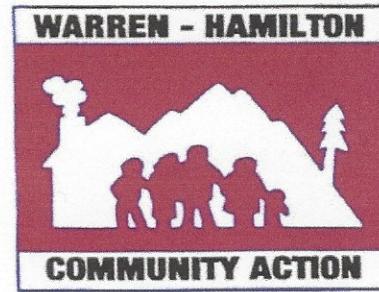


Warren-Hamilton Counties Action Committee for Economic Opportunity, Inc.
2022 Community Needs Assessment



ABOUT:

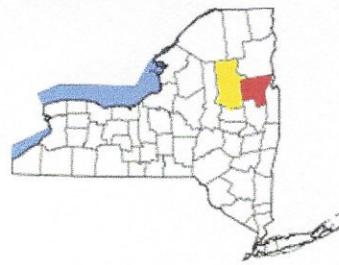
Warren-Hamilton Counties ACEO, Inc. was incorporated as a Community Action Agency in May of 1966. For over 55 years, the agency has strived to provide comprehensive services to low income, elderly and disabled residents of Warren and Hamilton Counties. The Agency offers a wide variety of services and programs aimed at helping people achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. With an annual budget of approximately \$1,500,000 current programming include the Weatherization Assistance Program, emergency housing and utility assistance, supplemental food, clothing and household items, senior transportation, food recovery, case management, holiday and school assistance, community gardens and the Alternative Sentencing program for Warren County.

The Agency mission statements is: **"To open opportunities for economic security and to provide the opportunity to live in decency with dignity".**

For our CSBG program year that ended 9/30/2021, Warren-Hamilton Counties Community Action Agency served 2,061 unduplicated individuals in 853 households. We work in close partnership with many other services providers in our community in order to reduce duplication of services and maximize resources.

We conduct a community needs assessment approximately once every three years, in order to collect information and explore the issues facing residents of Warren and Hamilton Counties. The information collected assists us in analyzing the services we provide, and to identify gaps in service and unmet needs. The assessment serves as a guide to the programs and services we provide.

The survey tool utilized for this report is the same survey instrument that was utilized in 2017 with additional questions added in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This allowed the agency to compare the results of both assessments. The survey developed in 2017 was developed in partnership with a focus group of Project Option case management participants that was held in June 2017. Once input from the group was obtained the agency Case manager in conjunction with the Agency's Executive Director and Board of Directors developed and approved the survey tool utilized. In January of 2022, a paper version of the survey was completed by patrons in both the Glens Falls and Indian Lake pantries. Additionally, SURVEY MONKEY was also utilized and sent to over 100 community members consisting of other human service providers, food pantries, agency Board members, local elected officials, clergy, law enforcement and educational professionals. Of the 100 surveys sent electronically 37% completed.



OUR COMMUNITY:

Warren and Hamilton Counties in New York are located in the northeast section of the state with the southernmost section being approximately 50 miles north of Albany. All of Hamilton County and the majority of Warren County is located within the Adirondack Park severely limiting employment opportunities within the two counties. Many of the well-paying manufacturing positions within the paper and forestry industries have long left the area along with other manufacturing jobs. What employment opportunities remain are primarily in the tourism, hospitality or retail industries and many are seasonal in nature. These industries were all severely impacted by the pandemic and have yet to recover. Although the State minimum wage has been rising, the majority of these positions do not offer a living wage making it necessary for many residents to be reliant on other forms of support such as food assistance.

The following data illustrates some of the social and economic conditions present at the time that our needs assessment survey was conducted or reflected in the current census data:

Population Change

Population change within the report area from 2010-2020 is shown below. During this ten-year period, total population estimates for the report area grew by 0.43 percent, increasing from 70,542 persons in 2010 to 70,844 persons in 2020.

Report Area	Total Population, 2010 Census	Total Population, 2020 Census	Population Change, 2010- 2020	Population Change, 2010-2020, Percent
Report Location	70,542	70,844	302	0.43%
Hamilton County, NY	4,836	5,107	271	5.60%
Warren County, NY	65,706	65,737	31	0.05%
New York	19,378,088	20,201,249	823,161	4.25%
United States	312,471,161	334,735,155	22,263,994	7.13%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020. Source geography: Tract

Population Change (2010-2020) by Hispanic Origin

This indicator reports the Hispanic or Latino population change in the report area.

