



A Project of the Dyson Foundation and the Marist
College Institute for Public Opinion to Examine
Residents' Priorities for the Mid-Hudson Region

Many Voices One Valley 2007

Greene County Report

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Many Voices One Valley 2007

Greene County Report

Many Voices One Valley 2007 reports the results of a survey conducted by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion and funded by the Dyson Foundation about what people in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley think of living in the region. While the study included Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, and Ulster Counties, this summary details only the results for Greene County.

The study updates a similar study conducted in 2002. Many of the questions asked five years ago are part of this new study so that life in the Mid-Hudson Valley and Greene County may be compared over time.

There have been several additions to the earlier study, as well. The current research delves deeper than the 2002 survey into how people rate the affordability of the region and examines the issue of health care.

In the present study, 4,320 residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley were interviewed April 9th through June 19th, 2007. This includes 503 residents living in Greene County. The survey results for all residents in the Mid-Hudson region are statistically significant at $\pm 1.5\%$ while the margin of error for Greene

County residents is $\pm 4.5\%$. The margin of error increases for smaller sub-groups in the population.

For additional information and complete details of the survey questionnaire and results visit www.ManyVoicesOneValley.org. Full reports for both the 2007 and the 2002 studies may be accessed there, as well.

A Profile

Demographic Profile of Greene County

The Mid-Hudson Valley includes seven counties: Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, and Ulster. Greene County has the smallest population in the region. Its residents comprise just 3% of the total Mid-Hudson Valley population.¹

Demographically, Greene County shares commonalities with the Mid-Hudson Valley as a whole. Yet, there are also stark differences. Most dramatically, nearly seven in ten households in the county have an annual income of less than \$50,000. This compares with only about four in ten of Mid-Hudson Valley households that are in this same income bracket.

There has been an increase in the proportion of low income families living in Greene County since 2002. Five years ago, just 36% of county households earned a family income of less than \$30,000 a year. Today, 44% of households in Greene County make less than \$30,000 annually. This

¹ Results not depicted in the charts of the report are detailed in the appendices which are available on www.ManyVoicesOneValley.org, the study website.

increase in low income households has not occurred at the regional level.

The average household size in Greene County is smaller than the average Mid-Hudson Valley household. It is 2.6 compared with the regional average of 2.8. Five years ago, the average household size in Greene County was 2.7 while the average Mid-Hudson Valley home was larger with 2.9. Among households with children, the average household size in Greene County is 3.8 compared with the regional average of 4.2.

In terms of race, Greene County is more homogenous than the Mid-Hudson region. 91% of Greene County residents are white compared with 83% of the region's residents. 5% of Greene County residents are Latino compared with one in ten Mid-Hudson Valley residents. 5% of Greene County residents are African American compared with 7% of the region as a whole.

The proportion of college graduates in the county is lower than the proportion who have completed college across the region. Nearly eight in ten Greene County residents do not have a college degree compared with 65% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole.

Greene County households are less likely to include children than the typical Mid-Hudson Valley household. 37% of Greene County households have at least one child compared with 44% of all households regionally. 13% of Greene County households include a child who is under age

five comparable to the regional proportion of 15%. About three in ten Greene County households have children age five to eighteen. This is less than the nearly four in ten of households across the region that include school age children.

	Greene County	Mid-Hudson Valley
Gender		
Men	52%	49%
Women	48%	51%
Race		
White	91%	83%
African American	5%	7%
Latino	5%	10%
Income		
Less than \$30,000	44%	25%
\$30,000 or more	56%	75%
Income		
Less than \$50,000	68%	42%
\$50,000 or more	32%	58%
Age		
Under 45	46%	44%
Over 45	54%	56%
Education		
Less than college	79%	65%
College graduate	21%	35%
Children		
Households with children	37%	44%
Households with children under 5	13%	15%
Households with children age 5 to 18	31%	38%

Greene County households with children are almost twice as likely to be a low income household or one which is headed by a single parent than the average Mid-Hudson Valley household with children. 39% of Greene County children reside in households where the annual household

income is less than \$30,000. This compares with 21% of children in the entire Mid-Hudson region. About two in ten Greene County households with children are headed by a single parent compared with 11% of households in the region as a whole.

Households with Children	Greene County	Mid-Hudson Valley
Low income	39%	21%
Single parents	21%	11%

Greene County has one of the highest rates of households without health insurance in the Mid-Hudson Valley. Nearly three in ten of the county's households have at least one member who has faced a gap in coverage in the last year, and 16% of households in the county include someone who is currently without coverage. These proportions are similar to the proportions reported in 2002.

Households	Greene County		Mid-Hudson Valley	
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Gap in health insurance	29%	28%	24%	24%
Currently not insured	16%	17%	12%	12%
Households with Children	Greene County		Mid-Hudson Valley	
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Children with gap in health insurance	23%	21%	15%	13%
Children currently not insured	12%	10%	7%	6%

Greene County has the largest proportion in the region of households with children who have had to confront a gap in coverage. 23% of all county households with children

have at least one child who has had interrupted coverage over the past year compared with 15% of households with children regionally. Greene County also has the highest proportion of currently uninsured children. 12% are without insurance right now compared with 7% in the region as a whole.

The proportion of Greene County's households with children that have not been able to maintain insurance has not been reduced since 2002. At that time, 21% of all households with children had at least one child who had a gap in coverage, and 10% were uninsured.

Continuity and Change in the Past Five Years

Rating of community

84% of Greene County residents rate life in the area where they live favorably. 66% see it as either very good or good. In 2002, more county residents described their community as excellent, 25% compared with 18% of residents today.

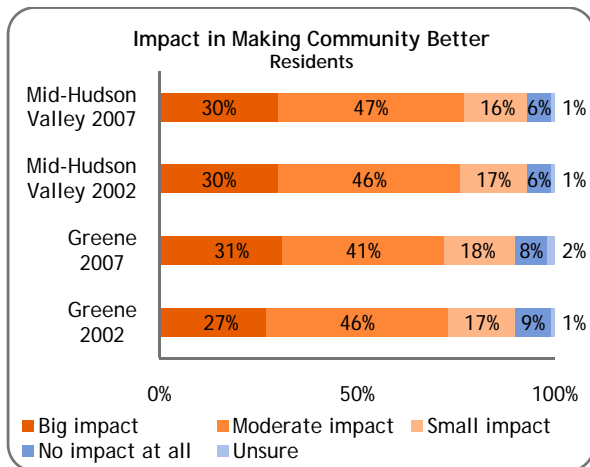
Of the seven counties included in the regional study, Greene County residents give the second least positive evaluation in the region. However, their attitudes do not differ sharply from residents of the region as a whole, among whom 88% rate life in their community favorably and 12% do not.



Question wording: Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live? Would you say it is: excellent, very good, good (positive), fair or poor (negative)?

Role in improving community

The people of Greene County do think they can have an impact in making the place they live better.



Question wording: Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live: a big impact, a moderate impact, a small impact, or no impact at all?

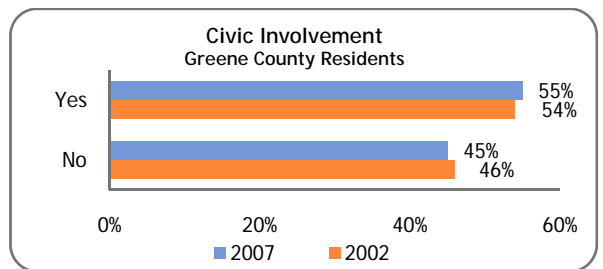
72% believe they can have at least a moderate impact in their community. This

compares with 77% of the region’s residents who share this perspective.

Five years ago, 73% of county residents thought they could play a role in shaping their community.

Volunteerism

46% of Greene County residents who think they can make a difference in the community think volunteering their time is the best way to do so. 39% feel getting other people involved is what is important. 55% of county residents are regular volunteers or actively participate in a civic organization, a church, or a club.



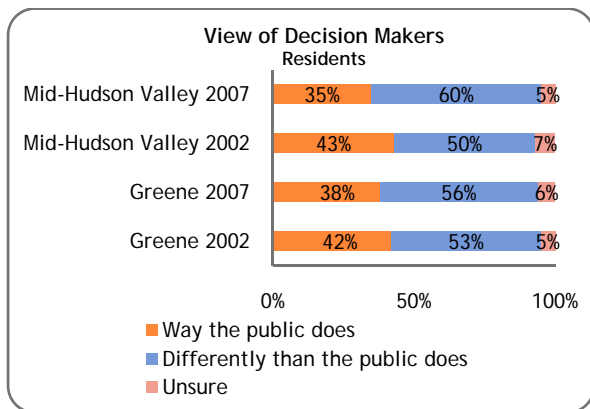
Question wording: Do you regularly volunteer or are you active in a civic organization, a church, or a club?

