



Head Start / Early Head Start Needs Assessment

2025

Leflore County
and Warren County,
Mississippi



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Head Start / Early Head Start
Community Needs Assessment
Leflore County and Warren County,
Mississippi

Center for Community Research and Evaluation
University of Memphis

August 2025

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Quick Facts

Table 1: Quick Facts Table

	Leflore County, Mississippi	Warren County, Mississippi	Mississippi	South Region	United States
Population	27,432	43,623	2,951,438	127,631,012	332,387,540
10-Year Population Change	-14.3%	-9.8%	-0.9%	10.0%	6.7%
Median Age	34.5	40.3	38.4	38.5	38.7
Median Household Income	\$33,188	\$56,648	\$54,915	\$72,265	\$78,538
Poverty Rate	31.9%	20.3%	19.1%	13.6%	12.4%
Child Poverty Rate	45.0%	32.9%	26.4%	18.5%	16.3%
% Food Stamps	27.5%	14.2%	13.6%	12.1%	11.8%
% Single Mother Households	58.4%	41.7%	34.5%	26.8%	24.8%
% with HS+ Degree	82.8%	88.1%	86.6%	88.6%	89.4%
% in Labor Force	55.2%	57.4%	57.2%	62.3%	63.5%
Unemployment Rate	11.7%	5.5%	6.0%	5.0%	5.2%
% Homes Owner-Occupied	54.1%	71.2%	69.5%	66.3%	65.0%
% Homes with Internet Access	36.0%	62.5%	58.3%	72.6%	74.8%
% Houses Built >2000	12.2%	17.9%	28.7%	31.4%	24.0%
% Without Vehicle	2.8%	3.8%	2.3%	2.8%	4.3%

Executive Summary

In Leflore County, nearly half of all children under five live in poverty, and many families face major challenges like unemployment, unstable housing, poor health, and limited access to transportation. Most children in Head Start come from families receiving public assistance, and chronic absenteeism is likely due to problems like unreliable transportation or frequent moves. With a small but growing number of Hispanic students, there is a need for more outreach to immigrant families. Many homes are older and may not be safe for young children, and educational levels in the area remain low. Key issues to address include improving transportation to school and medical appointments, supporting families with infants and toddlers, working with health providers on screenings and services, and making sure families who need help are aware of and able to access programs.

In Warren County, over 40% of children under five live in poverty, with some neighborhoods like Eagle Bend facing much higher rates. Most families in Head Start rely on public assistance, and many face barriers like poor health, limited internet access, and long travel times to services. Schools show clear signs of racial segregation, with some early childhood programs serving almost all Black students despite the county being more evenly split by race overall. While the county has more jobs than Leflore, unemployment remains higher for Black residents and for men. Health concerns like low birth weight and chronic disease are also common. Priorities for the county include expanding outreach to families with very young children, improving attendance in early education programs, and increasing access to healthcare and basic services in rural areas.

This community needs assessment aims to analyze demographic data to help highlight the socioeconomic challenges in Leflore and Warren Counties, with a particular eye towards those of the Head Start eligible population. This report was prepared by the Center for Community Research and Evaluation (CCRE) at the University of Memphis.

General Area Description - Demographics

Figure 1: Proposed Service Area in Leflore and Warren Counties

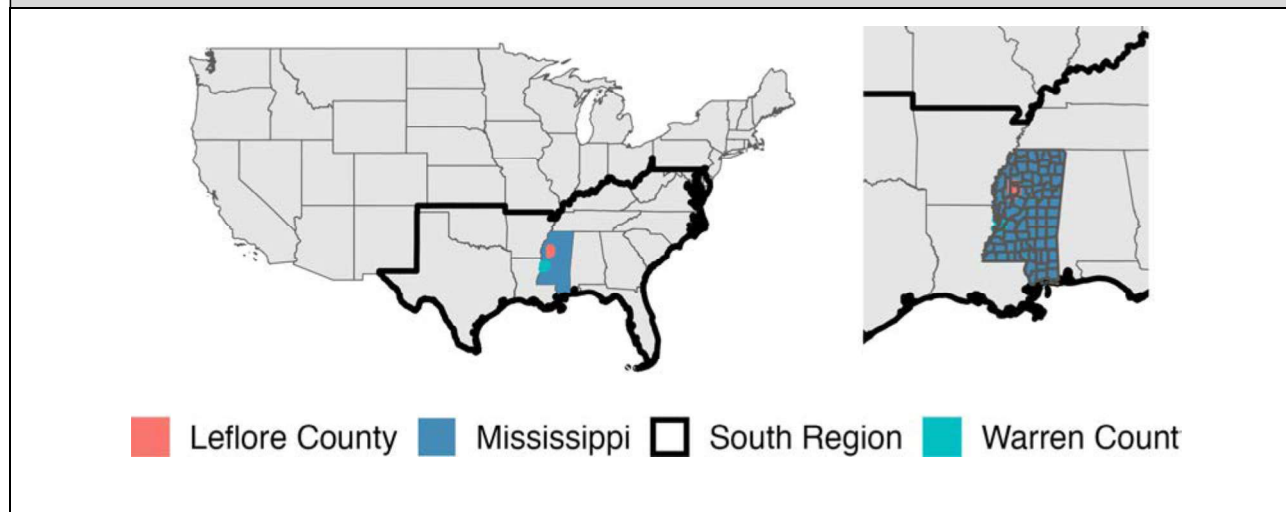
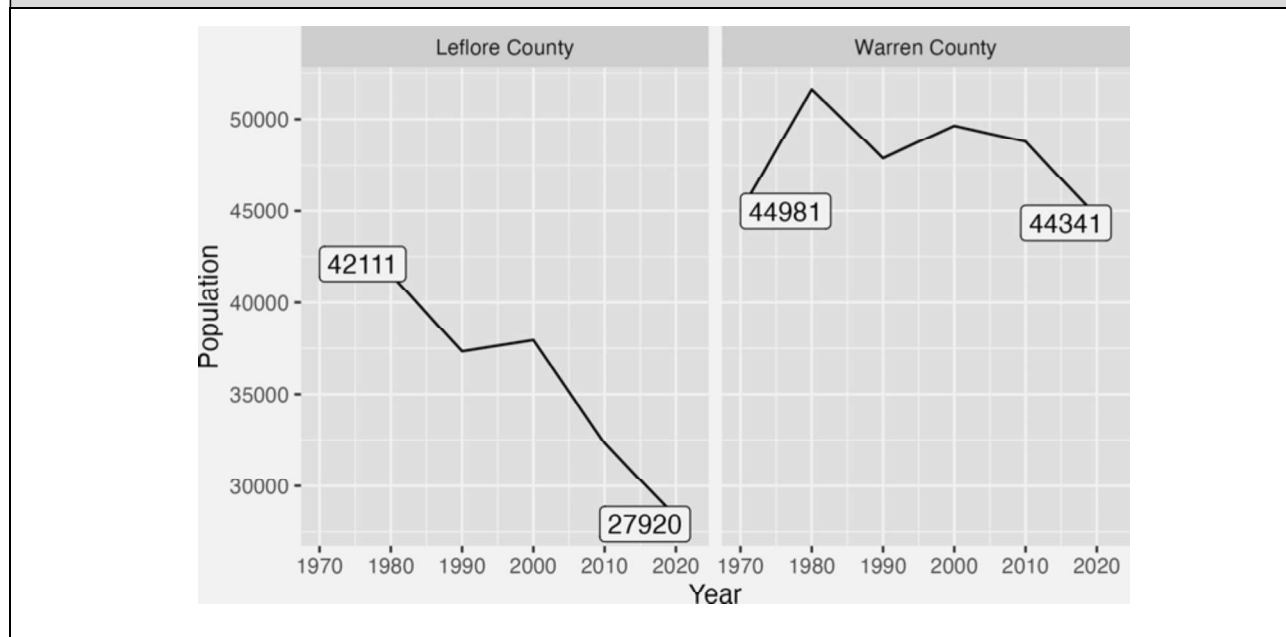


Figure 2: Population of Leflore and Warren Counties: 1970 to present



From 1970 to 2022, both Leflore and Warren Counties saw population declines, though the drop was much sharper in Leflore. Leflore County's population fell from 42,111 in 1970 to just 27,920 in 2022 — a loss of over one-third.¹ Warren County's population also went down, but more slowly, from a high of

¹ Steven Manson, Jonathan Schroeder, David Van Ripeerine Knowles, Tracy Kugler, Finn Roberts, and Steven Ruggles. IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS. 2023. <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V18.0>. Data from decennial censuses (1970-2010) and American Community Survey five-year estimates (2020, 2022).

51,627 in 1980 to 44,341 in 2022.² While both counties are losing people, the faster decline in Leflore suggests deeper challenges that may be driving residents away, such as fewer job opportunities or limited services. These population changes could impact local schools, businesses, and public services in the years ahead.

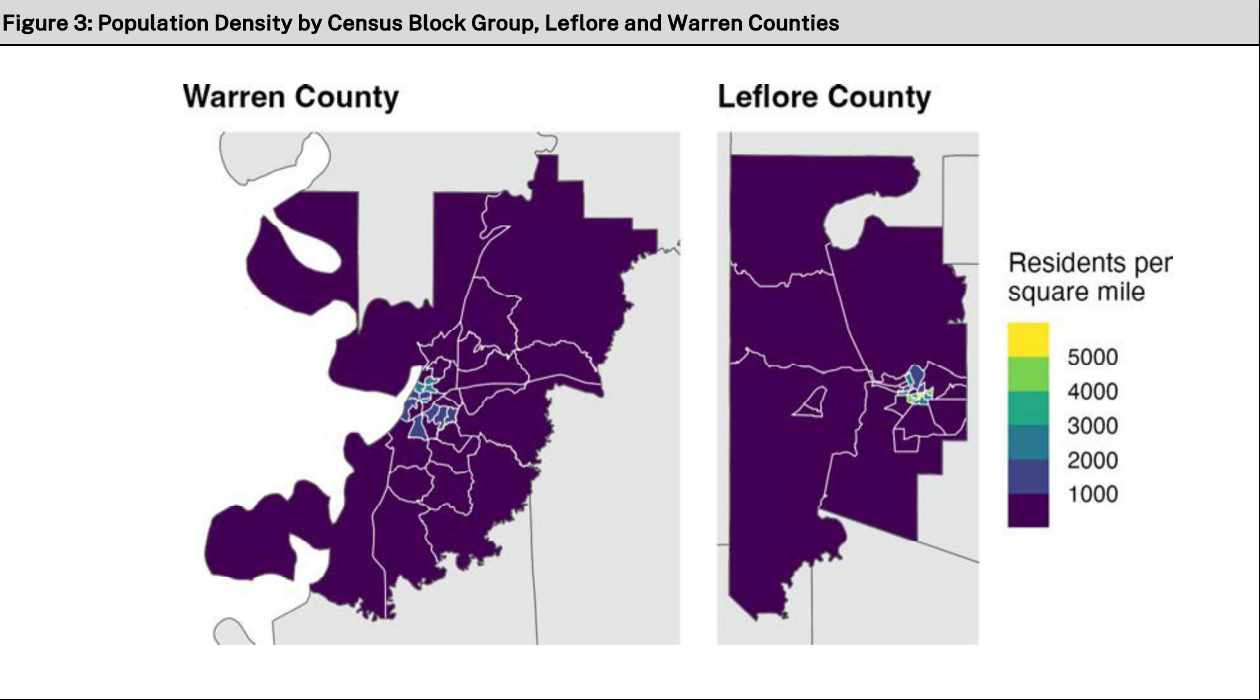


Figure 3 shows population density by census block group in Warren and Leflore Counties. In Warren County, the highest densities are concentrated in and around the city of Vicksburg, with several block groups reaching over 5,000 residents per square mile. Leflore County, on the other hand, has a more scattered population, with most areas falling below 1,000 residents per square mile. Higher densities in Leflore are limited to parts of Greenwood, while the rest of the county remains sparsely populated.³

Table 2: Race in National Context

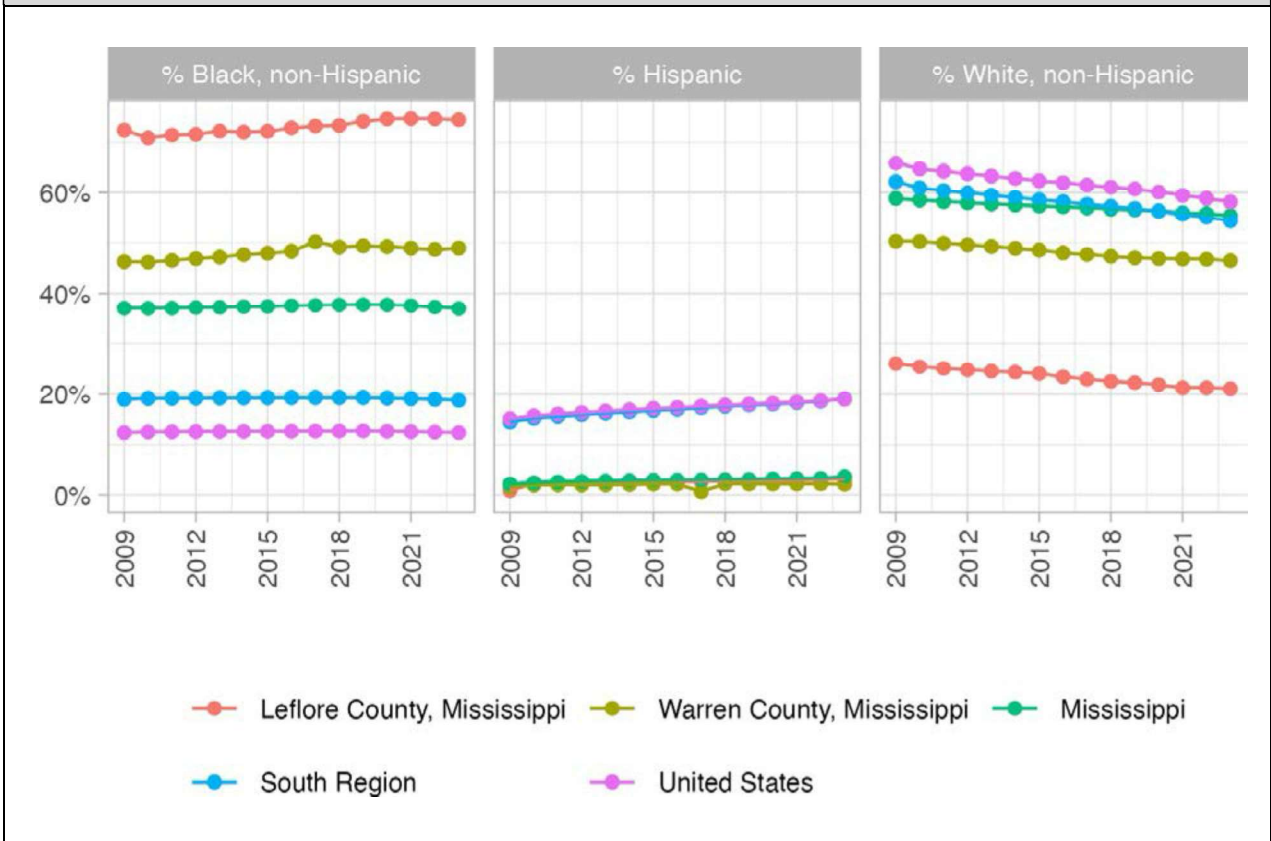
Geography	Black, Non-Hispanic (%)	White, Non-Hispanic (%)	Hispanic (%)	Other (%)
Leflore County, Mississippi	74.5%	21.0%	3.1%	1.4%
Warren County, Mississippi	49.0%	46.5%	2.1%	2.5%
Mississippi	37.0%	55.4%	3.6%	4.0%
South Region	18.8%	54.4%	19.0%	7.8%
United States	12.4%	58.2%	19.0%	10.5%

Leflore County has a much higher percentage of Black residents than the state, region, or country. About 74.5% of people in the county identify as Black, compared to 37.0% in Mississippi and 12.4% in the U.S. White residents make up 21.0% of the population in Leflore, which is much lower than the

² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 and 2023, 5-year estimates, table B01003.
³ Population density calculated using data from: (1) U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, TIGER/Line Shapefiles, and (2) U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, table B01001.

state and national averages. Warren County has a more even mix, with 49.0% Black and 46.5% White residents. Both counties have small Hispanic and Other populations, especially when compared to the South and the U.S. overall.⁴

Figure 4: Population Percentage by Race in National Context



From 2009 to 2023, Leflore County’s population remained majority Black, non-Hispanic, increasing slightly from 72.4% to 74.5%. During the same time, the White, non-Hispanic population declined from 26.1% to 21.0%, while the Hispanic population grew from under 1% to just over 3%. In Warren County, the racial breakdown was more evenly split, with the Black population rising from 46.3% to 49.0% and the White population falling from 50.3% to 46.5%. The Hispanic population in Warren County stayed low, increasing from 1.5% to about 2.1%. Statewide, Mississippi’s racial makeup changed little, with the Black population at about 37% and the White population at 55% in 2023. The Hispanic share grew slowly, reaching about 3.6%. Both Leflore and Warren counties have higher percentages of Black residents and lower percentages of Hispanic residents compared to the state and national averages.⁵

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, tables B01001, B01001B, B01001H, B01001I.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, years 2009-2023, 5-year estimates, tables B01001, B01001B, B01001H, B01001I.

