



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

Sullivan County Report

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Many Voices One Valley 2007

Sullivan 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 Sullivan County.

4,320 residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley were interviewed April 9th through June 19th, 2007. This includes 502 residents living in Sullivan 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 Sullivan County residents is $\pm 4.5\%$. The margin of error increases for smaller sub-groups in the population.

A similar study of the Mid-Hudson Valley was conducted in 2002, but Sullivan County residents were not included in the survey at that time.

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 Sullivan County

The Mid-Hudson Valley includes seven counties: Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, and Ulster. Sullivan County has the third smallest population in the region. Its residents make up 7% of the entire Mid-Hudson Valley population.¹

Sullivan County's demographic makeup is very similar to the composition of the Mid-Hudson Valley. The average household size of 2.8 in Sullivan County is exactly the same as that of the Mid-Hudson region. Among households with children, the average household size in Sullivan County is 4.1 which is comparable to the regional average of 4.2.

The racial composition of Sullivan County mirrors that of the Mid-Hudson region as a whole. Like the Mid-Hudson Valley, 83% of Sullivan County residents identify themselves as white, and 10% are Latino. 9% of Sullivan County residents are African American compared with 7% of the region as a whole.

There are some areas in which Sullivan County households differ. For instance, a majority, 51%, of people living in the county are in households with an annual income of less than \$50,000. In contrast, 58% of Mid-Hudson Valley households earn \$50,000 or more per year.

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.

	Sullivan County	Mid-Hudson Valley
Gender		
Men	50%	49%
Women	50%	51%
Race		
White	83%	83%
African American	9%	7%
Latino	10%	10%
Income		
Less than \$50,000	51%	42%
\$50,000 or more	49%	58%
Age		
Under 45	43%	44%
45 or older	57%	56%
Education		
Less than college	69%	65%
College graduate	31%	35%
Children		
Households with children	39%	44%
Households with children under 5	15%	15%
Households with children age 5 to 18	33%	38%

Sullivan County residents without a college degree outnumber college graduates. 69% of county residents do not have a college degree compared with 65% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole.

Households in Sullivan County are less likely to include children than the typical Mid-Hudson Valley household. 39% of county households include at least one child compared with 44% of households in the Mid-Hudson region. As with Mid-Hudson Valley households overall, 15% of Sullivan County households have a family member who is under age five. One-third of all county households includes school age

children which compares with 38% of households in the region overall that have children age five to eighteen.

	Sullivan County	Mid-Hudson Valley
Households with Children		
Low income	31%	21%
Single parents	10%	11%

Sullivan County households that include children are more likely to be low income than the average Mid-Hudson Valley household with children. 31% of Sullivan County children live in households where the total household yearly income is less than \$30,000. This compares with 21% of children in the entire Mid-Hudson region.

One in ten Sullivan County households with children are headed by a single parent compared with 11% of households with children in the region as a whole.

	Sullivan County	Mid-Hudson Valley
Households		
Gap in health insurance	28%	24%
Currently not insured	16%	12%
Households with Children		
Children with gap in health insurance	17%	15%
Children currently not insured	9%	7%

Sullivan County has one of the highest proportions of uninsured households in the region. 28% of all households have at least one member who has experienced a gap in coverage over the past year, and 16% of

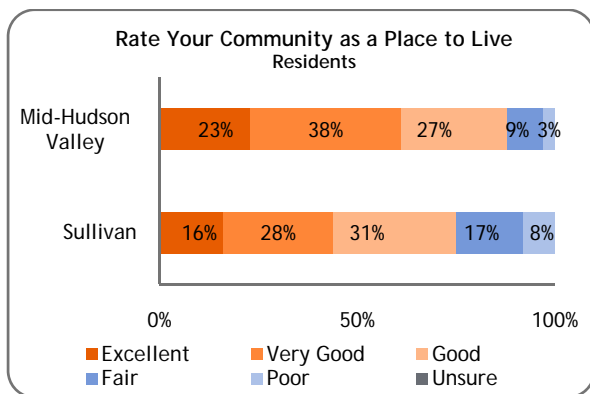
households in the county have someone who is not presently insured.

Living in Sullivan County

Rating of community

75% of Sullivan County residents feel positively about life in their community although one in four rates it as fair or poor.

Sullivan County residents are by far the most dissatisfied residents in the Mid-Hudson region with regard to their assessments of life in their community. To put this in perspective, the second least positive evaluation of life in the region comes from Greene County residents where only 16% of people in the county describe life in their community as fair or poor. In Sullivan County, 25% of residents hold this view.

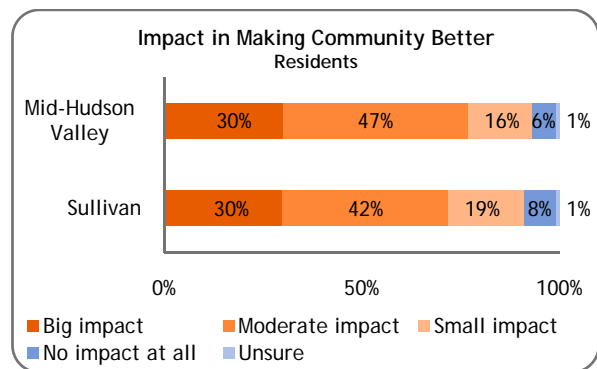


Question wording: Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live? Would you say it is: excellent, very good, good (positive), fair or poor (negative)?

Among Mid-Hudson Valley residents overall, 88% have a positive impression of their community and just 12% have a less favorable view of life in the region.

Role in improving community

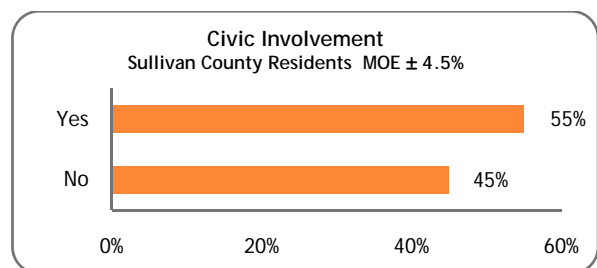
People in Sullivan County believe they can play a role in improving their community. 72% believe they can have at least a moderate impact shaping the place in which they live compared with 77% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents who share this view.



