

2013 RHP 17 Regional Health Assessment

A Community Snapshot:

Washington County



Community Description

Washington County residents describe their community as laid back, conservative, and a great, safe place to live. The community is generous and boasts beautiful, natural scenery making it an attractive place to live and visit. There is a sense of community based on local history and shared family values. Discussion group participants emphasized that the community is growing and becoming more diverse with larger populations of both younger and older residents, families who have lived there for generations as well as those who are new to the area, and increased proportions of racial and ethnic minorities.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Washington County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis/rheumatism, anxiety, depression, and Type 2 diabetes.

Given the proportion of obesity and older adults in Washington County, these chronic disease rates are not surprising. Washington County reported the highest rate of arthritis/rheumatism across the Brazos Valley.

Washington County residents reported the highest rate of arthritis/rheumatism across the region.

Disease/Condition	Washington County
Overweight/Obesity	72.3%
Hypertension	37.7%
High Cholesterol	35.2%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	24.4%
Anxiety	17.2%
Depression	15.9%
Diabetes (Type 2)	11.2%

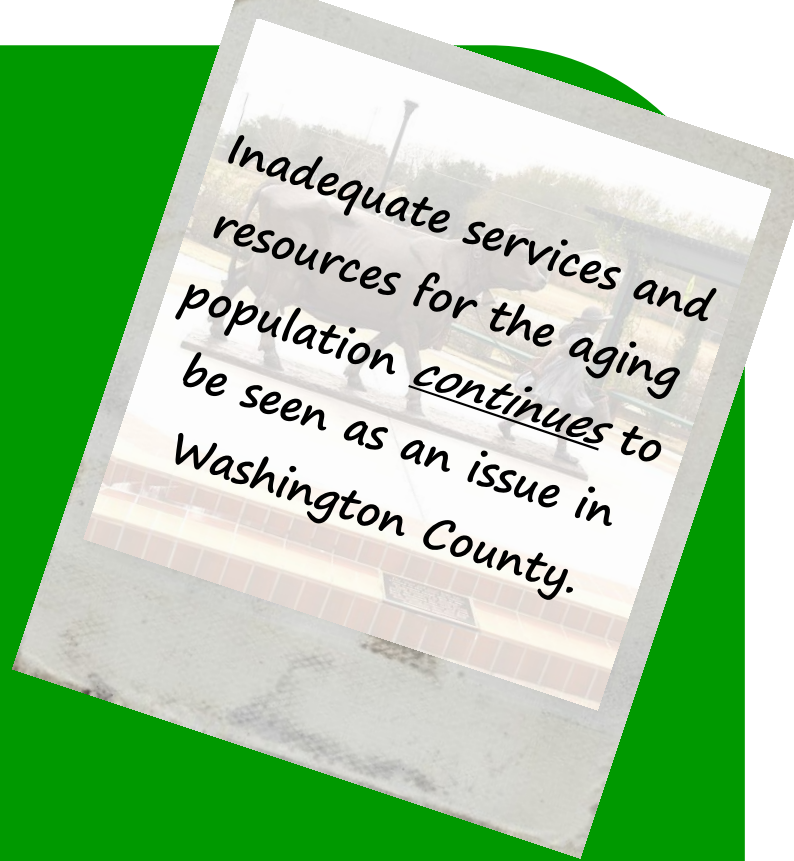
Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Washington County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

1. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (46.3%)
2. Alcohol abuse (41.4%)
3. Illegal drug use (37.5%)
4. Risky youth behaviors (such as alcohol or drug use, truancy, etc.; 35.6%)
5. Teen pregnancy (29.7%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Access to health care, especially specialty care
- ⇒ Lack of health services for the aging population
- ⇒ Limited public transportation options
- ⇒ Lack of affordable recreation activities for youth or adults
- ⇒ Youth risk behaviors such as substance abuse and property crime
- ⇒ Poverty
- ⇒ Lack of jobs locally



Youth risk behaviors was identified as a key community issue by both survey respondents and discussion group participants.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Utility assistance (76.5%)
2. Food, meal, and nutrition services (75.0%)
3. Affordable after school or summer day programs for children (66.7%)
4. Information and referral services (66.7%)
5. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (61.9%)