Figure 5: Non-Hispanic Black Population Percentage by Census Block Group, Leflore and Warren Counties

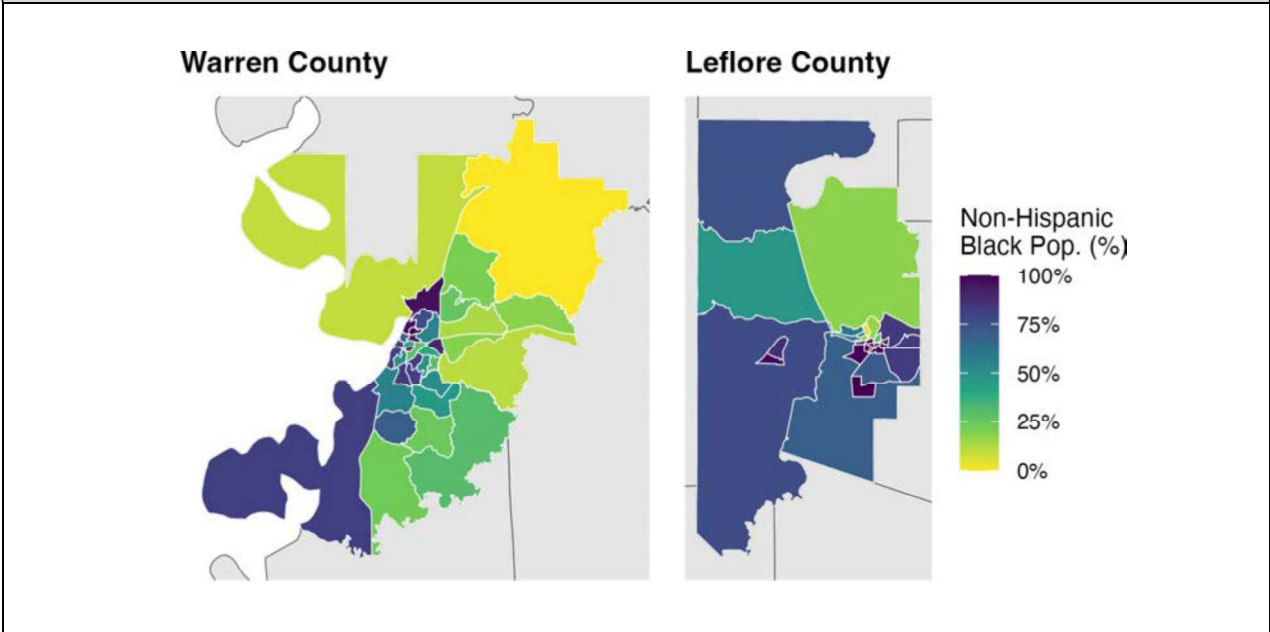
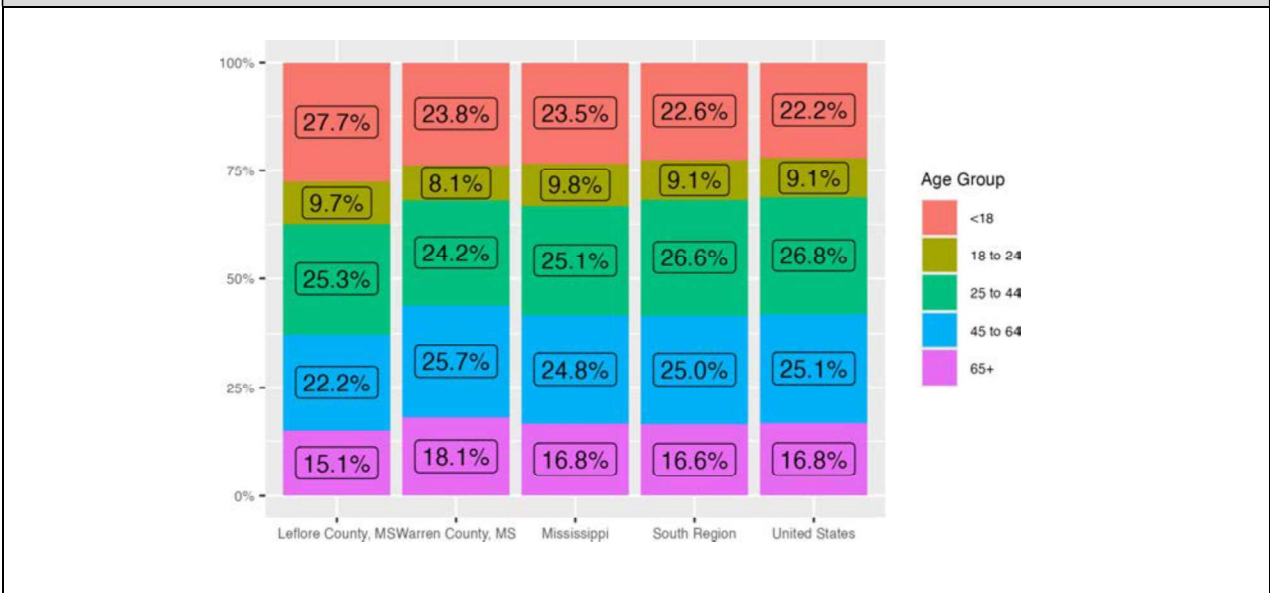


Figure 5 shows clear differences in where non-Hispanic Black residents live in Warren and Leflore counties. In Leflore County, most neighborhoods have mostly Black residents, especially in and around Greenwood, where some areas are nearly 100% Black. Only a few neighborhoods in the north and east have less than 25%. In Warren County, the population is more mixed. Vicksburg and nearby areas have higher shares of Black residents, while the northern and eastern parts of the county have mostly white residents, with some areas below 10% Black. These patterns show how the racial makeup of each county varies by location.⁶

Figure 6: Age Distribution



Leflore County has a younger population than Warren County, the state, the South Region, and the

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, tables B01001 and B02009.

U.S. overall. About 28% of residents are under 18, the highest of all areas shown. The share of young adults ages 18 to 24 is also slightly higher than in most comparison areas. On the other hand, only 15% of residents are 65 or older, the lowest among the areas. Overall, Leflore County has more children and fewer older adults than other counties, the state, or the nation.⁷

Table 3: Family Composition in National Context

Geography	Household Led by Single Mother (%)	Household Led by Single Mother #	Average Family Size (#)
Leflore County, Mississippi	58.4%	1,857	3.51
Warren County, Mississippi	41.7%	1,830	3.25
Mississippi	34.5%	122,814	3.15
South Region	26.8%	4,012,114	3.15

In Leflore County, 58.4% of households with children are led by single mothers.⁸ This is much higher than in Warren County (41.7%), the state of Mississippi (34.5%), the South region (26.8%), and the United States overall (24.8%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021a). Although the number of single-mother households in Leflore and Warren Counties is about the same — 1,857 and 1,830 — the percentage is much higher in Leflore. The average family size in Leflore County is also the largest at 3.51, compared to 3.25 in Warren County and 3.15 at the state, regional, and national levels.⁹ This means families in Leflore are more likely to have more children and be led by a single mother, which could increase the need for services like childcare, housing, and job support.

Table 4: Employment and Wages, 2014 to 2023

Geography	% Change, Employees	% Change, Establishments	% Change, Average Annual Pay	Average Annual Pay, 2023
Leflore County, Mississippi	-5.2%	-2.8%	+29.6%	\$41,470
Warren County, Mississippi	-6.1%	-1.4%	+35.0%	\$54,220
Mississippi	+5.3%	+21.6%	+32.4%	\$49,128
U.S.	+12.1%	+26.8%	+40.9%	\$72,360

From 2014 to 2023, Leflore County lost 5.2% of its jobs and 2.8% of its businesses, while average pay grew by 29.6%, reaching \$41,470 in 2023 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Even with this increase, pay in the county was still lower than the state average of \$49,128 and the national average of \$72,360. Statewide, Mississippi added 5.3% more jobs and 21.6% more businesses, and the U.S. saw even higher growth in both areas. Warren County also saw declines in jobs and businesses but had a larger wage increase and a higher average pay than Leflore. Overall, wages in Leflore County have gone up, but growth in jobs and businesses has not kept up with the rest of the state or country.¹⁰

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, table S0101.
⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate. Table B11005.
⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate. Table S1101.
¹⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2023 annual averages.

Table 5: Establishments, Employment, Wages per Industry in Leflore and Warren Counties			
Industry	# Establishments	# Employees	Annual Pay
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	80	493	\$45,966
Utilities	18	188	\$77,244
Construction	110	1,014	\$62,123
Manufacturing	59	5,048	\$53,319
Wholesale trade	69	863	\$75,311
Retail trade	342	3,811	\$32,777
Transportation, warehousing	69	1274	\$79,387
Information	21	229	\$44,726
Finance, insurance	110	553	\$62,841
Real estate, rental, leasing	98	316	\$40,474
Professional, scientific, technical services	135	3,078	\$93,522
Management of companies, employees	11	136	\$85,369
Administrative, support, waste management	68	840	\$34,010
Educational services	62	2,666	\$42,789
Health care, social assistance	249	5,608	\$43,749
Arts, entertainment, recreation	31	423	\$28,197
Accommodation, food services	204	3,989	\$22,319
Other services (except public administration)	119	421	\$38,524
Public administration	36	1,425	\$44,177

This table shows the number of businesses, workers, and average yearly pay in different industries across Leflore and Warren Counties. Health care and social assistance has the most employees (5,608), followed by manufacturing (5,048), and food services (3,989), though pay varies widely between them. Professional, scientific, and technical services pays the most, with an average salary of \$93,522, even though it employs fewer people (3,078). In contrast, food services pays the least, at just \$22,319 a year. Retail and education also have large workforces but offer lower wages, at \$32,777 and \$42,789, respectively. Some smaller industries, like transportation and finance, have fewer workers but higher pay. Overall, most jobs are in lower-paying service industries, but there are a few higher-paying fields in the region.¹¹

¹¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2023 annual averages, NAICS sectors with at least ten employees in county. Private and governmental employment aggregated.

Table 6: Percentage of Employment by Industry, Leflore and Warren Counties in Regional Context

Industry	Leflore County, MS	Warren County, MS	Mississippi	U.S.
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	3.7%	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%
Mining, quarrying, oil & gas extraction	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%
Utilities	0.9%	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%
Construction	4.2%	2.4%	4.4%	5.3%
Manufacturing	19.3%	13.0%	12.5%	8.4%
Wholesale trade	3.9%	1.8%	3.1%	4.0%
Retail trade	10.9%	12.3%	12.0%	10.2%
Transportation, warehousing	2.0%	5.3%	5.8%	4.8%
Information	1.0%	0.6%	1.0%	2.0%
Finance, insurance	1.9%	1.5%	2.9%	4.1%
Real estate, rental, leasing	1.1%	0.9%	1.0%	1.6%
Professional, scientific, technical services	1.7%	15.0%	3.6%	7.1%
Management of companies, employees	0.9%	0.1%	1.0%	1.7%
Administrative, support, waste management	1.2%	3.6%	5.9%	6.2%
Educational services	10.8%	6.4%	9.3%	8.4%
Health care, social assistance	21.4%	14.5%	15.8%	15.2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation	0.5%	1.9%	1.0%	1.8%
Accommodation, food services	8.7%	14.8%	10.9%	9.2%
Other services (except public administration)	1.5%	1.1%	1.9%	3.0%
Public administration	4.4%	4.4%	5.5%	5.0%
Unclassified	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%

Employment patterns in Leflore and Warren Counties show clear differences from each other and from broader state and national trends. In Leflore County, nearly one in five jobs is in manufacturing (19.3%), a much higher share than in Mississippi or the U.S. overall. Health care and social assistance is the largest sector in the county, making up 21.4% of all jobs. Warren County has a more mixed economy, with a large share of jobs in professional, scientific, and technical services (15.0%) – much higher than the state average – and in accommodation and food services (14.8%). Agriculture is a small but more notable part of Leflore’s workforce (3.7%) and is nearly absent in Warren. These differences suggest Leflore relies more on manufacturing and health services, while Warren has more jobs in tourism and professional fields.¹²

¹² Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2023 annual averages, NAICS sectors. Private and governmental employment.

