

# Goshen Help

## *Goshen County Community Needs Assessment*

February 2021

Prepared by:



TheAlignTeam.org

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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. Currently, there are 15 CSBG agencies in Wyoming that provide CSBG assistance. 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. Grantees are required to do a Community Needs Assessment every three years.

In Goshen County, Goshen Help is the CSBG grantee. Goshen Help is a community action agency whose mission is to improve the quality of life for people in need by empowering them to become more self-sufficient. They operate a food pantry, offer limited financial assistance to qualified households in need, and provide case management to help individuals and families achieve greater self-sufficiency. In addition to Goshen County, Goshen Help is the CSBG grantee for Crook, Weston, Niobrara, Carbon, and Washakie counties.

Goshen Help contracted with The Align Team to complete this Community Needs Assessment. Align completed the assessment in 2018 as well.

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. 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 focus groups, interviews, and the Community Needs Assessment Survey.

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This year's assessment process was complicated by the pandemic. Typically, Align would be in the county conducting interviews and focus groups in person. With the pandemic, it was decided the focus groups would be conducted via Zoom and interviews would be by phone. There were three focus groups conducted the second week of January. For those individuals unable to make it to one of the focus groups, Align reached out to schedule an interview.

The Community Needs Assessment survey was conducted online. Goshen Help promoted the survey through their Facebook page and in email communications.

The following CSBG domains were utilized as the basis for the community survey. Employment

- Housing
- Education and Cognitive Development
- Income and Asset Building
- Health and Social/Behavioral Development
- Civic Engagement

In addition to the above topics, the survey included a question on support services.

The survey was open from December 9, 2020 to January 10, 2021. As an incentive for completing the survey, respondents could chose to 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 297 validated responses to the survey.

In analyzing the data, Align pulled results specific to low-income households. This information is noted throughout the 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. The complete survey results follow. The last section includes the names of the individuals that participated in the focus groups and interviews.

Goshen Help and Align are extremely grateful to the people and agencies that contributed to this report. Without the information provided from agencies and the thoughtful input from residents of Goshen County, this Assessment would not have been possible.

For more information about Goshen Help or this assessment, contact Kyle Borger, Executive Director at 307-532-0269. Information about Goshen Help can also be found on their website: [www.goshenhelp.com](http://www.goshenhelp.com). The project lead for The Align Team was Jody Shields, Vice President.

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## Key Findings

### **Employment Opportunities**

When survey respondents were asked to select the top three needs for their household or their perceived need for the community, 56% selected “Employment”. The lack of job opportunities was a topic brought up by focus group participants and interviewees. With businesses closing and downsizing, there has been a loss of jobs. Over the past several years, there has been a decrease in the number of manufacturing or other manual-labor industry employment opportunities. Many of the livable-wage positions that are available require a college or other professional degree.

Employment opportunities was a key finding in the 2018 Community Needs Assessment as well. With the additional loss of jobs and the pandemic since then, this remains a primary challenge for the county.

### **Generational Poverty and the Cliff Effect**

Generational poverty is defined as a family having lived in poverty for at least two generations. This is different from situational poverty. Situational poverty is when a household’s income is decreased due to a specific change such as a job loss, divorce, or death. Families who experience situational poverty tend to see it as a temporary setback and remain hopeful. This is typically not the case with generational poverty.

People caught in the cycle of generational poverty focus on daily needs and survival versus planning for the future. This can cause counterproductive tendencies such as a low emphasis on education that can be passed on from generation to generation. Generational poverty was brought up frequently among focus group participants and interviewees as an issue in the county.

Sometimes related to the topic of generational poverty is “cliff effect.” The cliff effect is when a pay raise triggers a disproportionate loss of government assistance. Even a slight raise can push people off the cliff. They are suddenly ineligible for support in the areas of food, housing, healthcare and childcare. They do not earn enough to support themselves and their families, but earn too much for assistance. They end up being far worse off before receiving the increase in pay.

Focus group participants discussed how the cliff effect creates a fear among families. Fear that if they try to improve their earnings, they will end up worse off and lose the support they desperately need for everyday living. Participants stressed that there needs to be some kind of safety net and support as individuals and families work to transition from poverty to self-sufficiency.

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## Youth Services

When survey respondents were asked to select the top three needs for their household or their perceived need in the community, youth services ranked highest followed by life skills programs and services. One of the primary topics in the focus groups and interviews was youth services. There was strong support for creating a mentoring and support program to help teens transition to adulthood, especially for youth caught in the cycle of generational poverty. Many are not prepared for this transition, academically or socially. They also stressed the importance in engaging the family in these efforts. Both focus group participants and interviewees mentioned there is a lack of activities for the youth, especially in the winter.

## Mental Health

A shortage of mental health providers and services is an issue across the state and was highlighted in the focus groups and the survey. This is an issue for all ages, but the focus groups specifically discussed mental health challenges among the youth. When survey respondents were asked to select the top three social/behavioral development needs, 55% of the respondents selected the need for “more mental health resources for youth.”

## Other areas:

The lack of **transportation** was a topic that surfaced among focus groups and interviewees. Without a reliable vehicle, getting to work and medical appointments is a barrier for many households. The Senior Center offers some limited public transportation services, but they cannot meet all the needs. On the support services question on the survey, transportation services ranked number 3rd with 26% of survey respondents identifying it as a need.

While Goshen County does fare better than some other rural counties in terms of licensed **childcare** providers, the need for affordable childcare was a topic that was brought up in each of the focus groups as a challenge. It also surfaced as one of the top needs in the survey as related to employment.

As with many other counties across the state, there is always a need for more affordable **housing** options. This was discussed in the focus groups. In terms of overall needs, 34% of survey respondents identified it as a need. This ranked third behind employment and support services.

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## **Strengths**

The focus groups discussed the strengths in the county. The common responses were that the people of Goshen County help each other and will come together for the betterment of the communities. Other strengths included the schools and health care.

## **Note from Align**

Goshen Help has made significant strides in the past few years in providing much needed services to the county. With their leadership, the resources that exist in the county and the commitment of dedicated community members and agencies, there is much that can be achieved. Future success will require focusing on key areas and the underlying causes to these challenges. We are excited to see the continued forward momentum.

