



Years 2022-2027

***Amendment to 5-year Community Assessment
completed November 2023***

Champaign County Regional Planning Commission

Early Childhood Education Program Community Assessment



Executive Summary

The *Champaign County RPC Early Childhood Education Program* (RPCECEP), also known as Champaign County Head Start, community assessment is designed to serve as a guide to shape future program plans based on area demographics and community strengths and needs. RPCECEP conducted the initial assessment between February and September 2022. The amended assessment was completed in the fall of 2023.

RPCECEP Head Start leadership convened a cross-disciplinary team to lead the data collection process, which included management, service coordinators, community partners, and additional staff members. The process also included surveying Head Start/Early Head Start families, and analyzing administrative and public data.

Comprehensive information gathered through this community assessment provided RPC Early Childhood Education, Head Start team with a clearer picture of community and family needs in Champaign County. This included identifying the top community issues, barriers to accessing services, and populations that are currently underserved in the community. While the community assessment team acknowledges that no one entity can resolve these issues, we hope that it lays the groundwork for greater collaboration among all who seek to improve the quality of life for Head Start/Early Head Start families.

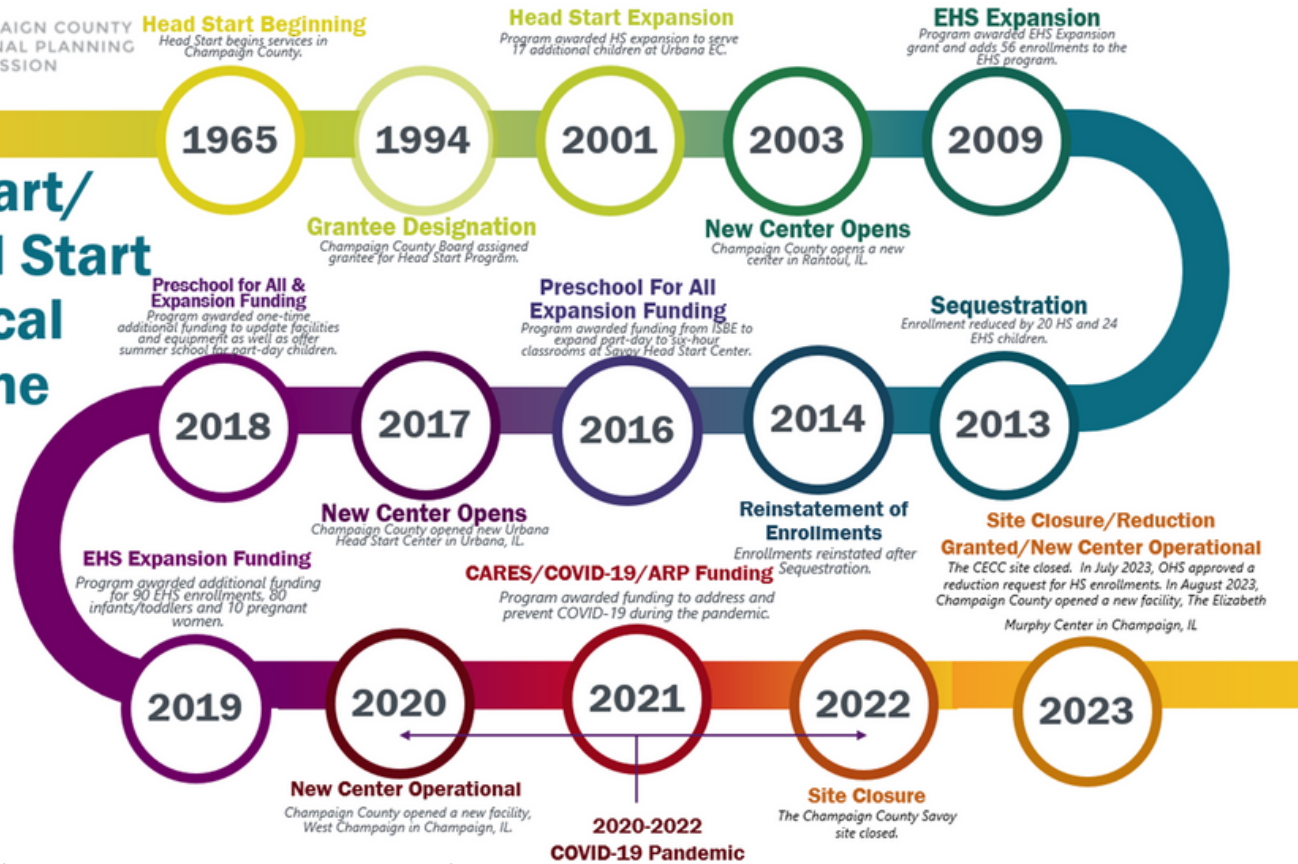
Organizational Background



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION

Head Start/ Early Head Start Historical Timeline

1965-2023



RPCECEP, Champaign County Head Start promotes kindergarten readiness to income- eligible families in Early Head Start, which serves infants, toddlers, and expectant parents; and Head Start, which serves three- to five- year-old-children. We partner with parents to assist children in developing the knowledge and skills necessary for school success and lifelong well-being.

Head Start services have been available to children and families in Champaign County since 1965. In 1994, the Champaign County Board was designated as the grantee of the program, returning administration of the local Head Start to a community entity. RPC administrative offices are in Urbana, Illinois at the Brookens Administrative Center.

In all program options, the family support team provides child health and social services that help the parent(s) ready his/her child for school, promote parents in their role as their child's first and most important teacher, and encourage parents to set and achieve goals for themselves and their children.

In July 2023, The Office of Head Start approved a program reduction request beginning September 1, 2023, of slots in Head Start from 435 to 280. The program's total funding count is now 511. This reduction request allowed the program to increase wages for all employees. In July 2023, the Champaign center was opened and re-named "The Elizabeth Murphy Early Childhood Education Center" in honor of the program's late Chief Operating Officer, Elizabeth Murphy. The center has 8 classrooms servicing Early Head Start and Early Head Start Expansion children.

RPC Early Childhood Education Program currently has 4 center-based sites, home-based services, FCC collaborations, and services for pregnant mothers, with a combined funded enrollment for:

280

Head Start children

136
EHS
children

&

5
Pregnant
women

80
EHS
Expansion
children

&

10
Pregnant
women

Children's Programming Options

School-day Head Start

School-day Head Start is a school-year option for children ages 3 to 5. Families may enroll their children six-hour sessions at the Urbana and West Champaign sites. The six-hour sessions operate five days a week, 41 weeks per year.

Full-day Early Head Start

Full day- Early Head Start is a year-round program for infants, toddlers, 2-year-olds, and pregnant mothers. Full-day sessions are 9 1/2 hours, Monday through Friday. While Early Head Start services are free, families using the full-day programming must qualify for childcare subsidy services. Most families are eligible for the state childcare assistance mentioned above. The Elizabeth Murphy Center, Rantoul, Urbana, and West Champaign sites offer EHS full-day, or 9 1/2 hour sessions.

Full-day Head Start

Full-day Head Start is a year-round, Monday through Friday option for children 3 to 5-years-old whose parents are working or attending school or training. The Rantoul, Urbana, and West Champaign sites offer full-day, or 9 1/2 - hour sessions. While Head Start services are free, families using full-day programming must qualify for childcare subsidy services. Most families are eligible for state childcare assistance administered by the State of Illinois Child Care Assistance Program.

Home Based

The home-based option serves children birth to 5-years-old and expectant families year-round. Home Visitors serve families throughout Champaign County and provide Head Start/Early Head Start services weekly to families in their homes. Home-based families can participate in Family Days held twice a month, with transportation provided. EHS parents must accompany their infant, toddler, or 2- year-old to Family Day activities.

Collaboration programming

Collaboration programming is a partnership between RPC Early Childhood Education Program and local childcare providers. RPC collaborates with several family childcare homes in the county. The childcare partners provide Head Start/Early Head Start Child Development Services in the childcare program setting. The family childcare home providers and the teachers at all collaboration sites are required to follow Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards.

RPC then “wraps” Head Start/Early Head Start child health and family support services around the children and families enrolled at the childcare program. The fee for childcare at a collaboration site is arranged at the center or home. Most families are eligible for the state childcare assistance administered by Childcare Resource Service. Parents are responsible for their child’s transportation at these sites.

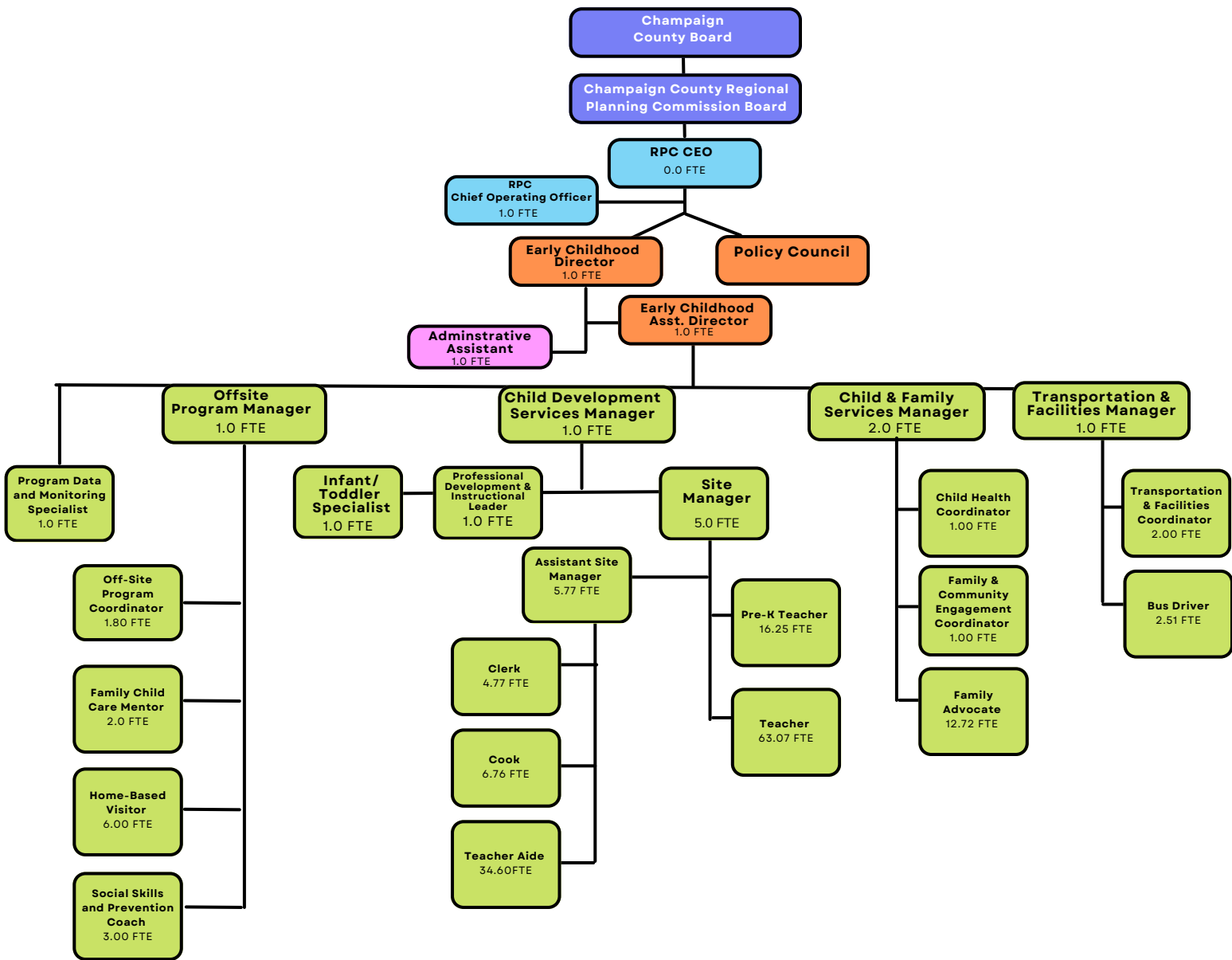
RPC also coordinates services for children who have a disability by working with local school districts’ early childhood program. Children who qualify for both Head Start and their school district’s special education services can be enrolled in each program. Services in this option, including transportation, are available during the school year. Children who need summer services may be able transition to Head Start year-round services during the summer months.

