



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

## Dutchess County Report

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# Many Voices One Valley 2007

## Dutchess 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 Dutchess 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 Dutchess 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 9<sup>th</sup> through June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007. This includes 827 residents living in Dutchess 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 Dutchess County residents is  $\pm 3.5\%$ . 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](http://www.ManyVoicesOneValley.org). Full reports for both the 2007 and the 2002 studies may be accessed there, as well.

### A Profile

#### Demographic Profile of Dutchess County

The Mid-Hudson Valley includes seven counties: Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, and Ulster. Dutchess County has the second largest population in the region.<sup>1</sup>

In many ways the demographic composition of Dutchess County is very similar to the makeup of the Mid-Hudson Valley as a whole. For instance, as in the Mid-Hudson Valley overall, six in ten people living in Dutchess County are in households with an annual income of more than \$50,000.

But, there are some areas in which residents of Dutchess County differ from the larger Mid-Hudson population. For example, the average household size in Dutchess County is larger than the average Mid-Hudson Valley household. It is 3.0 compared with the regional average of 2.8. Five years ago, the average household size for both Dutchess County and the greater Mid-Hudson Valley was 2.9. Among

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<sup>1</sup> Results not depicted in the charts of the report are detailed in the appendices which are available on [www.ManyVoicesOneValley.org](http://www.ManyVoicesOneValley.org), the study website.

households with children, the average household size in Dutchess County is 4.2 the same as it is in the Mid-Hudson Valley as a whole.

|                                      | Dutchess County | Mid-Hudson Valley |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                        |                 |                   |
| Men                                  | 49%             | 49%               |
| Women                                | 51%             | 51%               |
| <b>Race</b>                          |                 |                   |
| White                                | 82%             | 83%               |
| African American                     | 9%              | 7%                |
| Latino                               | 8%              | 10%               |
| <b>Income</b>                        |                 |                   |
| Less than \$50,000                   | 40%             | 42%               |
| \$50,000 or more                     | 60%             | 58%               |
| <b>Age</b>                           |                 |                   |
| Under 45                             | 45%             | 44%               |
| Over 45                              | 55%             | 56%               |
| <b>Education</b>                     |                 |                   |
| Less than college                    | 63%             | 65%               |
| College graduate                     | 37%             | 35%               |
| <b>Children</b>                      |                 |                   |
| Households with children             | 44%             | 44%               |
| Households with children under 5     | 12%             | 15%               |
| Households with children age 5 to 18 | 38%             | 38%               |

The racial and ethnic composition of the county is similar to that of the Mid-Hudson region. About four in five Dutchess County residents identify themselves as white compared with 9% who consider themselves African American and 8% of residents who say they are Latino.

A majority of Dutchess County residents do not have a college degree. Following

regional trends, more than six in ten county residents have not completed college.

Dutchess County households are just as likely to include children as the average household in the Mid-Hudson region. 44% of Dutchess County households include at least one child which is exactly the same proportion in the Mid-Hudson region. 12% of Dutchess County households have a family member who is under age five which is comparable to the regional average of 15%. As with Mid-Hudson Valley households overall, 38% of Dutchess County households include children age five to eighteen.

|                                 | Dutchess County | Mid-Hudson Valley |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Households with Children</b> |                 |                   |
| Low income                      | 18%             | 21%               |
| Single parents                  | 13%             | 11%               |

18% of Dutchess County children live in low income households where the yearly income is less than \$30,000. This compares with 21% of children in the entire Mid-Hudson region. 13% of Dutchess County households with children are headed by a single parent, comparable to the 11% in Mid-Hudson region households with children.

The proportion of residents without health care coverage in Dutchess County has remained similar to the number reported in 2002. 22% of all county households have at least one member who has experienced a gap in coverage over the past year, and one in ten households include someone who is currently uninsured. These figures are comparable to the entire region.

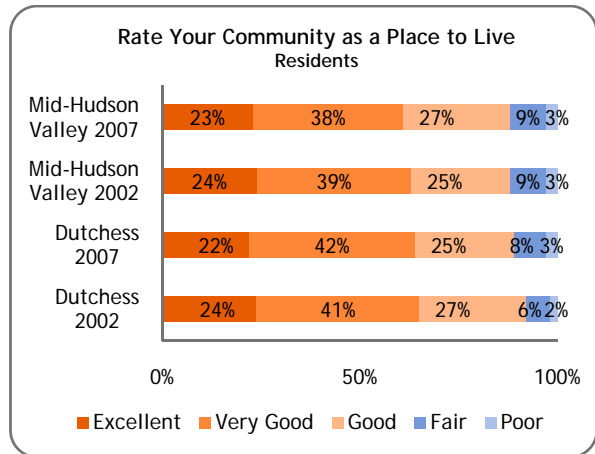
Since 2002 there has not been any progress in decreasing the number of Dutchess County's uninsured. 15% of all households with children have at least one child who has not had continuous coverage over the past year compared with 13% five years ago. 5% do not currently have insurance compared with 6% who were uninsured in 2002. The proportion of uninsured children in Dutchess County is consistent with the overall Mid-Hudson region.

| Households               | Dutchess County |      | Mid-Hudson Valley |      |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------|
|                          | 2007            | 2002 | 2007              | 2002 |
| Gap in health insurance  | 22%             | 24%  | 24%               | 24%  |
| Currently not insured    | 10%             | 11%  | 12%               | 12%  |
| Households with Children | Dutchess County |      | Mid-Hudson Valley |      |
|                          | 2007            | 2002 | 2007              | 2002 |
| Gap in health insurance  | 15%             | 13%  | 15%               | 13%  |
| Currently not insured    | 5%              | 6%   | 7%                | 6%   |

### Continuity and Change in the Past Five Years

#### Rating of community

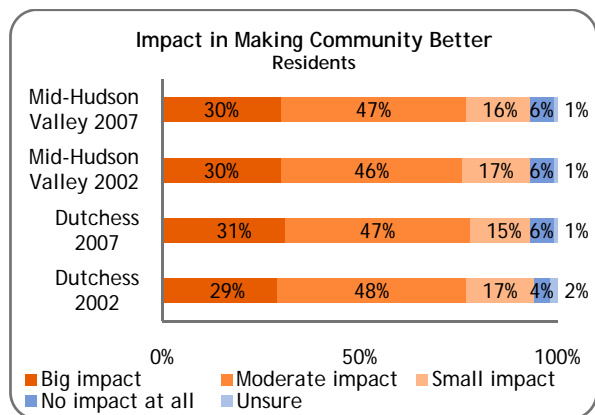
89% of Dutchess County residents rate life where they live as excellent, very good, or good. 22% of all residents think their community is an excellent place to live and another 67% rate it as either very good or good. County residents' attitudes closely reflect the opinions of Mid-Hudson Valley residents overall, and there has been little change since 2002 in Dutchess County residents' evaluations of their communities.



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

Many Dutchess County residents think they can have some impact in making their community a better place to live. 78% say they can have at least a moderate impact.



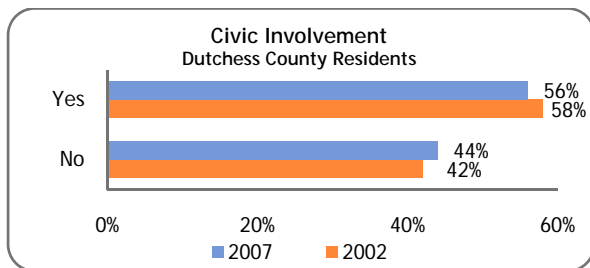
Question wording: Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live: a big impact, a moderate impact, a small impact, or no impact at all?

77% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents share this positive view. Five years ago, 77% of Dutchess County residents thought they

could make a difference in their community.

### Volunteerism

A majority of Dutchess County residents who believe they can play a role in shaping their community believe volunteerism is the most effective way to do so. In fact, 56% of Dutchess County residents report they regularly volunteer or 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?

