

Final Project

LIS 545

Toolkit

Rural Populations

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Introduction

Grundey County is a rural county in southeastern Tennessee along the scenic Cumberland Plateau. It is full of breathtaking bluffs and forests. The county spans 360 square miles atop the Plateau. The area features sandstone cliffs, waterfalls, and deep gorges. Established in 1844, the county was named after Senator Felix Grundey. The county is known for its mountainous landscape, natural beauty, and close-knit communities. The county seat is Altamont, with other key towns including Coalmont, Tracy City and Monteagle. The nearest major city is Chattanooga, Tennessee, which is less than 60 miles away. (Grundey County TN , n.d.)

It developed around coal mining and timber industries during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The plateau's isolation fostered distinctive Appalachian cultural traditions and self-sufficient farming communities. In the area around Tracy City, the Sewanee Mining Company was established. It boomed after the Civil War. Coke ovens still stand in Tracy City. These ovens were used by mining workers to bake coal into the by-product coke. (TN History for Kids, n.d.)

Grundey County had an important role in civil rights history. Grundey County was home to the Highlander Folk School. The school was founded in 1932 and served as the de facto CIO education center for the region, training union organizers and leaders across 11 southern states. (Highlander Folk School, n.d.) The school was instrumental in training civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Ella Baker, and leaders in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The school is considered the start of the modern civil rights movement. It taught nonviolent principles that were carried into the movement. The school has since moved closer to Knoxville, TN. (TN History For Kids, n.d.)

Per the 2020 Census, the population of Grundey County is 13,529. The population of this county is predominantly white, with over 95% identifying as such. The median household income is roughly \$47,593, with the poverty rate near 20%. This county is among the most economically depressed in Tennessee. It is placed in the bottom 10% of the counties nationwide. The unemployment rate is 4.7% according to the Federal Reserve Economic Data. Most residents must commute over 35 minutes to jobs off the mountain. Grundey

County has one of the lowest percentages of adults with a high school diploma in Tennessee. This limits access to higher-paying vocational and professional roles. (Government, n.d.)

As for educators in the county, they are among the lowest-paid in their region, which leads to recruitment and retention challenges. The school district is comprised of five schools. There are a few private schools in the area. This leads to limited educational resources among youth.

There are many needs in this county. There are issues with healthcare because of a lack of local medical infrastructure. This county ranks low in child well-being and has a life expectancy of 72 years, nearly four years lower than the state average. With Chattanooga being nearby, many programs and services are located in Hamilton County.

Community Resource Toolkit for Grundy County, Tennessee

This toolkit provides an overview of key community resources available to residents of Grundy County. Its purpose is to connect individuals and families with services that support health, education, housing, employment, and overall well-being. This toolkit demonstrates how community resources work together to support residents in Grundy County. Strong networks of public agencies, nonprofits, and local organizations contribute to community well-being and resilience.

Food Assistance

[Grundy County Food Bank](#)

Grundy County Food Bank is a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting those in need in Grundy County. Due to the limited resources in the area, food insecurity is a pressing matter. Grundy County Food Bank provides food distribution every Tuesday morning from 8 am to 10 am. Eligible community members in Grundy County may come once per month to receive food. Their address is 114 South Industrial Park Road in Coalmont, TN. If you are looking for ways to donate food, time, or money, they have that information on their website.

[Chattanooga Area Food Bank](#)

Chattanooga Area Food Bank provides services to more than 20 counties in Tennessee and Georgia. Their service area includes Grundy County. They also supply food to the Grundy County Food Bank. This food bank provides food through food pantries, senior centers, community gardens, and community programs. This website features an interactive map that locates local food banks. You can sign up for alerts to be notified when the next food drive is happening.

Health and Wellness

[Grundy County Health Department](#)

The county health department is located at 1372 Main Street in Altamont. This institution provides health services for uninsured individuals. They can provide routine health care for individuals aged 19 to 64. They provide well-baby exams for children ages 20 and under. They also provide health education and activities. Immunizations are provided for people of all ages based on their insurance status. You can contact them to find out whether you are covered at this location.

[Volunteer Behavioral Health](#)

Volunteer Behavioral Health is a nonprofit community behavioral health provider. They offer services in 58 counties across Tennessee. Their mission is to serve individuals, families, and communities through prevention and treatment, ensuring that help today leads to a better tomorrow. The Tracy City Campus offers services such as mobile crisis response, outpatient therapy, psychiatric medication management, support for veteran families, and telehealth, among others. This service is located at the Littell-Partin Center.

