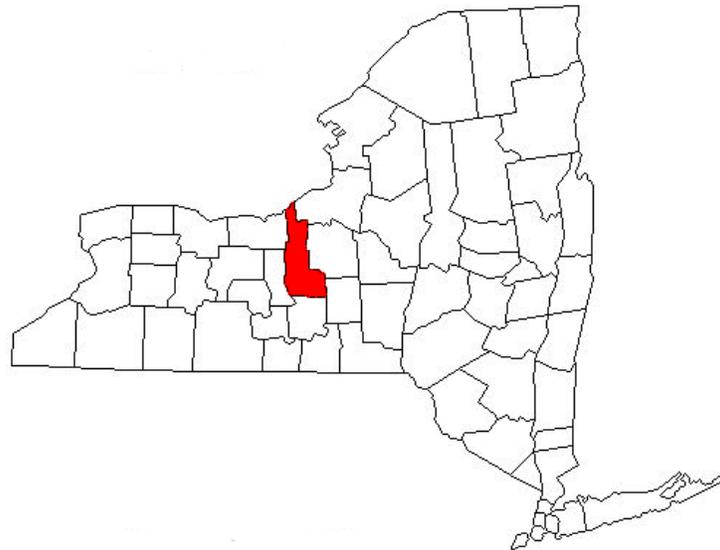


# **CAYUGA COUNTY**

**COVID-19 Community Task Force**



**Community Assessment Interim Report  
July 15, 2020**

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# Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force

Community Assessment Interim Report - July 15, 2020

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated Cayuga County's pre-existing opioid crisis and has resulted in a secondary financial crisis that continues to evolve. The cost of COVID-19 to County residents, businesses, nonprofits and government is substantial and growing. The picture looks similar across the state for New York's counties at a time when community needs are elevated among distressed households.

Cayuga County mobilized quickly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. Our community's resilience has been demonstrated throughout crisis response and will be essential during recovery efforts. It would be impossible to capture all the ways people have rallied to help those in need. Our educators, businesses, churches, nonprofits, municipal workers, farmers, medical providers, public safety officers, dispatchers, local media and concerned citizens are finding new and creative ways to connect and support each other.

Our County may be better positioned for economic growth post-COVID-19 than before the pandemic. Open spaces, abundant freshwater resources, prime agricultural soils, access to major markets, transportation infrastructure, world-class medical care and education, performing arts and artists, rich rural and cultural heritage – are attractive and marketable amenities in a post-COVID-19 world and key ingredients to our success. How do we as a County leverage and strengthen our economic assets to attract homebuyers, remote workers, business and investment to our community post-COVID-19? Concurrently, how does the County respond to growing needs of our residents and businesses during the secondary financial crisis?

The pandemic is driving conversations around reimagining government and service delivery post-COVID-19. Telemedicine is increasing access to health care. Education and entertainment are expanding online. Consumer patterns and vacation plans are changing. Birthdays are being celebrated with car and boat parades. People are getting back to basics - baking bread, planting gardens, sewing masks, sharing resources. Jobs have been lost and gained. Life goes on in Cayuga County although it looks a little different and continues to change.

This report was authorized by the Cayuga County Legislature in partnership with the United Way of Cayuga County to create an enhanced response to the evolving coronavirus pandemic. It provides underlying context for policymakers, community organizations, businesses and residents in Cayuga County to better understand COVID-19 impacts, community needs and service gaps. The report may be used to drive further discussion around new collaborations and service delivery models, to secure funding and resources to help local residents and businesses and to position the County to prosper through recovery efforts in post-COVID-19 world. The Task Force recognizes the need for on-going public feedback on this assessment and its recommendations and will extend an open invitation to the broader community for commentary via email: [taskforce@unitedwayofcayugacounty.org](mailto:taskforce@unitedwayofcayugacounty.org) upon official public release.

## Key Recommendations Include:

### Reopen Safely

- Enhance Crisis Communication between County, Nonprofits and Businesses

### Enhance Service Delivery

- Implement 211 Pilot Project Targeting Highest Needs
- Establish HSC Exchange to Facilitate Information Sharing Across the Service Provider Network
- Plan Strategically Across the Network of Service Providers

### Advance Sustainable Solutions

- Reimagine and Re-Energize the Cayuga County Youth Bureau Board
- Strategically Address Homeless and Housing Vulnerability
- Develop Living Wage Employment & Training Opportunities

### Close the Digital Divide

- Advance Access to High Speed Internet for all Cayuga County Residents
- Increase Distribution of Cell Phones/Minutes to the County's Most Vulnerable Residents
- Leverage Public Libraries to Close the Digital Divide

### Support Enhanced Community Response

- Develop Implementation Plans to Advance Recommendations
- Continue to Monitor and Respond to COVID-19 Impacts

## II. BACKGROUND

### **A. Task Force Purpose & Goals**

The Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force was established through Cayuga County Legislative Resolution #158-20 passed March 24, 2020, *Authorizing the Chair of the Cayuga County Legislature to Contract with the United Way to Establish and Advance the Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force*, in order to create an enhanced community response to the evolving *Novel Coronavirus* pandemic in Cayuga County. The Task Force seeks to develop a shared understanding of community needs, gaps, capabilities, and efforts underway to reduce impact on residents and businesses that can be enhanced or advanced as well as issues requiring action or attention.

### **Goals of the Task Force Include:**

1. Work with key stakeholders to identify and prioritize community needs and service gaps as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.
2. Assess and advocate for resources and strategies to address immediate and longer-term needs of the community.
3. Position the County and community to pursue State, Federal and philanthropic resources for COVID-19 response and recovery.
4. Enhance communication and coordination across service sectors.
5. Develop an action plan for post-crisis engagement.

### **B. Task Force Members**

The Task Force is comprised of representatives of government, nonprofit, faith-based, educational and private business sectors with countywide service areas and interests. Members include:

- Lisa Carr, Director, Seymour Library
- Jennifer Coughlin, Deputy Director, Cayuga County Mental Health
- Rev. Patrick Heary, Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Renee Jensen, Senior Planner, City of Auburn
- Tricia Kerr, District 12 Legislator, Cayuga County
- Ray Lockwood, President, Cayuga County Farm Bureau

- Karen Macier, Executive Director, United Way of Cayuga County
- Rhoda Overstreet-Wilson, Executive Director, Westminster Manor
- Laurie Piccolo, Executive Director, CAP Community Action Programs Cayuga/Seneca
- Jeff Rosenthal, Vice President of Student Affairs, Cayuga Community College
- Lori Schakow, Executive Director, Child Care Solutions
- Janet Taylor, Cayuga County Office for the Aging
- Shari Weiss, Executive Director, Cayuga Community Health Network
- Tracy Verrier, Executive Director, Cayuga Economic Development Agency/Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce
- Brenda Wiemann, Director, Cayuga County Office for the Aging
- Dan Welch, Associate Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Cindy Wilcox, Board Member, Human Services Coalition of Cayuga County

### **C. Methodology**

The United Way of Cayuga County organized and first convened the Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force on April 16, 2020. A trained facilitator was hired to coordinate Task Force and Focus Group meetings and to lead structured discussion around community needs, gaps, resources, and strategies for recovery and rebuilding. The facilitator has played an instrumental role in organizing the work of the Task Force, coordinating bi-weekly meetings and focus groups, capturing the feedback of participants and in moving these efforts forward. Individual Task Force members/entities have contributed to the process in substantive ways, including:

- Helping to define an approach and methodology for the assessment.
- Providing valued input into service needs, gaps and COVID-19 impacts in Cayuga County.
- Identifying and engaging stakeholders to participate in focus group sessions.
- Conducting Key Stakeholder Interviews.
- Developing and cross-promoting the Cayuga County COVID-19 Impact Survey.
- Reviewing and analyzing survey responses, 211 data, and focus group session notes.

- Developing and implementing strategies to address identified needs.
- Preparing, reviewing, editing and helping to finalize the COVID-19 Community Assessment July 15, 2020 Interim Report.

A consistent theme throughout Task Force discussions in planning the approach to this assessment was to minimize duplication of effort and coordinate activities when possible. The following data sources were considered in preparing this assessment:

- Direct input of Task Force members based on their knowledge and experiences with COVID-19 impact and community response.
- Cayuga County COVID-19 Impact Survey responses (90 total respondents)
- Focus Group Session Notes (20 new participants + Task Force participants)
- Key Informant Conversations
- New York State unemployment data - <https://labor.ny.gov/stats/weekly-ui-claims-report.shtm>
- New York State broadband data - <https://data.ny.gov>
- New York State Association of Counties, <https://www.nysac.org>
- Alice in New York: A Financial Hardship Study (2020), United Way of New York State, <https://www.unitedforalice.org/new-york>
- County Committee Reports (Aging, CEDA, DSS, Sheriff, Tourism, Youth Bureau)
- CenterState CEO Business Impact Survey Results

#### **D. Additional Key Informants/Focus Group Participants**

The Task Force recognizes the need for more extensive engagement with community stakeholders, key informants and the public at large as it continues to assess conditions and works to advance recommendations. The Task Force will distribute this report to additional key stakeholders in the community for feedback over a 2-week period prior to public release. At the time of this report, the following individuals have participated in assessment-related key conversations and/or focus groups:

- Ray Bizzari, DSS Commissioner
- Kevin Bucklin, CMI
- Chief Shawn Butler, Auburn Police Dept.

- Kathleen Cuddy, Cayuga County Public Health Commissioner
- Timothy Donovan, Community Advocate, CRPA, CARC
- Sara Douglass, Human Services Coalition of Cayuga County
- Kim Dunn, Chapel House
- Kevin Ellis, CMI
- Chris Ehlers, CAP
- Lloyd Hoskins, Cayuga County Youth Bureau
- Michelle Hubbard, CMI
- Bill Lamb, Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes
- Olan Mack, Chapel House
- Rev. Beth Malone, Auburn Methodist Church
- Gary Mann, Auburn Rescue Mission
- Rev. Mark Mindek, Auburn Alliance Church
- Aileen McNabb-Coleman, Chair, Cayuga County Legislature
- Katie Montroy, Cayuga County Mental Health
- Kimberly Patch, Hunger Task Force
- Debbie Patrick, King Ferry Food Pantry
- Julia Piascik, Nick's Ride for Friends
- Rev. Mary Roblee, Moravia United Methodist Church
- Sheriff Brian Schenck, Cayuga County Sheriff's Office
- Pastor Bonnie Seitz, Meridian Baptist Church
- Jessica Soule, East Hill Medical

- Shane Truman, Catholic Charities, Cayuga County Homeless Housing Coordinator
- Sue Van Epps, SCAT Van
- David Ward, St. Peter and John Soup Kitchen
- Michael Watrous, Central NY Food Bank

### **E. Report Scope/Limitations**

The Cayuga County community has pulled together with resiliency and resourcefulness to address a myriad of COVID-19 impacts and related needs. The work of the Task Force is not to document these actions, but to assess service gaps, challenges and opportunities within the context of current relief efforts and evolving community needs.

At the time of this report, Cayuga County is transitioning from COVID-19 crisis response to recovery and rebuilding. Community and organizational needs are in a state of change and expected to rise as stimulus relief ends, taxes and rent come due and other temporary assistance runs out. This report presents a snapshot in time of community needs and relief efforts.

COVID-19 has impacted various subpopulations across the state and locally in different ways including seniors, people with intellectual disabilities, impoverished households, families with school-aged children, youth placed at risk, higher education students, essential workers, people of color, domestic violence victims and individuals with mental illness and substance abuse disorders. Assessment of subpopulation needs and challenges is beyond the scope of this interim report but will be important to help inform policy and program development and to advance recommendations. Engagement with impacted populations and community stakeholders will be important in carrying out this work.

The Task Force acknowledges the pandemic has impacted various industry sectors disproportionately. Cayuga County's vibrant tourism industry has suffered devastating impacts as restrictions on travel and personal safety concerns are causing people to stay home. The agricultural industry continues to provide a fresh, local supply of food while keeping farmworkers safe. An in-depth assessment of the unique needs and challenges of various industry sectors is beyond the scope of this report but worthy of further analysis to help inform policy and program development. CEDA is currently examining industry sector needs and soliciting feedback from businesses via survey. The importance of buying local and supporting local farms and business cannot be overstated at this time.

Reported individual and household needs are based on survey and feedback from direct service providers and faith-based organizations as to the top needs they are encountering among those seeking help in Cayuga County. The Task Force recognizes the need for continued conversations and engagement with service providers and the community at large around this assessment and its recommendations as the pandemic continues to evolve. The Task Force welcomes direct feedback from the public at large on this assessment and its recommendations and invites commentary upon public release via email: [taskforce@unitedwayofcayugacounty.org](mailto:taskforce@unitedwayofcayugacounty.org).

