DuPage Tapestry

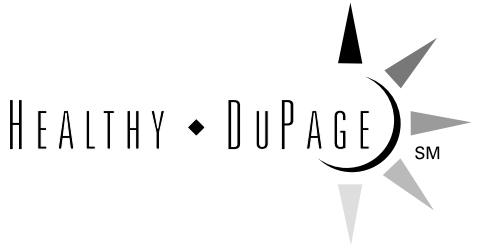
2001

Interrelated Factors Affecting a Healthy DuPage

$25.00

DuPage Tapestry 2001

Interrelated Factors Affecting a Healthy DuPage



Prepared by HEALTHY DUPAGE

with the assistance of and for the people

of DuPage County

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The Healthy DuPage Board of Directors is composed of respected and knowledgeable community leaders. Its charge is to oversee the healthy communities initiative and to ensure that the vision, values, and integrity of the process are upheld. The Board adds "voice" to the community by using their gifts, talents, and influence to create the positive changes needed to measurably improve our health and well-being.

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The Indicator Task Force mandate is to create a useable tool that will function as a resource for groups and organizations across the county, helping to keep all groups informed of the current trends within the community.

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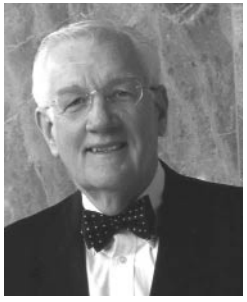
A healthy community works together.

A letter from the Healthy DuPage Chair

PREFACE



As a business leader, I believe that businesses have a responsibility to take an active role in their communities. Businesses supply jobs, revenue, and an economic resource that supports quality of life. However, that is not enough to ensure our employees lead rich, fulfilling, and productive lives. Communities supply the homes, social structures, and the spiritual base that allow employees and their families a complete life. How well communities manage natural resources, medical challenges, and educational opportunities also determines the quality of life for our employees.

That is why I have personally been involved in Healthy DuPage and the healthy communities movement. This is an initiative designed to improve the health and quality of life for our citizens. My interest and participation in Healthy DuPage stems from my fundamental belief that the various parts of our community are interrelated. Our efforts to weave these interrelated variables into programs to improve our health will help us maintain and improve our community. By working together we can ensure that we live in a healthy community.

C. William Pollard, Chair, Healthy DuPage
Chairman, the ServiceMaster Company

A healthy community collectively shapes its future.

A letter from the Healthy DuPage Executive Director

PREFACE

Healthy Communities is an international grassroots initiative that focuses efforts on understanding and acting on the systemic connections and underlying causes that make communities healthy. Healthy DuPage, an expression of the international movement, is dedicated to creating local partnerships that measurably improve community health and well-being. It is aimed at achieving measurable results through the collaborative efforts of individuals and organizations in all community sectors—educational, business, health care, governmental, human services and spiritual arenas.

By collectively selecting and investigating the complex weave of physical, social, economic and environmental factors that determine our community health, together we can monitor, improve, and sustain quality of life. By focusing on policies and actions that address the social determinants of health, we can shape our future.

This document is one of the resources for this collaborative effort. By assembling information about our collectively discovered indicators, this document serves as a guidepost, an informed beginning for further cohesive action in maintaining the good health of DuPage County.

This document is a part of our effort to fulfill our mission—to stimulate and encourage collaborative action and efficient use of resources as we work together toward creating and sustaining a healthy community for our children and ourselves.

Tapestry DuPage 2001 is intended to be a living document. As our county continues to grow and improve, so too will this document. We welcome your ongoing feedback.

Donell Bullock, Executive Director

Healthy DuPage

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We are privileged to have a community filled with visionary individuals, caring organizations, dedicated government organizations, and conscientious businesses. In compiling this resource many members of the DuPage community have been generous with their time, information, and passion. During our investigations we have met with people dedicated to their work and committed to envisioning the content and compiling accurate data for this document. This has been a truly collaborative effort at defining DuPage County, its trends, and the concerns we all share for it.

These individuals have been instrumental in the formation, direction, content, and creation of this document.

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This document consists of individual indicators, each of which looks at factors that shape the health of DuPage County. The indicators are grouped into nine sets of related information for reference.

