

# Pocono Services for Families and Children Community Needs Assessment



Pocono Services for Families and Children  
Head Start and Early Head Start Program  
Monroe County, PA  
*Published December 2023*

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Community Needs Assessment  
**Contents**

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction to PSFC
3. Demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and families - Monroe County's population
4. Employment
5. Poverty & Food Insecurity
6. Housing & Homelessness
7. Adoption/Foster Care
8. Disabilities
9. Race/Ethnicity
10. Education
11. Child Development and Child Care Programs serving Head Start eligible children
12. COVID Impact on Child Care and PSFC
13. Number of PSFC At-Risk Families & Children

This community needs assessment was prepared in accordance with 45 CFR 1302.11 of the Head Start Performance Standards. It serves as an overall assessment of local social and economic conditions for the entire service area as it relates to the needs, priorities, and lives of Head Start and Early Head Start eligible families and children and other low-income families in the service area. The Federal Office of Head Start requires all programs to conduct a thorough community assessment every 5 years. This information is collected from census data, online research, program and community information, and feedback from stakeholders (parent, staff, community partners, etc.). The resulting data is compiled into this formal document that includes strengths, needs, and resources around the community but more importantly is used to steer PSFC Early Head Start/Head Start program planning as well as our short and long-term goals. It is through this process that we can address the needs of the families we serve and maximize our efforts to support the children of our community. Trends throughout our service area become apparent and we can use that knowledge to guide program needs as well as training opportunities for families and staff. Although the formal process occurs every 5 years, Head Start of Monroe County is annually using surveys with parents, staff, and community agencies to measure not only satisfaction levels but to monitor needs and areas of concern. This information then directly flows into our selection criteria priorities, our school readiness goal planning, our Parent Family Community Engagement planning, and our overall program goals.

The Head Start and Early Head Start Program of Monroe County's Governing Board, Policy Council, and staff utilize the community needs assessment on an ongoing basis in order to determine:

- The overall vision and direction of the program
- Program goals as well as short- and long-term program objectives
- The types of services that are needed for program families
- The service delivery options to be implemented
- The recruitment area that will be served
- Appropriate locations for services
- Criteria that define the types of children and families who will be prioritized for selection and enrollment

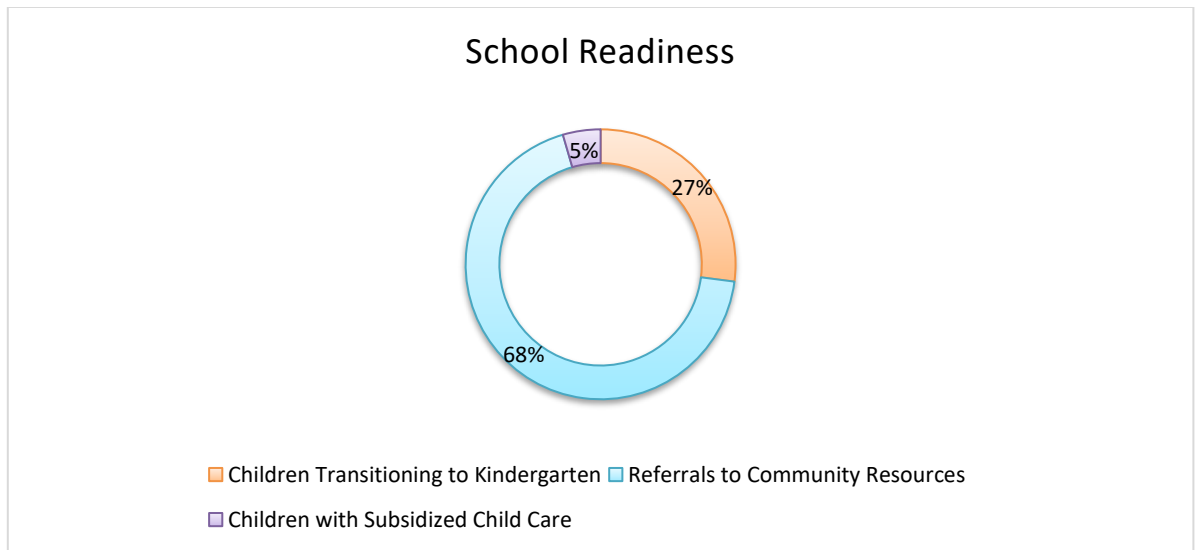
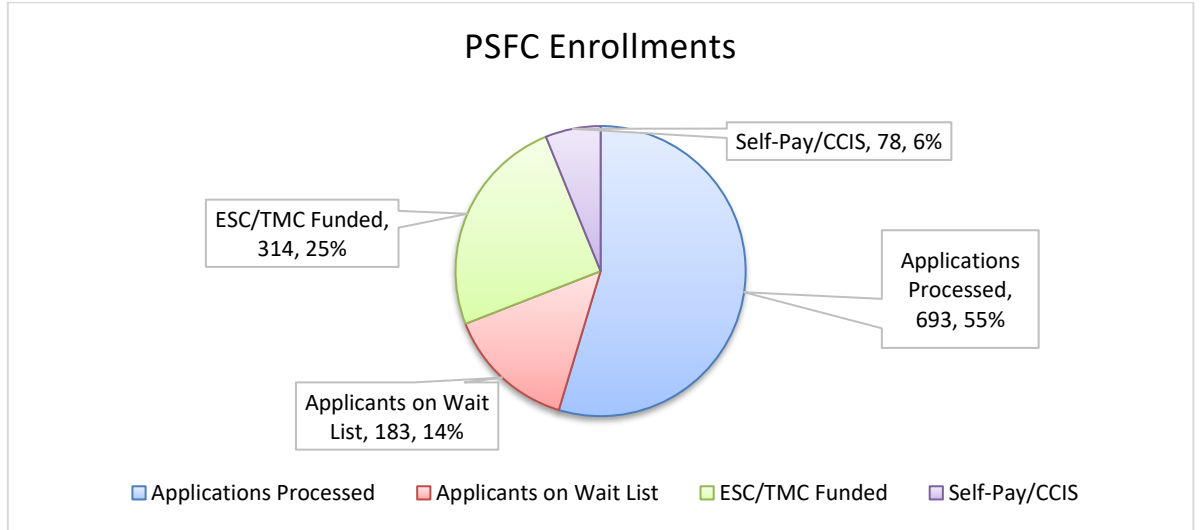
Based on the data collected from the multitude of sources, there is a continued need to focus on the following both in the community and throughout our program:

- Safe and affordable childcare
- Transportation
- Housing and homelessness
- Health & Wellness
- Mental health needs to include trauma, domestic violence and now isolation and other issues brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic

It is our hope that the efforts of our program will lead to new opportunities for children and families in Monroe County who can benefit from the support of our comprehensive services and strong partnerships. Despite COVID-19 pandemic and its cascading impacts over the past few years, we are focused on an approach that seeks to advance health equity and authentic community engagement. We have been a leader in the early childhood community for 55+ years and our focus will continue to be on doing whatever it takes to empower children and families to reach their full potential in learning and in life.

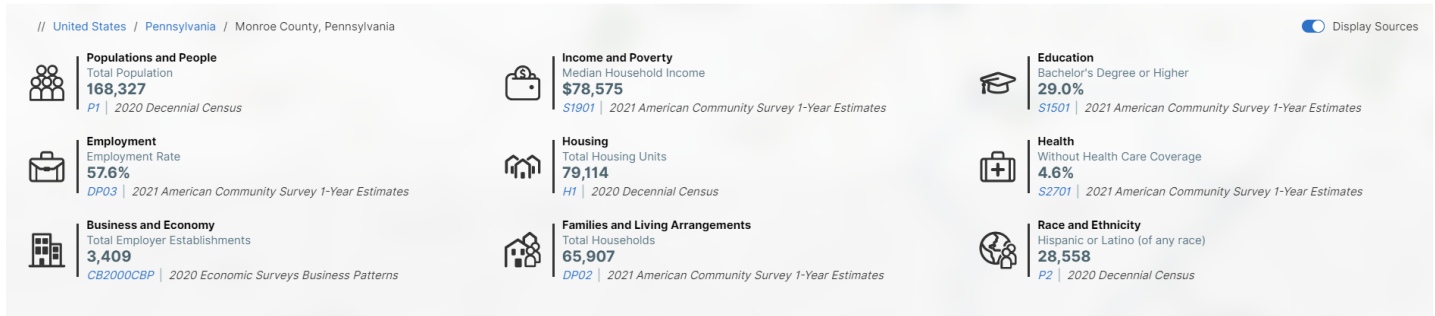
Pocono Services for Families and Children has been providing school readiness services to eligible children and families for over 55 years in Monroe County, Pennsylvania. In 1965, PSFC began with 12 Head Start children in East Stroudsburg and 1 part-time staff person. Today, as a grantee for Monroe County, PSFC is federally funded to provide services to over 329 Head Start and Early Head Start children. We are currently staffed with over 100 full-time and part-time employees, have since opened The Mountain Center in Tobyhanna, and have 2 active classrooms located within the East Stroudsburg School district buildings. Services are provided to neediest areas throughout Monroe County, closely working with all four school districts (East Stroudsburg, Pocono Mountain, Stroudsburg, and Pleasant Valley).

The charts below reflect PY 2021-2022.



## Monroe County Population

The U.S. Census Bureau reports from July 1, 2021, state Monroe County, PA has 608.3 square miles of land area and is the 36<sup>th</sup> largest county in Pennsylvania by total area. Monroe County is bordered by Wayne, Pike, Northampton, Carbon, Luzerne, and Lackawanna Counties.



Monroe County's population **shrank 0.3%** from the **169,852** people who lived there in **2010**. For comparison, the population in the U.S. **grew 7.3%** and the population in Pennsylvania **grew 2%** during that period. Monroe County's population increased **5** out of the **11** years between year **2010** and year **2021**. Its largest annual population increase was **1%** between **2016 and 2017**. The county's largest decline was between **2019 and 2020** when the population dropped **1.1%**. Between **2010** and **2021**, the county shrank by an average of **0%** per year.

Among 6 age groups - 0 to 4, 5 to 19, 20 to 34, 35 to 49, 50 to 64, and 65 and older - the **65+ group** was the fastest growing between **2010** and **2021** with its population increasing **43.2%**. The **35 to 49** age group decline the most, dropping **22.1%** between **2010** and **2021**.

The share of the population that is **0 to 4 years old** decreased from **5%** in **2010** to **4.6%** in **2021**. The share of the population that is **65 and older** increased from **12.8%** in **2010** to **18.5%** in **2021**.

In Monroe County, there are a total of 7,744 children eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start. According to the Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) the program is funded to serve **329** HS and EHS in 2022-2023 program year. In total Monroe County serves only 4.25% of children under 5 years old.

