



Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc.

2023

Community Needs Assessment

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Executive Summary

Southern New Hampshire Services (SNHS) conducts a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years to identify the strengths and needs within the community, analyze the findings, and determine our approach in addressing the resulting conclusions. This is all done through the lens of our mission, strengths, existing community resources, mutual leveraging of existing partnerships, and developing potential new partnerships.

It is required by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) that Community Action Partnerships (CAPs) conduct a CNA every three years to ensure that we have our “finger on the pulse” of the local community needs and are identifying the local causes and conditions of poverty. The results of the assessment help to create appropriate programming that the local communities need in order to flourish. The needs of the community which are identified during the CNA process may either be addressed directly within the agency or in partnership with community agencies or other entities that may be better suited to meet the need. The findings from the assessment inform the agency’s strategic plan.

The CNA process ensures *maximum feasible participation* of the low-income residents of the communities we serve, which is a central tenet of Community Action. Low income residents of Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties have had a central voice in identifying the strengths and needs of the community that are outlined in this CNA. In addition to low-income residents, we engaged SNHS staff, community partners, and representatives of the public sector, private sector, health care, education, and faith-based organizations in our gathering of quantitative and qualitative data.

It is worth noting that this Community Needs Assessment encompasses the pandemic years, beginning in 2020 through current. For that reason, the data contained within is unique from past assessments. The services, challenges, and experiences in the agency and the trends in community at large can, at least in part, be affected, directly and indirectly, by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Strengths

The research and analysis gathered through this CNA process has identified the following strengths of the communities within Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties.

Community response to the pandemic. Along with community agencies in the two counties, SNHS rapidly responded to the changing world during COVID-19. SNHS did not close its services for one day during the pandemic. Conversely, the agency expanded programming significantly during that time. Similar to many community partners in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties, SNHS made as many

accommodations as necessary to allow clients to continue to receive services seamlessly, safely, and remotely.

New and strengthened partnerships in the community. SNHS established a “wrap team” to address the issue of homelessness. This was done by assembling a team of community partners, specifically in the Manchester area where the issue was the most pervasive, who had various areas of expertise to meet the extensive needs facing the homeless Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) participants living in hotels.

Following the program’s completion, SNHS retained ERA staff who participated on the wrap team project to become the agency’s first Opportunity Navigators. These staff members will use the Whole Family Approach to service delivery to work with families with the ultimate goal of disrupting generational poverty. Families who have demonstrated that they are willing to commit to working with Opportunity Navigators to identify goals and follow through toward their achievement will be assisted on a path to self-sufficiency. Opportunity Navigators will work very closely with partners in the agency and the community in their work with families.

Another example of community partners coming together to improve the community is the Southern NH Nurse Leaders and Nurse Educators Pilot Project. The shortage of workforce in the nursing field was exacerbated during the pandemic. This project came about through our workforce work and the Chancellor of the Community College System introducing us to Abigail Selden from the Selden/Haring-Smith Foundation. This foundation shared a research paper which was a catalyst for us in partnership with St. Joseph Hospital to embark on a community-level project by convening, a multi-disciplinary work group to identify the root causes and implications of this issue. The group has met over a dozen times and has identified strategies for recruitment, retention, and enhanced career paths in nursing. Strategies include a focus on education, workforce, and policy.

The three NH Continuums of Care represent another community strength related to partnership. These groups consist of an array of community organizations and municipal entities which coordinate housing and services for homeless families and individuals. Members meet regularly and together they establish policies and practices to address the needs of homeless and at-risk households in their respective areas. In this way duplication of effort is greatly reduced, collaboration is enhanced, and services are delivered as effectively as possible. These Continuums provide a forum for discussion and coordination among non-profits and local and state government as they work to meet the needs of homeless and at-risk individuals and families.

Maximum Feasible Participation of Low-Income Residents. As a Community Action Partnership, one of SNHS’ goals is for *maximum feasible participation* of community members of low-income. SNHS has taken this very seriously and has actively engaged

SNHS program clients to formally participate on boards and committees that are making policy decisions related to programing.

SNHS included low-income clients in the design of the Whole Family Approach. The agency recognizes that low-income individuals' voice is invaluable in designing programming that can effectively provide services. We co-chair the State of NH's Whole Family Chapter and have included parents we serve as members.

This Chapter played a critical role in bringing the Cliff-Effect to the forefront of policy makers and was key in the policy that NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) drafted for NH policy makers to make real change recognizing the role they could play in positively impacting those struggling with the potential loss of benefits, due to their efforts to improve their financial stability. We currently host the State Cliff Calculator on our website- a critical tool for the use of staff across the state to utilize when working with clients to show them the positive changes in state benefits, and the opportunities they may have to reach their goals without fear of loss of income.

Additionally, the agency is spearheading and funding the Parent Leadership and Training Institute (PLTI) which is being administered in cooperation with the Manchester Community College, the NH Charitable Foundation and the National Parent Leadership Training Institute. PLTI will enroll parents in a 20-week course to develop the skills to become strong advocates for themselves, their families, and in their community. The course focuses on civics, public policy, and social change.

The National Parent Leadership Training Institute was introduced to us through the New England Chapter of Whole Family which we also serve on.

Community Needs

The research gathered through this assessment process has pointed to the following needs relating to the causes and conditions of poverty in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties, which certainly are familiar needs:

Affordable Housing. The shortage of affordable rental units in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties has been a persistent problem for years that is only getting worse as time goes on. Vacancy rates are at an all-time low and approaching 0%. In order to afford the median rent of \$1944 for a two-bedroom apartment in the area, a family would need to earn \$78,000 annually. As a result, many individuals and families are having to double or triple-up in apartments or become homeless. The end of ERA program funding has had an enormous impact on many residents' ability to keep up with rent. A significant number of SNHS client survey respondents mentioned this as a major impact on their ability to be financially stable.

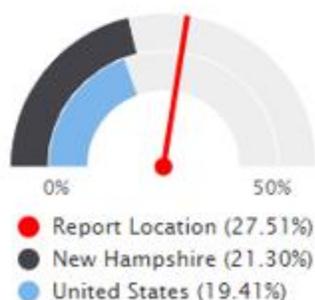
Energy/Fuel Assistance. According to NHPR, NH residents' electric utility costs more than doubled since before the pandemic. The cost of deliverable fuels went up an average of 140% at the height of the pandemic when compared with pre-pandemic rates. With elimination of the additional pandemic funding, individuals and families are struggling to keep up with the increased costs.

Income and Asset Building. 82% of SNHS client survey respondents reported that they "sometimes" or "never" are able to pay their bills on time each month. In order to make ends meet while the cost of food, housing, utilities and other basic needs is rising, individuals and families need to take measures to increase their income. During the pandemic many residents lost their employment. While the unemployment rate has since reached levels lower than prior to the pandemic, there has been a shift in the types of jobs that are hiring and many individuals were forced to change careers as a result. The result is an increased need for employment and training related services.

Financial literacy and budgeting are also areas that will help families meet the increased expenses they are facing each month.

As part of the SNHS client survey, SNHS provided information about education and training opportunities and workforce development programming that are available. Those respondents who identified these needs were given an opportunity to connect with services that can help them become employed or to advance in their career.

