

City of Columbia, Missouri



Community Trend Manual

For the Fiscal Year Ending - Sept. 30th, 2024





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City of Columbia
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August 05, 2025

Prior to 2021, demographic and socioeconomic data were included in the 5-Year Trend Manual, which focused primarily on the City's financial strengths and weaknesses. Beginning in 2021, the City of Columbia Finance Department has produced an annual Community Trend Manual in order to better align with the strategic plan for the City of Columbia and to increase data transparency. The 2025 edition of the Community Trend Manual reflects the publication year, whereas previous editions indicated the most recent year of available data. The Community Trend Manual illustrates the demographic and socioeconomic indicators that affect the City's financial condition. All components of the Community Trend Manual are relevant to understanding the fiscal position for the City of Columbia and should be documented, accessible, and engaging. The 2025 Community Trends Manual reflects data collected from FY 2020 through FY 2024.

The Community Trends Manual that follows is separated into six distinct sections: Demographics, Standard of Living, Local Economy, Fiscal Health, Community Services, and Environmental Indicators. Each section offers a description of the metric being observed, analyzed data from the current period (2020 – 2024), and citations of the sources used. By including indicators of public transportation and bus ridership, it is easier to track progress towards the goals outlined in the City of Columbia's strategic plan.

The purpose of the Community Trends Manual is to assist stakeholders and policymakers, including City Council and City Management, in making informed decisions that align with the Strategic Plan.

Respectively Submitted,

A blue ink signature of Matthew Lue, written in a cursive style.

Matthew Lue,
Director of Finance

A blue ink signature of Deepayan Debnath, written in a cursive style.

Deepayan Debnath,
Economist Supervisor

Table of Contents

Demographics	1
Population and Density	2
Population by Race.....	3
Population by Age.....	4
Standard of Living	5
Adult Poverty Rates	7
Child Poverty Rates.....	9
Homelessness	10
Local Economy	11
Unemployment Rate	12
Housing Market.....	13
Fiscal Health	14
Local Tax Collection.....	15
Federal and State Support	17
Community Services	18
Public Safety – Budgeted	19
Public Safety – Actual	20
CARE Program	21
Utility Assistance Program	22
Public Transit.....	23
Sustainability	24
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	25
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector.....	26
References	27

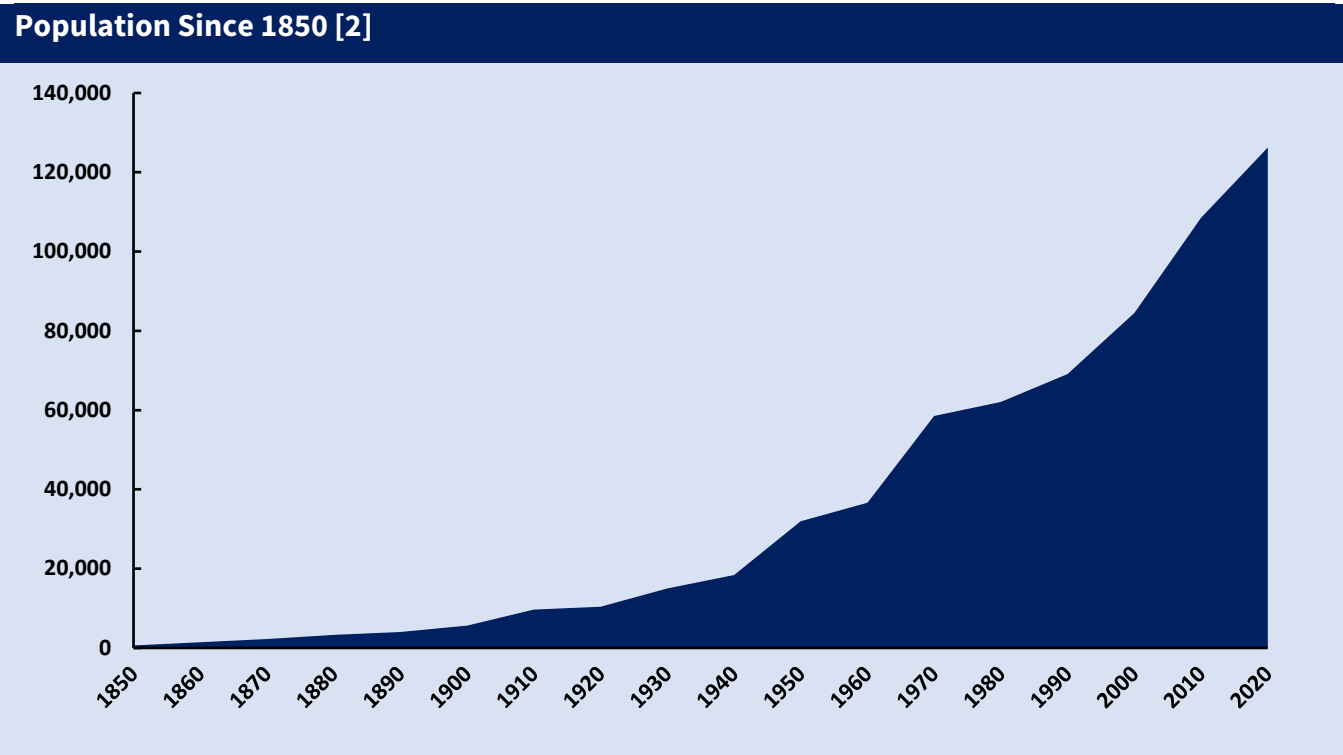


DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics are statistical data that describe the characteristics of a population, including its size, density, racial composition, and age distribution. Population and density refer to the total number of people in a given area and how densely they are concentrated. Population by race categorizes individuals based on racial or ethnic identity, while population by age breaks down the population into various age groups, helping to understand the age structure of a community.

Demographics

Population and Density



Population and Density [2] [3]			
Year	Estimated Population*	Square Miles	Population Density
2020	122,659	66.71	1,839
2021	126,850	67.41	1,882
2022	128,545	67.54	1,903
2023	129,328	67.73	1,909
2024	130,621	68.01	1,921

***Total population for 2024 is the estimation of the City, while all other years are sourced from the American Community Survey (ACS).**



The Population Estimates Program (PEP) projects a community’s total population from the last Census using known demographic trends. The American Community Survey (ACS) builds on PEP by adding ongoing survey data to gauge socioeconomic traits. Because they’re updated on different schedules, their total population figures may not match exactly.

Analysis

The first recorded population of Columbia, MO comes from the 1850 Census, which counted 651 Columbia residents. In 2024, the estimated population of the city increased to about 130.6 thousand people. From 2020 to 2024, Columbia's population has increased by 6.5%, for an average of 1.3% annually.

Population density is defined as the number of people per square mile of land area. A higher population density allows for closer proximity to community services such as fire, police, parks, and street maintenance. In the past 5 years, population density in Columbia has increased by 4.4%, with both population and square miles increasing.

Demographics

Population by Race

Population by Race [5]						
Year	Population	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other
2020	122,659	93,146	13,597	7,500	4,173	4,243
2021	126,850	93,859	15,892	7,895	5,031	4,173
2022	128,545	95,666	14,402	8,551	5,715	4,211
2023	129,328	96,294	16,347	6,822	5,659	4,206
2024*	130,621	97,257	16,510	6,890	5,716	4,248

Diversity [4]

The 2020 Census diversity index measures the likelihood of two randomly selected individuals from the community being from different racial categories. Columbia's Diversity Index is 47.2%, 6.4% higher than Missouri's Diversity Index. The National Diversity Index in 2020 was 61.1%, making Columbia 13.9% less diverse than the nation as a whole.

