



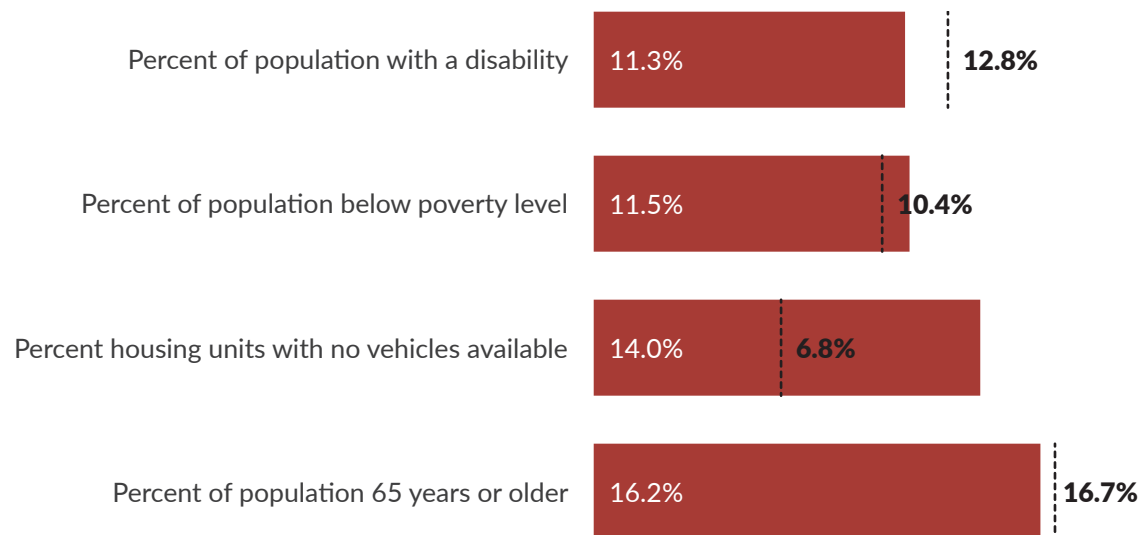
Adams County

Statistics at a glance

Table 1. Adams County and regional statistics

	Adams County	11-county region
Total Population	35,685	797,071
Median Household Income	\$61,731	
Percent of population with a disability	11.3%	12.8%
Percent of population below poverty level	11.5%	10.4%
Percent housing units with no vehicles available	14.0%	6.8%
Percent of population 65 years or older	16.2%	16.7%

Figure 1. Adams County statistics, compared with the 11-county region



Source: 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171) and 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Public and Specialized Transportation Services

Adams County Council on Aging, Inc. (COA) has provided transportation for senior citizens 60 and older, as well as individuals with disabilities, for over 50 years. Beginning January 2024, service expanded into a public transit agency providing service to all residents of Adams County. COA/Adams County Transit provides transportation throughout Adams County. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Table 2. Adams County Council on Aging statistics

Total Vehicles in Fleet	Number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles	Average Number of Vehicles Used per Day	Number of Full-Time Drivers	Number of Part-Time Drivers
7	7	4 or 5	0	9

Public Input Summary

A transportation needs assessment survey was advertised to the public online and in hard copy format. It was promoted in local print media, social media, flyers, at public meetings, on websites, and through communications from steering committee members with their peers, employees, and clients. The survey was open from May 19, 2023, through July 24, 2023. Public workshops in June 2023 and virtual meetings in July 2023 provided additional opportunities to discuss transportation with riders and potential riders. Across the region, 4,223 people participated in the public survey.

A total of 214 people from Adams County participated. Thirty-six percent of respondents who answered the survey from Adams County were between the ages of 25 to 34, making it the largest group contributing to that county's results.

During the public and virtual workshops, participants were asked to answer the question: What is currently working? Some of the positive areas that participants indicated are working well include the following:

- Bi-County Services provides some level of transportation
 - Adams County is now public so all residents of Adams County have public transportation available to them

4,223 people from throughout the region participated in the public survey.

