



BOONE COUNTY
UPWARD MOBILITY

BOONE COUNTY'S UPWARD MOBILITY ACTION PLAN

2025 COMMUNITY UPDATE



**Boone County
Children's Services Fund**

RELEASED:
DECEMBER 2025

About This Report



Background

Upward Mobility is the idea that everyone deserves the chance to improve their lives and economic well-being, to be valued and feel like they belong, and to have power and autonomy. Thriving communities support opportunities to boost upward mobility and aim to narrow inequities for children, youth, and adults.

In 2021, Boone County was selected as one of eight counties or municipalities in the Urban Institute's initial Upward Mobility Cohort. The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that provides "power through knowledge" by using data and research to help leaders and communities make better decisions to improve people's lives. This opportunity allowed Boone County to create a Mobility Action Plan focused on reducing racial and ethnic inequities and supporting upward mobility from poverty.

Following the release of the Mobility Action Plan, four workgroups began meeting to make progress in three thematic content areas:

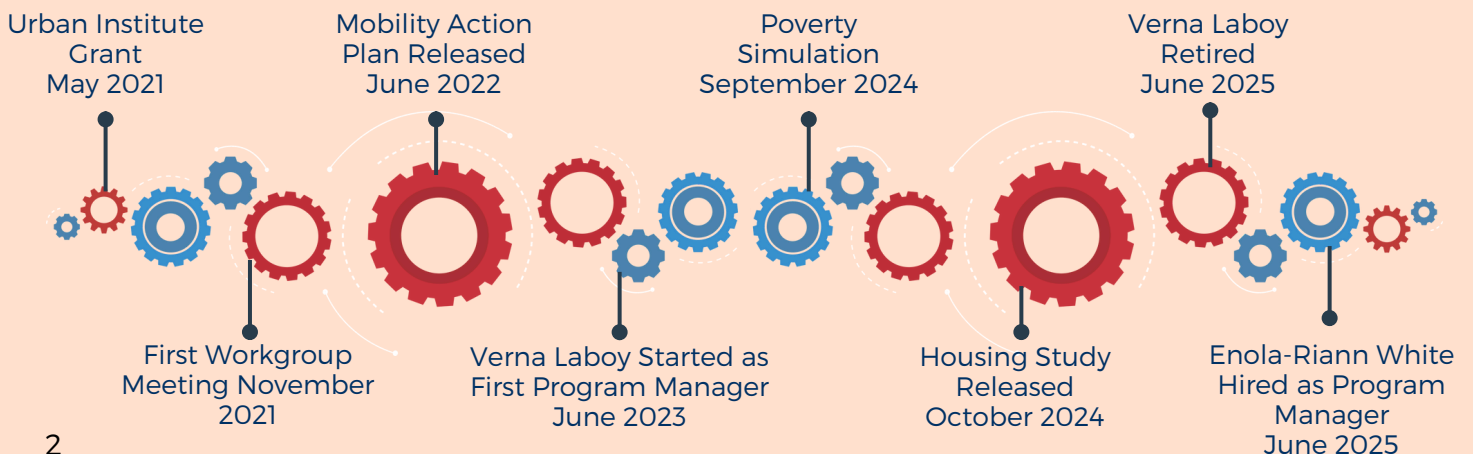
- Fair and Inclusive Housing
- Early Grade Literacy
- Jobs and Workforce Development

Results-Based Accountability

Boone County's Upward Mobility initiative utilizes Results-Based Accountability (RBA) to drive equity-centered and data-informed decisions. According to Clear Impact, RBA "is a disciplined way of thinking and acting to improve entrenched and complex social problems." It involves community stakeholders recognizing that not one individual or institution can address upward mobility alone.

This annual report highlights how Boone County can build on past progress to ensure all residents thrive now and in the future. It includes graphs showing historical data and future projections, illustrating potential trends if current patterns continue. This method, called forecasting, is a key part of the RBA framework. It helps the community anticipate challenges and guides proactive decisions. Data citations and notes are available at: <https://www.showmeboone.com/community-services/upward-mobility/>.