The table below provides population by age range (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey):

### Population by Age Range

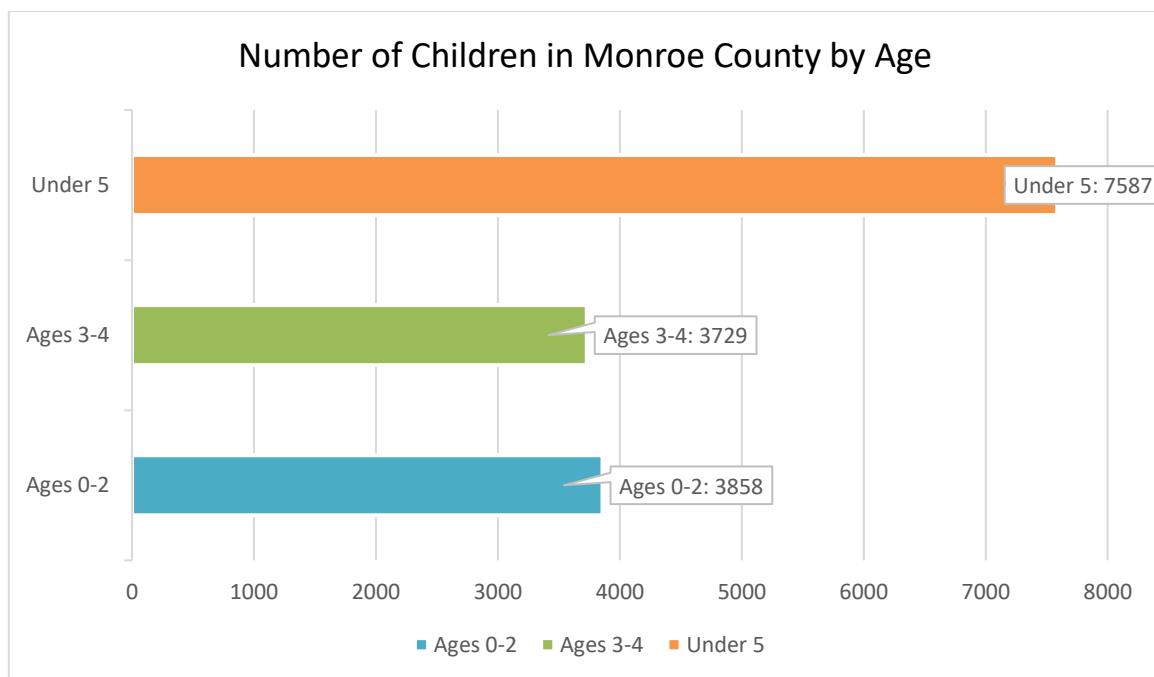
in Monroe County, Pennsylvania

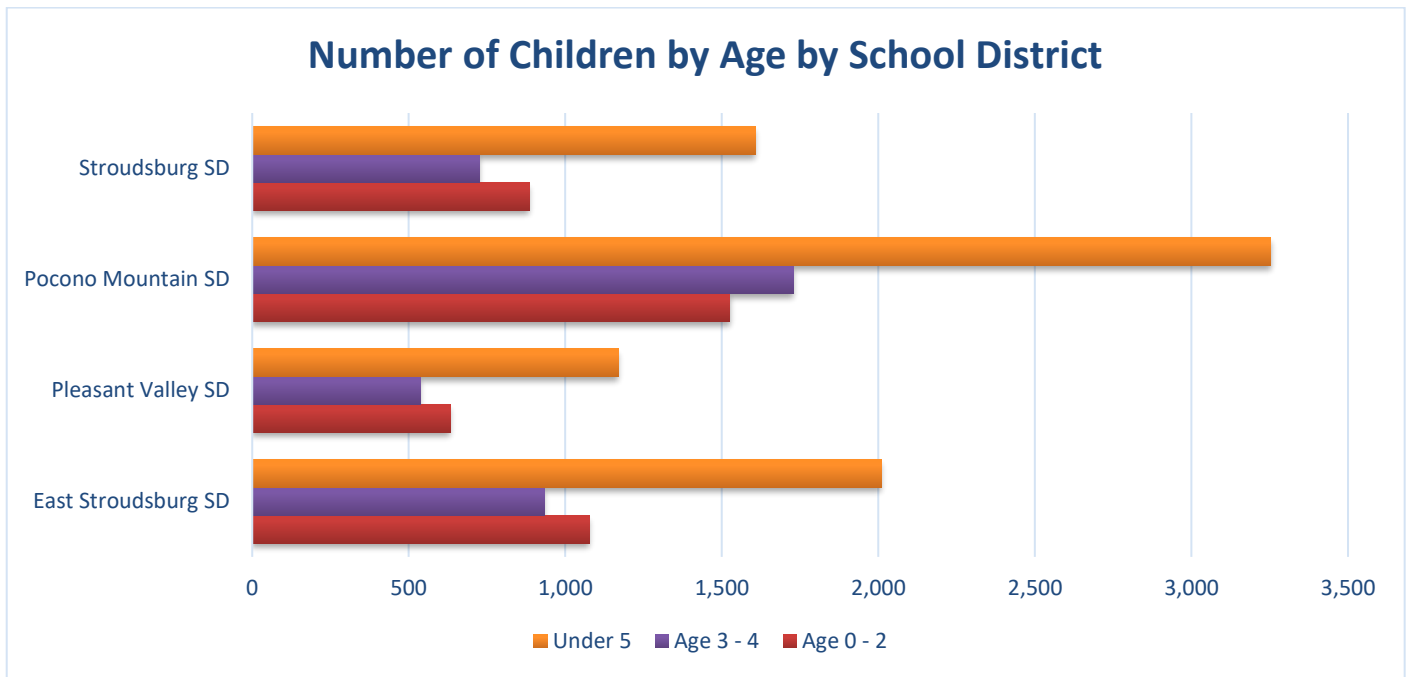
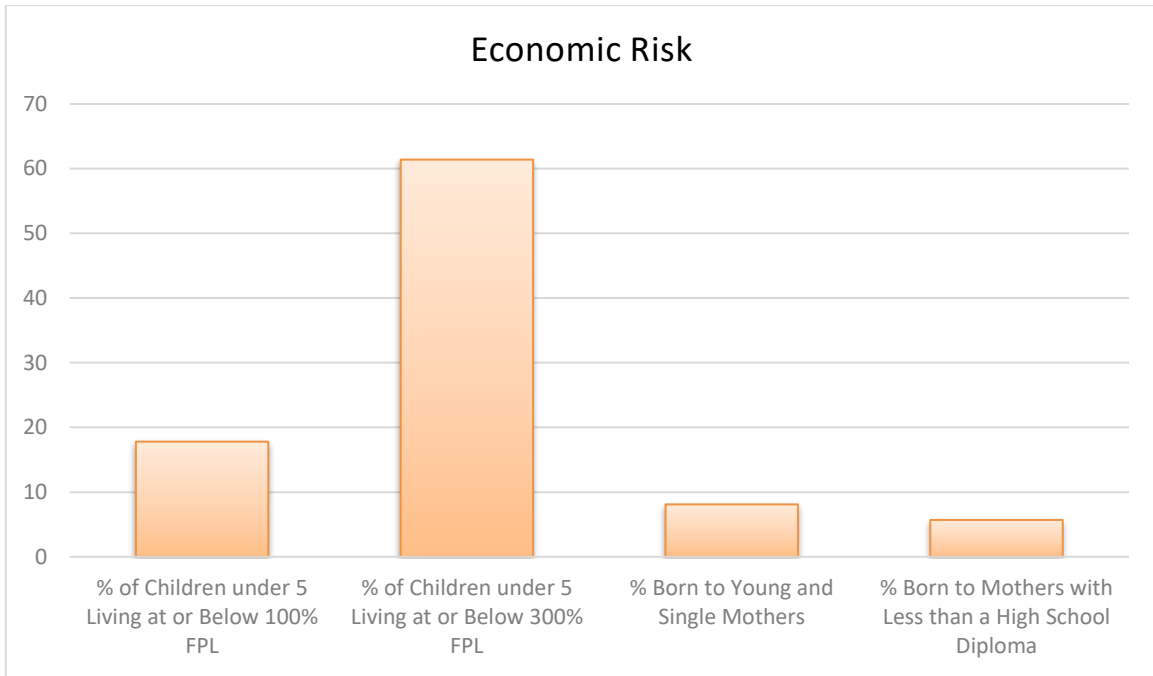
DP05



Measure	Value
Under 5 years	4.6%
Under 18 years	19.6%
18 years and over	80.4%
65 years and over	17.4%

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) *Reach and Risk Assessment* published in January of 2019 for the 2016-2017 school year shows the following breakdown of children by age, by economical risk factor, and by school district. This is the most recent report published by OCDEL.

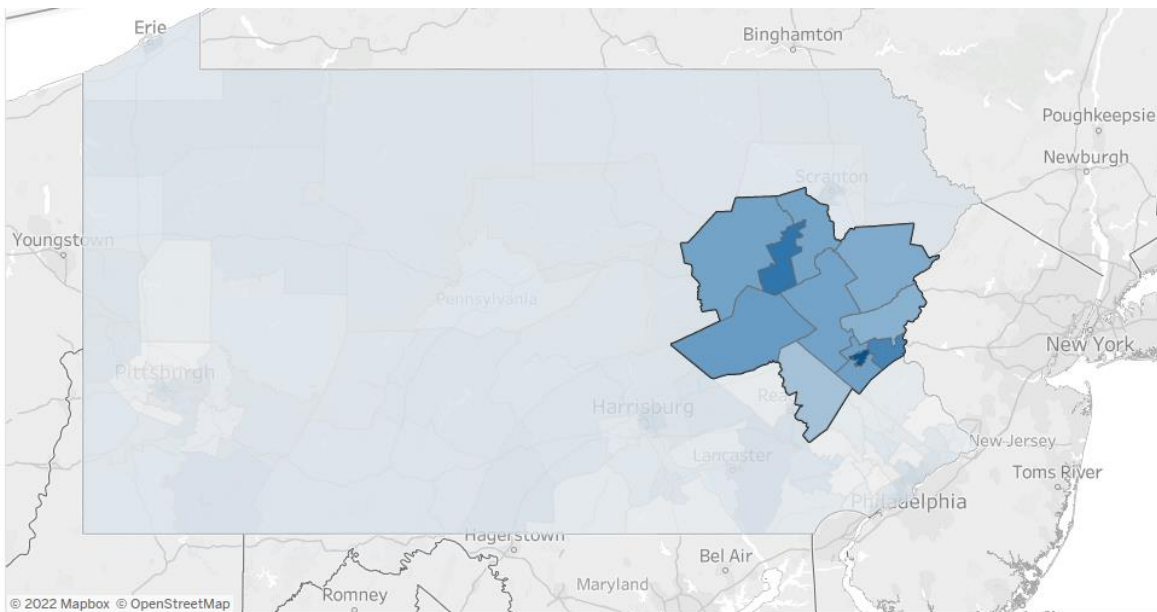




## ALICE Population

ALICE is Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed individuals and families that represent the growing number of who are unable to afford the basics of housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care and technology. The reality is that between families in poverty and those who are ALICE, almost half (49%) of children in the U.S. in 2019 lived in households with income below the ALICE Threshold, struggling to afford essentials in the communities where they lived (Pocono Mountains United Way).

- PA has 43% (or 698,628) of children who are at or below ALICE
- PA has 436,173 children who are considered at or below poverty level
- Monroe County has a **total of 33,459 children**, of these children, **7,617 children at or below ALICE** and **4,644 children at or below poverty level**
- Counties surrounding Monroe:
  - Carbon & Lehigh - total children 25,906 – 9,260 ALICE – 1,153 Poverty
  - Luzerne EAST - total children 25,113 – 6,255 ALICE – 3,706 Poverty
  - Luzerne SOUTH CENTRAL - total children 27,493 – 7,466 ALICE – 9,791 Poverty
  - Lackawanna - total children 27,398 – 6,637 ALICE – 4,146 Poverty
  - Pike, Wayne & Susquehanna - total children 25,267 – 7,219 ALICE – 4,457 Poverty



Percent Below ALICE Threshold  
8%  83%

### All Children - Pennsylvania

Name	Above ALICE Threshold	ALICE	Poverty	Grand Total
Allentown City PUMA	5,604	16,050	9,812	31,466
Berks County (East) PUMA	20,768	6,866	709	28,343
Carbon & Lehigh (North) C..	15,493	9,260	1,153	25,906
Columbia & Luzerne (West)..	12,833	5,920	2,693	21,446
Lehigh County (South--Out..	20,262	9,549	4,507	34,318
Luzerne County (East)--Kin..	15,152	6,255	3,706	25,113
Luzerne County (South Ce..	10,236	7,466	9,791	27,493
Monroe County PUMA	21,198	7,617	4,644	33,459
Northampton (South) & Leh..	14,408	13,960	2,932	31,300
Northampton County	21,113	10,213	754	32,080
Schuylkill County PUMA	15,648	9,281	2,713	27,642



