

Recession Tracker™

Northeastern Pennsylvania's Social Services Rate

In January 2008, 9.9% of the population in Lackawanna County was eligible for food stamps. By January 2009 this number jumped to 11.1%. Luzerne County also saw an increase during this time period – from 10.8% in 2008 to 12.4% in 2009. Both counties had a higher percentage than the state average for each year. There were also increases in the number of households and persons that were counted in the non-public assistance category (a household which contains at least one member who does NOT receive Public Assistance or SSI benefits) There were also increases in those counted the Public Assistance households or persons category.

Food Stamp Eligible Households by Persons and County							
County	Public Assistance		Non-Public Assistance		Total		% of Pop.
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	
STATE TOTAL	96,551	213,079	455,178	960,600	551,729	1,173,679	9.4%
Lackawanna	1,402	2,845	8,491	17,825	9,893	20,670	9.9%
Luzerne	1,650	3,370	14,401	30,587	16,051	33,957	10.8%

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Food Stamp Eligible Households by Persons and County							
January 2009							
County	Public Assistance		Non-Public Assistance		Total		% of Pop.
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	
STATE TOTAL	97,993	210,206	515,459	1,089,537	613,452	1,299,743	10.5%
Lackawanna	1,575	3,161	9,761	20,068	11,336	23,229	11.1%
Luzerne	1,710	3,308	16,544	35,374	18,254	38,682	12.4%

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

The number of persons receiving cash assistance decreased slightly statewide between January 2008 and January 2009. Lackawanna saw a slight increase while Luzerne County saw a slight decrease.

Number of Persons Receiving Cash Assistance by County					
County	January 2008		January 2009		
	Percent of Population	Total	County	Percent of Population	Total
STATE TOTAL	2.1%	263,404	STATE TOTAL	2.1%	259,982
Lackawanna	1.6%	3,467	Lackawanna	1.8%	3,745
Luzerne	1.5%	4,569	Luzerne	1.4%	4,464

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

The number of persons eligible for medical assistance increased statewide by over 1% from January 2008 to January 2009. Both Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties saw a higher percentage than the state total. Lackawanna County's numbers grew from 16.3% to 17.3 % while Luzerne showed a 1.3% increase – from 17% to 18.3%. The number of people also receiving a monetary payment such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and General Assistance (GA) increased overall.

Number of Persons Eligible for Medical Assistance by County: January 2008							
County	Percent of Pop	Total Eligible Pop.	ALSO RECEIVE MONEY PAYMENT			Cat. Needy	Med. Needy
			SSI	TANF	GA		
STATE TOTAL	15.2%	1,894,194	344,702	205,871	57,163	1,173,518	112,570
Lackawanna	16.3%	34,120	6,512	2,609	830	21,823	2,318
Luzerne	17.0%	53,310	9,453	3,469	1,082	35,261	4,027

