WILLIAMS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

HEALTH EQUITY REPORT

December 2022

2022

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Public Health
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Williams County Health District

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What is Health? What is Health Equity?

While there are many ways to describe health, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as, "... a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1946). While reaching a state of complete well-being is necessary to thrive, not all people are given the opportunity to obtain this level of health in their lifetimes. This unequal distribution of health opportunity threatens health equity, which is, "... the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2022). Health inequity is an avoidable outcome caused by many different factors.

Health equity requires a fair and just opportunity to reach optimal health. While health equality focuses on giving everyone the same exact tools and opportunities to achieve optimal health, health equity recognizes different people will need different levels of support to reach their health goals. This is demonstrated in Figure 1 below.

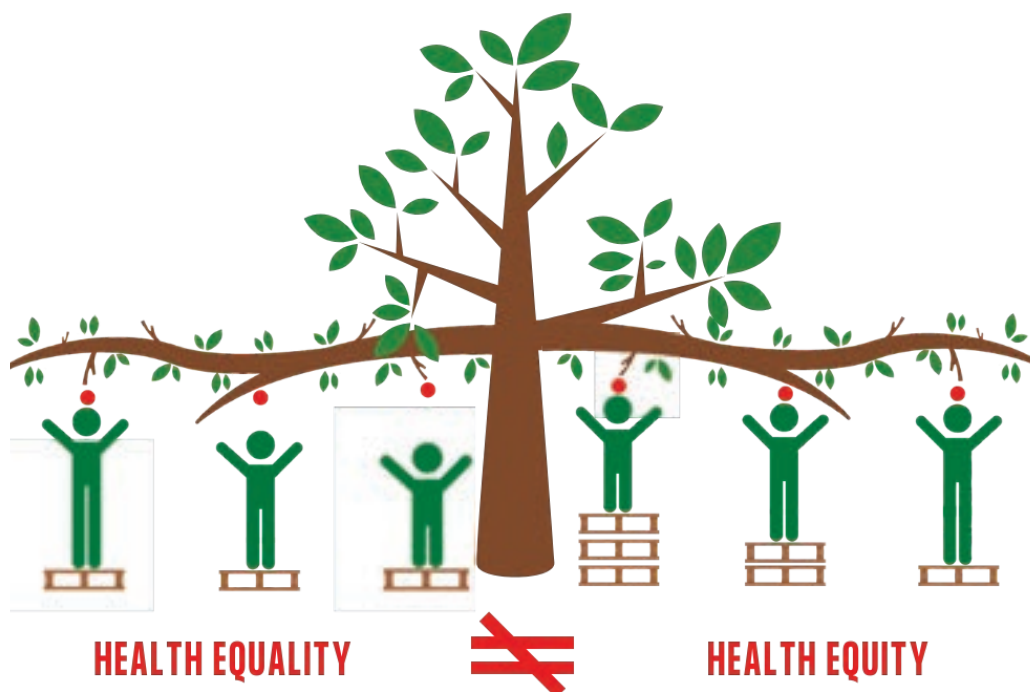**HEALTH EQUALITY** ≠ **HEALTH EQUITY**

Figure 1: Health equality and health equity are not the same. Health equity involves giving people proportional support based on their starting points.

What Impacts Health?
THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The social determinants of health are, "conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes" (CDC, 2021). Achieving good health consists of more than having access to healthcare – this is only one social determinant of health. Other determinants include health behaviors, built environments, and socioeconomic conditions. This is shown in Figure 3 below; only 20% of health outcomes are due to clinical healthcare, while 80% of health outcomes are determined by the combination of physical environment, health behaviors, and socioeconomic factors (Ohio Department of Health, 2022). The social determinants of health do not act independently of each other. Socioeconomic factors can influence where

someone lives, which can influence their access to health care, which can influence their health behaviors. There are many webs within the social determinants of health that can be formed to produce health outcomes. The social determinants of health contribute to health inequities when factors like poverty, lack of education, and lack of access to health care are not equally distributed in a community. Addressing health inequities needs to involve addressing the social determinants of health in order to be successful.
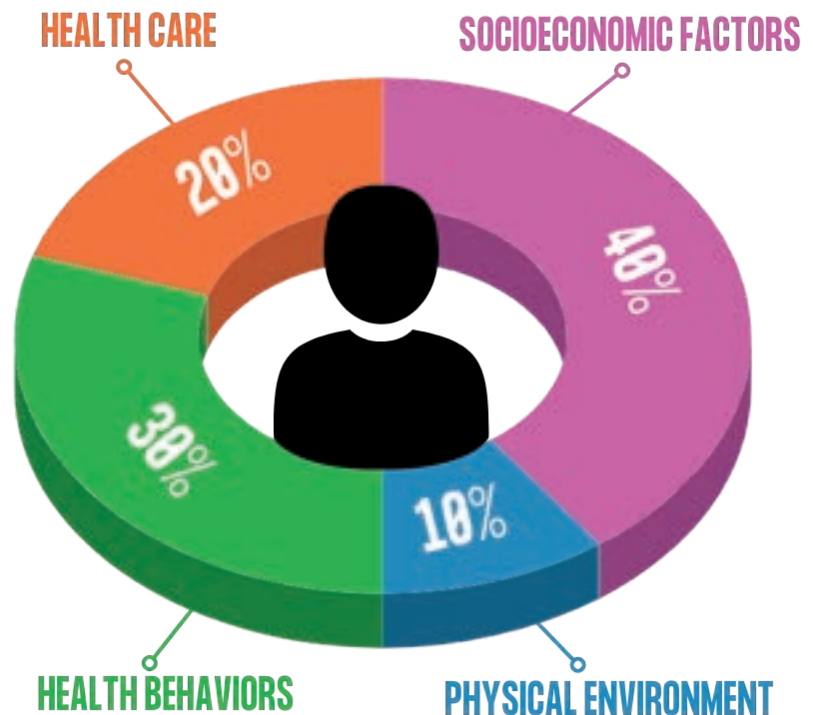

Figure 2: Health is more than clinical health care. 80% of health outcomes are due to factors outside of a physician's office.

Williams County Demographics

Williams County is a rural county located in the northwest corner of Ohio approximately 60 miles from the nearest metropolitan areas of Toledo, Ohio and Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 2020, the population was 36,760 residents living within 7 municipalities with 35% of the population residing in the two largest communities of Montpelier and Bryan. The county has seven public school districts. In 2020, the median age in Williams County was 41.4 years. The youth population under 18 years was 8,369, and 25–34-year-olds make up the largest age group with 12.1% of the population. Williams County race demographics are predominantly white with 92% of the population being white. Minority groups include 1% Black or African American, <1% Asian, <1% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1% two or more races, and <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Additionally, 5% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

Data Collection

Data for this report was collected on April 25, 2022 through the Community Wellbeing: Social Determinants of Health dashboard available through the DataOhio portal and the Ohio Department of Health. This source uses census tract data as well as data from the CDC and the American Community Survey to look closer at the five domains under the social determinants of health: economic vitality, neighborhood and physical environment, health care access and quality, education access and quality, and social and community environment. Within the five domains are over 100 community attributes that can be used to better inform public health decision-making at the local level. Supplemental data was obtained through the 2022 Williams County Community Health Assessment. Williams County average age of death data was collected from death certificates from the years from 2015-2020 from the Ohio Public Health Information Warehouse.

