

Community Needs Assessment

Crook County

2020



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Introduction and Overview

In 1964, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act as part of America's War on Poverty. This act created a funding stream for communities to address poverty on the local level. Today, each state receives Community Services Block Program (CSBG) funds according to a statutory formula. In turn, states fund a network of local entities for the purpose of assisting low-income individuals and families with activities and support services that empower them to overcome the effects of poverty and to support their progress towards greater self-sufficiency.

The Wyoming Department of Health administers CSBG funds in Wyoming. In the federal fiscal year 2020, there were 17 CSBG agencies in Wyoming that provided CSBG assistance in 23 counties. These agencies consist of public and nonprofit entities. There are three national goals of CSBG:

1. Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
2. Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
3. People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in their communities.

Community Needs Assessments are a requirement of CSBG. The Community Needs Assessment is a systematic process for creating a profile of the needs and resources of a given community or target population. CSBG funding priorities are based on needs and resources in the community.

Western States Learning Corporation, d/b/a Align, was the grantee for the CSBG funds for Crook County from October 2018 to September 2020. Align stepped into this role until a local or regional grantee could be identified. Align is a Wyoming-based nonprofit headquartered in Cheyenne that works across the state and region. Align's mission is to create stronger communities by partnering with nonprofits, government, and businesses for more impactful, successful organizations and programs.

During Align's tenure as the grantee for Crook County, CSBG funds were utilized for assisting households with rent and mortgage payments, utility bills and health expenses. Recipients of these funds must meet income eligibility requirements. Effective October 2020, Goshen Help is the grantee for Crook County. Goshen Help's mission is to improve the quality of life for people in need by empowering them to become more self-sufficient. They will be utilizing the findings from this Community Needs Assessment in developing priorities for funding services.

This Community Needs Assessment was conducted by Align through two separate contracts with the Wyoming Department of Health's Public Health Division. One contract was for the purpose of funding and oversight of the CSBG program in Crook County. The second contract expanded the Assessment scope to include a health component. Many of the CSBG requirements for a Community Needs Assessment overlap with Community Health Needs Assessment requirements.

Align consulted with the Wyoming Department of Health's Office of Rural Health and Community Service Program in defining the process for this collaborative community needs

assessment. This included the formation of a local advisory group for the assessment process, which included Crook County Medical Services District leadership as well as representatives from other agencies and organizations.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges for this Assessment process. Originally, the timeline for the Assessment was from May 2020 through August 2020. Typically, Align would be in the communities conducting interviews and working with local agencies and the hospital in the distribution of surveys. Due to the pandemic, the Assessment process was put on hold. In July, another strategy was identified. This strategy included phone interviews instead of in-person interviews. Also, surveys would be mailed to households instead of distributed through local agencies and the hospital.

The information contained in the Community Needs Assessment analyzes and synthesizes many types of information, including quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources. Align collected demographic information, as well as data specific to poverty and its prevalence as related to gender, age and race/ethnicity for the service areas. Quantitative data was also collected in the areas of cost of living, income, housing, food insecurity, employment, education and health. All sources of information are noted in this report.

Qualitative data is the process of collecting people's opinions and observations. This information was collected through a combination of key informant interviews and the Community Needs Assessment Survey.

The local advisory group members were interviewed as part of the process. Advisory group members also helped identify additional interviewees. There were 18 individuals, representing 17 different agencies/organizations, interviewed in September. The list of interviewees is included in this report.

The Community Needs Assessment Survey was distributed to 3,279 households in Crook County. There were a total of 582 surveys completed for a 18% response rate. The complete survey results are in this report.

Following the Introduction and Key Findings, the report is broken into sections by topic area. Each topic area incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data.

Align is extremely grateful to the multitude of people and agencies that contributed to this report. Without the information provided from agencies and the thoughtful input from residents of Crook County, this Assessment would not have been possible. The project lead for this Assessment was Jody Shields, Vice President, Align. Any questions about this report can be directed to her at jshields@TheAlignTeam.org or 307-772-9148.

Key Findings

As mentioned in the Introduction and Overview section, Align utilized key informant interviews and the Community Needs Assessment Survey to gather input for this report.

When interviewees were asked what their county's strengths were, most cited small town living with community members that help each other. Several interviewees mentioned an environment of teamwork and collaboration. When asked about the greatest challenges, the most common responses were lack of resources and services due to size. Several interviewees mentioned cell service and internet access as a challenge.

According to the most recent U.S. Census data available, Crook County's population has increased by 7% since the 2010 U.S. Census. In Crook County, 19% of the population is over 65 years of age. This compares to 15% for Wyoming as a whole. As stakeholders use the information in this report in developing funding and service priorities, it will be important to compare the demographic data in this report to the 2020 U.S. Census data when it becomes available.

The Median Household Income for Crook County is \$64,055, which is more than Wyoming overall (\$62,268). According to the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), the poverty rate is 8%, compared to Wyoming overall, which is 11%.

Most interviewees rated the local economy as fair to poor or struggling. They cited the loss of energy sector jobs and the impacts of COVID-19 closures on small businesses as the main reasons for this rating.

Low-Income Individuals and Families

To determine the greatest areas of need for low-income individuals and families, Align used quantitative data, survey responses and key informant interviews. Align was able to extract survey data for households that were near or below 200% of the poverty guidelines. The following needs were identified as priorities:

- Food assistance; Money for gas
- Employment opportunities (livable wage)
- Mental health services and medical services
- Housing assistance

When asked if these needs changed with the current pandemic, the majority of interviewees responded that the needs haven't change. The reader of this report will find information on each of the needs listed above in the sections that follow. Job opportunities is addressed in the Employment section.

Health Needs

The Community Needs Assessment Survey asked what services they would like to see offered in their local healthcare facilities. The top responses were:

1. Physical therapy
2. Women's health
3. Same day surgery

When asked what the three most pressing health concerns were in the county, the top responses were:

1. Cost of healthcare
2. Cancer
3. Prescription drug affordability

The cost of healthcare issue rose to the top in several other survey responses and in interviews. See the Cost of Living and Health Sections, as well as the Community Needs Assessment Survey in this report.

The following health education needs were identified:

1. Healthy lifestyle education
2. Health screenings
3. Mental health education

When survey respondents were asked what needed to be added, changed, or removed to improve their access to and use of medical services in the county, the top three responses were:

- More services and medical staff
 - Access/availability of more doctors
 - Clinics – extending hours, urgent care, walk-in care
- More affordable healthcare
- Increased public relations so community members are aware of services and providers

This Assessment utilized the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program to look at health outcomes and health factors. Crook County ranked 2 out of 23 counties in Wyoming in health outcomes and #3 health factors. The report highlighted the following areas for improvement: adult smoking, adult obesity, alcohol-impaired driving deaths, uninsured population, number of primary care physicians, number of dentists, mammography screening and flu vaccinations.

A shortage of mental health providers is a challenge across the state. When survey respondents were asked if they have a mental health specialist they can go to, 54% of the respondents replied "no". A lack of mental health providers was an issue brought up by several interviewees. In addition to cost, one of the barriers to accessing mental health is societal stigma.

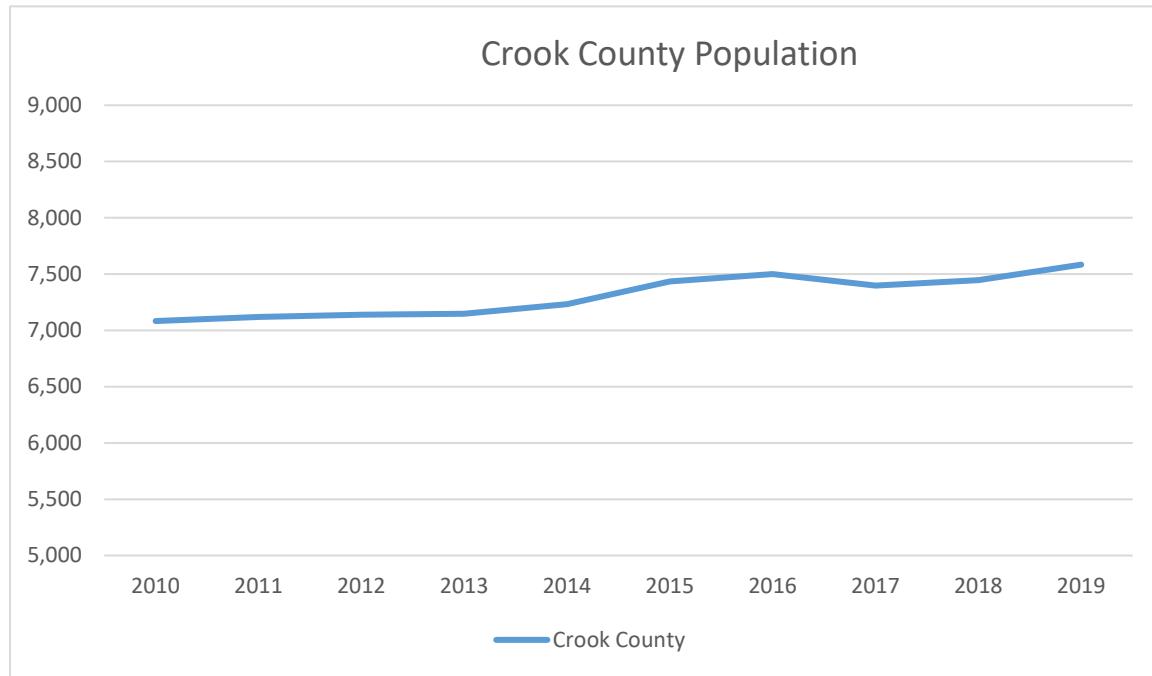
Additional information can be found in the Health Section of this report.

Demographics

The estimated population of Crook County in 2019 was 7,584. This reflects a 7.07% increase in population since the 2010 Census. Note, these figures are based on annual population estimates.

Crook County Population by Year

2019 Population Estimate	2015 Population Estimate	2010 Census Population
7,584	7,435	7,083



Population – Incorporated city/towns and outside of city/town limits

	2019 Estimate	2010 Census
Total Population	7,584	7,083
Sundance	1,292	1,182
Moorcroft	1,084	1,009
Hulett	427	383
Pine Haven	548	490
All other	4,233	4,019

U.S. Census, Population Division – Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places in Wyoming; 2010 Census, 2019 Population Estimates

Population – Gender and Age

The most recent population data break down by gender and age is the U.S. Census 2018 5-Year Estimate. There has been a slight decline in the number of people that are 45 to 64 years old and an increase in the number of people over the age of 65. These figures are based on the ACS 5-Year Estimates.

