



2024-2028 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2023



**West Central Arkansas
Planning and
Development District**

2024-2028 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

October 2023

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**Arkansas Economic
Development Institute**

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INTRODUCTION

What is a CEDS?

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or CEDS is a document designed to engage cooperation between the public and private sectors in the resiliency and health of the local economy. A CEDS analyzes the target region’s economic and social well-being and serves as a guide to establishing regional goals, strategies, investment priorities, and resources to benefit the region. A CEDS seeks to maximize the target region’s unique advantages and minimize its disadvantage. Finally, a CEDS provides a benchmark for regional economic success.

The CEDS is a mandated document by the Economic Development Administration, (EDA) to define Economic Development Districts throughout the nation. EDA, West Central and the CEDS Strategy Committee are to provide this document to reference economic conditions, development strategies, and projects throughout the 10-County district; this CEDS is not intended to be a “stand-alone” document. The CEDS is just one tool used in economic development.

West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (WCAPDD) 10-County District

Clark Co..... Arkadelphia
Conway Co..... Morrilton
Garland Co..... Hot Springs
Hot Spring Co. Malvern
Johnson Co..... Clarksville

Montgomery Co. Mount Ida
Perry Co..... Perryville
Pike Co..... Murfreesboro
Pope Co..... Russellville
Yell Co..... Danville and Dardanelle

MAP 1: WCAPDD County Boundaries and Seats

Developed by: Arkansas Economic Development Institute



CEDS TIMELINE

**JANUARY
2023**

West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (WCAPDD) partnered with Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) to assist with data collection and analysis, facilitation of meetings, and professional assistance in writing the West Central CEDS plan.

**FEBRUARY
2023**

AEDI began data collection to complete a labor shed analysis, housing and jobs trends analysis, economic growth cluster analysis, and county profiles of each of the 10 counties. AEDI also developed a survey intended to develop an understanding of the region's needs.

**MARCH
2023**

WCAPDD formed the CEDS Committee to represent public and private interests in the region's economic and social well-being. The survey was introduced to CEDS Committee members.

**APRIL-JUNE
2023**

AEDI met with the CEDS Committee and WCAPDD to present the collected data and survey results, complete a SWOT analysis, and establish focus areas for the CEDS plan.

**JUNE
2023**

AEDI begins completing an online dashboard to provide the region with easily accessible data to the incorporated place level.

**AUGUST-
SEPTEMBER
2023**

CEDS plan is finalized and given final stakeholder approval of contents.

**NOVEMBER
2023**

WCAPDD Board adopts CEDS plan.

**DECEMBER
2023**

CEDS plan is submitted to EDA.

CEDS REGIONAL SUMMARY

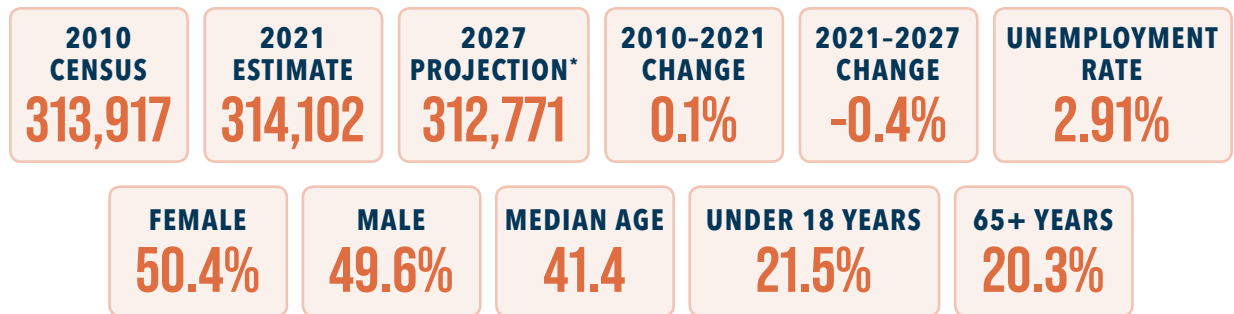
» Demographic and Economic Data

As of 2021, the West Central region has a population of over 314,000 people and has grown by 0.1% over the past decade. The region is projected to experience a slight decrease of 0.4% over the next 6 years, due to a projected decrease in population of all counties apart from Garland, Johnson, and Pope counties.

TABLE 1: Population Data

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

*It should be noted that the projection comes from Esri Geoenrichment Service

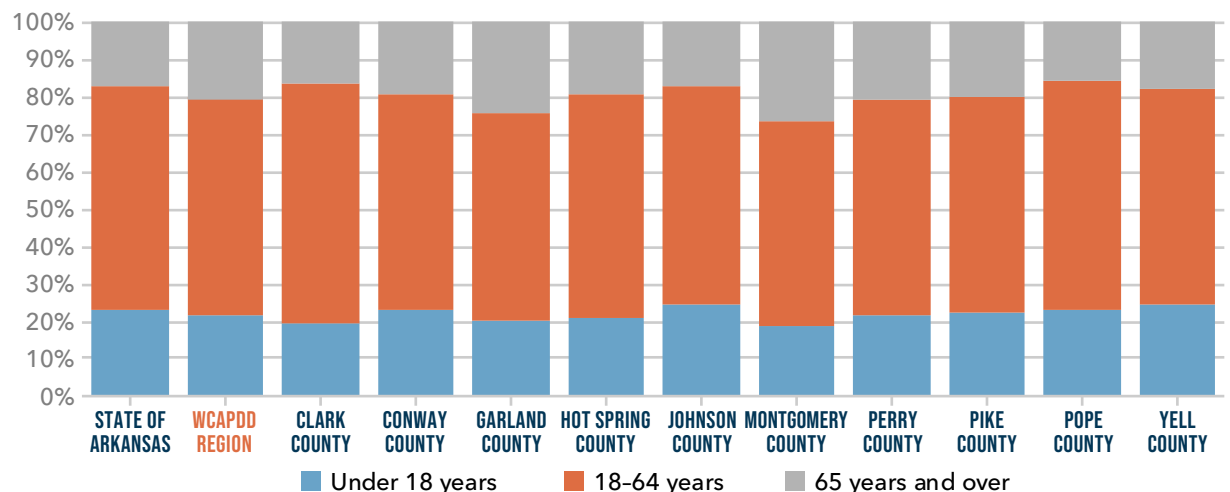


» Age

The age distribution of a community helps leaders understand where to prioritize community investments, such as for children, the elderly, or the workforce. The region's populations under 18 years and above 65 years makes up 21.5% and 20.3% of the population, respectively.

FIGURE 1: Population Age

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

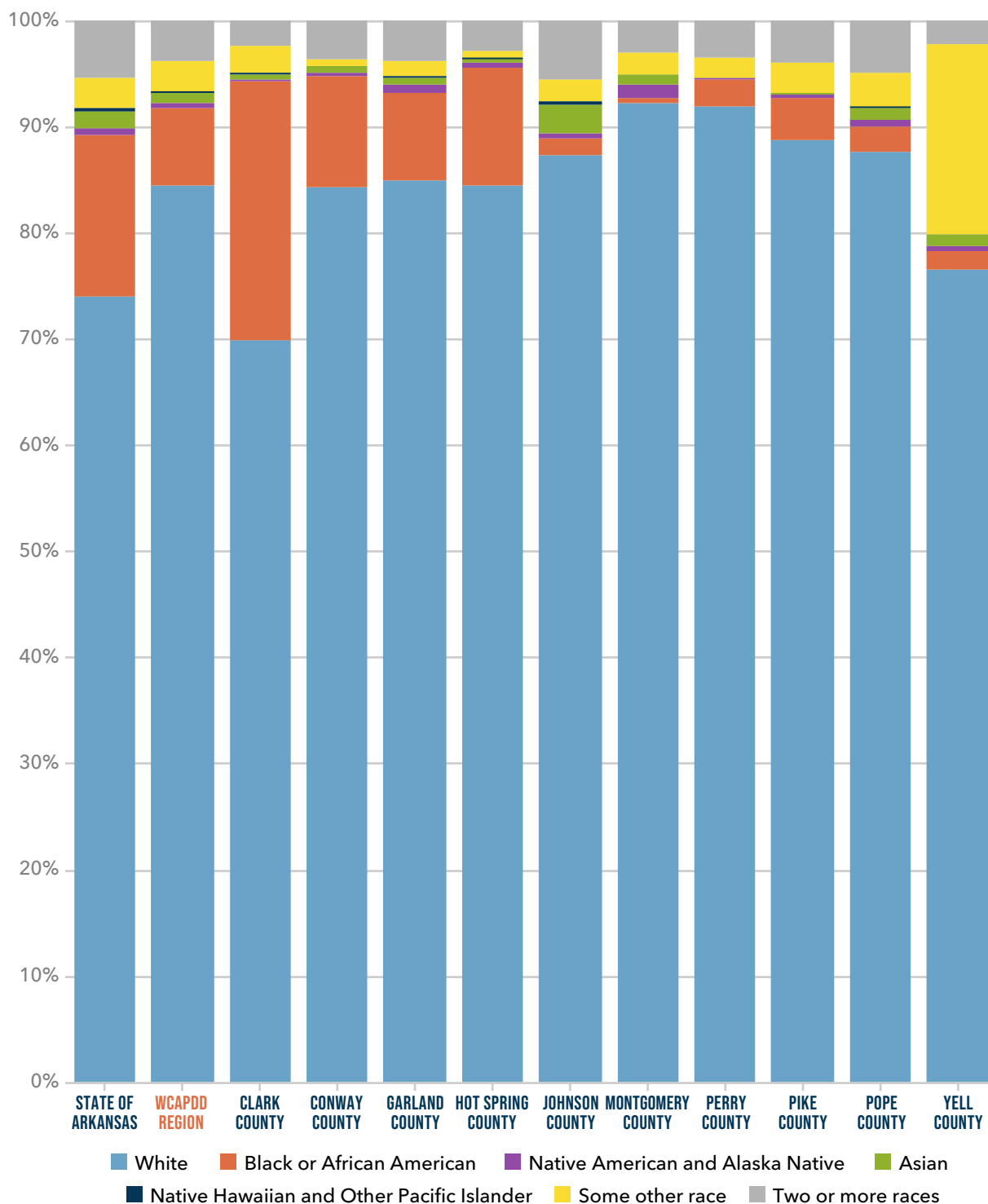


» Race/Ethnicity

Research shows that a diverse population and inclusive policies can contribute to a thriving economy. The region has somewhat of a diverse population with 84.58% of the population identifying as White, 7.16% identifying as Black or African American, 3.78% identifying as two or more races, and 2.98% identifying as some other race. 7.9% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino.