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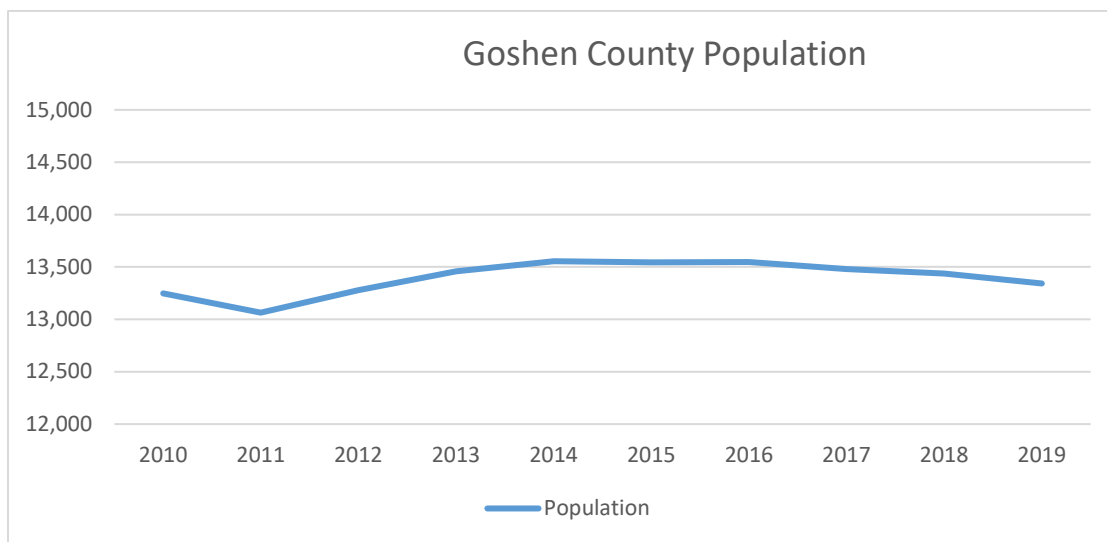
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## Demographics

The estimated population of Goshen County in 2019 was 13,342. This reflects a 3.88% increase in population since the 2010 Census based on annual population estimates.

### Goshen County Population by Year

2019 Population Estimate	2015 Population Estimate	2010 Census Population
13,342	13,544	13,249



U.S. Census Bureau – 2010 Census, 2011-2019 Annual Population Estimates

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

	2019 Estimate	2010 Census
<b>Total Population</b>		
Torrington	6,624	6,501
Lingle	456	468
Fort Laramie	227	230
LaGrange	442	448
Yoder	154	151
All other	5,439	5,451

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



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## Population – Gender and Age

The most recent population data breakdown by gender and age is the U.S. Census 2019 5-Year Estimate. For comparison purposes, the 2010 US Census numbers are included.

### 2019 Population Estimate and 2010 Census by Gender and Age

	2019 Estimate	2010 Census	Percent Change
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>13,342</b>	<b>13,249</b>	<b>0.70%</b>
Gender:			
Male	6,789	6,906	-1.69%
Female	6,553	6,343	3.31%
Age:			
Under 5	827	700	18.41%
5 to 19 years	2,268	2,483	-8.66%
20 to 44 years	3,786	3,672	3.10%
45 to 64 years	3,583	3,894	-7.99%
65 and over	2,878	2,500	15.12%

U.S. Census Bureau – 2010 Census, 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimate

### 2019 Population Estimate Comparison

	Goshen County	Wyoming
	Percentage	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	50.88%	50.98%
Female	49.12%	49.02%
Age:		
Under 5	6.20%	6.29%
5 to 19 years	17.00%	19.73%
20 to 44 years	28.38%	32.87%
45 to 64 years	26.86%	25.36%
65 and over	21.57%	15.74%

U.S. Census Bureau – 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimate

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## 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 Goshen County 97 for all items, which is lower than the statewide average of 100. The highest category was Medical at 104. The lowest category was housing at 76. As stated, these values reflect relative price levels at the time of data collection, not over time.

### Goshen County Cost of Living Index

All Items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Transportation	Medical	Recreation & Personal Care
88	97	76	101	98	104	102

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

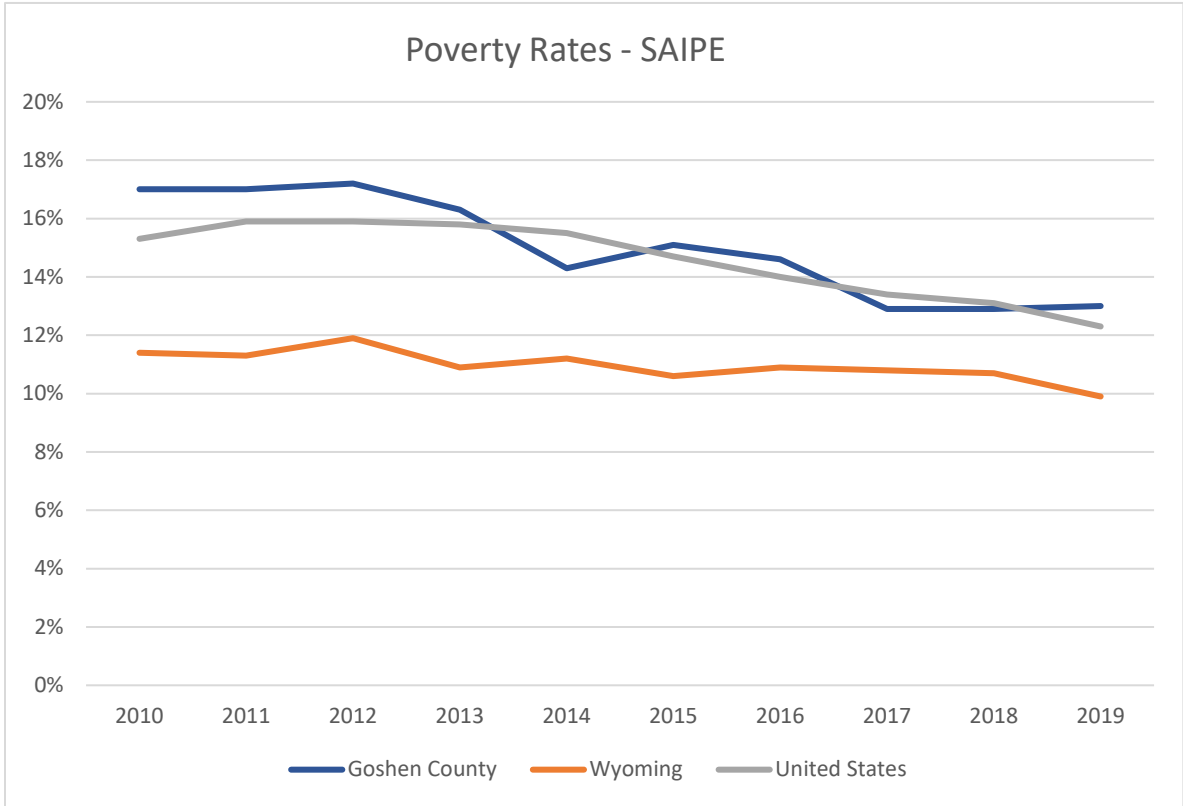
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## Poverty

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, Goshen County’s poverty rate was 13% in 2019. Wyoming was 9.9% this same year. The poverty rate in Goshen County has declined since a high in 2012 of 17.2% (blue line below). It has consistently been higher than Wyoming as whole.



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

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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 Goshen County percentages for the 2019 5-Year Estimate based on the ACS.