2023 Racial Proportions [5]



White	74.5%
Black	12.6%
Hispanic	4.4%
Asian	5.3%
Other	3.3%
Total	100.0%

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic or Latino ■ Asian ■ Other

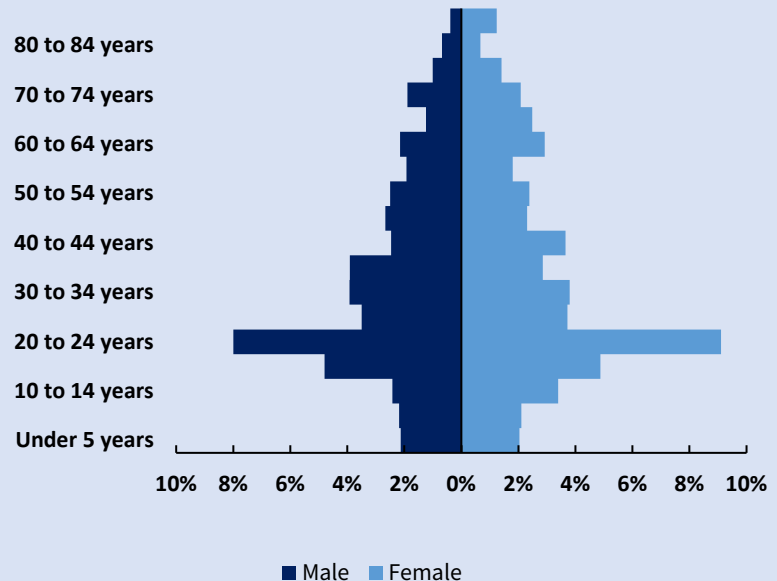
*City's estimate based on Oxford Economics data.

Demographics

Population by Age

Due to the presence of three major educational institutions in Columbia, the population is overwhelmingly college-aged. However, the rest of the population pyramid shows a growing number of young adults, especially young women.

Columbia, MO: Population Pyramid 2023 [6]



Minor and Elderly Population [6]

Year	Percent of Population Age 17 and Under	Percent of Population Age 65 and Older	Total Percent of Population Age 17 and Under or Age 65 and Older
2019	20.0%	10.7%	30.7%
2020	18.7%	11.0%	29.7%
2021	20.5%	10.6%	31.1%
2022	18.6%	10.6%	29.2%
2023	16.9%	13.0%	29.9%

Analysis

People age 17 and under or 65 and older are typically the populations with greater needs and reduced means to address those needs, so this metric communicates the needs of the community. From 2019 to 2023, the percentage of the population age 17 and under decreased by 3.1%, while the percentage of the population age 65 and older increased by 1.3%. Collectively, these vulnerable populations decreased by 0.8% over the period shown, demonstrating a decrease in demand for social services targeted towards these groups.

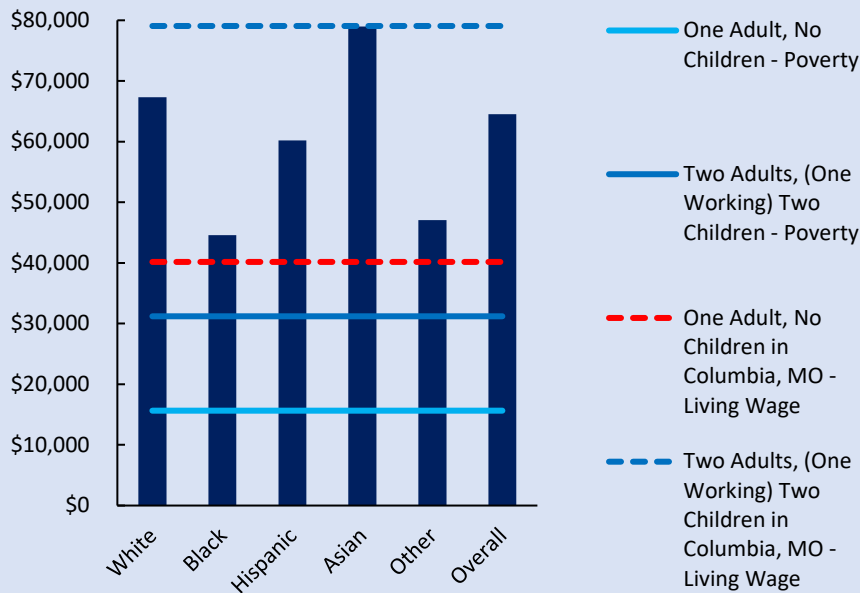


STANDARD OF LIVING

The standard of living refers to the level of wealth, comfort, and material goods available to a population. It is often assessed through indicators like median household income, which reflects the typical earnings of a household, and the living wage, which is the income necessary to meet basic needs. Poverty rates, both adult and child, measure the percentage of the population living below the poverty line, highlighting economic challenges. Homelessness rates indicate the prevalence of individuals without stable housing, providing a critical view of the lower end of the economic spectrum.

Standard of Living

Median Household Income 2023 [7][8]



Analysis

The poverty metrics used by MIT's Living Wage Calculator are based on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' standardized guidelines for all 48 contiguous states. The calculator adjusts these metrics using average prices of goods and services in mid-Missouri to determine the living wage for individuals in Columbia, providing a more specific measure of the income needed to thrive in this community.

Median Household Income

Year	Income	Gap	Inflation	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
2019	\$51,300	\$23,300	1.5%	\$55,600	\$32,300	\$50,100	\$36,600
2020	\$53,400	\$33,700	1.0%	\$56,300	\$33,200	\$66,900	\$42,600
2021	\$57,500	\$27,000	5.1%	\$59,800	\$38,000	\$65,000	\$56,700
2022	\$60,500	\$35,500	8.0%	\$63,700	\$35,000	\$70,500	\$56,800
2023	\$64,500	\$34,400	3.9%	\$67,300	\$44,600	\$79,000	\$60,200



Gap represents the difference between the race group with the highest median household income and the group with the lowest income.

Analysis

Median Household income across various races in 2023 shows a significant disparity in median income between Black and Asian households, with a \$34,400 gap between the two groups. The income gaps continue to persist, increasing \$11,100 over the measured 5-year period, which tends to suggest pay inequality. Further analysis will be provided in a separate report shortly.

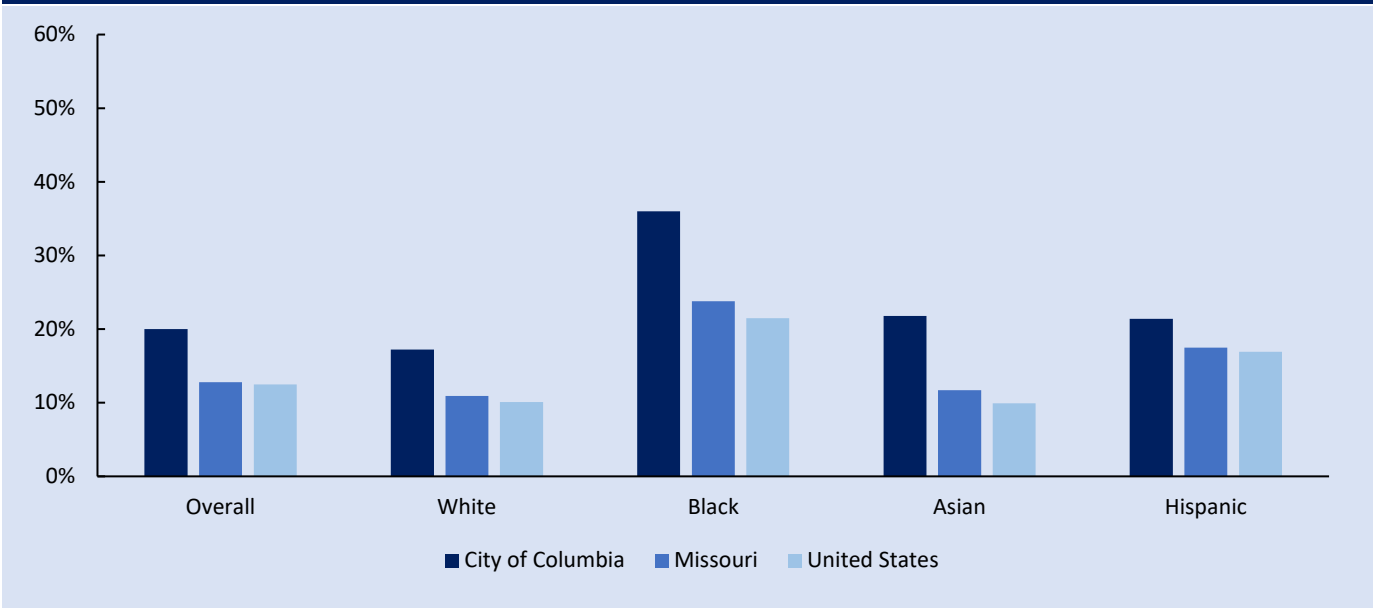
Standard of Living

Adult Poverty Rates

Analysis

As the level of poverty in a community increases, so do adverse outcomes such as crime, disinvestment, and lower quality of education. Poverty is an important metric to track in a community because a significantly impoverished population often needs additional access to all areas of improvement: education, healthcare, economic advancement, and more.