FIGURE 2: Race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

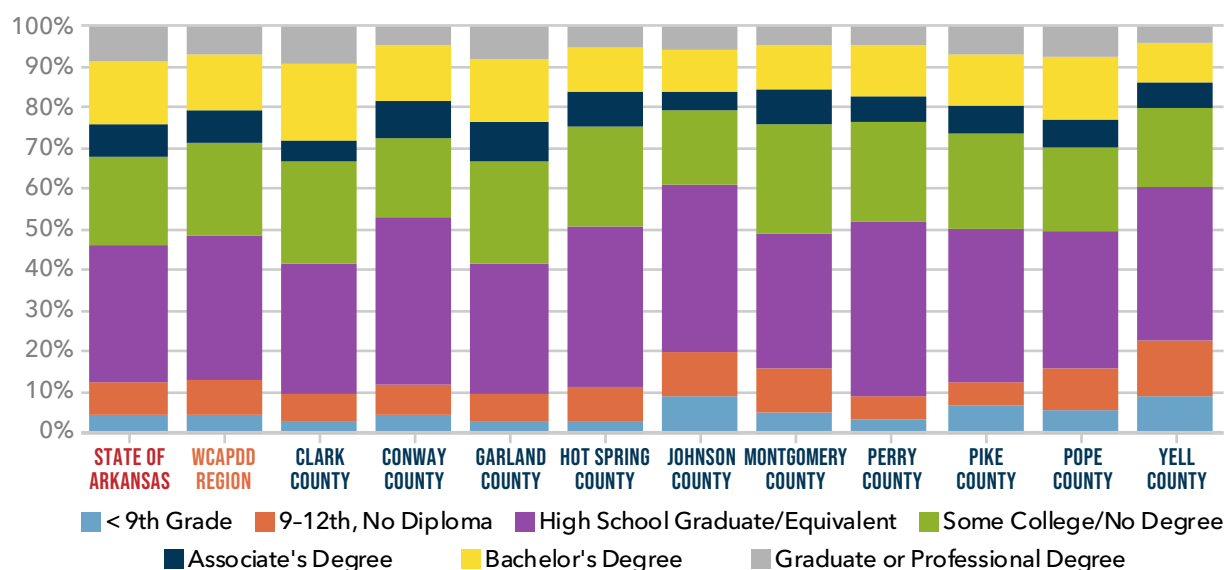


» Educational Attainment

As the economy becomes more knowledge-intensive, new jobs will require skilled workers with an education beyond a high school diploma. With the workforce being a top factor in many business location decisions, training and skill resources are key to being competitive. 35% of the population in the region has high school equivalency as their highest education, 23% with some college without a degree, and 14% with a bachelor's degree.

FIGURE 3: Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

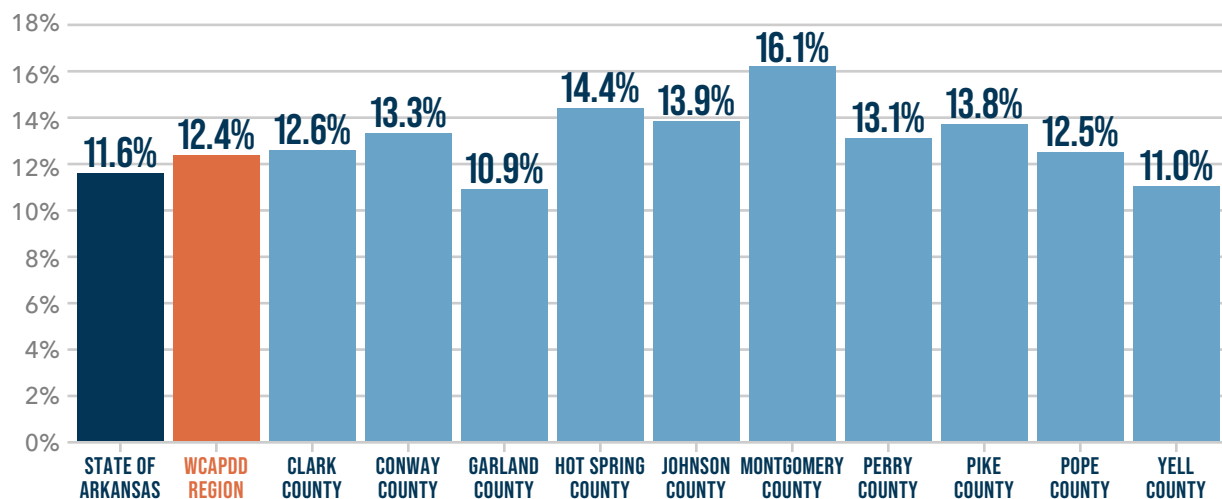


» Poverty Rates

High poverty rates are typically associated with low educational attainment and a lack of high-quality job opportunities. Persistent high poverty rates can put a heavy demand on social services. 12.4% of families in the West Central region live below the poverty level.

FIGURE 4: Family Below Poverty Level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

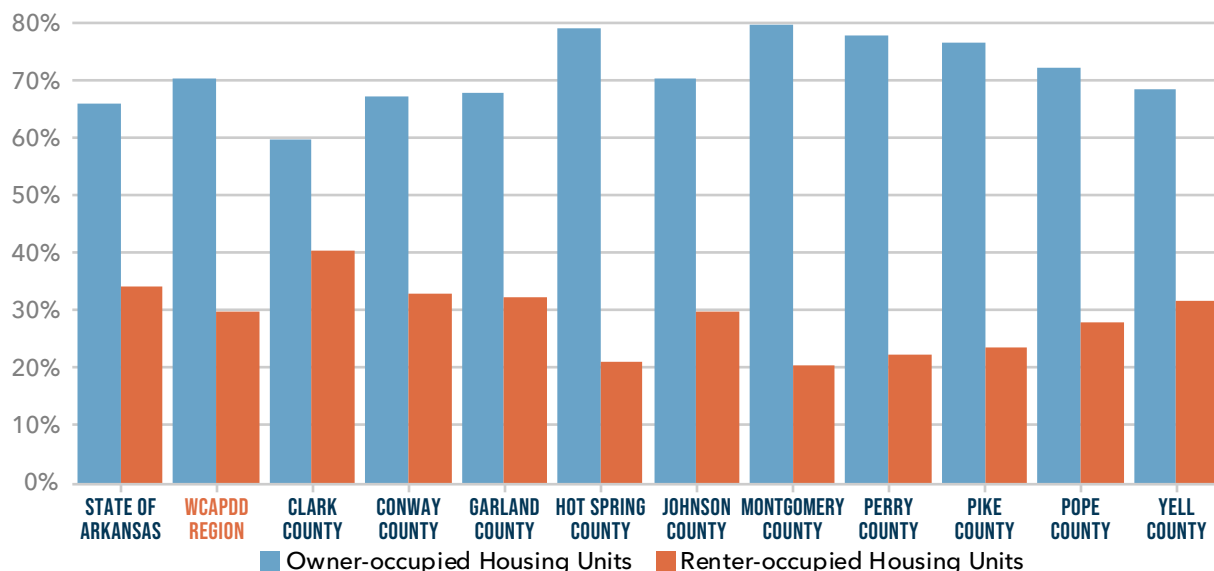


» Homeowners vs Renters

Homeownership is a major contributor to household wealth. As communities seek to meet housing demands, inclusive zoning, permitting, and land-use policies will be required for housing production. 70% of the households in the West Central region are owner-occupied, and 30% are renter-occupied.

FIGURE 5: Occupied Housing Tenure

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

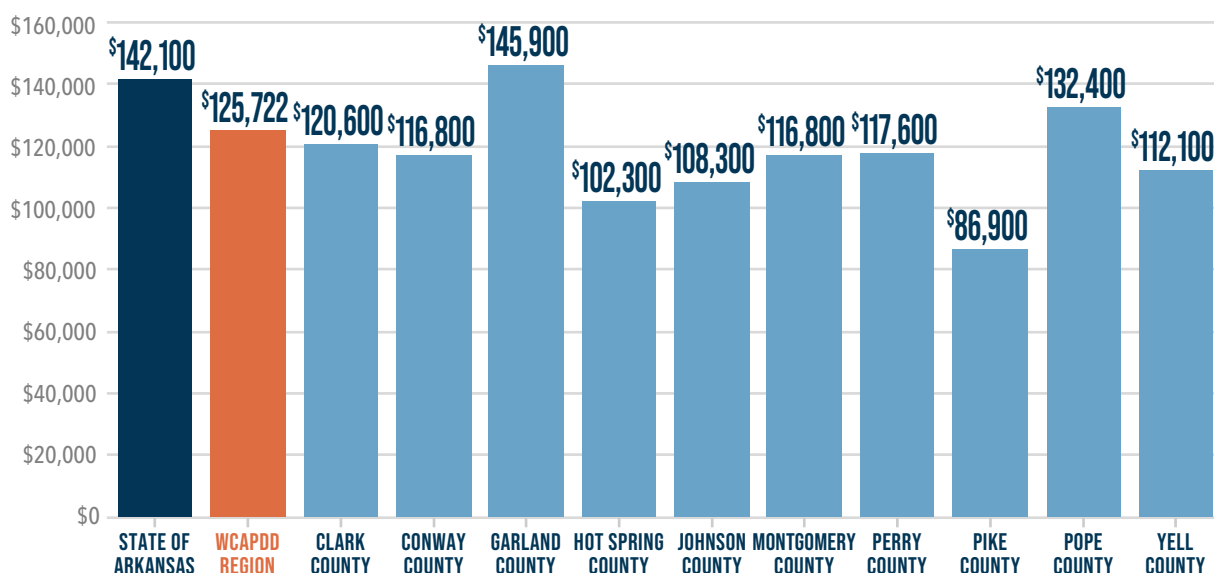


» Median Home Value

Home prices have increased significantly over the years and housing shortages have contributed to higher home prices. Affordable and workforce housing continues to dominate local and national headlines. The median home value for the West Central region is \$125,722.