214 people from Adams County participated.

12.37% were ages 65 and older.

26.88% have a disability that affects their ability to drive.

28.49% live with someone with a disability that affects their ability to drive.

24.73% were pregnant or had been pregnant within the last 18 months.

24.73% had a legal violation that was keeping them from driving.

Issues or Challenges

Workshop participants also shared the most common challenges for the existing transportation network. Common challenges mentioned during the meeting were as follows:

- Limited availability
 - Public transportation was not available in Adams County. However, this has been remedied beginning January 2024.
 - The need to increase community awareness and understanding of the new rural public transportation service.
 - An ongoing need for intercounty travel to access medical services in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis.

Survey results supported the input from the public workshops. It was noted in the survey results that at the time, public transportation was not an option in Adams County. Nearly a quarter of respondents indicated that having community/public transportation service would improve their ability to get where they need to go.

Summary

The main issue in Adams County was the lack of public transportation. However, with the addition of Adams County Transit in January 2024, all residents of Adams County now have public transportation options available to them. Increasing the awareness of the new public transportation service will enable county residents to understand the service is no longer restricted to individuals 60 and older.

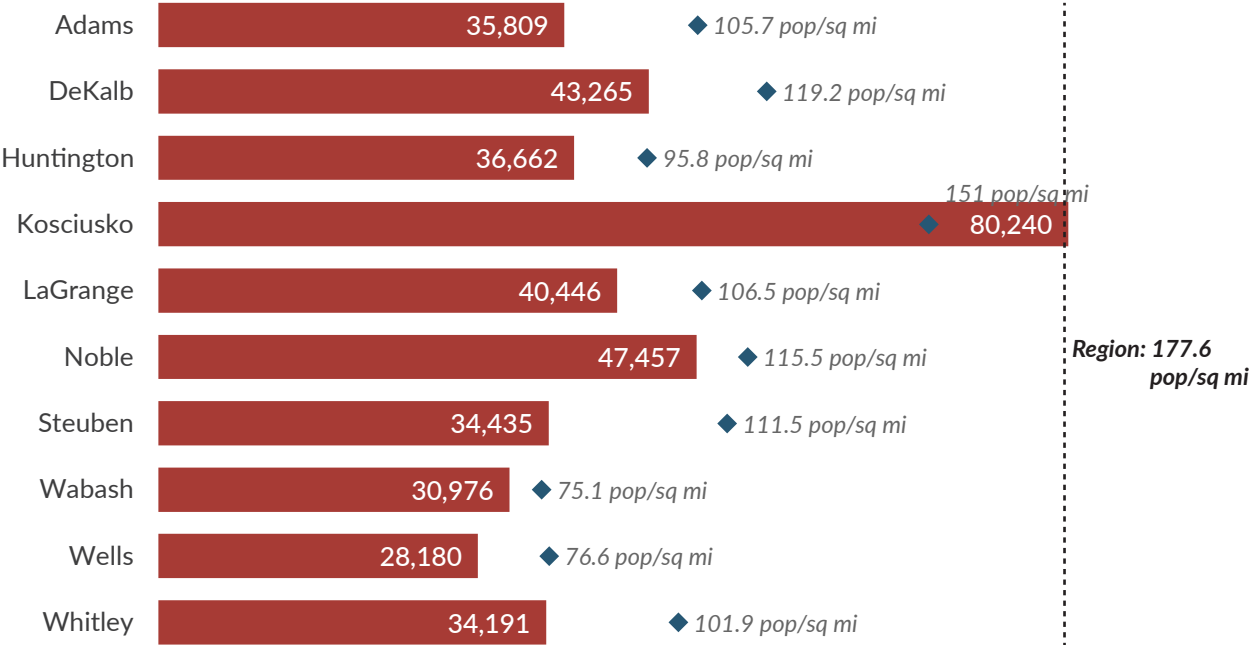


Demographics

Population

Figure 2 below shows the population for each county included in this transportation assessment. Adams County is the fifth smallest county amongst the eleven counties. Population density per square mile was also configured for Adams County. The block groups with the highest density are within Berne and Decatur, stretching up into Monmouth. The areas of Monroe and Geneva have population densities ranging from 1,501 to 1,895 people per square mile. Individual county population density maps are included in Appendix C for reference.

