



McCracken County PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan | 2024-2028

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Executive Summary

In November 2023, the Board of Trustees of the McCracken County Public Library determined that a strategic plan should be created for the operation of the library for the four-year period beginning with the 2024-2025 budget year. The board desired that the plan utilizes Board, employee, and community inputs to address the many internal and external factors affecting the library and hired Miller Consulting Group to facilitate the input and planning sessions and to help draft the final plan. The strengths, weaknesses and opportunities identified in the input process helped the board draft the goals contained in this plan.

Work began on the plan, evaluating Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. After evaluating board and staff inputs, the process to gather public input was started. A public survey was launched to gauge the public's feelings about the library as it stands now, and to solicit ideas of how to improve the library in the future. In general, the public is supportive and understanding and they love their library. No glaring library deficiencies were identified as a result of the Board, staff, and community input. However, common themes were identified. This input was used to help craft the goals set by the board in this plan.

In its final planning session, after considering all the input, the board set four major goals for the next three-four years. While each individual idea and issue could not be included, the board focused on those that were mentioned the most and those that had the greatest community focus. All other input was evaluated by the board for possible inclusion in future planning.

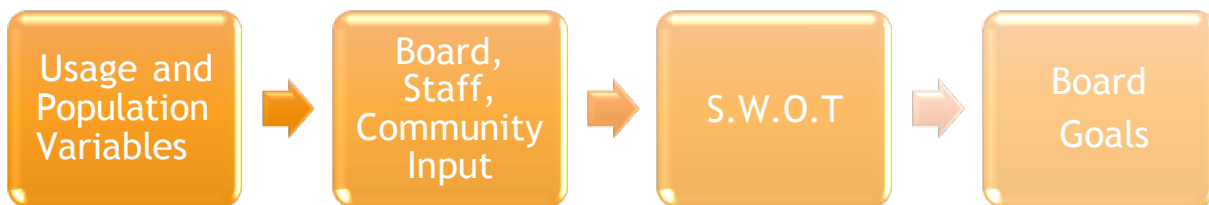
Strategic Planning Process

The Board of Trustees of the McCracken County Public Library approved the following process for completing the strategic plan.



Methodology

The fundamental goal during the strategic planning process was one of inclusion and openness. The process for creating and writing the strategic plan for the McCracken County Public Library followed the traditional method of evaluation of current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Specific variables that impact the library and the citizens of McCracken County were evaluated to determine how they might impact the library and its ability to serve the community. These variables included current library use, current and projected population as well as the impact of population growth on library use, and an estimation of future population changes in the County.



Strategic Plan Timeframe

This strategic plan covers the Calendar years 2024-2028, beginning July 2024 and ending December 31, 2028. The plan allows for flexibility and leaves room in the final year for action items that might need to be pushed back due to unforeseen events.

Role of Consultant

Dan Miller, of Miller Consulting Group, met regularly with the Library Director and the Board of Directors; he also led the board, staff and community input process.

Miller Consulting Group generated the strategic plan report using the information gathered and the decisions of the Board.

Library Mission Statement

The following Mission Statement was reviewed and affirmed at the December 2023 meeting of the Board of Trustees. The strategic plan reflects this Mission Statement.

Mission Statement:

To engage our community in literacy, self-guided learning and access to information.

Vision Statement:

To be a safe, welcoming community center focused on information access for all.

Kentucky Public Library Standards

The Kentucky Public Library Association in cooperation with the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives has established standards for measurement of public library services. Public libraries are judged to be essential, enhanced, or exemplary based on measurements established by the Standards Committee. The McCracken County Public Library completes a self-evaluation bi-yearly to determine progress made toward achieving exemplary status.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the Standards were used as a measurement tool for successful accomplishment of the plan goals. The McCracken County Public Library seeks to improve in each of the seven standards areas during each measurement period to reach and maintain exemplary status.

Planning is the keystone for a dynamic, evolving organization. For years the public library community has embraced planning as a core value. The most effective tool for evaluating a library's progress and defining goals for future development is a written plan. Planning is a prelude to effective utilization of standards and is reflected in the seven key service areas of Kentucky Public Library Standards.

