

GREENVILLE COUNTY COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A COMPILATION OF FACTS AND FINDINGS

MAY 2020

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INTRODUCTION

GREENVILLE COUNTY COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

A Compilation of Facts and Findings

This document follows best practice needs assessment models, especially United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg's [Indicators of Community Strength](#)

Other documents consulted and incorporated in part include:

- [Neighborhood Change in Greenville South Carolina](#)
- [Priority Communities Focused Needs and Assets Assessment](#)
- *Greenville Homeless Alliance Data Snapshot 2017*
- *Greenville Racial Equity Index*

Other formative qualitative data were taken from a distillation of numerous community conversations held throughout Greenville County compiled by United Way of Greenville County.

In addition to these sources, multiple other sources were used and are provided attribution in the graphs and tables herein. The most up-to-date sources are used. Disaggregated data are provided where possible and meaningful.

ABOUT UNITED WAY

At United Way of Greenville County (UWGC), we work every day to break down barriers, connect communities, and change lives. We gather diverse voices around the table to find new solutions to our community's toughest problems. We team up with volunteers and nonprofit partners on initiatives that drive real change.

With every person who steps up to make a difference with us, we're tearing down one more barrier to success and building a better Greenville County for all of us – one person, one family, one neighborhood, and one community at a time.

Summary

Greenville County is growing quickly and every day it seems that national media outlets recognize us for our successes. However, many people are being left behind in this growth. Understanding the state of our community for all our residents is critical to a thriving community, and therefore critical to United Way of Greenville County as we plan our path forward. With this in mind, we commissioned multiple studies, engaged in conversations with hundreds of community residents from all walks of life and looked at data from many existing sources to get a better picture of what life is like for residents.

In many measures, Greenville is improving: poverty is decreasing, the community is getting healthier, and the community is getting safer overall. However, time and time again, the data shows that people of color and other marginalized populations especially face worse rates across almost all measures. Poverty rates for Black and Hispanic residents are almost three times that of White residents, White students reach educational benchmarks at far higher rates than students of color, and infant mortality for Black newborns is twice that of White children.

Greenville County has around 55,000 residents experiencing poverty, with around a third of them being children. There are many barriers these community members face, like food insecurity, mental health struggles, and transportation access. Homeless shelters saw over 2000 unique individuals, and Greenville County Schools identified over 1000 students as experiencing homelessness during the 2018-2019 school year. However, even being above the poverty line doesn't always guarantee that a person is stable. Almost 2 out of every 5 households doesn't have three months' worth of expenses in savings.

While issues are broken out and measured separately, it is impossible to look at the community and not see the connections that weave these areas together. Poverty affects health which affects education which affects economic mobility. These issues are complex and multifaceted, which shows the power of bringing everyone together to tackle them. There is a long way to go to a community that allows everyone to thrive, but we can also see the seeds of progress as we continue this work.

People with lived experience facing these issues often said they felt frustrated. Many of them believe that there is an unawareness of the struggles that their community faces. One community member stated it plainly when they said, "There's a growing sense among the 'haves' that there's no issue. They don't see it." Many were just looking for their voice to be heard; to know that people see their struggles and care enough to come together to join in the solution.

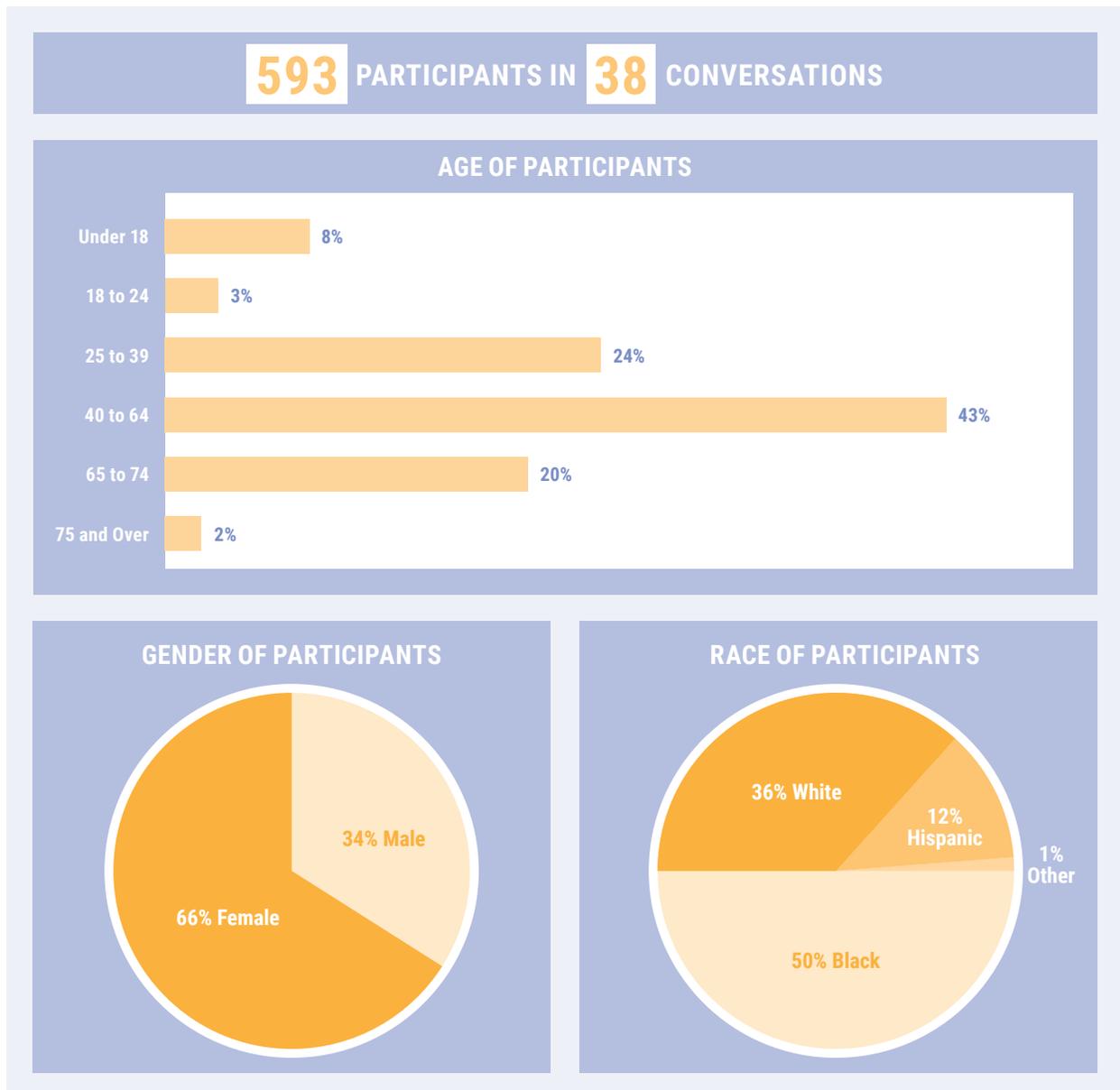
The data in this report represent the stories and experiences of these people in our community. Behind each percent is hundreds or thousands of residents experiencing a barrier on the path to prosperity. The goal as we move forward is not to improve a statistic, but to improve a life.

Greenville has seen a large amount of growth and many indicators show we are making progress. Still, there is a long way to go and the disparities for people experiencing poverty, people of color, and other marginalized communities show that are drastic. Many community members said that moving the needle would require collaboration and a stronger sense of unity across the community, which many found lacking. One resident said, "Our capacity for understanding each other is getting worse. We are losing the capacity to care about our neighbor." To build a vibrant community that has equal opportunities and access for everyone, we have to understand where we're at now and come together to agree on where we are going. The best answers to struggles in the community come from the community itself. It's time to show we care about our neighbor.

Community Conversations

We believe that the best way to move a community forward is with the people at the center. In tandem with the Peace Center, United Way of Greenville County brought Rich Harwood to Greenville to bring the Upstate together to learn more about the Harwood Model. Our goal was to learn more about best practices in community conversations and the best way to create an atmosphere for constructive dialogue. To further this objective, UWGC sponsored eight staff members and volunteers to be trained in the Harwood Model in Atlanta, Georgia. We are

committed to continuing this evolution and staying focused on the aspirations, challenges, and ideas the residents of Greenville. This model prepared them to facilitate conversations across the county to hear the voices of diverse communities with many different experiences. Nearly 600 people around the community participated in community conversations ranging from direct service providers, community leaders, donors, and especially those with lived experience with poverty and marginalization.



Some key aspirations for the community were:

- Equal access and opportunities for all people to thrive financially, socially, physically, and mentally
- A community that is aware and engaged with the struggles that our neighbors face
- An equitable society that supports and celebrates people of color, LGBTQ+ residents, and other marginalized populations
- A safe county that allows people to feel secure in connection to everyone in their community
- The ability for every child growing up in Greenville to have the same opportunities as their peers

Greenville County Demographic Profile

The total population of Greenville County as of 2018 is 514,213. The median age in Greenville is 38.4 in Greenville County which is about the same as the U.S. but a bit younger than the state on average. 23% of residents are 18 years or younger and about 16% are 65 or older.

Source: U.S. Census

There is a 12.4 year range in median age between different areas of Greenville County, with the City having the lowest median age at 33.2 and Slater-Marietta having the highest at 45.6. Tigerville has the largest population of working-age residents of any area of Greenville County.

Source: U.S. Census

68% of Greenville County's population is White, which is about 10% higher than both the state and national averages. Racial demographics are changing slower in Greenville County than they are across the country. Berea, Piedmont, and the City of Greenville are the most racially and ethnically diverse areas of Greenville County. White residents make up only 56% of Berea and Piedmont and 66% in the City.

Source: Kids Count Data Center and U.S. Census

By 2050, the population of Greenville County is estimated to be 688,849, with 43% of residents being people of color. Demographics are slightly different for the Greenville Metro Area, compared to the county. The changing racial and ethnic composition of the metro area to 2050 is still projected to comprise a higher percentage of White residents compared to the national average according to the National Equity Atlas.

Population Density in the county is highest in the City of Greenville and surrounding census tracts. Mauldin has the highest population density at around 2500 residents per square mile, with the City of Greenville and Berea following not far behind. The least dense areas of Greenville are to the north and south of the County, with Slater-Marrieta being the least dense Census designated place at only about 50 residents per square mile.

Source: U.S. Census and Greenville County Comprehensive Plan

BASIC NEEDS: FOOD, SAFETY, AND HOUSING

KEY INDICATOR:

Population Living Below Poverty Thresholds

Why does this matter?

Children and adults who live in poverty face real and immediate economic, social, and health hardships. Just getting by and obtaining basic resources is a daily struggle. Historically, about one-third of Americans cycle in and out of poverty, even during economic boom years. Poverty weakens families and communities, traps individuals and decreases mobility, and costs our economy billions of dollars annually.

People experiencing poverty in Greenville identified many barriers, but one of the more hidden challenges they talked was the mental effects of poverty. One community leader said, "There's a level of broken hope out of people who are oppressed and people who are struggling." Some individuals living below the poverty line then are not only dealing with the direct results of a lack of resources, but the struggle to maintain hope and a sense of self-worth as well.

How are we doing?

Poverty has been generally decreasing in Greenville County over the last few years. However, there are still almost 55,000 residents who live at or below the Federal Poverty Level. Poverty is not equitably distributed. Black and Hispanic people along with women have higher poverty rates compared to men and White people. In Greenville County in 2018, Hispanics had the highest poverty rates at 22.1%. Although Whites represent the largest number of residents in poverty, they also represent the lowest percentage in poverty.

Data Source: U.S. Census S1701

Poverty Rates by Race & Ethnicity in Greenville County



Data Source: US Census B17001

DID YOU KNOW...

Even though "poverty" typically describes people living at 100% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or below, individuals who live at 125%, 140%, and even 200% of FPL are often also considered to be living in poverty, or at least have low income. Often, they can qualify for various public and nonprofit assistance programs at these levels of poverty. Most subject matter experts report that half of Americans are living in or near poverty by these definitions.

