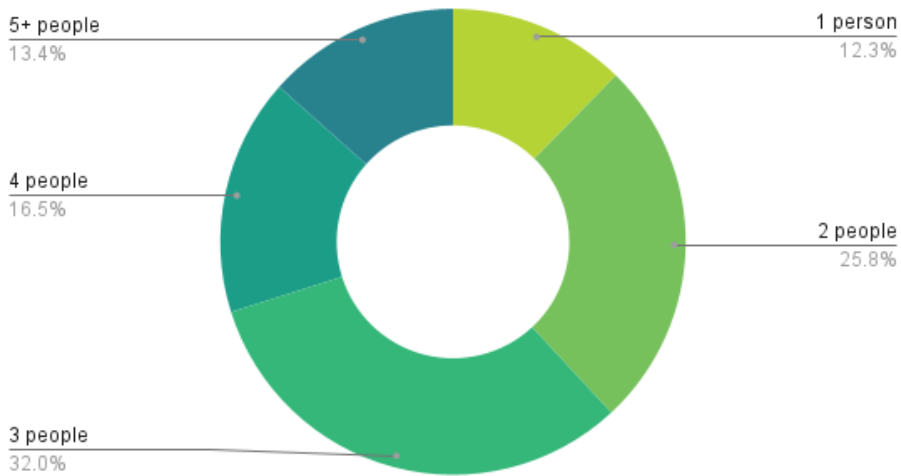


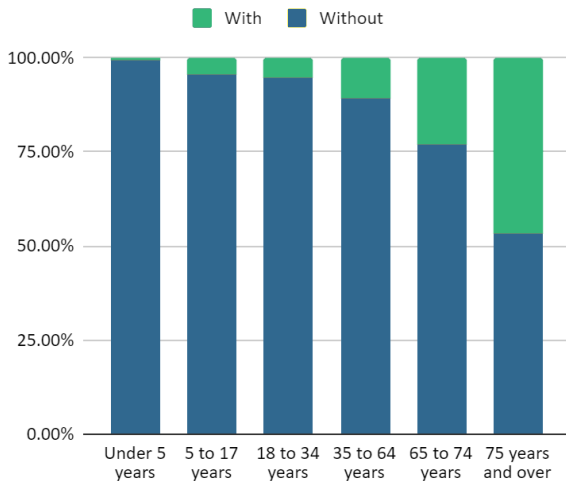
Table 1.3: Disability Statistics for the State of Illinois, Boone County, Winnebago County, and City of Rockford

	Illinois	Boone County	Winnebago County	City of Rockford
Age Under 5-17	0.08%	0.50%	1.06%	0.70%
Over 65	32.80%	29.50%	33.40%	40.70%
All Ages	11.00%	11.50%	13.80%	15.80%

Figure 1.7: Disability percentages by age cohort for the state of Illinois (1.7a), Boone County (1.7b), Winnebago (1.7c), and the City of Rockford (1.7d).

1.7a

Percent of people with and without a disability by age group in the State of Illinois



1.7b

Percent of people with and without a disability by age group in Boone County, IL

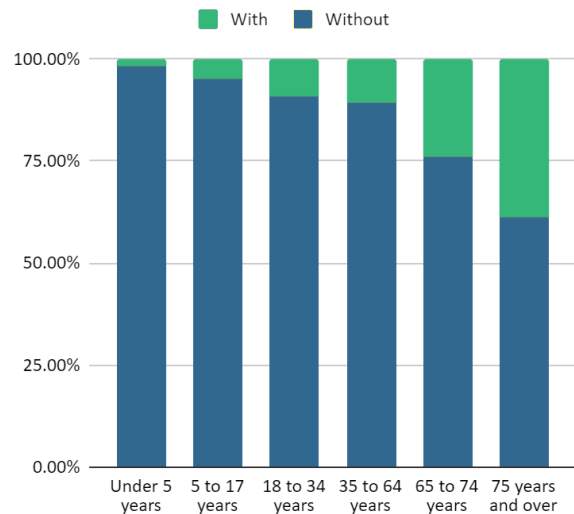
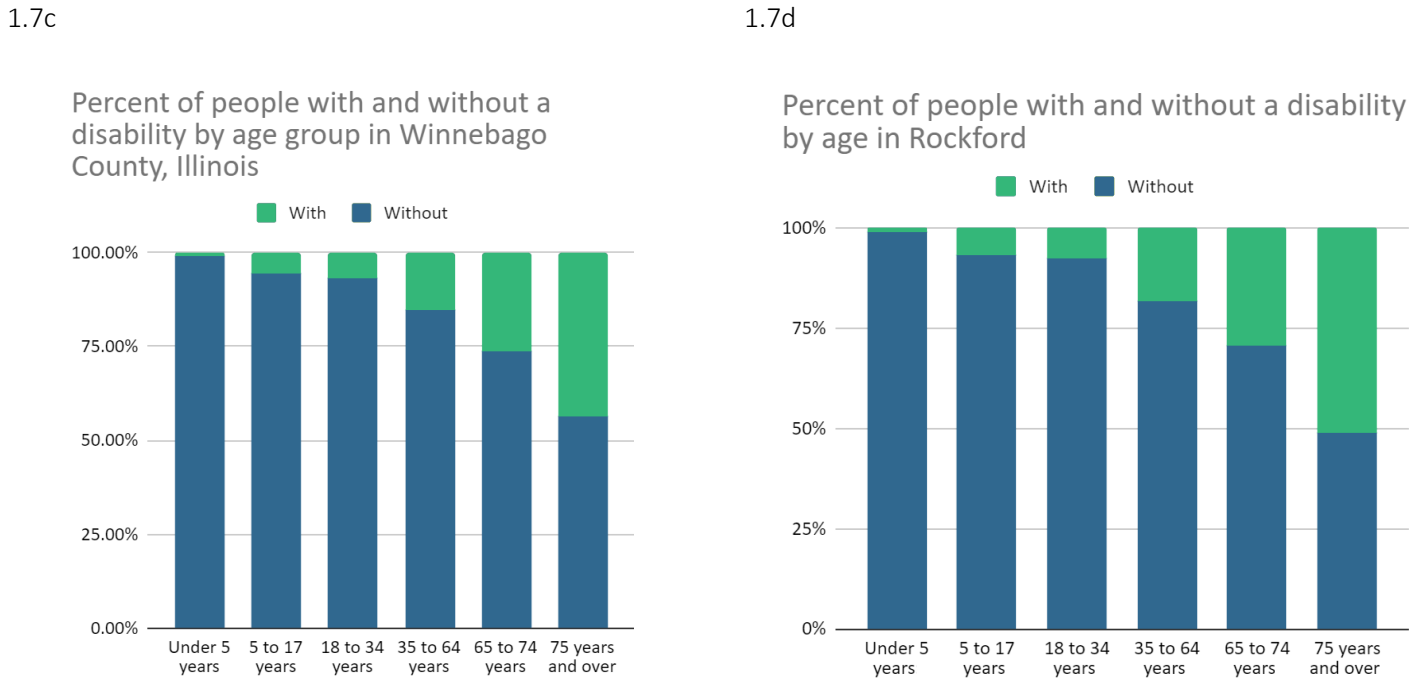


Figure 1.7: Disability percentages by age cohort for the state of Illinois (1.7a), Boone County (1.7b), Winnebago (1.7c), and the City of Rockford (1.7d).



Economic Stability

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, economic stability is one of the five social determinants of health.¹¹ This determinant focuses on how income, cost of living and socioeconomic status have an effect on one’s health. Poverty, employment, food security, and housing stability are all key components.

Poverty in the United States

Economic stability can be negatively affected by poverty, which is a multi-faceted social issue since, in free-market economies, most goods and services must be purchased. According to the United States Census Bureau, “If a family’s total income is less than the family’s threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty”.¹² In 2019, the rate of poverty was 10.5% which increased to 11.4% in 2020, the first increase in poverty after five consecutive annual declines. From 2019 to 2020, 3.3 million more people entered into poverty, resulting in a total of 37.2 million total people in poverty in the United States.¹³

Poverty can have multiple, detrimental effects that vary from person to person. Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to have poorer physical and mental health, do worse in school, live in poor neighborhoods, and engage in deviant or delinquent acts. Children in poverty have a higher probability of experiencing physical abuse or neglect than children who

are not in poverty.¹⁴ Families in poverty are more likely to experience food insecurity and housing insecurity.

Poverty in Rockford and Winnebago County

According to the United State Census, the city of Rockford has a poverty rate of 21.8%, which is higher than both Winnebago County (14.6%) and the state of Illinois (9.8%). The largest racial/ethnic groups that make up the poverty rate in Rockford are White (40.1%) Black (31.7%), and Hispanic (17.2%). Those living in poverty in Winnebago County and the state of Illinois are similar to those living in Rockford with the three largest racial/ethnic groups being White (48.4%) (44.2%), Black (25.3 %) (23.8 %), and Hispanic (17.1 %) (18.1 %). Much of the poverty in Rockford is concentrated on the West side of the city, with many of the neighborhoods having a poverty rate greater than 30%. The three Rockford neighborhoods with the highest percent of poverty are West Rockford (68.3%), St. Paul’s Place (59%), and Mulberry Forest (42.8%).¹⁵

Poverty in Belvidere and Boone County

According to the United States Census, the city of Belvidere’s poverty rate (13.5%) is lower than that of Rockford, but not as low as Boone County’s poverty rate (6.8 %) or the state of Illinois’ (9.8 %). Of those living in poverty in Belvidere, the three largest racial/ethnic groups are White (50.1 %),

Hispanic (34.2 %), and other (13.1 %), which is similar to Boone county with the largest three racial/ethnic groups living in poverty are White (57.7 %), Hispanic (29.2 %), and other (10.5 %). The largest racial/ethnic groups that make up the poverty rate of Belvidere and Boone somewhat differ to those of the state of Illinois, which are White (44.2 %), Black (23.8 %), and Hispanic (18.1 %).¹⁶

Employment in Rockford, Winnebago County, and Illinois

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the unemployment rates in May 2022 for Rockford, Winnebago County, and Illinois were 9.2 %, 8.3 %, and 4.6 %, respectively. Data from the United States Census indicates that the average income for Rockford, Winnebago County, and Illinois are \$44,252; \$59,455; and \$69,187. The most common industries for Rockford and Winnebago County are manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade. For Illinois the most common industries are restaurants and food service, elementary and secondary schools, and

construction.¹⁷ Below is Table 2.1 that was developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to demonstrate what wages an individual needs to make to live in Winnebago County as well as the cost of living.¹⁸

Employment in Belvidere, Boone County, and Illinois

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rates in May 2022 for Belvidere, Boone County, and Illinois were 10.5 %, 8.5 %, and 4.6 %, respectively. Data from the United States Census indicates that the average income for Belvidere, Boone County, and Illinois are \$51,166; \$69,272; and \$69,187. The most common industries for Belvidere and Boone County are manufacturing, retail trade, and healthcare and social assistance. In Illinois, the most common industries are restaurants and food service, elementary and secondary schools, and construction.¹⁹ Below is Table 2.2 that was developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to demonstrate what wages an individual needs to make to live in Boone County and the cost of living.

Table 2.1: Living Wage and Cost of Living for Winnebago County

	1 Adult				2 Adults (1 working)				2 Adults (Both Working)			
	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
Living Wage	\$15.56	\$31.53	\$39.73	\$52.63	\$24.61	\$30.12	\$35.81	\$38.82	\$12.31	\$17.50	\$22.78	\$26.72
Poverty Wage	\$6.19	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$14.92	\$4.19	\$5.28	\$6.37	\$7.46
Minimum Wage	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
	1 Adult				2 Adults (1 working)				2 Adults (Both Working)			
	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
Food	\$3,423	\$5,044	\$7,577	\$10,050	\$6,275	\$7,809	\$10,068	\$12,257	\$6,275	\$7,809	\$10,068	\$12,257
Child Care	\$0	\$8,223	\$16,445	\$24,668	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,223	\$16,445	\$24,668
Medical	\$2,715	\$7,991	\$7,778	\$8,087	\$5,822	\$7,778	\$8,087	\$7,876	\$5,822	\$7,778	\$8,087	\$7,876
Housing	\$6,843	\$10,374	\$10,374	\$14,088	\$7,868	\$10,374	\$10,374	\$14,088	\$7,868	\$10,374	\$10,374	\$14,088
Transportation	\$5,305	\$9,414	\$12,239	\$14,456	\$9,414	\$12,239	\$14,456	\$15,700	\$9,414	\$12,239	\$14,456	\$15,700
Civic	\$2,894	\$4,646	\$5,741	\$7,496	\$4,646	\$5,741	\$7,496	\$5,959	\$4,646	\$5,741	\$7,496	\$5,959
Other	\$4,939	\$7,366	\$6,739	\$9,804	\$7,366	\$6,739	\$9,804	\$9,484	\$7,366	\$6,739	\$9,804	\$9,484
Required annual income after taxes	\$26,242	\$53,182	\$67,015	\$88,773	\$41,515	\$50,803	\$60,410	\$65,486	\$41,515	\$59,026	\$76,855	\$90,154
Annual taxes	\$6,116	\$12,394	\$15,618	\$20,688	\$9,675	\$11,839	\$14,078	\$15,261	\$9,675	\$13,756	\$17,911	\$21,010
Required annual income before taxes	\$32,358	\$65,576	\$82,632	\$109,461	\$51,190	\$62,642	\$74,488	\$80,747	\$51,190	\$72,781	\$94,765	\$111,164

Table 2.2: Living Wage and Cost of Living for Boone County

	1 Adult				2 Adults (1 working)				2 Adults (Both Working)			
	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
Living Wage	\$15.56	\$32.02	\$40.71	\$54.11	\$24.61	\$30.12	\$35.81	\$38.82	\$12.31	\$17.74	\$23.27	\$27.46
Poverty Wage	\$6.19	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$14.92	\$4.19	\$5.28	\$6.37	\$7.46
Minimum Wage	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
	1 Adult				2 Adults (1 working)				2 Adults (Both Working)			
	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
Food	\$3,423	\$5,044	\$7,577	\$10,050	\$6,275	\$7,809	\$10,068	\$12,257	\$6,275	\$7,809	\$10,068	\$12,257
Child Care	\$0	\$9,055	\$18,110	\$27,164	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,055	\$18,110	\$27,164
Medical	\$2,715	\$7,991	\$7,778	\$8,087	\$5,822	\$7,778	\$8,087	\$7,876	\$5,822	\$7,778	\$8,087	\$7,876
Housing	\$6,843	\$10,374	\$10,374	\$14,088	\$7,868	\$10,374	\$10,374	\$14,088	\$7,868	\$10,374	\$10,374	\$14,088
Transportation	\$5,305	\$9,414	\$12,239	\$14,456	\$9,414	\$12,239	\$14,456	\$15,700	\$9,414	\$12,239	\$14,456	\$15,700
Civic	\$2,894	\$4,646	\$5,741	\$7,496	\$4,646	\$5,741	\$7,496	\$5,959	\$4,646	\$5,741	\$7,496	\$5,959
Other	\$4,939	\$7,366	\$6,739	\$9,804	\$7,366	\$6,739	\$9,804	\$9,484	\$7,366	\$6,739	\$9,804	\$9,484
Required annual income after taxes	\$26,242	\$54,014	\$68,680	\$91,269	\$41,515	\$50,803	\$60,410	\$65,486	\$41,515	\$59,858	\$78,520	\$92,650
Annual taxes	\$6,116	\$12,588	\$16,006	\$21,270	\$9,675	\$11,839	\$14,078	\$15,261	\$9,675	\$13,950	\$18,299	\$21,592
Required annual income before taxes	\$32,358	\$66,601	\$84,686	\$112,539	\$51,190	\$62,642	\$74,488	\$80,747	\$51,190	\$73,807	\$96,818	\$114,242

Results

Figure 2.1 shows the difference between males and females for the survey question, “In the past 12 months, did you or someone in your household need help with finding a full-time job?”. 32.1% of males said yes, while only 21.6% of females said yes, a 10.5% difference between the two genders, showing that in the survey sample males needed more assistance to find a full-time job than females. Overall, between these two groups, 24.16% of respondents answered yes to this question.

It could be speculated that males had a more difficult time finding a full-time job than females because females tend to have higher graduation rates than males. For example, according to the United States Census, 33,870 Rockford residents over the age of 25 had bachelor’s degrees, 54% being female and 46% being male.²⁰ Because more females have bachelor degrees than males, they may have more job opportunities available to them, thus they have less difficulty than males finding full-time jobs.

Figure 2.2 shows the difference between White and Black/African Americans for the question, “In the past 12 months, did you or someone in your household need help with finding a full-time job?”. 24.2% of White and 26.2% of Black/African American individuals said yes, with the difference between the two only being 2%. Because the difference is small between White and Black/African American, there is nothing significant to be concluded between this question and race. Overall, between these two groups, 24.51% of respondents answered yes to this question.

Figure 2.3 shows the difference between males and females for the survey question, “In the past 12 months did you or someone in your household have problems with paying bills (e.g., utilities or credit cards?)”. Only 23.9% of males said yes while 35.2% of females said yes, a 11.3% difference between the two genders showing that females had more problems paying bills than males. What is worth noting is that between these two groups, 32.43% said yes to this question.

