

***You Are Here**



Welcome to
Syracuse



The Center for Civic Engagement welcomes you to Upstate Medical University and the City of Syracuse. While we know that you will learn so much more in your service learning placements than we can teach you in a classroom or meeting setting, we feel it is important for you to have a little background information about this community.

Syracuse is a mid-sized city of just about 145,000 residents located in Onondaga County. It is home to Syracuse University (SU), LeMoyne College, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) and SUNY Upstate Medical University. Onondaga Community College (OCC) is just outside the city limits.

Syracuse is also the home of three professional minor league sports franchises – the Syracuse Chiefs baseball team, the Syracuse Silver Knights soccer team and the Syracuse Crunch hockey team. Syracuse residents are huge sports fans and the Syracuse University Orange are the hometown favorites. Don't be surprised to see orange everywhere in the city.

With an incredible variety of parks, festivals, restaurants, museums, art galleries and sports to watch and to play located throughout the area, there is something for just about everyone.

However, with all of the resources Syracuse and Onondaga County have to offer, it still has pockets of poverty to rival the worst cities in the nation.

Upstate Medical University is well positioned to have a positive impact on the residents of Syracuse, and for many years, Upstate has worked to develop partnerships with the community to ensure that we are indeed helping and not doing more harm.

In the pages that follow, you'll get some information about Syracuse that you won't likely learn in any of your classes. Consider it a gift from us to you, and from you to the community. Keep in mind, however, that the only way to truly get to know the community is to spend time in it.

Demographics

According to the 2010 US Census, Central New York’s population grew 1.4% in the last decade. This was an all-time high for the region that includes Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego and Madison counties. And though the region has gained in population, the City of Syracuse continues to lose. Though once a thriving manufacturing city and the 12th largest city in the nation, the loss of manufacturing resulted in the loss of population. Syracuse now sits at 167th nationwide.

US Census Year	1990	2000	2010	2015 (estimated)
Syracuse	163,860	147,306	145,170	144,142
Onondaga County	468,973	458,336	467,026	468,463

(Source: US Census Bureau, www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/pst045215/36067/3673000)

Syracuse is a diverse city with thousands of refugees entering the United States with the help of local resettlement agencies. Since 2000, more than 10,000 refugees have made Syracuse their home. Onondaga County received more than 5000 refugees between 2010 and 2015. The county accepts refugees at the highest per-capita rate in the state and the third-highest rate in the nation. Families and individuals come from Bhutan, Burma, Cuba, Somalia, Iraq, and several other countries.

(http://www.syracuse.com/poverty/2016/03/refugees_in_syracuse_benefit_burden.html)

Syracuse has a large population of Vietnamese and Hmong as a result of previous resettlement efforts.

Many refugees don’t speak English proficiently. In Syracuse, about 31% of the population are non-English speaking compared with 21% of the United States. In just one quadrant of the city, there has been an increase of 128% in the number of non-English speaking households since the year 2000 and a 123% increase in foreign-born residents.

According to the US Census, the percentage of foreign-born persons in Onondaga County from 2010 to 2014 was 7.2%, while in the City of Syracuse during the same time period, it was 11.8%.

The table below shows the percentage of the total population represented by each race and/or ethnicity according to the US Census.

	Syracuse (2010 estimated)	Onondaga County (2015 estimated)
White	56	80.4
Black or African American	29.5	11.8
American Indian & Alaska Native	1.1	.9
Asian	5.5	3.9

<i>Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander</i>	<i><0.1</i>	<i><0.1</i>
<i>2 or more races</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>2.9</i>
<i>Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>4.8</i>
<i>White (not Hispanic or Latino)</i>	<i>52.8</i>	<i>77.2</i>

(Source: <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/36067,3673000>)

All races slightly increased in percentage in Onondaga County from 2010 to 2015 except white (including Hispanic and Latino), which decreased by 0.7% and White (not Hispanic or Latino) which decreased by 2%.

Roughly 25% of the population is under age 18 and approximately 11% is age 65 or older. Thus, approximately one third (36%) of the population fall into the category of “vulnerable”.

Economy

Suburban sprawl and the resulting divestment in the city’s urban core has created a concentration of poverty in much of the city. Syracuse has a poverty rate at least three times that of surrounding towns and villages.

The median household income in Onondaga County in 2014 was \$54,498 and in the City of Syracuse it was \$31,566. Per capita income was \$29,156 in Onondaga County and \$19,283 in Syracuse. Based on these incomes, the percentage of people living in poverty in 2014 were 7.1% in Onondaga County and 35.1% in the City of Syracuse. The percentage of people living in poverty in the United States for the same time period is 15.6%.

Half (49.9%) of Syracuse’s children live in poverty, compared with Onondaga County at 22% and the United States at 21.9%. That amounts to approximately 16,000 children.

Syracuse has the highest concentration of poverty among black and Hispanic residents in the nation. 42% of all black people in Syracuse are poor.

In 2014, Onondaga County had a total of 17,473 public assistance cases.

Housing

Affordable housing in Onondaga County is concentrated in the poorest neighborhoods of Syracuse. There are 2,304 public housing apartments located primarily on the city's South and Near West sides. The city housing authority also has 3,300 rent vouchers, all assigned to low-income residents. The majority of those, too, are used in Syracuse in the same neighborhoods.

