

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY VIBRANCY and WELLNESS IN MACON COUNTY, IL



A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

AUGUST 31, 2021

Prepared by
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PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF ASSESSMENT

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation commissioned this independent community assessment for two purposes: (1) to understand the impact of the Foundation's grantmaking in Macon County, Illinois; and (2) to comprehensively assess the County's needs as well as the assets available to support those needs. To assist in securing information, 41 key stakeholders were interviewed who described their perceptions of Macon County's challenges and strengths. Research questions focused on improving the economy, community physical and mental health, employment, and possible criminal justice supports. Interviews were conducted from May 3, 2021, to June 25, 2021 in-person, over video conference, and by telephone. Additionally, a three-day in-person visit to Macon County occurred to assist in report preparation. Existing data in the public domain were also analyzed for the study and are provided in this document with the themes from the interviews. This assessment provides an overview of community needs and assets, current health and human service capacity, and models and opportunities to improve community well-being. Recommendations are provided for consideration, which includes short-term and long-term follow-through. The focus of this research was on identifying community needs. As a result, comments by participants included addressing community needs and issues. Efforts were made to encourage participants to share resources that are identified in the asset section of the report. The authors do not claim the asset section is all inclusive.

This work began in April of 2021 and continued until August 31, 2021.

INTRODUCTION TO MACON COUNTY

Macon County, Illinois, is located along the Sangamon River and Lake Decatur. A visitor to Decatur notes the boat traffic on the lake, bike paths, amphitheater, zoo, children's museum, antique mall, and a revitalized downtown with a civic center. The backbone of Macon County's economy is industrial and agricultural commodities. It is host to the Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) North American Headquarters, Tate and Lyle's largest corn processing plant, and manufacturing facilities for Caterpillar, Inc. It hosts a private university, Milliken University, and a public college, Richland Community College. Decatur, located in Macon County, has two hospitals, [Decatur Memorial Hospital](#) (DMH)¹ and [Saint Mary's](#),² and hosts a large federally qualified health center with integrated care, [Crossing Healthcare](#).³ Decatur is located 40 miles from the state capitol, Springfield, Illinois in central Illinois.

Macon County Economy

The United States Department of Agriculture reports grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas are the major crops in Macon County. They note a decrease in net cash farm income of 30% between 2012 and 2017.⁴ Technology advances in manufacturing, agriculture, mining, fishing, and forestry have increased migration to urban areas across the United States limiting the workforce in rural areas. Macon County experiences many of the same barriers to growth as other rural/agricultural communities, including a declining population and lack of access to the workforce. Of note, however, is that an initial decline in the population of Macon County has leveled.⁵

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this impacted perceptions. The Macon County, Illinois coronavirus cases and deaths reported 233 deaths due to COVID-19 in an August 25, 2021, update.⁶ Many who were interviewed described the impact of the pandemic on community well-being, including the limitations of in-person schooling during the 2020/2021 academic year by Decatur Public Schools. Others believe access to unemployment benefits during the pandemic created disincentives for people to return to employment.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

This study focused on the economic well-being and limitations to economic well-being with short and long-term recommendations. It also provides information regarding a host of assets that exist in Macon County. Economic struggles noted are due largely to a declining population base and economic challenges commonplace in all rural areas in the United States and throughout Central Illinois. Similar to Macon County, the decrease in rural population has exacerbated the labor shortages in rural areas across the United States.

Several long-term community participants provide a historical context to the decline noting the closing of the Firestone plant in Decatur in 2001 as a blow to the economy. The recent downsizing (2013) of other industries, including ADM moving its global headquarters out of Decatur to increase access to global markets, also had a negative impact. Another concern noted in conducting this study was commented by members about a perceived negative image of Decatur including “blighted neighborhoods” with vacant and abandoned properties. Still, others express concerns about gang activity from Chicago and increased violence. Despite these concerns, a host of assets exist in Macon County which are described throughout this report combined with talented community leaders.

GENERAL REVIEW OF FINDINGS

The report offers current demographic data on community well-being, in comparison to other communities in Illinois and the United States, with a visual summary. Concerns, for example, regarding a high child poverty rate (half of the school population in Macon County qualifies to receive free and reduced school lunches), low high school graduation rates, negative maternal and child health outcomes, high unemployment, high chronic disease rates, and poor general health of the residents of Macon County are evident when examining these data. Similarly, among many of the data points, there are worse health and social outcomes for persons of color.

The themes identified below center on the critical need to address the limitations on the economic vibrancy of Macon County. All content in both qualitative and quantitative data underscores the capacity and need to address community well-being. However, Macon County has garnered significant resources given the myriad of assets that are available and identified in the report. As one stakeholder noted, “I am on the call with many providers across the State of Illinois, and Macon County is heavily resourced.”

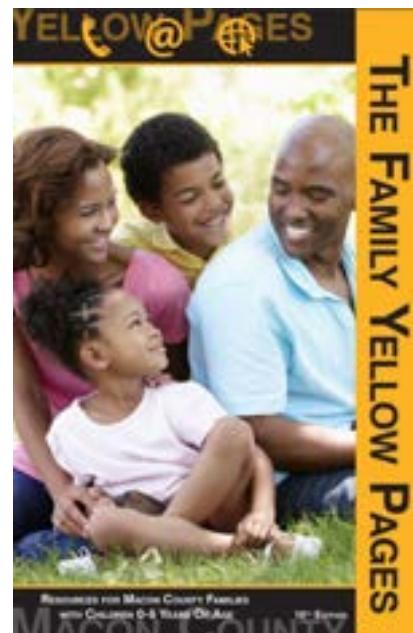
Community Well-Being: Enhancing Capacity

The assessment provides suggestions for addressing economic well-being and describes current community assets. Suggestions include: (1) enhancing access to affordable childcare, especially for second and third shift workers; (2) expanding access to affordable housing; (3) addressing the availability of transportation; (4) continued efforts to address soft skills in training programs and expand educational opportunities; (5) addressing generational poverty; (6) expanding access to behavioral health supports; and (7) addressing racial inequities. Risks to children in Macon County were noted as one stakeholder shared that Macon County has “the second most children in foster care, per-capita, of any county in Illinois.” She noted the lack of foster homes available to the youth placed in care in Macon County, but also notes a myriad of resources in Macon County to support families.

Resource Supports

Of note is a host of resources and access to educational opportunities for a county with just over 100,000 people. A sample of resources include the EnRICH Program, The Project Reads Program, Leadership Institutes, RESTORE, Adult Scholarships and additional resources to assist in maintaining employment, Future Farmers of America Program, access to [Milliken University](#)⁸ and [Richland Community College](#)⁹ in Decatur, and proximity to the Medical School at [Southern Illinois University](#)¹⁰ in Springfield, Illinois. The authors underscore the importance of expanding/continuing current efforts to address adverse childhood experiences by offering/expanding trauma-informed care for educators and in treatment facilities. Equally important is providing the tools necessary for health and behavioral health care providers to expand their treatment of persons with trauma. They encourage the application of a public health model to address social and health inequities.¹¹⁻¹² Recommendations throughout are based on best practices in addressing community challenges with several existing resources noted.

Directories of resources to support family well-being are available for residents of Macon County. For example, the [Family Yellow Pages, 10th edition](#)¹³ provides a comprehensive index of resources in Macon County for parents and children. Authors note extensive resources, including health and human services, education, access to food and clothing and childcare supports, etc. The Illinois Department of Human Services provides a service locator for residents of Macon County based on an index of categories including: child care resource & referral, comprehensive community-based youth services - developmental disability services, domestic violence victim services, early intervention, family case management, family community resource center (family & community services), family planning, mental health, partner abuse intervention services, rape crisis centers, recovery residence, rehabilitation services, residential school, state psychiatric hospital, and women infants and children (WIC).¹⁴



Salient Concerns

1. Childcare

Limited access to reliable and affordable childcare is a significant barrier to education and employment. The National League of Cities provides a practical tool kit for municipal leaders that provides structure for addressing limitation of childcare access. It emphasizes the importance of wages to support hiring childcare workers.¹⁵ Access to quality childcare is necessary to advance economic infrastructure.

2. Blighted Neighborhoods and Housing

“Blighted neighborhoods” have people living in unsafe housing, with temporary blue tarp roofs, next to boarded-up homes as the result of neglect and arson. This negative image was underscored in a recent *Washington Post* article about housing during the pandemic.¹⁶ The article featured Decatur in its presentation of concerns about access to federal aid to prevent evictions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Transportation

The author who visited Macon County noted no traffic congestion; however, stakeholders reported limitations in access to transportation necessary to secure and maintain employment for shift work. Buses do not run after 7:15 PM. Access to ride share services is limited. Taxi services do exist, but may not be affordable or accessible. One stakeholder noted that many are one car problem away from unemployment. Research on community well-being underscores the importance of investment in transportation infrastructure as a component of driving economic growth and alleviating poverty.

4. Police Reform Bill, 2021

All law enforcement personnel interviewed expressed concerns about the negative impact of the current Police Reform Bill that was passed in the 2021 legislative session in Illinois.¹⁷ Concerns center on the elimination of qualified immunity, the elimination of cash bail and affidavits, and the capacity for filing anonymous complaints against officers. Of concern were perceptions that this bill will create a workforce shortage of law enforcement officers in the future. This was expressed during a time when a police officer was shot and killed in Champaign, Illinois. The officer killed was from Decatur, and another police officer was shot in the parking lot of a church at the end of June 2021.

5. Diverse Economic Structures

Several participants mentioned the importance of diversifying the agricultural and manufacturing base economy. As a participant stated [there is a need for] “green energy and high technology jobs to grow the economy.” Most participants believed in the capability of Macon County to change economic structures and adapt, despite current significant frustrations among elected leaders. Another participant stated, “Macon County is in transition. It was a blue-collar town and that is changing.” Most respondents also noted the philanthropic giving of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation as a unique asset contributing to the well-being of Decatur. They note the Foundation’s contributions to the Community Care Campus, current revitalization of the Johns Hill neighborhood, leadership and educational programming, support for leisure and recreational activities including the amphitheater, support for the Zoo, helping to address the image of Decatur with funds for a rebranding campaign, and general and ongoing support for the state-of-art Macon County Law Enforcement Training Center, for example.

RECOMMENDATIONS: SHORT AND LONG TERM

Short-term

1. Host a series of community conversations on race and diversity sponsored by people with expertise on implicit biases. Include educators, industry leaders, elected officials, and key community stakeholders. Many communities have used [Project Implicit](#)¹⁸ developed by Harvard. Macon County could host information about diversity and inclusion on its web page to advance continued training. Educators can support conversations about racial equity as part of continued efforts to advance social and emotional learning. Expansion of the Diversity Book Club is suggested. Implementation of evidence-based strategies to address racial tension is critical.
2. Host the [Poverty Simulation](#)¹⁹ to enhance understanding of poverty to include both the public and private sector broadly in the community. If the kit is not available in Macon County, it can be purchased, and appropriate personnel trained on the application. Like the Project Implicit, it has strong outcomes. The application of this simulation has been successful in advancing a greater understanding of poverty in communities across the United States.
3. Expand and continue the use of telehealth to increase access to health and behavioral health care. Recruitment of a specialty workforce will likely continue to be difficult, like it is in all rural areas. An option for consideration is continued and possible expansion of the use of technology to deliver health care services, which increased during the pandemic. Recent federal policy changes have reduced barriers and increased access to telehealth. The literature notes that application of telehealth practices improves patient outcomes and has been largely seamless during the pandemic.²⁰⁻²¹ This will, however, require strong consideration of the need for additional brick and mortar structures. Of note are the benefits of teletherapy for teens and young adults defined as a “teen-friendly protective factor.”²² This could be beneficial to address the mental health needs of youth in Macon County.
4. Address waiting lists in behavioral health care facilities. As a respondent stated, “Waiting lists are a problem because when people have life or death thoughts - they need services [now].” A resource at no cost to Decatur, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in Region 5 HHS, exists at the [University of Wisconsin-Madison entitled NIATx](#).²³ This entity will provide expertise in assisting providers in removing the barrier of waitlists to access treatment and recovery. Professionals offer expertise, through training and technical assistance, to assist the organization in addressing wait lists and engagement in data-driven decision-making. It is provided in Illinois at no cost, as the state is part of the catchment area for service delivery of the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center that is part of NIATx.
5. Share success stories by highlighting noteworthy accomplishments in Macon County, including the success of youth in educational programs. It can continue to include extensive use of social media platforms to ensure a positive message. For example, the success of one of the Habitat for Humanity homes could be emphasized to underscore how the community is addressing homelessness and limitations of access to housing through partnerships.

Long-term

1. Ensure affordability and accessibility of childcare. An opportunity might exist, for example, to expand childcare facilities in the Johns Hill neighborhood during the revitalization process. It is recommended that community partners collaborate and consolidate resources and expertise in an effort to address this concern. Partnerships could, for example, include Baby TALK, the existing college and university program on workforce preparation, Head Start, the Employment Opportunity Center located on the Community Care Campus with Baby TALK, and the City of Decatur Economic Development Office as well as the faith-based community and public schools.
2. Engage with critical stakeholders to support a public-private partnership to expand green energy and high technology jobs. This might include expanding financial services, information technology, and personal services. This will require engagement with personnel in higher education, economic development, and other community leaders and elected officials.
3. Determine gaps in the addressing the behavioral health system's needs. Determine the most critical needs in serving persons with treatment concerns. This will require the support of entities such as Crossings Healthcare, Heritage, and Saint Mary's Hospital.
4. Expand access to the simulation training at Macon County Law Enforcement Training Center. This is an opportunity to draw people to Decatur and to engage in a greater understanding of the work of law enforcement. Evaluate if it changes perceptions of law enforcement. Provide as many opportunities as possible to share outcome data on the experience of participating in the simulations in a formal evaluation process that includes pre- and post-tests and review perceptions one month later. This would require the support of Richland Community College.
5. Examine the long-term impact of the revitalization of Johns Hill neighborhood. Research questions could include: What is the satisfaction with the outcome? Has it decreased teacher shortages at the Johns Hill Magnet School? Are local properties better maintained? Is the commercial development successful? Is there less crime/arson in the neighborhood? This effort provides a case study on neighborhood revitalization that has capacity for replication.
6. Expand access to training and technical assistance on trauma-informed care for pre-schools and K-12 schools in Macon County including an examination of the broad-based social and emotional learning opportunities already in existence.²⁴
7. Build and expand upon mental health training at the Macon County Law Enforcement Training Center to include collaborations with mental health providers and law enforcement officers trained together on crisis de-escalation.²⁵ This facility creates a fertile ground for the adaption of co-responder models to improve engagement and assistance for persons in crisis. Also, training staff working at the jail on substance use and mental health disorders is a critical and ongoing need. This collaboration would include Richland Community College and the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. It has the potential to serve as a national model. The State of Rhode Island has been doing training on advancing expertise among jail staff across the United States that is being adapted as one example.
8. Given the population demographics, assess needs among older adults for safety. Falls are serious and costly, and 911 calls for assistance are significant in Decatur. The use of technology and at-home supports has the potential to eliminate some of these calls including access to health care and optical supports, strength conditioning, and making homes safer with bars, railings, and brighter light bulbs.

STUDY METHODOOOGY

To complete this assessment, key informant interviews and focus groups involved more than 41 community leaders in Macon County, and secondary data on community demographics and inequities were examined. There was no requirement to secure institutional review board approval because data were collected solely for program development/improvement and no personal names or identifiers have been listed in the report or communication to the Foundation. However, both Dr. Schroeder and Heitkamp have current research, ethics, and compliance training certification through the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI\) Program](#).²⁶ The CITI Program “is dedicated to serving the training needs of colleges and universities, healthcare institutions, technology, and research organizations, and governmental agencies, as they foster integrity and professional advancement of their learners.”^a



DATA REVIEW

Quantitative data were gathered from several local, state, and national sources. See Appendix A for a complete list of all data sources, the general identification of variables included in this community assessment, and the external link for additional information or personal access to the data.

Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups

Key informant interviews, and four focus groups, occurred with residents of Macon County. More than 40 community leaders in Macon County participated in interviews over video conferencing, telephone, and in-person. Methodology for selection included a collaboration with Tanya Andricks, Executive Director of the Community Health Improvement Center (a Federally Qualified Health Center), who identified key community leaders. Natalie Beck, President of the Community Foundation of Macon County, suggested five additional names for inclusion, and Amy Rueff, Resource Director for the Illinois American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, suggested two additional names. Howard G. Buffett provided names for inclusion in the study and approved the final list of individuals invited to participate.

The selection process included individuals in leadership positions Macon County with the expertise to assess community needs, assets, and the impact of prior investments. Upon selection, people with email addresses available received an email invitation. Invitations described the purpose of the study with many completing a link to a Google form that provided information about availability and demographic information noting if they live in the city of Decatur or elsewhere in Macon County, their gender, race, ethnicity, and employment.

All participants, except twelve who participated in a focus group, participated in an individual interview with Professor Heitkamp. Focus groups were difficult to form due to the small sample size, availability, and range of expertise. Additionally, participants were able to provide more information in individual

interviews. Participants included elected officials, educators and higher education administrators, mass communications specialists, human service administrators, health care administrators, law enforcement/public safety personnel, economic development personnel, and personnel in recreation and leisure.

Researchers ensured diversity among gender, age, race, and ethnicity to ensure feedback was representative of the demographics of Macon County. Thomasine Heitkamp visited Macon County from June 20-23 to conduct interviews, tour the area of Macon County, and participate in meetings. In the initial stage of the interview, all participants were told the following: their name will not appear in the report; the interview is not being recorded; and, the final report to the Foundation will provide themes along with demographic data gathered from the public sources.

The interviews were an hour in length, except for one that was 30 minutes. The researchers kept copious notes that were prepared for data analysis and selection of themes. Information about participants that existed on the web was read prior to the interview to secure background and to inform additional interview questions. Dr. Schroeder joined Professor Heitkamp for two of the interviews (a focus group and an individual interview). Six participants shared additional information by email following the interview. Qualitative data were coded using an ethnographic approach to identify themes. Dr. Schroeder reviewed data and themes developed by Thomasine Heitkamp to ensure inter-rater reliability and confirm any concluding statements.

More information on the methodology of the key informant interviews and focus groups can be found in the Appendices.

- Appendix B: List of groups, organizations invited to participate (regardless of if they agreed to be interviewed, or not).
- Appendix C: Invitation letter to participate in key informant interviews and focus groups.
- Appendix D: Invitation form completed by participants
- Appendix E: Itinerary from Professor Heitkamp's visit to Macon County

Limitations

Individuals who participated in key informant interviews and focus groups largely represented communities and programs central to Decatur and lacked representation from the surrounding area within Macon County. Similarly, a majority of those interviewed provide services or programming for individuals who are experiencing poverty as opposed to the individuals themselves. The interviews lacked representation of those in Macon County who are experiencing joblessness, lacking access to basic health care services, who are under-resourced, and those experiencing homelessness (for example). Though many efforts were made to include a diverse set of participants with personal invitations and follow-up emails and calls, the authors hoped for stronger representation from persons of color who reside in Macon County.

