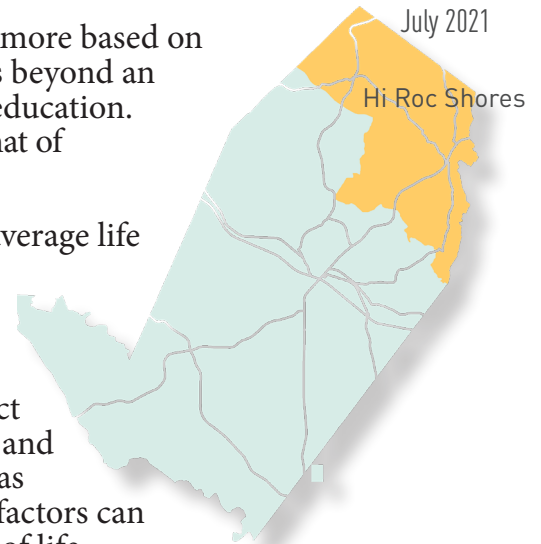


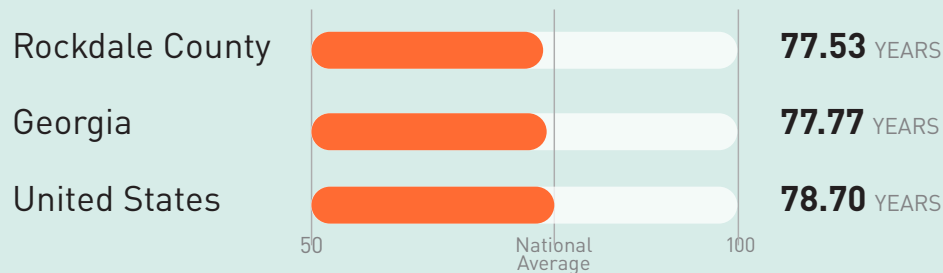
# Life Expectancy in Rockdale County

Across metro Atlanta, lifespans vary by as much as two decades or more based on geography. Life expectancy is shaped by numerous complex factors beyond an individual's control, such as access to food, sidewalks, and quality education. Many of these factors can be influenced by our work at ARC and that of our partners.

The average life expectancy in Rockdale County is lower than the average life expectancy across the state of Georgia. The Hi Roc Shores census tract has the lowest life expectancy in Rockdale County (75.6 years), which is almost two years shorter than the county's average life expectancy of 77.5 years. Residents in this same tract experience characteristics that both positively and negatively impact life expectancy. This document provides a snapshot of select social and economic characteristics with large discrepancies within this tract as well as some characteristics for the county. Consideration of these factors can inform strategies that help to extend lifespans and improve quality of life.



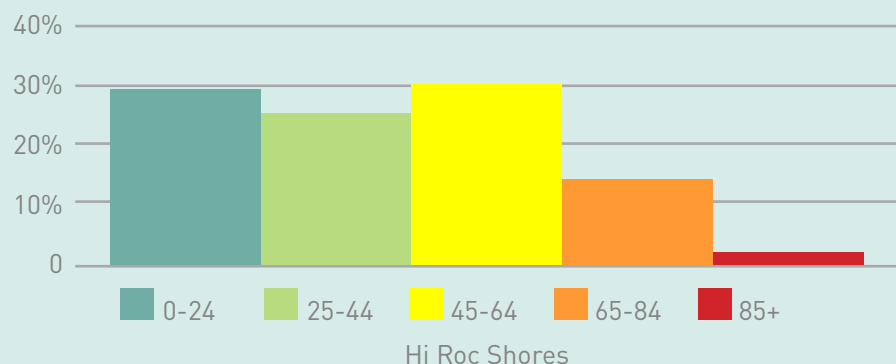
## Average Life Expectancy Comparison



Data Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Life Expectancy Tool, January 2020

## Factors Affecting Life Expectancy in Rockdale County

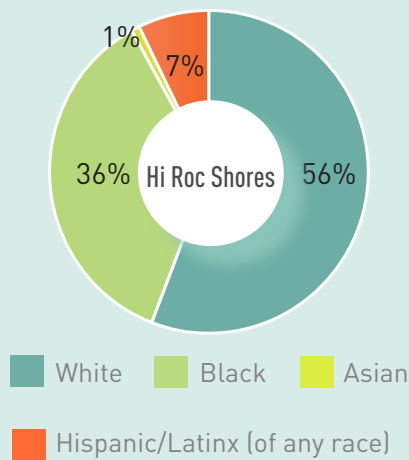
### Age Distribution



16% of residents in the Hi Roc Shores census tract are age 65 or older.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