FIGURE 6: Median Home Value

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

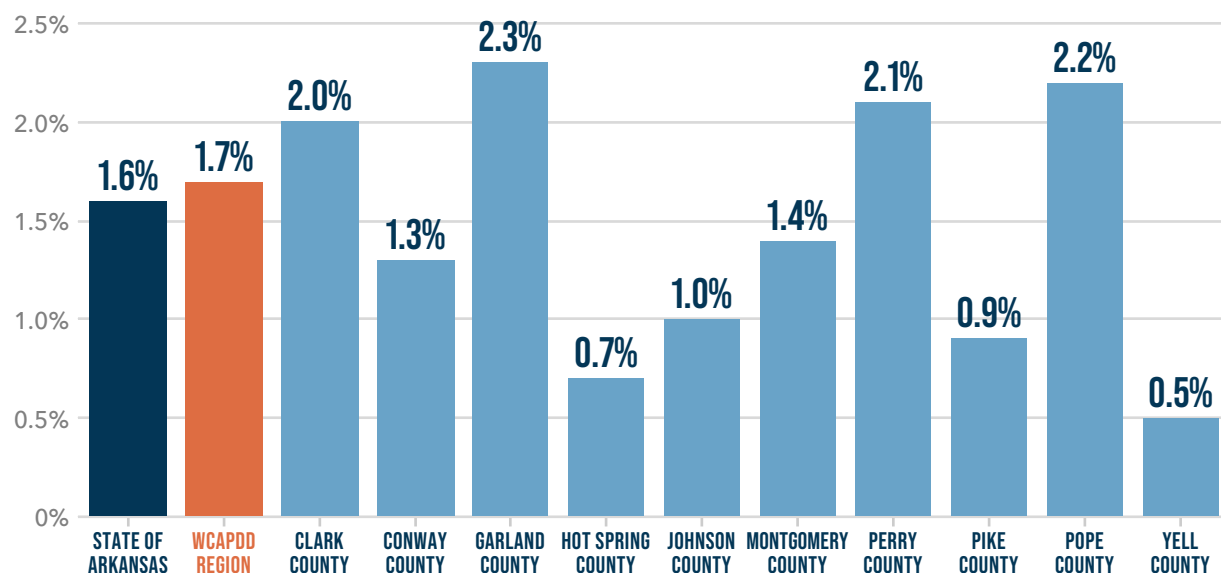


» Homeowner Vacancy Rate

Low vacancy rates are a factor that drives up housing costs. When fewer houses are vacant or available, owners increase prices to maximize their profits. The homeowner vacancy rate for the West Central region is 1.7%.

FIGURE 7: Homeowner Vacancy Rate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

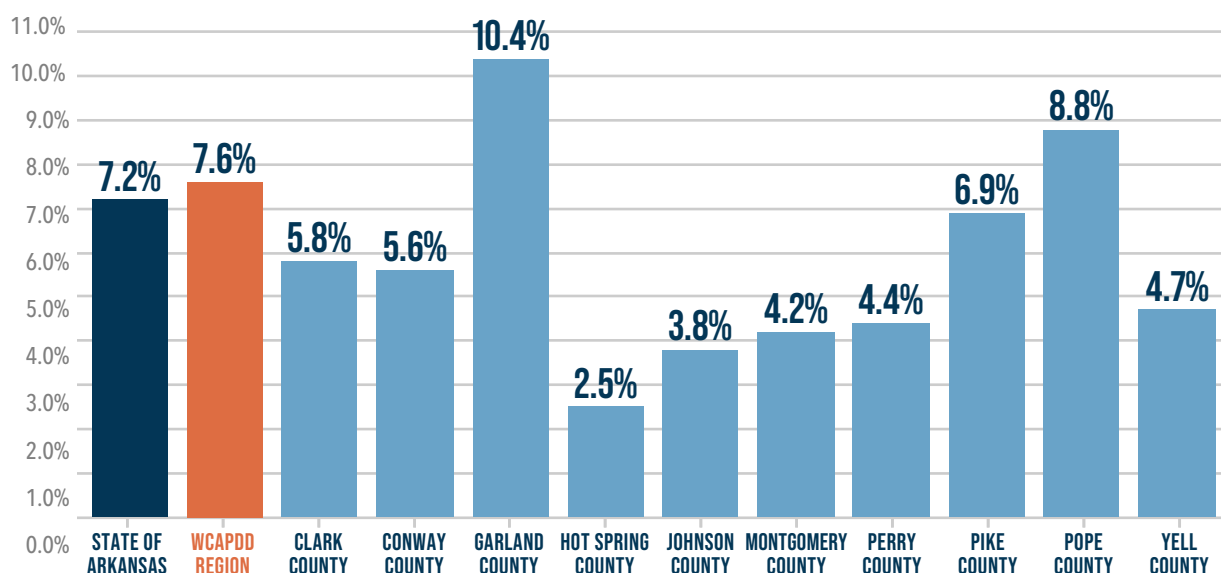


» Rental Vacancy Rate

Rental vacancy rates are similar to low vacancy rates for homes. With rental housing, low vacancy rates are also a factor that drives up rental costs. When fewer rental properties are vacant or available, landlords increase prices to maximize their profits. The rental vacancy rate for the West Central region is 7.6%.

FIGURE 8: Rental Vacancy Rate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

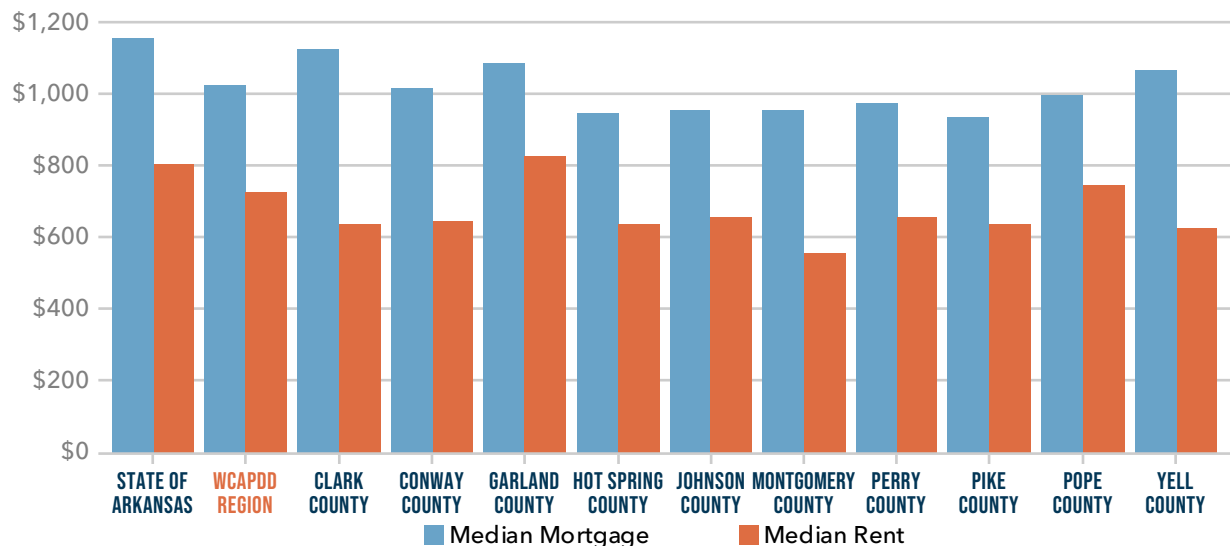


» Median Rent and Mortgage

Mortgage and rent costs have increased over the years, creating hardship for millions of individuals and families. Housing affordability also affects businesses as they seek to attract and retain workers. The median rent for the West Central region is \$729, and the median mortgage is \$1,026.

FIGURE 9: Median Rent and Mortgage

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

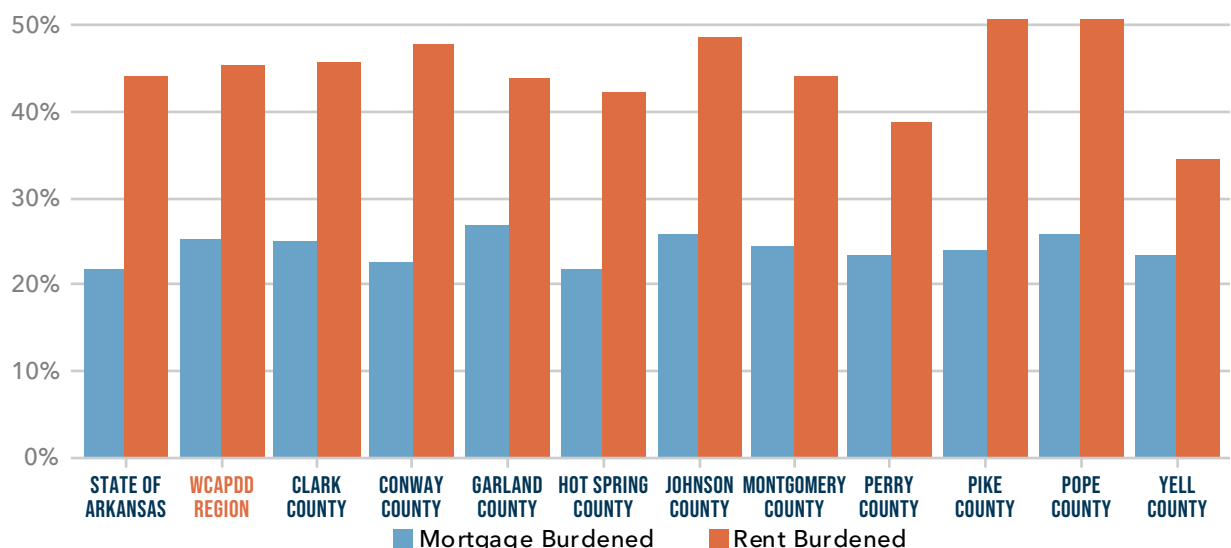


» Rent and Mortgage Burdened

When residents spend a large share of their income on housing costs, they are at risk of eviction or foreclosure and must cut back on other expenses. The U.S. Census Bureau defines households as burdened if they spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. 45.36% of renters in the West Central region are rent-burdened, and 25.20% of homeowners are mortgage-burdened.