MACON COUNTY: SNAPSHOT

Macon County experienced a 6.1% decline in its population between 2010 and 2019, based on Census estimates.²⁷ Macon County Facts:

- Roughly 22% of the residents are under the age of 18.²⁷
- More than 7,000 (7%) of the residents are veterans.²⁷
- Twenty-two percent hold a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 34.7% of all Illinois residents and 32.1% of the total U.S. population.²⁷
- Percent change in employment from 2017-18 was -0.20% compared to 0.50% for all of Illinois and 1.8% for the total U.S. population.²⁷
- Roughly one in six residents are living in poverty (16.7%) compared to 11.5% and 10.5% of the entire state of Illinois and the U.S. respectively.²⁷
- A greater proportion of residents under age 65 are living with a disability (10.7%) compared to all of Illinois (7.2%) or the total U.S. population (8.6%).²⁷
- Roughly 15.3% are living in rural areas.²⁷
- A significant shortage of behavioral healthcare providers exists. There were 650 people in Macon County for every one behavioral healthcare provider compared to one provider for every 410 persons living in Illinois.²⁸
- From a law enforcement perspective, Blacks, Latinx, and Asian drivers (2017) in Macon County were not asked for consent to search at rates significantly different than White drivers.²⁹
- A greater percentage of the population of Black or African American residents of Illinois (58%) experienced a traffic stop in 2019 compared to 21% of Illinois residents who are White.³⁰

Macon County is ranked among the least healthy counties in Illinois, ranking 89 out of 102 counties with data.³¹ Compared to the State of Illinois and the top-performing counties in the U.S., Macon County reports:³²

- Greater child and infant mortality (disproportionately higher among children who are Black in Macon County than those who are White).
- Greater unemployment.
- A higher percentage of children living in poverty (disproportionately higher among children who are Black in Macon County than those who are White).

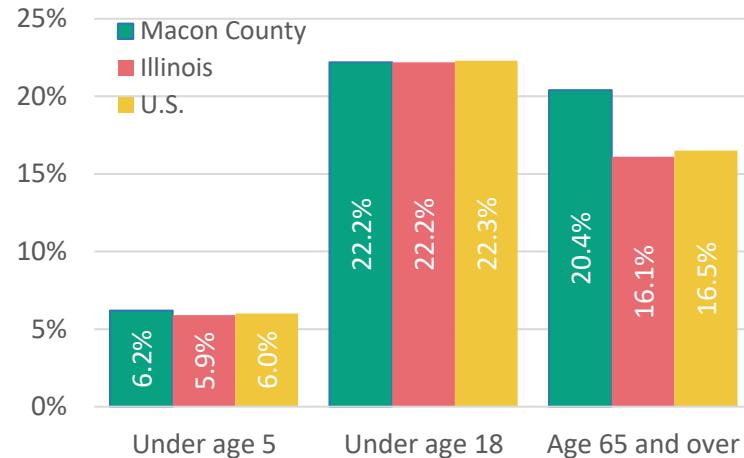


COMMUNITY DATA: HOW MACON COUNTY COMPARES

AGE

Nearly one in five people (20.4%) living in Macon County are age 65 or older – greater than the national average and the state of Illinois. This is an important consideration when developing community supports and programming and when reviewing accessible community services. This underscores the need for in-home supports for older adults.²⁷

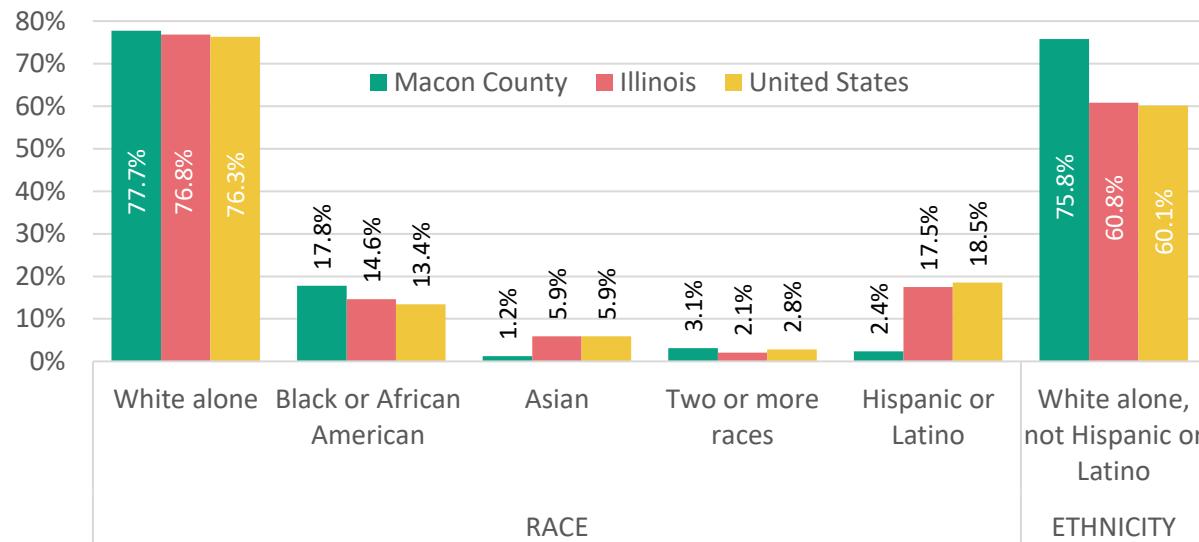
Figure 1. Percentage of Persons by Age



RACE AND ETHNICITY

Macon County mirrors the State of Illinois and the U.S. in the proportion of residents who are White alone. However, a greater proportion of residents in Macon County (than in all of Illinois or the U.S.) are Black or African American. Conversely, Macon County has a very low percentage of residents who are Hispanic or Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian. Roughly 75.8% of County residents indicate White alone, not Hispanic or Latino which is greater than the roughly 60% of residents in Illinois and the U.S. who indicate the same.²⁷

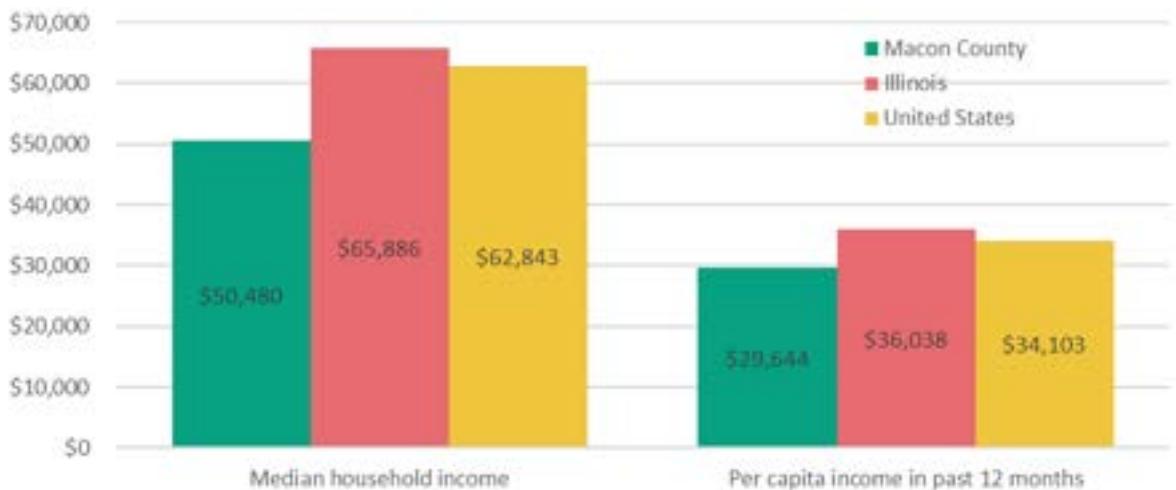
Figure 2. Race and Ethnicity for Groups Comprising at Least One Percent of Macon County



ECONOMY

Roughly one in six people in Macon County are living in poverty (16.7%). The County also reports a lower median household income compared to residents of Illinois and the total U.S. population. Similarly, Macon County identifies a lower per capita income than the State of Illinois or the total U.S. population.

Figure 3. Median Household Income and Per Capita Income 205-2019 (in 2019 Dollars)²⁷



Although median household income and per capita income is lower in Macon County than in the State of Illinois and the U.S. overall, so are housing costs. The median gross rent in Macon County is only \$684/month compared to \$1,010 for the state. Participants in the study described an asset of affordability of living in Decatur.

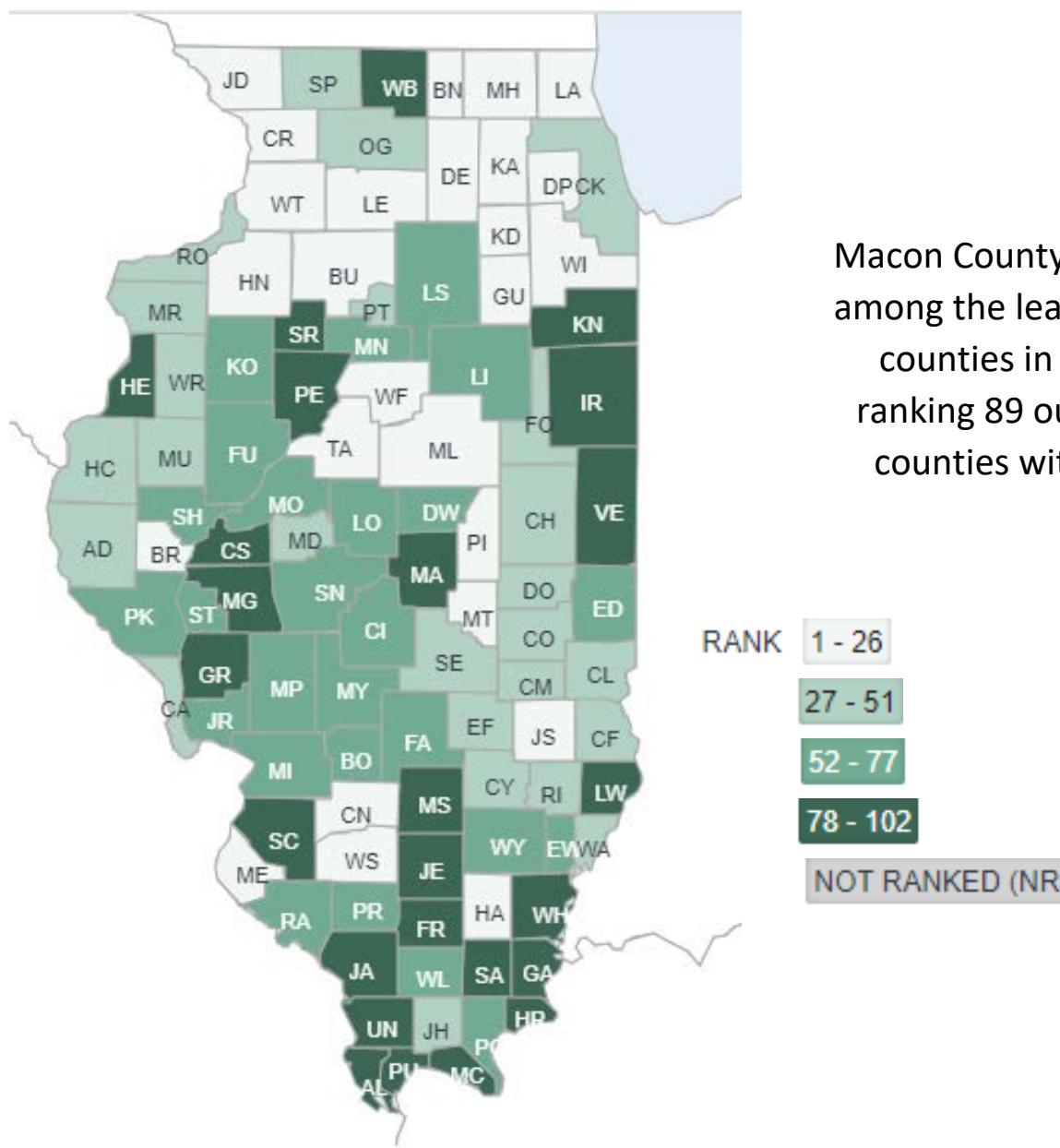
Table 1. Housing and Rental Costs in Macon County, Illinois, and the U.S. 2015-2019²⁷

	Macon County	Illinois	United States
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2015-2019	68.40%	66.10%	64.00%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2015-2019	\$98,400	\$194,500	\$217,500
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$1,067	\$1,693	\$1,595
Median selected monthly owner costs - without a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$457	\$641	\$500
Median gross rent, 2015-2019	\$684	\$1,010	\$1,062

COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS: 2021

County rankings are based on a comprehensive model of population health, which emphasizes many factors that, if addressed, “can make communities healthier places to live, learn, work, and play.”³³ County Health Rankings measure county performance on both health outcomes and health factors. Outcomes include measures around quality and length of life, while health factors are variables to include health behaviors and social and economic factors. Visit the [2021 Measures & Data Sources](#) page through County Health Rankings for more information on the measures included, the national data source, and years of data.³⁴

Figure 4. Overall Ranking for all Health Outcomes Combined, County Health Rankings 2021³¹



Macon County is ranked among the least healthy counties in Illinois, ranking 89 out of 102 counties with data.

Assets Present in County Health Rankings

Over the last twenty years, the average density of fine particulate matter in the air in Macon County (air pollution) has steadily declined; Macon County is presently doing better than the State of Illinois and the general U.S. for this measure. Macon County also ranks high in the state, and nationally, in high school completion, the percentage of the population with some college, and the percentage of eligible individuals who have had a mammogram.

Table 2. Macon County: High Performance, County Health Rankings 2021 ³²

	Macon County	Illinois	Top U.S. Performers*
Mammography screening rates	47%	51%	43%
High school completion	90%	89%	94%
Some college	62%	70%	73%
Air pollution – particular matter	7.8	8.7	5.2
Uninsured adults	7%	10%	7%
Uninsured children	2%	3%	3%

* Counties ranking in tenth or ninetieth percentile (i.e. only 10% of counties in the U.S. perform better).

Opportunities to Improve Quality of Life for Macon County

Compared to the State of Illinois and the top-performing counties in the U.S., Macon County reports: ³²

- Poorer physical and mental health days.
- Greater number of years of potential life lost (premature).
- Lower life expectancy (disproportionately lower among persons who are Black in Macon County than those who are White).
- Greater child and infant mortality (disproportionately higher among children who are Black in Macon County than those who are White).
- A greater proportion of residents who are obese, smoke, are physically inactive, participate in excessive drinking, and who have diabetes.
- Greater unemployment.
- A higher percentage of children living in poverty (disproportionately higher among children who are Black in Macon County than those who are White).
- Higher teen birth rate (disproportionately higher among persons who are Black in Macon County than those who are White).
- Higher alcohol-impaired driving deaths.
- Lower reading and math scores.
- A lower percentage of adults ages 25-44 with some post-secondary education.

See Table 3.

Table 3. Macon County: Opportunities for Improvement, County Health Rankings 2021 ³²

	Macon County	Illinois	Top U.S. Performers*
Quality of Life			
+ Premature death (years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population)	8,400	6,600	5,400
+ Premature age-adjusted mortality (# of deaths among residents under age 75 per 100,000)	420	330	280
+ Life expectancy	77.3	79.4	81.1
Poor or fair health days	18%	10%	8%
Average # of physically unhealthy days in the past 30	4.3	3.6	3.4
Frequent physical distress	13%	10%	10%
Average # of mentally unhealthy days in the past 30	4.6	3.8	3.8
Frequent mental distress	15%	12%	12%
Death by suicide	13	11	11
Diabetes prevalence	18%	10%	8%
+ Low birth weight	10%	8%	6%
+ Child mortality (# of deaths among children under age 18 per 100,000 population)	60	50	40
+ Infant mortality (# of infant deaths within 1 year per 1,000 live births)	8	6	4
Health Behaviors			
Adult smoking	21%	16%	16%
Adult obesity	36%	30%	26%
Physical inactivity	28%	22%	19%
Percentage of adults reporting heavy or binge drinking	21%	22%	15%
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths (% of driving deaths with alcohol involvement)	41%	31%	11%
+ Teen births (# of births per 1,000 females ages 15-19)	32	19	12
Food insecurity	13%	10%	9%
Limited access to healthy foods	7%	4%	2%
+ Drug overdose deaths	21	22	11
+ Motor vehicle crash deaths	12	9	9
Drug overdose deaths	21	22	11

* Counties ranking in 10th or 90th percentile (i.e. only 10% of U.S. counties perform better).

+ Disproportionally impacts people of one race more than any other race.

	Macon County	Illinois	Top U.S. Performers*
Social and Economic Factors			
Some college	62%	70%	73%
Unemployment	5.3%	4.05	2.6%
+ Children in poverty	22%	16%	10%
Children in single-parent households	32%	25%	14%
+ Injury deaths	78	65	59
Percentage of teens (ages 16-19) not in school nor working	10%	6%	4%
+ Reading scores	2.6	3.0	3.3
+ Math scores	2.4	2.9	3.4
+ Median household income	\$52,300	\$69,200	\$72,900
Children eligible for free, or reduced price, lunch	51%	49%	32%

* Counties ranking in 10th or 90th percentile (i.e. only 10% of U.S. counties perform better).

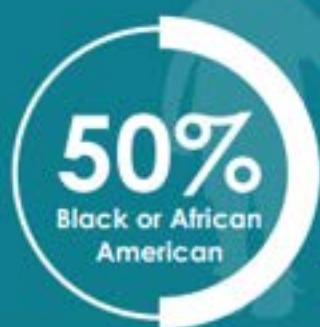
+ Disproportionally impacts people of one race more than any other race.

Racial Inequity in County Health Rankings

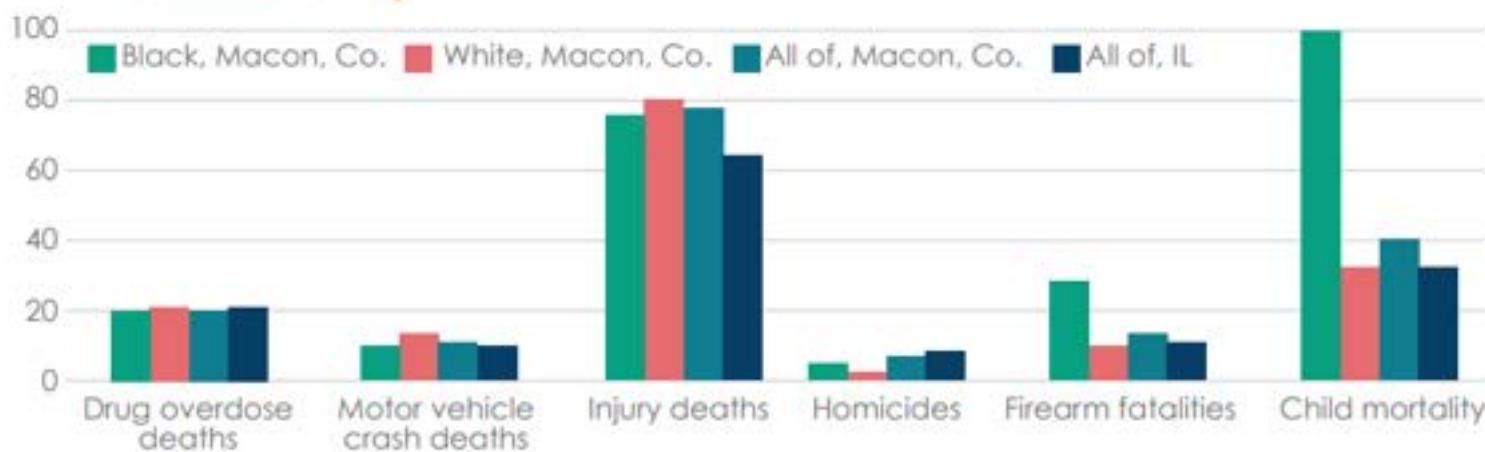
Areas of concern related to the social, health, economic, and quality of life conditions in Macon County are not the same for persons of color as they are for residents who are White only. For example, the rate of the drug overdose deaths, motor vehicle crashes, and injury deaths per 100,000 population is greater among Macon County residents who are White. Conversely, the number of homicides, firearm fatalities, and teen births are all greater among community members who are Black. Most significantly, Macon County residents who are Black have a lower life expectancy, lower math and reading scores, lower median household income, higher infant and child mortality, a greater percentage of children living in poverty, and a greater number of years of potential life lost.³²

See data visualization of these disparities on the following page. Data tables are available in Appendix F.