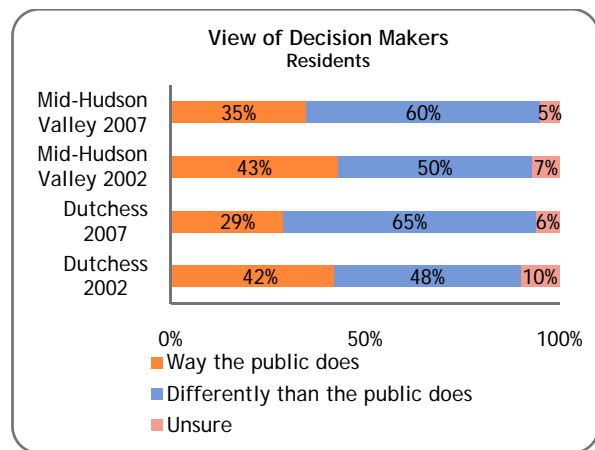
### Responsiveness of local leaders

Since 2002, one of the largest shifts has been in residents' perspective about how in sync community leaders are with public opinion. Five years ago, 48% of Dutchess County residents felt there was a disconnect between local decision makers and the public, but a large proportion, 42%, believed leaders mostly saw things the way the public did. This represented a gap of only six percentage points between those who felt local leaders were out of step and those who felt they were, in fact, in step with public opinion.

There has been a dramatic change in opinion from five years ago. Today, of the seven counties included in the larger study

of the Mid-Hudson region, Dutchess County residents are most likely to think there is a difference between the views of decision makers and the public. 65% of Dutchess County residents think their leaders do not represent the views of residents and only 29% think they do. This reflects a gap of thirty-six percentage points.

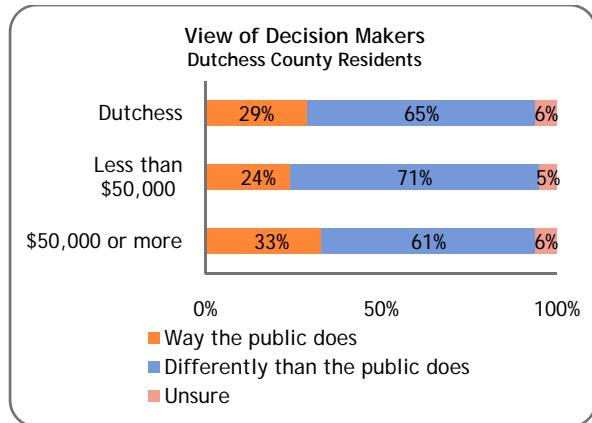
This shift in perspective is not wholly limited to residents of Dutchess County. People living throughout the Mid-Hudson region are more skeptical of their leaders' responsiveness than they were five years ago. However, the change in outlook is considerably more pronounced among Dutchess County residents than it is elsewhere in the region.



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?

Income plays a role in county residents' skepticism. While a majority of residents from all income backgrounds think their leaders are out of step, residents with lower income are generally more critical of

those in leadership positions than residents in households with higher income.



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?

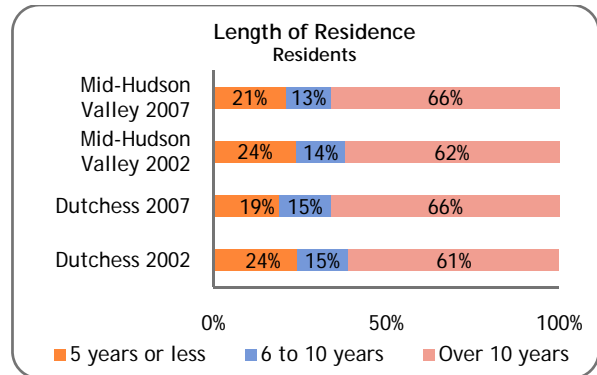
Only 24% of Dutchess County residents in households that earn an annual income of less than \$50,000 believe decision makers see things the way they do. This compares with 33% of residents earning \$50,000 or more who share this view.

### New residents

While most residents have called Dutchess County home for a long time, many new residents have moved to the area since the last survey. In 2002, Dutchess County residents had lived in the community for an average of 26 years. Now, the average length of residence is 23 years.

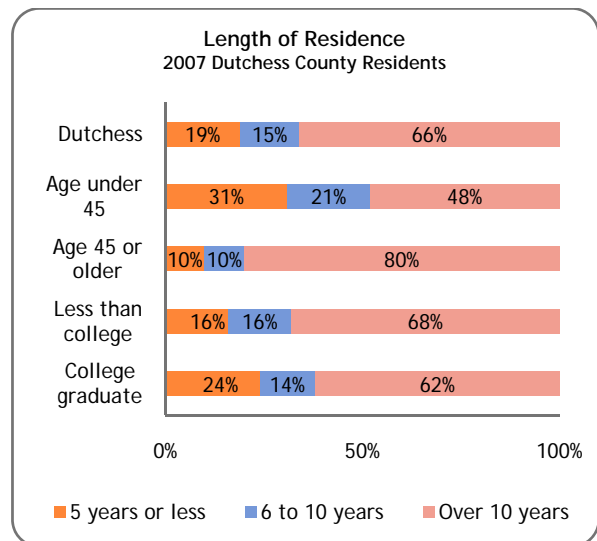
Although two-thirds of all current residents have lived in the area for more than a decade, there is a substantial proportion of new residents in the area. About one in five Dutchess County residents has moved to their community in the past five years.

This recent influx is consistent with larger regional trends.



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

A disproportionate amount of Dutchess County's young people and college graduates are recent arrivals. About a third of all county residents under the age of forty-five have moved to their community within the past five years compared with 10% of older residents.



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

Almost a quarter of all college graduates in Dutchess County are new to the area while just 16% of those without a college degree are new residents.

Issues: The Priorities

Overview of residents' priorities

Using a scale from 0 to 10, residents rated the importance they felt should be placed on a range of topics concerning their community. These priorities varied from health care to the economy and public schools to community services.

Residents of Dutchess County have remained fairly consistent in their priorities since 2002. Many of the issues they considered to be major concerns continue to rank at the top of the list. Making health care more affordable is now their top priority with an average rating of 8.0. Dutchess County residents are also still very concerned about the retention of businesses. Keeping businesses in the area is now the second priority for county residents also receiving an average score of 8.0.<sup>2</sup> Improving the quality of public schools continues to be a major goal among residents although it is no longer one of the two leading issues.

| Dutchess County  | 2007 |      | 2002 |      |
|--|------|------|------|------|
|  | Rank | Mean | Rank | Mean |
| Making health care more affordable                             | 1    | 8.0  | 3    | 7.7  |
| Keeping businesses in the area                                 | 2    | 8.0  | 1    | 7.9  |
| Improving the quality of the public schools                    | 3    | 7.9  | 2    | 7.9  |
| Making your community safer                                    | 4    | 7.7  | 8    | 7.3  |
| Creating more jobs   | 5    | 7.7  | 5    | 7.5  |
| Reducing taxes   | 6    | 7.7  | 11   | 7.1  |
| Making health insurance easier to get                          | 7    | 7.6  | 6    | 7.3  |
| Protecting open space  | 8    | 7.6  | 7    | 7.3  |
| Providing services for senior citizens                         | 9    | 7.5  | 4    | 7.5  |
| Providing more after-school activities                         | 10   | 7.5  | 10   | 7.2  |
| Improving relations between different racial and ethnic groups | 11   | 7.4  | 9    | 7.2  |
| Increasing the amount of affordable housing                    | 12   | 7.2  | 13   | 6.5  |
| Improving the quality of water                                 | 13   | 7.0  | 14   | 6.5  |
| Providing more affordable, quality child care                  | 14   | 6.9  | 12   | 6.6  |
| Supporting the arts and providing more cultural events         | 15   | 6.8  | 15   | 6.4  |
| Slowing growth and development                                 | 16   | 6.7  | 19   | 6.1  |
| Increasing the number of public areas                          | 17   | 6.7  | 17   | 6.2  |
| Reducing homelessness  | 18   | 6.6  | 16   | 6.3  |
| Increasing or improving public transportation                  | 19   | 6.6  | 18   | 6.1  |

<sup>2</sup> 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 "Keeping businesses in the area" are rounded to 8.0, their averages are 8.02 and 7.95, respectively. They are, therefore, ranked one and two in the priorities list.

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.

