



Hourglass Quarterly

Fall 2021



LANCASTER CITY HOUSING

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

UNHEALTHY AIR

FIRST FRIDAY FORUMS

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Letter from the Executive Director

Hello Hourglass community,

I hope this issue of the Hourglass Quarterly finds you well.

As we head into the holiday season, it's time to take stock of what we're grateful for. I, for one, am grateful that Lancaster is a community where individuals with diverse viewpoints can still collaborate on solutions to our most pressing challenges.



At Hourglass, our board of directors meets every Friday morning around a kitchen table. While across the country we've seen a loss of civility— at our weekly meetings Democrats, Republicans and Independents drink coffee, discuss the issues of the day, and find common ground. We don't always have the same roadmap of how to get there—but every week I'm inspired that old-fashioned conversations, relationships and grassroots problem solving can still work to make Lancaster a better place to live.

Our challenges as a community may seem vast. In this issue you'll read about Lancaster City's housing shortage, Lancaster's unhealthy air, and setbacks nationwide in early childhood education. And our community faces uncertainties and inequalities. But Lancaster is strong. I believe we can unite to create prosperity for all. I know, because I see it done over a cup of coffee every week.

Thank you for joining Hourglass in working to improve quality of life in Lancaster County. Like you, we believe that doing things right and making the right decisions requires thorough examination, in-depth research, objective analysis, and independent thinking. It also takes a willingness to come together at the table, hear other people's perspectives, and find common ground.

With gratitude,

Diana Martin
Executive Director

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Lancaster City Has a Housing Shortage



The City of Lancaster recently commissioned the Center for Regional Analysis to examine housing availability and its implications for affordable housing. The results may not surprise you: Lancaster City has a housing shortage.

The City has approximately 24,300 housing units and the City's population is 22,100 households.

This suggests that 9% of the City's housing units are vacant. However, this vacancy rate overstates the availability because it does not reflect how the housing stock is divided between rental and homeownership markets, how housing quality limits

supply, or how well housing supply matches the needs of City residents.

The analysis suggests that Lancaster City needs an additional 1,165-2,455 housing units. Without expanding the housing stock, price pressure will continue to rise and will cause displacement or create incentives for housing stock to be run down (particularly in the rental market).

Other findings from the analysis include:

- **The City's housing stock does not align with the household composition of its residents.** Over half of the City's housing stock (56%) is comprised of single

-family dwellings, with 83% of these units having three or more bedrooms. In contrast, only 30% of the City's households have children under the age of 18. 22% of the City's housing units are estimated to have one bedroom, but 30% of the City's households live alone.

- **The opportunities to increase housing supply are limited.** An estimated 88% of the City's parcels have some form of housing on it. The City needs intentionality in developing housing stock with a focus on large scale projects. However, both the rehabilitation of existing low to moderate density housing units and building more medium and high density housing units where feasible are important.
- **Housing cost burden is widespread.** The median household income of City residents in 2019 was \$45,570. This level of income suggests monthly housing costs of \$1,140 (rent or mortgage) imposes a housing cost burden for half of the City's households. However, nearly 67% of the City's households are comprised of one individual or family with one head of household, suggesting they have a single income earner. Over half of these households (7,850 households) had annual incomes of less than \$35,000. For these households, the City's median rent of \$870 exceeds the 30% threshold of housing affordability.

The net effect is that one-third of the City's households are housing cost burdened and almost half of all renting households are estimated to pay at least 30% of their gross income to rent.

Next Steps

This fall the City of Lancaster presented its interim housing strategy, which aims to facilitate the creation of 2,000 new housing units, with the goal of at least 15 percent being affordable, by 2026. The plan also calls for the City to protect and improve 1,000 existing low - to moderate-income homes through programs like lead remediation and critical repair grants, and evaluate and address every rental housing unit in the City with the goal that at least 85 percent being rated fair or in good condition.

Lancaster City Council also authorized \$5 million of the city's American Rescue Plan Act funds for affordable housing projects. The first allocation of these funds was \$1 million for the purchase of a parking lot at 838 Marietta Ave. to develop the property into multiple affordable housing units. The city intends to enter into an agreement with HDC MidAtlantic, a local nonprofit, to take title to the property and develop it. The nonprofit would eventually become the owner and manager of the property.

Access the full "Housing Availability in the City of Lancaster and Implications for Housing Affordability" Analysis or the City's "Interim Housing Strategy" at cityoflanasterpa.com/affordable-housing.



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Preschool Enrollment Has Plunged



Amid the pandemic, the number of young children attending preschool has dropped to its lowest level nationwide in more than a quarter century. The decline threatens to derail decades of improvements in school readiness, particularly for the most-vulnerable children.

