



*Green River Area Development District*

# COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023 UPDATE



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# PUBLIC & PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

ConnectGRADD Inc.  
GRADD Board of Directors  
GRADD Hazard Mitigation Council  
GRADD Regional Transportation Committee  
GRADD Water Management Council  
Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation  
Green River Area Council on Aging  
Green River Economic Development Corporation  
Green River Regional Health Council  
Green River Regional Industrial Development Authority  
Green River Workforce Development Board  
Hancock County Industrial Foundation  
Henderson Community College  
Henderson Economic Development  
Kentucky Career Center  
Kentucky State Data Center  
Madisonville Community College  
Murray State Small Business Development Center  
Ohio County Economic Development Alliance  
Owensboro Community & Technical College  
Union County First  
United Way of Ohio Valley  
Webster County Community & Economic Development  
Webster County Economic Development Council  
Webster County Industrial Development Authority  
West Kentucky Coalition  
West Kentucky Regional Industry Development Authority



GRADD accepting the 2023 Peggy Satterly Spirit of Kentucky Award for the Lisman Workforce Complex project. SOURCE: GRADD

# CEDS COLLABORATORS

**Mike Baker**

Hancock County Industrial Foundation

**Jim Davis**

Independence Bank (Henderson)

**Tammy Belt**

United Community Bank (Union)

**Christina Carpenter**

Ohio County Economic Development Alliance

**Melissa Coker**

Union County First

**Greg Collins**

Commonwealth Bank (Union) (retired)  
Citizen (Daviess)

**Sandy Dant**

First Security Bank (McLean)

**Monte Davenport**

Sebree Clerk (Webster) Independence Bank (retired)

**Brad Davis**

Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation (Daviess)

**Brandon Gentry**

Old National Bank (Daviess)

**Chad Gregory**

Hancock County Bank

**Barbara Howard**

Farm Credit Services of Mid-America (McLean)

**Kim Humphrey**

River View Coal (Union)

**Will McDowell**

Kentucky Utilities (McLean)

**Katie Peak**

Cecilian Bank (Ohio)

**Andy Rideout**

Henderson County Cooperative Extension Services

**Whitney Risley**

Henderson County Economic Development

**Miranda Robertson**

Independence Bank (Webster)

**Tina Snyder**

Hancock County Chamber

**Rachel Yarbrough**

Retired - Webster County Schools

**Marty Shephard**

Business Owner (Ohio)

**Judge Brad Schneider**

Judge/Executive Henderson County

**Judge Steve Henry**

Judge/Executive Webster County

**Judge David Johnston**

Judge/Executive Ohio County

**Judge Johnny "Chic" Roberts**

Judge/Executive Hancock County

**Judge Curtis Dame**

Judge/Executive McLean County

**Judge Adam O'Nan**

Judge/Executive Union County

**Judge Charlie Castlen**

Judge/Executive Daviess County

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Green River Area Development District evaluates and updates the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) through local planning with stakeholders across many sectors. The CEDS serves as a plan for regional economic development and is updated annually to show progress toward goals. The CEDS includes four main sections: the Summary Background, which provides information on the economic conditions of the region; the SWOT Analysis, which highlights regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; the Strategic Direction, which builds on the SWOT to identify key goals and objectives for the next five-year period; and the Evaluation Framework, which identifies performance metrics to evaluate successful implementation of the CEDS and economic progress.

One of the challenges facing the region is low workforce participation. As of July 2023, Kentucky's workforce participation rate ranks 45th out of 51 (states + Washington, D.C.) at just 57.7% according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Primary causes for low workforce participation rate were identified by the GRADD CEDS collaborators as a lack of childcare, slow population growth and barriers to formerly incarcerated individuals when reentering the workforce. Childcare access was highlighted by GRADD advisory committees as a major issue and data supports the claim. Every county except for Union is considered by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services as a childcare desert, meaning there are three or more children in the county for every one available slot in a certified childcare facility. According to a 2022 study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 58% of working parents not in the workforce cited care for children or other family members as a main reason for not looking for work. The study showed 32% of women more than men highlighted this issue as a barrier to workforce participation.

Another workforce issue is a growing need for more technical skills in the workforce. Several initiatives have been implemented to cultivate needed skills in the labor force, including:

- The Lisman Workforce Complex provides training for utility lineman, CDL certification, and diesel mechanic. GRADD was awarded the 2023 Peggy Satterly Spirit of Kentucky award for this project.

- The Henderson Community College Advanced Manufacturing Lab Expansion created additional workstations to house more students to train with up to date technology for high demand jobs.
- The Hire to Operate program offsets cost of Registered Apprenticeship Program participation for prospective water and wastewater operators and has had six graduates to date.
- GRADD received a \$1.8 million investment through the National Dislocated Worker Grant to provide employment and workforce training services for dislocated workers in the region.

The region needs better broadband connectivity, especially in rural areas. The Kentucky Office of Broadband Development was established in 2022 as a central broadband planning and coordination entity to encourage growth and development within the Commonwealth. In September 2023, they released a Digital Equity Plan to serve as a road map to close the digital divide. Advancements through partnerships with Kenergy and Conexon Connect have made progress, connecting over 1,000 rural customers and 500 miles of fiber. The project has connected its first broadband customers in McLean County and has extended broadband to more than 25% of Daviess County.

Lack of housing is a major concern for the GRADD region, especially affordable and mid-range single and multi-family housing. Ensuring adequate housing stock is critical to support the multiple new and growing industries in the region. Stakeholders cited a need to coordinate local and state incentives, especially tax credits and other financial benefits, to encourage private development. Stakeholders also encouraged flexible zoning and communication between local officials and housing developers.

Notable industries have reduced in size due to changing global markets, including the following:

- Century Aluminum in Hawesville temporarily shuttered in August 2022, resulting in layoffs for 628 smelter employees. After a year's closure, the plant has remained shut down.
- Daicel Safety Systems Americas Inc. plant in Beaver Dam is expected to fully close by March 2024, resulting in layoffs of 290 employees.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fortunately, new industries have begun flourishing across Kentucky, including in the GRADD region:

- Pratt Paper LLC opened its \$500 million investment in fall of 2023, including the new recycled paper mill and corrugated box factory in Henderson, creating 321 jobs with an average wage plus benefits package of \$39 per hour.
- Kentucky Whiskey Co. in Ohio County with a \$17.7 million investment has completed its first rickhouse and has begun barreling supplies. As of September 2023, the distillery has produced 6,000 barrels and operates around the clock. The distillery employs 25 employees and will grow to 30 over a 15-year-period with an average pay, including benefits, of \$31.25 an hour.

Despite the coal industry declining across much of the U.S., including Kentucky, Union County has continually seen growth in both coal employment and production. Additionally, River View Coal broke ground this year on an expansion into Henderson County that will create 260 well-paying jobs.

Aging water and wastewater infrastructure remain concerns in the region. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of developing infrastructure at industrial sites to attract new industries. Two significant pieces of legislation allocated \$8.7 million and \$13.1 million to the Cleaner Water Program. The Cleaner Water Program set aside funding for each county in Kentucky based on population to complete priority water and wastewater projects. Concerns over the cost and time to complete projects have been raised due to supply chain issues, which are impacting projects on a national level.

Transportation in the region has made progress with projects including:

- Progression of the I-69 Ohio River Crossing project, a bi-state agreement between Henderson, Kentucky and Evansville, Indiana, executed in early 2023 to construct a new bridge into the Commonwealth over the Ohio River. Another access point into the region will open the doors for more economic growth. Construction of the bridge is estimated to be complete by 2032.

- The Rockport Railroad Bridge, connecting Ohio and Muhlenberg counties across the Green River, is still in progress with \$17.3 million from the Department of Transportation as part of its Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program. The bridge serves as critical infrastructure for transportation of goods across Kentucky.
- Project development has begun for projects to widen Daviess County's Hwy 54 and Hwy 60 in Hancock County. These projects will ensure safer transportation through these heavily trafficked roadways.

Transportation needs also include the development of roads around the new I-69 bridge and the development of four-lane highways to ease industrial traffic. Improvements included in the I-69 project includes six mile extension of I-69, nine new bridges, seven rehabilitated bridges, a new US 60 exchange and a new US 41 exchange.

This CEDS features greater emphasis on quality of life as a factor for economic development. From recreation opportunities to better health care, quality of life is vital to attracting and retaining industries and growing the population and workforce.

From data and information collected in the Summary Background and the SWOT Analysis, the CEDS committee identified the following six goals as GRADD's top priorities for the next five years:

1. Grow and cultivate the region's workforce.
2. Strengthen broadband and cell availability.
3. Expand access to adequate housing.
4. Attract new industries to the region.
5. Upgrade infrastructure systems.
6. Improve the quality of life for residents.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## WORKFORCE

A September 2021 report by the Kentucky Chamber Foundation, *20 Years in the Making: Kentucky's Workforce Crisis*<sup>1</sup> found that the major causes of the workforce crisis in Kentucky include:

- A gap between the skills workers have and the skills employers need
- Slow population growth
- Incarceration and criminal backgrounds
- A lack of access to childcare services
- A need for better transportation, infrastructure, and broadband

The Green River Workforce Development Board concurred that these issues are the same primary issues affecting GRADD's workforce. These issues must be addressed through targeted projects to ensure the region is competitive with other regions across the United States.

