

PROFILE OF OLDER ADULTS IN BUTLER COUNTY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BUTLER COUNTY ELDERLY SERVICES PROGRAM

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BACKGROUND

One of the most important accomplishments of the modern era is the dramatic increase in life expectancy. Combined with lower rates of fertility, the U.S. has experienced an unprecedented growth in the older population (ages 60, 65, 85). At the turn of the 20th century just 3% of the U.S. population was age 65 and older, while today it is approaching 20%. While we celebrate increased longevity and the many opportunities it brings to society, these demographic changes are also accompanied by a series of challenges for individuals, families and governmental entities. Our nation has responded to this changing landscape by developing programs to assist older people using federal, state and local support. In part because almost all of the federal and state support uses the Medicaid program, which is designed to serve individuals with very low income, local support for older people has become an integral component of the Ohio system. Using funds, primarily from local property tax levies, 75 of Ohio's 88 counties provide in-home support services to older residents and their families to help them remain independent in their communities. This report has been prepared for Butler County and is designed to examine the current and future demographic changes of the older population in an effort to provide the best data possible for the local Elderly Services Program (ESP) to continue to meet the needs of county residents.

Today, Butler County has more than 83,000 residents aged 60 and older, encompassing 21% of its total population, with 6,200 of these individuals aged 85 and older. While in 2020 the county was younger than the statewide average, the percentage of people aged 85 and older is projected to increase at a faster pace than the state overall. Local communities have become involved in aging services because most older people (90%) are not eligible for the Medicaid program. As a result, the Butler County Elderly Services Program (BCESP) provides critical community-services for a significant component of the county's older population. The COVID-19 pandemic reduced the occupancy of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the county, further increasing the demand for ESP services. As BCESP plans for the future, it is critical to understand both the demographic and long-term services use patterns of the county.

STUDY APPROACH

This study examines past and future population trends for the age 60 and over population in Butler County. The review includes a focus on the demographic profile of older county residents, including rates of physical and cognitive disability to better understand the need for long-term services. The report concludes with a discussion of how projected changes in the population over the next three decades may impact long-term care use in the county.

The study uses information from various sources. Data from the Ohio Department of Development's 2020-2050 population estimates were aggregated into 60+ and 85+ categories. The 2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) data were used to further explore the current demographic characteristics of Ohio and Butler County. Disability rates were constructed using the 2015 National Health and Trends Study (NHATS). The disability rates by age and sex were applied to the current 2020 population estimates to determine how many people aged 65 and older live in Butler County with moderate or severe disability. Cognitive impairment estimates for Ohio and Butler County older adults were constructed by combining estimates of people 65 and older living in the community with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) to those identified in nursing homes (LTCFocus, 2023). The Ohio Department of Health's licensure data was used to track Butler County's nursing homes and residential care facilities.

RESULTS

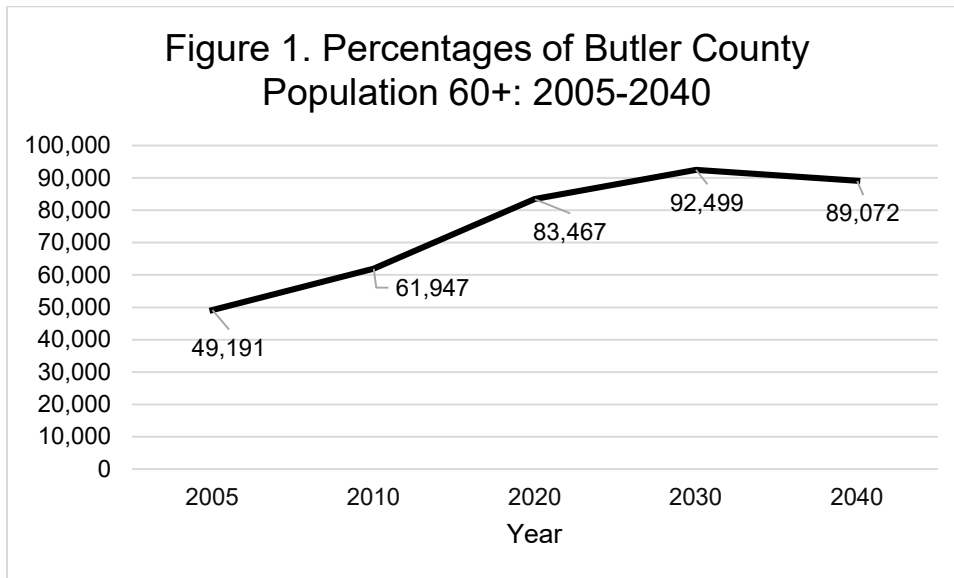
Demographic Changes: Ohio and Butler County

