

Johnson County Community Needs Assessment

Compass – Center for Families

September 2021

Prepared by:



TheAlignTeam.org

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Table of Contents

Background and Methods	2
Key Findings	4
Demographics	6
Cost of Living	8
Poverty	9
Employment, Unemployment	12
Housing	16
Education	19
Early Childhood Education & Childcare	21
Income	22
Health and Social/Behavioral Development	24
Food Insecurity	27
Community Needs Assessment Survey	29
Focus Group and Interview Participants	37

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Background

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 income are stable and achieve economic security.
2. Communities where people with low income live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
3. People with low income 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 Johnson County, the Compass Center for Families is the CSBG grantee. The mission of Compass Center for Families is to strengthen child-centered, family-focused positive relationships. They do this through five vital programs for children: the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, the Family Visitation and Exchange Program, the Co-Parenting Meditation Program, Community Parent Education, and the Parent Liaison Program. They serve both Johnson and Sheridan counties. Compass Center for Families contracted with The Align Team to complete this Community Needs Assessment.

Methods

This 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. Publicly available data was 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.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Align also collected data from Johnson County residents through focus groups, interviews, and the Community Needs Survey. Align conducted one in-person focus group at the Bomber Mountain Civic Center in Buffalo on August 16, 2021. The interviews were completed by phone and email. Those who participated in the focus group or interviews include professionals throughout the community. We spoke with representatives from healthcare, mental health centers, low-income service providers, public officials, and education. The complete list of focus group participants and interviewees is at the end of this report. It is important to note that we were unable to interview anyone from Kaycee, so these results only represent perspectives from Buffalo residents.

The Community Needs Survey was conducted online, and Compass staff distributed hard copies to customers and clients.

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 July 27, 2021 to August 19, 2021. As an incentive for completing the survey, respondents could choose 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 58 validated responses to the survey.

Following the Introduction and Key Findings, the report is broken into sections by topic area. In addition to publicly available data on each topic, most sections include findings from the focus group, interviews, and surveys (hereafter identified as *perception data*). The complete survey results follow at the end. The last section includes the names of the individuals that participated in the focus group and interviews.

Compass Center for Families 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 Johnson County, this assessment would not have been possible.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Key Findings

Johnson County is a rural area in north central Wyoming, with two small towns, Buffalo and Kaycee. Located near the Big Horn Mountains, between Yellowstone Park and Mount Rushmore, the communities in Johnson County are known for their friendly and welcoming demeanor with many residents and visitors enjoying outdoor activities year-round.

Focus group and interview participants described their communities as friendly and supportive. One interviewee described Buffalo as having a “strong sense of community spirit.” Residents are “proud of our caring nature and generous spirit [toward] the wellbeing of our friends and neighbors.” When asked about the communities’ strengths, almost every respondent spoke about people helping their neighbors.

Overall, Johnson County is faring better than statewide averages on many indicators, especially related to health. The percentage of people who are living below the poverty line in Johnson County is roughly equivalent to the rest of the state. However, the percentage for males in poverty is higher in Johnson County. The high school graduation rate for males in Johnson County is considerably lower than their female peers. These two statistics suggest programming and assistance for men in Johnson County may have a positive impact on poverty-related outcomes.

Housing was identified as the #1 community need by Johnson County residents, followed by employment and support services.

Housing was the number one concern among focus group participants and interviewees. Respondents repeatedly commented on the shortage of low-income housing in the area. This finding also appeared in the survey. When asked to rank the top three needs of the community, 35 out of 46 respondents reported *housing* as a major need.

Johnson County is faring better with employment, compared to the rest of the state. Wyoming’s economy is continuing to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. From 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2020, Wyoming lost 16,273 jobs, a 5.9% loss, and total payroll fell by \$58.4 million, a 1.6% loss. However, Johnson County’s average monthly employment only fell 0.9% from 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2020, and wages actually increased in that same period by 4.6% (Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Wyoming Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages).

Industries in Johnson County are changing. The industry that employs the most people in Johnson County is the local government. Many industries saw a decrease in the number of employees from 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2020. The biggest drop (of the top six industries) occurred in the mining, quarrying, and oil/gas industry, going from a monthly average of 206

Johnson County Needs Assessment

employees to 162, a 21.4% decrease. Local government, construction, and health care/social assistance all saw *increases* in the number of employees.

Childcare was another area of concern for Johnson County residents. Childcare centers that offer off-hours for shift workers are in short supply. Interviewees commented that childcare is costly and seems to keep people from being able to obtain and keep full-time employment.

Income in Johnson County is lower than state and national medians (U.S. Census Bureau 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates). Low wages and income can result in poor outcomes associated with housing, childcare, and food security. Of those in Johnson County who are food insecure, almost half (48%) do not qualify for federal programs (Feeding America, 2021). In addition, food costs in Johnson County are higher than the statewide average (Wyoming Comparative Cost of Living Index).

Several needs were identified by the survey respondents (28% of whom qualify as low income). More than a quarter of the survey respondents identified the following needs in their communities:

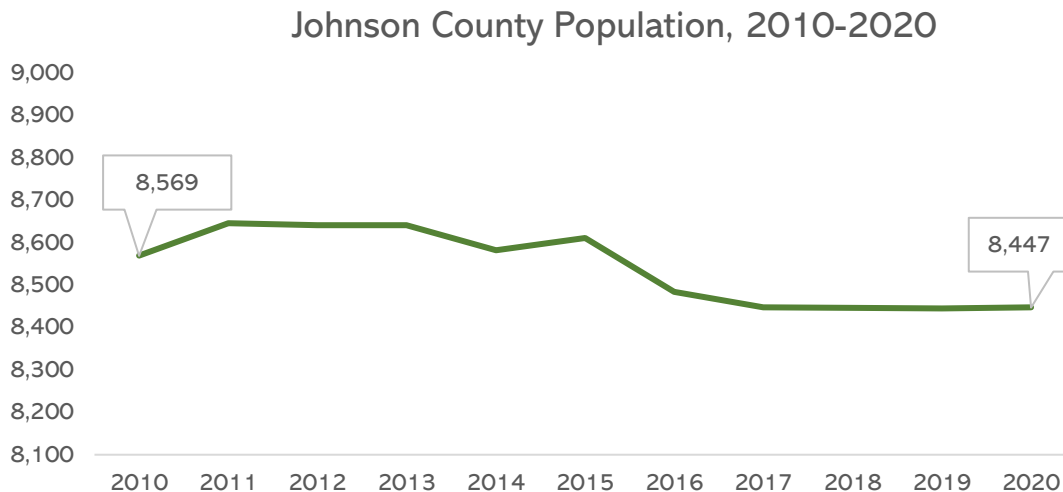
- More jobs with better pay and benefits
- More affordable housing
- Increasing the community's knowledge of available education resources
- More payment assistance programs for adult dental and/or hearing services
- More mental health resources for youth
- More education on how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups, or similar organizations
- Life skills programs and services

