

Southwest Human Resource Agency

Head Start

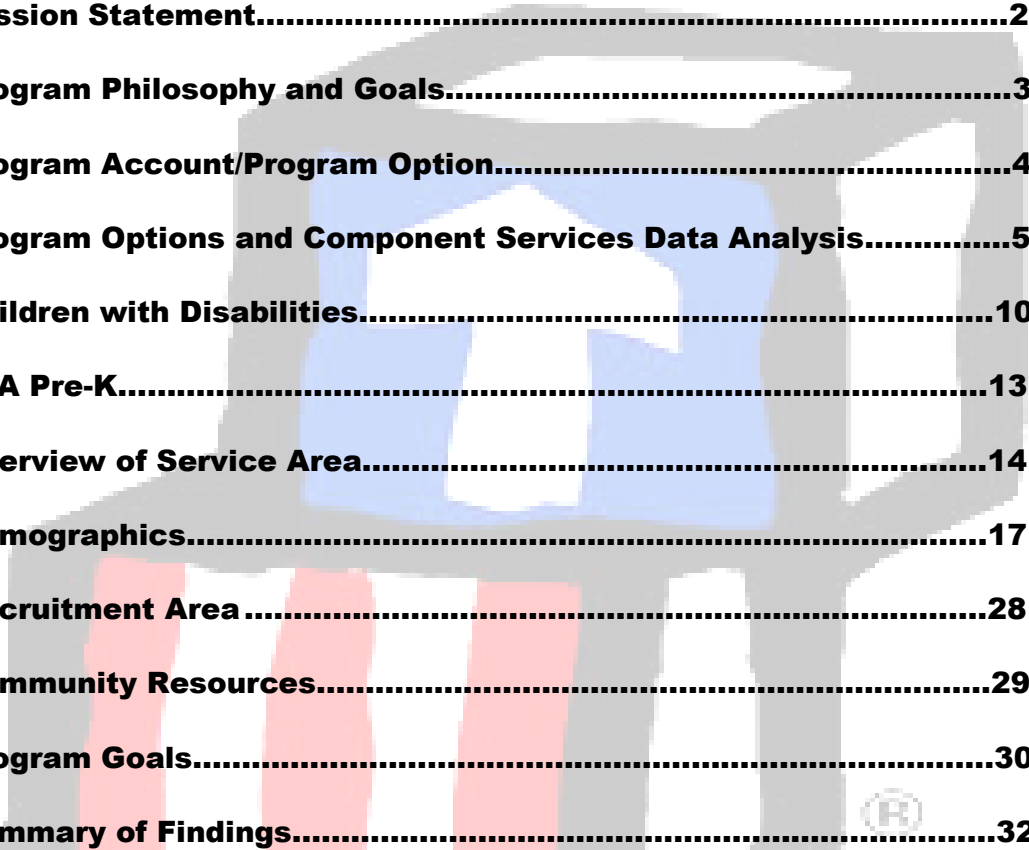
Community Assessment

JANUARY 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	1
Mission Statement.....	2
Program Philosophy and Goals.....	3
Program Account/Program Option.....	4
Program Options and Component Services Data Analysis.....	5
Children with Disabilities.....	10
LEA Pre-K.....	13
Overview of Service Area.....	14
Demographics.....	17
Recruitment Area.....	28
Community Resources.....	29
Program Goals.....	30
Summary of Findings.....	32



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Southwest Human Resource Agency began as Chickasaw Area Development in 1972 and in 1984 became a Human Resource Agency. The Head Start Program began as a summer Head Start program under Chickasaw Area Development and transitioned into a standard, full year Head Start operating from August until April in 1973. Today, the Southwest Human Resource Agency Head Start operates 10 centers with an enrollment of 425 children in Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, and McNairy Counties.

Southwest Human Resource Agency Head Start (SWHRAHS) conducts a community assessment to gather information regarding the communities served to aid in planning and determining long and short-range goals for SWHRA Head Start. This Community Assessment will serve as a collection of some of the most reliable and recent data available concerning our community.

Methodology

A full community assessment is completed every five years with updates annually. Data concerning county, city, and program demographics such as population, social services, health, disabilities, nutrition, etc. is acquired from various sources including, but not limited to, the Census Bureau, Tennessee Department of Human Services, Southwest HRA Head Start's data base (including the PIR report) and Parent Surveys. This Community Assessment was compiled with input from community stakeholders, Head Start Management Team, Head Start Parents, and the Head Start Policy Council along with collected data. It will offer a systematic analysis of this information, which will help our program to determine how to best serve Head Start and potential Head Start families. As a vital part of our program planning process, the findings based on the Community Assessment will be the basis for program choices and options that are allowed in the Head Start model.

SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Southwest Human Resource Agency as promulgated in TCA-13-26-102 is to deliver human service programs in the eight (8) county planning and development region of Southwest Tennessee. The eight (8) counties are: Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and McNairy.

The mission of the Southwest HRA Head Start is to create and support a safe and caring place of success for children, families and staff, meeting and exceeding the national goals of Head Start through parent and community partnerships.

SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Southwest HRA Head Start seeks to provide programming that will enhance children's growth and development in preparation for later academic and social pursuits. We believe the preschool years and the experiences that children have during these years are important to successful development, therefore we make every effort to provide the highest quality program possible. We believe that growth and development are multi-dimensional; therefore, we offer comprehensive services of education, medical, dental, and nutritional health, and social services. We believe that children with disabling conditions both benefit from and contribute to programming for preschool children; therefore, we make a special effort to serve and support children with disabling conditions. Finally, we believe that parents are the most important people in children's lives and that the support parents give children as they grow and develop is beneficial and crucial to their future success, therefore we involve parents in all aspects of the program and support them in their roles as parents and provide for their families.

Steps to ensure quality:

1. Provide well trained and qualified staff who will promote children's development and learning through social skills and intellectual growth.
2. Provide a curriculum which encourages children to be actively involved in the learning process through a variety of appropriate activities and materials, and to learn about life, their communities, and the world as they develop skills that will support later academic endeavors and school readiness.
3. Provide an indoor and outdoor physical environment, which fosters optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning.
4. Protect and enhance the health and safety of children and adults at all times.
5. Promote and assist parents in meeting the needs of their children.
6. Meet the nutritional needs of children and adults in a manner that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.
7. Provide training and support to staff so that they can best meet the needs of and promote the physical, social, and cognitive development of children.
8. Involve parents in the program in ways that enhance their abilities to support children's growth and development and assure that the Head Start Program effectively addresses their own goals for their children.
9. Provide Family Engagement opportunities for families that will assist them to becoming self-sufficient and involved advocates for their children.
10. To provide a transitional process that will allow for a smooth transition of the family into the Head Start program, while offering transitional activities within in the Head Start program and providing activities that will result in a smooth transition into the local school system for the parent and child.
11. To establish community partnerships with other agencies to provide and enhance services to our Head Start children and families.

**SOUTHWEST HEAD START
PROGRAM ACCOUNT/PROGRAM OPTION**

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

For the Program Year 2023-2024 the Southwest Human Resource Agency Head Start Program operates on Program Account No. 22 & 20. There are twenty-four (24) classes - 425 funded slots, operating on the Regular Standard Option. These classes operate on a five day a week schedule for center-based activities. Monday through Friday of each week is designated for the Head Start enrollees to be in the center-based classrooms for their active participation.

PROGRAM ACCOUNT AND OPTION INFORMATION:

(1) Number of children enrolled. 425

(2) Ten percent of enrollment for disabilities 43

(3) Number of children for whom fees will be charged. We do not charge any fees for the Head Start enrollees.

(4) Number of families above and below the poverty income level whose children will be enrolled.

We are allowed to have 10% over the poverty income level enrolled at one time; therefore, that would equal 43 families provided each of the families had one child enrolled leaving 382 families below the poverty guideline.

(5) Number of hours per week of operation: *All 24 classrooms operate approximately 6 hours and 15 minutes a day. All classrooms provide 166 days (1037.5 hours) of service over a 10- month period per year. The staff work on an 8-hour day, working 5 days a week.*

(6) *The personnel on the Central Office Staff will work on a 44 or 52-week basis.*

(7) Number of teachers: 25 teachers

(8) Number of teacher assistants: 25 teacher assistants

(9) Number of classroom aides: 14 classroom aides

(10) Number of classes or homes (in outreach programs): *All of the Southwest Head Start Classes are center-based.*

Program Options and Component Services Including Data Analysis

Efforts are made to meet the Educational, Health, Social Service, and Parent Involvement needs of all children served. Efforts to serve the “neediest children” and serve more referred children with diagnosed disabilities prior to enrollment have also changed the general make-up of those served. A large number of our families have had involvement with other agencies, and the percentage of grandparents raising children and protective services cases is increasing each year. Parents state they feel the need for their children to attend a Head Start center as opposed to home based. All of the parents feel that their children need to be in an “educational” setting, and many are surprised at the comprehensive nature of our program and the emphasis on parent education and involvement. A component and topical breakdown of component service emphasis and decision making follows.

