

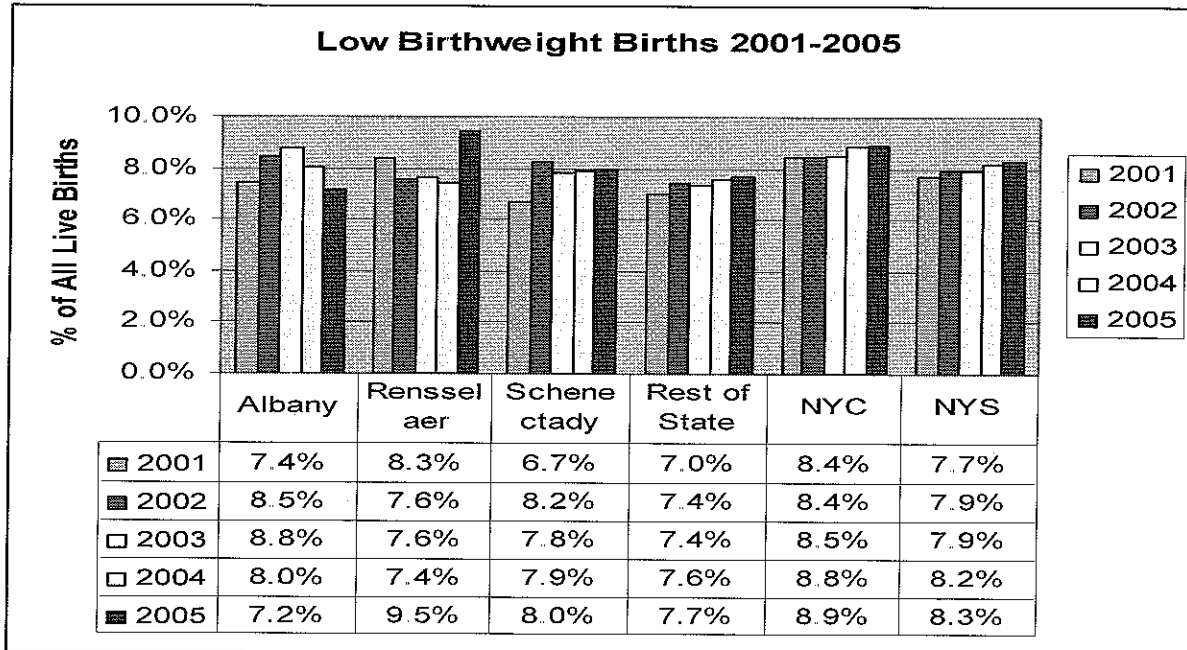
## **Low Birth Weight Births**

When a baby is born weighing under 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds), it is considered a low birth weight. This benchmark is significant because babies born under this weight may present short-term and long-term health concerns. Risk factors for low birth weight include:

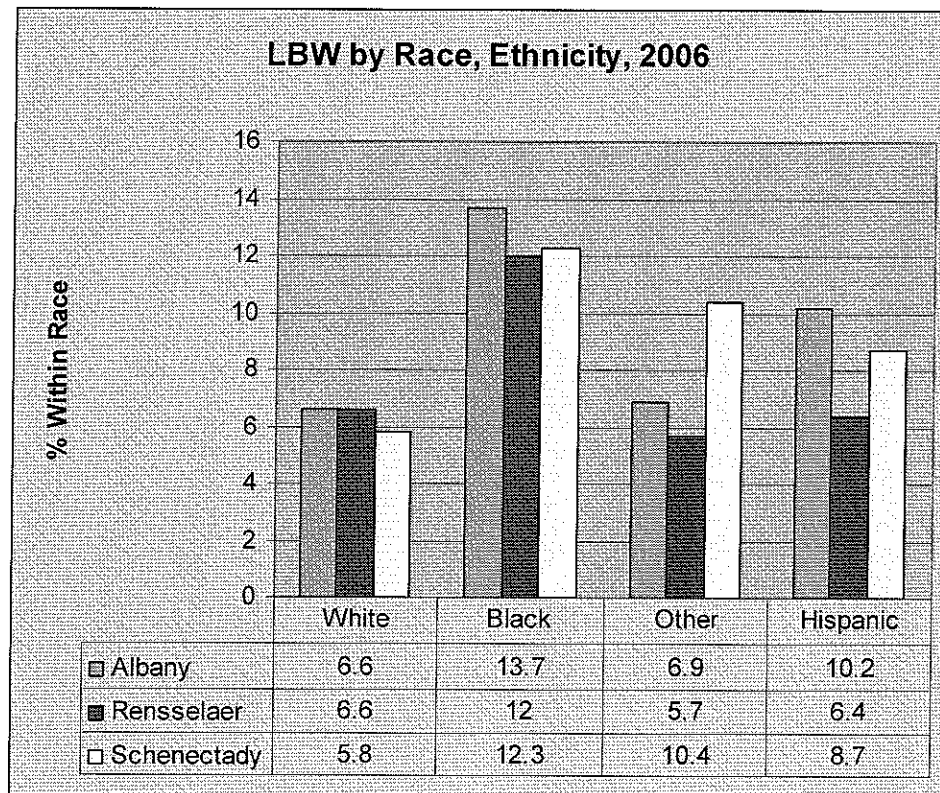
- smoking during pregnancy
- history of LBW
- short gestation
- age (both younger and older women)- or advanced maternal age
- race (Black); inadequate prenatal care
- alcohol, tobacco and other drug use
- domestic violence during pregnancy
- low pre-pregnancy weight and inadequate pregnancy weight gain
- multiple births

