

Economic Opportunities Council of Indian River County, Inc.

Community Assessment Data Update, July 2021

July 2021 DATA UPDATE:

This 2021 Data Update serves as a supplement to the *Economic Opportunities Council of Indian River County, Inc. 2020 Community Assessment*, to ensure the availability of current and comprehensive information for program planning.

Blue text throughout this document indicates where data can be found in the *Economic Opportunities Council of Indian River County, Inc. 2020 Community Assessment*.

Service Area Demographics

Population

Table 1. Population by Geographic Area and Year¹

Geographic Area	2017	2018	2019	Three-Year Trend
Indian River County	147,981	150,984	153,989	Increasing
Okeechobee County	40,228	40,572	41,144	Increasing
Florida	20,278,447	20,598,139	20,901,636	Increasing

- Population estimate is provided in Table 4 on page 18.

Table 2. Median Age and Distribution of the Population by Geographic Area (2019)²

Geographic Area	Median Age	Percent of Population Under Age 5	Percent of Population Over Age 65
Indian River County	53.5	4.2%	32.3%
Okeechobee County	41.1	6.0%	19.8%
Florida	42.0	5.4%	20.1%

- Median age and percent of the population under age 5 is provided in Table 9 on page 27.

Table 3. Population (and Percentage of Population) by Race and Geographic Area (2019)³

County	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races
Indian River County	133,103 (86.4%)	13,633 (8.9%)	385 (0.3%)	2,037 (1.3%)	57 (0.0%)	1,548 (1.0%)	3,226 (2.1%)

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

² U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

³ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Okeechobee County	35,138 (85.4%)	3,414 (8.3%)	188 (0.5%)	395 (1.0%)	120 (0.3%)	1,062 (2.6%)	827 (2.0%)
Florida	15,702,256 (75.1%)	3,359,031 (16.1%)	59,320 (0.3%)	571,276 (2.7%)	12,653 (0.1%)	625,079 (3.0%)	572,021 (2.7%)

- Percent of the population by race is described in Figure 6 on page 21.

Table 4. Ethnicity as a Percentage of the Population by Geographic Area (2019)⁴

Geographic Area	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
Indian River County	115,945 (75.3%)	19,063 (12.4%)
Okeechobee County	26,004 (63.2%)	10,497 (25.5%)
Florida	11,266,347 (53.9%)	5,346,684 (25.6%)

- Percent of the population by ethnicity is described in Figure 6 on page 21.

Table 5. Language Spoken at Home (5 Years and Over) by Geographic Area (2019)⁵

Geographic Area	English	Spanish	Other Indo-European	Asian and Pacific Island	Other
Indian River County	127,959 (86.7%)	13,945 (9.5%)	3,942 (2.7%)	1,277 (0.9%)	429 (0.3%)
Okeechobee County	29,879 (77.3%)	8,154 (21.1%)	330 (0.9%)	207 (0.5%)	102 (0.3%)
Florida	13,956,872 (70.6)	4,312,975 (21.8%)	1,048,736 (5.3%)	319,147 (1.6%)	135,692 (0.7%)

Table 5a. Language Spoken by Population (Ages 5-17) in Poverty (2019)⁶

Geographic Area	Income in the past 12 months < Poverty Level	5 to 17 years	Only English	Spanish	Indo-European Languages	Asian and Pacific Island	Other languages
Indian River County	16,282	3,500	2,778 (79.4%)	508 (14.5%)	189 (5.4%)	25 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
Okeechobee County	6,931	2,006	1,135 (57%)	853 (43%)	18 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Florida	2,622,303	581,158	365,822 (63%)	173,897 (30%)	31,469 (5.4%)	5,128 (0.88%)	4,842 (0.83%)
United States	36,032,407	8,542,781	5,819,392 (68.1%)	2,123,771 (24.8%)	244,862 (2.9%)	145,556 (1.7%)	209,200 (2.4%)

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Table 5b. Language Spoken by Population (Ages 18+) in Poverty (2019)⁷

Geographic Area	Income in the past 12 months < Poverty Level	18+	Only English	Spanish	Indo-European Languages	Asian and Pacific Island	Other languages
Indian River County	16,282	12,782	10,790 (84.4%)	1,070 (8.4%)	575 (4.5%)	236 (1.8%)	111 (0.87%)
Okeechobee County	6,931	4,925	3,632 (73.7%)	1,203 (24.4%)	42 (0.9%)	47 (0.95%)	1 (0.02%)
Florida	2,622,303	2,041,145	1,299,228 (63.7%)	562,065 (27.5%)	127,194 (6.2%)	32,735 (1.6%)	19,923 (0.97%)
United States	36,032,407	27,489,626	20,144,044 (73.3%)	4,801,605 (17.5%)	1,004,810 (3.7%)	1,014,701 (3.7%)	524,466 (1.9%)

- Languages spoken by populations in poverty are described in Table 6 and Table 7 on page 25.

Poverty

Table 6. Poverty Rate by Geographic Area and Year⁸

Geographic Area	2017	2018	2019	Three-Year Trend
Indian River County	18,617 (12.7%)	18,162 (12.2%)	17,418 (11.4%)	Decreasing
Okeechobee County	8,273 (22.3%)	8,495 (22.7%)	7,982 (21.0%)	Fluctuating
Florida	3,070,972 (15.5%)	2,983,851 (14.8%)	2,870,487 (14.0%)	Decreasing

- Poverty data provided in Table 20 on page 36.

Table 7. Percent of the Population Living in Poverty (and Number of Individuals) by Ethnicity and Geographic Area (2019)⁹

Geographic Area	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
Indian River County	10,065 (8.7%)	2,655 (14.0%)
Okeechobee County	3,932 (15.6%)	3,119 (33.3%)
Florida	1,108,233 (10.0%)	935,162 (17.7%)

- Poverty rate by race and ethnicity is provided in Figure 15 on page 37.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Table 8. Poverty Rate by Family Status and Geographic Area (2019)¹⁰

County	Married-couple Families	Families with Female Householder, No Husband Present (Children 0-5)
Indian River County	4.1%	21.5%
Okeechobee County	9.6%	31.5%
Florida	5.7%	24.2%

- Poverty for Select Family Characteristics can be found in Figure 18 and Figure 19 on page 39.

Household Composition

Table 9. Percentage of Children (ages 0 to 18-years-old) by Relationship to Householder and Geographic Area (2019)¹¹

Geographic Area	Own child	Grandchild	Other relatives	Foster child or other unrelated child
Indian River County	85.2%	9.2%	2.4%	3.3%
Okeechobee County	81.4%	13.2%	2.3%	3.1%
Florida	86.6%	9.0%	2.7%	1.7%

- Similar data is provided on pages 28 and 29.

Table 10. Children in One-Parent Families by Geographic Area

Geographic Area	County/Statewide (2019) ¹²	Head Start (2020-2021) ¹³
Indian River County	7,816	171
Okeechobee County	3,099	
Florida	1,553,812	n/a

- Data on family households with children (0-18) is provided in Figure 10 on page 28.
- Head Start data on children in single-parent families is described on page 15 under Families.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

¹² U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Children Characteristics. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

¹³ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

Eligible Children

Eligible Children Summary

Table 11. Estimated Number of Children in Service Area Eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start Services Compared to the Number of Head Start/Early Head Start Children Currently Served (based on primary eligibility)¹⁴

Eligibility Criteria	Total Number of Eligible Children (Ages 0-5)	Number of Eligible Children (Ages 0-5) Currently Served by Head Start/Early Head Start ¹⁵
Income-eligible children	2,187	198 (@ or below 100% FPL)
Income-eligible pregnant women	453	0
Children experiencing homelessness	<8 children	8
Children in foster care	91	0
Children receiving public assistance	>84	16
Children with disabilities	284	28
Over income/Exceeding over income	n/a	46 (100%-130% FPL)

- Summary information about children eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start by eligibility category is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Income-Eligible

Table 12. Children Under Age 5, Child Poverty, and Trends by Geographic Area (2019)¹⁶

Geographic Area	Child Poverty Rate (0-18)	Poverty Rate for Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 in Living in Poverty	Three-Year Trend for Number of Children <5 in Poverty
32948 (Fellsmere)	11.3%	16.7%	468	78	Decreasing
32958 (Sebastian)	19.4%	27.6%	859	237	Decreasing
32960 (Vero Beach)	15.9%	19.9%	1,064	212	Decreasing
32962 (Vero Beach)	22.4%	14.9%	1,541	230	Increasing
32693 (Vero Beach)	0.6%	11.6%	43	5	Fluctuating
32966 (Vero Beach)	19.2%	17.0%	659	112	Increasing
32967 (Vero Beach)	30.5%	20.0%	1,032	206	Fluctuating
32968 (Vero Beach)	5.7%	10.2%	551	56	Increasing
32970 (Wabasso)	n/a	n/a	0	0	No change
Indian River County	18.8%	18.3%	6,217	1,136	Fluctuating
34972 (Okeechobee)	41.4%	46.7%	1,261	589	Increasing
34973 (Okeechobee)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
34974 (Okeechobee)	31.4%	43.6%	1,177	513	Fluctuating
Okeechobee County	37.3%	44.8%	2,344	1,051	Increasing
Service Area Total			8,561	2,187	Increasing
Florida	20.1%	22.4%	1,109,315	248,184	Decreasing

- Child poverty (0-17) described in Table 20 on page 36.
- Children ages 0-4 in poverty is provided in Figure 20 on page 41 as well as pages 81-82.

