



Schenectady Community
Action Program

Creating Opportunity in Partnership

Schenectady County
Community Needs Assessment

November 2018



2018 Schenectady County Community Needs Assessment

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I. Introduction

The **Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP)** is Schenectady County's **Community Action Agency (CAA)**. Incorporated in 1965, with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status granted in 1966, SCAP was established to provide services and operate programs that address the causes and effects of poverty. **Community Action Agencies** are federally designated as the frontline resource for people living in poverty, providing direct services and support for low-income individuals and families. In addition to the direct services they provide, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) promote community economic development through partnerships and inter-agency collaborations.

Community Action Promise

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Regular assessment of needs and resources at the community level is the foundation of Community Action and a vital management tool that is used across the organization to set the course for agency resources, confirming the need for current programming, predicting future needs and guiding strategic initiatives. SCAP conducts an extensive Community Needs Assessment every three years, with annual updates in between. Results of the assessment are utilized to inform SCAP's **Community Action Plan**. The Community Needs Assessment is also utilized by multiple community-based organizations and groups, as well as local government entities, to guide program and planning efforts.



II. Executive Summary

This community needs assessment provides a comprehensive look at the indicators of need for Schenectady County and its low-income residents, as well as the strengths and resources in place to support these residents. It includes both quantitative and qualitative data. It provides an overview of SCAP and its programs and an overview of the area served. It incorporates detailed demographics, an economic profile, and the most up-to-date data available regarding poverty, employment, education, housing, homelessness, early childhood, health, nutrition, food insecurity, and other community and social service need indicators. This data, combined with an extensive community engagement process, as well as information regarding community resources, has provided the basis for a thorough analysis of community needs and identification of key findings. The resulting conclusions and recommendations will guide agency operations for the next three years. The assessment will be updated annually to reflect any significant changes or developments.

Needs

While SCAP has successfully provided supports for Schenectady County's low-income residents for over 50 years, expanding services and growing into an established community presence that supports 7,500 low-income residents annually, poverty in our community remains significant. 18,055 residents in Schenectady live below the federal poverty level, with 73% of these residents residing in the City of Schenectady; the city's poverty rate is 21.1%. Many more residents, while they may have incomes above the poverty rate, struggle to make ends meet. Significant is the fact that the methodology utilized to calculate the federal poverty level, developed in 1963 and still utilized today, is outdated. County-wide, over 20% of households make less than \$25,000 per year and over 30% make less than \$35,000. That percentage increases dramatically within the City of Schenectady where 32.2% of households make less than \$25,000 annually and 43.6% of households earn less than \$35,000 per year. Multiple barriers affect our target population's ability to achieve long-term stability, including but not limited to: housing, transportation, child care, health/mental health, education, training, employment and safety concerns. In order to increase our impact in addressing these barriers and reducing poverty, SCAP must continue to work towards integration of its programs and supports, as well as those of our community partners. These integrated services must be accessible. Residents must be aware of the availability of SCAP's and other community resources. To adequately meet individual needs, support must be flexible. Prevention is key. Assistance must last long enough to facilitate long-term results.

Strengths and Resources

Schenectady County providers engage in many strategic partnerships to provide support for the county's low-income individuals and families. SCAP leads partnership efforts in each of the agency's service areas. All of SCAP's program development activities feature collaboration. SCAP's resource navigation and case management support, which utilize the evidence-based **Family Development** model, have become an integral component of many community partnerships. Resource navigation and case management support is now provided at 10 satellite locations. Agency services and capacity continue to grow in all service areas. Schenectady County has a strong base of resources in place from which to build capacity for reducing poverty.



III. Key Findings: *Conditions and Causes of Poverty*

- There have not been statistically significant changes in Schenectady County's overall population over the past ten years. While the total population is not projected to change dramatically over the next decade, it is projected that there will be notable changes in the population age profile for persons 45-54 and 65-74 years of age. By 2020, it is projected that there will be a 19% decrease amongst the age cohort of 45-54 years (from 2010). Conversely, the 65-74 age cohort is expected to increase by 55%.
- The number of non-United States citizens residing in Schenectady County is over 5,500, with 64.1% residing in the City of Schenectady.
- The largest percentage of county residents living in poverty is in the City of Schenectady. However, poverty in the county's other communities has been increasing. While 73% of those in poverty reside in the city, this is down five percentage points from the 78% reported in SCAP's 2015 Community Needs Assessment. Additionally, while 79.5% of children in poverty are in the city, this is 12.5 percentage points less than the 92% reported in the 2015 assessment. NYS School Report Card data for all school districts show an increase in the percent of economically disadvantaged students. While the percent and number of economically disadvantaged students remains highest for the Schenectady City School District, this district experienced the smallest increase between 2013-2014 and 2016-2017.
- Many residents that are employed struggle to afford basic needs. According to the United Way's 2018 ALICE Report, over half of all households in Schenectady County are below the "ALICE" threshold; they are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.
- At 10%, the City of Schenectady's unemployment rate is higher than both the county (7.4%) and NYS rates (7.5%). Within the city, the highest unemployment rate, 21%, is in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood. County-wide, 39.5% of residents over the age of 25 have only a high school diploma or less. (2012–2016 American Community Survey)
- Homelessness continues to be significant. According to Schenectady County's 2018 Point in Time count, a total of 393 people (of which 38 were chronically homeless) in 268 households were either unsheltered (11 people), in emergency shelter (345 people) or in transitional housing (37 people). The total count of 393 is 119 over the 2017 Point in Time count of 274. The most recent HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) quarterly report for Schenectady County indicates services to 2,773 people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, a significant increase compared to 2,245 people one year earlier. 68% of adults and 21.4% of children served report at least one physical, emotional or other health condition, with 536 adults served reporting conditions that meet the criteria to be considered a disability.
- Lack of safe and affordable housing within the City of Schenectady continues to be a primary concern. Contributing factors include cost burden and substandard older housing stock.
- There are 9,128 children under age five living in Schenectady County, 2,073 of which live in poverty. There are 38 licensed child care centers in the county with a total of 3,094 slots for infant to school-age children. None of these centers offer evening, overnight or weekend care, with only three offering care for mildly/moderately ill children. There is a shortage of 247 slots needed in child care centers for children under three, a shortage of 152 slots needed in family child care homes for children under three, and a shortage of 3,193 slots needed in school-age programs. Families struggle with the cost of care, whether they receive a subsidy or not. Lack of child care options leads to employee absence. Low-income families need access to quality early childhood development services.



- The Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community has identified *Preventing Chronic Disease* and *Promoting Mental Health & Preventing Substance Abuse* as priority areas of need requiring focus through 2018.
- In a total of nine focus groups conducted as part of SCAP’s assessment process, residents and stakeholders identified the following as primary needs: Affordable & Safe Housing, Jobs that Pay a “Livable” Wage, Child Care (including on call, 2nd and 3rd shifts), Affordable/Accessible Youth Programs, Mental Health Support, Transportation, Peer Support, Improved Neighborhood Safety, Parent Education Support, and Domestic Violence Support. Customer needs are multifaceted. While customers of SCAP are aware that resources exist, accessibility and awareness of what services and supports are available were identified as key areas in need of improvement.
- The top three most pressing needs identified by 165 customers/community members surveyed were: Safe & Affordable Housing (50% identified as top need), Child Care Services (9% identified as top need) and Youth Programming (7% identified as top need). The five areas of need identified most as one of the top three most pressing needs were: Safe & Affordable Housing, Education Services, Nutrition/Hunger Services, Transportation Services and Child Care Services. The top three most pressing needs identified by 59 staff completing needs assessment surveys were: Safe, Affordable Housing (70% identified as top need), Child Care (29% identified as top need) and Transportation (23% identified as top need).

IV. **Conclusions & Recommendations:** *Summary Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data*

- SCAP should monitor the predicted increase in the population group ages 65 – 74 to identify and help ensure any associated increases in need are met.
- SCAP should consider opportunities to support Schenectady County’s immigrant population.
- Resource development and expansion efforts should consider poverty increases in areas outside the City of Schenectady.
- Employment services remain essential and should focus on training and education needed for a variety of in-demand career pathways that offer attainment of a livable wage.
- Services and supports to prevent homelessness need to focus on meeting the multifaceted, complex needs of this population. Ongoing support to prevent future crises is critical.
- SCAP should continue working with community partners to address the priority need for safe and affordable housing.
- Early learning programs throughout the county must work collaboratively to provide comprehensive early childhood development and child care support that adequately meets the needs of all of the area’s most vulnerable families.
- Continued collaboration with the Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community will contribute to health and quality of life outcomes for low-income individuals and families.
- Services and supports must be integrated and accessible to successfully address the multifaceted needs of low-income families. A two-generation, whole family approach to service provision offers the best chance for long-term stability. Services must be flexible; this should be a primary consideration of resource development efforts.
- SCAP should focus on creating more awareness of services and resources available for the agency’s target low-income population.



V. Strategic Planning

In November of 2017, SCAP's Board of Directors approved a new five-year **Strategic Plan** to guide the work of the agency through the year 2022. This plan represents the culmination of over a year of analysis and development. This analysis and development incorporated a thorough review of SCAP's mission and vision statements, which resulted in the following revised statements:

Mission:

In partnership with the community, SCAP develops and implements lasting solutions for people of all ages to move out of poverty.

Vision:

SCAP envisions a community without poverty where everyone's health, wellness and safety is a priority and where everyone:

- has safe and affordable housing;
- has quality education and learning experiences;
- seeking employment can earn a livable wage;
- is treated with dignity and respect; and
- feels invested in and connected to the community.

SCAP's 2017 – 2022 Strategic Plan incorporates goals in **five focus areas**:

1. Integration
2. Community Engagement
3. Service Expansion/Sustainability
4. Assessment, Evaluation & Quality Improvement
5. Facilities/Space

Following approval of the plan, SCAP's Executive Team developed a **Work Plan** to direct efforts to achieve identified goals. The Work Plan incorporates the systematic utilization of this community assessment (and subsequent updates) to inform SCAP's work.

VI. Methodology

The qualitative and quantitative data collected for this 2018 Community Needs Assessment represents the most current and relevant information available related to the people and communities of Schenectady County. Data sources utilized to inform the assessment include:

- **Qualitative:** Surveys (250) and focus groups (nine) conducted for this assessment, SCAP's Strategic Plan (2017-2022) Partner Survey, SCAP Early Learning 2017-18 Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Surveys, SCAP Career Readiness Class Surveys (from two 2018 sessions), Formerly Homeless People Maintaining Housing Evaluation (2018), Homeless Services Planning Board (HSPB) Strategic Plan (2018), 2017 City of Schenectady Community Needs Assessment (Surveys and Roundtables), and 2017 Schenectady County Healthy and Equitable Food Action Plan (Food Pantry Client Survey).
- **Quantitative:** Local, statewide and national data sources, including: United States Census Bureau, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), National Low Income Housing Coalition, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Living Wage Calculator, County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation), New York State Department of Education, New York State Department of Labor (DOL), New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), New York State Division of Criminal and Justice Services (DCJS), New York State Department of Health (DOH), New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS), New York State Kids' Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse, New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), Capital District Child Care Council, Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC), Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC), Healthy Capital District Initiative (HCDI) Community Health Needs Assessment, 2018 ALICE Report, Schenectady County, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community, City of Schenectady, Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority (SMHA), Schenectady City School District (SCSD) and SCAP's centralized data collection and program management system (CAP60).

Key Sector Information

SCAP continually utilizes information from key sectors of the community to assess needs and resources. Key sectors that informed this assessment process include:

- **Community-based Organizations/Entities/Coalitions:** Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board, Supportive Housing Solutions Advisory Council, Capital District Child Care Council, Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community, Healthy Capital District Initiative, YWCA Northeastern NY, and United Way of the Greater Capital Region.
- **Faith-based Organizations:** Community Crisis Network (CCN) faith-based partners, including Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM), City Mission, Catholic Charities, and area congregations.
- **Private Sector:** SCAP's Board of Directors, including private sector representatives, participated in a focus group discussion to inform this assessment process. The City of Schenectady's 2017 Needs Assessment process provided access to private sector input (*through survey and roundtable information; SCAP also participated in the roundtable process*). Private sector early childhood information is detailed in the Capital District Child Care Council's 2017 Picture of Child Care in the Capital Region.
- **Public Sector:** SCAP's Board of Directors, including public sector representatives, participated in a focus group discussion to inform this assessment process. Information provided by both the City and County of Schenectady (*both qualitative and quantitative*) informed multiple areas of this assessment.
- **Educational Institutions:** New York State Department of Education and Schenectady City School District.



