

ROCHESTER TODAY

POPULATION

In recent years, population decline has leveled off significantly in the city, with a decrease of only about 4.4% since 2000. Today, with a population of 210,291, Rochester is still New York State's third largest city after New York and Buffalo. The region's greater metropolitan area, which includes Monroe, Orleans, Livingston, Wayne, Ontario, and Yates Counties, has just over one million residents. The city has lost some of its population in the past few decades to suburban areas in Monroe County, which have grown modestly during the same period.



NEW YORK CITY
8.6 MILLION



BUFFALO
258,612



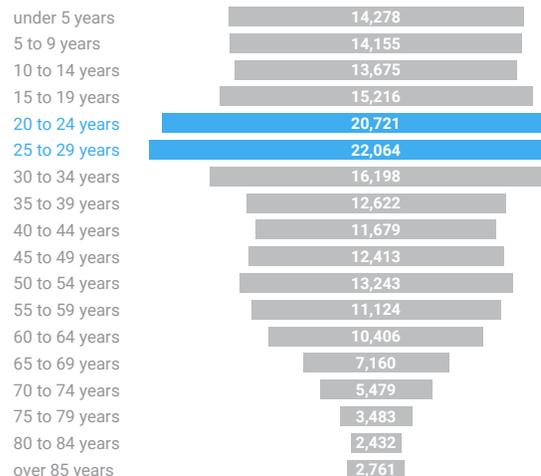
ROCHESTER
210,291

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The city's population is aging, as the population of people of childbearing age drops and total births in the city also falls. For example, 3,535 people were born in the city in 2009-2010, but that had fallen to 2,849 by 2015-2016. This is a common trend in the Upstate New York region; Rochester's birth rate per 10,000 people in 2016 was 13.6, similar to that of Buffalo, Syracuse, Yonkers, and Albany at 14.4, 14.4, 12.9, and 12.0, respectively. Rochester's teen pregnancy rate dropped in the recent years. Roughly 10% of all pregnancies were carried by teens in 2016, which is down from nearly 16% in 2000.

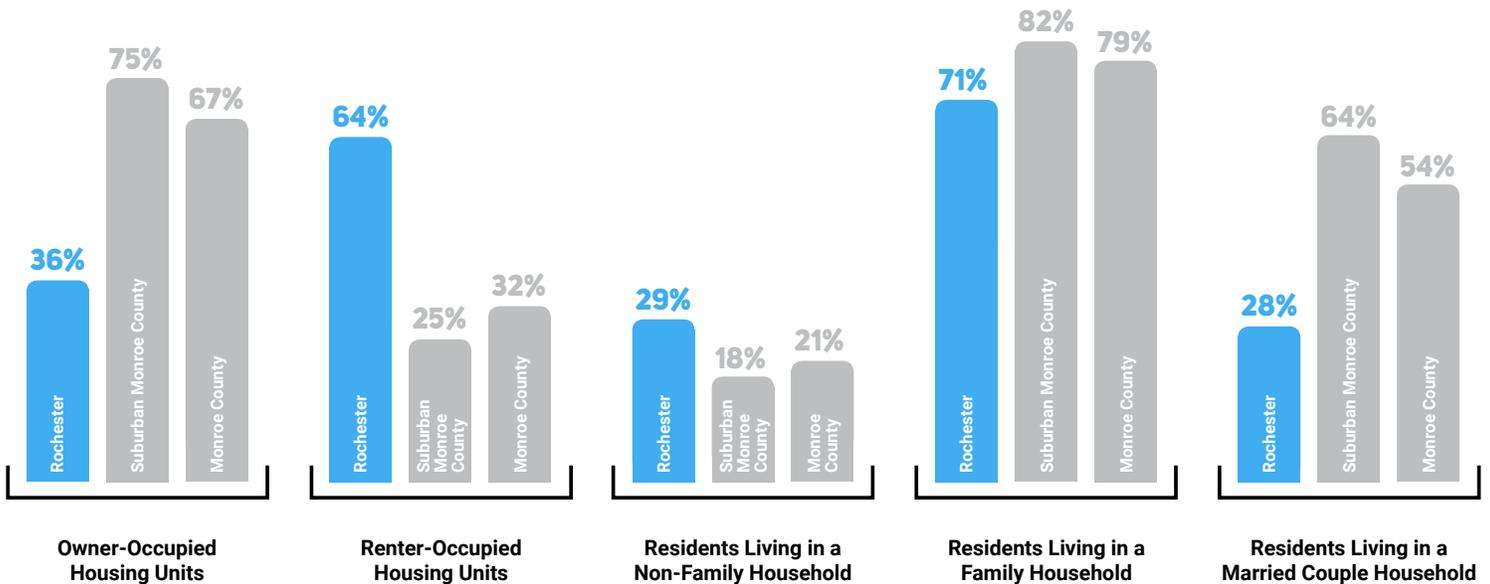
Rochester's share of residents 18 and under is projected to decrease to 23% by 2020 while the proportion of residents 65 and older is predicted to rise to 12%. The current median age for city residents is just over 31 years. Monroe County is also experiencing an overall greying of its population, with its median age now 38.6 years. Despite overall aging, the city's age distribution shows a significant millennial population between ages 20 and 30 in the city. **Recent studies have shown that Rochester is retaining its young, educated residents at stronger rates than most other cities in the country.**

Age Distribution of Rochester City Residents



HOUSEHOLDS

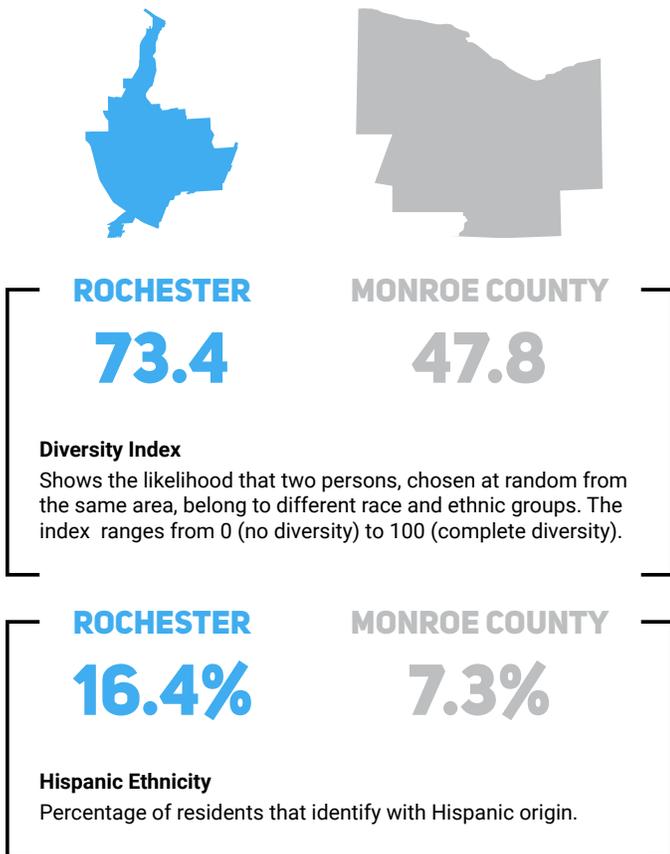
In 2016, there were an estimated 85,814 households in the City, with an average household size of 2.34. Nearly two-thirds of Rochester’s households are renters (64%), while 36% are owner-occupants. The county’s households (outside the city), on the other hand, are mostly (75%) owner-occupants. Most city residents (71%) live in a family household, while only 28% live in households headed by a married couple. This is lower than Monroe County as a whole, where 79% of county residents live with family, and just over half (54%) live in a married couple household.