Standards provide a guide to excellence. They define the kind of public library services that should be available to all Kentuckians. Stressing ongoing planning and evaluation, standards provide baseline data and establish a strong foundation from which to develop local goals to address local needs. They are an essential assessment tool to use in evaluating the library's effectiveness and a guide to assist in planning for improved services. The utilization of standards can maximize the library's role in the community by focusing resources. The ultimate outcome is heightened visibility and support for the library.

The Seven Standards are:

- Governance and Administration
- Human Resources
- Collections
- Services
- Facilities
- Technology
- Marketing/Public Relations

The entire standards document is available at: <https://kpla.org/standards/>

Kentucky Public Library Standards: Direction and Service for the 21st Century, 6th Edition
Kentucky Public Library Association in cooperation with the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives.

Evaluation of Population Growth and Distribution

Using data provided by the United States Census Bureau, the Library Board looked at population growth over the past five years and projections for the future. The McCracken County population has grown slightly from the beginning of the pandemic according to the Census and projections. Growth projections are slow but steady and better than other counties in the state.

This population stability is atypical for Kentucky counties, especially those in the Western half of the state. It bodes well for the stability of the tax base in the coming years.

McCracken County

	Population Projections							
	2010	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Total Population	65,565	67,875	68,742	69,450	70,013	70,529	71,063	71,761
Population in Households	64,376	65,731	67,573	68,272	68,826	69,333	69,858	70,547
Population in Group Quarters	1,189	2,144	1,169	1,178	1,187	1,196	1,205	1,214
Households	28,227	28,932	29,921	30,250	30,413	30,563	30,637	30,828
Mean Household Size	2.28	2.27	2.26	2.26	2.26	2.27	2.28	2.29

Note: HH=Household, GQ=Group Quarters

Population Change (2010-2020)	
Percent Change	3.5%
Numeric Change	2,310
Natural Increase	-324
Net Migration	2,639
Percent Change (2000-2010)	0.1%

Vital Stats (2015-2019)	
Total Fertility Rate	1.97
Female Life Expectancy at Birth	79.9
Male Life Expectancy at Birth	73.5
Migration Rate (per 1,000)	45.2

Library Usage

The McCracken County Public Library records statistics on a variety of usage measurements. Statistical areas include attendance, circulation, computer usage and the number of public meetings held. Usage data is compiled and reported to the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives annually.

The Library Board determined that usage statistics for the past three years were not indicative of future use due to the pandemic and the focus should be on service and adaptability for the next three years.

Community Input

The Library Board and Library Director asked that the strategic planning process include input from the staff and the community. The staff provided valuable input through a staff input sessions providing many new ideas and identifying several opportunities for internal improvement. The Board and Library Director reviewed all suggestions from the staff.

Community input was provided using an online and printed survey to solicit ideas and opinions from the residents of McCracken County. Over 300 individuals participated in the surveys online and in print. .

The questions on the survey were open ended, thus giving those responding the opportunity to comment on any area of library service.

S.W.O.T Analysis

The best way to begin planning for the future is to understand where an organization stands currently. A common way to accomplish that understanding is to evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T). This strategic plan was created by first evaluating the S.W.O.T. as perceived by all main constituency groups: the Library Board of Trustees, the staff, and the community. Community input was open to all. The community input focused on strengths, weaknesses, ideas and opportunities. The Library Board also listed threats in addition to the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

The S.W.O.T. analysis was conducted using an open and inclusive process. Anyone interested was invited to contribute feedback. All input from the surveys was combined and collated to provide the Library Board with a complete list of all strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that were mentioned. The Library Board evaluated the entire list. Using the frequency of mention and by combining like statements into categories, the Board developed the lists of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Ideas presented on the following pages.

The complete lists will be used by the Library Director and the Library Board to create tactical plans and budget items for each year of the three-year plan cycle.

The Facts

All discussions of Strengths and Weaknesses began with an acknowledgement of the facts. These were external to the library and out of the library's control.

