



# PLACE matters

6.0

2025

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Community Health Endowment of Lincoln

in partnership with the  
Lincoln-Lancaster County  
Health Department



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# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS PLACE MATTERS

Since 2015, Place Matters has helped Lincoln understand how health is shaped by where we live. These maps don't just identify challenges; they guide solutions. Over the past decade, Place Matters has ushered millions of dollars in community investment, sparked collaborations, and revealed opportunities.

Local organizations use Place Matters to drive impact, such as the Food Bank of Lincoln's Lincoln Fresh truck, which delivers fresh produce to neighborhoods with limited access to healthy food; the Asian Community & Cultural Center's prenatal care program, where bilingual Community Health Workers offer culturally responsive support to immigrant and refugee mothers; and at the Belmont Community Center, where neighborhood-level data guides development strategies that strengthen families and community health.

Place Matters 6.0 continues this work—mapping health, sparking change, and empowering action for a healthier Lincoln.

## New to Place Matters 6.0

Place Matters 6.0 includes data about where individuals with disabilities reside, which can guide more inclusive health strategies and targeted support. It also maps health insurance coverage, helping to identify areas where outreach about enrollment options or low-cost health care may be most needed.

## Trends in Place Matters 6.0

Place Matters 6.0 shows an overall improvement in PACER scores, including gains in schools with high free

and reduced-price lunch participation, which reflects socioeconomic status.

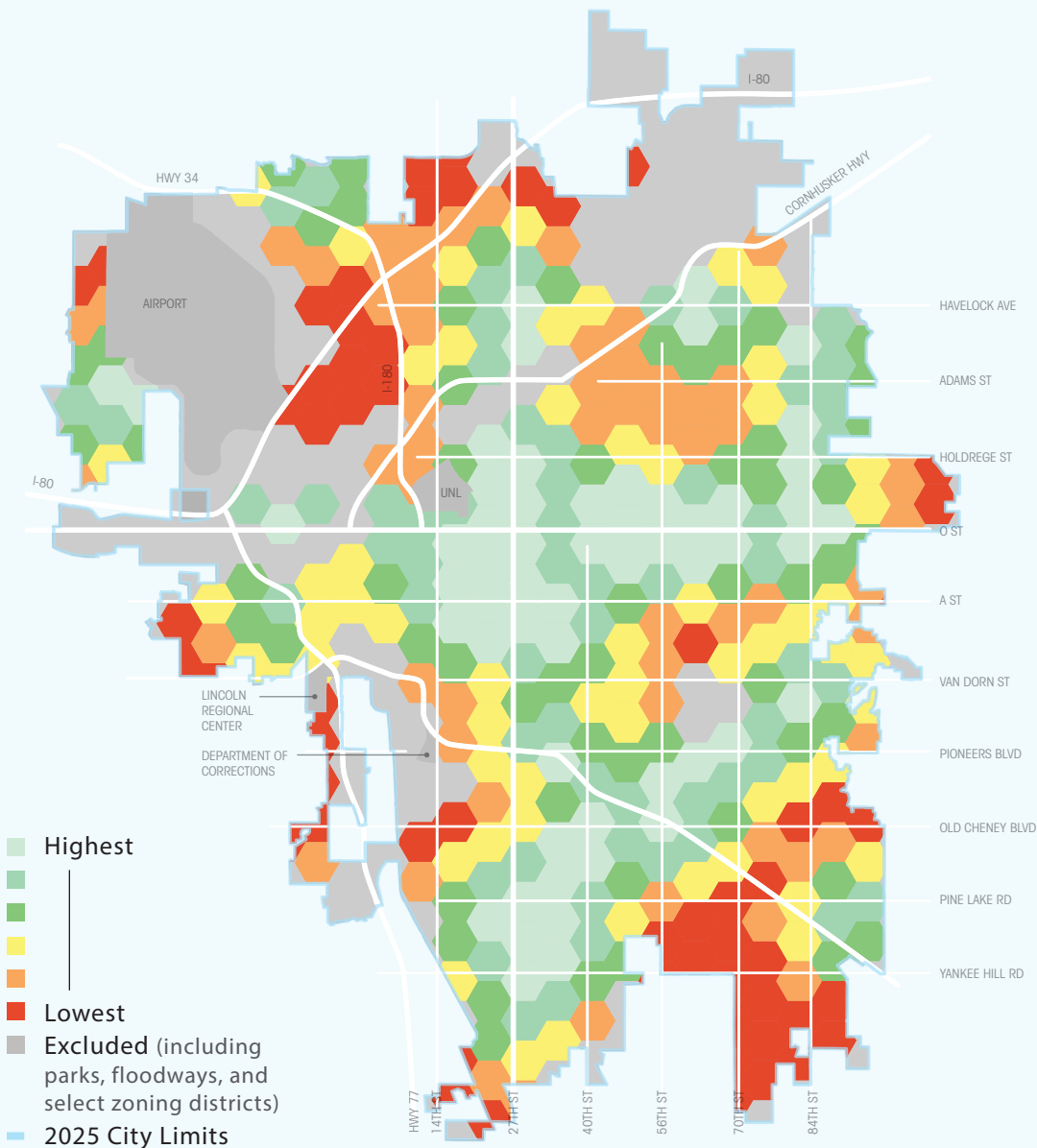
Place Matters 6.0 also demonstrates improvement in the percentage of Lancaster County residents in poverty, from 14.9% in the first edition in 2014, to 12% in 2021, to 11.2% in 2023. While poverty remains concentrated in several census tracts near the core of the city, some are trending in an improved direction.

The 10-year trend in life expectancy is more mixed. Lancaster County's overall life expectancy declined slightly from 80.1 years (First Edition of Place Matters, 2011–2013) to 79.5 years in Place Matters 6.0. However, the lowest census tract improved from 63.4 years to 69 years over the same period.

## Areas for Further Analysis

Health is a broad topic that deserves careful analysis, particularly in two key areas:

- 1 The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration states that mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. While mental health data is difficult to illustrate in the Place Matters publication, it is an important part of overall health.
- 2 Anyone who is not single-race White and not Hispanic is included in the minority population information. This definition is broad and encompasses a group of individuals who vary greatly in cultural and ethnic background as well as lived experience that is not fully illustrated.