¹⁴ The source for each of the data points in this table will be described in the tables that follow and are gathered from EOC's 2020 Community Assessment Report.

¹⁵ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

- Zip codes in the service area with the highest rates of poverty for children under age 5, include:
 - 34972 Okeechobee (41.4%)
 - 34974 Okeechobee (31.4%)
 - 32958 Sebastian (27.6%)
 - 32967 Vero Beach (20%)
 - 32960 Vero Beach (19.9%)
 - 32966 Vero Beach (17%)

Table 13. Number of Live Births and Birth Rate by Geographic Area and Race/Ethnicity (2019)¹⁷

Geographic Area	Count	Rate per 1,000			
		All Race/Ethnicity	Black	White	Hispanic
Indian River County	1,260	8.1	14.4	7.0	13.8
Okeechobee County	495	12.0	6.9	12.5	18.0
Florida	220,010	10.3	13.4	9.5	12.1

- Data is provided on birth rate by age only on page 62; above Table 13 includes Race/Ethnicity.

Table 14. Income-Eligible Pregnant Women by County (2018)

Geographic Area	Poverty Rate for Children <5 Years Old	Number of Live Births per Year	Number of Income-Eligible Pregnant Women
Indian River County	18.3%	1,260	231
Okeechobee County	44.8%	495	222
Service Area		1,755	453
Florida	22.4%	220,010	49,282

- Number of income-eligible pregnant women can be found in Table 21 on page 38.

Children Experiencing Homelessness

- The service area has a greater rate of students who are homeless than the statewide rate.
- In 2020, the number of homeless individuals identified was less than in 2019 in the service area (Table 15). As noted below, the 2021 Point in Time Count numbers are not comparable to the previous years' counts. Typically, Continuums of Care (CoCs) conduct a PIT Count of both sheltered and unsheltered households. This year, due to COVID-19 related safety concerns, only six of the 27 CoCs conducted such a count; 10 CoCs did not conduct an unsheltered count; and others conducted a modified form of the unsheltered count. All CoCs conducted a sheltered PIT count. For those that did not conduct an unsheltered count, the CoCs reported zero unsheltered persons, resulting in an undercount of homelessness.¹⁸
- Data is not yet available regarding the full impact of COVID-19 on individuals experiencing homelessness in the service area. However, given widespread job losses, and the end of an eviction moratorium in the state, the current homeless population is uncertain.

¹⁷ Florida Health Charts. (2019). Total Resident Live Births. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Birth.DataViewer&cid=0025>

¹⁸ Florida's Council on Homelessness. (2021). Florida's Council on Homelessness, 2021 Annual Report. Retrieved from <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/homelessness/docs/2021CouncilReport.pdf>

- See “Homelessness in Florida During the COVID-19 Pandemic” below for additional context.

Table 15. Total Homeless Persons in Families with Children by Continuum of Care (CoC) and Geographic Area (2017-2020)¹⁹

CoC	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 ²⁰
Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, COC (Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie Counties)	982	688	745	570	181
Heartland Coalition for the Homeless CoC (Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Okeechobee Counties)	232	161	161	143	53

Table 16. Homeless Students in Public Schools by School District (2019-2020)²¹

School District	Sheltered	Shared Housing	Unsheltered	Motels	Total Homeless
Indian River County School District	65	392	29	43	529
Okeechobee County School District	<11	336	<11	<11	352
Florida	6,720 (8.4%)	59,593 (74.5%)	4,823 (6%)	8,813 (11%)	79,949

Table 17. Percent of Total Students Who Are Homeless (2019-2020)²²

School District	Total Homeless	% of Total Students Who Are Homeless (2019-2020) ²³
Indian River County School District	529	1.4%
Okeechobee County School District	352	3.7%
Florida	79,949	2.8%

- Data for Homeless Students Served is provided in Table 31 on page 50.
- The percent of homeless children served is provided on page 14 under Enrollment Eligibility and Children with Disabilities.
- During the 2020-2021 program year, the Head Start Program served²⁴:
 - 13 Head Start children who experienced homelessness (3.8% of total Head Start enrollment); and
 - 13 families, 5 of which acquired housing during the enrollment year.

¹⁹ Florida’s Council on Homelessness. (2021). Florida’s Council on Homelessness, 2021 Annual Report. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.openingdoorsnwl.org/downloads/2020-Annual-Report-1.pdf>

²⁰ 2021 Point in Time Count numbers are not comparable to the previous years’ counts as CoCs annually conduct a PIT Count of both sheltered and unsheltered households and in 2021 due to COVID-19 related safety concerns, CoCs that did not conduct an unsheltered count reported zero unsheltered persons, resulting in an undercount of homelessness.

²¹ Florida’s Council on Homelessness. (2021). Florida’s Council on Homelessness, 2021 Annual Report. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.openingdoorsnwl.org/downloads/2020-Annual-Report-1.pdf>

²² Florida’s Council on Homelessness. (2021). Florida’s Council on Homelessness, 2021 Annual Report. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.openingdoorsnwl.org/downloads/2020-Annual-Report-1.pdf>

²³ Florida Department of Education. (2021). District Report Card. Retrieved from: <https://edudata.fldoe.org/ReportCards/Schools.html?school=0000&district=31>

²⁴ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

Children in Foster Care

Table 18. Number of Infants in Foster Care, Rate per 100,000, by Geographic Area (2019)²⁵

Geographic Area	Count	Rate per 100,000
Indian River County	9	718.8
Okeechobee County	4	818
Florida	1,044	482

Table 19. Number of Children ages 1-4 in Foster Care, Rate per 100,000, by Geographic Area (2019)²⁶

Geographic Area	Count	Rate per 100,000
Indian River County	46	242.9
Okeechobee County	32	472.2
Florida	7,244	220.4

- Data on all children in foster care (0-18) is provided in Table 53 on page 71.
- The percent of foster children served is provided on page 14 under Enrollment Eligibility and Children with Disabilities.
- During the 2020-2021 program year, the Head Start Program served²⁷:
 - 1 enrolled child (0.29% of total enrollment) in foster care at some point during the program year; and
 - 6 enrolled children who were referred to Head Start/Early Head Start services by a child welfare agency.

Table 20. Children Experiencing Child Abuse, Ages 5-11, Rate per 100,000, by Geographic Area (2019)²⁸

Geographic Area	Count	Rate per 100,000
Indian River County	60	627.6
Okeechobee County	49	1,474.5
Florida	10,856	662.7

- Related data (Children Subjects of Maltreatment Reports) provided in Table 52 on page 71.

²⁵ Florida Health Charts. (2019). Infants in Foster Care. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/OtherIndicators/NonVitalIndNoGrpDataViewer.aspx?cid=0619>

²⁶ Florida Health Charts. (2019). Children in Foster Care Ages 1-4. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndNoGrp.Dataviewer&cid=0662>

²⁷ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

²⁸ Florida Health Charts (2019). Children experiencing child abuse ages 5-11. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndNoGrp.Dataviewer>

Children with Disabilities

Table 21. Percent of Students with a Disability by School District (2020-2021)²⁹

School District	% Students with Diagnosed Disability (Pre-k through 12 th grade)
Indian River County	16.2%
Okeechobee County	22.3%
Florida	14.6%

- Percent of students with a disability, by school district, is not provided. Related data (Leading Student Disabilities) is provided in Figure 29 on page 54.