FIGURE 10: Rent and Mortgage Burden Rate

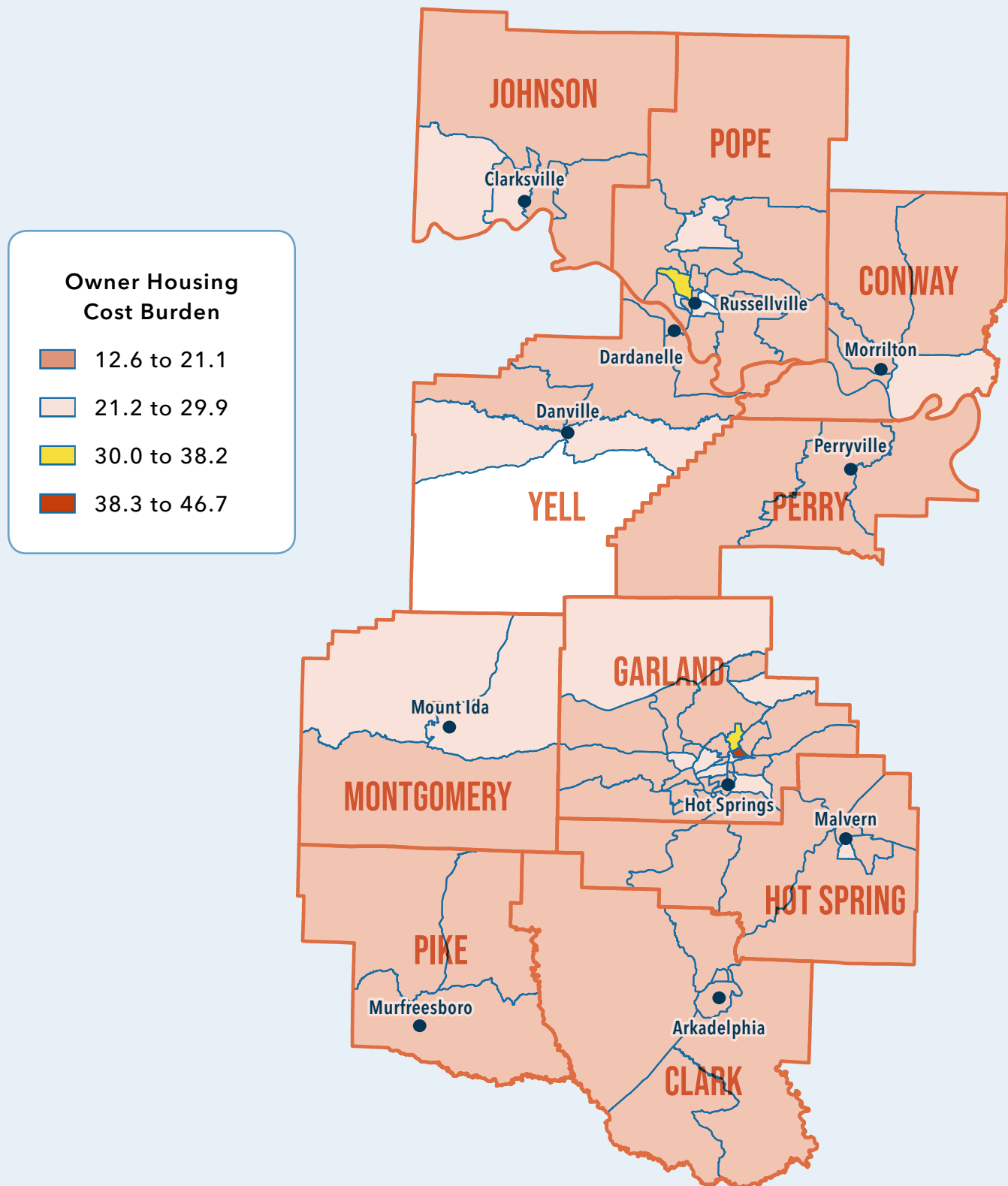
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



MAP 2: Owner Housing Cost Burden; > 30% Income

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

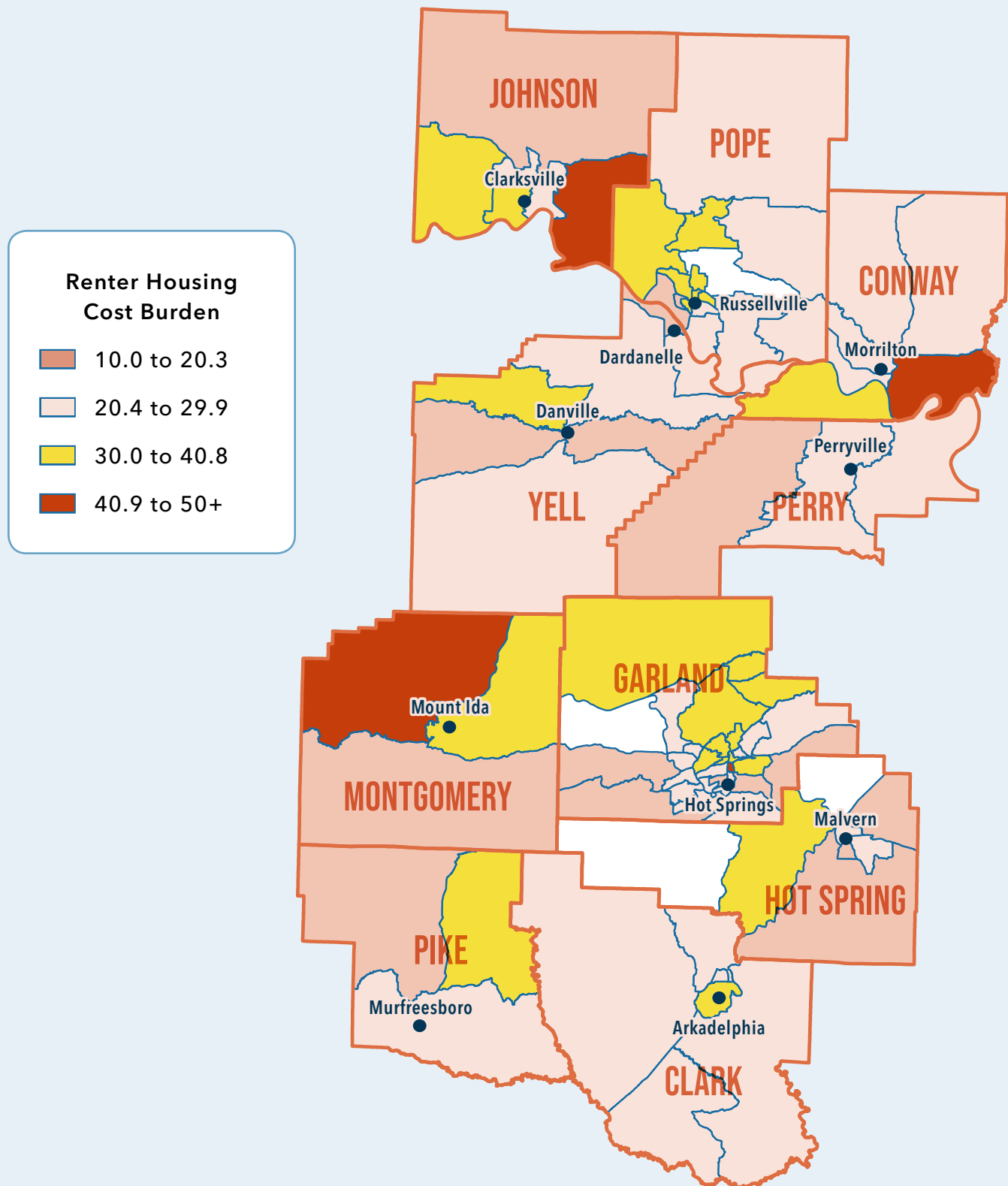
Map 2 shows a high concentration of homeowner cost burdening in and around Russellville and Hot Springs areas.



MAP 3: Renter Housing Cost Burden; > 30% Income

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Map 3 shows less concentrated and more widespread rental cost burdening throughout the region.



» Workplace and Residence Area Characteristics

An understanding of where population centers are compared to job centers can be established by comparing the number of working age adults, between 18 and 65 years, living in each census tract to the number of jobs provided by employers in each census tract.

MAP 4: WCAPDD Workplace and Residence Area Characteristics

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

Map 4 shows that the larger towns within the region tend to have more jobs than workers while the areas outside of those towns have more workers than jobs. This suggests a heavy trend towards populations working in urban areas while living in the surrounding rural areas.

Workers to Jobs Ratio

“-” Negative Value =
More Workers than Jobs

“+” Positive Value =
More Jobs than Workers

■ -1,018 to -659

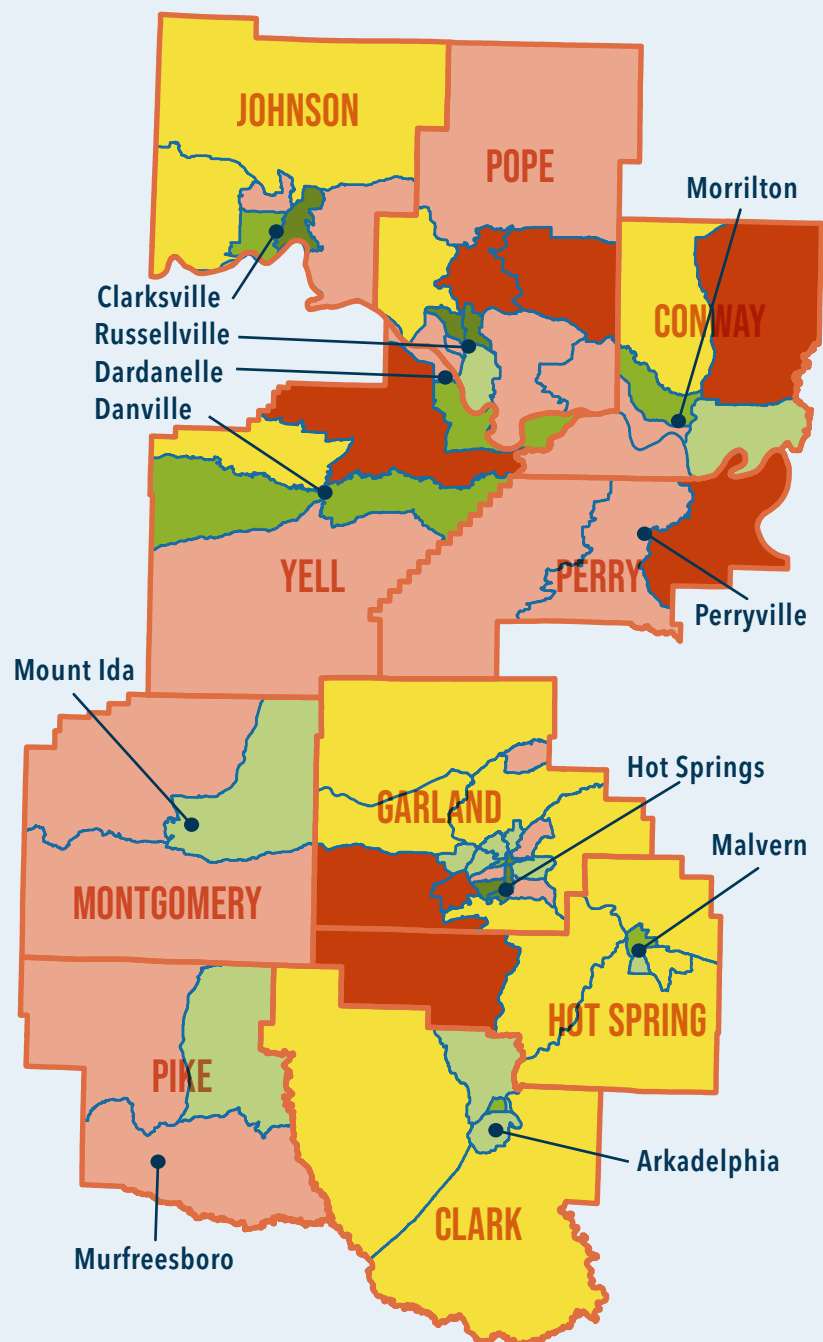
■ -658 to -358

■ -357 to -1

■ +1 to +286

■ +287 to +715

■ +716 to +2,027



» Workforce Development

While there have been a few company closures in the region over the past few years, notable new or expanding company operations in the region include:

- Hostess (Clark Co.),
- Petit Jean Meats (Conway Co.),
- FiberPro (Garland Co.),
- Arning Companies (Johnson Co.),
- Caddo River Forest Products (MontgomeryCo./Pike Co.),
- Owens Corning (Pope Co.), and
- Pet Solutions (Yell Co.).

