

The County of Venango

THREE YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Three-Year Community Development Plan (CDP) submitted with this FFY2023 CDBG application contains only minor updates from the previous year, with the majority of these changes contained in the short-term or one-year plan. The Venango County Regional Planning Commission (VCRPC) updates the three-year plan based upon input from the non-entitlement communities and from general comprehensive plan information, including functional plan updates such as our Long-Range Transportation Plan, Housing Market Analysis, Recreation Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, recently released American Community Survey analysis and our Natural Heritage Inventory. The CDP accomplishes this goal by determining the needs of the County and its communities, and particularly, the needs of the County's low- to moderate-income (LMI) households and persons. These needs are then incorporated into specific objectives, categorized as either short-term (one-year) or long-term (years two and three). These objectives assist the County in determining annual project selections, keeping in mind that all activities proposed in the CDP meet the National Objectives laid out as part of the Community Development Block Grant program.

BACKGROUND

Venango County is located in the heart of northwest Pennsylvania, commonly known as the birthplace of the modern oil industry. In the 19th century, the population of the county's communities would soar in good economic times and crash as the region's prosperity, measured in barrels of crude oil, dried up. To some extent, these population fluctuations of the 1800s continue to this day. According to the most recent census results, Venango County's 2010 population totaled 54,984 citizens, or a decrease of 2,581 persons (4.5%) from 2000 figures. The 2010 Census indicates that there has been a 9,292 person decrease in county population since its most recent high-water mark of 65,328 in 1950. This 17% loss is indicative of a long-term population decline. Over the past 50 years, the only population increase occurred between 1970 and 1980 when the number of residents rose from 62,353 to 64,444. More recent estimates through the American Community Survey reveal that the Venango County population continues to decline (see *Table 1*).

This long-term population decline is not attributable to natural decrease (i.e. where more deaths than births occur in a community). Rather, natural decline has only recently become a factor. Instead, the decline of Venango County's population has been fueled by an out-migration of residents. While several factors have influenced this population flight, the primary one has been to seek a better economic situation elsewhere. The population loss experienced by Venango County is similar throughout northwest Pennsylvania. Large numbers of people, especially young adults, leave in search of jobs and other opportunities.

The County is composed of two 3rd class cities, 9 boroughs, and 20 townships. The population core of the community is centered in the cities of Franklin and Oil City and the municipalities that surround them; Sugarcreek Borough, Sandycreek Borough, Cranberry Township, and Cornplanter Township. According to the 2010 Census, these central Venango County communities combined have a population of 33,759 residents, or 61% of the County's total population. In the remaining 25 municipalities, residents are primarily found in the small boroughs and settlements scattered along the County's roadways.

This Three-Year Plan considers only those municipalities that are non-entitlement communities, those with populations under 4,000 persons. Therefore, the entitlement communities of the cities of Oil City and Franklin, Cranberry Township, and Sugarcreek Borough are excluded. According to the 2010 census data, these four municipalities have a combined population of 29,101, with 25,883 persons residing within the remainder, or non-entitlement communities, of the County. Refer to *Table 1* and *Table 2* for long-term population change to recent estimates in both the county as a whole and in non-entitlement communities exclusively.

Table 1. Overall population change in Venango County

Year	Population	Change	% Change
1930	63,276	-	-
1940	63,958	682	1.08%
1950	65,328	1,370	2.14%
1960	65,295	-33	-0.05%
1970	62,353	-2,942	-4.51%
1980	64,444	2,091	3.35%
1990	59,381	-5,063	-7.86%
2000	57,565	-1,816	-3.06%
2010	54,984	-2,581	-4.48%
2019 ⁺	51,818	-3,166	-5.76%
1980-2019	-	-12,626	-19.59%

Source: U.S. Census Data, *ACS 5-Year Estimate (DP05)

Table 2. Population change-over-time in Venango County Non-Entitlement Communities

Year	Population	Change	% Change
1950	24,703	-	-
1960	25,384	681	2.76%
1970	25,962	578	2.28%
1980	28,590	2,628	10.12%
1990	27,315	-1,275	-4.46%
2000	26,504	-811	-2.97%
2010	25,883	-621	-2.34%
1980-2010	-	-2,707	-9.47%
2019 ⁺	24,451	-1,432	-5.53%

Source: U.S. Census Data, *ACS 5-Year Estimate (DP05)

ELDERLY PERSONS

Pennsylvania is a graying state with a median age of 40.1 years in the year 2010 and increase in 38 years the decade prior. The State's elderly population (65+) represents 15.4% of the total population. Venango County's age groupings are even older, with a median age of 44.3 years, and 18% of its residents 65 year of age or older (see Table 3).