Census Tract Overview

Williams County consists of nine census tracts depicted below. A census tract is the smallest area from which we can gather population data. They are subdivisions of the county given a unique number code. Census tracts average about 4,000 inhabitants.
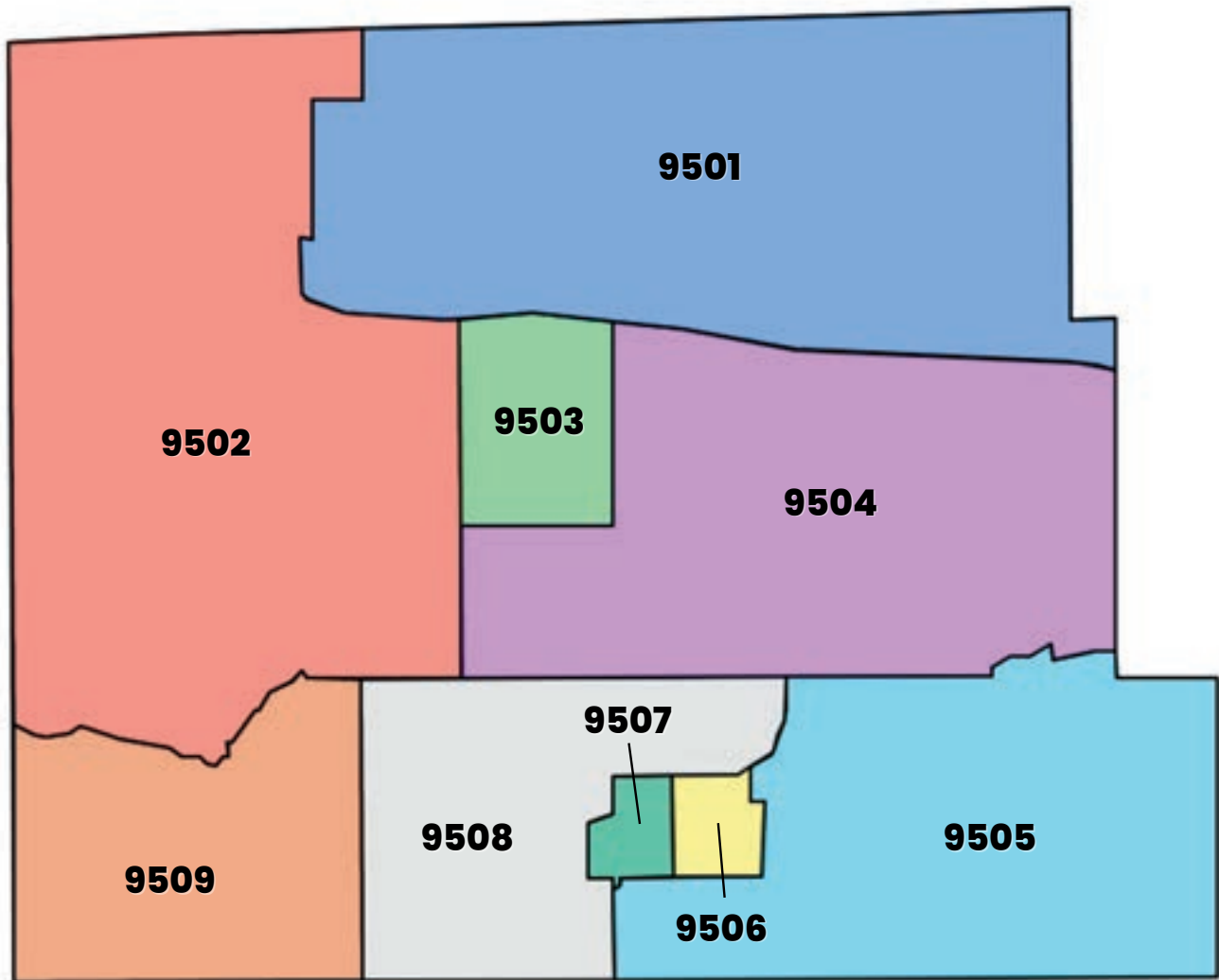

Figure 3: Map of census tracts in Williams County

9501: Pioneer area

9502: Edon area

9503: Montpelier area

9504: West Unity area

9505: Stryker area

9506: East Bryan area

9507: West Bryan area

9508: Center area

9509: Edgerton area

Economic Vitality

The Economic Vitality category includes factors that impact economic stability. For this report, poverty rates, median household income, and unemployment rates were analyzed.

POVERTY RATES

Poverty is one of the most important indicators of health; those with lower incomes have more barriers accessing medical care and higher rates of unhealthy behaviors often due to challenging home and community environments. Poverty rates show the percentage of people or families whose income is considered too low to cover basic needs. Children who experience poverty experience *toxic stress,* which can harm a child's development and increase their risk of chronic illnesses like heart disease and mental health problems later in life (Francis et al., 2018). Poverty rates in Williams County are not equally distributed. This creates inequities in health outcomes due to poverty.
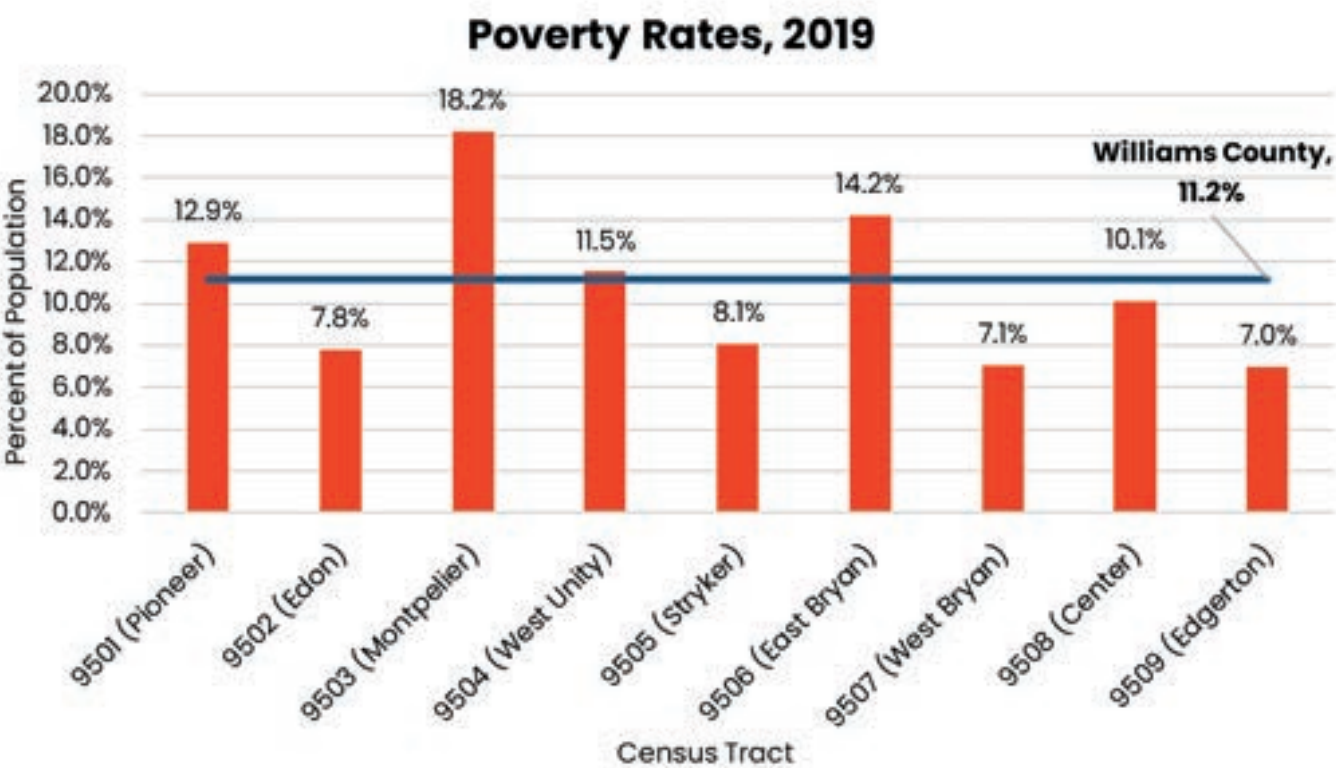

Figure 4.1: Overall poverty rates and poverty rates for children under 5. Data collected from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