VII. Schenectady Community Action Program Overview

SCAP serves the community and its residents in three program areas:

- **Early Learning:** Head Start, Pre-K and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships for children from birth to age five. These early learning programs provide comprehensive education, special needs, health, nutrition, mental health, parent engagement and family development services for low-income children and families in Schenectady County. SCAP also collaborates with the Albany Community Action Partnership to facilitate Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership services in Albany County.
- **Employment Services:** Assessment of skills and needs, career readiness training/soft skills development, educational and occupational training, goal planning, career/therapeutic counseling, reentry supports and job placement/retention supports. This range of services is designed to support career pathways that assist individuals and families achieve long-term economic self-reliance. In addition to the primary service area of Schenectady County, SCAP Employment Services are provided in neighboring Fulton and Montgomery Counties. SCAP offers its full range of career readiness supports in these counties, and also leads an Employer Resource Network (ERN) in the Mohawk Valley Region.
- **Housing & Community Services:** Community Crisis Network (CCN)/Emergency Services, Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-housing, Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing, Community Resource Navigation, Supportive Case Management and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance. Community Resource Navigation and Supportive Case Management are provided through SCAP's primary resource center location at 913 Albany Street as well as multiple satellite locations throughout the community. Many customers come into SCAP with an emergency need and are first assisted through the CCN's Emergency Fund and/or SCAP's Homeless Prevention or Rapid Re-housing programs. Longer-term case management support helps households develop skills and strategies to effectively address and manage multiple family needs, permanently stabilize their living conditions and work towards greater self-reliance.

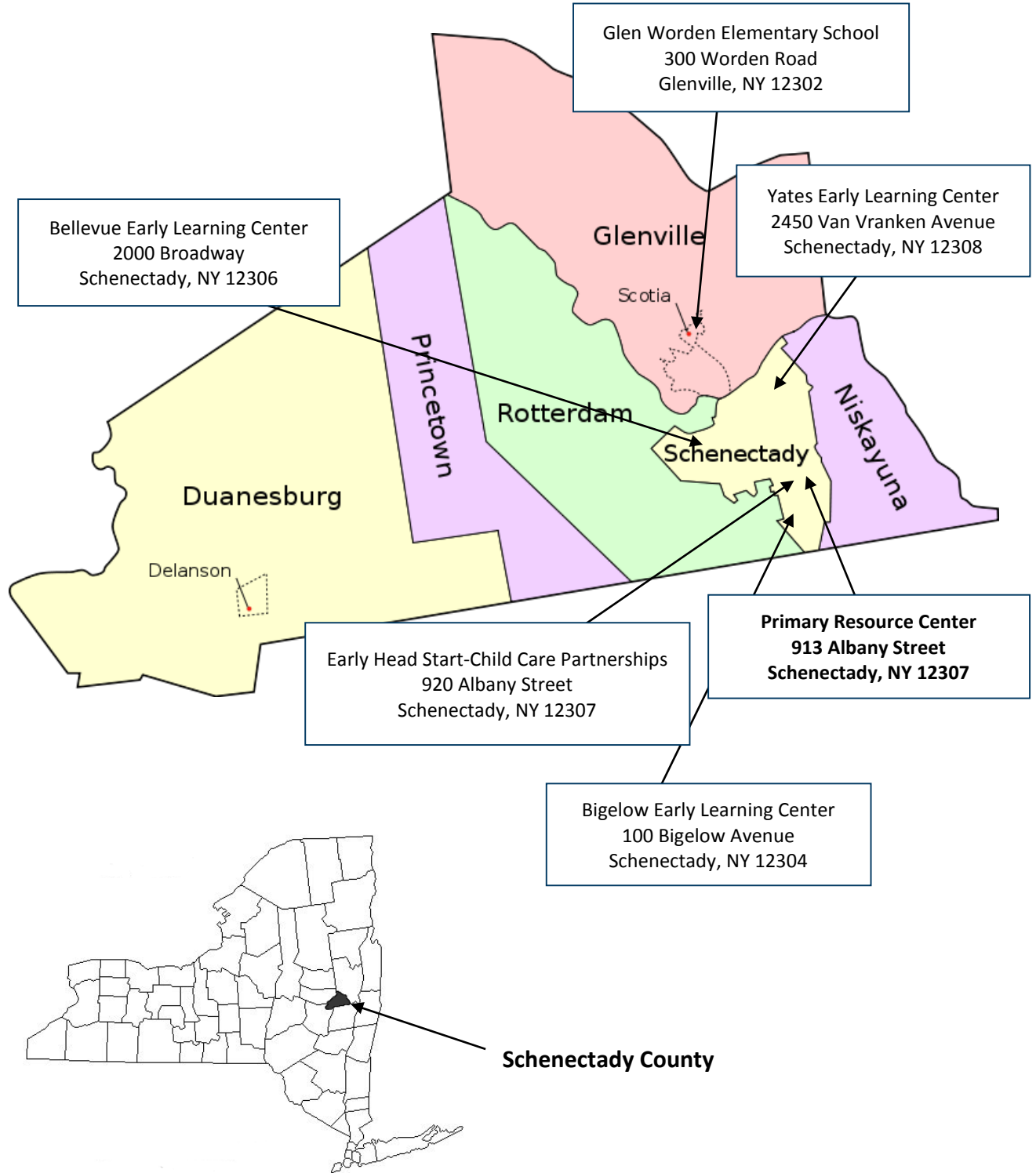
SCAP is governed by a tripartite Board of Directors that includes low-income representatives, business and community leaders, and local elected officials. This ensures SCAP is representative of its diverse community and meets its obligation to the community and low-income population it serves. The agency's data and program management system, CAP60, is a confidential, centralized, fully integrated web-based data collection and assessment system.

Services are provided utilizing the evidence-based **Family Development** model, an empowerment, strengths-based approach to working with families. SCAP also utilizes the evidence-based practice of **Trauma Informed Care**. This treatment framework involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma.

SCAP maintains several community partnerships to ensure comprehensive resources for customers, and is engaged in numerous key community initiatives.

Schenectady County

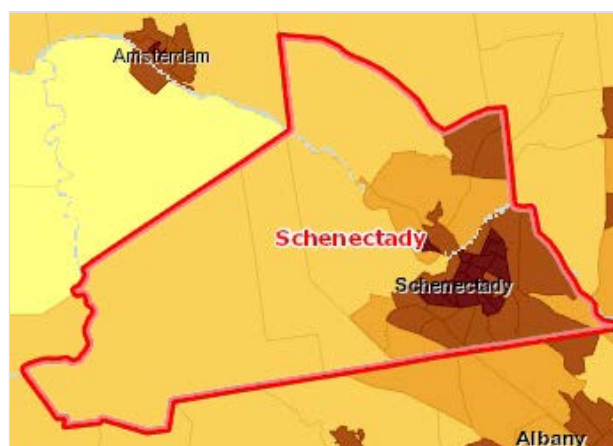
SCAP Primary Resource Center & Early Learning Locations



VIII. Community Overview

SCAP's primary service area of **Schenectady County** is geographically one of the smallest counties in New York State. It is the smallest most densely populated county in the eight county area covered by the Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC). It is more racially/ethnically diverse and impoverished, with a greater percentage of disabled individuals and less high school attainment than the other six Capital Region counties served by the Healthy Capital District Initiative (*HCDI Community Health Needs Assessment*). Although the smallest county in size in the eight county CREDC area, Schenectady County contains the region's second largest city. As estimated by the Census Bureau's 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS), the City of Schenectady is populated by 65,554 people. There are eight municipalities in Schenectady County, one city, five towns and two villages: City of Schenectady; Towns of Duaneburg, Glenville, Niskayuna, Princetown and Rotterdam; and Villages of Delanson and Scotia:

- **Duanesburg:** The western-most town in the county, Duanesburg includes 73.5 square miles. It is bordered by Montgomery County in the north, Schoharie County in the west and southwest, and Albany County in the south. The **Village of Delanson** is located in the town.
- **Glenville:** Located north of the Mohawk River, the Town of Glenville covers an area of 50.9 square miles and includes the **Village of Scotia**.
- **Niskayuna:** At 15.1 square miles, Niskayuna is geographically the smallest town in Schenectady County. It is located in the southeastern part of the county, east of the City of Schenectady, and is the eastern-most town in the county.
- **Princetown:** Located in the central part of the county, west of the City of Schenectady, Princetown is bordered by Montgomery County to the north and Albany County to the south.
- **Rotterdam:** Also located in the central part of Schenectady County, bordering the City of Schenectady, Rotterdam covers 36.5 square miles. The Mohawk River defines the northeast town line and the New York State Thruway passes through the town.
- **City of Schenectady:** The county seat, the City of Schenectady covers 11 square miles. The most densely populated municipality in the county, it includes the following neighborhoods: Bellevue, Central State Street, Downtown, Eastern Ave, Hamilton Hill & Vale, Mont Pleasant, Northside, Stockade, Union Street, and Woodlawn.



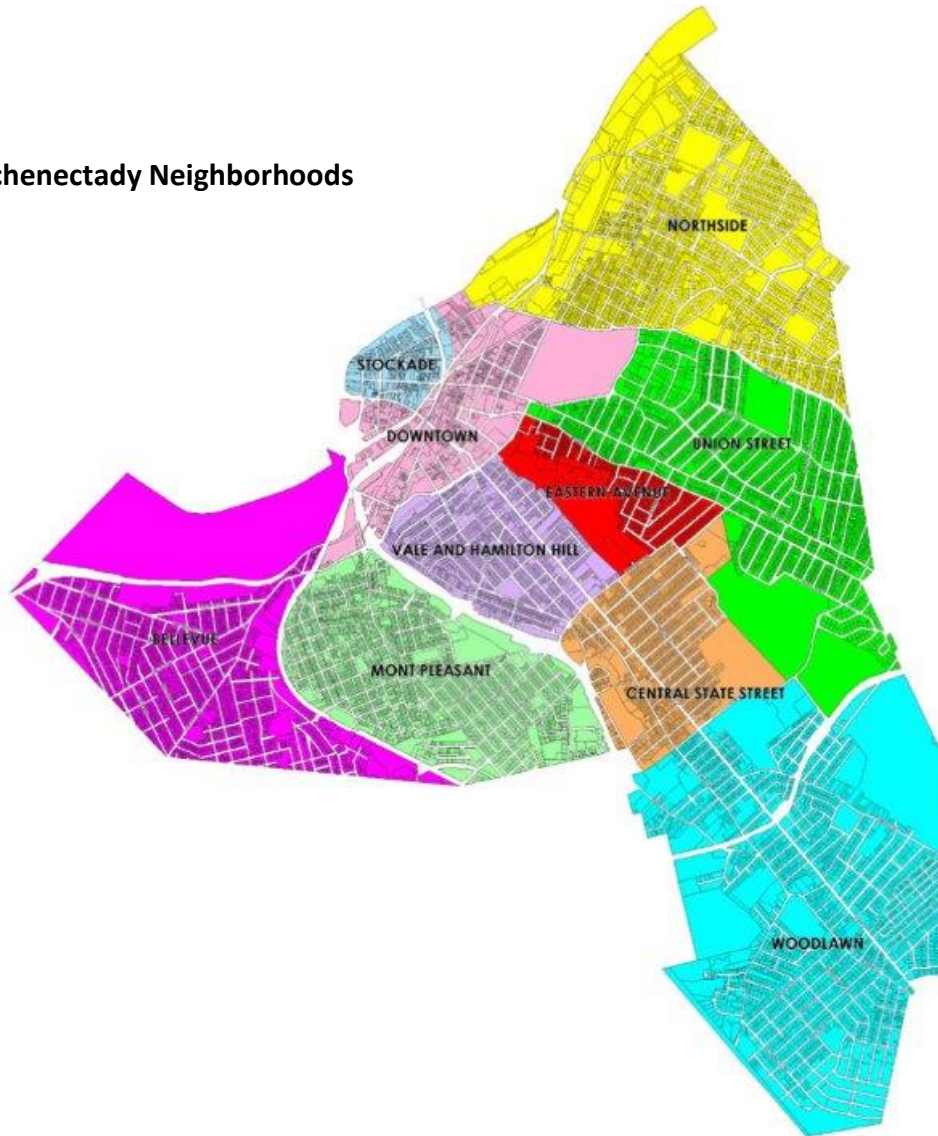
Schenectady County Population Density

Persons per square mile
by Census Tract

2012-2016 American Community Survey

- Over 5,000
- 1,001 – 5,000
- 501 – 1,000
- 51 – 500
- Under 51

City of Schenectady Neighborhoods



Immigration: The number of non-United States citizens residing in Schenectady County is just over 5,500, with 64.1% residing in the City of Schenectady. Of note is that over 85% of United States citizens born in Puerto Rico or United States island areas live in the City of Schenectady.