Between 2005 and 2020 the total population of Butler county grew by 16%, with the number of residents increasing by 50,000 to 405,000. In that same time period, the population of older adults, defined here as the 60+ population, increased by 70% (34,000 individuals) to 84,000 (See Table 1). The growth in the older population mirrors trends statewide. Between 2005 and 2020 the population of those 85 and over increased by 50%, which represents an additional 2100 county residents in that age group. The county's older population is projected to see continued growth between 2020 and 2030 with an additional 9000 residents (11%). Between 2030 and 2040 the overall growth of the population age 60 and older levels out, but the 85+ population will continue to grow, increasing by 32% representing more than 2000 additional individuals in that age group by 2040.

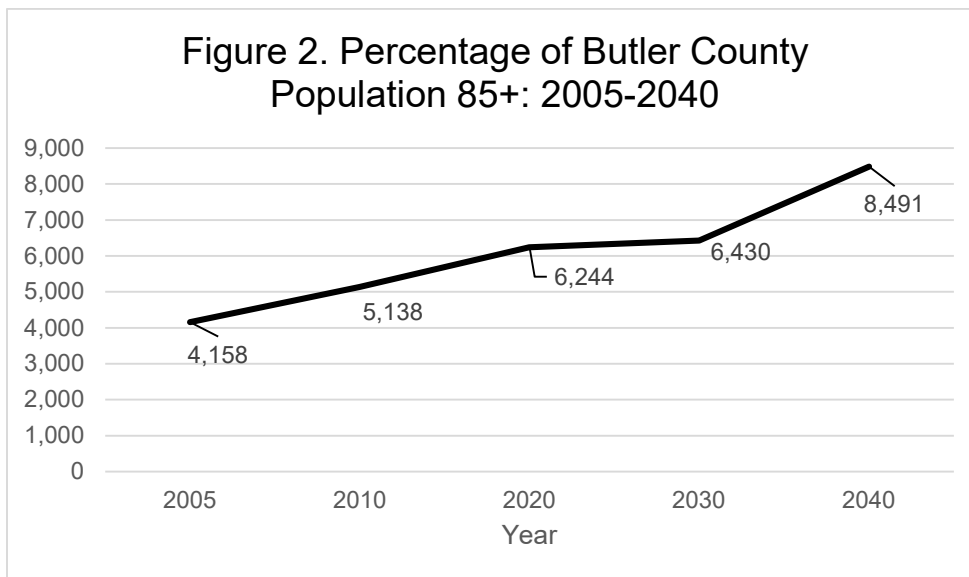
Table 1. Butler County and Ohio Changes for 60 and 85 plus Population (2020-2040)						
Year	Total Population		60+ Population		85+ population	
	Butler County	Ohio	Butler County	Ohio	Butler County	Ohio
2005	349,712	11,405,032	49,191	2,003,144	4,158	229,227
2010	368,130	11,536,504	61,947	2,287,424	5,138	230,429
2020	404,966	11,799,448	83,467	2,855,985	6,244	232,833
2030	441,773	11,694,767	92,499	2,937,042	6,430	213,788
2040	476,653	11,425,531	89,072	2,717,015	8,491	261,400

Calculated using data from the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research, "County Population Projections: 2020-2050", <https://development.ohio.gov/about-us/research/population>

The population changes are also depicted in Figure 1 below. As noted above, the age 60 and over 2020 population of Butler County was 83,467. This represents a large increase (70%) from 2005. The 2040 estimates for the 60-plus population of 89,072, represents a substantial increase from 2005 (81% increase) and 2010 (44%). The 2040 estimates for the 85+ population of 8491 is a more than a 100% increase from the 2005 numbers.