Child Education: Each child enrolled in the program at Southwest HRA Head Start is given a Head Start in life. The teachers engage with the children daily to achieve goals that will ensure each child is ready for school. These goals are assessed three times each year using the online research-based data program, Teaching Strategies, to see where the children are currently in each of the developmental domains; social and emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, and social studies. These assessments are shared with the parents in home-visits and parent/teacher conferences after the assessments have been completed. The teachers provide quality interactions while playing. The research-based curriculum, Creative Curriculum, provides a guide for the teachers. It has many study topics to explore in the classroom to help the children gain hands on experiences to expand their knowledge and learn important school readiness skills to excel in Kindergarten. There are different activities that the children are leads and learn at their own pace. Southwest HRA Head Start strives to achieve and go beyond the basics of learning. Southwest HRA Head Start uses the CLASS observation tool twice a year that is compared to a national average of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Southwest HRA Head Start not only goes above the basic DHS rules and regulations, but has performance standards that all staff must abide by. Performance standards also addresses the importance of high quality staff and ensures that the teachers keep going for higher education. When parents attend the April Parent/Teacher Conference, they will be given an opinion survey to be completed. The results from the surveys will be shared with Policy Council and vested individuals and included in reports each year.

Nutrition: There has been an observed lack of parent knowledge in what constitutes a well -balanced diet and in cooking skills related to new foods and optimized cooking methods and numerous parents have listed nutrition education as high priority. Parents have been invited to attend training sessions emphasizing nutrition each year. We have encouraged parents to participate in the WIC Outreach Program where it is available, and have included information during home visits where needs have been identified. The presentation “You Are What You Eat” is presented at one parent meeting at each center during the year. At the present time there have been 499 children screened for anemia and we are continuing to work with families in getting the remaining lab results on the other children. Head Start Staff are very supportive of parents concerning healthy eating habits needed follow-ups and providing them with information concerning iron rich foods. Southwest Human Resource Agency has established a central kitchen that provides meals for Head Start and Senior meals throughout multiple counties. The central kitchen collaborates with the Child Health Services Manager and Nutrition Asst. Manager concerning meal requirements. The central kitchen director works closely with their dietitian who in turn develops menus for both children and seniors. Careful consideration is taken concerning menu development to ensure that foods are served that meets all nutritional guidelines. Meals are transported by central kitchen staff. Some of the families participate in food banks (churches and community service centers), which are believed to be adequate in our community at this time. A fairly large number of parents qualify for food stamps and are using the service.

A BMI growth chart is used to measure readings over time to help reveal a pattern of development. The chart lets you know how children are growing in relation to other children their age and also to track their progress from previous measurements. The growth chart is shared with parents whose child is above the 85th percentile and below or at the 5th percentile.

Four hundred fifty-one (451) children were weighed and measured. Of these children, 66 were above the 85th percentile, 18 were below or at the 5th percentile, and 60 were above or at the 95th percentile on the growth chart. Children under the 5th percentile are underweight, those above the 85th percentile are overweight and Children above the 95th percentile are considered to be obese.

These children were tracked by Head Start Staff by height and weight repeated every two (2) months. Parents are also given information concerning healthy eating and how exercise and activity are important. Parents are also encouraged to discuss their child's weight with their family physician. Some parents feel that being overweight is normal for their child because it has been a "normal" occurrence in their family. Encouragement and education is needed to try and change some of the myths about being overweight.

Medical/Dental: Health care services for children in our seven (7) county area have improved since providers have been assigned to children enrolled in TennCare. *Cover Kids* is a program offered to children who are financially over the TennCare income guidelines and children who are born outside of the United States that do not qualify for TennCare. Families can apply online or request a paper application by phone, and they must be a TN resident. We always try to help them develop a medical home through the local health departments or community health agencies.

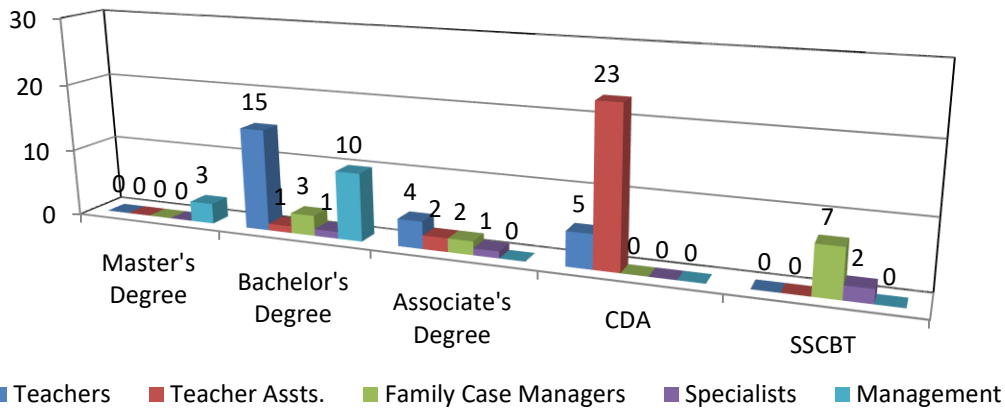
There have been 461 children screened for lead. One child, with a level greater than 5.0, needed follow-up concerning failed lead results. We will request from their local health department or primary care physician for the remaining children. We do a noninvasive procedure for hemoglobin. All hemoglobin checks were completed with 1 fail.

Dental Services for children with TennCare have severely declined since more dentists are not contracting with TennCare. Most of the dentists in the counties we cover that do contract with TennCare are not accepting new patients. The majority of our families are having difficulties not only with scheduling initial appointments for dental exams, but also with scheduling six-month dental appointments in a timely manner. Other families have lost their TennCare coverage for various reasons. Our staff are working to help assist these families in reapplying for their TennCare coverage. As a program, our staff has reached out to the families without insurance coverage to provide funding for the needed dental services, however, there are still families who are unable to get appointments with local dentists.

Housing: Many Head Start parents state their housing is not desirable or adequate. Referrals will continue to be made to the Human Resource Agency which has the Weatherization Assistance Program, Homeless Assistance, LIHEAP, and Emergency Services Program when it appears parents might qualify.

Career Development: Our Agency will continue in its efforts to employ qualified Head Start parents and to provide training leading up to CDA credentials, SSCBT credentials, or college degrees for staff. The chart listed below shows the highest degree level of staff by position and highest degree/credential held beyond a high school diploma.

SWHRA HEAD START STAFF EDUCATION LEVEL



Disabilities/Mental Health: Family and children’s needs related to Head Start family problems tend to increase yearly. Better information management and tracking allow for improved services. Both disabilities and mental health areas are identified for increased training emphasis, along with general “classroom management” which is excellent in dealing with our clients. At the present time, we have 37 children with an IEP and are receiving services. There are 31 “suspects” who are in the process of further testing. One refused testing. Mental Health consultants are taking an active role in parent/staff conferences of children who have previously been identified by mental health consultants during mental health observations. This active role has increased the parents’ cooperation in following through with the mental health consultant’s recommendation. There have been 37 mental health referrals this year. Eight (8) are enrolled in the Tennessee Resiliency Program with Pathways. Ten (10) were referred to and are receiving outside services. Seven (7) made progress and further treatment was not needed. Parents refused services for the remaining referrals.

Family Services

We have a partnership with the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program with the Department of Health in our seven counties. This program provides vouchers for families to receive nutritional foods for their children up to the age of five. They have launched an online sign-up service for the WIC program. Our program serves a total of 180 WIC families.

Our partnership agreement with the Department of Children’s Services has provided us with mandated child abuse and neglect training for our staff and parents. This partnership has helped bond two-way communication in assisting low-income families and families that need both of our services. Our Family Case Managers serve on the Community Advisory Boards in each county. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) was created by the Department of Children’s Services to have a more comprehensive way to serve low-income families. This has helped the Head Start Program provide efficient services and networking to ensure that all our family’s needs are being met.

Our partnership with UT Extension Services has provided our families with training on food and safety issues, health issues and money management. These services are provided in each of the seven counties we serve.

Our Head Start parenting curriculum, ParentPowered, empowers families with the information and emotional support to act as their child’s first and most important teacher. This curriculum promotes family well-being, positive relationships, child transitions, and involvement at school, supporting families as lifelong learners and leaders.

For our 2024-2025 school year data as of January 2025, within our seven counties, we have a total of 338 families connected to ParentPowered of our 425 funded enrollment. We have provided educational workshops to 88 parents through our in person workshops. We have a total of ten educational workshops throughout the school year. We are currently providing our parenting curriculum in person.

Homelessness

Our Head Start program partners with the homeless liaisons to provide additional assistance to homeless students and their families. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program ensures all homeless children and youth, including preschoolers, have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education as non-homeless children and youth. Based on the McKinney-Vento Act on criteria for documenting homeless children and families we now serve and assist families that need permanent housing, food, clothing, or job search assistance.

As of January 2025, our Head Start program has documented 91 of 460 Head Start children served this program year, as homeless. This is 19.78% of our families we serve. Within our seven counties the numbers are Chester (12) Decatur (8) Parsons (5) Hardeman (13) Hardin (5) Haywood (8) Henderson (17) and McNairy (19) Our families are provided with parent trainings on topics such as financial literacy, housing, child abuse/neglect, job search, etc.