Report Area	Hispanic Population Change, Total	Hispanic Population Change, Percent	Non-Hispanic Population Change, Total	Non-Hispanic Population Change, Percent
Report Location	623	50.69%	-322	-0.46%
Hamilton County, NY	49	96.08%	222	4.64%
Warren County, NY	574	48.73%	-544	-0.84%
New York	531,100	15.54%	292,042	1.83%
United States	11,163,011	20.61%	11,100,922	4.30%

Total Population Change (2010-2020) by Race

This indicator reports the total population change of the report area by combined race and ethnicity.

Report Area	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native	Non-Hispanic Asian	Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Non-Hispanic Some Other Race	Non-Hispanic Multiple Race	Hispanic or Latino
Report Location	-3,181	177	25	268	-8	156	2,241	623
Hamilton County, NY	105	-3	3	-12	-3	4	128	49
Warren County, NY	-3,286	180	22	280	-5	152	2,113	574
New York	-705,328	-24,843	1,001	510,138	777	115,487	394,812	531,100
United States	-5,122,185	2,254,139	4,595	5,153,427	140,453	1,087,053	7,583,494	11,163,011

Age and Gender Demographics

Population by gender within the report area is shown below. According to ACS 2015-2019 5 year population estimates for the report area, the female population comprised 51.25% of the report area, while the male population represented 48.75%.

Report Area	0 to 4	0 to 4	5 to 17	5 to 17	18 to 64	18 to 64	Over 64	Over 64
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Report Location	1,466	1,460	5,013	4,494	20,350	20,755	6,351	8,176
Hamilton County, NY	68	77	251	229	1,264	1,260	626	685
Warren County, NY	1,398	1,383	4,762	4,265	19,086	19,495	5,725	7,491
New York	590,459	563,742	1,510,451	1,443,847	6,051,827	6,265,687	1,199,629	1,798,042
United States	10,112,614	9,655,056	27,413,920	26,247,802	99,841,782	100,642,825	20,320,351	28,265,193

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2015-19. Source geography: Tract

Race Demographics

Population by gender within the report area is shown below. According to ACS 2015-2019 5 year population estimates, the white population comprised 95.72% of the report area, black population represented 1.26%, and other races combined were 1.54%. Persons identifying themselves as mixed race made up 1.48% of the population.

Report Area	Total Population	White Total	Black Total	American Indian Total	Asian Total	Native Hawaiian Total	Some Other Total	Mixed Race Total
Report Location	68,791	65,846	864	179	644	38	201	1,019
Hamilton County, NY	4,515	4,394	36	5	3	2	13	62
Warren County, NY	64,276	61,452	828	174	641	36	188	957
New York	19,572,319	12,459,687	3,065,471	79,512	1,647,606	8,821	1,694,965	616,257
United States	324,697,795	235,377,662	41,234,642	2,750,143	17,924,209	599,868	16,047,369	10,763,902

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2015-2019. Source geography: Tract

Poverty

2019 poverty estimates show a total of 6,832 persons living below the poverty level in the report area. Poverty information is at 100% of the federal poverty income guidelines.

Report Area	All Ages	All Ages	Age 0-17	Age 0-17	Age 5-17	Age 5-17
	No of Persons	Poverty Rate	No of Persons	Poverty Rate	No of Persons	Poverty Rate
Report Location	6,832	9.93%	1,794	14.43%	1,229	12.93%
Hamilton County, NY	433	9.8%	104	17.7%	69	15.4%
Warren County, NY	6,399	10.1%	1,690	15%	1,160	13.7%
New York	2,471,760	13.1%	716,817	18.2%	485,664	17.2%
United States	39,490,096	12.16%	12,000,470	16.34%	8,258,906	15.39%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates](#). 2019. Source geography: County

Poverty Rate Change

Poverty rate change in the report area from 2010 to 2019 is shown below. According to the U.S. Census, the poverty rate for the area was 10.1% in 2019 and was 10.4% in 2010.