Source: Census ACS
2016 5-Year Public
Microdata Sample

DIVERSITY

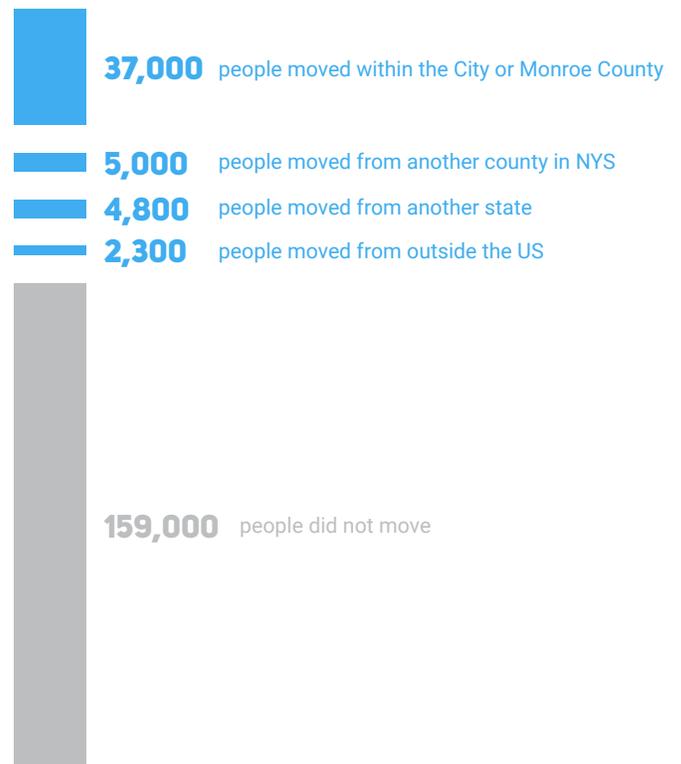
Rochester is a racially and ethnically diverse city, especially relative to the wider Monroe County area. Just over 63% of the city’s residents are from historically underrepresented and marginalized cultural groups, making Rochester one of a growing number of so-termed ‘minority majority’ cities in the United States. This stands in stark contrast to suburban Monroe County, where non-White cultural groups make up 13.4% of the population (i.e., 86.6% non-Hispanic white). This contrast in racial and ethnic strata reflects severe socioeconomic disparities, which will be further discussed later in this section.



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

Nearly one in five Rochester residents speaks English as a second language, the most common first language being Spanish. Roughly 8.7% of Rochester’s 2016 population was born abroad. Of this foreign-born population, 42.7% have become naturalized citizens. In 2016, approximately 2,284 people had moved to the City of Rochester from outside the US in the past year. Rochester has seen the growth of communities of Bhutanese, Nepalese, and Sudanese, among other immigrant groups moving to Rochester as part of refugee resettlement programs. In 2017 and 2018 Rochester saw an influx of approximately 3,400 refugees from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

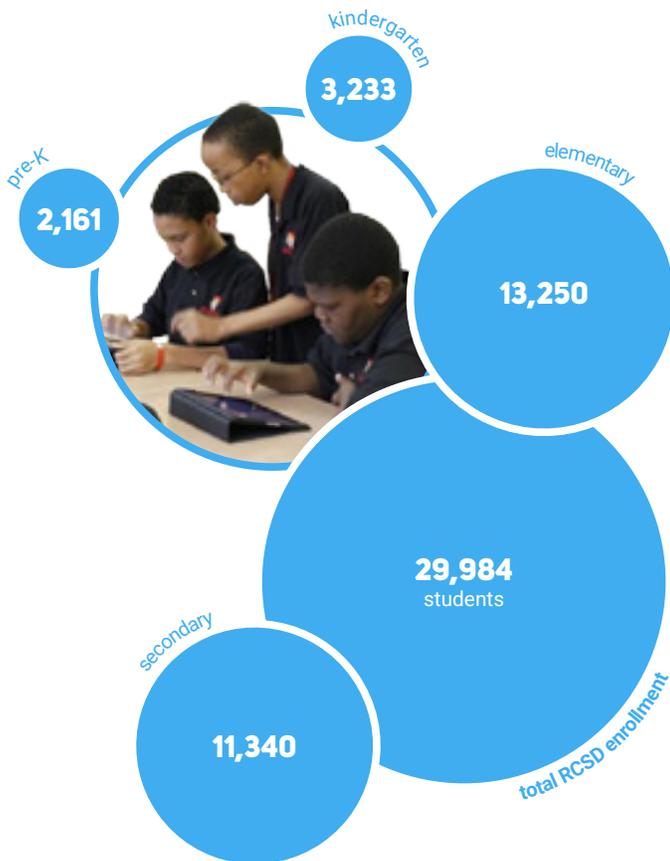
Migration into Rochester in the Past Year, Age 1 and Older



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

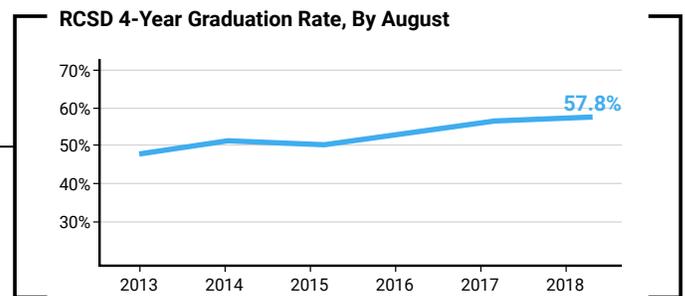
EDUCATION

The Rochester City School District (RCSD) operates the 50 public schools within the City of Rochester and serves nearly 30,000 students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. There are an additional 15 charter schools within the city limits serving more than 6,000 students, a figure that has grown substantially in the past ten years. Roughly 13% of RCSD students are learning English as a new language while in school. Of these new English language learners, the most common languages spoken at home are Spanish (67%), Somali (7.5%), Nepali (6.7%), and Arabic (5.5%).