### III. PRE-COVID-19 CONDITIONS

Before the pandemic hit, Cayuga County's economy was experiencing growth and unemployment was relatively low. Manufacturing, agribusiness, and mixed-use development projects were underway pre-COVID-19. The Cayuga Economic Development Agency's (CEDA) 2019 Annual Report captures significant investments made in the County over a 5-year period through CEDA-assisted projects (<https://cayugaeda.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ceda-2019-annual-report-1.pdf>).

From 2014 to 2019, annual sales tax revenue increased 8%; 2019 sales tax revenue was \$3.6 million dollars greater than 2014 revenue in Cayuga County. During that same period, CEDA assisted multiple companies to secure Auburn Industrial Development Authority and Cayuga Industrial Development Agency benefits and state aid for multiple local projects resulting in over \$80 million dollars of investment and significant job creation in the community.

CEDA continues to serve as the point of contact for business and entrepreneurs in Cayuga County, and has assisted several businesses in accessing capital and information related to the pandemic. CEDA also continues to work on business development and has supported projects serving new markets stimulated by the pandemic, including manufacturing of COVID-19 testing kits. These projects will bring much needed jobs and tax dollars to Cayuga County during a time when some businesses are thriving while others are barely surviving and some have closed permanently.

The United Way's 2020 report, *ALICE<sup>1</sup> in New York: A Financial Hardship Study*, indicates that 42% of all Cayuga County households – over 30,000 - fall into the ALICE category including those living below the poverty line (~ 13%). This suggests a high level of economic insecurity already existed among Cayuga County residents pre-COVID-19, making the community even more vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic. This story is playing out across New York's counties. The United Way of New York ALICE Project provides additional context:

*Even before COVID-19, 45% of New York households were already one emergency away from financial ruin, setting the stage for an unprecedented statewide economic crisis for the next several years. These hardworking households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford the basic cost of living. They often earn too much to qualify for government assistance and there is no room in their household budgets for emergency expenses. United Way calls this demographic ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. With income above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but below a basic survival threshold — defined as the ALICE Threshold — ALICE households earn too much to qualify as “poor” but are still unable to make ends meet. They often work as cashiers, nursing assistants, office clerks, servers, laborers, and security guards. These types of jobs are vital to keeping New York's economy running smoothly, but they do not provide adequate wages to cover the basics of housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology for these ALICE workers and their families.*

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<sup>1</sup> ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, is a new way of defining and understanding the struggles of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford a bare-bones household budget.

## IV. PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS STATUS & RESPONSE

At the time of this report, there have been more than 13 million confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide and nearly 600,000 deaths; within the United States more than 3 million confirmed cases and 125,000 deaths; in New York over 400,000 confirmed cases and 32,000 deaths; and in Cayuga County 131 confirmed cases and 3 deaths.

New York's COVID-19 crisis remains largely contained at this time, but outbreaks across the nation are cause for public health concern and economic uncertainty. To minimize risk, the Governor has issued restrictions on travel from nearly two dozen states across the country with significant community spread. Travelers must quarantine for 14 days when entering the State, among other things. Currently, the CNY region is reportedly experiencing shortage of rapid test supplies, backlog of testing among approved rapid test laboratories, extended delays for receipt of test results, volatile PPE supply chains and an impacted medical system requiring new protocols and close coordination with County government as State and Federal health care policies and guidelines continue to evolve. Additional information about regional health system challenges and concerns follows.

- Availability of rapid tests is limited within the region and designated for approved laboratories only. Approved rapid test labs are reporting shortage of analysis media required to perform these tests.
- In the absence of rapid testing, turnaround time on COVID-19 testing is currently a week or more for most laboratories in the region. Weeks may go by before someone with COVID-19 receives a positive test result.
- Delayed notification of County Health Department of positive COVID-19 results has been reported for tests ordered independently of the County. Potential HIPPA impact on household notification and COVID-19 containment should be assessed.
- Access to PPE remains inconsistent. Availability of clinical grade specialty PPE including disposable lab coats and level 3 procedure masks is limited and expensive.

Policy decisions about reopening of schools and other elements of society should seriously consider the County's ability to safeguard public health within the context of these regional health system limitations and complications as the pandemic continues to evolve across the country and heading into an uncertain fall when some are predicting a resurgence of cases.

Over the last 4 months, the Cayuga County Chair has overseen unprecedented local crisis response, leveraging the County Health Department and Emergency Management Office to safeguard public health and help the community navigate these new waters. The Chair works daily with other counties in the region to monitor and respond to the pandemic. She is actively engaged in regional efforts to reopen safely through a staged approach and continues to advocate with State and Federal Representatives for resources and policies needed to protect and support County residents and businesses. Activities and metrics associated with the County's response are presented below.

## Cayuga County Health Department COVID-19 Metrics as of July 9, 2020

- 42 Public Clinics held since March 17, 2020 including scheduling, specimen collection by staff wearing personal protective equipment, calling patients with results
- 1,717 people tested at clinics to date (not including special onsite testing performed at worksites due to outbreak)
- 127 Press Releases issued from March 10, 2020 to present to share information on prevention, number of new cases, clinic times, map updates
- 128 Isolation<sup>2</sup> Cases and 388 Quarantine Cases from March 18, 2020 to date
- 35 Precautionary Quarantine Cases
- 12 Onsite Workplace Educational Sessions (not including County offices)
- Innumerable phone calls, emails, social media interactions, print/radio/ television news interviews related to clinics, diagnoses, education, guidance interpretation, complaint and enforcement follow up.

## Cayuga County Emergency Management Office COVID-19 Supply Distribution

The Cayuga County Emergency Management Office has coordinated local emergency response including on-going distribution of supplies throughout the pandemic to residents, businesses, health care and service providers, as presented below.

<b>County EMO Supply Distribution: 03/18/2020 - 06/30/2020</b>		
2 oz. Hand Sanitizer - 6740	Cloth Masks - 46650	Gloves Large – 142
8 oz. Hand Sanitizer - 855	Face Shields - 2853	Gloves Medium - 1253
Hand Sanitizer - 583	KN95 Masks - 4650	Gloves Small - 316
Test Kits - 2380	N95 Masks - 4861	Gloves XL - 68
Surgical Gowns Large - 475	N95 Masks Small - 240	Food Prep Gloves Lg - 3
Surgical Gowns XL - 495	Pediatric Surgical Masks - 1500	Food Prep Gloves Med - 10
Surgical Gowns XXL - 36	Donated Masks - 96	Shelf Stable Food - 400
Isolation Gowns -1144	Hand Sewn Masks - 151	Coolers - 10
Level One Gowns - 200	Surgical Masks - 61000	Ice Packs - 34
Tyvek Suits - 78	Thermometers - 179	Shipping Boxes - 10
XL Tyvek Suits - 12		

<sup>2</sup> Isolation (approximately 10 days duration) and Quarantine (average 14 days) requires intake assessment, daily monitoring, delivery of signed Public Health order to isolate, drive by visits, delivery of signed discharge papers for return to work, and daily completion and submission of data to state database.

## ***Cayuga County's Recovery Crisis***

Early shutdown of support groups including Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and other peer supports by the state has had devastating impacts on the recovery community. Advocacy at the State level is needed to reclassify these and other critical support groups as essential health services should the County regress back to earlier phases of reopening. The recovery community cannot afford to be cut off from these critical supports. The numbers are alarming; at the time of this report, more people have died from overdoses than COVID-19 in Cayuga County.

The Cayuga County HEALing Communities Study has been closely monitoring opioid overdoses in the community. Law enforcement agencies (excluding NYS Police data) have reported 91 overdoses from January through June 30, 2020 – including 12 fatal overdoses, 9 of which were confirmed by the Coroner to be opioid-related with toxicology pending on remaining cases. These numbers indicate a stark contrast to 2019 when Cayuga County ended the year with a total of 9 fatal overdoses.

The HEALing Communities Study is providing critical coordination among providers and community stakeholders, and funding for implementation of data-driven solutions designed to reduce opioid overdose deaths in the County, at a time when treatment and recovery services have been disrupted, and state funded programs are facing deep cuts, despite rising need through the pandemic.

## V. COVID-19 COMMUNITY IMPACT

The public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated Cayuga County's pre-existing opioid crisis and has resulted in a secondary financial crisis that continues to evolve. The cost of COVID-19 on County residents, businesses, nonprofits and government is substantial and growing. Although the pandemic is having widespread global impact, places like New York with COVID-19 outbreaks resulting in business closures have been impacted far more significantly than those without. Multiple factors will influence the severity of impact on Cayuga County residents and businesses. The uncertainty of what lies ahead is of great concern.

### A. Factors Influencing Severity of Impact

- **Public Health Crisis Status** – The status of the pandemic in Central New York Region and across the country will largely influence reopening in Cayuga County. Consistent reinforcement of social distancing guidelines, testing and use of PPE is needed on an on-going basis.
- **Reopening Pace** - The pace of reopening will largely influence the severity of COVID-19 impacts on the community. Creating a countywide culture of support for reopening safely will instill consumer confidence and stimulate spending.
- **Communication** – Timely information on government plans and pronouncements, clear reopening guidelines and channels to share changes to services and operations will help mitigate potential negative impacts.
- **Technology Challenges** - Households without internet access or technology beyond a smart phone are struggling with homeschooling, filing of unemployment insurance claims, accessing services and more. Some residents lack access to a personal cell phone with minutes, hindering access to services and medical care.
- **Education** - Low literacy levels are impacting individual ability to navigate COVID-19 changes, social distancing guidelines, home schooling and new information.
- **Supply Chain Disruptions** – Phased reopening of the economy is creating supply chain issues for local businesses and industries.
- **Stimulus Relief** – The availability of federal aid to state and local governments to offset COVID-19 costs remains uncertain at the time of this report and will significantly impact recovery and rebuilding efforts. A series of federal and state stimulus measures are providing a temporary safety net for impacted residents and businesses. Many of these measures have been extended already and are scheduled to expire in the very near future. It will be important to monitor, anticipate and respond to subsequent impacts accordingly.

## **B. State/Federal Stimulus Relief - Dates to Watch**

- **Income Taxes** - Federal and State income tax filings and associated payments were due July 15, 2020 (extended from April 15).
- **Health Insurance** - Uninsured New Yorkers were eligible to apply for coverage through NY State of Health or directly to insurers during a special enrollment period that ends July 15, 2020.
- **NYS COVID-19 Rent Relief Program** – 2-week application period beginning July 16, 2020; this program will provide one-time rental assistance up to four months to offset increased rent burden associated with lost income due to COVID-19 beginning March 1, 2020. Applicants will not need to repay this assistance; payment is made directly to landlords.
- **Unemployment Insurance** - Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation ends July 31, 2020 (\$600/week additional payment for eligible individuals).
- **Mortgages** - Under the CARES Act, homeowners experiencing financial hardship due to Covid-19 can be granted forbearance on a federally backed mortgage loan initially for 90 days, and potentially for a year. Deferred payments are tacked on to the end of the loan or paid back over time in a mortgage modification. NYS mortgage servicers were given a similar directive by the State to provide 90-day mortgage relief to borrowers impacted by the novel coronavirus. The directive includes forbearance of mortgage payments based on financial hardship, no negative reporting to credit bureaus, grace period for loan modification, no late payment fees or online payment fees and postponing or suspending foreclosures.
- **Rent** - New York has extended a moratorium on evictions for residential and commercial tenants from June 6 to at least August 20. Eviction proceedings have been suspended and no one can be evicted in NY at this time. Late payments/fees for missed rent payments are banned during the eviction moratorium. Renters facing financial hardship due to COVID-19 may use their security deposit as payment and repay their security deposit over time.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – New York State is approved by the US Dept of Agriculture to issue Emergency Allotments (EA) to all SNAP household recipients, increasing their current monthly allotment up to the maximum monthly allotment for a household of that size. SNAP EA is authorized through the Families First Corona Virus Response Act of 2020. The State’s approval remains in effect until the Secretary of Health and Human Services rescinds the public health emergency declaration issued on January 27, 2020, or New York’s State-issued emergency or disaster declaration expires.
- **Utilities** – As of March 13, New York’s major utilities have suspended service shutoffs to residential, commercial and industrial customers during the outbreak. At the time of this report, NYSEG and National Grid have suspended collections-related activities, including service disconnections and penalties for late payments, and suspended required security deposits for new accounts.