Economic Vitality

The highest overall poverty rates can be found in the Montpelier (18.2%) and East Bryan (14.2%) census tracts. The highest child poverty rates can be found in the West Unity (35.8%) and Montpelier (34.4%) census tracts. There is an 11% spread between the census tracts with the highest and lowest overall poverty rates and a 28.4% spread between the highest and lowest non-zero child poverty rates. The highest overall poverty rate is over 4% higher than the Ohio average and over 12% higher for the poverty rates for children under 5. This wide range of poverty rates in Williams County has an effect on health outcomes by census tract. When looking at self-reported health status, Montpelier, West Unity, and East Bryan have the 1st, 3rd, and 4th highest rates of fair or poor health, respectively. Similar trends can be seen in self-reported mental health status.
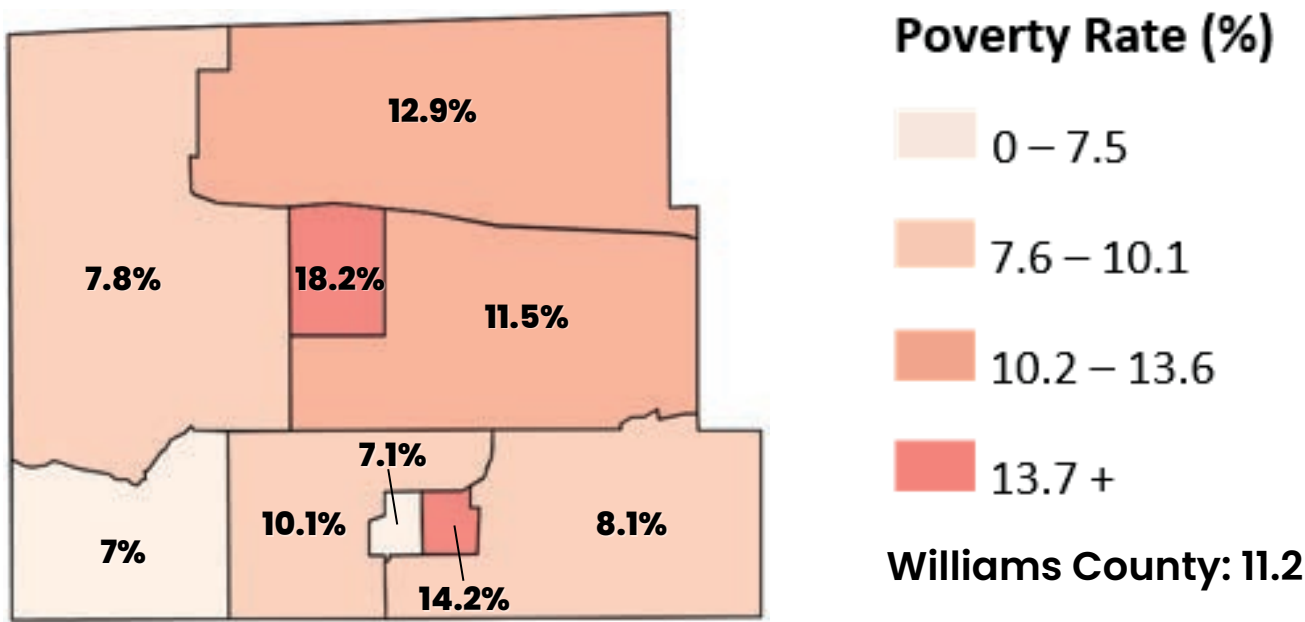
Figure 4.2: Map of the poverty rates in Williams County. Data obtained from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income in Williams County was $52,458 in 2020, but this is unevenly distributed (CHA). There is an over $25,000 difference between the highest median income and the lowest. While the effects on health of those with low incomes are easier to grasp, areas with higher income inequality see population-wide affects like stalls in economic growth and worse social cohesion (Cingano, 2014). These population-wide affects impact everyone, not just those who are economically worse off.

Median Household Income ($)

- $0- $51,954
- $51,955- $53,727
- $53,728- $58,654
- $58,655 +

$54,792

$58,235　　$53,727

$52,159

$51,750

$52,708　$59,071　$36,943

$62,500

Williams County: $52,458

Figure 4.3: Map of the distribution of income in Williams County. Data obtained from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Unemployment directly impacts income and access to health insurance, both of which are drivers of healthcare use and access. The unemployment rate in Williams County was 3.8 in February of 2022 (CHA). Additionally, employment issues interact with the social determinants of health and play a role in health inequities (Pratap et al., 2021). Lack of employment and access to good, full-time jobs can also increase "deaths of despair", which include suicides, drug or alcohol-related deaths, and deaths related to general poor physical and mental health (2021). In Williams County, the highest rates of unemployment are found in Montpelier (9.65%) and Edgerton (4.8%). It is important to keep in mind that simple unemployment rates may not be capturing the entire impact that employment issues has on health outcomes; underemployment and low-paying jobs are both important pieces of this puzzle but are not captured in this measure.
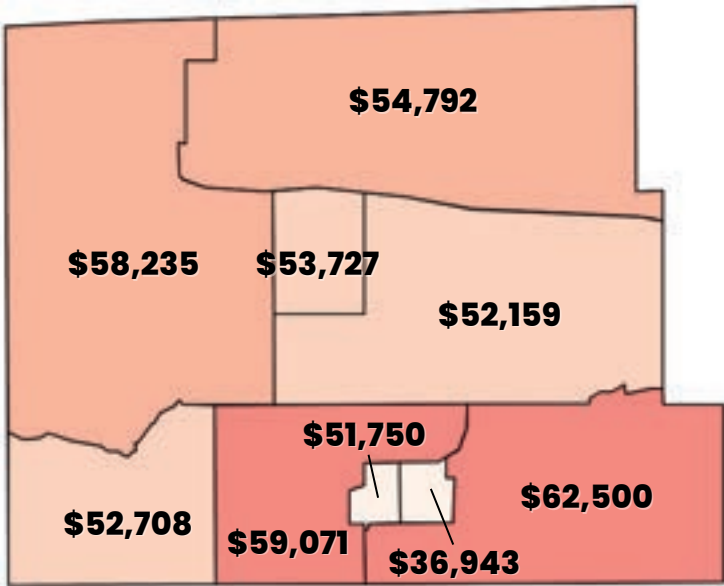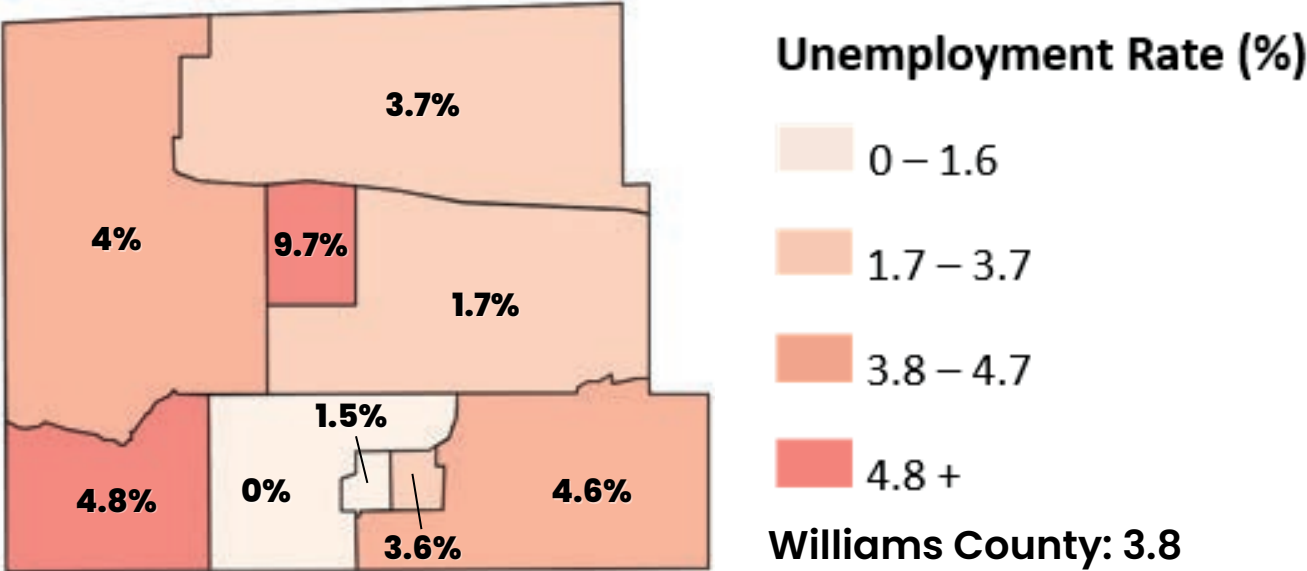

Figure 4.4: Map of unemployment rates in Williams County. Data obtained from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

Neighborhood & Physical Environment

The Neighborhood and Physical Environment category includes factors like safe housing, access to healthy foods, and the quality and safety of streets, sidewalks, and parks. Specifically for this report, percentages of households without a vehicle, households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and rates of renter vs. owner occupied housing were analyzed.