Percentage of Children Living in Poverty



Deaths per 100,000 Population County Health Rankings, 2021



Median Household Income



	Black	White
Premature Death Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population.	11,600	7,600
Premature Age-Adjusted Mortality Number of deaths among residents under age 75 per 100,000.	530	400
Life Expectancy Average for total U.S. is 78.5 and for all of IL it is 79.4.	73.8	77.9

ACCESS TO CARE

In Macon County, there is a significant shortage of behavioral healthcare providers. There were 650 Macon County residents for every one behavioral healthcare provider compared to one provider for every 410 persons living in Illinois. In the top-performing counties in the U.S., the ratio was one behavioral healthcare provider for every 270 persons. Macon County also reports a lack of access to dental providers. See Table 4. Macon County is performing better than the state overall for access to primary care physicians reporting one provider for every 1,180 residents compared to one primary care physician for every 1,240 persons in the State of Illinois. They are also reporting better ratios for other primary care providers (other than physicians). The World Health Organization recommends a primary care provider ratio of 1:1,000.²⁸

Table 4. Provider to Population Ratios, County Health Rankings 2021²⁸

	Macon County	Illinois	Top U.S. Performers*
Primary care physicians	1,180:1	1,240:1	1,030:1
Other primary care providers	670:1	1,110:1	620:1
Mental health providers	650:1	410:1	270:1
Dentists	1,680:1	1,240:1	1,210:1

* Counties ranking in tenth or ninetieth percentile (i.e. only 10% of counties in the U.S. perform better).

Decatur has recently developed a comprehensive response to substance use treatment and recovery in the Community Care Campus. This program provides wrap-around services and transitional housing. However, the county more broadly lacks access to substance use treatment. Services in Macon County are centrally located in Decatur, Illinois.³⁵⁻³⁶

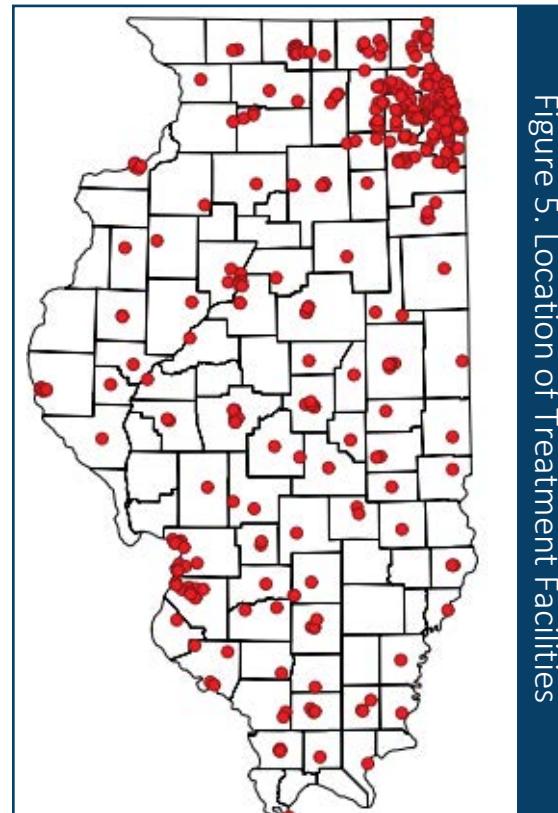
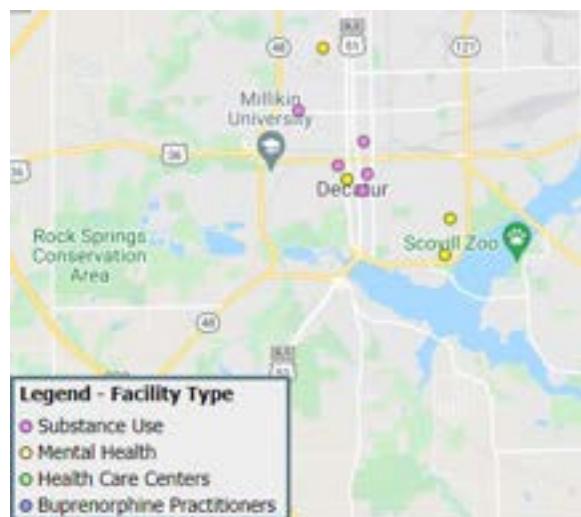


Figure 5. Location of Treatment Facilities

CRIMINAL JUSTICE, CRIME, AND POLICING

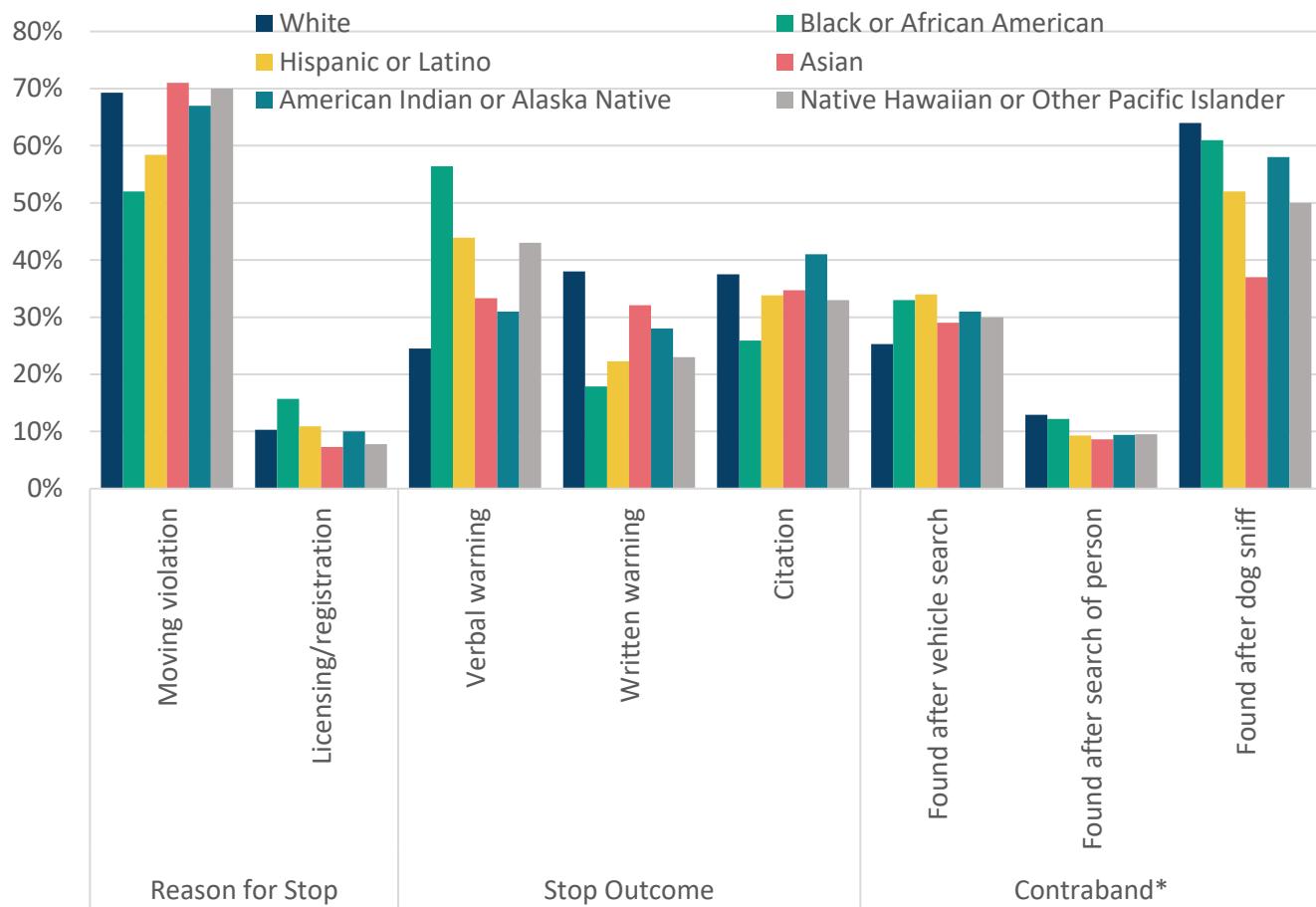
The sample size for county-level data omits detailed analyses for Macon County in several publicly available datasets. However, looking at the State of Illinois compared to the U.S. collectively, Illinois has a lower prison and jail incarceration rate, a larger population of persons on probation and parole, and a lower rate of juveniles in custody.

Compared to all states in 2017, Illinois ranks:³⁷

- 34 of 50 for the state imprisonment rate, reporting roughly 302 persons per 100,000 population.
- 36 of 50 for the state juvenile custody rate with 112 youth placed in the juvenile justice system per 100,000 you.
- 9 out of 50 for the racial disparity in incarceration rates for Black and White U.S. residents (8.8).

According to the recent (2019) [Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Study: Traffic Stop Analysis](#), a greater percentage of the population of Black or African Americans residents of Illinois (58%) experienced a traffic stop in 2019 compared to only 21% of Illinois residents who are White.³⁰ However, individuals who are White were more likely to receive a citation than any of their peers other than those who are American Indian or Alaska Native. See Figure 6. A table presenting the data is available in Appendix G.

Figure 6. Illinois Traffic Stop Study by Race, 2019³⁰

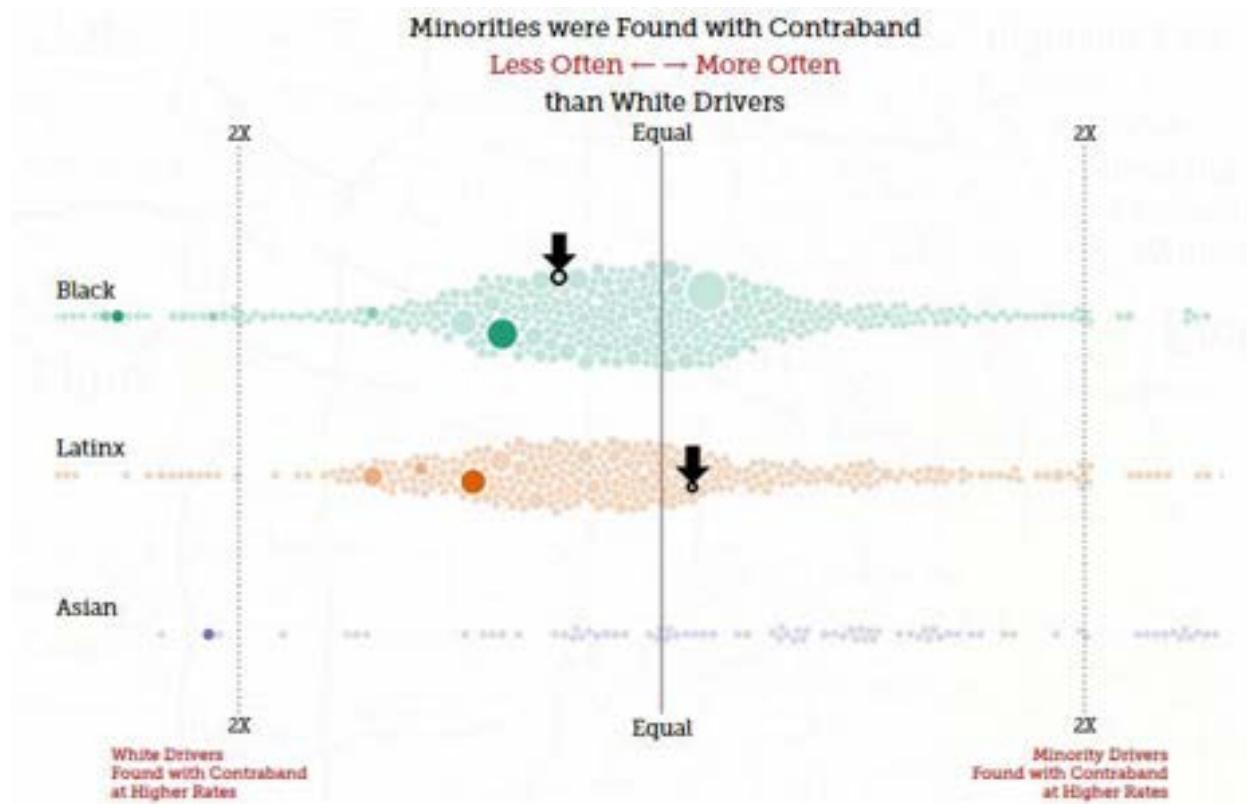


Utilizing 2017 data, Macon County Sheriff conducted 3,884 traffic stops. Of these stops,

- 2,852 (73%) involved a White driver,
- 955 (25%) involved a Black driver,
- 53 (1%) involved a Latinx driver, and
- 24 (1%) involved an Asian driver.²⁹

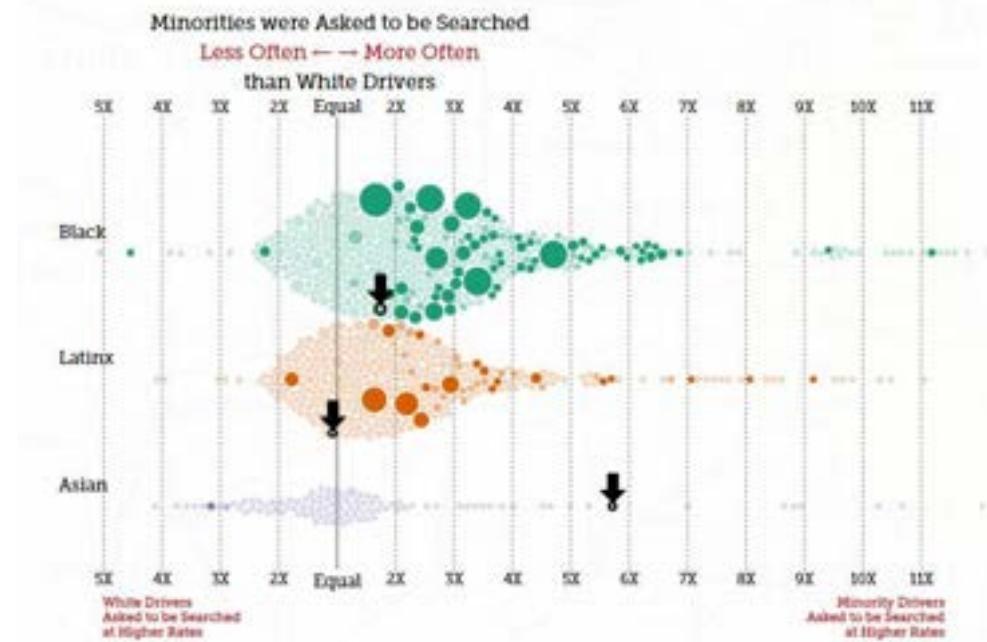
Black, Latinx, and Asian drivers were not cited at significantly different rates than White drivers. In Macon County, there were also no statistically significant differences in consent search hit rates by racial group. For departments with statistically significant differences in Illinois, officers were more likely to find contraband on White drivers than Black or Latinx drivers. In the figure below, the black arrow indicates where Macon County falls when compared to other agencies in Illinois.

Figure 7. Consent Search Hit Rate Comparisons for All Illinois Law Enforcement Agencies²⁹



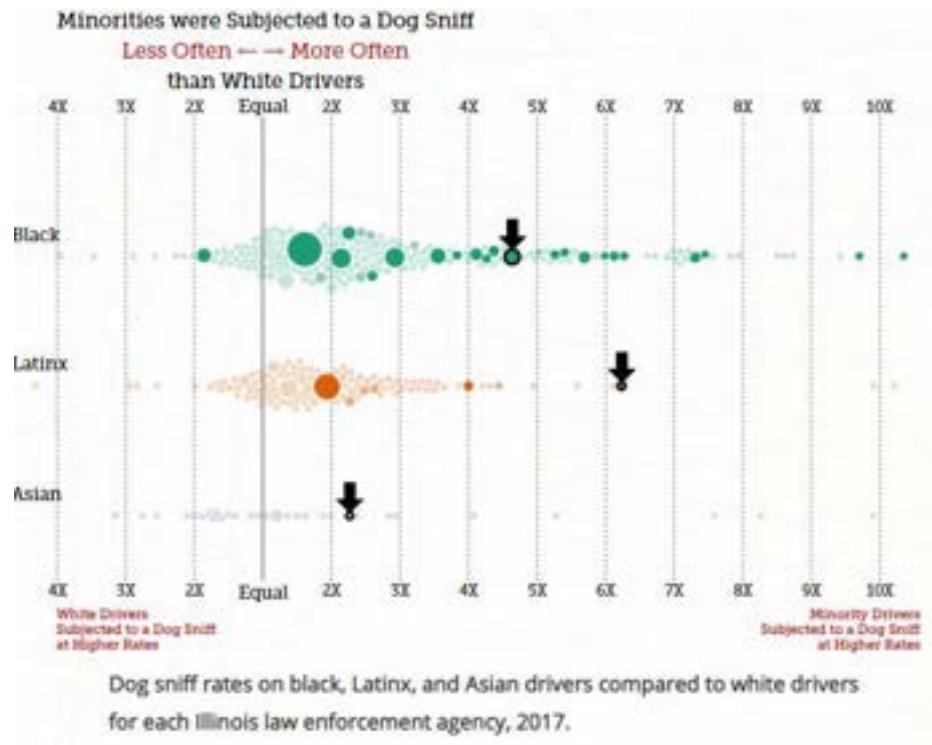
In Macon County (2017), Black and Latinx drivers were not asked consent to search at significantly different rates than White drivers. In the figure below, the black arrow indicates where Macon County falls when compared to other agencies in Illinois.²⁹ See Figure 8.

Figure 8. Search Request Rate Comparisons for All Illinois Law Enforcement Agencies ²⁹



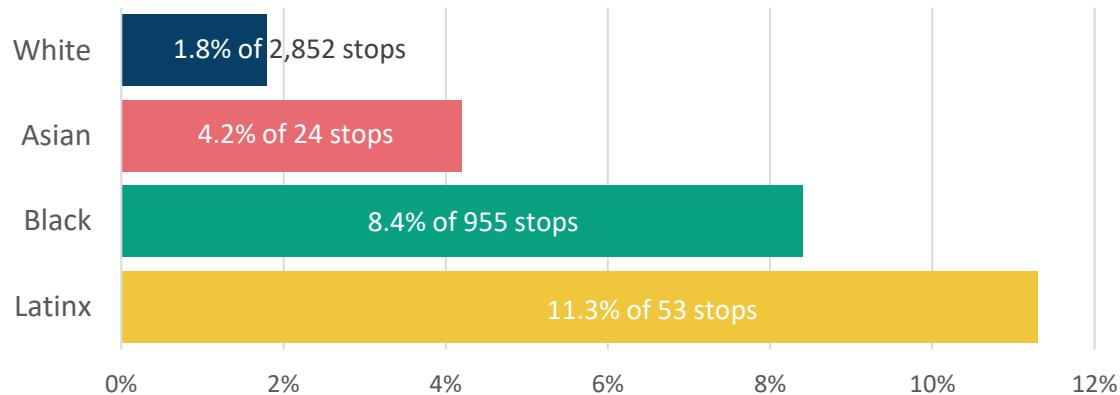
In Macon County (2017), minorities were subjected to a dog sniff test 4.6 and 6.2 times more often than White drivers. In Figure 9 below, the black arrow indicates where Macon County falls when compared to other agencies in Illinois.

