Montgomery County
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan | 2022-2025

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

In October 2019, the Board of Trustees of the Montgomery County Public Library determined that a strategic plan should be created for the operation of the library for the five-year period beginning with the 2020-2021 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, work began to gather public input. In March 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic hit and most libraries, including Montgomery County, were forced to close for in-person services. This unprecedented event created a complete disruption in service and the Board and staff were required to quickly find ways to serve the public. There was no clear guideline from state or local officials on how best to provide library services.

Work on the strategic plan stopped to focus on adapting to the difficult situation. As the pandemic conditions changed, the library adapted to provide services to the public. As of this date, the library is still adapting to the changing environment and doing their best to keep the staff and public safe while providing the public with the books, information and entertainment they need.

As the library reached a "new normal." Work began on the strategic plan again in June of 2021. Strengths and Weaknesses were revisited and the consultant spent time with the staff discussing the events of the previous year and lessons learned from working during a pandemic. It became clear that the next few years will be more about adapting and serving than planning. The library can't control the pandemic or the public's response to it, so the most logical approach is to create a plan for targeted goals for the next two years and then create a more strategic plan down the road.

A public survey was launched to gage the public's feelings about the library as is stands now, mid-pandemic. In general, the public is supportive and understanding and they have adapted to the current situation. 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 three major goals for the next five 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.

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

Strategic Planning Process

Strategic Planning Process Begins

↓

Board Planning Session #1

↓

Staff Input

↓

Public Input

↓

Board Planning Session #2

↓

Plan Writing

↓

Board Review of Draft Plan

↓

Board Approves Final 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 Montgomery 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 Montgomery 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.

Usage and Population Variables → Board, Staff, Community Input → S.W.O.T → Board Goals

Strategic Plan Timeframe

This strategic plan covers the Calendar years 2022-2025, beginning on January 1, 2022 and ending December 31, 2025. 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 sessions. 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 2019 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 Montgomery 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 Montgomery County Public Library seeks to improve in each of the seven standards areas during each measurement period in order 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:
http://kpla.org/wp-content/uploads/KPLA-Standards-5th-edition-2014-2015.pdf

*"Introduction" Kentucky Public Library Standards: Direction and Service for the 21st Century, 5th Edition, 2014-2015. 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 Kentucky Data Center at the University of Louisville and by the United States Census Bureau, the Library Board looked at population projections for the future. Montgomery County has had a 6.1% increase in population according to the 2020 census. This tracks higher than the growth rate for the state. The Hispanic population has grown by 40%, following the trend of the state and country.

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

Area	⇕ Diversity Index	⇕ Total Population	Total Population		Age 18 and Over		
			⇕ Hispanic	⇕ Not Hispanic, White	⇕ Total Population	⇕ Hispanic	⇕ Not Hispanic, White
United States	67	331,449,281	62,080,044	191,697,647	258,343,281	43,322,792	157,118,573
			18.7%	57.8%		16.8%	60.8%
	12↑	7.4%↑	23.0%↑	-2.6%↓	8.8%↑	19.9%↑	0.0%↑
Kentucky	35	4,505,836	207,854	3,664,764	3,483,900	133,075	2,905,545
			4.6%	81.3%		3.8%	83.4%
	10↑	3.8%↑	56.5%↑	-2.2%↓	5.1%↑	61.2%↑	-0.4%↓
Montgomery County, Kentucky	20	28,114	925	25,363	21,511	548	19,634
			3.3%	90.2%		2.5%	91.3%
	7↑	6.1%↑	40.2%↑	2.6%↑	7.6%↑	34.6%↑	4.5%↑
Census Tract 9201, Montgomery County, Kentucky	17	3,521	83	3,231	2,669	57	2,467
			2.4%	91.8%		2.1%	92.4%
	8↑	18.4%↑	7.8%↑	13.5%↑	18.7%↑	11.8%↑	14.1%↑

Source- US Census Bureau
See Appendix #1 for more detailed information about US Census projections for Montgomery County.

Library Usage

The Montgomery 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 two years were not indicative of future use 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 survey 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 both online and paper surveys to solicit ideas and opinions from the residents of Montgomery County before the pandemic began and mid-summer 2021. Nearly 100 individuals participated in two different surveys online or in person. Despite the significant challenges faced by the library management and staff, there are only minor differences between the two different surveys.