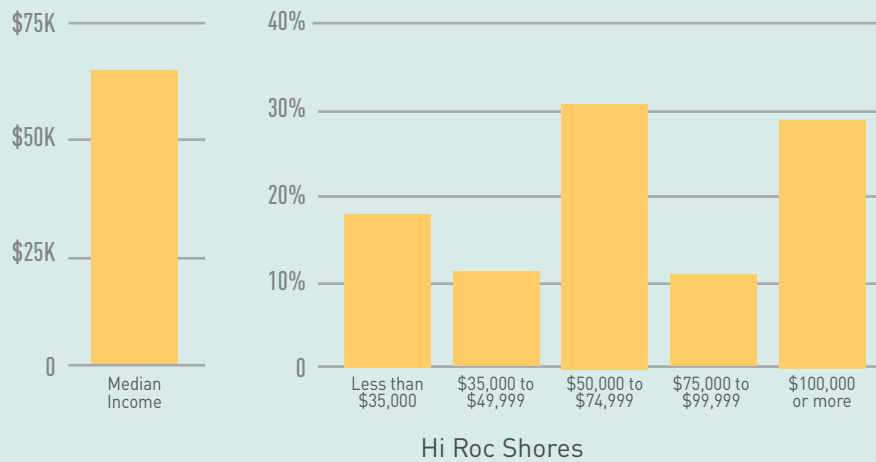
## Race & Hispanic Origin



On average, with some minor exceptions, studies have shown that white individuals outlive other individuals at every age and level of education. Reasons for this discrepancy vary by individual, but in general, multiple factors are at play associated with systemic racism, including socioeconomic status and access to health care.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

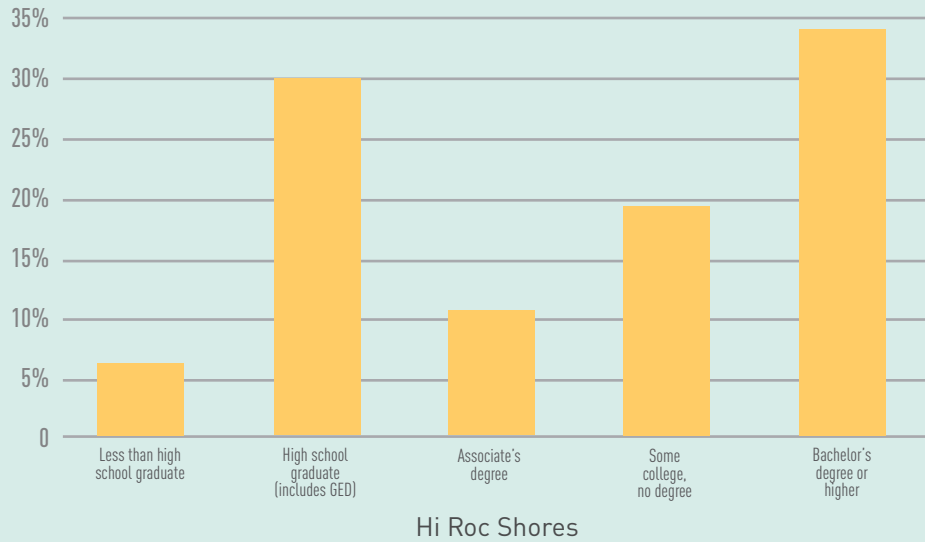
## Household Income



Residents of the lowest life expectancy census tract in Rockdale County experience great income disparity, even within the same census tract. Many studies have found income to correlate with life expectancy, as higher incomes correlate directly with things like better diets, healthier lifestyles, and access to medical care.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

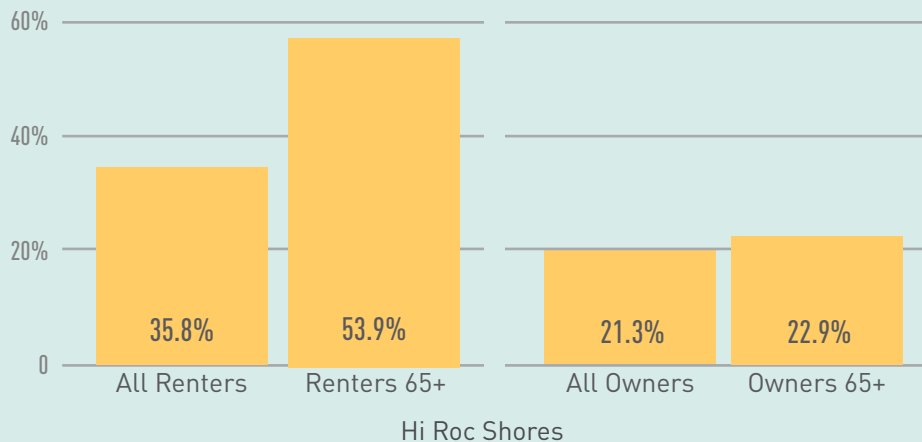
## Education



Education level is found to impact longevity regardless of gender or race. Within racial and ethnic groups, life expectancy is found to vary by as much as 13 years between those with the highest and those with the lowest levels of education. Within the lowest life expectancy tract, 30% of residents have a high school education, and 34% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

