

# CUYAHOGA COUNTY 2019-2022

United Way is committed to finding solutions to help residents of the communities we serve move from poverty to prosperity. For over 100 years, we have helped people in crisis with immediate relief for basic human needs. To get out of crisis mode, people need to reach a level of wealth and influence that will withstand a crisis – no longer living one crisis away from falling back into poverty. To understand the current community conditions, we undertake a data-driven Community Needs Assessment every few years to examine issues and conditions that affect Greater Clevelanders.



This report is organized by United Way of Greater Cleveland's three priority areas: **Economic Mobility**, which encompasses early childhood development and income progression; **Housing Stability**, from homelessness to safe, stable, affordable housing; and **Health Pathways**, fostering food security and healthy environments. The Center for Community Solutions, a nonpartisan policy and research think tank, collaborates with United Way of Greater Cleveland to gather and analyze data and prepare the report.

Each section includes secondary data, most of which is based on U.S. Census data and is therefore trackable over time. Some data points reflect key Mobility Metrics from the Urban Institute, part of a framework for conditions that boost upward mobility and narrow racial inequalities. This year's report highlights key findings from complementary local assessments to create a fuller picture of our shared regional understanding. Finally, sections conclude with United Way 211 data from January 2018 through March 2023. As pandemic-related supports end and the region's economy adjusts to post-pandemic norms, United Way 211 social need data can serve as an early indicator of stabilization or emerging challenges.

This Needs Assessment is a starting point and largely limited to data sets that do not reflect identities like disability status, sexual orientation or gender. Incorporation of stakeholder voices, assessment of community assets, and policy analysis are also necessary for finding workable systems-level solutions.

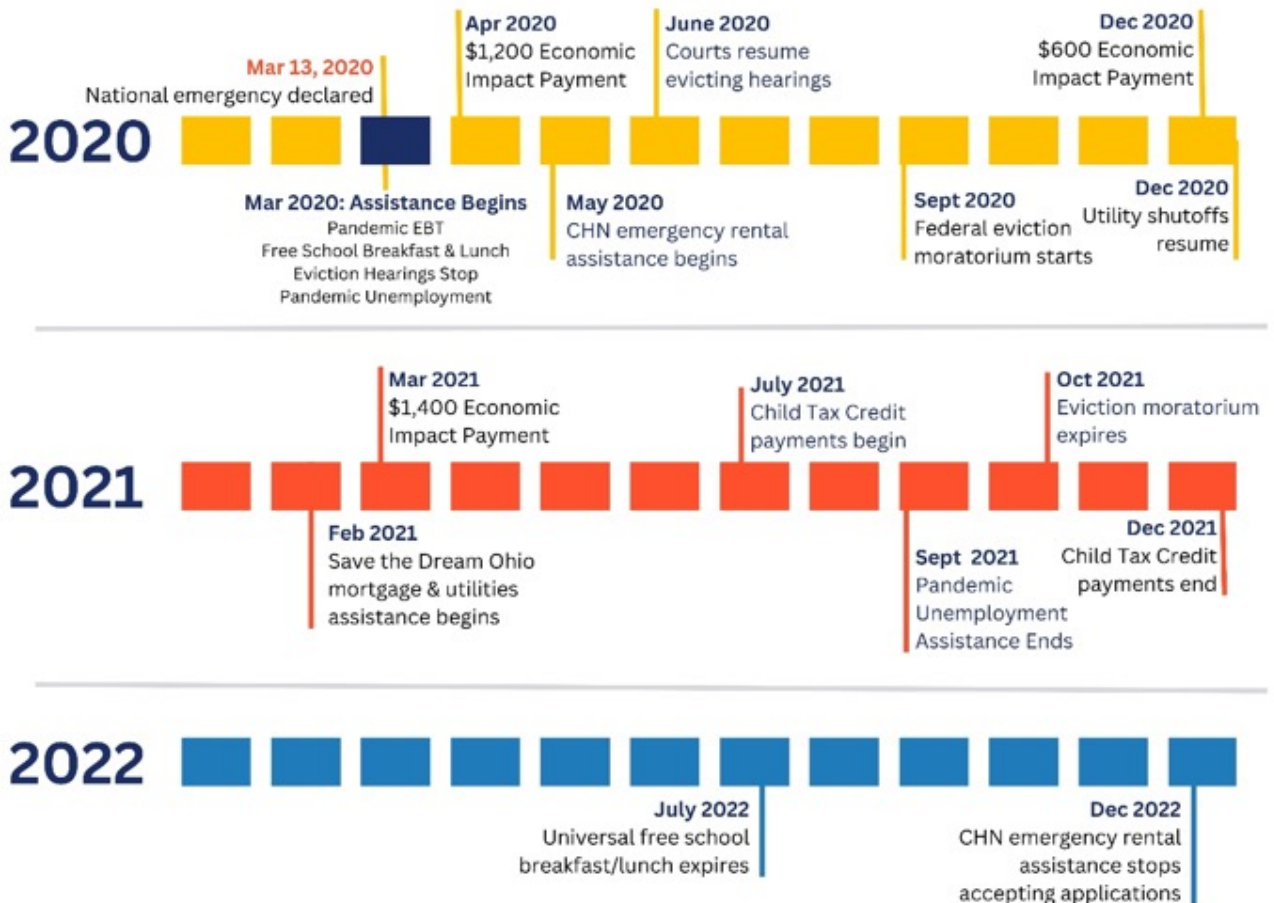
**Cleveland remains the second-poorest large city in the U.S.**, just ahead of Detroit according to the latest data. Key findings show limited progress in reducing poverty in Cuyahoga County, with slight decreases for children and working-age adults but an increase for older adults. Most annual data points across economic mobility, housing stability and health remain relatively unchanged over the past five years. Figures from 2020 are missing from most areas, due to challenges collecting accurate data during the peak of COVID-19.