There have been two noticeable changes in how Dutchess County residents rank priorities for their community since 2002. Following regional trends, county residents are much more concerned about taxes than they were five years ago. The average score for reducing taxes as a priority has risen, and it is now the sixth ranked issue among county residents. In 2002, it ranked eleventh.

Secondly, Dutchess County ranks providing services for senior citizens lower among county residents' list of priorities. While there has been no change in the average rating for this issue it is no longer among the top five issues.

#### Top Priorities: Health Care

Many Dutchess County residents are concerned about health care expenses. As noted, making health care more affordable is now the number one priority for residents of the county.

For more than one in five Dutchess County households, this issue hits close to home. 22% of county households have a member who has not had continuous health insurance coverage and, therefore, has experienced a gap in that coverage at some point in the past year. 10% of all households have at least one member who is currently without health insurance.

Many children in Dutchess County are without health care coverage. 15% of households have at least one child who has experienced a gap in coverage over the past

year and 5% of households include a child who is not currently insured.

#### Health care: affordability

Given the high proportion of Dutchess County that is experiencing gaps in health insurance coverage, not unexpectedly about half of all county residents rate making health care more affordable with a 10 the maximum score on the rating scale.

Among residents in Dutchess County the issue of affordable health care receives an average rating of 8.0 overall. This compares with the average score of 7.7 it received among Dutchess County residents five years ago when this priority ranked third among county residents.

The affordability of health care is also the top issue for the entire Mid-Hudson region 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  |
| Dutchess                           | 1    | 8.0  | 3    | 7.7  |

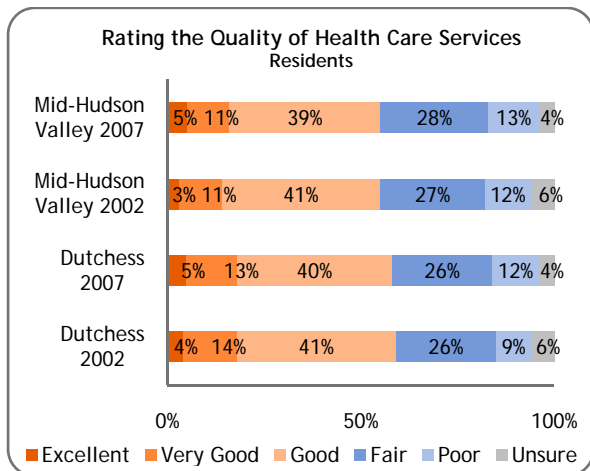
Question wording: Now I want to ask you about several issues that some communities face. Using the numbers 0 through 10 with 10 being a top priority and 0 being not a priority at all, please tell me how you would rate each one for your community. 10 is a top priority for your community and 0 is not a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

#### Rating health care services

A majority of Dutchess County residents favorably rate the caliber of health care services in their community even though

only 5% believe they are of excellent quality. 38% rate these services as fair or poor. Residents' appraisal of community health care services parallel the opinions held by residents throughout the Mid-Hudson region.

There has been little change in the proportion of Dutchess County residents who are satisfied with the quality of health care services since 2002. A majority of residents assessed health care services in their community favorably five years ago, as well. Similarly, in 2002, 35% did not rate the quality of health care services positively.

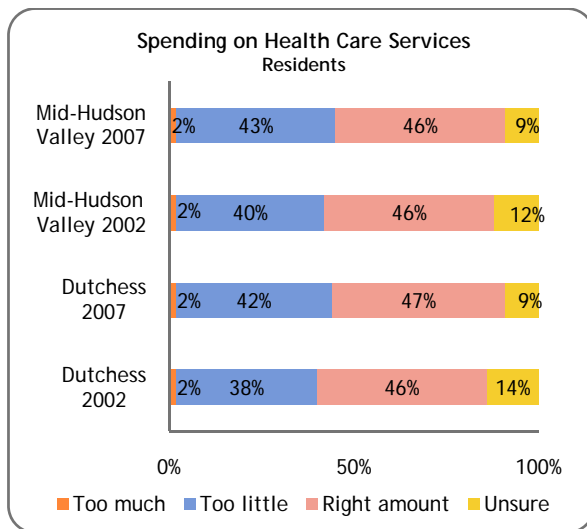


Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): Health care services?

**Spending on health care services**

Dutchess County residents divide about whether or not spending for health care services is sufficient. 42% think not enough is being allocated for funding on health care services, and 47% believe the current level of funding is on target.

The opinions of Dutchess County residents on this issue are comparable to Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole, and there has been little shift in opinion among county residents on this point since 2002.



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

**Summary: health care**

Overall, for most Dutchess County residents, health care affordability is the pressing concern for their community. Many consider the cost of health care to be the number one priority their community needs to concentrate on.

Residents rate the health care services in their area positively but they are not overly enthusiastic about them. While many feel spending is about right on health care services, a considerable proportion of the population feels more funding needs to be allocated.

### Top Priorities: Economic Priorities

Dutchess County residents consider economic issues top concerns. Keeping businesses in the area ranks second and creating more jobs ranks fifth among the priorities for county residents overall.

#### Keeping businesses in the area

Receiving a mean score of 8.0 on a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 being the most important, keeping businesses in the area is a main priority for many Dutchess County residents.

A focus on retaining businesses is just as widespread in Dutchess County today as it was in 2002. At that time, county residents ranked keeping businesses in the area as the number one priority for the community five years ago. This issue also still ranks among Mid-Hudson Valley residents' top three priorities for the region.

| Keeping Businesses in the Area | 2007 |      | 2002 |      |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                                | Rank | Mean | Rank | Mean |
| Mid-Hudson Valley              | 2    | 7.9  | 1    | 7.9  |
| Dutchess                       | 2    | 8.0  | 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.

#### Creating jobs

Creating more jobs is also an important priority for many Dutchess County

residents. With an average score of 7.7 this issue is now the fifth highest ranked issue.

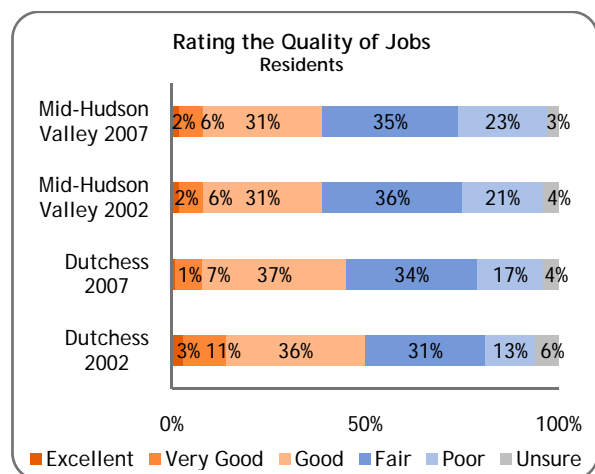
Job creation also ranked fifth among Dutchess County residents in 2002 with a mean score of 7.5.

| Creating More Jobs | 2007 |      | 2002 |      |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                    | Rank | Mean | Rank | Mean |
| Mid-Hudson Valley  | 6    | 7.6  | 5    | 7.5  |
| Dutchess           | 5    | 7.7  | 5    | 7.5  |

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.

#### Rating the quality of jobs

Residents of Dutchess County are generally dissatisfied with the quality of jobs in the region. Almost a fifth describes them as poor and about one-third considers the quality of jobs to be only fair.



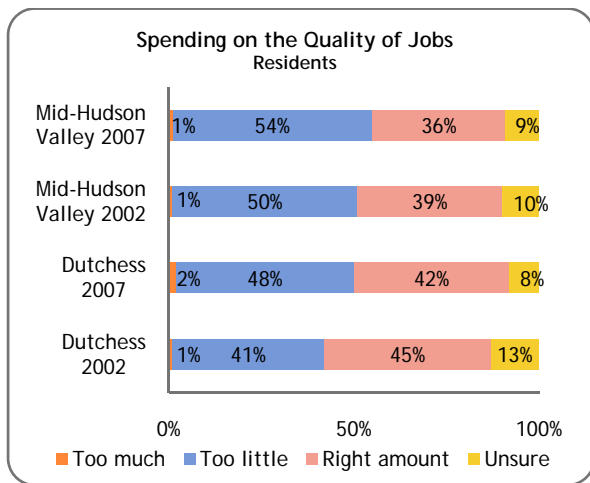
Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): The quality of jobs?