Percent below poverty level		
	Goshen County	Wyoming
<b>All Population</b>		
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	10.3%	9.7%
Female	12.6%	12.3%
<b>Age</b>		
Under 18 years	15.7%	12.6%
18 to 34 years	17.8%	16.6%
35 to 64 years	9.2%	7.9%
65 years and over		
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White alone	12.2%	10.5%
Black or African American alone	0.0%	15.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	9.7%	23.8%
Asian alone	0.0%	13.0%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	8.6%
Some other race alone	1.0%	13.4%
Two or more races	2.0%	14.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	15.9%	19.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	11.3%	9.6%

US Census - 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates

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.

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.

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

For the Community Needs Assessment Survey, we used 125% Federal Poverty Levels as detailed below (2020)

<b>125% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guidelines by Household Size</b>	
Persons in Family/Household	Annual Income – Column A
1	\$15,950
2	\$21,550
3	\$27,150
4	\$32,750
5	\$38,350
6	\$43,950
For families/households with more than 6 persons, add \$5,600 for each additional person.	

US Department of Health and Human Services

## Focus Groups, Interviews and Survey

Generational poverty was a topic that came up in all three focus groups and was mentioned by one interviewee. As mentioned in the Key Findings section of this report, generational poverty is defined as a family having lived in poverty for at least two generations. Generational poverty was also a topic highlighted in the 2018 Community Needs Assessment.

Lack of job opportunities surfaced in the Focus Groups and in the Survey. This is especially true if you do not have the educational degree to work in the healthcare or academic fields.

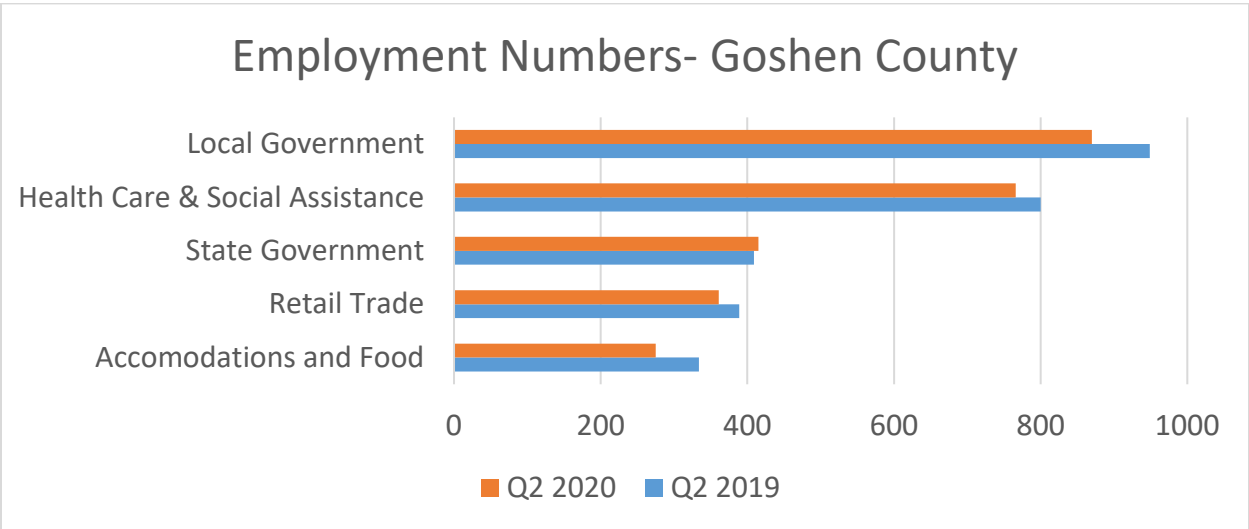
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## Employment

According to the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research and Planning Division, Wyoming experienced historic job losses in the second quarter of 2020. When comparing the second quarter of the 2020 with the second quarter of 2019, the average monthly employment number fell by 5.2% in Goshen County. This compares with a statewide average drop of 9.6%.

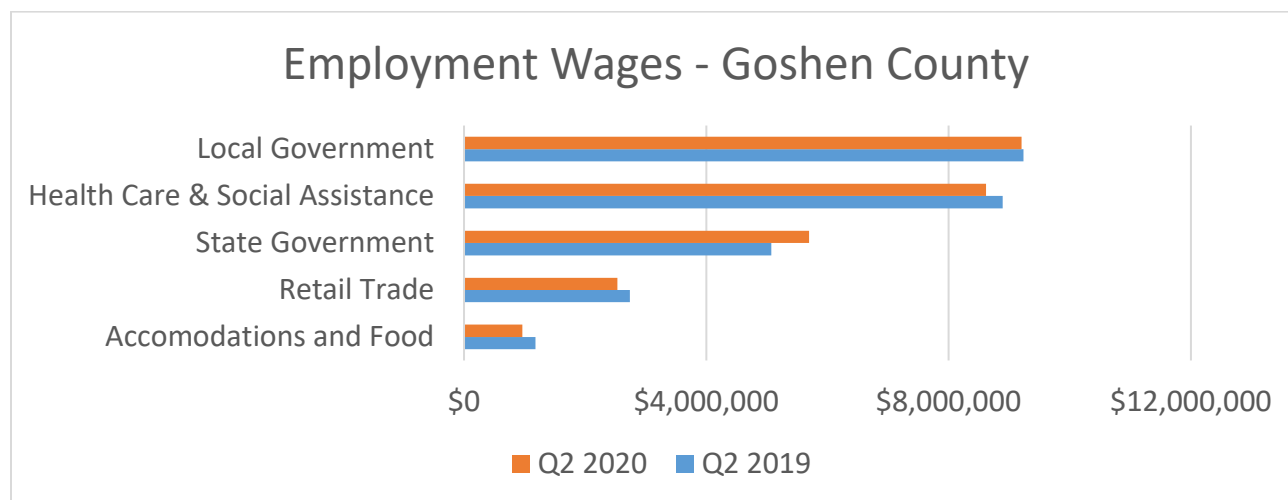
Quarter	Average Monthly Employment Total - Goshen County
Quarter 2, 2020	3,990
Quarter 1, 2020	4,049
Quarter 4, 2019	4,162
Quarter 3, 2019	4,073
Quarter 2, 2019	4,207

The graph below compares 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2020 with 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2019 for the top five industries in terms of employment numbers in Goshen 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

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Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Wyoming Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

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

- Eastern Wyoming College
- Newell Children’s Center (St. Joseph’s Children’s Home)
- Community Hospital

Other major employers include Goshen County School District and Wyoming Medium Correctional Institution.

## Unemployment

With the coronavirus-related business impacts and the energy sector decline, Wyoming’s economy experienced layoffs and other negative impacts in 2020. However, unemployment rates have improved in recent months. The first two columns compare unemployment rates for December 2020 and December 2019. The third column reflects November 2020 rates. The highest unemployment rate in 2020 was in April (last column).