- COVID happened, the library learned from it
- The Library is in a good financial position
- The county is growing
- Revenue is stable
- Unemployment is low

Strengths

The following strengths were identified as the most mentioned and relevant to the situation. These are listed in no particular order.

- Facility/Space
- Staff
- Technology
- Collection and Programs
- Outreach Services
- Children's Programs/Services
- Support from the Community

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses were identified as the most relevant to the situation. strategic planning process. These are listed in no particular order. Weaknesses do not imply problems, but are areas where the board, staff and constituents see room for improvement. Weaknesses related to internal processes will be addressed through tactical plans and in the budget.

- Location
- Infrastructure/Maintenance
- Staffing level-Need more staff/Pay/Recruitment/HR
- Library Space/Arrangement
- Need more Patron Services
- Need more Partnerships

Opportunities and Ideas

Many ideas and opportunities were presented during the input process. The board and staff will use the complete list of ideas as they consider goals related to the following:

- Hours
- Programs
- Facility- Expand/Learn new ways to use
- Technology- print station, remote print
- More Outreach
- More Services- Self Checkout, easier Printing
- Marketing
- Use 501 C 3 Better

Threats

Threats are almost always external to the institution. While there is rarely any action to be taken, it is important that the board be aware of them and prepared just in case.

- Pressure to not raise taxes
- Economic uncertainties/Rising wages
- KY Retirement System
- Book Challenges
- Recruitment Challenges

Goals

Strengths are used as tools to accomplish goals, weaknesses and opportunities are used to determine the goals.

To be successful, the board sought to make each goal specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound. Each goal is evaluated as to the strengths the goal uses and the weaknesses it addresses. Specific steps toward achieving success for each goal are listed, and each goal has deadlines that are realistic and measurable.

Improvement in each area of the Kentucky Public Library Standards is addressed and included as a measurement tool.

Ongoing Process

Each year of the strategic plan, the Library Director will present a budget to the board that addresses the goals and the steps needed to accomplish the goals. The annual budget may include additional goals as set by the board.

All input gained from the staff and community during strategic planning will be evaluated by the Director and incorporated, when possible, into the yearly plans.

Goal #1- Business Services and HR Director

Due to the recent notice that the Business Manager is leaving, the Library Director and Board will examine options for create a new position to combine the function of Business Services and Human Resources.

Action Item	Assigned to:	Due date:
Evaluate current Business and HR needs for the library	Library Board and Library Director	6/3/24
Create a job description and approve it, taking into account: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Other libraries with similar staff size. 2. Best practices 3. Budget 4. Existing staff 	Library Board/Library Director	6/5/24
Post position and begin the interview process.	Library Director	6/5/24
Add additional funds to budget if needed.	Library Board/Library Director	TBA
New HR person begins work	Library Director	6/27/24

Goal #1

Strengths Used	Weaknesses Addressed	State Standards Addressed
Staff	Pay Communication HR Process	Human Resources

Goal #2- Facility

Evaluate the building and space for improvement or expansion

Action Item	Assigned to:	Due date:
Create a committee of stakeholders including staff, leadership, and patrons to evaluate the facility and possible improvements.	Library Director	9/1/24
Hire a consulting architect to help determine what is possible and estimate costs.	Facility planning committee	12/1/2024
Consulting architect will evaluate current space and future space needs. Work with library staff to determine what is possible.	Facility planning committee	1/1/25-5/31/25
Report results to the board	Facility planning committee	6/25
Board evaluates recommendations Determines timing- current budget year or next year.	Board of Trustees	6/25-9/25
Based on recommendations of the committee, add funds to budget for completing the project.	Board of Trustees	10/2025
Issue RFP for architect or contractor depending on scope of work needed	Library Director Board of Trustees	TBA based on Board decision
Evaluate RFP Responses- Choose an architect/contractor	Board of Trustees	TBA based on Board decision
Architect/contractor begins work	Board of Trustees Architect	TBA based on Board decision

Goal #2

Strengths Used	Weaknesses Addressed	State Standards Addressed
Staff	Facility	Facilities
Facility		Marketing
Community Support		Governance & Admin

Goal #3-Programs and Outreach

Evaluate all Library programs to determine the need for expansion or change. Create an evaluation system to determine of programs should continue or expand.