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?

Volunteerism

51% of county residents who think they can have an impact say volunteering is the best way to do so. 55% of county residents volunteer regularly or are active in a civic organization, a church, or a club.



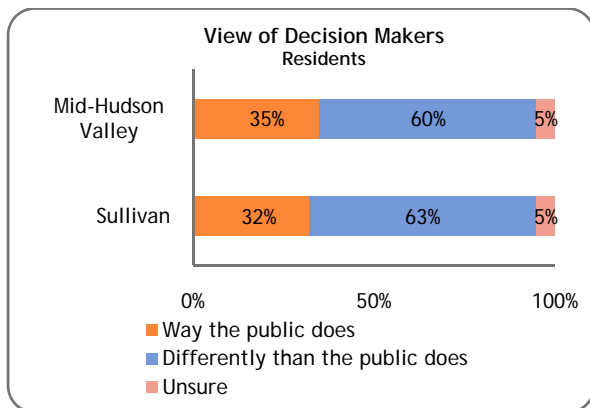
Question wording: Do you regularly volunteer or are you active in a civic organization, a church, or a club?

35% of the county residents who think they can play a role think it is important to get other people involved when striving to improve the community.

Responsiveness of local leaders

A majority of people living in Sullivan County think there is a disconnect between the views of those in leadership positions and the general public. 63% of residents in the county believe decision makers see things differently than the public. Only 32% think leaders in their community are in touch with public sentiment.

Lack of faith in the responsiveness of local decision makers is not limited to residents of Sullivan County. People living throughout the Mid-Hudson region are skeptical of their leaders' responsiveness.



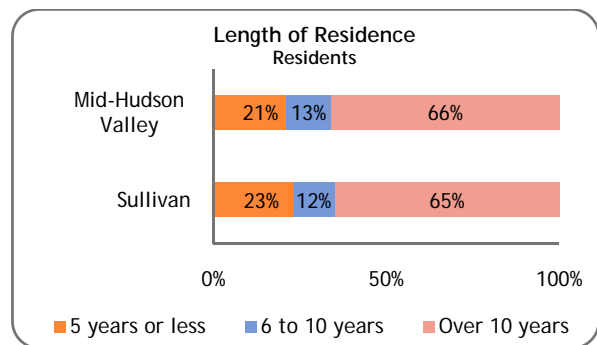
Question wording: Overall, do you feel that those individuals who are in positions to make decisions for your community mostly see things the way the public does or mostly see things differently than the public does?

New residents

Sullivan County residents have lived in the community for an average of 22 years. However, while most residents have called

Sullivan County home for a long time, many new residents have moved to the area over the past five years.

Although about 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. Nearly one in four Sullivan County residents has moved to their community in the past five years. Similarly, 21% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents are new to their community.



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

Issues: The Priorities

Overview of residents' priorities

Sullivan County residents were asked to gauge how important a host of concerns were for their community. The issues covered jobs and the economy to health care, taxes to public education, and a variety of other community services. Using a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, residents assessed the amount of attention they believed should be placed on each area.

Sullivan County	2007	
	Rank	Mean
Keeping businesses in the area	1	8.0
Making health care more affordable	2	7.9
Creating more jobs	3	7.9
Making health insurance easier to get	4	7.8
Reducing taxes	5	7.8
Improving the quality of the public schools	6	7.7
Providing more after-school activities	7	7.6
Protecting open space	8	7.5
Providing services for senior citizens	9	7.4
Making your community safer	10	7.3
Providing more affordable, quality child care	11	7.0
Increasing the amount of affordable housing	12	6.9
Improving relations between different racial and ethnic groups	13	6.7
Supporting the arts and providing more cultural events	14	6.7
Increasing the number of public areas	15	6.3
Increasing or improving public transportation	16	6.2
Slowing growth and development	17	6.2
Reducing homelessness	18	5.9
Improving the quality of the water	19	5.7

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.

Economic and health related issues comprise the top five priorities for Sullivan County residents. They rate keeping businesses in the area as their most important concern with an average score of 8.0.

This issue is followed by priorities to make health care more affordable and to create more jobs. Sullivan County residents also rate making health insurance easier to get and reducing taxes as important concerns. They rank fourth and fifth as priorities, respectively. There is little difference, however, in how Sullivan County residents rate these top five issues. Only two-tenths of a point separates the top priority from the fifth priority for these county residents.²

Top Priorities: Economic Priorities

Sullivan County residents consider three economic issues top concerns. As noted, keeping businesses in the area is the number one priority for residents of the county. Creating more jobs and reducing taxes also are among the five leading priorities for county residents overall. The county is the only one of the seven counties of the Mid-Hudson Valley to have three economic issues in the top tier of issues.

² Mean ranking tables list the average to the tenths place but are sorted in absolute order. For example, while both “Making health care more affordable” and “Creating more jobs” are rounded to 7.9, their averages are 7.94 and 7.89, respectively. They are, therefore, ranked two and three in the priorities list.

Keeping businesses in the area

Retaining local businesses is the highest priority for Sullivan County residents. It receives an average score of 8.0 on a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 representing the most important.

Keeping businesses 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	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	2	7.9
Sullivan	1	8.0

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: Keeping businesses in the area.

Creating jobs

Job creation is also a top priority for many Sullivan County residents. With an average score of 7.9 this issue is the third highest ranked issue.

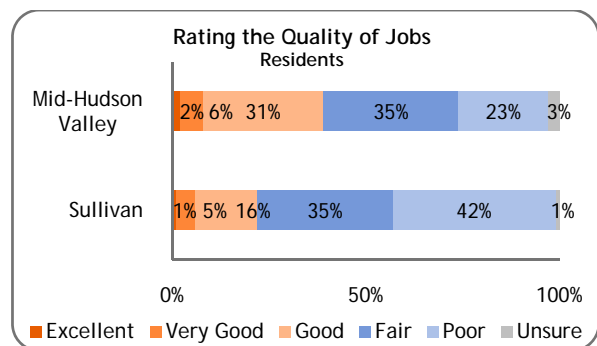
Creating More Jobs	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	6	7.6
Sullivan	3	7.9

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: Creating more jobs.