County residents' perceptions mirror the attitudes of the region as a whole.

Overall, Dutchess County residents' are less satisfied with the employment options available in their community than they were in 2002. Five years ago, only 44% rated local jobs as just fair or poor, compared with 51% today.

#### Spending on improving jobs

Many Dutchess County residents feel their community needs to do more to improve jobs. 48% think their community spends too little on improving jobs although a large proportion, 42%, think the level of funding is about right.



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

Residents of Dutchess County are generally more satisfied with the amount of resources allocated toward improving jobs in the region than Mid-Hudson Valley residents as a whole.

Dutchess County residents are, however, less pleased with funding toward jobs than they were in 2002. Five years ago, 45% believed funding was about right, and 41% thought too little was being spent.

#### Summary: economic priorities

Dutchess County residents are concerned about economic issues. Many residents continue to think the region should work to prevent businesses from leaving the area and to create more local jobs.

County residents are generally dissatisfied with the current employment options in the region, as well. Many people think their community should expend more resources toward improving the quality of jobs.

#### Top Priorities: Education

Maintaining the quality of public education is a major concern for residents of Dutchess County. This is not unexpected in a county where nearly four in ten households have at least one school age child.

#### Improving public schools

In Dutchess County, improving the quality of public schools is among the top priorities.

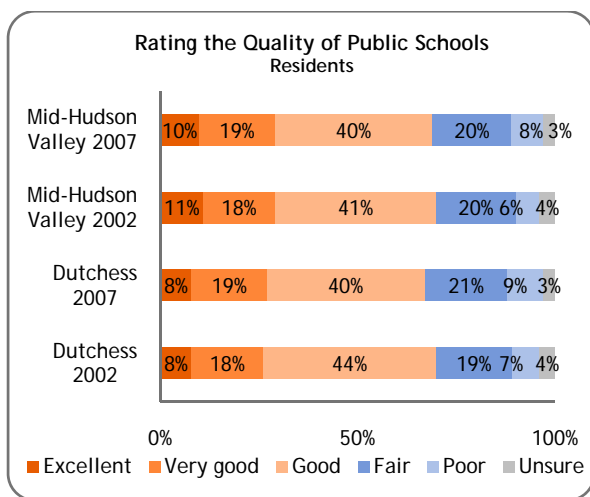
This concern now ranks third, overall, among county residents, and its average score is 7.9 out of 10, the same average rating it received in 2002. Education is also one of the top priorities regionally.

| Improving the Quality of the Public Schools | 2007 |      | 2002 |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|
|   | Rank | Mean | Rank | Mean |
| Mid-Hudson Valley                           | 4    | 7.8  | 2    | 7.8  |
| Dutchess                                    | 3    | 7.9  | 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: Improving the quality of the public schools.

### Rating the quality of public schools

Although fewer than one in ten Dutchess County residents consider their local public schools to be excellent over two thirds do rate the quality of schools in their community favorably. Only 9% of residents describe the caliber of their public schools as poor.



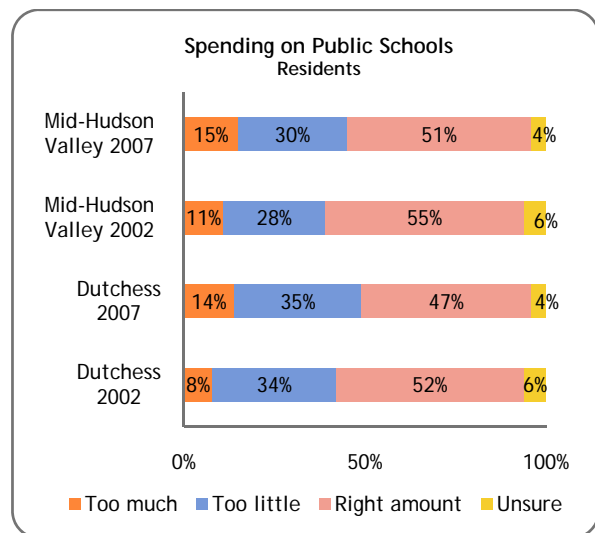
Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good (positive), fair, or poor (negative): The quality of the public schools?

Overall, Dutchess County residents have a similar level of satisfaction with the quality

of education as the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident and since 2002 county residents' evaluations of the public schools have stayed fairly constant.

### Spending on public schools

When it comes to assessing the levels of funding for public education nearly half of all Dutchess County residents feel the amount of resources that are expended improving the quality of the schools is on target. However, more than a third of residents think their community does not allocate enough funding, and 14% believe too much money is being spent.



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

Dutchess County residents are more likely to think too little is being spent on public schools than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident.

While Dutchess County residents' attitudes have not changed considerably since 2002, they are more likely to believe too much is

being spent on public schools than they were five years ago.

Summary: education as a priority

Dutchess County residents report that providing children with quality public education is a top priority. Overall, they favorably rate the quality of their public schools, and almost half of all county residents think community spending for schools is about right.

Top Priorities: Crime

Making communities safer

Making communities safer is an important concern for many Dutchess County residents. It now ranks fourth on the list of residents' priorities up from eighth five years ago. On average, residents rate the priority of making their community safer with a score of 7.7 out of 10.

Residents of Dutchess County place greater emphasis on safety than the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident. Making communities safer ranks just eighth among the region as a whole, and Dutchess County is the only one of the seven counties included in the larger study in which safety appears among the top five local priorities.

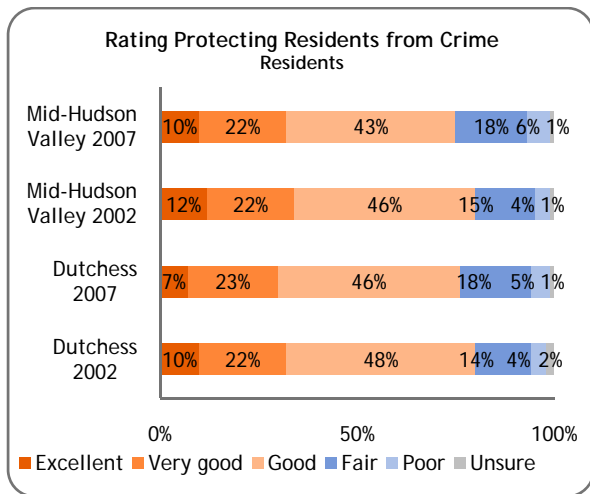
| Making Your Community Safer | 2007 |      | 2002 |      |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                             | Rank | Mean | Rank | Mean |
| Mid-Hudson Valley           | 8    | 7.5  | 10   | 7.2  |
| Dutchess                    | 4    | 7.7  | 8    | 7.3  |

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 your community safer.

Dutchess County residents are more concerned about safety in their community than they were five years ago. In 2002, the issue received an average score of 7.3 from county residents. Today, safety receives an average rating of 7.7 among residents in the county. The increase of four-tenths of a point since 2002 reflects the greatest shift in average score on this issue among the six counties studied five years ago.

Rating public safety

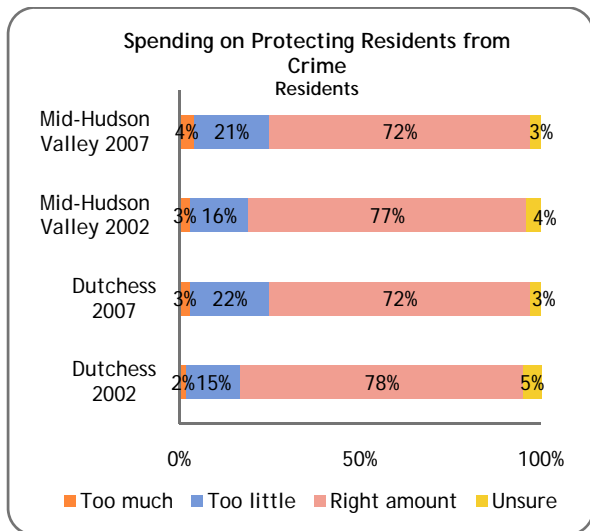
76% of Dutchess County residents believe their community is doing at least a good job protecting them from crime. This compares with 23% of residents in the region who do not rate their community positively on this issue. Their assessments are comparable to those of the region as a whole.



