

POVERTY IN LATAH COUNTY, IDAHO: A 2024 UPDATE

May 2024



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MOSCOW (IDAHO)*

***Note: Throughout this document League of Women Voters Of Moscow (ID) will be referred to as LWVM**

League of Women Voters Of Moscow (Idaho)
Poverty on the Palouse Report Update 2024

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Executive Summary

Poverty is not a static condition. Solutions are rarely one-and-done propositions. Circumstances have changed since the LWVM study of poverty in 2012. Recent news headlines, anecdotal evidence, and strains on public resources and volunteer services suggest that it is still a problem. At the LWVM's annual meeting (5-4-22), members agreed it is time to reassess the status of local poverty and relevant positions.

The LWVM's 2012 report increased awareness of poverty, resources to address it, and opportunities for collaboration. It served as justification for successful funding proposals, and yielded substantive results. Subsequent to those efforts, this region saw establishment of the CHAS federally qualified health center for people who are underinsured, Family Promise that provides for temporary housing for homeless families, grants to organizations like Sojourners Alliance, expansion of the free summer lunch program, improvements for ease in use of SNAP/EBT at the Moscow Farmers Market, increased support for youth recreation scholarships, outreach from University volunteer groups, more effective networking among foodbanks, development of a resource guide, a similar report by Pullman's League, and extensive coverage of the issue by the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*.

Since then, a pandemic triggered lingering social isolation, changes in workforce practices and employment, waves of federal stimulus funding, diminished confidence in the economy, disrupted supply chains, inflation, and legislation that affects financial stability of households that depend on financial aid and social services. New projects, programs, policies, and partnerships have filled some deficiencies identified in the LWVM's original report, but not all recommendations have been implemented and some resources have disappeared. This update seeks to discover the extent and manifestations of poverty in Latah County now, and what interventions, if any, could alleviate the impacts. It expands on the original study to include social justice, education/job training, employment and the economy, legislative policies, early childhood education, eldercare, and other interwoven aspects of poverty.

Lack of affordable housing is a growing problem. A regional housing assessment estimated we are short of affordable single-family homes by roughly 340 units now, and that from 2017-2027, an additional 2,600 single-family units (roughly 270 per year) will be needed. Those trying to build affordable housing face inflated costs for materials and land. Sometimes, efforts are stalled by zoning codes, allowable lot sizes, density restrictions, and setback requirements. Some deficiencies identified in the 2012 poverty report have been remedied, including the desire for a single point of entry. Sojourners has been designated as the access point for anyone seeking housing assistance. The need for temporary housing for unsheltered families is partially addressed by Family Promise, but the need exceeds capacity. Affordable workforce housing for people at or near the poverty level remains a significant problem. There is also a need for emergency shelter, especially in dangerously harsh weather. Older residents and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable. Solutions will require investment from public and private sectors; ongoing involvement by service organizations and the faith community; education about the need for affordable housing; practices to make it physically accessible; and legislative interventions to remove unnecessary obstacles.

In general, people in poverty spend a greater portion of their incomes on food and other necessities than do people with higher incomes. Food prices have increased steadily since the Great Recession. In 2022, prices for food constituted the highest year-over-year increase since 1979. Prices in grocery stores increased 11.4% in 2021 and 10.2% in 2022, and were predicted to increase by an additional 7.8% in 2023. Some measures of food insecurity improved as a result of assistance programs during the pandemic and recent economic flux. Some of that assistance has ended. Federal aid programs, local food banks, and community donations eased the crisis, and temporarily caused food insecurity figures to look better than they might have looked otherwise. Nevertheless, the demand for food assistance has continued to grow. In 2022, the West Side Food Pantry averaged 500 visits per month by adults, plus 300 visits by seniors and children. Use in Jan/Feb 2023 was double that of the same time period in 2022. In 2022, Moscow Food Bank had 18,000 customer visits, including about 650 family visits per month. They are on-pace to exceed those numbers in 2023. Variable assistance program eligibility and durations of coverage have contributed to a sense of insecurity over what could happen when resources dry up before circumstances improve. Solutions could involve addressing the regressive sales tax on food, centralized management of SNAP/EBT and Double-Up Food Bucks programs for farmers markets, expanding Medicaid resources, and establishing secure drop-off sites for area food banks and meal sites.

Poverty and educational attainment are negatively correlated. College graduation rates in Latah County are comparatively high. However, the region's largest employer, the University of Idaho, has encountered challenges relating to Legislative appropriations, enrollment numbers, and continuity of operations since the pandemic. Demand is growing for career-technical training and apprenticeships in skilled trades. Opportunities exist for collaboration among secondary education providers and workforce training partners to expand offerings and create well-paying jobs. Educating future physicians and other health professionals is vital. In 2022, Idaho ranked 51st nationally in physicians per capita. Recent Legislative changes are causing some from those ranks to leave, and prospective new physicians to look elsewhere to practice. The need is especially acute in low-resourced rural areas. Access to healthcare remains difficult, particularly for low-income households. Solutions could involve advocacy for job training and retention in healthcare-related fields, in addition to support for career-technical training, apprenticeships in skilled trades, career guidance in public schools, and cooperation among secondary education providers and workforce training partners.

Employment and economic circumstances have been in flux. Poverty can still be invisible here. Funding for social services waxed and waned during the pandemic and in the period of economic volatility that ensued. Some low-income households lost resources they had relied on. This region's economic base remains relatively narrow. Idaho's minimum wage has been the same \$7.25 per hour since 2009, far below livable wage measures. Solutions could include raising the minimum wage and tying it to cost-of-living indices, and broadening the economic base to grow jobs, boost the economy, and expand offerings of goods and services, such as by developing a light industrial park in Latah County.

The childcare industry in Latah County is insufficient to meet the needs of families, children, and caregivers. That deficiency adversely affects Idaho's economy. Federal relief funding provided a lifeline to struggling daycare providers and early childhood learning centers,

but Idaho's Child Care Stabilization and Wage Enhancement Grants ended in June 2023. Facility closures are expected as a result. The Idaho Child Care Program, intended to pay for a portion of childcare services for working parents who meet eligibility criteria for work or schooling, has a "donut" that leaves some earning too much to qualify for assistance, but too little to afford childcare without it. Some parents choose to leave the workforce as a result. Early childhood care workers are, themselves, economically distressed, earning an average of \$13 per hour in Idaho, so staffing is a problem. In response to the shortage, Moscow increased student-to-caregiver ratios, to allow for higher enrollments at facilities licensed by the City. Improvements could come from directed outreach to families to let them know about available assistance; expanding eligibility for those programs; advocating for a county-wide childcare ordinance to include health and safety regulations; advocacy for more government investment in childcare and early childhood education, including higher wages, scholarships, and student loan forgiveness for degrees and certification in early childhood education; and encouraging public and private leaders to facilitate access to start-up-, maintenance-, and expansion capital for childcare providers and early childhood educators.

The reciprocal relationship between healthcare and poverty poses complex challenges to addressing root causes of poverty. Health and lifestyle choices impact health status and, in combination with costs and access to medical resources, affect and are affected by poverty. Positive changes since the LWVM's report in 2012 include the 2013 opening of the federally qualified health center, CHAS, which offers medical dental, and behavioral health services to low-income individuals on a sliding scale or free, in addition to serving clientele with insurance, and the 2015 opening of the Latah Recovery Center, which provides mental health and behavioral health services to individuals from Latah County. While these service providers have helped residents gain access to physical, mental, and behavioral health services, challenges remain. The COVID pandemic and legislation involving reproductive health and Medicaid expansion may affect availability of healthcare providers. In addition, limited transportation services, rising prescription costs, and limited availability of in-home caregivers may exacerbate the challenges for those living in poverty, including elders and people with disabilities. Solutions could involve expanding accessible transportation services; increasing the number of professionally licensed/certified healthcare providers; expanding Medicaid, including for new mothers in their first year postpartum; increasing funding to maintain adequate staffing in the Department of Health and Welfare and institutions that deliver healthcare services; increasing funding to train and certify in-home paraprofessional caregivers, transport service workers, and nonclinical healthcare support staff; and lowering costs of prescription medications.

Transportation costs are not routinely calculated into measures of poverty, and in rural areas like ours, where housing costs are generally lower in outlying areas and where commutes may be longer, those costs add up. People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable. In Latah County in 2019, an estimated 33.5% of people aged 18-64 with disabilities were living in poverty, and accessible transportation services were and are limited. There is still no reliable and comprehensive single point of access for information on transportation resources. Moscow's population and municipal footprint have grown since the LWVM's report in 2012, but transit resources have not expanded proportionately. Bus service is still unavailable between Moscow and Pullman, and in under-resourced areas of Moscow, for which a third fixed route has been long sought. Challenges include funding and variable demands for transit services (and therefore,

unreliable work hours for employees). Solutions could come from increasing the number of fixed bus routes in Moscow and a mechanism to fund them; establishing public transportation to outlying communities in the region; providing transportation fuel assistance and a car/light truck acquisition subsidy for low-income individuals; creating incentive programs for replacing fuel-inefficient vehicles with fuel-efficient ones; and expanding ADA paratransit and other demand-response transit services, including for non-medical purposes, and a mechanism to fund them.

This update offers a snapshot of the current state of poverty in Latah County, relative to 2012, and the resources available to assist those in need. Once approved by the League, it is meant to be a common resource for stakeholders, and a basis for informing a coordinated approach to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs to alleviate impacts of poverty.

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Scope of Study and Introduction

POVERTY IN LATAH COUNTY, IDAHO: A 2024 UPDATE

At the 2022 annual meeting of the League of Women Voters Of Moscow (LWVM), members voted to update its 2012 study of poverty in Latah County (see Appendix A).^{1,2}

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This update covers the five categories of impact from the original 2012 study of poverty in Latah County. Those five categories include housing, food insecurity, childcare, healthcare, and transportation. In addition—and with approval by voting members and the Board of the LWVM—this update elaborates on those categories and includes new categories for education and job training; employment and the economy; early childhood education; and eldercare, all of which are integral to understanding the current status of poverty in Latah County. The study of each category of concern was organized around the following topics: Extent of the problem; How the problem is being addressed and with what resources; Identifying deficiencies; and Interactions among interest groups/organizations. This 2024 update also incorporates aspects of social justice, pertinent legislation, service providers' and recipients' aspirations, and personal anecdotes that humanize issues surrounding poverty. The purpose of this update is to provide a snapshot of the current state of poverty in Latah County, relative to 2012, and the resources available to assist those in need. Once approved by the LWVM, the document is meant to be a common resource for stakeholders, and a basis for informing a coordinated approach to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs to alleviate impacts of poverty.

INTRODUCTION

In December 2010, two public assistance service providers independently approached Moscow's mayor to express concern over growing demands on their services, without commensurate increases in funding or other support for their work. At the same time, area food banks were asking the public for more donations to keep up with growing demands. Rather than address those and related issues piecemeal, the City convened a series of well-attended forums among a wide array of stakeholders—*Poverty on the Palouse*³—and participants expressed enthusiasm over the prospect of cooperative problem-solving. In March 2011, the LWVM saw the need to gather information on the status of poverty in Latah County and to follow the LWVM's protocol for conducting a formal study, developing recommendations for action, reaching consensus, and adopting positions, which were posted on the LWVM website in December 2012.⁴ That report, along with the original *Poverty on the Palouse* networking series and dissemination of information about poverty by news media and service providers, increased awareness of the problems, resources to help alleviate them, and opportunities for collaboration. The initial study also served as justification for successful funding proposals and yielded substantive results. Subsequent to those efforts, this region saw establishment of the CHAS federally qualified health center for people who are underinsured, the Family Promise program for temporary housing and life skills assistance for homeless families, grants to organizations like Sojourners Alliance, expansion of the free summer lunch program, improvements for ease in use of SNAP/EBT at the Moscow Farmers Market, increased support for youth recreation scholarships, outreach from

university volunteer groups, more effective networking among foodbanks, development of a resource guide, a similar report on Poverty in Whitman County, Washington by the League of Women Voters of Pullman,⁵ and a series of articles and a stand-alone special publication on local poverty by the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*.⁶

Socio-economic conditions have changed since the LWVM's study in 2012. Economic well-being has fluctuated since 2019 (and during the COVID pandemic), making it difficult to identify a single snapshot in time as being representative of poverty in Latah County in 2024, compared to findings in the LWVM's poverty report in 2012. Uncertainty and unreliability seem to be catchwords of the time. Our data collection was necessarily broad (2019-2023), and our approach was nuanced. The pandemic triggered social isolation, job loss and other changes in the workforce, waves of federal stimulus funding, diminished confidence in the banking industry, disrupted supply chains, inflation, and State legislation that affects financial security for some households that depend on financial aid and social services. Moscow's population has grown and its municipal footprint has expanded since 2012. New projects, programs, policies, and partnerships have filled some of the deficiencies identified in that report. However, not all of its recommendations have been fully implemented, and some resources have been discontinued. Poverty persists in Latah County, and needs may be overlooked by those who might otherwise help. At the LWVM annual meeting on May 4, 2022, members reached consensus that it is time to reassess the status of local poverty and update its positions. This update seeks to discover the extent and manifestations of poverty in Latah County now, and what interventions, if any, could help alleviate the impacts. In addition, the League was receptive to expanding categories of interest in the 2024 update to integrate social justice, education, the economy, legislative intervention, and other relevant aspects of poverty, as may be agreed upon by study team members.⁷

New chapter topics address fundamental aspects of education, job training, employment, the economy, eldercare, and aid for families with children, in terms of changes since the original report in 2012. Since that time, the COVID pandemic has affected social interaction, prices and availability of goods and services, the labor market, and access to education. Political and ideological divides have widened, making it harder to agree on causes and solutions for problems like poverty. Significant public expenditures for stimulus checks, tax credits, debt relief, unemployment benefits, and food distribution eased hardships for many, but some of that assistance was temporary. At the same time, budgetary priorities and the public's attention have shifted toward natural disasters, failing infrastructure, and international aid, and away from perennial problems like poverty. The problems and solutions are neither static nor isolated. That was the motivation for this 2024 update to the LWVM's 2012 study of poverty in Latah County, Idaho.

¹ League of Women Voters of Moscow (Dec. 2012). A Study of Poverty in Latah County, Idaho in 2012. <https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/lwvm-study-of-poverty-in-latah-county-2012.pdf>

² Appendix A: Addressing poverty at the local level, 2022: A proposal for study by the League of Women Voters of Moscow

³ Poverty on the Palouse (2014, Feb 13). *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* Special Report. https://issuu.com/dailynews/docs/poverty_2014

⁴ League of Women Voters of Moscow (2012, Dec 10). Poverty in Latah County.

<https://my.lwv.org/idaho/moscow/position/poverty-latah-county>

⁵ Poverty in Whitman County, Washington: A study by the League of Women Voters of Pullman, May 2016,

https://lwvpullman.org/assets/PDFs/Pov_Study_Final.pdf

⁶ Poverty on the Palouse (2014, Feb 13). *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* Special Report.

https://issuu.com/dailynews/docs/poverty_2014

⁷ Appendix A: Addressing poverty at the local level, 2022: A proposal for study by the League of Women Voters of Moscow

Housing

Synopsis

Lack of affordable housing is a growing problem in Latah County, as it is across the country. Solving it will require action from federal, state and local governments, educational institutions, communities of faith, service organizations, and others. The numbers tell the story: A regional housing assessment estimated that the region was short of affordable single-family homes by roughly 340 units, and that from 2017 to 2027, an additional 2,600 single-family units (roughly 270 per year) will be needed. Given the high cost of building materials and financing, it is unlikely that those trying to build affordable housing will be able to meet the need anytime soon. Sometimes their efforts are stalled by zoning codes, including things like allowable lot sizes, density restrictions, and setback requirements. Moscow Affordable Housing Trust Executive Director Nils Peterson is working with the University of Idaho College of Art and Architecture, in cooperation with local government and the private sector, to build affordable homes. As of this writing, two small houses of around 500 square feet have been completed, but that pace and scale will not alleviate the shortage of affordable homes. Solutions will require more monetary participation by public and private sectors, more education about the need for such housing and building practices to keep them affordable, and legislative interventions to remove unnecessary obstacles to their construction. Some deficiencies identified in the original LWVM poverty report have been remedied, or at least improved, including a desire for a single point of entry. Since then, the North Central Idaho Health District has designated Sojourners as the access point for anyone in the district seeking housing assistance. The need for temporary housing for homeless families is only partially being addressed by Family Promise, because the number of unsheltered families exceeds local capacity to house them. Affordable workforce housing for people at or near the poverty level remains a significant problem. There is also a need for emergency shelter, especially in dangerously harsh weather, be it extreme cold or extreme heat.

Extent of the problem

The housing challenges currently existing in Latah County are basically the same as those stated in the original 2012 study and mirror those in the rest of the country: the immediate need for safe housing for homeless families, the lack of affordable housing for households below or near the poverty line, and the demand for temporary housing for homeless individuals. Overall, 66.7% of the total homeless population of the United States is single individuals, with the remaining 33.3% being families. In recent years, homelessness increased nationally by almost 1%. The elderly, those 62 or older, are also a growing category of those at risk for becoming homeless. The number of those who are not able to afford their rent has nearly doubled in recent years due to rising housing costs, high inflation, and the significant shortage of affordable housing.⁸

The Palouse Regional Housing Assessment (published in 2019) identified 11,932 (37.7%) of households in Latah and Whitman Counties as cost-burdened, meaning that those homeowners are paying more than 30% of their income toward housing. For statistical purposes, consultants teased-out households headed by people under age 25 (reasoning that would omit university students who they presumed receive housing assistance through non-income means). That recalculation reduced the cost-burdened percentage to 28.1%.⁹

U.S. Census figures from 2020 do not reflect the economic turmoil during and following the COVID pandemic: the changed job market with very low unemployment; high inflation; a selective workforce, more inclined to work from home; reduced work hours; and choices about whether to pay for childcare or leave the workplace. By 2022, a number of new federal assistance programs, not available in 2010, offered temporary relief to financially struggling households.

Between 2010 and 2020, rates of poverty in Latah County dropped 2.3%, from 17.6% to 15.3%.¹⁰ During that time, Latah County's population grew from 37,244 to 39,517, for an increase of about 6% over that decade.¹¹ However, no direct correlation can be drawn from those isolated figures, due to several variables. Inbound and outbound migration complicate population figures because residency is fluid, and individuals and associated demographics counted in one census may be different from those in others.^{12,13}

Between 2007 and 2016, the median household income in Latah County dropped 7.3%, from \$45,032 to \$41,738. Within Moscow, the drop was 12.1%, from \$39,317 to \$34,551, suggesting that more affluent community members lived outside of city limits. During the same period of time, Pullman's median income grew by 15.4%, likely due to State-mandated minimum wage increases, which may have attracted Idaho workers across the state line, and subsequently helped elevate starting wages on the Idaho side in a competitive labor market.¹⁴

The CHAS Health Clinic, which opened in Moscow subsequent to the 2012 poverty study, had 805 patients in 2022 whose housing status, using HUD's definition of homelessness, was listed as homeless in their Electronic Health Record System. Of the 805 patients, 70 were listed as street or shelter homeless and the remaining were listed as either in transitional or permanent supportive housing or "doubling up," meaning they were temporarily staying with friends or family.¹⁵ Efforts by the University of Idaho to increase enrollment have resulted in a need for additional off-campus housing. Consequentially, some sites that have provided temporary housing to unsheltered people will house students instead. See the Palouse Regional Housing Assessment for a gap analysis of housing stock, including in the university district.¹⁶

Housing is second only to food for creating stability for under-resourced residents. The need for affordable housing is escalating as the housing market surges, rental properties and in particular local mobile home parks are being sold to out-of-area companies, and the cost of living continues to rise.¹⁷

According to the Community Action Partnership's 2021 Community Needs Assessment, county residents reported the housing situation they faced most often was having to choose between paying rent or paying for other basic needs.¹⁸

How is the problem currently being addressed and with what resources?

Sojourners Alliance continues to be the only shelter for homeless individuals between Boise and Coeur d'Alene. During the period of May 2020 to December 2022, Sojourners was able to significantly increase the number of individuals and families it provided services to due to the receipt of COVID Relief funds. However, these funds are rapidly dwindling and when gone, the number of those it can help will decline. With COVID funds they were also able to remodel their on-site facility's basement to add six additional beds to its transitional housing program, and can now house up to 14 men and eight women at a time. It has a 600-square-foot unit that can house one family with up to four members.¹ Sojourners also leases 11 apartments to provide permanent housing for people with disabilities. Additionally, it has a rapid rehousing program funded by the federal government that pays for the first month's rent and security deposit to help people currently homeless move into apartments; its homelessness prevention program offers financial assistance to those who have fallen behind on their rent payments. The North Central Idaho Health District has designated Sojourners as the access point for anyone in the district seeking housing assistance. If Sojourners cannot provide the assistance needed the caller is recommended to another appropriate organization, including Family Promise, the YWCA, Alternatives to Violence on the Palouse, St. Vincent de Paul, or to voucher programs like HUD's Section 8 and Intermountain Fair Housing. (The designated phone number is (208) 310-4554.)

Family Promise of the Palouse was in the formation stage at the time of the original Poverty Study. It opened its doors in 2013 and now serves both Latah and Whitman counties. The program is designed to serve families with children and can accommodate about 12 families at a time. The families spend nights and receive meals in area churches. During the day the adults use a designated day center while the children are in school. At the day center counseling and educational services are provided by a paid director, paid social worker, and committed volunteers. Since it started, Family Promise has served 117 families, with the majority being single-parent families. Of these families, 79% have gone on to long-term permanent housing. Through grants and donations, Family Promise now also offers preventive services in the form of financial assistance to help families from becoming homeless. Those accepted into this program have to be working towards sustainability, and of the 20 families helped, only one has become homeless.

Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse was included in the 2012 poverty study as a source of housing for individuals and families who are in immediate danger from domestic or sexual violence. It continues to provide housing and other services to victims of such abuse and has done so for over 40 years. In 2021 it provided safe and confidential shelter for 139 individuals, totaling 2,085 bed nights. Their Moscow office is located at 407 S. Washington Street, #101; phone: (208) 883-4357. They also have a 24-hour crisis hotline, (877) 334-2887, and in 2021 they provided support to 3,465 callers to the hotline.

The mission of the **Moscow Affordable Housing Trust**, a 501(c) non-profit organization, is to create and preserve safe, inclusive, and affordable housing opportunities in keeping with the character of the community. It works with people whose household income is between 60% and 80% of the Area Median Income [AMI], an amount that varies with household size. The term used for this group is "ALICE," meaning "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed." It was founded in 2009 before the time of the 2012 poverty study, however the Trust's Board spent

¹ Personal communication, Rebecca Rucker, Office Manager, Sojourners, March 26, 2024

several years securing private philanthropy and matching funds from the City of Moscow before beginning to produce houses. In 2014 it hired its first Executive Director, Nils Peterson. Since then, under Peterson's leadership, it has been able to purchase and rehabilitate two houses and complete construction of one new house. These first three houses were sold fee-simple at below-market prices. One of the houses has since been re-sold at market rate and is no longer affordable. In order to create permanent affordability, the Trust has switched its sales to use the Community Land Trust model, where the improvements (the house) is sold, but not the land. Using the Community Land Trust model will ensure houses are kept permanently affordable. In 2020 the Housing Trust completed and sold a 3-unit townhouse and acquired land for a 17-lot subdivision. In 2022 it formed a collaboration with the University of Idaho College of Art and Architecture to build small single-family homes to be sold using the Community Land Trust model. To date, two homes have been completed and sold. The Housing Trust hopes to break ground in 2023 on a federally funded project for an additional two twin homes. In 2021 the Housing Trust Board did strategic planning, during which it set a goal of completing 20 houses by 2025 and an additional 30 by 2030. In practical terms, this means the Housing Trust would be constructing approximately 10% of all the new homes in Moscow. The Housing Trust is currently seeking more land to implement this vision.¹⁹

St. Vincent de Paul is a service organization affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church that reaches out to families and individuals in crisis. People needing housing assistance contact them via their hotline at (208) 883-3284. A volunteer returns the call, usually within 24 hours. A volunteer visits the requestor in person, and a committee determines how best to help at a weekly meeting. In the 2021-2022 time period, St. Vincent's conducted 1,800 visits, which involved a total of 3,400 people requesting assistance. It was able to provide some of the aid requested but could not provide as much as needed. They can give financial assistance for back rent and utility bills, rent deposits to get into new housing, and emergency housing in a motel for a limited time, depending on the situation. St. Vincent's pays money directly to the landlord. They also provide referral information for local low-income housing, other agencies, and shelters, and work closely with Sojourners and Family Promise.²⁰

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] is the principal federal agency that distributes funds for affordable housing, public housing, and rental assistance, through the programs described below.