High school graduation rates for the Rochester City School District (RCSD) have been gradually improving in recent years but remain substantially lower than suburban school districts in Monroe County at 56.8% in 2017. Subtracting out RCSD, the County's public school graduation rate is 91%. Despite this disparity, Rochester's graduation rates are largely comparable to the city school districts of Buffalo (63%) and Syracuse (60.5%). Certain high schools, however, like School of the Arts and World of Inquiry School No. 58, regularly graduate more than 90% of their students. District-wide, many schools struggle with low state test passage rates and poor student attendance. Additional challenges and opportunities related to education are discussed later in [Initiative Area 3-Section E, Schools and Community Centers](#).

Compared to suburban Monroe County, City residents are more than three times as likely to not have graduated high school or received an equivalent diploma, reflecting the long term challenges of concentrated poverty in the city.



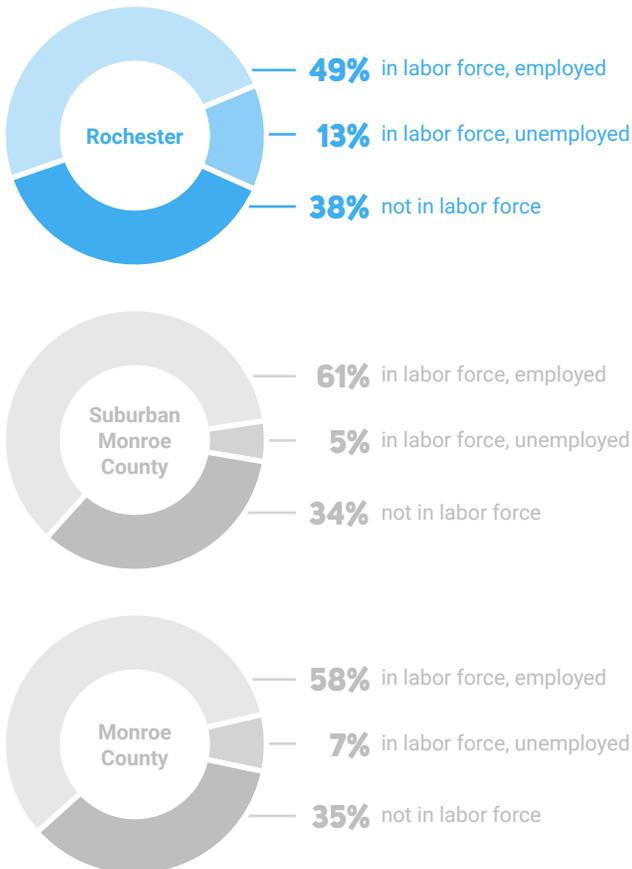
| Highest Level of Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years or Older | Rochester | Suburban Monroe County | Monroe County |
|--|-----------|------------------------|---------------|
| less than high school | 19.2% | 6.2% | 9.6% |
| high school graduate | 28.1% | 23.2% | 24.5% |
| some college or associate's degree | 29.0% | 29.3% | 29.2% |
| bachelor's degree | 14.0% | 22.7% | 20.4% |
| graduate or professional degree | 9.6% | 18.5% | 16.2% |

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

Rochester has lower rates of labor force participation than Monroe County, New York State and the nation. Labor force participation includes those either employed or actively looking for work (unemployed). It does not include those who have given up searching for work. According to the Census ACS, 62% of Rochester residents age 16 and older are in the labor force, in comparison 65.8% of people 16 or older in suburban Monroe County. In

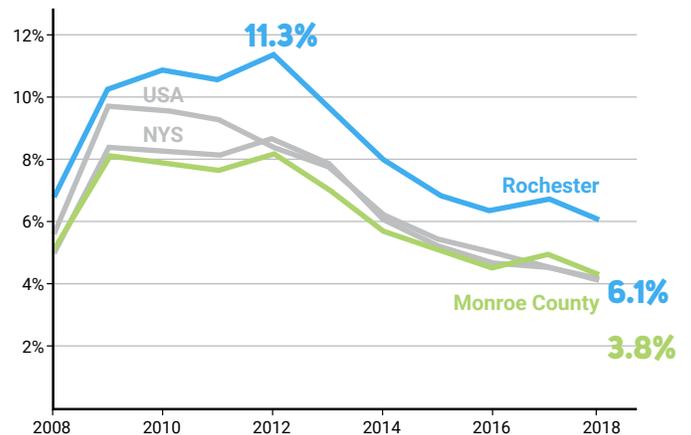
addition, 49% of this population was employed in the city, compared to slightly over 60% in suburban Monroe County. For the most accurate and up to date unemployment rate statistics, this section will refer to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. The city's 6.1% unemployment rate in June 2018 is higher than that of suburban Monroe County (3.8%), Monroe County (4.3%) the state of New York (4.2%), the United States (4.2%) and the Cities of Buffalo (5.9%)