Table 7: Average Wages by Industry, Leflore and Warren Counties, in Regional Context

Industry	Leflore County, MS	Warren County, MS	Mississippi	U.S.
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	\$45,966 (100.9%)	NA	\$47,666	\$45,558
Utilities	\$73,218 (62.7%)	\$84,863 (72.7%)	\$89,723	\$116,788
Construction	\$61,600 (80.1%)	\$62,808 (81.7%)	\$61,811	\$76,878
Manufacturing	\$39,909 (48.3%)	\$67,139 (81.2%)	\$59,236	\$82,634
Wholesale trade	\$87,123 (88.4%)	\$57,492 (58.3%)	\$73,752	\$98,587
Retail trade	\$30,957 (75.3%)	\$33,900 (82.4%)	\$32,468	\$41,127
Transportation, warehousing	\$50,910 (78.0%)	\$86,795 (133.0%)	\$53,095	\$65,257
Information	\$47,424 (31.6%)	\$40,772 (27.2%)	\$58,663	\$150,089
Finance, insurance	\$66,040 (48.7%)	\$60,043 (44.3%)	\$71,944	\$135,611
Real estate, rental, leasing	\$36,160 (48.7%)	\$44,178 (59.5%)	\$46,889	\$74,300
Professional, scientific, technical services	\$86,921 (71.8%)	\$93,938 (77.6%)	\$71,210	\$120,984
Management of companies, employees	\$88,657 (60.3%)	\$69,213 (47.1%)	\$105,359	\$146,963
Administrative, support, waste management	\$41,954 (74.6%)	\$32,099 (57.1%)	\$36,556	\$56,260
Educational services	\$39,813 (64.2%)	\$46,258 (74.5%)	\$49,088	\$62,052
Health care, social assistance	\$36,724 (57.0%)	\$50,988 (79.1%)	\$53,064	\$64,432
Arts, entertainment, recreation	\$23,678 (49.0%)	\$28,988 (60.0%)	\$25,285	\$48,333
Accommodation, food services	\$15,939 (55.3%)	\$24,932 (86.5%)	\$21,892	\$28,817
Other services (except public administration)	\$43,106 (84.9%)	\$34,216 (67.4%)	\$44,815	\$50,759
Public administration	\$41,486 (51.6%)	\$46,046 (57.3%)	\$51,181	\$80,352
Unclassified	\$39,813 (64.2%)	\$46,258 (74.5%)	\$49,088	\$62,052

This table shows how average wages in different industries compare between Leflore County, Warren County, the state of Mississippi, and the U.S. overall. In most industries, workers in Leflore County earn less than the national average, especially in fields like food service, healthcare, and public jobs. Some industries, like wholesale trade and professional services, come closer to national pay levels, but these are exceptions. Warren County generally has higher wages than Leflore, particularly in transportation and healthcare.¹³

Table 8: Economic Status in National Context

Geography	Poverty Rate (%)	Child Poverty Rate (%)	Receiving Food Stamps (%)	Median Household Income (\$)
Leflore County, Mississippi	31.9%	45.0%	27.5%	\$33,188
Warren County, Mississippi	20.3%	32.9%	14.2%	\$56,648
Mississippi	19.1%	26.4%	13.6%	\$54,915
South Region	13.6%	18.5%	12.1%	\$72,265
U.S.	12.4%	16.3%	11.8%	\$78,538

Economic indicators in Leflore County reveal levels of hardship that set it apart from both nearby counties and broader regional trends. Nearly one in three resident lives in poverty,¹⁴ and close to half of all children do¹⁵ — a rate that is nearly triple the national average. Over a quarter of households rely on food stamps,¹⁶ suggesting widespread material insecurity. Median household income in the county

¹³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2023 annual averages, NAICS sectors with at least ten employees in county. Private and governmental employment.

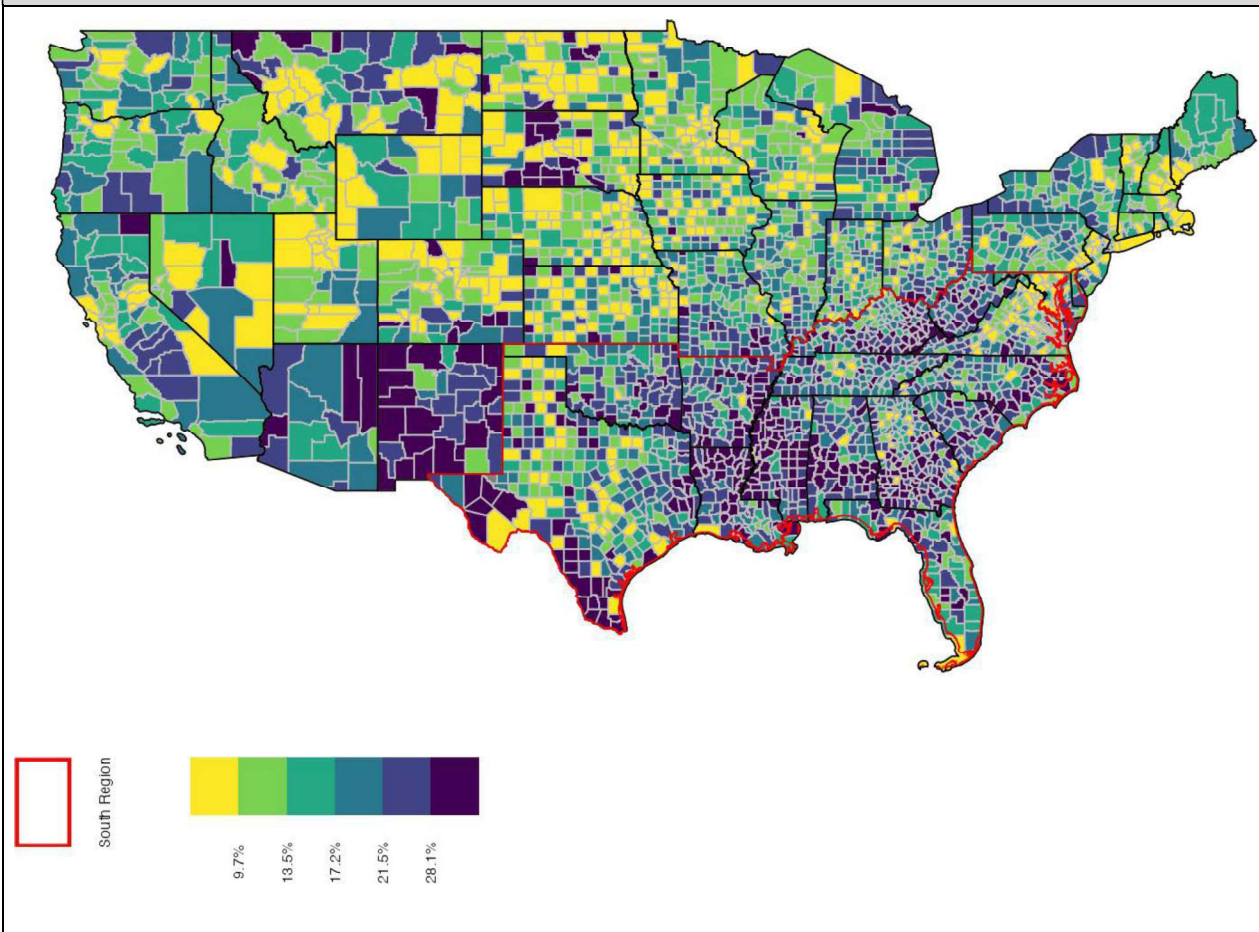
¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, table C17002.

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, table B17020.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, table B22003.

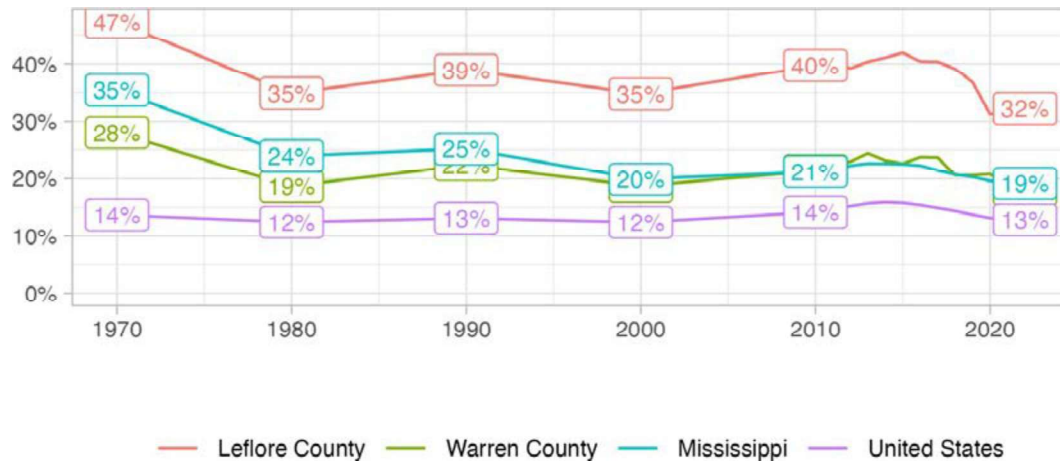
is just over \$33,000, far below both the state and national figures.¹⁷ In Warren County, by contrast, rates of poverty and food stamp usage are much lower, and household income is more in line with state and regional norms.

Figure 7: US Child Poverty Rate, 2023



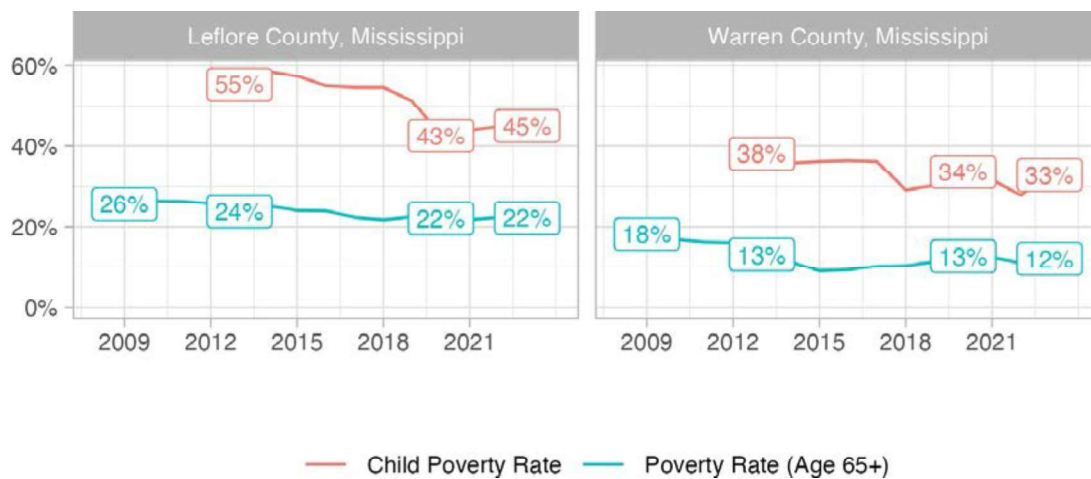
¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates, table B19013.

Figure 8: Poverty Rate in National Context, 1970-2023



Poverty in Leflore County has remained significantly higher than in neighboring areas, the state, and the nation for over five decades. While the national poverty rate declined from 14% in 1970 to 13% in 2022, and Mississippi’s rate dropped from 35% to 19% over the same period, Leflore County’s poverty rate fell more modestly, from 47% to 32%. In contrast, Warren County started at 28% in 1970 and declined to 18% by 2022, closely following statewide trends. Leflore’s poverty rate remained above 35% for much of the past two decades, peaking at over 40% in the early 2010s.¹⁸

Figure 9: Poverty by Age Group in Leflore County



Poverty in Leflore and Warren Counties shows clear patterns by age and place. In Leflore County, child poverty has stayed very high rising to 55% in 2013 and still at 45% in 2023.¹⁹ This is more than twice the poverty rate for older adults in the same area. In Warren County, child poverty is lower,

¹⁸ Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rogers, and Megan Schouweiler. IPUMS USA: Version 15.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V15.0>. Fields AX6AA and CL6AA used. Data sources include decennial censuses (1970- 2000) and American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2010-2023).

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table B17020.

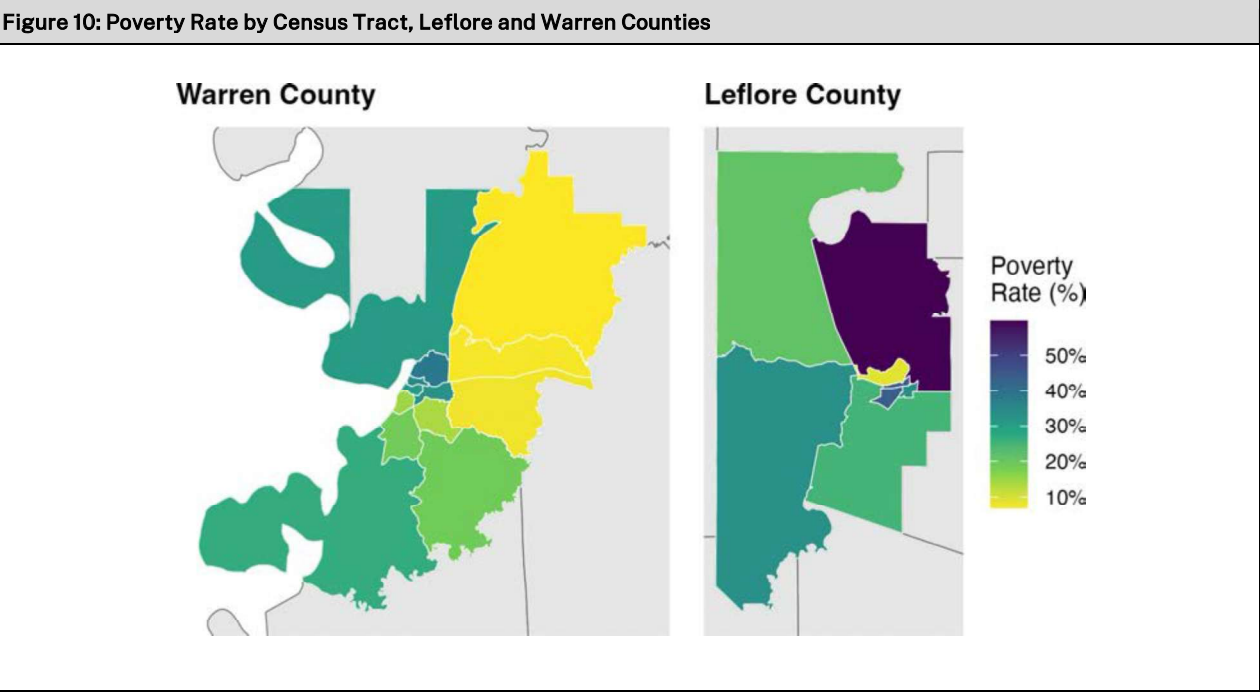
dropping slightly from 38% in 2013 to 33% in 2023. For seniors, Leflore County has seen little change since 2009, with poverty rates staying around 22–26%. In contrast, Warren County’s senior poverty rate fell from 18% in 2009 to 12% in 2023.²⁰

Table 9: Economic Status by Race/Ethnicity in Leflore and Warren Counties (2023)

County	Race	Poverty Rate (%)	Receiving Food Stamps (%)	Median Household Income (\$)
Leflore County, MS	Black Non-Hispanic	38.4%	34.5%	\$27,799
Leflore County, MS	White Non-Hispanic	9.3%	7.8%	\$75,378
Warren County, MS	Black Non-Hispanic	32.6%	26.8%	\$38,987
Warren County, MS	White Non-Hispanic	7.2%	3.2%	\$84,635

Note: Other smaller demographic subgroups have been excluded, as statistical samples were too small to be reliable.