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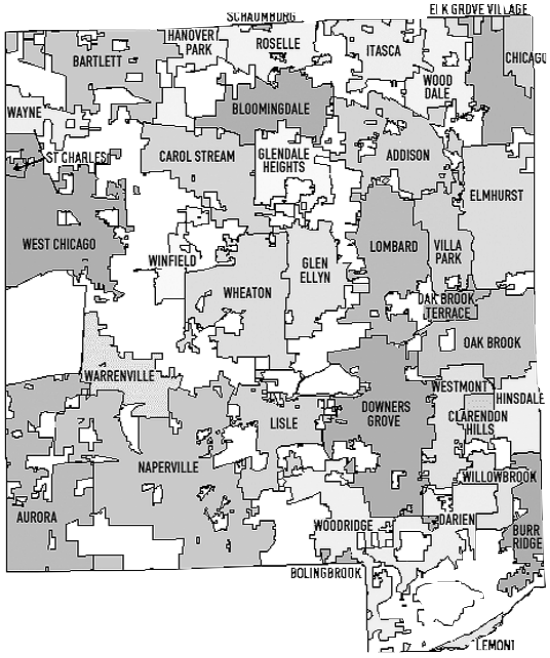
DuPage Today



Located 40 miles west of Chicago, a snapshot of DuPage County shows us:

Population: 904,161
Area: 334 square miles
Population density: 2,707.1 people per square mile
Majority population: 78.7% White
Median household money income: $62,825 (1997 model-based estimate)
Age distribution: 73.3% over age 18
Avg life expectancy: 77.7 years (1999)

All data are 2000 data with exceptions noted.

The Changing Population of DuPage County

This area appears on European maps as early as 1782. Through the early 1800's, settlers began to fill the prairie with homesteads and communities that drove out the Native Americans. From the 1840s until the 1950s, population growth in the area was fairly steady. Since the 1960s, population growth has been about 100,000 people every decade.

This growth has caused a constant weaving of new cultures and attitudes into the existing community. During the 1860s, about one-third of the population was foreign-born. By the 1920s, suburbanization of Chicago resulted in a DuPage County population that was predominantly "non-native" (came from outside the area). Whether the population growth has been largely German-born (as it was in the 1850s) or Latino (as the 2000 Census shows us), DuPage County has been enriched by the cultures of its new residents.

What is Healthy DuPage?

Healthy Communities Timeline

1986 — World Health Organization focuses on health promotion and disease prevention.

1989 — US Healthy Cities Program formed.

1993 — First International Conference on Healthy Cities and Communities.

1997 — DuPage County explores creating a county-wide healthy communities effort.

Healthy DuPage is a grassroots, regional-planning initiative launched by individuals who care about the quality of life in our communities. Launched in 1997, an Initializing Committee was formed of representatives from various public, private and non-profit organizations.

This Initializing Committee reorganized itself into the current 20-member Healthy DuPage Board of Directors and its 500 community stakeholders. The Board has worked with the community stakeholders to link DuPage assets to a future envisioned by the community. Conversations have been held—visioning meetings around the community, sessions with community stakeholders, and within action teams—to determine:

- What are the social, environmental, and economic factors that contribute to the high quality of life in DuPage County?
- Building from these strengths, what do we need in DuPage County to make our quality of life better?

Through these conversations, the Board of Directors identified specific strategic themes that can substantively move the community towards an enhanced quality of life. From this rich and broad perspective, indicators were selected to measure our progress toward or away from our shared vision. These indicators can be used to create a culture of effective countywide planning, data collection, and analysis.

Looking at the DuPage Tapestry

Goals of DuPage Tapestry 2001

1. To provide information important to all the diverse groups of people in DuPage County.
2. To provide measures of community systems so residents may, together, track community trends and engage in actions to make a healthier DuPage County.
3. To show links and interactions among community systems, such as how the economy impacts environmental and social issues, and vice versa.
4. To create a culture of effective countywide planning, data collection, and analysis.

Many factors determine the health of a community. The interconnected, interwoven nature of these factors allows us to compare DuPage County with a tapestry. A tapestry is made of a combination of weaving and embroidery that tells a story. The tapestry that is Healthy DuPage is woven from a strong background. The detail, the story, is embroidered on that background by many hands, using the skills unique to each contributor.

A healthy community weaves a tapestry of social, physical, and economic fabric that nurtures its members even as they repair its worn places and embellish its design. These factors are connected, not in a linear way, but rather like a tapestry—any thread we examine makes up a part of a picture and contributes to the whole story of the tapestry.

Yet because the overall picture for DuPage County is one of success, it is easy to be blinded by the colors or absorbed by the story. It is also difficult to remember that tapestry work is slow work. Inspired by our success, we may too quickly add to the tapestry, stepping back to discover we have destroyed the symmetry, rather than adding to its beauty.

