



# Community Context and Partnerships:

*State of Scranton*

*CBL Faculty Workshop June 2018*

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# End of Industry...Challenges Remain

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- ▶ Coal Strike of 1902...Knox Mine disaster in the 1950's...end of the Industrial era in Scranton
- ▶ City has struggled with neighborhood blight and fiscal distress but has remained resilient





# Population

- Scranton's population is currently 77,291 (1.6%+ since 2010).

## Population

1886:35,000

1900:102,000

2016:75,000

## Ancestry of population:

Irish 30.3%

Italian 19.4%

German 15.7%

Polish 14.8%

Welsh 6.9%

English 5.8%

*Data Sources for following slides: U.S. Census Bureau Data, American Community Survey, Labor and Industry Stats, Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development Indicators Reports*



# Race & Ethnicity

- ▶ Racial and ethnic diversity has been increasing:
  - 85% White/Caucasian
  - 7% African American
  - 4% Asian
- ▶ Hispanic/Latino population as a total percentage of the population for Scranton (at 13% as of 2016), Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania has increased annually since 2008.
- ▶ Catholic Social Services resettles refugees to the Scranton area, including: Bhutanese (1200+ since 2009); Syrian (50), Meshketian Turks (400) and Congolese (150+).





# Median Household Income

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- **\$38,232/year (as of 2016)**
  - 20% less than the Lackawanna County average
  - More than 25% less than the state average income
- Median rent is \$723/month
- According to the University's **Living Wage report...**
  - 40% of households in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties have an annual income under \$35,000, placing them below a “living wage” that provides a modest but dignified life for their families.



# Poverty Rate

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- ▶ 23.1% as compared to 14.1% for Lackawanna County and 12.9% in PA.
- ▶ 34% of children in Scranton live below the poverty level – twice the average for PA (19%). 1 in 4 children in NEPA is growing up in poverty
- ▶ 63% of low-income families are led by single mothers.
- ▶ Use of SNAP benefits increasing as of 2018 Indicators Report – 17% in Lackawanna and 17.6% in Luzerne Counties while PA at 13.4%



# Educational Attainment

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- ▶ 21.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher in Scranton as compared to 26.1% on the County level and 29.3% in PA, with higher education correlating to higher incomes.



# Scranton School District

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- ▶ More than 80% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch – as of 2016 offered to all students.
- ▶ Nine percent of students qualify for special education and more than 8% receive ESL services (30+ languages are spoken).
- ▶ Performance and graduate rates lag with just 72.8% graduating in 4 years and scores on PA tests often on the low end of the state averages.





# Housing

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- ▶ There are 24 low-income housing complexes in Lackawanna County, with 3,260 apartments for rent; 3,227 have rents based on your income (sliding scale).
- ▶ Waiting lists for housing are significant.
- ▶ 51.9% of homes are owner-occupied; national average is 63.9%.
- ▶ 76% of those living below the poverty level in Scranton are renters.



# Homelessness

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- ▶ Nationally, 37% of those experiencing homelessness do so as part of a family. In Scranton that number is 59%.
- ▶ There are less than 10 emergency/transitional housing units available in Lackawanna County for homeless families.
- ▶ As of January 31, 2017, the homeless count in Lackawanna County is 198: those in transitional housing, emergency shelters, and anyone living outside.



# Economic Development

- ▶ Scranton is poised to depart from its Act 47 Distressed Status (that began in 1992), though issues of high taxation, municipal debt and underfunded pensions remain a challenge.
- ▶ Downtown Scranton has seen increased residential living, new small businesses, thriving arts and culture and a new community initiative underway to focus on economic development.
- ▶ The South Side Cedar Avenue corridor has seen progress through UNC's Elm Street activities.





# Employment/Jobs

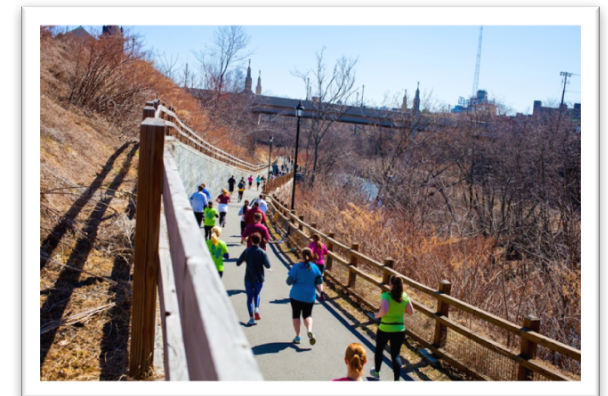
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- ▶ The unemployment rate is slightly higher than the state average: 5.4% in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre as of March 2018 as compared to 4.8% in PA.
- ▶ The region has more low wage jobs than high skilled opportunities, but also has a diversity of local sectors: defense, tourism, office/commercial, manufacturing, distribution, education and health care (“eds and meds”).



# Points of Pride

- ▶ From “Coal to Cool” – *Philadelphia Inquirer* 2007
- ▶ Scranton has been ranked #1 by MSN Real Estate of “10 Best Places to Start Over”
- ▶ No. 8 by Forbes of “America’s Best Cities for Raising a Family” (87% of area homes are affordable at the median income)
- ▶ “Upwardly Mobile City” in the Equality of Opportunity Project.
- ▶ Regional Trail System; Downtown Dining, Arts & Culture; Historic Sites.





# Engaged Non-Profit Sector

- ▶ Scranton's challenges are met through its strong non-profit community
- ▶ More than 120 non-profit agencies
- ▶ Strong collaboration among organizations
- ▶ Fairly small staffs; doing a lot with less
- ▶ Top 4 Agency Areas:
  - Children/Family: 42, Senior Citizens: 38, Health Care: 33, Public awareness/fundraising: 26





# Center for Service and Social Justice

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- Works with over 120 non-profit organizations
- Resource for non-profit partners, maintains website of local agencies
- In-class presentations on opportunities
- Reflection resources
- Assist with course integration in collaboration with CBL faculty coordinator
- Assist with clearances, transportation and student preparation



# Community and Government Relations



- Civic links
  - downtown businesses; neighborhood associations; civic orgs.; local school districts (K-12); local, state, federal governments
  - Experiential downtown walking tour
- Client-based projects – e.g. organizational planning
- Awareness-raising – e.g. oral histories
- Refugee solidarity initiative – e.g. Global Tastes of Scranton





# Joint/CBL Office Resources

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- ▶ Joint:
  - State of Scranton Seminar Series with guest speakers from community organizations
  - ‘State of Scranton’ class presentations
- ▶ CBL Office:
  - Faculty grants, workshop, networking among cohort and CBL Board, special seminars
  - Syllabi preparation, incl. linking with SLO’s

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE

**State of  
Scranton**  
SEMINAR SERIES





# Contacts

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