



Graham County Community Health Assessment

June 2023



This page intentionally left blank.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
Community Health Assessment Partners	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
A. County Overview.....	3
B. Community Health Assessment Overview.....	12
C. Maintaining Community Health Improvement Foundation	16
D. Key Findings	17
COMMUNITY STATUS	18
A. Health Outcomes	19
B. Quality of Life.....	35
C. Access to Clinical Care.....	44
COMMUNITY CONTEXT	55
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	67
KEY FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS	69
APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY PARTNERS	A-1
APPENDIX B: FORCES OF CHANGE ASSESSMENT	B-1
APPENDIX C: GRAHAM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT	C-1



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the last four years, Graham County Health Department staff and partners have made incredible strides towards evaluating and improving the health of the community. Since the 2020-2023 Community Health Assessment (CHA), the Health Department has added new staff, facilitated new and expanded Coalitions to address priority health needs, and secured additional grant funding to support growth in community-based initiatives such as Community Health Workers and Mental Health programming.

Thank you to our staff and our partners for your tireless, heartfelt commitment towards improving the health and well-being of our communities. Your passion and dedication are driving our momentum. Thank you also to our many community members that completed the Community Health Assessment survey and provided feedback that helped us to develop this document. We hope that our report accurately reflects the strengths and also the needs of our many populations.

This Community Health Assessment is an analysis of the health of our community, gathered from statistical data as well as the first-hand feedback from actual community members. Using this information, we engaged in a collaborative process to really understand what the priority health issues are in Graham County. Moving forward, we hope to engage all partners: individuals and organizations to identify real and meaningful ways we can work together to make a difference and improve these priority health issues with the end goal of a happy, healthy, and resilient Graham County.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT PARTNERS

Thank you to our staff and partners that participated in this collaborative process:

- ❖ Graham County Health Department Community Health Assessment Team, including the primary authors Eliza Coll, Rosa Contreras, Clare Santas, and Kathryn Williams, and the current Health Director Brian Douglas.
- ❖ CHA Steering Committee, including Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center, United Way of Graham and Greenlee Counties, the Gila Valley Food Coalition, and many other Local Public Health System partners and community-based organizations (see Appendix A) that provided important feedback and direction for this document.
- ❖ Graham County community members that took the 2022 Community Health Survey (see additional details in CHA Methodology).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

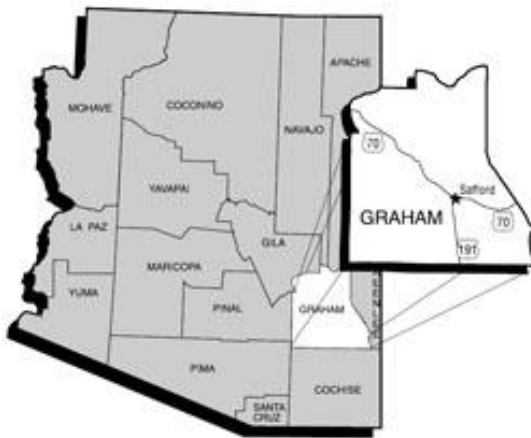
A. COUNTY OVERVIEW

This section covers physical, social and economic factors that impact the health of residents in Graham County including the geography, history, and demographics of Graham County as well as information on industry, income, housing, education and safety in the county. These are all important drivers of community health and impact individual health outcomes.

Geography

Graham County is located in the Southeastern part of Arizona and is about 81 miles long and averages about 56 miles wide. The current landmass of Graham County is 4,630 square miles making it the 4th smallest Arizona County by landmass. Graham County is bordered on the north primarily by Apache County with a small boundary of Navajo County; on the east by Greenlee County; on the south primarily by Cochise County with a small border of Pima County; and on the west by Pinal and Gila Counties. Graham County has three incorporated cities: Safford, Thatcher, and Pima. The population of Safford is approximately 10,000 people,¹ Thatcher is approximately 5,000 residents² and Pima has approximately 3,000 residents.³

Only 7% of Graham County consists of patented or privately-owned land (approximately 207,424 acres). The San Carlos Apache Indian Tribe accounts for 37% or 1,096,384 acres of land ownership, the Arizona State Land Department holds 533,376 acres or 18% of Graham County,



the Bureau of Land Management owns 25% or 740,800 acres; and the United States Forest Service holds 385,216 acres or 13% of the property in Graham County⁴.

Twenty-two square miles of the county are made up of water. Several highway systems weave in and around the county. Commuters utilize U.S. Highways 70 and 191, as well as State Highways 266 and 366.

History

Life along the upper Gila River had existed for centuries. The indigenous peoples that are native to what is now Graham County are the Anasazi, the Hohokam, and the Apache. The first Anglo-Americans ventured to Graham County around 1828. Following the Mexican-American War in 1848, Graham County was split between the United States and Mexico, with the area south of the Gila River belonging to Mexico. In

¹ QuickFacts Safford city, Arizona. US Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/saffordcityarizona/RHI825221>

² QuickFacts Thatcher town, Arizona. US Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/thatchertownarizona>

³ Pima, Arizona. Data Commons. https://datacommons.org/place/geoid/0455560?utm_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&hl=en

⁴ Article 1 Graham County Arizona Comprehensive Plan. <https://www.graham.az.gov/DocumentCenter/View/574/County-Zoning-Ordinance-PDF?bidId=>



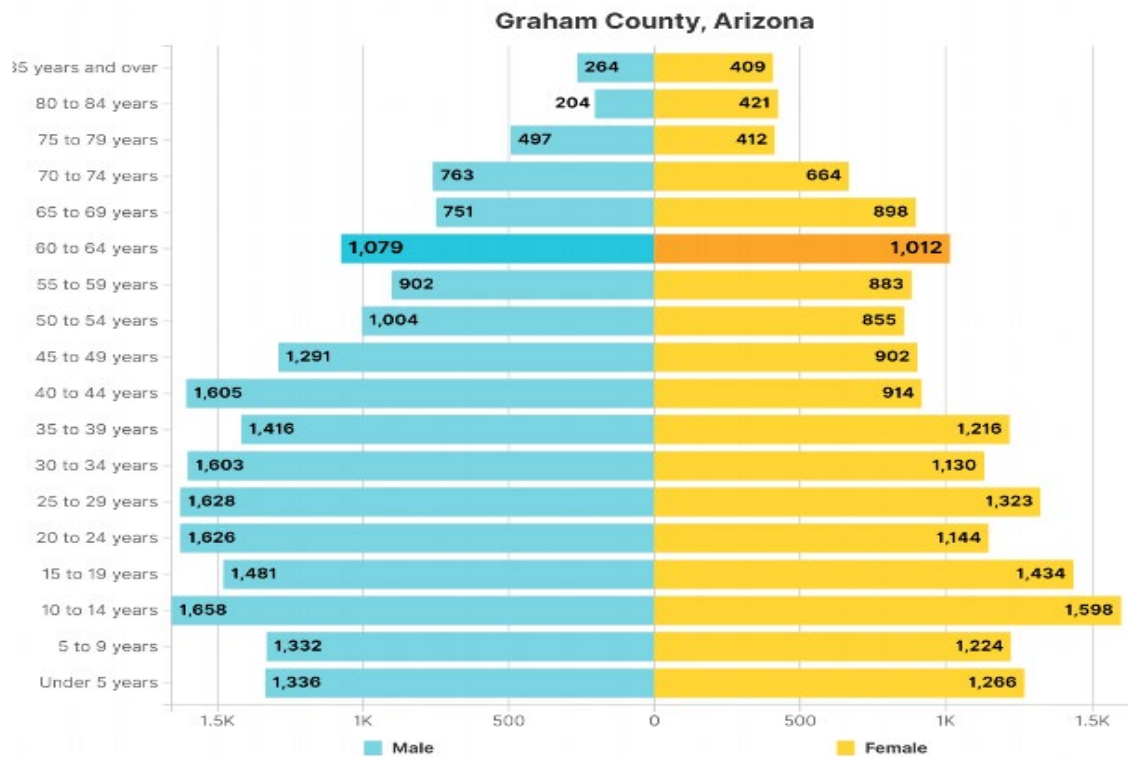
1853 the southern part of the County became part of the U.S. through the \$10,000,000 Gadsden Purchase. Some of the first settlers that passed through Graham County in the 1860s were a resolute group of Mormons. Through their industry, they helped to establish the region. Spanish settlers, from neighboring New Mexico, made their homes a few miles north and east of Safford in what are today, Sanchez, and San Jose, Arizona. 1872 was a milestone in Graham County's development when a copper mine began operating in Clifton, which was a part of Graham County at the time. Businesses developed to support mining activities. In the 1870s, farming communities began to appear along the Gila River. Munsonville, now San Jose, was established in 1873; Safford followed in 1874; Solomonville in 1876; and Smithville, now known as Pima, was the first Mormon settlement plotted out in 1879.

Graham County was formed in 1881 from parts of Apache and Pima Counties. The Legislature broke with the tradition of naming Arizona counties after local Indian tribes when they called the new county "Graham" after the 10,717-foot Mount Graham, the highest peak in the area. What is now called Mount Graham has long been referred to as Dzil Nachaa Si'an in Apache and has been important to Western Apache Tribes for generations due to its natural resources and spiritual significance.⁵ In the 1890s, several other Mormon settlements were established, including Thatcher, Eden, Central, and Bryce. Today, Graham County is a rich agricultural area with plentiful copper deposits, creating a strong agricultural-mining economy.

Population and Demographics

The total population in Graham County is 38,533 with the average age for the county being 33.8 years old, compared to an average 38.6 years old for Arizona. The Arizona state average for the population over 65 years old is 18.3%. The percent of older residents in Graham County is lower, with only 13.8% of residents being over 65 years old. Veterans make up 5.8% of the population in Graham County. Children under 18 years comprise 26.6% of Graham County's population which is slightly higher than the statewide average of 22.2%. The average family size in Arizona is 3.08 and in Graham County the average family size rises to 3.53. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census).

⁵ Dzil Nachaa Si'an: Sacred Peak for the Western Apache. The University of Arizona News. <https://news.arizona.edu/story/dzil-nachaa-sian-sacred-peak-western-apache#:~:text=Having%20that%20officially%20recognized%20means,and%20traditional%20ways%20of%20life>



The table below outlines the racial makeup of Graham County according to 2020 Census Data. A large majority of Graham County residents identify as white, with a significant minority of residents identifying as Hispanic, Latino or Native American.

White alone, percent	81.9%
Black or African American alone, percent	1.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	13.1%
Asian alone, percent	0.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.2%
Two or more races, percent	2.0%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	33.8%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	50.9%

78.9% of Graham County households speak English as the primary language at home and 15.2% of Graham County households speak Spanish as the primary language at home. Overall, 21.1% of Graham County households speak a language other than English at home which is slightly lower than the state average of 26.1%.

According to Census data, 13.9% of Graham County residents reported having a disability. A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the



world around them (participation restrictions).⁶ In rural communities, people with disabilities can have trouble accessing healthcare and needed resources.

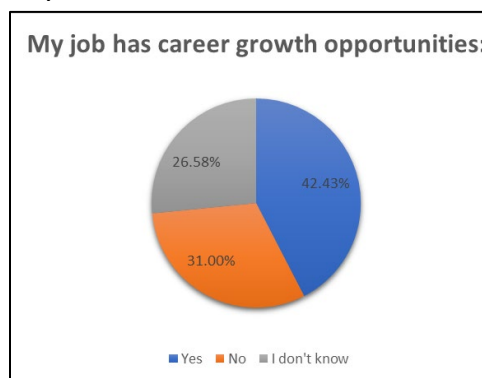
Hearing difficulty	3.8%
Vision difficulty	2.6%
Cognitive difficulty	6.8%
Ambulatory difficulty	7.8%
Self-care difficulty	2.5%
Independent living difficulty	6.5%

Industry

Agriculture has long driven the Graham County economy, even before its formation, as small farming communities sprung up along the Gila River in the 1870s. Cotton is a principal item produced in the communities of Graham County, along with alfalfa, small grains, apples, and pumpkins. Additionally, farming, ranching and copper mining are prominent industries in the county. The Safford Mine, operated by Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold, is located about 12 miles north of Safford. Freeport McMoRan also operates the Morenci mine which is the largest open pit copper mine in North America. The Safford Mine employed 1,270 workers with a direct impact of \$134.3 million on the Graham County Economy as reported by Freeport McMoRan in 2021.⁷ The incorporated towns of Safford, Thatcher and Pima are the retail and medical services center for Graham and Greenlee County residents. Graham County is also home to Eastern Arizona College, a large public community college. The top employers in Graham County are Arizona Department of Corrections, Arizona Department of Transportation, Bulk Transportation, City of Safford, DRG Technologies and Eastern Arizona College.⁸

There are a total of 529 employer establishments in Graham County with 46.1% of the population employed compared to the statewide average of 56.6% of the population. The U.S. Census reports 22.9% of the employed population over 16 working in educational services, healthcare and social assistance. The second highest industry is retail trade at 12.9%.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining follows at 11.8% and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services is next at 11.4% of the workforce. An important component for job satisfaction is the potential for career growth. According to the CHA survey results, 42% of respondents felt that their job did have career opportunities, 27% were not sure and 31% responded that they did not feel their job had opportunities.



⁶ Disability and Health Overview. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>

⁷ 2021 Safford Operations Economic Impact. FMI. https://www.fcx.com/sites/fcx/files/documents/sustainability/eco_impact/graham_safford_2022.pdf

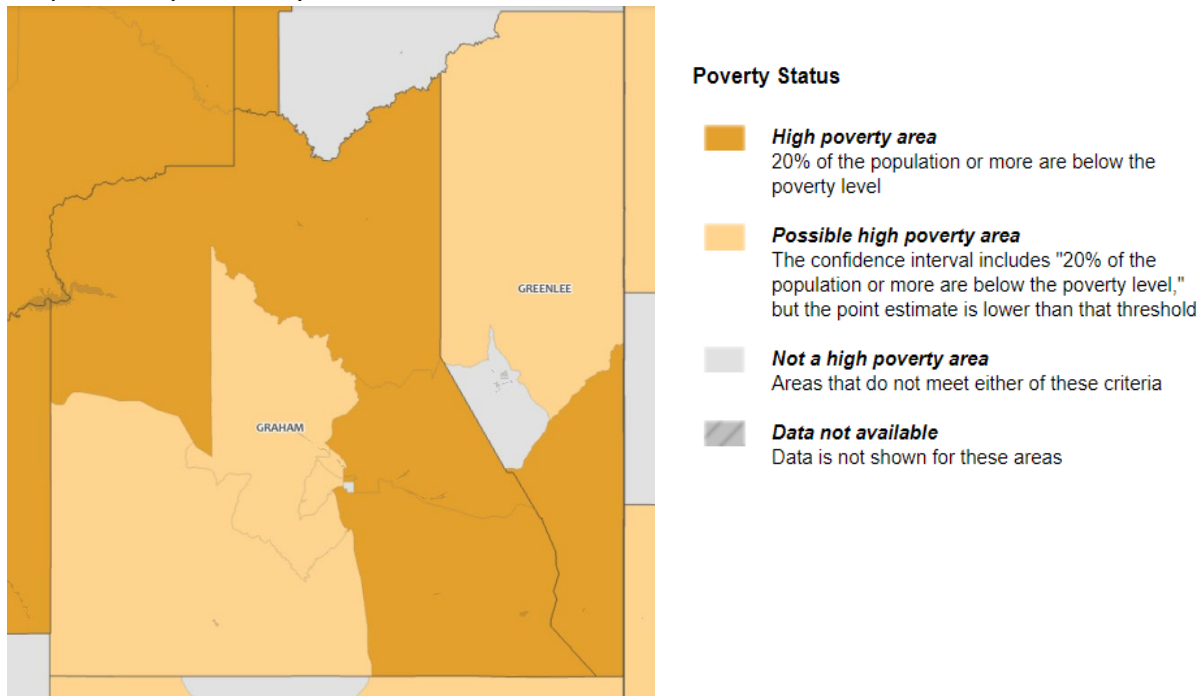
⁸ Graham County Arizona. US Economic Research. <https://grahameconomy.com/community-assets>



Income

The average household income for Graham County is \$55,693 (Census) while the average income for Arizona is over \$10,000 higher at \$69,056. In Graham County 20% of people are below the poverty line, while the state average is 12.8%. (Census). Poverty rates are higher for youth in Graham County with 1 in 5 children under 18 living in poverty. Poverty and income also vary within the county. Residents in the Eastern and Northern areas of Graham county have a higher overall rate of poverty compared to the southwest portion of the county.

Map: Poverty Status by Census Tract⁹.



From the community survey, only 34% of respondents always have enough money to pay for essentials like groceries, rent and medical bills. A combined 51% of respondents sometimes or rarely have enough to pay for necessities.



⁹ Census Poverty Status Viewer. US Census Bureau. <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=31e10881bd1040b7b0ae685559917509>

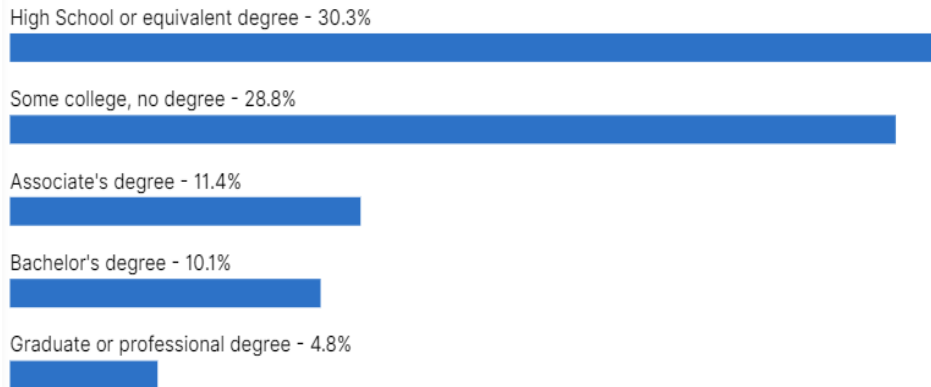


Education

Graham County is behind the state average when it comes to education. Only 14.8% of Graham County residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher. The state average is nearly double with 32.4% of residents statewide having a bachelor’s degree or higher (Census).

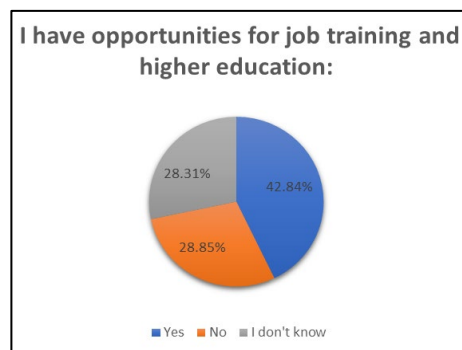
Education Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older)

in Graham County, Arizona



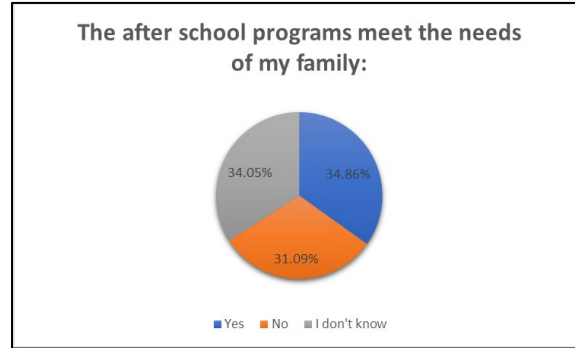
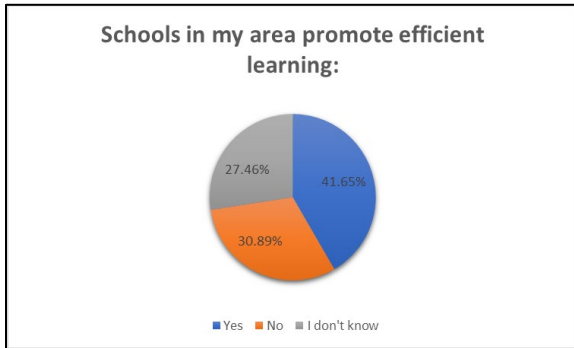
Eastern Arizona College and the Freeport Mine offer many opportunities for higher education and job training. From the community survey 43% of residents felt they did have opportunities for job training and higher education while 29% felt that they did not have opportunities.

In addition to the number of residents with bachelor’s degrees, Graham County falls behind in high school completion as well. According to the Rural Health Information Hub, Graham County ranks among the worst in the state for high school completion. For 2021, 21.4% of 18-24 year olds in Graham County are without a high school diploma.¹⁰ For all age groups in the county, 16.6% of residents do not have a high school diploma.¹¹ When asked about the quality of local education on the community survey only 42% of respondents felt like local schools promote efficient learning, compared to 31% who felt that local schools do not promote efficient learning. When it comes to after school offerings, current programs are meeting the needs of 35% of survey respondents.



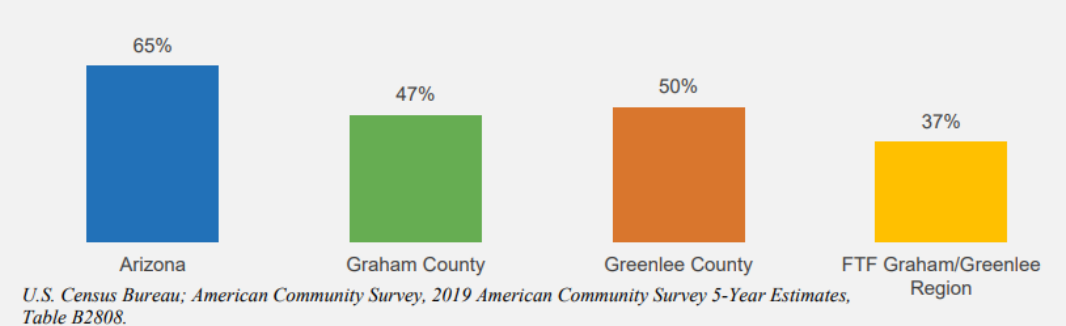
¹⁰ <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/data-explorer?id=217&state=AZ>

¹¹ <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/data-explorer?id=215&state=AZ>



90% of a child’s brain development takes place before the child enters kindergarten making early childhood education essential for healthy child development and learning.¹² Children that are enrolled in early childhood education programs are less likely to repeat a grade, more prepared academically for later grades, and more likely to graduate from high school.¹³ 47% of preschool aged children in Graham County are enrolled in school. This is below the Arizona state average of 65% of 3-4 year olds in preschool.

Exhibit 3.2. Percent of children ages 3-4 enrolled in private or public school



For more information about education in Graham and Greenlee Counties please refer to First Things First 2022 Needs and Asset report which can be found at:

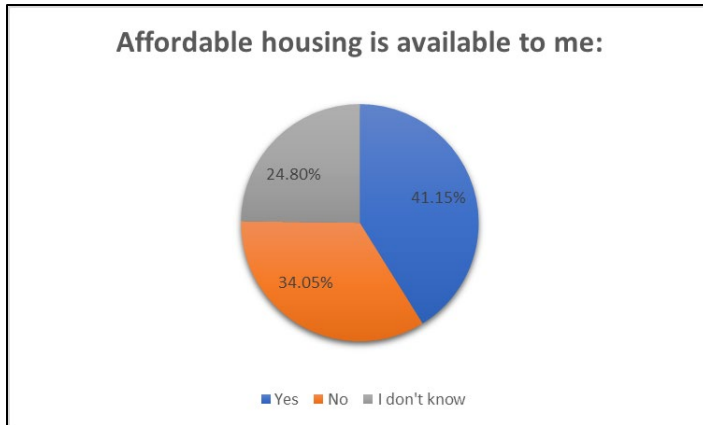
<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/graham-greenlee/>

Housing

There are a total of 13,704 housing units in Graham County. The median gross rent in Graham County is \$824. This is lower than the statewide average of \$1,253. The home ownership rate for Graham County is 71.5%, which is slightly higher than the Arizona average of 67.6% (Census). From our community survey, only 41% of respondents felt that affordable housing was available to them.

¹² <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/brain-development/>

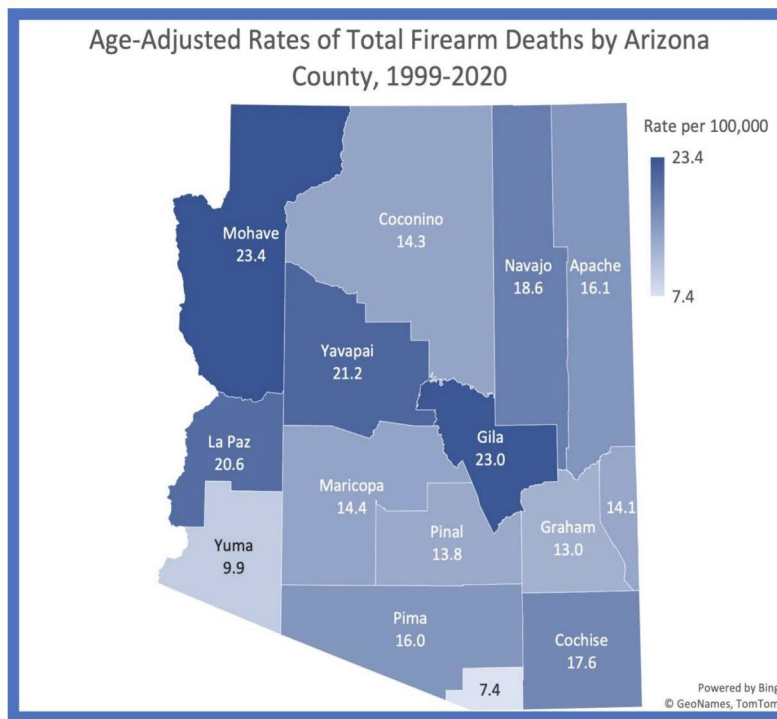
¹³ <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/action-center/our-issues/early-childhood-education>



24% of calls made to Arizona 2-1-1 between May 1, 2022-May 1, 2023 were for Housing and Shelter Requests, including rent assistance, shelter information, and low cost housing.