Figure 2. Population and density by county



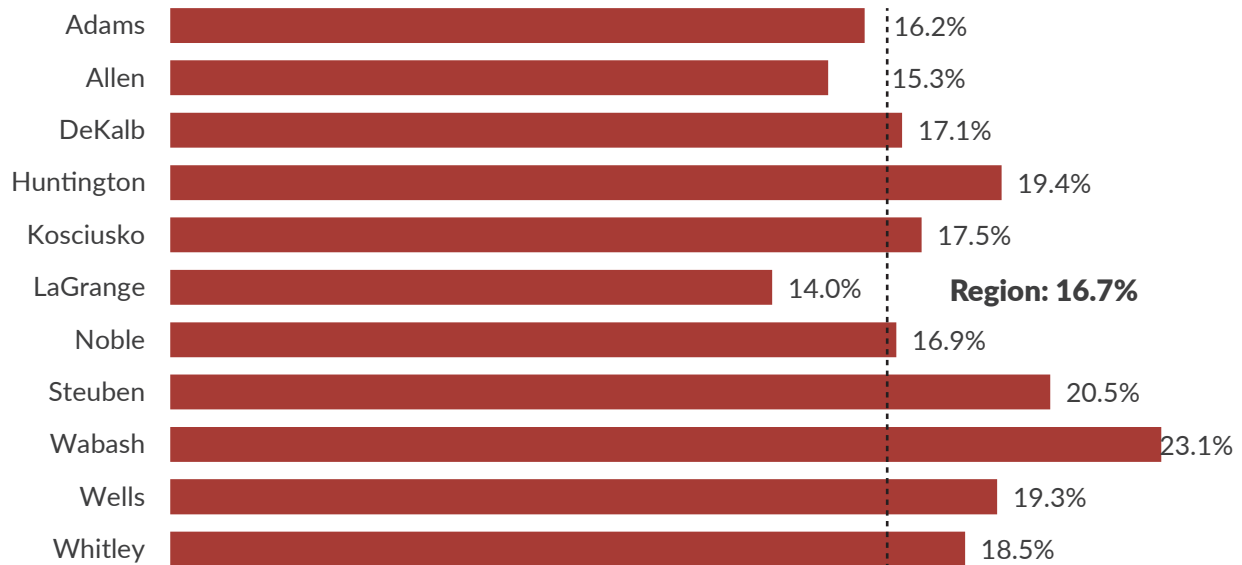
Source: 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

Age

In rural communities, it is common for age to be used as an indicator of current and future transportation demand. That is because as a person ages, they are more likely to need and want alternatives to driving themselves. Older adults are also sometimes living on a retirement or social security income which makes public transportation a more affordable option than owning and operating a personal vehicle.

In Adams County, 16.2 percent of the population is age 65 or older. LaGrange has the youngest population while Wabash and Steuben have the oldest. Figure 3 illustrates the county-by-county percentages.

