



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Approved 2019-2020

Scott County Public School Head Start

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ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

What is the Community Assessment?

As required by Section 1305.3, Title 45, Volume 4 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Scott County Public School Head Start (SCPSHS) must conduct a community assessment once every five years. The community assessment is a strategic planning tool to help SCPSHS determine long-term and short-term program goals and objectives. In addition, the community assessment identifies trends within the program service area that directly impact low-income families.

The 2019 community assessment provides the most recent data available regarding demographics, early learning programs, disabilities, health and nutrition, and social services for children and families in the program service area. The assessment provides a portrait of the SCPSHS program and identifies community resources available. This assessment also identifies where there are gaps between available services and needs.

Ultimately, the community assessment is used to make decisions for outreach, enrollment, selection, and the most appropriate delivery of services. It is a valuable resource for staff, parents, and community partners to collectively think about the impacts of population shifts and equitable distribution of services.

SCPSHS holds a “key community stakeholders” meeting consisting of staff, board members, policy council representatives, parents, and community partners to gather pertinent data critical to completing the community assessment.

Data Sources

This assessment is made using information from a variety of sources and divided into these three basic categories: Community/Consumer Input, Staff/Partner Agency Information, and Resource Sources. Information is gathered from each source using a process designed to provide an accurate and detailed picture of the needs and resources of the program and its service area. Community and consumer sources are surveyed using questions about needs and resources. Staff members are trained to elicit information and comments from families served by the program. Community input is collected in a number of different settings including private sector conferences and other interagency information gathering tools. Staff and partner agency comments are solicited, documented, and included in the assessment. Partner agencies submit comments in response to directed inquiries. Staff attend a facilitated

planning session in which directed brainstorming and prioritization techniques are used to elicit and rank suggestions for program direction and operation.

Standard research courses are also consulted. Local planning agencies as well as computer based information databases provide demographic and other data. The results of research in all three of these source categories are synthesized by the Program Director and Management Team.

Assessment Outcomes

Through this process, SCPSHS gathers data that is relevant to the population served. Ensuring accurate and timely data will create a community assessment which does the following:

- Informs decisions about needs for services
- Suggests improvements to service delivery systems
- Identifies recruitment and enrollment patterns and trends
- Proposes appropriate program options
- Suggests more efficient and effective staffing patterns
- Justifies budget levels and grant modifications, if needed
- Identifies community resources which can help supply the program's non-federal share
- Assists the program in revising or reaffirming the program's philosophy as it relates to new populations
- Assists in determining long-term and short-term goals for program planning

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 1965, Head Start began in Scott County as an eight-week summer program designed to break the cycle of poverty by providing children with a program to meet their social, emotional, health, nutritional, and physiological needs. The idea was that with a little help, children from even the most disadvantaged families could begin elementary school at the same level of school readiness as their more advantaged peers.

From 1965 to 1995, the community action agency, Rural Areas Development Association, Inc. (RADA) was the fiscal agent and grantee for the Head Start program in Scott County, with Scott County Public Schools delegated to operate the program. In 1995, the Head Start grant was awarded to Scott County Public Schools. The public school system continues to serve as the fiscal agent and grantee for the Head Start program today.

From 1965 to 1977, Head Start was funded to operate 147 children in a center-based program format. From 1977 to 2002, Head Start operated both center-based and home-based program options with a funded enrollment of 181 children. In the Fall of 2003, the community assessment indicated the need for all center-based services and as a result, funded enrollment dropped to 173 center-based slots. The program currently operates nine full school year, 6.5 hour per day center-based classrooms and is funded to serve 173 children ages three and four.

In addition to the Head Start grant, an Early Head Start grant was awarded to Scott County Public Schools in 2017. The program currently operates three full calendar year, 8-hour per day center-based classrooms and is funded to serve 24 children ages six weeks to three years.

Today, Scott County Public School Head Start (SCPSHS) continues to provide opportunities to low-income children, families, and communities with high quality early childhood education, nutrition, health, dental, mental health, and social services. The promotion of school readiness is the focal point and delivered through a program that is child centered, family focused, comprehensive, and community based. Not only are developmental goals for children supported, but there is also support for employment and self-sufficiency goals for families. The mission of SPSHS is *“Guiding low income families toward self-sufficiency and success in school.”* In order to meet our mission, the program must address the changing needs of its service area.

SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

History/Geography

Scott County was formed by an act of the Virginia General Assembly on November 24, 1814. The county was created out of parts of Washington, Lee, and Russell Counties.¹

Scott County is a rural county located on the southern edge of the Southwest Virginia coalfields in rural southeastern Appalachia. It contains 536 square miles of land area and borders Lee, Wise, Russell, and Washington counties. The county also borders the State of Tennessee.

There are six small incorporated towns within Scott County: Clinchport, Duffield, Dungannon, Gate City, Nickelsville, and Weber City. Most of these populated areas are located near rivers or large creeks, in county valleys, and in close proximity to natural passageways through mountain chains. These six incorporated areas account for 4.65 square miles (8.63%) of the county's total land area. Gate City, the county seat, is 348 miles southwest of the state's capital, Richmond.

Scott County has a continental, warm-to-temperate climate with an average winter temperate of 37.5 degrees and an average summer temperature of 73 degrees. Sudden, heavy rainfalls in late winter and spring combine with existing steep terrain to result in periodic flash flooding.

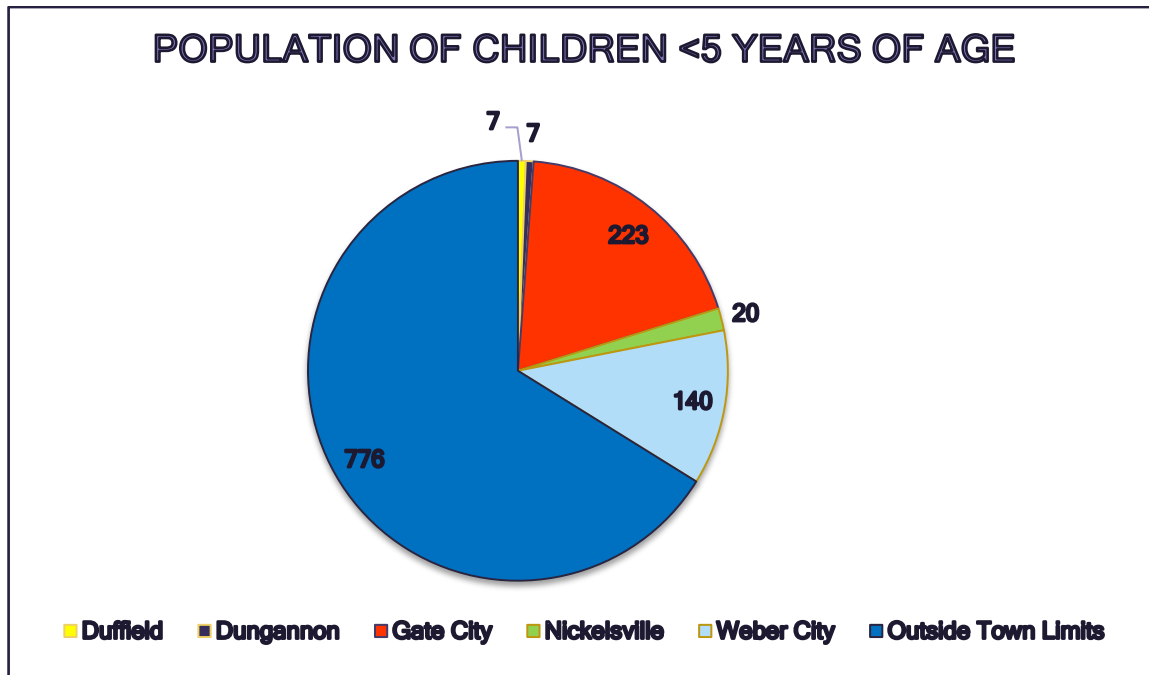
Local Government

Scott County is governed by a County Board form of local government. Divided into six magisterial districts, each district elects a representative to the Board of Supervisors, including a Supervisor at Large. These seven members are responsible for county governance.

Population

According to July 2018 US Census data, the population of Scott County is 21,534. The Scott County Comprehensive Plan 2017, estimates 18.3% of the county's total population resides in one of the county's six incorporated towns. The table below shows the 2017 estimated population less than five years of age for the six incorporated towns within Scott County and outside town limits.

¹ Scott County Tourism, www.explorescottcountyva.org, 2019



Source: Dilenowisco Planning District

The remaining 81.7% of Scott County residents live outside incorporated town limits. Of the total population, 1,173 Scott County residents are under the age of five.