Nativity and Citizenship Status

	Schenectady County	City of Schenectady
Total Population	154,845	65,554
US Citizen, born in the US	136,507	53,882
US Citizen, born in Puerto Rico or US Island Areas	1,530	1,340
US Citizen, born abroad of American Parent(s)	986	359
US citizen by naturalization	10,321	6,449
Not a US Citizen	5,501	3,524

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

IX. Demographics

Schenectady County is populated by **154,845** people, with approximately 42% of its residents living in the City of Schenectady. The towns of Glenville and Rotterdam are the most populated municipalities outside of the city. The total population of the county reported in the 2000 Census was 146,555. As of the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, the population of 154,845 represented an increase of 8,290 people (5.66% increase). There have not been statistically significant changes in population since the 2007-2011 American Community Survey.

Total Population

Municipality	ACS 2007-2011	ACS 2008-2012	ACS 2009-2013	ACS 2010-2014	ACS 2011-2015	ACS 2012-2016
Schenectady County	153,935	154,466	154,821	155,178	154,796	154,845
City of Schenectady	65,702	65,921	65,990	66,055	65,735	65,554
Duanesburg	6,006	5,889	6,012	6,218	6,280	6,407
Village of Delanson	280	352	373	367	390	379
Glenville	29,352	29,448	29,504	29,560	29,489	29,490
Village of Scotia	7,725	7,720	7,723	7,742	7,744	7,732
Niskayuna	21,646	21,784	21,895	22,022	22,050	22,177
Princetown	2,209	2,370	2,281	2,124	2,068	1,953
Rotterdam	29,020	29,054	29,139	29,199	29,174	29,264

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey Selected Characteristics of Total Population, Table S0601

Age Distribution: According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, 48.7% of Schenectady County's population are male and 51.3% are female. The lowest median age occurs in the City of Schenectady and Village of Delanson. The highest median age occurs in Princetown, followed by the Towns of Glenville and Niskayuna. While the City of Schenectady continues to have the greatest number of individuals in each age category, municipalities with the highest percentage of their total population by age category varies. The three highest percentages in each category are found in the following municipalities (not including Villages of Delanson and Scotia):

- **Under 5 years:** Niskayuna (6.9%), City of Schenectady (6.3%) and Rotterdam (6.0%)
- **5-17 years:** Niskayuna (18.4%), Duanesburg (17.4%) and Rotterdam (16.3%)
- **18-64 years:** Duanesburg (67.9%), City of Schenectady (65.7%) and Princetown (61.4%)
- **64 years and above:** Princetown (22.5%), Glenville (18.8%) and Niskayuna (18.6%)

Age cohort projections by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission remain the same as noted in SCAP's 2015 Community Needs Assessment. The total population is not projected to change dramatically over the next decade; however, it is projected there will be notable changes in the population age profile for persons 45-54 and 65-74 years of age. By 2020, it is projected that there will be a 19% decrease amongst the age cohort of 45-54 years of age (from 2010). Conversely, the 65-74 age cohort is expected to increase by 55%.

Age Distribution and Percent of Total Population

Municipality	Under 5 Years	% of Total	5 – 17 Years	% of Total	18 – 64 Years	% of Total	65 Years and Above	% of Total	Median Age (Years)
Schenectady County	9,082	5.9%	24,630	16.0%	95,901	62.3%	24,322	15.8%	39.9
City of Schenectady	4,139	6.3%	9,855	15.0%	43,166	65.7%	8,607	13.1%	35.8
Duanesburg	222	3.7%	1,045	17.4%	4,078	67.9%	655	10.9%	39.7
Village of Delanson	32	11.3%	50	17.7%	160	57.3%	38	13.7%	35.8
Glenville	1,497	5.1%	4,755	16.2%	17,582	59.9%	5,518	18.8%	43.7
Village of Scotia	417	5.4%	1,360	17.6%	4,758	61.6%	1,190	15.4%	37.8
Niskayuna	1,494	6.9%	3,983	18.4%	12,143	56.1%	4,026	18.6%	43.5
Princetown	38	1.7%	318	14.4%	1,356	61.4%	497	22.5%	48.6
Rotterdam	1,741	6.0%	4,730	16.3%	17,615	60.7%	4,934	17.0%	42.0

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey Selected Characteristics of Total Population, Table S0601

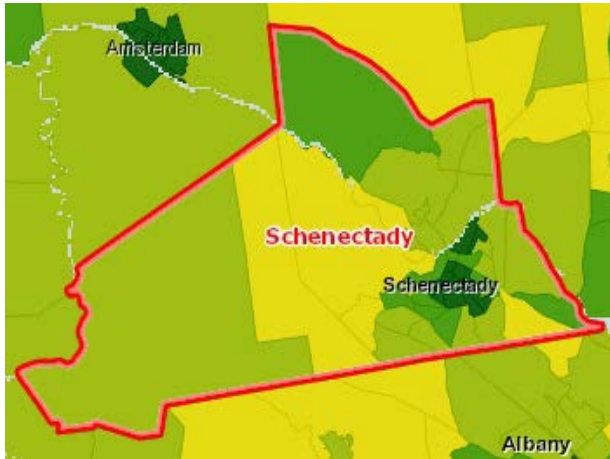
Race and Ethnicity: The City of Schenectady remains a diverse community, while Schenectady County residents outside the city continue to identify primarily as White. The municipality with the most diversity outside the City of Schenectady is Niskayuna.

Race and Ethnicity

(Race alone or in combination with one or more other races)

Municipality	White		Black / African American		Asian		Some Other Race		Hispanic/ Latino (any race)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Schenectady County	125,094	80.8%	18,706	12.1%	8,333	5.4%	8,872	5.8%	10,165	6.6%
City of Schenectady	41,667	63.6%	15,680	23.9%	4,824	7.4%	7,601	11.6%	6,993	10.7%
Duanesburg	6,183	96.5%	41	.6%	191	3.0%	135	2.1%	195	3.0%
Village of Delanson	374	98.7%	0	0%	5	1.3%	0	0%	11	2.9%
Glenville	28,333	96.1%	736	2.5%	565	1.9%	310	1.1%	1,025	3.5%
Village of Scotia	7,390	95.6%	322	4.2%	34	.4%	98	1.3%	275	3.6%
Niskayuna	19,224	86.7%	1,125	5.1%	2,167	9.8%	309	10.6%	773	3.5%
Princetown	1,946	99.6%	7	.4%	0	0%	0	0%	29	1.5%
Rotterdam	27,741	94.8%	1,117	3.8%	586	2.0%	517	1.7%	1,150	3.9%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates, Table DP-05



Schenectady County Minority Population (Non-White)

by Census Tract

2012-2016 American Community Survey

- Over 10.0%
- 5.1 – 10%
- 2.1 – 5%
- Under 2.1%
- No Hispanic Population Reported

Veterans: There are 8,874 Veterans living in Schenectady County, representing 7.3% of the civilian population over the age of 18. Veterans with disabilities constitute 27.9% of the Veteran population. (2012-2016 American Community Survey)

X. Economic Profile

Schenectady County’s median household income of \$59,958 is below the New York State median income of \$60,741. There is significant variation in median incomes across municipalities within the county; the municipality with the highest median income is Niskayuna (\$99,394), and the municipality with the lowest median income is the City of Schenectady (\$41,243).

Median Household Income by Municipality

Municipality	Median Income
Schenectady County	\$59,959
City of Schenectady	\$41,243
Duanesburg	\$82,123
Glenville	\$71,575
Niskayuna	\$99,394
Princetown	\$85,833
Rotterdam	\$66,281

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

The City of Schenectady’s median income is far above what its residents with low-income earn. People with low-income struggle to meet basic needs such as clothing, food and shelter. For example, a family of four, supported by one full-time minimum wage earner (at New York State’s minimum wage, which will increase to \$11.10/hour December 31, 2018), earns just \$23,088 annually, which is below the federal poverty level of \$25,100 for a family of this size.

Countywide, over 20% of households make less than \$25,000 per year and over 30% make less than \$35,000. These percentages increase dramatically within the City of Schenectady where 32.2% of

households make less than \$25,000 annually and 43.6% of households earn less than \$35,000 per year. After the City of Schenectady, communities with the highest percent of households with income less than \$25,000 per year are the Village of Scotia (24%), Town of Glenville (15.1%) and Town of Rotterdam (13.9%).

Household Income by Municipality

	Less than \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$149,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200K+
New York State	7.7%	5.1%	9.5%	8.7%	11.5%	16.2%	11.9%	14.6%	6.7%	8.0%
Schenectady County	5.7%	5.8%	9.5%	8.9%	12.5%	18.3%	14.7%	15.4%	5.4%	3.8%
City of Schenectady	8.7%	9.6%	13.9%	11.4%	15.3%	17.7%	11.3%	8.6%	2.2%	1.3%
Duanesburg	1.5%	6.0%	4.7%	4.1%	7.4%	18.8%	21.0%	27.6%	7.4%	1.5%
Village of Delanson	0.8%	0.8%	5.6%	7.2%	12.8%	22.4%	20.0%	23.2%	5.6%	1.6%
Glenville	4.8%	3.6%	6.7%	7.1%	11.8%	18.7%	16.8%	19.7%	7.0%	3.8%
Village of Scotia	8.2%	7.0%	8.8%	6.1%	15.0%	19.0%	16.2%	12.6%	6.7%	0.4%
Niskayuna	2.9%	1.9%	3.5%	4.7%	7.7%	15.3%	14.5%	23.9%	12.2%	13.4%
Princetown	5.1%	.7%	4.1%	6.3%	10.6%	14.8%	20.3%	22.1%	8.6%	7.5%
Rotterdam	2.9%	2.6%	8.4%	9.4%	11.8%	21.3%	18.6%	17.0%	5.4%	2.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics, Table DP-03

Regional Economic Development Councils

In 2011, Governor Cuomo established 10 Regional Councils to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. The Councils are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. Through New York State's annual **Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)** process, which incorporates review by the Regional Councils, applicants are considered for multiple funding sources for economic development projects through submission of one application. The **Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC)** represents eight counties: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren and Washington counties.

CREDC Vision

"To foster an ecosystem in which the private sector, academia, and government work in harmony to stimulate economic growth. Locally collaborative. Globally competitive. Economically vibrant."

Schenectady County's Economic Development and Planning Department provides advice and technical assistance to the County Manager, the Schenectady County Legislature, and municipal governments. As identified in the City of Schenectady's 2017 Needs Assessment, in addition to the CREDC, economic development resources for the city (many of which provide county-wide support) include: City of Schenectady Department of Development, Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority, Capital



Region Chamber, Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region, Capital Region Land Bank, Get Your Business Online, Schenectady Smart City Advisory Commission, and Cornell University Rust to Green Urban Studio.

Opportunity Zone Community Development Program

New York State participates in the federal Opportunity Zone community development program, offered through the **Tax Cuts and Job Acts of 2017**. An Opportunity Zone is an economically-distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Localities qualify as Opportunity Zones if they have been nominated for that designation by the state and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the United States Treasury via delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Service. Based on analyses by Empire State Development (ESD), New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), New York State Department of State (DOS) and the state's Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs), New York State recommended 514 census tracts to the United States Department of the Treasury for designation as Opportunity Zones. In Schenectady County, three census tracts have been designated as Opportunity Zone areas; all are within the City of Schenectady: 202, 210.01 and 335.

XI. Poverty

The highest level of poverty in Schenectady County is found in the City of Schenectady. According to the 2012-2016 ACS Five-Year Estimates, the percent of people living below the poverty level in New York State is 15.5%. While this rate is higher than the rate of 12.0% reported for Schenectady County residents, both rates are significantly lower than the 21.1% of residents in the City of Schenectady that live below the poverty level. Of all Schenectady County residents living below the poverty level, 73% reside in the City of Schenectady. This is five percentage points less than 78% reported in SCAP's 2015 Community Needs Assessment, indicating an increased share of impoverished residents living in other Schenectady County communities.