Figure 3. Percentage of population Age 65 and Older

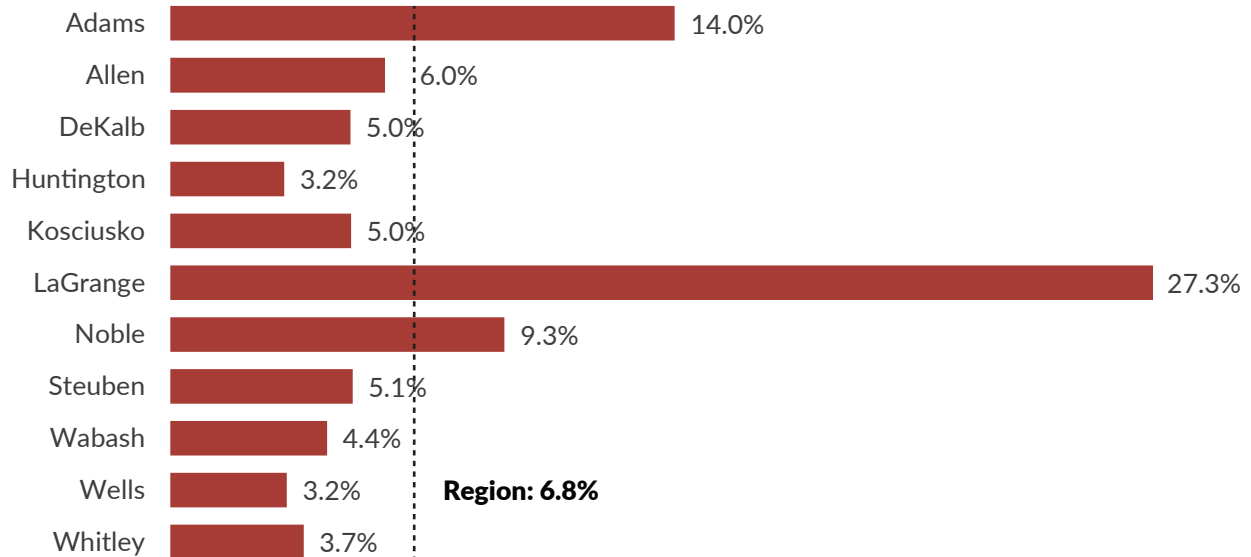


Source: 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

Zero-Vehicle Households and Households Below Poverty

Households without access to a vehicle are highly likely to need transportation from a public or nonprofit agency. Fourteen percent of households in Adams County have no vehicle, which is the second highest percentage behind LaGrange County. All other counties have ten percent or fewer zero-vehicle households. A breakdown by county is provided in Figure 4.