Figure 9. Dog Sniff Rate Comparisons for All Illinois Law Enforcement Agencies ²⁹



More specifically, individuals who were Black or Latinx were subjected to a dog sniff test in greater proportion than those who were White. See Figure 10 where 11.3% of all stops of persons who were Latinx resulted in a dog sniff test compared to only 1.8% of stops among persons who were White.

Figure 10. Dog Sniff Rates by Race for Macon County Sheriff, 2017 ²⁹



According to the recent (2019) [Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Study: Pedestrian Stop Analysis](#), there are racial disparities in stop ratios.³⁸ Black or African American residents of Illinois (data are not reported by county) are stopped 21.6 times more often than White Illinois residents. Hispanic or Latino residents and American Indian or Alaska Native residents experience pedestrian stops 6.3 and 5.2 times more often than White residents respectively and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander are stopped 41 times more often. However, the percentage of persons stopped who are patted down, searched beyond a pat-down, and where contraband is found is relatively equal.

According to county health ranking data, the number of reported violent crime offenses per 100,000 population in Macon County is higher (390 offenses per 100,000) than the top-performing U.S. counties (63 per 100,000 population). Homicides per 100,000 and firearm fatalities are also higher in Macon County than among the top-performing U.S. counties.²⁸ These rates vary widely by race in Macon. See Table 5.

Table 5. Rates per 100,000 Population: County Health Rankings 2021 ²⁸

	Homicides	Firearm Fatalities	Violent Crime	Juvenile Arrests
Macon County	6	12	390	17
Black, Macon County	25	27	*	*
White, Macon County	2	9	*	*
Illinois	7	11	403	9
Top performing U.S. Counties	2	8	63	*

* indicates no data were available

According to the [Crime Data Explorer](#) provided through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the number of violent crimes (other than robbery) has been steadily increasing in Macon County over the last ten years, after a sharp decline between 2010 and 2013.³⁹ Similarly there had been a decline in property crime, with rates beginning to again increase starting in 2016. The Crime Data explorer provides agency and state-level data on “all violent crime” which includes homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and “all property crime” which includes arson, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Reporting by agencies is voluntary. Nine agencies are listed as “submitting agencies” in Macon County. However, only six have data on violent crime. These include:

- Macon County Sheriff's Office
- Decatur Police Department
- Maroa Police Department
- Mount Zion Police Department
- Decatur Park District
- Warrensburg Police Department

MACON		
Macon County Sheriff's Office		County
DR: IL0580000		
Blue Mound Police Department		City
DR: IL0580100		
Decatur Police Department		City
DR: IL0580200		
Maroa Police Department		City
DR: IL0580300		
Mount Zion Police Department		City
DR: IL0580400		
Decatur Park District		Other
DR: IL0580700		
Warrensburg Police Department		City
DR: IL0580900		
Millikin University		University or College
DR: IL0581400		
Norfolk Southern Railway: Macon County		Other
DR: IL0586000		

Macon County has a small population, and as such, data for each of the six listed agencies are limited. When looking by agency, by year, and by type of violent crime, rates may be as low as zero. Because of this, the following figures present the total number of crimes, over time, reported collectively by all six agencies providing data in Macon County. See Figures 11-13. The data table is found in Appendix H.

Figure 11. Total **Violent Crime** Reported by Six Agencies in Macon County, Illinois 2010-2019³⁹

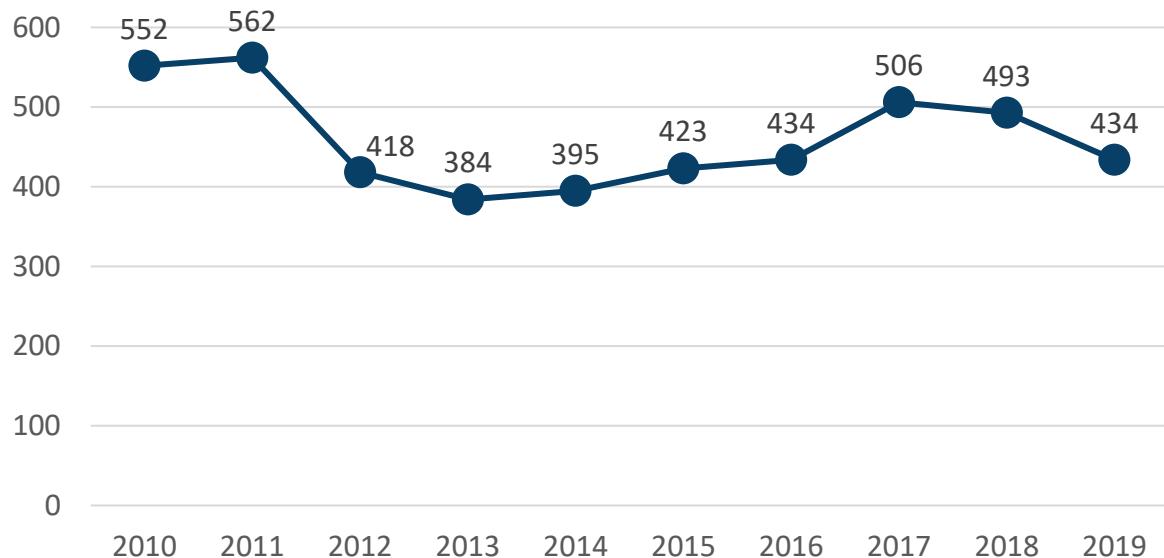


Figure 12. Total **Property Crime** Reported by Six Agencies in Macon County, Illinois 2010-2019 ³⁹

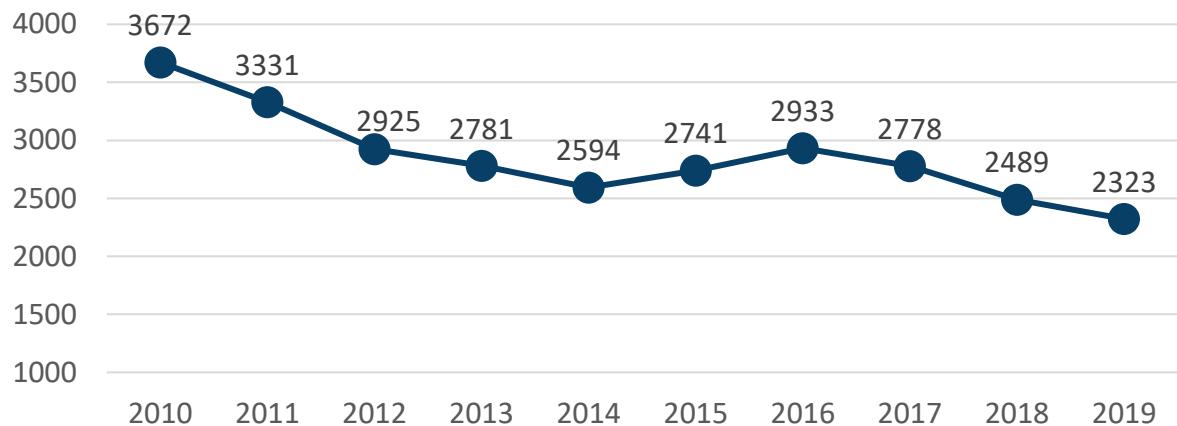
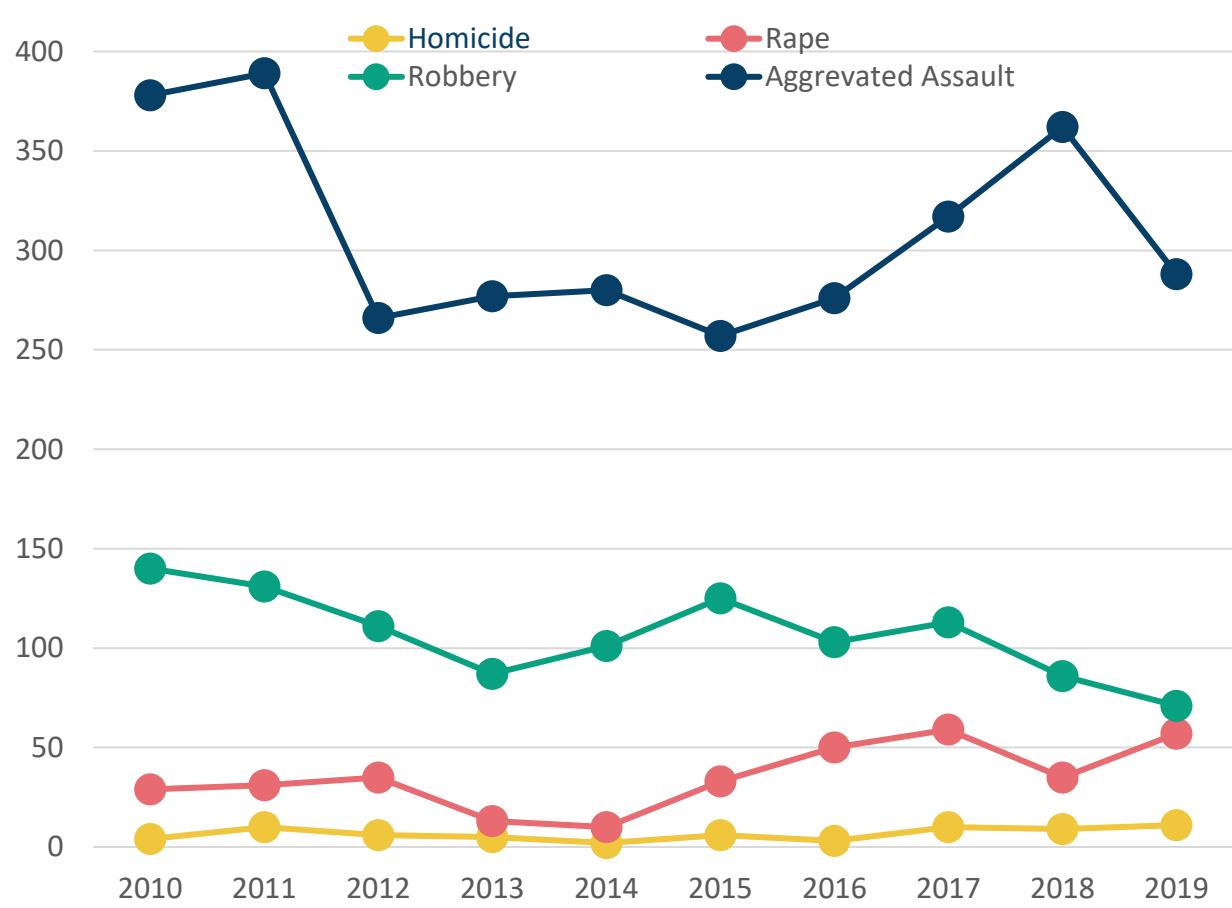


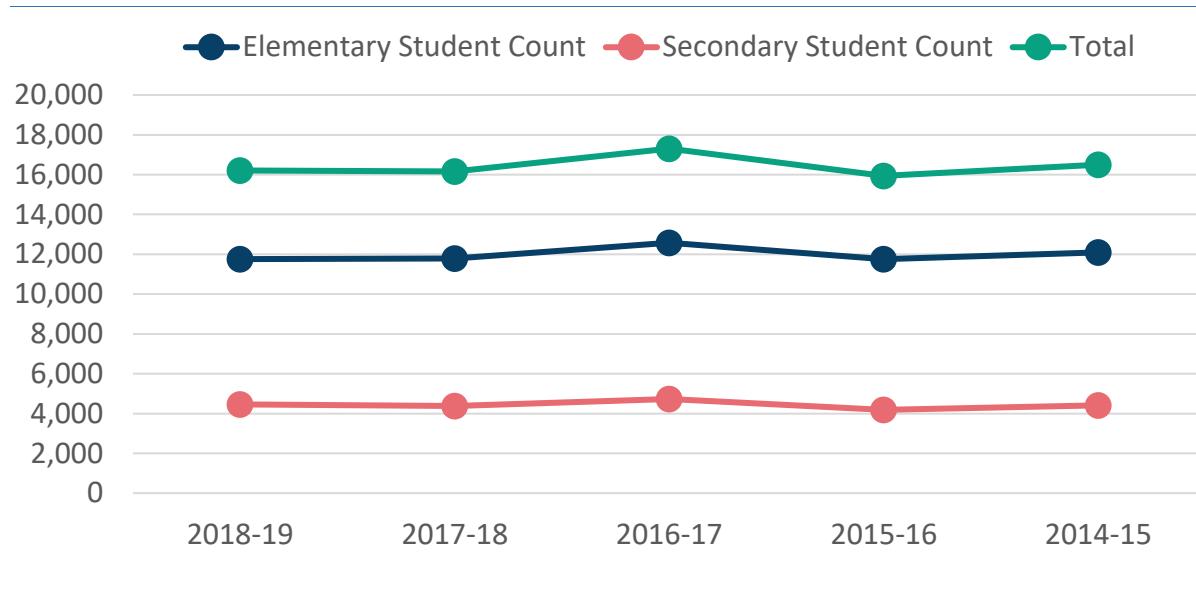
Figure 13. Total for Each Violent Crime, Reported by Six Agencies in Macon County, Illinois ³⁹



EDUCATION

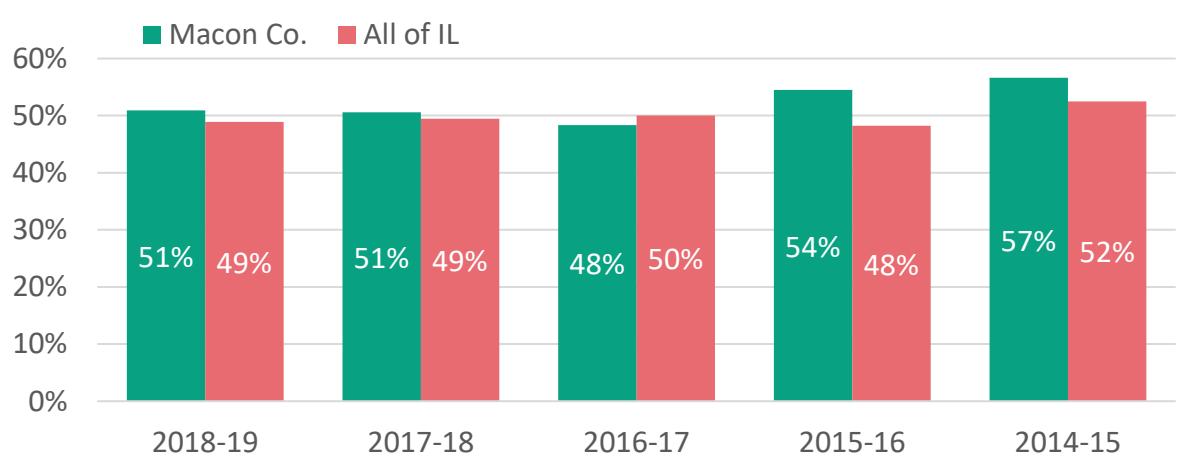
Between the 2014-2015 school year and the 2018-2019 school year, student enrollment has been relatively steady in Macon County. There was a spike in enrollment across all grades in the 2016-17 school year followed by a small decline the following year. See Figure 14. See Table in Appendix J for detailed enrollment by grade level for school years 2014 through 2019.⁴⁰

Figure 14. Student Enrollment in Macon County, Illinois



The proportion of students covered by the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) program makes up roughly half of the public school population in Macon County. The percentage of students covered by the FRL program at Macon County public schools is slightly greater than the proportion of students covered by the FRL program among all public schools in the state of Illinois. See Figure 15.⁴⁰

Figure 15. Percentage of Students who Qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program⁴⁰



Although there are no county-specific data on the dropout rate by race and gender, the dropout rate in the State of Illinois is greater among Black male students than any other demographic. Female students who are Black also report higher dropout rates than other race females. See Figures 16-17. See Appendix J for the data tables for all dropout rates by race and gender for Illinois.⁴⁰