COVID-19 exposed deep health disparities in the community, with some children excelling in remote learning while others struggled. Mental health issues reached an all-time high, and social isolation became a nearly universal experience. Unemployment rates soared, and many people sought assistance for basic needs for the first time. The pandemic brought issues of race and racism to the forefront of public consciousness, and the United Way of Greater Cleveland intensified its commitment to identify and dismantle systemic racism. The organization shifted from showcasing the persistence of racism to seeking solutions for systemic change to benefit marginalized communities.

The pandemic also led to positive changes which staved off economic crisis for many residents. Moratoriums and emergency assistance for renters and mortgage holders kept people housed. Economic Impact stimulus payments and the enhanced Child Tax Credit put money in the pockets of everyday people when working adults left the workforce to care for children. As the pandemic slowly receded, labor market forces caused many companies to raise wages and improve benefits to attract workers. Additionally, the swift distribution of COVID-19 vaccines included targeted efforts to ensure that low-income individuals and communities of color, who are often underserved in healthcare, had access to the vaccines. These changes offer a hopeful glimpse at potential systems-level solutions to some of the community's most pressing issues.

## COVID-19 Pandemic Assistance Timeline



When comparing Cuyahoga County to the rest of the State of Ohio, we can see that county residents are more diverse than the rest of the state, have similar labor force participation and are more likely to live in poverty across age groups. Cuyahoga County accounts for 11% of the state population and 13% of the residents experiencing poverty.

**Approximately 207,000 people live below the poverty level in Cuyahoga County, with approximately 209,000 additional people in or near poverty.** Within Cuyahoga County, 55% of people in poverty live within the City of Cleveland, 30% live within inner ring suburbs bordering Cleveland and 14% live in outer ring suburbs.

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Cuyahoga</b>		<b>Ohio</b>
<b>Population</b>	<b>1,241,475</b>		<b>11,769,923</b>
Under age 18	263,532	20.9%	22.3%
Ages 18-64	771,066	61.0%	60.6%
Ages 65+	229,069	18.1%	17.0%
<b>Race</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
White	766,091	60.6%	79.6%
Black/African-American	368,390	29.2%	12.3%
Asian-American/Pacific Islander	39,960	3.2%	2.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2,805	0.2%	0.2%
Other race reported	23,548	1.9%	1.2%
Two or more races	62,873	5.0%	4.3%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	82,942	6.6%	4.3%
<b>Disability Status</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
With a disability	186,052	14.9%	13.9%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