It could be speculated that females had a more difficult time paying bills than males because they earn less than males. For example, according to the United States Census, in Rockford, males working full-time aged 16 or older earned \$54,323, while females working full-time aged 16 or older earned \$44,220.²¹ Since females in Rockford make less than males, they may have experienced more difficulty paying bills.

Figure 2.4 shows the difference between whites and blacks/African Americans for the question, “In the past 12 months did you or someone in your household have problems with paying bills (e.g., utilities or credit cards?)”. 33.3% of whites said yes while 29.5% of blacks/African Americans said yes, a 3.8% difference. Because the difference is small between whites and blacks/African Americans, there is nothing significant to be concluded between this question and race. What is worth noting is that between these two groups, 32.76% said yes to this question.

Figure 2.1: Finding a Full-Time Job by Gender

In the past 12 months did you or someone in your household need help with finding a full-time job?

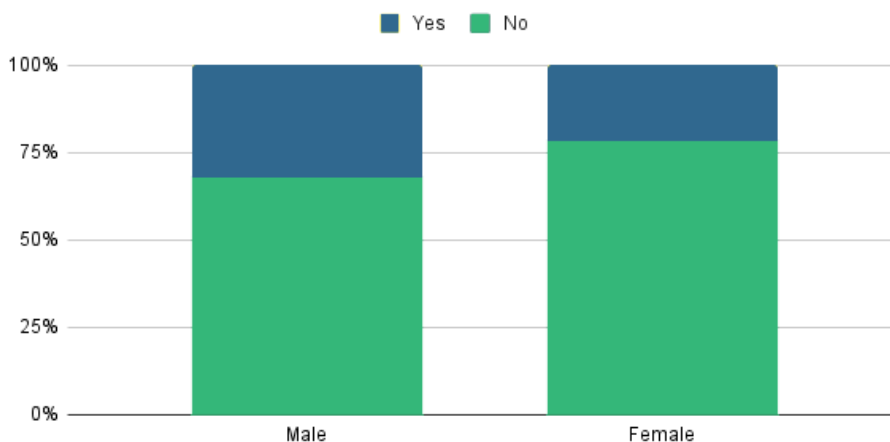


Figure 2.2: Finding a Full-Time Job by Race

In the past 12 months, did you or someone in your household need help with finding a full-time job?

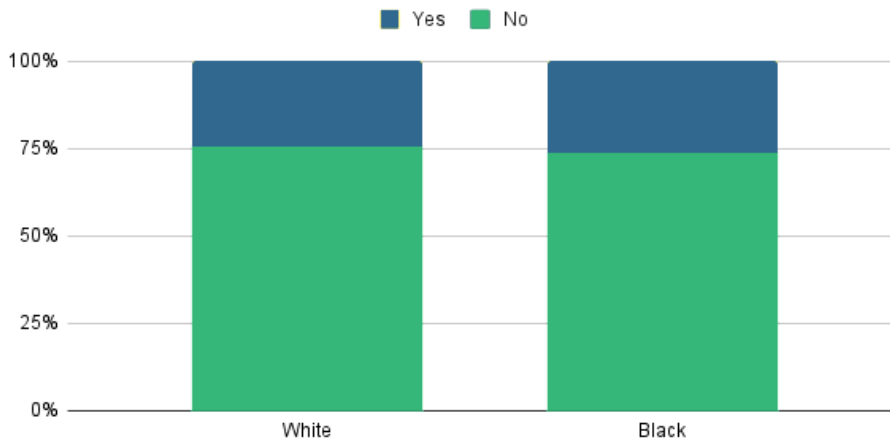


Figure 2.3: Paying Bills by Gender

In the past 12 months, did you or someone in your household have problems with paying bills (e.g., utilities or credit cards)?

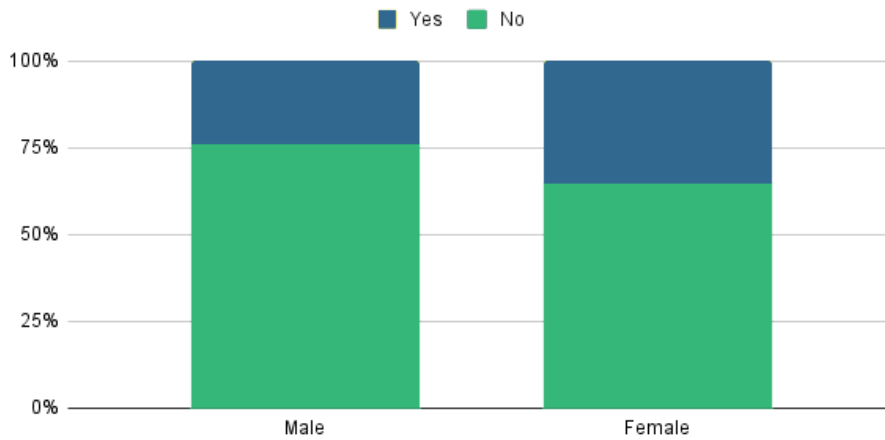
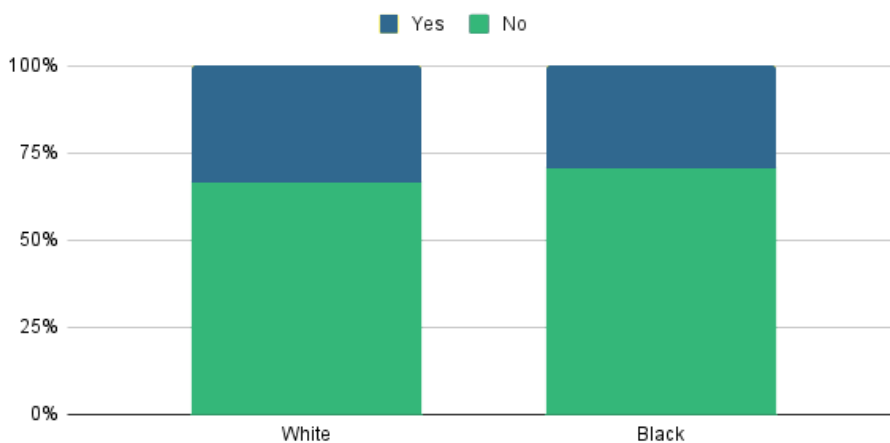


Figure 2.4: Paying Bills by Race

In the past 12 months, did you or someone in your household have problems with paying bills (e.g., utilities or credit cards)?



Education Access and Quality

Education continues to be a primary contributing factor for living a fulfilling life. According to Tulane University, education is classified as a social determinant of health for factors including an increase in the likelihood that a person will access healthcare, find high-quality employment, live in a safe environment, and overall correlates to more positive health outcomes.²² Education is an important factor for determining success; however, opportunities to receive a quality education are not distributed equally. The social environment an individual resides in can determine their educational experience due to zoning, property tax funding, and transportation barriers. Additionally, systemic racism continues to establish itself as a barrier for thousands of students across the country, as well as in Winnebago and Boone counties. Additionally, the rate of individuals within Boone (13.2%) and Winnebago (12.6%) counties and the City of Rockford (16.1%) without a high school diploma or GED equivalent has surpassed the national average of 12.6% and Illinois state average of 11.5%.

Education Inequalities

Inequality within the educational system can be tied to multiple influences such as school zoning, systemic racism, and disproportionate funding opportunities. The current system for funding public education through property taxes continues to reveal disproportionalities between schools. As public schools often rely on property taxes as a main source of funding, this creates large gaps based on geographical regions within communities. As reported by American University, affluent neighborhoods receive higher amounts of funding for public education for the school building, textbooks, staff salaries and more due to the higher property taxes in those neighborhoods.²³ The current system for funding highlights deep, systemic barriers to receiving high-quality education. Furthermore, Education Trust's analysis found that Chicago suburb school districts outspent Chicago students by more than \$10,000 per student.²⁴ The benefits of increased funding extend far beyond what was previously thought. Based on information from the Illinois Report Card²⁵ from the 2020-2021 school year, Rockford Public School District 205 spent an average of \$13,000 per student. Research from Northwestern economist C. Kirabo Jackson found that when school funding was increased by as little as 12%, graduation rates skyrocketed, test scores improved and salary wages increased by 7% for students later in life.²⁶

The Rockford Public School District 205 (RPS 205) graduation rate is 64.4%. Comparing this to the state graduation rate of 86.8%, the RPS 205 graduation rate is significantly lower. The graduation rates of the public Rockford high schools are as follows: Auburn (57%), East (62%), Guilford (74%),

and Jefferson (63%).²⁷ Looking at the locations of the public schools, it can be seen that the schools with more students living in poverty have lower graduation rates. Figure 3.2 identifies the high school attendance areas in Rockford between Auburn, East, Guildford and Jefferson high schools. Comparing the attendance areas to Figure 3.1 identifies the lowest percentage of residents below the poverty line to high school attendance. By doing so, Auburn High School's zone is shown to have the highest number of students living below the poverty line, however Jefferson High School's zone is also prominent with regions where 64-100% of students are living below the poverty line.

There are many factors (systemic or individual) that could influence whether or not a student graduates from high school. According to Factors Influencing High School Graduation, Sitter outlines five categories that influence a student's likelihood to graduate from high school: Economic Factors and High School Graduation; the Importance of Ninth Grade on High School Graduation; the Attendance Factor and Student Engagement with School; Course Failure Factor as an Indicator of High School Graduation; and Demographic Data.²⁸

Additionally, Table 3.1 from the United States Census Bureau highlights the earning potential for students receiving higher levels of education based on national data.²⁹ Educational attainment is directly correlated with higher earnings, as evidenced by Table 3.1. In Winnebago County and City of Rockford, income is double for individuals with some college or an associates degree and triple for those with a bachelor's degree as compared to individuals who have less than a high school graduate equivalency. The differences are slightly less dramatic in Boone County, but still significant with bachelor's degree graduates earning nearly double compared to people without a high school diploma or equivalency. However, continuing education after high school is not always feasible, especially for many students living below the poverty line. According to the American Psychological Association³⁰, more than one-third of students currently enrolled in college lack stable housing and food security. For many families and students already struggling, attending college rather than joining the workforce is simply unrealistic.

Figure 3.1: Rockford School District 205 with Poverty Overlay

Rockford School District 205

Percentage of Residents per Census Block Group Below the Poverty Line

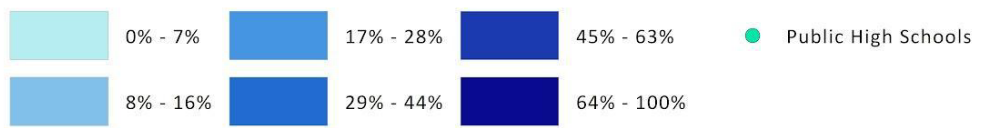
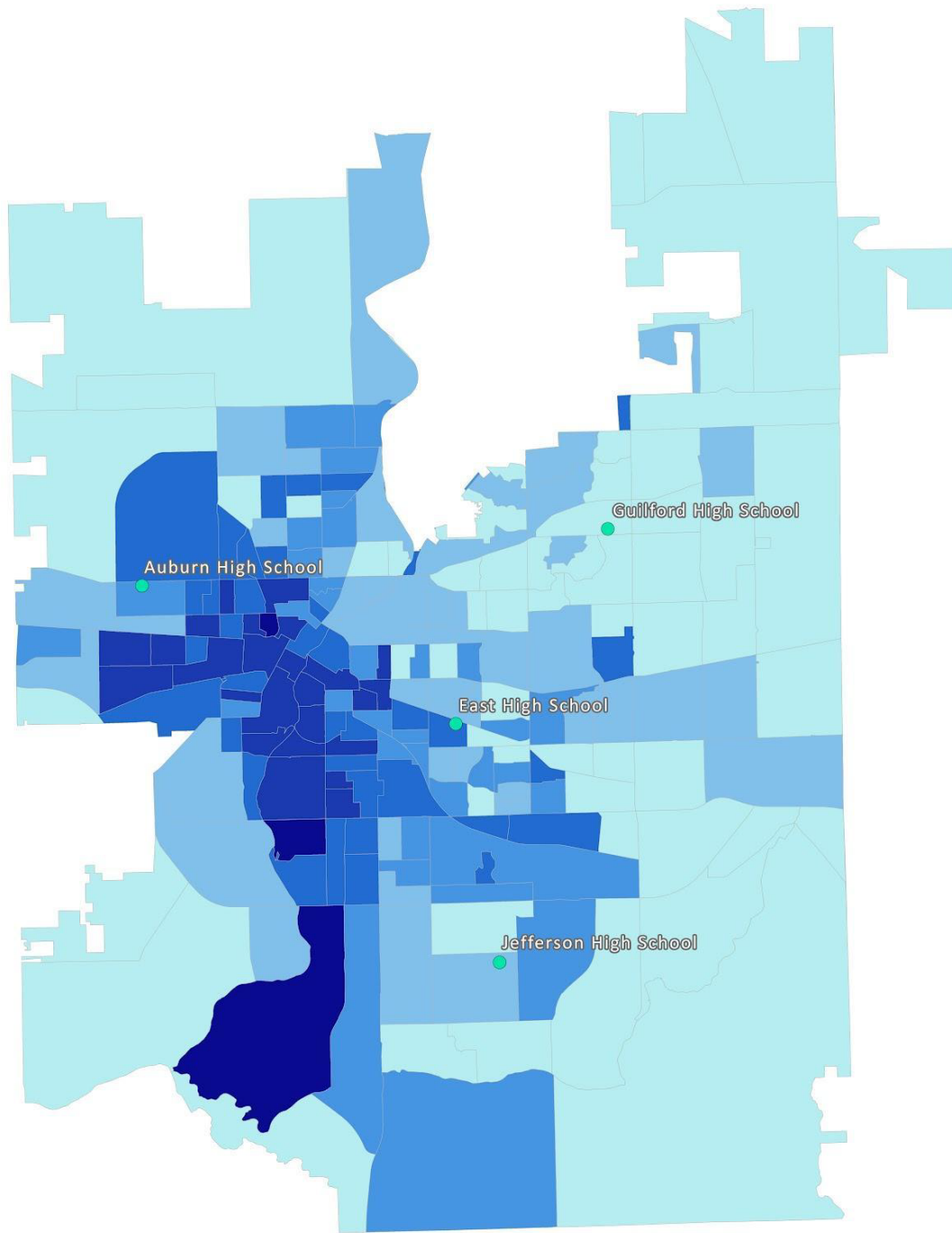


Figure 3.2: RPS 205 High School Zoning Map³¹

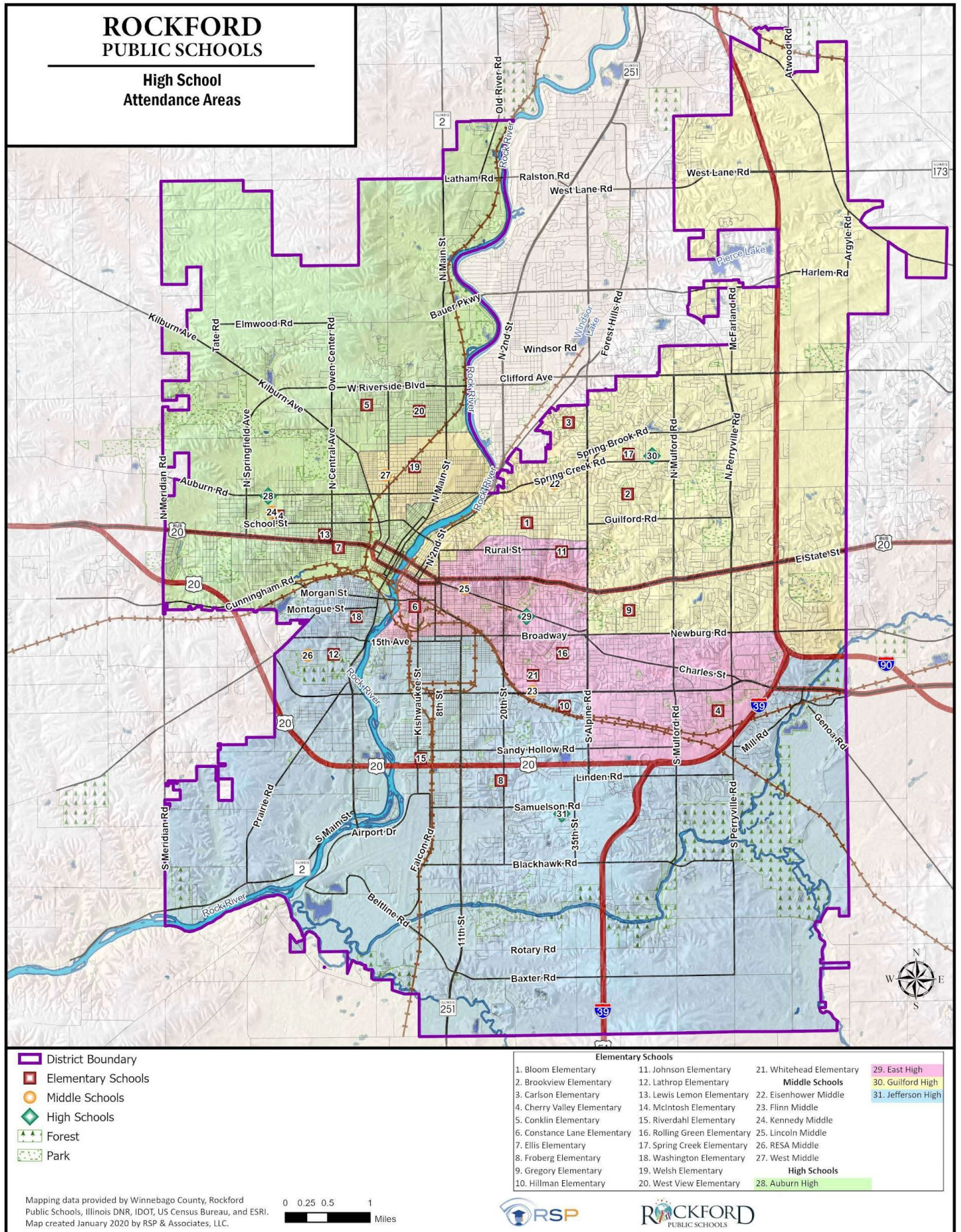


Table 3.1: Educational Attainment versus Median Earnings Winnebago County, Boone County and Rockford City

