



## SPECIAL REPORT

# Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area

DECEMBER 2013

## About This Report

This report was prepared by Rochester Area Community Foundation and ACT Rochester. In August 2013, the Community Foundation Board of Directors adopted a new *Grantmaking and Community Leadership Framework*. One of the principal goals of this ambitious framework is to create an equitable community by focusing on three critical community issues:

1. Making a significant and sustainable reduction in the academic achievement gap as currently experienced by many children, primarily in the city of Rochester;
2. Fostering racial and ethnic understanding and equity; and
3. Creating community awareness and understanding of the concentration of poverty and how it affects our community, and encouraging community and economic development efforts that address these issues.

Implementation of item 3 begins with this study. It is intended to frame and guide future work of the Community Foundation and to serve as an instrument to create community awareness and understanding.

U.S. Census information contains a trove of data that was sorted and analyzed in significant detail. The report also includes analyses from other sources and other studies. It focuses on the nine-county greater Rochester region and examines the level and concentration of poverty within the city of Rochester.

Care has been taken in the report's text and charts to accurately describe and cite sources for the data. The reader will benefit from three general points about the data:

- Information attributed to the U.S. Census is from either the 2010 decennial Census or the American Community Survey for 2007-11. These sources are cited in the various charts. When sources other than the U.S. Census are used, these are cited with sources detailed in the End Notes (page 40).
- In most instances, the terms "poverty" and "poor" refer to those living below the federal poverty level. As discussed in Section 1, the federal poverty level is set at an extremely low level of income. For school-level poverty information, the standard used is based on federal eligibility for free- and reduced-price meals. This standard and its relationship to the federal poverty level are discussed in Section 6 (page 34).
- The terms "region" and "metro area" (or metropolitan area) are not the same. "Region" refers to the nine-county region (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates). The nine-county region is used in Sections 1-3 of the report. "Metro" refers to the Metropolitan Statistical Areas established by the U.S. Census Bureau. For our area, this includes the six counties of Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Wayne, and Yates. The metro unit is used where comparisons are made to other parts of the country (Section 4).

# **Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area**

**December 2013**

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## Can You Picture It?

It is tempting to see the image of poverty as a single, clearly focused photograph. But the true image of poverty is blurry; it is complex and replete with paradox.

Even the data requires us to have multiple focal points. It requires us to view multiple realities.

Consider this: Within the nine-county region, the poverty rates for blacks and Hispanics are more than three times that of whites. Yet, the majority of our region's poor people (60%) are white.

While the concentration of poor in the city of Rochester is both extraordinary and highly visible, the majority of our region's poor people (59%) live outside the city. Even the "low poverty" suburbs of Monroe County are home to more than 41,000 poor people.

The human image of poverty is similarly diffuse. If our picture is of a poor child born into abject poverty, it is an accurate picture. But the picture also includes the adult with life-long health struggles, the family thrown suddenly

*(continued next page)*

## Executive Summary

Rochester – the fifth poorest city in the country (among the 75 largest metro areas)?

Rochester – the second poorest among comparably sized cities in the United States?

Rochester – the city with the third highest concentration of extremely poor neighborhoods (among the top 100 metropolitan areas in the country)?

Rochester – the poorest school district in upstate New York?

Rochester – the poorest large urban school district in New York State?

Rochester? Yes, Rochester.

\*\*\*

These are the troubling statistics behind our community's ongoing struggle with the critical issue of poverty. Poverty destroys neighborhoods and impairs the health of regions beyond those neighborhoods. Poverty robs people of their dignity and sense of worth and saps communities of resources – both human and material. And poverty has had a dramatic impact on Rochester, most particularly on its public schools.

Although acknowledged to be an enormous problem in the Rochester region, poverty's extent and impact have been too little understood. This report seeks to expand this understanding.

In addition to the alarming findings described above, the report also documents several well-known, but still disquieting facts:

- There are poor people in every city, town, and village in the region, with more than 160,000 people living below the federal poverty level in the nine-county region.
- Children are far more likely to be poor than adults. In the nine-county region, 19% of children are poor, as compared to 13% of all residents. In the city of Rochester, nearly half the children (46%) are poor, compared with 31% of the total population.
- Blacks and Hispanics are far more likely to be poor than whites. In our region, the poverty rate for blacks stands at 34% and for Hispanics at 33%. For whites the rate is 10%. And, blacks and Hispanics have a much higher rate of poverty in Rochester than they do elsewhere in New York State or in the nation.

into poverty by the loss of employment, the recent college graduate who cannot find work, and the farm worker who can find only a part-time job.

The true image of poverty is not found in a crisp photo, but in a collage that is sometimes clear and sometimes a bit murky.



- Those in female-headed households, especially those with children under the age of 5, experience a far greater poverty rate than other families.
- Our concentration of poverty is remarkable when compared to other communities. Among comparably sized cities, Rochester has one of the highest percentages of metro area poor people living in the city. And, as noted above, Rochester has one of the highest concentrations of extremely poor neighborhoods.
- The federal poverty level, which is used in the findings above (except the school information), is set at a very low level of income. For example, a single adult working full-time and earning the federal and NY State minimum wage (\$7.75 per hour) would earn \$16,120 per year, which is \$4,620 more than the federal poverty level. Another way of looking at the same situation is to realize that a single person making just above the federal poverty level of \$11,490 would earn only \$5.53 per hour, or 29% lower than the minimum wage. The key point is that the federal poverty level accounts for the very poor. There are many more people than those measured in this report who struggle with meeting the basic needs of life.

In addition to the data findings, the report also contains observations on how the current situation developed. Patterns of racial discrimination, unchecked sprawl, limited housing choices for the poor, and a failure to evolve new structures and new systems are discussed.

Finally, the impact of our highly concentrated poverty is examined and broad strategies for the future are presented. While the study offers observations on the various strategies available, it does not recommend specific actions. Instead, a comprehensive effort to improve community awareness of our poverty and its impacts is recommended.



## Is There An Alternative to the Federal Poverty Level?

Because of limitations in the federal poverty level, many efforts are under way to find an alternative.

One such approach is the self-sufficiency standard established by a steering committee of New York State anti-poverty and community action organizations.

Using a methodology developed by Diana M. Pearce, PhD, of the University of Washington, the steering committee published a self-sufficiency standard for each county in the state.\* This standard is intended to represent the income level needed to meet basic needs without public or private assistance.

The standard differs from the federal poverty level in several ways: it is built-up using contemporary cost categories and estimates; it varies with family structure (with different cost estimates for infants, toddlers, pre-school children, and

*(continued next page)*

## Section 1: Overview

### A. Poverty in Greater Rochester

160,699 people in the nine-county Greater Rochester region live below the federal poverty level.

It is a large number. Yet, there are many more “poor” in our community. The federal poverty level is so low that many health and human service programs use incomes higher than the poverty level to define eligibility. For example, eligibility for “food stamps” is currently set at 130% of the poverty level. If we considered 130% of the poverty level as “poor,” the number of poor people in our region can be estimated at approximately 210,000. Consistent data for all communities is not available to use the higher level; so this report uses the federal poverty level to define “poor.” The reader of this report should keep in mind that this definition of poverty is set at a very low level of income.

This report provides a description of the poor in our region (Section 2) and a detailed analysis of where the poor live (Section 3). The report examines the issue of concentration of poverty using a benchmark group of comparably sized metro areas, as well as the nation’s largest metros (Section 4). Section 5 delves into the origins of Rochester’s pattern of concentrated poverty, while Section 6 considers the importance of concentrated poverty and explores the question: Where do we go from here?

### B. What is Poverty? How is it Measured?

Most people recognize poverty to be a state or condition where individuals or families lack the financial resources to meet basic needs. Opinions vary greatly on what constitutes basic needs and how to quantify the resources needed.

The current federal poverty level derives from a formula developed in 1963. In that year, the Department of Agriculture estimated the cost to meet basic food needs. That amount was then multiplied by 3 to account for all other basic needs. The level has been adjusted annually since 1963 using changes in the consumer price index (CPI). The 2013 poverty levels for various family sizes are:

Family Size*	Annual Income
1	\$11,490
2	\$15,510
3	\$19,530
4	\$23,550
5	\$27,570

\* For larger families, add \$4,020 for each additional member

teenagers); and it is based on county-specific costs.

The table below shows the self-sufficiency standard for Monroe County. This level is significantly higher than the federal poverty level. In fact, in the case of families with children the self-sufficiency standard is more than double the federal poverty level.

Family Size*	Annual Income
1	\$20,042
2	\$38,773
3	\$47,391
4	\$58,284
5	\$58,598

The financial self-sufficiency standard is helpful in understanding just how low the income level is under the federal poverty level. Because this standard is not universally available and is not updated regularly, it cannot be used in this report. Except for the discussion of public education, the poverty level used throughout this report is the federal level.

\* Diana M. Pearce, PhD, "The Self Sufficiency Standard for New York State 2010," New York State Community Action Association, Inc., and Wider Opportunities for Women

There are many criticisms of how the federal poverty level is set. The relationship between food and all other needs was arbitrary in 1963, and that relationship has not been updated since. This relationship ignores new cost components such as child care, and it does not adequately account for cost items that have increased at rates higher than inflation such as health care, housing, and taxes. The federal poverty level also does not account for regional differences in the cost of living (except for Alaska and Hawaii which have their own levels). The federal poverty level is set so low that an individual earning \$5.53 per hour – well below the federal and New York State minimum wage – would be above the poverty line (based on a 40-hour work week).

Despite its limitations, the federal poverty level is a universally collected data element that facilitates comparison among communities. Except for the discussion of public education, the poverty measure used throughout this report is the federal level.

## Section 2: Who Are Our Poor?

### A. Poverty and Age

The U.S. Census Bureau tracks poor people in three age groups: children (under age 18); adults (18 to 64); and senior adults (65 and older). Chart 1 below shows poverty rates and the number of individuals by these groupings. As shown in column F, the regional poverty rate is greatest for children (18.7%). Children account for 32% of the region's poor people (column E), but only 23% of the total population (column C). Adults are the largest population group, and thus, are the largest block of poor people (column D), despite having the second lowest poverty rate (column F). Seniors have the lowest poverty rate and the lowest percentage of poor people.

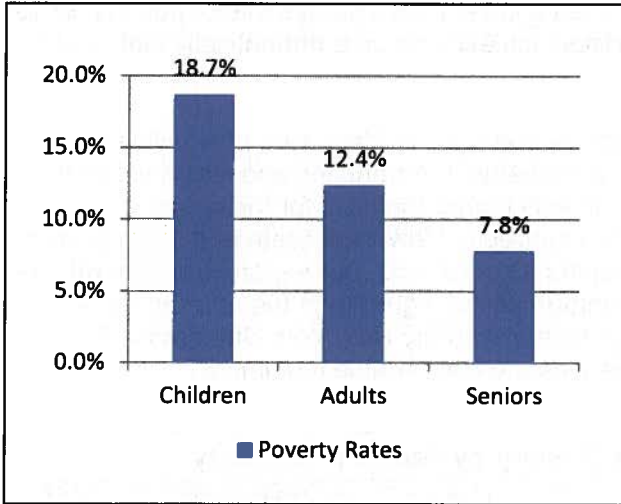
**Chart 1: Our Region's Poor – Numbers and Rates**

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F
	Total Population By Age	Percent of Total Population	Poor People by Age	Percent of Total Poor Population	Percent of Population that is Poor (poverty rate)
Under 18	275,739	22.6%	51,289	31.9%	18.7%
18 to 64	768,924	63.2%	95,891	59.7%	12.4%
65 or above	172,493	14.2%	13,519	8.4%	7.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,217,156</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>160,699</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11). Percentages were calculated for this report.

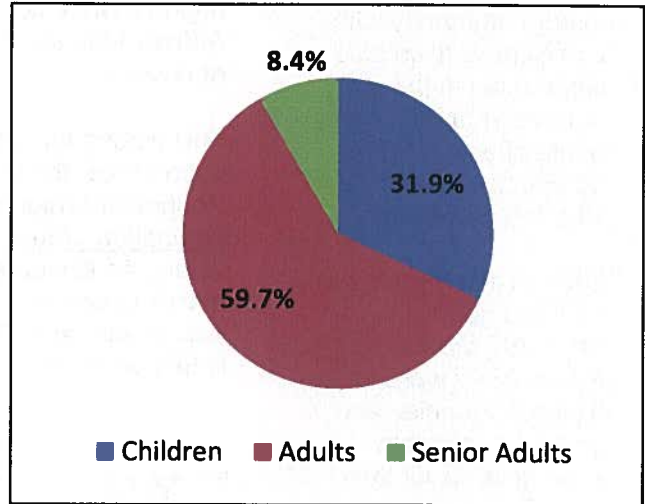
Chart 2 displays the poverty rates by age group and Chart 3 shows the distribution of poor people by age. It is difficult to draw conclusions from this data, except that children have a higher rate of poverty and represent a disproportionate share of the poor population. This is not unique to our area.

**Chart 2: Poverty Rates by Age**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).

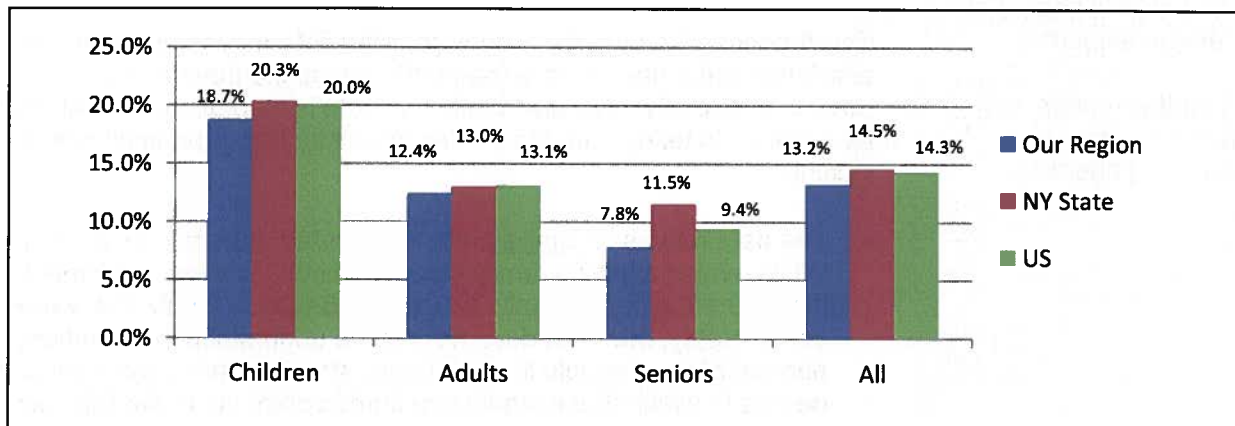
**Chart 3: Poor People by Age**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).

Chart 4 compares our region’s rate of poverty to New York State and U.S. levels. As illustrated, our regional poverty levels are lower than the state and national marks for all age groups. However, as will be discussed in Section 4, there are dramatic differences within the region. In fact, the city of Rochester’s poverty rate is among the highest for America’s large and medium cities.

**Chart 4: Poverty Rate Comparisons – Our Region, New York State, United States**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (2007-11).

## People Behind the Poverty Statistics

The charts, graphs and statistics in this report tell the story of poverty in our community with numbers. But we also wanted to tell the story of poverty and its many ripple effects from the perspective of people who live it every day.

Later in this report, you will read about Shynetta, Mercy, and Adam. They were vetted by local agencies and agreed to in-depth interviews about their lives. Details in each of the “Living with Poverty” stories are accurate; however, real names were changed in an effort to protect their privacy.

Thanks to the staff of Charles Settlement House and the YWCA of Rochester & Monroe County for their assistance in finding our interview subjects.

