

2025

Community Needs Assessment



Upper East Tennessee
Human Development Agency

Executive Summary

The 2025 CNA Update for the Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency (UETHDA) reveals key demographic, economic, and housing trends in its eight-county service area. The region's population grew by 0.67% in 2023, outpacing the national average, with Washington County leading in growth. Age demographics shifted slightly, with notable increases in the 25-44 and 65-74 age groups, while the 20-24 cohort declined. Migration trends show an influx of higher-income residents, likely driven by remote work opportunities and the area's historically low cost of living. The housing crisis remains a critical issue, with median rent payments rising significantly above inflation. From 2022 to 2023, median rent increased from \$790.95 to \$833.11 per month, while the percentage of renters spending over 30% of their income on housing (GRAPI) rose to 43.3%. Fair Market Rent in Tennessee surged by up to 44% since 2021, exacerbating affordability challenges. The Johnson City Housing Needs Assessment highlights a shortage of 5,587 units, reflecting a broader regional gap. Homelessness also grew sharply, with a 37.1% increase in unhoused individuals in 2025, particularly in Sullivan County and among unsheltered populations.

Community surveys identified the top five household needs as utilities assistance (79.32% of respondents), cost-of-living increases (62.73%), rent/mortgage assistance (56.14%), food/nutrition services (48.86%), and transportation services (24.77%). Similarly, the top five community needs included utilities assistance (62.05%), cost-of-living increases (56.36%), affordable housing availability (47.05%), rent/mortgage assistance (46.59%), and food/nutrition services (45.45%). These findings underscore the pervasive financial strain on households and the urgent demand for basic resources and housing support.

Economic indicators show mixed results. Median household income rose nominally to \$55,756.83 but declined slightly when adjusted for inflation. Poverty rates remained stable, though disparities persisted among racial and educational groups. Labor force participation was highest among those with bachelor's degrees (83.86%) and lowest among individuals with disabilities (34.81%). Utility costs burdened households, with over 30% paying over \$200 monthly for electricity. Head Start programs received high satisfaction ratings (4.52–4.86 out of 5), though parent participation barriers included work schedules and transportation. Overall, UETHDA's services were well-received, with 75.47% of clients reporting high satisfaction.

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Population Profile and Demographics

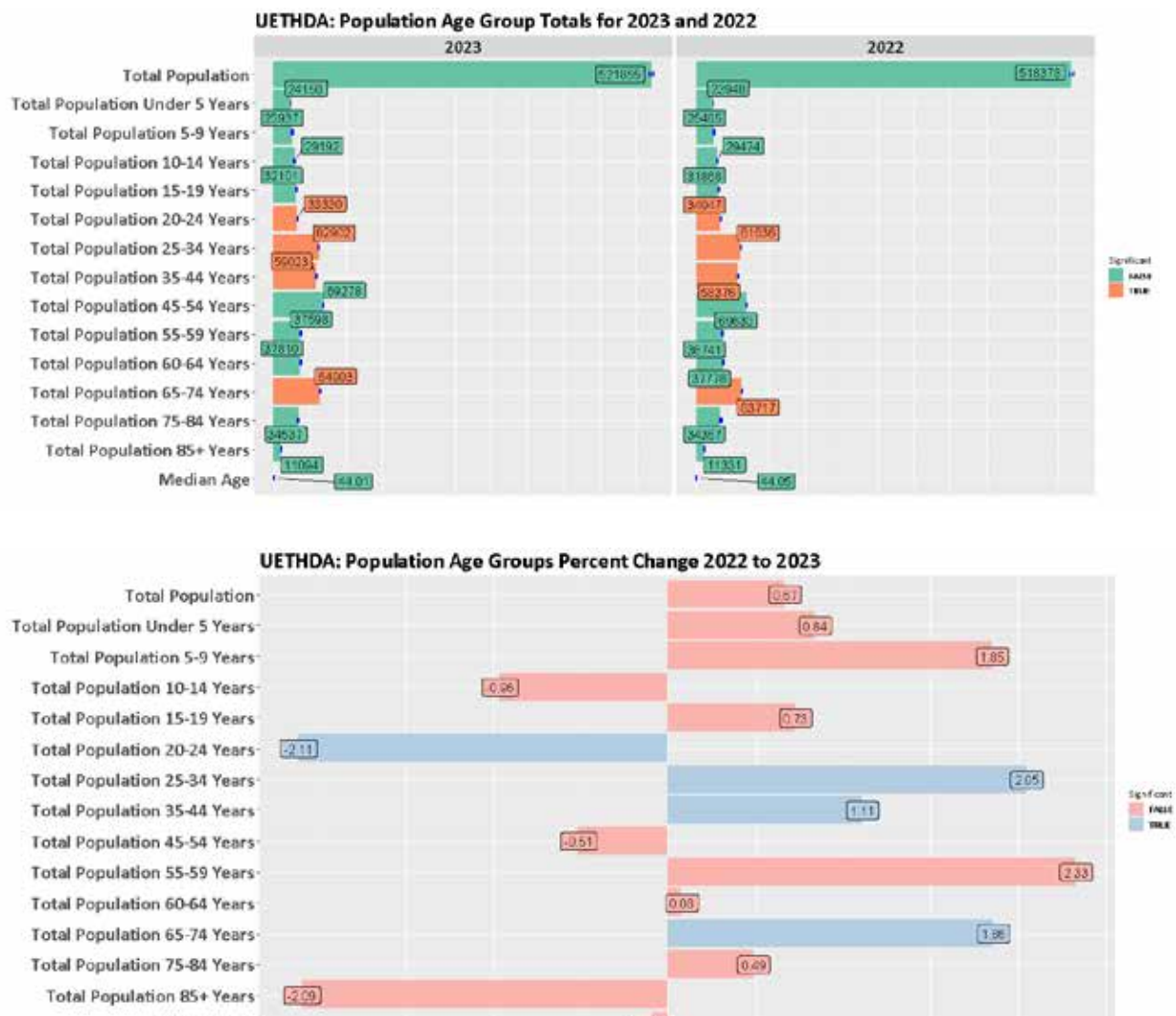
Total Population

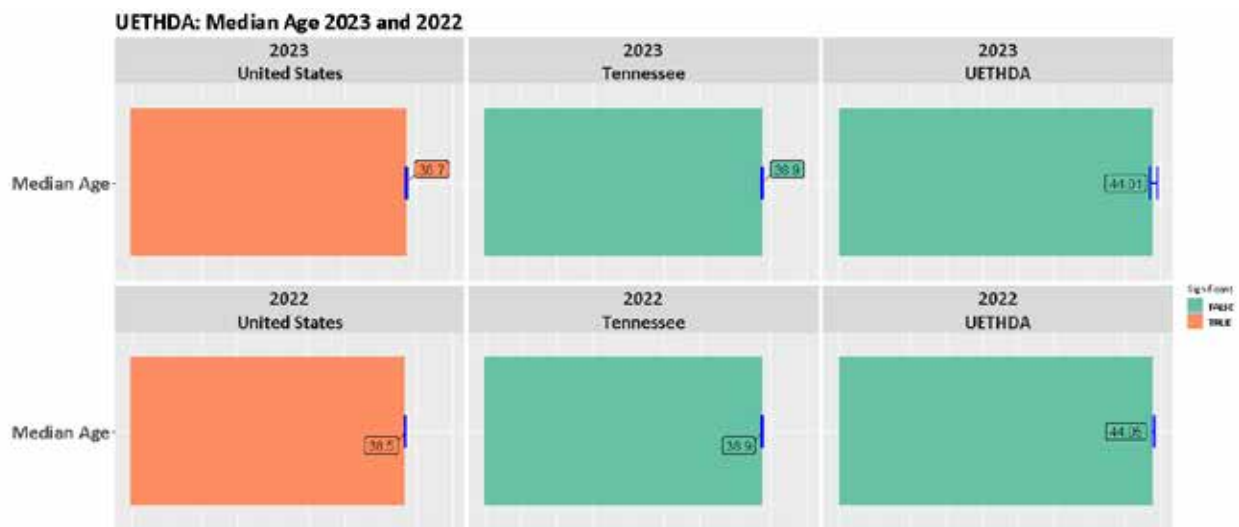
Location	2023 Estimate	2022 Estimate	Difference	Percent Change
United States	332387540	331097593	1289947	0.39
Tennessee	6986082	6923772	62310	0.90
UETHDA	521855	518378	3477	0.67
Carter County	56462	56315	147	0.26
Greene County	70919	70399	520	0.74
Hancock County	6790	6726	64	0.95
Hawkins County	57446	57107	339	0.59
Johnson County	18073	17982	91	0.51
Sullivan County	159693	158722	971	0.61
Washington County	134693	133282	1411	1.06
Unicoi County	17779	17845	-66	-0.37

UETHDA is nestled along the Appalachian Mountains and located in the heart of poverty-ridden America and serves the counties of Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington.

Age Distribution

According to the 2023 ACS 5 Year estimates, the age distribution for the UETHDA service area remained relatively unchanged from 2022 to 2023. The median age was almost unchanged and slightly decreased, which is in opposition to the median age in the United States significantly increasing. This dichotomy is likely due to the older median age the UETHDA service area has compared with the rest of the state and nation. The total population of those aged 20-24 significantly decreased by 2.11%, while the total population of those aged 25-44 and 65 to 74 significantly increased between 1.11% and 2.05%.

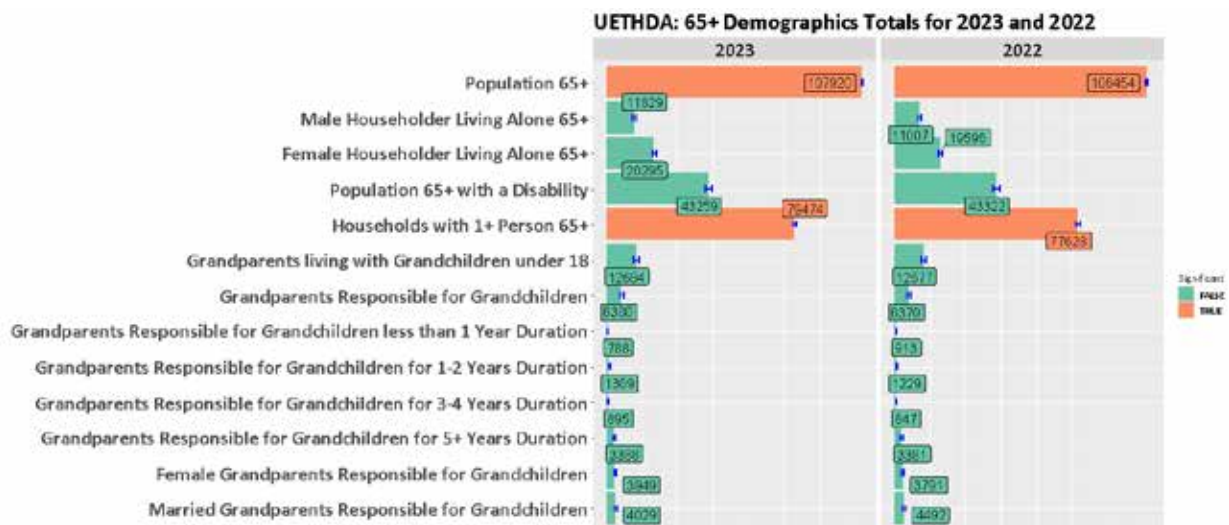




UETHDA: Age Groups

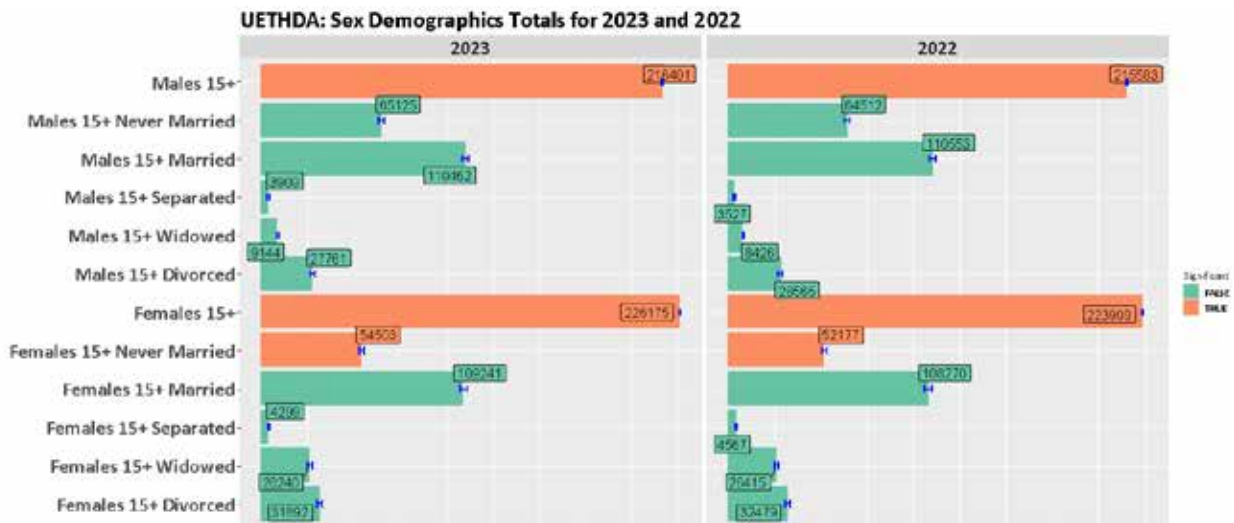
Variable	2023 Total	2023 Percent	2022 Total	2022 Percent
Total Population	521855.00	NA	518378.00	NA
Total Population 10-14 Years	29192.00	5.59	29474.00	5.69
Total Population 15-19 Years	32101.00	6.15	31868.00	6.15
Total Population 20-24 Years	33330.00	6.39	34047.00	6.57
Total Population 25-34 Years	62902.00	12.05	61636.00	11.89
Total Population 35-44 Years	59023.00	11.31	58376.00	11.26
Total Population 45-54 Years	69278.00	13.28	69630.00	13.43
Total Population 5-9 Years	25937.00	4.97	25465.00	4.91
Total Population 55-59 Years	37598.00	7.20	36741.00	7.09
Total Population 60-64 Years	37810.00	7.25	37778.00	7.29
Total Population 65-74 Years	64903.00	12.44	63717.00	12.29
Total Population 75-84 Years	34537.00	6.62	34367.00	6.63
Total Population 85+ Years	11094.00	2.13	11331.00	2.19
Total Population Under 5 Years	24150.00	4.63	23948.00	4.62
Median Age	44.01	NA	44.05	NA

The 65 and over age groups had one significant change from 2022 to 2023; Households with at least one person aged 65 and over increased by roughly 1,800 households.

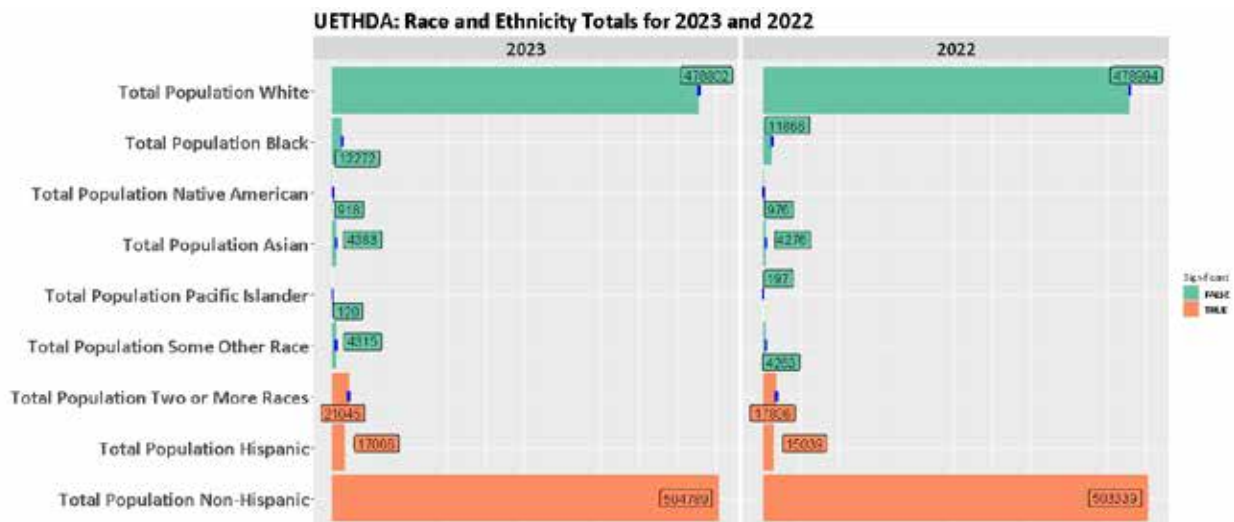


Both the total male and female populations increased in the UETHDA service area, with the total number of females increasing at a slightly higher rate and the total number of females remained higher than the males. The total male population aged 65 years and over significantly increased, which follows the trend of males living slightly longer than they have in previous times. The total number of females aged 15 and over who have never married also significantly increased.





The non-Hispanic white population continues to be the overwhelming majority race and ethnicity in the UETHDA service area, though the total population non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and two or more races significantly increased from 2022 to 2023 while the total population of white people was unchanged.

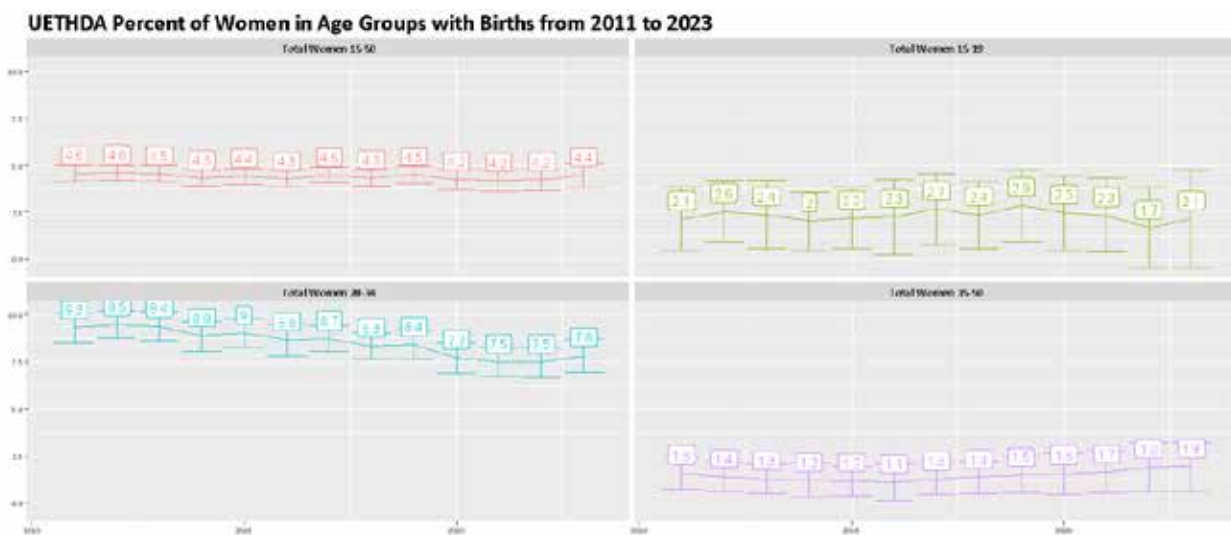


UETHDA: Race/Ethnicity

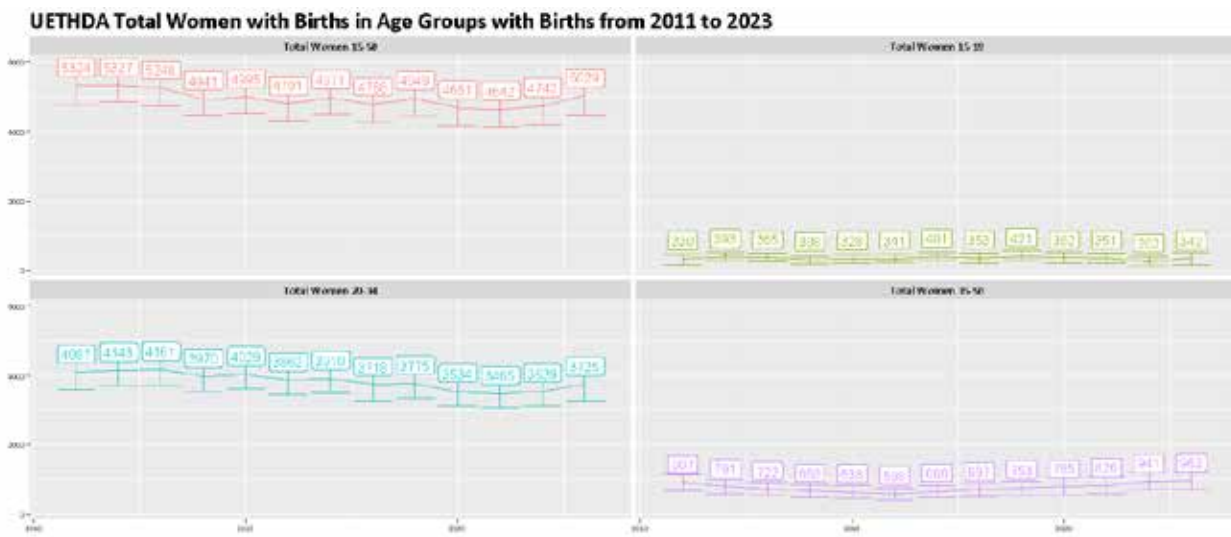
Variable	2023 Total	2023 Percent	2022 Total	2022 Percent
Total Population Asian	4383	0.84	4276	0.82
Total Population Black	12272	2.35	11866	2.29
Total Population Hispanic	17066	3.27	15039	2.90
Total Population Native American	918	0.18	976	0.19
Total Population Non-Hispanic	504789	96.73	503339	97.10
Total Population Pacific Islander	120	0.02	197	0.04
Total Population Some Other Race	4315	0.83	4263	0.82
Total Population Two or More Races	21045	4.03	17806	3.43
Total Population White	478802	91.75	478994	92.40

Migration and Birth Patterns

The total number of women with births increased in 2023 compared to 2022, with all age segments seeing increases. The percentage of women aged 15 to 50 years having births per year is currently about 4.4% an increase of 0.2% from 2022 but remains below the rate from 2011 of 4.6%.

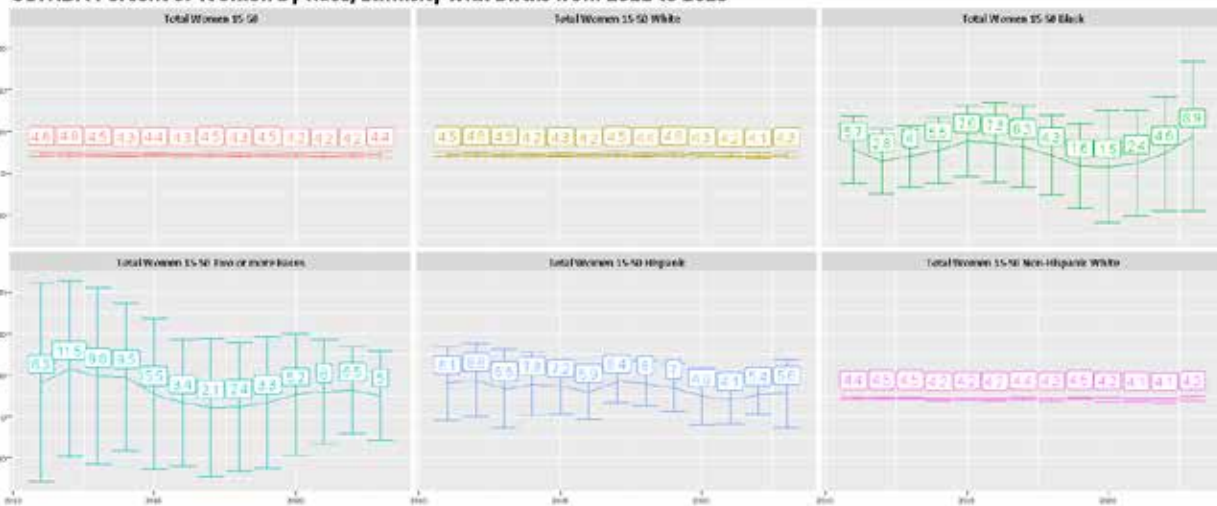


The largest trend increase in age groups of women with births is in those 35 to 50 years of age, up from a low of 1.1% in 2017.

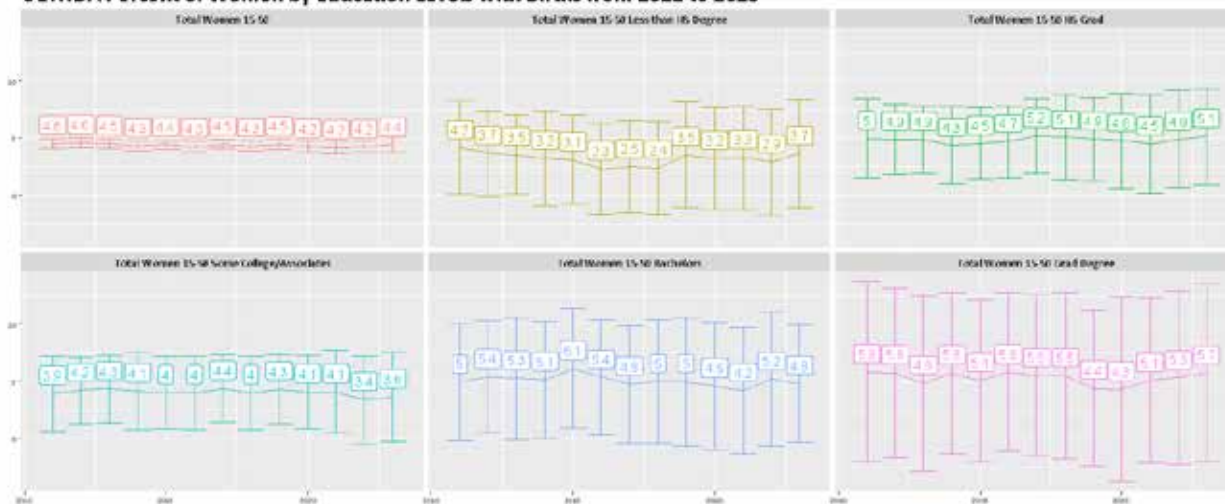


The highest percentage of women with births by race and ethnicity was in Black women at 8.9%, though the extremely wide margin of error makes interpretation and conclusions difficult to draw. Hispanic women and women of two or more races also had a higher percentage of births than did non-Hispanic White women, but again, the margin of error was extremely high.

UETHDA Percent of Women by Race/Ethnicity with Births from 2011 to 2023



When disaggregated by educational attainment, the percentage of women with births with Graduate Degrees was highest across education levels and those with less than a high school degree and some college or associates degree were the lowest, though the relatively low number those without a high school degree and graduate degrees are the lowest in total number of women effects the magnitude of these rates. Women with Bachelor's degrees and high school graduates have births at roughly the same rate.

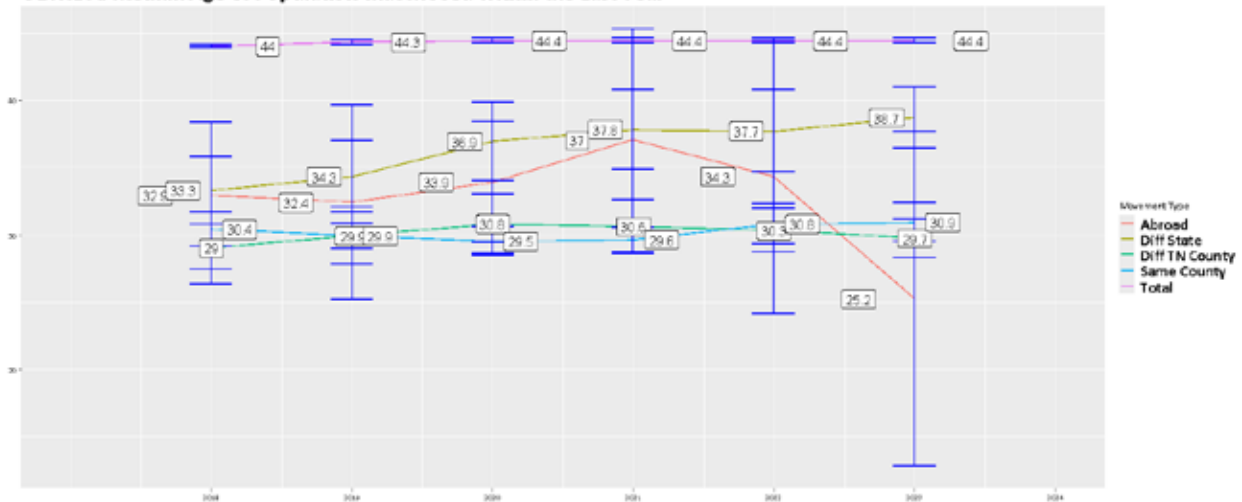
UETHDA Percent of Women by Education Levels with Births from 2011 to 2023


The percentage of women with births in poverty was higher than those above the poverty line. This may be due to the increase in family size pushing them into the higher income brackets for poverty. The percentage of those with births who received public assistance has been cut in half since 2011 but remains higher than those that did not receive public assistance, likely due to WIC and other programs for expectant mothers making them eligible.

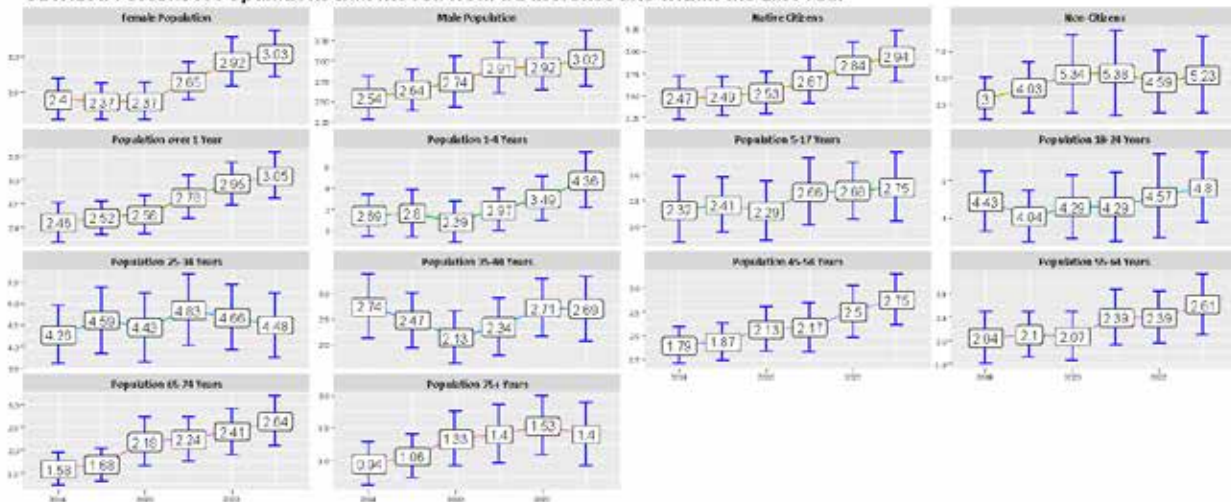
UETHDA Percent of Women at Income Levels with Births from 2011 to 2023


Migration

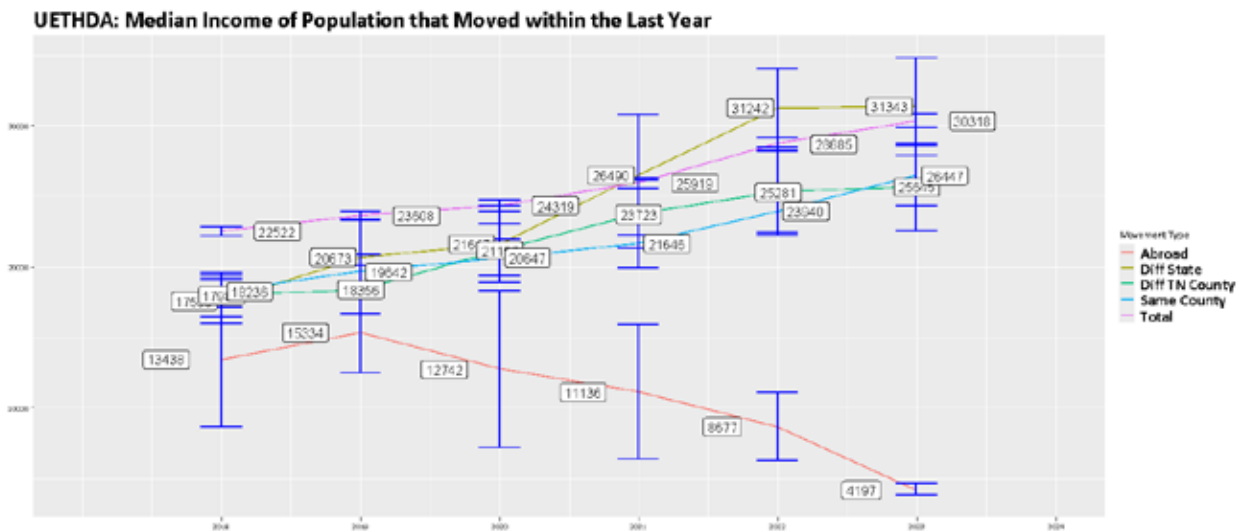
The UETHDA service area has seen a population increase since the COVID19 pandemic, primarily due to people moving into the area. The median age of those who move from out of state has increased by roughly 5 years in 2023 when compared to pre-pandemic times.