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. This is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. It is administered by the Idaho Housing and Finance Association, which has an office in Lewiston. Housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual. Participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments, and they are not limited to subsidized housing projects. The voucher is paid directly to the landlord, with the household paying the difference between the voucher and the actual rent. Eligibility for a housing voucher is determined by the total annual gross income and family size. In general, the family's income may not exceed 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family lives. By law, 75% of the vouchers must be awarded to applicants whose incomes do not exceed 30% of the area's

median income. Building owners do run credit and background checks on applicants. At this time there is an 18- to 24-month waiting list. They do not provide emergency assistance. See www.ihfa.org/ for more information. (The Lewiston office's phone number is toll free; (866) 566-1727.

The HUD Sliding-scale Project-based Assistance Program. This program bases rent on income and no voucher is required. Eight complexes in Latah County are part of the program: Mountain View Apartments, Oakridge, Hawthorne Village, Towne House, Edenmoor Apartments, and Ridge Road Apartments in Moscow, Hiawatha Apartments in Potlatch, and Hillcrest Apartments in Genesee. None of these has openings and there is a long waiting list.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Food and Shelter Program allotted \$11,000 to Latah County in FY 2022 for food, meals, and shelter in a mass sheltering facility or hotel, rent/mortgage assistance, and utility assistance. The allocation was based on county size and the determination of needs according to federal guidelines. The funds were distributed by the United Way of Latah County to various local organizations providing housing and food benefits to county residents.

What are the deficiencies?

The original 2012 poverty study identified five deficiencies, a few of which have since been met at least partially:

The need for a single point of access to information regarding housing. The North Central Idaho Health District has designated Sojourners as the access point for anyone in the district seeking housing assistance and there is now a central phone number that can be called: (208) 310-4554.

The number of homeless families exceeds local capacity to house them. Since opening its doors in 2013, Family Promise of the Palouse has been able to partially address the needs of homeless families, but the number of families needing housing continues to exceed local capacity to provide it.

Housing for homeless individuals, especially men, is needed to ease the burden carried by Sojourners Alliance. Sojourners continues to be the sole provider of housing for homeless individuals between Boise and Coeur d'Alene. However, thanks to COVID funds they were able to remodel their on-site facility to add additional beds to their transitional housing program, bringing the total to 14 beds designated for men and eight for women. In addition, their single-family unit can accommodate up to four people.

Affordable, low-cost housing is needed for those at or near the poverty level. Although the Affordable Housing Trust began working to address this problem since the 2012 study, it does not have the resources or capacity to meet the significant need that exists for affordable housing in the county. In a regional housing assessment published by the Partnership for Economic Prosperity in 2019, as was mentioned above, it was estimated that the region was then short of

the needed number of single-family homes by roughly 340 units; and that over the 10-year period from 2017 to 2027, an additional 2,600 single-family units (or roughly 270 per year) would be needed. Given the current high cost of building materials and financing, it is unlikely this need will be met. Latah County officials are looking into the prospect of establishing a countywide housing authority, to "...support bigger projects by attracting donations of land and funding from private donors and the government to develop housing."²¹

There is a need for emergency shelter, especially in harsh weather, both extreme cold as well as extreme heat, and natural events like flooding and poor air quality from wildfire smoke.

⁸ U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development's 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress; and AARP in its September, 2022 Newsletter

⁹https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1976/Documents/HousingAssessments/Palouse%20Regional%20Housing%20Assessment_2019.pdf

¹⁰ https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/#/?map_yearSelector=2010&x_tableYears=2021,2010&s_state=16&s_county=16057&s_district=&s_geography=county

¹¹ U.S. Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/latahcountyidaho.moscowcityidaho/IPE120222>, Accessed 11/23/23

¹² <https://idahoatwork.com/2023/02/24/ada-county-in-2020-out-migration-supassed-in-migration-within-idaho/Data> from 2010 reflect post-recession unemployment and associated drops in household income

¹³https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1976/Documents/HousingAssessments/Palouse%20Regional%20Housing%20Assessment_2019.pdf, p. 75

¹⁴ Palouse Regional Housing Assessment. https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1976/Documents/HousingAssessments/Palouse%20Regional%20Housing%20Assessment_2019.pdf, p. 66

¹⁵ Shelby Lambdin, MHPA, CHAS Health, Spokane, WA

¹⁶ Palouse Regional Housing Assessment (https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1976/Documents/HousingAssessments/Palouse%20Regional%20Housing%20Assessment_2019.pdf), pp. 96-99.

¹⁷ *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*, Housing shortage putting squeeze on trailer parks too, https://dnews.com/local/housing-shortage-putting-squeeze-on-trailer-parks-too/article_a4989fee-bc40-5612-8c09-bdda8cbecb96.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

¹⁸ <https://www.cap4action.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Attachment-D-2021-CNA-Report-Final.pdf>, p.20

¹⁹ Personal Communication, Nils Peterson, Director, Moscow Affordable Housing Trust, 8/28/23

²⁰ Panel presentation by Bob Tribelhorn (St. Vincent de Paul), Cody Riddle (City of Moscow), and Nils Peterson (Moscow Affordable Housing Trust), Housing Issues in Latah County (Dec 14, 2022). LWVM Speaker Series. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZYnHAp74pk>

²¹ Commissioner Tom Lamar, https://dnews.com/local/latah-county-looks-into-housing-authority/article_7da6d137-99c9-591f-b9ec-9d7a0f6f15e2.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Food Insecurity

Synopsis

In general, people in poverty spend a greater portion of their incomes on food and other necessities than do people with higher incomes. They are immediately affected by food prices, which have increased steadily since the Great Recession of 2008. In 2022, prices for food constituted the highest year-over-year increase since 1979. Food prices in grocery stores increased 11.4% in 2021 and 10.2% in 2022, and were predicted to increase by an additional 7.8% in 2023. At the time of the LWVM's original study, the food insecurity rate in Latah County was 17.6% (6,557 individuals). For children, that figure was 20.7% (1,380 individuals). By 2020, the percentage of food-insecure residents overall dropped to 10.5% (4,200 people), and the rate of food-insecure children dropped to 10.6%, or 780 individuals. Some measures of food insecurity improved as a result of assistance programs during the pandemic and recent economic flux. Some of that assistance has ended. Federal aid programs, local food banks, and community donations eased the crisis, and temporarily caused food insecurity figures to look better than they might have looked otherwise. Nevertheless, the demand for food assistance has continued to grow. In 2022, the West Side Food Pantry averaged 500 visits per month by adults, plus 300 visits by seniors and children. Use in Jan/Feb 2023 was double that of the same time period in 2022. In 2022, Moscow Food Bank had 18,000 customer visits, including about 650 family visits per month. They are on-pace to exceed those numbers in 2023. Variable assistance program eligibility and durations of coverage have contributed to a sense of insecurity and uncertainty over what would happen when those resources dry up before circumstances improve, which is where we are now.

Extent of the problem

Food insecurity is a condition assessed in the Current Population Survey, sponsored jointly by the U.S. Census and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,²² and reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).²³ It is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.²⁴ The food-insecurity rate measures the percent of the population who experience food insecurity at some point during the year. It does not mean that households lacked adequate food for the entire year.²⁵

At the time of the LWVM's original study, the overall food insecurity rate in Idaho was 17%. In Latah County, 17.6% of all residents (6,557 individuals) were food-insecure, and for children, that figure was 20.7% (1,380 individuals).²⁶ By 2020, the percentage of food-insecure residents statewide dropped to 8.7%, while the rate in Latah County dropped to 10.5% (4,200 people), and the rate of food-insecure children dropped to 10.6%, or 780 individuals.²⁷ Nevertheless, the demand for food assistance has continued to grow. In 2022, the West Side Food Pantry averaged 500 visits per month by adults, plus 300 visits by seniors and children. Use in Jan/Feb 2023 was double that of the same time period in 2022 (see Appendix B).²⁸ In 2022, Moscow Food Bank had 18,000 customer visits, including about 650 family visits per month. They are on-pace to exceed those numbers in 2023 (see Appendix C).²⁹

In 2010, 58% of food-insecure households in Latah County participated in at least one of the three major food assistance programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP],

formerly known as food stamps; the National School Lunch Program; and/or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children [WIC].³⁰ According to the US Census, between 2017 and 2019, 37.6% (+/- 11.3%) of Latah County residents who were eligible for SNAP benefits accessed them. As evidence of the uncertainty of such figures, that report says 71% (+/- 17.2%) of children aged 0-17 had SNAP.³¹ The USDA Food and Nutrition Service reported 73% participation among eligible Idahoans statewide in 2018.³² Margins of error for measures of eligibility for food assistance programs, relative to the use of those programs, vary widely, in part because not all charitable community resources require proof of eligibility or identifying information for tracking.

Some measures of food insecurity improved as a result of supplemental assistance from an array of sources during the COVID pandemic and recent economic flux. Some of that assistance has ended. Federal aid programs such as the American Rescue Plan; the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security [CARES] Act; Inflation Reduction Act; SNAP³³; and the WIC Program for Women, Infants and Children; federally-mandated Medicaid Protection (also known as Continuous Medicaid Enrollment, now ended in Idaho); and assistance from local foodbanks/pantries and community donations eased the crisis, and temporarily caused food insecurity figures to look better than they might have looked otherwise. According to the 2022 Feeding America Map the Gap report, in 2020, the first year of the pandemic, "...national food insecurity would likely have been much higher in 2020 if not for the unprecedented collective response by the charitable and public sectors to the public health and economic crises caused by COVID-19."³⁴ The infusion of federal COVID relief stimulus funds, combined with a generous response by local community members, appears to have also influenced measures of local food insecurity.³⁵ Variable program eligibility and durations of coverage contributed to a sense of insecurity and uncertainty over what would happen when those resources dried up before individuals' circumstances improved. A study reported in Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy in March 2021 describes pandemic-related heterogeneity in food insecurity statistics associated with disproportionate job loss in service sector economies (like Moscow's) and resilience in agricultural supply chains, which lessened price increases on foodstuffs in some distribution areas.³⁶

Rate of Student Eligibility for Free and Reduced School Meals^{*37}

School District	2009/10	2022/23
Genesee	20%	22%
Kendrick-Juliaetta	47%	29%
Moscow	33% (in 2011-12)	25%
Potlatch	45%	33%
Troy	39%	23
Whitepine	11%	34%
Latah County Overall	21%	11%

*Rounded to nearest decimal

In general, people in poverty are immediately affected by food price increases. Food prices have increased steadily since 2008. In the year ending August 2022, prices for food consumed at home constituted the highest year-over-year percent increase since 1979.³⁸ In March 2023, the Economic Research Service for the USDA reported that overall, food prices from grocery stores

increased 11.4% in 2021, 10.2% in 2022, and were predicted to increase by an additional 7.8% in 2023. In February 2023, retail egg prices were 55.4% above prices the year before, and were predicted to rise by 29.6% in 2023, largely due to outbreaks of avian influenza, which resulted in culling millions of birds and decimation of large commercial flocks.³⁹ Fundamental to the problem of food insecurity is the fact that an inadequate supply of nutritious food adversely affects human health, and is especially detrimental to children, affecting their physical health, behavioral and mental health, development, and school readiness and achievement.⁴⁰

Nationwide, the number of families drawing federal benefits for food assistance continues to grow. One estimate projects such programs could cost more than a trillion dollars over the next 10 years.⁴¹ SNAP and other food assistance programs are points of contention among members of Congress, as they debate the omnibus Farm Bill,⁴² that expired on September 30, 2023.⁴³ Their decisions will have implications for food-insecure families in Latah County, as well as for the farmers who produce food and contribute to the region's economic network.

How is the problem being addressed and with what resources?

Backyard Harvest connects local gardeners, farmers, and fruit-tree growers to area food pantries and meal programs. It offers gleaning opportunities to harvest and share fresh produce for individuals and food banks. The weekly farm share program, mobile food stand, food bank, and meal site drop-off program make fresh foods available to low-income households across the Palouse and L-C Valley. Backyard Harvest has coordinated with the City of Moscow and Moscow Food Co-op to allow for the acceptance of federal food assistance funds [SNAP] and Double Up Food Bucks at the Moscow Farmers Market and the Tuesday Growers Market. (Contact director@backyardharvest.org or (208) 669-2259 or visit <https://www.projectfare.org/farmstories/farmers-markets-help-low-income-families>.) A new program, Backyard Bucks, allows purchase of certain prepared foods from those markets for home consumption; in addition to fresh produce. The program was piloted in 2023; and funding is being sought to continue it.⁴⁴

Community dinners and other community-building activities. Several area churches, civic organizations, and senior centers host subsidized meals. See local bulletin boards, press announcements, or social media for details. The following are examples.

Welcome Table. Free community dinners take place in Moscow's 1912 Center at 6:00 p.m. on the fourth Monday every month. Reservations are required. Sponsored by Heart of the Arts, Inc., funding is provided through grants and private donations. Sit-down meals are prepared by local chefs and served by volunteer waiters. As many as 100 guests from throughout the community attend, including some who might not have many opportunities to enjoy this type of dining. A list of area food banks and other resources will be found on the backs of their menus. See <https://moscowwelcometable.org/> or contact moscowwelcometable@gmail.com or (208) 298-9020 for details.

Friendly Neighbors Senior Meal Site offers hot, healthy, low-cost lunches on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning at 11:30 in Moscow's 1912 Center. The suggested donation for people over age 60 is \$4, and for non-seniors, \$7. Those amounts are less than the actual

cost to prepare the meals, which jumped from around \$7 to \$9.50 in 2022. Grants help make up the difference and keep prices low.⁴⁵ They work with Community Action Partnership to deliver meals for seniors who are housebound. (<https://www.cap4action.org/food/>). *(Note, the lack of Meals on Wheels was identified as a deficiency in 2012, and this service helps fill that void.)*

Senior Meals, Potlatch Senior Center (645 Pine St.; (208) 875-1071) begin at 12 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, except for the first Wednesday of the month.

Spud Hill Seniors Meals take place at 12 p.m. on Tuesday in the Deary Community Center: 403 Line St.; (208) 877-1582.

J-K Senior Meals take place in Kendrick from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Senior Center; 104 S. 6th St.; (208) 289-5324.

Senior Meals, Genesee Senior Center, are provided at 12:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Fridays; 140 Walnut St.; (208) 285-3681).

Community food drives. Examples include:

Palouse Cares began in 2006 and continues to organize large annual door-to-door food drives, involving as many as 500 volunteers (<http://www.palousecares.org/about-us/>);

The Great Moscow Food Drive began in 2006. This gets bigger every year and in 2023, volunteers collected more than \$4,500 in monetary donations and five vans full of food and other items for the food bank; and,

Campus living groups, scout troops, United Way and other service organizations, etc., also contribute to food drives.

Educational outreach. Several food banks, as well as government agencies, educational institutions, service organizations, and non-profit service groups offer free classes in how to shop smartly and manage a limited food budget; how to prepare healthy low-cost meals; how to grow food or access existing sources of fresh produce, and more. Examples include **University of Idaho Extension, Latah County & Eat Smart Idaho** <https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/eat-smart-idaho/about>, (208) 885-6111, latah@uidaho.edu or eatsmart@uidaho.edu.

Family Promise of the Palouse offers a variety of resources for unsheltered families, including guidance on household budgeting for food and other necessities. Since its establishment in 2013, Family Promise-host congregations have served over 40,000 meals to facility guests (<https://www.familypromisepalouse.org/impact>).

Food Banks and Pantries. Most foodbanks in Latah County are supplied by the Idaho Foodbank in Lewiston and also receive monetary and material donations from individuals and groups. The Idaho Foodbank coordinates the Mobile Food Pantry Program, which features a 34-foot trailer that visits rural communities. Call (208) 746-2288 for hours and locations of Mobile Food Pantry stops. Other food pantries are operated by individuals or nonprofit organizations

that rely on monetary contributions and donations of foodstuffs and sundries, such as household cleaners, diapers, soaps, personal care items, and paper products.

Food Banks/Pantries/Distribution Sites in Latah County

Town	Name	Address	Phone	Hours
Bovill	Latah County Mobile Foodbank	Carolynn Park	208-746-2288	1 st Tue. each month, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Deary	Edith Griffin Food Bank	408 Line St.	208-310-0966	Tue. 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Sat. 4-7 p.m.
Genesee	Genesee Food Bank & donations site	St. John's, 648 W. Ash Ave.	208-285-1195	2 nd & 4 th Fri., 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Genesee	Latah Mobile Food Pantry distribution site	St. Mary's parking lot, 138 Jackson St.	208-305-5507	3 rd Wed., 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Juliaetta & Kendrick	J-K Good Samaritan Food Bank & Distribution Center	214 State St., Juliaetta	208-276-4510	Fri., 1-3 p.m.
Juliaetta	Latah County Mobile Pantry	Baseball field overflow parking off Hwy 3	208-305-5507	1 st Tue., 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Moscow/UI	Mobile Food Pantry	UI Parking Lot 60, east of Intermodal Transit Center	208-885-6078	1 st Wed., 12 p.m.-until food runs out
Moscow	Moscow Food Bank	110 N. Polk	208-882-4813	Tue.-Fri., 2-4 p.m. & on-call
Moscow	Moscow/Latah County United Way	Inland Northwest Broadcasting, 1114 N. Almon	208-882-3474	4 th Mon.
Moscow/UI	Vandal Food Pantry	UI Shoup Hall, Rm 105	208-885-6078	Mon.-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Moscow	West Side Food Pantry	660 W. Pullman Rd.	208-882-9499	Mon.-Sat. 2-7 p.m., Sun. 12-4 p.m.

Potlatch (see Appendix D)	Potlatch Food Bank	510 Pine St. (Food drop-offs at City Hall, Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. or by appt. Monetary donations: PO Box 453, Potlatch ID 83855.)	208-875-0735 or 208-875-0708	2 nd & 4 th Thurs., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. & 6-8 p.m.
Potlatch	Latah County Mobile Pantry (served by Idaho Foodbank, Lewiston)	325 Larch (Presbyterian Church)	208-875-0015	4 th Thurs., 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Troy	Troy Food Bank	106 E. 6th St, Rm 102	360-269-1063	Wed., 4-7 p.m.

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare food assistance programs

(<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/food-assistance/statewide-food-programs>). In 2020, Idaho participated in a USDA pilot project to allow the use of SNAP for online purchases from Amazon and Walmart.^{46,47,48} As of 2023, that project has expanded to include many more food retailers, including Rosauers, Target, and Safeway in Latah County.⁴⁹

Idaho Foodbank and SNAP

(<https://idahofoodbank.org/snap/#:~:text=The%20Idaho%20Department%20of%20Health%20and%20Welfare%20help,on%20how%20to%20make%20healthy%20meals%20at%20home>).

The **Latah Farmers Market** happens from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturdays, June-October in the Troy City Park and 4-7 p.m. on Wednesdays, mid-June-September in WI&M Depot in Potlatch. This volunteer-run independent market offers a flexible fee schedule for vendors, but is unable to process SNAP/EBT at this time. LatahFarmersMarket@hotmail.com

The **Moscow Farmers Market** was the first in the state to facilitate SNAP/EBT transactions in 2008 and continues to do so. During peak months in 2023, SNAP sales at the market totaled \$3,009 from 82 transactions in July and \$3,921 from 104 transactions in August.⁵⁰ For every \$5 expended from SNAP cards, market-goers are eligible for \$2 in Fresh Bucks to purchase fresh produce, eggs, and more, a 40% bonus. The market also welcomes Double-Up-Food-Bucks. The new Backyard Bucks Program (begun in 2023) offers a 1:1 match at Moscow Farmers Market and Winter Market, so SNAP users can purchase take-home quantities of prepared ready-to-eat foods, in addition to produce items. See Accepted Market Currency document, Appendix E,⁵¹ for detailed information. Contact Amanda Argona with the City of Moscow, (208) 883-7132 or farmersmarket@ci.moscow.id.us.

The **Moscow School District** has participated in the **USDA Summer Food Service Program** since 2012. All children up to age 18 may receive free summer lunches, no questions asked. Meals are prepared by school district food service staff and served by community volunteers. In 2012, 4,484 meals were served over 49 days, or about 100 meals per day. In 2023, 4,413 meals were served over 45 days. The program was not available in other Latah County towns.⁵²

The **National School Lunch Programs and/or School Breakfast Programs** are funded by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and administered by Idaho State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs. Free and reduced-price meals are available to school children from qualifying families, based on income and household size. Applications are sent home at the beginning of the school year and are available anytime at school offices. Participants in SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Families in Idaho [TAFI], or Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations [FDPIR] are automatically eligible. For guidelines see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/notices/iegs/IEGs.htm>.

The **School Backpack Program** is available at schools in the Moscow School District. Nutrition Department staff members collect foodstuffs from the Idaho Foodbank at a centralized location and deliver them to school counselors throughout the district. The program discreetly distributes backpacks weighing about six pounds that contain two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, and two snacks to participating children on the last day of the school week. In the State of Idaho 2,000 backpacks are distributed each week and an estimated 7,000 are needed. According to a representative from Potlatch Food Pantry, schools there are starting a backpack program in 2023.⁵³ At the time of the first LWVM poverty report in 2012, other Latah County towns expressed interest in participating in this program.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP is the largest of the domestic food and nutrition assistance programs administered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. In Idaho, the program is coordinated by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. Eligible families have food subsidy accounts set up for them, then receive Idaho Quest Cards, which are used as debit cards in scanners at grocery stores, the Moscow Food Co-Op, the Moscow Farmers Market, and certain other locations. For eligibility, see <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/food-assistance/apply-snap>. Benefit amounts depend on the number of people in a family and their household income, among other factors. Cards may not be used for nonfood items like cigarettes, alcohol, pet foods, soaps, diapers, paper products, or household supplies. Generally speaking, the threshold for SNAP eligibility is 130% of the poverty line. *Pandemic-related Emergency Allotments for SNAP, begun in March 2020, were discontinued in Idaho in March, 2021.* See Appendix F for recent changes to SNAP benefit amounts.

The **Tuesday Market** occurs on Tuesdays, 4-7 p.m., June to mid-October, at the Latah County Fairgrounds and accepts SNAP/EBT and Backyard Bucks; (<https://www.facebook.com/tuesdaycommunitymarket>).

Women, Infants and Children Program [WIC] is a USDA program that provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, healthcare referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. The service is provided through

the Public Health-Idaho North Central District. Latah County is in District 2 but is administered from Lewiston. The Moscow office phone number is (208) 882-7353; see <http://idahopublichealth.com/83-wic/> for more information about eligibility.

What are the deficiencies?

The lack of a single point of entry for access to information regarding food insecurity was a deficiency in 2012, but has now been largely remedied by the Palouse Resource Guide, 211.org, NPO Roundtables (moscownpogroup@gmail.com), improved communication among area food banks, and the central role of West Side Food Pantry as a receiving and distribution site for both food and information.

Another deficiency identified in 2012 is also being addressed by West Side Food Pantry. The 2012 report identified “a need for more coordination between the food banks,” and suggested “A local foods facility would help with problems of storage and distribution, reliability of resources, and the wide variability of supplies.” Today, West Side Food Pantry at Inland Oasis serves as a repository for food to be distributed to food banks and pantries around Latah County. According to its executive director, they could still benefit from having more personally-tended secure sites for drop-offs, and more partnerships with other organizations.

Food-insecure children across Latah County would benefit from having access to the Idaho Foodbank School Backpack Program in all towns. Moscow, Kendrick-Juliaetta, and Potlatch schools are participating. Whitepine School District discontinued participation in 2022.⁵⁴

The Summer Food Program should be more widely available than just in Moscow. Food trucks, school buses, or public transit might be ways of transporting food to where children live. (See New Haven CT program: <https://www.nhregister.com/connecticut/article/New-Haven-s-Free-Summer-Meals-program-aims-to-11329402.php>.)

SNAP is an investment in the health, well-being, and productivity of Idahoans. It is federally funded and administered by the state. Securing the ability to accept SNAP/EBT can seem complicated, labor-intensive, and burdensome, particularly for volunteer-run independent farmers markets and similar organizations that lack the staff to process payments and handle regulations. A centralized system to facilitate outsourcing of fiscal responsibility and management would make the program accessible to more low-income shoppers in small rural communities.

Idaho sales tax applies to food, which is not the case in many states. This is a regressive tax and affects the poor the most because food requires a greater proportion of low-income budgets. The Idaho Grocery Credit refund is available to Idaho citizens who do not file an income tax return, but SNAP (food stamp) recipients do not qualify, and the refund is allotted in a lump sum after February of the following year, which does not alleviate the constant, week-to-week anxiety about grocery bills.

Again, another deficiency is that there are not enough secure drop-off locations for food transfers from donors and distributors.

Interactions among interest groups/organizations

Food insecurity is probably the most-addressed need in Latah County. Civic organizations, campus living groups, non-profit organizations, school children, and others regularly hold well-advertised food drives to collect cash donations, non-perishable foods, personal care products, pet foods, etc. Pop-up food pantries can be found in academic settings, businesses, and even along neighborhood sidewalks. Communication and cooperation among area food banks grew during Moscow's Poverty on the Palouse Initiative and the LWVM's poverty study in 2010-12, and a number of deficiencies identified have been addressed. Still, poverty and food insecurity persist.