Overall, survey respondents identified *housing, employment, and support services* as the top three needs in their communities.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Demographics

The population of Johnson County is currently 8,447. The population has decreased slightly (1.4%) since 2010. The population for the state of Wyoming increased overall by 2.3%.



U.S. Census Bureau – 2020 & 2010 Census, 2011-2019 Annual Population Estimates

Like all other counties in Wyoming, Johnson County has a very low population density, with 2.0 persons per square mile, lower than the state average, which is 5.9 persons per square mile (2020 Census Demographic Data Map Viewer).

The county's population is slightly older than the state average: 79% of Johnson County's population is age 18 and over, compared to the state average of 76% (2020 Census Demographic Data Map Viewer). The median age of residents in Johnson County is 45.4 with 52% male and 48% female (2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables). Most Johnson County residents (92%) are White, 0.9% are American Indian, 0.3% are Black or African American, 0.2% are Asian, 0.1% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 5.2% are two or more races, and 1.3% are another race. The percentage of people in Johnson County who are Hispanic or Latino is 4.1% (2020 Census Demographic Data Map Viewer).

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Buffalo is the largest town in Johnson County, holding about 54% of the county’s population. Kasey is the only other officially incorporated town in the county.

Population of Incorporated Cities and Towns

	2010	2019
Buffalo	4,585	4,575
Kasey	263	278
All others	3,721	3,592

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

The percentage of housing units that are occupied in the Buffalo area is 90%, compared to the rest of the county at only 66%. The percentage for Wyoming is 86%. The percentage of those living in group quarters (either institutional or non-institutional) is also greater in the Buffalo area: 2.2% in Buffalo compared to 0% in the rest of the county. The percentage for Wyoming is similar to Buffalo—2.3% (2020 Census Demographic Data Map Viewer).

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Cost of Living

The cost of living is lower in Johnson County, compared to the rest of the state. 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 to the statewide average (100). Price data is collected in Wyoming cities and towns and 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	15.7%
Food	13.8%
Recreation & Personal Care	9.6%
Medical	8.8%
Apparel	3.6%

For the 4th quarter of 2020, the Comparative Cost of Living Index ranked Johnson County at 95 for all items, which is lower than the statewide average of 100. The highest category was Apparel at 111. The lowest category was Housing at 87. These values reflect relative price levels at the time of data collection, not over time.

Johnson County Cost of Living Index

All Items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Transportation	Medical	Recreation & Personal Care
95	109	87	111	101	95	102

Wyoming Economic Analysis Division - The Wyoming Comparative Cost of Living Index: 4th Quarter, 2020

Perception Data related to Cost of Living

While the Johnson County housing index is lower than the other categories, the shortage of affordable housing came up often in the focus group and interviews, and often as the number one challenge in the community. Several participants said there has been an influx of people moving to Buffalo during the pandemic, causing housing prices to skyrocket, with very few low-income housing options. One respondent said finding housing has been difficult for everyone, not just individuals who are low income. With that said, participants mentioned that homelessness does not appear to be a problem currently.

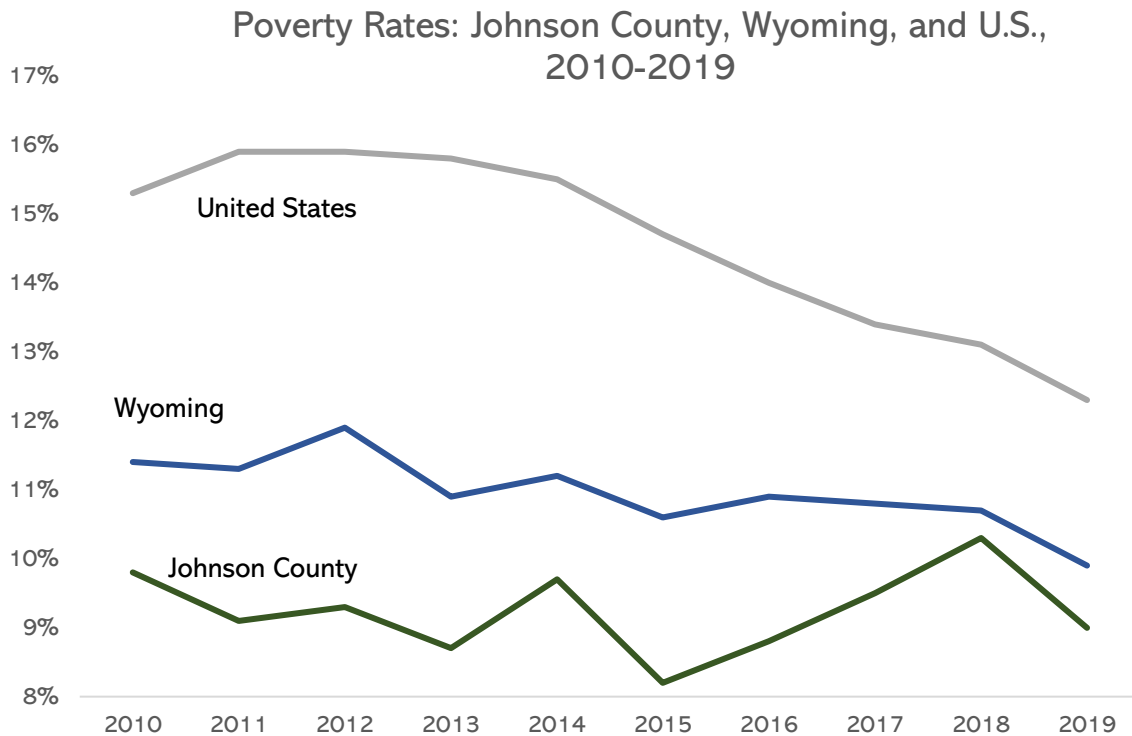
Johnson County Needs Assessment

Focus group participants also talked about the need to travel to Sheridan or other larger towns for groceries and other essential items. Johnson County appears to have a shortage of affordable food, clothing, and other essential items.