To keep DuPage County a strong, and a nurturing place in which to live, we must look closely at the detail, the individual stitching, to understand how our community works. Then we must look back at the work as a whole to understand how our new stitches will affect the story told by the tapestry. We must anticipate areas of wear and, through collaborative effort, weave into our actions, initiatives, and projections the threads that help us maintain our quality of life.

A tapestry depends for strength and beauty on its weaving and on the skill with which the individual threads are applied. Likewise, people depend upon their connections with others for fuller, more accomplished living. A skillfully interwoven fabric of health is the gift we wish to bequeath to and improve upon for future residents of DuPage County.

How to Use this Document

Recognizing a Good Indicator

A meaningful and useful indicator usually reflects a combination of idealism (what we would like to measure) and pragmatism (what we are able to measure). Good indicators share the following characteristics:

1. Both experts and non-experts easily understand them.
2. They show information considered important by diverse groups.
3. Some provide a guide toward the desired quality of life with a clear direction that reflects progress.
4. Some show position on a scale and promote community dialogue on matters about which there is disagreement.
5. Some point toward actions under individual control, while others point toward community decision-making.
6. They provide a basis for evaluating equity in the distribution of quality-of-life benefits.
7. Data for most indicators are readily and affordably available from a credible source. If data are not currently available, methods exist for obtaining data in the future.

For this document, the Healthy DuPage Board of Directors selected those indicators that help us to keep our tapestry vibrant and alive. Some indicators show us where we are; others show us the direction in which we seem to be going. Indicators such as household income levels or low birth rates are directly quantifiable. Other indicators, such as assessments of mental health, or alcohol use by teen-agers, may depend on surveys and other indirect measures or less quantifiable information. For some indicators, data are not available or are not currently collected.

In studying the statistical data in the indicators, there is a tendency to focus on the details and initiate changes that do not improve the whole picture, that miss the story. Yet without the detail, we cannot understand current health factors. Or, blinded by the story, we miss the details that enable us to make efficient changes. This document both embroiders the statistical detail for each indicator and weaves a picture that provides the connections between them. It requires moving back and forth between the detail and the story.

The Indicator Task Force accepted the charge of designing an approach that would turn selected indicators into a functional tool. The result is this document, designed to provide community residents with countywide information in their quest to better the health of their community. It is, however, a first attempt, a tapestry on which we will continue to work. Data are constantly changing and each year we hope to add more threads, to embroider on the knowledge we have gained with this first effort. We invite your critiques and your suggestions for improvements in future versions.

Within each of the nine indicator sets are individual indicators that describe the health of DuPage County. Each indicator has four sections: About the Indicator, Observations, Benchmark Data, and Tapestry. Each indicator set has additional Community Commentary and Sources sections.

About this Indicator: This section provides the reader with the background information needed to understand the statistics—how they were collected, explanations of terms used, sources, statistically significant problems with the data, and why particular data were or were not used.

Observations:

Each indicator includes some discussion of the data as they relate to our shared vision of a Healthy DuPage. We have defined the data for these indicators with the help of experts in the community. However, time has limited our search. For example, although new data from the 2000 Census is just becoming available, much of the analysis on a county-by-county basis has not yet been released. We may discover the best data to define an indicator in succeeding years.

Benchmark Data:

Data are more easily interpreted when there is a context in which to understand them. To that end, benchmark data are included where available. These benchmark data compare DuPage County to Lake County, a peer county in Illinois. In subsequent years, comparative data from more than one peer county will be more meaningful. Data from the Chicago Metro region, the 6-county region, the state, and the nation are also used as benchmark data.

Tapestry:

This section leads the discussion back to causes, reasons for trends, and connections to other indicators. By the nature of statistics, we tend to find ourselves focusing on the details, or threads, of the facts at hand. However, this tapestry discussion reminds us that data, no matter how well conceived in their collection, must be looked at within the whole tapestry of DuPage County. In this first attempt, these connections are only implied. In subsequent versions, this section should contain more detail.

Community Commentary:

Each indicator set closes with the thoughts of content experts for each set. He or she addresses those issues that are most illuminating when looking at our tapestry of a healthy community.

