

Food Insecurity in Geneva, 2022  
*Geneva 2030*

## OVERVIEW

Households in the northeast neighborhoods of Geneva are the farthest from the city's supermarkets and most likely to lack vehicles, according to a review of recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other sources.

The USDA designates census tracts as low-income and low-access to food according to a number of factors, including:

- \* Low access to food stores defined by the number and percentages of people and their distance from the nearest large grocery store.
- \* Low access determined by the number of housing units without access to a vehicle.

The map on the cover page of this report identifies census blocks meeting the USDA criteria, and identified in 2020 census data as having high poverty and high rates of residents without vehicle ownership. The focus area is similar to that identified in the 2017-2018 report, "Food Security in Geneva." Data and geographies have shifted slightly, as the Census Bureau has revised city block groups and updated its data on poverty and vehicle ownership.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH FOOD INSECURITY

Most households across the country (89.5%) were food secure throughout 2020. Among U.S. households with children under age 18, 85.2 percent were food secure.

The Census Bureau reports that 38.3 million people lived in food-insecure households in 2020, 6.1 million of them children. Rates of food insecurity were higher than the national average (10.5 percent) for the following groups:

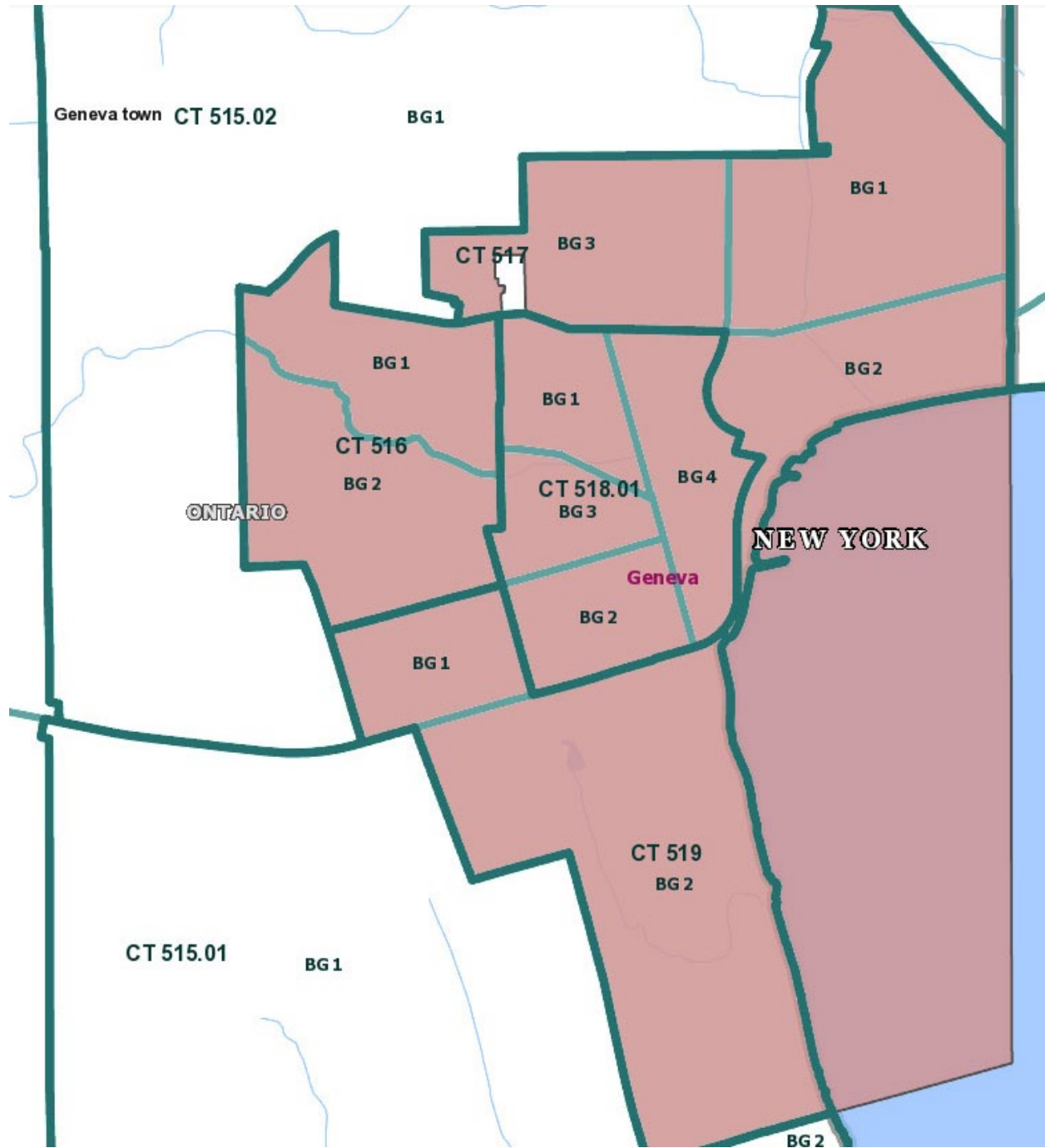
- All households with children (14.8 percent).
- Households with children under age 6 (15.3 percent).
- Households with children headed by a single woman (27.7 percent) or a single man (16.3 percent).
- Households with Black, non-Hispanic (21.7 percent) and Hispanic reference persons (17.2 percent; a household reference person is an adult household member in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented).
- Households with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty threshold (28.6 percent; the federal poverty line was \$26,246 for a family of four in 2020).