The story of Trinity Food Pantry is emblematic of the challenges associated with meeting an ever-increasing demand. Organized in 2011, it closed in 2017. Pastor Dan Bailey explained, "It just kept basically growing and getting more demanding and requiring more resources than we could sustain, and so it was just getting a little bit too much for everybody to handle."⁵⁵ They were only open three hours, one evening per week, but in their first year (2012), served more than 4,900 family visits, estimated to represent 16,000 individuals. The complexity of their effort is apparent in a newspaper brief from the pantry's director in 2013, in which she expressed gratitude to Walmart, Idaho Foodbank, Safeway, Backyard Harvest, Rosauers, Dollar Tree, Dryers, Palouse Cares, Sodexo, Wheatberries, Insanewich, members of Trinity Baptist Church, the LDS Church, Winco, LaQuinta Inn, Farm Bureau Insurance, Unitarian Universalist Church, Potlatch Corporation, Eagles Auxiliary, VFW Auxiliary, Boy Scouts, student groups, and many private individuals for their support. Like others working to address food insecurity, she noted that "The incredible outpouring of support in the Moscow community is humbling."⁵⁶ After Trinity Food Pantry closed, its model of generosity and compassion found homes in several successor organizations.

The West Side Food Pantry is an example of regional networking (see Appendix B).⁵⁷ Opened in 2020, it receives commodity funding from the Idaho Foodbank, as well as cash and in-kind private donations. Latah County Democrats collect food donations and the West Side Food Pantry at Inland Oasis serves as a receiving hub for distribution among peer facilities in rural communities that may not have the same access to resources as foodbanks/pantries in Moscow. Most fresh foods at West Side come from Target Store rescue, sometimes involving non-food items like baby supplies and pet supplies like cat litter for the Humane Society of the Palouse, which has its own pet food pantry. In addition to being a source for food assistance, West Side offers informational literature for neighbors to find resources to fill other needs, and helps promote organizations like CHAS, the Latah Recovery Center, dental care, and mental health services.

²² <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>, Accessed 3/27/23

²³ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/>, Accessed 3/27/23

²⁴ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/measurement/>, Accessed 3/27/23

²⁵ <https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/lwvm-study-of-poverty-in-latah-county-2012.pdf>, p. 7, Accessed 3/27/23. Disclaimer:

With appreciation for the work done by the LWVM 2012 poverty study team, some aspects of that report are retained verbatim in this update.

- ²⁶ <https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/lwvm-study-of-poverty-in-latah-county-2012.pdf>, p. 7. (Originally cited source now obsolete: Feeding America. 2012. <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/mapthe-meal-gap>)
- ²⁷ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/idaho>, Accessed 3/27/23
- ²⁸ Appendix B: Case Report: West Side Food Pantry
- ²⁹ Appendix C: Case Report: Moscow Food Bank
- ³⁰ A Study of Poverty in Latah County, Idaho in 2012. LWVM, Dec. 2012 (p. 7) <https://my.lwv.org/idaho/moscow/position/poverty-latah-county>
- ³¹ <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/snap-eligibility-access.html>
- ³² <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usamap#>
- ³³ Sainato, M. (March 17, 2023). Low-income Americans face a ‘hunger cliff’ as Snap benefits are cut. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/mar/17/snap-food-benefits-us-cuts-impact-families>
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Post-Secondary Education and Job Training

Synopsis

Educational attainment and poverty are negatively correlated. College graduation rates in Moscow and Latah County remain comparatively high. However, the region's largest employer, the University of Idaho, has encountered challenges relating to legislative appropriations, enrollment numbers, and continuity of operations during the pandemic. Demand is growing for career-technical training and apprenticeships in skilled trades, and opportunities exist for collaboration among secondary education providers and workforce training partners to expand offerings and create well-paying jobs. Access to healthcare remains difficult, particularly for low-income households. In 2022, Idaho ranked 51st nationally in physicians per capita. Recent legislative changes are causing some from those ranks to leave and prospective new physicians to look elsewhere to practice. Without supplemental education, Idaho medical students will not be trained to provide comprehensive reproductive care, which is especially problematic in low-resourced rural areas.

Extent of the problem

Educational attainment and poverty are negatively correlated. Nationwide in 2020, the poverty rate was 4% among residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 13.4% among those with a high school education and 24.7% for those without a high school diploma (Shrider, 2021).⁵⁸ With a high school graduation rate of 79.9%,⁵⁹ Idaho ranked 45th in the country.⁶⁰ Its income inequality ratio of 11.6 placed second among all states for having the lion's share of income going to the top 20%, relative to the bottom 20% of households.⁶¹ Educational attainment in Latah County is generally higher than that in the rest of the State, with 96.5% of residents having at least a high school diploma or higher,⁶² compared to 79.9% statewide, and 43.9% of residents holding bachelor's degrees or above.⁶³

As of 2023, the nine public schools of the Moscow School District serve 2,519 students, which includes 758 at the high school level, 26 of whom attend Paradise Creek Regional (alternative) High School (PCRHS). PCRHS reports 46% of its 26 students are from low-income families. Given the small enrollment and to protect individual identities, the Idaho Department of Education suppresses PCRHS data for meeting college readiness benchmarks. Noting that "Obtaining a high school diploma dramatically increases a student's future educational and workplace opportunities." PCRHS reports a 41.2% graduation rate in four years for the 2021 cohort, and a 77.8% rate within five years for the 2020 cohort.⁶⁴ Moscow High School reports that 96.9% have participated in college and career readiness courses; however, only 49.7% of its students meet college readiness benchmarks.⁶⁵

Additionally, the districts of Troy, Whitepine, Genesee, Kendrick, and Potlatch serve 1,492 students.⁶⁶ Similarly to Moscow, Troy reports that greater than 79% of their students participate in college and career readiness courses; however, only 35% meet college readiness benchmarks.⁶⁷

The effects of poverty on academic performance and long-term outcomes begin early. Emerging research suggests differences among urban, suburban, and rural geography and how the culture of place influences academic and career-oriented outcomes. Economically disadvantaged families are moving away from urban and rural places into suburbs and small towns, presumably like Moscow and other small communities in and around Latah County.⁶⁸

As referenced throughout this LWVM poverty update, the childcare, healthcare, housing, and transportation needs that contribute to poverty in Latah County are interconnected. The same issues that create barriers on the path to economic independence through employment also pose challenges to individuals engaging in education and training. These barriers represent costs that are part of the education and training decision-making process. The location and scheduling of training, for example, can create a significant burden on individuals seeking to improve their chances of job attainment in order to escape poverty.

Poverty and a lack of healthcare resources are social determinants of health. Poverty can adversely affect people's diets, physical activity, sanitation, access to healthcare, and ability to afford medications, and thereby contribute to poor health outcomes. Finding a primary care provider can be challenging, even for people who are well-insured. The COVID pandemic strained medical systems, and resulted in the loss of healthcare workers and difficulty recruiting replacements.⁶⁹

Idaho Department of Labor [IDL] predicts the near-to-medium-term outlook is for continued shortages in key health occupations, including physicians, surgeons, nurses, nursing assistants, and pharmacists, among others. Reasons cited by departing workers were: the cost of living (including lack of affordable housing); the amount of debt incurred for education relative to salaries; and, inadequate training resources and opportunities for in-state clinical experience. Those hurdles are more difficult for rural medical facilities to overcome. The retention rate for Idaho WWAMI medical school graduates is around 50%.⁷⁰ Education is among the recommendations proposed by IDL to staunch the outward flow. It advised, "Efforts at expanding interest in health care-related occupations are important, but education and training programs must be able to expand. For many, expansion will require investments into classrooms and teaching technology, increased funding to hire and retain teaching faculty, and expansion of clinical training sites at local hospitals and clinics."⁷¹

The shortage of medical caregivers is not just among primary-care physicians, nurses, and pharmacists; it includes home-health and personal-care aides too. Demand for their services is increasing nationwide. They care for elders and people with disabilities and provide services so family members may remain in the workforce who might otherwise be the caretakers. As vital as their work is, one in six home-health workers lives below the poverty line. Many require government benefits to make ends meet. In Idaho in 2020, their pay ranged from \$11.76 to \$13.37 per hour. Compensation comes from clients or clients' families, private long-term care insurance, or Medicare or Medicaid's Home and Community Based Services waiver program (HCBS). That program is funded by federal and state dollars, with states determining reimbursement rates.⁷²

A May 2022 report found that the annual mean wage for home-health and personal-care workers was \$27,770.⁷³

How is the problem being addressed and with what resources?

Professional-technical training, apprenticeships in skilled trades, social services and other community resources afford advantages. The following training and education programs are available to Latah County residents:

Idaho LAUNCH, a program under the Idaho Workforce Development Council, features tools to help match employment-seeker skills with employer needs. It also helps employment seekers research training opportunities for skills they may be lacking.⁷⁴

Idaho Employment and Training Program (offered by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare) is a program that includes career coaching, resume building, GED and training, childcare assistance, and support vouchers; it is available to recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Families in Idaho (TAFI) benefits.⁷⁵

Idaho Works offers a variety of programs ranging from apprenticeships to veterans services.⁷⁶

Potlatch High Idaho Career Ready Students Council⁷⁷ offers funding to expand career technical education for Idaho high school students.

Lewis and Clark College offers workforce training.

University of Idaho Extension Programs include: Certified Remote Work Professional Certificate for Rural Communities⁷⁸; Digital Economy Program⁷⁹; and, Rural Youth Education⁸⁰

All seven **Latah County public libraries** offer free public use of computers and Internet access, plus low-cost printing. They make mobile hotspots available for free. Library staff can provide basic tech help, and more in-depth assistance is available for free from the library's specialized Tech Help Team. In addition to materials available in the physical collection, free online learning resources, such as Tech-Talk and Universal Class, are available from the Digital Library page. As of late 2023, the Library District has been building a website page devoted to career and small business development resources and has been in contact with LCSC's Workforce Development Department to arrange programs for the public in Latah County libraries.⁸¹

Moscow Public Library offers a free Homebound Delivery Service of library materials to those within city limits who are unable to come to the library themselves.

The **Idaho's Digital Access for All Idahoans (DAAI)** plan targets underserved populations identified in the federal Digital Equity Act to promote digital equity and inclusion. Those populations include low-income households, aging populations, people with disabilities, rural residents, veterans, incarcerated individuals, people with language barriers, and racial and ethnic minorities. With federal funding, the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) offers stipends, discounted rates, and in some cases, free Internet service, based on income or participation in

government assistance programs. Eligible households can receive up to \$30 per month for broadband access and up to \$100 toward the purchase of a computer, laptop, or tablet.^{82,83,84}

Consistent with those efforts, the **University of Idaho Extension Digital Economy Program** and **Latah County Broadband Coalition** are conducting community outreach to identify local barriers in order to offer training and other resources to address the barriers.⁸⁵

In June 2023, Latah County submitted a grant application on behalf of the Latah County Broadband Coalition to address the fact that “[r]oughly 20% of households in rural Latah County have no Internet access at all” and the remaining rural population have subpar Internet access, thereby deeming rural Latah County to be “UNSERVED.”⁸⁶

The **Idaho Community Health Center Association (ICHCA)** has made available the **CUBE Academy**, which offers educational and training resources to employees at all levels of healthcare (<https://cubeacademy.idahochohc.org/>). Consistent with its mission to “promote and support vibrant, effective community health centers in providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality healthcare to all Idahoans,” the Association’s objectives for workforce development are several: “We connect centers with healthcare partners and higher education to help expand their workforce. Health centers looking to grow and retain their workforce through health profession education training will find programs, apprenticeships, and learning management tools to achieve their goals. ICHCA supports the health centers’ efforts to recruit, retain, and train staff across all professions.”⁸⁷

In 2021, the federal **Health Resources and Services Administration** made significant investments in projects, programs, and personnel to promote health equity and attract, train, and retain the health workforce, including paraprofessionals. The American Rescue Plan and Provider Relief Fund helped fund recruitment and retention of medical workers, education, and loan repayment assistance for health professionals.⁸⁸

Facilities

Physical Spaces. Local school buildings and universities offer physical space for education and training. Community buildings such as the 1912 Center also provide opportunities to host training and education programs.

Virtual learning spaces/Online Training. There are vast amounts of both free and fee-based opportunities to learn online. Some individuals may require assistance from workforce development or other similar social-service organizations to find online resources that match their employment seeking or professional development needs.

Student financial aid will continue to be a critical determining factor, but may require assistance for prospective students in order to research viable pathways to make such education affordable. If student loan debt is incurred without the means to repay the debt, education becomes a financial burden on the student and therefore education is not meeting societal needs of alleviating poverty.^{89,90}

What are the deficiencies?

While there are many online resources to provide helpful information on education and training opportunities and real, hands-on education and training, these lack meaning if people are unable to access these resources. Two reasons people cannot access these important Internet resources is that they lack Internet access to even go online to search for such opportunities and, very importantly, individuals may need a roadmap to know *where* and *how* to search for education and training opportunities. For example, based on the table below, found on the Latah County Broadband Coalition's website,⁹¹ 89% of eligible households in Moscow do not take advantage of the aforementioned Affordable Connectivity Program.

Latah County Households vis-à-vis ACP Benefits

Latah County Community	Eligible Households	Number Enrolled	Percentage with Benefit
Moscow	4,408	497	11%
Viola	30	3	10%
Potlatch & Onaway	368	13	3.5%
Princeton	73	2	2.7%
Harvard	14	2	14%
Deary & Bovill	136	3	2.2%
Troy	129	7	5.4%
Genesee	114	10	8.8%
Juliaetta	95	9	9.5%
Kendrick	112	4	3.6%

*Data from enrollment map in March 2022.

If individuals are not aware of programs to alleviate the financial costs of Internet services, it is possible that they are missing out on other valuable resources and services as well.

Interaction among interest groups/organizations

Idaho LAUNCH partners include Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation⁹², Next Steps Idaho,⁹³ and Idaho Department of Labor Idaho Works⁹⁴.

Latah County Broadband Coalition membership includes the following: City of Potlatch, City of Bovill, City of Genesee, City of Kendrick, City of Juliaetta, City of Deary, City of Troy, City of Moscow, Latah County Library District, Moscow School District, Kendrick Joint School

District, Genesee Joint School District, Potlatch School District, Troy School District, University of Idaho, Gritman Medical Center, South Latah Highway District, Latah County, (Project Partners: Port of Lewiston, Imagine Idaho Foundation, Benewah County, Shoshone County).⁹⁵

Family Promise of the Palouse works to address Latah County resident workforce development and training needs through their available programs and graduate supports. Their partners include ten host congregations, twenty support congregations, and fifteen community partners.⁹⁶

Schweitzer Engineering Lab is one of the area's largest employers that partners with K-12 schools, universities and technical schools, and community and education organizations.⁹⁷

The Downtown Business Alliance (Moscow Chamber of Commerce + Visitors Center) coordinates a "Leadership Moscow" certificate program⁹⁸ and sometimes organizes job skills programs for high school students. Activities have included a Legislative Tour to Boise as an educational experience and serves as a platform for workforce education and training advocacy.⁹⁹

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⁶¹ Shrider, Emily A., Melissa Kollar, Frances Chen, and Jessica Semega, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-273, Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, DC, September 2021 (<https://cps.ipums.org/cps/resources/poverty/PovReport20.pdf>, Accessed 02/26/23).

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Employment and Economy

Synopsis

Poverty is still largely invisible in the Latah County area. Funding for social services has varied wildly during the pandemic and the economic volatility that ensued, and low-income households cannot rely on resources they have grown to count on, including their jobs and limited-duration government subsidies. The economic base here remains relatively narrow, yet opportunities to broaden it could grow jobs, boost the economy, expand offerings of goods and service, and elevate people out of poverty. Meanwhile, Idaho's minimum wage has been the same \$7.25 per hour since 2009, far below livable wage measures.

Extent of the problem

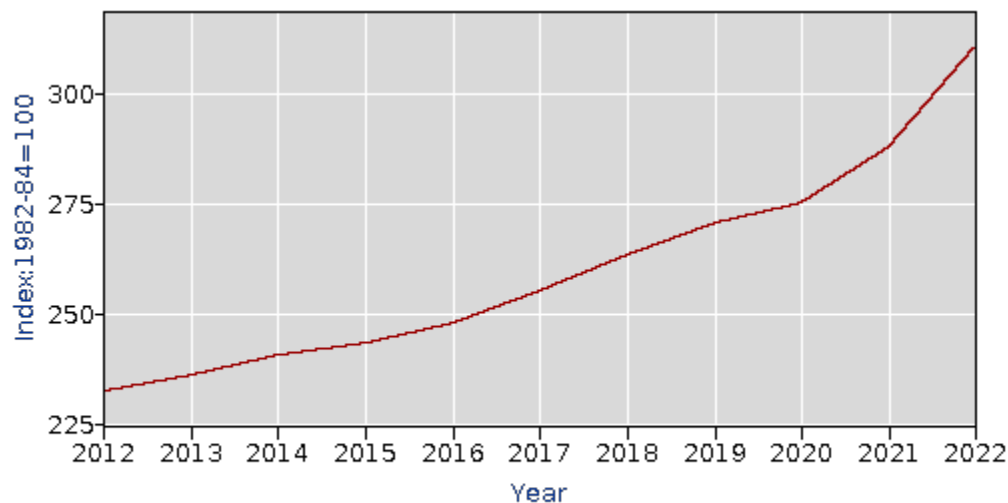
It is beyond the scope of this chapter and the poverty study update as a whole to offer an in-depth treatise on the overall economy, even locally. Nevertheless, income, earning capacity, workforce preparedness, job opportunities, market competition, public resources, and economic instability are fundamental to defining poverty, understanding its causes and manifestations, and addressing it effectively.

A generally accepted definition of poverty is not having enough money to meet basic needs, including housing, food, childcare, healthcare, clothing, utility costs, and transportation. Quantifying it can be complicated. The U.S. Census Bureau follows the Office of Management and Budget [OMB] Directive 14, which calculates poverty thresholds, the *Official Poverty Measure* [OPM] based on family size and composition, relative to specific income thresholds (adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index [CPI], but not including public services like housing assistance, Medicaid, SNAP food benefits, tax credits, or stimulus payments, and not varying by geographic location).¹⁰⁰ The OPM was developed in the mid-1960s and has remained mostly unchanged since that time.¹⁰¹ Another tool, developed by the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics in the around a decade ago and updated several times since, is the *Supplemental Poverty Measure* [SPM]. In addition to accounting for family resources and expenses, it considers the aforementioned in-kind subsidies and assistance programs in measuring poverty. SPM subtracts necessary expenses such as Social Security payroll tax, income tax, childcare, child support, medical care, health insurance, and work-related expenses.¹⁰² The *Living Wage Model* is a geographically-specific market-based approach to measuring adequacy of earnings, relative to likely minimum expenditures for basic needs.¹⁰³ According to the Economic Policy Institute [EPI] in 2018, nationwide “(o)ne in nine U.S. workers (was) paid wages that (could) leave them in poverty, even when working full time.” Further, EPI posited, “Any agenda to fight poverty should include labor market policies targeting each of the three factors affecting families’ incomes: jobs, hours, and wages.”¹⁰⁴ In 2010, the poverty rate in Latah County was 23%.¹⁰⁵ In 2021, that rate was 16.2%.¹⁰⁶

One's capacity to earn money, relative to his/her cost of living, is a foundational aspect of economic stability and financial security. The subsistence wage for a single childless individual in Latah County has been estimated to be \$15.22 per hour in 2022-23. That figure climbed to \$32.70 for a single parent with one child, and \$42.02 for individuals with two children. For

households with two full-time wage-earners and two children, the *per-person* living wage was calculated to be \$23.39 per hour.¹⁰⁷ Idaho’s minimum wage has mirrored the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour since 2009.¹⁰⁸ The minimum wage for tipped workers is \$3.35 per hour.¹⁰⁹ In 2012, when the poverty study came out, Idaho led the nation in the percentage (7.7%) of hourly wage workers who earned minimum wage or less.¹¹⁰ Between 2011 and 2021, the bottom 10% of earners saw their average incomes rise by 2.6% (\$2.43 per hour), for an average of \$10.76 per hour, while earners in the bottom 25% saw a 3.3% increase, (\$3.84 per hour), amounting to \$13.81 per hour.¹¹¹ Although those increases are encouraging, they are far from subsistence calculations, and have not kept pace with inflation. According to the League of Women Voters of Idaho [LWVID], “The federal rate has not kept up with cost of living, which is contrary to the original intent of establishing a minimum wage.”¹¹² A studied and consensus-driven position taken by the LWVID in 2017 advocates for raising Idaho’s minimum wage, and providing for automatic adjustments based on scientifically-valid indices linked to the cost of living in Idaho.¹¹³ The Cost of Living Index [CPI] measures the percentage change in the cost of a fixed quantity of representative goods and services purchased by a typical wage-earner, relative to an established base. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the CPI for this region rose from 232 in 2012 to 310.5 in 2022.¹¹⁴ Put another way, consumers who spent \$100 in 2012 would have spent about \$134 on comparable items in 2022.¹¹⁵

US Bureau of Labor Statistics Data CPI-West, 2012-2022



Measures and manifestations of poverty are complex and varied, and have become more so since the advent of the COVID pandemic, which prompted piecemeal infusions of federal stimulus funds, targeted tax credits, limited duration public assistance programs, changes in the workforce culture, supply chain disruptions, inflation, business expansion/contraction, and demographic shifts that have altered the economy at multiple scales.

The LWVM 2012 poverty report noted that, along with other contributing causes, “People have been driven into poverty by unemployment, eroding work opportunities and wage stagnation making rent payments difficult or impossible.”¹¹⁶ At the end of 2022, the seasonally-adjusted

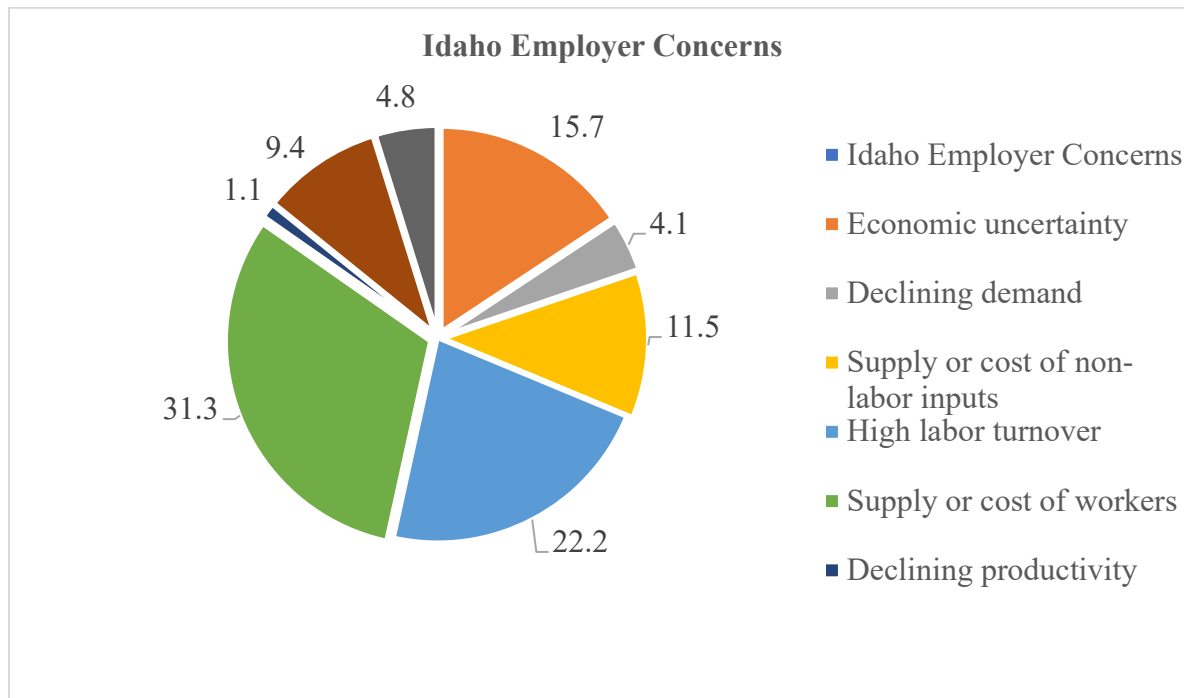
unemployment rate in Latah County was 2%, compared to 2.9% statewide and 3.5% nationally.¹¹⁷ In 2012, Latah County's unemployment rate ranged between 5.2% and 6.6%. Sensitivity of the labor market and job security were apparent in the early stages of the COVID pandemic in 2020, when the county's unemployment rates briefly jumped from 3.0% to 9.8%.¹¹⁸ In July 2023, the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate in Latah County was 3.1%, compared to 2.8% statewide and 3.5% nationally.¹¹⁹ Job offerings outstrip the number of people who seek to fill them. In July 2023, the workforce participation rate was at 62.4%.¹²⁰

According to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA] 2022-23 Plan for Idaho (Mod.), 51,500 jobs were lost statewide between 2007 and 2010 during the recession. Between 2010 and 2020, education and health sectors added the most jobs (28,400), and the number of construction jobs grew by 79% (partly due to rapid population growth in the state) and are projected to grow by another 38.9% by the end of the decade.¹²¹ In 2023, the Idaho Workforce Development Council reported that employers in North Central Idaho are seeking workers with skills in technology, healthcare, and business, and that the search is broadening to include industries like manufacturing.¹²² However, according to Lisa Grigg, Regional Economist for Idaho's North Central Region, "...manufacturing employers say they can't get the number of people they need and they really have no choice but to automate."¹²³ Grigg attributes the scarcity of applicants and the tight labor market overall to an aging workforce, sector-specific stressors related to COVID, and diminished workforce participation. Some of those people, Grigg said, would prefer to work, but are unable to afford outside care for children or aging parents.¹²⁴

In 2020, the population of Latah County was 39,517, including 25,435 residents (64%) who lived in Moscow.¹²⁵ Just over 42% of the jobs in Latah County are in Moscow,¹²⁶ where the cost of living is highest. According to the U.S. Census, 955 employer establishments existed in Latah County in 2020, employing 9,394 people.¹²⁷ The number of employers increased 7.7% since 2010, compared to a 19.6% increase statewide.¹²⁸ Most employer establishments in Latah County (55%) employed one to four employees.¹²⁹ Less than 2% of businesses in Latah County employ more than 50 people. According to Idaho Department of Labor, the University of Idaho is the largest employer here, followed by Gritman Medical Center, Moscow School District, and Walmart.¹³⁰ Other prominent employers include EMSI (since merged with Burning Glass Technologies, and now known as Lightcast), Bennett Lumber, and the Moscow Food Co-op.¹³¹ Economic sectors represented in the North Central region of Idaho also include forest products, agriculture, fish hatcheries, and the manufacture of items such as guns, ammunition, jet boats, lumber, and paper products.¹³² In 2019, the total number of non-employer establishments (with no paid employees and for which the owner is the only one paid) totaled 2,799.¹³³

The Clearwater Economic Development Association [CEDA] 2020-25 comprehensive economic development strategy, *Pathways to Accelerate North Central Idaho*, includes a survey of stakeholders, who were asked to list their top five items that most threaten the economic development potential in their communities. Low wages topped that list, with loss of highly skilled workers ranking second, and the lack of affordable housing ranking third. When asked to select five items that most threaten or limit economic development in their *jurisdictions*, affordable housing led.¹³⁴ In 2022, an estimated 46% of Latah County residents were renters, and 55% of those were considered rent-overburdened, spending more than 30% of their gross income on rent,¹³⁵ essentially the same as in 2010.¹³⁶ In July 2023, with the median household income

\$56,673,¹³⁷ the median listing price for a house in Latah County was \$537,500, up from \$203,000 in 2016.¹³⁸ In response, CEDA committed to hosting an annual housing summit, “to share information on financing, funding, home ownership, and housing availability...(increase) knowledge of regional housing issues (and) develop collaborative solutions leading to expands (sic) housing availability.”¹³⁹



Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Business Climate Service¹⁴⁰

How is the problem being addressed and with what resources?