Winnebago County		
Educational Attainment	Female	Male
Less than high school graduate	\$15,431	\$28,075
High school graduate	\$23,321	\$37,636
Some college or associate's degree	\$29,925	\$48,351
Bachelor's degree	\$46,703	\$64,506
Graduate or professional degree	\$63,823	\$77,149

Boone County		
Educational Attainment	Female	Male
Less than high school graduate	\$26,023	\$28,075
High school graduate	\$24,500	\$37,636
Some college or associate's degree	\$27,574	\$48,351
Bachelor's degree	\$45,678	\$64,506
Graduate or professional degree	\$68,313	\$77,149

City of Rockford		
Educational Attainment	Female	Male
Less than high school graduate	\$14,770	\$26,291
High school graduate	\$21,359	\$30,362
Some college or associate's degree	\$27,098	\$39,426
Bachelor's degree	\$45,422	\$53,006
Graduate or professional degree	\$57,429	\$72,404

Special Population Interventions

Investing in youth is an important facet of every society, especially within the educational system. Students with disabilities face additional challenges to learning and are often in need of additional resources and accommodations to succeed in school. In addition to the school-based resources that each district provides its students living with disability, The Winnebago County Special Education Cooperative provides the following services for students with disabilities: psychological services, social work services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, hearing impaired services, vision impaired services, speech/language therapy, audiology, orientation and mobility services, and technical assistance.³²

Early intervention supports babies and their families when developmental delays appear. As reported by The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), “the connections in a baby’s brain are most adaptable in the first three years of life. These connections, also called neural circuits, are the foundation for learning behavior and health. Over time, these connections are harder to change. Early intervention services can change a child’s developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.”³³ The skills children learn during this time last a lifetime and set a foundation for education, social and emotional wellbeing and more. More than one million neural connections are developed every second in this age range, exacerbating the need for nurturing, healthy relationships, and good health. However, many children born into poverty or other disadvantageous conditions can be thrust onto a shaky foundation. Gaps in education and achievement can begin to appear as young as six months of age. The need for early intervention and identifying gaps or delays in development at an early age shows the most positive impact within research. Early childhood education was identified as a community-wide issue that stakeholders would like to see addressed in both Boone and Winnebago counties.

Healthcare Access and Quality

Receiving needed health care services is an important part of health. There are many barriers to receiving healthcare like transportation, lack of health insurance, being unable to afford services, etc. Increasing health care coverage and focusing on preventive care are two ways to increase the health of individuals in communities. Improving communication between healthcare providers and services is an important part of ensuring people are getting the care they need. Healthcare access and quality includes considerations about adolescents, children, people with disabilities, cancer, drug and alcohol use, family planning, childbirth and pregnancy,

STIs/STDs, oral health care, medications, communication, telehealth, insurance, and much more.

Medical Care

There are nine federally qualified health centers (FQHC) in Winnebago County and two in Boone County. A FQHC is defined as a community-based health care provider that receives funds from the Health Resources & Services Administration Health Center Program to provide primary care in underserved areas. These centers must provide care on a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay and be governed by a board that includes patients.³⁴

Doctor Ratios

At a rate of 167 health care providers per 100,000 people, Boone and Winnebago County both fall below State (at 230) and National (at 202.80) rates. Within Rockford, three service areas (Low-income Belvidere, Low-income Rockford West Side, and Mendota) are designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (Primary Care HPSA). Access to doctors is important to consider because a shortage of professionals can contribute to health status issues. Figure 4.1 depicts the number of doctors in Boone and Winnebago County as compared to the state.

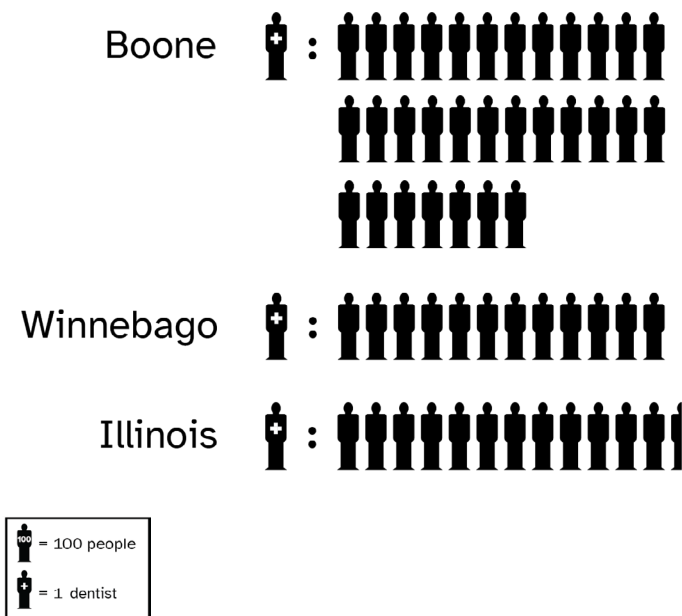
Figure 4.1: Number of Doctors per 100 People



Oral Care

In 2004, 12.3% of Boone County’s population said they could not afford to see a dentist and in 2014, 21.3% claimed to have never seen a dentist for unknown reasons.³⁵ In 2020, nearly 60% of Winnebago County residents reported seeing a dentist in the past year.³⁶ In Figure 4.2, a dentist is counted as someone who has a D.D.S. or D.M.D. and is licensed by the state to practice. Boone County is well above the state average for the number of dentists, but Winnebago County remains slightly below.

Figure 4.2: Number of Dentists per 100 People



Primary Care

Primary care is important as it helps individuals navigate good health; this is done by preventing diseases, identifying risk factors, managing chronic diseases, and creating a better quality of life. A long-term relationship with a primary care provider (PCP) keeps you healthier and lowers medical costs.³⁷

In 2015-2019, 81.3% of Boone County residents reported having a personal doctor.³⁸ Within the past year, only 71% of

Boone County residents reported having a routine checkup. In Winnebago County, 82.0% of residents reported having a personal doctor and 63.9% reported having a routine checkup in the past year.³⁹

Preventative Care and Chronic Diseases

A chronic disease is defined by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics as lasting three or more months. Many chronic diseases can be prevented or delayed through healthier choices like diet, drug and alcohol use, and exercise.

Preventative care reduces the risk for disabilities, diseases, and even death. Child and adult routine services such as dental check-ups, screenings, counseling and vaccinations are important in avoiding or delaying illnesses, diseases, or other health outcomes. Only 39.6% of Winnebago County and 40.9% of Boone County residents reported having no chronic disease.⁴⁰ The most prevalent chronic conditions and diseases in Winnebago County were shown to be high blood pressure, high cholesterol, arthritis, and obesity.⁴¹ In Boone County, the most prevalent chronic conditions are obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.⁴²

The rates of asthma, COPD, and depressive disorders are higher in Winnebago County than in the state of Illinois. In terms of cancer, lung, breast, prostate and colon cancers are higher in Winnebago County than Boone County and the state of Illinois.

Table 4.1: Chronic Illnesses Rate

	Boone	Winnebago	Illinois
Asthma	6.50%	12.70%	9.10%
COPD	8.50%	7.10%	5.80%
Diabetes	10.20%	10.60%	N/A
Arthritis	26.70%	26.00%	25.10%
Depressive Disorder	14.80%	18.70%	16.70%
Kidney Disease	3.00%	3.80%	2.60%
Agenia or Coronary Artery Disease	3.80%	6.40%	3.60%
Heart Attack/ Myocardial Infarction	3.50%	4.10%	3.80%
Stroke	1.70%	4.00%	2.90%
Adult Obesity	30.10%	28.90%	N/A

Emergency Care

Emergency care is an important component of health as it reduces the impacts of severe trauma, infections, and other health conditions. From the National Federation for Emergency Medicine, “Over half the deaths in low and middle-income countries could be avoided by effective immediate interventions on scene, organized and safe transport to a hospital with an emergency care unit; followed by a skilled assessment, stabilization, and diagnosis.”⁴³ However, due to complex issues in the medical system in America, many emergency room visits are deemed unnecessary as they are not considered an emergency.

Unnecessary Emergency Room Visits

Unnecessary emergency room visits burden the healthcare system as they are costly and consume resources that other individuals with more acute needs may need. Emergency room (ER) visits are deemed unnecessary due to non-emergent, treatable, or avoidable conditions. With proper primary care, these visits can be avoided. In 2009, for every 100 ER visits in Winnebago County, 50.8 of them were deemed unnecessary. In Boone County for the same time, 49.2 visits of 100 were identified as unnecessary.⁴⁴

Barriers to Care

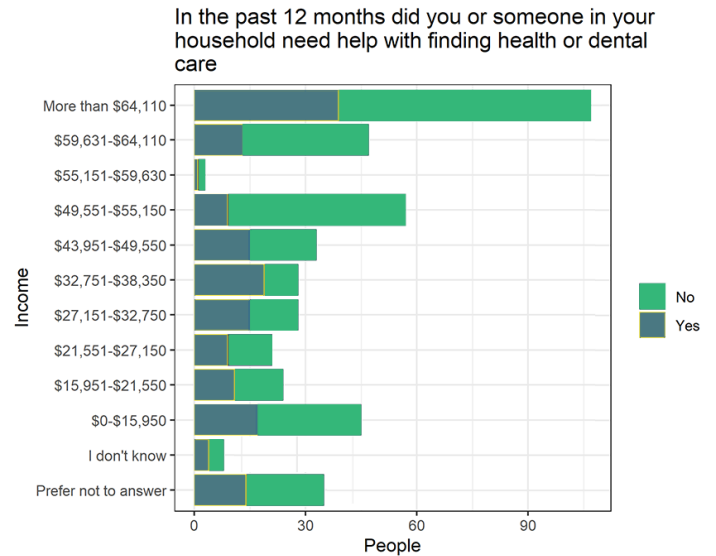
There are many different barriers that individuals face to access quality health care. For some people, a lack of insurance and cost of healthcare may prevent them from seeking out healthcare. The location of healthcare providers or health clinics or the lack of, and transportation to these providers are also barriers from receiving care.

Health Insurance

Lack of health insurance is a main reason that people are unable to access or receive health care. Being uninsured leads to less access to recommended care, poorer quality of care, and worse health outcomes.⁴⁵ The percent of the population that is uninsured in Boone County is 6.31% and 6.55% in Winnebago County. Both of these numbers are lower than the state percentage of uninsured at 7.34%.⁴⁶ In Boone County, 11.5% of the population is on Medicare, and 11.5% are on Medicaid. 16.5% of the Winnebago population is on Medicare, while 19.9% are on Medicaid.

Figure 4.3 shows survey respondents needing help finding affordable health or dental insurance. 35.28% of respondents reported needing assistance finding affordable health insurance; this can be seen across all income levels of survey respondents.

Figure 4.3: Survey Respondents Needing Affordable Health or Dental Insurance

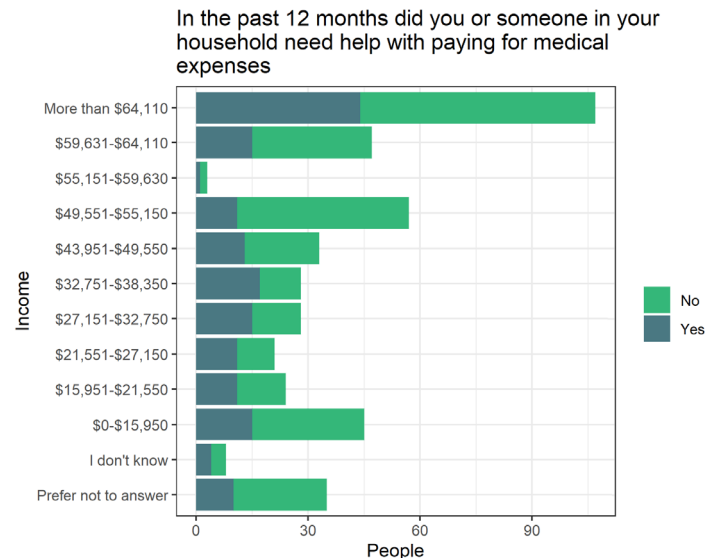


Cost of Care

Between 2015-2019, 11.1% of Boone County residents reported that they were unable to visit the doctor due to cost. Additionally, 12.9% of Boone County residents reported they could not fill a prescription due to the cost. Winnebago County residents reported that 8.6% of them were unable to visit the doctor due to cost and 9.0% were unable to fill a prescription due to cost.⁴⁷

According to Figure 4.4, across all income levels, survey respondents reported needing help paying for medical expenses. This indicates that cost of care remains a barrier for the Boone and Winnebago County community in receiving healthcare.

Figure 4.4: Survey Respondents Who Needed Help Paying for Medical Expenses



Geographic Location

Boone County is about 20.0% rural, while Winnebago County is less than 8.0%. Not only are there less doctors in rural areas, but also access to hospitals and specialty clinics is difficult. The Social Vulnerability Index uses U.S. Census data to determine the relative social vulnerability of every census tract. Social vulnerability refers to the potential negative effects on communities caused by external stresses on human health. According to CDC's 2018 Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), the overall score for Winnebago County was 0.7204, indicating a moderate to high level of vulnerability, and 0.3946 for Boone County, indicating a low to moderate level of vulnerability.⁴⁸

Transportation

Understanding the relationship between transportation barriers and health is important in addressing health in the most vulnerable. Transportation barriers lead to rescheduled or missed appointments, delayed care, and missed or delayed medication use. These consequences may lead to poorer management of chronic illness and thus poorer health outcomes.⁴⁹ In 2017, 4.3% of households had no access to a motor vehicle, which is much lower than Winnebago County's rate of 8.3%. Both of these rates are lower than the state rate of 10.78% and the national rate of 8.57%.⁵⁰ Although Boone County does have a bus service, it is considered inconvenient to many in the community due to the fact that it requires a 24 notice for pickup and there is no Spanish language option.⁵¹ In the IPLAN 2023 conducted by the Winnebago County Health Department, a broad theme that emerged in the transportation category was that individuals in Winnebago County found there was limited access to needed services due to limited public transportation.⁵²

Cultural Competency

Cultural competence in healthcare settings means delivering effective, quality care to patients with diverse beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors. While it refers to meeting the needs of people from different ethnic and racial groups, it also refers to meeting the needs of members of the LGBTQ community and individuals with disabilities. Including a diverse team of healthcare providers that are representative of the population served can improve cultural competency. In addition, language accessibility is also an important factor. Providing translation services in healthcare settings prevents language barriers from impacting the quality of care a patient receives. As a result, this will also improve health literacy, which is linked to overall better health outcomes.

Internet Access

Telehealth in urban and rural communities has been shown

to be an effective approach in improving healthcare access. Additionally, many healthcare providers rely on online systems to schedule appointments, such as vaccination appointments. However, lack of access to wi-fi is a major barrier for many, preventing them from utilizing these services. Nationally, 22.5% of U.S. households do not have home internet. In Illinois, approximately 23% of households are without internet connection.⁵³ Research has shown that areas with limited broadband access also had higher rates of chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes, resulting in "a double burden where those with the lowest connectivity have the highest need."⁵⁴

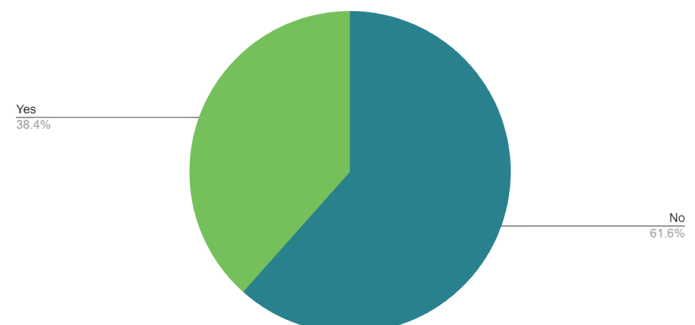
Mental Health

Mental health is an important component of overall health. Untreated mental illnesses contribute to chronic health conditions and poorer physical health. More than 50% of U.S. citizens will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetimes. Additionally, 1 in 25 Americans live with a serious mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression).⁵⁵ There is no single cause for mental illness, but risk factors include adverse life experiences, biological factors, substance use, isolation, or other chronic illnesses.