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.



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

Johnson County Needs Assessment

The ACS is an ongoing survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It includes indicators related to society, housing, economics, and demographics. The percentage of people who are living below the poverty line in Johnson County is roughly equivalent to the rest of the state. However, the percentage for males is higher in Johnson County.

Poverty Rates for Johnson County and Wyoming, by Gender, Age, and Race

	Percent below poverty level	
	Johnson County	Wyoming
All population	12.1%	11.0%
Male	15.6%	9.7%
Female	8.3%	12.3%
Under 18 years	15.3%	12.6%
18 to 34 years	15.4%	16.6%
35 to 64 years	11.3%	7.9%
65 years and over	8.1%	8.0%
White	12.5%	10.5%
Black or African American	--	15.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	--	23.8%
Asian	--	13.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	--	--
Some other race	--	13.4%
Two or more races	--	14.1%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	--	19.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	11.5%	9.6%

-- Denotes unavailable data due to small sample sizes.
 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.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

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.

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

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

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.	

US Department of Health and Human Services

Perception Data related to Poverty

One interviewee talked about the difficulty of generational poverty. One example of not being able to meet ongoing needs is that the Crisis Center can only provide housing once. Focus group participants spoke of the need for budgeting and planning assistance. In their work, they have seen many clients who are in “survival mode” and are not consistently planning for their future needs.

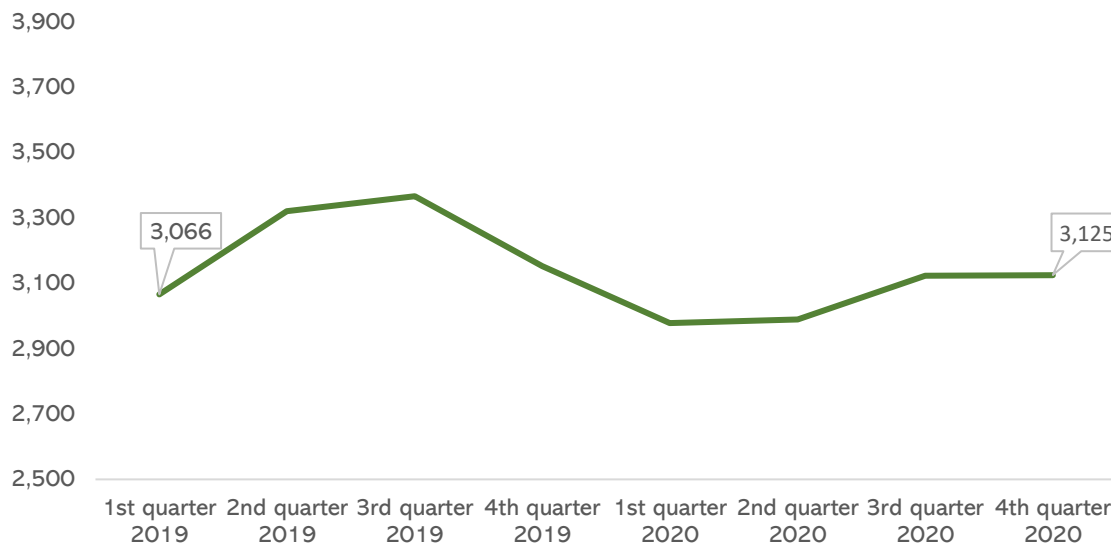
Survey respondents (29%) selected *life skills programs and services* as a need in their community.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Employment

Johnson County is faring better with employment, compared to the rest of the state. According to the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research and Planning Division, Wyoming’s economy is continuing to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. From 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2020, Wyoming lost 16,273 jobs, a 5.9% loss, and total payroll fell by \$58.4 million, a 1.6% loss. However, Johnson County’s average monthly employment only fell 0.9% from 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2020, and wages actually increased in that same period by 4.6%.

Employment in Johnson County, by Quarter, 2019-2020



Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Wyoming Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

The industry that employs the most people in Johnson County is the local government. Many industries saw a decrease in the number of employees from 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2020. The biggest drop (of the top six industries) occurred in the mining, quarrying, and oil/gas industry; going from a monthly average of 206 employees to 162, a 21.4% decrease. Local government, construction, and health care/social assistance all saw *increases* in the number of employees.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Monthly Average Number of Employees in Johnson County's Top Six Industries, Q4 2019 & Q4 2020

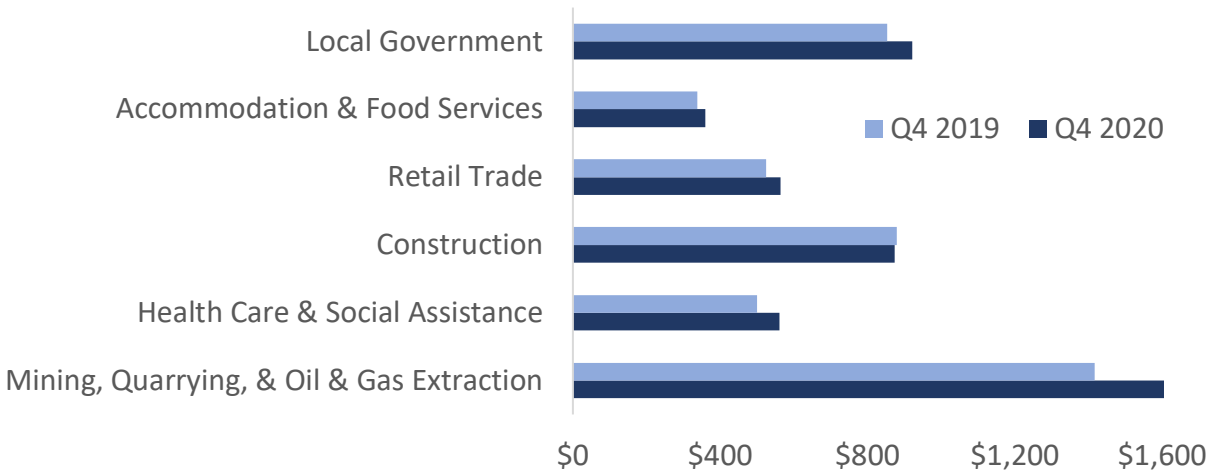


Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Wyoming Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Average weekly wages for five of the top six industries in Johnson County increased from 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2020. Only construction had a slight decrease in wages (from \$879 to \$874). While the mining, quarrying, and oil/gas saw the biggest drop in number of employees, the industry pays better than the other top industries in the county.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Average Weekly Wages for Employees in Johnson County's Top Six Industries, Q4 2019 & Q4 2020



Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Wyoming Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Within the above industries, the largest *employers* in Johnson County include:

- Johnson County Healthcare Center
- Johnson County School District
- HF Bar Ranch
- Veterans' Home of Wyoming

wyomingatwork.com, Geographic Solutions, Inc.

Perception Data related to Employment

Respondents to the Community Needs Survey ranked *employment* as the second greatest need in Johnson County (behind *housing*). The majority (61%) of respondents felt their community needs *more jobs with better pay and benefits*. When asked why people in their household may be unemployed, respondents most often reported *mental health problems* (15%) and *other health issues* (15%). For those who reported needing job-related assistance (17% of all respondents), respondents selected *work clothes*, *career assessment*, and *career information options*.

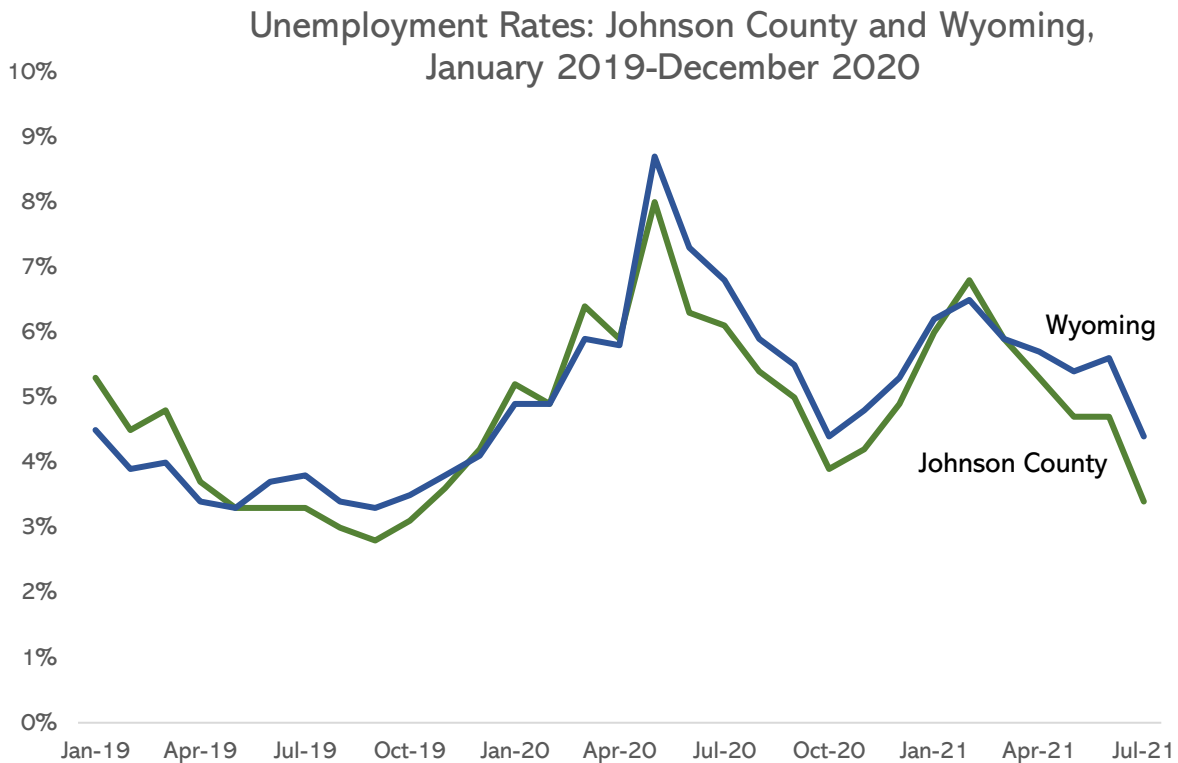
Focus group and interview participants talked in length about employment. They reported that many venues are looking for employees and their communities are experience a staffing shortage, to a point where some venues have had to decrease their operating hours. Many felt that the pandemic has had a direct impact on the job market. There seems to be simultaneous problems of employers looking for workers and employees looking for work. One participant suggested the creation of a network for people who are looking for work who could use a service

Johnson County Needs Assessment

(like Wyoming Workforce) to get connected to jobs. Other participants spoke of the need for higher paying jobs for people of all education levels and more opportunities for stable positions (beyond the oil and gas industry).

Unemployment

As of July 2021, the unemployment rate in Johnson County was 3.4%, lower than the statewide rate of 4.4%. The rate mostly has recovered since the spike in mid-2020 caused by the economic disruptions related to the pandemic. In July 2020, the unemployment rate in Johnson County was 6.1%. The unemployment rate in Johnson County has followed the state's pattern the past two years.



Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Research & Planning – Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Johnson County Needs Assessment

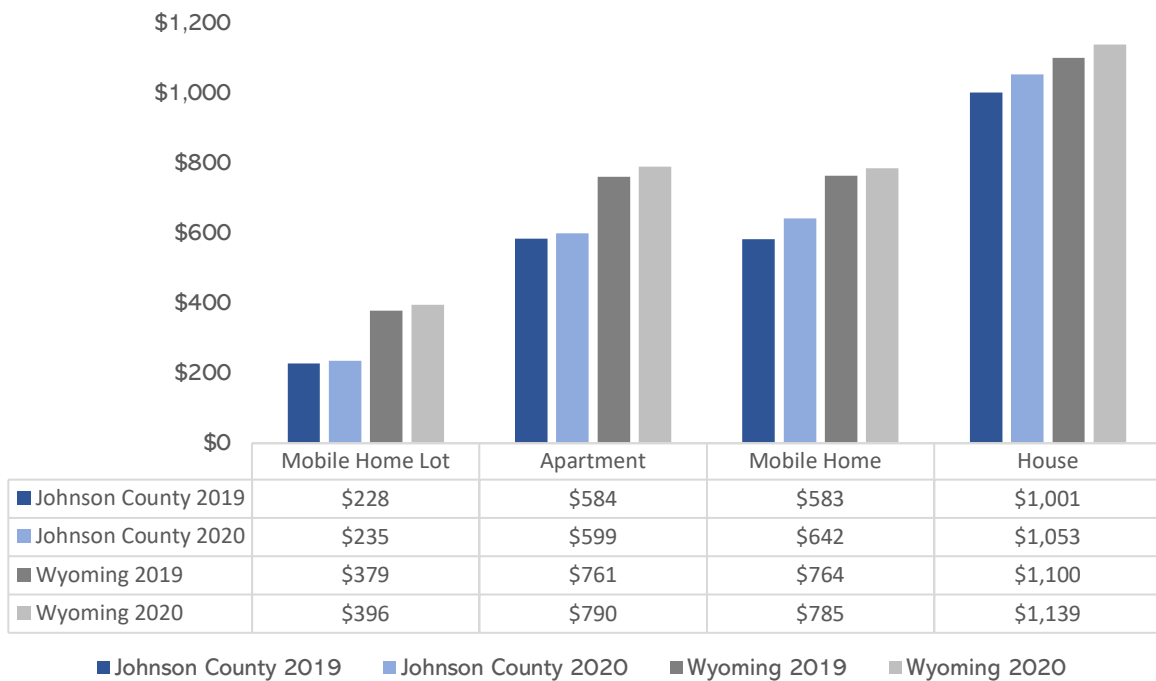
Housing

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.

The cost of renting increased in Johnson County from the 4th quarter of 2019 to the 4th quarter of 2020. Still, rental costs are lower in Johnson County than statewide.

Average Rental Rates, Johnson County and Wyoming, 4th Quarter 2019 vs. 4th Quarter 2020



Wyoming Cost of Living Index - 4th Quarter of 2020 – Average Rental Rates 4Q20 & 4Q19 Wyoming Economic Analysis Division

Johnson County Needs Assessment

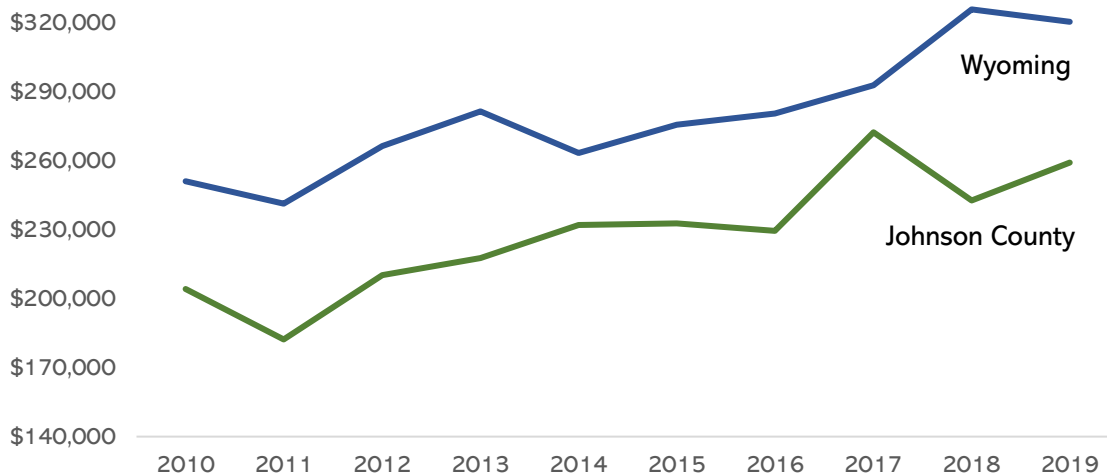
Housing Cost Burdened

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: 30% of renters and 26% of homeowners in Johnson County are housing cost burdened.

Home Ownership

The *average* sales price for homes in Johnson County is less than the rest of Wyoming. However, the *median* cost of homes is greater in Johnson County. This suggests that Johnson County has a greater proportion of higher-end homes and a smaller proportion of lower-value homes. In fact, 38% of owner-occupied units in Johnson County are valued at \$300,000 or more, compared to 28% of these units in Wyoming. Overall, the median home value in Johnson County is \$252,900, compared to the Wyoming median home value of \$220,500 (ACS 2019 5-Year Estimates). On the other hand, the *average* sales price of existing, detached, single-family homes in Johnson County was \$259,109 in 2019. This represented a 6.8% increase from the previous year. Wyoming’s average was \$320,317, a change of -1.68% over the previous year (Wyoming Community Development Authority, 2021).