UETHDA: Median Age of Population that Moved within the Last Year


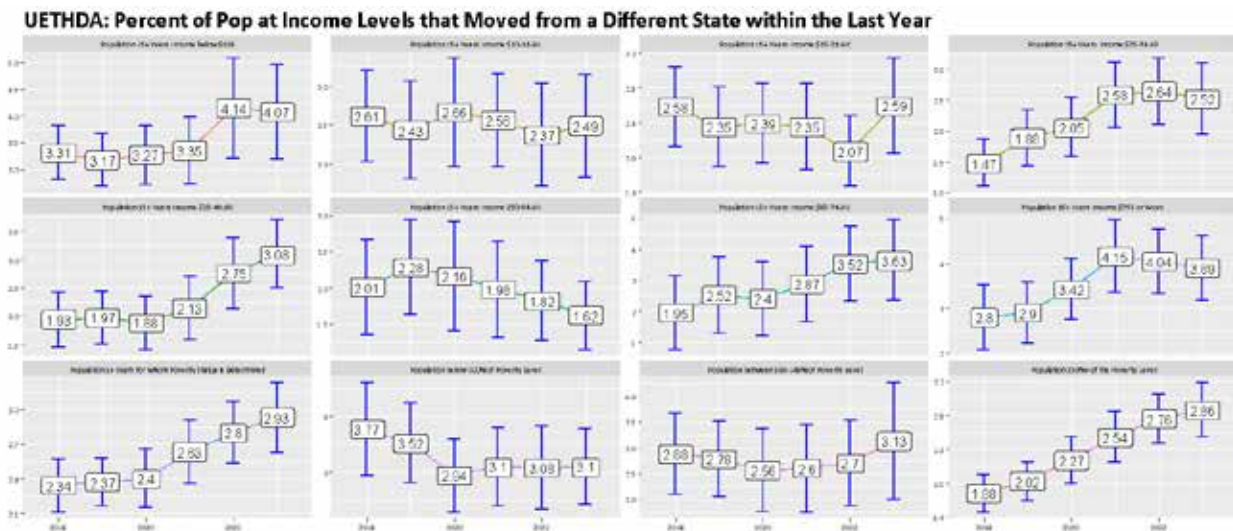
The rate of those 18 to 24 years of age and 25 to 34 years of age that move from a different state in the previous year continues to be higher than other age brackets and will likely continue to do so as this population is more transient than others. Those in the older and youngest age groups have been steadily increasing since the pandemic.

UETHDA: Percent of Populations that Moved from a Different State within the Last Year


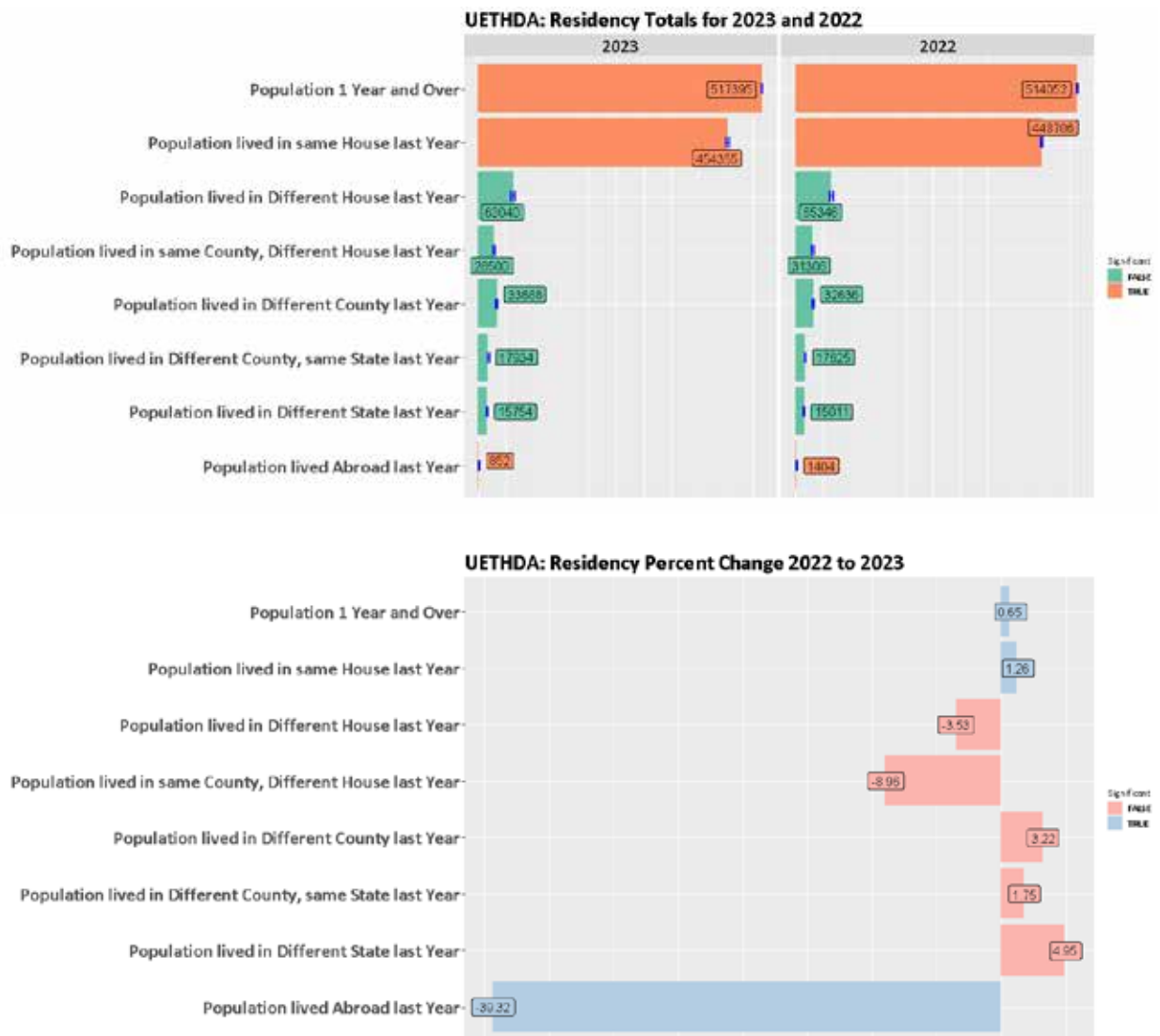
The median income of those who move from a different state to the UETHDA service area has also increased since the pandemic and is now higher than the median income of residents who lived there before.



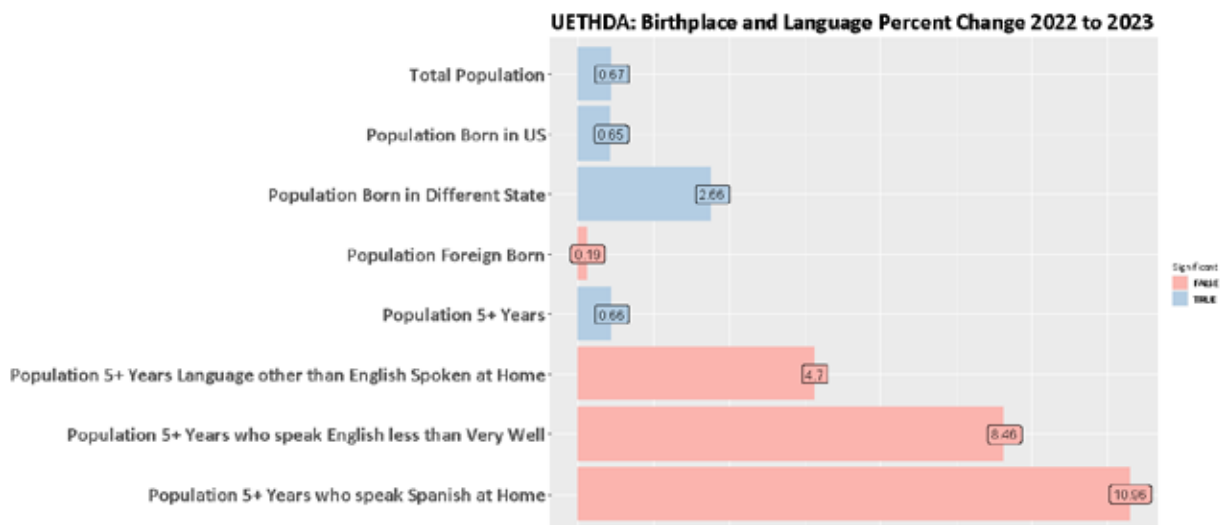
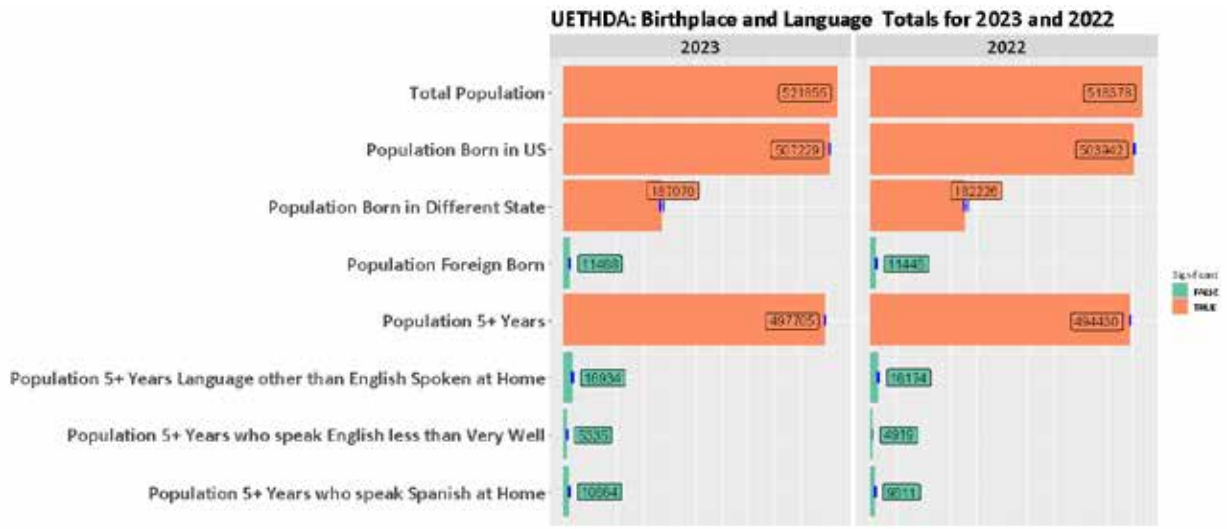
The total number of people moving from out of state to the UETHDA service area with incomes above \$75,000 has more than doubled since the pandemic, while those in poverty and less than 160% of the poverty line has stayed roughly the same. This may be tied to their ability to work remotely and the former low cost of living and real-estate prices during this time.



The population that lived in the same house as the previous year significantly increased from 2022 to 2023 by about 1.26%, while the population that lived abroad in the previous year significantly decreased. The increase in those that lived in different counties, or a different state was not significant, but comprises about 8.16% of residents. This points to those that move into the UETHDA service area staying in the same residence and the population continuing to expand from other areas of the country.



The total population born in a different state than Tennessee significantly increased from 2022 to 2023. The total population that speaks a language other than English at home increased insignificantly.

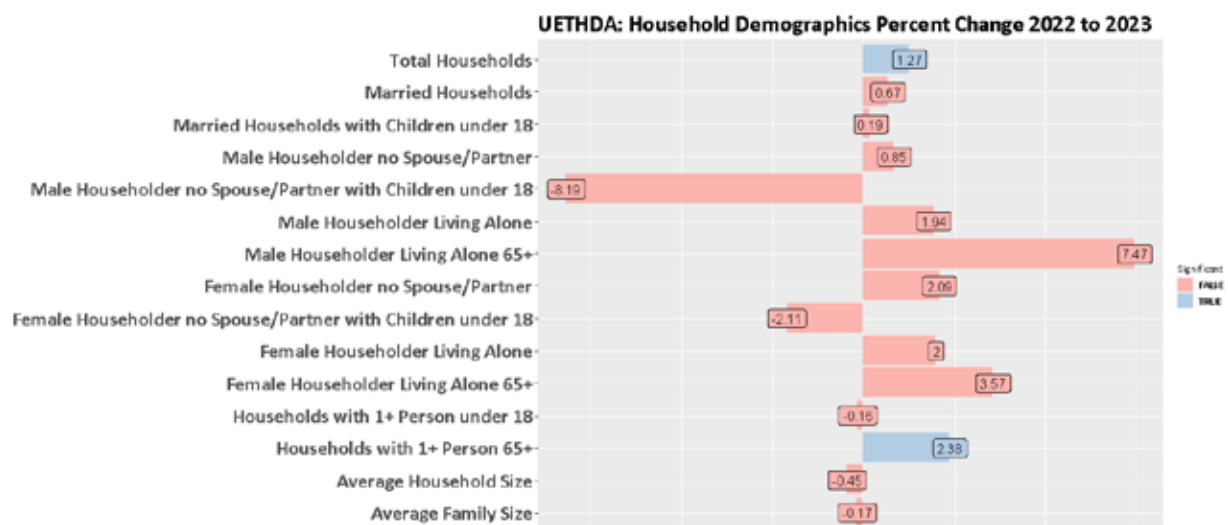
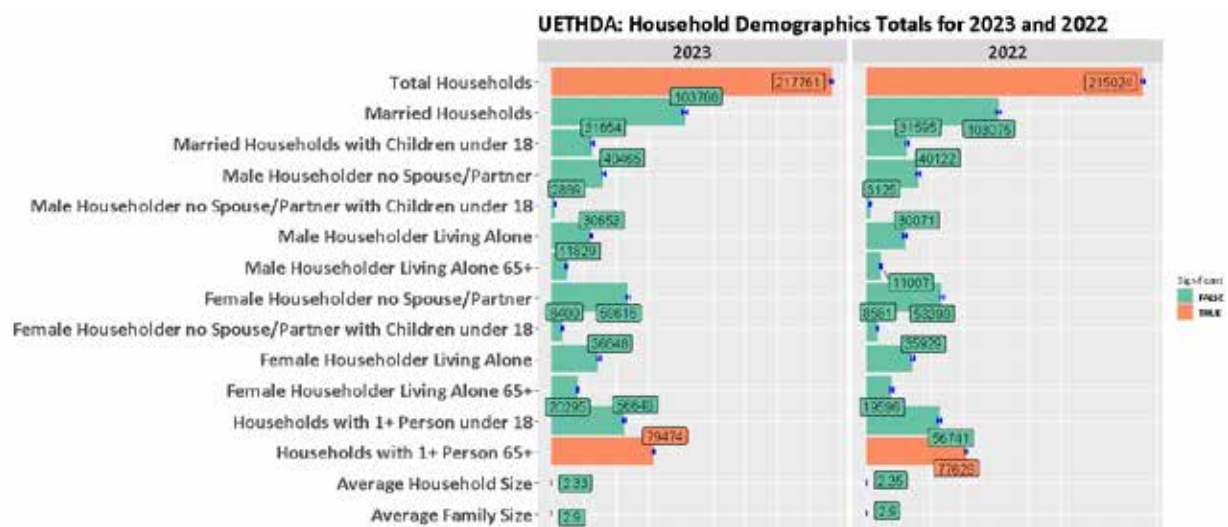


UETHDA: Birthplace and Language

Measure	2023 Total	2023 Percent	2022 Total	2022 Percent
Population 5+ Years	497705	NA	494430	NA
Population 5+ Years Language other than English Spoken at Home	16934	97.20	16174	97.22
Population 5+ Years who speak English less than Very Well	5335	2.20	4919	2.21
Population 5+ Years who speak Spanish at Home	10664	100.00	9611	100.00
Population Born in Different State	187070	100.00	182226	100.00
Population Born in US	507229	3.40	503942	3.27
Population Foreign Born	11468	1.07	11446	0.99

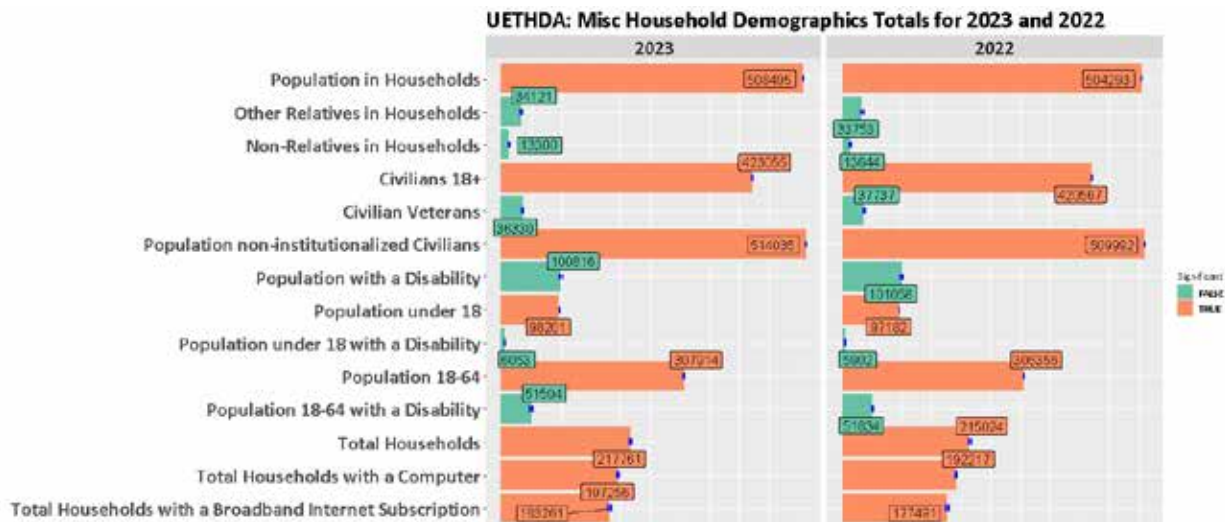
Household Characteristics

The total number of households in the UETHDA service area significantly increased by roughly 2,700 (1.27%) from 2022 to 2023 according to the ACS. This increase was fairly evenly split across all household types. The total number of households with at least one person aged 65 years and over also significantly increased by 2.38%, pointing to the continued aging in the UETHDA service area.



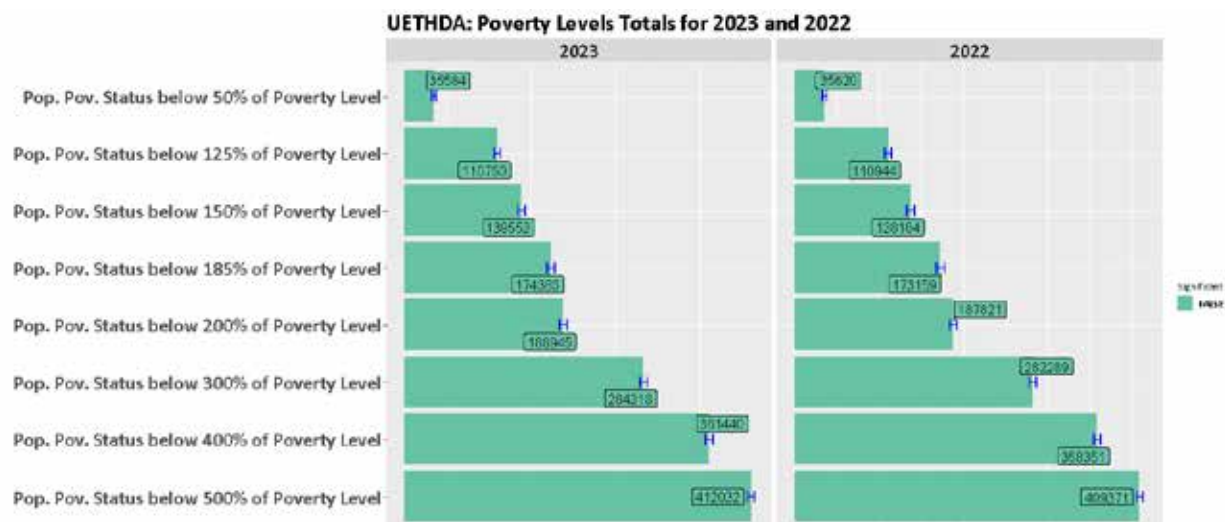
Other measures of household demographics also significantly increased from 2022 to 2023

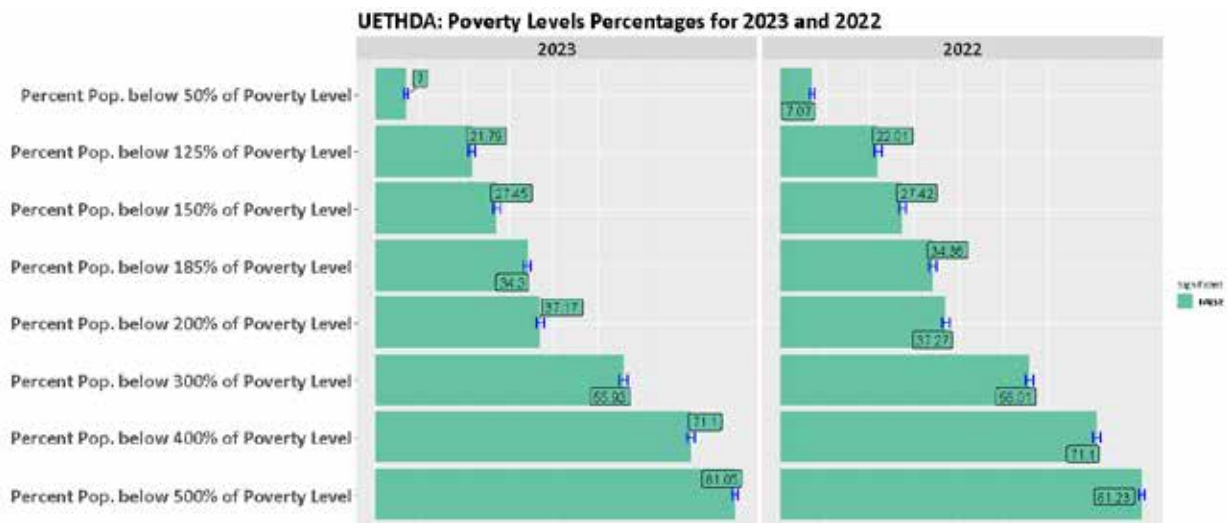
total households with a computer and total households with a broadband internet connection.



Poverty

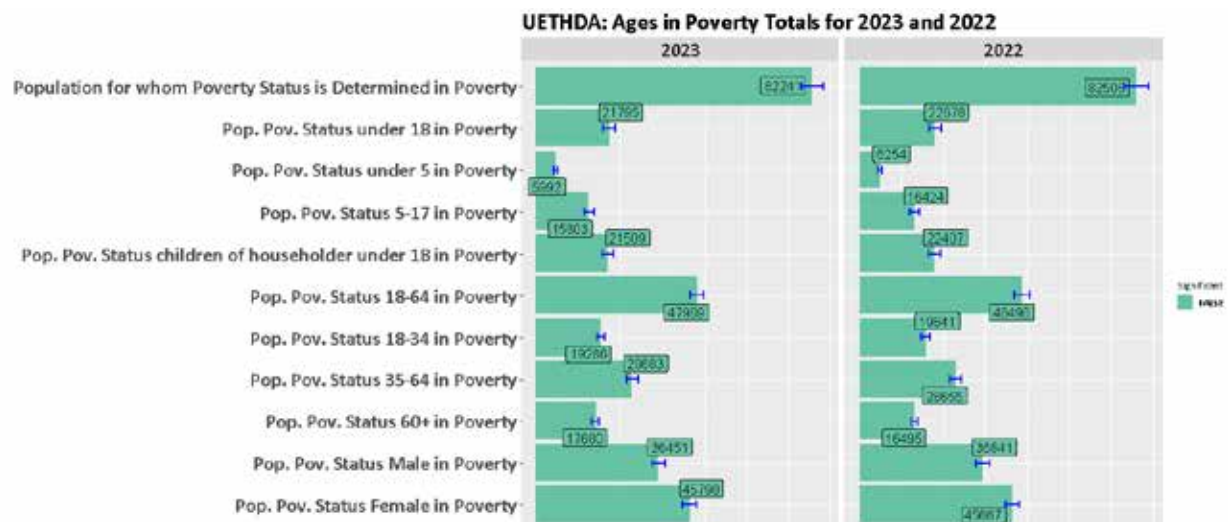
According to the ACS, there were no statistically significant changes from 2022 to 2023 in the total population at differently levels around the poverty line in either the total population at these levels or the percentage of people at these levels.

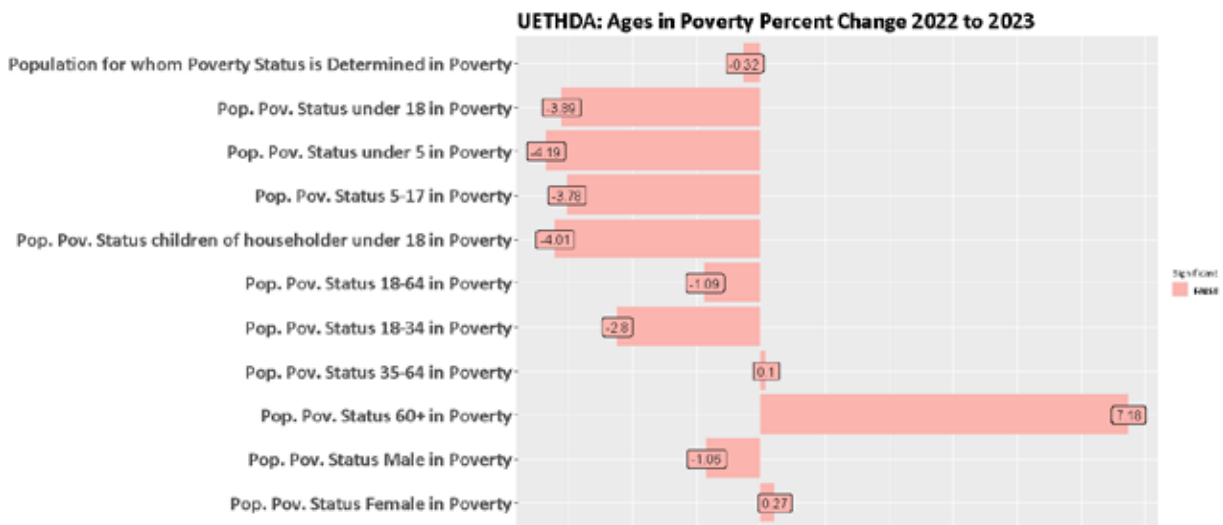
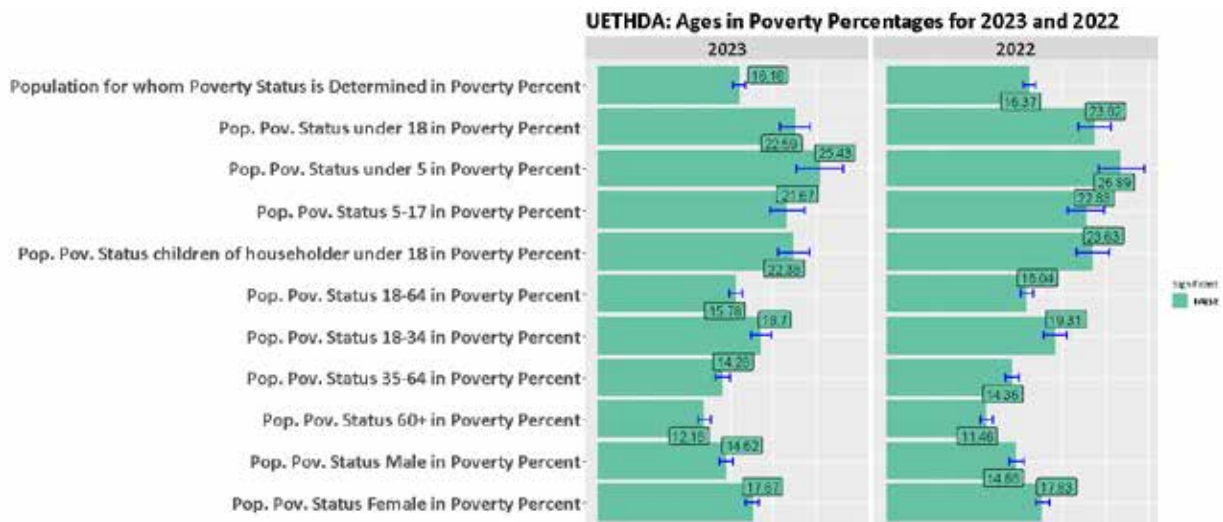




Poverty: Age Groups

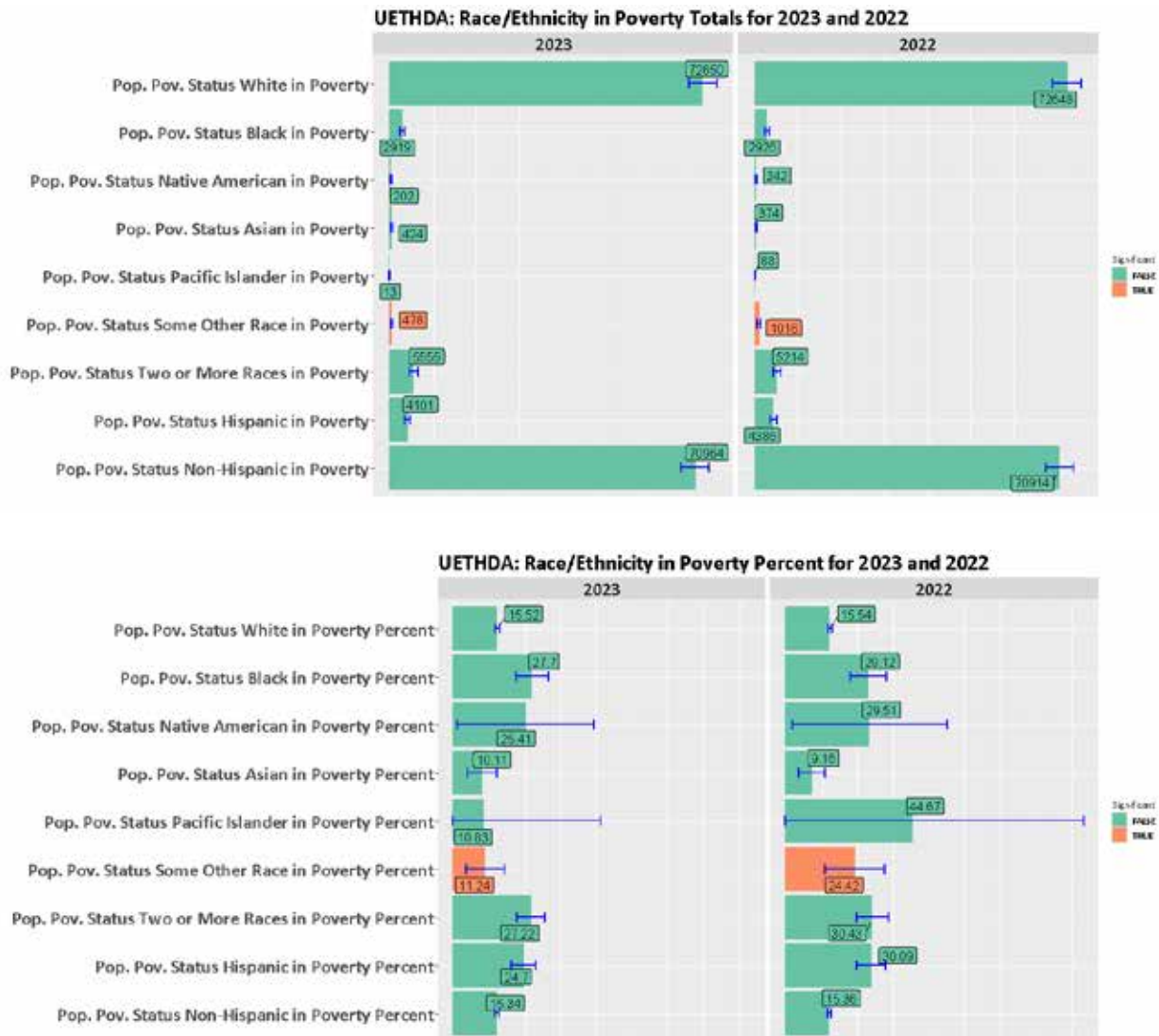
Similar to the population at different levels of poverty, there were no statistically significant changes in the total population in different age groups in poverty from 2022 to 2023. The under five years population remains the highest percentage of any age group in poverty at 25.43%. Though there were no statistically significant changes, all age groups saw a reduction in percentage in poverty with the exception of those aged 65 and over which increased by 7.18%.



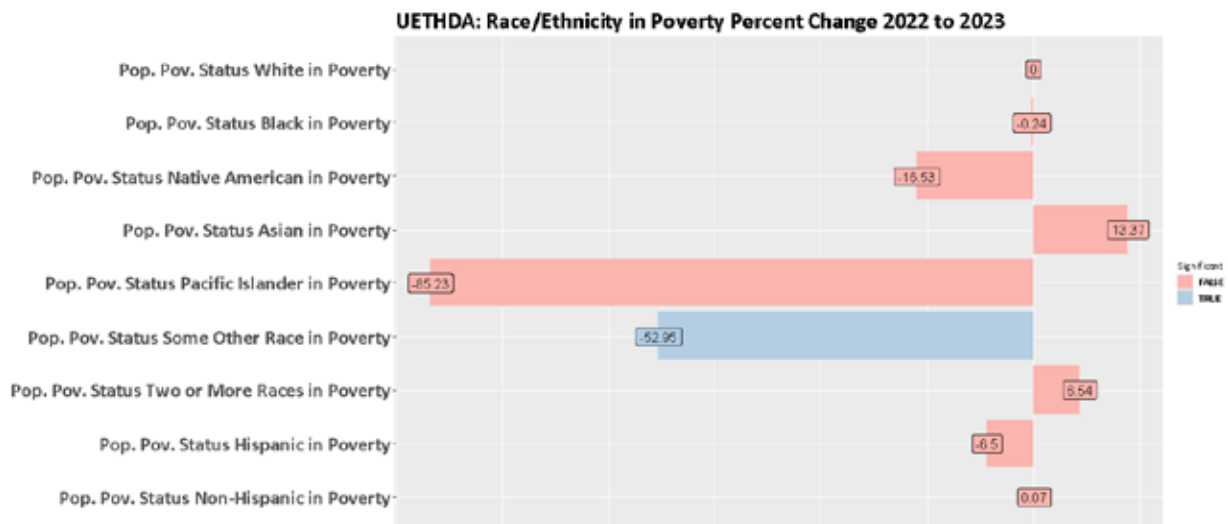


Poverty: Race/Ethnicity

Like other population poverty measures, there were few statistically significant changes in both the total population and percentage of population in poverty when disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Both the total and percentage of those identified as “some other Race” significantly decreased, though this is a small population in the UETHDA service area.