Adult Poverty Rate by Race, 2023 [9] [10]



Standard of Living

Adult Poverty Rates

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City of Columbia	Overall	22%	20%	20%	21%	20%
	White	19%	17%	17%	18%	17%
	Black	35%	41%	37%	44%	36%
	Asian	25%	21%	22%	22%	22%
	Hispanic	22%	21%	18%	22%	21%
Missouri	Overall	14%	13%	13%	13%	13%
	White	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%
	Black	25%	24%	24%	24%	18%
	Asian	14%	13%	12%	12%	12%
	Hispanic	22%	20%	18%	19%	18%
United States	Overall	13%	13%	13%	13%	12%
	White	11%	11%	10%	10%	10%
	Black	23%	22%	22%	22%	21%
	Asian	11%	11%	10%	10%	10%
	Hispanic	20%	18%	18%	17%	17%

Analysis

The overall poverty rate for Columbia's residents has decreased by 1.9% from 2019 to 2023. In the past, Columbia's poverty rate has been greater than the state of Missouri and the United States' poverty rates, and that trend has continued into 2023, although the gap is gradually decreasing. Columbia's poverty rate is nearly 7.5 percentage points higher than the nationwide poverty rate, which could be due to a significant portion of the population being college students. In Columbia, poverty among the white, Asian, and Hispanic population has decreased, while poverty among the black population has increased by 0.9 percentage points in the past five years.

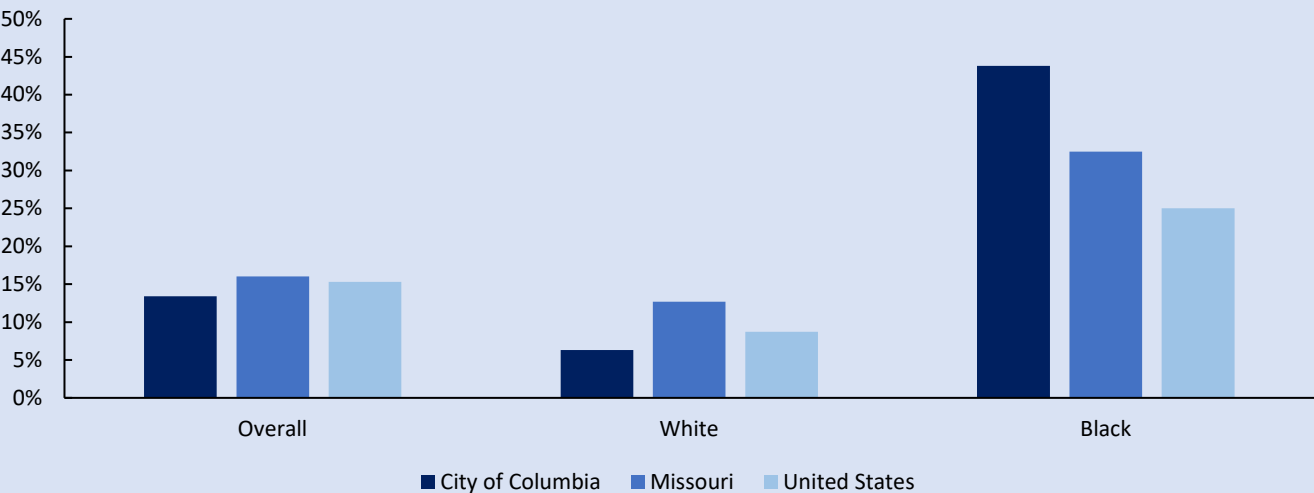
Standard of Living

Child Poverty Rates

Child Poverty

Similar to other forms of poverty, child poverty can have severe detrimental effects. These include behavioral and cognitive issues, higher rates of mental illness, and widening racial achievement gaps. It can also lead to higher incarceration rates upon entering adulthood, so there is a significant cost associated with high rates of child poverty. Supporting children growing up in poverty is essential to increasing community equity.

Child Poverty Rate by Race, 2023 [9] [10]



		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City of Columbia	Overall	16%	15%	16%	15%	17%	13%
	White	7%	7%	6%	7%	7%	6%
	Black	41%	40%	53%	47%	59%	44%
Missouri	Overall	20%	19%	17%	17%	17%	16%
	White	16%	15%	14%	14%	13%	13%
	Black	38%	36%	34%	34%	34%	33%
United States	Overall	16%	14%	16%	15%	15%	15%
	White	9%	8%	10%	9%	10%	9%
	Black	30%	26%	28%	27%	22%	25%



The US Census indicators classify “children” as people under 18.

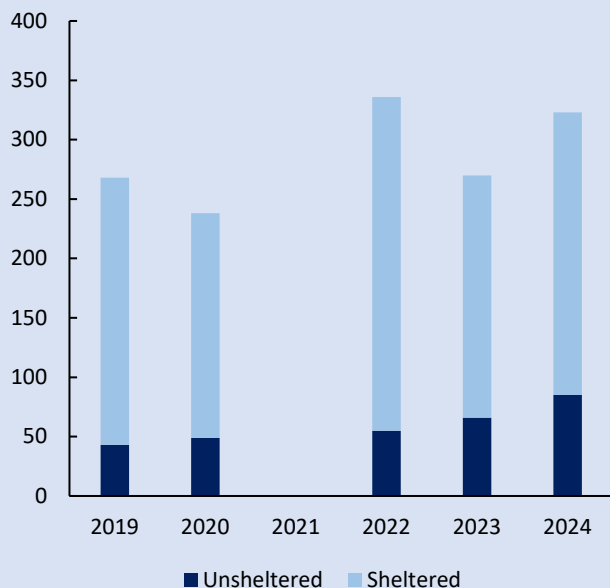
Analysis

The overall poverty rate for Columbia's children decreased by 2.2% from 2018, and was 13.4% in 2023. The child poverty rate in Columbia is below both Missouri and the United States levels. While poverty among white children has hovered around 6.5% in the past five years, poverty among black children has stayed between 40%-50% mostly, which is a concerning trend. Columbia’s poverty rate among black children is significantly higher than both Missouri and the national levels.

Standard of Living

Homelessness

Homeless Point in Time Counts [12]



Tracking Homelessness [12]

The Missouri Balance of State (BoS) Continuum of Care (CoC) conducts a Point-In-Time Count throughout its 101 county geographic areas each year as required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The count helps Missourians monitor trends in the homeless population and increases public awareness of homelessness.

In the most recent Point-In-Time Count, there were 323 persons found to be experiencing homelessness in Boone County. Since 2020, the total number of homeless people in Columbia has increased by 36%. Compared to the previous year, it increased by 20%.

Homelessness [12][20]

In FY 2025, the City of Columbia plans to allocate \$1,855,859 for service contracts to create opportunities and address the basic needs of the homeless. Before FY25, the City provided a total of \$3.13 million in funding. With these funds, the Voluntary Action Center (VAC) plans to open The Opportunity Campus on Bowling Street this fall, aiming to serve over 7,000 homeless individuals each year.