Responsiveness of local leaders

Greene County residents continue to believe that individuals who are in positions to make decisions for their community are not responsive to public opinion. Five years ago, a majority, 53%, of Greene County residents felt that there was a disconnect between decision makers and the public, and 42% felt decision makers were, in fact, in step with public perceptions.

County residents’ opinions have not changed much over the past five years.

Today, 56% of Greene County residents believe decision makers see things differently than the public. Only 38% think leaders in their community are in touch with public sentiment.

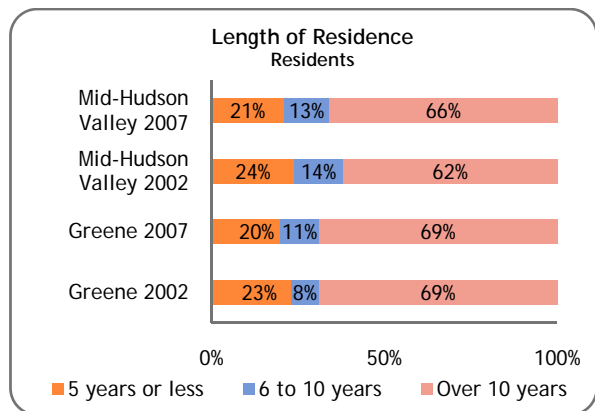


Question wording: Overall, do you feel that those individuals who are in positions to make decisions for your community mostly see things the way the public does or mostly see things differently than the public does?

While the attitudes of Greene County residents have remained constant over the past five years, there has been a shift in opinion among residents living in the region as a whole. In 2002, Greene County was one of the only counties surveyed in which a majority of residents believed their decision makers were out of step with the public. Greene County is now no longer an anomaly. People living throughout the Mid-Hudson region have become more skeptical of their leaders' responsiveness over the past five years, and Greene County residents' opinions on this issue now mirror the attitudes of the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident.

New residents

While most residents have called Greene County home for a long time, many new residents have moved to the area since the last survey. In 2002, Greene County residents had lived in the community for an average of 28 years. Now, the average length of residence is 24 years.



Question wording: How many years have you lived in your community?

Although more than two-thirds of all current residents have lived in the area for more than a decade, there is a substantial proportion of new residents in the area. One in five Greene County residents has moved to their community in the past five years. This recent influx is consistent with larger regional trends.

Issues: The Priorities

Overview of residents' priorities

On a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 meaning not a priority at all and 10 meaning a top priority, residents evaluated the importance they felt should be placed on a variety of issues that impact their community. The topics ranged from the economy to the public schools, health care to taxes, and a variety of community services.

Greene County residents are intensely concerned about an array of issues. Only one-tenth of a point separates the average score for their five most important priorities. At the top of the list are keeping businesses in the area, improving the quality of public schools, and making health care more affordable. Each priority receives an average score of 7.6.²

Of the seven counties in the region, Greene County is the most concerned about issues which affect children. Not only is public education a leading priority in the county, but Greene County is the only county where providing more after-school activities ranks among residents' top five priorities.

Greene County	2007		2002	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Keeping businesses in the area	1	7.6	1	7.9
Improving the quality of the public schools	2	7.6	2	7.8
Making health care more affordable	3	7.6	3	7.6
Reducing taxes	4	7.5	8	7.0
Providing more after-school activities	5	7.5	6	7.4
Making health insurance easier to get	6	7.3	7	7.2
Creating more jobs	7	7.3	5	7.4
Providing services for senior citizens	8	7.2	4	7.5
Making your community safer	9	7.0	9	6.8
Protecting open space	10	6.9	11	6.6
Providing more affordable, quality child care	11	6.7	10	6.8
Increasing the amount of affordable housing	12	6.4	13	6.1
Supporting the arts and providing more cultural events	13	6.3	14	6.0
Increasing the number of public areas	14	6.1	16	5.6
Improving relations between different racial and ethnic groups	15	6.1	12	6.2
Improving the quality of the water	16	6.0	15	5.9
Increasing or improving public transportation	17	5.6	19	5.0
Reducing homelessness	18	5.5	18	5.1
Slowing growth and development	19	5.5	17	5.1

Question wording: Now I want to ask you about several issues that some communities face. Using the numbers 0 through 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, please tell me how you would rate each one for your community. 10 is a top priority for your community and 0 is not a priority at all for your community and you may use the numbers in between.

² Mean ranking tables list the average to the tenths place but are sorted in absolute order. For example, while both "Keeping businesses in the area" and "Improving the quality of the public schools" are rounded to 7.6, their averages are 7.61 and 7.58, respectively. They are, therefore, ranked one and two in the priorities list.

There have been several changes since 2002 in how Greene County residents rank priorities for their community. Only three of their top five goals today were among the leading issues for county residents five years ago. The number four issue in 2002, providing services for senior citizens, has dropped to eighth place now.

Creating jobs, which was fifth among priorities for Greene County residents five years ago, is now seventh. However, it is important to note that while their rank has fallen, the scores for these two priorities have not substantially lowered since 2002.

The issues of reducing taxes and improving after-school activities for children and teenagers are now in the top five. These two priorities currently rank fourth and fifth, respectively.

Top Priorities: Economic Priorities

For Greene County residents, economic issues are at the forefront. As noted, keeping businesses in the area continues to be the number one priority for residents of the county. Reducing taxes is also among the five leading priorities for county residents overall.

Keeping businesses in the area

Keeping businesses in the area is the number one priority for Greene County residents. It receives a mean score of 7.6 on a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 being the most important. Four in ten county residents rank the retention of businesses with a 10 the top score for a priority.

It was the top concern for residents of Greene County in 2002, as well. This issue is also important to residents throughout the Mid-Hudson Valley. It is the number two issue for the region as a whole.

Keeping Businesses in the Area	2007		2002	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	2	7.9	1	7.9
Greene	1	7.6	1	7.9

Question wording: Now I want to ask you about several issues that some communities face. Using the numbers 0 through 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, please tell me how you would rate each one for your community. 10 is a top priority for your community and 0 is not a priority at all for your community and you may use the numbers in between: Keeping businesses in the area.

Reducing taxes

Since 2002, the issue of taxes has risen to the top tier of issues for people living in Greene County. It now receives an average score of 7.5 out of a high score of 10 from Greene County residents. This is an increase from the average score of 7.0 it received in 2002.

Reducing Taxes	2007		2002	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	3	7.9	9	7.3
Greene	4	7.5	8	7.0

Question wording: Now I want to ask you about several issues that some communities face. Using the numbers 0 through 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, please tell me how you would rate each one for your community. 10 is a top priority for your community and 0 is not a priority at all for your community and you may use the numbers in between: Reducing taxes.

Five years ago, Greene County residents considered taxes to be an important priority but did not view it as one of the most

significant issues facing the county. Reducing taxes ranked only eighth out of nineteen priorities. Today it ranks fourth.

This phenomenon is not limited to Greene County. Interest in reducing taxes has increased dramatically throughout the Mid-Hudson region.

Summary: economic priorities

The residents of Greene County are concerned about economic issues and rank them highly as priorities for their communities. Many county residents continue to think the county should work to prevent businesses from leaving the local area. Anxiety over the local tax burden has grown over the past five years, and it is now one of the top issues in the minds of Greene County residents.

Top Priorities: Priorities that Affect Children

Priorities that affect children are important to residents of Greene County. 31% of Greene County households have at least one school age child. Residents are concerned about the quality of public schools in their community, and many also think after-school activities are important issues to address.

Improving public schools

Improving the quality of public schools ranked second, overall, among Greene County residents in 2002 and continues to do so today. Its average score is now 7.6 out of 10.

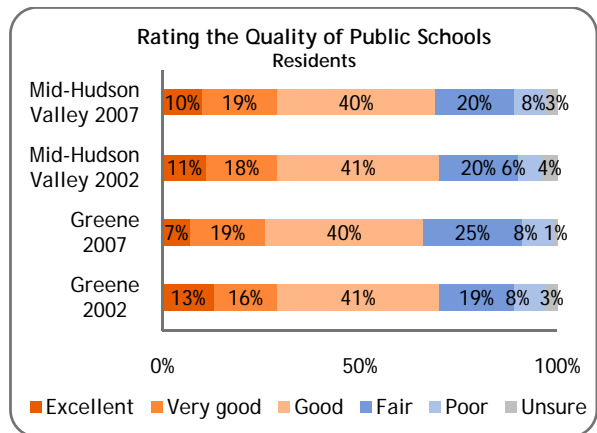
Education is a major concern for residents throughout the Mid-Hudson region. It ranks fourth among Mid-Hudson Valley residents, and it receives a mean score of 7.8.