The questions on the survey cards and the online 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 five-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 19
- Funding didn't drop
- The information changes rapidly
- We are not in control

Strengths During the Pandemic

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

- Staff
- Customer Service
- We still promoted the library
- Collection
- Drive thru/Online holds
- Once we were able to have people in the building, we opened as we could, fax, copies, print
- While we were closed, we got a lot done. Cleaning, weeding, rearranging
- Carmargo got remodeled
- Biggest thing- social media content, online content
- Letting patrons know we could pick books
- Collected emails and kept people updated
- Updated inventory at Camargo during renovation
- Free fax
- Free printing
- Tax Forms on request

Weaknesses During the Pandemic

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.

- Outreach
- Programs-How do we adapt to closing?
- We need to improve the website
- Inventory- lost and conversions
- Training/cross training
- Communication with the public- people didn't know we were open or not.
- No crisis communication plan
- We didn't have a plan for the staff not coming in the building.

Are patrons using the library differently?

- The allow us to pick books for them
- They used the Drive thru more
- More people using WIFI from the parking lots
- Book clubs went virtual

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:

- Review Programs/Outreach
- Marketing needs a bigger emphasis
- Consider dropping late fees

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.

- COVID 19
- Economic uncertainties
- Inconsistent messaging related to COVID 19 from state, local and federal government

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- Crisis Communications Plan

Create a comprehensive crisis communications plan to assure the library is prepared in the event of a future crisis like COVID or natural disaster.

Action Item	Assigned to:	Due date:
Research existing crisis communication plans for libraries. Seek guidance from KDLA.	Library Director	2/1/22- 4/1/22
Create a planning committee. With representatives from the library staff, trustees, etc. Issues to consider- internal communication, external communication, access to phone and computer, cross training and communication with local authorities.	Library Director	4/1/22
Evaluate and document possible emergency situations and list all necessary participants, avenues of communication, numbers and passwords.	Planning committee Library Director	4/1/22-6/1/22
Report results to the board	Library Director	6/22
Publish completed report. Issue copies to all necessary staff and board members. Keep copies inside and outside the library.	Library Director Board of Trustees	6/22

Goal #1

Strengths Used	Weaknesses Addressed	State Standards Addressed
Staff	Communication with the public	Governance & Admin
Customer Service	No Crisis Communications plan	Marketing

Goal #2- Marketing/Website

Launch a new website to provide more information and services to patrons 24 hours a day. The pandemic showed the need for more virtual services and programs. Take into account the lessons learned from patron feedback and staff experience during the library shutdown.

Action Item	Assigned to:	Due date:
Evaluate current website for effectiveness. Seek good examples of other library websites including costs	Library Director, Marketing/PR Staff Member	3/1/22-4/1/22
Add funding to 2022-23 budget for website redesign	Library Director, Board of Trustees	5/22
Create a website redesign group with representatives from each major area of library	Library Director	7/1/22
Evaluate redesign renders and choose one	Library Director, Website redesign group	7/2022
Work with the vendor to redesign website	Library Director, Website redesign group	7/2022-12/31/22
Launch New website	Library Director, Website redesign group, Website Vendor	1/1/2023

Goal #2

Strengths Used	Weaknesses Addressed	State Standards Addressed
Staff	We need to improve the website	Marketing
Collection	Communication with the public	
Customer Service		

Goal #3-Programs/Services

Evaluate all Library programs to determine the need for expansion or change. Use lessons learned during the pandemic to see what program were useful and helpful and what new programs or services could be launched.

Action Item	Assigned to:	Due date:
Assign staff program leader to lead evaluation process	Library Director	Start 1/1/23
Create working group to evaluate all programs	Library Director, Staff Team leader	1/1/23
Evaluate all current programs for need and relevance. Evaluate possible new programs for inclusion. Involve director, staff, and patrons	Staff program leader Task Force	1/1/23-4/1/23
Present findings, recommendations to director for review	Staff program leader Library Director	4/1/23
Recommend changes for inclusion in budget	Library Director	4/1/23
Implementation programs with no budgetary impact	Library Director Staff program leader	5/1/23
Implement programs that require additional funding	Library Director Staff program leader	Beginning 7/23