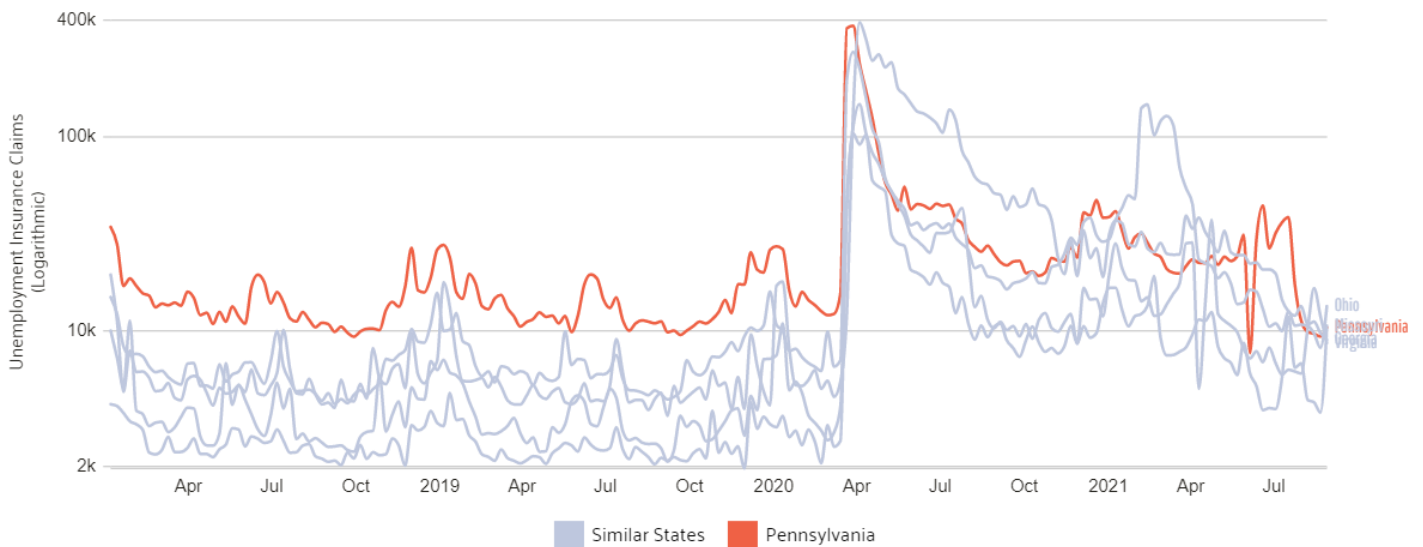
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## Employment

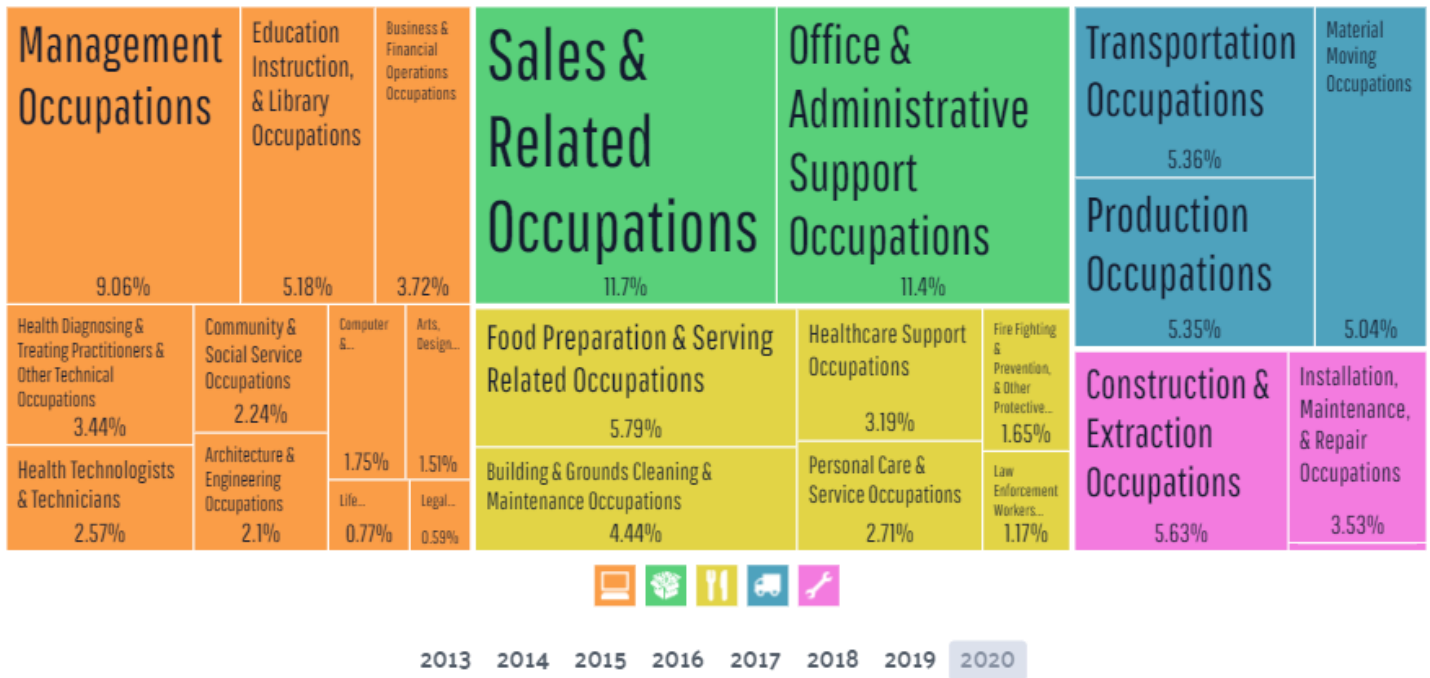
According to the 2020 Data USA county profiles and the Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimate, from 2019 to 2020, employment in Monroe County declined at a rate of -0.197% from 80.3k employees to 80.2k employees.

The following chart shows weekly unemployment insurance claims in Pennsylvania compared four states (Missouri, Virginia, Ohio, and Georgia) with the most similar impact.

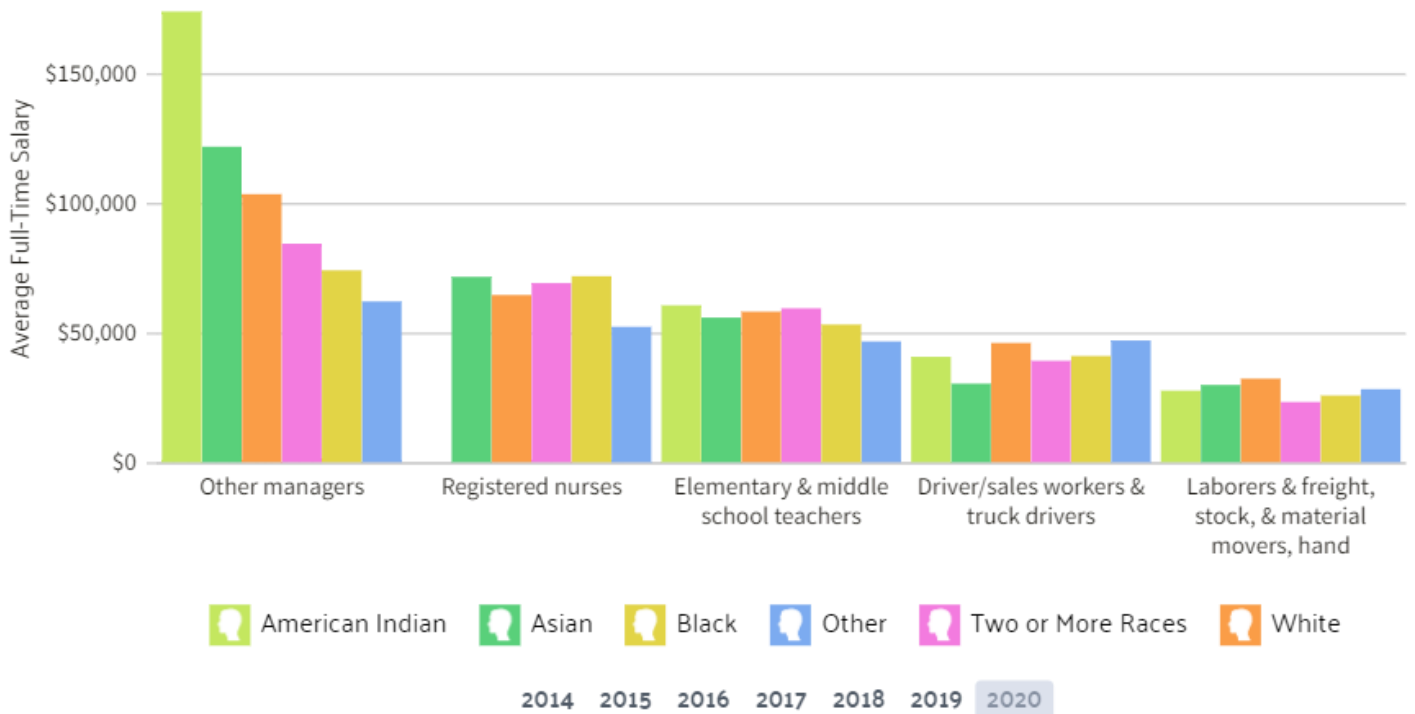


The most common job groups, by number of people are Sales and Related Occupations (9,380), Office and Administrative Support Occupations (9,110 people), and Management Occupations (7,264). This chart illustrates the share breakdown of the primary jobs held by residents of Monroe County. Please take note in 2020, the lower percent of jobs in Education Instruction with 4,151 people or 5.18% and Social Service 1,793 or 2.24%.

Total: 80.2k



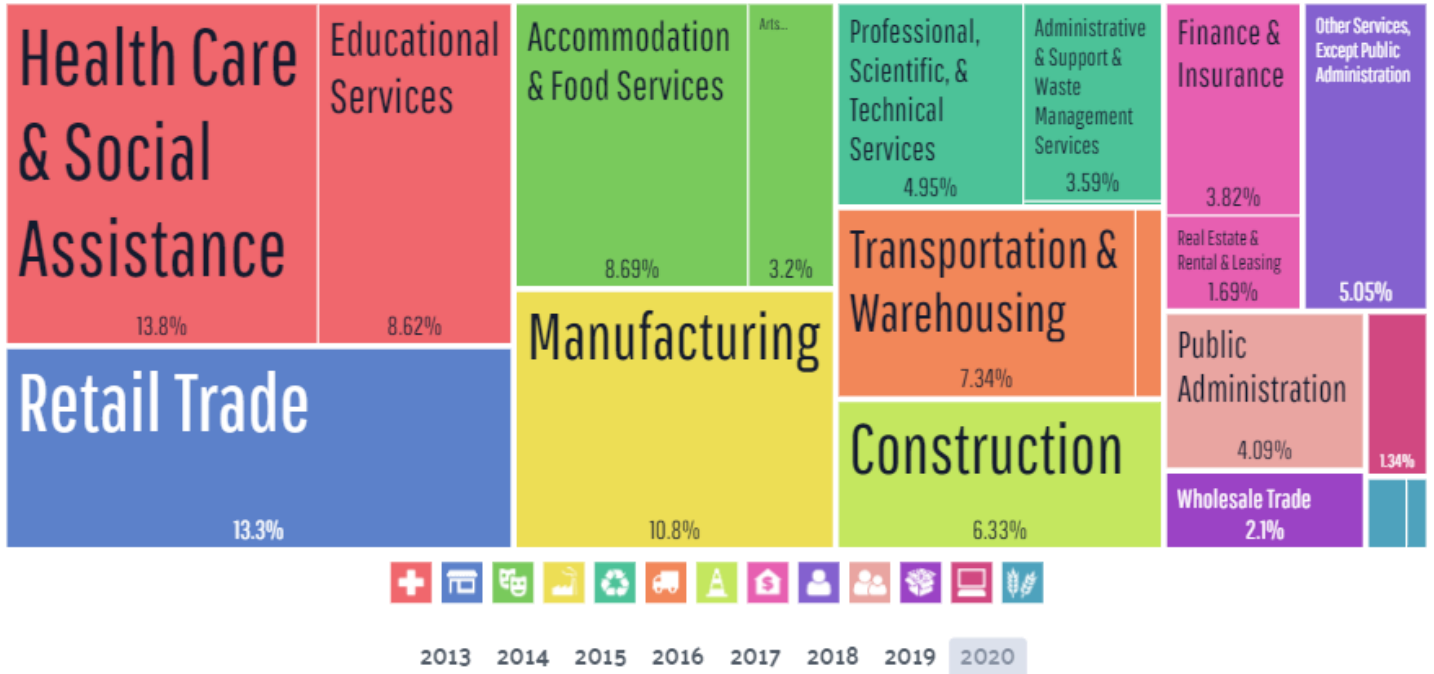
The following chart shows the race and ethnicity-based wage disparities in the 5 most common occupations in PA by number of full-time employees.