	Dec 2020	Dec 2019	Nov 2020	April 2020
Goshen County	3.7% <sub>p</sub>	3.4% <sub>b</sub>	4.0% <sub>r</sub>	6.2% <sub>r</sub>
Statewide	4.6% <sub>p</sub>	3.7% <sub>b</sub>	5.0% <sub>r</sub>	9.6% <sub>r</sub>
Statewide seasonal adjusted	4.8% <sub>p</sub>	3.7% <sub>b</sub>	5.1% <sub>r</sub>	9.6% <sub>r</sub>

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services; Research & Planning  
(p = preliminary, r = revised, b = benchmarked)

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## Survey Results

Of the 278 households that responded to the question of employment, 11% indicated that someone in the house was unemployed. Of those unemployed, 44% are looking for work (29 households). The top three reasons why they were unemployed were:

1. Layoff or downsizing due to COVID-19
2. Lack skills/education
3. Mental health problem

When asked if anyone in the household would like help with job-related activities, 21% of those looking for work selected that they would like assistance with Career/Job Training.

When survey respondents were asked to mark up to three employment needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community, the top three were:

- More jobs with better pay and benefits
- Affordable childcare during work hours
- Improve the workforce readiness skills of people who can work

When extracting responses for low-income households, the top three responses were:

- More jobs with better pay and benefits
- Affordable childcare during work hours
- Increasing the community's knowledge of available employment resources

## Focus Groups and Interviews

Limited employment opportunities was identified as a challenge in the Focus Groups and Interviews. There has been a loss of jobs in Goshen County as related to the railroad, sugar factory and the elimination of some state funded positions. In addition, with the pandemic there has been a loss of jobs in the hotel and restaurant industries.

For the most part, higher paying positions that are available require a degree. This ties back into the discussion on generational poverty and the value of an education. It was also mentioned that it would be beneficial for the high schools and college to work together on vocational training.



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## 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.

	2020 Quarter 2	2019 Quarter 2	Percent Change
Apartment - Goshen County	\$570	\$549	4.0%
Apartment - Statewide Average	\$781	\$757	3.1%
Mobile Home Lot - Goshen County	NA	NA	NA
Mobile Home Lot - Statewide Average	\$386	\$360	7.3%
House – Goshen County	\$653	\$669	-2.4%
House - Statewide Average	\$1,133	\$1,007	2.3%
Mobile Home - Goshen County	\$518	\$488	6.3%
Mobile Home - Statewide Average	\$768	\$734	4.7%

Wyoming Cost of Living Index - Second Quarter of 2020  
Wyoming Economic Analysis Division

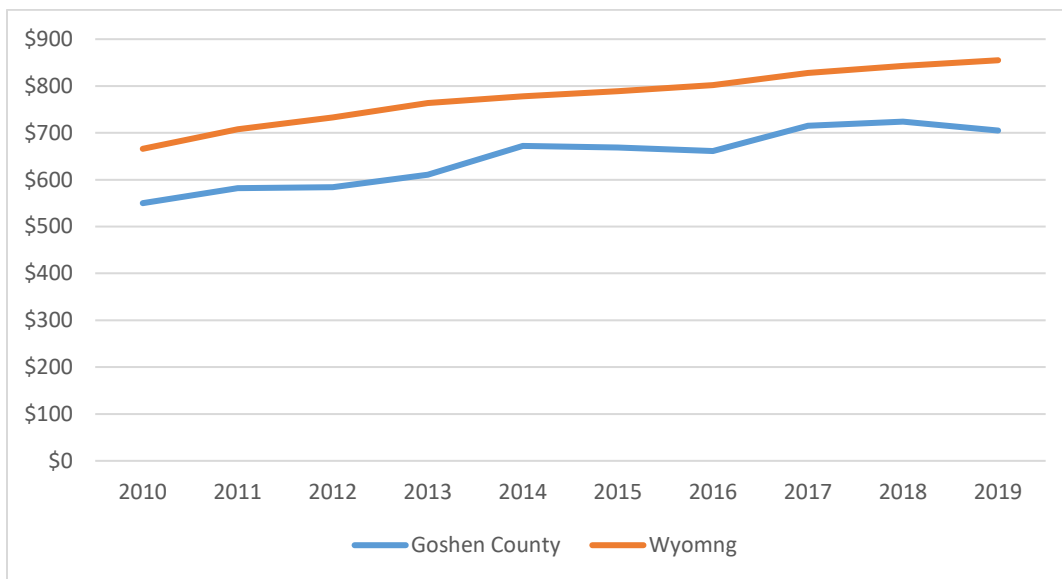
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## Median Gross Rent

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 – 2010 to 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimate

## 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 2019 5-Year Estimate: 29% of renters in Goshen County are housing cost burdened.

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According to the website directory of the Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA), there are five (5) properties of various types of affordable housing currently in Goshen County.

## Multi-Family Housing

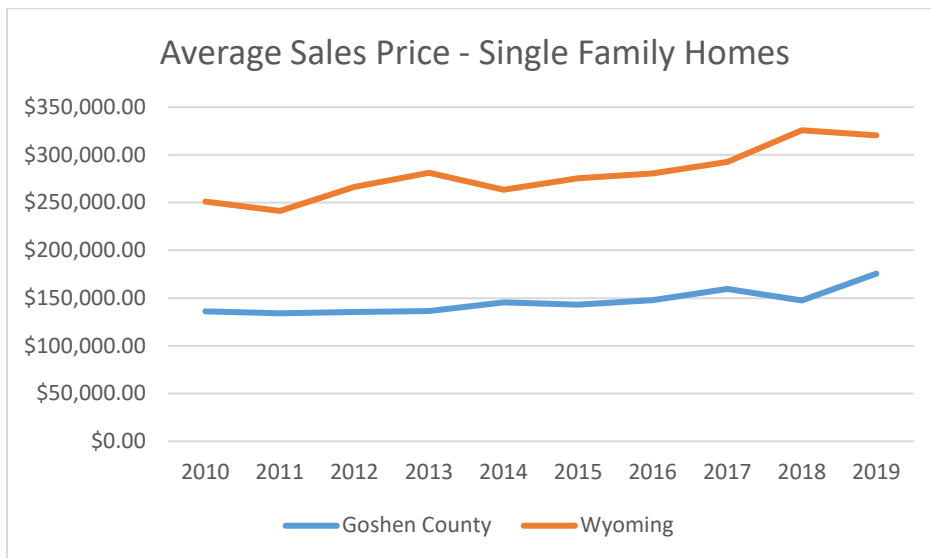
- Torrington Apartments – 26 units
- Sage Apartments – 36 units
- High Plains Apartments – 32 units