Sheltered and Unsheltered Counts

Year	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total Homeless
2020	49	189	238
2021*	-	-	-
2022	55	281	336
2023	66	204	270
2024	85	238	323

***The Point-In-Time Count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**



Point-in-time counts are conducted in the last 10 days of January and count the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night. The homeless population likely fluctuates throughout the year, but point-in-time counts are the most reliable and consistent estimate of people experiencing homelessness in the United States. [11]



LOCAL ECONOMY

The local economy encompasses the economic activities and conditions within a specific area, often measured by key indicators such as the unemployment rate and the housing market. The unemployment rate reflects the percentage of the workforce that is actively seeking but unable to find employment, serving as a gauge of job availability and economic health. The housing market, encompassing factors such as home prices, availability, and sales trends, offers insight into the local real estate environment and overall economic stability.

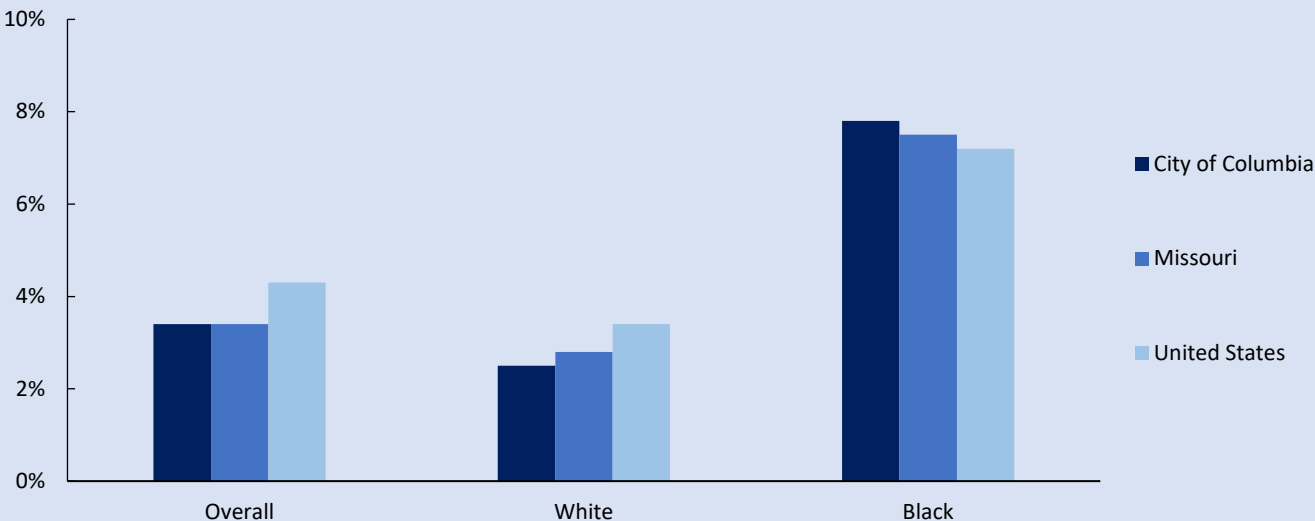
Local Economy

Unemployment Rate

Analysis

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment is defined as people who “do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior 4 weeks, and are currently available for work.” Therefore, the unemployed segment of the population is not just everyone who does not have a job, as it excludes those who are unable to work or are not currently seeking a job. High unemployment rates are correlated with higher poverty rates and other negative outcomes, which require increased support from social services.

2023 Unemployment Rate by Race [9]



Unemployment Rate

	City of Columbia			Missouri			United States		
	Overall	White	Black	Overall	White	Black	Overall	White	Black
2019	4.4%	3.4%	9.9%	4.6%	3.9%	9.2%	5.3%	4.5%	9.5%
2020	3.5%	2.9%	7.3%	5.1%	3.9%	8.2%	5.4%	4.6%	9.2%
2021	3.9%	3.3%	8.0%	4.5%	3.9%	8.2%	6.3%	5.1%	10.6%
2022	5.5%	3.3%	8.8%	3.7%	3.2%	6.6%	4.3%	4.4%	8.9%
2023	3.4%	2.5%	7.8%	3.4%	2.8%	7.5%	4.3%	3.4%	7.2%

Analysis

In 2023, Columbia’s unemployment rate was 3.4%, which was the same as the statewide unemployment rate, but substantially lower than the national unemployment rate. This is due in part to the large number of jobs created by the education and healthcare workforce sectors in Columbia. Black unemployment in Columbia is 5.3 percentage points higher than white unemployment. This is similar to the racial gaps examined in the Standard of Living section above regarding median income and poverty rates.

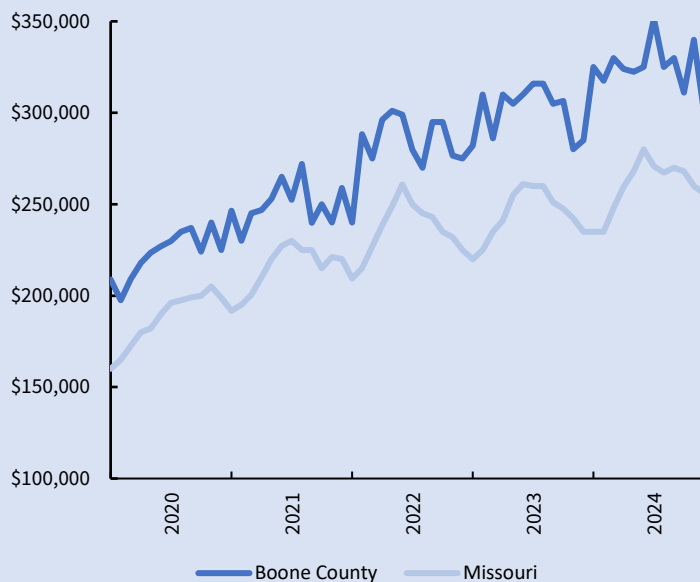
Local Economy

Housing Market

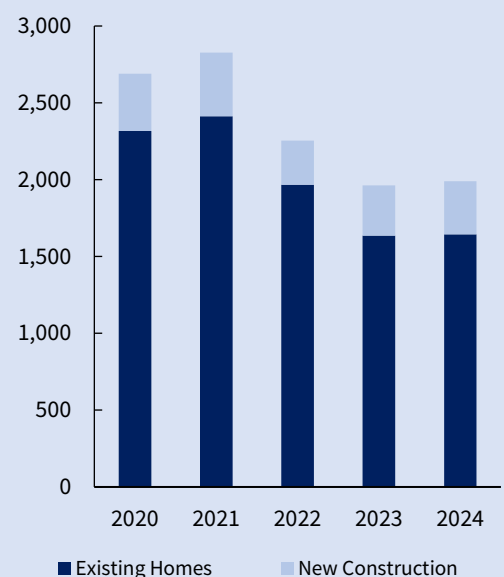
The Housing Market [13] [14]

The housing market is one of the most important economic indicators of a community's well-being. An increase in house prices does provide more revenue for public goods such as education – in lieu of property tax, but can also result in more members of the community being priced out of the housing market. In Boone County, median house prices have increased by 44.4% during 2020-2024, while total homes sold have decreased by 26 % over the same time period. This decreasing supply of houses is leading to a substantial price increase for houses in Boone County.

Median Home Price [13]



Boone County Home Sales [14]



The Columbia Board of Realtors suggests some items to consider before purchasing a home.

These include:



- ✓ Put the house in context of the neighborhood it is in (i.e. consider things like noise level and proximity to schools, parks, etc.)
- ✓ Make a list of top priorities and other items that are wanted but not necessarily needed.
- ✓ Start planning to get approved for a mortgage and do research on insurance before beginning the house hunting process. [12]

Housing Market Data [14]

Year	Median Price	Average Price	Homes Sold
2020	\$225,000	\$256,986	2,689
2021	\$251,000	\$292,860	2,827
2022	\$287,250	\$328,319	2,254
2023	\$302,990	\$343,436	1,963
2024	\$325,000	\$372,329	1,989



FISCAL HEALTH

Fiscal health refers to the financial stability and sustainability of a local government, often measured by its revenue sources and financial support. Local tax collections, including sales tax, gasoline tax, and other levies, are primary sources of revenue that fund public services and infrastructure. Federal and state grants to the city provide additional financial support, enabling local governments to undertake projects and maintain services without solely relying on local tax revenue. Together, these factors indicate the city's ability to manage its finances and meet its obligations.

