Upstate New York in Profile
Trends, Projections, and Community & Economic Development Issues

2011 State of Upstate New York Initiative
By Robin Blakely-Armitage, Scott Sanders, Joe Francis, and Jan Vink
Upstate New York in Profile:
Trends, Projections, and Community & Economic Development Issues
By Robin Blakely-Armitage, Scott Sanders, Joe Francis, and Jan Vink

cardi.cornell.edu

The graphs, tables, and maps contained in this report may be reproduced.
Please include proper source and accreditation.
Foreword

The Community & Regional Development Institute (CaRDI) and Cornell University’s Program on Applied Demographics (PAD) have produced this document to serve as a resource for decision-makers at multiple levels of government and community organizations, to help leaders and decision-makers track trends over time, examine projections, and consider public opinion on a host of emerging policy issues in key development areas of upstate New York. This chartbook integrates New York State-based survey data, Census and other secondary data sources, and provides important links to more information on several key community development topics such as energy, food systems, economic development, schools, and health care.

The Community & Regional Development Institute (CaRDI)

The Community & Regional Development Institute (CaRDI) at Cornell University has responded to current and emerging challenges and opportunities in community and economic development in New York State for two decades. New Yorkers are living through a period of remarkable change. Among challenges faced are the restructuring of traditional economic bases, increasing local government costs and demands for services, a global recession, land use changes, and pressures to develop new energy resources in the face of climate change. At the same time, new domestic and global markets are emerging, green technologies represent a growing employment sector, land use planning innovations are taking hold, the local agricultural sector is growing, environmental interests and concerns are influencing policy directions more generally, and communication technologies are bringing people together in new ways. Formerly the Community and Rural Development Institute, CaRDI recently changed its name to reflect the fact that most challenges and opportunities facing communities, rural, suburban, and urban, around New York State increasingly take place at a regional level.

In developing and implementing community and economic development projects, CaRDI’s programs seek to enhance outcomes and impacts for the people and communities of New York State. Working with Cornell faculty and staff—including Cornell Cooperative Extension’s network of county offices—and other state and regional institutions, CaRDI is a center of dialogue about development and collaboration addressing needs at the local, state, and national levels.

CaRDI supports local and regional development through its primary focus on community development. Our work is framed by the conviction that community and economic development are mutually interrelated at the local and regional levels. Housed in the Department of Development Sociology, CaRDI’s programs of applied research and outreach are motivated by a concern for understanding the determinants and consequences of societal development, and a desire to produce knowledge and educational programs that contribute to the alleviation of social problems, both local and throughout the United States.

CaRDI’s programming seeks to build community capacity – the knowledge, skills, attitudes and resources community members need to proactively and collaboratively identify, pursue and achieve their development goals. CaRDI’s programs are based on empirical research. Cornell’s extensive research resources provide the evidence base for most of its information and training services. CaRDI’s strong commitment to the University’s land grant mission guides its work as a multidisciplinary social science institute, providing the citizens and communities of New York State and nationally with current research-based information and training to promote sustainable community and regional development and well-being. CaRDI’s educational programs respond to local needs and opportunities, drawing upon university expertise to provide information, strategies, relevant education and a neutral “space” where opposing views can be discussed. These programs are developed and often delivered in partnership with local groups — local government, community organizations, individuals and agencies – all of which have a stake in the economic and social future of the community.

Cornell Program on Applied Demographics (PAD)

The Cornell Program on Applied Demographics at Cornell (PAD) is a major collaborator in the creation of this chartbook. PAD has for some years served communities and regions across New York, providing Census data, demographic analysis and interpretation to decision makers working in county planning offices, regional planning offices, and health organizations as well as many New York State agencies. We are a cooperating agency of the Census Bureau’s State Data Center (SDC) Program, housed in New York’s Empire State Development. We work with the State Education Department, the Office of the State Comptroller, the Department of Health, and others. We are also designated as the State’s representative to the Census Bureau’s Federal State Cooperative Program of Population Estimates and Projections.

In addition to providing estimates of population size and changes on an annual basis for county and sub-county levels of governments, we also provide regular updates to our population projections for 30 years from the most recent census. We recently added a mapping portfolio to other forms of displaying population and housing data. Beginning with the 2010 Census, much of the detailed information
on social and economic characteristics that was previously found in the decennial census is no longer available. Instead this information is made available through the ongoing American Community Survey (ACS). One of our missions is to help individuals and organizations learn how to retrieve information from that venue.

PAD provides demographic information to residents of New York State in a variety of ways. One way is via our web site (http://pad.human.cornell.edu/). Another means is through responding to requests from agencies and media for data, data analysis and/or data interpretation. We participate in presentations and workshops to organizations on the Cornell campus and throughout the state. Likewise, the Program on Applied Demographics is pleased to participate in the production of this chartbook and we look forward to continued participation in the State of Upstate conference.

Acknowledgements

CaRDI would like to acknowledge numerous individuals that supported the development of this chartbook. Many of the key workshop presenters at the State of Upstate NY conference provided key input in the early stages of the chartbook's development. Several members of the CaRDI team provided detailed review and suggestions - in particular we thank David Kay and Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman. Jen Jensen with the Rural Policy Research Institute's Rural Futures Lab also gave of her time to review a draft. Steve Kern, graphic designer with the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, used his talent and skills to give the final document its polish. Cornell University Press and Communications spurred us on with their enthusiasm and support as did Cornell Cooperative Extension as they celebrate their centennial this year. This project was not done in a vacuum and we greatly appreciate the breadth and depth of support and input we received along the way.
### Table of Contents

**Section I: Introduction** ........................................................................................................................................1

**Section II: The Changing Population of Upstate New York** .................................................................6
   - Historical Population Trends ..........................................................................................................................6
   - NYS Population Projections ..........................................................................................................................9
   - Natural Increase ...............................................................................................................................................9
   - Migration ..........................................................................................................................................................9
   - Age-Specific Net Migration ..........................................................................................................................11
   - Age Structure .................................................................................................................................................12
   - Household & Family Size .............................................................................................................................14
   - Race & Ethnicity .............................................................................................................................................14

**Section III: Upstate Development Issues**
   - A. Economic Development & Workforce Trends ..................................................................................17
   - B. Income and Poverty ..............................................................................................................................25
   - C. Local & Regional Government ............................................................................................................29
   - D. Schools & Youth .....................................................................................................................................35
   - E. Health Trends .........................................................................................................................................44
   - F. Environment, Land Use & Natural Resources ...................................................................................50
   - G. Energy .....................................................................................................................................................61
   - H. Agriculture & Food Systems ................................................................................................................69

**Section IV: Final Summary** ............................................................................................................................74
Section I: Introduction

What is this Chartbook all about?

Upstate New York, along with much of the Northeastern U.S., has experienced significant change over the past several decades. Communities are faced with a seemingly ever-increasing set of challenges, ranging from increased property taxes to changing employment opportunities to rising energy prices. In this document, we provide data on key social, economic, demographic trends as well as other indicators, including public opinion, on various community and regional development topics. Decision-makers, whether individual citizens, leaders of non-profit organizations, business owners, or elected and appointed officials need information in order to make evidence-based decisions about the future. It is hoped that this chartbook will provide useful data, survey information, and links to additional resources for these stakeholders to make informed decisions which result in stronger communities, regions, and an increased quality of life for New York State residents.

Goals & Audience

CaRDI organized a “State of Upstate New York” conference for June 2011 in Syracuse, New York. In many ways, this 2011 effort is a continuation of a project began in 2005, in collaboration with the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources (LCRR) called The Rural Vision Project (RVP). The project included a series of listening sessions held around NYS, culminating in a conference held in Syracuse, NY in 2006. The project helped to identify the key challenges, opportunities, and potential policy issues which rural communities in NYS face. Since that time, CaRDI’s focus has expanded to a regional perspective, one that recognizes that communities, as well as the state, must consider local development from a regional perspective. This regional approach is important, whether for economic development, land use, schools, health care, etc.

After the RVP project, CaRDI and the NYS LCRR produced a post-project booklet that captured the main findings and conclusions of the listening sessions and the conference (http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/programs/indicators/rvp/upload/rvp-summary_report.pdf). Many of the issues identified became legislative agenda items in Albany in late 2006. New partnerships were created in many areas of the state to help communities deal with particular issues. Further research and outreach efforts were spurred on as a result of questions and issues identified by project participants.

In 2011, CaRDI continues this work in New York State’s upstate region. The State of Upstate New York project focuses on almost identical issue areas as did the RVP project several years ago. However, while the focal areas are similar, our approach to this project is somewhat different. Just prior to the conference, CaRDI will release this Chartbook, the State of Upstate New York in Profile. Conference participants will have access to the document on-line, and will also receive a printed copy at the conference. It is intended that the trends and changes portrayed in this chartbook serve as a foundation for much of the discussion at the conference sessions. Conference attendees will attend three of nine workshop sessions to examine and explore the major challenges and opportunities facing the region. The nine sessions include:

- Economic Development
- Workforce Trends
- Local & Regional Government
- Schools & Youth
- Health Care
- Income & Poverty
- Environment, Land Use, and Natural Resources
- Community Energy
- Agriculture and Food Systems

The chartbook covers these nine topic areas, and also includes a detailed section on demographic trends being experienced by upstate New York. Basic data is presented in each of these areas to serve as a baseline for more informed discussion, and additional data resources are provided as web-links in each section. While the data included in the chartbook may highlight some important issues facing the upstate region, they are intended to be a basis for initiating informed discussion at the conference. The more detailed discussions at the conference will be captured and processed, and a post-conference report will be issued which frames and discusses the linkages between these nine topic areas, the major challenges and opportunities identified, and highlights of key data trends.

This Chartbook is designed to be useful for a broad audience and can function as a “stand alone” report, widely disseminated to individuals, organizations, communities, and leaders across New York State. It can serve as a useful resource for broader planning and decision-making at the local and regional levels. CaRDI’s stakeholders include elected and appointed officials at the local and state level, Cornell Cooperative Extension educators, leaders of non-profit organizations, business owners, economic developers, planners, social service providers, and teachers and administrators in primary, secondary, and higher education across the state. We hope this report will also be of use to citizens, students, and other individuals who are interested in gaining empirically-based insights about Upstate New York and helping their communities and regions plan effectively for the future.

Data sources

We rely on several primary and secondary data sources in this document. Data from the Decennial U.S. Census are provided for the years 1990, 2000, and 2010, and from the American Community Survey (ACS) (pooled estimates 2005-2009). In addition, we include estimates and projections through 2035 produced by the Program on Applied Demographics (PAD) at Cornell University (in collaboration with the NY State Data Center).
Primary data collection was achieved through commission of a special survey, the State of Upstate Survey. The survey was designed by CaRDI and was conducted in January 2011 by Cornell University’s Survey Research Institute (SRI). This telephone survey was administered to 600 Upstate New York State households using a random sampling framework. At a 95% confidence level, this survey has a confidence interval of +/- 4%.

For the specific topic areas covered in this report, in addition to the data sources discussed above, we include data from a variety of special sources. For example, in Section 5: Schools and Youth, we incorporate data from the New York State Department of Education, as well as the National Center for Education Statistics. In Section 4: Local and Regional Governance, we reference data from the NYS Office of the Comptroller. In all cases, data sources are supported by appropriate references and weblinks, when available.

How the data are organized & presented

Geography

For much of the chartbook, we are able to present data for NYS, Upstate, and county type (metropolitan status). However, in some sections such as Energy, and Environment, Land Use, and Natural Resources, data are not available at all these levels. We present data for the state as a whole, and if available, for the upstate region.

Upstate New York

Data in each section are first reported for New York State as a whole. These state-level data are then compared to data for Upstate New York, which is an aggregation of data from the 53 counties north of Westchester and Rockland Counties. We recognize that the term “upstate” may be defined and operationalized differently in different contexts.
Individual county statistics will not be presented in this report. However, we present county-level data categorized by metropolitan status. For this Chartbook we use three categories: Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Non-Core Based statistical areas. Counties fall into one of these three categories depending upon the presence and size of urbanized areas, as well as the degree of social and economic integration with adjacent counties as measured through commuting. Metropolitan statistical areas are comprised of a central county or counties containing a core place, including at least one urbanized area that has a population of at least 50,000, plus adjacent counties meeting the commuting criterion. Micropolitan statistical areas are nonmetropolitan counties that are also considered core areas, but where the urban cluster has a population between 10,000 and 50,000 people. Non-core based nonmetropolitan counties lack an urban cluster of at least 10,000 people (Federal Register, 2010).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Time Period

For our secondary data sources, we present data from 1990, 2000, 2010 and the latest 5-year (2005-2009) estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS). In addition, we present projections whenever possible. In many cases, and for non-Census data sources, the data may not be available for the same time periods. In these cases, we attempt to obtain data for at least the last decade in order to track general trends.

Presentation of Data

In this report our goal is to present the data in a clear, concise and interesting manner. While the actual numeric data will be provided in tables, we also provide maps and graphs whenever possible. In the report’s on-line version, these graphics are available for copying and pasting into other documents and presentations, with proper accreditation. Short text narratives, and links to additional data and information sources for each topic accompany the data presentations.
How the Chartbook Sections are organized

Each section starts with a brief overview identifying the major issues facing Upstate NY in that particular topical area. Survey and secondary data are then presented in graphs and charts with brief analyses. Because these sections only provide basic indicators for each area, we offer links to additional resources after each section. It is our intention after the State of Upstate New York Conference, to publish a post-conference report that provides more in-depth analysis, detail and narrative of these issues, the linkages across topical areas, across the region, and over time, as well as identifying potential policy implications and areas for future research.

Opinions on General Upstate Issues

To set the stage for the Chartbook, we report responses from Upstate New Yorkers to a series of general questions about the most important issues facing the state and their community, and general levels of satisfaction with various community characteristics. These overall responses are reported here to provide a general context for more specific topical area discussions.

Q: In your opinion, what do you think is the single most important issue facing your community as a whole?

Not surprisingly, employment and other economic issues were front and center in people’s minds, whether they were commenting on issues facing the state as a whole (Figure 1.5), or their communities (Figure 1.3). One in three respondents identified employment as the most important issue at the state level, and one in four cited it as the most important issue in their community. Taxes were cited by up to one quarter of respondents, and economic growth by one in seven. The responses in these categories were similar at both the state and community level, although people living in micropolitan counties were more concerned with employment (35%) in their communities than those living in metropolitan or non-core counties (Figure 1.4).

Q: In your opinion, what do you think is the single most important issue facing New York State as a whole?
Concern over state and local municipal governments and budgets was also apparent, although significant differences emerged. While 13% of respondents identified the NYS budget as the most important issue facing the state (Figure 1.5), only 4% identified municipal budgets as the most important issue facing their community (Figure 1.3). In a similar vein, upstate New Yorkers view NYS government as a relatively more pressing issue (9%) for the state, than are local governments (4%) an issue for their communities. Respondents living in non-core counties were more likely than others to identify economic issues (Figure 1.6).

**Q:** Every community has good points and bad points about living within it. Please tell me, for your local community, how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the following issues and characteristics:

While more than two-thirds of Upstate New Yorkers report satisfaction with access to health care (Figure 1.7) locally, this sentiment was particularly strong among those living in metropolitan counties (see Figure 3E.2 in health care section).

A solid majority (59%) of Upstate New Yorkers are satisfied with the quality of public education in their communities, while less than 20% expressed some level of dissatisfaction.

More than half of respondents indicate satisfaction with local efforts to preserve the local natural environment in their community, while just over one quarter express dissatisfaction with those same efforts. Respondents living in metro counties were more likely to express dissatisfaction and less likely to express satisfaction than their non-metro counterparts (see Figure 3F.2 in environment, land use and natural resource section).

Upstate New Yorkers are evenly split in their attitudes about the sufficiency of land use planning in their communities. Slightly more expressed levels of satisfaction versus dissatisfaction (39% versus 32%), while 29% were neutral on the issue. Those living in metro counties were slightly more likely to be dissatisfied than their non-metro counterparts (see Figure 3F.7 in environment, land use and natural resource section).

Opinions on the value of local services were also almost evenly split, with 38% indicating some level of satisfaction, and 40% voicing dissatisfaction. However, the “very dissatisfied” outnumbered the “very satisfied” by 2 to 1, indicating more emphasis on dissatisfaction for Upstate New Yorkers with regard to local service value. In addition, those respondents living in non-core based counties were much less likely to be satisfied compared to their micropolitan or metropolitan counterparts (see Figure 3C.2 in local and regional government section).

Upstate New Yorkers are almost evenly divided between being satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with the effectiveness of their local city or town government. There was not a significant variance between metro and non-metro respondents.

More than two-thirds of respondents express dissatisfaction with the quality and availability of jobs locally, while only 12% were satisfied. About one in five were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

**Other Surveys On NYS Issues**

Cornell Survey Research Institute's Empire State Poll: https://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.reports.cfm

Siena College Research Institute Polls: http://www.siena.edu/sri

Section II: The Changing Population of Upstate New York

Over the past two decades, upstate New York has experienced significant demographic change. Understanding how population size and composition has varied across the Upstate region is important when considering the implications for topics such as health care, schools, economic development, land use, and more.

Since 1910, the U.S. population has increased steadily. The first part of the 20th century trend lines were remarkably similar across the various regions of the county, but by the latter part of the century these trend lines had diverged. After the 1960s growth rates slowed in the Midwest and the Northeast, while the South and West continued to steadily grow (Figure 2.1).