Based on a five-year average from 2012-2016, Livestories.com estimates a total of 281 pre-school age children live in poverty within Scott County. This total dropped over 80 children to 199 based on a 5-year estimate from 2013-2017. Scott County Schools has also seen a decline in Kindergarten registration over the past five years. In 2015-2016, Kindergarten registration was 202 children. This number dropped to 131 children in the 2018-2019 school year.

SCPSHS has seen a shift in enrollment for the Head Start program. In 2016-2017, the program did not meet funded enrollment for four consecutive months. The areas of Dungannon and Nickelsville were consistently under enrolled. An under-enrollment plan was put into place for the 2017-2018 school year. During that school year, the program maintained full enrollment for each month.

Foster Care

According to the Scott County Department of Social Services, there are currently 46 children under the age of 18 in foster care within Scott County. Of those 46 children, 10 are under the age of 5. SCPSHS continues to serve children in foster care. During the 2018-2019

school year, SCPSHS served 2 infants/toddlers and 5 pre-school children from the Scott County Foster Care program.

Homelessness

Scott County serves homeless women and children through the Hope House of Scott County. SCPSHS and the Scott County Public School System work together to ensure the county is in compliance with the federal mandates of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in conjunction with Virginia's House Joint Resolution 181. Through an interagency agreement, the SCPSS informs Head Start of any homeless EHS/HS age eligible children in the county. SCPSHS informs the LEA's social worker of any homeless children and their siblings. SCPSHS has served 3 homeless children during the 2018-2019 school year.

Pregnant Women and Infants

According to 2016 Kids Count Data Center, 81.8% of Scott County women received pre-natal care beginning in the first trimester. According to the Virginia Department of Health, 187 births were documented for Scott County in 2017. The 2016 Kids Count Data revealed babies born to Scott County residents with a low birth weight are slightly lower than the corresponding rates in Virginia.

Disabilities

The recruitment efforts of SCPSHS include actively locating and recruiting children with disabilities. Among the children served by the Head Start program, there are 7 children with developmental delays and 22 children with speech delays. In the public school system's Early Childhood Special Education program, there are 37 children with developmental delays, 7 of whom are served by Head Start and included in these numbers.

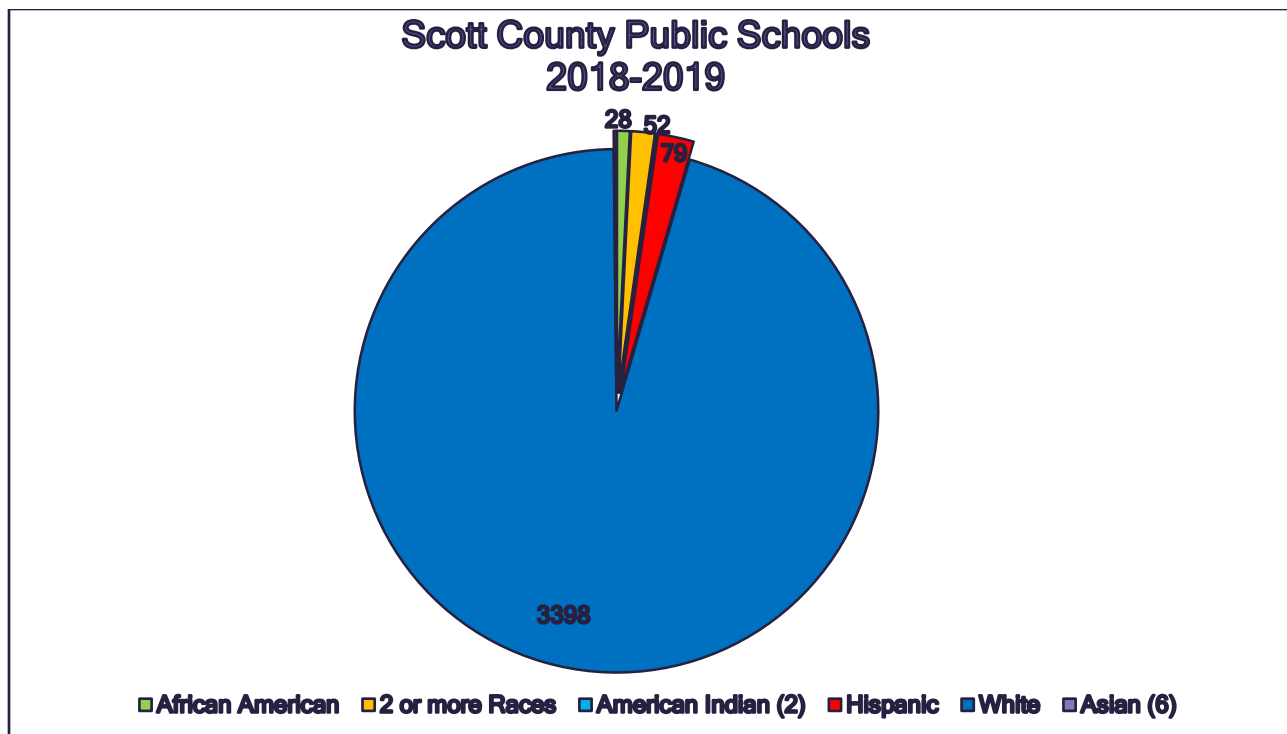
The Infant & Toddler Connection of Dilenowisco currently serves 24 children and has 2 referrals within Scott County. Of the 24 children served, 6 are enrolled in the Early Head Start program, 4 of which have developmental delays & 2 with speech delays.

Disability services are provided to Scott County children through various agencies including: Southwest Virginia Child Development Clinic, Scott County Behavioral Services, Infant & Toddler Connection of Dilenowisco, First Step Rehab, Mountain Region Speech & Hearing Center Inc., Bristol Regional Rehabilitation Center, Easter Seal Society of Virginia Inc., March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation/SW Division Chapter, Kluge Children's

Rehabilitation Center, Mini Miracles Pediatric Therapy, Regional Eye Center, Weber City Eye Clinic, & Repko Family Vision Center.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

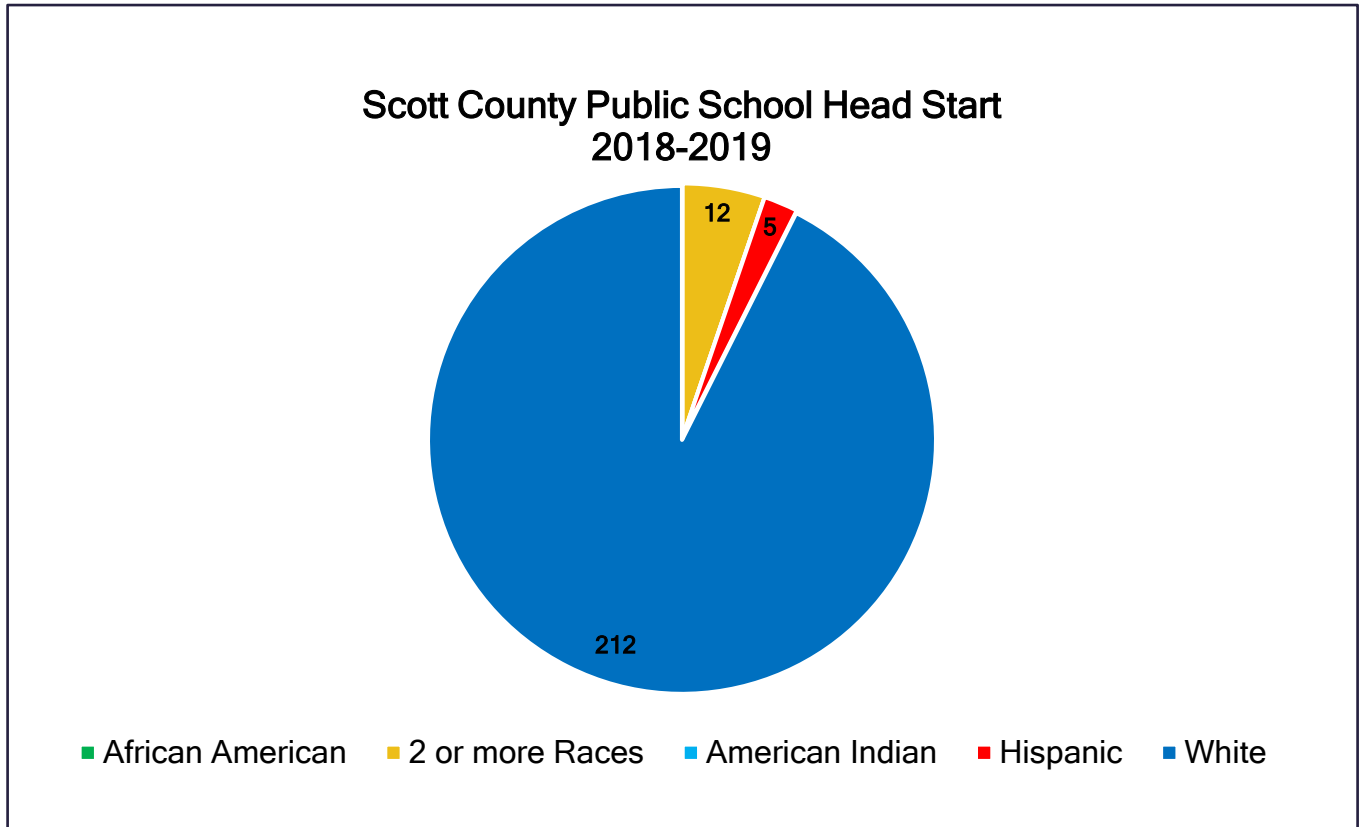
According to US Census data, 97.7% of Scott County residents are White. The remaining 3.6% is comprised of African American (.8%), American Indian and Alaska Native (.3%), Asian (.2%), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (.1%), Two or More Races (.9%), and Hispanic or Latino (1.3%). A majority of Scott County residents are native to the mountains of Southern Appalachia and share a common cultural background. The percentage of persons speaking a language other than English at home is 1.4%. The table below shows the racial demographics of enrolled children in the Scott County Public School system for the year 2018-2019.