Improving the Quality of the Public Schools	2007		2002	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	4	7.8	2	7.8
Greene	2	7.6	2	7.8

Question wording: Now I want to ask you about several issues that some communities face. Using the numbers 0 through 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, please tell me how you would rate each one for your community. 10 is a top priority for your community and 0 is not a priority at all for your community and you may use the numbers in between: Improving the quality of the public schools.

Rating the quality of public schools

In general, Greene County residents have an approving view of the quality of the public schools in their community. However, at the extremes, only 7% describe local schools as excellent and only 8% of residents consider them of poor quality.

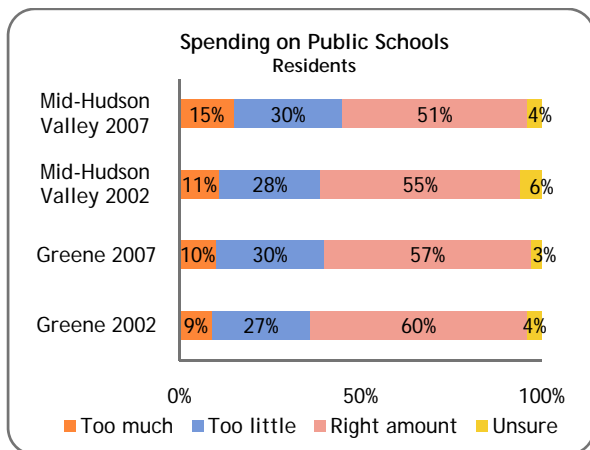


Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): The quality of the public schools?

Residents of Greene County are just as positive with the quality of education as residents are regionally. County residents' favorable perspective on the caliber of their public schools has stayed fairly stable since 2002.

Spending on public schools

Looking at how their community budgets for public education, nearly six in ten Greene County residents feel their community allocates the right amount toward improving public schools. However, three in ten residents say not enough is being spent, and one in ten think too much money is expended on public schools.



Question wording: Does your community spend too much, too little, or about the right amount on public schools?

Greene County residents tend to be more satisfied with current levels of funding for public education than residents regionally. County residents' opinions on school spending have not changed noticeably in the past five years.

After-school activities

Providing more after-school activities is among Greene County residents' top five priorities for the region. 33% of residents give this priority the top rating of 10. On average residents in Greene County rate providing more after-school activities with a score of 7.5 out of 10, relatively unchanged from the average rating of 7.4 in 2002.

Providing More After-School Activities for Children and Teenagers	2007		2002	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	10	7.4	7	7.3
Greene	5	7.5	6	7.4

Question wording: Now I want to ask you about several issues that some communities face. Using the numbers 0 through 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, please tell me how you would rate each one for your community. 10 is a top priority for your community and 0 is not a priority at all for your community and you may use the numbers in between: Providing more after-school activities for children and teenagers.

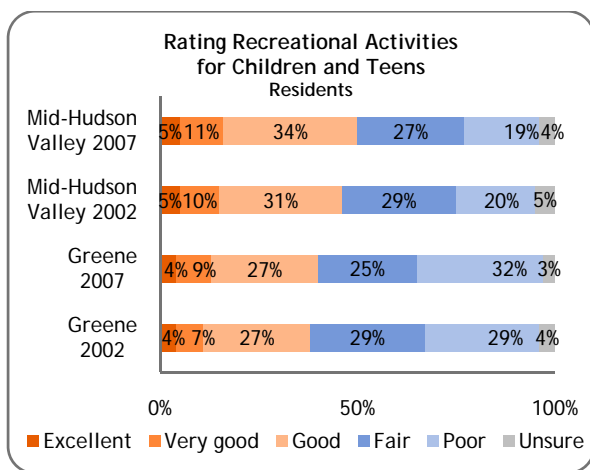
Greene County residents are more concerned about after-school activities than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident. While this issue ranks as the fifth priority for people living in Greene County, it only ranks tenth among Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole.

In fact, Greene County is the only one of the seven counties surveyed in 2007 in which providing more after-school activities ranks among residents' five greatest priorities. County residents' higher ranking of this issue is interesting given that Greene County households are less likely to include school age children than Mid-Hudson Valley

households as a whole. 31% of Greene County households include a child between the ages of five and eighteen compared with 38% of households regionally.

The quality of recreational activities

A majority of Greene County residents do not feel positively about the quality of activities available to children and teenagers in the area. Nearly six in ten residents rate them as only fair or poor, while just 40% give positive ratings.



Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good, (positive) fair, or poor (negative): Recreational activities for children and teens?

Not much has changed for residents of Greene County on this point. 58% viewed recreational activities for young people as being fair or poor in 2002.

Greene County residents are more dissatisfied with the quality of recreational activities than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident. Unlike people living in Greene County, residents of the region as a whole divide on the issue. Half of all Mid-

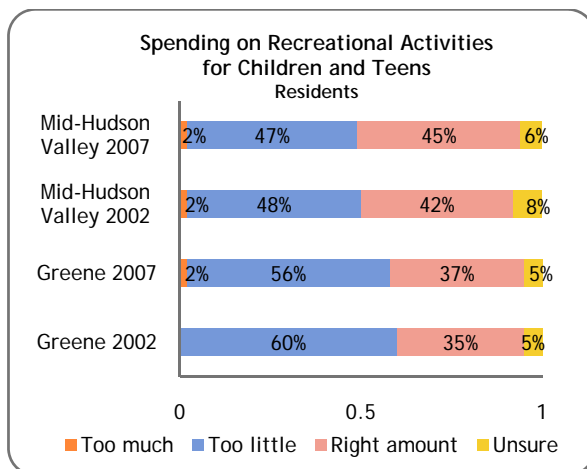
Hudson Valley residents rate them positively, and 46% rate them as only fair or poor.

Spending on recreational activities

Greene County residents believe their community does not allocate enough funding for recreational activities for children and teenagers. 56% feel not enough is being spent while 37% think the amount of funding is about right.

Residents' attitudes today are fairly comparable to their opinions in 2002 when 60% believed too little was being spent on this issue, and 35% thought the level of funding was reasonable.

Greene County residents are more critical of the amount of resources being expended on recreational activities than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident. Among residents of the region as a whole, 47% think too little is being spent and 45% believe funding is on target.



Question wording: Does your community spend too much, too little, or about the right amount on recreational activities for children and teens?

Summary: priorities that affect children

The issue of public education and services for children resonate among people living in Greene County. Residents are very concerned with providing children with a quality public education. Overall, they feel positively about the quality of their public schools, and nearly six in ten county residents think community spending in this area is about right.

After-school activities are also important to many residents of Greene County. Most residents are dissatisfied with the quality of recreational activities available to children in the community and would like to see more money spent in this area.

Top Priorities: Health Care

Greene County residents are troubled by the high cost of health care. Making health care more affordable is one of the top three priorities for residents of the county.

This issue hits close to home for the nearly three in ten Greene County households that include at least one person who has not had uninterrupted health insurance coverage and, therefore, has experienced a gap in that insurance for at least some time over the course of the last year. 16% of all households have at least one member who is presently without insurance. In fact, Greene County has one of the highest rates of households without current insurance in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

Many Greene County households with children are also struggling to maintain coverage for their children. The county is

home to the greatest proportion of children without current or continuous coverage in the Mid-Hudson region. 23% of Greene County households have at least one child who has experienced a gap in coverage over the past year, and 12% of county households include a child who is not currently insured.

Health care: affordability

Considering the high rate of Greene County households that face interruptions in health insurance coverage or have to contend without any insurance, it is not surprising that about four in ten people in the county assign making health care more affordable a 10 the top priority for their community.

Affordable health care receives an average score of 7.6 among Greene County residents and ranks third on their list of community priorities. This is the same average rating and ranking it received from county residents in 2002.

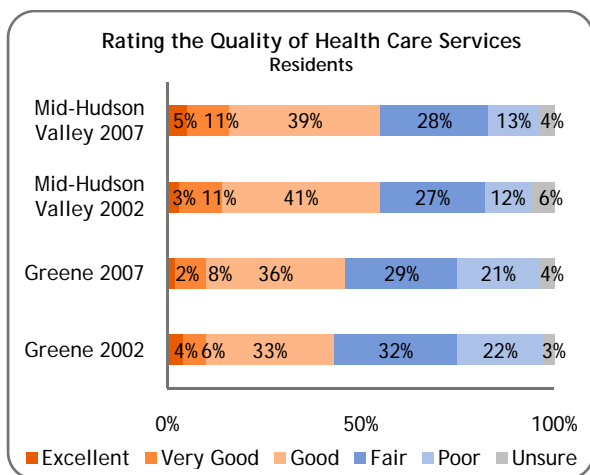
Lowering health care costs is the number one concern regionally yielding a mean score of 8.0 from all Mid-Hudson Valley residents.