Shynetta — page 17  
 Mercy — page 23  
 Adam — page 38

### B. Poverty and Race

Disparities and inequalities among different racial and ethnic populations have been well documented on a national and local level. ACT Rochester ([www.ACTRochester.org](http://www.ACTRochester.org)) has compiled a report that outlines local inequalities by race and ethnicity in health and well-being, education, housing, income, and employment<sup>2</sup>. Poverty is also distributed unevenly by race and ethnicity. As described in Chart 5, our region’s white population has a lower than average rate of poverty, while African Americans and Hispanics experience a dramatically higher rate of poverty.

This finding mirrors statewide and national data. But, of significant importance, the poverty rate of African Americans and Hispanics in the Rochester region is significantly higher than it is for these same population groups when compared to New York State and the U.S. as a whole. As illustrated in column D of Chart 5, our regional poverty rate for blacks is now eight percentage points higher than the rate for blacks nationwide, and 12 points higher than the New York State mark. For local Hispanics, the disparities are comparable (column E).

<i>Column A</i>	<i>Column B</i>	<i>Column C</i>	<i>Column D</i>	<i>Column E</i>
	<b>All</b>	<b>Whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Our Region	13%	10%	34%	33%
United States	14%	12%	26%	23%
NY State	14%	11%	22%	25%
NY State without NYC	11%	9%	23%	18%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).

### C. Poverty and Families

The American Community Survey provides information about poverty and family structure. Chart 6 (page 10) contains a trove of data on poverty and family structure. While this data is helpful, the reader should be cautious in using and interpreting this data. Some particular cautions include:

- The data relates to families, not the number of people in families. While overall average family size is available, it is not available for the different types of family structures. Because family size varies considerably, this data does not help to understand the number or percent of poor people in each family structure; nor does it tell us the degree to which these family structures contribute to the total poverty profile. Additional research would be needed to develop this data.

- Like most data, it shows correlation, not causation. Cause-and-effect conclusions require further research.

Despite the limitations, and recognizing the cautions, the data on Chart 6 is revealing. The chart shows:

- Families with children (under age 18) are more likely to be poor when compared to all families. This holds for all counties, as well as the city of Rochester (column C).
- Families of married couples living together have dramatically lower poverty rates (column D).
- Female-headed families (with no husband present) are markedly poorer than families in general (column E).
- Female-headed families (with no husband present) are even poorer if children under age 18 are present (column F), and poorer yet if there are children under the age of 5 (column G).

**Chart 6: Poverty and Family Structure**

<b>Chart 6: Poverty and Family Structure</b>						
<b>Poverty Rates for Families with Different Characteristics</b>						
<i>Column A</i>	<i>Column B</i>	<i>Column C</i>	<i>Column D</i>	<i>Column E</i>	<i>Column F</i>	<i>Column G</i>
<b>County, Region, or City</b>	<b>All Families</b>	<b>Families with Children under 18</b>	<b>Families of Married Couples</b>	<b>Female Headed Families* - No Husband Present</b>	<b>Female Headed Families* - No Husband Present with Children under 18</b>	<b>Female Headed Families* - No Husband Present with Children under 5</b>
Monroe**	10.3%	17.3%	3.2%	32.3%	42.0%	51.8%
Orleans	9.7%	15.2%	3.5%	33.4%	39.1%	28.9%
Genesee	9.0%	16.4%	4.0%	31.8%	47.0%	65.3%
Livingston	7.1%	13.6%	2.1%	29.1%	37.7%	64.5%
Ontario	6.2%	11.5%	2.4%	21.8%	30.8%	29.3%
Wayne	7.5%	13.3%	3.6%	26.0%	33.2%	36.4%
Wyoming	6.5%	11.9%	3.1%	25.0%	34.1%	70.4%
Seneca	7.7%	13.0%	5.0%	17.3%	23.3%	35.3%
Yates	10.3%	18.7%	5.4%	28.1%	32.2%	23.9%
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>39.7%</b>	<b>NA***</b>
<b>Rochester (city)</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>55.5%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).

\* This grouping includes single, divorced, widowed, and married women with no husband present.

\*\* Data for Monroe County includes the city of Rochester; city data is shown separately at the bottom for analysis purposes.

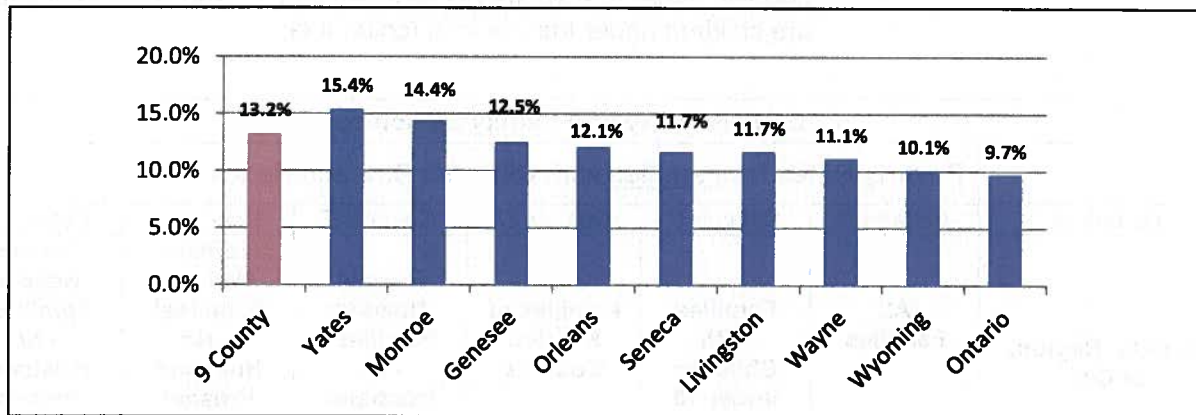
\*\*\* For this category, only percents were available – the regional total could not be calculated.

## Section 3: Where Do Our Poor Live?

### A. Poverty by County

It is well known that our region's poor people are concentrated in the city of Rochester, and this issue will be discussed in Section 4. But it is also important to recognize that there are considerable numbers of poor people in every county (and every town, village, and city). As illustrated in Charts 7 and 8, the poverty rates of all but two counties (Yates and Monroe) are below the regional average. Yates County has the highest poverty rate (15.4%), yet, because it has the smallest total population, it has the smallest number of poor people (3,904). On the opposite end of the spectrum, Ontario County has the lowest poverty rate (9.7%) but the largest number of poor people (10,469) outside Monroe County.

**Chart 7: Poverty Rate by County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (2007-11).

**Chart 8: Poverty Rate and Poor People by County**

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
County	Poverty Rate	Number of Poor People	Percent of Region's Poor People
Yates County	15.4%	3,904	2.4%
Monroe County	14.4%	107,186	66.7%
Genesee County	12.5%	7,510	4.7%
Orleans County	12.1%	5,189	3.2%
Seneca County	11.7%	4,124	2.6%
Livingston County	11.7%	7,650	4.8%
Wayne County	11.1%	10,409	6.5%
Wyoming County	10.1%	4,258	2.6%
Ontario County	9.7%	10,469	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>160,699</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Rochester (city)*</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>65,486</b>	<b>40.8%</b>

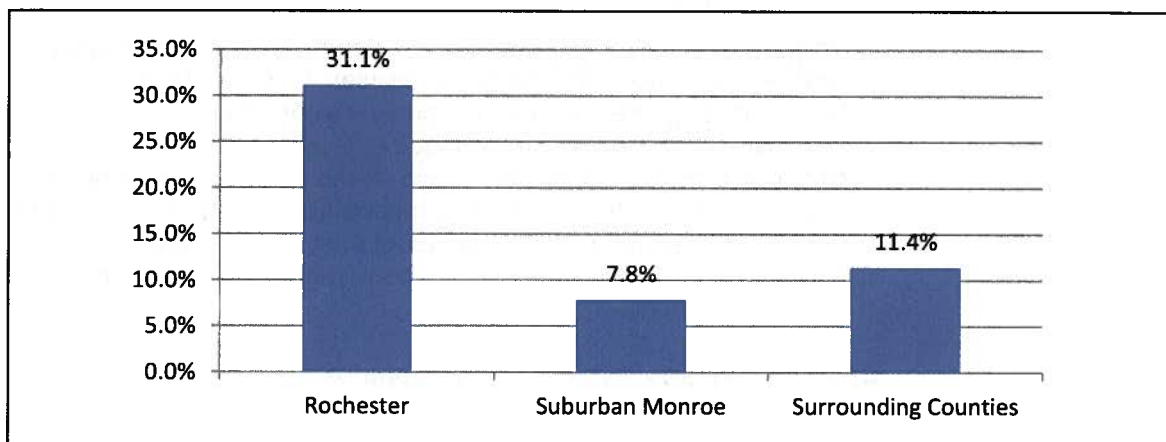
Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).  
 Percentages were calculated for this report.  
 \* Data for all counties includes cities within the county; city of Rochester data is shown separately at the bottom of this chart for analysis purposes.

## B. Poverty by Geographical Location

Chart 9 looks at poverty by community type and shows the sharp differences in poverty rates between the city of Rochester and the region's suburban areas. The difference between suburban Monroe County and the surrounding counties reflects a number of factors:

- Suburban Monroe County includes no cities, while the surrounding counties category includes the cities of Batavia, Geneva, and Canandaigua (see page 14 for more on these cities).
- Villages in the surrounding counties often serve as urban hubs in a way that most Monroe County suburban villages no longer do (see page 16 for more information about villages).
- Rural poverty is certainly greater in the outlying counties than in Monroe County, though this is not specifically documented in this study.

**Chart 9: City-Suburb Poverty Rates**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (2007-11).  
Percentage for Suburban Monroe and Surrounding Counties were calculated for this report.

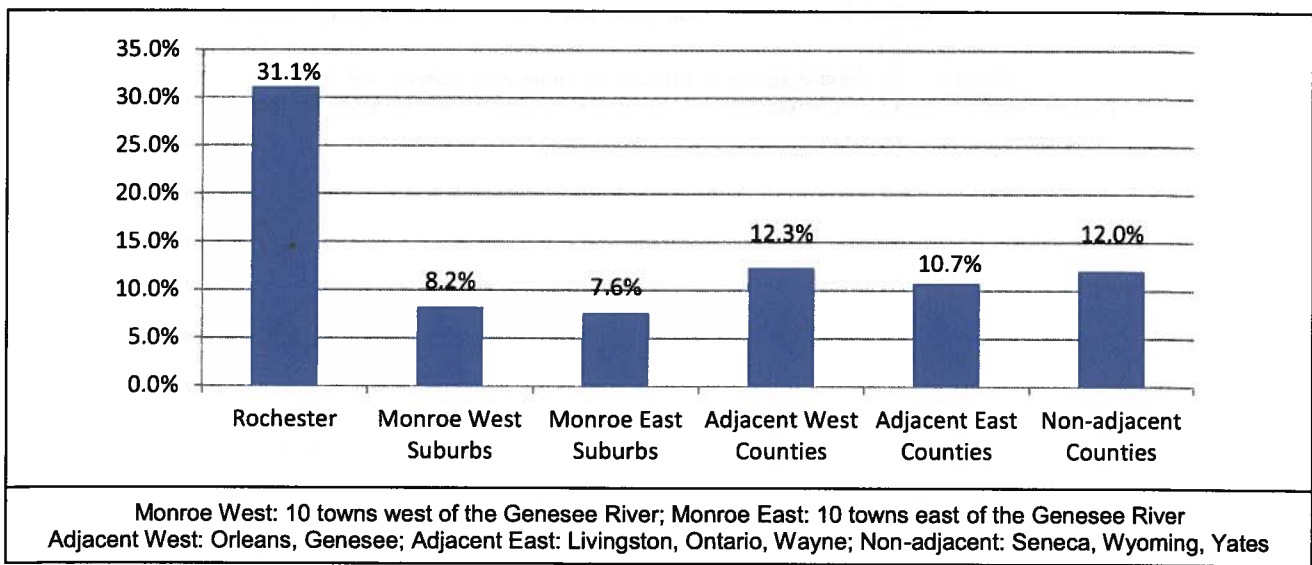
Poverty rates and the corresponding number of poor people are highlighted on Chart 10. While the city of Rochester's poverty rate is very high, less than half the region's poor are city residents. It may be surprising to some that about one-third of our region's poor people live outside of Monroe County (column D).

<b>Chart 10: Poverty Rate and Poor People by City-Suburban Location</b>			
<i>Column A</i>	<i>Column B</i>	<i>Column C</i>	<i>Column D</i>
<b>County</b>	<b>Poverty Rate</b>	<b>Number of Poor People</b>	<b>Percent of Region's Poor People</b>
City of Rochester	31.1%	65,486	40.8%
Suburban Monroe County	7.8%	41,700	25.9%
Surrounding Counties	11.4%	53,513	33.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>160,699</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11). Percentages were calculated for this report.

This study looked at sub-parts of the suburban areas to determine whether there were any major differences. Chart 11 illustrates a slightly higher poverty rate for Monroe County's western suburbs compared to the east side. Similarly, the counties adjacent to Monroe on the west side had higher poverty rates than those on the east. The west side adjacent counties and the three non-adjacent counties are more rural in character than Monroe County and the adjacent east side counties. This at least partially accounts for the higher poverty rates in the west side and non-adjacent counties.

**Chart 11: Poverty Rates by Geographic Area**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (2007-11). Percentages were calculated for this report.



**C. Poverty and Cities**

There are four cities within the nine-county region: Rochester, Batavia, Canandaigua, and Geneva. All have poverty levels higher than the regional average, although none approach the levels of the city of Rochester. Information for these cities is provided in Chart 12.

Rochester, Batavia, and Geneva have significant poverty rates. Chart 12 shows how each city's share of their county's poor population (Column G) significantly exceeds its share of the general population (Column F). Together, these four cities are home to nearly 48% of our region's poor people. Rochester's extraordinary poverty level is further analyzed in Sections 4 & 5.

**Chart 12: Poverty in Our Region's Cities**

<i>Column A</i>	<i>Column B</i>	<i>Column C</i>	<i>Column D</i>	<i>Column E</i>	<i>Column F</i>	<i>Column G</i>
<b>City*</b>	<b>County*</b>	<b>Poverty Rate</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Number of Poor People</b>	<b>Percent of Total County Population</b>	<b>Percent of County Poor Population</b>
<b>Batavia</b>	Genesee	23.0%	15,465	3,557	25.7%	47.4%
Canandaigua	Ontario	13.3%	10,545	1,402	9.8%	13.4%
<b>Geneva</b>	Ontario	23.0%	13,261	3,050	12.3%	29.1%
<b>Rochester</b>	Monroe	31.1%	210,565	65,486	28.3%	61.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11). Percentages were calculated for this report.  
 \* The data for these cities is part of the data for the respective counties as presented elsewhere in this report. This data is shown here separately for analysis.