Employment Status for Population 16 Years and Over

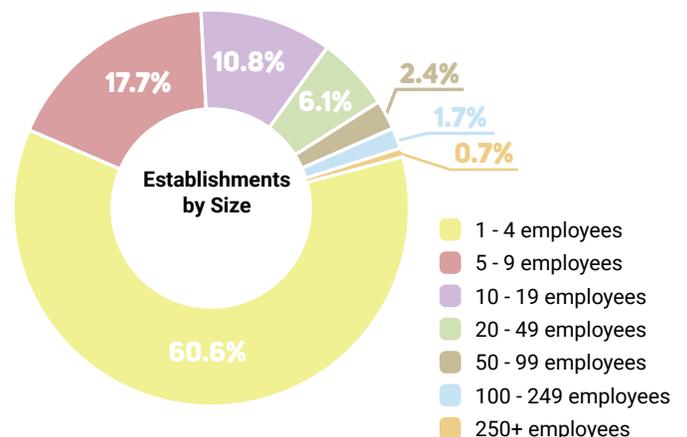


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

Unemployment Rates, Month of June



Source: Census Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics



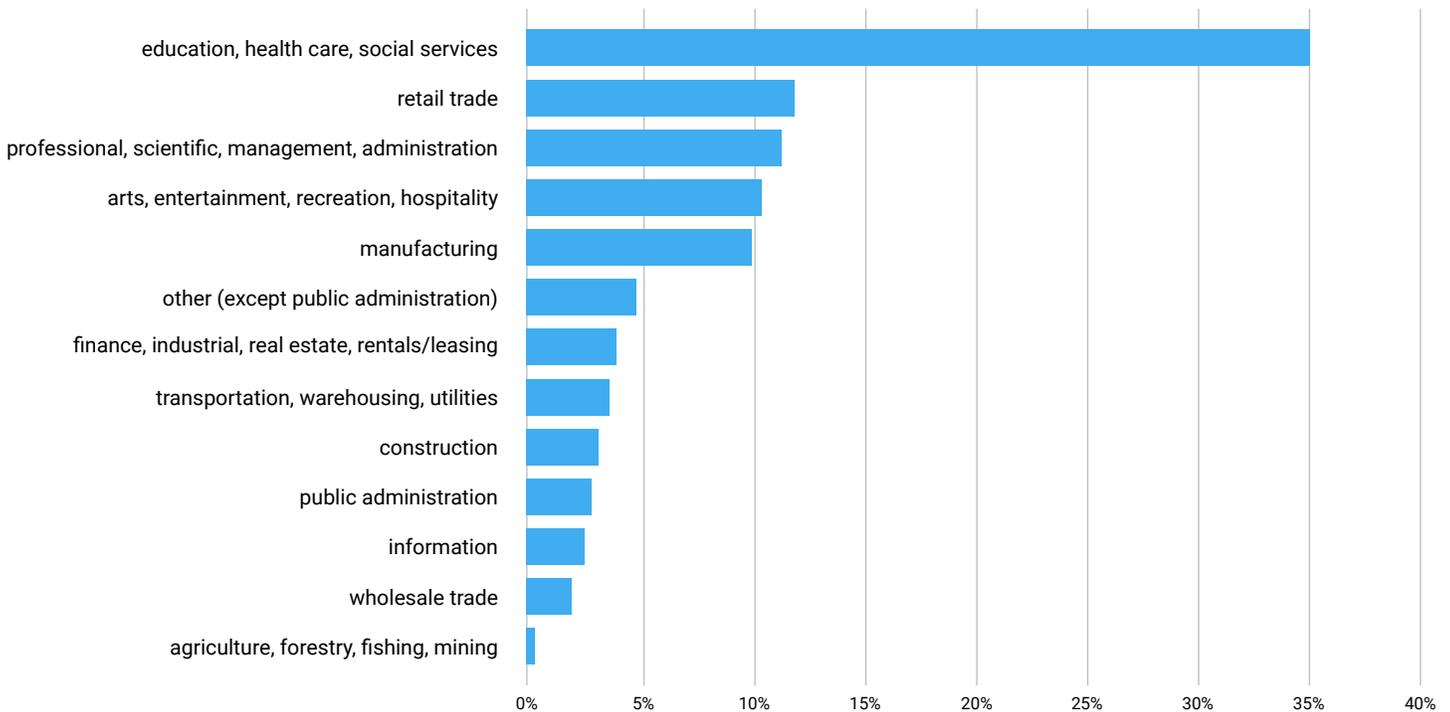
Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

and Syracuse (5.8%). The city's unemployment rate has declined steadily since 2012, but only in 2016 did it achieve a rate lower than it was prior to the great recession that began in 2008. The data suggests that even an improved economy will not cure employment disparities for city residents, and further strategies may be required to help Rochester residents get and maintain employment.

Of Rochester's employed population, 85% work for private sector organizations, 11% in government positions, and roughly 4% are self-employed. Rochester's top industry sector according to number of employees is 'Education, Health, and Social Services' by a wide margin. This industry is anchored by a large number of local universities and a growing health care field.

The data also highlights the decline of Rochester's former leading manufacturing industry, once led by industrial giants like Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch & Lomb. In 2018 the largest employers in the Rochester region are the University of Rochester, Rochester Regional Health, and Wegmans Food Markets, which collectively employ over 55,000 people. However, small businesses are the core of the Rochester's employment base. A majority (60.6%) of establishments in Rochester employ one to four people, while less than 1% employ over 250 people. The City of Rochester is home to over 15,700 companies.

Employment Status for Population 16 Years and Over

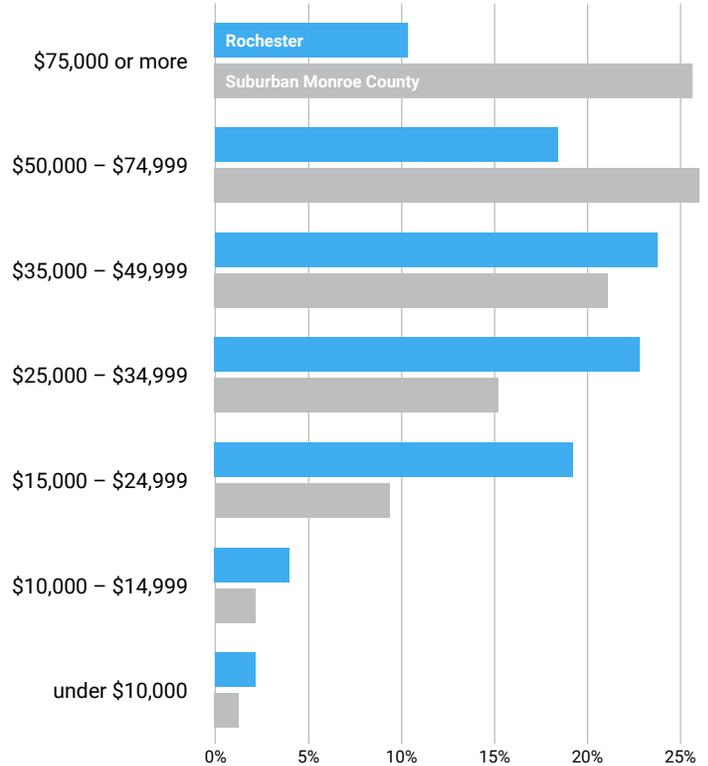


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

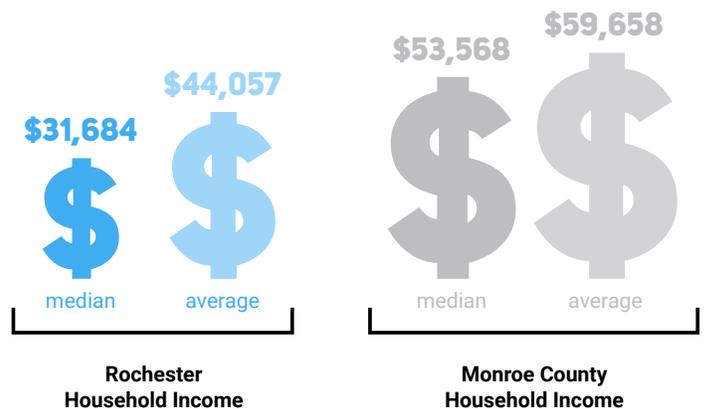
INCOME

Rochester residents have significantly lower median individual earnings and median household income, compared to suburban Monroe County and Monroe County as a whole. Rochester has a much higher proportion of workers in the low and middle earnings categories, as shown in the chart at right. Over a quarter (25.1%) of full-time earners in Rochester make less than \$25,000, compared to only 12.5% for their counterparts in suburban Monroe County. Census data estimates don't allow for calculation of median earning and income values for suburban Monroe County, but compared to Monroe County as a whole, the City of Rochester's median household income is 40.8% less. This disparity would be even larger if comparing to the median for suburban Monroe County. A good deal of this disparity is driven by Rochester's much higher prevalence of single-earner households compared to the suburban county, as discussed earlier. Rochester's median household income, however, is comparable to Buffalo and Syracuse.