The Green River Workforce Development Board has been essential in bridging the gap between laid off employees, potential employees that lack technical skills and reentry challenges for previously incarcerated individuals. Within the GRADD region, two major employers have laid off a large number of employees.

Century Aluminum in Hancock County closed production in June of 2022 and laid off around 600 employees with hopes to resume production once energy cost returned to more normalized levels. However, as of September 2023 it has yet to reopen. To address the economic hardship caused by the Century Aluminum closure, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded \$1,798,844 of National Dislocated Worker Grant to the Green River Workforce Development Board (WDB) to provide employment and workforce training services for dislocated workers in Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union and Webster counties. Administered by the department's Employment and Training Administration, this award will allow the WDB to provide retraining and skills development for affected workers in the seven counties the regional planning agency serves. Supported by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, National Dislocated Worker Grants provide assistance to a state or local board to fund direct services and assistance in areas experiencing a major economic dislocation event. The Skills to Succeed Grant has currently:

- 33 Individuals enrolled in Work Based Learning
- 111 Individuals enrolled in Occupational Skills Training
- 112 Job seekers Assisted

- Over \$870,000 has been obligated for training.
- Over \$70,000 has been obligated in supportive services.

Daicel Safety Systems located in Ohio County announced it would also be closing its doors completely by March of 2024, and began with initial lay offs in August of 2023. This closure will impact 251 total employees. This closure prompted local Rapid Response activities to respond immediately. Rapid Response provides services enabling dislocated workers to transition to new employment without delay. Of the 251 affected employees 114 attended the help offered from the Rapid Response team.



Henderson receives award for the HCC Lab Expansion Project. SOURCE: HCC

In October 2023, the Green River Workforce Development Board received a \$1.5 million dollar QUEST Grant in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Workforce Development. The Quality, Jobs, Equity, Strategy and Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant is funded through the Department of Labor. The grant has been funded for a three year period and will end September 2026. The focus of the grant is to serve individuals whose employment has been negatively impacted by the pandemic, including individuals from marginalized and underserved populations who have been disproportionately impacted to enter, return to or advance in high-quality jobs. Individuals who are eligible include:

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## WORKFORCE

- Individuals temporarily or permanently laid off as a result of the pandemic;
- Long-term unemployed individuals;
- Dislocated workers: and self-employed individuals who became unemployed or significantly underemployed due to the pandemic.

To help increase the number of skilled workers in the region, the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) has been involved in multiple workforce projects:

- DRA funded the Henderson Community College Advanced Manufacturing Lab Expansion project with \$650,501 to purchase enough equipment to double the Advanced Manufacturing Center's lab stations and fund the addition of an eight-station robotics lab. These assets will be used in classrooms to train the future workforce. Students training in this program with these tools will go on to work in local industries that are in high demand.
- Webster County Area Technology Center applied for \$122,190 from the DRA to purchase equipment to improve and expand the Area Technology Center's engineering, health sciences, industrial maintenance and machine tool programs.
- Union County Public Schools was awarded \$8 million to support renovations at the districts vocational education center. Renovations include updating portions of the building that do not meet ADA requirements, welding exhaust systems renovations and adding a sprinkler system and emergency lighting and fire alarms to increase safety throughout the building.

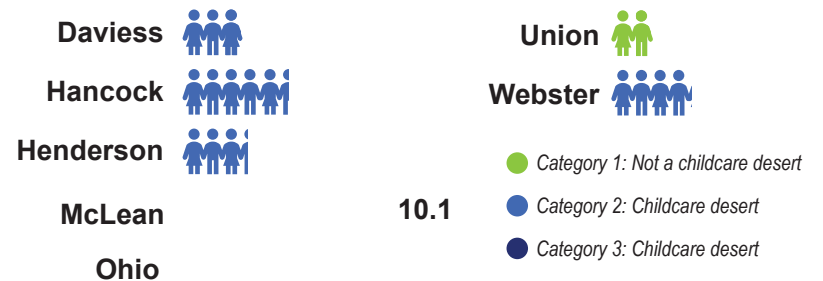
Investments in workforce programs are important for the development of skilled future workforce to fill high demand jobs that come with bringing in new industry.

Workforce demands can not be met without the investment of educating incarcerated individuals to be prepared to enter the workforce after time served. Partnerships are necessary in order to achieve this goal. The Reentry Success Program is a collaborative effort between the City of Owensboro, Daviess County Fiscal Court, Daviess County Detention Center, Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corp and Owensboro Community and Technical College. The program allows inmates to take online classes on information technology, problem solving, personal development, and job skills. Mock interviews are also utilized with local industry to help prepare inmates even further once released. Since the program began in late 2022, over twenty people have graduated in three cohorts.

Lack of childcare access in the GRADD region is another obstacle our communities face. According to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, every GRADD county except Union County is considered a child care desert<sup>2</sup>, meaning there are more than three children per available child care slot in licensed facilities. Lack of available childcare can prevent parents, especially mothers, from working so they can stay home to care for children. GRADD's female workforce participation rate is 53.8%, compared to the overall rate of 58.7%<sup>3</sup>. A survey from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce discovered 58% of American parents are unable to find childcare and 26% unable to afford childcare leading to half of all workers and nearly 60% of parents citing lack of childcare as a reason for leaving work<sup>4</sup>. The survey also cited the cost of childcare as a barrier for women to return to the workforce. Even when childcare is available, it is often so expensive that it does not financially benefit a parent to work and pay for childcare simultaneously.

### Child Care Deserts in the GRADD Region by County

#### Children Per Available Childcare Slot



1. Kentucky Chamber Foundation. *20 Years in the Making: Kentucky's Workforce Crisis*
2. Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. *Child Care Deserts by County*.
3. U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 Census. *Workforce Participation Rate by Sex*.
4. U.S. Chamber of Commerce Poll: *The COVID-19 Unemployed*. Published 6/3/22.



# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## BROADBAND

Broadband access is the greatest need to promote economic development in the region. According to the rankings provided by the BroadbandNow initiative, Kentucky ranks 36th in broadband subscription rate<sup>1</sup>. The Green River region is primarily rural, and many portions of the area have inadequate or no internet access. Issues with obtaining adequate internet access are struggles shared by both households and large companies, particularly in rural areas.

Although broadband availability has been a recognized issue for many years throughout rural America, the COVID-19 pandemic magnified the need for digital access and underscored the many impacts a lack of adequate broadband has on rural communities. Fast and accessible broadband became a necessity for work, school, telehealth, entertainment and communication during the height of the pandemic. The pandemic especially highlighted the digital divide between well-connected areas and those without quality broadband accessibility.

The Kentucky Office of Broadband was established in 2022 through House Bill 315 as the central broadband planning and coordination entity to encourage, foster, develop and improve broadband within the Commonwealth. The Kentucky Office of Broadband, in partnership with the Kentucky Office of Systems Equity, released the Kentucky Digital Equity Plan in 2023. This plan outlines six objectives to work toward digital equity for the entire Commonwealth:

- Enhance broadband availability and affordability for covered populations.
- Ensure access to affordable devices for all Kentuckians.
- Increase application accessibility and inclusivity to state and local government programs.
- Ensure that all Kentuckians are equipped to navigate the internet safely.
- Improve digital literacy for all populations in Kentucky.
- Empower all Kentuckians to develop the digital skills necessary for work and life.

This plan is a requirement through the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program is part of the larger State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, the purpose of which is to promote the achievement of digital equity, support digital inclusion activities, and build capacity for efforts by States relating to the adoption of broadband by residents of those States.



*Construction of communications tower in McLean County. SOURCE: GRADD*

A collaborative project led by Kenergy and Conexon Connect to construct 7,200 mile of fiber-to-the-home network in rural areas of Western Kentucky is underway. Connections began in McLean County this year and reached 25% of residents in Daviess County as of October 2023. Hancock County will be next in the GRADD region for the project.

1. U.S. News Best States Internet Access Rankings.



# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## EQUITY

The GRADD region is dedicated to serving all people within the region, demonstrated through annual diversity, equity and inclusion training for all GRADD staff and board members. This training enhances cultural competency and provides staff and local leaders with skills to address the unique needs of the diverse population they serve.

GRADD utilizes the Justice40 initiative as a guide during project development. The Justice40 initiative is a government effort to deliver at least forty percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved and overburdened by pollution. Focusing on these areas allows for equality of clean water, safe and clean parks, industries close to home to allow easier access to work and well-paying jobs. The Kentucky Department of Aging and Independent Living has held several trainings and emphasized the importance of equity in services for underserved groups.

Communities in the region have taken steps to ensure public facilities are accessible to all. Projects include installing an elevator in Union County's historic courthouse to enable access to all floors for disabled residents as well as several parks projects across the region to develop ADA accessible recreational facilities.