TIMELINE



Community Partners

Community Partners are essential to advancing upward mobility. Workgroups include Boone County citizens alongside representatives of local businesses, organizations, and corporations. This list includes affiliations of workgroup participants in the past year.

4-A Change	Grade A Plus
A Home for Her	Habitat for Humanity
Aaron Fox Writes	Heart of Missouri United Way
American Lung Association	Home Builders Association of Columbia
Anderson Homes	JBS Foods
Arthouse Properties	Job Point
Arise Dwellings	Local Motion
Aurora Organic Dairy	Love Columbia
Boone County Commissioners	Mid Missouri Legal Services
Boone County Community Services Department	Millstone Weber
Boone County Early Childhood Coalition	Minority Men's Network
Boone County Resource Management Department	Missouri Department of Corrections
Burrell Behavioral Health	Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development
Central Bank of Boone County	Missouri Department of Social Services
Central Missouri Community Action	Missouri Foundation for Health
City of Columbia - Planning and Zoning Commission	Missouri Works Initiative
City of Columbia - Parks and Recreation	Moberly Area Community College
City of Columbia - Housing and Neighborhood Services	Monarch Architecture
City of Columbia - Councilpersons	Race Matters, Friends
CMFM Construction	Regional Economic Development Inc (REDI)
Columbia Apartment Association	Salam PMO
Columbia Board of Realtors	The Salvation Army
Columbia Chamber of Commerce	Services for Independent Living
Columbia Community Land Trust	SMARTER Steps
Columbia Housing Authority	The Source Summit Global
Columbia Public Schools	St. Louis University Transformative Workforce Academy
Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services	St. Vincent de Paul Society
Como Comunidad	Stonebridge House
Compass Health Network	The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri
Connections to Success	The Reentry Opportunity Center (ROC)
Construction Engineering Solution LLC	True North
Daniel Boone Regional Library	Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital
Dream Tree Academy	Turning Point
FACE of Boone County	University of Missouri - Columbia
First Chance for Children	University of Missouri (MU) Health Care
First/Last Mile Transportation Service	University of Missouri Human Development and Family Sciences
Flat Branch Bank	MU Division of Student Affairs
Flourish Initiative	Urban Empowerment
Fresh Start Sober Living	Voluntary Action Center
Frontier Property Management	Will's Off-Grid RVs
Golden HomeShare	William Guitar Little (WGL) Foundation
	Woodhaven Learning Center

To join a workgroup or receive workgroup communications, scan the QR code or visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/upwardmobility>



FAIR & INCLUSIVE HOUSING

Result Statement:

All people in Boone County have safe, quality, and affordable housing.

Housing Access and Support Alliance

In 2025, the Second Chance Leasing Workgroup changed its name to Housing Access and Support Alliance. The workgroup defined their approach as “a collaborative approach to housing solutions for those seeking housing and those providing housing.” They have released several informational sheets for renters including: “Ready to Rent?” and “Ready to Move In?” The group continues to take key steps toward making more equitable and efficient housing accessible in Boone County by helping to create bridges between renters, housing providers, landlords, and services. (The Housing Access and Support Alliance is facilitated by Upward Mobility staff.)