Table 22. Infants and Toddlers Under Age 3 Served by Early Steps by Geographic Area (2020)³⁰

County	Number Served	Number Referred	Percent of Referrals Served
Indian River County	78	203	38.4%
Okeechobee County	27	67	40.3%
Total Service Area	105	270	
Florida	16,170	32,949	49.1%

- Related state-level data (IDEA Part C: Early Intervention, Ages 0-2) is provided in Table 34 on page 55.

Table 23. Children Ages 3-5 with Disabilities Receiving Pre-k Services by Geographic Area (2020)³¹

County	Number of Children	Rate per 1,000 Children in VPK
Indian River County	139	477.7
Okeechobee County	40	303.0
Total Service Area	179	n/a
Florida	25,704	392.0

- Related state-level data (IDEA Part C: Early Intervention, Ages 0-2) is provided in Table 34 on page 55.
- The percent of children with disabilities served is provided on page 14 under Enrollment Eligibility and Children with Disabilities.
- In the Head Start program, the most common disability was “Speech or Language Impairment.” Approximately 46.4% of children with disabilities were identified prior to enrollment in the program, versus during the enrollment year (53.6%).
- While EOC IR reserves at least 10% of enrollment for children with disabilities, the percent of children with disabilities served, during the 2020-2021 program year, was 8.2%, all in the Head Start program.³²

²⁹ Florida Department of Education. (2021). District Report Card. Retrieved from: <https://edudata.fldoe.org/ReportCards/Schools.html?school=0000&district=31>

³⁰ Florida Health Charts. (2020). Infants & Toddlers <3 Served by Early Steps. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndNoGrp.Dataviewer>

³¹ Florida Health Charts. (2019). Children ages 3-5 with disabilities receiving pre-K services. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndNoGrp.Dataviewer>

³² 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR); lines 23 and 24, and total enrollment (340)

Children Receiving Public Assistance

Table 24. Number and Percent of Head Start Families That Received Federal or Other Assistance (At Enrollment, 2020-2021)³³

Program	TANF	SSI	WIC	SNAP
Head Start	12 (3.5%)	21 (6.2%)	100 (29.4%)	152 (44.7%)

- Percent of Head Start families receiving public assistance is described on page 17, under Public Assistance.

Table 25. WIC Access: Percent of WIC-Eligible Individuals Served by Year and Geographic Area (2017-2020)³⁴

Geographic Area	2017	2018	2019	2020
Indian River County	52.9% (2,307)	51.1% (2,230)	42.5% (2,114)	48.8% (2,094)
Okeechobee County	72.3% (1,646)	70.9% (1,613)	65.7% (1,450)	73.6% (1,490)
Florida	69.3% (462,116)	67.8% (451,935)	64.3% (427,068)	64.8% (420,640)

- State-level WIC data is provided on page 64.

Table 26. Children Living in Households that Receive Public Assistance in the Past 12 Months (2019) JANES

County	Percent of Children (0-18) Living in Households that Receive Public Assistance ³⁵	Number of Children Under Age 5 (from Table 12)	Number of Children Under Age 5 Living in Households that Receive Public Assistance
Indian River County	27.9%	6,217	1,735
Okeechobee County	42.6%	2,344	999
Service Area Total	n/a	8,561	2,734
Florida	30.3%	1,109,315	336,122

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 27. Cash Assistance (TANF) Caseload by Month in Indian River and Okeechobee Counties (2020)³⁶

Geographic Area	TANF Clients (May 2021) (% Change From May 2020)	TANF Families (May 2021) (% Change From May 2020)
Indian River	245 (+2.1%)	133 (-8.9%)
Okeechobee	155 (-12.9%)	92 (-18.6%)
Total	400	225

- Point in time data for TANF recipients is provided for February 2020 on page 42.

³³ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

³⁴ Florida Health Charts. (2019). WIC Eligible Served. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndNoGrp.Dataviewer>

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

³⁶ Florida Department of Children and Families. (2020). ACCESS Florida, Flash Points Report. Retrieved from <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/StandardDataReports.asp>

- Month by month TANF data is available for “Clients” and “Families” but not distinctly for “Children” by age. Based on the data above, there are at least an estimated 225 children in families receiving cash assistance in the service area, of those it can be assumed 63 are birth to age 5. This calculation assumes an even distribution of children birth to age 18 receiving TANF. The number of children eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start based on receipt of public assistance is likely more than 75 since children may also be eligible based on receipt of SSI.

Agencies Serving Eligible Children and Pregnant Women

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.
- Head Start and Early Head Start Programs in the Neighboring Service Areas include:
 - Redlands Christian Migrant Association
 - East Coast Migrant Head Start Project

Child Care and Family Child Care

Table 28. Summary of Child Care Capacity by County (July 2021)³⁷

Geographic Area	Number of Programs (Capacity*)	Number of Programs Participating in VPK (July 2021)	Number of School Readiness Providers	Number of Programs Serving Infants
32948 (Fellsmere)	4 (75)	2	3	2
32958 (Sebastian)	13 (1,554)	3	6	4
32960 (Vero Beach)	24 (2,685)	14	12	11
32962 (Vero Beach)	12 (821)	3	4	7
32693 (Vero Beach)	5 (219)	4	3	1
32966 (Vero Beach)	3 (131)	1	1	1
32967 (Vero Beach)	12 (1,202)	6	6	7
32968 (Vero Beach)	8 (580)	1	2	3
32970 (Wabasso)	2 (289)	1	0	0
Indian River County	83 (7,556)	35	37	36
34972 (Okeechobee)	8 (623)	4	1	3
34973 (Okeechobee)	0 (0)	0	0	0
34974 (Okeechobee)	11 (781)	6	6	7
Okeechobee County	19 (1,404)	10	7	10
Service Area Total	102 (8,960)	45	44	46
Florida	11,401	5,470	6,527	5,702

- VPK data provided in Table 55 and Table 56 on pages 74-75.
- School readiness data provided in Table 58 on page 77.
- Child care capacity data provided in Table 59 and Table 60 on page 78.
- The Florida Division of Early Learning website notes that in 2019 - 2020, 171,199 children were served by 6,501 private, public and charter schools and private child care centers offering VPK.³⁸

³⁷ Florida Department of Children and Families. (2021). Child Care Search. <https://caressearch.myflfamilies.com/PublicSearch/Search>

³⁸ Florida Division of Early Learning. (2021). About Voluntary Prekindergarten. Retrieved from: <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/vpk/floridas-vpk-program>

Table 29. Number of Children Birth to Age 5 Compared to Capacity of Child Care Programs by County

Geographic Area	Capacity of Child Care Programs (Includes School Age)	Number of Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 in Poverty Living in Poverty
32948 (Fellsmere)	75	468	78
32958 (Sebastian)	1,554	859	237
32960 (Vero Beach)	2,685	1,064	212
32962 (Vero Beach)	821	1,541	230
32693 (Vero Beach)	219	43	5
32966 (Vero Beach)	131	659	112
32967 (Vero Beach)	1,202	1,032	206
32968 (Vero Beach)	580	551	56
32970 (Wabasso)	289	0	0
Indian River County	7,556	6,217	1,136
34972 (Okeechobee)	623	1,261	589
34973 (Okeechobee)	0		n/a
34974 (Okeechobee)	781	1,177	513
Okeechobee County	1,404	2,344	1,051
Service Area Total	8,960	8,561	2,187

- Summary information is not provided but could be derived from information available throughout the 2020 Community Assessment.

Home Visiting

Table 30. Home Visiting Services by County³⁹

County	Home Visiting Services	Enrollment
Indian River County	None	
Okeechobee County	Parents as Teachers implemented by Okeechobee County Healthy Start Coalition	n/a

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

³⁹ Florida Maternal Infant & Early Childhood Home Visiting Initiative. (2020). Florida MIECHV. Retrieved from <https://www.flmiechv.com/>

Publicly Funded Preschool

Table 31. Number of Public Preschool Programs by County (July 2021)⁴⁰

Indian River County Zip Codes	Number of Programs
32948	2
32958	3
32960	14
32962	3
32963	4
32966	1
32967	6
32968	1
32970	1
Indian River Total	35
Okeechobee County Zip Codes	Number of Programs
34974	4
34972	0
34973	6
Okeechobee Total	10
Service Area Total	45
Florida (2019-2020)	5,470

- VPK data provided in Table 55 and Table 56 on pages 74-75.