Crime and Community Safety

Crime and violence have a large impact on individuals' health.¹⁴ Graham County is considered one of the safest communities in Arizona. In 2022, there was a reported 109 violent crimes per 100,000 people, compared to the state average of 435 per 100,000.¹⁵ Graham also has the 3rd lowest rates of gun violence in the state of Arizona.¹⁶



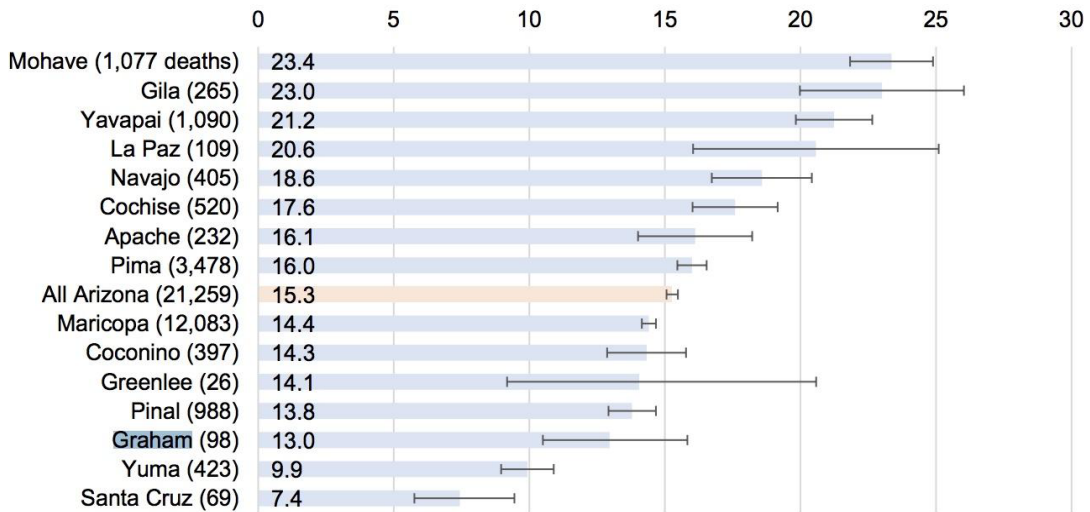
¹⁴ Crime and Violence. Healthy People 2030. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/crime-and-violence#:~:text=Specific%20examples%20of%20detrimental%20health,%2C%20stroke%2C%20and%20mental%20disorders.&text=Individuals%20can%20experience%20different%20types,can%20occur%20at%20any%20age.>

¹⁵ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/compare-counties?year=2022&compareCounties=04009%2C04000%2C00000>

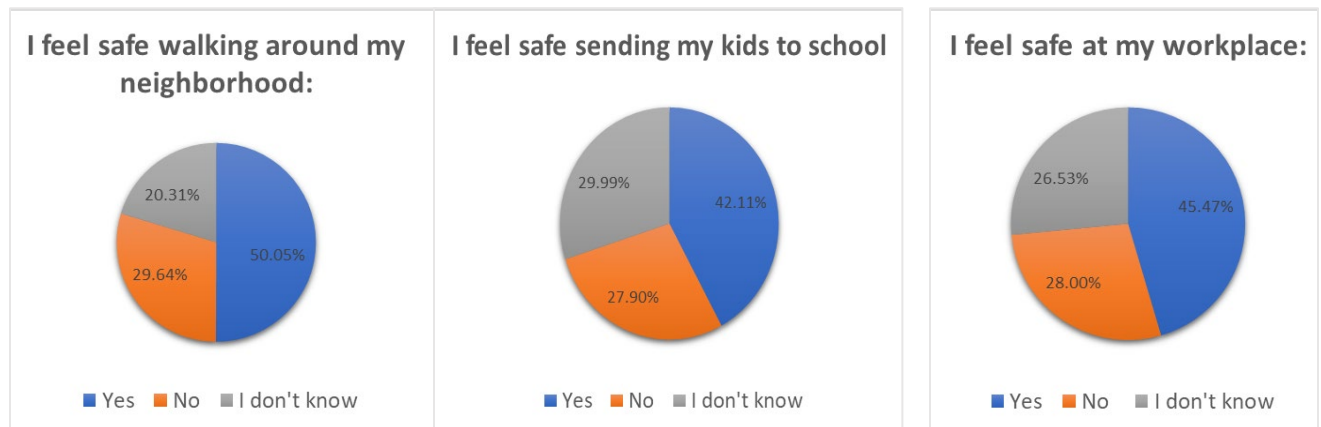
¹⁶ Gun Violence in Arizona. AZPHA. <https://azpha.wildapricot.org/resources/Final%20Final%20-%20Gun%20Violence%20in%20Arizona%20-%20Data%20to%20Inform%20Prevention%20Policies%20March%202023.pdf>



Figure 7. Numbers and Age-Adjusted Rates per 100,000 of Total Firearm Deaths by Arizona County, 1999-2020



Simply feeling safe is an important element to safety as well. 30% of residents reported they did not feel safe walking in their neighborhood, and 27% of respondents reported they did not feel safe sending their kids to school. Healthy People 2030 reports higher rates of neighborhood safety fears may lead to poor physical and mental health. Among CHA respondents, child abuse/neglect and domestic violence were reported as top health problems in the community.





B. COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The Public Health Accreditation Board states the purpose of a Community Health Assessment (CHA) is to learn about the health status of a population. A CHA identifies areas for health improvement, determines factors that contribute to health issues, and identifies assets and resources that can be mobilized to address population health improvement. A CHA entails the collaborative collection and analysis of health data and information for a given population or community¹⁷.

Graham County first developed a Community Health Assessment in 2012-2013 through an interactive and collaborative process with staff, stakeholders, and the community. In 2017-2019, Graham County began collecting data, conducting new surveys, and formally updating the Community Health Assessment for 2019-2023. Community Health Assessments are living documents that should be reviewed and updated regularly.

This 2023-2028 updated CHA was developed with the goal of describing the current state of health among county residents as well as identifying major priority areas and resources for improving health outcomes. This report is an invaluable tool for leveraging data, resources, and partnerships to identify gaps in health services and provide strategic direction for future community health improvement efforts. The CHA follows guidance set forth by the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO), the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), and other community best practices. Where possible, the documents are aligned with activities by Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and other stakeholders. Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center performs a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)¹⁸ every three years to fulfill federal regulatory¹⁹ requirements. GCHD and Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center worked collaboratively to support one another's CHA process.

Community Health Assessment Approach

Graham County utilized the NACCHO Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) framework²⁰. MAPP is a community-driven strategic planning process for improving community health that is generally facilitated by public health leaders. This framework is designed to help communities collect local health data and information, apply strategic thinking to prioritize local public health issues, and identify resources to address these priorities.

Over the years, MAPP has evolved to align with national strategies, integrate the CDC's Local Public Health System Assessment, and reinforce national initiatives such as the 10 Essential

¹⁷ Standards & Measures. Public Health Advancement Performance. https://www.phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/PHABSM_WEB_LR1.pdf

¹⁸ Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment. <https://www.mtgraham.org/community-health-needs-assessment.aspx>

¹⁹ Community Health Needs Assessment for Charitable Hospital Organizations. <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/community-health-needs-assessment-for-charitable-hospital-organizations-section-501r3>

²⁰ NACCHO MAPP Framework <https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/performance-improvement/community-health-assessment/mapp>



Public Health Services. In 2022, MAPP 2.0 was released to be more adaptable, facilitate sustained partner engagement, and to further embed health equity and community participation in the process.

The previous MAPP 1.0 framework involved six phases and four assessments, whereas the updated MAPP 2.0 framework outlines a new process for stakeholder and community involvement that now includes three phases and three assessments. The table below compares these frameworks.

A Comparison of the MAPP 1.0 Framework to the MAPP 2.0 Framework	
MAPP 1.0	MAPP 2.0
Phase 1: Organize for Success Phase 2: Visioning	Phase 1: Build the Community Health Improvement (CHI) Foundation
Phase 3: Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Health Status • Local Public Health System • Community Strengths and Themes • Forces of Change 	Phase 2: Tell the Community Story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Status • Community Partners • Community Context
Phase 4: Identify Strategic Issues Phase 5: Develop Goals & Strategies Phase 6: The Action Cycle	Phase 3: Continuously Improve the Community

The MAPP framework can be modified to meet the needs of the community, and GCHD did use and modify some of the assessments.



Community Health Assessment Methodology

The Community Health Assessment uses both primary data (or original data collected for the purposes of this report) and secondary data (or existing data generated by other reputable sources), and both qualitative data (which is descriptive and helps to understand perceptions) and quantitative data (which can be counted or measured using numerical values). Using this comprehensive approach to inform the Community Health Assessment, the report shows a wide ranging picture of the community, health status and needs, and partners.

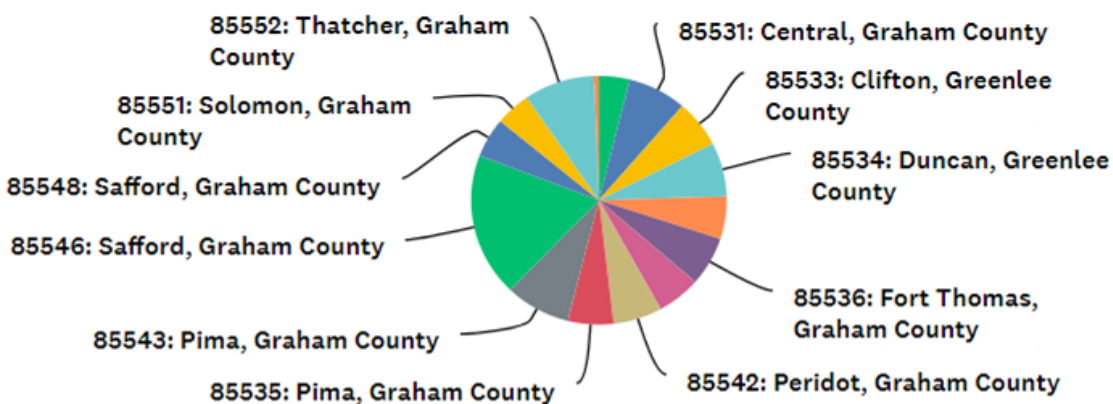
Community Health Assessment Survey

A comprehensive “Community Health Assessment” survey was conducted between July 15-September 30, 2022. The survey development and administration were a joint effort between the Graham County Health Department, Greenlee County Health Department, and the Mount Graham Regional Medical Center (MGRMC).

The survey was promoted through a robust marketing campaign using health department and MGRMC websites and social media, email distribution lists, paper mailers, flyers, and partner communications (e.g., promoted by Community Network Team Meeting with nonprofits to share on their social media accounts). Participants were entered to win one of ten \$50 Wal-Mart gift cards as an incentive.

The survey was open to all members of the community and was provided in both English and Spanish languages, and electronically through SurveyMonkey and in hard copy. Paper copies of the survey were offered at multiple community events, food pantry distribution sites (St Vincent de Paul, Our Neighbor’s Farm and Pantry, Thatcher TEFAP Distribution), back to school fairs, the health department buildings and clinics, Graham County Senior Center, and at Mt Graham Regional Medical Center.

A total of 2,892 total responses were collected, with 2,258 responses from Graham County residents (3 times as many responses as the last CHA/CHIP cycle) and 525 responses from Greenlee County residents (16 times as many responses as the last CHA/CHIP cycle). Data was collected in a manner that allowed analysis by zip code and demographics.





Survey results were kept anonymous and are included throughout this CHA. Full results are on record at the Graham County Health Department.

Data Collection and Analysis

These survey results primarily inform the Community Status and Community Context assessments.

In addition to the survey, additional working sessions were conducted with the Gila Valley Food Coalition, the Graham County Mental Health Action Committee, and other community-based organizations, partners, and stakeholders. This primary data will help inform the Community Partners and Community Context assessments.

Secondary data was accessed from Arizona Department of Health Services, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings, the U.S. Census, and other sources that are noted throughout the document.

Results of these data collection and analysis efforts informed the “significant results,” which will serve as the proposed priority areas for community health improvement. Graham County Health Department will host meetings with the CHA/CHIP Teams and Community Partners to build consensus around the key priority areas in the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan. This process will document where improvement is most needed and can feasibly be addressed, identifying where work is already being done and where to focus future efforts.

CHA Maintenance and Update

The Public Health Accreditation Board Standards & Measures Version 2.0 recommends that the Community Health Assessment is formally updated at least every 5 years. Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center is currently required to update their Community Health Needs Assessment every 3 years. Graham County Health Department will review the document on an annual basis and update further as needed and/or funding allows.

Graham County Health Department will inform partners and the public of the document and make accessible for the sharing of information. This document will be used as a standard for collecting and maintaining reliable, comparable, and valid data on conditions of public health importance and on the health status of the population.



C. MAINTAINING COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT FOUNDATION

Graham County Health Department, in collaboration with local partners, organizations, and community members, has demonstrated a strong commitment to community health improvement. Since 2020, GCHD has supported the Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition, facilitated and led the Gila Valley Food Coalition and launched the Graham County Mental Health Action Committee to address the findings of the 2020-2023 CHA and CHIP.

Over the last three years, GCHD has applied for and won grants that have increased staffing and programming for mental health, food security, and community health workers. Community health improvement has been a driving force over the past few years, and as we enter our next CHA/CHIP cycle, is posed to have even greater funding, staff, and resources. The following foundation and path forward were developed in collaboration with our Community Partners.

Our Community Health Improvement Vision is:

A fair, safe, and inclusive environment where all individuals of all ages and backgrounds have equitable information, opportunity, and support to attain their best health.

A trusted, comprehensive, and connected health system that is culturally and linguistically appropriate, has appropriate investments in funding, and whole community participation to meet the needs of our diverse residents.

Our Community Health Improvement Guiding Principles include:

- Ensure all community members have access to the public health and healthcare system.
- Reflect lived experience when creating programs or identifying resources.
- Support culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health and health care.
- Increase trust in providers and systems.
- Reduce stigma in seeking needed care.
- Increase empathy for community members experiencing different circumstances.
- Help individuals to change mindsets and break cycles.
- Broaden focus to health and wellness in different environments, including home, school, and recreational settings.
- Involve community leaders in community health improvement so they are educated on current, evidence-based issues and needs of their constituents.
- Continued communication and collaboration to prevent duplication of efforts.

The following sections of this report “Tell the Community Story” through three comprehensive assessments:

- Community Status
- Community Partners
- Community Context



D. KEY FINDINGS

After reviewing the wide range of primary and secondary data collected for this CHA, multiple themes emerged.

Access to health care was reported by survey respondents as “the most important aspect of a health community.” This point was reinforced throughout data collection and survey responses as respondents indicated lack of health care, transportation barriers, and shortage of providers as hurdles to quality care. This informs our first priority area of **access to clinical care**.

Survey respondents identified the following top health problems in the community:

1. Substance use
2. Mental health
3. Aging problems
4. Cancers
5. Child abuse and neglect

Other areas of concern for survey respondents were domestic violence, diabetes, COVID-19 and high blood pressure. Behavioral health encompasses mental health and substance use disorders, life stressors and crises, and stress-related physical symptoms. A focus on mental health and substance use was apparent throughout secondary data and the community survey. Addressing **behavioral health** is the second priority area.

This trend is reinforced by what respondents identified as the “most risky” behaviors in the community which are:

1. Drug use
2. Alcohol use
3. Being overweight
4. Poor eating habits
5. Lack of exercise

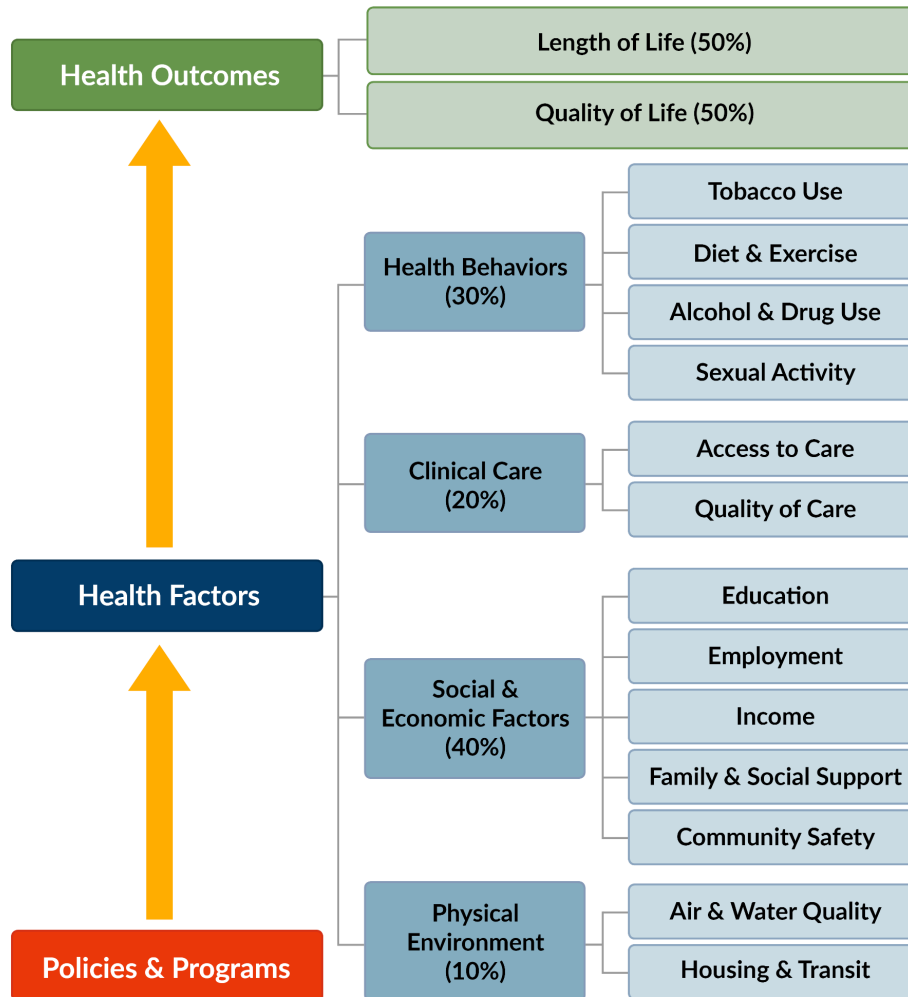
These responses in addition to high rates of chronic disease inform our final priority area, **healthy living**. This priority area includes wide ranging components including food security, nutrition, physical activity, and the interaction of social determinants of health on the outcomes of our community members.

The following sections review the comprehensive data, survey results, and other trends to support these priority areas and will culminate with next steps for community health improvement.



COMMUNITY STATUS

The MAPP Framework includes a Community Status Assessment, which collects quantitative data on the status of the community such as demographics, health status, and health inequities. This assessment captures the health, socioeconomic, environmental, and quality-of-life outcomes, and explores data about populations experiencing inequities and describes complex issues impact our community.



County Health Rankings model © 2014 UWPHI



A. HEALTH OUTCOMES

The Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics 2020 Annual Report²¹ listed the leading causes of death for all ages in Graham County:

1. Cardiovascular disease
2. Diseases of the heart
3. Malignant neoplasms (cancerous tumors)
4. COVID-19
5. Coronary heart disease
6. Accident (unintentional injury)
7. Diabetes
8. Chronic lower respiratory diseases
9. Alzheimer's disease
10. Cerebrovascular disease



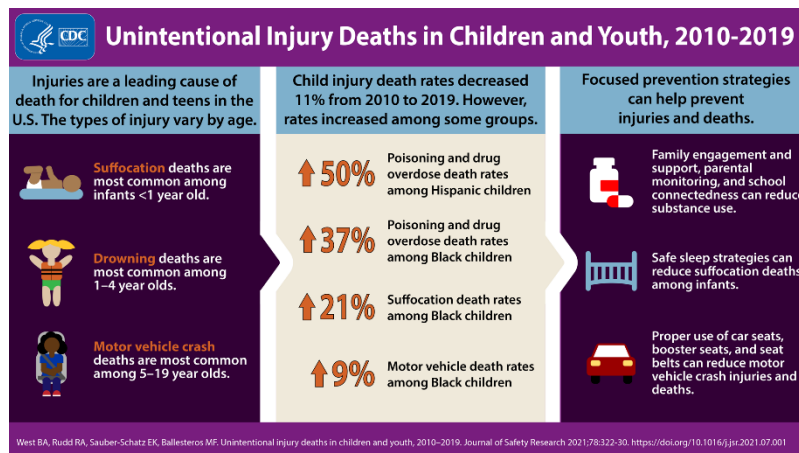
These findings are consistent with the top three leading causes of death in Arizona in 2020: heart disease, cancer, and COVID-19.

Based on Emergency Room visits in 2020, the leading diagnosis for Graham County residents was:

1. Abdominal pain
2. Acute upper respiratory infection, excluding pharyngitis
3. Chest pain
4. Superficial injuries
5. Mental disorders

Of the 2020 Emergency Room visits for unintentional injuries for Graham County residents, the top mechanisms of injury included:

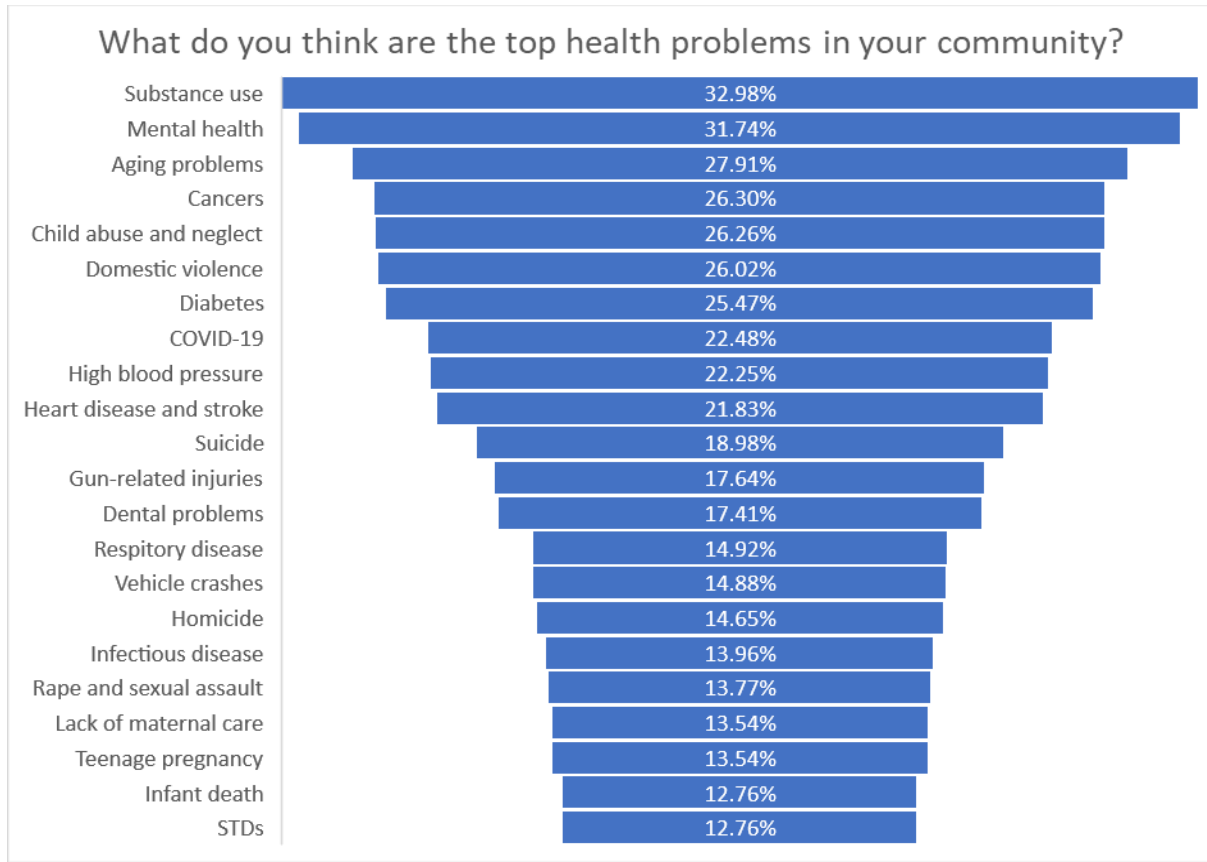
1. Falls
2. Natural and Environmental Factors
3. Transport Accidents
4. Overexertion
5. Struck against or struck accidentally by objects or person