Source: Scott County Public Schools, POWERSCHOOL data

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Head Start program served 187 children and the Early Head Start program served 37 children. There were no dual-language learners. The

below listed chart displays the racial composition of children enrolled in SCPSHS.



Poverty

Scott County, along with the surrounding areas continues to have some of the highest poverty rates in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Poverty creates barriers to accessing health services, healthy food options, and other necessities, thus contributing to poor health status.

For 2019, the federal poverty level is \$12,060 for a one-person household and \$24,600 for a four-person household. The below listed charts detail the percentage of Scott County residents and children living 100% below the federal poverty level.

POPULATION BELOW 100 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

REPORT AREA	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION IN POVERTY
Scott County	21,621	4,355 (20.14%)
State	8,060,892	921,664 (11.43%)
National	310,629,645	46,932,225 (15.11%)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16.

POPULATION OF CHILDREN BELOW 100 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

REPORT AREA	POPULATION UNDER AGE 18	POPULATION IN POVERTY UNDER AGE 18
Scott County	4,126	1,184 (28.7%)
State	1,838,212	278,352 (15.14%)
National	72,456,096	15,335,783 (21.17%)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Head Start program cumulatively enrolled 146 children at 100% below the poverty level, 23 between 100%-130%, & 18 over income. The Early Head Start program cumulatively enrolled 32 children at 100% below the poverty level, 3 between 100%-130%, & 2 over income.

During the 2018-2019 school year, 85 children within Scott County received TANF assistance. Thirty-three Scott County families participated in the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) program. The below listed chart details the number of families within Head Start and Early Head Start receiving TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and WIC services.

PROGRAM	TANF	SSI	WIC
Head Start	14	9	75
Early Head Start	6	0	10

According to the US Census Bureau, 1,581 (17.37%) households in Scott County are receiving SNAP benefits. This percentage is much higher than the state average of 9.43% and the nationwide average of 13.05%. Of the 1,581 households receiving SNAP benefits, 29 of them are Head Start/Early Head Start families. As of July 2019, the WIC program of Scott County served 97 infants from birth to twelve months and 166 children from age one to five. SCPSHS staff encourages all families to apply for WIC participation. Program families also receive assistance from a variety of other sources including Medicaid.

Employment

A vast majority of Scott County's residents obtain employment in nearby counties and states. Residents benefit from employment opportunities in the Tri-Cities metro area and the growth of industries along the I-81 corridor in Washington County, VA. The table below

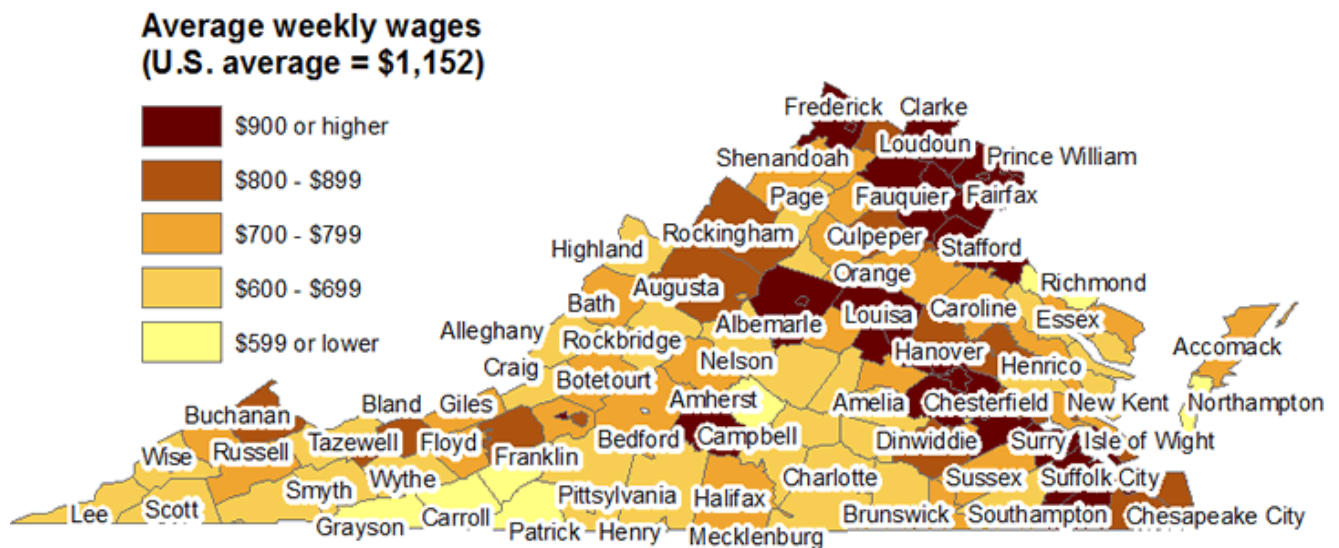
shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Scott County for the third quarter, 2017.

RANK	INDUSTRY SECTOR	# OF ESTABLISHMENTS	# OF EMPLOYEES
1	Total, All Industries	419	4,600
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	112	802
3	Manufacturing	9	740
4	Educational Services	3	672
5	Retail Trade	75	636
6	Accommodation & Food Services	23	417
7	Public Administration	33	338
8	Other Services	43	155
9	Administrative & Support, Waste Mgmt.	5	144
10	Transportation & Warehousing	18	140

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

According to December 2018 statistics from the Virginia Employment Commission, the federal unemployment rate was 3.7%, the state unemployment rate was 2.6% and Scott County's unemployment rate was reported at 2.9%. Scott County has seen a 1.2% decrease in the unemployment rate since January 2018. The top five largest employers within Scott County are Scott County School Board, Joy Technologies, Tempur Productions, Itec Healthcare Solutions Inc., and Food City. The average weekly wages for employees working in Scott County is \$614. At 2018-2019 enrollment, 137 households served by SCPSHS were gainfully employed. SCPSHS offers employment opportunities to families through substitute staff training. The program also communicates with families regarding job opportunities within the area through parent meetings and program wide workshops.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Virginia, first quarter 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Housing

According to the 2010 census, Scott County has a total of 11,916 housing units, an increase from the 2000 census count of 11,355. The dominate housing type continues to be single-family at 71%, with multi-family housing at 5%, and manufactured homes at 24%

In 2010, occupied rental units comprised 19% of Scott County housing. Owner occupied units comprised 63% and vacant units accounted for 18%. Median value for occupied housing units increased from \$46,000 in 1990 to \$91,700 in 2010.²

Based on the US Census Bureau Fact Finder Demographics, statistics for owner occupied households with own children under age 18 is 2,287 (23.4%). The statistics for renter occupied households with own children under age 18 is 667 (6.8%).

According to the 2010 census and the most recent data from the planning district commission, 6% of the total units in Scott County lack complete plumbing systems, 2% lack complete kitchen facilities, 5% are overcrowded, 6% lack indoor plumbing, 46.4% lack an approved source of water, 42% lack central heating, and 8% lack telephones.

According to the Scott County Redevelopment and Housing Authority, renters within Scott County pay a median gross rent of \$609. Approximately 40% of renters pay 30% or more of their income for housing costs, a level considered far exceeding affordable housing costs.