The Tennessee Homeless Solutions serving our seven counties reported having served the following number of homeless families as of January 2025:

Chester Co., Total served-5 Veterans Served-1 Families served-2 Individual served-1

Decatur Co., Total served-5 Veterans Served-4 Families served-0 Individual served-5

Hardeman Co., Total served-7 Veterans Served-3 Families served-1 Individual served-5

Hardin Co., Total served-51 Veterans Served-5 Families served-22 Individual served-20

Haywood Co., Total served-4 Veterans Served-0 Families served-1 Individual served-2

Henderson Co., Total served-15 Veterans Served-3 Families served-6 Individual served-9

McNairy Co., Total served-19 Veterans Served-5 Families served-7 Individual served-10

Based on this data our counties do not have a substantial number of homeless families that may have age eligible homeless children. As part of our recruitment process, we will continue canvassing areas and contacting agencies in efforts to document more homeless families to enroll in the Head Start program.

Labor and Unemployment

In the state of Tennessee, the unemployment rates have remained the same over the past five years. In December 2023, the unemployment rate was 3.5 and in December 2024, the rate remained 3.5. Many of our families hold jobs that are in low wage factories, food preparation and serving occupations. These jobs usually require only a high school education or no minimum education. Our program will be providing job search assistance by direct or referral services. Unemployed parents are encouraged to take the HiSET or to seek employment as a family goal when possible. According to data from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the following counties unemployment rates were: Chester 3.5, Decatur 4.5, Hardeman 4.6, Hardin 3.9, Haywood 4.6, Henderson 4.0, and McNairy 5.3.

Single Parent Families

Two-hundred and ninety-six (296) of our families are single parent families. Head Start single parents that are employed work at local industries in the counties that they live or in the surrounding counties.

As of January 22, 2025, 407 of our 424 Head Start families have received services ranging from HiSET classes, emergency assistance, employment, housing assistance, and parenting classes. Additional ongoing follow-ups and referrals are being made to encourage and assist families in reaching their goals. Based on ChildPlus reports, 100% of our Head Start families are in a goal setting process.

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE) is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. There are seven outcomes that are a part of the PFCE framework. They include family well-being, positive parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and community, and families as advocates and leaders.

The three highest outcomes are Family Well-being (259), Positive Parent-Child Relationships (83) and Families as Learners (36).

The Family and Community Partnership component will seek out and partner with agencies that can provide support in meeting the needs of single parents on a broader scale in providing stress management, child support assistance, fatherhood, and financial assistance.

Our program continues to have partnerships with various subsidized housing complexes to provide families with meeting their community service hours by volunteering at the Head Start centers and to assist with recruiting children for the Head Start program.

We are offering more opportunities to include fathers and/or father figures with the addition of monthly Focus on Fathers activities. All materials for each activity are sent home with the child and the fathers/father figures do the activity with their child and send pictures to their Family Case Manager. Our Fifth Annual Cardboard Box Car Contest saw an increase in father participation. We had one hundred and thirty-nine (139) fathers that participated. We are seeing an increase in the number of fathers who are incarcerated. We have 12 this program year. We are partnering with Community Services to offer these fathers a chance to improve their role as a father and to be involved in their child's education.

Literacy

Our Head Start program continues to promote family literacy by encouraging parents to develop and use literacy skills which enable them to become more active and effective participants in the community, workplace, their child's education, and development, and in their efforts to obtain economic and social self-sufficiency. This will be done through Community Partnerships and setting in place collaborative agreements with community libraries, adult education agencies, Board of Education (HiSET), and literacy volunteer programs that may offer assistance in addressing the needs of those families who use English as a second language. Our percentile of students that speaks another language other than English is less than 5%. Two point seventeen percent (2.17%) of our families speak English as their second language. For our classrooms the teaching staff focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language.

For the 2024-2025 program year, twenty-seven (27) of our Head Start primary adult members have an educational level less than a high school diploma. The HiSET Program is an alternative option for earning a high school equivalency credential. Testing may be done on paper and online at an approved testing facility by a certified testing facilitator. Two hundred seventy-five (275) of our primary adult members have a high school

diploma or HiSET. One hundred **twenty-three (123)** of these adults are working on or have a college education. The Head Start program has paid for parent’s HiSET testing fees to assist them in receiving their HiSET.

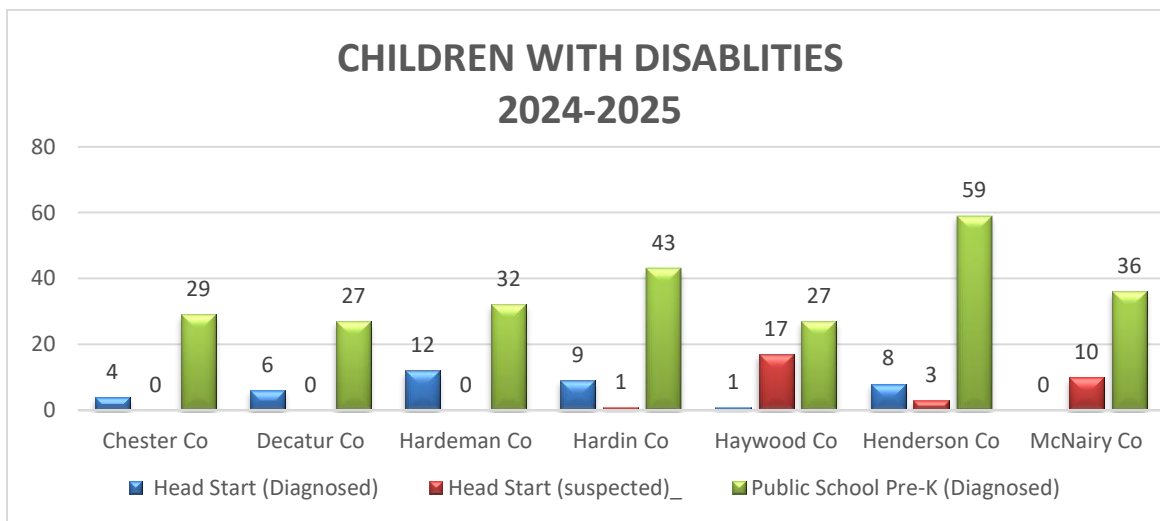
The state of Tennessee has initiated a program called Tennessee Reconnect. All Tennessee adults can now attend and earn a diploma or certificate at any of the 27 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) completely free of tuition and fees. Our Head Start families receive opportunities from our program to make a change in their educational and employment status. To assist our program in encouraging family members to continue their education, our program holds partnership agreements with agencies such as ABE programs, libraries, etc. The coming program year we will provide more opportunities and encouragement to family members in assisting them with working towards a HiSET or a higher educational level. Linking family members to various trainings and agencies will provide them with the educational services they need.

Children with Disabilities

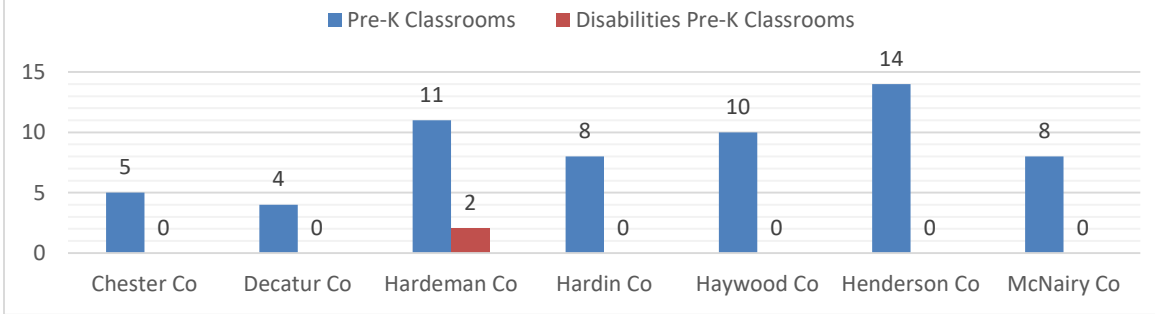
Our Head Start Program covers seven (7) counties in Southwest Tennessee. The counties are as follows: Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, and McNairy. The Southwest Head Start Program has an annually updated contract with each Local Education Agency (LEA) in our service area and we work collaboratively with the LEA throughout the year. The Head Start Program also works with other outside agencies in each county as deemed necessary.

In our service area, the number of LEA pre-K classrooms has remained unchanged between the **2023-2024 and the 2024-2025** program year in two (2) counties, increased by one (1) Pre-K Class in Chester and Hardin Counties, increased by 2 in McNairy Co, increased by 9 in Hardeman Co and decreased by two (2) in Haywood Co. Since the LEA’s are now providing pre-school for four year olds, it has proven to have an impact on the number of disability children in Head Start.

The following is a report of the number of Pre-School/Kindergarten children identified by the local school systems at the time of this update. Also included is a report of the number of Head Start children identified as having a disability at the time of this update.



PRE-K CLASSROOMS 2024-2025



Services provided by Community Service Agencies serving children with disabilities within the Southwest Head Start seven county areas

Our *Child Find* process begins November of each year. Letters are sent to various agencies seeking referrals on 4 year old and 3 year old children with disabilities. Family case managers do follow-ups by way of office visits, phone contacts and mailing out flyers. Flyers are also given out during door-to-door recruitment of children. To further secure placement of disability children into the Head Start program, written partnership agreements are kept up to date with the LEA, Tennessee Early Intervention System, Tennessee Infants and Parents Services, Department of Children Services, etc.