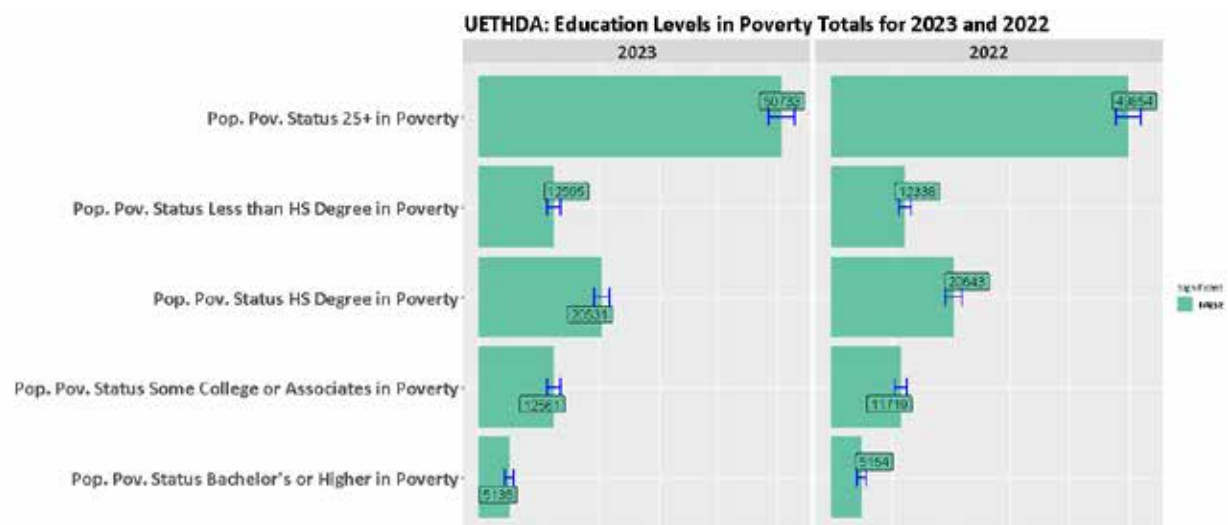


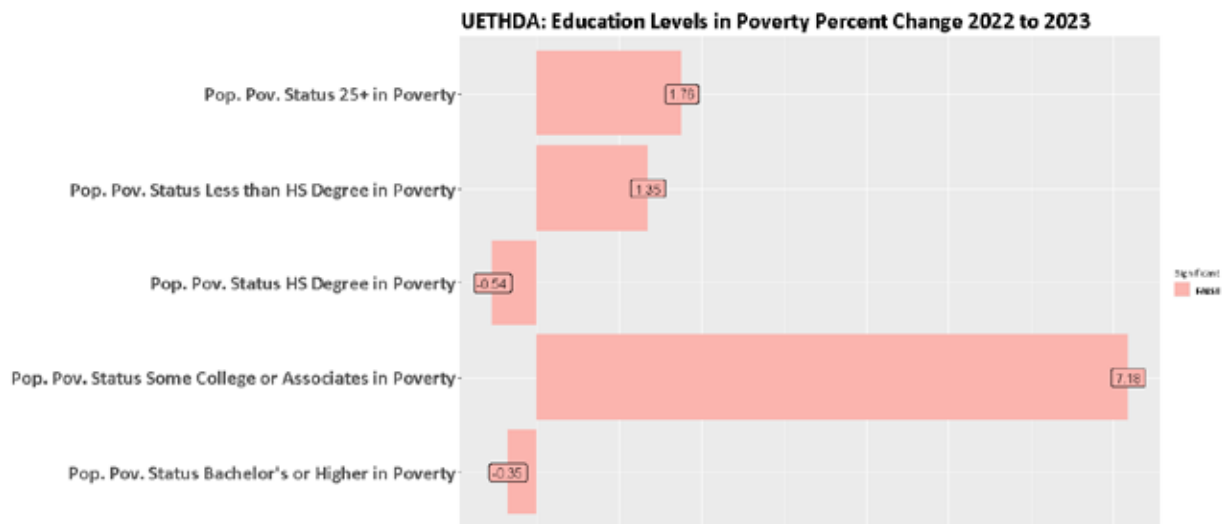
The total population identified as “some other Race” had a significant 52.95% decrease in poverty from 2022 to 2023. The population of Pacific Islanders also saw a large percent decrease during this time but was not significant due to the extremely low number of those individuals in the UETHDA service area. Asian Americans had a slight non-significant increase in poverty by roughly 13% while Hispanics had a slight non-significant decrease in poverty by -6.5%.



Poverty: Educational Attainment

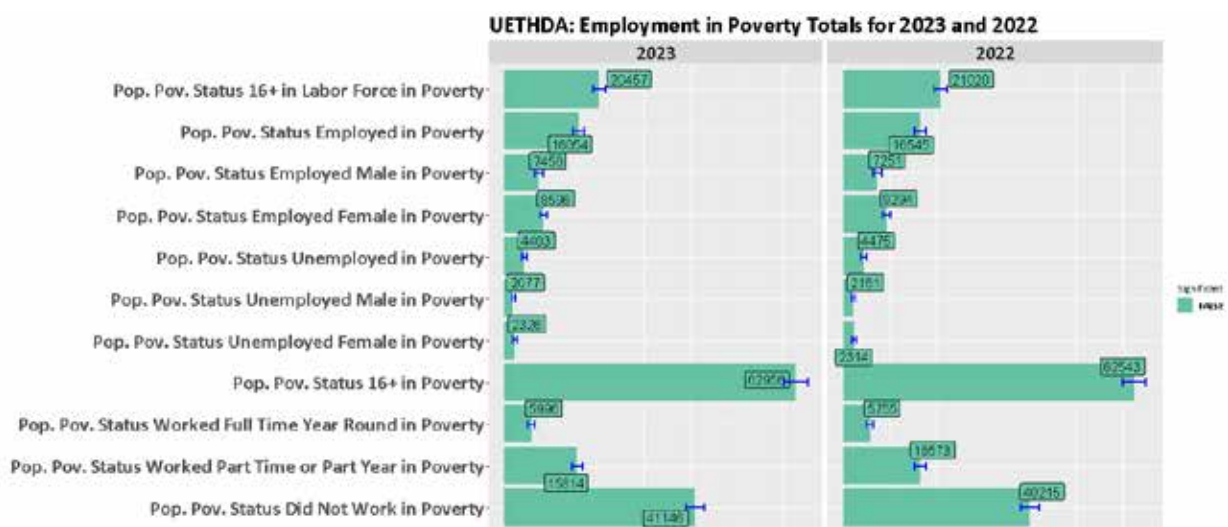
Educational attainment continues to be connected to poverty, with those only attaining a High School degree or equivalent comprising the dominant category in poverty in the UETHDA service area and those with a Bachelor's degree or higher the lowest poverty levels. There were no statistically significant changes from 2022 to 2023 in any education level in poverty. The population of residents who have some college education or an Associates degree insignificantly increased by 7.18% while the other categories remained relatively level.

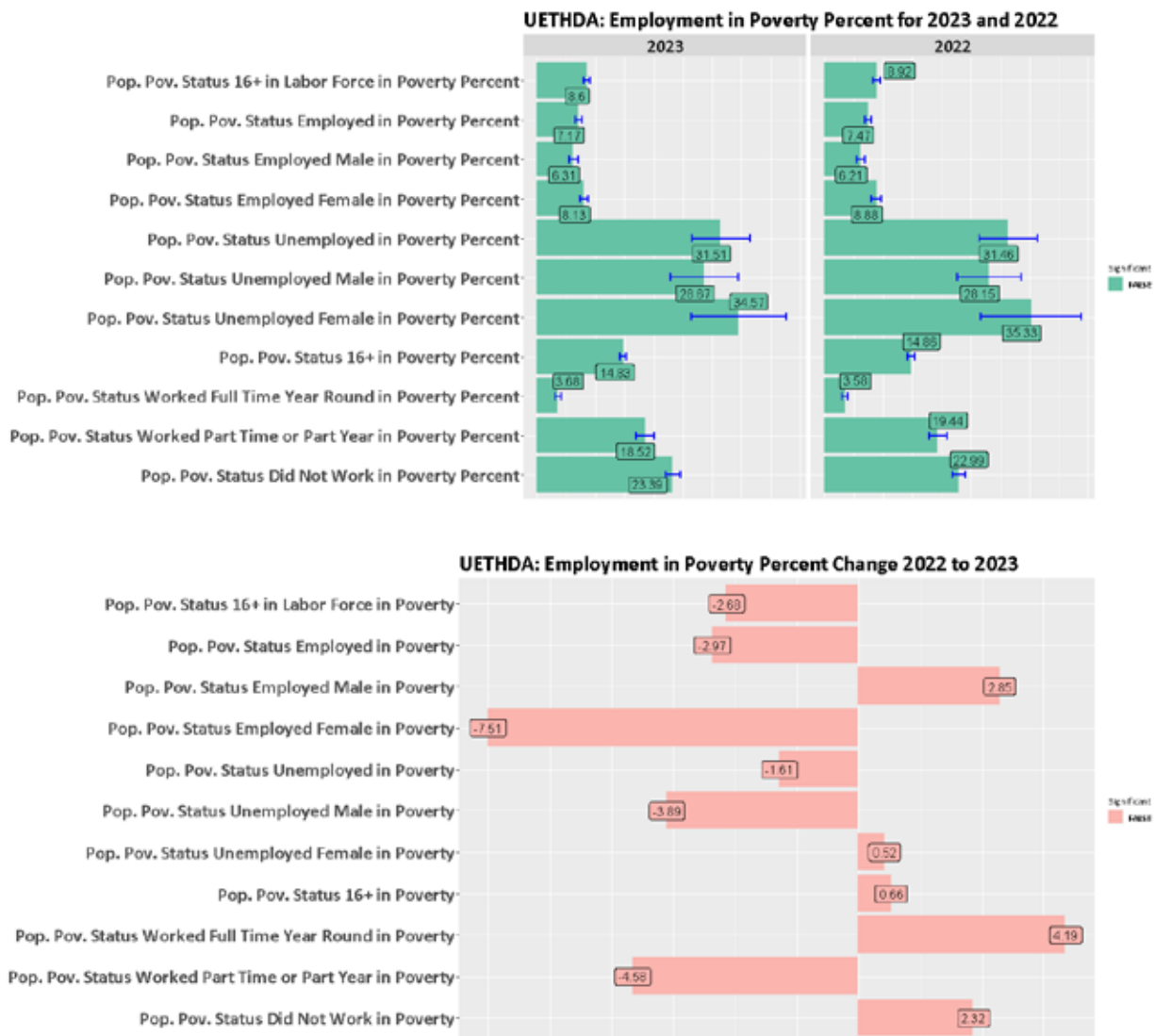




Poverty: Employment

Approximately 16,000 people in poverty are employed in the UETHDA service area, which is a slight decrease from the previous year. The total number of employed women in poverty is higher than the total number of employed men and the total number of unemployed people in poverty is roughly 4,400. The total number of people employed full-time year-round in poverty slightly increased from 2022 to 2023 at roughly 6,000 residents of the region. The total number of full-time employed and female employed in poverty decreased the largest year to year, though there were no statistically significant changes.

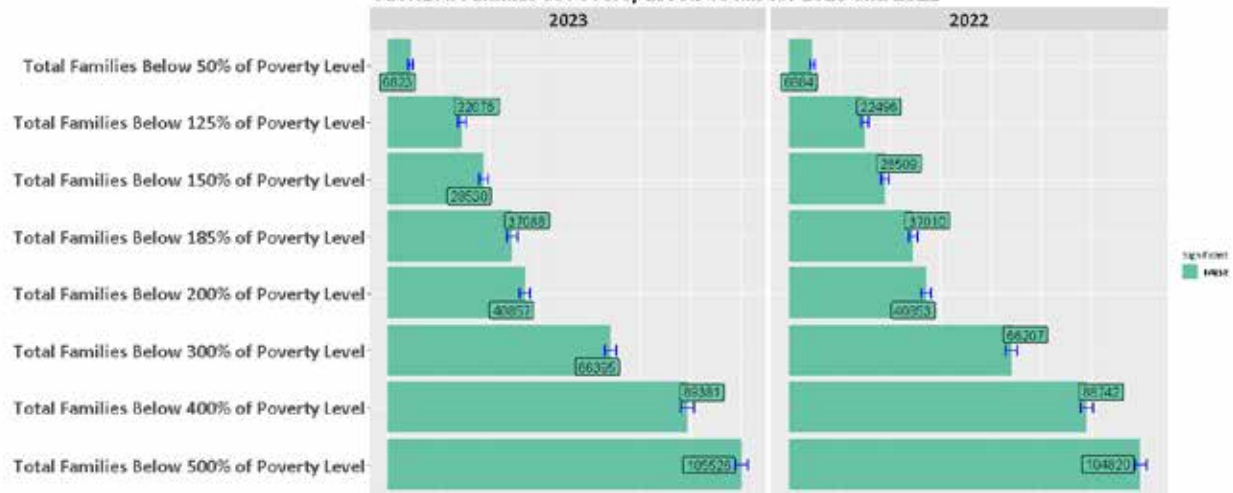




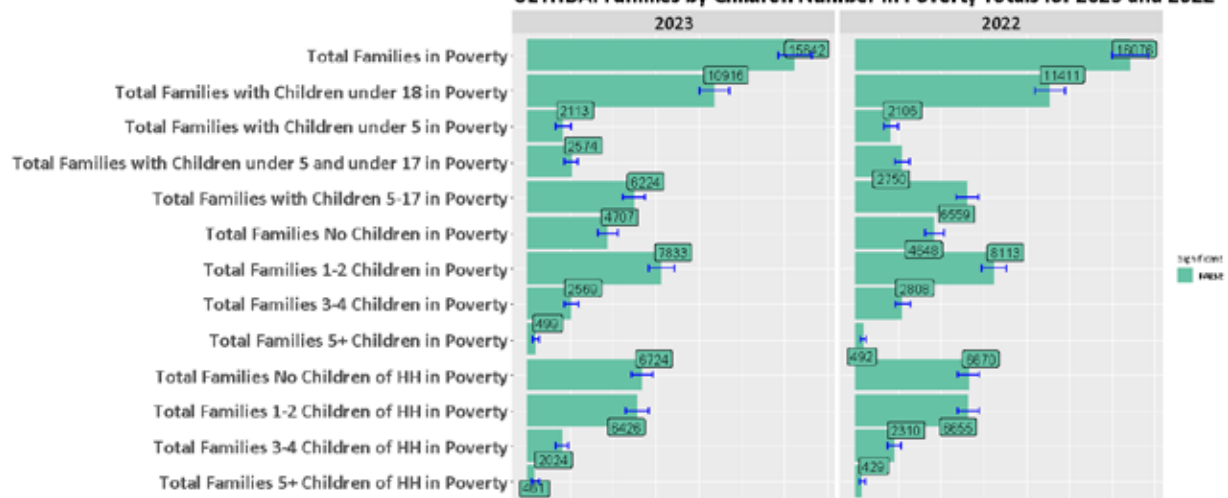
Poverty: Families

Families in poverty and at different poverty levels follow the distribution of household poverty discussed previously. These distributions continue to be similar when disaggregated by family size, race and ethnicity, and presence of children in the household, though families with children tend to have slightly lower poverty rates than households with children.

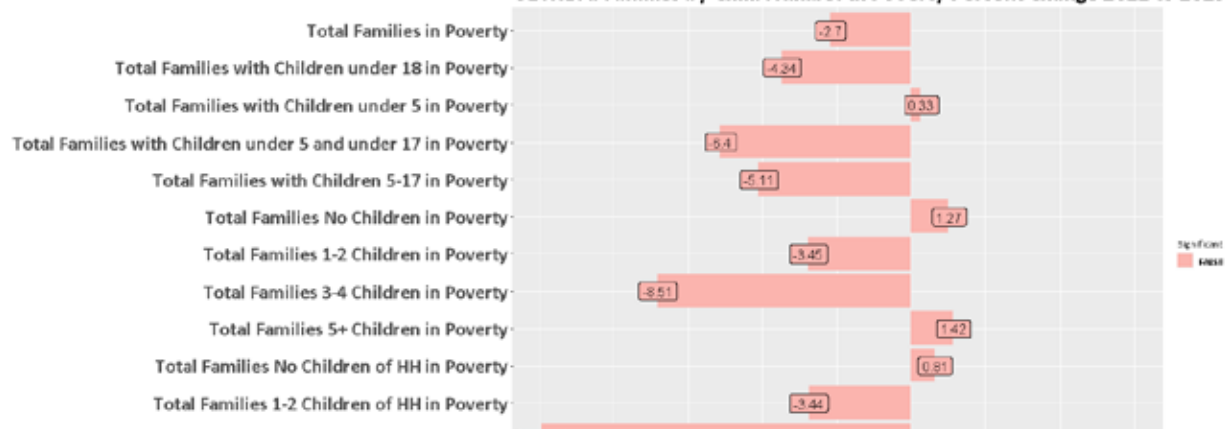
UETHDA: Families at Poverty Levels Totals for 2023 and 2022



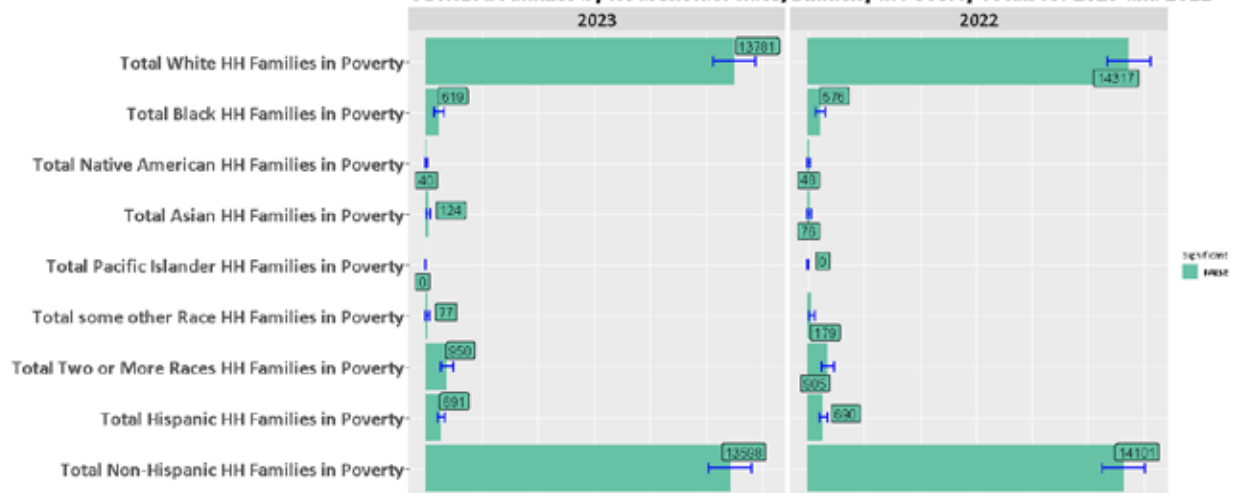
UETHDA: Families by Children Number in Poverty Totals for 2023 and 2022



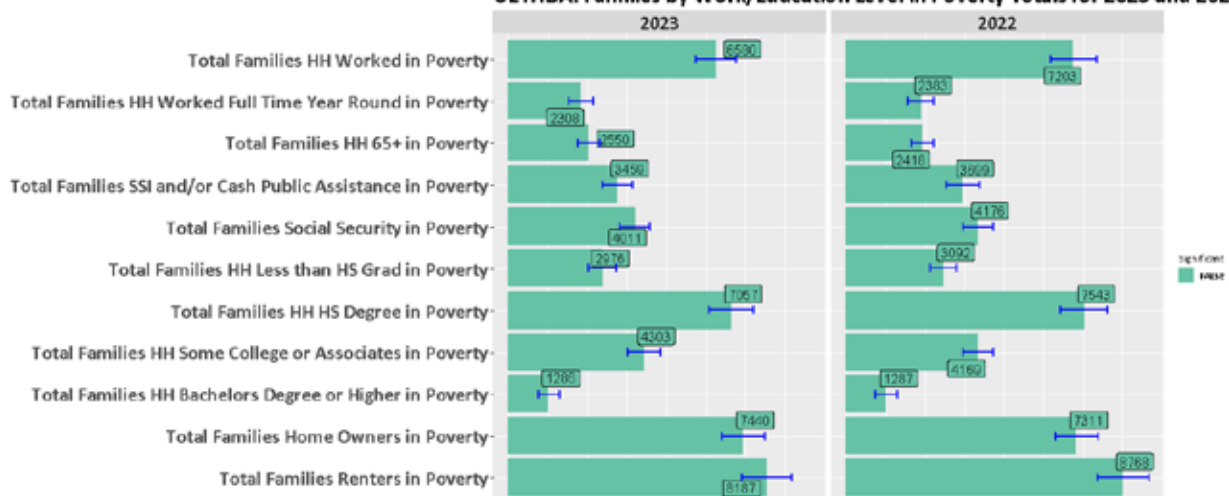
UETHDA: Families by Child Number in Poverty Percent Change 2022 to 2023



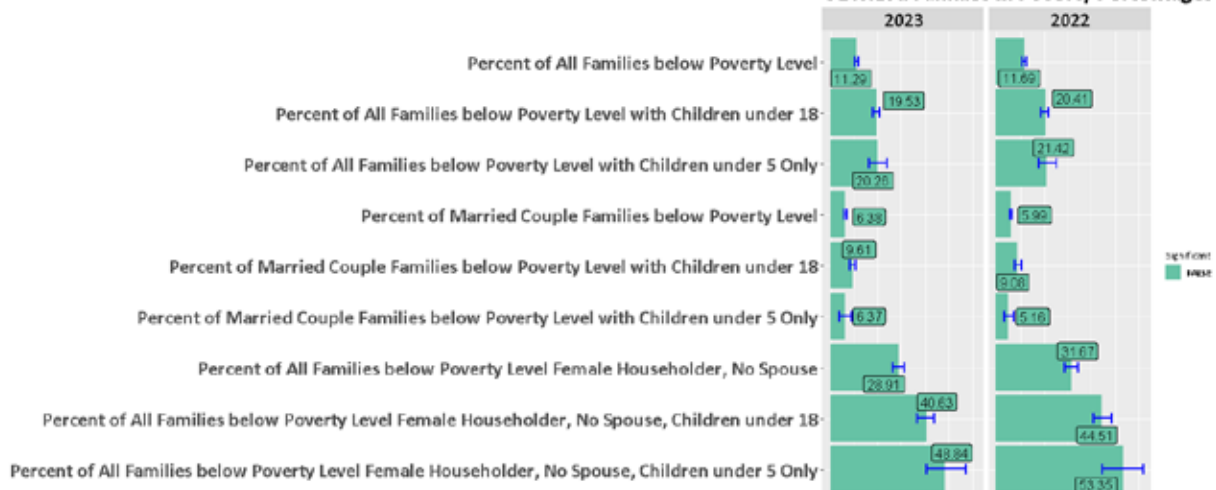
UETHDA: Families by Householder Race/Ethnicity in Poverty Totals for 2023 and 2022



UETHDA: Families by Work/Education Level in Poverty Totals for 2023 and 2022



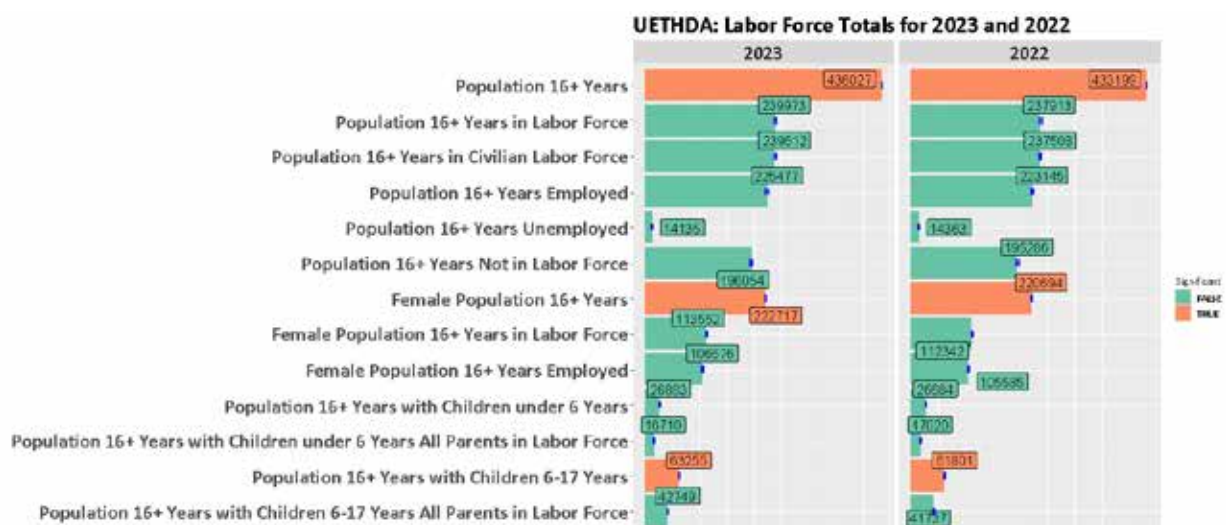
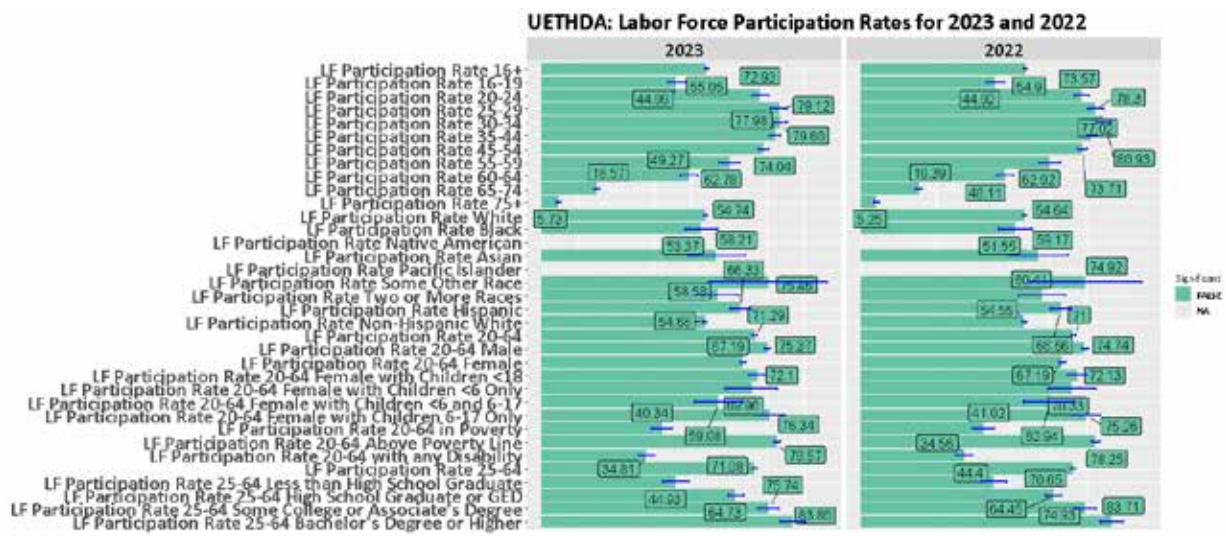
UETHDA: Families in Poverty Percentages

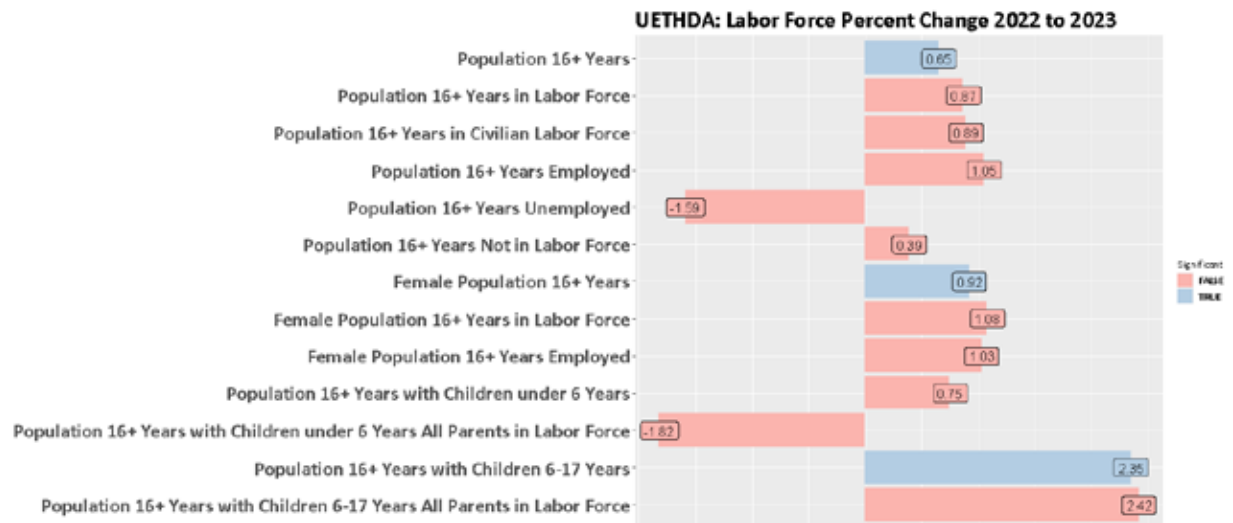


Employment and Labor Market

Labor Force

Approximately 55% of the UETHDA region's population 16 years and older is in the labor force with no significant changes from 2022 to 2023. The labor force participation rates were highest in those aged 25-64 with a bachelor's degree 83.86% and lowest (for those aged less than 65 years old) in those aged 25-64 with a disability at 34.81%. There were no major differences in race or ethnicity in labor force participation rates though Asians were slightly higher than others. Those in poverty had lower labor force participation rates than those not in poverty.





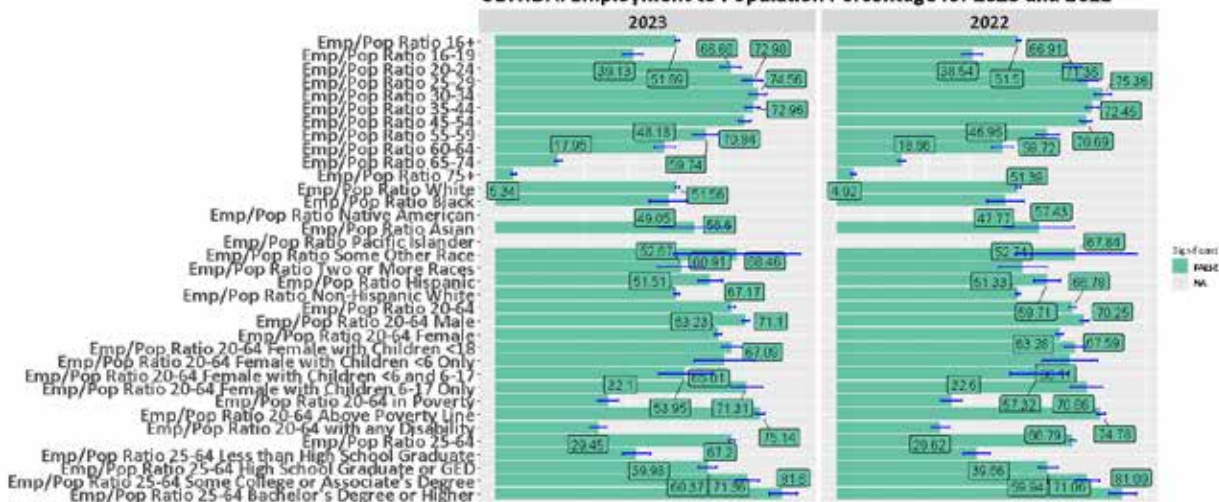
UETHDA: Labor Force Participation Rates

Variable	2022 Estimate	2022 Estimate
LF Participation Rate 25-64 Bachelor's Degree or higher	83.06	83.71
LF Participation Rate 20-64	79.08	80.93
LF Participation Rate 25-29	79.12	79.33
LF Participation Rate 20-64 Above Poverty Line	78.87	78.25
LF Participation Rate 35-44	77.06	77.87
LF Participation Rate 20-64 Female with Children 6-17 Only	76.34	75.28
LF Participation Rate 25-64 Some College or Associate's Degree	75.74	74.93
LF Participation Rate Some Other Race	75.38	74.82
LF Participation Rate 20-64 Male	75.37	74.74
LF Participation Rate 35-54	74.04	73.71
LF Participation Rate 20-34	73.53	73.57
LF Participation Rate 20-64 Female with Children <18	72.40	72.18
LF Participation Rate 20-64	71.29	71.00
LF Participation Rate 25-54	71.06	70.65
LF Participation Rate 20-64 Female with Children <6 Only	69.06	70.33
LF Participation Rate 20-64 Female	67.19	67.19
LF Participation Rate Hispanic	66.30	66.65
LF Participation Rate 25-64 High School Graduate or GED	64.73	64.45
LF Participation Rate 15-55	63.76	62.52
LF Participation Rate 20-64 Female with Children <6 and 6-17	59.06	62.94
LF Participation Rate Two or More Races	58.58	58.43
LF Participation Rate Asian	58.21	59.17
LF Participation Rate 55+	55.05	54.93
LF Participation Rate White	54.74	54.84
LF Participation Rate Non-Hispanic White	54.58	54.55
LF Participation Rate Black	53.87	52.59
LF Participation Rate 60-64	49.77	48.13
LF Participation Rate 25-49	44.98	44.82
LF Participation Rate 25-64 Less than High School Graduate	44.50	44.43
LF Participation Rate 20-64 in Couple	40.84	41.82
LF Participation Rate 20-64 with any Disability	34.81	32.58
LF Participation Rate 65-74	35.57	29.89
LF Participation Rate 75+	5.73	5.25
LF Participation Rate Native American	N/A	N/A
LF Participation Rate Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A

Employed to Population Ratio

Similar to labor force participation rates, the employed to population ratio was highest in those aged 20-64 with a bachelor's degree at 81.6% and lowest in that same age group if they have a disability at 29.54%.