Percent Low Income Population with Low Food Access



Access to Food. The rate of low-income residents of Hillsborough and Rockingham County with low access to food is higher than the NH and US average. Particularly in Rockingham County where nearly 40% of low-income residents have low access to food (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*). In addition, the cost of food increased nearly 12% from 2021 to 2022, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index.

Mental Health. The pandemic has exacerbated the already prevalent issue of mental health. In Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties 36% of Medicaid beneficiaries have mental health and substance use conditions in the two counties, which is well over the national rate of 32% (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*). According to NHPR, the average wait time to receive mental health services in NH is 45 days.

Dental care: Dental care is a persistent community need. Until 2023, adult Medicaid recipients lacked dental coverage. Those who do have dental coverage often have to pay more out-of-pocket for necessary procedures than other health related services.

Additionally, many dental practices are already at capacity, and therefore unable to provide services to Medicare recipients (NHPR).

Transportation. According to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, there are 12,088 households with no motor vehicle in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties. This represents 5.2% of households in Hillsborough County and 2.8% of households in Rockingham County. Public transportation in these areas is limited in some communities and nonexistent in others. In addition, interest rates have doubled since they were initially increased in 2022 and car prices remain high (Forbes).

Continued efforts toward coordinated access to services. As noted above, SNHS is progressing with the Whole Family Approach. In addition to the Opportunity Navigator positions, the agency's goal is to develop a universal application/database software that will eliminate the need for families to apply multiple times for various SNHS programs and services. This will also allow for eligibility pre-screening and may result in individuals and families receiving services that they may not otherwise have been aware of.

It is clear that the costs relating to many basic human necessities listed above are continuing to rise, making the ability to holistically provide services and use a multi-pronged approach more important than ever. Families are having to face difficult choices relating to which basic necessity they can afford. This can lead to significantly increased stress levels and a persistent feeling of living in crisis. SNHS is partnering with the Prosperity Agenda to train staff on family-centered coaching, which incorporates the social determinants of health. This will help families navigate all of the challenges they are facing with the support of an Opportunity Navigator and connection to as many services as they are eligible for and could benefit from.

The aftermath of the pandemic has left families facing higher costs and the elimination of COVID-related assistance programming.

About Southern New Hampshire Services

Southern New Hampshire Services (SNHS) is the Community Action Partnership (CAP) serving Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties. SNHS was chartered in the State of New Hampshire in 1964. In the early years, SNHS served the City of Nashua and the twenty-nine towns in Hillsborough County in accordance with the Economic Opportunity Act. In 1969 the organization expanded and became the Community Action Partnership for the City of Manchester as well. In the following decades, SNHS was the CAP serving all of Hillsborough County. On July 1, 2011, Rockingham Community Action merged with SNHS, expanding the service area to include both Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties. SNHS has since provided services to residents in all 65 towns and three cities in its service area.

SNHS is one of approximately 1,000 CAPs nationwide and the largest of the 5 serving NH. Community action came into existence as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty". One of the primary goals of CAPs is to create local communities in which families have access to the opportunities they need to be economically stable. CAP's receive Community Services Block Grant funding (CSBG) this is unique funding in that it allows the flexibility to meet the unique needs of the local communities served.

As a CAP, it is SNHS' mission to extinguish the root causes of poverty within our community at the source rather than only treating the symptoms, stopping the cycle at the start for sustained success. To that end, SNHS provides activities designed to assist participants of low-income in securing and retaining meaningful employment, attaining an adequate education, and making better use of available income; meeting urgent and immediate individual and family needs, including health, nutrition, housing and employment-related assistance; and addressing the problems and barriers which block the achievement of self-sufficiency.

SNHS operates more than 60 programs, contracting with the federal, state and local governments as well as other social service agencies and private entities.

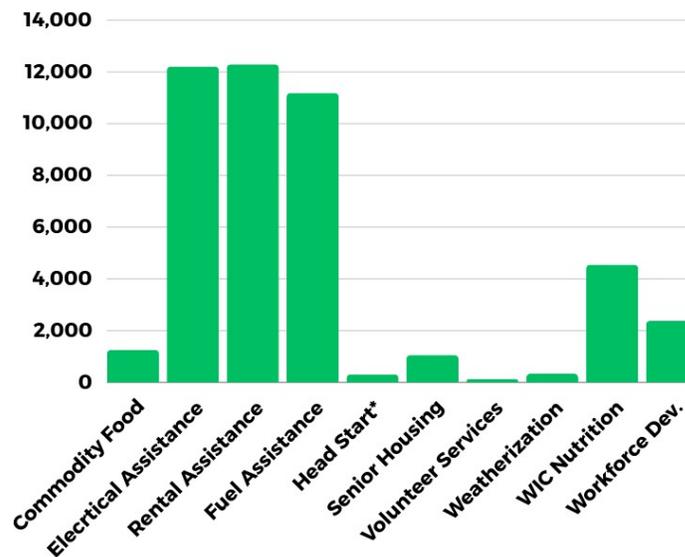
Approximately 51,500 individuals are assisted through these programs and services each year. Some of the programs we offer include:

- Workforce Development
 - Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
 - NH Employment Program (NHEP)
 - Apprenticeship Programming
 - English for New Americans
 - Financial Capabilities
- Child Development
 - Head Start
 - Early Head Start
 - Child Care
 - TEACH NH
 - Child Care Aware
- Food and Nutrition Programs
 - Women Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)
 - Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Energy Programs
 - Fuel Assistance
 - Electric Assistance
 - Weatherization
- Housing Related Programs

- Senior Housing
- Supportive Housing for Homeless Men
- Homelessness Prevention/Intervention programs
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

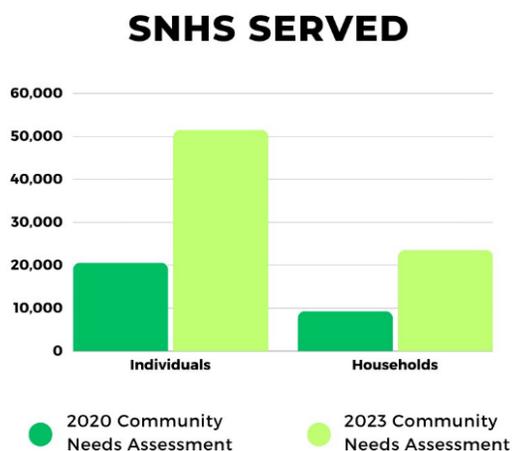
The table below illustrates the number of households served by program over the last year.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE



SNHS administers approximately \$56.2 million in financial resources on an annual basis. Of that amount, approximately 85% of funding comes from federal grants. Private resources, including utility companies, foundations, and other local sources account for approximately 12% of funding on average, and state funds make up the remainder, generally 3% or less. When fully staffed, SNHS employs over 400 employees and operates ten Resource Centers throughout Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties.

SNHS Data Snapshot



The number of individuals and households served increased significantly since the 2020 Community Needs Assessment. This was due, in large part, to the pandemic-related programming and funding. In response to the pandemic, and the related demand in need for services, the agency hired new staff, repurposed existing staff, and developed an increased capacity for remote work to meet evolving needs of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pandemic-related programming and funding provided critical assistance to thousands of households, many of which have never had to ask for help before. Some examples are: The Housing Relief program, which provided rental, utility, and mortgage assistance to households financially impacted by the pandemic. Emergency Rental Assistance which provided assistance with rental costs (arrearages and up to three months prospective), utility costs (arrearages and up to three months prospective), and other household expenses to assist households facing housing instability related to the pandemic. Fuel Assistance Program increased benefits of up to 20% for clients' fuel benefit along with supplemental benefits to all enrolled households. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds, which ensured that the agency's facilities were conducive to health and workplace safety standards and provided emergency assistance to families, among other needs.