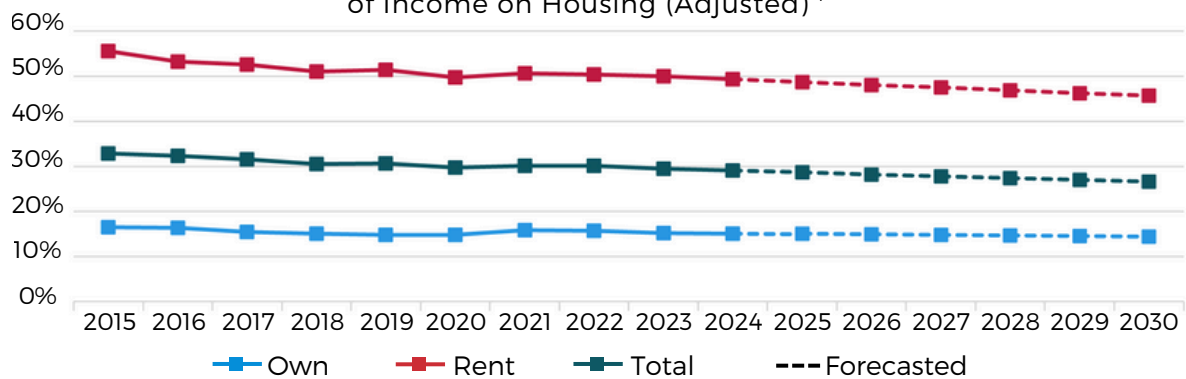
Affordable Housing Coalition

The Affordable Housing Coalition Workgroup is focused on supporting and advancing the Boone County Housing Study recommendations and receives regular updates from the City of Columbia and Boone County. The workgroup also receives education from experts and community partners on a range of topics including Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), shared living models such as homesharing, Community Land Trusts, policy tools, challenges facing builders, Housing Trust Funds, and small lot zoning. This information guides the workgroup’s ongoing support of housing solutions aligned with community needs and the Housing Study’s long-term goals.



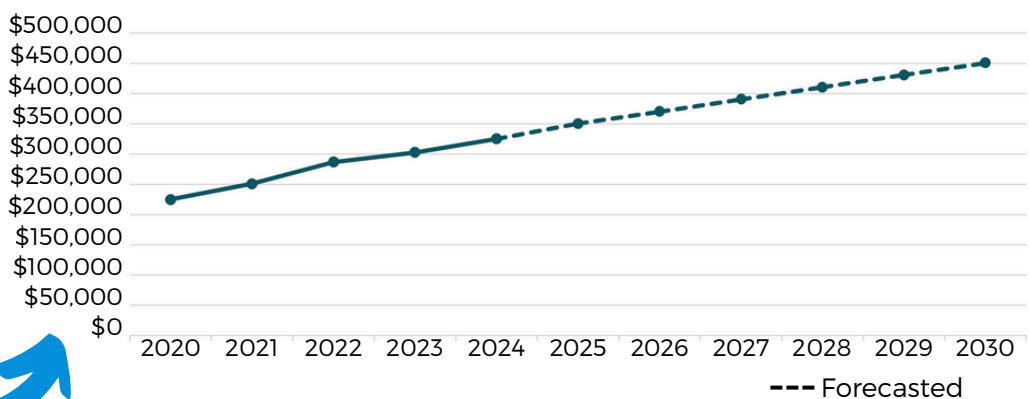
“We are inspired by the positive signs of coalition member housing projects and increased housing counseling and down payment assistance for those seeking homeownership. We have felt the strength of deepened partnerships and commitment to our mission to promote more affordable housing.”
Jane Williams, Love Columbia, Affordable Housing Coalition Stakeholder Facilitator

Percent of Boone County Households Spending Over 30% of Income on Housing (Adjusted) ¹



These graphs demonstrate adjusted housing cost burden (total, renting vs owning) and the yearly median sales price of a home in Boone County. They illustrate the need for more affordable housing access as home prices increase and incomes remain the same.

Yearly Median Sales Price of a Single Family Residence in Boone County ²



EARLY GRADE LITERACY

Result Statement:

All children in Boone County learn to read and write and see themselves as readers and writers.

