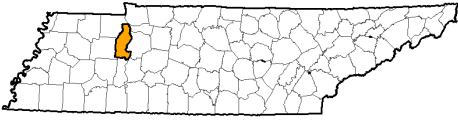
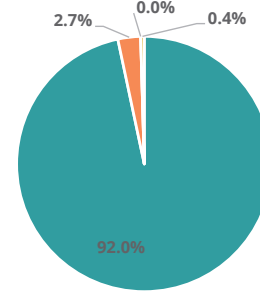


54th BENTON

Population Under 18: 19.8%

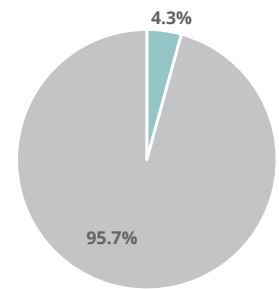


Child Population by Race



■ White, Including Hispanic ■ Black, Including Hispanic
■ Native American/Alaskan ■ Asian/Pacific Islander

Child Population by Hispanic Ethnicity



■ Hispanic, All Races ■ Non-Hispanic

Published May 2023

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING 76TH

Metric	Rank	Previous Percent/Rate	Previous Rank
Children living in poverty 29.1%	87th	24.5%	75th
Severe housing cost burden 9.2%	35th	11.5%	82nd
Child care cost burden 26.0%	65th	23.6%	65th

EDUCATION 31ST

Metric	Rank	Previous Percent/Rate	Previous Rank
3rd to 8th grade reading proficiency 30.7%	60th	26.1%	51st
3rd to 8th grade math proficiency 33.8%	42nd	30.2%	40th
Youth graduating high school on time 97.2%	10th	98.5%	3rd

HEALTH 17TH

Metric	Rank	Previous Percent/Rate	Previous Rank
Children who are food insecure 16.3%	78th	18.4%	61st
Children who lack health insurance 5.9%	37th	5.0%	49th
Babies born at a low birthweight 6.4%	4th	6.2%	9th

FAMILY & COMMUNITY 73RD

Metric	Rank	Previous Percent/Rate	Previous Rank
Children living in single parent families 45.4%	89th	21.3%	23rd
Children who are chronically absent 18.3%	55th	12.7%	47th
Victims of abuse or neglect per 1,000 12.1	38th	10.3	35th

Benton County

	Number	Rate	Tennessee Rate	County Rate as a percentage of State Rate	County Rank
Demographics					
Total population (state value is number not rate)	15,873	NA	6,975,170	0.2%	77
Population under 18 years of age (percent of total population)	3,147	19.8%	22.0%	90.1%	68

Economic Well-Being

Youth unemployment	18	10.8%	12.9%	83.7%	41
Per capita personal income (state value is dollars not rate)	\$40,963	NA	\$56,560	72.4%	68
Median home sales price (state value is dollars not rate)	\$140,000	NA	\$283,410	49.4%	80
Children receiving Families First grants (TANF)	65	2.1%	1.5%	139.0%	68
Children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)	910	28.9%	24.0%	120.5%	65
Fair market rent (percent of monthly median household income)	\$836	22.2%	21.1%	105.4%	26

Education

School age special education services	351	17.4%	12.2%	142.7%	88
TEIS participation (percent of children age 0 to 2)	5	1.1%	3.8%	28.0%	7
Cohort high school dropouts (percent of class cohort)	2	1.5%	6.7%	22.6%	10
Event high school dropouts (percent of students grade 9 to 12)	2	0.3%	4.0%	8.7%	4
Economically disadvantaged students	728	36.0%	30.0%	120.0%	68
School suspensions	*	*	5.1%	*	*
Graduating seniors scoring 21 or better on the ACT at least once	52	38.8%	35.3%	109.8%	16
Young adult college enrollment (percent of graduating seniors)	384	46.1%	52.8%	87.3%	68

Health

Neonatal abstinence syndrome (per 1,000 live births)	0	0.00	6.6	0.0%	1
Births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy	22	13.8%	9.1%	152.0%	35
Children on TennCare (Medicaid)	2,492	68.9%	55.3%	124.6%	80
Total TennCare (Medicaid) enrollees	4,809	30.3%	24.9%	121.7%	70
Births covered by TennCare (Medicaid)	118	74.2%	55.1%	134.8%	84
Children qualified for Medicaid/CHIP but uninsured	111	5.8%	7.6%	76.3%	18
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	0	0.00	6.2	0.0%	1
Neonatal death (per 1,000 live births)	0	0.00	3.2	0.0%	1
Child deaths (per 100,000 children age 1 to 14)	*	*	20.7	*	*
Teen violent deaths (per 100,000 youth age 15 to 19)	*	*	69.7	*	*
Adequate prenatal care	118	74.2%	73.9%	100.4%	69
Pediatric physicians (per 100,000 children)	0	0.0	76.5	0.0%	57
Public school students measured as overweight/obese	NA	47.7%	42.8%	111.5%	65
Teens with STDs (per 1,000 youth age 15 to 17)	10	20.1	16.6	121.2%	67
WIC participation (percent of children under 5)	397	49.1%	31.7%	155.0%	72
Dentists by county (per 100,000 residents)	3	18.9	41.4	45.6%	63

Family & Community

Reported child abuse cases	195	6.2%	4.6%	135.0%	72
Commitment to state custody (per 1,000 children)	1	0.3	2.8	10.3%	1
Remaining in state custody (per 1,000 children)	13	3.8	5.3	70.9%	23
Juvenile court referrals	46	1.5%	1.8%	81.6%	38
Recorded marriages (per 1,000 residents)	120	7.4	6.6	112.7%	20
Recorded divorces (per 1,000 residents)	54	3.3	3.2	104.6%	51
Young driver accidents (percent of age 15-24 driver's licenses)	101	7.8%	12.3%	63.7%	46
Regulated child care spaces (percent of children age 0 to 12)	413	18.2%	28.9%	62.9%	62
Child care assistance (per 1,000 children age 0 to 12)	30	13.2	24.9	53.0%	55

Benton

Overall

At 54th, Benton County is in the bottom half of Tennessee counties in child well-being. The county's strongest area was Health.

