

# Clark County Status of Youth

Attributes, Challenges, Behaviors, and Academic Success

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Executive Summary October 10, 2011



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# Executive summary

Wittenberg University's Center for Civic and Urban Engagement was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice toward strengthening the selection, quality, and accessibility of afterschool programs in the Greater Springfield area. In support of the Center's initiative **The Power & Promise of Afterschool**, Community Research Partners prepared **Clark County Status of Youth** to provide an update on overall county conditions and to answer key questions about the county's school age population. The following is a summary of primary issues arising from the data.

## The Clark County context for status of youth

**Out-migration:** For Clark County, out-migration exceeded in-migration by an average of about 650 people per year over the past decade. However, the Ohio Department of Development projects modest population growth for Clark County over the next two decades.

**Fewer two-parent households:** Among all households, 8,877 or 16.1% are married couple families with own children. The presence of this family type in Clark County decreased by 35.2% from 2000 and 2010. Over the same period, male single-parent households increased by 15.1% to 1,565, and female single-parent households remained the same (4,448 in 2010).

**Low owner-occupancy:** Clark County's owner-occupancy rate (67.6%) is well below the statewide rate of 83.6%.

**Older rental housing:** Clark County's rental housing stock is older than rental housing statewide, with 39.6% of units in structures built before 1950, compared to 29.8% statewide.

**Foreclosure:** In 2010, Clark County had 1,067 new foreclosure filings, a rate of 17.4 per 1,000 housing units, slightly higher than the statewide rate of 16.7. The county's annual peak was in 2008 with 1,124 new foreclosure filings – 6.8 times as many filings as in 1995.

**High crime rates:** Springfield's 2009 property crime rate of 72.9 per 1,000 population was higher than the rate in any of Ohio's three largest cities. In 2009, Springfield had a Part-I violent crime rate of 7.5 per 1,000 population, or about 1 violent crime for every 10 property crimes (467 to 4,512). Among all 367 reporting municipal and township jurisdictions in Ohio, Springfield had the 14<sup>th</sup> highest rate for both violent and property crimes.

**Job loss:** From 2000 to 2009, Clark County lost a net of 8,941 private sector jobs, or 17.9%. The manufacturing sector alone shed 7,535 jobs, or 54.6%. Other large losses included construction (down 44.0%) and retail trade (down 32.3%). However, Clark County's finance and insurance sector grew by 96.9% to surpass 2,500 total employment.

**Unemployment:** From February 2007 to June 2010, Clark County's unemployment rate increased in 40 out of 41 months (year-over-year comparisons). The rate peaked at 12.0% in January 2010, which was 5.4 points above January 2007 and represented 8,300 unemployed workers. As of June 2011, Clark County's rate was 9.6%. The county did not experience labor force loss in the recession.

**Poverty:** Clark County experienced a large increase in poverty between 2008 and 2009, with the poverty rate going from 13.3% to 16.2% and the estimated count of persons in poverty increasing by about 4,000. One in every 5 (20.8%) Clark County families with children are in poverty. Springfield's poverty rate is approximately 60% higher than that of Clark County overall. Springfield is home to 70.2% of Clark County's population in poverty.

**Lack of self-sufficiency:** Over one-third (35.9%) of Clark County residents are in households with annual income below the general self-sufficiency level of 200% Federal Poverty Level. In 2009, the unduplicated count people receiving food stamps was 33,946, or 24.3% of the total population. In comparison, the statewide unduplicated recipient rate was 18.6%.

**More “working poor” households:** From 2006 to 2010, Clark County’s “working poor” food stamp recipients (individuals not receiving cash public assistance) increased by over 7,800, or 59.2%.

## Who are the youth of Clark County?

**Geographically dispersed:** As of 2010, Clark County has 23,740 school age youth (ages 5-17). Four in every 10 (42.4%) live in the city of Springfield, 4.5% live in New Carlisle, another 4.5% live in one of eight incorporated villages, and nearly half (48.7%) live in unincorporated areas.