*Owensboro Human Relations Commission leading GRADD staff through their 2023 DEI training. SOURCE: GRADD*

Several communities have led reentry efforts for formerly incarcerated individuals. One of the largest examples is the Reentry Success program, a collaborative partnership between multiple institutions in Daviess County that allow inmates to take online classes on information technology, problem-solving, personal development, job skills and other areas to help them be more successful upon release. As of April of 2023, there have been 20 participants that have graduated from the program with opportunities to make connections with local employers to help increase their success rate once released.

Groups like the Interagency Working Group (IWG) and the Kentucky Office of Broadband Development are examples of federal and state groups formed to help bridge the gap of income inequity within the Commonwealth. The IWG is a national group that focuses on coal mining and power plant communities and economic revitalization. The IWG helps streamline federal funding to distressed communities that impacted by the decline of the coal industry. The IWG has provided assistance in the form of rapid response teams that help communities solidify project paths for economic diversification, as well as provides resources of a multitude of funding sources through the funding clearinghouse portal. The Office of Broadband Development was formed to progress broadband at an accelerated rate to rural areas throughout the Commonwealth and provide quality access for all Kentuckians.



*Graduates of the Reentry Success Program at Daviess County Detention Center. SOURCE: Owensboro Times*

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## INDUSTRY

Global economic changes have impacted local industries, resulting in job loss. Century Aluminum notified employees in June 2022 that its Hawesville plant would temporarily shutter in August, resulting in layoffs for 628 smelter employees. The company cited rising energy costs as the cause of the shutdown, linked in part to the war in Ukraine. The plant has remained closed despite hopes of reopening in June of 2023. In January 2022, Tyson Foods laid off 200 workers at its facility in Robards but in early 2023 was able to rehire all laid off employees.

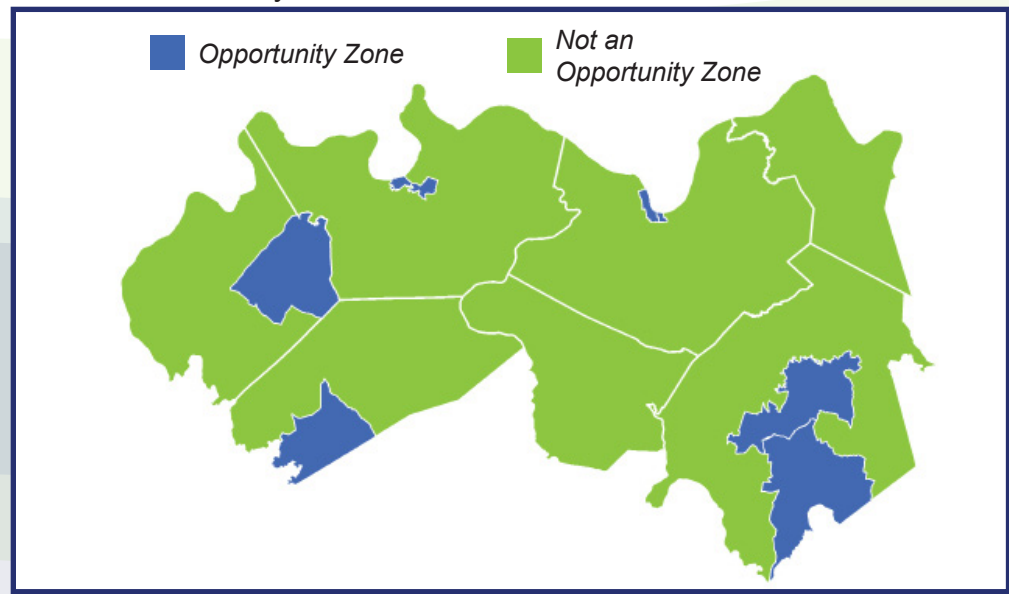
The coal industry has been declining across much of the U.S., including Kentucky. However, Union County has continually seen growth in both coal employment and production. Union County has been the leading coal producer in Kentucky since 2012, producing 4.4 million tons of coal in the first quarter of 2023, compared to 2.8 million tons produced by all Eastern Kentucky coal producing counties.<sup>1</sup> Union County's only coal producing company, River View Coal, broke ground on its expansion to Henderson County in July 2023. The company will create a new 30,000 square foot facility with a \$35 million investment expected to be completed by December 2024. The project will create 260 well-paying jobs. The coal industry also spurred more economic growth with the expansion of Mine System Solutions (MSS), one of only six companies worldwide that service electric haul trucks used in heavy mining operations. GRADD participated in this project by lending \$250,000 from the GRADD Revolving Loan Fund to purchase new equipment that will allow business growth.

Western Kentucky Distilling Co. opened in 2023 in Ohio County, employing 25 people with plans to expand to a staff of 35 over a 15-year-period. The distillery offers an average pay, including benefits, of \$31.25 an hour. A \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant helped extend water and sewer lines to the project site and construct an access road.

Webster County was awarded \$2.1 million to invest in land for economic development. The \$2.1 million will be used to acquire around 40 acres of property in Providence and extend 2,200 feet of waterline and 2,000 feet of sewer line for economic development. The goal of developing this area is to attract potential investors in the manufacturing industry. In Daviess County, the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation (GOEDC) has proposed development of a 184-acre industrial park. GOEDC was approved by a municipal order to submit an economic development application to the

Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet for matching funds for development of the property.

Seven Kentucky Opportunity Zones were established in the GRADD region by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service in 2018. Opportunity Zones were created to encourage long-term private investment in low-income urban and rural communities by offering tax incentives to investors. In the GRADD region, Opportunity Zones have prompted little interest or investment. Researchers from the University of California-Berkeley examined 2019 investments in Opportunity Zones and found that only 16% of Opportunity Zones received any investment that year. The study found that rural areas received little to no investment and that a majority of investments in Opportunity Zones were businesses specializing in real estate, construction and finance rather than industry.<sup>2</sup>



*Map of Opportunity Zones in the GRADD region*

1. Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, Quarterly Coal Reports 2012-2022.

2. Kennedy, Patrick and Wheeler, Harrison. *Neighborhood-Level Investment from the U.S. Opportunity Zone Program: Early Evidence*.



# HIGHLIGHTING RESILIENCE

## HIRE TO OPERATE (H2O) PROJECT

Advancements in water treatment and supply technology have increased the skills and training required of certified operators, increasing the cost and difficulty to obtain certifications. According to the 2022 Kentucky Water Workforce Survey, approximately 55% of Kentucky water and wastewater utilities do not have enough operators<sup>1</sup>. The Green River Water/Wastewater Survey, conducted in February 2023, revealed that twenty systems operations specialists are eligible to retire in the next two to five years in the GRADD region. Water and wastewater operators have struggled to find qualified replacements for the retiring workforce due to a lack of technically skilled applicants. As a last resort, several utilities in the area have had to borrow operators from neighboring utilities. These operators are stretched thin, serving multiple water and wastewater systems to mitigate the severe shortage.

In 2020, GRADD received a \$150,000 investment from the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) to create the Hire to Operate (H2O) program. DRA funding was used to enable water and wastewater apprentices in the Green River region to participate in the Kentucky Rural Water Association's (KRWA) Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Eight graduates of the program became certified Water/Wastewater Systems Operation Specialists.

In 2023, GRADD was awarded an additional \$450,000 from DRA to continue and expand the program. The 2023 H2O project will enable seventeen additional water and wastewater operator apprentices. Funds pay for \$22,247 towards On-the-Job Training and up to \$2,700 towards the required Related Technical Instruction for each of the apprentices. The H2O project targets individuals new to the workforce, dislocated workers and incumbent workers. Recruitment efforts will also target high school students through Partnering Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs as well veterans returning to or joining the workforce for the first time.

KRWA's RAP supplements experience with structured educational goals. The curriculum are designed to enhance and prepare apprentices to be fully qualified in multiple aspects of water and wastewater operations. Apprentices have the option to take classes from a variety of sources including KRWA, online, colleges, and others. All classes must be approved by the KRWA Apprenticeship Training Committee before receiving credit. Students receive additional mentoring throughout the two-year program where their progress is tracked and benchmarked. The combination of experience coupled

with a planned education curriculum accelerates the apprentice to fill operator positions at all levels of system classification. The apprenticeship program will create a talent pipeline to replace Kentucky's aging workforce.



*H2O apprentices.* SOURCE: GRADD

The H2O project assists local water and wastewater utility companies with the cost and implementation of enrolling employees to participate in KRWA Registered Apprenticeship Programs. The H2O program will benefit both local utility employees and communities by making water/wastewater employees more skilled and resilient to economic shock, and by providing communities with water and wastewater operators who have the necessary skills to ensure safe and sanitary water and wastewater service.

In August 2022, the H2O project was selected to receive a National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award and was invited to present the project at the 2022 NADO Conference. This award honors significant advances in community and economic development. Additionally, GRADD was invited to share information about the project's design and successes on a panel of over 80 attendees with the Syracuse University Center for Sustainable Community Solutions through the Environmental Finance Center.