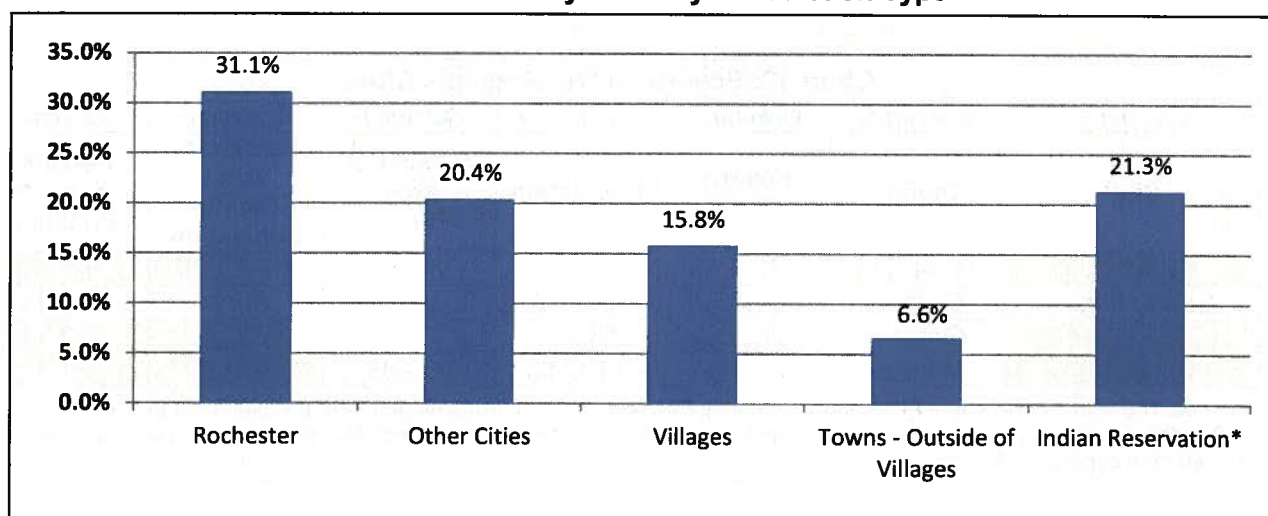


### D. Poverty and Towns

Nearly 80% of residents within our nine-county region (966,837 people) live within the area's 126 towns<sup>3</sup>. Of this group, 152,216 live within the region's 60 villages<sup>3</sup>. The remaining 814,621 residents live in town areas outside of villages (sometimes referred to as unincorporated areas).

As detailed in Charts 13 and 14, it is these town areas outside of villages where the lowest poverty rates exist. In fact, these areas in aggregate have poverty rates that are about half the regional level and dramatically lower than village and city rates. Nearly two thirds of our region's residents live in these relatively low poverty areas.

**Chart 13: Poverty Rates by Jurisdiction Type**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (2007-11). Percentages were calculated for this report.

\* Tonawanda Indian Reservation in Genesee County<sup>4</sup>

**Chart 14: Population and Poverty Rates by Jurisdiction Type**

Type of Jurisdiction	Number	Population	Percent of Regional Population	Poverty Rate
City of Rochester	1	210,565	17.4%	31.1%
Other Cities	3	39,271	3.2%	20.4%
Villages	60	152,216	12.5%	15.8%
Towns (outside villages)	126	814,621	66.9%	6.6%
American Indian Reservation (see End Note 4)	1	483	Less than 0.1%	21.3%
<b>Total Region</b>		<b>1,217,156</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11). Jurisdiction types, populations, and poverty rates were compiled by the author from Census data.

See **Appendix A** for poverty rates for all towns in the nine-county region.

### E. Poverty and Villages

There are 60 villages in the nine-county region. Like cities, villages often serve as urban hubs, although the modern function of villages varies. Chart 15 displays poverty rates in 17 selected villages representing all counties in the nine-county region. Five of these villages have poverty rates in excess of 20% (yellow highlights in Column C). These five villages all represent a disproportionate percentage of their respective county's poor population (yellow highlights in Columns F and G). Collectively, these 17 villages are home to 15,702 poor people. The collective poverty rate of this group of villages is 17%. Individual village poverty rates range from a low of 2.2% (Victor) to 41.3% (Geneseo).

At 41.3%, the poverty rate of the Village of Geneseo is startling. It is the highest poverty rate of any municipality in the region and it is 10 percentage points higher than the city of Rochester. It is likely that this is an artifact (at least partially) of being a college town. Evidence for this conclusion is found in the fact that Geneseo's childhood poverty rate (19.2%) is only slightly higher than the regional mark for children (18.7%), while its adult poverty rate (45.6%) is dramatically higher than the regional level (12.4%) and even higher than the city of Rochester (27.1%) level for adults.

See **Appendix A** for poverty rates of all villages in the nine-county region.

**Chart 15: Poverty in Selected Villages**

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F	Column G
Village	County	Poverty Rate	Population	Number of Poor People	Percent of Total County Population	Percent of County Poor Population
Medina	Orleans	21.0%	6,065	1,274	14.1%	24.6%
Albion	Orleans	20.6%	6,056	1,248	14.1%	24.1%
Warsaw	Wyoming	8.7%	3,473	302	8.2%	7.1%
Le Roy	Genesee	13.2%	4,391	580	7.3%	7.7%
Geneseo	Livingston	41.3%	8,031	3,317	12.3%	43.4%
Dansville	Livingston	17.6%	4,719	830	7.2%	10.1%
Clifton Springs	Ontario	8.3%	2,127	177	2.0%	1.7%
Victor	Ontario	2.2%	2,696	60	2.5%	.6%
Newark	Wayne	15.0%	9,145	1,372	9.8%	13.2%
Palmyra	Wayne	15.2%	3,536	537	3.8%	5.2%
Waterloo	Seneca	7.9%	5,171	409	16.0%	9.9%
Seneca Falls*	Seneca	12.8%	6,681	855	20.7%	20.7%
Penn Yan	Yates	20.0%	5,159	1,042	20.4%	26.7%
Fairport	Monroe	6.5%	5,353	348	.7%	.3%
Webster	Monroe	15.7%	5,399	848	.7%	.8%
Hilton	Monroe	7.0%	5,886	412	.8%	.4%
Brockport	Monroe	25.0%	8,366	2,091	1.1%	2.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11). Percentages were calculated for this report.  
 \* Seneca Falls Village was dissolved on December 31, 2011, but was in existence for the American Community Survey.

## Section 4: The Concentration of Poverty

### Living with Poverty

#### Shynetta's Story

Shynetta never imagined that being in an abusive relationship would derail her entire life. But it did.

She was evicted from the apartment where she lived for 10 years, lost her car and her job, and was kicked out of a nursing program because she missed too many classes. "I lost everything."

With only the clothes they were wearing, Shynetta and her young daughter moved into her mother's one-bedroom apartment and slept on an inflatable mattress in the living room. Several months later, the two spent a week at a YWCA shelter before they were accepted into Wilson Commencement Park's two-year program that would help stabilize their situation and give them time to become more financially self-sufficient.

"I can say right now that I'm living poor," says the 33-year-old, who lives with her now eight-year-old daughter in a YWCA-supported apartment. They receive SNAP benefits (formerly

*(continued next page)*

**Data Note:** For many of the analyses and charts in this section, it was necessary to use the Census Bureau's **Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)**. For the Rochester metro, this includes only six of the nine counties included in the earlier sections of this report. The counties of Genesee, Wyoming, and Seneca are not included in the analysis in this section. This means that some data in this section of the report will vary slightly, but accurately, from data described in earlier parts. For example, Chart 10 shows the city of Rochester's poor at 40.8% of the nine-county region, while Chart 19 shows that share at 45.2% of the six-county MSA.

#### A. Rochester – How Poor?

It may surprise many readers that **Rochester is the fifth poorest city in the United States**, among the top 75 metropolitan areas. As illustrated in Chart 16, only Detroit, Hartford, Cleveland, and Dayton have higher poverty rates than Rochester.

**Chart 16: City Poverty Rates in the Top 75 U.S. Metro Areas**

Highest Poverty Rates			Lowest Poverty Rates		
Rank	City	Poverty Rate	Rank	City	Poverty Rate
1	Detroit	36.2%	61	Albuquerque	16.6%
2	Hartford	32.9%	62	Riverside-San Bernardino	15.8%
3	Cleveland	32.6%	63	Louisville (Jefferson County)	15.7%
4	Dayton	32.5%	64	Omaha	15.5%
5	Rochester	31.1%	65	Oxnard, CA	15.3%
6	Buffalo	29.9%	66	Jacksonville	15.2%
7	Miami	27.7%	67	Raleigh	15.1%
8	Providence	27.7%	68	Charlotte	15.0%
9	McAllen, TX	27.6%	69	Las Vegas	14.9%
10	Cincinnati	27.4%	70	San Diego	14.6%
11	Birmingham	27.3%	71	Seattle	13.2%
12	Milwaukee	27.0%	72	San Francisco	12.3%
13	Richmond	26.3%	73	Honolulu	11.6%
14	New Haven	26.3%	74	San Jose	11.1%
15	St Louis	26.0%	75	Virginia Beach	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).

**Appendix C** of this report contains a full listing of the top 75 metropolitan areas and the poverty rates of their principal cities.

known as food stamps) and Department of Social Services support for rent, utilities, and a small cash allowance. When there is not enough money to buy her daughter clothing or supplies for school, her disabled mother does what she can. The one positive in Shynetta's unexpected spiral into poverty is that during all of these transitions her daughter has remained at the same school.

Shynetta is trying to get her life back on track. She has been taking online college classes, paid for with a combination of financial aid and personal loans.

But the road to independence is still a ways off because, she says, "there is still so much to be done."

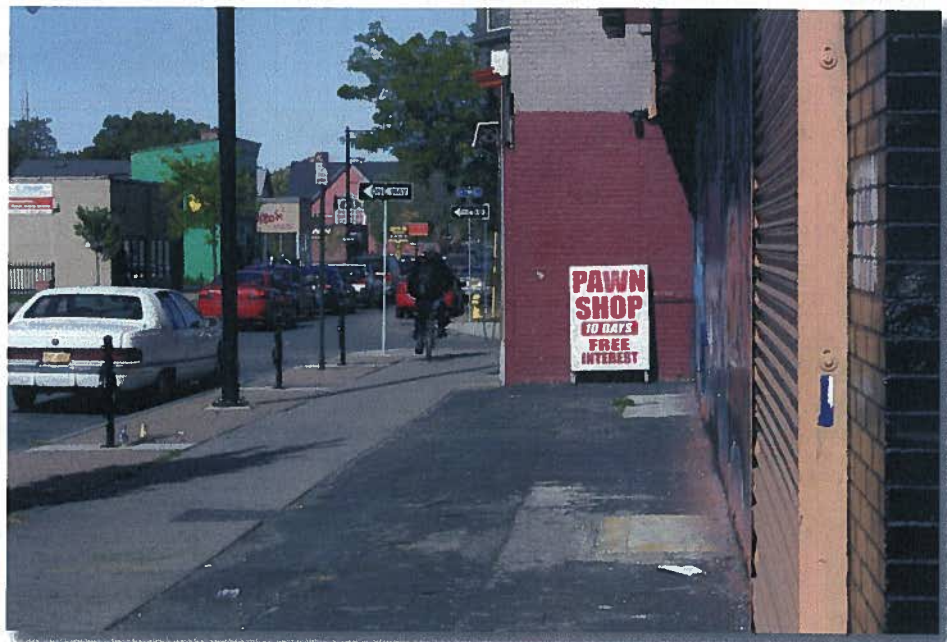
— Mary Holleran

To look at Rochester's poverty rate through a different perspective, Chart 17 compares Rochester's poverty rate to that of the principal city in the nation's 10 largest metro areas. As can be observed, Rochester's city poverty rate is higher than all the principal cities in the nation's largest metros. Expanding this group and looking at the nation's 25 largest metro areas, Rochester's poverty rate is higher than all but one of the principal cities (Detroit at 36.2%).

**Chart 17: Rochester Poverty Compared to the 10 Largest U.S. Metro Areas Ranked by Poverty Rate of Principal City**

Metro Area	Metro Population	Principal City Poverty Rate
Rochester	1,079,671	31.1%
Miami	5,564,635	27.7%
Philadelphia	5,965,343	25.6%
Atlanta	5,286,728	23.2%
Dallas – Fort Worth	6,426,214	23.0%
Mid-point of range		22.9%
Houston	5,920,416	21.5%
Chicago	9,461,105	21.4%
Boston	4,552,402	21.4%
Los Angeles	12,828,837	20.2%
New York	19,567,410	19.4%
Washington	5,636,232	18.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).



**B. Rochester and Comparably Sized Cities**

To dig deeper and to gauge the extent of Rochester’s urban poverty, this report developed a benchmark group of comparably sized metro areas in order to more fully explore this issue. The benchmark group consists of all metro areas with populations within 200,000 (+ or -) of Rochester’s.

The results of this benchmark comparison are shown in Chart 18. On the left side of the chart, *metro area* poverty rates are listed. As can be seen, the Rochester metro area is near the middle of the benchmark group, and is considerably lower than the mathematical mid-point<sup>5</sup>. A very different picture emerges when comparing based on the poverty rates of the *principal city*. In this comparison, Rochester is near the top, with only Hartford having a higher poverty rate. Rochester’s poverty rate is nearly nine percentage points higher than the mid-point of principal city poverty. In other words, **Rochester is second poorest among cities its size.**

**Chart 18: Poverty Rates - Rochester Benchmark Metro Areas (MSAs)\***

Ranked by Poverty Rate of Metro Area			Ranked by Poverty Rate of Principal City		
Metro Area	Metro Population	Metro Area Poverty Rate	Metro Area	Metro Population	Principal City Poverty Rate
Fresno	930,450	23.4%	Hartford	1,212,381	32.9%
Tucson	980,263	17.4%	<b>Rochester</b>	<b>1,079,671</b>	<b>31.1%</b>
New Orleans	1,189,866	17.0%	Buffalo	1,135,509	29.9%
Albuquerque	887,077	16.5%	Birmingham	1,128,047	27.3%
<b>Mid-point of range</b> →		<b>15.8%</b>	Richmond	1,208,101	26.3%
Birmingham	1,128,047	15.0%	Fresno	930,450	25.9%
Oklahoma City	1,252,987	14.9%	New Orleans	1,189,866	25.7%
Tulsa	937,478	14.5%	Grand Rapids	988,938	25.5%
Louisville	1,235,708	14.1%	Tucson	980,263	22.6%
Buffalo	1,135,509	13.9%	<b>Mid-point of range</b> →		<b>22.3%</b>
Grand Rapids	988,938	13.6%	Bridgeport	916,829	21.9%
<b>Rochester</b>	<b>1,079,671</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	Tulsa	937,478	19.4%
Richmond	1,208,101	11.5%	Worcester	916,980	19.0%
Raleigh	1,130,490	11.2%	Salt Lake City	1,087,873	17.9%
Salt Lake City	1,087,873	10.9%	Oklahoma City	1,252,987	17.1%
Worcester	916,980	10.0%	Albuquerque	887,077	16.6%
Hartford	1,212,381	9.8%	Louisville	1,235,708	15.7%
Honolulu	935,207	9.3%	Raleigh	1,130,490	15.1%
Bridgeport	916,829	8.3%	Honolulu	935,207	11.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11).

\* Includes all U.S. Metro areas with populations within 200,000 (+ or -) of Rochester; MSA means Metropolitan Statistical Area, which for Rochester is a six-county area.

In order to examine the degree of poverty concentration among the benchmark cities, this study considered the percent of metro area poor who live within the principal city. However, assessing cities on this metric does not produce a valid comparison because there is such a variation in city-metro structures. For example, Louisville recently consolidated with

surrounding Jefferson County. The result is that the new consolidated city, which now contains about 60% of the MSA population, accounts for a similarly high proportion of poor people. Also, cities in the West tend to have very large city boundaries, and therefore account for a high percent of both total population and the poor population within their MSA. Albuquerque, Fresno, and Tucson fit this description.

To account for the variation in city-metro structures, it is useful to measure a city's percent of the metro area poor, *in relation* to that city's proportion of metro area population. Chart 19 displays the results of such a measurement.

The left side of Chart 19 shows the eight cities (including Rochester) where the principal city represents less than 20% of the metro area's total population. For this group of comparable cities, Rochester has the highest concentration of the metro area's poor population. Rochester's share of poor people in its MSA is nearly nine percentage points above the mid-point of this subgroup.

The right side of the chart expands the group to include the 10 cities that contain 30% or less of their metro population. In this comparison, Rochester is second only to Buffalo in its share of MSA poor people. Rochester's share of the MSA's poor is still nearly 6½ percentage points above the mid-point in this expanded group.