Percent below Poverty Level by Municipality

Municipality	Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Schenectady County	18,055	12.0%
City of Schenectady	13,219	21.1%
Duanesburg	327	5.1%
Village of Delanson	16	4.2%
Glenville	1,507	5.2%
Village of Scotia	592	7.7%
Niskayuna	1,184	5.4%
Princetown	75	3.9%
Rotterdam	1,743	6.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Age

When compared to Schenectady County's other municipalities, the City of Schenectady has the largest percentage of individuals living in poverty in all age categories: children under 18 years (38.3%), adults ages 18 to 64 (17.6%) and residents 65 and over (10.2%). The municipalities with the highest percentage of total population in each age category living in poverty are:

- **Under 18 years:** City of Schenectady (38.3%), Rotterdam (9.5%) and Duanesburg & Niskayuna (both at 5.9%)
- **18 to 64 years:** City of Schenectady (17.6%), Niskayuna (5.6%) and Glenville (5.5%)
- **65 and over:** City of Schenectady (10.2%), Duanesburg (8.5%) and Princetown (5.2%)

Poverty by Age

Municipality	Under 18 years			18 to 64			65 and Over		
	Total	# Below Poverty Level	% In Poverty	Total	# Below Poverty Level	% In Poverty	Total	# Below Poverty Level	% In Poverty
Schenectady County	33,523	6,562	19.6%	94,171	9,997	10.6%	23,205	1,496	6.4%
City of Schenectady	13,617	5,214	38.3%	40,771	7,165	17.6%	8,206	840	10.2%
Duanesburg	1,354	80	5.9%	4,355	188	4.3%	698	59	8.5%
Glenville	6,213	322	5.2%	17,656	970	5.5%	5,082	215	4.2%
Niskayuna	5,599	331	5.9%	12,441	691	5.6%	3,971	162	4.1%
Princetown	307	5	1.6%	1,200	47	3.9%	439	23	5.2%
Rotterdam	6,433	610	9.5%	17,748	936	5.3%	4,809	197	4.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Low-income Infants, Toddlers, and Preschool Age Children

The table below utilizes 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) poverty data to estimate the number of birth to two, and three- and four-year old children in Schenectady County living in poverty. There are 9,128 children under age five in the county, 2,073 of which live in poverty. The highest concentration of children under age five in poverty, 87.4%, is found in the City of Schenectady. This percentage, however, is nearly five percentage points lower than the 92% reported in SCAP's 2015 Community Needs Assessment (utilizing ACS data).

Children Under Age Five in Poverty

Municipality	Total # of Children		% < 5 in Poverty	Estimated # in Poverty	
	0-2 years	3 & 4 years		0-2 years	3 & 4 years
City of Schenectady	2,564	1,518	44.4%	1,138	674
Town of Duanesburg	109	130	--	--	--
Town of Glenville	869	637	7.1%	62	45
Town of Niskayuna	922	599	3.2%	30	19
Town of Princetown	9	24	--	--	--
Town of Rotterdam	988	759	6.0%	59	46
Total:	5,461	3,667	-----	1,289	784

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Gender

There are 2,169 more females than males in Schenectady County living in poverty:

Poverty by Gender

	Male	Female
Total in Poverty	7,943	10,112
% of Total	10.83%	13.04%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Single Parent Families: Poverty rates for single parent female head of household families are higher than those for married couple families; 39.3% of Schenectady County’s single parent female head of household families with related children under 18 years old live in poverty. This number increases to 52.4% in the City of Schenectady.

Percentage of Families Living in Poverty by Type and Municipality

Municipality	All Families	% in poverty	With Related Children < 18	% in poverty	Married Couple Families	% in poverty	With Related Children < 18	% in poverty	Families w/Female Head of Household	% in poverty	With Related Children < 18	% in poverty
Schenectady County	33,239	7.9%	14,532	14.5%	25,211	2.8%	9,629	4.2%	6,094	27.4%	3,715	39.3%
City of Schenectady	11,811	16.2%	5,435	29.5%	7,504	5.8%	2,673	11.4%	3,232	37.7%	2,071	52.4%
Duanesburg	1,501	3.1%	659	4.9%	1,287	3.7%	462	6.9%	116	--	114	--
Glenville	7,064	2.4%	2,844	4.3%	5,853	.6%	2,171	.4%	1,014	13.2%	587	19.6%
Niskayuna	5,526	3.4%	2,630	4.8%	4,865	1.9%	2,245	1.7%	499	19.4%	291	29.9%
Princetown	511	3.3%	152	--	470	2.1%	138	--	31	22.6%	9	--
Rotterdam	6,826	4.5%	2,812	8.0%	5,232	1.4%	1,940	1.1%	1,202	17.1%	643	26.7%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Race and Ethnicity

At 70.59%, the race in Schenectady County with the highest poverty rate is Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, followed by the Black/African American population at 30.25%. Compared to less than 11% of the non-Hispanic population living in poverty, over 32% of Schenectady County’s Hispanic population lives in poverty.

Schenectady County Poverty by Race: Percent in Poverty

	White	Black/African American	Native American/ Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Multiple Races
% in Poverty	8.84%	30.25%	26.22%	9.45%	70.59%	25.03%	17.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Poverty by Ethnicity Alone

Total Population Hispanic/Latino in Poverty	Total Population Not Hispanic/Latino in Poverty	Percent Hispanic/Latino Population in Poverty	Percent Not Hispanic/Latino Population in Poverty
3,194	14,858	32.36%	10.54%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

As highlighted below, minority populations continue to disproportionately live in the City of Schenectady. The poverty rate for Black/African Americans in the City of Schenectady is 34.0%, over twice as high as the rate of 15.8% for people who identify as White. At 41.6%, the poverty rate for residents in the City of Schenectady who identify as Hispanic is even higher.

Poverty Status in the Past 12 months, Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin

Area	White			Black/African American		
	Total	# in Poverty	%	Total	# in Poverty	%
New York State	12,350,725	1,387,004	11.2%	2,961,512	678,013	22.9%
Schenectady County	117,712	10,402	8.8%	15,094	4,566	30.3%
City of Schenectady	36,846	5,826	15.8%	13,131	4,470	34.0%
Duanesburg	6,096	326	5.3%	14	1	7.1%
Village of Delanson	374	16	4.3%	0	0	0%
Glenville	27,399	1,420	5.2%	474	18	3.8%
Village of Scotia	7,278	574	7.9%	254	1	.4%
Niskayuna	18,533	1,099	5.9%	816	32	3.9%
Princetown	1,939	68	3.5%	7	7	100%
Rotterdam	26,899	1,663	6.2%	652	38	5.8%
Area	Hispanic/Latino			Two or more races		
	Total	# in Poverty	%	Total	# in Poverty	%
New York State	3,582,326	910,625	25.4%	558,200	118,209	21.2%
Schenectady County	9,879	3,197	32.4%	5,587	972	17.4%
City of Schenectady	6,739	2,804	41.6%	3,763	944	25.1%
Duanesburg	195	0	0%	143	0	0%
Village of Delanson	11	0	0%	0	0	0%
Glenville	1,019	66	6.5%	429	15	3.5%
Village of Scotia	275	2	.7%	112	0	0%
Niskayuna	763	257	33.7%	620	13	2.1%
Princetown	29	0	0%	0	0	0%
Rotterdam	1,134	70	6.2%	632	0	0%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Educational Attainment and Poverty: The largest number and highest percent of Schenectady County residents with less education living in poverty reside in the City of Schenectady.

Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, Educational Attainment (Population 25 Years and Over)

Area	Less than High School Graduate			High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	%	Total	Below Poverty Level	%
New York State	1,838,922	540,128	29.4%	3,488,203	525,328	15.1%
Schenectady County	10,034	1,973	19.7%	30,847	3,642	11.8%
City of Schenectady	6,893	1,707	24.8%	14,800	2,420	16.4%
Duanesburg	280	16	5.7%	1,327	59	4.4%
Village of Delanson	3	0	0%	73	13	17.8%
Glenville	873	42	4.8%	5,112	457	8.9%
Village of Scotia	206	4	1.9%	1,465	199	13.6%
Niskayuna	475	103	21.7%	2,456	212	8.6%
Princetown	137	20	14.6%	451	37	8.2%
Rotterdam	1,376	85	6.2%	6,701	457	6.8%
Area	Some College, Associate's Degree			Bachelor's Degree or Higher		
	Total	Below Poverty Level	%	Total	Below Poverty Level	%
New York State	3,307,293	359,830	10.9%	4,668,594	244,382	5.2%
Schenectady County	31,564	3,040	9.6%	32,279	1,072	3.3%
City of Schenectady	12,350	2,007	16.3%	9,123	603	6.6%
Duanesburg	1,498	147	9.8%	1,178	0	0%
Village of Delanson	105	1	1.0%	65	0	0%
Glenville	7,080	351	5.0%	7,342	150	2.0%
Village of Scotia	1,953	87	4.5%	1,671	66	3.9%
Niskayuna	3,118	289	9.3%	8,938	204	2.3%
Princetown	375	0	0%	586	6	1.0%
Rotterdam	7,143	246	3.4%	5,112	109	2.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Income and Disabilities: Individuals with disabilities are more likely to have low incomes. The differential in median income for residents with disabilities vs. those who are not disabled is substantial.

Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months by Disability Status by Gender for the Civilian Non-institutionalized Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings

	New York	Schenectady County
Median Earnings	\$35,440	\$31,686
With a disability	\$23,171	\$20,682
Male	\$26,235	\$21,486
Female	\$20,811	\$18,047
Without a disability	\$35,979	\$32,302
Male	\$41,063	\$38,261
Female	\$31,306	\$28,489

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

SSI (Supplemental Security Income): While many individuals with disabilities can support themselves through work, many cannot and must rely on public support. As of August 2018, **5,875** individuals in Schenectady County were receiving SSI. Maximum SSI benefit amounts for 2018, which include both federal and state SSI benefits, are shown below (not all recipients receive maximum benefit amount).

Maximum Monthly SSI Payments effective January 1, 2018

Category	Maximum
Individual Living Alone	\$837
Individual Living with Others (paying own expenses)	\$773
Couple Living Alone	\$1,229
Couple Living with Others (paying own expenses)	\$1,171
Couple living with Others (receiving some amount of free or subsidized food & shelter)	\$796

Source: NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (**SOAR**) is a model for assisting individuals that are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder, or other physical disability to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). SOAR seeks to maximize income supports through benefits and employment in order to stabilize housing and enhance recovery. SCAP's Housing and Community Services staff are SOAR-trained to assist households with the application process by completing a thorough assessment, collecting medical and functional records, assisting with accurate completion of forms, and writing a medical summary report that is co-signed by a physician or psychologist and submitted as part of the application packet. SCAP's Assistant Director of Housing and Community Services is the Local Lead for SOAR, and designated as Schenectady County's point person for training and SOAR applications.

Living Wage: The 2017 living wage for Schenectady County (most recent data available) shows the hourly rate an individual must earn to support their family if they are the sole provider and working full-time (2,080 hours per year). The poverty rate is typically quoted as gross annual income. In the chart that follows, it has been converted to an hourly wage for the sake of comparison:

Schenectady County Hourly Living Wage: 2017 Update

Hourly Wages	1 Adult	1 Adult, 1 Child	1 Adult, 2 Children	1 Adult, 3 Children	2 Adults (1 working)	2 Adults (1 working), 1 Child	2 Adults (1 working), 2 Children	2 Adults (1 working), 3 Children
Living Wage	\$11.78	\$26.71	\$35.78	\$48.03	\$19.23	\$22.54	\$25.58	\$28.21
Poverty Wage	\$5.00	\$7.00	\$9.00	\$11.00	\$7.00	\$9.00	\$11.00	\$13.00
NYS Minimum Wage (as of 12/31/18)	\$11.10	\$11.10	\$11.10	\$11.10	\$11.10	\$11.10	\$11.10	\$11.10

Source: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator

Income/Public Benefits: As reported in August 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, the number of SNAP, TANF and Safety Net Assistance recipients in Schenectady County continued to decrease, following steady increases from 2010 to 2014. As reported in August 2018, for the second time since 2010, there was a decrease in the number of SSI recipients.

Schenectady County Public Benefit per Household, August 2010 - 2017

Program	August 2010	August 2011	August 2012	August 2013	August 2014	August 2015	August 2016	August 2017	August 2018
SNAP Recipients	21,387	23,587	24,483	25,519	25,673	24,764	23,259	22,096	21,009
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	3,179	3,535	3,659	4,174	4,536	4,207	3,738	3,522	3,279
Safety Net (SN) Assistance Recipients	1,433	1,567	1,681	1,815	2,072	1,899	1,681	1,601	1,391
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Recipients	5,029	5,260	5,477	5,570	5,758	5,971	6,027	5,885	5,875

Source: NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

ALICE Report

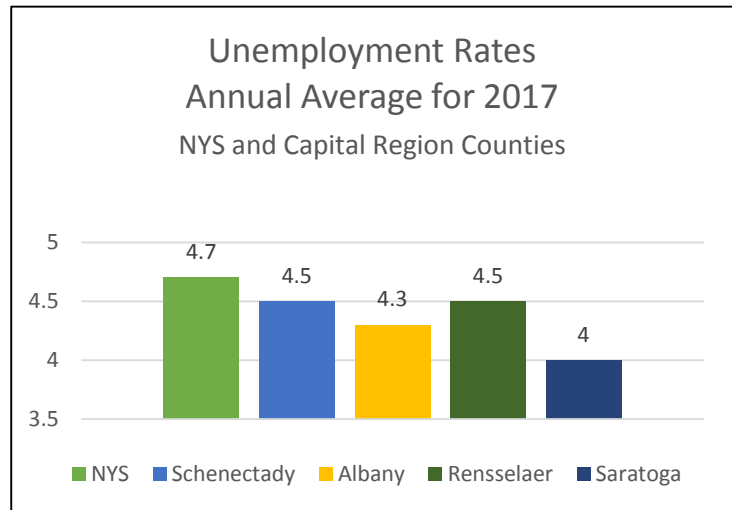
ALICE is a United Way initiative to raise awareness of the challenges faced by low-income working families and to help initiate strategies and policies that alleviate them. ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Emloyed - households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county (the ALICE Threshold). As reported in United Way's 2018 ALICE Report, **54%** of 48,720 households in Schenectady County are below the "ALICE" threshold (10% living below poverty and an additional 44% struggling to afford basic needs).