In both Leflore and Warren Counties, Black residents experience significantly higher poverty rates and lower household incomes than White residents. In Leflore County, 38.4% of Black residents live in poverty²¹ compared to 9.3% of White residents. Food stamp receipt shows a similar pattern, with 34.5% of Black residents receiving assistance compared to 7.8% of White residents.²² The median household income for Black residents is \$27,799, while White households report a median income of \$75,378. In Warren County, 32.6% of Black residents are in poverty compared to 7.2% of White residents, and the income gap remains large: \$38,987 for Black households versus \$84,635 for White households.²³



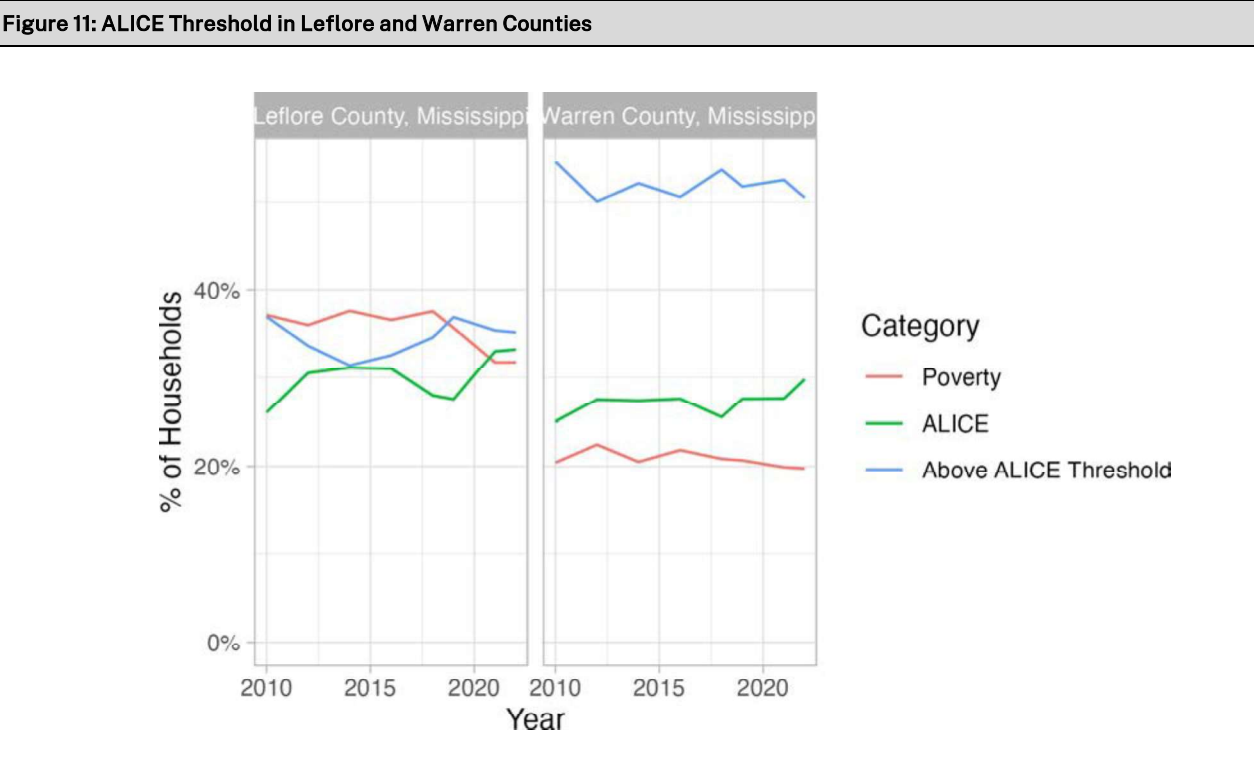
In Warren County, poverty rates vary widely by census tract. Several tracts in and around the city of Vicksburg show relatively low poverty rates, with two tracts reporting rates below 10%. However, other tracts have poverty rates above 40%, indicating pockets of deep need. The remaining tracts show a mix of economic conditions, falling between 10% and 30%.

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table B17001.
²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate. Tables B17001B, B17001H.
²² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate. Tables B22005B, B22005H.
²³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate. Tables B19013B, B19013H.

In Leflore County, poverty is consistently high. In the most severely stricken areas, over 60% of residents live below the federal poverty line. Several other tracts report rates above 40%. Only two tracts fall below 20%.²⁴

Table 10: ALICE Threshold, 2023

Geography	Household Below Poverty Level (%)	Above Poverty, ALICE (%)	Above ALICE (%)
Leflore County, Mississippi	31.7%	33.2%	35.1%
Warren County, Mississippi	19.8%	29.8%	50.5%
Mississippi	19.3%	32.6%	48.1%



In Leflore County, a large number of households have struggled financially over the past decade. From 2010 to 2022, the poverty rate stayed above 35% for most years, dropping to about 31% in 2022. The share of ALICE households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) – those who are working but still can’t afford basic needs – ranged from 26% to 33%, with the highest levels in 2021 and 2022. The smallest group each year was households earning enough to be above the ALICE level. Overall, most households in Leflore County have lived in poverty or just above it for more than ten years.

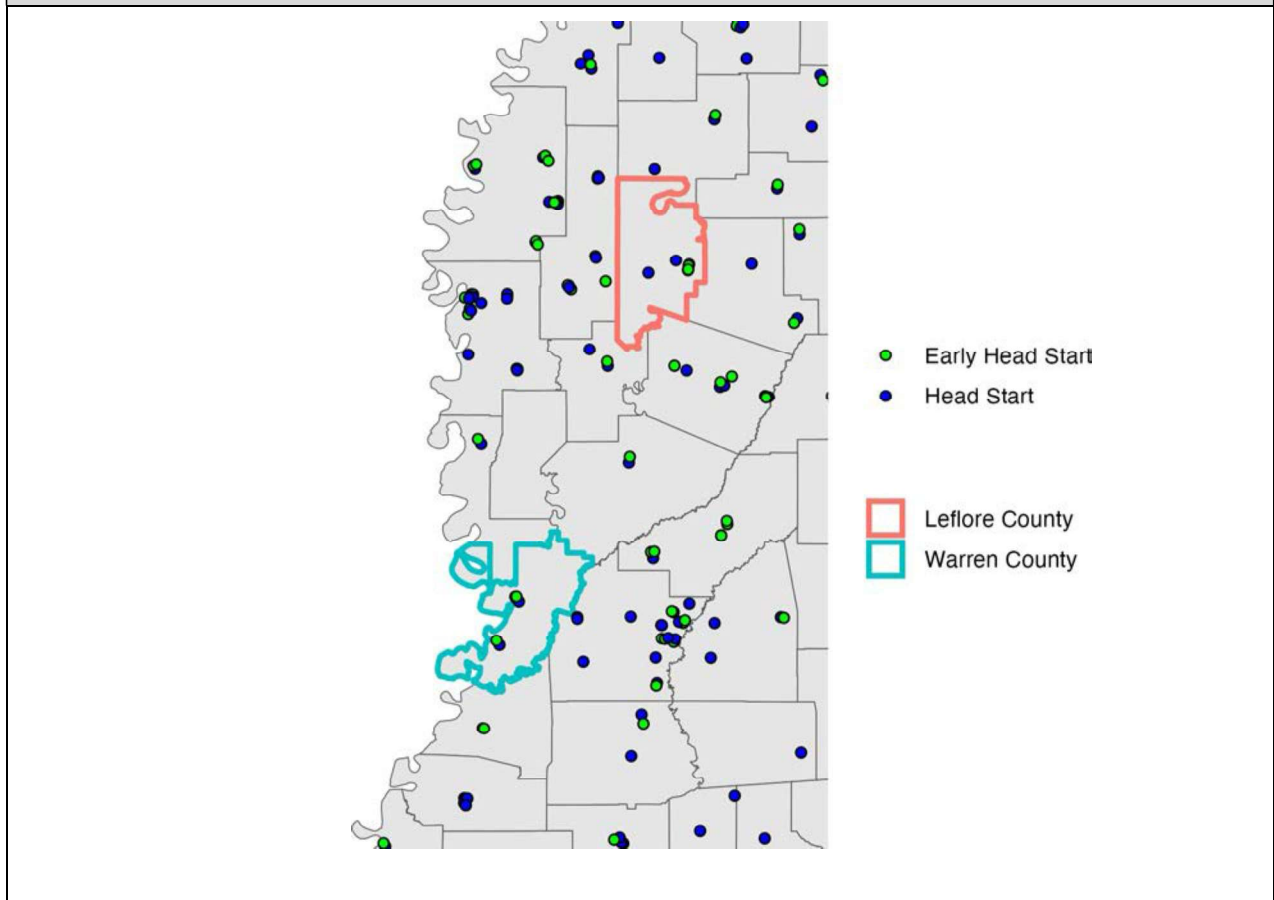
In Warren County, poverty rates stayed steady between 20% and 22% from 2010 to 2022. The share of ALICE households grew slowly over time, rising from 25% in 2010 to nearly 30% in 2022. Most households stayed above the ALICE level, though this group got slightly smaller in recent years.²⁵

²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate. Tables C17002.

²⁵ United for ALICE. (2022). Research Center: National Overview. United Way of Northern New Jersey. Retrieved from www.UnitedForALICE.org/national-overview

Child Care Availability

Figure 12: HS/EHS Centers Leflore and Warren Counties



Head Start and Early Head Start centers are located throughout the state, but their distribution is uneven. Leflore and Warren Counties, outlined on the map, show notable differences in proximity and density of childcare sites compared to surrounding areas. While both counties have some coverage, that coverage is largely contained to the largest municipalities in each county - Greenwood in Leflore County and Vicksburg in Warren County.

Head Start Enrolled Children and Families

Table 11: Head Start Enrollment in National Context

Geography	Total Enrollment	Below Poverty Level	Public Assistance	Foster Care	Homeless	Other	<130% Poverty Level
Leflore and Warren Counties	552	15.2%	72.8%	2.5%	0.2%	6.2%	3.1%
Mississippi	18,460	55.4%	35.6%	0.7%	2.8%	3.8%	1.7%
South Region	306,356	36.8%	47.6%	2.0%	5.4%	4.5%	3.7%
United States	765,116	33.4%	46.4%	2.7%	7.3%	5.4%	4.8%

In Leflore and Warren Counties, most children in Head Start qualify through public assistance rather than low income alone. Only 15.2% qualify because their family is below the poverty line, compared to over half of children statewide. Instead, 72.8% of local enrollees come from families receiving programs like TANF or SSI – more than twice the state rate. Fewer children are enrolled due to foster care or homelessness compared to state and national levels, which may point to challenges in identifying or reaching those families. Overall, this shows that in these counties, families are more likely to enter Head Start through visible ties to public programs than through income-based measures alone.²⁶

Table 12: Eligibility for Enrollment

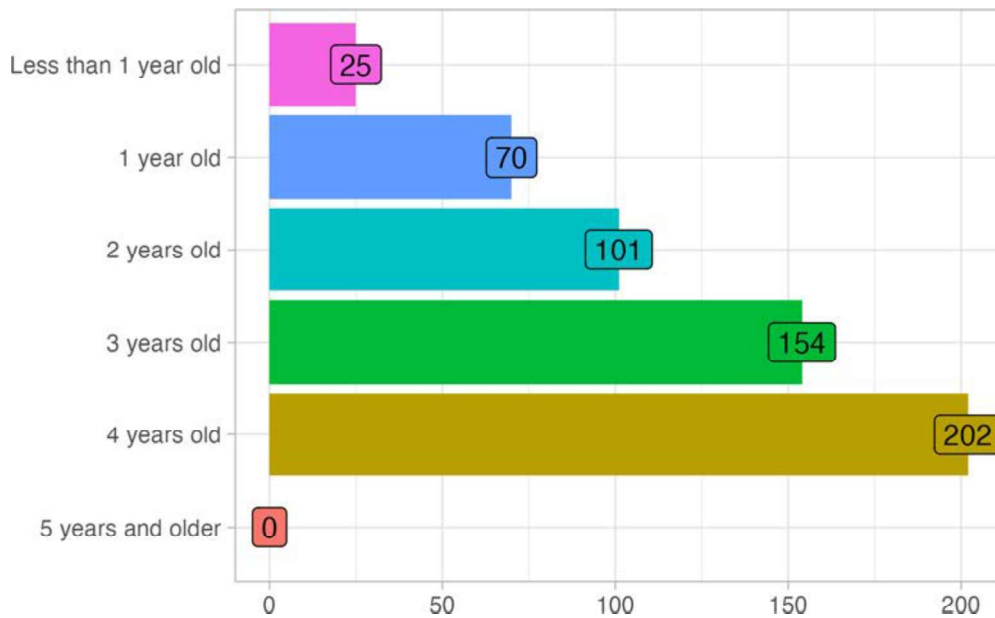
Geography	#04CH011654 (HS)	#04CH011654 (EHS)
Total enrollment	363	189
Income at or below 100% of FPL	53	31
Public assistance	261	141
Foster care	10	4
Homeless	1	0
Other	25	9
Income between 100% and 130% of FPL	13	4

Most children in Head Start and Early Head Start are enrolled because their families receive public assistance, not just because of low income. Out of 363 children in Head Start and 189 in Early Head Start, only about 15% come from families living at or below the federal poverty line. In contrast, over 70% of children in both programs are from families receiving public assistance, showing that many are facing serious financial challenges. Very few children qualify through foster care, homelessness, or slightly higher income levels, meaning the programs are mostly serving families with the greatest need.²⁷

²⁶ Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start, 2024

²⁷ Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start, 2024

Figure 13: Ages of Enrolled Children, Leflore and Warren Counties



Most children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start in Leflore and Warren Counties are 3 or 4 years old, with 154 and 202 children in those age groups. Fewer younger children are enrolled — only 25 are under 1 year old, 70 are 1-year-olds, and 101 are 2-year-olds. There are no children age 5 or older, which aligns with the program’s age limits. Enrollment rises steadily with age, showing that families are more likely to join the program as children get closer to preschool. This may point to a need for more outreach to families with infants and toddlers.²⁸

Table 13: Demographics of Enrollment

Category	Number
Race	
American Indian/Alaska Native	0
Asian	0
Black or African American	526
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0
White	5
Biracial or Multi-Racial	7
Other	14
Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino Origin	13
Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino Origin	539
Dual-Language Learners	21

Current Head Start enrollment is made up mostly of Black children, who represent about 95% of

²⁸ Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start, 2024

those enrolled. White children make up less than 1%, and there are no children identified as Asian, American Indian, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Small numbers of children are reported as Biracial or Multi- Racial (1.3%) or as “Other” (2.5%). Only 2.4% of enrolled children are of Hispanic or Latino origin. There are 21 children identified as dual-language learners, while most come from English-speaking, Non-Hispanic households. These figures suggest that the program is currently serving a largely uniform population and may benefit from examining outreach efforts to ensure all eligible families are aware of and able to access services.²⁹

Table 14: Disability Needs of Enrollment

Category	Number
Health Impairment	0
Emotional Disturbance	0
Speech Impairment	13
Intellectual Disabilities	0
Hearing Impairment	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0
Visual Impairment	0
Specific Learning Disabilities	0
Autism	1
Traumatic Brain Injury	0
Non-Categorical/Developmental Delay	5
Multiple Disabilities	1
Deaf-blind	0

The most common needs for disability services among Head Start enrollees nationally are for speech impairment and non-categorical developmental delays. This pattern holds true for Leflore and Warren County Head Starts as well.³⁰ Further training for disability support is of particular interest to DHA Head Start staff - when surveyed, 39% of staff selected this as one of their top areas for future training.³¹

Table 15: Head Start Absenteeism in National Context

Geography	# Enrollment	# Chronically Absent	% Chronically Absent
Leflore and Warren Counties	552	379	69%
Mississippi	17,947	10,845	60%
South Region	293,737	169,644	58%
United States	688,475	419,255	61%

Head Start programs in Leflore and Warren Counties have a much higher rate of chronic absenteeism compared to state, regional, and national levels. About 69% of enrolled children in these counties were reported chronically absent, compared to 60% in Mississippi, 58% in the South, and 61% nationwide. While absenteeism is a common issue, the higher local rate points to more serious challenges in the area.