The following agencies provided the estimated data to confirm the number of 4, 3 and under the age of 3 year old children with disabilities whom they presently serve. The types of disabilities reflect those of children who are presently being served. Various agencies have reported that they have had a slight decline in the number of children who are 4 years old and younger being served. Some reasons being mothers who use more preventive care during prenatal stages to parents having a larger scope of agencies to choose from when searching for an agency to provide services to their child. Each agency's number of children being served and types of disabilities changes from year to year. ***Note: Counties that are not listed under the various agencies had no children being served at this time. The following data may also include children who receive services from two or more of these agencies**

Quinco Mental Health Center:

Provides mental health and substance abuse treatment services. Provides dual services for children when needed.

Counties not listed reported not having children being served in the three and four year old category.

The following were served in Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, McNairy and Henderson Counties.

<u>Four year olds</u>	<u>Three year olds</u>	<u>Under three years old</u>	<u>Types of Disabilities</u>
8	0	0	Severely Emotionally Disturbed

3 and 4 Year Old Special Needs Pre-school Classes:

Provides intense classroom services for children with special needs. These children must meet the criteria of having a specific learning disability, speech or language impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, other health impairment, multiple impairments, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairment, autism, visual impairments, traumatic brain injury, developmental delay, blindness, or deafness. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the federal funds for these classes.

COUNTY	No. of classes	Age served	Types of disabilities
CHESTER	0 Children are integrated with reg. Pre-K class	3 YR and 4 YR 29	Autism (4), Dev. Delay (15), Lang. Impaired(3), Other health impairment (1), Speech Impaired (5) Intellectual Disability (1)
DECATUR	0 Children are integrated with reg. Pre-K class	3 YR and 4 YR 27	Autism (4), Dev. Delay (3), Speech Impaired (20)
HARDEMAN	2	3 YR- and 4YR 32	Autism (2),Dev. Delay (6), Speech/Lang Impaired(17), Language Impaired (7)
HARDIN	0 Children are integrated with reg Pre-K class	3 YR and 4YR 42	Autism (1), Dev Delay (19), Speech/Lang Impaired(21), Multiple Disabilities (1)
HAYWOOD	0 Children are integrated with reg Pre-K class	3 YR and 4YR 27	Autism (12), Dev. Delay (10), Speech/Lang Impaired (3), Multiple Disabilities (2)
HENDERSON	0 Children are integrated with reg Pre-K class	3 YR and 4YR 37	Autism (4), Dev. Delay (23), Speech/Lang. Impaired(9) Other Health Impairment (1)
HENDERSON CO CAYWOOD CITY SCHOOL	0 Children are integrated with reg Pre-K class	3 YR and 4YR 22	Autism (2), Dev. Delay (13), Speech/Lang Impaired(7),
MCNAIRY	0 Children are integrated with reg Pre-K class	3 YR and 4 YR 36	Autism (4), Dev. Delay (18), Speech/Lang. Impaired(14)
TOTALS	2		
TOTAL SERVED 253			

TEIS: The Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) is a program that provides services to children age's birth up to age three who have disabilities or other developmental delays. The TEIS Program is a critically important program in supporting young children and their families to reach their optimal development. (<https://www.tn.gov/education/early-learning>). According to the 2024 Annual Report, the number of children served by TEIS statewide during the 2022-2023 program (birth to through 2 years old). year was 9,483.

LEA Pre-K:

The state Pre-K Program provides early childhood education services to four-year-old “at-risk” children. At-risk children include children with disabilities, children in state custody, children who qualify for the *Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program* and those children who are considered the underserved population. The funding source for the state Pre-K program is The Tennessee Office of Early Learning and Tennessee Lottery revenue.

Based on the data collected, children who are age eligible for Head Start and have a disability are being served many times by agencies that can provide services specific to the child’s special needs. The increase of Pre-K and special needs preschool classes has caused the number of disability children served by our Head Start program to decline by as much as one third of the types of diagnosed children we have served in the past.

The increase of Pre-K classrooms across our seven (7) county Head Start service areas not only affected the number of disability children our program serves but it has had a great impact on the number of four-year-old children being served in our program. As of February 10, 2025, 38% (410) of our children are 3-year-olds. This program year the percentage of 4-year-olds being served by our program 62%. As of February 2025, we have enrolled a total of 255 four-year old children. In order to reach the federal mandate of full enrollment we are now serving more three-year-olds. As some of our county Pre-K’s begin to serve three-year old children, it is becoming a challenge to keep a waitlist of children eligible to attend Head Start.

The state of Tennessee has launched a statewide effort to prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences. ACEs are stressful or traumatic experiences that disrupt the safe, nurturing environments children need to thrive. During infancy and early childhood, ACEs can be very harmful to brain development in children. ACE’s contribute to health and physical issues in adults such as mental illness, child abuse/neglect/ alcohol/drug abuse, heart disease, divorce, and cancer. In 2012, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a telephone survey to analyze how ACEs affect the state’s general population. They found that 52% of the statewide population had at least one ACE while 21% had three or more ACEs (ACEs in TN).

Overview of Service Area

The service area of Southwest Human Resource Agency Head Start includes seven (7) counties in the Southwest Tennessee area.

Chester County encompasses 286 square miles with most of the population centered in the county seat of Henderson. It is located in the central southwest area of the state about 85 miles northeast of Memphis and 135 miles southwest of Nashville. Housing costs are higher in Chester County due to Freed-Hardeman University and the county's proximity to Jackson, TN. The crossroads of West Tennessee, Chester County is home to Freed-Hardeman University and Chickasaw State Park. The annual September Barbeque Festival salutes the significance of Chester County's agricultural base while it celebrates its nationally recognized specialty - whole hog barbequed over an open pit. The county's biggest challenge is an above average rate of babies born with low birth weight. There is one (1) Head Start Center (4 classrooms) located in Henderson.

Decatur County is 345 square miles with a majority of the population divided between the city of Parsons and the county seat of Decaturville. Decatur County anchors the middle of the extreme eastern edge of West Tennessee. It is bounded on the north by Benton County and the west by Henderson County. The Tennessee River divides it from Perry County on the east and from Hardin County on the south. Decatur County offers not only beautiful landscapes, but also provides abundant natural resources. Phosphate and limestone are two of the county's mineral assets. The limestone is well suited for building materials and also supplies high-grade gravel for road construction. The county's biggest challenges are a relatively high rate of children born without health insurance and babies born at low birth weight. The SWHRA operates Head Start Centers in the communities of Decaturville (1 classroom) and Parsons (1 classroom).

Hardeman County encompasses 670 square miles and is located in the southwestern corner of Tennessee, bordering Mississippi and bisected by the Hatchie River. Bolivar is the county seat. Hardeman County is home to the Bird Dog Museum and Field Trial Hall of Fame and is rich in history as well as natural resources. There are more than 20 watershed lakes stocked with game fish. Over 100 buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places including The Pillars, The Little Courthouse, and Ames Plantation. The Tennessee Forest Festival, held every October, is a natural festival due to the county's abundance of hardwood. Twenty-seven Hardwoods are shipped commercially from Hardeman County. Some of the county's biggest challenges include a high rate of school suspension and low rates of 3rd to 8th grade rating as proficient on TNReady tests in both reading and math. There is one (1) center in Bolivar (2 classrooms), and one (1) center in Middleton (1 classroom).

Hardin County encompasses 569 square miles and is located on the east bank of the Tennessee River. It borders the Alabama and Mississippi lines. Savannah is the county seat. Hardin County is home to the annual Civil War and Living History Demonstration, Pickwick Lake and Pickwick Landing State Park. The biggest challenges for Hardin County include low rates of 3rd to 8th grade students rating as proficient on TNReady tests in both reading and math. There are also improvements needed in high school graduation rates and there is a high rate of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. There is one Head Start Centers located in Savannah (3 classrooms).

Overview of Service Area

Page 2

Haywood County encompasses 534 square miles and is located west of Madison County and is 60 miles from Memphis, Tennessee. Brownsville is the county seat. Haywood County, home of the Peach Festival, has a vibrant business community along with agriculture and farming that are important ingredients in the community's overall economic mix. The mix of businesses and industries in Brownsville and Haywood County is ample evidence that there's great appeal in the resources and amenities of this serene community. Brownsville located in the rich, rolling farmlands of West Tennessee, is a quiet city which has maintained the charms of the past without ignoring the demands of the future. Two Head Start Centers (5 classrooms) are located in Brownsville.

Henderson County encompasses 526 square miles and is located approximately 111 miles west of Nashville, Tennessee. Lexington is the county seat. Three industrial parks, with roads and utility lines in place, are available to firms building facilities within the county. The county has a reliable labor force, and abundance of water, low natural gas and electric rates, and plenty of affordable land. It also enjoys a favorable central location, low tax rates and a moderate climate. Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy. Farming continues to contribute significantly to Henderson County's economy. While traditional types of farming have declined in recent years, there has been expansion in truck farming, orchards, recreational land use, and forestry. Natchez Trace State Park, the state's largest and most visited, with over 46,000 square acres, is six miles northeast of Lexington. The county's biggest challenges are high rates of child and teen deaths and substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. There is also a high rate of babies born at low birth weight and an above average rate of pregnancy among girls age 15 to 17. According to the *2018 Child Fatality Annual Report* from the Tennessee Department of Health six (6) deaths were classified under sleep related infant deaths in Henderson County. There is one (1) Head Start Center located in Lexington (5 classrooms).

