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### Introduction

This report summarizes New York State residents' economic well-being across several dimensions: employment, job security, workplace benefits, mobility, personal financial situation, and evaluations of New York State's economy. The 2006 Empire State Poll, conducted by the Survey Research Institute at Cornell University, is the source of the data featured in this report.

### Methodology

- In total, 800 telephone interviews were conducted between February 2, 2006 and March 19, 2006, equally divided by upstate/downstate, and then weighted to reflect actual population distribution within the state.
- The ESP utilizes a random digit dial (RDD) sample of NYS households. Eligible respondents must be a resident of NYS and at least 18 years old to participate.
- The cooperation rate was 62.2% according to AAPOR standards.
- The margin of error for reported statewide results is 3.5% and is 4.9% for upstate/downstate comparisons. For regional comparisons, "Downstate" is defined New York, Rockland, Kings, Richmond, Westchester, Suffolk, Queens, Nassau, and Bronx counties, with the remaining counties of the state defined as "upstate."

See Report 1: Introduction & Methodology for full description.

### Employment & Job Security

*New York State residents reported that finding jobs was slightly more difficult in 2006 as compared to 2005.*

- About three in five (62%) of New York State residents reported that finding jobs in their local communities during the past year was more difficult.
- Nearly a third of respondents (31%) said the ease of finding jobs remained the same, and only eight percent stated that finding employment was easier.

**Table 1** Perception of the Ease of Finding Jobs in Past Year

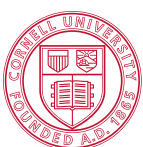
Year	% of all respondents		
	Harder	Same	Easier
2006 overall	62	31	8
- 2006 (upstate)	61	34	6
- 2006 (downstate)	62	29	9
2005	58	32	10
2004	56	36	7
2003	75	22	3

*Job security within New York State remained unchanged compared to 2005.*

- New York State residents reported that the mean likelihood of being able to keep their job for the next year was 86%.
- Eight percent of ESP respondents reported the likelihood of keeping their jobs was less than 50%.
- Overall, reported job security has improved since 2003.

**Table 2** Reported Mean Likelihood of Keeping Job (scale=0-100%)

Year	Mean % among employed respondents
2006 overall	86
- 2006 (upstate)	87
- 2006 (downstate)	86
2005	86
2004	85
2003	82



## Workplace Benefits

The availability of job benefits is an important concern for all workers. The ESP 2006 asked New York workers whether six differing types of job benefits were available to them through their employer.

- Nearly nine in ten New York State workers have access to health insurance and paid time off through their employment.
- Pension or 401k retirement plans are available to eighty-percent of New York State workers.
- A majority (58%) of New York State workers are eligible for flex-time at their workplace and about a third (32%) may receive time off for volunteering.
- An onsite child-care center or subsidy remain the least common benefit (24%) that is available to New York State workers.
- Workers in downstate New York are substantially more likely to have child-care benefits available through their employment (28% vs. 18%) than upstate New York workers.

**Table 3** Availability of Workplace Benefits

Year	% of employed respondents who have benefit available to them					
	I Health insur.	II Flex time	III Child care	IV 401k	V Time off	VI Volun- teer
2006 overall	87	58	24	80	87	32
- 2006 (upstate)	86	55	18	81	86	31
- 2006 (downstate)	88	59	28	79	87	32
2005	79	54	19	71	79	27
2004	82	58	21	77	81	32
2003	81	50	23	75	76	28

"I" Health Insurance; "II" Flex Time; "III" Child Care Center/ Subsidies; "IV" 401K/Pension; "V" Paid Time Off; "VI" Time Off Volunteering

For those workers who have access to health insurance or a retirement plan through their employment, the ESP asked what portion of the plans do employers pay.

- Roughly nine out of ten NYS workers replied that their employers pay at least some portion of their health insurance (70% pay some, 23% pay all).
- Since 2003, the employers appear to picking up a greater portion of employees' health benefits in NYS.
- Approximately eight out of ten NYS workers have their pension or 410K retirement plans funded at least partially by their employer (68% fund some, 13% fund all)

**Table 4** Portion of Benefit Paid by Employer

Year	% among those who have benefit available to them					
	Health Insurance			401k/Pension		
	None	Some	All	None	Some	All
2006 overall	7	70	23	19	68	13
- 2006 (upstate)	4	77	19	17	68	16
- 2006 (downstate)	10	64	26	20	69	11
2005	20	73	7	12	75	13
2004	28	63	8	14	71	15
2003	23	67	10	13	69	18

## Mobility

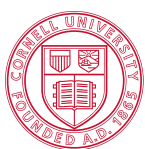
The ESP annually examines community mobility. Respondents were asked whether they planned to be living within their local community in five years, and if not, where they plan on going.