The following table illustrates the racial demographics of the agency's service recipients (for those who provided this information in program service applications).

SNHS Client & Community Racial Demographics

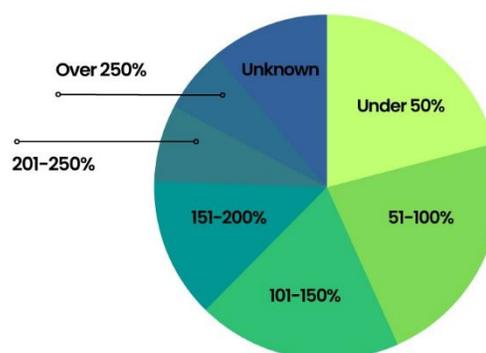
	SNHS Clients #	SNHS Clients %	Hillsborough County	Rockingham County
American Indian or Alaska Native	172	.5%	.12%	.06%
Asian	365	1%	4.2%	2%
Black or African American	2,420	6.4%	2.8%	1%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	208	.6%	.04%	.02%
White	32,881	87%	86%	93%
Other	1051	2.8%	1.3%	1%
Multi-race (two or more of above)	694	1.8%	5%	3%

Over 43% of all households served by SNHS are below the federal poverty limit. For a family of four, the limit was \$27,750 in 2022. The poverty guidelines don't factor in regional fluctuations in the cost of living. The NH Fiscal Policy Institute issued a report in 2022 that found that, when the high cost of living is considered, there are even more families living below the poverty level.

SNHS aims to address this by providing the services individuals and families need while leveraging community resources to fill any gaps in service that might exist. Furthermore, the agency is focusing on innovative ways to improve the community when feasible and aligned with our mission. Some examples include the Southern NH Nurse Leaders and Nurse Educators Pilot Project and the Parent Leadership Training Institute each described earlier in the assessment.

% OF HHS POVERTY GUIDELINE

Household Income



Hillsborough and Rockingham County Data

According to 2021 Census Bureau American Community Survey, Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties account for over half of the state's population (737,113 residents out of 1,377,529 NH residents). From the 2010 census to the 2020 census, the population of Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties grew by 5.9%, which is less than the national population growth during that timeframe which was 7.1%.

Hillsborough County

- 75.5% of the population lives in an urban setting. However, there are 103,354 rural households.
- 46,726 households have children aged 0-17 (28% of all households).
- 66,365 households have members who are 65 years or older.

Rockingham County

- Rockingham County is 70.9% urban with a rural population of 91,143.
- 35,466 households have children aged 0-17 (29% of all households).
- 56,494 households have members who are 65 years or older.

Poverty Data

Both Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties have median incomes that are higher than the NH and US median income levels. Hillsborough County's median income is \$86,930 and in Rockingham County it is \$101,683. When compared with a NH median income of \$83,449 and a US median income of \$69,021, it appears at first glance that these Counties are quite well off. However, there are many individuals and families suffering from the direct and indirect effects of living in poverty (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*).

The chart below illustrates that about a quarter of the households in Hillsborough and Rockingham County earn under \$50,000 per year.

Report Area	Under \$25,000	\$25,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000+
Report Location	10.36%	14.67%	28.22%	32.99%	13.76%
Hillsborough County, NH	10.99%	16.34%	28.88%	31.83%	11.96%
Rockingham County, NH	9.52%	12.45%	27.35%	34.53%	16.16%
New Hampshire	12.47%	16.61%	29.60%	30.30%	11.02%
United States	17.18%	19.60%	29.63%	24.14%	9.46%

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-21. → [Show more details](#)

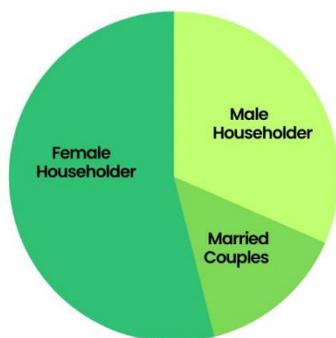
From 2011 to 2021, the poverty rate has decreased in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties, in NH, and nationally. However, NH and the two Counties saw a smaller improvement than did the US. In 2021, the poverty rate in Hillsborough County was

7.3% and in Rockingham County was 4.6% which represents almost 8,000 households. In the two counties combined, the poverty rate among seniors is 5.7% and 8.4% among children under the age of 18 (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*).

Our research concludes that the federal poverty level (FPL) fails to be an accurate threshold of need. The FPL was developed in 1965 by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and the underlying premise of it had remained unchanged in the decades since. The measure is largely obsolete in today's world. It factors in only a household's ability to afford minimum food consumption expenses as a basis. At that time, food was typically 33% of a household's budget. Today, there are factors such as child care, healthcare, transportation and more that have changed with the living standards. Today a typical household's budget for food is only 14% (*Maximizing Personal Potential for National Prosperity*).

A living wage to adequately support a family of four in NH is over \$100,000 per year (*MIT, Living Wage Calculator*). This highlights the enormous gap between the poverty line and what a family really needs to earn to sustain basic living expenses. Over 100,000 residents of Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties are living with incomes below 185% of the FPL, which for a family of four is \$55,5000 per year (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*).

Households In Poverty



As one SNHS client interviewee stated: "The poverty scale needs to reflect actual poverty. Too many services are denied when someone makes 'too much' when it is barely enough to pay for basic needs."

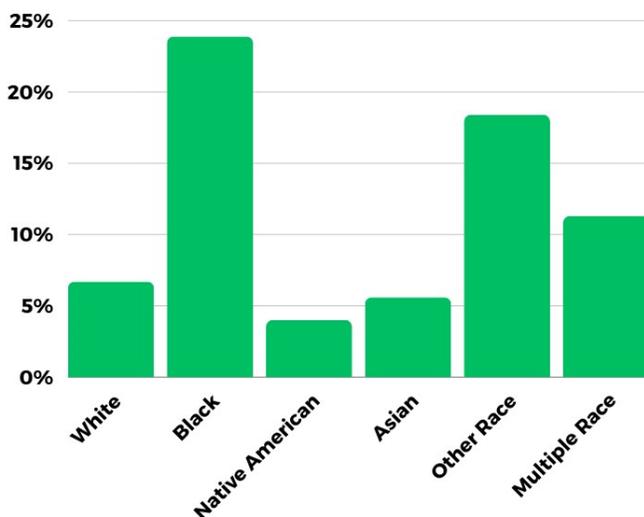
In the two Counties, the percentage of households in poverty that are female-led is 54% and 12,087 children under the age of 18 are living in poverty. In total, 5.2% of males and 7.2% of females

are living in poverty (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*).

According to a recent study by American Progress women are more likely to be in poverty than men in all racial and ethnic groups. The reasons for this include that women are more likely to be paid less than men for equal work with equal qualifications; women are more likely to fulfill unpaid roles as family caregivers; pregnancy can interfere with education and workplace opportunities (*americanprogress.org*).