KEY INDICATOR:

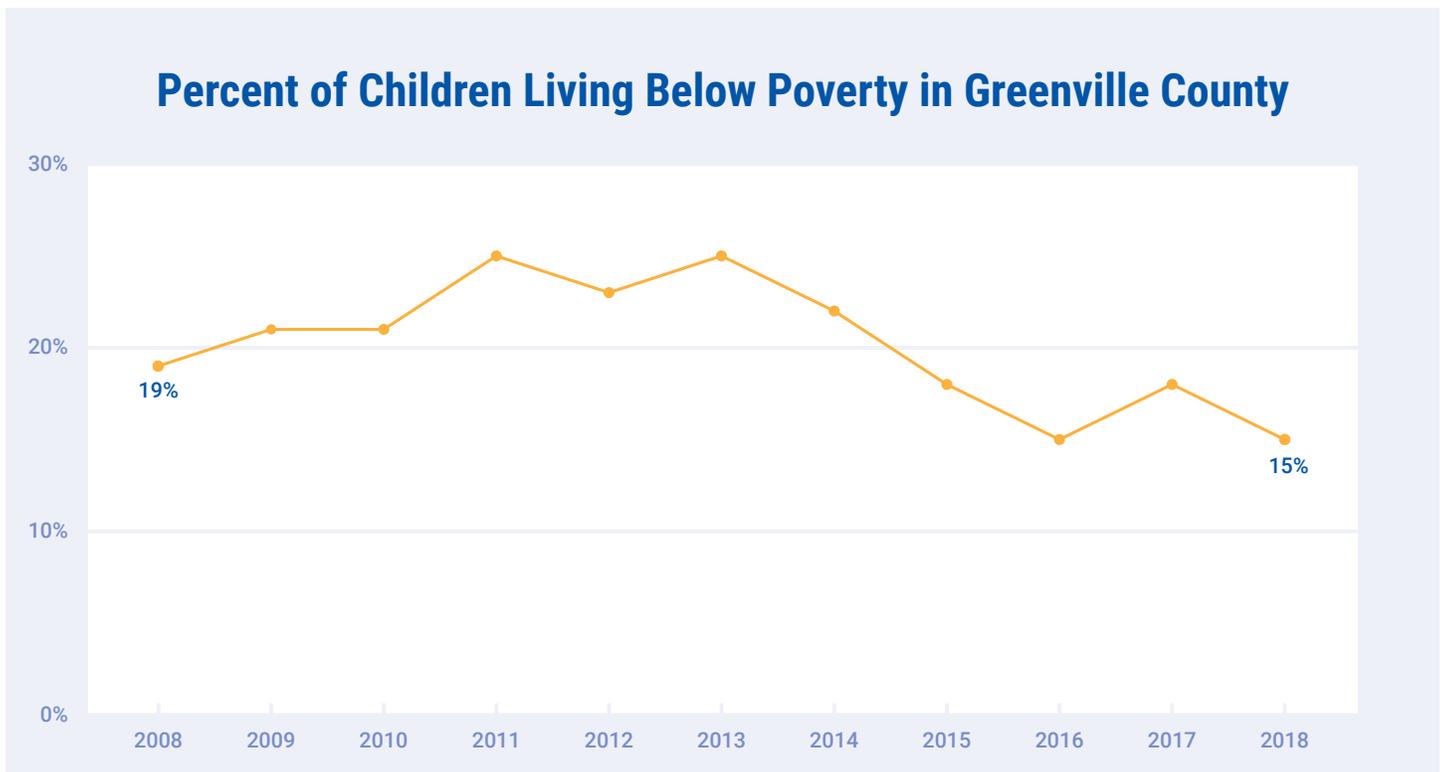
Children Living Below Poverty Thresholds

Why is this important?

Child poverty is a function of family and household income. Children who live in poverty often experience chronic toxic stress that disrupts healthy brain development, resulting in lifelong difficulties in learning, memory, and self-regulation, along with poor health outcomes in adulthood. Children living in poverty are much more likely to experience exposure to violence, chronic neglect, and the accumulated burdens of economic hardship.

How are we doing?

Over the last ten years for which data are available, the number of children living below the poverty threshold in Greenville County ranged from a high of 27,354 in 2011 to a low of 17,093 in 2018. Almost one in four children lived below the poverty threshold from 2011 and 2013.



Data Source: Kids Count Data Center, SAIPE

DID YOU KNOW....

Child poverty rates are consistently and significantly lower for White, non-Hispanic children in Greenville County, compared to Black children and Hispanic children.

KEY INDICATOR:

Homelessness

Why does this matter?

Homelessness is the condition of people lacking “a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” as defined by the federal McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Homelessness reduces the quality of life in cities and drastically affects those who are homeless, especially children. It worsens their health, exacerbates mental illness, makes ending substance abuse difficult, and promotes victimization. Homelessness is also very costly to social safety net programs, municipalities, and health care systems.

How are we doing?

In 2018, Greenville County emergency shelters served 2,285 unique individuals. The 2019 Point in Time (PIT) count identified 753 people in Greenville County as homeless, 242 of whom are unsheltered homeless living in a tent, car, abandoned building, or on the streets, and 193 of whom are chronically homeless. This count is widely considered to under-represent the total homeless population. In addition, the School District of Greenville County identified 1,106 children who experienced homelessness during the 2018-2019 school year. Among South Carolina counties, the PIT count determined that Greenville County has the fifth highest rate of persons who are homeless.

DID YOU KNOW...

Homelessness in the U.S. is a racial issue, disproportionately affecting Blacks. The disproportionate burdens of poverty, rental housing discrimination, and incarceration borne by Blacks result in higher rates of homelessness.

KEY INDICATOR:

Violent Crime Rate

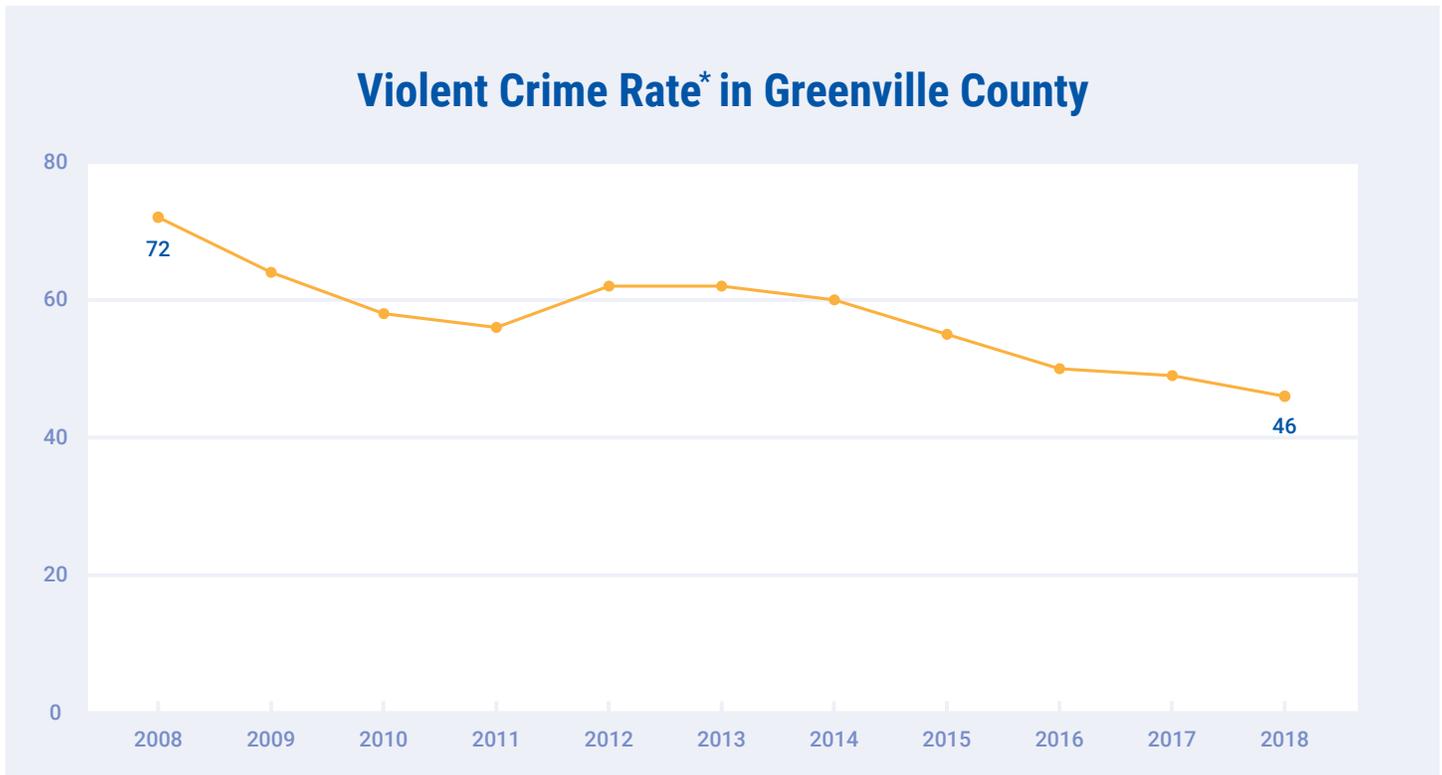
Why does this matter?

Violent crimes (murder, sexual battery, robbery, and aggravated assault) impose physical, emotional, and financial trauma on victims, as well as costs to communities through lower property values, increased policing, and increased investment in criminal justice. Communities cannot thrive where violent crime rates are high.

Safety was one of the most important topics to the community in conversations. Community members were especially worried about the safety of seniors or their children. One neighborhood’s resident noted the effects on the sense of community, saying, “A sense of not having safety makes you want to be closed off to others.”

How are we doing?

In 2018 there were 2,342 violent crimes reported in Greenville County, constituting the lowest rate in 10 years: 45.5 per 10,000 residents. The highest rate, 72.3 in 2008, equated to 3,166 violent crimes that year. The violent crime rate has decreased overall in Greenville County over the past 10 years.



*per 10,000 residents

Data Source: SC State Law Enforcement Division

DID YOU KNOW...

South Carolina’s violent crime rate decreased by 2% from 2017 to 2018. Since 1991, the violent crime rate decreased by 50.8%. South Carolina is not alone – the incidence of violent crimes in the United States has fallen sharply over the last 20 years.

KEY INDICATOR:

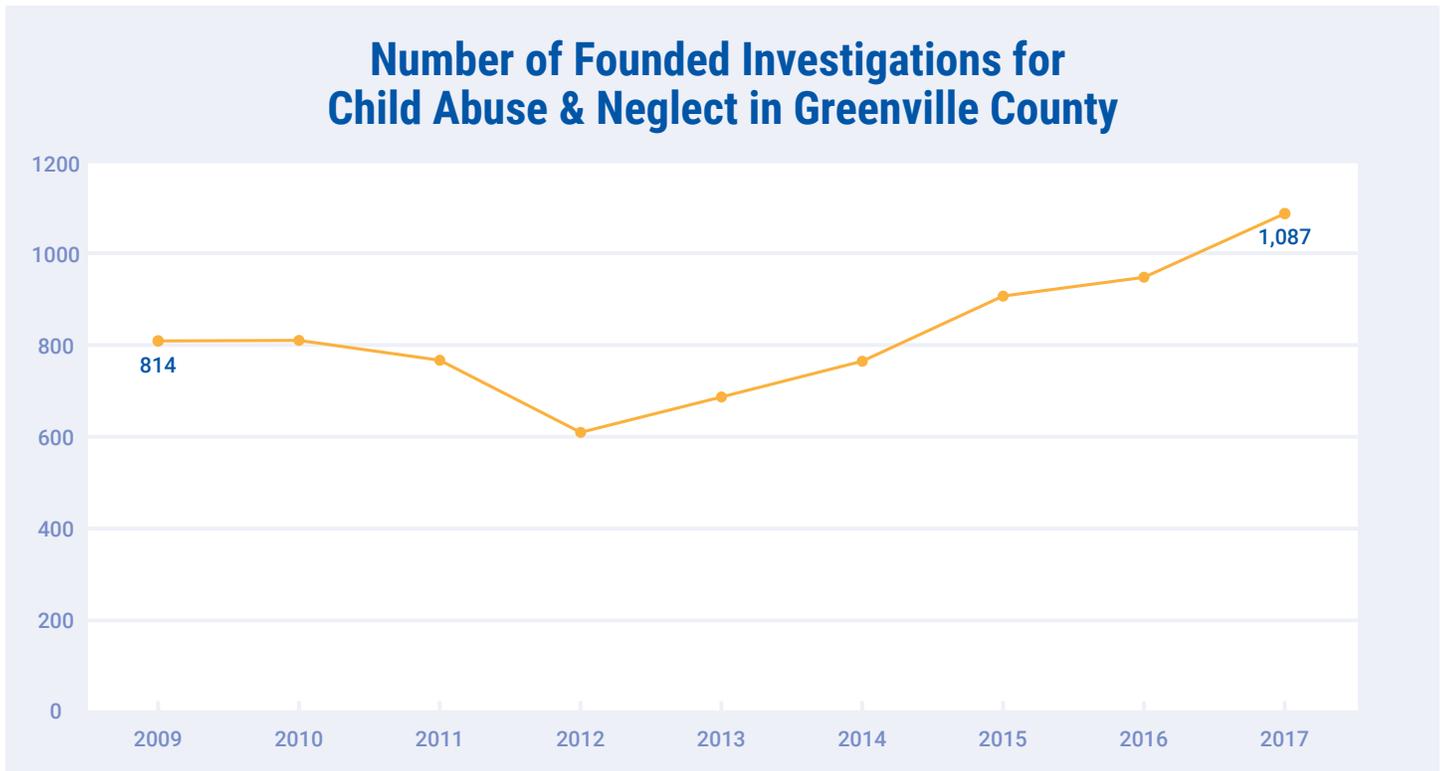
Child Abuse and Neglect Rate

Why is this important?

Child maltreatment has many negative effects on survivors, including poorer health, social and emotional difficulties, and decreased economic productivity. These negative effects over a survivor's lifetime generate many costs to the community's health care, education, criminal justice, and welfare systems.

How are we doing?

In 2017, Greenville County Department of Social Services investigated 3,733 cases of child abuse or neglect, and 1,087 were deemed "founded," which means they were found to meet legal definitions of abuse or neglect. The number of founded cases in 2017 is the highest in the last 9 years and has grown each year since 2013. This data is not provided as a portion of population however, so some of this can be attributed to population growth.



Data Source: Kids Count Data Center

DID YOU KNOW...