XII. Employment & Education

Unemployment: The annual unemployment rate for Schenectady County (4.5% for 2017), as reported by the New York State Department of Labor, tied with Rensselaer County for the highest within the four county Capital Region area including Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties.

Data for Schenectady County (2012-2016 ACS) with workforce implications includes:

- 10.6% of residents speak a language at home other than English
- 39.5% of residents over age 25 have only a high school diploma or less
- High level of poverty within the City of Schenectady (21.1%)



The New York State Department of Labor reports unemployment data for the following municipalities within Schenectady County. The only municipality with a rate higher than the county's annual average for 2017 was the City of Schenectady:

- City of Schenectady – 5.5%
- Rotterdam – 4.2%
- Glenville – 3.9%

As reported in the Census Bureau's 2012-2016 American Community Survey, the City of Schenectady's unemployment rate of 10% was higher than both the county (7.4%) and NYS rates (7.5%). Within the city, the highest unemployment rate, 21%, was found in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood (Census Tract 209), followed by 20.4% in the Mont Pleasant Neighborhood (Census Tract 215).

Education: As indicated in the chart that follows, the four-year graduation rate for the Schenectady City School District continues to be low. With regard to economically disadvantaged students, it is significant that compared to the 2013-2014 school report card data reported in SCAP's 2015 Community Needs Assessment, 2016-2017 report card data shows an increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students in every school district. While the percent and number of economically disadvantaged students remains highest for the Schenectady City School District, this district experienced the smallest increase between 2013-2014 and 2016-2017. The percent of economically disadvantaged students in the Duaneburg School District increased by 11% (17% to 28%). In the Rotterdam-Mohonasen District, the percent increased by 7% (34% to 41%); in the Schalmont District it increased by 3% (27% to 30%); in the Scotia-Glenville District it increased by 3% (26 – 29%); and in the Niskayuna District it increased by 2% (10% to 12%).

The New York State Department of Education defines economically disadvantaged students as “those who participate in, or whose family participates in, economic assistance programs, such as the free or reduced-price lunch programs, Social Security Insurance (SSI), Food Stamps, Foster Care, Refugee Assistance (cash or medical assistance), Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), or Family Assistance: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). If one student in a family is identified as low income, all students from that household (economic unit) may be identified as low income.”



2016-2017 New York State School Report Card Data

Student Group	Schenectady CSD	Niskayuna CSD	Duanesburg CSD	Rotterdam-Mohonasen CSD	Schalmont CSD	Scotia-Glenville CSD	Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake CSD
2013 Cohort Four – Year Graduation Rate – as of August 2017 (all students)	61% of 752	94% of 339	93% of 70	88% of 239	88% of 154	87% of 210	98% of 273
Total # of students in district	9,251	4,179	715	2,755	1,808	2,434	3,065
White	2,243 / 24%	3,004 / 72%	665 / 93%	2,291 or 83%	1,596 / 88%	2,233 or 92%	2,866 / 94%
Black/African American	2,933 / 32%	172 / 4%	8 / 1%	96 / 3%	33 / 2%	82 / 3%	34 / 1%
Multiracial	566 / 6%	149 / 4%	9 or 1%	106 / 4%	56 / 3%	8 / 0%	66 / 2%
Asian or Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	1,594 / 17%	711 / 17%	5 / 1%	70 / 3%	38 / 2%	39 / 2%	45 / 1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	19 / 0%	2 / 0%	2 / 0%	16 / 1%	3 / 0%	4 / 0%	1 / 0%
Hispanic or Latino	1,896 / 20%	141 / 3%	26 / 4%	176 / 6%	82 / 5%	68 / 3%	53 / 2%
English Language Learners	402 / 4%	111 / 3%	-----	36 / 1%	5 / 0%	11 / 0%	5 / 0%
Students with Disabilities	1,672 / 18%	458 / 11%	56 / 8%	363 / 13%	238 or 13%	364 / 15%	423 / 15%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	7,761 / 84%	519 / 12%	200 / 28%	1,119 / 41%	548 / 30%	713 / 29%	402 / 13%

Source: NYS Department of Education

As indicated above, the Schenectady City School District (SCSD) has, by far, the lowest graduation rate of any district in the county. SCSD graduation rates by student group vary:

Student Group	% Grad Rate (2013 cohort as of August 2017)	Student Group	% Grad Rate
Female	65%	General Education Students	69%
Male	58%	Students with Disabilities	30%
Black/African American	55%	English Language Learners	44%
Hispanic	57%	Not Economically Disadvantaged	50%
White	58%	Economically Disadvantaged	65%

Source: NYS Department of Education

English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Assessments: According to New York State Report Card Data for Grades 3 – 8 2018 ELA and Math Assessments, overall proficiency rates for students at all school districts in Schenectady County remain well below 50%: 37% ELA proficient and 34% math proficient. Proficiency rates are lower than those of NYS as a whole: 45% ELA proficient and 45% math proficient. As a result of the state’s new test design and performance standards, 2018 results cannot be compared with prior-year results to compare changes within a district. However, relative change from 2017 was significantly more positive statewide than in Schenectady County (2017 NYS results – 40% ELA proficient and 40% math proficient; 2017 Schenectady County results – 36% ELA proficient; 34% math proficient).

Employers: According to the New York State Department of Labor (last reviewed in 2016), the 10 largest private sector employers in the eight county New York State Capital Region Area including Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren and Washington County include four based in Schenectady County and a total of eight with locations in Schenectady County:

- **Albany Medical Center** (*location in Schenectady County*)
- **Bechtel Marine Propulsion Corp.** (*based in Schenectady County*)
- **Center for Disability Services** (*locations in Schenectady County*)
- **Ellis Hospital** (*based in Schenectady County*)
- **General Electric** (*based in Schenectady County*)
- **GlobalFoundries**
- **Hannaford Supermarkets** (*locations in Schenectady County*)
- **Price Chopper/Golub Corporation** (*based in Schenectady County*)
- **St. Peter's Hospital**
- **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.** (*locations in Schenectady County*)

Government Employers located in the City of Schenectady include the City of Schenectady, Schenectady County, and multiple New York State Offices including the Department of Transportation – Region 1, Commission on Quality Care, Lottery, and Division of Racing and Wagering.

According to the November 2018 issue of “Employment in NYS”, for the 12-month period ending September 2018: “The Capital Region’s private sector job count grew by 800, or 0.2 percent, to 444,600 for the year ending September 2018. Job growth was centered in educational and health services (+800); natural resources, mining and construction (+600); manufacturing (+300); financial activities (+200); and other services (+200). Losses were greatest in professional and business services (-600) and trade, transportation and utilities (-500).

XIII. Housing & Homelessness

Housing

Housing Occupancy, Conditions and Affordability: In Schenectady County, 46% of all housing units are located in the City of Schenectady. The city also contains the largest percent (63.5%) of the county's vacant units. Of note is the fact that 76.9% of the city's housing stock was constructed prior to 1960, with 58% of the housing stock constructed prior to 1940.

Housing Occupancy

County	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units	Homeowner Vacancy Rate	Rental Vacancy Rate
Schenectady County	68,236	55,027	13,209	2.3%	8.1%
City of Schenectady	31,676	23,284	8,392	3.7%	8.8%
Duanesburg	2,634	2,027	607	0.0%	0.0%
Glenville	12,487	10,814	1,373	1.6%	8.8%
Niskayuna	8,171	7,629	542	0.2%	6.8%
Princetown	920	710	210	0.8%	17.3%
Rotterdam	12,348	10,563	1,785	3.0%	5.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Current Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data published by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, which demonstrates extent of housing problems and housing needs by income bracket, is based on the Census Bureau's 2011 – 2015 American Community Survey:

- 56,760 occupied housing units in Schenectady County are inhabited by 37,745 homeowner and 19,015 renter households. In the City of Schenectady, over 50% of 24,085 occupied units are rental units (12,440 rental units compared to 11,650 homeowner units).
- The percent of households in the City of Schenectady with incomes below 80% of the HUD Area Median Family Income (61.8%) is significantly higher than the percent of Schenectady County households with incomes below 80% of the HUD Area Median Family Income (46.3%).
- Close to one third (31.5%) of all households in Schenectady County are cost-burdened, defined as over 30% of income expended on housing related costs. In the City of Schenectady, 39.3% of households are cost-burdened. Approximately 49.1% of renters in the county and 51.1% of renters in the city are cost-burdened. Comparatively, 26.6% of homeowners in the city and 22.7% of homeowners countywide are cost-burdened.
- 80.2% of the lowest income households in Schenectady County – 9,060 households with



incomes at or below 30% of the HUD Area Median Family Income – experience at least one of four “housing problems”, defined as incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than one person per room, and cost burden greater than 30%. The majority of these lowest income households, 68.7%, are located in the City of Schenectady.

- Renters in the City of Schenectady are more likely to experience housing problems than homeowners. 52.9% of renters experience housing problems, and 34.1% of renters experience severe housing problems. 27.9% of homeowners experience housing problems and 11.4% of homeowners experience at least one of four “severe housing problems”, defined as incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than one person per room and cost-burden greater than 50%.

Lead-based paint hazards have been prevalent in many of the City of Schenectady’s dwellings, with the city’s 12307 zip code ranked as one of the areas with the highest level of household lead hazards in the country. The city and county continue to work collaboratively on this issue, utilizing funds received through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to address lead hazards; most recently, in 2017 the City was awarded additional federal funds, in the amount of \$3 million, to address this issue.

Fair Market Rents (FMR) are estimated annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

FY2018 Fair Market Rents (FMR) for Schenectady County & Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA and Hourly Wage to Afford a Fair Market Rent

	Efficiency	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms
FMR	\$700	\$837	\$1,032	\$1,294	\$1,406
Hourly Wage Needed for FMR	\$13.46	\$16.10	\$19.85	\$24.88	\$27.04

Sources: HUD and National Low Income Housing Coalition

The hourly wage needed to afford an apartment at FMR defines affordable as not more than 30% of gross income spent on gross housing costs). According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s **2018 Out of Reach** report, the maximum affordable monthly housing cost for families with an annual income at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) is \$648 per month. As detailed above, the 2018 FMR for a two-bedroom unit in Schenectady County is \$1,032. A family in Schenectady County would need to earn at least \$41,280 per year, with an hourly wage of \$19.85, to afford a two-bedroom rental unit at Fair Market Rent. However, the county’s hourly mean renter wage is only \$13.79.

Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority (SMHA): SMHA operates seven conventional public housing developments in the City of Schenectady, serving 1,018 low-income families. Three properties (Schonowee Village, Ten Eyck Apartments and Lincoln Heights) serve the elderly and disabled, while the four other properties (Yates Village, Steinmetz Homes, MacGathan Townhouses and Maryvale Apartments) serve families with children. SMHA’s Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program serves 1,387 households, helping residents afford apartments by paying a portion of their rent directly to the landlord on their behalf. As reported in the City of Schenectady’s 2017 Community Needs Assessment, there has been a 5+ year waiting list for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. In 2018, SMHA opened up

the waitlist, accepting applications from June 19, 2018 through June 22, 2018. The waitlist is once again closed to new applicants.

Affordable Housing Development and Rehabilitation Activities: Among the local entities that focus on affordable housing development and rehabilitation activities in the City of Schenectady and Schenectady County are Better Neighborhoods, Inc. (BNI), Community Land Trust of Schenectady (CLTS) and Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County. Both BNI and the CLTS are New York State-designated Neighborhood Preservation Companies. Working with an experienced multifamily housing developer, BNI is currently leading an effort to develop 55+ units of affordable rental housing on Eastern Avenue. In order to build capacity, BNI and CLTS have been exploring the possibility of a merger to create a single, well financed, locally supported, high quality not for profit community development organization.