Table 3. Venango County comparative population age distribution

	Venango County	Pennsylvania	United States
Under 18	21.50%	22.00%	24.00%
18 to 64	60.50%	62.50%	62.90%
65 and Over (Elderly)	18.00%	15.40%	13.00%
Median Age	44.3	40.1	37.2

Source: U.S. Census Data 2010

The preponderance of elderly residents is significant. The retirement income of most individuals is considerably less than that of their working counterparts. Typically, persons 65 or older who are either fully or partially retired, have incomes 60-70% of what they enjoyed during their working years. Additionally, in the northern areas of the country, there is a trend for retired citizens to migrate south for a more comfortable climate. Many of those in Venango County who have the means often take this option. However, those who do not have such resources are forced to remain in the community. This is not to say that all elderly citizens abandon their home communities, but it is just another indication of the economic drain on the region. The Housing Market Study for Venango County describes the impact of the inability of these elderly residents to maintain and sell their property.

LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME PERSONS

In Venango County, low-moderate income persons are those with incomes of equal to or less than \$43,200 to \$81,400 depending on family size, according to HUD's most recent Section 8 income limits (see *Table 4*).

Table 4. Venango County Section 8 FFY 2023 Very Low and Low-Moderate Annual Income Limits

Family Size	Very-Low	Low-Moderate
1 Person	\$27,000	\$43,200
2 Person	\$30,850	\$49,350
3 Person	\$34,700	\$55,500
4 Person	\$38,550	\$61,650
5 Person	\$41,650	\$66,600
6 Person	\$44,750	\$71,550
7 Person	\$47,850	\$76,450
8+ Person	\$50,900	\$81,400

Source: HUD Section 8 Income Limits 2023

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in conjunction with the Census Bureau releases statistics every 10 years on the incidence of low-to-moderate income (LMI) persons in all communities based upon the decennial census results. The last count was completed in 2010. According to HUD's figures, in the County's 27 non-entitlement communities, 8,640 of the 25,175 LMI universes have incomes of 80% or less of the local median. This represents 35% of the communities' population. Venango County in its entirety has a 41% LMI population.

Historically, Venango County has had several non-entitlement block groups that met the low-to-moderate income criteria. According to 2011-15 ACS data, none of Venango County's municipalities have LMI rates at 51% or more. With no non-entitlement municipalities with LMI rates above 51%, but several that are very near 51%, it should follow that many rural block groups would also have high incidences of LMI. However, this is not the case as the population of each of these boroughs is so small that they are just a part of a more prosperous overall block group.

POVERTY

Another indicator of the county's economic status is the American Community Survey poverty data. Data shown in *Figure 1* demonstrates that the percentages of both Venango County families and individuals below the poverty level are higher than across Pennsylvania.

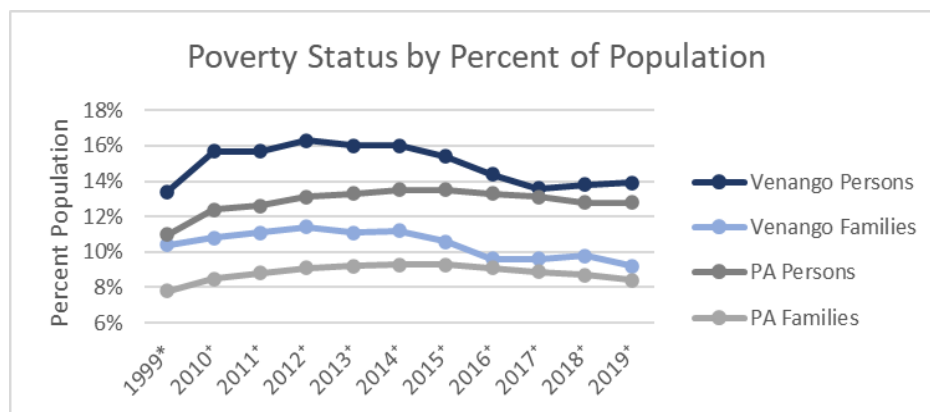


Figure 1. Comparative poverty percentage (Sources: *US Census 2000, *ACS 5-Year Estimate)

MINORITY PERSONS

According to the 2017 American Community Survey, Venango County has a 3.1% minority population. Maps are attached to this Plan depicting the LMI and minority concentrations. According to more recent estimates, the minority population of Venango County is increasing, with more people reporting as two or more races (see Table 5). However, as a whole, the county is far less diverse than the state.