Earnings in the Past 12-Months for Full-Time Workers

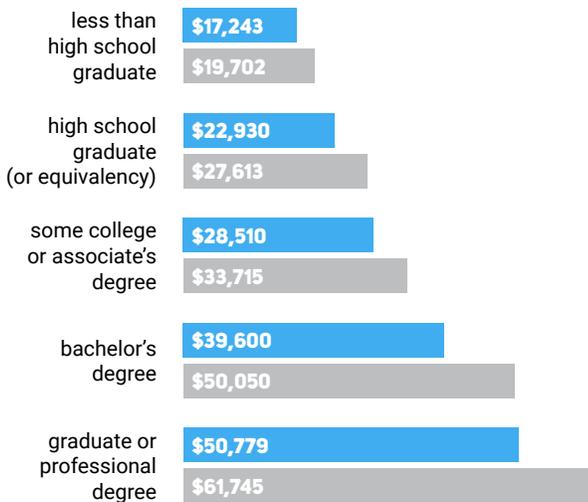


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

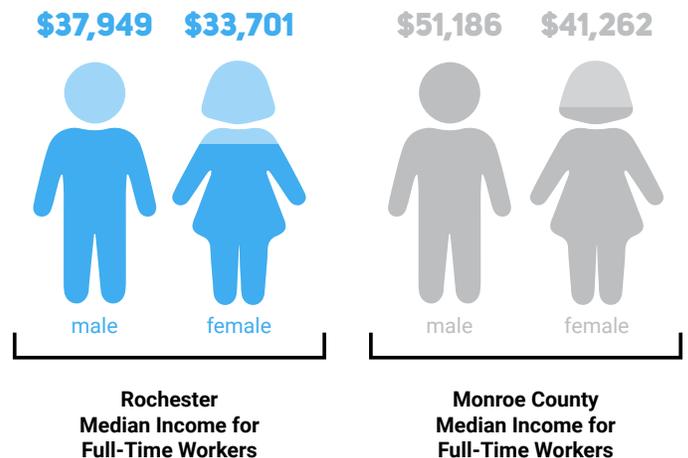


A common perception is that the earnings and income gaps between residents of the city and suburban county may be driven by the substantially lower levels of educational attainment in the city, as discussed earlier in this section. However, controlling for education levels, City of Rochester residents are still earning less than their counterparts of equal education levels in the suburban county. Median earnings for city residents are lower at every education level compared to the median earnings county-wide as shown below. The earnings gap is largest for the highest education levels, with Rochester residents median earnings about \$10,000 less than the county median for their counterparts. This data suggests that higher earners tend to choose to live in the suburbs, no matter their education level. It may also suggest some degree of discrimination on the part of employers related to the achievements of minority populations.

Median Earnings for Workers 25 or Older with Earnings



A good deal has been written about disparities in pay between men and women at both the national and local level. Despite improvements over the last two decades, earnings disparities still exist between male and female workers in Monroe County and Rochester. Male full time workers make more than their female counterparts when considering both the city and countywide median earnings. Interestingly, the gap in earnings is significantly smaller in the city compared to the countywide median.



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The Rochester metro area has some of the lowest home sale prices in the country, especially compared to large cities where housing prices are skyrocketing. Rochester is regularly included on lists of most affordable communities in which to live, such as Forbes. Homeownership is very attainable for households in Rochester with stable income and/or two income earners.

The city and county, however, show wide disparities in home values driven by long term depopulation and entrenched issues of concentrated poverty. Almost 65% of housing units in the city are valued below \$100,000, compared to just 20% of units in Monroe County. The city’s median home value is \$77,800, which is 45% lower than Monroe County’s (\$140,200).

Although the dollar amount of gross rent in Rochester (\$779) is significantly less expensive than for places like Boston (\$1,274) or New York City (\$1,297), median income in Rochester (\$31,684) is also much lower than those places – so much so that median gross rent eats up a significantly larger portion of median income in the City of Rochester than it does for some cities with much higher housing prices. The Rochester metro area is more affordable for renters on this metric than the city is, because it has

significantly higher median income (\$138,500) due to inclusion of higher earners in the suburbs, while median gross rent (\$821) is only slightly higher than the city’s. This continues to highlight the disparity in urban vs suburban income and housing affordability in our region.

Due to low incomes and high poverty rates, Rochester’s homeownership rate is quite low. Just over one third of households (36.4%) in the city were homeowners as of the latest Census ACS 5-Year 2016 estimates. Comparing to Suburban Monroe County where nearly three out of four households own their home, there is a stark disparity in homeownership rates. However, city residents who are able to purchase a home have relatively affordable housing costs.

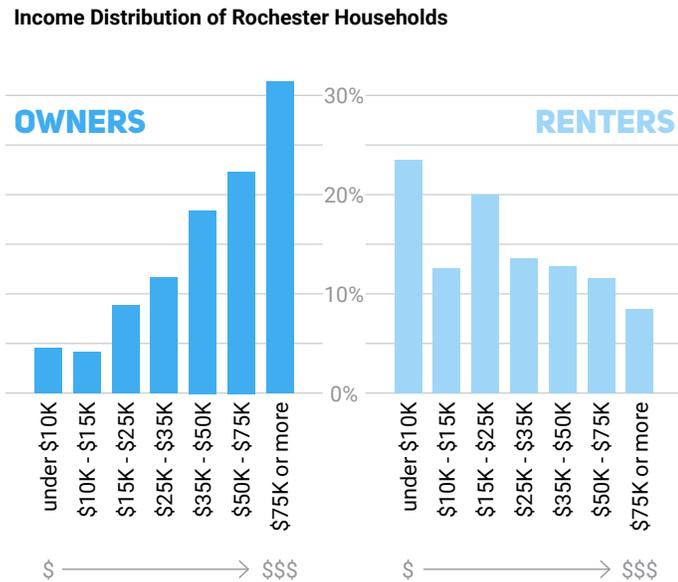
The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordability as spending no more than 30% of income on housing. For homeowners this includes a mortgage payment with principal, insurance, taxes, interest (PITI). Only one quarter of homeowners in Rochester spend more than 30% of their income on housing. While the city should further research and develop solutions to support the 25% of homeowners who