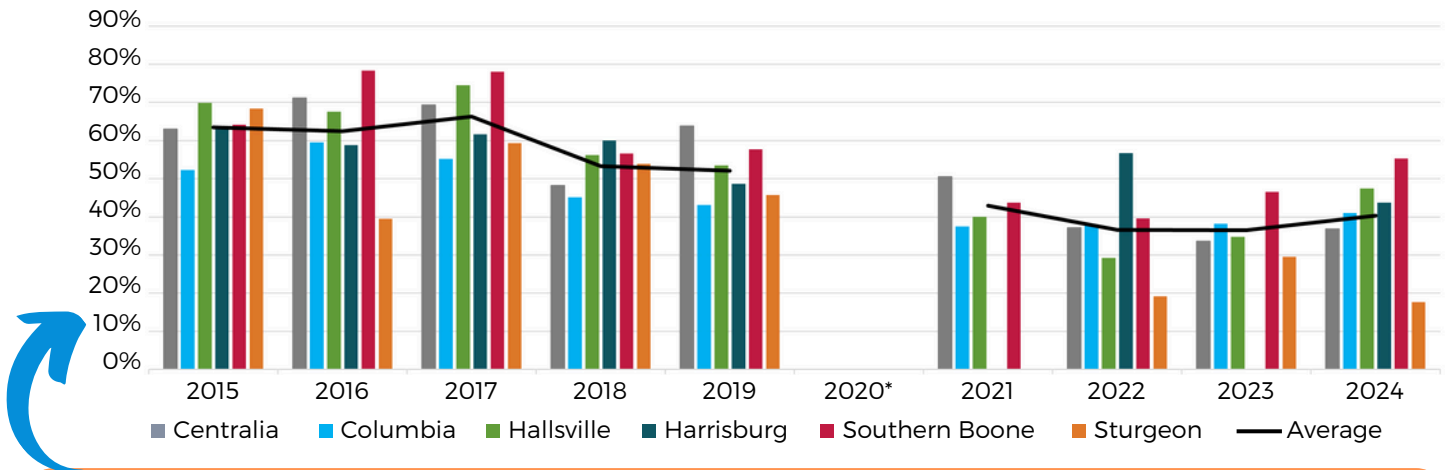
The Early Grade Literacy workgroup committed to a single focus for the year: developing a community-wide literacy campaign centered on early grade literacy, encouraging reading across all ages to support young readers. In March, the group began to shape the campaign, eventually adopting "Raising Readers" as its name. Through the spring and summer, the workgroup finalized campaign goals and developed a dual-team structure to divide responsibilities. As the group prepares for a spring 2026 launch of "Raising Readers," it continues to build capacity and refine messaging.



"I'm proud of the progress the workgroup has made to move the needle on the "Raising Readers" literacy campaign launching in 2026."

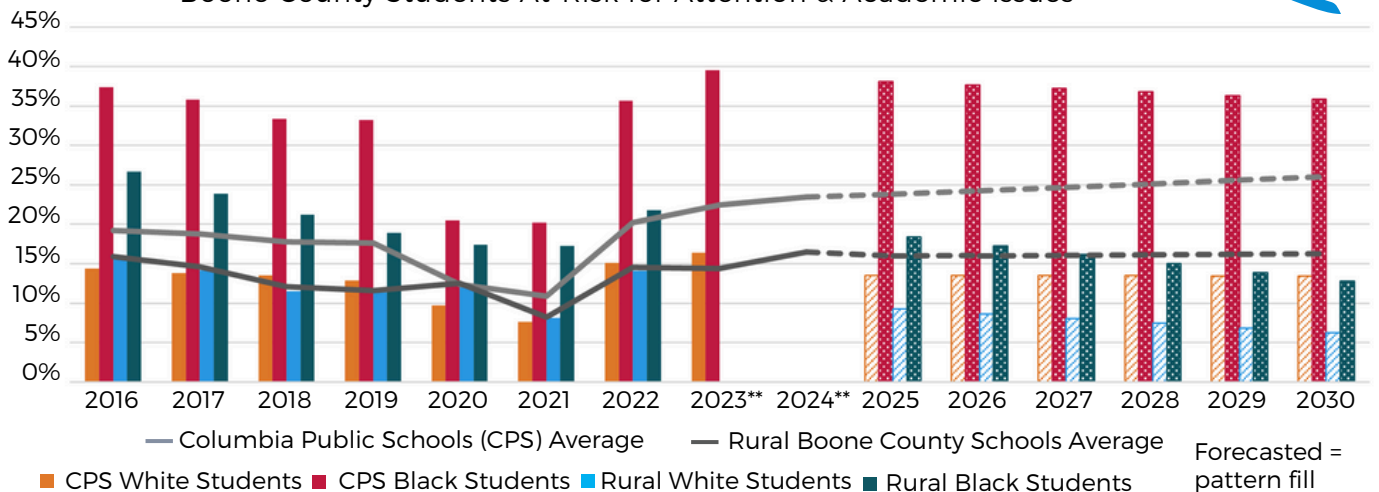
Alvin (Al) Plummer passed away on September 22, 2025. Al was a part of the Upward Mobility Initiative from the start of the Mobility Action Plan. He served as the facilitator of the Early Grade Literacy until he stepped down on September 10, 2025.

Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced in English Language Arts
Grade 3 MAP Test by Boone County School District ³



Together, the graphs show that while 3rd grade reading proficiency has begun to improve after earlier declines, many students continue to face attention and academic challenges. The forecasted data indicates that the share of students identified as at-risk is expected to remain steady or increase slightly.

Boone County Students At-Risk for Attention & Academic Issues ⁴



JOBS & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Result Statement:

Boone County is a flourishing community where everyone can live, learn, and grow.

Since the initial Mobility Action Plan, many organizations and community-wide efforts have emerged that are meeting the outcomes identified for the Jobs and Workforce Development workgroup. They are currently in the process of reviewing the Mobility Action Plan, evaluating the group's capacity, and identifying community needs to create new strategic actions to support Boone County.

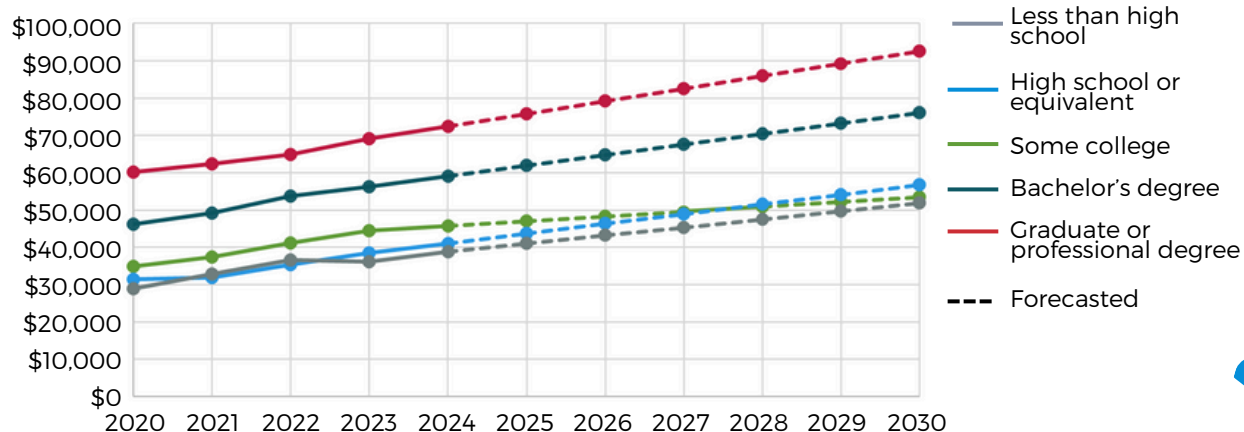


"Our workgroup has changed significantly since the beginning of the year. We have acknowledged significant changes since the workgroup's focus was established and have been open to changing directions to assure that our work is relevant to today's needs as well as remaining beholden to the original goal of upward mobility."

Lisa Driskel-Hawxby,

Regional Economic Development, Inc. (REDI), Stakeholder Facilitator

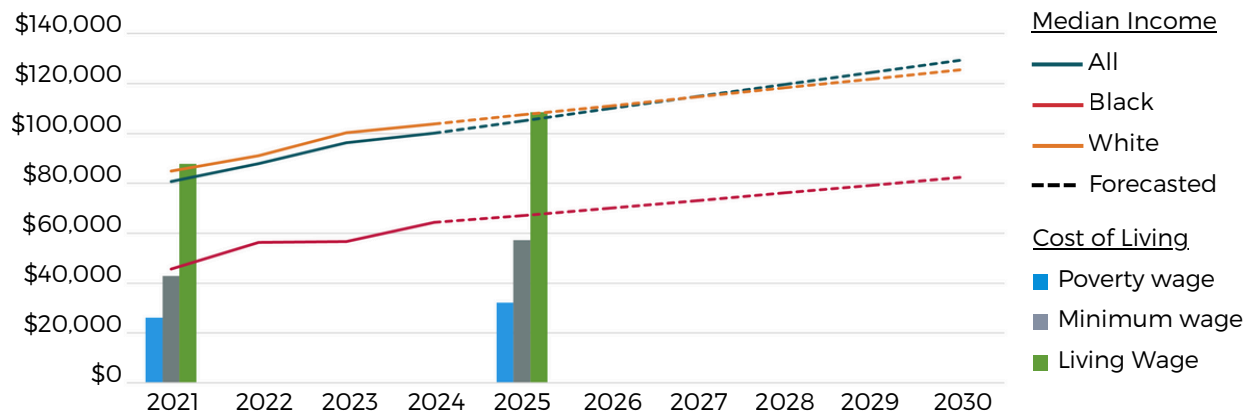
Median Earnings by Educational Attainment, Individuals 25 & Older in Boone County⁵