Transportation for Head Start children at the West Champaign center is provided for six-hour classrooms. Transportation at the Rantoul center was temporarily eliminated due to low staffing impacting full enrollment at the center. Parents are responsible for their child’s transportation for all Early Head Start children and for any child in full-day services at the Elizabeth Murphy Center, Rantoul, Urbana, and West Champaign centers.



Organizational Chart

(Early Childhood Fund Positions: FTE 175.02)



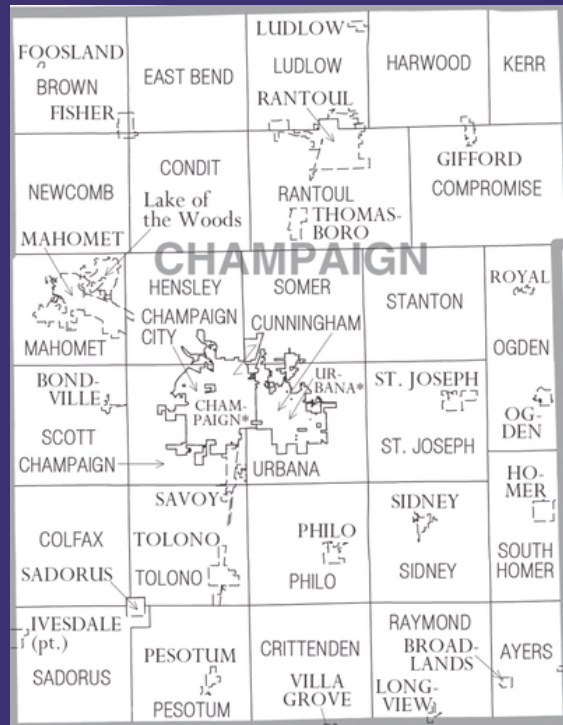
Champaign County Overview



Champaign County is located in the middle of East Central Illinois. Interstates 57, 72 & 74 intersect within Champaign County, which puts it 2 hours from Chicago, 3 hours northeast of St. Louis, MO, and 2 hours west of Indianapolis, IN.

According to the 2023 World Population Review, Champaign County has a population of 207,299, with a growth rate of 0.23% in the past year. It is 998 square miles in size. A large majority of those miles are used for agricultural purposes. Champaign County consists of 2 cities, and 21 villages located within 28 townships. It is the 10th largest county in Illinois.

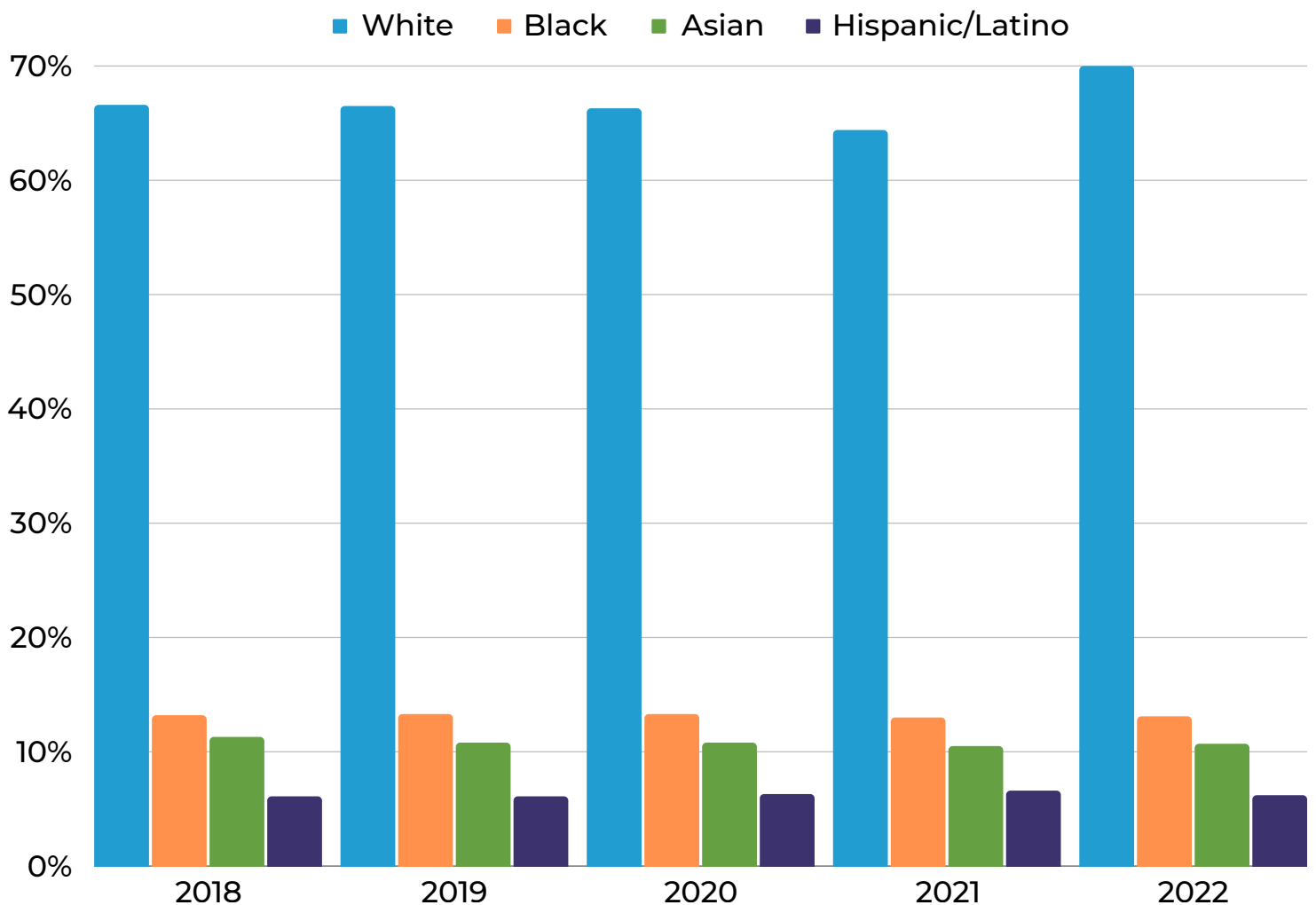
Champaign County has 2 major hospitals offering a wide variety of basic to specialty services. It is also the home to the University of Illinois, and Parkland College. The most current census information indicates there are 4,216 employer establishments within the county.



Champaign County 5-year Race/Ethnicity Distributions

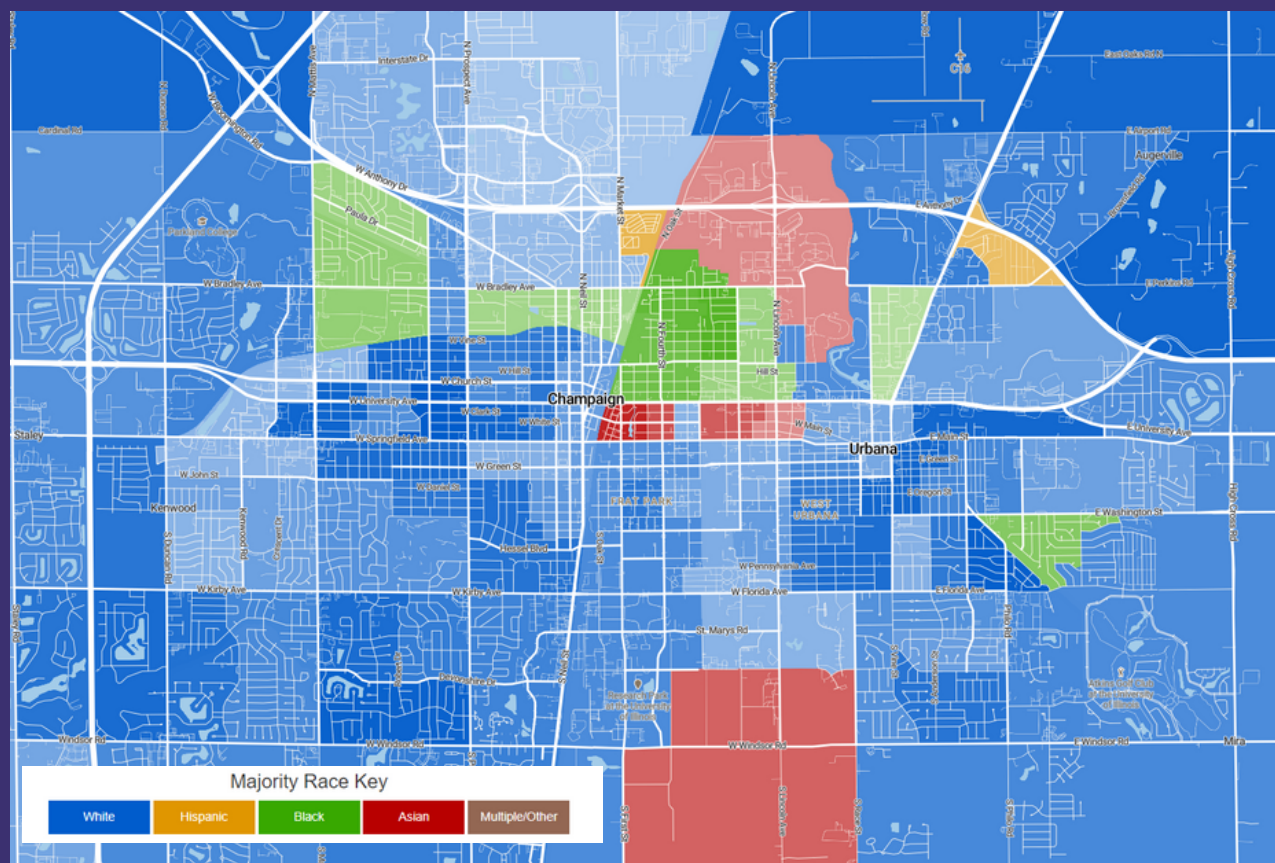
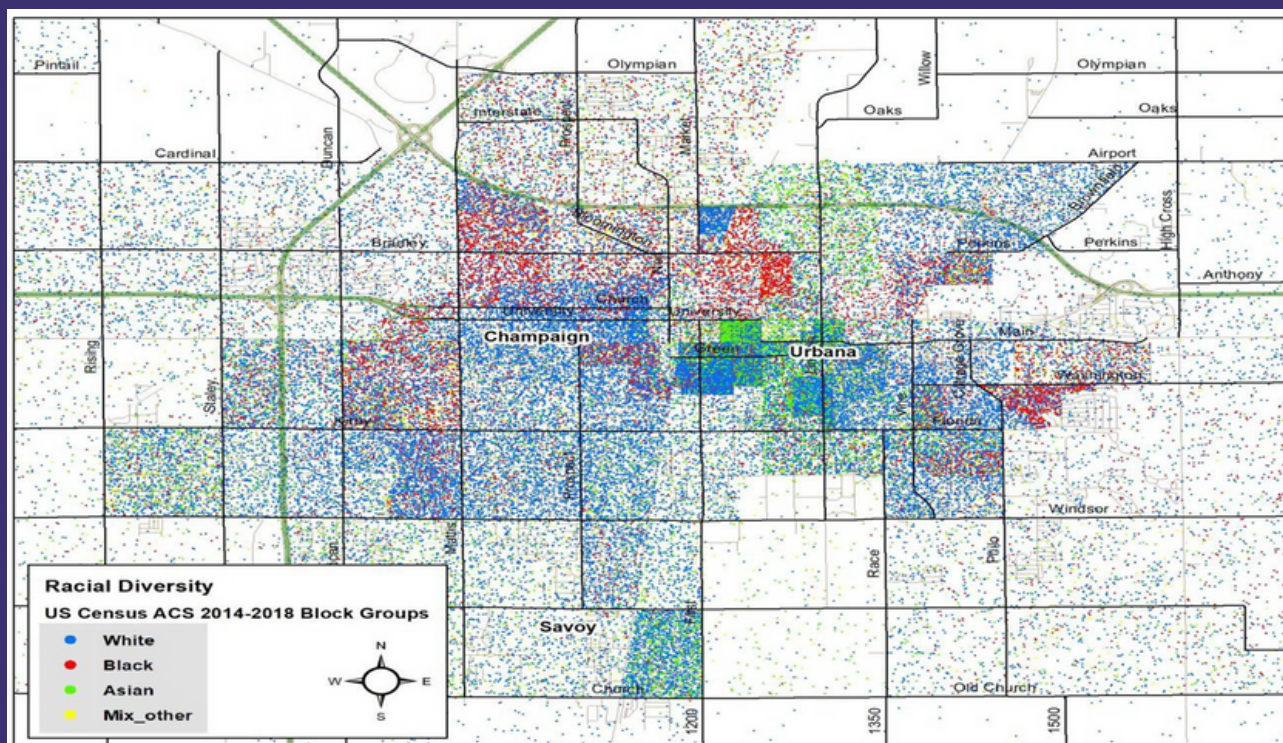
The race characteristic in Champaign County has varied over the last 5 years. As of the 2022 World Population Review, Champaign County race/ethnicity distributions are:

70.0% White; 13.1% Black/African American; 10.7% Asian; 6.2% Hispanic/Latino



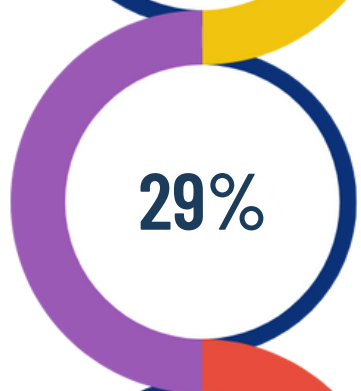
The *Champaign-Urbana Public Health District's Community Health Plan 2021-2023* indicated a higher concentration of African Americans represented in the northern part of Champaign, and the Southeast part of Urbana. The middle region shows a higher concentration of Asian presence. This is likely representing students at the University of Illinois.

*The map below was made using the *Racial Dot Map* program from the *Cooper Center at the University of Virginia* using 2014-2018 US Census ACS information. As of 2022, the Racial Dot Map system is no longer available for use. A different style of map with the most current data is shown at the bottom of this page.



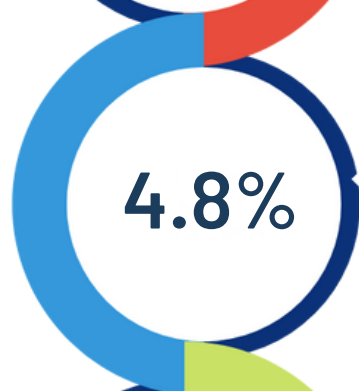
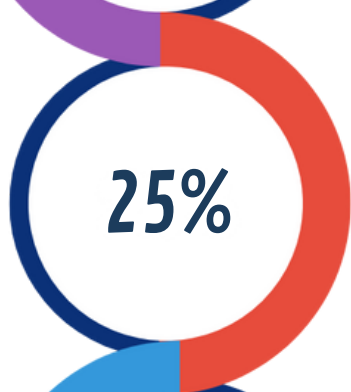
Champaign County Socio-Economic Data

MEDIAN
HOUSHOLD
INCOME



CHILDREN IN
SINGLE PARENT
HOUSHOLDS

CHILDCARE
COST BURDEN
AVERAGE



UNEMPLOYMENT
RATE AS OF
APRIL 2022

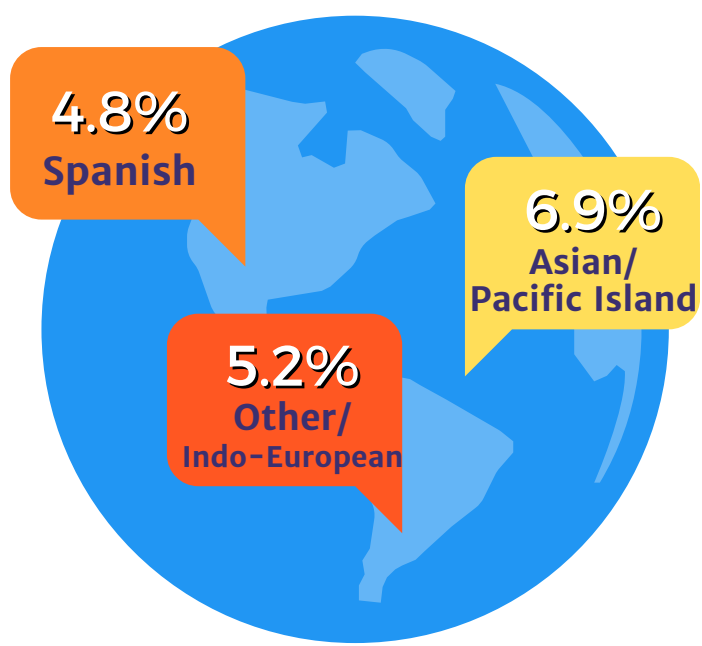
CRIME RATE
PER 100,000
PEOPLE



**95% High School
Completion Rate**

**45% Bachelor's
Degree or Higher**

Languages Other Than English Spoke at Home



Champaign County Socio-Economic Data

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) 2021 data states the hourly wage needed in Champaign County to cover basic household expenses for a household of one adult and two children is \$37.41 per hour. Using the Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator, the estimated living wage for October 2022 would be \$40.40 per hour. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics First Quarter 2022 County Employment and Wages Report, the median hourly wage for Champaign County equated to \$27.05 per hour.

2021 Hourly
Living Wage

\$37.41

2022 Estimated
Living Wage

\$40.40

2022 Median
Hourly Wage

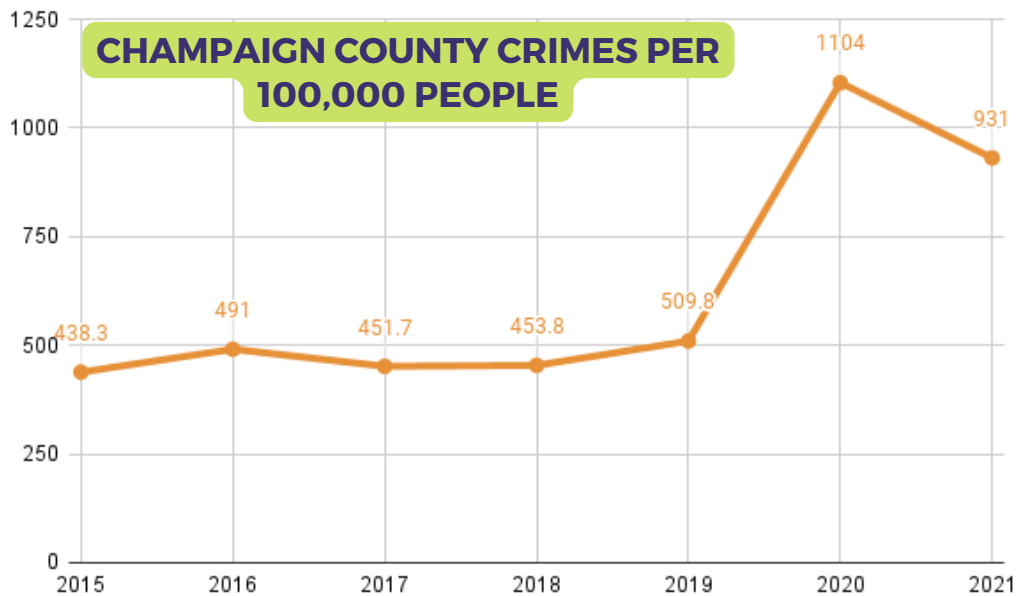
\$27.05

33%

difference in the median
wage and what is needed
to cover basic household
expenses in Champaign
County.



Champaign County Socio-Economic Trends



Source: *Illinois Uniform Crime Reports Index*. (2022). Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Retrieved October 10, 2022, from <https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/datasets/illinois-uniform-crime-reports-ucr-index-crime-offense/>

Information contained within the UCR Index comes from the Illinois State Police Crime Reports

The Illinois Uniform Crime Reports Index shows a significant increase in the number of crimes committed per 100,000 people in Champaign County in 2020. It is theorized that the change in daily routine, combined with elevated stress during the lockdown phase of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic could be related to the increase of domestic violence related crimes. However, no scientific studies have been published with respect to crime trends during the pandemic.

62%

of the overall county population lives within Champaign-Urbana

129

Shots fired in Champaign-Urbana during 2022

9

Murders in Champaign-Urbana during 2022

Champaign-Urbana is the heart of Champaign County, and home to 3 of the 4 Head Start Site Locations. An increase in gun violence has been identified within the community, suggesting a possible need for more trauma-informed practices, and mental health related services for our families who have been impacted by the gun violence. According to the Champaign Police Department, gun violence decreased by 50% between 2021 and 2022 with their renewed focus on community engagement after COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed.

Champaign County Employment & Economic Outlook

The *Illinois Health Ranking Report*, the overall 2020 unemployment rate in Champaign County was 6.7%, reaching its highest of 10.6% in June of 2020. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports continuous improvement of the unemployment rate in Champaign County. In August of 2022, the unemployment rate was reported at 4.3%, with a projected rate of 3.5% for September

3.5%*

current projected
unemployment rate
for Champaign
County as of
September 2022

4,216

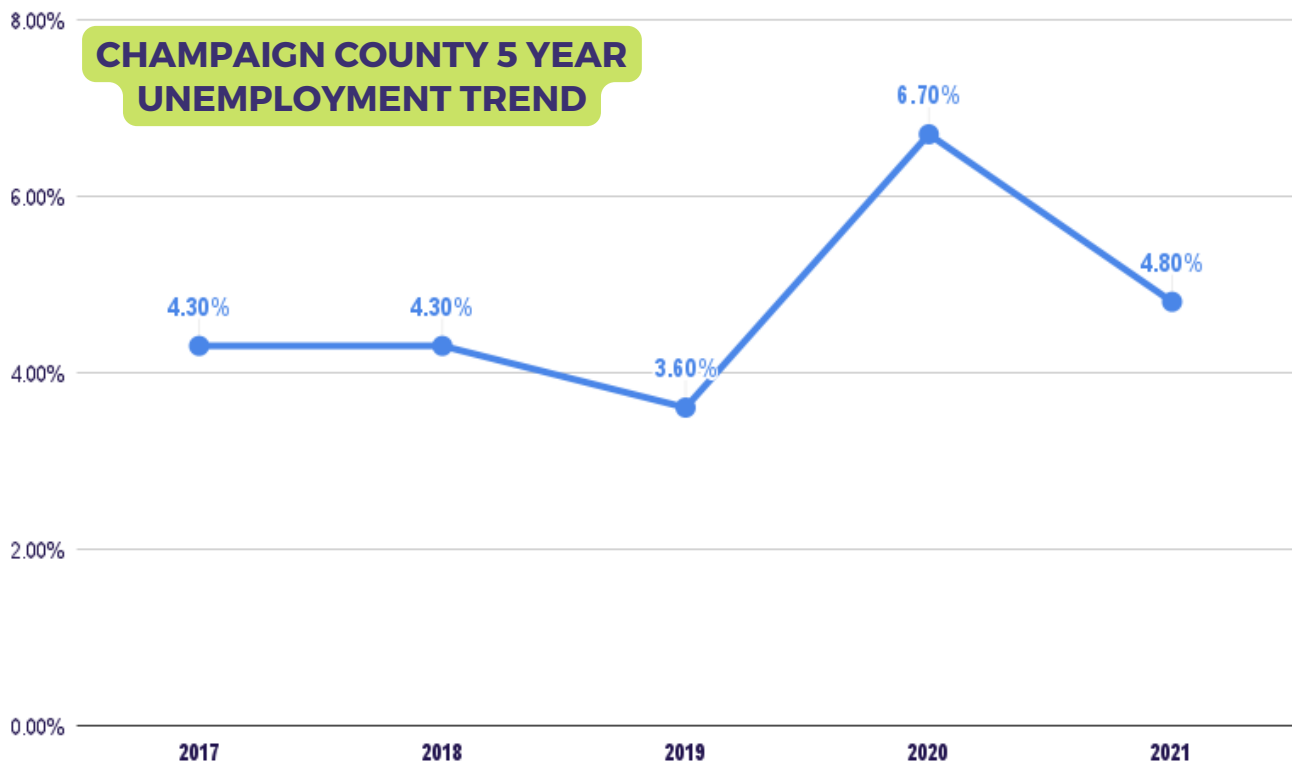
Employer
establishments

12,465

Nonemployer
establishments



According to the Census Bureau, Nonemployer businesses are generally small, such as real estate agents and independent contractors