2018 Population Estimate and 2010 Census by Gender and Age

	2018 Estimate	2010 Census	Percent Change
Total Population	7,410	7,083	4.62%
Gender:			
Male	3,730	3,648	2.25%
Female	3,680	3,435	7.13%
Age:			
Under 5	517	500	3.40%
5 to 19 years	1,410	1,339	5.30%
20 to 44 years	1,899	1,834	3.54%
45 to 64 years	2,211	2,260	-2.17%
65 and over	1,373	1,150	19.39%

U.S. Census Bureau – 2010 Census, 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimate

2018 Population Estimate Comparison

	Crook County Percentage	Wyoming Percentage
Gender:		
Male	53.07%	50.34%
Female	46.93%	49.66%
Age:		
Under 5	6.98%	6.41%
5 to 19 years	19.03%	19.83%
20 to 44 years	25.63%	32.97%
45 to 64 years	29.84%	25.71%
65 and over	18.53%	15.09%

U.S. Census Bureau – 2010 Census, 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Race

Race	Percent
White alone	96.2%
Black or African American alone	1.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.0%
Asian alone	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone	0%
Two or more races	1.1%
Hispanic or Latino	2.5%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	94.0%

U.S. Census – Population Estimates, July 1, 2019

Cost of Living

The State of Wyoming's Economic Analysis Division produces the Wyoming Cost of Living Index (WCLI) Report biannually. The Comparative Cost of Living Index compares each county's cost of living in one period (not over time) to the statewide average (100). Price data are collected in Wyoming cities and towns and the data is used to build a Comparative Cost of Living Index by county. There are 140 consumer items surveyed and then aggregated into six categories. These categories are then weighted to reflect their overall importance in the average consumer's budget. The categories and respective weights are:

Housing	48.4%
Transportation	16.3%
Food	13.3%
Recreation & Personal Care	9.5%
Medical	8.7%
Apparel	3.8%

For the second quarter of 2020, the Comparative Cost of Living Index ranked Crook County 95 for all items, which is lower than the statewide average of 100. However, five of the six categories were higher than the statewide average. The highest category was Medical at 109. The lowest category was housing at 86. As stated, these values reflect relative price levels at the time of data collection, not over time.

Crook County Cost of Living Index

All Items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Transportation	Medical	Recreation & Personal Care
95	103	86	106	103	109	102

Wyoming Economic Analysis Division - The Wyoming Comparative Cost of Living Index: 2nd Quarter, 2020

Survey Results and Interviews

Medical Costs

The Community Needs Assessment Survey included questions related to health care costs.

Survey Question: "In the past three years, was there a time when you or a member of your household thought you needed health services but did NOT receive or were delayed in receiving medical services?"

Out of the 568 respondents to this question, 17% answered "yes". The follow-up question for those that answered "yes", was 'What was the primary reason(s) you did not receive health care services? Out of the 98 respondents, 35% selected "It costs too much".

Survey Question: “Are medical, dental or prescription co-pays a large enough problem that you postpone or go without services or prescriptions”

Of the 565 respondents to this question, 26% replied “yes”.

Survey Question: “In your opinion, what are the three most pressing health concerns in the county?” *A list of choices was provided.*

“Cost of healthcare” ranked number one and “Prescription drug affordability” ranked number three.

When survey respondents were asked what needed to be added, changed or removed to improve their access to and use of medical services in the county, the second most common response was “lower healthcare costs”.

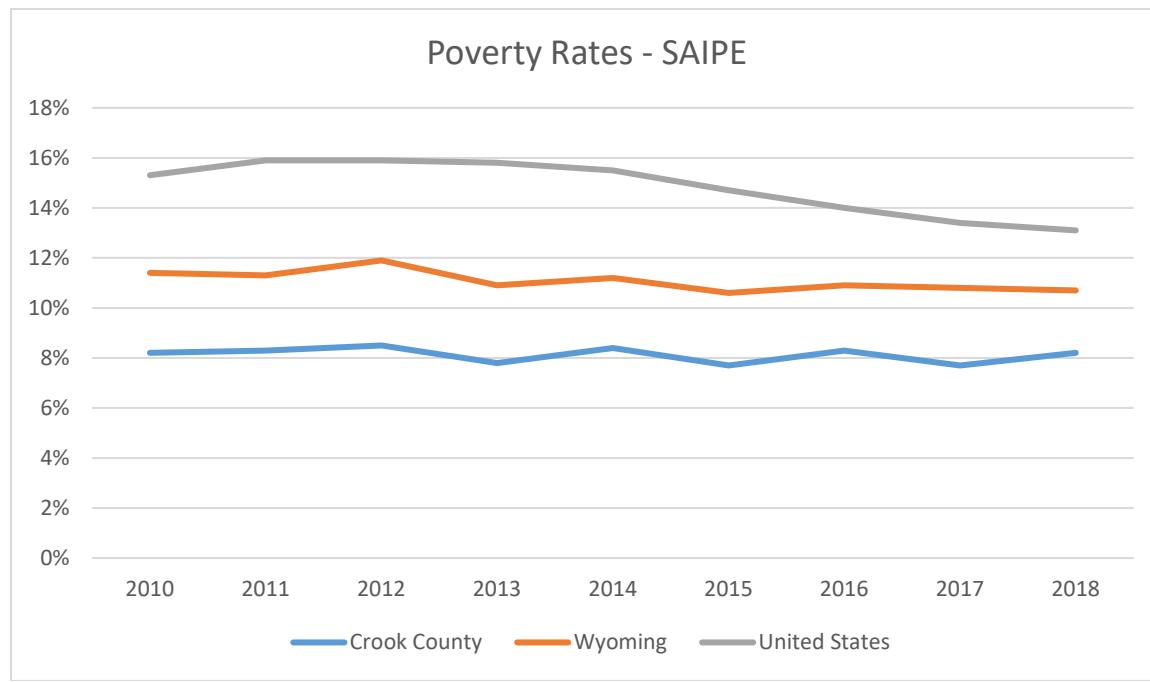
Several interviewees noted that medical costs were a barrier or limitation to accessing health and mental health services. Many cited that this was one factor for people utilizing medical services in Spearfish and Gillette.

Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau reports poverty data from several different household surveys and programs. This report contains two different estimates: The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) and the American Community Survey (ACS).

SAIPE are model-based estimates of income and poverty produced annually for school districts, counties, and states. The U.S. Census Bureau states “SAIPE estimates are specifically designed for use in annual Title 1 allocations to school districts. The SAIPE methodology combines the 1-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates with other data sources to provide more timely, precise, and stable estimates than the 5-year ACS estimates”. SAIPE provides these estimates for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions.

According to SAIPE, Crook County’s poverty rate was 8.2% in 2018. Wyoming was 10.7% in 2018. There have been slight variations over the past eight years as indicated in the chart below. The highest percentage was 8.5% in 2012 and the lowest was 7.7% in 2015.



U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

While the SAIPE estimates are more precise and stable than the 5-year ACS estimates alone, the ACS provides some additional information. The table below reflects Crook County percentages for the 2018 5-Year Estimate based on the ACS.

	Percent below poverty level	
	Crook County	Wyoming
All Population	6.7%	11.1%
Gender:		
Male	4.9%	9.7%
Female	8.6%	12.6%
Age		
Under 18 years	1.3%	12.8%
18 to 34 years	4.7%	16.7%
35 to 64 years	8.5%	8.1%
65 years and over	12.1%	7.9%
Race/Ethnicity		
White alone	7%	10.5%
Black or African American alone	0%	12.4%
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	0%	24.3%
Asian alone	0%	18.5%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	-	4.8%
Some other race alone	43.8%	23.5%
Two or more races	0%	13.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	16.1%	21.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	6.9%	9.6%

US Census - 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates

*not including in this report due to high margin of error

The US Department of Health and Human Services has two slightly different versions of the federal poverty measure: poverty thresholds and poverty guidelines.

The **poverty thresholds** are the original version of the federal poverty measure. They are updated each year by the Census Bureau. The thresholds are used mainly for statistical purposes. All official poverty population figures are calculated using the poverty thresholds, not the guidelines as explained below.

The **poverty guidelines** are the other version of the federal poverty measure. They are issued each year in the Federal Register by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The guidelines are a simplification of the poverty thresholds for use for administrative purposes such as determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs. See the next page for the current Poverty Guidelines.

2020 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia

Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
1	\$12,760
2	\$17,240
3	\$21,720
4	\$26,200
5	\$30,680
6	\$35,160
7	\$39,640
8	\$44,120
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,480 for each additional person.	

US Department of Health and Human Services

Survey Results and Interviews

Align extracted survey results for households near or below 200% of the poverty guideline. There were 111 households that were in this group. Survey responses specific to this group are noted in selected sections in this report.

When asked about the key drivers for poverty in Crook County, many of the interviewees cited limited job opportunities within the county, lack of education and generational poverty. When asked what would help individuals and families in becoming self-sufficient, job opportunities, education/training and housing assistance were the most common responses.

When interviewees were asked their opinion on why Crook County's poverty rate is lower than Wyoming's poverty rate, the responses were mixed. Some of the more common responses were relative stability of ranching, larger employers in county are steady, and the fact that Crook County is a bedroom community.

CSBG Program

From October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019, 16 Crook County households were assisted as part of the Community Service Block Grant Program. The average amount of the aid was \$907.21 A total of \$14,515.76 was distributed. Of that total, 70% went towards rent assistance, 14% towards utilities assistance and 16% for health expenses.

From October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, seven Crook County households were assisted as part of the CSBG Program. The average amount of aid was \$1,040.75. A total of \$7,285.22 was distributed. Of that total, 66% went towards rent, 21% went towards utilities, 9% went towards mortgage assistance and 4% went towards health expenses.

Additional Wyoming Data

Wyoming 2-1-1 is a statewide helpline and website that provides free, confidential health and human services information and referral. By dialing 2-1-1 or visiting the website from anywhere in the state of Wyoming, people are linked to information about local nonprofit and government resources.

In a 12-month period from October 2019 to September 2020, Wyoming 2-1-1 received 23 calls from Crook County. The number one need was for utility service payment assistance followed by mental health referrals.