The Land Reutilization Corporation of the Capital District (Capital Region Land Bank) works to promote the redevelopment and revitalization of derelict properties in the City of Schenectady and Schenectady County (as well as the City of Amsterdam). The Capital Region Land Bank's mission is to strengthen neighborhoods by mitigating blight.

Efforts within the past five years to increase affordable and supportive housing opportunities in Schenectady's distressed neighborhoods include a 51-unit new construction rental project by DePaul Properties, and The Community Builders' (TCB's) Hillside View housing development (58 units), both located in Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhoods. TCB is currently working on phase two of its efforts to create affordable and supportive housing units in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood; Hamilton Hill II will create 85 additional units of housing in this neighborhood.

The threat of eviction for low-income renters is a significant concern, particularly in the City of Schenectady. In 2017, there were 3,206 evictions filed in Schenectady City Court, with 994 evictions executed by the Schenectady County Sheriff's Department.

The City of Schenectady's 2015 – 2019 Consolidated plan, which outlines strategies for utilization of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG funds allocated to the city, includes four goals, three of which (in bold below) incorporate housing related objectives:

- 1) **Goal: Meet the essential needs for food, shelter, and safety for every individual in the City of Schenectady.**
- 2) Goal: Expand economic and employment opportunities and increase physical and economic mobility for individuals in the City of Schenectady.
- 3) **Goal: Improve and expand affordable housing options in the City of Schenectady.**
- 4) **Goal: Strengthen the neighborhoods in the City of Schenectady.**

Homelessness

The most recent Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) report available, for the third quarter of the federal fiscal year of 2018 (April 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018), indicates that 2,773 individuals in Schenectady County received one or more homeless-related supportive services, including 544 children under the age of 18. This is a significant increase compared to 2,245 individuals receiving services during the same quarter in 2017. From the 2018 quarterly report:

- 1,423 people were served in residential programs, with an additional 1,567 served in “supportive services only” programs.
- Of 2,296 adults or heads of household, including households consisting of only unaccompanied minors, 850 (37%) indicated a prior residence of Emergency Shelter, the streets or Safe Haven. Of these individuals, 466 (54.8%) reported no previous episodes of homelessness within the last three years while 163 (19.2%), 70 (8.2%), and 205 (24.1%) had been homeless 2, 3, or 4+ times (respectively) during the same time frame.
- 68% of adults and 21.4% of children served reported at least one physical, emotional or other health condition, with 536 adults served reporting conditions that met the criteria to be considered a disability.

According to the 2018 **Point in Time (PIT)** count of homeless persons in Schenectady County, 393 people (of which 38 were chronically homeless) in 268 households were either unsheltered (11 people), in emergency shelter (345 people) or in transitional housing (37 people). The total count of 393 is 119 over the 2017 Point in Time count of 274.

The most recent annual HMIS data available indicates 286 children under the age of five spent time in emergency (239) and/or transitional (47) housing arrangements. The New York State Department of Education reports that during the 2017-18 school year, 540 children enrolled in a Schenectady County school district experienced homelessness at some point during the school year. 467 of these children were enrolled at the Schenectady City School District.

Schenectady County's **Homeless Services Planning Board (HSPB)** governs Schenectady County's Continuum of Care (coordinating body for federal funding for homeless related services). The HSPB works to identify community needs and service gaps for the target population, maintain an awareness of available supports and services, and oversee a coordinated entry process for households seeking support through a Schenectady County Continuum of Care (CoC)-funded entity. SCAP maintains a leadership role on Schenectady's Homeless Services Planning Board (HSPB). SCAP's Chief Executive Officer is co-chair of the HSPB Board of Directors. Both SCAP's Chief Executive Officer and Director of Housing & Community Services participate on multiple HSPB committees. The HSPB's new Strategic Plan, approved by the HSPB Board of Directors in May 2018, includes the following goals:

- **Goal #1:** Expand community engagement among service providers county-wide to increase and enhance service delivery at a systems level.
- **Goal #2:** Develop resources to support increasing the supply of Permanent Supportive Housing units, and continue to develop effective access to these units and Intensive Case Management by prioritizing the most vulnerable.
- **Goal #3:** Increase development of and access to quality affordable housing.
- **Goal #4:** Engage additional partners and seek additional resources to identify and provide necessary support services to homeless households and previously homeless households.
- **Goal #5:** Identify methods to prevent and divert homelessness when appropriate.
- **Goal #6:** Ensure a strong, sustainable, and comprehensive community system of services for homeless households, from providing appropriate emergency housing to permanent housing options.
- **Goal #7:** Advocate as a community to address barriers to success in meeting the above goals.

XIV. Early Childhood

Child Care & Development Programs/Education

According to the **2017 Picture of Child Care in the Capital Region**, there are 38 licensed child care centers in Schenectady County with a total of 3,094 slots for infant to school-age children:

	Number of potential slots	Utilization rate as determined by random sample
Infant Slots	264	91%
Toddler Slots	534	89%
Preschool Slots	1,838	92%
School-age Slots	458	88%
Total	3,094	---

Source: 2017 Picture of Child Care in the Capital Region, Capital District Child Care Council

Additionally, there are **61 family child care homes with 488 slots, 41 group family child care homes with 656 slots, and 25 school-age programs with 1,394 slots**. None of Schenectady's Child Care Centers offer evening, overnight or weekend care. Only three offer care for mildly/moderately ill children. Based on Schenectady County's demographics combined with demand, the Child Care Council reports a **shortage of 247 slots needed in child care centers for children under three, a shortage of 152 slots needed in family child care homes for children under three, and a shortage of 3,193 slots needed in school-age programs**. Key findings cited in the report include:

- **Supply & Demand for Care:** Infant care, in all modalities, is needed in the Capital Region with specific need in Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties. Infant and toddler care is expensive and quality, affordable, care is needed in all areas across the region. There is need for regulated out-of-school time opportunities in Fulton, Montgomery, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties.
- **Economic Impact of Child Care:** Families struggle with the cost of child care, whether they receive a subsidy or not. In a recent survey, families reported that they have borrowed money, paid on credit, and cut back on work hours in order to afford care. Lack of child care options leads to employee absence. Unlike other areas of education investment, including higher education, families pay the majority of costs for early education.

Pre-Kindergarten: The only school district in Schenectady County that currently offers a pre-kindergarten program is the **Schenectady City School District (SCSD)**. SCSD includes 11 elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school. As highlighted in the district's 2018-19 budget:

While the District is not mandated to provide pre-kindergarten education, the District is currently able to educate 397 students through the support of three grants. At the start of the year, seven schools each have one full day class. Four schools offer two half-day programs. In February, two classes were added, one at MLK and one at Van Corlaer (for Hamilton students as Hamilton did not have the space). In addition to District programs, the grants also fund 3 community-based programs. Approximately 180 students are served at the Early Childhood Center (Parsons), Rosa Venerini and SCAP Head Start. The District is considering switching all of its half day programs to full day programs.



SCSD’s pre-kindergarten program, which continues to expand and now also includes Schenectady Day Nursery as a community-based partner, is currently limited to four-year old children. This expansion has been accompanied by a need to focus on the coordination of program waitlists to ensure accuracy of waitlist information and maximum benefits for eligible children through incorporation of continuity of care considerations. Currently, there are approximately 1,518 three- and four-year old children in Schenectady, an estimated 674 of which live in poverty (see p. 17). SCAP’s Head Start program has a large waiting list for three-year old Head Start slots, indicating that future pre-school expansion efforts should consider incorporating programs for three-year old children. This would enable SCAP’s Early Learning component to maximize support for the city’s low-income families.

Head Start and Early Head Start: As Schenectady County’s Head Start provider, SCAP is funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for 287 center-based and 30 home-based slots. As an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) grantee, SCAP works with YWCA Northeastern NY and two licensed group family day care providers in the City of Schenectady to provide EHS-CCP services for 38 children and their families (additional SCAP EHS-CCP slots are located in Albany County). Parsons Child & Family Center, is funded for 122 Early Head Start slots (64 center-based and 58 home-based) in Schenectady County.

Education: Prekindergarten, Head Start and Early Head Start Programs in Schenectady County collaborate to promote an aligned approach to early learning and smooth transitions between programs. SCAP, Parsons Child & Family Center, YWCA Northeastern NY, and EHS-CCP group family day care providers utilize the Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system to comprehensively address Head Start, Early Head Start and EHS-CCP children’s early learning needs. The Schenectady City School District (SCSD), currently the only public school district in Schenectady County offering prekindergarten services, works collaboratively with its community-based partners to promote smooth transitions. Professional development opportunities related to early learning are aligned. SCSD is now utilizing the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system.

Home-Based Services: Home-based services available in Schenectady County include the 30 home-based slots available through SCAP’s Head Start Program (increased from 20 as a result of 2013-14 sequestration related issues), home-based Early Head Start services available through Northern Rivers (Parsons Child & Family Center) and Healthy Schenectady Families (HSF). HSF is a free and voluntary home visiting program for pregnant women and parents of infants and toddlers. HSF services, which may continue for three to five years, provide support, nurturing, and education to help parents with the changes and needs of their family that can come along with the birth of a child. HSF provides home visitors in collaboration with Schenectady County Public Health Services and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schenectady County. Collaboration amongst all three home-based service providers has identified pervasive enrollment related issues; community demand for early childhood support in Schenectady County is primarily for center-based support.

Minimum Wage Impact: New York State has adopted a minimum wage plan that is having a significant impact on Head Start and Early Head Start programs in this state. While the federal minimum wage remains \$7.25 per hour, New York State has adopted the following minimum wage schedule for the geographic area that includes Schenectady County (not including tipped food service workers):

New York State Minimum Wage Schedule

Date	12/31/18	12/31/18	12/31/20
Hourly Minimum Wage	\$11.10	\$11.80	\$12.50

Source: NYS Department of Labor

Minimum wage increases are scheduled to continue until the rate reaches \$15 per hour. These increases will affect the ability of low-income working families to meet income eligibility for enrollment in Head Start and Early Head Start.

Effective June 1, 2018 the eligibility threshold for low-income child care subsidies through Schenectady County's Department of Social Services increased from 175% of the Federal Poverty Level to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Assistance is also provided for eligible working families through the Workforce Development Institute's (WDI's) Child Care Subsidy Facilitated Enrollment Program. To qualify, residents must work a minimum of 25 hours a week, have children under 13 years of age, and have a household income that falls within the income guidelines.

Expectant Mothers

Vital statistics available through the New York State Department of Health for 2016 indicate a total of **2,523 pregnancies** in Schenectady County, in the following age groups:

Pregnancies in Schenectady County: 2016										
Total	< 15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45+	Not Specified
2,523	3	63	136	532	666	698	346	73	6	0

Source: NYS Department of Health

The 199 pregnancies in women between the ages of 15 and 19 equate to a rate of 41.1 per 1,000, which is significantly higher than the New York State rate of 26.7. Only one other county in the state, Bronx County, had a higher rate (50.4). The overall pregnancy rate for women of all ages in Schenectady County is 85.9/1,000; this is relatively close to the New York State rate of 82.2. The teen birth rate for Schenectady County is significantly higher than the New York State rate.

Teen Births

	Age < 15	Age 15 to 17	Age 18 to 19	Total Live Births	Total Births to Teens	% Births to Teens
Schenectady County	0	21	74	1,697	95	5.60%
New York State	86	2,036	5,941	232,663	8,063	3.47%

Source: NYS Department of Health (2016 data)

Foster Care

In 2017 there were 2,243 reports of child abuse regarding children in Schenectady County; 518 of these reports were indicated. **115 children** were **admitted to foster care**, with a total of 202 in care at some point during the year. This equates to a rate of 2.6/1,000, higher than the average rate of 1.9 for the 23 New York State counties in the comparison group established by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to permit meaningful comparison between counties with similar child welfare populations. Forty-seven (**47**) of the children admitted to care in 2017 were **age five or under**, with 52 of the children in care during the year belonging to this age group.

Disabilities & Early Intervention

Preschool Special Education and Early Intervention services in Schenectady County are coordinated through the county's Children with Special Needs Program. To be eligible for **Early Intervention** services,

children must be under 3 years of age and have a confirmed disability or established developmental delay, as defined by New York State, in one or more of the following areas of development: physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, and/or adaptive. **Preschool Special Education** services are available for children ages three to five who are approved by their individual school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education as eligible for services in accordance with Part 200 of the New York State Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. During the 2017-2018 school year, **81** of the 349 children between the ages of 3 and 5 served through SCAP's Head Start program had an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**, indicating that they had been determined eligible to receive Preschool Special Education and related services.