Question wording: Would you rate each of the following in your community as excellent, very good, good, (positive) fair, or poor (negative): Protecting residents from crime?

### Spending on public safety

Most Dutchess County residents think their community allocates enough resources to protect them from crime.



Question wording: Does your community spend too much, too little, or about the right amount on protecting residents from crime?

72% of residents in Dutchess County believe their community spends enough money to

protect them from crime, and 22% believe more resources should be expended.

Although most residents in Dutchess County are satisfied with how their community allocates resources on this issue, there has been a slight shift since 2002. Five years ago, 78% of Dutchess County residents were satisfied with their communities spending on public safety and only 15% thought more money should be spent in this area.

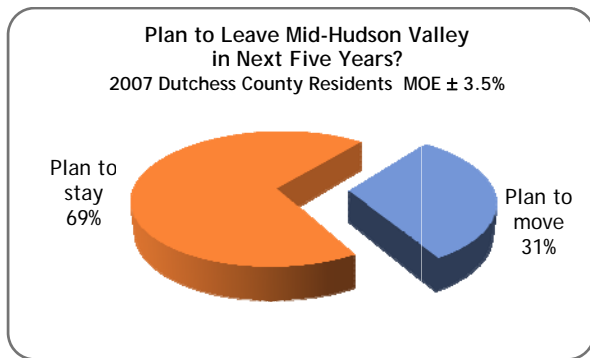
### Summary: crime

Protecting residents from crime is important to residents of Dutchess County. It is one of their top five priorities for the region. Most residents believe their communities do at least a good job in protecting them against crime and are satisfied with the resources that are currently being expended toward maintaining public safety.

### Plans for the Future

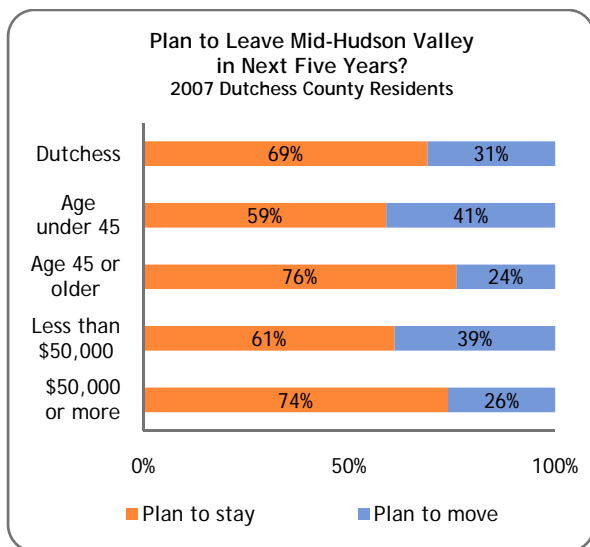
#### Residents who intend to leave

There is a strong sense of connection to community in Dutchess County. Many people feel that they can have an impact towards making their community a better place to live and many people are active in their communities. However, over three in ten residents intend to relocate when asked whether or not they plan to continue living in the area five years from now. Similarly, 29% of residents in the Mid-Hudson region overall plan to move someplace else in the next five years.



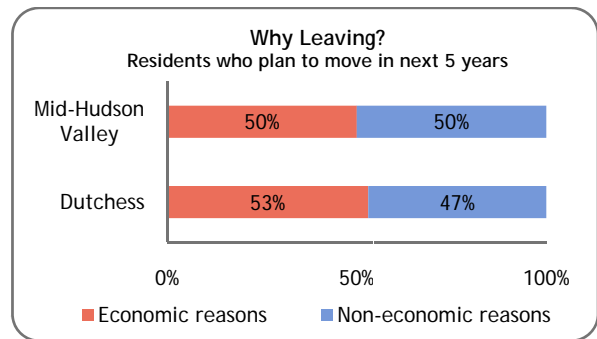
Question wording: Thinking about five years from now, do you plan to stay in the Hudson Valley or do you plan to move someplace else?

Some demographic groups in the county are more likely than others to plan to move out of the area in the near future. Age is a key factor. About four in ten adults under age forty-five in Dutchess County intend to leave the Mid-Hudson Valley in the next five years compared with just 24% of older adults.



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?

There are also differences based on income. Nearly four in ten residents of Dutchess County with household incomes of less than \$50,000 a year plan to move someplace else in the next five years compared with just about a quarter of all residents earning higher household incomes.



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

Dutchess County residents intend to leave for a variety of reasons, but a majority cites economic factors.

|                     | Dutchess County | Mid-Hudson Valley |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Why Leaving?</b> |                 |                   |
| Cost of living      | 20%             | 17%               |
| Jobs                | 15%             | 12%               |
| Taxes               | 15%             | 17%               |
| Climate             | 10%             | 8%                |
| Overcrowded         | 6%              | 6%                |
| Time for a change   | 6%              | 7%                |
| Retirement          | 5%              | 5%                |
| Move near family    | 4%              | 5%                |
| Quality of life     | 4%              | 6%                |
| Housing costs       | 3%              | 4%                |
| Schools             | 2%              | 2%                |
| Other               | 10%             | 11%               |

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

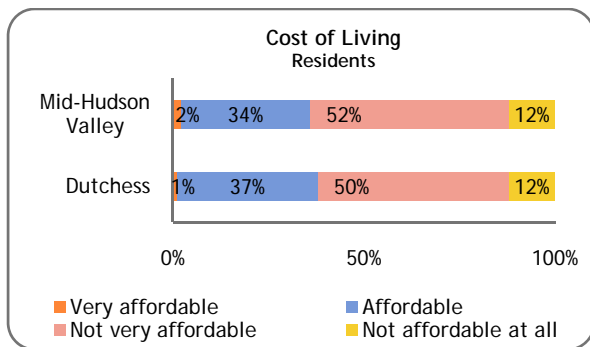
53% of those residents who plan to move away intend to do so because of economic reasons. For instance, 20% of residents planning to relocate cite the cost of living, 15% point to jobs, and 15% mention taxes.

Dutchess County residents who plan to move out of the area are just as likely to cite economic reasons as the average Mid-Hudson Valley resident.

### Making Ends Meet

#### Rating the affordability of the Mid-Hudson Valley

62% of Dutchess County residents feel the Mid-Hudson region is not affordable including 12% of residents who find the area as not affordable at all. This compares with 64% of Mid-Hudson Valley residents overall who regard the region as unaffordable.

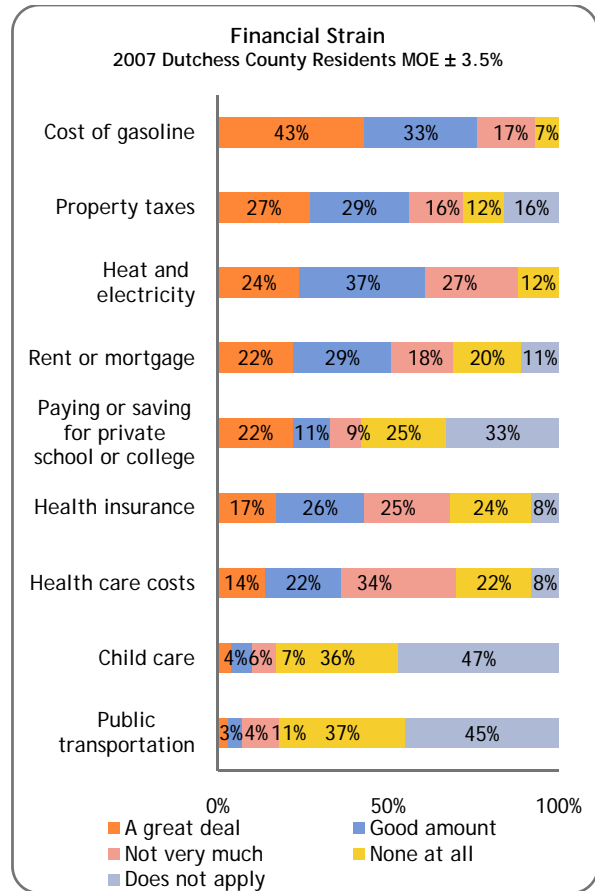


Question wording: Overall, would you describe the cost of living in the Hudson Valley for the average family as very affordable, affordable, not very affordable, or not affordable at all?