² Scott County Comprehensive Plan, 2017

There are two types of housing provided by the Scott County Redevelopment and Housing Authority: Section 8 Housing & Public Housing. In public housing, participants pay 30% of their adjusted income. Electricity and water are included in their rent. If participants in public housing become employed and go over the income guidelines, they are given the opportunity to stay in housing while paying a flat rent rate. In Section 8 housing, participants have a private landlord. Participants are responsible for a portion of the rent and are responsible for electricity and water. If while in Section 8 housing the participant goes over the income guidelines, they are given 6 months to find other housing.

As of June 2019, 42 families are on the wait list for Section 8 housing, and 48 families are on the wait list for public housing. There are three low-income housing projects within Scott County. There are 60 total units in Duffield, 36 in Gate City, and 15 in Dungannon. The wait list for housing is 6 to 12 months.

Education

In today's workforce, education is a key factor in self-sufficiency. Many employers are requiring higher education levels for vacant positions, limiting the number of job opportunities available for those with low education levels of formal education. The table below shows the 2012-2016 educational attainment of the population by percentage of Scott County in comparison to the state and national averages.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	COUNTY	STATE	NATIONAL
Less than High School Diploma	20.7%	11.4%	13.0%
High School Diploma or Equivalency	38.1%	24.5%	27.5%
Some College, No Degree	21.6%	19.9%	21.0%
Associate's Degree	7.0%	7.4%	8.2%
Bachelor's Degree	8.7%	21.2%	18.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.8%	15.7%	11.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16.

Although there are no institutions of higher learning located in Scott County, the area is served by a two-year community college, Mountain Empire Community College and a four-year college, the University of Virginia's College at Wise in Wise County, VA. The Kingsport Center for Higher Education located in neighboring Sullivan County, Tennessee consists of four institutions: Lincoln Memorial University, East Tennessee State University, and Northeast State Community College.

During the 2018-2019 school year, SCPSHS served a total of 207 families (171 Head Start, 36 Early Head Start). Of the 171 Head Start families, 5 have an advanced degree or baccalaureate degree, 24 have an associate's degree or some college, 133 have a high school diploma or equivalency, and 15 have less than a high school diploma. Of the 36 Early Head Start families, 2 have an advanced degree or baccalaureate degree, 9 have an associate's degree or some college, 22 have a high school diploma or equivalency, and 3 have less than a high school diploma. The following chart details the educational status of families served by the program based on percentages during the 2018-2019 school year.

EDUCATION STATUS	HS	EHS
Less than High School Diploma	9%	8%
High School Diploma or Equivalency	78%	61%
Associate's Degree or Some College	14%	25%
Advanced Degree or Baccalaureate Degree	3%	6%

SCPSHS partners with the Regional Adult Education Program through referrals to families for free GED classes offered in two locations throughout the county. There are currently two Head Start families enrolled in Adult Education classes.

Transportation

The primary mode of transportation throughout the service area is by private vehicle. There is a bus/van operated by Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) in a neighboring county offered to residents. Current American Community Survey (US Census Bureau) data reveals nearly 10% of Scott County residents carpool to work. The lack of public transportation creates a significant issue for those who do not own a vehicle. Among current families served by SCPSHS, four have no transportation. For many families, the transportation available is either unreliable or used to transport employed family members.

Head Start children utilize the public school system for transportation to and from school. Travel reimbursement is also available for parents attending certain SCPSHS events including Policy Council meetings.

HEALTH & NUTRITION

Health Services

Access to healthcare in Scott County is limited by both geographic and economic barriers. The county currently has no hospital facilities within the service area. Many residents seek hospital services in bordering Sullivan County, Tennessee. There are five general practice physician offices in localities throughout Scott County. Additionally, residents can seek health services through the Lenowisco Health District - Scott County Health Department located in Gate City. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Head Start program had 174 children with a primary care physician. The Early Head Start program had 24 children with a primary care physician.

According to data compiled by the US Census Bureau in 2016, 7% of children from low-income families do not have health insurance. The percentage of uninsured Scott County residents is 11.49% as opposed to the state's average of 10.68%. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Head Start program had 159 children enrolled with Medicaid, 16 with private insurance coverage, 2 covered by other insurance, and 10 not covered by medical insurance. The Early Head Start program has 21 children enrolled with Medicaid and 3 with private insurance.

The County Health Rankings, issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is a metrics for evaluating the overall health of a region. Scott County ranks 92nd least healthy out of 133 jurisdictions evaluated in Virginia.

Hearing & Vision Services

Scott County currently has two sites with three opticians providing optical care to residents. SCPSHS uses a SPOT screening camera for enrolled children to detect six amblyopic risk factors in children as young as six months old.

Additionally, the program uses a pediatric device called an OAE (otoacoustic emission) Hearing Screener to test hearing by detecting how hair cells in the cochlea respond to sound.

Oral Health Services

There are currently four dentists providing oral care services in Scott County. Of the four dentists, two offices accept Medicaid patients. SCPSHS has partnered with this dental office to provide initial dental examinations for enrolled children. Extensive follow-up care is offered in neighboring Tennessee. SCPSHS assists families with scheduling appointments

and transportation, as needed. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Head Start program had 157 children with a dental home. The Early Head Start program had 7 children with a dental home.

Mental Health Services

SCPSHS contracts with Frontier Health to provide identification and intervention regarding each child's social and emotional wellness. The program ensures support through regularly scheduled on-site consultations and observations.

The program uses the ASQSE-2 assessment tool to screen concerns and behaviors. During the initial observation of the 2018-2019 school year, 37 children have been referred for further evaluations.

Additional mental health services are provided to Scott County children through various agencies including: Health Connect America and Family Preservation Services.

Nutrition Services

Food uncertainty and limited access to nutritious food is an ongoing concern for many residents of Scott County, particularly children. Poor nutrition directly contributes to worse health and lower performance in school. According to 2015-2016 data from the CDC, nearly 1 in 5 school age children and young people (6-19 years old) in the United States has obesity. The Body Mass Index, BMI, is a widely used screening tool for measuring obesity. The CDC recommends the use of BMI percentile when measuring children. The CDC defines overweight in children ages two & up as a BMI at or above the 85th percentile and less than the 95th percentile. According to the latest measurements for Head Start children enrolled in the 2018-2019 school year, there are 20 overweight children and 29 obese children (27% of total enrollment).

According to the Virginia Department of Education - Office of School Nutrition Programs 2018-2019 Report, 3,527 children within the Scott County Public School system are members of the School Nutrition Program. Of the 3,527, 2,037 (57.75%) are classified as free while 243 (6.89%) are classified as reduced. All 197 children enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start are classified as free.

SCPSHS is regulated by the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federally-funded program that aids in the provision of nutritious foods for young children. SCPSHS also works to guarantee all children meet or surpass the recommended amount of daily physical activity as well as encourage children to drink water throughout the day.

SCPSHS partners with WIC on educational materials used to encourage healthier food choices for families.

SOCIAL SERVICE NEEDS

Substance Abuse

According to 2016 data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 48.5 million Americans have used illicit drugs or misused prescription drugs. These numbers continue to increase, affecting children and families nationwide. The Scott County Sheriff's Office reports 80% of incarcerations are drug related or drug abuse, approximately 30% of those cases involve children. According to the Virginia Department of Health data, opioids have been the driving force behind the large increase in fatal overdoses since 2013. In 2018, Scott County had a rate of 6.5-11.4 fatal prescription opioid overdoses per 100,000 persons. This is the third highest rating out of six on the fatal methamphetamine overdose scale in the State of Virginia. Additionally, Scott County had a rate of 2.6-4.4 fatal methamphetamine overdoses from 2016-2018. This is the second highest rating out of six on the fatal methamphetamine overdose scale in the State of Virginia. The rate of fatal prescription opioid overdoses in SCPSHS continues to address this problem through staff and parent trainings.

Domestic Violence

Families within the service area continue to face a variety of social service needs. According to the Domestic Violence Officer of the Scott County Sheriff's Office, substance abuse, alcohol, and drugs account for a majority of the domestic violence calls occurring within the county. These incidents increase during the summer months when children are home and resources such as money and food are scarce. The Domestic Violence Task Force works closely with the Hope House to ensure there is a safe place for women and children who flee from violence in the home. Within the past year, the Hope House has served 46 children under the age of 18 and 7 under the age of 5.

Child Abuse & Neglect

According to statistics provided by Virginia Department of Social Services for FY 17-18, the Child Protective Services (CPS) unit investigated 324 child abuse cases concerning children in Scott County. Family assessments were conducted for 653 families. Approximately 44% of the investigations were returned as "founded."