Notes: Calculated using data from the Ohio Department of Development (ODD), Office of Research, "County Population Projections: 2020-2050", <https://development.ohio.gov/about-us/research/population>,



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Demographic Characteristics of Older Residents of Butler County

An overview of the current demographic characteristics of the older population of Butler County as compared to the state overall is shown in Table 2. Forty percent of individuals 60+ in Butler county are not married which is three percentage points lower than the state. Almost 30% of Butler County's population 65+ lives alone. One in seven (13.9%) Butler County older adults live at or below 100% of the poverty rate compared to the state proportion of 17%. Similar trends are seen when looking at county residents at or below 150% of the poverty rate (33.1% versus 37.1%). Just over 10% of older adults in the county have a racial/ethnic status other than White and non-Hispanic, which is lower than the state overall (10.8% versus 13.4%).

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Population Age 60 and Older for Butler County and the state of Ohio		
Characteristics	Ohio	Butler County
Population 60+	2,803,677	82,359
Minority	13.7	10.8
Not Married	43.5	39.9
Living alone (65+)*	30.5	27.5
Economic Well-being 60+		
At or below 100% of poverty	17.1	13.9
At or below 150% of poverty	37.1	33.9
Households by presence of people aged 60 and over	1,767,021	50,267
Home Owner-occupied	1,386,397	40,672
30% or more of income goes to home ownership (%)	21.4	21
Renter – Occupied	380,624	9,595
30% or more of income goes to rent (%)	51.3	49.2

Note: U.S. Census Bureau. "POPULATION 60 YEARS AND OVER IN THE UNITED STATES." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0102, 2021, Accessed on November 15, 2023.

*U.S. Census Bureau. Table B09021, Living Arrangements of Adults 18 Years and older by Age, Accessed on 3/13/2024

In Butler County, older adults reside in a total of 50,000 houses/units. Most of these households (4 out of 5) are owned, but nearly 10,000 (20%) are rentals. How much money goes towards housing costs varies by whether the house/unit is owner-occupied or renter-occupied. For the owner-occupied households, one in five (21%) are paying 30% or more for homeownership. At the same time, nearly half (49%) of all renters are paying 30% or more for rent, which is comparable to the percentages for the state.

To better understand the potential need for services, it is helpful to know about the prevalence of disability and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD). Disability measurements are categorized as moderate and severe. Older adults receiving hands on assistance with one activity of daily living (ADLs) such as dressing or bathing are classified as having a moderate disability. Those receiving hands on assistance with at least 2 or more ADL impairments or have cognitive impairments that requires 24-hour supervision or have one ADL impairment and a need for medication administration are classified as having severe disability. In total, nearly 12,200 individuals 65+ or 21% of the population have a moderate or severe disability and this proportion mirrors Ohio's 65+ population (See Table 3). About 11% of Butler County's and Ohio's older adults 65+ have severe disability. It is estimated that 12% or 7100 adults 65 and older in Butler County have an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD). Most of these individuals live in the community with one in ten living in nursing homes. These numbers are similar to Ohio's 65+ population.

Table 3. Disability and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) Conditions		
	Ohio	Butler County
65+ Population	2,046,529	58,707
Disability		
Moderate (1 ADL impairment) – Estimated #	210,599	6,140
Severe (2+ ADL impairments, 24-hour supervision, dementia) – Estimated #	219,982	6,026
ADRD		
People ADRD and out of the 65+ population – by community/nursing home living	268,176	7,116
Community Residents (% out of 65+ with ADRD)	236,500 (88.2)	6,300 (88.5)
Nursing Home Residents (% out of 65+ with ADRD)	31,676 (11.8)	816 (11.5)

Dhana, K. Beck, T., et al. (2023). Prevalence of Alzheimer's disease dementia in the 50 US states and 3142 counties: A population estimate using the 2020 bridged-race postcensal from the National Center for Health Statistics. *Alzheimer's and Dementia*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.13081>

LTCFocus Public Use Data sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (P01 AG027296) through a cooperative agreement with the Brown University School of Public Health. Available at www.ltcfocus.org. <https://doi.org/10.26300/h9a2-2c26>

Long-Term Service Use in Butler County

Individuals experiencing moderate or severe levels of disability can receive assistance in a range of settings including their own home, the home of a family member or friend, an assisted living facility, or a skilled nursing home. Each of these options are available to Butler County residents. The vast majority of older individuals, even those experiencing moderate and severe levels of disability, continue to reside in the community. As an example, less than 3% of older people in Butler County live in nursing homes and another 2% live in assisted living facilities. In other words, of the more than 12,150 older residents with disability, about 2800 individuals (23%) live in skilled nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Butler County currently has 23 nursing homes with about 4500 licensed beds. There are 21 residential care facilities, which are primarily assisted living residences with 4100 beds.