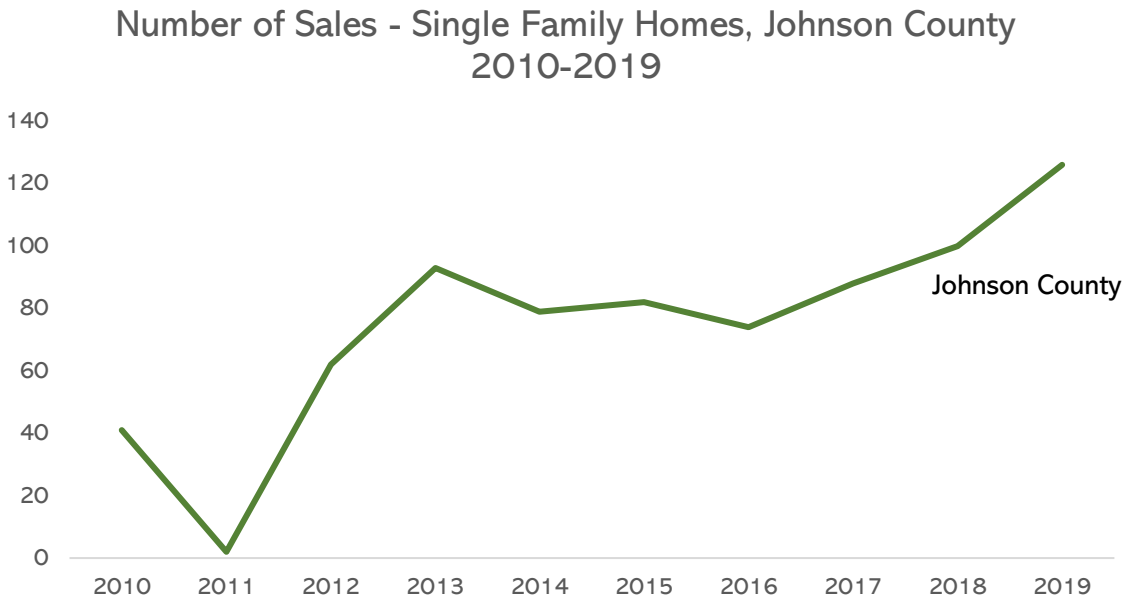
Average Sales Price - Single Family Homes, Johnson County vs. Wyoming, 2010-2019



Wyoming Department of Revenue, Wyoming Community Development Authority, County Profile (Final Report March 5, 2021)

Johnson County Needs Assessment

The number of home sales has increased in the past few years in Johnson County, from a low of 2 in 2011 to a high of 126 in 2019.



Wyoming Department of Revenue, Wyoming Community Development Authority, County Profile (Final Report March 5, 2021)

Of the 2,687 owner-occupied units, 1,551 have a mortgage. The monthly owner cost median is \$1,553 (ACS 2019 5-Year Estimates). 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.

Perception Data related to Housing

Respondents of the Community Needs Survey identified *housing* as the number one need in their community. Specifically, they reported needing *more affordable housing* (68%) and *more monthly rental assistance programs* (13%).

When asked about the community's greatest challenges, focus group and interview participants offered *housing* as a major concern. They reported that housing is scarce and expensive. One participant described Buffalo has having only two apartment complexes that accommodate low-income (Section 8) housing. Participants talked about the influx of people during the pandemic, causing housing prices to skyrocket and rentals to sell for huge profits. Affordable housing is a persistent problem for residents of Johnson County.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Education

Johnson County School District #1

There were 102 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 102 students, 84 graduated for an 82% graduation rate. A further breakdown is given in the table below.

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

	Johnson County #1	Statewide
All Students	82.4%	82.3%
Male	76.3%	79.4%
Female	90.7%	85.4%
Lunch Eligible*	70.7%	71.6%

*Students who qualified for free or reduced lunch

Wyoming Department of Education

All Students	Graduation Rate	Total # of Students in Cohort
Buffalo High School	82.1%	95
Kaycee School	85.7%	7

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 table below provides the educational attainment levels and percentages for Johnson County residents over 25 years old.

Educational Attainment - 25 years and over

	Percent
Population 25 years and over	
Less than high school graduate	4.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	26.8%
Some college, no degree	28.6%
Associate degree	8.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	31.7%

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

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Perception Data related to Education

Education was identified as a strength among focus group and interview participants. Respondents thought the education system is performing well. The district offers an alternative high school in Buffalo and college credit in high school. The school system also helps address family needs by providing food, free lunches, and mental health services (every school employs a licensed school counselor).

Focus group participants did suggest that the availability of more trade courses and programs (e.g., welding, nursing) would be beneficial. One participant suggested expanding the offerings of Sheridan College in Johnson County and another suggested boosting morale of teaching staff.

While education was not identified as a top need in Johnson County by survey respondents, 25% selected *increasing the community's knowledge of available education resources* as a need.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

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 Johnson County, there are 11 childcare licensed childcare providers.

- Child Care Center (CCC) – 5
- Family Child Care Center (FCCC) – 4
- 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 preschool and may only be offering limited hours.

Perception Data related to Childcare

Focus group participants felt that childcare is the #1 barrier for families in Johnson County to move from poverty to posterity. Childcare centers in Johnson County often have limited hours and low staffing and are cost prohibitive.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

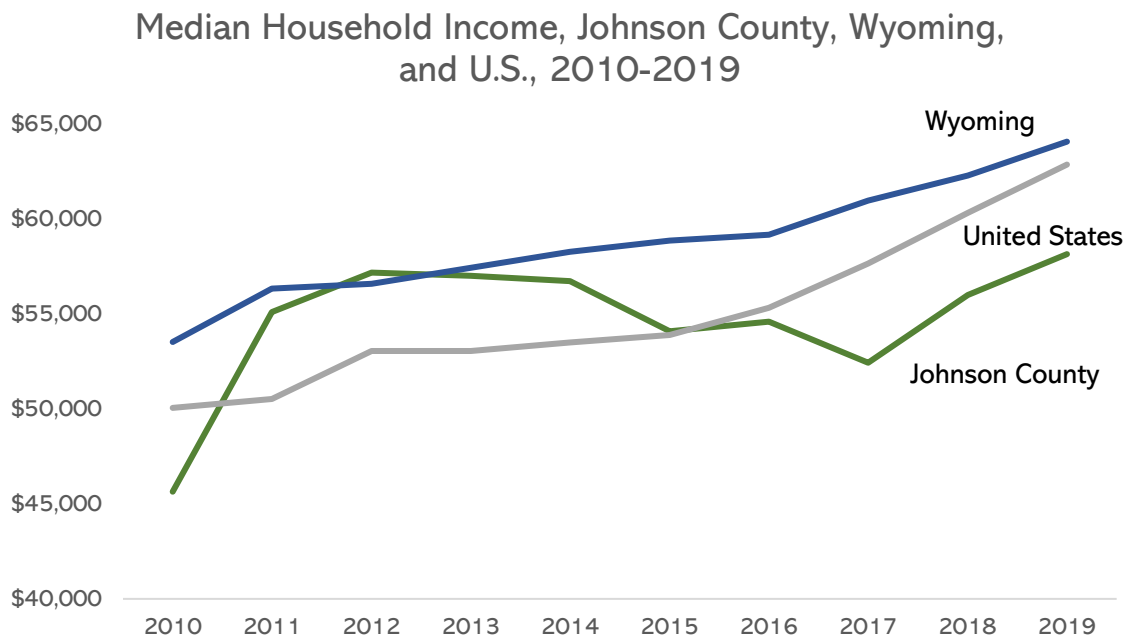
Income

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

Area	Median Household Income
Johnson County	\$58,132
Wyoming	\$64,049
United States	\$61,937

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

Johnson County’s median household income is currently below the United States and Wyoming; however, it has fluctuated the last 10 years. In 2012, it was slightly above the state and national medians.