As of May 2023, the labor force in the West Central Arkansas Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) totaled more than 129,000 people with 32% of the labor force being located in Garland County and 21% in Pope County.

The unemployment rate for the area was 2.9% and the unemployment rate was the lowest in Hot Spring, Perry, and Pike counties all at 2.6%. Montgomery County had the highest unemployment rate at 3.8%.

The region and many places across the country are experiencing historically low unemployment numbers which make it hard for employers to find talent.



TABLE 2: WCAPDD Labor Force - May 2023

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

	LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Arkansas	1,384,271	1,349,899	34,372	2.5%
WCAPDD	129,659	125,888	3,771	2.9%
Clark Co.	8,521	8,217	304	3.6%
Conway Co.	8,371	8,133	238	2.8%
Garland Co.	41,916	40,721	1,195	2.9%
Hot Spring Co.	13,930	13,561	369	2.6%
Johnson Co.	10,073	9,773	300	3.0%
Montgomery Co.	2,902	2,791	111	3.8%
Perry Co.	4,259	4,147	112	2.6%
Pike Co.	4,031	3,926	105	2.6%
Pope Co.	27,737	2,6931	806	2.9%
Yell Co.	7,919	7,688	231	2.9%

» Higher Education

The West Central region has a strong workforce development system and is home to eight higher education institutions enrolling more than 21,000 students combined. Additionally, several trade schools are located within the 10-county region.

As the region seeks to expand its high-speed broadband access, Arkansas State University Three Rivers offers a four-week Telecommunications Tower Technician program to create a workforce pipeline to build broadband infrastructure.



National Park College offers customized training solutions for businesses in the area. Additionally, the college offers aerospace, computer, forklift certification, industrial, and leadership training programs.



A Makerspace is also housed on the National Park College campus, which allows students and the public to utilize machinery such as 3D printers, laser cutters, woodworking equipment, sewing machines, and videography, streaming, and photography equipment.

The University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton has a 53,843-square-foot workforce training center that houses classrooms, labs, welding booths, and more to customize training for businesses and industries.



TABLE 3: WCAPDD Region Colleges and Universities

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, College Navigator

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	LOCATION	HIGHEST AWARD OFFERED	ENROLLMENT
Arkansas State University Three Rivers	Malvern, Hot Spring Co.	Associate's	1,597
Arkansas Tech University	Russellville, Pope Co.	Master's	9,640
Henderson State University	Arkadelphia, Clark Co.	Master's	2,919
National Park College	Hot Springs, Garland Co.	Associate's	1,919
Ouachita Baptist University	Arkadelphia, Clark Co.	Baccalaureate	1,764
University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton	Morrilton, Conway Co.	Associate's	1,953
University of Arkansas Rich Mountain Community College	Mena, Polk Co.	Associate's	718
University of the Ozarks	Clarksville, Johnson Co.	Baccalaureate	784



» Economy

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 brought economic activity across the world to a halt. As businesses were required to close and non-essential workers were required to shelter in place, massive layoffs occurred, and unemployment numbers skyrocketed.

As the local, national, and global economies grapple with the integration of artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and cybersecurity, the workplace of the future continues to evolve and requires a skilled workforce.

The West Central region has a mildly diversified economy with Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Educational Services employing 66.4% of workers in the region.

Management of Companies and Enterprises have the highest average annual wages at \$86,951 and Accommodation and Food Services have the lowest average annual wages at \$20,675.

Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Educational Services employ 66.4% of workers in the region.

Utilities have the highest location quotient (LQ) at 3.02, and Management of Companies and Enterprises has the lowest LQ at 0.29.

Over the past five years, Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction have

had the largest decrease at 2.7%. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services and Management of Companies and Enterprises have had a 2.6% increase over the past five years.

Over the next five years, the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector is projected to have the largest increase at 1.3%, and Utilities is projected to have the largest decrease at 3.0% over the next five years.

Seven key industries were defined for the West Central region based on their large industry presence or the potential for growth to diversify the regional economy. (See Table 5.)

To determine the key industries, an examination of existing companies, job numbers, LQ, average annual wages, and the historical and projected growth of industry data were utilized.

TABLE 4: WCAPDD Industry Data

Source: JobsEQ Data, 2022Q3

NAICS	INDUSTRY	EMP.	AVG. ANNUAL WAGES	LQ	5-YR HISTORY ANNUAL %	1-YR FORECAST ANNUAL % GROWTH
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	17,793	\$46,707	1.05	-0.7%	0.4%
31	Manufacturing	15,148	\$49,733	1.59	-1.5%	-0.8%
44	Retail Trade	15,144	\$30,426	1.27	0.5%	-1.0%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	12,307	\$20,675	1.24	1.1%	0.7%
61	Educational Services	10,306	\$46,653	1.10	-0.1%	-0.3%
23	Construction	7,433	\$45,078	1.06	-0.2%	-0.4%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,052	\$36,575	0.79	-1.4%	-0.4%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	5,023	\$52,922	0.86	0.7%	-0.3%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,826	\$26,665	0.96	-1.1%	-0.1%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,120	\$38,312	2.62	-0.4%	-0.7%
92	Public Administration	4,004	\$42,510	0.74	0.2%	-0.8%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,068	\$51,321	0.36	2.6%	-0.1%
52	Finance and Insurance	2,753	\$61,119	0.58	-1.3%	-0.5%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,645	\$28,869	1.18	0.0%	1.3%
42	Wholesale Trade	2,025	\$59,296	0.46	-0.4%	-0.6%
22	Utilities	1,798	\$85,791	3.02	0.6%	-3.0%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,374	\$37,720	0.66	1.1%	-0.7%
51	Information	916	\$41,131	0.38	-0.8%	0.1%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	518	\$86,951	0.29	2.6%	-0.5%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	472	\$57,362	1.16	-2.7%	0.0%
TOTAL - ALL INDUSTRIES		117,726	\$42,260	1.00	-0.2%	-0.3%

TABLE 5: WCAPDD Key Industry Data

Source: JobsEQ Data, 2022Q3

SECTOR	EMPLOYMENT	AVG. ANNUAL WAGES	LQ	5-YR HISTORY ANNUAL %	1-YR FORECAST ANNUAL % GROWTH
Healthcare	17,793	\$45,111	1.07	-0.7%	0.4%
Hospitality and Tourism	15,011	\$20,955	1.26	0.9%	0.8%
Food and Beverage	7,883	\$35,143	3.32	-3.1%	-0.6%
Advanced Manufacturing	5,144	\$50,858	1.96	-0.6%	-0.8%
Forestry and Wood Products	4,987	\$56,360	7.16	3.5%	-0.7%
Distribution and Logistics	3,472	\$49,532	1.37	0.7%	-0.3%
Business and Information Technology	2,545	\$57,920	0.44	-1.7%	-0.1%



» Equity

Providing fair access to education, employment, housing, healthcare, and quality-of-life opportunities, in addition to other factors, creates thriving communities. Healthy communities are built with residents of diverse backgrounds in mind and start with inclusive programming and policies necessary to build trust and engagement across resident groups.

As the West Central region continues to grow and evolve, policies, investments, and partnerships will be established to increase equity for all.



» Environment

The West Central region is vast and encompasses mountainous terrain and rich lowlands. The Ouachita National Forest, Ozark-St. Francis National Forests and Petit Jean State Park cover over 3 million acres of land combined.

The Arkansas, Caddo, Ouachita, and Saline Rivers, in addition to numerous lakes, provide ample opportunity for water recreation in the region.



» Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation has become a major aspect of many people's lives, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic. The outdoor recreation scene in the West Central region has always been a huge attraction for locals and tourists looking to enjoy nature.

The region boasts numerous state and national parks, rivers and lakes, walking/hiking/mountain biking trails, zip line courses, and a recreational diamond mine.

These outdoor amenities are nationally known and attract thousands of visitors, from inside and outside Arkansas, annually.



» Culture

Cultural activities happening in the West Central region include the Hot Springs Film Festival, horse racing, music festivals, and marathons, just to name a few.

Cities within the region have beautiful eye-catching murals that celebrate history, community, and place-making.

A vibrant art culture also exists in the region with many communities having art walks and long-standing arts centers in addition to museums.

DATA BY REGION/COUNTIES

West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	87.0%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	20.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	22.8
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	80.8%
Carpooled	11.3%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.3%
Walked	2.0%
Bicycle	0.1%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	1.1%
Worked at Home	4.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$47,402
Families Below Poverty Level	12.4%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$42,547
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.8%
Unemployment Rate	2.91%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

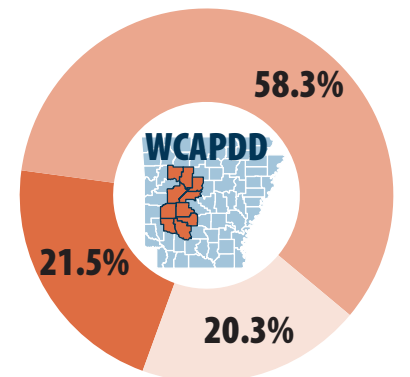
Median Value	\$125,722
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.7%
Rental Vacancy Rate	7.6%
Occupied Housing Units	122,642
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$1,026	25.20%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$729	45.36%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS 313,917	2021 ESTIMATE 314,102	2027 PROJECTION 312,771
2010-21 CHANGE 0.1%	2021-27 CHANGE -0.4%	MINORITY 19.4%
FEMALE 50.4%	MALE 49.6%	MEDIAN AGE 41.4
UNDER 18 YEARS 21.5%	18-64 YEARS 58.3%	65+ YEARS 20.3%



Under 18 18-64 65+

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

WCAPDD LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Health Care and Social Assistance	17,793	-0.7%	0.4%	\$46,707
Manufacturing	15,148	-1.5%	-0.8%	\$49,733
Retail Trade	15,144	0.5%	-1.0%	\$30,426
Accommodation and Food Services	12,307	1.1%	0.7%	\$20,675
Educational Services	10,306	-0.1%	-0.3%	\$46,653
Construction	7,433	-0.2%	-0.4%	\$45,078
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,052	-1.4%	-0.4%	\$36,575
Transportation and Warehousing	5,023	0.7%	-0.3%	\$52,922
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,826	-1.1%	-0.1%	\$26,665
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,120	-0.4%	-0.7%	\$38,312

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Clark County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	90.5%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	27.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	19.9
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	75.7%
Carpooled	14.1%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.5%
Walked	5.2%
Bicycle	0.1%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	0.5%
Worked at Home	3.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$45,351
Families Below Poverty Level	12.6%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$42,664
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.60%
Unemployment Rate	3.60%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