Creating more jobs also is a high priority for Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole, but it does not rank as highly regionally as it does in Sullivan County. It ranks sixth among residents of the region with an average rating of 7.6.

Rating the quality of jobs

Sullivan County residents are dissatisfied with the quality of jobs in the community. More than four in ten describe them as poor and over one third describes the caliber of jobs only as fair. In fact, just 22% of Sullivan County residents rate the quality of jobs in their community favorably.



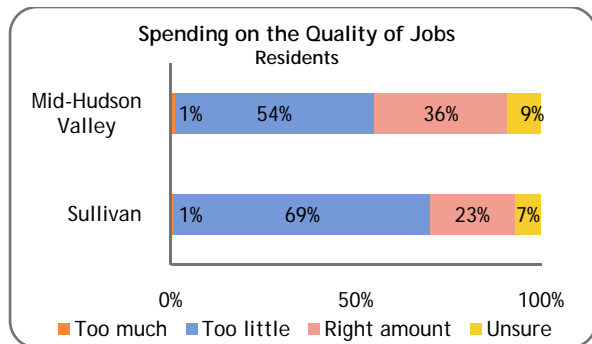
Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): The quality of jobs?

While most people living in other parts of the Mid-Hudson region are not pleased with the quality of jobs, Sullivan County residents are the least satisfied residents in the Mid-Hudson region. About four in ten Mid-Hudson Valley residents rate the quality of jobs in their community favorably.

Spending on improving jobs

Nearly seven in ten Sullivan County residents believe their community needs to

spend more on improving local jobs while just 23% think spending is about right.



Question wording: Does your community spend too much, too little, or about the right amount on the quality of jobs?

Dissatisfaction with this issue is not limited to Sullivan County residents. Most Mid-Hudson Valley residents are displeased with the current level of spending on improving jobs. However, residents of Sullivan County are more dissatisfied than other Mid-Hudson Valley residents in this regard. 54% of residents in the region as a whole think more monies ought to be spent to improve the quality of jobs compared with 69% of residents living in Sullivan County.

Reducing taxes

The increasing tax burden is one of the top concerns for people living in Sullivan County. Nearly half, 47%, of county residents consider reducing taxes to be a top priority worthy of the highest rating of 10. Overall, it receives an average score of 7.8 from Sullivan County residents, and it ranks fifth in order of residents' priorities.

Interest in lowering taxes is a high priority throughout the Mid-Hudson region, and it

ranks third among residents of the region as a whole.

Reducing Taxes	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	3	7.9
Sullivan	5	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: Reducing taxes.

Summary: economic priorities

Sullivan County residents are very concerned about economic issues. Many residents think the county should work to prevent businesses from leaving the area and should focus more attention on job creation. Anxiety over the local tax burden is high, and it is one of the top issues in the minds of Sullivan County residents.

Most Sullivan County residents are dissatisfied with the current employment options in the region, and a strong majority thinks their community should expend more resources toward improving the quality of jobs. Residents of Sullivan County tend to be more critical of these issues than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident.

Top Priorities: Health Care

Many Sullivan County residents voice concern about health care costs. Making health care more affordable is the second highest priority for residents of the county, and making health insurance easier to get is also a pressing issue.

Sullivan County has one of the highest rates of uninsured households in the region so these are issues that hit close to home for many residents. Nearly three in ten Sullivan County households have a member who has had interrupted health insurance coverage and, therefore, has faced a gap in coverage over the course of the past year. 16% of all county households have at least one member who is currently without insurance.

Lack of health care coverage is also a problem for Sullivan County households with children. 17% of households with children have at least one child who experienced a gap in coverage in the past twelve months, and 9% of households with children include at least one who is not presently uninsured.

Health care: affordability

Not unexpectedly, exactly half of all Sullivan County residents rate making health care more affordable a 10 the highest possible score on the rating scale.

Making Health Care More Affordable	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	1	8.0
Sullivan	2	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: Making health care more affordable.

Overall, the issue of affordable health care receives an average rating of 7.9 among

residents in Sullivan County, and it ranks second.

Reducing health care costs is the number one concern regionally yielding an average score of 8.0 from all Mid-Hudson Valley residents.

Health insurance: accessibility

Making health insurance easier to get is also a critical issue for many residents of Sullivan County. It ranks among their top five priorities, and it receives an average score of 7.8 out of 10.

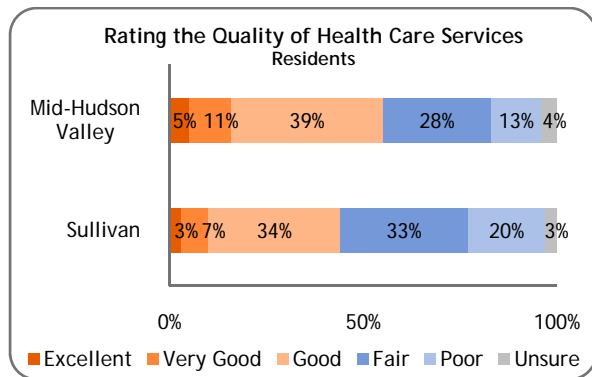
Making Health Insurance Easier to Get	Rank	Mean
Mid-Hudson Valley	5	7.7
Sullivan	4	7.8

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: Making health insurance easier to get.

The accessibility of health insurance is a leading concern for Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole, as well. It ranks fifth among residents' priorities.

Rating health care services

A majority of Sullivan County residents rates the quality of health care services in their community as only fair or poor. In fact, one in five describes these services as poor. One-third says they are of just fair quality. Still, 44% rate the quality of health care services as good or better.



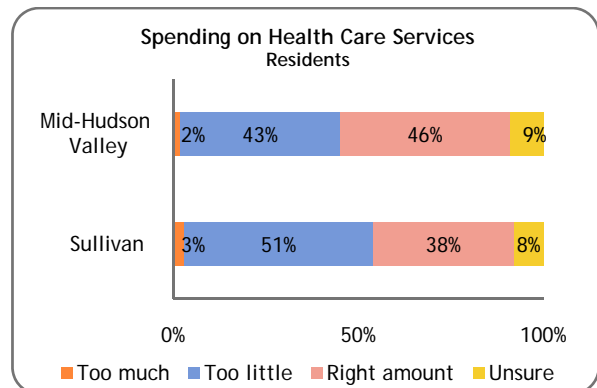
Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): Health care services?