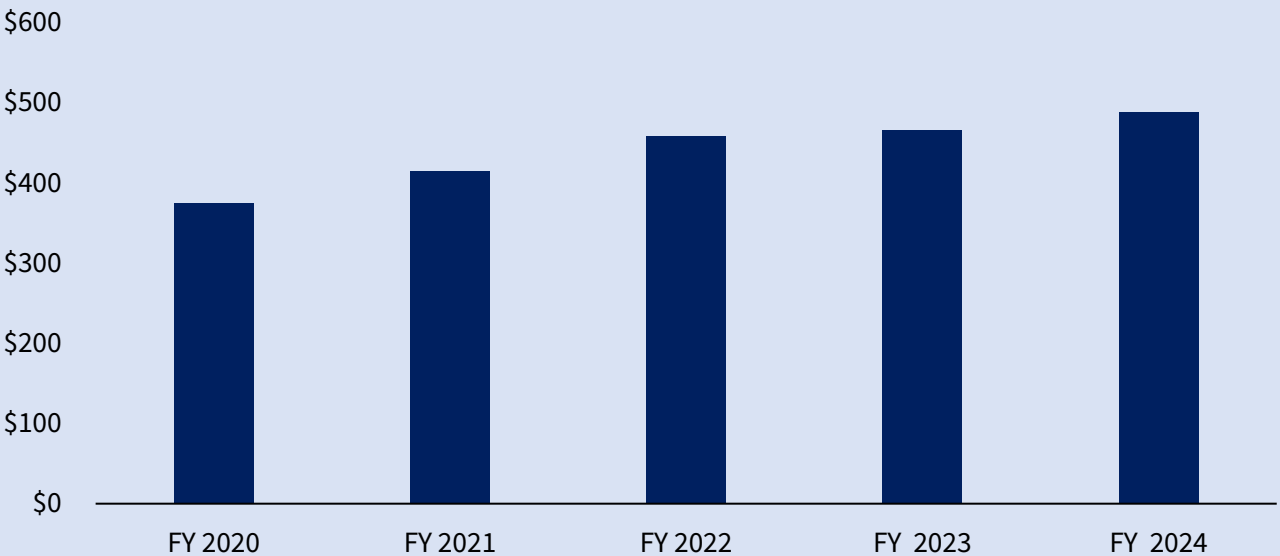
Fiscal Health

Local Tax Collection

Sales Tax

A general sales tax is levied on all persons selling tangible personal property or rendering taxable services on a retail basis within the City limits. The total sales tax paid to state, county, and city government in Columbia is 7.975%. Missouri imposes a 4.225% sales tax, Boone County imposes an additional 1.750%, and the City of Columbia collects 2.000% of gross retail receipts. The City's sales tax collections accounted for 13.5% of total revenue for Columbia in FY 2024. Sales tax collections per person (adjusted for inflation over the last 5 years) have increased by \$27.8 or 7.4%, due to more consumption and economic activity.

Sales Tax Per Person



Sales Tax

Fiscal Year	Total Sales Tax	Consumer Price Index*	Total Sales Tax (2020 Chained)	Population**	Sales Tax per Capita (2020 Chained)
2020	\$47,278,467	153.28	\$47,278,467	126,254	\$374.47
2021	\$52,611,482	161.56	\$49,913,891	126,850	\$393.49
2022	\$58,955,232	174.68	\$51,733,235	128,555	\$402.42
2023	\$60,246,376	181.44	\$50,896,810	129,330	\$393.54
2024	\$63,831,167	185.81	\$52,656,161	130,900	\$402.26

****Total population for 2024 is sourced from the Population Estimates Program (PEP), while all other years are sourced from the American Community Survey (ACS)**

***Midwest CPI Class Size B/C - cities with a population less than 2.5 million.**

Fiscal Health

Local Tax Collection

Gasoline Tax

Gasoline taxes are dedicated funding sources as they provide funding for the construction and maintenance of roadways. From July 1st, 2024, the tax rate increased to \$0.27 per gallon. This rate will continue to increase until July 1, 2025, when the motor fuel tax rate will be \$0.295. That increase, combined with increasing gas prices in 2024, explains the nearly \$358 thousand increase in motor fuel tax revenue from 2023 to 2024. Over the period shown, motor fuel tax revenue – based on 2020 prices - has increased by around \$1.19 million or 43%, and per capita tax revenue has increased by \$8.37 or 38.19%.

Motor Fuel Tax Per Person

Fiscal Year	Motor Fuel (MF) Sales Tax	Population*	CPI	MF Sales Tax (2020 Chained)	MF Sales Tax per Capita (2020 Chained)
2020	\$2,766,311	126,254	153.28	\$2,766,311	\$21.91
2021	\$2,899,920	126,850	161.56	\$2,751,230	\$21.69
2022	\$3,439,866	128,555	174.68	\$3,018,483	\$23.48
2023	\$4,436,183	129,330	181.44	\$3,747,737	\$28.98
2024	\$4,794,347	130,623	185.81	\$3,954,994	\$30.28

***Total population for 2024 is sourced from the Population Estimates Program (PEP), while all other years are sourced from the American Community Survey (ACS).**

Hotel/Motel Tax

Hotel/Motel taxes are dedicated to promoting conventions, tourism, and economic development in the City. The City collects a hotel/motel tax at the rate of 5%. Currently, 20% of the tax is dedicated to planning and constructing airport terminal improvements. From 2020 to 2024, hotel/motel tax revenue increased by around \$2 million, or 91.4%. During this time period, the average tax per visitor has increased by \$1.77 or 46.4%. This trend follows the rate of inflation over the same time period.

Lodging Data [15]

Fiscal Year	Occupancy Rate	Average Occupied Room per Night	Average Daily Rate	Average Tax per Visitor*	Total Hotel/Motel Tax
2020	40.5%	1,592	\$76.24	\$3.81	\$2,194,844
2021	56.0%	2,262	\$89.80	\$4.49	\$2,601,760
2022	61.2%	2,377	\$104.45	\$5.22	\$3,628,169
2023	59.6%	2,097	\$108.39	\$5.42	\$4,026,024
2024	53.7%	1,928	\$111.55	\$5.58	\$4,234,732

***Excludes visitors with Hotel/Motel tax exemption certificates.**

Fiscal Health

Federal and State Support

Federal and State Funding

Grant revenue included in this analysis comes from both the state and federal governments. State grants are focused on local issues such as health, transportation, public safety, or conservation. Federal grants include mass transit grants from the Department of Transportation, non-motorized grants, police grants, and economic stimulus grants. These government grants typically are awarded for a one- to three-year period.