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP STATUS

Having access to a vehicle is essential to accessing needs like healthy food, quality health care, employment, and social activities. The lack of public transportation in Williams County makes vehicle accessibility extremely important to its population. Purchasing or leasing a car and maintaining that car has become both increasingly expensive and necessary; "People without automobiles cannot access employment, complete errands, or generally move around in the same manner as the vast majority of their fellow residents" (King et al., 2019). In Williams County, the areas with the lowest vehicle access rates are East Bryan (8.1% without a vehicle) and Montpelier (7.5% without a vehicle). This creates further barriers for residents in these areas compared to areas like Center and Pioneer/Alvordton, which are areas with the highest vehicle accessibility rates. The inability to easily travel for some residents in Williams County is furthering the gaps of opportunity already seen in the area.

Households Without a Vehicle (%)

	0 − 2.1
	2.2 − 4.0
	4.1 − 6.6
	6.7 +
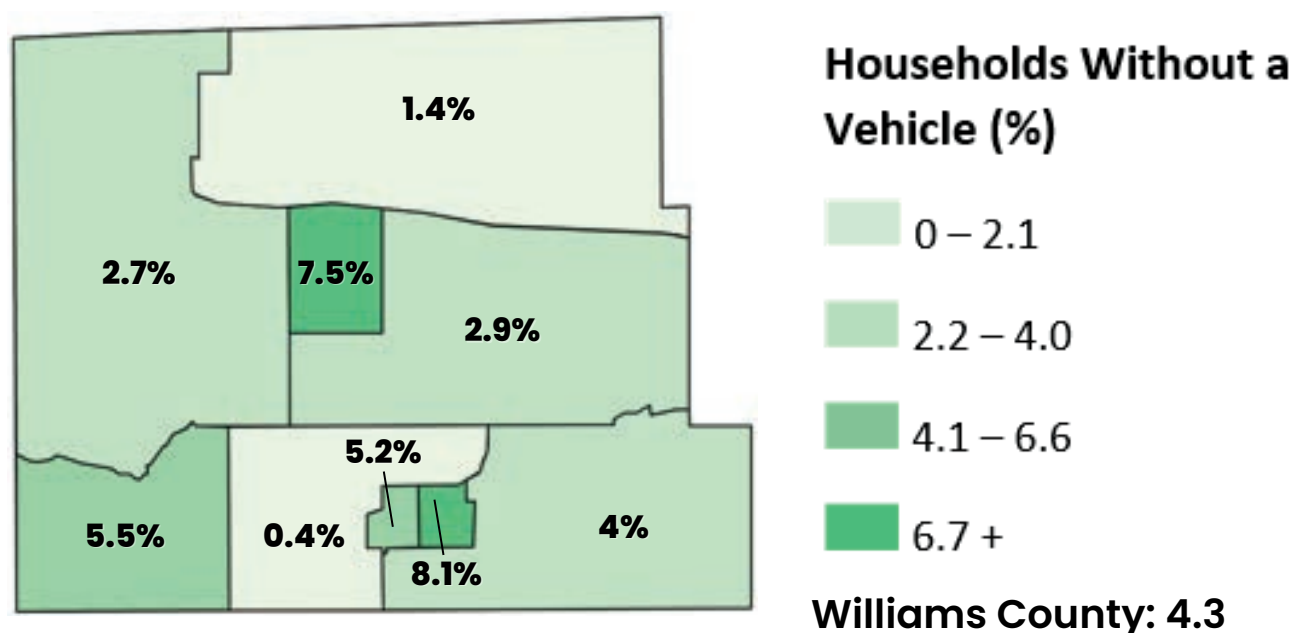
Williams County: 4.3

Figure 5.1: Map of the percentage of households without a vehicle in Williams County. Data obtained from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

SNAP benefits provide access to certain foods and are accessible to people who fall into certain eligibility guidelines. Measuring the rates of use of SNAP benefits can be an indicator of essential social service utilization.

The highest rates of SNAP benefit utilization naturally are seen in the areas with higher rates of poverty and lower median incomes; East Bryan has an almost 21% utilization rate and Montpelier has a 14% utilization rate. SNAP has kept millions of people out of poverty, making it an important resource for struggling people and families.

All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits, 2019

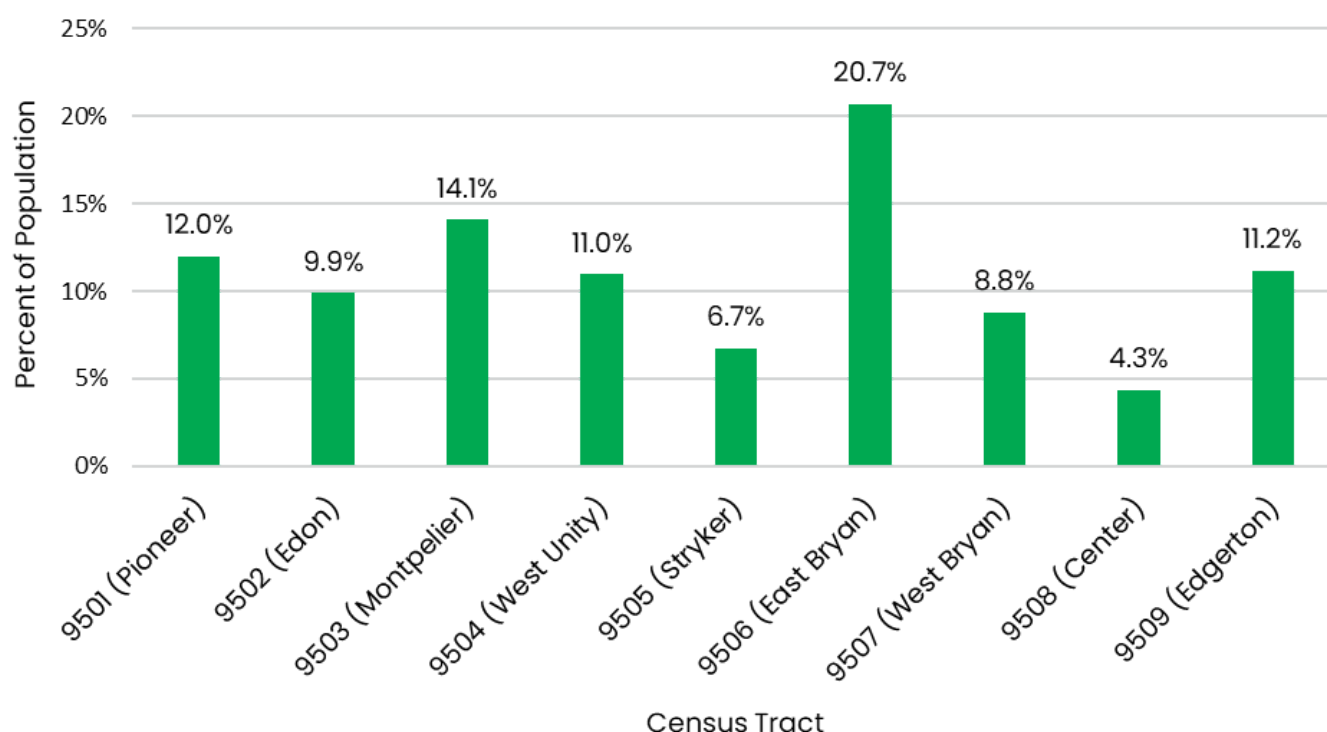
Figure 5.2 Percentages of households receiving SNAP benefits. Data collected from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

RENTING VS HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES

Those who rent are more likely to be exposed to things like rodents, heating and cooling issues, mold, lead paint, and other potentially dangerous exposures out of their control that can have a negative impact on their health (Milken Institute School of Public Health, 2018). Owning a home is also one of the most effective ways to build both personal wealth and generational wealth, both of which have an impact on health outcomes (Braveman et al., 2018).