These may include problems like lack of transportation, unstable housing, or health issues that make it harder for children to attend regularly.³²

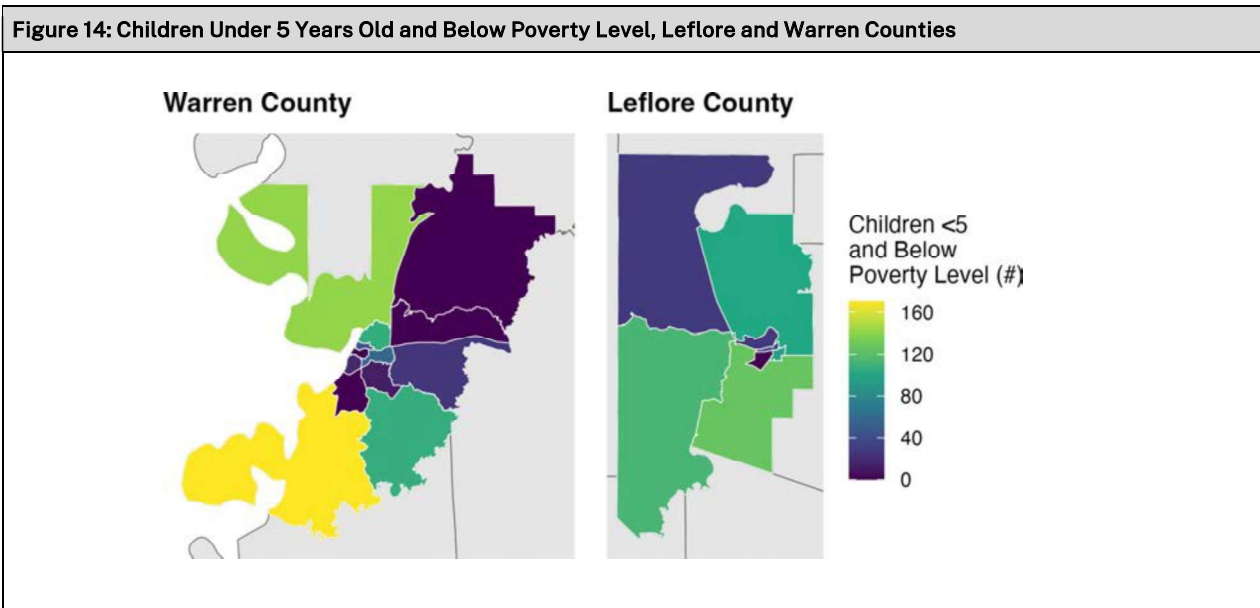
²⁹ Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start, 2024 ³⁰Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start, 2024 ³¹Delta Health Alliance, 2024 Head Start Teacher Survey
³⁰ Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start, 2024
³¹ Delta Health Alliance, 2024 Head Start Teacher Survey
³² Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start, 2024

Head Start Eligible Children and Families

Table 16: Head Start Eligible Children

Geography	Poverty Rate, Children <5 (%)
Leflore County, Mississippi	43.9%
Warren County, Mississippi	42.3%
Mississippi	28.7%
South Region	20.2%
United States	17.6%

Like other Delta communities, a large percentage of children under 5 in Leflore and Warren County live under the poverty line (43.9% and 42.3%, respectively). These percentages are more than double the regional and national rate of children under the age of 5 experiencing poverty (20.2% and 17.6%). Because of this, many of these families face issues with food insecurity, lack of stable housing, and difficulty accessing healthcare, among other things. Through Head Start, these families can access free childcare and early childhood education, which would otherwise be an added financial and time burden for them.³³



While Figure 10 demonstrates where poverty levels are concentrated throughout both counties, Figure 12 identifies where and how many children under 5 live under poverty within both counties. As of 2025, Warren County has around a 36% child poverty rate among both girls and boys under the age of 5.³⁴ Eagle Bend, in the upper left corner of Warren County, has the highest concentration of children under 5 living below the poverty level (70.6%).³⁵ In Leflore County, poverty rates for children under 5 are distributed more evenly across the census-designated places, with higher concentrations south of Greenwood in places like Itta Bena and Sidon where >90% of residents are Black.^{36 37}

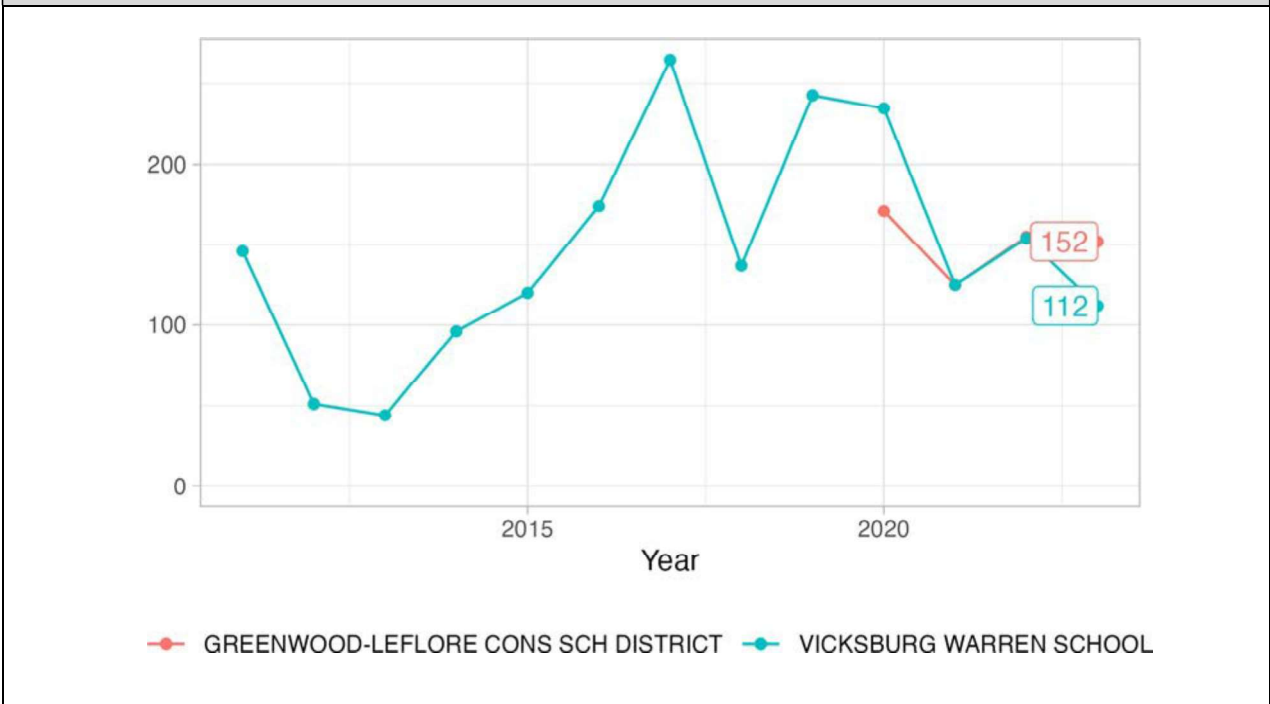
³³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate. Tables B13015

³⁴ Zip Atlas. (n.d.). Warren County, MS demographics in 2025. <https://zipatlas.com/us/ms/c/warren-county.htm>

³⁵ NeighborhoodScout. (n.d.). Eagle Bend Vicksburg, MS 39183, neighborhood profile. <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ms/vicksburg/eagle-bend>

³⁶ Data USA. (2023a). Itta Bena, MS. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/itta-bena-ms/>

Figure 15: Number of Homeless Students, Leflore and Warren Counties

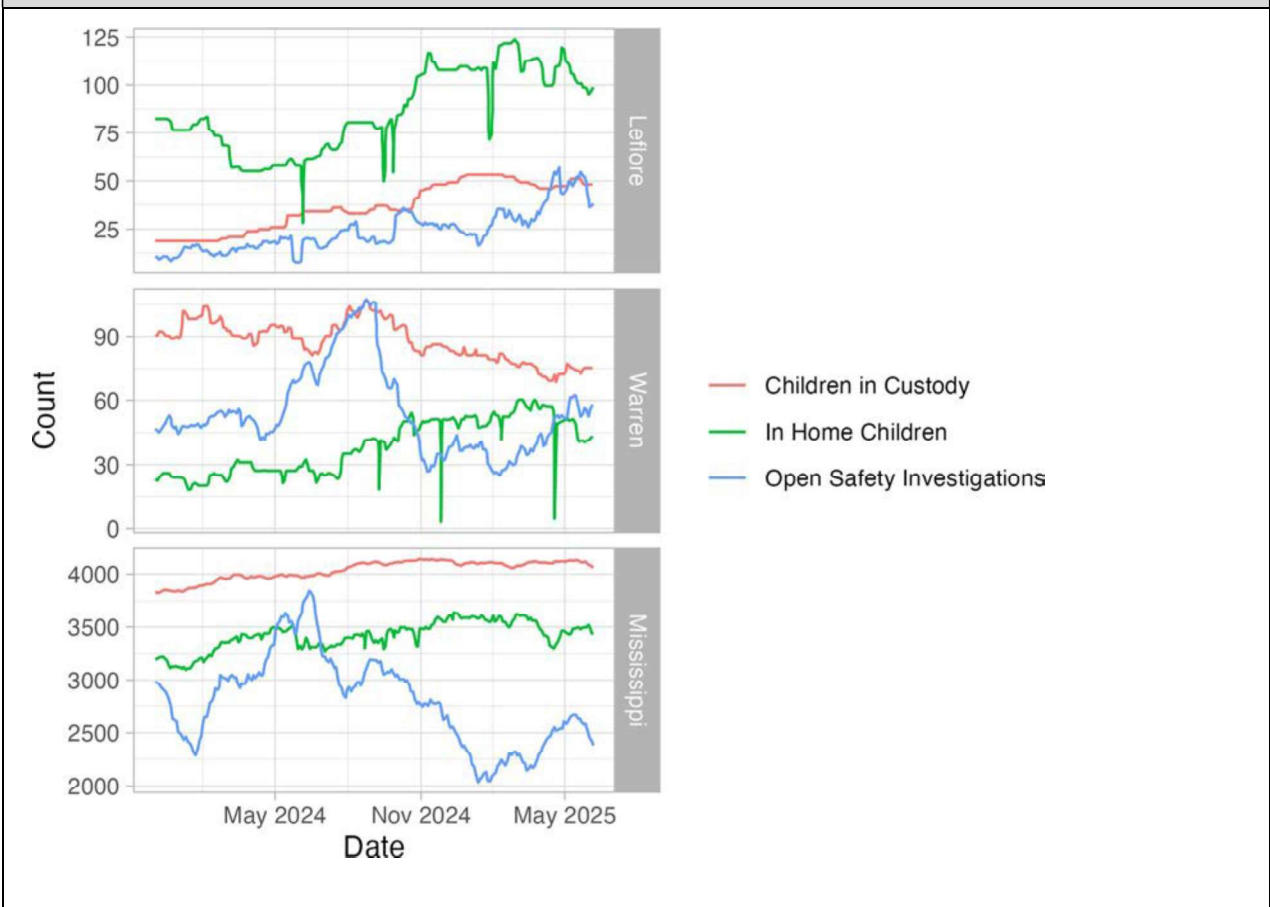


The number of homeless students in the Greenwood-Leflore Consolidated School District has stayed fairly steady since reporting began in 2020, ranging from 171 to 125. In Warren County, the numbers have changed more over time. The Vicksburg Warren School District reported 51 homeless students in 2012, and then rose to a high of 265 in 2017. Since then, the number has gone down each year, reaching 112 in 2023.³⁸

³⁷ World Population Review. (2025). Sidon, Mississippi. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/mississippi/sidon#demographics>

³⁸ Data obtained from McKinney-Vento Act reporting at EdDataExpress.ed.gov

Figure 16: Number of Children in Foster Care, Leflore and Warren Counties



In Leflore County, all three measures — custody, in-home cases, and investigations — have risen over the period reported here, showing a growing child welfare workload in the county. The number of children in state custody has risen steadily, starting at 19 in December 2023 and reaching 48 by June 2025. The number of children receiving in-home services also rose during this time, from 81 to 98. Open safety investigations followed the same trend, climbing from 10 to 49 before dropping slightly at the end of the period.

In Warren County, more children were in custody throughout the period, starting at 91 and staying near that level for most of 2024, while in-home cases went up from 25 to 43. Safety investigations increased quickly through 2024, peaking at 103 in August.³⁹

³⁹ Daily counts are available from MDCP at <https://gis.mdcp.ms.gov/data/CountyCountPublic.csv>. Historical data is interpolated from MDCP charts using automeris.io.

Table 17: Employment Patterns in National Context

Geography	Labor Force Participation	Unemplmt. Rate (%)	Unemplmt. Rate, < HS degree (%)	Workers Employed Full-Time, Year-Round (%)	Working Families Receiving Food Stamps (%)
Leflore County, MS	55.2%	11.7%	22.0%	40.2%	25.1%
Warren County, MS	57.4%	5.5%	9.7%	41.5%	16.5%
Mississippi	57.2%	6.0%	11.1%	40.6%	12.7%
South Region	62.3%	5.0%	7.1%	40.5%	12.2%
United States	63.5%	5.2%	7.6%	39.7%	11.4%

Participation in the labor force, which is the percentage of working-age adults who are either employed or actively looking for work, is moderately lower in Leflore County than in Mississippi or in the nation overall (and slightly lower than 2022 projections of 57.2%).⁴⁰ Only 55.2% of Leflore County adults are in the labor force, which is lower than Warren County (57.4%) and the state (57.2%), but both counties average significantly lower than the national average (63.5%). Participation in the labor force is also lower in Leflore County than in Warren County; the unemployment rate of Black, non-Hispanic residents is 15.3% compared to a rate of 6.8% among this demographic in Warren County (Table 13).

Table 18: Employment Patterns by Race/Ethnicity in Leflore and Warren Counties, 2023, for Ages 16+

County	Race	Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)
Leflore County, MS	Black Non-Hispanic	52.8%	15.3%
Leflore County, MS	White Non-Hispanic	58.3%	4.1%
Warren County, MS	Black Non-Hispanic	56.5%	6.8%
Warren County, MS	White Non-Hispanic	57.1%	4.7%

Further, the unemployment rate in Leflore County (11.7%) is twice that of Warren County (5.5%, despite an increase from the 2022 analysis rate of 4.7%). Leflore County's unemployment is also higher than the state (6%) and national levels (5.2%) of unemployment, and the rate of families in Leflore County receiving food stamps is twice the rate of the rest of the state and the nation.