McNairy County encompasses 564 square miles and borders Hardeman County to the West and Hardin County to the east. The southern border is the Mississippi state line. Selmer is the county seat. McNairy County has eight (8) public schools. Five (5) public colleges and universities are located within a 30- mile radius of McNairy County. Vocational and technical courses are offered at Crump, Tennessee on the Eastern edge of McNairy County. Recreation parks and facilities are located throughout the county. The county's biggest challenges include a high rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect, a third of McNairy County's children live in poverty and a high rate of pregnancy among girls age 15 to 17. Ramer is also experiencing a higher rate of parents commuting to nearby communities to work due to a decrease in employment opportunities in Ramer. There is also an issue with suitable facilities for Head Start to have a classroom. Communities serving Head Start are Selmer, which has one (1) center with two (3) classrooms.

WEST TENNESSEE COUNTIES



Southwest HRA Head Start serves the following counties:

Chester

Decatur

Hardeman

Hardin

Haywood

Henderson

McNairy

CHESTER COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS 2025

RACE¹

TOTAL	17,606
WHITE	87.2%
WHITE (non-Hispanic)	84.2%
BLACK	9.1%
HISPANIC	3.5%
ASIAN	0.7%
OTHER	3.0%



ADDITIONAL STATISTICS

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ¹	5.2%
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS – 2018-2022 ¹	6,333
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2022 dollars ¹	\$60,543
FOOD STAMP CASE LOAD ²	934
TOTAL OF FAMILIES FIRST PARTICIPANTS ⁴	73
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY ¹	16.7%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING TNCARE ²	3655

GENDER¹

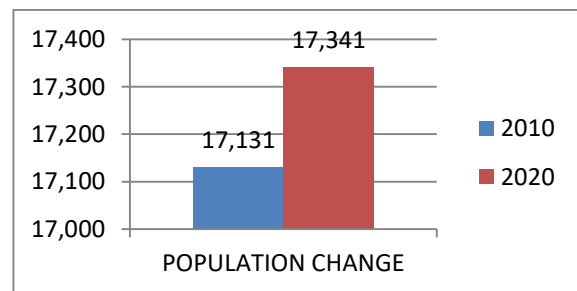
MALE	48.3%
FEMALE	51.7%

HEAD START CTRS/ # OF CLASSROOMS

CHESTER CO. CENTER	HENDERSON, TN	4
--------------------	---------------	---

KINDERGARTENS/CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS ³	12
PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	5
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	0
DISABLED KINDERGARTEN/PRE-K CHILDREN ³	57
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES ²	
GROUP HOMES	
DAY CARE CENTER	2



CACFP ELIGIBILITY (PRE-K – 12TH)³

FREE	1338
REDUCED	254
INELIGIBLE	1267

¹ CENSUS QUICK FACTS July 1, 2022 ESTIMATE.

² TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (2022)

³ CHESTER CO. BOARD OF EDUCATION (2022)

⁴ TN Commission on Children and Youth

DECATUR COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS 2025

RACE¹

TOTAL	11,656
WHITE	94.2%
WHITE (non-Hispanic)	90.8%
BLACK	2.7%
HISPANIC	3.9%
ASIAN	0.8%
OTHER	1.6%



ADDITIONAL STATISTICS

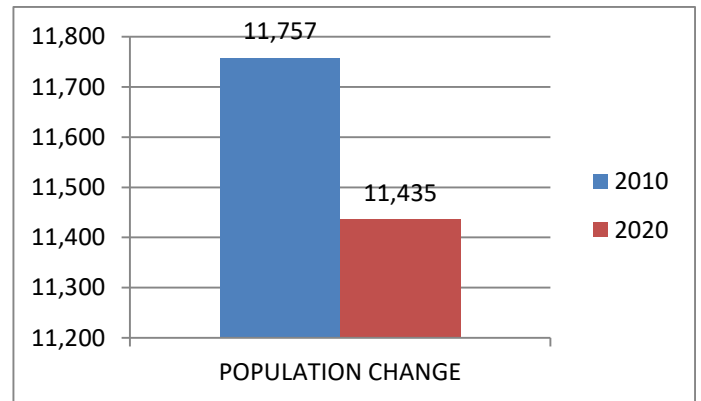
CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ¹	4.8%
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS – 2018-2022 ¹	4,439
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2022 dollars ¹	\$46,190
FOOD STAMP CASE LOAD ²	819
TOTAL OF FAMILIES FIRST PARTICIPANTS ⁴	55
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY ¹	19.2%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING TNCARE ²	2,858

GENDER¹

MALE	50.2%
FEMALE	49.8%

HEAD START CTRS/ # OF CLASSROOMS

DECATUR CO. CENTER	DECATURVILLE, TN	1
PARSONS CENTER	PARSONS, TN	1



KINDERGARTENS/CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS ³	7
PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	4
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	0
DISABLED KINDERGARTEN/PRE-K CHILDREN ³	49
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES ²	
GROUP HOMES ²	
DAY CARE CENTERS ²	1

CACFP ELIGIBILITY (PRE-K – 12TH)³

FREE	All students receive free meals
REDUCED	
INELIGIBLE	

¹ CENSUS QUICK FACTS JULY 1, 2022 ESTIMATE

² TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

³ DECATUR CO. BOARD OF EDUCATION

⁴ TN Commission on Children and Youth

HARDEMAN COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS 2025

RACE¹

TOTAL	25,567
WHITE	55.3%
WHITE (non-Hispanic)	53.7%
BLACK	41.4%
HISPANIC	2.2%
ASIAN	0.9%
OTHER	2.0%



ADDITIONAL STATISTICS

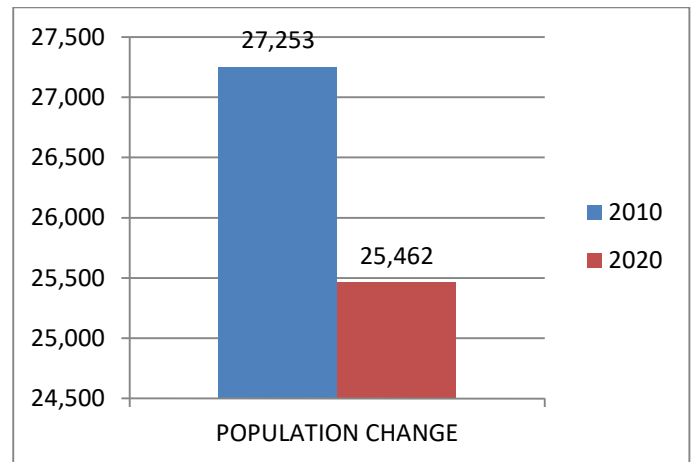
CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ¹	5.1%
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS – 2018-2022 ¹	9,049
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2022 dollars ¹	\$46,173
FOOD STAMP CASE LOAD ²	2,096
TOTAL OF FAMILIES FIRST PARTICIPANTS ⁴	94
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY ¹	21.5%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING TNCARE ²	6,744

GENDER¹

MALE	55.3%
FEMALE	44.7%

HEAD START CENTERS /# OF CLASSROOMS

HARDEMAN CO. CENTER	BOLIVAR, TN	2
MIDDLETON CENTER	MIDDLETON, TN	1



KINDERGARTENS/CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS ³	14
PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	11
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	2
DISABLED KINDERGARTEN/PRE-K CHILDREN ³	94
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES ²	
GROUP HOMES ²	
DAY CARE CENTERS ²	6

CACFP ELIGIBILITY (PRE-K – 12TH)³

FREE	All students receive free meals
REDUCED	0
INELIGIBLE	0

¹ CENSUS QUICK FACTS JULY 1, 2022 ESTIMATE

² TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

³ HARDEMAN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

⁴ TN Commission on Children and Youth

HARDIN COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS 2025

RACE¹

TOTAL	27,229
WHITE	93.7%
WHITE (non-Hispanic)	91.6%
BLACK	3.4%
HISPANIC	2.6%
ASIAN	0.6%
OTHER	1.7%



ADDITIONAL STATISTICS

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ¹	4.9%
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS – 2018-2022 ¹	10,833
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2022 dollars ¹	\$49,149
FOOD STAMP CASE LOAD ²	2,046
TOTAL OF FAMILIES FIRST PARTICIPANTS ⁴	127
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY ¹	19.7%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING TNCARE ²	6,826

GENDER¹

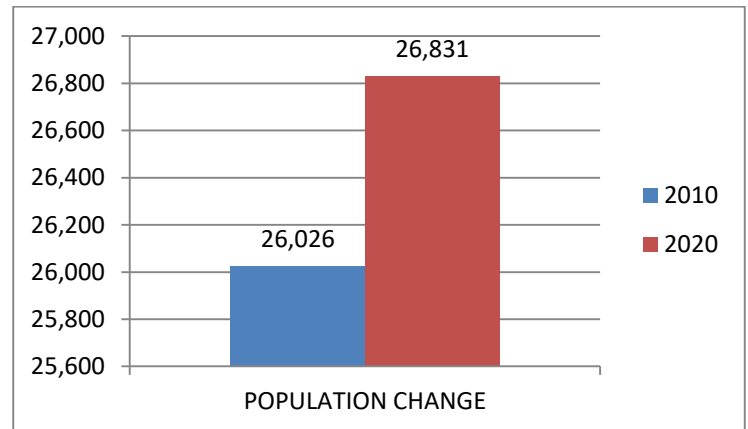
MALE	48.7%
FEMALE	51.3%

HEAD START CENTERS / # OF CLASSROOMS

HARDIN CO. CENTER	SAVANNAH, TN	3

KINDERGARTENS/CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS ³	14
PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	8
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	0
DISABLED KINDERGARTEN/PRE-K CHILDREN ³	102
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES ²	
GROUP HOMES ²	3
DAY CARE CENTERS ²	