Overall, there were around 16,600 housing units in Williams County. Around 92% of people own their homes, and the average rent per month is almost $700. East Bryan has the highest proportion of renter occupied homes at almost 40%. This is in stark contrast to other areas like Center (4.8%) and Edon (11.4%). Around 42% of residents report spending more than 30% of their income on their housing (CHA). Considering the connection between owning a home, wealth, and health, these disparate differences are concerning.
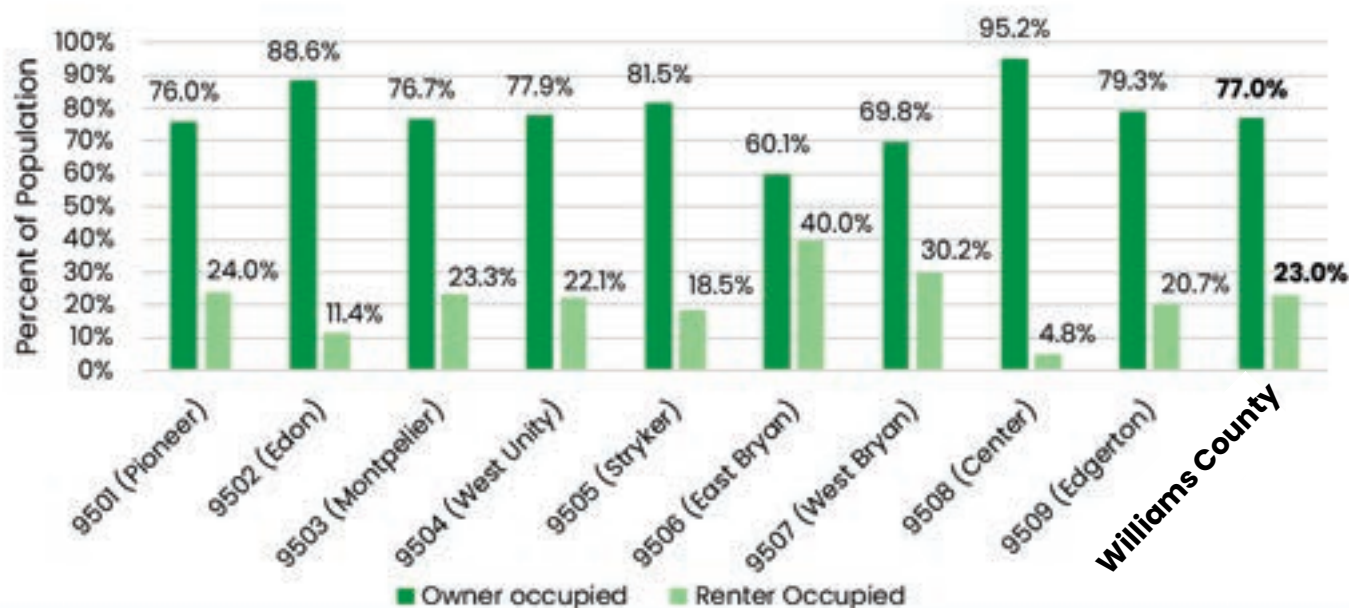

Housing Occupied Status in Williams County (2019)

Figure 5.3 Renter occupied versus owner occupied housing. Data collected from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

Education Access & Quality

The Education Access and Quality category includes data regarding the connection between educational attainment and income, as well as general educational attainment rates ranging from less than a high school degree to a bachelor's degree. The ways educational attainment can impact health are multifaceted. Higher levels of education tend to yield higher incomes, which opens up more opportunities to both engage in healthier behaviors and access affordable and quality health care. Overall, education is an important social determinant of health.

HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE ATTAINMENT

At the age of 27, people who did not graduate high school were 4 times more likely to have poor health and 24 times more likely to experience four or more negative outcomes than those who graduated high school (Lansford et al., 2016). Around 91% of Williams County Adults 25 years and over had a high school diploma or higher (CHA). The areas with the highest percentage of people without high school degrees are Montpelier (almost 18%) Pioneer/Alvordton (13%), and Center (10%). The difference between the highest and lowest percentage areas is 14%, creating a disparity in the health effects of this determinant.
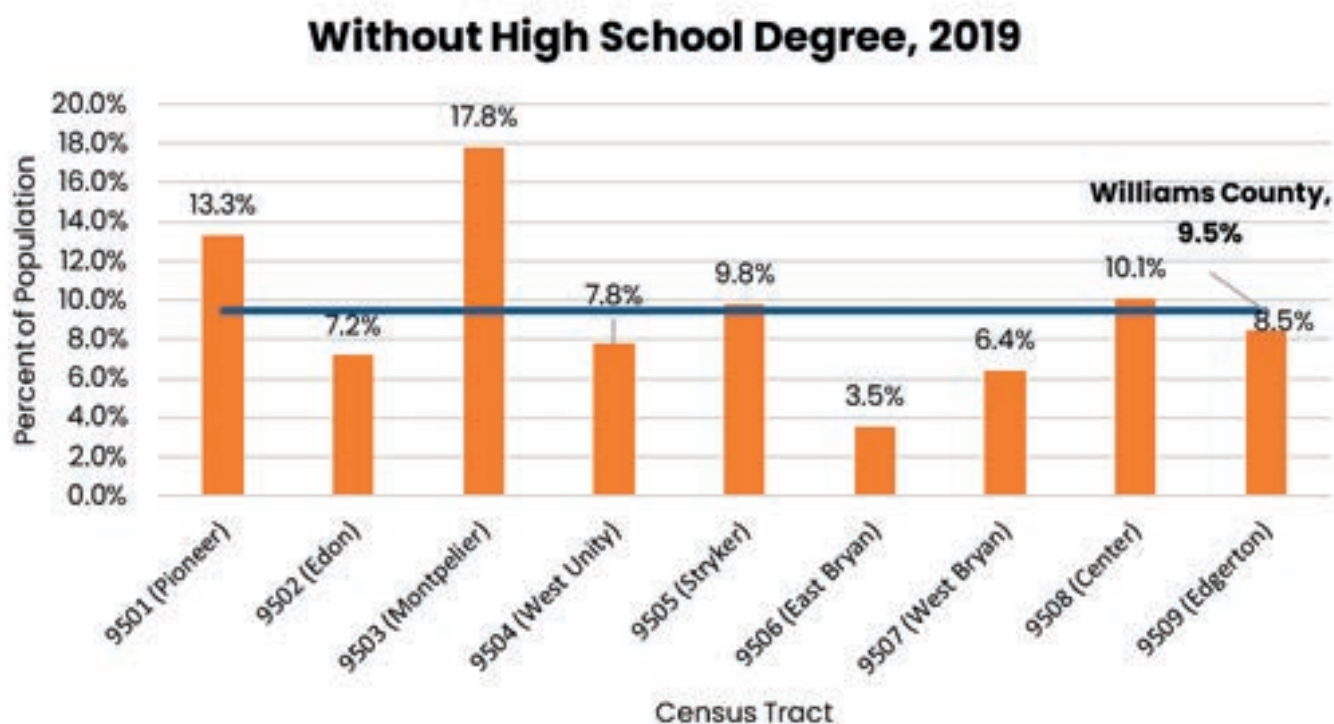
Figure 6.1: General educational attainment by census tract in Williams County. Data collected from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

COLLEGE DEGREE ATTAINMENT

While earning a college degree may not directly impact a person's health, the higher levels of income and differences in perceived social status that are the result of degree attainment can impact a person's health. On average, the salary of someone with a bachelor's degree is $26,000 more than someone with a high school degree and over $18,000 more than a person with an associate's degree (Stobierski, 2020).

