

**2023 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

Submitted to the:

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration

By the:



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**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
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## **Performance Progress Report**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Every five years, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) submits a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). In between five-year plans, NEPA submits an Annual Performance Report. Both submissions are required for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance to maintain its eligibility as an Economic Development District and for projects within the seven-county Northeastern Pennsylvania region, which consists of Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne counties, to be eligible for funding assistance from EDA. The five-year plan for 2019 - 2024 was submitted in May 2020 and this is the third Annual Performance Report under that plan.

This report provides an overview of economic data for the region and a summary of accomplishments. Also included is a description of what is being done within the region to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of resiliency.

## **Northeastern Pennsylvania Region**

Northeastern Pennsylvania represents a diverse landscape including urban cities, small towns, rural farms and natural areas. The region is within the Appalachian Mountain Chain and serves as a key watershed area for the Susquehanna River, which drains into the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware River Basin that serves the Greater Philadelphia region. The seven-county region is a 4,476 square mile area that includes Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne counties. Its major urban centers are primarily concentrated in the 87 miles stretching from the city of Carbondale in Lackawanna County through the Wyoming Valley to the city of Nanticoke and then following Interstate 81 south to the cities of Hazleton and Pottsville. The major cities within this belt are Scranton and Wilkes-Barre.

Northeastern Pennsylvania enjoys a diversified economic base. The region continues to be extremely competitive and successful as a location for warehousing and distribution centers, back office call centers, medical and health-related office facilities and processing centers, and food processing and distribution. Employment reflects the overall diversification of the region, although the Health Care and Social Assistance (19.9 percent), Retail Trade (15.3 percent), Manufacturing

(13.4 percent), and Accommodation and Food Service (9.7 percent) sectors account for over 58 percent of total employment.

Northeastern Pennsylvania’s business base is overwhelmingly dominated by small businesses. According to 2021 “County Business Patterns” from the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 21,689 businesses in the region and 72.6 percent of them employed between 1 and 9 people.

Due to its location by having proximity to major markets, excellent interstate highway connectivity and available land, coupled with an available and trainable labor force, the Northeastern Pennsylvania region (especially the Interstate 81 Corridor) has been able to attract considerable investment from logistics-related businesses. Transportation and Warehousing jobs account for 8.6 percent of jobs in the Northeastern Pennsylvania region. In 2015, jobs in the Transportation and Warehousing industry was 7 percent of total employment.

The tourism industry is a driver of the economy throughout the region, especially in the Pocono counties (Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne). Once known as the “Honeymoon Capital of the World,” this area has redefined itself as a family destination with the rise of the mega indoor waterpark resorts. Retail and Accommodation and Food Service are the first and second largest industries in Monroe and Pike Counties. The Pocono region draws heavily from the New York City and Philadelphia metropolitan areas, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> largest respectively in the United States in terms of population.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population in the region peaked at 1,118,580 according to the 1930 Census before declining to 873,891 according to the 1970 Census. The population then increased to its 2010 Census level before decreasing to its 2020 Census level. However, according to July 1, 2022, population estimates, the population has increased in the region. Table 1 provides a summary of recent population shifts.

**Table 1. Population for the United States, Pennsylvania, and Northeastern Pennsylvania Counties, 2020 and 2022**

Area	April 1, 2020 Estimates Base	July 1, 2022 Population Estimate	Change	Percent Change
United States	331,449,281	333,287,557	1,838,276	0.6%
Pennsylvania	13,002,700	12,972,008	-30,692	-0.2%
Northeastern Pennsylvania	1,027,333	1,029,477	2,144	0.2%
Carbon County	64,750	65,460	710	1.1%
Lackawanna County	215,911	215,615	-296	-0.1%
Luzerne County	325,613	326,369	783	0.2%
Monroe County	168,323	167,198	-1,125	-0.7%
Pike County	58,537	60,558	2,021	3.5%
Schuylkill County	143,048	143,104	56	0.0%
Wayne County	51,151	51,173	22	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

According to the figure below, Northeastern Pennsylvania has experienced not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates, which are generally higher than the state and nation. This trend has occurred since 1970, which is the first year that data were available at the county level. Currently, the region's unemployment is lower than the national average. It remains to be seen if this is an anomaly or if this will continue.

**Table 2. Not Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates for 2019 - 2022, and October 2023 (Current)**

Area	2019	2020	2021	2022	Current
United States	3.7%	8.1%	5.3%	3.6%	3.9%
Pennsylvania	4.3%	8.9%	6.0%	4.4%	3.4%
Northeastern Pennsylvania	5.3%	10.2%	7.0%	5.2%	3.8%
Carbon County	5.4%	9.6%	6.4%	5.1%	3.5%
Lackawanna County	4.9%	9.5%	6.5%	4.7%	3.5%
Luzerne County	5.6%	10.7%	7.7%	5.3%	4.0%
Monroe County	5.3%	11.3%	7.2%	5.7%	4.2%
Pike County	5.5%	10.3%	6.9%	5.6%	4.4%
Schuylkill County	5.4%	9.1%	6.4%	5.0%	3.8%
Wayne County	4.7%	9.0%	6.3%	5.1%	3.3%

Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Northeastern Pennsylvania regional economy is dependent on the Manufacturing industry. According to 2021 “County Business Patterns” from the U.S. Census Bureau, the region, at 13.4 percent, has a higher percentage of workers employed in the Manufacturing industry as compared to the state and nation with 10.1 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively. Tables 2 and 3 provide Manufacturing industry employment information from 2015 to 2021. From 2015 to 2018, the region had a percent increase that was higher than the nation and the state. From 2018 to 2021, manufacturing employment declined in the region, state, and nationally.

**Table 3. Manufacturing Industry Employment for the United States, Pennsylvania, and Northeastern Pennsylvania Counties, 2015 and 2018**

Area	2015	2018	Change 2015 - 2018	Percent Change 2015 - 2018
United States	11,605,501	11,912,665	307,164	2.6%
Pennsylvania	551,797	555,006	3,209	0.6%
Northeastern Pennsylvania	43,472	45,670	2,198	5.1%
Carbon County	1,742	1,338	-404	-23.2%
Lackawanna County	8,617	9,609	992	11.5%
Luzerne County	17,008	18,018	1,010	5.9%
Monroe County	5,290	5,214	-76	-1.4%
Pike County	266	373	107	40.2%
Schuylkill County	9,930	10,419	489	4.9%
Wayne County	619	699	80	12.9%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, “2015 and 2018 County Business Patterns”



**Table 4. Manufacturing Industry Employment for the United States, Pennsylvania, and Northeastern Pennsylvania Counties, 2018 and 2021**

Area	2018	2021	Change 2018 - 2021	Percent Change 2018 - 2021
United States	11,912,665	11,710,424	-202,241	-1.7%
Pennsylvania	555,006	532,207	-22,799	-4.1%
Northeastern Pennsylvania	45,670	44,060	-1,610	-3.5%
Carbon County	1,338	1,061	-277	-20.7%
Lackawanna County	9,609	9,704	95	1.0%
Luzerne County	18,018	17,602	-416	-2.3%
Monroe County	5,214	4,821	-393	-7.5%
Pike County	373	173	-200	-53.6%
Schuylkill County	10,419	10,039	-380	-3.6%
Wayne County	699	660	-39	-5.6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, “2018 and 2021 County Business Patterns”

The brief statements below represent economic development observations and trends in the Northeastern Pennsylvania region.

### ***Aging***

- Overall, the region continues to experience a high median age. According to County Population by Characteristics: 2020-2022 from the U.S. Census Bureau, the median age in the United States was 38.9 years, in Pennsylvania, it was 40.9 years, and the average in the region was 45.0 years.
- The Pocono counties are some of the oldest counties in the Commonwealth. This is due in part to the high number of retirees. Many individuals near retirement age relocate to these counties from neighboring states to take advantage of Pennsylvania’s friendly tax structure for retirees, while still being physically close to New York or New Jersey.
- The urban counties of Lackawanna and Luzerne see an average age much closer to the state average.

**Table 5. Median Age, 2022 and Rank within Pennsylvania’s 67 Counties**

Area	Age (Years)	Rank within Pennsylvania
United States	38.9	--
Pennsylvania	40.9	--
Northeastern Pennsylvania (Average)	45.0	--
Carbon County	46.0	15 <sup>th</sup>
Lackawanna County	41.8	44 <sup>th</sup>
Luzerne County	41.8	45 <sup>th</sup>
Monroe County	43.9	33 <sup>rd</sup>
Pike County	49.2	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Schuylkill County	43.7	35 <sup>th</sup>
Wayne County	48.8	5 <sup>th</sup>

### ***Income***

- According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, the 2022 per capita personal income in the region (\$52,435) was below that of the state (\$64,506) and the nation (\$65,470).
- According to the United Way of Pennsylvania, the poverty rate in Northeastern Pennsylvania was 12.7%. This is higher than the statewide and national poverty rate which stand at 12% and 11.5% respectively.
- The United Way also measures individuals that are above the federal poverty line but still Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE). They estimate 40% of households in Northeastern Pennsylvania fit into this group. The United Way estimates that 39% of households are under this threshold statewide, and 27% nationally.

### ***Business Growth and Entrepreneurship***

- Business Incubators are in five of the seven counties. There are three incubators in Lackawanna County, two incubators in Luzerne and Wayne counties, and one incubator in Monroe and Schuylkill counties. A new incubator is planned for Shenandoah, Schuylkill County in 2025.
- The region is experiencing a building boom in terms of large warehousing and distribution centers in the Hazleton, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton areas. Several new buildings have been constructed in the South Valley area of Luzerne County. Recently, it was announced that a natural gas processing facility will be constructed in Newport Township, Luzerne County.
- To help entrepreneurs in the start up and early business phase, the NEPA Alliance created StartUp NEPA, an Angel Investment Fund. So far StartUp NEPA has granted funds to six Pennsylvania based businesses.
- In Spring 2023, Lackawanna County funded a Techcelerator program for technology based entrepreneurs. Businesses that successfully completed the program received a \$10,000 grant to jumpstart their business. This program was administered by the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Ben Franklin Technology Partners of NEPA, and tecBRIDGE.
- The NEPA Alliance Business Finance Center received approval from the Small Business Administration to become a designated Community Advantage Pilot Loan Program lender through the SBA 7(a) loan program.