These findings are at least partially a function of state-to-state variation in how local government boundaries are drawn. Nonetheless, the concentration has very real impacts as important public services (such as public education) are financed and delivered in line with these boundaries. See section 6 (page 34) for more on this topic.

**Chart 19: Percent of Metro Poor Who Live in the Principal City  
Rochester Benchmark Metros\***

Cities Containing Less than <u>20%</u> of Metro Area Population			Cities Containing Less than <u>30%</u> of Metro Area Population		
Principal City	Percent of Metro Area Population	Percent of Metro Area Poor People	Principal City	Percent of Metro Area Population	Percent of Metro Area Poor People
Rochester	19.5%	45.2%	Buffalo	23.0%	49.4%
Bridgeport	15.7%	41.5%	Rochester	19.5%	45.2%
Richmond	16.9%	38.7%	New Orleans	28.7%	43.8%
Worcester	19.7%	37.4%	Bridgeport	15.7%	41.5%
<b>Mid-point of range</b> →		<b>36.7%</b>	<b>Mid-point of range</b> →		<b>38.8%</b>
Grand Rapids	19.0%	35.7%	Richmond	16.9%	38.7%
Hartford	10.3%	34.7%	Worcester	19.7%	37.4%
Birmingham	18.8%	34.3%	Grand Rapids	19.0%	35.7%
Salt Lake City	17.1%	28.1%	Hartford	10.3%	34.7%
			Birmingham	18.8%	34.3%
			Salt Lake City	17.1%	28.1%

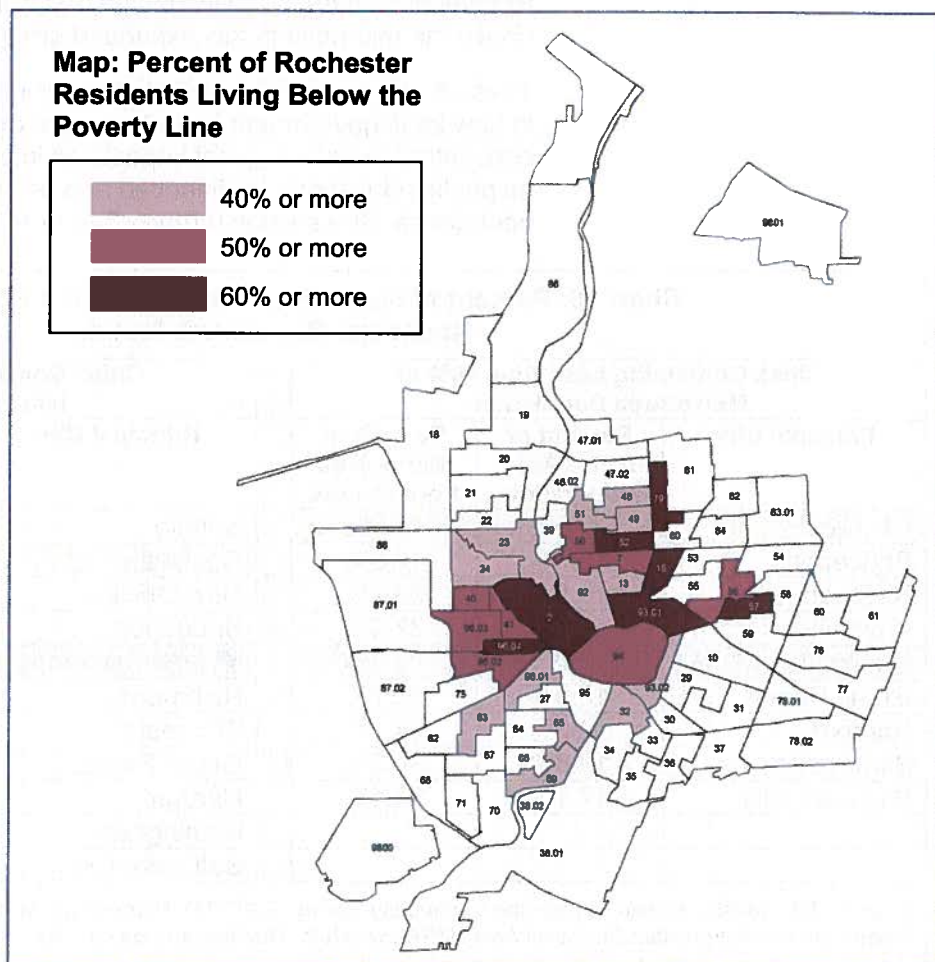
Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11). Percentages were calculated for this report.  
\* Metro means Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which for Rochester is six counties.

### C. Neighborhoods of Extreme Poverty

A 2011 Brookings Institution study provides additional insight into Rochester's highly concentrated poverty<sup>6</sup>. This study looked at extremely poor neighborhoods in the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas. Extremely poor neighborhoods were defined as those Census tracts with a poverty rate of 40% or higher.

For the Rochester *metro*, Brookings documented 27 such areas, all within the city of Rochester. These census tracts were home to 22% of our metro area's poor – a mark that places the Rochester *metro* 13<sup>th</sup> out of 100 with the highest concentration of poor people living in extreme poverty neighborhoods.

The Brookings study also looked at the concentration of poverty *within the principal city* in the 100 largest metropolitan areas. Based on this metric, Rochester's extremely poor Census tracts account for 47% of the city's poverty. This places Rochester *city* third highest among the 100 metro areas in the percent of poor who are concentrated into extremely poor neighborhoods. This finding provides further evidence of the economic stress within the city area often referred to as the "Crescent."





To take a deeper look at the issue of extreme poverty neighborhoods, this study analyzed the Brookings findings for the benchmark group of comparably sized communities. As shown in Chart 20, Rochester has the second highest concentration of extreme poverty among the benchmark cities when considering both the *metro area* and the *principal city*. This finding is particularly noteworthy because it means that the city of Rochester's poverty concentration was so great that it moved the whole metro area to the number two position among comparably sized metro areas.

**Chart 20: Extreme Poverty Neighborhoods, Rochester Benchmark Metro Areas (MSAs)\***

Ranked by Extreme Poverty in the Metro Area			Ranked by Extreme Poverty in the Principal City		
Metro Area	Percent of Poor People Living in Extremely Poor** Neighborhoods	Rank Among 100 Largest Metros	Principal City	Percent of Poor People Living in Extremely Poor** Neighborhoods	Rank Among 100 Largest Metros
Fresno	25.1%	5	Hartford	49.6%	2
<b>Rochester</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Rochester</b>	<b>47.0%</b>	<b>3</b>
Hartford	19.9%	17	Fresno	32.2%	19
Louisville	16.9%	20	Mid-point of range	28.1%	
Buffalo	15.7%	24	Buffalo	26.2%	29
Tucson	14.4%	27	New Orleans	26.1%	30
Mid-point of range	13.5%		Richmond, VA	26.0%	32
New Orleans	13.1%	33	Louisville, KY	24.9%	35
Richmond	11.2%	39	Birmingham	24.6%	36
Birmingham	10.9%	42	Grand Rapids	19.7%	47
Worcester, MA	9.9%	48	Worcester, MA	19.0%	51
Bridgeport, CT	8.8%	54	Tucson	15.7%	58
Tulsa	8.5%	57	Raleigh	15.5%	59
Grand Rapids	7.9%	62	Tulsa	14.8%	61
Albuquerque	7.5%	66	Oklahoma City	12.1%	73
Oklahoma City	6.9%	68	Bridgeport, CT	11.4%	76
Raleigh	6.5%	72	Albuquerque	8.2%	79
Honolulu	5.0%	81	Honolulu	8.0%	81
Salt Lake City	1.9%	95	Salt Lake City	6.5%	83

Source: Brookings Institution (see End Note 6)

\* All U.S. Metro areas within 200,000 population (+ or -) of Rochester

\*\* Census Tracts with 40% or higher poverty rates.

#### D. Closing

Compared with comparably sized cities, as well as the nation's largest cities, Rochester:

- **Is one of the poorest cities;**
- **Has one of the greatest concentrations of poverty; and**
- **Has one of the highest concentrations of extremely poor neighborhoods.**

## Section 5: Observations – Why is Our Poverty so Concentrated?

### Living with Poverty

#### Mercy's Story

While her three children were growing up, Mercy babysat for other children in her Gates neighborhood and worked from home sewing knock-off Cabbage Patch dolls and clothing and making just enough to get by.

Then a Thanksgiving night fire 20 years ago left the young family with nowhere to live and reliant on government assistance to help pay the rent and utilities in an apartment in the city. That Christmas, Charles Settlement House volunteers took the children to see Santa and then gave them certificates to get new bikes, which helped to brighten what would have been a depressing holiday.

About four years later, Mercy's family moved to a second-floor apartment in a house that provided a little more space. Three weeks later, an attic fire left them homeless once again. And once again the Settlement House reached out to help, finding them a place to live, and collecting beds,

*(continued next page)*

**Note:** This report has provided objective and descriptive information based on U.S. Census data and other sources. Sections 4 and 5 provide observations that are driven by this data, but also reflect interpretations, inferences, and some opinion by the author.

The previous section presents a startling view of our region's poverty, and an alarming picture of the concentration of poverty. It is clear that our region's poverty is a central factor in the problems that face the city of Rochester and its residents. It should also be apparent that our level and concentration of poverty severely limit our region's progress. So, how did this happen? Of course, economic stratification is not new, and exists almost everywhere. The following points attempt to trace some of the factors that describe Rochester's journey to its current state.

#### A. Racial Segregation

Given the strong relationship between poverty and race (see Chart 5), the impact of racial segregation is an important factor to explore. Cities have always had sub-areas of concentrated poverty, but the strong attitudes and policies that encouraged racial and ethnic segregation had, and continue to have, a profound impact on our community. Rochester's heritage as a "factory town" helped create tight-knit communities for many immigrant blue-collar workers. While not all immigrant groups found easy access to these factories (Italian, Irish), these groups were generally successful in finding work that indirectly supported the industrial output that created great wealth in Rochester. These groups formed additional tight-knit communities.

Despite its heritage as the home of Frederick Douglass, African Americans found access to these communities to be extremely difficult. Housing and employment choices for blacks were very limited, even for professionals.

The Great Migration refers to the movement of more than six million African Americans from the rural South to northern industrial cities between 1916 and 1970<sup>7</sup>. While Rochester is sometimes cited as a destination for this migration, this was significantly true only in the later years. In fact, at the city's peak population in 1950, Rochester recorded only 7,590 blacks in the U.S. Census (2.3% of the city's population). By 1960, Rochester's black population had more than tripled (to 23,586), and it doubled again between 1960 and 1970 (to 47,852). Double-digit rates of growth were experienced over each of the next three decades. In 2000, the city's black population reached 81,017, and then it grew only slightly (less than 3%) over the next decade to its 2010 mark of 83,346<sup>8</sup>.

bedding, clothing and other essentials.

"I am poor money-wise, but I'm still walking," says the 63-year-old, who has been unable to work since 2000 because she suffers from rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia.

In addition to Supplemental Security Income to pay for food and rent, Mercy also receives SNAP benefits (formerly food stamps). A lifelong crafter, she says she could make some money by selling what she creates. But she has chosen to give back instead. She leads a craft session for a group of low-income seniors four days a week. In her free time and every evening, she uses her knitting machine to make hats and scarves to give away to those who are less fortunate.

This Christmas, Mercy doesn't have money to buy gifts for everyone in her family, but she is making pajamas for her 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. She feels blessed, she says, because "I have all the people that I love and all the people that love me back in my life."

— *Mary Holleran*

The growth of the city's Hispanic population is less fully documented, since the Census Bureau only began to collect this information in 1970. Though it was slower to grow in the early post-World War II era, the Hispanic population in the city of Rochester has grown by an aggregate of 317% since 1970 to its 2010 level of 34,456<sup>8</sup>.

The city's African American population grew most rapidly during the early post-World War II era, a period when overt housing discrimination was the norm and substantially permitted by law. The resulting residential segregation is still with us today. A 2012 study by the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research documented current racial segregation in American neighborhoods<sup>9</sup>. That study analyzed racial segregation among neighborhoods (Census tracts) within each of the nation's Metropolitan Statistical Areas. The report's key finding was that, across the nation, residential segregation has declined significantly in recent years. But the study also notes that much of the decline results from the impact of newer cities where rapid growth occurred in the time period after courts and legislatures curtailed the most overt forms of housing discrimination. For older, slow-growing cities such as Rochester, the decline in residential segregation patterns has been much slower.



Chart 21 examines the results of the Manhattan Institute study as applied to the benchmark group of comparably sized communities. This data looks at the degree of segregation among all Census tracts within the metro area of each community. There are two measures of residential segregation used in this analysis. These two measures must be considered independently, as they represent different ways of viewing segregation. According to the report's authors, "the two measures together adequately summarize segregation<sup>10</sup>." Each measure expresses its results as an index, where perfect integration is 0 and complete segregation is 100.

<b>Chart 21: Measures of Residential Segregation Rochester Benchmark Metro Areas (MSAs)*</b>			
<b>Dissimilarity Measure</b>		<b>Isolation Measure</b>	
<b>Metro Area</b>	<b>Dissimilarity Index**</b>	<b>Metro Area</b>	<b>Isolation Index**</b>
<b>** Definition of Dissimilarity:</b> <i>Dissimilarity reflects the proportion of either whites or African Americans who would need to move to achieve perfect integration across the metro area. Higher index scores mean higher levels of segregation.</i>		<b>** Definition of Isolation:</b> <i>The Isolation indicator measures the tendency for members of one group to live where their share of the total population is above the community-wide average. Higher index scores mean higher levels of segregation.</i>	
Buffalo	69.9	Buffalo	48.7
Birmingham	64.3	Birmingham	48.0
Grand Rapids	63.2	Louisville	44.3
Louisville	62.8	New Orleans	43.8
<b>Rochester</b>	<b>61.6</b>	Richmond	35.7
New Orleans	59.7	<b>Rochester</b>	<b>33.7</b>
Hartford	56.3	Grand Rapids	30.0
Bridgeport	56.2	Hartford	28.7
Richmond	52.4	Tulsa	28.0
Tulsa	51.7	<b>Mid-point of range</b>	<b>24.9</b>
Oklahoma City	48.7	Oklahoma City	23.6
Worcester	48.1	Bridgeport	19.7
<b>Mid-point of range</b>	<b>47.1</b>	Raleigh	17.4
Honolulu	45.1	Fresno	5.9
Fresno	39.1	Worcester	4.9
Raleigh	38.6	Honolulu	4.9
Salt Lake City	32.2	Tucson	2.0
Tucson	29.3	Salt Lake City	1.3
Albuquerque	24.3	Albuquerque	1.1

Source: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, January 2012 (see End Note 9).  
\* All U.S. Metro areas within 200,000 population (+ or -) of Rochester

As can be seen in Chart 21, the Rochester area's current segregation is higher than most other communities and considerably higher than the mid-point for these benchmark metro areas. Rochester's segregation is well above the benchmark cities for both measures. In this study only those individuals identified as white or black (or African American) are

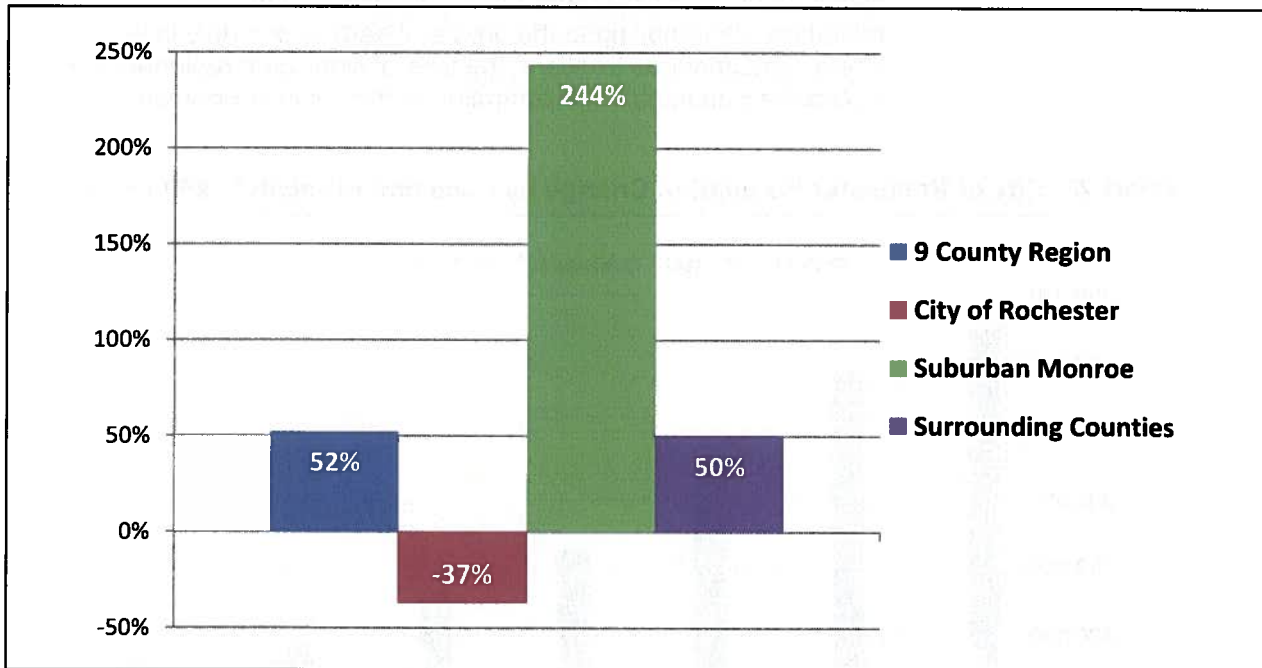
compared. Latinos, Asians, and other racial groups, and those identifying as “more than one race,” are not part of this analysis.