Department of Social Services (DSS) receives calls daily from people who are concerned about children. Often the concerns do not constitute abuse or neglect but are issues that cause instability for the child and their family. DSS responds in these situations by referring families to Community Based Prevention Providers for services and support. Services are provided by local organizations and include support in the home, counseling, parenting classes, referrals, employment assistance, and many others. They are offered at no cost to families referred by DSS.

KEY INDICATOR:
Food Access

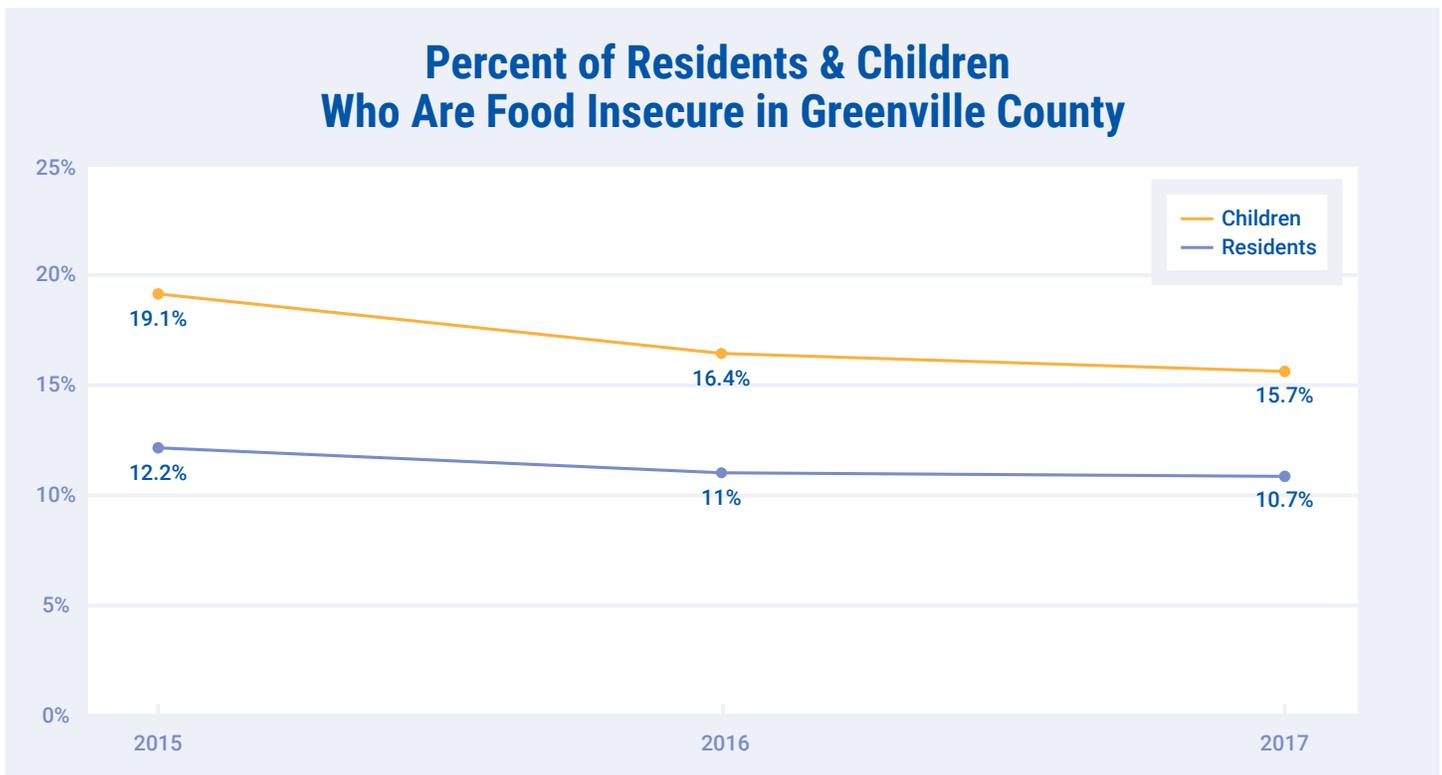
Why is this important?

Lack of access to affordable healthy foods is associated with negative health outcomes like obesity, premature mortality, asthma, and activity limitations, as well as increased health care costs.

How are we doing?

The Food Environment Index ranges from 0 (worst) to 10 (best) and equally weights two indicators of the food environment: limited access to healthy foods (the percentage of the population that is low income and does not live close to a grocery store) and food insecurity (the percentage of the population that did not have access to a reliable source of food during the past year). Greenville County's Food Environment Index value is a 7.6, with 13% of residents having limited access to healthy foods and 11% being food insecure. This 7.6 value is exactly the same as the South Carolina average across counties. Food insecurity, for children and for residents generally, has improved over the last three years in Greenville County.

Data Source: County Health Rankings



Data Source: Feeding America

DID YOU KNOW...

“Living near a grocery store” is defined differently in rural and non-rural areas. In rural areas, it means living less than 10 miles from a grocery store, whereas in non-rural areas it means less than 1 mile.

BORN HEALTHY

KEY INDICATOR:

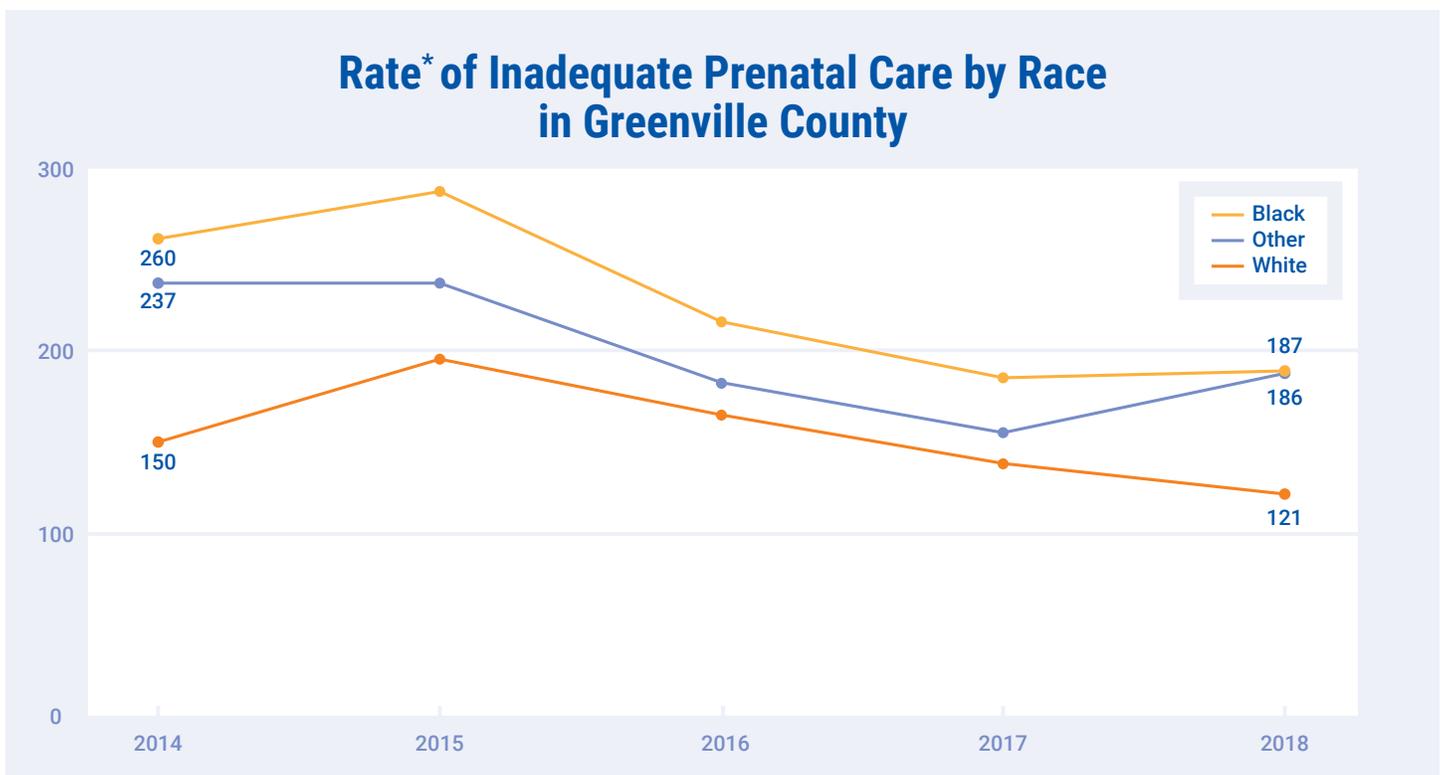
Prenatal Care

Why is this important?

Prenatal care promotes healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. Not having prenatal care is a significant risk factor for low birth weight and neonatal death. Adequate prenatal care is also a predictor of future child health care, including adequate number of well-child visits and up-to-date immunization status. Healthier mothers, babies, and children means significant savings in health care, education, and social safety net services.

How are we doing?

In Greenville County, rates of births to women who had inadequate prenatal care have generally decreased over the last five years. However, there is persistent inequity between White and Black mothers on this measure.



*Per 1,000 live births

Data Source: SC DHEC SCAN

DID YOU KNOW...

More than 1,196 women gave birth in South Carolina in 2018 having received no prenatal care at all - the highest number and rate per 1,000 live births since 1990 when reporting began. In 2018, there were 149 births in Greenville County to mothers who had receive no prenatal care – also the highest number and rate reported since 1990 when reporting began.

KEY INDICATOR:

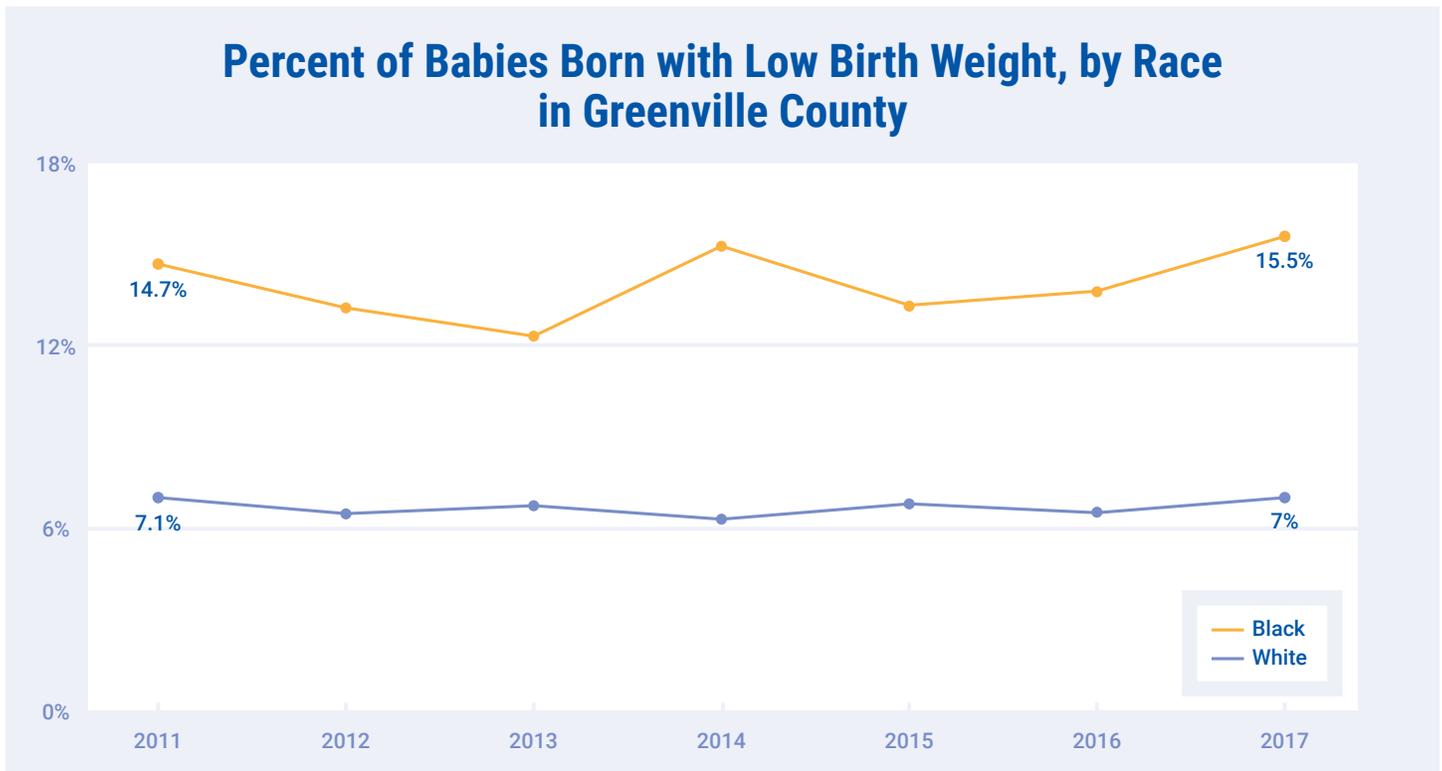
Birth Weight

Why is this important?

Low birth weight puts infants at greater risk of death and increases a child's risk of later health and developmental problems. Very low birth weight babies (less than 3.3 pounds) are at increased risk for chronic conditions such as respiratory problems, poor postnatal growth, cerebral palsy and infections. Some effects of low birth weight persist into adulthood and are associated with poorer educational achievement, lower college enrollment and a higher incidence of adult health problems like high blood pressure and respiratory disorders.