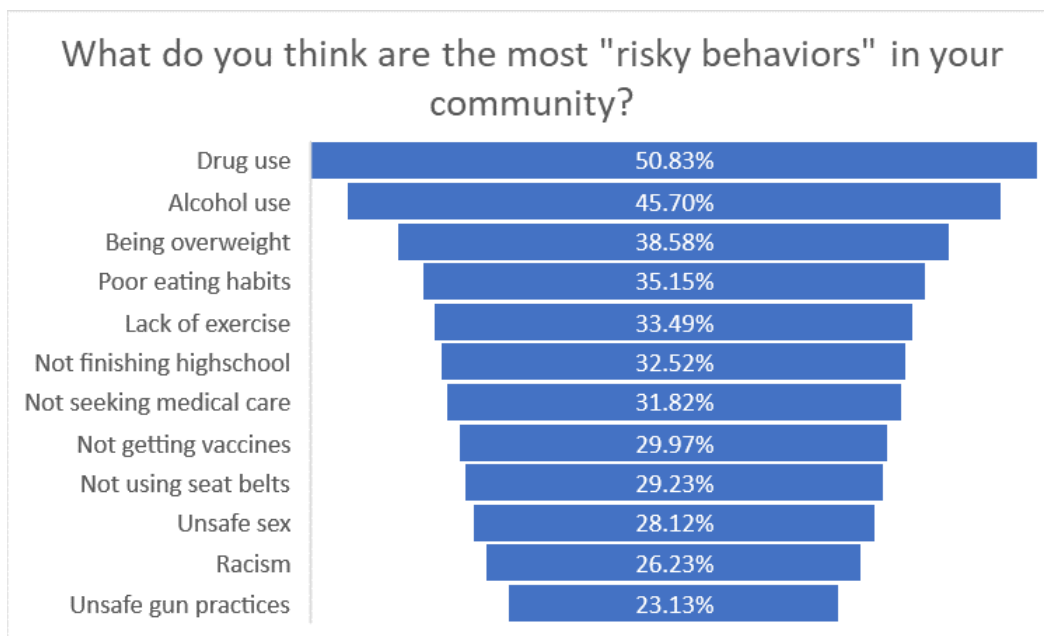
²¹ Population Health and Vital Statistics. AZDHS. [ADHS | Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics 2019 Annual Report \(azdhs.gov\)](https://www.azdhs.gov/arizona-health-status-and-vital-statistics-2019-annual-report/)



Based on the CHA survey, respondents identified the top health problems as follows:



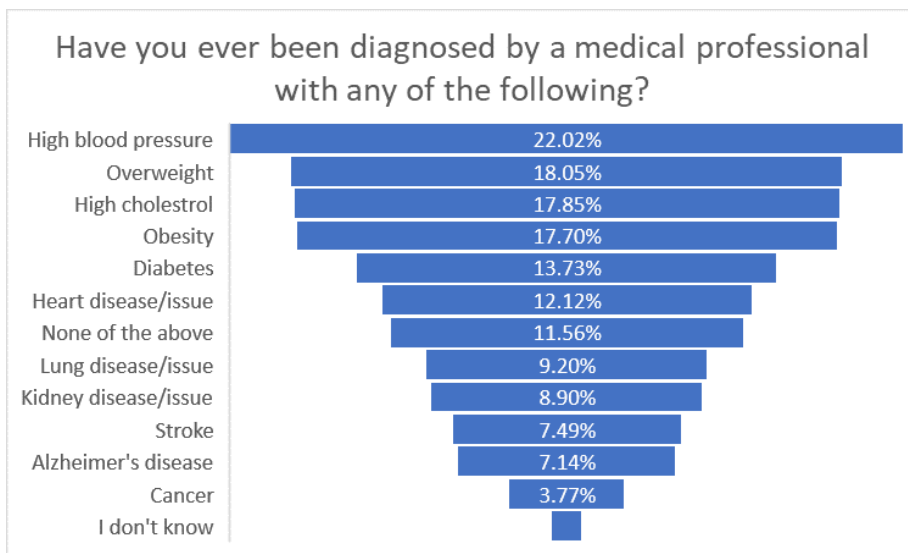
Survey respondents also reported what they perceived to be the most “risky behaviors” in the community:





Chronic Disease

Having a chronic disease is the leading cause of death in the United States.²² Examples of behaviors that can increase rates of chronic disease are use of tobacco, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, poor sleep habits, and excessive alcohol use. Lifestyle habits, such as shift work can lead to cardiovascular disease, as well as induce other unhealthy behaviors.²³ In the US, chronic disease accounts for \$4.1 trillion in health care costs.²⁴ Over 80% of Graham County residents indicated they have been diagnosed with at least one preventable chronic disease, and 11% of respondents reported they developed a chronic disease as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest reported chronic diseases were high blood pressure (22%), overweight (18%), and high cholesterol (17%). Graham County has the highest mortality rate related to diabetes in the state.²⁵



Rural communities are at higher risk of chronic disease, and typically have less resources for treatment and prevention.²⁶ Compared to urban areas, rural communities like Graham County have less access to care, less access to healthy food, and higher rates of unhealthy behaviors.²⁷ Residents of Graham County have expressed the need for more resources to combat chronic disease. Hispanic/Latino, Black, and Indigenous populations are at a higher risk of chronic disease due to systemic inequity. Among CHA respondents, those who identified as Hispanic/Latino reported higher rates of high blood pressure (35%), obesity (33%), high cholesterol (24%), and diabetes (23%). Among Indigenous respondents, there were reported higher rates of high blood pressure (47%), obesity (37%), high cholesterol (31%), and heart disease (22%).

²² Rural Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/rural-health.htm>

²³ Shift work and long hours associated with chronic health conditions: A systematic review of systematic reviews with meta-analyses. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7117719/>

²⁴ About Chronic Diseases. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm>

²⁵ Arizona EPHT Explorer. <https://gis.azdhs.gov/ephtexplorer/>

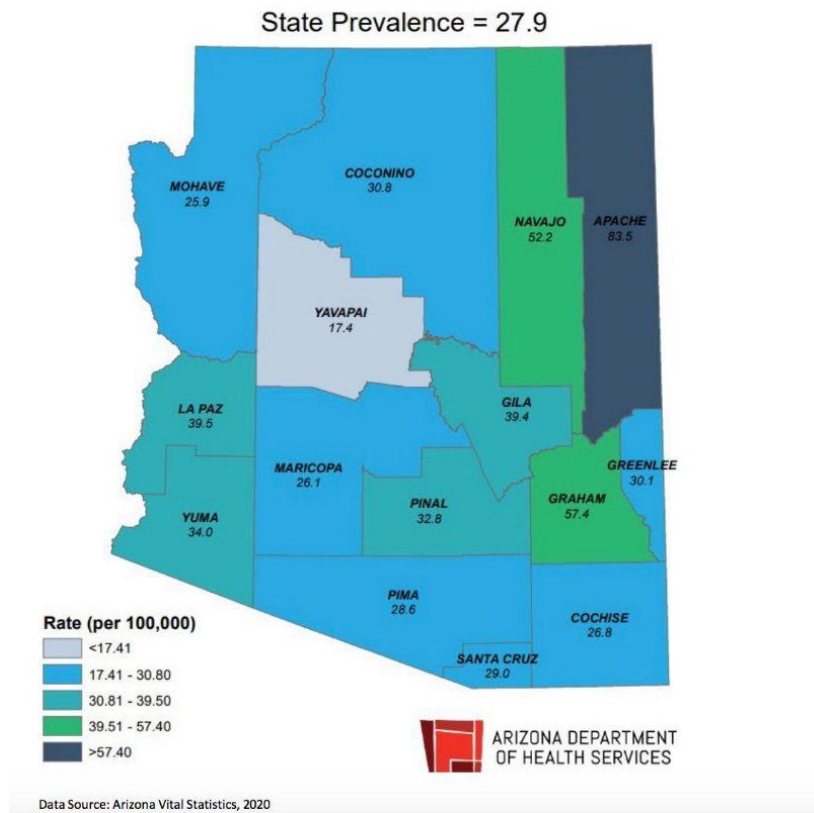
²⁶ Chronic Disease in America. Center for Rural Health. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/chronic-disease>

²⁷ Rural Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/rural-health.htm>



Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Diabetes Prevalence	11%	10%	9%	County Rankings
Cancer incidence rate per 1,000	367.7	385.7	457.7	US News and World Report
Heart disease prevalence	6.1%	5.5%	6.1%	US News and World Report

Figure 14. Mortality rates (per 100,000 persons) for diabetes, by county, 2020



There are a few local resources addressing chronic disease in the Gila Valley. Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center offers monthly Diabetes Support Group and Diabetes Education Classes. University of Arizona Extension Office offers Diabetes-friendly cooking classes. SEAHEC Community Health Workers visit local food pantries once a month to help pantry guests better understand and manage chronic disease.



Heat Related Illness

Arizona is one of the hottest places on earth from May to September. Heat-related illnesses are common during the summer. Year after year, nearly 3,000 people visit Arizona emergency rooms because of heat-related illnesses. Between 2020 and 2021, rates of Emergency Department Visits and Inpatient Admittance have declined by almost 50% in Graham County.²⁸

Mental health

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.²⁹ Mental health conditions refer to a wide range of disorders that affect our thinking, feeling, behavior, or mood. These conditions can affect our day-to-day living and over time, one's ability to function.³⁰ There is not one single thing that can impact mental health, but rather it is linked to multiple factors such as genetics, environment, lifestyle, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), feelings of loneliness or isolation, and experiences of chronic conditions, such as diabetes or cancer.³¹ Mental health conditions are common, and nearly 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental health condition at one point in their lifetime. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health conditions were exacerbated due to many factors, such as but not limited to, increased isolation, financial uncertainties, and disrupted routines.

Mental health conditions are treatable, but in rural counties, it can be difficult to find proper health care. Mental healthcare needs are not always able to be met because of high costs of services, and stigma of needing or receiving services, and limited number of professionals. According to University of Arizona Center for Rural Health,³² in Graham County, there are approximately 6.5 mental health professionals per 10,000 people which includes:

- 0.3 behavior analysts per 10,000 people
- 2.9 counselors per 10,000 people
- 0.3 marriage and family therapists per 10,000 people
- 0.5 psychologists per 10,000 people
- 1.6 social workers per 10,000 people
- 1 substance abuse counselor per 10,000 people

This is lower than the state average of 660 providers for every 1 resident, and the U.S. average of 355 for every 1 resident.³³

²⁸ Heat Related Illness Emergency Department Inpatient Admissions. <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/extreme-weather/pubs/heat-related-illness-emergency-department-and-inpatient-admissions-in-arizona-by-year.pdf>

²⁹ About Mental Health. CDC.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm#:~:text=Mental%20health%20includes%20our%20emotional,childhood%20and%20adolescence%20through%20adulthood>

³⁰ Mental Health Conditions. NAMI. <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions>

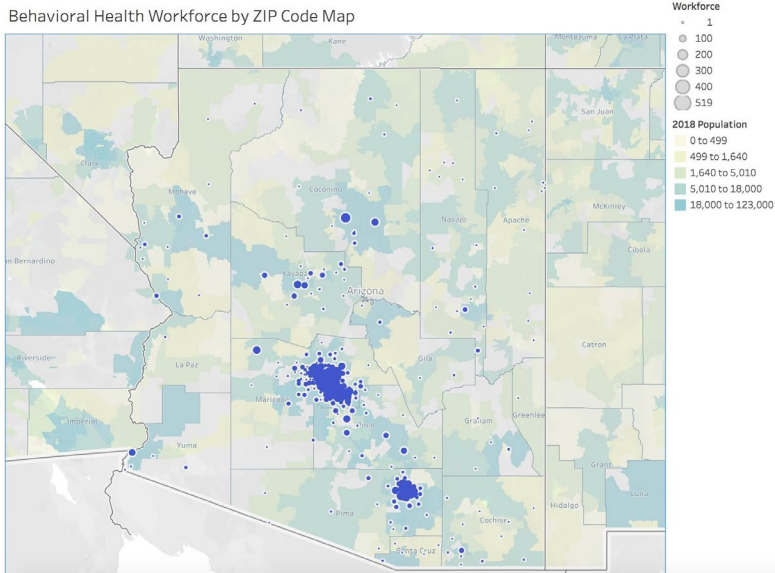
³¹ About Mental Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>

³² Arizona Health Workforce Profile Report. Center for Rural Health. <https://crh.arizona.edu/arizona-health-workforce-profile-report>

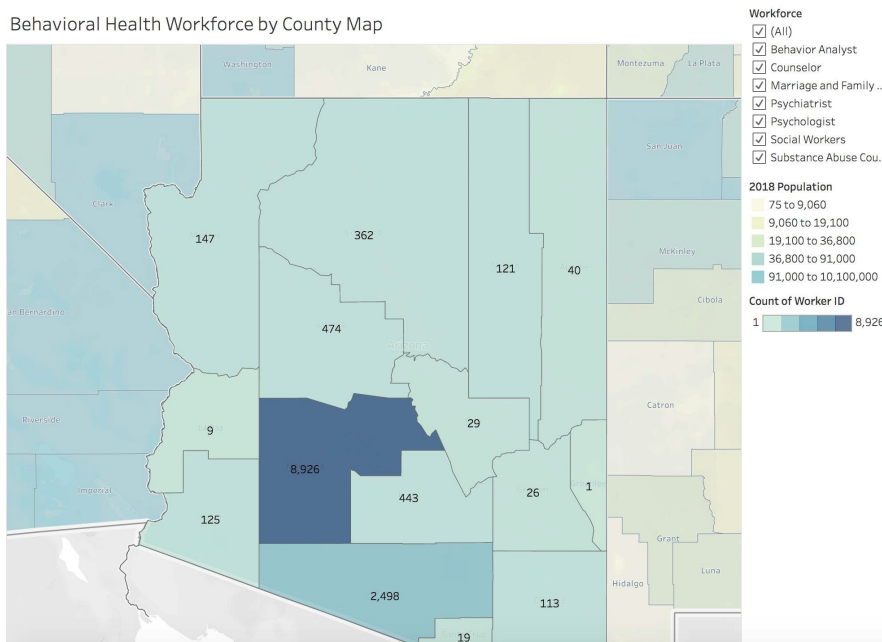
³³ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>



Behavioral Health Workforce by ZIP Code Map



Behavioral Health Workforce by County Map



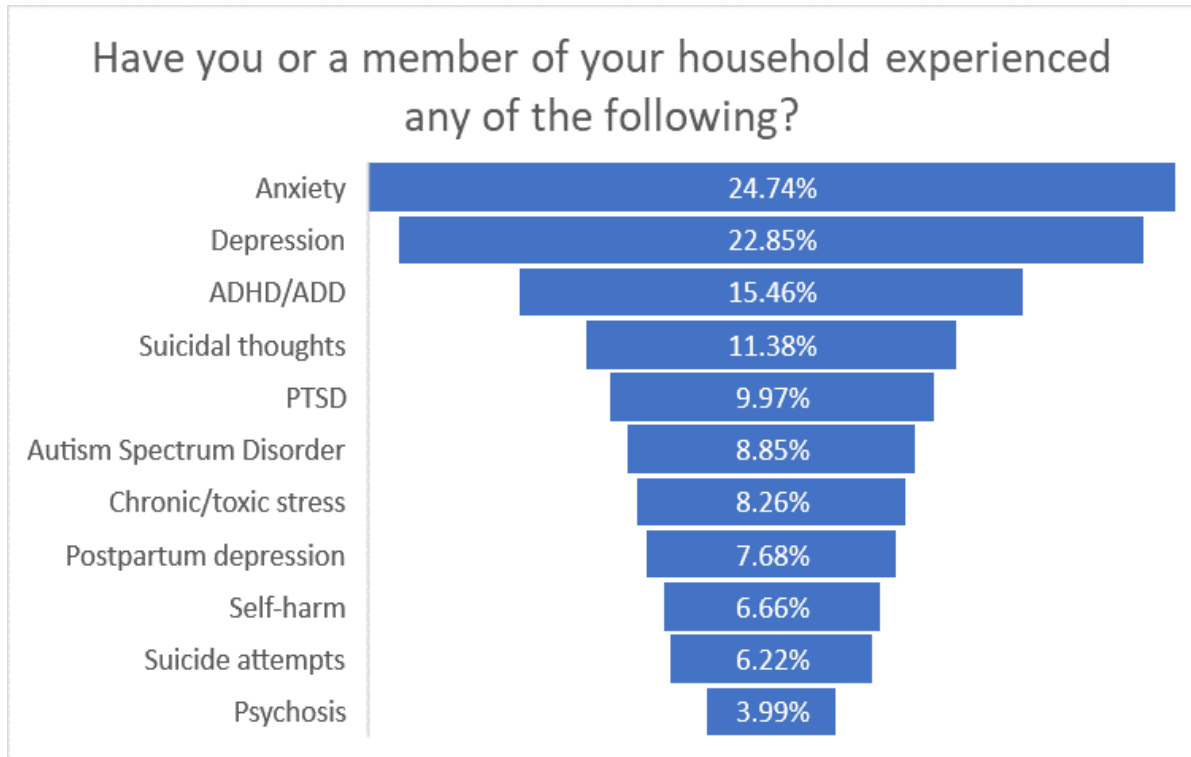
Rural areas, such as Graham County, are more likely to face serious mental health conditions compared to urban populations.³⁴ Survey respondents repeatedly commented on the need for more mental health services, reducing mental health stigma, affordability of services, and the need for an in-patient facility.

Mental health has repeatedly been identified as a priority area for Graham County Health Improvement Initiatives and is reinforced again by the current CHA. Respondents indicated mental health as the second most concerning health problem in the community, behind

³⁴ Rural Mental Health. Rural Information Hub. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/mental-health>



substance addiction and overdose. A large number of respondents indicated that they themselves have struggled with a mental health condition, the most common being anxiety at 25%, followed by depression at 23%.

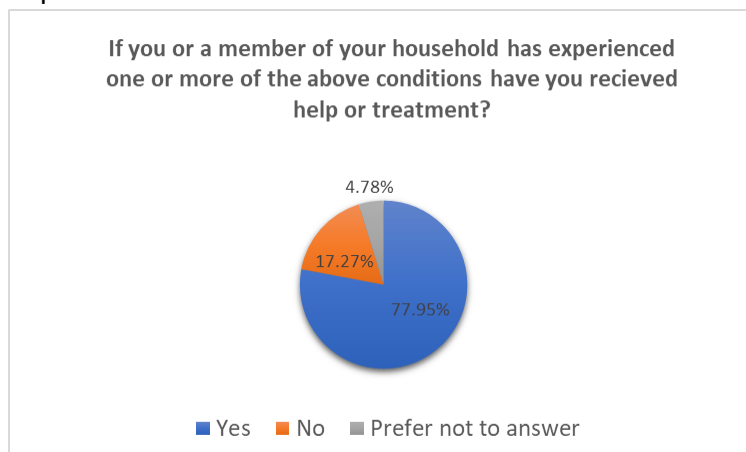




For those that were able to seek treatment for their mental health condition, respondents reported using the following resources:

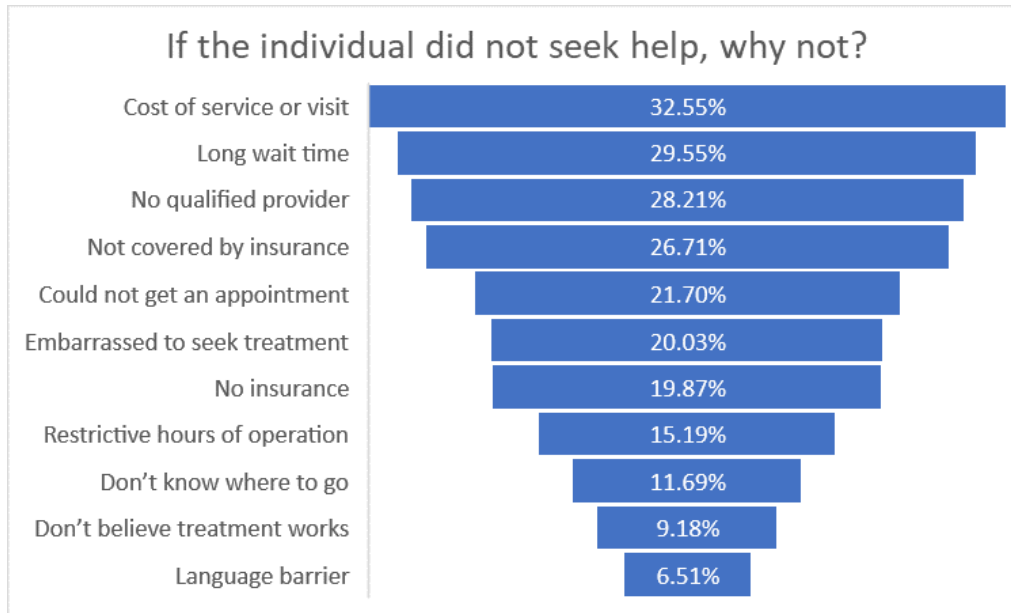
	IN COUNTY	OUT OF COUNTY	VIRTUAL/ONLINE	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Primary Care/Family Doctor	73.30% 431	29.93% 176	6.46% 38	588
Community Health Center	54.19% 194	44.69% 160	10.06% 36	358
Employee Assistance Program	47.34% 160	39.64% 134	18.34% 62	338
Peer Support Specialist	42.39% 142	39.70% 133	21.79% 73	335
Emergency Room	56.76% 214	38.99% 147	10.08% 38	377
Condition-Specific Support Group	37.50% 129	44.48% 153	22.38% 77	344
Trusted Friend/Family member	56.46% 249	37.19% 164	14.51% 64	441
Clergy/Faith-based organization	52.49% 200	30.97% 118	21.26% 81	381
Crisis Line	40.00% 128	44.69% 143	21.56% 69	320
Therapist/Counselor/Psychologist	54.90% 252	36.17% 166	20.26% 93	459
Psychiatrist (MD)	38.25% 140	46.17% 169	22.95% 84	366
In-patient treatment center	40.35% 140	46.40% 161	16.43% 57	347
School counselor or administrator	52.00% 169	36.31% 118	16.62% 54	325
911	38.64% 114	42.03% 124	23.73% 70	295

Unfortunately, not all residents have the ability to receive treatment for mental health. While a majority of residents have received treatment for mental health (77%), 17% of respondents have not received help or treatment and 4% chose not to answer.





There are many reasons why an individual may not seek help. The top concern for survey respondents was the cost of service or visit. This can be complicated by unclear insurance policies that may or may not cover certain mental health services.



Another barrier to care can be the stigma associated with seeking treatment. Mental health stigma can be common for various reasons. Among CHA respondents, 9% of residents did not believe mental health therapy worked, and 20% were embarrassed to seek treatment. In some religious communities, mental health can be viewed as a test to lean on God and trust in the healing process.³⁵ Despite this, strong religious beliefs can also be a source of strength for help in the healing journey of those who are struggling with mental health conditions.

In addition to religious stigma, there may also be cultural stigma associated with seeking treatment. Mental health in many families is still considered a “taboo”. It is not a topic that is generally discussed. Many people do not seek treatment, due to fear of being negatively labeled or seen as weak, broken, or being less than. Stigma can lead to misinformation, misconceptions about mental health and impede individuals from seeking treatment.

Unique challenges for mental health services were encountered during the pandemic when virtual doctor appointments/mental health counseling increased in popularity. However, this is not always a viable solution, especially in rural communities, as there may be limited access to high speed internet, with only 79% of Graham County residents having broadband access,³⁶ limited access to proper technology, and other barriers to care.

A concern among respondents was the criminalization of mental health. Due to limited numbers of mental health services, oftentimes law enforcement is called during mental health

³⁵ You Can Find Peace Amid Mental Health Trials. Latter Day Saints Insights. <https://latterdaysaintinsights.byu.edu/en/you-can-find-peace-amid-mental-health-trials/>

³⁶ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>



crises. Respondents suggested increased mental health support for first responders and educational advancement for law enforcement working with residents in mental health crises. Due to lack of services, police are called during times of mental health crises. Oftentimes, individuals are taken to ER or the crisis line is called. Dispatch of the crisis team can take up to an hour and law enforcement has to wait with the individual.

