Water Infrastructure Funding & Grant Resource Guide

Prepared by the Sullivan County
Department of Grants Administration
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845-807-0468
https://sullivanny.us/Departments/grants

Grant Process Work Flow

Project Preparation

- Meet with stakeholders to determine need and develop project.
- Involve collaborating partners/agencies as needed.
- Define project objectives, budget, and outcomes.
- A "stitch in time saves nine." Having a project planned out in advance will save time when you're ready to actually put together an application.

NOFA

- Be on the lookout for appropriate funding opportunities.
- When a Notification of Funding Availability in alignment with your project presents itself, read the eligibility requirements and guidelines carefully(once, twice, and three times over.)
- Review the NOFA early and often, and develop a timeline for preparing the application.

RESOLUTION?

- Check requirements related to resolutions required for governing bodies to make application. This may be required for municipalities, especially if entering into IMAs or MOUs, or if match funding is required.

APPLICATION & SUBMISSION

- Complete the grant application process.
- Gather all important documents & maintain organized records.
- Follow up on subsequent communication from the funding agency, as additional action may be required.

AWARD NOTIFICATION

- Obtain fully executed award agreement/contract and review carefully.
- Maintain copies of award notice and fully executed agreement/contract.
- Make sure all necessary approvals are obtained.

DECLINATION NOTIFICATION

Don't give up - request debriefing from funding agency

MANAGEMENT

- Draw down funds per grant guidelines and regulations.
- Maintain all documentation as required by funding agency.
- Complete reporting.
- Watch for any amendments to budget and/or terms.
- Complete close-out when term has ended and all funds are drawn down.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SEEKING GRANTS

Grant writing requires you to provide details about your organization and "make a case" for why you need funding. You will also have to follow the funder's guidelines for administration and reporting. The time to make sure you have the resources to carry it out is before you make application.

Am I grant ready?
Before you begin the process, compile all of the important information and documents that will likely be required for the application process. Refer to our **"Grant Readiness Checklist."**

Is my organization eligible?
Read the grant eligibility description. If you're not sure if you're eligible to apply, contact the funding agency directly for clarification (unless they specify not to contact them.) If you are not eligible, consider partnering with another organization that is.

Does our work further the funder's mission?
While corporate and government funding agencies are a little more cut-and-dry, private and foundation grants often have a particular mission. Review their mission statement, history, and current priorities to determine if your work is a match for their vision.

Does our proposed project/program fit?
Does your program serve the funder's priority demographic? Will it address problems the funder identifies as important areas? Does the project utilize methods the funder clearly does not support? Does the funder prefer new or established programs? Does the funder provide the type of funding you need (operating expenses, capital, or program funding)? Does the funder expect you to be able to sustain your program after the funding period ends?

Do we have the internal resources to meet funding requirements?
Does the grant have a cash or in-kind matching requirement? Reporting requirements are quite extensive and are time *and* labor intensive; will you have the staff to meet these requirements? What about additional staffing, technological, supply, or equipment needs not covered by the grant? Will you need to meet a minimum number of program recipients/participants? Does the project have to be completed in a certain time frame?

Is the grant the right size?
Look at the funding history and see if the funding practices align with your actual need. If the grant is a small amount, will it be worth the resources expended to apply and administer it?

Can we make the deadline?
Some grants have a very quick turn-around time. Will you need to develop a new program initiative and will you have the time and resources to do so? Will pursuing the grant burn out your staff or partnering organizations?

Do we have a good chance of winning?
Take the time to learn about what organizations have been funded in the past, and get a sense of how your project/program compares with funded initiatives.

GRANT READINESS CHECKLIST

Is your organization interested in applying for grant funding? Before you begin, make sure you are "grant ready" by gathering important information and documents you will need on hand. Depending on the nature of your organization and project, and the funding agency (government vs. private) and type of grant for which you are applying, not all of the following may be necessary. However, it is a helpful exercise to compile as much information as possible so you are well-prepared to apply for funding when the opportunity arises.