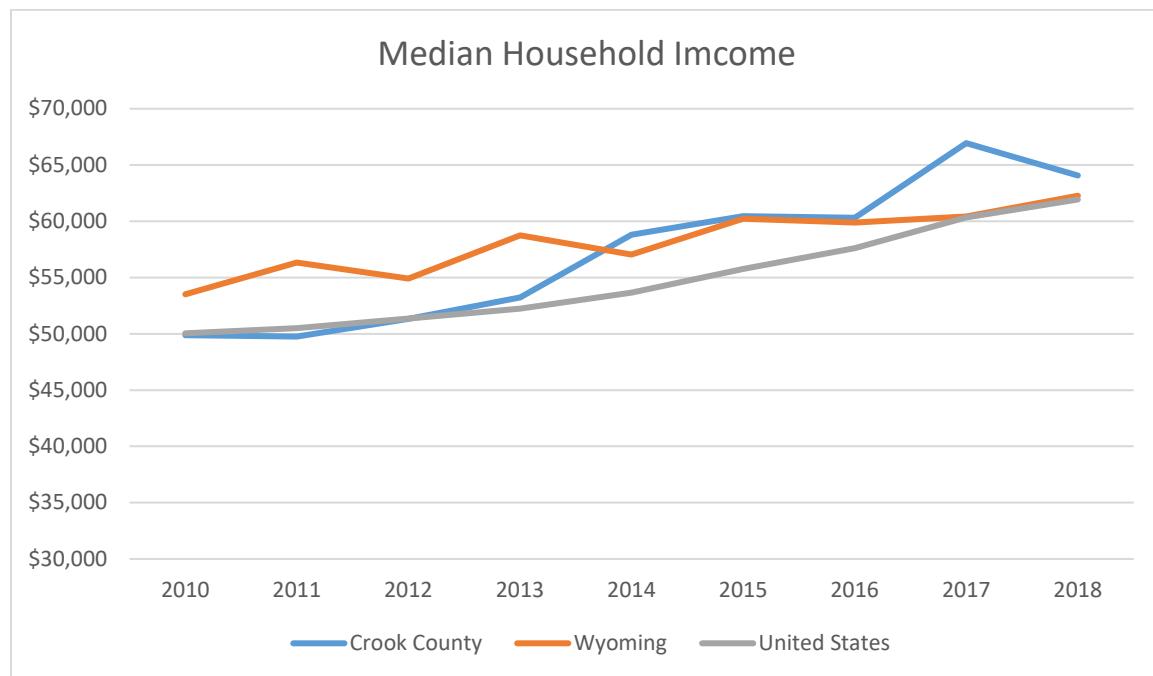
Income

In 2018, the median household income in Crook County was higher than Wyoming and the United States.

Area	Median Household Income
Crook County	\$64,055
Wyoming	\$62,268
United States	\$61,937

U.S. Census Bureau – 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates

In 2010, the median household income was \$49,892, which was below the state average. By 2015, it was \$60,445, which was slightly higher than the state median. It continued to increase until 2018. Despite the drop in 2018, it remained higher than Wyoming and U.S. levels.



U.S. Census Bureau: ACS 5-Year Estimates from 2010 to 2018

Education

Graduation Rates

There were 76 students in the 2018-2019 cohort in Crook County. A cohort year is a group of students expected to graduate on-time (4 years) at the end of the same school year. Of the 76 students, 70 graduated for a 92.1% graduation rate. A further breakdown is given in the table below.

Crook County District #1 Graduation Rates – 2018-19 Cohort

	Crook County	Statewide
All Students	92.1%	82.1%
Male	89.1%	79.3%
Female	96.7%	85.1%
Lunch Eligible*	89.3%	71.9%

*Students who qualified for free or reduced lunch
Wyoming Department of Education

Education attainment refers to the highest level of education that an individual has completed. This is different from the level of school the individual is attending. The tables below provide the educational attainment levels and percentages for Crook County 18 to 24-year-old individuals and for those over 25 years old.

Educational Attainment – 18 to 24 years

	Total	Percent
Population 18 to 24 years	468	
Less than high school graduate	135	28.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	190	40.6%
Some college or associate degree	132	28.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	11	2.4%

U.S. Census Bureau – 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment - 25 years and over

	Total	Percent
Population 25 years and over	5,127	
Less than high school graduate	348	6.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,486	29.0%
Some college, no degree	1,529	29.8%
Associate degree	616	12.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,148	22.4%

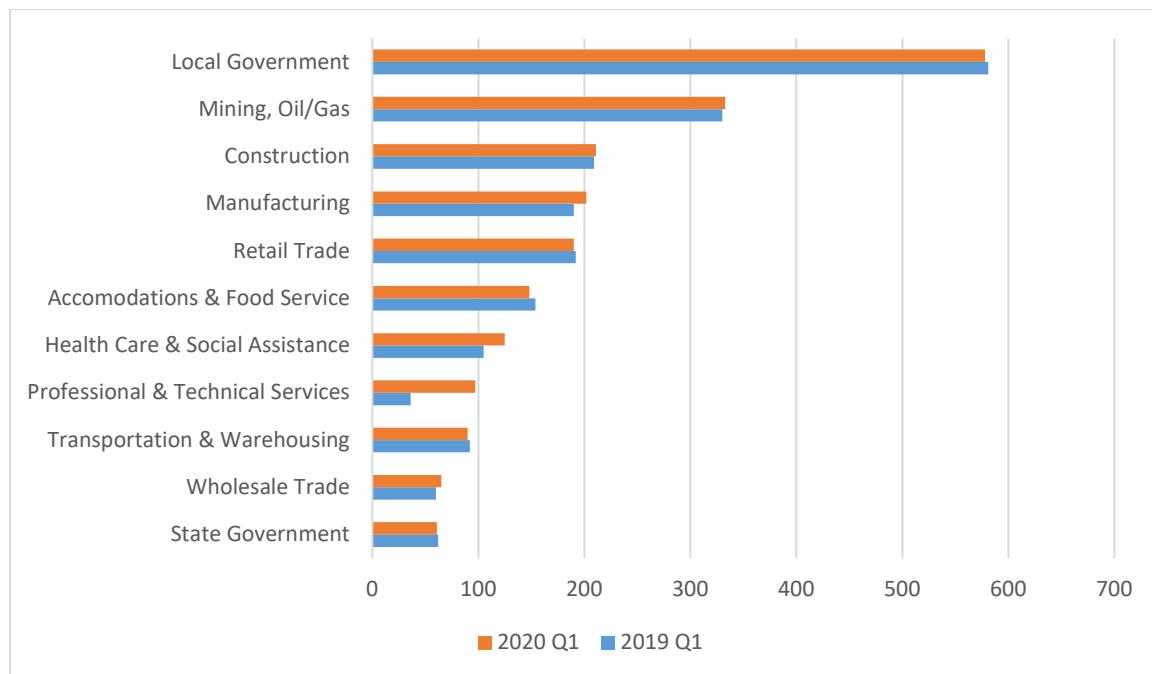
U.S. Census Bureau – 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment

According to the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research and Planning Division, Wyoming experienced weakened job growth in the first quarter of 2020 mostly due to large job losses in the mining sector. This included oil and gas. Crook County has experienced fluctuations in employment numbers as illustrated below.

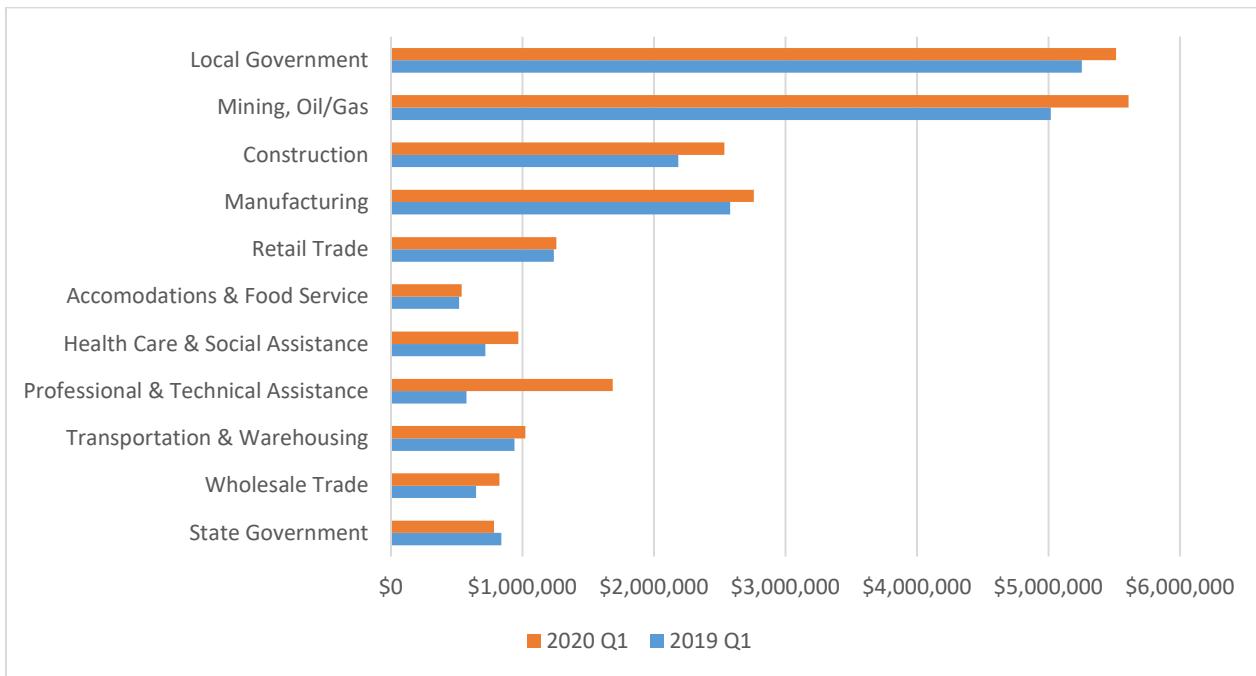
Quarter	Average Monthly Employment Total
Quarter 1, 2020	2,402
Quarter 4, 2019	2,479
Quarter 3, 2019	2,516
Quarter 2, 2019	2,539
Quarter 1, 2019	2,328

The graph below compares 1st quarter 2020 with 1st quarter 2019 for the top 11 industries in terms of employment numbers in Crook County. The graph on the next page compares total wages by these same industries.



Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Wyoming Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 1st Quarter

Total Wages (2020 Quarter 1 and 2019 Quarter 1) – Same Industries as Previous Graph



Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Wyoming Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 1st Quarter

According to the Wyoming at Work website, the three largest employers in Crook County are:

- Powder River Energy Corporation – *Serves multiple counties*
- Carbon County School District
- Crook County Medical Services District
- Sharon's Home Health Care – *Serves multiple counties*

Unemployment

With the coronavirus-related business impacts and the energy sector decline, Wyoming's economy has experienced layoffs and other negative impacts. However, unemployment rates have been improving since April. The first two columns compare unemployment rates for October 2020 and October 2019. The remaining six columns shows unemployment rates since April. Crook County tied with Carbon County for the 3rd lowest unemployment rate in the state for October 2020.