### ***Workforce***

- According to 2021 “County Business Patterns” from the U.S. Census Bureau, the region, at 13.4 percent, has a higher percentage of workers employed in the Manufacturing industry as compared to the state and nation with 10.1 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively.
- Northeastern Pennsylvania’s business base is overwhelmingly dominated by small businesses. According to 2020 “County Business Patterns” from the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 21,689 businesses in the region and 72.6 percent of them employed between 1 and 9 people. The nation had 72.8 percent and the state had 70.4 percent.

## ***Department of Defense / Aerospace Supply Chain Presence***

- The region's largest industrial employer is Tobyhanna Army Depot, which is the largest full-service electronics maintenance facility in the U.S. Department of Defense. The Depot overhauls, repairs, tests, modifies, converts, demilitarizes, and provides technical assembly and installation for airborne and electronic warfare systems and associated equipment for the Joint Warfighter.
- In recent years, employment at Tobyhanna Army Depot has fallen which has had a negative impact on the region. In 2010 there were 5,430 direct employees at Tobyhanna Army Depot. In 2022, that number had fallen to 3,219.
- According to "Defense Spending by State for Fiscal Year 2022," a publication by the U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (formerly the Office of Economic Adjustment), Pennsylvania is ranked eighth in the nation defense spending with \$17.9 billion, which is 3.2 percent of the total spending in the nation.
- According to GovernmentContractsWon.com, during 2020, there were 20,286 defense contracts, with an amount of \$302.3 million awarded, within the region.
- NEPA Launch – Regional Space Alliance is a recently initiated program that builds on Northeastern Pennsylvania's strong base of small- and medium-sized manufacturers and its strong presence in global defense supply chains. The program seeks to help local firms capture existing and new opportunities in defense markets and in booming commercial space markets.

## ***Energy***

- Northeastern Pennsylvania was once a global leader in energy production. The anthracite coal that powered the American Industrial Revolution was mined mainly in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Carbon, and Schuylkill Counties. This industry has declined over the past century.
- Pennsylvania is the second largest natural gas producing state and the second largest net supplier of energy to other states, after Texas, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Much of this production takes place in other parts of the Commonwealth, not the Northeastern Pennsylvania region.
- An increase in solar farms activity is also evident as many new farms are planned (Scranton, Lackawanna Co.; Scott Township, Lackawanna Co.; Earth Conservancy lands, Luzerne Co.) throughout the region.

## ***Transportation & Highway Infrastructure***

- Amtrak has expressed interest in providing passenger rail service from New York City to Scranton. This service will be along the Lackawanna Cutoff with stops in Pennsylvania at Tobyhanna, Mount Pocono and East Stroudsburg.
- PennDOT is in the planning stages of I-81 expansion (from 4 to 6 lanes) from Clarks Summit to Wilkes-Barre.
- PennDOT is poised to make a major investment in I-80 reconstruction in the coming years in Monroe County to improve safety and efficiencies.

- PennDOT is in the middle of decade long project to completely rebuild I-84 from the New York border through Pike County.
- The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is in the study phase of creating a “Scranton Beltway.” This project will create smoother interchanges between I-81 and I-476 – Pennsylvania Turnpike Northeast Extension. This project is designed to divert thru traffic off the congested I-81 and onto the lesser traveled I-476.
- In Fall 2023, the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport announced a \$17million terminal expansion project. This project is expected to add up to 10,000 square feet to the existing terminal building.
- Transportation barriers limit access to affordable housing, job opportunities, educational and cultural opportunities, and quality health care in Northeastern Pennsylvania. In response to these barriers, NEPA Moves was formed in 2017 to improve the quality of life for all people of Northeastern Pennsylvania through improved access to transportation. NEPA Moves is working diligently to gain a better understanding of the specific barriers of current transit systems and is focused on providing solutions to the transportation challenges through a strategic plan that promotes equity, encourages economic growth, and fosters greater opportunity for all .
- Two bridges that cross the Susquehanna River in Luzerne County, one in Pittston and the other in Nanticoke, are deteriorating and need replacement. Their replacement is vital to move goods to areas, especially those that are experiencing fast-paced construction activity.

### ***Logistic & Warehousing Firms***

- The region is served by three primary interstate highways (Interstates 80, 81 and 84) and two auxiliary interstate highways (Interstates 380 and 476). These highways have been used as marketing for the Transportation & Warehousing industry to locate to the region. According to 2015 and 2021 “County Business Patterns” from the U.S. Census Bureau, there has been an increase of 96 firms (Home Depot, Amazon, Chewy, Lowes, Boden) and 4,093 employees within this industry.

### ***Housing***

- Housing costs within the region are lower than the state and nation. According to 2018 - 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, the region has a lower median housing value and median rent than the state and nation. This indicates that low housing costs can be an attraction for businesses to locate to the region.
- In the downtown areas of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, there has been a major development in the quantity of rental housing. Commercial buildings have been converted into apartments.
- There are a large number of second homes and short term rentals in the Pocono region. This has resulted in the Pocono counties having higher home values than the rest of the region, which has served as a barrier to homeownership for first time homebuyers and low income individuals.

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 8% of workers in the region are fully remote and work from their homes.
- There is an increase in people moving from New York City and its suburbs to Northeastern Pennsylvania. This is most pronounced in the Pocono counties but also impacting the Scranton Wilkes-Barre corridor as well. Reasons for relocation include lower cost of living, more space, and the ability to work remotely / hybrid.

### ***Diversity***

- The population has become more diverse. In 2010, the region's population had a minority percentage of 13.5 percent. In 2020, the percentage rose to 21.9 percent.
- As a result of the additional diverse population, several organizations are now present. The Hazleton area has three organizations: Society of Hispanic Professionals, Hazleton Integration Project and Greater Hazleton Hispanic Business Association. In Scranton, there is the Black Scranton Project. In addition, there has been an increase in Spanish language newspapers and radio stations that serve the region.
- Southern Luzerne County has seen a rapid change in demographics since the turn of the twenty first century. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated 5 percent of the City of Hazleton identified as Hispanic or Latino. Today, almost three in five residents identify as Hispanic or Latino.

### ***Tourism***

- The Pocono Mountains provide many recreational activities that attract visitors to the region. According to a 2018 Visitor Report about the Pocono Mountains from Longwoods Travel USA, which is the most current available, there were an estimated 27.8 million total person-trips that consisted of 10.1 million overnight trips and 17.7 million day trips during 2018. Total spending from overnight visits was \$1.667 billion.
- The Pocono Mountains region is heavily dependent on tourism dollars. Monroe County is home to the Kalahari Resorts & Convention Center. This facility houses an enormous indoor waterpark, over 1,000 guest room, and over 215,000 square feet of convention center space. Other waterparks that have benefited from the additional tourism in the area are: Great Wolf Lodge, H2Oooohh, Aquatopia and Camelbeach. These waterparks have resulted in visitors extending their stay resulting in an increase in tourism-related spending. Consequently, additional waterparks and improvements to existing ones are speculated to come to the area.
- Retail benefits due to the high tourist traffic in the Pocono counties. Shoppers from New York and New Jersey oftentimes shop in Pennsylvania due to the favorable sales tax rates. The Crossings Premium Outlets in Tannersville was rebranded as the Pocono Premium Outlets in 2023. The name change will be accompanied by a major investment in modernizing the facility.
- The region is home to two sites managed by the National Park Service. The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is located in Monroe and Pike Counties as well as neighboring New Jersey. The Steamtown National Historic Site is located in Lackawanna County.

- There is an organized effort to redesignate the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area as a national park. If successful, this would be the first national park in the Commonwealth.
- The region’s anthracite mining history provides a network of tourism attractions that are anchored by three national heritage areas including the Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area, the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and the Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area.
- A hotel is being constructed at Montage Mountain that will accommodate visitors who want to ski, attend concerts at The Pavilion at Montage Mountain and participate in other recreational activities.
- The region is home to the Scranton Wilkes-Barre RailRiders, the AAA affiliate of the New York Yankees and the Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins, the AHL affiliate of the Pittsburgh Penguins.

### ***Health Care***

- In recent years, there have been additional hospitals constructed in the region. In 2021, St. Luke’s University Health Network built a new 160,000 sf Carbon Campus, an acute-care hospital with 80 private rooms. This is in addition to their already existing Lehighon Campus.
- In Spring 2022, Lehigh Valley Health Network opened Lehigh Valley Hospital – Dickson City, a 100,000 sf hospital that has advanced diagnostic testing, a health center, seven operating rooms, two procedure rooms and a 19-bay emergency room.
- In Summer 2023, Geisinger announced a \$900million project that will almost double the size of the Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center campus in Luzerne County. This includes the construction of a new 11 story building. Geisinger expects this project to be completed by 2030.
- In August 2022, Geisinger opened Healthplex CenterPoint, a 124,000 sf outpatient specialty facility in a former Walmart retail store location. According to Geisinger, “the healthplex will offer surgery and endoscopy; bone, muscle and joint care; urologic services; eyecare and eyewear; and physical and occupational therapy, as well as laboratory and diagnostics.”
- On August 30, 2022, St. Luke’s University Health Network broke ground on a 165,000 sf expansion to its Monroe Campus near Stroudsburg. The facility, which is expected to open in early 2024 will have a general medical-surgical unit with 36 beds, among other amenities. The St. Luke’s Hospital – Monroe Campus opened in Fall 2016 and was the first new hospital constructed in Monroe County in over a century.
- Geisinger St. Luke’s Hospital in Orwigsburg is adding 20 private, medical-surgical beds to the hospital’s second floor and a new interventional radiology suite next to the emergency room on the hospital’s first floor. A Care Now walk-in-urgent care facility is being constructed in West Pottsville.
- Pike County is the only county in the Commonwealth without a hospital or urgent care facility. The Pike County Commissioners recently announced a commitment from Northwell Health to construct a healthcare facility in Pike County.