Goal #3

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

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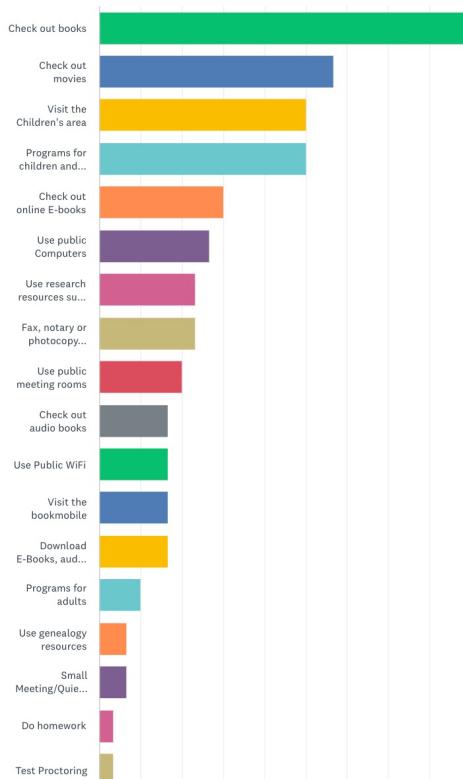
American Library Association. S*tate of America's Libraries Report-2015*. Chicago, IL, USA: American Library Association, 2015. Print.

Verbatim Responses from Patron Survey

Pre-Pandemic Survey

Please tell us how you use the library. What is the primary purpose of your typical library visit in person? Check all that apply.

Answered: 30   Skipped: 0

Current Survey

Please tell us how you use the library. What is the primary purpose of your typical library visit in person? Check all that apply.
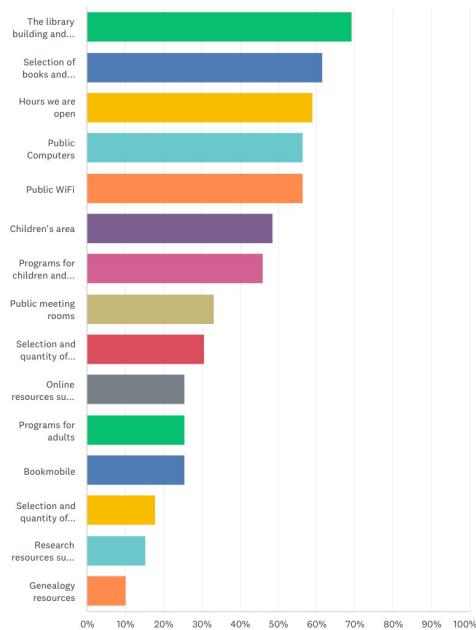
Answered: 39   Skipped: 1
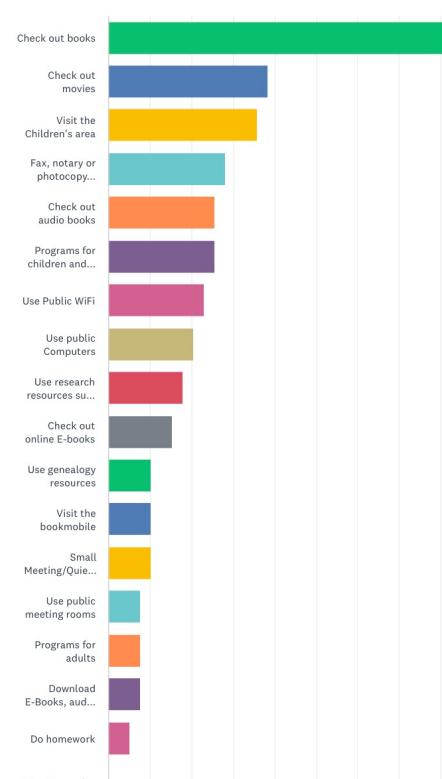
Verbatim Responses from Patron Survey