	Oct 2020	Oct 2019	Sept 2020	Aug 2020	July 2020	June 2020	May 2020	April 2020
Crook County	3.5% p	2.8% b	3.7% r	3.9% r	4.5% r	4.9% r	5.1% r	5.7% r
Statewide	5.0% p	3.4% b	5.6% r	6.1% r	6.8% r	7.6% r	8.7% r	9.6% r
Statewide seasonal adjusted	5.5% p	3.7% b	6.1% r	6.6% r	7.1% r	7.6% r	8.8% r	9.6% r

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services – Wyoming Labor Force Trends, September 2020, August 2020, July 2020; Aug/Sept/Oct 2020 Monthly News Releases (p = preliminary, r = revised, b = benchmarked)

Survey Results and Interviews

Of the 418 respondents to the survey question that rated difficulty level for “Being employed with a livable wage”, 15% identified this as “difficult for me most of the time” or “sometimes difficult for me”. When looking at low-income households that responded to this question (80), this percentage goes up to 43%.

Of the 573 respondents that answered the question regarding employment status, 46 households were unemployed and not job searching and 16 were unemployed and job searching. Of the total unemployed, nine were unemployed due to the coronavirus and the related economic downturn. For those individuals job searching, the top barrier to employment was “no jobs for my skills”.

Based on all the responses, top barriers to employment were:

- Physical disability
- No jobs for my skills
- Tied:
 - Pay too low to support family
 - No childcare during work

When interviewees were asked about the local economy, the most common response was “fair to poor or struggling”. The energy sector decline was the primary reason for the rating of the economy in addition to the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses.

Childcare

There are three different licensing categories in Wyoming:

- Child Care Center – Care provided for 16 or more children
- Family Child Care Center – Care provided in a residential or commercial structure for no more than 15 children
- Family Child Care Home – Care provided in the provider's own home for up to 10 children

In Crook County, there are 7 licensed providers.

- Child Care Center (CCC) – 5
- Family Child Care Center (FCCC) – 0
- Family Child Care Home (FCCH) – 2

Statewide Training and Resources Center (STARS)

It is important to note that Child Care Centers can be operating as a pre-school and may only offer limited hours.

Survey Results and Interviews

In looking at all survey responses for households with children, 32% responded that finding childcare is difficult for them most of the time or sometimes difficult for them. When low-income households are extracted, 29% of households responded that finding childcare is difficult for them most of the time or sometimes difficult for them.

A few interviewees mentioned affordable childcare as a need for low-income families, but it wasn't one of the top needs identified.

Housing

Rentals

The Wyoming Cost of Living Index (WCLI) produced by the Wyoming Economic Analysis Division reports average rental rates. The average rental rates reported in the WCLI are broken down by specific types of housing. Apartment averages are for two-bedroom, unfurnished units without gas and electric. Mobile Home Lots are single-wide, including water. Houses are two or three-bedroom, single family, and exclude gas and electric. Mobile homes are two or three-bedroom and lot rent is included. Average rental rates are collected by pulling information from newspapers, online sources and real estate companies that handle rentals. Income-restricted rentals are not included in the data, nor are any housing units located outside the city limits or in rural parts of the county.

Any column noted as “NA” means that there were too few observations to report.

	2020 Quarter 2	2019 Quarter 2	Percent Change
Apartment - Crook County	\$639	\$629	1.6%
Apartment - Statewide Average	\$781	\$757	3.1%
Mobile Home Lot - Crook County	NA	NA	NA
Mobile Home Lot - Statewide Average	\$386	\$360	7.3%
House - Crook County	\$739	\$730	1.2%
House - Statewide Average	\$1,133	\$1,007	2.3%
Mobile Home - Crook County	NA	NA	NA
Mobile Home - Statewide Average	\$768	\$734	4.7%

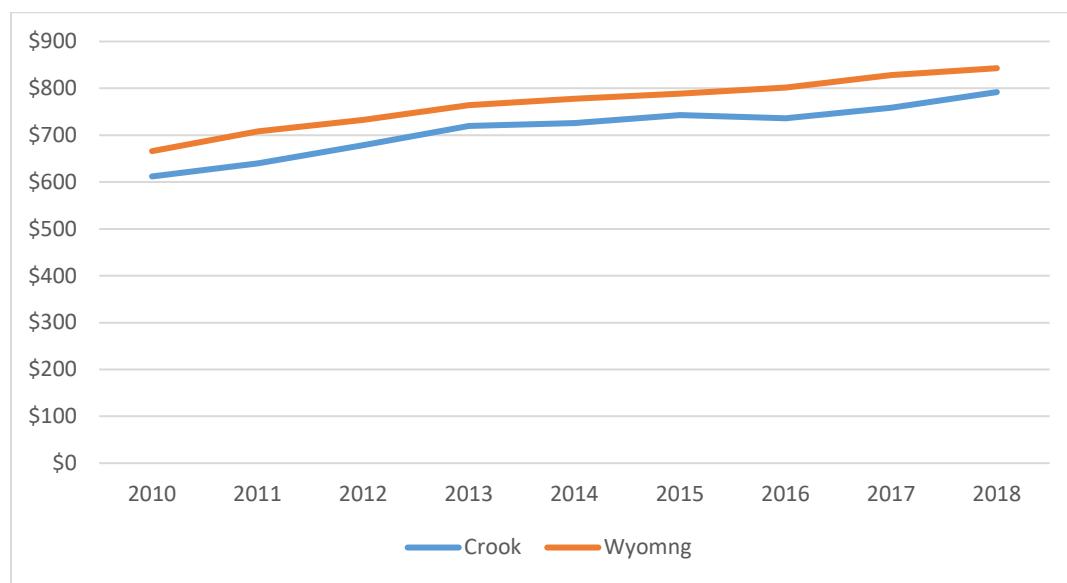
Wyoming Cost of Living Index - Second Quarter of 2020

Wyoming Economic Analysis Division

Median Gross Rent

The American Community Survey data, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, varies from the previous data for various reasons. This discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that the median gross rent listed in the ACS includes estimated cost of utilities. In addition, the data includes all rentals regardless of type, i.e. apartment, house, mobile home, etc. and of all sizes, 1 bedroom, 2 bedrooms, etc. In addition, data from the ACS is collected through household surveys sent to a sample of housing units with margins of error calculated with the data.

Median Gross Rent



U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010

Median gross rent has steadily increased since the 2010 Census. According to this data, Crook County remains below Wyoming as a whole.

Housing Cost Burdened

Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are termed “housing cost burdened”. If you are renting, this percentage includes utilities. According to the US Census, American Community Survey 2018 5-Year Estimate: 16.8% of renters in Crook County are in the 30%-34.9% category and 23.1% fall into the over 35% category.

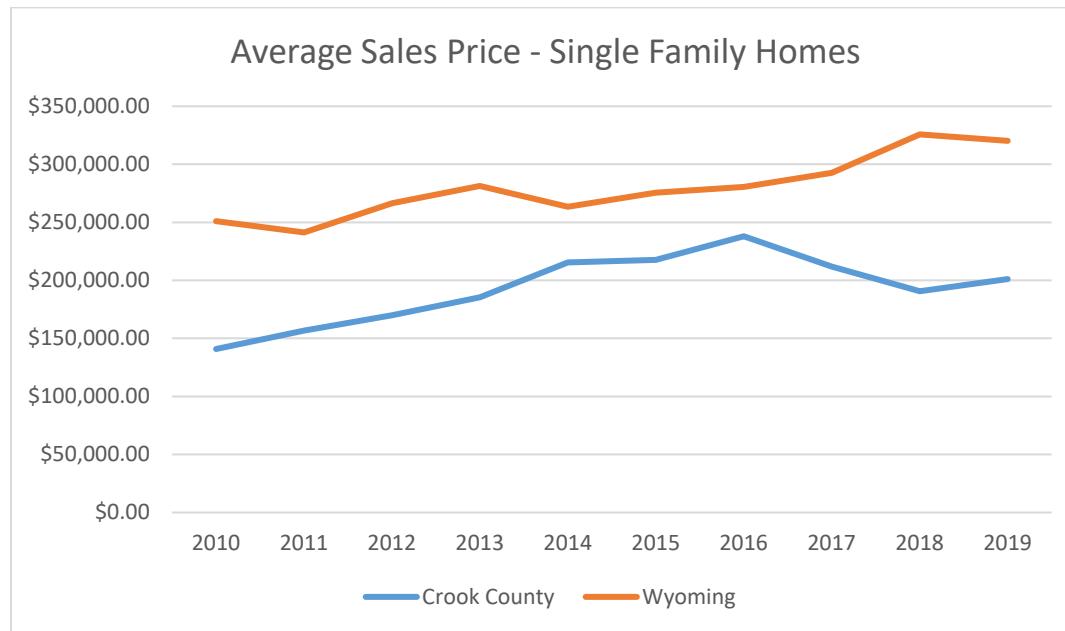
Crook County Affordable Housing Options

According to the website directory of the Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA), there are three affordable housing properties in Crook County. One is Green Mountain Estates located in Sundance. This is a senior housing only assisted living facility that offers 12 one-bedroom units. Another is Hulett Low Income Housing which offers 10 units of multi-family housing: 2 one-bedroom; 6 two-bedroom; and 2 three-bedroom. The third property, also in Hulett, offers 7 one-bedroom units of senior only housing.

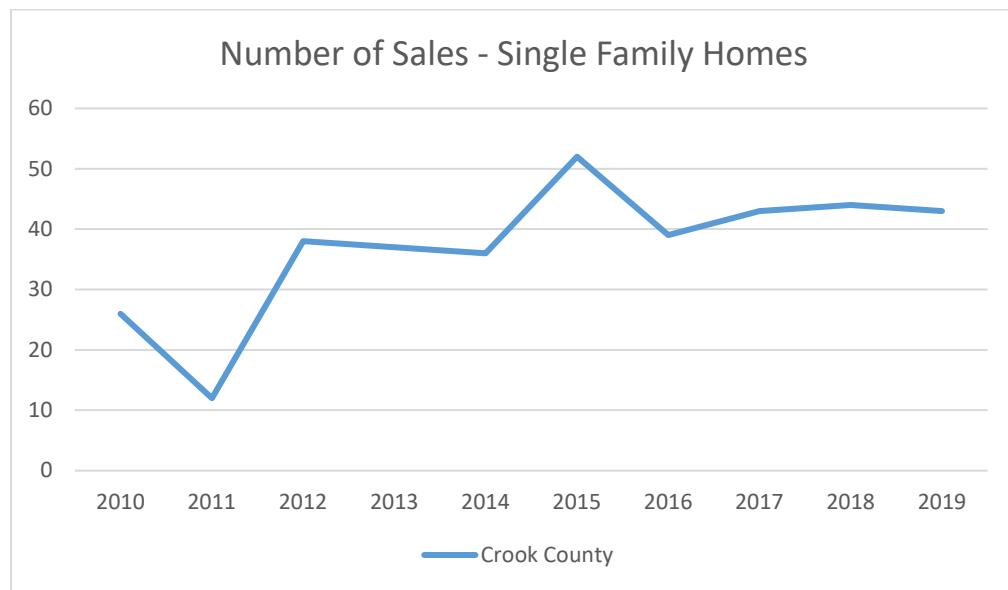
Home Ownership

Home Ownership – Average Sales Prices and Number of Sales

According to the Wyoming Department of Revenue, the average sales price of existing, detached, single-family homes in Crook County was \$201,191 in 2019.



