

# Is Upstate New York Like Appalachia?

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*Key statistics and trends*

The Public Policy Institute of New York State  
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# Is Upstate like Appalachia?

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- Recent economic and social trends in Appalachia have generally been more positive than those in Upstate
- We're still doing better on some key measures – such as education and poverty rates
- But even there, the gap is narrowing



# What exactly is ‘Appalachia’?

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- As it was outlined by Congress in the 1960s, the region includes:
  - All of West Virginia, and parts of 12 other states: AL, GA, KY, MD, MS, NY, NC, OH, PA, SC, TN and VA
- The part of New York that Congress included incorporates 14 counties along and abutting the Southern Tier



# Officially, three sub-regions

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- Southern Appalachia enjoyed strong growth in the 1990s, as did the South in general
- Northern Appalachia (including NY) did less well; counties in adjoining PA generally did better than those here
- Central Appalachia (including WV) continues to face tough challenges

# Population

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- From 1990 to 2000:
  - Appalachia's population rose 9.1%
  - Upstate's rose only 1.1%
  - Excluding the Hudson Valley, Upstate *lost* population during the '90s
  - Even Central (poorest) Appalachia grew 6%, much more than Upstate

# Population, cont.

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- People are moving into Appalachia: A net gain of more than 700,000 from internal U.S. migration in the 1990s
- Upstate, people are moving out: A net loss of more than 400,000 from 1990-2002
- However, *international* immigration helps Upstate more than Appalachia



# Jobs

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- ❑ Total employment in Upstate rose 0.2% in 2005.
- ❑ Eleven of 12 Appalachian states did better (most, *far* better)
- ❑ West Virginia, the heart of Appalachia, produced new jobs at a rate of 1.4%
- ❑ Matching West Virginia would have meant 36,000 more jobs across Upstate

# Wages

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- Average annual wages in Appalachian New York (just over \$40,000) are higher than the Appalachian median (\$29,000)
- Our technology businesses help produce those higher salaries; Binghamton/ Johnson City is a leading “tech cluster” in Appalachia
- Others are Greenville/Spartanburg, NC; Huntsville, AL; and Pittsburgh



# Poverty

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- ❑ Poverty in Upstate New York is lower than in Appalachia: 11% compared to 13.6%, in 2000
- ❑ West Virginia's poverty rate in 2003 was 16.3%; no Upstate county came close (St. Lawrence was highest, at 15.2%)
- ❑ Still, Upstate's poverty rate rose during the 1990s, while Appalachia's declined



# Personal income

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- Average incomes are *lower* in Appalachian New York (\$24,080 in 2002) than elsewhere in the region (\$25,470)
- Excluding transfer payments (Social Security, pensions, disability, etc.), the disparity is even greater
- Appalachian New York (and all Upstate) need good jobs to raise incomes

# Education

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- Appalachian New York is better educated: 83% of residents are high-school grads, 21% finished college
- In Appalachia, 77% and 18%, respectively
- Again, though, gaps are narrowing: In 1980, we were up 11% (rather than 6%) in high-school graduates

# Further information

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- Appalachian Regional Commission,  
[www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)
- Public Policy Institute of New York State,  
[www.ppiny.org](http://www.ppiny.org)
- Brookings Institution reports on Upstate,  
[www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu) (search for “Upstate”)