Table 5. Comparison of minority populations.

	Venango County		Pennsylvania	
	μ	%	μ	%
2010	55,462	100.00%	13,428,071	100.00%
White	53,390	96.26%	9,750,687	72.61%
Black/African American	571	1.03%	1,423,169	10.60%
American Indian/Alaska Native	85	0.15%	31,052	0.23%
Asian	197	0.36%	510,501	3.80%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	11	0.02%	4,276	0.03%
Some other Race	108	0.19%	508,531	3.79%
Two or More Races	622	1.12%	774,484	5.77%
Hispanic/Latino (Any race)	478	0.86%	425,371	3.17%
Total Minorities:	2,072	3.74%	3,677,384	27.39%
<i>Source: US Decennial Census 2010 (PL 94-171)</i>				
2019	52,385	100.00%	13,726,746	100.00%
White	50,080	95.60%	10,300,602	75.04%
Black/African American	407	0.78%	1,430,664	10.42%
American Indian/Alaska Native	17	0.03%	24,691	0.18%
Asian	195	0.37%	436,324	3.18%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.00%	4,198	0.03%
Some other Race	146	0.28%	275,177	2.00%
Two or More Races	973	1.86%	319,874	2.33%
Hispanic/Latino (Any race)	567	1.08%	935,216	6.81%
Total Minorities:	2,305	4.40%	13,726,746	24.96%
<i>Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate (B02001, B03002)</i>				
2020	51,031	100.00%	13,394,821	100.00%
White	47,324	92.74%	9,750,687	72.79%
Black/African American	444	0.87%	1,423,169	10.62%
American Indian/Alaska Native	83	0.16%	31,052	0.23%
Asian	172	0.34%	510,501	3.81%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	10	0.02%	4,276	0.03%
Some other Race	206	0.40%	508,531	3.80%
Two or More Races	2,215	4.34%	774,484	5.78%
Hispanic/Latino (Any race)	577	1.13%	392,121	2.93%
Total Minorities:	3,707	7.26%	3,644,134	27.21%
<i>Source: US Decennial Census 2020 (PL 94-171)</i>				

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Housing

The 2009 Housing Market study lists several recommendations to improve the housing market and conditions in Venango County. The recommendations include managing the supply of housing that now exists in ways that remove problem stocks, enable blocks of residents to organize and collectively promote and engage in higher standards of care and to orient policies in the county that help distribute the housing challenge fairly. “Without a broad-based change in employment, the real estate market will surely stay much as it has over the last 20 years. There will be little real growth and likely only modest decline. That decline will primarily take place in the older, low-income parts of Oil City and in scattered locations in Sugarcreek and Franklin.” The study also finds that “For 60 years, more housing has existed in Venango County than there have been households to fill them. . . Venango County’s housing stocks have not been properly aligned with demand for more than 60 years. Compounding this, numerous public efforts on the housing front do not function considering market reality. Instead, they operate as if the housing challenge in the County is solved by more supply, when in fact the housing challenge is anything but. One result of this is that today there are 5,312 more units of housing (10,470), affordable to HHs earning less than 50% of the area median income, than there are households at that income level (5,158).” *Table 6* and *Table 7* show the differences between number of housing units in Venango County as a whole and in the non-entitlement communities exclusively, as well as the subtle differences between occupied and unoccupied units.

Table 6. Venango County Housing – 1980-2010

	Venango County			Non-Entitlement		
	Units	Change	%	Units	Change	%
1980	24,358	--	--	10,156	--	--
1990	26,961	2,603	10.7	12,977	2,821	27.8
2000	26,904	57	0.2	13,048	71	0.5
2010	27,464	560	2.1	13,070	22	0.2

Source: Decennial Census

Table 7. Venango County Occupied Housing – 1980-2010

	Venango County			Non-Entitlement		
	Units	Change	%	Units	Change	%
1980	22,408	--	--	9,571	--	--
1990	22,734	326	1.6	--	--	--
2000	22,747	339	1.5	10,019	448	4.6
2010	22,621	213	0.9	12,268	2,249	22.4

Source: Decennial Census

Of the 27,464 total housing units in Venango County in 2010, 82% (22,621) were occupied and 18% (4,843) were vacant. Venango County’s high vacancy rate can be partially attributed to many seasonal, recreational, and occasional use homes (see *Table 8*). It is the conversion of these “seasonal” homes to year-round occupancy that often creates problems. Unfortunately, many times these seasonal dwellings were constructed many, many years ago and are presently in a deteriorated state. Many are not properly insulated, wired, plumbed and in other ways not up to current building practices and standard codes. However, it is these very qualities that make “seasonal” properties appear inexpensive and therefore affordable to persons of modest means. These so-called affordable properties are the costliest to heat and maintain. These factors decrease the overall quality of local housing stock.