Pre-Pandemic Survey

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

Answered: 39   Skipped: 1

Current Survey

Please tell us what you think we do well. What do you like best about the library? Check all that apply.
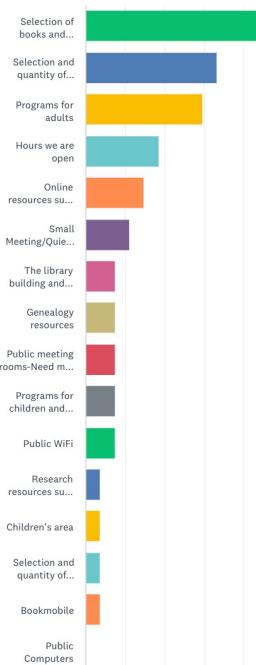
Answered: 30   Skipped: 0
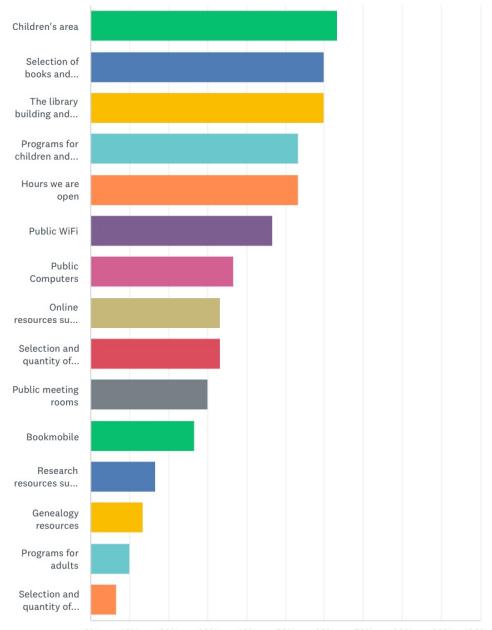
Verbatim Responses from Patron Survey

Pre-Pandemic Survey

Please tell us what you think we could improve. Select all that apply.
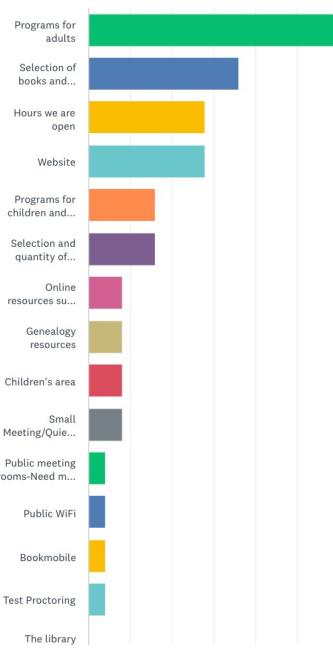
Answered: 27   Skipped: 13

Current Survey

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

Answered: 25   Skipped: 5

Patron Comments

"We LOVE OUR LIBRARY"

"Outstanding local resource"

"It might be just that I don't know where to look but I have trouble finding ideas for new reading on the website. Prior to the pandemic it was easier to come in and browse the shelves. Now if I put in a topic it generally suggests books with the topic as part of the title rather than all books within that topic."

"We love the library and are looking forward to normal hours and procedures again."

"Our family goes for entertainment, check out books/movies, summer book club, picnic and playground area"

"Would love to have more new releases in circulation. Also, please be sure to carry complete series and not just a few from a series!"

"The Staff is awesome!!!!!"

"The Camargo branch is great. I love the staff. Everyone is super friendly and very helpful. It is a Great Library!"

"Friendly and very helpful librarians!"