Making Health Care More Affordable	2007		2002	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	1	8.0	3	7.7
Greene	3	7.6	3	7.6

Question wording: Now I want to ask you about several issues that some communities face. Using the numbers 0 through 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, please tell me how you would rate each one for your community. 10 is a top priority for your community and 0 is not a priority at all for your community and you may use the numbers in between: Making health care more affordable.

Rating health care services

Overall, residents of Greene County divide about the quality of health care services in their community. Only a narrow four-point difference separates residents who rate these services as fair or poor, 50%, and those who have a positive impression of the health care services available to them, 46%.



Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): Health care services?

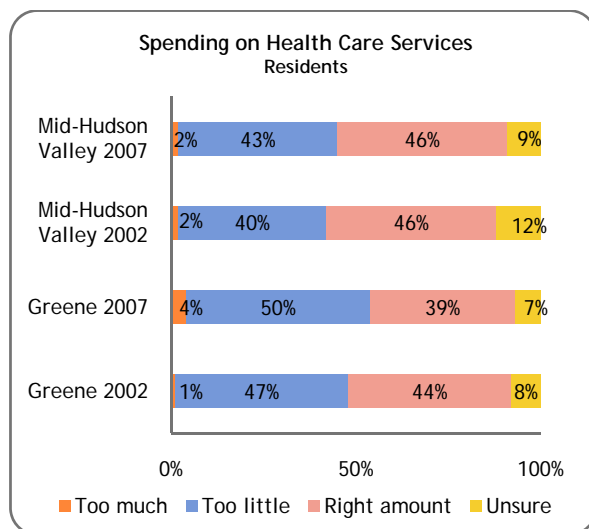
This represents a shift in opinion from five years ago, when 54% of Greene County residents considered local health care services to be of either fair or poor quality, and just 43% expressed a favorable opinion.

County residents are less positive about the quality of health care services than residents of the Mid-Hudson region as a whole.

Spending on health care services

A majority of Greene County residents would like more money spent, but there is no consensus among county residents about

the amount of money budgeted for local health care services. While half of county residents think the amount allocated is too little about four in ten residents believe their community is spending enough.



Question wording: Does your community spend too much, too little, or about the right amount on health care services?

Nevertheless, residents of Greene County are less divided in their opinions than the overall Mid-Hudson Valley population, among whom 46% think spending is about right and 43% think too few dollars are being allocated toward health care.

The attitudes of Greene County residents about spending on local health services were more divided in 2002.

Summary: health care

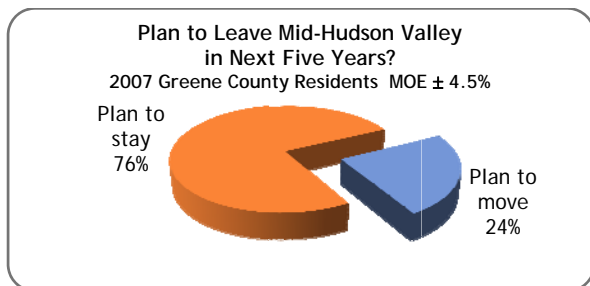
Health care issues are now major concerns for many Greene County residents. Many believe the county should focus a good amount of attention on this important community priority.

Many residents are not pleased with the caliber of the health care services in their area. A considerable proportion of people in the county want their community to allot more funding towards improving current health care services.

Plans for the Future

Residents who intend to leave

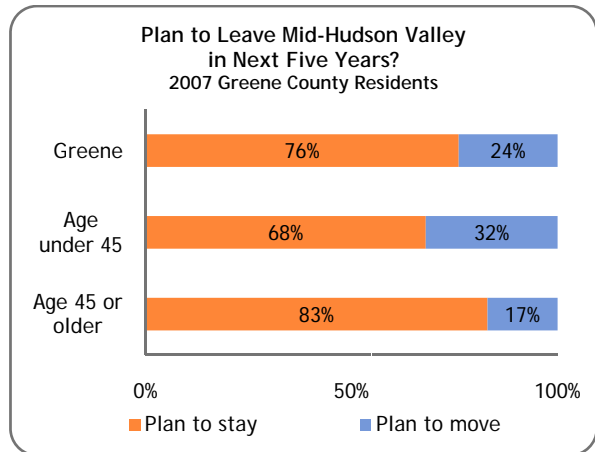
Despite the fact that many Greene County residents have deep roots in the community about one in four do not plan to be living in the area five years from now. When asked whether or not they plan to stay in the region 24% of residents intend to move out.



Question wording: Thinking about five years from now, do you plan to stay in the Hudson Valley or do you plan to move someplace else?

This compares with 29% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents who plan to relocate out of the area in the near future.

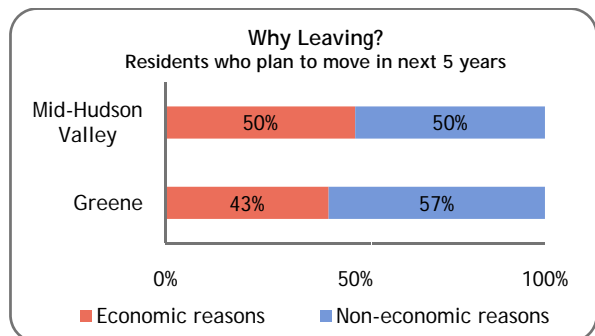
When looking at what types of people are more likely than others to plan to move out of the area, age is an important factor. About one-third of all Greene County adults age forty-five or younger plan to leave the region in the next five years compared with just 17% of adults over age forty-five.



Question wording: Thinking about five years from now, do you plan to stay in the Hudson Valley or do you plan to move someplace else?

Why do Greene County residents plan to relocate? 57% of Greene County residents thinking about moving mention non-economic reasons. While jobs are the top reason cited for departing the area, Greene County residents are not as likely to move out of the area for economic reasons than residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley overall.

18% of all Greene County residents who plan to leave indicate the climate is a motivating factor compared with only 8% of the Mid-Hudson Valley residents who plan to leave the region.



Question wording: What is the main reason you plan to move away from the Hudson Valley?

43% of those county residents who plan to relocate say it is because of economic reasons. For instance, 23% of residents planning to relocate mention jobs, and 11% state it is the cost of living. Greene County residents who intend to move out of the region are more likely to mention jobs as the main reason for their intended departure than residents of the region as a whole.

	Greene County	Mid-Hudson Valley
Why Leaving?		
Jobs	23%	12%
Climate	18%	8%
Cost of living	11%	17%
Taxes	8%	17%
Quality of life	8%	6%
Time for a change	6%	7%
Move near family	6%	5%
Retirement	3%	5%
Overcrowded	1%	6%
Housing costs	1%	4%
Schools	<1%	2%
Finish college-school	<1%	2%
Other	15%	9%

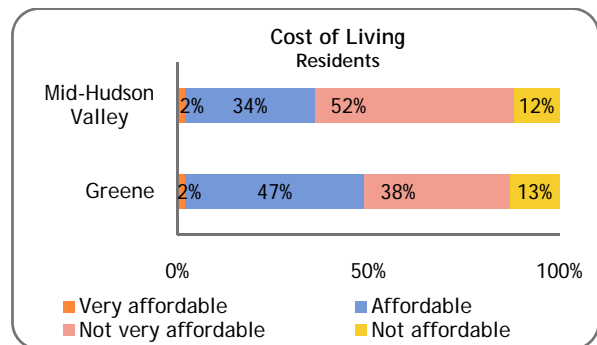
Question wording: What is the main reason you plan to move away from the Hudson Valley?

Making Ends Meet

Rating the affordability of the Mid-Hudson Valley

Greene County residents divide when asked to rate the affordability of the region. 51% of residents think the region is an expensive place to live but 49% describe it as affordable for the average family.

Still, residents of Greene County are more likely to view the area as being affordable than residents of the Mid-Hudson region as a whole. 64% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents regard the region as unaffordable.



Question wording: Overall, would you describe the cost of living in the Hudson Valley for the average family as very affordable, affordable, not very affordable, or not affordable at all?