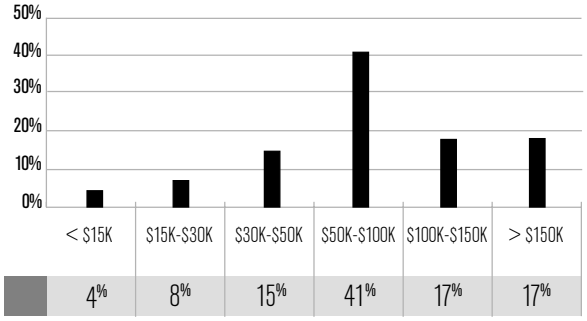
Sources:

Sources are listed in the text with the data. Data were collected online from February-May, 200,1 and in that time some web pages changed dramatically. Consequently, this section provides contact information information, not bibliographical information, about the sources.

Our economy will remain **strong** and will afford opportunities that enable all individuals to realize their full human **potential.**

We are a relatively affluent county.

DuPage County Estimated Household Income (2000)



Source: Solucient (formerly HCIA-Sachs) database

Median Household Income (2000):

DuPage County: $62,825
Lake County: $63,354

Source: US Census Bureau (1997 model-based estimate)

About the Indicator:

Household rather than per capita income is used because households consume certain goods as households rather than as individuals. Here, household income is estimated based on 1990 census data (not actual 2000 census data). The median household income for the 6-County region includes Lake, McHenry, Kane, DuPage, Cook, and Will Counties.

Observations:

The distribution of household income shows a clustering that is above the median income level for the area.

Benchmark Data:

DuPage and Lake Counties have similar median houshold incomes. According to the US Department of Commerce, the estimated median household income for the nation in 1999 was $40,816. The estimated median household income for the Midwest in 1999 was $42,679. With 75% of DuPage households with incomes exceeding $50,000, the distribution of incomes appears substantially higher than the distribution for the nation or the Midwest.

The Tapestry:

Income measures the ability of individual households to obtain needed goods and services and for the community to provide needed public goods and services (such as infrastructure, public safety, and education). It is clear that a large portion of our households most likely can obtain what they need. It is equally clear that a smaller but significant portion of our residents most likely cannot. For example, the average cost of a home in DuPage County is almost certainly a financial burden for many of our residents—a fact that is reflected in other indicators.

Many lower income families cannot afford typical homes in DuPage County.

Price of an Affordable Home for a Family of Moderate Means (2000)

$150,400 (conventional)
or $133,300 (FHA)

Source: DuPage Homeownership Center

Prices of Dupage County Homes (2000)

Median price $178,750
Average price $218,260

Source: DuPage Realtors Association of the Western Suburbs

About the Indicator:

One way to view the affordability of housing is to look at the cost of home ownership and who can afford housing in the area. Federal guidelines assume that housing costs that are more than one third of household income place a financial burden on the household. For this indicator, a lower income family is defined as one that has 80% (or less) of the median income for the area—about $50,200 for a family of four.

Observations:

In 2000, a family of four with an income of $50,200, no debt, and with a 5% down payment, could afford a home of $150,400 with a conventional loan, or $133,500 with an FHA loan. The median price of a DuPage County home in 2000 was considerably above these amounts.

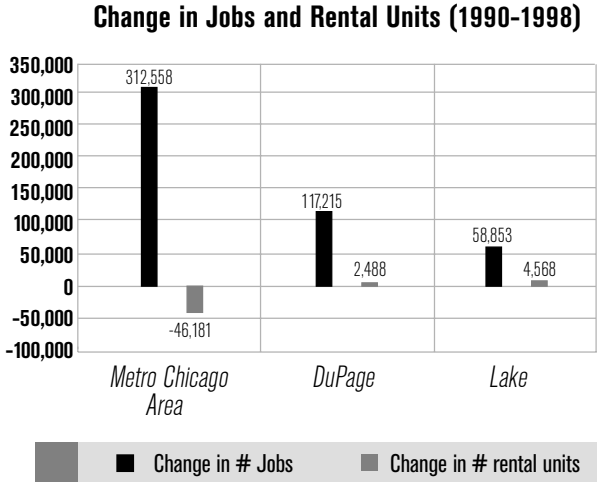
Benchmark Data:

These data should be tracked over time for both median income and lower income families. The 2000 census shows that 76.5% of households in DuPage County own their own home. This is a 2% increase over 1990.

The Tapestry:

Buying a home is the American Dream—the single largest investment made by families in the US, and frequently the foundation for retirement planning for many families. However, the further below the median one's income falls, the greater the difficulty in finding housing, particularly in buying a home. In DuPage County, 41,513 households had an income lower than $30,000 a year.

Rental housing supply has not kept pace with the rising number of jobs.



