

ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT

2025



UNITED WAY
Southwest
Louisiana

Table of Contents

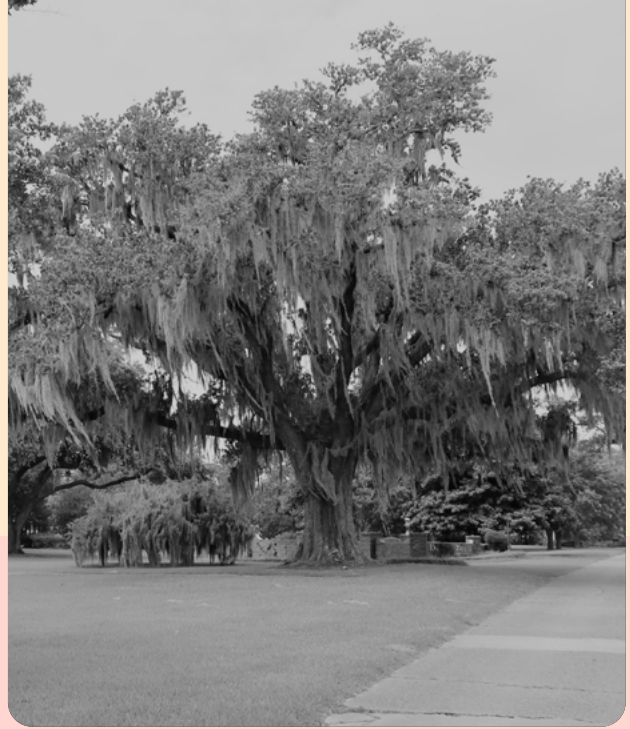
04	Our Focus Areas
05	ALICE
06	Youth Opportunity
10	Healthy Community
12	Financial Security
14	Community Resiliency

SOURCES

County Healthy Rankings
US Census - American Community Survey
Louisiana Department of Public Health
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
A.L.I.C.E. Report
Louisiana Department of Education



Our Southwest Louisiana COMMUNITY



United Way Southwest Louisiana deeply values the region's people, recognizing their resilience, strength, and potential. They are dedicated to supporting and uplifting every individual, believing that a strong community thrives when all its people are empowered and given opportunities to succeed.

Southwest Louisiana is a vibrant region rich in culture, history, and natural beauty. Known for its unique blend of Cajun and Creole influences, the area is characterized by its lively music scene, delicious cuisine, and warm community spirit. The landscape, adorned with picturesque bayous and lush wetlands, reflects the region's deep connection to nature. Many residents celebrate the local traditions and influences, showcasing the resilience and creativity of its residents.

The people of Southwest Louisiana are known for their hospitality and strong sense of community. Families often come together to support one another, fostering deep-rooted connections. This sense of kinship is evident in the numerous organizations and initiatives aimed at improving the lives of

residents, particularly the youth. Many community members are dedicated to volunteering and empowering future generations, underscoring a collective commitment to progress and growth.

Challenges such as economic disparities and educational gaps exist, but the people's determination shines through their efforts to create a brighter future. Organizations like United Way Southwest Louisiana are crucial in addressing these issues, focusing on youth opportunities and financial security. The spirit of collaboration and activism among residents instills hope for continued development, ensuring that Southwest Louisiana remains a place where everyone can thrive and prosper.

Southwest Louisiana embodies a vibrant community spirit, where hospitality and resilience unite to foster a brighter future for all.

Our FOCUS AREAS

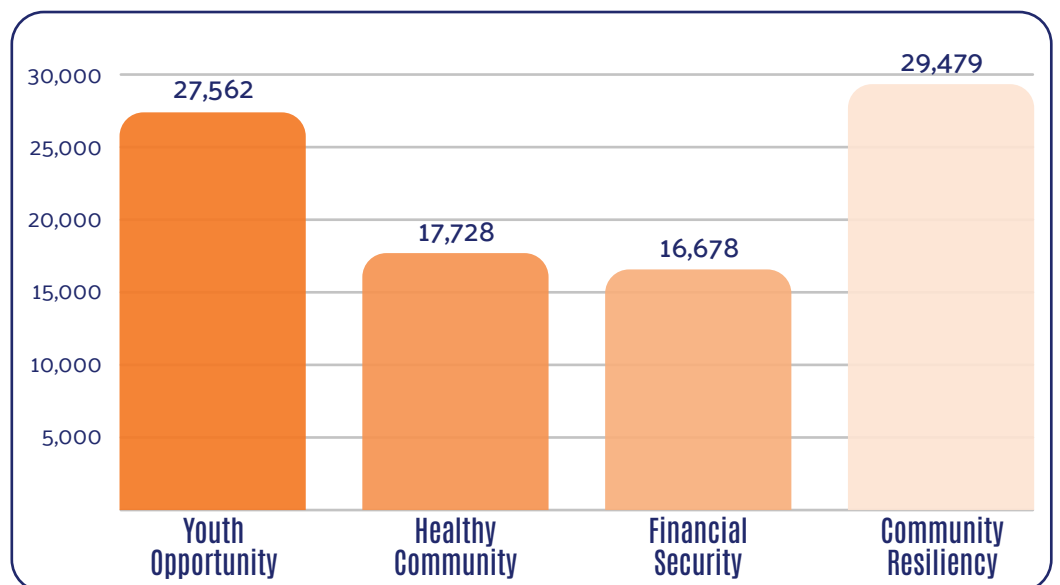
When our youth succeed, the entire community thrives.