Historical Population Trends

As the Northeast’s growth rate began to slow after 1970 compared to the rest of the U.S., so did the growth rate for the State of New York, although NYS lost population between 1970 and 1980 even though the Northeast as a whole was relatively stable during the decade (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

As shown in Figure 2.3, NYS’s population actually declined between 1970 and 1980, but this decrease was almost completely experienced in the downstate region. While Upstate New York’s growth slowed during this period, it did not decline as was true of the downstate region.
can actually be attributed to counties being re-classified as either metro or nonmetro due to population increases or decreases. As micropolitan counties grow past a threshold population, they then are re-classified as metropolitan, showing increases in the “metropolitan” category, and declines in the “micropolitan” category. Similarly nonmetro counties can “become” metropolitan if their commuting to metro areas exceeds a threshold level (25%). It is also possible for previously metro counties to drop out of the metro category. Counties categorized as non-core continued to increase in population during these two decades. Figure 2.5 shows the adjusted metro status of NYS counties after the 2000 decennial census results were completed.

**Figure 2.4: Total Population, New York State and Upstate County Types, 1990 – 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New York</th>
<th>Upstate</th>
<th>Metropolitan</th>
<th>Micropolitan</th>
<th>Non-Core</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>17,990,455</td>
<td>6,918,338</td>
<td>5,244,549</td>
<td>1,146,161</td>
<td>527,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>18,976,457</td>
<td>7,004,054</td>
<td>5,320,737</td>
<td>1,141,592</td>
<td>541,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005*</td>
<td>19,330,891</td>
<td>7,015,218</td>
<td>5,342,153</td>
<td>1,128,501</td>
<td>544,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19,378,102</td>
<td>7,109,287</td>
<td>5,546,068</td>
<td>1,015,680</td>
<td>547,539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 2.5 Changing metro status of NYS Counties**

Source: US Population Census

In the last two decades, NYS and the upstate region have continued to grow, but growth is not even across the Upstate region (Figure 2.4). Metropolitan Counties in Upstate have grown between every census year. Micropolitan counties, on the other hand, declined during both decades but at a much faster rate in the last ten years. Much of these “changes”...
Figure 2.6: Total Population by County, New York State, Census 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2.7: Percent Change in Population by County, 2000 to 2010, New York State

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Figure 2.6 shows the relative population size in NYS counties, according to the 2010 Census. In the upstate region, population size is greatest in those counties with large metro areas and smallest in the non-core counties, as would be expected. The next map, Figure 2.7, shows population change between 2000 and 2010 for each NYS county. Hamilton County, shown in dark purple, experienced a 10% or more population loss over the decade, and large areas of upstate, particularly in the central and western part of the state, experienced a loss of population of up to 5%. Among upstate counties posting population gains, Ontario, Saratoga, Orange and Duchess Counties had the most significant (6%-9.5%).

**Population Projections**

Population projections produced by Cornell University’s Program on Applied Demographics (PAD) indicate continued slow population growth in New York State over the next two and a half decades. According to PAD, the State will add close to a million people by the year 2035 (Figures 2.8 and 2.9). However, this rate of growth is likely to be slower than that experienced by other regions of the U.S. Hence, NYS’ share of the U.S. population is expected to decline over this time, an issue that of course has major political implications, since a state’s congressional apportionment is based on its share of the nation’s population.

In contrast to the entire state, the Upstate region, regardless of county type, is projected to decline, relative to current 2010 Census numbers (Figure 2.10).

**Natural Increase**

Population size is affected by the net effects of three events: births, deaths, and migration. The term “Natural Increase” refers to the net difference between the number of births and the number of deaths in a population. New York State experienced a decline in the rate of natural increase in the first several years of the past decade, but rates increased after 2005 and 2006. This is also true for the Upstate region. Upstate non-core based counties in particular experienced a steady increase in the natural rate of increase after 2004 (Figure 2.11).

**Migration**

Aside from natural increase, net migration is the other component of population change. Migration can be from international or domestic origins, and can be entering a place (in-migration) or exiting a place (out-migration). “Net” refers to the ending result of the differences in these processes. A trend line that sits above the “0” of the Y-axis indicates a positive net change (gain), a trend line below the “0” indicates a negative net change (loss). In addition, migrants can come from or go to domestic or international origins or destinations.
Figure 2.12 illustrates the net effects of both domestic and international net migration flows. Examining the net effect shows NYS experiencing higher rates of out-migration than in-migration, and while Upstate New York also had a net out-migration result, it was not as significant in the middle of the decade. However, these rates between the upstate region and the State as a whole converged by 2009.

![Figure 2.12: NYS and Upstate County Types Rates of Net Migration, 2001 – 2009](image)

Source: US Census Bureau

Figure 2.13 shows the upstate county-level variation in these net migration rates. Only those counties colored green experienced even modest net in-migration during the period. Those counties in red experienced the most significant rates of out-migration.

![Figure 2.13: New York State 2009 Net Migration Rates](image)

Source: US Census Bureau

Upstate New York experienced lower, but fairly steady rates of net international migration (people moving from a foreign country, or moving to a foreign country) during the 2000’s, compared to the State as a whole which experienced a significant decline (Figure 2.14). The rates for the non-core based counties appear to vary dramatically in the year 2003, but because of their relatively smaller population bases, small numeric variations in net international migration can result in large rate changes.

![Figure 2.14: NYS and Upstate County Types Rates of Net International Migration, 2001 – 2009](image)

Source: US Census Bureau

With regard to net domestic migration, the Upstate region had significantly different rates than did the State as a whole. While New York State as a whole experienced significant net out-migration, Upstate New York experienced much more moderate loss (Figure 2.14).

![Figure 2.15: NYS and Upstate County Types Rates of Net Domestic Migration, 2001 – 2009](image)

Source: US Census Bureau
Although migration is an important component of overall population change, not all age groups are equally mobile. In the following figures, we examine net migration rates for age groups in each decade from the 1950s through the 1990s. We can see a sharp peak in net migration into NYS for age groups 25-29 through 30-34 (trend lines are above zero on the Y-axis). For people aged older than 30-34, the trend changes to one of out migration (trend lines are below zero on the Y-axis). This trend was dramatically different, however, during the 1970s where the State experienced out migration for every age group (Figure 2.16).

The next three graphs (Figures 2.18-2.21) examine the age specific net migration trends among different types of upstate counties. The more recent decades examined are particularly noteworthy in the significant out-migration of 20-24 and 25-29 year olds, especially in the micropolitan and non-core based counties (note that the Y-axis in these two graphs runs to -30 per 1000). In the non-core based counties, we see evidence of positive net in-migration of people age 50 and above, perhaps retiring to more rural settings and small towns.

### Age Specific Migration

**Figure 2.16: New York State Net Migration Rates by Age, 1950s – 1990s**

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses

Turning to Upstate New York (Figure 2.17), we see significantly different trends compared to the state level shown in the previous graph. For the Upstate region, out migration is especially notable for the age groups 25-29 through 30-34. This trend was increasingly true over the last three decades shown.

**Figure 2.17: Upstate New York Net Migration Rate by Age, 1950s – 1990s**

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses

**Figure 2.18: Upstate New York Metropolitan Type County Net Migration Rate by Age, 1950s – 1990s**

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses

**Figure 2.19: Upstate New York Micropolitan Type County Net Migration Rate by Age, 1950s – 1990s**

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses

**Figure 2.20: Upstate New York Non-Core Type County Net Migration Rate by Age, 1950 – 1990**

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses
Age Structure

Changes in age structure, whether due to births, deaths, and/or net migration, can have important implications for community and regional development. In New York State, the median age has increased from 35.9 years in the year 2000 to 37.7 years in 2009, a difference of 1.8 years (Figure 2.21). The upstate micropolitan and non-core counties aged more rapidly than the rest of the state. They began the decade with the oldest median ages (37.3 and 37.1 years, respectively) and both increased by 2.6 years in just nine years.

Population pyramids are another tool to help visualize a population's age structure and how it changes over time. Figure 2.22 shows the changes in NYS age structure over the past decade. On the left side of the graphic, the grey shading refers to the age structure in 2000 and the dark blue outline refers to the age structure a decade later, allowing us to more clearly see how NYS age structure has changed in just one decade. Between 2000 and 2010, NYS lost population in the 0-14, 30-44, and 70-79 year old age groups, and gained population in the 15-29, 45-69, and 80+ year old age groups.

Figure 2.23 provides population pyramids for 1990 through 2030, projecting age structure two decades into the future. In general, the age structure of NYS is projected to continue to age, with a larger relative share of the population reaching the older age groups. The baby boom generation, seen most clearly in the first pyramid as the middle “bulge”, moves up the pyramid over time, resulting in a much larger number of senior citizens in the future.

---

**Figure 2.21: Median Age of New York State, Upstate, and Upstate County Populations, 2000-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NY State</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upstate</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micropolitan</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-core</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census, USA Counties Data

---

**Figure 2.22: Change in NYS age structure, 2000-2010**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Cornell University Program on Applied Demographics
Upstate New York’s age structure differs from the State as a whole due to the relative concave shape of the pyramid in year 2010 around the age groups 25-29 through 40-44. Over time the upstate region is projected to become much more uniform in size across the five year age groupings, experiencing decreases in the number of pre-school and school age children and young adults, while the middle-aged and older age groups become more uniform (Figure 2.24).

In general, an important trend to take from these population pyramids is not only the relative size of the population aged 65+ increasing across the Upstate region, but the actual number of people in these older age groups is also increasing, presenting particular challenges and opportunities for communities and the region. This overall projected trend is almost identical to that expected for the United States as a whole.

Household and Family Size

While national data suggests that average household and family size has increased over the last several years, we do not see that same trend in NYS. Since 1940 the average household size in NYS has declined from 3.54 persons to 2.57 persons in 2010. Average family size declined from 3.53 persons in 1970 to 3.2 persons in 2010 (Figure 2.26). Much of this decline has to do with lower birth rates as well as the increase in single-family headed households and individuals living on their own.

Household size and family size are not uniform across the state. As Figure 2.27 shows, average family size in NYS ranges between 2.91 persons in the Southern Tier to 3.37 in Long Island. Western New York has the fewest number of persons per household (2.34) while Long Island has the most (2.93).

Race and Ethnicity

Another dimension of population and population change is race and ethnic composition. In New York State in 1990, over 69% of the population was White, Non-Hispanic (Figure 2.28). By 2009 this number had decreased to just over 60%. The largest percentage increases were among Asian and Pacific Islanders (increasing from 3.8% to 7.3%) and Hispanics (increasing from 12.4% to 16.8%). While African Americans (non-Hispanic) increased as a percent of the total population from 14.4% in 1990 to 15.2% in 2009, Hispanics became the largest ethnic minority in the state. These state-level patterns, weighted heavily by the downstate region, differ markedly from those experienced in the upstate region. In 2009 Upstate New York was 84.7% White (non-Hispanic), with African-Americans (non-Hispanic) comprising 7.8% of the population and Hispanics only 4.9%.

The map in Figure 2.29 shows county-level population growth among Hispanics. Many of the counties which experienced significant percentage increases, however, still have relatively small Hispanic populations. Nonetheless, communities experiencing changes in their population, whether it be age structure, size, and/or race/ethnic composition, often face new challenges and opportunities.
### Figure 2.28: NYS and Upstate County Type Percentage Race and Ethnicity, 1990, 2000, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Asian and PI</th>
<th>AIAN (American Indian &amp; Alaskan Native)</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upstate</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Core</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center for Disease Control, Race and Ethnicity dataset

### Figure 2.29: NYS County Percentage Change in Hispanic Pop., 1990-2009

Source: Center for Disease Control, Race and Ethnicity dataset
The map in Figure 2.30 provides information on the actual relative size of the Hispanic population in Upstate NY counties, and indicates the metropolitan status of each county as well. This map helps to distinguish between percentage change in a population, and proportion of the total population comprised of a particular group, in this case, the Hispanic population of Upstate New York.

Related to both international migration and the Hispanic population increases, is the percent of the population that is foreign born. Almost 16% of New York State residents were foreign born in 1990, and this figure increased to 21.3% towards the end of the 2000’s. In contrast, only 5.8% of Upstate New York’s population is foreign born.

### Figure 2.31: Percentage Foreign Born, New York State County Types, 1990, 2000, & 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Type</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005-2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upstate</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micropolitan</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Core</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, and American Community Survey

**Resources For Demographic Data**

U.S. Census: [http://www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

Section III. Upstate Development Trends

A. Economic Development & Workforce Trends

Changing demographic and employment structures in upstate New York communities require a focus on workforce development and retention issues, including associated structural impediments. To remain competitive, communities and regions require access to essential services, resources, and infrastructure supportive of economic development.

A Vision for Rural New York, Fall 2006

The economy has been the topic receiving the most attention in Upstate New York in recent years. When people refer to “the economy” it often means a collection of concepts, including the availability of well-paying jobs, job growth, low unemployment, a reasonable cost of living, low rates of poverty, and employment across a diverse group of industrial sectors. In this section we focus on many of these concepts to provide a brief overview of the trends in Upstate New York in recent years.

We asked people in our survey what the main goal of local economic development should be (Figure 3A.1). A solid majority (62%) specified that creating local jobs was most important. The other three choices (increasing the tax base, reducing poverty, and improving the quality of life) were each cited as most important by slightly less than 10% of respondents.

Q: There are many goals of local economic development. Of the following four goals, please rank these in terms of importance:

While the majority of upstate New Yorkers are in agreement that creating local jobs should be the most important goal of local economic development efforts, this sentiment is particularly strong among those living in micropolitan counties (70%), and somewhat less important in non-core counties (59% (Figure 3A.2)). In contrast, reducing poverty was seen as more important by non-core county residents than in other types of upstate areas.

![Figure 3A.2: Most Important Goal of local economic development, by county type](source: SOUS Survey, 2011)

We examine job growth in New York State in recent years. The following graphs show the percent change from 12 months earlier for the U.S. NYS, and both upstate and downstate regions (Figures 3A.3 & 3A.4). The trends show a significant drop in job growth between 2006 and the end of 2008, when job loss (negative growth) was the trend until mid-2010 when payroll began moving in the positive growth direction. The trends for Upstate and Downstate New York during the last couple of years have been quite similar although Upstate had not posted a positive change in payroll by March 2011, compared to the 1% increase experienced in the Downstate region.

![Figure 3A.3: Payroll Job Growth: U.S. and New York State. Percent changes from 12-months earlier](source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, NY Department of Labor, Economy.com. March 9, 2011)
For the State as a whole, Health Care and Social Assistance is the major employment sector, with over 16% of the total labor force employed in this area in 2009 (Figure 3A.5). This has increased from 14% in just the past decade. Educational services and retail trade have remained fairly steady in recent years, employing between 10% and 11% of the labor force. Manufacturing continues to employ a smaller share of the labor force as time goes on, declining from 8.6% in 2000 to 5.9% by 2009. Trends for employment in all sectors are noted in Figure 3A.5.

In Upstate New York, the pattern has been somewhat different. While Health Care and Social Assistance employed about 16% of the labor force by the year 2009, at the beginning of the decade Manufacturing was still the largest employer in the upstate region (Figure 3A.6). In 2000 manufacturing employed 14.5% of the labor force, but by 2009 this had dropped to 10.2%. Educational services have a slightly stronger presence in the Upstate labor force compared to the state as a whole, and Retail trade is marginally greater as well.

The industrial structure of New York State has shifted dramatically over the past several decades. There has been much discussion about the general decline in manufacturing employment and the rise in employment in the service sector. The following graphs show the percent of total employment in each industrial sector for the years 2000-2009.
The next several graphs show how employment in the top six sectors in Upstate New York vary across the different county types of metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core based. We compare these figures to those for the Upstate region as a whole and for the State.

Manufacturing as a percent of total employment in Upstate New York has declined almost across the board (Figure 3A.7). Micropolitan counties had 18% of their labor force in manufacturing in 2000, but this had dropped to just below 13% by 2009. Metropolitan counties also experienced a significant decline, from 13.9% in 2000 to 9.7% in 2009. While non-core counties also experienced an overall decline in manufacturing, it was much less steep and seemed to even be leveling out around the 12%-13% range in the latter years of the decade.
Health Care & Social Assistance increased across the board in upstate New York, and makes up the relatively largest share of employment in micropolitan upstate counties, and the smallest in non-core based counties. While upstate counties depend less on employment in this sector than NYS overall, micropolitan areas are more dependent than the state as a whole (Figure 3A.8).

Educational Services employment remained relatively steady over the decade for all county types in the upstate region (Figure 3A.9). Employment dependence on educational services in the upstate region was far greater than the state average.

Public Administration has a strong presence in non-core upstate counties compared to the rest of the region and the state as a whole (Figure 3A.11). This is especially true of non-core counties.

Retail Trade also remained relatively steady over the period in the state, and in the upstate region, with virtually no difference among county types (Figure 3A.10). Once again, the upstate region is more dependent on retail trade employment than is NYS as a whole.

Accommodation & Food Service has slowly increased as a percentage of total employment in NYS as a whole and for much of the upstate region, but has declined since 2000 in non-core counties (Figure 3A.12). However, non-core counties still show a slightly higher percent of their labor force employed in this sector compared to the rest of Upstate.
It is not surprising that job creation emerged as a major concern among Upstate New Yorkers in our survey (Figures 3A.1 and 3A.2). Unemployment rates have increased significantly in recent years for the State, although the rate of 8.2% for New York State is less than the national rate of 8.9% (Figure 3A.13).