Report Area	Poverty									
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Report Location	10.4%	13.7%	11.5%	11.4%	13.2%	11.3%	11.6%	9.7%	10.7%	10.1%
Hamilton County, NY	10.6%	10.7%	10.3%	12.1%	11.4%	11.1%	10.2%	9.8%	9.1%	9.8%
Warren County, NY	10.4%	13.9%	11.6%	11.3%	13.3%	11.3%	11.7%	9.7%	10.8%	10.1%
New York	15%	16.1%	15.9%	16%	16%	15.5%	14.8%	14.1%	13.7%	13.1%
United States	15.3%	15.9%	15.9%	15.8%	15.5%	14.7%	14%	13.4%	13.1%	12.3%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates](#). 2019. Source geography: County

Current Unemployment

Labor force, employment, and unemployment data for each county in the report area is provided in the table below. Overall, the report area experienced an average 3.3% unemployment rate in December 2021.

Report Area	Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Report Location	31,927	30,883	1,044	3.3%
Hamilton County, NY	1,969	1,887	82	4.2%
Warren County, NY	29,958	28,996	962	3.2%
New York	9,140,537	8,683,231	457,306	5.0%
United States	162,825,074	156,786,647	6,038,427	3.7%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Department of Labor, [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). 2021 - December. Source geography: County

Wages

Average weekly wages for the report area during the period of September 2020 are provided below. Wage and employment figures are shown by county of employment. The report area has an average weekly wage of \$908.05.

Report Area	Total Employees	Avg Weekly Wage	Federal Employees	Avg Federal Government Weekly Wage	State/Local Employees	Avg State/Local Government Weekly Wage	Private Employees	Avg Private Weekly Wage
Report Location	37,629	\$908.05	281	\$861.22	5,220	\$742.37	32,128	\$935.38
Hamilton County, NY	1,767	\$722	25	\$676	840	\$935	902	\$591
Warren County, NY	35,862	\$927	256	\$962	4,380	\$979.5	31,226	\$931
New York	8,547,694	\$1,446	137,582	\$1,378	1,271,061	\$1,407.5	7,139,051	\$1,460
United States	138,549,503	\$1,173	3,122,191	\$1,506	18,167,327	\$1,181	117,259,985	\$1,170

Data Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Source geography: County

Housing Affordability

The National Low Income Housing Coalition reports each year on the amount of money a household must earn in order to afford a rental unit based on Fair Market Rents in the area and an accepted limit of 30% of income for housing costs.

Report Area	Average Renter Hourly Wage	Hourly	Hourly	Hourly	Hourly	Hourly	
		Wage	Wage	Wage	Wage	Wage	
		0 Bedrooms	1 Bedrooms	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	
Hamilton County, NY		\$10.09	\$13.37	\$13.46	\$17.73	\$22.06	\$25.33
Warren County, NY		\$12.72	\$13.02	\$15.27	\$19.33	\$25.21	\$26.54
New York		\$26.67	\$27.93	\$29.31	\$34.03	\$43.11	\$46.70

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition. 2021. Source geography: County

Free and Reduced Lunch Program

Report Area	Total Student Enrollment (January, 2019)	Students Eligible	Percent of Students Eligible
Report Location	9,057	4,140	45.71%
Hamilton County, NY	396	186	46.97%
Warren County, NY	8,661	3,954	45.65%
New York	3,058,426	2,286,046	74.75%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: New York State Education Department. Source geography: County

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly Food Stamp Program)

The number of persons receiving SNAP benefits and the total SNAP dollars issued per county in January 2021, within the report area is shown in below. The New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance reported that 3,986 households were receiving SNAP benefits totaling \$1,444,690, or \$362.44 per household.