- **Student Loans** – Under the CARES Act, no payments are required on federal student loans from March 13 until September 30, 2020, and any payments made will be applied 100% to principal vs interest. NYS has reached an agreement with private student loan providers representing over 90% of privately-held student loans, for 90 day deferment due to hardship and other relief, no late payment fees and no negative data reported to credit bureau agencies.
- **Business Assistance** - Changes to the Paycheck Protection Program have extended the timeline for businesses to spend funds from 2 months to 24 weeks. Businesses have until December 31 to rehire workers in order for their salaries to count toward forgiveness (previously June 30).
- **Paid Sick/Expanded Medical Leave** - The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions expire December 31, 2020. NYS COVID-19 Paid Family Leave expires on December 31, 2020

### C. Impact on Businesses

The shutdown of New York's economy began with closure of all non-essential businesses by way of Governor Cuomo's PAUSE executive order, effective March 22, 2020. Shortly thereafter, the Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA) established the Coronavirus Response Survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Cayuga County businesses and to understand related needs. The survey is used as an on-going tool by CEDA to address individualized business needs through tailored follow-up, and as an aggregate assessment tool to study the broader impact of COVID-19 across industry sectors.

COVID-19 Response Metrics reported by CEDA through May 21 indicate average weekly lost revenues of \$6,241 (78.3% decline) among responding businesses. To offset these devastating losses and help cover increased costs, CEDA announced establishment of an Emergency Microloan Program within a week of PAUSE. The Emergency Microloan Program has helped local businesses stay afloat during the pandemic. The fund has grown substantially with financial support from the Cayuga County Development Corp. As of July 1, CEDA had extended vital low-cost capital and flexible financing totaling \$96,550 to 21 local businesses and was in the process of underwriting additional loans.

Additionally, the City of Auburn has partnered with CEDA to oversee disbursement of Community Development Block Grant stimulus funds to address local business and nonprofit needs. \$224,000 of the CARES Act CDBG money was made available for grants to businesses, and an additional \$80,000 was made available to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. Having received over 50 business applications, it was clear that the need far exceeded available funds. In response, the City of Auburn and CEDA approached the Auburn Small Business Assistance Program committee with a request to divert \$100,000 of funds from the revolving loan fund to the grant fund. This additional funding was approved and made it possible to provide various levels of funding (ranging from \$3,000 to \$8,300) to nearly all business applicants.

## **Regional Business Needs**

CenterState CEO, the regional economic development, business leadership and chamber organization serving the Central New York Region including Cayuga County, released results of their COVID-19 Business Impact Survey on June 5, 2020. Over 150 responses were received. Key findings include among respondents include:

- 1 out of 5 manufacturers in the region report an increase in demand requiring hiring.
- 10% of all businesses are looking to hire employees to meet new demand.
- Concerns and impacts for most industries center on customers and sales.
- 55% of businesses have experienced a decrease in demand resulting in layoffs, decreased hours of operation, shifts, or workdays.
- 35% of businesses are offering discounted sales as a response.
- 34% of businesses now say that supply chain impacts are high or of the highest impact. This is up from 15% on March 23.

CenterState CEO's advocacy platform calls for smart federal investments to support economic recovery and development of a more resilient economy for the Central New York Region including Cayuga County, as follows:

- **Additional targeted federal relief** – *Additional relief must include provisions that allocate lending capacity to nonprofit and community-based lenders working with businesses that don't have strong relationships with traditional lending institutions, and address the disproportional impact on the minority business community caused by limitations to the initial stimulus. Additionally, financial support is needed for states and metropolitan areas with populations below 500,000.*
- **Jobs** - *Crisis levels of unemployment are likely to persist beyond the immediate recovery. A jobs program to put people back to work, once it's safe to do so, should employ people in areas that address the issues that were holding our economy back before the pandemic, such as laying fiber to improve digital access, energy and climate resiliency projects and infrastructure.*
- **Research and Development** – *Significant investment in basic and applied R&D in health sciences, industry 4.0, transportation and energy/climate, needed not only to better prepare for these threats in the future, but to flow to our educational and health care institutions that have been severely impacted and drive innovation in the economy.*
- **Infrastructure** - *A record investment in infrastructure, including roads, bridges, high-speed rail, telecommunications, research parks, water and sewer, mass transit, smart cities, and unmanned systems.*

- **Displaced Workers** - A robust training and education program that engages the region's extensive educational infrastructure in helping workers gain new skills that are relevant to the industries and jobs that re-emerge from this crisis.
- **Deregulation** - A temporary pause on regulatory activity that stifles competitiveness to give business and industry a chance to regain its footing.

### Impact by Industry Sector

Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims are on the rise across all industry sectors compared to last year, but industry sectors are being impacted disproportionately. The tables below provide a statewide look at unemployment by industry sector during the pandemic, cumulative and for the week ending July 4, 2020 (NYS Department of Labor). For the week ending July 4, Transportation and Warehousing experienced a 64% percent decrease in cumulative UI claims.

When looking at this statewide data, it is important to note that while the greatest *percent increase* in cumulative UI claims has occurred in the Retail Trade sector, the *greatest number of jobs lost* has occurred in Accommodations & Food Service – over 400,000 claims filed for the period specified in New York. Other industry sectors deeply impacted across the State include Education, Health Care & Social Assistance, Arts & Entertainment, and Manufacturing.

### **Over-the-Year Percent Change in Initial Claims by Industry (Week Ending 7/4/2020)**

Over-the-Year Change in Initial Claims by Industry  
Week Ending 7/04/2020

Industry	Latest Week	Previous Week	Year Ago	OTY Net Change	OTY Pct Change
Accommodation and Food Services	7,488	6,709	2,262	5,226	231%
Administrative and Support Services	6,338	6,079	2,354	3,984	169%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2,016	1,697	525	1,491	284%
Construction/Utilities	3,571	3,587	1,471	2,100	143%
Educational Services	7,786	7,353	1,895	5,891	311%
Finance and Insurance	1,157	1,416	401	756	189%
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,563	10,913	2,421	10,142	419%
Information	2,027	2,123	723	1,304	180%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	262	333	97	165	170%
Manufacturing	4,667	4,053	897	3,770	420%
Natural Resources and Mining	107	138	84	23	27%
Other Services	3,030	2,603	502	2,528	504%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3,464	3,206	865	2,599	300%
Public Administration (Including Government)	1,593	1,377	787	806	102%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,039	1,027	246	793	322%
Retail Trade	6,475	6,408	1,099	5,376	489%
Transportation and Warehousing	3,017	2,561	8,385	-5,368	-64%
Unclassified	27,855	28,627	210	27,645	13,164%
Wholesale Trade	1,805	1,947	343	1,462	426%
Total (Including Out-of-State Residents)	96,260	92,157	25,567	70,693	277%

Notes: With the exception of Public Administration, UI claims data by industry reflect both private and public sector workers.

## Cumulative Over-the-Year Percent Change in Initial Claims by Industry (3/14/2020 – 7/4/2020)

### Over-the-Year Change in Initial Claims by Industry Cumulative Weeks Ending March 14-July 4\*, 2019 and 2020

Industry	2020	2019	OTY Net Change	OTY Pct Change
Accommodation and Food Services	442,793	28,481	414,312	1,455%
Administrative and Support Services	237,914	29,862	208,052	697%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	89,926	8,364	81,562	975%
Construction/Utilities	207,220	34,103	173,117	508%
Educational Services	104,785	8,302	96,483	1,162%
Finance and Insurance	26,521	6,596	19,925	302%
Health Care and Social Assistance	334,435	21,880	312,555	1,428%
Information	96,327	13,007	83,320	641%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	13,391	1,190	12,201	1,025%
Manufacturing	137,613	12,512	125,101	1,000%
Natural Resources and Mining	4,444	986	3,458	351%
Other Services	139,753	4,899	134,854	2,753%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	104,899	13,536	91,363	675%
Public Administration (Including Government)	25,008	5,938	19,070	321%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	42,614	4,416	38,198	865%
Retail Trade	332,652	17,557	315,095	1,795%
Transportation and Warehousing	130,078	33,536	96,542	288%
Unclassified	469,736	3,321	466,415	14,044%
Wholesale Trade	87,741	6,489	81,252	1,252%
Total (Including Out-of-State Residents)	3,027,850	254,975	2,772,875	1,088%

Note: With the exception of Public Administration, UI claims data by industry reflect both private and public sector workers.

\*These represent the cumulative number of initial claims since they started increasing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Regional Job Loss

NYS Department of Labor statistics for Central New York indicates that “private sector jobs in the Syracuse metro area fell over the year by 42,800, or 16.2 percent, to 221,800 in June 2020. Job losses occurred in trade, transportation and utilities (-12,300), leisure and hospitality (-11,200), educational and health services (-6,700), professional and business services (-5,300), other services (-2,700), manufacturing (-2,500), natural resources, mining and construction (-1,300) and financial activities (-800). The government job count fell over the year (-3,000), with the largest job losses occurring in local government education.”

### Reopening Safely is Key

The status of the public health crisis in Central New York is largely driving the pace of reopening in Cayuga County. On April 26, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced a phased approach to reopen industries and businesses based upon data-driven, regional analysis of health metrics. At the time of this report, the CNY Region including Cayuga County is in Phase IV which includes reopening of malls, low-risk indoor and outdoor entertainment, professional sports competitions without fans, media production and educational institutions.

The County and CEDA are actively engaged in regional efforts to help local businesses reopen safely. CEDA has issued a survey to assess and respond to business needs and challenges as Cayuga County

progresses through the reopening phases. These include hiring and training needs, access to PPE, capital/financing needs, supply chain disruptions and more. Labor supply is being impacted by availability of enhanced federal unemployment coupled with health and safety concerns.

Successful reopening and economic recovery hinges on consumer confidence in public health and safety. Businesses that develop reopening plans and follow state guidelines will facilitate those efforts. CEDA staff are on the forefront of educating local businesses on constantly changing regulations and resources to support safe reopening through the Agency's COVID-19 landing page, newsletters, Facebook posts, FAQ videos, radio interviews, Citizen articles, business outreach, networking events, webinars and other activities.

The pace of reopening has been the cause of substantial public debate across the country and in Cayuga County. Some have advocated for faster reopening, arguing economic stability, emotional health and basic survival are on the line. Others have expressed concern for reopening too fast and the impact on public and individual health. Business owners are weighing the pros and cons of reopening in this new economy with its new restrictions and complications. They are in varying stages of planning to reopen; some are mapping out scenarios while others adopting a wait and see attitude.

## **B. Impact on Households & Individuals**

Cayuga County residents have been impacted profoundly by COVID-19 and have experienced major disruptions to their daily lives and routine activities. Service providers report emotional distress and deep concerns among County residents for personal health, financial stability, elders in long term care, and an unknown future. Direct service providers report seeing many new faces among people accessing help for the first time. As the economic impact of COVID-19 evolves, this number will likely continue to rise.

### ***Top Individual/Households Needs***

1. **Health & Safety** - Personal safety concerns and concerns for the safety of loved ones remains high. Many individuals are struggling with the stress and fear of having to return to work, concerned that employers, coworkers and/or customers will not follow the New York on PAUSE directives. Consumer confidence has not reached pre-COVID-19 levels. A statewide 211 report from June 9 states, *"Anxiety and personal safety concerns were reflected in conversations with many callers... due to the dual stressors of COVID-19 and continuing restrictions along with uncertainty and fear..."* In addition to these direct impacts, disruption of health services including school-based dental care and peer support groups has created secondary health concerns for vulnerable County residents.
2. **Housing Assistance** - Housing-related needs for shelter, rental assistance and landlord/tenant issues are on the rise. Financial assistance needs remain high among households living paycheck to paycheck. Providers are responding to requests for rental and utility assistance, challenges in filing for unemployment, concerns about being laid-off and help paying monthly bills. While the homeless census count for Cayuga County is down, these numbers are likely to rise when the State moratorium on evictions is suspended. Local agencies have mobilized and

are starting to build resources to assist housing and homeless vulnerable residents.

3. **Mental & Behavioral Health** - Uncertainty from one day to the next is taking its toll on mental health and well-being. Social isolation, loneliness, anxiety, and depression are contributing to increased substance abuse, spike in overdose deaths, and a rise in mental health needs. Local law enforcement are responding to a greater number of overdoses, suicides and overdose deaths. Early shutdown of support groups including Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other peer supports by the state has had devastating impacts on the recovery community. Providers report ongoing challenges to reach the most vulnerable individuals and connect them to services. At the time of this report, Governor Cuomo has announced 31% withholding of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter state aid payments for alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs, and 20% withholding for mental health services. Uncertainly around restoration of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter cuts, and/or additional cuts beyond 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter remains. What is certain, is that these cuts come at a critical time when mental health, substance abuse treatment and recovery needs are escalating.
4. **Children & Youth** - The need for summer child care and youth activities for school-aged children is coming into sharper focus as parents plan their return to work. Uncertainty regarding school reopening is creating child care challenges for working parents/guardians with school-aged children. Many parents remain fearful of putting their children in group care settings due to health concerns. Financially strained child care programs operating at reduced capacity due to COVID-19 restrictions are further impacted by these parental concerns. Children lacking protective factors at home are more vulnerable during COVID-19 when physical, emotional, or sexual abuse may go unseen due to less direct contact with mandated reporters. Foster care placements are on the rise as families struggle to meet the needs of their children. Children are having to adjust to significant disruptions to school, home environment and social activities; COVID-19 impact on Cayuga County's youth is substantial.
5. **Food Insecurity** - Food insecurity remains high. Providers have reported increased requests and referrals for food and prepared meal delivery, SNAP benefits and school meals. Food distribution throughout the county by the Central New York Food Bank, pantries, school districts, Rotary, local dairy industry, and others are providing critical enhanced supports to a growing number of food insecure households in Cayuga County. While utilization of food pantries had stabilized at the time of the report, it is expected to rise when temporary stimulus aid runs out.