In the table labeled “Children In Poverty by Race,” the percent of children of each race living in poverty as a percent of the total children is displayed. You will note that Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander is left off the table as there is not sufficient data

CHILDREN IN POVERTY BY RACE



reported for that race to be statistically significant. According to this data, nearly one quarter of black children in Hillsborough and Rockingham County are living in poverty. In the two counties, 22.3% of children who are Hispanic or Latino are living in poverty compared with 6.9% of non-Hispanic or Latino children (US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021). These minority groups’

representation in poverty are significantly disproportionate to their representation in the general population. The table below summarizes poverty rates by race.

Report Area	White	Black or African American	Native American or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Multiple Race
Report Location	5.73%	16.73%	3.34%	7.52%	9.55%	11.40%	8.65%
Hillsborough County, NH	6.45%	20.33%	4.47%	6.90%	0.00%	12.25%	10.93%
Rockingham County, NH	4.84%	2.26%	0.00%	9.19%	35.00%	9.62%	3.49%
New Hampshire	7.07%	16.70%	7.08%	8.71%	8.51%	11.23%	10.07%
United States	10.29%	21.71%	23.40%	10.31%	16.68%	19.06%	14.89%

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-21. → Show more details

Race and Ethnicity in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties

89% of Hillsborough and Rockingham County residents are white, 2% are black, 3% are Asian, 4% are multiple races, and 1% reported as “other race.” There are less than 1%

reported as Native American/ Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*).

41,356 residents of the two counties are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. This accounts for 7.4% of the population in Hillsborough County and 3.3% in Rockingham County. 7.8% of residents in the two counties are foreign-born. The State of NH as a whole is home to 82,895 foreign-born residents and there are a number of different languages spoken in the state (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021*).

Languages Spoken by NH Residents	
English Only	91.2%
Spanish	2.5%
Other Indo-European Languages	3.5%
Asian & Pacific Island Languages	2.9%

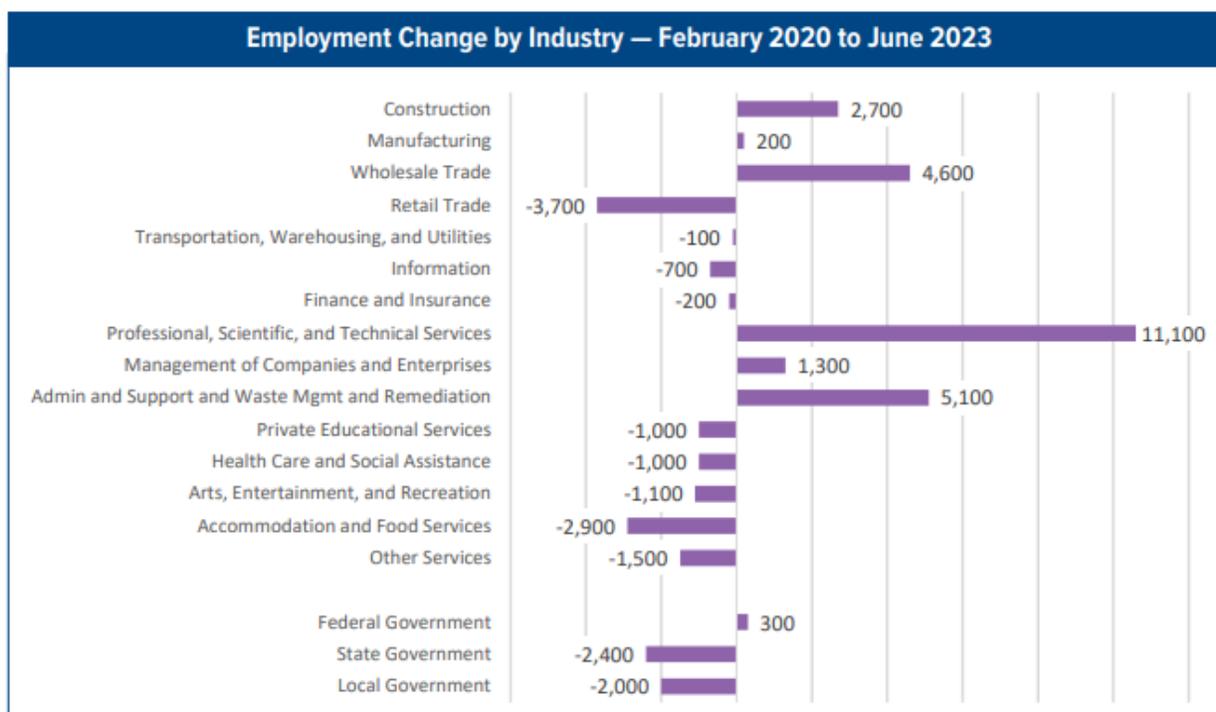
(worldpopulationreview.com/states/new-hampshire-population)

Employment

The impact of the pandemic on the unemployment rate was staggering. At the height of the pandemic, the number of unemployed residents in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties increased more than 250% over pre-pandemic levels. However, as of 2022 the number of unemployed residents was lower than 2019 in the two counties (*NH Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau*).

NH's October 2023 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 2.1% compared with a national rate of 3.9%. In the years since the pandemic, there has been a shift in employment by industry due to a variety of factors. The general shift has been away from brick-and-mortar enterprise, leading to a reduction in retail, accommodation, and food services employment and toward professional, scientific, and technical services positions (*NH Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau*).

According to the graph below, the largest increase in employment has been in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector, which increased by 11,100 positions from June 2020 through June 2023. That was followed by administrative, support, and waste management then wholesale trade which increased by 5,100 and 4,600 positions respectively. Meanwhile, retail trade lost 3,700 positions and accommodation and food service lost 2,900 positions during that timeframe.



Source: Current Employment Statistics program, seasonally adjusted estimates.

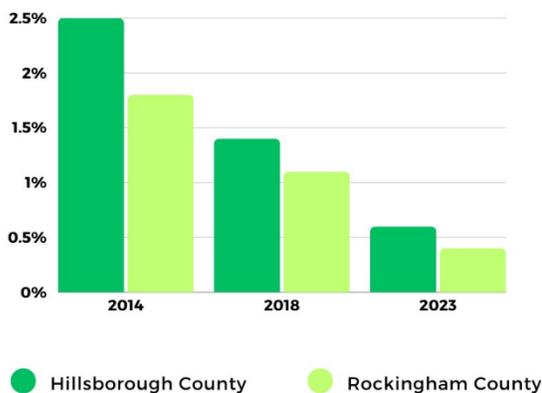
As a result of this shift in employment by industry, many workers who were displaced during the pandemic have been forced to re-enter the workforce in a new sector, often taking an entry-level position despite years of experience in another field.

Housing and Homelessness

In 2021, NH Housing Finance Authority's (NHHFA) Statewide Housing Needs Assessment cited 4,400 homeless individuals in NH. Each January the Department of Housing and Urban Development conducts a point-in-time count of homeless individuals and families. Although the official 2023 results have not been released, preliminary DHHS numbers indicate a more than 50% increase in the number of homeless individuals above the previous year.

The cost of rent has increased significantly in recent years. The median monthly rent for a 2-bedroom unit in Hillsborough County is \$2002 and \$1944 in Rockingham County. To afford this monthly rent, a household would need to earn \$78,000 annually (NH Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA)).