Source: Regional Realities, Chicago Metropolis 2020

About the Indicator:

The number of jobs compared to the number of rental units provides a measure of the housing available to workers who cannot afford or do not want to buy a home. These data reflect the changes in jobs and rental units from 1990 to 1998.

Observations:

In DuPage County from 1990 to 1998, 117,215 incremental jobs were created while only 2,488 incremental rental units were created.

Benchmark Data:

According to *Regional Realities*, produced by Chicago Metropolis 2020, the Chicago Metro Area as a whole has experienced a substantial loss of rental housing (-46,181 rental units).

The Tapestry:

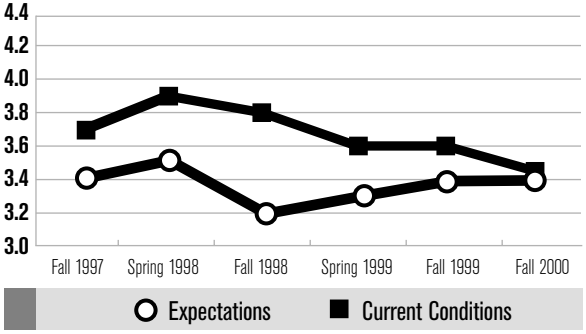
According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security from 1998 to 1999, most of the gains in jobs in DuPage County occurred in Business Services, Other Services, and Contract Construction. Many of these jobs may not provide the income required for home ownership. Some of them may not provide enough income for rental units of an appropriate size.

Where the income from a job does not enable a household to buy a home, more rental units are needed. If housing is not available locally, longer commutes and traffic congestion will follow. In order to fill jobs that require longer commutes, businesses may have to increase wages.

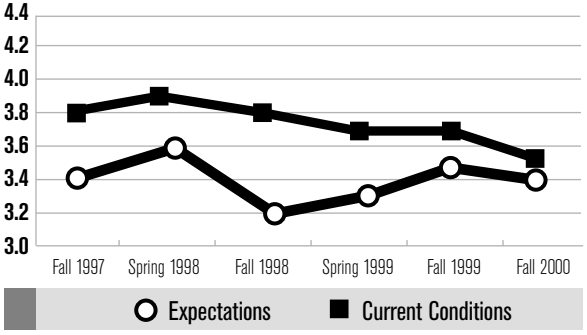
Over time, business leaders' assessments of business conditions decline, matching their expectations.

Trends in Business Conditions and Expectations (1998-2000)

Manufacturing Conditions and Expectations



Wholesale Conditions and Expectations



Source: East West Corporate Corridor Association

About the Indicator:

The East West Corporate Corridor Association surveys business leaders in DuPage, Cook, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties semi-annually. Each season (spring 1998, fall 1998, etc.) business leaders are asked to rate current business conditions and make projections for future business conditions on a one-to-five scale (where one is weak and five is strong).

Observations:

In surveys taken from 1998 through 2000, business leaders were generally less positive about their projections for future business conditions than about their assessment of current conditions. By 2000, manufacturing, wholesale, and retail expectations and current conditions were rated as equally strong.

Benchmark Data:

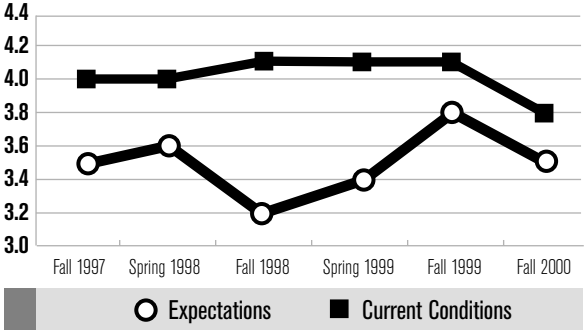
These data are unique to DuPage County and benchmark can only be done across time periods.

The Tapestry:

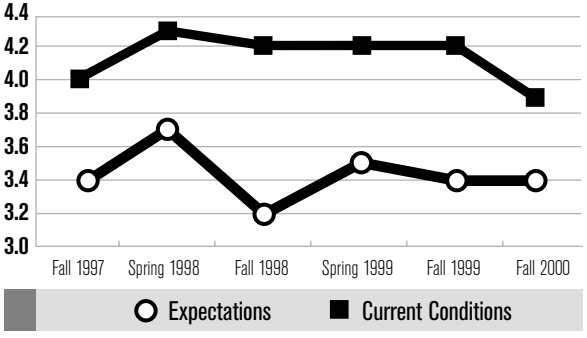
When our business leaders have a positive outlook on business conditions in the area it can lead to continued economic growth. This benefits the residents of DuPage County. We see this reflected in other indicators in this indicator set, such as household income or the unemployment rate.