Nationally in 2005 about 3 percent of all live births (4,138,349) were multiple births (twins and higher order – 139,816). Women with multiple births have a 9-time greater incidence of LBW and a 6-time greater incidence of pre-term births compared with women with single births.

LBW is one of the leading risk factors for infant death under one year of age, and increases the risk for childhood developmental disabilities and delays.



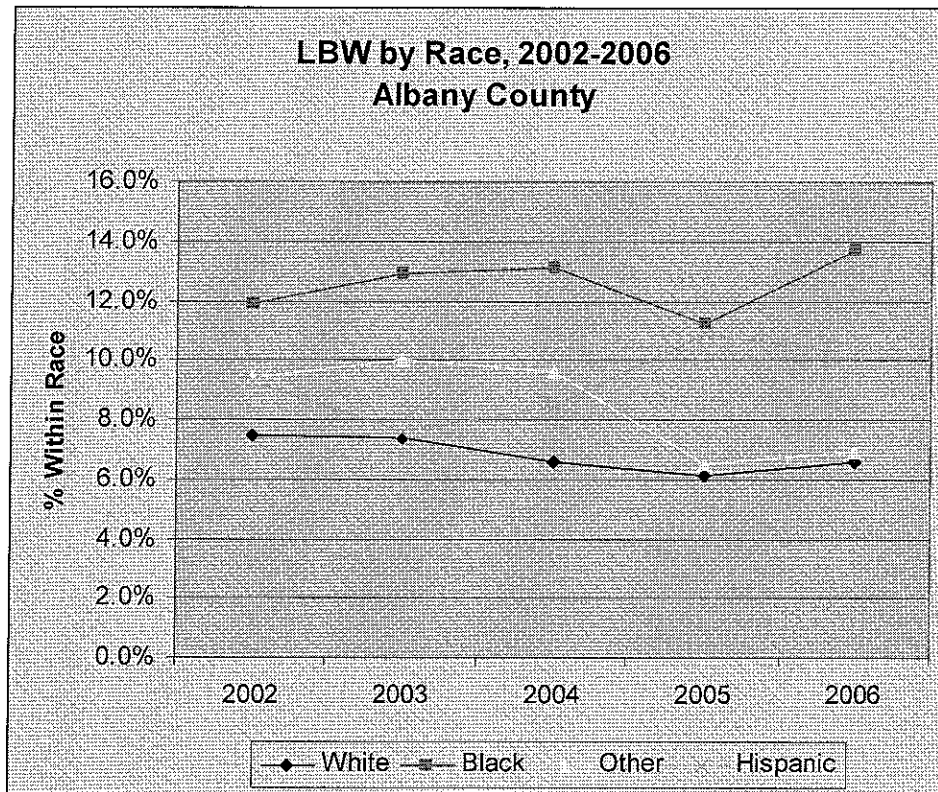
The *Healthy People 2010* target for LBW births is 5.0 per 100 births.



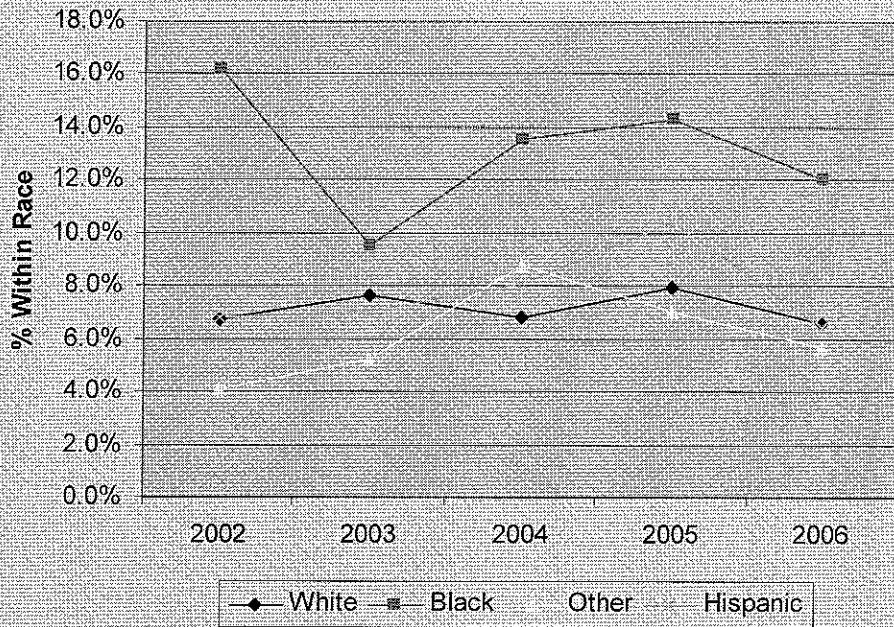
Black women have the highest rate of low birthweight births, ranging from 12.0% in Rensselaer County to 13.7% in Albany County. Some of this can be explained by the