#### Managing the family budget

Among a list of nine financial burdens, more Dutchess County residents point to the cost

of gasoline as causing financial strain than any other expense.



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.

76% of county residents mention the difficulty they have keeping up with the cost of gasoline. 43% describe it as placing a great deal of pressure on their monthly

finances and another 33% see it as putting a good deal of stress on their family budget.

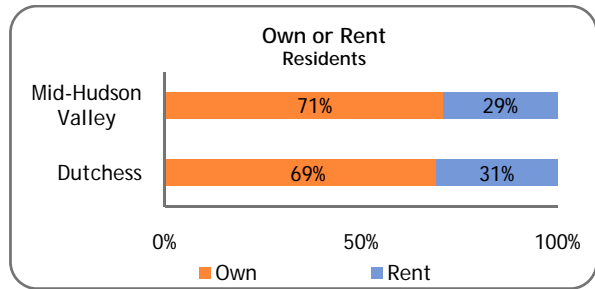
56% of Dutchess County residents report that property taxes are a burden on their family budget including 27% who feel it places a great deal of financial strain on meeting their monthly obligations.

Utility costs are a major burden for many of these county residents. 61% of Dutchess County residents think the cost of heat and electricity puts pressure on their monthly budget including nearly a quarter who say paying for their utilities places a great deal of stress on their finances.

A majority of county residents deal with the financial stress of meeting their monthly rent or mortgage payment including 22% who indicate that their rent or mortgage represents a considerable burden. Although most Dutchess County residents are not burdened by paying or saving for private school or college, one-third of county residents say they feel the financial strain of meeting these costs.

### Housing matters

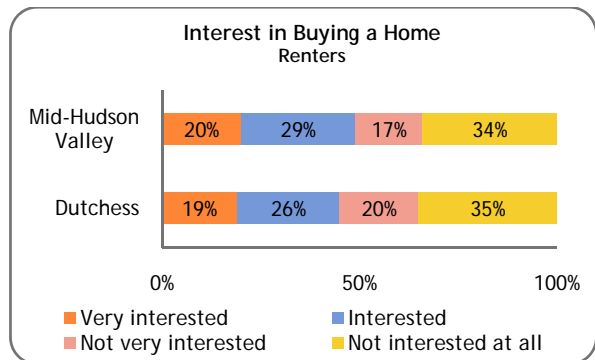
Most Mid-Hudson Valley residents own their home as do a majority of people living in Dutchess County. 69% in the county are homeowners compared with 31% who rent.



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

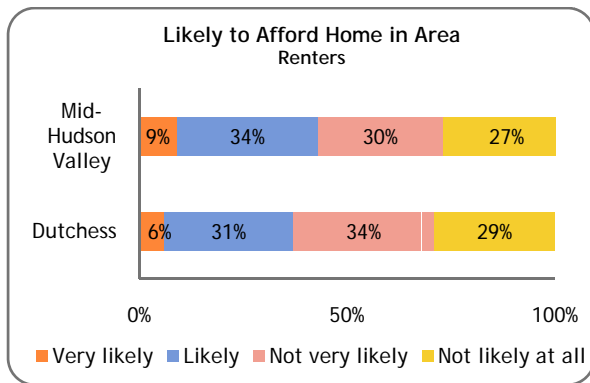
### Renting but hoping to own

When asked whether or not they are interested in buying a home someday, a majority of renters living in Dutchess County do not express interest. 55% are not interested and 45% are interested in future homeownership.



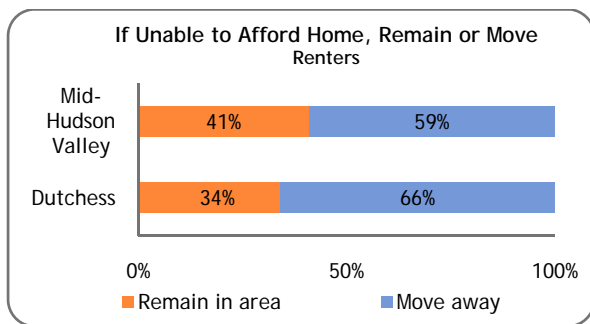
Question wording: Are you very interested, interested, not very interested, or not interested at all in buying a home in this area?

In concert with the feelings of renters throughout the Mid-Hudson region, about six in ten Dutchess County renters think it is likely they will be 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?

Dutchess County renters are more likely than the average renter living in the Mid-Hudson Valley to plan to leave the area if they cannot afford to buy a home nearby. 59% of Mid-Hudson Valley renters overall compared with 66% of Dutchess County renters are likely to move out of the area if they are unable to purchase a home.



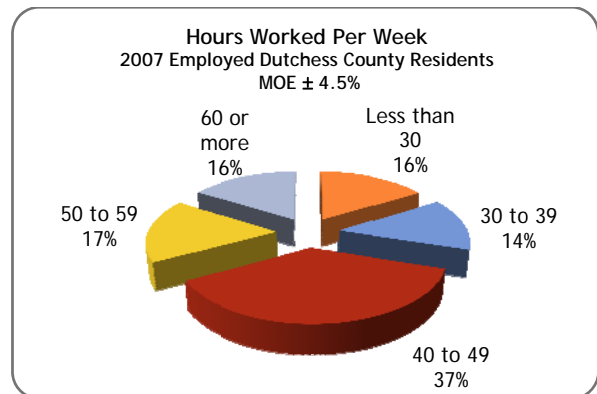
Question wording: If you cannot afford to buy a home here, are you likely to remain living in the Hudson Valley, or are you likely to move away?

### Working in the Mid-Hudson Valley

Many Dutchess County residents are working harder in order to keep up with the cost of living. A majority of households in the county hold at least two jobs. This includes

households where one adult holds more than one job as well as those households where at least two adult earners work. This pattern is consistent throughout the Mid-Hudson region, it is not unique to Dutchess County.

Dutchess County workers work an average of 42.3 hours each week. 70% of employed Dutchess County residents work forty hours or more each week including 33% of workers who work fifty hours a week or more. On average, workers in Dutchess County clock a comparable amount of hours as the typical Mid-Hudson Valley worker. Those employed in the region put in a weekly average of 43.1 hours and 74% clock forty or more hours weekly.

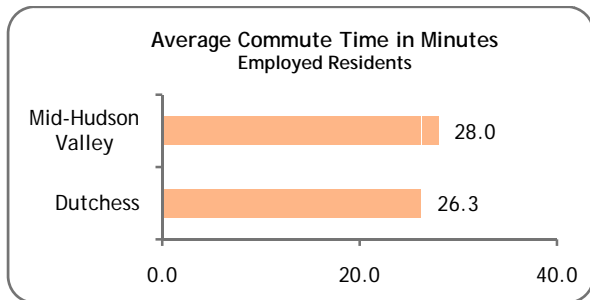


Question wording: In total, approximately how many hours do you work in an average week?

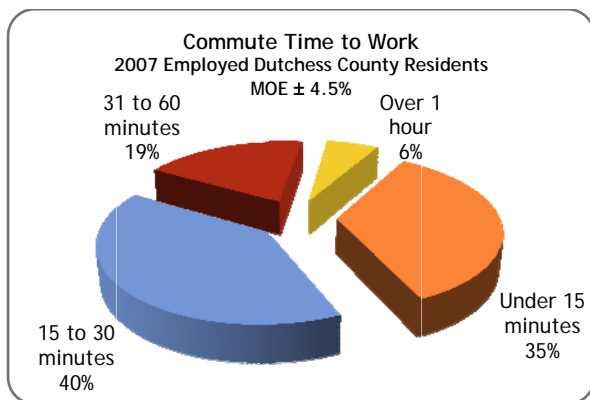
Dutchess County residents who are employed travel an average of 26.3 minutes to get to work each day. This compares with the regional average of 28.0 minutes.

Three in four employed Dutchess County residents have a work commute of a half hour or less. 35% of workers in the county travel less than fifteen minutes and 40%

spend between fifteen and thirty minutes one way to get to work daily. About one in five workers experience travel times between thirty-one minutes and an hour, and 6% commute over an hour away from their homes to their jobs.