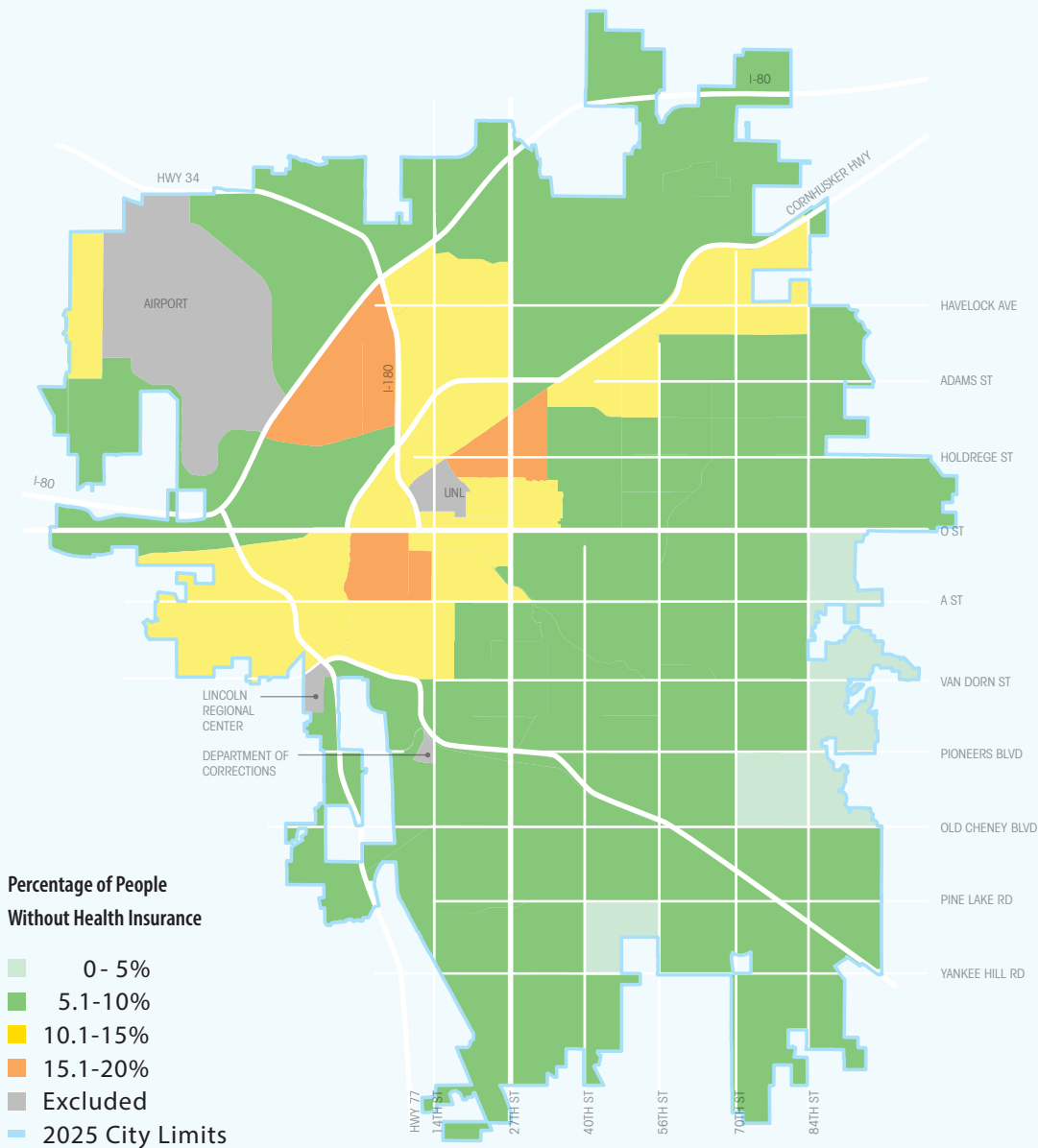
## Healthy Food Access 2025

In 2025, Nebraska Extension completed a survey\* of Lincoln food stores recording the availability of healthy food options (fruits with no added sugar, vegetables with no added sauce, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and whole grains) in 205 stores. This map shows (in red and orange) the neighborhoods where fewer options exist to access healthy food. In recent years, this information has been used for targeted geographic interventions, such as Lincoln Fresh mobile distributions, school markets, and programming to address healthy food disparities.

\* Nebraska Nutrition Environment Measures Survey

Data Source: Nebraska Extension

Map: Urban Development Department, City of Lincoln

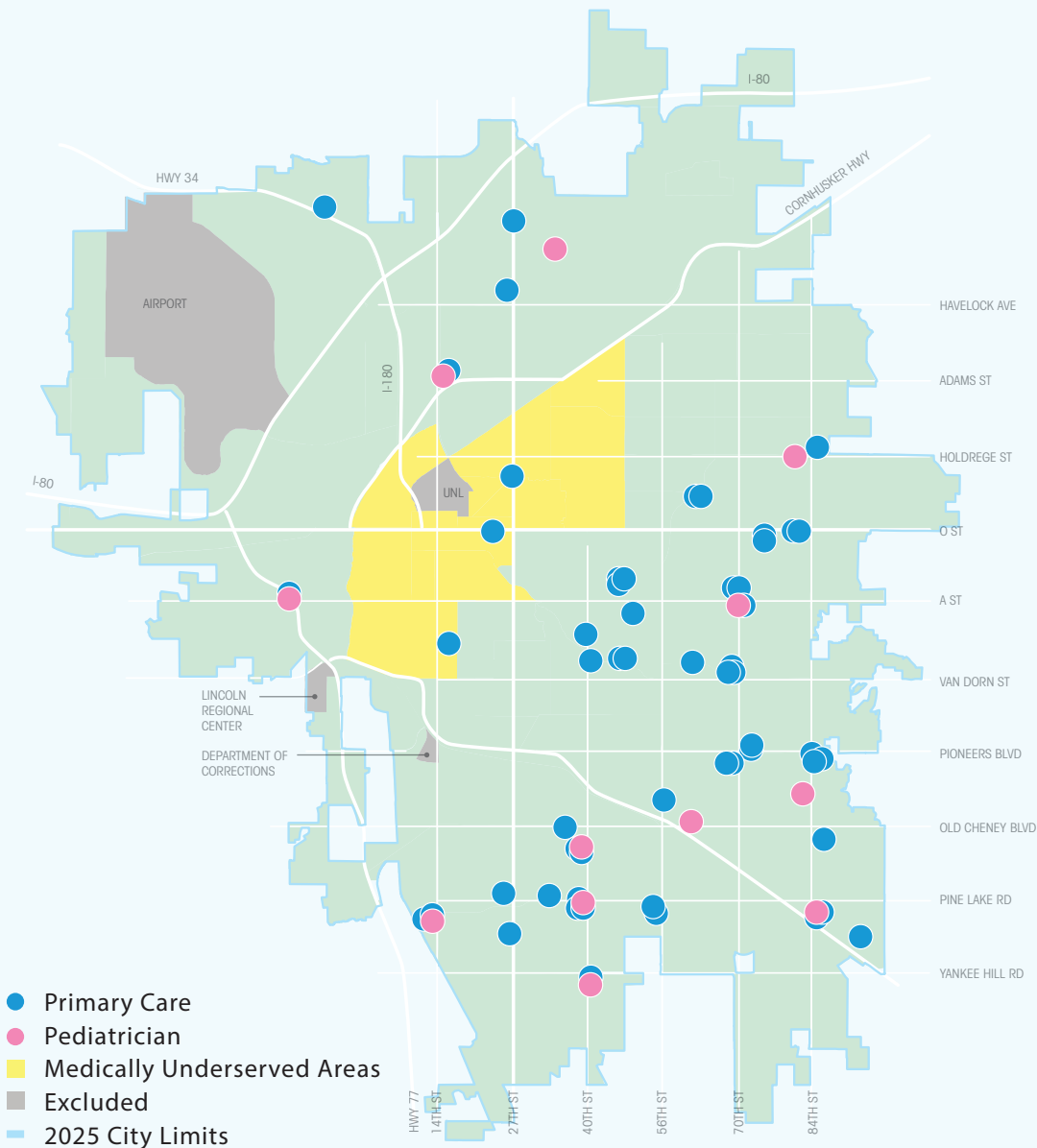


## Lack of Health Insurance Coverage 2023

Lincoln residents access health insurance through their employers, through private insurance companies, using subsidies from the Affordable Care Act, through the Medicaid program (a public health insurance program that covers a low-income population including seniors, children, and people with disabilities) and through Medicare (federal health insurance for those 65 and older.) This map represents Lincoln residents ages 18-64 who lack health insurance. This is a barrier to accessing and paying for health care. In 22 census tracts in Lincoln, more than 1 in 10 residents lack health insurance.

Data Source: CDC 500 Cities 2024

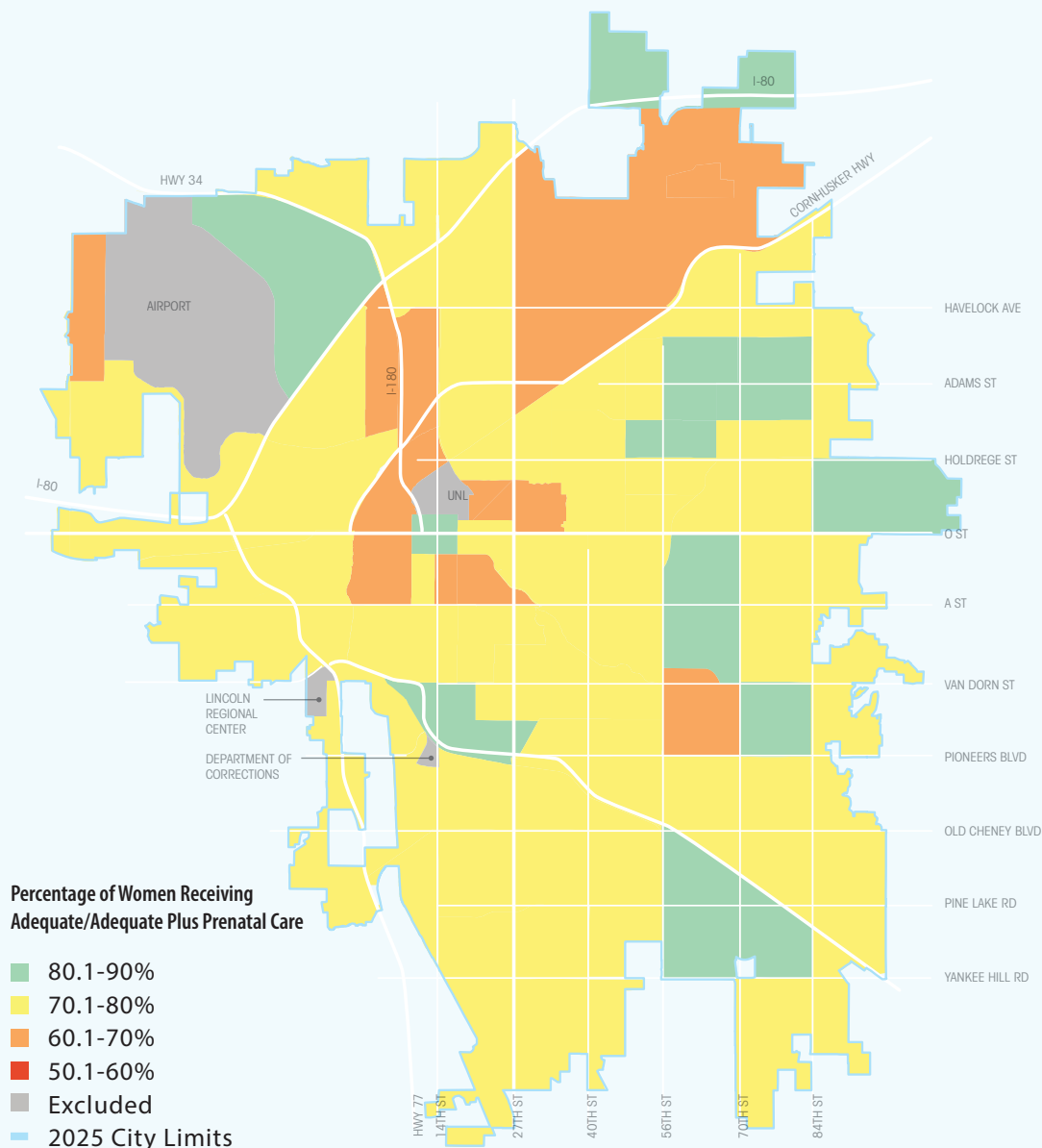
Map: Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD)



