



ECOHE UPDATES & ACTIONS

Under the Erie County Health Equity Act of 2021, the ECOHE is tasked with reporting annually on the programs and services provided by the Office to advance health equity, data on populations served, and goals for the upcoming year. This section provides an overview of the ECOHE's programs and actions in 2023 as well as goals for 2024.

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM & METRICS

Data is integral to the work of the ECOHE. The Erie County Health Equity Act of 2021 requires that the ECOHE report annually on the Office's programs, services, and outreach, including quantifying the populations served based on, at minimum, race and ZIP code. In order to accurately capture these data, the ECOHE developed a demographic form in 2023: the ECOHE Demographic Survey. Initially, this form was created using the demographic question and answer choices from the 2022 ECOHE Community Survey. The demographic questions and response options intentionally included smaller sub-groups or sub-categories in order to capture specific, more precise data that reflects the diversity of residents of Erie County. This allows populations that have been traditionally grouped—such as Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, LGBTQ+, and immigrants and refugees—to identify as more specific populations. For example, the ECOHE Demographic Survey disaggregates Latino/Hispanic by place of origin, which highlights that the majority of the Latino/Hispanic population in Erie County is Puerto Rican. By contrast, the largest percentage of the Latino/Hispanic population in the United States is Mexican, and the largest percentage of the Latino/Hispanic population in New York City is Dominican according to 2021 American Community Survey data [6].

The ECOHE Demographic Survey was modified several times over the course of 2023 to integrate feedback from the ECOHE team and members of the public. Of note, the ECOHE Demographic Survey did not originally disaggregate the option to select Black/African American. After hearing from the community that this was necessary, the ECOHE has implemented an updated demographic tool that allows Black/African American respondents to further identify themselves as African, American, Caribbean, South American, or members of another group. The current ECOHE Demographic Survey can be found in Appendix I.

The ECOHE consistently receives positive feedback from the public on the use of a more inclusive and disaggregated demographic collection tool, and recommends revisions to increase specificity in data collection as a best practice. It is not possible to address a health disparity if that community is not accurately represented in data collection. In addition to being more accurately reflective of the community, the broad use of expanded demographic options increases the ability to draw more precise and specific conclusions on the communities and populations any program or service wishes to serve. The ECOHE will continue to incorporate community feedback into the ways we collect, group, and present data on specific populations.