*Source: Champaign County Local Area Unemployment Statistics. (n.d.). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved October 10, 2022, from https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LAUMTI71658000000003?amp%253bdata_tool=XGtable&output_view=data&include_graphs=true

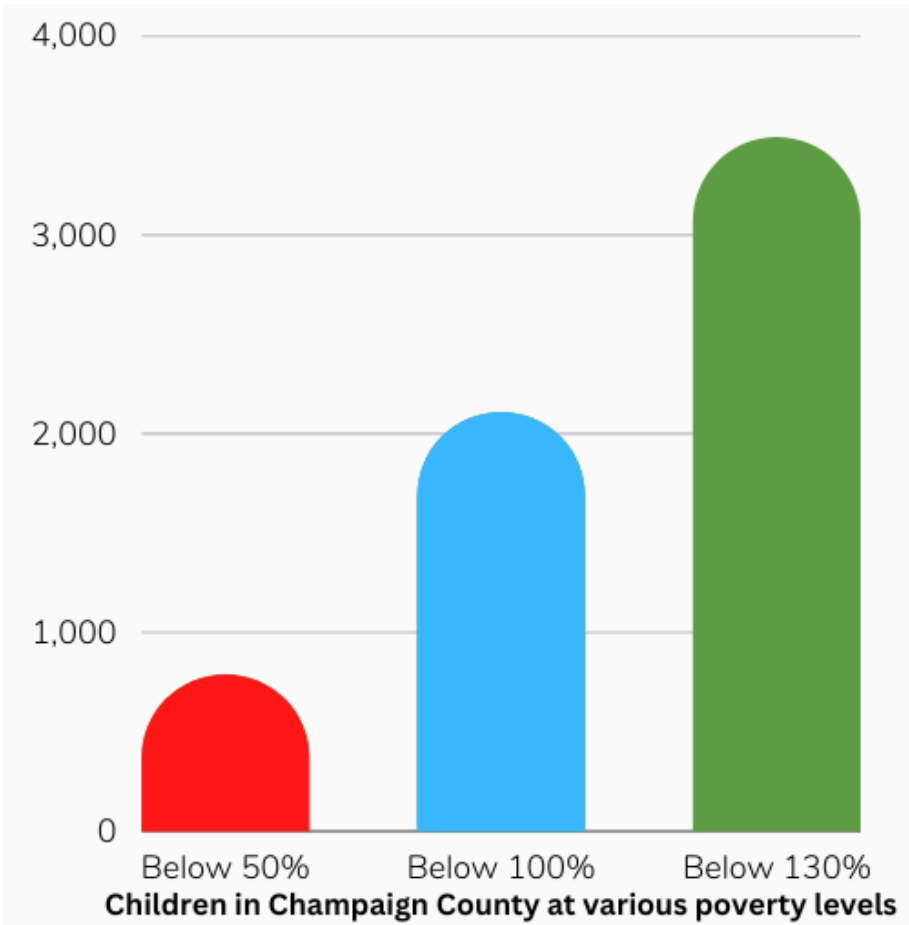
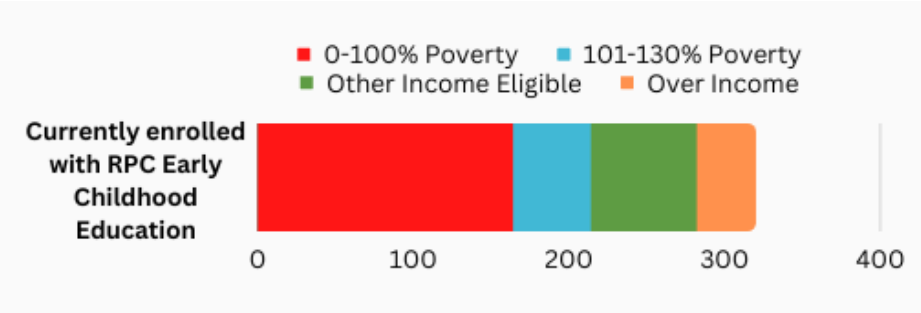
Income Eligibility

The 2021 US Census states there are 10,709 children aged 5 and under in Champaign County. The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) data shows 5.9% of those children live in families with incomes below 50% of the poverty level. This supports the program in identifying children and families that have the greatest needs in Champaign County.

2022 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Persons in family/household	Poverty Guideline
1	\$13,590
2	\$18,310
3	\$23,030
4	\$27,750
5	\$32,470
6	\$37,190
7	\$41,910
8	\$46,630

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,270 for each additional person



Source: Poverty Levels: Children Age 5 and Under by Federal Poverty Level. (n.d.-b). IECAM. <https://iecam.illinois.edu/browse/data/poverty-levels-children-age-5-and-under-by-federal-poverty-level>

Income Eligibility

**Champaign County
Overall Poverty Rate**

15.1%

**Census Tract 2 was identified as
having the highest number of
income eligible families in
Champaign.**

43.2% **2,266**
Poverty Rate **Population**

**151 Census Block Groups in
Champaign County**

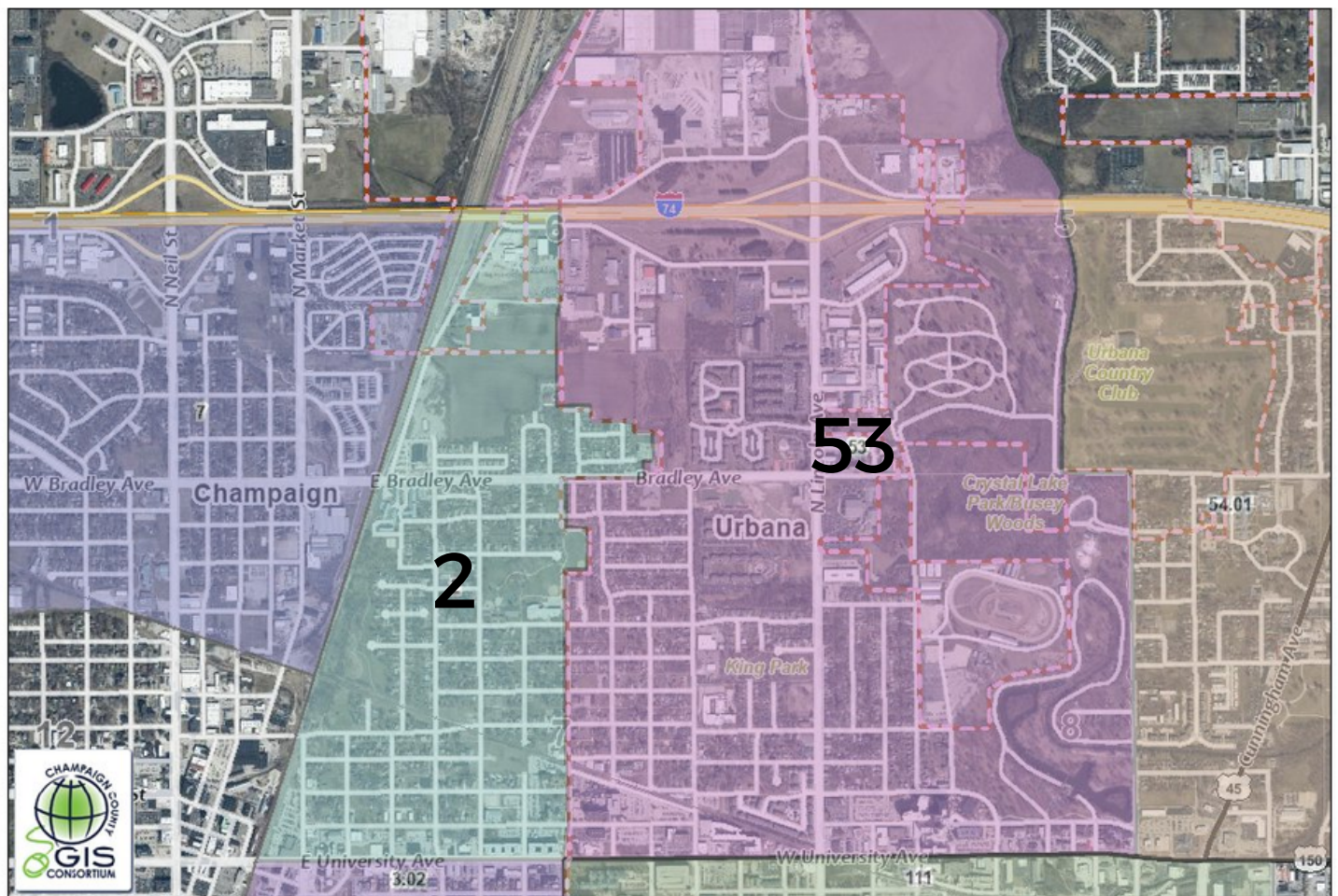
110 have income
eligible families
living in them.

**Census Tract 53 was identified as
having the highest number of
income eligible families in
Urbana.**

50.9% **3,800**
Poverty Rate **Population**

Almost 10% of our program families live within these identified tracts.

GIS Webmap Public Interface Champaign County, Illinois



This map was prepared with geographic information system (GIS) data created by the Champaign County GIS Consortium (CCGIS), or other CCGISC member agency. These entities do not warrant or guarantee the accuracy or suitability of GIS data for any purpose. The GIS data within this map is intended to be used as a general index to spatial information and not intended for detailed, site-specific analysis or resolution of legal matters. Users assume all risk arising from the use or misuse of this map and information contained herein. The use of this map constitutes acknowledgment of this disclaimer.