## Primary Medical Care 2025

This map identifies the 68 locations of physician-based primary medical care (family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics facilities) in Lincoln that are available to the general public. Market forces remain a key factor in determining practice location. 13 census tracts are identified as medically underserved areas\* on this map. This map does not distinguish between clinics that accept Medicaid, Medicare, and/or uninsured patients and those that do not. Rather, it illustrates the geographic placement of medical services and the lack of a physical health presence in some neighborhoods.

\* [bh.w.hrsa.gov/workforce-shortage-areas/shortage-designation#mups](https://bh.w.hrsa.gov/workforce-shortage-areas/shortage-designation#mups)

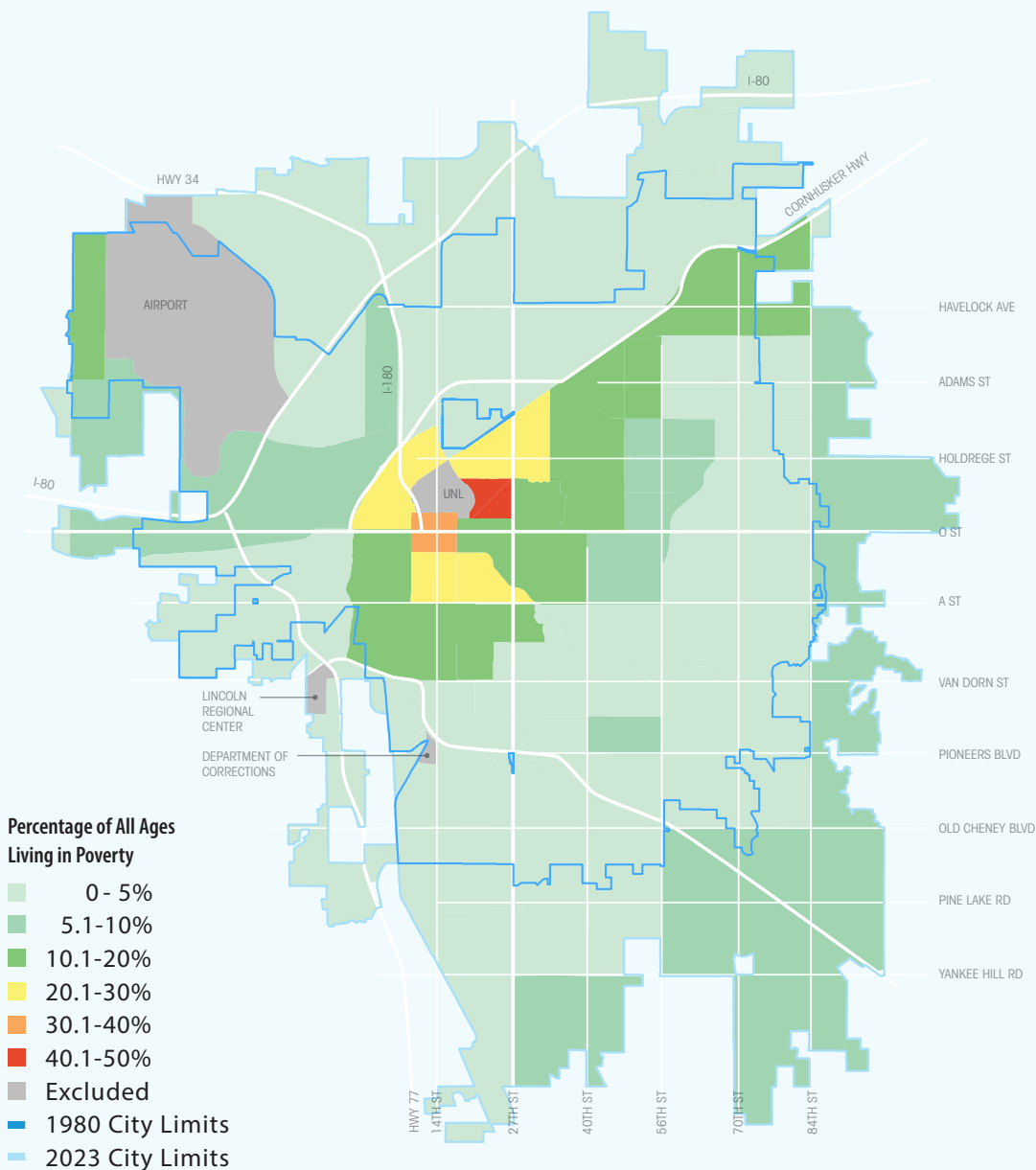


## Prenatal Care 2022-2024

Lincoln-Lancaster County's goal is that 80% of pregnant women receive "adequate/adequate plus" prenatal care which is defined as pregnancy-related care beginning in the first 4 months of pregnancy with the appropriate number of visits for gestational age. 12 census tracts meet that goal. No census tracts fall into the 50.1-60% or higher range, illustrating progress. The census tracts in orange represent the lowest percentages of prenatal care.