## GENEVA DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of the city of Geneva in 2021 is estimated to be 12,432, a slight decline (.6%) from the prior year. Persons under age 18 comprise 16.8% of the population. The city is 77.7% white, 8% black, and 15.7% Hispanic. People living in poverty comprise 18.8% of the population.

## Block groups

As noted on the cover page, we have focused on the northeast section of Geneva, where need is greatest. An analysis of block group data in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey shows needs at a more granular level.



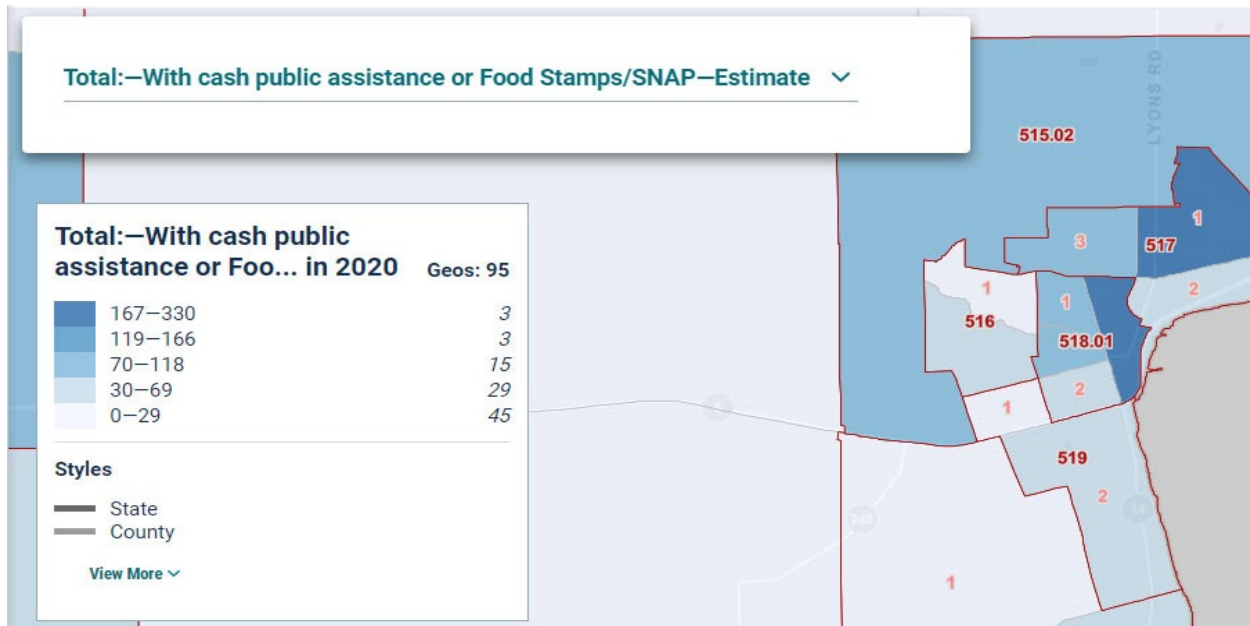
The following table shows our focus area, based on poverty, distance from supermarkets, and lack of vehicle ownership. The nine block groups encompass 4,337 households, including 2,126 families.