Federal infusions of stimulus funds and other assistance to address community and workforce destabilization associated with the COVID pandemic made significant, if temporary, improvements in household budgets and business balance sheets (see Appendices G & H).^{141,142} In 2021 Latah County was allocated nearly \$7.8 million in Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the American Rescue Plan Act, intended to restore financial stability, cover shortfalls, and enable qualifying investments in operations and infrastructure.¹⁴³

Federal Relief Resources, 2020-21

Organization	Type of Assistance	Timeframe	Individuals served
Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)	One-time direct financial relief up to \$1,200 per adult & \$500 per child	March 2020	All eligible Americans
Federal COVID-related Tax Relief Act of 2020	One-time direct financial relief up to \$600 per person	Dec. 2020	All eligible Americans
American Rescue Plan	One-time financial relief of up to \$1,400 per individual, plus extended unemployment benefit eligibility until 9-6-21, plus tax relief on up to \$10,200 of unemployment benefits	March 2021	All eligible Americans
American Rescue Plan	Expansion of Child Tax Credit from \$2,000 per child under age 6 in 2020 to \$3,600 under 6 and \$3,000 for older children under 18 in 2021 ¹⁴⁴	2020-21	Qualifying families with children
Medicaid Expansion (90% of expenses were paid by federal government)	In 2020 after 2018 successful voter initiative, Idaho expanded Medicaid to cover an additional 154,000 during the pandemic. By 2023, the State purged 100,000, deeming them ineligible. ^{145,146}	2020-2023	Low-income adults who couldn't afford health insurance, but didn't qualify for regular Medicaid

Ongoing Workforce Assistance

Federal sites: https://www.usa.gov/find-government-benefits ; https://www.usa.gov/financial-hardship	Lists of government benefits and eligibility requirements
Compilation of service agency partners: https://www.211.org/	Online resource to connect with service organizations to help pay bills, find housing, get healthcare, put food on the table, etc.
Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/211 or text 898211 or call 2-1-1 or 800-926-2588	Idaho-specific online resource for health/human services & social services
Idaho Dept. of Labor https://www.labor.idaho.gov/unemployment-benefits/	Unemployment benefits, job search assistance
American Job Center link to Idaho Dept. of Labor: https://idahoworks.gov/programs	Apprenticeships, workforce development training, unemployment assistance

Market-force solutions involve competition among employers across the state line. In 2019, 8,533 workers lived and worked in Latah County; another 4,939 lived outside the county and commuted from outside; and 7,791 commuted to other counties for employment,¹⁴⁷ including 3,116 who worked in Pullman,¹⁴⁸ where the minimum wage in 2023 was \$15.74 per hour.¹⁴⁹ To be competitive in a setting with two universities and associated student workforce, eight miles apart and separated by a state line, reader boards at several fast food restaurants in Moscow have advertised \$15 per hour job openings, consistent with similar jobs in Washington.

Some restaurants in Moscow have shifted to a gratuity-free service structure, adding 15-18% to menu prices instead, to provide a more stable and equitable income for all employees.¹⁵⁰

What are the deficiencies?

Wages have not kept up with the cost of living.

The ability for employers to attract and retain workers is impeded by the lack of affordable housing to buy or rent.

Low unemployment, combined with low workforce participation, leave jobs unfilled or automated, hindering economic growth.

The difficulty for attracting and retaining skilled workers remains an issue.

Interaction among interest groups/organizations

The Palouse Resource Guide “helps individuals in Whitman and Latah County find resources to support their health, their family’s health and their community’s health,” including a broad range of medical resources, eldercare, food, transportation, financial and legal assistance, housing, childcare, victim support, disability support, employment and training, recreation, and more (<https://palouserresources.org/>). *This one-stop, single portal of entry was identified as a deficiency in the 2012 poverty report.*

Clearwater Economic Development Association drives regional development and provides local governments guidance on economic diversification, improved community livability, and collective prosperity in North Central Idaho. <https://clearwater-eda.org/> or (208) 746-0015

Idaho Department of Labor, www.labor.idaho.gov or the Moscow office at 1350 Troy Hwy, Ste. 1; (208) 799-5000) offers resources related to jobs, unemployment, and employers.

211 Idaho CareLine (<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/211>) is an Idaho Department of Health and Welfare program with referral specialists who are accessible by phone (800-926-2588), text (send zip code to 898211), or online/email (careline@dhw.idaho.gov), Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Pacific. It is intended to connect people to resources to help with employment, financial assistance, housing, caregivers, transportation, food, education, healthcare, alcohol/drug use disorders, domestic violence, legal assistance, and more.

Idaho Rural Partnership is a public-private collaborative to improve economic and social conditions in rural Idaho: www.irp.idaho.gov; 700 W. State St., Boise ID 83702; (208) 287-0780; contactus@irp.idaho.gov.

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Childcare, Early Childhood Education, and Out-of-School Programs

Synopsis

The childcare industry in Latah County is insufficient to meet the needs of families, children, and caregivers; the number of placement spots available for 0-6-year-olds is insufficient and this deficiency has adverse impacts on Idaho's economy. In response to the shortage, the City of Moscow increased student-to-caregiver ratios, to allow for higher enrollments at facilities licensed by the city. The Idaho Child Care Program [ICCP] is intended to pay for a portion of childcare services for working parents who meet eligibility criteria for work or schooling; however, a "donut" leaves some earning too much to qualify for assistance, but too little to afford childcare without it. Additionally, early childcare workers are themselves economically distressed (earning an average of \$13 per hour in Idaho). Federal COVID relief funding provided a lifeline to struggling daycare providers and early childhood learning centers. However, Idaho's Child Care Stabilization and Wage Enhancement grants ended in June 2023, and facility closures are expected as a result.

Extent of the problem

The LWVM's 2012 poverty report chapter on childcare lists five key elements of a quality childcare environment: 1) highly skilled teachers; 2) small group or class sizes and high staff/child ratios; 3) age-appropriate and stimulating materials to play with in a safe physical setting; 4) a language-rich environment; and 5) warm, responsive interactions between staff and children. Authors of that study concluded that "Idaho and Latah County (did) not have enough childcare providers; many of those who work in the field are unqualified and under-trained; there are too many children per provider (who are often undercompensated); thorough inspections are not routinely required; the financial assistance that exists is not known to those who need it, and thus is underutilized; and, increasingly, due to the recession, childcare may very well come last on the list of living expenses."¹⁵¹ This update seeks to assess whether those conclusions still apply, what deficiencies, if any, exist today, and what is being done to address them. In addition, this chapter expands on the 2012 assessment of childcare to include early childhood education and after-school/out-of-school programming.

A variety of metrics indicate that the childcare industry in Latah County is still insufficient to meet the needs of families, children, and caregivers, and that consequences include adverse effects on children's safety and well-being, as well as on the workforce and economy.

A gap exists between the number of available childcare spots available for 0-6-year-olds and the number needed to fully support families who would like part- or full-time care for their young children. According to the recent Bipartisan Policy Center's Child Care Gaps Assessment,¹⁵² Latah County providers of early childhood care would need to add 290 more spaces to fully meet the needs of residents today, and that demand continues to grow.

Census Data Highlights from Idaho Voices for Children¹⁵³ show that in 2019, out of an estimated 7,142 children in Latah County, 1,427 of them lived below the federal poverty level. According

to that report, out of an estimated 2,257 children under age six 1,436 had all available parents working, highlighting the need for childcare services.

Having insufficient childcare resources for young children has a significant economic impact on Idaho, including lost productivity due to absenteeism, withdrawal from the workforce, and costs associated with chronic poverty and fewer opportunities to elevate one's potential. Full participation in the state's economy is lessened when such a high percentage of income is directed to childcare. A 2020 U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation study, *Untapped Potential*,¹⁵⁴ estimates that "childcare issues result in an estimated \$479 million loss annually for Idaho's economy." Another report, by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, puts that number at \$525 million.¹⁵⁵

The ICCP^{156,157} exists to assist parents with care for children under the age of 13 and older children with disabilities by paying for a portion of childcare services. Parents must meet certain work or schooling criteria because the program is intended to assist working families. However, a "donut" exists: some families earn too much to qualify for assistance, but too little to afford quality childcare. For example, a family of four would not qualify for any assistance if their monthly household income exceeded \$3,350. Childcare tuition for infants can cost between \$900 and \$1,400 per month in Moscow and pre-kindergarten care can exceed \$1,000; thus, families with two children could face childcare bills of \$2,000 per month, leaving little left for other essential monthly expenses.

Effects are not equal. The Early Childhood Workforce Index of 2020¹⁵⁸ notes that "Across almost all settings in the country, early educators are in economic distress, and this reality falls disproportionately on women of color and on those working with the youngest children (infants and toddlers)." In 2020, the Workforce Index found that the median wage for a childcare worker in Idaho was \$10.08 per hour. In 2023, the hiring platform Indeed.com advertises early childhood care jobs in Moscow starting at \$13 per hour.¹⁵⁹

Statements from the Idaho Kids Count Data Book for 2023 are sobering: "Year-round, full-time infant care costs as much as a year of tuition at an Idaho public university. While the cost of care burdens families, childcare workers are paid worse than 98% of professions."¹⁶⁰

Childcare is unaffordable for many Idahoans. In 2020, infant care cost a full-time minimum wage worker 50% of their salary, while typical families with an infant and a four-year-old will expend 25% of their annual income on childcare.¹⁶¹

Idaho's Child Care Stabilization and Wage Enhancement Grants¹⁶² ended June 30, 2023. The program was funded through the Workforce Development Council, with \$15 million dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act to expand high-quality childcare in Idaho. It was a lifeline for struggling daycare providers and early childhood learning centers, some of which are likely to close without that assistance.

The City of Moscow has acknowledged that the community's childcare needs exceed what is available, and has attempted to remedy the problem by increasing student-to-caregiver ratios (which do not count the caregiver's own children) to allow for higher enrollments at facilities

licensed by the City.^{163,164} Moscow City Code Title 9 Sec. 10-20 requires a minimum child-staff ratio of one director and/or staff for every 12 points or fewer to be maintained by a day care facility at all times; see the table immediately below. Any points over 12 requires one additional director and/or staff as determined from the following chart:

Age of Child	Points per Child*
0 to less than 1 year	4
1 to less than 3 years	2
3 to less than 5 years	1
5 to less than 13 years	0.5
13 years and over	0

*Example: A day care facility with three 10-month-olds (12 points) must maintain a director and/or staff of one. The enrollment of a five-year-old (0.5) requires the addition of another staff member.

The City of Moscow allows facility owners, licensees, directors, and staff as young as 16 who provide care to children to have as few as four hours of training in early childhood development and/or children’s health and safety within 30 days of employment (and 12 hours annually thereafter), in addition to CPR and first aid certification requirements.^{165,166}

Choices can be stark, particularly for parents working night shifts or staggered schedules. Without access to safe, affordable childcare facilities, options include leaving children home alone, sometimes to care for younger siblings, or having an unfamiliar neighbor or new boyfriend or girlfriend care for them. Such choices put children at risk of injury, abuse, and neglect.

Calling childcare “the backbone of the economy,” Idaho Voices for Children and the Annie E. Casey Foundation call on:

1. Federal, state and local governments to invest more in childcare, including by raising wages to retain staff and offering incentives like scholarships and loan forgiveness for early learning degrees, to grow the workforce in related fields.
2. Public and private leaders to lower barriers for home-based childcare by increasing access to startup and expansion capital.
3. Congress to help young parents by expanding the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School program.¹⁶⁷

National statistics about the disproportionate burden on single female heads of households with children under age six are sobering. In households headed by women, 36.5% of those children are likely to be considered poor, compared to 16.3% in male-headed households, and 6.4% with two married parents. When children are under age six, 46.5% with female heads of household are likely to be impoverished, compared to 18.4% in male-headed households.¹⁶⁸ Among single working mothers in Idaho, 78% fall below the ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed) threshold, earning too much to qualify for assistance, but too little to afford childcare and other basic household necessities.¹⁶⁹

A report from the McClure Center makes the point that “The lack of childcare options in Idaho serve(s) as a barrier to employment. This barrier is greater for women who disproportionately take on caregiving responsibilities when outside childcare is not an option.”¹⁷⁰

Childcare and early childhood education need not, and arguably for the sake of kindergarten-readiness, ought not be separate endeavors. Collaboration among school districts, families, preschools, and early childhood educators is possible. Regional examples include Head Start and Early Head Start,¹⁷¹ Moscow Day School,¹⁷² and the University of Idaho Children’s Center.¹⁷³

A 2020 needs assessment on early childhood care and education in Idaho noted that the lifelong importance of early childhood education and those educators is often under-appreciated. Three main themes arose during town halls and focus groups on the topic: 1) training, compensation, and respect will advance professional development in the field; 2) improved awareness of and access to educational materials and programs for young children will help families thrive; and, 3) improvement is needed in communicating the value of early learning programs to families, policymakers, and educators, as they relate to children’s readiness for school, future success in life, and the state’s economy and long-term goals.¹⁷⁴

In 2019, Idaho’s governor issued an executive order creating the Early Childhood Advisory Council, which was tasked with executing a statewide strategic plan for early childhood education.¹⁷⁵ The plan was informed by the Idaho Needs Assessment and funded by a \$3.3 million preschool development grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.¹⁷⁶ Despite compelling evidence that early childhood education prepares children to enter kindergarten and to succeed in future academic, social, and economic endeavors, between 2017 and 2021, 65% of 3- to 4-year-olds in Idaho did not attend preschool, placing the state 38th in the nation.¹⁷⁷ U.S. News and World Reports’ Best States Rankings placed Idaho 42nd in preschool enrollment in 2023.¹⁷⁸ Specific data are not available for Latah County.¹⁷⁹

How is the problem being addressed and with what resources?

IdahoSTARS¹⁸⁰ is a voluntary rating system for daycare facilities, created to improve the quality of childcare in Idaho. It also manages childcare provider eligibility for the Idaho Child Care Program, and has a coordinated childcare resources and referral system, with seven regional offices to assist childcare providers and parents statewide. As of August 2023, their Safety First¹⁸¹ web page list of participating childcare providers in Latah County included 31 in Moscow; five in Potlatch; two in Troy; one in Deary; one in Genesee; and one in Juliaetta.

Idaho Health and Welfare’s ICCP¹⁸² providers are registered and inspected. The program, managed by IdahoSTARS,¹⁸³ assists low-income families who meet eligibility requirements,

The University of Idaho Children’s Center¹⁸⁴ serves about 130 families (giving priority to students, faculty, and staff). However, others not affiliated with the campus are also eligible, including those subsidized by ICCP. Accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, it serves children aged six weeks to six years.

The **Lewis-Clark Early Childhood Program**¹⁸⁵ is a regional provider of early childhood education and family support services. In 2012, the program’s Moscow Head Start¹⁸⁶ affiliate served 54 low-income families with children from 3- to 5-years of age.¹⁸⁷ In 2020-21, it served 44 enrollees from Latah County, including 18 full-day, 18 half-day, and eight early childhood enrollees. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the program provides resources for early childhood development and learning; health and nutrition; disability services; family participation, and support toward self-sufficiency. Services are free to income-eligible families. In 2012, the center in Moscow had three fully-enrolled classrooms, plus a wait list of 20 families, with 15 more just above the income-eligible cutoff. Moscow is able to draw on students from the University of Idaho’s Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences to volunteer.

Latah County does not license daycares, so the number of daycare operators in Latah County is unknown. However, cities may set criteria for licensure within their jurisdictions as long as they are at least as stringent as the state’s. For example, Moscow requires payment to cover a background check and fingerprinting, a Health and Welfare Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Form, proof of CPR and first-aid certification, and 12 hours of training in early childhood development or childhood health and safety.¹⁸⁸

Idaho’s After School Snack Program provides free nutritional foods to students from income-eligible schools, in addition to supervising mandatory educational/enrichment after-school activities on-site.¹⁸⁹

Out-of-school activities serve important roles in health, safety, skill development, and social well-being for children of all ages. The Idaho Out-of-School network [ION]¹⁹⁰ was established in 2014 to “build, advocate for, and lead a strong out-of-school community... (and provide) tools and resources to increase access to quality youth programs,”¹⁹¹ including funding for organizations and individuals who provide “educational and enrichment experiences for children and youth during after-school and non-school hours.”¹⁹²

Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute offers an array of experiential education programs designed to build confidence, spark curiosity, and inspire learning about the natural world.¹⁹³

Communities and school districts throughout Latah County offer **summer and after-school programming** to engage children in learning and skill-building activities. Need-based scholarships are available.

With funding from the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program in the U.S. Department of Education,¹⁹⁴ **Kendrick-Juliaetta Joint School District 283** operates preschool, kindergarten, and before- and after-school programs, and family enrichment nights.¹⁹⁵

What are the deficiencies?

The LWVM 2012 report identified the lack of a single point of access to information about childcare as a deficiency. The 2020 Needs Assessment by the McClure Center documented a

statewide deficiency in not having a centralized system to cross-reference individual children's participation in various early childhood care and education programs and their later progress in school.¹⁹⁶ Some improvements have been realized. At the state level, IdahoSTARS offers an online database of resource specialists. However, participation is optional and non-participating educators are not yet included on those lists. The Idaho Careline (211) also maintains a list of local resource specialists,¹⁹⁷ and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare website includes an expansive assemblage of programs and services.¹⁹⁸ The childcare.gov website, established in 2014 and operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child Care, helps parents find childcare resources where they live.¹⁹⁹ In addition, the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children [IDAEYC] maintains a roster of resources to support families, including a video library for at-home learning, a parent resource toolkit, a list of family-oriented community events, and a calendar of pre-K workshops.²⁰⁰ Among those free workshops is the evening series, "Ready for Kindergarten," hosted by the Potlatch School District, in addition to virtual offerings.²⁰¹

The LWVM's 2012 poverty report identified inadequate funding for parenting and personal skills education as a deficiency. That situation has also improved. Resources include the Idaho Children's Trust Fund;²⁰² the Child Welfare Information Gateway within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;²⁰³ the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;²⁰⁴ Family Promise of the Palouse;²⁰⁵ Moscow's CHAS Clinic; and government-supported programs like WIC, Head Start, First Steps, the Infant Toddler Program, and others, some of which are linked on the findhelp website.²⁰⁶

Idaho still does not require a license or inspection for small family childcare homes, unless they have seven or more children in their care and operators receive compensation for providing care to one or more. Without mandatory inspections, the safety of those homes is unknown.

The cost for childcare services often exceeds families' capacity to pay for them. Just finding childcare can be very difficult, especially in rural areas, where many low-income families live.

Remuneration for childcare workers is generally low, given the responsibilities involved.

Interaction among interest groups/organizations

IdahoSTARS partners with many other Idaho agencies and organizations to coordinate early care and education throughout the state. The organization coordinates a statewide Child Care Resource Center [CCRC] network. It manages childcare provider eligibility through the ICCP and directs the statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System [QRIS] for providers. IdahoSTARS also offers professional development training for providers to meet childcare needs and provide support and resources for high-quality care.²⁰⁷

Among much else, the U of I Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences educates students who may study early childhood development, earn credentials in early childhood education, conduct research, develop programs, participate in service-learning volunteerism in local facilities, and pursue careers involving early childhood care and education.²⁰⁸

Consistent with the concept that “It takes a village,” Moscow Day School’s website includes a long list of community partners and resources.²⁰⁹

The collaborative Early Learning Advisory Council in Kendrick-Juliaetta is part of a statewide network to expand early childhood care and education programs, grow the numbers of educators and participating families, and improve school-readiness outcomes.²¹⁰

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¹⁶⁴ Moscow City Code Title 9, Chapter/Section 10-20.

<https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/DocumentCenter/View/1341/Chapter-10---Moscow-Day-Care-Ordinance-PDF>

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Healthcare

Synopsis

The reciprocal relationship between healthcare and poverty poses complex challenges to addressing the root causes of poverty. An individual's underlying health and lifestyle choices impact health status and, in combination with costs and access to medical resources, these all affect and are affected by poverty. Latah County has experienced positive changes in healthcare service availability with the opening of a satellite office of CHAS (Community Health Association of Spokane), a federally qualified health center (2013), and the Latah Recovery Center (2015). CHAS provides medical, dental, and behavioral health services and, significantly, provides these services to, among others, low-income individuals on a sliding scale or free. The Latah Recovery Center provides mental health and behavioral health services to individuals from Latah County. While these service providers have helped Latah County residents gain access to physical, mental, and behavioral health services, significant challenges to accessing and affording healthcare remain. The COVID-19 epidemic and recent and potential legislation (i.e., reproductive health and Medicaid expansion) may have a detrimental impact on the retention of healthcare providers and insurance coverage. In addition, a shortage of transportation services and in-home care, essential components in the complex healthcare system, may exacerbate the challenges for those living in poverty.

Extent of the problem

For many people in America and here in Latah County, lack of access to appropriate healthcare contributes to poverty, and in turn, poverty contributes to the lack of appropriate or preventive physical and mental healthcare. An important reason that individuals do not have access to necessary healthcare is the absence of insurance to cover the high costs of medical care, medications, and treatments for both chronic and acute illness. Often urgent and unexpected, healthcare expenses can be financially devastating for individuals and families, resulting in homelessness and a worsening health status. Chronic untreated health problems, both physical and mental, can decrease an individual's ability to become gainfully employed or to continue to work, and may progress to a permanent disability.²¹¹

Socioeconomic Measures and Health Status in Latah County

Approximately 16.2% of people in Latah County lived in poverty (2017-2021). A higher proportion of Latah County residents live in poverty as compared to Idaho and the U.S. However, the unemployment rate, potentially indicates that, even though people are employed their household incomes are not high enough to move them out of poverty (see Table 1). The 2023 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps project estimates that an hourly wage of \$42.02 is needed for a living wage in Latah County²¹². Furthermore, 14% of households spend 50% or more of their income on housing (see Table 1), considerably over the guidance from financial experts (30% of income).²¹³

Table 1. Socioeconomic Factors, 2017-2021

Factors	Latah County Percent	Idaho Percent	U.S. Percent
People living below poverty level	16	11	13
Children (<18 years) living in poverty*	10	13	17
People living below 150% of poverty level	24	21	21
Children eligible for free and reduced lunch	26	31	53
Unemployment (seeking work)*	3	4	5
High School Completion	97	91	89
Households with broadband internet subscription	88	88	87
Insufficient Sleep	31	30	33
Food Insecurity	11	9	12
Severe Housing Problems**	17	14	17
Severe Housing Cost Burden***	14	11	14

Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps: Latah County, Idaho, 2023²¹⁴

*Data from 2021.

**Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data 2015-2019, households that experience at least one of: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities or lack of plumbing facilities.

***Households that spent 50% or more of income on housing.

The 2023 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps project ranks Latah County as having some of the best health factors and health outcomes relative to other counties in Idaho. Twelve percent of Latah County residents reported fair or poor health, comparable to health rating from the state of Idaho and the U.S. Furthermore, 3.2% of people from Latah County reported poor physical health and 3.9% reported poor mental health in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. These data are consistent with health ratings from Idaho and the U.S.²¹⁵

In addition to the socioeconomic factors in Table 1, behavioral and environmental factors are important indicators for describing the health status of Latah County. Latah County residents report similar rates with Idaho and the U.S. for smoking, physical activity, adult binge drinking, and alcohol-related deaths (see Table 2). An indicator of note is that nearly a third of driving deaths involved alcohol. Additionally, the chronic conditions of obesity and diabetes (see Table 3) also exist in Latah County, Idaho, and the U.S. at similar rates.

Table 2. Behavioral and Environmental Health Factors, 2023

Factors	Latah County Percent	Idaho Percent	U.S. Percent
Adult Smokers*	15	14	16
Adults reporting no leisure time physical activity*	19	20	22
Adults reporting heavy or binge drinking*	20	17	19
Driving deaths with alcohol involvement	31	31	27
Mammography Screening**	44	36	37
Flu Vaccinations**	51	45	51

Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps: Latah County, Idaho, 2023²¹⁶

*Data from Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System 2020.

**Includes data from among Medicare enrollees.

Table 3. Adult Obesity and Diabetes²¹⁷

Factors	Latah County	Idaho	U.S.
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Adult Obesity*	30	31	32
Diabetes prevalence*	9	8	9

* Data from 2020 BRFSS.

Funding for Healthcare and Service Availability

For many people in America and here in Latah County, lack of access to appropriate healthcare contributes to poverty, and in turn, poverty contributes to the lack of appropriate or preventive physical and mental healthcare. In addition to the fact that Latah County is a medically underserved population and health professional shortage area (for dentists, primary care providers, and mental health providers),²¹⁸ another major reason individuals do not have access to necessary healthcare is the absence of insurance to cover the high costs of medical care, medications, and treatments for primary care as well as chronic and acute illness.

Nationally, drug prices are going up faster than inflation. In 2012, per person out-of-pocket prescription costs for the year were estimated to be \$827. In 2023, that figure rose to \$1,324. In 2012, an estimated total of \$259.2 billion was spent on prescription drugs nationwide, including \$67.5 billion from Medicare and \$21.4 billion from Medicaid. Comparable expenditures for 2023 were projected to total \$452.4 billion, including \$157.8 billion from Medicare and \$44.9 billion from Medicaid (see Appendix I).²¹⁹

People in need of care also often lack awareness of the non-emergency care that is available and/or do not possess transportation to get to that care. Currently, 12% of adults in Latah County are uninsured, relatively no change from the percent uninsured in 2010 (see Table 4). This lack of improvement could be due to Medicaid expansion only becoming available in 2020⁴. While the percent of uninsured in Latah County remained relatively flat, the percent of uninsured in Idaho had decreased to 8.8% in 2021.²²⁰ Other counties in Idaho may have realized a larger impact of Medicaid expansion than Latah County.

In 2018, Medicaid expansion was passed by voter initiative in Idaho and became effective on January 1, 2020.²²¹ This increased insurance coverage for many low-income citizens. However, the pandemic measures allowing more people to be insured by Medicaid expired in May 2023 and by late April, 27,000 Idahoans were disenrolled.²²² Currently, Medicaid enrollment is 76% higher than in late 2013. As of May 2023, there were 430,487 Idahoans covered by Medicaid or CHIP, an 81% increase from May 2013.²²³ Medicare beneficiaries who qualify can receive assistance through Medicaid, which can include premiums, cost-sharing, co-pays, co-insurance, and long-term care expenses.

People with marginal financial resources can lose the assets they do have to pay for necessary healthcare and subsequently be pushed below the poverty line. People already living in poverty are frequently unable to pay for housing, food, childcare, and education, let alone healthcare. Housing absorbs a high percentage of income and, for families and individuals struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral beginning with a lost job, depletion of any savings to pay for care, and, potentially, eventual, potential eviction and homelessness. As said above, in Latah County, 14% of households spend 50% or more of their household income on housing expenses (see Table 1 above).

Table 4. Access to Healthcare (percent), Latah County

	Latah County Percent	Idaho Percent	U.S. Percent
Uninsured Adults	12	13	12
Uninsured Children	7	6	5

Source: 2023 County Health Rankings.²²⁴

People who are homeless suffer from multiple, simultaneous adverse health conditions at a higher rate than the general population due to increased exposure to the elements, malnutrition, unsanitary conditions, inconsistent treatment for medical conditions requiring ongoing care, and violence.²²⁵ As the National Coalition for the Homeless explains, “if you are poor, you are essentially an illness, an accident, or a paycheck away from living on the streets.”²²⁶ Access to health insurance and preventive services are part of the reason for socio-economic health disparities. Those with low socio-economic status often experience barriers to obtaining health services, including lack of, or limited access to, primary and acute healthcare, childcare, and transportation.

Those who do not have health insurance, or who have inadequate health insurance, habitually do not seek usual and necessary healthcare services to address their healthcare needs. Their care, when sought, is frequently in emergency rooms, the least cost-effective option.²²⁷ This may occur

because the cost of a visit to a medical provider in the Moscow area for a person who is an established patient with the provider is \$169; if the patient is non-established, the cost of a visit (not including diagnostic tests or medications) is at least \$200.²²⁸ Those who do not have insurance generally do not have the funds to cover the cost of a visit. Community hospitals, emergency departments, and law enforcement agencies respond to the needs of medically indigent people. In 2012, Latah County budgeted \$529,000 for indigent care; however, this county responsibility ceased with the expansion of Medicaid in 2020.²²⁹ In 2020 the County Indigent program was dissolved by the Idaho State Legislature because of the assumption that Medicaid expansion would cover all citizens with indigent healthcare needs. Indigent assistance is based on the following requirements: the individual must be a county resident; must be unable to pay off medical expenses within 60 months (given income and living expenses); and the care must be medically necessary. The annual budget for Latah County (2022) for indigent care was \$86,000 (compared to the 2012 county indigent budget above).²³⁰ A question remains whether Medicaid expansion has filled this gap. Gritman Medical Center provided \$1.2 million in charity care for 2011 and provided \$1.7 million in 2022.²³¹ The cost of care in an emergency room is proportionately greater than a visit to a primary care provider. Thus, the cost of healthcare for those without health insurance places a burden on the existing healthcare system.

The Latah County population is designated as medically underserved. Health Professional Shortage Areas [HPSA] scores are developed for use by the National Health Service Corps to determine priorities for the assignment of clinicians (the higher the score, the greater the priority). Latah County rankings indicate that dental care has a score of 10 out of 26, mental health, 15 out of 25, and primary care, an alarming score of 19 out of 25.²³² There is one dentist per 2,020 people, one mental health provider per 550 people, and one primary care provider per 1,360 people in Latah County.²³³ The ratio of patients to primary care physicians in Latah County increased from 1,063 (2017) to 1,216 (2018); however, the ratio of patients to dentists, mental health providers and other primary care providers all decreased in the same period. The ratio of patients to mental healthcare providers in Latah County has been decreasing from 2017 to 2020.²³⁴ This may reflect the establishment of Latah Recovery Center (2015) and Lewiston's new CHAS Behavioral Health Center for the Lewis Clark Valley (2023).

Mental and Behavioral Health and Poverty

Individuals with low income are two to five times more likely to suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder.²³⁵ Within families, economic hardship can lead to marital distress and inadequate parenting and can result in mental health problems among children, such as depression, substance abuse, and behavioral problems.²³⁶ One in four persons has a relative with a mental illness. Mental illness typically strikes young people 16-25 years of age, occurs in people from all walks of life regardless of race, income, religion, or education.²³⁷ Research suggests that people with the lowest incomes in communities suffer from 1.5 to 3 times more anxiety, depression, and other common mental illnesses than those who are more affluent.²³⁸ Moreover, the loss of income, inadequate housing, and environmental stressors on people living in poverty may have a causal effect on mental health.

In 2021, about 1 in 5 (57.8 million) U.S. adults lived with mental illness.²³⁹ Adolescents (ages 13-18) reported a 49.5% lifetime prevalence of any mental health disorder with increasingly higher prevalence by age group (56% for 17-18 year-olds); the highest prevalence of any mental illness

for adults in 2021 (33.7%) was among 18-25 year-olds.²⁴⁰ In 2020, 13% of Latah County adults reported poor mental health for 14 days or more in the month prior to taking the survey (the same as Idaho) and 20% reported binge or heavy drinking (17% for Idaho).²⁴¹ Additionally, the Latah County suicide mortality rate (2016-2020) was 16/100,000 people compared to Idaho's suicide death rate of 22/100,000 people.²⁴²

Persons who require mental health service are already vulnerable and underserved. As with medical care, if a person does not have insurance or cannot afford the care, there is limited access. The Idaho Legislature cut the mental health service budget in the years 2009 to 2011 and, as a result, Region II Mental Health (the region serving Latah County), which was previously providing counseling and psychiatric care, changed their priorities to providing mandated evaluations for those in the judicial system as ordered by a judge and treatment for those who are mandated by a judge. Region II Mental Health no longer provided direct service.

Disability and access to healthcare

Often urgent and unexpected, healthcare expenses can be financially devastating for individuals and families and can result in a worsening health status and homelessness. Chronic untreated health problems (physical, behavioral or mental) can decrease an individual's ability to become gainfully employed or to continue to work and may progress to a permanent disability. Persons with disabilities are more than twice as likely to live in poverty.²⁴³ An estimated 12% of Latah County residents reported having a disability in 2019 compared to 13.5% in Idaho.²⁴⁴ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) describes a person with a disability as anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. Nationally, an estimated 58 million people are identified as having a disability.²⁴⁵ Disabilities include the more usually understood conditions (such as mobility and developmental conditions), but also include dyslexia, diabetes, obesity, visual and hearing impairments, etc. A Nov. 2023 article about independence assistance among Idahoans with disabilities and the shortage of workers to serve in that capacity notes, "For some Idahoans with a disability, '[their] entire independence relies' on direct care workers,"²⁴⁶

Maternal and reproductive healthcare and poverty

The Idaho Maternal Mortality Review Committee reported 42 pregnancy-associated deaths (during pregnancy, delivery, or one-year post-partum) statewide between 2018 and 2021. Sixty percent of those deaths were deemed "related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management" (as opposed to pregnancy as a coincidental finding "associated" with death). Of the 17 pregnancy-associated deaths in 2021, 16 were reviewed, and 15 of those were deemed preventable. Nine of those 15 deaths were deemed pregnancy-related. Additionally, the most common underlying cause is related to mental health. Other leading causes were infection and amniotic fluid embolism, which comports with the comparatively higher incidence of death among patients who were pregnant within 43-365 days of death. The leading contributing factor was inadequate education or insufficient knowledge by the pregnant person and/or their care provider. The second highest-ranked contributing factor was lack of access or financial resources. In 2018, 50% of pregnancy-associated deaths in Idaho were among patients on Medicaid. In 2019, that figure was 100%, and in 2020 and 2021, 73% and 75%, respectively. During that timeframe, two of those pregnancy-associated deaths (4.8%) occurred in Health District 2 (which includes Latah County). The Idaho Maternal Mortality Review Committee's #1

recommendation for 2021 was that “Idaho Medicaid should expand coverage for pregnant women to 12 months postpartum, regardless of pregnancy outcome.” The second recommendation for systemic change was that “The State of Idaho should continue to work toward increased access to primary care providers to help prevent delays in Idahoans accessing care and treatment.”²⁴⁷

Idaho’s Title V program was established to improve social determinants of health and promote health equity for maternal and child health. Among other things, it will support workforce development for maternal and child health professionals through block grants to attract, retain, and train personnel and support a coordinated system of associated services. In FY2024, that budget will total approximately \$5.8 million, including \$3.3 million in federal contributions and \$2.5 million in local funds.²⁴⁸

Senior healthcare and poverty

In 2022, there were about 6,188 (15.1%) people 65 and older living in Latah County. In Idaho, 9.5% of adults 65 and older lived below the poverty level²⁴⁹ and in Latah County this rate is about 7%.²⁵⁰ Seventy percent of people over 65 will require some form of long-term care.²⁵¹ The main reasons for the need for healthcare assistance among people 65 and older are deterioration of cardio and respiratory function, deterioration of the muscular and skeletal systems, loss of hearing and vision, and natural neurological changes.²⁵² The types of assistance could include: occasional friend or family help, paid help, in-home nurse visits, community services (such as those provided at the 1912 Center), assisted living (help from on-the-job trained personnel overseen by an RN), adult homes or adult foster care in neighborhoods (for those no longer capable of independent living), nursing home facilities (skilled nursing facilities), and Hospice.²⁵³ These types of assistance range in cost from no or low cost (occasional help from friends or family) to \$5,000-\$9,000 per month (residential care). The cost of long-term residential care is not covered by Medicare or private health insurance and long-term health insurance may be costly and have limited terms of use.²⁵⁴ Neither are adult day care services covered by Medicare or by most private insurance health plans, putting them out of reach for many families. In a 2020 report by the National Council on Aging and the LeadingAge LTSS Center at UMass Boston, nationwide, 60% of adults aged 60 and older (about 24 million households) “face significant risk for economic insecurity” due to their lack of ability to pay for two-years of long-term healthcare.²⁵⁵

Between 2012 and 2019, older Americans who were enrolled in Medicare Part D saw prescription gross drug costs rise by 11.5%.²⁵⁶ A poll taken in Dec. 2021 found that 34% of Americans over age 65 were concerned they wouldn’t be able to pay for prescription drugs in the next year. That poll also found that the percentage of older Americans who couldn’t afford their prescriptions within the previous three months had tripled, from 3% that March to 9% in October.²⁵⁷

How is the problem being addressed and with what resources?

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) provide access to primary health (including maternal healthcare), dental, and mental healthcare on a sliding-scale/affordable fee basis. In 2013, CHAS (Community Health Association of Spokane) opened a part-time satellite health

center in Moscow. In 2017 this clinic moved to its present location adjacent to Gritman Medical Center and opened full time. The clinic offers health, dental, pharmacy and behavioral health services. CHAS also operates a medical clinic, a new Behavioral Health Center in Lewiston and a dental clinic in Clarkston. Having these low-income-eligible clinics has increased access to affordable care in Latah and Nez Perce counties. The CHAS Behavioral Health (BH) clinics provide specialized care for severe BH conditions, peer support and targeted case management; the purpose is for care and to integrate high-acuity BH services with primary care. The CHAS focus for 2022 was preventive care (check-ups, screenings, and immunizations). In 2022, at the Moscow/Latah CHAS clinic, 1,939 patients were medically cared for during 7,039 visits; 2,074 dental patients were cared for during 5,172 visits; and BH visits numbered 897, serving 165 persons.²⁵⁸ Information about services at the CHAS Latah Community Health Center in Moscow is available at <https://chas.org/location/latah-community-health/>.

Community Hospitals serving Latah County include Gritman Medical Center, Pullman Regional Hospital, and St. Joseph Regional Medical Center. For the full range of services provided by Gritman Medical Center, Moscow, see <https://www.gritman.org/services-care-areas/>. Gritman Medical Center also offers a Community Resources Guide (last updated May, 2023) with a variety of local and regional services and contact information.²⁵⁹ Pullman Regional Hospital services can be found at <http://www.pullmanregional.org/patient-services>. St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Lewiston is the largest full service Medical Center between Boise and Spokane (<http://www.sjrmc.org/services.aspx>).

The **Public Health-Idaho North Central District** [PH-INCD] accomplishes the mission of community education and preventive medicine through the following programs, which include services with no fee, set fees, sliding-scale fees, insurance and/or private-pay fees:

- Public health / community education
 - Senior Health Fit and Fall
 - Suicide prevention
 - Opioid prevention
 - Diabetes prevention
 - Smoking/vaping cessation and education
- Immunizations (children and adults)
- Nutritional services for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Prenatal and child health Home Visiting Program (Parents as Teachers)
- Solid waste services for ground water protection
- Land development actions
- Food safety (all commercial kitchen inspections; education)
- Childcare inspections
- Communicable disease control and investigations

The Snake River Community Clinic, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) clinic, is not supported by federal or state funding, but with local donations. Located in the Department of Public Health office in Lewiston (215 10th Street), it is open five days a week for medical appointments and one day a week for dental appointments. It serves the lowest-income adults with no insurance and without Medicaid or Medicare. Staffed primarily by volunteers (including physicians, nurse practitioners,

physician’s assistants, pharmacists, dentists, registered nurses, and clerical staff), there is also a full-time nurse practitioner on staff. They accept patients from the eight surrounding counties. Services and medications are free. The clinic has been a functioning member of the area’s medical infrastructure for 20 years. However, there is currently no public transportation available between Moscow and Lewiston.

In 2015, **Latah Recovery Center** was established to serve individuals with behavioral and mental health issues in Latah County. The center works with any individual who suffers from substance abuse and/or mental health issues to find recovery resources for free or at cost. The center currently (information provided in early 2023) provides approximately 650 client contacts monthly and provides 50 Recovery Coach or Peer Specialist contacts per month as strengths-based support. The center also provides 25 different workshops and support groups each week.²⁶⁰ Specific services include: free recovery coach, peer specialist, and behavioral health clinician visits; behavioral health and crisis planning, online recovery support, safe syringe exchange, free naloxone, safer sex supplies, special outreach to veterans and individuals in jail; family and social support; Oxford House (which was destroyed by fire and is now in the process of being rebuilt by the Latah Recovery Center; the City approved architecture plans and issued necessary permits in September, 2023); Vandal Recovery On-campus Outreach; and a 24/7 Behavioral Health Crisis Center.²⁶¹ A calendar of meetings, resources, and services can be accessed at <https://latahrecoverycenter.org/>.

In 2019, with funding from the Idaho Legislature, Public Health–Idaho North Central District opened the first **Rural Crisis Center** in our region. The Rural Crisis Center, operating separately but from within the Latah Recovery Center, is a resource for law enforcement, the hospital and clinics, schools, and the public. Anyone over age 18 can use the crisis services that are provided by local practicing providers. The crisis center is open all day, every day, for referral and services. Services are free to all individuals, but if they have insurance, it will be billed. Moscow police and Latah County deputies are often the first contact for a person experiencing an obvious mental health crisis. They are now able to access the Latah Recovery Center and take advantage of the professionally staffed Crisis Center rather than taking an individual to the hospital emergency room.²⁶²

The **Latah Alliance on Mental Illness** [LAMI] operates Alliance House in Moscow, serving individuals with severe and persistent mental illness who need residential support. Alliance House provides a safe and supportive family-like residence for up to six adults who have had difficulty with living independently in the past. In addition to each resident’s monthly rent, LAMI receives its support from charitable organizations, government entities and donations from private individuals. In addition, LAMI facilitates support groups in the Moscow community and provides community outreach and advocacy about mental health.²⁶³

The **Disability Action Center-Northwest, Inc.** [DAC-NW] in Latah County assists people with disabilities in accessing services and provides public education and information to help community and service-systems work more effectively for everyone. The purpose of DAC-NW is to foster control over one’s own life, not to fix someone’s problems; to foster knowledge of the rights of the individual and assist the individual to gain control over his/her rightful services. The center provides two types of services: systems advocacy and public education and information to

help community and service-systems work more effectively for everyone; and help developing and achieving an individual’s personal goals, either through information and referral services, which entails approximately three contacts, or opening a full-service file. DAC-NW handles about 1,600 calls per year that are information and referral interactions and approximately 200 “open files” with longer-term services (as of January 2023, 100 receive in-home care). DAC-NW provides information and referral; individual living skills training; peer counseling; personal and systems advocacy; transitional assistance (in and out of an institution; assistance with institutional diversion); and in-home transition. DAC-NW acts as the employer of record for these in-home services. The customer is the employer-of-fact with full supervisory and hiring decision powers as allowed by the state Medicaid rules.²⁶⁴ Links to services and resources can be found on the DAC-NW’s website at <https://dacnw.org/>.

Circles of Caring Adult Day Health in Pullman, WA began in Moscow in 2001, providing a safe and nurturing environment to address clients’ physical, social, and cognitive needs during the day, when family caregivers were at work or sought respite. By 2012, about half of its daily census of 25 clients was from the Moscow area, and half was from Pullman. Half of the clients rely on Medicaid, 25% are self-pay, and the remainder benefit from donations that supplement what they are able to pay. By 2014, the majority of clients lived in Pullman, so the Center relocated there. Now, a van transports Moscow clients between their homes and the Center.²⁶⁵

Community Resources for Seniors

In Latah County, there are inexpensive and/or free community services supporting transport and meal needs for seniors: Dial-a-Ride (for local rides with 24-hour advance notice), Coast (for regional rides), and Smart Transit; Friendly Neighbors (1912 Center), which provides bi-weekly lunch-time meals and home delivery of meals; and Senior Centers (Moscow and the outlying towns). For in-home assistance and/or with the activities of daily life, personal and home care is available, however, this has become a service that is increasingly understaffed and difficult to find and afford.²⁶⁶ If one qualifies for a nurse, physical or occupational therapist, this is available, but must be prescribed by a physician.²⁶⁷

Although drug pricing can be problematic for any age demographic, the newly passed Medicare Prescription Drug Inflation Rebate Program (part of the Inflation Reduction Act) offers encouraging news for older Americans whose budgets are strained. The program will require drug companies to send rebates to Medicare if they raise the price of certain drugs faster than the rate of inflation. Those rebates will be deposited into the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund, to help sustain the Medicare Program and discourage runaway drug pricing.²⁶⁸

A recent change in the landscape of senior healthcare services in Moscow was the purchase of the non-profit Good Samaritan organization by Cascadia Healthcare, a for-profit company. A representative for Olympus Retirement Living reported that the company planned to “honor the existing contracts for residents.”²⁶⁹ Independent living options currently include two former Good Samaritan facilities, now called Paradise Creek Fairview Estates of Olympus and Paradise Creek of Olympus Retirement Living in Moscow and Bishop Place and Regency in Pullman, Washington. These organizations offer meals, activities, and emergency care, but no routine nursing attention. Assisted living facilities that provide nursing oversight with on-the-job trained

caregivers are also available in Moscow at Paradise Creek of Olympus Retirement Living, Palouse Hills Assisted Living, and Hill House, and in Pullman at Regency and Bishop Place. Hill House (Moscow), Palouse Hills (Moscow), and Bishop Place and Regency (Pullman) also provides memory care, staffed with trained attendants to care for adults with memory-related conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Nursing homes, which provide 24/7 nurses and certified nursing assistants with physician oversight, focus on rehabilitation rather than long-term care; this is available from Paradise Creek Health and Rehabilitation of Cascadia and Aspen (Moscow), Avalon (Pullman), and Whitman Health and Rehab (Colfax). Periodically, hospitals, such as Gritman, may make "swing beds" available to provide care similar to a nursing home.²⁷⁰

Supportive resources for family caregivers are available from Idaho Caregivers Alliance (<https://idahocaregiveralliance.com/>) and the Area Agency on Aging through Community Action Partnership (<https://www.cap4action.org/aaa/>).

Area 2 North Central Idaho Area Agency on Aging supports Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce counties: located in Lewiston, the agency can be reached at 1-208-743-5580 or 1-800-877-3206 or at <https://www.cap4action.org/aaa/>

What are the deficiencies?

A lack of transportation related to healthcare (physical and behavioral) service availability and trained people to provide transportation and in-home care continue as barriers to healthcare in Latah County.

Making behavioral health services at Latah Recovery Center available to more Latah County residents will require far greater and broader community awareness and additional means of transportation to reach services at the physical center.²⁷¹

A lack of transportation and service providers in Latah County has resulted in barriers to people with disabilities being able to access and receive services. Additionally, lack of accessible transportation, changes to payment for transportation services, and a lack of people to fill transport positions are current barriers to service for people with disabilities in Latah County. Threats to Medicaid expansion may impact in-home care for people with disabilities. There is a serious issue with lack of staff for in-home care.²⁷² The legislature recently denied the new Medicaid budget request (Spring 2023), which may have significant impacts on supports for people with a disability and the Medicaid expansion that improved access to healthcare.