The most common employment sectors for those who live in Monroe County are Health Care and Social Assistance (11,082 people), Retail Trade (10,658 people), and Manufacturing (8,632 people).

This chart shows the share breakdown of the primary industries for residents of Monroe County, though some of these residents may live in Monroe County and work somewhere else.

Total: 80.2k



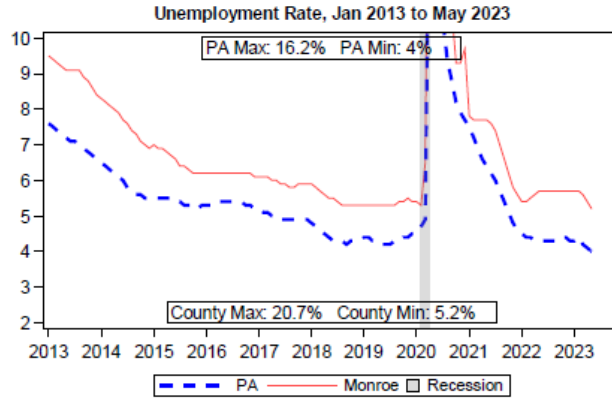
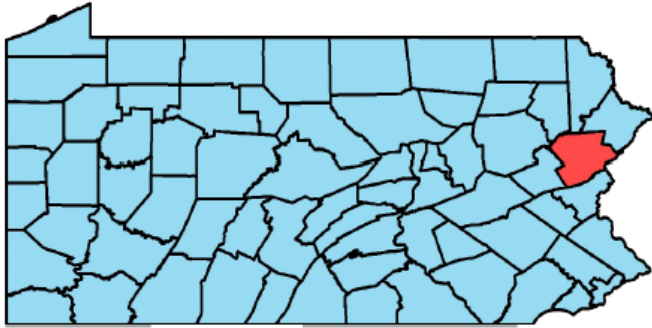
The Monthly County profile is compilation of selected economic, geographic, and demographic data for all Pennsylvania’s 67 counties. This information is provided by the PA Department of Labor and Industry Center for Workforce Information and Analysis.

This statistical snapshot includes information in the following areas:

- Map with the county highlighted
- Population of the county
- Online Job Postings
- Labor Force and Unemployment Rate
- Personal Income
- Major Employers
- Employment and wages by industry sector
- Wages by Major Occupational Group

# Monroe County Profile

June 2023



2021 Population		
Demographic	County	PA
Total Population	168,128	12,970,650
Female	84,352	6,576,433
Male	83,776	6,394,217
Population by Race		
White	73.0%	78.3%
Black	14.2%	11.0%
Other	12.8%	10.7%
Hispanic Origin (all races)	17.2%	7.9%
Population by Age		
Ages 0 to 17	19.7%	20.9%
Ages 18 to 24	10.3%	8.9%
Ages 25 to 34	11.4%	13.1%
Ages 35 to 44	10.9%	12.0%
Ages 45 to 54	14.1%	12.7%
Ages 55 to 64	16.1%	14.2%
Ages 65 to 74	11.1%	10.6%
Ages 75 and Older	6.5%	7.6%
Median Age	43.3	40.8

Source: U.S. Census 5 Year Estimate 2017-2021 (Tables: DP05 and B01001)

Online Job Postings	County	PA
May 2023	2,112	213,131
May 2022	2,773	219,062
Annual Percent Change	-23.8%	-2.7%
Annual Volume Change	-661	-5,931

Source: The Conference Board - LightCast - Help Wanted OnLine™

2021 Veterans	County	PA
Total Veterans	10,833	703,580
Veteran Median Income	\$44,714	\$42,205
Non-Veteran Median Income	\$32,150	\$34,377
Veteran Unemployment Rate	4.3%	4.6%
Non-Veteran Unemployment Rate	6.1%	5.5%

Source: U.S. Census 5 Year Estimate 2017-2021 (Table: S2101)

2021 Resident Income	County	PA
Per Capita Income	\$53,118	\$64,279
Total Personal Income (in thousands)	\$8,991,360	\$833,314,466
Total Earnings (in thousands)	\$5,195,189	\$490,499,452
Total Dividends/Interest/Rent (in thousands)	\$1,273,360	\$134,916,974
Total Transfer Payments (in thousands)	\$2,522,811	\$207,898,040

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Local Area Unemployment Statistics		
May 2023	County	PA
Unemployment Rate	5.2%	4.0%
Labor Force	82,600	6,510,000
Employed	78,200	6,251,000
Unemployed	4,300	259,000

Notes: Current month's data are preliminary. Data are Seasonally Adjusted.

Unemployment Compensation Exhaustees				
Jun 2022 to May 2023	Volume		Percent of Total	
	County	PA	County	PA
Natural Resources & Mining	0	290	0.0%	1.0%
Construction	40	6,600	7.5%	18.5%
Manufacturing	50	3,430	9.5%	9.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	160	6,350	29.5%	17.5%
Information	10	490	2.0%	1.5%
Financial Activities	20	2,040	3.5%	5.5%
Professional & Business Services	130	6,530	24.0%	18.0%
Education & Health Services	50	6,050	9.5%	17.0%
Leisure & Hospitality	60	2,330	11.0%	6.5%
Other Services	10	810	2.0%	2.5%
Government	10	1,000	2.0%	3.0%
Info Not Available	0	80	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Percentages less than 0.5% will be displayed as 0.0%.  
Source: Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation System

Top 10 Employers by Employment in Q4 of 2022
Federal Government
Aventis Pasteur Inc
Wal-Mart Associates Inc
Pocono Medical Center
Pocono Mountain School District
CMBK Resort Operations LLC
East Stroudsburg Area School District
Kalahari Resorts & Conventions
Saint Luke's Hospital
Mount Airy Casino Resort

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2022 Annual Averages									
NAICS	NAICS Description	Estab.		Employment		Employment %		Wages	
		County	LQ	County	PA	County	PA	County	PA
	Total, All Industries	3,642	1.00	55,050	5,862,949	100.0%	100.0%	\$50,941	\$67,279
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	26	0.66	168	27,141	0.3%	0.5%	\$26,049	\$42,548
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas	7	0.34	69	21,629	0.1%	0.4%	\$54,754	\$102,983
22	Utilities	10	0.47	148	33,477	0.3%	0.6%	\$100,477	\$106,982
23	Construction	349	0.74	1,855	267,211	3.4%	4.6%	\$53,542	\$75,090
31-33	Manufacturing	119	0.95	5,046	564,375	9.2%	9.6%	\$89,311	\$72,177
42	Wholesale Trade	110	0.32	633	213,185	1.1%	3.6%	\$65,080	\$95,546
44-45	Retail Trade	578	1.53	8,663	603,175	15.7%	10.3%	\$32,244	\$36,321
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	156	1.13	3,845	344,380	6.6%	5.9%	\$52,503	\$56,876
51	Information	42	0.32	289	96,283	0.5%	1.6%	\$52,646	\$114,615
52	Finance and Insurance	144	0.34	850	269,176	1.5%	4.6%	\$66,515	\$114,781
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	149	0.82	515	67,199	0.9%	1.1%	\$46,609	\$73,443
54	Professional and Technical Services	308	0.34	1,250	394,980	2.3%	6.7%	\$61,140	\$113,484
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	31	0.15	202	145,185	0.4%	2.5%	\$133,444	\$145,963
56	Administrative and Waste Services	197	0.76	2,222	311,141	4.0%	5.3%	\$39,640	\$49,973
61	Educational Services	87	1.05	4,685	474,105	8.5%	8.1%	\$63,939	\$65,378
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	442	0.80	8,026	1,063,262	14.6%	18.1%	\$60,591	\$62,201
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	81	1.42	1,288	96,439	2.3%	1.6%	\$29,372	\$42,014
72	Accommodation and Food Services	416	2.28	9,511	443,345	17.3%	7.6%	\$27,393	\$23,609
81	Other Services (Except Public Administration)	340	1.01	1,873	197,748	3.4%	3.4%	\$35,615	\$42,757
92	Public Administration	51	1.91	4,114	229,513	7.5%	3.9%	\$68,361	\$70,968
	Total, Suppressed Local Industries	0		0		0.0%			
Company Ownership									
	Total, All Ownership	3,642	1.00	55,050	5,862,949	100.0%	100.0%	\$50,941	\$67,279
	Private Ownership	3,473	0.93	45,498	5,210,182	82.6%	88.9%	\$47,830	\$67,335
	Federal Ownership	55	3.27	3,045	99,050	5.5%	1.7%	\$72,070	\$85,530
	State Ownership	19	0.95	1,117	124,829	2.0%	2.1%	\$73,384	\$71,477
	Local Ownership	95	1.34	5,391	428,887	9.8%	7.3%	\$60,601	\$61,152

Notes: 'Estab.'-Establishments. 'LQ'-(Location Quotient) is the percent of county employment by sector divided by the percent of PA's employment by sector.

Occupational Wages, 2022 Annual Averages					
SOC Code	Major Occupational Group	Entry-Level Wage		Average Wage	
		County	PA	County	PA
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	\$25,020	\$27,980	\$49,650	\$58,470
11-0000	Management	\$53,300	\$61,570	\$109,470	\$126,450
13-0000	Business & Financial Operations	\$44,380	\$46,220	\$75,070	\$80,280
15-0000	Computer & Mathematical	\$47,190	\$52,800	\$79,470	\$94,730
17-0000	Architecture & Engineering	\$56,990	\$53,320	\$84,190	\$89,330
19-0000	Life, Physical, & Social Science	\$46,210	\$44,240	\$77,270	\$75,920
21-0000	Community & Social Service	\$32,390	\$33,860	\$50,420	\$51,980
23-0000	Legal	\$35,880	\$48,780	\$75,970	\$109,460
25-0000	Educational Instruction & Library	\$35,040	\$32,650	\$67,270	\$66,040
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	\$25,370	\$30,610	\$49,890	\$59,420
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$39,640	\$45,120	\$84,730	\$89,820
31-0000	Healthcare Support	\$24,640	\$25,040	\$32,830	\$33,120
33-0000	Protective Service	\$26,890	\$27,470	\$48,310	\$52,870
35-0000	Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$19,560	\$20,130	\$28,710	\$29,460
37-0000	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	\$24,670	\$25,020	\$33,810	\$34,860
39-0000	Personal Care & Service	\$19,690	\$20,700	\$31,750	\$33,020
41-0000	Sales & Related	\$21,320	\$23,000	\$34,970	\$47,010
43-0000	Office & Administrative Support	\$27,220	\$29,710	\$41,880	\$44,850
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	\$30,550	\$25,180	\$40,150	\$39,290
47-0000	Construction & Extraction	\$36,300	\$38,120	\$52,760	\$59,770
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	\$33,860	\$35,130	\$51,990	\$55,080
51-0000	Production	\$29,620	\$31,100	\$43,570	\$45,620
53-0000	Transportation & Material Moving	\$26,250	\$28,010	\$39,660	\$42,490

Note: 'ND' represents Non-Disclosable information.