New Census data shows only 40 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school in 2020, a 14 percentage-point drop from 2019 and the first time since 1996 that fewer than half of U.S. children in that age group attended preschool. Pennsylvania saw an even greater drop—31.4%—in pre-K enrollment.

In 2019, only 14% of Lancaster County 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, lower than the Pennsylvania rate of 23%.

The National Institute for Early Education Research found the top three reasons parents pulled their young children from preschool included fears of health risks, cuts to state and other preschool programs and a dearth of in-school preschool options for working parents.

In fact, the Census data shows young children of working moms were particularly hard hit; their preschool enrollment nationwide fell 35 percent in

Pennsylvania

All grades in this state

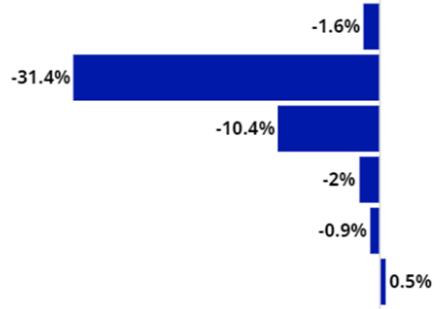
Pre-K

Kindergarten

Elementary

Middle*

High



2020, compared to only 10 percent of 3- to 4-year-olds whose mothers did not work.

School readiness at risk

Elementary schools are already feeling the fallout of incoming kindergartners who missed early education last year. Studies find young children were exposed to significantly more screen time and had fewer opportunities to develop academic routines.

One new study by researchers at George Mason University found children's school-readiness skills at age 4 still predicted their academic achievement and likelihood of receiving discipline by grade 5, and the American Academy of Pediatrics finds students who attended preschool were less likely later on to show signs of anxiety or be at risk of dropping out of school.

Children who attend preschool have been shown to attend school more regularly once they get to K-12, too, according to Hedy Chang, the founder of Attendance Works, a nonprofit that

studies the effects and prevention of chronic absenteeism. Better attendance comes in part, she said, because children develop school routines and become comfortable in organized school settings, and because they've strengthened their immune systems from having been around other kids.

Because there are few assessments for students before grade 3, Chang noted, "one of the challenges is we may not pick up what the impact of all of this is for a little while... We're already going to see some impacts on 3rd grade now, but it's going to grow over time unless we figure out some other ways to really support our youngest learners."

*Information adapted from the October 25, 2021 article "Preschool Enrollment Has Plunged: What That Means for School Readiness" by Sarah Sparks that ran in Education Week. Graph shows enrollment changes in Pennsylvania in 2020-2021. *Middle school assumes grades 6-8.*



TROUBLE IN THE AIR

Lancaster Leads State in Air Pollution

According to a new report from the PennEnvironment Research and Policy Center and the Frontier Group, Lancaster County saw 107 days of elevated levels of ozone or particulate pollution in our air in 2020.

Air pollution harms our health, even at low levels. According to the report, "exposure to ozone and particulate pollution has been linked to premature death; damage to the respiratory and cardiovascular systems; worsened mental health and neural functioning; problems with fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth; increased risk of many types of cancer; and harm to children."

It can also increase the risk of infectious diseases by weakening immune systems and helping pathogens spread. Lancaster County's air quality

is ranked 15th worst in the country by the American Lung Association, although it is improving. According to the EPA, in 2020 70% of days in Lancaster were healthy air days, slightly above 64% in 2000. The year with the fewest healthy air days was 2014, at 34%.

Air is polluted with a variety of contaminants, including particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and many other toxic or hazardous substances. This pollution comes from burning fossil fuels, agricultural activity, wildfires, and other sources.

According to the Partnership for Public Health, the largest contributors to fine particulate matter emissions in Lancaster County are 30 percent agricultural crop and livestock dust, 15 percent residential fuel combustion, 10 percent industrial fuel combustion, and 9 percent biomass waste disposal.

In order to communicate the potential health risks of air pollution to the public, the EPA uses the Air Quality Index (AQI), which classifies levels of different pollutants into the color-coded risk categories of "Good," "Moderate,"



Location	Number of days with ozone and/or PM _{2.5} AQI over 50	Population
Lancaster, PA	107	546,192
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	97	581,943
Reading, PA	82	421,017
York-Hanover, PA	65	450,448
Johnstown, PA	57	128,672
Pittsburgh, PA	57	2,309,246
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	51	846,399
Altoona, PA	51	121,007
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	49	6,107,906
Gettysburg, PA	46	102,742

Table A1. Days with elevated ozone, particulates and total pollution, by geographic area, 2020

“Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups,” “Unhealthy,” “Very Unhealthy,” and “Hazardous.” In 2020, Lancaster County saw 107 days at the “moderate” level or worse.