Mental health can have many barriers to care such as stigma, cost, availability, lack of education, etc. 88% of Winnebago County reports there being a stigma of mental illness in the community.⁵⁶ Many people may push off seeking mental health treatment until they are in a time of crisis. This is significant as many individuals and families will need mental health treatment and it is important to have access to correct information. As seen in Figure 4.5, 38.4% of survey respondents reported they or someone in their household needed help getting mental health treatment.

Figure 4.5: Survey Respondents Needing Mental Health Treatment

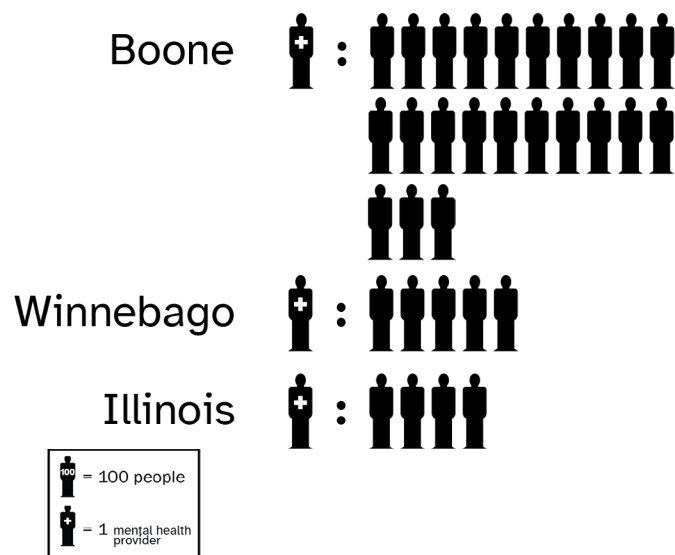
In the past 12 months, did you or someone in your household need help getting mental health treatment including treatment for stress, depression, or anxiety?



In Winnebago County, only 52% of people reported that they knew how to access treatment for a behavioral health disorder. 44% of people reported seeking mental health, substance, or disability services and finding help, while 14% reported being unable to find help in Winnebago County.⁵⁷ The top three mental health diagnoses in Boone are depression, bipolar disorder, and neurodevelopmental disorders.⁵⁸

Figure 4.6 counts mental health providers as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, and counselors. As depicted by Figure 4.6, it can be seen that there are more mental health providers in Boone and Winnebago County as compared to the state of Illinois.

Figure 4.6: Number of Mental Health Providers per 100 People



Substance Use and Abuse

Substance usage can contribute to other mental, physical, or chronic health conditions. Long-term health risks of excessive drinking include high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, cancer, weakened immune systems, memory problems, depression and anxiety, and more.⁵⁹ People with addiction are often likely to have one or more associated health issues. 9.96% of survey respondents reported they or someone in their household needed help getting drug or alcohol treatment.

In 2014, there were 280 drug-related emergency room (ER) visits in Winnebago, 18 in Boone, and 7,913 visits throughout Illinois.⁶⁰ In 2018, in Winnebago County, there were 149 deaths due to any drug, and 1,439 alcohol-related emergency room visits.⁶¹ The rate of chronic drinkers in Boone and Winnebago County is 32.8 of 100 of total chronic drinking survey respondents in 2007-2009. Additionally, there are 60,025 adults at risk for acute or binge drinking between both counties.⁶² In 2020, there were an estimated 18.60% of adults in Boone or Winnebago County drinking

excessively. Excessive drinking is defined as more than two drinks a day on average for men and more than one for women.⁶³

Out of 47 direct service agencies responding to a survey conducted in 2020 by the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board (WCCMHB), only eight reported that they offer substance use services and only one reported having detoxification. Additionally, there were only 24 detox beds reported as available in Winnebago County.⁶⁴

Neighborhood and Built Environment

The primary goal of the neighborhood and built environment social determinant of health is to create neighborhoods and environments that promote health and safety. The neighborhood and built environment includes environmental health, health policy, housing and homes, injury prevention, people with disabilities, physical activity, respiratory disease, sensory or communication disorders, tobacco use, transportation, and workplace. Increasing safety, having access to clean air and water, eliminating noise pollution, minimizing the effects of secondhand smoke, and decreasing motor vehicle crashes are all examples of ways to improve neighborhoods and built environments. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the neighborhood and built environment in Boone and Winnebago County, this report analyzes housing affordability, housing stock and its maintenance, home ownership, homelessness, transportation, and internet access.

Housing Affordability

The COVID-19 pandemic and rising costs of living due to inflation has made it difficult for some residents to pay their rent or mortgage. While housing costs in the Rockford region have typically remained low, there has been an increase in housing costs since 2014, with a sharper increase during the pandemic. Roughly 20.1% of survey respondents reported needing help finding affordable housing in Boone and Winnebago County.

The owner-occupied housing rate from 2015-2019 Boone County was 81.0% and the median value of owner-occupied homes was \$153,400 for the same time period. In Winnebago County, the owner-occupied housing rate was 65.9% and the median value of those homes was \$120,400. For the state of Illinois, the owner-occupied housing rate was 66.1% and a median value of \$194,500. This means that there is a higher percentage of homeowners in Boone County but that the median value of homes are lower as compared to the state of Illinois as a whole. In Winnebago County, there

are roughly the same percentage of homeowners, but the median values of these homes are less than Illinois as a state.⁶⁵ Table 5.1 gives the total number of occupied housing units and then compares renter-occupied and owner-occupied housing units. Table 5.1 also gives these numbers for the state of Illinois, Boone, and Winnebago County.

Cost Burdens

To examine whether housing is affordable in the Rockford MSA, we use the definition of cost burdened. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, to be considered cost burdened, a household must be spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs (including utilities). A person who is severely cost burdened spends 50% or more of their income on housing. According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey data, 49.3% of all renter households are cost overburdened by 30% or more, and 36.8% of all owner households are cost overburdened

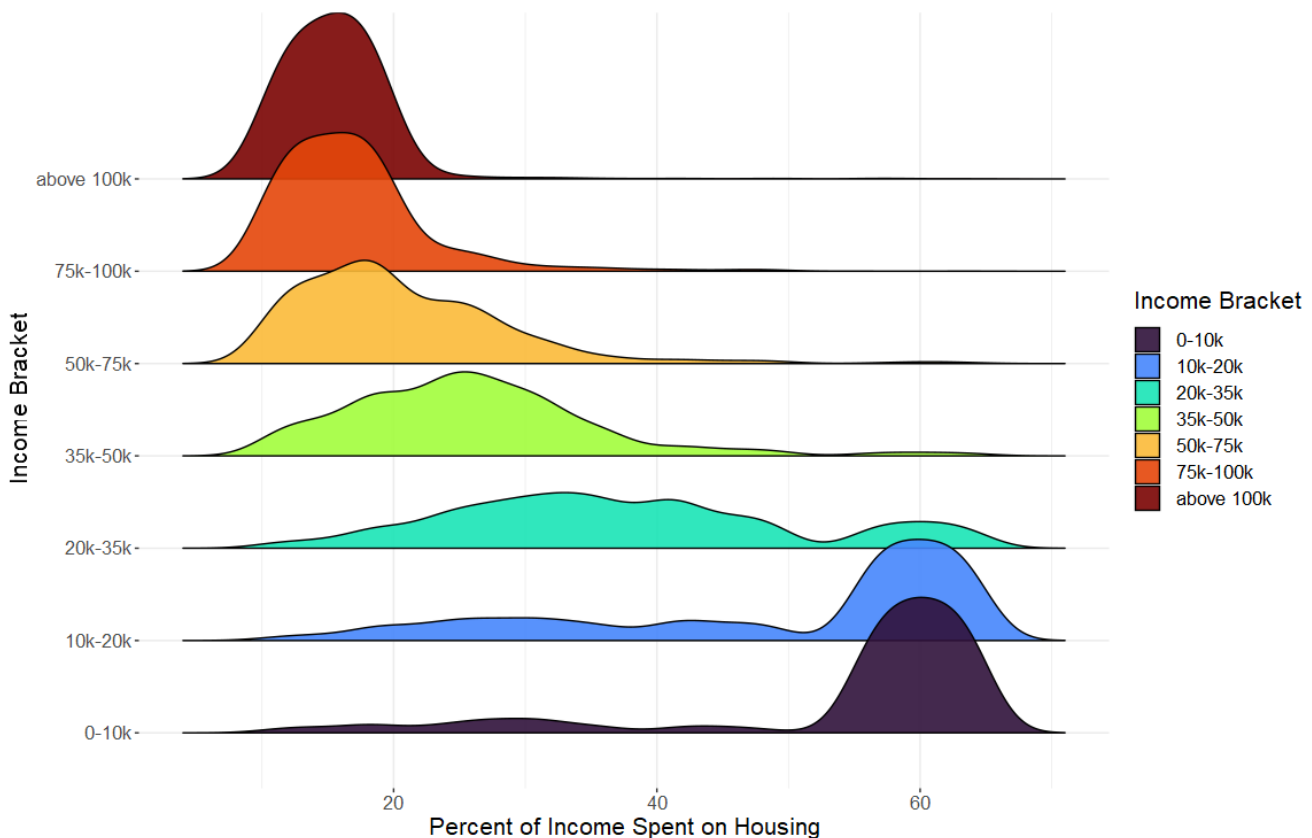
by 30% or more.⁶⁶ Today, over a third of all Boone County homeowners and nearly 40% of all renters are considered cost burdened in the county.⁶⁷

Figure 5.1 shows the percent of income households in Boone and Winnebago County spend on housing costs in different income brackets. While those who make \$75,000 or more rarely spend over 30% of their income on housing, all other income brackets are affected by cost burdens of housing. Individuals who make under \$35,000 a year are more likely to be severely cost burdened, leaving less money to pay for other necessary costs like food, transportation, or medical care. This is important to note about these communities as high housing burdens can lead to economic and residential instability through moving, living with relatives, eviction, or homelessness. Additionally, households that experience high housing cost burdens are more likely to face material hardships.⁶⁸

Table 5.1: Occupied Housing Units, Renters and Owners, for Illinois, Boone County and Winnebago County

	Illinois	Boone County	Winnebago County
Total Occupied Housing Units	4,846,134	18,571	114,779
Owner-Occupied	3,202,715 (66.1%)	15,042 (81.0%)	75,592 (65.9%)
Renter-Occupied	1,643,419 (33.9%)	3,529 (19.0%)	39,187 (34.1%)
Median Value	\$194,500	\$153,400	\$120,400

Figure 5.1: Percent of Income Spent on Housing per Income Bracket for Boone and Winnebago County



To estimate cost burdens on minimum wage individuals in Boone and Winnebago County, the median gross rent for each county and monthly income for these individuals were examined. The median gross rent in Winnebago County from 2016-2020 was \$817 and \$927 in Boone County. A person working a minimum wage job and paying the average rental cost in either county would be considered cost burdened. Minimum wage in both counties is \$12/hour, which means a person working a full-time minimum wage job makes \$480 a week, or \$1920 a month, before taxes. In Winnebago County an individual would be paying over 40% of their income on housing, and a person in Boone County would be paying almost 50% of their income.

Another way to examine affordability in the Rockford MSA is to examine the housing wage. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the housing wage is defined as the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn in order to afford a modest rental home while spending no more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. Minimum wage in Illinois is being raised by \$1 a year until it reaches \$15/hour in 2025. The minimum wage in 2022 was raised to \$12/hour from \$11/hour in 2021. The data below illustrates the hourly wage needed to earn in 2021 to afford rent at different numbers of bedrooms in the Rockford MSA and the state of Illinois. In 2021, only a zero-bedroom apartment was affordable for a minimum wage worker in the Rockford MSA.

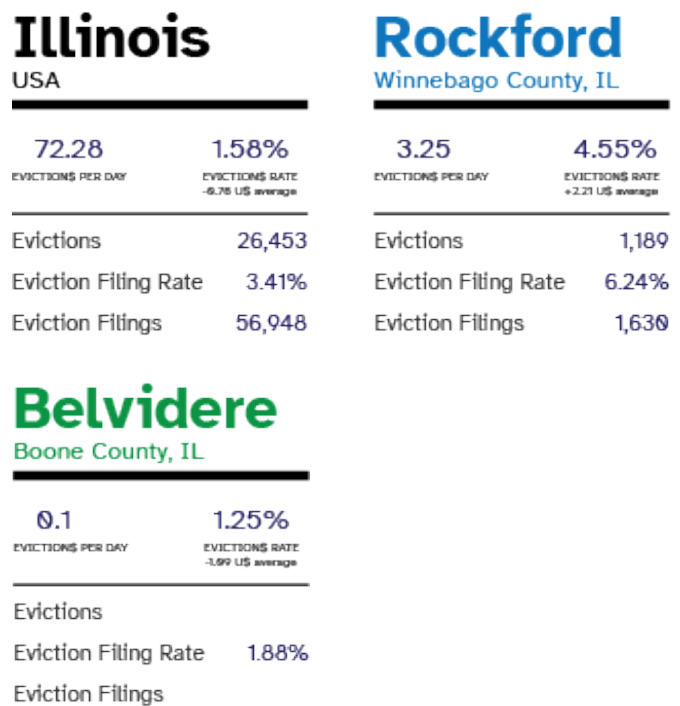
Table 5.2: *Housing Wage per Apartment Size 2021*⁶⁹

Housing Wage	Illinois	Rockford MSA	Minimum Wage 2021
Zero-Bedroom	\$16.87	\$10.13	\$11.00
One-Bedroom	\$18.70	\$11.65	\$11.00
Two-Bedroom	\$22.11	\$15.37	\$11.00
Three-Bedroom	\$28.34	\$20.87	\$11.00
Four-Bedroom	\$33.33	\$22.65	\$11.00

Eviction

Eviction rates can give insight to housing affordability. According to Princeton Eviction Lab, a leading researcher in the eviction crisis, Rockford ranks 51st in the nation in eviction rates. This averages out to 3.25 evictions per day, and a 4.55% eviction rate, which is over 2% more than the national average. The image below compares Rockford and Belvidere eviction rates to the state of Illinois. Rockford and Belvidere were chosen to represent Winnebago and Boone County as the largest city in each county respectively.⁷⁰ Eviction has many personal costs due to lost possessions, moving expenses, and it also decreases future renting prospects as many landlords do not rent to people who have been evicted.

Figure 5.2: *Illinois, Rockford, and Belvidere Eviction Data*



Housing Stock and Maintenance

Housing stock refers to the houses, apartments, buildings, etc. available in a particular area. Maintaining the housing stock is an important aspect of health for individuals and communities. This includes the current conditions of homes, age of homes, vacant homes, making any necessary repairs, and the accessibility of homes.

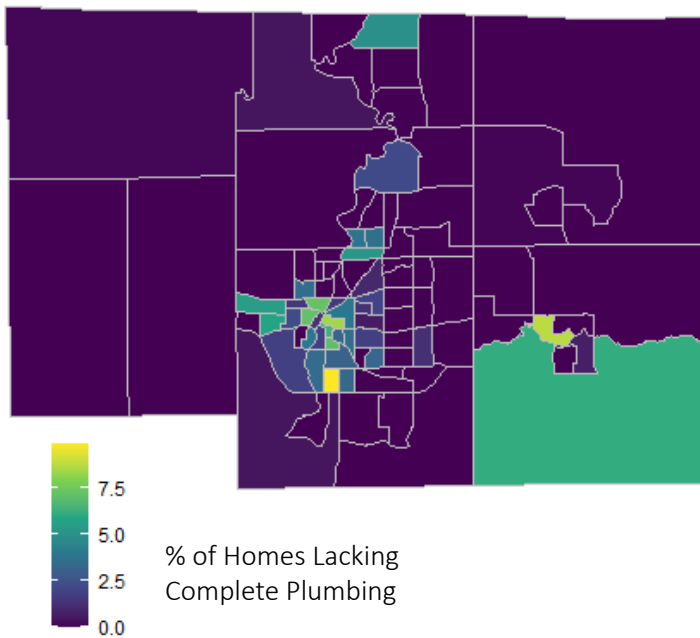
Conditions

The condition of the available housing stock can affect the health and wellbeing of neighborhoods and the built environment. The quality of housing stock can be measured by how many selected conditions it has. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a selected condition as a combination of incomplete kitchen or plumbing facilities, missing windows, screens, severely compromised foundations, outdated electrical infrastructure, holes in floors, or walls, holes in roof or severely compromised roofing materials preventing closure from weather penetration. 47% of rental housing in Rockford has at least one selected condition.⁷¹

In 2019, of a total estimation of 20,060 occupied housing units in Boone County, 19,880 had complete plumbing access while 180 of them did not.⁷² In Winnebago County, there are 125,707 occupied housing units and 123,534 of them had complete plumbing facilities while 2,173 did not. Having access to water is a basic human need that is important to help prevent diseases and illness, contributes to health, and prevents dehydration. In Figure 5.3, it can be seen that homes without complete plumbing are more likely

to be found in the more densely populated areas of Boone and Winnebago County.