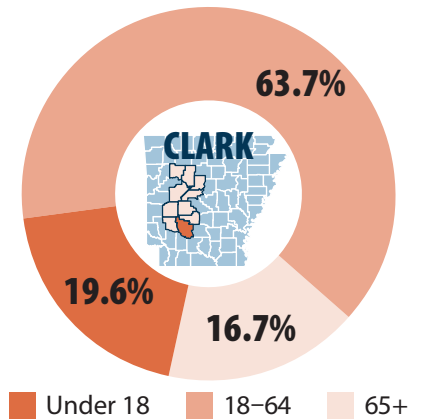
Median Value	\$120,600
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.0%
Rental Vacancy Rate	5.8%
Occupied Housing Units	8,056
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$1,124	24.90%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$641	45.70%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS 22,995	2021 ESTIMATE 21,321	2027 PROJECTION 20,748
2010-21 CHANGE -7.3%	2021-27 CHANGE -2.7%	MINORITY 31.8%
FEMALE 52.0%	MALE 48.0%	MEDIAN AGE 32.6
UNDER 18 YEARS 19.6%	18-64 YEARS 63.7%	65+ YEARS 16.7%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

CLARK COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Educational Services	1,434	-1.5%	-0.5%	\$43,145
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,434	-3.9%	-0.2%	\$41,435
Retail Trade	1,191	-1.0%	-1.4%	\$30,109
Manufacturing	1,068	-5.7%	-0.8%	\$60,915
Accommodation and Food Services	1,025	0.0%	0.4%	\$17,928
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	478	1.9%	-1.8%	\$39,711
Other Services (except Public Administration)	453	-1.5%	-0.5%	\$30,375
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	420	2.6%	-0.8%	\$40,166
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	275	-1.6%	-0.5%	\$54,305
Construction	266	4.1%	-0.7%	\$42,427

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Conway County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	88.1%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	18.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	27
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	79.6%
Carpooled	12.6%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.1%
Walked	0.9%
Bicycle	0.0%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	1.0%
Worked at Home	5.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$45,812
Families Below Poverty Level	13.3%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$46,412
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	15.40%
Unemployment Rate	2.80%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

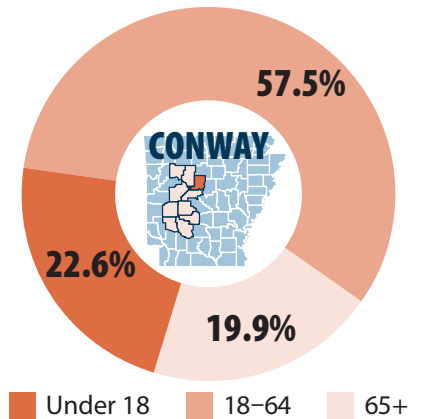
Median Value	\$116,800
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.3%
Rental Vacancy Rate	5.6%
Occupied Housing Units	8,460
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$1,015	22.70%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$650	47.70%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
21,273	20,873	20,418
2010–21 CHANGE	2021–27 CHANGE	MINORITY
-1.9%	-2.2%	19.4%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
50.7%	49.3%	42.4
UNDER 18 YEARS	18–64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
22.6%	57.5%	19.9%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

CONWAY COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Educational Services	1,134	2.9%	-0.4%	\$47,399
Manufacturing	1,106	4.6%	-1.1%	\$59,929
Retail Trade	829	-0.3%	-0.8%	\$29,078
Construction	744	2.6%	-0.4%	\$53,303
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	716	7.4%	-0.3%	\$31,163
Health Care and Social Assistance	704	-3.1%	0.5%	\$43,072
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	497	-0.7%	-0.9%	\$39,275
Accommodation and Food Services	442	-0.1%	0.8%	\$18,064
Transportation and Warehousing	405	-3.8%	-0.5%	\$54,077
Public Administration	295	4.3%	-0.6%	\$32,013

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Garland County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	90.4%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	23.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	21.7
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	81.4%
Carpooled	10.7%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.3%
Walked	1.5%
Bicycle	0.0%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	1.7%
Worked at Home	4.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$49,985
Families Below Poverty Level	10.9%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$46,897
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.00%
Unemployment Rate	2.90%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

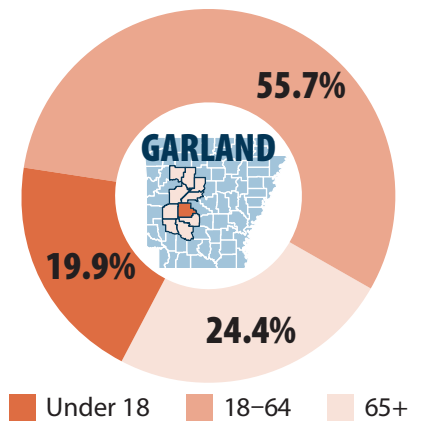
Median Value	\$145,900
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.3%
Rental Vacancy Rate	10.4%
Occupied Housing Units	41,919
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$1,089	26.70%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$827	43.80%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
96,024	100,330	101,085
2010-21 CHANGE	2021-27 CHANGE	MINORITY
4.5%	0.8%	18.9%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
51.5%	48.5%	45.4
UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
19.9%	55.7%	24.4%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

GARLAND COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,265	0.0%	0.5%	\$53,023
Retail Trade	6,501	1.0%	-1.0%	\$32,820
Accommodation and Food Services	6,119	2.4%	0.8%	\$22,575
Construction	2,791	1.5%	-0.5%	\$42,475
Manufacturing	2,500	-1.0%	-0.9%	\$51,872
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,267	-1.1%	-0.4%	\$33,060
Educational Services	2,197	0.3%	0.1%	\$52,373
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,850	-1.5%	0.0%	\$27,133
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,821	-0.6%	1.5%	\$32,854
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,351	3.5%	0.0%	\$54,484

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Hot Spring County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	88.6%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	16.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	27.4
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	80.2%
Carpooled	13.4%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.2%
Walked	3.1%
Bicycle	0.0%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	0.7%
Worked at Home	2.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$46,724
Families Below Poverty Level	14.4%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$37,474
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	15.00%
Unemployment Rate	2.60%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

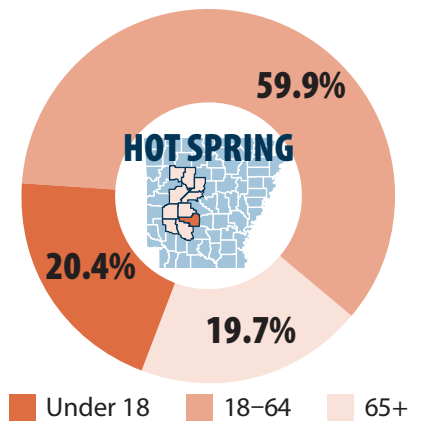
Median Value	\$102,300
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	0.7%
Rental Vacancy Rate	2.5%
Occupied Housing Units	12,070
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$945	21.90%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$640	42.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
32,923	33,148	32,807
2010-21 CHANGE	2021-27 CHANGE	MINORITY
0.7%	-1.0%	17.7%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
47.6%	52.4%	42.6
UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
20.4%	59.9%	19.7%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

HOT SPRING COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Manufacturing	1,616	2.5%	-0.4%	\$54,022
Retail Trade	977	0.8%	-0.7%	\$29,277
Health Care and Social Assistance	975	-3.1%	0.5%	\$40,341
Educational Services	834	-0.9%	-0.2%	\$45,978
Public Administration	784	-0.5%	-1.0%	\$36,242
Accommodation and Food Services	652	1.9%	0.8%	\$18,829
Transportation and Warehousing	648	0.9%	-0.3%	\$61,478
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	613	-8.4%	-0.3%	\$36,510
Construction	524	-3.4%	-0.2%	\$34,283
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	327	-0.7%	-0.5%	\$19,844

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Johnson County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	80.1%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	16.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	18.3
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	81.0%
Carpooled	10.5%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.1%
Walked	3.0%
Bicycle	0.5%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	0.7%
Worked at Home	4.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$40,628
Families Below Poverty Level	13.9%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$35,577
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.70%
Unemployment Rate	3.00%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

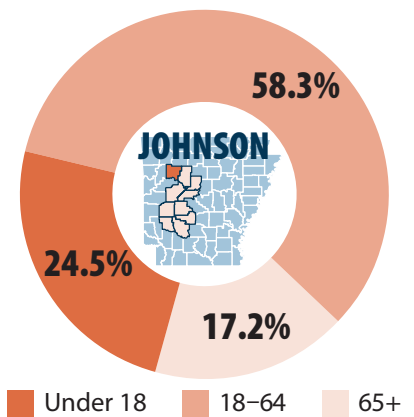
Median Value	\$108,300
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.0%
Rental Vacancy Rate	3.8%
Occupied Housing Units	9,849
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$953	25.90%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$662	48.70%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
25,540	25,845	25,922
2010-21 CHANGE	2021-27 CHANGE	MINORITY
1.2%	0.3%	22.5%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
50.0%	50.0%	38.3
UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
24.5%	58.3%	17.2%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

JOHNSON COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Manufacturing	2,366	-2.8%	-0.6%	\$42,416
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,400	1.9%	0.6%	\$41,810
Retail Trade	1,036	1.8%	-0.5%	\$25,849
Transportation and Warehousing	912	1.6%	0.4%	\$44,573
Educational Services	877	-1.1%	0.0%	\$44,420
Accommodation and Food Services	609	0.7%	1.2%	\$16,944
Public Administration	380	1.2%	-0.3%	\$38,143
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	378	-1.2%	-0.7%	\$41,256
Construction	351	0.1%	0.0%	\$40,759
Other Services (except Public Administration)	213	-2.6%	0.3%	\$24,623

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Montgomery County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	84.0%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	15.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	34.8
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	80.2%
Carpooled	13.7%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.0%
Walked	1.0%
Bicycle	0.0%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	1.1%
Worked at Home	4.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$41,032
Families Below Poverty Level	16.1%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$37,039
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	13.30%
Unemployment Rate	3.80%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

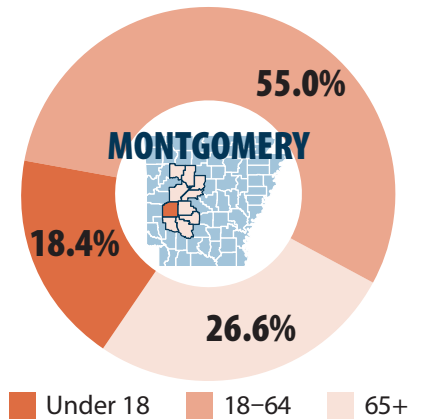
Median Value	\$116,800
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.4%
Rental Vacancy Rate	4.2%
Occupied Housing Units	3,669
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$1,063	24.40%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$560	44.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS 9,487	2021 ESTIMATE 8,611	2027 PROJECTION 8,153
2010–21 CHANGE -9.2%	2021–27 CHANGE -5.3%	MINORITY 10.0%
FEMALE 50.2%	MALE 49.8%	MEDIAN AGE 50.6
UNDER 18 YEARS 18.4%	18–64 YEARS 55.0%	65+ YEARS 26.6%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	207	-2.2%	-1.3%	\$20,884
Accommodation and Food Services	199	-1.5%	0.4%	\$25,822
Educational Services	193	-2.6%	-0.4%	\$44,434
Retail Trade	189	1.4%	-1.6%	\$22,621
Construction	169	-0.4%	-0.6%	\$29,638
Public Administration	169	1.5%	-1.0%	\$35,006
Health Care and Social Assistance	116	-8.3%	-0.1%	\$39,039
Other Services (except Public Administration)	88	-7.3%	-0.7%	\$23,255
Transportation and Warehousing	81	-2.9%	-0.7%	\$32,275
Wholesale Trade	63	3.9%	-0.9%	\$41,784