Figure 16. Dropout Rate for Females by Grade and Race, 2018-2019 School Year⁴⁰

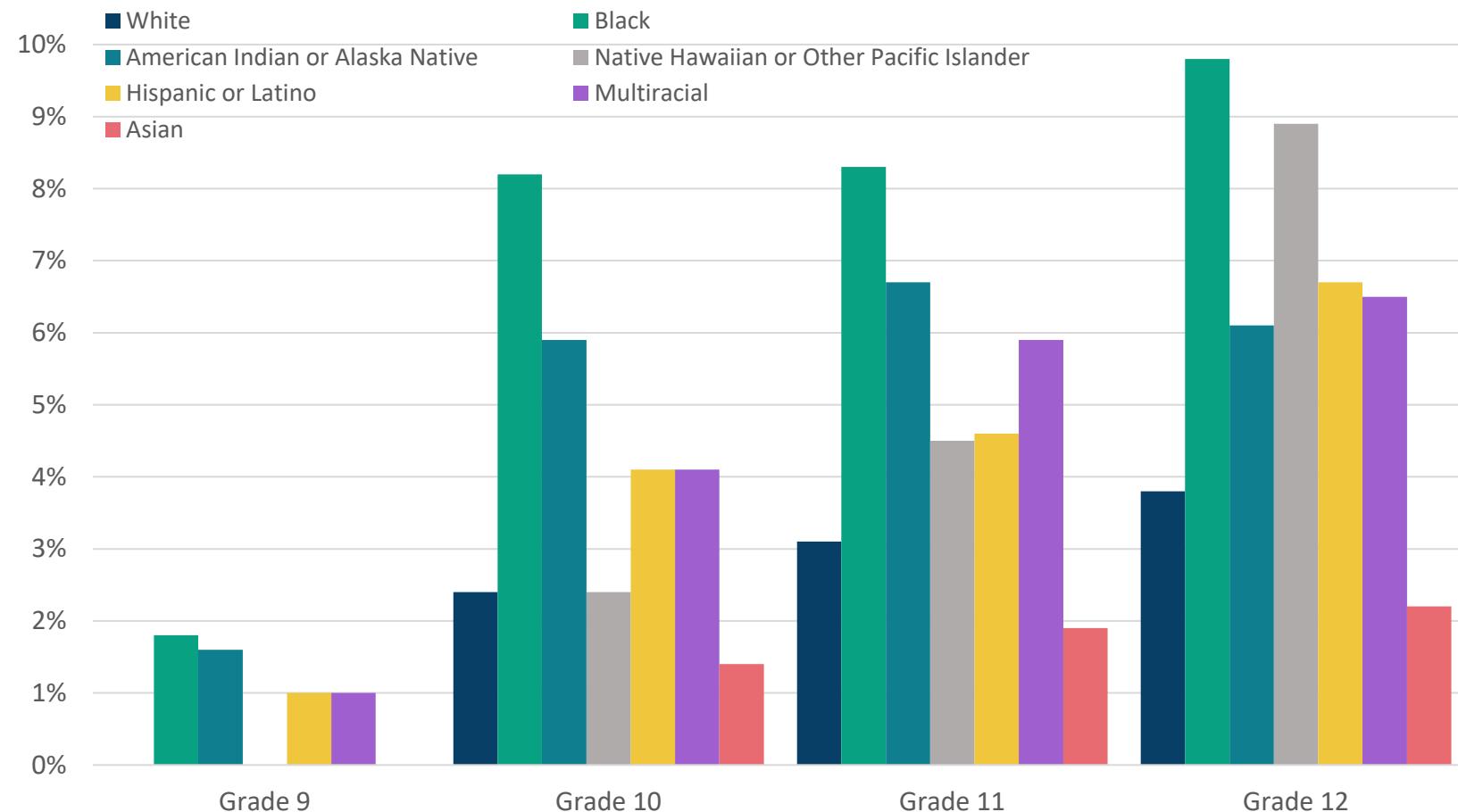
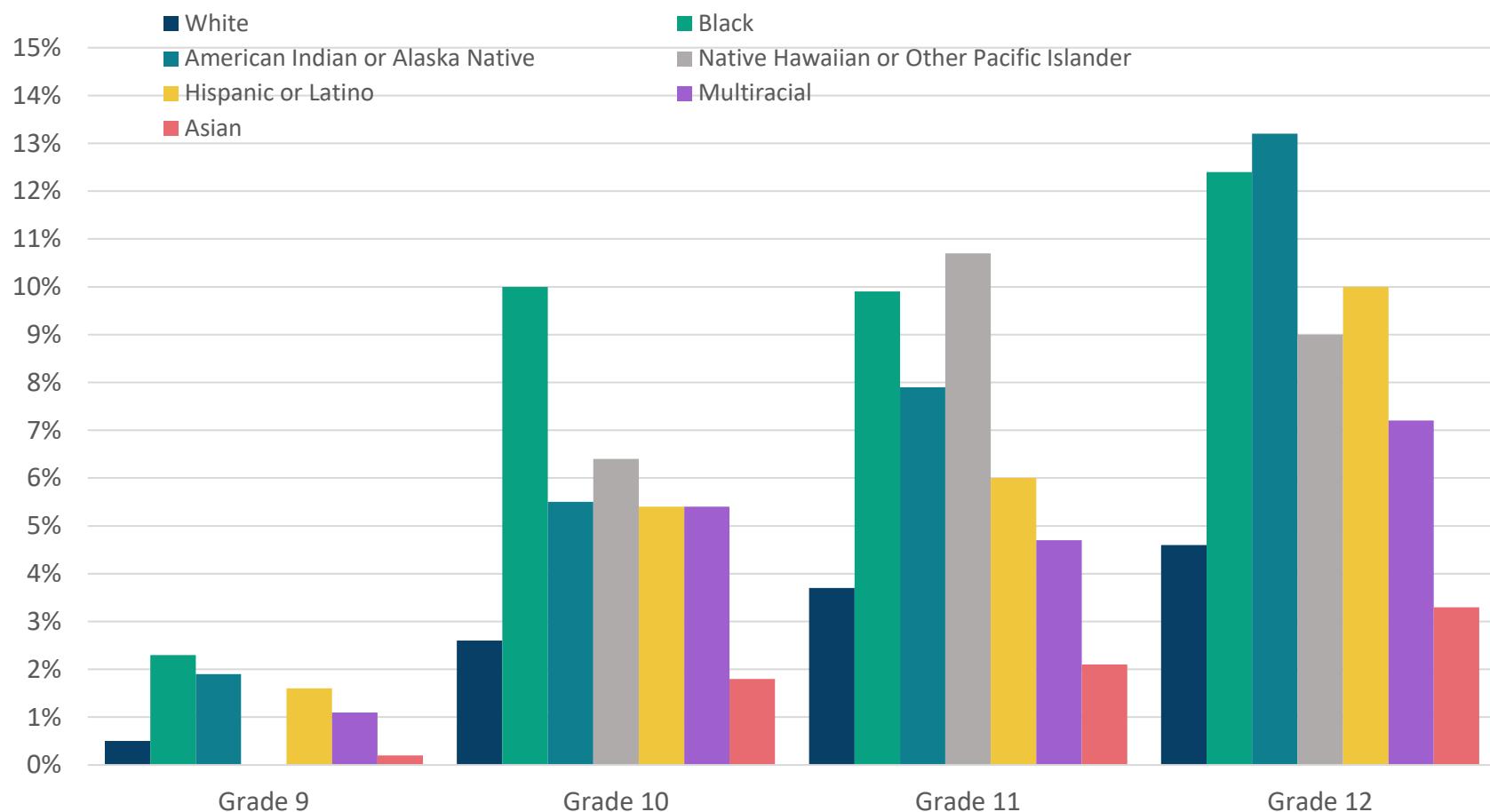


Figure 17. Dropout Rate for Males by Grade and Race, 2018-2019 School Year ⁴⁰



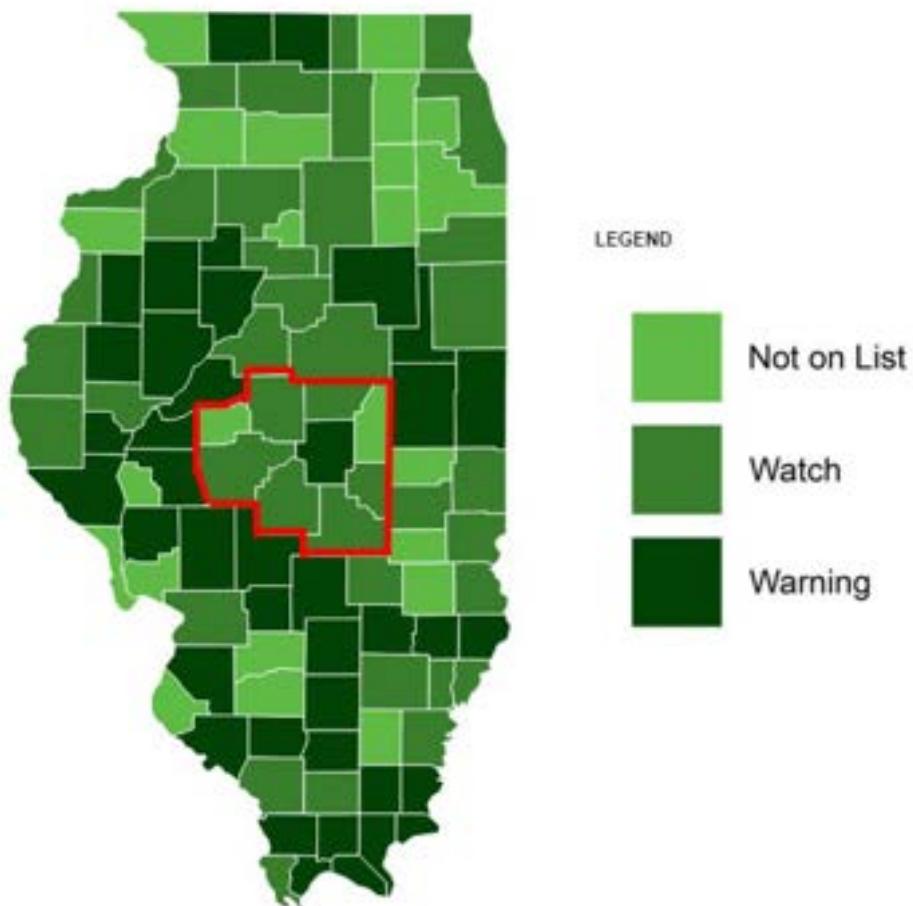
Although the Census reports high graduation rates and higher High School completion in Macon County, this is not consistent across demographic groups. For example, during the 2016-2017 school year, the high school graduation rate for students in Macon County who were low-income was only 76.6% compared to 85.2% for students who were low-income throughout Illinois. Graduation rates for all high school students (regardless of income) in Macon County is 85.2% and 89.6% in the State of Illinois.⁴¹

COUNTY WELL-BEING INDICES

The Heartland Alliance states that

“it’s important to look at the dynamics of poverty and well-being not only at the state and national levels but also locally. The County Well-Being Index highlights counties that are experiencing particularly negative conditions and trends on four key indicators: poverty, unemployment, teen births, and high school graduation. Use this map to explore the County Well-Being Index as well as a host of indicators tracking how Illinois counties are doing at moving the needle.”⁴²

Figure 18. Well-being Index: County Watch or Warning Status based on Illinois Data Dashboard



Following is a table outlining how Macon County performs compared to the counties surrounding Macon. The counties included for comparison have been outlined above and include:

- Christian
- De Witt
- Logan
- Menard
- Moultrie
- Piatt
- Sangamon
- Shelby

Compared to the surrounding counties and the State of Illinois, Macon County reports:

- A higher poverty rate.
 - This rate has increased in Macon County over the last year of reporting.
- A lower high school graduation rate.
 - The graduation rate has declined in Macon County over the last year of reporting.
- A higher teen birth rate (other than compared to Logan County).
 - The teen birth rate in Macon County has decreased slightly over the last year of reporting.
- A higher unemployment rate.
 - The unemployment rate in Macon County has decreased slightly over the last year of reporting.

See Table 6.

Table 6. Well-being Index: County Watch or Warning Status based on Illinois Data Dashboard ⁴²

	Christian	De Witt	Logan	Macon	Menard	Moultrie	Piatt	Sangamon	Shelby	Illinois
Poverty rate, 2018	12.5%	11.0%	10.9%	17.4%	9.0%	9.6%	7.3%	13.1%	10.2%	12.1%
Change in poverty rate from previous year	-1.1	-0.7	-1.3	3.1	0.3	0.6	1.0	-2.3	-0.1	-0.4
High school graduation rates, 2018-2019	86.8%	83.5%	83.9%	82.5%	85.9%	94.3%	93.2%	81.9%	91.1%	86.2%
Change in high school grad rate from previous years	-4.1	-3.8	0.5	-3.1	-0.3	-1.8	0.4	-2.9	-2.7	-0.3
Teen births (live births per 1,000 women ages 15-19), 2018	22.1	18.8	29.1	27.9	5.5	11.0	12	22.1	24.9	15.9
Change in teen births from previous year	-4.2	-4.2	-1.8	-1.2	-14.1	-0.2	-1.5	-2.2	-8.9	-1.6
Unemployment rate, 2019	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	5.3%	3.8%	3.3%	3.6%	4.0%	3.9%	4.0%
Change in unemployment rate from previous year	-0.5	-0.8	-0.4	-0.3	-0.2	-0.5	-0.7	-0.3	-0.4	-0.3

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

“During the spring of 2018, Decatur Memorial Hospital designed community health needs assessment survey. The primary data collection of community survey data began on July 30, 2018, and extended through August 19, 2018. During this period, 10,000 surveys were emailed to randomly selected Macon County residents who were age 18 and older.” ⁴¹

The following table illustrates the results of the community health needs based on survey responses.

Table 7. Top Three Needs and Risk Behaviors in Macon County

Three Most Important Factors for a Healthy Community	%
1. Access to health care (e.g., family doctors)	60%
2. Good jobs and a healthy economy	58%
3. Health behaviors and lifestyles	30%
Three Most Important Health Problems in the Community	%
1. Cancer	51%
2. Heart disease and stroke	50%
3. Obesity	48%
Three Most Dangerous Risky Behaviors	%
1. Drug abuse	60%
2. Alcohol abuse	47%
3. Untreated illnesses	38%
Top Three Unmet Needs in Our Community	%
1. Access to primary care physicians	32%
2. Access to mental health providers/services	29%
3. Access to safe neighborhoods	29%

“Upon completion of the community health needs assessment and focus group surveys and after reviewing the secondary data, the following top three needs will be appropriately included in the hospital’s strategic planning process.

1. Access to primary care physicians (e.g. family doctor)
2. Access to medical specialists (e.g., cardiologists, pulmonologists, urologists)
3. Access to mental health providers, services.” ⁴¹

SUMMARY

Macon County has the opportunity to focus resources and program development on reducing racial inequities, and increasing employment, education, social supports, and access to mental health and primary health care.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY VIBRANCY & WELLNESS: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Perspectives shared by residents and local leaders in Macon County largely reflected what was also evident in the existing data. Most broadly, individuals care deeply for their community and those living within Macon County; however, there is a strong desire to repair the County's image with surrounding areas and to ensure that Macon County reflects the assets of those who live there. Community assets and needs, as described by those who live, work, and raise families in Macon County, centered around the need for upstream supports to increase the economic vibrancy of the community. Specifically, investing in people and the supports individuals require to contribute to, and benefit from, a strong local economy. Macon County has the potential to be a more economically and socially rich community given the commitment and resources available.

“Macon County is a Community that Makes Things”⁴³

The Macon County region sports a diverse listing of industries with the top major employers in the area centered around manufacturing, service, support, transportation, office, and professional industries. See Table 8 for a listing of the top employers in Macon County.

“1,600 – 2,000 available jobs and they are not being filled.”

Even with these leading industries, however, compared to the State of Illinois and the top-performing countries in the U.S., Macon County reports greater unemployment at 5.3%.³² Residents have reported that the unemployment rate is not a result of few job opportunities. In fact, in Decatur, several community leaders shared a concern about the number of vacant positions with no “eligible” or interested local workforce. This is common in many communities and has been exacerbated during the pandemic. An examination of job listings in Decatur hosts significant openings and incentives to apply.⁴⁴

Table 8. Leading Employers in Macon County⁴²

Employer	# of Employees	Employer	# of Employees
Archer Daniels Midland	4,000	Norfolk Southern	500
Caterpillar	3,100	Mueller	500
Decatur Memorial Hospital	2,300	Bodine Electric	400
Decatur Public Schools	1,800	A-Lert Construction Services	300
HSHS St. Mary's Hospital	1,000	McLeod Express	250
Millikin University	600	Fuyao Glass	200
The Kelly Group	600	TCR Systems	150
Akorn Incorporated	600	T/CCI Manufacturing	125
Tate & Lyle	600	Parke Warehouses	80
Ameren Illinois	600		

According to community members, barriers to hiring eligible workers in the vacant positions in Macon County center around structural barriers to employment. Some of these concerns related to:

- Access to reliable, quality, and affordable childcare at various hours of the day.
- Access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation to and from work and/or childcare.
- The impact of legalized cannabis in Illinois and employees testing positive for use. This can occur days following use and results in termination or not hiring.
- A belief that labor unions impact access to higher-wage positions for under-resourced populations and persons of color in Macon County.
- Macon County has invested in programs and supports to assist individuals looking for employment, as well as to assist employers with finding qualified workers.

“There are individuals under or unemployed, and they have the desire to work.”

“The gatekeepers to these workforce positions need to take a “broader view.”

“Need to eliminate barriers.”

“Lack of diversity in high-paying Union jobs, including pipefitters, electricians, and plumbers, is a problem.”

Some of the community assets that underscore economic capacity that were noted in our interviews include:

1. Macon County Law Enforcement Training Center is an Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board facility developed with funding by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and operated in collaboration with Richland Community College in Decatur. It serves Central Illinois and includes administrative buildings, lodging for 90 trainees, a booking facility, training rooms, mock court room, conference room, weapons range, a VirTra simulator, and other training opportunities. It prepares law enforcement officers with [reality-based situational training \(VirTra\)](#)⁴⁵ through real-world de-escalation and judgment in the use of force with the accompanied nationally certified curriculum. Noteworthy is the collaboration that was noted between the Macon County Sheriff's Office, the City of Decatur, and the Decatur Police Department.⁴⁶
2. The EnRich Program at Richland provides basic life skills training from how to show up to work on the first day, to how to retain employment through personal interaction. It is a ten-week program and recognizes that those attending need an income while in class if they are not working. The program pays \$10/hour for those attending the class and offers trade tools, uniforms, and childcare. All facilitators at Richland have received training on trauma-informed practices to enhance soft skills development. Educators and coaches explore trauma triggers that impact people and keep them from retaining their jobs. Program leads noted that “about 89% of participants complete the program.” Approximately 90% are employed following completion and also employed three months later. About 64% are persons of color. Areas of training include paraprofessional training and education, transportation/CDL training, industrial skills, and a minority mentor protégé program/entrepreneurship. The primary limitations of EnRich are securing enough dollars to support additional attendees. The advantage of industry leaders supporting ongoing funding for this incentive has value.

3. Project Read Plus is an adult literacy reading and math program administered by Richland Community College. It serves people over the age of 17 who are not enrolled in high school. Its mission is to help adults improve their reading and math skills through individualized tutoring.
4. The Milligan Academy and Richland Community College partner with the Community Foundation of Macon County to offer Adult Scholarships to help students support their educational goals to secure degrees in education, nursing, and business in the recent awards.
5. Southern Illinois University School of Medicine located in Springfield, Illinois, near Macon County, offers medical education to include Medical Degrees (MD), Masters in Public Health (MPH) and MD, Juris Doctorate and MD, Physician Assistant Program, Residency, and Fellow Programs, and Physician Assistant with Doctor of Medical Science. This program expands access to the workforce in healthcare in Macon County.¹⁰
6. [The Jerry J. Dawson Civic Leadership Institute](#)⁴⁷ administered through the Decatur Public Schools, began in 2020 with funds from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. The Institute's focus is to advance leadership in public service by raising awareness and encouraging the pursuit of careers in firefighting, first responder, law enforcement, and the legal profession.
7. The [Dwayne O. Andreas Ag Academy](#)⁴⁸ at Eisenhower and MacArthur High Schools is a formal academic and field-based Future Farmers of America curriculum, with an emphasis on career development in the agriculture industry. The program began in the fall of 2018 with funding from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, in partnership with Neuhoff Media and Limitless Decatur and Macon County. The Academy incorporates a living science farm and collaborates with agribusiness companies across Illinois. Roughly 68% of the attendees are minority youth - including new Americans. ADM and Tate and Lyle are key partners in the initiative.
8. Employers in Macon County are investing in younger employees by offering new incentives that increase interest. One of these examples includes offering pet insurance.
9. [Decatur Township](#)⁴⁹ runs a program to help people secure Social Security benefits (file appeals), file for divorce, and get their criminal records expunged (especially when marijuana is involved). The Township also offers a labor program. They serve about 90 clients at a time; 30 are on the waiting list for social services and 60 are working. The township can assist with rent, utilities, and burial costs.
10. [Shemilah Outreach Center](#)⁵⁰ is a 501(c)(3) located in Decatur that encourages employment and offers scholarships. It was touted among Decatur City Officials as a resource and founded in memory of Shemilah Sanders, a young woman who died of gun violence.
11. Decatur Trades and Labor Assembly offers an apprenticeship program to pay for an individual to complete their GED and help them to remediate in math to advance a career in building or trades.