Unemployment has risen across the state, but shows significant variation by region. Among the Upstate regions, the North Country posts the highest unemployment as of June 2010, while the Capital Region shows the lowest (Figure 3A.14).

Unemployment in recent years has not varied much between different upstate county types as this next graph shows (Figure 3A.15).

Only 14% expressed satisfaction with the quantity and quality of jobs in their local community, while 69% were dissatisfied (Figure 3A.16). Almost half of those living in non-core counties, however were very dissatisfied, compared to 35 and 26 percent for micropolitan and metropolitan residents, respectively (Figure 3A.17). This is interesting because as shown in Figure 3.15 unemployment is no higher in non-core counties than in other parts of Upstate. One might speculate that the deep dissatisfaction reflects underemployment rather than unemployment.
To explore potential barriers to finding jobs, we asked the following question:

**Q: Of the following, which do you believe is the biggest challenge for people finding jobs in your community?**

Three quarters (73%) of respondents cited the lack of available jobs as the biggest challenge, distantly followed by 14% of respondents who felt that more education and training were needed (Figure 3A.18). People living in non-core counties were less likely (65%) than their more metro counterparts to identify lack of jobs as the main challenge, and more likely to identify inadequate transportation (Figure 3A.19).

While education and training was not cited as the most important reason that people were challenged in finding jobs locally, education attainment and specialized training are critical pieces of workforce and economic development. With regard to education, we examine the trends in educational attainment among Upstate New Yorkers. In 1990, one in four New Yorkers above the age of 25 lacked a high school diploma. By the latter part of the 2000’s this number had dropped to about 13%. This pattern was similar for Upstate New Yorkers (from 22.5% without a high school diploma in 1990 to just over 9% in the later 2000’s) (Figure 3A.20).
The percent of the population with a high school diploma or some college education increased among the Upstate population from almost 58% in 1990 to about 62% in 2005-2009. These rates are highest among upstate micropolitan and non-core counties with about 68% of their population having at least a high school or some college education (Figure 3A.21).

While just under 20% of the Upstate population had a Bachelor’s degree or higher in 1990, this figure had increased to almost 29% by 2005-2009. Upstate metropolitan counties had the highest percentage in this category, with 31.5% of the population over the age of 25 in the years 2005-2009 with at least a four year degree in 2005-2009.

The changing role of Community Colleges in local and regional economic development has attracted more attention recently because of their role in workforce preparation. In our survey we asked the following question:

Q: A major goal of most Upstate Community Colleges is to help their students go on to 4 year colleges. Some argue that Community Colleges should play a bigger role in training students for jobs in advanced manufacturing industries. Which of these two goals do you feel it is most important for upstate NY community colleges to focus on?

Figure 3A.22: Most important goal for upstate NY community colleges

Source: SOUS Survey, 2011

Relatively more respondents think community colleges should prepare students for jobs in advanced manufacturing, but the difference is not great, 42 versus 36% (Figure 3A.22). There were no significant differences in responses by county type (not shown). As traditional manufacturing employment opportunities have dried up in the Upstate region, many economic development experts are focused on newly emerging technologies and the higher tech manufacturing opportunities that may accompany them. Having an adequately trained labor force is one key component to being able to attract and retain such industries. In turn, many businesses who consider locating to an area are very focused on the availability of educated and well-trained labor. There is some concern that Upstate New York faces the additional challenge of attracting this sort of labor to the area in order to encourage this type of economic development.
In our survey we asked respondents the following question:

Q: There has been a lot of discussion about how best to attract young, educated workers to the upstate New York region. What do you think is Upstate's greatest asset in attracting people who want to relocate here?

Almost half of upstate New Yorkers believe the environment and natural resources of the region is the biggest asset for attracting young educated workers (Figure 3A.23). This sentiment was particularly strong among people living in non-core counties. One in five upstate New Yorkers identified quality of life as a major feature, but this was only echoed by 8 percent of non-core residents (Figure 3A.24). Interestingly, ten percent, overall, identified the economy and jobs as an asset for the region. Other characteristics mentioned included education, the diversity of people, and culture/arts, although these last two characteristics were not identified as important by non-core county residents.

Summary

The economy has been the topic receiving the most attention in Upstate New York in recent years. New Yorkers believe the main goal of local economic development should be creating local jobs (62%) as trends show significant drops in job growth and relatively high rates of unemployment, although the rate of 8.2% for New York State is less than the national rate of 8.9%. The industrial structure of New York State has shifted dramatically over the past several decades with Health Care and Social Assistance as the major employment sector. Educational services and retail trade employment have remained fairly steady in recent years, but Manufacturing continues to employ a smaller share of the state labor force as time goes on, declining from 8.6% in 2000 to 5.9% by 2009. In Upstate New York, the pattern has been somewhat different. While Health Care and Social Assistance employed about 16% of the labor force by the year 2009, at the beginning of the decade Manufacturing was still the largest employer in the upstate region. In 2000 manufacturing employed 14.5% of the labor force, but by 2009 this had dropped to 10.2%. Educational services have a slightly stronger presence in the Upstate labor force compared to the state as a whole, and Retail trade is marginally greater as well.

Education attainment and specialized training is a critical piece of workforce and economic development. In 1990, one in four New Yorkers above the age of 25 lacked a high school diploma. By the later part of the 2000's this number had dropped to about 13%. This pattern was similar for Upstate New Yorkers (from 22.5% without a high school diploma in 1990 to just over 9% in the later 2000's). The percent of the population with a high school diploma or some college education increased among the Upstate population from almost 58% in 1990 to about 62% in 2005-2009. While just under 20% of the Upstate population had a Bachelor's degree or higher in 1990, this figure had increased to almost 29% by 2005-2009.

Resources For Employment, Workforce and Economic Data

U.S. Census, Local Employment Dynamics: http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/index.php
B: Income and Poverty

The current fiscal crisis has sharpened the focus on the related issues of income and poverty for people across the state and nation. When incomes remain stagnant or decline in real dollars and poverty remains high, it not only has negative impacts on individuals and families but on communities, regions and entire societies.

Declining household incomes and the increasing prevalence of poverty are two outcomes of the economic downturn of the last few years. New York State has largely followed the trend of the U.S. as a whole over the last two decades (Figure 3B.1).

![Figure 3B.1: Personal Income: Percent Changes from 4-Quarters Earlier, U.S., NYS, and New Jersey. 1992-2011](image)

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Moody's Economy.com

While median individual income in upstate NYS has increased by about $3,300 between 1990 and 2005-07, upstate micropolitan counties increased by $6,254, but median incomes in upstate non-core counties only increased by $2,580 (Figure 3B.2). The median income of females in non-core counties was only 57 percent that of males in 2005-07.

In real terms, when using adjusted dollars, median household income in NYS has declined over the past decade, by 0.8% between 2000 and 2010 (Figure 3B.3). Household income in the upstate region dropped a greater percentage, 1.2%, and this was particularly felt in the metropolitan counties where household incomes dropped by 2.2%. Median household incomes in upstate non-core counties were relatively stable compared to other areas of the region.

![Figure 3B.2: New York State Median Individual Income, 1990, 2000, & 2005-2007](image)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – adjusted to 2007 constant dollars.

In the SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

**Q: The current economic crisis has impacted a lot of people. In the past few years, have you encountered difficulty in meeting your basic needs or covering all of your expenses? Have you encountered difficulty in paying for any of the following specific expenses?**

About a third of respondents to our survey indicated that they had experienced difficulty in meeting their basic needs or covering their expenses in recent years (Figure 3B.4). Of those that expressed difficulty in covering some of their expenses, more than half identified utilities, transportation...
and recreation as being difficult to pay for. Paying for food, mortgages, health care, and clothing were also identified by at least a third of these respondents as challenging.

![Figure 3B.4: In recent years, have you had difficulty paying for any of the following expenses?](image)

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

Poverty has increased across the board in New York State. Upstate New York’s poverty rate increased from about 11 percent in the year 2000 to about 13 percent in 2008. Non-core and micropolitan counties posted higher increases in poverty rates (Figure 3B.5) although poverty rates in micropolitan counties exceeded 14.6% by 2008, the highest among all upstate county types.

![Figure 3B.5: People of all ages in poverty - percent 2000-2008](image)

Source: U.S Census Bureau

While the percentage of people age 65 and older in poverty declined between 1990 and 2000, the figures increased later in the decade according to the five year ACS estimates (2005-2009). More than ten percent of those aged 65 and older in Upstate New York were poor in 2005-09. Figures were highest for micropolitan and non-core counties (Figure 3B.7). Higher taxes and housing costs in NYS may present challenges to families and households with older individuals who live on a more fixed income.

![Figure 3B.6: People under age 18 in poverty - percent 2000-2008, by upstate county type](image)

Source: U.S Census Bureau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upstate</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Core</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1990, and 2000, and 2005-2009 ACS.

Public policies for assisting lower income individuals and families are received with varying degrees of support. Public sentiment towards whether poor people are “deserving” or not of government assistance often weighs heavily into these levels of support or opposition. In the SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

![Figure 3B.7: Percent of the population age 65+ in poverty, NYS and Upstate NY Counties](image)

The percent of children in poverty in Upstate NY has also increased since 2000. Children living in non-core and micropolitan counties are at a higher risk of being poor than their upstate metro counterparts. About 18 percent of children in Upstate New York were poor in 2008, while 20 percent of children were poor living in non-core and micropolitan counties were poor (Figure 3B.6).
Q: Which is the bigger cause of poverty today: people not doing enough or circumstances beyond their control?

A majority (55%) felt that poverty was caused by circumstances beyond people’s control, but more than a third (37%) felt that poor people did not do enough to help themselves (Figure 3B.8).

Of those that felt poverty was caused by people not doing enough, about a third said that by this they meant that poor people were lazy. This sentiment was particularly strong among non-core county residents in upstate (43.5%). Another third felt that poor people abused government programs. The lack of education and unwillingness to take available jobs were also cited as examples of what some people felt explained poor people’s poverty status (Figure 3B.9).

Of the fifty-five percent of respondents who felt that poverty was caused by circumstances beyond peoples’ control, the lack of jobs was cited as the major reason (more than 50%), and this sentiment did not vary across county types in upstate (Figure 3B.10). While “poor economic conditions” was also cited by a significant number, those living in micropolitan counties were most likely to cite this as a reason (26.7%).

To follow the line of questioning around why some people end up in poverty, we asked the following question on the SOUS survey (a question that has appeared on many social surveys in the past):

Q: Do poor people have higher, lower, or the same moral values as other Americans?
A solid majority (69%) felt that poor people had the same moral values as other Americans (Figure 3B.11). Almost one in five, however, felt they had lower moral values. Five percent felt they had higher moral values. Eight percent responded that they did not know. Among those respondents offering an opinion, micropolitan county residents were more likely (27.5%) to feel that poor people had lower moral values than other Americans (Figure 3B.12).

![Figure 3B.12: Do poor people have higher, lower or the same moral values as other Americans? By upstate county type](source)

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

Summary

Mirroring national trends, household income and poverty rates fluctuated across Upstate NY throughout the last two decades. Median income in micropolitan counties increased by over $6200 but only $2580 in non-core counties. Adjusting for inflation, this results in a decline in real dollars of nearly 1%. Metropolitan counties have the highest household incomes of the three county types. Moreover, a substantial gender gap exists with women earning only 57% to that of men in non-core counties. The recent recession has caused more than half of all respondents to report difficulty in covering their utilities, transportation, and recreation costs, and at least a third of respondents had difficulty paying for food, mortgage, healthcare, and clothing. Poverty rates have steadily increased across Upstate from just over 11% to nearly 13% with micropolitan counties having the highest rates of over 14.5% poverty. The rates for children are higher, with 18% of all children living in Upstate living in poverty and 20% of children living in micro and non-core counties. Among those over the age of 65, poverty rates upstate are just under 8% with those living in micro and non-core pushing 9%. When asked about the central cause of people living in poverty in Upstate NY, more than half of respondents agreed that it was due to circumstances beyond the control of poor people such as lack of jobs and poor economic conditions. Thirty-seven percent of respondents suggested poor people are not doing enough because they are lazy of abusing government programs with these responses most prevalent in non-core counties.

Resources For Data On Income and Poverty

U.S. Census: [http://www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)


Bureau of Economic Analysis

C: Local & Regional Governance

New York State’s local governments are generally perceived as being accessible and responsive to public input, but their traditional structure, functions and financing may also be less efficient and effective in providing the public services and community development capacity required in the 21st century.

A Vision for Rural New York, Fall 2006

In general, the major issue for local and regional governments in Upstate New York is the tension between revenues and expenditures, and the mismatch that often results in tax increases and/or cuts in services. We begin this section with a question we asked on the SOUS survey:

Q: Every community has good and bad points about living within it. Please tell me, for your local community how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the value of local government services.

About 40% of upstate New Yorkers are dissatisfied with the value of local services, while 38% are satisfied (Figure 3C.1). Twenty-two percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. However, the proportion of very dissatisfied outweighs the proportion of very satisfied by almost two to one, suggesting more dissatisfaction that may appear at first glance.

In general, non-core county residents are the least satisfied of all upstate New Yorkers with the value of their local services (Figure 3C.2).

Additional concern over proposed property tax caps, service-sharing, consolidation, and overall budget pressures are currently overwhelming many local governments. We now highlight data found in the Comptroller’s annual report. For more detailed trend data, please refer to the 2010 Comptrollers Annual Report which can be accessed at:

www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/datamstat/annreport/10annreport.pdf

While revenues in upstate New York counties have increased over the decade, so too have expenditures, with expenditures outpacing revenues in 2009 by more than $360 million in the upstate region (Figures 3C.3 and 3C.4).
Figure 3C.5 shows more clearly the mismatch between expenditures and revenues for upstate NY counties. In 2000, expenditures totaled about 97% of revenues across upstate. This increased to a high of 107.5% in 2003, but even though this percentage has dropped since 2003, the figure is still above 100%, indicating expenditures have outpaced revenues. This is true for all county types across upstate, although more so for metropolitan counties.

Revenues

Looking at change in total revenues since 2000 by local government type, City revenues increased the most (35%), while County revenues increased by 25% (Figure 3C.6).

Source of revenues is an important issue to examine. Both property and sales tax revenues grew significantly for local governments over the decade, with upstate NY counties experiencing a massive jump in sales tax revenues. Cities in Upstate New York received the largest percentage change in state aid over the decade, increasing by almost 50 percent their aid from the state, compared to increases of about 20 percent for County and village governments. Federal aid to local governments varied significantly over the decade by local government type. Cities in the Upstate region received almost steady increases over 2000 levels of federal funding, while the amount that villages received from federal sources varied tremendously from year to year, with overall declines relative to 2000 levels (Figure 3C.7-3C.9).

Cities in upstate NY have maintained a fairly steady distribution of revenue sources over the decade, although property and sales tax revenues dropped in 2009 (Figure 3C.8).

Local sources of revenues (property and sales taxes) continue to make up a large share of total revenues for towns in Upstate (Figure 3C.9).
Villages in upstate New York receive a significant share of their total revenues through charges for services (Figure 3C.10).

Expenditures

As with revenues, total expenditures have also increased for all local government types in Upstate New York over the decade (Figure 3C.11).

Counties have spent an increasing proportion of their budgets on items listed as “general government” and a decreasing share on social services. Employee benefits have also increased as a share of total expenditures over the decade (Figure 3C.12).

City governments in upstate have experienced significant increases in the relative share of their budget allocated to employee benefits, while most other categories have remained steady (Figure 3C.13).

Types of town and village government expenditures have remained fairly steady on a relative basis over the decade, although employee benefits have increased to some extent (Figures 3C.14 and 3C.15).
While taxes are obviously a major revenue source for local and regional governments, New Yorkers have one of the highest tax burdens in the country. In one of our lead-in questions to the SOUS survey, we asked what people thought was the most important issue facing the State. About one-quarter identified “taxes” (Figures 1.5 and 1.6). We asked them to specify which specific tax they were referring to (Figure 3C.16). The most frequently cited tax was property tax, particularly in non-core counties. Non-core county residents were also more likely to identify the “gas tax” as the most important issue, perhaps since commuting distances tend to be longer in these non-core counties, and therefore gas expenses become a major factor for some residents. Interestingly, non-core county respondents did not identify school taxes as a major concern.

Q: In your opinion, what do you think is the single most important issue facing New York State as a whole? (For those who identified “taxes” as the most important issue, we asked them to specify which specific tax they were referring to.)

Given the relative importance of property tax revenues to local government budgets, particularly towns and villages, the possibility of a property tax cap has significant implications. Almost three-quarters (72.5%) of Upstate New Yorkers support property tax caps, but this support drops to less than two-thirds (61%) if local governments can no longer afford to provide the same level of services. Among the three county types there was virtually no difference when asked about support for property tax caps in general, but when the possibility of reduced services was raised, about 25 percent of those living in micropolitan counties were opposed, compared to 16 and 11 percent of metropolitan and non-core county residents, respectively (Figure 3C.17).

Q: Governor Cuomo has proposed a property tax cap. If enacted, the cap would limit annual increases in local property taxes to a maximum of 2%.

Do you support or oppose such a property tax cap? Would you support or oppose this property tax cap if it meant your local government could not afford to provide you with the level of services you are currently receiving?

There has been increased attention given to the notion of increasing local government efficiency and effectiveness through the consolidation of services and even merging of local government units. With the increasing pressure on smaller local governments to provide services with limited revenue, this scenario becomes a real possibility. We asked the following question on the SOUS survey:
Q: What would be most important to you when deciding whether to support or oppose the merging of some of your city, town, or village’s services with those of another city, town or village?