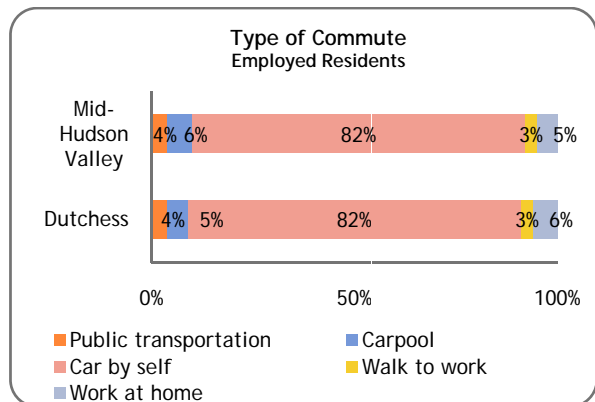


Question wording: In minutes, how long does it take you to get one way from home to work?



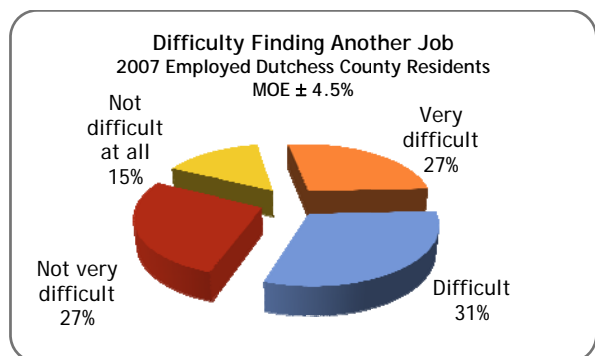
Question wording: In minutes, how long does it take you to get one way from home to work?

Most employed Dutchess County residents travel to work in a car alone. 82% of workers in the county drive to work by car by themselves as do 82% of those employed across the region.



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?

42% of Dutchess County working residents say it would not be difficult to find similar work within the same distance from their home as their current position if they were to lose their job. 58% say it would be difficult including more than a quarter who say it would be very difficult to do so.



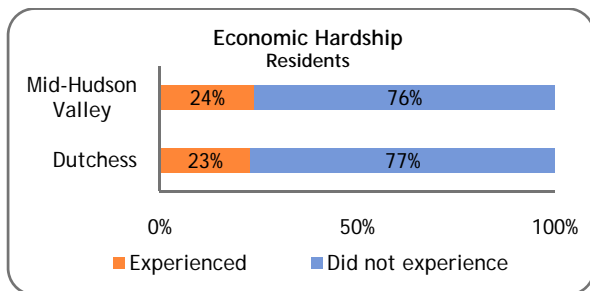
Question wording: If you were to lose your job, would it be very difficult, difficult, not very difficult, or not difficult at all to find another similar position about the same distance from your home?

### People doing without

A substantial proportion of households in Dutchess County struggle with stressful financial burdens. Residents were asked

whether or not they had encountered in the past twelve months several economic difficulties such as problems paying for food, housing costs, utility bills, or medical treatment.

While 77% of Dutchess County households have not had to face any of these economic hardships over the past year, 23% mentioned at least one. This figure is comparable to the proportion of residents in the Mid-Hudson region as a whole who have to deal with these types of economic hardships.



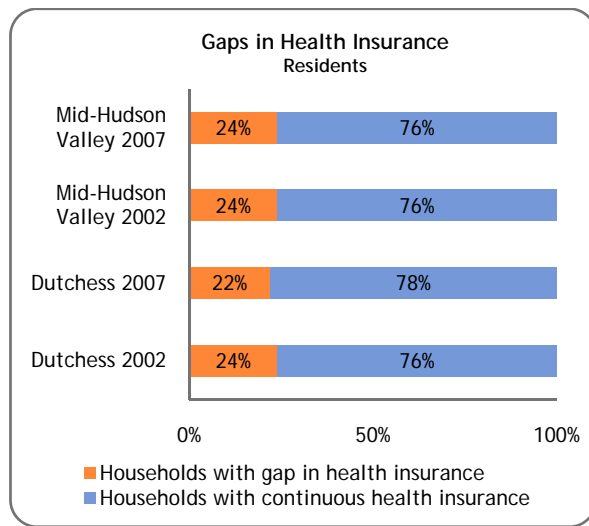
Question wording: In the past 12 months did you experience any of the following every month, some months but not others, a couple of times, once, or not at all you: cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food/got emergency food from a church, a food pantry, 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 Dutchess County households have trouble maintaining continuous health insurance coverage

throughout the year. Over a fifth of all households in the county have at least one member who has not had uninterrupted health insurance and, therefore, has confronted a gap in coverage during the past 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?

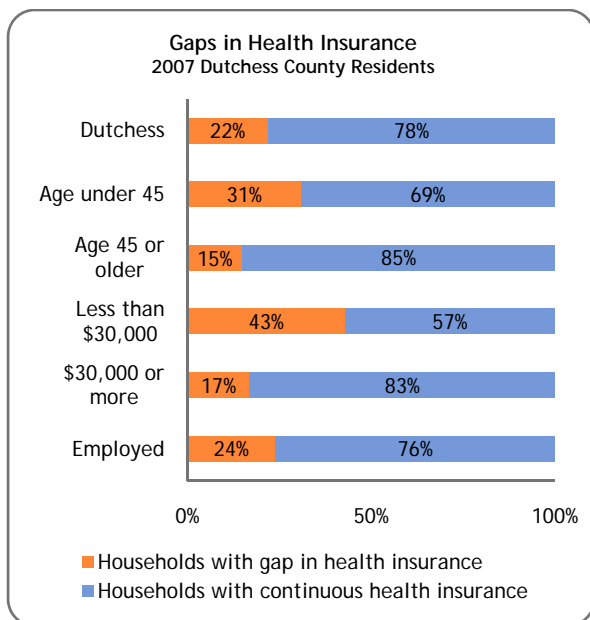
This includes both adults and children who do not have current health insurance and households that while currently insured, have had at least one member without insurance at some point in the last year. Using the U.S. Census, this translates into approximately 22,515 of the estimated 102,337 households in the county facing the challenge of maintaining continuous health insurance plans for all household members.<sup>3</sup> In 2002, 24% of Dutchess County households

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

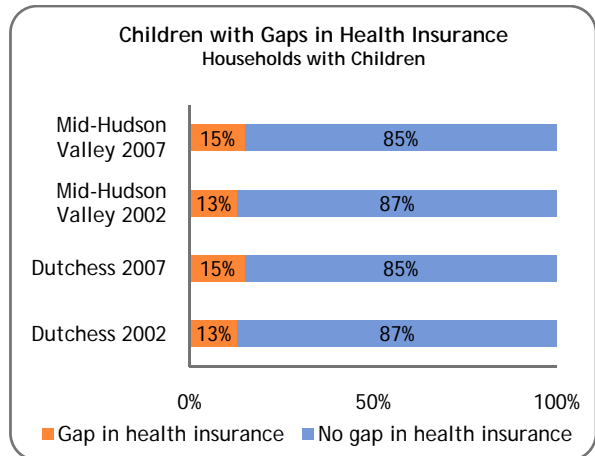
were either without health insurance or had a gap in their coverage.

This predicament is especially common among young people and for low income households. About three in ten Dutchess County adults under age forty-five live in a household where a member has confronted a gap in health care insurance in the last year. 43% of households with an annual income of less than \$30,000 have gone without uninterrupted insurance, as well.

Securing employment does not insure a household's chance of maintaining coverage. 24% of residents in Dutchess County who are employed come from a household that experienced a gap in insurance this 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?