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Child Development & Child Care Programs

Child care resources outside the Head Start/Early Head Start programs in the county are very limited. There is currently one faith-based child care provider serving a capacity of 220 children six weeks to twelve years of age. Of the 220 children, the provider serves approximately 48 children ages six weeks to two years of age and 90 children ages three to five years of age. There are also a limited number of private in-home child care providers. Approximate rates of child care within the county ranges from \$85 per week to \$140 for full time and daily rates of \$45 for a minimum of two days per week.

The Scott County Public School System offers six Pre-K classrooms, serving a total of 105 4-year old children throughout the county in the following locations: Hiltons, Yuma, Weber City, Gate City, Duffield, & Nickelsville. Of the 105 children, 50 slots are funded by the VDOE - Virginia Preschool Initiative. Gate City Christian School provides one Pre-K classroom, serving approximately five 4-year old children. The monthly rate for enrollment is \$155 per child.

Families within the community continue to express concerns of the lack of affordable child care, specifically for infants and toddlers. As of August 2019, SCPSHS has 55 age eligible children on the Early Head Start waitlist. Of that total amount, 32 children are income eligible. The program has seen this number continue to increase since the opening of Early Head Start.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Low Violent Crime Rates

In an analysis conducted by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, counties are ranked against other counties for total violent crime rates with the highest rate ranked 1 and the lowest rate ranked 95. Scott County ranked 63rd out of 95 counties for total violent crime rate in 2016. This is a decrease from 2007 in which Scott County ranked 57th.

Active Community and Intergenerational Family Involvement

Scott County is a close-knit community with a large number of faith-based worship centers. These churches along with other members of the community play an active role in meeting rising needs of families including extracurricular activities for children. Scott County has a volunteer-based Little League for children ages 4-14 interested in various sports. Additional extracurricular activities for children include Upward Sports League, Jenkins School of Dance, Virginia Cooperative Extension Office 4H Program, and the Scouts programs. Additionally, residents of Nickelsville, Duffield, and Gate City maintain community gardens during the summer months.

Intergenerational families play a contributing factor into the development of such a close-knit community. This is reflected in that extended family members help provide child care as needed while parents work or are in school. They also assist with transportation to various activities.

Quality Public School Education

The Scott County Public School System focuses on developing lifelong learners who value themselves and others, contribute to their community, and are college and career ready. All 13 schools within the Scott County Public School system are accredited. Developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, the 2018-2024 Comprehensive Plan details four main priority areas for the school system: High Academic Standards, College/Career Readiness, Communication/Community Involvement, and Social/Emotional Development. During the 2017-2018 school year, the district graduation rate was 95%, of those graduating, 50% of Twin Springs High School graduates had an advanced studies diploma, 33% from Rye Cove High School, and 54% from Gate City High School. The district maintained an attendance rate of 94.7% during the 2017-2018 school year. Additionally, the school system

has an extensive range of extracurricular activities for students ranging from academics to athletics.

Location/Economic Opportunity

Bordering the Tri-Cities metro area, Scott County residents have more opportunities for employment compared to other neighboring counties. In October 2016, TeleTech, a provider of customer service, opened a customer care center in Scott County, which brought up to 300 jobs to the region.

Cultural Landscape

Scott County is an area culturally rich in the Appalachian heritage. A major Scott County venue along the “Crooked Road” is the destination of the first family of country music, The Carter Family, at the Carter-Family Fold. Additionally, Kickin’ Back @ King Alley is a free summer concert and event series in which talented bands from across the region come to perform in downtown Gate City. Scott County JAMS is a Crooked Road JAM program that began in 2014. The program attempts to preserve the Appalachian music heritage by offering affordable afterschool classes in fiddle, banjo, guitar, and mandolin for students in grades 4th-8th.

Outdoor Recreation

Located along the Appalachian Trail, Scott County has a vast array of outdoor recreation opportunities available to residents. The county is home to a popular hiking destination known as the “Devil’s Bathtub” and Natural Tunnel State Park which offers hiking and mountain bike trails, swimming, fishing, and boating. Scott County is home to Creation Kingdom, an exotic zoo, open seasonally for visitors. The Scott County Regional Horse Association sponsors shows at the Scott County Horse Park. The Clinch and Holston Rivers are known for a great variety of fish. Additionally, the community utilizes these rivers for recreational fishing. Nearby Jefferson National Forest has several areas open for public hunting.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Service Area Demographics

- A majority of the county's population (81.7%) live outside incorporated town limits.
- SCPSHS served 7 children from the Scott County Foster Care program.
- SCPSHS served 3 homeless children during the 18/19 school year.
- 81.8% of women in Scott County receive pre-natal care during the first trimester.
- The Scott County Public School System serves 37 children with developmental delay, 7 of which are enrolled in Head Start.
- The Infant and Toddler Connection of Dilenowisco serves 24 children with developmental and/or speech delays, 6 of which are enrolled in Early Head Start.
- 97.7% of residents are white and share a common cultural background.
- The percentage of county residents living at or below the federal poverty level is significantly higher than state and national percentages, specifically those under the age of 18.
- 17.37% of Scott County residents are receiving SNAP benefits, a percentage much higher than the state average of 9.43% and national average of 13.05%.
- The average weekly wage of employees working in Scott County is \$614.
- 46.4% of housing units within Scott County lack an approved source of water.
- Gross median rent for county residents is \$609. Additionally, 40% of renters, pay 30% or more of their income towards housing.
- Scott County has a total of 111 low-income housing units (Duffield - 60, Gate City - 36, & Dungannon - 15).
- In comparison to the state and national averages, Scott County residents have a much higher percentage of residents without a high school diploma or equivalency.
- Lack of public transportation creates issues for many one-vehicle families throughout the county.

Health & Nutrition

- 11.49% of Scott County residents do not have health insurance as opposed to the state average of 10.7%.
- Scott County ranks 92nd least healthy out of 133 jurisdictions evaluated in Virginia.
- SCPSHS ensures routine health screenings for enrolled children.
- 27% of total enrolled Head Start children have a BMI measuring above the 85th percentile.
- All enrolled Head Start/Early Head Start children receive free healthy meals through the USDA's CACFP program.

Social Service Needs

- 30% of the drug cases within Scott County involve children.
- Scott County has a higher rate of drug overdose deaths per 100,000 people compared to the national average.
- The Hope House of Scott County served 46 children under the age of 18 within the past year.
- 44% of the investigations conducted by the Child Protective Service Unit of DSS during FY 17-18 were returned as "founded."

Early Learning Programs

- The number of early child care programs offered to Scott County residents is very limited.
- Existing child care programs offered outside SCPSHS and the public school system are unaffordable to many low income families.