VACANCY RATE



The rising cost of rent is due, in part, to the extremely low vacancy rate, which in the last decade, has been getting lower and lower with time. There is a concurrent increase in the price of houses, which rose by 50% from 2019 to 2022. The statewide median price of a home sold in the first three quarters of 2022 was \$430,000, up from \$285,975 in 2019. As a result, fewer people are leaving apartments to move into homes further exacerbating the low vacancy

rates (NH Housing Finance Authority NHHFA).

Health & Mental Health

According to Mental Health America, NH Ranks 26th in the US for a having higher prevalence of adult mental illness and lower rates of access to care. Conversely, NH Ranks 7th in the US for having lower prevalence of child mental illness and higher rates of access to care. Data in the next chart is reflecting the reporting adult and youth mental health and substance use statistics in NH. Additionally, NHChildData.org reports 12% of parents living below federal poverty level usually or always feel aggravation from parenting.

NH Mental Health Statistics

	Rank	Number	Percentage
Adult Mental Illness Prevalence	41st	260,000	23.74%
Adult Substance Use Disorder	38th	186,000	17%
Adults with Thoughts of Suicide	15th	50,000	4.62%
Youth with at least 1 Major Depressive Episode	26th	16,000	17.02%
Youth Substance Use Disorder	44th	7,000	7.46%

NH has designated Community Mental Health Center Regions. Services provided include 24-hour emergency services, assessment & evaluations, individual & group therapy, case management, community-based rehabilitation services, psychiatric services, and community disaster mental health support. There are specialized programs for adult, children, and families. Mobile Crisis response teams and peer support agencies are also available.

Substance Misuse continues to be a severe health concern in New Hampshire. In 2022 overdose deaths rose by 21.6%, making it the highest total overdose deaths since 2017.

Rockingham County ranked first in NH for positive health outcomes; Hillsborough County ranked fifth in the state. 13% of Rockingham County and 14% of Hillsborough County residents have poor to fair health. This is lower than the national average of 17%. However, the ratio of population to primary care physicians are 1,110 to 1 and 1,300 to 1 for dentist. More than 250,000 NH residents are enrolled in the Medicaid health insurance (*healthinsurance.org*).

Additional Head Start Data

SNHS has administered the Head Start program since 1965. Head Start is a pre-school child development program for children three to five years old designed to help children and their families prepare the skills needed for kindergarten. This program involves the whole family in a multifaceted approach to early education with a focus on school readiness through center attendance and home visits. Classes meet daily Monday through Friday for 4-6 hours depending on location with extended day services available at some sites for families who work or attend school full time.

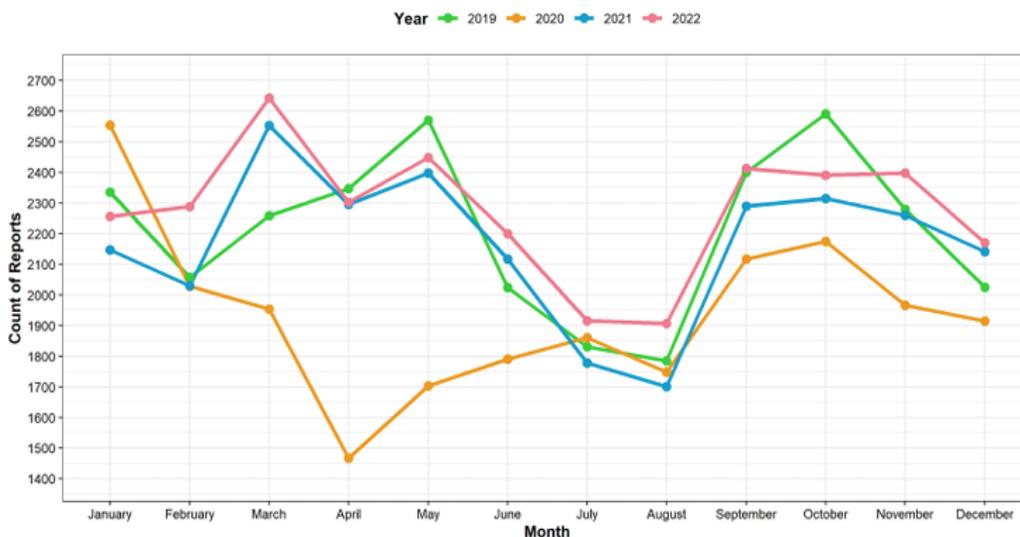
The Head Start program requires that an annual community assessment be conducted and that certain data points are reported. This section includes this information for all areas that are not covered elsewhere in this Community Needs Assessment.

Child Welfare

The New Hampshire Division on Children, Youth, and Families has compiled child and protective services data from 2019-2022. The charts below illustrate a significant drop in reports to Central Intake during 2020. Reports to Central Intake and screened in referrals have increased to numbers similar to pre-pandemic levels. The “Child Protection – Children & Youth Entering Out of Home Care” chart shows a significant decrease in children entering out-of-home care from 2019 to 2022 (*Department of Children Youth [DCYF] and Families Data Dashboard 2023*). During last program year, SNHS Head Start program’s enrollment of foster children was 1.7% of the total enrollment and Early Head Start’s was 7.7%.

Child Protection Intake- Reports to Central Intake

Child Protection: Reports To Central Intake
Comparing 2019 - 2022



Extracted from Bridges (NH SACWIS) on 01/18/2023

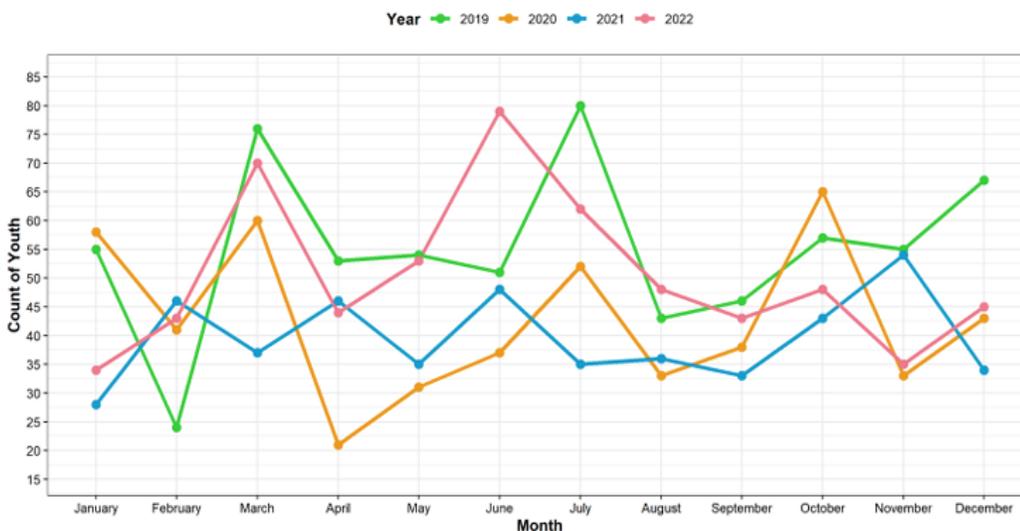


NH Department of Health & Human Services | Division for Children, Youth & Families



Child Protection – Children & Youth Entering Out of Home Care

Child Protection: Trends in Removals
Comparing 2019 - 2022



Extracted from Bridges (NH SACWIS) on 01/18/2023



NH Department of Health & Human Services | Division for Children, Youth & Families



