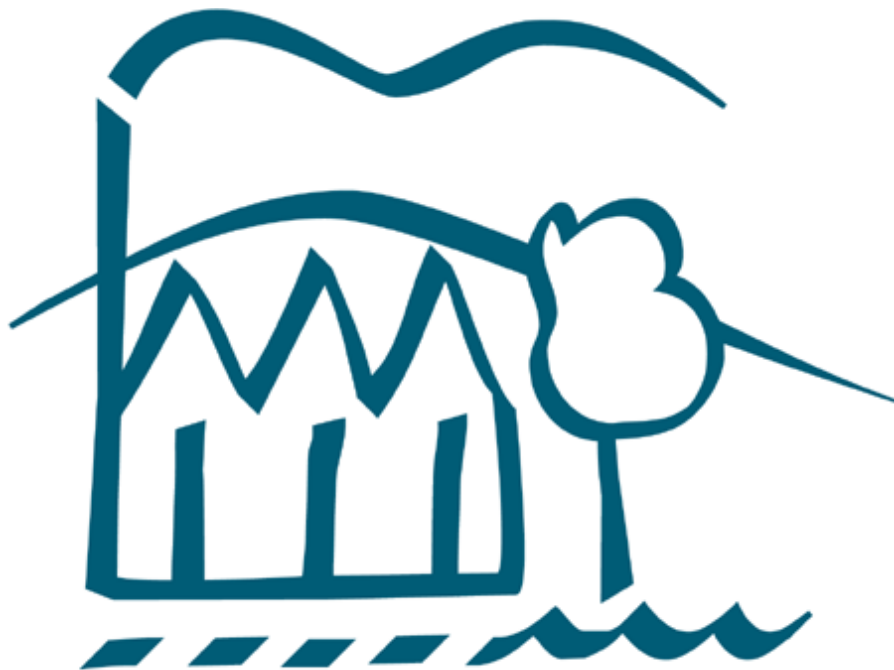


An Analysis of Current Socioeconomic Conditions in Seneca County, NY



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Mission Statement

The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) will identify, define, and inform its member counties of issues and opportunities critical to the physical, economic, and social health of the region. G/FLRPC provides forums for discussion, debate, and consensus building, and develops and implements a focused action plan with clearly defined outcomes, which include programs, personnel, and funding.



An Analysis of Current Socioeconomic Conditions in Seneca County, New York



This analysis presents a view of the socioeconomic conditions of Seneca County, New York and the surrounding area in the Genesee/Finger Lakes Region using the most current data available. A quick discussion of socioeconomic conditions is included based on information from the New York State Department of Family Assistance and the New York State Education Department. The information included, discussed, and presented is standardized and collected across the state and thus within Seneca County. The data itself is also shown in its entirety through the maps and tables found on the following pages. It is anticipated and hoped that further conclusions can be drawn from the data, and its inclusion may serve other projects and studies as well.

Methodology

Traditionally, briefs such as this one have used Census data because of its standardization, accuracy, and availability at small geographic levels. However, because the last published Census data was collected over ten years ago, more recent information sources were sought for this analysis. Much of the annual and monthly data collected at the federal and state levels are disseminated at geographical levels no smaller than the individual county. Examples include monthly unemployment data statistics from the New York State Department of Labor and the annual *County Business Patterns* of the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Two immediate data sources available at the sub-county level were the number of temporary assistance recipients by zip code from the NYS Department of Family Assistance's Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance and the number of applications for free or reduced price school lunches by school district from the NYS Education Department's Child Nutrition Reimbursement Unit. The temporary assistance recipients' data, which includes individuals receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and Safety Net benefits, by zip code is for May 1998. The numbers of applicants for reduced or free school lunches is for March 1999. Both data sources serve as indicators of socioeconomic conditions in that certain requirements based on income must be met to apply for or receive benefits under each of the programs. The data are collected in a standardized format across New York State.

As with any analysis, the first step undertaken was the definition of the study area. For the purposes of this report, Seneca County and its 15 municipalities (10 towns and five villages) are the primary areas of interest. However, the study area used is flexible in that two separate measures of socioeconomic conditions with similar, albeit slightly different, geographies are examined. Because neither of the data sources conforms to political boundaries or each other, the defined study area is actually two close, but not exact,

geographical areas that are as close to Seneca County's political boundaries as possible given the geographic limitations of the data. The study areas used to represent Seneca County for the two data sources exclude very small geographic areas within the County and include very small geographic areas outside the County. Essentially, both cover Seneca County and can be used to analyze the current socioeconomic conditions in the County.