- A new dental school in Scranton is in the planning phase. Studies have been conducted to assess the feasibility of the project. This school would allow students to do their residencies in rural and underserved communities in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

## SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Table 6. CEDS-Related Economic Development Activities, Outcomes and Milestones**

Goal	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts/Deliverables	Milestone Date
Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction	Conducted economic impact analyses that supported PA RACP and other funding applications	Two projects totaling \$4.5 million received funding assistance from the PA Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP). Two projects received a total of \$300,000 from either the Luzerne County or Monroe County Local Share Account (LSA) programs.	March 2023
Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction	Assisted businesses with RACP applications.	During the year, NEPA Alliance served as the lead applicant on the Hyatt Place Hotel & Convention Center. This project located in downtown Wilkes-Barre will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment in the city. NEPA also assisted NexUS-1 and Interstate Building & Supply with RACP application. A new round of RACP funding opened in December 2023 and NEPA Alliance will provide technical assistance to applicants for this round.	December 2023
Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction	Addressing the needs of the agriculture industry	Efforts are being made to improve the marketing of agricultural products. A sizable portion of the economy in Wayne County is based on agriculture and tourism. As a result, more locally-produced food is being marketed to restaurants, and to bed and breakfasts. Wayne County also has a significant amount of summer camps, which serve as an outlet for locally-produced food.  Wayne County is in the planning stages of creating a Agricultural Innovation Center. The proposed facility would support agribusinesses and the community by offering a shared aggregation and logistics center, shared processing/packaging equipment, a training and community kitchen, cold storage, educational programming, retail space, and entrepreneurial support. NEPA Alliance is working with the Wayne Economic Development Corporation and local stakeholders to identify funding sources.	Ongoing



Goal	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts/Deliverables	Milestone Date
Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction	Provided technical assistance to NEPA Community Advantage Loan Program	ARC funding is being used to establish the U.S. Small NEPA's Business Finance Corporation for their completion of successful application to the Appalachian Regional Commission to capitalize and launch the U.S. Small Business Administration's Community Advantage Loan Program to better serve the financing needs and growth of small to medium sized businesses within the region. Business Administration's Community Advantage Loan Program within the NEPA BFC. This funding will provide support for staffing to ramp for the program launch. Staff time will be used to develop internal protocols, update loan intake and servicing software, attending training and create marketing materials to raise awareness of the program. This program is designed to meet the needs of existing businesses and start-ups in the region.	March 2023
Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction	Downtown Shenandoah revitalization	NEPA Alliance assisted in leveraging \$136,000 with Downtown Shenandoah Inc to establish the region's newest business incubator, the Center for Education, Business & Arts (CEBA). This project will change the economic landscape in this part of Schuylkill County. CEBA will include a commercial kitchen, event center with catering kitchen, Penn State classroom, DSI offices, co-working maker and office spaces.	2023 and Ongoing
Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction	Montage Mountain Economic Development Plan	NEPA provided Lackawanna County with technical assistance on an ARC application seeking funding to initiate a public process to complete a comprehensive Economic Development Plan for Montage Mountain that incorporates current business operations and destination-based attractions and proposed/potential development to assure business hub is prepared for future growth. At its completion, this plan will provide scenarios for development and infrastructure that will include design and construction estimates for needs that are currently unavailable. In doing so, this plan and any developed estimates will be instrumental in assisting with potential funding and regional collaboration. A completed plan will also offer identification of jobs to be created, retained, or	November 2023

Goal	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts/Deliverables	Milestone Date
		repurposed throughout this corridor. The inclusion of infrastructure needs will be instrumental in determining and leveraging any available public/private investment on Montage Mountain Road.	
Small Business & Entrepreneurship	Served as a conduit for businesses to receive either an enhanced website or a new website	NEPA Alliance continues to administer the Get Connected program. This program, developed during the pandemic, provides website enhancements for businesses and encourages e-commerce. NEPA Alliance secured additional funding and continues to accept businesses into this program.	2023 and ongoing
Small Business & Entrepreneurship	Provided support to entrepreneurs through Angel Fund	StartUp NEPA, the angel investment fund created by NEPA Alliance made its first investments and loaned money to 5 start-up and early-stage small businesses. As the fund grows, it will provide additional support to aspiring entrepreneurs in the region.	2023 and Ongoing
Small Business & Entrepreneurship	Conducted within the region business walks and focus groups that targeted small businesses	The PA Department of Community & Economic Development's <i>Engage!</i> Program has a component for partners to conduct business walks and focus groups that target small businesses in downtown areas. These venues address the needs of small businesses. In Summer 2023, SLIBCO led a business walk in the City of Scranton's West Side. In November, the University of Scranton SBDC led a business walk in Milford borough.	Ongoing
Ready Workforce	Northeastern Pennsylvania Workforce Leadership Academy	Throughout 2023, a series of in person and virtual retreats were held where area leaders were able to work collaboratively to identify local and regional systems-based challenges and create shared solutions for economic opportunity. The program ran from March to December 2023 and was organized by the Scranton Area Community Foundation and the Aspen Institute.	December 2023
Ready Workforce	Higher education institutions providing training for students to meet workforce needs	Johnson College's RISE Program is aimed at working adults and people coming into Pennsylvania from foreign countries with skills they may not know how to put to use. Participants obtain technical training while accessing additional supports. Through the Dual Enrollment Program, high school students earn	2023 and Ongoing

Goal	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts/Deliverables	Milestone Date
		<p>college credits while also working towards their diploma.</p> <p>Lackawanna College was awarded \$1M from the Appalachian Regional Commission which will support the revitalization, renovation, and transformation of a six-story building in downtown Scranton and establish the Lackawanna College Center for Technology Innovation (CTI) as a hub for education and workforce activities.</p> <p>A new campus for Alvernia University opened in downtown Pottsville in January 2023 with degree programs geared towards adult learners and graduate studies.</p>	
Ready Workforce	Providing Transportation to Workers who need to get to work	<p>County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) broke ground on a new headquarters facility in Scranton in May 2023 with an expected completion in 2024. Through this project, COLTS will see technological improvements and better facilities. This facility is largely funded by the Federal Transit Administration and PennDOT.</p> <p>Construction of a new headquarters for the Luzerne County Transportation Authority is continuing with an expected opening in early 2024.</p> <p>In April 2023, the Schuylkill County Transportation Service held a ribbon cutting for their new \$30million facility.</p> <p>In December 2023, the Monroe County Transit Authority announced the creation of a new fixed route, the "Green Route" which will run six days per week.</p>	2023 and Ongoing
Critical Infrastructure: Transportation, Broadband & Energy	NEPA provided Salem Township with technical assistance on an ARC application seeking funding for engineering design for the expansion of public water service to increase business development and expansion along State Route 11 and	The project will contribute to sustainable economic development in the service area to be impacted: Designing municipal water infrastructure will establish the foundation for application to the Public Utility Commission for permission to expand a critical infrastructure element along Route 11 in Salem Township where available land can be developed with new businesses and entice existing businesses to remain in Salem Township. The clustering of new businesses developing together with existing	2023

Goal	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts/Deliverables	Milestone Date
	Beach Haven areas within the township.	businesses along and adjacent to Route 11 will serve as a catalyst for additional new manufacturing and warehousing companies to capitalize on the presence of water service access and existing sewer service access.	
Critical Infrastructure: Transportation, Broadband & Energy	Amtrak is interested in providing service between Scranton and New York City	Amtrak has expressed interest in providing passenger rail service from New York City to Scranton. This service will be along the Lackawanna Cutoff with stops in Pennsylvania at Scranton, Mount Pocono, and East Stroudsburg. In December 2023 the project accepted into the Corridor ID Program awarding \$500,000 to study returning passenger rail to the region.	Ongoing
Critical Infrastructure: Transportation, Broadband & Energy	NEPA provided Lackawanna County with technical assistance on a Local Access Road ARC application for an industrial park in Taylor, PA, with addition of 2 bus shelters that services the a 17-tenant developed business park in which the road has little or no base and has never been formally paved	This project will serve current and future business tenants within the industrial park. Constructing this road will also improve emergency response not only to the industrial park, but also to the surrounding community, as it links two highly traveled roads. By building and updating this infrastructure now, this construction will enhance the business and employment experience for the 17 current tenants, including the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, and approximately 2,860 employees; improving safety by providing better access for emergency vehicles such as fire, police and ambulance.	2023
Critical Infrastructure: Transportation, Broadband & Energy	Terminal Expansion at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport	The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport announced a terminal expansion project to remain competitive with neighboring regional airports. This \$17million project will be funded primarily through federal dollars from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.	Ongoing
Critical Infrastructure: Transportation, Broadband & Energy	Interstate expansion projects	FHWA and PennDOT are in the beginning phases of a multi-stage project to reconstruct Interstate 80 through parts of Monroe County. This stretch was constructed in the 1960s and has deteriorated considerably. It also carries considerably higher traffic volumes than it was originally designed to. An interstate widening project is also planned for Interstate 81 through the Scranton Wilkes-Barre corridor to ease congestion.	Ongoing

Goal	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts/Deliverables	Milestone Date
Community Placemaking, Development & Sustainability	Providing food security for rural communities	NEPA provided Wayne County with technical assistance on an ARC application for their Food Locker Pilot Program, which placed refrigerated food lockers in strategic locations in Wayne County to address food access challenges in rural communities and support economic growth of farms and retail in the local food system. The Food Locker Pilot addresses several goals: improve last-mile delivery efficiency and lower delivery fees, strengthen local farms and groceries, increase access to fresh and nutritious food, address food insecurity, and address impacts of COVID-19.	2023
Community Placemaking, Development & Sustainability	Community Foundation of Monroe County established	In 2021, NEPA Alliance and NCAC leveraged \$60,000 in ARC funds to develop a board of directors, articles of incorporation, bylaws, logo, mission and vision statements, strategic plan, website and marketing materials. In Fall 2023, the foundation launched and will provide funding to worthwhile causes in Monroe County.	October 2023

## CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION

There are many challenges the Northeast Pennsylvania region faces economically that act as a barrier to goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Supply chain disruptions remain an issue. This challenge is not unique to the region but is still delaying construction projects and hurting retailers. Inflation has also been a challenge for area businesses. Again, this is not unique to Northeastern Pennsylvania. Inflation has caused supply costs to rise for businesses which often necessitates them to raise their own prices. Employees may be requesting raises to keep up with the increased cost of living which increases labor costs. These are nationwide and even global issues. Fortunately, inflation seems to be slowing and supply chain issues have improved.