Sullivan County residents are less satisfied with the state of health care services in their community than other residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley. A majority of residents in the region as a whole have a positive impression of the health care services in their community.

Spending on health care services

Most residents of Sullivan County are not pleased with the amount of local funding for health care services. 51% believe too few resources are spent on health care services while just 38% think current expenditures are about right.

Sullivan County residents are the most dissatisfied residents in the Mid-Hudson Valley when it comes to health care spending. Residents living in the Mid-Hudson region divide on the issue. 46% think spending is about right, and 43% think too few dollars are being allocated toward health care.



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

Summary: health care

Overall, health care issues are top of mind for many people in Sullivan County. Many county residents want their community to treat the cost of health care as a top priority and there is a consensus in the county that more needs to be done to make health insurance more accessible.

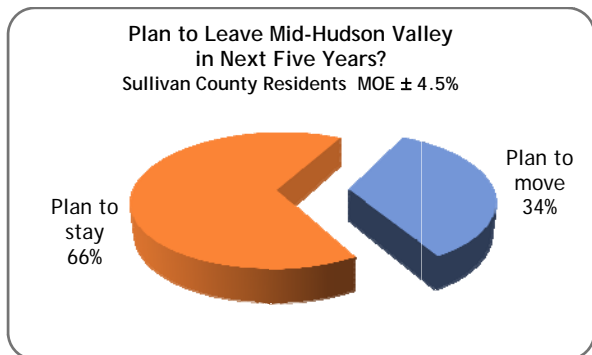
Most county residents are not positive about the health care services in their community, and a majority thinks more money needs to be set aside to improve current services. Sullivan County residents are less satisfied with the state of health care services in their area than residents living in the Mid-Hudson region as a whole.

Plans for the Future

Residents who intend to leave

When asked whether or not they plan to continue living in the area five years from now, two thirds of Sullivan County residents intend to stay. However, about one in three intend to relocate. This compares

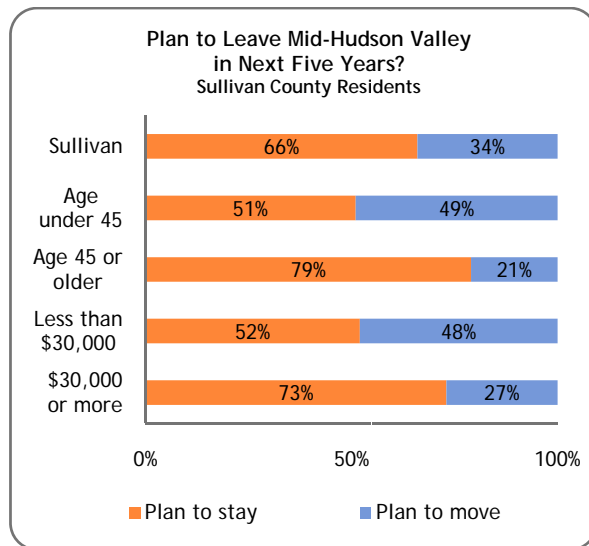
with 29% of residents in the Mid-Hudson region as a whole who intend to move out of the region in the next five years. In fact, of the seven counties in the Mid-Hudson Valley, Sullivan County is home to the largest proportion of residents who plan to leave the region in the near future.



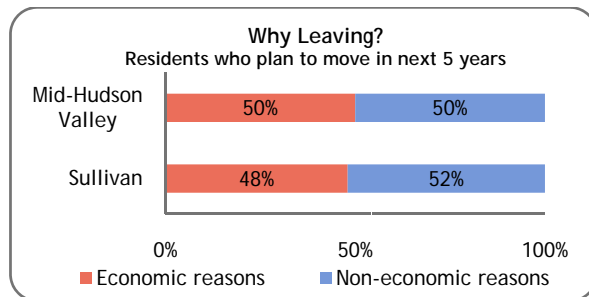
Question wording: Thinking about five years from now, do you plan to stay in the Hudson Valley or do you plan to move someplace else?

Some people are more likely than others to be thinking about leaving the area in the next five years. Age and income make a difference. Sullivan County adults under forty five years old and residents with yearly household incomes of less than \$30,000 are nearly as likely to say they are going to leave as to say they are going to stay. This compares with 21% of adults age forty-five and older and 27% of residents living in households that earn higher incomes.

Why do so many people in Sullivan County intend to leave the area? 48% of those residents who intend to leave plan to do so because of economic reasons. 52% of Sullivan County residents think about relocating because of non-economic reasons.



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?



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

The top two reasons cited are economic. For instance, 23% of residents planning to relocate mention jobs, and 12% point to taxes. Looking at non-economic factors, 12% say they may leave for a better quality of life. Still, two of the top three reasons for leaving the region among Sullivan County residents are economic.

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

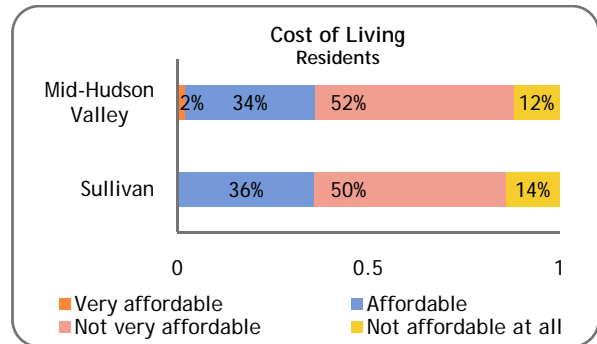
Question wording: What is the main reason you plan to move away from the Hudson Valley?

Sullivan County residents who intend to move away are just as likely to give economic reasons as the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident who plans to relocate. However, they are more likely to specifically mention jobs as the main reason for their intended departure than residents of the region as a whole who plan to leave.