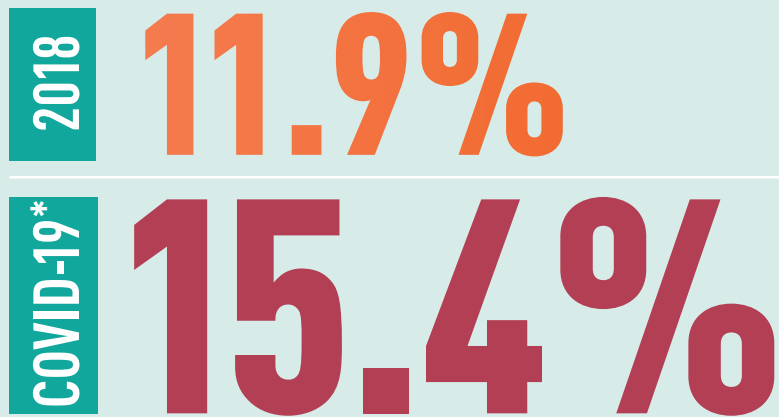
## Housing Cost-Burdened Households



Housing cost-burdened households spend more than 30% of their income on housing, potentially leaving insufficient funds for necessities such as food and medicine. A greater percentage of renters and homeowners over the age of 65 are cost-burdened than younger ones.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

## Percent of Rockdale County Food Insecure

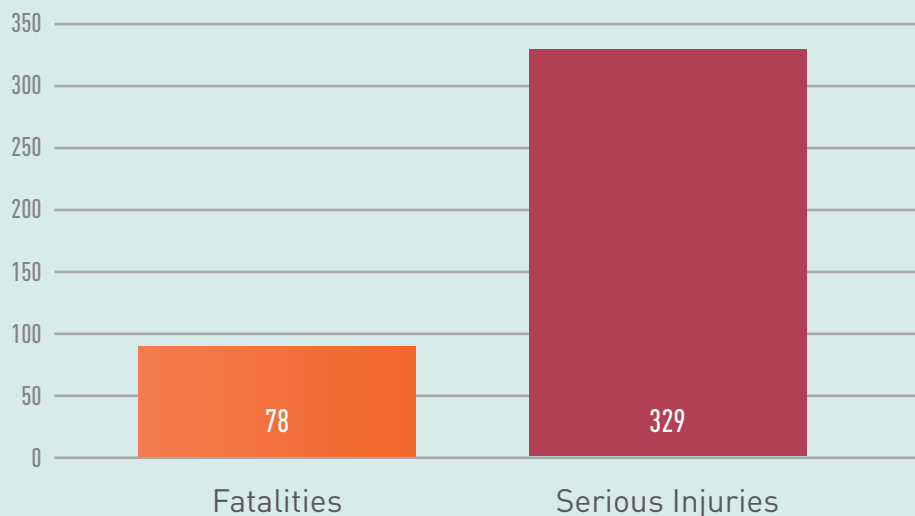


*\*projected rise due to COVID*

Food insecurity is limited or uncertain access to enough food. A lack of access to healthy food is linked to a greater likelihood of developing chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease—which have been shown to significantly affect life expectancy.

Data Source: Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2018

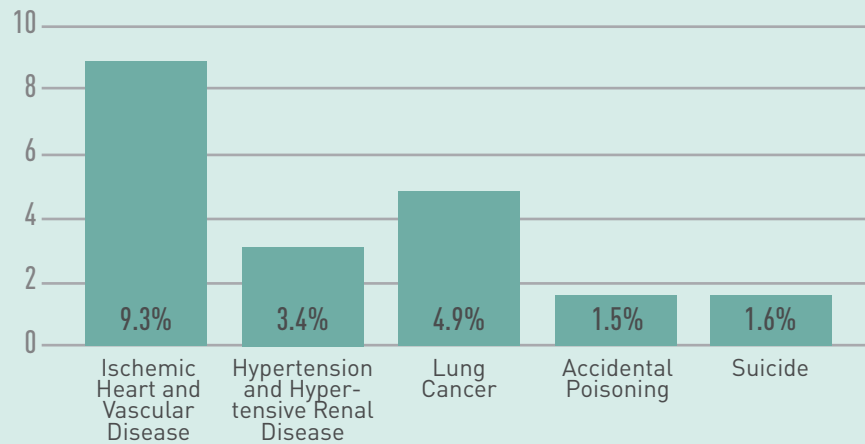
## Rockdale County Crashes Involving Motor Vehicles



Research has found a disproportionate number of motor-vehicle-related pedestrian injuries and deaths take place in the nation's less pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.