Education Attainment by Census Tract (2019)
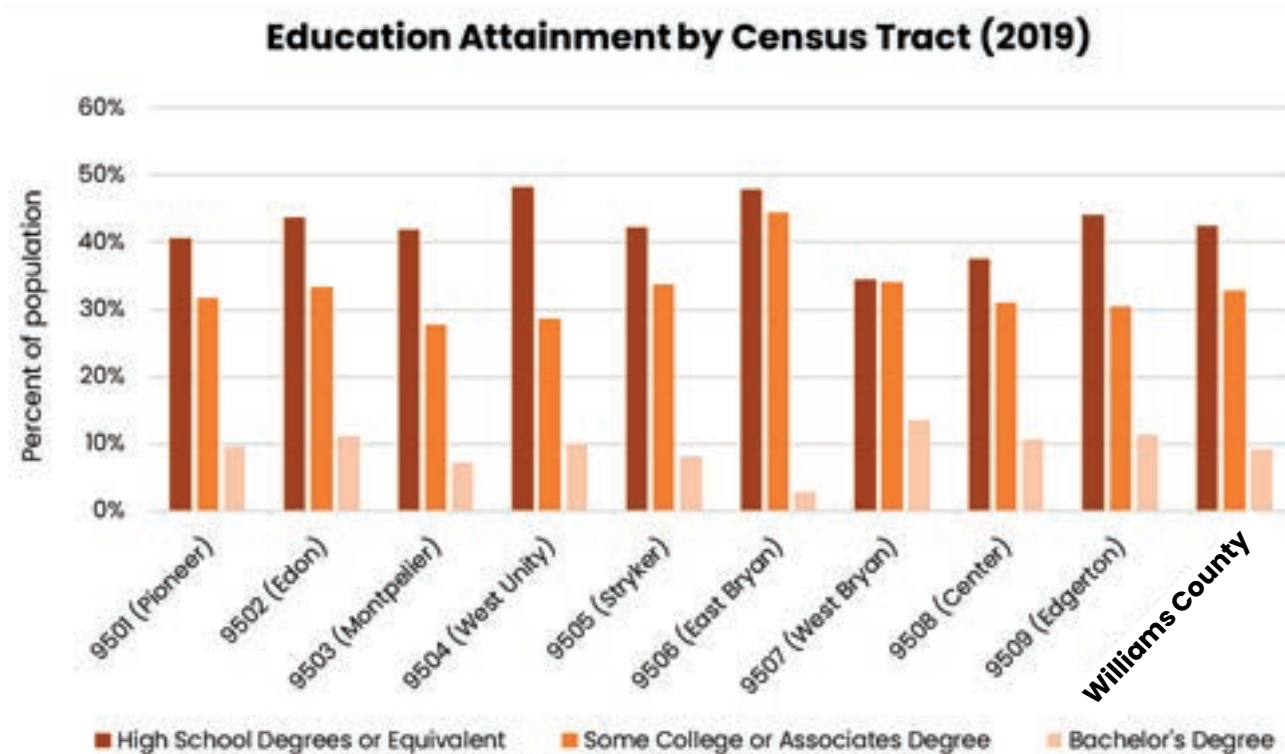
Figure 6.2: General educational attainment by census tract in Williams County. Data collected from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

In terms of unemployment rates, those with college degrees have lower rates than those with a high school degree or lower (2020). In Williams County, 15% of adults 25 years and over had at least a bachelor's degree (CHA). The areas with the lowest college degree attainment are East Bryan and Montpelier.

Social & Community Experiences

The Social and Community Experiences category seeks to demonstrate the connection between community and personal relationships and health. For this report, internet access and limited English-speaking households were analyzed.

POPULATION SPEAKING LIMITED ENGLISH

Speaking limited English creates barriers to accessing health care, impacts health literacy levels, and affects quality of care. *Health Literacy* is, "the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others" (CDC, 2022). With limited health literacy and institutional barriers to adequate, well-trained interpreters and cultural humility in our healthcare system, those who speak limited English experience extra hardships when making appointments, utilizing the healthcare system, and following medication instructions. In Williams County, 2.5% of people in the Montpelier area and 1.14% of people in the West Unity area speak limited English.

Population Speaking Limited English (%)

- 0 – 0.1
- 0.2 – 0.6
- 0.7 – 1.1
- 1.2 +

Williams County: 0.7

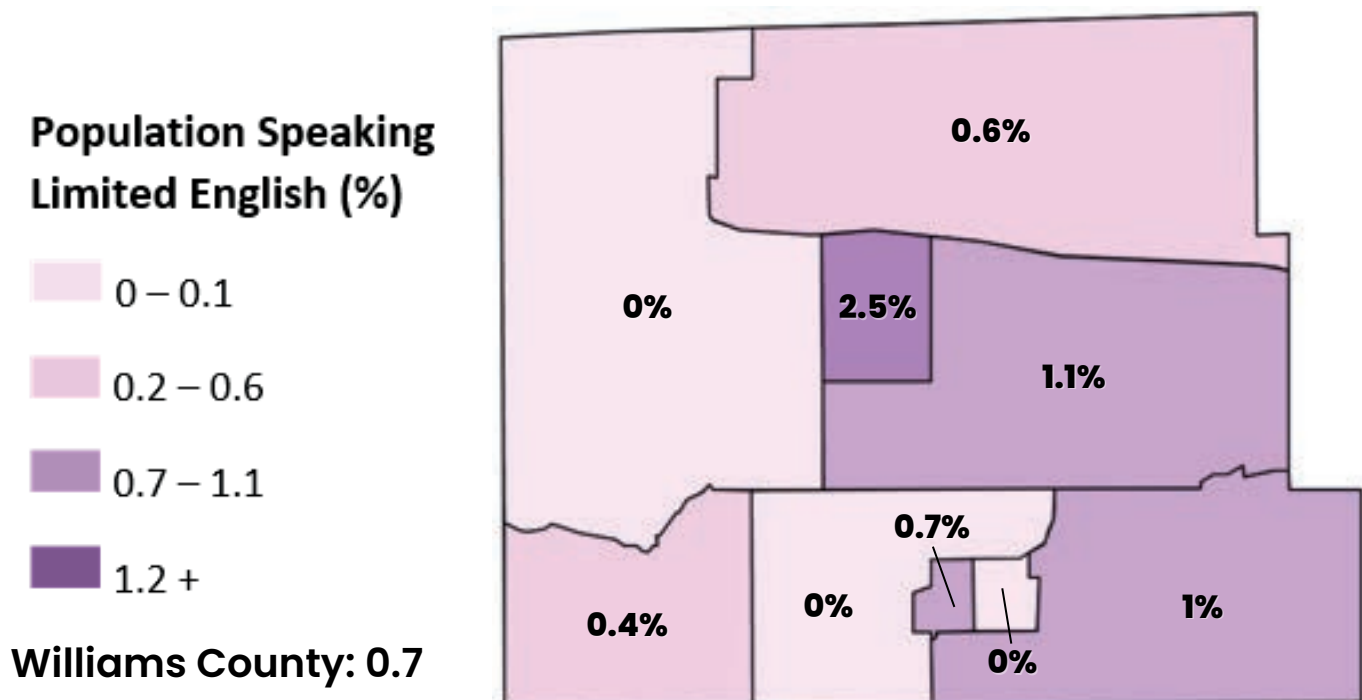Figure 7.1: Percentage of people who speak limited English in Williams County. Data collected from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

POPULATION WITH BROADBAND INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS

Over 50% of people use the internet to research health information, access their health insurance policies, or use telehealth services, especially due to the COVID–19 Pandemic. Aside from health information, having a broadband internet subscription allows people to access many different types of information as well as allows people to either work from home or access their education online (AHIMA Foundation, 2022). The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has found worse health outcomes like high obesity rates and lower physician access correlates to areas with lower rates of broadband internet subscriptions (2022). In 2021, the Broadband Pricing Index Report found the average cost of an internet subscription to be around $36 per month, with better plans averaging about $58, both of which can be a financial burden for lower income families.