Action Item	Assigned to:	Due date:
Evaluate and make changes to programs as needed immediately	Library Director	1/1/25
Assign staff team leader to lead evaluation process	Library Director	Start 2/1/2025
Create task force to evaluate all programs	Library Director, Staff Team leader	Start 2/1/2025
Evaluate all current programs for need and relevance. Involve director, staff, and patrons. Use feedback from public survey.	Staff team leader Task Force	2/1/25-4/1/25
Using resources from KDLA, PLA and ALA, determine what a successful program looks like (when to stop doing a program, when a program is so big it needs to move to new venue, etc.)	Staff team leader Task Force	2/1/25-4/1/25
Present findings, recommendations to director for review	Staff team leader Task Force	4/2/25
Evaluate possible new programs for need and relevance. Involve director, staff, and patrons	Staff team leader Task Force	5/1/25-7/31/25
Present findings, recommendations to director for review	Staff team leader Task Force	8/25
Present findings, recommendations to board for review	Library Director Staff team leader	9/25
Implementation programs with no budgetary impact	Library Director Staff team leader	NLT 10/25
Recommend changes for inclusion in budget	Library Director	11/25
Implement programs that require additional funding	Library Director Staff team leader	Beginning 2026

Goal #3

Strengths Used	Weaknesses Addressed	State Standards Addressed
Staff	Programs	Services
Programs		Collections
Customer Service		Governance & Admin
Community Partnership		Marketing

Goal #4- Services

Review all services and outreach that the library currently offers to determine if there is a need for change or expansion.

Action Item	Assigned to:	Due date:
Assign staff team leader and team of other stakeholders to lead evaluation process.	Library Director	Starting 9/1/26
Evaluate all existing services offered by the library, including all outreach programs. Use public input.	Evaluation Team	NLT 12/31/26
Report initial finding to the Library Director	Evaluation Team	1/27
Report Findings to the Board.	Evaluation Team Library Director	2/27
Evaluate budget impact of the recommendations of the report.	Library Director Board of Trustees	3/27
Approve plan and add funds to budget to implement.	Board of Trustees	4/27
Begin implementation of new services/outreach	Library Director and Staff	7/27

Goal #4

Strengths Used	Weaknesses/Opportunity Addressed	State Standards Addressed
Staff	Outreach	Services
Services	Services	Technology
Outreach		

Resources

Kentucky State Data Center. *2010 Population Projections*. Louisville, KY, USA: University of Louisville, Kentucky State Data Center, 2010.