natural increased occurrence of multiple births among Black women. A more significant reason may be contributing risk factors such as inadequate prenatal care, poor nutrition, and other factors related to poverty which effect Black communities in the area.

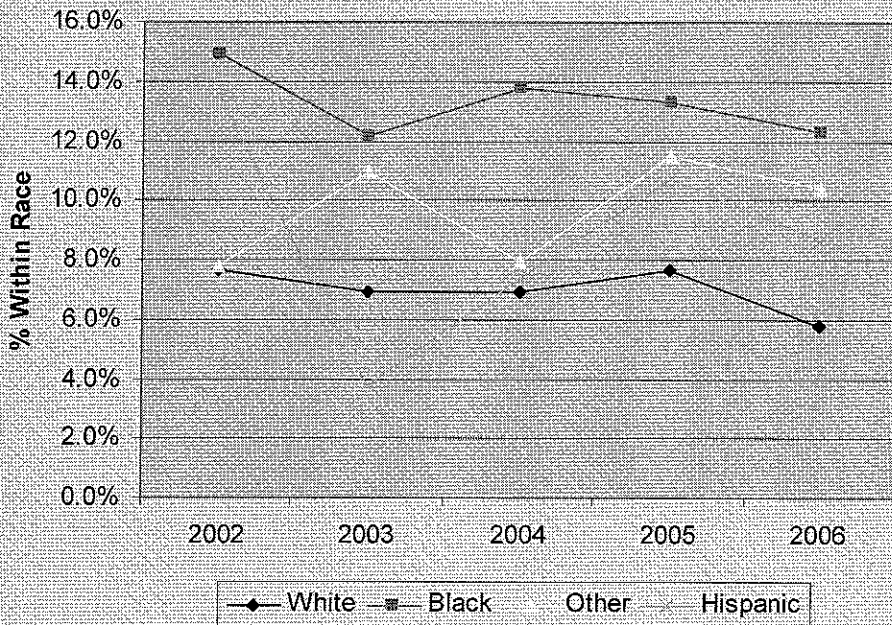
LBW trends differ between each of the counties, but fluctuations remain within 1% to 5% within race.