**B. Sprawl**

Racial segregation tended to concentrate people of color into the city, especially those with low incomes. On the other hand, people of means found the expanding suburbs to be a welcome destination for relocation. Urban sprawl refers to the physical expansion of urban areas resulting from population growth of the region and internal migration. Population and economic growth, new housing opportunities, and the dramatic expansion of private automobile ownership promoted an outward physical growth of metro areas. Many of these trends were fostered by federal policies, including the mortgage interest deduction and interstate highway construction.

As illustrated on Chart 22, our nine-county region’s population grew by 52% between 1950 and 2010. Despite this growth, the city of Rochester’s population declined by 37%, while suburban areas boomed.

**Chart 22: Regional Population Growth 1950 to 2010**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census for 1950 through 2010

Sprawl was experienced by almost all U.S. metro areas. However, several factors supported even more dramatic sprawl in the Rochester metro area:

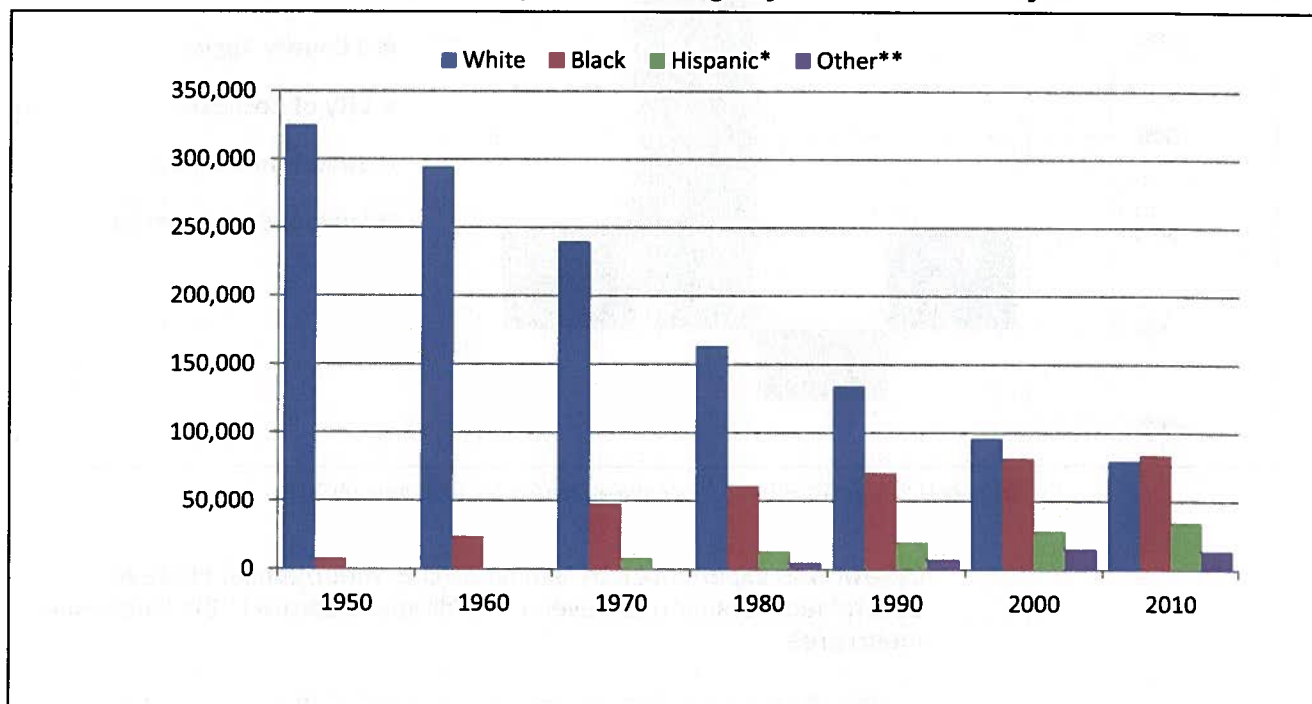
- Significant economic growth occurred during the early post-war years. The emergence of the Xerox Corporation and expansion at

Kodak and other industries created significant economic opportunity at the precise time that suburban development was most attractive. This encouraged those of economic means to consider the suburbs, and it encouraged housing developers to provide these choices.

- The absence of major physical barriers such as mountains, canyons, or islands. Lake Ontario prevented northward expansion, but open, flat lands to the east, west, and south yielded easily to urban sprawl.
- Very limited congestion and relatively good air quality. In some other communities, congestion and poor air quality fostered more compact development.
- The absence of any meaningful local or state policies to regulate or manage sprawl.

It is typical to think of central city population decline as a loss of white population (the so-called “white flight”). This certainly did happen in Rochester. But, it is also true that the black and Hispanic populations increased considerably at the same time as a result of migration from other areas of the country. So, two things were happening simultaneously: whites were leaving the city for the suburbs, and minorities were moving to the area and settling primarily in the city. These simultaneous trends at the time of significant regional growth fostered a remarkable concentration of the minority population.

**Chart 23: City of Rochester Population Change by Race and Ethnicity<sup>8</sup> 1950 to 2010**

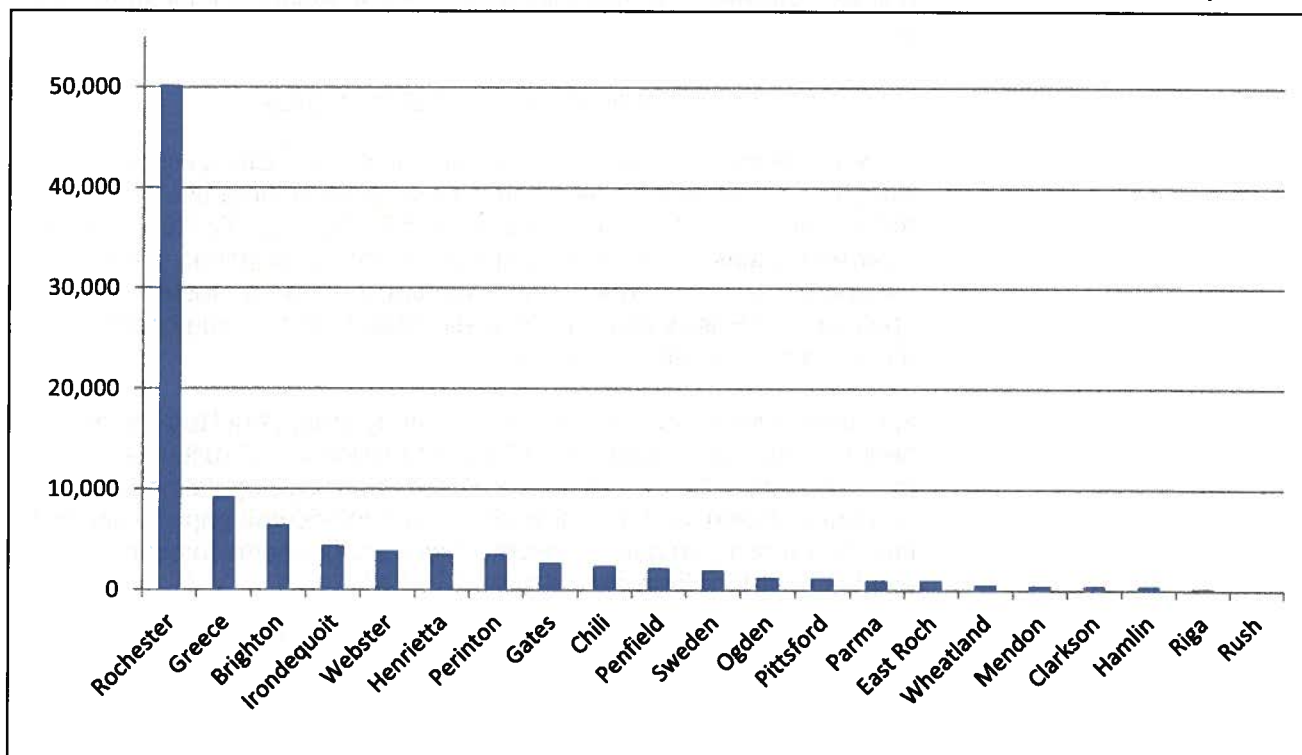


Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census for 1950 through 2010 (also see End Note 8).  
 \* Hispanic not tracked until 1970; \*\* “Other” too small to show visually on this chart prior to 1980

### C. Limited Housing Choices for the Poor

The rapid growth of Rochester's suburbs was not accompanied by a plan that would permit the poor to benefit from this growth. Very few housing choices for the poor can be found in Rochester's suburbs. For the most part, poor people must find affordable rental housing. The legacy of overt discrimination, combined with contemporary market conditions, has resulted in an extraordinary concentration of such housing. More than 35% of *all* rental housing in the nine-county region is within the city of Rochester (more than 50% of *all* Monroe County rental units). As starkly illustrated in Chart 24, the availability of *any* rental housing outside of the city is extremely limited. Only two towns – Greece and Brighton – have more than 5,000 rental units of any type.

**Chart 24: Rental Housing Units in Monroe County by Jurisdiction (All Rental Units)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (2007-11).

*Affordable* rental housing in Rochester's suburbs is nearly non-existent. The lack of *affordable* rental housing can be viewed as either a cause or result of the concentration of poverty. Regardless of one's perspective, it is very clear that private market conditions are not adequate to encourage a dispersion of the poor. And, as it turns out, public housing policy has not been overly effective either. There are a handful of public housing units in Rochester's suburbs, but the supply is very limited. And, most suburban public housing is limited to seniors or disabled persons.

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The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) maintains an online low-income apartment locator. A review of this tool shows 18 public housing facilities in Monroe County that are open to families<sup>11</sup>. Of these, 14 (78%) are located in the city of Rochester.

Current housing policy relies heavily on a voucher approach (Home Choice Voucher Program, or Section 8) leaving responsibility for supply in the private market. This approach has many benefits, but it certainly does nothing to provide suburban housing choices for poor people.

The synergistic impact of racial segregation and rapid sprawl created a striking separation of races. While it is important not to equate race and ethnicity with poverty, the correlation in the Greater Rochester area is indisputable. For much of our history, minorities were excluded from more lucrative employment, including factory employment. While employment opportunities are more equitable today, the legacy of past policies is strong and continues to impact our region by concentrating our poor.

#### D. *The Inelastic City and the Point of No Return*

In 1993, David Rusk published his influential book: *Cities without Suburbs*.<sup>12</sup> The main thesis of the book was based on research showing that economically thriving cities tended to be “elastic.” To Rusk, “elastic” referred to cities that were able to expand their populations, generally by expanding their boundaries. Cities that could not were labeled as “inelastic.” In Rusk’s analysis, inelastic cities (and their regions) failed to thrive both economically and socially.

Rochester was not part of his in-depth study group, but Rusk outlined a generally applicable conclusion that “a combination of sustained population loss (20 percent or more), high minority population (30 percent or more), and a significant city-suburb income gap (70 percent or less [when compared to the overall metro area]) seems to define the point of no return for a central city.”<sup>13</sup>



Chart 25 compares Rusk's criteria with Rochester's data. As can be seen, Rochester is well beyond Rusk's "point of no return" for all measures. The fact that Rochester was well beyond this point a decade ago, and has declined even more seems to provide some credence to Rusk's concept. This is a fairly bleak observation. Of course, it is important to recognize that Rusk's concept of the "point of no return" is that some structural change is needed to correct the trend.

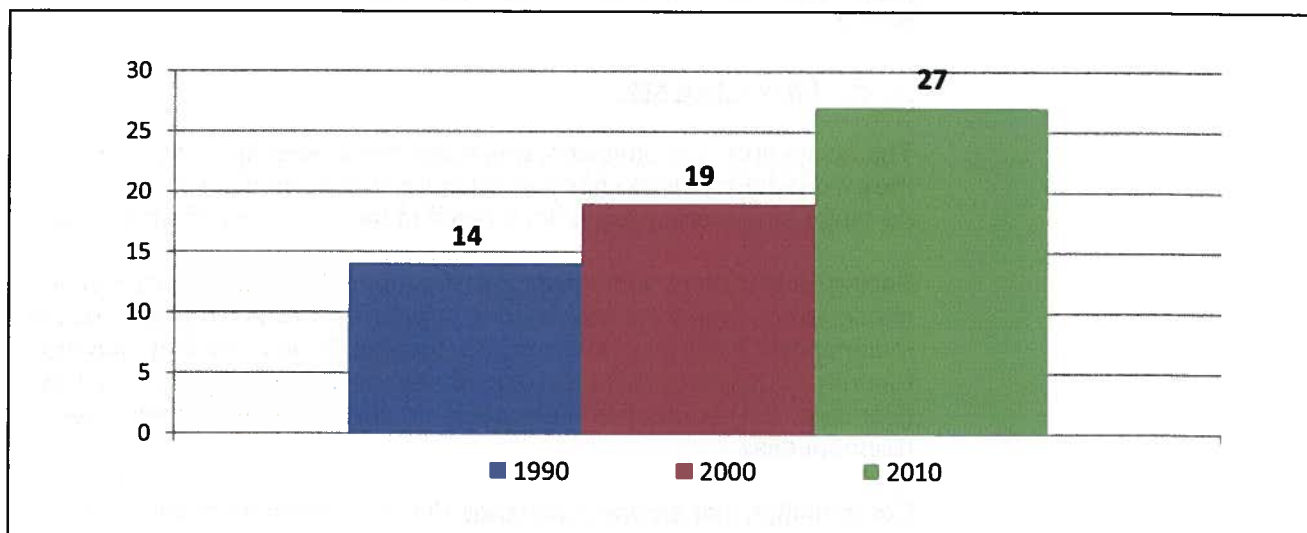
**Chart 25: City of Rochester Data Compared with David Rusk's "Point of No Return" Measures**

Rusk's "Point of No Return" – Factors	Rusk's "Point of No Return" – Indicators	City of Rochester 2000	City of Rochester 2010
Sustained Population Loss*	20% or more	34%	37%
High Minority Population**	30% or more	56%	60%
Significant City-Suburb Income Disparity***	70% or less	62%	58%

Sources: David Rusk (see End Note 12), U.S. Decennial Census for 2000, and U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (2007-11) for 2010.  
 \* Percentage decline from peak population (1950)    \*\* All minority groups  
 \*\*\* City incomes as a percent of metro area incomes, based on median household income

Earlier in this report (Section 4), the issue of extremely poor neighborhoods was discussed. The growth in the number of such neighborhoods within the city of Rochester parallels the decline in Rusk's "point of no return" indicators and adds weight to his argument.