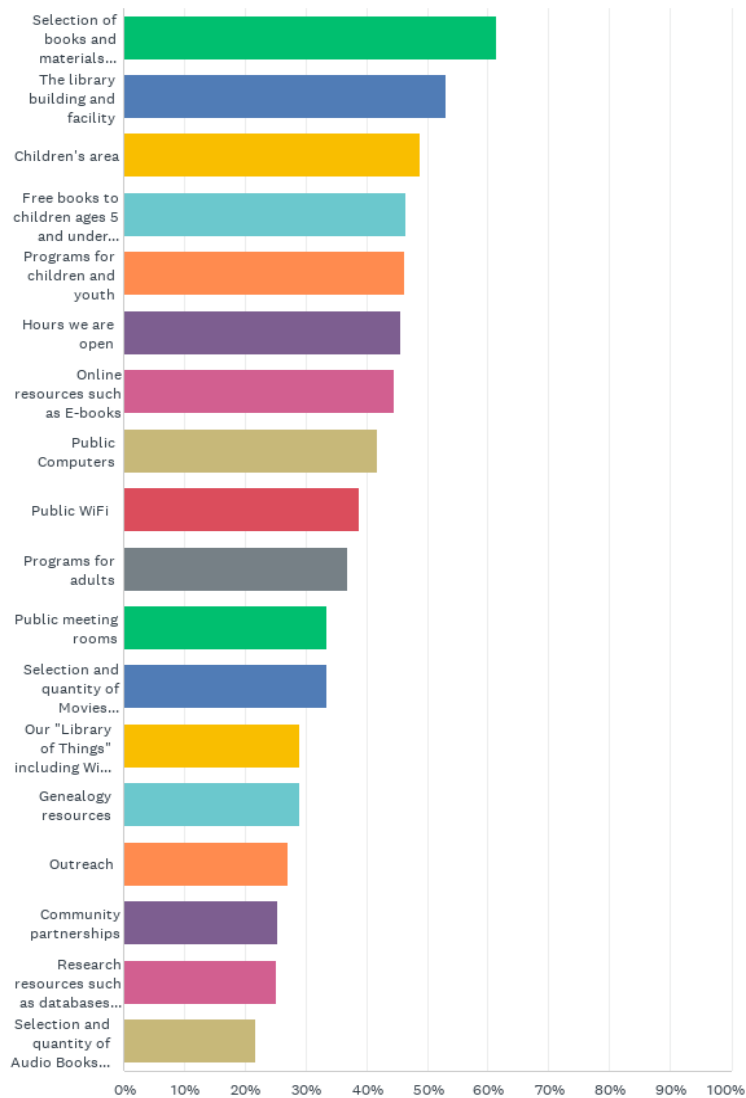
Nelson, Sandra S. *Strategic Planning for Results*. Chicago, IL, USA: American Library Association, 2001. Print.

Nelson, Sandra S. *The New Planning for Results: a Streamlined Approach*. Chicago, IL, USA: American Library Association, 2001. 2nd edition. Print.

American Library Association. *State of America's Libraries Report-2015*. Chicago, IL, USA: American Library Association, 2015. Print.

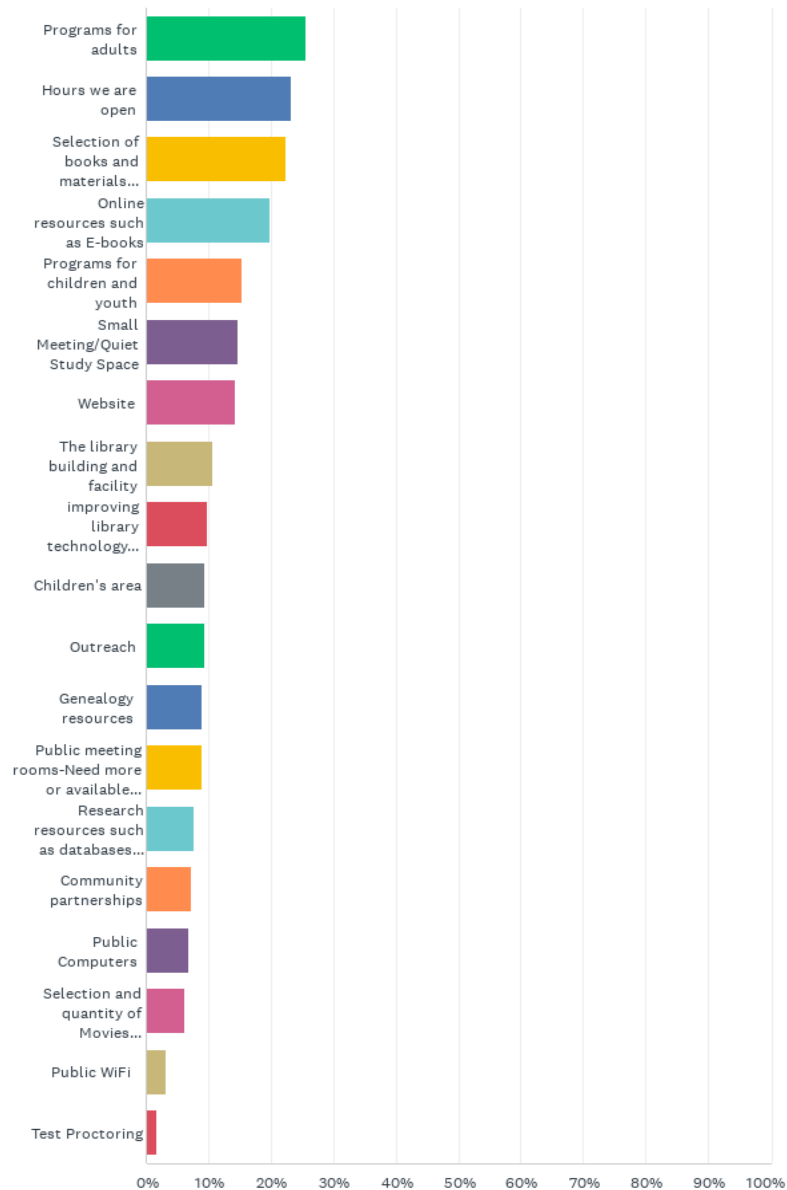
Verbatim Responses from Patron Survey Online Survey