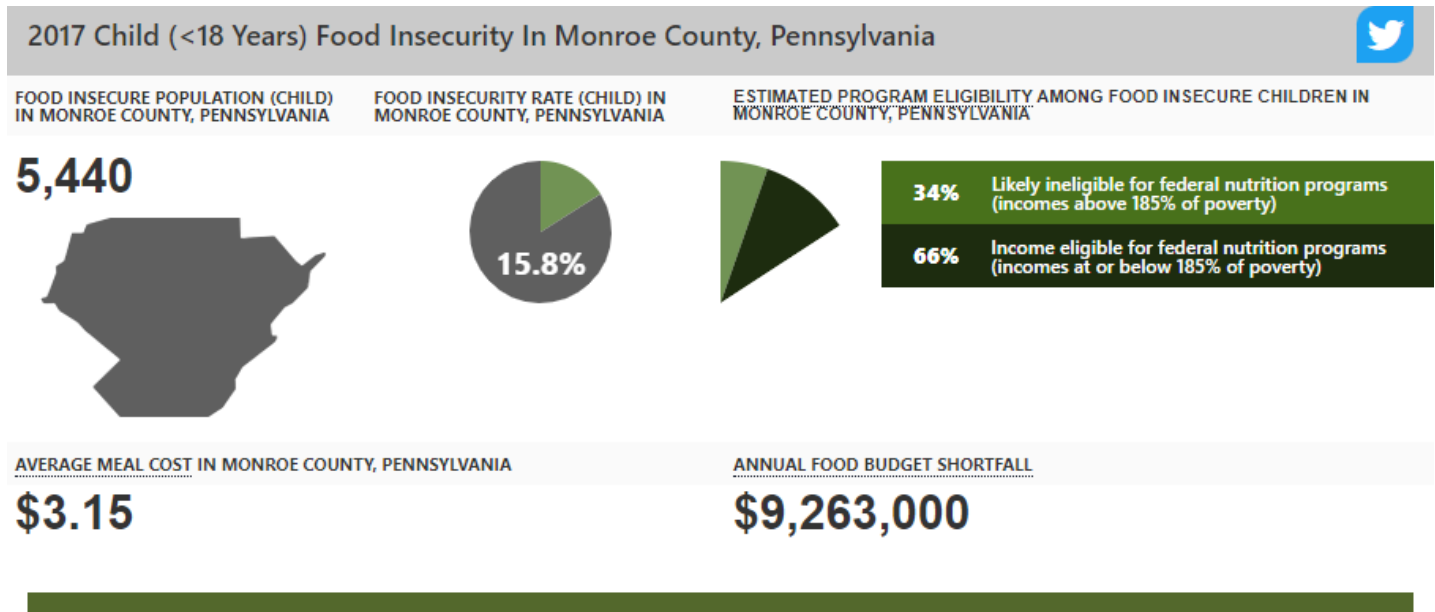
Website: [www.workstats.dli.pa.gov](http://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov) Email: [workforceinfo@pa.gov](mailto:workforceinfo@pa.gov) Phone: 877-4WF-DATA

## Poverty & Food Insecurity

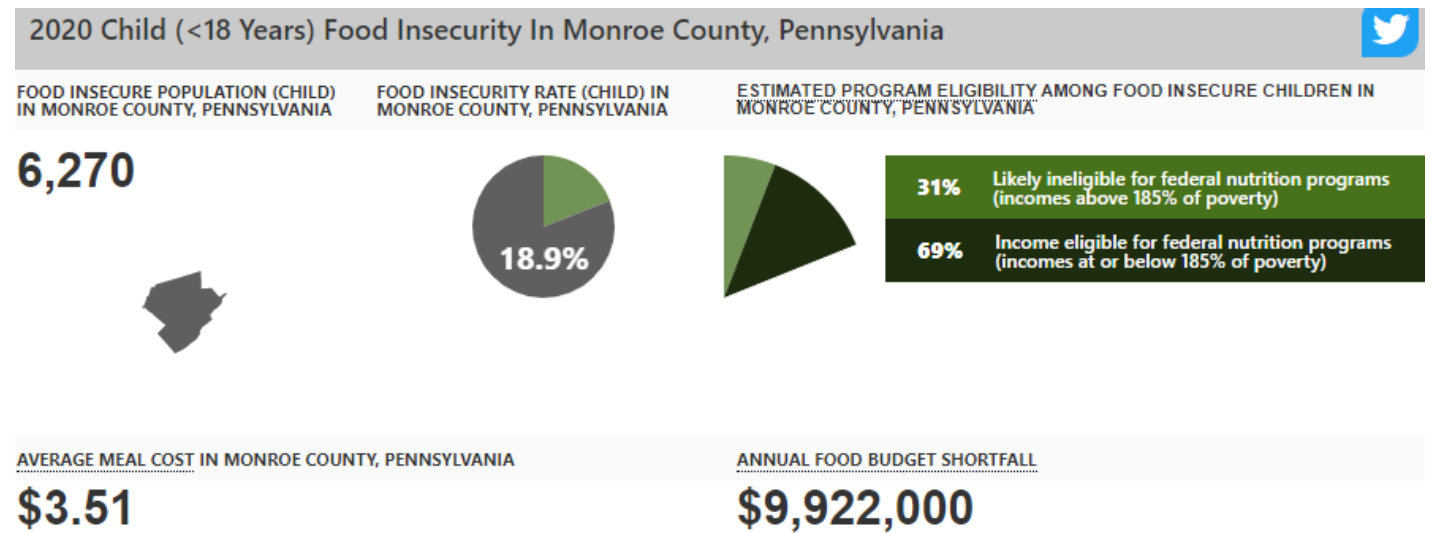
As defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Insecurity is the lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food insecurity is associated with numerous adverse social and health outcomes and is increasingly considered a critical public health issue. Key drivers of food insecurity include unemployment, poverty, and income shocks, which can present adequate access to food. Alternatively, multiple interventions have been shown to reduce food insecurity, including participation in food assistance programs and broader societal level improvements in economic stability.

Chart provided by Feeding America. The following charts show the difference in food insecurity among children under 18 years old prior to COVID in comparison to 2020.

### Before COVID:



### Food Insecurity in 2020:

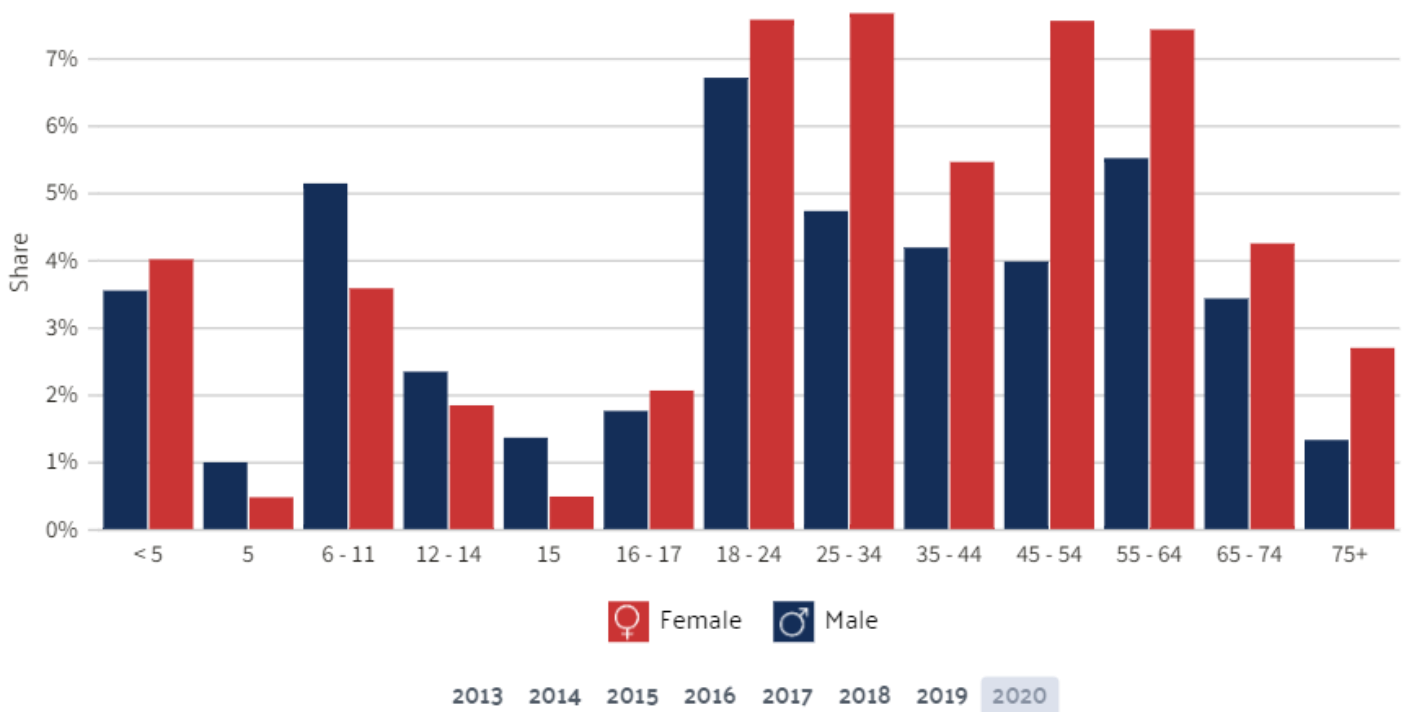


Males in PA have an average income that is 1.34 times higher than the average income of females, which is \$54,196. The income inequality in PA is 0.466, which is lower than the national average. Income inequality had a 0.614% decline from 2019 to 2020, which means that the wage distribution grew somewhat more even.

10.7% of the population for whom poverty status is determined 17.8k out of 166k people live below the poverty line, a number that is lower than the national average of 12.8%. The largest demographic living in poverty are Females 25-34, followed by Females 18-24 and then Females 45-54.

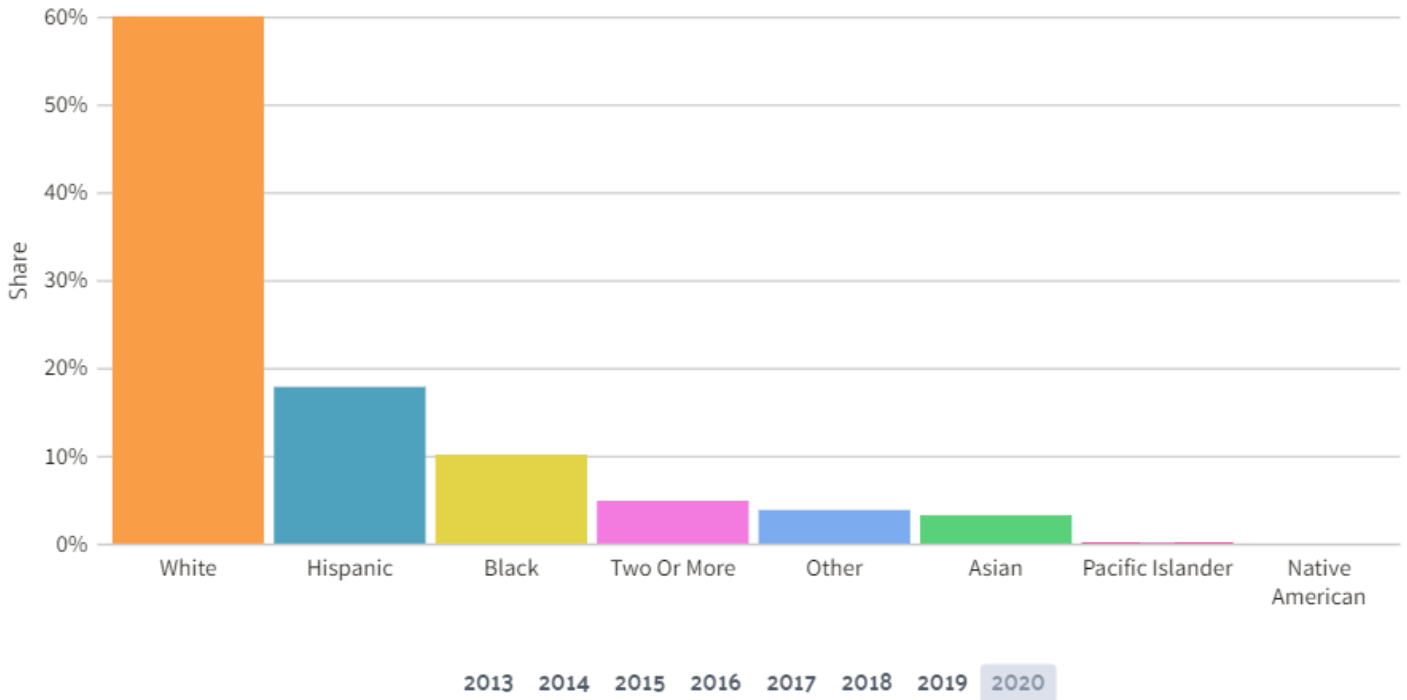
The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who classifies as impoverished. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is living in poverty.

The following chart shows poverty by sex and age.