Figure 5.3: Homes Lacking Complete Plumbing in Boone and Winnebago County



Blood Lead Levels

Any level of lead in the bloodstream is dangerous for children as it can be permanent or disabling. Not only can lead damage kidneys, blood, and brain at low levels, but at high levels it can cause comas, seizures, and death. Lead exposure is most likely to occur in older-homes with lead based paint. Lead paint was banned in 1978, which means that any home built before this time has the potential for lead based paint to be used in the home. Children are at higher risk for lead exposure as they are more likely to ingest lead dust or chips due to their developing behavior.

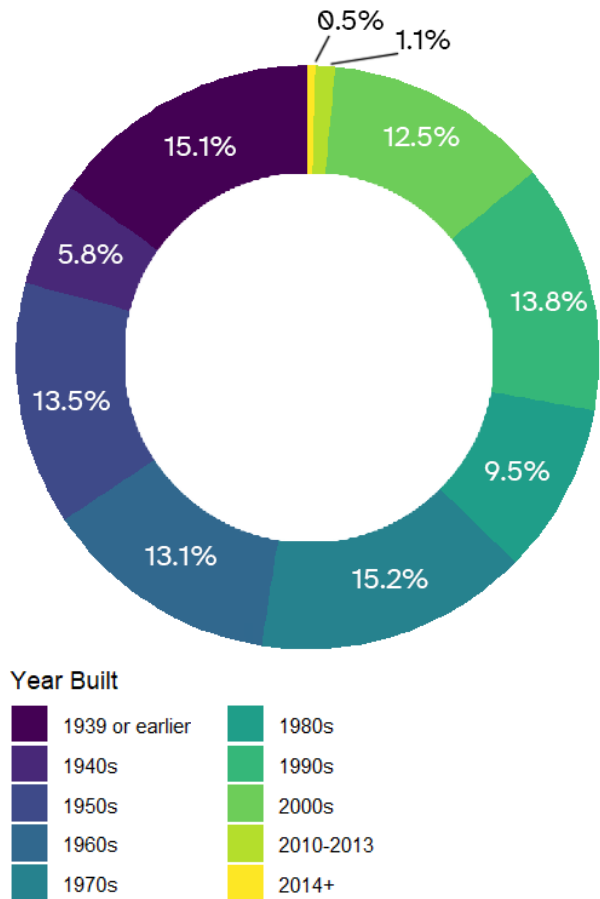
In 2017, Boone County had 3,645 children under 72 months of age, and 900 of them were tested for their blood lead levels. Of the 900, 18 children had confirmed blood lead levels $\geq 5 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, and 7 of them had blood lead levels $\geq 10 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. The same year, Winnebago County had 21,539 children under 72 months of age, and 5,879 of them had their blood lead levels tested. Of the 5,879 tested, 190 had blood lead levels $\geq 5 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ and 50 had blood lead levels $\geq 10 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. The blood lead levels of children are safest when it is at $0 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.

In the City of Rockford, there are 45,178 housing units built prior to 1980 that are either owner or renter-occupied. This represents about 77.1% of the total occupied housing units in the city that have the potential for lead based paint hazard. Boone County has about 18,571 housing units and 8,331 of these were built before 1980. This means that 44.9% of the existing housing stock in the county has the potential for lead exposure. Winnebago County has about 114,779 total

housing units, and 73,919 were built before 1980, or about 64%.

Figure 5.4 breaks down what year homes in Boone and Winnebago County were built. This is broken down by ten year increments except for earlier than 1940 and after 2014. Any home built before 1978 has the potential to have lead based paint; over 50% of homes in Boone or Winnebago County were built before 1978.

Figure 5.4: Years Homes Were Built in Boone and Winnebago County (Aggregated)



Brownfields and Vacant Lots

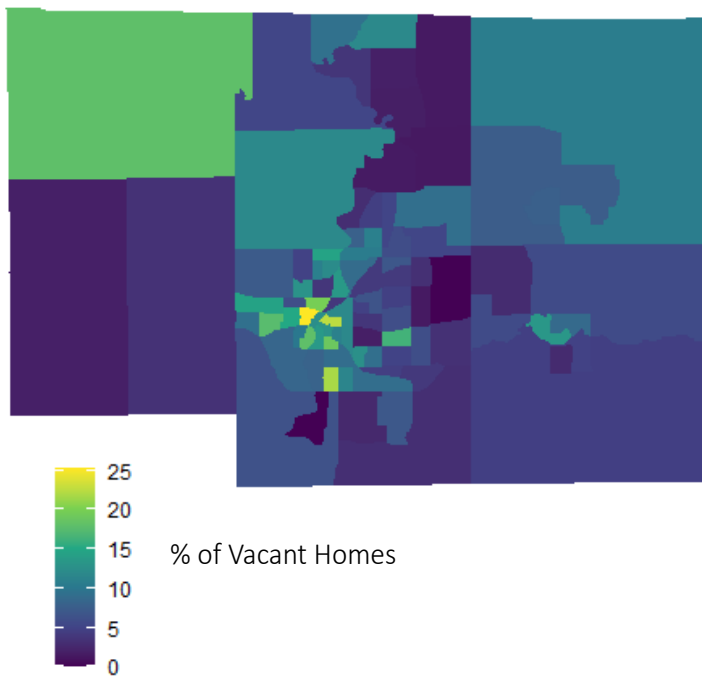
There are 1,048 vacant lots in Boone County and 9,524 in Winnebago County.⁷³ A vacant lot either has no building on it, or the buildings fell into disrepair or were demolished. They can be a potential hazard site as they attract illegal dumping or accumulate litter. In urban communities, vacant lots are often contaminated with hazardous wastes like lead, cadmium, arsenic, and asbestos. They can disrupt a sense of community and are an environmental justice concern as they are more likely to be found in poorer areas.⁷⁴

Boone County is primarily made up of single-family farmsteads, but more residential subdivisions have been built in the last 30 years. However, due to the Great Recession

there have been no new residential subdivisions in the county since 2009. The Great Recession also caused many platted residential parcels in the county to become vacant.⁷⁵

Brownfields are properties that are planned for redevelopment that may have the presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. In 2020, the City of Rockford identified 878 brownfields. However, the city has been successful in its grant applications for brownfield redevelopments. One of the biggest success stories was the building of the Embassy Suites by Hilton Rockford Riverfront and Rockford Conference Center.

Figure 5.5: *Percentage of Vacant Homes in Boone and Winnebago County*



Repairs

From the survey, 27.5% of respondents indicated that they needed help learning basic home repair/property maintenance skills.; additionally, 33.8% of respondents indicated that they needed help finding home repair services. 68.5% of respondents who indicated they needed help learning basic home repair skills also indicated that they needed assistance with finding home repair services. This data is important to be aware of as it can give an idea of the housing stock and needs in the community. Ensuring that the places individuals, couples, and families live is healthy and safe is an important part of the social determinants of health.

Accessibility

Increasing the number of homes that have an entrance without steps is an important component to increasing the

accessibility of our built environment. This can help reduce falls, which is one of the leading causes of accidental injuries in the U.S. It also makes it easier with those who use mobility aids to live or visit homes.

12.3% of survey respondents reported needing help with making changes to their home for someone with disabilities. Of the people who identified needing to make a change to their home for someone with a disability, only 36.8% of these people were able to find the services they needed in Boone or Winnebago County.

Home Ownership

Buying a home can be a stressful and overwhelming experience. 12.6% of survey respondents reported that they needed help with down payment or closing costs to buy a home. 44.8% of the people who reported needing assistance with down payment or closing costs to buy a home said that they were able to get the services they need in Boone or Winnebago County. However, 36.2% of respondents stated that they did not know who to contact or where to go in Boone or Winnebago County.

Similarly, 62, or 13.4%, of respondents stated they needed assistance qualifying for a loan to buy a home. 38.7% of these respondents reported that they were able to find the services they need in Boone or Winnebago County, while 50.0% reported not knowing where to go or who to contact loan qualifying assistance in Boone or Winnebago County.

Homelessness

While our community has an existing shelter system, there are still gaps in the system. In an effort to help close these gaps, CAA worked with the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition and began to act as the Single Point of Entry (SPOE) to the homeless within our two county service area. A SPOE places people who are literally homeless in temporary housing until a more permanent placement can be found. Literal homelessness is defined by someone living in shelters, on the street/places not meant for human habitation, or fleeing from domestic violence. A gap in homelessness services include a lack of shelter beds for single male head of household with minor children, single female head of household with male children over twelve, homeless persons with medical devices, and homeless persons whose mental health makes them not shelter appropriate. Domestic violence shelters do not have these or any other limitations.

Across the country there are extreme racial disparities in the homelessness system. CAA has worked to try to lessen the racial disparities and improve the local homelessness system. Prior to the implementation of the SPOE, it was determined that agencies were selecting more Caucasians

for their transitional and permanent housing programs than people of color. The implementation of the SPOE makes it less likely for agencies to hand pick their program participant. When there are openings in any affiliated housing program, the SPOE sends referrals to agencies based on a by name list; the list includes who is the next person in line based on their assessment scores and level of need. CAA is continuing to work with federal partners to improve the SPOE system to ensure that inequities are not further perpetuated.

CAA's SPOE system has been featured in the New York Times, Washington Post, two published books, and in a case study for the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative. Additionally, the program has been recognized for functionally ending veteran homelessness in 2015 and chronic homelessness in 2017. Functionally ending veteran homelessness indicates that there are fewer veterans experiencing homelessness than can be routinely housed within a month.⁷⁶ Chronic homelessness is defined as people who have experienced homelessness for at least a year while struggling with a disabling condition. Functionally ending chronic homelessness is achieved when a community has three or fewer people experiencing chronic homelessness. Veteran and chronic homelessness continue to be limited, while CAA is also working to end homelessness for all other populations—youth (ages 18-24), families with children, and single adults. While homelessness will never be fully eradicated, CAA's ultimate goal is to make homelessness rare, brief, and not recurring in our communities.

Transportation

Transportation is essential to the built environment as it allows people to get from one location to another. Boone and Winnebago County are fairly car-centric cities, but some public transportation and active modes of transportation are available.

Public Transportation

Winnebago County is home to the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) and the Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD). RMTD offers 24 routes Monday through Friday from 4:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. There is a late night service in Rockford only, which are two shuttles that provide transportation from downtown to final destination stops along the route, which is offered from 6:15 p.m. to 12:15 a.m. On Saturdays, the bus runs from 6 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Sunday routes run from 9:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. SMTD offers transportation to Roscoe, Rockton, and South Beloit. In order to use these services, the trip must end or start in the Stateline area. Rides must be scheduled ahead of time. Fixed route ridership costs \$1.50 per adult.

As Boone County is more rural, its transportation system

has been built with the automobile in mind. Boone County has two public transit providers—Boone County Public Transportation and RMTD. While Boone County Public Transportation it is a door-to-door service that will pick you up and drop you off at your desired location. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance and be put in place between the hours of 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Monday- Friday. Ride fares range from free to \$2 depending on age. RMTD has one route that helps connect Belvidere to Rockford, Loves Park, and Machesney Park. The RMTD route is inefficient for most Boone County riders as it only has four round trips a day, with only 10 stops in Belvidere. Transfers must also be made in order to reach other amenities in Winnebago County. Limited hours and timing of routes restricts the number of people who view public transportation as a viable option to work in Boone County.

Active Modes of Transportation

Regular physical activity can improve health at all ages. By including more options of transportation, like biking or walking, we can ensure that people include more physical activity in their days. Less than 2% of the Rockford Region bike or walk to work.⁷⁷ It is also important to consider how safe active modes of transportation to work are. Accidents or improper infrastructure may deter people from using active modes of transportation. Figure 5.6 depicts the fatal and non-fatal pedestrian and cyclist accidents within the Rockford region. It can be seen that many of these accidents occurred on minor arterial roads, meaning a high number of accidents are occurring on roads that typically carry less traffic.

Internet Access

Internet access is an important aspect of both the social and physical environment. The pandemic has made dependence on the internet even greater with online schooling, online health appointments, online work, and much more. Broadband internet access has even been advocated for as a social determinant of health. Wi-fi access affects financial health, education levels, and health care levels.⁷⁸ Of 18,571 households in Boone County, 2,631 reported having no type of internet subscription, including cellular, broadband, or satellite internet services. Winnebago County had 114,779 reported households, with 19,486 households without any type of internet subscription.⁷⁹

Many low-income individuals and families depend on libraries for online access. People who live in rural areas and earn less than \$30,000 a year are more likely to not have access to wi-fi at home. It is also important to note that smartphones may sometimes be the only way an individual or family has access to the internet.⁸⁰ Figure 5.7 shows the library locations in Boone and Winnebago County.

Figure 5.6: Fatal and Non-Fatal Pedestrian and Cyclists Accidents in 2020

2020 Pedestrian & Cyclist Traffic Accidents

Fatal & Non-Fatal Accidents Within the RPC MPA

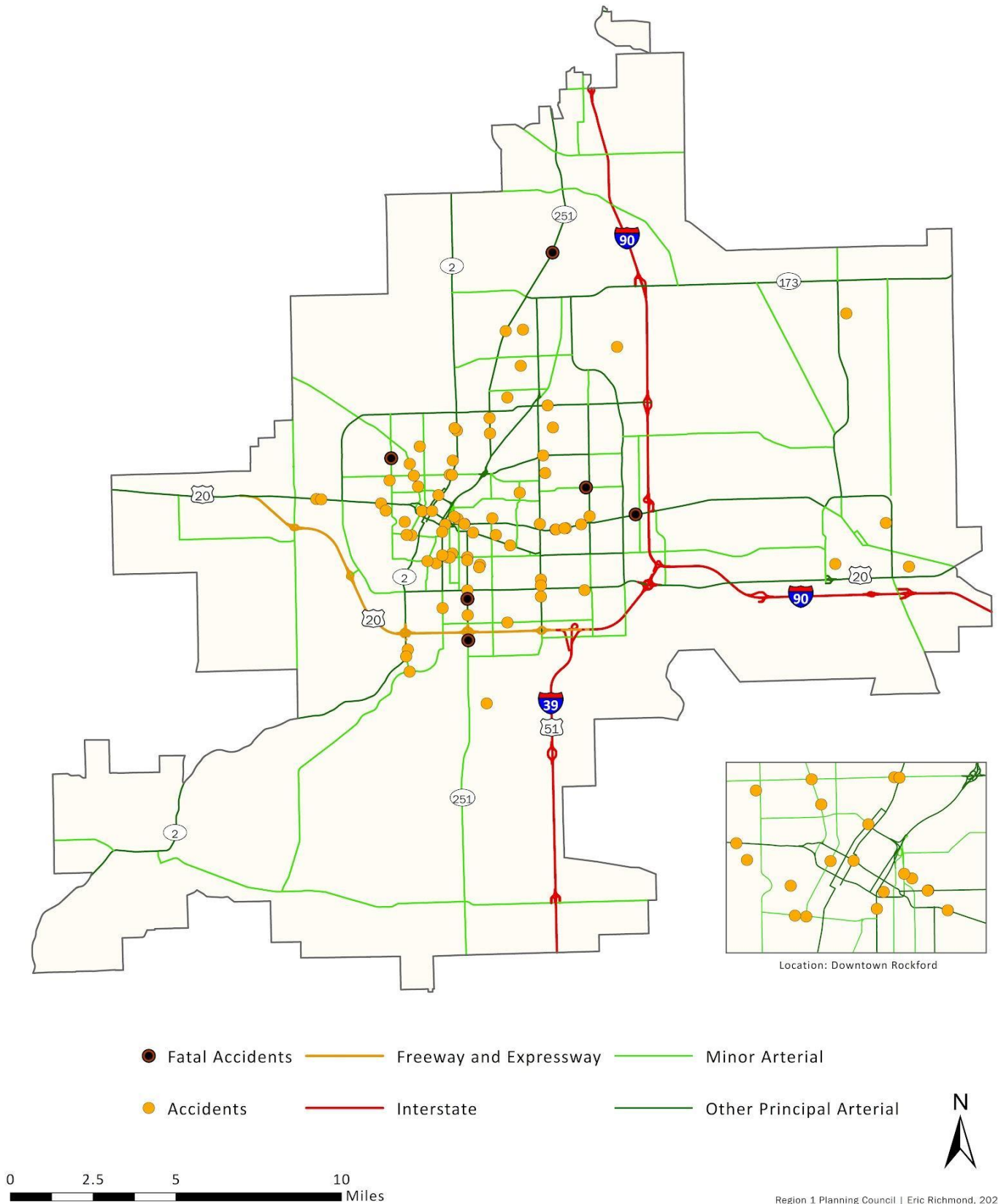
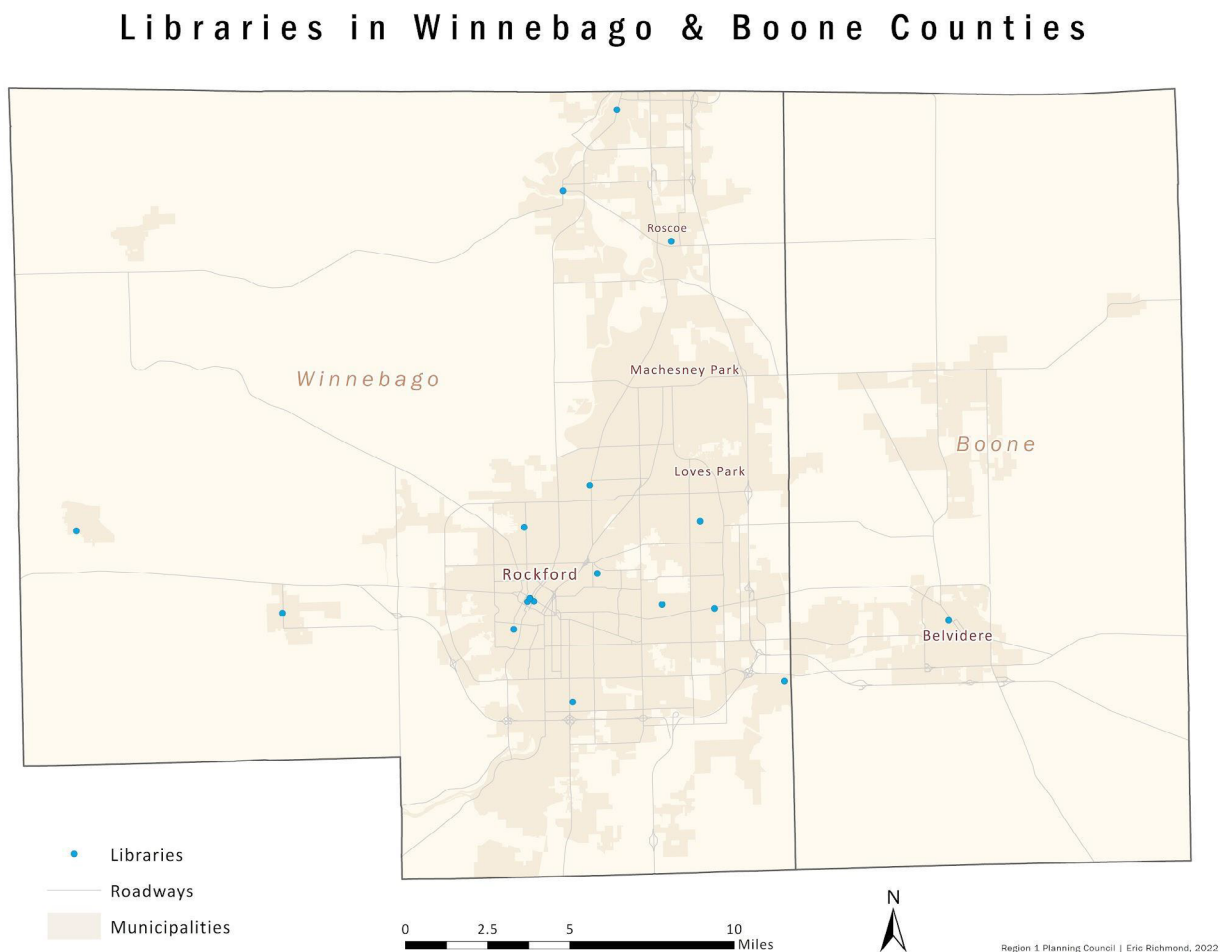