Furthermore, large disparities exist between groups when it comes to mental health. Those that identify as part of the LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex+) community are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health conditions. Those that identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are twice as likely to experience mental health conditions, and those that identify as transgender are four times as likely to experience mental health conditions. Graham County respondents who identified as transgender reported higher rates of anxiety, about 40%, and 35% experiencing depression. No insurance and high costs of services were the two main reported reasons respondents did not receive mental health services.³⁷

While non-White people experience similar rates of mental health conditions compared to White people, individuals in the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community historically experience greater difficulty in accessing mental care, in finding providers of similar race or ethnicity, and in confronting stigma. Those that identify as Hispanic/Latino reported higher rates of mental health conditions compared to non-Hispanic/Latino respondents. 54% reported themselves or a family member experiencing anxiety, 52% experiencing depression, 32% with ADHD/ADD, and 23% with suicidal thoughts. Respondents that identified as American Indian/Native American reported high rates of mental health conditions as well, over half reporting experiencing ADHD/ADD, 33% experiencing depression, and 24% experiencing post traumatic stress disorder.³⁸³⁹

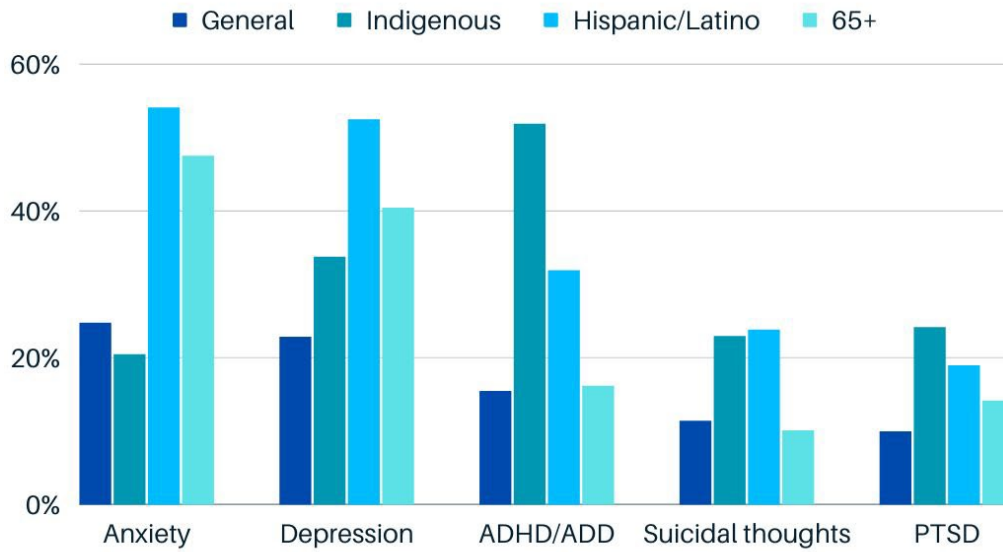
Age also plays a role in likelihood of experiencing a mental health condition. Respondents that were 65+ reported higher rates of mental health conditions compared to the general population. Throughout the lifetime, different events can impact mental health, such as feelings of grief, social isolation, or loneliness. Overtime, these feelings can turn into mental health conditions.⁴⁰ 47% of respondents in this age group reported experiencing anxiety and 40% experiencing depression. 43% indicated more education and awareness would support their mental health, 40% said more counselors, and 37% indicated help paying for counseling/therapy services. Those 65+ reported the need for grief counseling, group counseling sessions, and support for caregivers.

³⁷ LGBTQIA+. NAMI. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/LGBTQI>

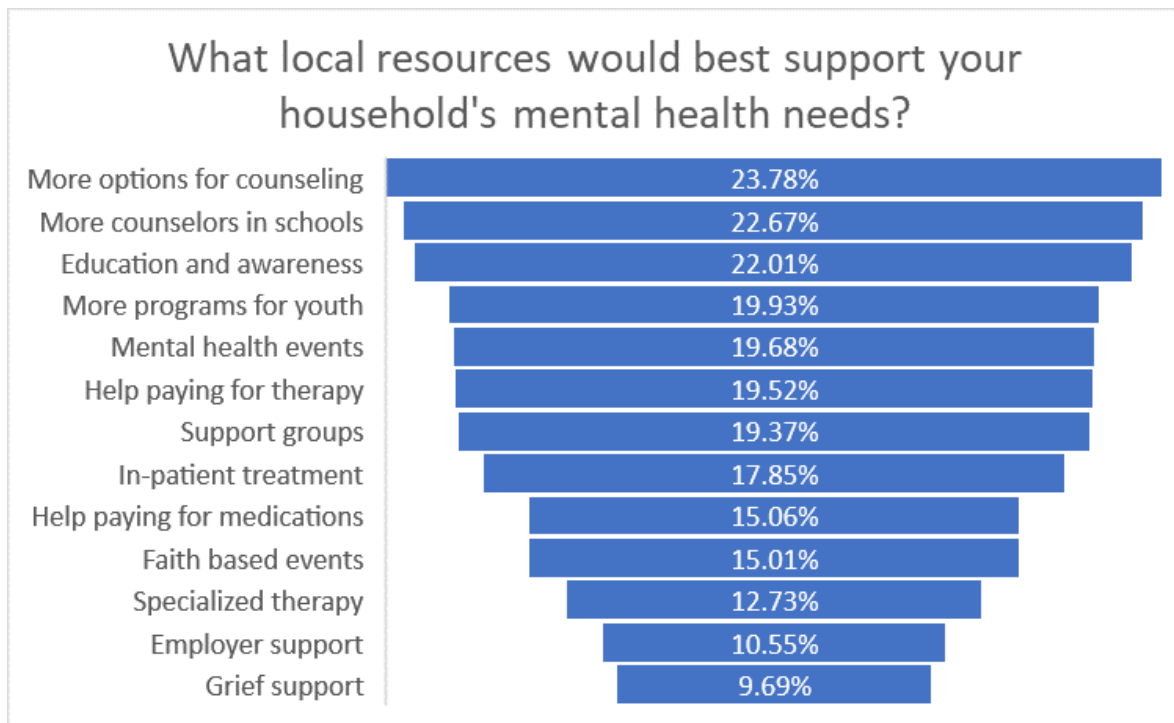
³⁸ Indigenous. NAMI. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/Indigenous>

³⁹ Hispanic/Latinx. NAMI. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/Hispanic-Latinx>

⁴⁰ Older Adults and Mental Health. National Institute of Mental Health.
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/older-adults-and-mental-health>



When asked about solutions to supporting to mental health in Graham County, respondents reported the following:





Substance Use Disorders (SUD)

A “substance” is anything that can alter a person’s mood or cognition. The National Institute on Drug Abuse lists drugs of abuse ranging from alcohol, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, opioids, over-the-counter medications, prescription medicines, and tobacco/nicotine and vaping. A full list with details can be found here: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse>.

Consequences of use may involve problems at work, school, home, interpersonal relationships, problems with the law, health problems, and physical risks that come with using drugs in dangerous situations.⁴¹ Substance misuse and abuse is viewed as a major public health problem to the residents of Graham County.

Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Excessive drinking	19%	17%	19%	County Rankings
Driving deaths with alcohol involvement	33%	22%	27%	County Rankings
Adult smoking	19%	14%	16%	County Rankings
Drug overdose death per 100,000	26	28	23	County Rankings

Graham County has a statistically high rate of driving deaths involving alcohol when compared with the state average. It is clear that addressing substance use is a top priority of community members. When asked what are the top “health problems” in your community, respondents selected the number one health problem as substance addiction and overdose (32.98%), and the most “risky behaviors” in the community among respondents was

1. Drug abuse and misuse (50.83%)
2. Alcohol abuse and misuse (45.7%)

⁴¹ Substance Use. Medline Plus.
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001945.htm#:~:text=Substance%20use%20is%20the%20continued,Health%20problems>



Survey participants were asked about their own and alcohol use with the question “Have you or a member of your household experienced any of the following related to drugs (including prescription, legal, and illegal drugs) or alcohol? Check all that apply.”

Experience	With Drugs	With Alcohol	Total Respondents
Misuse/Abuse	40.4% (647)	65.4% (1049)	1603
Addiction	35.3% (548)	69.8% (1086)	1557
Overdose	31.7% (469)	70.5% (1044)	1482
Injury/Accident	30.0% (439)	72.1% (1054)	1462
Illness	33.3% (486)	68.9% (1006)	1459
Death	32.7% (468)	69.7% (999)	1433
Incarceration (jail)	34.1% (505)	69.4% (1027)	1479
None of the Above	47.3% (823)	74.2% (1290)	1739

Opioids

Opioid use has increased across the state of Arizona, averaging about 5 overdose related deaths per day.⁴² It is estimated, in 2017, opioid use cost the Arizona economy \$53 Billion.⁴³ Statewide, there are efforts to reduce drug use. Drug use can lead to problems such as dependence and addiction, injury and accidents, poor health problems, and sleep issues.

Graham County addresses the opioid public health crisis through a collaborative approach.

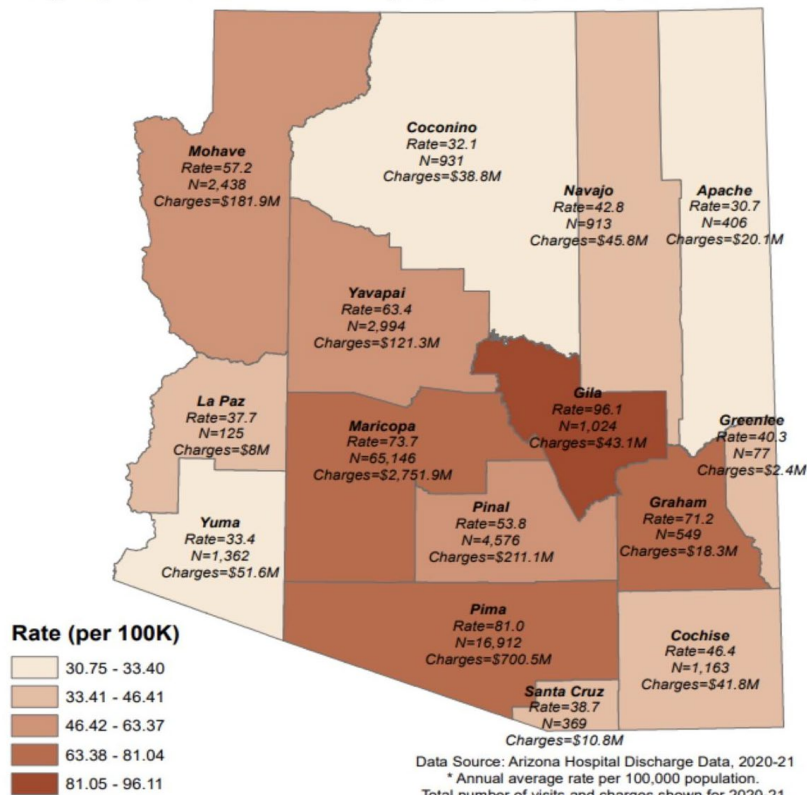
- The Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition (GCSAC) is a local nonprofit that works with different sectors of people in the community with the goal to “create a safe, healthy and drug free community.” More information can be found here: <https://gcsac.com/>
- GCSAC also oversees the House of Hope, a 17-bed sober living facility, opened in April 2021 to help those coming out of rehab for substance abuse transition back into the community, and to provide a meeting space for those in recovery programs.
- The Graham County “Drug Court” and “Detention Substance Abuse Treatment” helps individuals facing substance abuse problems with recovery help.⁴⁴
- In 2022-2023, GCSAC partnered with food pantries and trained staff and volunteers how to properly use Narcan as a vital component of opioid overdose prevention. GCSAC is the county distributor of Narcan and educates to discourage drug use.⁴⁵ Narcan is a nasal spray that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose.

⁴² Opioid Prevention. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/opioid/>

⁴³ Fentanyl, Crime, and Arizona’s Southern Border. Common Sense Institute. https://commonsenseinstituteaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CSI_AZ_FENTANYL_AUG2022_FINAL-1.pdf

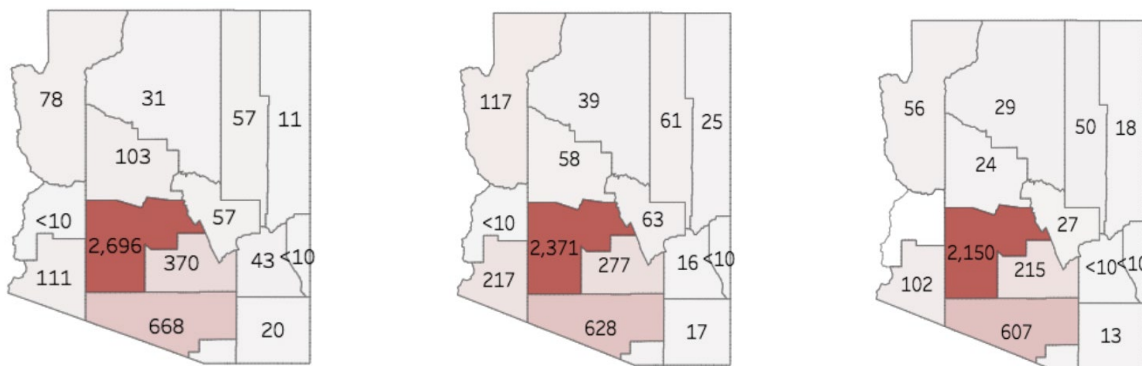
⁴⁴ Programs. Graham County Government. <https://www.graham.az.gov/386/Programs>

⁴⁵ Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition. <https://gcsac.com/>



Data Source: Hospital Discharge Data. Notes: Total charges abbreviated as millions of dollars (e.g., "\$500.0 M" is equal to \$500,000,000); County reflects person place of residence.

Rate (per 100,000 population), Number of Opioid-Related Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits and Charges (\$Million), Arizona, 2020-2021⁴⁶



Opioid Overdoses in 2020, 2021, and 2022⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Opioid Overdoses Surveillance Report, Arizona, 2020-20201. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/opioid/documents/opioid-surveillance-report-2020-2021.pdf>

⁴⁷ Verified Non-fatal Reported Overdoses. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/opioid/#dashboards-nonfatal-overdoses>



Drinking

Binge drinking is classified as 4 or more drinks for women and 5 or more drinks for men on a single occasion, and heavy drinking is classified as 8 or more drinks for women in a week, and 15 or more drinks for men.⁴⁸ Excessive drinking can cause violence, injuries, motor vehicle crashes, chronic conditions, and other health problems. According to American Addiction Centers, the occupations with the highest rates of heavy drinking are those in the mining industry (17.5%), Construction (16.5%), and Accommodation and food service industry (11.8%).⁴⁹ Excessive alcohol use is estimated to cost the US workforce \$250 Billion per year due to lost productivity, absenteeism, turnover, healthcare expenses, disability, and workers compensation.⁵⁰

Graham County, Arizona reports above average rates of excessive alcohol use compared to the state of Arizona. 19% of Graham County residents reported binge or heavy drinking, compared to the state average of 17%.⁵¹ Additionally, 33% of motor vehicle deaths in Graham County are a result from alcohol use, compared to the Arizona average of 22%, and the national average of 27%.

Vaping

Use of electronic cigarettes, or vaping, has increased in popularity in the United States, especially among teenagers. Many e-cigarettes come in kid-friendly flavors, such as mango, mint, and bubblegum, and contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development.⁵² In a statewide survey conducted by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, 16.9% of Graham County students between 10th and 12th grade reported e-cigarette use at least once in their lifetime.⁵³ While the long term effects of vaping are still unknown, adolescent use of e-cigarettes can lead to a cycle of nicotine dependence and other health challenges.

⁴⁸ What is Excessive Alcohol Use? CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/onlinemedialinfographics/excessive-alcohol-use.html#:~:text=For%20men%2C%20binge%20drinking%20is,drinks%20or%20more%20per%20week>

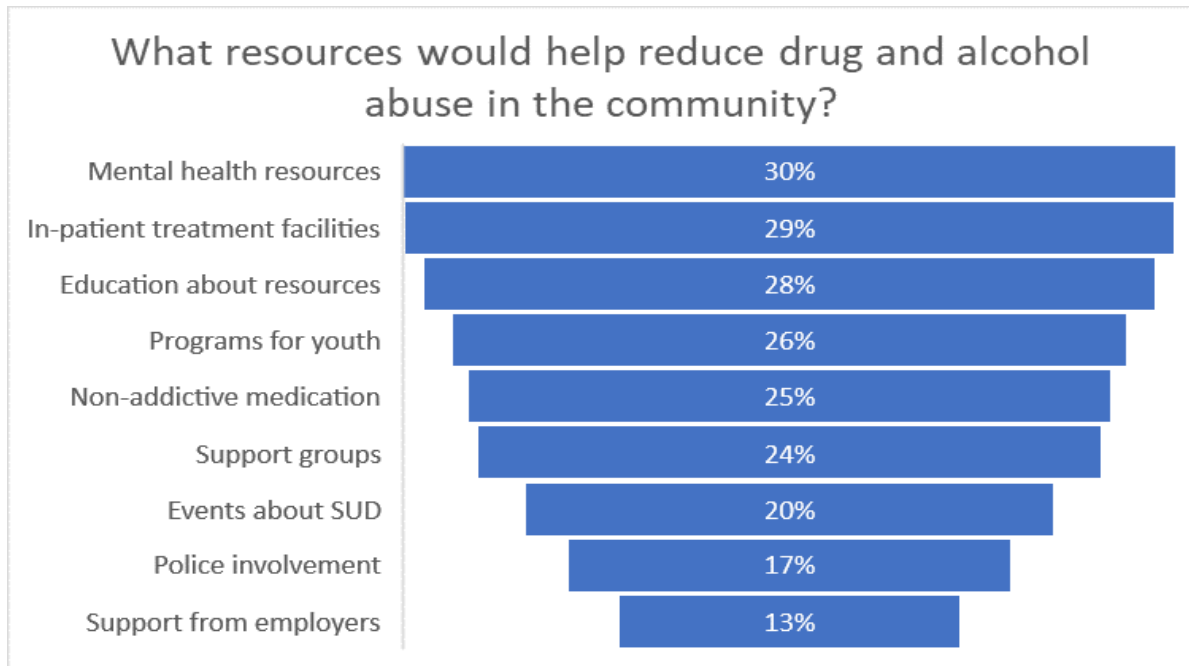
⁴⁹ Occupations Associated with Substance Abuse. American Addition Centers. <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/occupational-stress-influences>

⁵⁰ Excessive Drinking in Arizona. America's Health Rankings. <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/ExcessDrink/state/AZ>

⁵¹ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>

⁵² Tobacco, Vapes, and E-Cigarettes. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/tobacco-chronic-disease/tobacco-vape-e-cigarettes/index.php#vape-e-cig-use>

⁵³ Arizona Youth Survey Graham County. Arizona Criminal Justice Commission. https://www.azcjc.gov/Portals/0/Documents/pubs/AYSReports/2022/2022_AYS_Graham_Report.pdf



For both mental health and SUD issues, respondents of the survey cited more mental health resources as the top solution to reducing these problems in our community.

Many CHA respondents expressed they do not feel comfortable using the addiction services that are available in the Gila Valley because of the connection to churches. Additionally, with limited substance abuse counselors in Graham County, it can be a stigmatizing experience to receive help. Despite county wide efforts, Arizona and Graham County still face drug misuse issues and should continue to develop and implement effective strategies.



B. QUALITY OF LIFE

Graham County has a 77.5 year life expectancy at birth.⁵⁴ This puts Graham County in the top 5 for lowest life expectancy among Arizona counties. By comparison, neighboring Pinal County has a life expectancy nearly 6 years higher at 82 years old. In another measure, Graham County has an average of 8,800 years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population. This is more potential life lost in Graham County than the Arizona and United States average which is 7,700 years and 7,300 years respectively.⁵⁵ Additionally, the percent of adults reporting fair or poor health is 23% in Graham County which again, is higher than the state and national averages of 18% and 17% respectively.

Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population	8,800	7,700	7,300	County Rankings
Poor or fair physical health days	18%	15%	12%	County Rankings
Low birthweight	8%	7%	8%	County Rankings
Life expectancy	77.0	79.0	78.5	County Rankings
Deaths of resident under 18 per 100,000 population	70	50	50	County Rankings

Nutrition and the Food System

Food access can be a substantial challenge in rural areas like Graham County. 56% of Graham County residents have low access to healthy food as indicated by living more than 10 miles from the nearest supermarket.⁵⁶ Among survey respondents, 15% answered that they travel more than 20 miles for fresh fruits and vegetables and 21% answered that they travel 10-20 miles for fresh fruits and vegetables. Generally, grocery stores that stock fresh fruits and vegetables are located in the incorporated cities of Thatcher and Safford. Accessing fresh fruits

⁵⁴ Life Expectancy at Birth. Rural Information Hub. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/data-explorer?id=195&state=AZ>

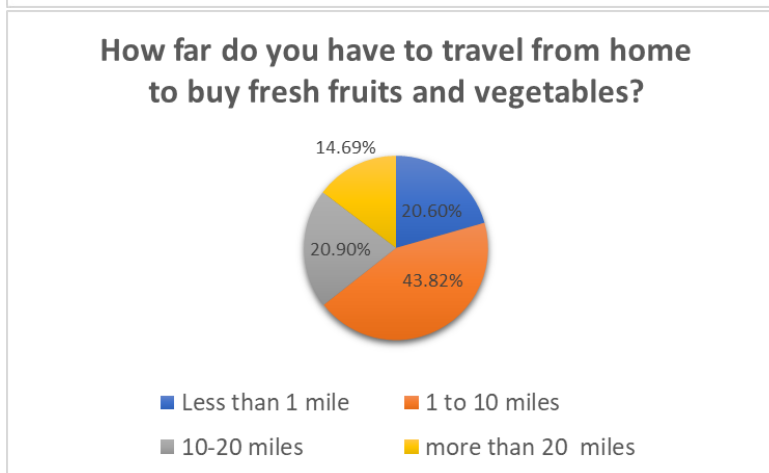
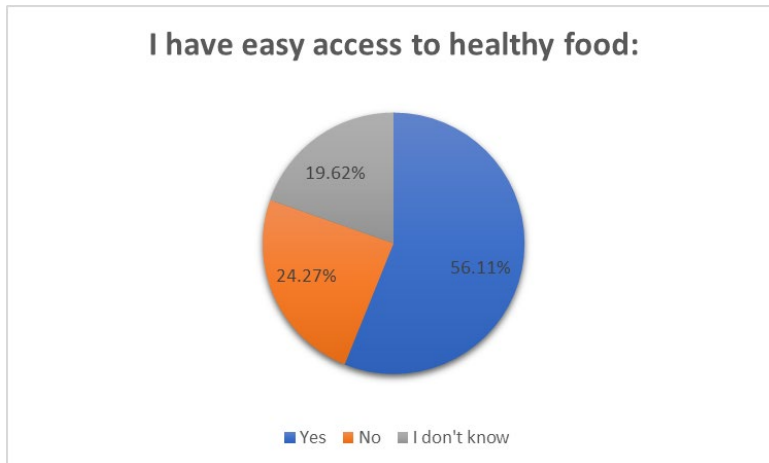
⁵⁵ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>

⁵⁶ Low Access to Healthy Food. Rural Health Information Hub. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/data-explorer?id=214&state=AZ>



and vegetables outside of these areas can be difficult for rural residents, especially residents without access to reliable transportation.

Another metric for the local food system is the food environment index which combines a number of factors that contribute to a healthy food environment on a scale from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). On this measure Graham County ranks 6.4 which is comparable to the state average of 6.5. Nationally the average for this index is higher at 7.8.⁵⁷



Fresh fruits and vegetables are vital to a healthy diet. The CDC recommends that adults consume 1.5-2 cups of fruit daily and 2-3 cups of vegetables.⁵⁸ Just over half of residents purchase fresh fruits and vegetables weekly with a large minority of residents purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables 1-2 times per month or never. Fresh fruits and vegetables can often be the most expensive items in the grocery store making frequent purchases of these items out of reach for families on a budget. A recent review of literature found that foods with lower nutritional value and low quality diets cost less than healthier alternatives making them more

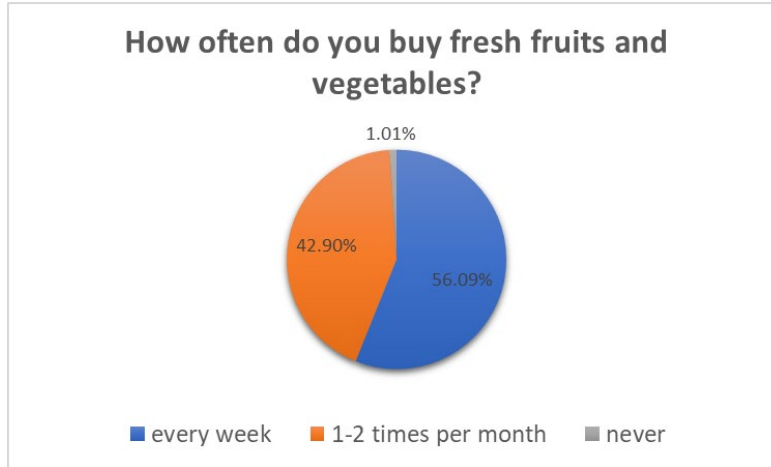
⁵⁷ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>

⁵⁸ Adults Meeting Fruit and Vegetable Intake Recommendations. CDC.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7101a1.htm#:~:text=Adults%20should%20consume%201.5%E2%80%932,cup%2Dequivalents%20of%20vegetables%20daily.>



feasible for families with lower incomes resulting in a socioeconomic disparity between families that can afford to eat healthy and families who cannot. Furthermore, families living below poverty have budgets that are insufficient for meeting optimum dietary recommendations.