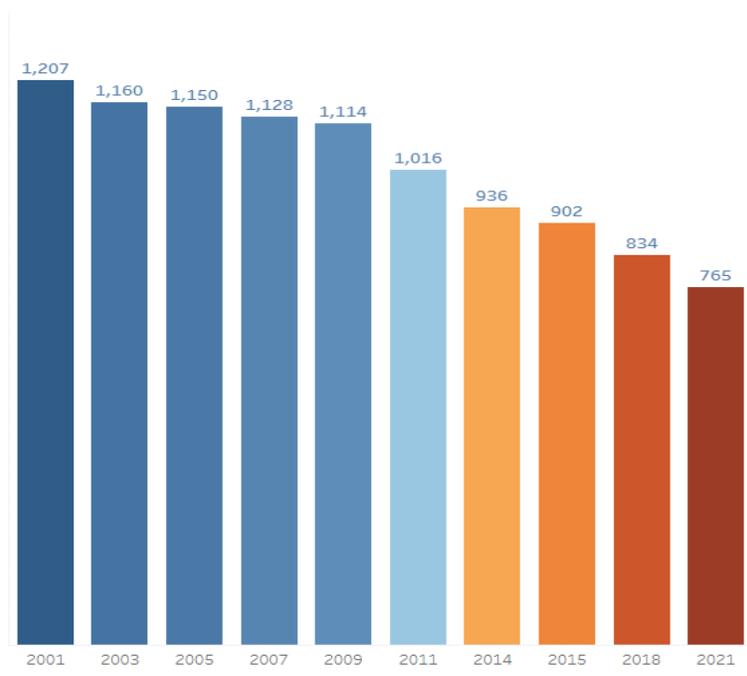
Early Childhood Education

There are 35,775 residents in Hillsborough and Rockingham County under age five. NH is one of six states in the US without state-funded preschool for children aged three and four. Additionally, NH does not have universal full-day kindergarten. These two facts create regional and socioeconomic barriers to accessing early care and education. In 2021, 3,848 children were enrolled in preschool in the public school system and 1,446 were enrolled in private preschool. *(NH Child Well-Being Data Hub)*

The number of licensed child care programs in NH has steadily declined over the last decade. The Child Care Strengthening Plan developed by DHHS and the Child Care Advisory Council was announced in June 2022. This plan focuses on strategies to increase recruitment and retention of child care staff, strategies to ensure future workforce and increase accessibility and affordability for families. Childcare staff salaries in NH were on average lower in 2021 than in 2019. The average childcare staff income is \$24,490 compared to the average statewide income of \$59,270. Childcare staff salary is not even of half the statewide average income. *(DHHS Strengthening Child Care Press Release)*

SNHS has implemented two statewide innovative initiatives to address the workforce shortage in child care with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® New Hampshire and Department of Labor (DOL) Early Childhood Apprenticeship Programs. The former provides comprehensive scholarships to enable early educators to take coursework leading to credentials and degrees by making it possible for them to afford both the time and expense of going to school. The latter is designed to combine classroom instruction and work experience to enhance the quality of care for children while increasing the apprentice's skill level and wages.

Number of Licensed Child Care Programs In New Hampshire



(NH Child Well-Being Data Hub)

Free and Reduced School Lunch

The rate of enrollment in the Free and Reduced Lunch program by school district is often a good predictor of the poverty experienced in individual school districts within local communities. This year, it is interesting to note that the data reflects an increase in children/families eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch than in the previous two years. The number of children/families eligible is still lower than pre-pandemic numbers.

Hillsborough County Locations

Town	% of Students
Manchester	44.0%
Auburn	5.9%
Bedford	4.5%
Candia	13.8%
Deerfield	7.9%
Goffstown	9.1%
Hooksett	15.0%
New Boston	6.6%
Londonderry	11.1%
Nashua	35.6%
State of NH	20.9%

Four of Manchester's elementary schools, identified below, have consistently faced the greatest impact of child poverty with the highest level of eligibility for the Free and Reduced School Lunch Program. These center city neighborhoods are an important area for SNHS recruitment for both Head Start and Early Head Start services.

Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility				
Manchester Highest Need Neighborhoods				
	Bakersville	Beech	Gossler	Wilson
2019-2020	77.94%	86.55%	73.04%	77.47%
2020-2021	62.50%	64.98%	61.40%	61.41%
2021-2022	67.47%	83.02%	69.33%	62.84%
2022-2023	70.15%	84.99%	69.33%	66.36%

Nashua, the second largest city in the State, also has four elementary schools that consistently have the greatest Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility.

Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility				
Nashua Highest Need Neighborhoods				
	Amherst St	Dr. Crisp	Ledge St	Mt Pleasant
2019-2020	71.81%	71.59%	75.24%	74.45%
2020-2021	62.50%	71.01%	70.10%	62.88%
2021-2022	65.92%	71.16%	67.35%	59.89%
2022-2023	61.09%	72.73%	69.32%	67.48%

The two additional communities served by SNHS Head Start in Hillsborough County are the towns of Hillsboro and Greenville. The percentages of eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch in Hillsboro have grown to pre-pandemic numbers, while the percentages in Greenville remain much lower.

Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility		
Balance of Hillsborough County Sites		
	Hillsborough	Greenville
2019-2020	38.89%	31.74%
2020-2021	19.90%	22.85%
2021-2022	36.19%	14.07%
2022-2023	37.76%	19.46%

Rockingham County consistently has the fewest low-income communities in comparison to the SNHS service areas within Hillsborough County. Derry and Seabrook remain the communities with the highest identified need for the SNHS service area in Rockingham County.

Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility			
Rockingham County Sites			
	Raymond	Seabrook	Derry (avg)
2019-2020	27.32%	35.03%	24.90%
2020-2021	20.44%	36.94%	26.50%
2021-2022	14.36%	40.93%	22.43%
2022-2023	20.33%	48.14%	23.28%

Other nutritional resources utilized by families include SNAP and WIC. In 2022, 6.7% of household were enrolled in SNAP. In 2021 48% of all families with only children under 6 (13,925) received WIC benefits. This is an increase from 2019 at 41% and 2020 at 44%. In 2022, SNHS WIC program services 6,408 participants.

Assessment Scores and Economic Status

The NH Department of Education provides detailed assessment data specific to each public elementary school. This data is pertinent to student achievement, which is measured across four levels of proficiency. The charts below show students in these high need elementary schools who fall in Level 1 and Level 2 which are considered not proficient. The percentage of children who fall below the proficiency level in these urban settings, particularly in Manchester, point to the need for Head Start services. According to the US Census American Community Survey, there are 1,821 homeless students in public schools in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties.