How are we doing?

In Greenville County, 8% of newborns have low birth weight from 2011-2017 averages. However, separated by race, the inequity is stark: 7% of White newborns have low birth weight, while 14% of Black newborns have low birth weight.



Data Source: Kids Count Data Center

DID YOU KNOW...

In South Carolina, Black babies have double the rate of low birth weight, compared to White babies. This trend is not improving. The inequities in urban areas are as stark as in rural areas.

KEY INDICATOR:

Infant Mortality

Why is this important?

The infant mortality rate is an important measure of the well-being of infants, children, and pregnant women because it is associated with a variety of factors such as maternal health, quality and access to medical care, socioeconomic conditions, and public health practices. Premature birth is the best predictor of infant mortality, but maternal education, rural-urban residence, and birth interval also have significant effect on infant mortality.

How are we doing?

Over the last three-year period with data available, 38 infants died in Greenville County. The infant mortality rate in Greenville County is almost twice as high for Black babies compared to White babies. Infant mortality rates are not decreasing for White or Black babies, and the equity gap continues to persist over time.

Source: Kids Count Data Center

DID YOU KNOW...

Black infants in the U.S. are now more than twice as likely to die as White infants. This racial inequity is wider than in 1850 and in one year constitutes 4,000 inequitable deaths of Black babies. Education and income do not mitigate this inequity – a Black woman with an advanced degree is more likely to lose her baby in its first year of life than a White woman with less than an eighth-grade education.

KEY INDICATOR:

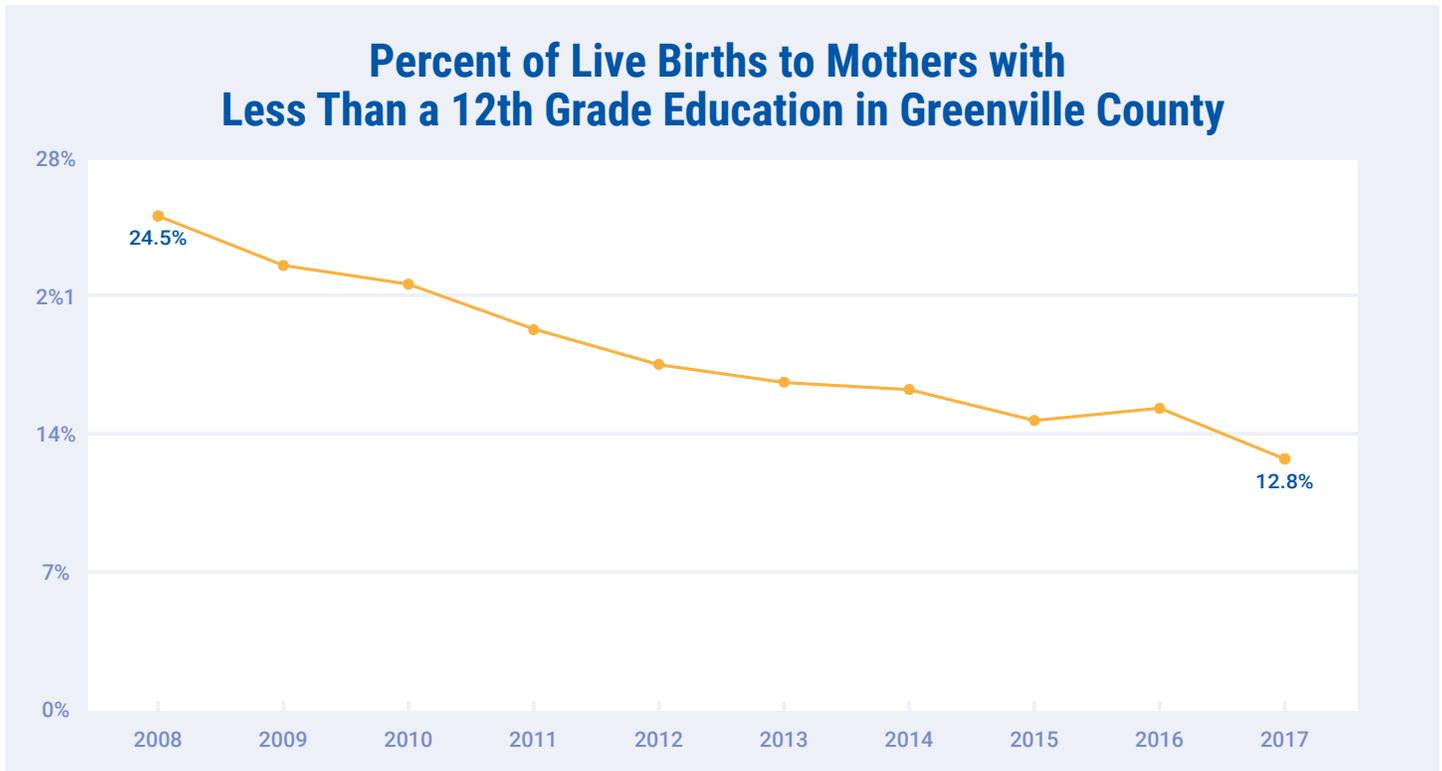
Births to Mothers with Less Than a 12th Grade Education

Why is this important?

Maternal education is a core dimension of the socioeconomic predictors of child wellbeing. Maternal education is strongly associated with children's cognitive development and is a key predictor of a family's economic security, family structure, and maternal depression.

How are we doing?

There has been a consistent reduction in Greenville County births to mothers with less than a 12th grade education. Still, almost 13% of mothers who gave birth in 2017 did not have a high school education.



Data Source: Kids Count Data Center

DID YOU KNOW...

Maternal education has impacts on children's outcomes through many separate mechanisms. More highly educated mothers are able to build more human capital, social capital, and cultural capital which they pass on to their children.

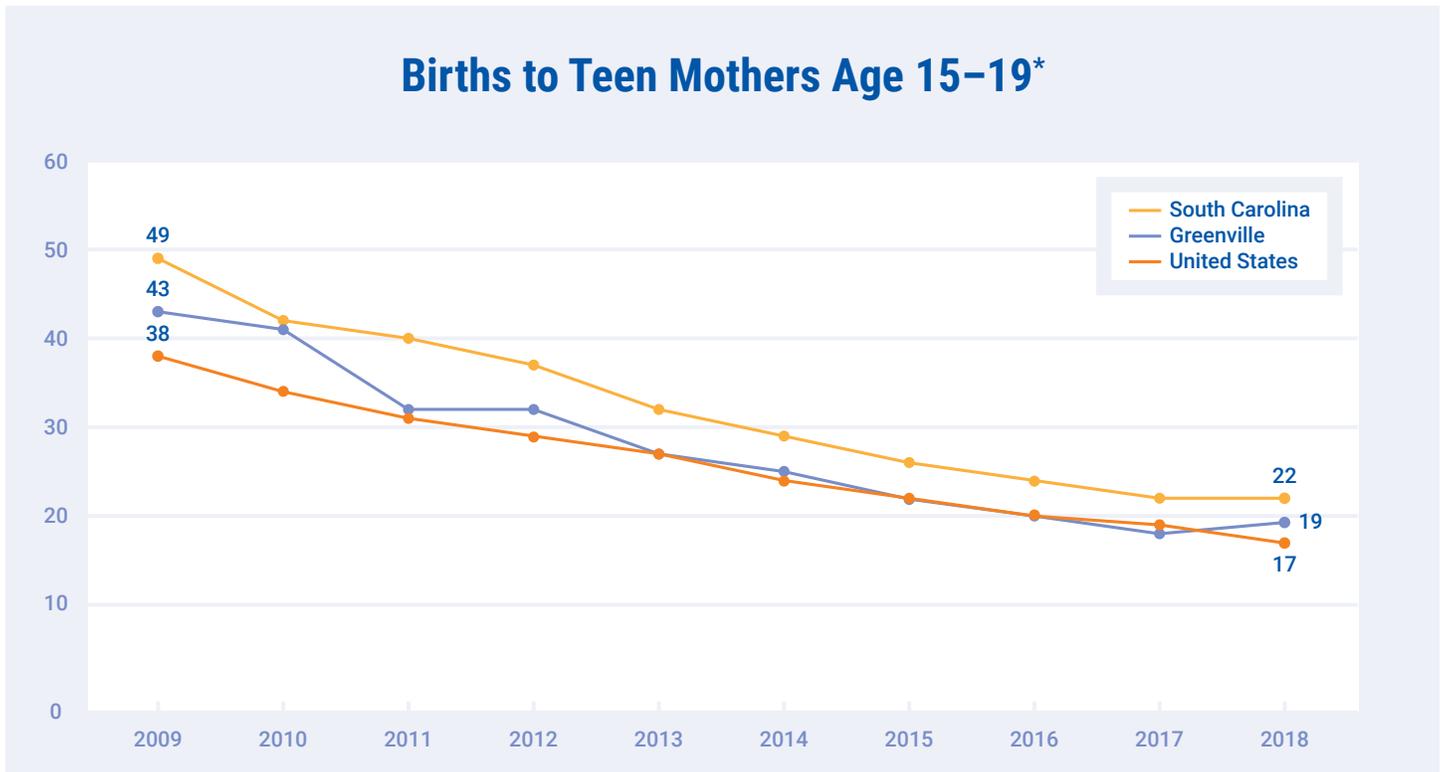
KEY INDICATOR:
Births to Teens

Why is this important?

Teen parenting has substantial negative impacts on educational and socioeconomic outcomes for the teen mother. Parenthood is the leading reason that teen girls drop out of school. More than 50% of teen mothers never graduate from high school, whereas approximately 90% of women who do not give birth during their teenage years will graduate from high school. Additionally, less than 2% of teen moms earn a college degree by age 30.

How are we doing?

Since peaking in 1957, the teen birth rate has been in decline nationally. Greenville County has consistently performed better than the state average and since 2015, has been in line with the national average. The 2018 teen birth rate for females age 15-19 in Greenville County was 18.8 per 1,000 females, equating to 301 babies born to teen mothers. Greenville County had the eighth lowest teen birth rate among the state's 46 counties.



*per 1,000 females
Data Source: SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy / Fact Forward, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Although teen birth rates have fallen consistently over the past ten years, disparities exist by race, with Black teenagers having higher birth rates than their White counterparts for both age groups (15-17 and 18-19) as they are typically reported.

DID YOU KNOW...

More than two decades of investments in prevention programs and services have led to significant declines in unplanned pregnancies and birth rates among teens in South Carolina and across the nation. The state's teen birth rate has declined by 70% since peaking in 1991.

PREPARED FOR KINDERGARTEN

KEY INDICATOR:

Kindergarten Readiness

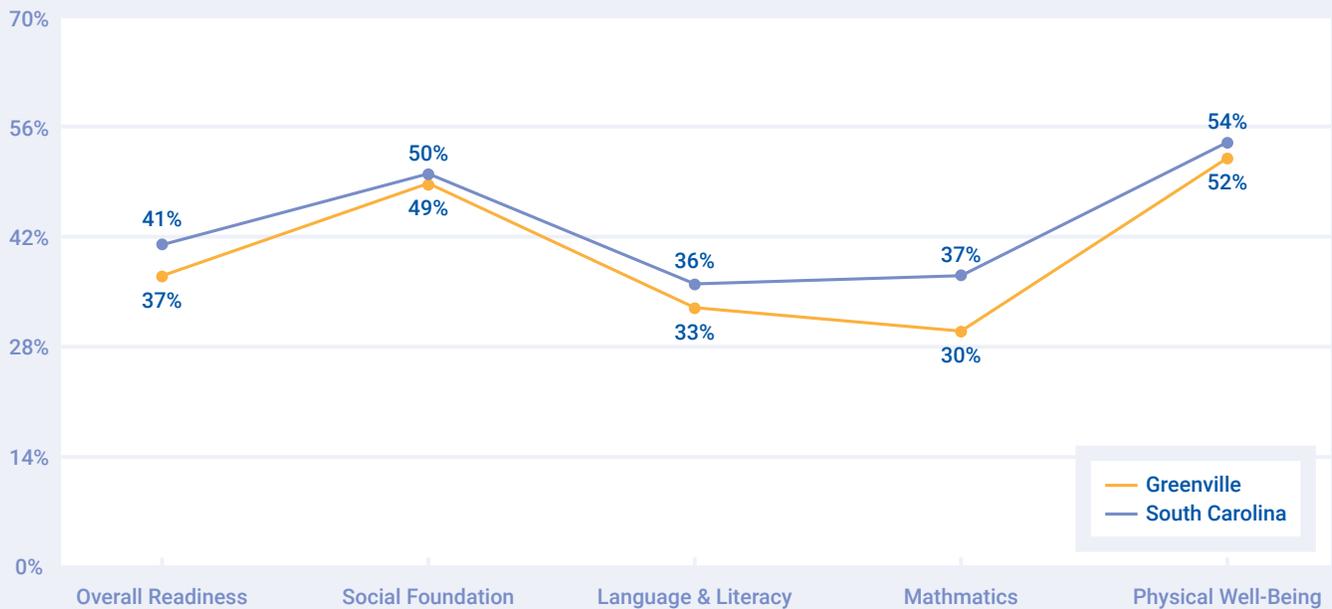
Why is this important?

Students need foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for kindergarten-level instruction. The academic success of children in later years depends heavily upon their kindergarten readiness, including the ability to focus, think logically, recognize important words, demonstrate self-control and speak clearly.