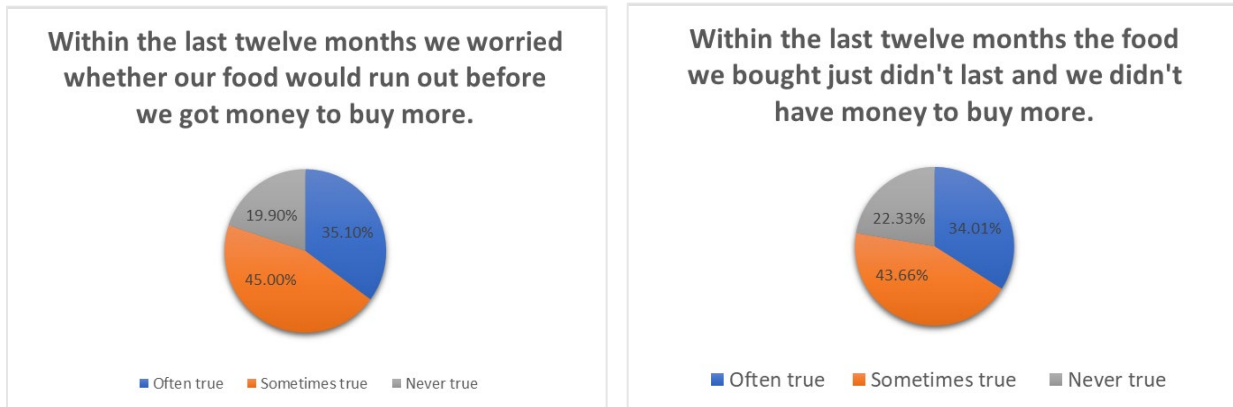
Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Population that is low income and do not live close to a grocery store	16%	9%	6%	County Rankings
Food environment index	6.4	6.4	7.0	County Rankings
Population without access to a large grocery store	39.6%	26.8%	21.7%	US News and World Report
Food insecurity				Feeding America

The community survey included two questions that comprise the validated Hunger Sign tool that screens families at risk for food insecurity. The questions are:

1. Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more
2. Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more

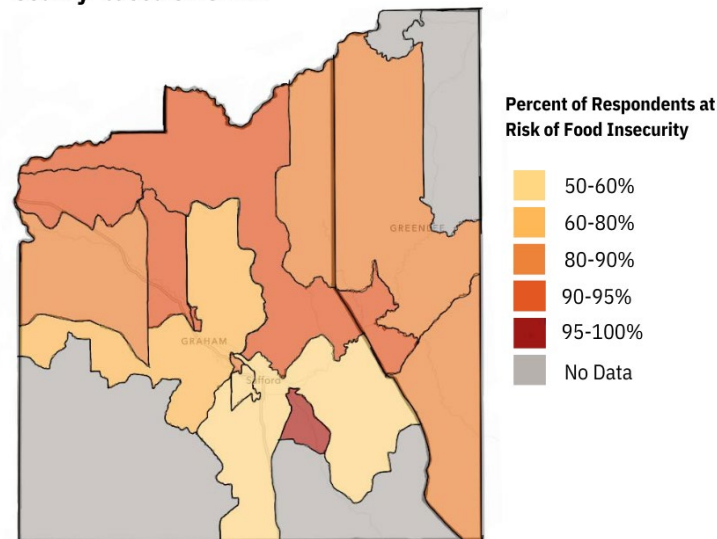


Respondents can indicate these statements are “sometimes true” “often true” or “never true”. A response of “sometimes true” or “often true” to either question indicates that a family is *at risk* for food insecurity.⁵⁹ Based on this measure, a shocking 80% of residents are at risk for food insecurity highlighting how normal it is for Graham County families to be one paycheck away from needing assistance putting food on the table.



Even within Graham County risk for food insecurity varies by zip code with the highest risk for food insecurity in the Solomon area and the least risk of food insecurity in Thatcher and Safford.

Risk of Food Insecurity in Graham and Greenlee County based on CHNA



Data from 211 Counts reinforces that residents in Graham County need support accessing healthy food. 10% of calls made to 211 between May 1, 2022-May 1, 2023 were for food assistance, including help purchasing food, food pantries, and where to get home delivered meals.

⁵⁹ Hunger Vital Sign. Children’s Health Watch. <https://childrenshealthwatch.org/public-policy/hunger-vital-sign/>

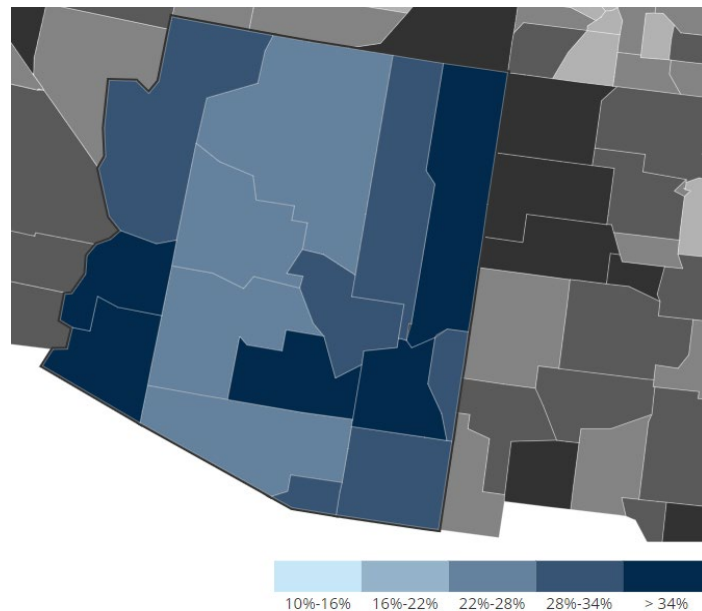


Many wonderful organizations are working to combat food insecurity in Graham County including Our Neighbor’s Farm and Pantry, Eastern Arizona College’s Monster Exchange and St. Vincent de Paul. These organizations host food distributions for families and students in need. More information can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/gilavalleyfoodcoalition/>

Obesity and Physical Activity

According to the CDC and Rural Health Information Hub, the rate of obesity in Graham County is 34.1%. This puts Graham County in the top 5 Arizona counties for high rates of obesity. High rates of obesity are linked to an increased risk for many serious diseases including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, osteoarthritis, many types of cancer, mental health disorders and body pain.⁶⁰ Obesity is considered a public health crisis due to the multitude of negative effects on population health.⁶¹

Factors that contribute to obesity include nutrition, level of activity, environment, genetics, existing health conditions, stress and poor sleep. Notably, environmental factors like a lack of sidewalks, oversized portions, lack of access to healthy food and predatory marketing of high fat and high sugar foods are large contributors to obesity. This indicates that interventions must occur at both the individual and community level.



Map: Obesity Prevalence ([CDC and RHIHub](#))

Inadequate exercise is a primary contributor to obesity and its negative consequences. 30% of Graham County adults report no physical activity in their leisure time. This is higher than the

⁶⁰ Health Effects of Overweight and Obesity. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/effects/index.html>

⁶¹ Public Health Considerations Regarding Obesity. National Center for Biotechnology Information. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK572122/>



Arizona average of 24% of adults.⁶² This trend is also seen in survey results where only 15% of respondents exercised more than 3 times a week for 20 minutes.



Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Adults with no leisure time activity	30.2%	25.5%	30.0%	US News and World Report
Population with adequate access to locations for physical activity	57%	86%	84%	County Rankings
Poor physical health days	3.9	3.1	3.0	County Rankings
Frequent physical distress	12%	10%	9%	County Rankings
Adult Obesity	33%	32%	32%	County Rankings

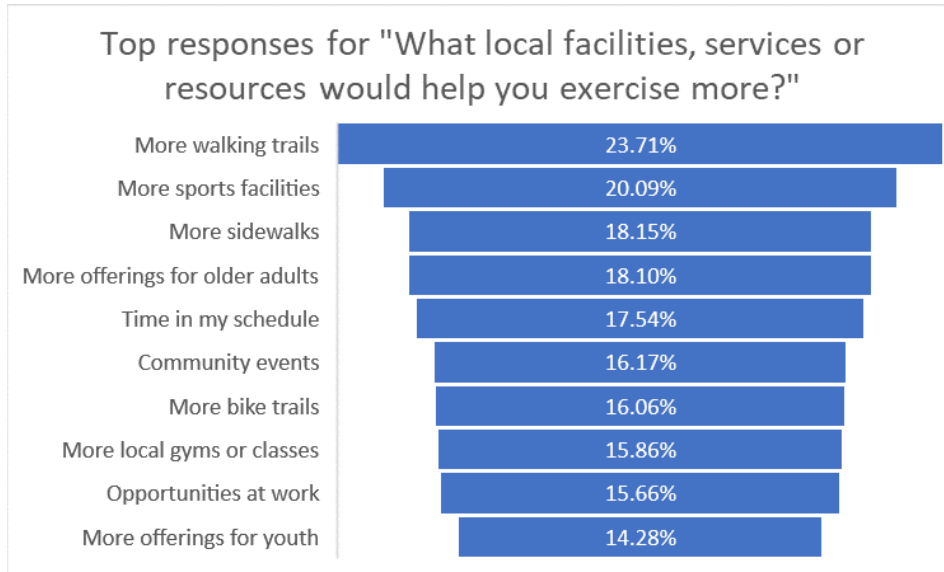
A barrier to physical activity in Graham County is access to exercise opportunities. Only 45% of the Graham County population has adequate access to locations for physical activity. Statewide, 82% of Arizona residents have adequate access to locations for physical activity.

Lack of access to space and facilities for exercise was a prominent theme in the community health survey. 31% of survey respondents felt that they did not have opportunities for recreation.

⁶² Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>



When asked what resources would help residents exercise more, the following responses were received:



Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood that can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance use problems. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood.⁶³ It is estimated 43% of Arizona youth have experienced one or more ACE, higher than the national average of 39.8%.⁶⁴ 11% of Graham respondents reported themselves or a family member experiencing family/partner violence, over 8% experiencing rape/sexual assault, as well as 6% reporting suicide attempts. In Graham County, there are 18 deaths by suicide per 100,000 people.⁶⁵

Social Connectedness

When people or groups have relationships that create a sense of belonging and being cared for, valued, and supported, that's called "social connectedness." When people are socially connected, they are more likely to make healthy choices and better able to cope with stress, trauma, adversity, anxiety, and depression.⁶⁶ Lack of social relationships is detrimental to your health. Many Graham County residents acknowledged the importance of strong family and friend connections and encouraged community members to be involved in local events. Among

⁶³ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces/index.html>

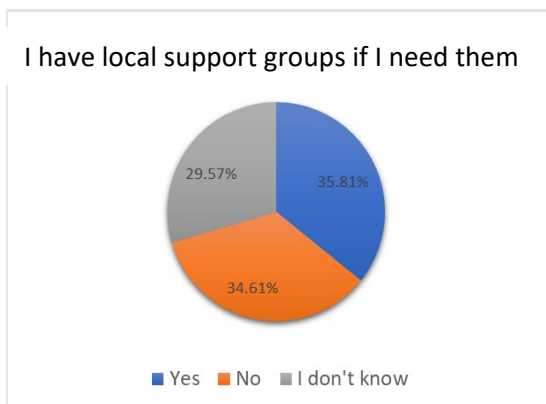
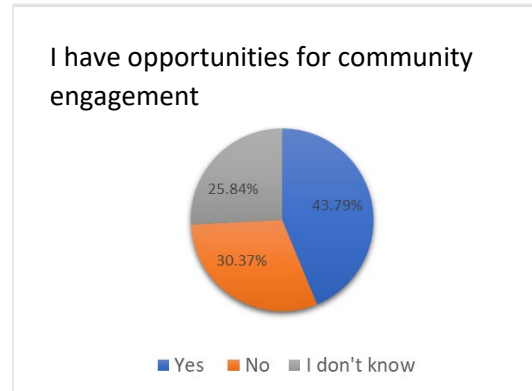
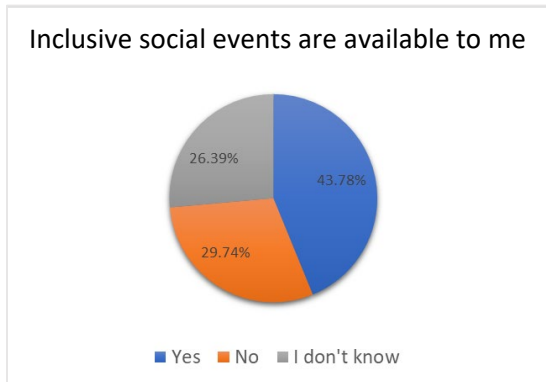
⁶⁴ Adverse Childhood Experiences in Arizona. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/prevention/womens-childrens-health/assessment-evaluation/aces-brief-az-may-2021.pdf>

⁶⁵ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>

⁶⁶ Social Connectedness: NCCDPHP's Program Successes. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/healthequity/sdoh-and-chronic-disease/nccdphp-and-social-determinants-of-health/social-connectedness.htm>



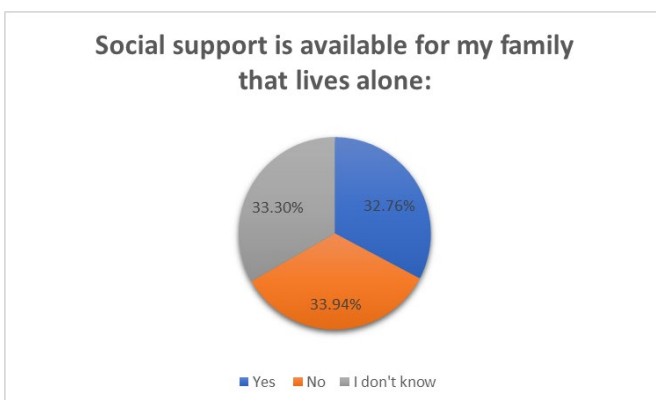
CHA respondents, many acknowledged the need for events that were not religious based, and for more acceptance among LGBTQ populations.



In 2022, Graham County Health Department Mental Health Coordinators started a support group for seniors experiencing grief. They are in the process of expanding support groups for different populations.

Many respondents indicated the impact that religion plays on their health, such as providing a sense of social cohesion. 48.1% of 2022 CHA survey respondents reported “yes” that they had faith communities that met their needs, with 29.2% responding “no” and 22.7% “did not know.”

In the Gila Valley, religious communities have strong networks, and work in collaboration to help improve health and wellness. For example, the ministerial association in Graham County works extensively with people experiencing homelessness.



The Graham County Senior Center offers great social opportunities for 55+ adults. Older adults are eligible for congregate meals and group activities such as yoga and board games.



A 2022 report from National Center for Equitable Care for Elders⁶⁷ found that social isolation, or infrequent social interactions with others, and loneliness can cause changes to an older adult’s physical health, mental health, and memory. Other physical health risks include high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and a weakened immune system. The impact of social isolation on older adults’ mental health includes an increased risk of cognitive decline, dementia, and depression. The study reported that social isolation is associated with:

- 29% increased risk of all-cause mortality
- 59% increased risk of functional decline
- 24% increased risk of death

Using life expectancy as an indicator of health, evidence shows that reductions in lifespan related to social isolation and loneliness are roughly the same as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Strengthening Social Connections in Older Adults. National Center for Equitable Care for Elders. https://ece.hsdm.harvard.edu/files/ece/files/strengthening_social_connection_in_older_adults.pdf?m=1659037585
Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality. Perspectives on Psychological Science. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614568352>



C. ACCESS TO CLINICAL CARE

“Access to healthcare” was ranked as the most important thing for a healthy community among CHA respondents. Access to health care means having “the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes.”⁶⁹

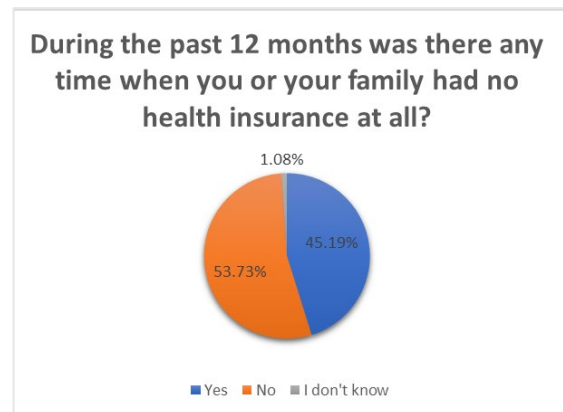
There are four components to access to care:

1. **Coverage:** facilitates entry into the health care system. Uninsured people are less likely to receive medical care and more likely to have poor health status.
2. **Services:** Having a usual source of care is associated with adults receiving recommended screening and prevention services.
3. **Timeliness:** ability to provide health care when the need is recognized.
4. **Workforce:** capable, qualified, culturally competent providers.

Barriers to accessing healthcare can lead to unmet health needs, delays in receiving care, inability to get preventive services, financial burdens, and preventable hospitalizations.⁷⁰

Insurance

Over 1 in 10 Graham County residents do not have health insurance.⁷¹ People without insurance are less likely to have a primary caregiver, and they may not be able to afford the health care services and medications they need. 45% of respondents reported that at some point during the last 12 months, they did not have any insurance. Additionally, 20% of respondents indicated their family was covered by AHCCCS/Medicaid/KidsCare.



Expansion of AHCCCS has increased the number of Arizonans with insurance, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, AHCCCS was automatically renewed for thousands of Arizonans and Graham County residents. Following the end of the COVID emergency, AHCCCS will begin disenrolling members, as well as requiring members to reenroll on a yearly basis.⁷²

Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Uninsured	14%	13%	10%	County Rankings
Uninsured adults	17%	15%	12%	County Rankings
Uninsured children	10%	9%	5%	County Rankings

⁶⁹ Topic: Access to Care. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. <https://www.ahrq.gov/topics/access-care.html>

⁷⁰ Disparities of Access, Use, and Barriers to Seeking Healthcare Services in Arizona. National Center for Biotechnology Information. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35030560/>

⁷¹ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/arizona/graham-county>

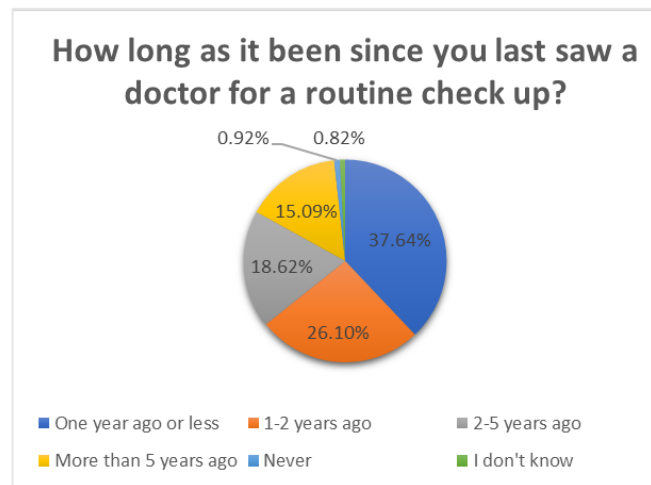
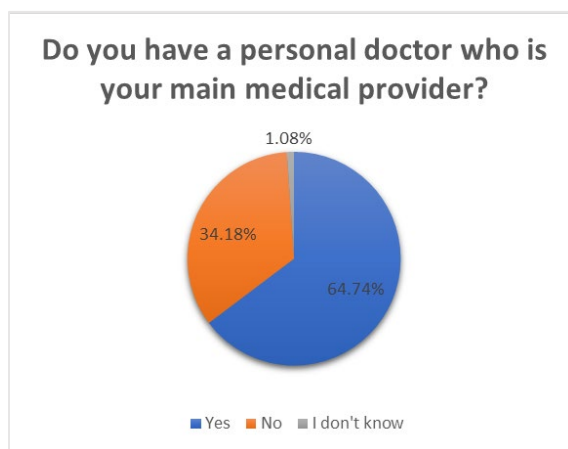
⁷² Preparing for the End of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Return to Regular Renewals. Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System. <https://www.azahcccs.gov/Renewals>



Primary and Preventive Care

Appropriate access to care means that everyone receives the services and supports they need to maintain optimal health and wellbeing throughout their lifetimes.⁷³ Access to preventive health care can prevent both disease and early death. The number of people getting preventive services has increased in recent years, but there are disparities by age and race/ethnicity. Strategies like providing team-based care and reducing copays can help people get recommended preventive care services.⁷⁴

35% of Graham County respondents did not have a main provider for medical needs, and 67% of respondents have not seen a doctor or medical provider for over a year, which is recommended for individuals age 21 and up.



Over 20% of respondents reported they usually visit the hospital when sick. Mt Graham Regional Medical Center also serves as the primary local hospital for other neighboring counties. In 2021, there were 81,873 outpatient visits, as well as 20,919 visits to the Emergency Department. With a limited number of medical professionals and an average of 0.6 hospital beds per 1,000 residents,⁷⁵ patients may wait extensively for timely care.

Canyonlands Healthcare in Safford is a federally qualified health center serving Graham County in primary care, family planning, pediatric, and dental services on a sliding fee scale basis and assistance from state and federal programs. Federally Qualified Health Centers are important safety net providers in rural areas. FQHCs are outpatient clinics that qualify for specific reimbursement systems under Medicare and Medicaid and provide a set of comprehensive, high-quality primary care and preventive services regardless of patients' ability to pay.⁷⁶

⁷³ Topic: Access to Care. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. <https://www.ahrq.gov/topics/access-care.html#:~:text=Topic%3A%20Access%20to%20Care,achieve%20the%20best%20health%20outcomes.%22>

⁷⁴ Increase the proportion of adults who get recommended preventive health care. Healthy People 2030. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality/increase-proportion-adults-who-get-recommended-evidence-based-preventive-health-care-ahs-08>

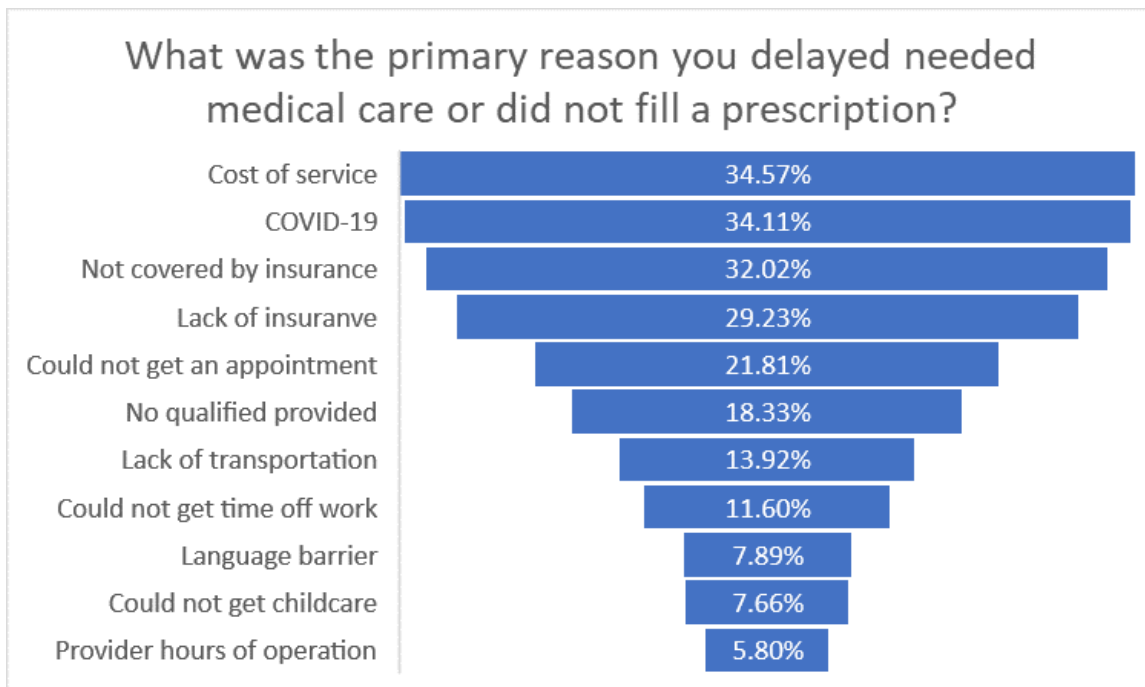
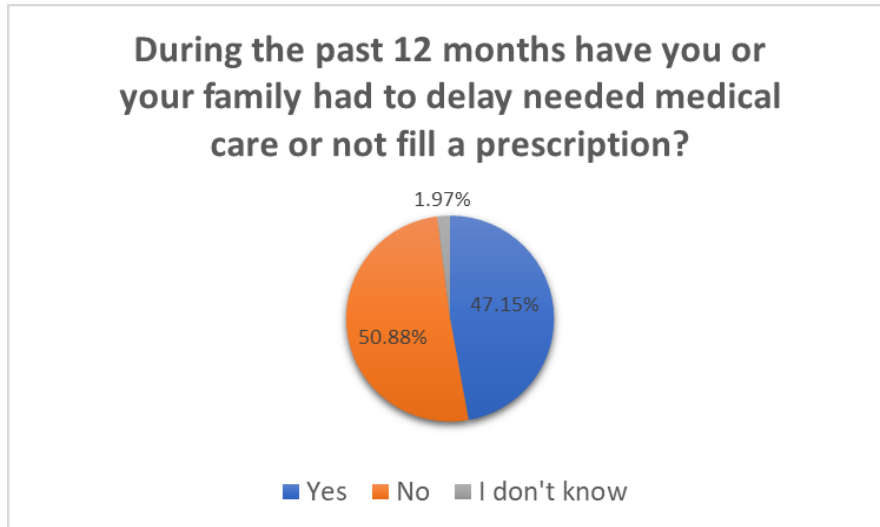
⁷⁵ Graham County, AZ. US News. <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/arizona/graham-county>

⁷⁶ Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and the Health Center Program. Rural Health Information Hub. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/federally-qualified-health-centers>



Barriers to Care

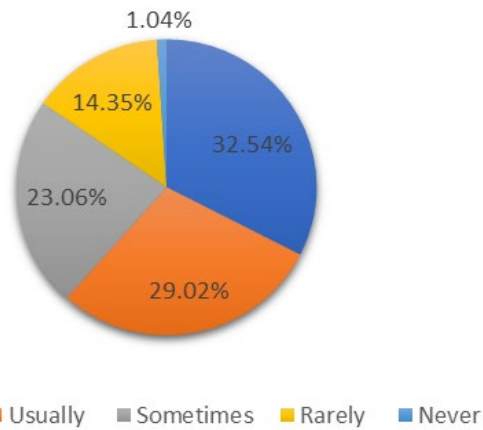
With limited number of healthcare providers and access to these services, many Graham County residents are not getting needed care. Nearly half of survey respondents delayed medical care in the past 12 months. The top reasons for delaying care were cost of service (35%) and COVID-19 (34%). Insurance was also cited as a barrier to care with 32% of respondents delaying care because they had insurance, but the service was not covered and 29% of respondents delayed care because they had no insurance at all.