Data Source: Lancaster County Vital Records

Map: LLCHD

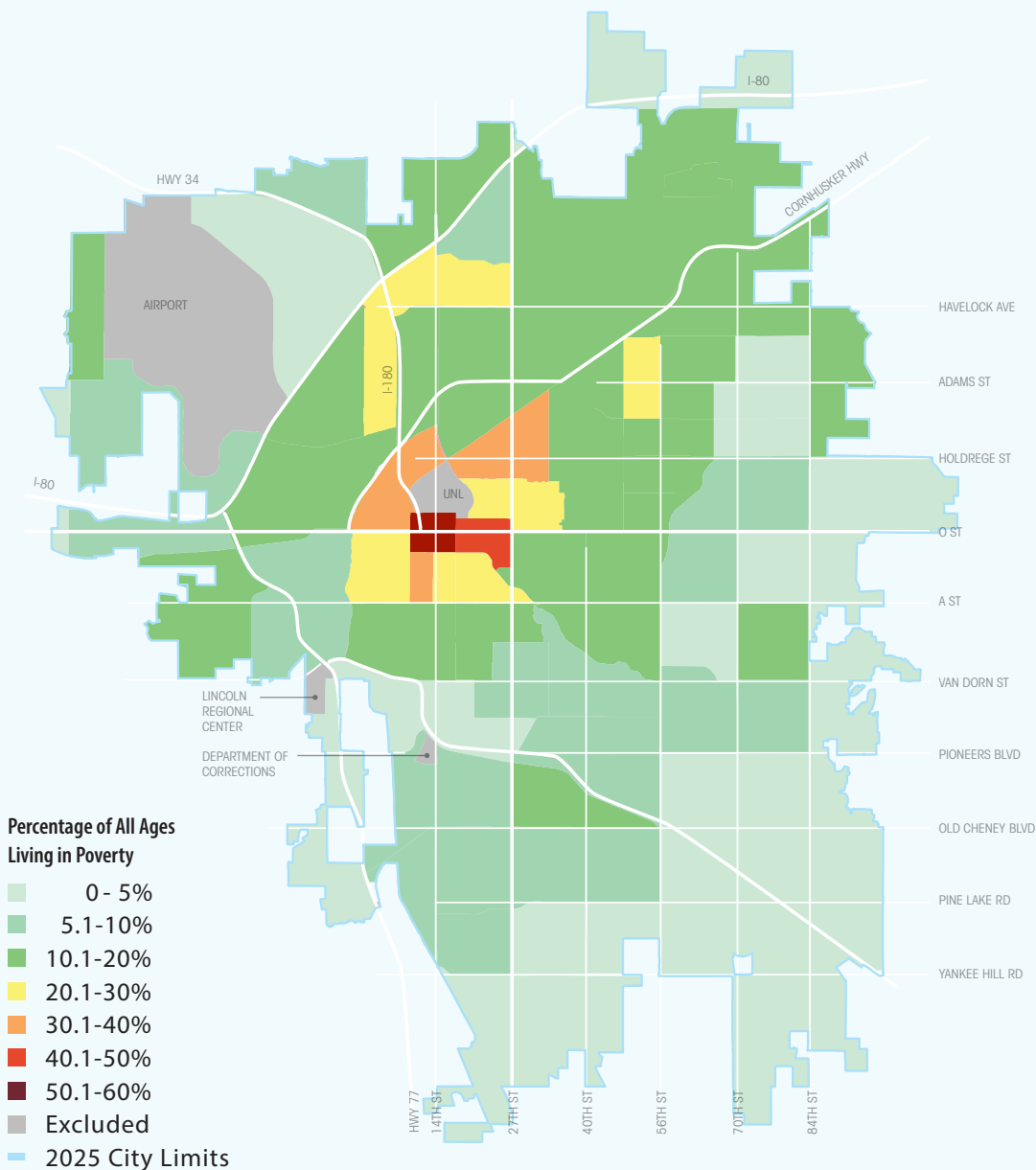


## Poverty 1980

In 1980, 8.6% of Lancaster County residents were considered to be living in poverty. Across the city, 18 census tracts had at least 8.6% of residents living in poverty. Over the past four decades, poverty has expanded in every direction from Lincoln’s core. Poverty is often viewed as the ‘cause of causes’ and as a powerful predictor of disease and mortality.

*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
Map: LLCHD*



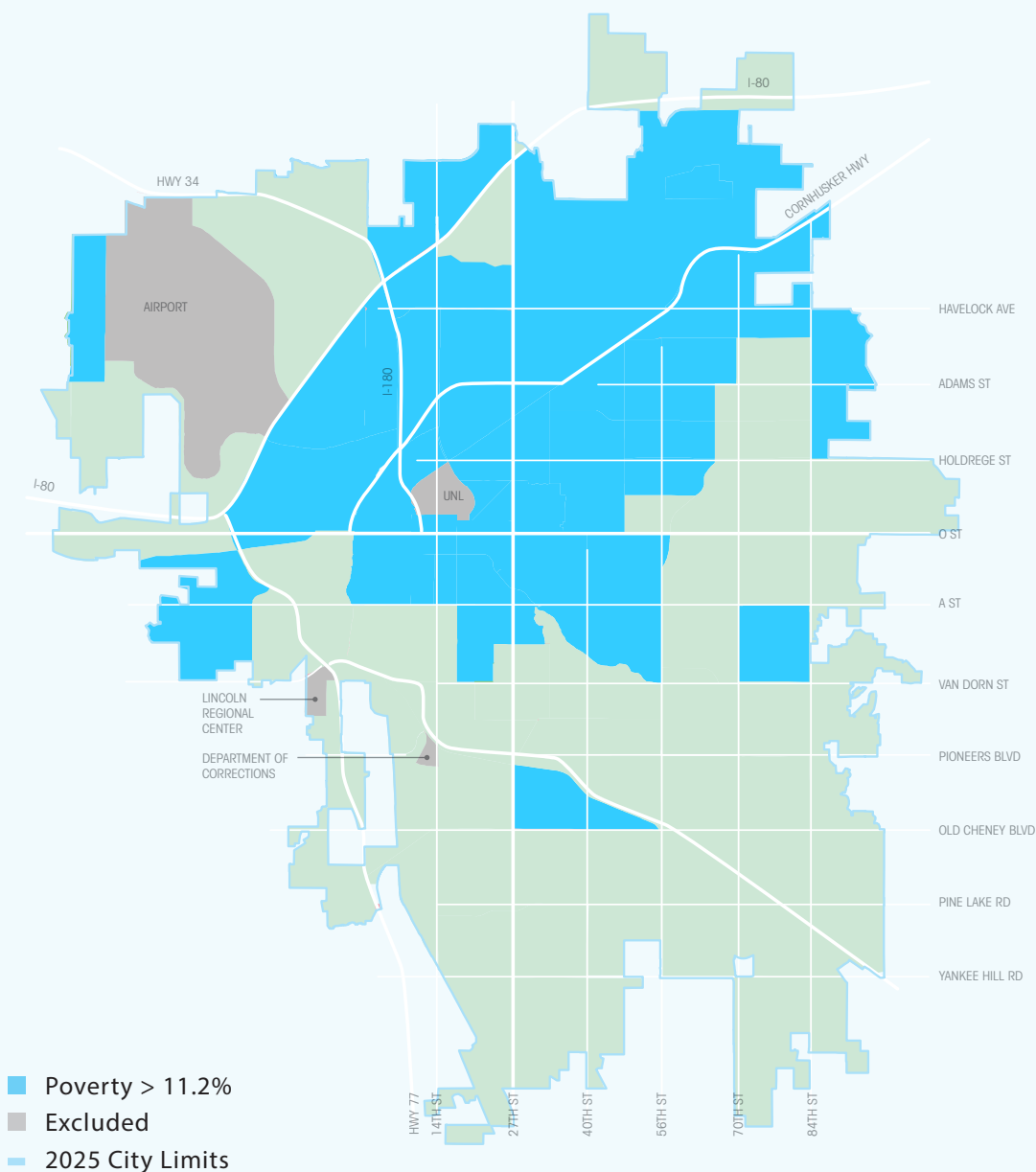


## Poverty 2023

The most current data shows that 11.2% of Lancaster County residents live in poverty.\* Among census tracts with the highest poverty levels (> 30%), the overall life expectancy is lower compared to Lancaster County as a whole. In 2023, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$30,900.

\* Poverty is defined as 100% of the federal poverty threshold as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2023, the poverty threshold for a family with two adults and two children was \$30,900. (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines/prior-hhs-poverty-guidelines-federal-register-references/2023-poverty-guidelines-computations>)

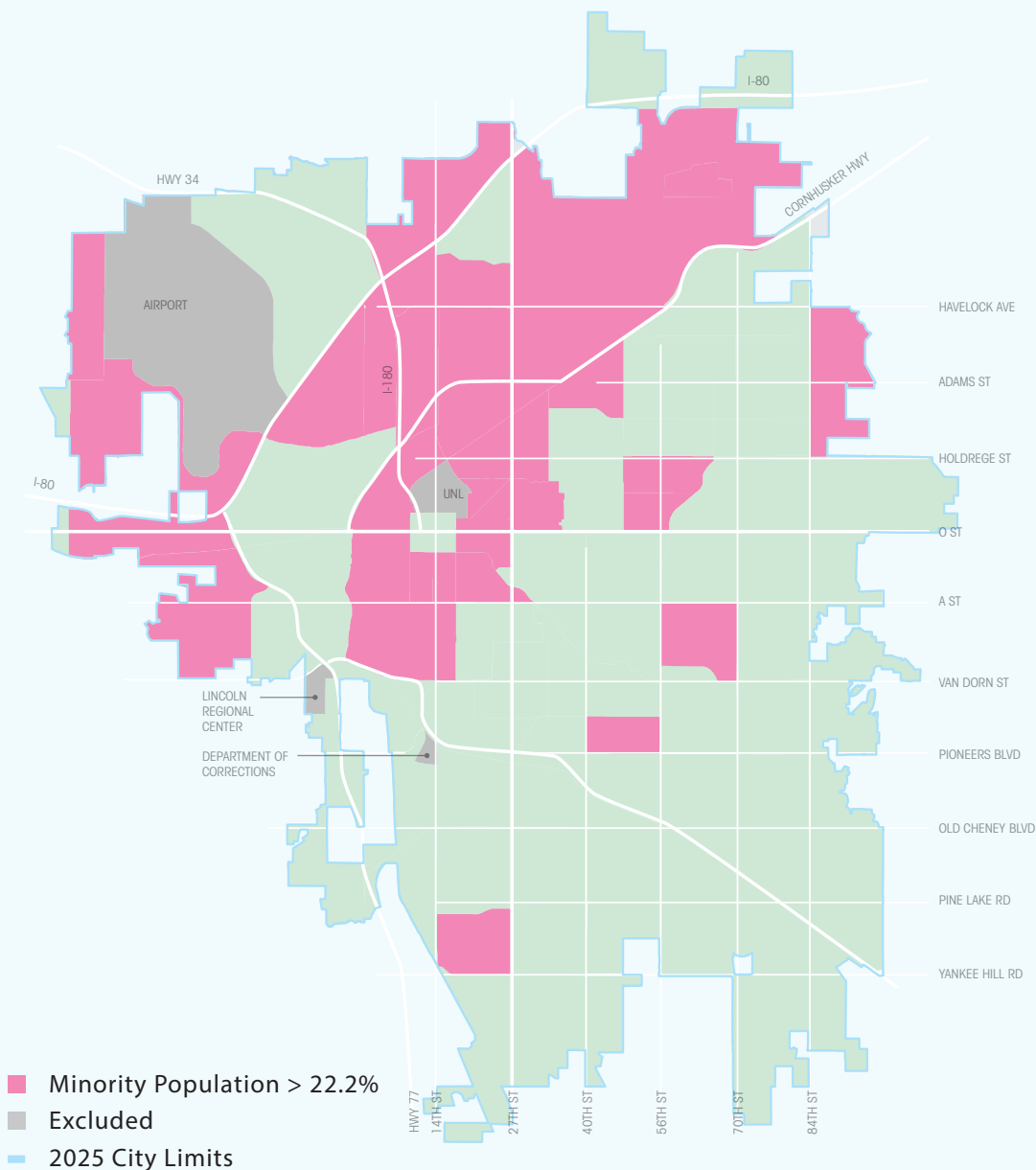
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year estimate  
Map: LLCHD



## Poverty 2023

Poverty is often considered the ‘cause of causes’ and the most powerful predictor of disease and premature death. In 2023, the overall poverty rate for Lancaster County was 11.2%. This map highlights the census tracts where the percentage of people living in poverty exceeded the community overall rate of 11.2%. Of the census tracts mapped, 34 have a rate above the overall county rate.