## Senior Housing

- Golden Manor I and II – 50 units
- Bell Park Tower – 40 units

## Home Ownership

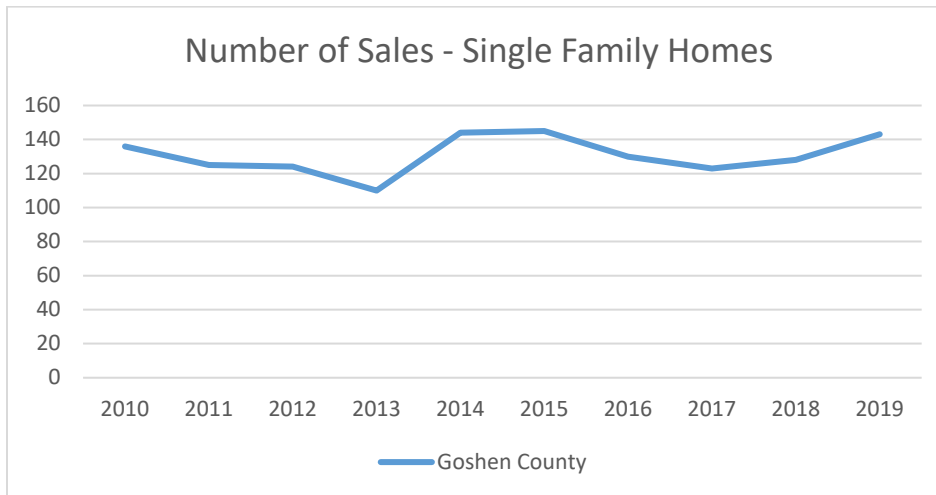
According to the Wyoming Department of Revenue, the average sales price of existing, detached, single-family homes in Goshen County was \$175,667.39 in 2019.



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

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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 (2019), the median home value in Goshen County is \$174,000. This compares to the Wyoming median home value of \$220,500.

Of the 3,836 owner-occupied units, 1,986 have a mortgage. The monthly owner cost median is \$1,261. 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 Goshen County, 25.4 % of homeowners with a mortgage are housing cost burdened.

## Survey Results and Focus Groups

When survey respondents were asked to mark up to three housing needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community, the top three were:

- More affordable housing
- More grants to make home ownership and home rehab affordable
- More grants to provide services that reduce energy cost

When extracting responses for low-income households, these were the same top three needs.

Housing was touched on in the Focus Groups. While there remains a need for additional affordable housing options, the topic did not dominate the discussion.

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## Education

### Goshen County School District #1

There were 121 students in the 2019-2020 cohort. 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 121 students, 104 graduated for an 86% graduation rate. A further breakdown is given in the table below.

### Goshen County District #1 Graduation Rates – 2019-20 Cohort

	Goshen County #1	Statewide
All Students	86.0%	82.3%
Male	84.6%	79.4%
Female	87.5%	85.4%
Lunch Eligible*	79.4%	71.6%

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

All Students	Graduation Rate	Total # of Students in Cohort
Southeast High School	100.0%	21
Lingle-Ft Laramie	100.0%	22
Torrington High School	78.2%	78

Wyoming Department of Education

## Education Attainment

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 Goshen County 18- to 24-year-old individuals and for those over 25 years old.

### Educational Attainment – 18 to 24 years

	Percent
<b>Population 18 to 24 years</b>	
Less than high school graduate	16.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	33.4%
Some college or associate degree	48.3%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	2.1%

U.S. Census Bureau – 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates

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## Educational Attainment - 25 years and over

	Percent
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	
Less than high school graduate	7.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	28.2%
Some college, no degree	25.6%
Associate degree	12.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.9%

U.S. Census Bureau – 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Survey Results

When survey respondents were asked to mark up to three education needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community, the top three were:

- More certificate/degree programs offered locally
- Increasing the community's knowledge of available education resources
- Affordable high-quality early childhood education options for parents who would like to further their education

When extracting responses for low-income households, the top three needs were:

- More certificate/degree programs offered locally
- Affordable high-quality early childhood education options for parents who would like to further their education
- More services for adult education

## Focus Groups and Interviews

As mentioned in the Employment section, there were individuals who suggested that there is a need for or a greater focus on vocational training at the high school level. A partnership between the high school and college would be helpful for those students who may have an interest in these fields.

As referenced earlier, the connection between generational poverty and the value of education was discussed.

There was a discussion about Eastern Wyoming College and the cuts they have experienced. It makes it difficult to offer educational opportunities to low-income students if tuition is having to be raised.

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## Early Childhood Education and 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 Goshen County, there are 22 licensed providers.**

- Child Care Center (CCC) – 7
- Family Child Care Center (FCCC) – 7
- Family Child Care Home (FCCH) – 8

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 be offering limited hours.

## Survey Results and Focus Groups

Almost half the survey respondents (44.49%) indicated that they have minor children (under 18) or other dependents in the household. Nine households indicated that their childcare/early education provider was not reliable and that they needed to find an alternative. Twelve households indicated that they need before and/or afterschool care.

When survey respondents were asked about the top three employment needs, 31.18% selected affordable childcare during work hours (ranked #2 on this list).

The need for additional affordable quality childcare was brought up in the Focus Groups, not just in Torrington but for other communities as well.

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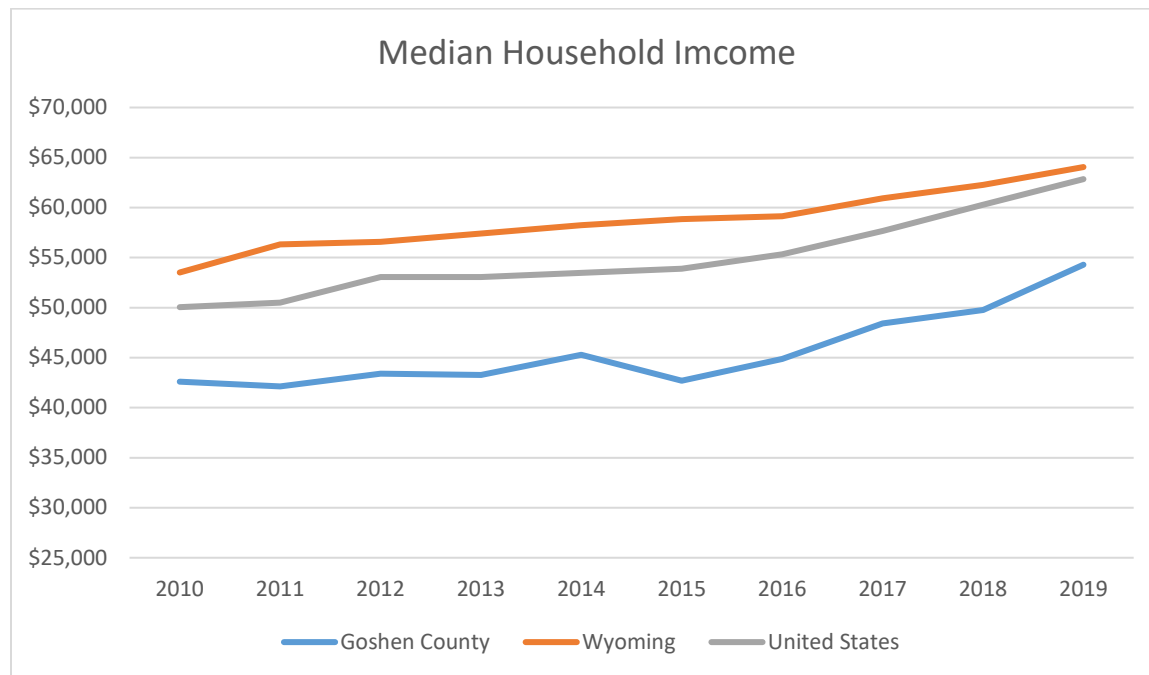
## Income

In 2019, the median household income in Goshen County was lower than Wyoming and the United States.