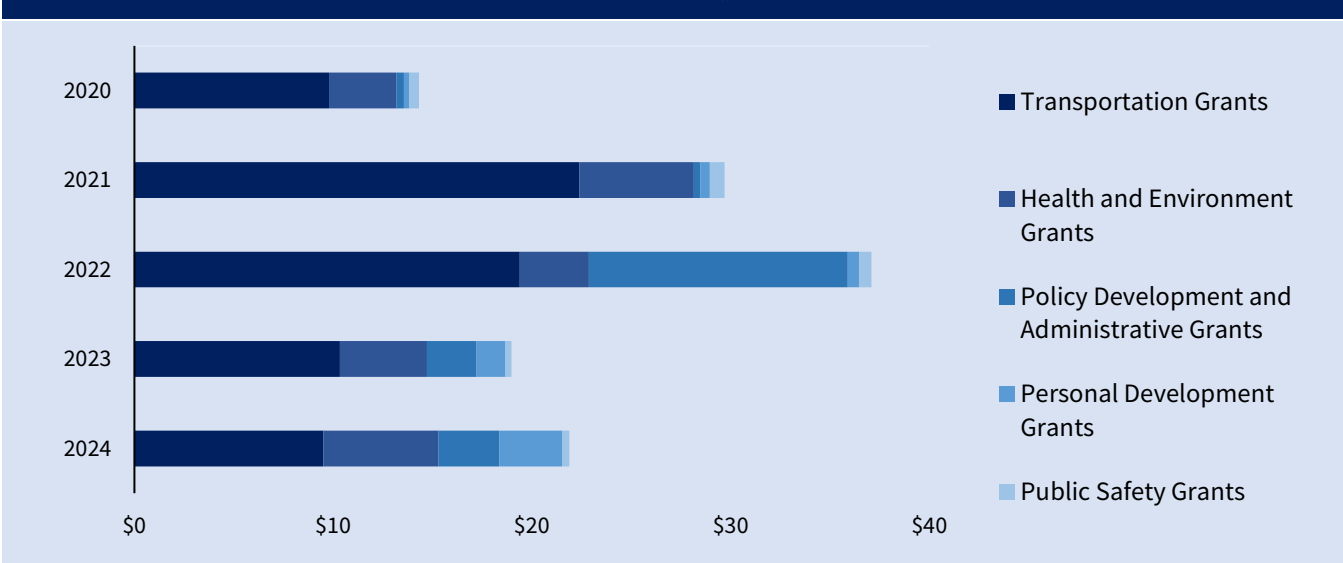
Analysis

The City of Columbia's grant revenue increased by 52.8% from fiscal years 2020 to 2024. During this period, the City also received one-time federal funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that dramatically increased grant revenue for 2021 and 2022. By 2023, the City's grant revenue started returning to pre-pandemic levels, decreasing as the COVID-era grants started coming to an end. A large portion of the grants received by the City in 2024 were related to transportation and infrastructure.

Federal/State Government Funding

Fiscal Year	Policy Development and Administrative Grants	Public Safety Grants	Transportation Grants	Health and Environment Grants	Personal Development Grants	Total Grants
2020	\$376,836	\$485,184	\$9,789,115	\$3,401,950	\$272,146	\$14,325,231
2021	\$332,098	\$742,228	\$22,383,592	\$5,761,800	\$475,984	\$29,695,702
2022	\$13,025,047	\$613,564	\$19,382,085	\$3,481,037	\$588,566	\$37,090,299
2023	\$2,496,779	\$328,315	\$10,345,377	\$4,377,799	\$1,427,296	\$18,975,566
2024	\$3,070,616	\$363,144	\$9,497,524	\$5,797,832	\$3,153,090	\$21,882,207

Federal/State Grants Awarded (in millions of USD), 2020-2024





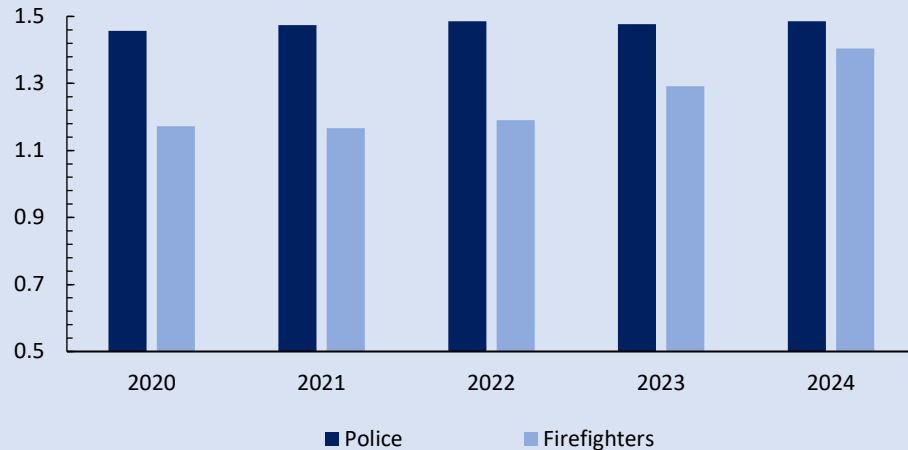
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community services encompass the essential support and resources provided to residents to enhance their quality of life and well-being. Emergency personnel, such as police and fire services, play a crucial role in ensuring public safety and responding to crises. Programs such as CARE (Career Awareness Related Experience) offer young people opportunities for skill development and employment, fostering their growth and future success. Utility assistance programs provide financial help to residents struggling to pay for basic utilities, ensuring access to essential services, including electricity, water, and heating.

Community Services

Public Safety – Budgeted

Public Safety Personnel per Thousand People - Budgeted



The City uses the standard FTE (full-time equivalent) for quantifying full-time, part-time, and other types of employees.

Police Per Thousand

Fiscal Year	Number of Police Officer Positions	Number of Civilian Positions	Total Number of Employees	Officers FTEs Per Thousand Population	Change in Number of Positions
2020	184	41	225	1.46	11
2021	187	52	239	1.47	14
2022	191	57	248	1.49	9
2023	191	59	250	1.48	2
2024	194	65	259	1.49	9

Police Department

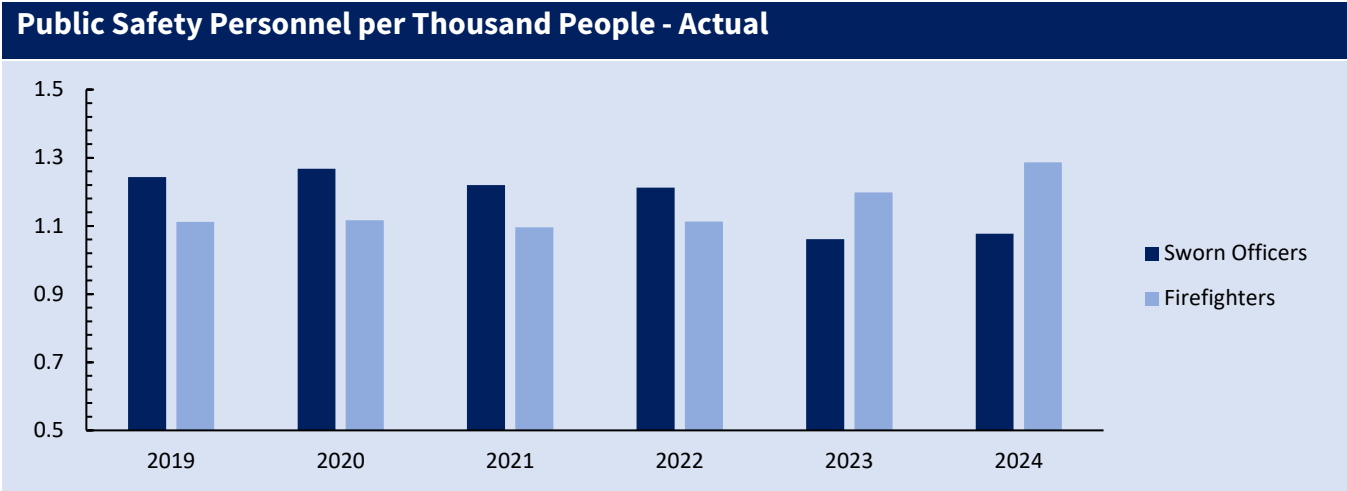
From 2020 - 2024, the number of budgeted police officer positions in the Columbia Police Department increased by 10.0 FTE. As Columbia's population has continued to grow, the number of budgeted police officers has increased at a slightly faster rate, resulting in a 0.03 increase in the ratio of officers per 1,000 residents since 2020.

Community Services

Public Safety – Actual

Actual Employment

Even though the City of Columbia budgets for a given number of police and fire positions each year, not all of these positions are filled. The actual employment metrics show how many emergency personnel positions were filled each year, and, especially in the case of police, can be different from the budgeted figures due to unfilled positions.