CACFP ELIGIBILITY (PRE-K – 12TH)³

FREE	All students receive free lunches
REDUCED	0
INELIGIBLE	0

¹ CENSUS QUICK FACTS JULY 1, 2022 ESTIMATE

² TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

³ HARDIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

⁴ TN Commission on Children and Youth

HAYWOOD COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

2025

RACE¹

TOTAL	17,328
WHITE	46.3%
WHITE (non-Hispanic)	42.6%
BLACK	51.3%
HISPANIC	4.9%
ASIAN	0.4%
OTHER	1.5%



ADDITIONAL STATISTICS

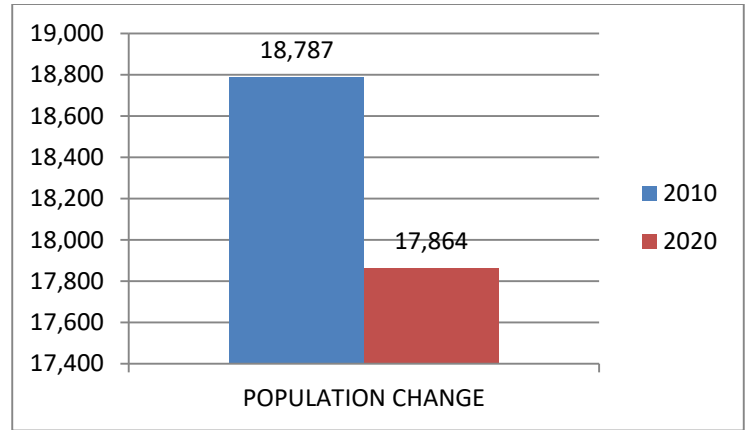
CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ¹	5.6%
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS – 2018-2022 ¹	7,166
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2022 dollars ¹	\$43,513
FOOD STAMP CASE LOAD ²	1,777
TOTAL OF FAMILIES FIRST PARTICIPANTS ⁴	113
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY ¹	21.0%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING TNCARE ²	4,903

GENDER¹

MALE	46.9%
FEMALE	53.1%

HEAD START CENTERS / # OF CLASSROOMS

HAYWOOD CO CENTER	BROWNSVILLE, TN	5



KINDERGARTENS/CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS ³	11
PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	10
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K'S ³	0
DISABLED K/PRE-K CHILDREN ³	60
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES ²	
GROUP HOMES ²	
DAY CARE CENTERS ²	3

CACFP ELIGIBILITY (PRE-K – 12TH)³

FREE	All students receive free meals
REDUCED	0
INELIGIBLE	0

¹ CENSUS QUICKFACTS JULY 1, 2022 ESTIMATE

² TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

³ HAYWOOD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

⁴ TN Commission on Children and Youth

HENDERSON COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS 2025

RACE ¹

TOTAL	28,070
WHITE	88.5%
WHITE (non-Hispanic)	86.0%
BLACK	7.8%
HISPANIC	3.1%
ASIAN	0.5%
OTHER	2.7%



ADDITIONAL STATISTICS

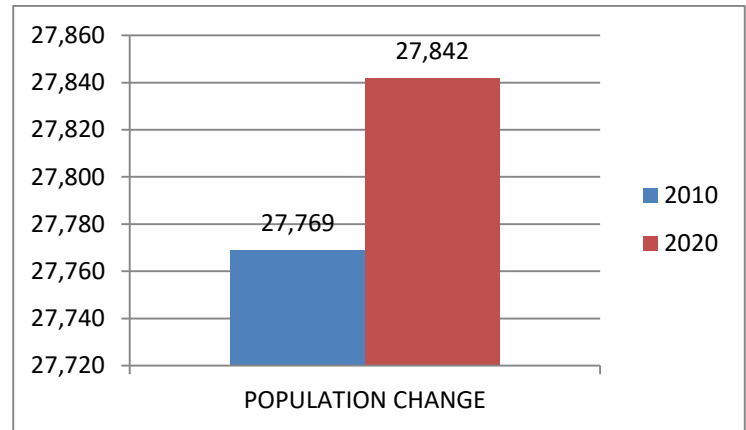
CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ¹	5.4%
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS – 2018-2022 ¹	10,928
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2022 dollars ¹	\$53,471
FOOD STAMP CASE LOAD ²	1,732
TOTAL OF FAMILIES FIRST PARTICIPANTS ⁵	153
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY ¹	14.0%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING TNCARE ²	7,156

GENDER¹

MALE	49.1%
FEMALE	50.9%

HEAD START CENTERS / # OF CLASSROOMS

MONTGOMERY CENTER	LEXINGTON, TN	5



KINDERGARTENS/CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS – Henderson Co. ³	15
PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS – Lexington City ⁴	6
PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³ – Henderson Co. ³	10
PRE-K CLASSROOMS – Lexington City ⁴	4
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K'S - Henderson Co. ³	0
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K'S – Lexington City ⁴	0
DISABLED K/PRE-K CHILDREN – Henderson Co. ³	87
DISABLED K/PRE-K CHILDREN – Lexington City ⁴	44
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES ²	
GROUP HOMES ²	4
DAY CARE CENTERS ²	

CACFP ELIGIBILITY (PRE-K – 12TH)³

FREE – Henderson Co. ³	All receive free meals
FREE – Lexington City ⁴	311
REDUCED – Henderson Co. ³	0
REDUCED – Lexington City ⁴	69
INELIGIBLE – Henderson Co. ³	0
INELIGIBLE – Lexington City ⁴	521

¹ CENSUS QUICKFACTS JULY 1, 2022 ESTIMATE
² TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
³ HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
⁴ LEXINGTON CITY SCHOOLS

McNAIRY COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

2025



RACE¹

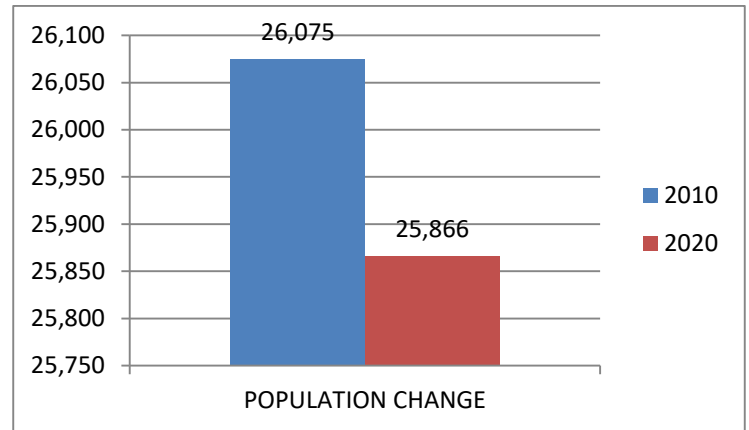
TOTAL	26,163
WHITE	90.8%
WHITE (non-Hispanic)	89.0%
BLACK	6.1%
HISPANIC	2.3%
ASIAN	0.5%
OTHER	2.0%

ADDITIONAL STATISTICS

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ¹	5.5%
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS – 2018-2022 ¹	9,806
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2022 dollars ¹	\$50,714
FOOD STAMP CASE LOAD ²	1,701
TOTAL OF FAMILIES FIRST PARTICIPANTS ⁴	79
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY ¹	15.5%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING TNCARE ²	6,566

GENDER¹

MALE	49.6%
FEMALE	50.4%



HEAD START CENTERS / # OF CLASSROOMS

McNAIRY CO CENTER	SELMER, TN	3

KINDERGARTENS/CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS ³	21
PRE-K CLASSROOMS ³	8
SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-K'S ³	0
DISABLED K/PRE-K CHILDREN ³	83
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES ²	
GROUP HOMES ²	
DAY CARE CENTERS ²	0

CACFP ELIGIBILITY (PRE-K – 12TH)³

FREE	All receive free meals
REDUCED	
INELIGIBLE	

¹ 2020 CENSUS

² TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

³ MCNAIRY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

⁴ TN Commission on Children and Youth

Head Start Child Demographics 2024-2025

Based on total enrollment of 458 Children as of 1/22/25

AGE

3 YEAR OLDS 324
4 YEAR OLDS 134

GENDER

MALE 229
FEMALE 229

LANGUAGE

ENGLISH 445
SPANISH 8
FAR EAST 1
Dual Language 1
MID EAST 1

CACFP (ALL FREE)