Figure 3C.18: What is important when supporting/opposing mergers of local government service

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

Forty-one percent of Upstate New Yorkers are most concerned about the impact service sharing and consolidation would have on their taxes, while 36% are concerned about the impact on the quality of services delivered (Figure 3C.18). Fewer than one in five respondents expressed concern about the impact such a move would have on their local government’s influence on the service. Those living in micropolitan counties were more concerned about the impact on their taxes (48 percent) than those living in metropolitan or non-core counties (40% and 40% respectively) (Figure 3C.19).

Given the rise in expenditures relative to revenues, there is increased concern over local and state budgets. People have varying opinions about how our government leaders should go about balancing these budgets. On our SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

Q: Some people have said New York State will not have enough money soon to balance the state budget and pay for all its existing programs. In addition, many municipalities across the state are struggling to balance their budgets and pay for all their existing programs. In order to balance state and local budgets, if you had to choose among the following things, what would you prefer?

Figure 3C.20: Preferred actions for balancing local and state budgets

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

Upstate New Yorkers indicate a strong preference for cutting both local and state programs in order to balance municipal and state budgets (Figure 3C.20). A preference for cutting specific programs was noted over a uniform cut, particularly at the state level. Less than one in five respondents preferred to either raise taxes or borrow money at the local or state level, although there was slightly more willingness to do either of these two things at the local level compared to the state. There was no significant difference in responses for balancing the state budget, according to what county type people lived in, but variation emerged when referring to local budgets. Upstate metropolitan residents were much more likely to choose cutting local programs uniformly (40 percent) while non-core upstate residents preferred cutting specific local programs. Micropolitan residents (20 percent) were more likely than others to prefer raising local taxes in order to balance local budgets (Figure 3C.21).

Figure 3C.21: Preference for actions to balance local budget, by county type

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey
While upstate New Yorkers have clear preferences for budget priorities, they must put their faith in their local and state elected leaders to make the final decisions. The level of confidence we place in our elected officials is often related to how prepared we feel they are for the job. On our SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

**Q: In terms of your local elected leaders’ skills and knowledge, how well prepared do you think they are to effectively serve your community?**

![Figure 3C.22: How prepared are local elected leaders?](image)

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

About two-thirds (64%) of Upstate New Yorkers feel their local leaders are somewhat to very prepared to effectively serve their communities (Figure 4.22). However, slightly more than a third (36%) feel their leaders are unprepared. There were virtually no differences in responses among residents of different county types.

**Summary**

In general, the major issue for local and regional governments in Upstate New York is the tension between revenues and expenditures, and the mismatch that often results in tax increases and/or cuts in services. Additional concern over proposed property tax caps, service-sharing, consolidation, and overall budget pressures are currently overwhelming many local governments. While revenues in upstate New York counties have increased over the decade, so too have expenditures, with expenditures outpacing revenues by 2009 by more than $360 million in the upstate region. In 2000, expenditures totaled about 97% of revenues across upstate. This increased to a high of 107.5% in 2003, but even though this percentage has dropped since 2003, the figure is still above 100%, indicating expenditures have outpaced revenues.

While taxes are obviously a major revenue source for local and regional governments, New Yorkers have one of the highest tax burdens in the country. Almost three-quarters (72.5%) of Upstate New Yorkers support property tax caps, but this support drops to less than two-thirds (61%) if local governments can no longer afford to provide the same level of services.

People have varying opinions about how our government leaders should go about balancing local and state budgets. Upstate New Yorkers indicate a strong preference for cutting both local and state programs in order to balance municipal and state budgets rather than increasing taxes. A preference for cutting specific programs was noted over a uniform cut, particularly at the state level.

**Resources for NYS Local & Regional Government Data**

NYS Office of the Comptroller: [http://www.osc.state.ny.us/](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/)

Local Government & School Accountability Data: [http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/datanstat/index.htm](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/datanstat/index.htm)
School districts in New York State, as in most of the country, have experienced significant changes in the past decade. Enrollment patterns have shifted over time, with many rural and central city districts experiencing declining enrollment, and many suburban or mid-sized districts showing stability or sometimes slight increases in enrollment. Prior to 2010, there were dramatic increases in revenues, particularly from state and local sources, allowing for a substantial increase in district expenditures. In the 2009/10 school year, total local, state, and federal general and special aid fund expenditures for New York State was $55.7 billion. Starting in the spring of 2010 and most recently in April of 2011, the state enacted cuts in state aid, ranging from $600/pupil in the lowest need districts, $900/pupil in NYC, $1100/pupil in the Big 4, and over $1300/pupil in the Average need and high need rural districts. This results in $19.6 billion of general NY State aid to public schools for the 2011/12 school year, which represents a 3.3% reduction from the previous school year. As a result of state aid cuts and general fiscal constraint, school districts put up budgets for public approval with average expenditure increases of 1.25% and an average increase in the local tax levy of 3.43%. In late May of 2011, the Governor, Senate, and Assembly reached agreement on a bill that would implement a cap on increases in the local school property tax levies beginning with the 2011/12 budget season. This tax levy would be capped at 2% or the national Consumer Price Index, whichever is less. Sixty percent of voters would need to approve an override to the cap, but if the votes falls short of the 60% then the mandated cap is reduced to 0%. Governor Cuomo described the cap as the “tightest and best property tax cap in the nation” and stated “...I think this is the single most important development for the economy of the state of New York.”

This is a critical time for Upstate NY schools and the communities they serve. For the first time in decades we are witnessing a combined set of pressures that include drops in enrollment, multi-year state aid cuts, and the soon-to-be-enacted local property tax cap. Moreover, the state Board of Regents continues it long-term plan to heighten academic expectations and rigorous evaluation of schools, students, and teachers and the Federal government is in the process of reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind. This is a squeeze that few in NYS have experienced. Change is certain and views are divided as to whether and how this will help or hurt the schools and youth in Upstate NY.

In general, Upstate New Yorkers are quite satisfied with the public education in their local community. On our SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

**Q: Every community has good points and bad points about living within it. Please tell me, for your local community, how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the public education.**

Fifty-nine percent indicate being either satisfied or very satisfied, while only nineteen percent indicated being dissatisfied. More than one in five (22%) however indicated being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the public education in their local community (Figure 3D.1). There was virtually no difference in opinion by residents’ county type (not shown).
Enrollment losses were experienced by private schools across the state as well (Figures 3D.4 & 3D.5). Total private school enrollment dropped 7.6% state-wide, a loss of almost 37,000 students. Upstate the losses were much more significant with private enrollment dropping almost 22% over the period (a loss of 26,000 students). Private enrollment in metropolitan county schools declined by over 21,000 students (21%), while non-core counties experienced a smaller relative decline of 721 students, or a drop of 11% over the decade.

Revenues
State aid to upstate New York public school districts has comprised about half of all revenues over the past fifteen years. Local revenue declined after 1997 at the same time that the STAR program was initiated (Figure 3D.6).

Public school districts in upstate micropolitan and non-core counties receive, on average, a significantly greater share of their total revenues from state aid, compared to metropolitan districts (Figures 3D.7-3D.9). While upstate metropolitan districts receive about forty to forty-five percent of their revenues from local sources, districts in micropolitan and non-core counties receive only thirty to thirty-five percent of their revenues from local sources. In all cases federal aid amounts to less than 10% of upstate New York school district’s sources of revenue.
In the SOUS survey, we asked upstate New Yorkers about the proposed property tax caps (see local government section, Figure 3C.15). A majority support a tax cap (72.5 percent), although this support drops to sixty-one percent if it was thought that the cap would result in a reduction of local services. When survey respondents were further questioned about their support or opposition to property tax caps, only 49 percent indicated support if the caps resulted in cuts to their local school budgets (Figure 3D.10). Thirty-nine percent oppose the caps under this scenario, whereas only 16.3 percent were generally opposed and about 24 percent opposed with a reduction in local services. When we examine the results by resident county type, non-core county residents are much less supportive (49% oppose) of property tax caps if it results in annual cuts to their local school budget, and residents of micropolitan counties are much more supportive (58% support) (Figure 3D.11).

On the SOUS survey, we asked another question about what upstate New Yorkers would support in order to reduce their local property taxes. Gubernatorial candidate Cuomo voiced concern about the large number of local governments across NYS, including the 697 school districts. On the heels of two statewide reports on local government and taxes, both of which called for greater school district consolidation, discussion of school district consolidation is rampant.
Q: If it resulted in a decrease in your local school property tax, how much would you support the merging of your local school with that of a school in a neighboring town?

About half of upstate respondents support merging their local school with a neighboring one if it resulted in a decrease in property taxes (Figure 3D.12). Almost a third of respondents were opposed to this consolidation even if there were tax savings as a result, and one in five respondents are neutral on this issue. In contrast to the question on the proposed tax cap, there is virtually no difference in response by residents’ county type.

Figure 3D.12: Levels of support for merging local school with one of neighboring town to reduce property tax

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

Expenditures

Looking at expenditures on a per pupil level, upstate New York public school districts are spending an ever increasing amount on their students (New York State has consistently been in the top three of all states in per-pupil spending and led the nation in 2010). In 2000, the vast majority of upstate districts spent between $10,000 and $15,000 per pupil. By 2008, most districts were spending significantly more per pupil (Figures 3D.13 & 3D.14). Several districts in the Adirondacks were spending more than $30,000 per student, and in two cases, Long Lake and Newcomb Central school districts were spending about $55,000 per pupil. There is also a cluster of districts in the Sullivan and Ulster County areas that are spending substantially more than the state average per pupil.

Figure 3D.13: Expenditures per pupil, NYS School Districts, 2000

Source: NYSEd Fiscal Analysis and Research Unit
What are the components of total district expenditures, and how has this changed over time? Teacher’s salaries have increased from just under $3,800 per student in 1993 to over $4,305 in 2008 (Figure 3D.15). Health care expenditures per pupil more than tripled during this period. Transportation costs per pupil increased forty percent, while teacher retirement expenditures per student fell slightly, overall. Expenditures per student did not vary significantly across districts in different county types, although districts in non-core counties spent the most per pupil on transportation.
While teachers’ salaries comprise the largest share of total expenditures by upstate New York school districts, the relative share has declined over the past fifteen years, and health care expenditures have dramatically increased their share of the local school district budget (Figure 3D.16).

Student Performance and Outcomes

Has the financial investment in public schools translated into improved outcomes for students? The Board of Regents of New York State sets learning standards for students in the state in conjunction with a federal mandate to test all students in mathematics and English-language arts annually in grades 3-8. Figure 3D.17 provides the percentage of students in each grade deemed “proficient” in meeting the NYS standards for these two types of tests in 2010.

While there is slight variation grade-to-grade, there is substantial difference based on geography and local community wealth. Among the high need districts, students attending the high need rural districts perform slightly better than those in New York City, better than the students attending high need suburban or urban and much higher than those attending the “Big Four” school districts of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers. Students attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need to Resource</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Need to Resource</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large City</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban-Suburban</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Need to Resource</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Need to Resource</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PUBLIC</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NONPUBLIC</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

average need districts score better than the average of the high need districts, and students attending the schools in the wealthiest communities (low need) perform the highest with 72–83% of all students scoring at a level deemed proficient by New York State (Figure 3D.17).

Another important measure of student outcomes is the high school dropout rate. The cohort dropout rate is calculated as the percent of students who enter 9th grade in a given year who dropout at any time over the next four year period. Beginning with the 2001 9th grade cohort, 8.7% of public school students in Upstate New York dropped out of school before their intended graduation date four years later (Figure 3D.18). This number declined slightly the following year but then increased significantly to 9.4% for the 2003 cohort. The dropout rate has declined slightly since that time, but still exceeds 9% of all students. The figures are lowest among non-core students in recent years (8.3% with the 2005 cohort) and highest among students living in micropolitan counties (9.2% with the 2005 cohort).

According to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics (New York Times, 5/5/11), across the United States, just 74.9 percent of public school students who were freshmen in the fall of 2004 graduated from high school on time in 2008. New York State was below average, with 70.9 percent graduating on time, although this still marked a significant improvement from five years earlier when the rate was just 60.9 percent. Looking at district-level data within NYS, graduation rates reported by NYS public school districts have increased overall over the past five years (Figure 3D.19). High need urban/suburban and rural districts have increased by 3 to 4 percentage points. Average and low need districts have the
highest graduation rates, but have been relatively stagnant during the past 4 years. Statewide, almost 72 percent of the students who started 9th grade in 2005 had graduated after 4 years, by June 2009. This is compared with a 66 percent graduation rate for students who started 9th grade in 2001. The annual rate of increase has slowed – from 2.1 percent for the 2003 cohort to .9 percent for the 2005 cohort. While these rates are shown for June graduates, when factoring in the additional time some students may need to graduate, the graduation rate for August 2009 was over 74 percent. A fifth year of high school makes a difference for many students. Among students who started 9th grade in 2004, 77 percent had graduated by 2009, an increase of five percentage points or 12,500 more students during the fifth year.

Figure 3D.20 compares the 4-year graduation rates for the 2001-2005 9th grade cohorts in upstate New York counties. As in the previous figure, upstate public school districts showed progress in their 4-year graduation rates, increasing from 74.7% in 2005 (the 2001 cohort) to 76.7% in 2009 (the 2005 cohort). While districts in micropolitan counties began the period with the highest 4-year graduation rates, they improved only slightly over the period. Districts in non-core counties, on the other hand, made the most dramatic improvement, with 4-year graduation rates increasing from 74.4% to 78.4% over the 4 year period.

Since teacher salaries comprise such a significant share of school district’s expenditures, much attention has been paid to evaluating teacher performance and linking it to specific measures of student performance outcomes. On the SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

**Q:** The federal government has awarded NYS $700,000,000 Race to the Top funding. To qualify for this money, the state will allow teachers’ evaluation to be linked to student performance.

On a scale of 1-5, would you support your local school district’s interest in obtaining funding by using local student performance to partially evaluate local teachers’ performance?
Summary

Nearly 60% of Upstate New Yorkers are satisfied or very satisfied with their local public schools, while nearly 20% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and another 20% indifferent. This sentiment does not vary by geographical context. The enrollment in Upstate NY’s public schools mirrors the general population trends with schools experiencing enrollment loss. Public school expenditures have steadily increased over the last 15 years, though state aid has been cut in the most recent two years and average expenditure increases have been reduced. The cap on the local school property tax levy is ready for certain approval which will further constrain the ability of localities to make up for the cuts in state aid. On average, about half of all school district revenue is provided by the state while the STAR tax relief program is associated with proportionally reduced reliance on local tax sources. The SOUS poll found that support for a property tax cap is mixed, with the most support from respondents in micro counties, while the most opposition is found in non-core counties. Half of all respondents are supportive of school consolidation but this support drops when faced with the prospect of local programmatic cuts. While geography plays some role in student test performance, community wealth is a far stronger predictor of average district performance with districts in low need communities performing substantially better than in the high need urban and rural communities. In contrast, graduation rates of rural school districts are substantially higher than their comparatively poor urban and suburban neighbors.

Resources For School Data

NYS Department of Education: http://www.nysed.gov/

Program on Applied Demographics, Integrated Data System for Schools:
http://pad.human.cornell.edu/schools/index.cfm

NYS Center for Rural Schools:
http://www.nyruralschools.org/

NYS School Report Cards:

Federal Education Budget Project: http://febp.newamerica.net/
**E: Health Care**

Long range planning in health care is critical for the future development of upstate New York and to the quality of life and well-being of community residents across the region.

A Vision for Rural New York, Fall 2006

Issues in health care in upstate New York are similar to those faced by people across the nation. The U.S. has arguably the best health care in the world in terms of numbers of highly trained doctors and specialists, state of the art equipment and facilities, but access to these health care providers can be challenging for many people. Issues such as the lack of health insurance, inadequate clinics and specialists in more remote, rural areas, lack of transportation, and the conditions of poverty create barriers against obtaining quality health care for many people. In addition, health outcomes vary significantly across the population, creating real problems for people, families, and communities, as their individual and collective capacity is compromised due to poor health outcomes.

On our SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

**Q:** Every community has good points and bad points about living within it. Please tell me, for your local community, how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with community health care.

Access to health care can be defined by not just living in a community with a health clinic, but having access to specialists, health insurance coverage, and a sufficient number of health care providers for the population. In general, a majority of Upstate New Yorkers (69%) indicate satisfaction with the quality of health care in their community and only sixteen percent indicate some level of dissatisfaction (Figure 3E.1). Upstate metropolitan residents express more satisfaction than those living in micropolitan or non-core counties, perhaps due to the higher concentration of hospitals, health care specialists, and public transportation (Figure 3E.2).

**Health Insurance Coverage**

While the debate over health care reform at the national level continues, the percent of New Yorkers without health insurance coverage is significant. In 2000, fourteen percent of New Yorkers were uninsured (Figure 3E.3). The figures are lower for upstate (10 percent), although those living in non-core based counties had the highest rate among upstate residents, with twelve percent not covered by health insurance in 2000.

The story is different with regards to children in upstate New York. While about 8 percent of people under age 18 in NYS were uninsured in 2006, children living in upstate micropolitan and non-core counties were less likely to have health insurance (9.9% and 8.7%, respectively) (Figure 3E.4).
Almost twenty-one percent of adults age 18-64 in Upstate non-core counties went without health insurance in 2006, compared to eighteen percent of all upstate New Yorkers (Figure 3E.5). Those living in metropolitan upstate counties were more likely to be insured, yet 17.5% were still uninsured.