A major challenge facing the Northeastern Pennsylvania region is the decrease in manufacturing jobs. This has occurred throughout the Commonwealth and United States too, but this region is dependent on these high skilled, high paying manufacturing jobs. The most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau's County Business Patterns is from 2021 and reflects disruptions caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, the number of manufacturing jobs in the region increased year over year. New data will be monitored closely to see if this downward trend will reverse as we move further from the pandemic. The NEPA Alliance and Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center provide financial and technical assistance to manufacturers. The Strategic Early Warning Network (SEWN) aids manufacturers who are struggling to avoid layoffs. The region is also pursuing funding for NEPA Launch, an initiative to help manufacturers pivot to the space and aerospace supply chain.

Affordable housing is a challenge for some employers in the Pocono region. Many low skilled workers in the tourism industry face barriers with housing and transportation. Monroe County has some of the highest home prices in Northeast Pennsylvania and lacks affordable rental units. The large resorts are mostly located in more rural areas with limited access for public transportation. This has created a workforce issue in the tourism industry in the Poconos. Groups like the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, Pocono Mountains United Way, Monroe County Transportation Authority, and the resorts themselves have worked to mitigate this issue by creating more onsite employee housing, better public transportation routes, and more affordable housing.

Transportation also remains a challenge for the region. There has been a noticeable increase in truck traffic on Northeastern Pennsylvania highways. Interstate 80 is one of the major east-west routes across the United States while Interstate 81 serves as an alternative route for north-south travelers looking to avoid I95. While much of the tractor-trailer traffic in the region is through traffic, the rapid increase in warehousing has also contributed to more trucks on the roads. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the NEPA Alliance Metropolitan Planning Organization have worked to mitigate these issues. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will see dollars come into the region to repair roads and bridges. Multibillion dollar expansion projects are planned on I80 through the Poconos and I81 through the Scranton Wilkes-Barre corridor. The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is in talks with PennDOT to create a Scranton Beltway. This project will improve interchanges between I81 and I476 to allow motorists to easily avoid traffic around the City of Scranton.

## NEXT STEPS

An application will be submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission to fund the NEPA Launch initiative. This initiative has been led by the NEPA Alliance since 2021 along with our economic development partners, notably NEPIRC and the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce. The Northeast Pennsylvania economic development community has partnered with the Keystone Space Collaborative and Congressman Matthew Cartwright to assist with making this initiative a reality. NEPA Launch will grow the emerging space and aerospace cluster in the region. The NEPA Launch initiative will support manufacturers in the region who already are doing work in the space / aerospace industry as well as manufacturers who are looking to pivot into that industry. The initiative will also collaborate with our institutions of higher education to grow the next generation of entrepreneurial space companies right here in Northeast Pennsylvania.

The NEPA Alliance Business Finance Center is beginning the process of becoming Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) certified. Through this certification, NEPA Alliance BFC will have access to additional revolving loan funds that they will be able to lend to area businesses. Once CDFI certified, NEPA Alliance BFC will be able to finance housing projects. NEPA Alliance BFC expects to receive CDFI certification in 2025.

## CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES

### Engage! Program

NEPA Alliance serves as the regional coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's business retention and business engagement program called Engage!. The NEPA Alliance, along with our regional economic development partners meet with local businesses to discuss their needs, opportunities, and challenges. Below are some success stories gathered through the Engage! program.

### *Success Story from the University of Scranton Small Business Development Center*

Figliomeni Pharmacy Care is a long-term care pharmacy servicing skilled nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and group homes. Based in Carbondale, PA, they have 10 employees. During the pandemic, nursing homes were not allowed to admit new patients for a long period of time due to rapid spread of COVID-19, which significantly impacted the pharmacy's income. There were over 50 deaths due to COVID-19 at facilities they serve and it was still climbing at the time of the survey. They experienced a temporary adjustment of operations, interrupted supply chain, and loss of profits due to the pandemic. They estimate the impact to have been about \$350,000. They received a PPP loan and EIDL advance, which covered a portion of the impacts.

While Figliomeni Pharmacy Care has been a long-time client of The University of Scranton SBDC, it was through an Engage! survey that Keith Yurgosky, SBDC Business Consultant, was inquiring about COVID impacts and was able to refer the business to the CDBG CARES Act COVID-19 Response Grant program administered by NEPA Alliance. The program was designed to provide grants of up to \$50,000 for small businesses located in Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, or Wayne County that have been severely impacted due to COVID-19.

Impact: The business recently got word from NEPA Alliance that they have been approved to receive \$30,000 in grant funds to help with the impacts noted above. They were extremely thankful for being connected with NEPA Alliance for this program.

*Success Story from the Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce*

Sixteen years ago, Nick Duvall started Duvall Leatherwork in the basement of his home creating handcrafted leather goods. In 2006, he expanded his small startup business by purchasing a commercial building in Kingston, PA. After 15 years of business, product and team growth, he decided that it was time to expand. When the COVID-19 Pandemic hit, he decided that a website was needed so that he could conduct business transactions online. The success of online sales and the wave of online shopping to cope with the pandemic has led the company to relocate their production to another facility. Since they opened their Hanover Twp manufacturing location, they have continued to succeed and grow their business and staff. With continued product demand, they have expansion plans for a Clarks Summit location for another retail store. There are also plans for another brand line offering an online store for large scale for e commerce sales to reach another demographic of corporate clients worldwide. The Engage! program assisted the company with understanding their needs and helping with expansion information, support and promotion.

The following are regional success stories on initiatives that will make the Northeastern Pennsylvania region more competitive into the future.

*Intercity Rail Service from Scranton to New York City*

In December 2023, the Federal Railroad Administration announced that the Scranton to New York City route had been accepted into the Corridor ID Program. This provided \$500,000 to develop a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for the rail service. Restoring passenger rail service to Northeast Pennsylvania has been discussed for decades. The NEPA Alliance, Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, and Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation have been working with our federal and state elected officials for years to get this project to this stage. The service will be operated by Amtrak with proposed stops in East Stroudsburg, Mt. Pocono, and Scranton. Amtrak officials anticipate nearly 500,000 passengers per year and an annual economic impact of \$84million.

*StartUp NEPA Angel Investment Fund*

StartUp NEPA, an Angel Investment Fund, was set up to support aspiring entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses. In 2023, StartUp NEPA made its first investments. The fund is led, designed, and funded by local investors, who assist in identifying, evaluating and placing private investments. The fund is designed to increase the economic growth and performance of Northeastern Pennsylvania and collectively improve the economic sustainability and prosperity of its residents. The following Pennsylvania based companies received funding in 2023.

**Table 7. Angel Fund Investments by StartUp NEPA**

<b>Business</b>	<b>Industry/Sector</b>	<b>Investment Amount</b>	<b>Location</b>
Conservation Labs	Utility/Tech	\$50,000	Pittsburgh, PA
LifeAire	Indoor Air Quality	\$185,000	Allentown, PA
Gilson Snow Boards	Recreation	\$50,000	Snyder/Union Counties PA
UpContent	Tech	\$50,000	Pittsburgh, PA

*TechCelerator @ Lackawanna County*

In Spring 2023, eight startup businesses participated in the TechCelerator @ Lackawanna County program. Entrepreneurs that participated met weekly and gained insights from subject matter experts and industry leaders. Businesses that successfully completed the ten week course received a grant of \$10,000 to jump start their venture. This program was a collaborative effort



between Lackawanna County, the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Ben Franklin Technology Partners of NEPA, and tecBRIDGE. This program was designed to help Lackawanna County based early-stage, for-profit, technology-based start-ups learn, grow, and network.

## **EDA ASSISTANCE NEEDED**

The EDA Planning Grant, has been at \$70,000 for many years and has not been adjusted for inflation. It would be helpful if the amount were increased so that it can be comparable with the amount of \$130,285 that is received from ARC for its 302(a) Local development District Administrative Grant.

## **PRESS ENGAGEMENTS/OPPORTUNITIES**

The NEPA Alliance will coordinate media events with EDA as well as our elected officials, Appalachian Regional Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and our local Economic Development Partners to assure the mission and impact of EDA is communicated within our region.

## **ECONOMIC RESILIENCY**

The Northeastern Pennsylvania regional economy, like others throughout the nation, continues to recover from the Covid-19 Pandemic. Nationwide issues such as inflation, supply chain disruptions, and workforce challenges are still impacting businesses in the region.

To encourage collaboration and communication between economic development agencies in the region, NEPA Alliance oversees the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP). The PREP partners include the local chambers of commerce, industrial resource centers, small business development centers, and county economic development corporations. The PREP partners meet quarterly to ensure there is regular and open discussion on business sector needs and a way coordinate impact assessment efforts.

Northeastern Pennsylvania has continued to diversify economically. Manufacturing remains a critical component of the economic landscape of the region. The region has undertaken efforts to broaden the industrial base with diversification initiatives, such as the NEPA Launch initiative. This initiative is aimed at supporting the emerging aerospace cluster in Northeast Pennsylvania. This program will help manufacturers who are already in the space / aerospace supply chain expand, as well as help those manufacturers who are not yet in that space pivot. NEPIRC provides trainings and informational sessions on best practices in the manufacturing space. The Strategic Early Warning Network assists struggling manufacturers in the region avoid layoffs and closure.

Transportation and Warehousing is a growing industry in the region. Northeastern Pennsylvania is strategically located with proximity to major population centers; the region is within one day's drive of 1/3 of U.S. population. The cost of developable land is also significantly less than neighboring areas in New York, New Jersey, or the Lehigh Valley. Northeastern Pennsylvania is also known for its higher educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and tourism industry.

Having a diversified economy allows the region to better withstand downturns in a particular industry.

The NEPA Alliance continues to administer the Get Connected program. Business enrolled in the Get Connected program work with one of two local web development firms to create a business website or improve an existing website. Businesses in the program gain the capability to conduct e-commerce transactions by accepting as payment credit cards through a secured website. This program has helped area retailers become more resilient should another health emergency or other disaster require their physical location to shut down.