Date: Thursday, November 10, 2022

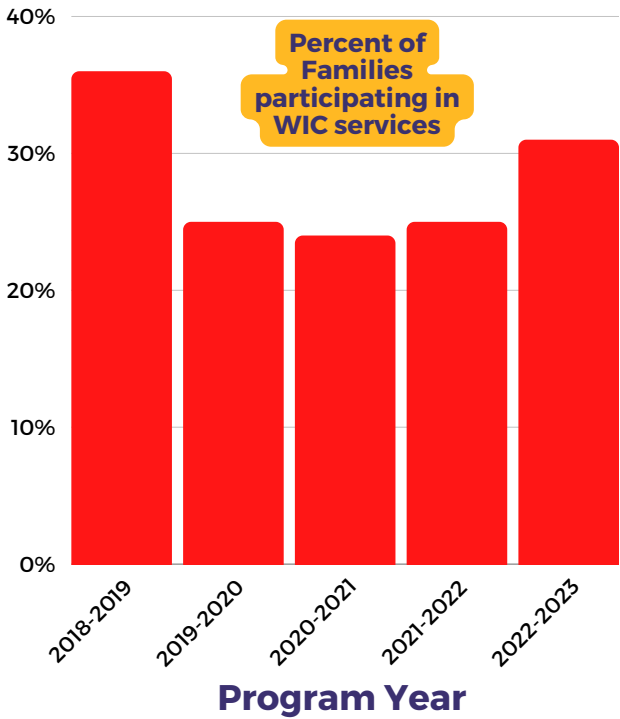
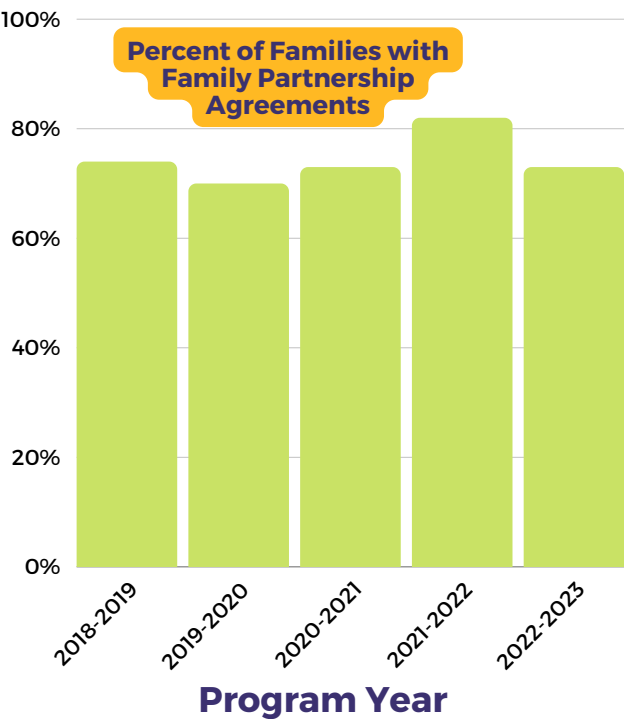


Head Start Enrolled Children & Families

The Program Information Report (PIR) for the RPC Early Childhood Education Program shows **425** initial and replacement enrollments during the 2022-2023 program year. This is a significant decrease from the **604** children enrolled during the 2021-2022 program year. There are a variety of reasons for this decrease, including program-wide staffing issues, resulting in classroom closures, and capping Head Start classroom placements to 15 in an effort to help reduce challenging behaviors.

The RPC Early Childhood Education Program offers a wide variety of beneficial services to our program families, including crisis assistance, education & employment training services, and more. The RPC ECEP also collaborates with many community partners to help our families maximize resources and navigate life's day to day challenges.

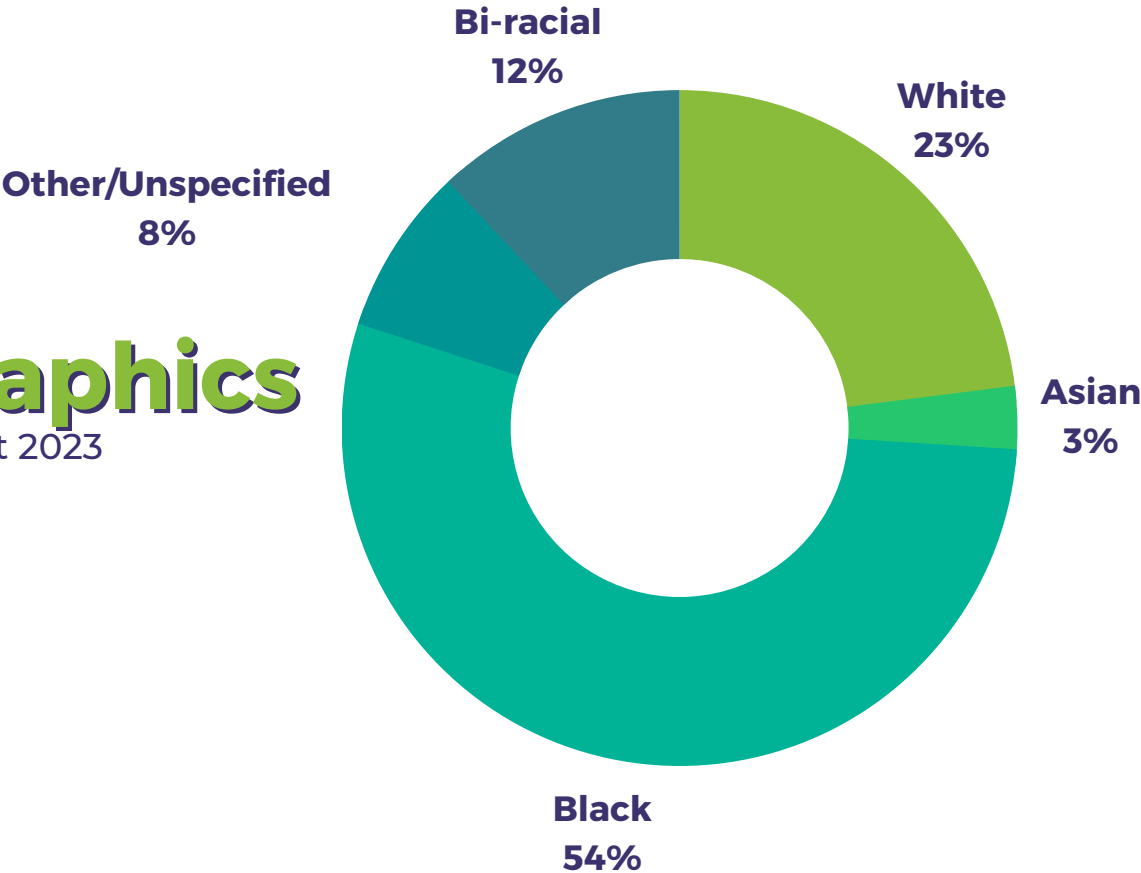
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Emergency, crisis assistance & mental health services provided	153	105	245	216	149
Education, literacy & employment training services provided	648	648	1177	1618	814



Head Start Enrolled Children & Families

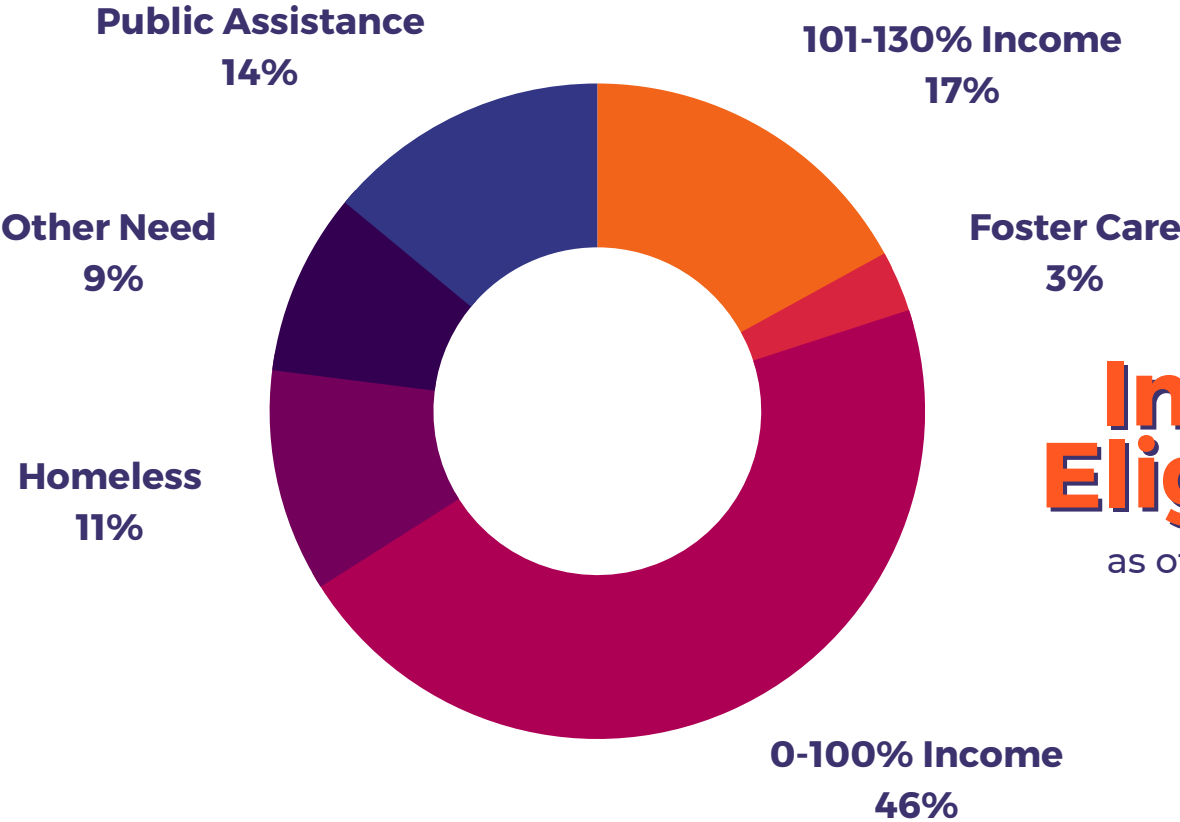
Demographics

as of August 2023



Income Eligibility

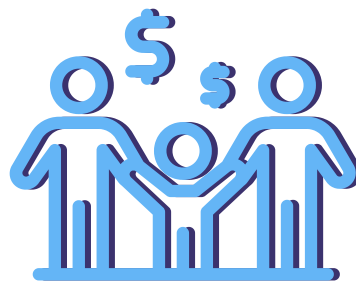
as of August 2023



Child Care Assistance Program

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and assists income-eligible families in paying for childcare. CCAP services allow parents to maintain employment or attend school and assists families in accessing multiple options of affordable quality childcare, early education, and after school programs in their community. Our local CCAP agency, Child Care Resource Service Illinois, serves the counties of: Champaign, Douglas, Iroquois, Macon, Piatt, & Vermilion. The Child Care Annual Report FY2022 reports CCAP served 172,794 children and 96,668 families in Illinois the previous year.

CCAP also provided funding to childcare programs to improve program quality, provide professional development opportunities, and apply for Illinois Gateway Accreditation.



\$271
million

invested by IDHS in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplement Appropriations Act to support the sustainability of the childcare field in FY21

199

childcare subsidy
eligible children served
by RPC Early Childhood
during the 2022-2023
school year



Our local CCAP agency:



Child Care
Resource Service
ILLINOIS

OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY	8:30 TO 4:30
TUESDAY	11:00 TO 4:30
WEDNESDAY	8:30 TO 4:30
THURSDAY	8:30 TO 4:30
FRIDAY	8:30 TO 4:30