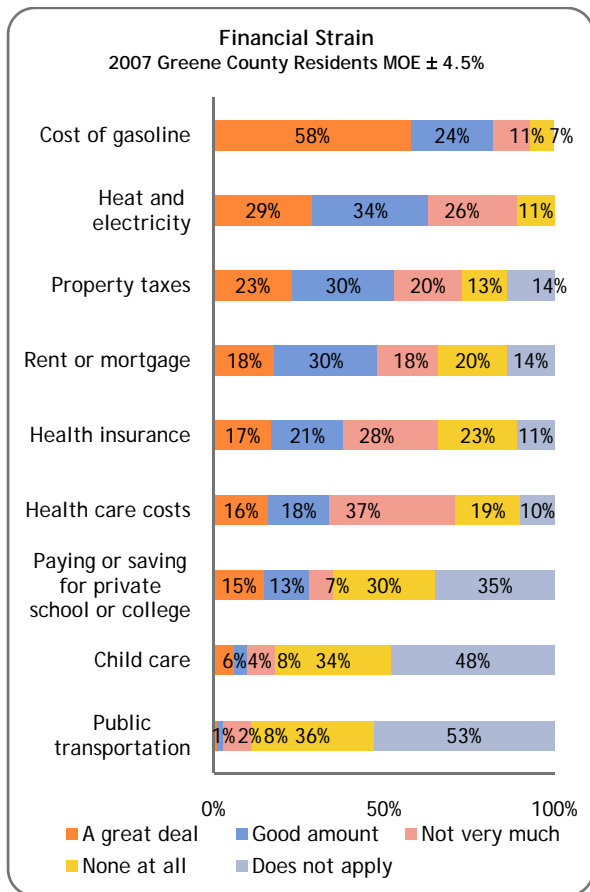
Managing the family budget

Many residents of Greene County describe their monthly budgets as burdened by an assortment of financial strains. The cost of gasoline tops the list of troublesome expenses for Greene County residents.

82% of county residents find it financially difficult to pay for the high cost of fuel. 58% of Greene County residents think paying for gasoline has caused a great deal of stress on their budgets compared with 45% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents overall. Another 24% of Greene County residents report the cost of gasoline has placed a good deal of strain on their finances.

The proportion of Greene County residents adversely affected by the cost of gasoline substantially outweighs the proportion of county residents financially stressed by any

other monthly expenditure. But, 63% of county residents point to the financial difficulty they experience paying for heat and electricity including 29% of people in the county who describe this issue as placing a great deal of financial strain on meeting their monthly expenses.



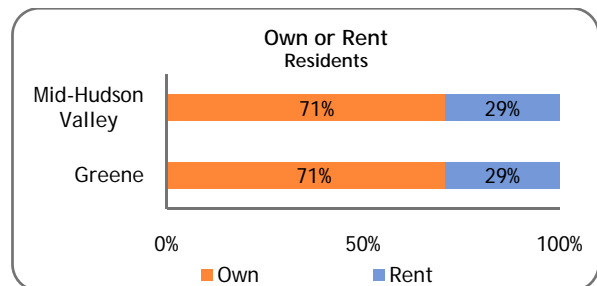
Question wording: Thinking about an average month, how much financial strain does the cost of gasoline/the cost of public transportation such as buses and trains/your rent or mortgage/heat and electricity/property taxes/child care/paying or saving for private school or college/health care costs or medical expenses not including health insurance/health insurance put on your family budget: a great deal of financial strain, a good amount, not very much, or none at all? If something doesn't apply to you, please say so.

53% of Greene County residents feel their household finances have been stretched by their property tax bill including nearly one-quarter of county residents who experience a great deal of financial strain paying these bills.

Other expenses that place a great deal of financial strain for about one in five Greene County residents include their rent or mortgage payment and the cost of health insurance.

Housing matters

A majority of people living in Greene County are homeowners as are most of the Mid-Hudson Valley's residents. 71% county residents own their home compared with 29% who rent.

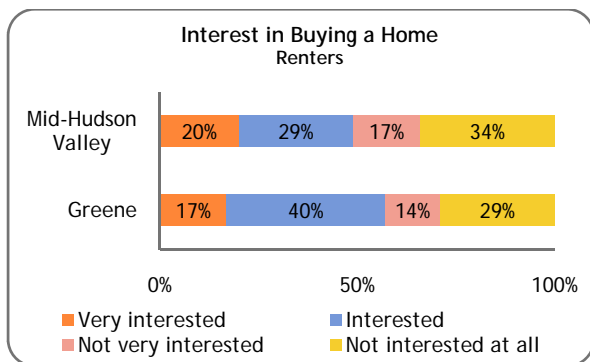


Question wording: Do you own your own home or do you rent?

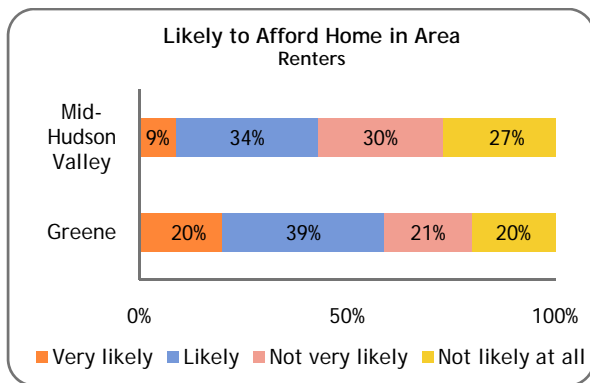
Renting but hoping to own

A majority of renters living in Greene County are interested in buying a home. 57% express interest in homeownership someday. 43% do not. Overall, Greene County renters are more likely to want to buy a home than renters living in the Mid-Hudson region as a whole.

About six in ten renters living in Greene County think buying a home is an attainable goal, although 41% feel priced out of homeownership. People who rent in Greene County are more optimistic about the prospect of future homeownership than renters living in the region as a whole. 57% of Mid-Hudson Valley renters doubt they will be able to afford a home in the area.



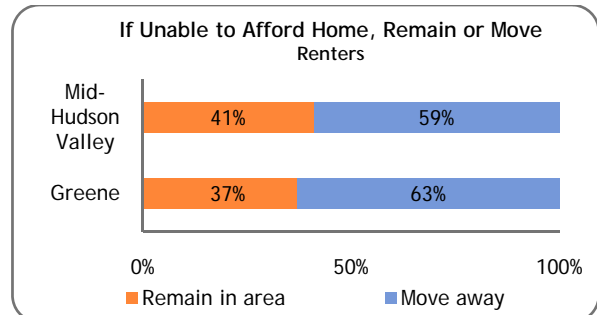
Question wording: Are you very interested, interested, not very interested, or not interested at all in buying a home in this area?



Question wording: Do you think it is very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all that you will be able to afford a home in this area?

Mirroring the intentions of renters throughout the Mid-Hudson region, if Greene County renters cannot afford to buy

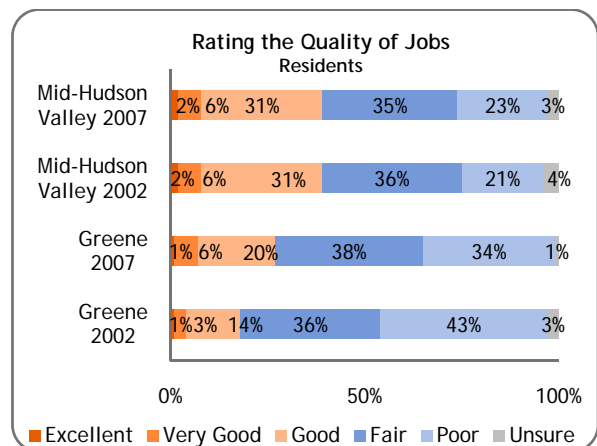
a home in the area, a majority of them, 63%, plan to move out of the region.



Question wording: If you cannot afford to buy a home here, are you likely to remain living in the Hudson Valley, or are you likely to move away?

Working in the Mid-Hudson Valley

Most Greene County residents do not rate the quality of jobs available in their community highly. Only about three in ten county residents describe the quality of jobs favorably.



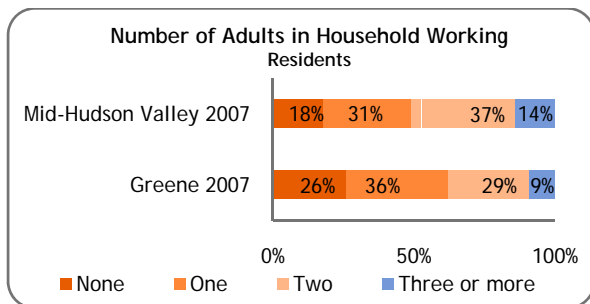
Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): The quality of jobs?

Although most people living in other parts of the Mid-Hudson region are not satisfied with the caliber of jobs, Greene County

residents are even more dissatisfied than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident.

Despite Greene County residents' dismal assessments, these figures actually reflect a slight improvement in their opinions since 2002. Five years ago, nearly four in five county residents, 79%, rated jobs in the community where they live as fair or poor.

Many people in Greene County work hard in order to make ends meet, often holding down two jobs. At the household level, 44% of county households have two adult wage earners or include at least one adult that is working more than one job.