Comparative Housing Costs and Income Data

| | Rochester | Monroe County | New York City | Boston | San Francisco |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| Median Household Income | \$31,684 | \$53,568 | \$55,191 | \$58,516 | \$87,701 |
| Median Owner-Occupied Home Value | \$77,800 | \$140,200 | \$508,900 | \$423,200 | \$858,800 |
| Median Gross Rent | \$779 | \$843 | \$1,294 | \$1,369 | \$1,632 |
| Median Annual Rent | \$9,348 | \$10,116 | \$15,528 | \$16,428 | \$19,584 |
| Years of Median Household Income Needed to Purchase Median Value Owner-Occupied Home | 2.5 | 2.6 | 9.2 | 7.2 | 9.8 |
| Percent of Median Household Income Needed to Pay Median Gross Rent | 30% | 19% | 28% | 28% | 22% |

Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

Median Household Income and Cost Burden in Rochester

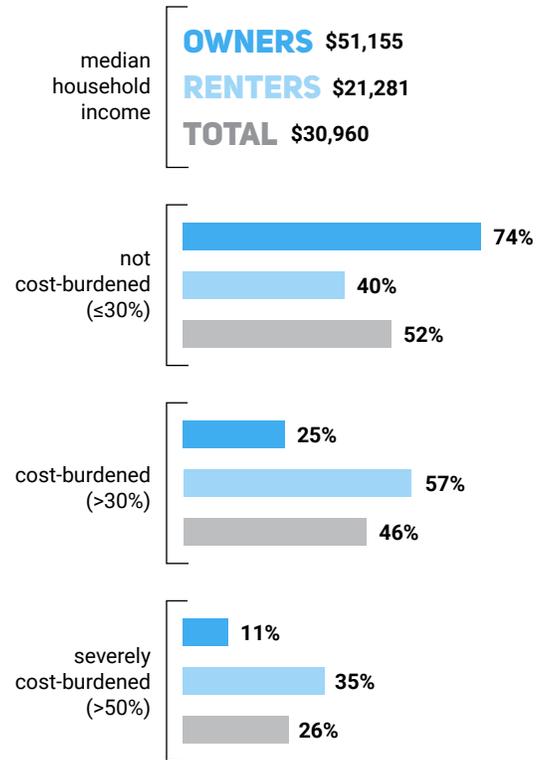


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

are “cost burdened” – a term that describes anyone paying more than 30% of their income on housing – this indicator suggests that most homeowners in the city enjoy stable, affordable housing.

Two thirds of city households (63.5%) are renters. Median gross rent in the city is \$779 and renter households have a much higher rate of housing cost burden than homeowners. Nearly 60% of renter households spend more than 30% of their annual household income on housing costs (contract rent plus utilities). This is primarily driven by the city’s high rates of poverty, low household incomes, and the fact that there is a pricing floor below which there are very few rentable apartments. As the table below shows, less than 15% of occupied rental units in Rochester have gross rents less than \$500.

Breaking households out by federally-defined HUD income bands, we see the greatest number of Rochester’s rental households are in the lowest income bands. Nearly 40% of Rochester’s rental households (20,237) earn 30% or less of area median income (AMI), which is a maximum of \$10,107 per year. This income band also has the worst rates of



Source: Census ACS 5-Year Estimates 2015 and HUD’s 2015 CHAS (released June 2018)

housing affordability, as more than 91% of these households are cost burdened.

Looking exclusively at households that have affordable rent levels helps illuminate the challenges in addressing housing affordability for the lowest income bands. Households below 50% of AMI (up to \$21,299 per year) would need to pay gross rent below \$500 to satisfy their affordability needs. These households make up nearly 58% of rental households in the city, but as noted above, fewer than 15% of occupied rental units have gross rents less than \$500 a month.

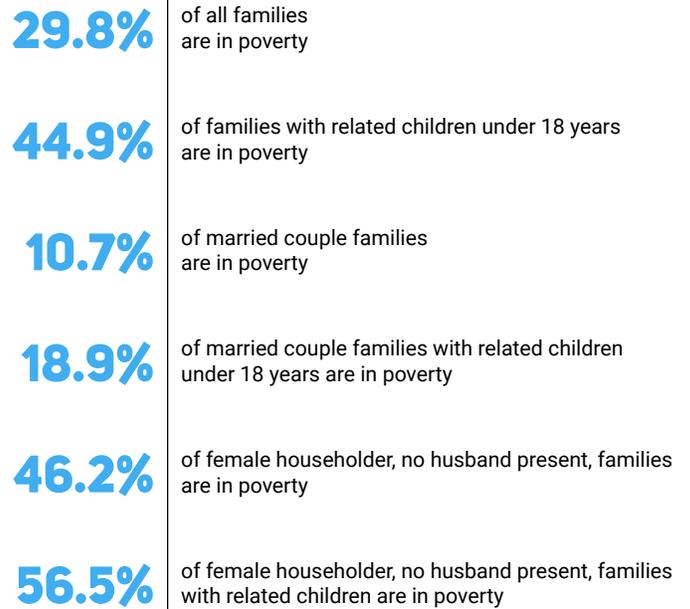
The housing market may not be able to satisfy the high need for affordable rents at the lowest rental price points due to limits on how cheaply units can be rented while still covering fixed costs of construction and operation. Without access to the enormous amount of subsidy that would be required to create tens of thousands of low-rent units, it is more realistic for the City to work on increasing incomes and other strategies to support these households. See [Initiative Area 3-Section A, Housing](#) for more information on the city’s housing market.

POVERTY

Low household incomes in the city translate to high poverty rates as shown in the bar chart below. Poverty is a measure designed to quantify a household’s ability to purchase their basic needs. A household’s poverty status is determined based on the number of individuals in the household and the total household income, and an income threshold updated annually by the federal government. For example, in 2018 a family of four must make at least \$25,100 or they are considered to be in poverty. Individuals who live in households in poverty are counted towards the total individuals in poverty. The poverty rate is the percentage of the total population in poverty. As of the latest Census American Community Survey data from 2016, over 32% of people in the city are living in poverty.