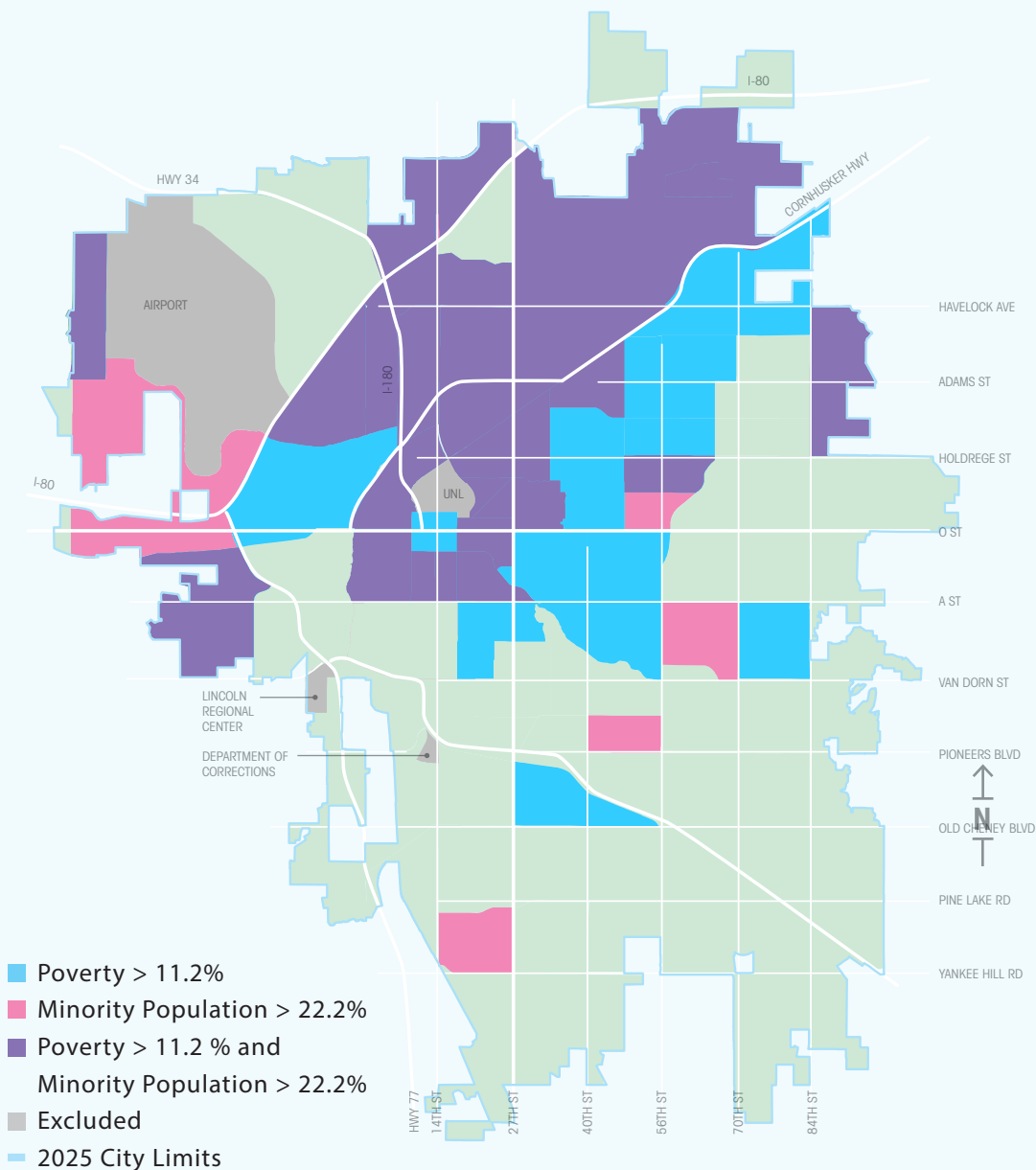
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
Map: LLCHD



## Minority Population 2023

While the majority of the population identifies as White and non-Hispanic, Lincoln is becoming an increasingly diverse community. In 2000, the percentage of people who identified as minority (anyone who is not single-race White and not Hispanic) was 11.3% of the total population, compared to 22.2% in 2023. This map highlights the census tracts where the percentage of people identifying as a racial minority exceeds the community overall rate.

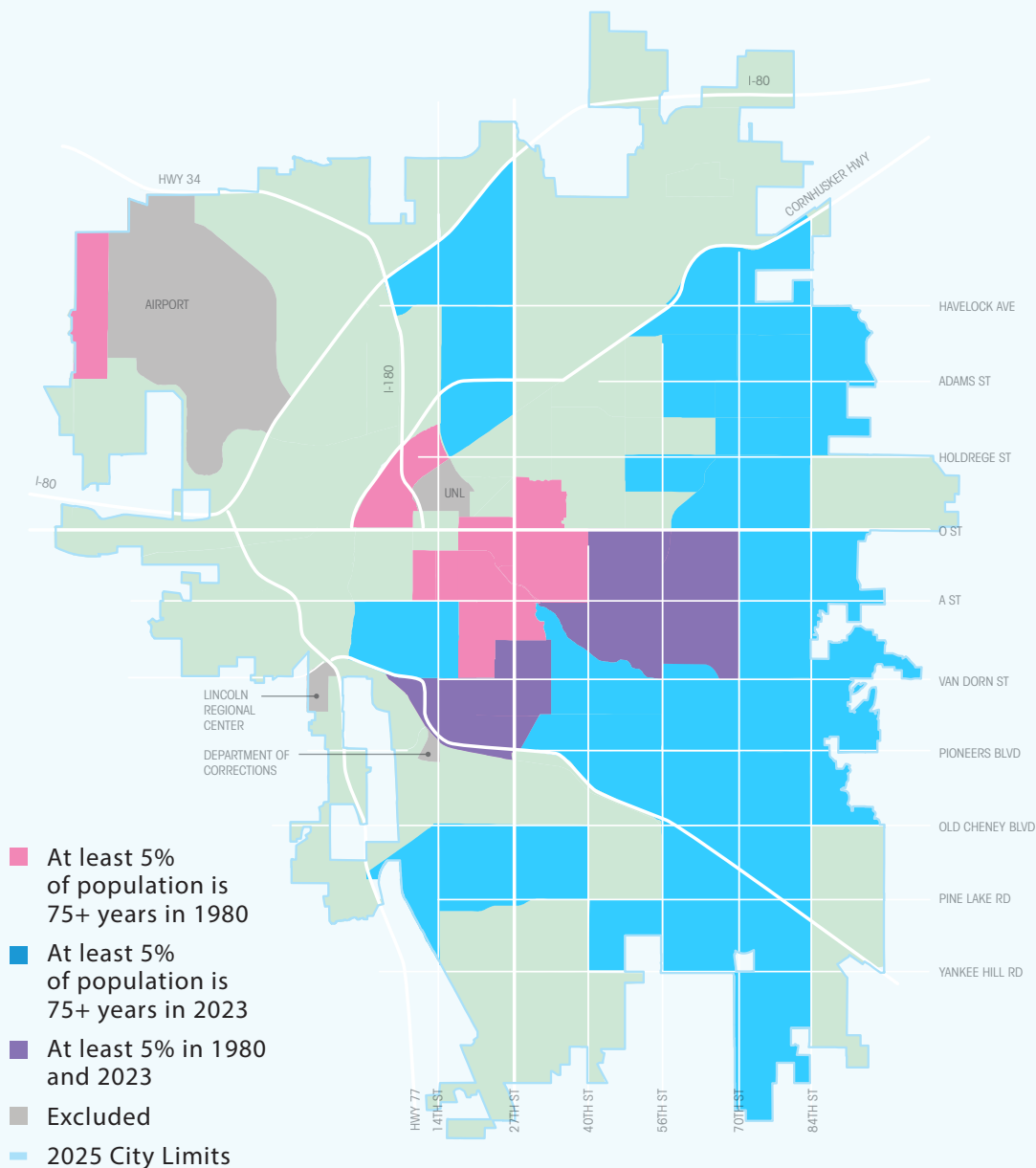
*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023, 5 Year Estimate  
Map: LLCHD*



## Poverty and Minority Population 2023

There is a correlation between census tracts with higher poverty and a higher percentage of people who identify as a minority. Of the 27 census tracts with above average minority population, 21 (70%) also have a higher than average poverty rate. Of the 49 census tracts with below average minority populations, only 13 (28%) have a higher-than-average poverty rate. The purple census tracts reveal where both poverty and minority population exceed the community average.