**Chart 26: Number of City of Rochester Census Tracts with Poverty of 40% or More**



Source: Brookings Institution (see End Note 6)

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In 2013, David Rusk released the fourth edition of his book with updated information. Rusk reported that of the 24 cities studied in-depth and classified beyond the “Point of No Return” in 1993, only one (Chicago) has seen sustained improvement through the 2010 Census<sup>14</sup>.

Rochester was not part of Rusk’s in-depth analysis. Nonetheless, the fourth edition did include a calculation of elasticity for principal cities in the 137 largest U.S. metropolitan areas. Rochester was placed in the lowest category (“Zero Elasticity”) and it received the second lowest score among all metros<sup>15</sup>.

#### *E. The Manufacturing Colossus No More*

The Rochester area’s economic position has long been directly connected to its manufacturing strength. While most Northeastern and Midwestern cities began to lose manufacturing jobs in the mid-1970s, Rochester was able to hold on longer because its manufacturing was concentrated in industries involving technology and consumer products. However, in recent years the manufacturing employment base has collapsed. As documented by ACT Rochester, our region lost 34% of its manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2011 (Monroe County lost 42%)<sup>16</sup>. Along with this manufacturing decline, the region suffered a corresponding loss in income. Over the same decade, regional median household income declined by 11% (14% in Monroe County)<sup>17</sup>.

This loss in income was felt throughout the region, but the greatest impact settled in the poorest areas. As those who were displaced from manufacturing took jobs in the service sector, the less skilled found even fewer opportunities. In the city of Rochester, median household income dropped by 17% during this decade, and its poverty rate jumped by 5 percentage points to 31%, further deepening the concentration of poverty.

#### *F. Failure to Evolve*

The social and economic changes described above are profound. Yet, they were not met with changes in local governmental structures. In fact, no major structural changes took place in the greater Rochester area.

Facing similar deep demographic shifts, some U.S. communities have chosen to change local governance structures. Some examples include: Indianapolis, Nashville, Jacksonville, Virginia Beach, Raleigh, and most recently Louisville. Others developed new growth management policies (Portland, OR) or creative metropolitan revenue-sharing arrangements (Minneapolis).

Communities that embraced change did not choose the exact same approach, but all found ways of better aligning metro resources and metro challenges. It is interesting that many of these examples involve mid-sized communities.

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Many of the largest U.S. cities have found ways of diversifying their economies. This helped attract more middle and upper income residents and thereby reduce central city poverty rates. New York, Washington, Boston, and Chicago seem to fit this category. Others benefit from governance structures that encompass broader city boundaries (Houston, Dallas, and San Diego).

Many mid-sized cities are in similar situations to Rochester in that they have lost their industrial base and are not large enough or strategically situated to become major financial, entertainment, or tourism centers. While the Rochester area has not embraced structural change, there have been some examples of efforts to address fiscal inequities. Interestingly, few of these were initiated in the past 30 years, and none in the past 25 years. Some examples of these efforts are:

- State-mandated changes during the 1950s and 1960s moved social service and health functions from cities to counties, and the creation of the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority in the early 1970s relieved the city of financial subsidies for the transit system.
- Creation of the Pure Waters system in the early 1970s relieved the city of the pending burdens of meeting new water pollution standards and the day-to-day cost of sewer maintenance (this was a fiscal relief to city government, but not to taxpayers since the new Pure Waters District had virtually the same boundaries as the city).
- Traffic engineering services (traffic planning, traffic lights, signs, etc.) were absorbed by Monroe County in the early 1970s, and county support for major city parks and the central library was established at about the same time. County support for the county-wide emergency communications function (the 911 Center) was established in the early 1980s.
- The Morin-Ryan sales tax plan was enacted in 1984 to provide fiscal relief to the city based on city and school budget deficits that were projected at the time to occur over the following 10-year period.

As a result of significant fiscal stress and the lack of structural change to alleviate it, the city has become far more dependent on aid from New York State. Chart 27 is a 15-year look-back at city of Rochester budgets, and it shows a huge increase in state aid (175%) while all other revenue sources, except enterprise funds, have not even paced the rate of inflation.

Adjusting for inflation, most local revenues declined, while state aid increased by 92.1%. Property tax income declined by 20.2%, and sales tax declined by 2.9%.

**Chart 27: Change in City of Rochester Revenues (fiscal 1999 to fiscal 2014)**

	1998-99	2013-14	Change	% Change	% Change Inflation Adjusted
<b>Revenues:</b>					
Property Tax*	127,766,900	145,608,200	17,841,300	14.0%	-20.2%
Sales Tax	100,447,000	139,332,000	38,885,000	38.7%	-2.9%
State Aid	38,952,300	106,934,200	67,981,900	174.5%	92.1%
Enterprise Funds*	73,932,000	108,508,500	34,576,500	46.8%	2.7%
All Others*	103,569,200	100,412,500	-3,156,700	-3.0%	-32.2%
Transfer to Schools	-127,300,000	-119,100,100	8,199,900	-6.4%	-34.5%
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>317,367,400</b>	<b>481,695,300</b>	<b>164,327,900</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
<i>Inflation growth</i>	—————→			42.9%	
Source: Approved city budgets for the respective fiscal years.					
* The Property Tax category in this chart includes all property tax income, including portions the city allocates to enterprise and special funds. Correspondingly, the Enterprise Funds and All Other categories in the chart exclude the allocation of property tax revenue. In other words, all property tax income is in one category.					

**G. Closing**

While the factors described in this section provide part of the “why” to Rochester’s strong concentration of poverty, there are certainly many other social, economic, and political reasons for our failure to create an equitable community. Although exploring all of these is beyond the capacity of this report, doing so may be needed to pursue permanent solutions.

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## Section 6: Where Do We Go From Here?

### A. Is This Important?

It is useful to ask whether the concentration of poverty is really important. The more than 65,000 poor people who live in the city of Rochester could certainly answer the question better than this author. The challenges of being poor are great under any circumstances. Adding the challenges of neighborhoods plagued with extreme concentrations of poverty creates quality-of-life struggles to which many of us cannot relate. Even getting food is a major undertaking in areas that have experienced such a dramatic intensity of disinvestment.

This section will explore only two such quality-of-life issues: the provision of municipal services and the condition of the public education system.

Sometimes people refer to municipal boundaries as “artificial” because approaches to municipal organization can vary significantly. When considering public services, there is nothing “artificial” about the city of Rochester’s boundaries. As described above, the city’s boundaries contain a major portion of our region’s poor people. And the boundaries are extremely relevant to the public services provided to both the poor and non-poor within those boundaries. The city and city school district combine to expend more than \$1.2 billion annually for public services.

### Municipal Services

A review of the city budget over the past 15 years begins to illustrate how the city’s fiscal stress manifests itself. Chart 28 (next page) contains such a look back. Despite the seemingly constant declarations of multi-million dollar budget gaps, the city’s overall budget increased by more than the rate of inflation. But, within the budget is found a significant re-shifting. Public safety expenditures increased by nearly 87%, more than twice the rate of inflation. Correspondingly, expenditures for services such as libraries and parks and recreation didn’t come close to keeping pace. In fact, when adjusted for inflation, funding for these two services declined by 24% and 31% respectively. Public works services also failed to keep up with inflation.

The growth in public safety expenses has gradually crowded out community amenities. So, over a period when poverty has grown significantly, funding for publicly supported amenities such as libraries and recreation has been cut significantly.

This report does not suggest that these priorities are inappropriate. Instead, the report seeks to document results of budgetary shifts. Expanding public safety is not unusual in high-poverty communities. In addition, the cost structure of public safety functions is much greater than other services, resulting in greater cost increases even when there is no corresponding increase in output<sup>18</sup>. This report also does not intend to cast doubt on the management of the city’s budget. Rochester’s ability to

retain a relatively high bond rating is remarkable, and is clearly a testament to strong financial management.

**Chart 28: Change in City of Rochester Expenses (Fiscal 1999 to Fiscal 2014)**

	1998-99	2013-14	Change	% Change	% Change Inflation Adjusted	Notes
<b>Expenses:</b>						1,2
City Council & Clerk	1,618,500	2,657,000	1,038,500	64.2%	14.9%	
Admin - Finance	17,737,100	37,902,200	20,165,100	113.7%	49.5%	3
Development	20,601,400	29,753,400	9,152,000	44.4%	1.1%	4
Public Works	107,898,700	145,520,000	37,621,300	34.9%	-5.6%	5
Public Safety	117,276,200	219,189,300	101,913,100	86.9%	30.8%	6
Parks & Recreation	23,848,200	23,566,200	-282,000	-1.2%	-30.8%	
Libraries	14,003,500	15,260,700	1,257,200	9.0%	-23.7%	
Unallocated	14,383,800	7,846,500	-6,537,300	-45.4%	-61.8%	
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>317,367,400</b>	<b>481,695,300</b>	<b>164,327,900</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	
<i>Inflation growth</i> →				42.9%		

Source: Approved city budgets for the respective fiscal years, categorized as described in the notes below. Adjustments described in note 2 below were calculated for this report using information in the approved budgets.

1. All expense numbers reflect full costs, including operations, employee benefits, and allocated capital. See page 1-47 of the 2013-14 budget for details.
2. To provide a valid comparison, major reorganizations were accounted for, including transfers of: Municipal Parking; Parks, Recreation, and Cemeteries; Municipal Security; and the NET function.
3. The dramatic increase in Administration - Finance primarily reflects the city's investment in the Information Technology function (operating and capital costs).
4. Development includes Neighborhood and Business Development for 2013-14, and for 1998-99: Community Development, Economic Development, and NET.
5. Public Works is the Department of Environmental Services.
6. Public Safety includes Police, Fire, and Emergency Communications Departments.

### Public Education

Public education is the largest public service provided within the boundaries of the city of Rochester. The Rochester City School District expends nearly three quarters of a billion dollars per year. It is both well-documented and statistically obvious that poverty exerts a strong influence on educational outcomes<sup>19</sup>. Beyond this general observation, education experts and community leaders hold a wide variety of perspectives on the relationship between poverty and academic achievement – and what to do about it. While some see a strong relationship, others urge academic progress even in the face of poverty. In 2011, Microsoft founder Bill Gates issued a call for educational progress independent of progress to alleviate poverty. This set off an expected reaction from those who see poverty as a root cause of the academic achievement gap<sup>20</sup>.

While the Gates call is certainly laudable in its “no excuses” challenge, it is premised on a belief that important incremental improvement is achievable. A school-by-school analysis of Rochester’s grade three reading results conducted by ACT Rochester documents both the

## How Close? How Far?

At their closest points, the Rochester and Pittsford school districts are a mere mile and a half apart.\* But, in terms of poverty, they couldn't be more distant from each other.

As discussed in this report, Rochester is the poorest of upstate New York's 430 school districts and Pittsford is the wealthiest.

\* From the southeast corner of Rochester to Pittsford's Allen Creek Elementary School.



general correlation between poverty and academic performance, as well as exceptions that may demonstrate opportunities for marginal improvement<sup>21</sup>. It is probably valid to conclude that progress can be made within the current poverty paradigm, but that the parameters of that progress are likely to be narrow and difficult to sustain.

The current poverty reality in Rochester city schools is much more dramatic than the data described in the earlier parts of this report. While the overall city poverty rate is 31.1%, poverty among Rochester city school students is documented to be at 88%. Why such a large variance? The following factors help to explain this situation:

- While the overall city of Rochester poverty rate is 31.1%, the poverty rate for children (under age 18) is 46%.
- Schools measure poverty by student eligibility for free or reduced price meals. Rochester reports 83% of its students eligible for free meals, and an additional 5% eligible for reduced price meals. The federally developed formula for meal eligibility is complex, but it allows student household incomes of up to 130% of the federal poverty rate for free meals, and up to 165% for reduced meals.
- The school district poverty rate of 88% is for students who attend Rochester city schools. The 2010 Census enumerated 44,100 city children of school age. Only 32,500 are enrolled in the Rochester City School District (Pre-K to 12). The remaining 11,600 students (26% of all school-age children) are in charter schools, private schools, home-schools, have not enrolled, or have dropped out. It is reasonable to assume that those in private schools are less likely to be poor. The 2,300 charter school enrollees are less poor than those in city schools (75% versus 88%).

Measuring poverty by student eligibility for free and reduced meals provides a good school-level indicator of poverty for comparative purposes. Using this measure, **Rochester is the poorest large urban school district in New York State<sup>22</sup>**.

One recent study attempted to measure school district prosperity (or poverty) using a multiple factor formula<sup>23</sup>. The study focused on upstate New York school districts and measured youth poverty rates (Census data) and free and reduced meal eligibility. This study found **Rochester to be the poorest of Upstate New York's 430 school districts**. The study created a combined index for each district where 1.0 equaled the statewide prosperity average. Rochester's index score was 0.283; in other words, Rochester was at less than 29% of the statewide average. The wealthiest district in upstate New York (Pittsford) had a ratio of 1.329 (meaning Pittsford was nearly 33% more prosperous than the statewide average). This disparity within the same county is striking.

Rochester's student academic performance is now the poorest of any large urban district in New York State<sup>24</sup>. Certainly, there is room for

## How Rochester's Child Poverty Rate Compares with the Nation's

Across the U.S., one of every five children under age 18 lives in poverty. The situation in Rochester is more dire, with a 46% poverty rate that more than doubles the national rate.

### U.S. Child Poverty Rate

**20%**



### City of Rochester Child Poverty Rate

**46%**



improvement even within the current poverty reality. However, transformative improvement without addressing the issue of poverty, and concentrated poverty, does not seem likely.

It is apparent that Rochester's poverty has had a profound impact on its ability to provide municipal services and to provide effective public education.

### B. Considering the Strategies

It is well beyond the scope of this report to suggest solutions to the age-old problem of poverty. To be sure, the issues of social and economic stratification have been studied at the greatest universities while the policy options have perplexed state and national governments.

But can the issue of the *concentration* of poor people be effectively addressed at the community level? Since other regions of the country have done better than greater Rochester, it seems worthwhile for this community to consider its strategy options.

The two main strategies that have been deployed here are rebuilding the urban core and dispersing the poor.

Investing in the urban core has been Rochester's primary strategy to improve its overall economic condition and reduce the concentration of poverty. Beginning with urban renewal in the mid-1960s and continuing with Community Development Block Grants and other programs, hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funds have been targeted to housing development, neighborhood reinvestment, and other public improvements. Additional hundreds of millions of dollars in federal, state, and local funds have been invested in the city's public infrastructure. Of course, millions more in private investments were made.

Less ambitious efforts have been made at dispersing the poor by providing low-income housing choices in the suburbs. As described in Section 5 (pages 28-29), there is very little rental housing of any kind available outside the city of Rochester. Public housing for families is extremely limited. There have been efforts to promote more affordable housing in Rochester's suburbs, but these have been limited.