Table 19: Leflore and Warren Counties Employment Patterns by Sex for Ages 20-64 Only, 2023

County	Sex	Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)
Leflore County, MS	Male	68.4%	15.1%
Leflore County, MS	Female	67.5%	6.9%
Leflore County, MS	Female w/ child < 6 years	78.2%	0.0%
Warren County, MS	Male	73.7%	8.5%
Warren County, MS	Female	70.1%	2.6%
Warren County, MS	Female w/ child < 6 years	75.1%	3.3%

In Leflore County, 68.4% of men participate in the labor force, and 15.1% of those men are unemployed. This unemployment rate amongst men in Leflore County doubles the rate of unemployed women in the same county. While Warren County has a higher percentage of men in the labor force and a lower unemployment rate amongst men than in Leflore, the unemployment rate amongst men and women mirrors Leflore's where almost three times the percentage of men are unemployed (8.5%) compared to women in the same county.⁴¹

⁴⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate, table S2301.

⁴¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimate, table S2301. Outcomes by sex are calculated on ages 20-64, while outcomes overall and by race are calculated on ages 16+.

Education Needs of Eligible Families

Table 20: Number of Students in School District by Race

Race	Leflore County		Warren County	
	# of Students	% of Students	# of Students	% of Students
Black	3,563	92.6%	4,373	63.9%
Hispanic	169	4.4%	96	1.4%
White	69	1.8%	2,176	31.8%
Two or more races	38	1.0%	114	1.7%
Asian	10	0.3%	56	0.8%

Leflore County’s school district is almost entirely comprised of Black students (92.6%), almost a ~20% increase compared to the Black composition of the county in general (see Table 2). Similarly, Warren County, which has about an even proportion of Black and White residents (right under 50% each), has almost a 15% increase in Black students in the school district (see Table 2).⁴²

The following table provides aggregated data for Leflore and Warren County school-level demographics.⁴³ Across public schools in Leflore County, half the student population is female, and more than two-thirds identify as Black. Racial identifiability within the school district is even more extreme than in the county, with several schools reaching rates of 95% Black, non-Hispanic students. Specifically, all three schools that offer Pre-K classes have high levels of disproportionate Black-White differences. Schools with lower levels of this disproportion (Leflore County Elementary and Bankston Elementary) have more Hispanic students than the rest of the county. Notably, in locations like Itta Bena, where Leflore County Elementary is located, a less than 1% Hispanic population and yet 10.6% of the school is made up of Hispanic students.⁴⁴ Further, in Greenwood where only 2.87% (402 people) of the population is Hispanic, 4.7% of Bankston Elementary’s student population (located in Greenwood) is comprised of Hispanic students.⁴⁵ This indicates a need for further attention from Head Start on a growing Hispanic and immigrant population in the “New Latino South”.^{46 47}

⁴² National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2023.
⁴³ National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2023.
⁴⁴ Data USA. (2023a). Itta Bena, MS. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/itta-bena-ms>
⁴⁵ Data USA. (2023b). Greenwood, MS. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/greenwood-ms/>
⁴⁶ Jones, J. A. (2019). *The browning of the New South* (1st ed.). University of Chicago Press.
⁴⁷ Kochhar, R., Suro, R., & Tafoya, S. (2005, July 26). *The new Latino South: The context and consequences of rapid population growth*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2005/07/26/the-new-latino-south/>

Geography	# Teachers	# Students	% Male	% Female	% White	% Black	% Hispanic
Threadgill Primary (Pre-K to 1)	16	216	44.9%	55.1%	0.5%	99.5%	0.0%
Claudine F Brown Elementary School (Pre-K to 2)	19	260	49.6%	50.4%	0.4%	94.2%	3.8%
East Elementary School (3 to 5)	16	223	48.0%	52.0%	2.2%	91.0%	5.8%
Bankston Elementary School (KG to 6)	24	307	4.9%	52.1%	13.0%	68.7%	14.7%
Davis Elementary School (KG to 6)	27	274	47.1%	52.9%	1.6%	96.3%	0.0%
Leflore County (Pre-K to 6)	22	303	52.1%	47.9%	0.3%	87.8%	10.6%
Threadgill Elementary School (2 to 6)	23	322	46.3%	53.7%	0.6%	98.8%	0.0%
Amanda Elzy Junior High School (6 to 8)	21	211	58.3%	41.7%	0.0%	93.4%	6.6%
Greenwood Middle School (7 to 8)	21	273	56.4%	43.6%	0.4%	97.4%	1.1%
Amanda Elzy High School (9 to 12)	29	387	47.0%	53.0%	0.8%	91.7%	7.0%
Greenwood High School (9 to 12)	40	660	48.9%	51.1%	1.4%	96.4%	0.8%
Leflore County High School (7 to 12)	27	313	49.5%	50.5%	0.0%	93.0%	6.4%

Geography	# Teachers	# Students	% Male	% Female	% White	% Black	% Hispanic
Dana Road Elementary (Pre-K to 2)	31	434	53.20%	46.80%	9.00%	89.40%	0.20%
Sherman Ave Elementary (Pre-K to 2)	29	394	54.30%	45.70%	9.40%	83.00%	1.00%
Bowmar Avenue School (KG to 6)	26	343	53.10%	46.90%	59.20%	37.00%	2.00%
Redwood Elementary (Pre-K to 6)	30	379	59.90%	40.10%	68.30%	29.60%	0.50%
Warrenton Elementary (Pre-K to 6)	24	296	50.70%	49.30%	14.20%	79.10%	3.70%
Vicksburg Intermediate (3 to 6)	27	381	50.40%	49.60%	8.40%	89.00%	0.50%
Warren Central Intermediate (3 to 6)	25	329	48.00%	52.00%	6.10%	87.80%	1.20%
South Park Elementary (Pre-K to 6)	29	365	49.90%	50.10%	33.70%	63.00%	0.00%
Beechwood Elementary (Pre-K to 6)	45	556	53.80%	46.20%	58.60%	37.10%	0.90%
Bovina Elementary School (Pre-K to 6)	27	361	49.30%	50.70%	66.80%	29.40%	0.80%
Vicksburg Junior High School (7 to 8)	40	431	47.10%	52.90%	13.90%	82.10%	2.30%
Warren Central Junior High School (7 to 8)	47	565	48.80%	51.20%	42.70%	52.40%	2.30%
Vicksburg High School (9 to 12)	57	842	49.80%	50.20%	10.30%	85.20%	2.30%
Warren Central High School (9 to 12)	73	1168	50.50%	49.50%	39.90%	55.50%	1.30%

Unlike Leflore County, Warren County's school district demographics show wider variation in the racial proportions of the district's schools. For example, the percentage of Black students ranges from 29.4% in Bovina Elementary to 89.4% at Dana Road Elementary (both offering pre-K classes). Most of the schools with pre-K availability are located in Vicksburg, MS where the white population is 22.8%, but where schools like Dana Road and Sherman Ave Elementary are only comprised of less than 10% white students.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Data USA. (2023c). Vicksburg, MS. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/vicksburg-ms>

Geography	Student-Teacher Ratio
Greenwood-Leflore Cons Sch District	12.8
Vicksburg Warren School District	13.1
Mississippi	13.0
South Region	15.0
United States	15.1

The average teacher to student ratio in Greenwood-Leflore School District and Vicksburg Warren School District are 12.8 and 13.1, respectively, which is below the national rate of 15.1 and on par with the state average of 13.1.⁴⁹

Geography	% < High School	% Some College Credit (or more)	% Bachelor's Degree (or more)
Leflore County, MS	17.2%	52.0%	20.0%
Warren County, MS	11.9%	60.0%	26.5%
Mississippi	13.4%	56.7%	24.2%
South Region	11.4%	61.4%	33.0%
United States	10.6%	63.2%	35.0%

Educational attainment in both counties for all adults 25 and older lags behind state and national averages, with fewer county residents receiving high school diplomas, some college credit, or Bachelor's degrees. These discrepancies are especially pronounced in Leflore County. For example, just over 10% of people aged 25+ lack a high school diploma in the United States, but that average jumps to 17.2% in Leflore County. Further, 63.2% of adults in the United States have some college credit, but that number drops to 52% in Leflore County. Lastly, over a third of adults in the United States have obtained a Bachelor's degree, but only 20% have done so in Leflore County.⁵⁰

Educational Attainment Category	Leflore County, Mississippi	Warren County, Mississippi
% with at least HS degree (Black, non-Hispanic)	81.30%	83.90%
% with at least HS degree (White, non-Hispanic)	85.80%	91.80%
% with at least 4-year degree (Black, non-Hispanic)	15.90%	19.90%
% with at least 4-year degree (White, non-Hispanic)	31.40%	31.90%
% with at least HS degree (Male)	80.40%	87.30%
% with at least HS degree (Female)	84.70%	88.70%
% with at least 4-year degree (Male)	15.90%	25.60%
% with at least 4-year degree (Female)	23.30%	27.20%

When disaggregating educational attainment by racial groups, there are some notable disparities. In Leflore County, only a few percentage points separate Black and White residents who have at least a high school diploma, but when it comes to residents who have at least a 4-year degree, the percentage of white residents (31.4%) in this category is almost twice that of Black residents (15.9%), indicating disproportional access to higher education and later impacting labor participation and unemployment rates amongst both groups (see Table 13).⁵¹ Similar analysis can be

⁴⁹ National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2023. Enrollment divided by full-time-equivalent number of teachers.

⁵⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2023. Table S1501.

⁵¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2023. Table S1501.

made with Warren County percentages. While the percentage of White residents who have at least a high school diploma or a 4-year degree is notably higher than the percentage for Black residents in both counties, these percentages have decreased for the White population and increased for the Black population since the 2022 assessment.

Table 26: Median Income by Educational Attainment

Geography	Median Income, < High School	Median Income, High School	Median Income, Some College or Associate's	Median Income, Bachelor's	Median Income, Graduate or Professional
Leflore County, Mississippi	\$24,452	\$22,291	\$27,823	\$27,418	\$63,487
Warren County, Mississippi	\$23,233	\$31,487	\$36,909	\$60,000	\$72,965
Mississippi	\$26,749	\$34,315	\$38,500	\$52,657	\$64,563
South Region	\$30,079	\$36,858	\$43,573	\$63,903	\$82,781
United States	\$31,492	\$38,789	\$45,840	\$67,849	\$88,719

In Leflore County, only a few percentage points separate the percent of Black and White residents who have at least a high school diploma, but when it comes to residents who have at least a 4-year degree, the percentage of white residents (31.4%) in this category is almost twice that of Black residents (15.9), indicating disproportional access to higher education and later impacting labor participation and unemployment rates amongst both groups (see Table 13). Similar analysis can be made with Warren County percentages. While the percentage of White residents who have at least a high school diploma or a 4-year degree is notably higher than the percentage for Black residents in both counties, these percentages have decreased for the White population and increased for the Black population since the 2022 assessment.⁵²

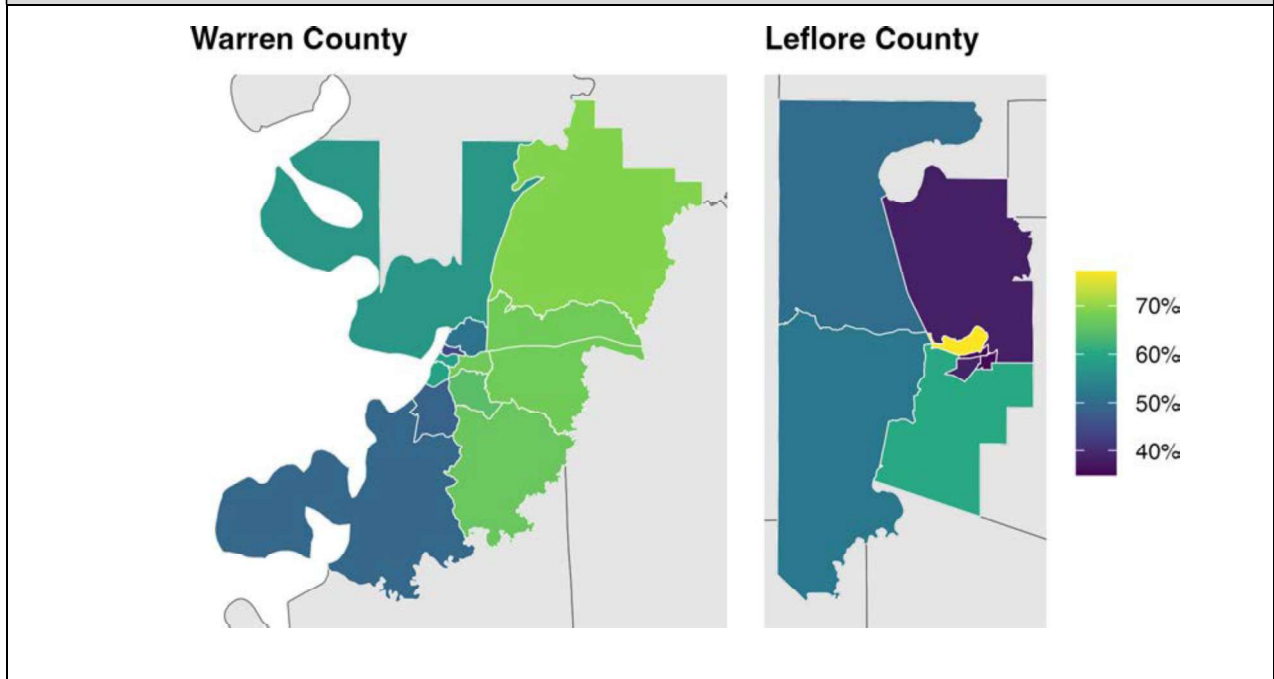
Table 27: County-to-U.S. Ratio

	Leflore County, Mississippi	Warren County, Mississippi
Median Income, < High School	77.6%	73.77%
Median Income, High School	57.5%	81.18%
Median Income, Some College or Associate's	60.7%	80.52%
Median Income, Bachelor's	40.4%	88.43%
Median Income, Graduate or Professional	71.6%	82.24%

Educational attainment is a very important predictor of future earnings. The median income of those with a high school diploma in Leflore County is only 57.5% of the median income level for those with the same education level at the national level. The most notable discrepancy between Leflore and national levels is amongst those with a Bachelor's degree, where the median income level is only 40.4% of the national rate. Interestingly, Warren County's discrepancy is much lower compared to Leflore's. Specifically, the median income level of those with a Bachelor's degree is more than twice the percentage rate in Warren County (\$60,000) vs. Leflore (\$27,418) when compared to the national average (\$67,849). This is strong evidence that there are higher paying opportunities in Warren County for people of varying educational backgrounds compared to Leflore County, but still lower than national averages.⁵³

⁵² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2023. Table S1501.
⁵³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2023. Table S1501.