Figure 5.7: Libraries in Boone and Winnebago County



Social and Community Context

Social and community context is one of the five social determinants of health. This determinant focuses on people’s relationships and interactions with family, friends, co-workers, and community members. These interactions can have a major impact on an individual’s health and well-being. An important element of social and community context is a sense of cohesion and connectedness among community members. Interventions to help people get the social and community support they need are critical for improving overall health and well-being.

Discrimination

Discrimination is a key issue in the Social and Community Context domain. Healthy People 2020 defines discrimination as a “socially structured action that is unfair or unjustified and harms individuals and groups.” Discrimination is a type of social stressor experienced by people of lower socioeconomic status, sexual and gender minorities, older adults, communities of color, and many others in the United

States. The impacts of discrimination are harmful not just to the individuals that are targeted but to their families and communities. Regardless of what the cause is, experiencing discrimination is associated with increased stress and poorer health outcomes. Discrimination also impacts other important social determinants of health such as access to quality healthcare and education, reliable transportation, and safe housing, all of which are linked to health.

In a poll titled “Discrimination in America”, developed by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and National Public Radio, researchers interviewed 3,453 people, including African Americans, Latinos/as/x, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Whites, and LGBTQ adults to investigate the prevalence of discrimination.⁸¹

Findings revealed that:

- Nearly half (45%) of African Americans experienced racial discrimination when trying to rent an apartment or buy a home.
- 60% of African Americans say that they or a family member have been unfairly stopped or treated by

police and 31% have avoided calling the police when in need to avoid potential discrimination.

- Nearly 1 in 5 Latinos/as/x have avoided receiving medical care due to concern of being discriminated against or treated poorly.
- 41% of women report being discriminated against in equal pay and promotion opportunities.

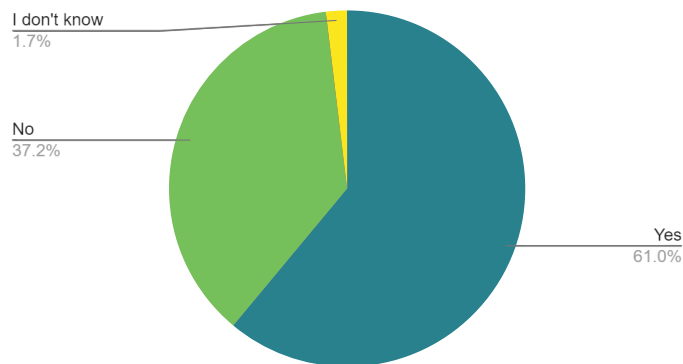
These findings suggest that in response to experiencing discrimination, individuals may avoid police assistance when in need and utilizing health services, which will ultimately put someone more at risk for negative mental and physical health outcomes.

COVID-19 Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated preexisting disparities and has revealed that health equity is a major problem as many racial and ethnic minority groups have been unequally affected, putting them at an increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.⁸² The pandemic has also increased economic disparities from job losses or a reduction in wages. From the survey, 61.0% of respondents reported the COVID-19 pandemic reduced their income.

Figure 6.1: Survey Responses to “Did the COVID-19 Pandemic Reduce your Income?”

Did the COVID-19 pandemic reduce your income?



Vaccination Rates

Boone and Winnebago County are both below the Illinois state percentage for the population with at least one dose and the population fully vaccinated. There can be structural or attitude related barriers to vaccination. Structural barriers are limitations in the access of vaccinations, like location of the clinic, job flexibility, associated costs of the vaccine, etc. Attitude related barriers are beliefs or perceptions that reduce willingness to seek or accept a vaccination.⁸³ Barriers are important to consider when looking at vaccination rates and can help identify areas of improvement with education and administration of vaccines.⁸⁴

Table 6.1: Vaccination Rates

	Illinois	Boone County	Winnebago County
Administered Vaccine Doses	22,638,124	84,113	426,020
Population Vaccinated With At Least One Dose	8,982,802 (70.49%)	34,492 (64.38%)	172,519 (60.73%)
Population Fully Vaccinated	8,981,802 (70.49%)	32,315 (60.32%)	160,357 (56.45%)
Booster Doses Administered	4,603,521	16,950	87,564
Population	12,741,080	53,577	284,081

Mental Health

The pandemic has also increased mental health issues as an experience of collective trauma for the world. While people with existing mental health issues were experiencing new barriers to care, 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. reported feelings of depression or anxiety during the pandemic, up from 1 in 10 adults the previous year. COVID also decreased overall well-being through difficulty sleeping, increased stress, and worsening or chronic conditions.⁸⁵ Different age groups have been impacted by the pandemic in separate ways, making this important to monitor in the future. For example, young children completing school online or social isolation of older adults can have lasting impacts on the mental health of these age groups.

From the survey, of the respondents who reported the pandemic reducing their income, 120 respondents, or 42.6%, also reported needing help getting mental health treatment for stress, depression, or anxiety. Of the respondents who reported the pandemic reduced their income, 11.0% reported needing help getting mental health treatment for stress, depression, or anxiety, and help getting drug or alcohol treatment.

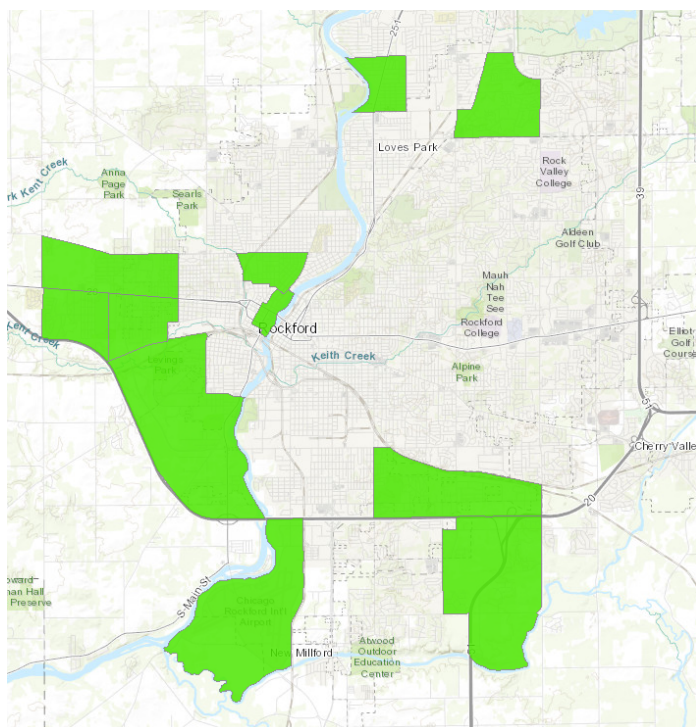
Food Insecurity

Food insecurity can be defined as “the disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources”.⁸⁶ Various studies have found that individuals who experience food insecurity may be at an increased risk for negative mental and physical health outcomes. Food insecurity can be caused by a number of different factors such as low income, lack of employment, disability, race/ethnicity, transportation, education, and age.⁸⁷ A USDA study found census tracts that are food deserts tend to have smaller populations, higher rates of abandoned or vacant homes, and residents with lower levels of education,

lower incomes, and higher unemployment. Census tracts with higher poverty rates are more likely to be food deserts than otherwise similar low-income census tracts in highly populated urban areas.⁸⁸

This is evidently true in Rockford, with its poverty rate of nearly 22%. Further impacting social and economic struggles, many neighborhoods in Rockford lack access to fresh food and experience food insecurity. The USDA Food Atlas map indicates that almost 13,000 people in nine census tracts in Rockford are both low income and have low access to food, defined as being greater than one mile from the nearest full-service grocery store. Within Boone County, there is a 7.3% (approximately 3,900 people) overall food insecurity rate and a 16% child food insecurity rate (approximately 2,300 out of 14,200 kids).⁸⁹ According to the 2014 Racism Report on Illinois Poverty, 43% of Belvidere students were on the Free and Reduced Lunch Program increasing to 57% by 2016.⁹⁰

Figure 6.2: USDA Food Dessert Map



Closing

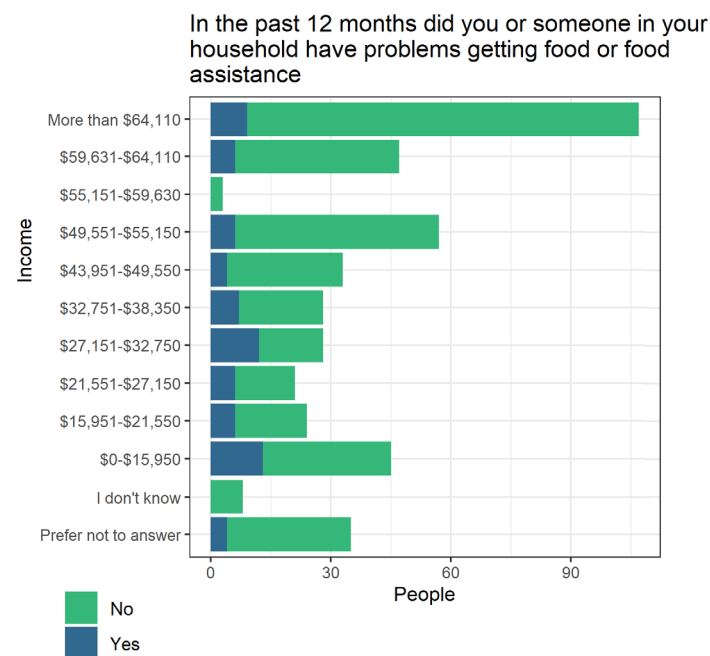
- Schnucks - Rockton Ave. -- 2018
- Schnucks - Mulford Rd. -- 2018
- Schnucks - Rual St. -- 2014
- Highlander/ Schnucks - N. Main St. -- 2012

Openings

- Valli Produce - E. State St. -- 2012
- Save-A-Lot - W. State St. -- 2015
- LoCost - Rockton Ave. -- 2021
- Save-A-Lot - W. Riverside Blvd. -- 2012

From the survey, the household income group with the most difficulty getting food or receiving food assistance was the income group ranging from \$0-\$15,950 displayed in Figure 6.2 below.

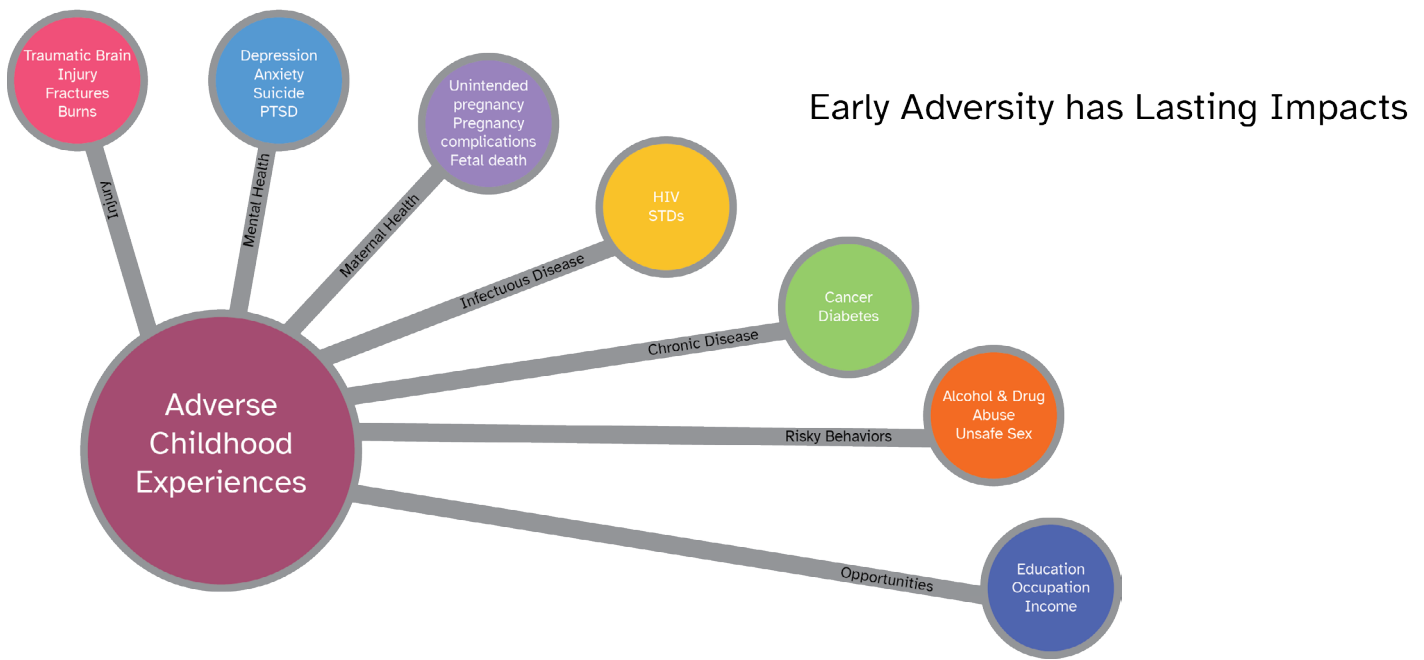
Figure 6.3: Survey Respondents to Food Assistance



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood, ages 0-17 years old. These include forms of abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), neglect (physical or emotional), and household dysfunction (mental illness, mother being treated violently, divorce, incarcerated relative, or substance abuse). ACEs are linked to “chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood.”⁹¹ ACEs have also been shown to negatively impact education attainment, job opportunities, and income potential. The rate of child abuse and neglect in Winnebago County (19.80) and Boone County (12.80) is higher than that of Cook County (6.20), the state of Illinois (9.50) and the United States (9.30) when looking at rates per 1,000.⁹² Although there is limited data about ACEs by region or city, national data informs us that 61% of US adults self-reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE, whereas nearly 1 in 6 reported experiencing four or more types of ACEs.⁹³ This is important to understand, because ACEs and their associating impacts are preventable by developing and sustaining safe, secure, and supportive environments for all children and families.