Police Officers per Thousand				Firefighters per Thousand		
Fiscal Year	Total Number of Sworn Officers	Sworn Officers Per Thousand Population	Change in Number of Positions	Total Number of Employees	Employees Per Thousand Population	Change in Number of Positions
2020	160	1.27	3	137	1.12	-
2021	154	1.22	-6	139	1.10	2
2022	153	1.21	-1	143	1.11	4
2023	134	1.06	-19	155	1.20	12
2024	136	1.08	2	168	1.29	13

Police Department	Fire Department
From 2020 - 2024, the actual number of sworn officers in the Columbia Police Department decreased by 24. Due to this decline in officers, the ratio of sworn officers to thousand residents has decreased by 0.19 in the last 5 years.	From 2020 to 2024, the actual number of Columbia Fire Department employees has increased by 31 as a result of opening a new fire station. As the population continues to grow, the number of fire employees has increased at a faster pace, resulting in a 0.17 increase in the ratio of fire employees per one thousand residents.

Community Services

CARE Program

CARE Program Operations		
Fiscal Year	Total Expenses	Work Site Partners
2020	\$354,897	73
2021	\$396,774	84
2022	\$407,753	81
2023	\$508,679	81
2024	\$577,003	73

CARE Program

The City of Columbia's Career Awareness Related Experience (CARE) program hires 14- to 20-year-olds who live in the City and/or attend a Columbia school, and places them in local businesses. The trainees gain much-needed real-world hands-on work experience while getting paid. CARE, which is administered through the City's Parks and Recreation Department, pays the trainees' wages in full. CARE's goals are for Columbia's youth to be ready to enter the workforce and become productive, self-sufficient citizens.

CARE Program Applications and Participation Statistics						
Fiscal Year	Number of Applicants	Applicants Placed	Percent Placed	% Minority Applicant	# Completed Program	% Completed Program
2020	332	144	43%	56%	143	99%
2021	438	154	35%	56%	152	99%
2022	250	139	54%	51%	139	100%
2023	357	129	36%	56%	125	97%
2024	454	129	28%	40%	127	98%

Analysis

Of the applicants that apply, the CARE program has only had enough funding to place less than half of the applicants most summers. Every time the minimum wage goes up, the pay for CARE's trainees, interns, and job coaches increases as well. Missouri's minimum wage has increased from \$9.45 per hour in 2020 to \$12.30 per hour in 2024, which explains why fewer applicants were placed this year, even though the program had a funding increase of over \$100,000. While there were over 100 more applicants, only the number of applicants placed remained same in 2024.

Community Services

Utility Assistance Program

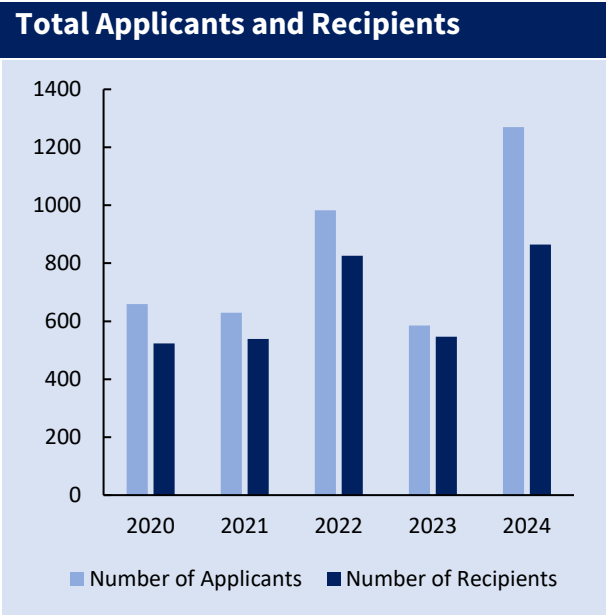
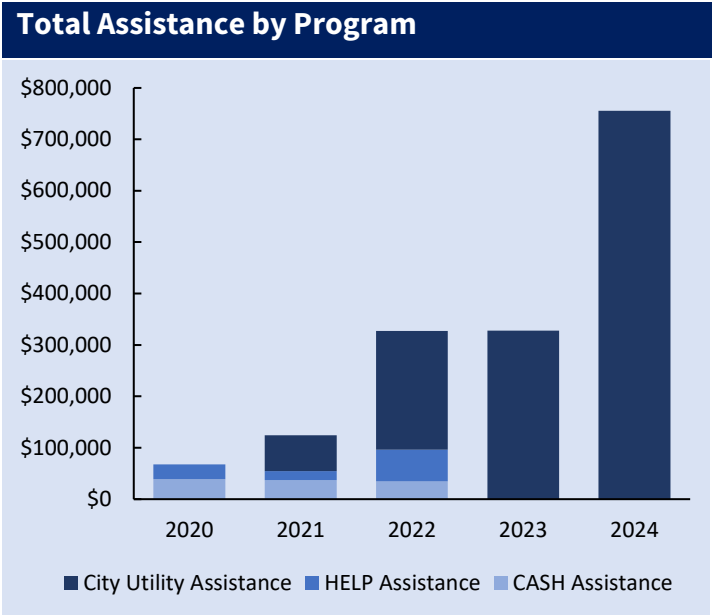
Utility Assistance Program

The City of Columbia offers utility assistance for seniors, persons with disabilities, and families with children aged 18 and younger who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Prior to 2021, these services were primarily funded by donations to CASH (Citizens Assisting Seniors and Handicapped) and HELP (Heat Energy and Light Program) programs. In FY 2021, the City Utility Assistance Program was developed, using contributions from the City's general revenue fund. The Utility Assistance program provides the same services and has the same eligibility, while affording more flexibility in implementation. Total funding has increased by \$687,460 from 2020 to 2024, due in part to a city council-approved \$600,000 transfer from the general fund revenue in FY24. The City administration is combining all sources of funds into one pool for the purpose of better disbursement.

Utility Assistance

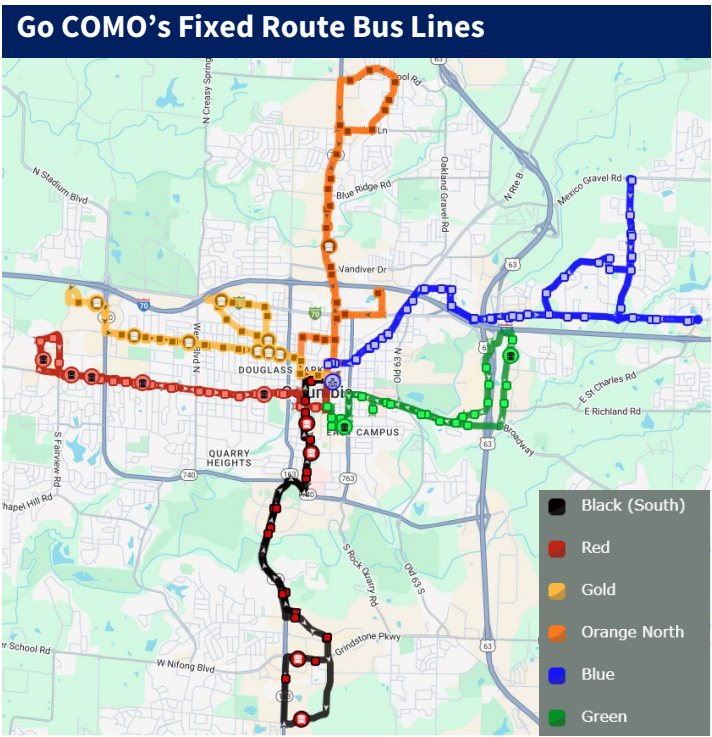
Fiscal Year	Number of Applicants	Number of Recipients	CASH Assistance	HELP Assistance	City Utility Assistance	Total Assistance
2020	659	523	\$39,008	\$28,912	-	\$67,920
2021	629	539	\$36,924	\$17,503	\$69,712	\$124,139
2022	983	826	\$34,747	\$61,274	\$230,988	\$327,009
2023*	920	801	-	-	\$327,900	\$327,900
2024	1270	864	-	-	\$755,380	\$755,380