This past year, the NEPA Alliance Business Finance Center was designated as a Community Advantage Pilot Loan Program lender through the SBA 7(a) loan program. This loan program was designed to give new businesses, minority owned businesses, veteran owned businesses, woman owned business, and businesses with limited funds better access to capital. There has been strong demand from area businesses; three enterprises have already received funding through the program.

Finally, having a skilled and trained workforce is critical for any region. Efforts have been made by workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, and other economic development organizations to ensure that the region has a resilient workforce that can better shift between jobs or industries when their core employment is threatened. Johnson College, the region's main technical school, recently announced the construction of a new advanced technology facility to house the building trades programs, HVAC, and electrical construction technology. Alvernia University opened a branch campus in Schuylkill County in 2023 that will focus on adult education and graduate degree programs. The region also hosts a strong network of career and technical schools for high school students. Pike and Wayne Counties do not have a career and technical center; establishing one is a priority for the county commissioners.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **DATA PROFILES**

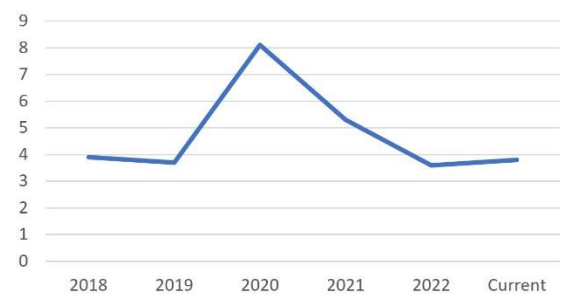
**Figure 1. Data Profile for the United States**



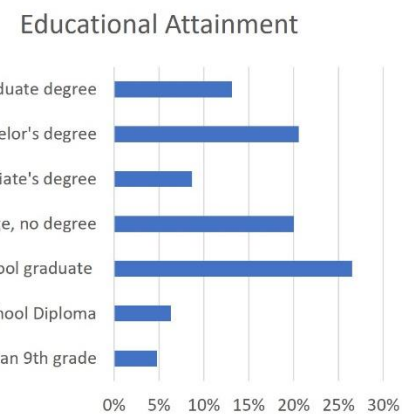
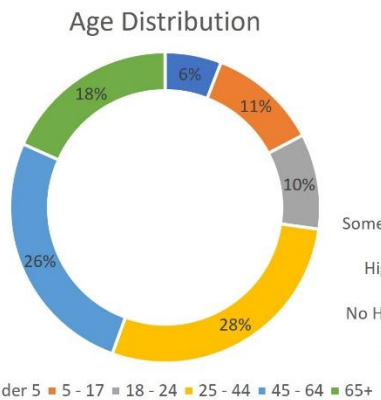
**333,287,557**      **0.6%**      **38.9**  
 2022 Population    % Change from 2020    Median Age

**Number of Businesses – 8,148,606**  
**Number of 501(c)(3) Nonprofits – 2,211,685**  
**Unemployment Rate – 3.8%**  
**Number of States – 50**

United States Unemployment Rate



- Sources:
- US Census Population Estimate
  - ACS 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022)
  - US Census (via StatsAmerica.org)
  - US BLS
  - US Census 2021 County Business Patterns
  - United Way ALICE Report
  - map.feedingamerica.org
  - US BLS (via StatsAmerica.org)
  - GuideStar



**UNIQUE INDUSTRY CLUSTERS**  
 The United States has no unique industry clusters because according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Location quotients compare the concentration of an industry within a specific area to the concentration of that industry nationwide."

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC**  
 Median Household Income    \$75,149  
 Veteran Population            6.6%  
 Poverty Rate                    11.5%  
 Food Insecurity Rate        11.5%  
 Average Commute            27 min  
 Households w/ Broadband Internet    88.3%

**TOP INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT**

Health Care & Social Assistance	16.1%
Retail	12.1%
Administrative Services	10.1%
Accommodation & Food Service	9.5%
Manufacturing	9.1%

**HOUSING**

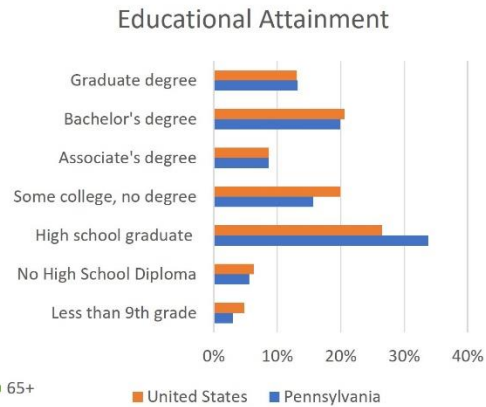
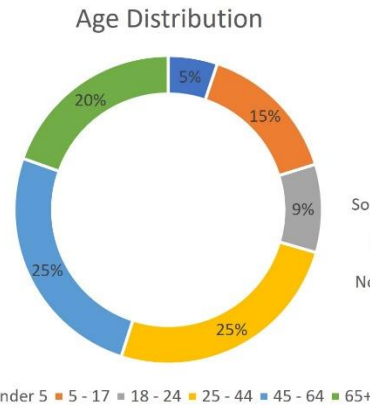
Median Home Value	\$226,200
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.0%
Rental Vacancy Rate	3.8%
Housing Units with No Vehicle	8.3%
Homes Built before 1970	36.7%



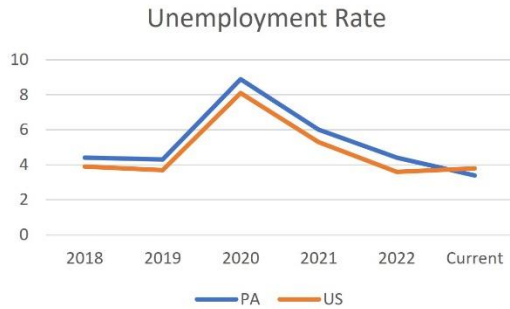
**Figure 2. Data Profile for Pennsylvania**



**12,972,008** 2022 Population  
**-0.2%** % Change from 2020  
**40.9** Median Age



**Number of Businesses – 304,633**  
**Number of 501(c)(3) Nonprofits<sup>9</sup> – 84,782**  
**Unemployment Rate – 3.4%**  
**Number of Municipalities – 2,560**



- Sources:
- US Census Population Estimate
  - ACS 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022)
  - US Census (via StatsAmerica.org)
  - US BLS
  - US Census 2021 County Business Patterns
  - United Way ALICE Report
  - map.feedingamerica.org
  - US BLS (via StatsAmerica.org)
  - Guidestar
  - Pennsylvania DCED

### UNIQUE INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

- Education
- Health Care
- Wood, Wood Products & Publishing
- Energy
- Logistics and Transportation

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC

- Median Household Income \$73,170
- Veteran Population 6.6%
- Poverty Rate 12%
- Food Insecurity Rate 10.9%
- Average Commute 27 min
- Households w/ Broadband Internet 87.1%

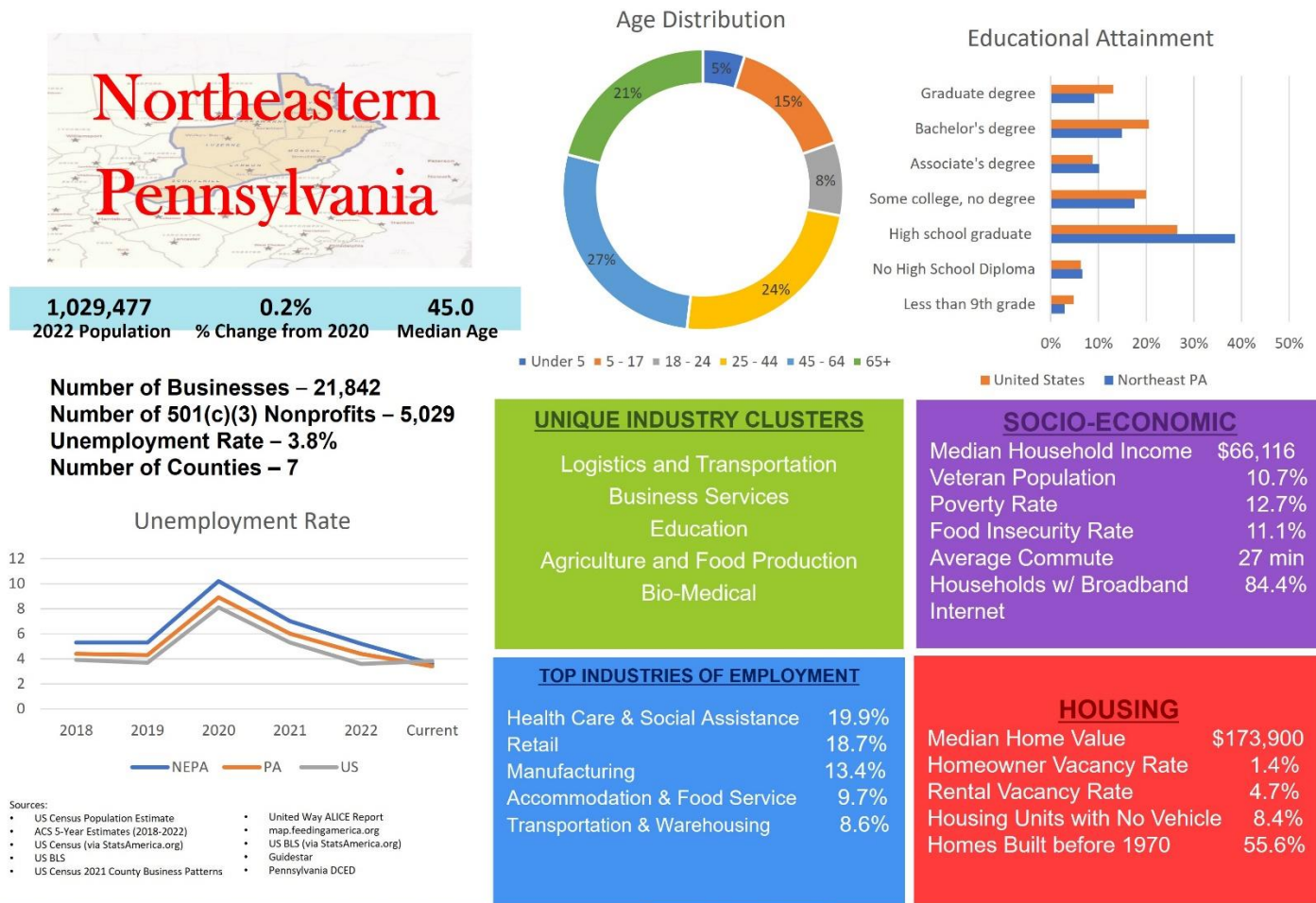
### TOP INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT

- Health Care & Social Assistance 20.1%
- Retail 12.0%
- Manufacturing 10.1%
- Accommodation & Food Service 7.5%
- Professional Services 6.4%

### HOUSING

- Median Home Value \$226,200
- Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.0%
- Rental Vacancy Rate 3.8%
- Housing Units with No Vehicle 10.6%
- Homes Built before 1970 55.9%

**Figure 3. Data Profile for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Region**



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2023  
 Annual Performance Report for Northeastern Pennsylvania  
[www.nepa-alliance.org](http://www.nepa-alliance.org)



Information provided by Tyler Day  
 Community & Economic Development Manager  
 Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

**Figure 4. Data Profile for Carbon County, Pennsylvania**

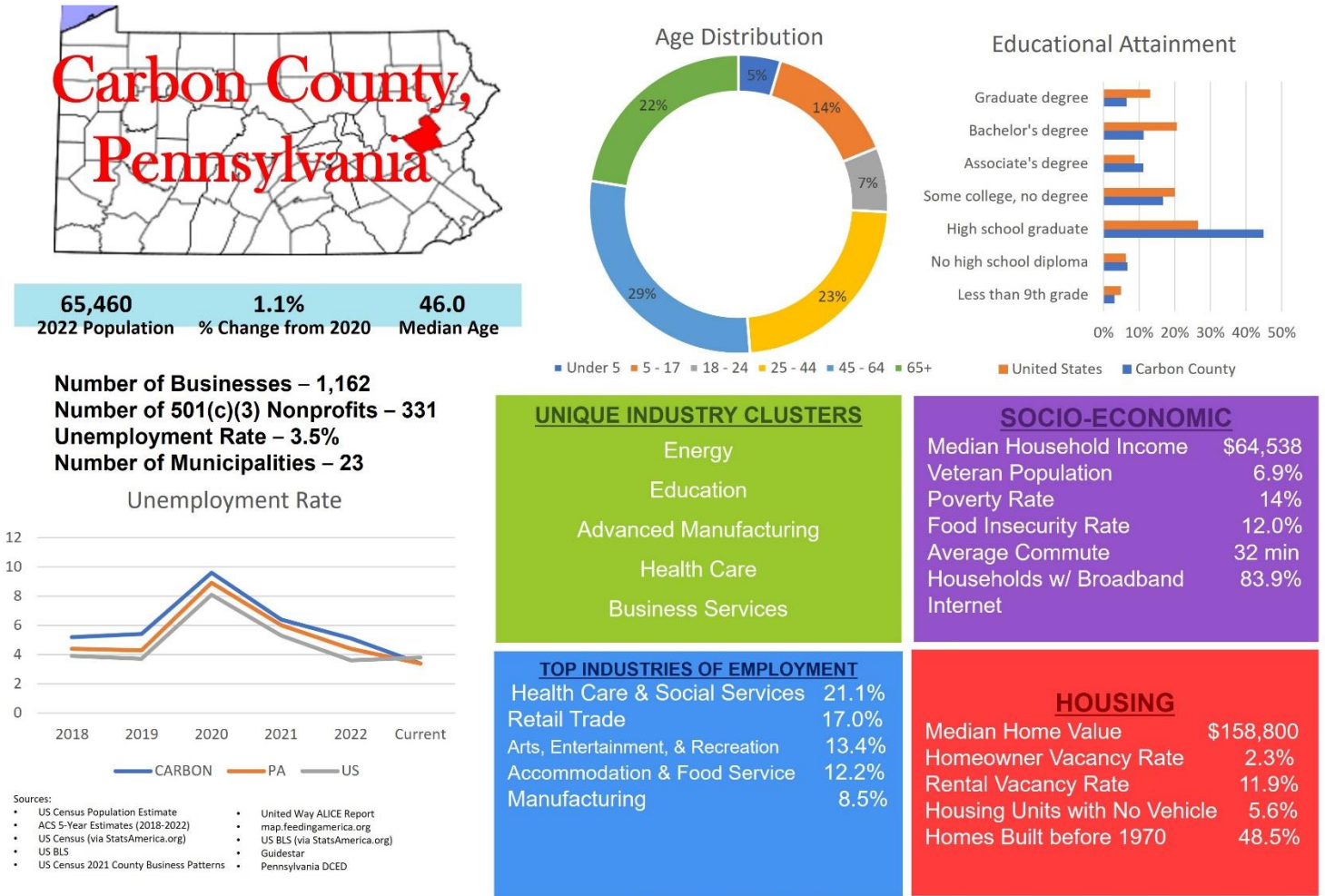
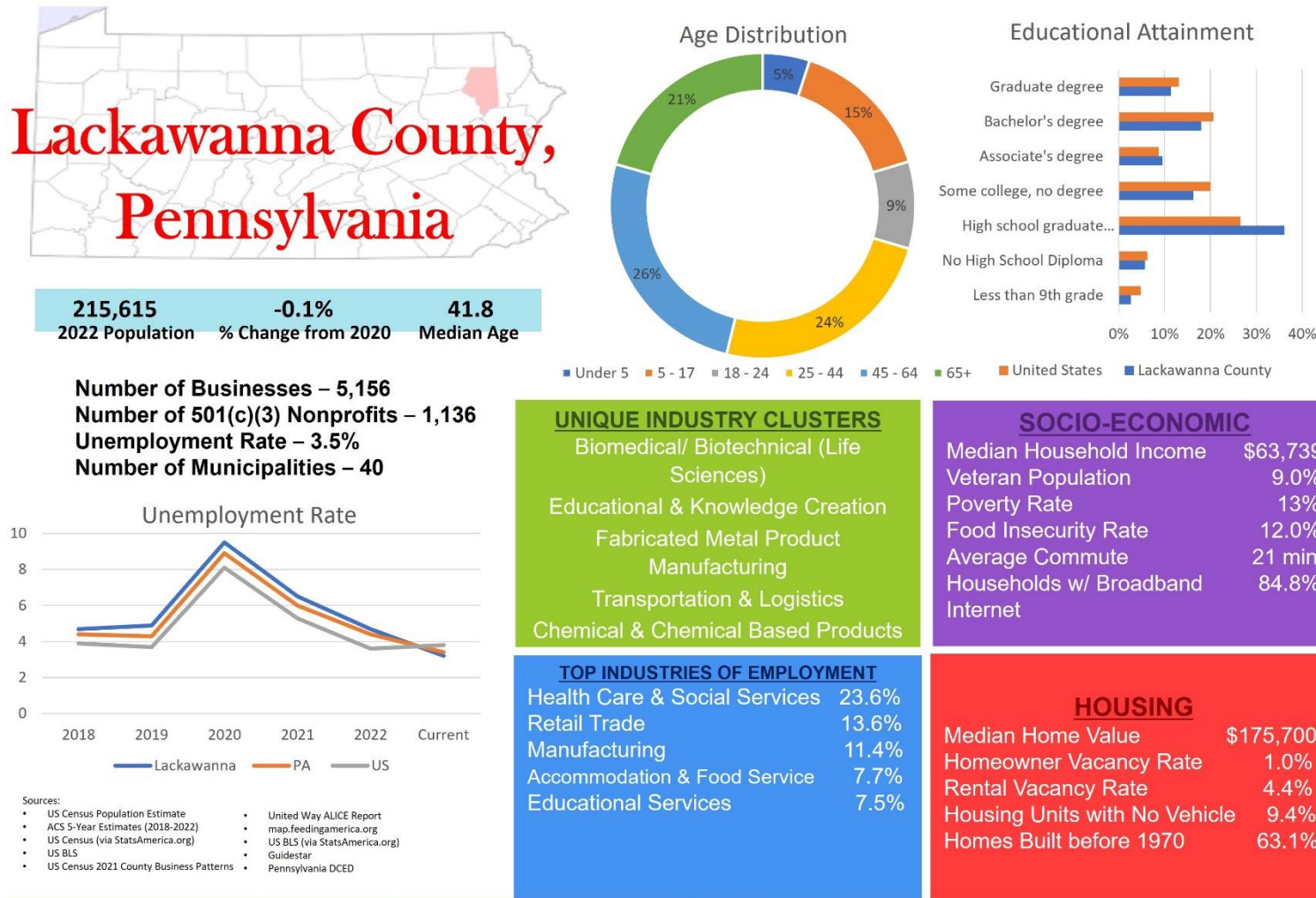


Figure 5. Data Profile for Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

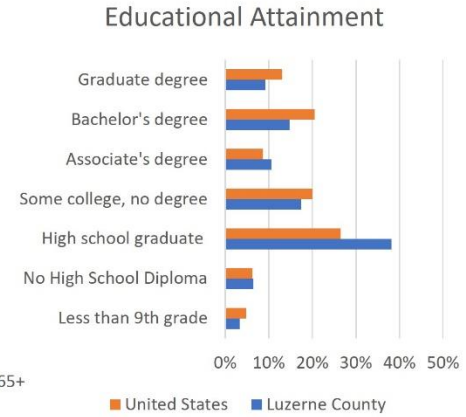
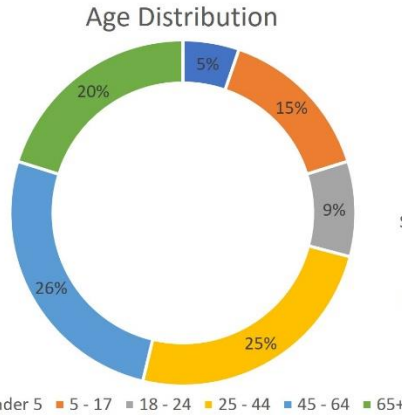