⁴⁰ Florida Department of Children and Families. (2020). Provider Search. Retrieved from <https://cares.myflfamilies.com/PublicSearch>

Health, Nutrition, Education and Social Service Needs

Health

Adult Health

Table 32. County Health Rankings (Out of 67 Counties)⁴¹

County	Health Outcomes
Indian River County	13
Okeechobee County	53

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 33. Health Outcomes Data by Geographic Area⁴²

Geographic Area	Years of Potential Life Lost (2017-2019)	% Poor or Fair Health (2018)	Physically Unhealthy Days (2018)	Mentally Unhealthy Days (2018)
Indian River County	7,100	19%	4.1	4.7
Okeechobee County	10,800	28%	4.7	5.3
Florida	7,200	20%	4.0	4.2

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 34. Adult Health Factors by Geographic Area⁴³

Geographic Area	% Smokers (2018) ⁴⁴	% Obese (2017)	% Diabetic (2017)	HIV Prevalence Rate (2018) ⁴⁵
Indian River County	21%	34%	11%	277
Okeechobee County	26%	27%	14%	310
Florida	15%	27%	11%	607

- Diabetes and obesity data is provided on page 59.

Table 35. Rate of Uninsured Adults (Over Age 65) by Geographic Area⁴⁶

Geographic Area	% Uninsured (2018)
Indian River County	21%
Okeechobee County	27%
Florida	19%

- Health Insurance data is provided on page 57.

⁴¹ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁴² County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁴³ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁴⁴ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁴⁵ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁴⁶ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

Table 36. Access to Care - Ratio of Health Care Providers by Geographic Area⁴⁷

Geographic Area	Primary Care Provider Ratio (2018)	Dentist Ratio (2019)	Mental Health Provider Ratio (2020)
Indian River County	1,670:1	1,450:1	750:1
Okeechobee County	2,310:1	2,340:1	1,830:1
Florida	1,380:1	1,650:1	590:1

- Dentist ratios provided on page 60. Related HPSA data provided on page 58.

Table 37. Drug Overdose Deaths and Mortality Rate by Geographic Area (2017-2019)⁴⁸

Geographic Area	Number of Overdose Deaths	Drug Overdose Mortality Rate (per 100,000)
Indian River County	92	20
Okeechobee County	33	26
Florida	24	
Top U.S. Performers	9	

- Data provided in Table 50 (page 68) and Table 51 (page 70).

Infant and Child Health and Well-being

Table 38. Prenatal Care (First Trimester) by Geographic Area, Percent of Total Births (2019)⁴⁹

Geographic Area	All	White	Black	Hispanic
Indian River County	969 (79.6%)	758 (83.2%)	143 (70.8%)	207 (78.1%)
Okeechobee County	311 (69.7%)	279 (69.1%)	16 (66.7%)	119 (69.6%)
Florida	150,090 (75.9%)	109,833 (78.0%)	29,472 (69.0%)	46,098 (76.1%)

- Prenatal health care data provided in Table 43 on page 63.

Table 39. Teen Birth Rate (Ages 14-19), per 1,000, by Race and Ethnicity and Geographic Area (2019)⁵⁰

Geographic Area	All	Black	Hispanic	White
Indian River County	15.2%	26.7%	22.2%	11.5%
Okeechobee County	30.3%	28.6%	29.5%	32%
Florida	13.6%	19.1%	15.6%	12.3%

- Teen birth rate is provided in Table 42 on page 62.
- Okeechobee County is in the fourth quartile for this measure. This means that relative to other counties in Florida, the situation occurs less often in about three quarters of the counties than in Okeechobee County. There are at least 51 counties with data for this measure.

⁴⁷ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁴⁸ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁴⁹ Florida Health Charts. (2019). Births to Mothers with 1st Trimester Prenatal Care. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Birth.DataViewer&cid=0018>

⁵⁰ Florida Health Charts. (2019). Births by Mother's Age (14-19). Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Birth.Dataviewer>

- Indian River County is in the second quartile for this measure. This means that relative to other counties in Florida, the situation occurs more often in about half of the counties, and it occurs less often in about one quarter of the counties. There are at least 51 counties with data for this measure.

Table 40. Low Birth Weight by Geographic Area, Percent of Total Births (2019)⁵¹

Geographic Area	Low Birth Weight			
	All	Black	White	Hispanic
Indian River County	104 8.3%	31 14.6%	66 7%	19 7%
Okeechobee County	35 7.1%	5 19.2%	30 6.7%	9 4.8%
Florida	19,292 8.8%	6,741 14%	11,152 7.2%	5,059 7.5%

- Low birth weight data is provided in Table 44 on page 63.

Table 41. Infant Death Rate (per 1,000) by Geographic Area and Race (2019)⁵²

Geographic Area	All	Black	White
Indian River County	7	5	2
Okeechobee County	4	1	3
Florida	1,328	524	682

- Infant mortality data is provided in Table 45 on page 63.

Table 42. Percent of Head Start Children Up-to-Date on Age-Appropriate Preventative and Primary Health Care (EPSDT), 2020-2021⁵³

Program Option	At Enrollment	End of Enrollment Year
Head Start	256	263

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 43. Percent of Children Up-to-Date on Age-Appropriate Immunizations by Grade (2019-2020)⁵⁴

Geographic Area	Kindergarten (Public and Private)	Seventh Grade (Public and Private)
Indian River County	94.5%	95.6%
Okeechobee County	94.5%	98.8%
Florida	93.5%	96.1%

- Kindergarten immunization data provided in Table 37.
- Childhood obesity

⁵¹ Florida Health Charts. (2019). Low Birth Weight. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Birth.DataViewer&cid=0021>

⁵² Florida Health Charts. (2019). Infant Mortality. Retrieved from <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Birth.DataViewer&cid=0021>

⁵³ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

⁵⁴ Florida Department of Health. (2021). Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Immunization Status Report 2019-20. Retrieved from http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/immunization/resources/surveys/_documents/k-7-status2019-20.pdf

- Rate among enrolled children; obese: 64 children (18.8%)⁵⁵
- Rate among young children in Florida – [Data on page 59](#).
- Rate among children 0-18 in Florida – [Data on page 59](#).
- Chronic health conditions among enrolled children (4).⁵⁶
 - 2 Vision Problems
 - 1 Asthma
 - 1 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Nutrition

Table 44. Food Access by Geographic Area (2015 & 2018)⁵⁷

Geographic Area	Food Environment Index	% Limited Access to Healthy Foods	% Food Insecurity (2018)
Indian River County	6.2 (2015), 7.1 (2018)	15% (2015), 16% (2018)	13% (2018)
Okeechobee County	5.1 (2015), 5.3 (2018)	21% (2015), 29% (2018)	15% (2018)
Florida	7.0 (2015), 6.9 (2018)	7% (2015), n/a (2018)	n/a (2018)

- Food insecurity data is provided in Table 48 on page 65.

Table 45. Census Tract Food Deserts by County (2021)⁵⁸

Indian River County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tract 12061050903 (East of SR-9 from the northern county line to Highway 60) ● Tract 12061050806 (South of Sebastian, FL) ● Tract 12061050302 (Eastern Vero Beach, FL)
Okeechobee County
<p>7 out of 10 census tracts in Okeechobee County are food deserts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tract 12093910102 ● Tract 12093910101 ● Tract 12093910201 ● Tract 12093910202 ● Tract 12093910402 ● Tract 12093910403 ● Tract 12093910500

- Data is provided on page 60.

Table 46. Free and Reduced Lunch Rate by School District⁵⁹

School District	2020-2021
Indian River County Schools	48.2%
Okeechobee County Schools	87.9%

⁵⁵ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

⁵⁶ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

⁵⁷ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁵⁸ USDA Food Access Research Atlas. (2021). Retrieved from: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>

⁵⁹ Florida Department of Education. (2021). Lunch Status by District, Final Survey 3, 2020-2021. Retrieved from <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/students.stm>

- Data is provided in Table 47 on page 64.

Education

Table 47. Graduation Rates by School District, 2015-2016 through 2019-2020⁶⁰

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
Indian River County Schools	87.2%	87.1%	92.0%	88.5%	93.4%
Okeechobee County Schools	70.5%	71.7%	76.9%	75.8%	84.2%
Florida	80.7%	82.3%	86.1%	86.9%	90.0%

- Data is provided in Table 16 on page 32.

Table 48. Dropout Rates by School District and School Year⁶¹

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-2019
Indian River County Schools	0.8%	0.6%	1.1%	1.0%
Okeechobee County Schools	9.5%	10.5%	7.7%	11.2%
Florida	3.8%	4.0%	3.5%	3.4%

- Drop out data is not provided. This table includes the most updated data available.