Area	Median Household Income
Goshen County	\$54,289
Wyoming	\$64,049
United States	\$61,937

U.S. Census Bureau – 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Goshen County’s median household income has remained far below the United States and Wyoming.



U.S. Census Bureau: ACS 5-Year Estimates from 2010 to 2019



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## Survey Results

One of the survey questions asked respondents if their total household income was more than or less than 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. Of the 242 respondents to this question, 32.23% responded “less than.”

When survey respondents were asked to mark up to three income and asset building needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community, the top three were:

- More access to low interest loans
- Anonymous and confidential budget counseling
- More education on how to build assets

When extracting responses for low-income households, the top three needs were:

- More access to low interest loans
- Increased availability of public transportation
- More information on how to access free credit counseling

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## Health and Social/Behavioral Development

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

- Community Hospital - Critical Access Hospital
- Banner Health Clinic - Rural Health Clinic
- Goshen Care at Home - Home Health Agency
- Goshen Healthcare Community - Nursing Home
- Evergreen Court - Boarding Home
- St Joseph's Children's Home - Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility

In addition, Goshen County Public Health offers a variety of low- and no-cost services, including immunizations, STD/HIV Testing, support services for pregnant and parenting families, financial assistance for children with special health care needs, pregnancy testing, and TB Risk Assessment/Testing.

Peak Wellness, a Wyoming-based nonprofit, operates a Mental Health Center in Torrington. There are also private businesses in Torrington offering counseling and mental health 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.

### **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. Goshen County ranked 10 out of the 23 counties 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, Goshen County ranked 9 out of the 23 counties. Years of Potential Life Lost is used to measure the rate and distribution of premature mortality.

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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, Goshen County ranks 14 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, Goshen County ranked 15 in Health Factors. The four components and their rankings for Goshen County are outlined below.

Health Behaviors – Goshen County ranked 17 out of the 23 counties. The areas to explore for improvement include:

- Adult smoking
- Adult obesity
- Physical inactivity

Clinical Care – Goshen County ranked 13. An area of strength was “Preventable hospital stays.” The one area to explore for improvement:

- Uninsured

Social & Economic Factors – Goshen County ranked 10 out the 23 counties with one area to explore for improvement:

- Violent crime

Physical Environment – Goshen County ranked 20 out of the 23 counties. There no areas highlighted for improvement.

## Health Insurance

According to the US Census Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) for 2018, 14.9% of the Goshen County population under 65 years old are uninsured.

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## Survey Results and Focus Groups

When survey respondents were asked to mark up to three **health** needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community, the top three were:

- More payment assistance programs for adult dental and/or hearing services
- Increasing the community's knowledge of available health (physical, mental, dental, or behavioral) resources
- More vision assistance for adults

When extracting responses for low-income households, the top three needs were:

- More payment assistance programs for adult dental and/or hearing services
- More vision assistance for adults
- Increasing the community's knowledge of available health (physical, mental, dental, or behavioral) resources

When survey respondents were asked to mark up to three **social/behavioral** needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community, the top three were:

- More mental health resources for youth
- More assistance and resources for youth with history of substance abuse
- More assistance and resources for victims of domestic violence

When extracting responses for low-income households, the top three needs were:

- More mental health resources for youth
- More assistance and resources for victims of domestic violence
- More assistance and resources for youth with history of substance abuse

The Focus Groups discussed the mental health needs in the county, especially for youth. Issues identified included the need for additional providers and the financial barriers to accessing services. There is also an issue with finding resources for acute mental health needs. These individuals must be transported outside of this area and sometimes the only option is law enforcement.

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## Support Services

### Survey Results and Focus Groups

When survey respondents were asked to mark up to three support services needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community, the top three were:

- Youth services
- Life skills programs and services
- Transportation services

When extracting responses for low-income households, the top three needs were:

- Transportation services
- Meal programs
- Tied:
  - Legal services
  - Youth services

The topic of Youth Services was a major area of discussion for all three Focus Groups. In addition, interviewees mentioned this as a need. Specifically, there is a need for mentoring and support as they transition from teenagers to adults. Some of the county's youth are not prepared academically or socially for this transition.

Transportation was identified as an issue in the Focus Groups and in the Interviews. There are very limited options to get to work and to medical appointments if you do not have a reliable vehicle.

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## 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 Goshen County food insecurity rate in 2018 was 12.1% or an estimated 1,620 people. The child food insecurity rate was 16.2% or 450 children.

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

Of the estimated 1,620 food insecure individuals:

- 48.2% are below 130% poverty and qualify for SNAP, free lunch meals, WIC
- 13.6% are between 130% and 185% poverty and qualify for WIC and reduced-price school meals.
- The remaining 38.2% do not 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 Goshen County are slightly lower than the statewide average. Based on the Wyoming Comparative Cost of Living Index for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2020, Goshen County's index for food was 97. 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, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 7.6% of households in Goshen County participate in SNAP.

According to Wyoming Department of Education data for 2019-2020:

- 28.61% of the students enrolled in Goshen County School District #1 are eligible for free lunch. 13.61% are eligible for reduced lunch.

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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.

According to the Wyoming Hunger Initiative website, the food pantries in Goshen County include Goshen County Caring and Sharing Food Pantry, LaGrange Bible Missionary Church, Eastern Wyoming College Gear Up, Goshen Help, Land of Goshen Ministries, and Senior Friendship Center.

## Survey Results and Focus Groups

When asked about support services on the survey, 23.58% of the respondents selected meal programs as one of the three top support services needs.

The topic of Food Insecurity was mentioned in one of the Focus Groups as related to school lunches. They are currently being offered for free due to the pandemic. There is a worry that once this ends, some students will be at further risk of food insecurity.

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## Community Needs Assessment Survey

The Community Needs Assessment survey was made available online and promoted through social media and email communications. The survey was open from December 9, 2020 to January 10, 2021.

As an incentive for completing the survey, respondents could chose to 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 297 validated surveys completed. Only those respondents that indicated that they live in Goshen County are included in this number. In analyzing the survey data, Align pulled results specific to low-income households for some of the questions. These are referenced in the following pages.