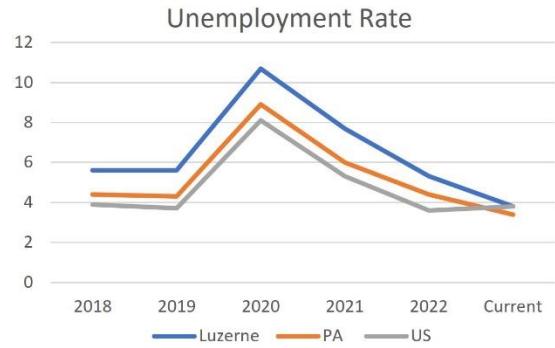
**Figure 6. Data Profile for Luzerne County, Pennsylvania**



**326,369** 2022 Population  
**0.2%** % Change from 2020  
**41.8** Median Age



**Number of Businesses – 7,095**  
**Number of 501(c)(3) Nonprofits – 1,392**  
**Unemployment Rate – 4.0%**  
**Number of Municipalities – 76**



Sources:  
 • US Census Population Estimate  
 • ACS 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022)  
 • US Census (via StatsAmerica.org)  
 • US BLS  
 • US Census 2021 County Business Patterns  
 • United Way ALICE Report - 2021 Update for Pennsylvania  
 • map.feedingamerica.org  
 • US BLS (via StatsAmerica.org)  
 • Guidestar  
 • Pennsylvania DCED

**UNIQUE INDUSTRY CLUSTERS**  
 Logistics and Transportation  
 Agriculture and Food Production  
 Wood, Wood Products & Publishing  
 Advanced Manufacturing  
 Education

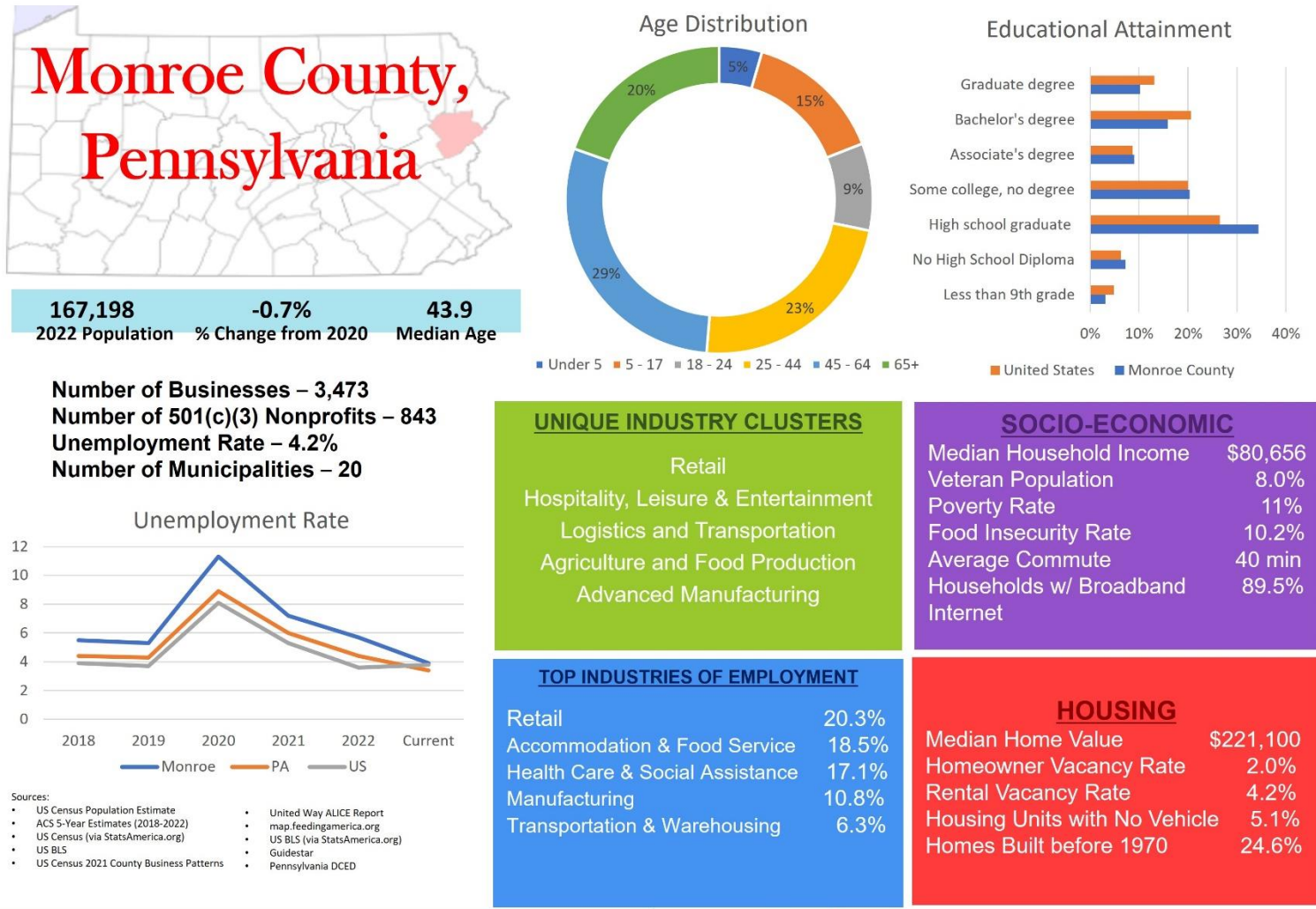
**SOCIO-ECONOMIC**  
 Median Household Income \$60,836  
 Veteran Population 7.8%  
 Poverty Rate 14%  
 Food Insecurity Rate 11.9%  
 Average Commute 24 min  
 Households w/ Broadband Internet 83.0%

**TOP INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT**  
 Health Care & Social Services 20.1%  
 Manufacturing 13.8%  
 Retail 13.6%  
 Transportation & Warehousing 10.7%  
 Accommodation & Food Service 7.8%

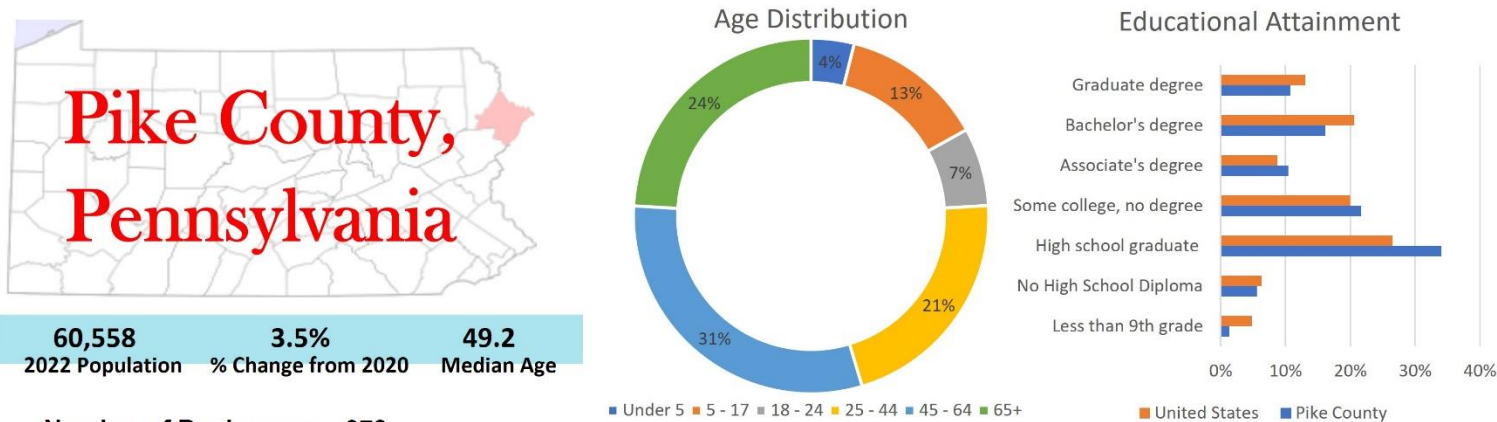
**HOUSING**  
 Median Home Value \$152,400  
 Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.5%  
 Rental Vacancy Rate 4.7%  
 Housing Units with No Vehicle 10.7%  
 Homes Built before 1970 59.9%



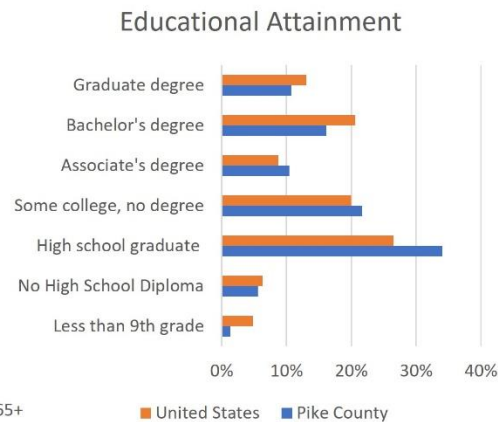
**Figure 7. Data Profile for Monroe County, Pennsylvania**



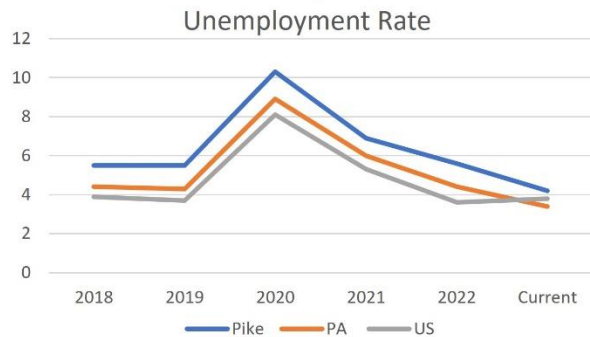
**Figure 8. Data Profile for Pike County, Pennsylvania**



**60,558** 2022 Population  
**3.5%** % Change from 2020  
**49.2** Median Age



**Number of Businesses – 978**  
**Number of 501(c)(3) Nonprofits – 267**  
**Unemployment Rate – 4.4%**  
**Number of Municipalities – 13**