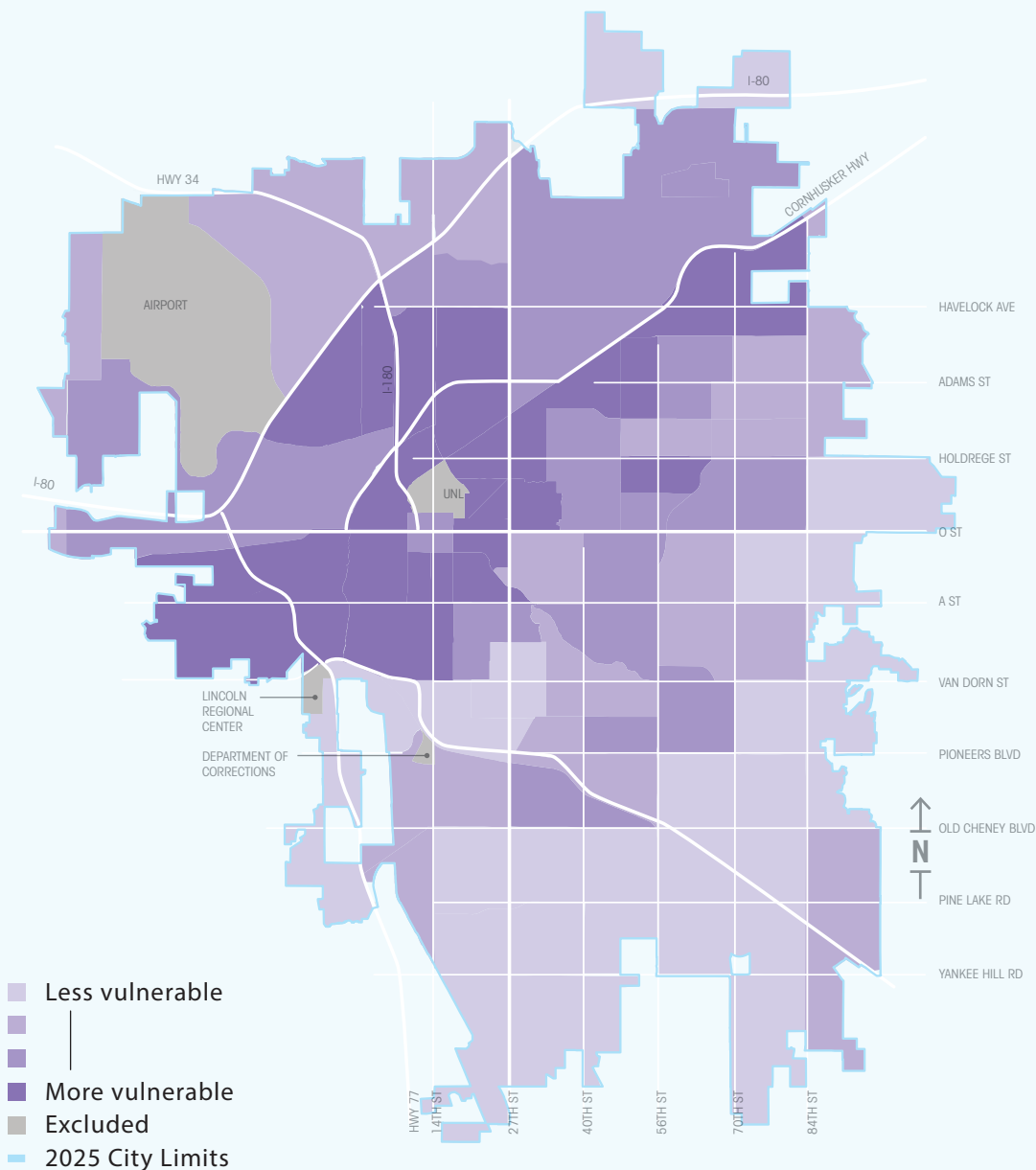
*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
Map: LLCHD*



## Older Adults (75+ years) 1980 and 2023

The older members of the large “Baby Boomer Generation” are now turning 75. As they age, their impact on society becomes increasingly significant. While many older individuals enjoy good health, others may face challenges such as limited mobility, chronic disease, and decreasing social connections. Addressing and planning for the health and social needs of seniors in Lincoln is important to ensure our city remains vibrant and inclusive as the population ages.

*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023, 5 Year Estimate  
Map: LLCHD*

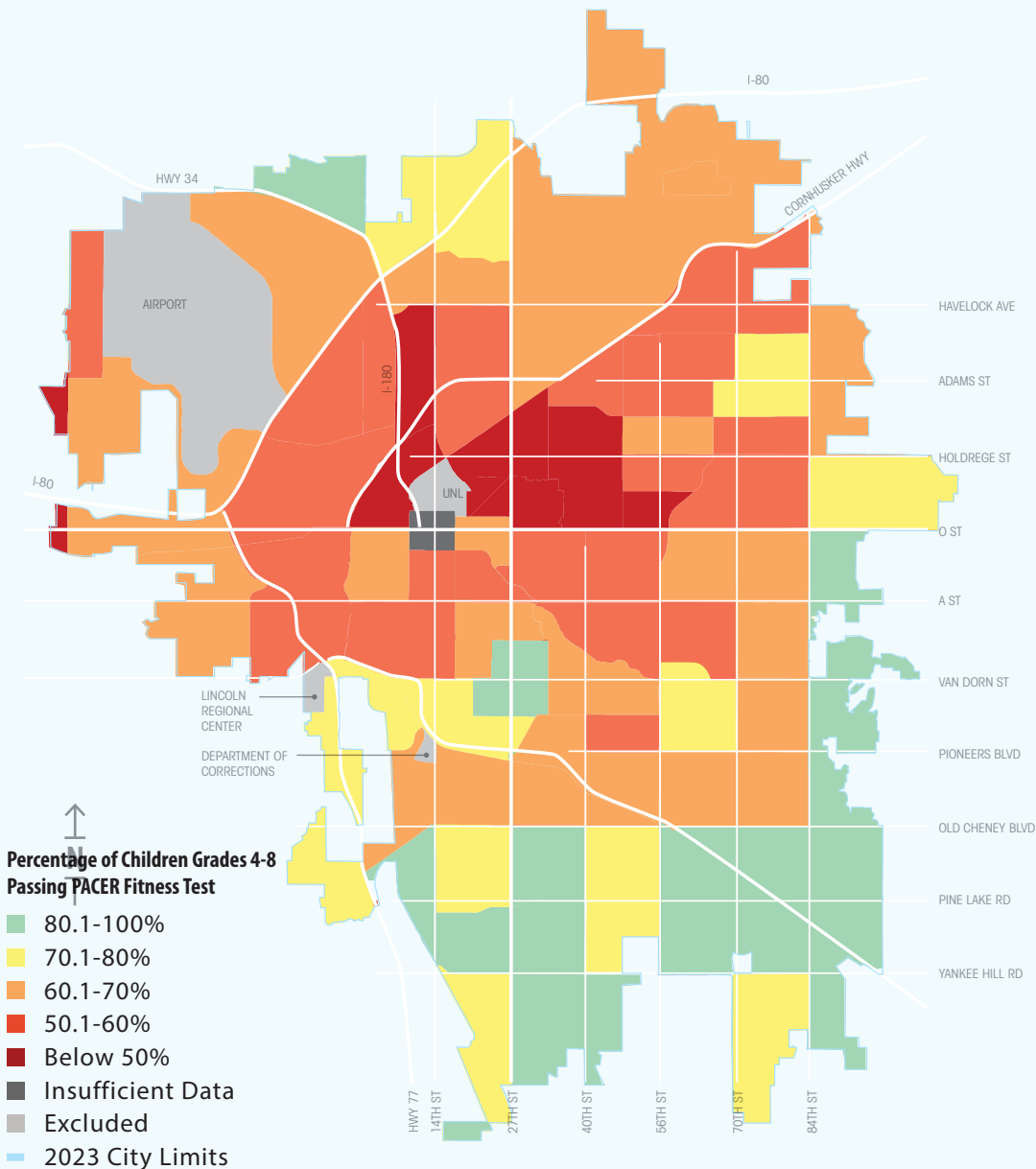


## Social Vulnerability Index 2022

The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) uses U.S. census data to rank census tracts on 14 social factors and group them into four related themes (socioeconomic status, household composition and disability, minority status and language, and housing and transportation).<sup>\*</sup> SVI assists public health and other local officials in identifying neighborhoods that could benefit from health promotion initiatives or may need support before, during, and after a hazardous event (e.g. tornado, disease outbreak). 20 census tracts are identified in the “more vulnerable” category.