According to the East West Corporate Corridor Association survey, issues that may affect future confidence levels are: a tight labor market, transportation, recruiting, and cost of labor. Recent energy prices were not cited as a problem in the survey to date, but they may affect other indicators. Building regulations were listed as a possible concern for residential construction.

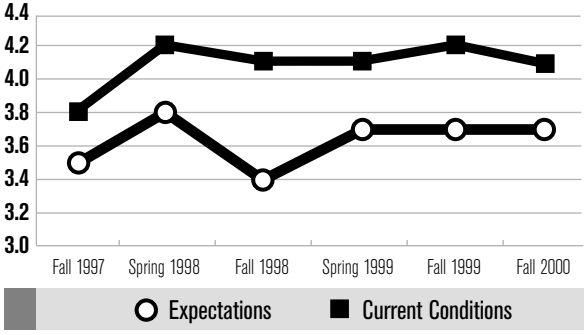
Retail Conditions and Expectations



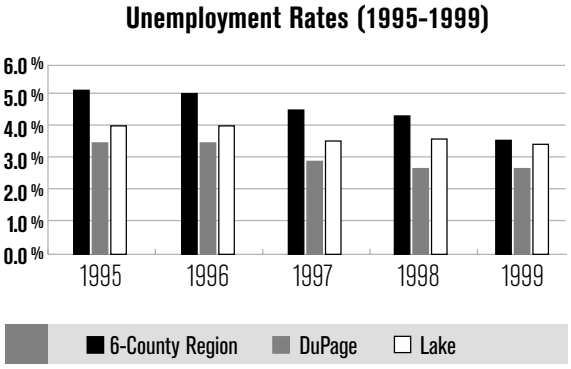
Residential Construction Conditions and Expectations



Re-Sale Price of Homes Conditions and Expectations



Unemployment rates show a steady decline and are the lowest in the six-county area.



Source: Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and Illinois Department of Employment Security

About the Indicator:

Unemployment is a measure of how well we provide jobs for our residents. In determining unemployment rates, people not included in the labor force are those not counted as either employed or unemployed. Examples are: non-working students, homemakers, retirees, and people who want a job but have stopped looking for work (this includes those who are discouraged over their job opportunities or who face barriers to entering the labor market). The 6-County area includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties.

Observations:

With a 1999 labor force of 528,237, the numbers of unemployed in DuPage County were approximately 14,000 to 15,000 unemployed. In 1999, DuPage County had the lowest unemployment rate in the 6-County region.

Benchmark Data:

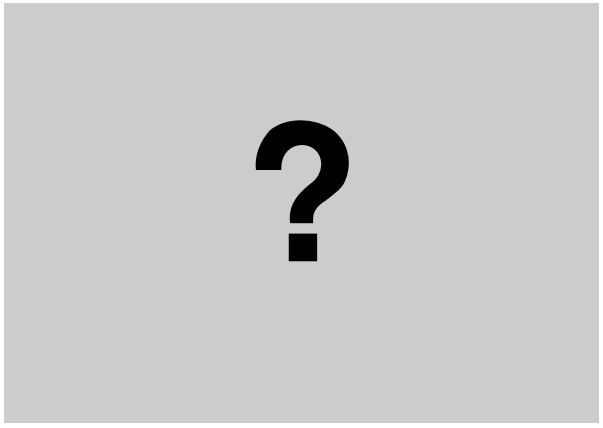
DuPage County consistently has lower unemployment than the 6-county region and Lake County. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Securities, the Illinois Labor Force Estimates, overall the unemployment rate for Illinois for 1999 was 1.6% higher than the rate in DuPage County.

The Tapestry:

Low unemployment rates can benefit our residents in ways beyond the obvious. Employers may have difficulty in finding workers that fit their needs. This may spur a rise in opportunity and possibly improved career advancement for employees. In order to get the employees needed, businesses may have to increase the wages they offer. At the same time, this increases their costs.

When studying the unemployment rates, we should remember the people behind them. Some people have stopped looking for work perhaps because transportation or child care are not available, or the distance from affordable housing to work is too great. These people are not included in the unemployed rates.

Unemployment rates for people with disabilities are estimated to be high.



