

Updated Community Needs Assessment, 2023

Demographics of service area

The population of Lynchburg is 79,285, up .52% since the 2020 census.ⁱ Its population has grown by an average of .4% a year from 2010 to 2021, with the largest increase between 2010 and 2011 (1.4%) and largest decline between 2019 and 2020 (3.5%).ⁱⁱ Bedford County's current population is 82,699, an increase of 1.32% since the 2020 census.ⁱⁱⁱ From 2010 to 2021, the population of Bedford County has increased an average of .6% per year, for a total increase of 6.8%.^{iv} The town of Bedford's current population is 6,720, an increase of 1.77% since the 2020 census.^v Amherst County's population is 30,992, a decrease of .34% in the past year, and a decrease of 4.21% since 2010's population of 32,353.^{vi}

The overall poverty rate for Lynchburg is 17.6%^{vii}; however, 23.1%^{viii} of children live in households with income in the past twelve months that is below the poverty level. In Bedford County, the overall poverty rate is 8.8%^{ix} with 13.3%^x of children are living in households with income below the poverty level. For the town of Bedford, the overall poverty rate is 29.0%^{xi}, but the child poverty rate is an alarming 49.2%.^{xii} In Amherst County, the overall poverty rate (12.4%^{xiii}) is nearly identical to the percent of children under five that live below the poverty level (12.6%)^{xiv}.

Description ^{xv}	Amherst County	Bedford County	Bedford Town	Lynchburg	Virginia
Total Population	30,992	82,699	6,720	79,285	8,709,873
Population per Square Mile	65	108	772	1,602	204
Total Area in Square Miles	474	769	8.7	49.5	42,775
Financial Comparison					
Overall Poverty Rate	12.4%	8.8%	29.0%	17.6%	10.2%
Child Poverty Rate	12.6%	13.3%	49.2%	23.1%	13.1%
Median Household Income ^{xvi}	\$60,876	\$70,870	\$36,971	\$54,015	\$80,615
Race/Ethnicity^{xvii}					
American Indian and Alaska Native	.9%	.4%	0%	.3%	.6%
Asian	.6%	1.5%	2.7%	2.5%	7.3%
Black or African American	18.4%	7.1%	19.5%	28.5%	20.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	.1%
Two or More Races	2.9%	1.9%	1.4%	3.5%	3.4%
White	77.2%	89.1%	71.8%	63.6%	68.5%
Hispanic or Latino	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%	4.5%	10.5%

The number of homeless individuals on any given night in the greater Lynchburg area (which includes the city of Lynchburg and counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell) has increased from

73 in 2020 to 84 in 2022. The number of homeless families has decreased over that time frame from 25 any given night in 2020 to 16 in 2022.^{xviii}

According to our regional healthcare provider, Centra's, 2021-2024 Lynchburg Area Community Health Needs Assessment, approximately 41% of 95,926 households in the service area classify as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), compared to 29% statewide.^{xix}

Of the public school-aged children, 62% (19,405) are eligible for free and reduced lunches as compared to 45.64% of children in the Commonwealth. "This is even more pronounced for children attending Lynchburg City Schools where 82.04% are eligible for free and reduced lunches. Almost half of children (46%) living in the Lynchburg service area live at or below 200% the Federal Poverty Level as compared to 33% in Virginia and that is estimated to be 23,506 children. The greatest concentration of these children live in the city of Lynchburg and Pittsylvania County."^{xx}

Approximately 37% of Community Health Needs Assessment respondents reported not having enough money in the past 12 months to pay for rent or mortgage while 45.3% reported not having enough money in the past 12 months to buy food. Approximately 20% could not afford to pay for their medications. Over 25% of respondents reported being a victim of domestic violence or abuse in the past 12 months, a significant increase from 3.6% in 2018 while 10% of respondents did not feel safe where they lived.^{xxi}

When asked which social/support resources are hard to get in the community, the top 5 responses included (1) childcare; (2) affordable/safe housing; (3) employment/job assistance; (4) domestic violence assistance; and (5) healthy food.^{xxii}

Availability of childcare

While the cost of care as a percent of income for married couples in Virginia is 11.9%, the cost for single parents is 41.6%.^{xxiii} According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center, Virginia children under age 6 with all parents in the workforce has hovered steady around 67-68% since 2012. In 2021, that number dropped to 39.5%^{xxiv}

According to the 2022 State of Babies Yearbook, the child care workforce remains 12% smaller than it was pre-pandemic.^{xxv} With COVID-era child care support ending in 2023, the childcare crisis in Central Virginia is expected to worsen.