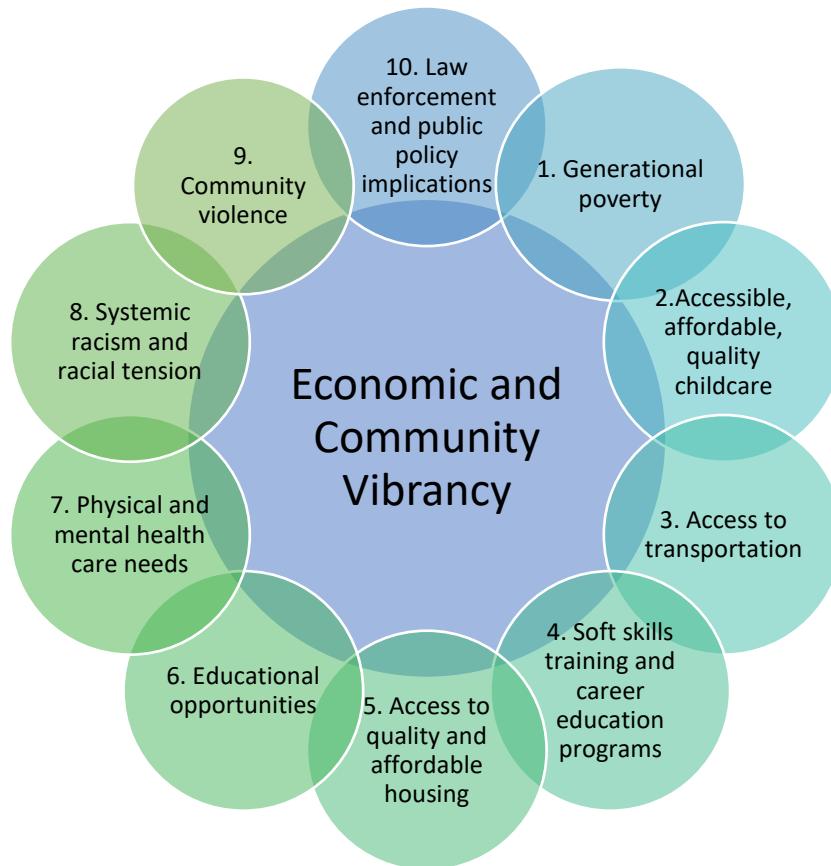
One participant shared that “Decatur needs a plan for the future” while another stated that “Macon County is in transition. It was a blue-collar town and that is changing.” As noted in the introduction, those who were interviewed and who spoke about the shift in economic growth mentioned the loss of Firestone and ADM (Archer-Daniel Midland) Global Headquarters when Decatur and surrounding areas experienced economic change, population loss, and simultaneously a decreased tax base which impacts public service availability. As one participant stated, “The tax base is not strong. We had 22 professionals in our office, and we are down to 11.”

A need exists to provide support upstream to address workforce vacancies that, in turn, improve employment rates, the community's economic vitality, and individual success. According to the data and the community interviews, Macon County could improve its overall economy and community vibrancy, and be an exemplar for community development, by focusing on key issues centered around:

- Education and workforce development (K-12 public, vocational, and training programs)
- Workforce supports (transportation, childcare, affordable housing)
- Physical and mental health care access/utilization needs
- Racial inequities and under-resourced populations
- Human service needs, supports, and program coordination

The following summary of the need focuses on how interrelated the key concerns in Macon County are, and how programs addressing these issues can support economic and community vibrancy in Macon.

Figure 19. Opportunities to Support Economic and Community Vibrancy in Macon County



1. GENERATIONAL POVERTY

Roughly one in six of all Macon County residents are living in poverty (16.7%) compared to only 11.5% and 10.5% of the entire State of Illinois and the U.S. respectively.²⁷ Additionally, Macon County has seen an increase in the proportion of residents who are living in poverty and reports more than one in five children in the County live below the poverty line. This rate is significantly greater for children of color. Poverty in Macon County also appears to be generational. Living below the poverty line complicates employment and is often associated with a complexity of other structural barriers, including an inability to afford childcare, transportation, and/or professional attire for an interview or job placement.

Macon County residents recognize these concerns and shared the following sample quotes:

- There is no off-ramp for improving your life when your life is so complicated.
- The community needs a bridge to connect people to a better life including employment.
- Lots of poverty in the community.
- Poverty breeds poverty...we have to break that up.
- High unemployment and underemployment rate.
- Three generations of poverty in some households.
- My concern is for the 18 to 23-year-olds with no career path. They need to see the opportunities out there.

Recommendations

The current workforce initiatives are noted as successful and could be expanded. Also, the most effective way to end generational poverty is to ensure equitable opportunity to quality education beginning in early childhood education and following through opportunities for higher education, graduation/GED supports, and vocational training. The early childhood services offered by the Empowerment Opportunity Center entitled the Anna Waters Head Start program is an example of comprehensive services for families. They offer services that include developmental screening, child-center activities, family improvement activities, services for a child with disabilities and other special needs, nutritious meals and snacks, parent education training, volunteer activities, Foster Grandparent Program, and a comprehensive Literacy Program.⁵¹

Generational poverty is an adverse childhood experience, and with many children in Macon County living in poverty (more than one in five), there is an immediate need to identify and implement upstream solutions that advance prevention of poverty. The capacity to expand risk and protective factors exist in the programs noted as assets throughout Macon County in this report.⁵² Children living in poverty are likely to experience illness, poor sanitation, malnutrition, lack of access to education, and inadequate health care facilities. Short-term solutions do not work. One participant suggested a need to encourage government work to guarantee a living wage in place of offering unemployment as an opportunity to fill vacant positions and address poverty and employee retention.

2. ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILDCARE

For those raising families in Macon County, in order to accept employment, the individual must be able to secure childcare that is affordable, reliable, accessible, and trustworthy (quality). Residents shared these direct quotations:

- People finally get a job, and there is no childcare available for that person – then what about quality childcare.
- It is not worth working, especially with access to childcare being so limited.
- Women take home 50 dollars a week after paying for childcare.
- Childcare shortages are a big issue – especially for the second and third shift workers.
- Lack of access to childcare is an issue - just lost four nurses because they did not have childcare available during their shift.
- Lack of childcare is a basic safety issue and development issue and preschool readiness issue - without childcare that is quality and reputable, the child may be left alone or with someone who isn't safe.
- No matter your income, there is a lack of childcare – a five to a 10-month waitlist. Need for quality affordable childcare and partly because there is a workforce shortage of childcare providers too.
- Available childcare is an issue for all families.
- A clear need exists for more income-based childcare.

Recommendations

[Baby TALK](#),⁵³ Head Start, and [Decatur Day Care Center](#)⁵⁴ can be viewed as models for offering quality and educational childcare to individuals based on a sliding fee scale. Decatur Baby TALK (Teaching Activities for Learning and Knowledge) is a community model of primary prevention serving every family in Decatur with a child from birth to age three with a focus on information sharing and supports for parents. While conducting this study, Baby TALK alone reported a five to ten-week waiting list so the need for the program is evident. Given the exemplary model of the program, expansion is recommended along with conducting a comprehensive evaluation of lessons learned to expand broad access for replication.

Increasing childcare availability in the county also increases employment of additional childcare workers and early elementary educators. Although not available to all ages, Parks Day Campus Programs and youth sports offer additional opportunities for youth in Decatur. Many of the above-mentioned programs have wait lists, are unable to meet demand, and are largely centrally located in Decatur without access to the more rural communities located in Macon County. Additionally, a directory of resources, the Family Yellow Pages, is described earlier in this report.

The [American Rescue Plan](#)⁵⁵ included an expansion of the child tax credit, from \$2,000 annually to up to \$3,600 per child, depending on their age, with payments starting in July. The intent is that this increase in financial support could assist parents with childcare expenses to seek and retain employment.

3. ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

Macon County (but more specifically, Decatur) has a public bus service. However, this bus service is only available until 7:15 pm, which is a barrier for those who work evening or overnight shifts. During the pandemic, there has also been a general feeling of concern about taking public transit. Decatur and surrounding communities do not have large participation in ride share programs like Uber or Lyft. Lack of access to reliable, timely, and accessible transportation limits employment options, complicates seeking preventive and treatment-based health care services, and creates barriers to participating in recreation and extra-curricular programming for youth. Community members shared that even as Macon County begins to provide training, vocational programming, social supports, community events, and other recreational supports, without reliable transportation, the people these programs were designed to serve cannot access them. Specifically, “access to these events is limited” and “lack of transportation impacts some relative to employment.” “Your car breaks down, and you lose your job.”

Recommendations

It is not economical to run a bus or public transportation system that is not used. But it is also not advantageous to have public transportation that is not available beyond the first shift in a community that is struggling to fill nearly 2,000 vacant positions. It is recommended that Macon County explore ride share options or discuss incentives for larger employers in the community to create private transportation programs for employees. A map of community transportation needs could be developed to identify pockets of Macon County reporting the highest rates of under or unemployment, and then work with those communities on job placement and private transportation/busing provided by the leading employers in Macon County (see Table 8).

Programs in Macon County provide bus tokens, offer rides to job sites, and access to gas cards. These programs advance job-seeking programs, during employee onboarding, and in communities with high transportation needs or low employment rates and should be widely publicized.

4. SOFT SKILLS TRAINING AND CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Funding and program development should focus on meeting the community where it is at. The demand (nearly 2,000 vacant positions), though diverse, has several positions that do not require a degree beyond high school or a GED. The biggest concern shared by community members and business leaders in Macon County wasn't that individuals did not have the technical training or degree/expertise required to perform the duties of the job. Instead, what was keeping individuals from employment were structural barriers around transportation, affordable housing, drug screening, childcare access, and most notably, a lack of soft skills.

“We need to utilize this potential workforce and give them the soft skills they need to get and maintain jobs in the local community.”

“I found that what people were missing is that employers wanted, or needed more of, are reliability – it isn't a 2-year degree – they need soft skills.”

Programs like EnRich are working to address many of these barriers and offer training on soft skills required to obtain and maintain employment in Macon County. However, as one participant indicated, "Sustainability of programs like [EnRich at] Richland is too hard without endowment or financial support from external businesses." Larger employers in Macon County that are experiencing vacancies could partner with EnRich, or to implement similar training programs for new employees onsite. Although this requires investment from the employers, it will likely save organizations' money by decreasing turnover and unfilled positions.

Recommendations

Macon County could continue and expand the integration of career education, vocational training, and soft skill programming among populations commonly under and/or unemployed. Several community members and local leaders shared that:

- *We need to grow our OWN.*
- *Decatur needs stronger pipelines to work in industry jobs.*
- *Youth need a career vision and a vision of opportunity for mobility.*
- *Need to offer job fairs at Black churches.*
- *Need for effective mentoring and coaching programs in the Black community.*
- *Need to enhance wellness and opportunities in media message.*

Recognition of the barriers to employment is critical. It includes the barriers noted in this document. Another barrier to retaining employees at the organizational level are drug screenings that take place in a state where recreational marijuana is legal. Unlike alcohol, if an employee legally uses cannabis on their day off, even if they are not using or under the influence during their scheduled shift, they can still test positive for drug use. It is recommended that social supports, community programming, and employers, or at the very least the leading employers in Macon County, consider their policies around drug screening. Additional consideration could be given to expanding and/or offering training on micro-aggressions/implicit bias in the workplace. This will help ensure that their business/industry is a welcoming environment and a safe place for all persons to work. A participant noted the expertise offered by the University of Champagne-Urbana in soft skills development.

5. ACCESS TO QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Persons who do not have quality and reliable housing have priorities outside of maintaining employment and contributing to community vibrancy. An overwhelming response was noted by those who were interviewed on the need to invest in access to quality and affordable housing in Macon County, and the need to revitalize areas that have fallen during the County's economic downturn. Although the community presents many assets and has recreation, entertainment, and community programming that advance vibrancy and life, Macon County continues to carry a negative perception because its outward appearance does not reflect the people who make Macon County thrive.

Community Members' Perceptions around Access to Housing

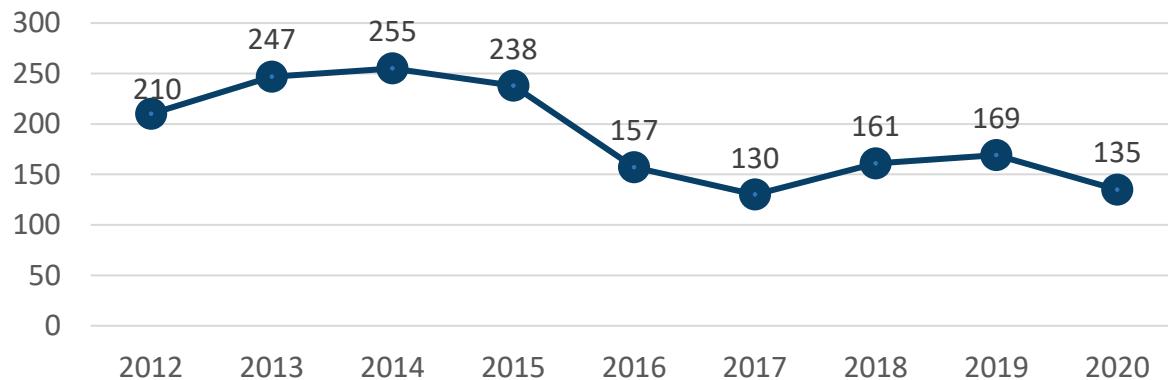
- [We need a] comprehensive plan for neighborhood revitalization.
- Decatur needs better housing solutions.
- [A community leaders stated that] The last apartment building was constructed in the 70s.
- Caterpillar Interns commute from Champagne [50 minutes away on I-72] due to no housing, and they never get to know the community.
- Young professionals need a place to live.
- Homeless people are on every corner downtown.
- A desperate need exists for working-class housing and apartments.
- People cannot pay rent, and [struggle] to meet their mortgage payment especially during the pandemic.
- My biggest concern is around HOUSING - the eviction moratorium going away in a few days [June 25, 2021] and that is an issue. Water and electricity are being turned off in homes as well as worries about eviction.
- People are exaggerating their substance use disorder to get shelter at Crossings.

Community Members' Perceptions around Neighborhood Revitalization

- [We need a] comprehensive plan for neighborhood revitalization.
- Decatur needs better housing solutions. The last apartment building was constructed in the 70s.
- [There are] many boarded-up houses
- Increased signs of more squalor, vacant homes, and businesses are visible
- The blue tarp houses are firetraps. You see them around town
- Say Decatur is 47 square miles; 25 to 30 of those square miles I would not recommend for living.

Although Macon County, Decatur specifically, struggles to draw in new residents, and there are neighborhoods where it is “not safe to travel at night,” there are a few community assets. For example, the Landlord Association provides [a handbook](#) to assist landlords and tenants to avoid issues commonly found in rental housing.⁵⁶ Point in time rates of individuals who are homeless is not high in Macon County. According to longitudinal work from Millikin University, the number of persons who are homeless in Macon County has been steadily declining.⁵⁷

Figure 20. Homeless Individuals in Macon County



Some may identify as housing insecure without identifying as homeless. The data may not reflect the same level of need as described by the people of Macon County because many have insecure housing or unsafe living situations but are not in fact homeless. A concern exists that this rate has climbed since the pandemic and may increase following the end of the eviction moratorium.

Macon County (Decatur specifically) has opportunities for those who are experiencing homelessness. Important to explore are the rates of housing insecurity and unsafe living environments experienced by those in Macon County outside of Decatur. These individuals likely also have less access to assistive programs and temporary housing options. A sample of programs available in Decatur that were noted in interviews include:

- [**The Employment Opportunity Center**](#)⁵⁸ offers housing services, including transitional housing, emergency shelter and rent and mortgage assistance. Other supports include a weatherization program and access to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) with easy access to scheduling an appointment.
- [**Woodford Homes**](#)⁵⁹ is a “charitable corporation with the purpose of building, fostering, maintaining and operating quality, affordable housing for low-income persons with a mental disorder and those with a mental or physical disability.”
- [**Dove**](#)⁶⁰ is an “organization that engages religious institutions, volunteers, and advocates seeking to coordinate efforts to address unmet needs and social injustices”. These needs are met through coordinated programs focusing on domestic violence, homelessness, education, volunteer and community empowerment, and individual emergency need fulfillment.”
- [**Salvation Army**](#) provides emergency shelter for single men in Decatur.
- [**Oasis Day Shelter**](#) is open from 7 am to 5 pm and offers showers, laundry, mail delivery, access to a phone, connection to community resources, and access to nurse practitioners through Crossing Healthcare.
- [**God's Shelter of Love**](#) serves married couples and single women with or without children. The goal of the organization is to help people become self-sufficient community members.
- [**The Water Street Mission Resurrected Homeless Shelter**](#) is a men’s homeless shelter In Decatur.
- [**Habitat for Humanity**](#)⁶¹ has a chapter located in Decatur.
- [**Decatur Housing Authority**](#)⁶² is a resource. Their web page notes they are taking applications for the waiting list for individuals eligible for one-bedroom high rise and two, three, four, and five-bedroom at Cantrell Street Garden Apartments.

Recommendations

Residents expressed a need to revitalize homes and neighborhoods that are in disarray, to invest in infrastructure to make communities safer and cleaner, and to support families in need of housing supports especially following the end of the eviction moratorium. Opportunities to create incentives for home improvements, and an expansion of available low-income, safe, quality housing should be explored including opportunities currently with the Johns Hill revitalization and lesson learned. Though the data do not indicate a significant need for supports for persons who are homeless, community members see a greater need for addressing housing security. However, this need is likely more central to supports to maintain housing and to ensure safe and quality housing.

6. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The authors note the access to community colleges and four-year degree granting programs in Macon County. While the authors note many supports for children and youth in Macon County, the current K-12 system in Decatur is in a state of transition with leadership changes occurring during this study. In the past year, four new board members were elected and there has been a transition in the Superintendent. An interim Superintendent was appointed, who has served as an educator, but she is limited in the hours she can serve due to her earlier retirement status. With this large change in leadership, an opportunity exists to make significant changes to the zoning and resource allocations in Decatur to make education more equitable in the County. According to some leaders that were interviewed, “the educational model is not advantageous to those at greatest risk. The community needs a bridge to connect to a better life including employment.” Efforts are underway to include advancing social and emotional learning in the Decatur Public Schools.

K-12 Education Issues Shared by Community Members and Leaders

- The Decatur K-12 School District is a series of unfortunate events.
- You don't turn the Titanic around overnight.
- The greatest concern is with education and the systemic differences and educational inequities that exist.
- Kids with the highest needs are in the worst facilities. There is dysfunction at the top. Lack of diverse leadership and so much change.
- We need more attention to Alternative Schools and schools that look at education more holistically, especially as related to trauma-informed classrooms.
- The Alternative Schools are in blighted areas of town.
- People move to Mount Zion intentionally because of the schools in Decatur, but Decatur public schools also see good outcomes. [This has resulted in] . . . white flight from Decatur schools. It is not just white flight but parents taking on additional jobs to send their children to private school.
- Decatur merged two middle schools with gang rivals before construction on the building was complete, and it was/is a mess. It is called Hope Academy which has been a failure and is referred to as HOPELESS Academy. Police visit the school frequently due to the students fighting.
- The shortage of teachers is an issue. They are accessing MANY substitute teachers, and parents are begging for non-substitute teachers.

Community concerns around the structure of K-12 education are evident in the data. Community members indicated racial and income inequities, with White and resource-rich families leaving the area for education or paying for private school. The inequity is evident in both reading and math scores for Macon County which are lower than the math and reading scores for the State of Illinois. However, when broken down by race, Macon County residents who are White perform better than the state average with children who are Black falling significantly behind in Macon. See Table 9.