| <b>BLOCK GROUPS IN THE TARGET AREA</b> |                    |                    |                 |                            |   |                            |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <b>census tract</b>                    | <b>block group</b> | <b>house holds</b> | <b>families</b> | <b>families in poverty</b> | <b>HHs on public assistance, food stamps/SNAP</b> | <b>HHs with no vehicle</b> |
| 516                                    | 2                  | 514                | 165             | 4.8%                       | 11.1%   | 9.3%                       |
| 517                                    | 1                  | 499                | 334             | 15.3%                      | 53.1%   | 1.8%                       |
| 517                                    | 2                  | 177                | 151             | 6.0%                       | 30.5%   | 5.1%                       |
| 517                                    | 3                  | 461                | 239             | 19.2%                      | 23.4%   | 8.5%                       |
| 518.01                                 | 1                  | 406                | 149             | 0.0%                       | 24.9%   | 18.0%                      |
| 518.01                                 | 2                  | 492                | 189             | 3.2%                       | 7.7%  | 10.6%                      |
| 518.01                                 | 3                  | 404                | 238             | 10.9%                      | 23.0%   | 27.0%                      |
| 518.01                                 | 4                  | 1,136              | 520             | 20.2%                      | 29.0%   | 23.2%                      |
| 519                                    | 1                  | 248                | 141             | 4.3%                       | 0.0%  | 10.9%                      |

## **GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**

Multiple government programs address food insecurity, among them: food stamps/SNAP, WIC, social services payments, and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP).

According to estimates in the 2020 American Community Survey, almost a fourth of the households in the target area (24.1% or 1,048 households) received cash public assistance or food stamps/SNAP during the prior 12 months.



## FOOD AVAILABILITY

Geneva has lost two major food outlets - TOPS and BJ's Wholesale Club - in recent years. While local food prices are beyond the scope of this study, it is likely that prices have risen as competition has declined.

The two remaining supermarkets, Wegmans and Walmart (outside the city limits), are located in the southwest quadrant of Geneva. Other food sources include small groceries and convenience stores, school breakfasts and lunches, food pantries, and food distribution programs.

Food distributions have played an increasing role during the pandemic. Among them:

### Boys and Girls Club of Geneva

The Boys and Girls Club distributes food from FoodLink, Freihofer, Red Jacket, and Cornell. In April-May of 2022, the club provided food to 1,373 households, 1,618 adults, 887 seniors, and 1,251 children. Most recipients were from Zip code 14456.

### Food Justice Alliance

The Food Justice Alliance provided more than 30,000 pounds of produce to food-insecure families in Ontario County in 2020.

### Geneva Center of Concern

In 2021 the center's pantry distributed food to 12,126 individuals (4,643 families). This represented a 40% increase since the start of the pandemic.