UETHDA: Employment to Population Percentage for 2023 and 2022



UETHDA: Unemployment Rate for 2023 and 2022



Unemployment Rate

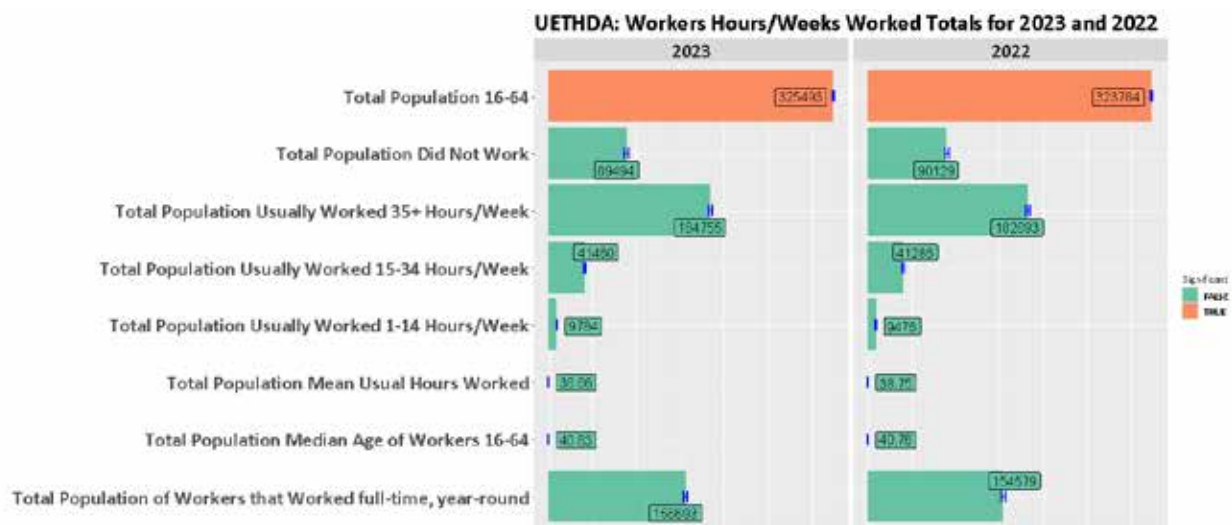
The unemployment rate was highest for those aged 20-64 in poverty at 21.23% compared to those aged 20-64 above the poverty line at 4.22%. The next highest unemployment rate was in those aged 20-64 with a disability at 15.24%. The lowest unemployment rate was again in those aged 20-64 with a bachelor's degree at 2.48%. There were no significant changes from 2022-2023 in any groups in unemployment rates.

UETHDA: Unemployment Rate

Variable	2023 Estimate	2022 Estimate
Unemployment Rate 25-64 in Poverty	21.33	21.33
Unemployment Rate 25-64 with any Disability	25.24	14.03
Unemployment Rate 15-19	32.85	14.11
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Less than High School Graduate	29.89	10.48
Unemployment Rate Two or More Races	9.82	12.68
Unemployment Rate Some Other Race	9.00	10.29
Unemployment Rate 25-64	8.45	8.97
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Female with Children 18 and 6-17	8.00	6.03
Unemployment Rate Black	8.60	7.03
Unemployment Rate 25-29	7.11	8.27
Unemployment Rate Hispanic	7.08	9.23
Unemployment Rate 25-64 High School Graduate or GED	6.72	7.04
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Female with Children >18	6.88	5.89
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Female with Children 6-17 Only	6.44	5.44
Unemployment Rate 30-34	6.42	8.89
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Female with Children 18 Only	6.31	5.73
Unemployment Rate 35-44	6.33	3.63
Unemployment Rate 75+	6.18	N/A
Unemployment Rate 18+	5.94	6.11
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Female	5.88	5.73
Unemployment Rate White	5.74	5.80
Unemployment Rate Non-Hispanic White	5.72	5.83
Unemployment Rate 25-64	5.66	5.79
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Some College or Associate's Degree	5.48	5.02
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Male	5.40	5.79
Unemployment Rate 25-64	5.33	5.44
Unemployment Rate 55-59	4.70	4.89
Unemployment Rate 45-54	4.28	4.07
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Above Poverty Line	4.11	4.27
Unemployment Rate 65-74	3.90	3.08
Unemployment Rate 25-64 Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3.48	3.79
Unemployment Rate 60-64	2.18	2.32
Unemployment Rate Asian	N/A	N/A
Unemployment Rate Native American	N/A	N/A
Unemployment Rate Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A

Hours Worked

From 2022 to 2023, there were no significant changes in the mean hours worked in the UETHDA service area, the population that worked full-time, the median age of workers, or those that worked part-time. The total population that did not work slightly decreased and those that worked full-time, year-round also slightly increased. Roughly the same percentage (27%) of the population did not work.



UETHDA: Workers Hours/Weeks Worked

Variable	2023 Total	2023 Percent	2022 Total	2022 Percent
Total Population 16-64	325493.00	NA	323784.00	NA
Total Population Did Not Work	89494.00	27.49	90129.00	27.84
Total Population Usually Worked 1-14 Hours/Week	9784.00	3.01	9476.00	2.93
Total Population Usually Worked 15-34 Hours/Week	41480.00	12.74	41286.00	12.75
Total Population Usually Worked 35+ Hours/Week	184755.00	56.76	182893.00	56.49
Total Population of Workers that Worked full-time, year-round	156693.00	48.14	154579.00	47.74
Total Population Mean Usual Hours Worked	38.66	NA	38.75	NA
Total Population Median Age of Workers 16-64	40.83	NA	40.76	NA

Males averaged roughly four more hours worked per week than did females and this did not change from 2022 to 2023. Approximately 54.18% of males worked full-time year-round in 2023 compared to 41.10% of females and 31.24% of females usually did not work compared to 23.75% of males.

UETHDA: Male Workers Hours/Weeks Worked

Variable	2023 Total	2023 Percent	2022 Total	2022 Percent
Total Male Population 16-64	162829.00	NA	162828.00	NA
Total Male Population Did Not Work	38671.00	23.75	39915.00	24.51
Total Male Population Usually Worked 1-14 Hours/Week	3731.00	2.29	3815.00	2.34
Total Male Population Usually Worked 15-34 Hours/Week	16639.00	10.22	16351.00	10.04
Total Male Population Usually Worked 35+ Hours/Week	103788.00	63.74	102747.00	63.10
Total Male Population of Workers that Worked full-time, year-round	88217.00	54.18	87335.00	53.64
Total Male Population Mean Usual Hours Worked	40.71	NA	40.77	NA
Total Male Population Median Age of Workers 16-64	40.80	NA	40.80	NA

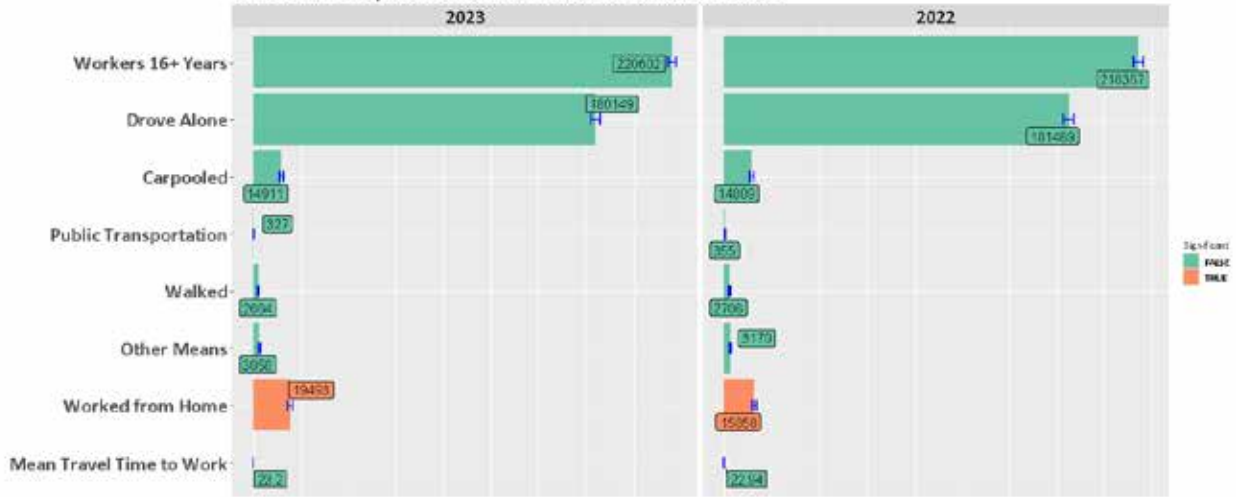
UETHDA: Female Workers Hours/Weeks Worked

Variable	2023 Total	2023 Percent	2022 Total	2022 Percent
Total Female Population 16-64	162664.00	NA	160956.00	NA
Total Female Population Did Not Work	50823.00	31.24	50214.00	31.20
Total Female Population Usually Worked 1-14 Hours/Week	6053.00	3.72	5661.00	3.52
Total Female Population Usually Worked 15-34 Hours/Week	24821.00	15.26	24935.00	15.49
Total Female Population Usually Worked 35+ Hours/Week	80967.00	49.78	80146.00	49.79
Total Female Population of Workers that Worked full-time, year-round	68476.00	42.10	67244.00	41.78
Total Female Population Mean Usual Hours Worked	36.39	NA	36.48	NA
Total Female Population Median Age of Workers 16-64	40.78	NA	40.61	NA

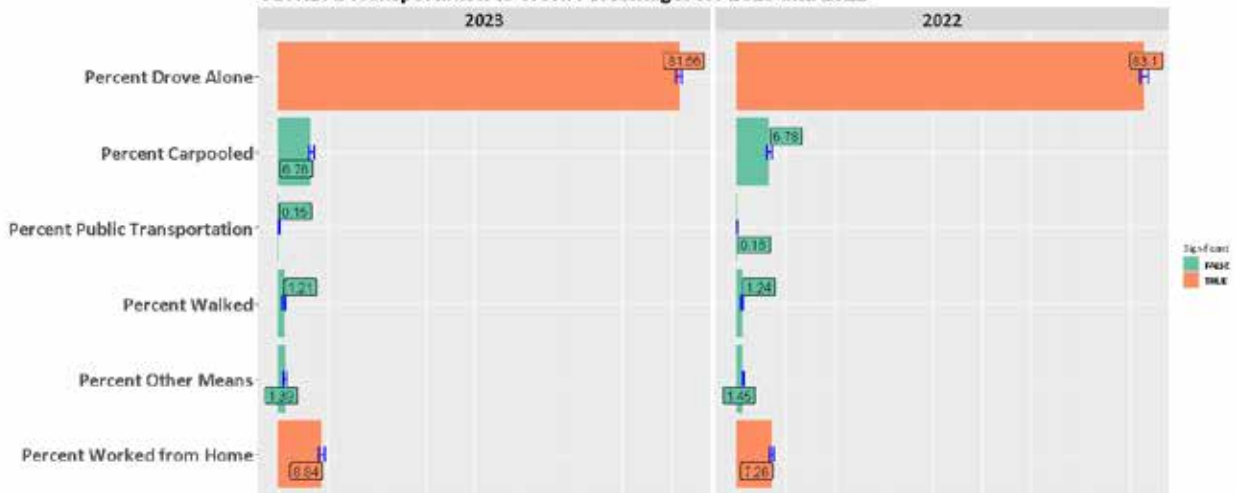
Transportation to Work

The vast majority of workers in the UETHDA service area traveled to work by driving alone and this was unchanged from 2022 to 2023 though the percentage of people who drove to work alone significantly decreased from 83.1% to 81.66% from 2022 to 2023. This was mostly due to the large increase in the percentage of people who worked from home which saw a 22.79% increase, meaning roughly 3,600 people more people in the UETHDA service area mostly work from home.

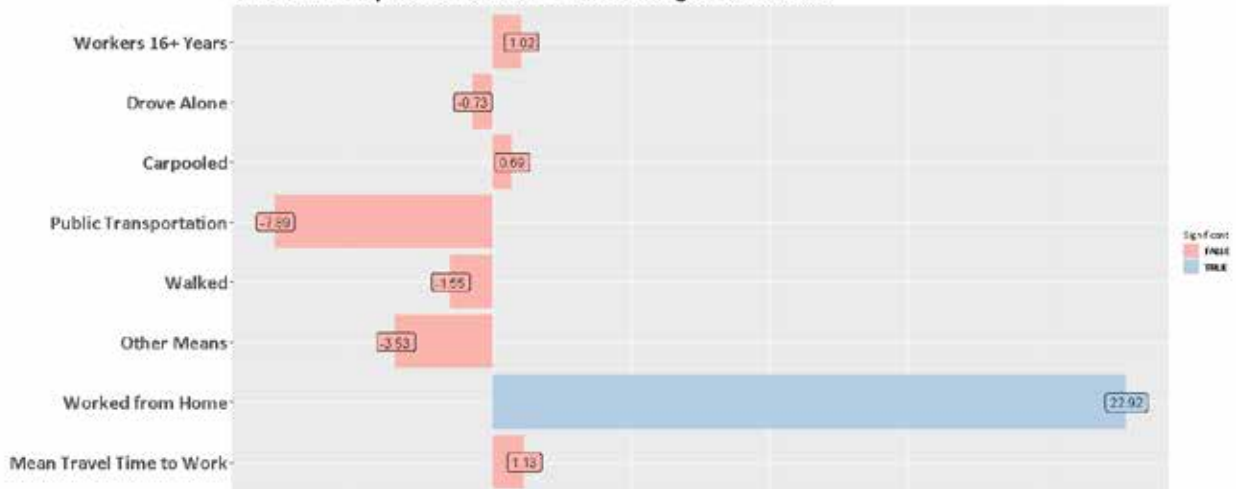
UETHDA: Transportation to Work Totals for 2023 and 2022



UETHDA: Transportation to Work Percentages for 2023 and 2022

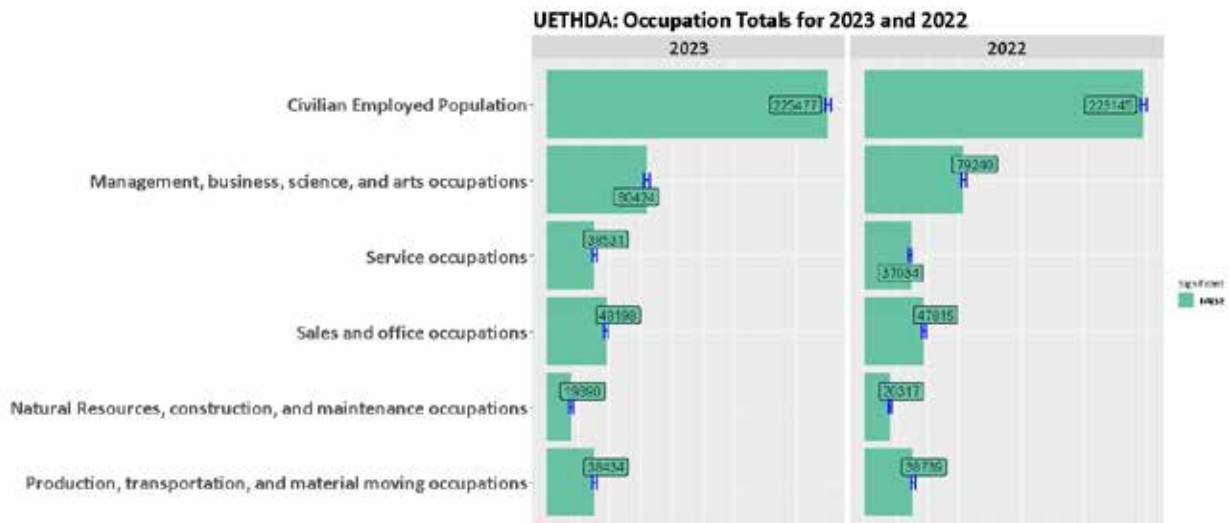


UETHDA: Transportation to Work Percent Change 2022 to 2023



Occupation, Industry, and Class of Workers

There are roughly 225,000 employed civilians in the UETHDA service area. The majority work in management, business, science, and arts occupations, with sales and office occupations being the next most common. This remained unchanged from 2022 to 2023.

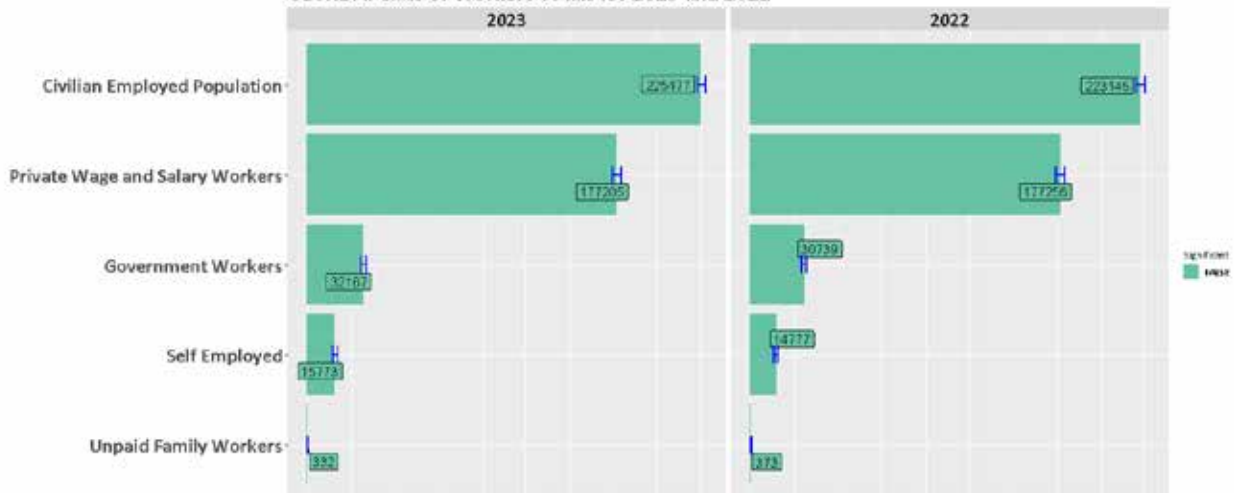


The most common industries in the region are education, healthcare, and social services. This also remained unchanged from 2022 to 2023.



The vast majority of workers are private wage and salary workers which, again, remained unchanged from 2022 to 2023.

UETHDA: Class of Workers Totals for 2023 and 2022

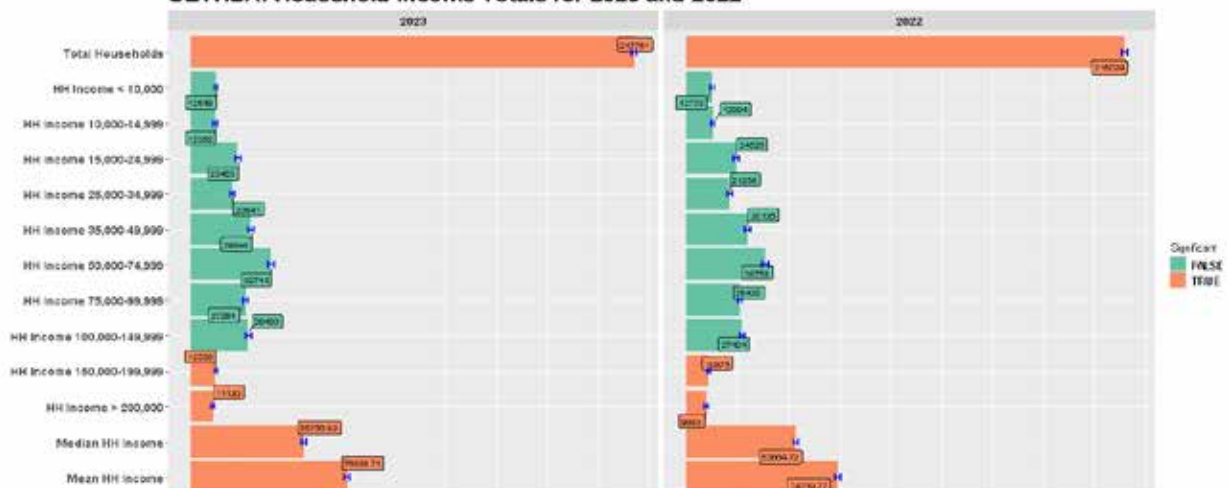


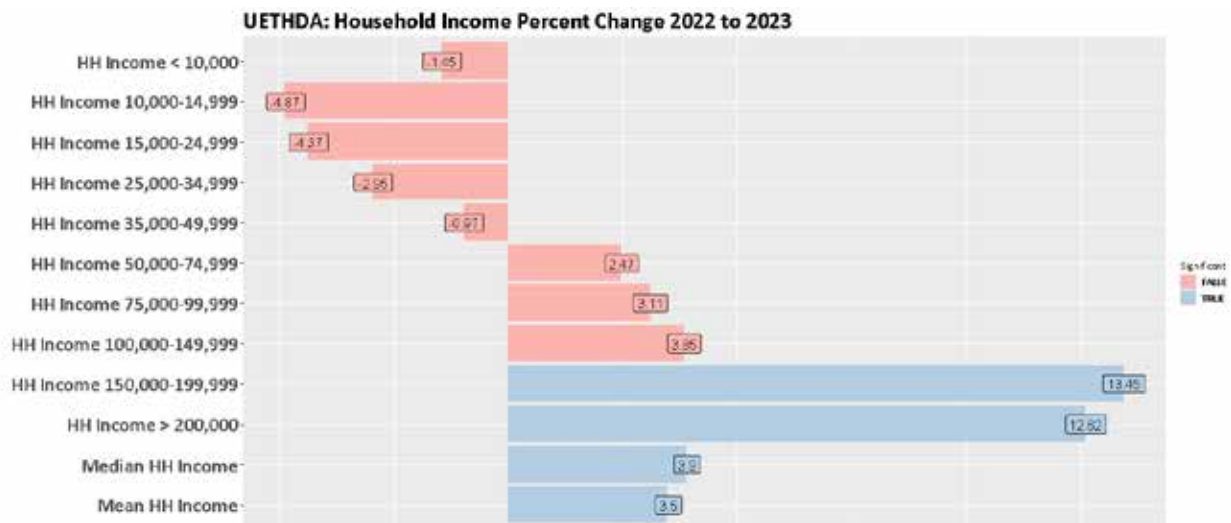
Income

Household Income

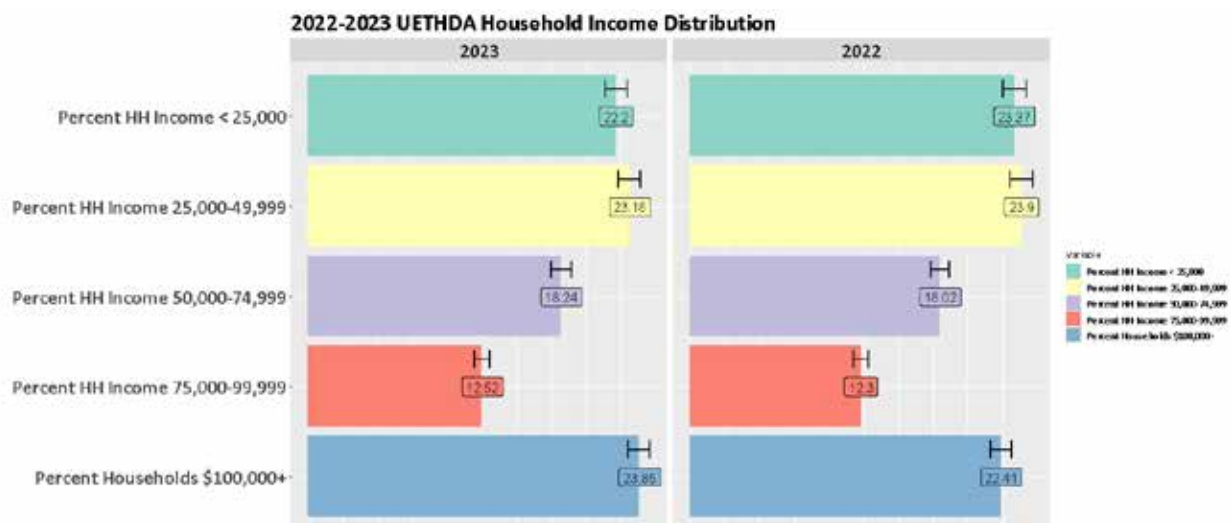
According to the ACS, both mean and median total household income significantly increased in the UETHDA service area from 2022 to 2023 with median household income increasing to \$55,756.83 and mean increasing to \$76,838.71, increases of 3.9% and 3.5% respectively. Both income brackets of \$150,000 - \$199,999 and over \$200,000 significantly increased both in the number of households contained within them and the percentage of households of the total that they comprise. The \$150,000 - \$199,999 bracket increased by 13.45% and the over \$200,000 bracket increased by 12.62%, both amounting to roughly 2,000 households each.

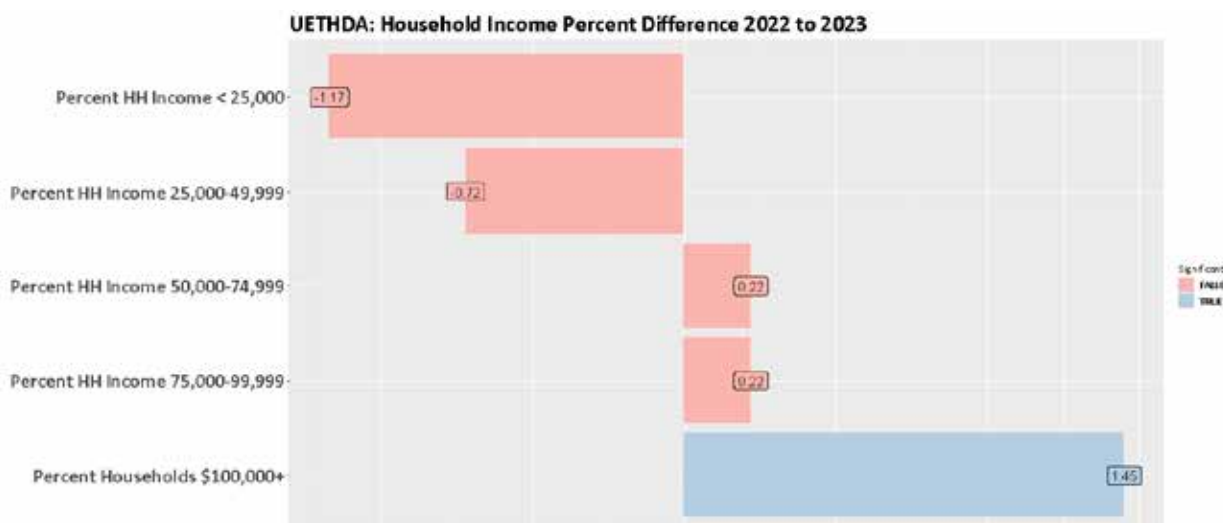
UETHDA: Household Income Totals for 2023 and 2022



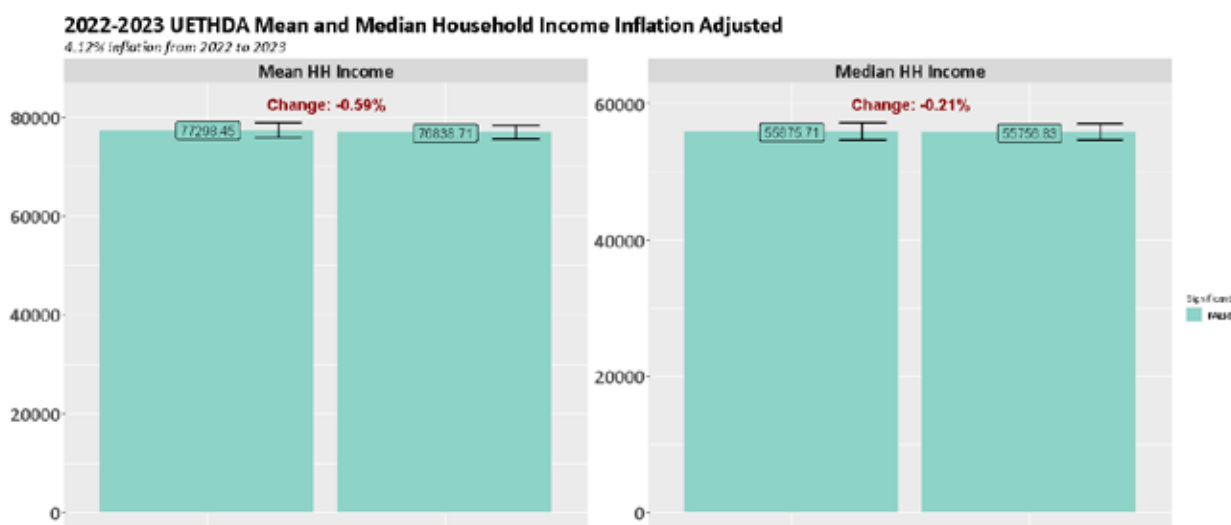


When rearranged to income brackets with \$25,000 increments, the UETHDA service has the least number of households in the \$75,000 to \$100,000 bracket than any other category. The upper income bracket of \$100,000 or more had the highest percentage of households within it for the first time in 2023 and increased significantly from 2022 by 1.45%. The two lowest income brackets comprising incomes less than \$50,000 both had decreases in the percentage of households contained within them.





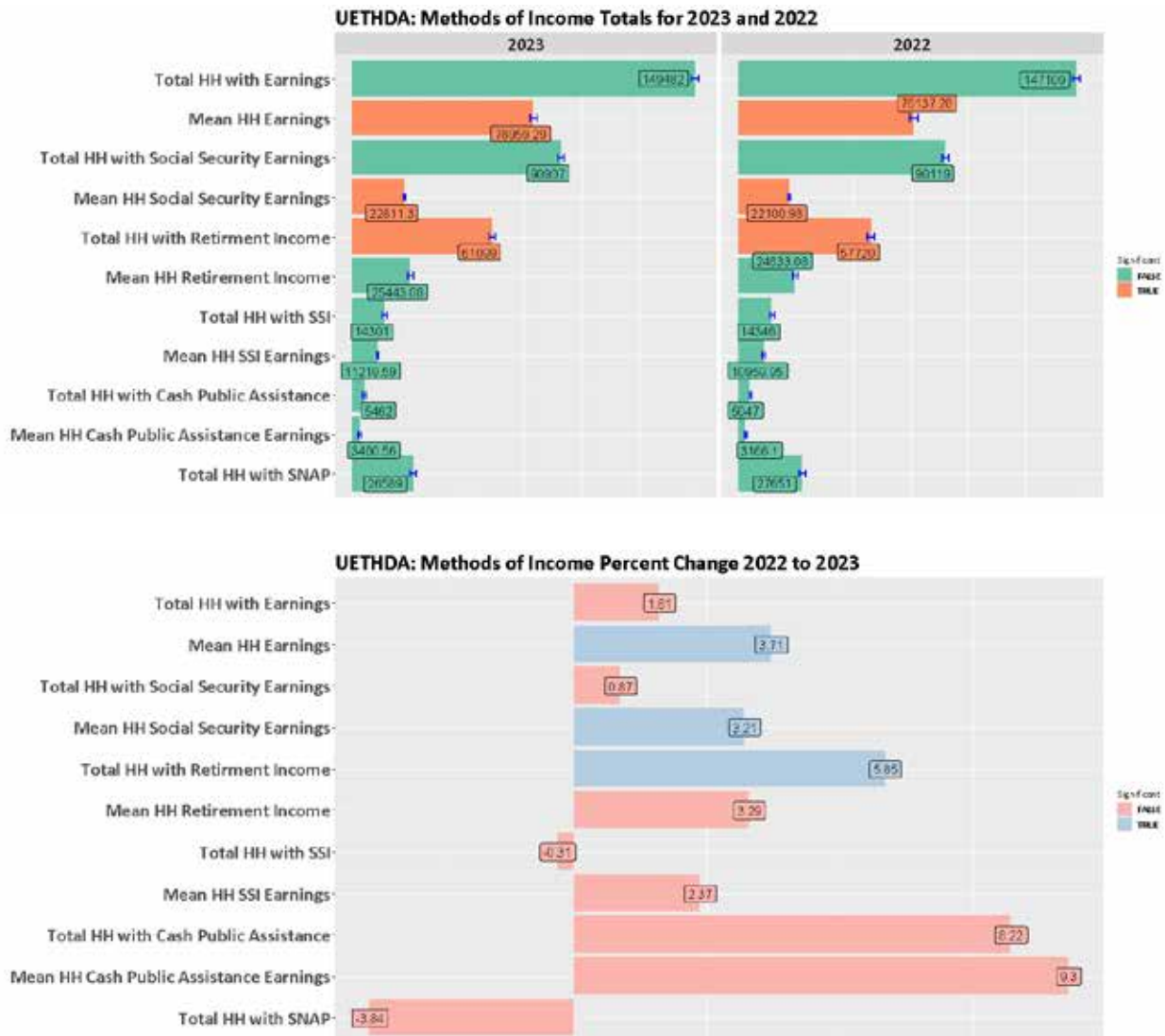
Though these increases in total household income are significant, when adjusting for inflation the picture of income becomes less rosey. After adjusting for 4.12% inflation from 2022 to 2023, both the mean and median household income actually decreased by 0.59% and 0.21% respectively from 2022 to 2023. This points to the increases in household income having little to no affect one the average household in their net spending power.