- In 2006, roughly three-quarters (77%) of New York State residents believe that they will be living within their current community in five years.
- Approximately one in ten (11%) New Yorkers expect to leave the state within five years.
- The downstate New York region experiences over all higher resident mobility than upstate New York and downstate residents are more likely to leave New York State.

**Table 5** Resident Mobility Within New York State

Year	% of respondents saying that 5 years from now they will...			
	Stay in current community	Leave community but stay in NYS	Leave NYS altogether	Leave community unknown destination
2006 overall	77	3	11	4
- 2006 (upstate)	85	3	8	3
- 2006 (downstate)	79	3	12	5
2005	81	5	10	4
2004	74	5	13	7
2003	77	*	*	*

\* Question was not asked on ESP 2003



## Evaluations of Personal Finance

A majority of New York State residents reported that their personal economic situation remained unchanged from 2005.

- Compared to 2005, respondents' reported their personal financial situation over the last year remained remarkably consistent, with a little more than half (56%) reporting their financial situation remained the same, a little less than a quarter (22%) reporting that it had worsened, and about another quarter (23%) reporting that it had improved.

Personal economic optimism in 2006 was comparable to 2005, but still remained substantially lower than its high in 2004.

- Though approximately a third of respondents (34%) believe that their personal economic situation will improve in the forthcoming year, it was still nine-points lower than the 43% of New Yorkers who felt the same in 2004.
- About half of the poll respondents (51%) believed their economic situation will remain the same and fifteen-percent believed it would worsen.

**Table 6** Reported Personal Economic Conditions in NYS

Year	% of all respondents		
	Worse	Same	Better
<b>Perceptions of Past Year</b>			
2006 overall	22	56	23
- 2006 (upstate)	26	56	18
- 2006 (downstate)	19	55	26
2005	22	53	25
2004	22	55	24
2003	32	50	18
<b>Perceptions of Forthcoming Year</b>			
2006 overall	15	51	34
- 2006 (upstate)	19	57	24
- 2006 (downstate)	12	48	40
2005	13	51	35
2004	9	48	43
2003	15	53	32

Regional variations in personal economic situations remain pronounced.

- More upstate residents (26%) reported a worsening of their economic situation than downstate residents (only 19%), while conversely a higher percentage of downstate residents (26%) reported an improvement in economic status compared to upstate residents (18%).

## Evaluations of State Economic Performance

The ESP found evaluations of New York's economic performance over the past year substantially improved in 2006 compared to 2005, and were at the highest level since the ESP began in 2003.

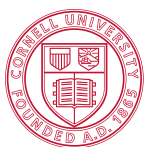
- Only about a third of respondents (36%) believe the economy worsened in 2005 compared to half in 2006. Conversely, the number of respondents who said that the economy remained the same increased by thirteen points (47% in 2006 vs. 34% in 2005).
- The percentage of respondents that stated that they believed the economy improved did not change from 2005 (16%).

In contrast to perceptions of the past year, respondents' expectations of the forthcoming year were relatively static compared to 2005.

- Approximately one quarter (23%) of respondents believed that the state economy would improve; a second quarter believed it will worsen, and about half (52%) believed it will remain the same.

**Table 7** Evaluations State Economic Conditions in NYS

Year	% of all respondents		
	Worse	Same	Better
<b>Perceptions of Past Year</b>			
2006 overall	36	47	16
- 2006 (upstate)	47	42	12
- 2006 (downstate)	30	51	19
2005	50	34	16
2004	54	29	17
2003	79	17	3
<b>Perceptions of Forthcoming Year</b>			
2006 overall	25	52	23
- 2006 (upstate)	31	54	15
- 2006 (downstate)	21	51	27
2005	31	45	25
2004	27	39	34
2003	34	25	24



*Perceptions of the state economy continue to vary substantially by region.*

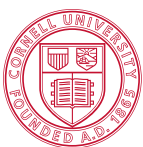
- Nearly half (47%) of upstate residents believed the state economy worsened over the past year compared to less than a third (30%) of downstate residents.
- Conversely, downstate residents were more likely than upstate residents (19% vs. 12% respectively) to respond that the state economy has improved over the past year
- Respondents' expectations about the state's economy also differed across the state. Upstate residents were more likely to believe that the state economy will worsen (31% vs. 21% respectively) compared to downstate residents, and conversely, were less likely to believe that it will improve in the forthcoming year (15% vs. 27% respectively).

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**Citing Results from the ESP:**

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