<sup>\*</sup> This index shows how Lincoln's census tracts rank compared to Nebraska census tracts. [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/?CDC_AAref_Val)

Data Source: CDC/ATSDR  
Map: LLCHD

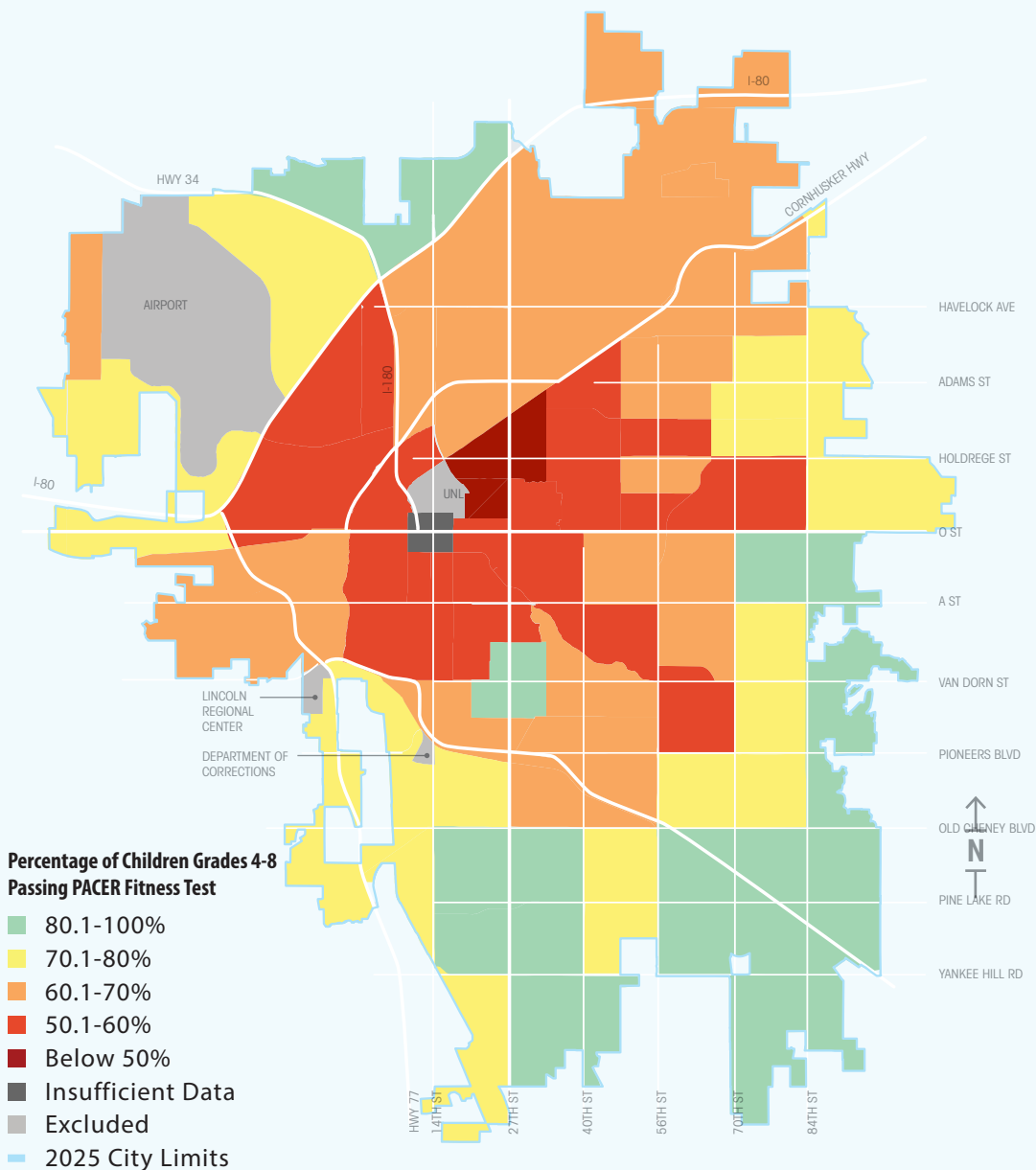


## Youth Fitness 2022-2023

Cardiorespiratory fitness is a powerful predictor of illness/mortality. In Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) aerobic fitness is measured using the Fitnessgram PACER, a multistage aerobic capacity test, with a goal that 80% of kids pass. In 2022-23, 13 (16.9%) of census tracts achieved that goal. It is notable that the data does not include scores from non-public schools. Place Matters 6.0 uses school year 22-23 as a baseline to compare against the school year 24-25 data to offer a comparison less influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data Source: Lincoln Public Schools

Map: LLCHD



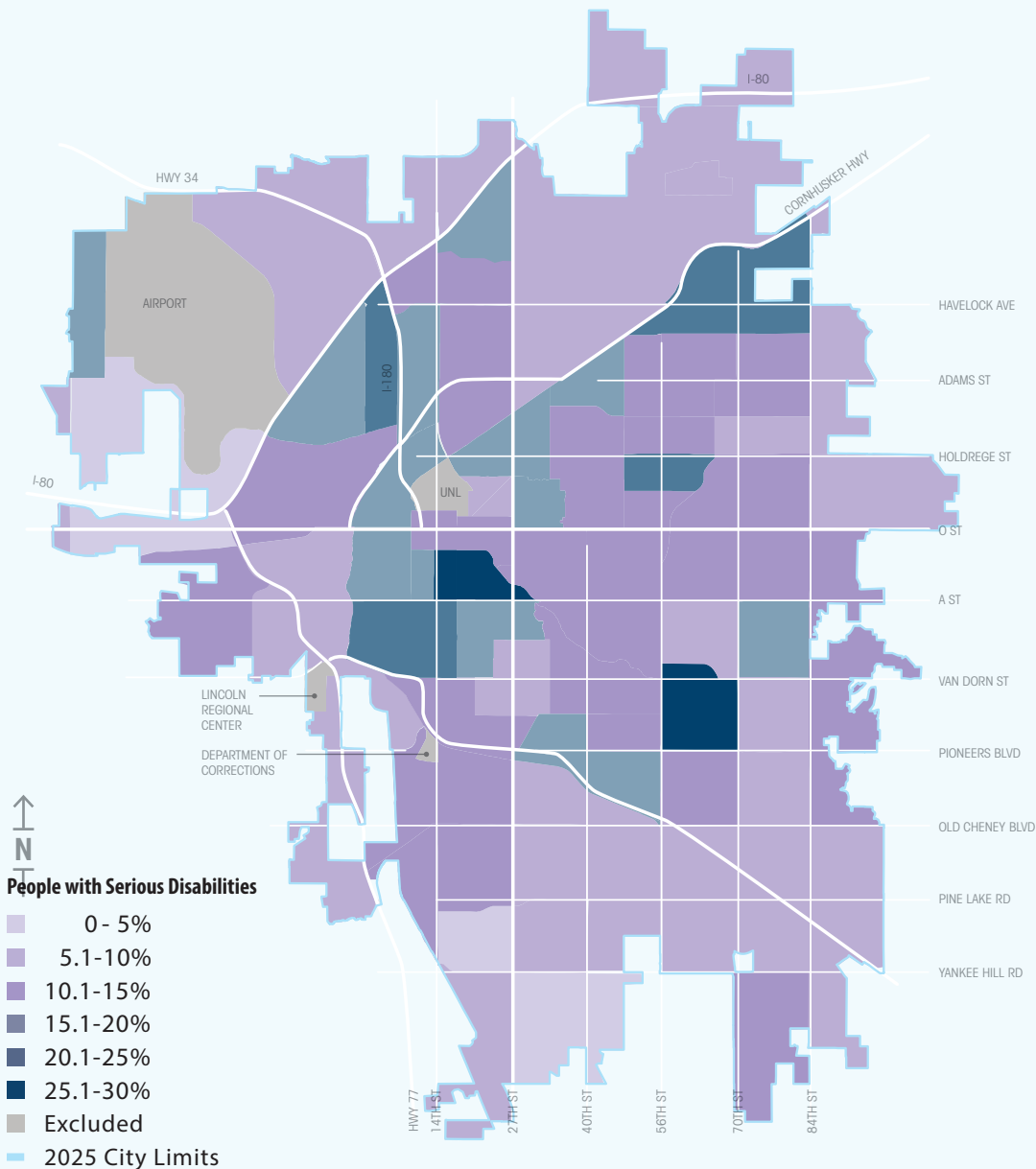
## Youth Fitness 2024-2025

Lincoln Public Schools PACER data demonstrates an improvement in PACER scores. Only two census tracts fell below the 50% rate, compared to 7 in 2022-23, and the overall pass rate improved over that period from 65.3% to 69.3%.