Community Strengths

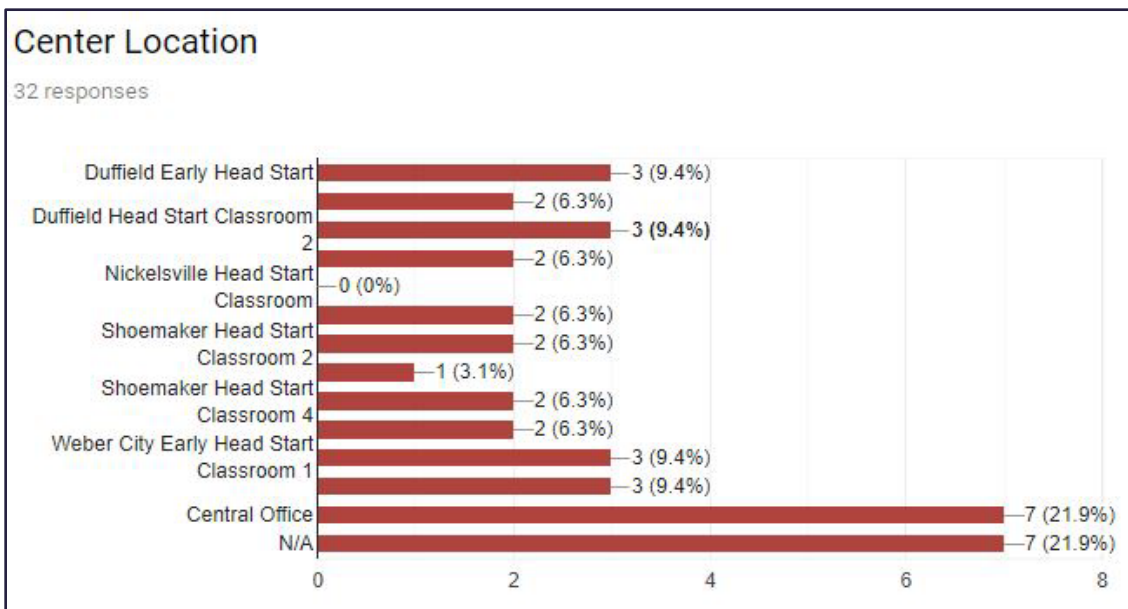
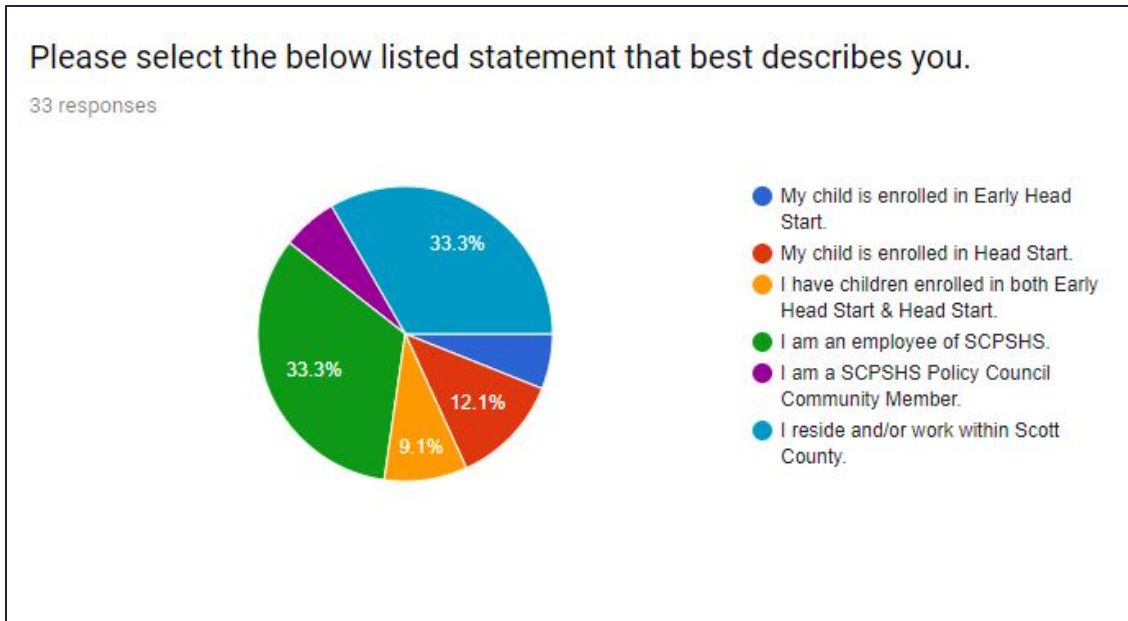
- Scott County ranks 63rd out of 95 counties for total violent crime rate (highest ranking beginning at 1).
- Community and intergenerational family involvement play a contributing factor in creating a close-knit community.
- The Scott County Public School System provides quality education and extracurricular activities for school age children.

- Residents of Scott County have more opportunities for employment compared to neighboring counties due to its close proximity to Tri-Cities area.
- Scott County is an area culturally rich in the Appalachian heritage.
- Residents have access to a vast array of outdoor recreational opportunities including hiking, mountain biking, swimming, fishing, and boating.

ASSESSMENT SURVEY

As a part of the assessment process, comments were solicited from parents with children currently enrolled in the program, policy council community members, program staff, and individuals who reside/work within the community. This took place through an electronic survey posted on social media and the program’s website. Additionally, details regarding the survey were sent home with children enrolled in the program at that time.

The program had a total 33 responses. The below chart provides details of those surveyed.



The following multiple choice questions were included in the survey and the below listed chart provides details of the responses.

- *What do you feel are the greatest childcare needs within your community?*
- *What do you feel are the most concerning health/disability needs for children and families within your community?*
- *What do you feel are the most concerning educational needs for children and families within your community?*
- *What do you feel are the most concerning nutritional needs for children and families within your community?*
- *What do you feel are the most concerning social service needs for children and families within your community?*
- *What do you feel are the most concerning safety needs for children and families within your community?*

The survey also included the following short answer questions. Below are the three most common responses for each question.

What do you like best about living in your community?

1. Small town community
2. The people are friendly
3. Feel like it is a safe place to live.

What do you like least about living in your community?

1. Increase in drug abuse
2. Lack of job opportunities in the area
3. Lack of community resources

What resources are easily accessible to you within your community?

1. Online Educational Opportunities with GED Classes & MECC
2. Local Library
3. Assistance from Department of Social Services

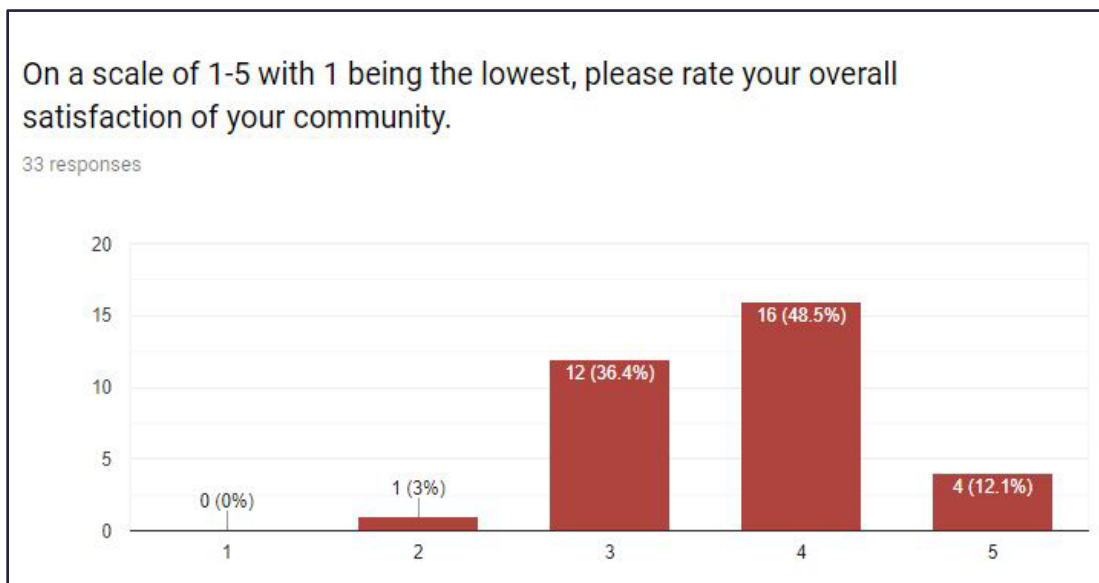
What resources are difficult for you to access within your community?

1. Public Transportation
2. Affordable child care (after school & summer)
3. Dental care

The program also requested changes or suggestions that could be made within the community to better meet the needs of families. Some of the responses included:

- Community Center for children and youth
- More options for child care & after school/summer care
- Public transportation
- More job opportunities

Surveyors were asked to rate their overall satisfaction of their community, with one being the lowest and five the highest. The below listed chart details the responses.



SCPSHS staff comments reflected the importance of health care and transportation issues. The need for insured and affordable medical/dental care is great among families. There is also a need for a prescription medication insurance plan that would be economically feasible for program families. Additionally, transportation for many families is either undependable or used to transport a working parent to and from a job.

Underlying all the specific issues is the recurrent theme of increasingly lower eligibility cutoff points. When parents find employment, they increase their income by just enough to make them ineligible for benefits such as child care and health services. These services are too expensive for families living at this level to afford in the private market. The lack of benefits interferes with their ability to maintain stable employment. Many children who need the services provided by Head Start/Early Head Start are barely ineligible due to family's income being slightly over the income guidelines.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

SCPSHS works collaboratively with other agencies and community resources to provide high quality services to families. Some examples of these collaborations are listed below.

Scott County School Public School System - provides fiscal and administrative oversight to SCPSHS. Additionally, supports the program by providing computer technician services, maintenance, transportation, legal services, school health support, staff training, and technical assistance as needed.

Scott County Public Health Department - services and programs offered include: Pharmacy Connect Program - assisting eligible patients with prescription medications at no or reduced costs, immunizations, Pre-school physicals with an appointment, diagnostic evaluation services for children with developmental disorders (Child Development Clinic), diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental health treatment, food establishment regulations, sewage regulations, water permits, rabies prevention, lead exposure, and outbreak investigations.

Clinch River Health Services - A community health care center, located in Dungannon provides medical services to low-income patients through a sliding scale of service charge. The Clinch River practice has nine examinations rooms that are shared by two family physicians and a family nurse practitioner. Services include a waived medical lab, simple x-rays, emergency care, pharmaceuticals for patients with chronic illnesses, mental health counseling, minor surgery, and prenatal care up to 32 weeks for low-risk patients. The clinic will make home visits as needed and tailor their range of available services to meet the needs of the community.