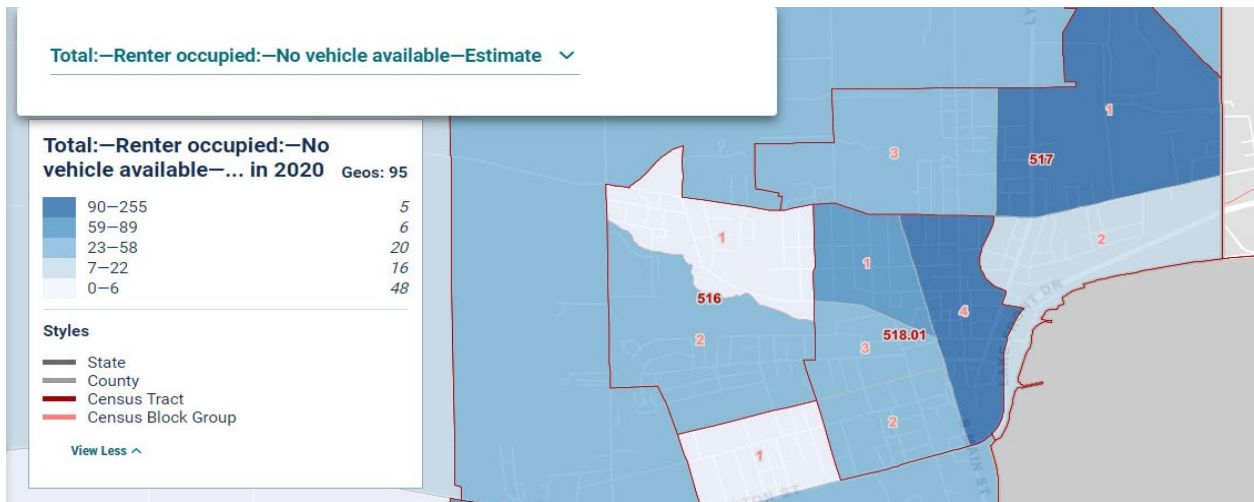
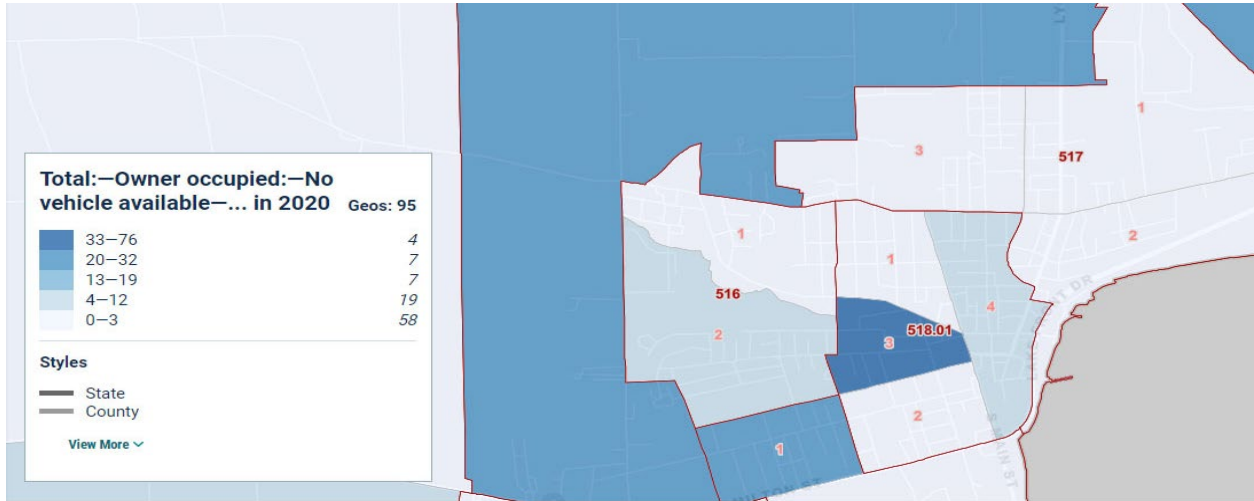
### Salvation Army

The organization runs a food pantry and twice-a-week food distributions.

# TRANSPORTATION

## Vehicle ownership

The following maps show areas of Geneva with the highest rates of residences occupied by people who don't own vehicles.



