

CAPC Needs Assessment 2015 for ESPRI Workforce Development Work Group

Jefferson County Poverty Profile

15% of the population in Jefferson County lives at less than 100% of the poverty level* (ACS, 5-year estimates, 2010 – 2014). This is slightly below the poverty levels of NYS and the United States, estimated at 15.61% and 15.59% respectively. The poverty breakdown of Jefferson County is as follows:

- 6.3% of the population lives in extreme poverty – below 50% of the poverty level
- 15% of the population lives in poverty – at less than 100% of the poverty level
- 19.9% of the population lives near poverty – at less than 125% of the poverty level

Poverty level refers to the **poverty thresholds that are updated each year by the Census Bureau. The thresholds are used to define and quantify poverty in America, and thereby provide a yardstick for progress or regress in antipoverty efforts. The most recent values of the poverty thresholds are provided in the table below.*

U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Thresholds, 2014	
Size of Family Unit	Poverty Threshold
One person (unrelated individual)	\$12,071
Under age 65	12,316
Age 65 or older	11,354
Two people	15,379
Householder under age 65	15,934
Householder age 65 or older	14,326
Three people	18,850
Three people with two related children	19,073
Four people	24,230
Four people with two related children	24,008
Five people	28,695
Five people with two related children	28,960
Six people	32,473
Six people with two related children	33,303
Seven people	36,927
Seven people with two related children	38,375
Eight people	40,968
Eight people with two related children	43,179
Nine people or more	49,021

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Thresholds for 2014 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children under 18 Years, released in September 2015.

City of Watertown Poverty Profile

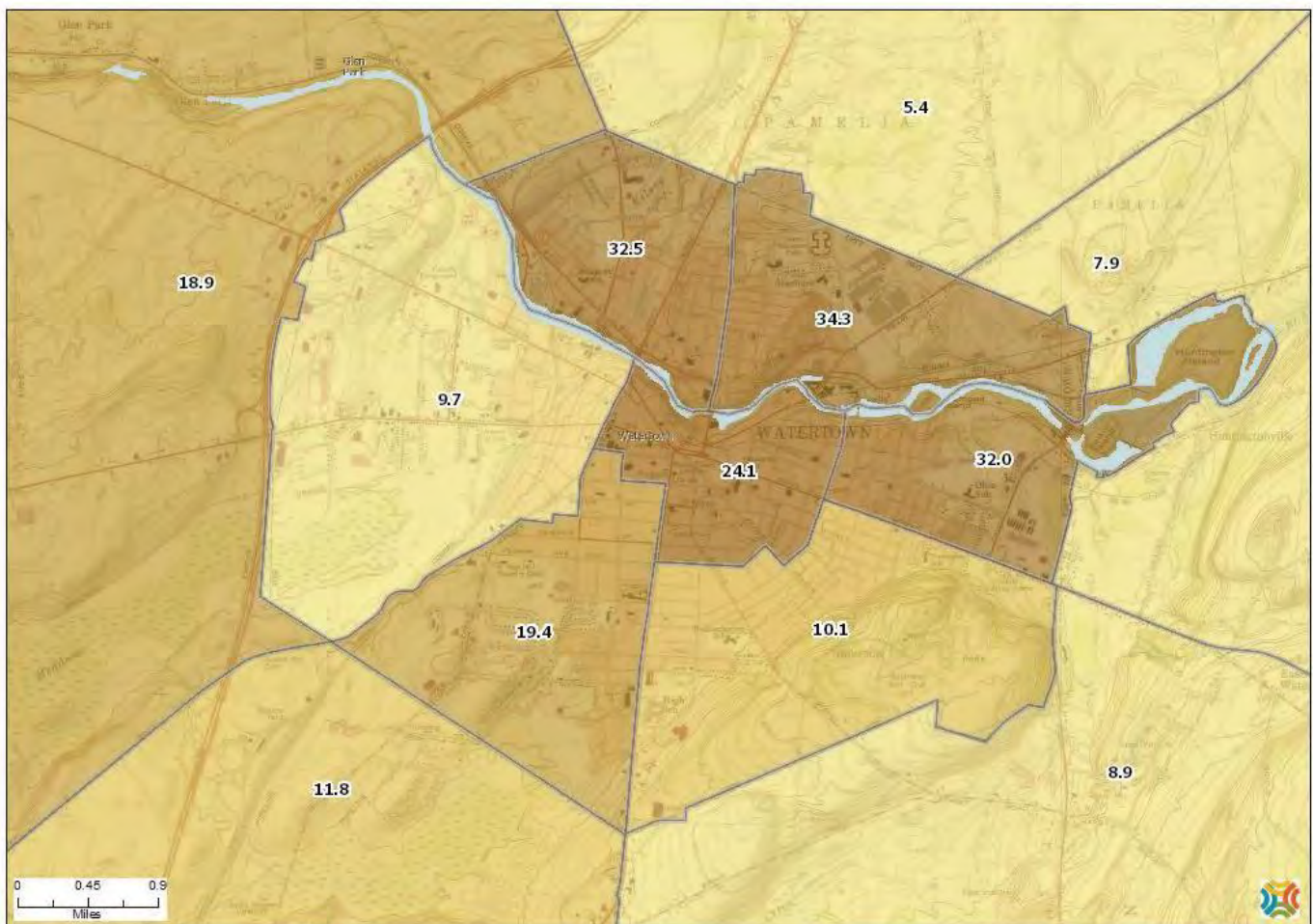
22.2% of the population of the City of Watertown lives at less than 100% of the poverty level* (ACS, 5-year estimates, 2010 – 2014). This is significantly higher than the poverty levels of NYS and the United States, estimated at 15.61% and 15.59% respectively. The poverty breakdown of Jefferson County is as follows:

- 8.7% of the population lives in extreme poverty – below 50% of the poverty level
- 22.2% of the population lives in poverty – at less than 100% of the poverty level
- 27.4% of the population lives near poverty – at less than 125% of the poverty level

33.1% of children (0 – 17) in the City live at less than 100% of the poverty level (ACS, 5-year estimates, 2010 – 2014).

The deepest pockets of poverty can be found in the portions of the City (defined by Census Tracts) to the north, northeast, city center and southwest, all well in excess of the country poverty rate of 15%.

City of Watertown Poverty by Census Tract



*City of Watertown Poverty Rates by Census Tract
American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 – 2014
Map Courtesy of Community Commons*

Community Needs

The Work Group's findings are summarized under the category headings: Living Wage Jobs, Transportation, Housing, Child Care, Adult Education, Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse, Youth / Family Activities, and Public Relations. Data summaries are listed under each category heading, followed by italicized statements of need, labeled as community (C), family (F) or agency (A) level.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of the identified needs, the Work Group opted not to rank needs although it was agreed that lack of living wage job opportunities is integral to the other categories and to economic stability.

Living Wage Jobs

The unemployment rate in Jefferson County is on a downward trend, and the local economy appears to be on the upswing. However, there are limited industries in the area and few employers that offer career paths. The area is home to many service-related jobs in retail and restaurant chains and tourism-related businesses which tend to offer lower wages, non-traditional or seasonal hours, and limited opportunities for benefits and career growth. Other major employment sectors in Jefferson County include the government, schools, and hospitals. Convergys and Car-Freshner, major employers based in Watertown, offer stable employment to individuals who lack higher education. Overall, there are limited opportunities to obtain sustainable wage jobs without higher education and/or professional experience.

According to the Department of Labor, the average weekly wage in Jefferson County for the time period April through June 2015 was \$757 compared to \$1,180 statewide. It is estimated that the hourly rate that an individual must earn to support their family, if they are the sole provider and are working full time (2,080 hours per year) is \$24.58 for a family of one adult and one child (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator, 2010- 2014).

More than half of households served through the agency are employed. 36% report employment as the only source of household income; 18% report employment plus other sources of income.

The agency's major constituent groups – community partners, board and staff members – cited the lack of living wage jobs as the most negative aspect of living in Jefferson County. The same constituencies identified lack of employment opportunities as the leading cause of poverty in Jefferson County.

Nearly one-third of low-income households surveyed indicated that at least one member of the household is actively seeking employment. One in four households reported that a member of the household is having difficulty finding or keeping a job. 30% of those surveyed indicated they would be interested in improving their computer skills while nearly 19% are interested in job search skills.