How are we doing?

Students enrolling in kindergarten in Greenville County exceed the state average for kindergarten readiness overall and in each domain of readiness. Still, less than half of students assessed in 2018-2019 were considered ready for kindergarten.

Percent Students Enrolling in Kindergarten that are Ready for Kindergarten in Greenville County and SC, 2018-2019



Data Source: SC Department of Education

DID YOU KNOW...

In the state of South Carolina, kindergarten attendance is required. In fact, the compulsory school age is five years old. However, parents may apply to their school district for a kindergarten waiver.

KEY INDICATOR:

Health Insurance Coverage for Children Age 0-6

Why is this important?

Health insurance coverage improves child wellbeing. When children have health insurance, they are more likely than uninsured children to be healthy and to get medical care. They are also more likely to have improved outcomes related to education and economic security that benefit society as a whole.

How are we doing?

The number of young children without health insurance has dropped somewhat over the last three years in Greenville County; however as a percentage the change is very small. In 2015, 1666 children were without insurance, which made up 4.5% of children under 6. In 2017, 1528 children were without insurance, or 4.1%. Young children are more likely to have health insurance than the overall population in Greenville County.

Data Source: US Census S2701

DID YOU KNOW...

Greenville County is about equal to or slightly better than the United States (4.5% currently) in percentage of uninsured young children. Greenville County is about equal to or slightly worse than the South Carolina average (3.9% currently) in percentage of uninsured young children.

KEY INDICATOR:

Early Childhood Education (ages 3-4)

Why is this important?

Preschool is foundational since it provides initial exposure to school and sets the tone for children's educational career. Preschool graduates receive short-term and long-term benefits including improved academic and school readiness, higher high school graduation rates, and lower incarceration rates. Public preschool is also a financial benefit to lower- and middle-income parents.

How are we doing?

Preschool enrollment has been fairly consistent in Greenville County over the past few years. However, less than half of three and four-year-olds are enrolled in school. Of these students, 43% are enrolled in public preschool programs, and 57% are enrolled in private preschool.

Many parents cited the cost of childcare as one of the challenges they faced in their lives. Some individuals mentioned that they had found good jobs they had to decline, simply because childcare was inaccessible. Finding a quality, affordable option for their preschool children was, to many, an impossibility.

Data Source: US Census S1401

DID YOU KNOW...

In addition to 4K and preschool special education programs in elementary schools, Greenville County Schools has six Child Development Centers that provide 4K and preschool Special Education, along with activities that involve and educate families.

GRADE-LEVEL READING BY 3RD GRADE

KEY INDICATOR:

Third Grade Reading Scores

Why is this important?

Students who are not on grade level for reading at the end of 3rd grade are at a higher risk of not graduating high school, which has long-term impacts on their future social and economic success. Reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade is a strong predictor of a child's educational development and a make-or-break benchmark. Prior to 3rd grade, children "learn to read" whereas in 4th grade and beyond, children "read to learn."

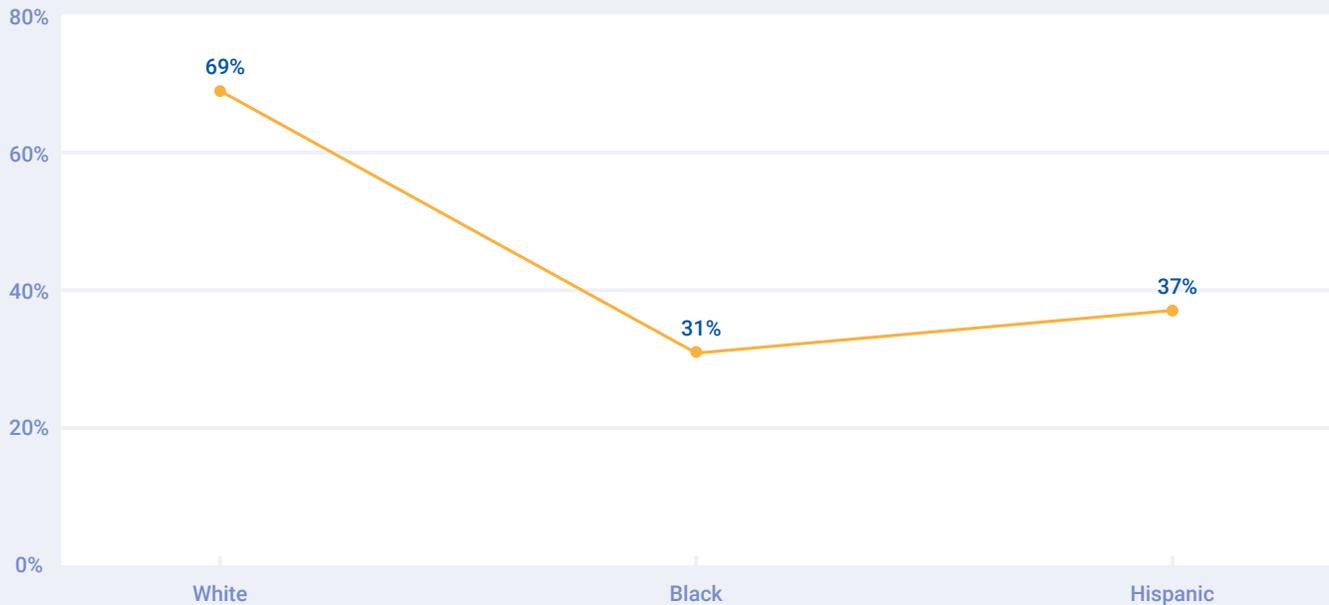
How are we doing?

As of 2019, 39% of Greenville County 3rd graders test below state standards in Reading and English / Language Arts which is an improvement from the 49.5% rate in 2016 when the current testing standards were introduced.

Data Source: SC Kids Count, and SC Department of Education

In 2018, 55% of Greenville County 3rd graders met or exceeded the Reading and English / Language Arts standard; however, there was a significant difference by race, with 69% of White students but only 31% of Black students meeting or exceeding the reading standard.

Percent of Greenville County Students Meeting or Exceeding 3rd Grade Reading and English / Language Arts Standard, 2018



DID YOU KNOW...

A current priority for the Alliance for a Healthier South Carolina is to reduce the economic disparity gap in 3rd grade reading, as this measure is viewed as critical to public health in the state. In Greenville County, children in low-income homes test below standards at over three times the rate of high-income families.

KEY INDICATOR:

Chronic Absenteeism

Why is this important?

Consistent school attendance in the early grades is critical to sustaining school readiness skills gained in preschool and kindergarten, especially for low-income children.

How are we doing?

In the 2018-2019 school year, 7% of Greenville County elementary school students missed 18 or more days of school, excused or unexcused. This is considered to constitute chronic or excessive absenteeism.

Data Source: School District of Greenville County

DID YOU KNOW...

Research shows that young students who arrive at school academically ready to learn, but then missed 10% of their kindergarten and first grade years, scored an average of 60 points below similar students with good attendance on 3rd grade reading tests.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

KEY INDICATOR:

Eighth Grade Reading and English / Language Arts Scores

Why is this important?

By 8th grade, readers should be able to read for literal comprehension and be able to think critically while reading. Eighth graders should also be able to create persuasive compositions. These abilities allow children to describe and connect essential ideas, arguments and perspectives.

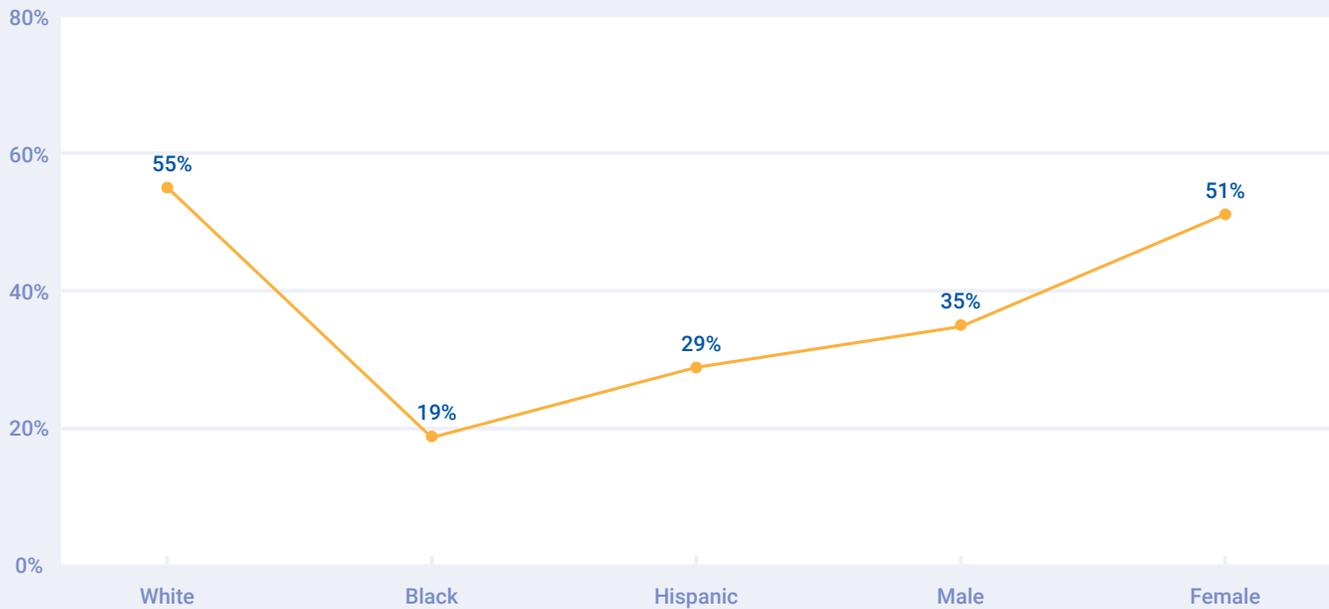
How are we doing?

Currently, half of all Greenville County 8th graders test below state standards in Reading and English / Language Arts. This rate is the same as when the standards were introduced in 2016, however it has improved since 2017 and 2018 when the number of students who were not meeting standards grew up to a peak of 57%.

Data Source: SC Kids Count, and SC Department of Education

For students who met or exceeded the state standard for eighth grade Reading and English / language Arts in 2018, the inequities between students are stark for both race and sex. Over half of White students, but less than 20% of Black students, met or exceeded the standard.

Greenville County Students Meeting or Exceeding 8th Grade Reading and English/Language Arts Standard by Race and Sex, 2018



Data Source: SC Department of Education

DID YOU KNOW...

Although only 43% of Greenville County 8th graders met or exceeded the standard for 8th grade Reading and English / Language Arts in 2018, this was higher than the state average at 39%.

KEY INDICATOR:

Eighth Grade Math Scores

Why is this important?

Math proficiency in middle and high school is highly correlated with graduation, and advanced mathematics courses are considered gate-keeping courses for enrollment in and completion of college. These courses emphasize higher order thinking and complex problem-solving skills, both of which are important beyond the academic realm. Individuals who transition into the workforce with limited mathematics skills tend to have limited professional success.

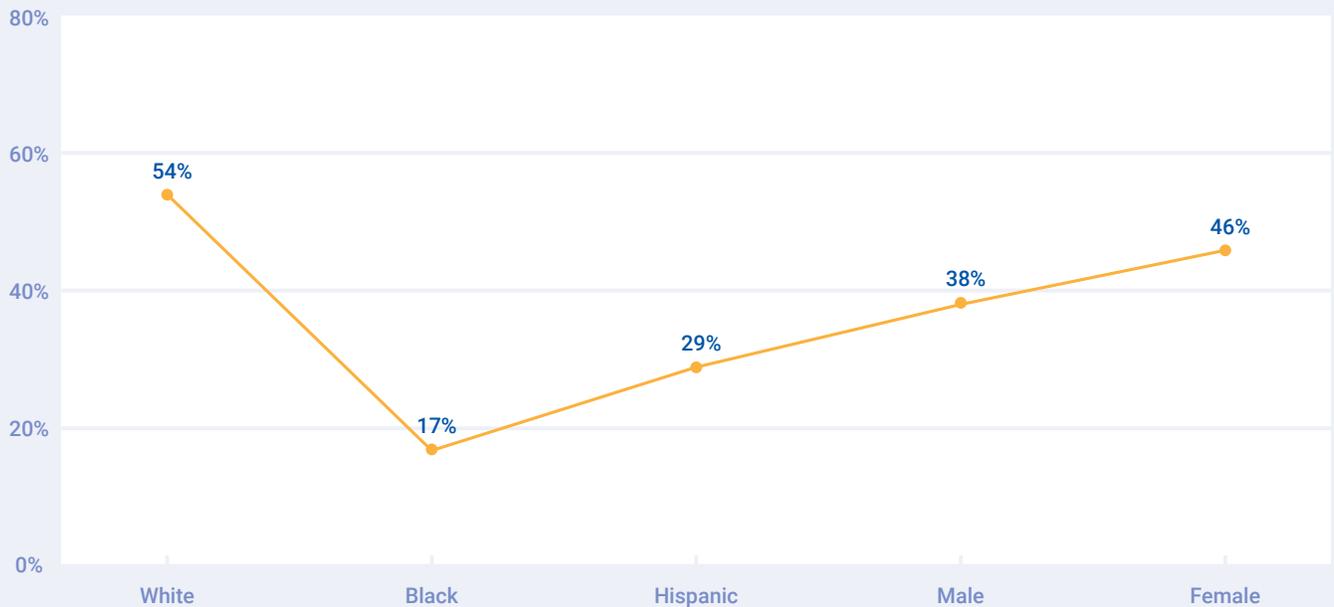
How are we doing?