Manchester School District

	Beech	Bakersville	Wilson	Gossler
Economic Disadvantage	86.16%	70.78%	66.97%	75.08%
English Language Learners	31.24 %	24.40%	33.49%	21.41%
Students with Disabilities	20.13%	20.78%	21.33%	27.48%
Students Experiencing Homelessness	12.79%	<10%	<10%	<10%
English Language Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 79% Level 2: 15%	Level 1: 51% Level 2: 18%	Level 1: 78% Level 2: 15%	Level 1: 69% Level 2: 19%
Math Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 83% Level 2: 12%	Level 1: 42% Level 2: 35%	Level 1: 80% Level 2: 13%	Level 1: 55% Level 2: 29%
Science Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 74% Level 2: 25%	Level 1: NA Level 2: NA	Level 1: 89% Level 2: <10%	Level 1: NA Level 2: NA

Nashua School District

	Ledge	Amherst	Mt. Pleasant	Dr. Crisp
Economic Disadvantage	71.43%	67.79%	62.40%	77.09%
English Language Learners	38.32%	18.73%	11.70%	19.41%
Students with Disabilities	17.91%	30.71%	33.43%	21.56%
Students Experiencing Homelessness	<10%	<10%	<10%	<10%
English Language Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 55% Level 2: 24%	Level 1: 49% Level 2: 30%	Level 1: 55% Level 2: 21%	Level 1: 69% Level 2: 19%
Math Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 66% Level 2: 24%	Level 1: 50% Level 2: 35%	Level 1: 58% Level 2: 26%	Level 1: 74% Level 2: 20%
Science Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 68% Level 2: 16%	Level 1: 56% Level 2: 28%	Level 1: 79% Level 2: 10%	Level 1: 83% Level 2: 14%

Rockingham County and Rural Hillsborough County

	Derry	Raymond	Seabrook	Mascenic	Hillsborough
Economic Disadvantaged	22.6%	18.67%	38.9%	22.33%	40.71%
English Language Learners	<10%	*N/A	<10%	*N/A	NA
Students with Disabilities	24.98%	19*.20%	17.03%	14.42%	26.90%
Students Experiencing Homelessness	<10%	*N/A	19.23%	*N/A	<10%
English Language Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 26% Level 2: 26%	Level 1: 40% Level 2: 22%	Level 1: 48% Level 2: 19%	Level 1: 23% Level 2: 30%	Level 1: 40% Level 2: 20%
Math Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 28% Level 2: 34%	Level 1: 38% Level 2: 26%	Level 1: 28% Level 2: 36%	Level 1: 25% Level 2: 37%	Level 1: 28% Level 2: 30%
Science Assessment Scores Percentage of students falling in the not proficient categories.	Level 1: 35% Level 2: 24%	Level 1: N/A Level 2: N/A	Level 1: N/A Level 2: N/A	Level 1: 37% Level 2: 21%	Level 1: 52% Level 2: 24%

(NH Department of Education iReport)

Disabilities Birth- Age Three

In the 2022-2023 program year, 52 children enrolled in SNHS' Head Start program have a disability. Of which, 44 have a developmental delay, seven have a disability related to speech and language and one has autism. Five children in the Early Head Start program have a disability. Two have a developmental delay, one has a speech and language disability, one has a heart condition and one has autism.

Community Feedback Results

Community Needs Assessment Survey Respondents	
SNHS Clients	1,814
SNHS Staff	159
Community Members	342
Community Partner Organizations	52
Representatives of Education	58
Health Care Representatives	55
Private Sector Representatives	39
Public Sector Representatives	32
Faith Based Representatives	13
Total	2,564

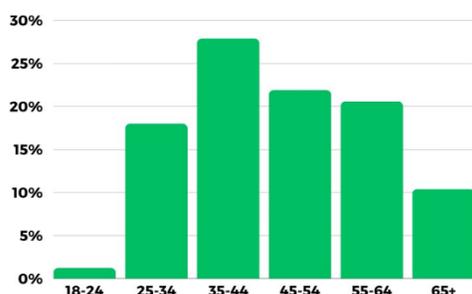
SNHS gathered quantitative and qualitative data from a range of individuals in Hillsborough and Rockingham County. A survey was posted on SNHS' website and sent to SNHS service recipients, SNHS staff, community partners, and representatives of the public sector, private sector, health care, education, and faith-

based organizations. In addition, SNHS conducted interviews with service recipients, community partner representatives. The resulting data collected includes a combination of quantitative data and rich qualitative and contextual data around the causes and conditions of poverty in the community. The following section summarizes this information.

Demographics of SNHS Client Survey Respondents: Of the SNHS client survey respondents, 70% were from Hillsborough County and 26% were from Rockingham County, with 4% selecting "other." Many of those who selected "other" were homeless respondents.

Nearly half of the SNHS client respondents reported having an annual income of under \$25,000. 76% were female and 24% were male and two respondents identify as non-

SNHS CLIENT RESPONDENT AGE



binary. 90% of respondents are of working age, see the summary of respondent's ages in the chart to the left.

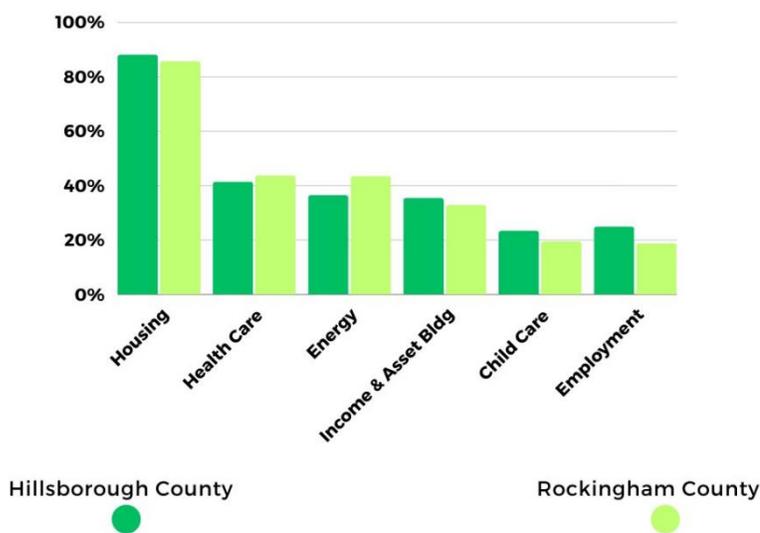
84.7% identified as white, 6% identified as black, 3.4% identified as multi race, and 4% identified as other. 15 respondents were American Indian/Alaska Natives, nine were Asian, and two were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Together these amount to 1.5% of respondents.

Reported Community Needs and Strengths

The information provided relating to community needs, strengths, and resources was quite consistent despite which group the respondents belonged to and despite whether the respondent was from Hillsborough or Rockingham County.

All survey respondents were asked to choose the three greatest unmet needs from a list of options and housing was by far the most prevalent need. As you can see in the chart, health care, energy, income and asset building, child care, and employment were the needs identified by respondents consistently in the two counties.

COMMUNITY NEEDS



The survey also inquired about community strengths. The following were the most frequently cited community strengths by respondents of all groups.

- The community's response to the pandemic. Respondents were impressed by the response from service providers to be able to continue to administer programs remotely and stand up new (pandemic-related) programming swiftly.
- The willingness for community providers to work together and network to provide optimal services for those in need.

- Variety of services available to those who need assistance.

Multiple respondents commented on the kindness of community members. One of the clients interviewed for additional feedback stated: "The community has a great team of individuals that care and put forth a lot of time and hard work to help many in need. I see the joy that many receive when they are able to get the help they need."