- Sources:
- US Census Population Estimate
  - ACS 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022)
  - US Census (via StatsAmerica.org)
  - US BLS
  - US Census 2021 County Business Patterns
  - United Way ALICE Report
  - map.feedingamerica.org
  - US BLS (via StatsAmerica.org)
  - Guidestar
  - Pennsylvania DCED

**UNIQUE INDUSTRY CLUSTERS**

- Energy
- Hospitality, Leisure & Entertainment
- Education
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Health Care

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC**

- Median Household Income: \$76,416
- Veteran Population: 8.8%
- Poverty Rate: 9%
- Food Insecurity Rate: 10.1%
- Average Commute: 44 min
- Households w/ Broadband Internet: 88.5%

**TOP INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT**

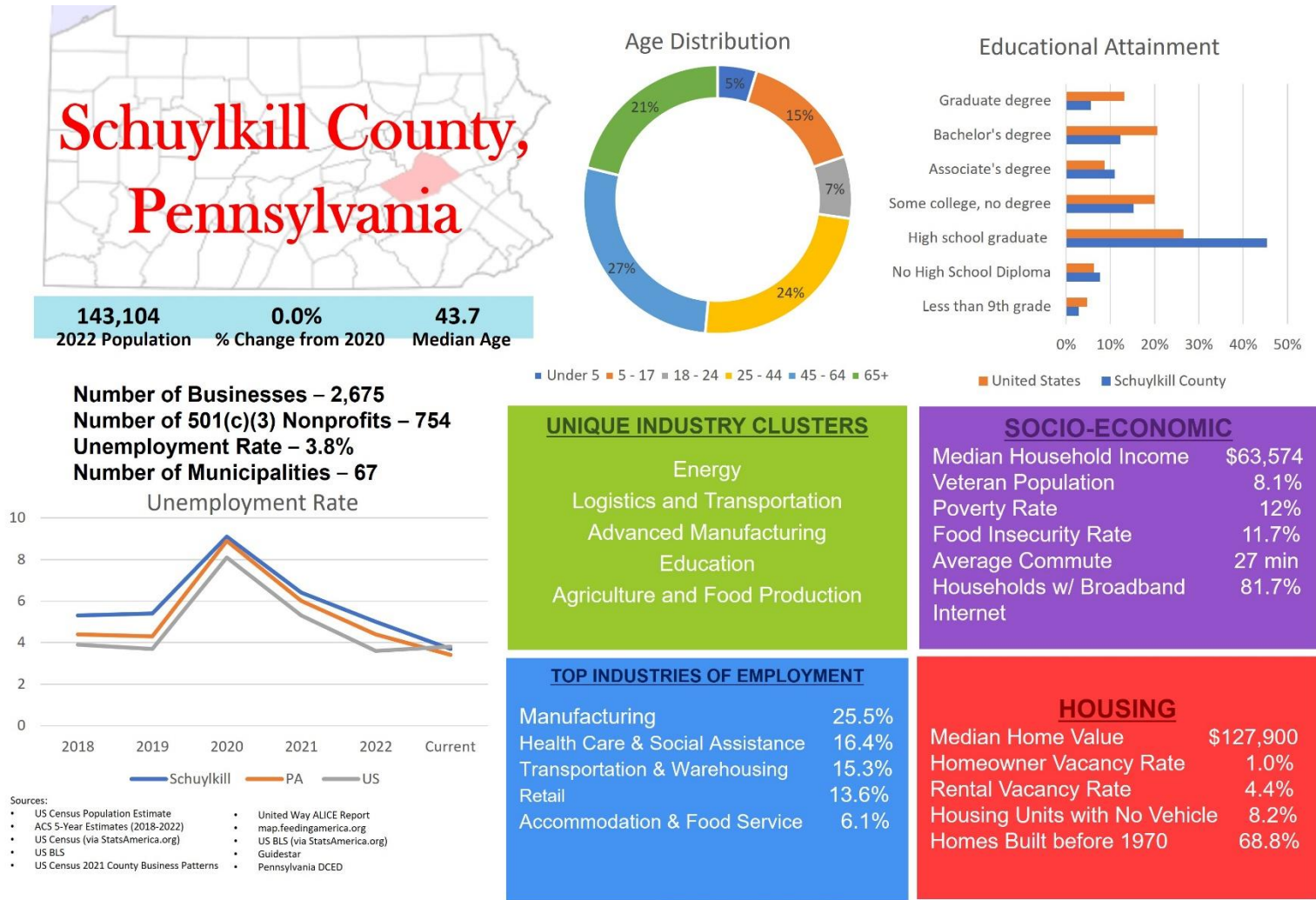
- Retail: 23.8%
- Accommodation & Food Service: 23.0%
- Health Care & Social Assistance: 12.6%
- Other Services (except Public Admin): 10.9%
- Administrative & Support Services: 7.4%

**HOUSING**

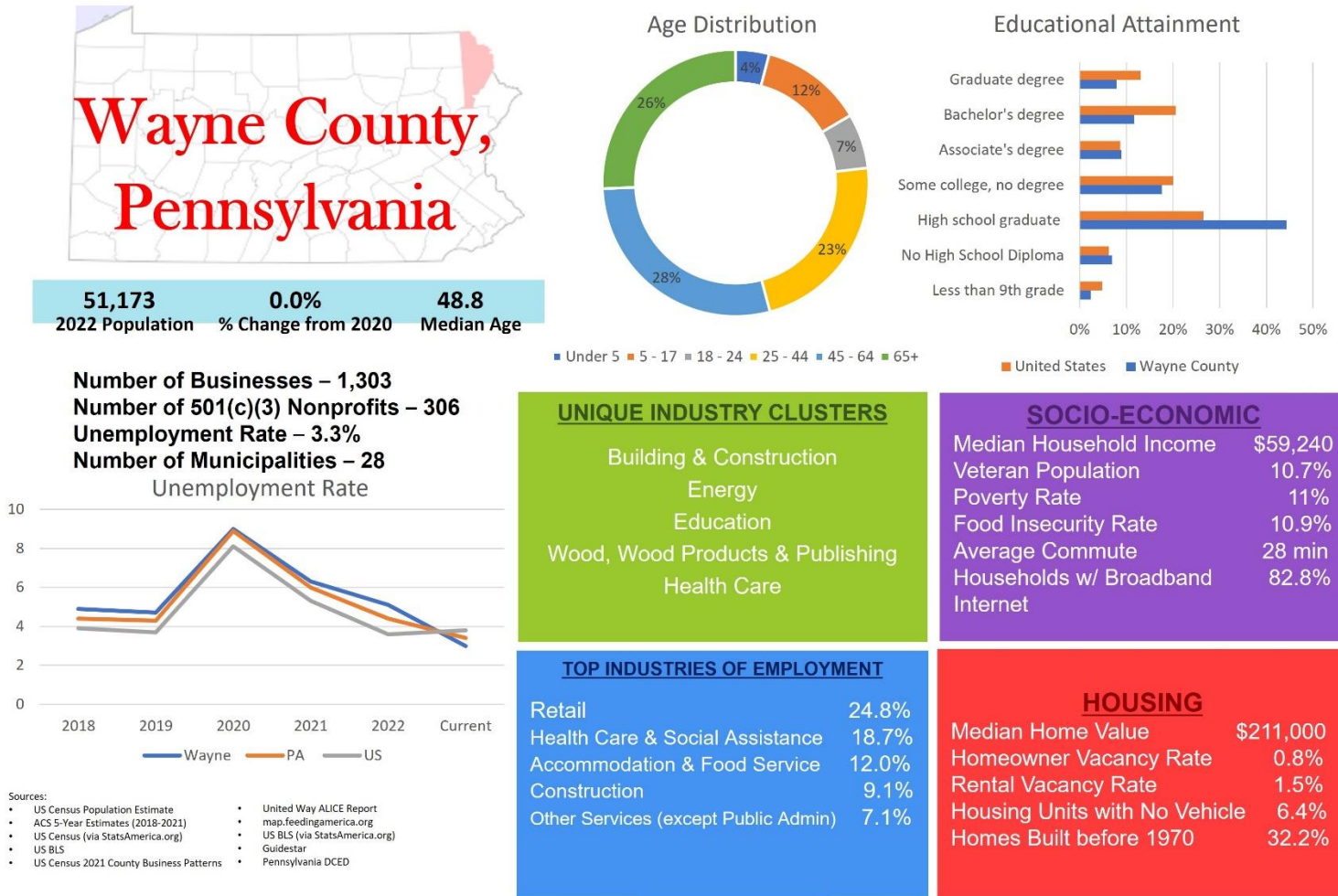
- Median Home Value: \$225,100
- Homeowner Vacancy Rate: 1.7%
- Rental Vacancy Rate: 6.1%
- Housing Units with No Vehicle: 5.4%
- Homes Built before 1970: 22.5%



**Figure 9. Data Profile for Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania**



**Figure 10. Data Profile for Wayne County, Pennsylvania**



**APPENDIX B**

**BOARD RESOLUTION**



**RESOLUTION 2024-2**

**OF THE  
NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA ALLIANCE (NEPA) BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
TO ADOPT THE 2023 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)  
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR CARBON, LACKAWANNA, LUZERNE, MONROE,  
PIKE, SCHUYLKILL AND WAYNE COUNTIES IN NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

**WHEREAS**, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA), as the Economic Development District for the seven-county region of Northeastern Pennsylvania, is required to submit an Annual Performance Report on its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and

**WHEREAS**, the CEDS Annual Performance Report documents the progress achieved on economic development activities, adjusts the 2019 - 2024 CEDS Five-Year Plan and reports on the changing economic conditions in the region, and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the CEDS Annual Performance Report for the period January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, is hereby adopted. The President & CEO of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance is authorized to transmit the report to the Philadelphia Regional Office of the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and share the report with Economic and Community Development organizations within the region.

**ADOPTED THIS 3<sup>rd</sup> DAY of January 2024**

*Mary Beth Wood*

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Mary Beth Wood  
Board Chairperson  
NEPA Alliance Board of Directors

*Jeffrey K. Box*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffrey K. Box  
President & CEO  
NEPA Alliance

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