Currently, over half of all Greenville County 8th graders test below state standards in math. This number has improve slightly each year since the current standards were introduced in 2016.

Data Source: SC Kids Count and SC Department of Education

For students who met or exceeded the state standard for 8th grade math in 2018, the inequities between students are stark for both race and sex. Over half of White students, but less than 20% of Black students met or exceeded the 8th grade math standard.

Greenville County Students Meeting or Exceeding 8th Grade Math Standard by Race and Sex, 2018



Data Source: SC Department of Education

DID YOU KNOW...

Although only 42% of Greenville County 8th graders met or exceeded the standard for 8th grade math in 2018, this was higher than the state average at 37%.

KEY INDICATOR:

Chronic Absenteeism

Why is this important?

Students who are chronically absent in the middle grades are at very high risk of eventually dropping out of high school. Absenteeism rates increase in middle school, placing additional burdens on school counselors and school systems.

How are we doing?

In the 2018-2019 school year, 9% of Greenville County middle school students missed 18 or more days of school, excused or unexcused. This is considered to constitute chronic or excessive absenteeism.

Data Source: School District of Greenville County

DID YOU KNOW...

Nationally, 14% of middle school students are chronically absent. Improving attendance in middle grades is more impactful for high school success than improving test scores. Attendance is a stronger indicator of educational risk than background characteristics, such as race and poverty.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

KEY INDICATOR:

On-Time High School Graduation Rate

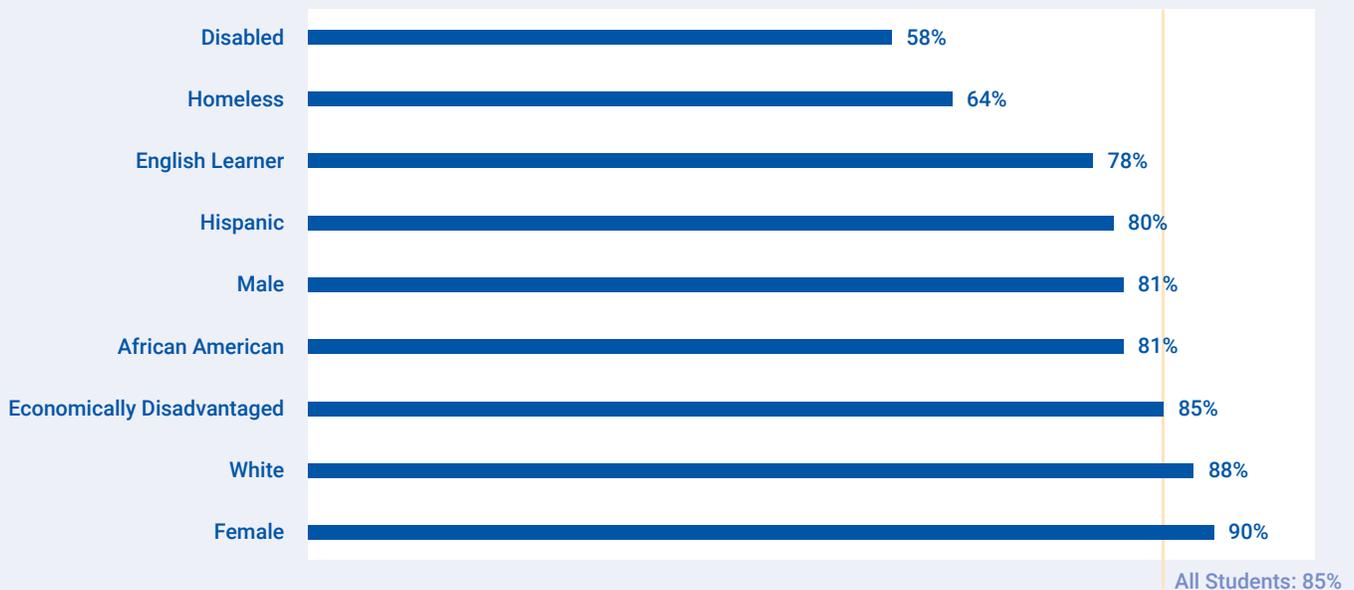
Why is this important?

Students who graduate from high school in four years are more likely to continue to postsecondary education and training, are more employable, and have higher incomes than students who fail to graduate on time or at all. High school graduates also have better health outcomes, make healthier choices, and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

How are we doing?

The on-time graduation rate has held essentially steady at around 85% for the last several years in Greenville County, and it is consistently higher than the state average at 81%. However, graduation rates differ widely among student groups. Students with disabilities and homeless students have extremely low graduation rates compared to males, and White students have higher graduation rates compared to Black and Hispanic students.

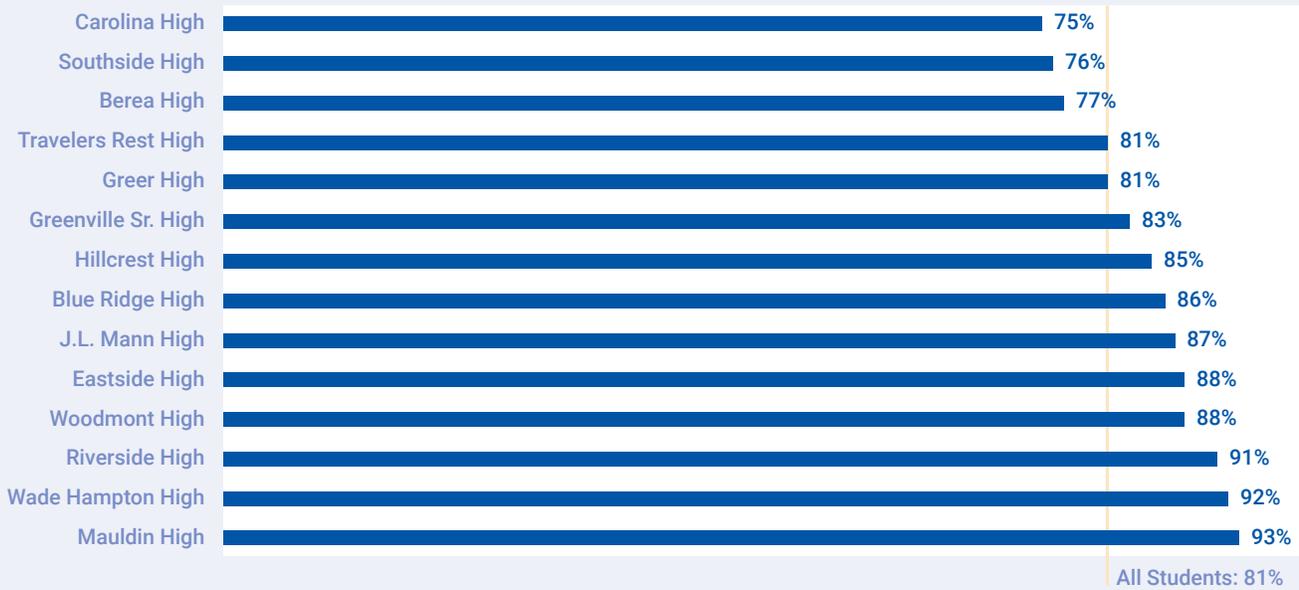
2019 On-Time Graduation Rates by Select Demographics, Greenville County Schools



Data Source: SC Department of Education

There are significant differences in graduation rates for high schools within Greenville County. Five of the county's 14 public high schools had lower graduation rates in 2019 compared to the state average.

2019 On-Time Graduation Rates, Greenville County High Schools



Data Source: SC Department of Education

DID YOU KNOW...

Nationally, in school year 2016-2017, the graduation rate for public high school students was 85%, the highest it has been since the rate was first measured in 2010-2011. Asian / Pacific Islander students had the highest rate at 91%, followed by White (89%), Hispanic (80%), Black (78%), and American Indian / Alaska native (72%) students.

KEY INDICATOR:

High School Dropout Rate

Why is this important?

Students who drop out of high school are more likely to live lives characterized by periodic unemployment, low income, use of government assistance, and cycling in and out of the criminal justice system. Dropout rates are an indicator of workforce quality and social and economic costs.

How are we doing?

The dropout rate for Greenville County public schools (7th – 12th grades) has been consistently low over the last several years, currently just below 2%.

Data Source: SC Department of Education

DID YOU KNOW...

High school dropout rates are at an all-time low. The national average is 7% However, this still constitutes significant numbers of individuals.

KEY INDICATOR:

Chronic Absenteeism

Why is this important?

Regular school attendance is an essential part of a student's learning process and a necessary means to graduating with a good education. Students who are frequently absent may be putting their futures in jeopardy by falling behind in academics and missing important socialization. Chronic absenteeism, especially truancy, is a behavior that is highly associated with dropping out of school.

How are we doing?

In the 2018-2019 school year, 21% of Greenville County high school students missed 18 or more days of school, excused or unexcused. This is considered to constitute chronic or excessive absenteeism.

Data Source: School District of Greenville County

DID YOU KNOW...

Nationally, over 20% of students in high school are chronically absent. Across all grades, there are stark racial disparities in absenteeism. Compared to White peers, American Indian and Pacific Islander students are over 50% more likely to lose three weeks of school or more, Black students are 40% more likely, and Hispanic students are 17% more likely.

KEY INDICATOR:

Juvenile Crime

Why is this important?

In addition to gauging law enforcement's response to crime, arrest rates by age provide one of the better readily available measures of juvenile delinquency. Youths who are arrested as juveniles have higher rates of incarceration as adults and very high rates of recidivism.

How are we doing?

Violent crime comprises murder, sexual battery, robbery, and aggravated assault. South Carolina's juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes increased by 4% from 2017 to 2018 but decreased overall by 59% since 1991. Although adult crime data is publicly available by South Carolina county, juvenile crime data is not.

Source: SC State Law Enforcement Division

The latest Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) data for Greenville County shows that of the 893 youth who were referred in the fiscal year 2016-2017, 53% of cases were ultimately dismissed. The most common offense associated with referral was Assault & Battery, 3rd degree. Violent and Serious offenses declined by 8% from the previous fiscal year. However, violent and serious offenses increased by 16% from fiscal year 2014-2015 to 2015-2016. Black youth are significantly more likely to be referred to DJJ than White youth.

Source: SC Department of Juvenile Justice

DID YOU KNOW...

Nationally, the juvenile all-offense arrest rate has declined steadily since 1996 and is at its lowest in two decades – 2,167.1 arrests per 100,000 persons ages 10-17. Long-term juvenile incarceration does not decrease re-offending and may actually increase recidivism rates for lower-level youth offenders.

COLLEGE- OR CAREER-READY

KEY INDICATOR:

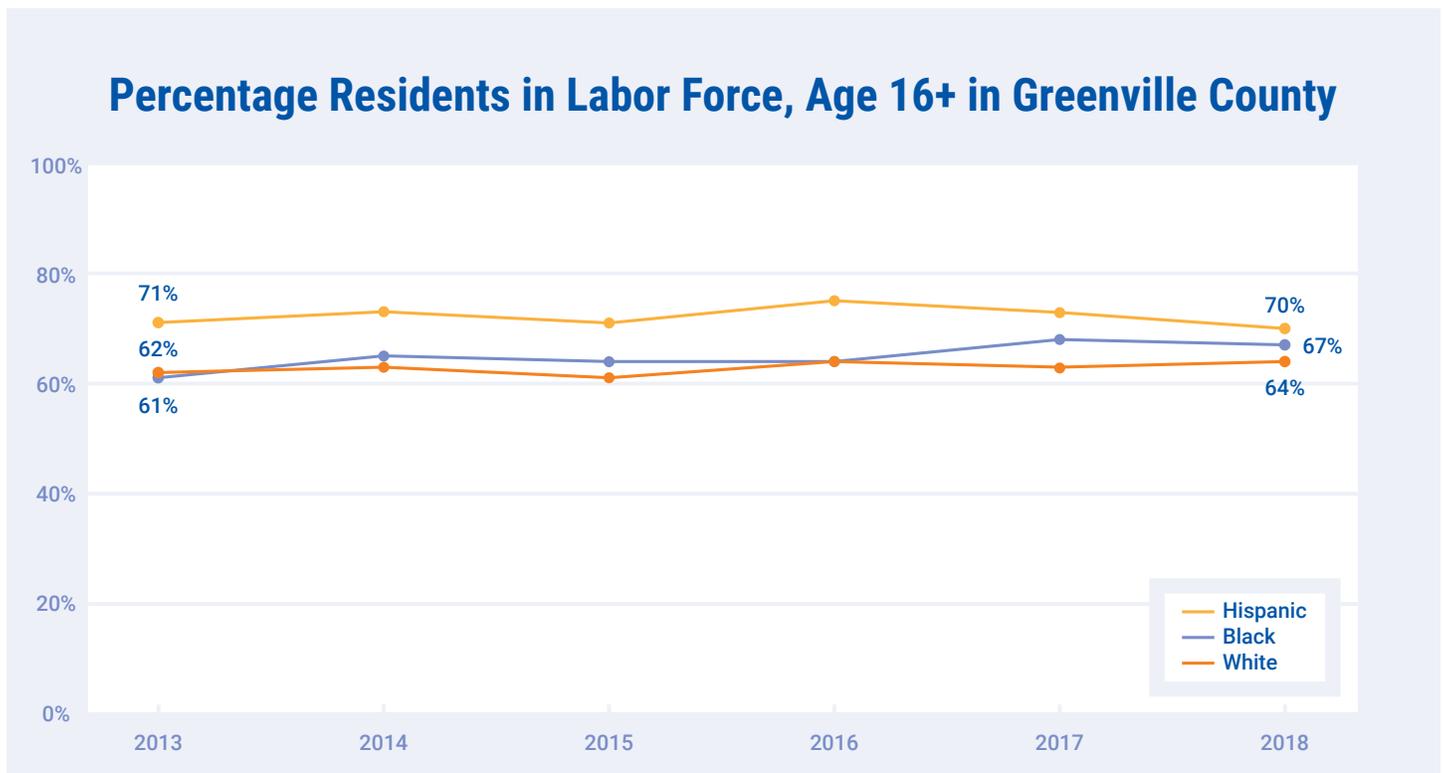
Labor Force Participation

Why is this important?

