



Update from the American Community Survey

Poverty in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area

In 2010, the poverty rate in the Washington DC metropolitan area was about 8.4 percent. The region's poverty rate increased from 7.5 percent in 2009 and around 7 percent over the 2005-2008 period. The metro area's poverty rate has remained about half of the nation's figure since at least 2005.

The percentage of population living below the poverty line in the Washington metropolitan area was the lowest among the nation's 15 largest metro areas in 2010. Boston ranked second with a poverty rate of 10.3 percent. The poverty rate in the Washington DC area in 2010 was about half of that registered in the five worst performing metropolitan areas – Phoenix, Los Angeles, Houston, Detroit, and Miami. However, this across-regions picture might be different had

How the Poverty Rate is Calculated in the ACS

The poverty rate is the percentage of people living in families whose before-tax money income in the 12 months preceding the survey falls below the poverty thresholds.

The poverty thresholds vary by family size, number of children, and age of householder. They do not vary geographically. They are updated annually to account for inflation. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of four people was \$22,314 in 2010.

Poverty Rate in the Nation's 15 Largest Metropolitan Areas by Selected Race/Ethnic Groups: 2010

Metropolitan Area	Overall	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Washington DC	8.4	4.7	14.0	8.2	11.4
Boston	10.3	6.8	24.0	13.1	27.2
Minneapolis	10.9	6.9	35.9	18.1	21.9
San Francisco	10.9	7.1	21.3	9.2	16.4
Seattle	11.7	8.6	24.6	10.1	25.8
Philadelphia	12.7	7.0	24.8	14.1	28.5
Chicago	13.6	6.7	28.8	11.7	19.7
New York	13.8	7.2	20.5	14.2	23.2
Dallas	14.6	7.3	23.7	11.0	23.7
Atlanta	14.8	8.2	20.8	12.5	29.4
Phoenix	16.3	10.1	25.8	11.0	27.2
Los Angeles	16.3	8.8	22.0	12.8	22.1
Houston	16.5	7.1	22.5	12.9	25.2
Detroit	16.6	10.8	32.0	11.0	28.6
Miami	17.1	9.5	27.1	12.2	19.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

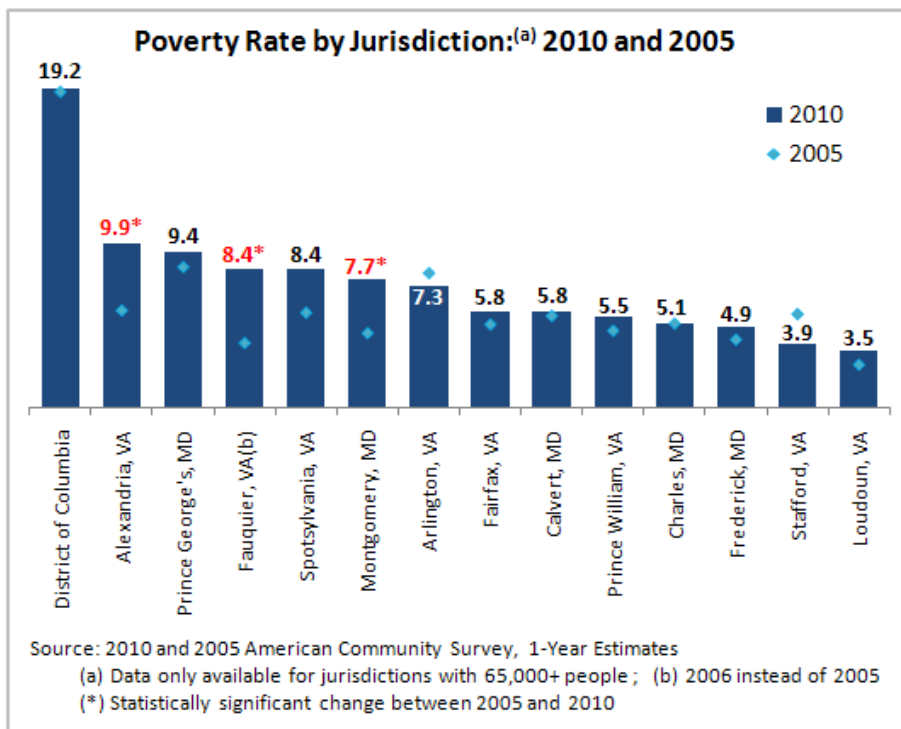
the poverty rate taken into account the differences in the cost of living among metro areas.

In the Washington DC metro area the poverty rates varied significantly among race/ethnic groups. In 2010, the black population had a poverty rate of 14 percent, the highest among the minority groups and about three times higher than that of the white population (4.7 percent). The Hispanics ranked second with a poverty rate of 11.4 percent. The percentage of the Asian

population in the Washington metro area with a family income below the poverty line (8.2 percent) was the lowest among the minority groups but still almost twice as big as the poverty rate for the white population.

Within the Washington DC metropolitan area, the poverty rate in 2010 was significantly greater in the District of Columbia than in any other jurisdiction for which data are available. The poverty rate in the District (19.2 percent) was about twice that of the City of Alexandria (9.9 percent), the jurisdiction with the second highest poverty rate in the Washington DC region. Fairfax County (5.8 percent), Prince William County (5.5 percent), and Loudoun County (3.5 percent) are among the jurisdictions with the lowest poverty rates in 2010. These are three of the most populous jurisdictions in the Washington DC metro area.

In jurisdictions with relatively low poverty rates as well as in the District of Columbia, the percentage of the population in poverty did not change significantly in the last 5 years. In contrast, Fauquier County (+4.5 percentage points), the City of Alexandria (+4 p.p.), and Montgomery County (+3.2 p.p.) experienced a significant increase in the proportion of their population below the poverty line between 2005 and 2010.



GMU Center for Regional Analysis

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The Center for Regional Analysis has become the “go-to” organization for economic, demographic and housing data and analysis within the Washington and Baltimore regions and is cited locally and nationally as the source of information for the media, research scholars, and investors interested in understanding the Washington area’s economy. The Center posts research reports, presentations, data and other information its website (policy-cra.gmu.edu)

Updates from the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey

The Center for Regional Analysis will issue periodic reports on demographic and economic topics based on newly released data from the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey. The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides detailed data every year about states, metropolitan areas, counties and cities. More information about the 2010 Census and the ACS can be found at www.census.gov.