***Note:** The number of applicants and recipients have been revised from the 2023 Community Trend Manual.



Community Services

Public Transit

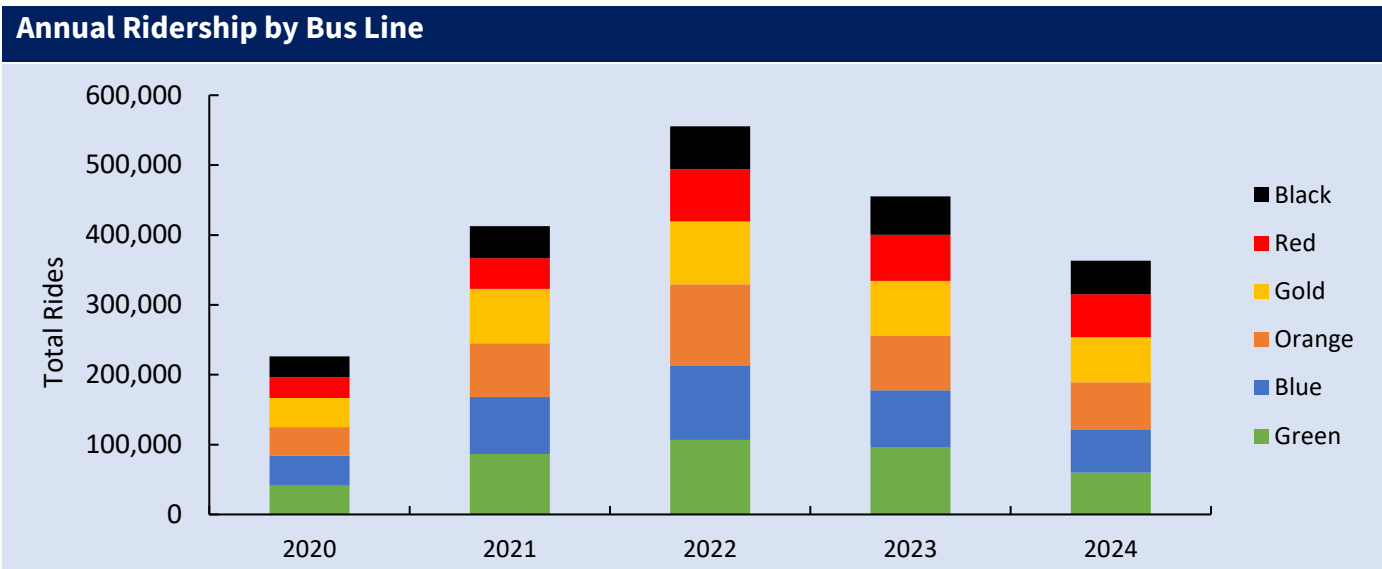


Analysis [18]

Since 2020, Go Como (Columbia, Missouri public transportation) has implemented fare-free bus service along all six of its bus routes. However, ridership has declined in recent years. Notably, the number of bus rides in 2023-24 (348,150) represents a significant decline of 37% compared to 2022-23. Ridership decline is largely attributable to bus driver-related staffing shortages.

Analysis [18] [19]

Passenger Miles Traveled (PMT) refers to the total number of miles passengers have traveled on city buses each year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership plummeted. From 1.5 million PMT in 2021 to 2.8 million PMT in 2022, pandemic concerns began to subside, and ridership started returning to normal levels. However, in 2023, ridership (measured in passenger-miles traveled, or PMT) declined by 12% from the previous year due to staffing shortages, causing less consistent bus services.





SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability focuses on the long-term health of the environment and community by addressing and reducing environmental impacts. Total community greenhouse gas emissions are measured from sources such as residential energy use, transportation, and general waste, all of which contribute to the local carbon footprint. The Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP) outlines strategies to reduce these emissions, aiming to mitigate the impact of climate uncertainties by promoting energy efficiency, reducing vehicle emissions, and managing waste more sustainably.

Sustainability

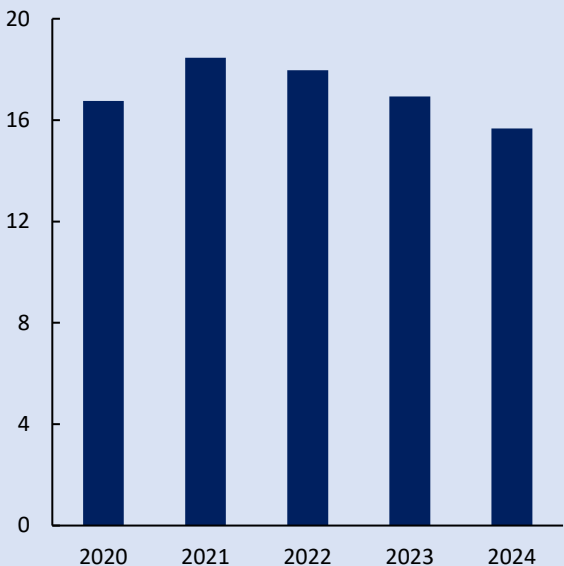
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Total GHG Emissions [16]

The total community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of a community are comprised of residential, commercial, and industrial energy use as well as transportation, solid waste, wastewater, and process and fugitive emissions from natural gas within Columbia city limits. Emissions are measured in metric tons or CO2 equivalent (MTCO2e). The City of Columbia's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) outlines goals to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions to 1.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e) by 2035 and under 477,000 MTCO2e by 2050.

Per capita emissions are used to measure changes in emissions in relation to population. Factors such as improved energy efficiency in buildings, increased supply of renewable energy, and low-emission transportation vehicles can decrease per capita emissions. As Columbia's population grows, per capita emissions will need to decrease to achieve the emissions reduction goals outlined in the CAAP.

Per Capita GHG Emissions (MTCO2e) [16]



GHG Emissions (MTCO2e) [16]

Year	Total Community GHG Emissions	Per Capita Emissions
2020	2,114,303	16.75
2021	2,341,420	18.46
2022	2,308,872	17.96
2023	2,189,333	16.76
2024	2,046,867	15.67

Analysis [16]

GHG emissions are influenced by changes in weather (e.g., colder winters, hotter summers), energy efficiency, and human behavior. Total community emissions fell by 1.08 MTCO2e or 3.2% over the period shown. Per capita GHG emissions in 2024 were lower than 2020 levels, mainly due the adoption lower residential, commercial, and industrial energy usage. This trend shows Columbia's increasingly efficient use of energy over the last two years.

Sustainability

Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector

GHG Emissions by Sector [16]

The residential energy, transportation, and waste sectors are all directly influenced by population size. Per capita emissions in these sectors are used to understand how emissions per sector are changing in relation to population changes. For each sector, the CAAP outlines plans and goals to reduce emissions. Successful implementation of the CAAP will decrease overall and per capita emissions in each of these sectors over time.

Per Capita GHG Emissions by Sector (MTCO2e) [16]			
Year	Per Capita Residential Energy Emissions	Per Capita Transportation Emissions	Per Capita Waste Emissions
2020	4.44	3.69	0.34
2021	4.66	4.64	0.32
2022	4.47	4.75	0.25
2023	4.01	4.79	0.31
2024	3.35	4.58	0.31

Analysis [16]

The residential energy sector represents emissions from natural gas and electricity use in Columbia homes. To reduce energy use in this sector, renewable energy generation needs to be increased, and building energy efficiency needs to be improved. From 2020 to 2024, residential energy emissions per capita fell by 24.5%.

The transportation sector includes emissions from vehicles traveling within the city limits of Columbia. Transitioning to lower-emission vehicles, increased use of public transportation, and improving active transportation infrastructure are all methods to decrease this form of emissions. From 2020 to 2024, transportation emissions per capita decreased by 4.4%.

Waste emissions in the city of Columbia are generated from solid waste decomposition in landfills and wastewater processing. The active cells at the City of Columbia Sanitary Landfill bioreactors are designed and managed to decompose and stabilize the waste quickly. This also produces methane gas at a faster rate, some of which is used to generate electricity at the landfill site. Per capita waste sector emissions have remained at around 0.3 MTCO2e per resident for the last 5 years.

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