1. University of Kentucky Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute. Kentucky Water Workforce Survey 2022. Accessed online: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/cd4e92283a.html>



# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## INFRASTRUCTURE

GRADD has made improving water and sewer infrastructure a top priority. One of the largest obstacles to infrastructure projects is the high cost associated with major water and sewer projects. The Kentucky Infrastructure Authority (KIA) works to develop water and sewer infrastructure throughout the state by helping communities secure the funding needed to complete projects. KIA works with the Area Development Districts to maintain the Water Resource Information System (WRIS), an online database of identified projects under the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act. The WRIS portal is critical in helping communities identify and prioritize their water and sewer needs and develop their projects and find funding assistance. The WRIS portal also contains mapping and general information about water and wastewater systems throughout the state, which can also be a helpful tool in identifying needs and developing projects.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were designed to fund various strategic projects during and in the wake of the pandemic. Kentucky distributed ARPA funds earmarked for infrastructure development through the Cleaner Water Program. The Cleaner Water Grant Program brought \$8.7 million and \$13.1 million of funding through Senate Bill 36 and House Bill 1, with another round of funds expected next year. Cleaner Water Grant Program funds were allocated to communities based on size. GRADD met with each of its communities to help prioritize projects and determine how to best administer funds. Communities used these funds for long-term projects to increase the resilience of their water and wastewater infrastructure.

Several major projects are currently underway in the GRADD region. Ohio County is working to complete a \$6.2 million project to rebuild the current 1,000 linear foot ductile iron intake line that is failing and physically falling apart at River Road in Cromwell. If this line were to fail, it would seriously affect all 6,013 customers, including the cities of Beaver Dam, Centertown and Fordsville. The project includes construction of two new submerged intake screening structures, installation of 16-inch ball joint DIP supply lines, construction of an elevation valve access platform, assembly of two intake screenings on Green River, construction of micro pipe foundation for intake screening assemblies, connection to the existing supply line, and erosion control and bank stabilization. By using existing intake screens and a supply line in operation, it will minimize time required for change over to the new system.



*Unearthed manhole in Morganfield as part of the Job Corps Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation. SOURCE: GRADD*

The Whitesville Sewer Plant project includes the replacement of three blowers, improvements to the UV disinfection system, removal of solids from the lagoons, rehabilitation of the effluent pump station and gravity filters, replacement of leaking air head piping and installation of additional aeration headers. The project will ensure that the sewer plant maintains safety and efficiency standards.

Jack Hinton Road Water Main Project will replace 33,071 of 3" PVC water line with 6" PVC water line. It will extend through Jack Hinton Road and Short Station Road and improve service for 153 households and extend service to 20 households. This project received funds from the Cleaner Water Grant Program. \$847,596 from Senate Bill 36 and \$1,050,000 from House Bill 1 are being used to fully fund this project.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## TRANSPORTATION

Quality transportation remains critical for economic growth. Fifteen key projects totaling \$372 million are leading the way as the GRADD region seeks to improve its infrastructure to attract new industries and support growth of existing industries, as well as to improve the quality of life for residents.

The Kentucky approach phase of the I-69 Ohio River bridge construction in Henderson began and is expected to conclude in 2025. A contract for the Indiana approach to the bridge is expected to be awarded in late 2023 or early 2024, with construction being complete in 2026. Work on the final portion – the new bridge itself – is expected to begin in 2027. Once complete, the bridge will complete the I-69 corridor in both Indiana and Kentucky and is expected to lead to a boom in economic development in the Tri-State area with the opportunity for businesses and industries to locate in the corridor of a major interstate.

Daviess County broke ground on one major project in 2023 and took a significant step forward on another. In August, work began on a \$14.4 million upgrade to KY 331, which provides access to the Owensboro Riverport. The

road is being widened and straightened to make it easier for semis to navigate. The project makes the road safer for all users while also allowing the riverport to accommodate more traffic.

August also was a key month for the project to widen KY 54. After two failed rounds of bids, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet awarded a \$23.38 million contract for construction to begin on the widening of KY 54 from US 60 to Bold Forbes Way. Work is expected to begin in spring 2024. Future projects will improve the road from Bold Forbes to Jack Hinton Road.

Every two years, transportation agencies across the state submit a list of their most needed road projects to the state. The projects are put through the SHIFT (Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow) scoring process and funding is assigned based on those scores. Through its Regional Transportation Committee and the Owensboro-Daviess County MPO, GRADD submitted 12 projects worth \$152 million:

- Daviess: Reconstruct the intersection of US 60 and US 231 in Maceo to include an interchange - \$23,500,000
- Daviess: Improve Fairview Drive from Settles Lane to KY 54 - \$12,070,000
- Daviess: Reconstruct the intersection of Fairview Drive and Old Hartford Road - \$4,500,000
- Hancock: Improve connection between US 60 and Ohio River bridge in Hawesville - \$9,750,000
- Hancock: Widen US 60 from MP 2.2 to KY 1957 - \$11,150,000
- McLean: Improve alignment and address safety issues on bridges on KY 136 from KY 56 to Ohio County line - \$7,000,000
- McLean: Improve the intersection of KY 81 and KY138 – \$545,000
- Ohio: Widen a portion of KY 54 to three lanes - \$11,490,000
- Ohio: Improve alignment and address safety issues on bridges on KY 136 from McLean County line to US 231 - \$8,600,000
- Union: Address safety and service concerns on US 60 from KY 950 to KY 492 - \$23,000,000
- Union: Address safety and service concerns on US 56 from Morganfield to KY 141 - \$27,300,000
- Webster: Address service concerns on KY 630 from KY 132 in Dixon to Hopkins County line - \$23,000,000



August 2023 groundbreaking on the Owensboro Riverport KY Highway 331 Improvement Project. SOURCE: Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation Facebook



# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## QUALITY OF LIFE & HOUSING

Community services affect the quality of life of residents. Community development projects enhance the services cities and counties provide. Leveraging local funds with grant funding allows GRADD communities to develop quality recreational, public safety and public health services. With better facilities, communities can improve the quality of life of residents while retaining and attracting skilled workers who will continue growing the economy.

Several recreation projects were recently funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Parks in Morganfield and Clay are undergoing upgrades with this funding. Vastwood Park in Hancock County is getting a new spray park. Henderson is building a new sports complex to provide space for no- and low-cost youth sports organizations. Creating accessible outdoor spaces for residents to enjoy is important to local officials and appreciated by residents. Webster County recently purchased property for its first county park. Although it needs to be developed from the ground up, many in Webster County look forward to the possibilities of the outdoor spaces it will provide.



Site of Canaan Ridge Park, a new park in Webster County  
SOURCE: Webster County EMA Jeremy Moore

Fire departments ensure the safety of their communities, so it is important to ensure they are well-equipped. The community of Poole in Webster County was awarded \$111,034 to purchase new gear to help keep their firefighters protected. A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project for Dukes Fire Station in Hancock County is in progress and will begin construction in early 2024. DRA projects such as the McLean County Broadband Tower that will be completed by the end of 2023 will improve emergency service communications.

Stakeholders across all CEDS planning meetings cited a lack of available housing units as a major concern. There is a lack of adequate data showing housing needs by county; however, an NPR report from June 2022 examined 800 cities and towns, including Owensboro. The report states that the Owensboro metro area had its housing needs met between 2012-2014 but had entered a shortage between 2017-2019<sup>1</sup>. With incoming industries and a need for a growing workforce, housing developments are an urgent need in the region. GRADD CEDS collaborators cited a need for both more multi-unit dwellings and single-family homes. Progress has been made in areas such as Henderson County that will build 300 new housing units and attempts to obtain CDBG funds in Daviess County to build a 12-home subdivision under Habitat for Humanity.

Further complicating the housing issue is the rising cost of construction. Supply chain issues post-pandemic have substantially raised the cost of construction and the time needed to secure building materials. GRADD CEDS collaborators stated that state and local incentives are needed to encourage housing developers. The CEDS committee also highlighted the importance of communication between local governments and housing developers and the need for flexible, planning-led zoning reforms.

1. Arnold, Chris; Benincasa, Robert; Ganun, Jacqueline; and Chu, Haidee. *There's a massive housing shortage across the U.S. Here's how bad it is where you live.* NPR. 7/14/22



# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Climate resiliency is critical in the GRADD region, indicated by recent occurrences in extreme weather across Kentucky. In 2022 and 2023, nine severe storms, one drought, one winter storm and one flooding billion-dollar disasters affected Kentucky, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Over 28% of the 42 weather/climate disaster events in the United States since 2022 have impacted Kentucky<sup>1</sup>. These events cause costly damages to crops, buildings and infrastructure and pose threats to human lives. Efforts must be made to prevent or minimize the risks associated with these events.

GRADD's Hazard Mitigation Plan has placed a strong focus on generators at every emergency facility, ensuring that in the event of power outages, each facility can operate at full capacity. Generators have been installed at Hancock County Rescue Squad building in June, Beaver Dam Fire Department in Ohio County in April, Sacramento Fire Station in McLean County in February and three generators to power emergency facilities in Daviess County.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is strongly utilized throughout the GRADD region to fund projects to enhance resilience against climate and weather disasters. Daviess County is applying for funding to strengthen the electric power infrastructure in an area identified in the Justice40 initiative, consisting of 1,481 residential properties, multiple commercial businesses, two elementary schools and a radio station that serves as a primary source of information for the citizens of the county. These properties have proven to be especially vulnerable to strong winds.