Wyoming Department of Revenue, Wyoming Community Development Authority, County Profile (September 4, 2020)



Wyoming Department of Revenue, Wyoming Community Development Authority, County Profile (September 4, 2020)

According to the most recent US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, the median home value in Crook County is \$220,200. This compares to the Wyoming median home value of \$213,300.

Of the 2,448 owner-occupied housing units, 1,216 of these have a mortgage. The monthly owner costs median is \$1,429. The US Census includes the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs and condominium fees in the monthly owner cost calculation.

As stated earlier, households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are termed “housing cost burdened”. In Crook County, 22% of homeowners are housing cost burdened.

Survey Results and Interviews

Of the survey respondents, 6.7% of the households are currently living in a rental unit. The average rental payment was \$568.68. Of the survey respondents, 88.7% of the households are currently living in a home that they own. For those with a mortgage (and provided a response to the payment question), the average mortgage payment was \$1,152.45.

On the question of housing problems, 11% of the respondents reported one or more of the housing problems below. These are ranked from highest response to lowest.

1. I cannot afford to make needed repairs on my home – 51%
2. I cannot find affordable housing to buy – 17%
3. Bad credit makes it hard to find a place to rent – 11%
4. I am at risk of foreclosure on home that I own – 7%
5. I cannot find affordable housing to rent – 6%
6. I am at risk of eviction from home that I rent – 4%
7. Criminal background makes it hard to rent a home – 4%

Looking at low-income household responses to the same question above, 26% of households reported one or more of the housing problems. The top four responses are below.

1. I cannot afford to make needed repairs on my home - 55%
2. I cannot find affordable housing to buy – 21%
3. Bad credit makes it hard to find a place to rent - 17%
4. I cannot find affordable housing to rent – 14%

Being able to pay my rent or mortgage was identified as “difficult for me most of the time” or “sometimes difficult for me” by 12.38% of the respondents (total 420). When looking at low-income households that responded to this question (79), this percentage goes up to 33%.

As stated in the Key Findings, interviewees identified housing as one of the top needs of low-income individuals and families

Food Insecurity

Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, defines food insecurity as follows:

Food insecurity refers to the USDA's measure of lack of access to enough food for an active healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

According to Feeding America, the Crook County food insecurity rate in 2018 was 9.5% or an estimated 700 people. The child food insecurity rate was 11.1% or 200 children.

Wyoming's overall food insecurity rate was 12.2%. The child food insecurity rate was 15.9%.

Of the estimated 700 food insecure individuals:

- 33.8% are below 130% poverty and qualify for SNAP, free lunch meals, WIC
- 20.9% are between 130% and 185% poverty and qualify for WIC and reduced-price school meals.
- The remaining 45.3% don't qualify for federal programs.

Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, E. Engelhard, M. Strayer & L. Lapinski. *Map the Meal Gap 2020: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2018*. Feeding America, 2020.

Food costs in Crook County are slightly higher than the statewide average. Based on the Wyoming Comparative Cost of Living Index for 2nd Quarter 2020, Crook County's index for food was 103. The Statewide average is 100.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides monthly benefits that help low-income households buy the food they need for good health. According to the Wyoming Department of Family Services, for most households SNAP funds account for only a portion of their food budget. They must also use their own funds to ensure they have enough food for the month. According to the U.S. Census, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 1.6% of households in Crook County participate in SNAP.

Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies (WFBR) is the central distribution program providing food and essentials to more than 250 hunger-relief programs in Wyoming. WFBR is currently conducting Mobile Food Pantries across the state. Moorcroft is one of the sites, the local coordinator is Moorcroft Interfaith Community. According to their Food Bank website, they are offering this on a monthly basis.

Crook County Council of Community Services operates a Food Pantry in Sundance, Moorcroft and Hulett. They each are open two days per month, two hours each day.

There are a total of 1,201 students enrolled at Crook County School District #1. According to Wyoming Department of Education data, 19.65% of the students enrolled in Crook County School District #1 are eligible for free lunch, with an additional 16.65% eligible for reduced price lunch. Income eligibility guidelines are based on the federal income poverty guidelines and are revised annually. The eligibility criteria are 130% of the income poverty guidelines for free lunch, and 185% for reduced-price meals.

	Crook County District #1	Wyoming
Total Enrollment	1,201	98,832
Free Lunch Eligibility	236	24,525
Free Lunch Eligibility as a % of Total Enrollment	19.65%	26.14%
Reduced Lunch Eligible	200	8,557
Reduced Lunch as a % of Total Enrollment	16.65%	9.12%
Total Free and Reduced Eligible	436	33,082
Total Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible as a % of Total Enrollment	36.30%	35.26%

Wyoming Department of Education: 2019-20

Survey Results and Interviews

Of the 446 respondents to the question that rated difficulty level of “Having enough food in the home”, 11 % identified this as “difficult for me most of the time” or “sometimes difficult for me”. When looking at low-income households that responded to this question (81), this percentage goes up to 31% of the respondents. Interviewees identified food as the top need of low-income individuals and families in Crook County.

Health

The Wyoming Facility Directory produced by the Wyoming Department of Health, listed the following health facilities in Crook County:

- Crook County Medical Services District – Critical Access Hospital (Sundance)
- Hulett Clinic
- Moorcroft Clinic
- Sundance Clinic
- Davis Home Health, d/b/a Healing Hearts Home Health (Moorcroft)
- Wyoming Home Health, d/b/a Sharon's Home Health (Moorcroft)
- Sundance Assisted Living Center
- Crook County Medical Services District – Long Term Care (Sundance)
- Bear Lodge Rehabilitation Services (Sundance)

Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center offers outpatient services in Sundance, Moorcroft and Hulett.

Crook County Public Health offers a variety of services including adult and child immunizations, prenatal classes, family planning counseling, blood pressure screens and many other basic health care services.

Health Rankings

For this Community Needs Assessment Report, the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) program is being used as the primary source of information. CHR&R is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. As stated on their website, “CHR&R program provides data, evidence, guidance, and examples to build awareness of the multiple factors that influence health and support community leaders working to improve health and increase health equity”. The county rankings provide a measurement of the overall health of each county in the United States. They also evaluate different measures that impact future health of communities. For example, high school graduation rates, access to healthy foods, rates of smoking, children in poverty, and teen births.

2020 CHR&R Rankings

Health Outcomes

The overall rankings in health outcomes represent how healthy counties are within the state. Health outcomes are measured by length and quality of life. The healthiest county in the state is ranked #1. **Crook County ranked #2** in the state behind Teton County in overall health outcomes.

Length of life is measured by premature death which is years of life lost before age 75. In looking at Length of Life, Crook County ranks 4 out of the 23 counties. As illustrated below, Crook County is improving in length of live. Years of Potential Life Lost is used to measure the rate and distribution of premature mortality.

The other component of Health Outcomes is Quality of Life. This is measured by the percentage of adults reporting poor or fair health, poor physical health days and poor mental health days. In addition, low birthweight is factored in. This data is provided by National Vital Statistics System. Births are counted in the county corresponding to the mother's address on the child's birth certificate, not the county the child was born. In looking at Quality of Life, Crook County ranks **1st out of the 23 counties**.

Health Factors

Health Factors are the things that people can change to improve health for all. The ranks are based on four types of measures health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environment. Overall, **Crook County ranked #3** in the state behind Teton (#1) and Park (#2) in Health Factors. The four components and their rankings for Crook County are outlined below.

Health Behaviors – Crook County ranked 7 out of the 23 counties. The report highlights the following as areas to explore for improvement:

- Adult Smoking
- Adult Obesity
- Alcohol-impaired driving deaths

Clinical Care – Crook County ranked 9 out of the 23 counties. The report highlights the following as areas to explore for improvement:

- Uninsured
- Primary care physicians
- Dentists
- Mental health providers
- Mammography screening
- Flu vaccinations

Social & Economic Factors – Crook County ranked 2 out the 23 counties. There were no areas highlighted for improvement. The areas of strength include high school graduate rate and low percentages in unemployment, children in poverty, and children in single-parent households.

Physical Environment – Crook County ranked 10 out of the 23 counties. The only area highlighted for improvement was long commute. This is not unexpected as people have referenced Crook County as a “bedroom community”.

Health Insurance

According to the US Census Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) for 2018, 13.7% of the Crook County population under 65 years old are uninsured.

Survey Results and Interviews

When asked about local health services, facilities and the perception in the community, the responses from interviewees was mixed. Several mentioned positive aspects of local healthcare services and the importance of having these services available. Some interviewees stated there are community members that are happy, while there are some that are unhappy.

When asked about the barriers or limitations to access health and mental health services, several interviewees mentioned the cost of health services and the distance to services. A lot of the interviewees mentioned the lack of mental health services and the societal stigma associated with accessing services. The high number of suicides in the county was mentioned several times.

In reviewing the survey findings, it is important to note that 51% of respondents included at least one person over 65 years old in the household. When looking at total people included in survey numbers, 33% were over the age of 65.

Of those 54 households that indicated someone in the house had no health coverage, 69% of them selected “cannot afford to pay for health insurance” as the reason.

There were 569 responses to the question on rating personal health. 73% selected Very Healthy or Healthy, 23% selected Somewhat Healthy, and 4% selected Unhealthy or Very Unhealthy.

When asked about providers, 94% respondents reported that they have a doctor to go to. 90% of respondents stated they had a dentist to go to. On the question as to whether they had a mental health specialist they can go to, 46% responded yes. Note that there were 115 respondents that didn't answer the question on mental health.

When asked which facilities they use in Crook County, 31% of the households reported that they don't use hospital or local clinic. When asked why, many people sited that they go to Spearfish and Rapid City. In some responses, they mentioned that their specialists are in these two locations. Gillette was the third location mentioned, sometimes due to proximity. There were a few comments regarding better quality of care in Spearfish.

