



## *A Portrait of Women & Girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area* **Fact Sheet on African-American Women**

*A Portrait of Women & Girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area* (the Portrait Project) is an unprecedented collaboration. Led by the Washington Area Women's Foundation, the project utilized the time, data, and expertise of 24 leading research organizations to document the issues affecting the lives of women and girls in the region. The Foundation embarked upon the Portrait Project 18 months ago to examine the roles of education, economics, health, safety, and leadership in the lives of the region's 1.8 million women and girls in the District of Columbia; Prince George's and Montgomery Counties in Maryland; Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax Counties in Virginia.

### **Key Facts about African-American Women:**

#### **Earnings:**

African-American women's median annual earnings in each jurisdiction exceed the median annual earnings of \$27,194 for women nationally. In the region, African-American women's median annual earnings range from \$30,941 to \$36,965. These figures also outpace the national figures for African-American women by at least \$5,300 and upwards to \$11,376 in some jurisdictions.

#### **Educational Attainment:**

While women of all races and ethnicities in the region have higher levels of education than their counterparts nationally, the racial differences in educational attainment among women are stark. While 62% of white women and 56% of Asian women in the region have some sort of college degree, only 30% of African-American women do.

- Twenty-nine percent (29%) of African-American women ages 18 and older in the District lack a high school diploma. Twenty-one percent (21%) of African-American women ages 18 and older lack a high school diploma in Alexandria.
- These figures exceed the national figure of 19% of African-American women lacking a high school degree.

### **Key Facts on the Washington Metropolitan Area:**

#### ***Regional Strengths:***

- For each county in the region, the women's median annual earnings outpace the national median income, from a low of \$8,500 above the national median in Prince George's County to a high of \$14,000 above the national median in Arlington County. However, women still earn less than their male counterparts by as much as \$18,700.
- The Washington region ranks 4<sup>th</sup> among the top 50 metropolitan areas for women's business ownership.
- Women head 34% of the top 100 foundations (by assets) and 28% of the largest foundations established in the region since 1996. Women-led foundations oversaw more than \$141.2 million in giving in 2001.

## Key Facts on the Washington Metropolitan Area:

### Regional Weaknesses:

- Women-headed households make up 58% of families in poverty in our region. In the District, women-headed households make up 74% of all families living in poverty. In Prince George's County they represent 59% of all families in poverty.
- Key family supports such as affordable childcare and housing are difficult to access for those who need them most. Women-headed families at the median income level (\$26,500) in the District can afford to purchase only 8% of the homes there; those at the median income level in Arlington (\$41,100) can afford to purchase only 14% of that county's homes.
- The incidence of infant mortality in the District and in Prince George's County (12 and 9.8 per 1,000 births, respectively) is higher than the national average (6.9 per 1,000 births).
- The rate of new AIDS cases among adolescent and adult women in the District is ten times the national rate (92 vs. 9 per 100,000, respectively).
- One hundred thirty-eight new foundations, with assets of at least \$1 million, have been created in the region since 1996. Only \$1.97 million of the \$68.8 million in grants made by these foundations went to women's and girls' programs or activities.

### Health:

African-American women and their children fare worse than their counterparts in the region in a number of key health indicators, including heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

- African-American women in all jurisdictions in the region have much higher rates of death from heart disease than all other women of other racial or ethnic backgrounds, they also have the highest rates of obesity in the region.
- HIV and AIDS represent a growing threat for African-American women as well as the rate of new AIDS cases is higher than their actual representation in the population nationally and regionally.

### Infant Mortality:

The African-American infant-mortality rate remains higher than the national average of 13.5 per 100,000 in parts of our region such as the District of Columbia at 15.1 per 100,000.

### Poverty:

African-American women and Latinas have the highest poverty rates of all women in the region at 14%.

- African-American women in the District have the highest poverty rates of all women in every jurisdiction (when compared to Montgomery, Prince George's, Arlington, Fairfax and Alexandria).
- One in four African-American women in the District of Columbia lives in poverty.

### Unemployment Rates:

Unemployment remains a significant problem for African-American women who face unemployment rates of 7.5% in the region. The national statistic for all people in the workforce is 5.8%. Compared with women in neighboring counties, African-American women in the District are unemployed at a substantially higher rate (11%), almost double the national rate for all women (6%).

**Wage Gap:** One of the smallest wage gaps exists between African-American women's and men's median annual earnings. African American women's earnings for the region

range from being 88% of men's earnings (Fairfax County) to more than 100% of their earnings. In fact, in Arlington County, African-American women's median earnings are 10% higher than those of African-American men: \$34,600 for women compared to \$31,500 for men. While there is more equality in earnings between African-American women and men, they have lower median earnings than whites. The wage gap is more of an issue of race than gender when looking at the earnings of men and women of color in our region.

## African-American Women in the Washington Metropolitan Area Key Statistics

	National	Regional	District of Columbia	Montgomery County	Prince George's County	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Alexandria
<b>Demographics</b> (% of All Women in the Region)	13%	33%	62%	16%	64%	10%	9%	22%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	10.9%	7.5%	13.5%	5.4%	5.6%	5.4%	4.4%	5%
<b>Earnings</b>								
Women	\$25,589	N/A	\$30,941	\$36,369	\$36,291	\$34,583	\$36,965	\$31,253
Men	\$30,000	N/A	\$31,674	\$38,585	\$38,170	\$31,524	\$42,000	\$35,004
Percent of Women's Earning to Men	85%	N/A	98%	94%	95%	110%	88%	89%
<b>Poverty</b>								
All Women	26.7%	14.4%	26.3%	9.8%	8.3%	13.4%	8.7%	15.9%
Child	33.3%	18.7%	37.3%	11.8%	10.8%	12.1%	10.7%	23.2%
Adult	23.5%	12.4%	23.5%	8.8%	7.2%	13.2%	7.6%	13.4%
Elderly	26.7%	16.9%	21.3%	12.3%	9.6%	17.8%	13.1%	20.1%
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
No High School Diploma	26.7%	18%	29%	11.5%	12.3%	19.4%	12.3%	20.8%
High School Graduates	28.4%	26.5%	29.9%	20.1%	27.1%	24.6%	19.6%	24%

### In the region, African-American women:

- Have the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest median earnings (after white women) in Alexandria, Fairfax County and Prince George's County.
- Have the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest median earnings in Arlington County, the District of Columbia and Montgomery County.
- Have the highest rate of unemployment among women (tied with Latinas) in the region.
- Have the highest women's poverty rate (tied with Latinas) in the region.

Please note: Regional comparisons include the District of Columbia; Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland and Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax Counties in Virginia.

***Established in 1997, the Washington Area Women's Foundation is the only public foundation dedicated to increasing resources and opportunities for women and girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Our mission is to foster a powerful wave of philanthropy to improve the lives of all women and girls in the Washington region. Since 1998, Foundation grants to 47 local organizations have helped more than 30,000 women, girls, and their families achieve economic and physical security, escape violence and physical abuse, maintain health and well-being, and secure education and leadership opportunities. Visit [www.wawf.org](http://www.wawf.org) to view the full report.***



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