About the Indicator:

Current statistics about the number of people in DuPage County with disabilities and their employability are not readily available. In trying to obtain this data there are several hurdles to overcome. First, the lack of a universally accepted definition of what constitutes "disabled" means we cannot define the universe of people with disabilities. Secondly, there are no numbers available that define, out of the total population of people with disabilities, the number who are seeking employment. For example, as the population ages, the number of people with disabilities increases. In this older population, there are a lower number of people who are seeking work.

Observations:

Nationally, about one-third of people with disabilities of an employable age (16-64) are employed. We do not know how many of the rest of the people with disabilities, aged 16-64, would like to work.

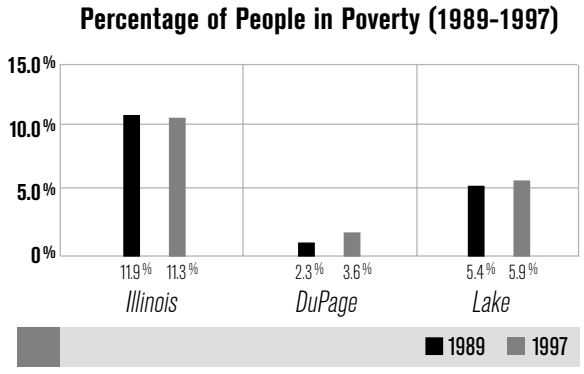
Benchmark Data:

According to an article in *Business Week* and the Able to Work Organization, the nationally accepted estimates for the unemployment rate of people with disabilities is extremely high at 66% to 79%.

The Tapestry:

We know some of this unemployment is due to access problems, transportation problems, and some to discrimination. With the current low unemployment rate, finding workers to fill jobs can be difficult. DuPage County workers with disabilities would appear to be a large, and largely available, labor pool.

The percentage of population under the poverty level remains low, but it is slightly higher than 1989 rates.



Source: US Census Bureau

About the Indicator:

The poverty level as recognized by the Census Bureau is a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. If the family's total income is less than the poverty thresholds for a family of that size and composition, then that family and everyone in it is considered poor. Poverty thresholds do not vary geographically and will be the same in all parts of the US, regardless of the local cost of living.

Observations:

Despite it's growing wealth, the poverty rate in DuPage County has increased since 1989. In DuPage County, the percent of people in poverty in 1997 was 1.7% higher than the rate in 1989. The number of people in poverty in 1997 was 32,379.

Benchmark Data:

Between 1989 and 1997, the poverty rate in both DuPage and Lake Counties rose, while the poverty rate in the state as a whole fell. Lake County rates increased by 0.5%. The number of people in poverty in Lake County in 1997 was 35,205.

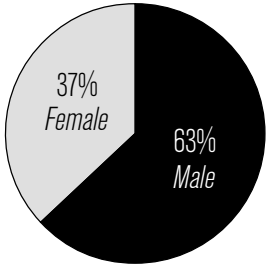
The Tapestry:

Our residents living at or below the poverty level are more vulnerable to a variety of stress factors that can endanger their health, limit their educational attainment, and reduce the quality of their lives.

Their precarious economic position makes them more vulnerable to homelessness, inadequate nutrition and divorce. These residents also incur the stresses that come with the social stigma of poverty. Living below the poverty level in a high-cost area like DuPage County presents a special set of problems and stresses.

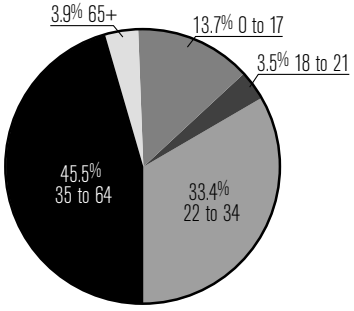
The homeless are predominantly adult, Caucasian males.

Gender of DuPage Homeless One-Night Count (1997)



Source: 1997 One Night Count of Homeless, DuPage County Development Department

Age of DuPage Homeless One-Night Count (1997)



Source: 1997 One Night Count of Homeless, DuPage County Development Department

About the Indicator:

The figures used here to assess the composition of the homeless were gathered through a single night count of 15 agencies that serve the homeless in DuPage County. They were verified through mail surveys to multiple agencies. These numbers were taken from a One-Night Count of homeless persons in shelters in 1997. This is a point-in-time measurement that may over-estimate the number of chronically homeless because many people are homeless only for a short time. Others feel that, because a substantial portion of the homeless population do not take up residence in shelters (living in cars, cardboard shacks, etc.) this method under-estimates the number of homeless.