United Way Southwest Louisiana is dedicated to empowering youth and enhancing community resilience through strategic support in key areas. They focus on Youth Opportunity by providing mentorship, skills development, and access to high-quality early learning, ensuring young people can thrive.

Financial Security is another priority, with initiatives aimed at promoting economic independence through financial literacy, job training, and essential services, which help break the cycle of poverty.

Additionally, they are committed to creating a Healthy Community by improving access to health resources, addressing disparities, and promoting overall wellness. This holistic approach fosters both physical and emotional well-being.

Finally, United Way Southwest Louisiana enhances Community Resiliency by equipping organizations and families with the tools needed to respond to crises effectively, ensuring a safer environment for all.



Individuals served by United Way Southwest Louisiana in 2024

About ALICE

ALICE®, which stands for **Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**, represents individuals and families in our community who work hard but still struggle to make ends meet. These are the essential workers who contribute to our economy yet often find themselves one unexpected expense away from financial instability.

The **ALICE Threshold** refers to the minimum income level required for a household to afford basic necessities, including housing, food, childcare, healthcare, and transportation. This threshold varies by region and takes into account local cost of living, highlighting the financial challenges that ALICE households face even while being employed.

Learn more

unitedforalice.org

unitedwayswla.org/alice

58%

Below the
ALICE Threshold

ALLEN PARISH

7,659 households in the parish

Poverty.....22%

ALICE.....36%

4,468 families not making ends meet

44%

Below the
ALICE Threshold

BEAUREGARD PARISH

13,691 households in the parish

Poverty.....15%

ALICE.....29%

6,037 families not making ends meet

45%

Below the
ALICE Threshold

CALCASIEU PARISH

79,222 households in the parish

Poverty.....17%

ALICE.....29%

35,952 families not making ends meet

33%

Below the
ALICE Threshold

CAMERON PARISH

2,034 households in the parish

Poverty.....5%

ALICE.....28%

671 families not making ends meet

51%

Below the
ALICE Threshold

JEFF DAVIS PARISH

11,704 households in the parish

Poverty.....18%

ALICE.....33%

5,991 families not making ends meet

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

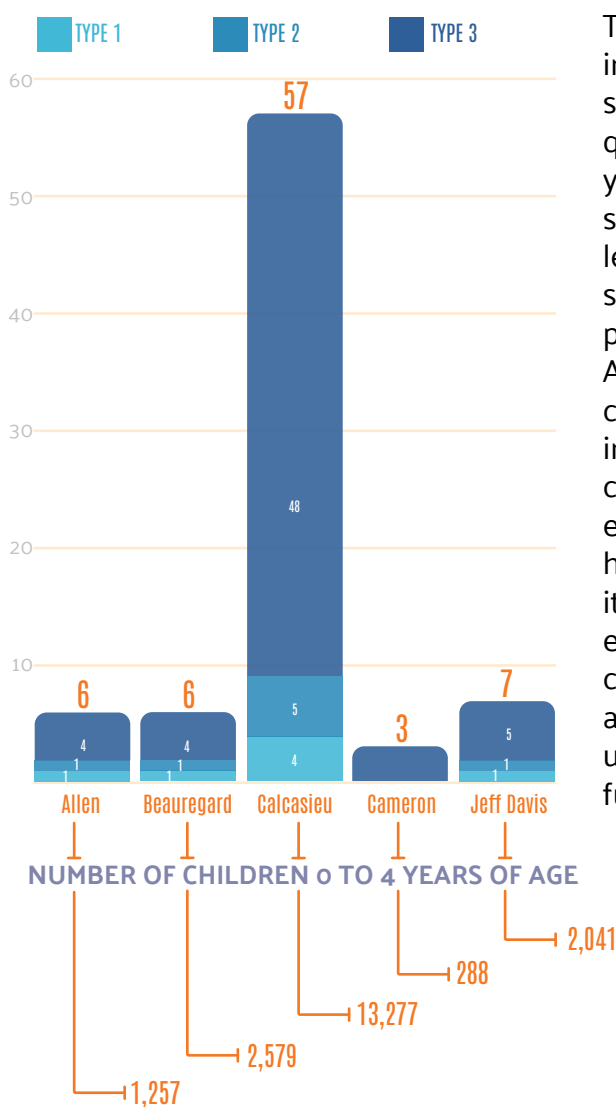
Focus Area

Empowering youth shapes our community's future.

United Way Southwest Louisiana strongly emphasizes the importance of Youth Opportunity, recognizing that the community's future lies in the hands of its young people. They focus on providing vital resources and support through programs that enhance education, mentorship, and skills development. By addressing youth

barriers, such as access to quality education and life skills training, United Way is working to break the cycle of poverty and create a path to success for every child. They understand that when youth have the opportunity to grow and thrive, it benefits the entire community, driving economic growth and social development. Through collaborative efforts with local schools, organizations, and families, United Way Southwest Louisiana is committed to fostering an environment where all young individuals can realize their potential and contribute positively to society.