Figure 17: Percentage of Population Ages 25+ With Some College Credit or More, Leflore and Warren Counties



In general, Warren County has moderate to high rates of adults 25+ with some college credit, with locations like Vicksburg and the upper right census block, containing Youngton and Eldorado, having rates of up to 70%. In Leflore, educational attainment is generally lower. The Greenwood sector of Leflore County has the highest concentration of adults ages 25+ who have some college credit (70%), but the census block just north of Greenwood has the lowest concentration at 40%.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2023. Table B15003.

Health and Social Service Needs of Eligible Families

Table 28: Pregnancies and Births in State Context, 2022

	Leflore County, Mississippi		Warren County, Mississippi		Mississippi	
	#	Rate (per 1,000)	#	Rate (per 1,000)	#	Rate (per 1,000)
Teenage Pregnancy	50	23.8	55	20.3	3,098	15.7
Unintended injury death	29	109.1	22	51.6	2,371	80.6
Suicide death	7	26.3	8	18.8	419	14.3
Low Birth Weight	51	15.1	64	12.9	4,409	12.7
Very L Birth Weight	3	0.9	12	2.4	749	2.2
Premature Birth	52	15.4	79	15.9	5,127	14.8
Inadequate Prenatal Care	56	16.6	38	7.6	2,628	7.6
Smoking During Pregnancy	11	3.3	23	4.6	1,773	5.1

The previous table explores different pregnancy and negative birth statistics at the county and state levels. The rates of these occurrences per 1,000 individuals were generally higher at the county levels (compared to nation or state). For example, teenage pregnancy rates in both Leflore and Warren County occur at a rate of 5-8 more people per 1,000 than at the state level. Unintended death and suicide death rates were significantly higher in Leflore compared to the state. Low weight and premature birth rates were higher across both counties than at the state level. Notably, inadequate prenatal care was twice the state and Warren County rates in Leflore County. Overall, Leflore County had more poor outcomes regarding pregnancy and birth statistics, but Warren County had comparable rates to state averages.⁵⁵

Table 29: Health Indicators in National Context

Geography	Life Expectancy (years)	Obesity (%)	Diabetes (%)	Low Birthweight (%)
Leflore County, Mississippi	71.10	45.8%	18.9%	15.3%
Warren County, Mississippi	73.96	41.8%	13.2%	13.6%
Mississippi	74.69	40.1%	13.8%	12.2%
United States	79.09	33.5%	10.0%	8.4%

Table 29 shows basic health numbers for each county, along with state and national averages. In Leflore County, people live just over 71 years on average, which is lower than both the state and national averages.⁵⁶ Nearly half of adults are obese, almost one in five has diabetes,⁵⁷ and 15.1% of babies are born at a low birthweight. In Warren County, the average life expectancy is just under 74 years. About 42% of adults are obese, 13.2% have diabetes, and 13.6% of babies are born at a low birthweight.⁵⁸ Both counties do worse than the national averages on all four measures, but the disparities in rates of obesity and low birthweight are especially bad.

⁵⁵ Mississippi Department of Health, MSTAHRS, birth data, 2022. <https://mstahrs.ms.gov/>

⁵⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth by State and Census Tract, 2010-2015.

⁵⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021. Obtained from: University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2024.

⁵⁸ National Center for Health Statistics, Natality Files; Census Population Estimates Program, 2016-2022. Obtained from: University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2024.

Figure 18: Life Expectancy in United States, 2010-2015

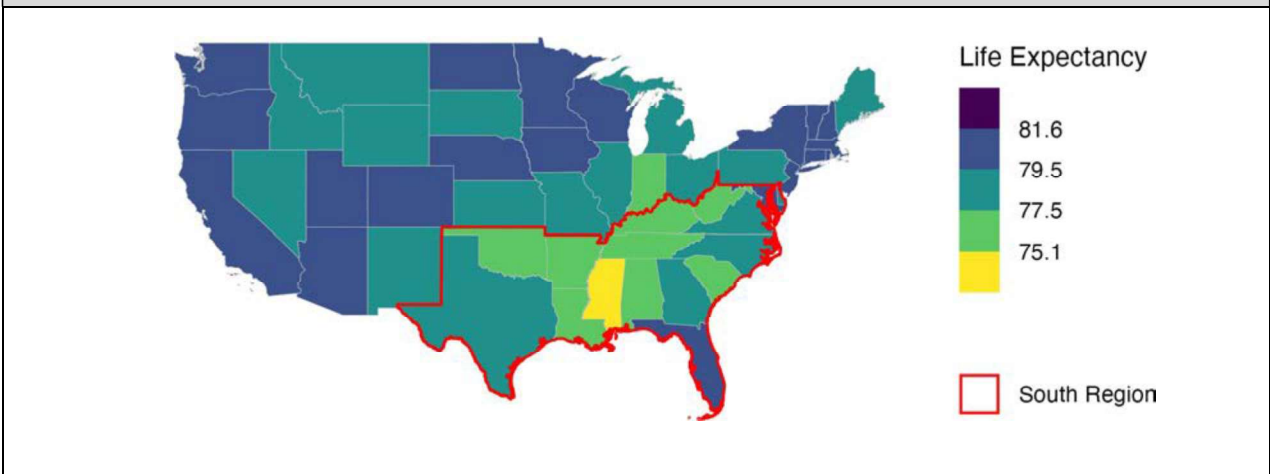


Figure 19: Life Expectancy by Census Tract, 2010-2015

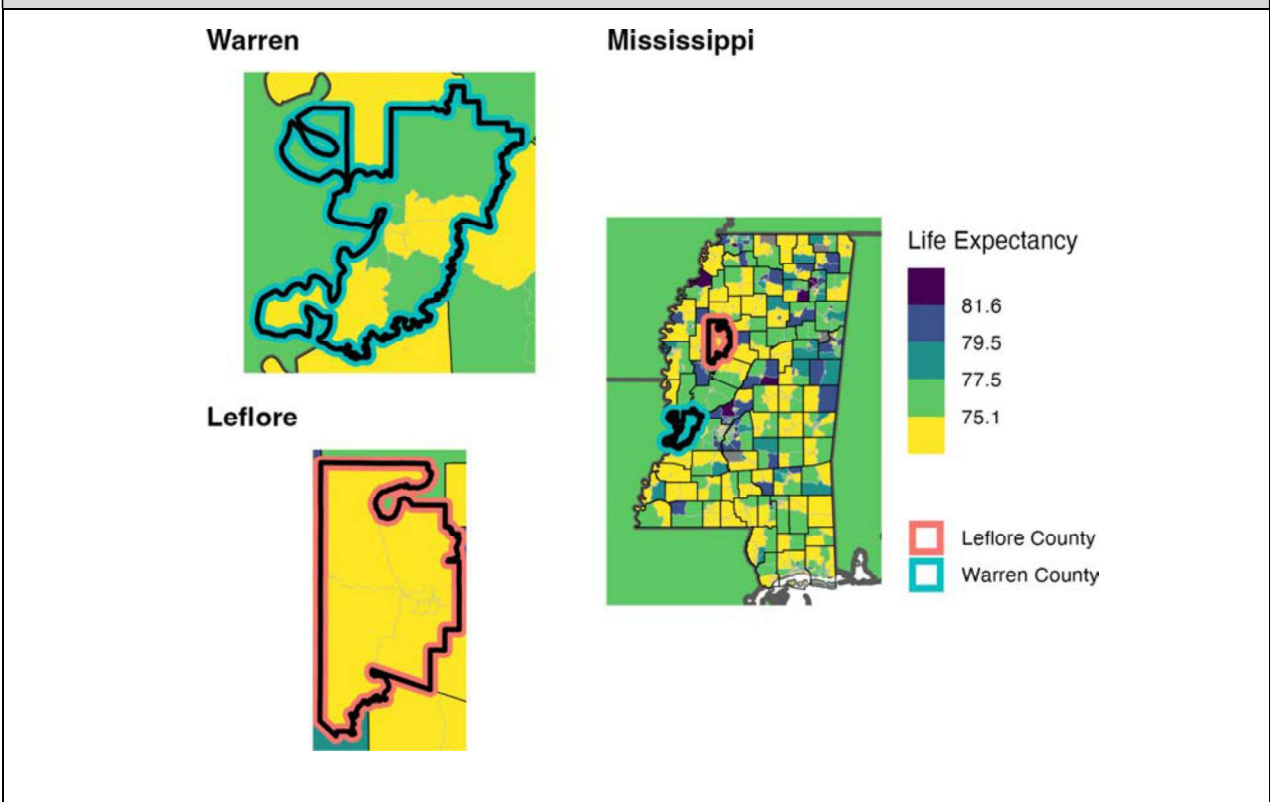
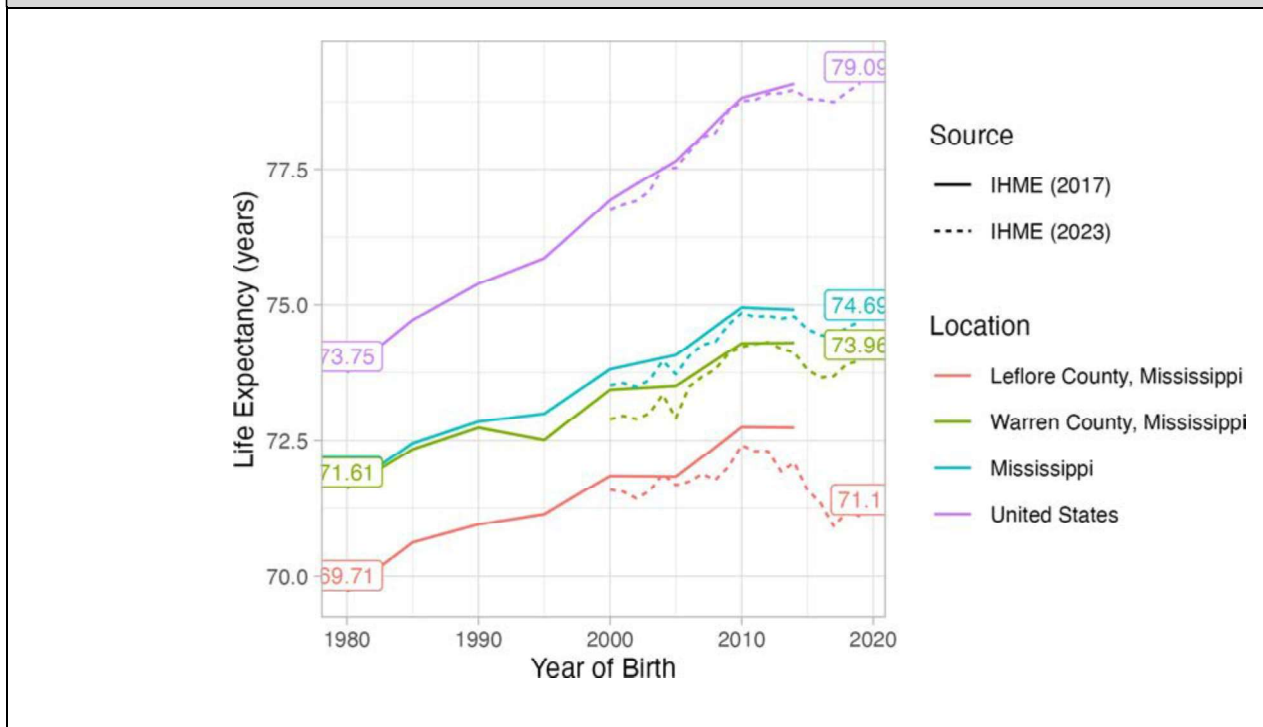


Figure 19 shows life expectancy at birth by census tract in Mississippi. In Leflore County, all tracts fall below 75 years, with most between 71 and 74.9 and the lowest at 67.4 years. The entire county appears in yellow on the map, showing consistently low life expectancy with little variation. In contrast, Warren County has a wider range. Most tracts fall between 73 and 77 years, with the lowest at 66.2. Mississippi shows a considerable range in outcomes; while the average life expectancy of the state is lower than the national average, there are clearly communities in central and northeastern Mississippi where the average life expectancy is higher than even the national average.

Figure 20: Life Expectancy at Birth in National Context, 1980-2019



Life expectancy at birth in the United States steadily increased from 1980 to 2019, rising from approximately 74 years to 79 years. Mississippi consistently trailed behind national averages, improving from about 72 years in 1980 to only 75 years by 2019.⁵⁹ In 2019, life expectancy in Leflore County was approximately 71 years, while Warren County fared slightly better at 74 years. Alarming, Leflore County has seen a sharp downward turn since 2010, falling even further behind state and national averages.

⁵⁹ Data pooled from: (1) Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. 2023. United States Mortality Rates by Causes of Death and Life Expectancy by County, Race, and Ethnicity, 2000-2019. (2) Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. 2017. United States Life Expectancy and Age-Specific Mortality Risk by County, 1980-2014. We report both due to technical differences in how data is calculated each year.

Housing

Table 30: Housing in National Context

Geography	Median Rent (\$)	Apartments (%)	Housing Stock Built Since 2000 (%)	Homes with Utility Heating (Gas or Electric)	Households with Wired Internet (%)
Leflore County, Mississippi	\$701	23.90%	12.20%	92.40%	36.00%
Warren County, Mississippi	\$889	17.30%	17.90%	84.40%	62.50%
Mississippi	\$923	14.10%	28.70%	88.00%	58.30%
South Region	\$1,274	21.90%	31.40%	93.10%	72.60%
United States	\$1,348	26.00%	24.00%	87.60%	74.80%