Cost is a clear barrier to care. Only 32.5% of Graham County respondents indicated on a monthly basis they always “have enough money to pay for health care expenses (such as medical appointments and filling prescriptions).”

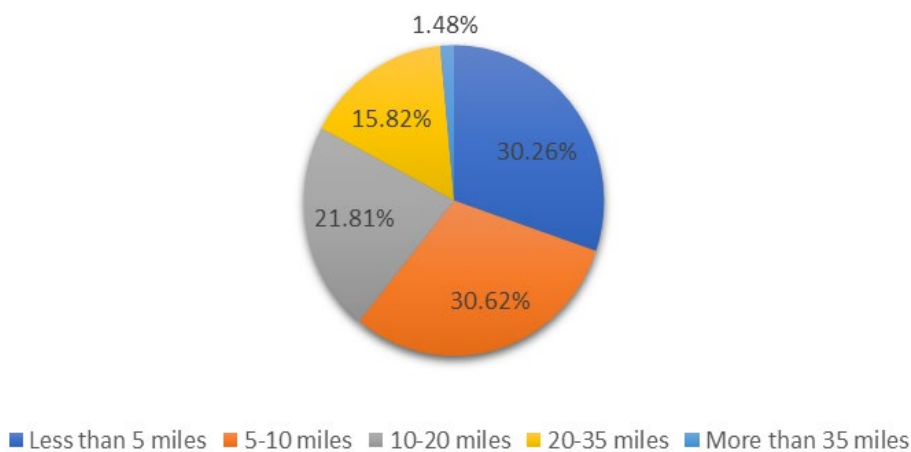


On a monthly basis do you have enough money to pay for health care expenses?

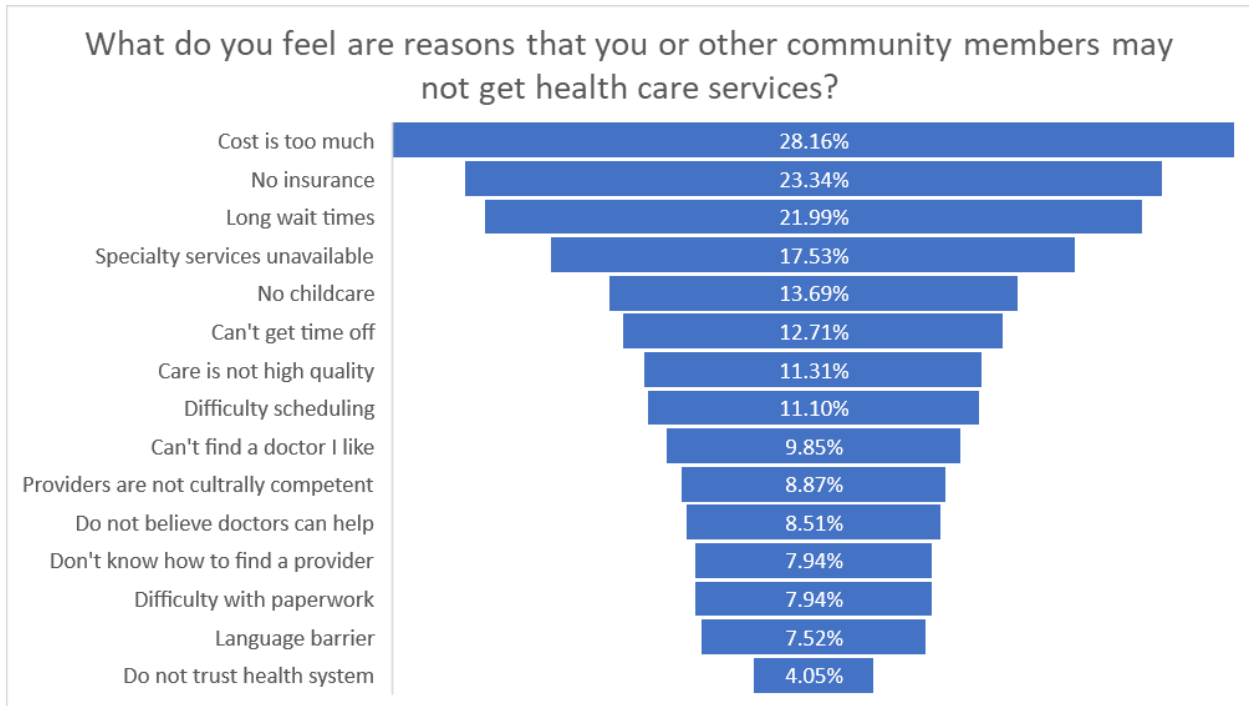


Additionally, transportation poses a challenge to Graham County residents. About 70% of respondents indicated they travel more than 5 miles for routine healthcare needs, and 30% of respondents did not have reliable transportation for medical appointments.

How far one way do you have to travel for routine health care needs?



Along with cost and transportation, other barriers to care may include wait times, lack of appropriate provider, childcare and work commitments, and difficulty scheduling. Cultural barriers such as a lack of culturally competent care, language barriers and skepticism of the traditional health care system may prevent residents from seeking care.



Respondents also indicated a lack of providers that meet their needs and are of high quality.



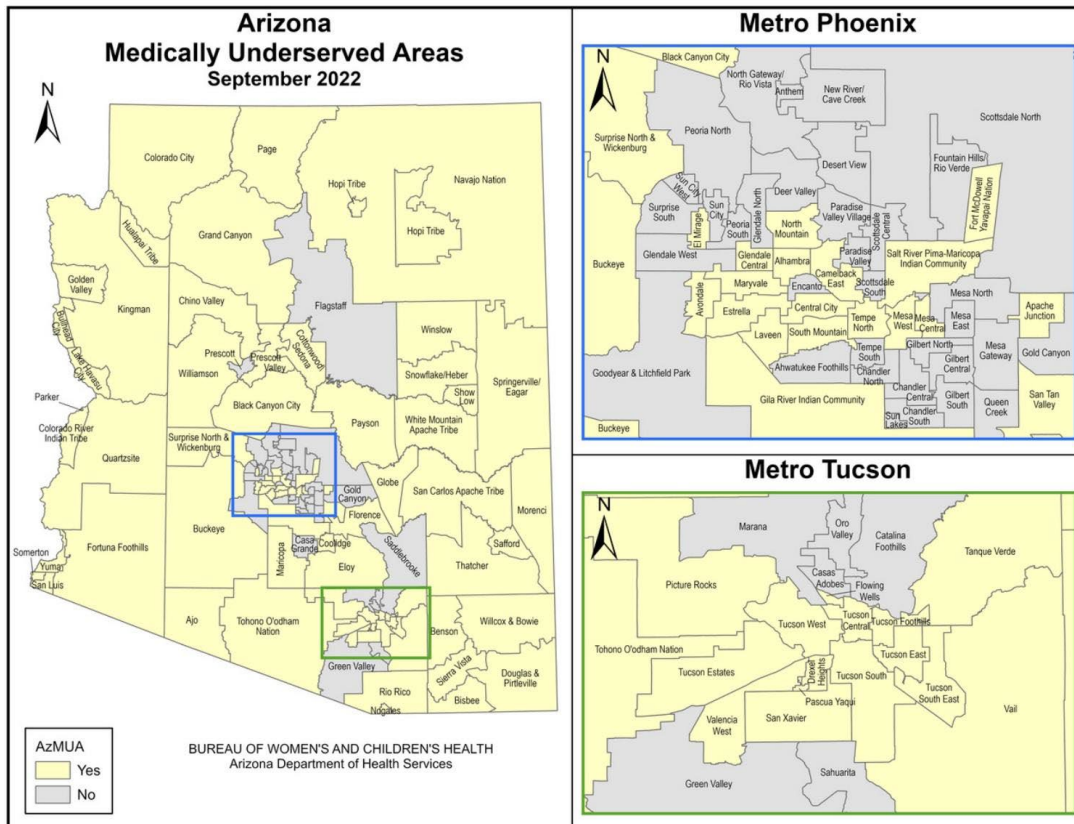
Availability of Health Professionals

Graham County has a talented workforce of healthcare professionals but is still very limited in their capacity. In Graham County, the Center for Rural Health reports there are approximately 12.3 physicians per 10,000 people and 5.2 physician assistants per 10,000 people. Regular checkups are easiest for those with health insurance, sick leave, knowledge of health information, employment, and language barriers. There are additional barriers with the majority of healthcare professionals working primarily in Safford. Graham County is considered a medically underserved area, which means there is a shortage of primary health care services for residents within a geographic area.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Arizona Medically Underserved Areas. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/prevention/health-systems-development/data-reports-maps/reports/azmua-biennial-report.pdf>



Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Ratio of population to primary care physicians	2,060:1	1,520:1	1,310:1	County Rankings
Ratio of population to mental health providers	2,440:1	590:1	340:1	County Rankings
Hospital bed availability per 1,000	0.6	2.7	1.9	US News and World Report



The University of Arizona Center for Rural Health reports that Graham County has some of the highest ratio of nurses per capita in the state of Arizona:

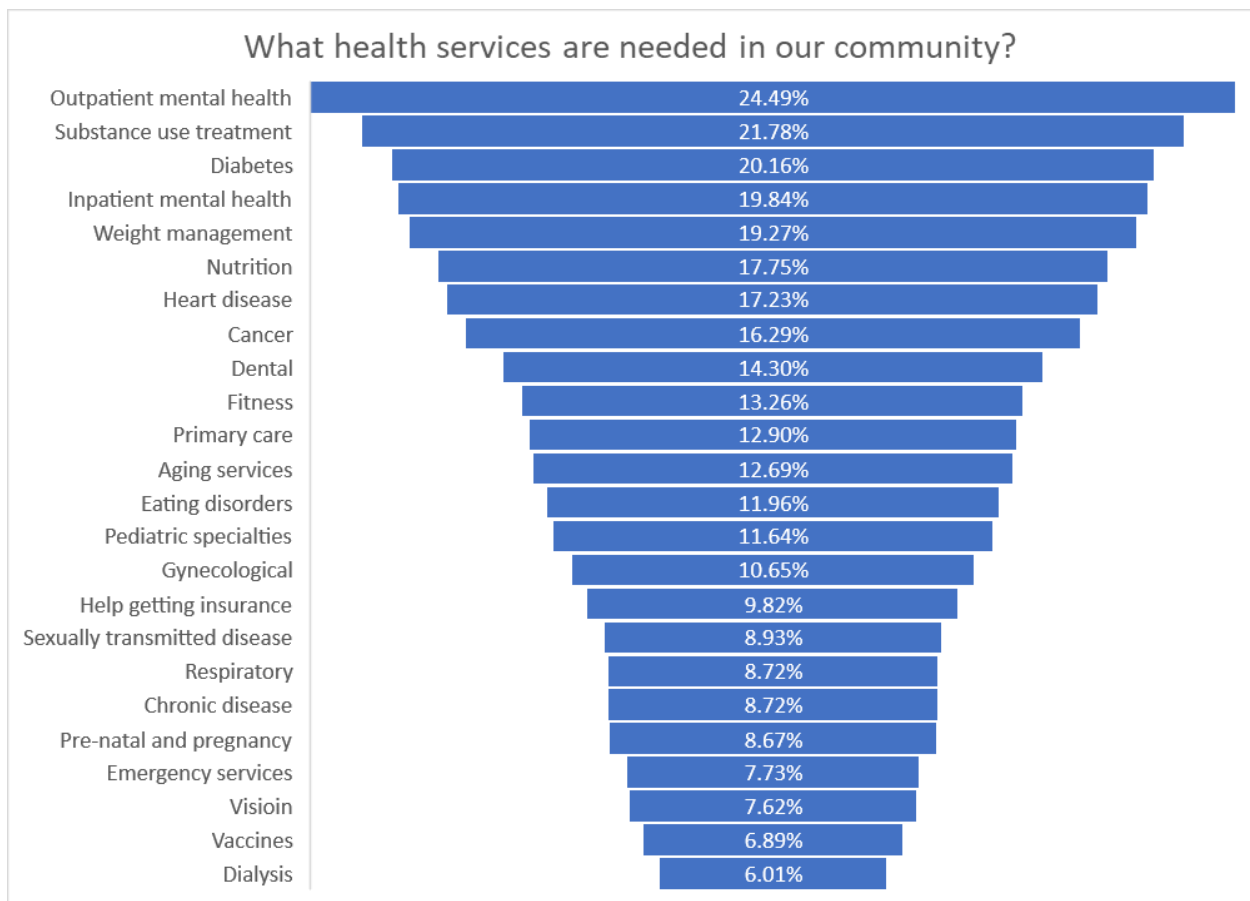
- 9.4 nurse practitioners per 10,000 people (1063:1)
- 7.6 nurse assistants per 10,000 people (highest ratio in Arizona)



- 2.3 practical nurse per 10,000 people (3rd lowest ratio in state)
- 109.4 registered nurse per 10,000 people (2nd highest ratio)

Eastern Arizona College (EAC), located in Thatcher, AZ, is an excellent pipeline for nursing professionals in Graham County. According to RegisteredNursing.org⁷⁸ EAC is ranked the #1 Nursing Program in the state of Arizona.

When asked about health services that are needed in the community, top responses were outpatient mental health services, substance use treatment, diabetes services, inpatient mental health and weight management programs. Full results are shown below.



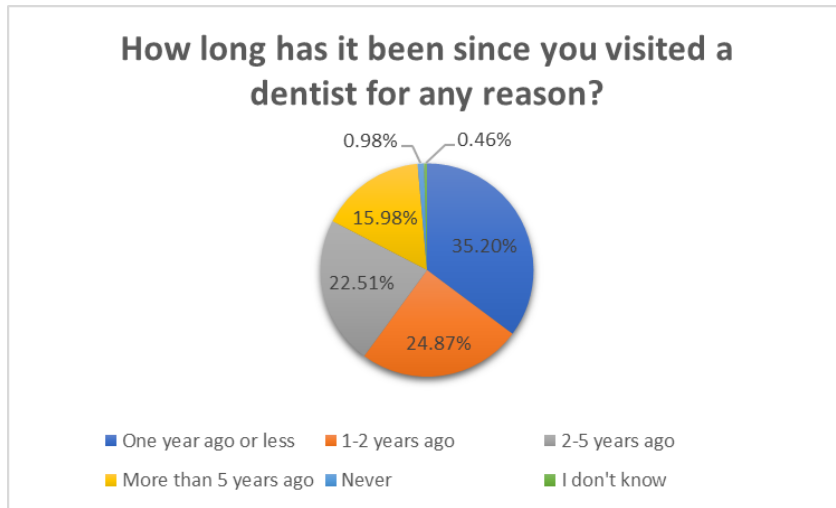
⁷⁸ 2023 – Best Nursing Schools in Arizona. Registered Nursing.org <https://www.registerednursing.org/state/arizona/>



Dental Care

Dental care is important because oral diseases are one of the most prevalent diseases globally and have serious health and economic burdens, greatly reducing quality of life for those affected.⁷⁹ Oral conditions are frequently considered separate from other chronic conditions, but these are actually inter-related.⁸⁰ Poor oral health is associated with other chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Additionally, oral disease also is associated with risky behaviors such as using tobacco and consuming sugary foods and beverages.

About 65% of CHA respondents indicated they had not been to a dentist in over a year. Without regular dental care, individuals are more likely to develop oral and other health problems.⁸¹



Parts of Graham County were determined to be a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area in 2022⁸². With the limited number of dentists, it can be challenging for residents to receive consistent care.

Metric	Graham County	Arizona	United States	Source
Ratio of population to dentists	1,780:1	1,530:1	1,380:1	County Rankings

Tooth B.U.D.D.S. is a local nonprofit organization that addresses the gap in dental services in Graham County. They provide free dental disease education and oral care to schools in Graham and Greenlee counties, with the goal to improve oral health and overall health of children.

⁷⁹ Oral Diseases: a global public health challenge. Center for Biotechnology Information. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31327369/>

⁸⁰ Oral Health Conditions. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/conditions/index.html>

⁸¹ Disparities in Oral Health. CDC. https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/oral_health_disparities/index.htm

⁸² Dental Health Professional Shortage Area. AZDHS. [dentalhpsas.pdf \(azdhs.gov\)](https://www.azdhs.gov/dentalhpsas.pdf)



Vaccinations

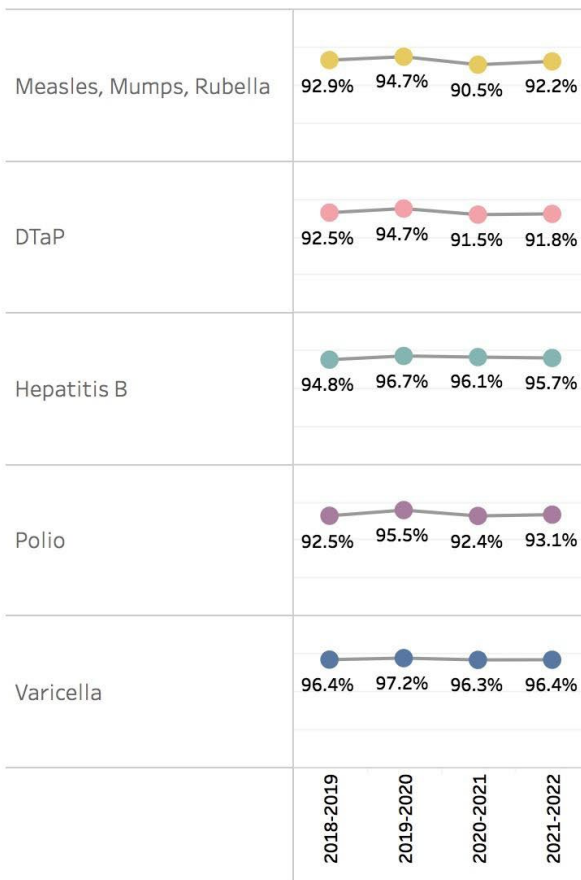
Vaccines reduce risks of getting a disease by working with your body’s natural defenses to build protection. When you get a vaccine, your immune system recognizes the disease and has the immunity to work against it.⁸³

To protect all children against serious vaccine preventable diseases, Arizona school immunization laws require students to receive immunizations before entry to childcare and school.

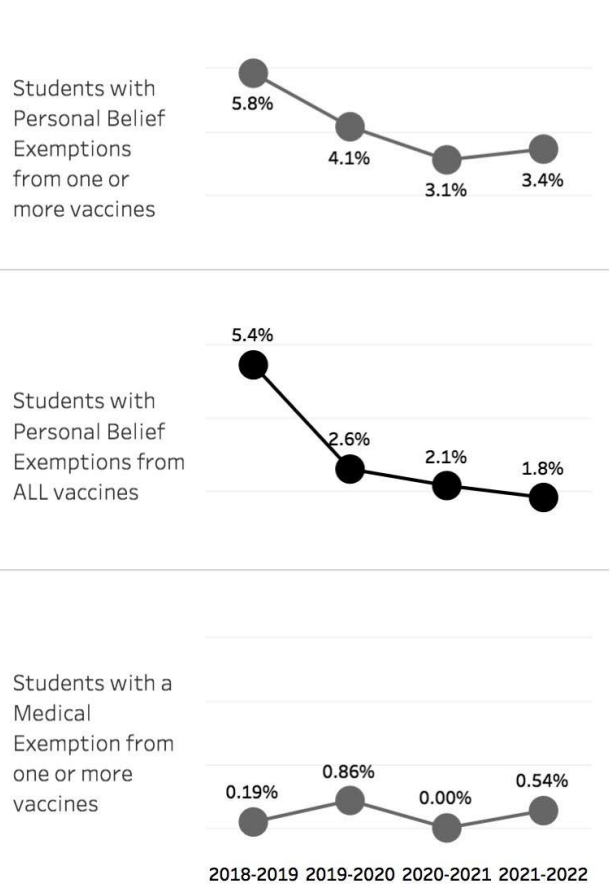
The following charts demonstrate immunization coverage in Graham County.⁸⁴

30% of survey respondents indicated that “not getting vaccines” was one of the riskiest behaviors in the community.

Percent of Kindergarten Students Fully Immunized by Vaccine in Graham County



Percent of Kindergarten Students with an Exemption in Graham County



⁸³ Vaccines and Immunizations. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab_1

⁸⁴ Arizona Immunization Program. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/immunization/index.php#reports-immunization-coverage>



In December 2020, the original COVID-19 vaccines became available to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 vaccines reduce risk of hospitalization, severe illness, and death.⁸⁵ 66% of Graham County residents are fully vaccinated for COVID-19, comparable to the national average of 68%.⁸⁶

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the misinformation around the COVID-19 vaccine, there has been increased vaccine hesitancy for routine immunizations.⁸⁷ In Graham County, 29% of Medicare enrollees had the annual flu vaccine, compared to 45% of Arizonans and 48% nationally.⁸⁸ This is the second lowest in the state.

Maternal and Child Health

Maternal and childhood health is the promotion of women’s health and infant health before, during, and after pregnancy.⁸⁹ Maternal, Child, and Family Health focuses on a variety of health topics including prenatal care, preterm birth, sudden infant death syndrome prevention, maternal mental health, childhood nutrition, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and infant and maternal mortality prevention. In Graham County, 13% of respondents reported a lack of prenatal/after birth care as a top health problem in the community. Graham County has 1 OB-GYN and 1 Certified Nurse Midwife.⁹⁰ Prenatal care is important so doctors can spot problems early with regular visits.⁹¹ Social, economic, and health care coverage and access influences maternal health. In Graham County, 30.7% of women ages 15-44 lived below poverty, 13.4% are uninsured, and 47% of births are covered by AHCCCS insurance.

In Graham County, 8% of babies are born at a low birth weight, compared to the state average of 7%. Low birthweight can be due to preterm births (<37 weeks of gestation) and intrauterine growth restrictions. Barriers to proper nutrition and adequate prenatal care can result in slowed intrauterine growth, as well as stress and exposure to pollution. Substance misuse during pregnancy also can lead to low birthweight. Low birthweight is an important public health indicator that can be used to assess maternal health, nutrition, healthcare delivery, and poverty.⁹²

⁸⁵ Overview of the COVID-19 Vaccines. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/overview-COVID-19-vaccines.html>

⁸⁶ Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case County. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html>

⁸⁷ COVID-19 pandemic fuels largest continued backslide in vaccinations for three decades. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news/item/15-07-2022-covid-19-pandemic-fuels-largest-continued-backslide-in-vaccinations-in-three-decades>

⁸⁸ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>

⁸⁹ Maternal and Infant Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/index.html>

⁹⁰ Arizona’s Maternal Health Workforce. Arizona Center for Rural Health. <https://crh.arizona.edu/arizonas-maternal-health-workforce-report-2020>

⁹¹ Prenatal Care. Office of Women’s Health. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/prenatal-care#:~:text=Prenatal%20care%20can%20help%20keep,when%20they%20see%20mothers%20regularly>

⁹² Low Birthweight. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-model/health-outcomes/quality-of-life/low-birthweight?state=04&year=2022#map-anchor>



13% of CHA respondents found teenage pregnancy a top health problem. Graham County also has above average rates of teen pregnancy. County wide, there are 36 teen births per 1000 people, compared to the state average of 22 and US average of 19.⁹³ Children born to teenage mothers are more likely to be born pre-term, have lower birth weight, and experience higher newborn mortality.

Graham County Health Department provides services related to family planning, pregnancy testing, and prenatal vitamins.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

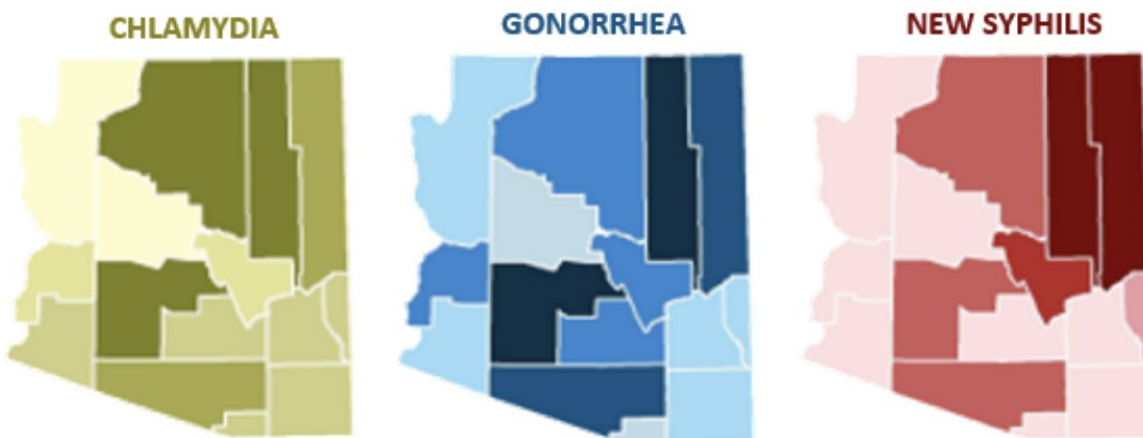
STIs are serious infections that if left untreated can lead to severe health outcomes, including infertility.⁹⁴

Prevention is important, as people infected with STIs can pass the infection to their partner or child. STIs can be prevented by use of condoms, reduction of anonymous partners, consistent testing, and treatment.⁹⁵

Graham County has lower rates of STIs compared to the state of Arizona, but practicing safe sex habits is always important. Graham County Health Department offers anonymous and confidential testing for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

Graham County is part of a statewide teen pregnancy prevention initiative to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease among youth. The curriculum being offered to youth are Wise Guys, Smart Girls, and Wyman Teen Outreach Program.