GRADD has explored funding through programs such as Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) which supports states, local communities, tribes and territories as they undertake hazard mitigation projects to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards. Through BRIC funding, the Commonwealth is contracting each of the ADDs to produce a regional energy resilience report detailing its region's backup power needs and capabilities of critical facilities. This project started in August 2023 with the launch of the GRADD Community Energy Resiliency Survey and will conclude in mid-2024 when the final report is delivered to the state.

Additionally, energy initiatives have been at the forefront of grant research for the GRADD region, since the region is home to large coal



*Coal Communities House Bill 9 Workshop held in Murray, KY. SOURCE: White House Interagency Working Group Twitter/X @EnergyComm\_US*

producing counties impacted by the changing energy industry. In July of 2023, the Kentucky Area Development Districts hosted a two-day workshop in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy to relay information to communities about funding opportunities through House Bill 9, which created the Government Resources Accelerating Needed Transformation (GRANT) program. The GRANT program, housed within the Department for Local Government, enables priority communities to access federal funding for projects that are in the public interest and public purpose. The Energy Communities Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization was formed by Presidential Executive Order 14008 to identify priority communities affected by the decline of the coal industry and to help streamline funding and resources towards revitalizing these communities.

1. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters (2023). <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>, DOI: 10.25921/stkw-7w73

# HIGHLIGHTING RESILIENCE

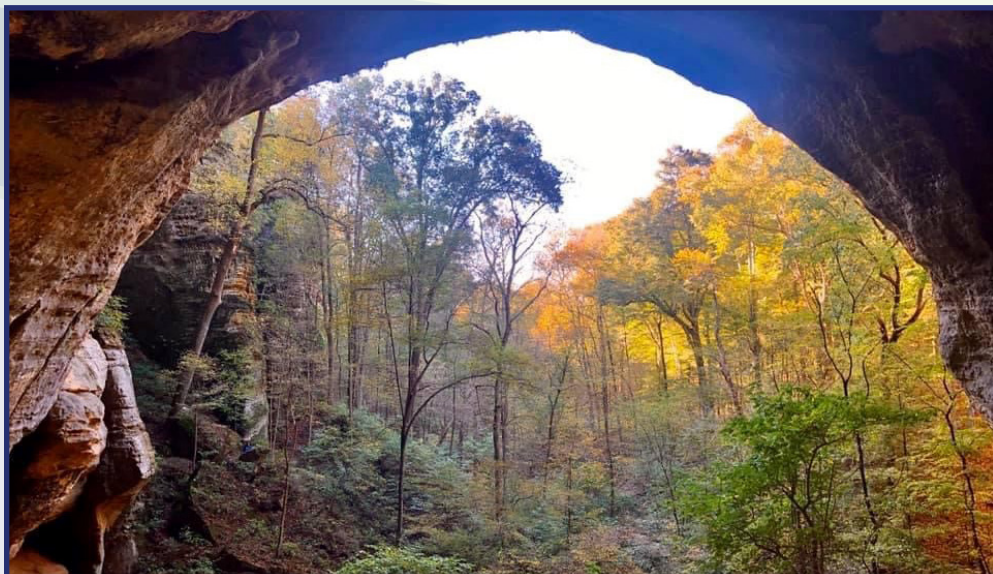
## GROWING TOURISM INDUSTRY

Owensboro remains a cultural and tourist hub for the western part of the state. Home to the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Owensboro also declared itself the Bluegrass Capitol of the World in November 2021. The RiverPark Center hosted a summer concert series, putting on free concerts for locals. The city was also home to the annual ROMP Music Festival, which boasted popular bluegrass artists including Marty Stuart and The Steeldrivers. ROMP attracts crowds of 25,000 each year from all over the world. The Owensboro-Daviess County's Convention and Visitors Bureau was awarded \$5.46 million in ARPA funds to attract more conventions and boost tourism in the area. This money is set to be used by December of 2026, the region is excited to see what this money will bring into the community in that time span.

Jeffreys Cliffs in Hancock County was included in National Geographic's "Great Outdoors U.S.A.: 1,000 Adventures Across All 50 States" published in August 2023. The book includes twenty recreational opportunities in each state open to the public. Jeffreys Cliffs was officially opened to the public in 2018 and includes several walking and hiking trails.

The City of Livermore was certified as the 25th Kentucky Trail Town. The Department of Tourism announced that Livermore in McLean County was

to be an official trail town, stating, "Outdoor recreation is a major economic driver for both Kentucky and the United States. There are thousands of miles of trails and waterways throughout the Commonwealth. These trail towns offer the perfect destination for long distance adventures or day trips and we are excited to have Livermore join the other 24 destinations who have received this designation." The Kentucky Trail Town Program is a tourism and economic development initiative designed to help towns capitalize on outdoor and travel opportunities within their communities. Activities that can be found in Livermore include sports on the Rough and Green rivers and three new bicycling routes. They are also home to a local sporting goods supply store offering a canoe and kayak livery, as well as a new River Trails Inn, providing overnight rentals.



Jeffreys Cliffs. SOURCE: Jeffreys Cliffs Conservation & Recreation Area Facebook



Brews and Balloon Festival at the Beaver Dam Amphitheater  
SOURCE: Messenger-Inquirer

The Beaver Dam Tourism Commission continues to be a hub for entertainment and community involvement in Ohio County with another year of successful events. Since its first show in 2014, the Amphitheater has hosted visitors from all 50 states and 13 countries. The City of Beaver Dam was also the recipient of the 2021 Government Award, as a part of the Governor's Awards in the Arts.



# SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis is an identification of competitive assets to a region, as well as factors that could hinder economic development. A SWOT Analysis is a helpful tool to determine what features a region has implemented or needs to implement to strengthen and grow their economy.

**Strengths** are a region's competitive advantages, such as a skilled workforce or robust broadband availability.

**Weaknesses** are a region's competitive disadvantages, such as low educational attainment or high cost of living.

**Opportunities** are chances for regional improvement or progress, such as the potential expansion of an existing industry.

**Threats** are chances for negative impacts or regional decline, such as several companies considering relocating outside of the region.

## STRENGTHS

- Precedent of collaboration between local officials and industries
- Strong collaboration between region's water and wastewater systems
- Excellent community colleges with technical training programs
- Strong network of senior centers & services
- Excellent mapping of infrastructure systems
- Strong K-12 school systems

## WEAKNESSES

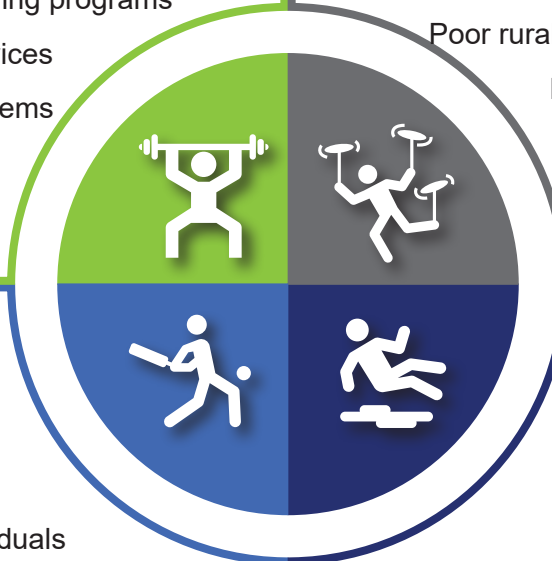
- Lack of decent affordable housing, especially single family homes and apartments
- Lack of comprehensive health care, especially in rural areas
- Poor rural accessibility to public transportation and sidewalks
- Lack of rural broadband and cell coverage
- Lack of childcare options and affordability
- Lack of four-lane highways for industries
- Lack of soft skills in labor force

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Expansion of health care facilities
- Expanding tourism industry
- Future I-69 bridge
- Reentry programs for incarcerated individuals
- Potential to attract EV battery industry to region
- Cleaner Water Grant program funds

## THREATS

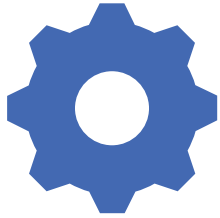
- Loss of population to larger cities
- Low workforce participation rate
- Aging infrastructure
- Declining coal industry
- Rising cost of living
- Supply chain issues
- Retiring water and wastewater operators





# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Strategic Direction outlines GRADD's broad goals and objectives for economic development for the next five years. Goals are priority general intentions for the next five years. Each goal has several objectives, which are specific, measurable and concrete targets.



## GOAL 1

Grow and cultivate the region's workforce.



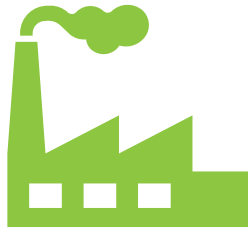
## GOAL 2

Strengthen broadband and cell availability.