Data regarding the numbers of temporary assistance recipients and free or reduced school lunch applications in Seneca County and the surrounding area to the west in the Genesee/Finger Lakes Region are presented in tables and maps using a Geographic Information System to present public officials, planners, and policymakers with clear, succinct numeric and graphic representations of the conditions discussed. The following discussion of the data is based on these maps and tables as well as current US Census Bureau estimates and qualitative information gathered for other reports and studies on Seneca County completed by the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council.

Analysis

This discussion focuses on both comparisons of the data within Seneca County and the surrounding areas to the north, south, and west of the County within the Genesee/Finger Lakes Region. Comparisons of data within Seneca County and among its neighbors in eastern Wayne, Ontario, and Yates Counties are done in an attempt to quantify socioeconomic conditions among the populations in Seneca County and the adjacent areas of the Genesee/Finger Lakes Region.

Within Seneca County, the largest numbers of persons receiving temporary assistance in May 1998 (141) were in the 13148 zip code covering the Town and Village of Seneca Falls, Town of Tyre, and eastern third of the Town of Fayette. The zip code with the next largest numbers of temporary assistance recipients (111) was the 13165 zip code covering the Town and Village of Waterloo, Town of Junius, and the remaining western portion of the Town of Fayette. Combined, 56.8% of all temporary assistance recipients in Seneca County were in the northern half of the County as covered by the 13148 and 13165 zip codes.

In the southern half of Seneca County, the zip codes covering the Town of Covert (14886) and the Village of Interlaken as well as a portion of the Town of Ovid (14847) in the southeast corner of the County had the largest number of temporary assistance recipients residing within their boundaries (131). The remaining temporary assistance recipients in Seneca County numbered 61 in May 1998 and were located in the Town and Village of Ovid and the Towns of Romulus and Varick. Overall, 192 temporary assistance recipients resided in the southern half of Seneca County in May 1998; accounting for 43.2% of the County's total number of temporary assistance recipients.

Based on the data from the NYS Department of Family Assistance's Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, the northern half of the county contains the largest numbers of

temporary assistance recipients in the County. Given that the municipalities in the northern half of Seneca County are the most populous (according to the 1990 Census and 1998 Census Bureau estimates, the Villages of Seneca Falls and Waterloo and the Towns of Fayette and Waterloo were the four municipalities with the largest populations), it is reasonable to assume that these municipalities would also have the largest numbers of persons receiving temporary assistance.

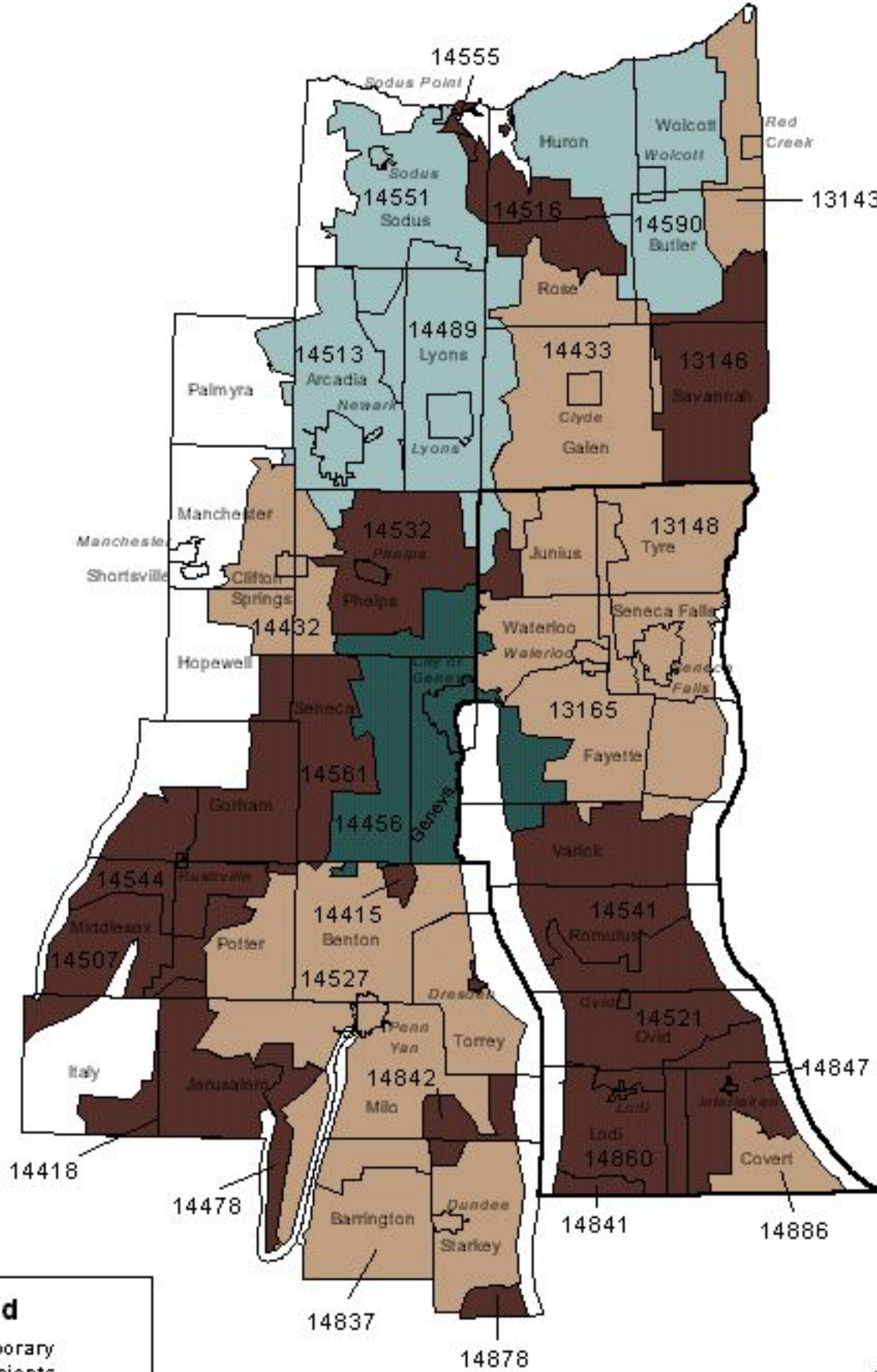
In southern half of the County, the largest numbers of temporary assistance recipients are located in the Town of Covert and Village of Interlaken. The Town of Covert had a population just over one-fifth (21.2%) the size of the County's largest municipality (the Village of Seneca Falls) and only two of the fifteen municipalities in Seneca County had a smaller population than the Village of Interlaken in 1990. The number of temporary assistance recipients in the surrounding area present similar conditions. The 14456 zip code covering the City and Town of Geneva and the eastern half of the Town of Seneca had the largest number of temporary assistance recipients (846) in the eastern portion of the G/FL Region (Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates Counties). To the northwest, the zip codes covering the Villages of Newark and Lyons had the next largest numbers of temporary assistance recipients in the surrounding area. Map1 presents the number of temporary assistance recipients by zip code in Seneca County and the surrounding G/FL Region.