Report Area	Household	Household	Household	Persons	Persons	Persons Receiving Benefits Non-Temp	Benefits			
	Receiving	Receiving	Receiving	Receiving	Receiving		Benefits	Benefits	Benefits	Benefits
	Benefits	Benefits	Benefits	Benefits	Benefits		Issued	Issued	Issued	Per
	Total	Temp	Non-Temp	Total	Temp		Total	Temp	Non-Temp	Household
Report Location	3,986	1,075	2,911	6,720	1,211	5,509	\$1,444,690	\$275,813	\$1,168,877	\$362.44
Hamilton County, NY	192	51	141	286	55	231	\$60,982	\$12,483	\$48,499	\$317.61
Warren County, NY	3,794	1,024	2,770	6,434	1,156	5,278	\$1,383,708	\$263,330	\$1,120,378	\$364.71
New York	1,587,973	621,770	966,203	2,758,288	891,459	1,866,829	\$616,127,787	\$206,282,697	\$409,845,090	\$388.00

Data Source: [New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance](#). Source geography: County

Supplemental Security Income

The below table shows the number of Supplemental Security Income recipients and expenditures by the state and federal governments issued per county in January 2021 for the report area. The report area average payment of \$550.20 to each recipient is less than the state average of \$614.67 per recipient.

Report Area	Recipients	Recipients		Recipients Federal	Recipients State	Expenditure per Recipient
		Total				
Report Location	1,672	\$919,939		\$796,233	\$123,706	\$550.20
Hamilton County, NY	68	\$33,636		\$29,898	\$3,738	\$494.65
Warren County, NY	1,604	\$886,303		\$766,335	\$119,968	\$552.56
New York	656,361	\$403,443,801		\$356,059,463	\$47,384,338	\$614.67

Data Source: [New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance](#). Source geography: County

RESPONDENT PROFILE:

Respondents completing the survey instrument while accessing the food pantries in Glens Falls and Indian Lake are assumed to be recorded in the Agency's Client database. Demographics reflected by the 853 families served during the year that ended 9/30/2021 are as follows:

Gender: 57% of the primary adults receiving services were female.

Age: 43% of the primary adults receiving services were between the ages of 25 and 44, 31% were 55 or older and 4% were 23 or younger.

Family Type: 19% of the families receiving services were two parent households, 15% were single parents and 37% were single.

Education: 71% of the primary adults receiving services only achieved a high school diploma or less.

Income Source: 9% of the families receiving services reported having no income, 25% received their income from employment or employment and other sources and 31% received their income from Social Security programs.

Income Level: 58% reported that their income was at or below 100% of poverty

Housing: Over 54% of families receiving services lived in rental units, 10% reported being homeless.

Race: 92% were white

COMPILED SURVEY RESULTS:

	2022		2017	
1. Which housing need is lacking?				
Quality and affordable	79	74%	156	56%
Renter/ Tenant rights and responsibilities education	6	6%	17	6%
Financial assistance with rent or security deposits	11	10%	48	17%
Energy efficient or handicap accessible housing	5	5%	19	7%
Adult emergency shelter	6	6%	38	14%
Total responses:	107			
2. Which Food & Nutrition need is lacking?				
Inadequate food in households	28	31%	82	31%
Healthy eating, cooking or budgeting education	44	49%	111	42%
Assistance with applying for SNAP (food stamps)	8	9%	32	12%
Food pantries	9	10%	40	15%
Total responses:	89			
3. What employment need is lacking?				
Education or training to obtain a better job	28	27%	58	21%
Full-time jobs with a living wage income	43	42%	137	49%
Resume and interview skills assistance	3	3%	18	6%
Financial assistance for tools and clothing	8	8%	22	8%
Safe/ affordable child care	21	20%	42	15%
Total responses:	103			
4. Which education need is lacking?				
GED (TASC)	25	30%	68	28%
Bachelor's degree in chosen field	7	9%	36	15%
Scholarship or grants	23	28%	63	26%
Computer or language classes	27	33%	73	30%
Total responses:	82			
5. Which health need is lacking?				
Affordable health or dental insurance	32	35%	74	29%
Doctors or Dentists that accept Medicaid	17	19%	66	25%
Financial assistance for medical or dental appointments	9	10%	26	10%
Financial assistance for prescriptions, glasses, hearing aids, etc.	6	7%	29	11%
Drug, alcohol or mental health treatment	11	12%	32	12%
Transportation to medical appointments	16	18%	32	12%
Total responses:	91			
6. Which transportation need is family priority?				
Expanded public transportation	42	46%	71	27%
Financial assistance to purchase a car or make repairs	17	19%	47	18%
Obtaining a driver's license	5	5%	10	4%
Having a dependable vehicle	20	22%	85	33%
Affordable car insurance	7	8%	46	18%
Total responses:	91			