### Demographics

#### Where do you live?

Response	Percentage
Torrington	80.13%
Lingle	6.73%
Fort Laramie	4.38%
Yoder	2.36%
Huntley	1.68%
Veteran	1.01%
Jay Em	1.01%
Hawk Springs	0.67%
LaGrange	0.34%
Other	1.68%

*Answered:297*



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## What is your marital status?

Answer Choices	Response %
Single, never married	10.14%
Married or domestic partnership	66.55%
Divorced or separated	12.84%
Living with partner	5.74%
Widowed	4.73%

Answered: 296; Skipped: 1

## How many people live in your household?

Responses	# of responses	Response %
One	36	12.12%
Two	101	34.01%
Three	53	17.85%
Four	55	18.52%
Five	31	10.44%
Six	13	4.38%
Seven	4	1.35%
Eight	4	1.35%

Answered: 297

## 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	58	88
6 to 17 years old	115	204
18 to 49 years old	176	327
50 to 64 years old	124	185
65+ years old	77	107

Answered: 294; Skipped 3

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

Answer Choice	Responses
8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	0.85%
Some high school, no diploma	5.25%
High school graduate or GED	23.52%
Some college credit, no degree	20.30%
Trade/technical/vocational training	9.30%
Associate degree	11.17%
Bachelor's degree	16.41%
Professional degree	1.86%
Master's or Doctorate degree	11.34%

Answered: 289; Skipped 8

## Employment

What is the employment status for each adult in your household?

Answer Choices	Response %	Total # of people
Full-Time	51.55%	300
Part-Time	13.57%	79
Seasonal	1.55%	9
Not working/Retired	22.34%	130
Unemployed	11.00%	64

Answered: 278; Skipped: 19

**If anyone in your household is unemployed, are they currently looking for work?**

*Only showing results for those responses that answered "unemployed" on previous question.*

Answer Choices	Response %	Total # of people
Yes	44.0%	31
No	34.0%	22
Not applicable	22.0%	11

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If anyone in your household is unemployed, please select the reason(s) why below:

Answer Choices	Response %
Permanent physical disability	21.05%
Layoff or downsizing due to COVID-19	11.40%
Mental health problem	10.53%
Other health issues	9.65%
Lack skills/education	6.14%
Learning/developmental disability	4.39%
Unaccompanied youth	4.39%
Layoff or downsizing	3.51%
Lack early childhood education/care	2.63%
Lack transportation	2.63%
Lack US documents	2.63%
Temporary physical disability	1.75%
Sexual orientation or gender identity	0.88%
Criminal background	0.88%
Attempting to flee domestic abuse or sexual assault	0
Drug/alcohol problem	0
Lack permanent address	0
Lack proper clothing	0
Language barrier	0

For the previous question, Align extracted responses for those that responded that they were unemployed and looking for work. For these survey respondents, the top three reasons were:

1. Layoff or downsizing due to COVID-19
2. Lack skills/education
3. Mental health problem

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Would you or anyone in your household like help with these job-related activities? Check all that apply.

Answer choices	Response %
Career/job training	6.32%
Resume writing	4.35%
Work clothes	4.35%
Job interviewing skills	3.56%
Job search strategies	3.16%
Career assessment	2.37%
Career information options	1.98%
No assistance needed	91.30%

Answered:253; Skipped: 44

Mark up to three employment needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
More jobs with better pay and benefits	56.63%
Affordable childcare during work hours	31.18%
Improve the workforce readiness skills of people who can work	19.71%
Increasing the community's knowledge of available employment resources	19.00%
More training for the types of jobs available in the area	16.13%
Early reinforcement of the values of entering the workforce	14.34%
Affordable transportation to and from job	5.38%
No needs	29.39%
Other	3.23%

Answered:279; Skipped:18

Low-Income households top 3 responses:

1. More jobs with better pay and benefits
2. Affordable childcare during work hours
3. Increasing the community's knowledge of available employment resources

# Goshen Help

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## Housing

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

Answer Choices	Response %
Homeowner	63.77%
Renter	25.66%
Living with others and assisting with rent or mortgage	4.53%
Living with others and not paying rent or mortgage	2.26%
Living in shelter	0%
Homeless	0%
Other	3.77%

Answered: 265; Skipped:32

What is your monthly payment for housing?

	Number of responses	Average payment
I rent house/apartment: My rent is	70	\$582.50
I own my home: My mortgage payment is	107*	\$1,021.90

\* Homeowners with a mortgage payment

47 homeowners responded that they have paid off their home.

Mark up to three housing needs for your and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
More affordable housing	36.84%
More grants to make home ownership and home rehab affordable	27.82%
More grants to provide services that reduce energy cost	23.31%
More programs to provide free home repair	20.68%
More income based rental housing for disabled and seniors	19.55%
More monthly rental assistance programs	13.53%
More community supports for homeless families	12.41%
Increased availability of security/utility deposit programs	12.03%
Increased availability of emergency housing (temporary shelters)	10.15%
More counseling resources for homeowners	5.64%
No needs	27.07%
Other	2.26%

Answered:266; Skipped:31

# Goshen Help

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Low-income households top 3 responses:

1. More affordable housing
2. More grants to make how ownership and home rehab affordable
3. More grants to provide services that reduce energy costs

## Education

**Do you have minor children (under 18) or other dependents?**

Answer choices	Response %
Yes	44.49%
No	55.51%

*Answered:263; Skipped:34*

**Are you your child(ren)'s primary caretaker?**

Answer choices	Response %
Yes	43.89%
No	10.69%
Not applicable	45.42%

*Answered:262; Skipped:35*

**If you have children or other dependents under your care, what is your family situation?**

Answer choices	Response %
Single parent	8.95%
Two parents	30.35%
Raising own children and children of others	1.56%
Raising children of other family members	5.45%
Raising someone else's children, not family	0.39%
Foster parents	0.78%
Shared custody	3.50%
No children or dependents at home	49.03%

*Answered:257; Skipped:40*

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**Who provides your early childhood education (or dependent care)? Check all that apply.**

Answer choices	Response %
Self	23.44%
Friends	4.30%
Family	11.72%
Church	3.91%
Childcare	7.42%
Head Start	6.64%
Must leave children alone	0%
Before and/or after school program	0.78%
Not applicable	67.58%
Other	1.17%

*Answered:256; Skipped:41*

**Is your early childhood education (dependent care) provider dependable?**

Answer choices	Response %
Yes	21.01%
No	3.50%
Not applicable	75.49%

*Answered:257; Skipped:40*

**Do you need different early childhood education (dependent care) help?**

Answer choices	Response %
Yes	3.47%
No	23.17%
Not applicable	73.69%

*Answered:259; Skipped:38*

**What kind of early childhood education (dependent care) do you need?**

Answer choices	Response %
Before and/or afterschool	4.67%
Evening hours due to shift work	1.56%
Care for child with special health care needs	1.17%
Center-based	0.78%
No needs at this time	15.18%
Other	0.785
No needs at this time	75.88%

*Answered:257; Skipped:40*

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Mark up to three education needs for your and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
More certificate/degree programs offered locally	29.66%
Increasing the community’s knowledge of available education resources	26.62%
Affordable high-quality early childhood education options for parent who would like to further their education	24.33%
More services for adult education	22.05%
Preschool activities for child(ren) to develop school readiness skills	21.67%
More assessable counseling to prepare students for tech or college	17.11%
Affordable transportation options to and from school	7.60%
No needs	33.84%
Other	4.94%

Answered:263; Skipped:34

Low-income households top 3 responses:

1. More certificate/degree programs offered locally
2. Affordable high-quality early childhood education options for parent who would like to further their education.
3. More services for adult education.

