

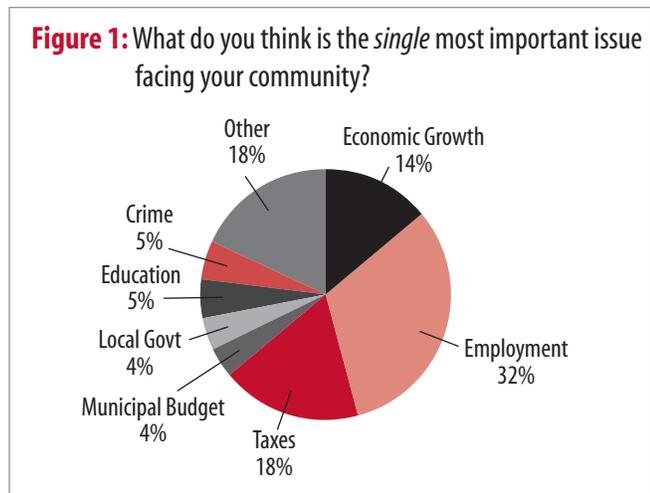
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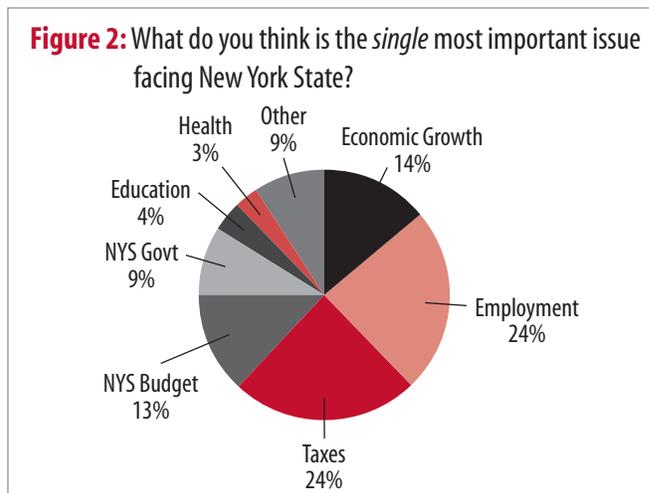
State of Upstate New York: A First Look

Upstate New York has experienced significant social, economic and environmental change in the past several decades, presenting challenges and opportunities for communities and regions across the state. With the current fiscal crisis, it is more important than ever for communities, regions, and the state to approach these changes in ways that emphasize resiliency, partnerships and innovation. To address many of these changes, Cornell's Community & Regional Development Institute (CaRDI) is pleased to host the *State of Upstate New York Conference*¹ this June in Syracuse, New York. This conference will offer detailed data analysis in combination with engaged panel discussions across nine key topic areas including economic development, workforce trends, land use and environment, schools, health care, income and poverty, energy, agriculture, and local and regional government.

To complement our secondary data sources, CaRDI surveyed 600 upstate New York households to gauge public opinion on a broad range of current, policy-relevant topics. The complete survey results, along with Census data, will be featured in a *State of Upstate New York Chartbook*, scheduled for release in later May 2011 (visit our website). The survey began by asking upstate New Yorkers what they considered to be the most important issues facing their own community and the state as a whole.



Source: 2011 SOUS Survey, CaRDI, Cornell University



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Not surprisingly, employment and other economic issues were front and center in people's minds, whether they were commenting on issues facing the state, or their communities. One in three respondents identified *employment* as the most important issue at the state level, and one in four cited it as the most important issue in their community. *Taxes* were cited by up to one quarter of respondents, and *economic growth* by one in seven. The responses in these categories were similar whether respondents were referring to state or community-level concerns.

Concern about state and local municipal governments and budgets was also apparent, although significant differences emerged. While 13% of respondents identified the *NYS budget* as the most important issue facing the state, only 4% identified *municipal budgets* as the most important issue facing their community. In a similar vein, 9% of upstate New Yorkers view *NYS government* as a relatively pressing issue for the state, compared to 4% who feel *local governments* are the most important issue for their communities. This suggests that local government finances and functions are viewed more favorably than are those of the state government.

Please join us in Syracuse on June 8 and 9 to discuss these and other issues at the *State of Upstate New York Conference*. A key focus of the conference will be the use of data for informed decision-making at the local, regional and state levels. Further analysis and attention to these topics is needed, along with the development of new innovative ideas and partnerships, in order for upstate New York communities to prosper, and for the region as a whole to build a strong and dynamic future.

¹For more information and to register, please visit: www.cais.cornell.edu/cais/devsoc/outreach/cardi/calendar-events/state-of-upstate-ny.cfm