When asked what services they would like to see offered at their local healthcare facilities, the top three were:

- Physical Therapy
- Women's Health
- Home Health Care

When asked if there was a time within the last three years they, or a member of their household, needed healthcare services but didn't receive it or were delayed in receiving it, 17% responded “yes”. The primary reason was “it costs too much” followed by “too long to wait for an appointment”.

The three most pressing health concerns in the county were:

- Cost of healthcare
- Cancer
- Prescription drug affordability

When asked what resources they rely upon to keep themselves and their family health, the top three were:

- Clinic
- Outdoor recreation
- Hospital

When asked what the greatest health education need in the county is, the top three were:

- Health lifestyles education
- Health screenings
- Mental health education

When asked what needs to be added, changed, or removed to improve your access to and use of medical services in our county, the most common responses were:

- More Services and Medical Staff
 - Access/availability of more doctors
 - Clinics – extended hours, urgent care, walk-in care
- More affordable healthcare
- Increased public relations so community members are aware of the services providers

More information on health survey responses can be found in the Community Needs Assessment Survey section.

Community Needs Assessment Survey

The Community Needs Assessment survey was mailed to 3,279 households in Crook County. Respondents were given four choices for completing the survey:

- Complete the paper survey and mail back in the enclosed postage-paid envelope; or
- Take the survey online by going to the hospital website for the survey link; or
- Scan the QR code with their phone; or
- Call Align if they had a language barrier or needed other assistance with completing the survey.

As an incentive for completing the survey, respondents could provide their first name and phone number to be entered in a drawing for a \$200 gift card. These names and phone numbers were kept confidential and this information is not contained in any part of this report or in the survey results.

There were 582 surveys completed for a rate of 18%. Of the 582 surveys, 508 were returned in the mail and the remaining 74 were completed online.

Survey Results

Where do you live?

Response	Percentage
Sundance	43.08%
Moorcroft	21.63%
Hulett	12.80%
Pine Haven	8.65%
Beulah	5.19%
Aladdin	3.29%
Alva	1.38%
Carlile	1.21%
Devils Tower	1.04%
Other:	1.73%

Answered: 578; Skipped: 4

Which best describes your household? (Check only one)

Answer Choices	Response %
Two adults NO children at home	48.95%
Single person	23.52%
Two-parent household	19.69%
Single parent male	2.61%
Single parent female	2.09%
Multi-family household	1.39%
Grandparent(s) and grandchildren	0.52%
Other:	1.22%

Answered: 574; Skipped: 8

Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

Response	# of responses	Response %
One	154	
Two	309	
Three	32	
Four	33	
Five	25	
Six	14	
Seven or more	14	

Answered: 581; Skipped: 1

Including yourself, how many people in your household are:

Answer Choices	Number of household responses	Total number of people in this age category
0 to 5 years old	57	97
6 to 17 years old	91	189
18 to 49 years old	149	267
50 to 64 years old	202	308
65+ years old	297	438

Answered: 581; Skipped: 1

What best describes the place where you are living currently? (Check only one)

Answer Choices	Response %
Live in home that I/we own	88.71%
Rental unit	6.70%
Own mobile home, rent lot	1.23%
Share home with family/friends/roommate	0.71%
Other	2.65%

Answered: 567; Skipped: 15

What is your monthly payment for housing?

Type of Housing	Number of Responses	Average Payment
Rental	43	\$568.68 Average Rental Payment
Own	191	\$1,152.45 Average Mortgage Payment

268 respondents reported \$0 or replied that they had paid off their home.
8 responses - Other

Do you receive help with your rent or house payment from a government program or agency?

Answer Choices	Response %
Yes	0.88%
No	99.12%

Answered: 569; Skipped: 13

Do any of these housing problems apply to you? (Check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Response %
I am at risk of eviction from home that I rent	0.54%
I am at risk of foreclosure on home that I own	0.90%
I cannot find affordable housing to rent	0.72%
I cannot find affordable housing to buy	2.15%
I cannot afford to make needed repairs on my home	6.63%
Bad credit makes it hard to find a place to rent	1.43%
Criminal background makes it hard to rent a home	0.54%
None of these apply	89.07%

Answered: 558; Skipped: 24

What is the employment status for each adult in your household? (Check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Response %	Response #
Full-Time	40.31%	231
Part-Time	10.30%	59
Self-Employed	16.06%	92
Retired	51.48%	295
Unemployed/Job Searching	2.79%	16
Unemployed/Not Searching	8.03%	46

Answered: 573; Skipped: 9

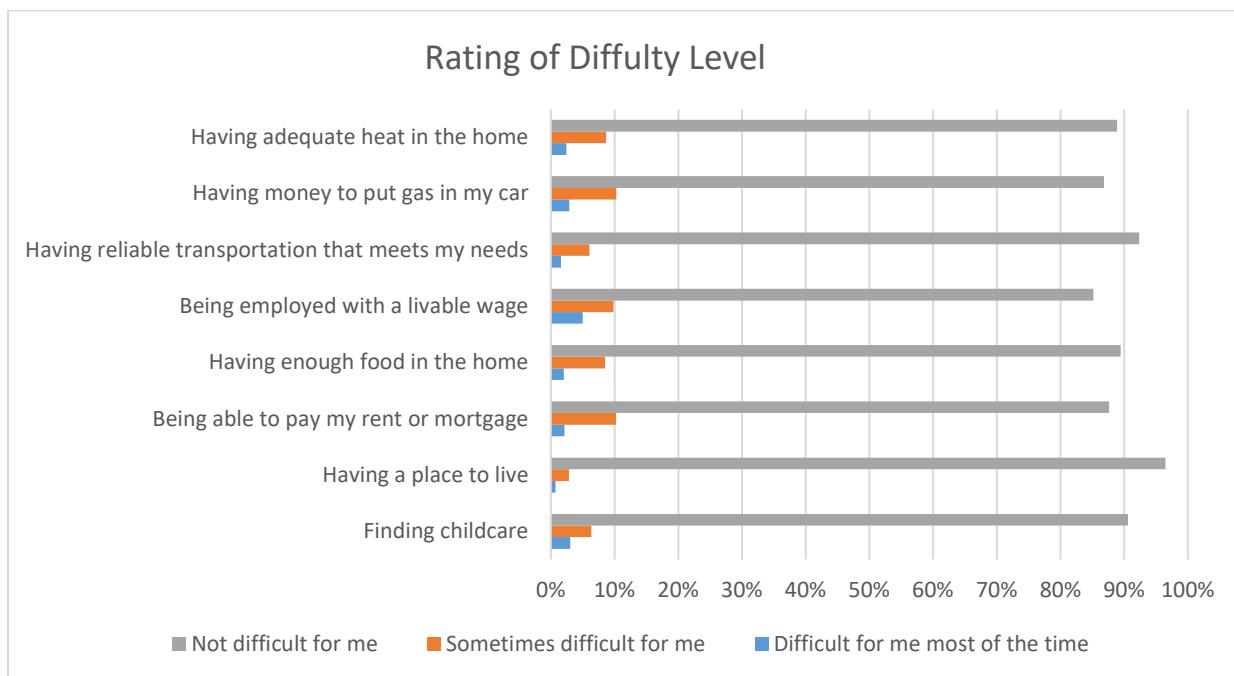
If unemployed, is the reason you are unemployed due to COVID-19 and the related economic downturn?

Of the 62 households that selected that someone was unemployed, 9 responded “yes” to the question.

If unemployed, what are your barriers to employment? (Check all that apply)
Only showing results for selected employment status as unemployed.

Answer Choices	Response #
No jobs for my skills	8
No transportation	3
Pay too low to support family	2
No childcare during work	5
Lack of training or experience	3
Physical or mental disability	11

Please rate the following by putting an “x” in the appropriate column: Not difficult for me; Sometimes difficult for me; or difficult for me most of the time.



Utilizing a weighted average, the highest degree of difficulty was:

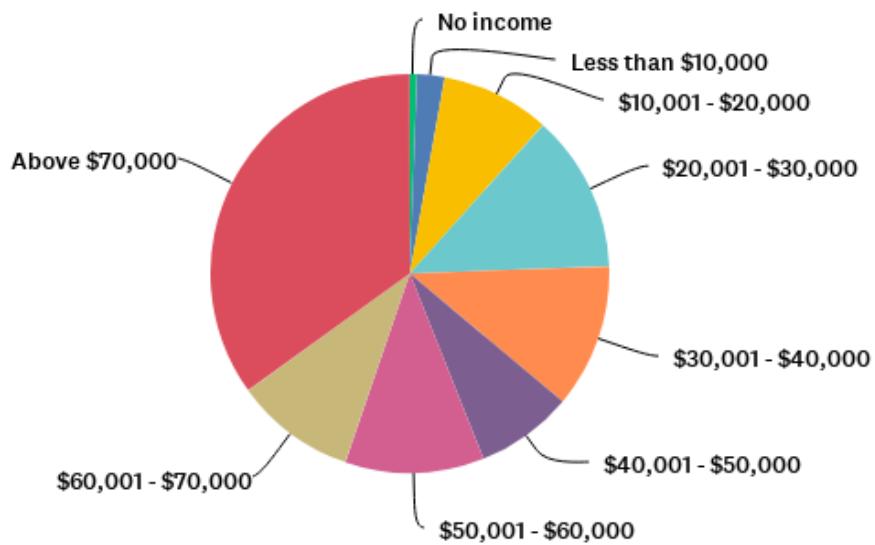
1. Being employed with a livable wage 2.80
2. Having money to put gas in my car 2.84
3. Being able to pay my rent or mortgage 2.85
4. Having adequate heat in the home 2.86
5. Having enough food in the home 2.87
6. Finding childcare 2.88*

7. Having reliable transportation that meets my needs 2.91
8. Having a place to live 2.96

* This includes all responses, which includes households without children. See the Child Care Section for further analysis.

Various sections in this report provides further analysis on this question as it relates to low-income household responses.

What is your annual household income from all sources? (Including, but not limited to employment, self-employment, Social Security, retirement, disability, worker's compensation, unemployment, VA benefits, alimony).



For each adult in the household, what is the highest level of education completed?

Answer Choice	Responses
Less than high school diploma	4.20%
High school graduate	41.43%
GED or high school equivalency	8.57%
Vocational or trade school	15.21%
Some college (or still in college)	26.40%
Two-year college degree	17.66%
Four-year college degree	21.33%
Graduate college degree	16.26%
Other:	3.32%

Answered: 572; Skipped: 10

Indicate your health coverage for each individual in your household.