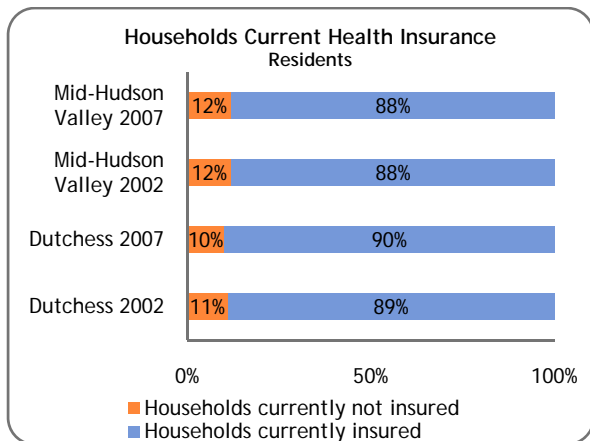


Question wording: Do the children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now? Was there ever a time in the past 12 months when a child in your household did not have any health insurance or a health plan?

Children are also at risk. 15% of households with children in Dutchess County include at least one child who has not had the benefit of uninterrupted coverage. There has been no improvement in this proportion since 2002 when the rate was 13%.

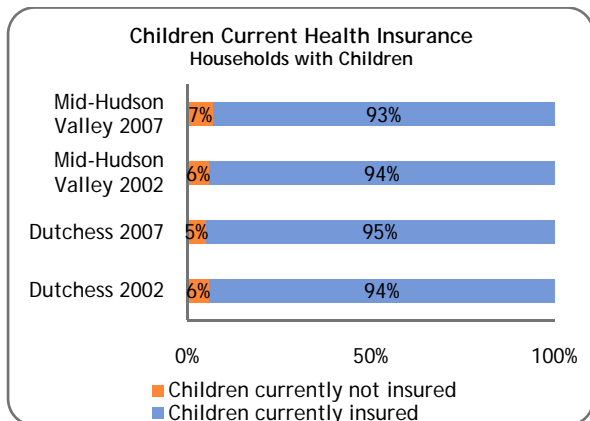
#### Households currently without health insurance

10% of Dutchess County households include at least one member, adult or child, who presently does not have health insurance. Using the U.S. Census, approximately 10,235 households of the estimated 102,337 households in Dutchess County have at least one member 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 rate of uninsured children is one in twenty, as 5% of all county households with children have at least one uninsured child. This compares with 7% of Mid-Hudson Valley households with children that include a child without coverage.

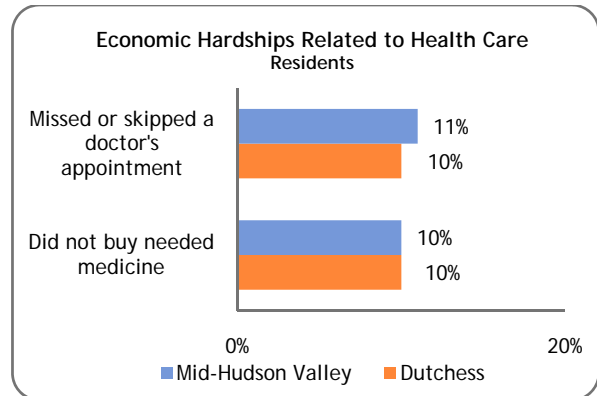


Question wording: Do the children in your household have health insurance or a health plan right now?

### Going without because of cost

Overall many Dutchess County residents struggle with the financial strain of health care costs. One in ten county residents find

these expenses to be so taxing that they go 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, one in ten Dutchess County residents skipped a doctor's appointment and 10% did not buy needed medicine because they could not afford it. These rates are very similar to those reported across the Mid-Hudson Valley.

### Conclusion

Dutchess County is the second largest of the seven counties studied in the Mid-Hudson Valley and is demographically very similar to the region as a whole. Like residents across the region, people in Dutchess County place health care costs, the quality of jobs, the retention of local businesses, and the quality of public schools at the top of their list of community priorities.

Making health care more affordable is now the number one issue for Dutchess County residents. 22% of households in the county

face a gap in health insurance and 10% are currently without coverage. The proportion of residents in the county unable to maintain health insurance has remained unchanged since 2002. Many residents are struggling to pay for health care and health insurance, and at the extremes about one in ten residents have to forgo medical treatment.

For the most part, the issues Dutchess County residents find important have not changed since the previous study in 2002. Keeping businesses, the quality of jobs, the public schools, and health care costs were all among the top priorities for residents five years ago. There are two notable exceptions. First, Dutchess County residents are now more concerned about community safety than they were in 2002 and they are more concerned about it than most residents across the region. Second, concern about rising taxes has also increased. Dutchess County residents now rank taxes sixth as a priority a jump from eleventh five years ago.

Many people in Dutchess County describe the region's cost of living as too high for a typical family in the area. As a result, a majority of households in the county depend on more than one job and most of the county's work force puts in more than forty hours per week. A majority of workers feel they would have a difficult time finding a similar job with a comparable commute if they were to lose their current job. More than half of county residents are not satisfied with the jobs available in the region. And while

homeownership is the norm, most renters feel priced out of the market.

One of the largest shifts in attitudes since 2002 has been in residents' perceptions of the responsiveness of community leaders. Five years ago, over four in ten of the county's residents felt leaders mostly viewed things the way the public did. Now, less than three in ten county residents feel individuals who are in positions to make decisions for their community are in step with public opinion. Of the seven counties included in the larger study of the Mid-Hudson region, residents in Dutchess County are the most likely to think there is a difference between the views of decision makers and the public.

The people of Dutchess County see their local leaders as out of sync with public opinion. Residents would like to see the county be a place that is safe to live in and provides a stable environment for businesses and quality jobs. They would like the county to evolve into a more affordable place to live, an area where costs are kept in check, particularly for gasoline, housing, utilities, taxes, and health care.

#### 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. 827 residents living in Dutchess 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 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Mid-Hudson Valley</b> |             |             |
| <b>County</b>            |             |             |
| Columbia                 | 4%          | 5%          |
| Dutchess                 | 27%         | 26%         |
| Greene                   | 3%          | 3%          |
| Orange                   | 34%         | 34%         |
| Putnam                   | 9%          | 9%          |
| Sullivan                 | 7%          | 7%          |
| Ulster                   | 16%         | 16%         |
| <b>Gender</b>            |             |             |
| Men                      | 49%         | 49%         |
| Women                    | 51%         | 51%         |
| <b>Race</b>              |             |             |
| White non-Latino         | 80%         | 80%         |
| Non-white                | 20%         | 20%         |
| <b>Income</b>            |             |             |
| Less than \$50,000       | 42%         | 43%         |
| \$50,000 or more         | 58%         | 57%         |
| <b>Age</b>               |             |             |
| 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 Dutchess County were interviewed.

#### 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 Dutchess 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 Dutchess County residents is  $\pm 3.5\%$ . 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.

|                        | 2007 Survey | 2005 Census |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Dutchess County</b> |             |             |
| <b>Gender</b>          |             |             |
| Men                    | 49%         | 49%         |
| Women                  | 51%         | 51%         |
| <b>Race</b>            |             |             |
| White non-Latino       | 80%         | 79%         |
| Non-white              | 20%         | 21%         |
| <b>Income</b>          |             |             |
| Less than \$50,000     | 40%         | 40%         |
| \$50,000 or more       | 60%         | 60%         |
| <b>Age</b>             |             |             |
| Under 45               | 45%         | 48%         |
| Over 45                | 55%         | 52%         |

For example, 48% of Dutchess County residents surveyed feel making health care more affordable ranks a 10 on a scale of 0 to 10 as a priority for their community. 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 51.5% and 44.5%,  $\pm 3.5\%$ . 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 Dutchess 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 9<sup>th</sup>, 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 10<sup>th</sup> through June 19<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>4</sup>

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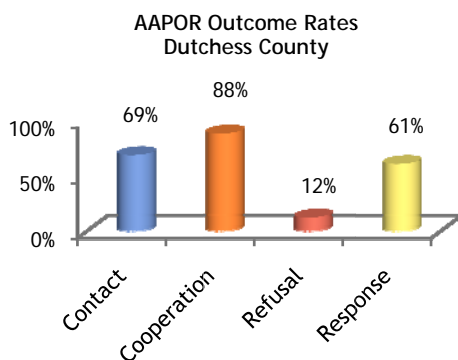
<sup>4</sup> This report may be found at:  
[http://www.aapor.org/uploads/standarddefs\\_4.pdf](http://www.aapor.org/uploads/standarddefs_4.pdf)

- 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.

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 Dutchess 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%.



For the survey of Dutchess 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

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