

METRO

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Women Soaring or Struggling, Study Says

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The District has the highest concentration of elderly women in the Washington area. Prince George's and Fairfax counties have the lowest. Arlington leads the region in the percentage of women with advanced degrees. Alexandria has the second-highest poverty rate among girls. Montgomery and Prince George's have the highest child-care costs.

These are among the findings of a study by the Washington Area Women's Foundation, which examined the lives and lifestyles of the 1.8 million women

Births Per 1,000 Girls, Ages 15-17

1997-'99 average

D.C.	65.1
Montgomery	12.4
Prince Georges	28.8
Arlington	21.9
Fairfax	9.4
Alexandria	31.2

SOURCE: Metropolitan Washington Public Health Assessment Center, Community Health Indicators for the Washington Metropolitan Region, June 2001

and girls in six local jurisdictions. The Portrait Project study, being released today, took nearly two years and documents

the virtually unprecedented power and income of many women in the region compared with national statistics.

Not only do women here outpace the nation in labor force participation (65 percent of Washington area women hold jobs, compared with 57 percent nationally), but almost half of local women have a college degree, compared with less than a third nationally. Women-owned businesses here employ more than 170,000, and women hold a significant number of elected offices, the report notes.

But by breaking the numbers down by jurisdiction, the foundation also found that many women

live far outside that stratosphere. In the District, 30 percent of women-headed families are poor. Up to 80 percent of Hispanic women in Montgomery County do not have health insurance. Sixteen percent of Asian women in Arlington are living in poverty.

Even in those counties with a large proportion of highly educated, well-paid women, their salaries lagged well behind men's, the study found. The highest income and workplace participation rates were found in Fairfax: The full-time median income for women was \$41,802—

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Despite Many Women's Growing Power, Others Left Struggling

WOMEN, From B1

substantially higher than the median of \$27,194 for women nationally, but well below the \$60,500 median for men in the county.

What's more, the advantages enjoyed by women in this area tended to be concentrated mostly among whites and Asians, the study found.

Sixty-two percent of white women and more than half of Asian women in the area have college degrees, compared with one-fourth of Hispanic women and fewer than one-third of black women.

In Prince George's County and the District, the statistics are even more dismal. One half of Hispanic women in Prince George's and almost a third of black women in the District do not have a high school diploma.

"It's almost like every major theme has two sides to the coin," said foundation president Anne B. Mosle. "We are fortunate to have incredible regional strengths, but we also have alarming regional weaknesses."

The release of the study comes at a time when nonprofit groups and the organizations and agencies that fund them are struggling to sustain programs launched during healthier economic times. Yesterday, some said that the report will help them

better target dwindling resources to areas where the need is greatest.

"There hasn't really been a lot of information on the lives of female-headed households in the District," said Rubie G. Coles, associate director of the Moriah Fund, a District foundation that helped fund the

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The study found that women played an important role in managing many of the region's 100 largest charitable foundations. Eighty-five percent have female board members, and 34 are led by women.

But, it noted, an analysis of 12,000 grants by those foundations found that only 7 percent of the total \$441 million given went to programs serving women or girls. Only half of that percentage went to local organizations.

In addition to analyzing data from 40 sources, foundation researchers conducted 11 community forums.

The information collected from lower-income girls was discouraging, Mosle said.

"They saw the American Dream, and they believe in it," she said. "They saw themselves as a doctor or a teacher, but when you started to talk to them about how they were going to get there... it all began to disintegrate and disconnect."

Mosle said the women's foundation, which has made \$365,000 in grants since 1997 to about three dozen local women's organizations, is looking to fund more mentoring and leadership programs "reaching out to each girl."

"The numbers aren't so vast that we can't connect one to one," she said.

The Lives of Women and Girls

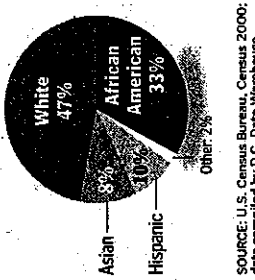
Results from a two-year-long project by the Washington Area Women's Foundation, released today, document the lives of 1.8 million women and girls in six Washington area jurisdictions between 1997 and 1999.

Percentage of affordable homes for purchase by family type (at median income) in each region:

	Female household (no husband present)	Male household (no wife present)	Married-couple family
D.C.	8%	21%	64%
Montgomery	15	26	47
Prince George's	31	31	85
Arlington	14	14	39
Fairfax	21	31	73
Alexandria	17	27	49

Racial and ethnic distribution of women and girls, by area:

	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other ethnicity
D.C.	26%	62%	7%	3%	2%
Montgomery	59	16	11	11	3
Prince George's	24	64	6	4	2
Arlington	61	10	17	9	3
Fairfax	64	9	10	13	4
Alexandria	55	22	13	6	4



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000; data compiled by D.C. Data Warehouse

Women's educational attainment, 18 and older:

	Number of women	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's or professional degree
D.C.	245,409	2.6%	18%	16.0
Montgomery	347,992	5.2	27	21.0
Prince George's	314,300	5.6	16	8.4
Arlington	79,087	3.7	31.4	25.0
Fairfax	369,874	5.9	30	17.0
Alexandria	55,639	4.3	30	20.0

Number of reported rapes or attempted rapes per 100,000 people:

D.C.	78
Montgomery	37
Prince George's	69
Arlington	33
Fairfax	19
Alexandria	57

SOURCE: Metropolitan Washington Public Health Assessment Center, Community Health Indicators for the Washington Metropolitan Region, June 2001