Observations:

Of the DuPage homeless residents counted, the largest population is male and 57% Caucasian. (Caucasian does not include people who identified themselves as Hispanic.) The largest proportion of the homeless (79%) fall between the ages of 22 and 64. Based on the 1997 One-Night Count, it is estimated that there are 500 homeless individuals in DuPage County on any given day.

Benchmark Data:

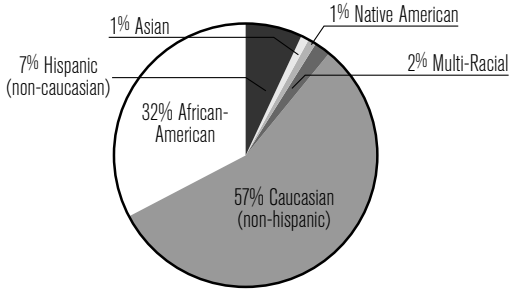
Benchmark data should be of homeless populations in DuPage County over time.

The Tapestry:

Our residents are homeless for a variety of reasons. Domestic violence is a major factor for homelessness among women and children. With affordable housing at a premium, frequent upheavals in a life of paycheck-to-paycheck living can propel lower income residents into homelessness.

These residents may also find it difficult to save the required deposit for rental housing once a crisis is past. Lack of job opportunities that pay a living wage, lack of affordable housing, and a severe shortage of supportive housing for persons with mental illness all affect the ability of the homeless to obtain housing.

Ethnicity of DuPage Homeless One-Night Count (1997)



Source: 1997 One Night Count of Homeless, DuPage County Development Department

Bonnie J. Wood

Executive Director, East West Corporate Corridor Association (EWCCA)

A healthy community is viable in economic, health, environmental, and social terms. With such high median household incomes in DuPage County, the current methods of assessing our economy tell us we are an exceptionally viable community, economically. But if a healthy community is a whole community, then we need economic assessments that take a broader measure of the community's wealth—economic measures that incorporate economic effects on the environmental and the social responsibility of businesses that results in a vibrant community, for example.

In the Healthy Communities movement we speak of the sense of efficacy that enables people to act. Expecting more from their actions, people move forward to make changes. This sense of efficacy can give rise to a high level of social capital—the willingness to invest time and energy into the community. On the other hand, a lower sense of efficacy inhibits actions. How much "wealth" are we ignoring if we don't account for our social capital?

In looking at these economic indicators, what do low unemployment figures tell us about economic viability if our lower income workers cannot afford housing in the community? How low is unemployment if three quarters of disabled people want work but cannot find it?

These considerations do not mean that DuPage County is not economically well off or that it's time to ignore dollars and cents. Rather, they are ways of asking how to examine the detail that is sometimes hidden in the broader picture of our economic wealth.

SOURCES

The sources used for this indicator set are identified within the text. For further information:

The East-West Corridor Association

Provides a consensus-building forum to develop a common voice for key issues in the business communities of DuPage, Cook, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties.

www.ewcca.org

NIPC Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission

The official planning agency for the 6-county Chicago Metropolitan Region

www.nipc.cog.il.us

Illinois department of Employment Security

www.ides.state.il.us

Business Week (magazine)

www.businessweek.com

Able to Work

Consortium dedicated to increasing the employment of people with disabilities.

www.abletowork.org

US Department of Commerce and US Census Bureau

www.us.census.gov

DuPage Realtors Association of the Western Suburbs

630-653-1790

Regional Realities Report produced by Chicago Metropolis 2020

Measure progress toward shared goals in the 6-county region (DuPage, Cook, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties), encourage regional thinking, and inspire action.

www.chicagometropolis2020.org

DuPage Home Ownership Center

Provides first time homebuyers with information on how to purchase their first home.

www.dupagehomeownershipcenter.org

One-Night count of Homeless Persons Staying in Shelters and Transitional Housing in DuPage County and Portions of Kane County. March 19, 1997.

DuPage County Development Department

$25.00

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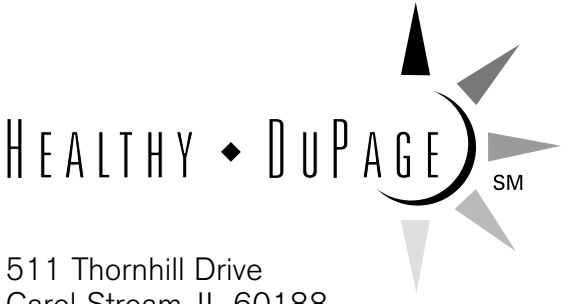

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