It is difficult to assess the impact of these two approaches. Clearly, the upward march of poverty has not been abated. Of course, arguments could be made that conditions would be worse if these initiatives had not been pursued. Whatever the case, it is clear that community and economic development efforts have not been sufficient enough or strategic enough to overcome the economic market conditions that have resulted in our extraordinary concentration of poverty.

There are many ways in which the above strategies could become more comprehensive and more effective. It is tempting to critique our community efforts, but that is beyond the scope of this report. However,



## Living with Poverty

### Adam's Story

Working hard was a way of life for Adam, who started his first job on a dairy farm when he was 14 years old.

When this Buffalo native moved to Rochester in the late 1970s, he laid carpet and linoleum and then worked in a factory before he found a permanent job on the loading dock of a Fortune 500 company. In his 30th year, Adam and 80 others were laid off when the production line he had been on for nine years was shut down.

In search of work that would provide some sort of income, he immediately went to a temp agency and was placed. But that job didn't last for long. Adam was stricken with a bleeding ulcer and then doctors determined that he needed a pacemaker.

When his former employer cut off his medical insurance, he and his wife applied for welfare. "It was a help, but it was a joke, too," says Adam. In addition to his \$202-a-month pension, he initially

*(continued next page)*

the community should undertake a serious examination of ways to make our development strategies more comprehensive, more targeted, more collaborative, and more effective at serving the poor.

It is also tempting to advocate specific new solutions, such as expanded city boundaries, a consolidated governmental structure ("metro government"), or a consolidated county-wide school system. To be sure, some communities have found success with these approaches. Consolidation helped such mid-size cities as Indianapolis, Nashville, Jacksonville, and Virginia Beach to become more prosperous<sup>25</sup>. Many people tout the benefits of school consolidation in Raleigh and Wake County in North Carolina<sup>26</sup>.

Recommending specific new strategies is beyond the scope of this report, and it would be dangerous to pursue such options without detailed study and community engagement. But the community will need to consider a wide range of difficult changes if this deeply embedded concentration of poverty is to be alleviated.

### C. Conclusion

This report analyzes poverty in our region and in our city. The numbers have been "sliced and diced" to show a portrait of our poverty and our poor people. Analyses and comparisons demonstrate that poverty is a major issue for our community, and that the poor have been concentrated to an extreme degree.

So, where do we go from here?

If we are to address the issues described in this report, the Greater Rochester community needs to find a willingness to change. Real and sustained change is not likely to occur from the top unless there is a political imperative. It is also unlikely to rise from the grass roots, given that most of our residents are comfortable and very segregated from those who are not.

Real change can come only with greater understanding. Only through greater understanding can we create the community support that is needed. To that end, three actions seem warranted:

1. Significantly expand our community's knowledge of poverty, the poor, and the concentration of poverty. This is actually a challenging action step. Facing the stark realities presented in this report requires frank and candid discourse. This, in turn, exposes a community weakness that is not consistent with the image we often hold and project to the wider world. Certainly any real progress requires a candid and more complete knowledge of who we are. This effort should be undertaken in every corner of this region. Remedies can build on the many assets that this community possesses.

received enough help to pay his rent, utilities and buy food, but it was a far cry from his regular \$1,000-plus weekly pay.

And medical problems persisted. Intense pain he felt in his back, neck, and right leg was diagnosed as lumbar spinal stenosis, which has greatly impaired his ability to get around. At 6-foot-7, he no longer is able to straighten up to his full height. Because he can't lift his legs and balance well enough to use steps, he is relegated to using a four-wheel walker for support. And just last year, his wife of more than 12 years passed away suddenly.

This 60-year-old is discouraged about the series of circumstances in the last three years that have forced him to rely on others. "I wish I could be working now, but I can't walk well and I can't lift that much. I had planned on retiring when I was 70, maybe."

— *Mary Holleran*

2. Create an understanding that poverty is a problem for all, not just for the poor and those communities that house the poor in great numbers. Surely it is not too hard to comprehend that the impacts of poverty stand in the way of our region's economic and social success. Those impacts are felt most greatly by our children – and their communities and their schools. Our future may be bleak if we do not find a better way.
3. Involve and engage our diverse community. Draw on our residents and leaders in all parts of the community, including business, government, and our great colleges and universities. Our leaders can honestly and openly study the success in other communities and help determine what changes are best for greater Rochester.

**“Where Do We Go from Here:  
Chaos or Community?”**

— **Dr. Martin Luther King<sup>27</sup>**

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## End Notes

1. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
2. See ACT Rochester – Race-Ethnicity Indicators ([www.ACTRochester.org/race-ethnicity-indicators](http://www.ACTRochester.org/race-ethnicity-indicators)).
3. East Rochester has a very unique structure as a town/village with coterminous borders. There are only five such jurisdictions in New York. For this analysis, East Rochester is treated as a town. In all other cases in our region, villages are located within one or more towns.
4. A portion of the Tonawanda Indian Reservation is located in Genesee County. Reservations are separate jurisdictions and are not included in towns or villages.
5. In this and other charts, the mid-point is calculated by averaging the values for the highest and lowest communities.
6. Elizabeth Kneebone, Carey Nadeau, and Alan Berube, “The Re-Emergence of Concentrated Poverty,” Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, November, 2011.
7. For a thumbnail on the Great Migration, visit [www.history.com/topics/great-migration](http://www.history.com/topics/great-migration).
8. The Hispanic designation was not used until the 1970 Census. Hispanic is not a racial group. For this analysis, Hispanics were subtracted from the racial group with which they identified and were counted as “Hispanic”. Accordingly, “White” means non-Hispanic White, “Black” means non-Hispanic Black, and “Other” means non-Hispanic Other. This adjustment was based on actual Census data for 2010 and estimates for prior years. “Other” consists of: American Indians and Alaska Natives; Hawaiian Natives and Pacific Islanders; Asians; and those identifying as “some other race” or “two or more races.” “Other” included fewer than 1,000 people for 1950, 1960, and 1970 and, therefore, doesn’t show visually on Chart 23.
9. Edward Glaeser and Jacob Vigdor, “The End of the Segregated Century,” Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, January 2012.
10. The two measures are Dissimilarity and Isolation. Dissimilarity reflects the proportion of either Whites or African Americans who would need to move to achieve perfect integration across the metro area. Isolation measures the tendency for members of one group to live where their share of the total population is above the community-wide average. Both measures are expressed as an index, with 100 being complete segregation and 0 full integration.
11. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, rental assistance website ([http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental\\_assistance](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance)).
12. David Rusk, **Cities without Suburbs** (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993).
13. Rusk, p. 45.
14. David Rusk, **Cities without Suburbs** - 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013), pages 105-107.
15. Rusk (2013), pages 74-75. Rusk used two measures in relation to one another to rank cities for elasticity: population density at the time of peak population and the amount of physical expansion since. Three cities tied for most inelastic with a score of 4.0 (New York, Washington, Detroit). With a score of 5.0, Rochester was tied (with Hartford and Minneapolis) for the position of fourth most inelastic city among the top 137 metros analyzed.
16. See ACT Rochester Economy section ([www.ACTRochester.org/economy](http://www.ACTRochester.org/economy)).
17. See ACT Rochester Financial Self Sufficiency section: ([www.ACTRochester.org/financial-self-sufficiency](http://www.ACTRochester.org/financial-self-sufficiency)).

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## End Notes

18. The public safety cost structure is greater than other municipal functions because: the average police and firefighter salary exceeds that of other non-management employees; salary increases are subject to binding arbitration; and pension benefits are significantly more costly.
19. Laura Lippman, Shelley Burns, and Edith McArthur, **Urban Schools: The Challenge of Location and Poverty** (Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, 1996).
20. Bill Gates, "Education can be Reformed before Poverty is Eliminated," Huffington Post, July 28, 2011, and Dr. James Taylor, "Arne and Bill's Misguided Adventure," Huffington Post, August 2, 2011.
21. "Grade 3 English Language Arts: An Analysis of Rochester City School Results on the 2010-11 New York State Standardized Tests," ACT Rochester ([www.ACTRochester.org/highlights](http://www.ACTRochester.org/highlights)).
22. NY State school report cards (<https://reportcards.nysed.gov/>).
23. G. Scott Thomas, "Pittsford and Niskayuna Lead Upstate Affluence Ratings," Buffalo Business First, October 24, 2012.
24. New York State Department of Education, August 7, 2013 Press Release ([www.oms.nysed.gov/press/grades-3-8-assessment-results-2013.html](http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/grades-3-8-assessment-results-2013.html)).
25. Rusk (2013), pages 123-148.
26. Gerald Grant, **Hope and Despair in the American City: Why There Are No Bad Schools in Raleigh** (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
27. Dr. Martin Luther King, **Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?** (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1967).

### Poverty Data for all Regional Municipalities

Listed by county, then municipal type, then in order of poverty

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2010 Census for total population data,  
U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11) for poverty rate data.

Genesee County		Poverty Rate: 12.5%	
Population: 60,079		Poor People: 7,510	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
City	Batavia	15,465	23.0%
Towns	Bethany	1,765	15.9%
	Batavia	6,809	11.8%
	Bergen	3,120	11.8%
	Pembroke	4,292	11.0%
	Oakfield	3,250	10.0%
	Le Roy	7,641	9.3%
	Alexander	2,534	6.8%
	Elba	2,370	6.7%
	Pavilion	2,495	6.3%
	Alabama	1,869	6.0%
	Stafford	2,459	5.2%
	Darien	3,158	4.3%
	Byron	2,369	2.4%
Reservation	Tonawanda	483	21.3%
<b>Total*</b>		<b>60,079</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
Villages*	Oakfield	1,813	13.8%
	Le Roy	4,391	13.2%
	Elba	676	11.5%
	Corfu	709	11.4%
	Bergen	1,176	10.7%
	Alexander	509	7.2%
<p>* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data and "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.</p> <p>Note: The Village of Attica is located partially in Genesee County, but mostly in Wyoming County. It is listed in Wyoming.</p>			

Livingston County		Poverty Rate: 11.7%	
Population: 65,393		Poor People: 7,650	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
Towns	Geneseo	10,483	28.4%
	Mt. Morris	4,465	21.5%
	North Dansville	5,538	16.4%
	Nunda	3,064	13.9%
	West Sparta	1,255	13.5%
	Leicester	2,200	12.7%
	Ossian	789	12.5%
	Portage	884	9.5%
	Sparta	1,624	9.5%
	Groveland	3,249	8.3%
	Springwater	2,439	7.3%
	Caledonia	4,255	7.1%
	Conesus	2,473	7.0%
	Livonia	7,809	6.2%
	Lima	4,305	5.7%
	York	3,397	4.7%
	Avon	7,164	3.9%
<b>Total*</b>		<b>65,393</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
Villages*	Geneseo	8,031	41.3%
	Mt. Morris	2,986	24.3%
	Nunda	1,377	24.1%
	Dansville	4,719	17.6%
	Leicester	468	14.0%
	Livonia	1,409	12.2%
	Caledonia	2,201	8.7%
	Lima	2,139	8.5%
	Avon	3,394	3.7%
<p>* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data and "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.</p>			

## Poverty Data for all Regional Municipalities

Listed by county, then municipal type, then in order of poverty

Monroe County		Poverty Rate: 14.4%	
Population: 744,344		Poor People: 107,186	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
City	Rochester	210,565	31.1%
Towns	Sweden	14,175	17.6%
	East Rochester**	6,587	14.3%
	Henrietta	42,581	11.4%
	Irondequoit	51,692	10.5%
	Brighton	36,609	9.8%
	Greece	96,095	9.2%
	Gates	28,400	8.8%
	Wheatland	4,775	8.8%
	Parma	15,633	8.7%
	Hamlin	9,045	8.3%
	Clarkson	6,736	6.8%
	Perinton	46,462	6.4%
	Webster	42,641	5.2%
	Chili	28,625	4.9%
	Ogden	19,856	4.9%
	Riga	5,590	4.5%
	Pittsford	29,405	4.4%
	Penfield	36,242	3.9%
	Mendon	9,152	2.9%
	Rush	3,478	1.7%
<b>Total*</b>		<b>744,344</b>	<b>14.4%</b>
Villages*	Brockport	8,366	25.0%
	Webster	5,399	15.7%
	Scottsville	2,001	9.8%
	Hilton	5,886	7.0%
	Honeoye Falls	2,674	6.8%
	Fairport	5,353	6.5%
	Spencerport	3,601	6.3%
	Churchville	1,961	5.3%
	Pittsford	1,355	3.5%

\*Villages are within towns and are included in the town data and "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.

\*\*East Rochester has the dual status of a town and village.

Ontario County		Poverty Rate: 9.7%	
Population: 107,931		Poor People: 10,469	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
Cities	Geneva	13,261	23.0%
	Canandaigua	10,545	13.3%
Towns	Richmond	3,361	14.3%
	Naples	2,502	13.8%
	Gorham	4,247	12.5%
	Hopewell	3,747	12.5%
	Bristol	2,315	10.1%
	West Bloomfield	2,466	9.9%
	Canadice	1,664	9.8%
	Farmington	11,825	9.4%
	Manchester	9,395	8.4%
	Canandaigua	10,020	7.7%
	Phelps	7,072	6.9%
	Seneca	2,721	5.0%
	South Bristol	1,590	4.7%
	East Bloomfield	3,634	3.9%
	Victor	14,275	1.8%
	Geneva	3,291	1.5%
<b>Total*</b>		<b>107,931</b>	<b>9.7%</b>
Villages*	Rushville**	677	24.2%
	Naples	1,041	18.3%
	Phelps	1,989	10.2%
	Clifton Springs	2,127	8.3%
	Manchester	1,709	7.8%
	Bloomfield	1,361	7.1%
	Victor	2,696	2.2%

\* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.

\*\* Rushville is shown in Ontario County, but is located about equally in Ontario and Yates counties.

## Poverty Data for all Regional Municipalities

Listed by county, then municipal type, then in order of poverty

Orleans County		Poverty Rate: 12.1%	
Population: 42,883		Poor People: 5,189	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
Towns	Shelby	5,319	21.9%
	Albion	8,468	18.3%
	Murray	4,988	11.8%
	Ridgeway	6,780	11.6%
	Barre	2,025	10.2%
	Kendall	2,724	9.8%
	Carlton	2,994	9.5%
	Yates	2,559	8.0%
	Gaines	3,378	6.7%
	Clarendon	3,648	2.5%
<b>Total*</b>		<b>42,883</b>	<b>12.1%</b>
Villages* <sup>1</sup>	Medina	6,065	21.0%
	Albion	6,056	20.6%
	Holley	1,811	14.5%
	Lyndonville	838	13.7%
* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data and "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.			

Seneca County		Poverty Rate: 11.7%	
Population: 35,251		Poor People: 4,124	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
Towns	Covert	1,471	27.9%
	Fayette	1,550	14.7%
	Junius	981	14.6%
	Lodi	2,311	14.2%
	Ovid	1,857	13.6%
	Romulus	2,154	12.1%
	Seneca Falls	9,040	12.1%
	Tyre	7,642	8.8%
	Varick	3,929	8.3%
	Waterloo	4,316	7.9%
<b>Total*</b>		<b>35,251</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
Villages*	Lodi	291	15.7%
	Ovid	602	15.6%
	Seneca Falls**	6,681	12.8%
	Interlaken	602	12.2%
	Waterloo	5,171	7.9%
* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data and "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.			
** Seneca Falls Village was dissolved on December 31, 2011, but was in existence for the 2010 Census.			