Scott County Volunteer Fire Department - Fire prevention training to children and parents, as well as tours of the local fire station.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Scott County Office) - Parent training is offered annually on a wide range of topics. Associated with Virginia Tech, this office provides printed materials/information ranging from “nutrition” to “budgeting” at no cost to staff and parents. The Smart Choice Nutrition Education Program (SCNEP) agent provides nutrition education to families in their home. The Extension Office also conducts workshops throughout the year designed to help parents preserve the Appalachian heritage including gardening, canning, and cooking traditional recipes in a healthy manner.

The Christian Social Ministry - Provides clothing and household goods for families in crisis.

Christmas CART - Provides food baskets and clothing/toys to families during the Christmas season.

Hope House - Provides shelter for victims of domestic violence including homeless women and children.

Scott County Cooperative Ministries - Distribution of monthly food packages and additional groceries are distributed to families in crisis and as needed.

Dungannon Development Commission - Organization that involves the people in building a better community through providing survival skills, environmentally sound economic development, affordable and safe housing, and youth empowerment programs. Some programs include: monthly food pantry, Project Help-Volunteer Home Repair program, Crisis Program, Computer Training center, and Dungannon Thrift Store.

H.O.P.E. Christian Ministries - A non-profit group of area churches that provide food and clothing to those within the community in need. Additional programs provided include: food pantry, clothes closet, counseling, tutoring, resume building, cooking classes, and elder care assistance.

Natural Tunnel State Park - Serves on the SCPSHS Policy Council. Provides community events promoting outdoor recreation and history related to Scott County.

Regional Adult & Career Education - Serves on the SCPSHS Policy Council. Offers free GED classes and GED testing services within Scott County to improve regional adult education and prepare students for career success through earning a high school equivalency diploma.

Appalachian Community Action & Development Agency (AppCAA) - Serves on the SCPSHS Policy Council. Some programs include: After School/Summer Food Program, Imagination Library, Financial Coaching & Empowerment, Financial Workshops, Tax Preparation Services, AmeriCorps VISTA, Retired Seniors Volunteer Program, CHORE Program, Emergency utility services, Housing Counseling, Indoor Plumbing & Rehabilitation, New Eyes for the Needy, SafeLink Cellphone, and Weatherization.

Findhelp.org - Website to connect support with financial assistance, food pantries, medical care, mental health services, and other free or reduced costs.

Anthem HealthKeepers Plus - Serves on the Health Services Advisory Committee. Provides funding assistance for program events. Offers vaccination incentives.

Molina Healthcare - Serves on the Health Services Advisory Committee and participates in the program's resource events.

Health Wagon - Provides medical and dental services. Can serve as a dental home for individuals without a primary care dental practitioner.

Birth to Five Hub - A child care locator through United Way of Southwest Virginia

United Way of Southwest Virginia - Resource hub for early childhood education programs to improve quality childcare.

SCPSHS receives additional support from several private sector companies. Local banks often provide training on managing money and budgeting. A past Policy Council Community Representative, who is also a local farmer, provides a tour through his pumpkin patch and corn maze as a field trip for children and their families. Three local churches share space for parent meetings, including kitchen space for meals and space for on-site child care.

ASSESSMENT UPDATES 2020-2021

Subpart A 1302.11(b)(2) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards requires programs to review and update the community assessment annually to reflect any significant changes, including increased availability of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten, rates of family and child homelessness, and significant shifts in community demographics and resources.

COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 670,000 Virginia residents have filed for unemployment. According to June 2020 statistics from the Virginia Employment Commission, the federal unemployment rate was 11.2%, a 7.4% increase from June 2019. On the state level, Virginia reported an unemployment rate of 8.5%, which was a 5.6% increase from June 2019. Locally, Scott County's unemployment rate was reported at 6.7%, a 3.2% increase from June 2019. Many Scott County residents work in the labor force sector of the Tri-Cities area in Tennessee, which saw an unemployment rate of 8.0% in June 2020. This was a 3.5% increase from the unemployment rate reported in June 2019.

According to results collected from the program's Family Resource Specialists, at least 15 of the program's families were laid off due to COVID-19. Some of the families have either returned back to work or are now working two jobs to meet the changing needs of their families. At least four families remain unemployed at this time. The local health department's quarantine requirements for potential COVID-19 exposure has also affected the program's working families. Companies exempt from the emergency paid leave requirements set forth in the CARES Act aren't required to provide paid sick leave to employees during quarantine. In addition, families working multiple part-time jobs may be ineligible to receive company paid sick leave.

The lack of affordable childcare within the service area continues to be a concern with the community. As a result of COVID-19, the public school system, including Head Start, altered their program operating hours. With this change, many families had to modify their work schedules, rely on family members for childcare, and/or incur increased expenses by paying for childcare. Childcare providers within the service area have a limited capacity and have also had to modify their services to meet state and local health department COVID-19 requirements.

SCPSHS has seen a shift in enrollment throughout the county as a result of COVID-19. The Head Start grant is funded to serve 140 Head Start children and 8 Early Head Start

children. Head Start is currently serving 91 Head Start children, 17 of which are being served in a remote online platform and 8 Early Head Start children. The Early Head Start grant is funded to serve 24 children and is fully enrolled. All Early Head Start children are receiving in-person services.

During the 2020-2021 school year, in case of school closure or the need for virtual instruction, teaching staff will provide services online. Services will be provided through online platforms (Seesaw, Facebook Live, Facebook Class Page, and/or Zoom). Education staff will provide weekly instruction in social emotional development, language and literacy development, math and science, and health and nutrition.

The COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing. Program statistics contained within this assessment update is from data gathered as of September 2020.

Program Nurse

SCPSHS hired a Program Nurse with a LPN credential to support health, oral health, and nutrition services in July 2020. Even though the Program Nurse has worked for a short period of time, she has helped the program develop a Pandemic Plan that supports children, families, and staff. The Program Nurse has worked in conjunction with appropriate Head Start staff, families, and the LENOWISCO Health Department to address any concerns related to COVID-19. The Program Nurse has provided training to staff and families related to following all guidelines set forth by the CDC, VA DSS Licensing, Office of Head Start, LENOWISCO Health Department, and Scott County Schools.

ASSESSMENT UPDATES 2021-2022

Subpart A 1302.11(b)(2) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards requires programs to review and update the community assessment annually to reflect any significant changes, including increased availability of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten, rates of family and child homelessness, and significant shifts in community demographics and resources.

Job Expansion Opportunities

In December 2020, eHealth Technologies, a provider of medical record and image retrieval and clinical intelligence services announced it would bring 160 new jobs to Scott County through the establishment of a customer service center. In a press release issued by Governor Northam, he stated *“The growth of telehealth during the pandemic has created an increased demand for companies like eHealth Technologies. Southwest Virginia is proactively working with its higher education partners to equip the workforce with 21st-century skills, and this announcement is a reflection of that progress.”*

Additional employment opportunities have expanded within the county and surrounding counties during 2021. Little Caesars joined the food industry bringing in 35 jobs to the county. Bristol, Virginia, a neighboring county, opened an Amazon Distribution Center, bringing in hundreds of new jobs for the region with base pay beginning well above minimum wage.

The creation of these new jobs will further boost the county’s economy and provide more job opportunities for residents living within Scott County.

Increased Access to Higher Education, including Early Childhood

On March 29, 2021, Governor Ralph Northam signed legislation creating his signature “Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back” initiative, or “G3,” which makes tuition-free community college available to low and middle income students who pursue jobs in high-demand fields. The G3 program includes \$36 million to cover tuition, fees, books, and provide wraparound support for eligible students at the Commonwealth’s two-year public institutions, including Mountain Empire Community College. The designated programs fall into five targeted career areas that are in high demand in Virginia: Healthcare, Information Technology, Manufacturing and Skilled Trades, Early Childhood Education, and Public Safety.

Scott County has a poverty rate higher than the state and national averages. Combined with a low educational attainment rate, financial resources could create a barrier

for pursuing higher education opportunities. As a result of the G3 legislation, higher education is now more affordable and accessible to those residing in the service area. SCPSHS hopes to see an influx of qualified candidates eligible for early childhood education positions within the program. SCPSHS continues to collaborate with Mountain Empire Community College to recruit and enroll adult learners into the college's Early Childhood Education program. Staff have also increased personnel recruitment efforts through job fairs and providing education on the G3 initiative to program families.

Access to Nutritious Meals for Children during COVID-19

To assist in combating barriers to healthy food options, all children enrolled in Scott County Public Schools receive a free breakfast and lunch each day of the school year, including virtual learning days. This benefit for Scott County families is made possible through the USDA under their Community Eligibility Provision for school districts in low income areas.