Two problems for low-income families needing services from Public Health-Idaho North Central District are families' lack of information about the services or eligibility requirements for health department programs and families' lack of information about transportation options when they are unable to get to the health department.²⁷³

Lack of accessibility in regular healthcare settings is an issue: if someone is wheelchair bound, how do you weigh that individual? Do you provide interpreters, large print, etc.? And again, lack of public transportation is a big issue.

Lack of direct care workers for in-home services is not just about money: electronic visit verification [EVV] has added costs and complexities (required electronic verification is impossible without the ability to connect via Internet); unbundled services have produced changes in clocking for different in-home services; and there are not enough people to fill these needs, which has resulted in a very real crisis.²⁷⁴

Interactions among interest groups/organizations

The DAC-NW partners with the regional ADA Center, the Area Agency on Aging, and the Commission for the Blind. The organization's primary funding comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS] Administration on Community Living grants. Additionally, funding has been allocated to hire two public health support workers that may work to identify possible accessibility barriers in healthcare and help locate resources to support access. This is dependent on locating staffing to complete the public health access project.²⁷⁵

While service providers such as the CHAS Latah County Health Center, Latah Recovery Center, and the Rural Crisis Center have helped Latah County residents gain access to physical, mental, and behavioral health services, significant challenges to accessing and affording healthcare remain. The COVID-19 epidemic and recent and potential legislation (i.e., reproductive health and Medicaid expansion) may have a detrimental impact on the retention of healthcare providers and insurance coverage. In addition, a shortage of transportation services and in-home care, essential components in the complex healthcare system, may exacerbate the challenges for those living in poverty.

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<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/idaho/latah?year=2023>

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Transportation

Synopsis

Transportation costs are not routinely calculated into measures of poverty, and in rural areas like Latah County, where housing costs are generally lower in outlying areas and where commutes may be longer, those costs add up. People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable. In Latah County in 2019, an estimated 33.5% of people aged 18-64 with disabilities were living in poverty, and accessible transportation services were and are limited. There is still no reliable and comprehensive single point of access for information on transportation resources. Moscow's population and municipal footprint have grown since the LWVM poverty report in 2012, but transit resources have not expanded proportionately. Bus service is still unavailable between Moscow and Pullman, and in under-resourced areas of Moscow for which a third fixed route has been long sought. Challenges include funding and variable demands for transit services; an additional challenge is unreliable work hours for employees.

Extent of the problem

Transportation costs are not consistently included in measures of poverty. In 2010, 23% of Latah County residents lived below the poverty level, compared to 18.1 +/- 2% in 2020.²⁷⁶ That measure amounted to \$22,350/year for a family of four in 2010, and \$26,000 in 2020.²⁷⁷ It does not take into account transportation or other costs associated with holding a job and earning an income. In Latah County in 2010, baseline monthly transportation expenses for a single person with no dependents was \$285, and for a two-parent household with two children, \$686 (see Appendix J).²⁷⁸ In 2021, those figures were \$411 and \$1,121, respectively,²⁷⁹ roughly consistent with inflation.²⁸⁰ People with disabilities are more likely to live below the poverty level and face challenges related to accessibility and affordability of transportation resources.²⁸¹ In 2012, the poverty rate for working-age Idahoans with disabilities was 25.5%, compared to 12.4% for those without.²⁸² Nationwide, an estimated 29.3% of that age cohort with disabilities lived in poverty, compared to 14.6% of those without disabilities.²⁸³ In Latah County in 2019, an estimated 33.5% of people aged 18-64 with disabilities were living in poverty, compared to 20.5% of those without disabilities, with statewide figures of 25% and 11.6%²⁸⁴ and national figures of 25.9% and 11.4%, respectively.²⁸⁵

Gas prices still have greater than average effects on low-income households because the money spent on transportation amounts to a larger percentage of overall expenses. In 2010, Americans with incomes in the bottom 20% spent about 10% of their income on gasoline.²⁸⁶ Gas prices have fluctuated substantially over the intervening years, but in general, the percentage of household income expended on gasoline remained about the same, with households in the 20th percentile lowest-earning bracket spending much more on a relative basis than did wealthier households.²⁸⁷ Low-income rural area populations are hit hardest by rising gas prices because they tend to drive less fuel-efficient vehicles and travel farther to work. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, in 2020, "Nationwide, rural households drive further and have a higher transportation energy burden than suburban and urban households. Rural households have higher burden for all regions... (and) Pacific rural households have the highest portion of their income spent on transportation fuel."²⁸⁸ Housing options may be less expensive in outlying areas, but the majority

of jobs in this region are in Moscow, Idaho or Pullman, Washington. With few rural public transit options, those residents are obligated to commute by a private vehicle. Low-income households are also less likely to be able to afford new, fuel-efficient vehicles, and costs associated with frequent repairs of older vehicles may make it more difficult for those households to manage financially. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, "Suburban and rural households spend more on transportation energy compared to urban households due to the usage of less fuel-efficient vehicle technologies and higher annual VMT (vehicle miles traveled). Lower-income neighborhoods have a relatively higher transportation energy burden, with census tracts with annual income under \$20,000 averaging 6.5% burden. Lower-income groups have a wide distribution of transportation energy burden, with the most burdened quarter of tracts in the lowest income group above 6.3%, but another quarter below 3.6%."²⁸⁹ In addition, according to that analysis, "The adoption of more fuel-efficient vehicles, especially among low-income households, could have the biggest impact on improving household transportation energy burden."²⁹⁰ Low-income households are more likely to rely on public transit and non-motorized transportation options, when available and more practicable.^{291,292,293} Dominant investment in infrastructure for motorized transportation disfavors the poor, who may rely on non-motorized options.^{294,295} According to Moscow's Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, "...half of transit riders have an income of less than \$15,000, indicating a strong need for transit among lower-income residents, high school students, and University of Idaho students. Moscow's transit passengers report using transit for a variety of reasons; the top two reasons are to save money and the lack of access to a car."²⁹⁶

Time and money spent on transportation and not spent or invested elsewhere, might be a contributing factor to slowing down or actually preventing movement out of poverty. In 2020, the mean commute time in Latah County was 19.3 +/- 1.1 minutes, compared to 18.3 +/- 0.9 minutes in 2010.²⁹⁷ There are social costs related to transportation, as well. Limited transportation options may contribute to social isolation, separation from decision-making processes, participation in community events, and the development of social relations that keep communities strong. Transportation costs may require tradeoffs in other areas. For example, people may have to choose between food and fuel, choose jobs based on ease and affordability of transportation rather than opportunities for advancement, or not participate in after-school activities or other social activities. They may have difficulty keeping jobs, due to the difficulty getting to and from work reliably. Transportation and fuel costs influence individuals' and communities' access to goods and services, affect shipping, farm production, manufacturing, and the price of goods, including food.

Challenges related to access and affordability of transportation that existed before the COVID pandemic worsened in the spring of 2020. According to the Congressional Budget Office, "The decline in travel that resulted from working at home, social distancing that occurred in response to the spread of the coronavirus, and the economic contraction that resulted from the pandemic contributed to a precipitous decline in the use of public transportation in spring 2020. The number of trips was about 75% lower than it had been over the same period in 2019. Although ridership partially rebounded later in 2020, it remained well below its pre-pandemic level throughout calendar year 2021..."²⁹⁸ In Moscow, Regional Public Transportation, Inc. [RPT] reported a 50% reduction in ridership in 2020, related to impacts of the pandemic.²⁹⁹

How is the problem being addressed and with what resources?

Vehicles and Services. Congress recently approved the Inflation Reduction Act [IRA], which provides for grants, rebates, tax credits, and other subsidies, with \$60 billion specifically to help low-income households improve energy efficiency, including purchasing electric vehicles and charging equipment.³⁰⁰ For those without cars and those who desire on-demand private transport, the ride-hailing app company, Uber, operates in this area. (Pullman is also served by Lyft.) In addition to filling gaps in the transit system, this affords opportunities for independent work in the gig economy.^{301,302,303} When asked whether RPT/SMART Transit requested or intended to request funding for clean electric or hybrid bus funding through the IRA, a spokesperson replied that electrification of its fleet is a few years away from being practical, due to lack of charging infrastructure, considerations for indoor storage, maintenance and repair facilities, concerns over cold temperatures affecting battery performance, and staff training requirements. RPT/SMART Transit buses are typically financed by Federal Transit Administration capital grants, which require a local cash match, typically at an 80% to 20% ratio. Local contributors have variously included the City of Moscow, University of Idaho, and competitive grants from organizations such as the Latah County Community Foundation.³⁰⁴

Regional Public Transportation, Inc. (doing business as SMART Transit)³⁰⁵ is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that began in Lewiston in 1993. Previously known as Valley Transit and Moscow Valley Transit, it has operated as SMART Transit (Sustainable Moscow Area Regional Transportation) since 2012. According to its mission statement, “(RPT) SMART Transit is a community partner dedicated to providing sustainable, affordable, reliable and accessible public transportation to Moscow and the region.”³⁰⁶ All RPT buses are ADA accessible with wheelchair lifts or ramps for use by people with disabilities, and the fixed route buses also have bicycle racks. Due to funding limitations, it presently serves only Moscow. Based at the Intermodal Transit Center, it provides two fare-free fixed routes that have traditionally operated from 6:40 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday-Friday. Due to staff shortages and the inability to fill open positions, RPT has temporarily reduced services for an indefinite period, with a single bus running from 2 p.m.-7 p.m. on weekdays, and sometimes a single bus running fixed routes for the entire day to accommodate staff days off due to illness, scheduled leave, etc. Normal operating hours on Saturdays are from 8:10 a.m.-4 p.m. However, subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic and a shortage of drivers, Saturday service has been temporarily suspended at times, and as of this writing, has been reduced to 8:10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with a single bus alternating the east and west routes. It is undetermined if modifications will be made to fixed-route services after more drivers can be hired. The westerly route includes the Pitman Center and dorms along Sixth Street, Walmart, Moscow Family Medicine QuickCARE, Winco grocery store, the Palouse Mall, A Street, downtown, and Gritman Medical Center. The eastern route ranges from the U of I campus to downtown, Rosauers grocery store, the municipal aquatic center, Moscow Middle School, the skateboard park, Latah County Fairgrounds, Eastside Marketplace and Styner Avenue.³⁰⁷ Ridership for fixed route service increased from just over 80,000 rider trips in 2007 to an annual average of 161,000 from 2011 to 2019, peaking at 181,000 when Saturday service was implemented in August 2018. In 2020, the impact of COVID-19 resulted in reduced service levels and ridership, which dropped by about 50%. According to RPT, at the time the LWVM 2012 study was written, the cost of operating what was then called Moscow Valley Transit was \$697,000/year, and the shortfall that year was projected to exceed \$200,000. The subsidized cost

per ride at that time was \$2.83. In FY22, the combined operational cost for fixed route and paratransit services was about \$859,000. Costs were fully funded by grants and local partners, without shortfall. The fixed route cost per rider was approximately \$6.22, due to the approximate 50% decrease in ridership that resulted from the pandemic. Efforts are ongoing to restore ridership. The University of Idaho is matching the City of Moscow's contribution of approximately \$130,000 for FY23. Contact Andie Severson, Executive Director, at (208) 883-7165.^{308,309}

Dial-a-Ride, operated by RPT/SMART Transit,³¹⁰ offers demand-response paratransit services for people who are mobility-challenged, senior citizens, those who are economically disadvantaged, and non-driving members of the public, for whom it may be their only transportation option for healthcare appointments, grocery shopping, and other basic needs. The system combines the services of a bus and a taxi. Riders call at least one day in advance to schedule curb-to-curb or even door-to-door transport to their destination. Reservations can be made by phone from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, and an answering machine is available until 5 p.m. on weekends and holidays for ADA priority passengers. No fare is charged for ADA priority paratransit-eligible riders, but all others are charged \$1.50 per boarding, or \$30 for a pass for 30 rides, valid for 90 days. Any member of the public is eligible to use this service, regardless of age or disability. Service is available the same times as the fixed route service, from 6:40 a.m. (first pick-up) to 7 p.m. (last drop-off) Monday-Friday and from 8:10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturdays. Contact Andie Severson, Executive Director, at (208) 883-7165, or for reservations, (208) 883-7747.

COAST is a demand-response transportation program overseen by the Council on Aging and Human Services based in Colfax, Washington. Trained volunteers using their own vehicles and paid drivers using agency accessible vehicles serve Asotin, Garfield, Whitman, and southern Spokane counties in Washington and Nez Perce, Idaho, Latah, Clearwater, and Lewis counties in Idaho. Transportation is free, but donations are accepted. In 2015, COAST saw its budget cut in half, from \$80,000 per year to just \$40,000, after Idaho reallocated money for rural transportation to larger service areas. The budget deficit forced COAST to stop providing Idaho rides for the general public (as it does in Washington). However, funding has been maintained and slightly increased for the elderly and people with disabilities through agencies like the Disability Action Center, the Lewiston-Clarkston Metropolitan Planning Organization, Spokane Transit Authority, and the Idaho Transportation Department. According to a COAST spokesperson, the organization “hopes to maintain current levels of service throughout its Idaho service area and will continue to search for funding to expand services, if possible.

Transportation plays a critical role in the livability of a community and the factors that influence a community's quality of life. Transportation allows for access to food, healthcare, educational opportunities, and employment. Additionally, access to transportation increases rural residents' ability to access recreation, entertainment, and other activities that promote community engagement. Efficient and affordable transportation is an important driver in economic growth in rural areas and helps ensure that people can obtain services and participate in public life.” COAST provides rides for citizens who need access to basic necessities or activities that enhance the quality of their lives within or outside of their home communities. In Washington, COAST serves the general public, including but not limited to, people who are elderly, low income, disabled, or children. In Idaho, funding is provided for people who are elderly or

disabled, with a few exceptions for others. Service hours are Monday-Friday, from approximately 6 a.m.-6 p.m., with targeted night and weekend service in Washington. For more information, email cvantine@gmail.com or call (509) 397-2935.³¹¹

Medical Transportation Management, Inc. [MTM]³¹² administers, coordinates, and manages non-emergency transportation services for Medicaid participants and select members of Blue Cross of Idaho, and brokers subcontract with local and regional transportation providers.³¹³ They offer transportation to and from medical appointments that are pre-approved by Medicaid; restrictions apply.^{314,315} For details, contact the MTM call center or use their online chat: <https://www.mtm-inc.net/idaho/members/>. Prior to 2018, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare medical transportation services were overseen by the Medical Transportation Unit [MTU]. In 2018, IDHW contracted with MTM for those services. MTM subcontracts with more than 60 transportation providers statewide to serve the entire state of Idaho, including Latah County.

Independently-owned taxi services that are licensed in Moscow include Moscow Taxi, reached at (208) 892-4544,³¹⁶ and College Cabs (855) 829-4487.³¹⁷ In November 2022, the lowest estimated taxi prices were \$5.80 base fee + 30-cents per minute + \$2.10 per mile.³¹⁸

Rideshare offerings are also available. Estimated costs for Uber rides start at \$2.50 base fare + \$2.45 booking fee + 25-cents per minute + \$1.81 per mile, with a minimum charge of \$6.45 and a \$5.00 fee for cancellation.^{319,320} On September 23, 2022, the University of Idaho's Lyft Pass Program replaced its previous partnership with Uber. Along with other ride-hailing app options, it is intended to fill the void in public transit for students when SMART Transit is unavailable, and to provide trips between UI/Moscow and WSU/Pullman.³²¹ UI's Lyft Pass Program operates from 7 p.m.-7 a.m., Monday-Friday and 24-hours per day on weekends. Students on the Moscow campus can get up to two rides per month at up to \$15/per ride. Tips are encouraged.³²² In February 2023, that changed to a total monthly allowance of \$30 per student.³²³ The Van Pool started in 1985 and was discontinued in October 2022, due to lack of participation. It previously offered cost-based commuter service within Moscow, between Moscow and Lewiston, and as-needed for other work-related trips. When the LWVM poverty report was issued in 2012, the program was coordinated by the City of Moscow, and made possible by grants from Idaho Transportation Department and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It involved approved commuters' private operation of any of three vans (a seven-, eight-, and 15-passenger van) for a modest fee. When the program was discontinued, the one remaining active van was returned to the state.³²⁴

Disability Action Center-Northwest³²⁵ provides funding to the Volunteer Driver Program coordinated by COAST. That program provides free transportation for people traveling to or from their residences to appointments. Donations are accepted. The service allows people who might otherwise be housebound, or who do not have reliable access to transportation, to get to their destinations affordably, safely, and with their dignity intact. Contact COAST at cvantine@gmail.com or (509) 397-2935 for information.

Vandal Access Shuttle³²⁶ has provided free on-campus transportation since 2008 for University of Idaho employees and students with short or long-term mobility-limiting disabilities. It is

managed and self-funded by UI Parking and Transportation Services, and operates a wheelchair-accommodating minivan, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.–6 p.m. during the fall and spring academic sessions, except during holidays and academic breaks. The Vandal Access Shuttle provided 1,071 rides from October 2021-September 2022. For more information or to schedule transportation services, see www.uidaho.edu/parking, email vandal-access@uidaho.edu, or call (208) 885-6424.³²⁷

The **Vandal Bikes Program**³²⁸ was created in the fall of 2022 as a stand-alone program offered by Parking and Transportation Services at the University of Idaho. All students are eligible to apply. The program started with 12 bicycles, and as of January 2023, five more have been added, for a total of 17. So far in academic year 2022-23, 13 bikes are in active use by students. The program provides bicycles, helmets, locks, lights, storage, maintenance and repair to first-year students who have not purchased annual parking permits. As of the 2022-23 academic year, the program requires a refundable deposit of \$292, which covers up to four years of use for enrolled students, after which participants have the option of acquiring their bikes and accessories at no additional charge.³²⁹ The Vandal Bikes Program replaces the associated students bike loan program, begun in 2008 and touted as “the solution for students having to choose between eating for a week or filling up the gas tank.”³³⁰

Northwestern Trailways³³¹ has provided regional inter-city bus service for more than 60 years. It offers daily bus service to Seattle and between Spokane and Boise, including stops at Moscow’s Intermodal Transit Center; (208) 882-5521.^{332,333}

Community infrastructure, plans, programs, and policies facilitate multi-modal transportation for people at all income levels in Moscow. Measures to improve non-motorized mobility by users of all abilities and all incomes include strategic efforts to improve bicycle-pedestrian connectivity and safety through implementation of an integrated multimodal transportation plan³³⁴ to complement the Comprehensive Plan^{335,336} and programs such as Safe Routes to School^{337,338} and regulations that facilitate user safety. Expansion and maintenance of the regional pathways network connects bicyclists and pedestrians with local destinations and public transit services.

The Intermodal Transit Center [ITC] houses RPT/SMART Transit operations, as well as University of Idaho Parking Services, under-cover bike parking, Vandal Access service, inter-city bus ticketing and pull-in for Northwestern Trailways. Located near Paradise Path, the ITC opened on Railroad Street at Sweet Avenue on the University of Idaho campus in December 2012. Public infrastructure in Moscow includes accessible bus shelters, tactile curb drops, and a strategic plan to incrementally replace, repair, and maintain multimodal amenities.

What are the deficiencies?

There is still no reliable and comprehensive single point of access for information on transportation resources. Currently, the web address for the Palouse Resource Guide, intended to serve that purpose, does not connect to Latah County transit but instead generates Pullman Transit information.³³⁹ An updated and upgraded Palouse Resource Guide is reportedly expected to launch soon.³⁴⁰ Internet-based resources like Google have improved access to information, but

not everyone has access to the Internet or expertise in computer technology. One SMART Transit web page offers www.511.idaho.gov, GoogleTransit and BingTransit as resources for finding routes, schedules, and mapping ways to get to transit stops. However, at the time of this update, efforts to find that info from those links proved fruitless.³⁴¹ UI Parking and Transportation Services provides a thorough list of available resources for students.³⁴² A national program, findhelp.org (associated with the public benefit corporation, Aunt Bertha), describes various local resources, including transit options in Moscow, but many of the links are to resources outside of this area.³⁴³

The 2012 report identified the demise of Wheatland Express service between Moscow/UI and Pullman/WSU as a major deficiency, and efforts to remedy it have proven elusive. To address that need, at least for students, the University of Idaho developed a program that supported two Uber trips between Moscow and Pullman per day for each student. However, those efforts proved challenging, due to an inadequate number of drivers. As of December 2021, the amount of subsidization and continuation of the program were in doubt.³⁴⁴ In September 2022, UI developed a Lyft Pass Program (described under *Rideshare offerings*, above) to help fill that void. When the Wheatland Express bus service was discontinued in 2011, it was serving about 150 riders per day, including students, university faculty and staff, shoppers, people traveling to medical appointments, and others. Ridership numbers and funding sources for reviving it were unknown at the time the prospect was covered by the *Daily News* in 2021.³⁴⁵ Riders of a new service would almost certainly include work commuters, so understanding their needs would be vital. Of Moscow's 9,892 workers in 2019, 4.9% (488) lived in Pullman, and 4.7% (465) lived in Lewiston. Of Pullman's 14,203 workforce at that time, 12.8% (1,821) lived in Moscow.³⁴⁶ Both universities document numbers of students who are enrolled in cross-listed classes across the state line.³⁴⁷

Other public transit offerings have also been discontinued, or their services reduced. According to Tara LeGresley, Assistant Director for RPT/SMART Transit, services to Elk River and to Lewiston were discontinued because they were not utilized to the degree anticipated.³⁴⁸ Neither is bus service available between Moscow and the free/low-cost medical clinics in Lewiston anymore; however, subsequent to the LWVM poverty report in 2012, low-cost medical services are now available in Moscow at the CHAS clinic as an alternative. As noted in our 2012 report, availability is one thing; scheduling, another. According to the former director of the transitional housing nonprofit, Sojourner's Alliance, even when the service between Moscow and Lewiston existed, its scheduling proved to be impractical for some riders. The last shuttle reportedly left Lewiston so early that patients with evening appointments could be stranded until the next day.³⁴⁹

Regional Public Transportation, Inc. recognizes the public's desire for a third fixed-route in Moscow and full-day service on Saturdays.^{350,351} Saturday service was a priority for community members who responded to a 2018 survey, and Saturday service was implemented that summer. Since then, grant funding became available to add a third fixed route, but due to the service interruptions and lowered demand related to the pandemic, slow ridership recovery, the size of local match requirements, and staffing challenges have extended the timeline for implementation to an as-yet undetermined date. That deficiency, acknowledged in the LWVM's report, persists in 2022-23. Access by large multi-family housing complexes, including The Grove Apartments at the south end of town, could be improved. Relocation of Moscow Police Department and

increasing commercial development in the vicinity increase the demand for a third route. Expanding the transit system is consistent with the City of Moscow's Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, adopted in 2014, which notes that "portions of moderate density low-income clusters, such as those located south of Styner Avenue, are not in close proximity to transit."³⁵² Moscow Existing Other gaps identified in that plan also targeted *links between poverty and access to transit*, including lack of transit services for low-income residential neighborhoods south of Styner Avenue; some neighborhoods with low-income households and senior housing east of Mountain View Road; low-income populations on and around Rodeo Drive; and some of Moscow's poorest residents, in neighborhoods east of North Almon Street.³⁵³

Circumstances surrounding the replacement or expansion of the fleet of buses are mixed. The 2012 report identified RPT's aging fleet as a concern, and singled out a paratransit bus that was then 13 years old, estimating it to be 30,000 miles past its useful life expectancy. In February 2012, RPT successfully applied to the federal government for funding to replace it, and today, the SMART fleet of buses are on a continual replacement schedule, with FTA capital grant funding available for competitive applications annually. The 20% local match required is typically the challenge, depending on funding availability from local partners. SMART Transit's paratransit fleet typically consists of three to five available vehicles. Current challenges resulting from after-effects of the pandemic include supply chain issues for new buses, because manufacturers cannot keep up with demand for chassis. In 2011-12, federal and state formula and competitive grants for transit and transportation infrastructure and programs were becoming increasingly harder to come by. However, according to a spokesperson for RPT, "The picture of federal grant funding has improved since 2012."³⁵⁴

Inadequate access to transportation remains a barrier to independence for people with disabilities. In December 2021, the Idaho State Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living distributed a community survey to understand the needs of Idahoans with disabilities. Their objective was to gather information to better advocate for improved access, support, and services for people with disabilities across the state (see Appendix K).³⁵⁵ The periodic statewide needs assessments are mandated by State law, as performance measures to satisfy federal funding requirements. Assessment surveys are developed, conducted and reviewed at public meetings at least every three years, and are "used in conjunction with electronic surveys to develop the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL)."³⁵⁶ Outcomes from that survey have yet to be published but a spokesperson for DAC-NW said raw data are consistent with previous reports that identified lack of access to transportation and housing as the top barriers to independence among people with disabilities. Other issues of concern to respondents include *not having rural transportation and affordable connections between places, and that getting to social activities is a problem because even where transit exists, it may not operate during the times people want to go out for dinner, to a movie, etc.* DAC-NW regularly receives inquiries from people outside of the Moscow SMART Transit service area who seek transportation to the Social Security Office, shopping, dining and entertainment venues, and other destinations in Lewiston. COAST prioritizes medical trips for those who cannot access Medicaid-funded transportation services, leaving *little capacity to serve those who seek accessible transportation for non-medical purposes like shopping.* DAC-NW plans to apply for one-time funding for an accessible multi-use vehicle to supplement COAST's fleet and to potentially be made available for driver's education of those who need to learn to drive with

hand controls. There are currently no such offerings anywhere in Idaho for someone to take driver's education if they require hand controls.³⁵⁷

Interaction among interest groups/organizations

The League of Women Voters of Pullman (Washington)³⁵⁸ took interest in the Moscow poverty report in 2012 and invited a cadre of participants from Moscow to speak about it at one of their meetings. They subsequently published a comparable report, *Poverty in Whitman County, Washington*, in May 2016.³⁵⁹

Pullman City Council³⁶⁰ recently articulated interest in exploring the viability of becoming a micro-metropolitan area to compete for federal transit funding. However, when Moscow and RPT looked into it previously, it was deemed impractical due to tradeoffs like losing eligibility for rural transit funding and competition with the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley and others for scarce monetary resources.