As pointed out by the Century Foundation's June 21, 2023 article, when COVID-era federal stabilization funds expire on September 30, 2023, more than 70,000 child care centers are projected to close, impacting care for more than 3 million children across the U.S. The grants supported increased wages to workers, rent, utilities, supplies, and professional development. Without them, the child care workforce, one of the slowest to recover from the pandemic, is expected to lose another 232,000 jobs.^{xxvi}

According to their calculations, Virginia is slated to lose 1,383 child care centers, resulting in 88,265 children losing care. This will have a ripple effect for parents, forcing many from the workforce while resulting in rising costs for fewer slots.

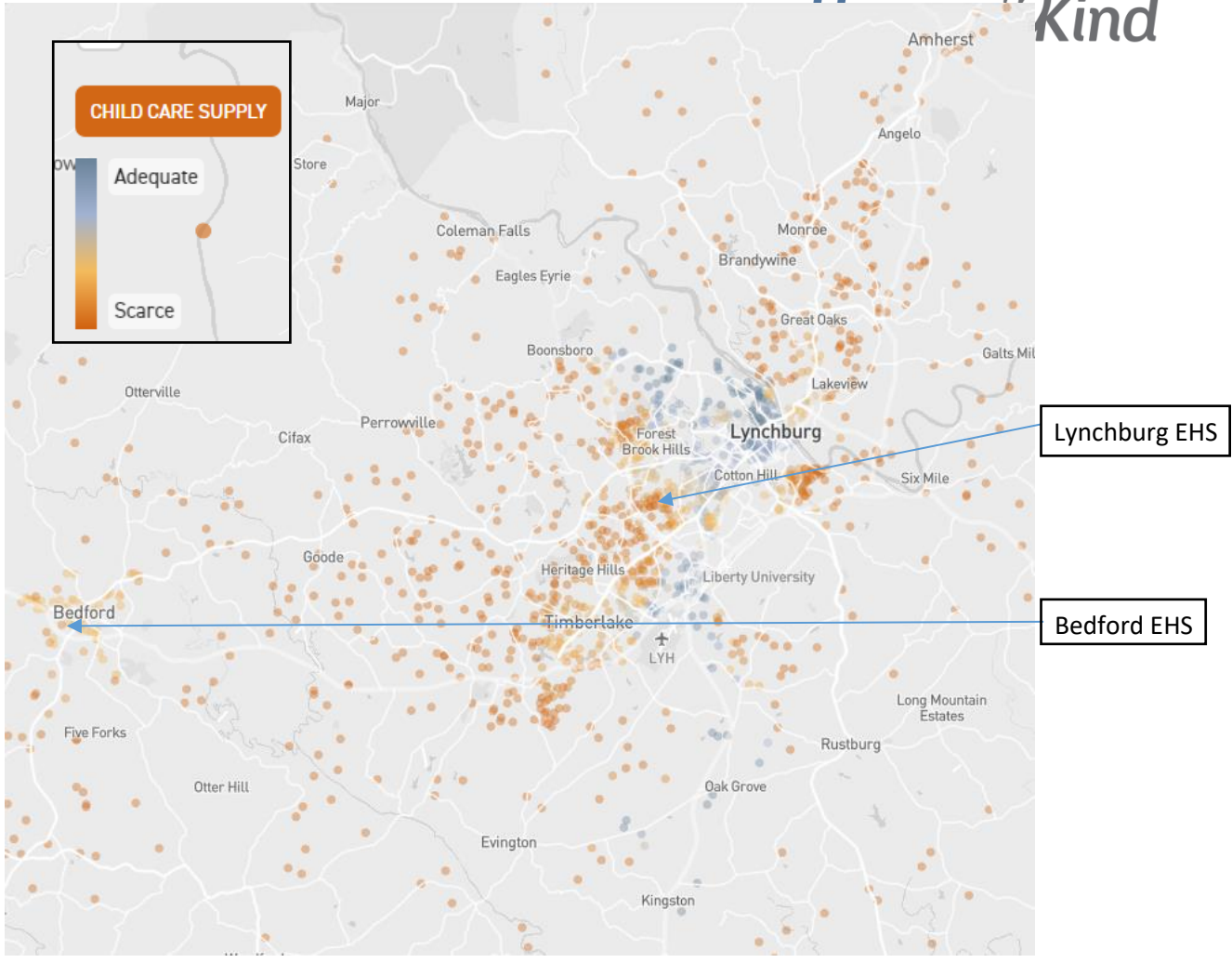


Figure 1 from Childcaresdeserts.org

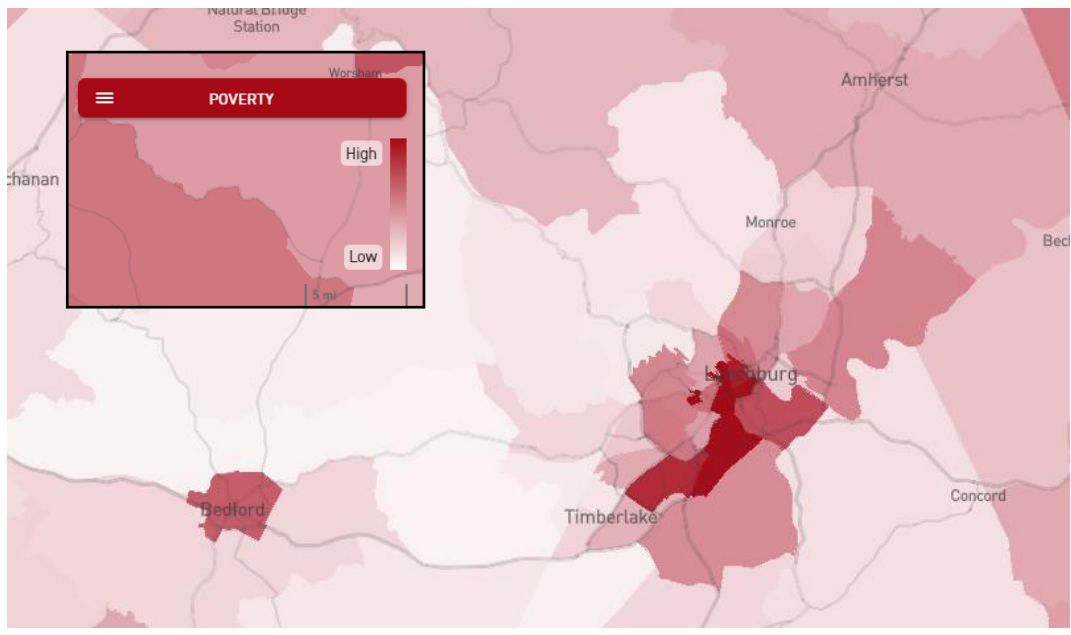


Figure 2 from Childcaresdeserts.org

Access in service area

Centra’s 2021-2024 Lynchburg Area Community Health Needs Assessment reports that “All of the localities in the service area, with the exception of Campbell County, are federally designated as Medically Underserved Areas and all localities are designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas for Primary Care, Mental Health, and Dental.”