7. Which financial/ legal issues are lacking?

Assistance with eviction/ utility/ repossession/ bankruptcy or foreclosure problems	36	43%	80	32%
Budgeting/ money management classes	31	37%	96	38%
Credit score education	4	5%	22	9%
Advocacy for delinquent credit cards	5	6%	18	7%
Fraud awareness	7	8%	36	14%
Total responses:	83		252	

8. Over the last two years, how has the Covid-19 pandemic most affected your family

Loss of income	20	22%
Loss of Housing	2	2%
Increase need for child care	5	6%
Illness/death of family member	13	15%
Lack of social/recreational activities	20	22%
Increase in alcohol/substance abuse	3	3%
Increase in anxiety/depression	26	29%
Total Responses	89	

9. In your opinion, how has Covid-19 most affected the local community

Small business closures	22	24%
Decrease in goods and services	15	16%
Increase in unemployment	11	12%
Increase in financial insecurity	15	16%
Disruption of childhood education	8	9%
Increase in mistrust/misinformation/partisanship	20	22%
Total Responses	91	

10. In your opinion, what would most help the local community return to pre-pandemic "normalcy"

Increase vaccinations	24	30%
Increased availability/affordability child/adult care	18	22%
Increase support for working families	18	22%
Increased employment opportunities/compensation	21	26%
Total Responses	81	

Warren County Respondents	76
Hamilton County Respondents	60
Respondents from other counties	13
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CONCLUSIONS/KEY FINDINGS:

Of all the areas covered in the survey instrument utilized, overwhelmingly the need for quality, affordable housing was most cited by respondents and increased from 56% in 2017 to 74% in 2022. This is clearly reflected in the Housing Affordability chart on page 5. Of this report. Although housing costs in Warren and Hamilton Counties are below the State's average, so are the wages paid leaving many low-income households unable to afford their basic needs. As reflected by the data charts on pages 5 and 6, wages, Supplemental Security Income, and SNAP benefits are all less than the New York State average while housing affordability for both Warren and Hamilton Counties is quite higher than the average wages paid.

As consistent with prior needs assessments conducted, many of the respondents, 42% cited the need for full time jobs that provide a living wage this percentage was down slightly from 2017 and may be reflective of the current increase in minimum wage and the ongoing labor shortage. Although the percentage of respondents citing the need for adequate food remained the same as in 2017, at 31%, almost half of the respondents cited the need for healthy eating, cooking or budgeting education. In the past, prior to the pandemic, Community Action has partnered with entities such as Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Regional Food Bank to provide such education. Hopefully, in the future, this is something that can once again be offered.

Education also appears to be a contributing factor. The agency's data base continues to reflect that the majority of residents seeking assistance, 71% only have up to a high school diploma. Although 28% cited the need for financial assistance in pursuing their educational goals only 9% cited the need to obtain a bachelor's degree. A larger percentage, 33% cited the need for computer or language classes and several respondents who selected "other" as their response, cited the lack of trade training and apprenticeships opportunities.

In regard to respondents' health, not only is the cost of health and dental insurance an issue but for those receiving medicaid or medicare, finding a practitioner who accepts these forms of insurance is also an issue in the area.

Transportation in a rural environment is always cited as a critical need. However, contrary to the assessment conducted in 2017, expansion of public transportation was cited significantly higher than the need for having a dependable vehicle, 46% to 22% reflectively.

The need for financial assistance with evictions, utilities, repossession, bankruptcy and foreclosure rose significantly from 2017 from 32 to 43%. This may be reflective of the now ending moratoriums on evictions, foreclosures and utility disconnections. With the moratoriums in place, the agency was not receiving a lot of requests for this type of assistance. That is now quickly changing. Although the need for substance abuse or mental health treatment remained the same at 12% from 2017 to 2022, 29% of respondents cited an increase in anxiety or depression since the onset of Covid-19. This being cited more than a loss of income or social activities attributed to the pandemic. On a positive note, in my opinion, 30% of respondents stated that increased vaccinations rates would most help to return the community to pre-pandemic "normalcy".