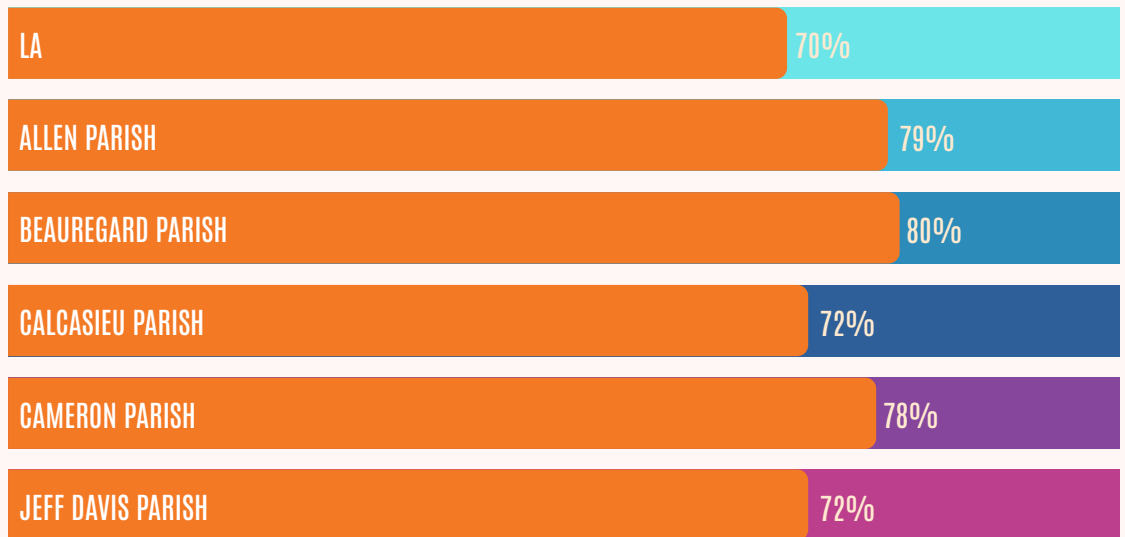
EARLY LEARNING CENTERS



The licensed early learning situation in Southwest Louisiana faces several significant challenges that impact the quality and accessibility of education for young children. Many licensed facilities struggle with inadequate funding, leading to limited resources and staffing shortages that hinder their ability to provide high-quality care and education. Additionally, trained educators are scarce, contributing to high turnover rates and inconsistent learning experiences for children. Geographic disparities further exacerbate the problem, with rural areas having fewer licensed providers, making it difficult for families to find accessible early learning options. These issues collectively hinder the development and well-being of children in the region, ultimately affecting their readiness for future academic success.

Imagine a community where **13,277 preschool-aged children are eager for quality early education, yet only 57 licensed facilities serve their needs.** How can we ensure every child receives the foundational learning and support they deserve? This scenario highlights the critical need for innovative solutions and community collaboration to expand access to quality early education, enabling all children to thrive and reach their full potential. What creative ideas can we explore to bridge this gap and provide the essential resources these young learners require?

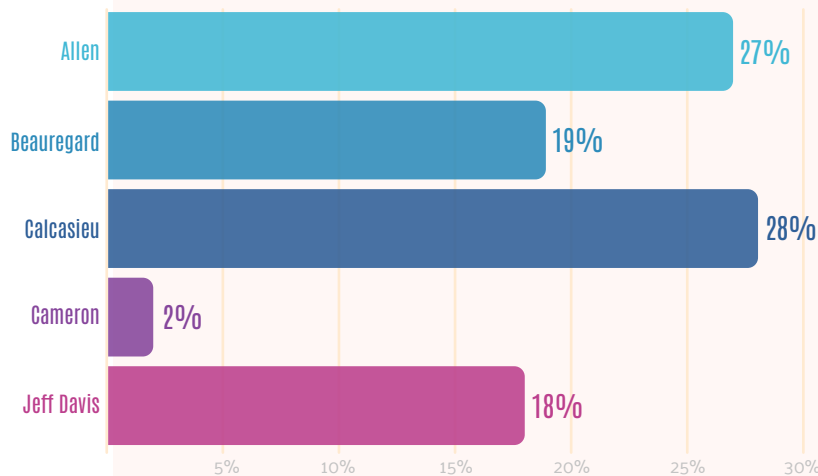
School Enrollment Rates of



Analyzing the percentage of students enrolled in school compared to the number of school-age children is vital for assessing the educational system's health. This comparison reveals enrollment rates and potential barriers to education, such as **POVERTY** and transportation issues.

The national average enrollment rate is approximately 90%. A lower percentage may indicate significant challenges in a community. Addressing these gaps allows stakeholders to implement targeted interventions, ensuring all children have access to quality education and fostering a more equitable society.

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY



Children living in poverty is a crucial statistic, particularly as national data shows that about 17% of children in the U.S. are affected. Growing up in impoverished conditions can severely limit their access to education, healthcare, and nutritious food, leading to long-term negative effects on their development and future opportunities. Addressing child poverty is essential for breaking the cycle of disadvantage and fostering a healthier, more equitable community for everyone.

Reading on grade level by third grade is vital for children's future academic success, as research shows that students who struggle with reading are four times more likely to drop out of high school. With nearly 65% of fourth graders in the U.S. not reading at grade level, it's crucial to prioritize literacy to ensure that all children have the skills they need to thrive in school and beyond.