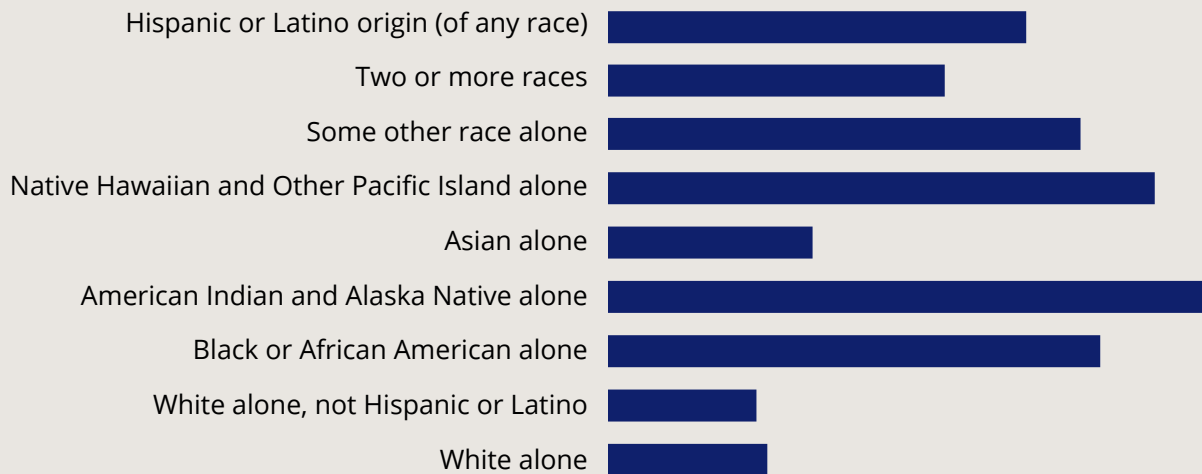
<b>Income, Employment &amp; Poverty</b>	<b>Cuyahoga</b>		<b>Ohio</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$55,109</b>		<b>\$61,938</b>
<b>Employment (Ages 16 and older)</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>%</b>
Labor Force Participation	63.5%		63.3%
Unemployment Rate	7.5%		5.3%
<b>Income &amp; Poverty</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Persons living below poverty	206,906	16.7%	13.4%
Children (Ages 0-17) below poverty	63,026	24.2%	18.6%
Families with children living below poverty	27,178	20.1%	15.6%
Older Adults (Ages 60+) below poverty	39,153	12.6%	9.3%
Persons in deep poverty (under 50%)	94,966	7.7%	6.1%
Persons in or near poverty (under 200%)	416,566	33.6%	29.9%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

In Cuyahoga County, poverty disproportionately affects individuals who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native (37%), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (33%), Black or African American (30%) and Latino (25%). In contrast, a significantly lower percentage of Asian (12%) and White individuals (9%) are impacted by poverty in the county.

### Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, by Race

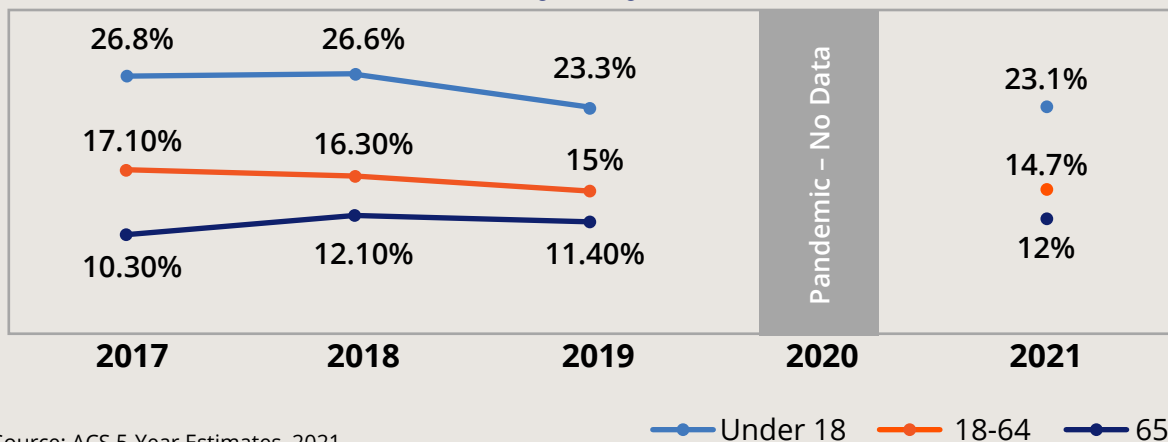
U.S. Census



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021

In Cuyahoga County, poverty disproportionately affects households with children, with almost a quarter (23%) of those under 18 living below poverty. However, the poverty rate improves for those in the working age group between 18 and 64 (15%) and those 65 and over (12%).

### Poverty Rate Trends by Age Group 2017-2021



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021

The majority of families living in poverty, particularly those with children under five and aged five to 17, are headed by a female without a spouse present. This group represents 61% of all families living in poverty. In contrast, married-couple or cohabitating families make up a very small proportion of those living in poverty compared to all families and those led by a female householder without a spouse.