Organizational Information
- History (Narrative)
- Year Established
- Articles of Incorporation & By-Laws
- EIN Number
- Address, Phone, Web Address
- Mission/Values Statement
- Service Area/Target Population
- Current Program/Services Description

Governance
- Organizational Structure/Chart
- Board of Directors (affiliations and contact info)
- Strategic Plan/Business Plan
- Executive Director/CEO Bio

Tax Documentation
- Tax exemption status letter
- IRS Form 990
- W-9

Technical Requirements
- Required for federal grants
- UEI (Unique Entity Identifier or SAM, formerly DUNS number)
- SAM Registration
- Grants.gov Registration

Financial Information
- Annual Operating Budget
- Year-End Financial Statements
- Audit, if applicable
- Sources of Funding

Program or Project Information
- Program/Project Description
- Target Population
- Staffing Structure/Organizational Chart
- Year Established
- Program/Project Budget
- Measurable Outcomes (number served, current outcomes)
- Success Story Narratives

Other Documentation that Might be Required:
- Annual Report
- Letters of Support
- Collaborating Partners (with Memorandums of Agreement)
- Policies and Procedures
- History of Grants/Funding Received or Denied
- News Articles/Photographs/Video Clips/Media
- Staff Information (Number of FT and PT Staff/Bios/Qualifications/Resumes)
- Cost Estimates and Vendor Information (equipment)
- Other Registrations (ex. State & Local Licenses and Registrations)

For information about the grant process and a glossary of grant terminology, visit: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants.html

Potential Funding Resources for Water Infrastructure Improvement Projects

New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYS EFC) – some of these programs are available through the CFA (see page 2) due end of July every year.

- *Water Infrastructure Improvement & Intermunicipal Grants* - fund wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects in order to reduce water pollution, and safeguard vital drinking water supplies from emerging contaminants and toxic chemicals. https://efc.ny.gov/wiia

- *Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant* – funding for initial planning for engineering report, so municipalities can better prepare to seek financing to help them complete their wastewater, sewer and water quality projects. https://efc.ny.gov/EPG

- *Green Innovation Grant Program* - funding for projects that improve water quality and mitigate the effects of climate change utilizing the following green practices: green stormwater infrastructure, energy efficiency, water efficiency, and environmental innovation. https://efc.ny.gov/gigp

- *Communities Assistance Program* - low-cost capital, grants, and expert technical assistance to help municipalities undertake critical water infrastructure projects. https://efc.ny.gov/CAT

- *Asset Management Program*-a process that municipalities can use to effectively manage infrastructure investments, including procedures to inventory, assess, and track infrastructure throughout its lifecycle, improving its longevity and supporting municipal planning. https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/101412.html

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) – typically through the CFA (see page 2) due end of July every year.
 General Information: https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/grants.html

- *Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program*- funds projects that directly improve water quality or aquatic habitat, promote flood risk reduction, restoration, and enhanced flood and climate resiliency, or protect a drinking water source. https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4774.html

- *Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and MS4 Mapping Grant* - funds planning reports for nonpoint source water quality improvement projects and mapping of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). The program aims to prepare nonpoint source projects for construction and application for implementation funding, and to encourage and support cooperation among regulated MS4s to complete mapping of their stormwater system. https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/116725.html

- *Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)*-is a locally led, state-supported program that empowers municipalities to improve and protect their public water sources and surrounding environment. Communities accepted into the program are provided free technical assistance to develop their own unique DWSP2 plan, leading to steps the municipality can take to protect their drinking water sources. For more information and to complete an Interest Form, visit: https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/115250.html

- *The Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act* - For a *comprehensive* listing of funding opportunities, refer to the New York State and Federal Funding Opportunities Overview (May 2023): https://www.dec.ny.gov/about/127772.html

Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC)

- *Catalyst Program* –funds economic development and infrastructure projects throughout designated counties in its four-state service area, of which County of Sullivan, NY is a part. Letters of Interest due April 1, application due in June. https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst

CFA - Regional Economic Development Council Consolidated Funding Application

- Multiple opportunities to apply for funding from the DEC, EFC, ESD, etc. Typically opens in May and due the end of July of each year, sign up for notifications and watch for meeting notices. Meeting agendas include helpful information about available resources and REDC priorities. REDC website: https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/mid-hudson

USDA Rural Development

- *Rural Utilities Service Water and Environmental Programs (WEP)*-provides funding for the construction of water and waste facilities in rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less, and funding to organizations that provide technical assistance and training to rural communities in relation to their water and waste activities. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs

USDA Rural Development Programs Worth Noting:

- *Water and Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants*- state/local governments/non-profits, for populations of 10,000 or fewer, applications accepted year-round. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/water-waste-disposal-predevelopment-planning-grants

- *Special Evaluation and Assistance for Rural Communities and Household Grants* - state/local governments/non-profits, for populations of 2,500 or fewer, applications accepted year-round. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/search-special-evaluation-assistance-rural-communities-and-households-grant

- *Water & Waste Disposal Technical Assistance & Training Grants* - nonprofits with technical background, in areas and towns with populations of 10,000 or fewer *(*applications open October 1-December 31st every year) https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/water-waste-disposal-technical-assistance-training-grants

US EPA - Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Resources for Clean Water - EPA and other organizations provide funding to improve water and wastewater systems in small and rural communities. In addition, EPA and its partners have developed many tools and resources for planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining wastewater infrastructure.

- *Funding Resources for Small and Rural Wastewater Systems* - https://www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/funding-sources-small-and-rural-wastewater-systems

- *Tools, Training, and Technical Assistance for Small and Rural Wastewater Systems* - https://www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/tools-training-and-technical-assistance-small-and-rural

Bookmark and check all of the program websites periodically, in order to stay tuned for updates, notification of funding opportunities, and new program guidelines and deadlines.

Other Water–Related Resources

NY State Department of Health Drinking Water Protection Program - resources for management and protection of NY public drinking water systems, reduction of exposure to contaminents, & safeguarding wells/ septic systems.
https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/

US Water Alliance "The Economic Benefits of Investing in Water Infrastructure" Report - by the American Society of Civil Engineers and Value of Water Campaign
https://uswateralliance.org/sites/uswateralliance.org/files/publications/VOW%20Economic%20Paper_1.pdf

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Resources for Stakeholders *Inside* the NYC Watershed

- *New York Department of State NYC City Watershed Program* - https://dos.ny.gov/new-york-city-watershed-program

- *Catskill Watershed Corporation Septic Repair and Replacement Program*-https://cwconline.org/programs/septic-repair-and-replacement/

- *Watershed Agricultural Council NYC Watershed Boundary Map* - https://www.nycwatershed.org/nyc-watershed-boundary-map

- *NYC Environmental Protection Agency* (website includes information about Assistance for Homeowners and Landowners and Programs for Communities and Businesses) - https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/environment/about-the-watershed.page

Resources for Stakeholders *Outside* the NYC Watershed

- *NYS Septic System Replacement Fund* – OF NOTE: Sullivan County is currently <u>not</u> eligible based on 303(d) list of impaired waters, revised every three years - https://efc.ny.gov/septic-replacement

- *NYS 303 (d) List of Impaired Waters* - https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/31290.html

- *DEC CSLAP Initiative (Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program)* - https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/81576.html

- *CALM (Consolidated Assessment and Listing) Methodology* – https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/calm.pdf

- *New York State Federation of Lake Associations* - https://nysfola.org/

Technical Assistance

In addition to aforementioned initiatives offered through the DEC Environmental Facilities Corporation, the Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) is the recipient of grant funding to assist with Water Quality Planning in the region through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the Federal Clean Water Act program. Through this funding, HVRC provides education and outreach to local municipalities with respect to water quality planning and storm water management. Contact Lauren Bunce Lauren Bunce, Water Resources Coordinator, 845-564-4075 or lbunce@hudsonvalleyrc.org.

Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center (SU-EFC) *facilitates the development of sustainable and resilient communities throughout US EPA Region 2 (includes New York). SU-EFC enhances the administrative and financial capacities of state and local government officials, nonprofit organizations, and private sectors to make change toward improved environmental infrastructure and quality of life. For information, visit https://efc.syr.edu/assistance/*

EFC's Community Assistance Teams *host regional events and connect communities with experts who can help them undertake their critical water infrastructure projects. These Teams provide on-site or virtual consultations to help communities across the state jump start planning, submit funding applications, and see their projects through to completion.*

If you have questions about whether your project is eligible for a particular grant, contact the program rep. They are typically helpful, and may provide some tips.

Questions?

Contact the Sullivan County Division of Planning, Community Development and Environmental Management 845-807-0527 or the Department of Grants Administration at 845-807-0468.

Preparing a Winning Grant Proposal

PREPARING A WINNING GRANT PROPOSAL

A standard grant proposal should include these sections:

- **Summary**
- **Introduction to the Applicant Organization**
- **Problem or Needs Statement**
- **Objective**
- **Method**
- **Evaluation Plan**
- **Future Funding**
- **Budget**

Summary
- Keep it short. If proposal is single spaced, make it a ½ page; if double spaced, make it a full page;
- Include all elements of the proposal;
- Keep it interesting and deal with most compelling issue first; and
- Include what you're asking for within the summary.

Introduction to the Applicant Organization
- Address the organization's credibility and history.
- Rise above the competition.

NOTE: The reviewer will expect to see the following information about your organization:
- Mission Statement or Goal
- How long in operation
- Performance history aka your track record
- Other funding sources currently being utilized by the applicant organization
- The number of clients served
- The number of clients that will benefit from this project
- Accreditations
- Uniqueness

Problem, Objective & Method

Problem:

- State why the organization is concerned about the problem identified;
- Address the – who, how many, where and what issues;
- Use research–based data to make the case for what is causing the problem;
- Discuss what will happen if your organization does not act to address the problem;
- Support the existence of the problem with statistics, quotes and analysis.

Objective:

- Include information about what changes you want to see;
- The objectives should state who or what will be changed, in what direction, by how much and in what time frame;
- The objectives should be measurable, specific, achievable, time specific and relevant; There are three types of objectives:
    1. **Proven Process** – already works- want to do more of it.
    2. **Outcome** – measuring the change in the incidence of problem.
    3. **Indicator**- measuring signs that the incidence of the problem is likely to decline (research-based).

- You may have more than one objective for a single problem;
- Conduct a trial run of your objective to see what your results would be.

Method:

- Address the processes you will be using to meet the objectives;
- Clearly state *who* will do *what* and *when*;
- Address other options considered and make sure that your methods for meeting the objective are research based;
- Chart out your methods. Chart format could consist of the activity, timeframe, person / party responsible for carrying out the method, identification of the partners, where the method will be carried out and the costs involved;
- Organize your methods – chronologically, by target group, thematically, geographically and /or by objective; and
- Be specific about why the work will be done in a specific way, what challenges you expect and your strategy for dealing with those challenges.

Evaluation Plan

- Having an evaluation plan will help to ensure you are meeting the proposed program objectives; and
- It should be developed using research-based, proven plans of evaluation. Increasingly, funders want to see that you are making good use of the funds provided and that you are paying attention to future program development needs.

Future Funding

- What funds will you use to continue the program after the grant ends? (Funders are interested in funding programs that show longevity.)
- Who else is contributing to the project or program?
- Is the funding secured?

Budget

- The total budget for the project is made up of the amount of money requested and the amount being used from other sources;
- Include all line items and budget realistically;
- Refrain from rounding off to the nearest $10K and do not include cents in your figures;
- Involve fiscal staff in the budget process;
- Do *not* include a budget line item for "Miscellaneous"; and
- When drafting the budget justification, explain in brief how the calculations were arrived at. You can use bullet style in the budget justification.

Questions?

Contact the Department of Grants Administration at 845-807-0468.

Additional Points About How to
Develop a Problem / Need Statement

The "Problem / Need Statement" delineates the problem within the community to be addressed. Data is provided to substantiate the need and a human interest story can be included to make the issue more personal.

