Wyandanch

Community Advisory Board

In This Newsletter

Upcoming Events

October 6th, 10:30 AM: Wyandanch Fall Job Fair at the Gerald Ryan Outreach Center

October 14th, 10:30 AM: Solar Eclipse viewing at the public library

October 30th, 3:00 pm: Halloween party at the public library

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New York State Children's Environmental Health Centers

LONG ISLAND

Wyandanch At-a-Glance: U.S. Census Data

By Zachary Lee and Benjamin Lee, Roslyn High School, Wyandanch CAB interns
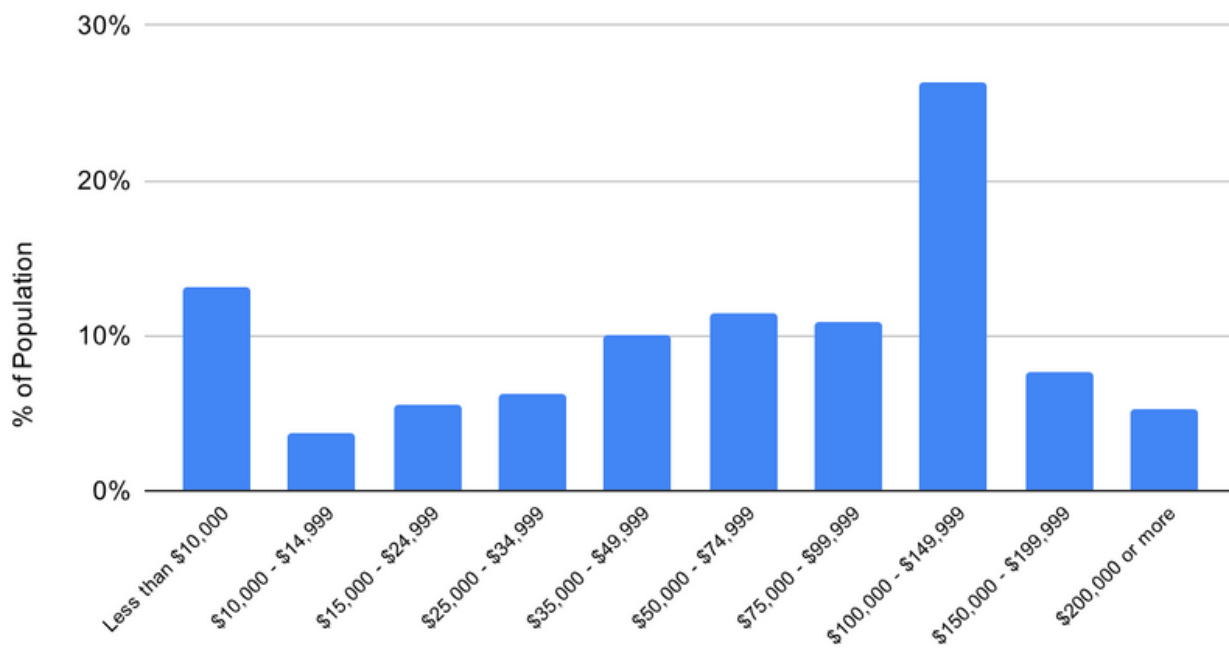

Census data can reveal trends in communities, data correlations, and forecasts of future events. For example, census data may show an increasing median age that also corresponds with an increase in median income. Or data can reveal sudden changes in food insecurity; declines in food security can create ripples throughout the community such as declines in high school graduation rates. While data is necessary, analysis and interpretation of that data is just as important. This newsletter covers some important statistics regarding Wyandanch. This review is part of the Wyandanch CAB's commitment to understanding the social determinants of health – a broad range of social and environmental factors that have significant impacts on personal health outcomes in any community.

Income

One of the most important attributes of health is household income. In the United States, people who are healthier tend to have more money. Median household income in 2021 for Wyandanch is lower than nearby Amityville or Suffolk County. Suffolk has a median household income of $111,660, while the median household income

Wyandanch Income by Bracket. Source: US Census Bureau (2021)

in Wyandanch is $75,216, which is comparable to the rest of New York State ($75,157). In Wyandanch, 26.3% of families have incomes in the $100,000 - $149,999 bracket. The second largest bracket of income (13.1% of families) is less than $10,000. The graph above illustrates these variations in household income.

Census data reveals that the percentage of residents living in poverty jumped from 15.3% to 25.1%, since 2010. This jump in poverty coincides with a 5.3% decrease in the number of high school graduates, since 2010. The U.S. Census data also shows that median household income increased from $54,052 to $75,216, since 2010. If poverty and median household income both increased, then others are making more money, driving up median income. Additionally, the COVID pandemic may have increased poverty rates in Wyandanch and worsened income disparities in the community, however, we did not investigate this.

COVID was not just a public health crisis; it was also an economic crisis. Higher rates of inflation – for food, housing, etc. – reduces "real" income levels. Across Long Island, 29% of families struggle to afford these basic needs, according to United Way. **Armed with this information, Suffolk County and New York State should develop targeted programs to assist families that have recently experienced a surge in poverty** throughout the county and New York State.