458

RACE

BLACK 173
WHITE 240
ASIAN 3
MULTI/BI-RACIAL 39
INDIAN ALASKAN 0
PACIFIC ISLANDER/ALASKAN 0
OTHER 3

CHILD WELFARE REFERRALS

6

ETHNICITY

HISPANIC/LATIN ORIGIN 20
NON-HISPANIC/NON LATIN 437

NUMBER ON WAITLIST

106

SECOND YEAR CHILDREN

127

CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP TO PRIMARY ADULT

CHILD 398
FOSTER CHILD 1
GRANDCHILD 19
NIECE/NEPHEW 4
OTHER 2

NUMBER ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

124

ELIGIBLE TO RETURN TO HEAD START NEXT YEAR

309

Family Demographics 2024-2025

Family Demographic Information based on 458 children served by Head Start this year as of 1/22/25

Family Income 2024-2025

To \$2,999	120
To \$5,999	40
To \$8,999	40
To \$11,999	33
To \$14,999	27
> \$15,000	205

Number of WIC families: At Enrollment
180

Number of TANF families: 13

Number of SSI families: 33

Education Level (Count based on 497 Primary Adults as of 02/1/24 in our Head Start Families)

<High School Grad.	27
High School Grad. or HISET	273
Some College/Training	105
Advanced Degree	18

Employment Status (Count based on 458 Primary Adults as of 01/22/25 in our Head Start families)

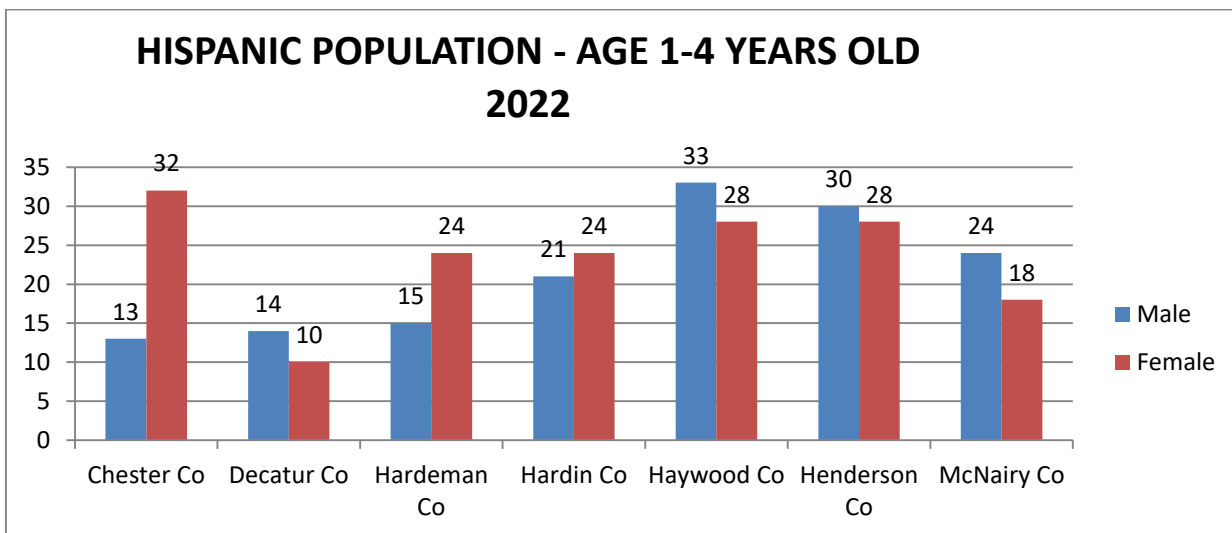
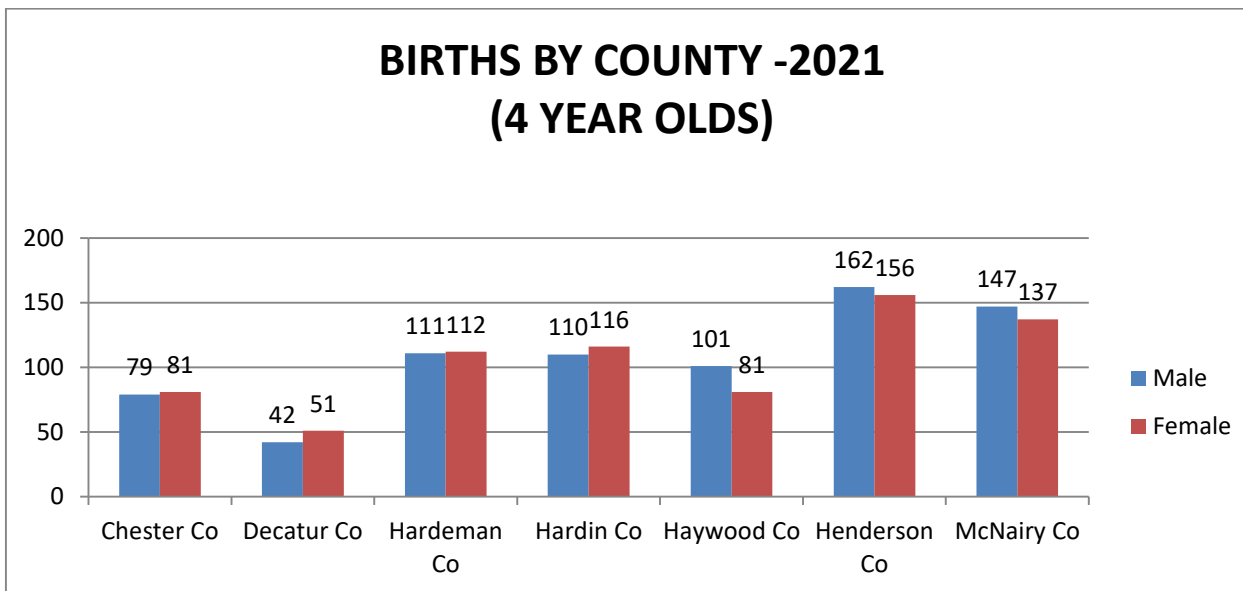
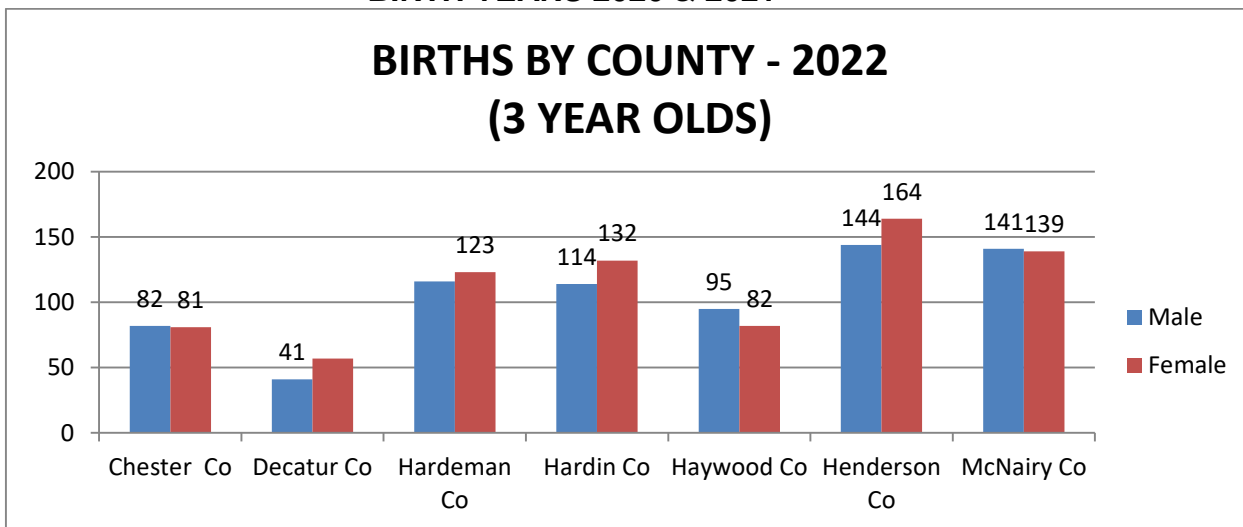
Two Parent Families 128 One Parent Families 296

1. At enrollment total number of families employed, in job training, or school: 259
2. One or more parents employed: 259
3. One or more parents in job training, working on occupational certificate or license: 6
4. In school for a GED: 0

Income Eligibility (Count based on 458 children enrolled at the time of the assessment)

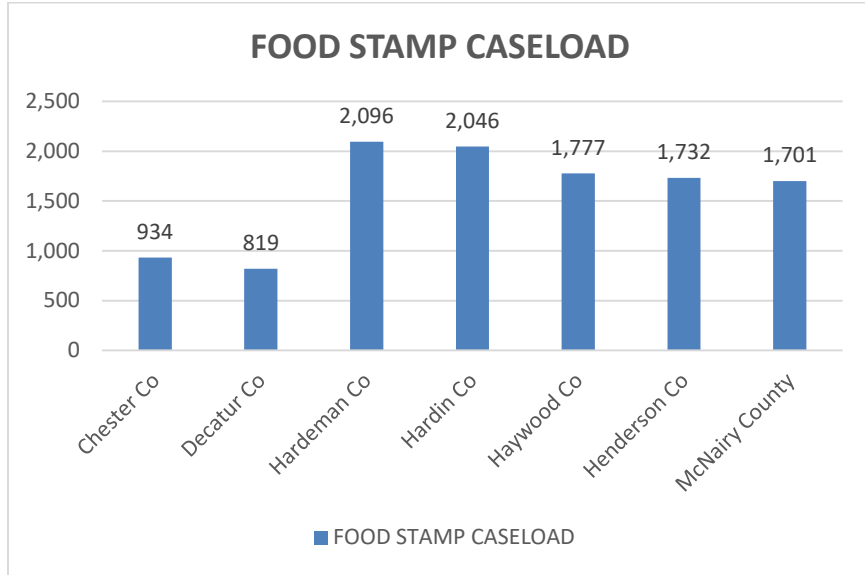
Income Eligible	175
Public Assistance	157
Over Income Guidelines 101-130%	0
Over Income Guidelines	44
Foster Children	1
Homeless	88