- The statement is used to educate the funder about the community problem or need the organization seeks to address. The statement will enable a reviewer to learn more about the issues by its presentation of the facts and of the evidence that supports the need for the project.   This section of the grant proposal also establishes that the applicant understands the problem / need and therefore will be able to appropriately address it. The information used to support the case can come from authorities in the field, as well as from your own experience.
- The statement of need should be succinct, yet persuasive.

The Function & Importance of the Problem / Need Statement

The function of the statement is to discuss the problem/need in a way that makes the funder want to help with it.

- Problem: a community or external constituency need;
- Action: what your organization proposes to do to address the problem; and
- Solution: the positive outcome that results from the action effecting change on the problem;
- Problem + Action = Solution;

The statement demonstrates to the funder that there is a problem /need that is important and urgent. This statement must relate both to your organization's mission statement and to the funder's priorities.

Problem / Need Statement Should Include the Following Information:

- **Description of the problem /need:** What is the problem / need? Who? What? Where? When? Why?

- **Recognition of the problem / need:** Why is it a problem /need? Who else sees it as a problem /need? What are the views of community stakeholders about this problem / need?

- **Need for resolution of the problem /need:** What will happen to the population served and to the community if the problem / need is not resolved? Is there a cost to society?

- **Hurdles that need to be overcome before the problem /need is solved:** Clearly identify the challenges involved in addressing the problem /need. Describe the gap between what exists now and what ought to be. What has prevented resolution of the problem /need?

- **Urgency required to address problem / need:** Why does it need to be addressed now? What is currently being done about the problem /need?

- **Human interest story:** Provide a real example of how the problem is affecting someone's life and how the proposed program will impact his/her life. Make it real.

Pitfalls to Avoid in Developing a Problem Statement:

- Leaving out information asked for in the Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Proposing a project that is outside the scope of the RFP
- Using outdated or unsubstantiated information
- Providing insufficient data or too much statistical information
- Including unfamiliar concepts or terms
- Long, convoluted sentences

General Tips for Writing a Grant Application

Use strong words for a lively proposal that stands out from others.
A good source for examples of creative wording is the book *Spunk & Bite: A Writer's Guide to Bold, Contemporary Style* by Arthur Plotnik.
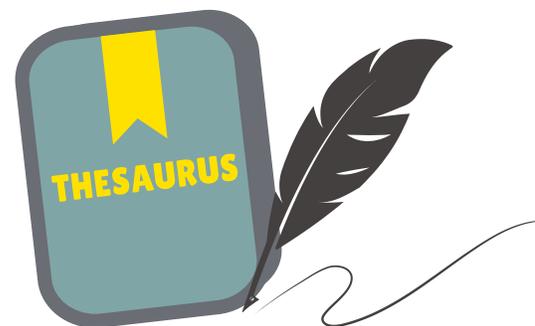
Examples of weighty words:
- *Innovative, ground-breaking, pioneering* instead of *new*
- *Impoverished, poverty-stricken, needy* instead of *poor*

Make the language tight—pare down and condense — more is not necessarily better, especially if there are page limits!

NOTE: The bottom line is that in order to develop a program that will be funded; the program must seek to solve the problem or address the need that both your organization and the funder are interested in and the project must generate results that are measurable.

Give the reviewer hope.
The picture you paint should not be so grim that the solution appears hopeless. If you do that, the funder will wonder whether an investment in your solution would be worthwhile. Here's an example of a solid statement of need that is <u>hopeful:</u>

"Breast cancer kills. But statistics prove that regular check-ups catch most breast cancer in the early stages, reducing the likelihood of death. Hence, a program to encourage preventive check-ups will reduce the risk of death due to breast cancer."

Decide whether you can demonstrate that your project / program addresses the need differently or better than others that preceded it.
It is often difficult to describe the need for your project / program without being critical of the competition. Being critical of others will not be well received by the funder. It may cause the funder to look more carefully at your own project / program to see why you felt you had to build your case by demeaning others. The funder may have invested in these other projects or may begin to consider them, now that you have brought them to the funder's attention. If possible, you should make it clear that you are cognizant of, and on good terms with, others doing work in your field.