On the SOUS survey we asked the following question:

**Q: Which of the following statements best reflects your health insurance situation?**

Among the SOUS survey respondents, only six percent indicated not being covered by any health insurance plan at the time (February 2011), but one fourth of all respondents were covered by some sort of government health insurance plan (Figure 3E.6; The figure of 6% is somewhat lower than...
the Census figures, which may be a result of the greater margin of error connected with survey statistics). There were no significant differences in health insurance “situations” across the upstate county types (not shown).

Even though a solid majority of the survey respondents reported being covered by some type of health insurance, this coverage was largely through their employers. For this reason, benefits such as health insurance are often a big factor when considering employment opportunities or change. On the SOUS survey we asked the following question:

**Q: How big a concern is health insurance when you think about changing or losing your job?**

An overwhelming majority (81%) indicated some level of concern (67 percent said it was a “big” concern) over health insurance when thinking about changing or losing their jobs (Figure 3E.7). Only one in five (19%) indicated it was either not much of a concern or not a concern at all. People living in micropolitan counties were more likely to indicate levels of concern than were their metro or non-core counterparts (Figure 3E.8).

![Figure 3E.7: Level of concern when thinking about losing or changing jobs](source: 2011 SOUS Survey)

![Figure 3E.8: Level of concern when thinking about losing or changing jobs, by upstate county type](source: 2011 SOUS Survey)

**Health Care Access**

Having health insurance is a major step towards accessing health care, but many people in upstate New York with health insurance may not have adequate access to healthcare in their local communities. On the SOUS survey we asked the following question:

**Q: Do you feel that you have adequate access to doctors and general health care locally when you need it?**

While ninety percent of survey respondents said they had adequate access to doctors and general health care in their local communities (Figure 3E.9), one quarter of respondents living in non-core counties reported inadequate access (Figure 3E.10).

![Figure 3E.9: Do you have adequate access to health care locally?](source: 2011 SOUS Survey)

![Figure 3E.10: Do you have adequate access to health care locally?, by upstate county type](source: 2011 SOUS Survey)

Data on the number of physicians per capita support the variation in responses about access to health care. Respondents living in metro counties were most likely to answer “yes” to having adequate access to health care locally, and this may be due to the fact that metro areas in upstate have the highest number of physicians per capita (3.5 per 1,000 population in 2008) (Figure 3E.11). Those living in
non-core counties have the lowest number of physicians per capita (about 1.4 per 1,000 persons in 2008) and are also most likely to report inadequate access to health care locally.

Health Factors and Outcomes

The definition and measurement of “health” can vary widely, and can incorporate many different variables. Reporting data for individual measures of health it outside the scope of this document, but indices that capture more general concepts around health measures can be particularly useful. County Health Rankings (countyhealthrankings.org) provides annual data on the two concepts of “health factors” and “health outcomes” for NYS counties. The group created indexes for both of these concepts. The health “factors” index includes data on health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. The health “outcomes” index includes mortality and morbidity. Figure 3E.12 illustrates their model.

Source: County Health Rankings Model. 2010 UWPHI

--

Figure 3E.11: Number of Physicians per 1,000 population, 2003–2008

Source: USA Counties, US Census Bureau
Significant variation in “health factors” exists across the state (Figure 3E.13). Those counties shaded medium and dark blue rank in the bottom half of NYS counties with regard to physical environment, social and economic factors, clinical care, and health behaviors. Several counties in western NY do not score well on this index ranking, and there are several other areas of the state that fare poorly in health factors.

While there is certainly a strong relationship between health factors and health outcomes, the relationship is not absolute, as Figure 3E.14 indicates. Higher rates of morbidity and mortality are evident in western NY and much of the Southern Tier. County-level data on the individual factors that comprise both indices are available on the county health rankings site (countyhealthrankings.org).

Other measures of health access and outcomes include the percentage of women receiving prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy. Across New York State this percentage declined from 77.5 percent in 2004 to 74.8 percent in 2008 (Figure 3E.15). Women in upstate New York had slightly higher rates of prenatal care than the state as a whole in 2008 (75.3% versus 74.8%). Those living in non-core counties were the least likely to receive first trimester prenatal care (74.2% in 2008) and those living in micropolitan counties were the most likely (76.4% in 2008).
Related to prenatal care is the infant death rate. The number of infant deaths per 1000 births in New York State declined between 2004 and 2008, although the rates for upstate were more variable and did not decline much overall (from a rate of 6 per 1,000 in 2004 to 5.8 in 2008) (Figure 3E.16). By 2008, the infant death rate in non-core counties was the highest in the upstate region (6.4 per 1,000), although the rate in micropolitan counties had exceeded the rate in non-core counties for the two preceding years.

The death rate in upstate New York is significantly higher than for the state as a whole, and non-core counties have the highest rates within the upstate region (Figure 3E.17). Much of this may be related to the older age structure of this population in non-core counties, but it may also be a factor of more limited access to health care and the composition of health factors discussed above.

Summary

Ninety percent of upstate respondents report adequate access to healthcare in their own community and nearly 70% of Upstate New Yorkers are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of healthcare in their community. Sixteen percent are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Health insurance coverage varies by county-type, with 12% of residents in non-core counties without health insurance and just under 10% in metropolitan counties. For children, however, the highest rate of uninsured is found in the micropolitan counties. The highest rate of residents without health insurance is for the 18-64 year olds with a rate of more than 20%. The issue of health insurance looms large when Upstate NY residents think of changing or losing their job with 67% reporting it to be a big concern. Rates of prenatal care dropped slightly this decade and access to prenatal care is lowest in non-core counties. Infant mortality rates dropped across NYS, though increased in recent years across Upstate NY and especially in non-core counties where infant mortality increased from under 5% in 2006 to nearly 6.5% in 2008. Linked to the aging population update, death rates are higher upstate than in the state as a whole with the non-core counties having the highest rates.

Resources For Health Data

NYS Department of Health: http://www.health.state.ny.us/

NYS Dept. of Health Statistics: http://www.health.state.ny.us/statistics/

NYS County Health Indicator Profiles: http://www.health.state.ny.us/statistics/chip/

County Health Rankings: http://countyhealthrankings.org
F: Environment. Land Use and Natural Resources

The quality and diversity of the natural resources and environment across New York State are strengths upon which communities and regions can build their futures, using good land use planning as a foundation.

A Vision for Rural New York, Fall 2006

For many years, major issues affecting rural upstate landscapes have involved a related nexus of issues and trends: housing development and sprawl; long term changes (generally decline) in the major land-extensive historical economic uses of rural lands such as forestry, mining, and agriculture; increased recreational pressure on the most attractive rural landscapes; increasing human/wildlife interaction; degradation of habitat; concerns about diminished water quality due to nonpoint sources such as animal agriculture and storm water runoff; the spread of invasive species; and more.

New York State’s land and waters provide a vast array of “ecosystem services” that support a diverse array of human and nonhuman life and activities. Farmers, loggers, rural residents, skiers, boaters, hikers, tourists, and many others are among the human beneficiaries. A broad array of flora and fauna are also dependent on upstate habitat and ecosystems, some of which is in parks, wildlife preserves, conservation easements, and other protected areas but most of which is stewarded primarily by private land owners.

From a land use planning perspective, a decade or two ago the major newcomer fomenting conflict over rural land uses was probably cell towers. In the past few years however, with increasing energy prices and growing concerns about climate change, a more significant set of major new issues have involved energy. In the north and some other parts of the state, conflicts over the siting of wind turbines have dominated. In the southern part of the state, the prospect of transformative regional change due to shale gas development is now front and center pending finalization of DEC regulations and federal reviews. As the state looks to a post-peak oil future, there is great potential for other forms of energy related demands – including biomass production, geothermal development, carbon sequestration, and more – to increase in significance.

Unfortunately, there is no single source of information available, equivalent to the Census of Population for example, in order to get a comprehensive overview of the status and trends for the state’s (much less Upstate’s) environment, land use and natural resources. Even so, it is out of the scope of this chartbook to present data on the vast breadth and depth of environmental and natural resource issues in the state. However, since land use planning sets the stage for much of how human populations impact the environment and our natural resources, we focus in this section on the use of land use planning tools in upstate NY, presenting survey information from the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, a special CaRDI land use survey, and results of our SOUS survey. In addition, we provide links to key resources for additional data on environmental indicators and natural resource issues.

Public opinion on select environmental and natural resource issues

To gauge public opinion on the level of environmental preservation in local communities in upstate New York, we asked the following question on our SOUS survey:

Q: Every community has good points and bad points about living within it. Please tell me, for your local community, how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the level of environmental preservation.

More than half (54%) of upstate New Yorkers are satisfied with the level of environmental preservation in their local community, while just over a quarter (26%) were dissatisfied (Figure 3F.1). One fifth (20%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Non-core residents reported the highest levels of satisfaction, while metropolitan residents reported more dissatisfaction than their upstate counterparts (Figure 3F.2).
In times of fiscal stress and limited resources, public opinion often shifts regarding what programs should be prioritized and what programs should be cut. Given the current fiscal challenges facing NYS and the nation as a whole, we asked the following question on the SOUS survey:

**Q: Given the current economic challenges facing NYS, do you believe state and local governments should be committed to protecting long-term environmental values?**

An overwhelming majority of upstate New Yorkers (90%) felt that even though NYS is currently facing significant economic challenges, the state and local governments should still be committed to protecting long-term environmental values (Figure 3F.3). Only 10% did not support this commitment given the fiscal situation. There was virtually no difference in responses among the different county types in upstate (not shown).

Almost two-thirds (65%) of respondents indicated that the risks to water quality outweigh the revenues from natural gas drilling in NYS (Figure 3F.4). One quarter (24%) felt the revenues outweighed the risks to water quality, and about 11% felt they did not know enough about natural gas drilling to respond to the question.

Natural gas drilling in upstate New York has become an extremely controversial topic. Many supporters of natural gas drilling point to the potential economic benefits to individual land owners, communities, and the state, while others are concerned with negative environmental impacts such as compromised water quality. In our SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

**Q: Which statement best reflects your opinion about water quality and natural gas drilling in New York State? The risks outweigh the revenues, the revenues outweigh the risks, or I do not know enough about the drilling.**

Of those that had an opinion to the question, upstate New Yorkers living in non-core counties were more likely to feel that the risks to water quality outweigh the revenues from natural gas drilling (79% vs. 21%), while metropolitan residents were the least risk adverse, although a solid majority still felt the risks did not justify the revenues (72% vs. 28% - Figure 3F.5).

**NYS Land Use Planning**

In our SOUS survey, we asked Upstate New Yorkers to tell us how satisfied they were with the level of land use planning in their local community:
Q: Every community has good points and bad points about living within it. Please tell me, for your local community, how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the land use planning in your local community:

About a third of respondents (32%) are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the level of land use planning in their community (Figure 3F.6). A slightly higher percentage (39%) of respondents indicated satisfaction, which another third (29%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the land use planning in their community. Metropolitan county residents are the most dissatisfied, while micropolitan residents are the most satisfied, among various upstate county types (Figure 3F.7), although the differences are not large.

We report findings from a 2008 survey conducted by the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources (LCRR) on the basic land use planning and regulatory tools used by each city, town and village government outside New York City. The entire report can be accessed at:

http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lg/publications/Rural_Resource_Survey.pdf

The 2008 NYS LCRR report presents the results of a survey of land use tools currently being used by New York’s 1,544 cities, towns, villages (the survey excludes New York City). Such tools include the creation of a written comprehensive plan, zoning and subdivision regulations, site plan review and the creation of planning boards/commissions. It updates similar surveys conducted by the LCRR in 1994, 1999 and 2004. The findings demonstrate that at a time when most localities experienced slow population growth — or even decline in some cases — municipalities show a continued interest in adopting basic land use tools.

Virtually all cities in NYS report having planning boards and zoning regulations (Figure 3F.8). More than 90% of cities conduct site plan reviews, have subdivision regulations, and use written comprehensive plans. Use of these planning and zoning tools are not as widespread, however, in the villages and towns of NYS. Only 66% of villages and 71% of towns use written comprehensive plans. Only 71% of villages and 68% of towns conduct site plan reviews, and only 69% of villages and 74% of towns use subdivision regulations. A somewhat higher percentage of villages (84%) and towns (87%) have planning boards, however, and 89% of villages and 71% of towns use zoning regulations.
Many of the towns in upstate NY with no land use tools are clustered in the southern tier, and the North Country region (Figure 3F.9).

**Comprehensive Plans**

“You can save what you love best about the place you live while accommodating and attracting desirable growth if you begin with a sound comprehensive plan.”

*New York Planning Federation, 1996*

A comprehensive plan articulates goals and approaches pertaining to the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the municipality. Plans may cover a broad array of topics, but they focus on implications for the built and natural environments, public infrastructure, and related land use issues. State law stipulates that municipalities that adopt comprehensive plans must ensure all land use regulations are in accordance with it.

The single largest percent increase since the 2004 report was issued is the proportion of municipalities that now have a written comprehensive plan. The state legislature enacted landmark legislation in 1995 that for the first time established a procedure in state enabling statutes for the preparation and adoption of city, town, and village comprehensive plans. In 1997, the state legislature enacted similar enabling statutes for county governments and regional planning councils. All such efforts were part of the legislature’s support of efforts by state and local government officials, professional planners and private sector leaders to recodify state planning and zoning enabling statutes, led by the State Land Use Advisory Committee and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources (NYS LCRR, 2008).

Of the 34% of NYS towns that didn’t have a written comprehensive plan in 2008, many are clustered in specific areas of upstate (shown in white in Figure 3F.10). In the northern part of the state, the majority of towns in Franklin County, and about half in St. Lawrence, Lewis and Jefferson Counties did not have written comprehensive plans. In the southern tier, at least half or more of the towns in Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany, Wyoming and Steuben Counties did not have written comprehensive plans. Several other counties in the central and eastern part of the state have numerous towns without comprehensive plans.
Those cities and villages in NYS reporting no land use tools in 2008 were scattered across the southern tier, the central part of the state, and up into Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Franklin Counties (shown in red Figure 3F.11). Those cities and villages having at least one land use tool are shown in blue.

Cities and villages in NYS with written comprehensive plans (shown in blue) are distributed rather uniformly across the state, although those without written comprehensive plans (shown in red) have higher concentrations in the western, central and northern part of the state (Figure 3F.12).

Survey responses illustrate the continuing differences and diversity among cities, towns, and villages in the state in their utilization of planning and land use tools. The higher density development found in cities, suburbs and villages—and the more rapid land use change often experienced in these places—has created a climate more receptive to land use planning and regulation for them than in many of the more remote rural towns. Still, the 2008 survey results indicate a widespread and growing use of basic land use tools around the state in urban, suburban and rural areas alike (NYS LCRR, 2008).

A new addition to the LCRR survey in 2008 was the inclusion of data collected from county governments on basic land use tools developed through their planning agencies (Figure 3F.13). These include the presence of a planning board or commission and written comprehensive plan. For the many counties that have an agricultural land use base, the LCRR inquired if they had created an agriculture and farmland protection board and plan, and adopted a county right-to-farm law to enhance and protect this vital state and local resource. County governments have become valued partners with the state and municipalities in the design and implementation of such innovative land use and natural resource protection measures (NYS LCRR, 2008).

“As communities confront the opportunities and challenges of growth and development, they also come to recognize the value of improving their local planning and zoning laws and practices. The state constitutional provisions for home rule specify that the primary authority for guiding community planning and development is vested in cities, towns and villages. In devising their comprehensive plans, zoning, subdivision, site plan, and other regulatory options, local governments often turn for technical assistance to county and regional planning agencies, municipal associations, the New York Planning Federation, the NYS Department of State’s Division of Local Government Services, Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Agriculture and Markets. The NYS Department of Transportation, Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Empire State Development, Office of Real Property Services and other agencies are consulted as well. The voluntary partnership among these agencies and their county and local counterparts, rises in potency with the increase in compatible Geographic Information Systems and other information- sharing on the Internet among planners, elected officials and the public (NYS LCRR, 2008)”.

How effective are comprehensive plans?

While there has been an increase in use of written comprehensive plans, little is known about the quality and effectiveness of these plans in NYS. Tracking or monitoring the increased use of planning tools does not measure their impact on community development. In November of 2007, CaRDI mailed a survey to NYS planning board chairpersons, focusing on the status and role of local comprehensive plans (see CaRDI Research & Policy Brief, Issue 27, March 2009).

Consistency between zoning regulations and a comprehensive plan serves as a key indicator of the plan’s role in shaping land use. While NYS requires that local
zoning be “in accordance” with comprehensive plans, the link between the two land use tools is not as close as might be expected. According to statewide data, 140 villages, 5 cities, and 103 towns have zoning but lack a written comprehensive plan. More subjectively, only 22% of responding planning board chairs felt zoning was “completely” consistent with the comprehensive plan, though more than half felt it was “mostly” consistent. Less affirmatively, nearly one in four thought zoning was only “somewhat” consistent (Figure 3F.14).

Are comprehensive plans actually used in planning board deliberations? Nearly a third (31%) of planning board chairs with comprehensive plans said the plan had “seldom or never” been referenced during board meetings during the prior year. However, a robust 75% felt they were personally “very familiar” with their plan, and 85% thought that at least some other board members were “familiar” with it. Board chairs weighed in directly on the central question, “How important is the plan in guiding board decisions?” As shown in Figure 3F.15, a sizeable minority (40%) said the plan was “extremely important” in this regard, while just under a fifth (18%) dismissed its importance altogether.