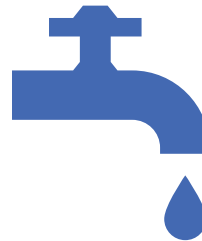
## GOAL 3

Expand access to adequate housing.



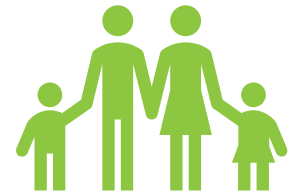
## GOAL 4

Attract new industries to the region.



## GOAL 5

Upgrade infrastructure systems.



## GOAL 6

Improve the quality of life for residents.

# GOAL 1: Grow and cultivate the region's workforce.

## OBJECTIVE 1

**Cultivate skills in the workforce by increasing the percentage of people aged 25+ with an associate degree by five percent.**

### PROGRESS

- **Dislocated Worker Trainings:** This program offers 28 credits in the I-TEC that help workers obtain associates degrees. As of May 2023, 11 dislocated workers completed all 28 credits and earned five OCTC certificates.
- **Summer Bridge Program:** 13 recent students earning 16 credit hours from Tech-X classes allowed students to work towards completion of an associate's degree.

## OBJECTIVE 2

**Develop childcare facilities in all counties to the extent that no county is considered a childcare desert.**

### PROGRESS

- \$700 million cease of temporary childcare funds across Kentucky from the federal government, which were allocated during the pandemic.

## OBJECTIVE 3

**Implement new technical education and training programs.**

### PROGRESS

- **Henderson Community College Advanced Manufacturing-** Received DRA funds to purchase additional lab stations to increase participants and advance the technology used to complete the course.
- **Union County High School-** Received \$8 million dollars to revamp the technical school that will include updating to ADA compliance, welding exhaust system renovations and updating emergency systems throughout.

# GOAL 2: Strengthen broadband and cell availability

## OBJECTIVE 1

Secure funding and work with Internet Service Providers to complete "last mile" projects to provide internet to unserved or underserved households and businesses.

### PROGRESS

- **Bipartisan Infrastructure Broadband Equity, Access and Development Program-** \$1.1 Billion dollars secured by the State to provide Kentuckians with affordable and reliable internet access in both rural and urban areas.
- **Kentucky's Better Internet Program-** House Bill 320 and House Bill 382 established Kentucky's Broadband Deployment fund to assist private sectors entities and governmental agencies in the cost of constructing "last mile" of high speed internet access to unserved and underserved households and businesses.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Increase access to 25 Mbps broadband by at least five percent in each county.

### PROGRESS

- **Kenergy Partnership with Conexon Connect-** First connections started in February 2023 in McLean County and made progression into Daviess County. In Daviess County the partnership reached its 10% milestone.
- **McLean County Broadband Tower-** Construction of 300' tower is near completion in the City of Calhoun this tower will serve 2,300 residents and provide download speeds up to 100 mbps and upload speeds up to 20 Mbps.



# GOAL 3: Expand access to adequate housing.

## OBJECTIVE 1

Encourage new housing construction through state and local incentives, such as tax incentives and streamlined zoning processes, resulting in at least 200 new housing units across the region by 2025.

### PROGRESS

- **Henderson County-** \$35 Million investment to build 300 new housing units.
- **Daviess County/Habitat for Humanity-** Applied for Community Block Grant funds to provide a Habitat for humanity subdivision that would include 12 homes in a 3-acre plot of land.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Identify and secure funding for affordable housing projects and shelters to meet the demand in each county.

### PROGRESS

- **GRADD-**The Kentucky Housing Corporation TARGETs Operating Grant program awarded GRADD \$25,000 to conduct a housing study to determine housing struggles throughout the region.
- **City of Owensboro-** Accepted \$1 million dollars in Home investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan funds for future low-income housing projects.
- Avenues for housing funds are being explored through USDA grant and loan programs and consultations with Kentucky Housing Corporation to identify sources for funding to build housing units for low-to-moderate income residents in the region.

# GOAL 4: Attract new industries to the region.

## OBJECTIVE 1

Coordinate with the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development to identify and market potential sites for investors with a goal of securing at least one new industrial investment in each county.

### PROGRESS

- **Mine System Solutions-** Union County received a \$7.1 million investment through Union County Industrial Development Authority, GRADD and community banks to secure Mine Systems Solutions (MSS) that is one of only six companies worldwide who service electric haul trucks used in heavy mining operations.
- **Alliance Coal** broke ground on a \$35 million coal mine project in Henderson County, bringing close to 300 new high paying jobs into the region.
- **Pratt Paper** completed construction on a \$500 million investment in Henderson County and has created over 300 jobs.
- **Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation-** A municipal order was made supporting the GOEDC's submittal of an economic development application to the Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet for matching funds to develop a 184-acre industrial park to attract new industries.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Attract new industries in emerging clusters, especially distilling and electric vehicle battery production.

### PROGRESS

- **Western Kentucky Distilling Co. -** Ohio County has completed its first rickhouse in the Western Kentucky Distillery and plans to open to the public in September of 2023 and will continue to expand the bourbon industry in Ohio County.
- **Green River Distilling-**Hancock County has completed one rickhouse to store bourbon for Green River Distillery and is in progress of constructing eight more. This project will initially start with 15 jobs created and rise to 25 by fourth year operation.

# GOAL 5: Upgrade infrastructure systems.

**OBJECTIVE 1** Develop water, wastewater and transportation infrastructure to priority industrial sites.

## PROGRESS

- **Webster County** received \$2 million to purchase land in the City of Providence for the extension of water and sewer lines to attract investment opportunities.

**OBJECTIVE 2** Develop four-lane highways to encourage new industry and improve traffic flow.

## PROGRESS

- **Hancock County**- In April of 2023 work began to widen Hwy 60 to accommodate high volumes of traffic flow and industrial traffic.
- **Daviess County**- Accepted a \$23.38 million bid to begin on construction of Hwy 54 to widen to help increase flow of traffic.

**OBJECTIVE 3** Secure funding for water and wastewater projects identified in the WRIS portal.

## PROGRESS

- **Senate Bill 36 and House Bill 1 Clean Water Grant Program**- GRADD region received over \$8 million in the first round of funding and over \$13 million the second round of funding.
- Projects completed with this funding were HWY 54 water line relocation, City of Sebree sanitary sewer replacement and multiple meter replacement projects.

**OBJECTIVE 4** Secure funding for projects identified in the GRADD Hazard Mitigation Plan.

## PROGRESS

- GRADD is in the final stages of completing a risk assessment add-on to the GRADD Hazard Mitigation Plan. An outcome of the project is the addition of new local hazard mitigation strategies for each GRADD county to assess existing projects and cross utilize state and federal funding opportunities aimed at hazard mitigation and infrastructure resilience.



# GOAL 6: Improve the quality of life for residents.

## OBJECTIVE 1

Create and develop community facilities including fire stations, libraries, senior centers, parks, community centers, sidewalks, public transit, etc.

### PROGRESS

- **Webster County Senior Center-** received \$319,356 in funds through CDBG to provide an open outdoor space that can enclose to provide a safe area to spread out and enjoy outdoor space and installation of ADA compliant ramps.
- **City of Morganfield-** received \$144,625 in Land and Water Conservation Funds to build an accessible splash pad, ADA bathroom and parking lot.
- **Union County Moffit Lake-** received \$100,000 in Land and Water Conservation funds to repave existing roadways and a basketball court.
- **Dukes Fire Station-**received CDBG funds to construct a new fire station with plans to begin construction at the beginning of 2024.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Identify and secure funding for the development of healthcare facilities and initiative, including mental health and substance use treatment.

### PROGRESS

- **Yellow Banks Recovery Center-** Opened its doors in August of 2023 in the City of Owensboro to help serve those in recovery with job training, education and life skills. Yellow Banks will eventually serve 300 women healing from addiction.
- **The Center of Addiction Recovery of Henderson Inc-** The WARM facility under the Center of Addiction Recovery of Henderson received funds from the CDBG funds to support administrative cost.
- Kentucky announced \$40 million for regional educational cooperatives, comprising school districts, to give the money to major universities in their area to be used to recruit, train and educate mental health professionals for grade school children in each region.

# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework is a set of measures selected to track economic progress. These measures gauge how successful the goals and objectives in the Strategic Direction have been towards economic growth and increasing prosperity.