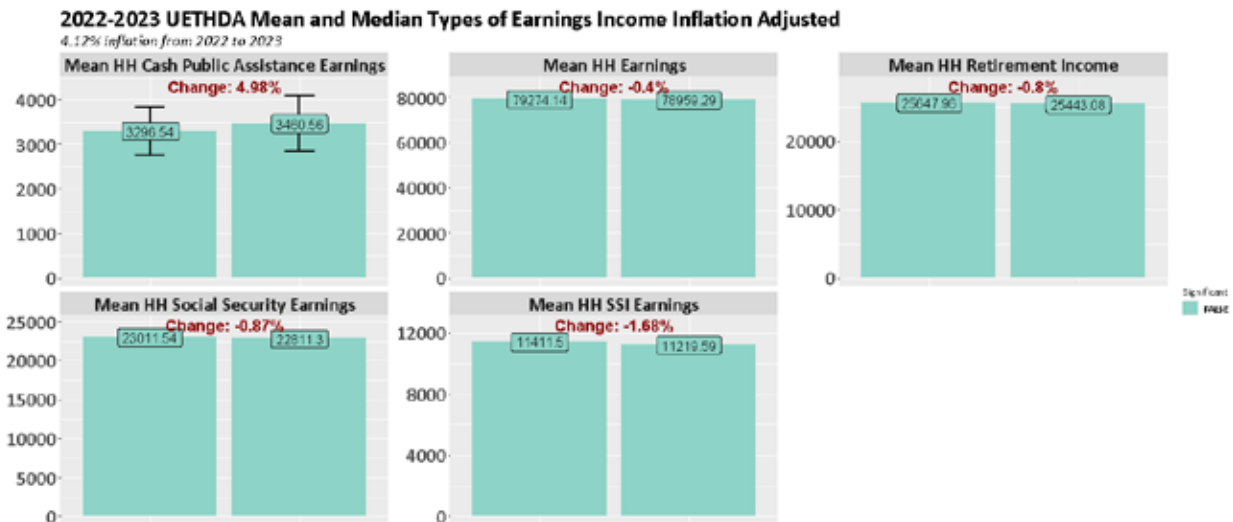
Methods of Household Income

Both the mean household earnings and mean social security earnings also significantly increased from 2022 to 2023 with mean household earning rising to \$78,959.29 (3.71% increase) and mean social security earnings rising to \$22,811.30 (3.21% increase). The total number of households with retirement income also significantly increased by 5.85% to 61,099 total households, pointing to the continued aging of the UETHDA

population. Both the total number of households receiving SNAP and SSI decreased, though not significantly, by 3.81% and 0.31% respectively.

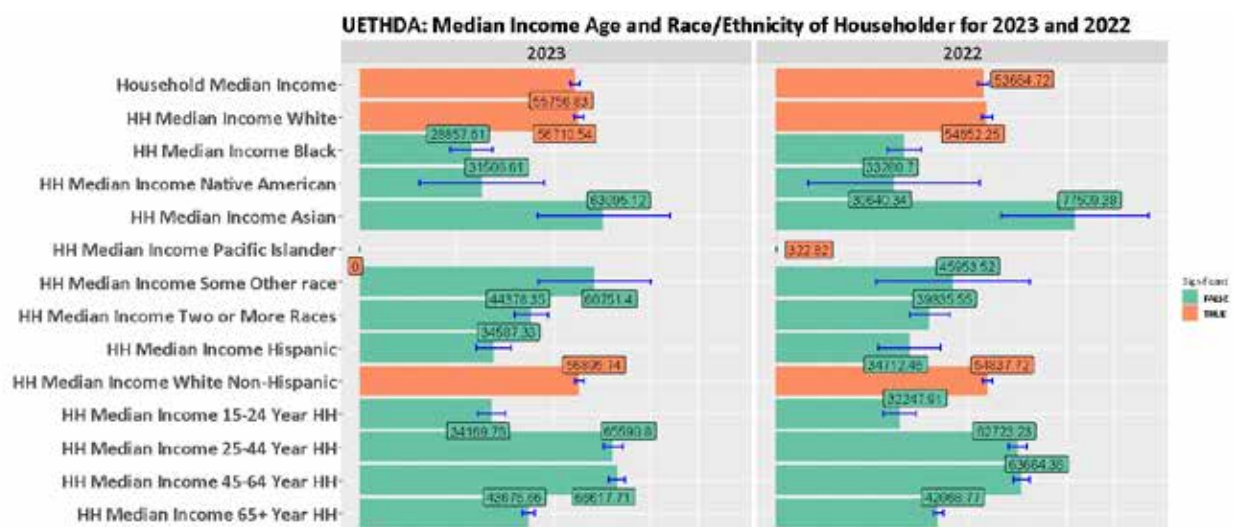


When the inflation factor of 4.12% was applied to the 2022 earnings, the only income method that actually increased the amount of usable income was cash public assistance rising by 4.98% to \$3,460.56. The mean SSI income useability decreased the most due to inflation having a 1.68% drop, meaning those households on SSI fixed incomes had less usable income in 2023 than in 2022. Combined with the fewer total number of households receiving SSI, fixed income households continue to be in a perilous situation in the UETHDA service region.

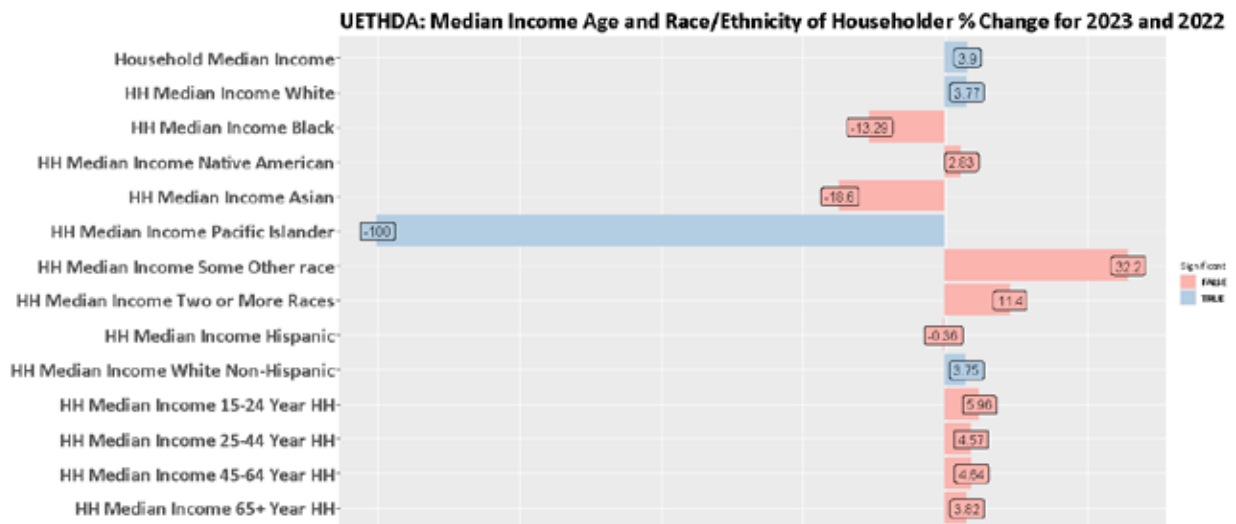


Race and Ethnicity

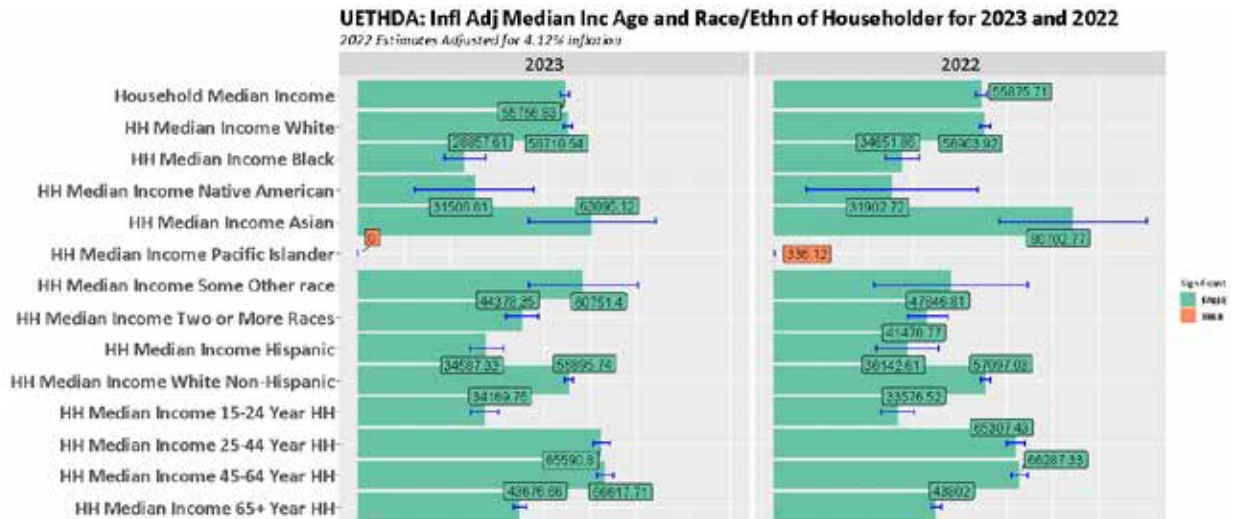
The increase in household income was only significant for households with a non-Hispanic white householder, rising by 3.75% to \$56,895.74. Though not significant, median income for households with a black or Hispanic householder decreased by roughly \$5,000 each, decreases of 13.29% and 0.36% respectively. Pacific Islander households had significant decreases in their median income by approximately 100% but due to the extremely low total number of those households in the UETHDA service area these results are barely interpretable. There were no significant changes in household income when disaggregated by the age of the householder.

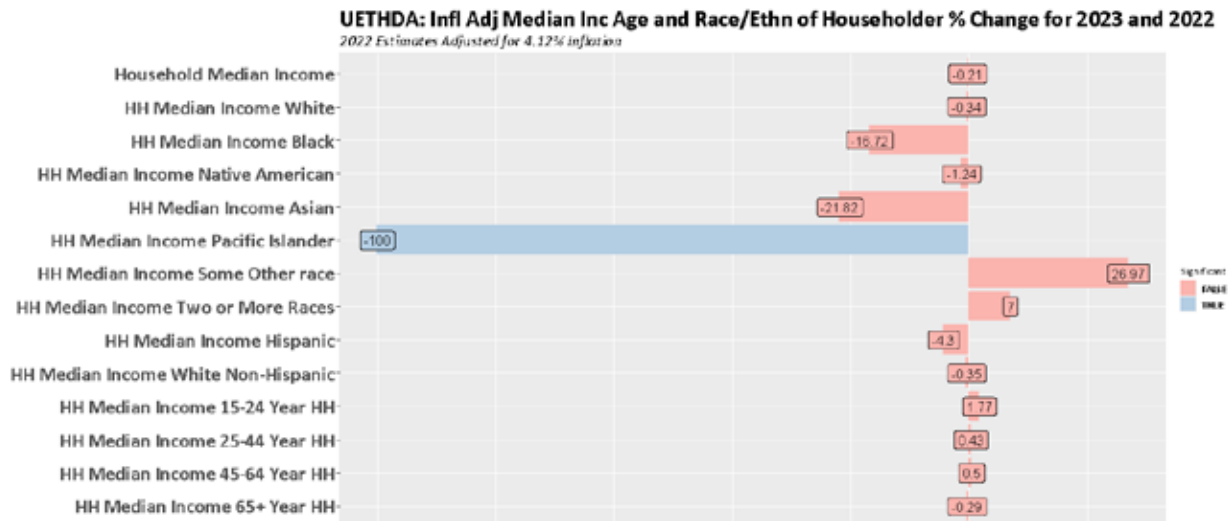






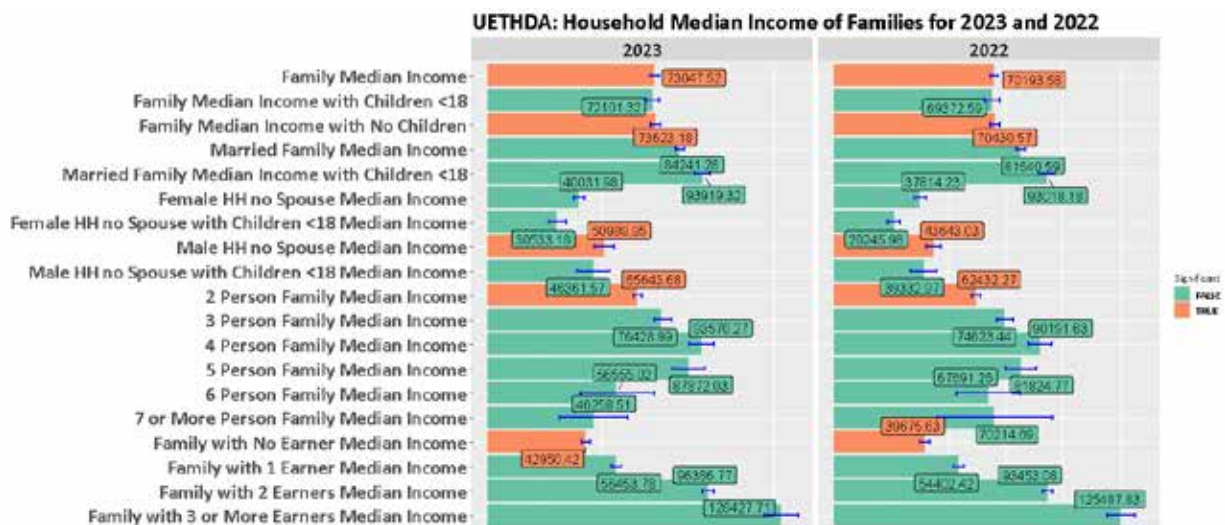
When the inflation adjustment was applied and excluding for pacific islander households, no households had significant changes from 2022 to 2023 when broken down by race, ethnicity, or age or the householder.

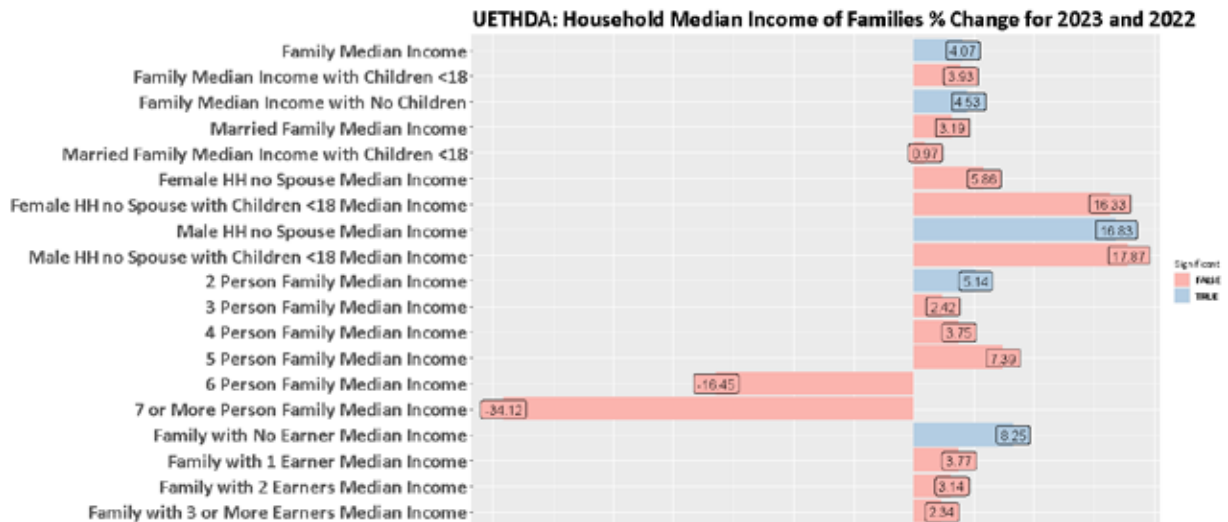




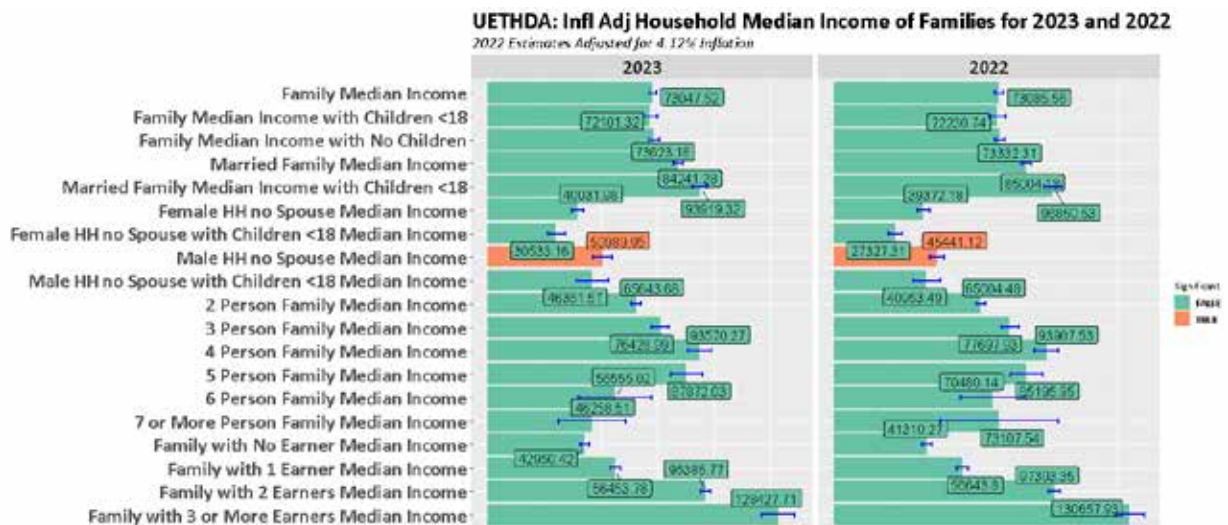
Family Income

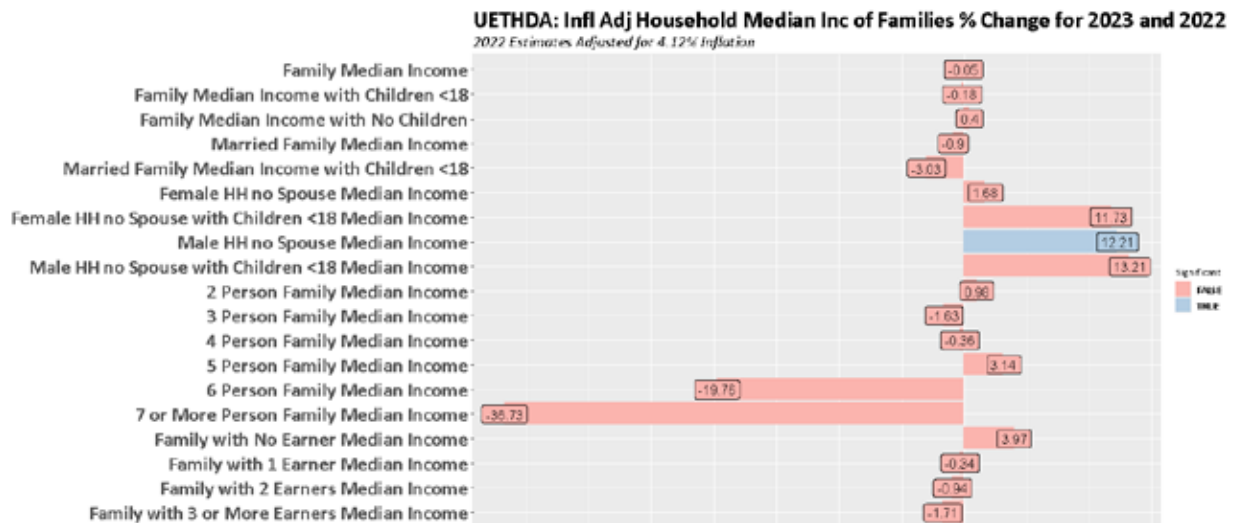
Median family income increased significantly from 2022 to 2023 in total dollars, rising 4.07% to \$73,047.52. Male families with no spouse present, two-person family households, and families with no earners, and families with no children median income also significantly increase from 2022 to 2023 with the largest percent gain occurring in male households with no spouse present at 16.83%.





When adjusted for inflation, single male families was the only family type that had a statistically significant change from 2022 to 2023, an increase of 12.21% to \$50,989.95.

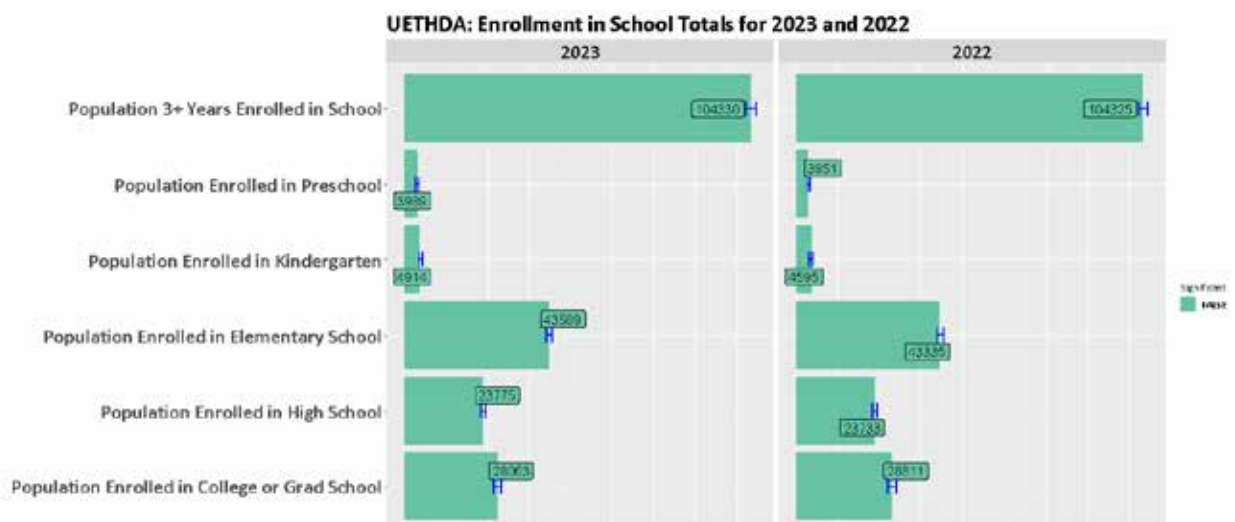




Education

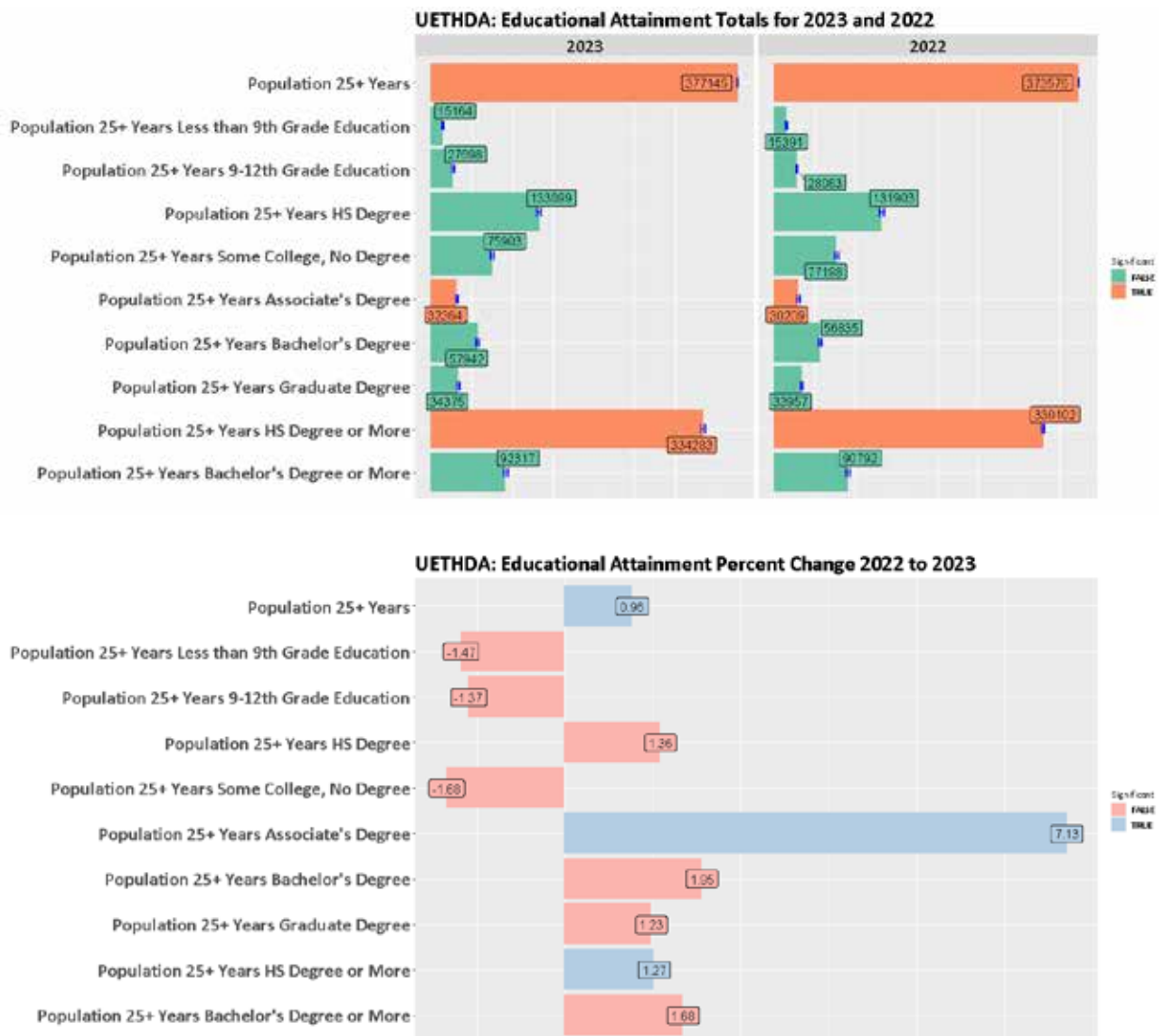
Enrollment

The total number of students enrolled at any level of education has not significantly changed from 2022 to 2023, with approximately 104,330 people enrolled in school across all levels in the UETHDA service area.



Educational Attainment

Both the total number of citizens with an associates degree and those with a High School degree or equivalent or more significantly increased from 2022 to 2023 by 7.13% and 1.27% respectively.



88.64% of the population in the UETHDA service area has at least a High School degree or equivalent, 24.48% have at least a Bachelors degree, and 9.11% hold a Graduate degree.

UETHDA: Educational Attainment

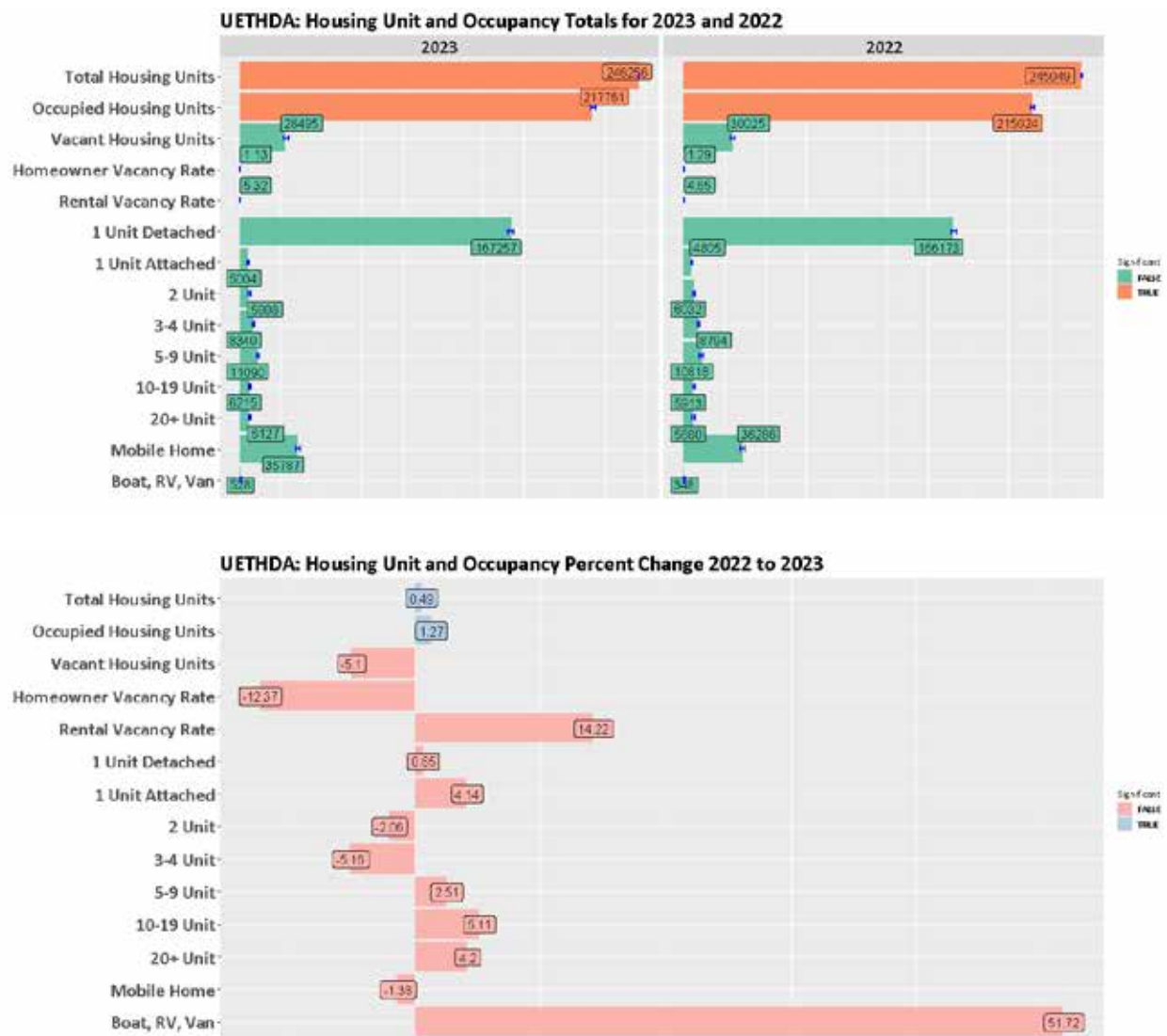
Measure	2023 Total	2023 Percent	2022 Total	2022 Percent
Population 25+ Years	377145	NA	373576	NA
Population 25+ Years Less than 9th Grade Education	15164	4.02	15391	4.12
Population 25+ Years 9-12th Grade Education	27698	7.34	28083	7.52
Population 25+ Years HS Degree	133699	35.45	131903	35.31
Population 25+ Years Some College, No Degree	75903	20.13	77198	20.66
Population 25+ Years Associate's Degree	32364	8.58	30209	8.09
Population 25+ Years Bachelor's Degree	57942	15.36	56835	15.21
Population 25+ Years Graduate Degree	34375	9.11	33957	9.09
Population 25+ Years HS Degree or More	334283	88.64	330102	88.36
Population 25+ Years Bachelor's Degree or More	92317	24.48	90792	24.30

Housing

Housing continues to be a main issue in the UETHDA service area as well as the rest of the country. According to the Johnson City Housing Needs Assessment, the city's housing gap has grown to a shortage of 5,587 units. This shortage is not limited to the Johnson City limits, as many other areas in the region continue to have shortfalls. Though new building permits are up, this issue continues to be at the forefront of needs in the East Tennessee region.

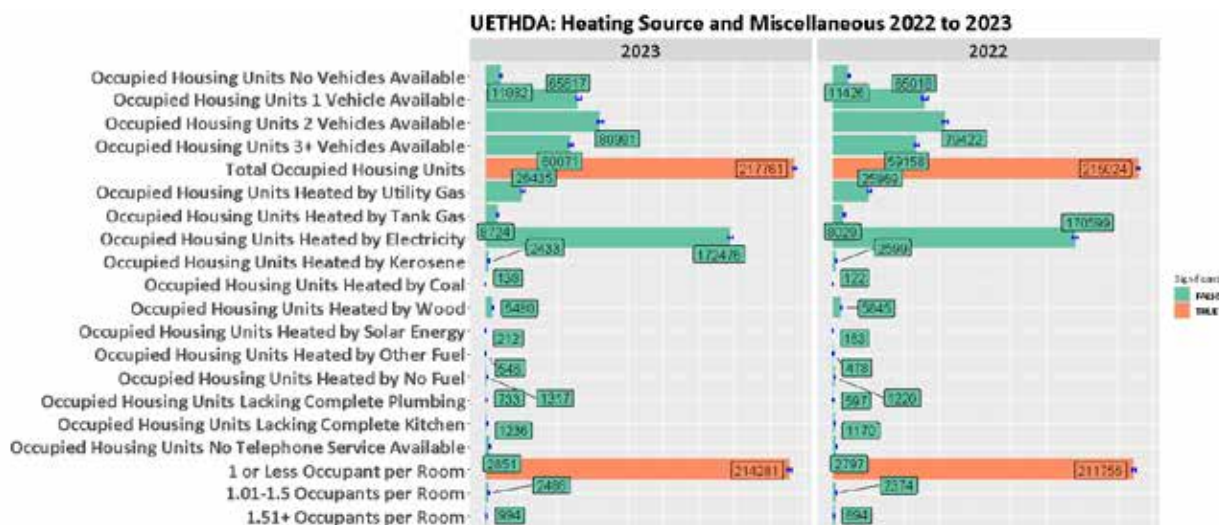
Housing Units and Occupancy

Both the total number of housing units and occupied housing units significantly increased from 2022 to 2023 according to the ACS. The total number of housing units rose by 0.49% (roughly 1,200 units) to 246,255 units in the UETHDA service area. Occupied housing units rose by 1.27% to 217,761 units during the same period. Homeowner vacancy rates decreased by 5.1% while rental vacancy rates increased by 14.22%, though these changes were not statistically significant. One in twenty rental properties are vacant compared to slightly over one in one hundred owner occupied homes.



Heating Source, Vehicles, and Occupants per Room

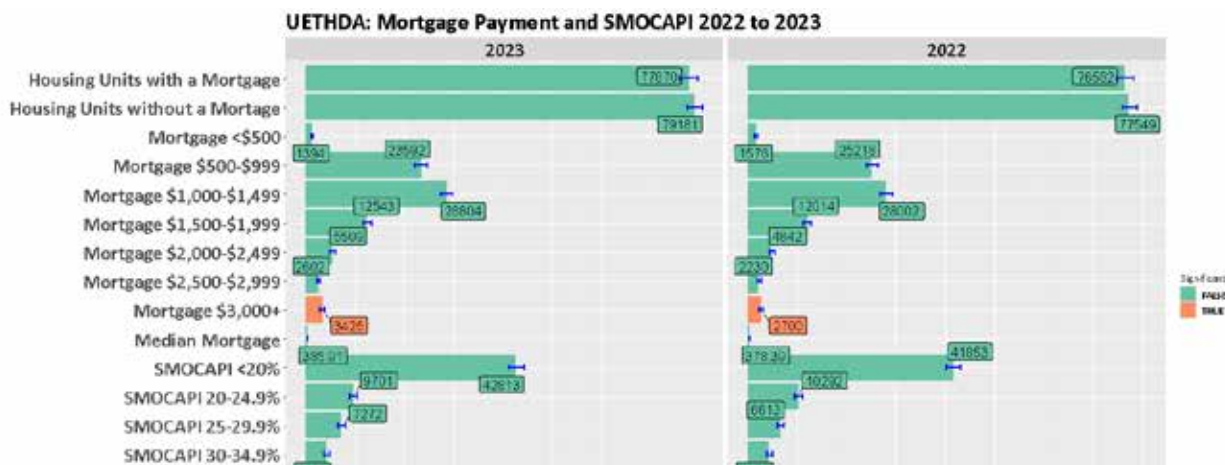
Along with total housing units, the number of housing units with one or less occupants per room were the only significant change from 2022 to 2023 with regards to heating source, number of vehicles per unit, and occupants per room. The majority of households in the UETHDA service area have at least two vehicles per occupied housing unit.