### ***Financial Impact on Households***

Cayuga County's unemployment numbers tripled from 5.1% to 15.3% from March to April and dropped back to 10.6% in May of 2020 as thousands lost their jobs due to COVID-19. While many individuals make substantially more on enhanced unemployment with Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation than they were working, delayed receipt of benefits has left vulnerable households stretched thin. Further, the enhanced unemployment insurance payment of \$600/week is a temporary stimulus benefit scheduled to end July 31, 2020. At the time of this report, job loss and unemployment remains high in Cayuga County.

### Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, New York State Department of Labor's Division of Research & Statistics is temporarily publishing detailed weekly reports with data on Unemployment Insurance claims in New York State. At the time of this report, the number of initial Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims filed in Cayuga County and Central New York from one week to the next appears to be trending down. This is a number to watch and one that is influenced by multiple factors including reopening restrictions, business retractions and closures.

Important to note, while generally trending in the right direction, hundreds of new unemployment insurance claims continue to be filed weekly in Cayuga County and continue to be significantly elevated over prior year claims across all industry sectors. Prior to the pandemic, unemployment claims within the Central New York Region were down compared to last year.

**Over-the-Year (OTY) Percent Change in Initial Claims<sup>3</sup> by Region & County**

Data for the Week Ending:	CNY Region OTY % Change	Cayuga County		
		OTY % Change	2020 Claims	Last Year Claims
7/4/2020	265	113	270	127
6/27/2020	486	284	265	69
6/20/2020	601	629	248	34
6/13/2020	506	583	287	42
6/6/2020	515	417	269	52
5/30/2020	326	372	203	43
5/23/2020	912	717	490	60
5/16/2020	1264	1302	589	42
5/9/2020	1184	1198	597	46
5/2/2020	1196	829	511	55
4/25/2020	786	387	643	132
4/18/2020	1120	1255	637	47
4/11/2020	2370	2993	1237	40
4/4/2020	2518	2907	1233	41
3/28/2020	2765	2534	1528	58
3/21/2020	312	301	233	58
3/4/2020	-13	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Utilization of Public Assistance

Cayuga County Department of Social Services and Office for the Aging have reported increased usage of public assistance programs; metrics should be identified, and data tracked to further assess ongoing impact on individual households.

<sup>3</sup> *Initial Claims* include both new and additional claims, both of which signify a new spell of unemployment. A *New Claim* is the first initial claim filed to request a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation. An *Additional Claim* is a subsequent claim filed during an existing benefit year due to new period of unemployment. Someone who files a new claim and collects benefits, finds another job but is laid off again within the same year would be considered an additional claim.

## Current State of the Child Care System

Child care programs across Cayuga County have experienced reduced enrollment due to COVID-19, as a result of State restrictions, because out of work parents no longer need child care, and because parents are fearful of putting their children in group care settings due to health concerns. Even as businesses begin to re-open throughout Cayuga County and people return to work, many parents are reluctant to return their children to group child care. The table below provides information on the current state of Cayuga County’s licensed/registered child care programs.

<b>Number of Licensed or Registered Child Care Programs by Modality - 7/2/2020</b>					
	Number of Programs	Number that remained open	Percent that remained open	Total Number of Openings	Openings for Infants
Child Care Centers	13	4*	31%	21	3
School Age Child Care	12	0	0%		
Group Family Child Care**	9	9	100%	28	7
Family Child Care***	25	20	80%	24	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>17</b>

\* Another Child Care Center plans to reopen on July 6, 2020

\*\* 5 of the Group Family Child Care programs are not accepting new children

\*\*\* 9 of the Family Child Care programs are either full, or not accepting new children

Although 56% of child care programs in Cayuga County remained open throughout the pandemic, most are operating at a diminished capacity. Guidance from the Department of Health and NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) require that programs limit group sizes to 10 children or less. Maximum group size for infants was already limited to 8 infants; however, the maximum group size for older children ranged from 12 to 30 based upon the age of the children. Smaller group sizes severely limit child care programs’ ability to generate revenue.

Even while operating at diminished capacity, child care programs are currently underutilized, in large part due to parent concerns for safety. Child Care Solutions (CCS) has played a key role in helping providers navigate changing regulations and address safety concerns. CCS secured CARES funds to purchase up to \$600 in COVID-19 response supplies including PPE and disinfecting cleaning supplies for each child care program that remained open. CCS also secured CARES scholarship funds to cover child care through 7 different programs for 18 children of essential workers in Cayuga County.

To further support parents and providers, CCS published a “Guide to Revitalizing or Re-opening Your Child Care Business” with information from the Center for Disease Control, Department of Health and Office of Children & Family Services to help child care programs navigate the requirements, recommendations and best practices for keeping children safe in group settings. The guide suggested ways that child care programs could assist in alleviating the fears of parents about group child care.

## **C. Impact on Nonprofits**

COVID-19 continues to have profound financial and operational impact on the nonprofit sector during a time when community needs are on the rise. In early April, a COVID-19 Impact Survey was generated by the United Way of Cayuga County in partnership with the City of Auburn and with input from the Task Force, to understand the impact of COVID-19 on operations and current and anticipated needs of the nonprofit sector. The City of Auburn has utilized survey responses to help prioritize spending areas for Community Development Block Grant stimulus funds. The Task Force has considered results of the survey in this report, recognizing that needs and impact continue to evolve. A summary of nonprofit survey responses is provided as an appendix to this report and outlined below.

### ***Top Nonprofit Needs***

77% of surveyed nonprofits reported significant disruption in services to clients and the community. Looking ahead over the next 6 months, 62% anticipate continued significant disruption and 26% anticipate moderate disruption in service delivery. Top reported nonprofit needs/concerns include the following:

1. **Funding** – Devastating funding losses, increased costs and uncertainty across the sector have impacted operations, service delivery and the ability to plan. More detail is provided below about the financial challenges across the nonprofit sector.
2. **Technology** – Technology continues to present major issues with service delivery. Challenges include access to laptops, computers, printers, scanners and software; access to the internet; comfort level among staff and clients with technology platforms; availability of in-house tech support expertise; and difficulty keeping track of some populations (addiction/recovery).
3. **Capacity** – Staff reductions due to state restrictions, layoffs, furloughs and job loss, loss of volunteers who are older and self-isolating, disruptions in internships, inability to work from home for some, and a variety of other issues are impacting nonprofit capacity. Staff burnout is a concern for those who have been working through the crisis. Many are working longer hours with significantly heavier workloads.
4. **Communication** – Providers rely heavily on referral services and have struggled to keep on top of changing resources and operating hours across the network during COVID-19. The inability to centrally track changes presents a challenge with referral processes. Lack of clarity around State reopening guidelines including last minute changes has created challenges for local government officials and caused confusion among local businesses including nonprofits.
5. **Safety** – Access to sufficient PPE including masks, sanitizer and cleaning supplies needed to safeguard the health of staff and clients remains inconsistent. Availability of clinical grade specialty PPE including disposable lab coats and level 3 procedure masks is limited and expensive.

## ***Nonprofit Financial Impact***

Cayuga County's nonprofit sector is facing severe budget restrictions, hiring freezes, furloughs, possible layoffs, non-renewal of contracts, reduced income and other impacts and challenges as a result of COVID-19. At the time of this report, Governor Cuomo has announced a 31% withholding of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter state aid payments for alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs and 20% withholding for mental health services.

The financial stability of many local nonprofits is strained due to lost revenue from reduced State aid, funding delays, disruption of fee for service income, canceled fundraisers and programs, lack of discretionary income for donations and memberships, lack of new admissions, changes to state rates and other lost revenue streams. 76% of surveyed nonprofits report revenue loss from canceled programs or events, 60% report budgetary pressures resulting from strains on the economy.

Providers have reported significant cash flow issues, a need to borrow to stay afloat and difficulties planning. COVID-19 emergency funds through United Way, Cayuga Community Fund, Emerson Foundation, CEDA, the City and others are providing critical support during this period of uncertainty to offset losses and cover increased costs associated with PPE, remote technology, and increased service demands which are expected to remain high for the foreseeable future. A summary of funding awards is included with this report and further points to nonprofit sector needs.

### **D. Impact on Cayuga County Government**

On March 14, 2020 the Cayuga County Chair declared a State of Emergency in connection with Novel coronavirus that remains in effect at the time of this report. The impact of the pandemic on County government operations and finances is substantial and unprecedented. Revenue shortfalls are anticipated in the millions, and much uncertainty remains about the extent of impact. At the time of this report, County offices remain largely closed to the public and operating at reduced workforce capacity. Employee furloughs are in place and departments are planning for reopening as restrictions lift and the region advances between phases. Local municipalities and school districts throughout the County are facing similar financial challenges.

### ***County Legislative Action***

The Cayuga County Chair has worked closely with the County Legislature to take a series of legislative actions to manage the COVID-19 crisis, the including:

- March 16 – Cayuga County Legislature establishes Legislative Emergency Response 2020 Budget in the amount of \$100,000 for COVID-19, authorizes Chair to enter into contracts as needed to manage the impact on individuals and families living, working and visiting Cayuga County
- March 20 – Cayuga County Legislature cancels penalty and interest for all 2020 Town and County tax payments received by the Cayuga County Treasurer in the month of April 2020

- March 24 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes Chair to contract with the United Way to establish and advance the Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force
- March 31 – Cayuga County Legislature excludes emergency responders from the provisions of the Family First Coronavirus Response Act regarding family and medical leave
- April 8 – Cayuga County Chair issues Emergency Order closing all playgrounds, athletic courts and sporting fields, and limiting interactions at all public parks
- April 9 – Cayuga County Chair issues Executive Order closing golf courses (rescinded April 19)
- April 28 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes Chair to implement workplace furloughs through July 31, 2020
- April 28 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes additional compensatory time for non-bargaining employees, recognizing the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated significant changes in the county’s workforce in terms of both hours and locations
- April 28 – Cayuga County Legislature establishes a review process for hiring resolutions as a result of the COVID-19 crisis
- April 28 – Cayuga County Legislature rescinds resolutions authorizing the filling of certain positions of employment in the County found to be important but not critical to operations
- April 28 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes Chair to enter into a 36-month contract with MOMENTUM at an annual cost not to exceed \$18,000 to support the need for increased remote access to county network resources and the anticipated increased demand for secure internet application and data services
- April 28 – Cayuga County Legislature waives parking fees at Emerson Park for 60 days to facilitate access to open space where citizens can spend time outdoors while still maintaining appropriate social distances (extended for additional 60 days)
- April 28 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes the Director of the Emergency Management to fill a vacant Administrative Officer position on a temporary basis during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- May 26 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes Office for the Aging to accept additional funds from the NYS Office for Aging through the Corona Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act in the amount of \$176,024
- May 26 - Cayuga County Legislature authorizes Office for the Aging to accept additional funds from the NYS Office for Aging through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) in the amount of \$53,442
- May 26 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes modification of the current license agreement with A&M Catering for management of the Emerson Park Pavilion due to public health

restrictions on gatherings, and authorizes refund of fees associated with facility rentals at Emerson Park

- June 23 – Cayuga County Legislature calls upon State of New York to consider modifications to the New York State Employees Retirement System to provide incentives for early retirement in order to confront growing financial pressures related to COVID-19
- June 23 – Cayuga County Legislature authorizes Chair of the Legislature and Commissioners of the Cayuga County Board of Elections to sign contract for NYS HAVA CARES Act Grant Program to reimburse expenses incurred by the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Financial Impact on Cayuga County**

The NYS Association of Counties (NYSAC) is monitoring economic data to assess the impact of COVID-19 on New York counties. NYSAC’s report titled *Lost Revenue and State Aid Cuts: Coronavirus Economic Impact on Counties* was most recently updated May 2020 (<https://www.nysac.org/files/NYSAC%20Report%20-%20Lost%20Revenue%20and%20State%20Aid%20Cuts%20-%20May%207.pdf>). The report asserts that NY counties are being disproportionately impacted compared to other parts of the country, that every region of the state is affected, and that NY Counties face a quadruple threat:

1. Declining local revenues, especially sales tax, but also hotel occupancy taxes, mortgage recording taxes, gaming revenues, among other revenues;
2. Higher spending necessary to respond to the health emergency;
3. The loss of state reimbursement; and
4. The potential of significant losses for small businesses that could threaten jobs and the property tax base over the short to mid-term.