Figure 6.4: Association between ACEs and Negative Outcomes



Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

If an individual’s primary language is not English and they have a limited ability to write, read, speak, or understand English, they can be referred to as limited English proficient or “LEP”.⁹⁴ An inability to speak English adequately creates barriers to healthcare access, provider communications, and health literacy/education. Studies have revealed that individuals who face language barriers experience lower quality medical care and suffer poorer health outcomes than individuals who speak the local language.⁹⁵ In Rockford, 21.5% of households reported speaking a language other than English at home, in comparison to a reported 31.8% by Belvidere households.⁹⁶ The survey was only offered in English, resulting in only 10 respondents who reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Table 6.2: Limited English Proficiency

	Boone County	Winnebago County
Number of households	18,799	72,121
Number of limited English-speaking households, Spanish	267	1,243
Number of limited English-speaking households, other languages	77	765

Crime

People can experience crime through direct victimization, witnessing crime, or hearing about crime in their community. Not only do survivors of violent crime experience physical

pain and suffering, but they also experience mental distress and reduced quality of life. This can result in poorer health outcomes as people feel less safe functioning in their community. For example, those who fear crime in their communities may walk or bike less.⁹⁷

Rockford is often known for its high crime rate, and especially in relation to violent crime. According to the 2021 RockStat report, an annual report published by the Rockford Police Department, the city of Rockford had 2,198 reported violent crimes and 4,192 reported property crimes. In 2021, violent crimes increased by 133 crimes (2,331 total), while property crimes decreased by 301 crimes (3,891 total).⁹⁸

Domestic Violence

In Illinois, domestic violence is broadly defined as abusive relationships between intimate partners, other family and household relationships, and personal caretakers. Nearly 30% of Rockford’s violent crime is accounted for by domestic violence. Additionally, it has been reported by the City of Rockford Human Services Department that 25% of the homeless population in Rockford are without a residence as a result of domestic violence.

CAA has been working with the Family Peace Center (FPC) and the Mayor’s Office on Domestic Violence to create and maintain early intervention programs in relation to domestic violence. This includes having the Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) work on site at the FPC to provide support and options to individuals and families. The CSBG and FPC continue to work with the individuals or families to provide continuing support even after their initial contact.

Figure 6.5: Crime Statistics for Rockford, IL MSA (Winnebago and Boone Counties)

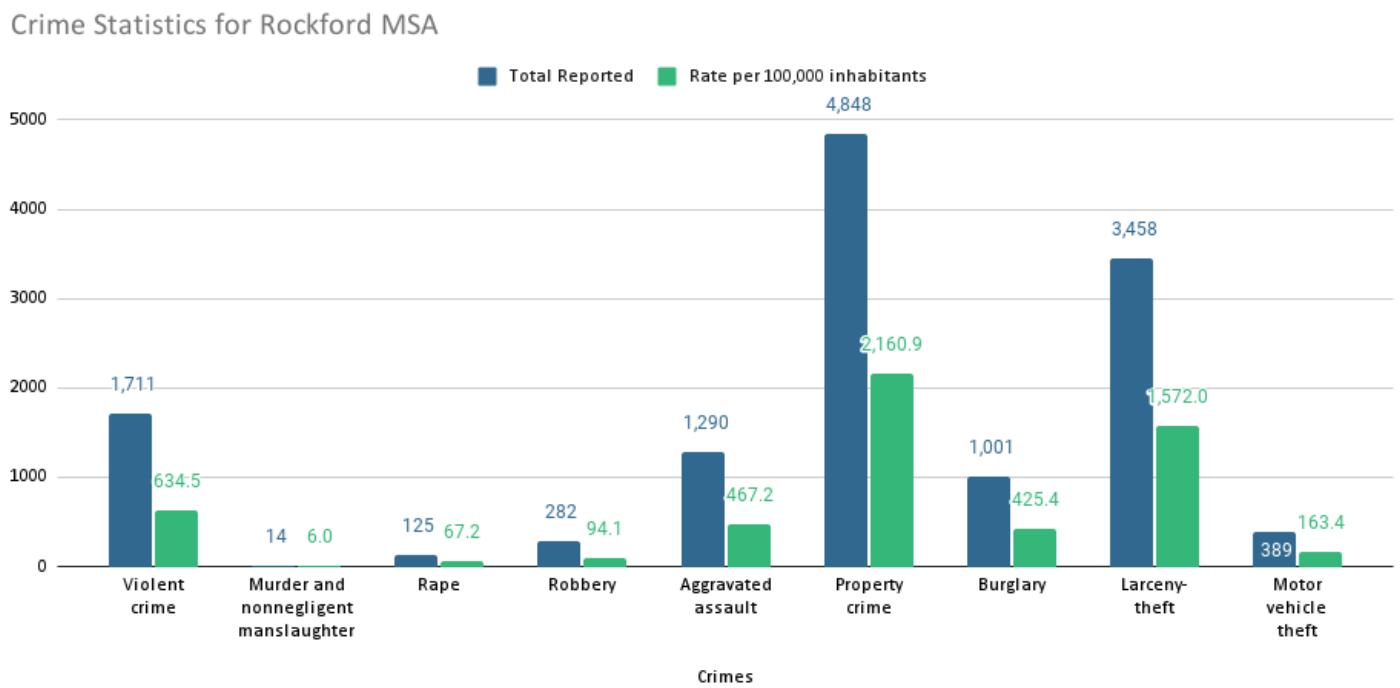
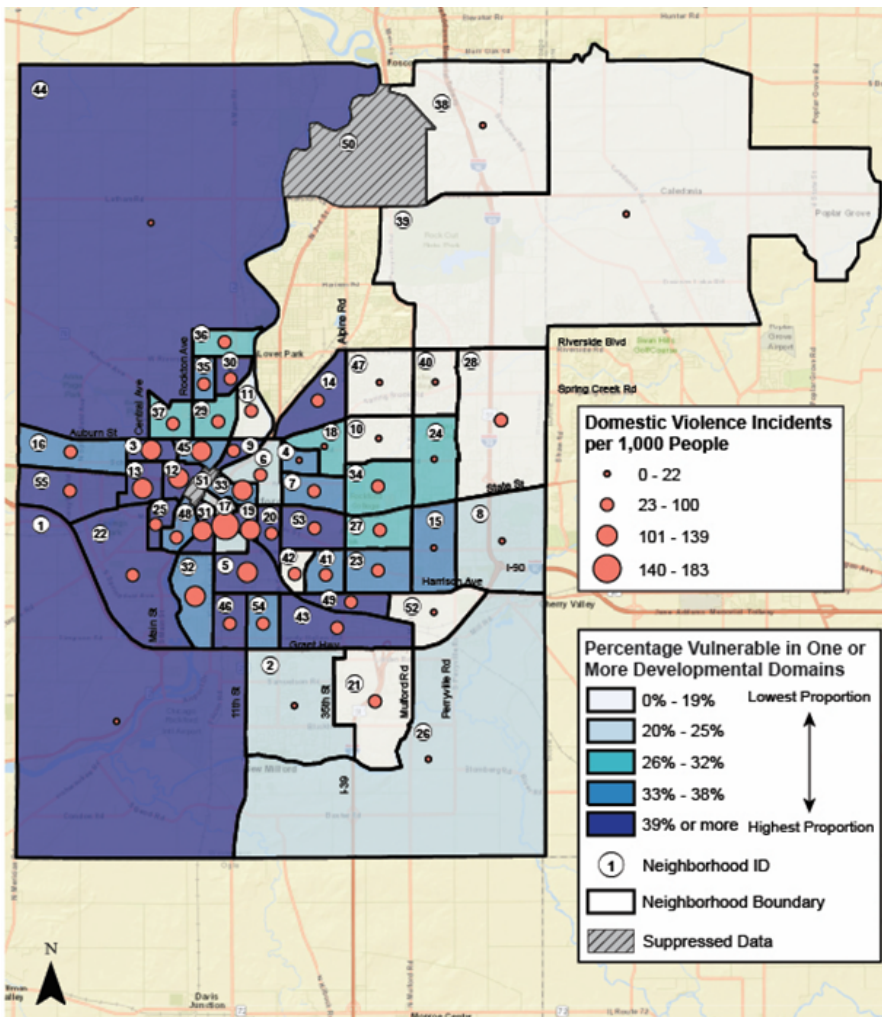


Figure 6.6: Domestic Violence Incidents per 1,000 and Children Vulnerable in One or More Developmental Domains in Rockford, IL



Map 14: Rate of Domestic Violence Incidents per 1,000 people and Children Vulnerable in One or More Developmental Domains in Rockford, IL

Erikson Institute

Head Start

Head Start promotes the school readiness of young children from low-income families through agencies in their local community. Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide comprehensive services to support the mental, social, and emotional development of pregnant women and children from birth to age five and their families through full-day, part-time, home and center based services at various locations in Winnebago County.

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are aimed at improving early development, school readiness, health, and family well-being. Families with children enrolled in a Head Start program are able to receive assistance locating housing, continued education, transportation, and translation services, in addition to education on financial security and more. Head Start and Early Head Start programs also provide vision, hearing, and dental exams for all students at no cost in an effort to ensure all children are receiving adequate health care from an early age.

Additionally, Head Start programs have also included nutritional assistance and education to teach children healthy habits and instill the importance of exercise. Head Start programs focus on the family as a whole, encouraging parents

to take leadership roles within the programs so parents and caregivers are involved in their students' education and form connections with teachers, administration and mental health staff. Head Start programs have shown long-term and community-wide benefits through multiple longitudinal studies. Research has shown Head Start programs have contributed to improved educational outcomes, increased social-emotional and behavioral development measured by self-control and self-esteem, and increased positive parenting practices.⁹⁹

Eligible Participants

Participants are eligible for Head Start programs using several different eligibility metrics. Any pregnant people or children under five who are at or below 100% poverty, who receive public benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) among others, children who are in foster care, or children who are homeless are eligible. Other circumstances may make a child eligible, such as certain disability statuses; these case-by-case determinations will not be discussed here. It is also difficult to separate out people with multiple qualifying statuses, meaning the total number of people eligible under these categories may be lower than the sum as an individual may have more than one qualifying status.

Table 7.1: Children under five who are below 100%¹⁰⁰ poverty or who have any disability.¹⁰¹

	Illinois	Boone County, Illinois	Winnebago County, Illinois
Total people under five experiencing poverty	143,676	722	5,185
Total people under 5 years with any disability	4,648	53	180

Table 7.2: Children at 0-100% Federal Poverty Level Estimates

	Boone County	Winnebago County
Number of children under 1 year	83	916
Number of children 1 year	67	871
Number of children 2 years	57	822
Number of children 3 years	58	830
Number of children 4 years	71	896
Number of children 5 years	74	826
Total number of children 5 years and under	410	5,161

Table 7.3: Number of People in Illinois on TANF, 2020

TANF: State of Illinois, 2020	
Month	Persons
Jan	57,445
Feb	58,743
Mar	58,479
Apr	59,102
May	63,810
Jun	67,333
Jul	69,631
Aug	70,705
Sep	73,945
Oct	75,518
Nov	75,926
Dec	77,420

Table 7.4: Number of People on SNAP Benefits in the Winnebago Office, 2021

SNAP: Winnebago Office (Consolidated with Boone), 2021	
Month	Persons
Jan	76,917
Feb	77,464
Mar	77,753
Apr	74,940
May	73,990
Jun	73,240
Jul	70,817
Aug	70,207
Sep	69,734
Oct	71,996
Nov	73,637
Dec	74,297

Community Resources for Young Children

Early Development Instrument

The 2019 Illinois Risk and Reach Report identified Winnebago County, where Rockford is located, as a high-risk county where many Rockford children experience trauma and lack access to resources that prepare them to be ready to learn. Data also revealed that existing early childhood supports in Rockford are effective, yet the fewer resources a family has, the greater difficulty they have accessing them. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a need to increase awareness of available services and programs, so all children and families have equitable access to opportunities and resources. Yet, the pandemic has only increased the need.

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a questionnaire completed by kindergarten teachers measuring children’s ability to meet age-appropriate development expectations in five key domains. The Ready to Learn initiative, a partnership led by Alignment Rockford, Rockford Public Schools, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, and Illinois Action for Children designed to help kids succeed in school and life, used the EDI data to determine areas in the community where more support is needed for families and young children. The first wave of the EDI was administered by Erikson Institute in 2019, which revealed substantial developmental vulnerability showing 34% of Kindergarten students vulnerable in at least one of EDI’s developmental domains. The second wave of the EDI data was administered by UCLA and will be available in 2022.

Trinity Day Care

Trinity Day Care is a non-profit organization licensed through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and recognized by the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) National Learning Network.¹⁰² There are early learning and childcare enrollment options for children six weeks to twelve years old between the hours of 5:30 am to 5:30 pm Monday through Friday. They aim to provide a secure nurturing environment for children and families.

YMCA Children’s Learning Center

The YMCA Children’s Learning Center is open to children ages six weeks to Pre-K, Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6 pm. The center uses a creative curriculum developed by Teaching Strategies Inc. that focuses on how children develop and learn, the learning environment, what children learn, the role of the teacher, and the role of the family.

Hand-n-Hand Child Care

Hand-n-Hand Child Care Center is located in Loves Park and has a maximum capacity of 150. They accept children aged from six weeks to five years old. Their hours are Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6 pm.

Discovery Center

The Discovery Center is a museum that can be used as a resource for classes, field trips, and outreach programs. They have classes for children and family including Tot Spot Classes, Toddler Time (13-24 months), Homeschool Classes, and Enrichment Classes. For the overall museum, their hours are Tuesday through Sunday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Child Development or Child Care Centers

Child development and child care centers are vital for parents to be able to continue working during the day and they can provide children with additional support including nutritional support. There are a large number of day care centers in Winnebago County but fewer in Boone County, which increases parental commuting in that area. While the centers in Winnebago County are concentrated in Rockford, there are several others in smaller towns to the West of Rockford. See Figure 7.2 for the locations of the centers.

There is one Preschool for All program with a capacity of 40 in Boone County. Boone County has three total licensed daycare sites as of 2021. There were 114 licensed capacity sessions 6 weeks to 1 year. There were 62 licensed capacity across sessions 2 years. The total licensed capacity sessions for ages 3-4 and 5-kindergarten was 140. The total licensed

Figure 7.1: Number of Children Attending Publically-Funded Early Childhood Programs in Rockford and Harlem Neighborhoods