In Williams County, 81% of households have broadband internet subscriptions, but there are disparities by both income and census tract. The East Bryan area has the lowest rates of internet subscriptions at around 76%, with Montpelier close behind at almost 79%. Over 90% of people making more than $75,000 a year have an internet subscription, while an average of 60% of people who make less than $20,000 a year have access to an internet subscription.
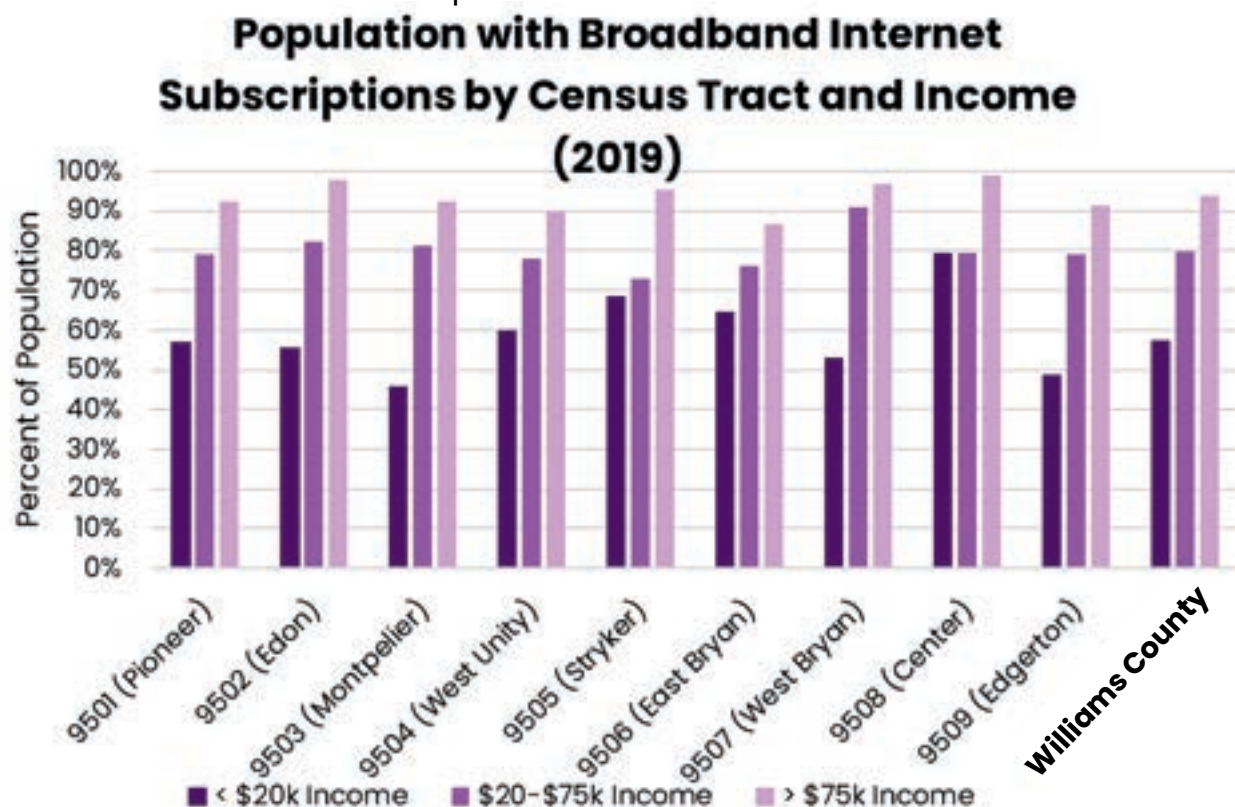
Figure 7.2: Population with broadband internet subscriptions by income in Williams County. Data collected from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

Average Age of Death by Census Tract

When analyzing data from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard, some areas are consistently found to be the most affected by these indicators. Specifically, the East Bryan and Montpelier areas are repeatedly found to have the worst rates of the different factors from the social determinants of health, including poverty levels, educational attainment, housing status, healthcare status, and more. While it is difficult to definitively establish a causal relationship between these indicators and health, correlations are found between key health indicators and the social determinants of health data in this report.

One of the strongest correlations between the indicators discussed in this report and real health outcomes can be seen when looking at average age of death in Williams County. The census tracts with a lower average age of death, like East Bryan and Montpelier, are consistently found to have worse outcomes in the indicators discussed in this report. The census tracts with a higher average age of death consistently fared better in this report's indicators. **Overall, the difference between the highest and lowest average age of death is around 6 years.**

Average Age of Death

- 0 – 74.4 Years
- 74.5 – 75.5 Years
- 75.6 – 78.4 Years
- 78.5 + Years

Williams County: 76.2

Figure 8.1: Map of the average age of death at birth in Williams County. Data obtained from the Ohio Public Health Information Warehouse Dashboard.

How Does Williams County Compare?

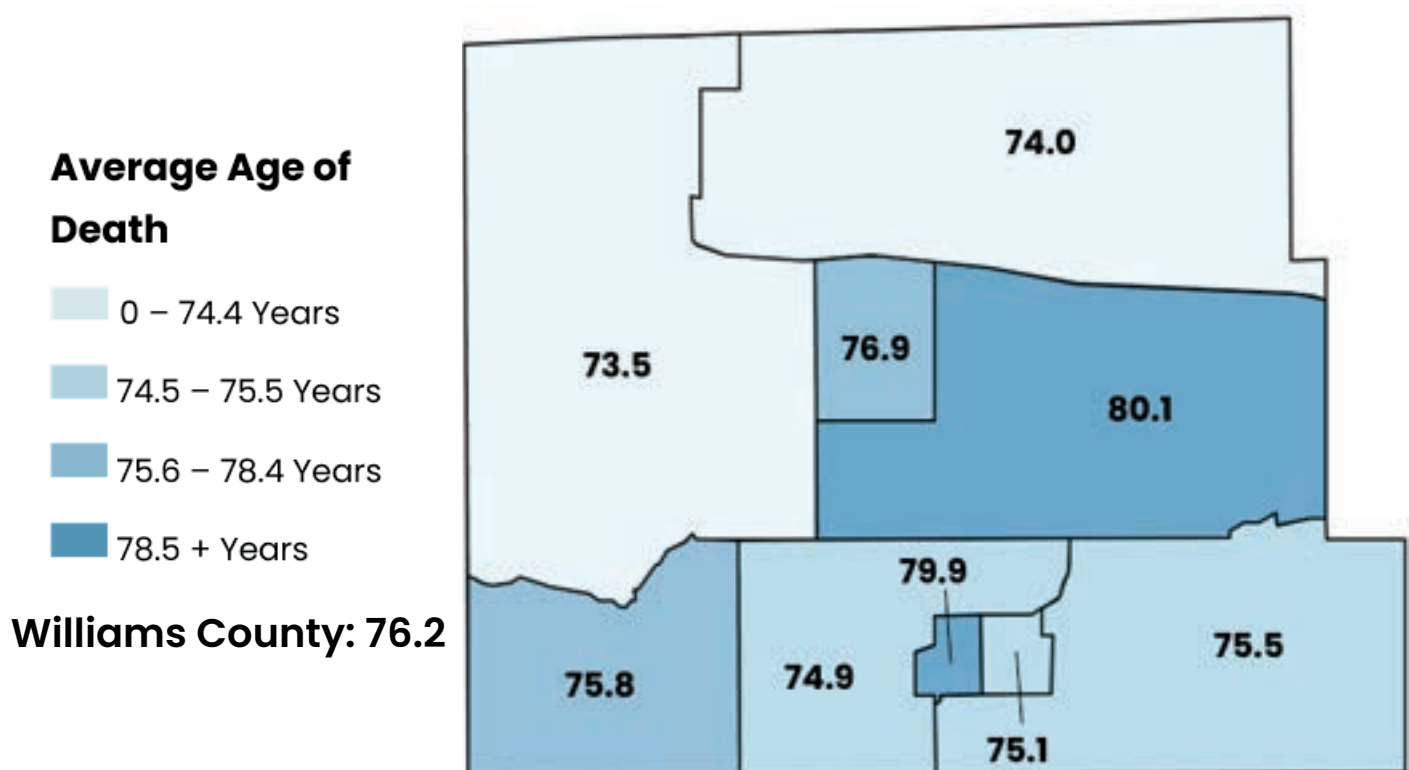The analysis of this data reveals concerning trends in terms of inequitably distributed negative social determinant of health metrics. However, Williams County's overall data is comparable to surrounding counties, including Fulton, Henry, and Defiance counties. The levels of health inequity and the trends seen in social determinant of health metrics are not unique to Williams County. This data provides insight to a wider issue affecting multiple areas.