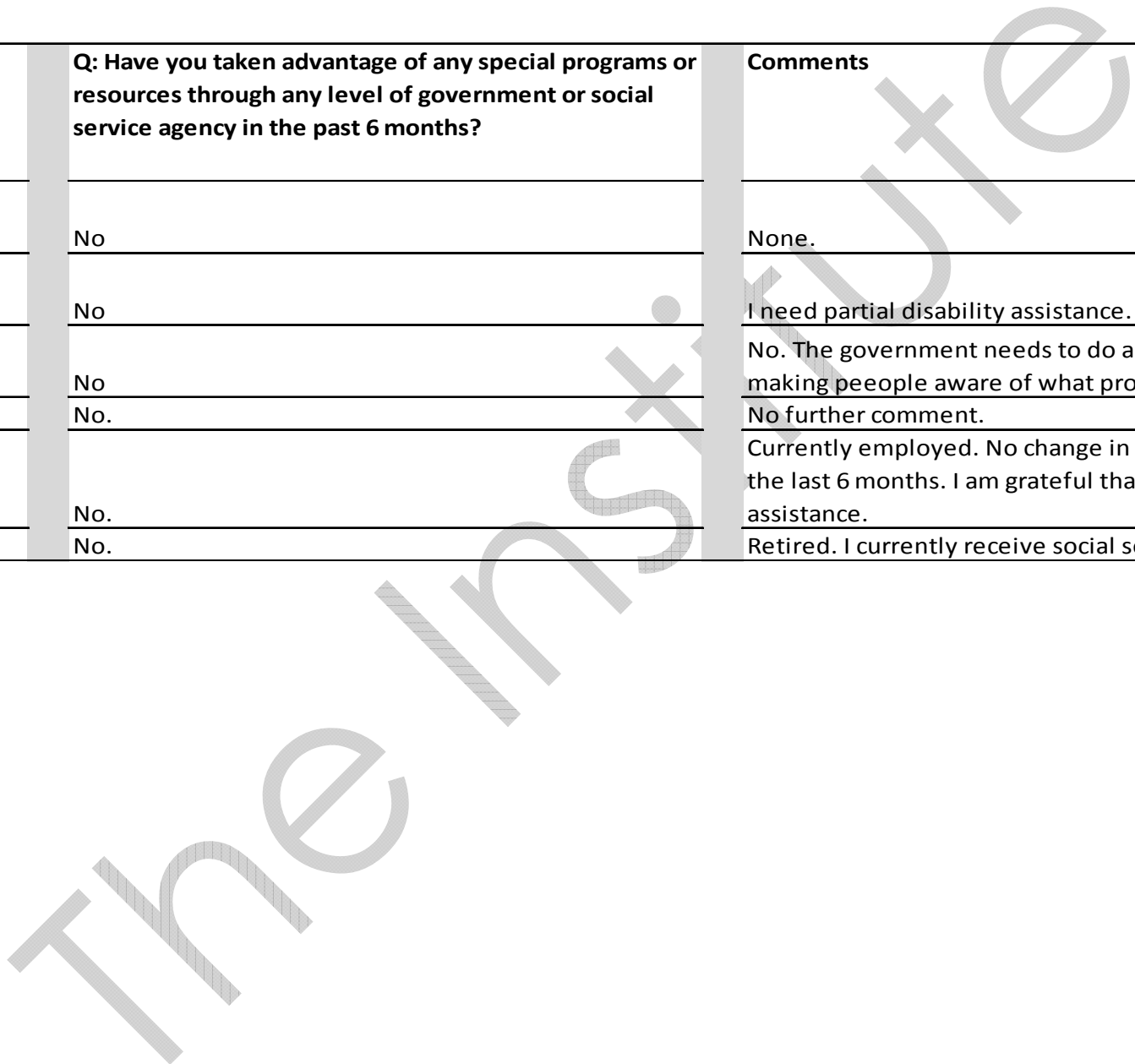
Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Number of Persons Eligible for Medical Assistance by County: January 2009							
County	Percent of Pop	Total Eligible Pop.	ALSO RECEIVE MONEY PAYMENT			Cat. Needy	Med. Needy
			SSI	TANF	GA		
STATE TOTAL	16.3%	2,022,583	350,106	199,407	60,237	1,291,348	121,147
Lackawanna	17.3%	36,138	6,572	2,730	992	23,365	2,456
Luzerne	18.3%	57,123	9,582	3,283	1,166	38,818	4,259

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

What people in Lackawanna & Luzerne County are saying:

	Q: Have you taken advantage of any special programs or resources through any level of government or social service agency in the past 6 months?	Comments
Respondent 1	No	None.
Respondent 2	No	I need partial disability assistance.
Respondent 3	No	No. The government needs to do a better job of making people aware of what programs are available.
Respondent 4	No.	No further comment.
Respondent 5	No.	Currently employed. No change in employment within the last 6 months. I am grateful that I do not need assistance.
Respondent 6	No.	Retired. I currently receive social security benefits.



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Northeastern Pennsylvania's Unemployment Rate: Update

In January 2009 the unemployment rate continued to increase in the region. Lackawanna saw the rate increase by 1.4% between December and January. Again in February the rate increase slightly but decreased in March. Luzerne County experienced a similar trend for the same months; increasing by 1.5% in January and again in February. The County also showed some positive signs with a slight decrease in March. During the first two months of 2009 both counties experienced higher unemployment than the State and the country as a whole. However, in March while Pennsylvania and the U.S. saw their rates remain idle and increase respectively Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties saw decreases. This could mean the region is seeing the beginning stages of recovery before other counties and states.

Monthly (January) Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data for 2009

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate (%)
Lackawanna County	107,500	98,700	8,800	8.2%
Luzerne County	161,500	146,600	14,900	9.2%
Pennsylvania	6,404,000	5,907,000	497,000	7.8%
United States	153,716	142,099	11,616	7.6%

Monthly (February) Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data for 2009

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate (%)
Lackawanna County	107,200	98,000	9,200	8.5%
Luzerne County	161,300	145,600	15,700	9.7%
Pennsylvania	6,393,000	5,866,000	527,000	8.2%
United States	154,214	141,748	12,467	8.1%

Monthly (March) Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data for 2009

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate (%)
Lackawanna County	107,900	99,100	8,800	8.1%
Luzerne County	161,900	147,200	14,700	9.1%
Pennsylvania	6,382,000	5,858,000	524,000	8.2%
United States	154,048,000	140,887	13,161	8.5%