Table 8. Venango County's distribution of vacancy status

Vacancy Status	Vacant (n=4,157)	in 2000	Vacant (n=4,843)	in 2010
For rent	396	9.5%	424	8.8%
Rented, not occupied	*	*	58	1.2%
For sale only	309	7.4%	315	6.5%
Sold, not occupied	281	6.8%	122	2.5%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	2586	62.2%	2813	58.1%
For migrant workers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other vacant	585	14.1%	1111	22.9%

Source: US Decennial Census (H5), *Figure was reported in together with Sold, not occupied

Another factor to consider in determining the quality or condition of the County's housing stock is the age of the homes themselves. Generally, the older the home the greater the tendency for deterioration. In 1990, 41% of Venango County's houses were built prior to 1940, compared to the State rate of 35.1%. According to the 2000 Census, this figure dropped somewhat to 39% of the County's dwelling units. The State's number also dropped to 30.3%. These figures should not be construed to mean that the State lost many older homes. Pennsylvania still has the largest number of older homes in the nation, but a large number of newly constructed units have significantly increased the total number of dwelling units within the Commonwealth. The building boom of the 1990's did not occur in Venango County, which has helped insulate the County from housing market turmoil. Additionally, seasonal use homes tend to be younger than those of year-round use mainly because the ability to own a seasonal home is a trend that only recently (post World War II) became affordable to the middle class. In 1990, only 32.6% of all vacant houses (of which seasonal houses comprised 55.8%) were built before 1939. The most recent housing distribution for Venango County can be found in *Table 9* and *Figure 2*.

Table 9. Venango County's age distribution of homes by occupancy status

Year	Occupied (n=22,050)	Owner-Occupied (n=16,549)	Renter-Occupied (n=5,501)
2014 or later	0.9%	1.0%	0.6%
2010 to 2013	1.1%	1.2%	0.7%
2000 to 2009	7.2%	7.7%	5.8%
1980 to 1999	14.0%	14.4%	12.7%
1960 to 1979	22.2%	20.6%	27.1%
1940 to 1959	18.5%	18.7%	18.0%
1939 or earlier	36.0%	36.3%	35.1%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate 2019 (S2504)

The Median Housing Value (MHV) of owner-occupied housing units within the County (2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimate) is \$85,000 (see *Figure 3*). This amount placed Venango County 65th out of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Pennsylvania's MHV is \$170,500. Median housing values (2013-2017 ACS) for individual Venango County municipalities range from a low of \$61,300 (Clintonville Borough) to a high of \$113,000 (Irwin Township), placing all Venango County municipal median housing values well below the statewide median \$170,500. All the data presented on housing, including the number, tenure/vacancy, age, and value, indicate that there is housing stock in Venango County that is in poor condition. Beyond these specific housing statistics that demonstrate a need for housing rehabilitation are other factors including the incidence of LMI, poverty, age and income of County residents. The incidence of LMI, poverty, and age (see Economic Development Needs) emphasize that many County residents have limited means to invest in their homes and, unfortunately, these are usually the very homes that are most in need of attention.

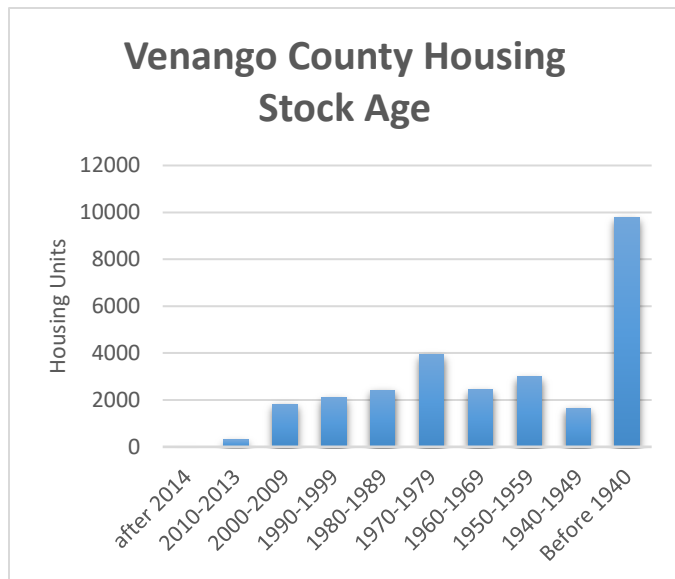


Figure 3. Bar chart with a right-leaning distribution of older homes built before 1940 (ACS 2015).