	2010	2020	2025 Goal
<b>Percentage of owner-occupied housing units<sup>1</sup></b>	72.0%	68.9%	70%
<b>Cost-burdened households* - Renters<sup>1</sup></b>	42.7%	39.1%	38%
<b>Cost-burdened households* - Homeowners with a mortgage<sup>1</sup></b>	26.1%	23.6%	22%
<b>Percentage of housing constructed after 2014<sup>1</sup></b>	**	2.5%	10%
<b>Poverty rate<sup>1</sup></b>	16.8%	16.8%	15.8%
<b>High school graduation rate<sup>2</sup></b>	82.4%	89.1%	92.0%
<b>Associate degree holders in population 25 years and over<sup>1</sup></b>	11,393	14,512	16,000
<b>Employment in manufacturing sector 16 years and over<sup>1</sup></b>	19,317	18,189	19,000
<b>Labor force participation rate<sup>1</sup></b>	59.5%	58.7%	60%
<b>Total number of people in the civilian labor force<sup>1</sup></b>	99,762	100,276	102,000
<b>Percentage of women in the civilian labor force<sup>1</sup></b>	65.9%	53.8%	55%
<b>Number of shovel-ready sites<sup>4</sup></b>	**	14	16
<b>Number of build-ready sites<sup>4</sup></b>	**	3	5
<b>Percent of households with access to 25 Mbps broadband<sup>1</sup></b>	†	†	≥90% in all counties
<b>Annual median household income<sup>1</sup></b>	†	†	+5% in all counties

1. United States Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

2. Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky's School Report Card

\*monthly housing costs greater than or equal to 30% of household income

\*\*data not available

†data available by county in the statistics pages of this document

# DAVIESS COUNTY STATISTICS

## POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

2021 Population      Change Since 2010

**102,488**      **+7.43%**

Median Age

**38.7**

Median Household Income

**\$57,660**

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line

**13.6%**

Percent of Population with Disability

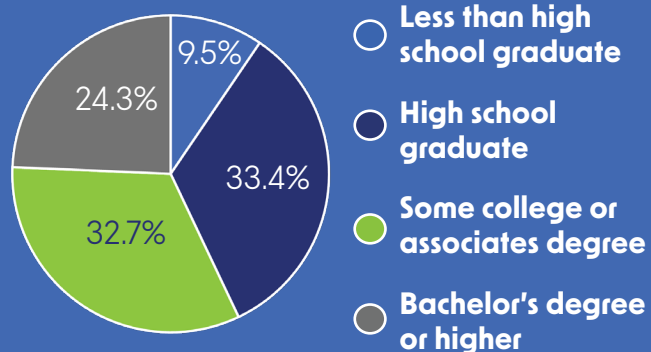
**11.4%**

Limited English Proficiency Population

**2,029**

## EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



## WORKFORCE<sup>1</sup>

Total Labor Force

**62,965**

Labor Force Participation

**61.7%**

Annual Average  
Unemployment Rate<sup>2</sup>

**4.3%**

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Manufacturing	7,652 employees
	Health Care & Social Assistance	7,546 employees
	Retail Trade	5,027 employees
	Educational Services	4,063 employees
	Accommodation & Food Services	3,099 employees

## HOUSING<sup>1</sup>

Cost Burdened Households

Paying rent

**40.5%**

With a mortgage

**25.4%**

Without a mortgage

**9.2%**

Median Home Value

**\$150,600**

Households with Broadband Internet Subscription

**86.5%**

Housing Occupancy

66.6%

Owner

33.4%

Renter

Age of Housing Units

**2014 or Later**

3.3%

**2000 to 2013**

13.9%

**1980 to 1999**

10.4%

**1960 to 1979**

31.8%

**Prior to 1960**

27.1%

## COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Upgrade the Audubon and Natcher Parkways to interstate standards.
- Expand broadband accessibility in the county and provide redundancy in fiber optics.
- Increase public awareness of drug abuse and strengthen treatment opportunities.
- Continue identification and development of industrial parks.
- Promote regionalism among the GRADD counties, particularly in terms of solid waste coordination, animal shelters, prisons, and E911 call centers.

### Sources

1. United States Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2021 Annual Averages



# HANCOCK COUNTY STATISTICS

## POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

2021 Population      Change Since 2010  
**9,050**                      **+5.79%**

Median Age  
**40.2**

Median Household Income  
**\$61,622**

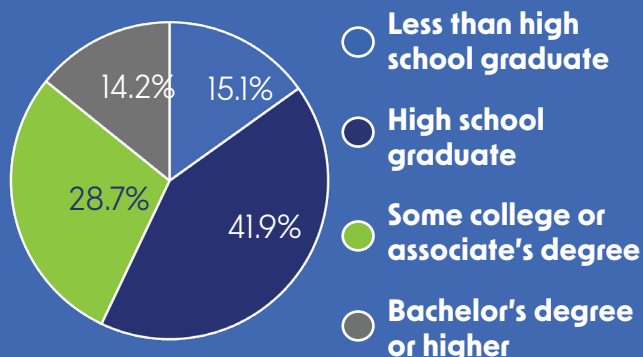
Percent of Population Below Poverty Line  
**12.6%**

Percent of Population with Disability  
**18.2%**

Limited English Proficiency Population  
**27**

## EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



## WORKFORCE<sup>1</sup>

Total Labor Force

**6,898**



Labor Force Participation

**57.1%**

Annual Average  
Unemployment Rate<sup>2</sup>

**4.4%**

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Manufacturing	1,344 employees
	Health Care & Social Assistance	474 employees
	Retail Trade	428 employees
	Educational Services	296 employees
	Construction	164 employees

## HOUSING<sup>1</sup>

Cost Burdened Households

Paying rent

**45.2%**

With a mortgage

**16.8%**

Without a mortgage

**5.8%**

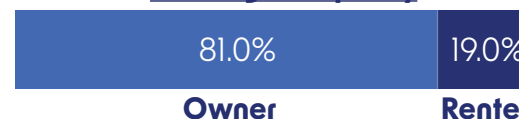
Median Home Value

**\$112,600**

Households with Broadband Internet Subscription

**82.6%**

Housing Occupancy



Age of Housing Units

**2014 or Later**

1.6%

**2000 to 2013**

17.6%

**1980 to 1999**

13.6%

**1960 to 1979**

31.4%

**Prior to 1960**

15.8%

## COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Complete broadband build-out with Kenergy/Conexon for all county residents.
- Widen Highway 60 to accommodate an increase in truck traffic.
- Completely upgrade all emergency and protective services radio communications.
- Continue to upgrade county parks, including the splash pad project at Vastwood Park, and work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote growth.
- Continue to attract businesses of all sizes and promote economic development.

Sources

1. United States Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2021 Annual Averages

# HENDERSON COUNTY STATISTICS

## POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

2021 Population      Change Since 2010

**45,102**      **-1.83%**

Median Age

**41.0**

Median Household Income

**\$53,635**

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line

**12.4%**

Percent of Population with Disability

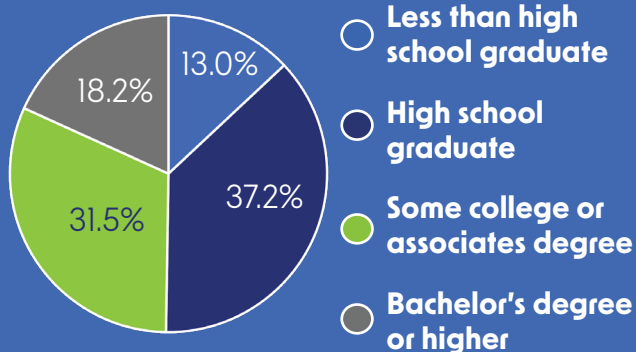
**21.7%**

Limited English Proficiency Population

**446**

## EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



## WORKFORCE<sup>1</sup>

Total Labor Force

**21,273**



Labor Force Participation

**58.2%**

Annual Average  
Unemployment Rate<sup>2</sup>

**4.5%**

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Manufacturing	3,904 employees
	Health Care & Social Assistance	3,509 employees
	Retail Trade	2,032 employees
	Construction	1,711 employees
	Educational Services	1,484 employees

## HOUSING<sup>1</sup>

Cost Burdened Households

Paying rent

**42.5%**

With a mortgage

**24.0%**

Without a mortgage

**13.6%**

Median Home Value

**\$136,100**

Households with Broadband Internet Subscription

**81.8%**

Housing Occupancy

63.4%

Owner

36.6%

Renter

Age of Housing Units

**2014 or Later**

1.8%

**2000 to 2013**

12.4%

**1980 to 1999**

14.9%

**1960 to 1979**

30.1%

**Prior to 1960**

27.6%

## COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Support efforts to build the I-69 Ohio River bridge.
- Improve internet service in underserved parts of the county.
- Support and complement the Henderson Economic Development agency's efforts in industrial recruitment/expansion and small business development.
- Promote the services and programs at Henderson Community College and Henderson County High School's Career and Technical Education program.
- Maintain and improve infrastructure to support local businesses and industries and improve the quality of life for residents.

