

# T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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## Introduction

The Orange County Quality of Life Report Card was first developed by the Orange County Citizens Foundation in 2007 to help define its goals and determine policy directions for the organization and for Orange County. It was, and remains, the first of its kind for Orange County. As such, it is constantly evolving. The Citizens Foundation established guidelines for the Report Card, brought together experts in each area covered, developed meaningful objective indicators, commissioned the School of Business at SUNY New Paltz to conduct the research necessary to complete this project, and reviewed the results of this report.

The 2007 Report Card served as a baseline report for quality of life in the county and makes comparisons to the region and to New York State. The 2012 Report Card now measures progress on the topics chosen.

This Report Card, wherever possible, makes comparisons to the data found in the 2007 Report Card. However, in the five years since the first Report Card, some areas of study are no longer measured or are not measured in the same way. In those cases, we have tried to find similar data.

This report does not advocate for any specific positions or policies. Rather, its intent is to monitor progress and serve as a catalyst for change where necessary. By conducting this Report Card, the Board of Trustees of the Citizens Foundation hopes to engage the public and our elected officials in a dialogue where our mutual goals are determined and reached together.

Specifically, the Orange County Quality of Life Report Card seeks to:

- Measure our current situations and show trends over time
- Encourage regional planning
- Increase awareness of issues and their effects on our citizens
- Motivate our citizens, whatever their background, expertise, and specific interest, to work together in new ways to develop and achieve shared goals.

While each section contains an opening page summarizing the findings of the Report Card, the indicators do not explain why trends occur in certain ways or what actions should be taken to promote change. Instead,

they provide the information necessary to begin those conversations and encourage community involvement toward improving trends.

The majority of funding for this report was provided by the **Orange County Citizens Foundation, Orange Pathways, Provident Bank, Crystal Run Healthcare and Vanacore, DeBenedictus, DiGiovanni and Weddell**. However, a number of individuals contributed to the Report Card; they are listed on page 7. We are grateful to the community for its support of this important project. We are especially grateful to Susan Metzger, Roberta Ginton (who passed away in 2010), and Tom Weddell, three Ruth and James Ottaway Medal recipients, who over the past five years, have requested that all donations in their name to the Orange County Citizens Foundation be allocated towards this Report Card.

### *What are Quality of Life Indicators?*

An indicator is a measure that helps us understand our current status, our direction, and how far we are from our goals. For the purposes of this report, quality of life refers to a feeling of well-being, fulfillment, or satisfaction resulting from factors in the external environments. We recognize that some aspects of quality of life relate to close interpersonal relationships, rather than the external environments. However, this project concentrates on the external environments, presenting quality of life from a community perspective.

The Orange County Quality of Life Report Card includes close to 300 indicators that reflect trends in eight external environments: Arts and Culture, Economy, Education, Environment, Government, Health and Well-Being, Public Safety, and Transportation. Much of the data has been obtained from records and documents of public and private organizations. Some important dimensions of the quality of life are not included because quantitative indicators are not available. It is important to note that in 2007, the Arts and Culture section also included Recreation. This topic has been moved in 2012 to Health and Well-Being, to better reflect the importance of recreational opportunities on a community's physical and mental health.

Indicators used in the Orange County Quality of Life Report Card were established by a number of coop-

erating entities. We are grateful to the individuals and organizations that lent us their time and expertise. Included are:

- Quality of Life Report Card Committee (members listed below)
- Board of Trustees of the Orange County Citizens Foundation
- Strategic partners, including the Office of the County Executive, Orange County Planning Department, Orange County Office of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, Orange County Tourism, New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Department of Labor, Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Orange County Land Trust, Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan Counties, the Orange County Arts Council, the Orange County Partnership and Orange County Department of Social Services, Orange County Office of the Aging, Orange County Real Property, and the Orange County United Way
- Committee Members and Volunteers of the Citizens Foundation

In most cases, local experts and community leaders were polled as to what content they would find useful in such a report. Special thanks for their suggestions, research and technical assistance are extended to: Richard Mayfield, Chris White, Dr. Alan Bernstein, Gaynor Rosenstein, Elaine McClung, Rob Lee, Jeff Reilly, Jennifer Lange, Faith Piatt, David Jolley, Lucy Joyce, Audrey Reith, Bill Richards, Ed Estrada, Maire Ullrich, Susan Bahren, Ann Barber, Anne Coon, Susan Hawvermale, David Church, John Czamanske, Meghan Tennerman, John Ebert, Richard Rose, Paula Gorton, Maureen Halahan, Andrew Komonchak, Marge LaPerle, Rebecca Lindland, John Nelson, John Bassler, Shawn Dell Joyce, John Cimino, Joe Izzo, Dan Coots, Bill Gorton, Bill Richards, Al Buckbee, II, Pam Breeman, and Dan Mack. We are grateful to the SUNY New Paltz research team for their expertise, hard work, and commitment: Professor Ted Clark, SUNY New Paltz School of Business and Ted Clark Associates, Ann Barber Smith, Mauno Ahlgren, and Fuat Kapuco.

We encourage public feedback to help us determine additional or more meaningful measures. Please contact us at 845-469-9459 or by email at [nancy@occitizensfoundation.org](mailto:nancy@occitizensfoundation.org) with suggestions.

**Quality of Life Advisory Committee Members**

Edwin Estrada, Co-Chair	Elaine McClung
Patricia Claiborne, Co-Chair	Richard McGoey
Brendan Coyne	Bonnie Neucall
Andrew Komonchak	Brian Varley




**Indicator Criteria**

The following questions were posed in considering possible indicators:

- Is the indicator as timely as possible?
- Can the indicator be measured reliably?
- Does the indicator reflect a value held widely by citizens throughout our region?
- Does the indicator provide warning of changes?
- Can the indicator be linked to other social, economic and environmental issues?
- Can the indicator be influenced by changes in policy and/or individual behavior?

