



# Mid-Hudson Valley Community Profiles

## Regional Overview

June, 2021

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**Prepared for:**

Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley, Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan, Dyson Foundation, United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region

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## Summary

The Mid-Hudson Valley Community Profiles project represents a commitment by four of the region's leading philanthropic organizations to provide the public with continuously updated comparative information regarding Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan and Ulster counties. The project is designed to provide government and nonprofits with an important tool for assessing and understanding the populations they serve.

The Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley, Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan, Dyson Foundation, United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region jointly commissioned the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) to collect and analyze the data and maintain the website. With input from local health and human service providers, the four organizations selected 59 indicators within the following fields to be included on the site: Children & Youth, Community Engagement, Demographics, Economy, Education, Financial Stability, Health, Housing, and Public Safety.

This web-based project provides an "apples-to-apples" understanding of regional trends and comparative information that has been difficult to obtain in the past because of variations in how each county reports certain types of information. The project enables organizations to track community conditions, develop programs, and affect change that will ultimately contribute to the well-being of citizens in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

The project expanded to cover four additional counties (Columbia, Greene, Putnam and Sullivan) and added indicators, including data on drug-related deaths that show the spike in opioid abuse, living wage estimates and the share of our residents who are foreign-born.

This Overview highlights findings from each of the nine topics for the Mid-Hudson Valley region.

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## A Portrait of the Region

The Mid-Hudson Valley continues to be a strong region of New York State with below average poverty and above average incomes, along with prosperous economic sectors, natural beauty, historic significance and a wealth of tourist attractions.

But as the region works to recover from the multifaceted impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, indicator data reveals areas that will likely pose changes.

The available data for our indicators pre-date the pandemic. But pre-existing challenges such as housing affordability have been exacerbated by job losses and rising home prices.

And the region was unaffordable for many even before COVID-19. Living wage models estimate that in the Mid-Hudson Valley, two working parents with two children need to earn \$97,000 a year, more than three times the poverty level (about \$25,900) for a family of this type. A single earner with two children to support needs, \$89,200 a year, to make a living wage.

The pandemic laid bare the impact of structural racism as Black, Latino and other populations were disproportionately impacted not only by the virus itself but also economic challenges in lower-income sectors. In the Mid-Hudson Valley, about a fifth of Black and Latino children were living in poverty, compared to 14% of white children (pre-pandemic).

An influx of federal aid to families with children and to governments in the region have the potential to dramatically reduce racial disparities. Choices made by local governments in the next few years will be important to charting the Mid-Hudson Valley's path to recovery and increased equity.

*Note: In this report, comparisons to state statistics reflect the state excluding New York City.*

## Children and Youth

The challenges facing our community's children can diminish their chances for successful adult lives. In this section we review several indicators that describe family supports and risk exposure of our youngest residents.

There are more [children living in poverty](#) than in 2000, similar to state and national trends. In 2015-19, about 16% of children in the region were living in poverty, up 3 points since 2000 and lower than the national rate (19%). Dutchess

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County continued to have the lowest rate of child poverty in the region (12%), while Sullivan County had the highest percentage of children living in poverty (24%). [Poverty was highest among](#) African American (21%) and Hispanic (22%) children in the Mid-Hudson Valley region in 2015-19. White children (14%) were less likely to be living in poverty, though there was a 4 point increase since 2000.

There are more [single-parent families](#) in the region, though still below the state and nation. The proportion of single-parent families in the region increased 6 percentage points from 2000, similar to state and national trends. In 2015-19, slightly more than one-quarter (30%) of families in the region were headed by single parents, below the rates for the state (excluding NYC) (32%) and nation (34%). Sullivan, Columbia and Ulster (all at 37%) counties had the highest proportion of single-parent families, while Putnam had the lowest (19%). Over half (60%) of African American families in the [region were headed by single parents](#), the highest of any racial or ethnic group. This was below the rates for African American families throughout the state (excluding NYC) (65%) and nation (66%). In the region, 36% of Hispanic families and 32% of white families were headed by single parents.

Rates of [child abuse and neglect](#) have fluctuated but not changed substantially since 2000. In 2019, there were 14 abused children for every 1,000 children in the region, up 7% from 2000 and below the statewide rate of 18. Rates were lowest in Orange (9 per 1,000) and Putnam (10 per 1,000) counties and highest in Greene County (27 per 1,000 children under 18).