Data Source: Lincoln Public Schools

Map: LLCHD



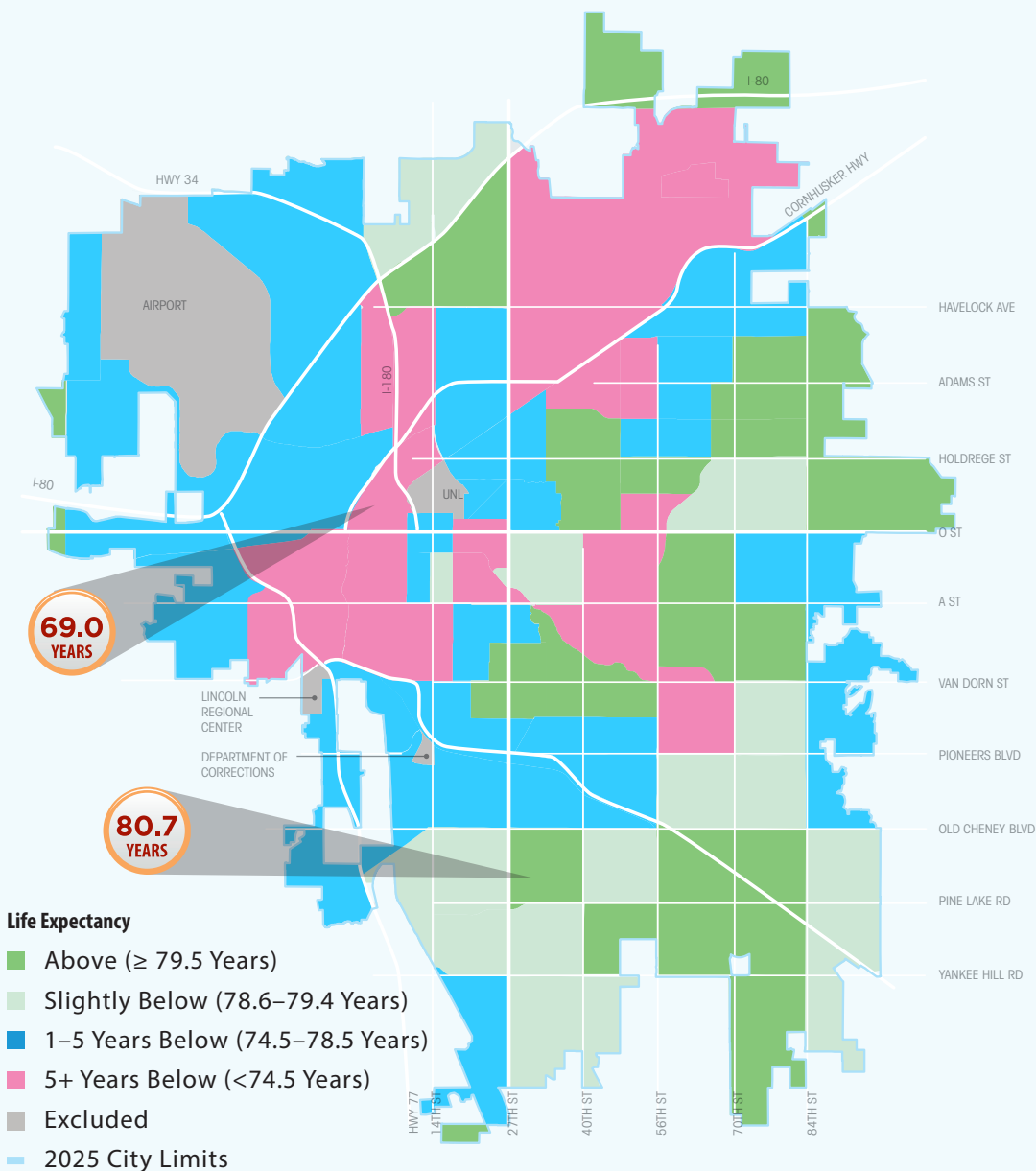


## Population with Any Disability 2023

This map reflects people in Lincoln with serious disabilities. It represents all ages and includes all types of disabilities tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau (hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living difficulty.) An individual may report multiple types of disabilities. The map represents people living in the community, not those who reside in institutional settings such as skilled nursing facilities.

Data Source: American Community Survey 2019-2023

Map: LLCHD

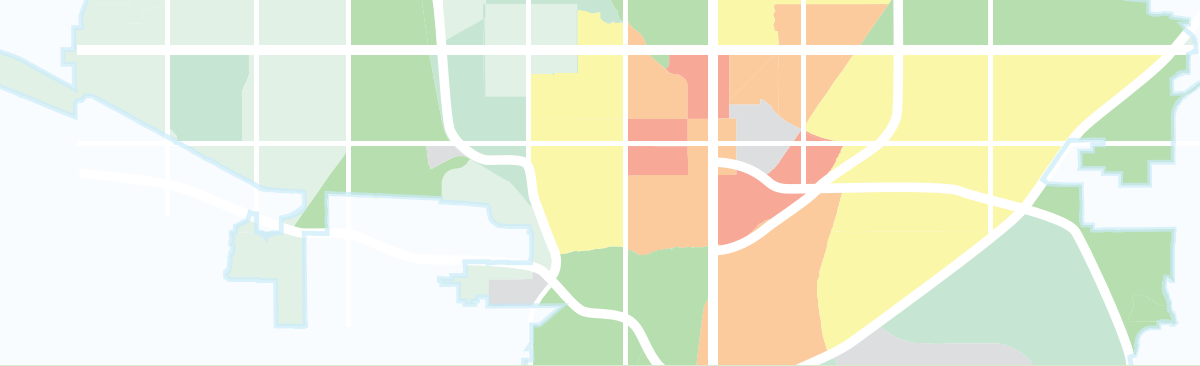


## Life Expectancy 2020-2024

Life expectancy is the statistically probable length of time an individual born today can be expected to live. In this map, life expectancy is based on mortality patterns of the population in a specific census tract given the risk factors in that location. Life expectancy in Lancaster County has remained relatively static in recent years. This map shows where life expectancy values are at or above average (dark green), slightly below average (light green), 1-5 years lower than average (blue), and 5+ years lower than the average life expectancy (pink).

*\* Calculated using Reed-Merrill and Greville methods*

Data Source: Lancaster County Vital Records  
Map: LLC&D



## More About the Data

### **Social Vulnerability Index**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Social Vulnerability Index is designed to identify communities experiencing social vulnerability to better prepare for and respond to emergency events. It includes 16 social factors that can be found at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/index.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/index.html).

### **Poverty Thresholds**

Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status. The Census Bureau assigns each person or family one out of 48 possible poverty thresholds varying by the size of the family and age of the members. Thresholds are more specific than the poverty guidelines used to determine eligibility for some public programs. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children is \$30,900.

### **Medicaid**

Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that helps cover medical costs for some people with limited income and resources.

### **Medicare**

Medicare is federal health insurance for people 65 or older, and some people under 65 with certain disabilities or conditions.



## Place Matters in Practice: Leveling the Playing Field


In neighborhoods where opportunity can feel out of reach, Lincoln's Community Learning Centers (CLCs) are changing the game by supporting youth, families, and neighborhoods to be successful, thriving, and strong. They create a culture of learning in partnership with local schools to offer high-quality extended learning opportunities, weekend and summer enrichment programs, and other supportive services.

The Community Learning Center's "Get in the Game" project supports Kindergarten – 5th grade sports leagues in 20 high poverty schools by funding equipment, referee and coach costs, travel, and entry fees. It's about belonging, building confidence, and creating healthier futures.



The project uses Place Matters poverty and aerobic fitness maps to inspire and inform youth fitness initiatives and help Lincoln's youth be healthy, connected, and fit. They operate in 20 of the Lincoln Public Schools' highest poverty elementary schools throughout the city. According to Place Matters data, lower aerobic fitness rates are correlated with census tracts that have higher rates of poverty.

In 2025, this transformative project received the **Place Matters Pioneer Award**, honoring its impact on creating a healthier community.



## SPECIAL THANKS

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Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department  
Lancaster County Medical Society  
Lincoln Public Schools  
Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln  
City of Lincoln - Urban Development Department  
Nebraska Extension



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*For more information about the Place Matters Community Mapping Project  
and access to our interactive maps, visit [chelincoln.org/placematters](http://chelincoln.org/placematters)*

*If your organization would like a presentation about Place Matters,  
contact CHE at (402)436-5516.*