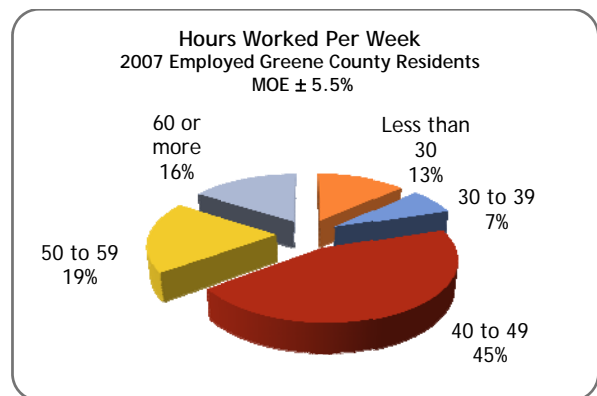


Question wording: Are you currently working for pay? How many other adults in your household are currently working for pay?

Nevertheless, Greene County residents are less likely than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident to come from households in which at least two jobs are held. 55% of households in the Mid-Hudson Valley as a whole hold more than one job.

In fact, about a quarter of all Greene County households hold no jobs at all. This compares with 18% of all Mid-Hudson Valley households in which no jobs are held.

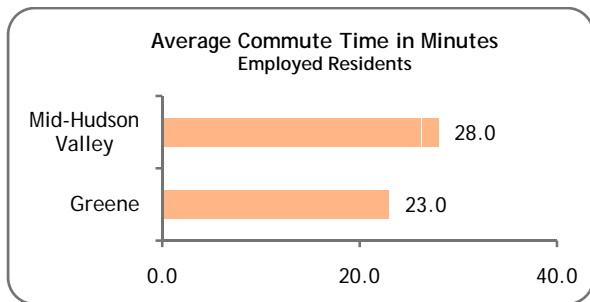
While there may be more households in Greene County without current employment as compared to the region as a whole, those workers in the county that are able to secure employment work more hours than the average Mid-Hudson worker. 80% of Greene County workers put in forty hours or more each week including 35% of workers who clock more than fifty hours a week.



Question wording: In total, approximately how many hours do you work in an average week?

Only one in five Greene County workers puts in less than forty hours per week compared with 26% of the regions' workers. On average, Greene County workers clock 44.2 per week compared with a weekly average of 43.1 hours for workers across the region.

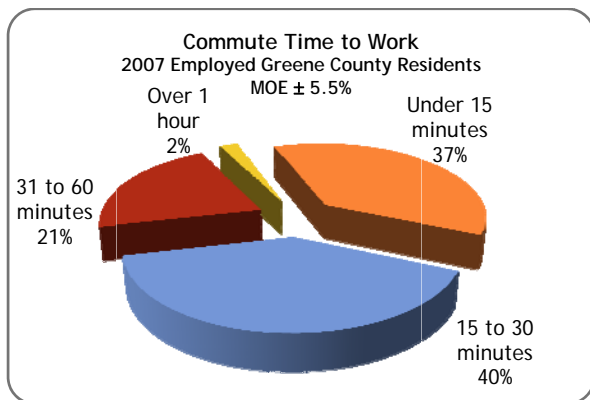
Greene County residents that are employed have a short average commute time of 23 minutes which is the second shortest travel time for people who work in the Mid-Hudson region. The regional average commute time is 28 minutes.



Question wording: In minutes, how long does it take you to get one way from home to work?

Most workers in Greene County spend less than thirty minutes to get to work each day. Nearly four in ten employed Greene County residents travel less than fifteen minutes and 40% spend between fifteen and thirty minutes one way to get to work.

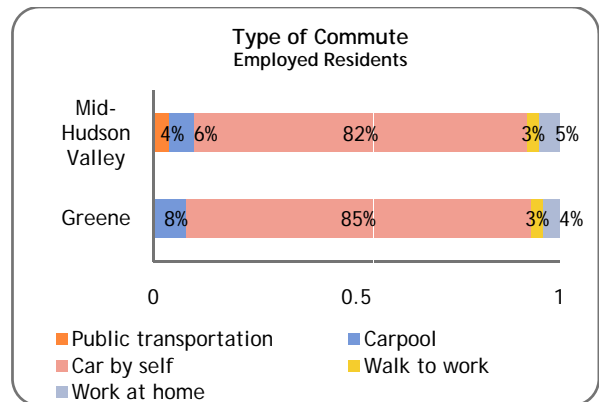
Only 23% of those in the county that are employed experience travel times of more than a half hour. 21% commute for thirty-one minutes to an hour, and 2% travel over an hour away from their homes to get to their jobs.



Question wording: In minutes, how long does it take you to get one way from home to work?

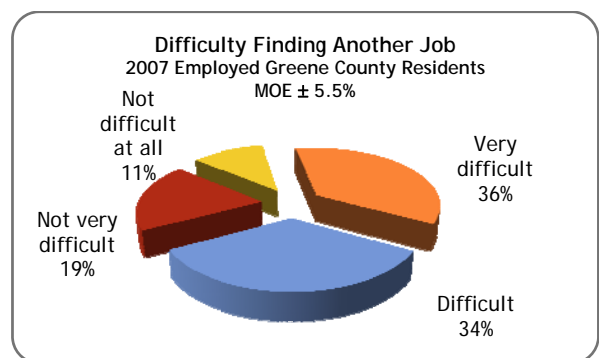
Similar to most workers in the Mid-Hudson region employed Greene County residents travel to work in a car by themselves. 85%

drive to work alone, 8% carpool, 3% walk to work, and 4% work at home.



Question wording: On most workdays, do you commute to work by car by yourself, carpool with other adults, or do you take public transportation such as a bus, train, or subway?

In Greene County, most residents with jobs think it would be difficult to find a similar job with a comparable commute if they lost their current position. 36% of workers in the county say it would be very difficult to find similar work within the same distance if they were to lose their job and another 34% of working residents say it would be difficult to do so.

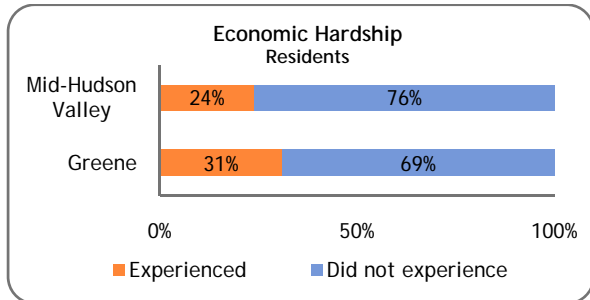


Question wording: If you were to lose your job, would it be very difficult, difficult, not very difficult, or not difficult at all to find another similar position about the same distance from your home?

Greene County residents that are employed are among the most likely employed residents of the region to believe they would not have an easy time securing a comparable job with a similar commute.

People doing without

A large number of Greene County households struggle financially. Residents were asked if they had encountered each of several economic hardships in the past year. These difficulties include problems paying for food, housing costs, utility bills, or medical treatment. 31% of Greene County residents mention at least one of these economic hardships. County residents are more likely to face these types of economic hardships than residents in the Mid-Hudson region as a whole.

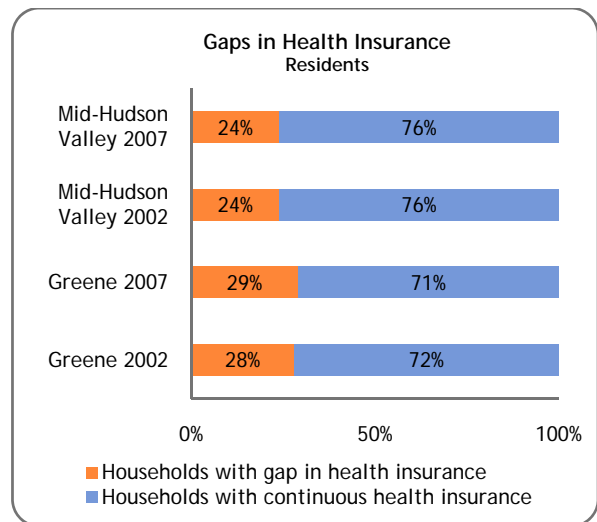


Question wording: In the past 12 months did you experience any of the following every month, some months but not others, a couple of times, once, or not at all you: cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food/got emergency food from a church, a food pantry, or food bank/did not have enough money to pay your mortgage, rent, or utility bills/moved in with other people even for a little while because you could not afford to pay your mortgage, rent, or utility bills/missed or skipped a doctor's appointment because you could not afford to pay for it/did not buy needed medicine because you did not have the money to pay for it?

Health Matters

Households with gaps in health insurance coverage

A considerable proportion of Greene County households face the challenge of maintaining continuous health insurance coverage throughout the year. 29% of households in Greene County include at least one member who has not had uninterrupted health insurance and, therefore, has experienced a gap in coverage during the last year.