The labor force participation rate is the percentage of working age individuals who are employed or are looking for work. It represents the relative amount of workers available for the production of goods and services.

How are we doing?

In Greenville County, the total labor force participation rate has grown over the last three years. There are some differences by race, with Hispanics having significantly and consistently higher rates of participation and Blacks generally having a higher labor force participation rate compared to Whites.



Data Source: US Census S2301

DID YOU KNOW...

Although Whites are the least likely to be in the labor force proportionately, they have a lower unemployment rate compared to Blacks.

KEY INDICATOR:

Educational Attainment

Why does this matter?

Educational attainment is highly correlated with income, prosperity, and good health. America's future jobs will require ever-higher levels of skills and education as a part of the knowledge-driven economy. The future demands higher educational attainment of the local workforce if Greenville is to be economically competitive. Education is the key to economic mobility and inter-generational economic mobility, simultaneously increasing mobility in this generation and the next.

How are we doing?

At 34.2%, a greater percentage of Greenville County residents holds bachelor's degrees or above compared to the state at 27.4% and the nation with 31.5%. A little over one third of jobs nationwide now require at least a bachelor's degree, and between 2016 and 2026, the number of jobs requiring a bachelor's degree will increase by 10%, a master's degree by 17%, and a doctoral or professional degree by 13%.

Data Source: US Census S1501

In Greenville County, as in other geographies, there are marked racial inequities in educational attainment. Whites graduate from high school at the highest rates at about 92%. Hispanics and residents of races other than Black, White, and Hispanics have extremely low educational attainment at around 60% high school graduation. Blacks, Hispanics, and other race residents graduate from college at rates of only about 13 to 17% in compared to the 40% of White students and 57% of Asian students.

Data source: US Census S1501

DID YOU KNOW...

To this day, the nation's schools are highly segregated, due in large part to social and class isolation, funding inequities, and discrimination. Post-secondary educational attainment is far lower for Blacks than for Whites, and Black children are not as prepared to succeed in school in the early grades. It is estimated that the U.S. economy would be \$2.3 trillion larger by 2050 if the educational achievement of Black and Hispanic children were raised to that of White children.

KEY INDICATOR:

Teens age 16-19 Not Attending School and Not Working

Why does this matter?

The U.S. Census measures "idleness" for teenagers which is defined as residents age 16-19 who are not in school and not working. This measure can be used as a proxy for school dropout.

How are we doing?

The idleness rate is decreasing in Greenville County. In 2017, of the county's estimated 24,371 residents age 16-19, approximately 4% were not in school and not working, equating to 915 teens, down from a peak of 7.6% in 2013.

Data Source: Kids Count Data Center

DID YOU KNOW...

Generally, Hispanic teens have the lowest rate of "idleness," compared to White and Black teens in Greenville County.

KEY INDICATOR:

Higher Education Enrollment and Completion

Why is this important?

Educational attainment is highly correlated with income. In fact, for every incremental increase in education, there is an almost perfectly corresponding incremental increase in earnings.

How are we doing?

Numbers and percentages of residents enrolled in post-secondary education has been steady at approximately 41% for several years. This equates to approximately 19,000 students, currently. However, there is great disparity in percent of graduates by high school in Greenville County who enroll in post-secondary education. Six of the county's 14 high schools fall below the state average on this measure.

Only 36% of students from Berea High go on to post-secondary education, along with 40% of Carolina High. Blue Ridge, Greer, Travelers Rest, and Southside all range from 51 to 64%, falling below the South Carolina average of 70%. Mauldin High School has the most students go on to post-secondary education, with almost 90% of all students going on to take college classes.

Source: US Census S1401 and SC Department of Education

In 2017, Greenville County colleges and universities awarded 4,909 degrees. The largest number were awarded by Greenville Technical College (2,040) followed by Furman University (920), Bob Jones University (637) and North Greenville University (536). Most students graduating were White (68.2%), constituting almost four times the number of Black graduates, who received 17% of degrees awarded.

Data Sources: IPEDS, Data USA

DID YOU KNOW...

The economic gap between college-educated persons and their less-educated peers is widening every year, and the trend is continuing year over year. The cost of not going to college is also rising; millennials with only a high school diploma are suffering more economically than earlier generations.

FINANCIAL WELLBEING

KEY INDICATOR:

Asset Poverty

Why does this matter?

At its most basic, poverty is the scarcity or lack of material possessions or money. However, asset poverty, or the inability to access and build wealth resources such as homeownership, savings, stocks, and business assets, is more persistent and prevalent than income poverty. Even when income is sufficient to get by, asset poverty means that resources are unavailable to support basic needs in cases of emergency and are unavailable to pass on to children for intergenerational wealth-building.

How are we doing?

One in four residents in the city and almost 30% of the county are experiencing asset poverty, which means if they lost their income they couldn't cover three months of expenses with savings and assets. Rates of households with zero net worth are even higher in the city (17.5%) and the county (20.5%), compared to the state and national averages at around 15%. Liquid asset poverty rates, which does not include difficult to sell assets like homes or businesses, are also high at around 37% but in line with national rates and slightly lower than the state rate.

Data Source: Prosperity Now Scorecard (July 2019)

DID YOU KNOW...

Communities of color are disproportionately affected by asset poverty. Policy-level interventions, strategies, and best-practice models have proven to be impactful in decreasing asset poverty and increasing wealth equity.

KEY INDICATOR:

Unbanked and Underbanked Households

Why is this important?

Personal checking and savings accounts are the basis for climbing the economic ladder through building credit and financial safety nets and saving for their future. Households that do not have bank accounts or that have limited access to banking spend significantly more to cash paychecks or through predatory lending.

How are we doing?

Rates of unbanked households in the city and the county are slightly higher than the state and national averages, at around 7.5%. The rates of underbanked households, however, are about the same as state and national averages, around 18 to 19%.

Data Source: Prosperity Now Scorecard (July 2019)

DID YOU KNOW...

Some states are enacting policies that help low- and moderate-income people build assets through state-supported Individual Development Account (IDA) programs. These special savings accounts match deposits of when low- and moderate-income savers participate in financial education and use the savings for targeted purposes like postsecondary education, homeownership or capitalizing a small business. Individual Development Accounts are best practices that make families more financially secure and communities more stable.

KEY INDICATOR:

Unemployment and Employment Rates

Why is this important?

Employment provides income and benefits that can support economic wellbeing and healthy lifestyle choices. Unemployment and underemployment limit these choices and negatively affect quality of life in many ways.

How are we doing?

In November 2019, the unemployment rate in Greenville County fell to one of the lowest rates in years, 1.8%. The same month, South Carolina tied with Utah for the second lowest rate for states. The lowest recorded unemployment in Greenville County was 1.4% in April 1998. Full employment is considered to be 4%.

Source: SC Department of Employment and Workforce

The employment rate reflects whether people who are available to work are being put to work. In Greenville County, Hispanics have a consistently higher employment rate, currently around 68%, compared to non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks which are both around 60%.

Data Source: US Census S2301

DID YOU KNOW...

The economic conditions in a community, the distribution of structural supports for employment, and an individual's level of educational attainment play important roles in shaping employment opportunities. However, there is continuing widespread discrimination in employment in numerous forms. Even at the first step in the employment process, job applicants with White-sounding names are much more likely to get called for an interview than those with Black-sounding names, despite having identical resumes.

KEY INDICATOR:

Children Living in Areas of Concentrated Poverty

Why does this matter?

Communities struggling with concentrated poverty, at rates of 40% or more, have poor human capital development, high unemployment, inadequate housing, and other negative outcomes. Children who live in communities of concentrated poverty are more likely to become single parents, less likely to go to college, and earn less as adults.

Many in the community worried about the lack of opportunities for children experiencing poverty. Issues related to education and children were one of the most common across all communities. The importance of opportunity for youth across the entire county was summed up by one individual who said, "Youth are our future, and if we fail to protect them, then what will our future look like?"

How are we doing?

The numbers and percentages of children in Greenville County who live in areas of concentrated poverty have fallen in recent years. Still, almost 14,000 children live in these areas. In Greenville County, Black and Hispanic children are significantly more likely to live in areas of concentrated poverty, compared to White, non-Hispanic children. This trend is consistent over time, although concentrated poverty rates are more variable for Black and Hispanic children.

Percentage of Children Living in Concentrated Poverty by Race in Greenville County



Data Source: Kids Count Data Center

DID YOU KNOW...

The Equality of Opportunity Project has demonstrated that the younger a child is when he or she moves to a neighborhood with more opportunity, the greater the boost in their chance of economic success as an adult. This dosage effect means that, with every year of exposure to a better environment, a child's chance of economic success as an adult improves.

KEY INDICATOR:

Households Spending More than 30% of Income on Housing

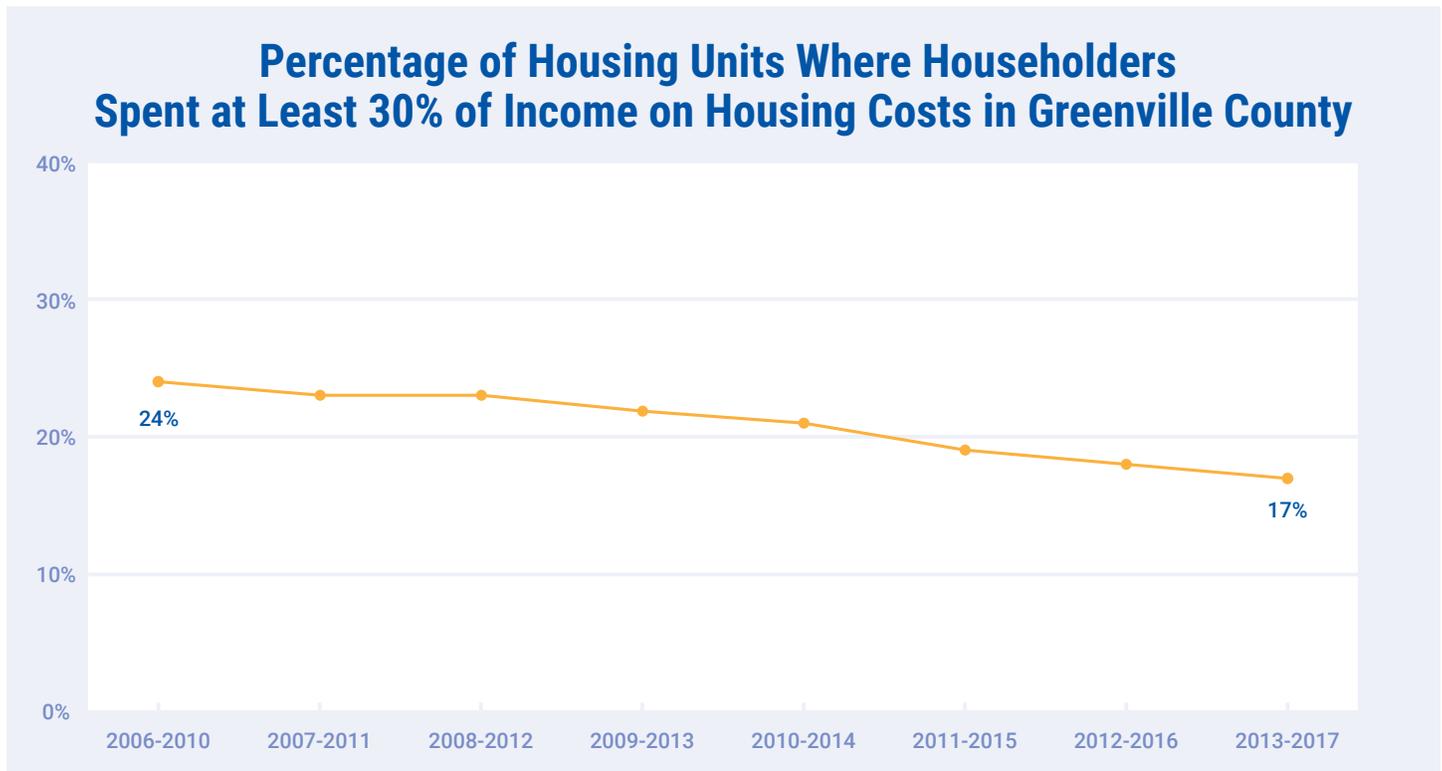
Why does this Matter?