Avoid circular reasoning.
When you use circular reasoning, you would typically present the absence of your solution as the actual problem. Then your solution is offered as the way to solve the problem.

For example, the circular reasoning for building a community swimming pool might go like this: *"The problem is that we have no pool in our community. Building a pool will solve the problem."* A more persuasive case would show what a pool has meant to a neighboring community, permitting it to offer recreation, exercise, and physical therapy programs. The statement might refer to a survey that underscores the target audience's planned usage of the facility and conclude with the connection between the proposed usage and potential benefits to enhance life in the community.

Using Data and Statistics
The role of data and statistics is to back up the issue that you are addressing, by utilizing reliable information sources. The data you use should be as current as possible and it should be unbiased. In order to make sure that you are using unbiased data, you need to be aware of who did the research and who funded it. In addition, use authoritative data that is considered reputable by others. Data functions to describe, compare, trend, predict and explain.

Decide which facts or statistics best support the project.
Be sure the data you present is accurate. There are few things more embarrassing than to have the funder tell you that your information is out of date or incorrect. Information that is too generic or broad will not help you develop a winning argument for your project. Similarly, using information that does not relate to your organization or to the project you are presenting will cause the funder to question the entire proposal.

Data Searches and Useful Web Sites for Accessing Data / Statistics

Demographic information clearinghouses, federal agencies, state agencies, foundations and other nonprofits, databases, scholarly journals and articles, and industry publications are key resources for gathering statistics and data. While this list is not comprehensive, these sources are a good starting point.

US Census Website   www.census.gov
Of particular interest is information about Sullivan County and its communities that is available through the US Census web site. A good starting point is to go to *Sullivan County QuickFacts at http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36105.html* . You can also find a Fact Sheet for the city/town name or zip code that you are focusing on. The Fact Sheet will provide information such as population, median household income, number of individuals speaking languages other than English at home, poverty levels, etc. National comparisons are also available on the Fact Sheet. You can print a Fact Sheet out for New York which will allow you to compare your community to the state as a whole.

American Fact Finder   http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
This is another handy tool to provide you with statistics. The data is compiled from several censuses and from a number of separate surveys such as the American Community Survey and the American Housing Survey. You can obtain data at the state, county, municipality, town, zip code, census tract, and block group level. Reference maps are available so you can pinpoint the exact locations for which you need data. Information can be downloaded into Excel files.

FedStats & Federal Agency Websites   www.fedstats.gov
Search by *keyword or topic* and this site will link you to federal agencies who maintain those statistics. Search by *location* and you will pull up a fact sheet for that location (also available on the Census website). You can also search by agency. Many federal agencies maintain a lot of research information online.

A few examples include:
- <u>Bureau of Labor Statistics</u>: www.bls.gov. This is often fastest way to find information at the national, state, or local level is (click on —Local Unemployment Rates on the right and scroll down to find NY information);
- <u>USDA Economic Research Service:</u> www.ers.usda.gov (Try —Publica ons or —Data Sources);
- <u>Department of Health & Human Services</u>: www.hhs.gov/reference/;
- <u>HHS Reference Collection</u>: http://datacenter.kidscount.org/; and
- <u>Administration for Children and Families</u>: www.acf.hhs.gov

NYS Agency Websites   https://www.ny.gov/agencies
 Websites from various agencies in New York State offer a wealth of information. Locate all New York State agencies, including the NYS Department of Health and NYS Office for the Aging.

Demographics Now   www.freedemographics.com
This is a free information service. Basic demographic data including income and employment statistics can be found on the website. You can search by the entire US, State, County, Census Tract, Block Group, US Places, ZIP Codes, etc. Information can be downloaded.

United for ALICE   https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/new-york
ALICE stands for *Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed*. The Research Center-New York provides a source for exploring the latest ALICE data on this growing population of individuals in our state.