The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program was created by the federal government in the spring of 2020 to supplement school meals that students missed while schools were closed or placed on part-time attendance schedules due to COVID-19. All children enrolled in Scott County Public Schools were eligible for the P-EBT benefits due to their status under the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision. These benefits were issued in eight installments from March 2021 - August 2021 for a benefit period beginning October 2020. P-EBT funds were eligible for use at any store that accepts SNAP, including online platforms such as Amazon, Aldi, Food Lion, and Walmart.

Expansion of Program's Recruitment Efforts

With the push for in-person learning, and full enrollment effective January 2022, SCPSHS continues to utilize creative methods for recruiting. During the summer of 2021, SCPSHS partnered with our neighboring state to actively recruit within their service area. Due to our county's location and limited resources and industry, many within the community work, shop, and seek medical care across the state line. Expanding the program's recruitment efforts has increased SCPSHS's involvement and public relations in surrounding community events.

COVID-19 Ongoing Pandemic

An increase in COVID-19 cases within the Appalachian Highlands area has prompted, Ballard Health, the community's local healthcare system, to postpone all elective and non-

emergent surgeries as of August 26, 2021. Additionally, clinical and non-clinical personnel from the United States Army and National Guard have been working within the local hospitals to support the COVID-19 surge. Ballad Health continues to set new records for COVID-19 patients in their facilities. As of September 9, 2021, the regional positivity rate was 21.1%, with Ballad Health caring for 709 patients positive with, or under investigation for COVID-19. Of that total, five are children.

According to records received from the Virginia Department of Health, the percentage of the population fully vaccinated within Virginia is 57.5% with Scott County's vaccination rate at 39.7%. Since the start of the pandemic, the Virginia Department of Health has recorded over 2,000 positive COVID-19 cases within Scott County. SCPSHS continues to raise awareness and promote COVID-19 vaccinations within the community. The program recently collaborated with the Virginia Department of Health to provide a mobile vaccination clinic at the Head Start Central Office. Five individuals within the community were vaccinated during the event.

Minimum Wage Increase

On May 1, 2021, the Virginia Assembly passed legislation increasing the minimum wage within the Commonwealth from \$7.25 per hour to \$9.50 per hour. This has given residents within Scott County some assistance in recovering from the loss of employment and wages due to the ongoing pandemic. According to the Virginia Employment Commission, pandemic unemployment benefits (\$300 weekly payments and extended benefits for people who have run out of regular state unemployment) expired September 4, 2021. Scott County currently has an unemployment rate of 3.7%.

ASSESSMENT UPDATES 2022-2023

Subpart A 1302.11(b)(2) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards requires programs to review and update the community assessment annually to reflect any significant changes, including increased availability of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten, rates of family and child homelessness, and significant shifts in community demographics and resources.

Early Education Employment Sector

Like many other employment sectors across the country, early education programs continue to face shortages in staff. SCPSHS had a 24% turnover rate in full-time contracted employees during the 2021-2022 school year. Additionally, the program has struggled to secure an adequate pool of substitute teaching staff. SCPSHS continues to collaborate with Mountain Empire Community College to expand the early childhood education workforce in Scott County and has also recently partnered with Bluefield University to promote their post-secondary early education programs.

Retention Bonuses - Recognizing the essential role staff play in the delivery of high-quality comprehensive services, SCPSHS implemented a staff retention plan for the past two school years. Staff receive retention bonus payouts for services rendered during a defined period so long as they meet certain eligibility criteria. Financial incentives have also been implemented for temporary non-contracted staff in an attempt to attract and retain substitute teaching staff.

Minimum Wage - Minimum wage continues to increase in the Commonwealth of Virginia beyond the federal minimum wage rate. As of January 1, 2023, the state minimum wage rate will be \$12.00 per hour, a \$4.75 increase from the federal rate and state rate of Tennessee, which borders Virginia. Many Scott County residents seek employment opportunities within neighboring Tennessee counties and it appears that Virginia's minimum wage rate has not created a competitive advantage. Tennessee employers are choosing to increase their rates of pay beyond minimum wage in order to mitigate staffing shortages and retain qualified candidates for employment.

Masking & Vaccination Mandates - OHS masking and vaccination mandates have created challenges for the recruitment and retention of staff, especially in situations where these mandates contradict local policies. Candidates applying for similar positions within other early education programs do not have to adhere to the same COVID-19 vaccination and masking mandates required by Head Start programs. On January 6, 2023, the Office of Head

Start issued a final rule removing the masking requirement for all individuals over the age of two.

Mental Health Supports - In June 2022, the National Head Start Association in partnership with Ayogo Health, announced the launch of Starling Minds Mental Fitness, a digital mental health program that delivers proactive, comprehensive mental health support to early childhood educators, staff, and their families. The program offers a wide range of tools and features, including an assessment, checkups, guided module sessions, short exercise, live training sessions, educational videos, and a peer community - all aimed to help educators identify negative thoughts, patterns, and behaviors and practical tools and strategies to better manage them. SCPSHS pays the National Head Start Association membership fees for all staff enabling them and their families access to this digital mental health program.

Limited Public Service Loan Forgiveness Waiver - The Department of Education announced major changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program for a limited time, as a result of the COVID-19 national emergency. The Limited PSLF Waiver allowed borrowers to receive credit for past periods of repayment, making it easier to have student loans forgiven. The deadline for applications was October 31, 2022. The waiver also allowed borrowers, including those who work for Head Start and early childcare programs, to gain additional PSLF credit, even if previously told they had the wrong loan type or repayment plan.

Additional Housing Opportunities

On November 2, 2022, the Scott County Economic Development Authority announced that a new housing development will be coming to Scott County. The developer is planning to build several traditional homes and dozens of town houses. This project should bring economic growth through housing opportunities for families seeking to reside in the service area.

One-Time Tax Rebate

The 2022 Virginia General Assembly passed a law earlier this year giving taxpayers with a liability a rebate of up to \$250 for individual filers and up to \$500 for joint filers. Most eligible taxpayers who filed by September 5th, have already been issued rebates with the remaining tax payers receiving rebates in the order that returns were filed.

The Connection Between Head Start and SNAP

President Biden's "Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government" simplified and streamlined processes in order to improve efficiency and bridge a connection between Head Start eligibility and SNAP. Prior to the Information Memorandum, families needed to go through eligibility and enrollment processes for both Head Start and SNAP programs separately. This executive order went into effect April 2022.

As of school year 22/23, 43 families receive SNAP benefits, making them categorically eligible for Head Start services. Of these families, at least three were above the 130% income guidelines. Additionally, 9 families receive TANF and 5 receive SSI.

VPI Funding Increase & Current Head Start Enrollment

During school year 22/23, Scott County Public Schools' VPI program increased funding slots by 20 students. As of November 2022, at least 14 slots remain unfilled.

As of November 2022, Head Start is serving 136 three and four-year-old children with four slots unfilled and 32 infants and toddlers with no vacancies. There are currently 13 three to four-year-old children on the Head Start waitlist, with one residing outside the service area. Of these children, nine are categorized as over-income. There are 24 infants and toddlers on the Early Head Start waitlist, with ten residing outside the service area. Of these children, four are categorized as over-income.

Therapeutic Day Treatment Closure

Family Preservation Services, LLC (FPS) has been a mental and behavioral health services provider in Virginia since 1992. In 2001, FPS became the first private provider of therapeutic day treatment (TDT) services in Virginia public schools. As of December 12, 2022, FPS has made the decision to close out the TDT program due to procedural and fiscal challenges. This will affect eight Head Start children. Utilizing American Resource Plan funds, the program has entered into a partnership with FPS to secure a qualified mental health professional (QMHP) for alternative behavioral intervention services (ABIS). The QMHP is currently providing services to six enrolled children.

Access to Quality Medical & Dental Services

According to County Health Rankings, there is one dentist per 5,410 people registered in Scott County in comparison to one dentist per 1,309 people statewide. There is one dental

provider in the service area that accepts Medicaid, however the practitioner does not provide sedative services. Enrolled children must seek care outside the service area in neighboring counties. Ongoing partnerships continue with the Health Wagon for medical and dental services of enrolled children. The program is currently in negotiations with Appalachian Miles for Smiles to provide additional dental services.

Additional Licensed Child Care Provider

Holston View United Methodist Daycare serves newborn to school age children up to thirteen years of age. The daycare also accepts Virginia Child Care subsidy and has served the community as a religiously-exempt child care provider since 2006. The daycare has recently partnered with United Way of Southwest Virginia to increase access to quality childcare and is now a state licensed facility.