^{xxvii} Centra’s 2021-2024 Bedford Area Community Health Needs Assessment reported similarly on Bedford County, stating that it is also “federally designated as a Medically Underserved Area and Health Professional Shortage Area for Primary Care, Mental Health, and Dental.”^{xxviii} HumanKind staff identified this gap in dental care for toddlers and collaborated with the Johnson Health Center to bring a Mobile Dental Unit to its Early Head Start centers.

Unemployment rates in the service area have decreased since the start of the pandemic, but have recently plateaued. They remain slightly higher in Amherst (3.1%), Bedford (2.9%) and Lynchburg (3.5%) than for the state of Virginia (2.7%).

Unemployment Rates 2020-2023				
	Amherst County ^{xxix}	Bedford County ^{xxx}	Lynchburg ^{xxxi}	Virginia ^{xxxii}
June 2023	3.1%	2.9%	3.5%	2.7%
June 2022	3.1%	3.0%	3.4%	2.5%
June 2021	4.3%	4.2%	4.9%	4.0%
June 2020	7.3%	7.7%	9.4%	8.9%

The number of available non-farm jobs in Lynchburg has increased over the past four years, from 97,700 (June 2020) to 105,000 (June 2023).^{xxxiii} Within the last year, there has been a job market increase of 2.1%. Access to these increased job opportunities may be limited for families with young children when childcare is not available.