2020 STI Rates* by County**



⁹³ Graham County, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>

⁹⁴ 10 Ways STDs Impact Women Differently from Men. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/health-disparities/STDs-Women-042011.pdf>

⁹⁵ Sexually Transmitted

Infections 2020 Annual Report. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/disease-integrated-services/std-control/reports/2020-std-annual-report.pdf?v=20230209>



COMMUNITY CONTEXT

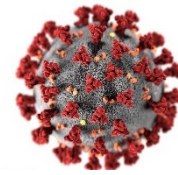
The MAPP Community Context Assessment seeks to understand a community’s strengths, assets, and culture. The assessment looks to identify strengths and resources in the community that support health and well-being, including physical and cultural assets in the built environment, and how inequities may be present in different populations or neighborhoods. The assessment also looks at current and historical forces of change that shape political, economic, and social conditions for community members and what the community is doing to improve health outcomes for all (see Appendix B: Forces of Change).

Before examining the community context of Graham County, we would be remiss without first recognizing the overshadowing context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 is the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This “novel” or new virus was first reported in the United States on January 21, 2020. As COVID-19 cases and fatalities began to rapidly increase, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and shortly after, the President of the United States proclaimed a nationwide emergency pursuant on March 13, 2020.

Within Arizona, much like the rest of the country and world, series of mitigation actions including Stay at Home orders and closures were implemented to slow the spread of the virus and reduce illness. In December 2020, the first COVID-19 vaccines became available and were offered in priority tiers. COVID-19 vaccines help your body develop protection from the virus that causes COVID-19. Although vaccinated people sometimes get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccines significantly lowers the risk of getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying from COVID-19.

Vaccines, treatments, and testing for COVID-19 are readily available, putting the nation in a different point in the pandemic, with more tools and resources than ever before to better protect ourselves and our communities. After more than three years, the World Health Organization ended the global health emergency for COVID-19 on May 5, 2023, and the U.S. Federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency declaration ended on May 11, 2023.



COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. These droplets and particles can be breathed in by other people or land on their eyes, noses, or mouth. In some circumstances, they may contaminate surfaces they touch. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Many viruses are constantly changing, including the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. These changes occur over time and can lead to the emergence of variants that may have new characteristics, including different ways of spreading.



As the we all collectively recover and grow from the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, this Community Health Assessment is more important than ever to focus on health and well-being, recognizing inequities, and supporting resilience in our communities.

Community Strengths and Assets

Graham County focus groups repeatedly identify the close knit nature of residents as a strength in the community. Especially in times of tragedy, Graham County exudes a strong sense of unity and support. People are proud to be from Graham County, as there is strong community involvement. Annually, Graham County hosts 2 major festivals, SalsaFest and SpringFest, which bring in hundreds of people from outside the Gila Valley. With strong collaboration from community organizations, such as the Safford Lion’s Club and the Graham County Chamber of Commerce, these events are very successful.

At the time of writing, there are many revitalization projects in Graham County. The Safford Downtown Association (SDA) is made up of local business and property owners. The association works to help facilitate and administer the Downtown Safford Vision Plan, promote business activity, encourage growth and beautification, support redevelopment downtown, sponsor and support all events downtown, and administer the Façade Grant Program. The organization supports the mural project, intended to increase traffic into downtown businesses, and is repairing the Safford Theater.

Graham County has one of the widest varieties of animal and bird life of anywhere in the United States. It is also the site of the only two designated Riparian Areas in the United States, the Aravaipa Canyon and the Gila Box. The natural beauty of the area is widely and deeply loved and appreciated by residents. The land is also ideal for many farming and agriculture activities.

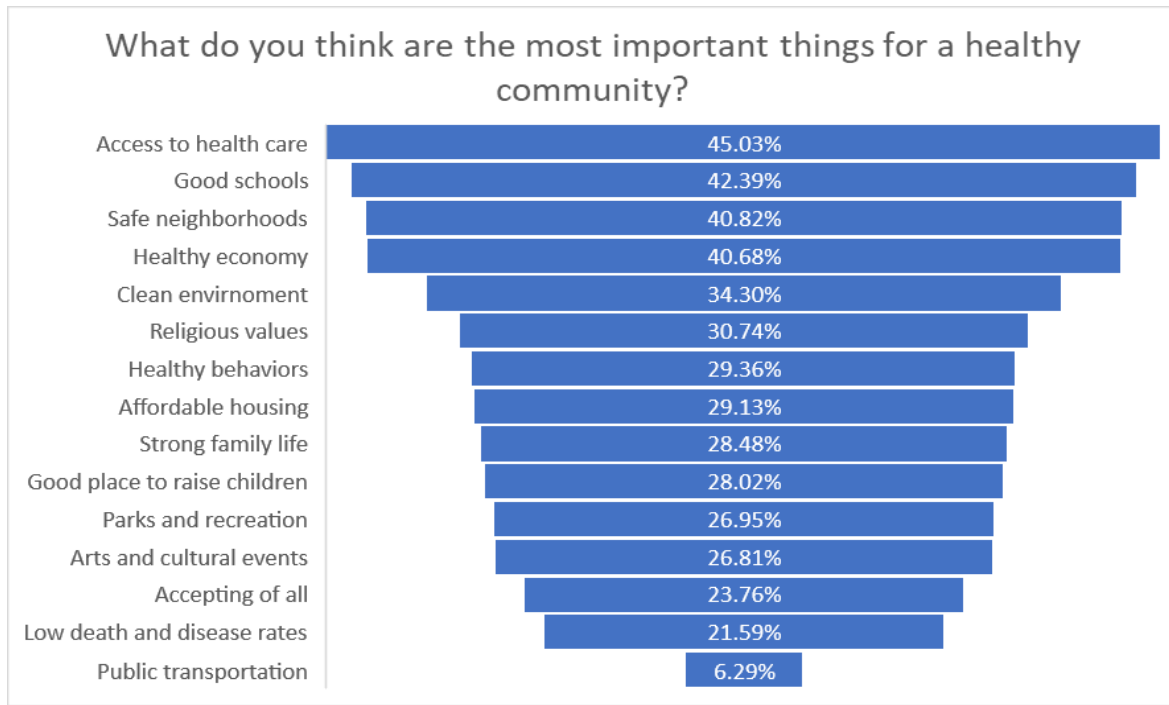
Graham County is home to Eastern Arizona College (EAC), a public, junior college. Education is often regarded as a social determinant of health. EAC offers many scholarship opportunities for students to pursue higher education at a low cost, with most students leaving debt free.⁹⁶ EAC is also one of the biggest employers in the community.

The county also has numerous dedicated nonprofits that increase the quality of life for countless individuals.

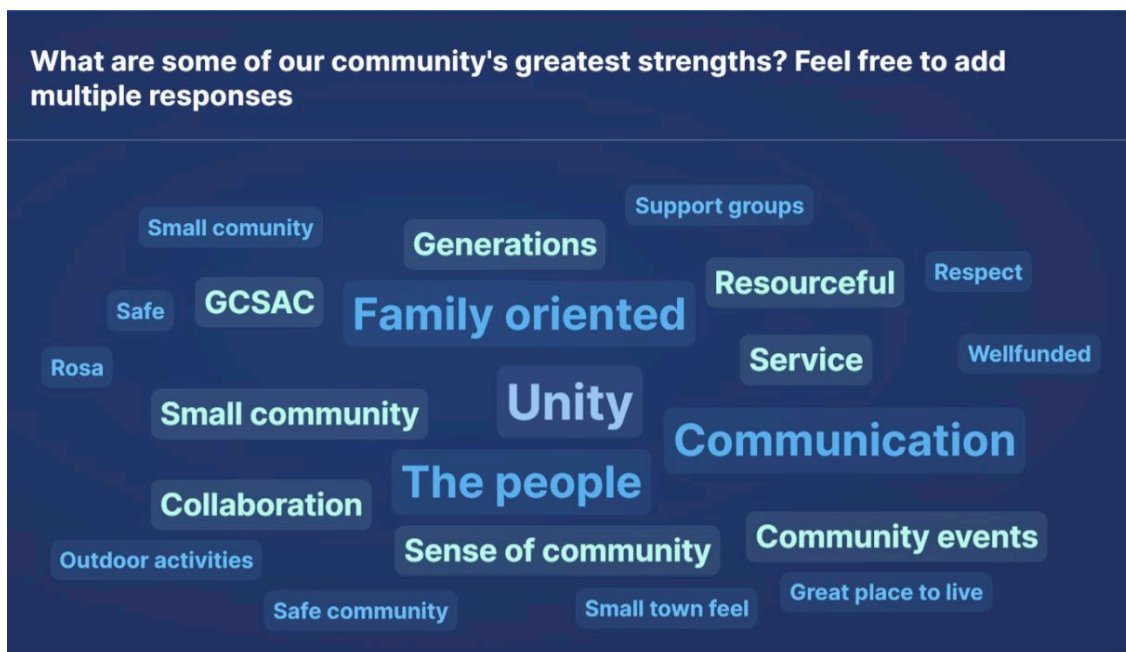
⁹⁶ A Top Notch Education at an Incredibly Affordable Price. Eastern Arizona College. <https://eac.edu/costs-aid/index.php>



In the CHA Survey, the following responses were received related to important aspects of a healthy community:



In the June 1, 2023 CHA/CHIP workshop meeting, Graham County meeting attendees highlighted their favorite strengths of Graham County:





Built Environment

The built environment includes all the man-made, physical attributes of an area including conditions that affect walkability, access to recreation, availability of health promoting resources, and undesirable amenities.⁹⁷ Built environment affects an individual’s level of physical activity. Without accessible or existent sidewalks and bike paths, residents may have more sedentary lifestyles, leading to poor health.⁹⁸ There is often a belief that health is a product of individual choice, but the built environment dramatically impacts mental and physical health.

Recreation

Community design is important in regard to the built environment. When people have the ability to walk, bike, and are connected to amenities, such as grocery stores or parks, overall health and wellbeing can improve.⁹⁹ An important indicator to accessibility is a measure of walkability. This is the ability to walk safely to amenities by foot. Communities with high walkability scores are associated with lower rates of chronic disease and positive mental health. In Graham County, Safford is scored 57/100, being somewhat walkable. Thatcher scored 42/100 and Pima scored 24/100, being considered car dependent communities.¹⁰⁰

Graham County CHA respondents reported more walking trails would help them exercise more frequently. The majority of paved trails are in Safford and Thatcher, leaving other Graham County respondents without accessible trails. Over 25% of respondents indicated that parks and recreation was an important part of a healthy community. Having access to parks and trails encourages residents to participate in physical activity. The closer one lives to a park or trail, the more likely they are to use those spaces.¹⁰¹ County health rankings reports that only 45% of Graham County residents lived close to parks & recreation site.¹⁰² Several studies highlight the link between time spent in parks and physical activity and the correlation between that activity and positive health outcomes, such as a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.¹⁰³

The following map shows the trails surrounding the cities of Thatcher and Safford. There are approximately 23 miles of walking trails for residents to use.

⁹⁷ Basic Information about the Built Environment. United States Environmental Protection Agency. <https://www.epa.gov/smm/basic-information-about-built-environment>

⁹⁸ Impacts of Built Environment on Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/publications/factsheets/impactofthebuiltenvironmentonhealth.pdf>

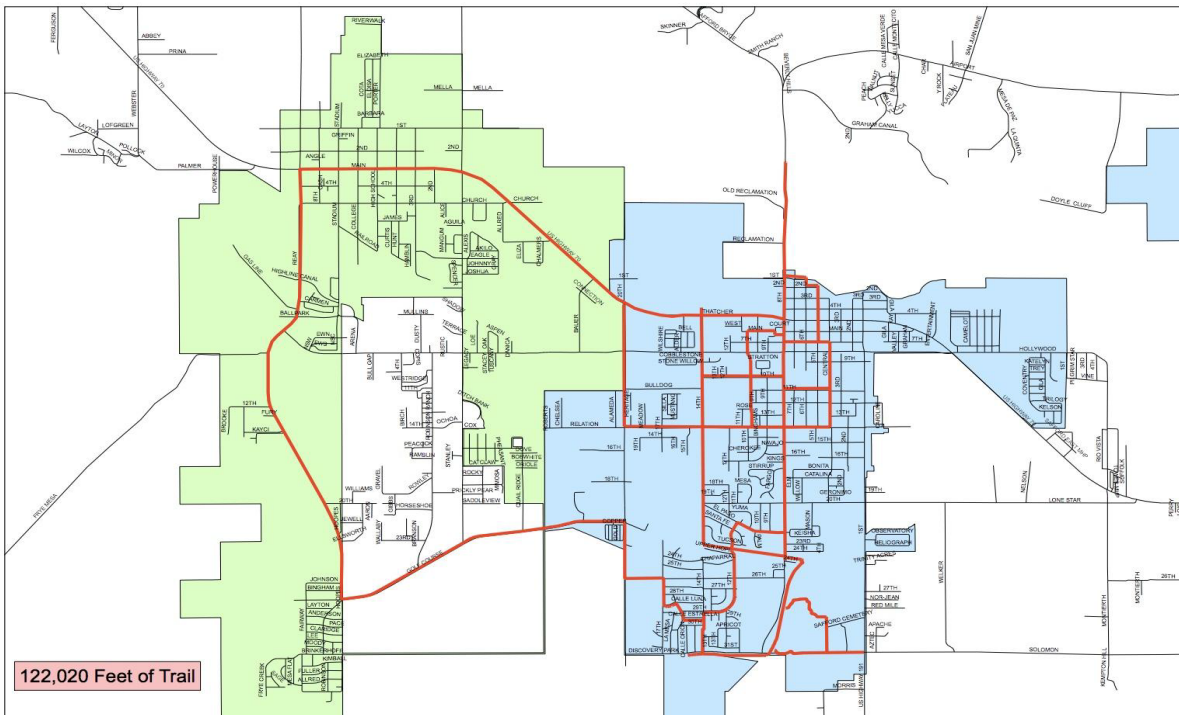
⁹⁹ Healthy Community Design. Public Health Association. <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/environmental-health/healthy-community-design>

¹⁰⁰ Walkscore. <https://www.walkscore.com/>

¹⁰¹ Parks, Trails and Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks.htm>

¹⁰² Graham, AZ. County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/arizona/graham?year=2022>

¹⁰³ The Health Benefits of Parks and their Economic Impacts. Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/the-health-benefits-of-parks-and-their-economic-impacts_0.pdf



Pools provide a great opportunity for exercise and are popular in Arizona with the hot temperatures. There are 3 public pools in Graham County, along with natural bodies of water. In 2021, there were 44 drowning related deaths among children 0-17 years of age throughout the state.¹⁰⁴ Teaching children to swim as young as 1 years old, as well as proper adult supervision, is some of the most effective strategies to prevent drowning.

Graham County has many hiking trails and outdoor recreation opportunities. However, much of this land

is remote locations that are not accessible, due to three or more miles of travel. Graham County has 2 state parks, Roper Lake and Dankworth that require \$10 entry fees. A few other natural features of

Graham County include:

- Mt Graham (most accessible by car)
- Aravaipa Canyon (most accessible by car/4x4), permit required
- Gila Box (limited trails)
- Coronado forest

At Arizona Public Libraries, library card holders can “check out” a state park day pass to enjoy the recreation opportunities offered in Graham County and throughout the state.

¹⁰⁴ Arizona Child Fatality Review Team. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/director/agency-reports/29th-annual-child-fatality-report.pdf>



Access to gyms and indoor exercise equipment can encourage physical activity. At the time of writing, Graham County has seven gym options for residents, ranging from traditional workout facilities to martial arts studios. Residents noted the need for additional gyms and/or recreational centers that are accessible and affordable for all age and skills levels. Many supported opportunities for children and family such as a YMCA.

Loose animals are repeatedly a reported barrier to exercise opportunities for Graham County residents. While Graham County government has laws on animal control and restraint of pets, it is still an issue in the community.¹⁰⁵ Multiple responses were received regarding unattended cats and dogs in the street, sometimes aggressive or dangerous, and requested additional animal control services.

Public Transportation

Public transportation systems help ensure that people can reach everyday destinations, such as jobs, schools, healthy food outlets and healthcare facilities, safely and reliably. These services play an important role for people who are unable to drive, including those without access to personal vehicles, children, individuals with disabilities, and older adults.¹⁰⁶ Public transportation systems are associated with reductions in several health risk factors such as motor vehicle crashes, air pollution, and physical inactivity.

While public transportation is limited in the Gila Valley, the San Carlos Apache Tribe has available rides from the reservation to Safford for a modest price through the ADOT.¹⁰⁷ There are additional options through Easter Seals Blake Foundation that offers limited transportation, primarily for elderly and low income individuals,¹⁰⁸ as well as bus stops for Greyhound bus for rides to metropolitans such as Phoenix or Tucson. 30% of Graham County residents indicated they did not have reliable transportation for medical appointments.

Internet Access

Access to broadband, or high-speed internet connection, is increasingly deemed as more important to public health and healthcare. Following COVID-19, telehealth appointments increased in popularity. Especially in rural communities, telehealth is a promising approach to reduce health disparities by bringing specialized healthcare to communities where specialty care was previously unavailable, facilitating monitoring and follow-up care for chronic health conditions, and connecting providers in remote areas.¹⁰⁹ However, there are some barriers to

¹⁰⁵ Animal Control Laws. Graham County Government. <https://www.graham.az.gov/158/Animal-Control-Laws>

¹⁰⁶ Public Transportation. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/policy/opaph/hi5/publictransportation/index.html>

¹⁰⁷ Apache Transit. San Carlos Apache Nnee Bich'o Nii Services. <http://scat-tanf.org/transit/>

¹⁰⁸ Transportation Services. Easter Seals Blake Foundation. <https://www.easterseals.com/blakefoundation/our-programs/adult-services/transportation-services.html>

¹⁰⁹ Broadband Access as a Public Health Issue: The Role of Law in Expanding Broadband Access and Connecting Underserved Communities for Better Health Outcomes. American Society of Law, Medicine, and Ethics. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1073110519857314>



telehealth. Census data reports that 19% of Graham County houses do not have internet access, compared to 12% of Arizonans.

Access to broadband is also important to connect individuals to work and school. The American Rescue Plan will invest in increasing wireless internet connection (Wi-Fi) to Graham County residents. In July 2022, the City of Safford was awarded \$63,000 to offer free Wi-Fi in the downtown area, as well as city parks.¹¹⁰ Free Wi-Fi is also available at the local library.

Public art

Over 25% of CHA respondents reported Arts and Cultural Events as an important thing for a healthy community. Recently, public art has been embraced by the public health sector for the associations of advancing health and wellbeing, as well as community development.¹¹¹ Public art, such as the murals throughout the Gila Valley, represent the residents, attract businesses to the area, and are correlated with better mental health.¹¹² The arts also connect individuals to different ideas and cultures. The Gila Valley Arts Council is a local nonprofit that sponsors artists from all over the world to perform in Graham and Greenlee Counties.¹¹³

Food/Restaurants

The majority of restaurants in Graham County are fast-food establishments. “Food swamps” have been described as areas with a high-density of establishments selling high-calorie fast food and junk food, relative to healthier food options.¹¹⁴ “Food deserts” are geographic areas where residents’ access to affordable, healthy food options are restricted or nonexistent due to the absence of grocery stores within convenient traveling distance.¹¹⁵ Both food swamps and food deserts are associated with negative impacts on health. However, food swamps have stronger impacts of higher rates of obesity (See additional references in Community Status, Nutrition and the Food System section).

Water

Water is an essential component to physical health and safety. In Graham County, municipal departments are responsible for safe drinking water. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) works with counties to regulate and test water quality.¹¹⁶ ADEQ classifies Graham County water in category A (uniformly good to excellent, natural quality).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ Gila Valley Central. Safford Among Communities Receiving Broadband Grants. <https://gilavalleycentral.net/safford-among-communities-receiving-broadband-grants/>

¹¹¹ Creating Healthy Communities through Cross-Sector Collaboration. University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine / ArtPlace America. https://arts.ufl.edu/site/assets/files/174533/uf_chc_whitepaper_2019.pdf

¹¹² Arts and Culture. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/everyone-can-be-involved/arts-and-culture.html>

¹¹³ Gila Valley Arts Council. <https://gvac.org/>

¹¹⁴ Food Swamps Predict Obesity Rates Better Than Food Deserts in the United States. National Center for Biotechnology Information. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5708005/>

¹¹⁵ Food Deserts. Food Empowerment Project. <https://foodispower.org/access-health/food-deserts/>

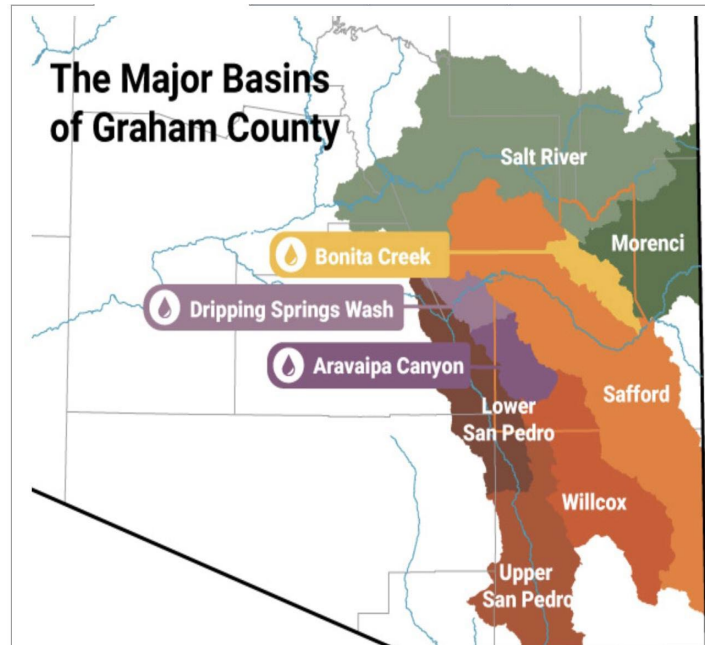
¹¹⁶ Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. Safe Drinking Water. <https://www.azdeq.gov/programs/water-quality-programs/safe-drinking-water>

¹¹⁷ Arizona Department of Environmental Quality – Safe Drinking Water Database.

https://azsdwis.azdeq.gov/DWW_EXT/JSP/WaterSystems.jsp?PointOfContactType=none&number=&name=&county=Graham



The Colorado River is a main source of water for 7 US states, many Indigenous tribes, and millions of acres of farmland.¹¹⁸ It accounts for 36% of the water supply in AZ, much of it used for agriculture, one of the state’s multibillion dollar industries.¹¹⁹ In 2022, the Colorado River experienced historic low water levels, largely due to increasing temperatures. A water emergency was implemented, causing Arizona to lose 21% of the yearly allotment.¹²⁰ Some cities across the southwest are placing water restrictions, such as limiting the size of pools and outlawing turf lawns. Arizona has yet to place these regulations but may have no choice in the coming years.



¹¹⁸ Priority Landscapes: Colorado River Basin. The Nature Conservancy. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/priority-landscapes/colorado-river/>

¹¹⁹ Arizona Water Factsheets. University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center. <https://wrrc.arizona.edu/resources/arizona-water-factsheets>

¹²⁰ Why you should care about the Colorado River. ASU News. <https://news.asu.edu/20221018-arizona-impact-why-you-should-care-about-colorado-river-cuts>



Social Determinants of Health and Populations Experiencing Worse Health Outcomes

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems¹²¹. The CDC outlines economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context.