Q5 Please tell us what you think we do well. What do you like best about the library? Check all that apply.



Verbatim Responses from Patron Survey Online Survey

Q6 Please tell us what you think we could improve. Select all that apply.



Selected Patron Comments

I lost my job during the pandemic, having computers available and free printing made applying for jobs and printing out copies of my resume were a lifesaver. I got another job before I got evicted - I'd have lost my job if it weren't for the library. This library is a literal lifesaver

The audio books have very important for people that for one reason or another cannot get to the library. The mp3 format allows those of us that eye problems to enjoy the books.

Be open more hours, especially on weekends.

Excellent facility and staff.

I'm pleased with what the library offers me.

Coordinate with community programs to support the homeless population. It does not deter me from going whatsoever, but I've heard other people say they don't go because of it.

Keep up the great work! The staff are wonderful and always patient with my kids. Everyone is very kind. Thank you.

Follow technology. Paper books are slowly being replaced by electronic versions. Be ready for all things modern or be ready to be left behind.

Believe the library is a valuable resource for our community and especially for low to middle income families. Continuing to build on those demographics but also highlighting how the library can benefit upper middle to higher income demographics could expand the reach of the library.

My wife and I have three children under 11 and we've lived in four states. The McCracken County library is the best public library we've used. The staff is incredible and the policies are tremendously helpful for a busy family with young children. The staff makes the library a special treat for our children. My middle child is shy but the staff makes him feel like he can ask for help without being embarrassed. Keep up the great work.

I think we have an exceptionally fine library. My impression has always been that its leadership is always looking for/coming up with innovative ideas to keep the library up-to-date and moving into the future.