Table 49. Education Attainment of the Adult Population (Ages 25 and over) by Geographic Area (2019)⁶²

Geographic Area	Indian River County	Okeechobee County	Florida
Less Than 9 th Grade	4,189 (3.5%)	2,784 (9.6%)	718,909 (4.8%)
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	8,420 (7.1%)	3,824 (13.2%)	1,048,674 (7.0%)
High school graduate	36,070 (30.4%)	11,434 (39.5%)	4,276,237 (28.6%)
Some college, no degree	24,194 (20.4%)	5,591 (19.3%)	2,981,480 (19.9%)
Associate's degree	11,119 (9.4%)	2,036 (7.0%)	1,468,744 (9.8%)
Bachelor's degree	21,086 (17.8%)	2,387 (8.2%)	2,827,938 (18.9%)
Advanced degree	13,426 (11.3%)	896 (3.1%)	1,643,763 (11.0%)

- The percent of the population with a high school degree or higher a bachelor's degree or higher is described in Table 13 on page 30.

Table 50. Educational Attainment of Families Served by Head Start Program (highest level of education attained by parent(s)/guardian(s))⁶³

	HS: Number of Families (at enrollment)	HS: Percent of Families
Less than a high school degree	64	18.8%
High school graduate or GED	146	43%
Associates degree, vocational school or some college	59	17.4%
Bachelor's or advanced degree	11	3.2%
Total	280	82.4%

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

⁶⁰ Florida Department of Education. (2021). Florida's High School Cohort, 2019-2020 Graduation Rate. Retrieved from <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7584/urlt/GradRates1920.pdf>

⁶¹ Florida Department of Education. (2019). Florida's High School Cohort, 2018-19 Dropout Rate. Retrieved from <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7584/urlt/CohortDropoutRate1819.pdf>

⁶² U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

⁶³ 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

Table 51. School District Performance Grades (2020)⁶⁴

School District	Grade
Indian River County Schools	N/A
Okeechobee County Schools	N/A

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.
- Historically, Florida schools have received an overall performance grade. A grade “A” is the highest ranking. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, in April 2020, the U.S. Department of Education provided a Report Card waiver for requirements related to certain assessments and accountability that are based on data from the 2019-20 school year. Accordingly, the Indian River and Okeechobee County Schools did not receive a grade for the 2020-2021 school year (Table 51).⁶⁵

Table 52. 2018-2019 English Language Arts Assessment Results by School District and Achievement Level⁶⁶

Geographic Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 3+
Indian River County Schools (All students)	19.7%	24.6%	25.9%	21.2%	8.6%	55.7%
Indian River County Schools (Economically disadvantaged students)	26%	28.6%	25%	16.3%	4.1%	45.8%
Indian River County Schools (English Language Learners)	33.8%	34.5%	20.2%	10.2%	1.4%	31.7%
Okeechobee County Schools (All students)	25.7%	28.2%	24.6%	16.3%	5.1%	46.1%
Okeechobee County Schools (Economically disadvantaged students)	28.3%	30.6%	24.3%	13.3%	3.5%	41.1%
Okeechobee County Schools (English Language Learners)	26.3%	37.3%	25.6%	8.9%	1.8%	36.4%

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.
- Pursuant to Florida Department of Education Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-1, spring K-12 statewide assessment test administrations for the 2019-20 school year were canceled and accountability measures reliant on such data were not calculated for the 2019-20 school year. This data was not updated and the most recent English Language Arts and Mathematics assessment results are provided, by achievement level, for all students, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learners in Indian River and Okeechobee County Schools (Table 52 and 53).

⁶⁴ Florida Department of Education. (2019). District Report Cards. Retrieved from <https://edudata.fldoe.org>

⁶⁵ Florida Department of Education. (2021). District Report Card. Retrieved from <https://edudata.fldoe.org/ReportCards/Schools.html?school=0000&district=31>

⁶⁶ Florida Department of Education. (2019). District Report Cards. Retrieved from <https://edudata.fldoe.org>

Table 53. 2018-2019 Mathematics Assessment Results by School District and Achievement Level⁶⁷

Geographic Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 3+
Indian River County Schools (All students)	23.2%	19.2%	27.1%	19.7%	10.8%	57.6%
Indian River County Schools (Economically disadvantaged students)	28.8%	22%	26.6%	16.8%	5.9%	49.3%
Indian River County Schools (English Language Learners)	27.1%	26.7%	25.3%	16.5%	4.4%	46.2%
Okeechobee County Schools						
Okeechobee County Schools (All students)	24.6%	19.2%	28%	19.1%	9.2%	56.2%
Okeechobee County Schools (Economically disadvantaged students)	26.7%	20.4%	28%	17.3%	7.5%	52.8%
Okeechobee County Schools (English Language Learners)	26.4%	20.6%	26.4%	19.7%	6.9%	53%

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 54. Elementary School Ratings by School District (2018-2019)⁶⁸

School District	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Total
Indian River County Schools	7	7	10	0	24
Okeechobee County Schools	0	2	6	0	8

- For Table 54, updated data is not available; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2019-2020 grades were not calculated.

Social and Economic Well-being

Home Value and Affordability

Table 55. Median Home Value and Costs by Geographic Area (2019)⁶⁹

Geographic Area	Median Home Value	Median Owner Costs	Median Rent
Indian River County	\$202,300	\$1,322	\$959
Okeechobee County	\$106,000	\$1,087	\$772
Florida	\$215,300	\$1,503	\$1,175

- Related rental data found in Table 28 on page 47.

⁶⁷ Florida Department of Education. (2019). District Report Cards. Retrieved from <https://edudata.fldoe.org>

⁶⁸ Florida Department of Education, 2018-19 District Report Card. Retrieved from: <https://edudata.fldoe.org/ReportCards/Schools.html?school=0000&district=31>

⁶⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Table 56. Housing Characteristics by Geographic Area (2019)⁷⁰

Geographic Area	Rental Vacancy Rate	Households Spending 30% or More of Monthly Income on Rent
Indian River County	26.0%	56%
Okeechobee County	6.7%	53%
Florida	8.4%	56.3%

- Related rental data found in Table 28 on page 47.

Table 57. Severe Housing Problems by Geographic Area (2013-2017)⁷¹

Geographic Area	Percent of households experiencing at least 1 of 4: Overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen, lack of plumbing
Indian River County	15%
Okeechobee County	14%
Florida	20%
Top U.S. Performers	9% (10th Percentile)

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Income Inequality

Table 58. Income Inequality by Geographic Area (2015-2019)⁷²

County	80 th percentile income	20 th percentile income	Income inequality ratio
Indian River County	110,918	24,717	4.5
Okeechobee County	84,196	20,308	4.1
Florida			4.5
Top U.S. Performers			3.7

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Community Safety and Incarceration

Table 59. Community Safety by Geographic Area (2019-2020)⁷³

Geographic Area	Total Crime Index	% Change 2019-2020	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault
Indian River County	2,447	-14.2%	6	36	31	279
Okeechobee County	1,175	6%	2	21	28	141
Florida	541,328	-14.1	1,120	8,439	16,199	55,333

- Data is provided in Table 49 on page 67.

⁷⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

⁷¹ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁷² County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2021). Florida. Available at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

⁷³ Florida Department of Law Enforcement. (2021). Uniform Crime Reports – Statewide County Report. Retrieved from http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/getattachment/FSAC/CJAB-Home/Uniform-Crime-Report/Data-Archives/2020A_Statewide_County.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US

Table 60. Total Domestic Violence Offenses, Rate per 100,000 Population, by Geographic Area (2018-2020)⁷⁴

Geographic Area	2018	2019	2020	Three-Year Trend
Indian River County	551	446	492	Fluctuating
Okeechobee County	196	225	155	Fluctuating
Florida	104,914	105,298	106,515	Increasing

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 61. Florida County Detention Facilities, Average Daily Population and Incarceration Rate (June 2019)^{75 76}

Geographic Area	Average Daily Population at County Detention Facilities	Rate per 100,000
Indian River County	500	483.4
Okeechobee County	N/A	1,152.9
Florida	55,381	450.9

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Employment, Education and Training

Labor Force, Industries, and Occupations

Table 62. Percent of the Population in Labor Force (Age 16+) by Geographic Area (2019)⁷⁷

Geographic Area	Population Age 16+	Households with Children Under Age 6, All Parents in Family in Labor Force
Indian River County	47.7%	72.0%
Okeechobee County	49.1%	40.8%
Florida	58.8%	67.5%

- Data is provided in Table 57 on page 77.