Comprehensive Intervention Required (CIR)

School earned an overall letter grade of D or F for three consecutive years and/or a cohort graduation rate below 67% in the most recent year

Urgent Intervention Required (UIR)

School earned a score equivalent to an F for two consecutive years; school had an out-of-school suspension rate greater than twice the national average for three consecutive years

Urgent Intervention Needed (UIN)

School earned a score equivalent to a D or F in the most recent year

ALLEN PARISH

Kinder Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
Kinder Middle School.....	Students with Disabilities
Oakdale Middle School.....	Students with Disabilities
.....	Black or African American

BEAUREGARD PARISH

DeRidder Junior High School.....	Black or African American
.....	Students with Disabilities
Pinewood Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities

JEFF DAVIS PARISH

Elton Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
Fenton Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
Jennings Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
Welsh-Roanoke Junior High School.....	All Students
.....	Students with Disabilities

Lake Charles Charter Academy.....	All Students
.....	Students with Disabilities
SWLA Charter Academy.....	All Students
.....	Students with Disabilities

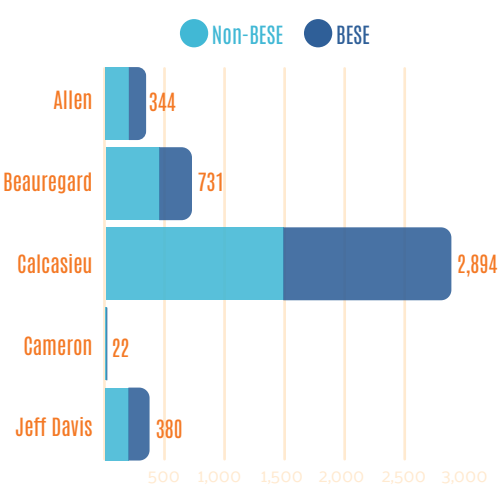
In Southwest Louisiana, some schools face significant challenges that necessitate intervention to improve educational outcomes for their students. Socioeconomic disparities, inadequate funding, and limited access to educational resources contribute to lower performance levels and high dropout rates. A lack of parental support and unstable home environments can also hinder students' academic progress and motivation. Schools that need intervention often require enhanced support in curriculum development, teacher training, and student mentorship programs.

CALCASIEU PARISH

Arnett Middle School.....	Students with Disabilities
Barbe Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
Brentwood Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
College Oaks Elementary School.....	All Students
.....	Black or African American
Combte-Fondel Elementary School.....	Economically Disadvantaged
.....	Students with Disabilities
DeQuincy Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
Fairview Elementary School.....	All Students
.....	Black or African American
.....	Students with Disabilities
F.K. White Middle School.....	Homeless
.....	Students with Disabilities
Henry Heights Elementary School.....	All Students
.....	Black or African American
.....	Economically Disadvantaged
.....	Students with Disabilities
JJ. Johnson Elementary School.....	All Students
Kaufman Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
LeBlanc Middle School.....	Black or African American
.....	Students with Disabilities
Maplewood Middle School.....	Black or African American
Molo Middle Magnet School.....	Students with Disabilities
Moss Bluff Middle School.....	Students with Disabilities
Oak Park Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
Oak Park Middle School.....	All Students
.....	Black or African American
.....	Economically Disadvantaged
.....	Hispanic/Latino
.....	Homeless
.....	Students with Disabilities
Pearl Watson Elementary School.....	All Students
.....	Black or African American
.....	Economically Disadvantaged
.....	Students with Disabilities
Ralph Wilson Elementary School.....	All Students
.....	Black or African American
.....	Economically Disadvantaged
.....	Students with Disabilities
SJ. Welsh Middle Schools.....	Students with Disabilities
St. John Elementary School.....	Students with Disabilities
R.W. Vincent Elementary School.....	Black or African American
Vinton Elementary School.....	Black or African American
.....	Economically Disadvantaged
.....	Students with Disabilities
.....	White
Vinton Middle School.....	Students with Disabilities
Watkins Elementary School.....	All Students
.....	Black or African American
.....	Economically Disadvantaged
.....	Students with Disabilities

In Louisiana, home study programs for K-8 students can be categorized into two main types: BESE-approved and non-BESE-approved programs. BESE-approved programs must meet specific state educational standards and curriculum guidelines set by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). This ensures accountability and recognition that can facilitate access to specific resources and support. These programs often provide more structured options and help families stay aligned with state educational benchmarks. Non-BESE-approved home study programs allow for greater flexibility and creativity, as parents can design their curriculum without state oversight.

HOME STUDY



AVERAGE ACT SCORES 2024

The average ACT scores in Louisiana have concerned educators and policymakers. In recent years, the state has typically reported scores that fall below the national average, reflecting ongoing challenges in educational attainment. For instance, the average composite score hovers around 19, while the national average tends to be around 20.5. This gap highlights the need for continued efforts to enhance educational resources and support for students, aiming to improve college readiness and ensure that Louisiana's youth are better equipped for future academic and career opportunities. Addressing the factors contributing to these scores is essential for fostering higher educational outcomes across the state.