Applications for free and reduced price school lunches in Seneca County show a somewhat different geographic view of socioeconomic conditions. Overall, the four central school districts (CSD) in Seneca County had 5,505 students enrolled in them and 32.3% (1,780) of those students applied for free or reduced price school lunches in March 1999. Of the four counties in the eastern portion of the G/FL Region, Seneca County had the highest percentage of students applying for free or reduced price school lunches. The South Seneca CSD had the highest percentage of students applying for free or reduced price lunches in the four-county sub-region at nearly 43%. The South Seneca CSD includes the Towns of Ovid and Lodi, the Villages of Ovid, Lodi, and Interlaken, the southern half of Romulus, and a large portion of the Town of Covert.

The largest CSD was the Waterloo CSD (2,150 students enrolled) which had the second highest percentage (31.91%) of students applying for free or reduced price school lunches. The percentage of students filing applications for free or reduced price school lunches in the Seneca Falls CSD and Romulus CSD were nearly equal: 27.24% in the Seneca Falls CSD and 27.29% in the Romulus CSD.

In the adjacent school districts of Ontario, Wayne, and Yates Counties, the percentages and total numbers of students applying for free or reduced price school lunches were similar with large percentages in the City School District of Geneva (47.06%) and the Dundee CSD (40.26%). In Wayne County, the largest percentages of students filing applications were in the northern school districts: Sodus CSD (39.51%), North Rose Wolcott CSD (37.56%), and Red Creek CSD (36.74%).

Number of Temporary Assistance Recipients by Zip Code in Seneca County and Surrounding Area - May 1998



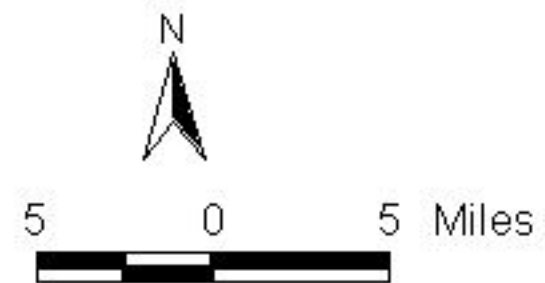
Legend

Number of Temporary Assistance Recipients

- 0 - 46
- 47 - 154
- 155 - 425
- 426 - 846

14432 Zip Code

- Seneca County
- Municipal Boundary



Sources: NYS Dept. of Family Assistance, Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, 1999.
NYS Department of Transportation, 1996.
Geographic Data Technology, Inc., 1998.