⁷⁴ Florida Department of Law Enforcement. (2021) Total Reported Domestic Violence Offenses by County, 1992 – 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/FSAC/County-Profiles/Okeechobee.aspx>

⁷⁵ Florida Legislature Office of Economic and Demographic Research. Criminal Justice Profile August 2020. Retrieved from <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/area-profiles/criminal-justice-county/indianriver.pdf>

⁷⁶ Florida Legislature Office of Economic and Demographic Research. Criminal Justice Profile August 2020. Retrieved from <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/area-profiles/criminal-justice-county/okeechobee.pdf>

⁷⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Table 63. Number of Employed Individuals (Age 16+) and Percentage of the Employed Workforce by Class of Worker and Geographic Area (2019)⁷⁸

Class of Worker	Indian River County		Okeechobee County		Florida
Private wage and salary workers	47,800	81.5%	11,796	77.1%	7,823,864 (82.4%)
Government workers	6,380	10.9%	2,232	14.6%	1,093,978 (11.5%)
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	43,07	7.3%	1,270	8.3%	559,741 (5.9%)
Unpaid family workers	139	0.2%	6	0.0%	17,770 (0.2%)
Total	54,319	100.0%	15,304	100.0%	9,495,353

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 64. Number of Employed Individuals (Age 16+) and Percentage of the Employed Workforce by Occupation and Geographic Area (2019)⁷⁹

Occupation	Indian River County		Okeechobee County		Florida
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	19,396	33.1%	3,330	21.8%	35.6
Service occupations	12,386	21.1%	3,405	22.2%	20.0
Sales and office occupations	14,520	24.8%	2,625	17.2%	24.6
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	6,568	11.2%	3,395	22.2%	9.4
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	5,756	9.8%	2,549	16.7%	10.5
Total	58,627	100.0%	15,304	100.0%	

- Limited occupation information is provided on pages 45 (Indian River County) and page 46 (Okeechobee County).

Table 65. Number of Employed Individuals (Age 16+) and Percentage of the Employed Workforce by Industry and Geographic Area (2019)⁸⁰

Industry	Indian River County		Okeechobee County		Florida
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1,085	1.9%	1,453	9.5%	1.0%
Construction	5,069	8.6%	1,862	12.2%	7.6%
Manufacturing	2,798	4.8%	764	5.0%	5.1%
Wholesale trade	1,442	2.5%	479	3.1%	2.6%
Retail trade	9,051	15.4%	1,739	11.4%	12.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	2,006	3.4%	1,047	6.8%	5.6%
Information	557	1%	75	0.5%	1.8%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4,218	7.2%	497	3.2%	7.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	7,896	13.5%	1,151	7.5%	13.1%

⁷⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>

⁷⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>

⁸⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>

Industry	Indian River County		Okeechobee County		Florida
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	12,635	21.6%	3,025	19.8%	21.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7,267	12.4%	1,468	9.6%	12.2%
Other services, except public administration	2,637	4.5%	888	5.8%	5.3%
Public administration	1,965	3.4%	856	5.6%	4.2%
Total	58,626	100.0%	15,304	100.0%	100.0%

- Limited industry information is provided on pages 45 (Indian River County) and page 46 (Okeechobee County).

Unemployment

Table 66. Unemployment Rate by Geographic Area and Year (2019-2021)⁸¹

Geographic Area	April 2019	April 2020	April 2021
Indian River County	3.5	14.3	5.3
Okeechobee County	3.2	7.8	4.4
Florida	2.9	13.9	5.2

- Unemployment data provided on page 33, under Employment Status and Income.

Table 67. Head Start Parent/Guardian Employment Status (2020-2021)⁸²

Program	One or more employed	One or more in job training	One or more in school	Both not employed, in job training or school	Total Number of Families
Head Start	209	36	4	69	282

- Number of two parent households: 109
- Number of single parent households: 171

⁸¹ Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. (2021). Unemployment Rate in Florida. Retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/FLURN#0>

⁸² 2020-2021 Program Information Report (PIR)

Employers

The top employers in the service area are a mix of public and private entities, including local governments and schools, health systems, and retail companies.

Top Employers in Indian River County 2019⁸³

Employer	Type of Industry	Employees
School District of Indian River County	Government	2,039
Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital	Healthcare	2,112
Indian River County (includes Constitutional offices)	Government	1,455
Publix Supermarkets	Retail Food/Beverage	1,380
Piper Aircraft, Inc.	Manufacturing	1,005
Wal-Mart/Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market	Retail	806
Sebastian River Medical Center	Healthcare	750
John's Island	Residential/Resort	495
Indian River Estates (ACTS)	Retirement Community	486
Visiting Nurse Association	Private Healthcare/Hospice	500
City of Vero Beach	Government	328
CVS Warehouse/Distribution	Warehouse/Distribution	336
St. Edward's School	Private School/College Preparatory	223
Disney Vero Beach Resort	Resort Hotel	279
Skyborne Airline Academy	Flight Instruction	170
B&W Quality Growers LLC	Agriculture/Arugula	142
City of Sebastian	Government	188

Top Employers in Okeechobee County⁸⁴

Employer	Type of Industry	Employees
Entegra Roof Tile	Manufacturing	250-499
Walpole Inc	Distribution	250-499
Raulerson Hospital	Healthcare	250-499
Gilbert Family of Companies	Distribution	100-249
McArthur Farms	Agriculture, Agribusiness	100-249
TRC Investments LLC	Manufacturing	10-25
Larson Dairy	Food Manufacturing	100-249
Okeechobee Health Care	Healthcare	100-249
Charles Industries LTD INC.	Manufacturing	50-100
Okeechobee Livestock Market	Agribusiness	10-25

- Indian River County data is provided in Table 26 on pages 45-46; Okeechobee County data is provided in Table 27 on page 46.

⁸³ Indian River County Economic Development. (2021). Major Employers. Retrieved at: <https://indianrivered.com/community/demographics/major-employers>

⁸⁴ Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation. (2021). Major Employer. Retrieved from:

<https://ocedcorp.com/regional-data/major-employers/#:~:text=MAJOR%20EMPLOYERS%20%20%20Company%20%20,%20%20Distribution%20%20%20more%20rows%20>

Projected Employment Trends

Table 68. Projected Fastest-growing Industries and Occupations (2020-2028)⁸⁵

CareerSource Region	Fastest-growing Industries ⁸⁶	Fastest-growing Occupations
Research Coast (Indian River , Martin, and St. Lucie Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performing Arts and Spectator Sports (+48.6%) - Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation (+44.4%) - Leisure and Hospitality Accommodation (+43.6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooks, Restaurant (+40.3%) - Veterinarian (+39%) - Software Developers, Applications (+32%)
Heartland (Okeechobee , DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational Services (+54.8%) - Financial Investment and Related Activity (33.3%) - Accommodation and Food Services (+31%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-Enrichment Education Teachers (+59.7%) - Cooks, Restaurant (+41.5%) - Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food (+31.3%)

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Transportation

- Public Transportation data is provided on page 53.
- GoLine is the Indian River County public transportation system with bus service on 15 fixed routes throughout Indian River County. Riders take GoLine buses to work or school, to medical appointments, grocery stores, to the mall, to the beach and to dozens of other locations throughout the area. There is no fee for GoLine passengers to ride the bus, but they are encouraged to make a donation to help support the bus system.⁸⁷ Community Coach is door-to-door transportation for eligible riders with no other means of transportation. Coaches accommodate riders with wheelchairs, walkers, canes, service animals and other mobility devices.⁸⁸
- The Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) provides door-to-door transportation for individuals in DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties to allow them to get to medical appointments, employment, education, shopping, social activities, and other important services. Also available to residents of Okeechobee County is the Commute Connector, which helps employers and employees explore the benefits of carpooling, vanpooling, transit, biking, walking, and telecommuting while earning rewards. The program offers ride matching services, employer resources, and Emergency Ride Home Program. Additionally, the Amtrak train from Okeechobee Station has been available since 2011 and allows for travel on the silver line within Florida and also offers options to travel North up the eastern seaboard.⁸⁹
- Uber, Lyft and other fee-based services such as taxis are also available in the service area.

⁸⁵ Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. (2021). Employment Projections Data. Retrieved from <https://floridajobs.org/workforce-statistics/data-center/statistical-programs/employment-projections>

⁸⁶ Industries and occupation with an insignificant N were excluded from being listed (e.g., industries showing 100% growth, as they grew from 2 to 4 individuals).