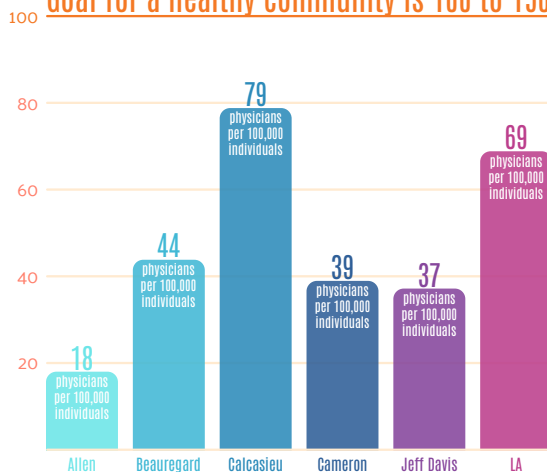
Allen	Elizabeth High School.....	17.7
	Fairview High School.....	18.6
	Kinder High School.....	17.8
	Oakdale High School.....	18.2
	Oberlin High School.....	17.4
	Reeves High School.....	19.6
Beauregard	DeRidder High School.....	17.3
	East Beauregard High School.....	19.2
	Merryville High School.....	17.7
	Singer High School.....	18.4
	South Beauregard High School.....	20.2
Calcasieu	Alfred M. Barbe High School.....	20.4
	Bell City High School.....	19.7
	DeQuincy High School.....	19.2
	Sam Houston High School.....	20.2
	Iowa High School.....	18.4
	LaGrange High School.....	15.9
	Lake Charles College Prep.....	15.9
	Starks High School.....	20.5
	Sulphur High School.....	19.4
	Vinton High School.....	19.5
	Washington/Marion High School.....	15
	Westlake High School.....	17.8
Cameron	Grand Lake High School.....	19.6
	South Cameron High School.....	16
Jeff Davis	Elton High School.....	16.9
	Hathaway High School.....	17.7
	Jennings High School.....	18.7
	Lacassine High School.....	19.4
	Lake Arthur High School.....	18.5
	Welsh High School.....	18.6

*A healthy community
is the foundation for a
prosperous future.*

United Way Southwest Louisiana is dedicated to fostering a Healthy Community by addressing all residents' essential health and wellness needs. Their Initiatives focus on improving access to healthcare services, nutrition, and mental health support, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to lead a healthy life. By collaborating with local partners and providing necessary resources, United Way aims to create an environment where families can thrive through better health outcomes and increased awareness about healthy living. This holistic approach ultimately strengthens the fabric of the community and promotes overall well-being.

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN RATIO

Goal for a healthy community is 100 to 150

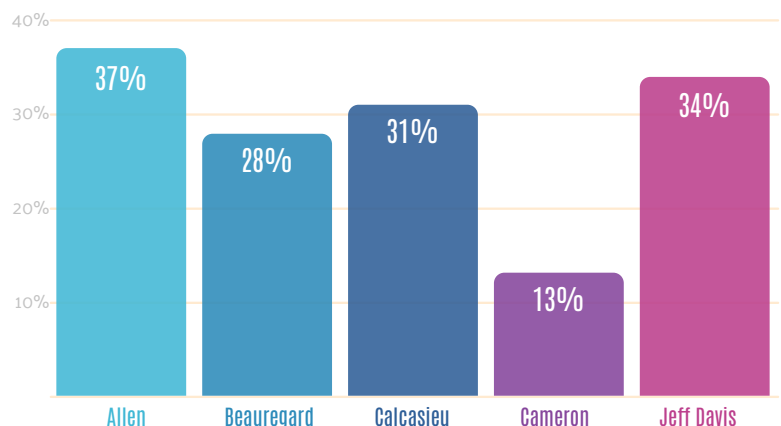


The Primary Care Physician Ratio refers to the number of primary care physicians available per 100,000 population in a given area, which helps evaluate the accessibility and effectiveness of healthcare services. A higher ratio generally indicates better access to primary care, potentially leading to improved overall health outcomes for the community. The national average is approximately 86. The goal ratio is 100 to 150 primary care physicians per 100,000 population. Achieving this ratio aims to ensure adequate access to primary healthcare services, which can improve health outcomes and enhance the community's overall well-being. This target helps to promote preventive care, timely treatment, and ongoing management of chronic conditions.

CHILDREN RECEIVING SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

Monitoring the rate of children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits is crucial for understanding food security and the overall well-being of families.

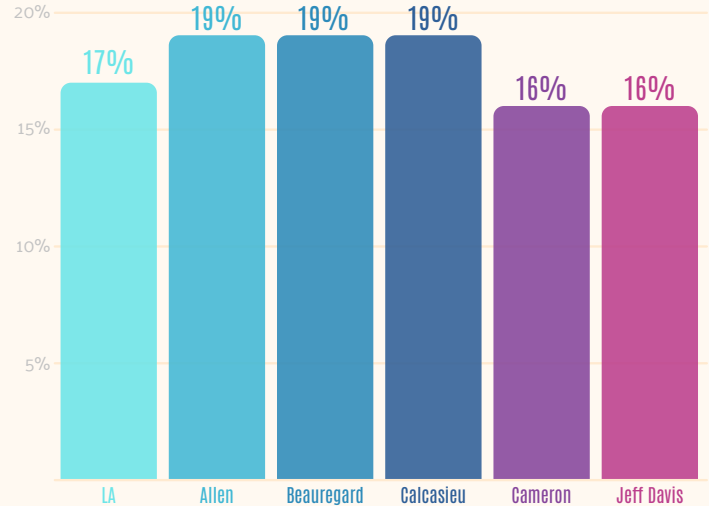
As a vital resource to alleviate hunger and improve nutrition among low-income households, SNAP plays a significant role in ensuring that children have access to healthy food options necessary for their growth and development. By tracking these rates, policymakers and community organizations can identify trends, assess the effectiveness of outreach efforts, and address service gaps.