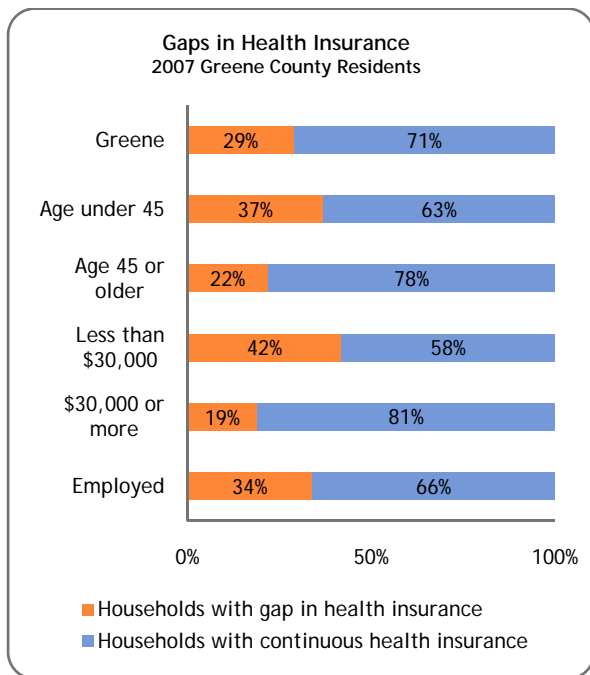


Question wording: Do the adults/children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now? Was there ever a time in the past 12 months when an adult/child in your household did not have any health insurance or a health plan?

This proportion includes both adults and children who do not have current health insurance and households, while presently insured, have had at least one member without coverage at some point during the past year.

Using the U.S. Census, this means approximately 5,295 of the estimated 18,256 households in the county confronted the problem of keeping continuous health coverage for everyone in the household.³

Greene County has one of the highest rates for households facing gaps in their health insurance coverage in the Mid-Hudson Valley. This proportion is similar to that reported in the county in 2002. Five years ago, 28% of Greene County residents were without health insurance or experienced a gap in their plan.

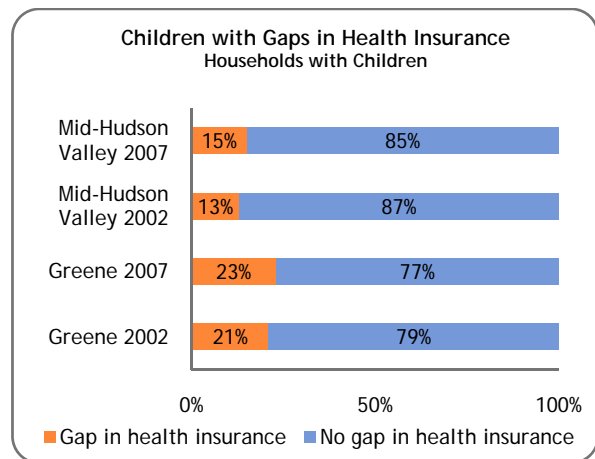


Question wording: Do the adults/children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now? Was there ever a time in the past 12 months when an adult/child in your household did not have any health insurance or a health plan?

³ Population estimates for households are based on the American Community Survey, Census 2000.

For young people and residents in low income households the problem is particularly pressing. 37% of Greene County adults under the age of forty-five live in a household in which someone has experienced a gap in health care coverage in the past twelve months. 42% of households with an annual income of less than \$30,000 have gone without continuous insurance, as well. People in Greene County who are employed are no more likely to gain health insurance than those that are without a job. In fact, 34% of county residents who are employed encountered a gap in coverage this year.

Children are also affected. 23% of households with children in Greene County include at least one child who has not had the benefit of continuous health insurance. This rate has not declined since 2002. Five years ago, this proportion was 21%.



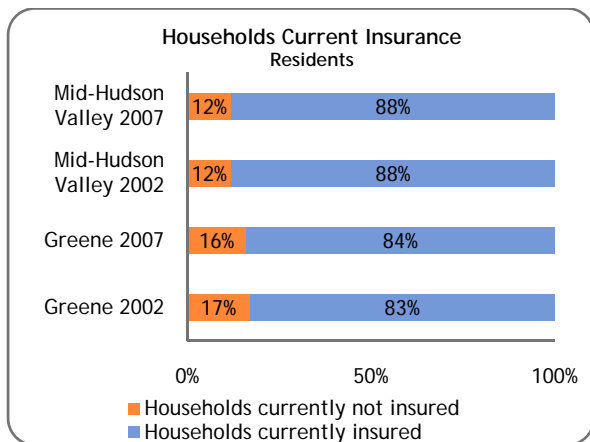
Question wording: Do the children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now? Was there ever a time in the past 12 months when a child in your household did not have any health insurance or a health plan?

Of the seven Mid-Hudson Valley counties included in the larger study, Greene County has the highest rate of households with children who have experienced gaps in coverage.

Households currently without health insurance

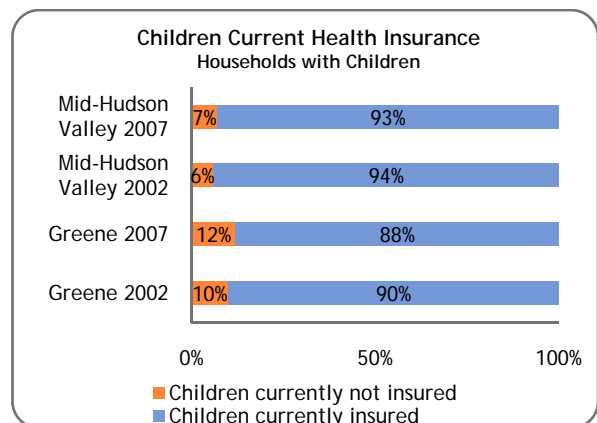
Greene County has one of the highest rates of households without current insurance in the Mid-Hudson Valley. 16% of households in Greene County include at least one person, adult or child, who is presently without health insurance.

Using the U.S. Census, approximately 2,920 households of the estimated 18,256 households in the region have at least one adult or child who does not have health insurance.



Question wording: Do the adults/children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now?

The county also has the highest proportion of Mid-Hudson Valley households with children where at least one child is currently uninsured. The proportion of households with children that have an uninsured child is more than one in every ten, as 12% of county households with children have at least one uninsured child.

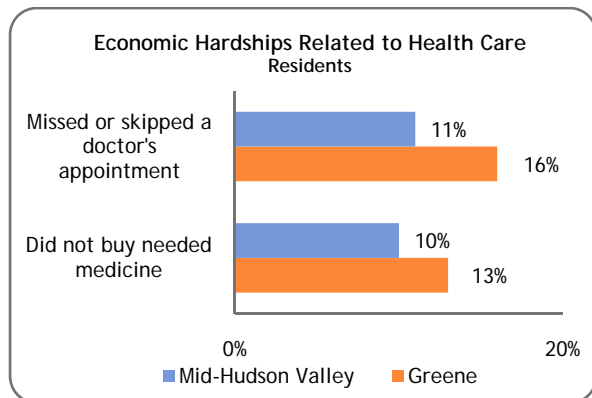


Question wording: Do the children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now?

Going without because of cost

In addition to the many Greene County households that encounter the financial strain of health care costs, a smaller yet significant group of people describe these expenses to be so burdensome they forgo basic medical needs.

Greene County has the greatest proportion of residents in the Mid-Hudson Valley who have missed or skipped a visit to a doctor on at least one occasion in the past year because of cost. 16% of Greene County residents did not visit a doctor because they could not pay for it.



Question wording: In the past 12 months did you experience any of the following every month, some months but not others, a couple of times, once, or not at all you: missed or skipped a doctor's appointment because you could not afford to pay for it/did not buy needed medicine because you did not have the money to pay for it?

13% of county residents did not purchase necessary medicine because they could not afford it. This proportion is consistent with the overall regional average for the Mid-Hudson Valley. However, of the seven counties included in the larger study, Greene County has the highest rate of residents who experienced the inability to pay for needed medicine because of cost.

Conclusion

Greene County residents are concerned about the many challenges facing their communities the most urgent of which include the local economy, public education, and health care costs. Keeping businesses in the area ranks as the number one issue for the county, followed by improving the public schools, lowering health care costs, reducing the tax burden, and providing children with more after-school activities.

Three of the top five goals, retaining businesses, education, and health care were all among the top priorities five years ago. But there have been some differences in the issues residents see as important since the last study in 2002. New to the top tier of priorities for Greene County is lowering taxes and more after-school activities. Only in Greene County is providing more programs after school for children a top five priority.

Greene County has one of the highest rates for households facing gaps in their health insurance or without current insurance in the region. Of the seven counties, the county has the highest proportion of households with children that have experienced gaps in coverage or are presently without coverage. As such, it is not surprising that making health care more affordable is the number three issue for county residents. Many residents are challenged with the prospect of health care and health insurance costs, and at the extremes about one in six residents have to skip needed treatment or medicine.