Data Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Crash Data Portal, 2013-2019

## Rockdale County Top Causes of Premature Death

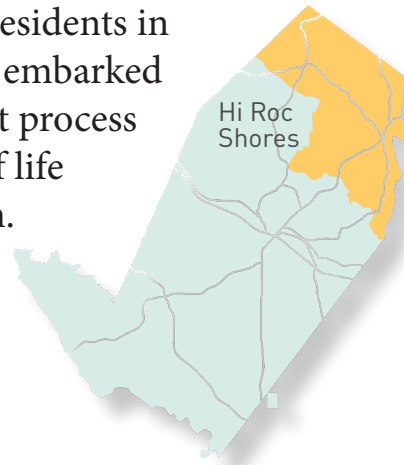


Premature deaths due to these causes can be prevented through interventions in areas such as transportation, access to preventative care, disease management, and mental health services.

Data Source: Georgia OASIS, Mortality Mapping Tool, 2015-2019

# Sustained Engagement

To better understand the issues facing residents in the Hi Roc Shores neighborhood, ARC embarked on a three-part community engagement process that identified and prioritized quality of life concerns and strategies for intervention. The process and findings are detailed below.



## Focus Group

To supplement the data compiled above, ARC held a focus group with ten residents of the area who were compensated \$100 for their time in early 2022. During a two-hour session, ARC asked them questions about the assets of their community, their quality of life, and barriers they experienced to health. The focus group held in the Hi Roc Shores community shared 5 issues impacting their quality of life:

- Access to public transportation
- Senior Services
- Youth Services
- Improved water quality
- Improved communication about existing resources

In the second quarter of 2022, ARC held a series of webinars with elected officials across the region where they shared the process of the focus groups and preliminary findings and invited them to engage with ARC in broader outreach.

# Prioritization

In fall and winter of 2022-2023, ARC attended a community event in Rockdale County to conduct broader outreach. They engaged families at a 4-H event in Conyers, specifically seeking out those who lived and/or worked in the focus area in the northern part of the county. At these events, ARC invited residents to vote on the issues that had arisen in the focus group to prioritize them. In broader community engagement, residents chose one of those issues as their primary concern.\*

**31%** of residents chose youth services

**27%** of residents chose improved communication

**17%** of residents chose improving access to public transportation

**12%** of residents chose senior services

**10%** of residents chose improved water quality

There was also space via comment cards for them to add supplemental information about personal experiences or suggestions for solutions. Residents overwhelmingly discussed a lack of free or low-cost activities for youth unable to drive as a main driver in their decision making.

\*decimal points in percentages were rounded so total may not equal 100

# Community Listening Sessions

Finally, in 2023, ARC conducted a listening session with leaders across Rockdale County, including elected officials, employees, service providers, and community leaders. Here, ARC presented their findings from the previous stages of community engagement and invited them to contribute insight on potential solutions. Based on this data, they are working with service providers and elected officials in Rockdale County to continue to design evidence-based approaches to health disparities in the county. This includes continuing outreach initiatives in the Hi Roc Shores neighborhood, promoting youth services and transparent communication as important policy issues, and spreading awareness about existing disparities. Contact Arin Yost at [ayost@atlantaregional.org](mailto:ayost@atlantaregional.org) if you have questions or are interested in partnering in Rockdale County.





# Addressing the Problem

By working together across the region, we can address metro Atlanta's life expectancy disparities. The ingenuity and resources are here. ARC invites all interested individuals and organizations to join with us and our communities to ensure that the Atlanta region is a place where people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can live high-quality lives, regardless of location. We are focusing on:

- Place** Concentrate on locations where residents experience the most inequity
- Policy** Work with governmental, philanthropic, educational, nonprofit, and business leaders to improve or amend policies that create inequities and advance policies that promote equity
- Practice** Provide services and programs that address unmet needs



| **empowerline**

For more information, please contact [info@empowerline.org](mailto:info@empowerline.org)