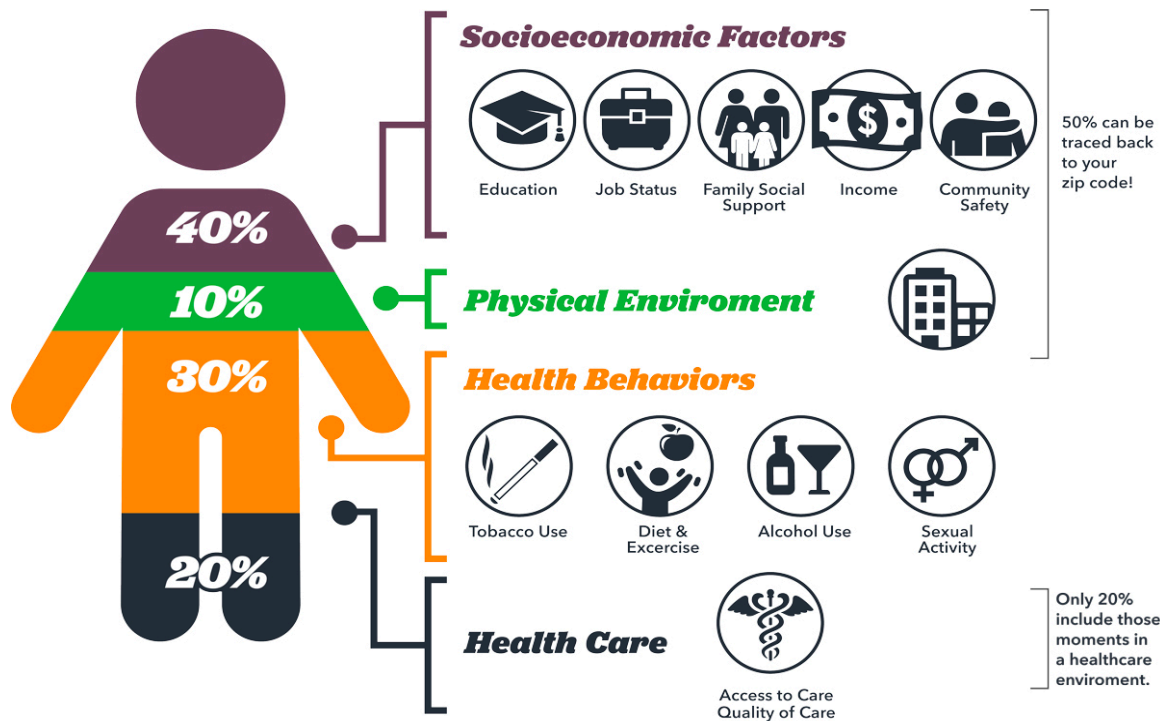


Traditionally, public health departments have focused on individual behaviors, but in recent years, the focus has shifted to social determinants of health. This shift has increased the focus on social and environmental and on ensuring that all citizens have favorable health outcomes.¹²² This requires addressing social determinants of health, such as poverty, discrimination, unemployment, quality education, housing, and safe environments.¹²³ Through this report, sharing of data, and collaboration with community partners, Graham County seeks to better incorporate SDOH throughout the multiple aspects of public health work and strengthen their capacity to advance a health community for all Graham County residents. The following section highlights specific groups that are more vulnerable to adverse health outcomes. It is important to consider how social determinants of health affect all population groups within a community.

¹²¹ Social Determinants of Health at CDC. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/about/sdoh/index.html>

¹²² Conducting a Health Equity-Focused Community Health Assessment. RTI Healthcare Advancement. <https://healthcare.rti.org/insights/conducting-health-equity-focused-community-health-assessment>

¹²³ Social Determinants of Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/sdoh/index.html>



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)

124

Older Adults

Older adults have been identified as a vulnerable population in Graham County. In an aging society, many seniors tend to live in rural communities versus urban communities. 65+ respondents indicated higher rates of mental health conditions (see additional references in Community Status, Mental Health section), less access to healthcare, a desire for more offerings, increased isolation, and the need for more specialty services. Older adults are also at a higher risk for chronic disease. Graham County has the “Graham County Senior Center” and “Southeastern Arizona Community Unique Services” (SEACUS) that oversees the meals on wheels program to address the needs of the community. Oftentimes, these programs are at capacity.

Multi-Generational Households

Multi-generational households were identified as potential sub-populations experiencing poorer health outcomes. In many instances, these living arrangements can be a benefit for financial savings, care for older parents, shared childcare, or kinship care (care of children by relatives). Community partners noted that there are often “individuals living with families that engage in unhealthy behaviors that do not have other living options or ability to get out of that cycle.” High costs of housing and limited housing resources can drive the burden to live in

¹²⁴ Social Determinants of Health. Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health. <https://noahhelps.org/sdoh/>



multi-generational or congregate housing, instead of finding safe, healthy living situations on one's own.

People Experiencing Homelessness

In recent years, people experiencing homelessness has increased in Graham County and across the state of Arizona.¹²⁵ There are various reasons people may experience homelessness. Some reasons include unemployment and poverty, as well as untreated mental illness, substance abuse issues, and lack of affordable housing.¹²⁶ There are many efforts among Graham County organizations to address these barriers. At the time of writing, the Gila Valley Ministerial Association offers a warm, monthly meal to unsheltered people, and SVDP does weekly wellness checks. In recent years, there has been discussion among local government to start a respite day center, but significant action has yet to come from discussion. The Arizona Department of Public Housing is working with dedicated Graham County organizations to begin the "Graham County Local Coalition to End Homelessness". They have pledged to allocate money towards Graham County efforts to coordinate and increase community resources.

Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups

In the US, racial and ethnic minority groups experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease.¹²⁷ Nationally the life expectancy for Hispanic and Black Americans is six years lower than the average.¹²⁸ Black, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Native American respondents disproportionately reported racism as a public health concern. At the state level, Arizona Department of Health Services is prioritizing strategies that prioritize racial equity.¹²⁹

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Some respondents who identified as LGBTQIA+ (an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and other terms describing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity) shared experiencing discrimination in Graham County.¹³⁰ LGBTQIA+ respondents reported Domestic Violence as a top health problem in the community, and 13% of survey respondents who identified as LGBTQIA+ experienced rape or sexual assault. Additionally, this population is at a higher risk for food insecurity and mental health conditions.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Homelessness in the Valley. Phoenix Rescue Mission. <https://phoenixrescuemission.org/homelessness/>

¹²⁶ Homelessness, Health, and Human Needs. National Center for Biotechnology Information. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK218240/#:~:text=Three%20factors%20contributing%20substantially%20to,deinstitutionalization%20of%20mentally%20ill%20patients>

¹²⁷ Racism and Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/racism-disparities/index.html>

¹²⁸ Key Data on Health and Health Care by Race and Ethnicity. KFF. March 15, 2023. <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/report/key-data-on-health-and-health-care-by-race-and-ethnicity/#:~:text=Provisional%20data%20from%202021%20show,77.7%20years%20for%20Hispanic%20people>

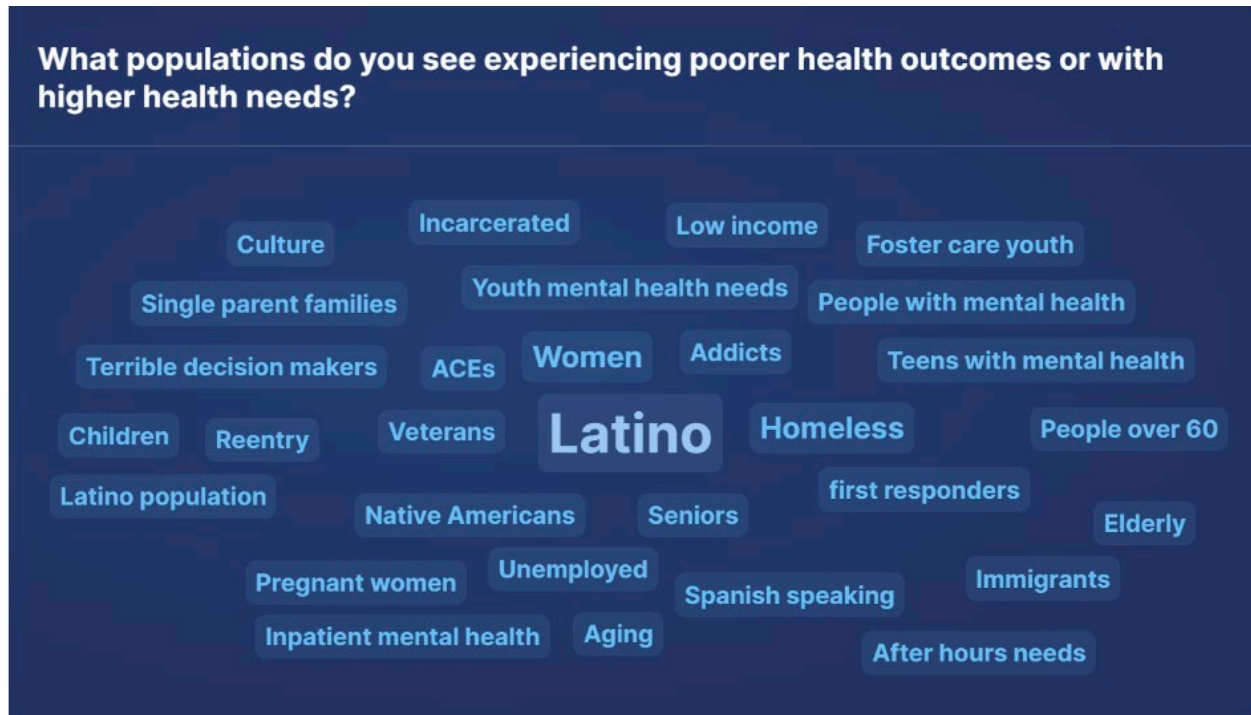
¹²⁹ Arizona Health Improvement Plan. AZDHS. <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/operations/strategic-initiatives/azhip-2021-2025.pdf>

¹³⁰ Arizona's Equality Profile. Movement Advancement Project. https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality_maps/profile_state/AZ

¹³¹ Food Insecurity and SNAP use among sexual minority people: analysis of a population based sample from National Health Interview Survey, 2017. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9099054/>



At the June 1, 2023 CHA/CHIP meeting, Graham County meeting attendees highlighted additional vulnerable populations in the community. The following are the responses from attendees:





COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Public Health improvement in the Gila Valley is a collaborative effort among many stakeholders. A brief summary of the core CHA committees and partners are listed below. A full list of our partners who are contributing to health in Graham County is include in Appendix A Thank you all for your collaboration and dedication.

Graham County Health Department

Graham County Health Department (GCHD) is a vital entity to public health in Graham County. It has supported Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Activities since 2012 in coordination with the Arizona Department of Health Services. Refer to Appendix C for a full summary of services provided by GCHD. To address 2019 CHIP activities, the GCHD supports the development and staff for the Mental Health Action Committee and the Gila Valley Food Coalition.

➤ **Gila Valley Food Coalition**

The Gila Valley Food Coalition (GVFC) is supported through funding from United Way. The coalition began in 2019 with partners at Our Neighbor’s Farm & Pantry (ONF&P), and since then, has grown into a collaboration among main partners: ONF&P, St. Vincent de Paul, EAC Monster Exchange, Duncan Food Bank, Clifton Food Bank, Southeastern Arizona Community Unique Services, and MGRMC. The group systematically addresses food access, health, and nutrition.

➤ **Mental Health Action Committee (MHAC)**

The Mental Health Action Committee (MHAC) is supported through funding from United Way. The MHAC started in 2022 and is working towards county level changes in the local mental health system. The group works to engage stakeholders all across the valley to collectively address mental health challenges. Additionally, the group works extensively in the local schools, the senior population, and other mental health promoting organizations.

The United Way of Graham and Greenlee Counties

The United Way of Graham and Greenlee Counties (UWGGC) is a nonprofit organization in the Gila Valley. UWGGC is instrumental in community health through their funding of public health improvement projects. Their focuses areas include education, health, and financial stability, strongly associated with public health.

Mount Graham Regional Medical Center

Mount Graham Regional Medical Center (MGRMC) is located in Safford, AZ, and is the primary source of healthcare for both Graham and Greenlee Counties. MGRMC offers a range of services including emergency room, specialty services, laboratory, imaging, intensive care,



surgical, and other medical care. MGRMC was a key partner in conducting the CHA and is strongly committed to the advancement of public health in the Gila Valley.

Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition

The Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition (GCSAC) is a cross-system substance abuse coalition. The coalition focuses on community wide prevention efforts and strategies to address underage drinking and prescription drug misuse/abuse.

Arizona 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free, confidential, and powerful information referral service that helps people connect to needed health and human services. Live-operator service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, every day of the year - in English and Spanish, and assistance is available in other languages via real-time interpreter services. 211 plays a key role in connecting people to services so they can stay well, meet basic needs, manage illness, and care for themselves.



GRAHAM COUNTY 2-1-1 WORKGROUP

Graham County Health Department in partnership with United Way, Mount Graham Regional Medical Center, Gila Valley Food Coalition, SEACUS, First Things First, Graham County Chamber of Commerce and Southeastern Area Agency on Aging, have been working to increase awareness of community resources to help Graham County residents meet basic needs, manage illness, and care for themselves. There was a recognized gap in residents' ability to easily find and access the wide range of resources in our community. The organizations established a workgroup to aid in the adoption and integration of 2-1-1.

- Builds a single data hub of community resources and reduces duplication.
- Regular updates and maintenance by the host system
- Increases the ability to understand client's experiences/identified barriers in navigating health and human services in Graham County.
- Workgroup Success: Identified and modified promotional materials to market 211 to Graham County residents.
- Workgroup Success: Applied and received a \$5,000 Grant from United Way for radio Marketing campaign.



KEY FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The 2023-2028 CHA includes a wealth of primary and secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative, that provided a well-rounded picture of the health of the community, contributing factors and trends in health outcomes, and populations with higher health risks or poorer health outcomes. This helps to identify where our strengths and assets are, and where we have room to focus our efforts on health improvement.

After identifying the 2020 CHIP Priorities of mental health, substance misuse and abuse, and Healthy Living, Nutrition, and Physical Activity, Graham County has made great strides towards addressing these areas. We intend to continue including these issues while expanding our outlook to include the diverse and evolving health needs of our populations.

The 2023-2028 Graham County CHA Strategic Issues Identified are as follows:

1. Behavioral Health
2. Access to clinical care
3. Healthy Living

Considering the community status, context, and partners, the following strategic issues were identified. Graham County will continue to build on and exploring the convergence of the MAPP Assessments and determine how those issues affect the achievement of the shared vision.



The next steps will follow MAPP Phase 3: Continuously Improve the Community. GCHD

will work with community partners to take the CHA strategic issues identified above and formulate goal statements and measurable objectives. The end product will be a Community Health Improvement Plan that defines an action plan for addressing priority goals and objectives and a framework for establishing a shared measurement structure across partners to monitor and evaluate short and long-term impact on CHIP priorities.

Graham County Health Department looks forward to engaging the CHA/CHIP Teams, the Local Public Health System, and the greater Community to participate in the Community Health Improvement Plan and related activities to improve the health and wellness of Graham County.

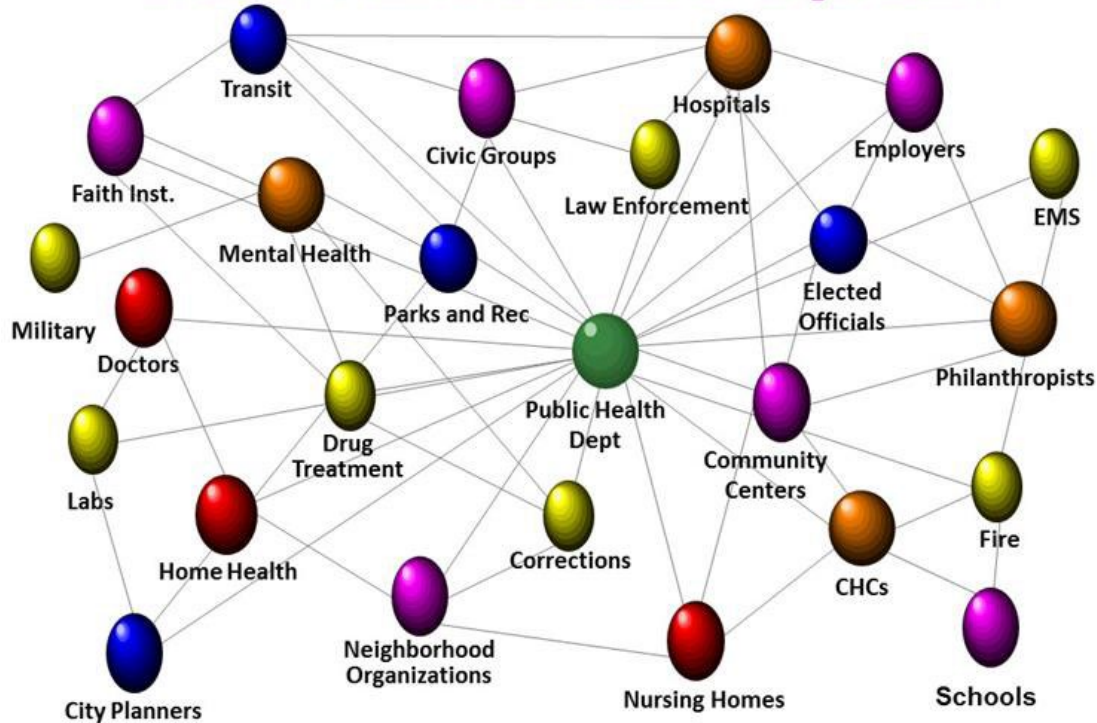


This page intentionally left blank.



APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Local Public Health System



The Graham County Local Public Health System is composed of diverse entities, all contributing directly or indirectly towards the health and well-being of the community.

Thank you for your collaboration and dedication.

- 4-H Youth Development - Solomon
- Arizona Department of Corrections Safford Parole Office
- Arizona State Prison Complex - Safford
- Arizona@Work-Safford
- AZ Children's Association Foster Care/Adoption Services-Safford
- Boys and Girls Club
- Bureau of Land Management - Safford Field Office
- Canyonlands
- CASA of Graham County
- Child & Family Resources Healthy Families - Safford
- Community Medical Services
- Community Partners Integrated Healthcare - Safford
- Community-Based Outpatient Clinic - Safford
- Dan Hinton School District #99
- Desert Cat Rescue
- Eastern Arizona College
- Federal Correctional Institution - Safford
- Fort Thomas Unified School District #7
- Gila Institute for Technology #2
- Gila Valley Consolidated Municipal Court
- Graham County Administration
- Graham County Animal Control
- Graham County Are You OK? Program



- Graham County Attorney’s Office
- Graham County Attorney’s Office Victim Assistance
- Graham County Board of Supervisors
- Graham County Chamber of Commerce
- Graham County Clerk of the Superior Court
- Graham County Election Department
- Graham County Emergency Management
- Graham County Environmental Health Services
- Graham County Health Department
- Graham County Jail
- Graham County Jury Commissioners
- Graham County Justice Courts
- Graham County Juvenile Court
- Graham County Law Library
- Graham County Office of Vital Records
- Graham County Parks & Fair Department
- Graham County Planning and Zoning Department
- Graham County Probation Department
- Graham County Public Fiduciary
- Graham County Public Health Services
- Graham County Rehabilitation Center
- Graham County Rural Housing Development Association, Inc.
- Graham County School Superintendent Office
- Graham County Senior Center
- Graham County Sheriff's Department Community Services
- Graham County Superior Court
- Graham County Treasurer's Office
- Mount Graham Regional Medical Center
- Mt Graham Safe House Shelter
- Mt. Graham Safe House
- Our Neighbor’s Farm and Pantry (ONF&P)
- Pima (Town of)
- Pima Parks and Recreation Department
- Pima Planning and Zoning Department
- Pima Police Department
- Pima Public Library
- Pima Public Works Department
- Pima Town Clerk
- Pima Unified School District #6
- Pima Volunteer Fire Department
- Safford (City of)
- Safford Agricultural Research Center
- Safford City Clerk
- Safford City-Graham County Library
- Safford DES
- Safford Fire Department
- Safford Police Department
- Safford Public Works Department
- Safford Unified School District
- SEABHS Integrated Care Clinic - Safford
- Social Security Administration
- Solomon Elementary School District #5
- Southeastern Arizona Behavioral Health Services (SEABHS)
- Southeastern Arizona Community Action Program (SEACAP)
- Southeastern Arizona Community Unique Services (SEACUS)
- St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP)
- Thatcher (Town of)
- Thatcher Administration Department
- Thatcher Fire Department
- Thatcher Parks & Recreation Department
- Thatcher Police Department
- Thatcher Public Works Department
- Thatcher Unified School District #4
- United Way of Graham and Greenlee Counties
- University of Arizona Graham County Extension Office



APPENDIX B: FORCES OF CHANGE ASSESSMENT

Forces of Change is a component of the Community Context Assessment, which identifies forces that can affect the community and local public health system. It can focus on occurrences in the past, present, or future, including forces in the past that contribute to structural inequities. Forces may include trends, factors, or events:

- Trends are patterns over time, such as an aging population, the decline in affordable housing in a community, environmental conservation, or movements for equity and justice.
- Factors are discrete elements, such as a community’s rural setting, a town’s nearness to a major waterway, or the presence of an immigration detention center.
- Events are one-time occurrences, such as a factory closure, natural disaster, or new legislation or policy.

Forces may be social, economic, political, technological, environmental, scientific, legal, ethical, or other. The assessment seeks to answer, "what is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?" and "what specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?"

<i>Forces (Trends, Events, Factors)</i>	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Increased substance use, including fentanyl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury, illness, death • Incarceration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive for increased services • Reduced stigma
High ACE scores in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient, trauma informed communities • Reduced stigma
Multi-generational households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to break cycles • Negative influences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free childcare • Financial benefit of shared rent/mortgage
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness and death • Long COVID • Misinformation/ disinformation • Increased vaccine hesitancy • Ending declaration will impact increased funding and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased partnerships • Adoption of virtual meetings, telehealth • Increased WIC, SNAP, and other benefits
Rural setting/geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited providers, particularly in specialty services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close-knit community



Forces (Trends, Events, Factors)	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited transportation 	
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex insurance systems and applications Knowledge of/access to health information and services (health literacy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased funding for community programs
Underinsured community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex insurance systems and applications Knowledge of/access to health information and services (health literacy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for CHWs Opportunity for increased health education, ownership
Strong Religious Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many CHA survey respondents who are non-LDS did report feeling excluded from the general culture and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many CHA survey respondents who are non-LDS did report feeling excluded from the general culture and community The LDS church has played a monumental role in the development of the area. The Gila Valley Arizona Temple serves 21,000 Latter-day Saints in southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico <p>The church gives practicing Latter-day Saints residents a sense of belonging and provides considerable social support and resources to members</p>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of public or hired transportation Challenges to access services or make appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for increased services and jobs



Forces (Trends, Events, Factors)	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Safe and affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of safe and affordable housing Contributing factor to multi-generational households and homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive multi-generational households Opportunity for new community infrastructure
Mining Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift work can have detrimental health effects Mining itself can also have a serious environmental impact. Historically, copper mining in Arizona has negatively harmed the drinking water supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021, Freeport-McMoran’s Safford operations generated nearly \$314 million dollars in economic benefits for Arizona, including more than \$167 million for Graham County. The Safford operations employed 1,270 and reportedly contributed to a “ripple effect of wages and taxes plus services we purchase created a total of 3,050 jobs in the state.^{[1]”}
Correctional Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presence of state and federal correction facilities means that Graham County has the highest incarceration rate across the state of Arizona.^[4] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The correctional facilities serve as a source of employment for many Graham County residents



APPENDIX C: GRAHAM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The purpose of the Graham County Health Services is to promote health and quality of life for all Graham County residents through education, service and leadership.

Website: <https://www.graham.az.gov/254/Health>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Graham-County-Health-Department-1611121092508959/>

Services Provided:

- **Annual Flu Clinics:** The most current influenza vaccine is provided for adults and children during the fall season.
- **Environmental Health Services (EHS):** The purpose of EHS is to educate and protect the public and business in regard to food safety, sanitation and vector borne and zoonotic disease. EHS staff also provide wastewater services including review and approval of new and replacement septic systems.
- **Family Planning:** Several methods of birth control are offered to women who meet established income guidelines and wish to prevent or delay pregnancy. The types of contraception offered are birth control pills, condoms, and Dep-Provera injections and IUD placements.
- **Folic Acid Multivitamins:** Women of childbearing years may receive multivitamins that include folic acid.
- **Health in Arizona Policy Initiative (HAPI):** Offers a wide array of health-related information and education for Chronic Disease, Dementia/Alzheimer's Program and Dementia Friendly Communities; Healthy Community; School Health; Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs; Free presentations for organizations and groups.
- **Immunizations:** Free vaccines are available to children, up to and including age 18, who are determined to be uninsured, underinsured or on AHCCCS. Adult vaccines at \$20.00 each.
- **Pregnancy Testing:** Upon request please call (928) 428-0110 for availability.
- **Public Emergency Preparedness Program:** PHEP is responsible for responding to and preparing for a bioterrorism event, communicable disease outbreak or any other type of public health emergency. Visit our website for full listing and descriptions of PHEP services.
- **Public Fiduciary:** The Public Fiduciary assumes Guardian, Conservator or Personal Representative functions for individuals who have been determined to be unable to



handle their own personal business affairs, when there are no relatives or other qualified individuals willing or able to service.

- **STD/HIV Testing and Counseling:** Anonymous and confidential testing and treatment for gonorrhea and chlamydia. Treatment is available for positive clients and their partner(s). Hepatitis-C and HIV testing and counseling provided (specimen is obtained by finger-stick). STD testing is \$10.00.
- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP):** Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs focus on working with population of youth of greatest risk of experiencing a teen pregnancy based on state and national data.
- **Tobacco Prevention Program (TEP):** Tobacco Prevention Program offers high school youth the opportunity to learn and educate others about the dangers involved with tobacco smoking and chewing as well as vaping. Youth also gain leadership and public speaking skills. TEP youth and staff offer free presentations for organizations and groups.
- **Tuberculosis (TB) Services:** Tuberculosis Skin Test is a simple procedure to determine if a person has been exposed to the TB bacteria. These clinics are held on every Monday of each month (1:00 – 4:00 pm) on a walk-in basis at \$5.00 each.
- **Vital Records:** Vital Records staff provide copies of Arizona birth and death certificates at \$20.00 per certificate. Payment methods are cash, check, money order and credit card (Visa, Master Card, Discover and American Express) With all credit card transactions a convenience fee will be applied. You must provide a government issued picture identification that contains a signature, such as a driver's license.
- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** WIC is a nutrition program for eligible women, infants and children that provides nutrition education and breastfeeding, support services, nutritious foods, basic health screenings and referrals to other health and social services. Call (928) 428-7690 to schedule appointment.