Board chairs with plans were asked which topics were addressed in their comprehensive plans, as these are suggested but not mandated in state law. As shown in Figure 3F.16, only four of the listed topics were said to be addressed in 80% or more of the plans. Growth and development (92%) and the location and intensity of proposed uses (92%) were the most frequently cited topics among those that had comprehensive plans. Half or fewer of the plans addressed regional needs, affordable housing, educational facilities, health/emergency service facilities, or local economic development. Two of these (local economic development and affordable housing) were also among the lowest ranked by all respondents in a related question, “How well does your municipality plan for each topic?” Board chairs who assigned greater importance to local economic issues like tax base, jobs and affordable housing were more likely to give poor marks to local planning in multiple topical areas.
Farmland Protection

Farmland represents more than a quarter of the total privately owned land base of New York State (Figure 3F.17) and is vital to protecting the state’s natural resources. Well-managed farms provide aquifer recharge areas and act as natural filters to surface and subsurface water. Almost 10,000 farmers from 54 counties across the state have voluntarily enrolled in the Agriculture Environmental Management (AEM) program administered by the State Department of Agriculture and Markets — roughly 26% of the farmers in New York. AEM helps farmers implement management practices on the farm that protect water quality to reduce their environmental impact and preserve the productivity of their soils.

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, of the 7.1 million acres of farmland in NYS, 60% was in cropland, 22% in woodland, about 10% in pastureland, and 8% in house lots, ponds, roads, wasteland, etcetera (Figure 3F.18). Only 1.6% of farmland acreage was in conservation or wetlands reserve programs in 2007, a decline from 2.8% in 2002.

To look at how land use of agricultural land in New York State has changed in recent years, we examine data from the National Resources Inventory (NRI). The NRI is conducted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in cooperation with Iowa State University’s Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology. The NRI tracks natural resources conditions and trends on non-federal land. Specifically, we examine farmland conversion data in NYS between 1982 and 2007. In 1982, NYS had about 9.8 million acres in agricultural land (Figure 3F.19) out of about 31.4 million total acres of land in the state. Between 1982 and 2007, almost half a million acres of agricultural land was converted to developed land, more than a third of which was considered prime agricultural land.

This development comes not necessarily as a result of population growth, but of population sprawl. During the past decade, researchers documented that despite low to anemic overall growth in much of Upstate, population and development continued to sprawl out of existing villages and cities, many of which have struggled with stagnant or declining populations, and into more rural and suburban communities (http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2003/10demographics_pendall.aspx). American Farmland Trust’s 1997 Farming on the Edge report summarizes the top 20 areas in the U.S. where prime farmland is most threatened by poorly planned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximate total land area (acres)</td>
<td>30,196,361</td>
<td>30,216,824</td>
<td>30,162,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total farmland (acres)</td>
<td>7,788,241</td>
<td>7,660,969</td>
<td>7,174,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total land area</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland (acres)</td>
<td>4,961,538</td>
<td>4,841,367</td>
<td>4,314,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of farmland</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent in pasture</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent irrigated</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvested Cropland (acres)</td>
<td>3,855,732</td>
<td>3,846,368</td>
<td>3,651,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland (acres)</td>
<td>1,655,185</td>
<td>1,649,585</td>
<td>1,559,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of farmland</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent in pasture</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastureland (acres)</td>
<td>520,150</td>
<td>550,225</td>
<td>714,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total farmland</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land in house lots, ponds, roads, wasteland, etc. (acres)</td>
<td>651,368</td>
<td>619,792</td>
<td>585,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total farmland</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmland in conservation or wetlands reserve programs (acres)</td>
<td>97,617</td>
<td>211,996</td>
<td>115,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average farm size (acres)</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3F.19: Changes in Land Use of Agricultural Land, New York State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural land converted to developed land (acres)</td>
<td>88,500</td>
<td>47,700</td>
<td>449,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural land at the beginning of the reporting period (acres)</td>
<td>8,148,700</td>
<td>7,916,600</td>
<td>9,762,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime agricultural land converted to developed land (acres)</td>
<td>30,800</td>
<td>15,100</td>
<td>160,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime agricultural land at the beginning of the reporting period (acres)</td>
<td>3,042,900</td>
<td>2,993,700</td>
<td>3,400,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural land converted to developed land (acres)</td>
<td>257,600</td>
<td>144,900</td>
<td>1,009,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural land at the beginning of the reporting period (acres)</td>
<td>26,484,200</td>
<td>26,221,500</td>
<td>27,075,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime rural land converted to developed land (acres)</td>
<td>72,400</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>279,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime rural land available at the beginning of the reporting period (acres)</td>
<td>4,520,900</td>
<td>4,443,600</td>
<td>4,695,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total surface area (acres)</td>
<td>31,360,800</td>
<td>31,360,800</td>
<td>31,360,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Resources Inventory, Farmland Information Center, 2007

Figure 3F.20: Areas of high-quality farmland and high & low development, NYS, 2009

Source: American Farmland Trust, 2009

development. Four regions in New York were included on this list, including parts of Western New York, the Finger Lakes, the Hudson Valley and Long Island. Farmland is being lost to development in New York at a rate of approximately 26,000 acres per year (http://www.farmlandinfo.org/farmland_technical_resources/index.cfm?function=article_view&articleID=29268).

Figure 3F.20 updates this finding with 2009 data for New York State, indicating that these same regions are considered to be high-quality farmland in the path of high levels of development. The resulting decentralization of communities and fragmentation of farmland has huge implications for New York’s farmers and communities.

Development pressure brings many challenges to both farmers and communities. Farmers and New York State’s multi-billion dollar agricultural industry face increased competition for productive land from development. At the same time, local governments are challenged to manage sprawling development while maintaining their quality of life and community character. These trends stretch local and state budgets, drive up property taxes and threaten New York’s economic future. Currently, New York State ranks
among the bottom of U.S. states with regard to the percent of farmland under state farmland protection. According to the Farmland Information Center, only 0.2% of NY’s farmland is covered by a farmland protection program (Figure 3F.21).

**Figure 3F.21: Farmland Protected by State Farmland Protection Programs as a Percent of the State’s Total Farmland**

Source: Farmland Information Center, 2002.

Among eleven northeastern states, this relative lack of farmland protection bodes poorly for New York State. Figure 3F.22 shows that the relative difference between the number of protected farmland acres and the number of acres lost to development is significantly greater in NYS than in any other northeastern state in 2002.

**Figure 3F.22: Farmland Protected by State Farmland Protection Programs vs. Farmland Developed Annually**

Source: Farmland Information Center, 2002.

Not all New Yorkers think that regulating private property is a good thing. Privately owned land not covered by farmland protection programs can be converted for development purposes much more easily. On our SOUS survey, we asked the following question:

**Q: Which of the following should be local government’s first priority with respect to development of private property?**

More than half (56%) of respondents felt that protecting existing residents’ private property should be the first priority of local government, followed by more than a fifth (22%) indicating that the preservation of open space should be paramount (Figure 3F.23). Fourteen percent felt that providing new affordable housing opportunities should be the top priority, while only 5% felt that protecting a land developers property rights was most important.

**Figure 3F.23: What should local government’s first priority be with respect to development of private property?**

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

Those living in non-core (29%) and metropolitan (23%) counties were much more likely to prioritize the preservation of open space than were micropolitan residents (10% - Figure 3F.24). However, protecting existing private property was still the most important priority among all county type residents.

**Figure 3F.24: What should local government’s first priority be with respect to development of private property? By upstate county type.**

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey
Summary

Upstate New Yorkers value environmental preservation, are generally satisfied with the level of environmental protection efforts in their local communities, and believe that both local and state governments should be committed to long-term environmental values even in the face of current economic challenges. The majority of upstate residents also indicate that the risks to their water quality outweigh the economic benefits of natural gas drilling. About one-third are satisfied with the level of local land use planning in their communities, one-third dissatisfied, and one-third neutral. In municipalities across the state, however, there has been a significant increase in the use of land use tools in recent years, most notably the use of comprehensive plans. However, not all comprehensive planning efforts have had an impact on local land use decisions, according to a CaRDI survey. Farmland protection is another important issue in the land use arena, particularly as well-managed farms can help protect the natural resources in the area. Almost half a million acres of farmland in NYS were converted to developed land between 1982 and 2007, about one-third of this considered prime agricultural land. Despite high development pressures in some areas of upstate, and the population sprawl that has occurred without population growth, comparatively little of NYS's agricultural land is currently covered under a farmland protection program. Upstate New Yorkers report mixed emotions, however, when it comes to how local governments should approach regulating development of private property. Given the broad and varied nature of environment, land use, and natural resource issues in NYS, we present a lengthy list of resources for data and other information.

Resources

Cornell Cooperative Extension, Environment & Natural Resources:
http://cce.cornell.edu/Environment/Pages/EnvironmentandNaturalResources.aspx

CCE Energy and Climate Change:
http://cce.cornell.edu/EnergyClimateChange/Pages/default.aspx

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF):
http://www.esf.edu/sustainability/

General Land Use Resources:

New York Land Use Tools: Counties, Cities, Towns, and Villages. A 2008 Survey of Land Use Planning and Regulations in NYS. NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources (LCRR), 2008:
http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lg/publications/Rural_Resource_Survey.pdf

Department of State, Local Government Services – Programs in Land Use Training, Smart Growth, Watershed Protection, and other areas:
http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lg/

New York Planning Federation:
http://www.nypf.org/

Pace University Land Use Law Center:
http://www.pace.edu/school-of-law/centers-and-special-programs/centers/land-use-law-center-0

Farmland Protection Resources:

NYS Agricultural Environmental Management (NYS Ag and Markets):
http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/soilwater/aem/

Farmland Information Center:

Picking up the Pace: A Road Map for Accelerating Farmland Protection in New York. American Farmland Trust, 2007 -

American Farmland Trust publications:
http://www.farmland.org/resources/publications/default2.asp

* Planning for Agriculture in New York: A Toolkit for Towns and Counties
* Cost of Community Services Studies: Making the Case for Conservation
* New York Agricultural Landowner Guide to Tax, Conservation and Management Program

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Resources for Lands and Waters:

Forests: Programs to manage and protect NYS's privately and publicly owned forest lands:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/309.html

Open Space: New York's Open Space Conservation Plan serves as the blueprint for the State's land conservation efforts. DEC's smart growth program encourages economic growth within the footprint of existing communities:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/317.html

Watershed, Lakes, Rivers: Main bodies of freshwater and their watersheds in New York State:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/26561.html

Oceans & Estuaries: Protecting and managing New York State's marine and estuary resources:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/207.html
Wetlands: Information on freshwater and tidal wetlands status, protection and mapping in New York State; where to see freshwater wetlands maps:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/305.html

Groundwater: Groundwater is a critical source of water in New York State:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/36064.html

Dam Safety, Coastal & Flood Protection: Programs related to flood protection, floodplain development, dam safety, and coastal management:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/311.html

Water Supply & Conservation: DEC programs for protecting New York's public water supplies; drought information:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/313.html

Mining & Reclamation: Information about mining in New York, for general audiences and mine owners/operators:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5020.html
**G: Energy Issues**

Identifying specific sources of alternative energy and evaluating the associated costs, benefits, and barriers has become a major focus in New York State.

* A Vision for Rural New York, Fall 2006

The continuing absence of consensus about energy and climate policy at the international and national levels only increases the responsibility of institutions and governments at other levels to find locally appropriate ways to take the lead in addressing the complex nexus of energy-related issues. Already at the state and community level, multiple approaches to energy conservation, renewable energy production, and new forms of fossil fuel extraction are being implemented and debated, with many other proposals waiting in the wings.

It is increasingly evident in many New York communities that energy related issues have dimensions – environmental, economic, and social - that are profoundly local in nature. Many aspects of energy conservation and production involve decisions and behavioral changes at the local community and household level.

Because the context and capacities of communities vary, the research, tools, outreach, and policy analysis that are appropriate will also be differentiated across communities. Land use controls are typically exercised in the first instance by local rather than state or federal authorities, and local land use rules are tailored to the preferences of each community. Decisions about the way New York’s land base will be used will make or break most efforts to foster more energy efficient development patterns. They will also help determine the future of renewable fuel resources ranging from wind and solar to biomass, and locally available nonrenewable fuels such as natural gas.

Increasing numbers of local governments in New York and elsewhere are adopting climate action plans which focus on reducing ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil fuels. Many more have attended more specifically to energy conservation and reducing the use of fossil fuels for basic efficiency and cost saving reasons.

Energy issues particularly relevant to upstate New York include the broad issue of energy transitions which includes both energy conservation and renewable energy and the role of existing and emerging energy production scenarios. Factored into this are many variables including public and private decisions, the land use base, technology, costs, greenhouse gas emissions, workforce development, and transportation options. The possibility of natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale has led to a broader discussion of how we responsibly meet the energy needs of our communities.

In this section of the chartbook, we focus on energy consumption, energy expenditure, and energy production patterns in New York State, presenting data from the New York State Energy Research Authority (January 2011

**Q: In making decisions about America’s energy policies, which ONE of the following goals do you feel is MOST important?**

When asked about goals for the country’s energy policies as a whole, more than half (52%) of respondents felt that reducing our dependence on foreign energy was the most important (Figure 3G.1). About a quarter (26%) felt that protecting the environment was of paramount importance, while the remaining respondents (22%) were fairly evenly split between citing the need to create jobs within the energy sector and the need to keep energy prices low as the most important goals for U.S. energy policy. Interestingly, residents living in non-core counties did not cite creating jobs within the energy sector as an important goal, but instead focused more on reducing foreign energy dependence and keeping energy prices low (Figure 3G.2).

![Figure 3G.1: Most important goal for America’s energy policies](source: 2011 SOUS Survey)
NYS Energy Consumption

New York is the most energy-efficient state in the continental United States on a per-capita basis, accounting for 4.0% of the nation’s total primary energy consumption. The state scores well largely due to the high proportion of the total population that lives in densely populated New York City. The density enables transportation and construction systems that are comparatively energy efficient on a per capita basis. Net energy demand in New York differs from national demand in several respects. Residential net energy use accounts for 29% of total energy demand in New York, compared to 19% nationally (Figure 3G.3). Commercial net energy use accounts for 25% of total energy demand in New York, compared to 14% nationally. Industrial net energy use accounts for 7% of total energy demand in New York, compared to 24% nationally. Transportation net energy use accounts for 39% of total energy demand in New York, compared to 43% nationally.

New York’s energy consumption for commercial and particularly for industrial purposes has declined since 1995 (Figure 3G.4). Energy consumption for electric generation increased between 1995 and 2005, but has declined somewhat since that time. Energy consumption for transportation continues to increase, while it has been relatively stable for residential use.

New York State’s primary consumption of coal, natural gas, and petroleum decreased 30%, 4%, and 5% respectively in 2009, while use of hydropower and nuclear power both increased less than 1% (Figure 3G.5). Total consumption of petroleum products was 253 million barrels, representing 36% of total primary energy consumption.
Nuclear power and natural gas accounted for 27% and 26% of New York's electricity requirements in 2009, respectively (Figure 3G.6). Use of nuclear power for electrical generation has increased in the state since 1995 (Figure 3G.7). Energy used for electricity generation accounted for 40% of primary energy use.

**NYS Energy Expenditures**

Energy expenditures across different sectors have varied over time in NYS (Figure 3G.8). While energy expenditures for industrial purposes have remained relatively stable, expenditures for residential, commercial, and in particular for transportation purposes have increased significantly between 1995 and 2009.
**Figure 3G.7**: NYS Primary Consumption of Energy for Electrical Generation, 1995-2009

![Graph showing primary consumption of energy for electrical generation, 1995-2009](image)

Source: NYSERDA, 2011

**Figure 3G.8**: NYS Energy Expenditure estimates by sector, in constant 2009 dollars, 1995-2009

![Graph showing energy expenditure estimates by sector, 1995-2009](image)

Source: NYSERDA, 2011
While national governments and global corporations have much influence over energy markets and policies, there is still an important role in shaping consumption for individual behavior and state, regional and local government policies. Even though residential energy expenditures have increased significantly over the past fifteen years, we asked respondents to the SOUS survey whether they would be willing to pay higher energy costs for renewable or “green” sources of energy.

Q: Would you be willing to pay higher energy costs if the source of the energy was considered “green” and/or renewable?

Responses were split down the middle, with a slight edge towards being willing to pay more (Figure 3G.9). Non-core county residents were the most willing of all upstate New Yorkers to pay more for green or renewable energy sources (Figure 3G.10).

It can be somewhat abstract for survey respondents to answer “yes” or “no” to a proposition such as “willingness to spend more money on green or renewable energy sources”, particularly when such an idea has been widely touted as having environmental and social benefits. Therefore, we followed this survey question with another which more pointedly asks respondents to identify the exact dollar amount they would be willing to spend:

Q: If yes, how much more would you be willing to pay?

For example, if your average home energy bill was $200 a month, would you be willing to pay $10, $20, $30, or more extra per month if the source of energy was considered green and/or renewable?

Of the 53 percent of respondents who indicated willingness to pay more for such energy sources, more than a fourth were willing to pay an additional $30 or more on a monthly bill of $200 for green or renewable energy sources (Figure 3G.11). A third (35%) were willing to pay an additional $20/month, and another third (37%) were willing to pay another $10/month. Upstate New Yorkers living in non-core based counties were willing to pay the most for “green” or renewable energy sources, (more than 36 percent were willing to pay an additional $30 or more per month for these energy sources) (Figure 3G.12).
Households, businesses, industries, and electric utilities in NYS rely largely on fuels produced elsewhere. Thirteen percent (13%) of New York's total primary energy requirement was met from in-state resources, including 7% from hydropower and 5% from waste, wind, wood, and landfill gas collectively. The remaining 1% was met with petroleum and natural gas production (NYSERDA, 2011).