## Poverty Data for all Regional Municipalities

Listed by county, then municipal type, then in order of poverty

Wayne County		Poverty Rate: 11.1%		
Population: 93,772		Poor People: 10,409		
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate	
Towns	Butler	2,064	19.8%	
	Lyons	5,682	19.6%	
	Huron	2,118	19.1%	
	Savannah	1,730	16.8%	
	Galen	4,290	16.3%	
	Wolcott	4,453	15.6%	
	Sodus	8,384	13.7%	
	Palmyra	7,975	12.5%	
	Arcadia	14,244	12.3%	
	Marion	4,746	10.7%	
	Williamson	6,984	10.6%	
	Macedon	9,148	7.1%	
	Ontario	10,136	5.6%	
	Rose	2,369	5.2%	
	Walworth	9,449	3.5%	
	<b>Total*</b>		<b>93,772</b>	<b>11.1%</b>
	Villages*	Wolcott	1,701	30.2%
Sodus		1,819	25.9%	
Lyons		3,619	23.5%	
Clyde		2,093	19.0%	
Palmyra		3,536	15.2%	
Newark		9,145	15.0%	
Sodus Point		900	8.0%	
Macedon		1,523	7.6%	
Red Creek		532	4.1%	
* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data and "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.				

Wyoming County		Poverty Rate: 10.1%	
Population: 42,155		Poor People: 4,258	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
Towns	Pike	1,114	18.2%
	Perry	4,616	15.9%
	Castile	2,906	12.1%
	Wethersfield	883	11.7%
	Eagle	1,192	11.4%
	Attica	7,702	11.1%
	Arcade	4,205	10.8%
	Warsaw	5,064	10.6%
	Middlebury	1,441	8.8%
	Gainsville	2,182	8.4%
	Genesee Falls	438	6.8%
	Sheldon	2,409	6.8%
	Covington	1,232	6.7%
	Bennington	3,359	6.1%
	Java	2,057	4.1%
	Orangeville	1,355	4.1%
	<b>Total*</b>		<b>42,155</b>
Villages*	Pike	302	19.0%
	Perry	3,673	18.7%
	Arcade	2,071	18.2%
	Silver Springs	782	16.9%
	Attica *	2,547	16.8%
	Castile	1,015	16.7%
	Warsaw	3,473	8.7%
Wyoming	434	5.9%	
Gainesville	229	2.3%	
* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.			
**Attica is shown in Wyoming County, but a small part of the village is within Genesee County.			



### Poverty Data for all Regional Municipalities

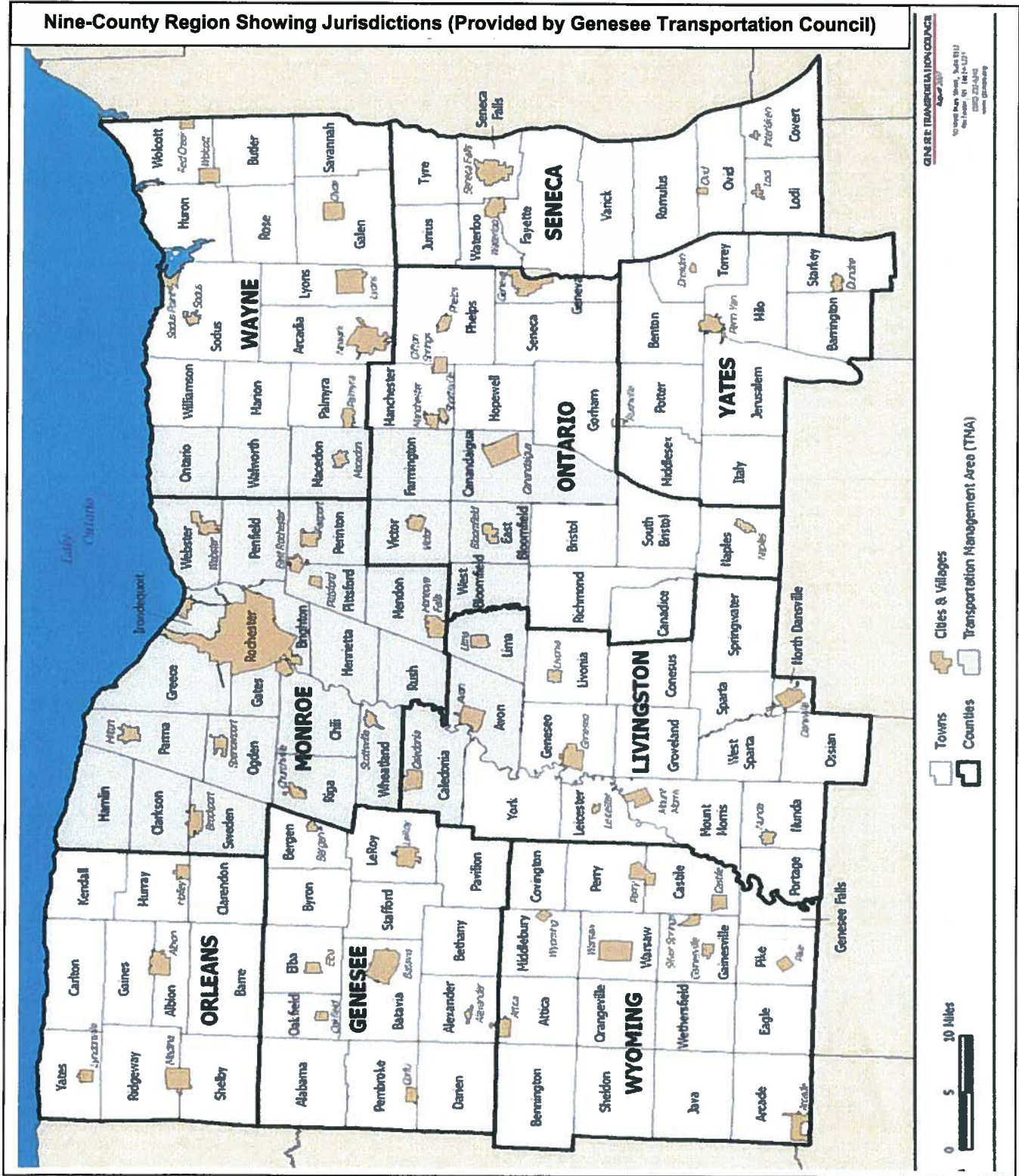
Listed by county, then municipal type, then in order of poverty

Yates County		Poverty Rate: 15.4%	
Population: 25,348		Poor People: 3,904	
Type	Municipality	Total Population	Poverty Rate
Towns	Milo	7,006	20.0%
	Potter	1,865	19.2%
	Starkey	3,573	17.7%
	Italy	1,141	17.5%
	Jerusalem	4,469	14.1%
	Torrey	1,282	10.8%
	Middlesex	1,495	9.1%
	Barrington	1,681	8.7%
	Benton	2,836	8.3%
	<b>Total*</b>		<b>25,348</b>
Villages*	Dresden	308	24.1%
	Penn Yan	5,159	20.0%
	Dundee	1,725	19.9%

\* Villages are within towns and are included in the town data and "Total" row above. They are shown here separately for information.

Note: The Village of Rushville is shown in Ontario County, but is located about equally in Yates and Ontario counties







## Metro and Principal City Poverty Rates: 75 Top US Metropolitan Areas

Top 75 U.S. Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Metro Population					Top 75 U.S. Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Principal City Poverty Rate				
Rank	Metro Area	Metro Population	Principal City Population	City Poverty Rate	Rank	Metro Area	Metro Population	Principal City Population	City Poverty Rate
1	New York	19,567,410	8,175,133	19.4%	1	Detroit	4,296,250	713,777	36.2%
2	Los Angeles	12,828,837	3,792,621	20.2%	2	Hartford	1,212,381	124,775	32.9%
3	Chicago	9,461,105	2,695,588	21.4%	3	Cleveland	2,077,240	396,815	32.6%
4	Dallas – Fort Worth	6,426,214	1,197,816	23.0%	4	Dayton	799,232	141,527	32.5%
5	Philadelphia	5,965,343	1,526,000	25.6%	5	Rochester	1,079,671	210,565	31.1%
6	Houston	5,920,416	2,099,451	21.5%	6	Buffalo	1,135,509	261,310	29.9%
7	Washington	5,636,232	601,723	18.2%	7	Miami	5,564,635	399,457	27.7%
8	Miami	5,564,635	399,457	27.7%	8	Providence	1,600,852	178,042	27.7%
9	Atlanta	5,286,728	420,003	23.2%	9	McAllen	774,769	129,877	27.6%
10	Boston	4,552,402	617,594	21.4%	10	Cincinnati	2,114,580	296,943	27.4%
11	San Francisco	4,335,391	805,235	12.3%	11	Birmingham	1,128,047	212,237	27.3%
12	Detroit	4,296,250	713,777	36.2%	12	Milwaukee	1,555,908	594,833	27.0%
13	Riverside – San Bernardino	4,224,851	303,871	15.8%	13	Richmond	1,208,101	204,214	26.3%
14	Phoenix	4,192,887	1,445,632	20.3%	14	New Haven	862,477	129,779	26.3%
15	Seattle	3,439,809	608,660	13.2%	15	St Louis	2,787,701	319,294	26.0%
16	Minneapolis	3,348,859	382,578	22.3%	16	Memphis	1,324,829	646,889	26.0%
17	San Diego	3,095,313	1,307,402	14.6%	17	Fresno	930,450	494,665	25.9%
18	St. Louis	2,787,701	319,294	26.0%	18	Allentown	821,173	118,032	25.8%
19	Tampa	2,783,243	335,709	19.2%	19	New Orleans	1,189,866	343,829	25.7%
20	Baltimore	2,710,489	620,961	22.4%	20	Philadelphia	5,965,343	1,526,000	25.6%
21	Denver	2,543,482	600,158	18.8%	21	Grand Rapids	988,938	188,040	25.5%
22	Pittsburgh	2,356,285	305,704	22.2%	22	Albany	870,716	97,856	25.0%
23	Portland	2,226,009	583,776	16.8%	23	Baton Rouge	802,484	229,493	24.8%
24	Charlotte	2,217,012	731,424	15.0%	24	Knoxville	837,571	178,874	23.4%
25	Sacramento	2,149,127	466,488	18.6%	25	El Paso	804,123	649,121	23.3%
26	San Antonio	2,142,508	1,327,407	19.2%	26	Columbia	767,598	129,272	23.3%
27	Orlando	2,134,411	238,300	17.3%	27	Atlanta	5,286,728	420,003	23.2%
28	Cincinnati	2,114,580	296,943	27.4%	28	Dallas – Fort Worth	6,426,214	1,197,816	23.0%
29	Cleveland	2,077,240	396,815	32.6%	29	Tucson	980,263	520,116	22.6%
30	Kansas City	2,009,342	459,787	18.2%	30	Baltimore	2,710,489	620,961	22.4%
31	Las Vegas	1,951,269	583,756	14.9%	31	Minneapolis	3,348,859	382,578	22.3%
32	Columbus	1,901,974	787,033	21.8%	32	Pittsburgh	2,356,285	305,704	22.2%
33	Indianapolis	1,887,877	820,445	18.9%	33	Bridgeport	916,829	144,229	21.9%
34	San Jose	1,836,911	945,942	11.1%	34	Columbus	1,901,974	787,033	21.8%
						Mid- point of range			21.7%
35	Austin	1,716,289	790,390	18.5%	35	Houston	5,920,416	2,099,451	21.5%
36	Virginia Beach	1,676,822	437,994	7.1%	36	Chicago	9,461,105	2,695,588	21.4%
37	Nashville (Davidson County)	1,670,890	626,681	17.7%	37	Boston	4,552,402	617,594	21.4%
38	Providence	1,600,852	178,042	27.7%	38	Phoenix	4,192,887	1,445,632	20.3%
39	Milwaukee	1,555,908	594,833	27.0%	39	Los Angeles	12,828,837	3,792,621	20.2%

Rank	Metro Area	Metro Population	Principal City Population	City Poverty Rate	Rank	Metro Area	Metro Population	Principal City Population	City Poverty Rate
40	Jacksonville	1,345,596	821,784	15.2%	40	Sarasota	702,281	51,917	19.5%
41	Memphis	1,324,829	646,889	26.0%	41	New York	19,567,410	8,175,133	19.4%
42	Oklahoma City	1,252,987	579,999	17.1%	42	Tulsa	937,478	391,906	19.4%
43	Louisville (Jefferson County)	1,235,708	741,096	15.7%	43	Tampa	2,783,243	335,709	19.2%
44	Hartford	1,212,381	124,775	32.9%	44	San Antonio	2,142,508	1,327,407	19.2%
45	Richmond	1,208,101	204,214	26.3%	45	Worcester	916,980	181,045	19.0%
46	New Orleans	1,189,866	343,829	25.7%	46	Indianapolis	1,887,877	820,445	18.9%
47	Buffalo	1,135,509	261,310	29.9%	47	Denver	2,543,482	600,158	18.8%
48	Raleigh	1,130,490	403,892	15.1%	48	Sacramento	2,149,127	466,488	18.6%
49	Birmingham	1,128,047	212,237	27.3%	49	Greenville	824,112	58,409	18.6%
50	Salt Lake City	1,087,873	186,440	17.9%	50	Austin	1,716,289	790,390	18.5%
51	Rochester	1,079,671	210,565	31.1%	51	Greensboro	723,801	269,666	18.4%
52	Grand Rapids	988,938	188,040	25.5%	52	Washington	5,636,232	601,723	18.2%
53	Tucson	980,263	520,116	22.6%	53	Kansas City	2,009,342	459,787	18.2%
54	Tulsa	937,478	391,906	19.4%	54	Bakersfield	839,631	347,483	18.2%
55	Honolulu	935,207	337,256	11.6%	55	Salt Lake City	1,087,873	186,440	17.9%
56	Fresno	930,450	494,665	25.9%	56	Little Rock	699,757	193,524	17.8%
57	Worcester	916,980	181,045	19.0%	57	Nashville (Davidson County)	1,670,890	626,681	17.7%
58	Bridgeport	916,829	144,229	21.9%	58	Orlando	2,134,411	238,300	17.3%
59	Albuquerque	887,077	545,852	16.6%	59	Oklahoma City	1,252,987	579,999	17.1%
60	Omaha	865,350	408,958	15.5%	60	Portland	2,226,009	583,776	16.8%
61	Albany	870,716	97,856	25.0%	61	Albuquerque	887,077	545,852	16.6%
62	New Haven	862,477	129,779	26.3%	62	Riverside-San Bernardino	4,224,851	303,871	15.8%
63	Bakersfield	839,631	347,483	18.2%	63	Louisville, (Jefferson County)	1,235,708	741,096	15.7%
64	Knoxville	837,571	178,874	23.4%	64	Omaha	865,350	408,958	15.5%
65	Greenville	824,112	58,409	18.6%	65	Oxnard	823,318	197,899	15.3%
66	Oxnard	823,318	197,899	15.3%	66	Jacksonville	1,345,596	821,784	15.2%
67	Allentown	821,173	118,032	25.8%	67	Raleigh	1,130,490	403,892	15.1%
68	El Paso	804,123	649,121	23.3%	68	Charlotte	2,217,012	731,424	15.0%
69	Baton Rouge	802,484	229,493	24.8%	69	Las Vegas	1,951,269	583,756	14.9%
70	Dayton	799,232	141,527	32.5%	70	San Diego	3,095,313	1,307,402	14.6%
71	McAllen	774,769	129,877	27.6%	71	Seattle	3,439,809	608,660	13.2%
72	Columbia	767,598	129,272	23.3%	72	San Francisco	4,335,391	805,235	12.3%
73	Greensboro	723,801	269,666	18.4%	73	Honolulu	935,207	337,256	11.6%
74	Sarasota	702,281	51,917	19.5%	74	San Jose	1,836,911	945,942	11.1%
75	Little Rock	699,757	193,524	17.8%	75	Virginia Beach	1,676,822	437,994	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2010 Census for metro and principal city populations, U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (2007-11) for poverty rates.

Note: The shaded area highlights the metro areas in the benchmark group of comparably sized cities (all metros within 200,000 of Rochester's population).

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