Coverage Choices:	Percentage (based on total people)
Medicare	28.28%
Medicaid	5.77%
Employer's health insurance	30.50%
Retirement insurance plan	7.74%
Veteran's Administration; Military	4.82%
Privately insured	12.30%
Kid Care CHIP	1.59%
No health coverage	5.39%
Other	3.61%

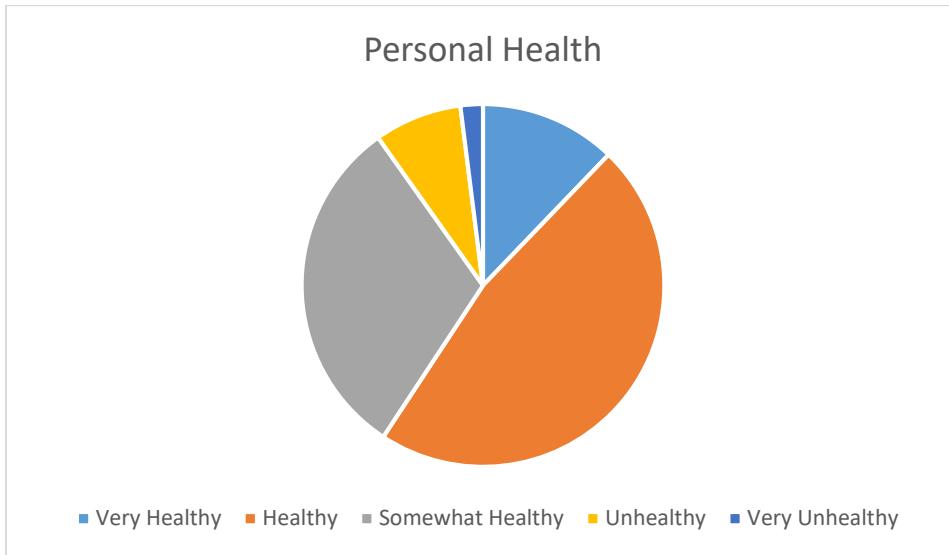
Answered: 573; Skipped: 9

If you do NOT have insurance, please check why:

Answer Choices:	Responses
Cannot afford to pay for health insurance	66.66%
Employer doesn't offer insurance	7.41%
Don't know how to apply or too difficult to apply	1.85%
Choose not to have health insurance	3.70%
Other	5.56%
Skipped	14.81%

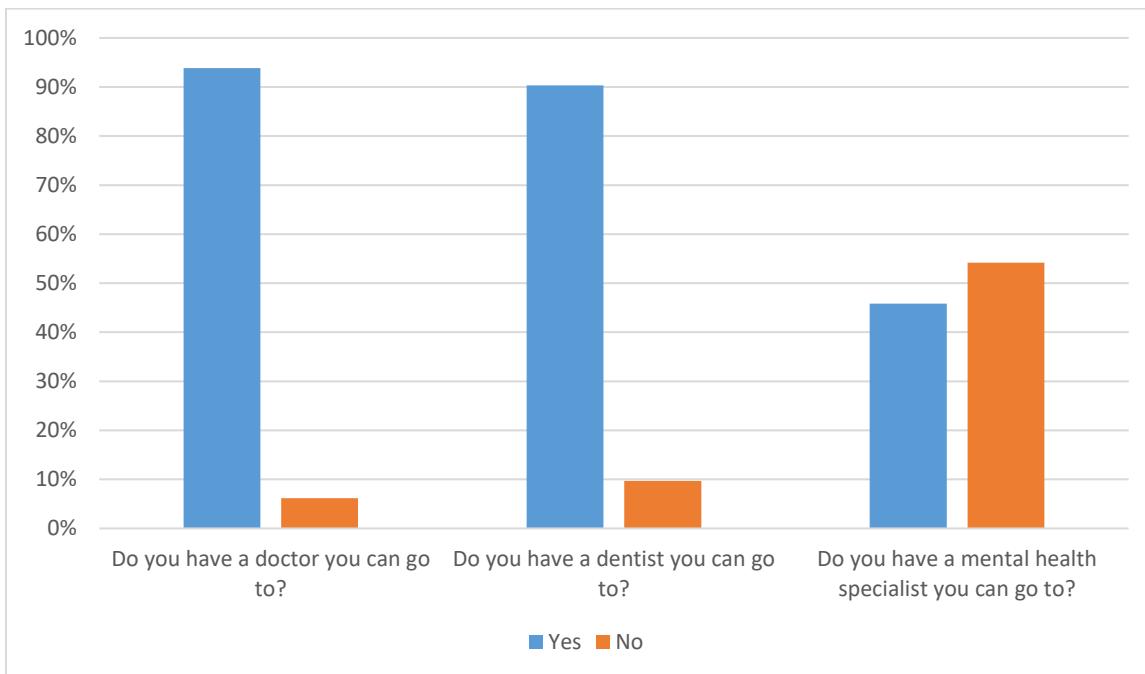
Only showing results for those respondents that selected "no health coverage" on previous question.

Overall, how would you rate your personal health?



Answered: 569; Skipped: 13

If you or a household member have a health care need:



Answered: 568; Skipped: 14

Which medical facilities do you use in Crook County?

Answer Choices	Responses
Clinic	39.02%
Hospital	1.74%
Both Hospital and Clinic	27.87%
Neither	31.36%

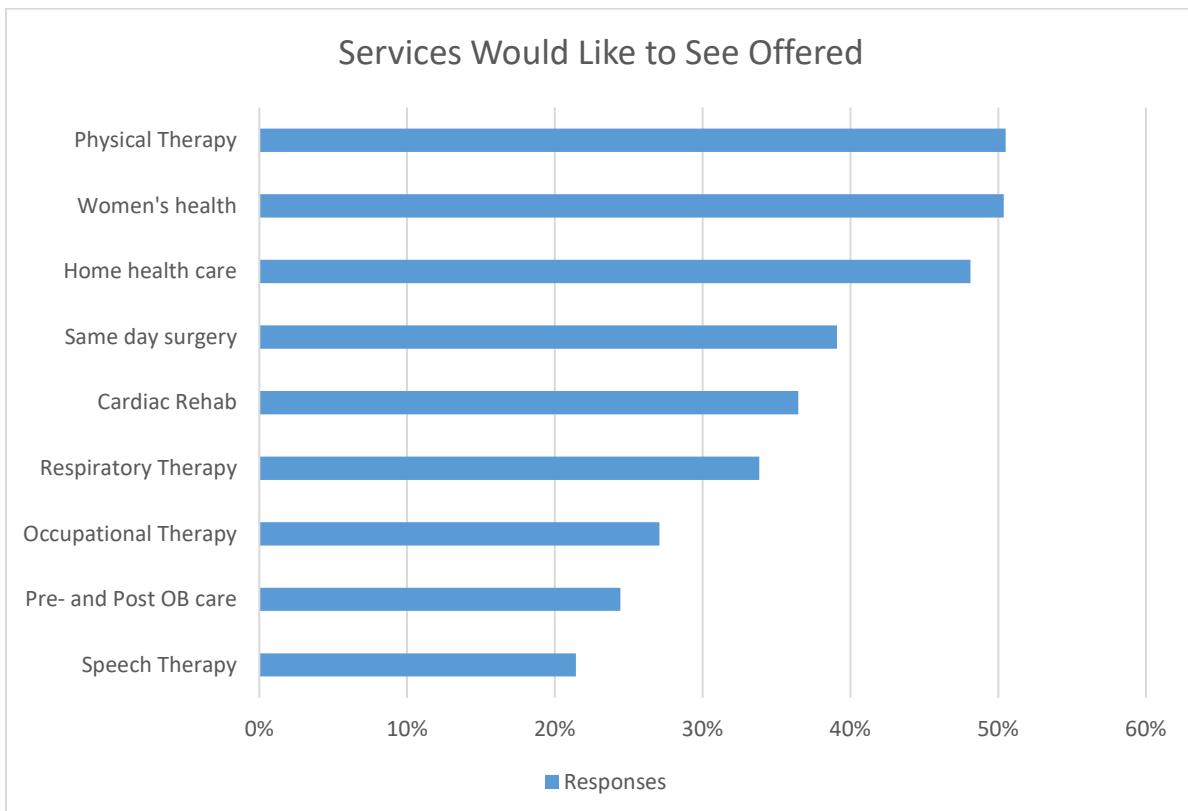
Answered: 574; Skipped: 8

If you do not use medical facilities in Crook County, why not?

This was an open-ended question with 126 households responded. Most common responses were:

1. Go elsewhere for services (most common responses: Spearfish, Rapid City, Gillette)
2. Negative experience or perception
3. Go elsewhere for specialists

What services would you like to see offered in your local health care facilities?



Answered: 266; Skipped: 316

In the past three year, was there a time when you or a member of your household thought you needed health care services but did NOT receive or were delayed in receiving medical services?

Answer Choices	Responses	Number
Yes	17.25%	98
No	82.75%	470

Answered: 568; Skipped: 14

**If yes, what was the primary reason(s) why you did not receive health care services?
(Check all that apply)**

Answer Choices	Responses
It costs too much	39.67%
Too long to wait for an appointment	28.10%
Not covered by insurance	20.66%
Could not get an appointment	14.05%
Office wasn't open when I could go	12.40%
Too nervous or afraid	10.74%
Don't like doctors	9.92%
Could not get off work	8.26%
Transportation problems	4.96%
Had no one to care for my children	3.31%
Language barrier	0.00%
Other	30.58%

Answered: 121; Skipped: 461

Other: Most common response was COVID

Are medical, dental or prescription co-pays a large enough problem that you postpone or go without services or prescriptions?

Answer Choices	Responses	Number
Yes	25.84%	146
No	74.16%	419

Answered: 565; Skipped: 17

In the past three years, have you or a household member received care in a hospital?

Answer Choices	Responses	Number
Yes	56.97%	327
No	43.03%	247

Answered: 574; Skipped: 8

If yes, name of hospital(s):

Reporting top responses

- Crook County
- Campbell County
- Spearfish
- Rapid City

In the past three years, have you or a household member seen a primary health care provider such as a family physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner for health care services?

Answer Choices	Responses	Number
Yes	92.79%	528
No	7.21%	41

Answered: 569; Skipped: 13

If yes, where was the primary health care provider located?

Reporting top responses

- Sundance
- Spearfish
- Gillette

In the past year, have you or someone in your household had a medical emergency?