Table 9. State of Children in K-12, Poverty, and Test Scores

	Black, Macon	White, Macon	Macon County	Illinois	Top U.S. Performers
Reading scores	1.9	2.9	2.6	3.0	3.3
Math scores	1.5	2.9	2.4	2.9	3.4
Children eligible for free and reduced lunch	n.d.	n.d.	51%	49%	32%
% of teens not in school or working	n.d.	n.d.	10%	6%	4%
Children in poverty	50%	15%	22%	16%	n.d.

n.d. = no data

The community, though small, has several educational options, including the opportunity to complete an Associate's Degree in high school. All schools within Decatur, though experiencing permanent teacher shortages, have a low student-to-teacher ratio, allowing for more one-on-one engagement with students. The small community also has educational options outside of the traditional K-12 setting, including:

- Garfield - Montessori Academy for Peace is a magnet school (but part of the public-school system)
- Johns Hill, a magnet school in Decatur (but part of the public-school system)
- Futures Unlimited is an alternative school (public)
- Milligan Academy is an alternative school (public)

Recommendations

Partner with Surrounding Macon County Schools

Much of this report has a focus on Decatur schools as opposed to Macon County at large. An opportunity exists to connect with neighboring communities to determine educational needs, potential workforce shortages, or potential consolidations. Additionally, as Decatur advances school-based mental health services, soft-skills training for students, school staff training for mental health first aid, and/or becoming a trauma-informed school district, there may be an advantage to partnering with surrounding rural/small communities to consolidate resources and increase the reach of any training offered or mental health program developed. While some of this is occurring, it could be advanced.

Build on Social and Emotional Learning

With many students in the public school system experiencing hunger, poverty, and other adverse childhood experiences (ACE), the need for mental health supports exists to support children and youth. Students who are hungry, in crisis, or concerned about negative events occurring in their home cannot focus in the classroom and may exhibit behavior labeled as "bad" when they need his assistance. However, educators are already tasked with so many responsibilities in the classroom that it is

unrealistic to assume they are prepared to provide the emotional and mental health supports their students need without training and access to resources. These are concerns in many communities across the United States. Giving teachers paid time to attend such training to meet the needs of their students and to assist teachers in feeling more prepared and comfortable in their classrooms. Training should focus on topics like mental health first aid,⁶³ continued efforts to address social-emotional learning, and creating a trauma-informed school. Heritage, though not the only option, is a local option for offering such training to all K-12 educators in Macon County (not only Decatur). The efforts to expand social and emotional learning in the Decatur Public Schools were noted by interviewees. Of note, a plan is in place to identify and deploy universal social and emotional screening tools district-wide, including a curriculum, collaborations with community partners, and strengthen positive relationships among staff, students, and families.

7. PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

Table 3 outlined health behaviors and outcomes for Macon County residents. The data indicate a need to address tobacco use, obesity, physical inactivity, alcohol-impaired driving rates, rates of unprotected sex (and subsequently teen birth rates), motor vehicle deaths, diabetes, child mortality (especially among children of color), and death by suicide.

Data presented in Table 3, and results from both the Community Health Needs Assessment through St. Mary's Hospital, and public health have indicated a need to focus on:

- Obesity, physical inactivity, and nutrition.
- Unmanaged chronic disease (to include diabetes).
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Access to primary care.
- Access to behavioral health supports (to include substance use).

Within Decatur, there are two primary hospitals and a federally qualified health center. Specifically, care provision in the county is centered around:

- Saint Mary's, a 244-bed facility.
- Decatur Memorial Hospital, a 300-bed facility.
- Crossing Healthcare (FQHC) offers full service integrated care with a mobile unit, both residential and outpatient treatment for substance use disorders, a walk-in clinic, nutritional services, telehealth, behavioral health, adult health, and children's health.

Primary/Physical Health Care

Residents were concerned that given the high rate of mortality among children, especially those who are Black, there is no pediatric hospital unit for medical care. There is also "a critical need . . . for nurses." One healthcare facility in Decatur has "63 job openings and many for over 120 days." These positions include needs for all levels of the workforce including radiology technology, dietary, certified nurse aides, sitters, housekeepers, etc. and are noted in the job opening lists referenced above in Decatur. There is also an acute shortage of physicians at all levels (primary care/specialty care/psychiatry) and turnover in leadership. Specifically, "Theresa is the fifth CEO at Saint Mary's in seven years" states a

participant. Part of the low supply of primary care workforce is that “health care wages cannot compete with outside health systems because of reimbursement.”

Behavioral Health Care

More broadly, residents and community leaders indicated a significant need for behavioral health supports and access to treatment and services in Macon County. The data indicated that 15% of Macon County residents reported frequent mental distress compared to only 12% of those in the State of Illinois. Similarly, the average number of mentally unhealthy days for residents of Macon County is 4.6 compared to only 3.8 for all residents of Illinois. Finally, the number of persons per 100,000 who die by suicide each year is greater in Macon County than it is in the State of Illinois.

Direct quotes from residents:

- There is a 100% lack of access to acute inpatient psychiatric care.
- The greatest need is for behavioral health service.
- Deal with the whole person.
- Need to use a more holistic approach.
- People live a 911 crisis lifestyle. Many are people living in crisis.
- [There is] a lack of access to counseling and therapy for families that have experienced trauma who live in poverty, who have ACEs, who need counseling and support services for prevention – [there is] nowhere to refer them.
- Laws need to change to allow more capacity to hold people in treatment longer when they are in a mental health crisis.
- Law needs to be stronger on keeping people in a mental health crisis in care.

Recommendations to Address Behavioral Health Care Concerns

Access to, and utilization of, behavioral health care supports could be improved by addressing a few key aspects, including:

1. Identify solutions to alleviate waitlists.
2. Address the lack of access to specialty care to include tele-health to the degree possible.
3. Better services and supports for serving individuals experiencing behavioral health issues who are justice-involved.
4. A location for Heritage that provides private outdoor space.
5. Expansions of services and care provided through Crossing Healthcare, which currently offers both residential and outpatient substance use treatment.
6. Combat stigma around care needs for those with substance use and mental health disorders.

1. Identify solutions to alleviate waitlists

Residents shared that “We have waiting lists for everything we are doing.” “Waiting lists are a problem because when people have life or death thoughts - they need services [now].” Crisis response availability is low in Macon County and residents do not have real-time access to care when in immediate danger of harm to themselves or others. Macon County (and Decatur more centrally) need more beds for behavioral health diagnoses and an expansion of both prevention and treatment

behavioral health services. Both Crossing and Heritage are doing great work to address the needs of residents in Decatur, but their care, like others listed, cannot meet all of the needs in the County. Another asset is the [Macon County Mental Health Board](#).⁶⁴ Still another concern is that, even when the services ARE available, we “can’t force people to stay in treatment.” These are not concerns unique to Decatur, but provide opportunities to “think out of the box and possibly expand tele mental health.”

2. Address the lack of access to specialty care

Saint Mary's has inpatient psychiatric care for youth, adults, and older adults. There are 44 beds for psychiatric care. Primary care physicians in Decatur are growing more comfortable assessing and treating psychiatric care. The campus at Crossing Healthcare is a valuable resource to support recovery. The community of Decatur also has advanced Mental Health First Aid and Safe Zone training. However, residents still share concerns around the lack of access to specialty behavioral health care. Additionally, the increase in 911 calls to support older adults who have fallen in their home was noted by a participant. Specifically, residents were quoted as sharing:

- A lack of specialized psychiatric care for children and older adults exists.
- The waiting list for adolescent psychiatric care is great.
- [There is a] need for co-occurring supports for IDDT/SMI. Non-existent clinical services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Isolated elderly as the pandemic took away their soul.
- Lack of access to outpatient behavioral health services, specifically psychiatric care.
- We need more psychiatrists.

McFarland Mental Health Center (the state's psychiatric hospital) was not recognized as an asset among participants given what was perceived as a lack of access to their care. Many of those interviewed shared concerns around the lack of community supports to assist persons with serious mental illness, and deinstitutionalization has been ineffective due to the lack of community-based supports required to allow people to live more independently in the community.

Psychiatric care for youth is a concern outlined in a statement such as: “Lacking in child psychiatry – no supports for pediatric mental wellness.” Another participant stated, “We need to “start earlier in addressing mental health issues.” With many residents (and especially children of color in Macon County) presenting with several adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), a need for a strong focus on trauma-informed care exists and is noted throughout the recommendations. Again, this requires expanding training on trauma-informed care for educators, healthcare providers, primary care providers, childcare providers, and other community members using a multi-disciplinary approach. This also underscores the need for a referral source for counseling and therapy for those that have experienced trauma (regardless of their age or economic background). While the community directory of services provides a host of services, participants report gaps in access. The community might also consider looking for innovative community action to provide care that can prevent the need for mental health commitments. Again, the authors recommend expanding telehealth to address the needs for specialty care and understand expansion of the scope of practice of Advance Practice Nurses who can prescribe.

Although prevention and access to timely behavioral health care services can reduce the number of mental health commitments, there are situations where commitments are necessary for individual

and/or community safety. However, there is a “lack of inpatient treatment for those with involuntary commitments.” Instead, these individuals “are seen at the ER and released after likely giving them some Haldol.” They are lost, given a temporary relief or response to their need, and lack follow-up or referral, which can lead to them again presenting in the ER, or worse, to become involved in the justice system. The lack of access to care for those who require commitments was viewed as a critical need.

3. Expand services and supports for working with individuals experiencing behavioral health issues who are justice-involved.

Residents recognize that a majority of those who are justice-involved (whether on probation, parole, or incarcerated) likely have substance use disorder, a behavioral health concern (whether diagnosed or not), or both. A stakeholder who was interviewed asked a rhetorical question, “is there is a disconnect between the recovery center and the criminal justice system?” Another stated, a need exists for “more of a marriage between law enforcement and substance abuse treatment providers.” A model program, RESTORE was developed in 2019 and exists in partnership with the Macon County jail and Crossings Healthcare includes several educational and vocational courses. It is a partnership with Decatur Public Library and Project Reads Plus. This program includes advancing basic math skills. The mentorship available underscores serving people with behavioral health disorders to develop the tools they require to better ensure a decrease in recidivism.⁶⁵

There are assets in Macon County with many harm reduction efforts in place - including all officers who carry naloxone and can administer it effectively. Decatur also has a syringe exchange program. Crossing Healthcare also offers both in-patient and out-patient substance use treatment. Heritage is a full-service community mental health center. The Housing First model is available to residents.

Drug court has also been a successful intervention in Decatur; however, there is a waiting list. The Macon County Hybrid Court is one of less than ten courts in Illinois that combines drug and DUI courts. Drug court is a voluntary program for high-risk offenders. Judge Tom Little read a statement at the 2018 graduation ceremony for Drug Court graduates about its success provided to the authors: “at the time of entering the Macon County Hybrid Court Program, our graduates had a combined history of the following offenses: 289 traffic cases; 22 driving under the influence cases; 29 misdemeanor cases; and, 67 felony cases. Their sentences for these combined offenses have included community-based sentences, such as probation, conditional discharge, and supervision, as well as sentences to the Macon County Jail and the Illinois Department of Corrections. For the 314 months that these 17 graduates have been participating in Hybrid Court, only one has been charged with a felony offense (Class 4 property damage). No other participant has been charged with or convicted of any new felony offense. In the interest of full disclosure, a couple of our graduates have received traffic citations that may be pending or have already been resolved.”

4. Location for Heritage that provides private outdoor space

Heritage, a critical behavioral health resource in Macon County requires a significant update to their group homes. They are perceived to be outdated, exacerbating the earlier concern around safety, quality, and affordable housing in Decatur, as well as the concern around the outward image of the community. Residents shared a need for a better location for Heritage that would include safe and private outdoor space. Heritage group homes were described as “*old homes with lousy plumbing,*

roofing issues, and stairs [that] create access issues.” Additionally, some expressed concerns that the “facilities are run down.”

5. Expansion of services and care provided through Crossing Healthcare which offers both residential and outpatient substance use treatment.

Both Heritage and Crossing Healthcare offer residential and outpatient substance use treatment. The Community Cares Campus has been a critical resource in Decatur with a host of resources, including a comprehensive FQHC, Baby TALK, Head Start, and a nearby food pantry providing resources to address food insecurity. Crossing Healthcare has also been a hub for accessing vaccines and has a focus on both building leaders and on early prevention efforts that begin in childhood. It is a model for improving access to child welfare supports and medical and behavioral health care. The authors suggest efforts to evaluate the success of the program to advance lessons learned.

6. Combat stigma around care needs for those with substance use or mental health disorders.

A need exists to educate the community to prevent stigma around persons with substance use and mental health disorders. Of note is the availability of effective treatments for opioid use disorder supported by Heritage Behavioral Health Center and Crossing Healthcare. Access to supports of prescriptions, including buprenorphine/naltrexone/methadone, community treatment and counseling supports, and transitional housing is available. However, like many communities, negative perceptions persist surrounding people with substance use disorders.

8. Systemic Racism and Racial Tension

Significant concerns were expressed and are noted in existing data around systemic racism that impact economic and community vibrancy in Macon County. Roughly 18% of Macon County residents are Black or African American. The data indicated the residents of Macon County who are persons of color, when compared to all other Macon County residents, have a statistically significant:

- Higher rate of premature death.
- Lower birth weight among infants.
- Greater number of deaths among children under age 18.
- Higher rate of infant mortality.
- Higher rate of teen births.
- Higher rate of drug overdose deaths.
- A higher percentage of children are living in poverty.
- Higher rate of injury deaths.
- Lower median household income.

Although not necessarily aware of the data, residents are aware of the racial inequities and tensions within the community. Specifically, those who were interviewed shared that:

- People are discouraged when you keep getting pushed down. One thing about Black people they survive.
- We need an honest conversation about race.
- I don’t see a lot of interaction between White and Black

- [People move to rural areas so] they don't have the racial component.
- Our young African American youth with Bachelor's degrees leave because they see no opportunity in Macon County.
- Systemic racism exists.
- The City has 22 Boards and Commissions, and they need more African American representation on these boards.
- There is a lack of trust.
- Need to hire more African Americans to do skilled labor. Black people need the same opportunities.
- Crime and gangs reflect racial tension – reflect economic despair, and then people resort to
- People need to understand race. A need exists for more education about Black history to understand the impact of race on opportunities better. Educate people about the truth and facts about race.
- Racial equity needs to be addressed.
- People have the right heart, but we need more boots on the ground addressing diversity.

It is recommended that Macon County schools and community programs look for opportunities to educate the community on structural racism and historical trauma. Training, for example, on addressing implicit bias is recommended in the summary section of this report. Community events and training for business and leadership must focus on “courageous conversation about race and racism.” However, these events, programs, resources, and training need to be present where people live and work as suggested by a stakeholder that was interviewed stating. “Do not expect people to come to you.” Many interviewed mentioned collaborations with the faith-based community as critical in addressing issues of racial injustice.

Macon County has had program development to support racial equity. These efforts include:

- The Community Foundation Board has taken a position that “money is contingent upon the board being diverse and representing the people they serve.”
- The Boys and Girls Club and the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) were recognized by many as exemplary programs in the community. There has also been action taken locally to withhold funds when there is a lack of diversity on boards.
- Bruce Nims has led efforts to advance diversity.
- Young Leaders in Action Program has experienced local success.
- Supports from the Black Chamber of Commerce have addressed community concerns.
- Another participant noted the strength of the [Caring Black Men Project](#) located in Decatur.⁶⁶

9. COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

Residents who were interviewed shared concerns about intimate partner violence in Macon County, child maltreatment (which is an adverse childhood experience), arson, and gang violence. Several noted the impact of the global pandemic. “People have been “bottled up” in the house during COVID, so there are more problems [related to domestic violence]”. Leaders in criminal justice shared that, “we are seeing new clients from all walks of life. We see an increase in strangulations. Increase in violence. We have [had] 18 Emergency Orders and 20 Plenary Orders just recently – this is way up. These are largely strangulation.”

Participants also shared that “violent crime is shooting up”. Lots of “gang fighting for the drug trade.” Another added that, “violence is an issue. Gang activity from Chicago has an impact – recently when two gangs broke up in Chicago, they moved to Decatur”. There is a high level of “drug traffic and gangs from Chicago.” As noted earlier, this creates a negative image for Decatur.

Data also indicate an increase in property damage. One participant shared that there are “125 current fire investigations” in Macon County. Recently in Decatur, they “just had a block of buildings burn.” Fire and rescue, the police department, and the community have heightened “concerns about the arson we are seeing.” This level of destruction is costly to the community, can lead business owners or individuals who have lost their property to leave the area, and again exacerbates the existing negative image of the community to those from outside of Macon. Several burnt buildings is not a draw for new residents and significantly affects the vibrancy of that neighborhood and ultimately the economic well-being.

As of June 24, 2021, in an area with a population of only 104,009, there were 630 children from Macon County in foster care. Roughly 30% of those youth are placed outside of Macon County to include St. Louis, Chicago, and Indiana, as well as a residential facility in Champagne and other places. “It is the second most children in foster care, per capita, of any county in Illinois.” Although only 18% of the County’s population are Black, 32% of the kids in foster care are Black. Given so many of the children are placed in care outside of Macon County, family visits and plans for reunification are negatively impacted. Reunification processes can then be easily delayed.

The primary reason children are removed from the home relates to substance use. Two-thirds of all child abuse cases in Macon County also involve substance abuse. Another possible call to action is to advance prevention, treatment, and recovery supports locally and to address the stigma associated with SUD. Greater access to substance use prevention programs, behavioral health supports, and treatment programs could reduce the number of children in need of foster placement in Macon County.

Some of the current community assets that serve the communities of Macon County include:

- Expanding access to counseling and therapy through the use of technology. In March 2020, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family services amended state regulations to allow reimbursement of medically necessary and clinically appropriate telehealth services until the coronavirus pandemic subsides. In addition, the Governor issued an executive order requiring health insurance providers to cover telehealth services rendered by in-network providers.
- Wraparound services are offered to include assistance with earning a GED. Supports include court-appointed special advocates, access to service animals, childcare, family goal planning, intensive services, and child development screenings. The supports of the Empowerment Opportunity Center provide a wide range of programs to empower individuals and families. Including services for those who are ages 0-3 in Baby TALK to determine eligibility for early intervention case management.
- Collaborative efforts among health and human service providers with law enforcement were noted.
- Family Violence Coordination Council is well established and a community resource.
- [Set Free](#) was developed to address human trafficking.⁶⁷
- [Growing Strong Sexual Assault](#) serves victims of sexual assault.⁶⁸
- DOVE, Inc. “coordinates programs focusing on domestic violence, homelessness, education, volunteer and community empowerment, and individual emergency need fulfillment.”⁶⁹

10. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Illinois House Bill 3653 has led to significant reform for criminal justice. According to several law enforcement members interviewed, this bill will harm the criminal justice workforce in the state and Macon County. Some believe that this new bill hampers law enforcement and makes it difficult for law enforcement to do their jobs. Others have shared concerns that the new bill mandates efforts that are too costly for rural agencies (like storing body camera footage in the cloud). Specific concerns included the following quotes:

- I am worried about maintaining a [law enforcement] workforce with new legislation. The issue of qualified immunity – protection of community and officers, seeing more people moving into retirement, going to different jobs. Law enforcement wants training.
- Law enforcement has been villainized, and the media is negative.
- The new Illinois [1000 pages passed in the early morning hours] crime reform bill seriously hampers law enforcement.
- When we [law enforcement officers] do our job, we still get persecuted or sued even if we did everything correctly.
- They are trying to trip up officers.
- Rural counties do not have funds to store webcam data. It is too costly.

Concerns about media coverage and general community perceptions around law enforcement are not positive locally or nationally. Two recent incidents describe the dangers of serving as law enforcement officers, including a police officer who was shot at while doing paperwork in a church parking lot in Decatur and the shooting death of a former Decatur police officer in Champaign. His memorial service was in Decatur.

Input underscored the need to encourage collaboration among community and law enforcement. Concerns were expressed that “policing has become even more reactive instead of proactive [and this has led to] less community support.” This creates concerns about access to the criminal justice workforce. The number of people in custody in the Macon County jail has increased to 350 in the past three years. Fears exist surrounding deaths while in custody and a need described “to connect jails/law enforcement with substance abuse treatment programs.” “Supports are needed in the jail.” “Jail is tough – people are afraid of a death while in custody.” An additional law enforcement concern is that it is “hard to assess levels of impairment for marijuana use. Drug recognition experts have helped.”