Hydropower and energy collectively from waste, wind, wood and landfill gas account for 53% and 37%, respectively, of New York's in-state primary energy production, while crude oil and natural gas constitute the remaining 10% (Figure 3G.14). New York consumers rely on external sources for 100% of refined petroleum fuel products.
because there are no petroleum refineries in the State. In-state production of natural gas decreased 11% between 2008 and 2009, while collective production of waste, wind, wood, and landfill gas increased 14%. In 2009, natural gas production in the State was recorded at 44.8 Bcf, and accounted for 1.2% of total statewide primary energy use. While wind power production still comprises a very small share of total energy production in the state, it increased significantly between 2005 and 2009.

To explore the attitudes and opinions of Upstate New Yorkers about various forms of energy production, we asked the following question on the SOUS survey:

Q: To address New York State’s energy needs, would you support or oppose the following policies to be pursued in NYS?

When asked about support for energy-related policies in NYS, levels of support vary significantly depending on the proposed source of energy (Figure 3G.15). More than half (55%) of Upstate New Yorkers expressed support for policies supporting increased oil and gas drilling in the state, while more than half (54%) opposed building more nuclear power plants. There was overwhelming support (93%) for developing more solar and wind power in NYS, with the majority of this group supporting the policy strongly.

Opposition to increasing oil and gas drilling and building more nuclear power plants is slightly higher in non-core counties than in other parts of Upstate (Figure 3G.16), while support for developing more wind and solar power enjoys slightly more support among metropolitan residents.
Summary

As was noted in the beginning of this section, energy related issues have environmental, economic, and social dimensions that are profoundly local in nature. While the results of the SOUS survey questions often reveal a disconnect between the energy consumption and production patterns currently in place in NYS and the level of support or opposition upstate New Yorkers have for specific energy policies, we note geographic variation among county-types that underscores this local dimension. Specifically, non-core county residents exhibit much more willingness to pay more for “green” and renewable energy sources and are more likely to indicate a desire to reduce our dependence on foreign energy sources. Since many aspects of energy conservation and production involve decisions and behavioral changes at the local community and household level, the results of the survey, compared to the “reality” of current patterns, serves as a useful starting point for further discussion.

Resources For Data On NYS Energy

NYSERDA: http://www.nyserda.org/
CCE Energy and Climate Change: http://cce.cornell.edu/EnergyClimateChange/Pages/default.aspx
### H: Agriculture and Food Systems

Agriculture remains a key component of many communities and regions, and is an important aspect of the desired quality of life and state identity for New York State.

*A Vision for Rural New York, Fall 2006*

While agriculture employs a relatively small proportion of the NYS labor force, New York's position as a leading producer of dairy, apple, cabbage, grapes, and other commodities, as well as the critical local and regional multiplier effects of the broader agricultural sector help to keep agriculture an important contributor to upstate economic development. Beyond its economic contributions, agriculture continues to be seen as a key component of overall quality of life in Upstate New York, with additional non-economic impacts such as the preservation of open space, the preservation of rural heritage and traditions, and the provision of locally produced, high quality food.

To gauge public opinion on the importance of agriculture, we asked the following question in our SOUS survey:

**Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “A strong agricultural sector is essential to the well-being of Upstate NY communities?”**

Upstate New Yorkers, most not directly involved in the agriculture sector, believe that agriculture is an important part of life in the state. An overwhelming majority (87%) agreed with this statement, 56 percent agreeing strongly, and only six percent disagreed (Figure 3H.1). “Strong” agreement was most evident in the non-core counties of upstate (Figure 3H.2).

#### Figure 3H.1: A strong agricultural sector is essential to the well-being of Upstate NY communities – levels of agreement and disagreement

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

Employment in agriculture in NYS is concentrated in the upstate region, primarily in non-metropolitan counties. The numbers in the following chart may not be completely reflective of total employment in this industry since there are significant seasonal farm labor fluctuations, and farm workers who are unauthorized may be hesitant to participate in the Census which reports this data. The relative dependence on agricultural employment has slightly increased in micropolitan and non-core counties over the decade (Figure 3H.3).

#### Figure 3H.2: A strong agricultural sector is essential to the well-being of Upstate NY communities – levels of agreement and disagreement, by upstate county type

Source: 2011 SOUS Survey

The contribution of agriculture to the NYS economy is significant. Figure 3H.4 shows the specific contribution to the state's economy for various ag-based economic activities. Of the total Gross State Product in 2009, total agricultural-based activity contributes an estimated 4.5%.

#### Figure 3H.3: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting as a percent of total employment, for NYS, Upstate, and Upstate county types, 2000-2009

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics, 2000-2009

The contribution of agriculture to the NYS economy is significant. Figure 3H.4 shows the specific contribution to the state's economy for various ag-based economic activities. Of the total Gross State Product in 2009, total agricultural-based activity contributes an estimated 4.5%.

#### Figure 3H.4: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting as a percent of total employment, for NYS, Upstate, and Upstate county types, 2000-2009

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics, 2000-2009
Not only does agricultural production have a strong positive impact on the NYS economy, but it makes a positive contribution to the nations’ economy as well. In particular, NYS’s share of the U.S.’s total value for apple and dairy product is significant (Figure 3H.5).

In terms of where the majority of agricultural activity is located in NYS, Figure 3H.6 provides the top 5 counties in the state for agricultural sales in 2007. What may surprise many upstate New Yorkers is that the county with the highest sales in agriculture in the state is actually in Long Island, Suffolk County, with 5.5% of the state’s total agricultural sales receipts. The other four top counties, Wyoming, Cayuga, Genesee, and Wayne are all in the upstate region. Suffolk County’s primary commodity is in the greenhouse/nursery category.

Source: Minnesota Implan Group, Inc (MIG) 2009

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

Source: Census of Agriculture, 2007
While employment in agriculture in some areas of upstate has increased slightly, the number of farms has continued to decline. In 1997 there were 37,309 farms in the upstate region, but by 2007 this number had dropped to 35,561. The number of acres of land in farms also declined over this period, as well as the average size of farms in upstate (Figure 3H.7-3H.8). These changes mimic larger trends in agriculture across the U.S. In NYS, micropolitan counties had the largest average size farms, at 215 acres, in 2007 (Figure 3H.9).

**Figure 3H.7: Number of farms 1997, 2002, 2007 (adjusted)**


**Figure 3H.9: Average size of farms (acres) 1997, 2002, 2007 (adjusted)**


**Figure 3H.10: Characteristics of farmers and farm organization in NYS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full owner (farms)</td>
<td>24,286</td>
<td>24,722</td>
<td>24,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part owner (farms)</td>
<td>11,741</td>
<td>11,040</td>
<td>10,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant owner (farms)</td>
<td>2,237</td>
<td>1,493</td>
<td>1,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm Organization</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals/family, sole proprietorship (farms)</td>
<td>32,813</td>
<td>32,654</td>
<td>30,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-held corporations (farms)</td>
<td>1,593</td>
<td>1,388</td>
<td>1,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships (farms)</td>
<td>3,465</td>
<td>2,846</td>
<td>3,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-family corporations (farms)</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others-cooperative, estate or trust, institutional, etc. (farms)</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Characteristics of principal farm operators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average operator age (years)</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with farming as their primary occupation</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>33,795</td>
<td>31,583</td>
<td>29,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>4,469</td>
<td>5,672</td>
<td>6,688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The characteristics of farm owners and operators are important to examine when considering the future of the sector. At the same time that employment in agriculture is increasing and number of acres farmed has decreased, the average age of farmer operators has increased significantly (Figure 3H.10). While the number of principal farm operators who are men has declined, there has been an increase in the number of women, to about 18% of all principal farm operators in 2007, up from 11.7% in 1997. The tenure of farmers has shifted somewhat as well, with slight increases in full owners, and decreases in part owners and tenant owners.

While we do not present data on the number of new and younger farmers starting farms in NYS, in areas of the United States there has been a trend toward younger people, recent college graduates, and even retirees starting small farms, often using organic production methods and selling to local and regional markets. Indeed, the number of organic farms and the number of acres in organic farming in NYS has increased significantly in just a few recent years (Figure 3H.11), although it still represents just a small fraction of total farm acreage in the state.

Figure 3H.11: Organic Agriculture in NYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of certified operations</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crops (acres)</td>
<td>69,613</td>
<td>102,004</td>
<td>131,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture &amp; rangled (acres)</td>
<td>21,626</td>
<td>27,022</td>
<td>38,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total acres</td>
<td>91,239</td>
<td>129,026</td>
<td>170,125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

In recent years, increased attention has been paid to local food, organic food, and the production practices farmers use. We were interested in how Upstate NY consumers made decisions with regard to choosing food. In our SOUS survey we asked the following question:

Q: Which of the following is most important to you in choosing the food you eat?

For 42 percent of survey respondents, it was most important that their food was grown locally (Figure 3H.12). For more than a third (36%) it was important that the farmer used sustainable practices to grow the food (for six percent it was most important that their food be certified organic), and for sixteen percent cost was the most important factor. Price was more important in more urban areas (Figure 3H.13).

Traditional federal policies such as funding for agricultural research, income support to farmers for commodity production, and social safety net programs like SNAP that help low-income consumers purchase food, have promoted low-cost food products. In contrast, new policies at the federal, state and local level are increasingly focused on supporting food production for local markets. These policies include regulations that support farm-to-school initiatives (programs that help bring locally grown foods into school cafeterias), the creation of local food policy councils, and the development of farmers’ markets. Local and regional food issues could also be made more prominent in federal legislation like the Farm Bill by including better rules and funding for regional food infrastructure or ensuring some level of local food procurement by government entities.

To gauge relative levels of support for policies aimed at agriculture, we asked our survey respondents the following question:
Q: Which one of the following agriculturally-related government policies do you feel is more important:

![Figure 3H.14: Which agriculturally-related government policy is more important?](image)

Overwhelmingly, upstate New Yorkers support agricultural policies which ensure regional or local food production and supply (81 percent) over those that ensure the lowest cost food (Figure 3H.14). This sentiment did not vary significantly by county type (not shown).

**Summary**

While the number of farms, size of farms, and land in farms has continued to decrease over the last ten years, the number of New Yorkers employed in agriculture has increased slightly during the same time period and agriculture continues to be an important part of the Upstate economy and contributor to the state’s economy overall. Upstate New Yorkers, moreover, overwhelmingly see agriculture as essential to the well-being of their communities. They also want their food to be produced locally and through production practices that are ecologically sustainable. These trends are very much in line with those nationally and are increasingly reflected in agricultural policy designed to support new and beginning farmers, encourage local and regional food markets, and promote sustainable production practices.

**Resources For NYS Agriculture & Food Systems Data**

Progressive Agricultural Rankings:  
http://www.agdevonline.com/progressive-agriculture-rankings.html

USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, NYS Data:  

USDA Census of Agriculture:  
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/

ERS Organic Production Data:  

Regional Economic Information System, April 2010, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of  
Farm Income and Costs Briefing Room, Economic Research Service, USDA.

Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States (FATUS), Economic Research Service, USDA.
Final Summary

Demographic Change

Over the past two decades, upstate New York has experienced significant demographic change. Understanding how population size and composition has varied across the Upstate region is important when considering the implications for all the issue and topical areas covered in this chartbook.

Since 1910, the U.S. population has increased steadily. After the 1960s growth rates slowed in the Midwest and the Northeast, while the South and West continued to steadily grow. As the Northeast's growth rate began to slow after 1970 compared to the rest of the U.S., so did the growth rate for the State of New York, although NYS lost population between 1970 and 1980 even though the Northeast as a whole was relatively stable during the decade. NYS's population actually declined between 1970 and 1980, but this decrease was almost completely experienced in the downstate region. While Upstate New York's growth slowed during this period, it did not decline as was true in the downstate region.

Population projections produced by Cornell University’s Program on Applied Demographics (PAD) indicate continued slow population growth in New York State over the next two and a half decades. According to PAD, the State will add close to a million people by the year 2035, but this rate of growth is likely to be slower than that experienced by other regions of the U.S.

Between 2001 and 2009 NYS experienced higher rates of out-migration than in-migration, and while Upstate New York also had a net out-migration result, it was not as significant in the middle of the decade. During the 2000's, Upstate New York experienced lower, but steady rates of net international migration compared to the State as a whole which experienced a significant decline.

Although migration is an important component of overall population change, not all age groups are equally mobile. In Upstate New York there are significantly different trends compared to the state level. For the Upstate region, out migration is especially notable for the age groups 25-29 through 30-34. This trend was increasingly true over the last three decades.

In New York State, the median age has increased from 35.9 years in the year 2000 to 37.7 years in 2009, a difference of 1.8 years. The upstate micropolitan and non-core counties aged more rapidly than the rest of the state. Between 2000 and 2010, NYS lost population in the 0-14, 30-44, and 70-79 year old age groups, and gained population in the 15-29, 45-69, and 80+ year old age groups.

While national data suggests that average household and family size has increased over the last several years, we do not see that same trend in NYS. Since 1940 the average household size in NYS has declined from 3.54 persons to 2.57 persons in 2010. Average family size declined from 3.53 persons in 1970 to 3.2 persons in 2010.

Another dimension of population and population change is race and ethnic composition. In New York State in 1990, over 69% of the population was White, Non-Hispanic. By 2009 this number had decreased to just over 60%. The largest percentage increases were among Asian and Pacific Islanders (increasing from 3.8% to 7.3%) and Hispanics (increasing from 12.4% to 16.8%). While African Americans (non-Hispanic) increased as a percent of the total population from 14.4% in 1990 to 15.2% in 2009, Hispanics became the largest ethnic minority in the state. These state-level patterns, weighted heavily by the downstate region, differ markedly from those experienced in the upstate region. In 2009 Upstate New York was 84.7% White (non-Hispanic), with African-Americans (non-Hispanic) comprising 7.8% of the population and Hispanics only 4.9%.

Related to both international migration and the Hispanic population increases, is the percent of the population that is foreign born. Almost 16% of New York State residents were foreign born in 1990, and this figure increased to 21.3% towards the end of the 2000's. In contrast, only 5.8% of Upstate New York's population is foreign born.

Economic Development & Workforce Trends

The economy has been the topic receiving the most attention in Upstate New York in recent years. When people refer to "the economy" it often means a collection of concepts, including the availability of well-paying jobs, job growth, low unemployment, a reasonable cost of living, low rates of poverty, and employment across a diverse group of industrial sectors. Survey respondents felt that the main goal of local economic development should be creating local jobs (62%). Trends show a significant drop in job growth between 2006 and the end of 2008, when job losses (negative growth) was the trend until mid-2010 when payroll began moving in the positive growth direction region. The trends for Upstate and Downstate New York during the last couple of years has been quite similar although Upstate had not posted a positive change in payroll by March 2011, compared to the 1% increase experienced in the Downstate region.

The industrial structure of New York State has shifted dramatically over the past several decades with Health Care and Social Assistance as the major employment sector, with over 16% of the total labor force employed in this area in 2009. Educational services and retail trade have remained fairly steady in recent years, employing between 10% and 11% of the labor force. Manufacturing continues to employ a smaller share of the labor force as time goes on, declining from 8.6% in 2000 to 5.9% by 2009.

In Upstate New York, the pattern has been somewhat different. While Health Care and Social Assistance employed about 16% of the labor force by the year 2009, at the beginning of the decade Manufacturing was still the largest employer in the upstate region. In 2000 manufacturing employed 14.5% of the labor force, but by 2009 this had dropped to 10.2%. Educational services have a slightly stronger presence in the
Upstate labor force compared to the state as a whole, and Retail trade is marginally greater as well.

Unemployment rates have increased significantly in recent years for the State, although the rate of 8.2% for New York State is less than the national rate of 8.9%. Unemployment has risen across the state, but shows significant variation by region.

Education attainment and specialized training is a critical piece of workforce and economic development. In 1990, one in four New Yorkers above the age of 25 lacked a high school diploma. By the later part of the 2000’s this number had dropped to about 13%. This pattern was similar for Upstate New Yorkers (from 22.5% without a high school diploma in 1990 to just over 9% in the later 2000’s) (Figure 3A.20). The percent of the population with a high school diploma or some college education increased among the Upstate population from almost 58% in 1990 to about 62% in 2005-2009. While just under 20% of the Upstate population had a Bachelor’s degree or higher in 1990, this figure had increased to almost 29% by 2005-2009.

### Income & Poverty

The current fiscal crisis has sharpened the focus on the related issues of income and poverty for people across the state and nation. When incomes remain stagnant and poverty increases, it not only has negative impacts on individuals and families, but on communities, regions and entire societies. Declining household incomes and the increasing prevalence of poverty are two outcomes of the economic downturn of the last few years.

New York State has largely following the trend of the U.S. as a whole over the last two decades (Figure 3B.1). Mirroring national trends, household income and poverty rates fluctuated across Upstate NY throughout the last two decades. Median income in micropolitan counties increased by over $6200 but only $2580 in non-core counties. Adjusting for inflation, this results in a decline in real dollars of nearly 1%. Metropolitan counties have the highest household incomes of the three county types. Moreover, a substantial gender gap exists with women earning only 57% to that of men.