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

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Perception Data related to Income

Focus group participants discussed the problem of the widening income disparity. They see more wealthy people moving into Buffalo and creating a widening gap among rich and poor.

Similar to many Wyoming towns, Buffalo and Kaycee suffer from a boom-and-bust economic cycle. Participants felt the economy is currently doing fine—it could be better, and it could be worse.

Income was less of a concern among survey participants. When asked what the #1 financial-related need is in the community, the most common answer was *no needs* (19%), although 16% selected *more information on how to access financial resources*.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Health and Social/Behavioral Development

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

- Johnson County Healthcare Center – Critical Access Hospital, Home Health Agency, and Nursing Home
- Agape Manor Inc – Assisted Living Facility
- Veterans’ Home of Wyoming – Assisted Living Facility
- Willow Creek Homes of Buffalo – Assisted Living Facility
- Buffalo Senior Center Inc – Home Health Agency
- Sharon’s Home Health – Home Health Agency
- Susie Bowling Lawrence Hospice – Hospice Facility

In addition, Johnson 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.

Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center operates an office in Buffalo, offering outpatient services. There are also private businesses and individuals offering counseling and mental health services in Buffalo. Very few of these services are offered in Kaycee.

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 (currently Teton County). Johnson County ranked 8th out of the 23 counties in overall health outcomes, landing it in the higher 50-75% of counties in Wyoming.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Length of life is measured by premature death which is years of life lost before age 75. In looking at Length of Life, Johnson County ranked 14th out of the 23 counties. 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. In looking at Quality of Life, Johnson County ranks 5th 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, Johnson County ranked 5 in Health Factors. The four components and their rankings for Johnson County are outlined below.

Health Behaviors – Johnson County ranked 3rd out of the 23 counties. Areas of strength include *adult obesity*, *sexually transmitted infections*, and *teen births*. The one area to explore for improvement includes:

- Access to exercise opportunities

Clinical Care – Johnson County ranked 3rd out of the 23 counties. An area of strength includes the number of *primary care physicians*. Areas to explore for improvement:

- Uninsured
- Mental health providers

Social & Economic Factors – Johnson County ranked 7th out the 23 counties with two areas to explore for improvement:

- Income inequality
- Injury deaths

Physical Environment – Johnson County ranked 5th out of the 23 counties. An area of strength includes comparatively little *air pollution*. One area to explore for improvement:

- Long commute – driving alone (more than 30 minutes)

Health Insurance

According to the US Census Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) for 2018, 12.6% of the Johnson County population under 65 years old are uninsured.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Perception Data related to Health and Social/Behavioral Development

When it comes to health, focus group and interview participants spoke about needs related to mental health and addiction, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. One interview participant talked about the need for more psychiatric services in or near Johnson County.

One interview participant discussed the difficulty of helping families navigate the healthcare system. The Medicaid waiver, for example, is arduous and families do not always know how to complete it. On a positive note, the school district and the Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center have a relationship where schools can refer kids for whom they are concerned about suicide or self-harm; the center will then conduct safety evaluations free of charge.

Survey respondents identified three primary needs related to health in their community: *more payment assistance programs for adult dental and/or hearing services (26%)*, *more community focus on preventative healthcare (21%)*, and *increasing the community's knowledge of available health resource (13%)*. The primary need related to development was *more mental health resources for youth (47%)*.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

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 Johnson County food insecurity rate in 2019 (before COVID-19) was 13.1% or an estimated 1,110 people. Feeding America has released data on how food insecurity may have increased in 2020 due to COVID-19. The projected overall food insecurity rate for Johnson County goes up to 15.0% in 2020 and 14.0% in 2021.

Prior to the pandemic, the child food insecurity rate was 16.2% or 300 children. The projected child food insecurity rate for 2020 is 19.5% and 17.4% in 2021.

For comparison, in 2019, Wyoming's overall food insecurity rate was 11.7%. The child food insecurity rate was 14.4%.

Of the estimated 1,110 food insecure individuals in Johnson County:

- 43% are below 130% poverty and qualify for SNAP, free lunch meals, WIC
- 9% are between 130% and 185% poverty and qualify for WIC and reduced-price school meals
- The remaining 48% do not qualify for federal programs.

Map the Meal Gap 2021. Feeding America, 2021.

Food costs in Johnson County are higher than the statewide average. Based on the Wyoming Comparative Cost of Living Index for the 4th Quarter 2020, Johnson County's index for food was 109. 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, only 0.9% of households in Johnson County participate in SNAP.

Johnson County Needs Assessment

According to the Wyoming Hunger Initiative website, the food pantries in Johnson County include Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies, Boys & Girls Club of Central Wyoming, Johnson County Friends Feeding Friends, and Bread of Life Food Pantry.

Perception Data related to Food Insecurity

Focus group participants discussed the high cost of groceries in Buffalo. Many residents travel to Sheridan or other larger towns for groceries and essential items. This is problematic for families who do not have reliable and consistent transportation.

Johnson County does have several organizations that help in this area: the Rocky Mountain Food Bank, Summit Church, and the school district (which offers free food at school and sends food home with students on weekends).

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Community Needs Survey

The Community Needs Survey was made available both online and by hard copy. It was promoted through providers of family services. The survey was open from July 27, 2021 to August 19, 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 58 surveys completed. Only respondents who indicated that they live in Johnson County are included in this number.

Demographics

Are you a provider or user of services for families?

Response	Percentage
Provider	18.97%
User	27.59%
Both	29.31%
Not sure	24.14%

Answered 58

Where do you live?

Response	Percentage
Buffalo	93.10%
Kaycee	1.72%
Other	5.17%

Answered 58

Johnson County Needs Assessment

How many people live in your household?