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Perry County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	91.3%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	17.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	34.9
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	83.7%
Carpooled	8.2%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.1%
Walked	0.7%
Bicycle	0.0%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	0.7%
Worked at Home	6.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$47,500
Families Below Poverty Level	13.1%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$43,793
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	10.10%
Unemployment Rate	2.60%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

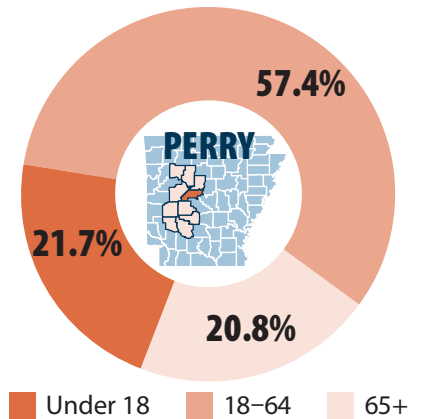
Median Value	\$117,600
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.1%
Rental Vacancy Rate	4.4%
Occupied Housing Units	3,732
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$979	23.40%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$658	38.80%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
10,445	9,964	9,822
2010-21 CHANGE	2021-27 CHANGE	MINORITY
-4.6%	-1.4%	8.7%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
49.8%	50.2%	44.4
UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
21.7%	57.4%	20.8%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

PERRY COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Health Care and Social Assistance	239	0.2%	0.6%	\$33,504
Educational Services	213	-2.5%	-0.1%	\$43,713
Construction	179	-3.2%	0.0%	\$45,030
Retail Trade	179	0.5%	-1.0%	\$18,740
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	178	-1.1%	-0.6%	\$26,724
Public Administration	118	0.7%	-0.3%	\$29,201
Accommodation and Food Services	85	0.9%	0.9%	\$16,031
Other Services (except Public Administration)	79	0.2%	0.3%	\$34,644
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	60	-2.4%	-0.3%	\$25,779
Transportation and Warehousing	41	-0.8%	-0.6%	\$55,970

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Pike County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	87.9%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	19.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	28.1
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	80.3%
Carpooled	13.8%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.1%
Walked	1.9%
Bicycle	0.0%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	0.5%
Worked at Home	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$46,672
Families Below Poverty Level	13.8%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$40,806
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	14.30%
Unemployment Rate	2.60%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

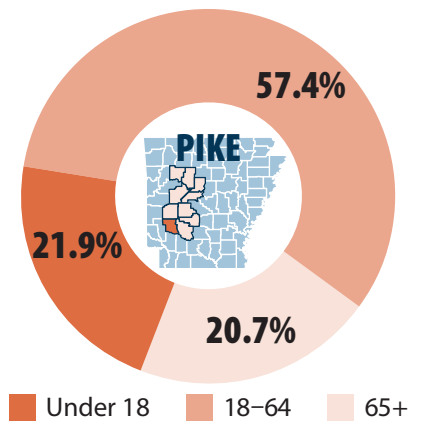
Median Value	\$86,900
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	0.9%
Rental Vacancy Rate	6.9%
Occupied Housing Units	4,042
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$942	23.80%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$633	50.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
11,291	10,066	9,661
2010-21 CHANGE	2021-27 CHANGE	MINORITY
-10.8%	-4.0%	13.8%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
49.9%	50.1%	43.6
UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
21.9%	57.4%	20.7%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

PIKE COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Manufacturing	448	5.5%	-1.4%	\$45,832
Retail Trade	362	-1.3%	-1.3%	\$23,913
Educational Services	336	0.7%	-1.1%	\$40,007
Health Care and Social Assistance	266	-3.3%	0.4%	\$30,070
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	251	-1.8%	-1.1%	\$51,680
Accommodation and Food Services	233	2.1%	0.8%	\$16,202
Public Administration	176	3.4%	-0.7%	\$26,388
Other Services (except Public Administration)	163	-1.8%	-0.2%	\$22,577
Construction	159	0.3%	-0.4%	\$34,787
Finance and Insurance	155	2.3%	-0.5%	\$53,640

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Pope County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	84.2%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	23.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	20.1
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	83.1%
Carpooled	9.6%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.4%
Walked	1.7%
Bicycle	0.1%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	1.1%
Worked at Home	4.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$47,322
Families Below Poverty Level	12.5%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$40,937
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	11.90%
Unemployment Rate	2.90%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

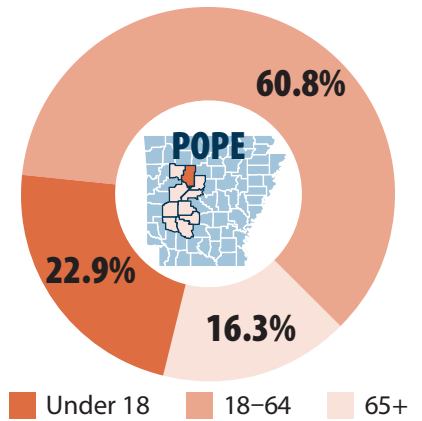
Median Value	\$132,400
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.2%
Rental Vacancy Rate	8.8%
Occupied Housing Units	23,304
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$995	25.80%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$745	50.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
61,754	63,789	64,631
2010-21 CHANGE	2021-27 CHANGE	MINORITY
3.3%	1.3%	17.2%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
50.3%	49.7%	36.4
UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
22.9%	60.8%	16.3%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

POPE COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Manufacturing	3,600	-3.7%	-1.0%	\$50,540
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,476	0.5%	0.5%	\$43,236
Retail Trade	3,305	-0.1%	-1.2%	\$30,797
Accommodation and Food Services	2,682	-0.5%	0.5%	\$19,548
Educational Services	2,481	0.0%	-0.2%	\$45,303
Construction	1,875	-2.7%	-0.5%	\$53,766
Transportation and Warehousing	1,677	1.7%	-0.5%	\$55,099
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,324	-2.0%	-0.5%	\$47,530
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,220	0.3%	-0.3%	\$27,038
Utilities	1,089	1.2%	-4.6%	\$95,776

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Yell County

EDUCATION

≥ High School Graduate	77.5%
≥ Bachelor's Degree	14.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute Time (minutes)	22.4
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Drove Alone	77.6%
Carpooled	12.0%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.1%
Walked	1.0%
Bicycle	0.1%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or other means	1.1%
Worked at Home	8.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Median Household Income	\$51,070
Families Below Poverty Level	11.0%
Per Capita Personal Income	\$41,750
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	13.20%
Unemployment Rate	2.90%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Unemployment Rate: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

HOUSING

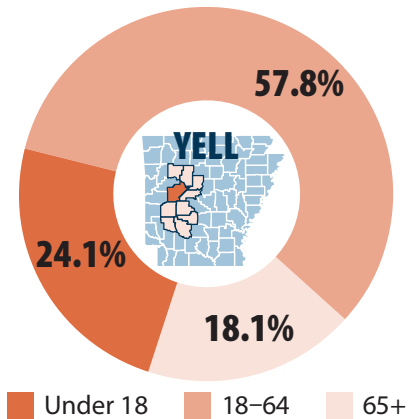
Median Value	\$112,100
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	0.5%
Rental Vacancy Rate	4.7%
Occupied Housing Units	7,541
MORTGAGE	
Median	Burdened*
\$1,069	23.40%
RENT	
Median	Burdened*
\$625	34.50%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Definition: Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage.

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2021 ESTIMATE	2027 PROJECTION
22,185	20,155	19,524
2010-21 CHANGE	2021-27 CHANGE	MINORITY
-9.2%	-3.1%	26.5%
FEMALE	MALE	MEDIAN AGE
49.5%	50.5%	40.4
UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65+ YEARS
24.1%	57.8%	18.1%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

YELL COUNTY LARGEST INDUSTRIES, 2022Q3¹

	2022 JOBS	5-YEAR HISTORY	1-YEAR PROJECTED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES
Manufacturing	2,371	-0.4%	-0.7%	\$41,605
Health Care and Social Assistance	919	-3.5%	-0.1%	\$37,461
Educational Services	608	0.2%	-0.7%	\$47,931
Retail Trade	577	1.0%	-1.1%	\$24,336
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	548	0.1%	-0.5%	\$49,861
Construction	375	-0.4%	-0.4%	\$37,026
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	369	8.0%	-0.5%	\$32,601
Accommodation and Food Services	261	-2.7%	0.5%	\$17,811
Public Administration	239	-2.0%	-0.8%	\$40,130
Transportation and Warehousing	190	-3.1%	-0.8%	\$61,724

Source: JobsEQ®. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. ¹All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Through April and May of 2023, West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District conducted two CEDS committee meetings. The CEDS committee comprised local government staff,

elected officials, community members, and other stakeholders and analyzed the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This is a summary of the findings.

STRENGTHS

- Cultural and recreational activities
- Collaboration among stakeholders
- Access to quality healthcare
- Access to higher education
- Strong public schools
- Natural beauty
- Tourism
- Utilities
- Safety

WEAKNESSES

- Entrepreneurial training opportunities
- Port, rail, and intermodal assets
- Opportunities for young people
- Job Growth, well-paying jobs, specialized workforce
- Roads and infrastructure
- Industry supply chains
- Public transportation
- Affordable housing

OPPORTUNITIES

- Broadband Internet Access
- Growing availability of remote work positions
- Development of an industrial park
- Quality of life, expanding opportunities for activities

THREATS

- Limited Housing Stock
- Increased stress on healthcare infrastructure and workforce
- Skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities over capacity
- Lack of industrial support infrastructure
- Limited Opportunities For Young People

SWOT

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Since 2000 Arkansas has had eighty-one incidents that were issued a presidential disaster declaration. Many smaller incidents received SBA disaster declarations to assist in the recovery of businesses. Over twenty of these incidents occurred in West Central's counties, and many more incidents have occurred not measured by declarations that have affected the West Central region's communities through this time. Uncertainty is the driver of the need for resilient communities. Building resiliency requires a whole community approach to anticipated hazards, predicting the impacts, preventing or mitigating damages, adapting to changing conditions, and being able to withstand adversity and recover from disruptions.