The recent recession has caused more than half of all respondents to report difficulty in covering their utilities, transportation, and recreation costs, and at least a third of respondents had difficulty paying for food, mortgage, healthcare, and clothing.

Poverty rates have steadily increased across Upstate from just over 11% to nearly 13% with micropolitan counties having the highest rates of over 14.5% poverty. The poverty rates for children are higher, with 18% of all children living in Upstate living in poverty and 20% of children living in micro and non-core counties. Among those over the age of 65, poverty rates upstate are just under 8% with those living in micro and non-core pushing 9%.

When asked about the central cause of people living in poverty in Upstate NY, more than half of respondents agreed that it was due to circumstances beyond the control of poor people such as lack of jobs and poor economic conditions. Thirty-seven percent of respondents suggested poor people are not doing enough because they are lazy or abusing government programs with these responses most prevalent in non-core counties.

### Local and Regional Governance

In general, the major issue for local and regional governments in Upstate New York is the tension between revenues and expenditures, and the mismatch that often results in tax increases and/or cuts in services. Additional concern over proposed property tax caps, service-sharing, consolidation, and overall budget pressures are currently overwhelming many local governments. While revenues in upstate New York counties have increased over the decade, so too have expenditures, with expenditures outpacing revenues by 2009 by more than $360 million in the upstate region.

In 2000, expenditures totaled about 97% of revenues across upstate. This increased to a high of 107.5% in 2003, but even though this percentage has dropped since 2003, the figure is still above 100%, indicating expenditures have outpaced revenues. Looking at change in total revenues since 2000 by local government type, City revenues increased the most (35%), while County revenues increased by 25%.

Source of revenues is an important issue to examine. Both property and sales tax revenues grew significantly for local governments over the decade, with upstate NY counties experiencing a massive jump in sales tax revenues. Cities in Upstate New York received the largest percentage change in state aid over the decade, increasing by almost 50 percent their aid from the state, compared to increases of about 20 percent for County and village governments. Federal aid to local governments varied significantly over the decade by local government type. Cities in the Upstate region received almost steady increases over 2000 levels of federal funding, while the amount that villages received from federal sources varied tremendously from year to year, with overall declines relative to 2000 levels.

As with revenues, total expenditures have also increased for all local government types in Upstate New York over the decade. Counties have spent an increasing proportion of their budgets on items listed as “general government” and a decreasing share on social services. Employee benefits have also increased as a share of total expenditures over the decade. City governments in upstate have experienced significant increases in the relative share of their budget allocated to employee benefits, while most other categories have remained steady. Types of town and village government expenditures have remained fairly steady on a relative basis over the decade, although employee benefits have increased to some extent.

While taxes are obviously a major revenue source for local and regional governments, New Yorkers have one of the highest tax burdens in the country. Given the relative
the mandated cap is reduced to 0%. Governor Cuomo override to the cap, but if the votes falls short of the 60% is less. Sixty percent of voters would need to approve an at 2% or the national Consumer Price Index, whichever 2011/12 budget season. This tax levy would be capped in the local school property tax levies beginning with the agreement on a bill that would implement a cap on increases . In late May of 2011, the Governor, Senate, and Assembly reached public approval with average expenditure increases of 1.25%. In April of 2011, the state enacted cuts in state aid, ranging $19.6 Billion in general NY State aid to public schools for special aid fund expenditures for New York State was $55.7 billion. Starting in the spring of 2010 and most recently in April of 2011, the state enacted cuts in state aid, ranging from $600/pupil in the lowest need districts, $900/pupil in NYC, $1100/pupil in the Big 4, and over $1300/pupil in the Average need and high need rural districts. This results in $19.6 Billion in general NY State aid to public schools for the 2011/2012 school year. As a result of state aid cuts and general fiscal constraint, school districts put up budgets for public approval with average expenditure increases of 1.25% and an average increase in the local tax levy of 3.43%. In late May of 2011, the Governor, Senate, and Assembly reached agreement on a bill that would implement a cap on increases in the local school property tax levies beginning with the 2011/12 budget season. This tax levy would be capped at 2% or the national Consumer Price Index, whichever is less. Sixty percent of voters would need to approve an override to the cap, but if the votes falls short of the 60% then the mandated cap is reduced to 0%. Governor Cuomo described the cap as the “tightest” and “best” property tax cap in the nation” and stated “…I think this is the single most important development for the economy of the state of New York”.

This is a critical time for Upstate NY schools and the communities they serve. For the first time in decades we are witnessing a combined set of pressures that include drops in enrollment, multi-year state aid cuts, and a soon-to-be-enacted local property tax cap. Moreover, the state Board of Regents continues it long-term plan to heighten academic expectations and rigorous evaluation of schools, students, and teachers and the Federal government is in the process of reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind. This is a squeeze that few in NYS have experienced. Change is certain and views are divided as to whether and how this will help or hurt the schools and youth in Upstate NY.

Nearly 60% of Upstate New Yorkers are satisfied or very satisfied with their local public schools, while nearly 20% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and another 20% indifferent. The enrollment in Upstate NY’s public schools mirrors the general population trends of loss. Public school expenditures have steadily increased over the last 15 years, though state aid has been cut in the most recent two years and average expenditure increases have been reduced. The cap on the local school property tax levy is ready for certain approval which will further constrain the ability of localities to make up for the cuts in state aid. On average, about half of all school district revenue is provided by the state while the STAR tax relief program is associated with proportionally reduced reliance on local tax sources. Health care expenditures tripled over this time. The SOUS poll found that support for a property tax cap is mixed with the most support from respondents in micro counties while the most opposition is found in non-core counties. Half of all respondents are supportive of school consolidation but this support drops when faced with local programmatic cuts. While geography plays some role in student test performance, community wealth is a far stronger predictor of average district performance with districts in low need communities performing substantially higher than in the low need urban and rural communities. In contrast, graduation rates of rural school districts are substantially higher than their comparatively poor urban and suburban neighbors.

Schools & Youth

School districts in New York State, as in most of the country, have experienced significant changes in the past decade. Enrollment patterns have shifted over time, with many rural and central city districts experiencing declining enrollment, and many suburban or mid-sized districts showing stability or sometime slight increases in enrollment. Prior to 2010, there were dramatic increases in revenues, particularly from state and local sources, allowing for a substantial increase in district expenditures over the last decade. In 2009/10 school year, total local, state, and federal general and special aid fund expenditures for New York State was $55.7 billion. Starting in the spring of 2010 and most recently in April of 2011, the state enacted cuts in state aid, ranging from $600/pupil in the lowest need districts, $900/pupil in NYC, $1100/pupil in the Big 4, and over $1300/pupil in the Average need and high need rural districts. This results in -$19.6 Billion in general NY State aid to public schools for the 2011/2012 school year. As a result of state aid cuts and general fiscal constraint, school districts put up budgets for public approval with average expenditure increases of 1.25% and an average increase in the local tax levy of 3.43%. In late May of 2011, the Governor, Senate, and Assembly reached agreement on a bill that would implement a cap on increases in the local school property tax levies beginning with the 2011/12 budget season. This tax levy would be capped at 2% or the national Consumer Price Index, whichever is less. Sixty percent of voters would need to approve an override to the cap, but if the votes falls short of the 60% then the mandated cap is reduced to 0%. Governor Cuomo described the cap as the “tightest” and “best” property tax cap in the nation” and stated “…I think this is the single most important development for the economy of the state of New York.”

This is a critical time for Upstate NY schools and the communities they serve. For the first time in decades we are witnessing a combined set of pressures that include drops in enrollment, multi-year state aid cuts, and a soon-to-be-enacted local property tax cap. Moreover, the state Board of Regents continues it long-term plan to heighten academic expectations and rigorous evaluation of schools, students, and teachers and the Federal government is in the process of reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind. This is a squeeze that few in NYS have experienced. Change is certain and views are divided as to whether and how this will help or hurt the schools and youth in Upstate NY.

Nearly 60% of Upstate New Yorkers are satisfied or very satisfied with their local public schools, while nearly 20% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and another 20% indifferent. The enrollment in Upstate NY’s public schools mirrors the general population trends of loss. Public school expenditures have steadily increased over the last 15 years, though state aid has been cut in the most recent two years and average expenditure increases have been reduced. The cap on the local school property tax levy is ready for certain approval which will further constrain the ability of localities to make up for the cuts in state aid. On average, about half of all school district revenue is provided by the state while the STAR tax relief program is associated with proportionally reduced reliance on local tax sources. Health care expenditures tripled over this time. The SOUS poll found that support for a property tax cap is mixed with the most support from respondents in micro counties while the most opposition is found in non-core counties. Half of all respondents are supportive of school consolidation but this support drops when faced with local programmatic cuts. While geography plays some role in student test performance, community wealth is a far stronger predictor of average district performance with districts in low need communities performing substantially higher than in the low need urban and rural communities. In contrast, graduation rates of rural school districts are substantially higher than their comparatively poor urban and suburban neighbors.

Issues in health care in upstate New York are similar to those faced by people across the nation. The U.S. has arguably the best health care in the world in terms of numbers of highly trained doctors and specialists, state of the art equipment and facilities, but access to these health care providers can be challenging for many people. Issues such as the lack of health insurance, inadequate clinics and specialists in more remote, rural areas, lack of transportation, and the conditions of poverty create barriers against obtaining quality health
care for many people. In addition, health outcomes vary significantly across the population, creating real problems for people, families, and communities, as their individual and collective capacity is compromised due to poor health outcomes.

Access to health care can be defined by not just living in a community with a health clinic, but having access to specialists, health insurance coverage, and a sufficient number of health care providers for the population. In general, a majority of Upstate New Yorkers (69%) indicate satisfaction with the quality of health care in their community and only sixteen percent indicate some level of dissatisfaction. Ninety percent of upstate respondents report adequate access to healthcare in their own communities.

Health insurance coverage varies by county-type, with 12% of residents in non-core counties without health insurance and just under 10% in metropolitan counties. For children, however, the highest rate of uninsured is found in the micropolitan counties. The highest rate of residents without health insurance is for the 18-64 year olds with a rate of more than 20%. The issue of health insurance looms large when Upstate NY residents think of changing or losing their job with 67% reporting it to be a big concern.

Rates of prenatal care dropped slightly this decade and access to prenatal care is lowest in non-core counties. Infant mortality rates dropped slightly across NYS, though increased in recent years across Upstate NY and especially in non-core counties where infant mortality increased from under 5% in 2006 to nearly 6.5% in 2008. Linked to the aging population update, death rates are higher upstate than in the state as a whole with the non-core counties having the highest rates.

Environment, Land Use & Natural Resources

For many years, major issues affecting rural upstate landscapes have involved a related nexus of issues and trends: housing development and sprawl; long term changes (generally decline) in the major land-extensive historical economic uses of rural lands such as forestry, mining, and agriculture; increased recreational pressure on the most attractive rural landscapes; increasing human/wildlife interaction; degradation of habitat; concerns about diminished water quality due to nonpoint sources such as animal agriculture and storm water runoff; the spread of invasive species; and more.

From a land use planning perspective, a decade or two ago the major newcomer fomenting conflict over rural land uses was probably cell towers. In the past few years however, with increasing energy prices and growing concerns about climate change, a more significant set of major new issues have involved energy. In the north and some other parts of the state, conflicts over the siting of wind turbines have dominated. In the southern part of the state, the prospect of transformative regional change due to shale gas development is now front and center pending finalization of DEC regulations and federal reviews. As the state looks to a post-peak oil future, there is great potential for other forms of energy related demands – including biomass production, geothermal development, carbon sequestration, and more – to increase in significance.

Upstate New Yorkers value environmental preservation, are generally satisfied with the level of environmental protection efforts in their local communities, and believe that both local and state governments should be committed to long-term environmental values even in the face of current economic challenges. The majority of upstate residents indicate that the risks to their water quality outweigh the economic benefits of natural gas drilling.

About one-third are satisfied with the level of local land use planning in their communities, one-third dissatisfied, and one-third neutral. In municipalities across the state, however, there has been a significant increase in the use of land use tools in recent years, most notably the use of comprehensive plans. However, not all comprehensive planning efforts have had an impact on local land use decisions, according to a CaRDI survey.

Farmland protection is another important issue in the land use arena, particularly as well-managed farms can help protect the natural resources in the area. Almost half a million acres of farmland in NYS were converted to developed land between 1982 and 2007, about one-third of this considered prime agricultural land. Despite high development pressures in some areas of upstate, and the population sprawl that has occurred without population growth, comparatively little of NYS’s agricultural land is currently covered under a farmland protection program. Upstate New Yorkers report mixed emotions, however, when it comes to how local governments should approach regulating development of private property.

Energy

The continuing absence of consensus about energy and climate policy at the international and national levels only increases the responsibility of institutions and governments at other levels to find locally appropriate ways to take the lead in addressing the complex nexus of energy-related issues. Already at the state and community level, multiple approaches to energy conservation, renewable energy production, and new forms of fossil fuel extraction are being implemented and debated, with many other proposals waiting in the wings.

It is increasingly evident in many New York communities that energy related issues have dimensions – environmental, economic, and social - that are profoundly local in nature. Many aspects of energy conservation and production involve decisions and behavioral changes at the local community and household level.

Because the context and capacities of communities vary, the research, tools, outreach, and policy analysis that are appropriate will also be differentiated across communities. Land use controls are typically exercised in the first instance by local rather than state or federal authorities, and local land
use rules are tailored to the preferences of each community. Decisions about the way New York's land base will be used will make or break most efforts to foster more energy efficient development patterns. They will also help determine the future of renewable fuel resources ranging from wind and solar to biomass, and locally available nonrenewable fuels such as natural gas.

Increasing numbers of local governments in New York and elsewhere are adopting climate action plans which focus on reducing ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil fuels. Many more have attended more specifically to energy conservation and reducing the use of fossil fuels for basic efficiency and cost saving reasons.

Energy issues particularly relevant to upstate New York include the broad issue of energy transitions which includes both energy conservation and renewable energy and the role of existing and emerging energy production scenarios. Factored into this are many variables including public and private decisions, the land use base, technology, costs, greenhouse gas emissions, workforce development, and transportation options. The possibility of natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale has led to a broader discussion of how we responsibly meet the energy needs of our communities.

As was noted in the beginning of this section, energy related issues have environmental, economic, and social dimensions that are profoundly local in nature. While the results of the SOUS survey questions often reveal a disconnect between the energy consumption and production patterns currently in place in NYS and the level of support or opposition upstate New Yorkers have for specific energy policies, we note geographic variation among county-types that underscores this local dimension. Specifically, non-core county residents exhibit much more willingness to pay more for “green” and renewable energy sources and are more likely to indicate a desire to reduce our dependence on foreign energy sources. Since many aspects of energy conservation and production involve decisions and behavioral changes at the local community and household level, the results of the survey, compared to the “reality” of current patterns, serves as a useful starting point for further discussion.

### Agriculture and Food Systems

While agriculture employs a relatively small proportion of the NYS labor force, New York's position as a leading producer of dairy, apple, cabbage, grapes, and other commodities, as well as the critical local and regional multiplier effects of the broader agricultural sector help to keep agriculture an important contributor to upstate economic development. Beyond its economic contributions, agriculture continues to be seen as a key component of overall quality of life in Upstate New York, with additional non-economic impacts such as the preservation of open space, the preservation of rural heritage and traditions, and the provision of locally produced, high quality food.

Upstate New Yorkers, most not directly involved in the agriculture sector, believe that agriculture is an important part of life in the state. The contribution of agriculture to the NYS economy is significant. Of the total Gross State Product in 2009, total agricultural-based activity contributes an estimated 4.5%. Not only does agricultural production have a positive impact on the NYS economy, but it makes a positive contribution to the nations' economy as well. In particular, NYS's share of the U.S.'s total value for apple and dairy product is significant.

While employment in agriculture in some areas of upstate has increased slightly, the number of farms has continued to decline. The number of acres of land in farms also declined over this period, as well as the average size of farms in upstate. These changes mimic larger trends in agriculture across the U.S.

The characteristics of farm owners and operators are important to examine when considering the future of the sector. At the same time that employment in agriculture is increasing and number of acres farmed has decreased, the average age of farmer operators has increased significantly. While the number of principal farm operators who are men has declined, there has been an increase in the number of women, to about 18% of all principal farm operators in 2007, up from 11.7% in 1997.

The tenure of farmers has shifted somewhat as well, with slight increases in full owners, and decreases in part owners and tenant owners. The number of organic farms and the number of acres in organic farming in NYS has increased significantly in just a few recent years although it still represents just a small fraction of total farm acreage in the state.

For many Upstate New Yorkers (42%) it was most important that their food was grown locally. For more than a third (36%) it was important that the farmer used sustainable practices to grow the food (for six percent it was most important that their food be certified organic), and for sixteen percent cost was the most important factor. Price was more important in more urban areas. Overwhelmingly, upstate New Yorkers support agricultural policies which ensure regional or local food production and supply (81 percent) over those that ensure the lowest cost.

While the number of farms, size of farms, and land in farms has continued to decrease over the last ten years, the number of New Yorkers employed in agriculture has increased slightly during the same time period and agriculture continues to be an important part of the Upstate economy and contributor to the state's economy overall. Upstate New Yorkers, moreover, overwhelmingly see agriculture as essential to the well-being of their communities. They also want their food to be produced locally and through production practices that are ecologically sustainable. These trends are very much in line with those nationally and are increasingly reflected in agricultural policy designed to support new and beginning farmers, encourage local and regional food markets, and promote sustainable production practices.