According to the 2016-17 NYS School Report Cards, public school districts in Schenectady County served 3,151 special education students, representing 15% of 21,142 students. **Preschool Special Education** services were provided for a total of **339** children:

District	Preschool Students with Disabilities: 2016-17
Burnt Hills- Ballston Lake Central School District (CSD)	45
Duanesburg CSD	5
Mohonasen CSD	38
Niskayuna CSD	49
Schalmont CSD	21
Schenectady City School District	149
Scotia-Glenville CSD	32
Total	339

Source: NYS School Report Cards

The New York State Department of Health reports that in 2016, .8% of children under the age of 1 year, and 2.8% of children under the age of three received Early Intervention support. At the estimated number of 5,461 children under age three in Schenectady County (2012-2016 ACS), 2.8% is equal to approximately 153 children receiving Early Intervention support. SCAP's Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships program referred eight children served in the City of Schenectady for early intervention support, which resulted in an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for two children.

Family Schedules

Most families seeking early learning services from SCAP are single parent families; 64% of Head Start families and 81% of EHS-CCP families are headed by single parents. This is in line with poverty related statistics for the different types of households in the county. Of 310 single parent families served by SCAP Head Start (2017-2018), 55% percent were employed. EHS-CCP services provide full-day, full-year support to accommodate work schedules. Center-based slots are full-day, with both extended day and summer program options to accommodate family schedules.



XV. Health & Nutrition/Food Insecurity

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program, Schenectady County ranks **55** out of New York State’s 62 counties for **Overall Health**, which considers length and quality of life. The county’s ranking for **Health Factors**, which includes health behaviors, clinical care, social & economic factors, and physical environment is **19**. Individual health factor areas in which the county scores poorly include health behaviors (ranked 29th) and physical environment (ranked 46th).

As reported by the New York State Department of Health, the leading cause of death in Schenectady County, for each year from 2008 through 2015 has been heart disease, followed by cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases and stroke. The fifth leading cause of death has alternated between diabetes and Alzheimer’s Disease.

During SCAP’s most recent agency-wide reporting year, 517 (7%) out of 7,445 customers did not have health insurance. County-wide, 4.8% of residents are uninsured. Approximately 19% of SCAP customers have one or more disability. For the 2017-2018 program year, 96% of all children ages zero to five enrolled in SCAP’s Head Start and EHS-CCP programs were up-to-date on a schedule of preventative and primary health care, and 97% of children had an ongoing source of continuous accessible health care.

Health Insurance

Area	Persons Eligible for Insurance	Insured	Uninsured	Percent Uninsured
Schenectady County	126,816	120,686	6,130	4.8%

Source: 2016 Small Area Health Insurance Estimates

The most significant needs identified by the Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community’s most recent health needs assessment include Asthma & Smoking, Diabetes & Obesity, Emergency Department Inappropriate Utilization, Mental Health & Substance Abuse and Adolescent Pregnancy:

Significant Community Health	Critical Indicator Examples
Asthma & Smoking	A third of surveyed City residents smoke; disparity of asthma hospitalization rate among pediatric population
Diabetes & Obesity	Highest rates of child and adult obesity in the Region; disparity of high rate of diabetes in West Indian population
Emergency Department Inappropriate Utilization	Half of Regional ED visits may be preventable; highest utilization among lowest income population
Mental Health & Substance Abuse	Double the State rate for newborn drug-related hospitalization; opportunity for more coordination
Adolescent Pregnancy	Highest rate in the Region; Black, non-Hispanic and Hispanic females age 15-17 disproportionately impacted compared to White, non-Hispanic females

Source: Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community, 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment

The Coalition identified **Preventing Chronic Disease** and **Promoting Mental Health & Preventing Substance Abuse** as priority areas requiring focus through 2018. From “The Largest Health Disparity We Don’t Talk About” (New York Times, May 30, 2018, Dhruv Khullar):

“Americans with depression, bipolar disorder or other serious mental illnesses die 15 to 30 years younger than those without mental illness – a disparity larger than for race, ethnicity, geography or socioeconomic status.....We may assume that people with mental health problems die of “unnatural causes” like suicide, overdoses and accidents, but they’re much more likely to die of the same things as everyone else: cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and respiratory problems. Those with serious mental illness are more likely to struggle with homelessness, poverty and social isolation. They have higher rates of obesity, physical inactivity and tobacco use. Nearly half don’t receive treatment, and for those who do, there’s often a long delay.”

There are 3.51 physicians per 1,000 persons in Schenectady County; the statewide average is 4.47 physicians per 1,000 persons. (*US Census Bureau American Community Survey & NYS Education Department*)

Nutrition/Food Insecurity

In 2017, 25.2% (8,460) of all children in Schenectady County received SNAP benefits. This is higher than the statewide rate of 24.5%. 10,614 children in grades K – 12 received free or reduced-price school lunches (*Kids’ Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse*). SCAP assisted with 844 initial and recertification SNAP applications during 2017.

From Schenectady County’s **Equitable and Healthy Food Action Plan**, published in March 2017:

“The UMMatter community health assessment conducted in 2013 documented a high level of food insecurity among Schenectady City residents as well as a direct correlation between food insecurity and obesity. Data collected through a subsequent food asset mapping activity helped further identify pockets of high need, overlaps, and gaps in current service availability, barriers to service access, the location of food deserts, and difficulties in accessing information about available food resources.”

As part of the research conducted to assist with development of the plan, Schenectady County Public Health Services conducted a food insecurity survey with 393 adults in the City of Schenectady, focusing on locations where food insecure residents are likely to live:

- 92% of respondents with low food security reported that their SNAP benefits do not last the full month.
- 85% of households with very low food security reported food pantries as the most commonly utilized food resource.
- 64% of respondents accessing food pantries walk to them.
- 40% of respondents indicated a high level of food insecurity, compared to 12% county-wide.

This was followed by a food pantry nutrition survey at five Schenectady County food pantries, surveying 305 individuals:

- 73% reported using food pantries at least once per month.



- Based on body mass index, 73% were obese or overweight.
- 68% experienced one or more chronic conditions, i.e. diabetes, high cholesterol, etc.
- 58% indicated a low or very low level of food security.

The Equitable and Health Food Action Plan that was developed places an emphasis on resources for the county food insecure residents. Four overarching goals are guiding implementation of the plan:

- **Goal 1:** Build community-wide support for healthier food.
- **Goal 2:** Increase the accessibility and affordability of healthier food.
- **Goal 3:** Engage all members of our diverse community in collaborating to support healthier eating.
- **Goal 4:** Ensure community ownership of a sustainable healthier food system.



XVI. Other Community/Social Service Need Indicators

There are multiple other indicators which influence the need for a range of support services in Schenectady County.

Ability to Speak English

A significant number of residents in Schenectady County speak a language other than English, 38.7% of which speak English less than very well. The majority of residents that speak English less than very well (63.3%) reside in the City of Schenectady.

Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English

Subject	Schenectady County	City of Schenectady
Population 5 years and over	145,693	61,449
Speak language other than English	15,382 / 10.6%	8,651 / 14.1%
Speak English less than “very well”	5,950 / 4.1%	3,764 / 6.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

There are a significant number of grandparents in Schenectady County living with their grandchildren under 18 years of age. Of note is the high percentage of those grandparents responsible for grandchildren within the Town of Glenville (41.6%), City of Schenectady (29.2%) and Town of Niskayuna (26.0%).

Grandparents as Caregivers

	Schenectady County	City of Schenectady	Duanesburg	Glenville	Niskayuna	Rotterdam
Number of grandparents living with own grandchildren under 18 years	2,931	1,444	78	462	396	510
Responsible for grandchildren	832	422	17	192	103	72
Years responsible for grandchildren						
< than 1 year	139	51	1	22	50	15
1 or 2 years	251	107	0	123	4	17
3 or 4 years	78	19	16	27	0	16
5 or more years	364	245	0	20	49	24

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey



Crime

As reported by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), the Violent and Property Index Crime Rate per 100,000 for Schenectady County (2,965.5) has been higher than any other New York State county, including New York City (2017 data reported in September 2018). There are eight patrol zones in the City of Schenectady, with most service calls from the Hamilton Hill, Central State and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods. At approximately 3,500/100,000, the city’s overall crime rate for 2017 was significantly higher than the county rate.

The Schenectady County Jail houses an average of **292** inmates on a daily basis (2017 average). The total number of county residents sentenced to jail and prison (adult status) annually is approximately 1,000:

**Sentences to Jail and Prison: Adults in Schenectady County
Felony, Violent Felony, Drug Felony and Misdemeanor Categories**

	2015	2016	2017
Prison	371	448	431
Jail	568	629	546
Total	939	1,077	977

Source: NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services

According to the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), the annual number of individuals from Schenectady County released from prison for the first time in 2015 was **156** (most recent data). The average age of offenders released was **36**. Many of those released from incarceration to the target service area face homelessness. Of 187 homeless adult individuals enrolled in SCAP’s Supportive Housing Solutions Program, funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), **94 (50%)** were previously incarcerated.

Community Crisis Network

Schenectady’s Community Crisis Network (CCN) utilizes a clearinghouse approach to provide coordinated crisis intervention that maximizes capacity to provide comprehensive services without duplicating effort. The network’s five primary partners include SCAP, Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM), Catholic Charities, City Mission and YWCA. Many additional providers participate in the CCN’s active referral process. As the CCN’s lead agency, SCAP provides assessment services at multiple locations throughout Schenectady and coordinates intervention supports. The CCN Emergency Fund provides financial support when no other resources are available.

Each household in poverty has its own unique set of circumstances that contribute to its struggles. SCAP’s integrated approach to service CCN service navigation gives customers seamless access to a continuum of programs, ensuring the best possible outcomes. **Involvement with a family may be over a short period to address a one-time need, or continue for an extended period of time to address multiple needs.** Long-term case management assists families to establish goals and develop skills and strategies to effectively manage family needs, permanently stabilize their living conditions and work towards greater self-reliance. The CCN’s Emergency Fund assists approximately 2,000 households annually. This fund helps with fundamentals such as rental assistance/security deposits, utility assistance/emergency fuel, prescription co-payments, work clothing, and transportation, as well as other essential items. It helps to prevent homelessness and stabilize households.



XVII. Community Engagement

Community Needs Assessment Focus Groups

A total of nine focus groups were conducted with a total of **107** individuals:

- Six focus groups with **customers** of SCAP for a total of **74** participants;
- One focus group with SCAP's **Board of Directors** for a total of **seven** participants; and
- Two focus groups with **staff** for a total of **26** participants.

Customer focus groups included Early Learning customers (two groups), Employment Services customers (one group) and Housing & Community Services customers (three groups, with one focused solely on supportive housing customers). With the exception of the Board of Director's focus group, which only incorporated the first three questions, each focus group considered the following four questions:

1. What are the greatest needs in Schenectady County?
2. What will meet those needs?
3. What resources are in place to meet those needs?
4. What are some of the barriers?

Focus group discussions prioritized the following topics and indicators, with many identified by multiple groups:

1. What are the greatest needs in Schenectady County?

- Affordable, Safe Housing
- Jobs that pay a "livable" wage
- Child Care (including on call, 2nd & 3rd shifts)
- Affordable / Accessible Youth Programs
- Transportation
- Mental Health Support
- Peer Support
- Improved Neighborhood Safety
- Parent Education Support
- Domestic Violence Support

2. What will meet those needs?

- Employment Training
- Education
- More Accessible Services
Community Center/
Everything Available in One Place
- More Services / Funding
- Flexible Services / Support
- Coordinated Services
- Bus Passes / Wheels for Work
- Affordable / Accessible Childcare
- Prevention Programs (vs. deficit model)



- Financial Assistance
- Empathy
 - Friendly, Approachable, Compassionate, Respectful Workers
- Legal Advocacy
- Peer level support groups in a safe place
- Bus Passes
- Jail Diversion

3. What resources are in place to meet those needs?

- Eviction Prevention
- Furniture Vouchers
- Shelter + Care
- Food Pantries / Free Meals
- Early Learning Programs
- Community Supervision Program
- Upgraded Playgrounds
- Community Members / Neighbors
- SCAP
- Ellis Pros
- New Choices
- YWCA
- Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM)
- City Mission
- One Stop
- DSS on call
- Northern Rivers
- Washington Irving
- Library
- Bethesda House

4. What are some of the barriers?

- Lack of Awareness of Available Services
- Services not Accessible
- Difficult Path to Recovery Within Neighborhood
- Eligibility Requirements / Program Regulations
- Benefit Cliff Effect
- Lack of Required Documentation to Access Services
- Waitlists
- Language / Culture Differences
- Directing of Resources - ex. negatives associated with Casino
- Criminal Backgrounds

There was consensus amongst all of the customer focus groups that there are resources available, and people have to want to help themselves. In every group, participants shared information with each other about particular resources and sources of support.