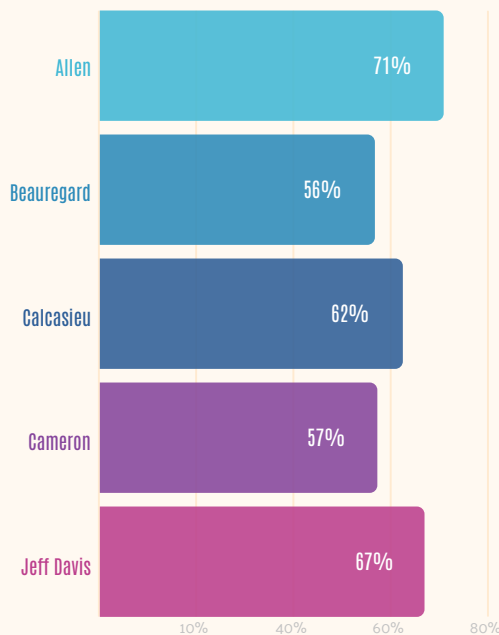
Rates of DISABILITY

The Disability Rate in a parish is a key metric reflecting the proportion of individuals with disabilities, which affects access to education, employment, and healthcare. In Southwest Louisiana, ambulatory disabilities and independent living challenges are particularly prevalent, especially in rural areas where limited resources and services exacerbate these issues.

Nationally, the disability rate stands at around 12.6%, but the South has the highest rates, indicating a pressing need for tailored support to help individuals navigate daily life. Understanding these rates is vital for policymakers and community organizations to create inclusive programs, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all community members and fostering a stronger, more supportive environment.

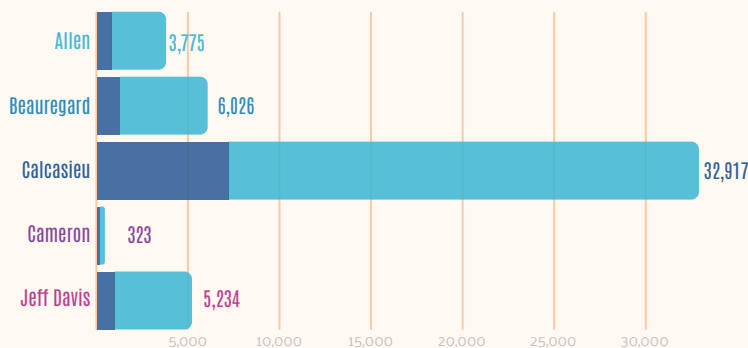


BIRTHS COVERED BY MEDICAID



The rate of births covered by Medicaid has become a critical measure of healthcare access for low-income families, with national averages showing that approximately 40% of births are financed through the program. This coverage ensures that expectant mothers receive essential prenatal care, promoting healthier outcomes for both mothers and infants. Medicaid expansion in various states has further increased access to maternal health services, improving birth outcomes and reducing disparities in healthcare for vulnerable populations.

PUBLICLY INSURED CHILDREN



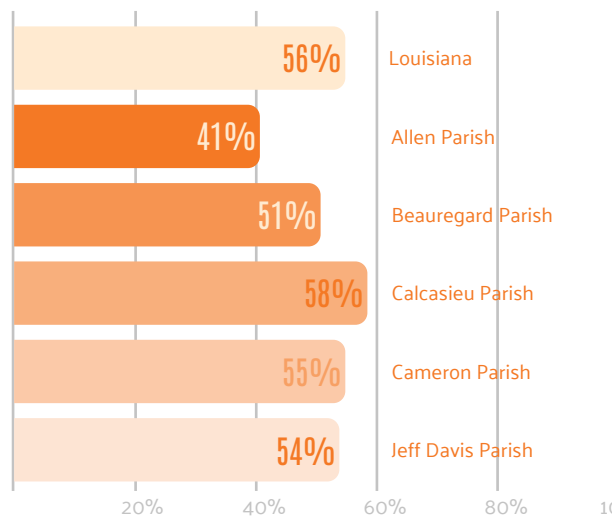
The number of publicly insured children in Southwest Louisiana indicates a significant reliance on government support for healthcare. This highlights the community's economic challenges and the need for accessible health services to ensure the well-being of its youth.

Building financial security is the cornerstone of a thriving community.

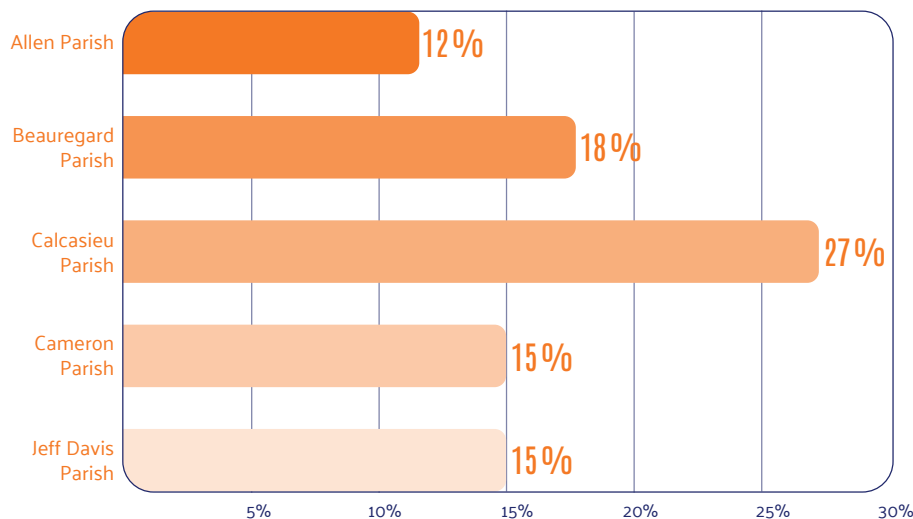
United Way Southwest Louisiana prioritizes Financial Security as a vital focus area, aiming to empower individuals and families to achieve economic independence and stability. Through various programs and resources, they provide support in areas such as financial literacy, job training, and access to essential services.