Responses	# of responses	Response %
One	13	22.81%
Two	17	29.82%
Three	9	15.79%
Four	11	19.30%
Five	4	7.02%
Six +	3	5.26%

Answered 57; 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	15	23
6 to 17 years old	17	25
18 to 49 years old	33	56
50 to 64 years old	13	18
65+ years old	15	23

Answered 57; Skipped 1

Employment

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

Answer Choices	Response %
Mental health problem	15.00%
Other health issues	15.00%
Lack early childhood education/care	10.00%
Lack permanent address	10.00%
Lack skills/education	10.00%
Learning/developmental disability	10.00%
Permanent physical disability	10.00%
Attempting to flee domestic abuse or sexual assault	5.00%
Drug/alcohol problem	5.00%
Lack proper clothing	5.00%
Bad work environment	5.00%

Answered 20; Not applicable 34; Skipped 4

Johnson County Needs Assessment

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

Answer choices	Response %
Work clothes	9.26%
Career assessment	7.41%
Career information options	7.41%
Job search strategies	3.70%
Job interviewing skills	3.70%
Resume writing	3.70%
Career/job training	1.85%
No assistance needed	83.33%

Answered 54; Skipped 4

From your perspective, what is the #1 employment-related need in your community?

Answer choices	Response %
More jobs with better pay and benefits	60.71%
No needs	8.93%
Affordable childcare during work hours	7.14%
Early reinforcement of the values of entering the workforce	7.14%
More training for the types of jobs available in the area	3.57%
Improve the workforce readiness skills of people who can work	3.57%

Answered 56; Skipped 2

Housing

From your perspective, what is the #1 housing-related need in your community?

Answer choices	Response %
More affordable housing	67.92%
More monthly rental assistance programs	13.21%
No needs	5.66%
More income based rental housing for disabled and seniors	3.77%
More grants to make home ownership and home rehab affordable	1.89%
More programs to provide free home repair	1.89%

Answered 53; Skipped 5

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Education

What kind of childcare do you need that you're not getting?

Answer choices	Response %
No needs at this time	62.07%
Evening hours due to shift work	17.24%
Care for child with special healthcare needs	6.90%
Smaller childcare homes that can take walk-ins or part-time	3.44%

Answered 29; Skipped 29

From your perspective, what is the #1 education-related need in your community?

Answer choices	Response %
Increasing the community's knowledge of available education resources	25.00%
No needs	19.64%
More services for adult education	14.29%
Affordable high-quality early childhood education options for parents who would like to further their education	12.50%
More certificate/degree programs offered locally	10.71%
Preschool activities for children to develop school readiness skills	8.93%
Affordable transportation options to and from school	3.57%
More special training for teachers to recognize and help students with disabilities	1.79%

Answered 56; Skipped 2

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Income and Asset Building

Below are the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines (FPL) 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.	

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	63.79%
Less than	27.59%
Not answered	8.62%

Answered 58

Johnson County Needs Assessment

From your perspective, what is the #1 financial-related need in your community?

Answer choices	Response %
No needs	19.23%
More information on how to access financial resources	15.83%
More education on how to build assets	13.46%
More access to low interest loans	13.46%
Increasing the community's knowledge of available mainstream financial resources	9.62%
Anonymous and confidential savings counseling	7.69%
Increased availability of public transportation	5.77%
Anonymous and confidential budget counseling	3.85%
Information on how to access free credit counseling	1.92%
More access to broadband	1.92%
More access to recreational resources	1.92%
Increasing community asset (like commercial resources)	1.92%
Higher wages	1.92%

Answered 52; Skipped 6

Health and Social/Behavioral Development

From your perspective, what is the #1 health-related need in your community?

Answer choices	Response %
More payment assistance programs for adult dental and/or hearing services	26.42%
More community focus on preventative healthcare	20.75%
Increasing the community's knowledge of available health resources	13.21%
No needs	11.32%
More nutritional counseling	7.55%
Affordable healthcare	5.66%
More vision assistance programs for adults	3.77%
More emphasis on early childhood nutrition education	3.77%
More knowledge of available food resources	3.77%
Provide more education on maintaining personal hygiene	1.89%

Answered 53; Skipped 5

Johnson County Needs Assessment

From your perspective, what is the #1 development-related need in your community?

Answer choices	Response %
More mental health resources for youth	47.06%
No needs	15.69%
More emphasis on reinforcing healthy eating habits	13.73%
More assistance and resource for victims of domestic violence	7.84%
More assistance and resources for youth with history of substance misuse	5.88%
Mental health resources in general	3.92%

Answered 51; Skipped 7

Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

From your perspective, what is the #1 need in your community related to civic engagement?

Answer choices	Response %
More education on how to join neighborhood associations, community boards, advisory groups, or similar organizations	28.30%
No needs	28.30%
More knowledge on civic activities	20.75%
Increasing the community's skills and knowledge for leadership development	15.09%
More citizenship classes	5.66%

Answered 53; Skipped 5

Support Services

From your perspective, what is the #1 need in your community related to support services?

Answer choices	Response %
Life skills programs and services	28.85%
Youth services	11.54%
Substance misuse resources	11.54%
Legal services	9.62%
Meal programs	9.62%
No needs	7.69%
Emotional abuse services	5.77%
Child support	3.85%
Transportation services	3.85%

Answered 52; Skipped 6

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Overall Needs

Rank the top 3 needs of your community.

Answer choices	Number of respondents ranking in top 3
Housing	35
Employment	24
Support services	21
Health	20
Education	13
Civic engagement	8
Finances	4
No needs	3

Answered 46; Skipped 12

Johnson County Needs Assessment

Focus Group Participants and Interviewees

Tyler Broderick, Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center

Jennifer Burden, Johnson County Healthcare Center

Susan Carr, Compass Center for Families

Dave Harness, Johnson County Coroner, Director of Ambulance Service, Harness Funeral Home

Kate Harness, Harness Funeral Home

Kim Pope, Compass Center for Families

Desiree Parsons, Department of Family Services

Tiffany Resser, Compass Center for Families

Tucker Ruby, County Attorney

Shannon Sickler, Compass Center for Families

Jen Skaggs, Clear Creek Middle School