⁸⁷ GoLine. (2021). Welcome to GoLine. Retrieved from: <https://www.golineir.com/>

⁸⁸ VeroBeach.com. (2021). Community Coach & Indian River Transit / GoLine. Retrieved from: <https://verobeach.com/verobeach-community/community-coach-indian-river-transit>

⁸⁹ Heartland Rides. (2021). Find a Ride. Retrieved from: <https://heartlandrides.org/>

Table 69. Households with No Vehicle Available by Geographic Area (2019)⁹⁰

Geographic Area	Percent of Households with No Vehicle Available
Indian River County	5.0%
Okeechobee County	3.8%
Florida	6.3%

- Data is provided in Table 32 on page 53.

Table 70. Transportation to Work by Geographic Area (2019)⁹¹

Geographic Area	Car, truck, or van – drove alone	Car, truck, or van – carpoled	Public transportation	Walked	Other means
Indian River County	80.5%	8.5%	0.4%	0.8%	2.1%
Okeechobee County	80.7%	12.9%	0.1%	2.0%	1.7%
Florida	79.1%	9.2%	1.8%	1.4%	2.3%

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Table 71. Mean Travel Time to Work by Geographic Area (2019)⁹²

Geographic Area	Minutes
Indian River County	22.9
Okeechobee County	24.4
Florida	27.8

- Data is not provided in the 2020 Community Assessment.

Education and Training to Support Employment

- REACH Family Self Sufficiency program outlined on page 11.
- Primary providers of career services in Indian River and Okeechobee Counties are CareerSource Research Coast and CareerSource Heartland, respectively. CareerSource is a private, non-profit organization that helps career seekers find jobs and maintain employment. The agency provides services such as interview preparation, resume development, employer partnerships, and job referrals.⁹³ The Indian River County Economic Development also offers an immersive one-week Manufacturing Boot Camp where participants (mainly high school students and young adults) visit 10 manufacturers to learn more about the businesses and potential employment in the industry. Indian River State College offers over 100 programs leading to a Bachelor’s or Associates Degree, Technical Certificates and Applied Technology Diplomas as well as Career Training programs. Amongst other training programs available, the Indian River State College also offers a 12 week “Fast Track to Manufacturing Program” with a goal of matching students with employment in one of the college’s partners in the manufacturing field.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsc>

⁹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsc>

⁹² U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>

⁹³ CareerSource Suncoast. (2020). CareerSource Suncoast. Retrieved from <https://careersourcesuncoast.com>

⁹⁴ Indian River County Florida Economic Development. (2021). Workforce Training. Retrieved from: <https://indianrivered.com/>

- The Okeechobee County School District offers a Career & Technical Education (CTE) program, and the district has implemented the “Major Areas of Interest” approach and has expanded their career and technical programs. Academic and career-related curriculum provides dual enrollment programs which allow students to receive both a high school education and credits toward their ultimate career goals.⁹⁵
- While specific work and training schedules of families in the service area are not readily available, the top industries in the service area suggest a variety of schedules. With a mix of service occupations, manufacturing jobs, and education options, it can be reasonably assumed that some individuals work traditional business hours while others may have second or third shift employment.

Resources Available to Meet Community Need

- [List of resources provided on pages 79-80.](#)

⁹⁵ Economic Development Corporation. (2021). Workforce Training Services. Retrieved from: <https://ocedcorp.com/regional-data/workforce-and-training/>

COVID-19: Contextual Information

COVID-19 Cases, Deaths and Vaccinations

As of July 2021, in Indian River County, there have been 13,352 cases of the COVID-19 virus and 306 resulting deaths. In the same time period, in Okeechobee County there have been 4,139 cases of the COVID-19 virus and 89 resulting deaths. As of July 9, 2021, 46.7% of Florida's eligible population received a COVID-19 vaccination, with 54.6% receiving at least one dose, ranking 27th nationally.⁹⁶

From July 1 to July 22, 2021, the weekly total of COVID-19 cases in Florida increased by fourfold and the state recorded more new cases than any other US state. Epidemiologists suggest that this surge is the result of the convergence of a larger number of unvaccinated individuals, relaxed prevention measures, and the more contagious nature of the Delta variant.⁹⁷

COVID-19 Pandemic's Potential Effects on Florida's Children

The CDC listed "children and teens" as a subgroup that may respond more strongly to the stress of a pandemic crisis and noted that from April 2020 to October 2020, there was a rise in the number of children visiting hospital emergency rooms for mental health concerns.^{98 99}

A new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation is shedding light on the toll the coronavirus pandemic has taken on Florida's children. It found that 18 percent of Florida's children live in poverty and that the coronavirus pandemic could push that figure to 25 percent. Food insecurity issues have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The report also found that Florida continued to have the second highest number of children without health insurance in the country, which is more concerning during the coronavirus pandemic.¹⁰⁰

The Director of Florida Kids Count noted that the impact of the pandemic has disproportionately and adversely affected adults of color and households with children, with the most noticeable disparities in education, with black and Latino children suffering a six-to-12-month regression in academics, compared to four to eight months in white students. The Director suggests that state and local governments

⁹⁶ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, (2021). Florida State Profile Report. Retrieved from: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>

⁹⁷ Wall Street Journal, 2021, Florida Leads US in COVID-19 Cases as Hospitalizations Surge. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/florida-leads-u-s-in-covid-19-cases-as-hospitalizations-surge-11627131600>

⁹⁸ Florida Health. (2020). Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19. Retrieved from: <http://leon.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/08/mental-health-coping-covid.html>

⁹⁹ Tampa Bay Times. (2021). A pandemic plus: Florida suicides plummeted. Experts worry it won't last. Retrieved from: <https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2021/02/10/a-pandemic-plus-florida-suicides-plummeted-experts-worry-it-wont-last/>

¹⁰⁰ WUSF Public Media. (2021). Coronavirus Pandemic Takes Toll on Florida's Children, Report Finds. Retrieved from: <https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/health-news-florida/2021-06-21/coronavirus-pandemic-takes-toll-on-floridas-children-report-finds> and <https://www.aecf.org/interactive/databook>

prioritize the recovery of hard-hit communities of color due to these disparities and increase outreach with these populations.¹⁰¹

COVID-19 and Home Visiting

During the pandemic, home visiting programs continued to play a vital role in addressing the needs of pregnant women, young children, and families, in-person and virtually. The potential impacts on pregnant women and families' access to critical health, early care and education, and family economic supports made continued connections with families essential.

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, and a number of evidence-based home visiting service delivery model developers released guidance to encourage the use of telephone and/or video technology to maintain contact with families to identify any necessary local COVID-19 resources (e.g., health and mental health services), assist with strategies for managing family stress and social isolation, keep families informed about current public health recommendations and promote family emergency planning strategies. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 appropriated \$150 million for MIECHV Program awardees to continue to support children and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰²

Homelessness in Florida During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Florida received unprecedented federal resources dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness. These one-time resources allowed families that would have otherwise faced homelessness to remain safe at home.

Nationally, in September 2020, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued a temporary halt on evictions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, which prevented tenants from being evicted if they could prove they struggled to keep up with rent because of COVID-19. This public health measure aimed to support housing stability to reduce putting individuals at risk for exposure and serious illness due to unsheltered homelessness and homelessness. This unprecedented moratorium on evictions will cease on July 31, 2021 nationally.

Annually, Florida collects "Point in Time Count (PIT)" data to provide a snapshot of homelessness in the state. This data reflects a 10-year trend indicating that the number of people experiencing homelessness decreased among both sheltered and unsheltered categories. However, due to the pandemic, the 2021 PIT Count is not directly comparable to prior years' counts. Typically, Continuums of Care (CoCs) conduct a PIT Count of both sheltered and unsheltered households. Due to COVID-19 related safety concerns,

¹⁰¹ WUSF Public Media. (2021). Coronavirus Pandemic Takes Toll on Florida's Children, Report Finds. Retrieved from: <https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/health-news-florida/2021-06-21/coronavirus-pandemic-takes-toll-on-floridas-children-report-finds> and <https://www.aecf.org/interactive/databook>

¹⁰² The MIECHV Program (2021). The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program. Retrieved from: <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/MaternalChildHealthInitiatives/HomeVisiting/pdf/programbrief.pdf>

only six of the 27 CoCs conducted such a count; 10 CoCs did not conduct an unsheltered count; and others conducted a modified form of the unsheltered count. All CoCs conducted a sheltered PIT count.