ADDRESS

905 S. GOODWIN AVE
314 BEVIER HALL
URBANA, IL 61801

CONTACT

(217) 333-3252
OR TOLL-FREE
(800) 325-5516

\$143,443

To obtain an
application for
childcare assistance
through CCRS, scan
the QR code



Over

3,500

families are assisted per
month through CCRS



Head Start Enrolled Children & Families



One Parent Families

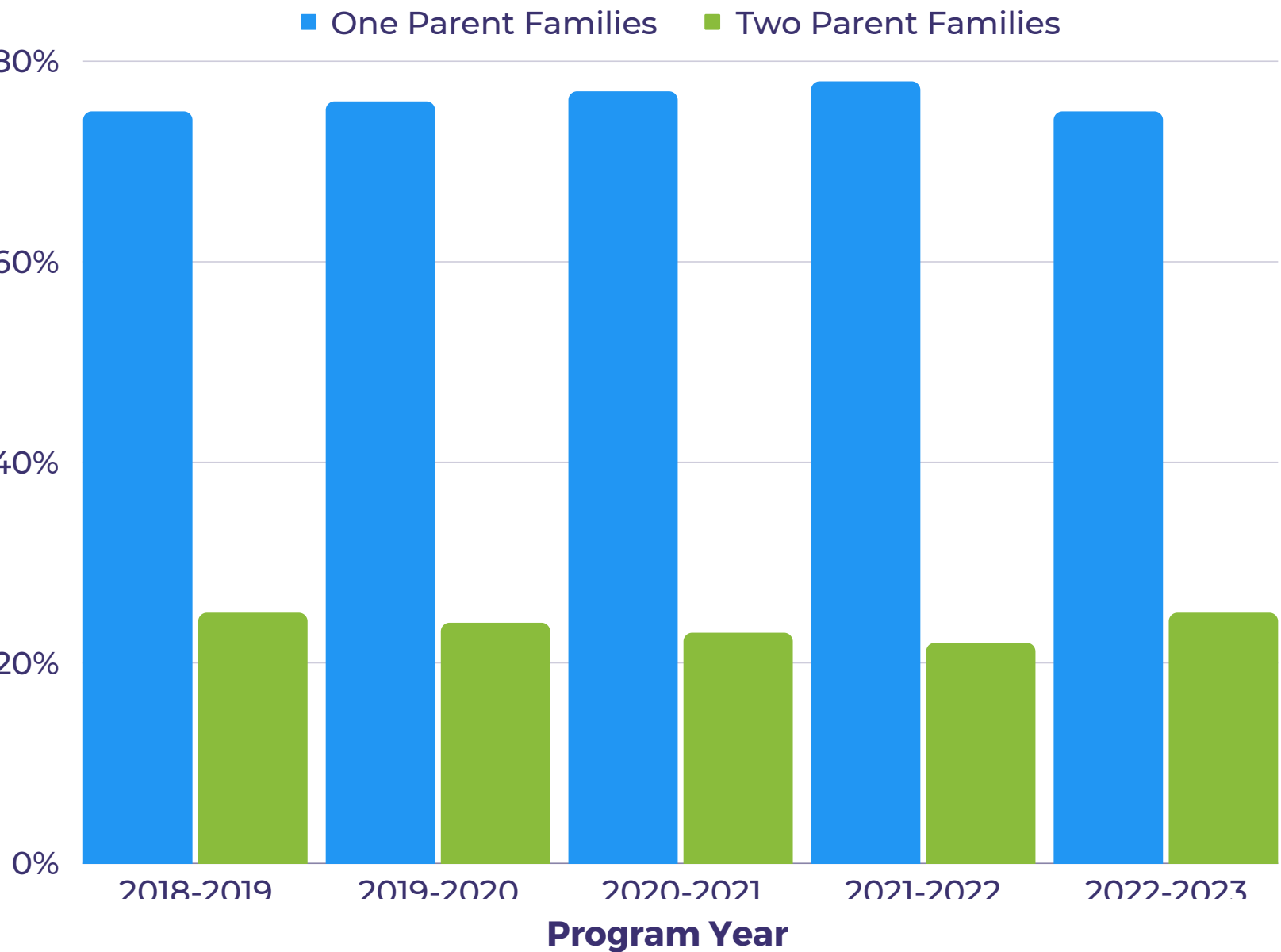
76.2%



Two Parent Families

23.8%

5 year family type average





101

children entered kindergarten from the RPC Early Childhood Education Program for the 2022-2023 school year

Child Outcomes Data for kindergarten bound children:

Developmental Area	% of Kindergarten-Bound Children Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Summer 2022-2023)
Social-Emotional	75%
Physical	90%
Language	90%
Cognitive	76%
Literacy	80%
Mathematics	69%

Factors Affecting Outcomes:

- COVID-19, the flu, RSV, and other illnesses continue to impact sites across the program.
- Staffing shortages, absences of both children and staff (for various reasons) and inconsistent staffing across the program has impacted the checkpoint results.
- The group of children assessed at each checkpoint period (fall, winter, spring, and summer) is not consistent over time. Children enrolled (and with enough data entered) at the time each checkpoint is completed are not the same across the school year.
- There are several school-year Head Start classrooms that are closed in the summer, so these children are not accounted for in the summer outcome report.
- Negative impact on the mental health of staff, parents, and children.
- Limited time for teachers to meet with coaches for continued professional development due to classroom closures, site closures, and overall lack of additional staff to cover classrooms.
- Some families have transportation issues - this has affected children's attendance.
- IEP's - there are 24 Head Start children with an IEP and 9 Head Start children with suspected disabilities.
- There are children in the program with challenging behaviors and 10 children with behavior plans.

Action Steps Taken:

- August in-service training topics were tailored to staff requests and program requirements to continue supporting staff growth and development.
- Teaching staff are asked to complete the inter-rater reliability training in Teaching Strategies GOLD so their checkpoints are completed accurately.
- COVID-19 protocols and other health and safety precautions continue to be implemented across sites to prevent illness and/or limit the spread of illness as much as possible.
- A new staff orientation/onboarding process was put in place to provide new employees with trainings and information that will help support them in becoming successful within our organization.
- Coaching opportunities and classroom observations were offered to teachers who have requested additional support.
- After each checkpoint period, teachers completed Data-informed Support Plan reports, reflecting on their individual classroom data and to plan for next steps. Teaching teams met with an education specialist and a manager to discuss the data and the plan for continued growth.
- The program actively sought to hire staff and fill open positions.
- An Infant/Toddler Specialist, Specialists, and Social Skills and Prevention Coaches were available to help support teachers, families, and children in the program.
- ECERS-3 and CLASS evaluations are completed on the preschool classrooms. Specific feedback is given to each classroom team, with suggestions for improvement.

Homelessness & Foster Care

Children experiencing homelessness or children placed in foster care are categorically eligible for enrollment into the Early Head Start or Head Start program.

Child abuse and neglect was an area of great concern in Champaign County. Children in foster care receive priority enrollment into the program because they are at an increased risk for negative outcomes. The RPC Early Childhood Education program provides consistency of care to those children experiencing these hardships and challenges.



42

preschoolers
experienced
homelessness in
Champaign County
during the 2022-2023
school year

6%

increase in the number
of DCFS reported hotline
calls from 2022 to 2023

462

Champaign County
children placed into
foster care as of
October 31, 2023

2%

homeless rate among
public school students
during 2021-2022

45

homeless **families**
served by RPC
during the 2022-
2023 school year

46

homeless **children**
served by RPC
during the 2022-
2023 school year

16

children in foster
care served by
RPC Early
Childhood
Education
Program in
2022-2023



Early Intervention Services

Child and Family Connections (CFC) is funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and is the single point of entry into the early intervention system in Champaign County. Early intervention includes Head Start/Early Head Start for families who have a child under the age of three with a disability. Referrals are made to CFC through screenings done in medical settings, the Developmental Services Center (DSC), and Carle Therapy Services. Children needing early intervention services received them through Carle Therapy Services, DSC, or individual therapists. Currently there are 1,398 children that have been referred for services through CFC. Along with Champaign County, this number includes children in Livingston, McClean, Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion counties as well.

For children aged 3- kindergarten entry with a diagnosed disability, early childhood education services to address academic risk is offered at only **7 out of the 54** public school districts plus Head Start, within Champaign County.

1,191

children were enrolled in early childhood programs in Champaign County during the 2022-2023 school year

30%

of children enrolled in early childhood programs in Champaign County had an IEP during the 2022-2023 school year

175

kids aged 3-kindergarten entry in Champaign County were on waiting lists to receive early childhood education services with the mentioned districts and Head Start during the 2022-2023 school year.

IEP QUALIFICATION

CATEGORY/IMPAIRMENT	CHAMPAIGN	MAHOMET	RANTOUL	SPECTRUM	URBANA	HEAD START
AUTISM	30	1	8	5	10	9
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS	14	6	18	9	37	14
HEALTH & "OTHER HEALTH"	1	1	0	0	3	1
HEARING IMPAIRED	1	0	0	0	0	0
MENTAL IMPAIRMENT	0	0	1	0	0	0
ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT	0	3	0	0	0	0
SPEECH/LANGUAGE	30	26	32	44	31	18
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	0	0	0	0	1	0
MULTIPLE DISABILITIES/TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY	2	1	2	2	0	0
FEE BASED	0	11	0	0	0	0

*The Spectrum Program is offered within 3 districts in the county.

Area School District Information

The largest towns in Champaign County were served by the following school districts:

	Champaign	Mahomet	Rantoul City	Rantoul Township	Urbana
Percent Low Income Students	53.1%	22.5%	91.7%	74.2%	74%
Student Mobility Rate	12.2%	4.4%	15.9%	18.2%	15.3%
Attendance Rate	88.5%	93%	91.4%	86.5%	86%
Chronic Truancy Rate	28.1%	4.0%	24.8%	39.6%	27%
Drop-Out Rate	5.2%	3.7%	N/A	4.8%	3.8%

2022-2023 State of Illinois School Report Card Overview



**Teacher
Retention Rate**

90.2%



**Student
Mobility Rate**

7.4%



**Graduation
Rate**

87.6%



**Chronic
Truancy Rate**

25.1%



**Drop-out
rate**

2.9%

Source: *Illinois Schools State Snapshot*. (n.d.). Illinois Report Card.

<https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/Default.aspx>

Data retrieved from this source comes from the Illinois State Board of Education

Community Health Care

There are several healthcare organizations that serve the population of Champaign County.

Carle Health features Carle Foundation Hospital with 453 licensed beds, and a level 1 trauma center, Carle Physician Group hosts several clinic locations, and over 300 physicians in 50 specialties.

OSF Healthcare took ownership of Presence Health Care in February of 2018 bringing another major healthcare network to the area. OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center in Urbana contains 206 licensed beds. OSF Medical Group has several locations including 13 specialties.

Christie Clinic features 179 providers in 34 specialty areas, and 27 different locations, 9 of which are in Champaign County.

Promise Healthcare, formerly known as Frances Nelson Healthcare, is one of 2 clinics that aim to provide no or low-cost healthcare to the underserved population in Champaign County. Promise Healthcare features 10 general care providers.

The **Champaign County Christian Health Center** is a volunteer ran, faith based free clinic that provides services every 2nd and 4th Tuesday & Wednesday from 5:30-8:30 p.m. There are 12 area providers that volunteer their time and expertise. According to the CCCHC Annual Report, 504 persons were treated by CCCHC in 2021.



Identified Pediatric Primary Care Providers:

15



1



10



1



It should be noted that the healthcare facilities mentioned, have other providers in various areas, including specialties, and general family practice that also treat children. The numbers above solely reflect designated **PEDIATRIC PRIMARY CARE** providers.

Community Health Care Needs

One of the significant needs among low-income county residents was access to affordable health care. According to the Kids Count Data Center, **21,690** children aged 0-18 were enrolled in medical assistance programs.

The All Kids hotline reported there are 2,529 providers listed in Champaign County that accept Medicaid. This number is currently being updated and will likely reflect only 60-70% of the 2,529 still accepting Medicaid at the start of 2023.

The All Kids hotline stated that while some providers do accept Medicaid, they only have a certain number of allotted Medicaid slots on their patient panel. Most of the time, a provider's Medicaid panel is full, and many patients are placed on waiting lists to seek treatment for their healthcare needs.

A severe shortage of dental, primary care, and mental health providers that accept Medicaid has been identified within the community.



55%

of children aged 0-18 in Champaign County are enrolled in medical assistance programs

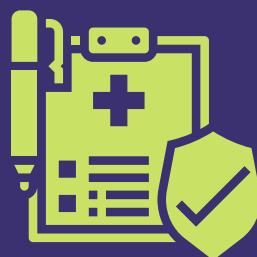


Source: Children enrolled in medical assistance programs by county | KIDS COUNT Data Center. (n.d.). <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6079-children-enrolled-in-medical-assistance-programs-by-county?loc=15>

According to IECAM

3%

of children



According to County Health Rankings

7%

of adults

ARE WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

Mental Health

The need for comprehensive and accessible mental health care was identified as a high priority for the Champaign County community last year.

Stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic was listed as the main cause of the increase in need for mental health services. In response, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services amended state regulations to allow reimbursement of medically necessary and clinically appropriate telehealth services.

Long waitlists for mental health services were prevalent regardless of health insurance coverage. Families calling for counseling/therapy services are often placed on waitlists with no guarantee as to when services will become available.

In order to address the mental health needs of families and children within our program, the RPC Early Childhood Education program secured funding from the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Boards. The initial grant from 2005 was to provide child-find, child counseling, trauma informed trainings to staff, and screening for children exhibiting challenging behaviors. In 2018, the RPC ECEP received an additional grant to fund Social Skills and Prevention Coaches for additional support for children with challenging behaviors, or children that demonstrate a deficit in social skills such as self-regulation, problem solving, friendship, and emotional literacy.

Over the 2022-2023 school year, the social emotional services team provided **3,235** service contracts, including face to face services to children on site, mentoring and coaching for teaching staff, reflective consultation to management staff, and regular consultation to teachers and families about social skills and challenging behaviors.