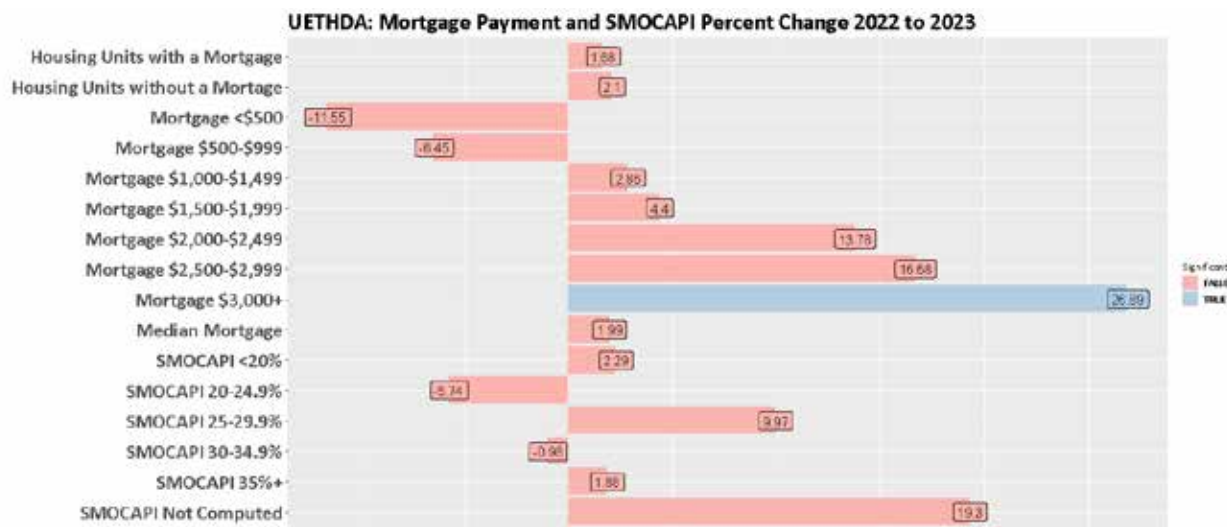


Mortgage and SMOCAPI

Mortgage payments have continued to rise in the UETHDA service area. The total number of mortgages above \$3,000 per month significantly increased by 26.89% from 2022 to 2023 to 3,426 mortgages. The upward trend of rising new mortgage costs can be seen in the rising median mortgage payment, the decrease in percentage of mortgages less than \$1,000, and the subsequent increase in mortgage payments above \$1,000.

Selected monthly home-ownerships costs as a percentage of household income or SMOCAPI is a measure of housing affordability with a SMOCAPI percentage greater than 30% generally being a sign of unaffordable housing. In 2023, 22.7% of households with a mortgage have a SMOCAPI of greater than 30% in the UETHDA service area which is roughly the same percentage as in 2022.

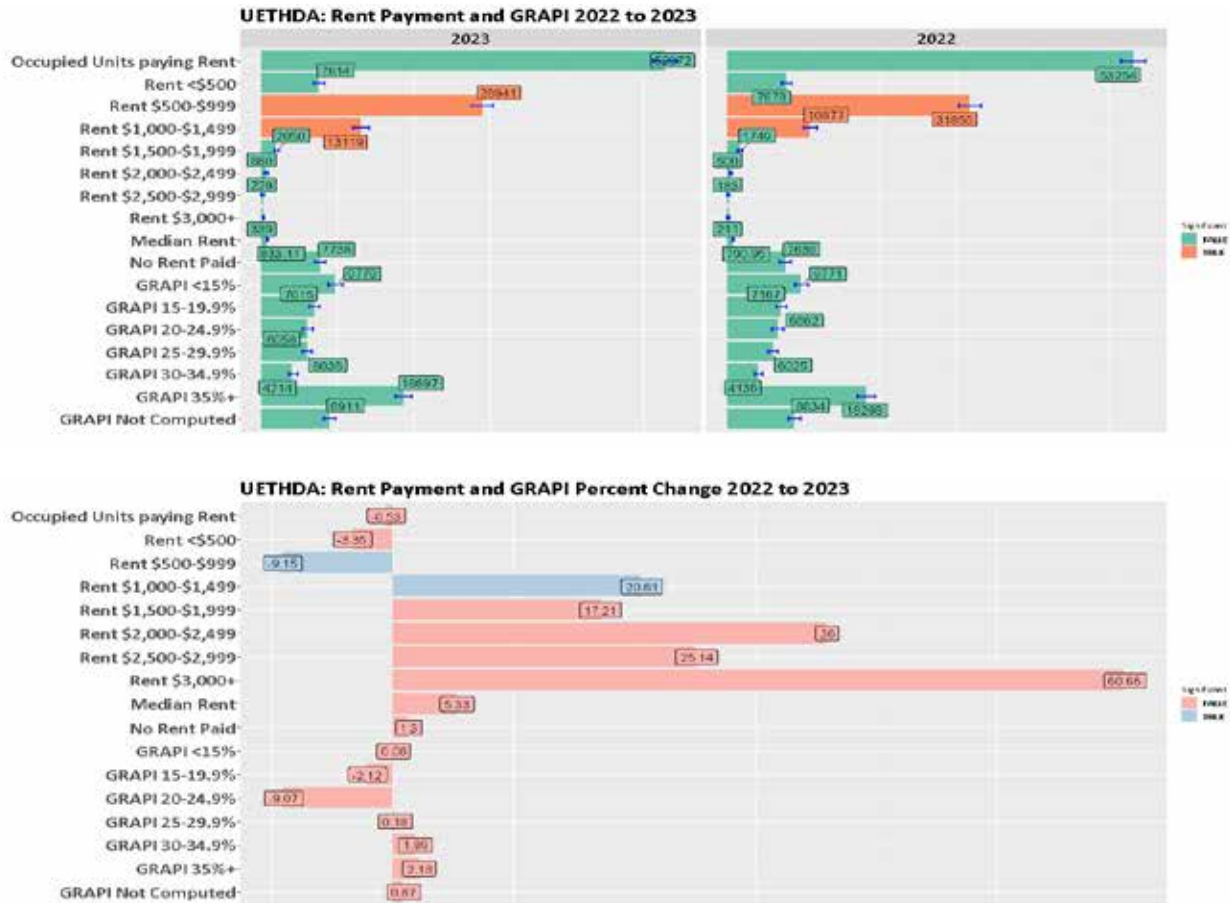




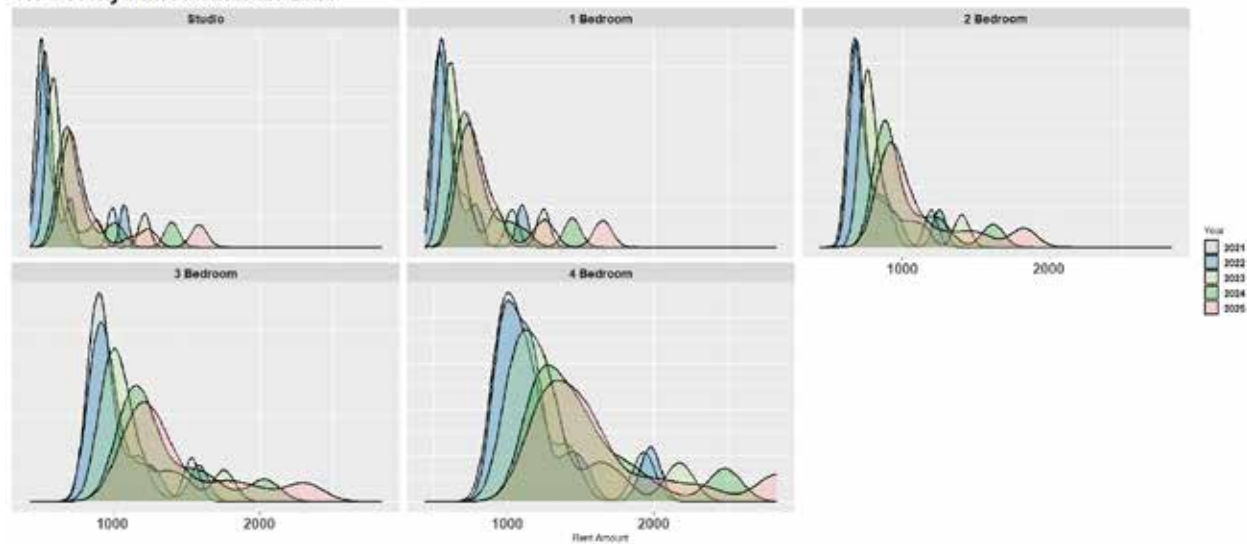
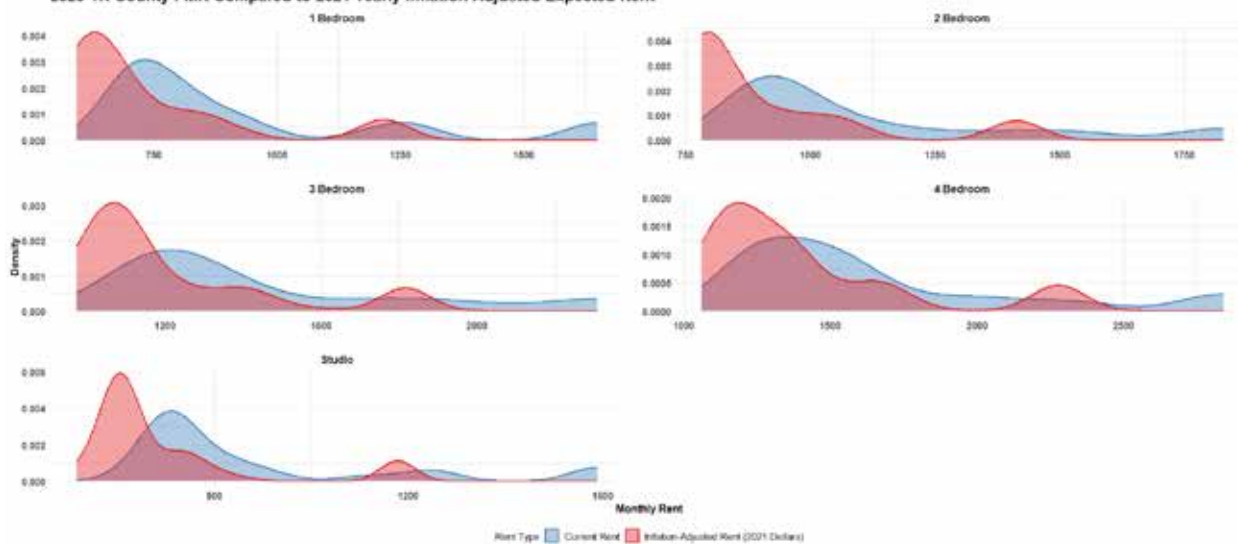
Rent and GRAPI

Much like mortgage rates and home purchase prices, rental prices have steadily increased in the UETHDA service area. According to the ACS, from 2022 to 2023 the median rent had a non-significant increase from \$790.95 per month to \$833.11 per month. The total number of rental units with monthly rents of \$1,000-\$1,499 per month significantly increased by over 20% while the number of rental units with monthly rent of \$500-\$999 per month significantly decreased by 9.15%.

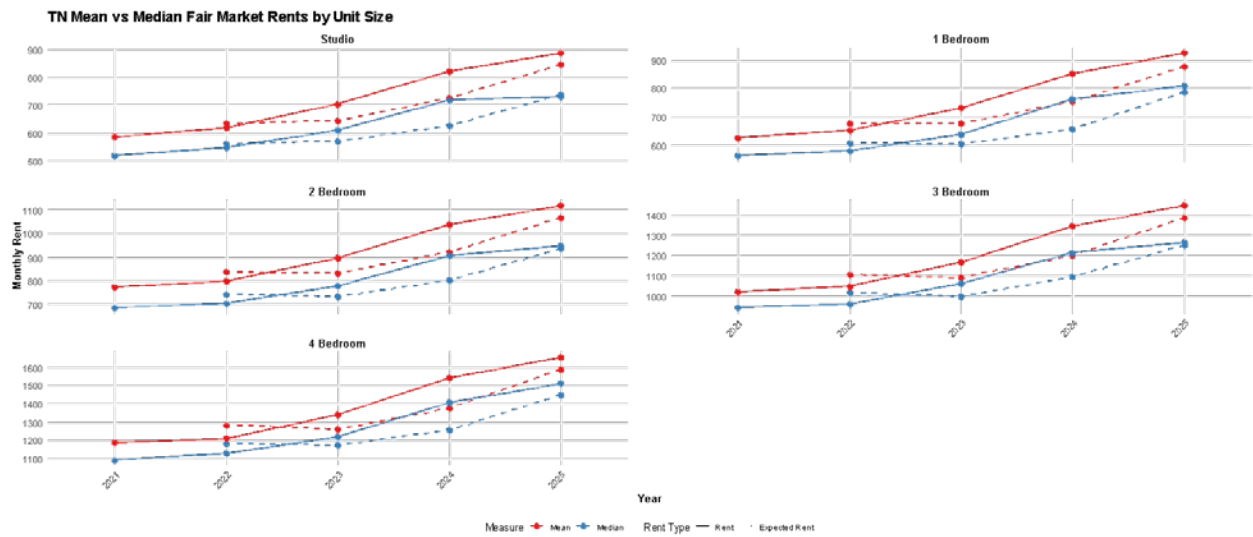
Similar to SMOCAPI, Gross Rent as a Percent of Household Income or GRAPI is a measure of housing affordability for renters with a GRAPI percentage of greater than 30% generally considered unaffordable. In 2023, 43.3% of renters in the UETHDA service area had GRAPIs of greater than 30%, a slight increase from 2022 where this was at 42.1% meaning almost half of all renters in the UETHDA service area live in unaffordable housing.



According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the median Fair Market Rent in Tennessee has risen across all rental unit types since 2021 from a low of 34% in three-bedroom units to a high of 44% in one-bedroom units. These increases have greatly outpaced the standard inflation factor seen by the rest of the economy.

TN County FMR from 2021-2025

2025 TN County FMR Compared to 2021 Yearly Inflation Adjusted Expected Rent


This increase in rental prices above inflation really began in 2023 as seen in the graph below. From 2021 to 2022, rental prices remained roughly the same as would be expected due to inflation with a large increase occurring in 2023 and continuing in 2024. The increase from 2024 to 2025 was less but still increased at a higher rate than the standard inflation rate.



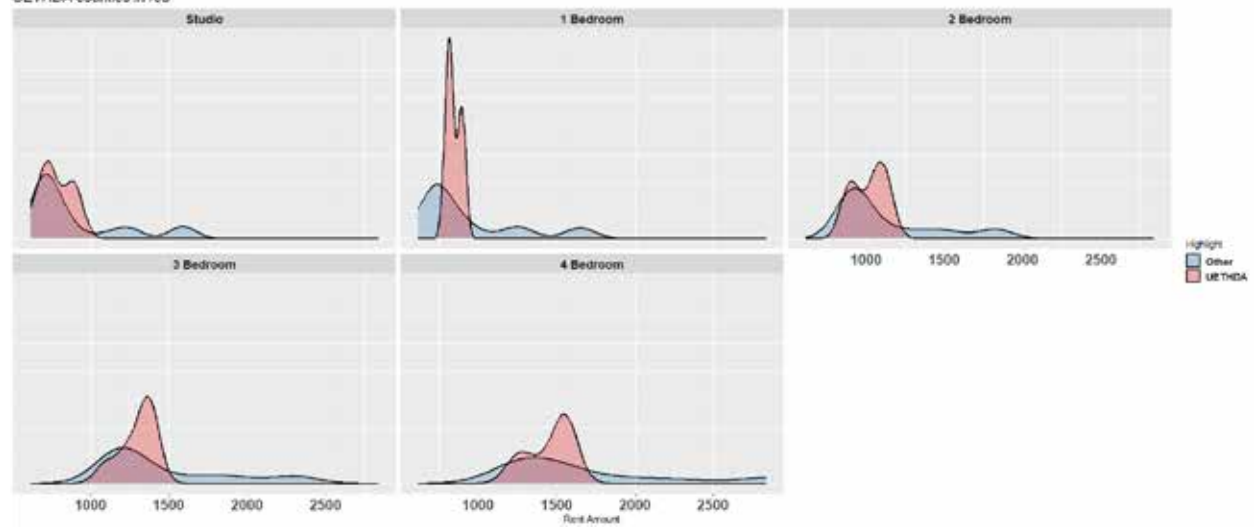
TN County Median and Mean Rents for 2021-2025

Year	Studio median	Studio mean	1 Bedroom median	1 Bedroom mean	2 Bedroom median	2 Bedroom mean	3 Bedroom median	3 Bedroom mean	4 Bedroom median	4 Bedroom mean
2021	518	588.03	561	625.35	685	773.84	942	1022.08	1092	1188.01
2022	547	618.81	579	649.97	703	798.46	960	1048.32	1128	1211.24
2023	609	703.00	636	732.17	780	894.45	1062	1164.41	1218	1336.56
2024	717	820.49	764	851.78	907	1035.99	1213	1343.53	1404	1538.88
2025	731	885.89	809	924.93	948	1119.88	1265	1447.19	1510	1653.53

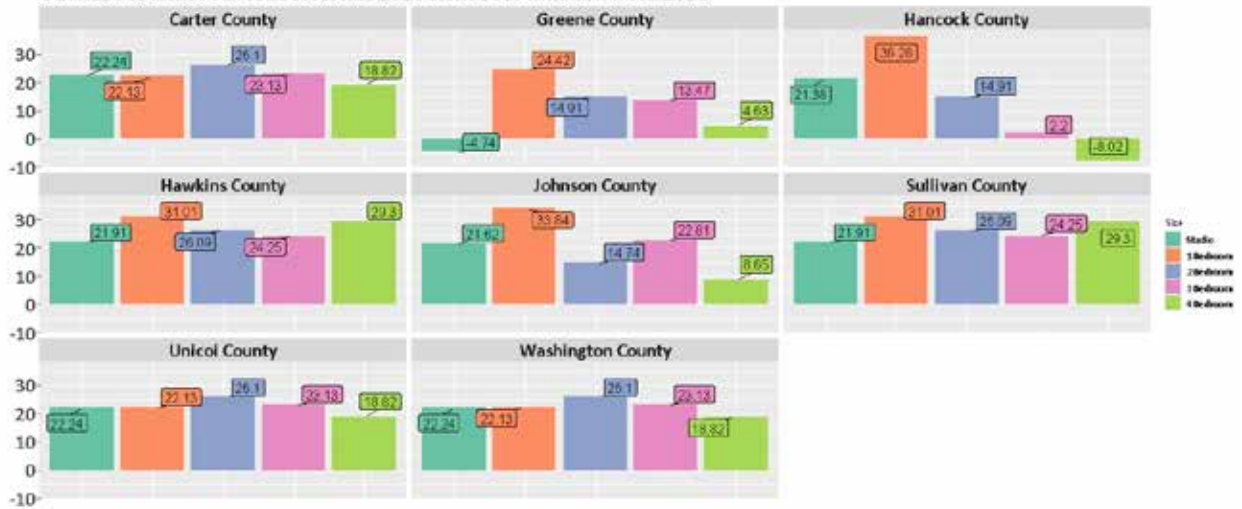
In UETHDA service area counties, the Fair Market Rent is roughly at the slightly higher than the mid-point of county rents in Tennessee for all rental types and the percentage over inflation since 2021 ranges from 36.26% for a one-bedroom unit in Hancock County to a low of -8.02% for a four-bedroom unit also in Hancock County. The average rent above inflationary expectation is roughly 20% in the UETHDA service area.

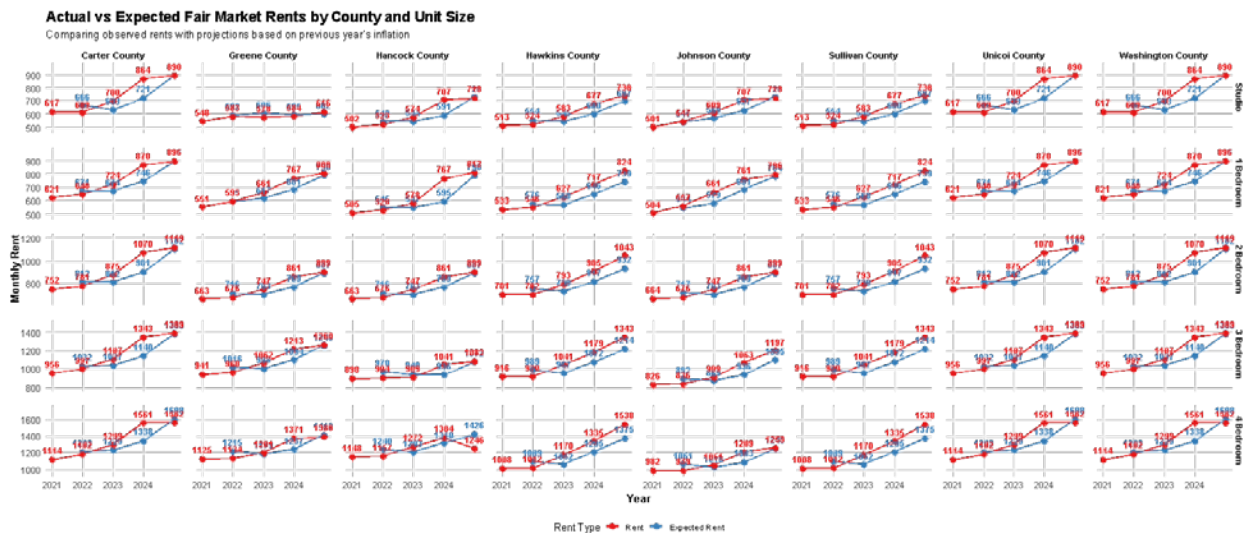
TN County FMR in 2025

UETHDA counties in red



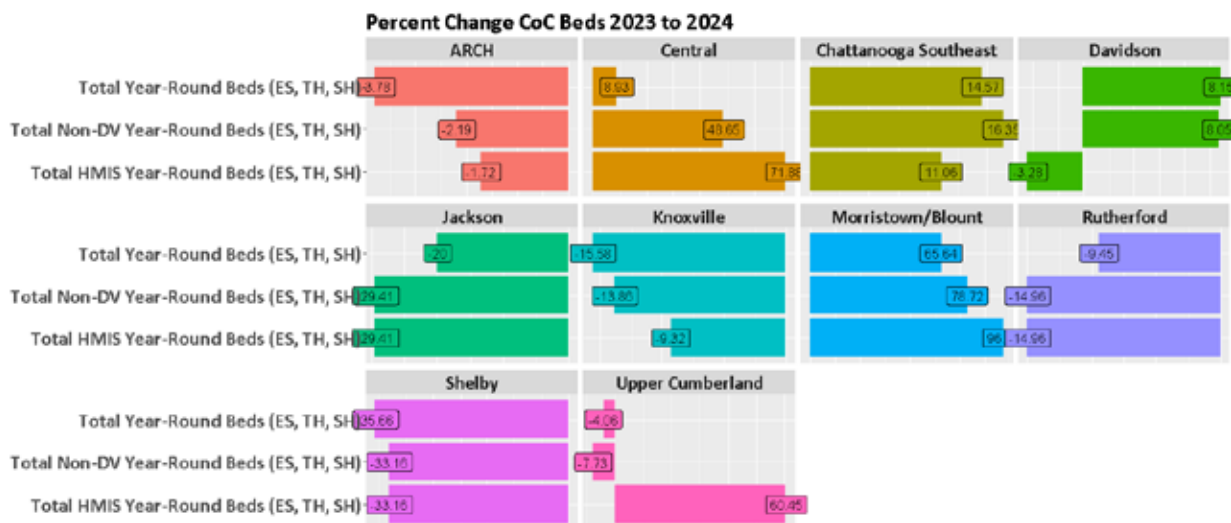
UETHDA Counties Percent of Actual 2025 Rent over Inflation from 2021





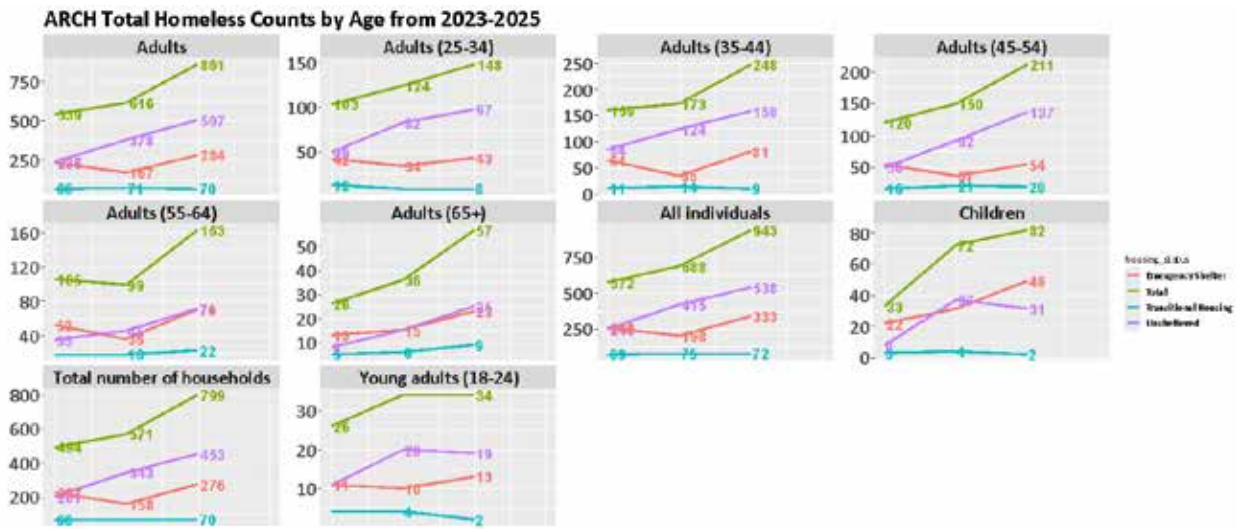
Homelessness

The total number of year-round beds for the homeless and unhoused has generally decreased in the state of Tennessee across the continuums of care. The UETHDA service area is contained within the Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness (ARCH) and has seen the total number of available beds decrease by between 1.72% and 3.78% from 2023 to 2024.

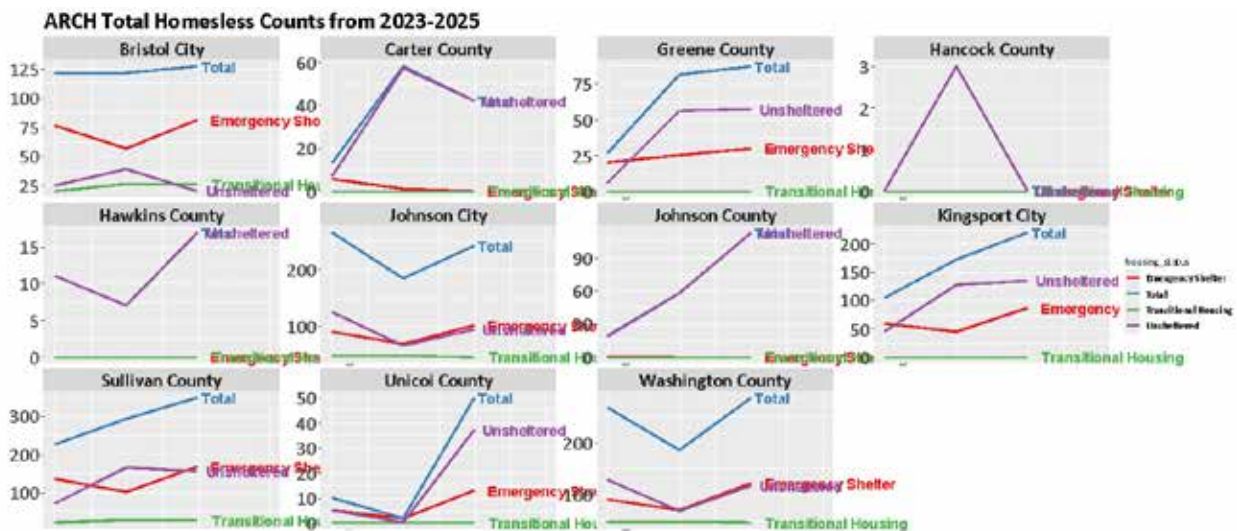


In the 2025 ARCH CoC's point in time count, there were a total of 943 homeless individuals in the UETHDA service area, an increase of 37.1% or 255 people. A total of 799 households comprise those unhoused people and there are 82 children without a home. The majority of these individuals are aged 35-44 years, and the majority are unsheltered.



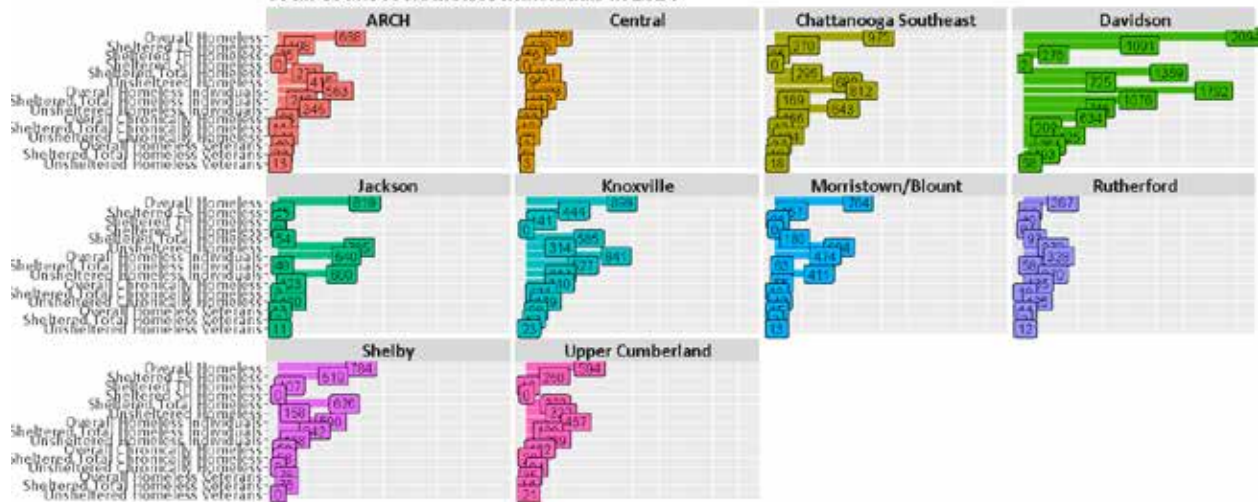


Sullivan County has the largest population in the UETHDA service area and also has the largest population of unhoused people with even splits between those unsheltered and in emergency sheltered while Johnson City has the largest population for cities and towns. Unicoi County has seen the largest increase in unhoused people from 2024 to 2025 with the vast majority of them being unsheltered.

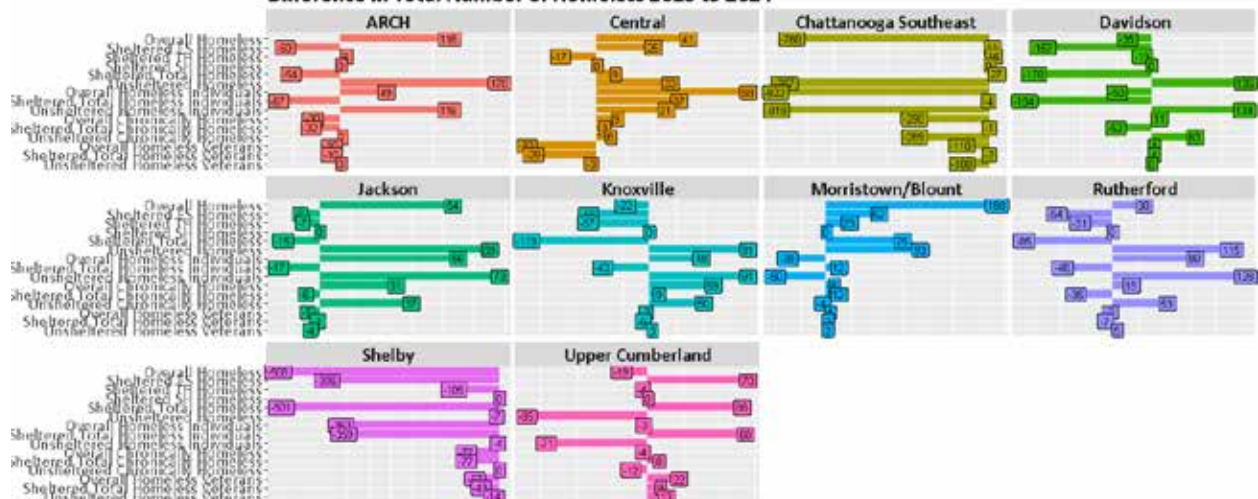


Comparisons of the CoC's in Tennessee are listed below through 2024. 2025 point in time counts were not available for all CoC's at time of publication. The Davidson CoC has the greatest number of unhoused people across the state.