Statements of Need

The community lacks living wage jobs (C)

Low-income individuals lack the skills, experience, education to be competitive in the job market (F)

Customer Survey Summary

Customer Survey – Synopsis of Aggregated Data March through May 2015

Between March 9 and May 15, 2015, a total of 520 households completed the survey which was distributed in paper and electronic forms. The survey was completed by a variety of agency customers, representative of all program areas. Additionally, the survey was made available to individuals participating in the Job Club at the Jefferson-Lewis Workplace, the area's one-stop employment center.

A summary of data follows with comparisons against the previous customer survey, conducted in 2011.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE and HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Gender of Person Completing Survey

75.3%	Female
24.7%	Male

Age of Person Completing Survey

9%	18 – 23
53%	24 – 44
13%	45 – 54
15%	55 – 69
10%	70+

Ethnicity of Person Completing Survey

93.5%	Non-Hispanic
6.5%	Hispanic

Race of Person Completing Survey

92.5%	Caucasian
4.1%	African American
1.6%	Multi-Racial
1.4%	Native American/Alaskan
0.6%	Asian

Income (403 Households Reporting)

20%	Up to 50% of Poverty Level
17%	51 – 75% of Poverty Level
18%	76 – 100% of Poverty Level
16%	101 – 125% of Poverty Level
8%	126 – 150% of Poverty Level
6%	151 – 175% of Poverty Level
7%	176 – 200% of Poverty Level
8%	200+% of Poverty Level

Household Size

25.3%	HH of 1
15.5%	HH of 2
13.7%	HH of 3
17.3%	HH of 4
16.7%	HH of 5
5.1%	HH of 6
3.1%	HH of 7
1.8%	HH of 8
1.4%	HH greater than 8

Highest Level of Education of Person Completing Survey

26.5%	High School Graduate
21.4%	Some College (or still in College)
19.5%	Less than High School Diploma
11.7%	GED or High School Equivalency
8.8%	Two-Year Degree
7.0%	Vocational or Trade School
3.9%	Four-Year Degree
1.4%	Graduate Degree

Primary Language Spoken in HH

98.6%	English
1.4%	Spanish

Home Community of HH

53.8%	Watertown (Survey did not differentiate between City and Town of Watertown)
-------	---

Other most commonly reported home communities are: Clayton – 9.2%, Carthage – 4.1%, Adams/Adams Center – 4.9% Dexter – 3.7%, Fort Drum – 2.3%, Theresa – 2.5%, and Antwerp – 2.1%

Military in HH

19.5% report that a member of the HH has served in the military

Aging Parent in HH

5.6% report having an aging parent who lives in the HH

EMPLOYMENT and INCOME

55.7% report that one or more adult in HH is employed – down from 64.2% in 2011.

30.9% report that one or more adult in HH is seeking employment – down from 41.6% in 2011.

25.5% report that a member of HH is having difficulty finding/keeping a job– down from 35.4% in 2011.

Most Common Barriers to Employment (in past 12 months)

	2011	2015
Mental / Physical disability*	N/A	41.8%
Not enough jobs available	61.8%	32.8%
No transportation	33.7%	28.7%
Not the right job skills	28.1%	19.7%
No child care	8.5%	18.9%
Recent layoff or hours cut	26.4%	10.7%
Criminal record	24.0%	10.7%
No tools, clothing or equipment for the job	6.9%	8.2%
Seasonal work	13.4%	8.2%
Problems with credit	14.2%	7.4%
Don't know how to search for a job	9.8%	5.7%
No regular place to sleep at night	3.3%	2.5%
No telephone	5.3%	2.5%
Language barriers	0.4%	0.0%
Mental disability	13.4%	N/A
Physical disability	15.5%	N/A

*Response new to 2015 survey.

Most Common Household Finance Issues (in past 12 months)

	2011	2015
Pressured to pay bills by bill collector	54.1%	56.1%
Borrowed money from friends/family to pay bills	57.6%	52.7%
Fell behind paying rent or mortgage	42.0%	32.9%
Pawned or sold valuables to pay bills	20.4%	19.4%
Used rent-to-own service*	N/A	18.1%
Had utilities (water, heat, electric) shut off	15.3%	12.2%
Car, appliance or furniture repossessed	7.6%	5.9%
Could not pay child care bill	3.5%	3.3%
Used a check cashing service	2.9%	0.4%
Had gambling losses	2.6%	0.4%