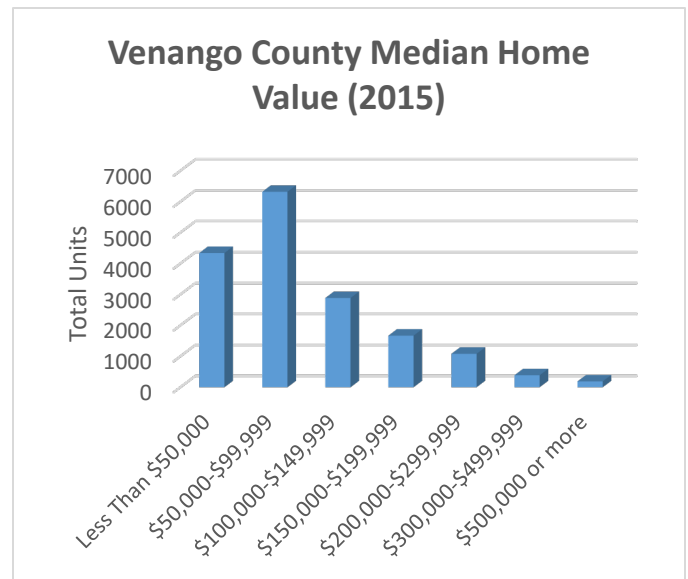


Figure 2. Median Home Value according to the American Community Survey 2015.

The majority of the housing efforts within the county have occurred within the Cities of Franklin and Oil City, Sugar Creek Borough and Cranberry Township, as these four communities have larger municipal staff and more resources to draw upon. Recently, the County has received funding from the HOME grant program, PHARE grant program, and CDBG to facilitate a countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program. The County's current HOME grant program is rehabilitating low-income, owner-occupied homes in the City of Franklin. Previously, the county has been awarded two separate HOME grants and three PHARE grants. PHARE grants are state-funded grants that are utilized to rehabilitate homes. The County also has the Venango County Land Bank, which serves as another tool to address housing issues within Venango County.

Finally, the Housing Market Analysis that was completed in 2009 offers the following recommendations in an effort to build a healthy, functional housing market within the County:

- Build capacity to address housing issues
- Focus Targeted Demolition:
 - Within heavily traveled corridors
 - Properties with potential as side-yard additions
 - Converting undesirable lots to permanent greenspace
- Renewed Commitment to Code Enforcement by municipalities
- Maintain affordable housing (repair and energy efficiency)
- Rehabilitate and Reinvest in Functional Properties
- Coordination or consolidation of housing authorities/policies
- Stabilize rental properties through better management & tenancy
- Help responsible renters transition into first-time homebuyers

COUNTYWIDE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Sewer

Sanitary sewer facilities are a concern to Venango County. Most soils in Venango County are ill suited for on-site sewage disposal. Malfunctioning systems have led to localized degradation of surface water and shallow groundwater resources.

These problems frequently occur in rural and suburban areas of Venango County. Obviously, the malfunctioning systems in widely scattered rural locations cannot effectively be addressed by community sewer systems. However, in many of the County's municipalities, there are areas where numerous suburban developments have grown around the County's older urban areas. In those instances, an existing sewer system is usually near the problem areas.

Another pervasive problem relates to the age and condition of many of the existing sewer systems that service the County's smaller communities. For example, Clintonville Borough received a Consent Order from DEP in August of 2011 that obligates the Authority to make the necessary improvements to their sewage treatment plan, and CDBG funds were utilized to help the borough make the needed repairs. The County has allocated considerable funds to assist with updating sewer facilities, many of which are in significant need of repair due to their age and subsequent deterioration of lines and related treatment plant equipment. Venango County municipalities continue Act 537 Plan amendments and application to various funding sources for sewage improvements.

New Construction, replacement and/or upgrading costs are beyond the financial capacity of local communities. It is believed that in many instances, these small communities have a majority of residents that are classified as low to moderate income, with this assumption usually confirmed by an income survey.

Water

Water facilities are also of major concern in Venango County. In addition to contamination from malfunctioning septic systems, individual water sources become contaminated from gas drilling and coal mining activities. As with sanitary sewer systems, most of the pollution is evident in rural and suburban areas where community water systems have not been a feasible option.