Employment in Bedford County declined slightly (-.589%) from 2019 to 2020.^{xxxiv} However, many Bedford County residents (26,576), commute to neighboring cities or counties for work, with Lynchburg drawing the most commuters (6,896).^{xxxv} Amherst County experiences a similar situation, in which 10,296 residents commute elsewhere for work, with nearly half employed in Lynchburg (4,494).^{xxxvi} The employment rate in Amherst County declined very slightly (-.338%) from 2019 to 2020.^{xxxvii}

In Lynchburg, there’s a gap in affordable housing, with 4,585 households in need of housing, but unable to access it. Mary Mayrose, Executive Director for the Lynchburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority, said “the current affordable housing market is approaching a ‘soon-to-be-crisis’ situation”.^{xxxviii} 26.9%^{xxxix} of respondents to the Lynchburg Area Community Needs Assessment (which includes Amherst County), identified access to affordable housing as a top issue affecting health in the community, while 27.5% of respondents identified affordable housing as a top need in the Bedford Community Health Needs Assessment.^{xl}

Legislative impacts on community

On March 22, 2023, the Lynchburg City Council voted unanimously to amend a city ordinance that was restricting the ability for new care centers to obtain licensing. The ordinance eliminated area and frontage requirements for family day homes and day cares within commercial zoning district.

The School Readiness Committee was renamed as the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education in the Virginia Senate. The Commission is charged with providing recommendations for and tracking progress on the financing of Virginia’s comprehensive birth-to-five early childhood care and education system. According to its website, the Commission was created by the 2023 General Assembly via House Bill 1423/Senate Bill 1404.

The Commission has the following powers and duties:

1. Expand access to and the quality of child care statewide;
2. Analyze existing and potential new financing opportunities, with a focus on data-driven outcomes;
3. Retain, grow, and strengthen the quality of the ECCE workforce;
4. Gather and study information and data to accomplish its purposes;
5. Gather and analyze data on current and projected availability, quality, cost, and affordability of ECCE services; determine needs and priorities; and develop funding recommendations focused on family choice, access, affordability, and quality;
6. Annually report on specific expenditures, outcomes, and impact, including children served, demographics, child-level assessments, classroom-level assessment data, educator turnover and retention, and parental employment;
7. Support the development of an integrated early childhood longitudinal data process to capture and link access, quality, and educator data with child outcomes, and facilitate the integration of this data with other longitudinal data systems; and
8. Monitor and support ongoing research and evaluation conducted by VDOE, UVA, and VECF, and any other high education or research institutes deemed relevant, to continuously improve ECCE quality.

The commission will issue a report with recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by October 1 annually.

The Virginia Promise Partnership tracks child care activities in the legislature. It reported the following for the winter 2023 legislative session^{xli}:

In the Virginia House Budget, the following allocation has been included, however the Virginia state budget is still pending approval.

Amendment Number	Patron	Topic	Summary
Item 128 #2h	Del. Bloxom	Study of Childcare Workforce Regulation (language only)	The Secretary of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Education, shall convene a workgroup to evaluate the future of the child care workforce. Such evaluation shall consider: (i) severing regulations for programs serving school-aged children from early childhood education program regulations, (ii) examining requirements for early childhood education site directors and individuals in the classroom for all licensed programs, and (iii) initiating a holistic review of early childhood education regulations addressing health and safety matters, with a particular emphasis on eliminating duplicative regulations.

Regarding Tax Credits and Paid Family Leave, the following secondary Senate bills were discussed:

Bill Number	Patron	Co-Patrons	Topic	Summary	Status
SB 1101	Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-SD-33)	Sen. Ghazala F. Hashmi (chief co-patron) Sen. L. Louise Lucas (chief co-patron) Sen. Jennifer L. McClellan (chief co-patron) Sen. R. Creigh Deeds Sen. Mamie E. Locke Sen. Jeremy S. McPike Sen. Joseph D. Morrissey Sen. Scott A. Surovell	Paid family and medical leave program; Virginia Employment Commission required to establish.	Requires the Virginia Employment Commission to establish and administer a paid family and medical leave program with benefits beginning January 1, 2026. Under the program, benefits are paid to eligible employees for family and medical leave. Funding for the program is provided through premiums assessed to employers and employees beginning in 2025. The amount of a benefit is 80 percent of the employee's average weekly wage, not to exceed 80 percent of the state weekly wage, which amount is required to be adjusted annually to reflect changes in the statewide average weekly wage. The measure caps the duration of paid leave at 12 weeks in any application year. The bill provides self-employed individuals the option of participating in the program.	Prefiled (1/9/23); Referred to Senate Commerce & Labor Cmte (1/9/23); Reported from Senate Commerce & Labor Cmtw (11-4)(1/30/23); Referred to Senate Finance & Approps Cmte (1/30/23); Reported from Senate Finance & Approps Cmte with amendment (11-5)(2/2/23); Constitutional reading dispensed (38-0)(2/3/23); Passed Senate (22-18)(2/7/23) Referred to House Commerce & Energy Committee (2/10/23); Assigned to House Special Subcmte #5 (2/13/23); Subcmte recommends laying on the table (4-2)(2/16/23)
SB 1324	Sen. Jennifer McClellan (D-SD-9) Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-SD-30)		Child tax credit.	Creates a refundable tax credit for taxable years 2023 through 2027 for individuals whose households include dependents younger than the age of 18. The bill provides that the amount of the credit will be equal to \$500 for an individual or married persons filing a joint return whose family Virginia adjusted gross income, as defined by Virginia code, does not exceed \$100,000. The bill provides that if the amount of such credit exceeds the taxpayer's liability for the taxable year, the excess shall be refunded by the Tax Commissioner within 90 days after the filing date of the income tax return on which the taxpayer applies for such refund.	Prefiled (1/10/23); Referred to Senate Finance & Approps Committee (1/10/23); Reported from Senate Finance & Approps Cmte with substitute (16-0)(2/2/23); Passed out of the Senate (39-0)(2/6/23) Referred to House Finance Committee (2/9/23); Assigned to House Finance Subcmte #3 (2/13/23); Subcmte recommends laying on the table (2/17/23)

Amendment Number	Patron	Topic	Summary	Included in Senate Budget?
Item 0 #11s	Sen. McClellan	Child Tax Credit (SB 1324) (language only)	This amendment accompanies Senate Bill 1324, a bill establishing a state Child Tax Credit. The bill provides a \$500 refundable tax credit per child under the age of 18 for households earning at or below \$100,000 adjusted gross income. This amendment assumes a general fund reduction of \$564.0 million the second year as a placeholder. The actual revenue impact is to be determined.	NO

ⁱ World Population Review, www.worldpopulationreview.com

ⁱⁱ USA Facts, www.usafacts.org

ⁱⁱⁱ World Population Review, www.worldpopulationreview.com

^{iv} USA Facts, www.usafacts.org

^v World Population Review, www.worldpopulationreview.com

^{vi} World Population Review, www.worldpopulationreview.com

^{vii} U.S. Census Quick Facts, www.census.gov/quickfacts

^{viii} U.S. Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/>

^{ix} U.S. Census Quick Facts, www.census.gov/quickfacts

^x U.S. Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/>

^{xi} U.S. Census Quick Facts, www.census.gov/quickfacts

^{xii} Biggest U.S. Cities, www.biggestuscities.com

^{xiii} U.S. Census Quick Facts, www.census.gov/quickfacts

^{xiv} U.S. Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/>

^{xv} World Population Review, www.worldpopulationreview.com

^{xvi} U.S. Census Quick Facts, www.census.gov/quickfacts

^{xvii} U.S. Census Quick Facts, www.census.gov/quickfacts

^{xviii} National Alliance to End Homelessness, www.endhomelessness.org

^{xix} Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com

^{xx} Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com

^{xxi} Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com

^{xxii} Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com

^{xxiii} State of Babies Yearbook 2022, www.stateofbabies.org

^{xxiv} The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center (Virginia), www.datacenter.aecf.org/data

^{xxv} State of Babies Yearbook 2022, www.stateofbabies.org

^{xxvi} The Century Foundation, "Child Care Cliff: 3.2 Million Children Likely to Lose Spots with End of Federal Funds." 2023. www.tcf.org/content/report/child-care-cliff/

^{xxvii} Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com

^{xxviii} Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com

^{xxix} Burlington Free Press, <https://data.burlingtonfreepress.com>

^{xxx} FRED Economic Data, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

^{xxxi} U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov

^{xxxii} U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov

-
- xxxiii U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov
- xxxiv Data USA, www.datausa.io
- xxxv Virginia Community Profile Bedford County, Virginia Employment Commission, www.viriniaworks.com
- xxxvi Virginia Community Profile Amherst County, Virginia Employment Commission, www.viriniaworks.com
- xxxvii Data USA, www.datausa.io
- xxxviii The News & Advance, “Lynchburg staff, nonprofits work to close the affordable housing gap”,
www.newsadvance.com
- xxxix Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com
- xl Centra Health 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, www.centrahealth.com
- xli Virginia Promise Partnership, www.vapromisepartnership.com