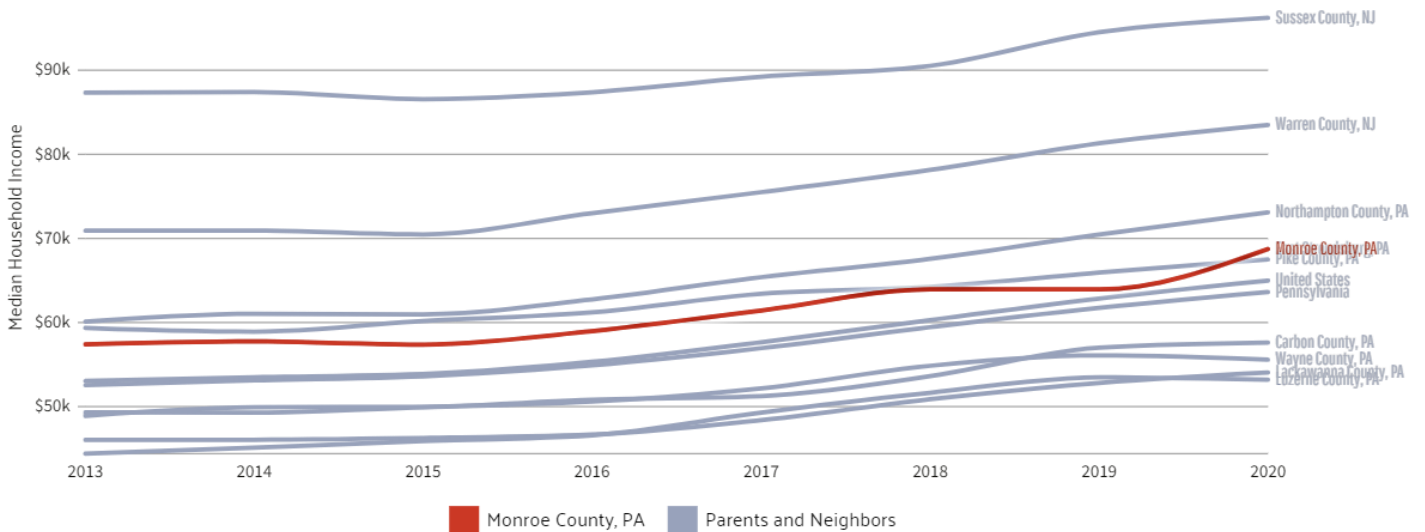
The most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty line is White with 13,025 people, followed by Hispanic with 3,869 people and Black with 2,200 people.

The following chart shows poverty by race and ethnicity.



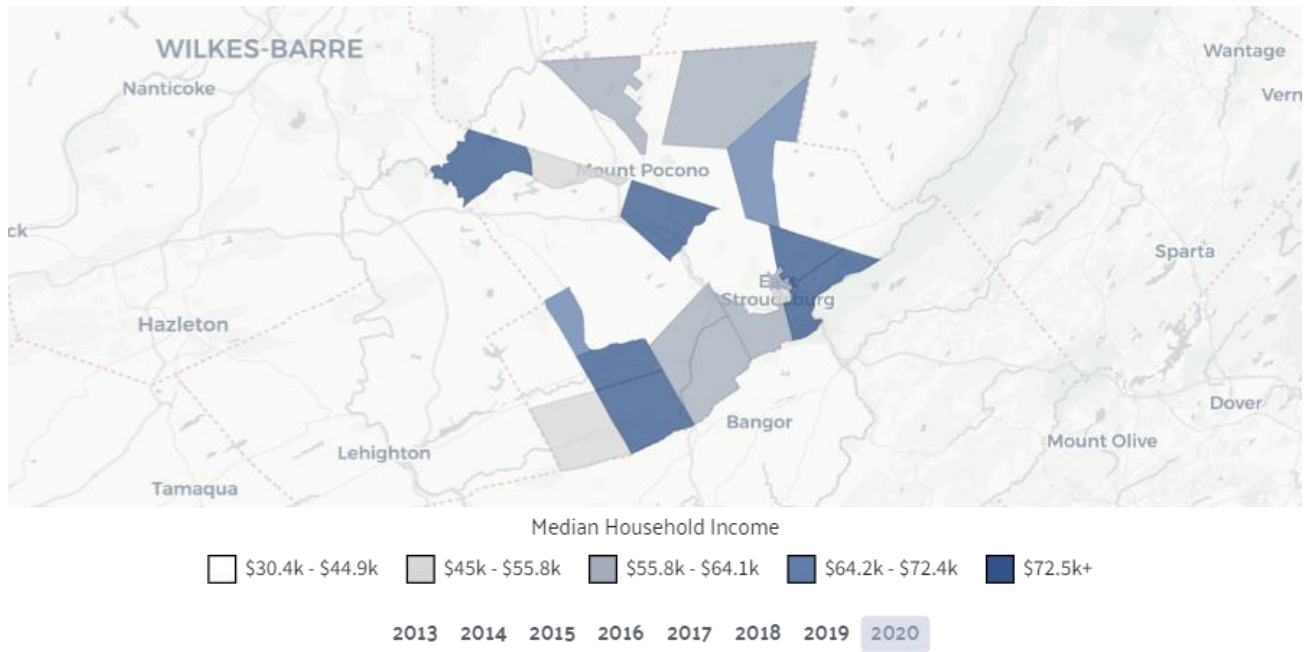
According to the Data USA county profiles, the median household income in Monroe County is \$68,734. In 2020, the tract with the highest median household income in Monroe County was Census Tract 3005.02 with a value of \$83,713, followed by Census Tract 3012.03 and 3003.12 with \$83,955 and \$81,583. Monroe County’s annual income is more than the median annual income of \$64,994 across the entire United States. This is in comparison to a median income of \$63,934 in 2019, which represents a 7.51% annual growth.

The following chart, provided by the Census Bureau ACS 5-year estimate, shows how the median household income compares to that of its neighboring and parent geographies.

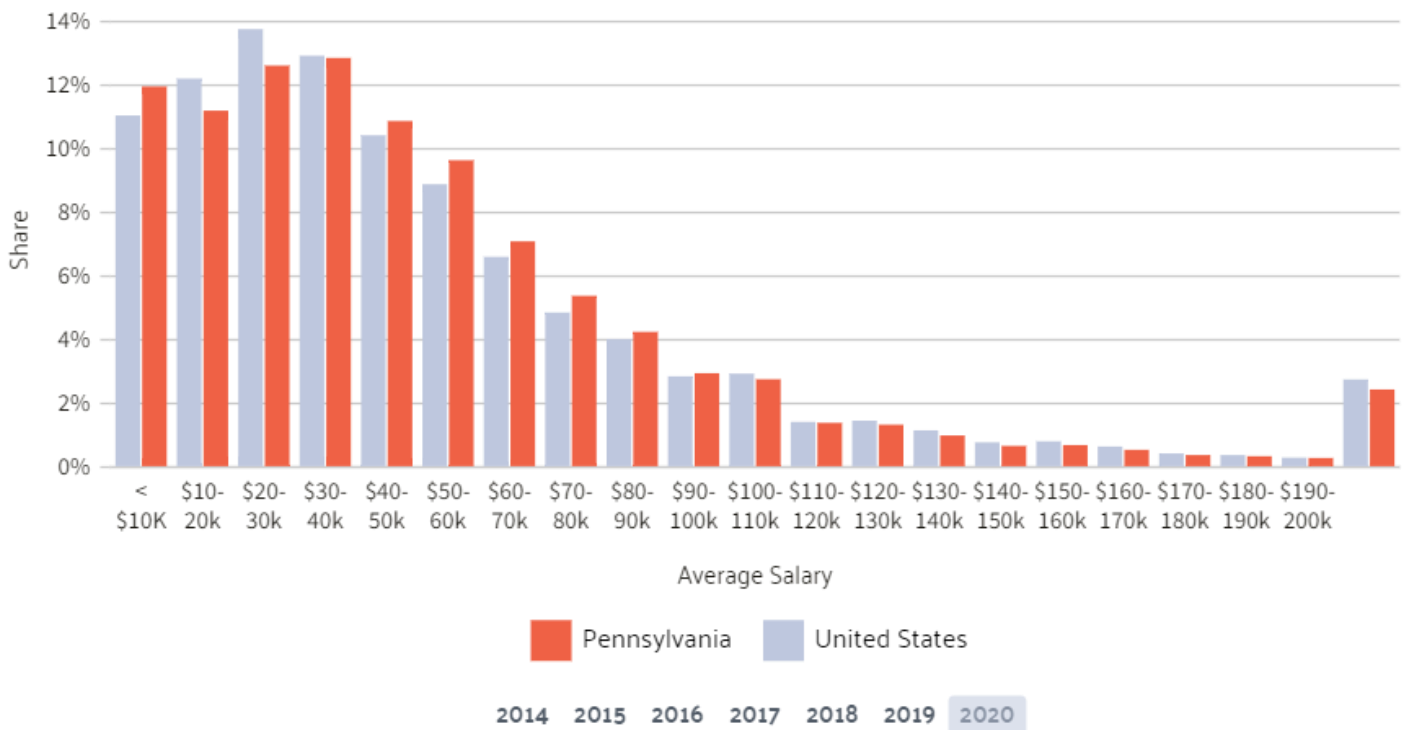




The following map shows all the tracts colored by their Median household Income in Monroe County.



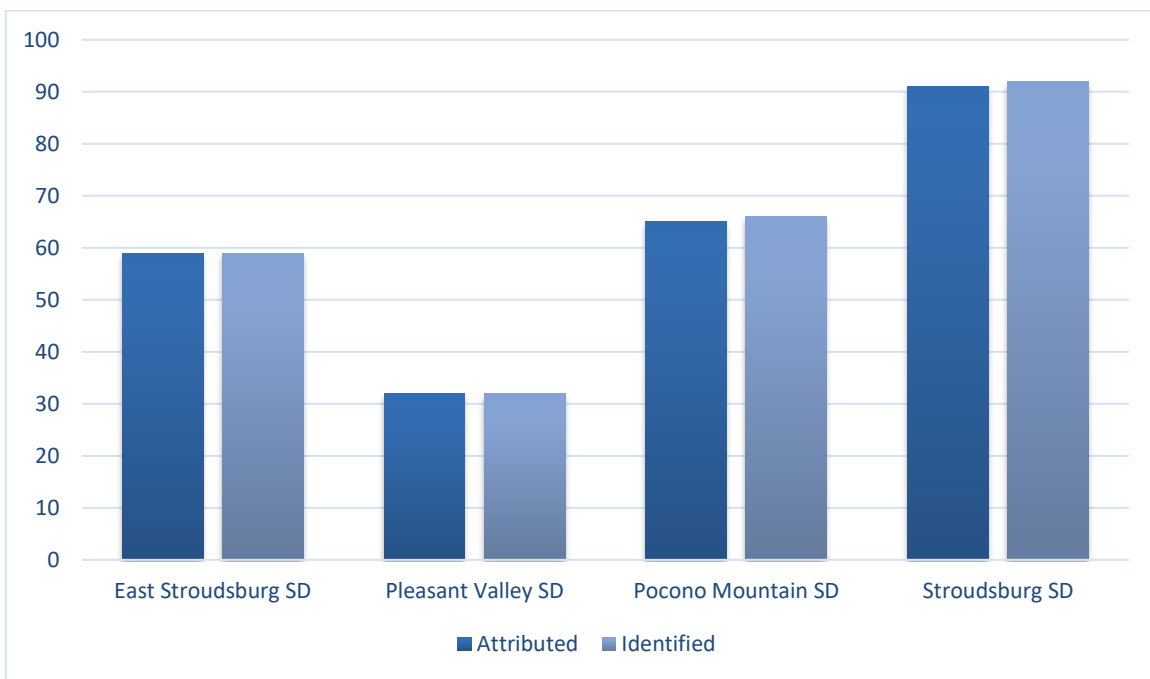
This chart shows the number of workers across various wage buckets compared to the national average.



In Monroe County, there are a total of 62,032 households, each made up of approximately 3 household members. Family establishments represent 70.71% of these residents. Non-family units account for the remaining 29.29%. Of all the households, 29.54% have children.