Making Ends Meet

Rating the affordability of the Mid-Hudson Valley

Many Sullivan County residents feel that the region is not a very affordable place to live. As with residents living in the region as a whole, 64% of Sullivan County residents say the Mid-Hudson region is unaffordable including 14% of residents who describe the region as not affordable at all.

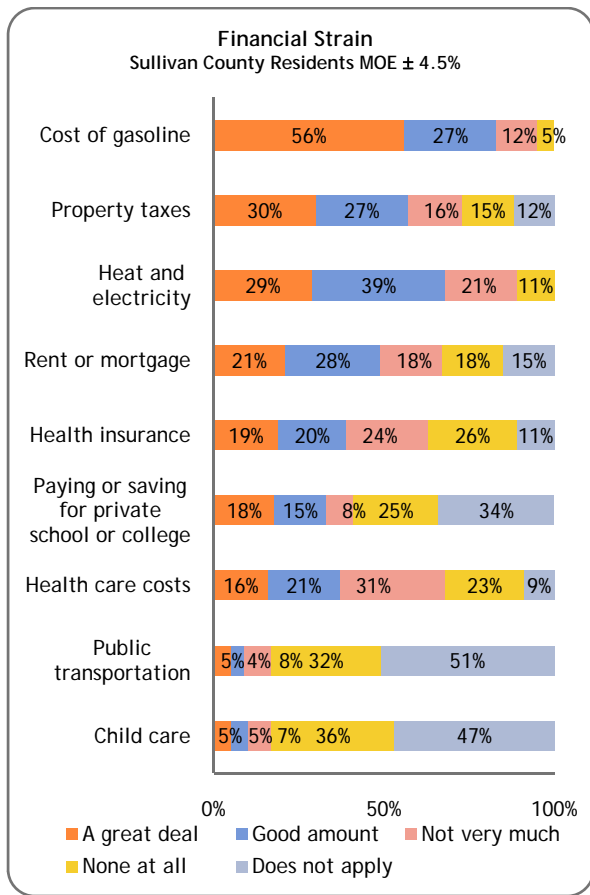


Question wording: Overall, would you describe the cost of living in the Hudson Valley for the average family as very affordable, affordable, not very affordable, or not affordable at all?

Managing the family budget

Many people in Sullivan County are financially strained by an assortment of monthly expenses. Overall, Sullivan County residents struggle the most with paying for gasoline. County residents are more likely to feel the financial pressure of the high cost of gasoline than Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole. 83% of county residents have difficulty meeting the cost of fuel including 56% who say the cost of gasoline has adversely affected their family budget a great deal.

68% of Sullivan County residents feel their budget stretched by the cost of heat and electricity. This includes 29% of county residents who feel a great deal of pressure to meet these monthly expenses and another 39% who feel these bills place a good deal of financial strain on their household budget. In fact, of all Mid-Hudson Valley residents, people living in Sullivan County are among the most likely to report utility costs as a stress on their family budget.



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.

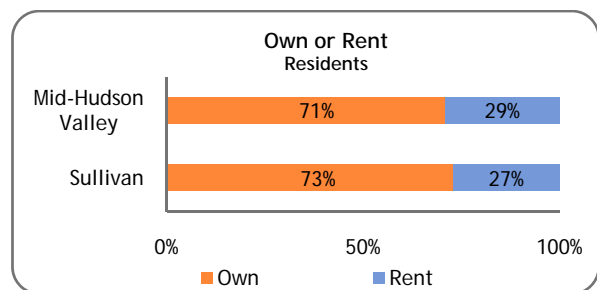
A majority of Sullivan County residents feel burdened paying their property taxes including 30% who have a great deal of difficulty meeting these payments.

Nearly half of county residents struggle to make their rent or mortgage payment.

Almost four in ten Sullivan County residents find it difficult to pay for health insurance.

Housing matters

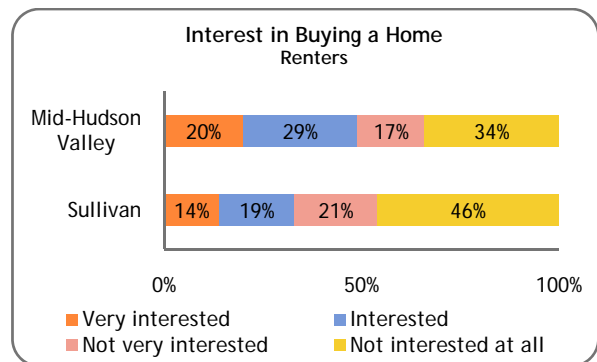
Most Mid-Hudson Valley residents own their own home as do many people living in Sullivan County. 73% of residents in the county are homeowners compared with 27% who are not.



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

Renting but hoping to own

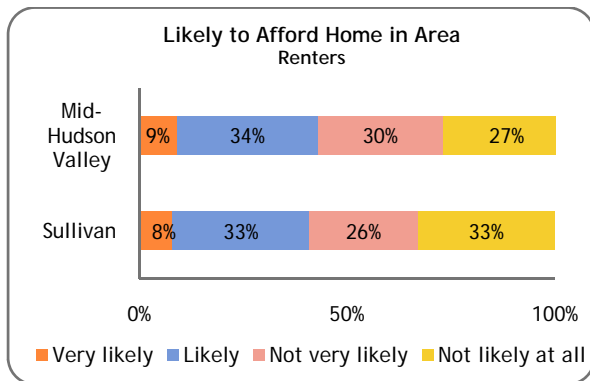
Most renters in Sullivan County are not interested in purchasing a home. Only one-third of Sullivan County residents who rent are interested in the prospect of homeownership.



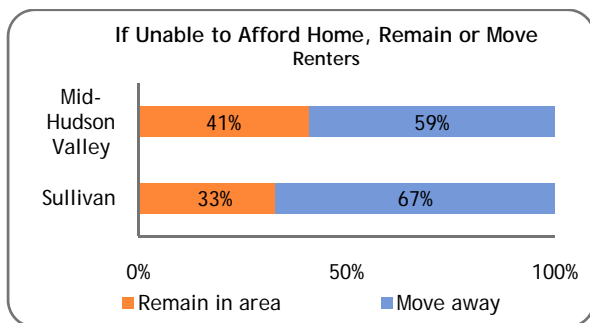
Question wording: Are you very interested, interested, not very interested, or not interested at all in buying a home in this area?