Appendix 1- Population and Census Data

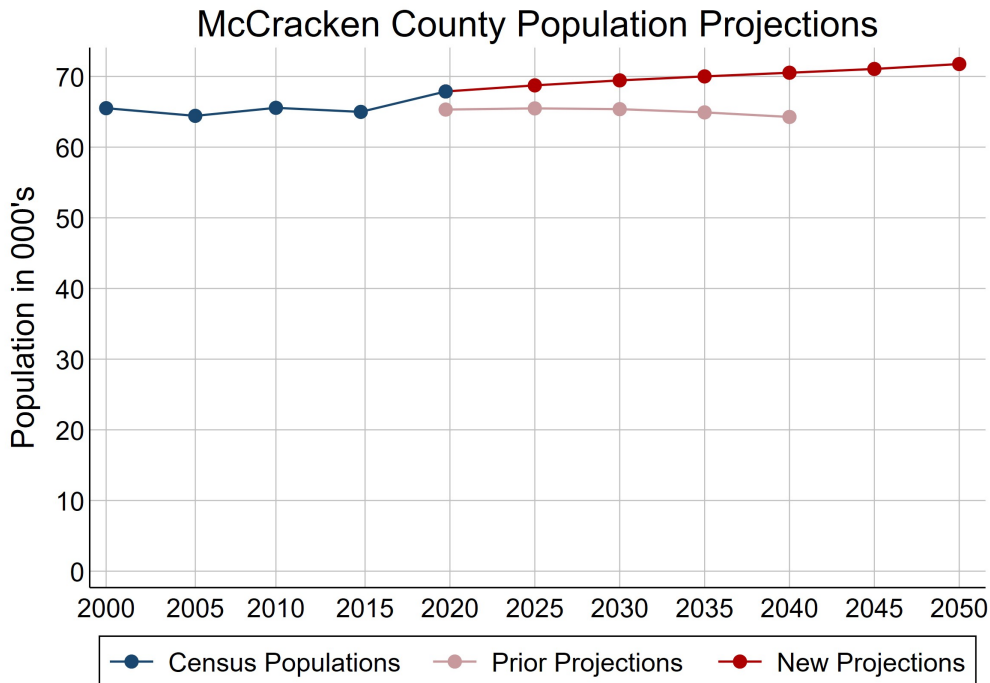
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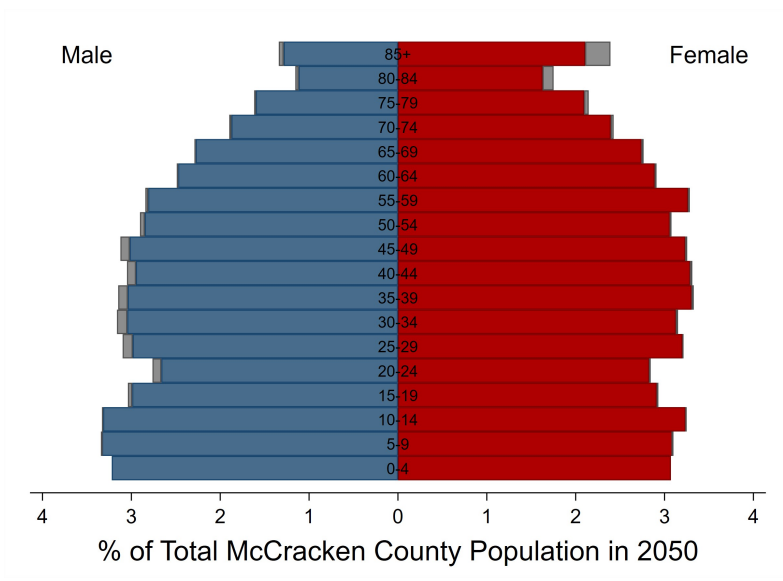
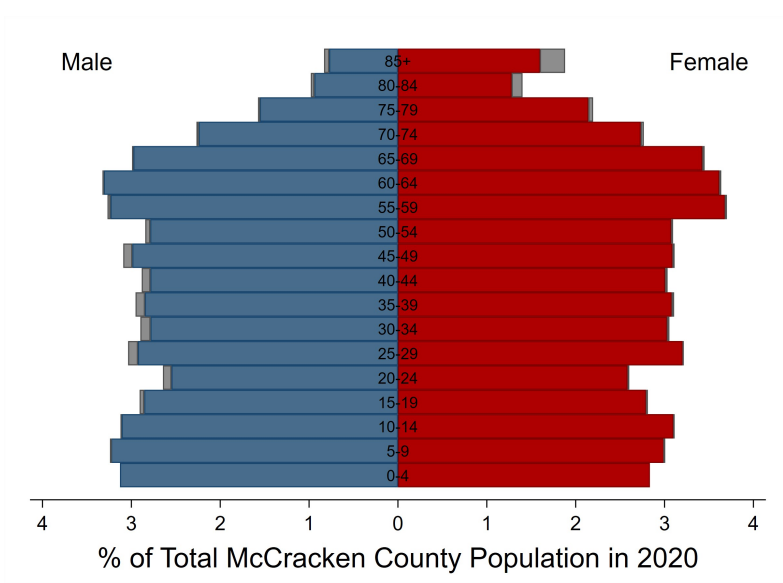
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Male Life Expectancy at Birth	73.5
Migration Rate (per 1,000)	45.2



Source- Kentucky State Data Center/2020 Census.

McCracken County Population Pyramids

McCracken County Sex by Age



Note: Blue and red bars represent population in households. Grey bars represent population in group quarters.

Source- Kentucky State Data Center/2020 Census.