**Fewer youth and lower enrollment:** From 2000 to 2010, Clark County’s school age population decreased at a higher rate (10.8%) than did population overall (4.4%). Over the past 15 years, enrollment across the seven public school districts lost a combined 16.0%, or 3,926 students. Springfield alone is down by 3,265 students, or 31.1%, since school year 1995-96.

**More youth with single parents:** Compared to Ohio, Clark County has a lesser portion of school age youth in married couple families and a higher portion in female single-parent families. From 2000 to 2009, the number of school age youth in married couple families decreased by over 4,000 while the number in single-parent families increased by over 1,300. However, the married couple family is still the most common (62.3%) for school age youth in Clark County.

**Racial concentrations:** Less than one-fifth (18.1%) of the county’s school age youth are a minority race or ethnicity, and 8 out of 10 (80.2%) of these minority youth live in the city of Springfield. At 37.2%, the Springfield district has the largest portion of its enrollment as minority. Tecumseh (11.4%) is the only other public district in the county with minority enrollment above 10%.

## What challenges do Clark County youth face?

**More youth in poverty:** Over the decade, the poverty rate among school age youth increased from 14.3% to 22.4%, resulting in over 5,200 school age youth living in poverty in 2009. More than 1,800 school age youth live in extreme poverty, with household income below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level.

**Concentrated poverty:** Springfield is home to 65.0% of school age youth living below poverty. For the 5-17 age range, the poverty rate in Springfield (33.8%) was more than double the rate for the remainder of Clark County (14.0%). Nearly three-fourths (72.7%, or 5,297) of students in the Springfield district are economically disadvantaged.

**Levels of need:** In Clark County, 12,506 youth under age 18 lived in households that received SSI, cash assistance, or food stamps in 2009. This number represents 38.0% of all youth in households, well above the corresponding statewide rate (25.8%). Further, economic disadvantage rates – generally corresponding with eligibility for Free or Reduced Price Lunch – have trended upward for all public school districts over the past decade.

**Health insurance:** From 2001 to 2007, the count of Clark County youth enrolled in public health care programs increased from 11,663 to 17,828 (up 52.9%). As of 2007, half (51.7%) of all persons under age 18 were enrolled. Just over 1,000 Clark County youth, or 3.3%, were uninsured in 2008.

**Medical issues:** Based on the 2008 Ohio Family Health Survey, Clark County was higher than the state in both the percentage of children with a costly medical event in the past 12 months (21.1%) and the percentage of children ever diagnosed with asthma (27.3%).

**Weight issues:** One-third (33%) of surveyed high school students were overweight or obese by body mass index, a rate higher than students statewide or nationwide.

**Child protective services:** The June 2010 counts of children under in-home (887) or in-custody (144) protection of Clark County Childrens Services decreased by 9% and 24%, respectively, from recent quarterly highs in June 2008.

**Abuse and neglect:** In 2009, Clark County had a substantiated abuse/neglect rate of 8.6 per 1,000 children, the county's lowest rate in the past eight years. In comparison, the statewide rate was 8.9 for 2009. However, the total numbers of active Juvenile Court cases of abuse, neglect, or dependency were much higher in 2009 (485) and 2010 (439) than in previous years.

**Incarceration of parents:** Among surveyed students, 46.2% of 1,289 youth reported their father had been incarcerated, and 19.8% of 1,613 youth reported their mother had been incarcerated.

**Quality of schools:** Four out of every 10 (41.4%) public school students attend a school with either an Excellent or Excellent with Distinction rating, and 3 out of 4 (76.6%) students attend a school that is rated Effective or better. Each of the public districts has at least one school rated as Excellent or better; however, the Springfield district has 9 of the 10 lowest rated schools.

## How are Clark County youth behaving?

**School discipline:** The Tecumseh district witnessed a steady rise in its rate of disciplinary actions, more than doubling from 24.9 per 100 students in school year 2005-06 to 56.8 in school year 2009-10. Disruptive behavior was cited as the most common reason. Tecumseh Middle School alone had 703 incidents of disruptive behavior and Tecumseh High School had almost 500 during 2009-10. Behind Tecumseh, Greenon and Springfield had disciplinary action rates of 27.6 and 23.8, respectively.