NYSAC has created two scenarios – a milder recession and quick recovery versus a more severe recession and prolonged recovery. Projected revenue losses under both scenarios are presented below for Cayuga County.

<b>Coronavirus Impact on NY Counties &amp; Cayuga County (NYSAC Recession Scenarios: Updated May 2020)</b>			
	Mild Recession	Severe Recession	Cayuga County Impact
Sales Tax Revenue	9% loss	22% loss	\$4,164,380 to \$10,037,551 <sup>4</sup>
Occupancy Tax Revenue	38% loss	73% loss	\$231,195 to \$366,137
Gaming Revenues	35% loss	55% loss	\$184,726 to \$277,088
State Aide <sup>5</sup>	20% loss	50% loss	\$4,996,099 to \$12,490,247

<sup>4</sup> Does not reflect Cayuga County’s strong gains in sales tax revenues in June and first half of July 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Based on State Fiscal Year \$8.2 billion cut in Aid to Localities reflected in the Enacted State Financial Plan, with low end range based on equal across-the-board cuts and high end based on holding school aid and Medicaid harmless.

The Cayuga County Chair has directed the Treasurer and Budget Director to provide regular updates to the Legislature on the County's changing financial picture. The most current available data on anticipated and actual revenue impacts is presented below.

- Sales Tax Revenue: Cayuga County experienced strong growth in sales tax revenues during the month of June and holding steady for the first payment in July - a positive economic indicator and number to watch that will largely influence the County budget. June 2020 sales tax revenues were 4.6% more than June 2019 revenues and nearly tripled from sales tax collected in May. YTD sales tax revenues as of mid-July 2020 are only \$150,000 less than 2019 for the same period.
- Occupancy Tax Revenue: Tourism's April 2020 occupancy dropped more than 50% from April 2019 – declining from 48% in 2019 to 23% in 2020. May 2020 occupancy remained at 23% compared to 55% in 2019.
- Gaming Revenues/State Aide Reductions: Projected revenue decline of \$215,000 for 2020.
- Interest Earnings: Projected revenue decline of \$100,000 for 2020.
- Unrealized/Realized Gains: Projected revenue decline of \$200,000 for 2020.
- Loss in State Aid: Projected 10% revenue loss of \$1,077,885 for 2020.
  - In early July, Governor Cuomo announced 31% withholding of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter state aid payments for alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs, and 20% withholding for mental health services. Uncertainly around restoration of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter cuts, and/or additional cuts beyond 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter remains.
  - At the time of this report, the State has begun withholding payment of vouchers submitted by the County.
  - The availability of federal aid to state and local governments to offset COVID-19 costs remains uncertain at the time of this report and will largely influence further reductions in state aid.

### ***Impact on Services***

To offset revenue losses, the County has taken steps to reduce expenditures including furloughing employees and holding vacancies open. Within the context of an uncertain financial picture, Cayuga County workers are on the front lines of COVID-19 response, continuing to provide vital services through the pandemic at a time of reduced workforce capacity due to COVID-19 restrictions and temporary furloughs and when community needs are elevated. Department Heads are reporting increased utilization of services, many new faces and high levels of stress.

The picture looks similar across the state for New York's counties. A report issued in June 2020 by NYSAC titled *New York's Counties: Serving New Yorkers During the Pandemic and Recession*,

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recognizes how counties support “the most vulnerable members of our communities, the poor, aged, disabled, unemployed, those needing mental health and substance abuse services, youth at risk, veterans and more” (<https://www.nysac.org/files/NY%20Counties%20-%20Serving%20During%20Pandemic%20and%20Recession.pdf>).

DRAFT

## V. TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

The Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force has considered information and data presented in this assessment of current conditions in formulating recommendations for an enhanced community response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Cayuga County. The following Action Agenda is presented for consideration by the community to reduce impact on residents and businesses:

### A. Reopen Safely

Reopening safely is key to the success of Cayuga County's recovery, not only to stifle the spread of COVID-19 and further restrictions, but also to instill confidence in concerned consumers whose local dollars are needed to support local businesses and to stimulate the local economy. We must collectively safeguard public health by following social distancing guidelines and reopening protocols.

The Cayuga County Chair has led emergency response and reopening efforts in close coordination with Cayuga County Health Department, Cayuga County Emergency Management Office, regional and state partners. Updates are provided by the County through expanded communication channels including Cayuga County's COVID-19 website and briefings to local municipalities, community partners and the public at large. Frequently changing COVID-19-related information and lack of clarity around State regulations and guidelines has created challenges for local government officials and caused confusion and frustration among local businesses including nonprofits during reopening.

- **Recommendation #1: Enhance Crisis Communication between County, Nonprofit and Business Sectors.** The Task Force recommends intentional communication between the County's Emergency Response team (Admin, Emergency Management, Health) and the nonprofit community through establishment of regularly recurring conference calls. County staff can provide important updates to changing services, operations, reopening guidelines, etc. and respond to questions and concerns of the nonprofit community at this time. Unanswered questions can be researched and addressed from one call to the next. This will ensure consistency of information across the network and may facilitate better compliance, collaboration and resource sharing. Engagement with the business community is similarly recommended through establishment of a public affairs forum or other such venue in partnership with Cayuga Economic Development Agency to facilitate information exchange between the county and business community.

### B. Enhance Service Delivery

The Task Force recognizes the nonprofit community's challenge to stay current on frequently changing regulations, operations and resources during the pandemic. Providers have expressed challenges with keeping track of operational changes among partner agencies during COVID-19.

In Cayuga County, the Human Services Directory is published annually by the Human Services Coalition of Cayuga County (HSC) in partnership with The Citizen. It is widely distributed for free throughout the County including rural areas. The Directory includes a comprehensive listing of services available in the County indexed by Agency and topic. Service providers use the Directory to

make referrals to other agencies. Residents use the Directory to access services. The Directory has become outdated during COVID-19 and does not reflect any changes happening across the network. This has the potential for devastating repercussions for individuals in crisis seeking immediate help who are unable to easily access it.

The Task Force has visited the topic of a single website with up to date information on COVID-19 services at varying times during this process. The primary conclusion, after research into different options, was to boost the use of and access to the existing 211 system. 211 is a free, confidential referral and information helpline and website operating nationwide that connects people of all ages to the essential health and human services they need, 24/7 via phone, text or computer. A recent statewide report of 211 activity from March 1 – May 23 highlights the advantages of 211 during COVID-19:

*211s across the State (exclusive of NYC) have responded to more than 136,000 calls from New Yorkers seeking assistance, information, referrals and reassurance. The system has fully tested its disaster response capacity and can demonstrate its unique capabilities – capacity to add hours and staff to address increased demand...ability to work fully remotely; essential local partnerships that had many local/county leaders turning to 211 as the number to call for a wide array of specialized and general health and human service needs; highly trained, competent and caring call specialists and comprehensive data bases of services that can assist callers with a wide array of issues and concerns.*

A report released by United Way of New York State on July 14, 2020, entitled “211 Answers The Call: COVID-19 Four Month Summary of 211 Calls and Look Ahead”, highlights a key advantage of the 211 system:

*Callers are always so happy that they were able to reach a real person at 2-1-1. With State systems so bogged down by demand, many callers told us that they were happy that we were here because although we could not directly help them with an unemployment claim, we were a friendly reassuring voice that could tell them to be patient, unemployment was experiencing capacity constraints, and that they were not alone.” (reported by 2-1-1 HelpLine, a part of 2-1-1 Finger Lakes Region)*

Cayuga County is part of the Rochester 211 service area managed by Goodwill of the Fingerlakes. 211 is traditionally underutilized in the County but could play a more central role in reopening and rebuilding efforts moving forward. Work ahead in making 211 a useful resource in Cayuga County includes demonstrating the value of 211 to human service providers, making sure provider information and services are up to date with 211, and educating the public to call 211 for service needs.

- **Recommendation #2: Implement 211 Pilot Project Targeting Highest Needs.** The Task Force recommends establishing a 211 subgroup and pilot project to enhance the use of 211 in Cayuga County, concentrating efforts on top household needs including food, housing, substance abuse and mental health services. The United Way and Human Services Coalition working together are positioned to help the nonprofit network make this transition to 211

successfully. Concerted effort to populate 211 with relevant service information should occur prior to public promotion of 211. Campaigns and outreach strategies to promote 211 and the availability of assistance for top household needs should be developed.

In addition to nonprofits updating their information with 211, there remains the need to notify local agencies and providers about frequently updated operational and program changes during COVID-19 and beyond.

- **Recommendation #3. Establish HSC Exchange to Facilitate Information Sharing Across the Service Provider Network.** The Task Force has supported fast-tracking of the HSC Exchange, an information sharing platform for use by service providers. HSC is currently implementing a listserv pilot with emergency service providers and has established guidelines for use and onboarding for the Exchange. Members can opt to receive emails in real time or in daily digest to reduce volume. Cayuga Community College has been instrumental in setting up and hosting the listserv at no cost to the community and assisting with technical issues. HSC has been educating members about expectations and will expand access to the full service provider network in the near future. The true value of the Exchange remains to be seen and will depend on member usage.

Throughout the pandemic, Cayuga County workers, nonprofit service providers, educators, communities of faith, local businesses and many others have provided a critical safety net for vulnerable residents in need. These partners will be instrumental in the community's recovery efforts. Strained budgets and economic uncertainty should drive exploration of shared services, public-private partnerships and new models of service delivery that result in sustained cost savings, reduced reliance on public assistance and economic security and prosperity for County residents.

- **Recommendation #4. Plan Strategically Across the Network of Service Providers.** Cayuga County is rich with a strong array of support services provided by both its governmental agencies and human service providers. Yet, as the County is faced with decreasing fiscal resources, increasing needs, an aging population and other factors still unknown, successful rebuilding after COVID-19 commands a strategic and objective look at service delivery and prioritization of services. The Task Force recommends the County and nonprofit network engage in strategic planning around human services, looking comprehensively at community needs and new ways to leverage resources and provide services more cost-effectively, without compromising quality or desired outcomes.

### **C. Advance Sustainable Solutions**

COVID-19's impact on the local and regional economy continues to unfold but is substantial. Recommendations below are intended to advance positive, sustainable outcomes for Cayuga County's residents, businesses and community at large. Fundamental ingredients necessary to advance sustainable solutions include funding, political support, community engagement and a commitment to social equity among policymakers. Critical resources that may be leveraged to support these efforts include the following:

## ***U.S. 2020 Census Complete Count***

Engagement by the entire community is needed to help achieve a complete and accurate count in the 2020 U.S. Census to help direct federal resources to Cayuga County over the next decade. At the time of this report, the County's response rate of 55.8% lags behind the State's (57.6%) and Nation's (62.1%). Lack of internet access in our rural areas, second homes, transient populations, COVID-19 and other factors are complicating response. Outreach efforts should be enhanced by the County in close coordination with the Cayuga County Complete Count Committee to encourage greater participation by local municipalities, businesses, nonprofits and County staff in promoting the U.S. Census. Cayuga County's federal funding and legislative representation is largely dependent upon a complete and accurate census count.

## ***COVID-19 Funding***

COVID-19 funding for Cayuga County has come from many sources including government stimulus funds, foundation emergency grants, nonprofit microlending and private donations. Local foundations have played a key role in stabilizing the community and will be central to recovery efforts. Funds have been extended to support nonprofit operational capacity needs (technology, PPE, space reconfiguration, etc.) and programming to support community needs around housing, transportation, literacy, food insecurity and more. Access to low-cost capital and flexible financing for small businesses including nonprofits will continue to be important, as will funding to address elevated service needs in the county.

## ***Social Justice Movement***

At the time of this report, a powerful social justice movement is underway in Auburn, Cayuga County and across the country. The Auburn/Cayuga Branch of the NAACP, Harriet Tubman Center for Justice and Peace, the Human Rights Commission and others are leading the way for systemic change through planning, advocacy and community action. The Cayuga County Social Justice Task Force, a broad-based coalition of social justice organizations and public/private entities, was formed to send a message of unity to the community and help advance local efforts to address racism and discrimination. Public forums, peaceful protests, community dialogue, and youth-led events are being organized locally and throughout the region. These efforts should be supported and leveraged to further assess and advance Task Force recommendations.