[Foster care admissions](#) are decreasing, though the regional rate is higher than the state's. The rate of children admitted to foster care declined to 2.1 children per 1,000 in 2019 from 2.8 in 2000. However, beginning in 2010, rates in the region exceeded statewide rates. Admissions were greatest in Greene County, with 5.4 children per 1,000 admitted to foster care, followed by Sullivan and Ulster (3.7 and 3.3 respectively).

The region has seen a decline in the [teen pregnancy rate](#), which is similar to the state. In 2018, the number of pregnancies among females 12-19 was 1.1%, 2 percentage points lower than in 2000. Teen pregnancy was highest in Sullivan County at 2.0%, followed by Orange at 1.3% and lowest in Putnam (0.3%), Greene and Columbia (both 0.9%) counties.

[Live births to teen mothers](#) have also declined since 2000. In 2018, there were 9 live births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 in the region, below the state and nation (11 and 17 respectively). This makes for a 66% decrease since 2000. Sullivan County had the highest rate in the region, with 14 births per 1,000 teen females, followed by Orange and Greene (both at 11 births per 1,000).

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**Juvenile delinquency intakes** are down drastically since 2000, and the regional rate is lower than the state's. In 2019, the region had a rate of 43 juvenile delinquency intakes for every 10,000 juveniles, a decrease of 59% since 2000 and lower than the statewide rate (55). Putnam County had the lowest rate of juvenile delinquency intakes at 24 per 10,000 juveniles, followed by Columbia (38), while Sullivan County had the highest rate at 77 per 10,000 juveniles.

**Reported bullying incidents** have declined in the region since 2014, and the rate is similar to the statewide rate. In 2020, there were 5.6 bullying incidents per 1,000 students in the region, similar to the statewide rate (5.1). Rates have decreased for all counties in the region. Ulster County had the highest rate in the region at 6.6 per 1,000, followed by Orange at 6.4.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement is the extent to which individuals take responsibility for addressing civic issues and improving the life of their community.

**Average levels of charitable giving** are below the state and the nation.

In 2018, average charitable contributions in the Mid-Hudson Valley region ranged from approximately \$8,500 in Orange to \$5,700 in Sullivan, below the statewide and national average of \$10,800 and \$13,230 respectively.

The region's **voter registration rates** have remained steady at above 80%, yet they are persistently a bit lower than the state. Between 2000 and 2019, the average voter registration rate was 83% for the Mid-Hudson region and 84% for the state. Of the region's voting-age residents, 85% were registered in 2016, compared to 86% of the state overall.

Voter registration rates vary somewhat across the region. Columbia County's registration rate has been equal to or greater than the statewide rate in every year except 2000. In 2019, Columbia County (95%) had the highest registration rate of the seven counties.

**Voter turnout** in the region approaches 60% in presidential election years, and is about even with the state rate. In the 2018 mid-term election, voter turnout in the region was 2 points lower than the state at 45%. Turnout was highest in Columbia (59%) and lowest in Sullivan County at 41%.

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# Demographics

Population measures provide insight on the changing size and face of communities, and an area's needs and assets.

The [total population](#) of the Mid-Hudson Valley Region is growing. Counter to the population declines experienced in Western and Central New York, most of the seven counties in the Mid-Hudson Valley region have gained residents since 2000. From 2000 to 2019, the region gained 5.3% more residents, higher than the state (1.4%), yet below the rate for the nation (17%). Orange led the region with its robust 13% growth, followed by Dutchess (5.1%), Putnam (2.7%) and Sullivan (2.1%), while Columbia, Greene and Ulster decreased 5.7%, 1.7%, and 0.1% respectively.

The [population over the age of 60 has been growing the fastest](#), while the [population under 40 has been shrinking](#). All counties in the region are experiencing the “graying” phenomenon affecting much of the country. Since 2000, the 85 and over age group grew the fastest, at 60% for Dutchess and 43% for the region overall. The under 20 group shrank 13% throughout the region. Columbia and Greene had the largest declines in population under age 20 (down 30% and 28% respectively), while Orange lost the least (0.2%). The 20 to 39 age group also shrank 4% throughout the region, or by 13% in Putnam and 10% in Columbia.

While the [counties are gradually becoming more diverse](#) in terms of race and ethnicity, they remain overwhelmingly white. Despite the large percentage increases in minority populations and a modest decline in the white population (3%), the region remains predominantly white, representing 80% of total residents. Hispanics were the region's fastest growing racial group, up 93% from 2000. Putnam had the greatest increase in Hispanic population, at 147%, followed by Dutchess with 98%. The Asian population was the second fastest growing group in the region, growing by 69%.