According to the PA Department of Education, the McKinney-Vento Act, Education for Homeless Children and Youth ensures that all homeless children and youth have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school. In 2020-2021 program year, education and community agencies identified 32,666 children and youth experiencing homelessness served by Pennsylvania’s Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program. According to their 2020-2021 counts by county, **Monroe County served 337 children experiencing homelessness**. This population includes children under five years old and youth enrolled in prekindergarten through grade 12. Children and youth may be identified in more than one local education agency (LEA) (i.e., school district, comprehensive technical school, or charter/cyber charter school) or entity (i.e., shelter, non-LEA Early Intervention, prekindergarten program, non-LEA private school/institution). Attribution is based on the LEA that the child or youth was identified by or enrolled in the longest. The unique count is used for state education agency (SEA) EDFacts reporting.

The table below provides 2020-2021 Monroe County children who were identified as homeless by school district.

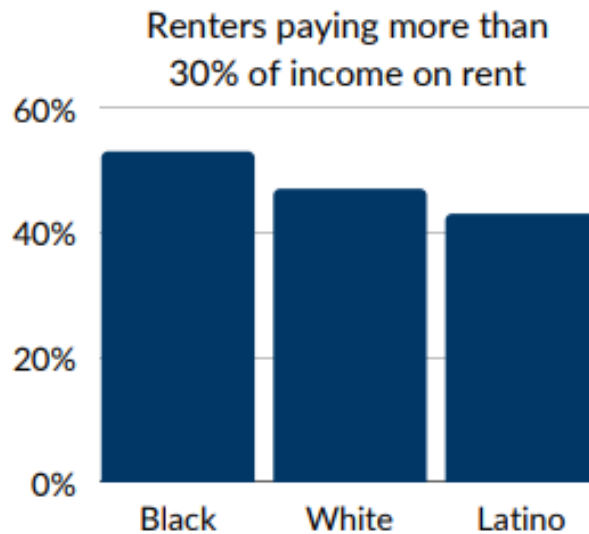


According to the Housing Alliance of PA, a home is foundational to accessing quality jobs, education opportunities, maintaining good health, and has the power to break the cycle of poverty. However, there is a critical shortage of affordable homes in Monroe County. **For every 100 low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities renting, only 38 affordable rental homes are available.** In Monroe County, low-income families live on less than \$24,450 a year and may be forced to sacrifice paying for food, healthcare, or education needs to keep a roof over their heads.

The lack of affordable housing leads to deep rent burdens, and this burden is not equal. In Monroe County, renters of color are more likely to face unaffordable rents, with 53% of Black renters paying more than 30% of income on rent. Lessening the burden of paying for a home is a critical part of advancing racial equality.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition 2022, Monroe County needs more homes for essential workers. **A worker needs to earn at least \$23.61 an hour to afford rent for a modest 2-bedroom home.** More affordable homes would help essential workers in Monroe County give their families a stable foundation to build on, especially for workers in marginalized communities who are likely to earn less.

The table below provides Monroe County renters paying more than 30% of income on rent.



#### Adoption/Foster Care

Children that are in foster care represent a high-risk population whose negative life circumstance necessitated their placement in the child welfare system. Some of the challenges they may face that impact their chances for success in school include:

- Low birth weight
- Abusive homes
- Increased hunger and poor nutrition
- Frequently changing schools
- Exposure to environmental hazards such as drugs, alcohol, and violence
- Lack of home support in reading and language development
- Single-parent homes
- Less involved home and school connections

Consequently, children and youth in foster care are more likely than their peers to have lower test scores, repeat grades, require special education services, exhibit behavior problems, have lower attendance and drop out of school. Children in foster care who meet eligibility requirements are prioritized for enrollment in the EHS and HS programs.

According to the Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association, approximately **13,000-15,000 PA children are currently in foster care and part of the child welfare system.** Between 400,000-500,000 children in the U.S. are in foster care each year. Sadly, on average, 1,100 PA youth 'age out' of foster care or leave the system at 18. Far too many youths never end up with a stable, permanent family. Often these children are left on their own with few resources, limited education, training, and employment, homeless, and with no support from family or friends.

On August 20, 2022, WBRE/WYOU released an article discussing the increasing number of children in need of high-quality foster families who are willing to work on transitioning children back into their families' homes. Monroe County has more than 150 children currently in foster care. **“We are truly facing a crisis in foster care right now, there are not enough families,”** says Jenae Holtzhafer, the founder, and Executive Director of the Kindness Project.

## Disabilities

According to the findings provide by the Lehigh Valley Health Network’s 2022 Health Assessment, 15% of the population has a disability, which is higher than the state percentage of 14%. Moreover, 34% of those aged 65 and older have a disability, followed by 13% of those aged 18-64 and 4.97% or 1,654 children under 18 with a disability.

The following chart provided by LVHN’s health assessment, shows Monroe County’s population with any disability in relation to our nations average by gender, age, and ethnicity:

### POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY GENDER

Report Area	Male	Female	Male	Female
Monroe County	11,987	12,911	14.51%	15.30%
Pennsylvania	836,653	922,390	13.65%	14.29%
United States	19,519,273	20,815,826	12.49%	12.74%

### POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY AGE GROUP

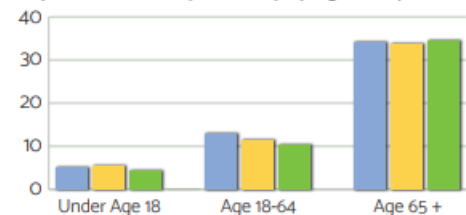
Report Area	Under Age 18		Age 18-64		Age 65 +	
Monroe County	1,654	4.97%	13,763	12.99%	9,481	34.14%
Pennsylvania	142,152	5.35%	876,280	11.34%	740,611	33.63%
United States	3,084,450	4.21%	20,187,604	10.25%	17,063,045	34.48%

### POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY ETHNICITY

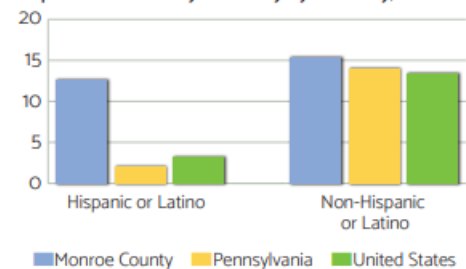
This indicator reports the percentage of the total civilian non-institutionalized population with a disability by ethnicity alone.

Report Area	Hispanic or Latino	Non-Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino, %	Non-Hispanic or Latino, %
Monroe County	3,332	21,566	12.54%	15.36%
Pennsylvania	127,997	1,631,046	1.98%	13.98%
United States	5,180,805	35,154,294	3.17%	13.42%

Population With Any Disability by Age Group, Percent



Population With Any Disability by Ethnicity, Percent



### POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY RACE

RACE	REPORT AREA					
	Monroe County		Pennsylvania		United States	
White	20,013	15.71%	1,413,984	13.91%	30,510,078	13.14%
Black or African American	2,942	11.97%	226,524	16.48%	5,579,158	13.95%
Native American/Alaska Native	85	15.07%	5,421	22.90%	454,471	16.94%
Asian	380	9.28%	30,840	7.09%	1,259,426	7.06%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	30	58.82%	724	17.45%	63,132	10.78%
Some Other Race	768	15.22%	42,742	15.86%	1,310,335	8.27%
Multiple Races	680	12.93%	38,808	12.39%	1,158,499	10.93%

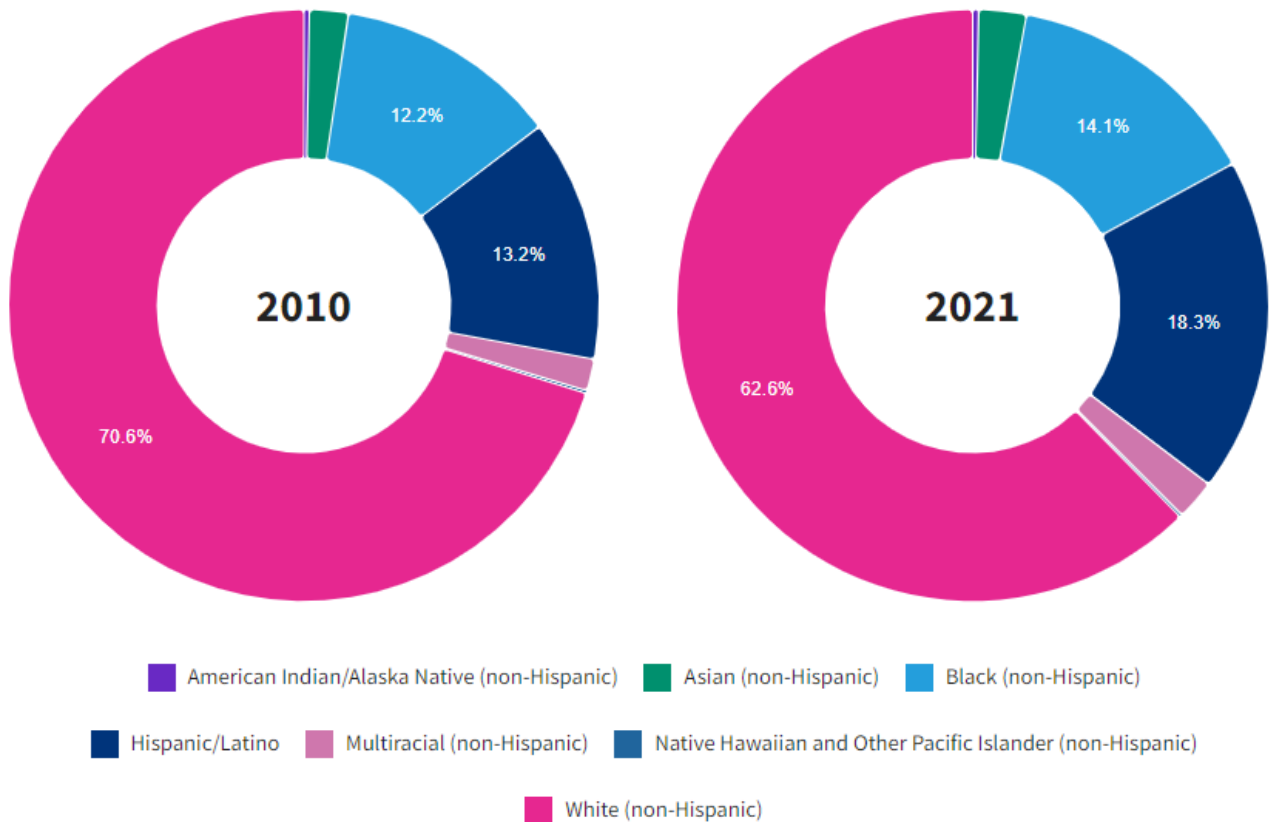
In **2021**, the largest racial or ethnic group in Monroe County was the **white (non-Hispanic)** group, which had a population of **106,026**. Between **2010** and **2021**, the **Hispanic/Latino** population had the most growth increasing by **8,495** from **22,452** in **2010** to **30,947** in **2021**.

In **2021**, Monroe County was more diverse than it was in 2010. In **2021**, the **white (non-Hispanic)** group made up **62.6%** of the population compared with **70.6%** in **2010**. Between **2010** and **2021**, the share of the population that is **Hispanic/Latino** grew the most, increasing **5.1** percentage points to **18.3%**. The **white (non-Hispanic)** population had the largest decrease dropping **7.9** percentage point to **62.6%**.

The table below provides population by Racial makeup (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey).

### Racial makeup of Monroe County

Hide Hispanic ethnicity

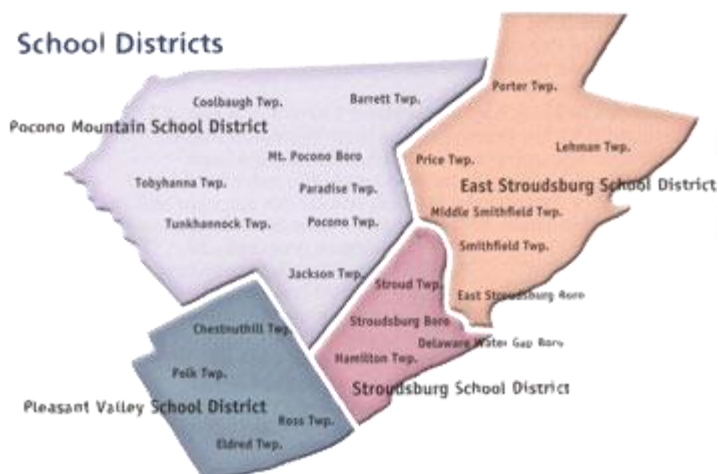


## Education

There are approximately 37,747 individuals in Monroe County that are over the age of three years who are currently enrolled in school.