Answer Choices	Responses	Number
Yes	36.20%	202
No	63.80%	356

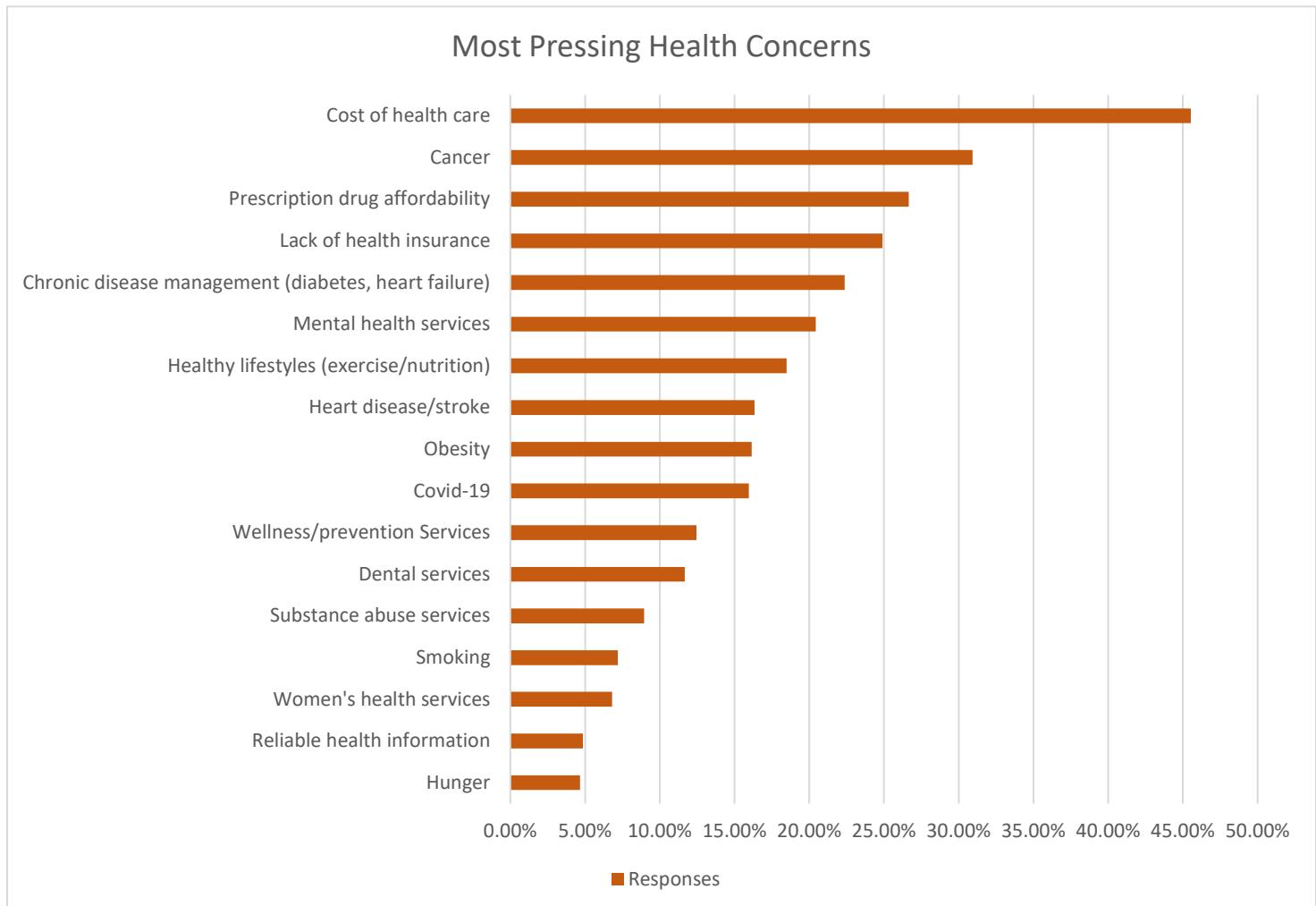
Answered: 558; Skipped: 24

If you answered yes to the above question, did you access the 911 system for an ambulance?

Answer Choices	Responses	Number
Yes	22.71%	57
No	77.29%	194

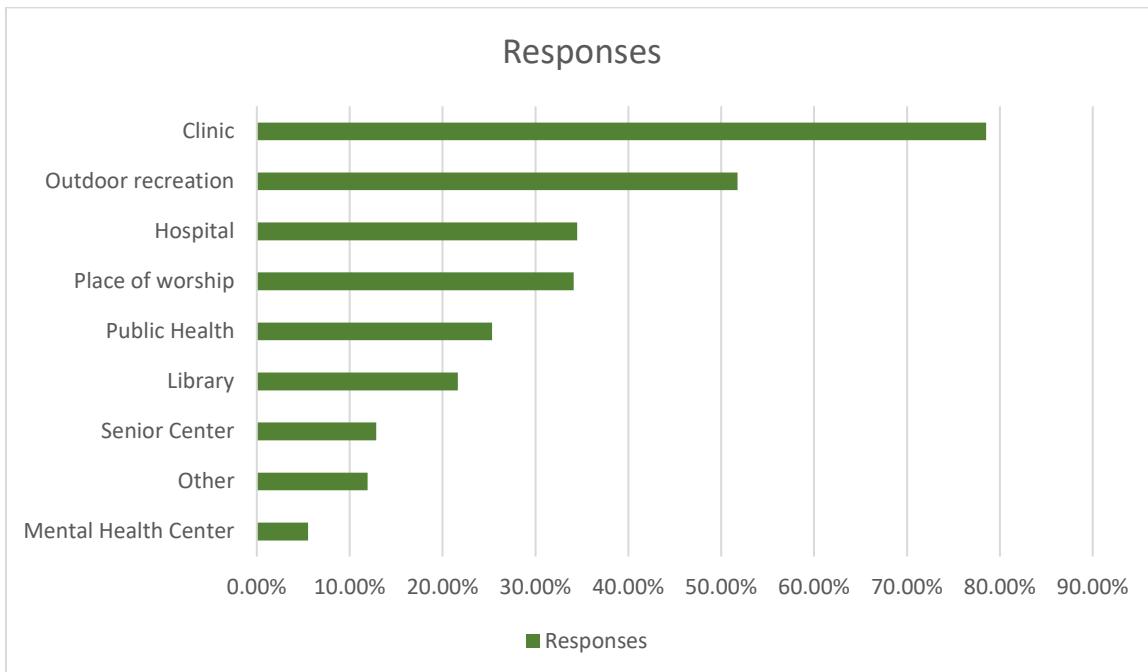
Answered 251

In your opinion, what are the three most pressing health concerns in the county? (Choose only 3)



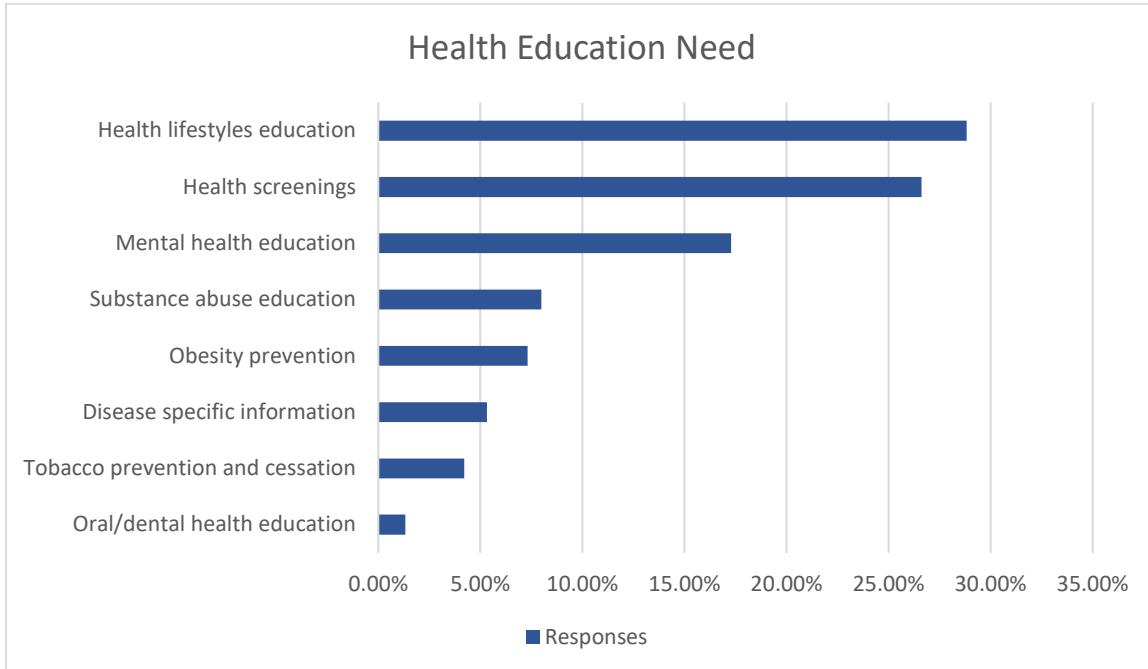
Answered: 514; Skipped: 68

What resources do you rely upon to help keep you and your family healthy? (Check all that apply)



Answered: 545; Skipped:37

What is the greatest health education need in our county? (select one)



Answered: 451; Skipped:131

What needs to be added, changed, or removed to improve your access to and use of medical services in your county?

The most common responses included:

- More Services and Medical Staff
 - Access/availability of more doctors
 - Clinics – extended hours, urgent care, walk-in care
- More affordable healthcare
- Increased public relations so community members are aware of the services providers

Key Informant Interviews

Agency	Name
City of Sundance	Kathy Lenz, Clerk Treasurer
Crook County	Linda Fritz, County Clerk
Crook County, UW Extension	Sara Fleenor, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth
Crook County Library	Jill Mackey, County Librarian
Crook County Medical Services District	Micki Lyons, CEO
Crook County Medical Services District	Anthony Vopat, EMS Coordinator
Crook County Emergency Management	Ed Robinson, Emergency Management Coordinator
Crook County Public Health	Kathy Cluff, Prevention Specialist
Crook County School District #1	Mark Broderson, Superintendent
Crook County Senior Services	Jenna Ellsbury, Director
Moorcroft Interfaith Community	Monte Reichenberg, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church
Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center	Janelle Day, LPC
Sundance Chamber of Commerce	Sheryl Klocker, President
Town of Hulett	Melissa Bears, Clerk/Treasurer
Town of Moorcroft	Cheryl Schneider, Clerk/Treasurer
Town of Pine Haven	Barb Hardy, Clerk/Treasurer
Wyoming Department of Family Services	Amanda Gaskin, Case Worker
Wyoming Department of Workforce Services	Amanda Bialas, Vocational Rehabilitation