The Hope Center³⁶¹ in Moscow offers participants in its Hope at Work program monetary assistance in the form of cost-sharing for transportation-related expenses such as the cost for a car, payment of past fines, and other related items. It typically does not provide assistance for ongoing expenses like car insurance. As part of that program, the center offers employment in its thrift store, as well as job and leadership training, to help participants prepare for workforce entry or reentry. They also teach budgeting, to help participants manage their income and expenses. Contact Brian Nuttbrock, Executive Director, hopecenterexe@gmail.com or (208) 596-7516.

Within the context of transportation resources, **Community Action Partnership**³⁶² functions as a referral service, advising those who request assistance with transportation needs about resources available from other agencies in the area. At the time of the LWVM poverty report in 2012, CAP provided gas vouchers when funding was available, but that assistance is no longer offered in Latah County, and the Moscow office has since closed.³⁶³ For more information contact CAP at (208) 746-3351.

²⁷⁶ American Community Survey referenced on the U.S. Census web site (<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=poverty%20in%20latah%20county%20idaho>)

²⁷⁷ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines/prior-hhs-poverty-guidelines-federal-register-references/2020-poverty-guidelines>, more accurately referred to as "poverty guidelines," which are used by the federal government to determine eligibility for certain assistance programs.

²⁷⁸ Appendix J: Poverty in America Wage Calculator, Source: 2012 LWVM poverty report, pp. 45–46, <https://my.lwv.org/idaho/moscow/position/poverty-latah-county>

²⁷⁹ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/16057>

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**Appendix A: A Proposal for Study by the League of Women Voters Of Moscow (Idaho)
Addressing Poverty at the Local Level, 2022:**

A proposal for study by the League of Women Voters of Moscow
(Study update authorized by vote at the LWVM annual meeting, 5-4-22)

Submitted by: Nancy Chaney, League Member and co-chair of original study in 2011/2012;

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Problem statement from LWVM study from 2012: “Poverty is sometimes invisible in Latah County. As such, needs may be overlooked by those who might otherwise help. A variety of resources are available, but gaps in communication limit cooperation among service providers and access by people who need their services.” *(See <https://my.lwv.org/idaho/moscow/position/poverty-latah-county>)* **Ideas for updated problem statement for 2022:** “Poverty persists in Latah County. Socio-economic conditions have changed since the LWVM’s study in 2012, and not all of the recommendations in the report have been implemented. What interventions could help alleviate poverty under present circumstances?”

Background: The problem was brought to the attention of Moscow’s mayor in Dec. 2010, when two service providers approached her independently, to express concern over growing demands on their services, without commensurate increases in outside funding and other support for their work. At the same time, area food banks were calling for more donations to keep up. Rather than address issues piecemeal, the City convened a series of well-attended forums among a wide array of stakeholders (“Poverty on the Palouse”), and participants expressed enthusiasm over the prospect of cooperative problem-solving. In March 2011, the LWVM embarked on a formal study of poverty in the area, and issued its report in December 2012 (“A Study of Poverty in Latah County, Idaho in 2012”). That study enhanced awareness, facilitated collaboration, served as justification for successful funding proposals, and yielded substantive results. A lot has changed in the intervening years. At the LWVM annual meeting on May 4, 2022, members voted affirmatively that it’s time to reassess the status of local poverty and update its position through another study.

Questions: Is poverty still a significant problem here? Should it be addressed differently? If so, how? What resources exist? What’s lacking? How have circumstances/variables/trends changed since the 2012 report? In what ways could interaction among service providers and clients be improved? What is the role of government, if any? Is advocacy by the League of Women Voters appropriate?

Proposal: President and VP/Communications Chair will solicit volunteers to study particular aspects of local poverty. Agree to a timeline. Conduct a study to 1) Collate existing data to document the extent to which poverty is a problem in Latah County and the larger region; 2) Determine whether the numbers and underlying causes have changed over time; 3) Expand study to include other relevant aspects of poverty, as may be agreed upon by study team members; 4) Inventory existing services (including volunteerism and private sector donations) and identify gaps; 5) Calculate effects of increased demands and adequacy of governmental funding for various categories of users, as well as response by private funders and volunteers; 6) Identify which services are complementary and propose cooperation for efficiency; 7) Recommend ways to improve communication; 8) Plan for follow-up to assess effectiveness of intervention, based on changes in demands, funding, and policies. 9) Advocate for policy changes to provide remedies and solutions as may be agreed upon through the consensus process.

Consistency with the LWV Mission: “The mission of the LWV is to encourage the informed and active participation in government and to influence public policy through voter education and advocacy.” With regard to poverty, *lack of public awareness* and *limitations in interaction* among agencies and service providers are basic to the problem, so *education* is integral to the success of intervention. Funding programs to address poverty costs something, but there are societal costs associated with not addressing it too. Identifying the roles of various public and private sectors will clarify the relative need and benefits of *advocacy*.

Possible Approaches (including how public policy can address the problem):

- Gather the facts. Numerous resources were identified through the previous LWVM poverty study and report, the City’s broad-based *Poverty on the Palouse* forums (2010-2014), and others from various organizations/agencies. Food insecurity became the focus of Poverty on the Palouse, beginning in 2017.
- Initial study looked at housing, food insecurity, childcare, transportation, and healthcare. Consider that this study could be more expansive, to also include social justice; opportunities for job training and employment; and legislation pertaining to this study (including new/pending bills). Other categories?
- Incorporate categories from study into themes for speaker forums.
- Inform the public. Once the facts and personal stories about the extent and effects of poverty are gathered, a public awareness campaign could help alleviate some of the problems. An informed and engaged public is more likely to support programs, projects, and policies that efficiently address problems they understand.
- Advocate for an agreed-upon position and recommendations to policymakers. Policy is shaped by many factors, but having the facts and being able to relate on a human level are important to making informed decisions. Rational and compassionate advocacy is a means to that (non-partisan) end.

Resources (including lead role):

- Nancy Chaney, member 2022 LWV- Moscow poverty study appointed by president; co-chair previous poverty study/report (2012); former mayor for Moscow (2006-2014) and convenor of the City's Poverty on the Palouse forums, 2010-2014.
(nchaney@moscow.com, H/O: (208) 882-9350, cell: (208) 596-5836)
- Nancy Lyle, co-chair LWVM poverty study/report 2012, healthcare
(nancyl@moscow.com; H: (208) 882-7025)
- See Pullman League's study of poverty (initially modeled after Moscow's)
- News reports
- Other potentially interested League members so far...
 - Kay Keskinen, food insecurity
 - Louise Davison, previously worked on childcare, final editing
 - Jennifer O'Laughlin (potentially, a *limited role*; previously worked on statistics, quantifiable aspects of poverty, and final editing)
 - Kylee Britzman, information technology assistance
 - Dulce Kersting-Lark, early childcare (complementary parallel study)

Appendix B: Case Report West Side Food Pantry

Case Report

West Side Food Pantry-Inland Oasis

Janna Jones, Executive Director

730 W. Pullman Rd., #3 (P.O. Box 8205)

Moscow ID 83843

inlandoasispantry@gmail.com

(208) 596-4992

Personal communication with LWVM poverty committee chair Nancy Chaney, 4-4-23.

West Side Food Pantry opened in 2020, during the early stages of the pandemic. It had a modest beginning as a few shelves in Safari Pearl, a comics, games, and costumes shop in Moscow. As the need for food grew, founders Kathy Sprague and Tabitha Simmons acquired a former doggie daycare building nearby, and set about turning it into a community center, with a full commercial kitchen and great room, in addition to the expanded food pantry.

Demand has continued to grow. In 2022, the West Side Food Pantry averaged 500 visits per month by adults, plus 300 visits by seniors and children. Use in Jan/Feb 2023 was double that of the same time period in 2022. The increased demand coincided with loss of emergency food assistance from the State of Idaho, then Washington. At the same time, donations dropped, and food prices climbed with overall inflation. According to Janna, “The comfortable middle class are not quite as comfortable...” and people who were on the edge before need more help now, with food budgets tighter for everyone. The Palouse Cares annual food drive in November 2022 only had 25% of the number of volunteers it had in the previous year. The drop-off in volunteers coincided with public fear and wide publicity associated with fatal stabbings of four University students, before a suspect was in custody. Donations from another food drive in Pullman for Latah County recipients were also markedly diminished around that time.

What are your primary sources of funding and types of in-kind assistance?

In addition to cash and in-kind private donations, West Side Food Pantry receives commodity funding from Idaho Foodbank, which requires documentation of the total number of adults, seniors, and children served. They made a conscious decision to not solicit TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) USDA commodities because of its more stringent requirements like personal identification and proof of residency. This pantry doesn't distribute generically pre-packed food boxes. Instead, they set quantity limits on individual items, relative to the number of people in household, and use a shopping model, which allows shoppers to choose what they want to eat, thereby preserving their dignity, and filtering for taste preferences, allergies, etc. Idaho food resources, together with local donations are working well.

Successes: Today, West Side prepares meals for on-site consumption, pre-packaging and freezing meals for pantry users to pick up, teaches nutrition classes, and offers the kitchen and gathering areas for public rentals for activities like community theater, Aikido classes, drag luncheons, grief support, and dining events with as many of 150-200 people.

Networking: The Latah County Democrats collect food donations for area foodbanks. Inland Oasis-West Side Food Pantry serves as a receiving hub for distribution among peer facilities in rural communities that may not have the same access to resources as foodbanks/pantries in Moscow. Most fresh foods at West Side come from Target Store rescue, sometimes involving non-food items like baby supplies and pet supplies such as cat litter. Those materials go to the Humane Society of the Palouse, which has its own pet food pantry and offers discount coupons for spay/neuter.

What are your biggest challenges/needs?

- Office equipment, including a dedicated computer
- Kitchen shelving
- Exterior signage and an over-door banner
- Funding
- Volunteers are always welcome, Janna said, emphasizing that they are grateful for working crew they have, including AmeriCorps from WSU and UI, and the public at-large.
- As evidence of the tenuous nature of operating a high-demand food pantry, Janna had to reschedule our interview because a volunteer called in sick and their refrigerator broke down, both of which required her attention.

Do you have suggestions for improving collection, storage, and distribution of food and collaboration among service providers?

On a limited scale, Inland Oasis-West Side Food Pantry serves as a repository for food to be distributed to foodbanks and pantries around Latah County. They could benefit from having more personally-tended sites for drop-offs, and more partnerships with other organizations. West Side already offers literature for neighbors in need, and helps promote organizations like CHAS, the Latah Recovery Center, dental care, and mental health resources.

Janna was preparing to attend the Idaho Foodbank conference in Lewiston, Thurs. April 6, 2023.

Appendix C: Case Report Moscow Food Bank

Case Report

Moscow Food Bank

- 110 N. Polk for pick-up and drop-off, 2:00-4:00 Tue-Fri or
- St. Mary's Church office, 618. E. 1st St. for drop-off, Monday–Friday, 9:00–11:30 and 12:30–4:00; closed weekends

Linda Nickels, Director since 1993. Personal communication with LWVM poverty committee chair Nancy Chaney (9-5-23)

1. Have demands on your food bank fluctuated with COVID and temporary food assistance programs?

Early in the first year of the pandemic, we were very busy, then things settled down, especially for home porch and curbside deliveries. (Deliveries are still possible, when necessary.) Food drives were very limited during the pandemic, and haven't fully recovered. We noticed a big increase in demand around July 2022, when some food benefit programs stopped. We've also seen increases since some mobile home parks in the area were sold to out-of-state owners, and space rental has increased substantially, like from \$250 per month to \$500. That really affects people's ability to put food on the table.

2. How many customers do you serve?

We served 18,000 individual visitors in 2022, including around 650 families per month, and are on pace to exceed those numbers this year. During the pandemic, to keep people from having to line-up, we implemented a menu-style sign-up sheet, and while volunteers packed boxes with customers' chosen canned goods, they could shop for baked goods, fresh produce, and toiletries. We still do that.

3. What are your primary sources of funding and types of in-kind assistance?

Individual donations of food and cash; Idaho Foodbank deliveries; Rosauers buy-a-bag-of-groceries program during the Nov-Dec holiday season; food drives; and drop-off stations for non-perishable foods in several local grocery stores.

4. What are your challenges/needs?

Our biggest challenge is keeping the place stocked. Our inventory from Idaho Foodbank has shrunk this year. Also, we're seeing quite a few customers from Pullman, even though they have two food distribution sites there. They tell me that Community Action Partnership requires appointments, which aren't always convenient. (Linda noted that CAP has told her it does try to accommodate people's schedules.) The other site, Pullman Child Welfare, is only open 9:00–11:00 Saturdays.

5. Greatest successes?

During the pandemic (2020–2022), we built a new warehouse-style building off the alley. Customers and volunteers love it! It has big a garage-style door to wheel-in pallets of food, delivered by trucks.

6. Do you have ideas for improving collection, storage, or distribution of food or collaboration among service providers?

We hope the food drives are able to ramp back up this year, and that donations can keep pace with the growing demand.

7. On paper, some poverty indicators look improved, but demands on food banks continue to grow. What would you say to someone who thinks people who can afford it are just looking for free food?

Most everybody who comes to Moscow Food Bank is working, at least part-time. Some of them don't have the educational credentials to have good-paying jobs. Quite a few are working in the service sector. With the lack of affordable housing and inflated grocery prices, they can't make it without help. For those who think the demand increases when students return to campus, that's simply not the case. We receive more donations from the university than people who use the food bank.

Appendix D: Case Report Potlatch Food Pantry

Case Report

Potlatch Food Pantry

Interview with Amber Weber, Board Member and Volunteer

510 Pine St. (for food drop-offs at City Hall, Monday-Friday, 10:00–5:00 or by appointment)

PO Box 453 (for monetary donations and correspondence)

Potlatch ID 83855

(208) 875-0735 or (208) 875-0708

Personal communication with LWVMoscow poverty committee chair Nancy Chaney, 9-27-23

Potlatch Food Pantry is a volunteer-run organization with a six-member board, tasked with everything from picking up donations of food, managing the budget, writing grant proposals, working in the food distribution facility, and organizing local food drives. Recently, the need for food from the Pantry has been growing every month. Clients who used to come just once per month now come in twice. (The pantry is open twice per month, on the second and fourth Thursdays, from 10:00–2:00 and 6:00–8:00 p.m.) During the pandemic, with more government subsidies available, they saw a decrease in customers, but since those subsidies dried up and food inflation exploded, more people are seeking help. Over the past year, 144 families, representing 460 individuals, were served. On a monthly basis, they serve 6068 families, representing 250260 people.

At the same time as demand is increasing, cash donations are down and supply chains are diminished. Amber reports a decrease in both the types and quantities of foods available from their usual suppliers, including Idaho Foodbank. An order form that used to be three or more pages long has been reduced to one. Whereas they used to be able to request milk, cheese, and yogurt, they are now dipping into grant monies for their volunteers to drive to Winco and Walmart in Moscow, and the local grocery store in Potlatch to shop for those items.

When we spoke, Amber had been working for hours on a grant funding request, and expressed hope that upcoming food drives this fall will be successful. Like other service-oriented organizations, a few volunteers are doing a lot of heavy lifting, and even inspired people, doing important work, get tired. Amber was unfamiliar with the first poverty study by the League, and expressed interest in the possibility that the 2024 report will be similarly informative and useful for organizations like hers and the people they serve.

Appendix E: Currencies Accepted at Moscow Farmers Market



CURRENCIES MANAGED BY COMMUNITY EVENTS STAFF

Bicycle Benefits

Bicycle Benefits is a national non-profit that supports and incentivizes safe biking and sustainability. Bicycle Benefits tokens are given to cyclists that bike to Market with a Bicycle Benefits sticker on their helmet. Tokens are in \$2 increments and may be used to purchase any item from all Vendors at the Moscow Farmers Market.

**All Vendors may accept this form of currency.
No change may be given.
Valid from year to year.**



POP Bucks

The Power of Produce Club, or POP Club, empowers children (ages 5 through 12) to make healthy choices when selecting food to eat. POP Bucks are earned by each child participant that completes the scheduled POP Club activity. Buck vouchers are dispersed in \$5 increments and may be used to purchase fresh produce, fresh fruit, and seeds/plants that produce food.

**Only Ag. Vendors with the appropriate edible product may accept this voucher.
No change may be given.
Valid June-September during the current Market Season.**





CURRENCIES MANAGED BY COMMUNITY EVENTS STAFF

WA State Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

WIC FMNP and Senior FMNP benefits are ONLY available to Washington State residents. In 2023, this process will go completely digital and checks will no longer be issued. Funds through this program can be spent on fruit, vegetables and cut herbs and honey (honey is only available for purchase with the Senior FMNP benefit).

NEW in 2023 Cash Value Benefits (CVB). Unlike WIC and Senior FMNP, which grants participants a set amount of money for the season, CVB amounts reset monthly.

- ∨ Only **authorized** Ag. Vendors with the appropriate edible product may accept these benefits.
- ∨ No change may be given for any program.
- ∨ Vendors enrolled in this program are required to display a sign indicating they are an authorized vendor.
- ∨ Un-authorized vendors that accept these benefits may be fined and may cause the Market to lose its authorization.



For more resources on the transition from paper check vouchers to electronic benefits:

- ∨ WIC – Katherine Flores, 360-236-3721, katherine.flores@doh.wa.gov
- ∨ WIC – Nick Lee, 360-236-3586, nick.lee@doh.wa.gov
- ∨ Senior – Cameron Akita, 360-725-2466, cameron.akita@dshs.wa.gov
- ∨ Help Desk – 1-800-841-1410 ext. 2

Webinar recording – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HG58KeIoIQ0>

Primary website – <https://doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/wic/farmers-market/growers-markets-and-farm-stores>

MOSCOW FARMERS MARKET



CURRENCIES MANAGED BY BACKYARD HARVEST

Shop the Market Tokens



Shop the Market tokens are given to SNAP/EBT recipients, and are in \$1 and \$5 increments. These tokens may be used to only purchase seeds, plants that produce food, bread, cheese, milk, egg, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, honey, etc. Please contact Backyard Harvest if you have questions about whether your product qualifies.

Only Vendors with the appropriate edible product may accept this currency type.

No change may be given for either.

Valid from year to year.

Backyard Bucks Tokens



Backyard Bucks tokens are an incentive program for SNAP/EBT recipients and are in \$1 and \$5 increments. These tokens may be used to purchase **any food** item at the Market (excluding alcohol) such as all of the items listed above **AND** hot/prepared food, beverages, etc. Please contact Backyard Harvest if you have questions about whether your product qualifies. Backyard Harvest is offering a \$1 to \$1 match up to \$100. This means if a SNAP/EBT recipient withdraws \$50 from their SNAP/EBT account, Backyard Harvest will provide an additional \$50 in Backyard Bucks.

Only Vendors with the appropriate edible product may accept this currency type.

No change may be given for either.

Valid from year to year.

Backyard Harvest staff visit Vendors towards the end of Market to collect tokens and reimburse Vendors depending on the amount of the reimbursement; in some cases, a check may be sent in lieu of day-of-cash payment. Vendors may also visit the Backyard Harvest tent, by the clock in Friendship Square, if you feel you have been overlooked. For questions, please contact Backyard

Harvest at (208) 669-2259 or

programcoordinator@backyardharvest.org.



FAQS

- ∇ Can I give change in the form of tokens for any of these currencies?
- ∇ Can I charge sales tax and/or container deposits with any of these currencies?
- ∇ Who decides what products are eligible for each program/currency?
- ∇ Who funds these programs?

	I can give change in the form of tokens	I can charge sales tax and/or container deposits	Funding for this program comes from	Eligible products for this program are determined by
Bicycle Benefits	No	Yes	City of Moscow	City of Moscow
POP Club	No	Yes	City of Moscow	City of Moscow
WIC/SFMNP	No	No	Washington State	USDA Food and Nutrition Services
Shop the Market	Yes	No	Backyard Harvest	USDA Food and Nutrition Services
Backyard Bucks	Yes	Yes	Backyard Harvest	Backyard Harvest and City of Moscow

- ∇ **What do I do if a customer doesn't have enough currency to cover their transaction?**
Vendors are never required to sell an item for less than its market value.
 - If a customer is attempting to pay only using the designated currency, best practices are for Vendors to add or remove items to try to bring the value of the item to the nearest dollar if possible.
 - If a customer does not have enough money in the designated currency, and the Vendor is unable to add or remove items, the customer can use cash/check/credit card to pay the remaining balance.



ACCEPTED CURRENCIES BY MARKET PRODUCTS

	Bicycle Benefits	POP Club	WIC/SFMNP	Shop the Market	Backyard Bucks
Crafts, Artisan goods and wares	Yes	No	No	No	No
Prepared, ready-to-eat foods <i>(sushi rolls, açaí bowls, scones, brownies, muffins, pastries, cake pops, cookies, cupcakes, etc.)</i>	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Hot, served, ready-to-eat foods <i>(kettle corn, crepes, burritos, tacos, burgers, sandwiches, plates of food, etc.)</i>	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Hot/cold single beverages <i>(lemonade, smoothies, juices, kombucha, coffee, Italian sodas, etc.)</i>	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Fresh Produce <i>(vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, berries, cut herbs, etc.)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seeds and/or Plants that produce food	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Milk, Cheese	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Eggs, Meat	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Honey	Yes	No	SFMNP Only	Yes	Yes
Bread <i>(baguettes, loaves, rolls, quick breads, etc.)</i>	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Canned Goods <i>(jams, jellies, pickles, preserves, non-alcoholic beverages, etc.)</i>	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Seasonings <i>(salt, sugar, and/or herb mixes, dry rubs, packaged sauces, salsas, syrups, etc.)</i>	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Dry/dehydrated goods <i>(ground/whole bean coffee, tea, drink infusions, fruit, mushrooms, soup mixes, granola, flour)</i>	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Frozen/refrigerated goods <i>(half dozen or more tamales, raw dough balls for bread, fresh pasta, soup bones, bulk cider, bulk kombucha)</i>	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

Accepted Currencies at the Moscow Farmers Market
Last updated: April 2023

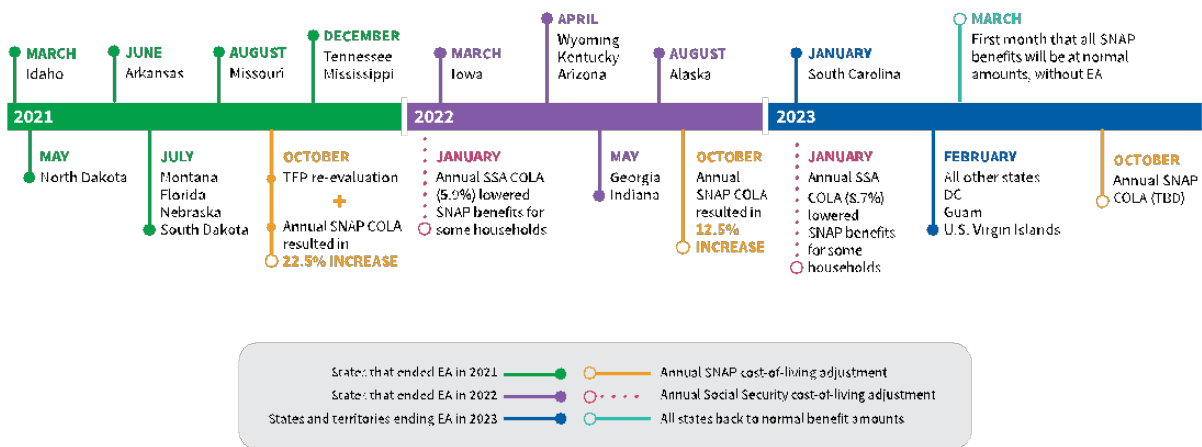
Appendix F: Recent Changes to SNAP Benefit Amounts



RECENT CHANGES TO SNAP BENEFIT AMOUNTS

Beginning in March 2020, USDA approved states to provide SNAP households with extra pandemic-related SNAP benefits known as [emergency allotments](#) (EA). Since then, a variety of state and federal changes have impacted SNAP benefit amounts as shown in the timeline below.