Inclusive processes to engage people of color, social justice organizations and civil rights leaders in advancing these recommendations should be developed, and opportunities for meaningful participation to remedy racial disparities and racism through systemic change identified, to support advancement of sustainable solutions below.

- **Recommendation #5: Reimagine and Re-Energize the Cayuga County Youth Bureau Board.** Positive youth programming is happening during COVID-19, including summer day camps, online storytelling and youth-led dialogue on racism and social justice. Over the years with dwindling State and Federal funds for youth placed at risk, the Cayuga County Youth Bureau's Board has become inactive. The Task Force recommends the Cayuga County Legislature

reconstitute the Cayuga County Youth Bureau Board to oversee planning, assessment, coordination and development of positive youth programming and delinquency prevention in Cayuga County during this time of elevated needs among the County's youth population. The community should be engaged, and local youth leaders invited to the table, to help shape these efforts and the work of the Board. Oversight and staffing of the Youth Bureau and Board by Cayuga County Department of Social Services should be considered, from the standpoint of connectivity to a larger social services network and opportunity to leverage various funding sources to stretch limited resources further.

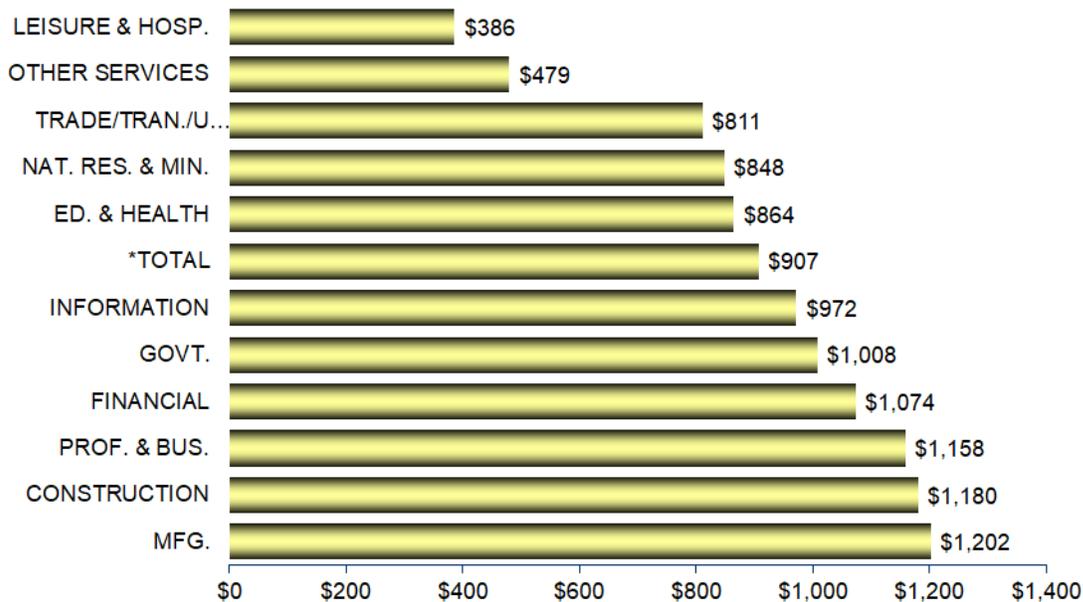
- **Recommendation #6: Strategically Address Homeless and Housing Vulnerability.** The Task Force recommends continuation of planning discussions originating through the County's Health and Human Services Committee workgroup, between the County, homeless housing and service providers to strategically look at preventing and reducing the cost of homelessness. Homeless Management Information System data should be used to analyze conditions and make decisions about changes to services, policies and housing inventory needed to better serve people experiencing homelessness. The County's Homeless Housing Coordinator, DSS, Homeless and Housing Coalition of CNY, local housing and service providers, social justice organizations and officials from the County and City should be included in these planning efforts. Desired outcomes include reduced recidivism, decreased length of homeless episodes, homeless prevention, long-term housing stability and overall cost reduction to the County.
- **Recommendation #7: Prepare the Workforce for Employment Opportunities that Cover Basic Household Survival Needs.** The community's workforce development partners including County Employment and Training, County Department of Social Services, Cayuga Economic Development Agency, Cayuga Community College, Wells College, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES, nonprofit partners, social justice organizations, trade unions, local employers and others should work collaboratively to develop short-term training programs and support services to help unemployed and underemployed individuals re-enter the workforce quickly and access job opportunities that will provide sufficient income to cover their Basic Household Survival Budget<sup>6</sup>. Participation by elected officials in these conversations early on may facilitate critical buy-in needed to advance these efforts through legislative advocacy, policy changes and political influence. Partners are starting to pursue resources and funding for these efforts.

The NYS Department of Labor graph below presents earnings data from the Census Bureau's Quarterly Census of Employment and may help inform these efforts. *(Note: Ag/Farm payables are surveyed differently.)* The minimum wage required to meet Basic Household Survival Needs in Cayuga County for a single adult is \$12.28/hr (\$472/wk), for a senior is \$13.72/hr (528/wk), and for a family of four with infant and toddler is \$36.48 (\$1,403/wk).

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<sup>6</sup> The Survival Budget estimates actual bare-minimum cost of basic necessities (housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and a basic smartphone plan) in New York, adjusted for different counties and household types (United Way Alice Report).

## Average Weekly Earnings by Industry for 2019 4th Quarter in Cayuga County



### **D. Close the Digital Divide**

COVID-19 has magnified disparities across Cayuga County related to digital technology and high speed internet access. Slow/no connectivity has impacted economic development opportunities, educational opportunities, service delivery, access to jobs, ability to work from home, health care and more for Cayuga County residents and businesses. The County's rural extremities are most impacted by the digital divide.

#### **High Speed Internet Access in Cayuga County**

In June 2020, Cayuga County's Chief Information Officer issued a report to the Legislature's Government Operations Committee on efforts to improve rural internet access using broadband and wireless technologies in Cayuga County. Report findings are outlined below.

#### **Cayuga County: Rural Internet Access Projects**

A broadband project is underway and near completion that will serve 7,516 addressed locations across 24 municipalities in Cayuga County (<https://nysbroadband.ny.gov/all-phases-municipality>). This \$38 million dollar project is partially funded with a \$26 million dollar State investment through the NYS Broadband Program grant awarded across five vendors (Frontier Communications, Hughes Network Systems, LLC, New Visions Communications, TDS Telecom and Verizon). Communities benefiting most from this project include Genoa (1,111 addresses), Locke (902 addresses), Conquest (828 addresses), Moravia Town (740 addresses), Moravia Village (714 addresses), Venice (659 addresses), Victory (616 addresses), Summerhill (563 addresses), Montezuma (543 addresses), and Sterling (202 addresses).

In August of 2019, the State announced more funding for rural broadband including funds for Verizon

to serve an additional 1,526 addresses in Cayuga County. Prior State investment includes over \$2 million dollars of NY Connects Program funds (around 2012) to leverage existing tower infrastructure and upgrade DSL services to increase internet speeds in Tompkins and Cayuga Counties including Towns of Ledyard, Genoa, Venice, Scipio, Niles, Sempronius, and Summerhill.

### Underserved Areas of Cayuga County

At the time of this report, Cayuga County has been unable to validate actual locations connected to broadband as a result of infrastructure investments (homes/businesses). This problem is not unique; a report issued April 6, 2020 by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service (CRS), *State Broadband Initiatives: Selected State and Local Approaches as Potential Models for Federal Initiatives to Address the Digital Divide* (<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46307>) provides options to Congress on federal strategies to help address the digital divide, and recognizes the mapping challenges Cayuga County and others are facing:

*Pinpointing where broadband is and is not available in the United States has been an ongoing challenge. Current data on national broadband availability is provided by private telecommunications providers, collected by the FCC, and displayed on the FCC's Fixed Broadband Deployment Map. Difficulty in accurately mapping broadband availability has been attributed to a number of factors...In early 2019, it came to the FCC's attention that inaccuracies in the Fixed Broadband Deployment Map's data may cause broadband deployment to be overstated...and may indicate that areas have access to broadband when in reality, they do not.*

Data presented in FCC's 2019 Broadband Deployment Report (as of 12/31/2017) indicates 78.6% of Cayuga County's population has access to the internet at broadband speeds (fixed 25 Mbps or greater), including 100% of the County's population in urban areas and 60% of the County's population in rural areas. As an alternative to FCC data, Microsoft has created broadband usage maps based on actual download and usage speeds for multiple Microsoft products and services. Microsoft's online mapping tool indicates only 36% of Cayuga County's population is actually using the internet at broadband speeds - calling into question FCC's coverage rate of 78%.

Regardless of these discrepancies one thing is certain - large areas of Cayuga County lack access to high-speed internet. New York State recently completed a broadband mapping program as part of a national initiative to collect information about the availability of high-speed Internet services statewide. Information is accessible through the State's online broadband mapping tool <https://map.nysbroadband.ny.gov> and data website <https://data.ny.gov> (Broadband Availability by Municipality, updated June 10, 2019). According to the State, only 45% of Cayuga County households have access to high-speed fiber primarily within the City of Auburn and surrounding doughnut Towns. High-speed cable is more readily available in rural Cayuga County but not nearly as fast.

- **Recommendation #8: Advance Access to High Speed Internet for all Cayuga County Residents.** The Task Force recommends infrastructure planning, funding advocacy and pursuit of resources as they become available to advance access to digital technology and highspeed internet for all residents of Cayuga County. A clearer picture is needed of coverage, speed, and connectivity, as well as creative efforts to remedy disparities through COVID-19, in order to

effectively plan for future infrastructure development in the County. State and local data should be accessed and mapped by the County to the extent possible to support these efforts, and approach determined for moving this work forward.

### ***Affordability of Technology***

The County's most vulnerable populations including people experiencing homelessness, individuals in recovery and those with severe mental health issues often lack the financial resources to afford cell phones, laptops, computers and other devices that have become so important in this COVID-19 era to maintain human connection, access to services and other resources.

The HEALing Communities Study is purchasing prepaid phones for individuals in recovery who are experiencing homelessness in order to increase access to services, and Unity House advanced a similar project to reach their client base. Having a personal communication device like a basic cell phone that facilitates access to therapy, peer counseling, case management and other critical supports can mean the difference between life and death for high-risk populations.

- **Recommendation #9: Increase Distribution of Cell Phones/Minutes to the County's Most Vulnerable Residents.** The County and nonprofit network should work together to increase access to services and supports among the most vulnerable residents through expanded distribution of cell phones and prepaid phone cards. A coordinated countywide assessment of need for cell phones, smart phones and phone cards with minutes should be made, and a coordinated funding application considered to address countywide needs holistically across the health and human services network.

### ***Role of Public Libraries***

Public libraries often function as community centers and provide a safe, inclusive place for individuals and families from all backgrounds to come together. Historically public libraries have played a central role in helping to close the digital divide and are expected to play an even more integral role throughout the COVID-19 crisis. The Finger Lakes Library System and Cayuga County's public libraries are providing free access to high-speed internet during the pandemic through wi-fi hotspots.

- **Recommendation #10: Leverage Public Libraries to Close the Digital Divide.** Access to computers, laptops, printers, high speed internet and other technologies is integral to individual recovery efforts during COVID-19. Opportunities to leverage Cayuga County's public library system to help close the digital divide, provide access to vital community resources, telehealth services and online learning should be considered. Potential collaborations with workforce development partners should be explored to provide on-site computer literacy training to help people use the technology. An assessment across the Finger Lakes Public Library System should be considered to better understand the potential for public libraries to play a more central role in addressing the region's digital divide.

## E. Support and Advance an Enhanced Community Response

The Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force establishes a vehicle through which community needs can be evaluated and addressed on an on-going basis to create an Enhanced Community Response and reduce negative impact of the pandemic on residents and businesses in the County. The following recommendations are made to advance these efforts:

- **Recommendation #11: Develop Implementation Plans to Advance Recommendations.** The Task Force recognizes the need to develop implementation plans and strategies to advance proposed recommendations, including next steps, public input, resources needed, involved parties, timeline and priority level. As systems and resources are evaluated in response to changing community needs, and new systems and infrastructure developed, opportunities to remedy racial disparities and racism through systemic change should be evaluated. Inclusive processes to engage Cayuga County's social justice organizations and people of color impacted by racism and discrimination should be developed, and opportunities for meaningful participation should be built into the process early on.
- **Recommendation #12: Continue to Monitor and Respond to COVID-19 Impacts.** The Task Force recognizes the importance of on-going assessment and analysis of COVID-19 impacts. Key metrics included in this report should be updated regularly, and additional metrics identified to further analyze current conditions and trends in Cayuga County. Existing efforts to monitor and assess COVID-19 impacts among community boards and agencies should be identified and leveraged; duplication of effort should be avoided. Sub-groups should be formed to advance recommendations, and progress tracked to ensure implementation continues to move forward. The Task Force recognizes the need for on-going public feedback on this assessment and its recommendations and extends an open invitation to the broader community for commentary via email: [taskforce@unitedwayofcayugacounty.org](mailto:taskforce@unitedwayofcayugacounty.org).

