

## CHAPTER 2: WHO WE ARE





Understanding who Warren County residents are today – and who Warren County's residents could be tomorrow - is critical for shaping this Plan, as demographics directly impact long-term planning for services, infrastructure, and economic development. With an aging population, the needs of older residents will drive decisions on healthcare, housing, and transportation as an example. Stagnating population growth highlights the need to attract new residents, young families and a more diverse workforce to sustain the local economy. Addressing these demographic trends will ensure the County can effectively allocate resources, support economic vitality, and enhance quality of life for all residents. This information helps prioritize strategies for growth, equity, and community resilience.

## POPULATION

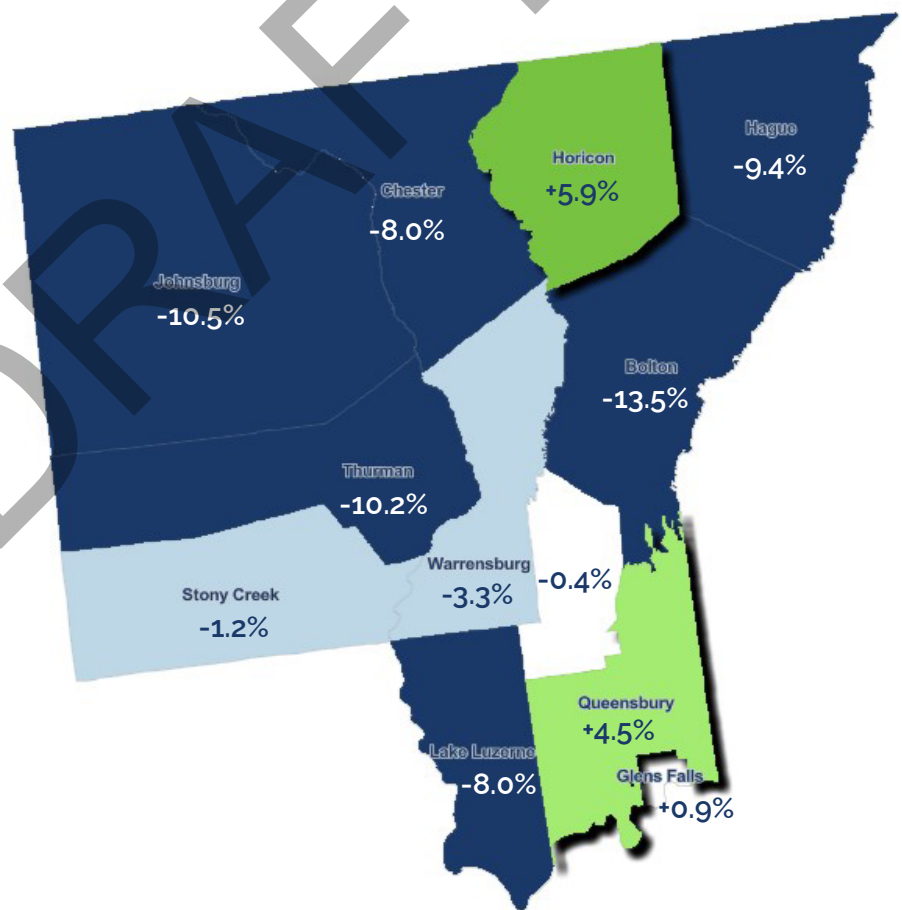
State and national rural population trends are evident in Warren County, with growth slowing dramatically in recent decades. After a history of relatively steady increases, including rapid growth between 1830 and 1890 and again between 1960 and 1980, the pace of growth has stagnated entirely, with only 30 new residents added to the County's population between the 2010 and 2020 Censuses. The 2020 Census lists the County's population as 65,737.

When looking at population at the municipal level, varying trends emerge: the County's largest town, Queensbury, increased in population between 2010 and 2020 by about 5%, or 1,268 people. The population in the City of Glens Falls held steady, with an increase of just under 1%. The "up-County" rural towns within the Adirondack Park mostly declined in population.

Warren County's population stagnation mirrors broader trends. Between 2010 and 2020, the United States experienced its slowest growth since the 1930s, with over half of all counties losing population. In New York State, the overall growth of 4% was concentrated in a handful of counties, as 75% of upstate counties lost population or remained flat. Notably, some Capital Region counties, including Saratoga (up 7.2%), Schenectady, Albany, and Rensselaer, did grow, reflecting the national trend of urban areas gaining population while rural areas hold steady or decline.

Looking ahead, population projections through 2040 from the Cornell Program on Applied Demographics suggest that Warren County's population will decline (to 62,314), while the Capital Region and NYS will experience slight increases in population. Specifically, Warren County's population is projected to decline by 3% between 2020 and 2030, with an additional 2% decline from 2030 to 2040. That being said, other external factors, such as climate change, migration, and the growth of the Capital Region chip fabrication industries, could reverse some of these projections if housing availability improves.