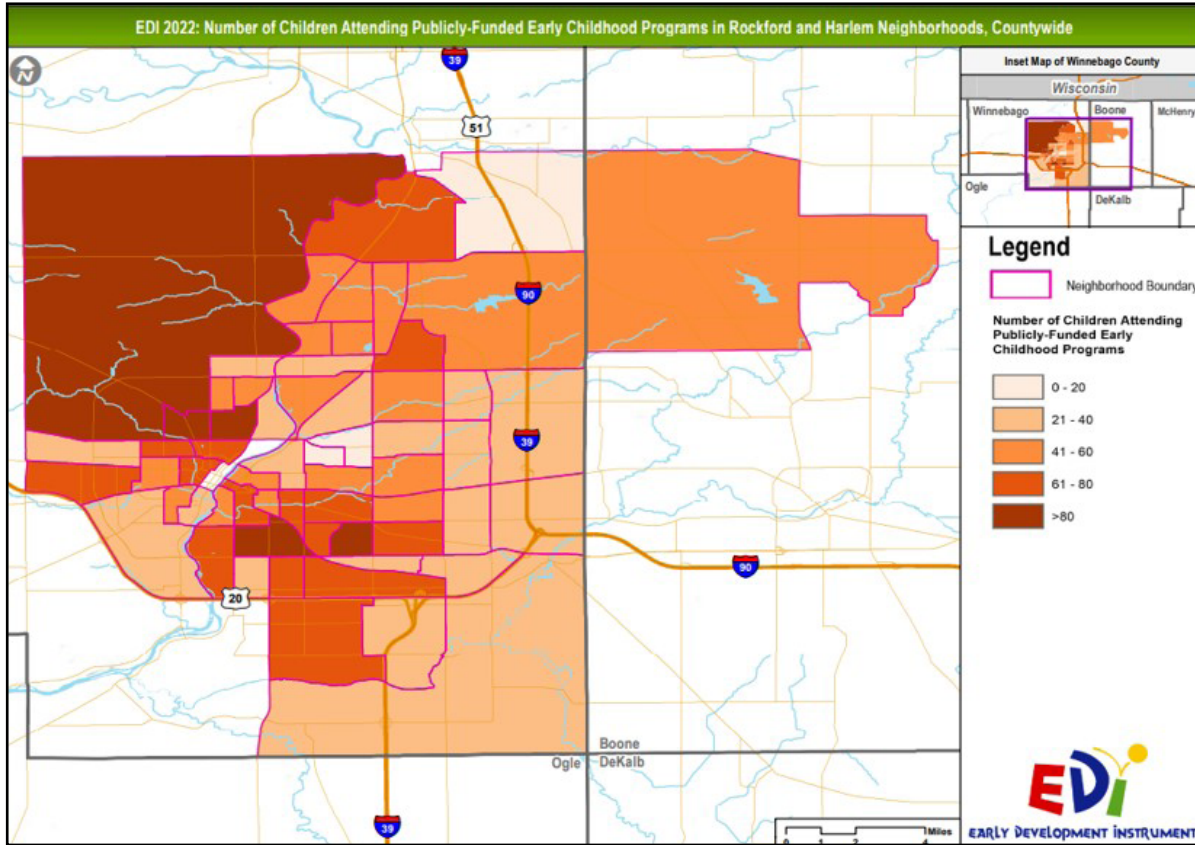
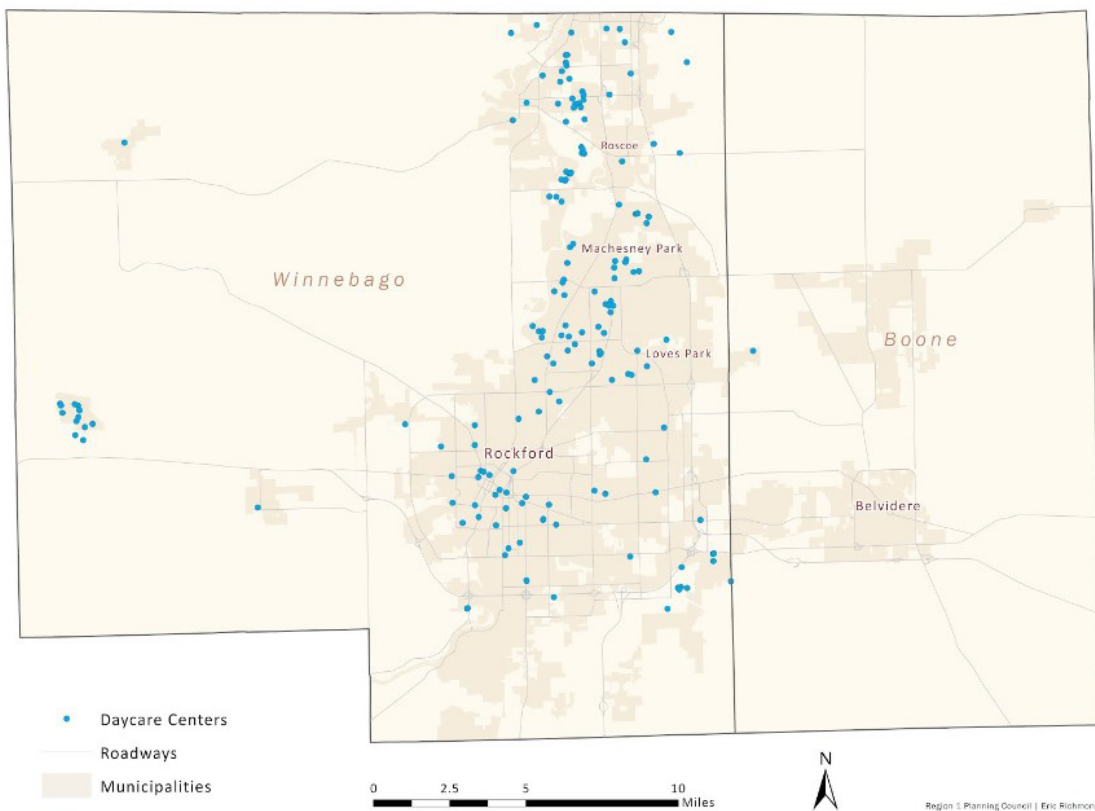


Figure 7.2: Licensed Daycare Centers in Boone and Winnebago County

Daycare Centers in Winnebago & Boone Counties



capacity was 412. There was one site that qualified as a license-exempt day care center, with the total reported capacity being 30. There were 14 licensed family child care homes, with a total licensed capacity of 135.

with a total reported capacity of 89. There were 102 licensed family child care homes, with a total licensed capacity of 1,012.

Winnebago County has five Preschool for All programs with a proposed capacity of 1,855. There are three head start sites with a funded enrollment of 500; there are also three early head start sites with a funded enrollment of 154. Winnebago County has three 15 licensed child care sites as of 2021. There were 447 licensed capacity sessions 6 weeks to 1 year. There were 278 licensed capacities across sessions 2 years. The total licensed capacity sessions for ages 3-4 and 5-kindergarten was 837. The total licensed capacity was 2,039. There are four license exempt child care centers,

Food Assistance

Winnebago and Boone Counties have food pantries across the region, but similarly to childcare centers they're concentrated in Rockford. There is only one in Boone County, in Belvidere. These are able to provide nutritional support for families that may not be able to get healthy food otherwise. There are three food assistance agencies in Winnebago County, 15 food pantries/soup kitchens, and over 20 full service grocery stores.

Table 7.5: Children Receiving Assistance by Family Location

	Boone County	Winnebago County
Number of children 0 and 1 year	74	684
Number of children 2 years	62	441
Number of children 3 and 4 years	117	876
Number of children 5 years	37	340
Number of children 5 years and under total	290	2,341

Figure 7.3: Food Pantries in Winnebago and Boone Counties

Food Pantries in Winnebago & Boone Counties

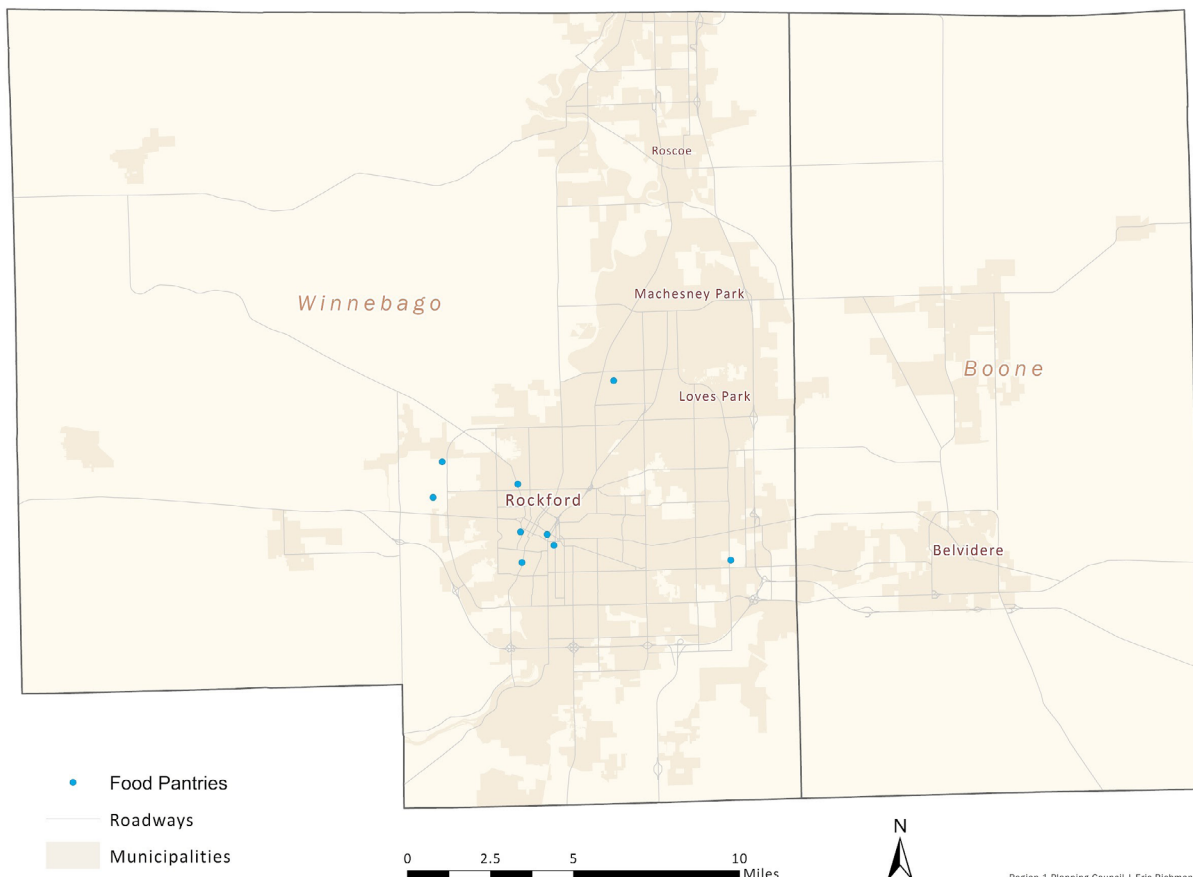


Figure 7.4: Food Security in Winnebago County

Note: Shopping carts represent full-service grocery stores, the knife and fork represent soup kitchens and pantries, and the house represents food assistance agencies.

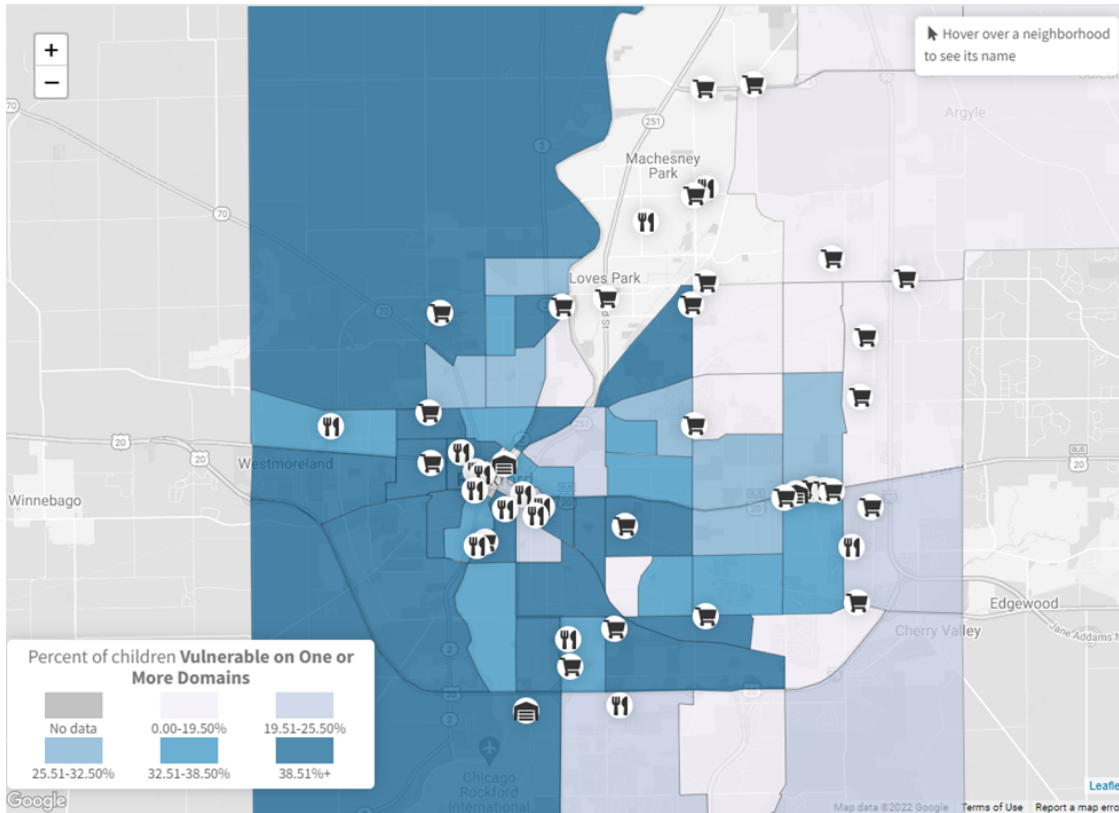
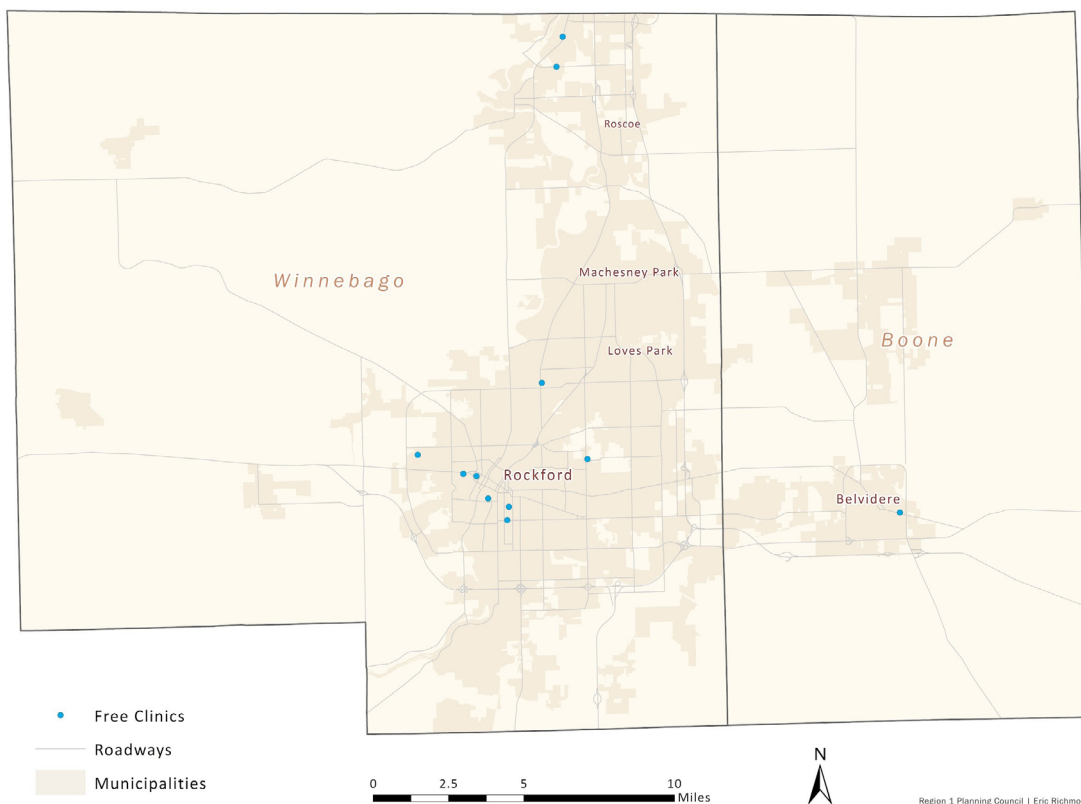


Figure 7.5: Free Healthcare Centers in Boone and Winnebago & Boone County

Free Healthcare Clinics in Winnebago & Boone Counties



Healthcare Centers

Boone and Winnebago Counties have a number of healthcare clinics that provide services for free or on a sliding scale for uninsured or underinsured people. These include larger systems, such as Crusader Community Health, as well as smaller clinics like The Bridge Clinic.¹⁰³ Crusader is also the only operating free clinic in Boone County.¹⁰⁴

Strengths of Community

The region with Boone and Winnebago Counties has a number of strengths that can support eligible people. There are a number of affordable housing options in the region along with health care systems supporting people with low or no insurance. Green space and outdoor locations are common across the region and allow residents to exercise or experience the other benefits of nature. The cost of living in Rockford is 75.3% of the US's cost of living.¹⁰⁵ Anecdotally, the region also has a large number of people working to support their community, developing large numbers of grassroots programs and organizations to provide resources.

Community Partnerships

Non-Profit

American Red Cross
B1 Food Pantry
Boone County Council on Aging
Boone County Housing Authority
Boone County United Way
Family Peace Center
Empower Boone (Food Pantry)
Northwestern Illinois Area on Aging
Northern Illinois Food Bank
Regional Access Mobilization Project (RAMP)
Remedies
Rock River Valley Pantry
Rockford Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (RAASE)
Rockford Housing Authority
Rockford Park District
Rockford Sexual Assault
United Way of Rock River Valley
Winnebago County Veterans Assistance Commission
Winnebago County Housing Authority
YMCA of Belvidere
YMCA of Rock River Valley
Youth Services Network/Meld

Faith Based

Carpenters Place
One Body Collaborative

Rockford Rescue Mission
Rockford Today Network
Rock Valley College Refugee and Immigrant Services
Salvation Army (Rockford/Winnebago Co.)
Salvation Army (Belvidere/Boone Co.)
Shelter Care Ministries
Zion Development

Local Government

Cherry Valley Township
City of Rockford Building Development
City of Rockford Community Development
Rockford Township

State Government

Illinois Department of Human Services
Illinois Employment Training Center (Boone and Winnebago)

Federal Government

Housing and Urban Development

For-Profit Business or Corporation

Rockford Business Association
Total Plumbing and Heating

Consortiums/Collaborations

Boone County Hunger Coalition
Continuum of Care
Rockford Health Council
WIOA Youth Council

School Districts

Belvidere School District 100
Harlem School District 122
Regional Office of Education
Rockford School District 205

Institutions of Post-Secondary Education/Training

Northern Illinois University
Rock Valley College
Rockford University

Financial/Banking Institutions

PNC Bank

Health Service Organizations

Boone County Health Department
Crusader Community Health
NAMI of Northern Illinois
Rosecrance Ware Center
Winnebago Community Health Department

Statewide Associations or Collaborations

Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies

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