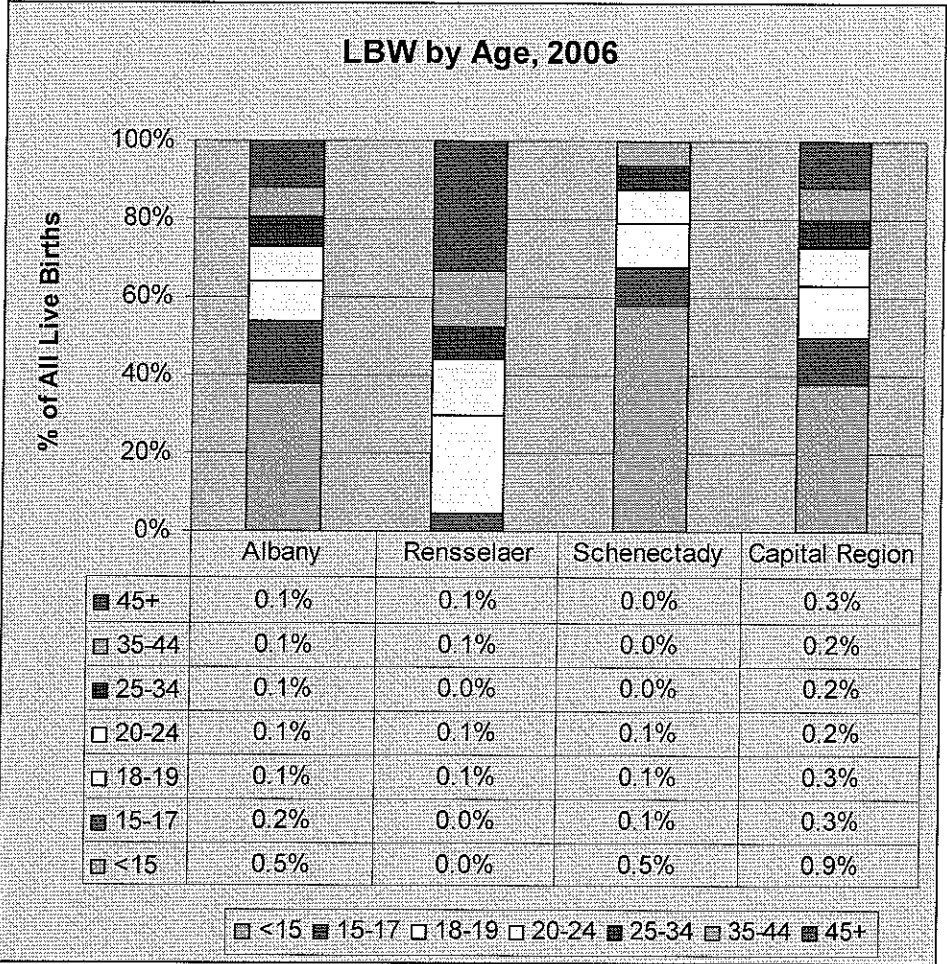


**LBW by Race, 2002-2006  
Rensselaer County**

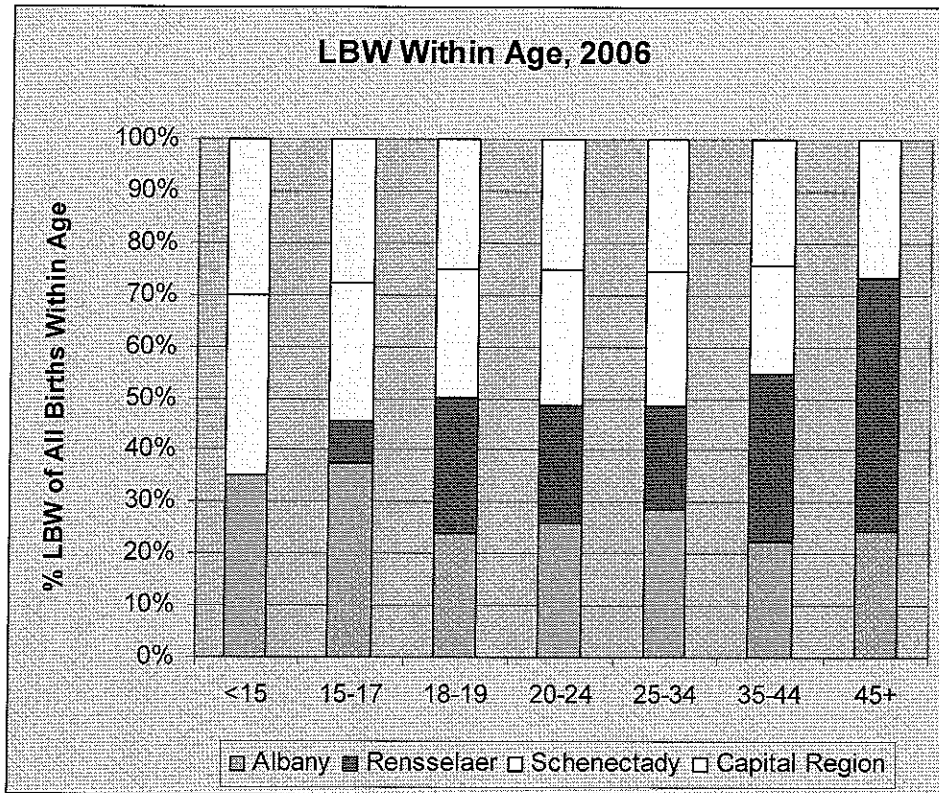


**LBW by Race, 2002-2006  
Schenectady County**





Age also plays a role in the rate of LBW births. Of all LBW births in the Capital Region, nearly half (45.2%) are to mothers aged 25-34 (Figure 22). In all three counties, the remaining half of LBW births ranged from 33% to 37% for women under the age of 25, and from 16% to 24% for women 35-44. This is a trend changed from previous years and shows that an increasing number of LBW births are occurring in younger age groups.



Within age groups, the picture is a little different. Teens (< 15) delivered the highest proportion (28.6%) of low birthweight babies in their age group, followed closely by older teens. The lowest rate of LBW deliveries was among 25-34 year old women (6.5%). There are interesting differences between counties. Rensselaer County's highest LBW rate is among 45+ year olds, whereas in Albany County, the highest rate is among < 15 year olds. Schenectady County was similar to Albany County rates with the exception of Schenectady having no LBW births in the 45+ age group.