Regionally, married couples without children were the [most common household type](#), similar to state and national trends. In 2015-19, 30% of households were made up of married couples without children and 21% were married couples with children. Among the counties, Greene had the largest share of households composed of people living alone at 34%, and Orange had 26% of households made up of married couples with children.

The [foreign-born share of the population](#) in the region has increased since 2000. Putnam County had the largest share of foreign-born population (13%) followed by Dutchess and Orange (both at 11%), while Greene has the smallest share (6%) in 2015-19.



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## Economy

A vibrant economy is the foundation of a thriving community.

Regional [job growth](#) has been strong through the decade overall, despite job losses in 2010. Between 2001 and 2019, total jobs in the region increased 17%, below the nation (23%) but above the state (12%). Between 2018 and 2019, jobs increased 1.4% in the region and 0.9% in the state, compared to a 1.8% increase for the nation. Sullivan County led the region with a 3.0% increase in jobs in 2019 followed by 2% in Orange and 1.7% in Putnam. While Greene County had a 0.8% decline.

Some of the largest [employment sectors](#) in the region added a significant number of jobs between 2001 and 2019. Industries with the largest gains were Financial Activities (48%), Leisure and Hospitality (44%), Professional and Business Services (41%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (36%), while Government lost jobs (2%). Putnam and Orange counties had the largest total gains at 27% each. Dutchess and Ulster counties had the lowest gains both at 9%.

[Spending by county government, after adjusting for inflation](#), grew 15% from 2000 to 2019. That compares to a statewide increase of 5%. County government spending per capita for the region was about \$2,300 in 2019, compared to \$2,600 for the state. From 2000 to 2019, per capita spending increased the most, 26%, in Dutchess County followed by 21% in Orange. Putnam County (6%) was the only county with a decrease in per capita spending from 2000 to 2019. In 2019, Sullivan County had the highest county spending (\$3,900), while Putnam had the least (\$1,680).

[Tourism revenue](#) increased 45% in the region since 2005. Tourism brought about \$3,000 per capita into the region in 2019 and was strongest in Sullivan and Greene counties on a per-capita basis. Adjusted for inflation, tourism revenue per capita declined after the Great Recession in 2008 but has slowly rebounded.

## Education

Quality educational opportunities are critical to helping our children develop to their maximum potential and to our community's ability to compete in the global economy.

The percentage of [preschoolers receiving special education services](#) has been increasing since 2000. From 2000 to 2019, the share increased 3 percentage

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points, surpassing the state percentage. In 2019, 7.6% of all 3- to 5-year-olds in the region and 6.8% in the state were receiving special education services.

**Prekindergarten enrollment has been increasing since 2009, but remains below the rate for the state.** About 27% of the region's 4-year-olds were enrolled in publicly funded prekindergarten programs in 2019, below the 39% rate for the state. Participation was highest in Orange and Sullivan counties (37% and 36% respectively), followed by Greene (30%). Dutchess had the lowest enrollment at 11%.

**Per-student spending by school districts is slightly higher in the region than in the state.** In 2019, per-student spending by school districts in the region was approximately \$27,500, more than the state at \$25,500. Per-student spending in the region has increased 71% since 2000, even after adjusting for inflation. Spending in Sullivan County was the highest in the region, about \$31,000 per student, followed by Putnam County school districts at \$30,900 and Ulster County at \$29,200. Dutchess and Orange counties were the lowest in the region at \$26,300 per student.

**The region has lower passing rates on fourth-grade English exams than the state.** The 2019 passing rate of 41% in English was 4 points below the state. Passing rates on state tests were significantly lower for low-income, English language learners, and students with disabilities than for their peers. In the region, 27% of low-income fourth-graders passed the English exams and 7% for both English language learners and students with disabilities. Greene and Ulster counties' economically disadvantaged students had the lowest proficiency rate among the counties at 21% and Dutchess had the highest at 34%. We note that 22% of students in the region opted not to take the exam.

**The region has lower passing rates on fourth-grade math exams than the state.** The 2019 passing rate of 46% in math was 3 points below the state. Passing rates on state tests were significantly lower for low-income, English language learners, and students with disabilities than for their peers. In the region, 32% of low-income fourth-graders passed the math exams, 13% of English language learners, and 11% of students with disabilities. Ulster County had the lowest proficiency rate among economically disadvantaged students at 25% and Greene had the highest at 41%. About 24% of students region-wide opted out of the exam.

**Both high school graduation and dropout rates are in line with statewide trends.** By 2020, 88% of the region's 2016 cohort graduated on time, similar to the state (88%). About 5% of the cohort dropped out, similar to the state rate.