Appendix 1- Population/Census Data

Montgomery County

|	2010 Census	2015 Estimate	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	2035 Projection	2040 Projection
Total Population	26,499	27,608	29,421	31,241	33,051	34,810	36,571
Population in Households	26,142	27,251	29,060	30,876	32,682	34,437	36,194
Population in Group Quarters	357	357	361	365	369	373	377
Total Households	10,435	11,078	11,824	12,606	13,346	14,120	14,884
Average Household Size	2.51	2.46	2.46	2.45	2.45	2.44	2.43
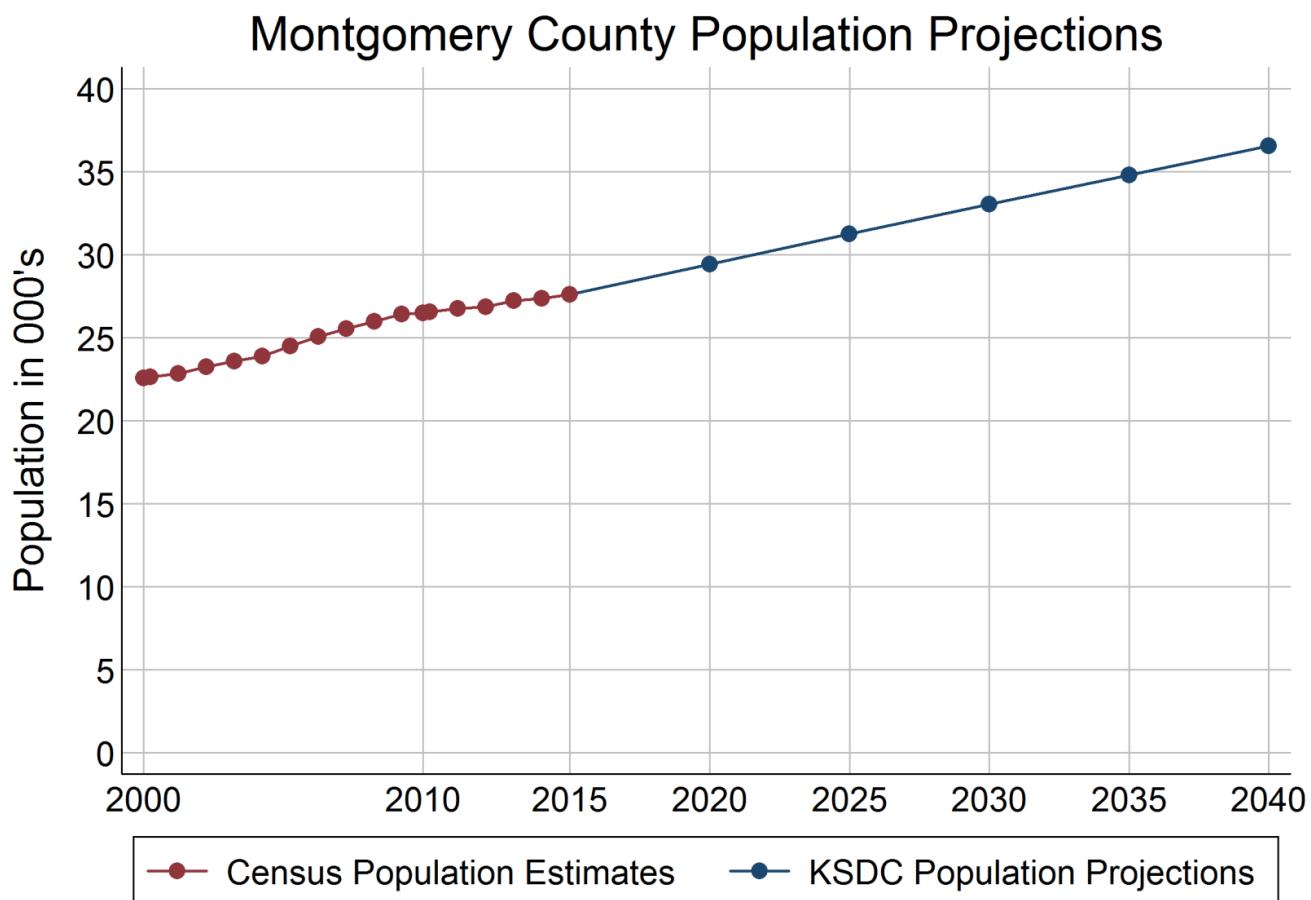
Montgomery County Population Projections

Source- Kentucky State Data Center/2016 Census. 2020 Projections not available as of publication date.