**Understanding the Orange County Quality of Life Report Card**

An explanation of each indicator and the way it has been measured is provided. In addition, Summary Statements have been included whenever possible.

-  Throughout the report, an arrow pointing upward identifies indicators that are moving in a positive direction in comparison to other Hudson Valley counties or New York State.
-  An arrow pointing downward identifies indicators that are moving in a negative direction in comparison to other Hudson Valley counties or New York State.
-  A flat line indicates that no clear positive or negative direction can be ascertained.

Some indicators are reported for Orange County and its municipalities only. Sometimes that is a result of data availability; sometimes the issues are specific to Orange County.

For purposes of this report, the Hudson Valley Region is defined as the following counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, Rockland, Ulster, and Westchester. All information and reference data contained in this report will be available on the Orange County Citizens Foundation’s website: [www.occitizensfoundation.org](http://www.occitizensfoundation.org).

Information that was not available in time for publication of this report, or that is brought to our attention after our publication date, may be posted on our website at a later date.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this report. However, we recognize that some errors may have slipped by our editors, proofreaders and fact checkers. If you find a mistake, please contact us immediately.

### ***Report Intent and Future Steps***

The Orange County Quality of Life Report Card provides information about the status of our community and of our collective well-being. We sincerely hope that the information in this report will be used in the way it is intended—to help the people and organizations leading our community efforts to improve quality of life in our county. By familiarizing ourselves with these indicators, we become better informed. By using these indicators to effect change, we can build a better community.

We have already received numerous requests from organizations that plan to use the information in the

report for research and grant writing purposes. We have also received requests from agencies and organizations to include additional data in the next edition of this report. If your organization is working to improve any of the trend lines, please contact the Orange County Citizens Foundation for possible inclusion in a later report.

For readers who live in one county and work in another, who shop in one area and participate in recreation or cultural activities elsewhere, building a better local community can only lead to a better regional community. We hope all citizens of the region will use this report to effect change wherever they live, work, or enjoy recreational activities.

Finally, we ask readers of this report to share information, learn more, and advocate for positive change. Please support efforts in the community to measure, track, and improve elements of the quality of life. Get involved in our community to make a difference. Join the Orange County Citizens Foundation, and through your membership, support this project and other efforts of the Citizens Foundation to improve the quality of life in Orange County and the Hudson Valley region.

## Funding

The 2012 Quality of Life Report Card was made possible with funding from:



In addition, a number of organizations and individuals donated funds to help the Citizens Foundation complete this Report Card. They are listed below. We are grateful to the community for its support of this project.

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MISSION STATEMENT  
ORANGE COUNTY CITIZENS FOUNDATION

The Orange County Citizens Foundation creates the environment that improves the lives of Orange County residents.



Paul Ernenwein  
*Chairman*



***Advocating for the Public Interest***

The Orange County Citizens Foundation is a unique partnership between the public and private sector created to ensure the sustainability of the Orange County community. We work with the business and private sectors as well as all levels of government to find solutions to our citizens' top concerns.

Close to 500 members, representing all walks of life, work together on a number of diverse committees that focus on infrastructure and quality-of-life issues. *Topics covered include:*

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Agriculture
- Waste and Water
- Cultural Affairs
- Health

Since 1971, the Citizens Foundation has effectively advocated in the interest of the entire community and provided progressive educational seminars for our residents.

*Some highlights of our collaborations include:*

- Orange County Heritage Trail
- Leadership Orange
- Community Foundation of Orange County
- Arboretum at Orange County Park
- D&H Canal Park
- Orange County Arts Council
- Nationally-Recognized Speakers to Educational and Informational Forums
- Quality of Life Reports
- Hudson Valley Honor Flight

The Citizens Foundation relies on the generosity of businesses and individuals to reach its goals. Our membership is comprised of companies and people that understand the importance of a solid, sustainable community.

Website: [www.occitizensfoundation.org](http://www.occitizensfoundation.org)  
 Email: [info@occitizensfoundation.org](mailto:info@occitizensfoundation.org)  
 Phone: 845-469-9459

Please consider becoming a Member of the Citizens Foundation; it is the continued support of our constituency that allows us to pursue information such as is found in this report, without regard to outside influence, as an independent entity.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Young Citizens Club — Children 12 and under	\$5
Student — Full time students	\$15
NextGen — Individuals 35 and under	\$50
Senior Supporter — Budget-minded seniors 65+	\$65
Supporter — Our most popular individual level	\$100

Members who join us at these enriched levels help ensure the Citizens Foundation's sustainability:

Contributor	\$250
Sustainer	\$500
Patron	\$1,000
Benefactor	\$2,500
Seligmann Circle	\$5,000

Visit our website at [www.occitizensfoundation.org](http://www.occitizensfoundation.org) for detailed membership benefits.

We offer a number of ways to join. You may enclose a check made payable to OCCF in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_, call us at (845) 469-9459, or visit our website at [www.occitizensfoundation.org](http://www.occitizensfoundation.org). We accept Visa or Mastercard and offer quarterly invoicing for your convenience.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

The Citizens Foundation has a number of estate planning options available for those who would like to leave a lasting legacy. Please contact Nancy Proyect at [nancy@occitizensfoundation.org](mailto:nancy@occitizensfoundation.org) or 845-469-9459 to discuss.

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