2020 Child-Wellbeing Rankings for Tennessee Counties

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) has released county-level data on about 100 indicators of child well-being. You can find data on all the indicators on KIDS COUNT Data Center. TCCY selected 12 of these indicators to compare child-wellbeing across counties. These indicators came from four areas: Education, Economic Well-being, Health, and Family & Community.
The county with the best child well-being was Williamson. The county with the worst was Lake. **In all four areas, Williamson County fared better than Lake County.** Williamson County was ranked 1st in Education, Economic Well-being, and Family & Community. It was ranked 3rd in Health. Marion County and Houston County were ranked 1st and 2nd for Health, respectively. Lake County was ranked 95th in Health and Family & Community. It was ranked 94th in Economic Well-being while Hancock County was ranked 95th. In Education, it was ranked 86th while Hardeman County was ranked 95th.

Full county profiles available [here](#).

---

**ICYMI**

- **TJC's Letter to the 112th TN General Assembly** - TJC sent a letter to the state legislature detailing some of our goals to address child hunger and child health in 2021. These efforts include combatting harmful policies and removing administrative barriers to programs like SNAP, WIC, and TennCare. [Read the full letter](#).

- **Recent News**
  
  - [The Affordable Care Act is a lifeline for young adults | Opinion](#)
  
  - [Pandemic Takes Toll On Children's Mental Health](#)
  
  - [An 11th-Hour Approval for Major Changes to Medicaid in Tennessee](#)
  
  - [Last Ditch Approval of Tennessee's Medicaid Block Grant Proposal Causes Alarm](#)

- **TJC's Child Poverty Organizational Sign-On Letter** - Tennessee is not faring well in meeting the basic needs of families in terms of housing, health, economic support, and food during the pandemic, as noted in [The State of The Child 2020: COVID-19 Edition](#). TJC is inviting organizations to sign onto a letter about child poverty and recommendations to address the issue in Tennessee. The letter will be sent to Gov. Bill Lee and...
Members of the General Assembly. You can review the letter and sign on [here](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewMessage/eda062aa-365b-eb11-a607-00155d43c992) by January 31st. The letter will list organizations, not individuals. Please feel free to share this link with other organizations across the state, but please DO NOT post publicly.

- **Tennessee’s Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap** - The Prenatal-To-3 State Policy Roadmap is an annual policy guide produced by the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center at The University of Texas at Austin that provides states with actionable policy solutions to improve overall outcomes for young children. In 2020, Tennessee implemented 1 of the 5 recommended state policies and 0 of the 6 effective strategies to improve child outcomes. The one policy Tennessee implemented was reducing the administrative burden of SNAP by extending the recertification interval to 12 months for households with SNAP-eligible children. Read [Tennessee’s Roadmap](#).

- **Block Grant Approval Press Releases** - On January 8th, CMS approved Tennessee’s proposal to block grant TennCare. On January 15th, Tennessee General Assembly authorized the Block Grant proposal. Read Michele Johnson’s, Executive Director of TJC, press statements [here](#) and [here](#).

- **TN Disability Survey** - Please share your thoughts on the best ways of connecting individuals with disabilities, their families, and disability professionals with the information and services they need. Everyone who completes the survey can request free resources and be entered into a drawing for one of 100 gift cards ($20 each). The study is a collaboration between the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center UCEDD, Tennessee Disability Pathfinder, and the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities. Complete this survey

**INSURE OUR KIDS PARTNER UPDATE**

Welcome the following new Insure Our Kids Partners: No More Silence Foundation, Centro Hispano, and Hispanic Outreach Leadership Association of the Lakeway Area!
Visit insureourkids.org for more information about the campaign to enroll every eligible but uninsured child in TennCare and CoverKids. If your organization is interested in joining the campaign, feel free to reply to this email.