## Income and Asset Building

Below are the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines (FLP) for 125% FPL. Household income includes employment, self-employment, Social Security, retirement, disability, worker’s compensation, unemployment, VA benefits, and alimony. Please reference the table below for the following question.

125% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guidelines by Household Size	
Persons in Family/Household	Annual Income – Column A
1	\$15,950
2	\$21,550
3	\$27,150
4	\$32,750
5	\$38,350
6	\$43,950
For families/households with more than 6 persons, add \$5,600 for each additional person.	



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**Is your total household income “more than” or “less than” Column A for the number of household members in your household?**

Answer choices	Response %
More than	67.77%
Less than	32.23%

*Answered:242; Skipped:55*

**What type of income do you have in your household? Check all that apply**

Answer choices	Response %
Employer wages	70.95%
Social Security	26.56%
Pension/Retirement	19.92%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	13.69%
Child support	6.22%
Veterans Affairs Compensation	5.81%
Student grants/loans	2.90%
Unemployment benefits	1.66%
TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)	1.24%
No income	0.83%
Family/Friends	0.41%
Other	7.05%

*Answered:241; Skipped:56*

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**Mark up to three income and asset building needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community.**

<b>Answer choices</b>	<b>Response %</b>
More access to low interest loans	29.34%
Anonymous and confidential budget counseling	21.90%
More education on how to build assets	17.36%
Increased availability of public transportation	17.36%
More access to recreational resources	16.53%
Increasing the community's knowledge of available mainstream financial resources	16.12%
More access to broadband	14.05%
Increasing community assets (i.e., commercial resources)	13.64%
Information on how to access free credit counseling	12.40%
Anonymous and confidential savings counseling	10.33%
More information on how to access financial resources	10.33%
Other	2.07%
No needs	24.79%

*Answered:242; Skipped:55*

Low-income households top 3 responses:

1. More access to low interest loans
2. Increased availability of public transportation
3. More information on how to access free credit counseling

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## Health and Social/Behavioral Development

Mark up to three health needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
More payment assistance programs for adult dental and/or hearing services	53.88%
Increasing the community's knowledge of available health (physical, mental, dental, or behavioral) resources	36.64%
More vision assistance for adults	35.34%
More community focus on preventative healthcare	29.74%
More knowledge of available food resources	17.67%
More nutritional counseling (one on one and free)	14.66%
More emphasis on early childhood nutrition education	12.50%
Provide more education on maintaining personal hygiene	12.07%
More emphasis on reinforcing healthy eating habits	0.00%
More assistance and resources for victims of domestic violence	0.00%
More mental health resources for youth	0.00%
More assistance and resources for youth with history of substance misuse	0.00%
Other	4.74%
No needs	15.09%

Answered:232; Skipped:65

Low-income households top 3 responses:

1. More payment assistance programs for adult dental and/or hearing services.
2. More vision assistance programs for adults
3. Increasing the community's knowledge of available health (physical, mental, dental, or behavioral) resources

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Mark up to three social/behavioral development needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
More mental health resources for youth	54.74%
More assistance and resources for youth with history of substance misuse	39.66%
More assistance and resources for victims of domestic violence	33.62%
More emphasis on reinforcing healthy eating habits	21.98%
Provide more education on maintaining personal hygiene	15.95%
Other	3.88%
No needs	25.86%

Answered:232; Skipped:65

Low-income household top 3 responses:

1. More mental health resources for youth
2. More assistance and resources for victims of domestic violence
3. More assistance and resources for youth with a history of substance misuse

## Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

Mark up to three civic engagement and community involvement needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
More knowledge on civic activities	44.35%
More education on how to join associations, community boards, advocacy groups or similar organizations	43.91%
Increasing the community's skills and knowledge of leadership development	35.22%
More citizen classes	9.57%
Other	1.74%
No needs	33.04%

Answered:230; Skipped:67

Low-income household top 3 responses:

1. More education on how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups, or similar organization.
2. More knowledge on civic activities
3. Increasing the community's skills and knowledge of leadership development.

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## Support Services

Mark up to three support services needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
Youth services	35.81%
Life skills programs and services	35.37%
Transportation services	26.20%
Legal services	24.02%
Meal programs	23.58%
Emotional abuse services	18.34%
Substance misuse resources	17.47%
Child support	12.66%
Sexual abuse services	10.04%
Physical abuse services	9.17%
Other	1.75%
No needs	17.03%

*Answered:229; Skipped:68*

Low-income household top 3 responses:

1. Transportation services
2. Meal programs
3. Tied:
  - a. Legal services
  - b. Youth services

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## Overall Needs

Mark up to three overall needs for you and your household or your perceived need for the community.

Answer choices	Response %
Employment	56.14%
Support services (i.e., legal, youth, abuse, transportation, etc.)	42.54%
Housing	34.21%
Health	23.68%
Education	23.25%
Income and asset building	19.30%
Civic engagement	9.65%
Other	2.63%
No needs	19.30%

*Answered:228; Skipped:69*

Low-income households top 3 responses:

1. Employment
2. Housing
3. Tied
  - a. Health
  - b. Support services

# Goshen Help

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## Focus Group Participants and Interviewees

Kyle Borger, Goshen Help  
Linda Cockett, Goshen County Senior Friendship Center  
Sammie Coxbill, WIC  
Jessica Emigh, Sage Apartments  
Sandy Hoehn, Goshen County Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce  
Tori Hunt, Goshen County Task Force on Family Violence & Sexual Assault  
Matt Johnson, Torrington Police Department  
Lacy Judkins, Torrington Learning Center  
Ryan Kramer, Goshen County School District #1  
Essie McCall, Peak Wellness Center  
Michelle Powell, Goshen County Task Force on Family Violence & Sexual Assault  
Carlos Saucedo, St. Joseph's Children's Home  
Lynette Saucedo, Goshen County Prevention Specialist  
Gilbert Servantez, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services  
Kori Sillerud, Wyoming Department of Family Services  
Dale Steffens, Torrington Apartments  
Dr. Leslie Travers, Eastern Wyoming College  
Heidi Wayland, Torrington Learning Center  
Janelle Werner, Community Hospital