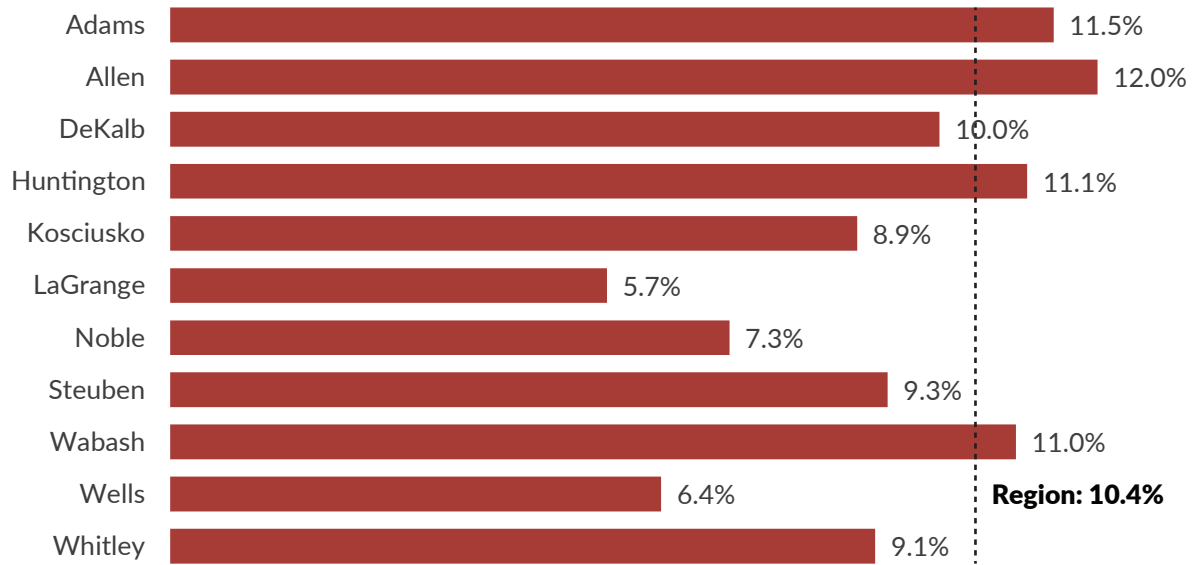
Figure 4. Zero-Vehicle Households



Source: 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04

Adams County has 11.5 percent of its population with income below the poverty level, which is the second highest percentage amongst the 11-county region. Figure 5 shows the percentages of household incomes below the poverty level for the 11-county region.

Figure 5. Percent people below poverty level

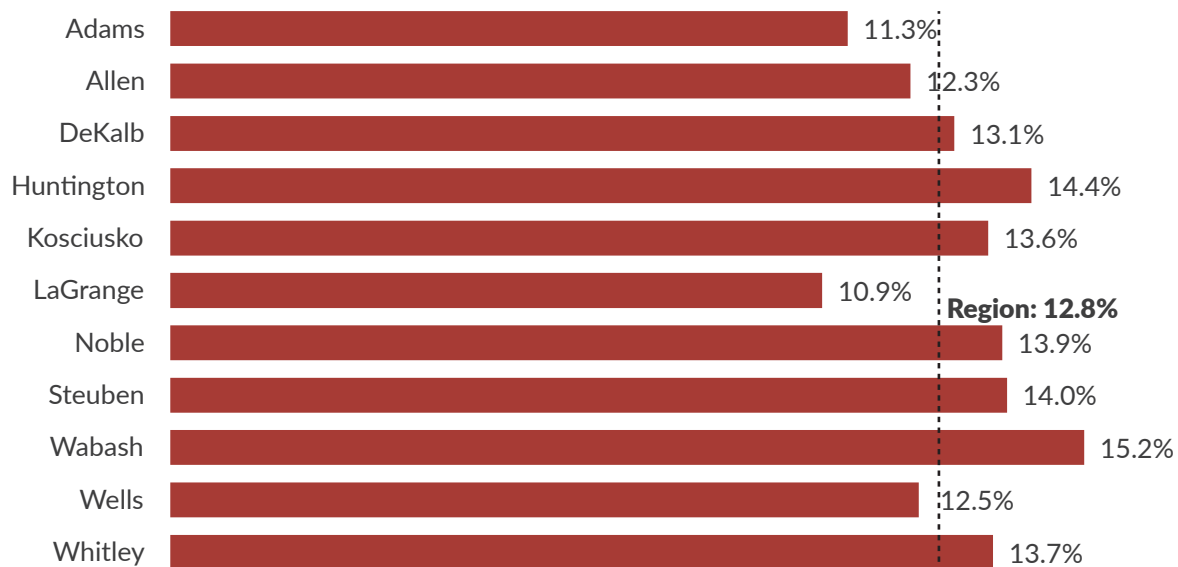


Source: 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table B17001

Individuals with Disabilities

In Adams County, 11.3 percent of the population has a disability, which is the second lowest in the region. In all other counties, twelve to sixteen percent of the population has a disability, according to American Community Survey data, as depicted in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6. Individuals with a Disability



Source: 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP02

Recommendations

The following recommendations listing and Table 3 summarizes the recommendations and action steps pertinent to Adams County. Complete information and a full breakdown of each recommendation and associated action steps/implementation responsibility can be found in the full Needs Assessment report.

Recommendation 3: Regional Scheduling/Dispatching Software Initiative

Recommendation 4: Assistance for Personal Vehicle Maintenance and Parts

Recommendation 6: Design a Regional Transportation Network

Recommendation 7: Vehicle Sharing Program

Recommendation 8: Increased NEMT Providers

Recommendation 9: Increase Participation in Medicaid Family Member and Associate Transportation Provider Program

Recommendation 10: Increase community outreach and education efforts to expand awareness and understanding of available transportation options.