The generally accepted definition of affordable housing is that for which the occupants are paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing costs, including utilities. High housing costs put undue stress on household budgets and leave few resources for other expenses, savings, long-term investments, financial cushions for emergencies, and trans-generational wealth-building. Renters and people of color are disproportionately low income, and low-income people spend disproportionately more on housing costs.

People across Greenville often identified housing affordability as a major barrier in their life. Especially in neighborhoods near Greenville city limits, many individuals were struggling to keep up with the rising costs. One resident said, "There is only so many ways to stretch a dollar... I really feel like I'm in my own boat, but my boat is sinking."

How are we doing?

In Greenville County, there are an estimated 185,837 housing units as of 2017, with one third being renter-occupied and two thirds being owner-occupied. Just over 17% of Greenville County householders spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs. This percentage has been steadily decreasing.



Data Source: Kids Count Data Center

DID YOU KNOW...

One in three U.S. households is paying too much for housing, the preponderance of those being low income households and households of color. Compared to Richland and Charleston Counties, which are similar in-state counties, a consistently lower percentage of Greenville County residents, whether homeowners or renters, spend 30% or more of their income on housing.

CONNECTED AND HEALTHY OLDER ADULTS

KEY INDICATOR:

Median Age by Census Tract

Why is this important?

Older adults who live in rural areas face additional challenges, including transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and other essential and leisure activities; housing quality, affordability, and access to repair services; and availability of home-based services, community supports and long-term care.

How are we doing?

The median age for Greenville County is 38. Two of the three northern-most census tracts, one inner-city census tract, and four others in Taylors, Greer, and Travelers Rest are home to county residents with the highest median ages ranging from 47 to 56. The northern-most census tracts are extremely rural, making access to services a challenge for seniors who live there.

Source: U.S. Census B01002

DID YOU KNOW...

Older adults are the fastest growing age segment of the U.S. population. As the baby boomer generation enters retirement and advances in medicine help people live longer, the older adult population is projected to more than double over the next 20 years. For the first time in our region, the number of people ages 60 and older will outnumber school-age children.

KEY INDICATOR:

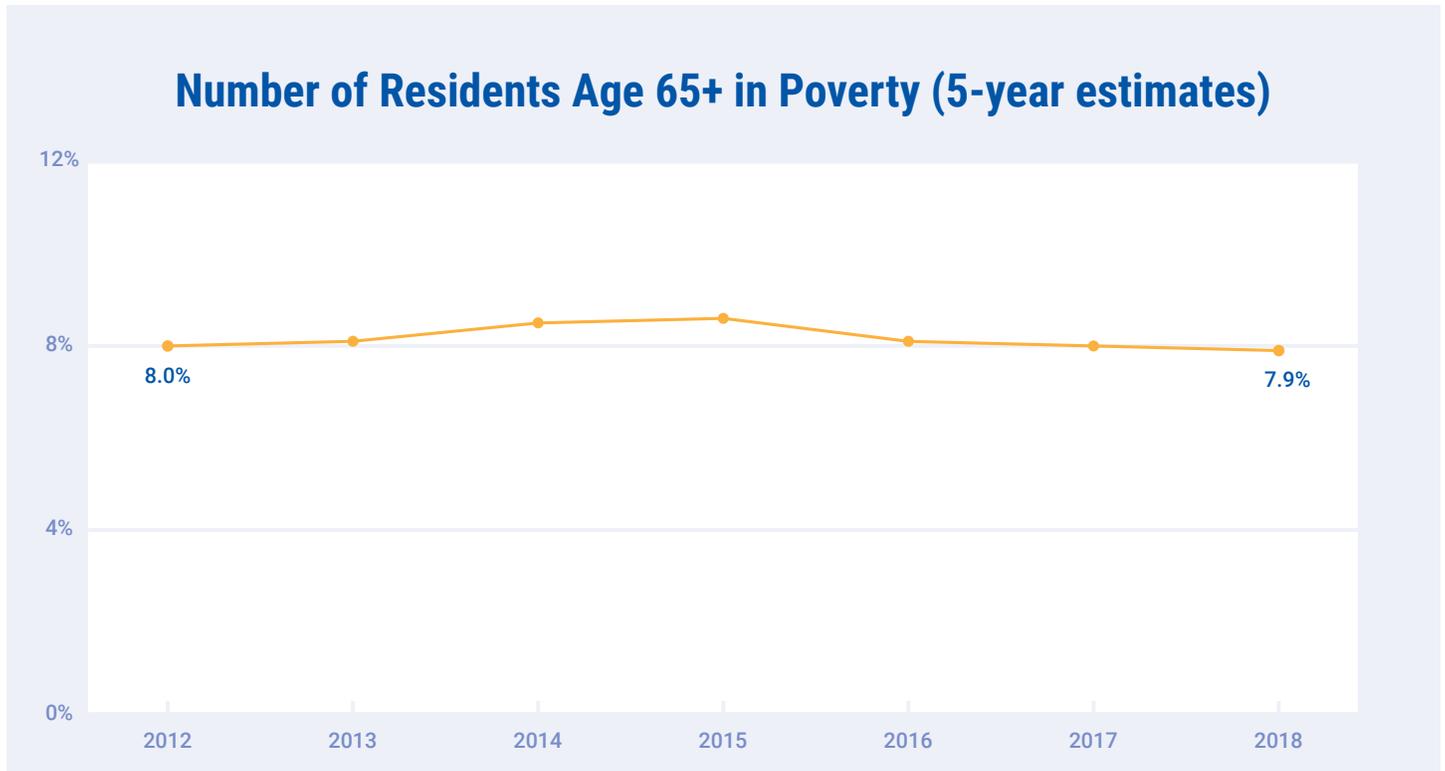
Older Adults (65+) Living Below Poverty Thresholds

Why is this important?

Although poverty has negative impacts on all age groups, it tends to impact the oldest generations the hardest. Lack of regular income, mounting medical bills, and poor planning for retirement mean that seniors have little opportunity to improve their economic outcomes.

How are we doing?

The poverty rate for seniors (age 65+) in Greenville County has held steady over the last several years between 8 and 9%, although numbers in poverty have grown due to the aging population. That equates to almost 6,000 seniors in Greenville County in poverty



Data Source: US Census S1701

DID YOU KNOW...

More than 21% of married Social Security recipients, and 43% of single recipients age 65+, depend on Social Security for 90% of their income.

KEY INDICATOR:

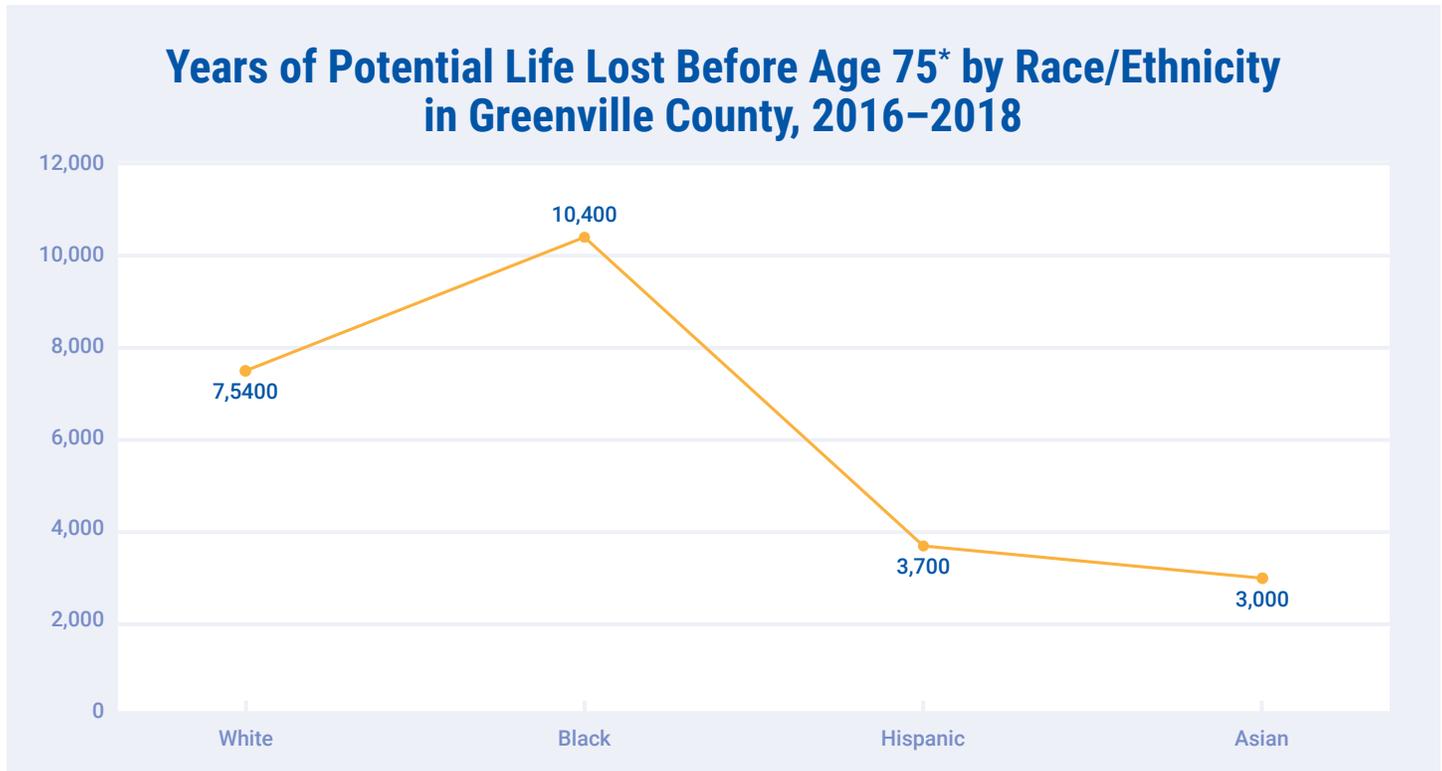
Premature Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate

Why is this important?

Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) is a measure of premature mortality and reflects the number of deaths before age 75, weighted by age, that could have been prevented. By exploring this data, we can answer a critical question: Are people in our community living long, healthy lives?

How are we doing?

The current rate of YPLL in Greenville County is 7,600 per 100,000 residents age 75 and younger. Greenville fares better on this measure, compared to the state average at 8,700 YPLL per 100,000 residents. However, there are significant differences by race and ethnicity with Black residents having markedly higher rates of YPLL.



Data Source: County Health Rankings, CDC WONDER

The primary cause of death under age 75 in Greenville County is cancer at 86 per 100,000 people, followed by heart disease at 59 and accidents at 51 with other causes of death all being far less common than these three primary causes.

Data Source: County Health Rankings, CDC WONDER

DID YOU KNOW...

At a community level, we can influence how long people live by focusing on the many factors that influence health, including the social determinants of health – social and economic conditions that impact individual and group differences in health outcomes. When access to health-promoting opportunities like nutritious food, medical care and prevention services, good jobs, and safe environments are unevenly distributed, length of life varies greatly by place and group.

KEY INDICATOR:

Adults in Poor or Fair Health

Why is this important?

Self-reported health status is a general measure of health-related quality of life in a community. These data help characterize the burden of disease and disability and help us plan services to meet needs as our population ages.

How are we doing?

In Greenville County, 15% of adult residents report that they are in poor or fair health. This is better than the state average but worse than the top counties in the U.S. Likewise, the average monthly number of days of poor physical or mental health that Greenville County adults experience are lower than the state average but higher than the top U.S. counties.

Data Source: County Health Rankings, BRFSS

DID YOU KNOW...

Greenville County ranks second of the South Carolina's 46 counties for health-related quality of life, according to the County Health Rankings. Domains used in the calculations are self-reported Poor or Fair Health, Poor Physical Health Days, Poor Mental Health Days, and the county's rate of low birthweight.

KEY INDICATOR:

Health Insurance Coverage

Why is this important?

The cost of health care and the extent to which seniors require health care is untenable without health insurance. Most seniors, age 65 and over, are covered through Medicare Part A, although having just one plan is insufficient to provide the scope of coverage most seniors need.

How are we doing?

Very few of Greenville County residents age 65 and over lack basic health insurance, primarily because they are entitled to Medicare. However, approximately 11% of younger seniors (age 55-64) lack health insurance. This has decreased from 13% in 2015.

Data Source: US Census S2701

DID YOU KNOW...

Most non-citizen residents are ineligible for Medicare. However, if non-citizen residents are lawfully present, they are eligible to receive Medicare if they qualify to receive Social Security retirement benefits, Railroad Retirement Benefits, or Social Security Disability Insurance.

KEY INDICATOR:

Social Isolation - Older Adults Living Alone

Why is this important?

When seniors are socially isolated, feelings of loneliness and disconnection from the community around them can lead to serious health consequences. While living alone does not inevitably lead to social isolation, it can be a contributing factor. Regardless of the causes of senior isolation, it is one of the main risk factors that worsen pre-existing conditions and lead to early death.

How are we doing?

Just over one-fourth of Greenville County seniors, age 65 and older, live alone. This is approximately the same as the state rate (26%) and slightly under the national rate (27%).

Data Source: US Census B09021

DID YOU KNOW...

Senior isolation and loneliness are linked to high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease, a weakened immune system, depression, anxiety, cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease, and premature mortality.