## IV. APPENDICES

- Nonprofit Survey Response Summary
- ALICE Report County Snapshot
- Foundation Grant Awards

DRAFT

## COVID-19 COMMUNITY IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS JUNE 2020

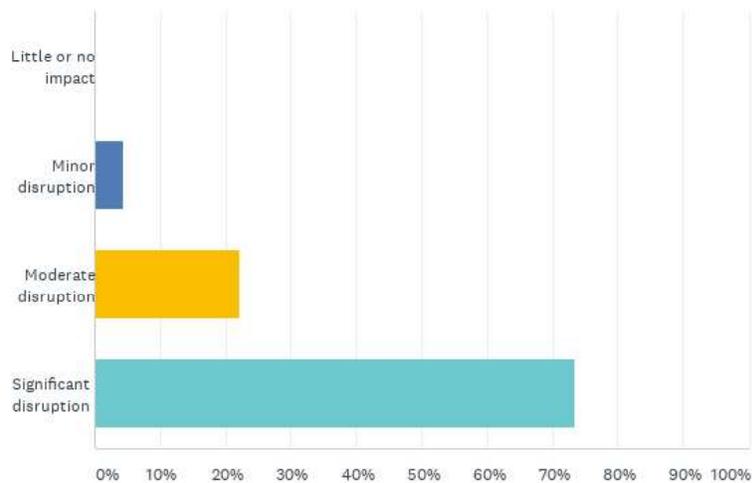
A survey of Cayuga County's area nonprofits was conducted in late April through mid- May 2020. The survey was a project of the Cayuga County COVID-19 Community Task Force to gain an in-depth understanding of the sector's current and anticipated needs. Additionally, since the city of Auburn had received CDBG stimulus money through the CARES Act, questions were crafted to help them in their decision-making.

Surveys were emailed directly to organizations and available through a web link. There was a total of 16 questions (not including respondent information). Some 90 responses were received.

Of those responding, 81% were currently providing services during the pandemic and while the state had initiated a pause. Fifty-two of these organizations have budgets under \$1 million.

Some 73% stated they were experiencing a significant disruption in services/operations. Another 22% were undergoing moderate disruptions. Sixty-one (61) percent of the respondents serve a population that prohibited them from shutting down. The important note here is that our local human service agencies were continuing to serve the area's most vulnerable and those experiencing need (some for the very first time in their lives) during a difficult and challenging time for the organization.

Q3 Please estimate the level of impact COVID-19 is currently having on the programs, services, and/or general operations of your organization.

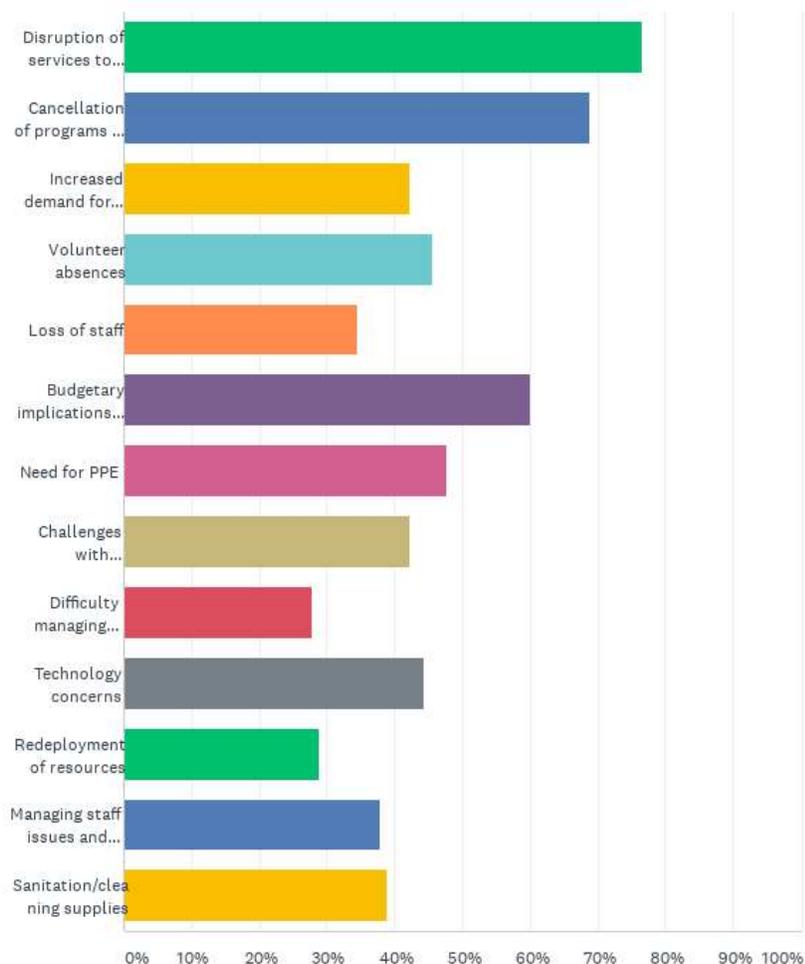


## Current Impact

Some 77% of the respondents' state that services to clients/community have been disrupted during this time. Further, 42% are seeing an increased demand for some services. The ability to serve clients has been impacted in a variety of ways including some services being shut down entirely, volunteers unable or afraid to serve, an inability to meet clients face-to-face, an impact on the quality of the service being delivered ("stretched thin"), and the lack of internet access in parts of the county.

Survey participants noted that changes in partner agencies services, hours, closing and so on plays an important role in their ability to serve as well. Forty agencies (44%) reported a significant disruption because of this with another 23 (26%) reporting a moderate disruption.

Q6 Of the following, what has your organization experienced or do you anticipate experiencing?



## Nonprofit Needs

Many technology needs were identified throughout the survey – both current and future---to include laptops, web cams, software, scanners, teleconferencing software, Internet access (organization and client), technology assistance, and hot spots for access. The lack of technology in many cases made (makes) providing services during a shut down extremely difficult.

In addition to technology, PPE (cost and availability) was among the top three needs listed.

When we look to serving clients---many do not have smart phones or have exhausted their minutes. This is a barrier as they need to call in advance for an appointment or when picking up food, and so forth. Depending on where you live, Internet access remains an issue and with the libraries shut down this has been an additional barrier for many.

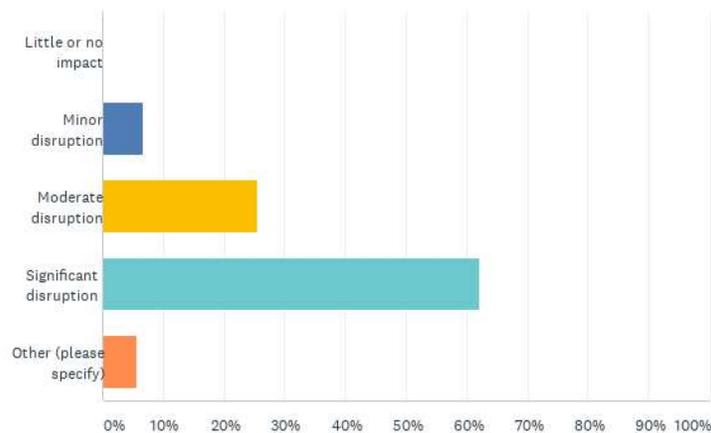
Organizations were asked about what needs they saw as priorities in the community. The top five needs were:

- Emergency Food
- Mental health/Substance abuse services
- Domestic Violence
- Child Care
- Housing/Homelessness Assistance

## Trends

Not only have our nonprofits been significantly impacted by the Corona Virus Pandemic they will continue to be affected for the next six months and, foreseeably, beyond.

Q4 Please estimate the level of impact COVID-19 is anticipated to have on the programs, services, and/or general operations of your organization over the next six months.



Trends identified by the survey include:

- **Agency Operations**

The impact on nonprofit agency operations include a shift in available hours for conducting business, the closure of agency buildings to the public, and staff working remotely.

Additionally, Agencies have continually adapted to implement organizational changes to adhere to state regulation's regarding COVID-19. At the time of this survey the need for PPE and cleaning supplies was a need and resources for reopening.

Communication and coordination were identified as a trend throughout the survey. Specifically, communication among nonprofits and government

When asked what resources agencies could share with other organizations at this time, space was the top response.

- **Disruption of Services**

More than 70% of survey participants indicated a significant disruption in services. The most common trends detected in the survey related to the disruption of services were cancellation of programs, change in delivery of services to clients, and technology obstacles

Technology was the greatest resource need identified, which includes software equipment, teleconferencing, and remote access. Additionally, nonprofit needs for computers and laptops are essential for service delivery to clients.

The challenges of delivering programs and services for agencies in the survey were: not being able to see clients, using virtual platforms, the cancellation of programs and volunteer availability. Many agencies are seeing an increase need of almost 50% for services and the impact is greatest among our most vulnerable population. Adults with low level reading or limited English trying to navigate information around COVID-19, social distancing, unemployment, and homeschooling has been difficult.

Communicating current information about COVID and agency changes to the Senior population was another challenge identified.

- **Loss of Budget Revenue**

Agencies have cancelled fundraising events and are expecting that fundraising will be limited for the next six months. The increase need of services and the reduced ability to raise funds is a financial strain.

The need of assistance for agencies was highlighted throughout the survey. Forty-four agencies had applied for the Payday Protection Program (PPP), 27 for the United Way Emergency Grant Program, and 13 for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). Thirty-three were looking into other areas of financial assistance. Additionally, it was noted that agencies have had a delay in funding (i.e. grant payments) and loss of funding (events cancelled, fees for services) due to the economic impact of COVID-19.

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## **Summary**

This is a short synopsis of the survey and its results and we are happy to make the data available to those wishing to see results in their entirety. We will close with this comment: “The services continue—we are in this together.”