**Youth felony adjudication:** Over the past nine years, Clark County's rate of felony adjudications per 1,000 youth has been as high as 29.8 (in 2003) and has been over 20.0 seven times. In comparison, the annual statewide rate did not exceed 15.4 during that time span. The total of 130 felony adjudications in 2009 does, however, represent a 9-year low for Clark County.

**Parole/probation violation:** Among the nearly 1,700 official delinquency cases disposed (e.g., in some form resolved) by Clark County Juvenile Court in 2010, over one-quarter (27.4%) were related to probation or parole violations.

**Youth relationship violence:** Clark County students reported experiencing physical violence perpetrated by a boyfriend or girlfriend at a rate greater than Ohio overall, and 9% reported having been forcibly raped. In 2010, the Juvenile Court disposed 117 official delinquency cases involving domestic violence and 15 cases of gross sexual imposition or rape.

**Youth detention:** In 2010, the Clark County Juvenile Detention Center had 1,022 total intakes, of whom, 72.2% were male, 62.2% were white, and 14.6% involved a felony. The average daily population at the center was 33, with an average length of stay of 9 days.

**Risky sexual behavior:** Half (51%) of all surveyed high school students reported having sexual intercourse during the life, and 27% reported sexual activity with multiple partners. One-quarter of students (26%) had sex without a condom in the past 3 months. Clark County's teen birth rate is higher than the statewide rate. One in 10 (11%) students reported never being educated about HIV/AIDS.

**Suicidal thoughts:** Almost 1 in 10 (9%) surveyed high school students said they had attempted suicide during the past 12 months, an estimated 1,080 attempted suicides among Clark County high schoolers. Over the same period, 16% seriously considered attempting suicide, a significantly higher rate than for Ohio overall.

**Drug incidents:** Among the nearly 1,700 official delinquency cases disposed by Juvenile Court in 2010, less than 10% (159) were drug-related. In school year 2009-10, the public schools had relatively few drug-related disciplinary actions. Clark County high school students were less likely than students statewide to have smoked cigarettes or consumed alcohol in the past 30 days. However, 23% of surveyed high school students had been offered or sold drugs on school property over the past year, 30% had smoked marijuana in the past 30 days, and 11% had ever tried inhalers to get high.

**Disinterest in afterschool activities:** The main reason for not participating in afterschool activities cited by elementary school students (42.0%), middle school students (54.3%), and high school students (48.3%) was “lack of interest.” Among survey respondents, 43.6% of elementary school students, 32.6% of middle school students, and 28.1% of high school students reported participating in afterschool activities.

### **Are Clark County youth succeeding academically?**

**Kindergarten preparedness:** Since school year 2006-07, there has been a general decrease/improvement in the percentage of incoming kindergarteners scoring in “Band 1”(signifying potential need for intensive instruction) of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for Literacy. However, both Springfield and Tecumseh have relatively high percentages, at 39.2% and 32.2%, respectively. **A potential contributing factor:** As of June 2010, only 4 of the 40 child care centers in Clark County had earned quality ratings through Ohio’s voluntary program, Step Up To Quality.

**Achievement test struggles:** In the Springfield district in school year 2009-10, less than 75% of students were proficient on achievement tests across every subject/grade combination from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. According to the most recent results, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science achievement tests presented difficulties across the seven public school districts. However, the proficiency rate for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading has been an area of improvement across all school districts.

**Lower graduation rates:** In school year 2008-09, 5 of the 8 high schools in the public school districts were at least 3 percentage points below their highest annual graduation rate of the past decade. Graduate counts and rates suggest 156 dropouts were associated with the 2009 graduating cohort for the eight schools. Approximately half of these dropouts were from Springfield High School. Conversely, Shawnee and Greenon high schools each had a high percentage of students graduating with honors in 2009.

**College preparedness:** Five of Clark County’s 7 public school districts had at least 45% of their college-entering graduates (aggregate for 2003 to 2007) who required remedial math or English coursework in college.

**College persistence:** Among the 2004 Clark County high school graduates who enrolled in a 4-year Ohio public college, a little over half (55.2%) graduated with a Bachelor’s degree within six years. Among the 2007 Clark County high school graduates who enrolled in a 2-year Ohio public college, only 5.9% graduated within three years.