## POPULATION CHANGE, 2010-2020



The County's population growth has slowed over time, with declines projected, but there are opportunities to capture some of the growth occurring in the larger Capital Region.

## AGE

Compared to other counties in Upstate New York, Warren County's population is old and getting older. As of the 2020 Census, the median age of Warren County is 47.5, with significant increases in the County's median age since 1990. This demographic shift has significant implications. For the first time between the 2010 and 2020 Censuses, Warren County recorded a higher percentage of seniors (23.2%) than children (17.8%). The aging population, coupled with stagnant overall population growth, underscores a decline in the County's youth population.

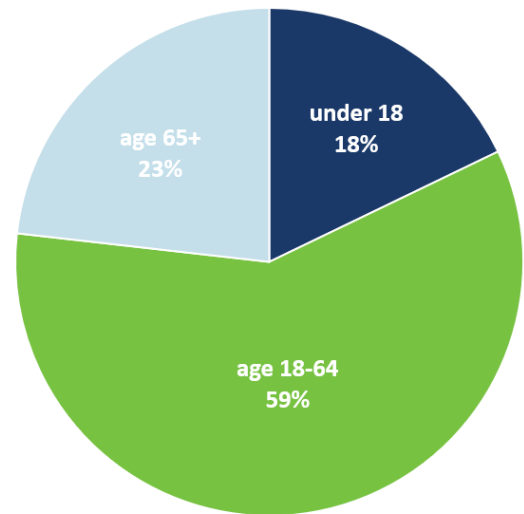
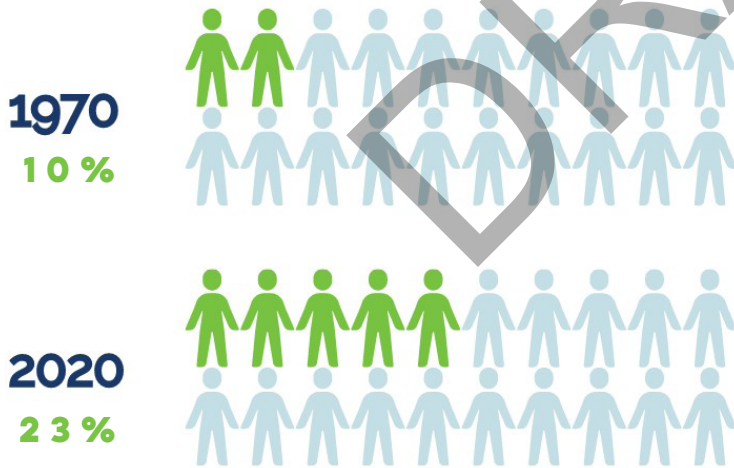
From Warren County to New York to the United States as a whole, the population is aging, largely due to the Baby Boomers, who started turning 65 in 2011. The increase

in older population is especially pronounced in rural America, with over a fifth of the rural population in the country over the age of 65. While both the State and US populations are aging, Warren County's population is especially old. Warren County (median age 47.5) is tied for fourth oldest county in the State and is in the top fifth of oldest counties in the country.

At the municipal level in Warren County, the aging of the population is especially stark. In 2020, Glens Falls was the municipality with the lowest median age (39.6), which is still higher than the median age of both New York State (39.0) and the country as a whole (38.8). In Hague, the municipality with the highest median age in the County (61.8), over half of everyone living in the town is over the age of 60. Even Queensbury, the County's fastest growing town, has a median age of 47.4.

A disproportionately large increase in older residents coincides with a significant decline in the County's youth population. Warren County has 4.3% fewer children, and in many municipalities the decline in the youth population is much greater than the County average. For example, the Town of Bolton has three times as many seniors than it does children, with over 30% of the population aged 65+ and only 10% under age 18. In Hague, Horicon, and Lake George, fewer than 15% of the population are children. This decline in the youth population is impacting the County's schools: school enrollment across Warren County decreased by almost double the 2012-2022 statewide enrollment rate over the same period.

### Population Over Age 65



### Aging Population



41% of survey respondents cited the County's aging population as the biggest challenge facing Warren County.

## HOUSEHOLDS

Household size is a key demographic indicator that shapes housing needs and reflects broader population trends affecting the County. As of 2022, the average household size in Warren County was 2.2 persons per household, smaller than the national average household size of 2.5 persons per household. The average household size in both the County and nation is projected to decrease through 2027. Within the County, the average household size is smallest in Bolton, at 2.0 persons per household, and largest in Stony Creek, at 2.5 persons per household. As discussed in Chapter 5, "Our Built Environment," the small - and continuing to decline - household size is a driving factor in the County's housing issues, among other things.

