

# Chautauqua County I.D.E.A. Coalition

A county-wide coalition to promote racial and social justice through inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

## The Business Case for IDEA Work in CHQ County

The ethical and moral reasons for the Chautauqua County IDEA Coalition to create a fully inclusive and welcoming community are indisputable. **A secondary reason for pursuing our goals is the benefits an inclusive community brings to the local business community and to Chautauqua County's economy.**

### **A more inclusive Chautauqua County will strengthen local businesses & organizations by:**

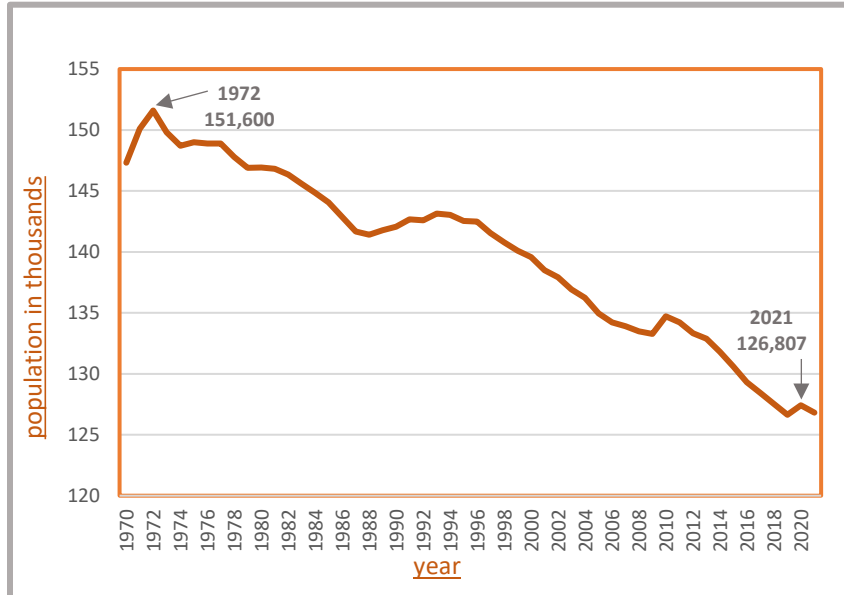
- increasing economic activity in all sectors
- expanding the workforce pool in the County
- creating conditions for new businesses and industries to come to Chautauqua County
- boosting property values and home ownership equity
- helping businesses expand their existing customer base by serving an increasingly diverse population
- reversing the steady population decline in the county by making it more attractive for diverse communities to work and live here
- attracting young people who have moved away back to Chautauqua County to work, and build our economy and community
- expanding the middle class and customer base
- enhancing the customer experience for everyone
- improving communication within the workforce by increasing the number of bilingual or multi-lingual workers and building cultural sensitivity
- growing the tax base

**How would you articulate the mission based, ethical and/or business case for your organization to engage in IDEA work?**

## The Impact of Chautauqua County's Decreasing Population

The decline in Chautauqua County's total population is accelerating while the population of people of color is slowly increasing.

### Population, Chautauqua County New York, 1970 - 2021



The county's population peaked at **151,600 in 1972** and declined to **126,807 in 2021**. This decline has accelerated over the past 11 years with the population declining from 134,726 in 2010 to 126,807 in 2021 representing an annual decrease of 720 people.

Source:

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/NYCHAU5POP>

### This trend is particularly alarming and could lead to:

- Reduction in the overall tax base which funds schools, fire, police, roads and other services critical to our well-being
- Reduction in the overall economic activity within the county
- Reduction in the overall availability of an employee pool for businesses
- Labor recruitment and retention issues may be particularly hard for some industries (e.g., hospitals may not be able to recruit or retain medical professionals because it has higher percentages of racially diverse individuals)
- Reluctance on the part of new industries, and especially large employers, from establishing new offices or factories in Chautauqua County because of the reduced (and reducing) labor pool
- Steady decline in quality of housing along with deflating equity for current homeowners

Over the past decade, communities of color are slowly increasing their presence in the county.

### Population of Chautauqua County by Race & Ethnicity, 2010-2021

<u>Race &amp; Ethnicity</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>change</u>	<u>% of population in 2010</u>	<u>% of population in 2021</u>
White (Non-Hispanic)	120,327	109,806	(10,521)	89.3%	86.6%
Hispanic/Latino	8,276	10,272	1,996	6.1%	8.1%
Black (Non-Hispanic)*	2,797	2,742	(55)	2.1%	2.2%
Multiracial (Non-	2,033	2,547	514	1.5%	2.0%
Asian (Non-Hispanic)	677	769	92	0.5%	0.6%
American Indian/Alaska	585	637	52	0.4%	0.5%
Native Hawaiian & Other	31	34	3	0.02%	0.02%
<b>Total</b>	<b>134,726</b>	<b>126,807</b>			

(Source: <https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/new-york/county/chautauqua-county>)

\*It is important to note that even though the overall number of Black (Non-Hispanic) individuals in the county declined a little, their representation as a percentage of the overall county population actually increased.

For additional information on population trends and economic data, please see this report about the current and projected future state of Chautauqua County from the National Equity Atlas:

[https://nationalequityatlas.org/research/data\\_summary#/?geoSectionName=County&geo=04000000000036013](https://nationalequityatlas.org/research/data_summary#/?geoSectionName=County&geo=04000000000036013)

## Strategies to Create an Inclusive CHQ Community

**These are the actions suggested by members representing IDEA Coalition organizations that we need to collectively take to create a fully inclusive community:**

- strengthen relationships between organizations led by people of color and/or which serve people of color
- invest in the vast and diverse resources in the County
- reduce and eliminate the systems that take advantage of people of color by engaging consumers and creating equitable opportunities
- assure that people from all backgrounds have all their basic needs met
- commit to students not reaching their potential
- increase the number of teachers (and others that work within schools) that reflect the student population
- increase the number of employees that look and sound (language) like those of diverse backgrounds
- teach financial literacy
- raise the awareness of those living in insular communities and not exposed to diversity of other cultures and ethnicities
- provide access to higher education or technical training to develop our local and regional workforce
- look at the business case by sector
- create stable living situations and mobility for displaced families
- leverage the county's natural beauty, affordable housing, and affordable housing to recruit diverse populations
- access the incredible resources and potential that individuals in marginalized communities can offer, which would benefit the whole community
- identify the key critical issues (e.g., workforce - how we can get employees)
- tie DEI practices to the critical issues that worry business owners in their day-to-day operations (e.g., developing and maintaining their workforce, attracting customers)
- shift the conversation to a "strengths-based" discussion; how is this a mutual relationship that benefits people and organizations?