- By law, EA benefits will end for all states by March 2023. However, 18 states already ended EA. States and territories are listed below by the final month that benefits included EA.
- The 2021 Thrifty Food Plan re-evaluation and annual SNAP cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) bolstered SNAP benefits to support a nutritious diet reflective of today's food costs.
- Approximately half of SNAP households also receive Social Security and/or Supplemental Security Income benefits. Therefore, the Social Security Administration (SSA) annual COLA resulted in higher income for many SNAP households, which may have lowered their SNAP benefits.



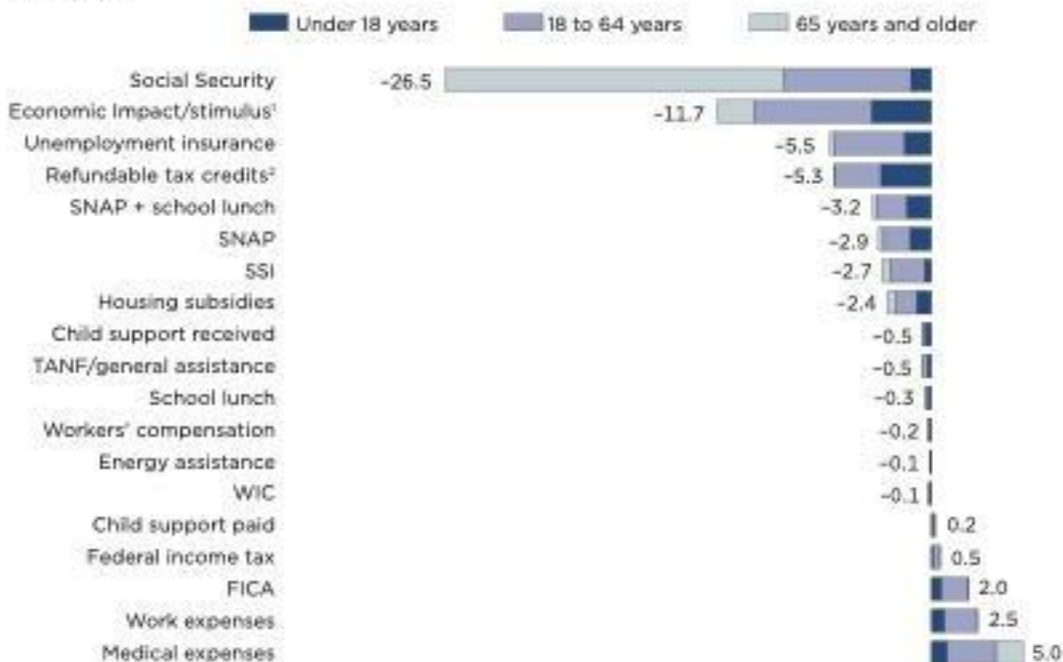
Source: USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Recent Changes to SNAP Benefit Amounts. Retrieved 9/11/23 <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/2023-benefit-changes>

Appendix G: Change in Number of People in Poverty

Figure 8.

Change in Number of People in Poverty After Including Each Element: 2020

(In millions)



¹ Includes the first two rounds of stimulus payments. Additional details available in the report appendix.

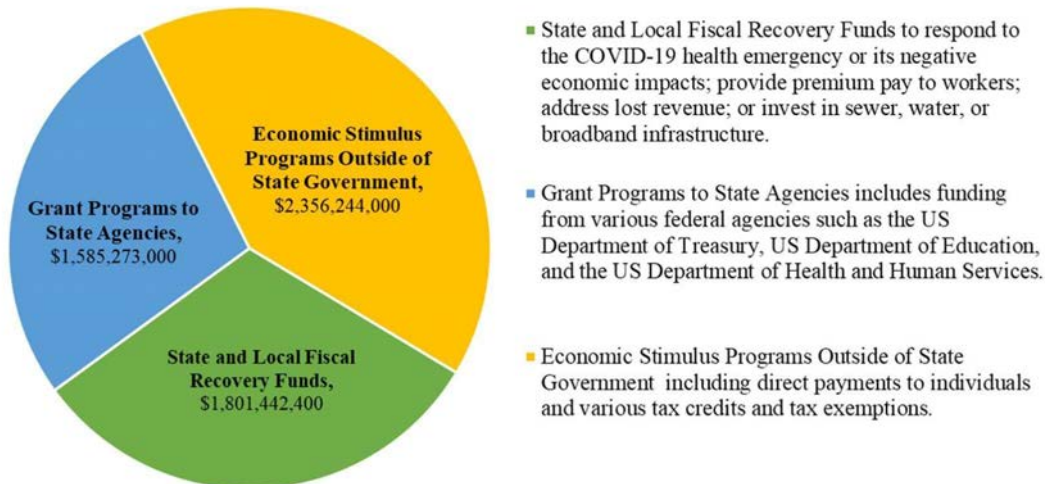
² Refundable tax credits do not include stimulus payments.

Notes: SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSI: Supplemental Security Income; TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; FICA: Federal Insurance Contributions Act. More information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions is available at <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar21.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2021 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

Appendix H: ARPA Funding and Relief Available to Idaho

ARPA Funding and Relief Available to Idaho is \$5.74 Billion



Source: FFIS State by State Allocations Spreadsheet #47 (January 4, 2022, allocations and estimates) from Idaho Report 01-22: 3rd Updated Review of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, A publication of the legislative services office: Budget and Policy Analysis, Second Regular Session: 66th legislature. Updates January 13, 2022 (page 1.)
<https://legislature.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/budget/publications/ARPA/ARPA.pdf>

Appendix I: Prescription Drug Expenditures

Table 11
Prescription Drug Expenditures; Aggregate and per Capita Amounts, Percent Distribution and Annual Percent Change by Source of Funds: Calendar Years 2011-2027

Year	Total	Out-of-Pocket Payments	Health Insurance ¹					Other Health Insurance Programs ²	Other Third Party Payers ³
			Total	Private Health Insurance	Medicare	Medicaid			
Amount in Billions									
Historical Estimates									
2011	\$258.8	\$45.3	\$210.7	\$117.1	\$63.3	\$21.0	\$9.4	\$2.8	
2012	259.2	45.1	211.5	113.1	67.5	21.4	9.5	2.6	
2013	265.2	43.6	219.2	113.9	74.0	22.1	9.2	2.4	
2014	297.9	44.8	251.1	128.8	84.8	27.3	10.2	2.0	
2015	324.5	45.5	277.0	142.9	92.4	30.5	11.1	1.9	
2016	332.0	46.7	283.5	144.6	96.6	32.0	10.3	1.8	
2017	333.4	46.7	285.0	140.1	100.9	33.0	11.0	1.8	
Projected									
2018	344.5	47.3	295.4	142.9	107.6	33.5	11.4	1.8	
2019	360.3	49.2	309.1	145.6	116.0	35.8	11.8	2.0	
2020	378.9	51.2	325.7	150.3	125.3	37.9	12.1	2.1	
2021	400.4	53.4	344.7	156.9	135.3	40.0	12.5	2.2	
2022	425.2	56.6	366.3	164.8	146.3	42.4	12.5	2.3	
2023	452.4	59.5	390.4	174.3	157.8	44.9	13.3	2.5	
2024	481.2	62.8	415.8	184.3	170.2	47.5	13.8	2.6	
2025	511.1	66.4	442.0	194.7	182.7	50.3	14.2	2.7	
2026	542.9	70.1	469.9	205.5	196.4	53.3	14.7	2.9	
2027	576.7	74.0	499.6	216.6	211.4	56.4	15.2	3.1	
Per Capita Amount									
Historical Estimates									
2011	\$832	\$145	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2012	827	144	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2013	840	138	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2014	937	141	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2015	1,013	142	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2016	1,028	145	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2017	1,025	144	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
Projected									
2018	1,050	144	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2019	1,089	149	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2020	1,136	153	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2021	1,191	159	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2022	1,255	167	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2023	1,324	174	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2024	1,397	182	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2025	1,472	191	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2026	1,551	200	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
2027	1,635	210	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
Percent Distribution									
Historical Estimates									
2011	100.0	17.5	81.4	45.2	24.5	8.1	3.6	1.1	
2012	100.0	17.4	81.6	43.6	26.1	8.3	3.7	1.0	
2013	100.0	16.4	82.7	43.0	27.9	8.3	3.5	0.9	
2014	100.0	15.0	84.3	43.2	28.4	9.2	3.4	0.7	
2015	100.0	14.0	85.4	44.0	28.5	9.4	3.4	0.6	
2016	100.0	14.1	85.4	43.5	29.1	9.6	3.1	0.5	
2017	100.0	14.0	85.5	42.0	30.3	9.9	3.3	0.5	
Projected									
2018	100.0	13.7	85.7	41.5	31.2	9.7	3.3	0.5	
2019	100.0	13.7	85.8	40.4	32.2	9.9	3.3	0.5	
2020	100.0	13.5	85.9	39.7	33.1	10.0	3.2	0.6	
2021	100.0	13.3	86.1	39.2	33.8	10.0	3.1	0.6	
2022	100.0	13.3	86.1	38.7	34.4	10.0	3.0	0.5	
2023	100.0	13.2	86.3	38.5	34.9	9.9	2.9	0.5	
2024	100.0	13.1	86.4	38.3	35.4	9.9	2.9	0.5	
2025	100.0	13.0	86.5	38.1	35.8	9.8	2.8	0.5	
2026	100.0	12.9	86.6	37.9	36.2	9.8	2.7	0.5	
2027	100.0	12.8	86.6	37.6	36.7	9.8	2.6	0.5	
Annual Percent Change from Previous Year Shown									
Historical Estimates									
2011	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
2012	0.2	-0.3	0.4	-3.4	6.7	2.3	1.2	-9.8	
2013	2.3	-3.3	3.6	0.8	9.7	2.9	-3.6	-6.0	
2014	12.4	2.8	14.6	13.0	14.5	23.9	11.8	-16.2	
2015	8.9	1.6	10.3	11.0	9.0	11.6	8.8	-3.4	
2016	2.3	2.5	2.4	1.2	4.5	5.0	-7.9	-6.2	
2017	0.4	0.1	0.5	-3.1	4.4	3.1	6.7	-3.1	
Projected									
2018	3.3	1.2	3.7	2.0	6.7	1.5	3.8	3.8	
2019	4.6	4.1	4.7	1.9	7.7	6.8	3.8	7.8	
2020	5.2	4.0	5.3	3.2	8.1	6.0	2.7	6.1	
2021	5.7	4.4	5.9	4.4	8.0	5.6	2.8	5.6	
2022	6.2	5.9	6.3	5.0	8.1	5.9	3.6	5.5	
2023	6.4	5.2	6.6	5.8	7.9	5.9	3.3	5.5	
2024	6.4	5.5	6.5	5.7	7.8	5.9	3.3	5.5	
2025	6.2	5.7	6.3	5.7	7.4	5.8	3.3	5.6	
2026	6.2	5.6	6.3	5.5	7.5	5.9	3.3	5.7	
2027	6.2	5.6	6.3	5.4	7.6	6.0	3.3	5.4	

¹Includes Private Health Insurance (Employer Sponsored Insurance and other private insurance, which includes Marketplace plans), Medicare, Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (Titles XIX and XXI), Department of Defense, and Department of Veterans' Affairs.

²Children's Health Insurance Program (Titles XIX and XXI), Department of Defense, and Department of Veterans' Affairs.

³Includes worksite health care, other private revenues, Indian Health Service, workers' compensation, general assistance, maternal and child health, vocational rehabilitation, other federal programs, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, other state and local programs, and school health.

⁴Calculation of per capita estimates is not applicable.

NOTE: Per capita amounts based on estimates that reflect the U.S. Bureau of Census definition for resident-based population (which includes all persons who usually reside in one of the fifty states or the District of Columbia, but excludes (i) residents living in Puerto Rico and areas under U.S. sovereignty, and (ii) U.S. Armed Forces overseas and U.S. citizens whose usual place of residence is outside of the United States) plus a small (typically less than 0.2% of population) adjustment to reflect Census undercounts. Projected estimates reflect the area population growth assumptions found in the Medicare Trustees Report. Numbers and precents may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Office of the Actuary.
<https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/Downloads/Proj2018Tables.zip>)

Appendix J: Living Wage Calculation for Latah County, Idaho

Living Wage Calculation for Latah County, Idaho

displaying_results

The living wage shown is the hourly rate that an individual must earn to support their family, if they are the sole provider and are working full-time (2080 hours per year). The state minimum wage is the same for all individuals, regardless of how many dependents they may have. The poverty rate is typically quoted as gross annual income. We have converted it to an hourly wage for the sake of comparison. Wages that are less than the living wage are shown in red.

Hourly Wages	1 Adult	1 Adult, 1 Child	1 Adult, 2 Children	1 Adult, 3 Children	2 Adults	2 Adults, 1 Child	2 Adults, 2 Children	2 Adults, 3 Children
Living Wage	\$8.05	\$16.85	\$21.76	\$28.48	\$12.68	\$15.85	\$17.25	\$20.84
Poverty Wage	\$5.21	\$7.00	\$8.80	\$10.60	\$7.00	\$8.80	\$10.60	\$12.40
Minimum Wage	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25

Typical Expenses

These figures show the individual expenses that went into the living wage estimate. Their values vary by family size, composition, and the current location.

Monthly Expenses	1 Adult	1 Adult, 1 Child	1 Adult, 2 Children	1 Adult, 3 Children	2 Adults	2 Adults, 1 Child	2 Adults, 2 Children	2 Adults, 3 Children
Food	\$242	\$357	\$536	\$749	\$444	\$553	\$713	\$904
Child Care	\$0	\$421	\$808	\$1,196	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Medical	\$108	\$389	\$412	\$399	\$250	\$384	\$363	\$375
Housing	\$493	\$622	\$622	\$907	\$515	\$622	\$622	\$907
Transportation	\$285	\$555	\$639	\$686	\$555	\$639	\$686	\$698
Other	\$68	\$157	\$213	\$292	\$118	\$155	\$177	\$210
Required monthly income after taxes	\$1,196	\$2,501	\$3,230	\$4,229	\$1,882	\$2,353	\$2,561	\$3,094
Required annual income after taxes	\$14,352	\$30,012	\$38,760	\$50,748	\$22,584	\$28,236	\$30,732	\$37,128
Annual taxes	\$2,397	\$3,026	\$6,494	\$8,499	\$1,785	\$4,732	\$5,148	\$6,220
Required annual income before taxes	\$16,749	\$35,038	\$45,254	\$59,247	\$24,369	\$32,968	\$35,880	\$43,348

Typical Hourly Wages

These are the typical hourly rates for various professions in this location. Wages that are below the living wage for one adult supporting one child are marked in red.

Occupational Area	Typical Hourly Wage
Management	\$31.89
Business and Financial Operations	\$24.60
Computer and Mathematical	\$27.29
Architecture and Engineering	\$30.91
Life, Physical and social Science	\$21.23
Community and Social Services	\$17.75
Legal	\$27.66
Education, Training and Library	\$18.45

Occupational Area	Typical Hourly Wage
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media	\$14.00
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	\$26.58
Healthcare Support	\$11.06
Protective Service	\$16.84
Food Preparation and Serving Related	\$8.68
Building and Grounds Cleaning and maintenance	\$10.51
Personal care and Services	\$9.01
Sales and Related	\$11.05
Office and Administrative Support	\$13.31
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	\$11.34
Construction and Extraction	\$17.07
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	\$17.60
Production	\$13.61
Transportation and Material Moving	\$13.35

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Appendix K: State Plan for Independent Living Community Survey

December 13, 2021

The Idaho State Independent Living Council

The Idaho State Independent Living Council's [SILC] mission is to promote, advocate for and enhance the ability of all Idahoans with disabilities to live independently, direct their lives and participate fully in their community of choice. We envision an Idaho where people across disabilities and lifespan live in their community of choice with the services and supports they need to reach their full potential.

The SILC, in collaboration with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI), develop the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) at least every three-years. The SPIL is a three-year plan that sets goals and guides plans for the delivery of independent living services, and systemic advocacy in Idaho. The SILC is responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the SPIL. The SILC also conducts systems advocacy, public education about disability related topics and provides technical assistance related to community living.

CIL Core Services

Independent Living Services are designed to help people with disabilities reach their personal goals for independence and participation with their families and communities. The five core services of the Independent Living program are:

- Information and Referral
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Peer Counseling
- Individual and Systems Advocacy
 - Life Transition Assistance (related to youth leaving high school or people moving out of nursing homes or staying in their own homes with the right supports).

Access

2022 marks the 32nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA says it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. There are many other laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities so we can access our communities.

Access means:

- You can go to the places you need and want to go.
- You can do the things you need and want to do in your community.
- You can get the services you need and want; and you are able to buy the things you need or want within reason.

By completing this survey, you'll help us better understand the needs of Idahoans with disabilities; that we may better advocate for improved access, supports and services across our state. The survey is voluntary and anonymous.

1. Are you a person with a disability?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Are you a service provider or family member of a person with a disability?
 - No
 - Yes - Family member of a person with a disability
 - Yes - Service Provider/Agency owner or manager
 - Yes - Direct care or community support worker
3. What is your City or 5-digit zip code?
 - City: _____
 - Zip Code: _____

Housing

4. What is your current housing? **Check all that apply.**
 - I rent
 - I own
 - I live in a group setting (ResHab, Certified Family Home, Group home) I live in a facility (nursing home, assisted living)
 - I live with family or roommates I chose
 - I live in a shelter or other temporary housing
 - Other _____

Housing continued

5. What issues, barriers or worries do you face related to your housing? Check all that apply.
 - No worries or concerns
 - Rent increase
 - Affordability
 - Location
 - Accessibility (ramp, wider doors, shower, toilet, pathways, appliances) Property taxes
 - Maintenance on home I own
 - I need help with daily activities (cooking, showering, getting out of bed, cleaning, getting and taking medication, getting dressed, shopping, etc.) Having the technology (computer, phone, teleservices, internet) I need to do the things I want to do
 - Having the aids (grabbers, bathroom benches, Hoyer lift, magnifier, bump dots) to be independent in my home
 - Problems with landlord or property management
 - Timely repairs of property I rent

Disability or other discrimination
 Group home - owner or manager
 ResHab/assisted living provider or staff
 Housing assistance application, recertification or long wait list
 Landlords won't accept housing vouchers
 Lack of public transportation where I live
 Not enough housing in the town where I live
 There aren't sidewalks where I live
 There isn't a care provider (service agency), family or friends near me I don't
 have control over my own money
 I don't get to see my friends or do things I want to do
 Other _____

Life skills

6. What things do you struggle with or need help doing? Check all that apply.

Mobility training
 Standing up for or protecting myself
 Knowing how much money I have
 Being allowed to buy the things I need with my own money
 Cooking
 Cleaning
 Getting around my home
 Medication management
 Budgeting and money management
 Time management
 Wellness and self-care (bathing, hygiene, washing clothes)
 Taking care of pets or service animals
 Organization skills

Communication skills (written, verbal or specialized communication books or specialized interpreters or communication devices)

None

Other _____

Transportation

7. How do you get to the places you want to go? **Check all that apply.**

Public Transportation/bus
 Private vehicle/driver's license
 Walking/Using a wheelchair/scooter
 Bicycle
 Taxi/Uber/Lyft
 Rides from friends/family
 Accessible bus services

Medicaid transportation

Other _____

Transportation continued

8. Can you get where you want to go in your community by using public transit (bus), personal vehicle, crosswalks, sidewalks, and entryways?

Always

Most of the time

Sometimes

Never

9. What places in your community are hard to get to? **Check all that apply.**

It's easy to go where I want

Grocery store or other shopping

Pharmacy

Doctor or Counseling appointments

Visit with nearby friends or relatives

Church

Social, community or recreational activities

Other _____

10. What would help you get where you want to go? **Check all that apply.**

I don't need help

Public transportation or bus

Taxi/Uber/Lyft

Drivers training and testing that includes adaptive equipment (hand controls)

Accessible parking near places I want to go

Help paying for rides through public or private transportation services Safe pedestrian routes like sidewalks, curb cuts and crosswalks Bus stops that I can get to

Other _____

Independent Living Supported Services

11. Do you have paid or unpaid supports (helpers, including family members) who help you stay in your home?

Yes

No

I have paid and unpaid help

Does not apply

12. If you rely on friends or family for help, what things would be hard for you without their help? **Check all that apply.**

I don't need help

Cooking

Shopping

Hygiene (bathing, brushing teeth, etc.)
 Getting dressed
 Paying bills
 Getting or taking my medications
 Going to the doctor and picking up my prescriptions
 Getting to work, school, church or other places I want or need to go
 Cleaning my home
 Taking care of pets or service animals
 Other _____

13. If you have paid support, who is the payer? **Check all that apply.**

Medicaid
 Managed Care (Medicaid/Medicare)
 Private insurance
 Private pay
 Don't know

14. In the last 12 months, have you gone without staff, help or support (paid or unpaid) when you needed it?

Yes
 No
 Does not apply

Independent Living Supported Services continued

15. If yes, how long did you go without paid direct care staff or community support workers?

Does not apply
 Less than 2 hours
 3 – 6 hours
 8 – 12 hours
 1 – 2 days
 2 – 7 days
 Several weeks
 Several months
 I still don't have help at home
 I have given up on getting help at home
 Other or additional information

16. In the last 12 months, what paid supports or services have you had trouble getting or keeping?

Check all that apply.

I've gotten all the support I need
 Community support worker
 Personal assistance services

Case management
 Target service coordination
 Medication management
 Chore services, including help with grocery shopping
 Transportation to medical appointments
 Job coaching or supported employment services
 Other _____

Independent Living Supported Services continued

17. What things would you like to do, but can't because you don't have help (paid or unpaid)? **Check all that apply.**

I do everything I want to do
 Shower and change clothes as often as I'd like
 Cook my own food
 Go shopping for groceries, clothes or other things
 Have a cleaner home
 Go out to community activities, like movies, sporting events and the farmer's market
 Get a job
 Go to college or get other training
 Learn to drive
 Other _____

18. What things make it difficult to get the support you need? **Check all that apply.**

I get all the support I need
 I don't know what to ask for
 I don't have anyone who can help me talk to Medicaid or other insurance I don't have or use the internet
 I don't have a smart phone
 I don't have anyone to help me ask for what I need
 No one answers the phone or returns my calls when I call Medicaid, care manager, caseworker, service provider agency, doctor, nurse, etc.
 There are no service providers where I live
 My support workers need better training
 My support workers need better pay and benefits
 My support workers don't listen to me or they are bossy
 I live too far from town
 There is no one to translate my language
 It is hard for me to read
 It is hard for me to write
 It is hard for people who don't know me to understand what I am saying Other

19. Would you like to know more about training and working with your staff or in home helpers?

Yes

No

Maybe

Does not apply

Interests

20. I would like to learn more about the following - **Check all that apply:**

How to manage my own support services as the employer

Where to get help when I feel isolated or alone

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability rights laws Service or emotional support animals

Housing laws, rights and responsibilities

Individual Education Plan (IEP) or behavioral and medical plan (504) How to talk to or write to elected officials (city, county, state, federal) about the things that matter to me

Vocational Rehabilitation

Centers for Independent Living

Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Focus on my well-being (health, nutrition, fitness, wellness)

Budgeting or money management

Who to call if I feel like someone is taking advantage of me

Skills training to increase my independence (cooking, budgeting, shopping, etc.)

Aids and technology available to help with the things I want, need or like to do (activities of daily living)

How to be prepared for personal or public emergencies or disasters Voting rights, accessible voting options and information

Recreation in my area

Computer or smart phone skills

How to advocate, "speak up" for myself and others

Who can help when someone says bad things to me or hurts me Aging in place

Education

Employment

Other _____

Interests (continued)

21. If you could educate (teach) people (businesses, government, family, friends, other people with disabilities) on ONE topic, what would it be? _____

22. Do you have any additional

Optional

23. Preferred Language: ASL

Other _____

English Spanish

24. Age:

0 - 11

12 - 20

21 - 30

31 - 40

25. Race and ethnicity – **check all that apply:**

Black/African American

Native Alaskan

Pacific islander

Native American

Hispanic or Latino

White

Other

41 – 50 51 – 60 60 +

26. If you are interested in learning more about independent living or would like to serve on a board or council that works for people with disabilities, please provide your name and contact information.