Table 1 and Map 2 present the total number and percent of students enrolled applying for free or reduced price school lunches by school district in Seneca County and the surrounding G/FL Region.

Table 1

Comparison Of Free/Reduced Price Lunch Applications To Enrollment By School District In Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates Counties - March 1999

	Enrollment	Free Applications	Reduced Applications	Total Applications	% Enrollment Applying for Free or Reduced Lunches
<i>Ontario County</i>					
Canandaigua City School District	4,187	508	227	735	17.55%
East Bloomfield CSD	1,200	125	63	188	15.67%
City School District of Geneva	2,741	1,122	168	1,290	47.06%
Gorham Middlesex CSD	1,945	400	166	566	29.10%
Honeoye CSD	1,144	119	48	167	14.60%
Manchester/Shortsville CSD	1,138	230	66	296	26.01%
Naples CSD	966	212	49	261	27.02%
Phelps-Clifton Springs CSD	2,305	449	185	634	27.51%
Victor CSD	2,775	158	69	227	8.18%
<i>Seneca County</i>					
Romulus CSD	601	93	71	164	27.29%
Seneca Falls CSD	1,604	337	100	437	27.24%
South Seneca CSD	1,150	339	154	493	42.87%
Waterloo CSD	2,150	458	228	686	31.91%
<i>Wayne County</i>					
Clyde-Savannah CSD	1,148	317	78	395	34.41%
Gananda CSD	1,080	63	34	97	8.98%
Lyons CSD	1,241	355	90	445	35.86%
Marion CSD	1,266	143	83	226	17.85%
Newark CSD	2,765	628	199	827	29.91%
North Rose Wolcott CSD	1,845	529	164	693	37.56%
Palmrya-Macedon CSD	2,345	279	76	355	15.14%
Red Creek School District	1,203	336	106	442	36.74%
Sodus CSD	1,625	510	132	642	39.51%
Wayne CSD	3,060	352	138	490	16.01%
Williamson CSD	1,349	193	83	276	20.46%
<i>Yates County</i>					
Penn Yan CSD	2,190	475	193	668	30.50%
Dundee CSD	1,001	309	94	403	40.26%

(CSD = Central School District)

Source: NYS Education Department, Child Nutrition Reimbursement Unit, June 2000.

Ontario-Seneca-Wayne-Yates Total	46,024	9,039	3,064	12,103	26.30%
Seneca County	5,505	1,227	553	1,780	32.33%
Percent of Ontario-Seneca-Wayne-Yates Total in Seneca County	11.96%	13.57%	18.05%	14.71%	

Additionally, Seneca County has seen a decline in population of 3,142 persons (9%) between 1970 and 1990. According to US Census Bureau estimates for 1998, the population of Seneca County and its municipalities has continued to decline 5.17%. The largest losses are estimated in the Towns of Varick (-16.06%) and Romulus (-12.45%). In fact, these estimates show a decline in population in all of the 15 Seneca County municipalities. Table 2 presents historical population figures and the 1998 Census Bureau estimates for Seneca County.

Table 2

Historical Population and Estimates for Seneca County, NY					
	1970	1980	1990	1998*	Percent Change 1990-1998
Seneca County	35,083	33,733	33,683	31,941	-5.17%
Town of Covert	1,364	1,503	1,566	1,528	-2.43%
Town of Fayette	2,352	2,829	2,856	2,788	-2.38%
Village of Interlaken	733	685	680	648	-4.71%
Town of Junius	1,111	1,354	1,354	1,321	-2.44%
Town of Lodi	934	850	1,065	1,039	-2.44%
Village of Lodi	353	334	364	346	-4.95%
Town of Ovid	2,359	1,888	1,671	1,634	-2.21%
Village of Ovid	779	666	660	629	-4.70%
Town of Romulus	4,253	2,440	2,507	2,195	-12.45%
Town of Seneca Falls	2,106	2,420	2,014	1,962	-2.58%
Village of Seneca Falls	7,794	7,466	7,370	7,005	-4.95%
Town of Tyre	837	887	870	849	-2.41%
Town of Varick	1,700	1,868	2,161	1,814	-16.06%
Town of Waterloo	2,990	3,240	3,429	3,348	-2.36%
Village of Waterloo	5,418	5,303	5,116	4,835	-5.49%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1970, 1980, 1990, 1999.

*The 1998 figures represent Census Bureau estimates and are not developed using the same procedures or methodology as those collected during the three previous decennial censuses.

Based on the two measures of socioeconomic conditions, Seneca County is less affluent than its neighbors in the surrounding counties of the G/FL Region; particularly those in the western portions of Ontario, and Wayne Counties. Population levels in Seneca County are declining and may be representative of economic conditions that produce fewer opportunities than elsewhere in the region, New York State, and the nation.