Greene County has the smallest population of the seven counties studied in the Mid-Hudson region and in many ways the county is demographically similar to the region as a whole. However, economically residents of the county are not as well off as the regions' residents. Low income households, that is, those that earn less than \$30,000 per year, make up 44% of the county's households compared with 25% of households regionally.

Many households in the county depend on multiple jobs and over a third of the county's work force puts in more than fifty hours weekly. 70% of the employed residents of Greene County think they would have difficulty finding a comparable job with a similar commute if they were to lose their current position. Most county residents are not pleased with the quality of the jobs that are available. Although many people are homeowners in the county, about four in ten of the county's renters do not foresee being able to purchase a home in the area someday.

Across the region, one of the biggest changes in opinions since 2002 has been in peoples' view as to whether or not community leaders' perspectives were in step with the public's viewpoints. Five years ago, exactly half of the region's residents felt leaders did not view things the way the public did. At that time, only Greene County and Orange County shared this perception among more than half of the populace. Now, majorities in all seven counties do not think decision makers are in step with public perceptions.

Greene County residents continue to view their local decision makers as out of sync with public opinion. County residents desire a county that promotes a stable environment for businesses, keeps down health care costs, and provides a quality education and recreational programs for children. Many people living in the county would like the county to be more affordable, a place where earnings can meet the demands of the cost of living.

How the Survey Was Conducted

The survey was conducted by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion and funded by the Dyson Foundation. 4,320 adults eighteen years of age or older who live in the Mid-Hudson Valley in New York were interviewed in proportion to the adult population in seven counties: Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, and Ulster. 503 residents living in Greene County were interviewed. The survey was designed to collect information about the Mid-Hudson Valley as a region and to allow for county level analysis, as well.

Representative samples were drawn from each county based on the population distribution within that county. In order to analyze the opinions of residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley, the seven county samples were combined and weighted to reflect the population distribution of the entire region.

The goal of a scientifically designed survey sample is to be representative of the population that is being surveyed. The results obtained from a scientific probability survey are not just answers from those individuals who responded but more importantly, because of the design and methods by which the data is collected, can be used to generalize to the population as a whole. For this report, the results are an estimate of what would have been obtained, within a certain range, if all adults eighteen years of age or older in the Mid-Hudson region or Greene County were interviewed.

	2007 Survey	2005 Census
Mid-Hudson Valley		
County		
Columbia	4%	5%
Dutchess	27%	26%
Greene	3%	3%
Orange	34%	34%
Putnam	9%	9%
Sullivan	7%	7%
Ulster	16%	16%
Gender		
Men	49%	49%
Women	51%	51%
Race		
White non-Latino	80%	80%
Non-white	20%	20%
Income		
Less than \$50,000	42%	43%
\$50,000 or more	58%	57%
Age		
18 to 34	26%	27%
35 to 54	42%	42%
55 and over	32%	31%

	2007 Survey	2000 Census
Greene County		
Gender		
Men	52%	52%
Women	48%	48%
Race		
White non-Latino	89%	88%
Non-white	11%	12%
Income		
Less than \$50,000	68%	66%
\$50,000 or more	32%	34%
Age		
Under 45	46%	47%
Over 45	54%	53%

How to interpret the numbers

Sampling error is the difference between the responses to the survey if all adults eighteen years of age or older who live in the Mid-Hudson Valley or Greene County had been interviewed and the actual survey results. Sampling error is primarily based upon the number of interviews in the survey sample. The sampling error may be interpreted as indicating the probability (95 times out of 100) within which the results of repeated samplings, in the same time period, assuming the same sampling procedures, could be expected to fall within a certain range.

The margin of error for the survey results of Mid-Hudson residents is $\pm 1.5\%$ for percentages near 50% at a confidence level of 95%. The margin of error for Greene County residents is $\pm 4.5\%$. The sampling error diminishes slightly for questions whose results are at the extremes and the sampling error increases as the number of interviews for a particular group or subgroup within the sample declines.

For example, 50% of Greene County residents surveyed rate health care services in their community as fair or poor. We may conclude that there is a high probability, 95 times out of 100, that the average results for this question of repeated samplings in the region will fall between 54.5% and 45.5%, $\pm 4.5\%$. All results are rounded to the next whole number.

In evaluating the information detailed in this report, several points should be noted. First, the analysis often focuses on

differences among subgroups rather than commonalities. Therefore, the charts depicted in the report do not include all factors but rather those where differences are evident. Tables in the appendix may be referenced for further detail among subgroups and other key segmenting variables.

Second, some questions in the survey were only asked of a subgroup of those interviewed depending on an answer to a previous question. For instance, residents were asked if they were currently employed. If they were not, they were not asked subsequent questions about their job such as commute time. Questions that were not asked of all residents are identified.

Finally, totals in tables may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Methodology: sample design

A stratified random digit dial (RDD) probability design was used to draw the telephone numbers for the survey. RDD ensures representation of both listed and unlisted telephone numbers. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the seven counties. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each county was represented in proportion to the adult population. The telephone numbers were obtained from Survey Sampling International in Fairfield, Connecticut. The sample file was electronically matched after selection to the yellow pages business

directory and screened for business and/or disconnected numbers.

In order to participate in the survey a household had to have a residence located within one of the seven counties and have an adult resident that was eighteen years of age or older. A member within each household was then selected to be interviewed through the use of a random household selection method. In order to be interviewed, a respondent needed to be at least eighteen years of age or older and be a resident of the Mid-Hudson Valley. This report presents the results for Greene County residents.

Methodology: data collection

The questionnaire and the telephone sample were programmed for computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). Interviewing was conducted from a centralized telephone facility at the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion using trained interviewers who were specifically briefed on this study. The interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish.

There were a total of 151 interviewers and supervisors who worked on this study. On average, the supervisor to interviewer ratio was seven to one. Polling supervisors regularly monitored, evaluated, and provided feedback to the interviewing staff throughout the data collection period. The average length of the survey was nineteen minutes.

Eighty-seven pretest interviews for the survey were administered by telephone on April 9th, 2007. As a result of the pretest, the questionnaire was updated and revised. Due to the limited nature of the changes, pretest interviews were included as part of the final dataset.

Additional interviews were conducted April 10th through June 19th, 2007. Interviewers contacted households between 5:15 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Callbacks were also conducted between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Up to eighteen attempts to contact a household were made before a telephone number was eliminated from the sample. Callbacks were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Suspended interviews and refusals were re-contacted at least once in order to attempt to convert them to a completed interview. This included callbacks to initial unsuccessful contacts, refusal conversion, and scheduled appointments. A toll free number was used so that respondents could call back the survey center at their convenience to complete an interview. 2%, or seventy-three respondents, completed a survey interview by contacting the survey center using the toll free number.

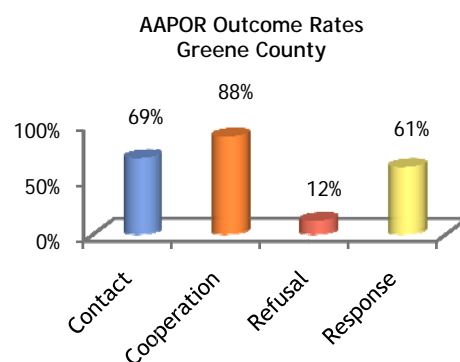
Information collected from survey participants is both confidential and anonymous. Personal identifying information is removed from files after the integrity of the data has been verified.

Outcome rates

Outcome rates were computed using Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys published by the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), 2006.⁴

- The contact rate is the proportion of all cases in which some responsible household member is reached.
- The cooperation rate is the proportion of all cases that complete an interview of all eligible households that are contacted.
- The refusal rate is the proportion of all cases in which a household member or the respondent refuses to be interviewed, or breaks-off an interview, of all potentially eligible cases.

The response rate is the number of complete interviews with eligible adults divided by the number of eligible households in the sample. The response rate is calculated by multiplying the contact rate by the cooperation rate.



⁴ This report may be found at: http://www.aapor.org/uploads/standarddefs_4.pdf

For the survey of Greene County, the contact rate is 69%, meaning that for nearly seven in ten phone records in the county it was established that the phone number was a valid household phone number. The remaining 31% of records include phone numbers that were not verifiable, those that were attempted multiple times without confirmation that there was an adult age eighteen or older living in the household, or bad numbers such as fax or data lines, disconnected or non-working, or business numbers.

There was a very high cooperation rate, 88%. This means that for those records where contact was made with an adult age eighteen or older in the household, there was a very high chance of completing a survey. This was accompanied by a refusal rate of 12%. In order to compute the response rate, the contact rate, 69%, is multiplied by the cooperation rate, 88%. The total response rate for the Greene County survey is 61%.

For the region as a whole, the contact rate was 71%, the cooperation rate was 86%, the refusal rate was 14%, and the response rate was 61%.