



The Park City-County Health Department with the help of volunteers knocked on over 100 doors in November, 2020 to survey residents about the Covid-19 pandemic. Survey questions focused on how life in Park County has changed since the pandemic began nearly one year ago. The results offer a snapshot on employment, housing, food security and mental health in the county. The survey will be repeated in May, 2021.

The technique used for the survey is called CASPER (Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response.) Survey results are statistically significant and provide community leaders with current social and economic information as we work towards recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Employment:

“Has anyone in your household lost their job or income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?”

36% of respondents reported they have lost their job or income as a result of COVID-19. The Health Department has received comments from frontline workers in recent months who are fearful about working in face to face settings, concerned about the lack of mask enforcement, and employers who do not pay staff if they stay home when sick or are under quarantine. Also, a small number of businesses have closed in recent months. Some working parents have decreased work hours or given up jobs in order to care for school age children while schools are not fully open. Unemployment claims in Park County are up significantly. New unemployment claims filed the week of 12/14/2019 was 19. The week of 12/12/2020, the number was 48. Throughout the county, service and tourist related jobs are reportedly available.

Housing:

“How concerned are you about your household’s ability to pay next month’s rent or mortgage?”

CASPER survey data suggests that 21.3% of Park County residents are currently concerned about their household’s ability to make their monthly rent or mortgage payments. This is supported by the Low-Income Housing Coalition’s projection that 31% of Park County households are considered “cost burdened,” and can be at risk for homelessness. This problem is compounded by the scarcity of available housing in the county. According to Livingston Landlady, there has been a 0% vacancy rate for about 3 years. Further complicating the housing issue is the fact that home prices in Park County have been on an upward trend. The average sales price of a condominium in Park County has increased by 52.1%, from \$172,500 to \$262,296 in the last year, and median sales price for homes has increased from \$170,000 in 2015 to \$350,000 in 2020, moving home ownership out of reach for many people.

Food Security:

“How concerned are you about your household’s ability to feed your family in the next month?”

Nearly one fifth (20.4%) of survey respondents stated that they are either “very” or “somewhat” concerned about their household’s ability to feed their family in the next month. This metric is supported by the Livingston Food Resource Center (LFRC). Between April and November of 2020 the LFRC provided emergency food support for 1,225 unique households, accounting for roughly 33% of the all of the households in Livingston. Compared to 2019, the number of households that visited the LFRC increased initially by 300%. The number of household visits has since declined, but still remains 100-150% greater than in 2019. The number of families with young children that the LFRC serves initially increased by 400% and has remained high compared to 2019. Results from the CASPER survey combined with the community’s utilization of food assistance programs provided by the LFRC underscore Park County’s concern for food security.

For more information, please call The Park City-County Health Department at 406 222-4145.