	Williams County	Fulton County	Henry County	Defiance County
Poverty Rates	11.2%	7.9%	8.4%	10.2%
Median Income	$53,543	$63,550	$59,403	$60,010
Renter Occupied Housing	23%	20.9%	22.6%	23.7%
Without High School Degree	16.2%	11%	15.6%	9.8%
Unemployment Rate	3.8%	4%	3.1%	4.3%
Speaking Limited English	0.7%	1.6%	1%	1.5%

Figure 8.2: Social determinants of health data by county. Data obtained from the Social Determinants of Health dashboard.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Achieving health equity in Williams County would mean creating conditions where all members of our community have access to resources that enable them to live long and healthy lives regardless of income, educational attainment, employment status, or other metrics under the social determinants of health. The most effective policies and interventions that can be used to address health inequity would seek to change the social and economic conditions in which people in Williams County live. This report can be used to develop targeted population health interventions to areas in Williams County that need them.

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Appendix A: Economic Vitality Data

	9501 (Pioneer)	9502 (Edon)	9503 (Montpelier)	9504 (West Unity)	9505 (Stryker)	9506 (East Bryan)	9507 (West Bryan)	9508 (Center)	9509 (Edgerton)	Williams County
Poverty Rate	12.9%	7.8%	18.2%	11.5%	8.1%	14.2%	7.1%	10.1%	7%	11.2%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	7.8%	17.7%	34.5%	35.9%	15.2%	0%	21.9%	24.7%	7.4%	20%
Median Household Income	$54,792	$58,235	$53,727	$52,159	$62,500	$36,943	$51,750	$59,071	$52,708	$53,543
Unemployment Rate	3.7%	4%	9.7%	1.7%	4.6%	3.6%	1.5%	0%	4.8%	3.8%

Appendix B: Neighborhood & Environment Data

	9501 (Pioneer)	9502 (Edon)	9503 (Montpelier)	9504 (West Unity)	9505 (Stryker)	9506 (East Bryan)	9507 (West Bryan)	9508 (Center)	9509 (Edgerton)	Williams County
Households Without a Vehicle	1.4%	2.7%	7.5%	2.9%	4%	8.1%	5.2%	0.4%	5.5%	4.3%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	12%	9.9%	14.1%	11%	6.7%	20.7%	8.8%	4.3%	11.2%	--
Owner Occupied Housing	76%	88.6%	76.7%	77.9%	81.5%	60.1%	69.8%	95.2%	79.3%	77%
Renter Occupied Housing	24%	11.4%	23.3%	22.1%	18.5%	39.9%	30.2%	4.8%	20.7%	23%

Appendix C: Education Access & Quality Data

	9501 (Pioneer)	9502 (Edon)	9503 (Montpelier)	9504 (West Unity)	9505 (Stryker)	9506 (East Bryan)	9507 (West Bryan)	9508 (Center)	9509 (Edgerton)	Williams County
Without High School Degree	13.3%	7.2%	17.8%	7.8%	9.8%	3.5%	6.4%	10.1%	8.5%	9.5%
High School Degrees or Equivalent	40.6%	43.7%	41.9%	48.3%	42.2%	47.8%	34.4%	37.5%	44.1%	42.4%
Some College or Associate Degree	31.7%	33.4%	27.7%	28.6%	33.7%	44.5%	34.1%	31.1%	30.4%	32.9%
Bachelor's Degree	9.8%	11.1%	7.1%	9.9%	8.1%	2.8%	13.6%	10.7%	11.3%	9.2%

Appendix D: Healthcare Access & Quality Data

	9501 (Pioneer)	9502 (Edon)	9503 (Montpelier)	9504 (West Unity)	9505 (Stryker)	9506 (East Bryan)	9507 (West Bryan)	9508 (Center)	9509 (Edgerton)	Williams County
Average Age of Death	74.0	73.5	76.9	80.1	75.5	75.1	79.9	74.9	75.8	76.2
Uninsured (%)	5.6%	5.5%	6.2%	4.5%	3.3%	4.8%	4%	7.8%	0.5%	4.8%

Appendix E: Social & Community Experiences Data

	9501 (Pioneer)	9502 (Edon)	9503 (Montpelier)	9504 (West Unity)	9505 (Stryker)	9506 (East Bryan)	9507 (West Bryan)	9508 (Center)	9509 (Edgerton)	Williams County
Speaking Limited English	0.6%	0%	2.5%	1.1%	1%	0%	0.7%	0%	0.4%	0.7%
Broadband Internet Subscription (<$20k Income)	57.2%	55.5%	45.7%	60%	68.6%	64.5%	53.1%	79.3%	48.8%	57.3%
Broadband Internet Subscription (<$20-75k Income)	79.2%	82.3%	81.2%	77.9%	72.8%	76.4%	91.2%	79.6%	79.1%	79.8%
Broadband Internet Subscription (>$75k Income)	92.6%	97.7%	92.3%	90%	95.5%	86.7%	96.9%	98.9%	91.3%	94%

Appendix F: All Data by Census Tract

9501 (Pioneer Area)

Poverty Rate	12.9%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	7.8%
Unemployment Rate	3.7%
Median Household Income	$54,792
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	1.4%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	12%
Average Age of Death	74.0
Population with Medicaid Coverage	17.2%
Population Speaking Limited English	0.6%

9502 (Edon Area)

Poverty Rate	7.8%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	17.7%
Unemployment Rate	4%
Median Household Income	$58,235
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	2.7%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	9.9%
Average Age of Death	73.5
Population with Medicaid Coverage	10.1%
Population Speaking Limited English	0%

9503 (Montpelier Area)

Poverty Rate	18.2%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	34.5%
Unemployment Rate	9.7%
Median Household Income	$53,727
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	7.5%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	14.1%
Average Age of Death	76.9
Population with Medicaid Coverage	20.3%
Population Speaking Limited English	2.5%

9504 (West Unity Area)

Poverty Rate	11.5%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	35.9%
Unemployment Rate	1.7%
Median Household Income	$52,159
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	2.9%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	11%
Average Age of Death	80.1
Population with Medicaid Coverage	16%
Population Speaking Limited English	1.1%

Appendix F: All Data by Census Tract (cont.)

9505 (Stryker Area)

Poverty Rate	8.1%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	15.2%
Unemployment Rate	4.6%
Median Household Income	$62,500
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	4%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	6.7%
Average Age of Death	75.5
Population with Medicaid Coverage	9.8%
Population Speaking Limited English	1%

9506 (East Bryan area)

Poverty Rate	14.2%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	0%
Unemployment Rate	3.6%
Median Household Income	$36,943
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	8.1%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	20.7%
Average Age of Death	75.1
Population with Medicaid Coverage	20.1%
Population Speaking Limited English	0%

9507 (West Bryan Area)

Poverty Rate	7.1%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	21.9%
Unemployment Rate	1.5%
Median Household Income	$51,750
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	5.2%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	8.8%
Average Age of Death	79.9
Population with Medicaid Coverage	12.4%
Population Speaking Limited English	0.7%

9508 (Center Area)

Poverty Rate	10.1%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	24.7%
Unemployment Rate	0%
Median Household Income	$59,071
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	0.4%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	4.3%
Average Age of Death	74.9
Population with Medicaid Coverage	11.4%
Population Speaking Limited English	0%

Appendix F: All Data by Census Tract (cont.)

9509 (Edgerton Area)	
Poverty Rate	7%
Children Under 5 Living in Poverty	7.4%
Unemployment Rate	4.8%
Median Household Income	$52,708
Percentage of Households Without a Vehicle	5.5%
All Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	11.2%
Average Age of Death	75.8
Population with Medicaid Coverage	13.5%
Population Speaking Limited English	0.4%