Strengths

Benton's strongest indicator is the percent of babies who were born at a low birthweight, where the county ranks 4th. The county also performs well in the percent of high school students who graduated on time at 97.2%.

Opportunities

The county's biggest challenge is the percent of children who are living in single parent families, where it ranks 89th. There are opportunities for improvement in the percent of children living below the federal poverty line as well.

Policy/Practice/Program Options to Improve Outcomes

Many of these policies have multiple models for delivery, including public-private partnership, non-profit partners and community engagement.

Single-parent families often have fewer resources—both financial and time—to help children achieve success in school and beyond. Connecting families with services to reduce these burdens helps their children thrive. Paid parental leave and other family-friendly work policies can improve single parents' ability to be involved in their children's daily lives without sacrificing financial stability, while supports for single parents to complete education and training help those who lack such stability. Additionally, broadening services times and appointment availability to meet varying working hours can reduce the time-strain and need to take off work for a single parent. The Tennessee Department of Human Resources Child Support Division can help connect single parents to legal supports to ensure they receive any child support or other benefits they are due.

With a high rate of child poverty, improving outreach to those who may qualify to receive SNAP and WIC benefits to be sure they are aware of these services can help ensure basic needs are met. Additionally, nutrition programs that provide food for school-age children to take home can contribute to food security. Expanding services through Family Resource Centers can also help reach these vulnerable populations. Making parents aware of opportunities to receive education and training through Tennessee Reconnect can also boost household incomes over the longer term. Many neighborhoods with a high concentration of poverty are also food deserts, lacking access to affordable healthy options. Community gardens can provide fresh produce and help mitigate some of the negative health implications of child poverty.

Indicator Definitions and History

Children living in poverty - Percent of children living in a household below the federal poverty line. Source: US Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (2021).

Severe housing cost burden - Percent of households spending 50% or more of their income on housing. Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2017-2021). New to the county profiles, it replaces Fair Market Rent. It is more closely aligned to a KIDS COUNT national indicator, does not apply only to rental housing, and is a rate rather than a dollar value.

Child care cost burden - Child care costs for a household with two children as a percent of median household income. Source: Produced by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute using The Living Wage Calculator (2022) and Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (2021). This is new to the rankings and replaces Median Household Income (MHI). We wanted an indicator expressed as a percentage rather than a dollar amount as well as one that related to a common family expense. Income is already somewhat measured in poverty estimates. In addition, this indicator uses MHI in its calculation.

3rd to 8th grade reading proficiency - Percent of third- to eighth-grade students who scored "on-track" or "mastered" on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) reading and language test. Source: Tennessee Department of Education (2021-22).

3rd to 8th grade math proficiency - Percent of third- to eighth-grade students who scored "on-track" or "mastered" on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment program (TCAP) math test. Source: Tennessee Department of Education (2021-22).

Youth graduating high school on time - Percent of ninth-grade cohort that graduates in four years. Source: Tennessee Department of Education (2021-22).

Children who are food insecure - Percent of children who sometimes lack access to adequate food. Source: Map the Meal Gap (2021). This is new to the rankings and replaces child and teen death rates, which, because the Department of Health has tightened its data suppression rules, is no longer available for all counties. We did not have an indicator for all counties to line up with overweight/obesity data in the national ranking, so we searched for an one related to nutrition and healthy eating.

Children who lack health insurance - Percent of children who lack health insurance. Source: US Census Bureau Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (2020).

Babies born at a low birthweight - Percent of live births where baby weighs less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds), averaged over three years. Source: Tennessee Department of Health (2019-21), with three counties estimated using American Community Survey 5-year data (2015-19, 2016-20, 2017-21). It has been in our county profiles from the beginning, though it was previously just one-year data. The Department of Health has tightened its data suppression rules, and dozens of counties' data were unavailable with one-year numbers. Three-year numbers still left three counties suppressed. Those were estimated from 5-year American Community Survey data.

Children living in single parent families - Single-parent households as a percent of all households with children. Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2017-2021). New to the county profiles, it replaces births to unmarried females, which in turn replaced teen births. As the Tennessee Department of Health tightened its data suppression rules, teen birth data was no longer available for all counties. Children born to unmarried females was always an attempt to roughly estimate teen births using different data. In moving from actual counts to ACS 5-year estimates, we decided to use this indicator over teen births as it affects families with parents of all ages.

Children who are chronically absent - Children who are absent 10 percent or more of school days for any reason, including excused/unexcused absences and out-of-school suspensions. Source: Tennessee Department of Education (2021-22). New to the county profiles, it replaces school suspensions, which have suppressed data for many counties.

Victims of abuse or neglect per 1,000 - Child victims of abuse or neglect. In cases with multiple children each child is counted individually. The total is the number of children associated with substantiated cases of severe abuse and of determinations of "Services Court Ordered" or "Services Needed" in cases of non-severe abuse or neglect. Children with multiple cases during the year are counted only once. The rate is per 1,000 children. Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services (2021). This has been in our county rankings from the beginning, but we have moved to counting children rather than cases.