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**An increasing proportion of high school graduates [plans to attend college](#).** In 2017, 83% of high school seniors in the region planned to attend college, with 36% planning to attend a 2-year program and 47% planning to attend a 4-year program. The regional college-bound rate in 2017 was slightly higher than the state rate of 82%. Rates were similar across most of the regional counties except for Putnam where 90% of graduates planned to attend college.

**[Education levels among adults are rising, with more having a college education](#).** In 2015-19, 61% of adults had attended at least some college, up from 52% in 2000 and even with the nation. About 32% of the region's residents had a 4-year degree or higher in 2015-19, compared to 25% in 2000. Just 10% of residents in the region did not have a high school diploma in 2015-19. Educational attainment among counties in the region was highest in Putnam County, with 40% of residents possessing a 4-year degree or higher, compared to 22% in Greene and 25% in Sullivan.

The [share of residents with a bachelor's or higher](#) was highest among Asians in the region (56%), followed by whites (34%), African Americans (22%) and Hispanics (20%). Still, those figures reflect increases of 10 percentage points for African Americans and 7 points for Hispanics from 2000.

## Financial Stability

Indicators of financial stability are a critical benchmark of a community's well-being.

**Regionally, [median household income](#) has declined similar to losses at the state and national levels.** When adjusted for inflation, regional median income declined by 2%, or almost \$1,200, from 2000 to 2015-19. At \$75,230 in 2015-19, median incomes were above the levels for the state (\$71,350) and nation (\$62,800). Median incomes were higher than the region in Putnam (\$104,500), Dutchess (\$81,200) and Orange counties (\$79,900), while Ulster (\$64,300), Columbia (\$66,800) and Sullivan (\$57,400) were lower.

Asian and white residents in the region had [the highest median incomes](#), at \$107,100 and \$77,500, respectively. African American and Hispanic residents had the lowest median incomes at \$57,500 and \$65,100, though both exceeded rates for their respective groups in the state and nation.

**[Poverty rates in the region are below the nation](#).** In 2015-19, about 11% of the region's residents were living in poverty, on par with the state and lower than the nation (13%). Sullivan County had the highest poverty rate in the region at 15%.

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followed by Ulster with 14%. Putnam County had the lowest at 5%, followed by Dutchess at 9%.

Poverty rates were highest for African American and Hispanic residents in the region (16% and 17% respectively), as was true for the state and nation. In 2015-19, Asians and whites had the lowest (11% and 10% respectively). About 8% of seniors and 4% of veterans were living in poverty in 2015-19. While poverty is relatively low at 11% for the region, another 14% of residents had incomes between 100% and 199% of the poverty level, and 13% were between 200% and 299% of poverty.

Living wage models suggest that this broader group of regional residents may have trouble making ends meet. The living wage measures the level of income that households require to pay for necessities, including housing and food, without assistance. The estimated hourly living wage for two working parents with two children was \$22.40 in the region, or \$97,000 a year, more than three times the poverty level (about \$25,900) for a family of this type. A single earner with two children to support needs an even higher wage, \$42.90/hour or \$89,200 a year, to make a living wage.

**More students were economically disadvantaged in 2021 compared to 2013 in the region.** In 2021, 42% of students in the region were economically disadvantaged, slightly above the state rate of 41%. Sullivan County, at 57%, had the highest rate in the region, followed by Columbia at 47%, and Greene and Ulster both at 45%. The lowest rates were in Putnam, at 28%, and Dutchess, at 36%.

**A low percentage of children are receiving subsidized child care.** In 2019, 1.3% of the region's children participated in subsidized child care, below the rate of 2.2% for the state.

**A lower percentage of the region's population received the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) than nation.** About 13% of tax filers in the region received the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in 2018, similar to the state and below the nation (17%). The rates for each county, the state (excluding NYC) and nation have remained relatively unchanged since 2011.

## Health

Healthy communities are built on a foundation of healthy children, youth and adults.

**The rate of individuals without health insurance fell between 2008 and 2019.** The percentage of residents under the age of 65 without health insurance in the region fell from 13% in 2008 to 5% in 2019. This puts the region on par with the



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statewide rate yet below the national rate (11%). Columbia, Ulster and Sullivan counties were on the higher end of rates of uninsured residents (6%), while Putnam had the lowest rate, at 4%.