The Elderly Services Program (ESP), as has been the case in many counties across the state, is designed to serve older county residents with disability, who do not meet the stringent Medicaid program eligibility criteria. Data from a 2021 Scripps study of BCESP found the program serving 3150 county residents (See Table 4). The BCESP serves a vulnerable population. The average age was 81 and six in ten participants lived alone. Three in ten individuals (31%) had monthly incomes below \$1350. Nine in ten participants reported two or more activity of daily living impairments in areas such as bathing and dressing. Almost four in ten (37%) of program participants did contribute to services through a copay requirement.

Table 4. Butler County ESP Enrollee Characteristics				
	All Enrollees %	Receiving 1 paid service of any type %	Receiving 2+ paid services %	Consumer Directed Care option %
Age (mean)	80.9	81.3	80.5	81.5
Minority	10.3	9.1	11.7	16.7
Live alone	59.7	52.9	67.8	56.4
Income less than \$1,350	30.5	29	32.2	31.8
Dementia and needs 24-hour care	2.3	3.2	1.3	4.0
2+ ADLS	91.4	89.3	93.9	96.0
2+ IADLS	96.3	94.6	98.2	98.4
Has copay	36.8	46.3	26.5	20.6
Receipt of services breakdown	100	54.6	45.4	4.0
Total	3,152	1,721	1,431	126

Scripps Presentation to BCESP Advisory Board entitled 3-22, *Evaluation of the Butler County Elderly Services Program (ESP)*

A more detailed profile of long-term services use is presented below in Table 5, where the county is compared to the state overall. A review of nursing home use finds Butler County to have a lower utilization rate when compared to the state overall (23.8/1000 vs. 25.5/1000). Butler County also has a considerably lower utilization rate in the Medicaid waiver program (11.7/1000 vs. 17.4/1000). In both the nursing home and home care arenas county residents appear to be less reliant on the Medicaid program to support long-term services than many Ohio counties. Butler County has a smaller supply of nursing homes than the state overall, but a higher supply of residential care facility beds.

Table 5. Long-Term Care Use in 2019				
	NH Users per 1000 60+	HCBS Users per 1000 60+	Assisted Waiver Users per 1000 60+	NF Beds per 1000 60+
Ohio	25.5	17.4	1.3	30.2
Butler	23.8	11.7	1.8	27.6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- The size of the Butler County population age 60+ (70% increase) and age 85+ (50% increase) has increased considerably between 2005 and 2020.
- The county population age 85+ and older is estimated to increase by 36% between 2020 and 2040.
- Butler County residents appear slightly less vulnerable than Ohioans statewide, but still four in ten live alone, one in seven live below the poverty level, and half of all renters pay more than 30% of their income for housing.
- With 12,150 residents age 65 and older with a moderate or severe impairment, the BCESP served 3150 in 2021.

IMPLICATIONS

This review identifies the considerable growth in the older population of Butler County over the past 15 years and projects continued growth, especially in the age 85 and over group between now and 2040. To date, the BCESP has demonstrated an impact in the community with a number of older individuals with disability being able to receive support from the program. Butler County residents appear to have been less reliant on the Medicaid program than overall older population of the state. Despite these

important effects, there are a number of future challenges facing the program. Given that the program is now reaching capacity based on current levels of funding, the projection increases indicate that BCESP has some strategic decisions to make moving forward.

Strategies essentially involve stricter eligibility criteria, reducing the average service plan cost, a more aggressive copay structure, increased efforts to have the state contribute to local programs since they appear to lower Medicaid costs or an increase in the amount of funds generated through the levy. There are no easy answers to meeting these challenges. As an example, the program could shift eligibility criterion from moderate and severe disability to just those classified as experiencing severe disability. Such an option reduces community support, hurts those just needing a moderate amount of help, and places considerable pressure on families. Increasing the cost sharing responsibility also may be difficult. Already four in ten have a copay and with about 30% living below poverty, room for generating additional funds appears limited. While choosing the best strategies to meet the future demand of the county are unclear, what is quite clear is that the number of older people, particularly those age 85 and older, have and will continue to increase.