By equipping community members with the skills and knowledge to manage their finances effectively, United Way is working to break the cycle of poverty and foster long-term community growth.

Employment Rate

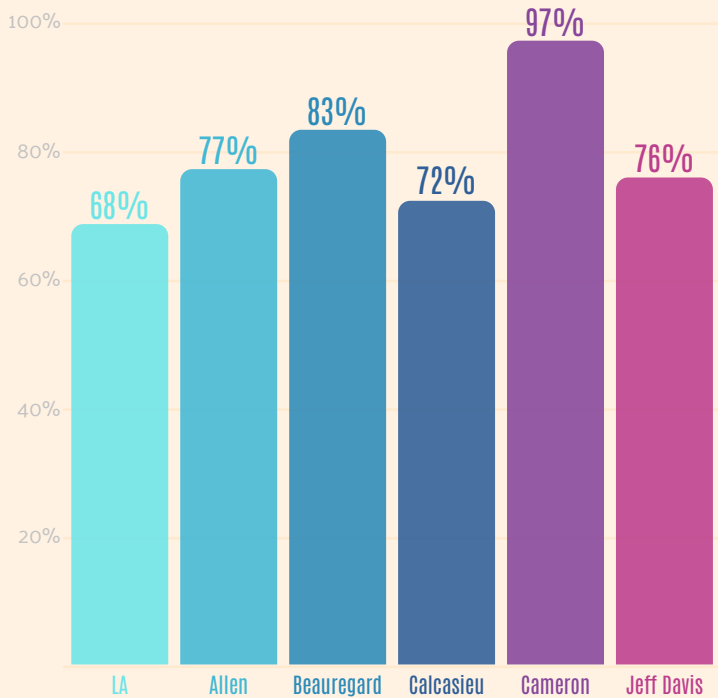


The employment rate measures the percentage of the working-age population that is employed, indicating the job market's health. It is calculated by dividing the employed individuals by the total working-age population and multiplying by 100. A high employment rate, often above 95%, suggests optimal economic conditions and more lavish consumer spending. In contrast, a low rate below 60% can indicate severe financial challenges, such as high unemployment and a struggling job market. Analyzing this rate helps policymakers identify trends and implement job creation and workforce development strategies.



National statistics reveal that 39% of women aged 25 and older and 36% of men in the same age group have completed a bachelor's degree or higher. In Louisiana, the average is significantly lower at just 27%, with some parishes struggling even more to improve educational outcomes.

Homeownership Rate

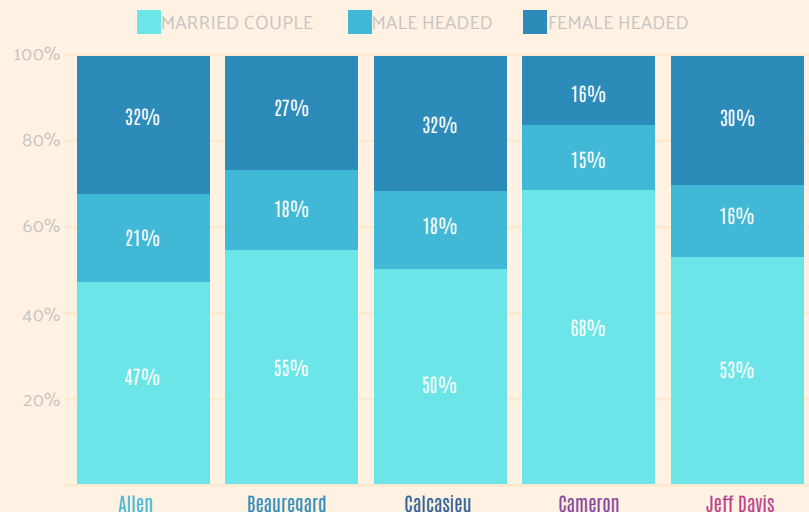


The homeownership rate is an essential indicator of economic well-being and social stability within a community. Higher homeownership rates typically reflect greater financial security, as owning a home often signifies increased wealth and investment in the local economy. Homeownership fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility, empowering individuals and families to invest in their neighborhoods, contributing to community development and cohesion.

The national average is 66%.

Due to economic and social factors, single female-headed households often face more significant challenges than other family structures. These households frequently experience higher rates of poverty, mainly because single mothers usually have to rely on a single income to support their families. Limited access to affordable childcare, healthcare, and educational opportunities can further hinder their ability to secure stable employment. Additionally, societal stigmas and systemic barriers can make it more difficult for single mothers to find adequate support or assistance, leaving them vulnerable to financial instability and stress. As a result, these families may struggle to meet basic needs, affecting their overall well-being and opportunities for future success.