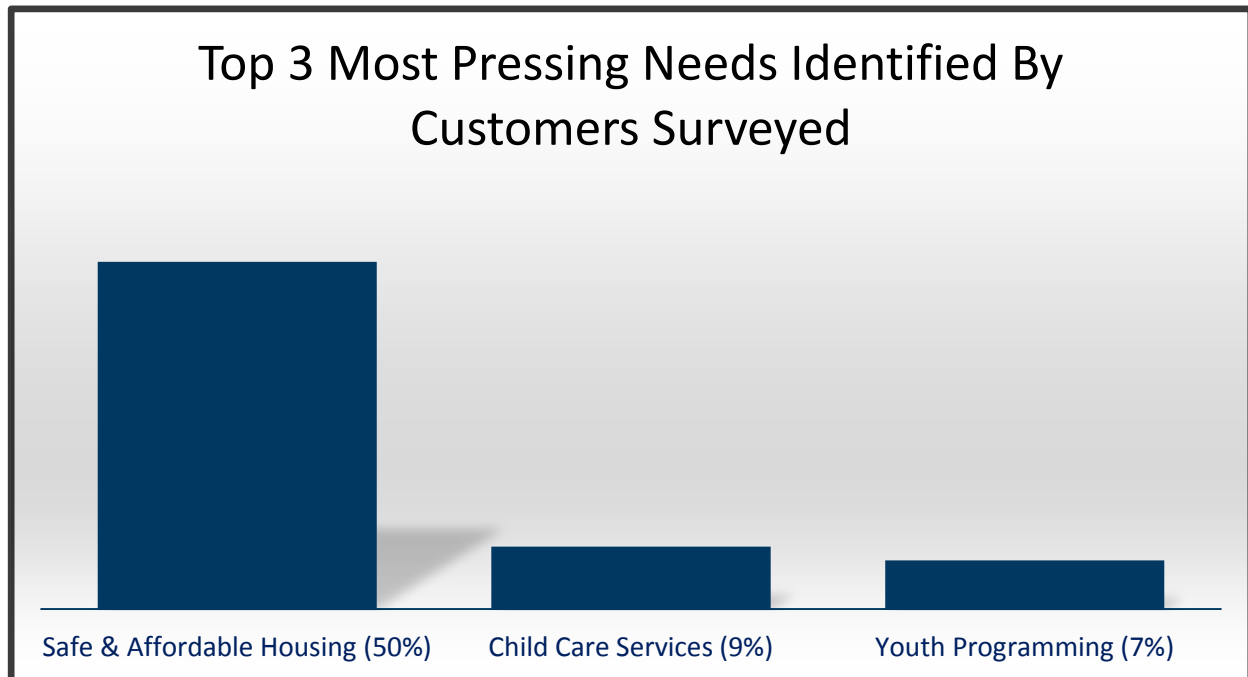


Community Needs Assessment Surveys

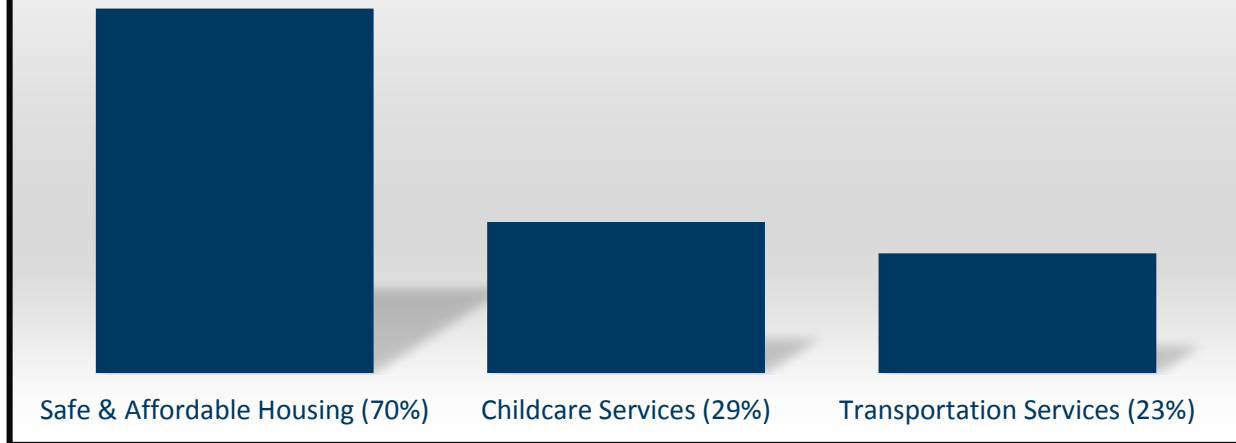
A total of **250** surveys were completed:

- **189** surveys were completed by members of the community, **165** of which included enough detail to permit analysis
 - **60** were completed by focus group participants
 - **129** were completed by “walk in” customers, Housing & Community Services customers, Early Learning program parents, and Employment Services program customers. Surveys were distributed through each of SCAP’s program departments: Early Learning, Employment Services and Housing & Community Services
 - **2** surveys were completed by Policy Council Members
- **59** surveys were completed by employees of SCAP

Both customers and staff identified **Safe, Affordable Housing** as the most pressing need, by far, faced by the low-income population in Schenectady County. Safe, affordable housing services available were also identified the most by both staff and customers as “not meeting the current demand”. This was followed by transportation, family counseling and childcare by staff; and transportation, safety/crime prevention and healthcare services by customers.



Top 3 Most Pressing Needs Identified By Staff Surveyed



Additional Community Input

Multiple existing customer and community engagement activities have also informed this assessment process:

- **Strategic Plan Partner Survey**

As part of the agency's strategic planning process, SCAP sent a Partner Survey to twenty (20) of SCAP's closest partners. Responses identified a number of strengths of SCAP:

- Highly aware of community needs
- Leader in early childhood education
- Leader in work preparation, employment and job training
- Successful neighborhood programs, focus on healthcare
- Promotes collaboration
- Great job of engaging individuals
- Increasing the availability of navigation services

Areas for improvement were also identified:

- Important that process not be prioritized over people
- Communication of overarching goals

In addition, partner respondents commented on opportunities for growth, things SCAP should do more of moving forward, and particular areas that SCAP should focus on:

- SCAP could have more presence at the Chamber of Commerce
- The community needs better integration of workforce programs
- Growth of early childhood education and after-school programs

Finally, SCAP asked, “What can SCAP do to optimize the relationship with your Agency”?

- Continue to provide support and leadership in human services field
- Continue to support local needs
- Provide better opportunities to understand the broad array of services and how they are integrated
- Help understanding where SCAP is going directionally

▪ **Formerly Homeless People Maintaining Housing**

Completed in April 2018, this report highlights the results of an evaluation completed by students of The Sage Colleges with SCAP Supportive Housing Solutions (SHS) customers. Based on extensive telephone interviews with twelve customers of the program that have maintained permanent housing for more than six months, the evaluation concluded that secondary supports provided through SHS were a critical component to maintaining housing. Suggestions for program improvements included:

- Subsidize security deposits for everyone.
- Optimize application process, including reducing paperwork and wait times and increasing follow-up calls.
- Secure funds through additional revenue sources to have financial support available to individuals all year instead of just at certain times.
- Improved collaboration between local agency and landlords which is likely to lead to more housing options.

▪ **Early Learning Program Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Survey**

At the conclusion of each program year, parents and guardians of children enrolled in SCAP’s Early Learning Programs are asked to complete a satisfaction survey. The survey assesses education services and program satisfaction. For the 2017-2018 school year, **123** parents and guardians participated in the survey:

- 88% indicated they were satisfied with the services their child had received.
- 86% had indicated that they have a greater understanding of how important it is to be involved in their child’s education.

▪ **Career Readiness Class Surveys**

At the conclusion of all Career Readiness courses held at SCAP, students are asked to complete a program evaluation. The survey allows for participants to provide feedback on their experience with the class as well as personal growth. As a result of both the January/February 2018 and February/March classes, 100% of the students felt that they were more self-sufficient after completing the class.

▪ **Schenectady Community Needs Assessment (October 2017)**

From the Executive Summary:

“Roundtables – City staff and the Cornell University Rust to Green (R2G) Urban Studio team assisted community leaders to chair and moderate eight (8) CNA roundtable discussions with their peers to discuss community and economic development issues and priorities.

Surveys – Hardcopy and online surveys were developed and distributed to gather resident input. 733 long format and 191 short format surveys were accessed with a total of 924 individuals

participating in the survey process. A myriad of individuals, groups, and community members took part, providing direction for Schenectady's future.

The people conveyed to the City that:

- *acquisition, demolition, and/or rehabilitation of vacant, blighted buildings and properties is critical*
- *walkability needs to be improved*
- *public safety, tax rates and the quality of the schools have a significant impact on the perception of the city*
- *access to healthy food is a necessity*
- *childcare, transportation options and soft-skills training are critical for increased employment*
- *more affordable housing and public housing with support services are a priority*

The City's CNA 2-Year Action Plan includes six (6) goals, twenty-four (24) sub-goals and priority actions relating to economic activity, employment, education, culture, housing, health and safety. All of the CNA roundtable and survey recommendations were taken into consideration and the identified top priorities were addressed in the Plan's goals, sub-goals and/or activities."

- GOAL #1: Increase Economic Activity
- GOAL #2: Expand Employment Opportunities
- GOAL #3: Raise Educational Achievement
- GOAL #4: Promote Health, Wellness & Public Safety
- GOAL #5: Expand Housing Opportunities
- GOAL #6: Enhance Community, Cultural, and Recreational Opportunities



XVIII. Community Resources

SCAP's Resource Navigation component maintains up-to-date knowledge of the range of resources available in Schenectady County; navigators, intervention counselors, case managers and family workers in all departments have access to information about the full range of services and supports available. Additionally, following the INFO-OP Community Resource Directory originally created in 2009, and updated by SCAP in 2015, with assistance from VISTA Fellows Schenectady County created an up-to-date Resource Book of Schenectady County services (most recent update was December 2017).

Schenectady County is also part of the United Way of the Greater Capital Region's 2-1-1 initiative. 2-1-1 provides free online assistance and confidential telephone referrals that connect users with resources providing food, shelter, rent assistance, clothing, child care options and other types of community assistance. The initiative's referral specialists are multi-lingual. 2-1-1 is available throughout this region, covering Schenectady, Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schoharie, Warren, and Washington counties. SCAP participates in this initiative.



XIX. Fulton and Montgomery Counties

SCAP’s Employment Services Department has operated a Displaced Homemaker Program (DHP), funded through the New York State Department of Labor, since 1978. In addition to services for residents in Schenectady County, this program also serves residents of neighboring Fulton and Montgomery counties. Schenectady County Community College’s second five-year federally-funded Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG), in which SCAP continues to be a key partner, also serves Fulton and Montgomery counties. Building on these employment supports, in 2016 SCAP was awarded funding to build an Employer Resource Network (ERN) in this region. SCAP’s services and supports in this area, adjacent to Schenectady County, complement the work of the **Fulmont Community Action Agency**, which provides the following services for residents of Fulton, Montgomery and surrounding counties:

Fulton County Senior Transportation
A joint program of the Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc. and Fulton County Office for the Aging. Providing free transportation to Fulton County Senior Citizens for medical appointments, day care, food sites, shopping, banking and social events.
Early Childhood Services
Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc. Early Childhood Services Program is a comprehensive preschool program that provides children ages 3-5 and their families a wide range of services. All families who are enrolled receive services in the areas of education, health, nutrition, disabilities and family services.
Community Services Department
Food pantry, clothing, baked goods, information and referrals to Fulmont programs and other services in the community. WIC, Head Start, HEAP application assistance (Montgomery County only), FEMA, Family Development and Weatherization. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), free income tax preparation, employment support and processing for income eligible families.
Energy Services Department
Provides Energy Services to HEAP eligible households in both Fulton and Montgomery counties. These services are open to both homeowners and renters.
Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
WIC is the supplemental food program for pregnant, breast-feeding and post-partum Women, Infants & Children up to the age of five (5). WIC provides nutrition education and nutritious foods to income eligible families.

Source: <http://www.fulmont.org/departments.shtml>

Fulmont Community Action’s 2017 Community Needs Assessment provides extensive information about the conditions and needs in Fulton and Montgomery counties, informing SCAP’s work in these areas. The assessment and additional information about Fulmont Community Action can be viewed at: <http://www.fulmont.org>. Fulmont’s mission is *to improve and expand human services and programs in order to promote self-sufficiency and improve the quality of life of the socially and economically disadvantaged, as well as provide services to promote economic efficiency and stability in Fulton, Montgomery and Surrounding Counties.*