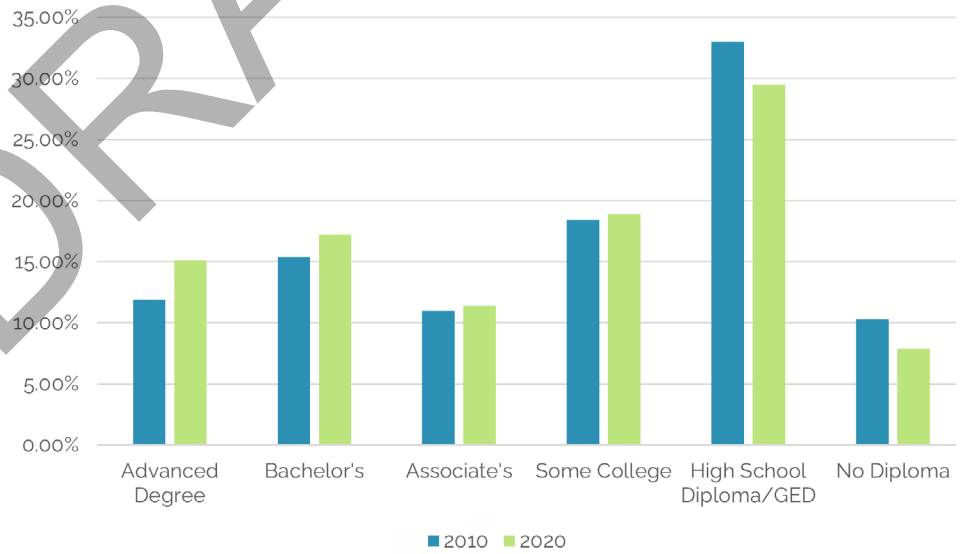
Household Size 

1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
3	2.78	2.58	2.41	2.32	2.22



## EDUCATION

Educational attainment can be a useful measure of a region's workforce readiness, economic potential, and overall quality of life. Over the past ten years, the percentage of Warren County residents over 25 that have post-high school degrees has increased - including the percentage with Associate's, Bachelor's, and Advanced Degrees. In total, the percentage of Warren County residents with post-high school degrees has increased from 38.3 percent to 43.7 percent. Relatedly, the percentage of Warren County residents with less than a high school diploma or equivalent has declined over the same ten-year period from 10.3 percent to 7.9 percent. This is a lower percentage than State-wide: 12.8 percent of NY State residents over 25 have less than a high school diploma.



## GENDER & RACE

The County's gender ratio has remained relatively stable from 2010 to 2020 – 49.1 percent of the population is male; 50.9 is female – with a slight increase in the overall male percentage (from 48.8) and a slight decrease in the female percentage (from 51.2) over the ten-year period.

Warren County remains predominantly White: in 2020, the County's population was 90.2 percent White. However, there has been a modest trend towards increasing diversity, reflected in the almost five percent decline in the County's White population between 2010 and 2020.

## INCOME & COST OF LIVING

The 2023 median household income in Warren County was \$73,802, representing a 43 percent increase since 2010. The County's median household income remains less than that of New York State as a whole (\$82,095) and grew at a slightly lower rate than the State's median income. Between 2010 and 2023, the percentage of the County's families that were below the Federal Poverty Level increased slightly from 5.5 percent to 5.7 percent.

Compared to the rest of NYS, transportation costs for residents in the County are particularly high. Although adequate access to vehicles is often the most important consideration for workforce transportation in rural areas, there are other transportation factors which influence an individual's ability to get and keep a job. These can include the cost of gas, vehicle maintenance, and insurance. Collectively, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has consolidated these factors into the Transportation Cost Burden (TCB), which quantifies transportation costs as a percentage of income of the typical household for the region. All Warren County communities, with the exception of Glens Falls and portions of Queensbury, are above the 50th percentile for TCBs, when compared to NY State. The northwestern communities of Johnsbury, Thurman, and Sony Creek have the highest TCB in the County (80th to 90th percentile, when compared to NYS).

## HEALTH

Population trends are directly shaping health outcomes in Warren County. With a higher median age compared to state and national averages, the County faces increasing impacts of chronic diseases like cancer and

cardiovascular conditions. This demographic shift contributes to higher hospitalization and death rates, which have both trended upward in recent years. Based on data from the County's Health Improvement Plan, from 2017–2019, Warren County had a death rate of 1,157.3 per 100,000 exceeded the Upstate average of 916.2 during the same period. However, when compared to State and National "Health Outcomes" as developed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Warren County is faring slightly worse than the NY State average, but better than the average county in the nation.

Efforts by organizations like the Adirondack Health Institute (AHI) and Albany Medical Center, as well as Warren County Public Health, emphasize the need to expand community-based health services and preventive care initiatives. These include managing chronic diseases, promoting tobacco cessation, and addressing asthma and diabetes, all crucial in improving long-term health outcomes in Warren County. These factors underline the importance of local initiatives and coordinated efforts to adapt healthcare delivery to the County's aging population and evolving needs.

Warren County Health Outcomes - 2024