Assets

Although there are some concerns about the relationship between law enforcement and the community, and there are officer concerns centered around the new police reform bill. Macon County has several supports for officers and other first responders. The Howard G. Buffett Foundation is building a treatment center to serve first responders and law enforcement officers who have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder on the job. The Foundation is also building a large center to include a canine training unit for certification and recertification.

IMAGE OF DECATUR AND MACON COUNTY

Community leaders in Macon County are committed to addressing the image of Decatur and Macon County more broadly. They strive for an economy and a community that is vibrant and well. However, ten key issues stand in the way of a healthy economy, strong employment rates, and a safe and quality living environment. Community members noted specific concerns about Eldorado Street, the number of individuals panhandling, and the impact of the negative reputation on a declining tax base. Specifically, some participants believe a negative perception of Decatur (and Macon County) leads individuals to move to Springfield and commute for work, which results in a loss to the tax base for Decatur which impairs the capacity to fund the neighborhood revitalization projects.

“Most people avoid Decatur because it has such a negative image.”

“Inner-city Decatur needs a neighborhood revitalization, and that has not happened – dilapidated housing is not good.”

Decatur has self-confidence issues, but it is hard to out-shout naysayers.”

Although the city does not have the positive reputation community leaders desire, the area has much to offer in entertainment, community development, and investment. One resident stated, “Decatur is good on entertainment.”

Specifically, some of the community assets that are overshadowed by some of the challenges include:

- The Howard G. Buffett Foundation: one participant shared that, “Decatur is a very giving community – Howard has modeled this and inspired people.”
- The HGBF has invested in rebuilding Johns Hill as a step toward community revitalization. There has been a new focus on increasing curbs and lighting around this middle school for safety and neighborhood revitalization.
- Brian Byers works to expand the image of Decatur with the Limitless Decatur and Macon County efforts that highlight success stories. The HGBF provided funds for this effort.⁶⁹
- The revitalization of the neighborhood with the Community Care Campus.
- The many opportunities for recreation and leisure include a local golf course, splash cove, zoom, museums, the Devon local amphitheater (funded by HGBF), and local bike trails.
- Schaub Floral Display Center.
- An express train and cheetah at the local zoo.
- Scovill Sculpture Park.
- Kirkland Fine Arts Center at Millikin University campus.
- Lakeshore Landing with an adventure park.
- Children’s Museum with and expansion.
- Julia Roundtree Livingston as part of the Community Foundation of Macon County hosts a book club on racial differences.
- Downtown Development improving the image of downtown.

- Macon County Development and United Way collaboration with the Chamber and Economic Development office to enhance access to downtown services.
- Downtown Civic Center.
- Decatur had a five-year marketing plan designed to correct misperceptions of the community and to elevate community assets: “Good People Doing Good Things.”⁷⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific recommendations, as they relate to each of the ten key issues to economic and community vibrancy in Macon County, were addressed in each of their respective sections. The Executive Summary outlines the key short-term and long-term recommendations for Macon County. However, the general recommendation for Macon County is to look upstream and invest in the people of Macon so that the people can then invest back into the community by addressing the ten barriers outlined above.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Utilized Data Sources

Data Source	Agency	Variables	Accessibility
Census Data: Quick Facts	United States Census Bureau	Age, sex, race, housing, computer access, education, economy, business, population density	census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/
County Health Rankings	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of WI	Social and economic variables, physical environment, clinical care, health behaviors, health outcomes	countyhealthrankings.org/app/illinois/2021/rankings/macon/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot
Illinois Traffic Stops: Racial Disparities	Data Viz Community	Traffic stops, race, traffic searches, contraband, citations from traffic stops (2017)	illinoistrafficstops.com/?agency=Macon%20County%20Sheriff
Criminal Justice Facts: State-by-State Data	The Sentencing Project	State imprisonment rate, racial disparity index, juvenile custody rate	sentencingproject.org/the-facts/#rankings?dataset-option=BWR
Illinois Traffic Stop Study: 2019 Annual Report	Mountain-Whisper-Light Statistics	All data collected, by law, through the Illinois Department of Transportation	ilga.gov/reports/ReportsSubmitted/2189RSGAEmail3672RSGAAttachFINAL--Part%20I%20Executive%20Summary%20Traffic%20Stop%20Data--7-1-20.pdf idot.illinois.gov/Assets/uploads/files/Transportation-System/Reports/Safety/Traffic-Stop-Studies/2019/FINAL--Part%20I%20Executive%20Summary%20Pedestrian%20Stop%20Data--7-1-20.pdf
Illinois Pedestrian Stop Study	Mountain-Whisper-Light Statistics	All data collected, by law, through the Illinois Department of Transportation	idot.illinois.gov/Assets/uploads/files/Transportation-System/Reports/Safety/Traffic-Stop-Studies/2019/FINAL--Part%20I%20Executive%20Summary%20Pedestrian%20Stop%20Data--7-1-20.pdf
Uniform Crime Reporting Program	Federal Bureau of Investigation	Totals for violent crime: homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Totals for property crime: arson, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft.	https://crime-data-explorer.app.cloud.gov/explorer/agency/IL0580200/crime
Illinois Poverty Dashboard	Heartland Alliance	highlights counties by trends on four key indicators: poverty, unemployment, teen births, and high school graduation.	https://www.heartlandalliance.org/illinois-poverty-data-dashboards/
Community Health Needs Assessment 2019-2021	Decatur Memorial Hospital	Full community assessment and priority community needs.	https://www.dmhcares.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/18-617-BOOKLET-CHNA-07-03-19.pdf

APPENDIX B: Groups/Organizations Represented in Key Informant Interviews

- Blue Mound community member
- Heritage Behavioral Health Center
- Decatur Memorial Hospital
- Chiefs of Police Departments
- City Officials
- Child Advocacy Center
- Community Foundation of Macon County
- Crossing Healthcare
- Decatur Public School – Foundation
- Dove
- County Board Members
- County Officials
- Decatur Chamber of Commerce
- Decatur Empowerment Opportunity Center
- Baby TALK
- Macon County Mental Health Board
- Macon County Law and Fire
- Job Recruitment Specialist
- Richland Community College
- Rural fire Chief
- Saint Mary's Hospital
- Macon County State's Attorney's Office
- United Way of Decatur and Mid-Illinois
- Neuhoff Media
- Warrensburg community member
- Recruitment of Ag Employees - Social Media Marketing
- Decatur Parks and Recreation
- Elected County Officers
- Faith Based Community Members

APPENDIX C: Invitation to Participate

Greeting [NAME]

My name is Thomasine Heitkamp, LCSW, and I am an independent researcher working on behalf of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, an Illinois non-profit corporation. The Foundation has contracted with Dr. Shawnda Schroeder, independent researcher, and myself to prepare a comprehensive assessment of community needs in Macon County. Dr. Schroeder and I have over four decades of experience in conducting community needs assessments.

As a part of the assessment, we are reaching out to you as an identified community leader to determine if you are willing to participate in a focus group or individual interview. We are interested in your opinions and ideas about improving the economy, community physical and mental health, employment, criminal justice support, health resources, and how to address general community needs in Macon County. Dr. Schroeder and I are hoping you might be willing to volunteer to participate. We promise the interview will take no longer than one hour of your time. All data will be reported in aggregate form and participants' names will not appear in the report.

See the link in this paragraph that you can click into to complete some brief information including the times you are available to participate in an interview. We will use video conferencing or telephone to conduct the interviews and will send out invites to all who agree to participate to ensure the time is marked on your calendar with sign-in and contact information. <https://forms.gle/M14ShVpFD3NKpCwZ9>

Do not hesitate to email us with any questions: Thomasine Heitkamp thomasine.heitkamp@gmail.com and Shawnda Schroeder shawndamarie.schroeder@gmail.com

Your participation in this assessment will assist the Howard G. Buffett Foundation.

Best –

Thomasine Heitkamp - 218-779-6249 [mobile number]
Dr. Shawnda Schroeder

APPENDIX D: Invitation Form (Survey)



Community Input: Macon County, IL

You have been identified as a key community leader for Macon County. Please consider participating in a community focus group or key informant interview to share your ideas on future community investments and to identify community solutions through data and group discussion.

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation has funded this comprehensive community assessment for Macon County, IL. Dr. Shawnda Schroeder and Thomasine Heitkamp have been contracted to complete this community assessment. They have more than four decades of community based research and evaluation experience between them. They will be reviewing data, and hosting both community focus groups and key informant interviews to identify community assets, inequity, and opportunities for growth.

NOTE:

- * Participant names will NOT be included in the final report to the Howard G. Buffett Foundation.
- * Focus groups and key informant interviews will be held primarily over video conference or phone.
- * Topics discussed will include ideas around improving the economy, community physical and mental health, employment, criminal justice supports, health resources, and general community equity.

Any questions, please contact Shawndamarie.schroeder@gmail.com or thomasine.heitkamp@gmail.com.

1. Name:
2. Email:
3. Phone number (if you prefer meeting by phone):
4. To include many voices and to respect personal safety during the pandemic, please mark ALL of the following that is true for you. You can mark more than one!
 - Willing to participate in a focus group (knowing no names will appear in the final report).
 - Willing to participate in a key informant interview (knowing no names will appear in the final report).
 - Prefer to meet using video conference.
 - Prefer to meet over the phone.
5. Please indicate which of the following dates and times you would be available to participate in a one-hour phone call or videoconference.
 - More than 24 options over three weeks were provided.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographic information will NOT be associated with your name or contact information. These questions are being asked to make sure that the focus groups represent ALL of Macon County and not just one group. We will work to ensure that many voices, representing the unique diversity of Macon County, are included in these community discussions.

6. Where do you live?

- Decatur, IL (Macon County)
- Macon County, not in Decatur

7. Age (must be 18 or older to participate):

8. Gender

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Gender not listed here
- Prefer not to answer

9. Race and Ethnicity

- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- Other

10. Employment

- Educator
- Health (medical)
- Mental health
- Justice (i.e., law enforcement, criminal justice, probation/parole officer)
- Service industry
- Human services provider
- Student
- Agriculture
- Government (city, state, county)
- Other _____

APPENDIX E: Itinerary from Professor Heitkamp's Visit

Location of Interviews: Bolek Training Center Second floor Library at 1095 Rotary Way, Decatur, Illinois.

June 20, 2021

Arrive from Springfield – Travel to Decatur

June 21, 2021

9:00 to 10:00 Interview - Law Enforcement
10:00 to 11:00 Interview - Fire Chief Rural Community
11:30 to 12:30 Lunch with Director of Community Foundation of Macon County
12:30 to 1:00 Tour Downtown Decatur Area including Community Cares Campus
2:00 to 3:00 Focus Group - Human Service
3:00 to 4:00 Interview - Law Enforcement
4:00 to 5:00 Interview - Law Enforcement

June 22, 2021

9:00 to 10:30 Listening Session with Scot Wrington, Julie Moore Wolfe, Cordaryl Patrick, Jon Kindseth from the City of Decatur and Howard Buffett, Trisha Cook and Charlotte Ryan from the HGB Foundation – Regarding Johns Hill Development Progress and Problem Solving
10:30 to 11:15 Meeting with Howard Buffett and Trish Cook to review preliminary findings
11:30 to 1:00 Interview - Fire Chief/Law Enforcement
2:00 to 3:00 Interview – Education/Public Safety
3:00 to 3:45 Travel to Blue Mound
3:45 to 7:30 Interview – Workforce Issues - Visited Farm Shared Dinner with Family

June 23, 2021

9:00 to 11:45 Tour of Macon County with Howard Buffett to include: Research Farm in Pana, Johns Hill Development, Building Occurring for Canine Training for Law Enforcement Academy to certify and recertify, Building site for a Center for Treatment of PTSD for law enforcement and first responders, Macon County Fire and Rescue Training - CSI (Center for Sustainability & Innovation) Grain Bin, etc.
10:45 to 11:30 Participate in Law Enforcement Simulation
11:30 to 12:30 - Lunch with Howard Buffett, Tanya Andricks (Crossing Healthcare), and Julie Moore-Wolfe (Mayor) to Debrief on Progress of Assessment
12:30 Depart for Springfield Airport

APPENDIX F: Data Tables from County Health Rankings 2021³²

	Black or African American (Macon Co.)	White (Macon Co.)	All of Macon Co.	All of IL
Premature death (years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population)	11,600	7,600	8400	6600
Premature age-adjusted mortality (deaths among residents under age 75 per 100,000)	530	400	420	330
Life expectancy	73.8	77.9	77.3	79.4
Low birth weight	15%	8%	10%	8%
Reading scores	1.9	2.9	2.6	3
Math scores	1.5	2.9	2.4	2.9
Children in poverty	50%	15%	22%	16%
Median household income	\$25,800	\$55,000	\$52,300	\$69,200
Drug overdose deaths -	20	22	21	22
Motor vehicle crash deaths -	9	13	12	9
Injury deaths -	75	81	78	65
Homicides -	5	2	6	7
Firearm fatalities -	27	9	12	11
Child mortality -	100	50	60	50
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	16	5	8	6
Teen births (births per 1,000)	66	22	32	19
(-) per 100,000				

APPENDIX G: Data Tables from Traffic Stop Study, Figure 6, 2019 ²⁹

		White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Reason for Stop	Moving violation	69.3%	52.0%	58.4%	71.0%	67.0%	70.0%
	Licensing/registration	10.3%	15.7%	10.9%	7.3%	10.0%	7.8%
Stop Outcome	Verbal warning	24.5%	56.4%	43.9%	33.3%	31.0%	43.0%
	Written warning	38.0%	17.9%	22.3%	32.1%	28.0%	23.0%
	Citation	37.5%	25.9%	33.8%	34.7%	41.0%	33.0%
Contraband*	Found after vehicle search	25.3%	33.0%	34.0%	29.0%	31.0%	30.0%
	Found after search of person	12.9%	12.2%	9.3%	8.6%	9.4%	9.5%
	Found after dog sniff	64.0%	61.0%	52.0%	37.0%	58.0%	50.0%

APPENDIX H: Data Tables from Crime Data Explorer provided through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010-2019 ³⁹

	Macon County Sheriff's Office	Decatur P.D.	Maroa P.D.	Mount Zion P.D.	Decatur Park District	Warrensburg P.D.	All Violent Crime
ALL VIOLENT CRIME							
2010	66	468	6	4	7	1	552
2011	69	481	2	3	4	3	562
2012	50	351	2	6	4	5	418
2013	13	351	2	6	7	5	384
2014	22	355	3	4	11	0	395
2015	27	373	4	8	7	4	423
2016	28	392	2	3	6	3	434
2017	27	446	4	11	16	2	506
2018	39	444	1	5	2	2	493
2019	38	375	1	11	6	3	434
HOMICIDE							
2010	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
2011	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
2012	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
2013	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
2014	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
2015	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
2016	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
2017	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
2018	0	9	0	0	0	0	9
2019	0	11	0	0	0	0	11
RAPE							
2010	9	20	0	0	*	*	29
2011	17	14	0	0	*	*	31
2012	10	25	0	0	*	*	35
2013	2	9	1	1	*	*	13
2014	*	10	0	0	*	*	10
2015	1	32	0	0	*	*	33
2016	5	45	0	0	*	*	50
2017	7	52	0	0	*	*	59
2018	5	30	0	0	*	*	35
2019	5	52	0	0	*	*	57

* Indicates no data were available for this cell

	Macon County Sheriff's Office	Decatur P.D.	Maroa P.D.	Mount Zion P.D.	Decatur Park District	Warrensburg P.D.	Total for Macon Co.
ROBBERY							
2010	0	136	0	1	3	0	140
2011	3	124	0	0	3	1	131
2012	2	106	0	0	3	0	111
2013	1	84	0	1	1	0	87
2014	3	93	0	3	2	0	101
2015	3	120	0	0	2	0	125
2016	4	97	0	1	1	0	103
2017	1	106	0	1	4	1	113
2018	1	84	0	1	0	0	86
2019	3	65	0	0	3	0	71
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT							
2010	57	308	6	2	4	1	378
2011	49	333	2	3	1	1	389
2012	38	214	2	6	1	5	266
2013	10	253	1	3	5	5	277
2014	18	251	3	1	7	0	280
2015	23	215	4	6	5	4	257
2016	19	247	1	1	5	3	276
2017	19	278	4	7	8	1	317
2018	33	321	1	4	2	1	362
2019	30	247	0	5	3	3	288
ALL PROPERTY CRIME							
2010	433	3121	18	54	34	12	3672
2011	377	2835	22	58	29	10	3331
2012	382	2448	12	42	28	13	2925
2013	323	2369	12	30	37	10	2781
2014	295	2225	13	32	25	4	2594
2015	277	2383	10	30	29	12	2741
2016	217	2657	20	21	11	7	2933
2017	270	2394	42	44	19	9	2778
2018	355	2050	22	51	7	4	2489
2019	282	1954	10	60	13	4	2323

* Indicates no data were available for this cell

APPENDIX I: Illinois Public School Enrollment Data ⁴⁰

Illinois Public School Enrollment: Number of Elementary Students, 2018-2019											
YEAR	Pre K	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	Total Elem. Count
2018-19	953	1,255	1,118	1,178	1,223	1,221	1,227	1,189	1,253	1,140	11,757
2017-18	886	1,169	1,219	1,235	1,223	1,234	1,213	1,209	1,201	1,197	11,786
2016-17	1015	1,344	1,329	1,314	1,277	1,263	1,265	1,212	1,325	1,233	12,577
2015-16	877	1,299	1,307	1,233	1,222	1,234	1,167	1,147	1,145	1,123	11,754
2014-15	920	1,340	1,266	1,253	1,245	1,167	1,242	1,221	1,247	1,188	12,089

Illinois Public School Enrollment: Number of Secondary Students, 2018-2019						
YEAR	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth	Total Secondary Count	Total Student Count
2018-19	1,187	1,149	1,122	1,000	4,458	16,215
2017-18	1,380	1,236	867	896	4,379	16,165
2016-17	1,550	1,218	1,038	923	4,729	17,306
2015-16	1,307	1,100	947	830	4,184	15,938
2014-15	1,381	1,158	980	884	4,403	16,492

APPENDIX J: Illinois Public School Dropout Rates by Grade, Race, and Gender⁴⁰

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	All High School
Dropout Rates for FEMALE Students in Illinois					
White	0.34	2.37	3.09	3.75	2.4
Black	1.77	8.2	8.29	9.75	7.01
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.63	5.91	6.7	6.06	5.13
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	2.41	4.49	8.89	5.34
Hispanic or Latino	0.81	4.06	4.56	6.71	3.99
Asian	0.03	1.37	1.89	2.24	1.38
Multiracial	0.78	4.1	5.91	6.53	4
Statewide Totals	0.71	3.83	4.4	5.55	3.62
Dropout Rates for MALE Students in Illinois					
White	0.48	2.62	3.7	4.64	2.87
Black	2.25	10	9.93	12.43	8.62
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.97	5.47	7.94	13.24	7.07
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	6.42	10.71	8.99	8.51
Hispanic or Latino	1.59	5.36	6.04	9.99	5.68
Asian	0.2	1.84	2.06	3.3	1.86
Multiracial	1.11	5.37	4.69	7.22	4.27
Statewide Totals	1.09	4.66	5.3	7.34	4.58