Montgomery County Population Pyramids
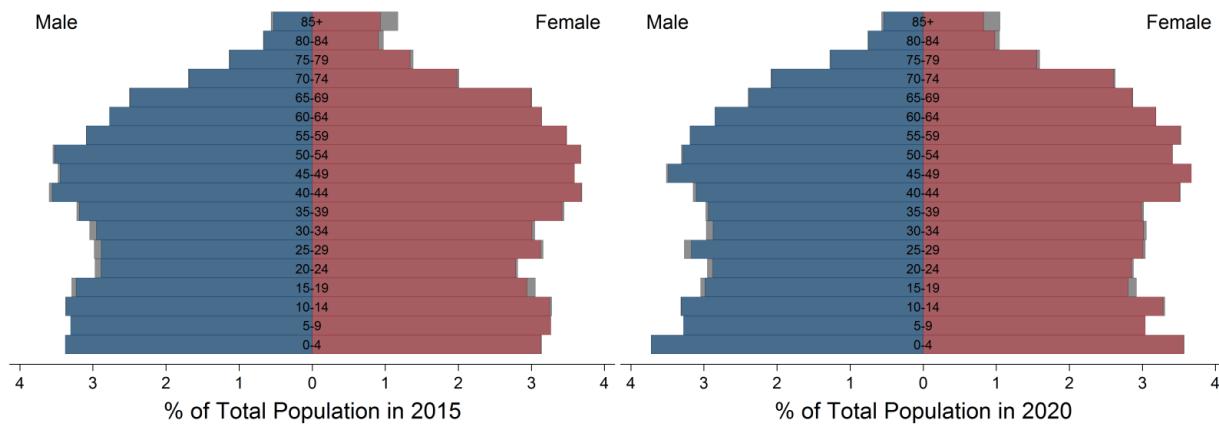
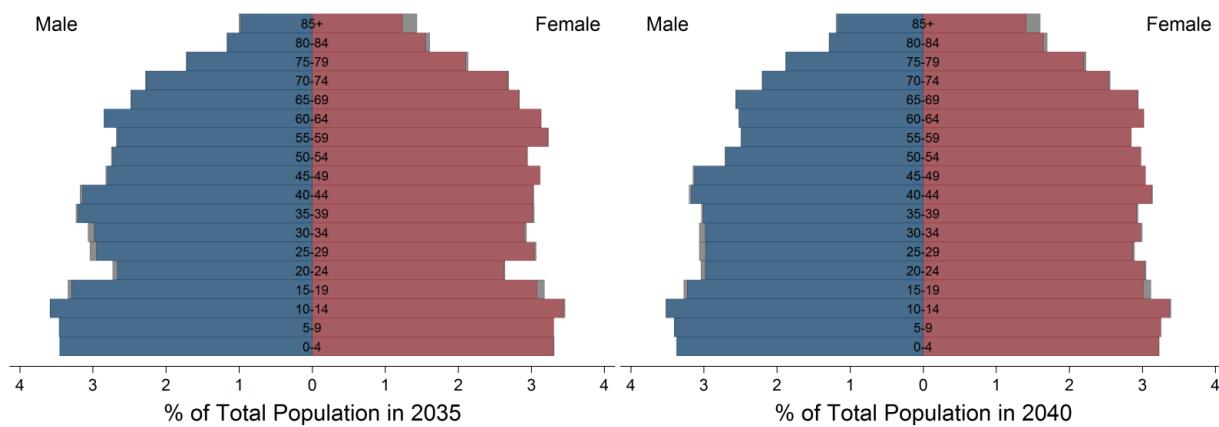% of Total Population in 2015

Note: Grey bars represent group quarter (GQ) population

% of Total Population in 2020

Note: Grey bars represent group quarter (GQ) population

% of Total Population in 2025

Note: Grey bars represent group quarter (GQ) population

% of Total Population in 2030

Note: Grey bars represent group quarter (GQ) population

% of Total Population in 2035

Note: Grey bars represent group quarter (GQ) population

% of Total Population in 2040
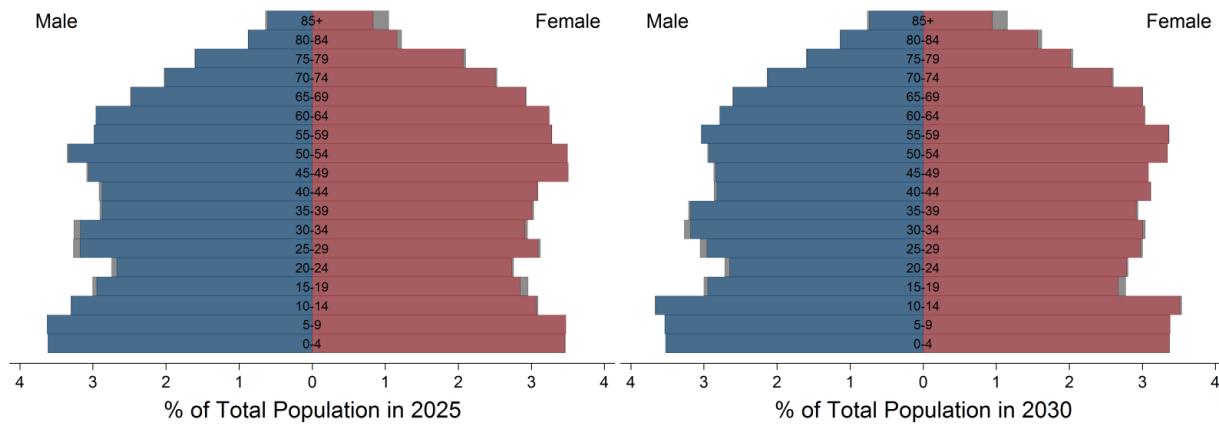
Note: Grey bars represent group quarter (GQ) population

Source- Kentucky State Data Center/2016 Census. 2020 Projections not available as of publication date.