436

CHILDREN RECEIVED
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SERVICES BY
RPC Early Childhood MENTAL
HEALTH CONSULTANT and
COACHES IN THE 2022-2023
SCHOOL YEAR



Ratio of the Champaign County Population to Mental Health Providers

340:1

Source: *Health Outcomes- Clinical Rankings*. (n.d.). County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/illinois/champaign?year=2022>

4

OUT OF 54 MENTAL
HEALTH FACILITIES
IN CHAMPAIGN
COUNTY ACCEPT
MEDICAID

Source: *Resource Guides | Champaign County Health Care Consumers*. (2022).
<https://www.healthcareconsumers.org/resource-guides-2/>

ONLY 2

DEVELOPMENTAL
PEDIATRICIANS IN
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
WHO CAN DIAGNOSE
AND TREAT CHILDREN
WITH MENTAL HEALTH/
DEVELOPMENTAL
CONCERNS

Dental Care Access

A significant lack of affordable dental services is available within Champaign County. The limited number of local dentists that accept Medicaid and All Kids is a large barrier for low-income families. In addition, a majority of large-scale employers in the community utilize Delta Dental as the employer offered dental insurance. Many dental offices are not considered in-network for Delta Dental and require up-front payment in full for dental services. This is a significant hardship placed upon some families while they wait for reimbursement by Delta Dental.

The State of Illinois offers low reimbursement rates and slow turnaround for payment which has increased hesitancy of dentists to accept individuals on Medicaid. Additionally, children who require sedation for more involved dental treatment have to travel a minimum of 75 miles to receive sedation services covered by the medical card.

C-UPHD's Mobile Dental Program provides dental exams, cleanings, fluoride and dental sealants to Champaign Urbana Public Schools grades Pre-K-12. The school clinics have been in operation for over 12 years and maintain a 92% retention rate after one year for sealants placed. In 2022, 798 children received dental care in this program.

**RATIO OF THE
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
POPULATION TO
AVAILABLE DENTISTS**

1560:1

Source: Health Outcomes- Clinical Rankings. (n.d.). County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/illinois/champaign?year=2022>



**OVER 20,000 CHILDREN
IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
HAVE MEDICAID**

2

**DENTAL OFFICES
OUTSIDE OF
SMILEHEALTHY ACCEPT
MEDICAID**

Source: Resource Guides | Champaign County Health Care Consumers. (2022).
<https://www.healthcareconsumers.org/resource-guides-2/>



RPC Early Childhood Education Program built a strong collaboration with the SmileHealthy mobile clinics to provide free dental services to enrolled children and their immediate families. Outside of the RPC Early Childhood Education program, SmileHealthy is open to the public, however you must be a registered patient with Frances Nelson Health Center.

One dentist and at least one hygienist perform the dental care at the mobile clinics. Unfortunately, due the COVID-19 pandemic, services remained on hold for the 2022-2023 school year.

Community Resources for Pregnancy

In 2022, there were **2,099** reported births in Champaign County. There are a variety of resources within the community that provide services such as pregnancy testing, pregnancy planning, family planning and referrals for prenatal care for expectant mothers.

C-UPHD offers support to pregnant women through WIC, and it's Maternal/Child Health Management programs. They also offer free of charge basic health services such as immunization, and pre-natal checks.

Carle Healthy Beginnings provides home visiting care/support from registered nurses. They also provide mobile clinic services, education, employment opportunities, and assistance with healthy food access.

YoungLives has been around since 2009 and is an expanding program for teen mothers in our area. YoungLives is a faith-based mentorship program that provides life skill instruction, regular meetings, and outings/events to provide a break from daily struggles. They also provide assistance to resources for teen moms like diapers, clothes, baby supplies etc.

RPC Early Childhood utilizes the *Partners for a Healthy Baby* curriculum and screening tools to collaborate with the pregnant women and expectant family members. The Family Advocates help families with childcare placement, and referrals for to WIC, TANF, C-UPHD and DHS.

24

Teen births (mothers under 18 years old) reported in Champaign County in 2022

Source: Birth Statistics by County of Residence. (2022).
<https://dph.illinois.gov/data-statistics/vital-statistics/birth-statistics.html>



10

expectant women were served by RPC Early Childhood in the 2022-2023 school year

Champaign County has 9 agencies focused on income-eligible pregnant women/families:

**Planned Parenthood
CUPHD- G.R.E.A.T. Start
Crisis Nursery**

**DSC- Parent Wonders
Carle Healthy Beginnings
CU School District's - CU Early
Baby Fold- Healthy Start**

**Children's Home & Aid- Healthy Families
RPC Early Childhood - Expectant Mothers**



Nutrition Access

According to Feeding America, in 2020 there were 4,850 food insecure children in Champaign County.

3,162

WIC participants
in Champaign
County in 2022

In addition to providing coupons for the traditional items such as formula, baby food, cereal, milk etc., the C-UPHD WIC recipients also receive additional vouchers for use from May-August at Urbana's Market at the Square Farmer's Market. This allows recipients the opportunity to purchase farm fresh, homegrown fruits and vegetables.

Champaign County is home of the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. The EI Foodbank covers over 14,500 square miles and provides food to 18 eastern Illinois counties. An estimated 117,020 benefit from the food provided by the EI Foodbank. In the area served by them, 1 in 9 people, including 1 in 8 children face hunger daily.

Scan here to see the
food pantry
times/locations in
Champaign County



9.6%

of Champaign
County children
faced food
insecurities in
2021

4,332

households with
children in
Champaign
County that
received SNAP
benefits in 2022

While Champaign County food pantries offer 37 regular weekly distributions, 28 of those distributions occur during regular business hours. This limits access for working income-eligible families.

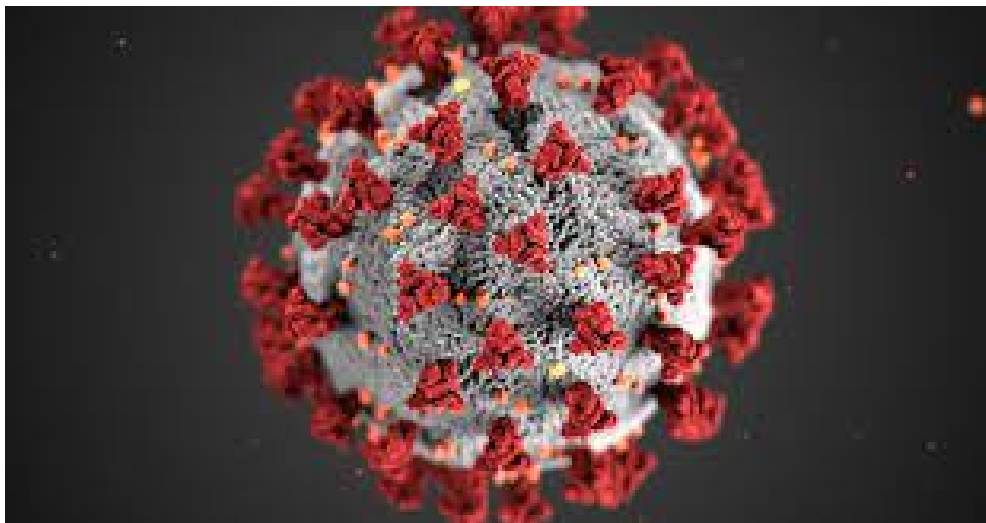
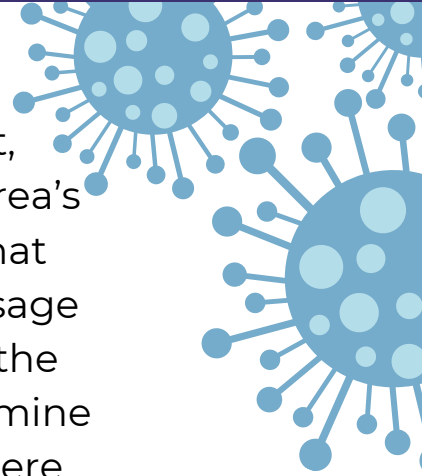
RPC Early Childhood Centers have set up "food pantry" shelves, with limited shelf stable goods to aid our working families unable to attend regular weekly food pantries in the area due to their work schedules.

22

**Food pantries
are available
within
Champaign
County**

COVID-19 Community Impact

Based on guidance from DCFS and the Office of Head Start, Champaign County Head Start was allowed to follow the area's COVID-19 rates of infection percentages and decide with that information whether it was appropriate to remove mask usage in the program. It was decided that regular monitoring of the COVID-19 percentage rates in the community would determine if masks would be required on a month-to-month basis. There were minimal positive COVID-19 cases during the 2022-2023 program year.



Recruitment, Outreach & Community Events



The RPC Early Childhood Education Program recruited regularly throughout the program year to maintain a healthy waitlist. During the 2022-2023 school year, RPC provided recruitment materials to all households with children aged birth to 5-years-old, pregnant women, and families who receive state subsidies (Medicaid, childcare resource subsidy, SNAP and TANF). The RPC recruitment efforts were provided through various outreach and community events, social media advertisements, television and radio ads, and online applications, and distributing recruitment material, emails, and referrals.

During the spring and summer months of 2022 the program was able to resume in person recruitment and engagement events. The Family Support Team also resumed door to door canvassing in income eligible service areas identified in the Family Poverty Census Tracts and Block Group Maps in Champaign County.

The Family and Community Engagement Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment. She coordinates the committee that identifies other service agencies to collaborate and distribute promotional materials. Members of the family support team are assigned to various agencies to establish and maintain relationships to encourage referrals and community partnerships.



In person recruitment events held in the 2022-2023 school year:

17

Some of the recruitment activities the RPC Early Childhood Education Program attended in 2022-2023:

- Urbana Park District's Read Across America
- Touch A Truck
- Urbana Park District's Neighborhood Concert Nights
- Juneteenth Celebration
- C-UPHD Back to School Family Fun Day
- Jettie Rhodes "Get to know your Neighbor"
- C-U Promise Healthcare Fair
- Rantoul Farmer's Market
- Salvation Army Job Fair & Career Expo
- University of Illinois School of Social Work Internship Event
- DisAbility Expo & Resource Fair
- C-U Days
- Unit 4 "Back to School Event"
- Scott Bennett's Legal Aid and Resource Fair

Community Wide Resources & Collaborations

The RPC Early Childhood Education Program continues to build, connect, and collaborate with many community agencies within Champaign County to better serve our children and families in the areas of transportation, healthcare, safety, employment, food, clothing, financial planning, childcare and parental education. A few examples of our community partners include:



Thank you to ALL of our Community Partners, including those not listed here, for being an instrumental part to the success of our program.

Current Community Needs

The Champaign County Community Health Plan 2021-2023 reported surveying 634 diverse community residents to get an in-depth picture of the perceived community strengths and weaknesses. The survey data revealed the following:

Top Health Concerns identified within Champaign County:

- Mental Health
- Child Abuse
- Gun Violence
- Infectious Disease

Most INADEQUATE resources identified within Champaign County:

- Mental Health Services
- Affordable Childcare
- Drug Treatment Services

12%

Of respondents indicated that there were times when they ran out of food before they had the means to buy more.

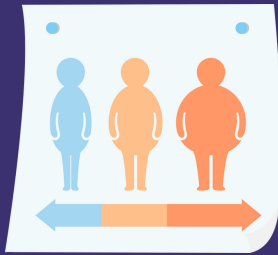
Scan here to read the full Community Health Plan 2021-2023:



Community Concerns

In addition to mental health, child abuse, gun violence, and infectious disease being amongst the top concerns in the community, the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board and Champaign County Mental Health Board's Community Assessment 2022 survey respondents rated illegal drug abuse as the third most prevalent unhealthy behavior in Champaign County, followed by alcohol abuse. The survey also identified the following community health concerns:

Healthy Behaviors & Wellness



61%

of Champaign County residents are diagnosed with obesity or being overweight.

According to the Obesity Prevention Initiative from the Illinois General Assembly, **20%** of Illinois children are obese.