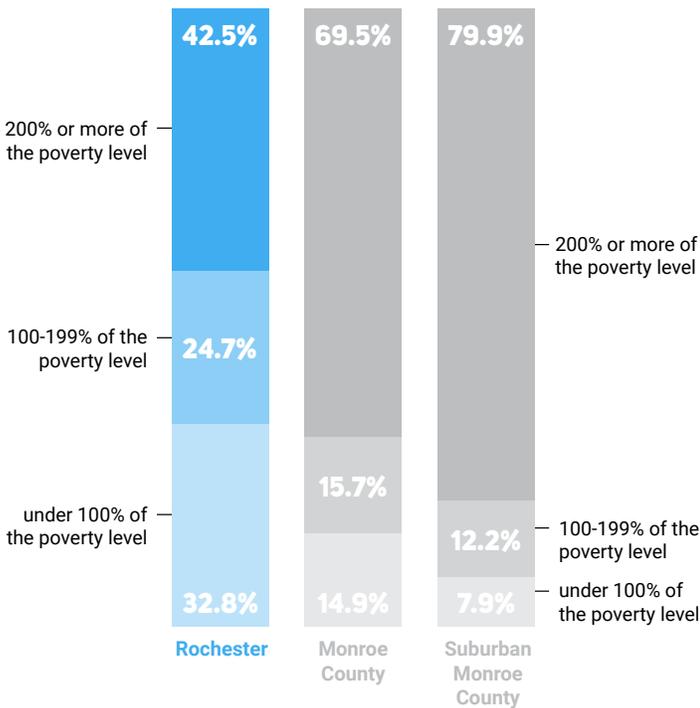
Certain family types have higher rates of poverty. Households with multiple children and only one income earner are extremely challenged to meet the poverty threshold. 56.5% of single-female headed family households are in poverty and account for 54% of the total population in poverty in the City of Rochester. Single-female headed households also account for 88% of children in poverty in the city. Married couple families are much less likely to be in poverty.

Poverty Rates by Family Type, Rochester



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

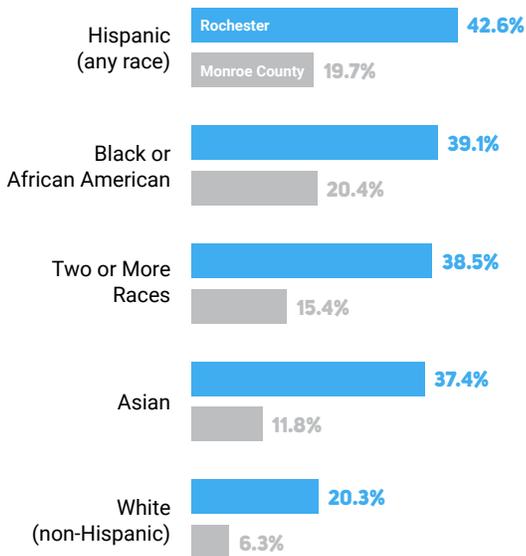
Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

As has been shown through extensive research nationally and locally, certain racial and ethnic groups also have higher poverty rates. Black and Hispanic individuals in the city are more than twice as likely to be in poverty as their non-Hispanic white counterparts. In the suburbs, they are more than three times as likely to be in poverty, while rates for both groups are substantially lower. Interestingly, whites in the City of Rochester have about the same poverty rate as black and Hispanic individuals in suburbs. These disparities in poverty rates by geography and race continue to underscore Rochester’s history of economic and racial segregation.

Poverty Rates by Race / Ethnicity

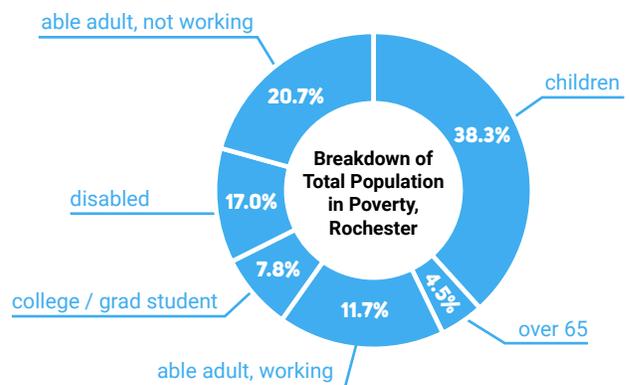


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

Breaking down the diverse population in poverty into sub-populations according to employability is valuable to help determine potential strategies that may be tailored specifically to their needs. Over 38% of people in poverty in the City of Rochester are children. While it is critical to support children’s health and educational opportunities, children’s poverty status can only be impacted by increasing the income and employment of the adults in their household.

Another 17% of the population are adults that have a disability, 7.8% are currently in college or graduate school, and 4.5% are over age 65. These individuals may be able to work, but may face barriers that require strategies to address them that are more difficult and nuanced. The remaining 32.8% (21,711) of people in poverty are considered ‘able bodied’ adults, and do not appear to have major physical or lifecycle barriers to employment. These individuals are potential targets for traditional workforce development strategies.

Approximately 17,139 children in poverty live in households headed by an ‘able adult’. Combining able adults and their children together, this group makes up 58% of people in poverty who could potentially be impacted by traditional workforce development strategies.



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Public Microdata Sample

POVERTY CONTINUED

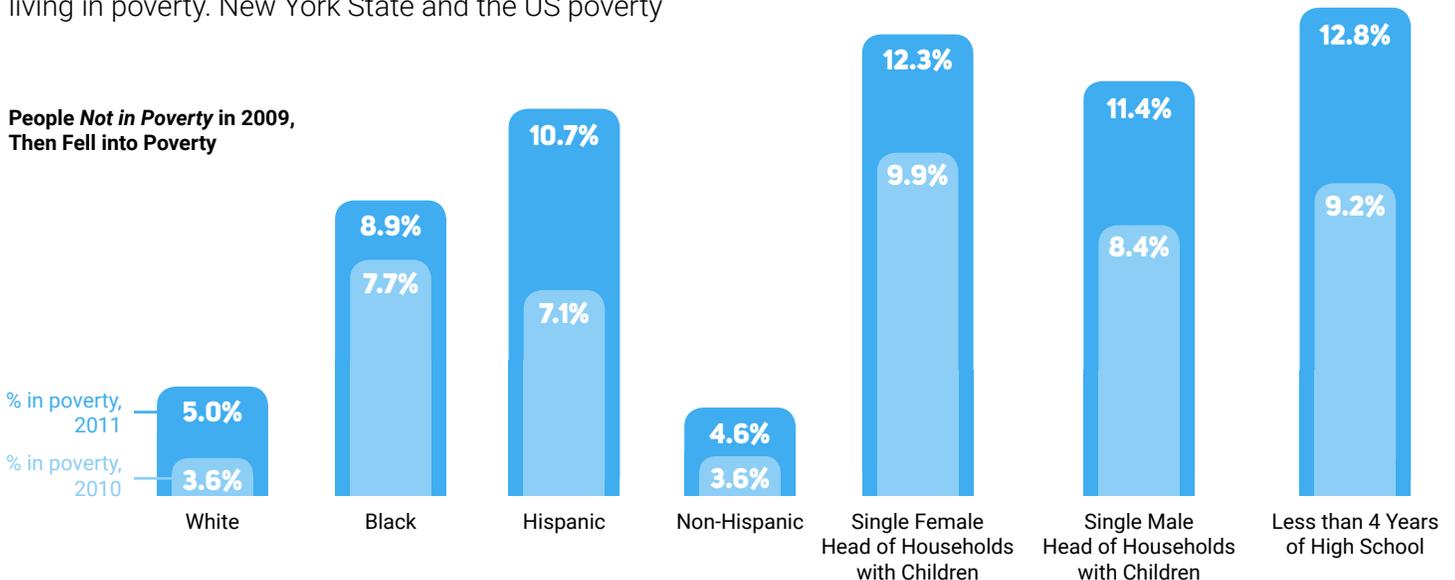
The federal poverty threshold is a low standard, and many households with incomes that place them out of poverty are still not self-sufficient. These households still rely on public benefits and government programming to afford many basic needs, goods, and services. These families also do not have the disposable income to save money, build wealth, or advance up the socioeconomic ladder. Households that have earnings between poverty and self-sufficiency can end up falling into poverty when minor life crises spin out of control. For example, deferred maintenance on a car can lead to a breakdown, causing a person to be late for work, and getting them fired from their job. Without income, that household would potentially be put into poverty. Of people in poverty, about 35.4% will be out of poverty within two years. The median length of stay in poverty is 6.2 months, 8.2 months for minority groups. This more dynamic understanding of the fluctuations of poverty for individuals and families is important to help policymakers and service providers address these issues.