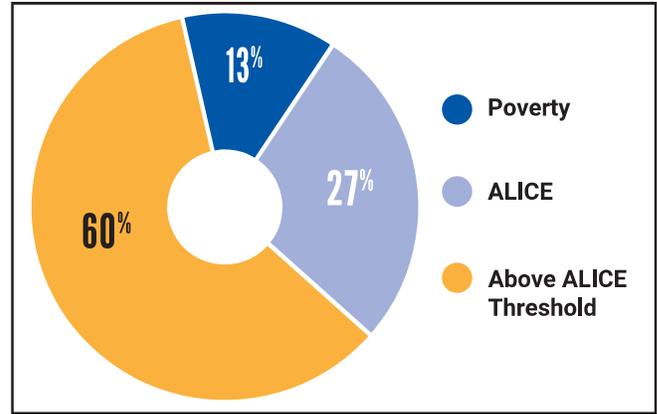
# AT-A-GLANCE: REST OF NY STATE

2018 Point-in-Time Data

Population: 6,246,108 • Number of Counties: 50 • Number of Households: 2,518,642

## How many households are struggling?

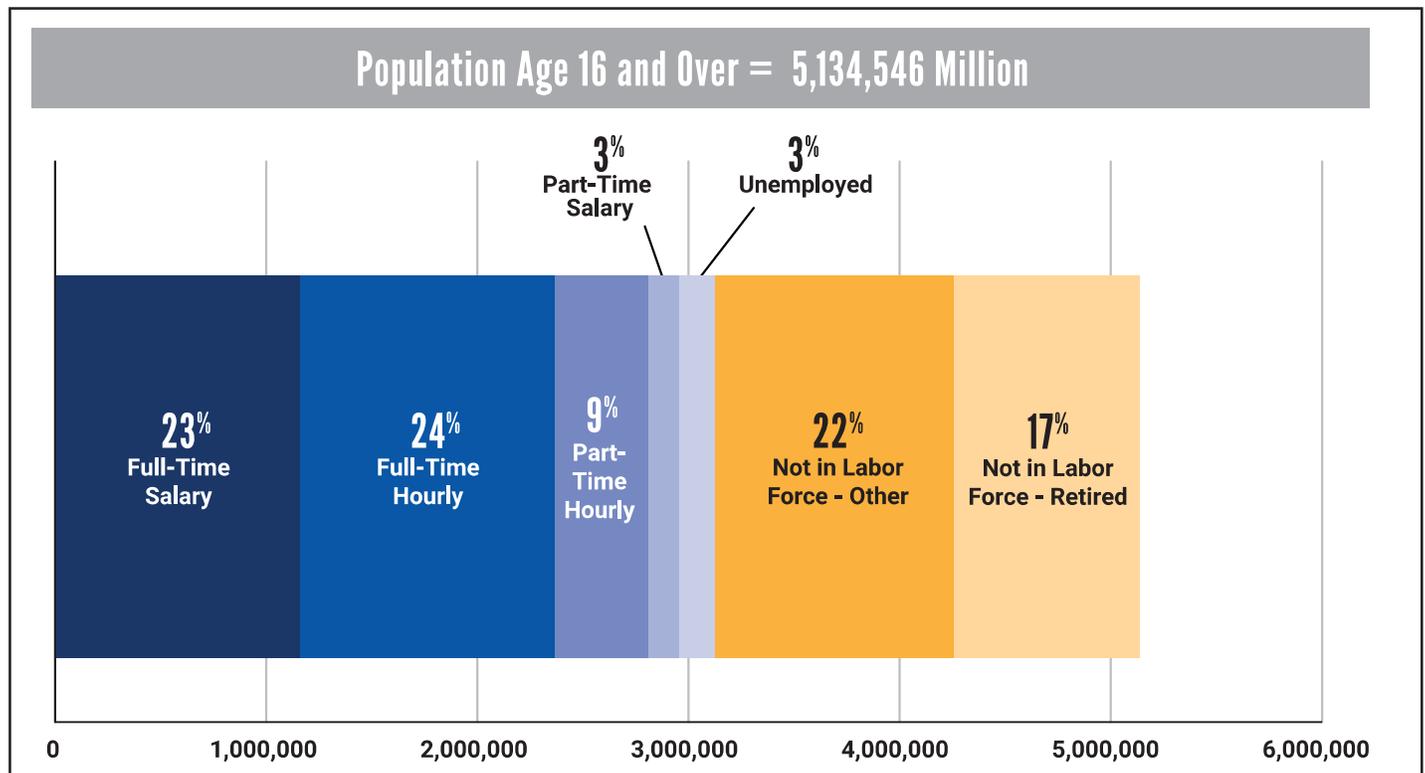
ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, comprises households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but less than the basic cost of living for the state (the ALICE Threshold). Of New York Rest of State's 2,518,642 households, 326,476 earned below the Federal Poverty Level (13%) in 2018, and another 690,876 (27%) were ALICE.



## What does the Rest of State labor force look like?

A 2018 overview of the labor status of Rest of State's 5,134,546 working-age adults (people age 16 and over) shows that 62% of adults were in the labor force (blue bars), yet more than half were workers who were paid hourly. Hourly paid jobs tend to have lower wages, fewer benefits, and less stability. In addition, 39% of adults were outside the labor force (gold bars), either because they were retired or because they had stopped looking for work.

## Labor Status, Population Age 16 and Over, Rest of State, 2018



Note: Data for full- and part-time jobs is only available at the national level; these national rates (51% of full-time workers and 75% of part-time, hourly workers) have been applied to the total Rest of State workforce to calculate the breakdown shown in this figure. Full-time represents a minimum of 35 hours per week at one or more jobs for 48 weeks per year.

# What does it cost to afford the basic necessities?

The average ALICE Household Survival Budget in Rest of State was \$24,552 for a single adult, \$27,432 for a single senior, and \$72,960 for a family of four in 2018 — significantly more than the Federal Poverty Level of \$12,140 for a single adult and \$25,100 for a family of four.



Household Survival Budget, Rest of State, Average, 2018			
	SINGLE ADULT	SENIOR (1 ADULT)	2 ADULTS, 1 INFANT, 1 PRESCHOOLER
<b>Monthly Costs</b>			
Housing	\$640	\$640	\$889
Child Care	\$-	\$-	\$1,366
Food	\$273	\$232	\$826
Transportation	\$365	\$319	\$834
Health Care	\$212	\$505	\$705
Technology	\$55	\$55	\$75
Miscellaneous	\$186	\$208	\$553
Taxes	\$315	\$327	\$832
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$2,046</b>	<b>\$2,286</b>	<b>\$6,080</b>
<b>ANNUAL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,552</b>	<b>\$27,432</b>	<b>\$72,960</b>
<i>Hourly Wage*</i>	<i>\$12.28</i>	<i>\$13.72</i>	<i>\$36.48</i>

\*Full-time wage required to support this budget

Rest of State Counties, 2018		
COUNTY	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	% ALICE & POVERTY
Albany	126,578	40%
Allegany	18,009	50%
Broome	75,539	44%
Cattaraugus	32,079	42%
Cayuga	30,083	42%
Chautauqua	53,429	45%
Chemung	34,325	42%

Rest of State Counties, 2018		
COUNTY	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	% ALICE & POVERTY
Chenango	20,616	40%
Clinton	31,392	37%
Columbia	25,243	36%
Cortland	17,685	43%
Delaware	19,030	45%
Erie	390,341	40%
Essex	15,425	38%

## Rest of State Counties, 2018

COUNTY	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	% ALICE & POVERTY
Franklin	19,088	43%
Fulton	22,439	40%
Genesee	23,681	33%
Greene	17,117	51%
Hamilton	1,124	56%
Herkimer	24,583	42%
Jefferson	44,657	41%
Lewis	10,242	41%
Livingston	23,746	39%
Madison	26,127	39%
Monroe	301,668	42%
Montgomery	19,665	47%
Niagara	89,765	37%
Oneida	88,871	41%
Onondaga	185,046	40%
Ontario	44,079	36%
Orleans	16,333	41%
Oswego	46,270	41%
Otsego	23,556	43%
Rensselaer	64,614	34%
St. Lawrence	41,680	44%
Saratoga	94,156	33%
Schenectady	55,262	45%

## Rest of State Counties, 2018

COUNTY	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	% ALICE & POVERTY
Schoharie	12,559	45%
Schuyler	7,304	41%
Seneca	13,522	39%
Steuben	40,578	36%
Sullivan	28,900	46%
Tioga	20,045	37%
Tompkins	40,250	44%
Ulster	69,154	41%
Warren	28,007	40%
Washington	24,009	44%
Wayne	35,927	34%
Wyoming	15,815	37%
Yates	9,029	43%

**Sources:** *Point-in-Time Data:* American Community Survey, 2018. **ALICE Demographics:** ALICE Threshold, 2018; American Community Survey, 2018. **Labor Status:** American Community Survey, 2018; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2018. **Budget:** AAA, 2018; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2018; American Community Survey, 2018; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018—Consumer Expenditure Surveys; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019—Consumer Expenditure Survey; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018—Occupational Employment Statistics; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2016—Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2019; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2019—Medicare - Chronic Conditions; Federal Highway Administration, 2017; Feeding America, 2019; Fowler, 2019; Internal Revenue Service, 2020; Internal Revenue Service—FICA, 2020; New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2019; The Zebra, 2018; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2018—Official USDA Food Plans; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018—Fair Market Rents; Walczak, 2019. For more details, see the Methodology Overview at [UnitedForALICE.org/Methodology](https://UnitedForALICE.org/Methodology)

## **Cayuga County Foundation Grant Awards COVID Related Needs (Partial Listing)**

### **United Way of Cayuga County's COVID-19 Mini Grant Fund**

-  
Over \$44,400 was awarded to 15 agencies:

- Auburn Hunger Task Force - \$1,500 for increased expenses for increased meals and food pantry needs
- Auburn Rescue Mission - \$5,000 rental payments, utilities, and maintenance costs
- CAP - \$3,500 technology needs and PPE
- Cayuga Counseling Services - \$2426 – fund PPE
- CHAD - \$2,000 purchase needed equipment and technology for remote work
- Chapel House - \$3,150 - laptops and sanitation equipment
- Critical Support Services - \$3,500 equipment & technology purchases
- Gavras Center - \$4,800 for Day Habilitation modifications to treat disabled individual's with COVID 19
- Girl Scouts NYPENN - \$1,000 – financial assistance to girls and families within Cayuga County
- Loretto – The Commons - \$3,500 employee support in such areas as childcare, transportation, food, etc.
- Loves with Love Program (Holy Family Church) - \$500 to purchase food and help them maintain their program
- Mozaic \$5,000 cleaning supplies and PPE equipment, food at the supervised residences
- Nick's Ride 4 Friends - \$2,500 – Transportation to treatments and operations
- Salvation Army - \$3,500 – support food operations
- YMCA - \$2,600 sanitizing and cleaning equipment for childcare and wellness areas

### **CAYUGA COUNTY COVID-19 FUND**

#### **Auburn Rescue Mission – \$15,000**

Supply food, household items and financial support to keep families moving forward

#### **Booker T. Washington Community Center – \$650**

Provide properly packaged food for local residents

#### **Cayuga Centers - \$2,000**

Provide masks and face shields for employees to use during home visits and trauma interventions

#### **Cayuga Community Health Network - \$2,608**

Provide wellness kits including face masks, hand sanitizer and information in Spanish/ English about COVID-19 prevention to farm workers

**Cayuga County Homsite Development Corporation – \$10,000**

Offer low and moderate-income renters and homeowners funds for emergency rent and home repairs

**Central New York TomatoFest – \$18,000**

Partner with other organizations to bring food to residents of Cayuga County

**Food Bank of Central New York – \$1,320**

Create emergency food boxes that will be distributed by Cayuga County’s Office for the Aging

**Mozaic (Formerly ARC of Seneca-Cayuga) - \$10,000**

Supply employees with PPE and cleaning supplies as they provide aid to Cayuga County residents

**Peachtown Elementary School - \$1,200**

Hire Wells College education majors as study buddies/tutors to work with individual students via video conferencing

**Peachtown Elementary School - \$4,800**

Continue the virtual tutor/study buddy program which pairs Wells education majors with families in need of educational support; Hire a qualified consultant to work with teaching staff over the summer months to develop a vibrant and effective online learning structure

**Transportation Project for Cayuga County – \$2,000**

Transport senior and disabled citizens of Cayuga County to medical appointments and groceries

**Unity House of Cayuga County – \$700**

Provide phone cards for clients to participate in telehealth sessions, online classes and check-in meetings

**WCNY Public Broadcasting - \$2,500**

Broadcast the TV Classroom Network, which provides Pre-K-12 instruction in key academic subject areas by Syracuse-area teachers

**WOMEN'S FUND OF CENTRAL NEW YORK**

**King Ferry Food Pantry, Inc. - \$3,000**

Provide a one-month supply of personal hygiene products and vitamins to women in our community

City of Auburn Community Development Block Grant-Corona Virus Funding (CDBG-CV)

COVID Response, Preparation or Prevention Operational Expenses for Agencies that serve Low to Moderate Income Persons	Program	Funding Provided
Aurora of CNY	COVID-19 Response for people with hearing/vision loss	\$14,516.85
Booker T Washington Center	BTW Technology Updates Response to COVID	\$16,359.00
Cayuga Counseling Services	COVID Telehealth/Out-patient Mental Health Clinic	\$20,000.00
Chapel House	Social Distance Space Rehab for Homeless Shelter	\$4,000.00
Gavras Center	Keeping IRA Residents Safe From COVID-19	\$3,000.00
Auburn Hunger Task Force	Soup Wheels: Safely delivering meals to food insecure individuals	\$13,975.79
Literacy Volunteers	PPE Equipment Purchase	\$2,000.00
Mosaic	Covid Safety and Prevention Measures	\$6,700.00
Auburn YMCA	PPE wipes	\$5,360.00
SCAT VAN	Van repairs for safe transportation of seniors and disabled individuals	\$3,540.36
	<b>Total Operational Funding Provided</b>	<b>\$89,452.00</b>

COVID Response, Preparation or Prevention Programs Needs	Program	Funding Provided
Auburn Central School District	Feeding Auburn Enlarged City School District Children: Transporting food to food insecure children during summer COVID period	\$20,000.00
Community Action Programs	Domestic Violence Intervention Program: Rental and utility assistance to DV victims impacted by COVID	\$3,000.00
Community Action Programs	Homeless Intervention/Housing Vulnerable Program (Rental Assistance, Security Deposit and Emergency Shelter funding)	\$5,000.00
Community Action Programs	Volunteer Transportation Program-COVID	\$5,000.00
Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes	Auburn Housing Assistance (Rental)	\$8,000.00
Chapel House	COVID Rapid Rehousing Response Program	\$15,972.00
E. John Gavras Center	Equal Access to Transportation Program for vulnerable individuals during COVID	\$5,028.00
Legal Aid	Legal Aid for Victims of Violence in Shelter - Impacted by Corona Virus	\$5,000.00
Literacy Volunteers of Cayuga County, Inc.	COVID Workforce Literacy: Assisting individuals with workplace skills to apply for jobs	\$8,000.00
Rescue Mission	Auburn Rescue Mission Virtual Programs: Conducting virtual programming in response to COVID	\$5,000.00
	<b>Total Programming Funding provided</b>	<b>\$80,000.00</b>