### Sources

1. United States Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2021 Annual Averages

# MCLEAN COUNTY STATISTICS

## POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

2021 Population      Change Since 2010  
**9,182**                      **-4.70%**

Median Age  
**43.8**

Median Household Income  
**\$57,027**

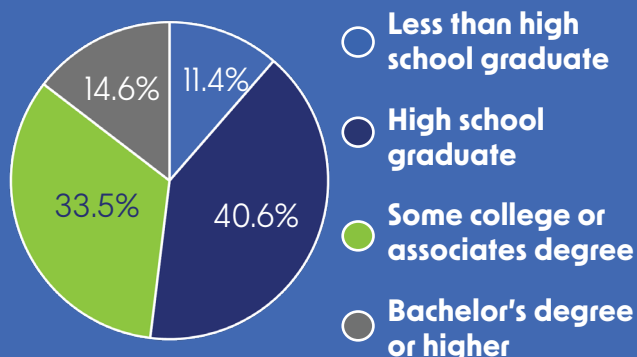
Percent of Population Below Poverty Line  
**13.6%**

Percent of Population with Disability  
**21.5%**

Limited English Proficiency Population  
**79**

## EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>




Attainment for Population 25 years and older



## WORKFORCE<sup>1</sup>

Total Labor Force  
**3,991**  
 Labor Force Participation  
**54.4%**  
 Annual Average  
 Unemployment Rate<sup>2</sup>  
**4.3%**

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Manufacturing	601 employees
	Health Care & Social Assistance	489 employees
	Retail Trade	402 employees
	Educational Services	318 employees
	Construction	274 employees

## HOUSING<sup>1</sup>

Cost Burdened Households

Paying rent

**41.6%**

With a mortgage

**19.7%**

Without a mortgage

**8.2%**

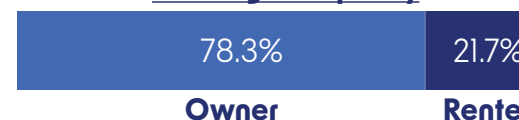
Median Home Value

**\$119,100**

Households with Broadband Internet Subscription

**80.1%**

Housing Occupancy



Age of Housing Units

**2014 or Later**

0.9%

**2000 to 2013**

10.6%

**1980 to 1999**

13.1%

**1960 to 1979**

37.2%

**Prior to 1960**

23.6%

## COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Complete the reconstruction of the county senior center.
- Seek funding to improve recreational opportunities for residents, especially at Myer Creek Park.
- Encourage new small businesses to open in vacant storefront lots.
- Promote economic development initiatives and site development.
- Analyze county-wide water system to evaluate issues and the need for replacements and improvements.

Sources

1. United States Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2021 Annual Averages



# OHIO COUNTY STATISTICS

## POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

2021 Population      Change Since 2010

**23,861**      **+0.10%**

Median Age

**40.5**

Median Household Income

**\$48,481**

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line

**16.3%**

Percent of Population with Disability

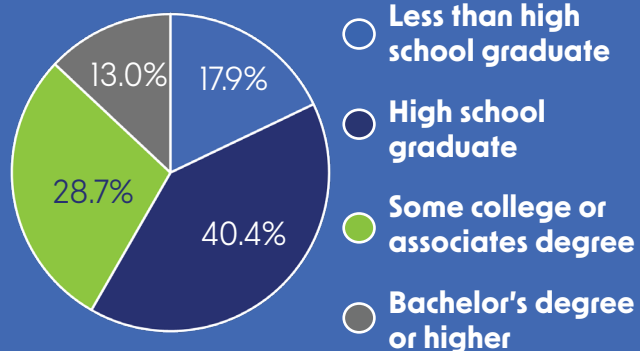
**17.8%**

Limited English Proficiency Population

**353**

## EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



## WORKFORCE<sup>1</sup>

Total Labor Force

**10,777**

Labor Force Participation

**57.0%**

Annual Average  
Unemployment Rate<sup>2</sup>

**5.5%**

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Manufacturing	2,213 employees
	Health Care & Social Assistance	1,199 employees
	Retail Trade	1,086 employees
	Educational Services	961 employees
	Construction	753 employees

## HOUSING<sup>1</sup>

Cost Burdened Households

Paying rent

**28.6%**

With a mortgage

**24.5%**

Without a mortgage

**8.0%**

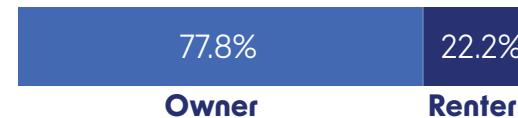
Median Home Value

**\$94,800**

Households with Broadband Internet Subscription

**76.6%**

Housing Occupancy



Age of Housing Units

**2014 or Later**

2.4%

**2000 to 2013**

18.9%

**1980 to 1999**

13.1%

**1960 to 1979**

28.1%

**Prior to 1960**

19.9%

## COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Increase availability of housing.
- Complete efforts to build a regional jail.
- Expand tourism and construct an annex at the Bill Monroe Bluegrass Museum.
- Improve roads.
- Improve parks and outdoor recreation areas, especially through creative funding mechanisms.

### Sources

1. United States Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2021 Annual Averages

# UNION COUNTY STATISTICS

## POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

2021 Population      Change Since 2010

**13,786**      **-8.56%**

Median Age

**39.0**

Median Household Income

**\$50,533**

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line

**18.4%**

Percent of Population with Disability

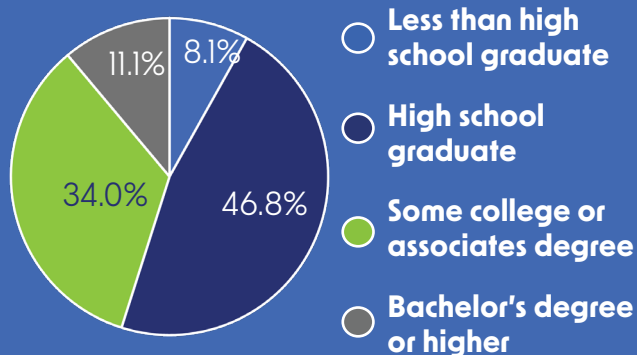
**22.7%**

Limited English Proficiency Population

**142**

## EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



## WORKFORCE<sup>1</sup>

Total Labor Force

**6,642**






Labor Force Participation

**54.3%**

Annual Average  
Unemployment Rate<sup>2</sup>

**4.4%**

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Manufacturing	1,071 employees
	Health Care & Social Assistance	936 employees
	Retail Trade	562 employees
	Construction	491 employees
	Mining, Quarrying & Oil & Gas Extraction	435 employees

## HOUSING<sup>1</sup>

Cost Burdened Households

Paying rent

**26.6%**

With a mortgage

**11.4%**

Without a mortgage

**7.8%**

Median Home Value

**\$90,700**

Households with Broadband Internet Subscription

**80.7%**

Housing Occupancy

71.2%

Owner

28.8%

Renter

Age of Housing Units

**2014 or Later**

1.1%

**2000 to 2013**

9.8%

**1980 to 1999**

16.3%

**1960 to 1979**

31.1%

**Prior to 1960**

31.9%

## COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Work with the State Highway Department to widen US HWY 60 from Henderson Community College to Morganfield.
- Acquire land and develop to build ready status for economic development.
- Acquire land for housing development to generate population growth to coincide with economic development projects.
- Construct a county Emergency Operations Center with potential for future growth.
- Extend broadband service to residents not covered by the current rural broadband project.

Sources

1. United States Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2021 Annual Averages

# WEBSTER COUNTY STATISTICS

## POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

2021 Population      Change Since 2010  
**12,994**                      **-5.39%**

Median Age  
**40.1**

Median Household Income  
**\$47,051**

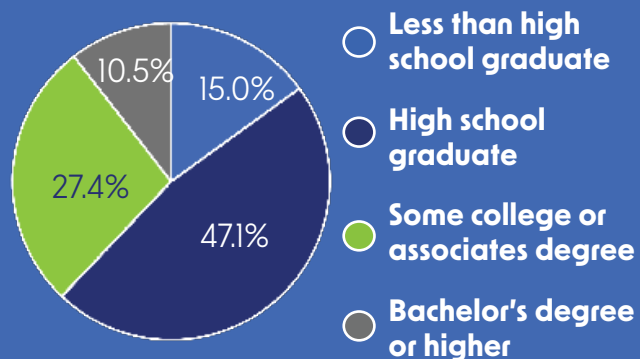
Percent of Population Below Poverty Line  
**15.7%**

Percent of Population with Disability  
**27.5%**

Limited English Proficiency Population  
**234**

## EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



## WORKFORCE<sup>1</sup>

Total Labor Force

**5,338**

Labor Force Participation

**51.6%**

Annual Average  
Unemployment Rate<sup>2</sup>

**4.5%**

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Manufacturing	1,404 employees
	Health Care & Social Assistance	632 employees
	Retail Trade	484 employees
	Educational Services	443 employees
	Transportation & Warehousing	431 employees

## HOUSING<sup>1</sup>

Cost Burdened Households

Paying rent

**29.3%**

With a mortgage

**27.5%**

Without a mortgage

**15.2%**

Median Home Value

**\$75,600**

Households with Broadband Internet Subscription

**75.3%**

Housing Occupancy



Age of Housing Units

**2014 or Later**

2.3%

**2000 to 2013**

8.7%

**1980 to 1999**

14.1%

**1960 to 1979**

26.6%

**Prior to 1960**

34.3%

## COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Improve broadband access and speeds throughout the county.
- Open Canaan Ridge Park to provide new recreational opportunities to residents and encourage recreation tourism.
- Encourage economic development along the I-69 corridor.
- Support business development.
- Increase availability of housing.

### Sources

1. United States Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2021 Annual Averages



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