Despite these severe poverty issues in the city, Monroe County as a whole is on par with national and state poverty averages, with 14.9% of people living in poverty. New York State and the US poverty

rates are 15.5% and 15.1%, respectively. What sets the Rochester metro area apart is its concentration of poverty in the city in relation to the surrounding suburbs, another measure of geographic income inequality and segregation. While the City of Rochester accounts for only 28.1% of the population in the County, it accounts for 61.4% of the County's people in poverty. The poverty rate for suburban Monroe County is only 7.9%.

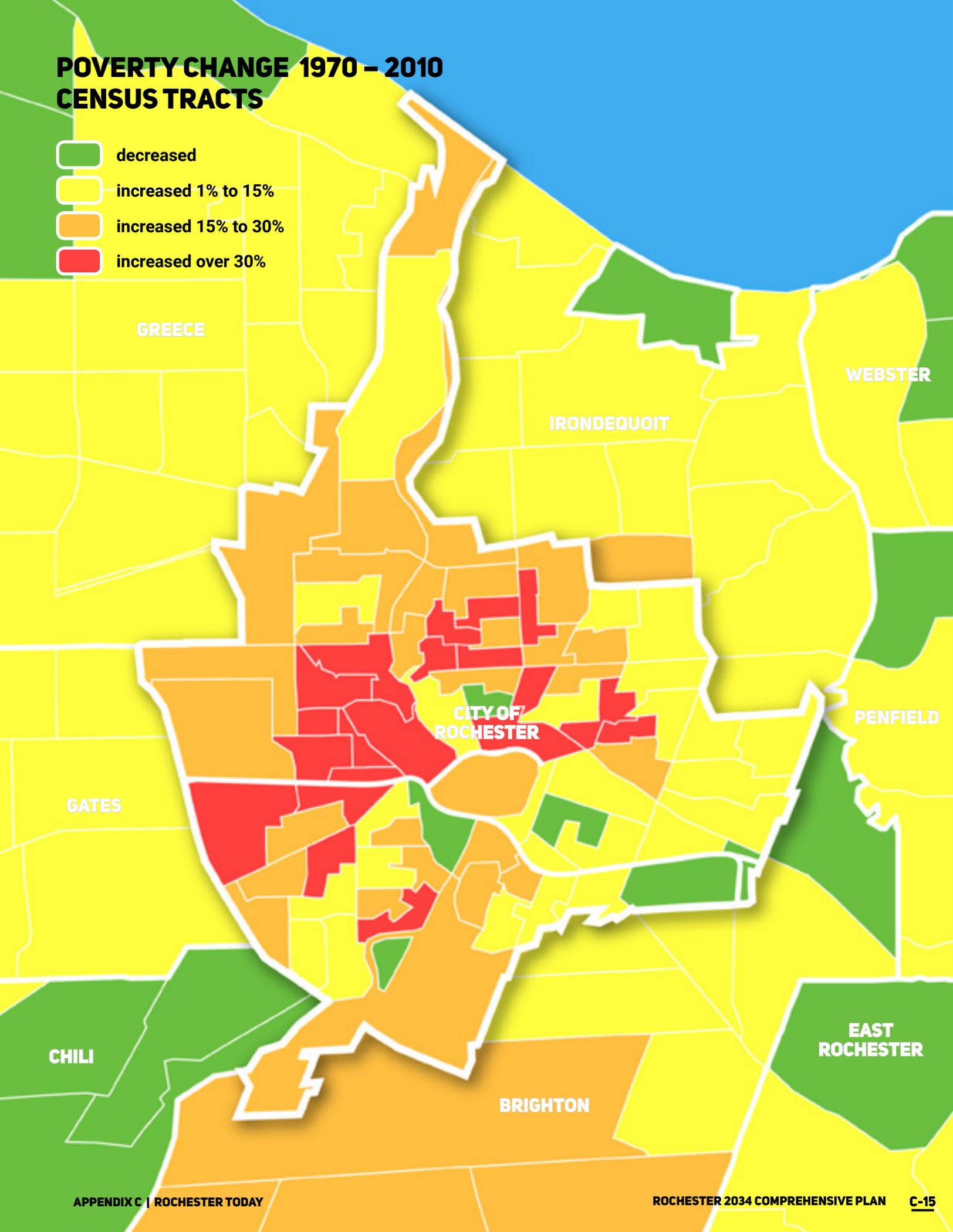
In 1970, Rochester had only two census tracts over 30% poverty rate, compared to 34 in 2010, an increase of 1600%. According to 2016 Census data, the population of these 34 census tracts is 83.4% minority (non-white and/or Hispanic), and have a collective poverty rate of over 48%. Eighteen of these 34 tracts saw dramatic increases in poverty rate over 30% between 1970 and 2010. None of Rochester's tracts that have ever eclipsed 30% poverty rate since 1970 have rebounded to under 15% poverty rate. Of city census tracts that have ever eclipsed 15% poverty, only three have rebounded to be under 15% by 2016. These tracts include a portion of the Swillburg neighborhood, a portion of the ABC Streets neighborhood, and 'the Triangle' portion of North Winton Village.

People Not in Poverty in 2009, Then Fell into Poverty



POVERTY CHANGE 1970 – 2010 CENSUS TRACTS

- decreased
- increased 1% to 15%
- increased 15% to 30%
- increased over 30%



GREECE

WEBSTER

IRONDEQUOIT

CITY OF ROCHESTER

PENFIELD

GATES

CHILI

EAST ROCHESTER

BRIGHTON