People who rent in Sullivan County are the least likely renters in the Mid-Hudson Valley to be interested in purchasing a home in the future.

Mirroring the perceptions of renters across the region, about six in ten Sullivan County renters feel priced out of homeownership.



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?



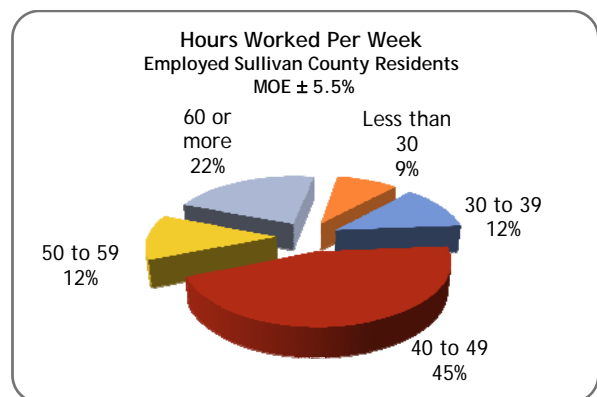
Question wording: If you cannot afford to buy a home here, are you likely to remain living in the Hudson Valley, or are you likely to move away?

Renters living in Sullivan County are more likely than the average Mid-Hudson Valley renter to move out of the area if they cannot afford to buy a home in the region. 67% of Sullivan County renters plan to relocate if they are unable to purchase a

home compared with 59% of Mid-Hudson Valley renters overall.

Working in the Mid-Hudson Valley

In order to make ends meet, many Sullivan County residents are working hard. 55% of Sullivan County households hold at least two jobs. This includes households where two adult earners have jobs as well as those households where one adult holds more than one job. Reliance on multiple jobs is not unique to Sullivan County households. Rather, it is a pattern found throughout the Mid-Hudson Valley.

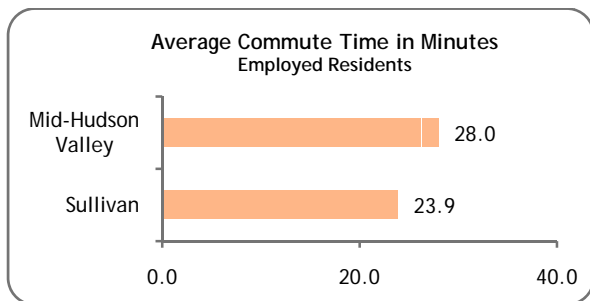


Question wording: In total, approximately how many hours do you work in an average week?

On average, employed Sullivan County residents clock 46.4 hours weekly. 79% of Sullivan County workers put in forty hours or more each week including 34% of workers who work more than fifty hours per week. 74% of the regions' workers put in forty hours or more per week with a weekly average of 43.1 hours.

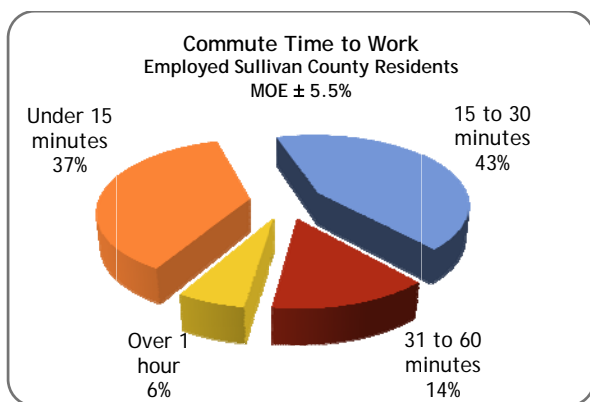
Employed Sullivan County residents do not work far from home and they have the third shortest commute time of people who work

in the Mid-Hudson Valley. On average, people who work in Sullivan County take nearly 24 minutes one way to get to their job compared with the regional average of 28 minutes.



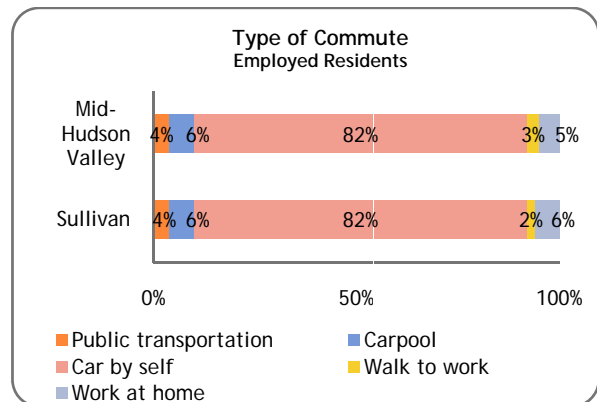
Question wording: In minutes, how long does it take you to get one way from home to work?

Nearly four in ten employed Sullivan County residents travel less than fifteen minutes and 43% commute fifteen to thirty minutes one way to get to work daily. 14% of workers in the county experience travel times over a half hour to an hour, and only 6% travel more than an hour away from their homes to get to where they are employed.



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

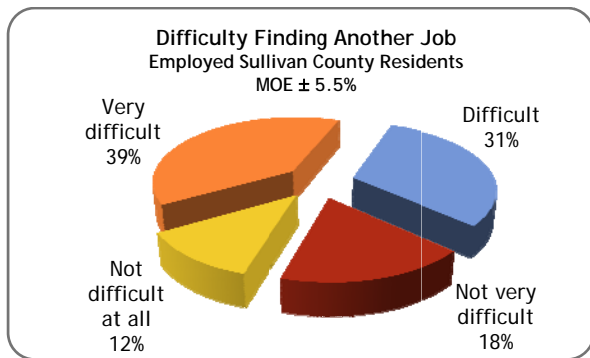
82% of employed Sullivan County residents travel to work in a car alone, 6% car pool, 6% work at home, 4% use public transportation, and 2% walk to work. Most people who live in the region and are employed drive to work in a car by themselves.



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?