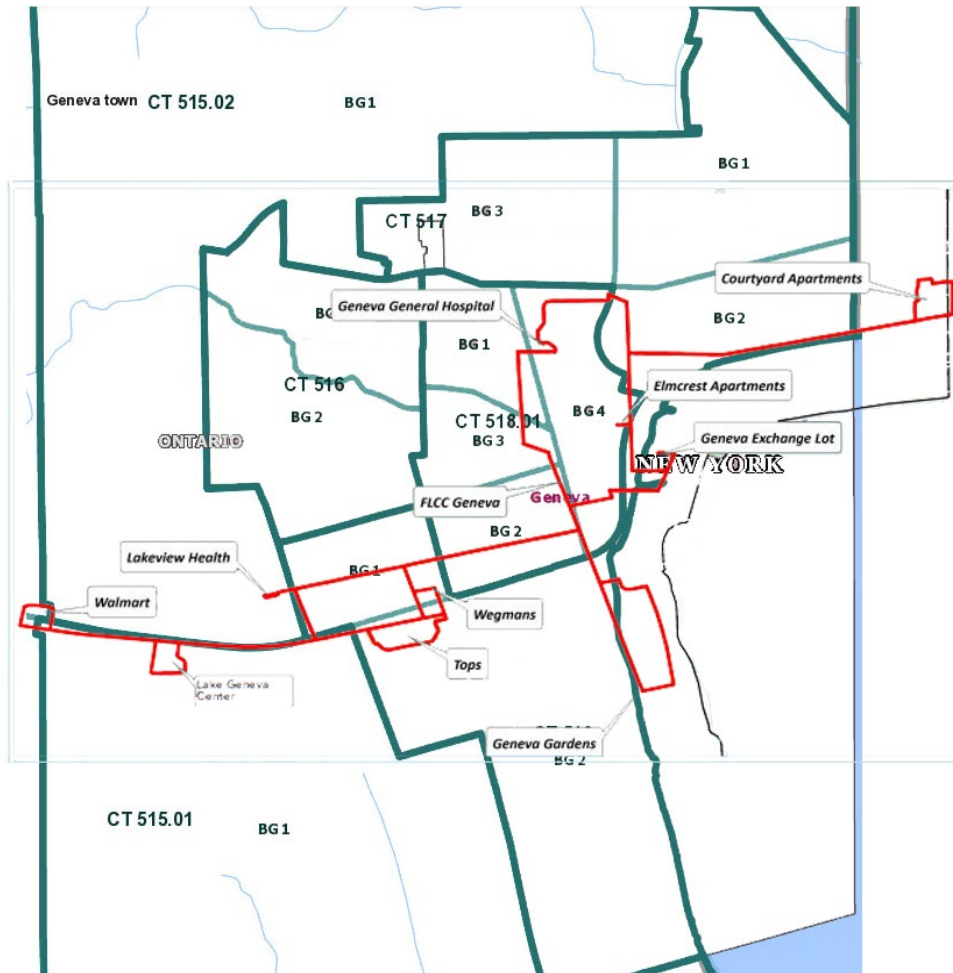
Out of 4,337 households in the targeted area, an estimated 766 (17.7%) do not have vehicles. This statistic raises a plethora of questions: What prevents these households from car ownership? Are funded food deliveries, shuttles and other modes of public transportation more efficient solutions?

## Regional Transportation Service (RTS)

RTS bus service runs hourly from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (except for 1:30-2:30 p.m.). Weekend service has been cancelled. For the working poor without vehicles, lack of transportation during evenings and weekends has to pose a challenge. So does the bus route, in a community that can suffer harsh weather conditions in winter.

Public transportation is an area ripe for further exploration. The latest annual report for RTS notes 2010-2020 population changes for the eight counties it serves. Ontario had the highest increase of the counties. However, regionwide ridership and fare revenue declined markedly during the pandemic.

The following map shows the Geneva bus route.



## **SUMMARY**

The pandemic, the loss of two supermarkets, low rates of vehicle ownership in selected neighborhoods, and cutbacks in RTS bus service have increased the importance of small markets, food distributions and food pantries in Geneva. Food delivery services such as Instacart are beyond the means of many households in the target area, as are transportation services such as Uber. Availability of healthful food is not the problem. Access is. The challenges are transportation and public awareness of services.