The age and condition of water systems servicing many small areas in the County present serious problems. Deterioration of these systems is costly to remedy and most communities cannot obtain the needed funding to address these problems. Replacement of undersized water lines is beyond the financial means of most municipalities. Since the inception of the CDBG program to the present, the County has continued to allocate funding to water system improvements.

Other Facilities

In addition to the traditional facilities of a community, there are often special resources that provide services to certain segments of the population. Venango County has paid considerable attention to facilities for the elderly. In Oil City, the assistance of CDBG funds enabled a community effort which resulted in a centrally located and exclusively dedicated senior center. This center continues to be the most active one in the County and is used by many residents of the townships and boroughs outside of Oil City. Additionally, CDBG funds supported the conversion of a former County nursing home for the elderly to a personal care facility. The Oil Region Alliance, a local economic development agency, completed a market study for expanded housing opportunities in Cranberry Township.

Another needed public improvement is the rehabilitation of local streets, curbs, sidewalks, and storm sewers. Like much of the infrastructure in the County's older established municipalities, these facilities are aged and deteriorated. The deteriorated sidewalks present potential hazards to the elderly and impede handicapped access. FFYs 2007, 2010 and 2011 CDBG funding targeted sidewalk improvements in the Borough of Utica. Utica was able to use the CDBG funds to leverage monies toward a successful Safe Routes to School grant application. FFY2018 CDBG included a sidewalk project in the Borough of Rouseville.

Expansion of a road at the Sandycreek Industrial Park to encourage economic development opportunities and job creation was completed with CDBG, ARC, and RCAP funding in previous years.

Handicapped Access

Much of the development in Venango County was completed prior to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. In 1990, the County completed a handicapped self-evaluation that detailed several deficiencies within various County-owned and/or -operated facilities. These barriers began to be removed with CDBG assistance. The County recognizes the need to remove architectural barriers from public and municipal buildings and facilities as an ongoing priority for projects. The County wishes to continue to use CDBG funds toward the removal of handicapped impediments within the County. Therefore, 2007, 2009 and CDBG-R funds addressed compliance matters at the county-owned Two Mile Run Park. FFY 2011 funds were targeted toward accessibility at the County's historic courthouse, 2014 funds were utilized to complete an ABR project at the Pinegrove Township fire hall, 2017 funds were used to complete an ABR project at the Barkeyville Borough Municipal Building, 2018 funds are being utilized to begin an ABR project at Emlenton Borough's Hughes Park,

2019 funds are being utilized for an ABR project at the Clinton Township Municipal Building, 2020 funds are being utilized for an ABR project at the Reno VFD Social Hall, which acts as a County polling place. In years past, funding went toward the community building in Emlenton Borough, the Crawford Center, to install a “closet elevator” and remove barriers to public restrooms that will make the building fully accessible. FFY2019 money is also allocated to improve handicap accessibility to the Venango County Conservation District’s public environmental trail, at Two Mile Run County Park.

Streets

Local streets are a vital aspect of the infrastructure needs of a community, with several streets critical to efficient traffic flow within a particular area. Some of the more heavily traveled streets require pavement restoration and are located in neighborhoods with significant concentrations of LMI households. Various municipalities continue to target such improvements as vitally needed through our public review/comment efforts. Since 1993, portions of the County’s annual entitlements have been used for street and/or walkway improvements within Rouseville Borough, Clintonville Borough, Utica Borough, Sandycreek Township, Emlenton Borough, Richland Township, and Polk Borough. FFY 2014 funds were utilized for street reconstruction in the LMI Clapp Farm neighborhood of Cornplanter Township.

PUBLIC SERVICE NEEDS

The social service needs of Venango County are provided by county, multi-county, and state agencies, as well as numerous local private, non-profit organizations. For the most part, these facilities adequately address the needs of the residents.

Recreation can generally be divided into two categories that include the traditional recreational activities for residents and those which are tourist-based. Local recreational facilities are principally located in the smaller, more densely populated areas, such as the boroughs and villages. These parks are normally used by all of the area’s residents and tend to need either rehabilitative work or the installation of new equipment. However, a typical small community’s tight budget does not often make this feasible. Examples of this would be the community parks located in the boroughs of Pleasantville, Clintonville, Utica, and Emlenton. These local parks provide daily recreational opportunities to their residents and CDBG assistance has been used for upgrades to existing facilities.