Food Security

Similar to the income gap, food insecurity in Wyandanch is a serious issue. Children who are food insecure have an increased chance of being obese. **Factors that lead to obesity include sleep patterns; insufficient physical activity; the social determinants of health; household stress; limited access to supermarkets; and a diet rich in processed and energy dense foods, often found at local convenience stores and fast-food restaurants.**

The percentage of households which received food aid in 2021 was 35.5%, and among households with children under the age of 18, the percentage was 13.5%. Food insecurity in Wyandanch is a priority issue

for the Wyandanch CAB. Between the years 2010 and 2021, the percentage of households receiving food aid increased 21.1%; it more than doubled in the 11-year timespan.

When factoring in economic aid, the percentage of Wyandanch households who received economic and nutritional aid is 47.6%, nearly half of all Wyandanch households. The percentage of households receiving economic and nutritional aid in nearby Amityville is 6.2%. In Suffolk County 11.2% of households received this aid. The New York State percentage was 25.8%. **More people on Long Island need to understand and create strategies to reduce these disparities.** Even though median income increased in Wyandanch, unmet food and economic needs also increased. More data is needed on this critical issue. Food needs to be locally available that is nutritious and affordable. **Given the increases in food insecurity in Wyandanch, county, state, and federal officials should be mobilizing additional resources to understand and address its causes.** These problems are state- and nation-wide.

Food Aid

Adult: **35.5%**   Children: **13.5%**

Left: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN's World Food Day 2017 third place poster winner.
Above: Food aid in Wyandanch (2021) (created by Benjamin and Zachary Lee).

Population

The population of Wyandanch has slowly increased from 1960 to 2021, as shown in the graph on the next page. The local population in 1960 was 6,930. The population continued to rise until it reached 13,215 in 1980. Population then declined to 8,950 in 1990. Since 1990, the total population in Wyandanch has increased up to 13,598 people in 2021.

From 2010 to 2021, the population of Wyandanch increased from 11,647 to 13,598. The Town of Babylon saw its population increase from 213,654 to 217,796, and Suffolk County increased from 1,482,548 to 1,522,998 people. From the U.S. Census data we also learned that Wyandanch residents have gotten older, with the median age increasing from 30.7 to 37.2 from 2010 to 2021.
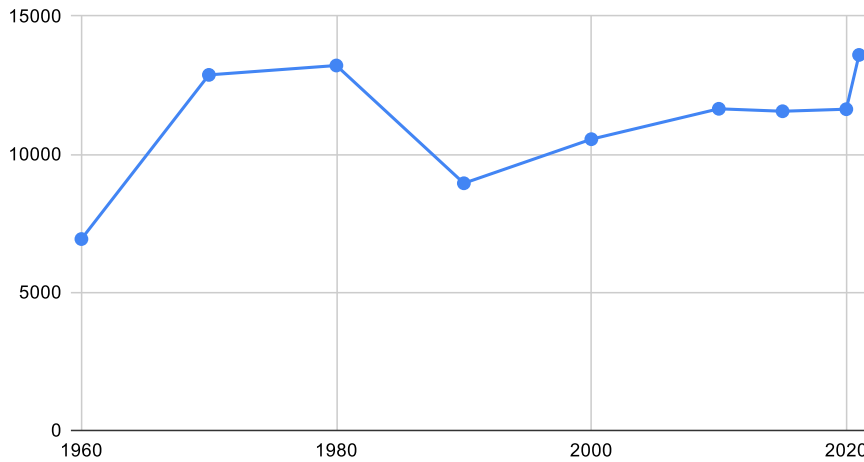
Wyandanch	Babylon Town	Suffolk County
13,598 ↑	217,796 ↑	1,522,998 ↑
11,647	213,654	1,482,548

Wyandanch Population (1960-2021)

Top: Changes in Wyandanch, Babylon and Suffolk populations from 2010-2021.
Bottom: Wyandanch population from 1960-2021. (created by Ben and Zach Lee)

Conclusion

Throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data, we gained valuable insights into the dynamics of Wyandanch. We share this data in the hopes that policy makers can use this information to improve local lives.

We also want students to take time to understand that information from the U.S. Census Bureau can be an important tool for youth empowerment and tackling problems like food insecurity.

Seeing other students conduct research on this topic within other communities would not only improve knowledge on the functioning of communities, but also expose young people to issues and information that they may not encounter otherwise. This data can be used to bring awareness to certain issues, which can be addressed by the local government and other organizations. As stated previously, programs can be put in place in areas such as Wyandanch to help those in need.

Wyandanch's population is aging and needs greater access to healthcare resources. However, the current healthcare system in America is very expensive. **With more data and research, a better system can be designed to suit the needs of changing communities across Long Island.** It is also concerning to see the percentage of high school graduates has declined and this correlates with an increase in food insecurity in Wyandanch. Further research needs to be done on this topic. We hope our research can raise awareness about these problems in Wyandanch and other communities, prompting change and progress.

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Page 1 graphic:https://drawingchange.com/gathering-wisdom-visuals-for-a-healthy-future/
Page 3 graphic: https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/wfd_contest/img/2017/large_IMG_7511.JPG