When asked about their employment prospects if they were to lose their current job, many Sullivan County residents are pessimistic. 70% of county residents who are employed think it would be difficult to find comparable work with a similar commute as their current position if they were to lose their job. This includes nearly four in ten working county residents who say it would be very difficult to do so.

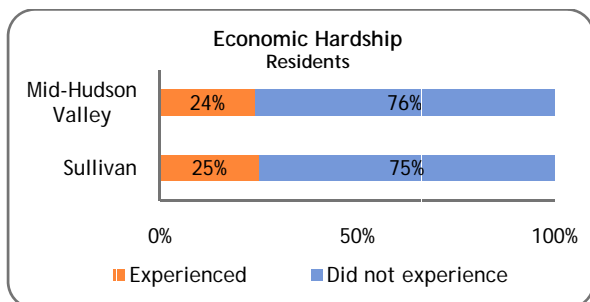
Workers living in Sullivan County are among the most likely employed residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley to think they would have a difficult time securing a similar job within the same distance from their home.



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?

People doing without

One in four households in Sullivan County has to deal with major financial need. Residents were asked whether or not they had faced each of several economic challenges in the past twelve months.



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?

These difficulties include problems purchasing food, paying for rent or a mortgage, utility bills, or health care needs. While 75% of Sullivan County residents have not experienced any of these economic hardships, 25% of county residents face at least one. The proportion reporting economic hardships in Sullivan County is similar to the proportion reported by residents in the Mid-Hudson region as a whole.

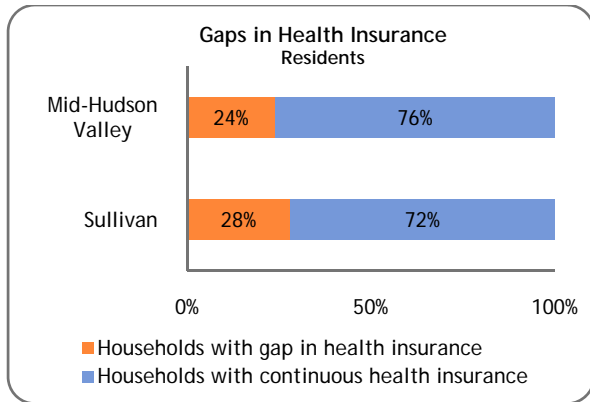
Health Matters

Households with gaps in health insurance coverage

A considerable proportion of Sullivan County households struggle to maintain a continuous health insurance plan. Nearly three in ten households in Sullivan County have a member who has had interrupted health insurance and, therefore, has encountered a gap in coverage during the past twelve months. This proportion includes both adults and children who are without health insurance at present and households, while currently insured, that have had someone without coverage during the past year.

Using the U.S. Census, this means approximately 8,235 of the estimated 29,404 households in Sullivan County have to cope with meeting their health care needs without the benefit of uninterrupted

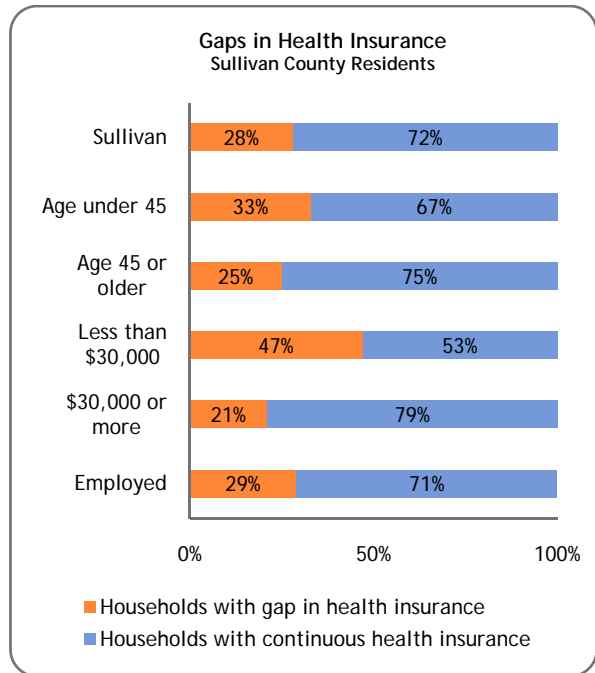
health coverage for all household members.³



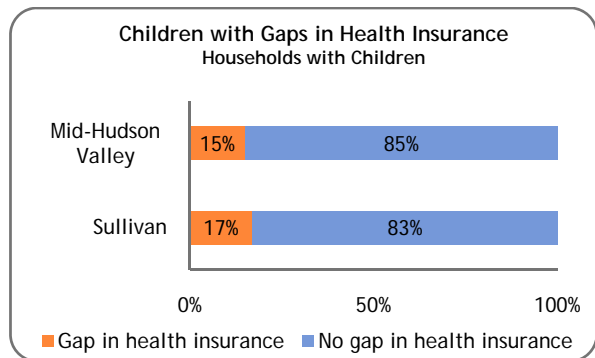
Question wording: Do the adults/children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now? Was there ever a time in the past 12 months when an adult/child in your household did not have any health insurance or a health plan?

Income and age matter. Nearly half of Sullivan County households with an annual income of less than \$30,000 have gone without continuous insurance. One in three adults under the age of forty-five come from a household in which a member has experienced a gap in health care coverage over the past year, as well. People in the county who are employed are not any more likely to reside in households where everyone is covered. 29% of county residents who are employed face a gap in insurance for their household.

Children are also at risk. 17% of Sullivan County households with children include at least one child who has not had continuous health insurance coverage.



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?



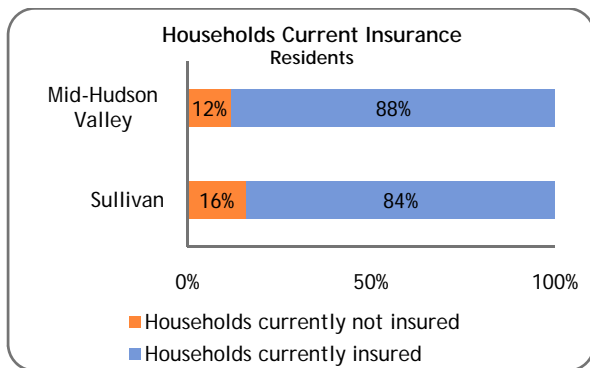
Question wording: Do the children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now? Was there ever a time in the past 12 months when a child in your household did not have any health insurance or a health plan?