**POPULATION BY AGE
BIRTH YEARS 2020 & 2021**

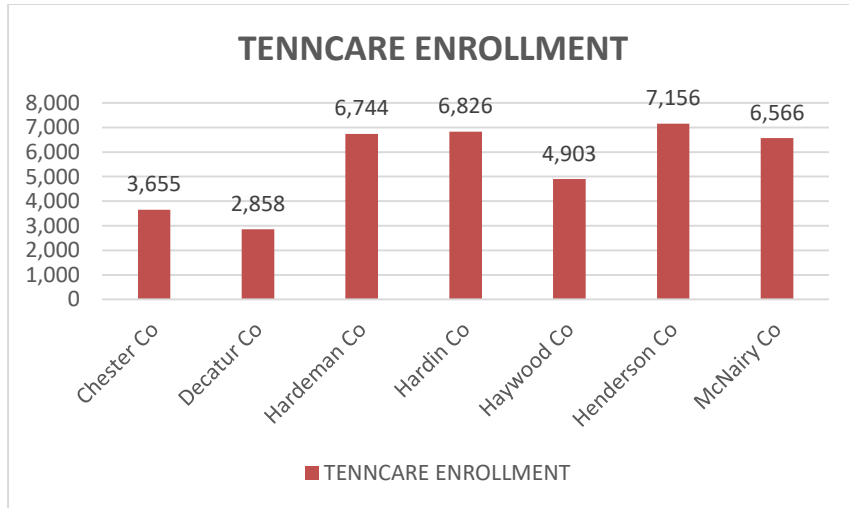


Note: People who are Hispanic may be of any race.

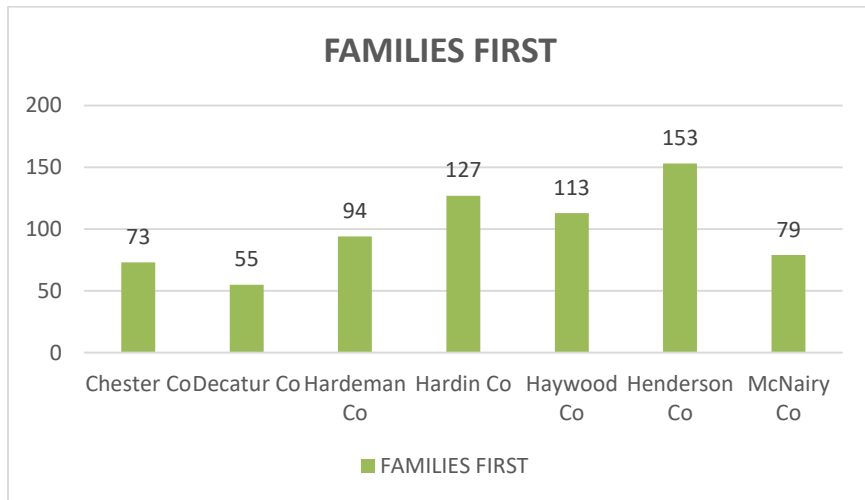
COUNTY STATISTICS
(as of February 2025)



TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICT 5

Recruitment Area

Our Agency serves children from all parts of a seven (7) county area. Our recruitment areas include as many Head Start eligible families and children as possible, and the maps on pages 18 - 25 indicates a fairly adequate distribution of the 10 sites within the seven (7) county area.

Southwest HRA Head Start Program is involved in seven (7) of the counties which are: Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, and McNairy. The locations for the classes are designated on the map showing the exact area involved.

Chester County	Henderson	4 classes
Decatur County	Decaturville	1 class
	Parsons	1 class
Hardeman County	Middleton	1 class
	Bolivar	2 classes
Hardin County	Savannah	3 classes
Haywood County	Brownsville	4 classes*
Henderson County	Lexington	5 classes*
McNairy County	Selmer	3 classes

The funded enrollment for 2024-2025 is 425 children. Southwest HRA Head Start will attempt to continue our current practice of serving more children than our funding level in order to accommodate the needs of our service area. All of this will be done only if additional children can be served with no adverse effect on services. No classroom enrollment shall exceed 20 children.

All of the centers are inspected and we receive a license for each center from the Department of Human Services.

Community Resources

The Southwest Tennessee Family Resource Directory is the most comprehensive reference available and includes information about the seven (7) county service area. Each county has a County Resource Guide which has details related to the specific county: demographic information, adolescent treatment program, child care services, educational opportunities, employment opportunities, financial services, health/health related, housing, legal services, nutrition services, planning services, transportation, volunteer services, and youth programs. Southwest Head Start also utilizes the Directory of Services and information about parenting classes and community education is available at each center.

PROGRAM DECISION MAKING

PROGRAM GOALS

The mission of The Southwest HRA Head Start is to create and support a safe and caring place of success for children, their families and Head Start staff while meeting and exceeding the national goals of Head Start through Parent and Community Partnerships.

Southwest HRA Head Start strives to provide services and programs which will enhance the growth and development of children and to prepare them for later academic and social success. We believe the preschool years and the experiences that children have during these years are vital to successful development so we make every effort to provide the highest quality program possible. We believe that growth and development are multi-dimensional so we offer the comprehensive services of education, medical, dental and nutritional health, and social services. We believe that children with disabling conditions both benefit from and contribute to programming for preschool children so we make a special effort to serve and support children with disabling conditions. Finally, we believe that parents are the most important people in the lives of their children and that the support parents give children as they grow and develop is crucial to their future success. As a result of this belief, we involve parents in all aspects of the program, and support them in their roles as parents, and as providers for their families.

An analysis of the data in this year's community assessment pointed out the need for action in several areas.

State Pre-K: An increased number of Pre-K classrooms have impacted our program in several ways.

1. Many parents are opting to send their children to state Pre-K for several reasons:
 - A. longer hours
 - B. transportation
 - C. location
 - D. siblings in K-12 county schools

Immediate Short Term Goals

1. To continue process of building a new Head Start center, as quickly as possible, in Henderson County. The current building require expensive and excessive maintenance and it has reached a point where we need a different building to operate in Henderson Co.
2. To utilize *Ages and Stages Social Emotional Screening* to identify and support children's and families' social-emotional and behavioral needs.
3. To move the slots for Ramer Center to the Selmer Center (same county)

Ongoing Short Term Goals

1. Intensify outreach/recruitment with increased focus on three year olds and disabled children.
2. Continue to develop a relationship with county Local Education Authorities (LEA's) to ensure that Head Start serves the neediest children and families.
3. The Agency must continue in its training commitment and efforts to improve recommendations and satisfaction for employees who meet the high expectations of the program. A training program for the Head Start Staff and Policy Council Members that will better inform the public of our Head Start Program activities in the communities in which our program operates.
4. A CDA or credentialed staff person must be in each classroom and the Agency must continue in its efforts to extend the training requirements to teacher assistants who lack the credential and others who directly work with children. Teacher Assistants will be encouraged to work toward an Associate Degree to be eligible for available teacher positions and to strengthen the work force in the future.

PROGRAM GOALS

PAGE 2

5. To provide impoverished and/or disabled children the needed medical and dental services required. This process includes coordination of the Family Services, Health, Parent Involvement, and Disabilities Areas. This will be accomplished by providing transportation when necessary, purchasing proper equipment and supplies, providing therapists and consultants to aid the children, parents, and teaching staff, and by making referrals and appointments for therapy for the more severely disabled and assist in maintaining TNCare and other insurance options.
6. To fulfill all efforts to identify, coordinate, integrate and utilize the existing community resources and services in our locality in providing educational, nutritional, health, social, parent involvement, and psychological services for the children and their families.
7. To continue to work with Head Start fathers in promoting involvement in their children's lives.
8. To identify and serve more homeless families according to the McKinney-Vento Act.
9. Train staff to work with parents on importance of dental and medical appointments and follow-ups as necessary.
10. Ensure Staff is knowledgeable concerning agency and program policies and procedures and Office of Head Start Monitoring System and active supervision.

Long Term Goals

In order to continue providing effective and efficient programs and services to Head Start children and their families, Southwest HRA Head Start has developed the following long range goals.

Program Expansion:

Southwest HRA Head Start will continue to monitor data and request expansion funds as necessary when funds are available.

Offer Early Head Start services in areas that show the greatest need as funds become available.

Collaboration:

Southwest HRA Head Start will continue to build upon existing partnerships and will seek out new partners that will allow us to provide ever improving services and programs to Head Start children and their families.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Data shows that all of the seven (7) Southwest rural counties served by our Head Start Program have median household incomes well below the national average for the United States and the percentage of persons in poverty is well above the national average in each county.