[Senior Care](#)

Aging Care Management provides senior care managers in Tracy City. Their mission is to reduce stress for families by bringing a sense of peace. They help set up in-home care, end-of-life doulas, and legal and financial resources. They can provide care for your elderly loved one. If they are not able to provide care, they are able to connect you with the right resource.

[Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability \(SETAAAD\)](#)

This organization provides benefit assistance, long-term care services, nutritional programs, and caregiver support. SETAAAD covers Grundy County and other counties in the area. This group will guide seniors or family members through the process of receiving services. They will submit applications and help you understand your rights as a senior. They provide legal assistance, long-term care, and public guardian services.

[GRACE](#)

Grundy Recovery Alliance Community Endeavor (G.R.A.C.E.) is a faith-based nonprofit that offers recovery support for all addictions. They provide fuel cards, prepared meals, recovery resources, and training. They also have a youth mentoring program for youth in the criminal justice center. This organization works with others in the Grundy County area.

Public Benefits and Family Services

[Tennessee Department of Human Services \(Grundy County\)](#)

This is the website for the Tennessee Department of Human Services. This site provides information on how to sign up for SNAP benefits, child support, adult protective services, and rehabilitation services. This is the go-to site for the state of Tennessee. You can look up your county to find your office and the representative for your area. There is also a portal to begin the process for your services.

Housing

[Grundy Housing Authority](#)

This site provides information about the HUD public housing program. It appears that Grundy County does not have an official website. This site is designed to provide information, including the address and phone number for the housing authority. The Grundy Housing Authority is located at 100 Raulston Ave, Monteagle, TN. Please contact them for further information about the waitlist or how to place your property on the list of available units.

[Tennessee Housing Development Agency](#)

The Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) is at the forefront of creating housing opportunities across the state. The purpose of this office is to promote the production of more affordable housing units for very low- and moderate-income individuals and families in Tennessee. THDA also preserves and rehabilitates existing units for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. THDA also provides homebuyer education classes. These classes provide an overview of the homebuying process and help you meet individuals who may be able to assist with your homebuying process.

[Mountain T.O.P.](#)

This is a Christian community organization that partners with Grundy County. The goal is to reduce substandard housing, support lifelong learning, and promote overall wellness. The organization provides minor and major housing repairs, yard work, painting, and window installation. These services are provided free or at low cost by volunteers. The organization's website has a form for those interested in services. Their offices are located in Altamont.

Education

[Grundy County Libraries](#)

Grundy County has six libraries. The motto of the Grundy County Public Libraries is “open the world of knowledge and opportunity to educate, enrich and empower our

communities.” These libraries offer free Wi-Fi, public computers, e-books, books, and other programs. They serve the whole family with programs for babies to adults. Their hours are limited, but their services are robust. They are located in Altamont, Tracy City, Coalmont, Beersheba Springs, Palmer, and Monteagle.

[UT Extension-Grundy County](#)

The University of Tennessee (UT) and Tennessee State University (TSU) serve the Grundy County community through educational programs in Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, Community Resource Development, and 4-H youth development. This outreach branch of UT and TSU provides research-based solutions and information to Tennessee citizens. Family programs address finances, childcare needs, and nutrition and health. Their office is in Coalmont.

[Rise Up Grundy](#)

Rise UP Grundy is a Christian nonprofit that assists students, teachers, and families in various ways. They provide tutoring, mentoring, and apprenticeships to help the community fulfill their purpose in life. They also offer a Hospitality Training Program to help youth gain experience in specific employment settings. This organization is located in the town of Palmer.

Legal

[Legal Aid Society](#)

This organization provides free legal help in certain civil cases in 48 counties across Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland. In partnership with the Littell-Partin Center, Legal Aid Society offers free services on the third Thursday of every month from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. A representative will be on site to review your information and help you get the process started. No appointment is needed.

Transportation

[Southeast Tennessee Human Resource Agency \(SETHRA\)](#)

SETHRA was organized in 1973 under the Human Resource Act of 1973. It provides services for nine counties: Bledsoe, Bradley, Grundy, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Polk, Rhea, and Sequatchie. The service costs \$3 for the initial pickup and \$1 for each additional stop. If a ride to Chattanooga is needed, the cost will be \$10 each way. These services operate Monday-Friday, 6 am – 6 pm. These services are not offered on weekends.

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