³ Population estimates for households are based on the American Community Survey, Census 2005.

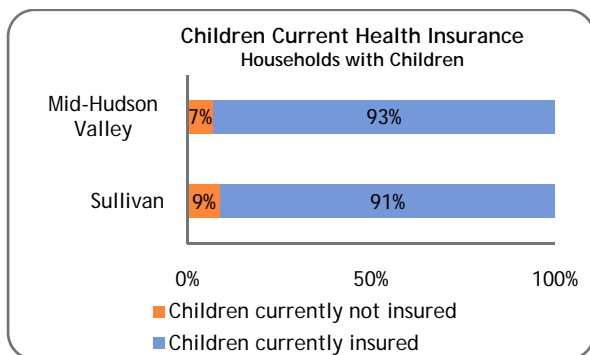
Households currently without health insurance

16% of Sullivan County households include at least one member, adult or child, who currently has no health insurance.

Using the U.S. Census, approximately 4,705 households of the estimated 29,404 households in the county have at least one adult or child who is without current health insurance. Sullivan County has one of the highest rates of households without current insurance in the Mid-Hudson Valley.



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



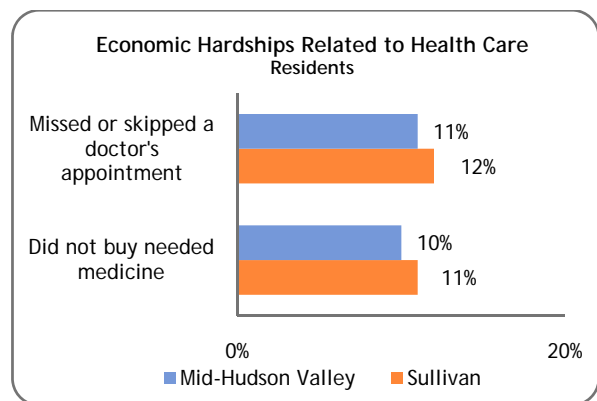
Question wording: Do the children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now?

The rate of households with children with at least one uninsured child is nearly one in

ten. 9% of all county households with children have one or more uninsured children.

Going without because of cost

While many Sullivan County residents report financial stress due to health care costs, a smaller segment of the population describes these costs as so burdensome that they have to do without basic medical needs.



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?

In the past year, 12% of Sullivan County residents skipped a doctor's appointment and 11% did not purchase needed medicine because they could not afford it. These proportions are similar to those reported across the Mid-Hudson Valley.

Conclusion

Sullivan County is the westernmost county in the Mid-Hudson Valley. In many respects the county is demographically similar to the region as a whole. There are some

differences. Economically, Sullivan County households are not as well off as households throughout the region. A majority, 51%, of county households earn less than \$50,000 per year compared with 42% of households regionally.

The residents of Sullivan County voice concern about the many challenges confronting their communities the most pressing of which include the local economy and health care. Keeping businesses in the area ranks as the number one priority followed by making health care more affordable, creating more jobs, making health insurance easier to get, and reducing taxes. Of the seven counties in the Mid-Hudson Valley, only Sullivan County ranks three economic issues in the top five.

Sullivan County and Columbia County are the only two counties where both health care costs and access to health insurance are among the top five priorities. Sullivan County has one of the highest rates of uninsured households in the region so it is not surprising that health care issues rank highly in the county. Many residents are burdened by rising medical and health insurance costs, and at the extremes about one in ten residents have to forgo medical treatment or medicine.

Many households in the county depend on income from more than one job and about one-third of employed Sullivan County residents clock over fifty hours per week. When it comes to evaluating the jobs that are available, county residents are the least satisfied residents in the region. Workers

living in Sullivan County are also among the most likely employed residents in the region to believe they would not have an easy time finding a similar job with a comparable commute if they lost their current position.

Sullivan County residents view their local leaders as out of step with the public. Compared with the six other counties in the region, county residents are the least positive about life in their community. Economic and health care issues dominate their list of urgent priorities. Right now county residents view the county as unaffordable, a place where earnings barely meet the demands of the cost of living. County residents want to live in a place that nurtures local businesses and quality jobs, maintains manageable health care costs and makes insurance more accessible, all while keeping the tax burden in check.

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. 502 residents living in Sullivan 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.

	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%

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 Sullivan County were interviewed.

	2007 Survey	2005 Census
Sullivan County		
Gender		
Men	50%	50%
Women	50%	50%
Race		
White non-Latino	80%	80%
Non-white	20%	20%
Income		
Less than \$50,000	51%	52%
\$50,000 or more	49%	48%
Age		
Under 45	43%	45%
45 and over	57%	55%

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 Sullivan 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 Valley residents is $\pm 1.5\%$ for percentages near 50% at a confidence level of 95%. The margin of error for Sullivan

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 Sullivan County residents surveyed rate making health care more affordable as a 10. 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 Sullivan 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

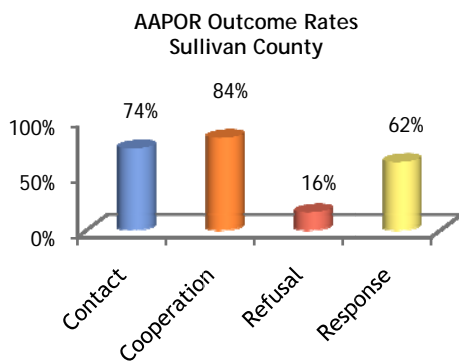
Outcome rates were computed using Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys published by the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), 2006.⁴

- 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

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

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.



For the survey of Sullivan County, the contact rate is 74%, meaning that for nearly three in four phone records in the county it was established that the phone number was a valid household phone number. The remaining 26% 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, 84%. 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 16%. In order to compute the response rate, the contact rate, 74%, is multiplied by the cooperation rate, 84%. The total response rate for the Sullivan County survey is 62%.

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%.