Table 3. Recommendations tables

Recommendation #3	Action Steps
Adams County could participate in a regional scheduling/dispatching software initiative now that public transit is available. This would help eliminate gaps within the region by expanding access to services between the counties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural transit providers implement broad use of block scheduling to enable more trip-sharing opportunities. • Rural transit providers would establish local permission as well as agreements between agencies to pick up trips that would otherwise go unserved. • Rural transit providers would establish the necessary policies, consistent driver training standards, and customer service procedures.

Recommendation #4	Action Steps
Adams County could participate in a program that assists working individuals with purchasing necessary parts to repair vehicles. The program would involve mechanics who volunteer time and/or offer reduced-priced maintenance. Individuals would submit an application and the lead agency would first explore that individuals' options for using public transit. Should the applicant have transportation needs beyond the service provided by any of the local public transit services, the application would then be taken into consideration and evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a lead agency to administer the program and develop a board or committee for program establishment and fundraising. • Identify program parameters and policies. • Promote the program to potential funders. • Implement the program through partner non-profit agencies that will identify good candidates for the program. • Establish and measure program performance.

Recommendation #6	Action Steps
<p>Adams County could participate in the 11-county regional transportation network initiative in response to INDOT's announcement to establish a regional rural transportation model through Indiana.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene meetings of the Section 5310 and Section 5311 transportation providers in the region for the purpose of establishing the regional transportation network. Establish a regionalization committee. • Determine the most appropriate regional structure for the eleven counties that will provide the most opportunity for increased mobility throughout the region. • Identify a lead agency for the region and/or subregions. • Present regional structure to INDOT. • Submit regional Section 5311 grant application(s).
Recommendation #7	Action Steps
<p>Adams County could participate in a vehicle sharing program which would establish vehicle lease and rental programs so that providers and human service agencies could rent or lease vehicles from another provider when not in use by the owner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify vehicles throughout the region that are idle on days or periods during the day. • Identify and establish an organization to manage the vehicle-sharing lease/rental program. • Develop lease/rental agreement. • Establish a vehicle lease/rental management agency. • Establish vehicle lease/rental rates at a level sufficient to support administration and management of the program.
Recommendation #8	Action Steps
<p>Adams County could participate in collaborative and coordinated regional efforts to review and evaluate current Indiana Medicaid brokerage requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a list of contractual issues that are deterring providers from contracting with NEMT brokers. • Develop recommendations for contract revisions. • Meet with Indiana's NEMT brokers to present and negotiate contract revisions.
Recommendation #9	Action Steps
<p>Adams County could help promote increased participation in the Medicaid program wherein a family member or other person can drive Medicaid-eligible clients to medical appointments and in turn receive gas mileage reimbursement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop information packet with instructions on how to enroll in the Indiana Medicaid Family or Associate Transportation Program. • Promote and provide education about the Indiana Medicaid family and associate transportation program. • Establish a program to assist, as needed, with the completion of the Medicaid Family Member or Associate Transportation Services Form.

Recommendation #10

Adams County could help initiate promotion and marketing in order to increase community outreach and education efforts to expand awareness and understanding of available transportation options. This would be especially beneficial since Adams County just began public transportation service in January 2024.

Action Steps

- Develop a public awareness of transit campaign with one-page information sheets about public transit service options, prices, hours, and how to schedule a ride in the local county; include a resource for information about multi-county rides or services in neighboring counties
- Meet with community partners and tell them about the available transit options and encourage them to share information with clients and staff
- Take the vehicle or set up a table at community fairs, festivals and events to promote transit
- Coordinate with other regional transportation providers to develop a consistent message about using transit for multi-county trip needs