According to the Housing and Homeless Coalition of Syracuse, Onondaga and Oswego Counties, there were 220 unique individuals staying in emergency or transitional shelters in 2015. Of those, 131 were under the age of 18; 138 identified as female.

Organizations such as Catholic Charities, Rescue Mission, The Salvation Army, and others provide emergency and transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. The Housing and Homeless Coalition meets monthly to discuss service needs of the population and coordinate care for those families and individuals facing homelessness.

Education

Onondaga County consists of 18 public school districts including the Syracuse City School District (SCSD). The SCSD serves approximately 21,000 students in 34 schools and 4 alternative education programs.

Schools in the Syracuse City School District

High Schools	Middle Schools	Elementary
<i>Corcoran</i>	<i>Clary</i>	<i>Bellvue</i>
<i>Fowler</i>	<i>Danforth</i>	<i>Delaware</i>
<i>Henninger</i>	<i>Ed Smith K-8</i>	<i>Delaware Primary</i>
<i>Institute of Technology at Central</i>	<i>Expeditionary Learning Middle School</i>	<i>Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr</i>
<i>Nottingham</i>	<i>Frazer K-8</i>	<i>Dr. Weeks</i>
<i>Public Service Leadership Academy at Fowler</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Franklin</i>
	<i>Huntington Pre-K - 8</i>	<i>Hughes</i>
	<i>HW Smith Pre-K – 8</i>	<i>LeMoyne</i>
	<i>Lincoln</i>	<i>McKinley-Brighton</i>
	<i>Roberts</i>	<i>Meachem</i>
Alternative Education Programs	<i>Westside Academy at Blodgett</i>	<i>Montessori at LeMoyne</i>
<i>Elmcrest</i>		<i>Porter</i>
<i>Johnson Center/Adult Ed</i>		<i>Salem Hyde</i>
<i>McCarthy @ Beard</i>		<i>Seymour Dual Language Academy</i>
<i>Middle School Alternative Program @ Shea</i>		<i>Syracuse Latin</i>
		<i>Van Duyn</i>
		<i>Webster</i>

Enrollment by Ethnicity*

- White: 24%*
- Black or African American: 50%*
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 1%*
- Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 8%*

Multiracial: 4%
Hispanic or Latino: 13%

Enrollment by Gender*

Male: 52%
Female: 48%

Enrollment by Other Characteristics*

English Language Learners: 15%
Students with Disabilities: 20%
Economically Disadvantaged: 77%

*Source: <http://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2015&instid=800000040902>

SCSD employed 344 professional staff and 715 paraprofessionals in the 2014-15 school year. The teacher turnover rate from academic year 2013-14 to 2014-14 was 18%.

There were 9,076 student suspensions in 2013-14. The district adopted a new code of conduct to improve student behavior as well as district response to misbehavior in response to an attorney general report revealing that the SCSD suspended students at higher rates than almost every other district in the nation. The report also asserted that the SCSD violates the legal rights of many students facing discipline. Suspension numbers for years following the implementation of the code are not publically available.

Performance

The four year graduation rate for students beginning in 2010 and expected to graduate in 2014 was 56%, far below the state standard of 80%.

English Language Arts	
Grade 3	Percent Performing at Proficient Level
1,426 tested	8%
Grade 4	
1,344 tested	9%
Grade 5	
1,310 tested	7%
Mathematics	
Grade 3	Percent Performing at Proficient Level
1,450 tested	13%
Grade 4	
1,328 tested	14%
Grade 5	
1,309 tested	10%

Source:

<http://data.nysed.gov/reportcard.php?instid=800000040902&year=2015&createreport=1&38ELA=1&38MATH=1&48SCI=1>

In addition to these staggeringly low percentages, only 50% of students scored at a level indicative of kindergarten readiness on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) upon entry into the SCSD. In 2011, only 31% of English language learners scored at that level.

Adult Literacy and Education

Based on the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (the most recent available), it is estimated that approximately 10% of adults in Onondaga County lack basic prose literacy, which is the ability to read newspapers, books and other written materials from daily living (<https://nces.ed.gov/naal/>)

Educational Attainment (2010 - 2014)			
	<i>Less than High School</i>	<i>% High School Graduate</i>	<i>% Bachelor's degree or higher</i>
<i>New York State</i>	<i>14.7</i>	<i>26.9</i>	<i>33.7</i>
<i>Onondaga County</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>33.4</i>
<i>Syracuse</i>	<i>19.8</i>	<i>27.1</i>	<i>26</i>

Source: <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/36067,3673000>,
http://www.syracuse.com/poverty/2016/03/poverty_in_syracuse_how_it_com.html

Syracuse has a long history of work on the issue of adult literacy. Ruth J. Colvin created a tutoring method in partnership with colleagues at Syracuse University and founded Literacy Volunteers of Greater Syracuse. That organization eventually became Literacy Volunteers of America, which in 2002 merged with Laubach Literacy International to form ProLiteracy. The organization is still based in Syracuse. LiteracyCNY is a direct link to the former Literacy Volunteers of Greater Syracuse.