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal updates

- COVID-19 Relief Package- In late December 2020, Trump signed a $900 billion pandemic relief bill. The package includes some important anti-poverty supports, but it is still lacking in many areas of support that are critical.
State updates

Tennessee’s Block Grant Approval

In Fall 2019, the state legislature unveiled the block grant proposal. 6,124 comments were submitted during the federal comment period which ended December 2019. An overwhelming majority of these comments opposed the block grant. Despite the opposition, CMS approved Tennessee’s proposal to block grant TennCare on January 8th. Exactly one week later, the Tennessee General Assembly authorized the Block Grant proposal. **This approved block grant places a cap on federal funding, giving Tennessee the flexibility to make changes without federal approval.** This waiver will allow the state to keep 45-55% of the money spent below the funding cap, if it meets 10 quality metrics that are yet to be defined. The state claims it can run its Medicaid program more efficiently under a block grant. **There is no commitment to cover any additional people or any additional benefits.** This is an experimental proposal that creates risks and uncertainties for TennCare beneficiaries. A **block grant** is not the same as **Medicaid Expansion**. If the Tennessee Legislature wanted to improve its Medicaid program, it would take the $1.4 Billion waiting in Washington and expand Medicaid to over 300,000 working Tennesseans. **Check out TJC’s Block Grant One Pager to learn more about why the Federal and State officials’ approval of Tennessee’s Block Grant proposal is detrimental to the State’s Medicaid program.**

![Image of what's in the COVID relief package and what's missing]

- An extension of unemployment benefits that were set to expire
- An extension of the federal eviction moratorium
- Rental assistance and boosts for SNAP program
- Aid for child care providers!
- $600 stimulus checks for qualifying individuals
- Additional health care assistance for uninsured people
- Emergency grants to help poor households that were left out of previous packages or need additional help
- Long-term solutions to the eviction crisis
- Protections for essential workers
P-EBT

In November 2020, P-EBT was extended to September 2021 in USDA guidance on P-EBT. Despite this extension, families continue to wait for P-EBT benefits and have received nothing for October to present. They have not received food support since September of last year. That means they have not received benefits -- for which they qualify -- during the darkest days of this pandemic: October, November, December, and January. **Without this support, over 360,000 Tennessee kids are going hungry.**

Tell Governor Lee that children cannot wait. **Act now and stop the wait for P-EBT!**

If you have questions about P-EBT, email TJC at nutrition@tnjustice.org

TJC will send updates on any breaking news regarding P-EBT as we learn about them. **Sign-up here to be the first to know.**

---

**JOIN US**

Tennessee Justice Center and University of Tennessee College of Nursing present 2021 Healthcare Advocacy Series

**Workshop 1: Media Engagement.**

Saturday, January 23
9 AM CT/10 AM ET

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Join us for the last event in the 2021 advocacy series hosted by TJC and University of Tennessee-Knoxville College of Nursing. Dr. Carole R. Myers will lead participants in this interactive workshop to learn how to use media engagement as an effective tool for educating, connecting with, and influencing a variety of stakeholders, including policymakers. The workshop is free and open to all. Recordings from the prior events in this series are
Tennessee Justice Center’s College Hunger Call 2021

Saturday, January 29
10 AM CT/11 AM ET

REGISTER HERE

Join TJC for the first College Hunger Call of 2021! Do you want to learn more about college hunger in Tennessee or get an update to changes to the nutrition programs as a result of COVID-19? Are you interested in hearing about how to integrate Food Assistance Programs like SNAP and WIC into your college’s anti-hunger initiatives? This call is the first of our regular college hunger series. If you want to join the college hunger partners group, please contact Emily Sherwood at esherwood@tnjustice.org.

As a reminder, the Tennessee Justice Center also helps with:

1. Enrollment onto TennCare and CoverKids
2. Service Issues
3. Redetermination Issues

If you ever encounter anyone who is having trouble getting health insurance or getting health services, please call TJC: (615) 255-0331.

If there is any information you would like us to share on your behalf, including events and resources, please reply to this email.

Sincerely,