Boone County has maintained a strong and steady high school graduation rate between 92% to 94%. Looking ahead, graduation rates are expected to remain stable through 2030.⁵

A living wage is the minimum income needed to meet basic needs without assistance. Both graphs show rising incomes over time, but widening gaps. Higher education leads to higher earnings, yet many families still fall short of the living wage despite income growth.

Median Family Income Compared to Cost of Living (Household with Two Adults, Both Working)^{6,7}



NOTABLE WORKGROUP HIGHLIGHTS



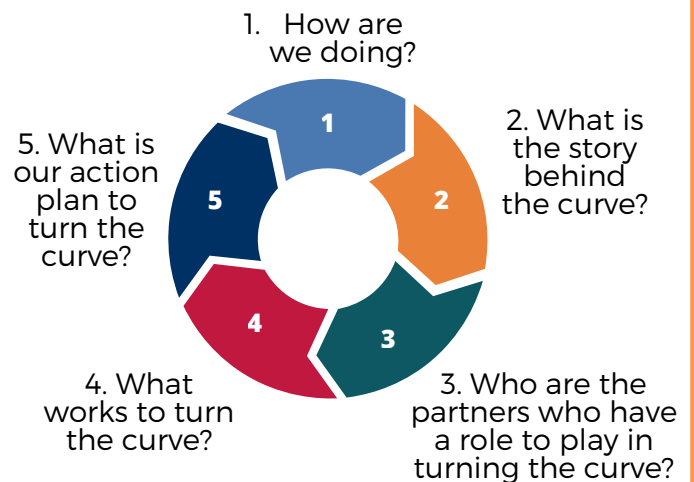
The Housing Access and Support Alliance workgroup developed tools and checklists to help tenants navigate the rental and move-in process. In 2026, the group will work to provide additional education to landlords and housing providers on housing assistance programs. Materials can be found on the Upward Mobility website.



In 2025, the Early Grade Literacy (EGL) workgroup developed "Raising Readers" - a literacy campaign to increase literacy in Boone County. The campaign will launch in 2026 and will feature Al the Otter as the campaign mascot. Al is a Missouri River Otter and was designed by Boone County student Katie Hulett. He is named in honor of late EGL facilitator Alvin Plummer.



The collaborations in the Affordable Housing Coalition workgroup served as a starting point for the community to conduct a comprehensive housing study. Completed in Fall 2024, the Boone County/City of Columbia Housing Study provides data and recommendations that are used by government officials, community partners, and guide Affordable Housing Coalition workgroup meetings.



Using Results-Based Accountability (RBA) and Turn the Curve Thinking, the Jobs and Workforce Development workgroup revisited original Mobility Action Plan goals in light of changing needs and available resources in Boone County. The workgroup is currently exploring additional ways to create shared impact and redefining what it means to be a Boone County upwardly mobile business.



BOONE COUNTY UPWARD MOBILITY

Boone County Community Services
Department Supporting Staff Members:

Joanne Nelson, Director

Enola-Riann White, Program Manager Upward Mobility

Gina Jenkins, Data & Performance Analyst

Verna Laboy (Program Manager Upward Mobility - Retired 2025)

Designed by

Kristin Cummins, Deputy Director

Scan for more
information on the
Upward Mobility
Initiative:



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