Obesity in children has been linked to numerous chronic diseases such as: Type II diabetes, hypertension, high blood pressure, and asthma.

Behavioral Health

Mental health and substance abuse remain a great concern within the community. When survey respondents were asked to indicate specific mental health issues in the last 30 days before taking the survey, the following data was found:

64%
indicated they
felt depressed

55%
indicated they
felt anxious or
stressed



Community Violence



**ANGER-
VIOLENCE
&
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**

Were ranked as the two most important unhealthy behaviors in the community. Champaign County has seen an increase in criminal homicides from **11 to 16** from 2020-2021. An increase in aggravated assault/battery from **621 to 817** from 2018-2020.

The Champaign County Coalition continues to provide impactful forums and events to build positive relationships and increase community engagement to address the violence in the community.

Parent Satisfaction Survey Outcomes

Survey data was collected to incorporate the voices of our program families into the community assessment process. Surveys were administered online through Google Forms in both English and Spanish.

103

RESPONSES

Does your family have
safe/stable housing?

99% Yes

1% No

What are the top 3 needs
of your family?

71.8% Housing

18.4% Employment

16.5% Transportation

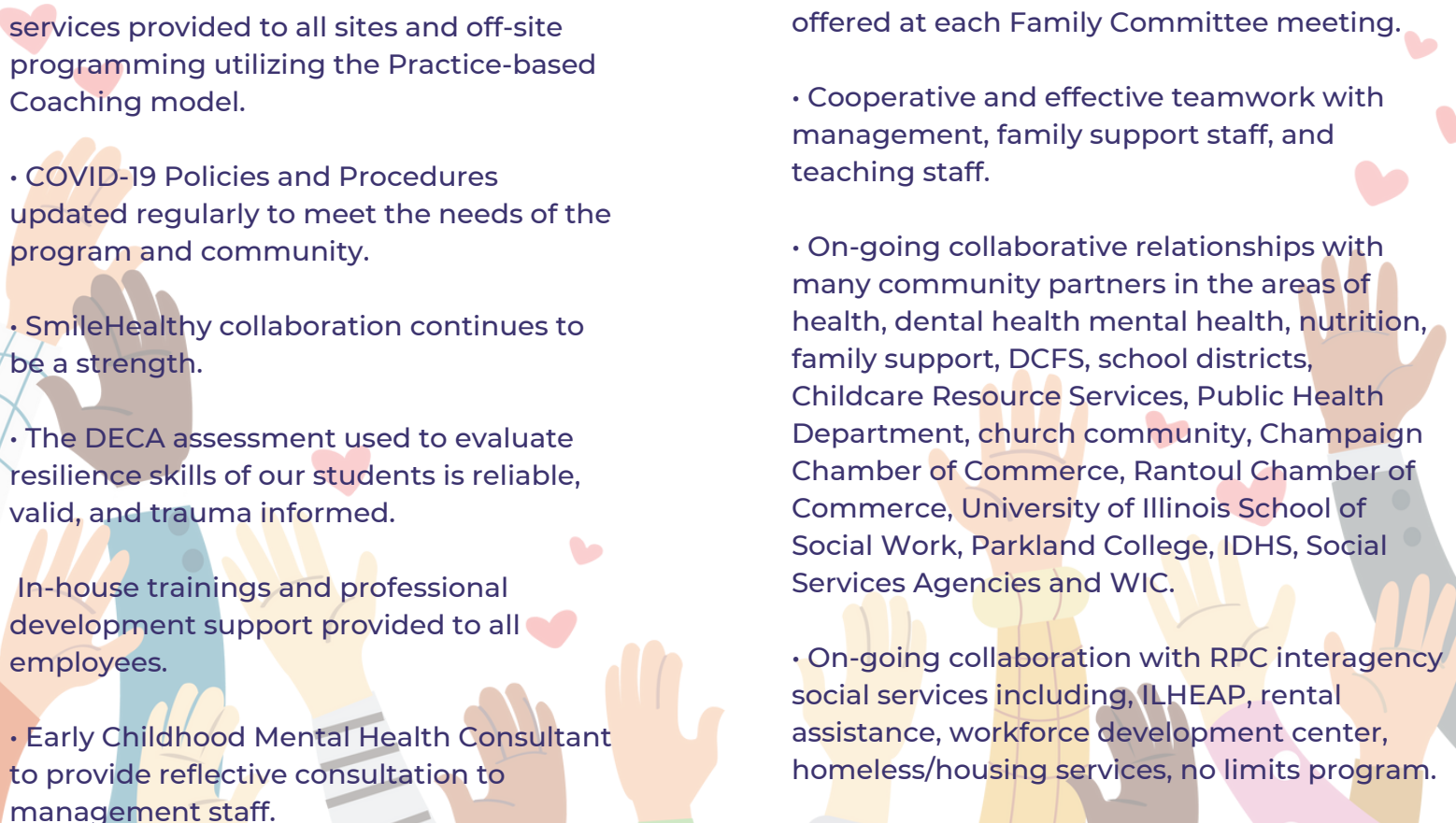
15.5% Adequate Food

13.6% Financial Counseling

6.8% Job Training

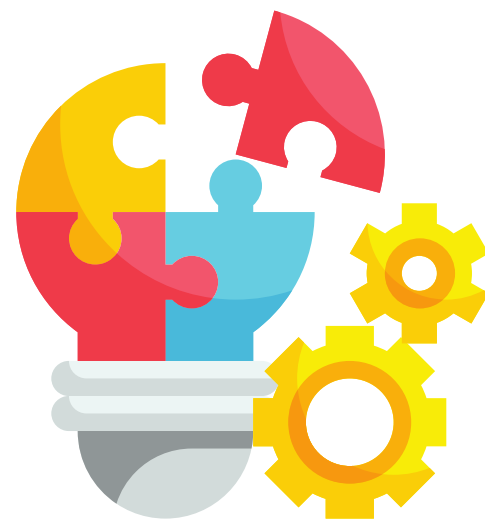
5.8% Adult Education

Program Strengths

- Great connections with families.
 - Flexible home visits and parent teacher conferences over Zoom offered to ensure families and employees felt safe with COVID positivity rates still fluctuating.
 - FCC partnerships provide care in smaller settings in a home environment.
 - High family involvement in off-site programming.
 - Families participate in the WILL Book Mentor program.
 - FCC mentors available to support the providers.
 - Mixed age group classes that allow for diverse learning environments.
 - Social Skills and Prevention Coach services provided to all sites and off-site programming utilizing the Practice-based Coaching model.
 - COVID-19 Policies and Procedures updated regularly to meet the needs of the program and community.
 - SmileHealthy collaboration continues to be a strength.
 - The DECA assessment used to evaluate resilience skills of our students is reliable, valid, and trauma informed.
 - In-house trainings and professional development support provided to all employees.
 - Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant to provide reflective consultation to management staff.
 - Ready for Kindergarten curriculum for Home Visitors and FCC supporting adults in the home to guide their child's learning.
 - Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment is reliable, shows child growth over time, and offers activity ideas to help children continue to build on their current skill set.
 - Child outcomes analyzed quarterly by teaching staff and managers, including a Data Informed Support Plan completed by teachers and reviewed with program specialists and managers.
 - Classrooms scheduled to have three teachers assigned to most classrooms.
 - Employees responsive and communicative to meet child and family needs.
 - Conscious Discipline parent curriculum offered at each Family Committee meeting.
 - Cooperative and effective teamwork with management, family support staff, and teaching staff.
 - On-going collaborative relationships with many community partners in the areas of health, dental health mental health, nutrition, family support, DCFS, school districts, Childcare Resource Services, Public Health Department, church community, Champaign Chamber of Commerce, Rantoul Chamber of Commerce, University of Illinois School of Social Work, Parkland College, IDHS, Social Services Agencies and WIC.
 - On-going collaboration with RPC interagency social services including, ILHEAP, rental assistance, workforce development center, homeless/housing services, no limits program.
- 
- An illustration at the bottom of the page shows several hands of different skin tones reaching upwards. Small pink hearts are scattered around the hands, adding a positive and supportive feel to the design.

Program Challenges

- Non-competitive market payrates make it hard to fill open positions.
- Increase in community- crime rates.
- Difficulty getting program requirements done in 37.5-hour work week with staffing shortages.
- Families of RPC Early Childhood Education Program identified the top three needs as: housing, financial counseling, and employment.
- Bus driver vacancies have been challenging to fill; Transportation is a community need, particularly for rural areas.
- Limited dental providers in the area who accept Medicaid.
- Pandemic, economic, and staff shortage related stressors affect the wellbeing of all our staff which can impact their capacity to hold space for each other and for the children and families we serve.
- Staffing shortages have caused wide-spread challenges across the program throughout services.
- Recruiting FCC providers is challenging due to the stringent requirements of Head Start.
- Onboarding process is not comprehensive and doesn't fully prepare employees to enter the classroom.
- COVID-19 caused a lack of consistency of care and child/family progress due to absenteeism problems.
- Full enrollment was not possible due to COVID-19 issues.
- Increased social/emotional challenges and behaviors of children in the classrooms.
- Increase of children going into foster care due to substance abuse and domestic violence.
- Increases gun violence in community neighborhoods of Head Start families.
- Lack of diversity in teaching staff in the classrooms.



Program Recommendations

- Continue to offer all options currently implemented: 6-hour and 9-hour classrooms as well as home-based, combination and collaboration options.
- Continue analysis of enrollment; continue exploring additional innovative recruitment strategies, including making continued connection with homeless shelters, foster care licensing agencies, high schools, and other programs that may no longer be accepting families who are using the childcare assistance program.
- Continue looking for an enrollment center to be centrally located in Champaign-Urbana.
- Continue to establish community partners with new organizations and continue to retain relationships with existing community partners to help meet the needs of families dealing with mental health, employment, affordable housing issues, community violence, and food insecurity.
- Continue analysis of state funding and enrollment in collaborations funded by Illinois State Board of Education.
- Ensure staff training and education opportunities keep them up to date in providing quality services to families with various/multiple at-risk factors and with English as a second language.
- Continue to analyze specific strategies to engage families and support children who have English as a second language.
- Continue to recruit and enhance Parent Policy Council Membership.
- Establish and implement the Male / Father Engagement Initiative specific to employment and educational opportunities.
- Provide additional Early Head Start services to meet the need for more Early Head Start services in the community.
- Assess transportation resources through MTD and C-Carts to assist families in need of transportation.
- Provide more trauma-informed training to staff to better support families experiencing gun violence and domestic violence in their neighborhoods.



Conclusions

- There are 15.8% of children aged 5 and under, living in poverty, and there are 5.9% of children under the age of 5-years old living in families with incomes below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level in Champaign County.
- Unemployment rates for the county were at projected at 3.5% for September 2022, whereas Illinois unemployment rates are 4.5%.
- The enrollment of Spanish speaking families in the program held steady this past year. The program identified a growth in the number of French speaking families over the past year.
- Families continued to have a need for medical insurance in Champaign County.
- There was an increase in Mental Health need in the community.
- Head Start/Early Head Start parent survey results expressed the top 3 needs of the families in the areas of housing, employment, and financial counseling.
- With the number of families still struggling with being in poverty, and record high inflation rates, there continued to be significant food insecurity.
- There is a significant need for transportation services in the rural area of Champaign County.
- There was a significant increase in community violence in Champaign County within the last year including gun violence, and domestic violence.
- There is a high need for more early intervention services for children birth-three years due to staffing shortages of service providers.
- There was a decrease in family engagement due to the pandemic.





It is with sincere gratitude that we thank all those who participated in this seven-month community assessment project. The exemplary dedication of the individuals combined with their passion for improving lives within our community, and Head Start program is remarkable.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to build a brighter future for all Champaign County Early Childhood Education Program's children and families.



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION

Early Childhood Education Program

1776 E. Washington St., Urbana, IL 61802

217-383-3313

www.ccrpc.org 

info@ccrpc.org 

[@rpcearlychildhoodeducation](#) 

[@champaign-county-head-start](#) 