The West Central Planning and Development District is committed to assisting the counties, cities, and school districts in developing and updating hazard mitigation plans, disaster recovery plans, and continuity of operation plans. Additionally, West Central provides access to resources such as Community Development Block Grants through the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program through Federal Emergency Management Agency. All counties within the West Central District work with West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District to maintain updated hazard mitigation plans.



ACTION PLAN

The West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District CEDS identified five areas of focus through discussions between the planning committee. The following strategies were developed to address these focus areas and better serve the WCAPDD region.





FOCUS AREA

BROADBAND ACCESS

Strategy:

Cultivate cooperation between phone/internet providers and local/regional governments.

Benefit to the Community:

Business attraction and growth, improved quality of life, improved access to education.

ACTION STEPS:

- Conduct an internet access survey of the region to understand the current limitation of providers from the consumer perspective.
- Survey and interview providers to understand the limitation of internet access from a provider perspective.
- Investigate best practices used in other states and regions to increase internet service in underserved rural areas.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

- West Central Arkansas PDD
- Telecommunication companies
- Federal government
- State, county, and local government officials

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Current data on broadband coverage
- Research on ‘best practices’ used to provide coverage to underserved small towns and rural areas
- Telecommunication companies
- Federal government
- State, county, and local government officials

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

- Immediate
- Ongoing (re-evaluate after 5 years)



FOCUS AREA

SUITABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Strategy:

Collect and analyze data regarding community housing needs.

Benefit to the Community:

Understand which community residents most need suitable and affordable housing.

ACTION STEPS:

- Assess the historical and current housing trends by examining key data.
- Determine the level of housing inventory necessary to parallel projected population growth.
- Identify land sufficient for housing developments.
- Preserve and restore existing housing stock through local, state, and federal programming and first-time homebuyer financial education.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Local Cities and Housing Authorities
- Community-based Organizations
- Partner Organizations

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Partner Organizations

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

- Finish creation of plans by 2025
- Ongoing (re-evaluate after 5 years)



FOCUS AREA

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy

Identify and improve critical infrastructure in the district, including rail, port, highway, public transport, and service roads, which may need repair or updating to service the needs of citizens and industry.

Benefit to the Community

Increased commercial and population capacity and increased public safety.

ACTION STEPS:

- Create an infrastructure committee to work with transportation stakeholders to develop strategic transport plans and feasibility studies.
- Inventory potential sources of infrastructure funding
- Work with industry partners at the Little Rock & Western, Arkansas Midland, Caddo Valley, and Union Pacific Railroads to improve or develop short-line, spur, and mainline access to support West Central District industry.
- Partner with public transit authorities to discuss their strategic long-term plans and where needs for expanded service exist. Develop cost-benefit analysis for expanded service and seek funding opportunities.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Local county, city, and municipal officials
- Industry leaders
- District, state, and federal infrastructure professionals
- CEDS committee members

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- WCAPDD and AEDI
- Public and Alternative Transportation Grants
- Infrastructure subject matter experts

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

- Infrastructure committee developed immediately
- Inventory completed by 2025
- Ongoing (re-evaluate after 5 years)



FOCUS AREA

TOURISM AND NATURAL ASSETS

Strategy

Cultivate and attract natural tourism businesses.

Benefit to the Community

Business attraction and growth, job creation, population growth, increased tourism.

ACTION STEPS:

- Inventory current methods of revenue generation for nature tourism and research new modes of revenue generation.
- Research best practices of other communities which benefit from natural tourism.
- Encourage innovative farming and animal husbandry methods that may produce agricultural tourism (corn mazes, apple orchards, farmer's markets, agricultural innovations, etc.)
- Research grants available for improving agricultural and natural infrastructure tied to tourism.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Local county, city, and municipal officials
- Arkansas Department of Tourism

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Local county, city, and municipal officials
- Arkansas Department of Tourism

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

- Inventory completed by 2025
- Ongoing (re-evaluate every year)



FOCUS AREA

TOURISM AND NATURAL ASSETS

Strategy

Cultivate nightlife and activities that attract young people.

Benefit to the Community

Business attraction and growth, job creation, population growth, increased tourism.

ACTION STEPS:

- Conduct community outreach events targeting soon-to-be and recent college and high school graduates to gain a better understanding of what they want and need for entertainment and quality of life.
- Inventory existing businesses that provide the service young people want to see in their communities.
- Connect local businesses providing entertainment and local Chambers of Commerce.
- Explore innovative methods of entertainment (entertainment districts, weekly park events, etc.)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Local county, city, and municipal officials
- Arkansas Department of Tourism

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Local county, city, and municipal officials
- Arkansas Department of Tourism

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

- Inventory completed by 2025
- Ongoing (re-evaluate every year)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy

Engage employers and develop, attract, and retain skilled workers.

Benefit to the Community:

Understand the skills necessary for current and future employers and build a robust talent pipeline.

ACTION STEPS:

- Seek regular input from employers regarding local workforce availability, training quality, etc.
- Survey employers to understand their short and long-term workforce needs.
- Evaluate and understand local job posting data to make informed decisions on training needs.
- Survey workers to understand commuting patterns and skillsets.
- Create an asset map of workforce training programs and postsecondary education assets to match employer's workforce needs.
- Establish industry roundtables and training consortiums.
- Develop career pathway ladder materials for key occupations to disperse to community partners.
- Partner to establish or enhance programs to increase the workforce participation of formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Maximize and leverage resources and programs that advance multicultural workplaces and economic opportunities.
- Embed soft skills into workforce training initiatives.
- Develop or enhance two-generation programs to advance low-income parents and their children with education, job training, and economic stability.
- Identify and secure funding for workforce training programs.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Employers
- Community Residents/Workers
- Chambers of Commerce
- Office of Skills Development
- Higher Education Institutions
- Regional Workforce Board – Division of Career and Technical Education
- Community-based Organizations
- U.S. Department of Labor
- Partner Organizations

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- WCAPDD Staff, Partner Organizations
- Funding for workforce training programs

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

- Finish creation of programs by 2025
- Ongoing (re-evaluate every year)



FOCUS AREA

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy:

Increase the community's exposure to workforce training opportunities, programs, and resources

Benefit to the community:

Ensure equity in access and opportunity to the region's diverse workforce

ACTION STEPS

- Identify, create, or enhance a robust one-stop-shop platform for workforce information and materials.
- Implement a marketing strategy to garner participation in workforce programs and assist regional employers in attracting talent.
- Market career pathway ladders on various social media platforms.
- Collect and market workforce training success stories.
- Encourage advertisement of local workforce events and information on a wide variety of media outlets.
- Improve community awareness of workforce training and certification opportunities through collaboration and outreach with community-based organizations and partners.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Media Companies
- Community-based Organizations
- Partner Organizations

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- WCAPDD Staff
- Partner Organizations

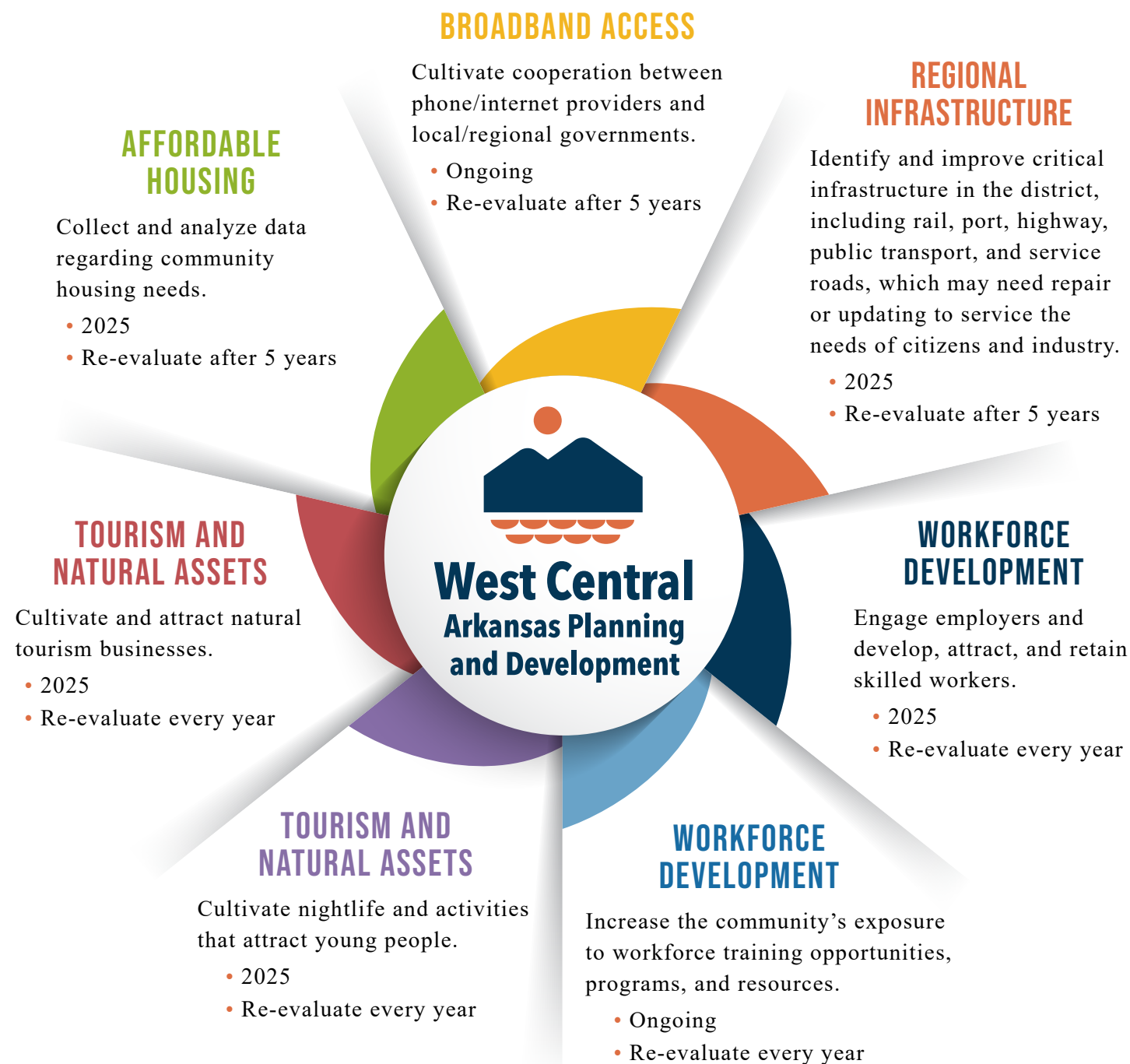
ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

- Ongoing (re-evaluate every year)

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework is the schedule in which the CEDS plans to achieve the priorities that were set forth by the CEDS Committee.

The responsible parties and resources were discussed in the Action Plan so therefore will not be discussed in this section.



SOURCES

- Arkansas Economic Development Institute
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- JobsEQ Data, 2022Q3
- National Center for Education Statistics, College Navigator
- U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)



West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District

wcapdd.org

HOT SPRINGS OFFICE

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