**Early prenatal care rates varied among racial and ethnic groups throughout the region, similar to statewide trends.** In 2018, the share of white mothers receiving early prenatal care ranged from 90% in Putnam County to 68% in Sullivan County. African American mothers had the lowest rates, ranging from 47% in Columbia County to 89% in Putnam County. Rates were somewhat higher among Hispanic mothers, ranging from 79% in Putnam County to 61% in Columbia County. Dutchess and Putnam counties were the only counties to surpass statewide rates for each racial and ethnic category.

**The rate of low birth weight babies increased since 2000, similar to statewide trends.** In 2018, 6.7% of babies born in the region had low birth weights, below the state and national rates of 8.7% and 7.7%, but up from 6.5% in 2000. Greene County had the lowest rate in 2018 (6.2%), while Ulster County had the highest rate at 7.1%, followed by Putnam (7.0%)

**Deaths from drug poisoning have increased in the region similar to statewide and national trends.** There were 27 drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 residents in the Mid-Hudson Valley region in 2018, an increase of over 500% since 2000. That put the region above the state and national rates of 19 and 21 respectively. Sullivan County had the highest rate of drug poisoning deaths in the region at 33, followed by Ulster (29). Columbia and Putnam counties had the lowest rates (17 and 20 respectively).

**The rate of people living with HIV has decreased since 2002 in the Mid-Hudson Valley region.** In 2018, there were 98 people per 100,000 residents with HIV, similar to the state rate of 93. The rate has decreased by 3% in the region since 2002, in contrast to an increase in the state (20%). Columbia County had a rate of 146 per 100,000 residents with HIV followed by Greene County (135). Putnam County had the lowest rate in 2018 at 53 people per 100,000 residents with HIV.

**The region's rate of mental health clinic visits declined since 2001.** There were 5.8 mental health clinic visits per 1,000 residents in the region in 2019, compared to 6.0 in 2001. Orange had the lowest rate (4.8), followed by Putnam (4.9), and Greene County (8.5) had the highest rate. Dutchess County had the largest decline (30%), compared to a 4% decrease region-wide.

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## Housing

Housing fulfills the basic human need for shelter and is a strong measure of a community's cost of living, relative wealth and general prosperity.

**Homeownership rates have remained steady across the region and on par with the state at 70%.** Rates were similar across the Mid-Hudson Valley, except Putnam County with the highest rate at 82% in 2015-19.

The Mid-Hudson Valley experienced a decrease in the rate of **homelessness since 2007.** In 2019, there were 18 homeless people per 10,000 residents in the region. Among the counties, Ulster County had the highest rate at 24 homeless people per 10,000 residents, followed by Sullivan County (21) while Orange County had the lowest rate at 15 homeless people per 10,000 residents in 2019. The region's rate of homelessness decreased by 4% between 2007 and 2019, lower than the 20% decline in the national rate.

**Owning a home has become harder in the Mid-Hudson Valley, with rising home values and income not keeping pace.** The affordability ratio (median home value divided by household income) was 3.5 in the region in 2015-19, up from 2.7 in 2000. Across the region, ratios ranged from a low of 3.0 in Sullivan County to a high of 3.6 in Ulster - all above the 3.0 considered affordable.

**Rental housing has become less affordable between 2000 and 2015-19, similar to state and national trends.** Region-wide, 33% of the median household income went to cover rent in 2015-19, above the federal affordability guideline that housing should cost no more than 30% of household income. In 2015-19, renters in Sullivan County spent 31% of their income on rent, below Greene (43%) and Ulster (37%) renters, but above the 29% spent in the state. These proportions were up from 2000, 16 points in Greene and 9 points in Orange counties.

## Public Safety

Public safety affects the emotional and physical well-being of residents and contributes to quality of life for individuals at home, at work, and in the community.

**Violent crime rates have decreased across the region.** In 2019, the Mid-Hudson Valley region had 18 violent crimes reported per 10,000 residents, below the state rate of 20 violent crimes per 10,000 residents. This was a 27% decrease in the rate of violent crimes since 2000, compared to a 25% decrease statewide. Greene (38) and Sullivan (25) had the highest rates in the region, while Putnam (5) and Ulster

(14) had the lowest. All counties, except Greene, experienced a rate decrease since 2000.

The rate of domestic violence decreased in the Mid-Hudson Valley region. The region had an 11% decrease in the rate of reported domestic violence between 2009 and 2019. In 2019, there were 32 reports of domestic violence per 10,000 residents in the region, down from 36 in 2009 and below the state rate (41). The rate grew the most in Orange County, increasing 26%, in contrast to Greene and Putnam counties, which had decreases of 62% and 56%, respectively, since 2009.