The keystone of local recreation is Two Mile Run County Park, located in the center of the County, north of Route 8, between Franklin and Oil City. This 2,700-acre park was first conceived about 40 years ago with the continued support of the County Commissioners. Recreational opportunities abound in all seasons at this park, with offerings of cross-country skiing, year-round hiking, water sports, and field games. Used by more than 100,000 visitors annually, this park provides an inexpensive and enjoyable recreational focal point for all county residents. The County has used portions of its annual CDBG allocation from several individual grant years for numerous improvements to this facility. In the FFY2019 CDBG contract, the County allocated monies to enhance access to the environmental trail for handicapped and elderly visitors.

Venango County completed a countywide recreation and open space plan in 2010. Future CDBG monies may be used to leverage DCNR grant funding targeted toward implementation of the visioning recommendations resulting from that planning effort.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Although the County is essentially rural, agriculture has not played the key role in its development that might be expected. Despite this reality, the County’s natural resources have always played a vital role in its economic history. Timber, oil, gas, coal, and sand and gravel have been crucial both historically and currently. While oil and coal remain important to the economy, they are no longer the major job generators. Recent interest in unconventional shale gas deposits (Marcellus and Utica) may change the landscape and economy of the region and state, and efforts remain underway to work with the industry and local educational institutions to assure that we are prepared for these opportunities.

Generally, Venango County has been classified as a manufacturing area. As such, it is not surprising to see that it has suffered from the same problems that have beset the industrial Northeast and the State of Pennsylvania

(see *Figure 4*). Traditionally, 6,000 to 7,000 jobs in Venango County were manufacturing related. Manufacturing jobs were lost in the County and will most likely never be recovered. Since the Median Household Income (MHI) values began divulging in 1979, the MHI for Venango County has lagged drastically behind the state with a steady ten-thousand-point gap (see *Table 10*). Although traditional manufacturing is always welcome, the growth and expansion of local businesses and entrepreneurs, and the marketing of the region as an outdoor recreation hub with a high quality of life are expected to be the region's most likely prospects for new job creation opportunities in the future.

Table 10. Annual Median Household Income 1979-2015

	1979	1979*	1989	1989**	1999	2009	2014	2015
Pennsylvania	\$16,880	\$38,736	\$29,060	\$39,044	\$40,106	\$49,737	\$53,115	\$53,599
Venango	\$16,796	\$38,543	\$22,593	\$30,356	\$32,257	\$38,475	\$43,291	\$43,644

* Adjusted by factor of 2.295 (CPI) ** Adjusted by factor of 1.344 (CPI)

Source: U.S. Census, Federal Reserve Bank, Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Community Survey Five Year Estimates

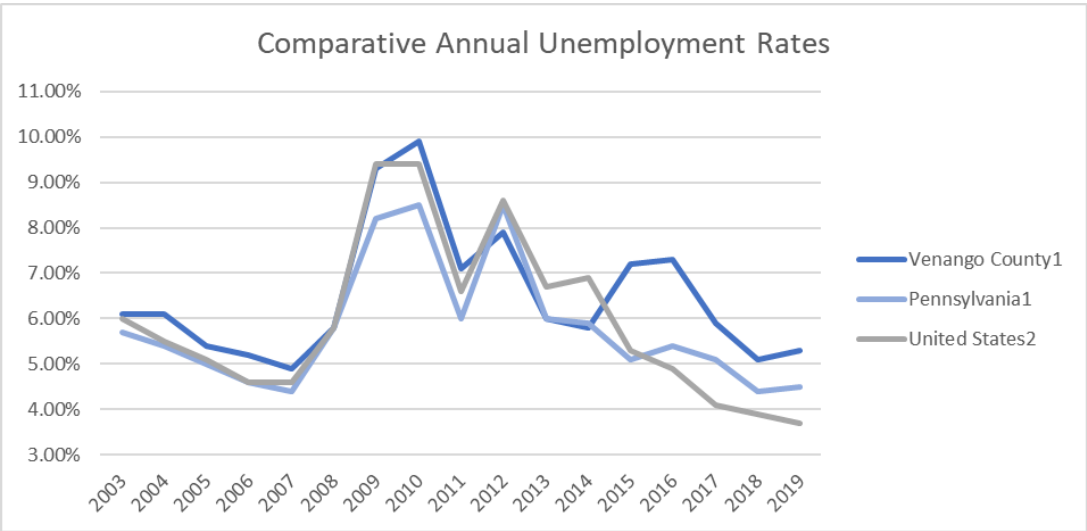


Figure 4. Comparative unemployment trends. Sources: 1PA Department of Labor and Industry, 2US Dept. of Labor and Industry, 3ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles (DP03)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been formulated to address the needs identified in this CDP, with an emphasis on those objectives most likely to benefit low- to moderate-income households. It is understood that not all needs can be addressed with FFY 2023 funds. Therefore, the following objectives include activities to be undertaken with 2023 monies as well as future projects:

- To identify the existing water and sewage systems, especially those in rural areas, in need of repair and/or upgrading and review them based upon benefit to low-moderate income households.
- To consider the extension of sewer and waterlines, where adequate treatment and capacity are present, and when extensions will benefit low-moderate income households.
- To continue projects which will provide needed special services to the low-moderate and very low-income residents of the County with an emphasis on maintaining or securing facilities to promote the overall wellbeing of children and their families.
- To assist low/moderate income communities with the upgrading and rehabilitation of their community parks, and with the provision and/or upgrading of community centers to continue providing low-moderate income citizens with local recreational opportunities.
- To support projects which will remove architectural barriers to the handicapped at public buildings, facilities, or recreation centers.
- To consider projects and programs aimed at economic strengthening and development through the creation and/or retention of jobs for low-moderate income citizens.

- To continue housing rehabilitation and energy savings activities in areas where no other such assistance is available to very low and low-moderate income families.
- To support projects that will address blighted and vacant homes and/or properties within core communities and along transportation corridors to strengthen the county housing stock and positively impact home values within the county.
- To continue projects that will provide needed special services to the low-moderate and very low-income residents of the County and those projects aimed at benefiting the elderly through the provision of special services or the upgrading of facilities for the elderly.
- To continue to assist communities with other types of infrastructure and public improvements aimed at benefiting primarily low-moderate income persons and the County's substantial population of elderly persons. Such projects include road reconstruction, sidewalk replacement and curbing installation to remove barriers.
- To continue to update planning and grant procurement strategies to secure additional resources to leverage County and CDBG dollars to complete needed projects.

Short-Term Plan – First Year (2023)

The following plan identifies activities that are designed to meet some of the County's immediate community development needs. Several factors were taken into consideration in establishing this Plan. Of primary concern was local municipal input. Local officials as well as various agencies and organizations throughout the County were informed in writing of the availability of CDBG funds and invited to submit eligible project proposals to address their specific community needs. Their responses afforded the County the opportunity to assess each proposal's impact on community development needs within Venango County. Other factors taken into consideration in the formulation of this Plan included the percentage of each activity's benefit to low-moderate income residents, project readiness, each project's consistency with the Three-Year Plan, local comprehensive plans and County comprehensive plans, and each project sponsor's prior utilization, if any, for CDBG funds.

The Short-Term Plan recommends the following activities:

- Lance Bowes Environmental Trail ABR
- Countywide Demolition/Clearance
- Courthouse Restroom ABR
- Low- to Moderate-Income, Owner-Occupied Home Rehabilitation

Long-Term Plan (2024-2025)

The following Plan identifies activities designed to address the County's community development needs on a long-term basis. Critical to this Plan development was the identification of certain housing, facilities, services, and economic needs as so cited in our needs analysis. During the second and third years of this Plan, funding priority will be given to communities that have received little or no prior CDBG funding assistance. Funding will be continued in the following areas:

- Projects that will remove or reduce accessibility barriers for the elderly and handicapped
- Infrastructure projects for the removal of health and safety hazards, the improvement of water and sewer facilities, and to enhance economic development.
- LMI owner-occupied home rehabilitations
- Projects that address blighted and vacant homes and/or properties within core communities and along transportation corridors.
- Projects that provide needed special services to low- to moderate-income residents.

Criteria Considered

The principal criteria considered in the selection of the previously listed projects were:

- Compliance with DCED's CDBG Guidelines
- Qualifications under the National Objectives Test – principal benefit to low-moderate income residents
- Previous CDBG assistance received by project sponsor
- Project dependence on CDBG funds
- Community's financial resources and tax effort to date
- Relationship and consistency of project with comprehensive planning

- Financial commitment of the municipality
- Project economic potential
- Municipal economic distress factors
- Project readiness

SOURCES

U.S. Census
 American Community Survey
 Venango County Comprehensive Plan
 Venango County 2009 Housing Market Study
 Venango County Water and Sewage Study
 Act 537 Plans – Various Municipalities
 Pennsylvania Department of Labor, Industry, Bureau of
 Employment Security

Municipal Responses to the annual CDBG Proposal Process
 Venango County Officials
 HUD LMI Statistics/Section 8 Income Limits
 Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism
 Venango County 2010 Recreation Plan
 Venango County 2010 Stormwater Management Plan
 Long Range Transportation Plan (currently under update)