However, research suggests that even “moderate” air quality can, in fact, pose broad threats to public health, and a variety of medical and public health organizations have recommended tighter air quality standards that are more protective of public health.

The report recommends curbing emissions by electrifying buildings and equipment that currently burn fossil fuels directly, improving access to and the quality of public transportation

systems and infrastructure for walking and biking, increasing the use of renewable energy like wind, solar and geothermal, and protecting and building upon the Clean Air Act.

You can track Lancaster County’s current air quality at AirNow.Gov.

Summary comes from “Trouble In the Air,” Fall 2021, published by the Frontier Group, Environment America Research & Policy Center, and the U.S. PIRG Education Fund. The full report can be found at <https://pennenvironmentcenter.org/feature/amc/trouble-in-the-air>.



HOURGLASS FIRST FRIDAY FORUMS

Highlights From Recent Forums

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WEALTH ADVISERS

September 3, 2021—Lancaster City Police

Presenter: Lancaster City Police Chief John T. Bey



Lancaster City's new police chief John Bey shared his background, experience and his vision for Lancaster City Police. He spoke about community policing—including reinstituting bike patrols—efforts and challenges around recruiting officers, the department's new social workers, and his commitment to transparency, accountability and accessibility. He also spoke to the connection between quality of life issues and crime and making data-driven decisions.

October 1, 2021—Fulton Theatre

Presenters: Rich Bowen, Director of Corporate Relations & Grants, and Jeff Coon, Annual Fund and Foundation Director

Having just reopened after an 18-month intermission, the Fulton team shared about their new \$30 million expansion and renovation project, their 2021-2022 season, and how they're keeping actors and the community safe during COVID-19. The Fulton team also spoke about their \$23.8 million annual economic impact on the Lancaster community before taking us on a tour of the new building.



November 5, 2021—Refugee Resettlement in Lancaster County

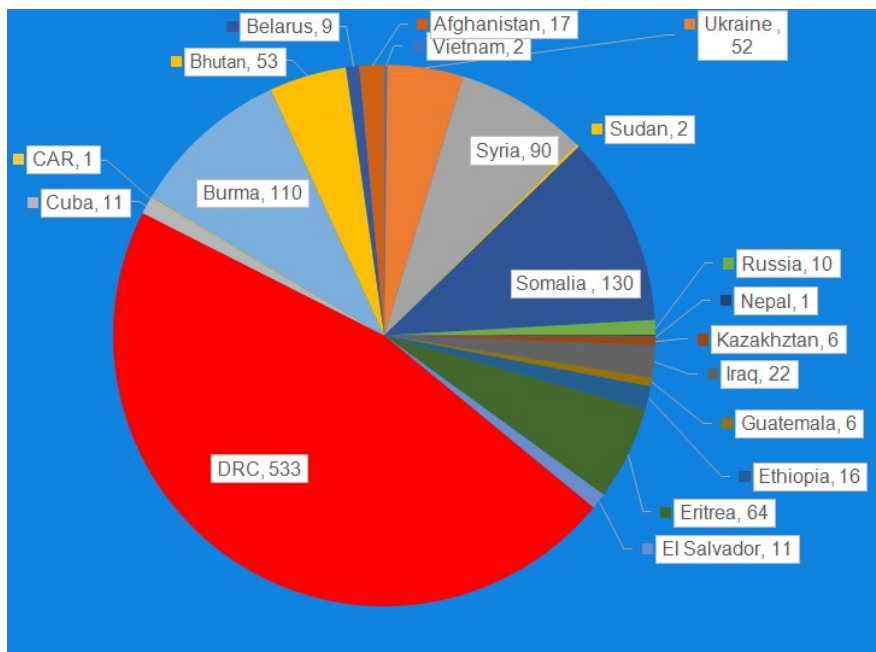
Presenter: Valentina Ross, Director, Church World Services



Valentina provided an update on the global refugee crisis, recent refugees from Afghanistan, and Church World Service's programs for welcoming refugees and helping them to achieve self-reliance. She explained how refugees differ from other immigrant groups, and how the United States Refugee Admissions Program works and has shifted under different administrations. Over the past 5 years, the largest refugee nationalities to resettle in Lancaster have come from the

Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Burma and Syria. Church World Services expects to resettle 120 Afghan evacuees in Lancaster.

Refugee Arrivals in Lancaster by Nationality (2015-2020). Chart presented by Church World Service.



Watch forum recordings at HourglassLancaster.org or on our Youtube channel. To attend forums like these, become an Hourglass member at HourglassLancaster.org/membership.



HOURLASS

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Hourglass champions and facilitates sound decision-making to continue Lancaster County's prosperity while maintaining its unique character and enviable quality of life.

As a trusted source for information, innovative ideas and insights, Hourglass helps stakeholders, elected officials and citizens make more informed and enlightened decisions.

For more info:

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