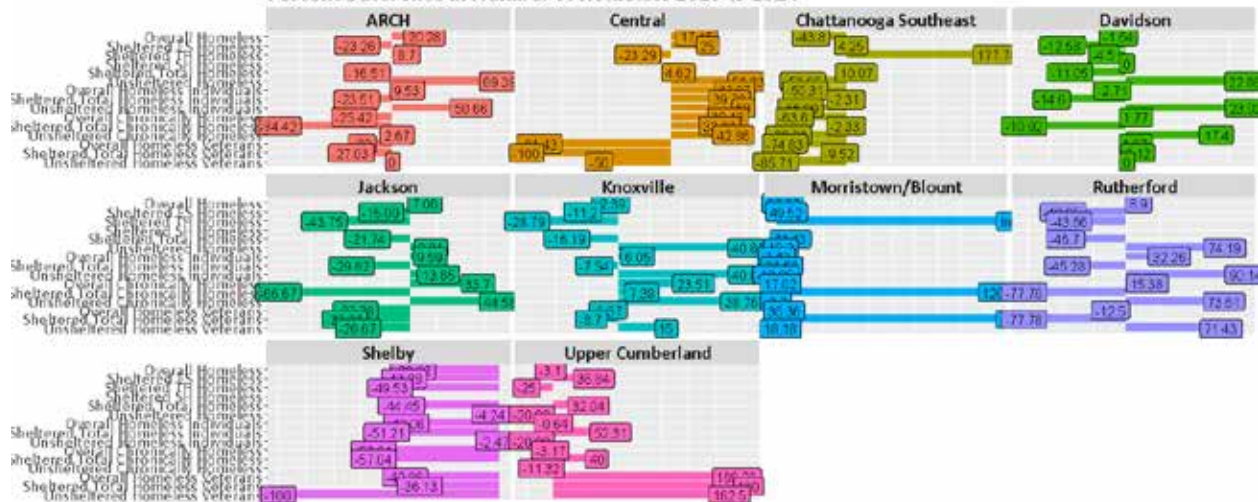
Total Count of Homeless Individuals in 2024



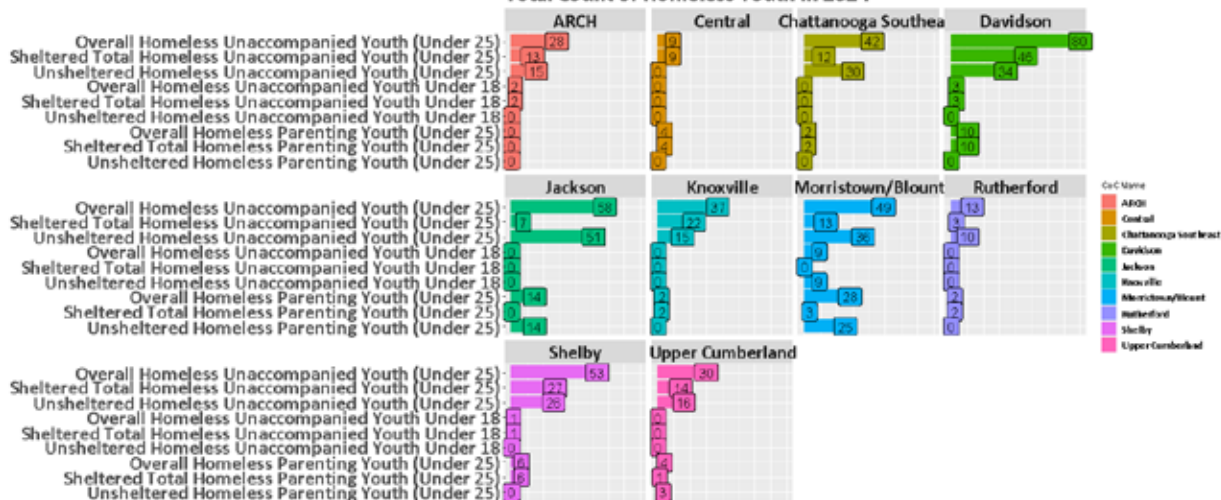
Difference in Total Number of Homeless 2023 to 2024



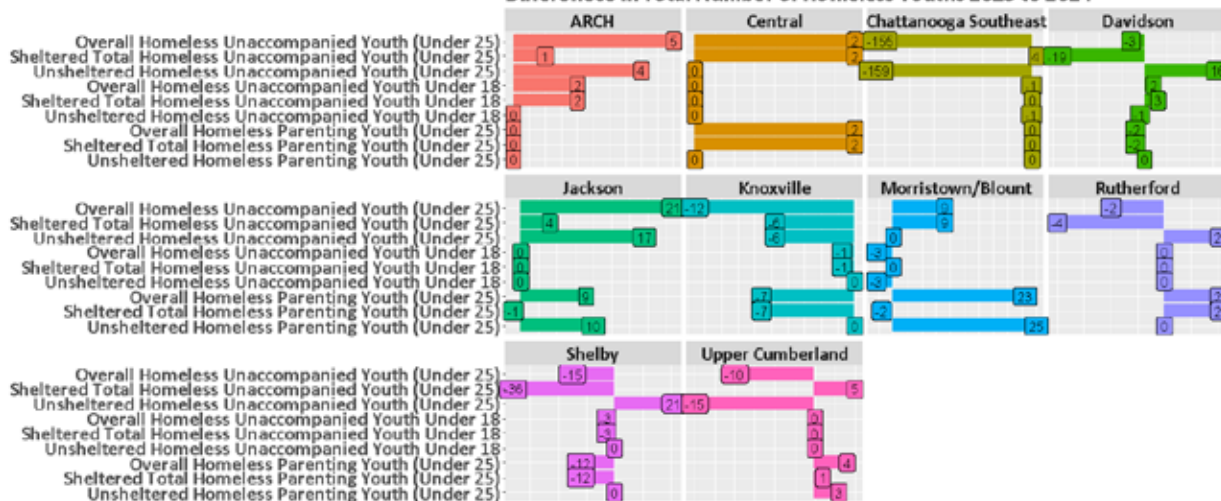
Percent Difference in Number of Homeless 2023 to 2024



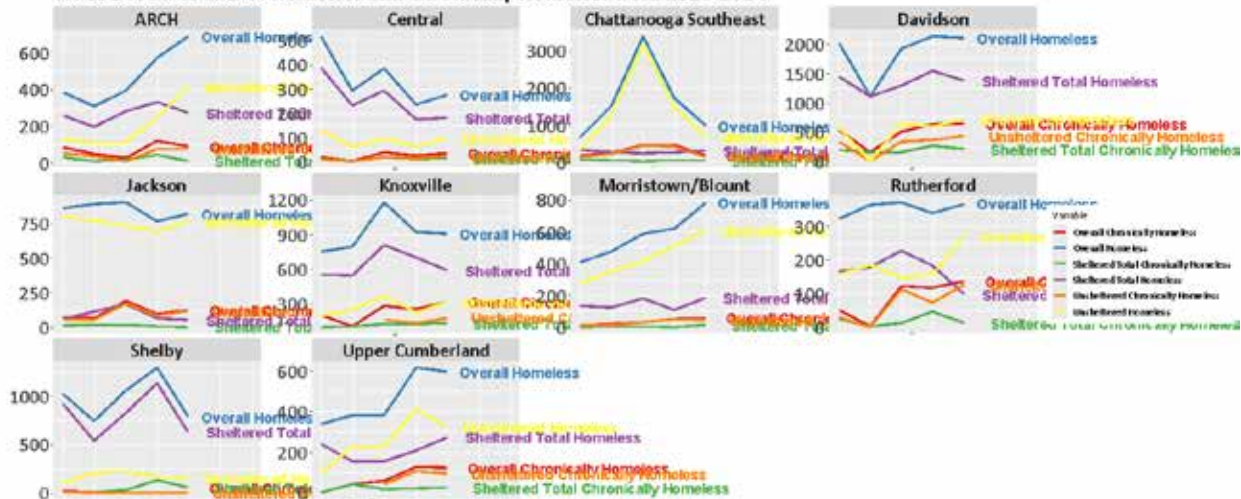
Total Count of Homeless Youth in 2024



Difference in Total Number of Homeless Youths 2023 to 2024



TN CoC Total Counts of Homeless and Chronically Homeless from 2020-2024



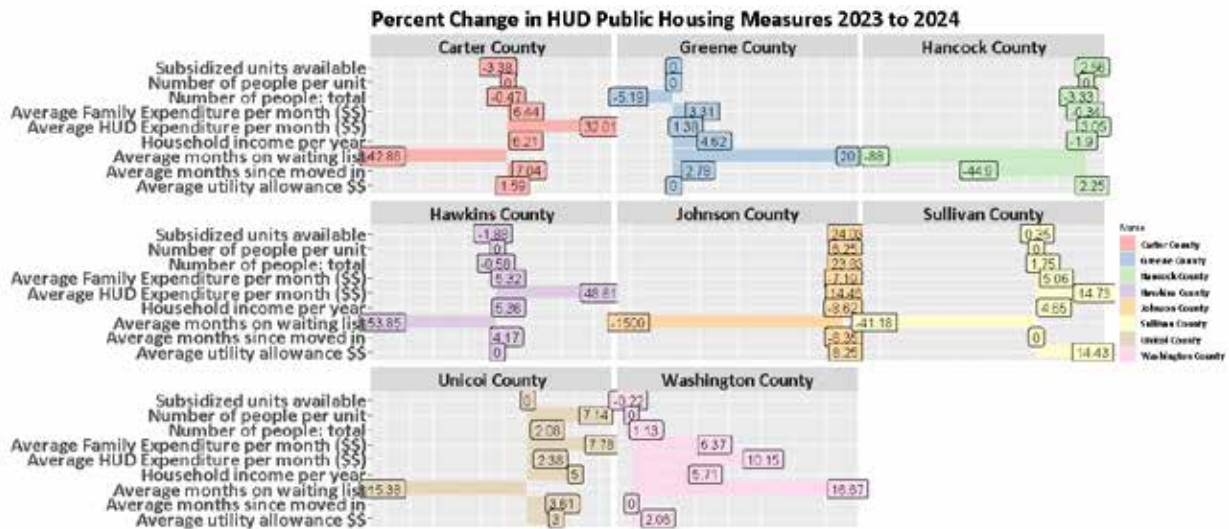
Public Housing

The 2024 HUD public housing picture is a look at the demographics of citizens who utilize public housing. In the UETHDA service area, Sullivan County has the largest number of subsidized units available at 2,908 with 86% of them being occupied. Washington County has the next highest at 2,303 subsidized units available but a higher occupied percentage at 94%. Household income for those utilizing subsidized housing units for all UETHDA counties is below \$17,000 per year and falls below 31% of the median household income for respective counties. Over 88% of households utilizing public housing fall into the “Very Low Income” category. The percentage of households considered minority groups who utilize public housing is lower in all counties than the county wide minority demographics. The average months on the wait list after being approved for public housing subsidies ranges from a low of six months in Hancock County to a high of 22 months in Unicoi County, with the average being 9.875 months.

2024 1940 Public Housing Picture

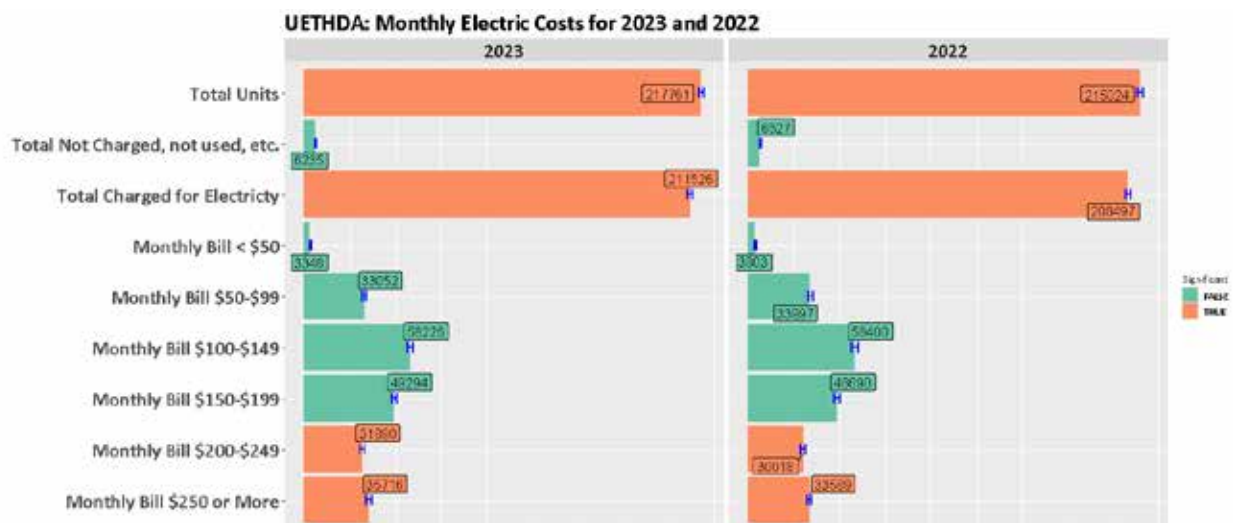
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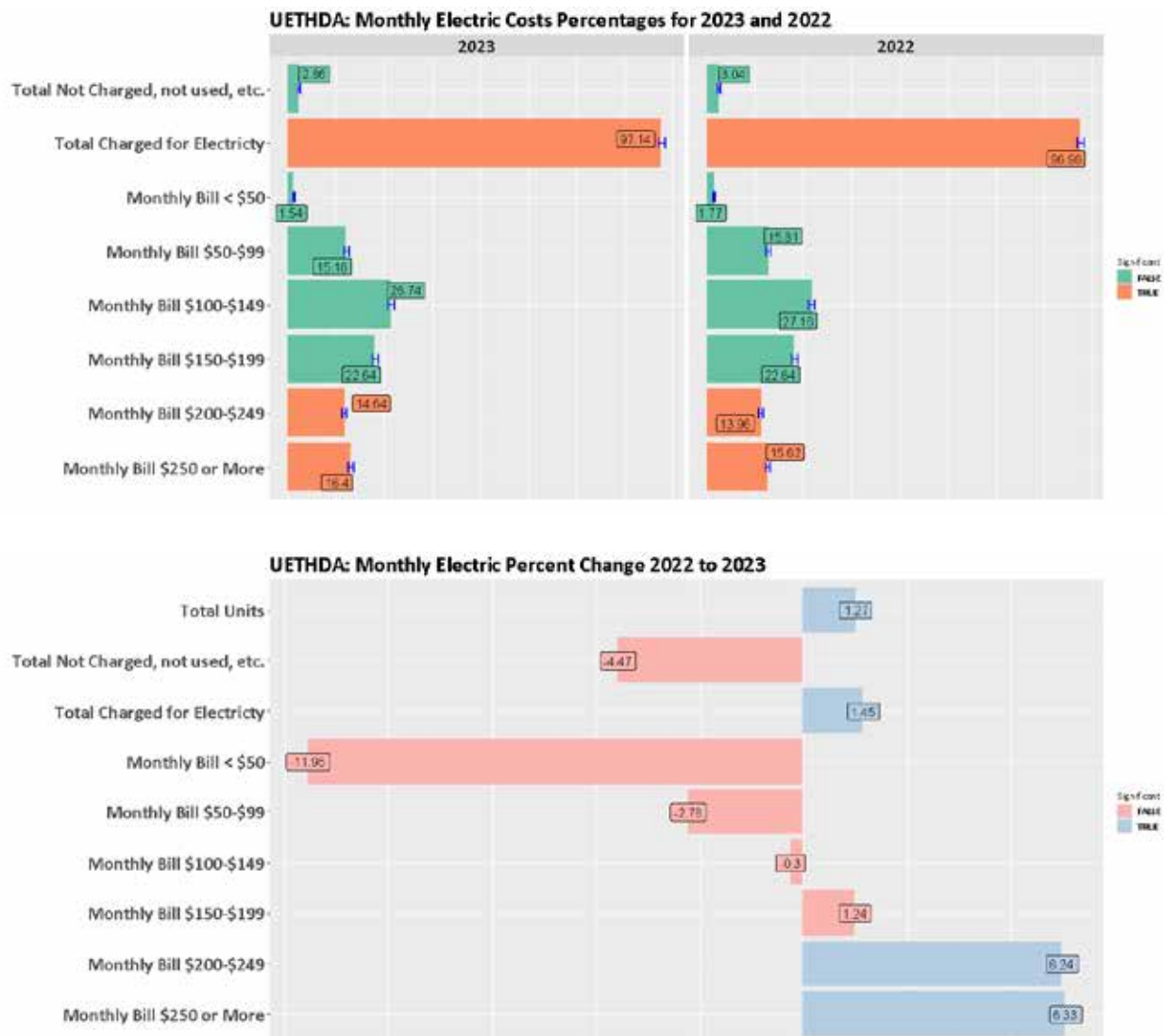
The total number of subsidized units available increased from 2023 to 2024 in Hancock (2.56%), Johnson (24.03%), and Sullivan (0.35%) County. They remained the same in Greene and Unicoi County and decreased in Carter (-3.38%), Hawkins (-1.88%), and Washington County (-0.22%).



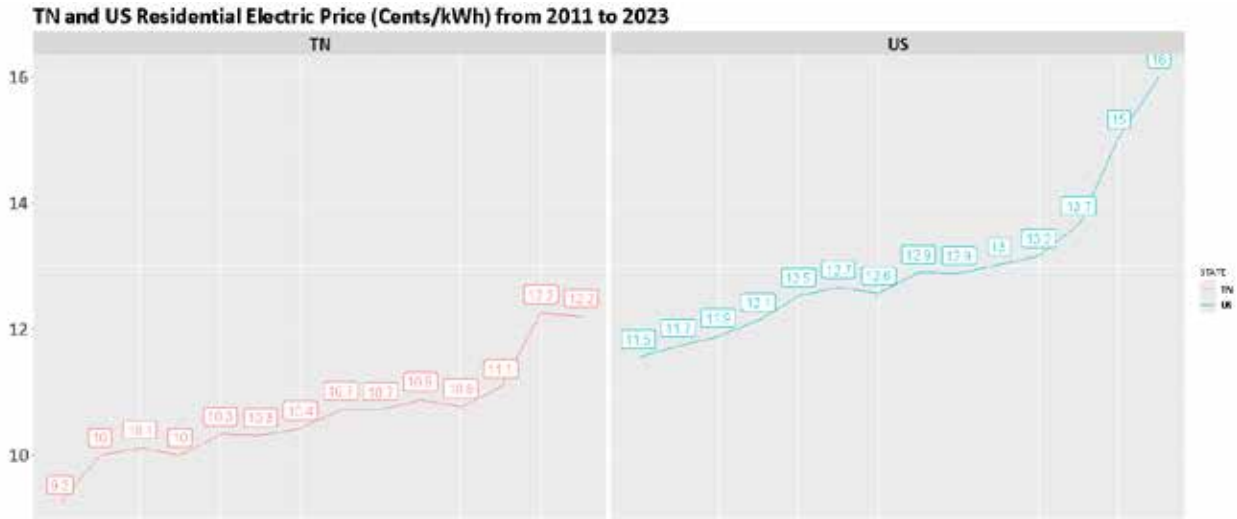
Electric Costs

Utility bills, especially for those with fixed incomes, have become an increasing burden for households in the UETHDA service area. From 2022 to 2023, the total number of households paying between \$200-\$249 per month and those paying more than \$250 per month for electricity significantly increased in the UETHDA service area with greater than 30% of households above \$200 per month. The majority of households in the region pay between \$100-\$149 per month. The total amount charged for electricity also significantly increased by 1.45%.



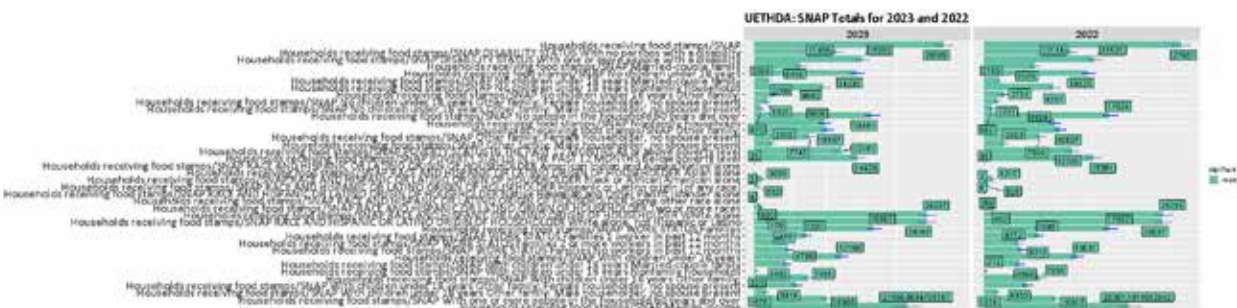


The electric price has steadily increased from 2011 to 2023 in both the United States and Tennessee. Tennessee continues to have a lower than median average price for residential utilities and has the 16th ranked cheapest electric cost in the country. This cost rose 10.8% from 2024 to 2025. According to [Saveonenergy.com](https://www.saveonenergy.com/), a resource to compare national electric costs, despite having the 16th ranked electricity rate, Tennessee has the 34th ranked monthly electric bill at \$155.81 per month. This is compared with Utah who has the 1st ranked electric bill at \$95.03 while Connecticut has the 50th at \$218.86 per month.



SNAP

The total number of households receiving SNAP benefits decreased by 3.84% in the UETHDA service area but this was not statistically significant. The demographics of those households receiving SNAP benefits are listed below and generally decreases in total number from 2022 to 2023, but there were no significant changes.



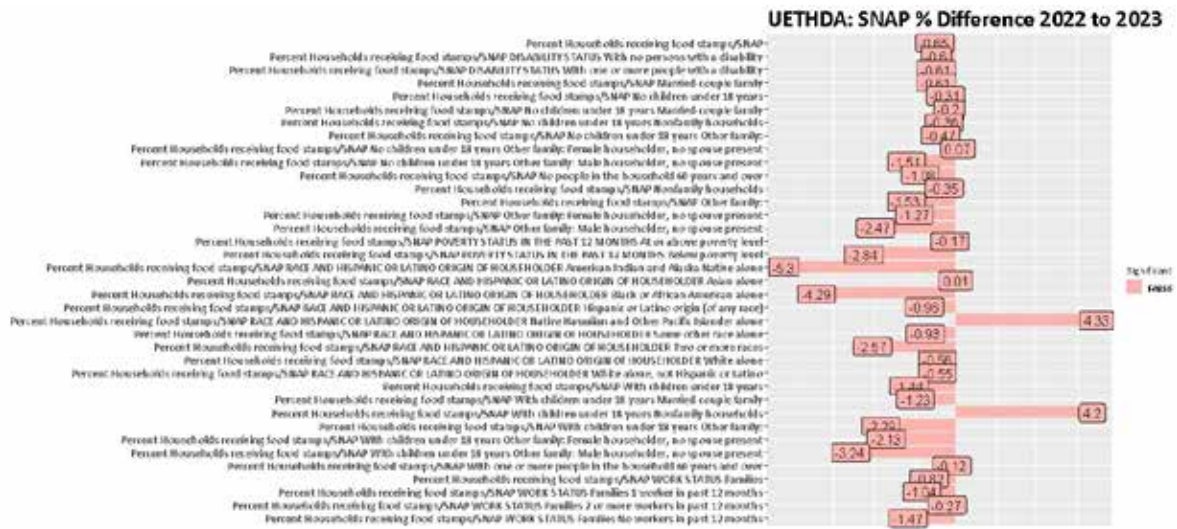
12.21% of households in the UETHDA service area currently receive SNAP benefits and 40.61% of these households are in poverty.



The demographics of households receiving SNAP benefits only increased in total number for single female householders with no children (3.39%), householders who were pacific islanders (12.5%), householders with two or more races (3.99%), non-family households with children under 18 years (5.19%), and households with one or more people above 60 years of age (0.81%) while all other demographics decreased.



The percentage of demographics for those receiving SNAP also had no significant changes with the only two increasing being householders who were pacific islanders (4.33%) and non-family households with children under 18 years (4.2%).



Survey Results

Surveys were conducted from April through June 2025 to assess the needs of the UETHDA service area. Three surveys were created for three different target populations; Head Start Parents, the residents of the UETHDA service area, and the satisfaction that UETHDA clients have with their service.

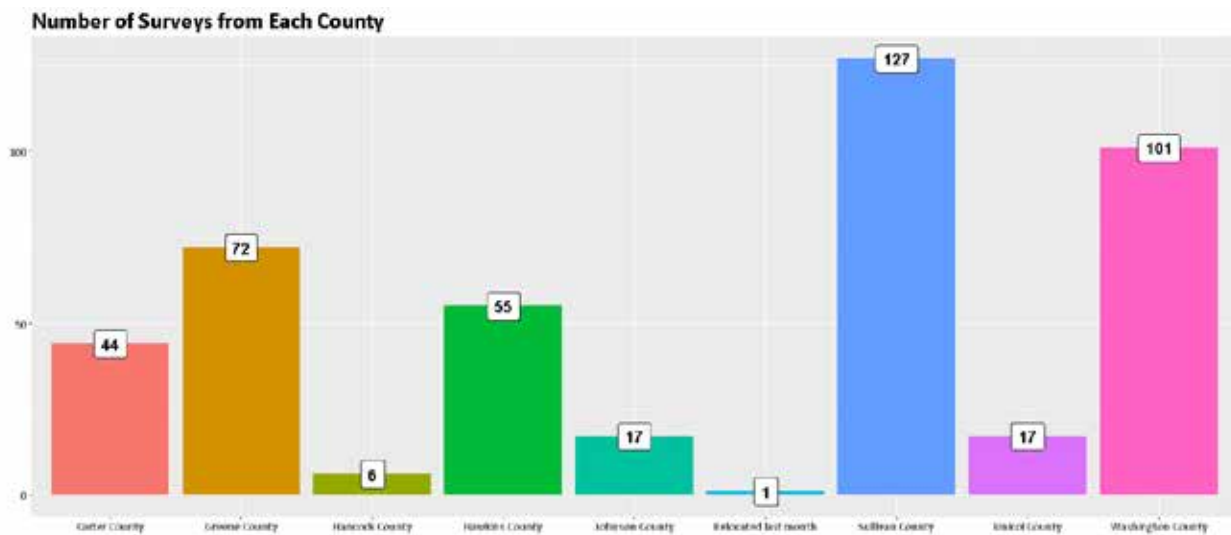
Neighbors Survey

Sample size needed was calculated based on the UETHDA service area total population of 521,855 giving a needed total survey number of 385 for 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error. The total surveys were proportionally divided based on the county's population for each of the 8 UETHDA counties. The survey was promoted online as well as case workers contacting clients and other community members who do not use UETHDA. A total of 440 surveys were received and all counties hit their needed survey number for a stratified sample. The survey was limited in that it was not a true random sample of the counties population and was likely a sample of convenience to those in some way connected to the agency.

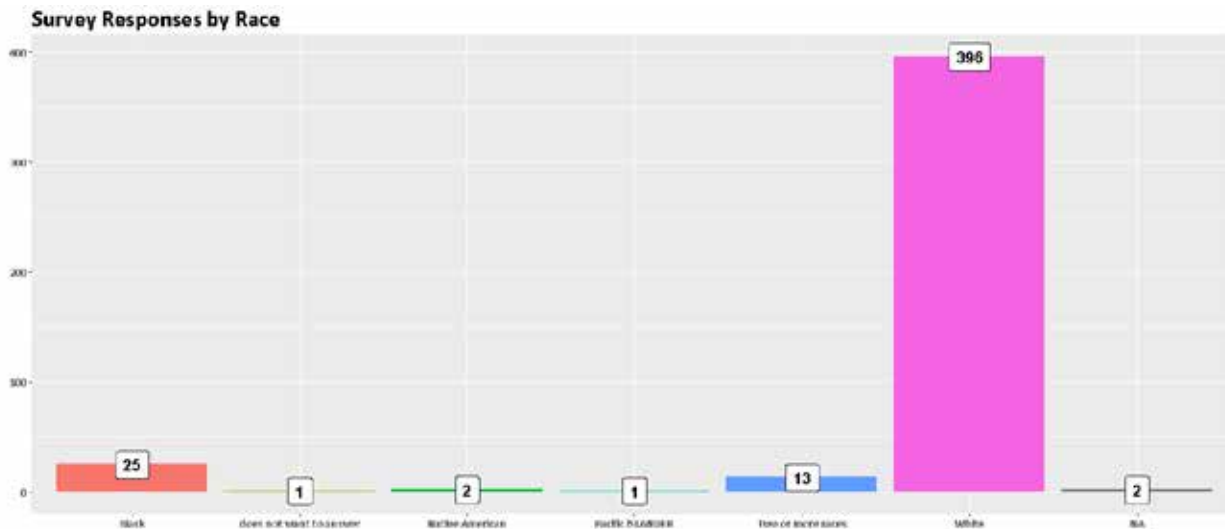
2025 Surveys Needed

Location	2023 Estimate	total	ratio	Surveys Needed
Carter County	56462	521855	0.1081948	42
Greene County	70919	521855	0.1358979	52
Hancock County	6790	521855	0.0130113	5
Hawkins County	57446	521855	0.1100804	42
Johnson County	18073	521855	0.0346322	13
Sullivan County	159693	521855	0.3060103	118
Washington County	134693	521855	0.2581043	99
Unicoi County	17779	521855	0.0340689	13

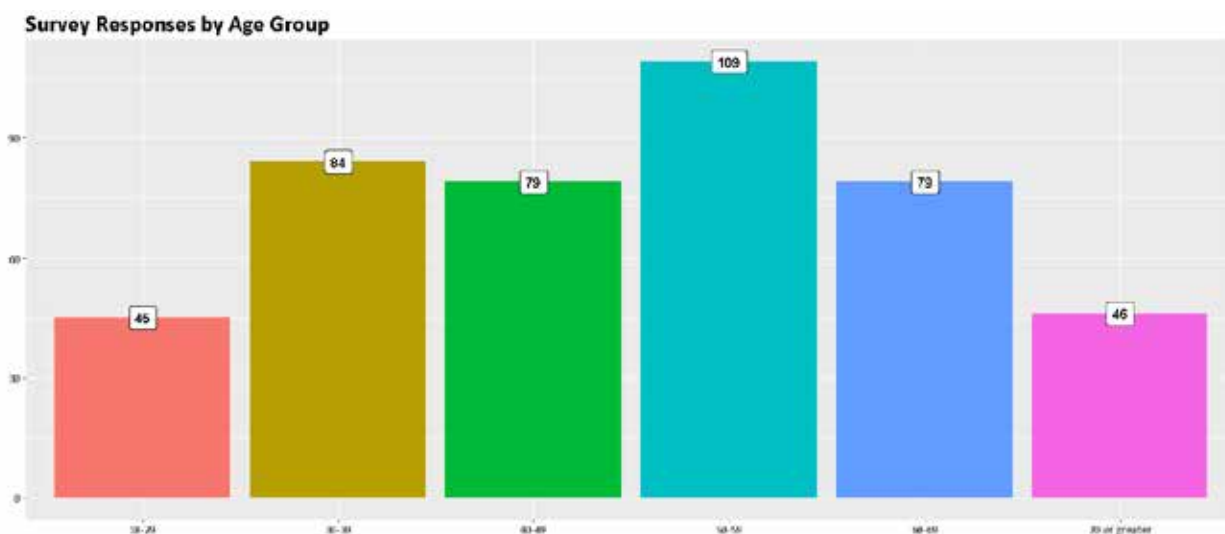
Sullivan and Washington Counties were the most represented in the survey because they were the most populous counties in the service area.



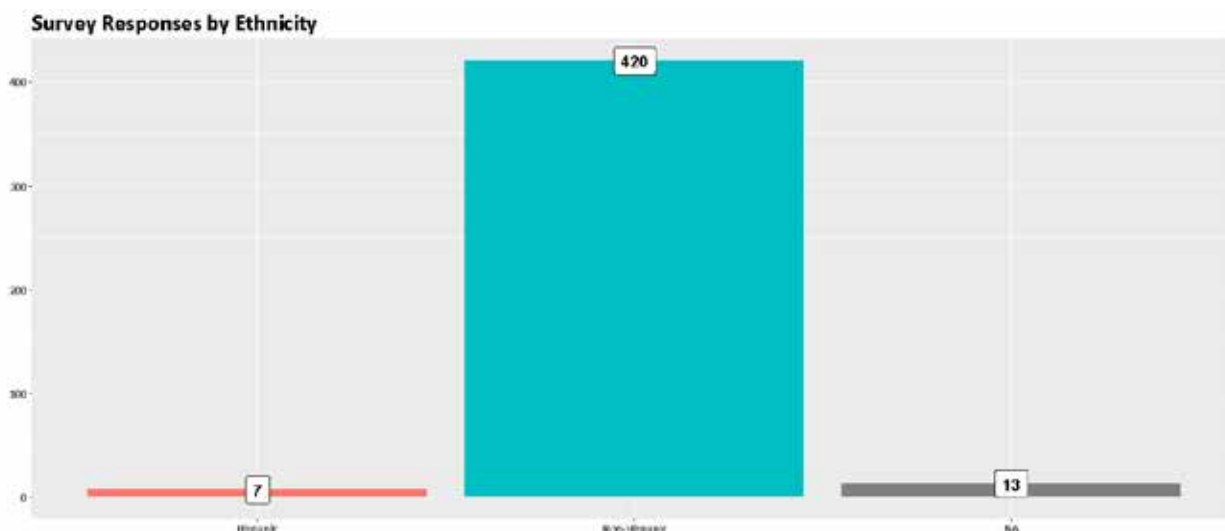
94% of the survey respondents were white and 5.6% were black, which follows the overall racial distribution of the UETHDA service area.



The majority of responses were from those aged 50-59 years of age. This is higher than the median age of the UETHDA service area, but this makes sense due to the exclusion of children from the survey.