Household Types



PERCENT OF SINGLE-FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN LIVING UNDER THE ALICE THRESHOLD

ALLEN.....	92%
BEAUREGARD	88%
CALCASIEU	87%
CAMERON.....	24%
JEFF DAVIS.....	75%

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

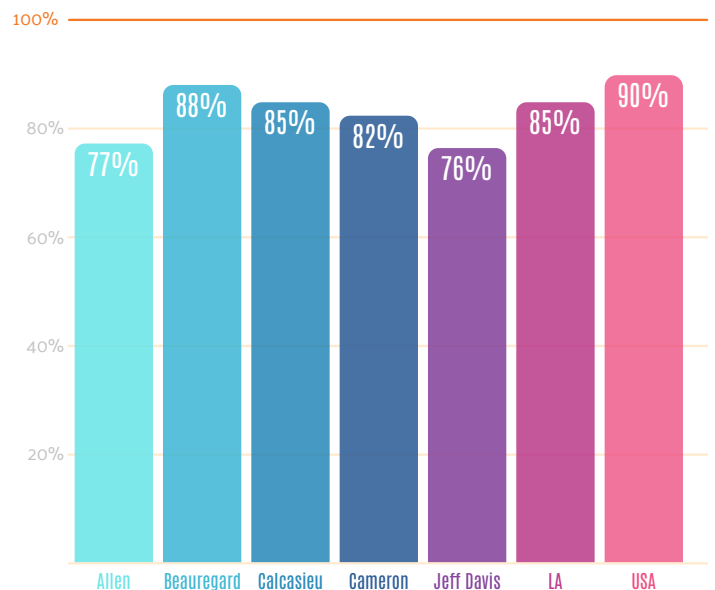
Focus Area

By working together and accessing the right resources, we can build a resilient community.

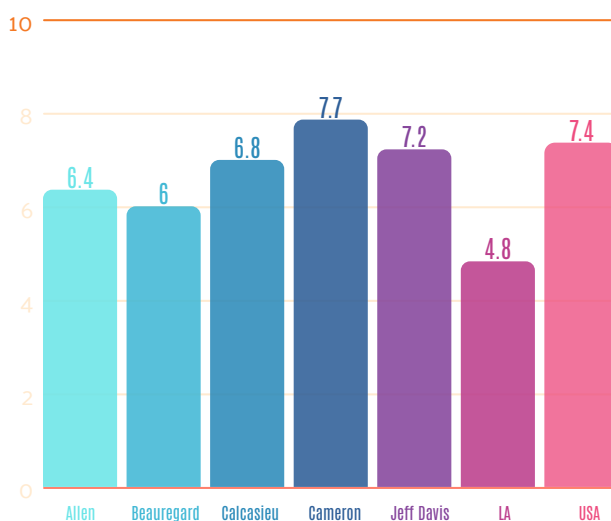
United Way Southwest Louisiana focuses on Community Resiliency by preparing individuals and families to face adversity through collaboration and resource accessibility. Their Initiatives prioritize building strong networks and sharing crucial information that enhances community preparedness. By connecting residents with essential resources and fostering partnerships among local organizations, United Way empowers the community to navigate challenges together. This proactive approach ensures that when difficulties arise, citizens are ready to respond and supported by a cohesive network, ultimately enhancing their collective capacity to thrive.

Broadband access and affordability are crucial for rural areas in Louisiana, as they serve as lifelines for education, healthcare, and economic development. Reliable internet connectivity enables students to participate in online learning, allows healthcare providers to offer telemedicine services, and helps local businesses reach broader markets. Ensuring that these communities have affordable broadband access bridges the digital divide, fosters social equity, and enhances overall quality of life. Without it, rural populations risk being left behind in an increasingly connected world.

BROADBAND ACCESS



FOOD ENVIRONMENT INDEX



The Food Environment Index ranks communities on a scale from 0 to 10 based on the combined factors of access to healthy foods and income. A score of 0 indicates a very low food environment, reflecting significant barriers to accessing healthy food options, while a score of 10 represents an optimal environment where healthy food is readily available and accessible to all income levels. This ranking system helps to identify areas in need of intervention and support, as communities with lower scores may require targeted efforts to improve healthy food access and overall health outcomes. Lacking consistent access to food is related to negative health outcomes such as weight gain, premature mortality, asthma, and activity limitations, as well as increased health care costs.

The ALICE report highlights a critical distinction between the Household Survival Budget and the Household Stability Budget. The **SURVIVAL BUDGET** outlines the minimum resources needed for basic living expenses, often leaving families with little to no margin for unexpected situations. In contrast, the **STABILITY BUDGET** provides a more comprehensive framework that includes savings for emergencies and unforeseen events.

Access to a Stability Budget equips families with the resilience to navigate personal crises and disasters, enabling them to maintain their well-being and recover more effectively. This financial buffer fosters security and peace of mind, allowing families to focus on their long-term goals rather than struggling with immediate survival needs.

ALLEN

Median Household Income: \$51,138

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$78,192
Hourly Income Needed.....\$39.10

HOUSEHOLD STABILITY BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$107,472
Hourly Income Needed.....\$58.60

BEAUREGARD

Median Household Income: \$64,995

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$79,068
Hourly Income Needed.....\$39.53

HOUSEHOLD STABILITY BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$120,792
Hourly Income Needed.....\$60.40

CALCASIEU

Median Household Income: \$63,890

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$82,656
Hourly Income Needed.....\$41.33

HOUSEHOLD STABILITY BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$123,588
Hourly Income Needed.....\$61.79

CAMERON

Median Household Income: \$72,500

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$82,716
Hourly Income Needed.....\$41.36

HOUSEHOLD STABILITY BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$120,816
Hourly Income Needed.....\$60.17

JEFF DAVIS

Median Household Income: \$56,500

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$78,588
Hourly Income Needed.....\$39.29

HOUSEHOLD STABILITY BUDGET

Annual Income Needed.....\$119,328
Hourly Income Needed.....\$59.66



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