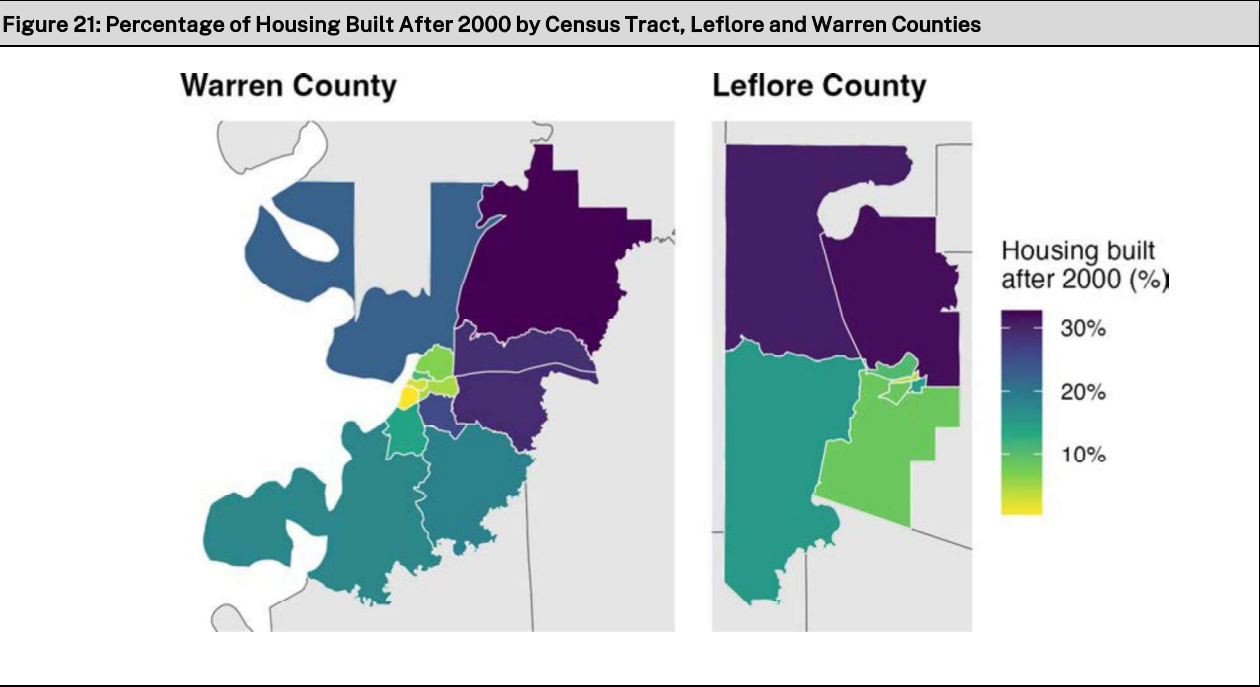
Mississippi is a more affordable housing market with relatively newer housing stock but is potentially lagging in apartment availability and wired internet access compared to the national and regional averages. There is a significant variation within the state, particularly between Leflore and Warren Counties. Both Leflore (12.2%) and Warren County (17.9%) are quite far below state average (28.7%) of housing stock built since 2000. There is also a significant gap in wired internet access between Warren County (62.5%) and Leflore County (36.0%).⁶⁰ Warren County has a much higher percentage of households with wired internet, suggesting a digital divide within the state. Having a larger proportion of older housing stock in Leflore and Warren Counties compared to the Mississippi state average could carry several implications, particularly for the health and development of children. Older homes often suffer from lower energy efficiency due to outdated insulation and building materials, leading to higher utility costs and less comfortable living environments. More concerning, these homes may contain hazardous materials like lead-based paint and asbestos, both of which pose serious health risks, especially to young, developing bodies. Substandard housing is strongly linked to increased risk of infectious diseases, chronic illnesses, injuries, poor nutrition, and mental health issues. Contributing factors include lack of clean and hot water, inadequate waste disposal, pest infestations, and poor food storage – all of which facilitate the spread of disease. Overcrowding, especially in shelters or temporary housing, raises the risk of tuberculosis and respiratory infections. Injury risks are heightened by unsafe features such as exposed heating sources, unprotected windows, slippery surfaces, breakable glass, and poorly lit stairs. These homes may also contain hazardous materials like lead-based paint and asbestos, both of which pose serious health risks, especially to young, developing bodies. Fire hazards are also more likely in poorly constructed buildings, particularly those used to house homeless women and children. Limited access to affordable housing often forces low-income families to choose between rent and food, leading to undernutrition, especially in children.

Table 31: Homeownership in National Context

Geography	Median Mortgaged Home Value (\$)	Owner-occupied (%)	Mortgaged Home Value < 2× Yearly Household Income (%)	Owned Outright Worth < \$100k (%)
Leflore County, Mississippi	\$122,100	54.10%	51.60%	64.20%
Warren County, Mississippi	\$183,200	71.20%	47.10%	46.30%
Mississippi	\$194,700	69.50%	44.50%	43.10%
South Region	\$296,200	66.30%	30.60%	24.80%
United States	\$337,900	65.00%	28.70%	20.30%

⁶⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S2801.

Mississippi has a higher rate of homeownership with lower median home values,⁶¹ and for those with mortgages, their home values tend to be more closely aligned with their income.⁶² However, there’s a notable segment of the homeowner population, particularly in areas like Leflore County, who own their homes outright, and these homes tend to be valued at less than \$100,000, possibly indicating a different stage of homeownership or a different type of housing stock. Homeownership is more common in Mississippi, the nature of that ownership, in terms of home value and mortgage status, differs significantly from the national and even regional trends. This is likely due to differences in economic conditions, housing market dynamics, and the age and type of housing stock across these geographical areas. Higher homeownership in Mississippi, coupled with lower home values and many outright-owned homes, might present some mixed outcomes for child development. While stability from ownership is beneficial, the financial situation and resources available for children can vary. Lower home values might free up income or indicate underfunded community resources like schools and parks. Parental stress, potentially influenced by financial security or the upkeep of older homes common in this scenario, also plays a role. Although homeownership offers stability, the wealth-building potential might be less with lower-valued properties. Importantly, older homes are more likely to have health hazards like lead paint, directly harming children. Understanding the broader socioeconomic context and local resources is key to determining the overall impact on child development in these areas.



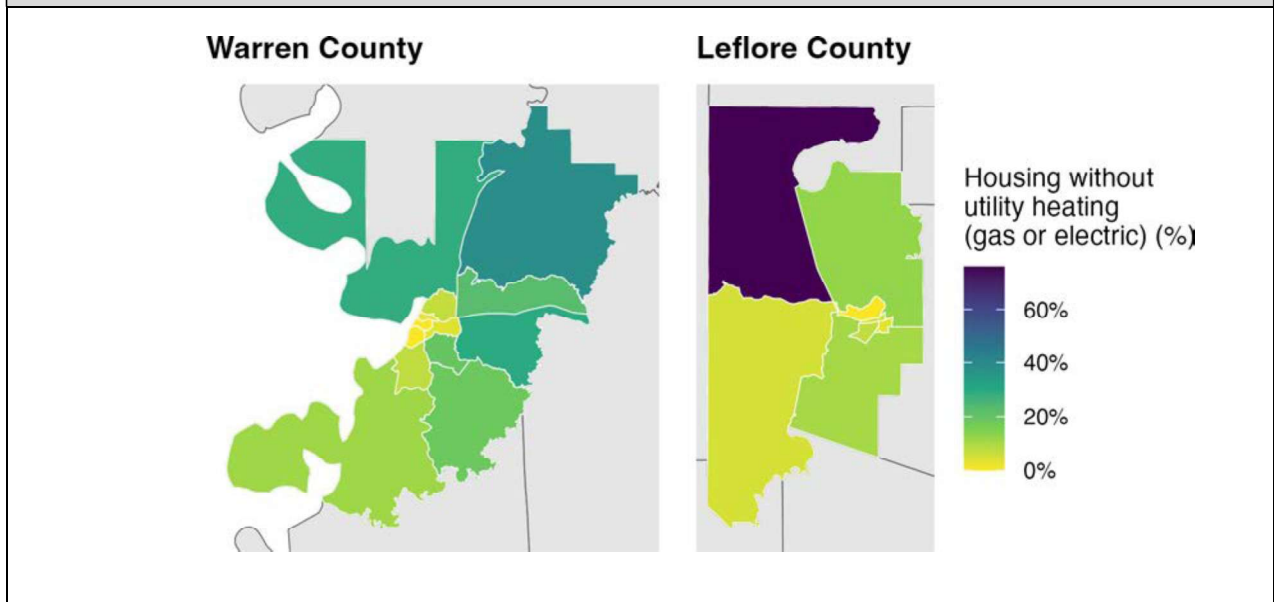
The percentage of housing units built after the year 2000 across different census tracts within Warren and Leflore Counties in Mississippi. In Warren County, we can see a greater degree of variation, with some census tracts, in and around Vicksburg exhibiting a lower percentage of housing built after 2000. In contrast, Leflore County’s has a more uniform distribution of newer housing, with most census tracts falling into the lower to mid-range percentages. This supports conclusions from Table 25, which indicated that Warren County had a slightly higher percentage of housing stock built since 2000 compared to Leflore County, but both were below the state average.⁶³

⁶¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S2506.

⁶² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S2506.

⁶³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table B25034.

Figure 22: Percentage of Housing without Utility Heating by Census Tract, Leflore and Warren Counties



In Warren County, a number of census tracts with a higher percentage of homes without utility heating are in and around Vicksburg, with percentages reaching up to 60%. Leflore County presents a different picture, with a significant portion of the county, particularly in the northern and western areas, showing a high percentage of homes without utility heating. There are some central and southern tracts with lower percentages, but overall, Leflore County seems to have a greater prevalence of homes relying on alternative heating methods compared to Warren County.

In general, higher income tracts tend to have greater access to utility gas (more infrastructure investment). Lower-income, predominantly Black tracts often rely on electricity or LP (liquefied petroleum) gas, which may reflect both older housing stock and systemic underinvestment in infrastructure.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table B28040.

Transportation and Communication

Table 32: Commuting in National Context

Geography	Drove Own Car Alone to Work (%)	No Vehicle Available (%)	Worked Outside County of Residence (%)	Used Public Transit, Walked, or Biked (%)	Average Commute Time (mins)	Worked from Home (%)
Leflore County, Mississippi	82.3%	2.8%	16.4%	0.1%	NA	3.8%
Warren County, Mississippi	87.8%	3.8%	12.9%	0.3%	21.9	2.9%
Mississippi	82.5%	2.3%	28.3%	0.3%	25.6	5.3%
South Region	73.7%	2.8%	24.0%	1.3%	26.7	12.7%
United States	70.2%	4.3%	22.0%	3.5%	26.6	13.5%

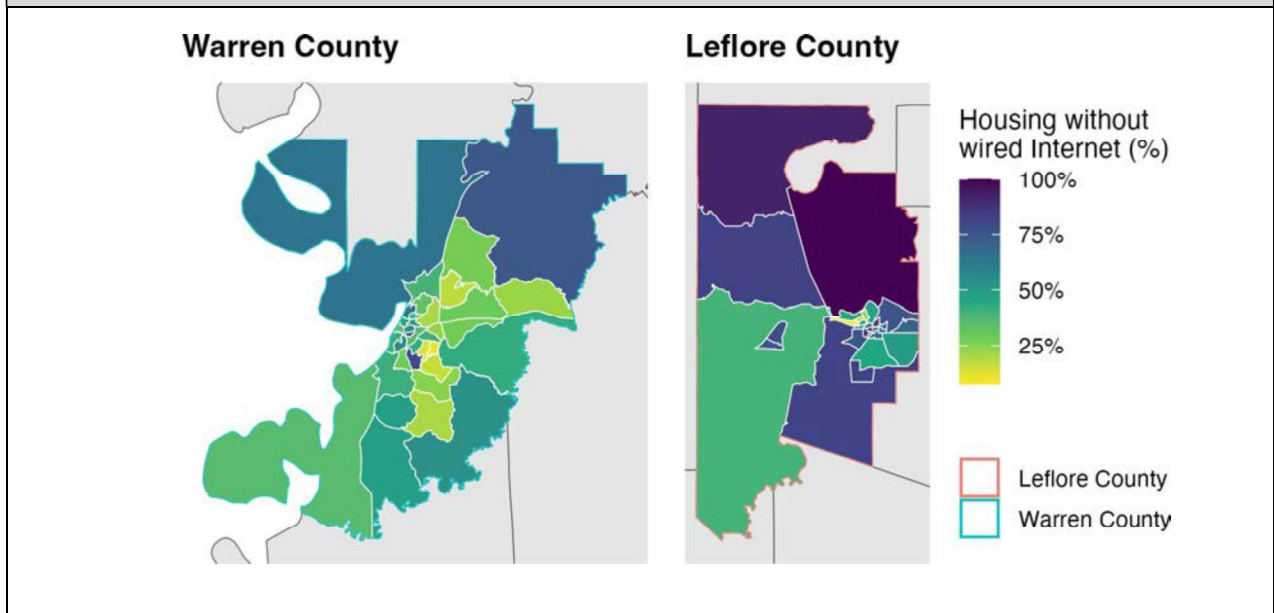
Mississippians rely heavily on personal transportation to get to work – in Leflore and Warren Counties, even more so where the trend is even more pronounced than in the broader South Region and the United States. The significantly lower rates of public transit use, walking, or biking suggest limited alternative transportation options for residents. While Warren County benefits from a slightly shorter average commute time compared to the state and nation (data is unavailable for Leflore), the overwhelming dependence on private cars has notable implications.

This car-centric commuting landscape likely impacts families, particularly concerning access to essential services like medical care for children. With fewer public transportation alternatives, getting children to appointments, especially in cases of emergency or when a single parent is the primary caregiver and needs to commute, could be more challenging. Any disruption to the family vehicle, such as breakdowns or lack of access due to work or other commitments, could create significant barriers to healthcare access. The lower rates of working from home further complicates this, as parents have less flexibility to manage childcare needs or attend to medical appointments during traditional work hours.

Furthermore, the higher rate of driving alone to work, coupled with limited carpooling (not explicitly shown but implied by the low public transit and no vehicle availability rates), contributes to increased traffic on roadways and potentially longer travel times during peak hours, even if the average commute time appears shorter in Warren County. This can add stress to families' daily routines and further complicate accessing timely medical care or other essential services. The lack of diverse transportation options also makes the population more vulnerable to fluctuations in fuel costs and the overall expense of vehicle ownership.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S0802.

Figure 23: Percentage of Housing without Wired Internet by Census Block Group, Leflore and Warren Counties



In Warren County, there is better wired internet access in the more central and urbanized areas. However, the outer regions of Warren County, particularly to the north and south, exhibit much higher percentages of homes without wired internet. Leflore County, on the other hand, shows a more widespread lack of wired internet access, with large portions of the county having high percentages of homes without this service. There are some smaller pockets, mainly in the central part of the county, with slightly better access, but overall, wired internet penetration seems significantly lower in Leflore County compared to the more central areas of Warren County. There appears to be a digital divide within both counties, with more pronounced limitations in wired internet access in the less central or rural areas, and a particularly significant challenge in Leflore County as a whole.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, 5-year estimates. Table B28002.

Resources available to address needs of eligible children and families

Table 33: Healthcare Access in National Context

Geography	Uninsured (%)	Uninsured, <6 years old (%)	Primary Care Providers per 100k	Mental Health Providers per 100k
Leflore County, Mississippi	14.1%	3.6%	79.83	538.33
Warren County, Mississippi	10.6%	2.1%	66.55	621.78
Mississippi	11.6%	4.5%	53.32	229.45
South Region	11.7%	5.7%	67.66	237.79
United States	8.6%	4.5%	74.94	332.49

Over the last ten years, the United States has seen notable progress in expanding healthcare access, with the national uninsured rate dropping from 13.3% in 2013 to 8.6% by 2023.⁶⁷ Despite these gains, Mississippi remains behind the curve, with an uninsured rate of 11.6% in 2022, one of the highest in the country. Rural counties like Leflore and Warren continue to experience deeper challenges due to limited coverage and fewer healthcare resources. Young children in Mississippi, especially those under age six, are also more likely to be uninsured compared to the national average of 4.5%. Access to health care providers is an additional concern. While the U.S. maintains around 75 primary care providers per 100,000 residents, Mississippi averages only 53,⁶⁸ and rural counties often have even fewer. Mental health services are similarly scarce, with Mississippi averaging 229 providers per 100,000 people compared to the national figure of 332.⁶⁹ These disparities, particularly in the Delta region, point to persistent issues with both coverage and care availability, highlighting the urgent need for targeted solutions in underserved areas like Leflore and Warren counties.

⁶⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2023. Table S2701.

⁶⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Area Health Resource Files, 2023-2024. Obtained from: University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2025.

⁶⁹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. National Provider Identification (NPI) Registry. Obtained from: University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2025.