The CoCs that include Okeechobee and Indian River Counties reported a respective 63-68% drop in the homeless population from 2020 to 2021. This data must be interpreted with a note of caution and the understanding that for the CoCs that did not conduct an unsheltered count, the CoCs reported zero unsheltered persons, resulting in an undercount of total homelessness for 2021.¹⁰³

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Florida received an unprecedented infusion of federal funding to address homelessness and housing instability. With these funds appropriated by Congress, state, local governments, CoCs, and partner agencies have invested in solutions to homelessness, including rent and utilities assistance, sheltering, outreach, supportive services and more. While these resources have increased Florida's capacity to prevent and end homelessness, the federal funds have strict restrictions on how the funds may be used; they are not interchangeable with the Challenge and Staffing grants provided to CoCs by the State of Florida. State funding remains critical to addressing homelessness in Florida, especially in rural areas and for the many programs that cannot be funded by federal resources due to their restrictions. State funding helps ensure a broad range of programs in Florida, as well as increase the capacity of the CoCs to administer the federal funding and other resources.¹⁰⁴

In Florida, prior to the pandemic, there were only 26 affordable homes available per 100 extremely low-income households; this may be exacerbated by the projected increase in future evictions as the eviction moratorium expires during a time when families may have a reduced income or lapsing benefits across the state.¹⁰⁵

COVID-19 and Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic is pushing many into a mental health crisis. Federal agencies and experts warn that a historic wave of mental-health problems is approaching bringing depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide.¹⁰⁶

According to preliminary Medical Examiner's statistics, 2,975 people in Florida died by suicide in 2020, a drop of 13 percent from the previous year, and 16 percent from 2018. During times of national crisis, suicide rates do tend to drop due to a greater rate of societal connectedness and family members

¹⁰³ Florida's Council on Homelessness. (2021). 2021 Annual Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/homelessness/docs/2021CouncilReport.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ Florida's Council on Homelessness. (2021). 2021 Annual Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/homelessness/docs/2021CouncilReport.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ Florida's Council on Homelessness, (2020). 2020 Annual Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/homelessness/docs/2021CouncilReport.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Florida Health. (2020). Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19. Retrieved from: <http://leon.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/08/mental-health-coping-covid.html>

staying home together, but mental health experts warn that long term the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have an increasing impact on suicide rates and will need to be watched over time.¹⁰⁷

COVID-19 and Substance Abuse

Nationally, while overdose deaths were already increasing in the months preceding the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the latest numbers suggest an acceleration of overdose deaths during the pandemic.¹⁰⁸

Synthetic opioids (primarily illicitly manufactured fentanyl) appear to be the primary driver of the increases in overdose deaths, increasing 38.4 percent from the 12-month period leading up to June 2019 compared with the 12-month period leading up to May 2020.

In 2020, the American Medical Association reported that the nation had already suffered a “dramatic” increase in fatalities from opioids, methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine before the pandemic began. The AMA warned then that the problem was expected to worsen; Florida’s Project Opioid analysis found drug overdoses of all forms were projected to have killed 55 Floridians a day in 2020 — up from 33-35 a day in 2018 and 2019 respectively.¹⁰⁹

The Indian River County Sheriff's Office has reported a large number of drug overdoses. So far in 2021, they've responded to 138 overdoses; 8 of those were fatal. In July 2021 alone, the Office reported 19 overdoses.¹¹⁰

In light of the growing number of overdose deaths, it is critical that essential services remain accessible for people most at risk of overdose and prevention and response activities are available. The CDC issued a health advisory with recommendations that include: expanding the distribution and use of naloxone and overdose prevention education, expanding awareness about and access to and availability of treatment for substance use disorders, intervening early with individuals at highest risk for overdose, and improving detection of overdose outbreaks to facilitate more effective response.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Tampa Bay Times. (2021). A pandemic plus: Florida suicides plummeted. Experts worry it won't last. Retrieved from: <https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2021/02/10/a-pandemic-plus-florida-suicides-plummeted-experts-worry-it-wont-last/>

¹⁰⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Overdose Deaths Accelerating During COVID-19. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p1218-overdose-deaths-covid-19.html>

¹⁰⁹ Orlando Sentinel. (2020). Central Florida drug OD deaths up 70% during COVID, report shows. Retrieved from: <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/coronavirus/os-ne-coronavirus-dramatic-rise-in-florida-drug-overdoses-during-covid-20201202-u6rognhnrh7foitil4h5kltqi-story.html>

¹¹⁰ Channel 12 News. (2021). Indian River County seeing rash of drug overdoses. Retrieved from: <https://cbs12.com/news/local/indian-river-county-seeing-rash-of-drug-overdoses>

¹¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Overdose Deaths Accelerating During COVID-19. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p1218-overdose-deaths-covid-19.html>

COVID-19 and Increased Demand for Food Assistance

Further illustrating the nutrition needs in the service area, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, there was a sharp increase in the number of individuals receiving food support from the Treasure Coast Food Bank. The reported demand rose 40% as access to non-perishables slowed amid the COVID-19 outbreak.¹¹² Treasure Coast Food Bank officials said the need for assistance still remains in 2021; demand for food assistance since Thanksgiving 2020 remains consistently 55% above pre-pandemic levels.¹¹³

The Treasure Coast Food Bank has rolled out a new tool to help meet the needs of hungry children in the service area during the summer months. The non-profit expanded its summer meals program with the help of their market fresh food trucks. The purpose of the program is to ease the burden and provide more options for families living in underserved communities.¹¹⁴

COVID-19 and ALICE Families

In the service area, 11.4% of Indian River County individuals and 21% of Okeechobee County individuals are living in poverty (Table 6). The state average of ALICE households in Florida is 33%, with an average of 13% of the population under the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).¹¹⁵ Those on the brink of poverty are considered within the “ALICE” threshold (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). ALICE households earn more than the federal poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living. Both types of households are struggling to afford basic needs.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Floridians were already housing burdened, with 945,687 low-income households paying more than 50% of their incomes for housing. There is now even more concern that this current financial crisis may lead to homelessness for many, at a time when eviction policies and unemployment benefits are expiring for many.¹¹⁶

The United Way reflected that “the rapid spread of COVID-19 has exposed critical shortcomings in our economy and in our systems of health care and education. In the midst of this crisis, the ALICE measures show how profoundly the nation’s most vulnerable households are being affected.”¹¹⁷

¹¹² TC Palm. (2021). Treasure Coast Food Bank demand up 40% as access to non-perishables slows amid COVID-19 outbreak. Retrieved from: <https://amp.tcpalm.com/amp/5121102002>

¹¹³ WPTV Chanel 5. (2021). Video. Retrieved from: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/treasure-coast-food-bank-officials-say-the-need-for-assistance-still-remains/vp-BB1exnVW>

¹¹⁴ WPTV. (2021). Treasure Coast Food Bank expanding summer meals program. Retrieved from: <https://www.wptv.com/news/region-okeechobee-county/treasure-coast-food-bank-expanding-summer-meals-program-with-food-trucks>

¹¹⁵ United Way. (2020). ALICE Report. retrieved from: <https://www.hfuw.org/alicerreport2020/#:~:text=The%20state%20average%20of%20ALICE,across%20Central%20Florida%20it's%2047%25.>

¹¹⁶ Florida Housing Coalition. (2020), Home Matters. Retrieved from: <https://www.flhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Home-Matters-2020.pdf>

¹¹⁷ United Way, 2021, COVID-19 and ALICE. retrieved from: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/covid2019>

COVID-19 and Unemployment Benefits in Florida

During the pandemic, Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) was provided to eligible individuals who collected unemployment compensation (\$600/week in additional federal benefits through July 2020 and then extended at a reduced rate of \$300/week through September 4, 2021). In an effort to “help meet the demands of small and large businesses who are ready to hire and expand their workforce,” Florida became the 23rd state to cut off the extended \$300 federal unemployment benefit, effective June 26, 2021.¹¹⁸

Historically, Floridians have been required to actively pursue work opportunities in order to be eligible to receive unemployment benefits; due to the pandemic, this requirement was waived to ease the burden of returning to the workforce. In May 2021, the work search waiver expired.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Orlando Sentinel. (2020). Florida’s jobless will lose weekly \$300 federal unemployment benefit starting June 26. Retrieved by: <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/politics/os-ne-florida-federal-benefits-withdrawal-20210524-53ict5lodbchlfqx3oyupdvnm-story.html>

¹¹⁹ Spectrum News. (2021). Florida unemployment benefits: changes explained. Retrieved from: <https://www.mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2021/05/28/florida-unemployment--changes-explained>.