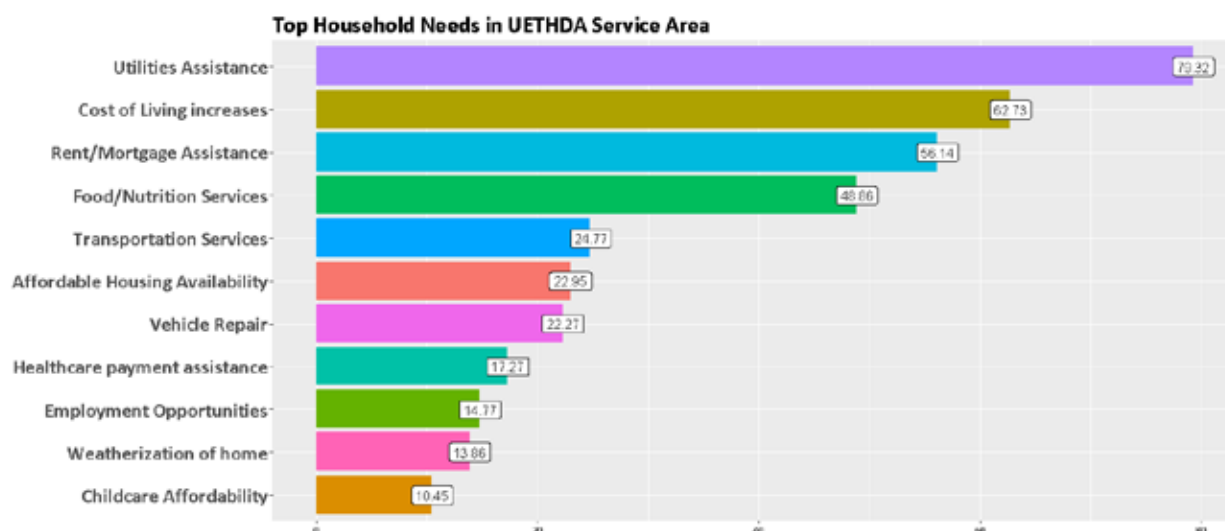


The vast majority of respondents were non-Hispanic with only 1.6% identifying as Hispanic. This is below the UETHDA regions Hispanic population percentage of 3.2% meaning that the Hispanic population was underrepresented in the survey results.

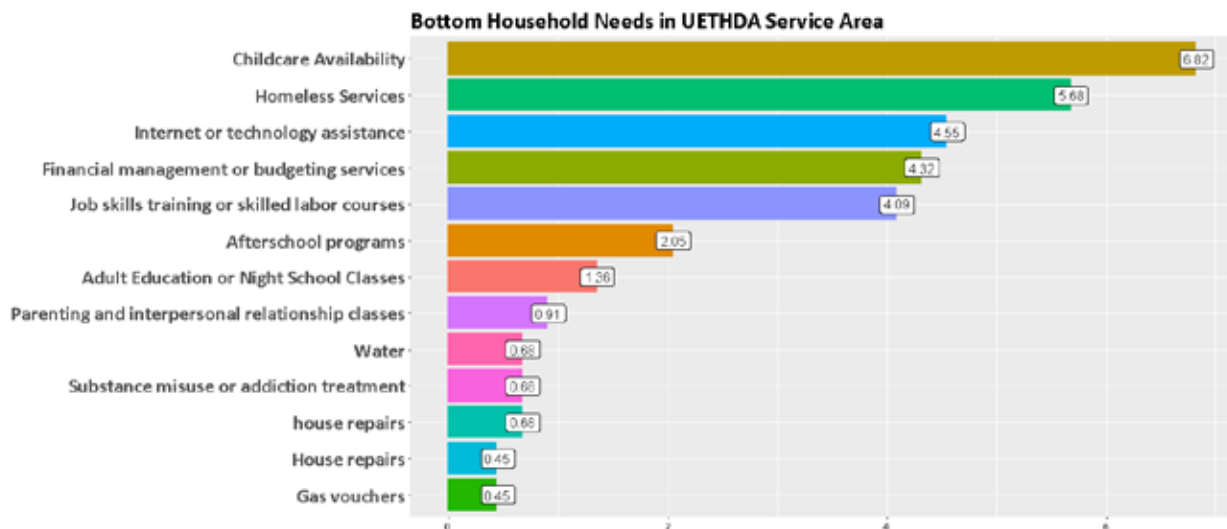


Household Needs

Respondents were given a list of needs and asked to name the top five that their household was most in need of. Utilities Assistance was the most common selected with 79.32% saying it was a top need for their household. Cost of living increases was second highest with 62.73%, rent/mortgage assistance at 56.14%, Food/Nutrition services at 48.86%, and transportation services at 24.77%, rounding out the top five needs.

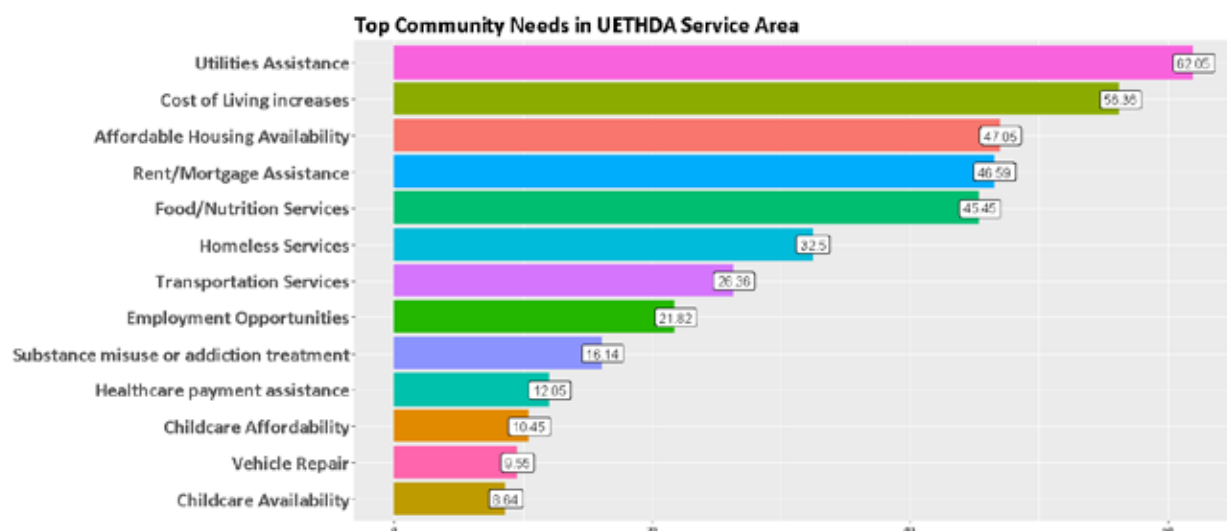


The bottom household needs were all listed by less than 7% of respondents. Substance misuse or addiction treatment was the lowest listed option to pick with less than 1% of respondents saying this was a need for their household.

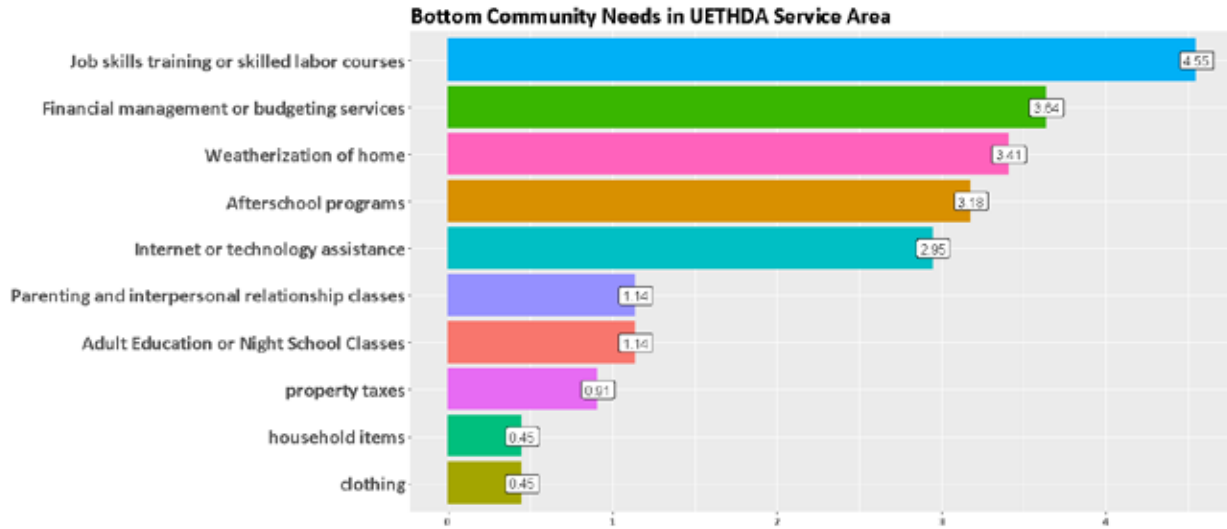


Community Needs

Survey takers were also asked to select up to five things they were most needed in their community. Utilities assistance again topped the list of needs at 62.05%, followed by Cost-of-Living increases at 56.36%, affordable housing availability at 47.05%, rent/mortgage assistance at 46.59%, and food/nutrition services at 45.45%. Homeless services were the most common community need that was not listed in individual household needs with 32.5% saying it was a top need in their community.

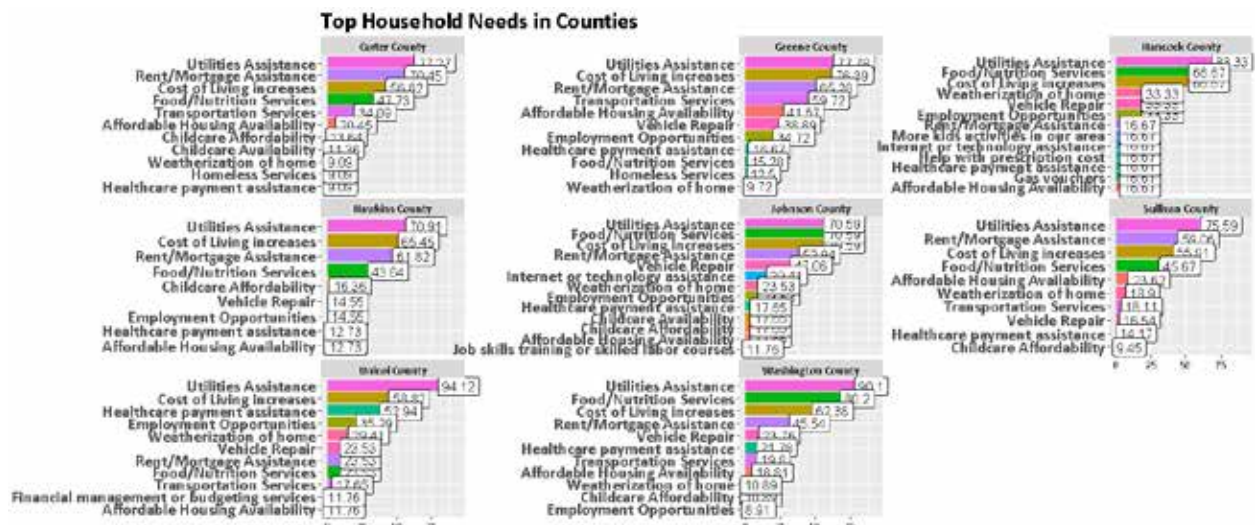


The bottom needs survey respondents were not needed in their community are listed below.

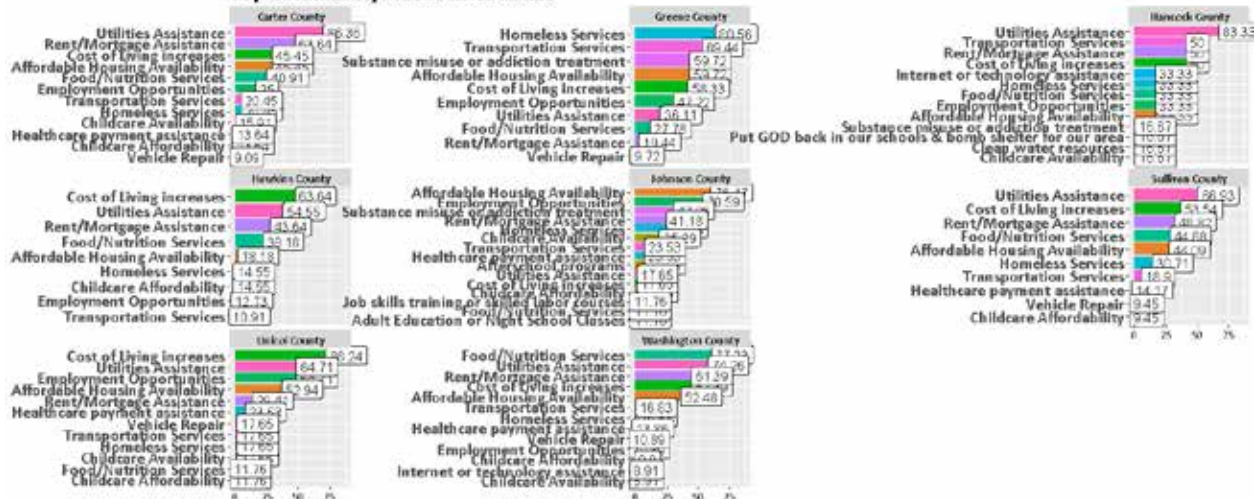


County Household Needs

Top household needs by county are listed below. These results are limited in their interpretability due to the limited number of surveys received from some counties and may or may not be representative of the counties as a whole. The results follow the overall results from the UETHDA region as a whole.



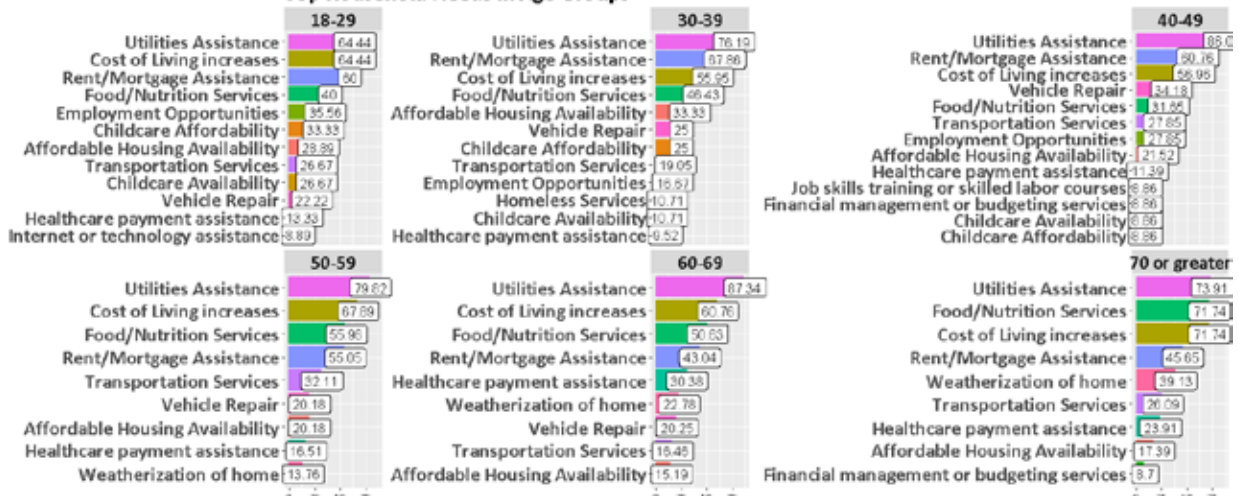
Top Community Needs in Counties



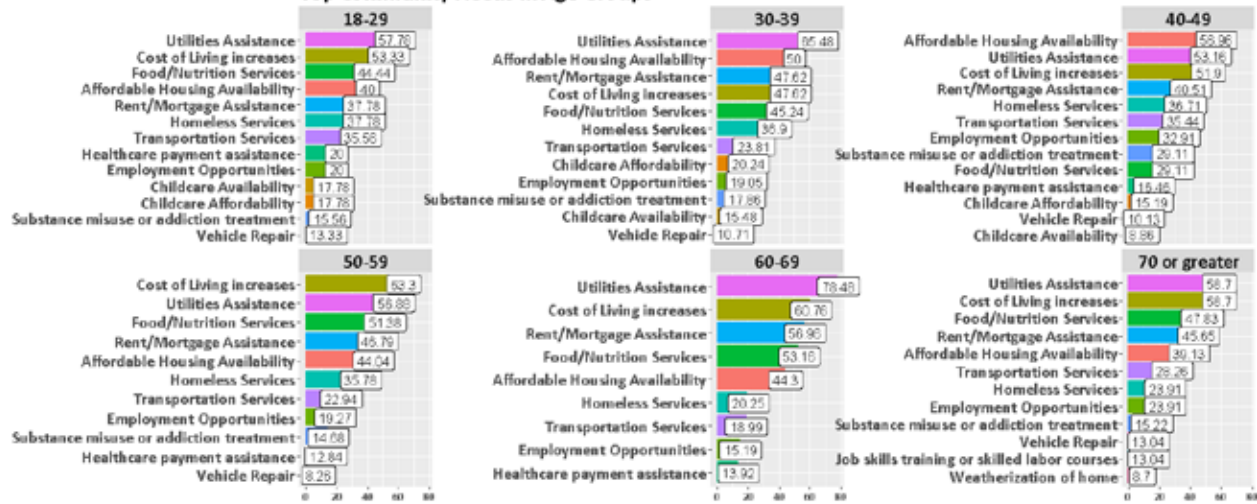
Age Group Needs

Results were also grouped by ages with the top four household needs being the same just in different orders, with Utilities assistance ranking first for all. The younger groups were more likely to respond that their household needs centered around housing while the older groups were more likely to have food/nutrition services and transportation needs.

Top Household Needs in Age Groups



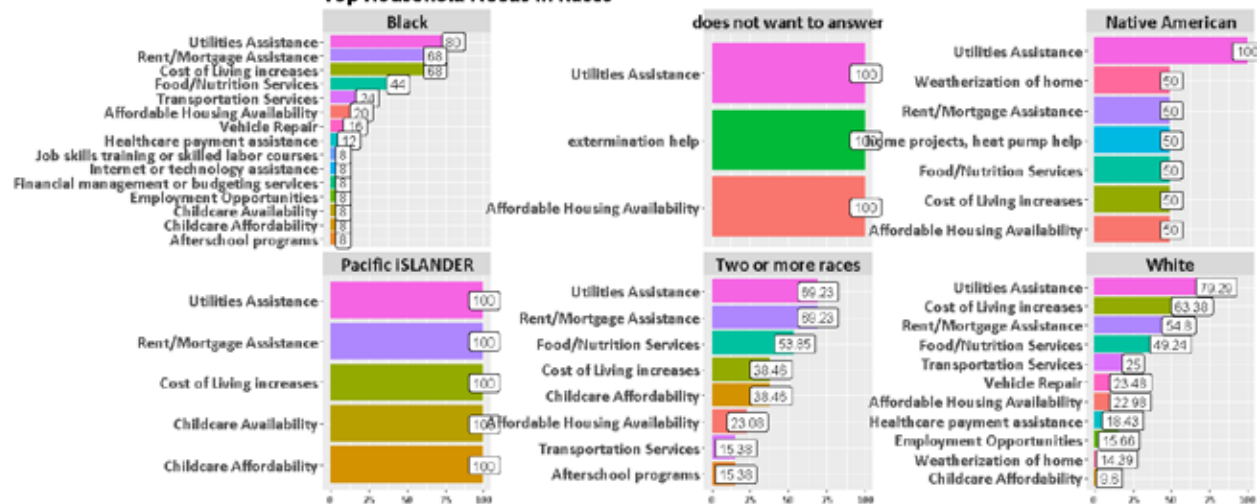
Top Community Needs in Age Groups



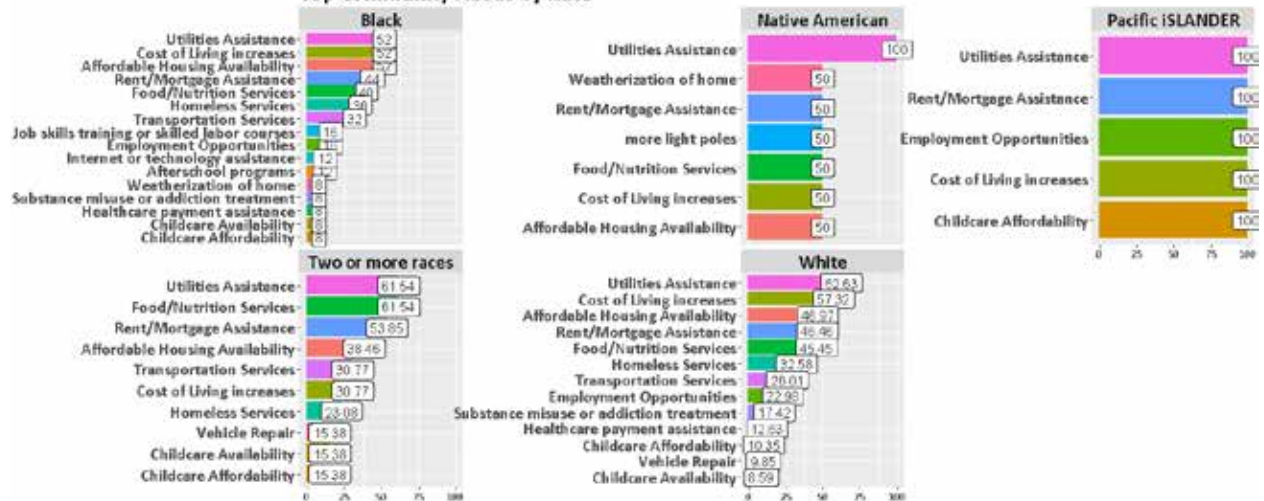
Race/Ethnicity

There were no real differences in needs by race or ethnic group though Hispanics were most likely to state employment opportunities are a household need than non-Hispanics.

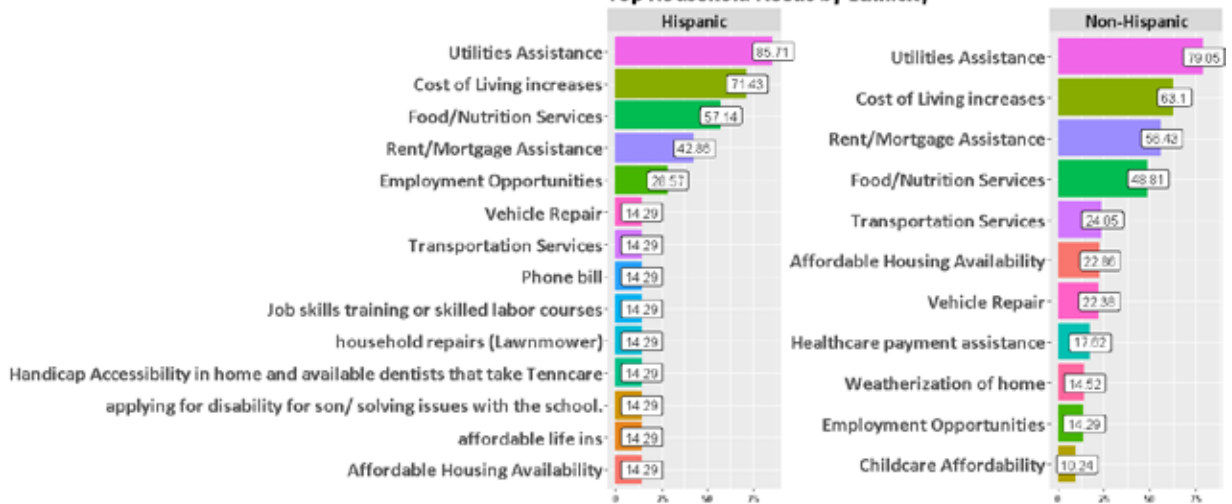
Top Household Needs in Races



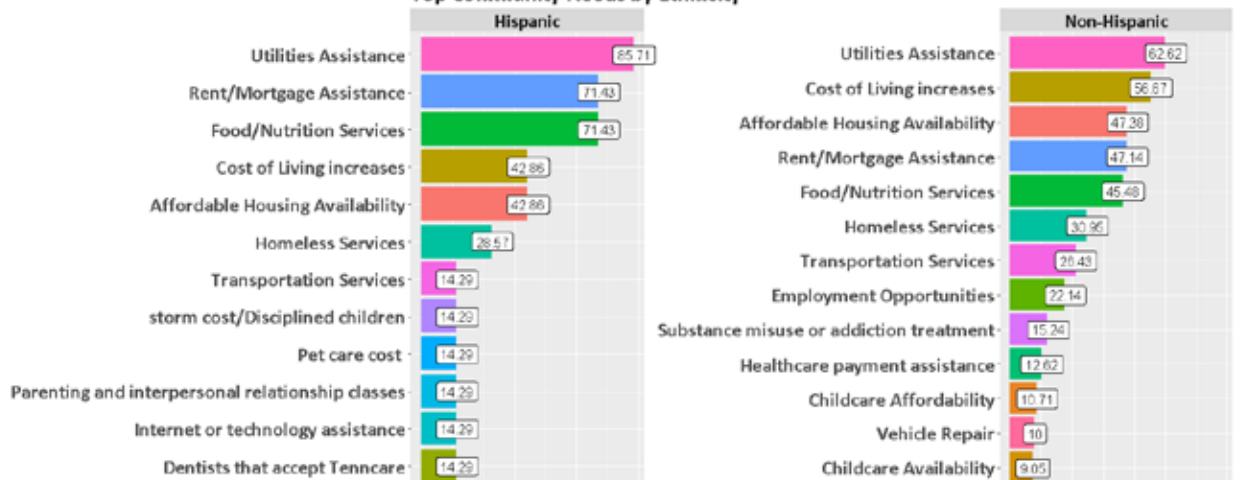
Top Community Needs by Race



Top Household Needs by Ethnicity



Top Community Needs by Ethnicity



Hurricane Helene

The UETHDA service area was impacted by Hurricane Helene and the devastating flooding in late September of 2024. Survey takers were asked what, if any, impact the hurricane had on their immediate household. Carter County had the highest percentage of respondents saying they were directly impacted at 50%, followed by Johnson County at 47.06% and Unicoi County at 41.16%. The most common impact type for all counties were power outages or food loss, followed by flooding and water damage, and tree/property damage. Housing Displacement was thankfully uncommon with only three respondents across all counties saying their household was directly impacted in this way.



Head Start Parents Survey

Parents of Head Start students were asked their level of satisfaction they had with the UETHDA Head Start program at the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year. Responses were collected from each classroom with Dobbins classrooms having the highest number of responses.

Parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the environment of their child's classroom with a 4.76 out of 5 satisfaction level.

2. Please rate your satisfaction level with the environment of your child's classroom (positive space, supportive environment, classroom art, etc.).



Parents were also highly satisfied with the classroom staff's welcoming attitude, scoring a 4.69 out of 5 level of satisfaction.

3. Please rate your satisfaction level with classroom staff making you feel welcome in the classroom when dropping your child off, at Parent Meetings, Parent/Teacher Conferences, etc. (are they smiling, friendly, etc.).



Parents' confidence in their child's kindergarten readiness was also high but had a more spread distribution than the classroom environment and staff's welcoming attitude. Overall confidence for kindergarten readiness was 4.52 out of 5, but there were many more 4 levels than the previous two questions. This overall readiness score was higher than the previous school year's level of 4.22. When asked what concerns they had about their child not being ready for kindergarten, issues related to using the bathroom,

their child being only 4 years of age, and behavior issues with their child. Socialization with other students was an issue that also appeared more on this year's survey than in previous years.

4. How confident are you that your child is ready for Kindergarten?



The health services were also highly rated, scoring a 4.82 out of 5 level of satisfaction from Head Start parents.

6. What is your level of satisfaction with the health services your child has received?



Head Start parents were also highly satisfied with the family services they received through UETHDA Head Start, with a 4.79 out of 5 satisfaction level.

7. What is your level of satisfaction with the family services (resources provided, Family Partnership Agreement, home visits, etc.) your family has received?



The Head Start Teaching Staff scored 4.63 out of 5 satisfaction level, while the Family Engagement Specialist had a 4.86 out of 5 satisfaction level.

8. How satisfied are you with your child's teaching staff?

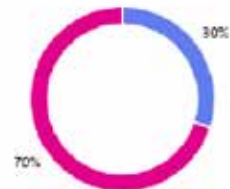
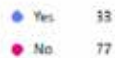


9. How satisfied are you with your child's Family Engagement Specialist?



The majority of parents or guardians did not attend any parent curriculum sessions during the 2024-2025 school year. When asked why they could not attend, the most common response was work schedule, other schedule related issues, and lack of reliable transportation.

10. Did you attend any of the Parent Curriculum sessions? These are 4 separate sessions focusing on Active Parenting - First Five Year curriculum.



All but 29 survey respondents said that they attended a parent meeting during the school year. The most common reason why they couldn't attend a parent meeting was also work-related issues. Many parents who could not attend stated that they received consistent feedback from the teaching staff regarding their students.

12. Did you attend any Parent Meetings? Parent Meetings are held monthly and include different topics or may be a Family Engagement Event that includes fun activities that include students.



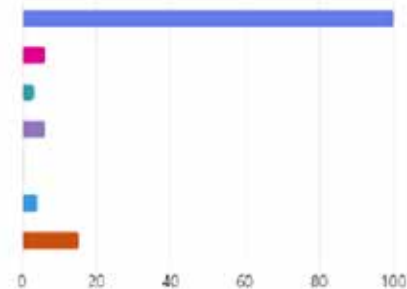
Parents were asked how likely they were to recommend UETHDA Head Start to someone else. 92 out of 110 (83.6%) parents said they would Definitely Recommend Head Start for another child, and only 2 parents would not recommend UETHDA Head Start for another child.

14. How likely would you be to recommend other children attend UETHDA Head Start, with 1=Would Not Recommend; 2=Most Likely Not Recommend; 3=Neither; 4=Most Likely Recommend; 5=Definitely Recommend



Lastly, parents were asked how they preferred to communicate with for upcoming events in their student's classroom with the overwhelming majority preferring Facebook.

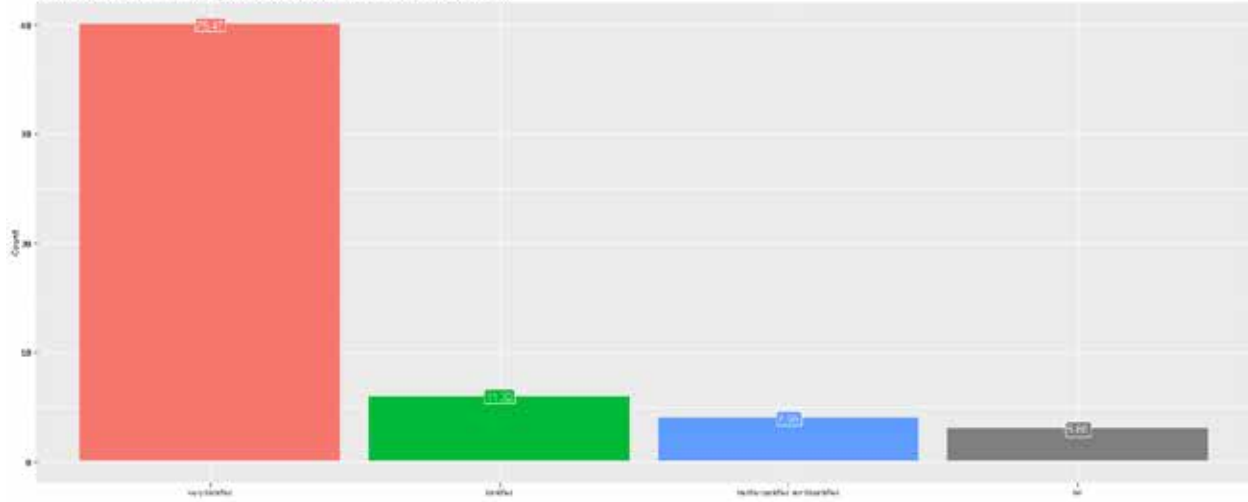
16. Which of the social media platforms below, do you prefer we use when communicating with you? (Check all that apply)



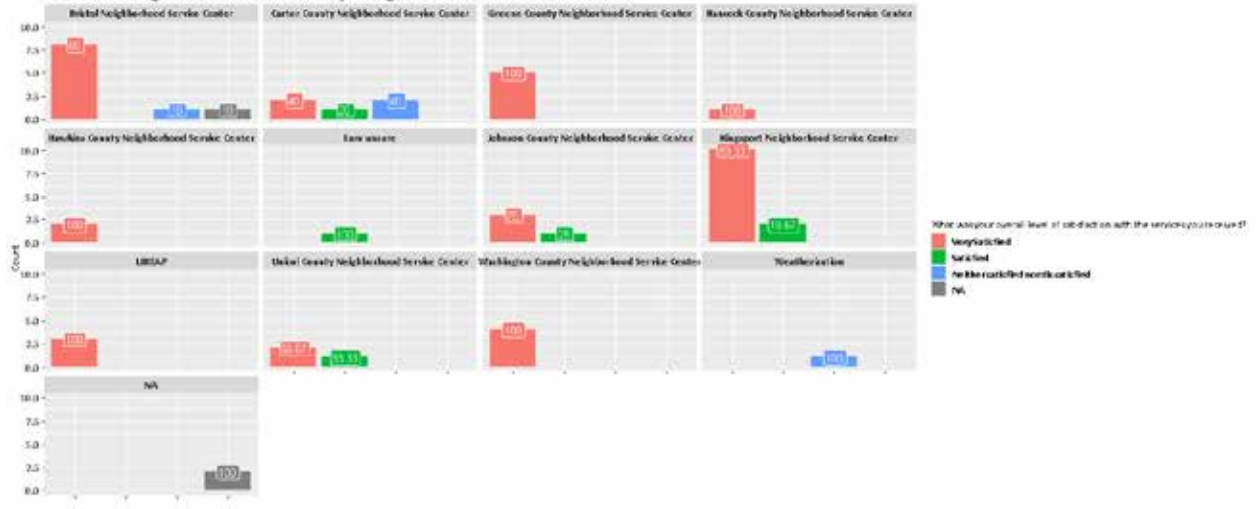
Neighbor Satisfaction Survey

During the 2024 Fiscal Year, neighbors were asked to fill out an anonymous survey about their level of satisfaction with the services they received from UETHDA. This was conducted on a self-service tablet device away from the neighborhood service centers employees to promote honesty and unbiased observed responses. Neighbors were overwhelmingly "Very Satisfied" with the service they received from UETHDA, with a 75.47% response rate. Only 7.57% of neighbors were less than Satisfied with the service they received and 0% of neighbors were Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied.

FY2024 Overall Neighbor Satisfaction with Service



FY2024 Neighbor Satisfaction by Neighborhood Service Center





Upper East Tennessee
Human Development Agency