### Public Schools

- Pocono Mountain School District
- East Stroudsburg School District
- Pleasant Valley School District
- Stroudsburg School District



The tables below provide School Enrollment in Monroe County PA (US Census Bureau & Future Ready PA Index).

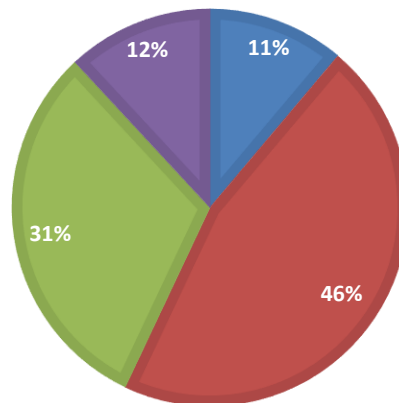
School Enrollment Characteristics		
School Enrollment	Estimated Number	Percentage
Nursey School, Preschool	1,181	3.1%
Kindergarten	1,759	4.7%
Elementary School (grades 1-8)	15,517	41.1%
High School (grades 9-12)	7,780	20.6%
College or Graduate School	11,510	30.5%

Race and Ethnicity of Students						
		White	Black/African American	Asian	Hispanic	2 or More Races
Pocono Mountain	8,191	42.2%	23.9%	2.2%	29.4%	1.8%
East Stroudsburg	6,408	40.2%	22.2%	2.1%	21.2%	11.1%
Pleasant Valley	4,085	72.2%	6.1%	1.4%	15.7%	4.5%
Stroudsburg	4,717	47.4%	19.6%	3.5%	25.7%	3.5%

Percent Enrollment by Barrier					
District	Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learner	Special Education	Foster Care	Homeless
Pocono Mountain	41.6%	4.0%	21.0	1.1%	1.1%
East Stroudsburg	53.3%	2.4%	20.3%	1.0%	1.3%
Pleasant Valley	44.2%	2.1%	19.2%	1.3%	1.1%
Stroudsburg	46.9%	3.5%	17.4%	.7%	2.4%

## MONROE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 18 - 24 YRS OLD

■ Less than High School Graduate ■ High School Graduate  
■ Some College or Associate's Degree ■ Bachelor's Degree or Higher



The impact of poverty on graduation rates can be examined by viewing the graduation rate for each school district in Monroe County along with the percentage of students that are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. While many schools that have a high percentage of students that are socioeconomically disadvantaged can maintain a high graduation rate, Stroudsburg School District has a large population of disadvantaged students and has a low graduation rate.

### Child Development and Child Care Programs serving Head Start eligible children

Affordable child care is the area of great need for low-income households in both focus groups and surveys. Sufficient affordable child care options were thought to be lacking in providers and accessibility to families who often miss work or discontinue work all together due to the lack of child care. The pandemic has pushed these issues even more into the forefront as many providers have closed because of health risks and safety policies as a result of COVID-19.

It is widely known that quality child care benefits the child, the family, the community, and ultimately, the country. Children in higher quality early learning programs have better cognitive outcomes: measurably better language/vocabulary, reading, math skills, and applied problem solving. They are more likely to attend college and earn higher wages, and less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. While quality child care has a positive benefit on all children, the impact is particularly strong for children in low-income families. Unfortunately, with the rising costs of child care and limited availability, low-income families are more likely to stay home with their children rather than enrolling them in centers or having them attend home daycares which means less socialization, no formal early learning programs, and no support for these working families.

Based upon the percentage of families that have all parents in the workforce and the number of children ages 5 and younger, there are approximately 37,000 children in Monroe County who need childcare.

#### Availability

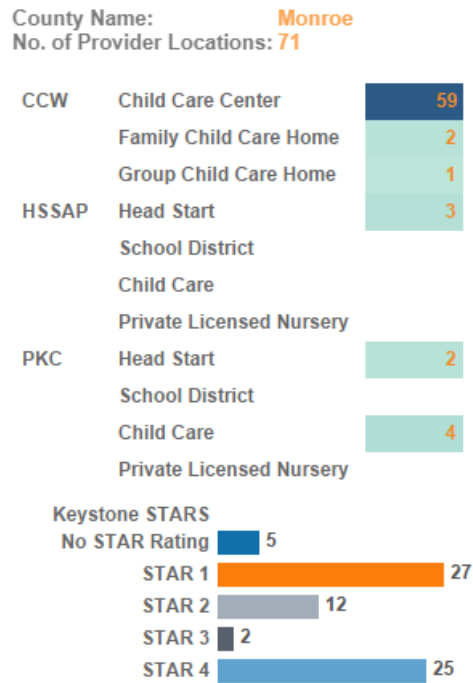
The Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services reports for the 2021-2022 state fiscal year that there are 71 Early Childhood Service Provision Locations within Monroe County. Of those, 59 are at Child Care Center, 2 are Family Child Care Home, and 1 is Group Child Care Home.

When assessing the quality of child care providers, the state of Pennsylvania uses the Keystone STARS voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) in which early learning programs and practitioners are encouraged and supported to meet specific, evidence-based performance standards. Early learning and care providers that participate earn a quality rating, ranging from a STAR 1 to a STAR 4. At each level programs must meet specific performance standards in four

key areas: staff education, learning environment, leadership/management, and family/community partnerships. The highest STAR levels are designated for providers meeting more rigorous standards for quality. A Keystone STARS designation informs parents that their children are in a developmentally appropriate respectful environment in which they are learning new things every day to support their current and future successes in school and in life. Of the 71 provider locations in Monroe County, there are 5 without a STAR rating, 27 with a STAR 1 rating, 12 with a STAR 2 rating, 2 with a STAR 3 rating and 25 with a STAR 4 rating.

PA DHS reports for the 2022-2023 state fiscal year, there are 91 funded Pre-K Counts slots and 93 Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program funded slots for Monroe County. PA DHS also reports that during the 2019-2020 State Fiscal Year, Monroe County served 252 children in Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Programs.

The table below provides Child Care Programs in Monroe County PA (DHS Early Learning Dashboard).



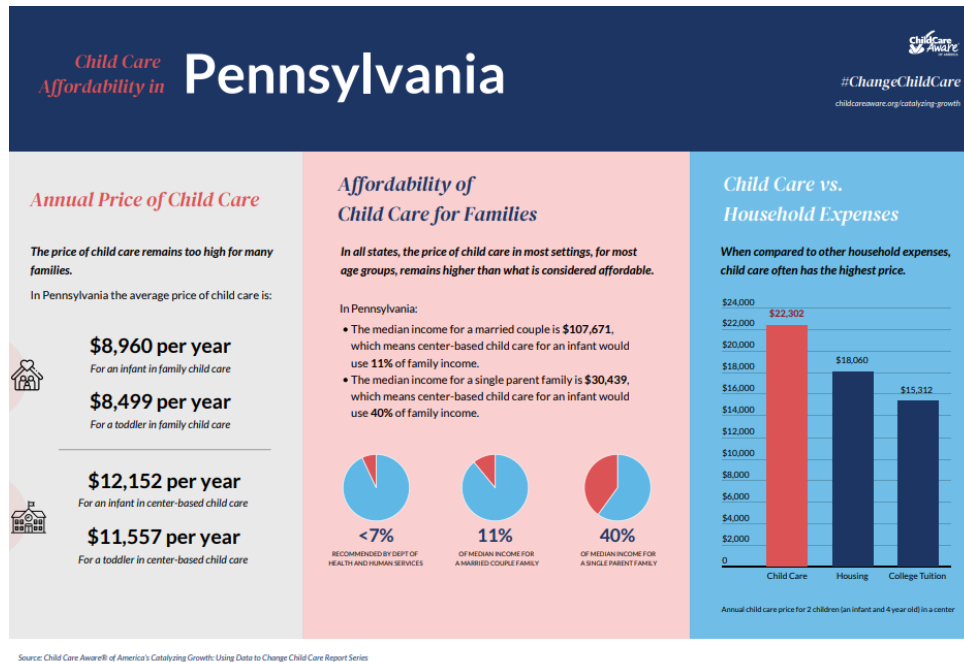
### Cost

Based upon the 2021 Child Care Aware Cost of Child Care in America report, for Pennsylvania the average cost of child care for an infant in a child care center is \$12,152 and the average cost of care for an infant in a home-based child care is \$8,960. When the cost of care for a 4-year-old is factored in, the **cost of care for an infant and a 4-year-old is \$23,709 annually for center-based care and \$17,459 for home-based child care.** In Pennsylvania, single parents pay nearly half of their income for infant center care and would pay 80.2% of their income for center care for two children. Married parents of two children with an income at the poverty line pay 84.1% of their income for center-based child care for two children.

In Monroe County, based on the median income for a single-female headed household, center-based child care for one infant and one preschool-aged child would consume **77.07% of the annual family income.** For married couples, the cost of care would equal **34.49% of family income.**



The table below provides Child Care Affordability in PA (2021 Child Care Aware Cost of Child Care in America report).



## COVID Impact on Child Care and PSFC

**Child care has always been a need but the challenges of COVID, lack of staff, and ever-growing waitlists, have become an all-time high demand, especially from agencies working with subsidized care.** Through the Monroe County Needs Assessment, we know that nearly 12% of the county's 169,000 residents live in poverty. Broken down into age groups, our target population, almost 19% of children under the age of 5, and over 15% of school-age youth live in poverty. Overall, it is reported that 35.88% of children and youth under the age of 18 in Monroe County live in economically distressed households. There are over 3,000 pre-k age children in our community who are income-eligible for Head Start services, and our national and state mandatory enrollment meets the needs of only 259.

Since COVID, we have seen a significant increase in youth with mental health illness and a demand for psychological services. According to the American Psychological Association 2022 article Children's mental health is in crisis, "Prior to COVID-19, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data found 1 in 5 children had a mental disorder, but only about 20% of those children receive care from a mental health provider." Just from March 2020 to October 2020, hospital visits increased 24% for children ages 5 to 11 and 31% for those ages 12 to 17. And now, **more than 70% of parents report that the pandemic has impacted their children's mental health** (Abramson, 2022).

As the Early Head Start and Head Start provider for Monroe County, it is our mission to promote school readiness of young children from low-income working families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. According to the 2020 ALICE report, Monroe County has 55,109 households. Of these households 16,466 households (or 30%) earn above the Federal Poverty Level, therefore make less than what is needed to survive. More specifically, PSFC targets Pocono Twp, East Stroudsburg Borough, Stroudsburg Borough, Smithfield Twp, Tobyhanna Twp, Coolbaugh Twp, Middle Smithfield Twp, and Stroud Twp, which are among the **highest percentages of ALICE households or 10,666**.

Child care is essential for working families and businesses. According to an ALICE survey by United Way PA and Early Learning Investment Commission conducted in spring 2021 of PA working families, 32% of families at and below ALICE level report finding a child care provider with consistent and sufficient hours is a major issue as a result of the pandemic. **96% of families at or below ALICE level state the challenge of juggling work and child care needs have**

**caused major restrictions to their ability to work.** 57% of ALICE families report needing to reduce their hours or leave their job due to lack of child care. 45% of working families needed to adjust their work to accommodate their need for child care. And these statistics have only increased significantly since 2021 and we know our families are struggling.

Many of our local businesses are also feeling the residual impacts of COVID-19. According to the same report, **54% of employers believe the increasing number of staff terminating employment is due to the lack of child care.** 72% of employers did report offering flexible work schedules and/or remote work to aid in the child care challenges.

PSFC recognizes that the lack of early learning and child care impacts families, businesses, and the economy. It is important for our economy that businesses are becoming more interested in and needing child care in order to support their working families. The report provided by United Way PA and Early Learning Investment commission, by doing so businesses will see improved recruitment, retention, productivity. Parents will experience increased job opportunities and advancement. Children will have access to safe, nurturing, engaging care and learning, and enhanced school readiness. And the economy will continue to grow and gain potential cost savings of billions of dollars.

Number of PSFC At-Risk Families & Children