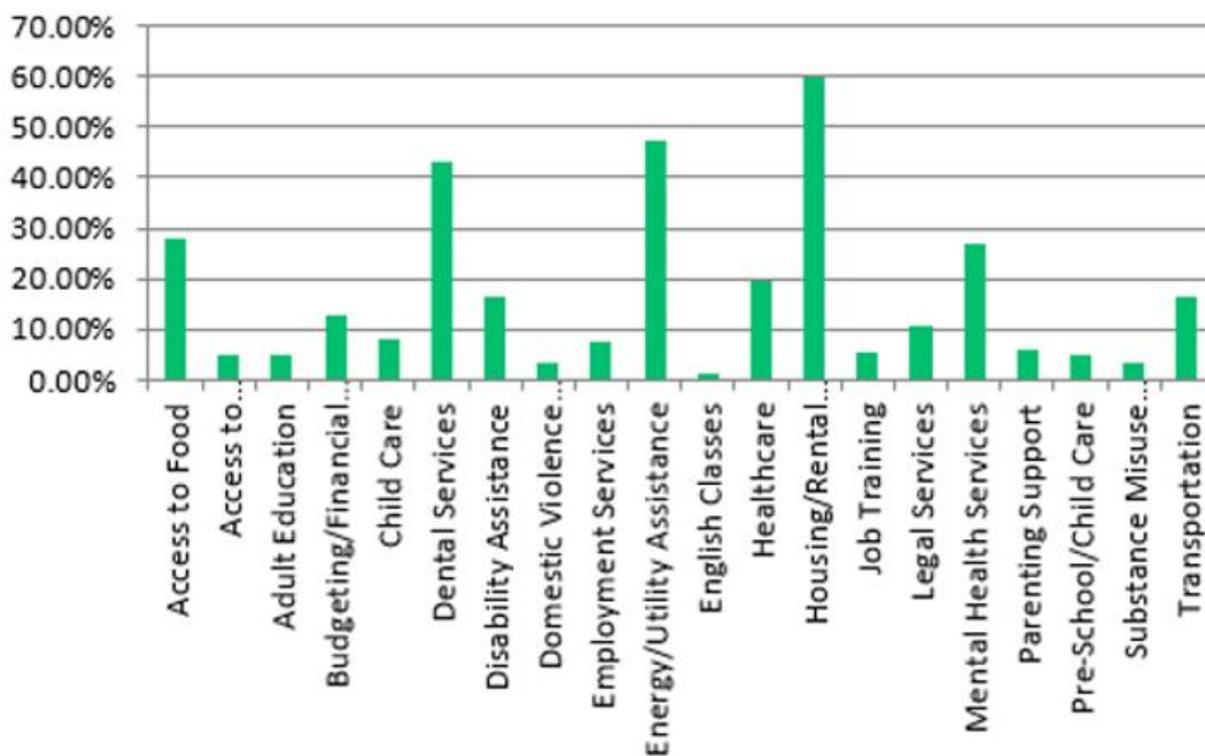
Of community partner respondents, 86.7% reported an increase in need for services over the last 12 months. 13.3% saw no change and zero reported a decrease in the need for services. The following were cited as reasons for the increased need for services:

- Growing shortage of affordable housing
- Increased food costs
- Increased fuel and utility costs
- Increase in mental health issues following the pandemic
- Shortage of affordable child care
- Loss of employment during the pandemic
- Elimination of additional funds from COVID-related assistance programs

In line with the trend of increased demand for assistance reported by service providers, 68% of SNHS client respondents reported being less financially stable than prior to the pandemic and only 8% reported being more financially stable. When asked if they can pay their bills on time each month, 42% said no, 40% said sometimes, and only 18% said yes. Furthermore, 39.7% of respondents were evicted or at-risk of eviction in the last twelve months.

SNHS client respondents were asked to identify all needs that their family was facing at the time of the survey. Those responses are summarized in the following table.

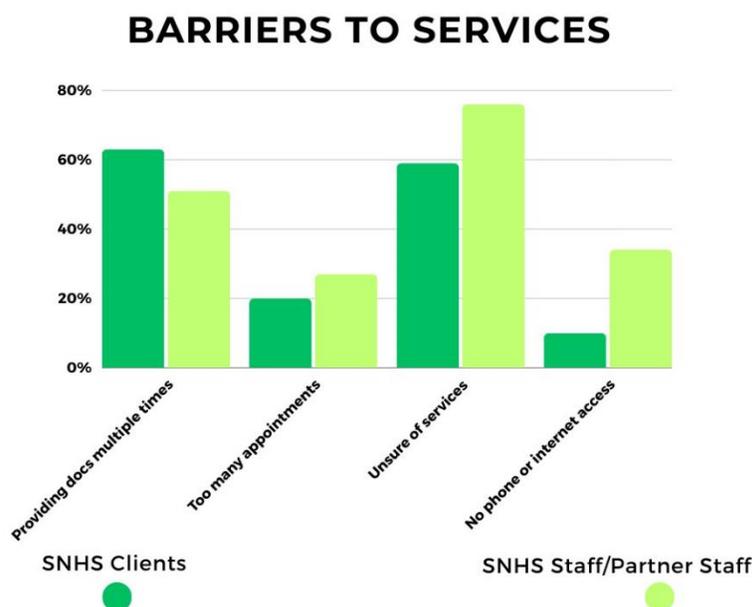
Your Family's Needs



Housing and rental assistance continues to be the most prevalent need facing families. This is followed by utility assistance, dental services, access to food, mental health services, health care, and transportation.

Barriers to Services

In response to questions about barriers to receiving services, SNHS clients' responses were a bit different than SNHS staff and community partner organizations. SNHS clients reported having to provide the same documentation multiple times as the biggest barrier to receiving services while SNHS staff and community partners believed that the biggest barrier was that clients are unsure of what services are available.



Clients added some additional context around the barriers to receiving services. The following are client statements regarding the difficulty of accessing services:

- It's been challenging to get all the documentation required to be considered a candidate for benefits, and I've got a fairly well seasoned skill set. I can't imagine what a heavily burdened young mother experiences getting together all the documentation.

- Wish I understood better what services I might qualify for. My dealings with SNHS have been great both with the community garden and with emergency rental assistance. I truly and deeply appreciate the help and assistance you all have provided to me.
- Case management to tie all the services that may be available especially for the mentally disabled.

SNHS - Client Satisfaction

As part of the community needs assessment survey, respondents who identified as having received services from SNHS in the last year were given client satisfaction questions at the end of their survey. The results were extremely positive. When asked to rate the quality of services provided by SNHS, 75% rated them as “excellent” or “good.” 19% rated the services as “fair,” while 6.5% selected “poor.” The remaining responses were “unsure” or “n/a.”

The ratings for the support received from SNHS staff was similarly favorable. 39.2% of respondents rated the support from staff as “excellent” and 35.1% rated it as “good.” Clients were given an opportunity to provide additional comments related to their experience with SNHS. Below are some of these comments regarding SNHS directly quoted from the survey:

“The best most helpful services in NH”

“Southern New Hampshire services was a godsend when I couldn't pay my rent. Thank you very much for your services.”

“Honestly, I’m so embarrassed I needed help but once speaking with the staff I never felt ashamed or anything. The staff really are genuine and understanding.”

“You all are Angels in my eyes. Thank you.”

“Excellent help finding an apartment.”

“I’m grateful to the staff and services SNHS provides me and my family. Thank you.”

“This came at a time in my life that myself and 6 people would have been homeless. I really appreciate the kindness and patience with me.”