



A Portrait of Women & Girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area **Fact Sheet on Asian 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 Asian Women:

Earnings:

Asian women's median annual earnings in each jurisdiction exceed the median annual earnings of \$27,194 for women nationally. In the region, Asian women's median annual earnings range from \$29,804 to \$38,370. In four out of six local jurisdictions, Asian women's earnings outpace the national figure for this group by at least \$2,773 (Fairfax County), and upwards to \$7,321 (District of Columbia).

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. Fifty-six (56%) of Asian women in the region have some sort of college degree and are the second most highly educated women in the region (just behind white women of which 62% hold some sort of college degree).

- Compared to other women in the region, Asian women ages 18 and older have the 2nd lowest percentage of women without a high school diploma. The percentage of Asian women in our region without a high school diploma ranges from 17- 21%.
- These figures trail the national figure of 22% of Asian women lacking a high school diploma.

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 4th 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:

Asian women have the second lowest heart disease mortality rates of all women in the region, ranging from 201 – 216 deaths per 100,000 women.

Poverty:

Asian women have the second highest poverty rates of all women in the region at 8.9%.

- Elderly Asian women have the second highest poverty rates of all elderly women in the region (tied with Latinas).
- Elderly Asian women in Alexandria and Arlington have the highest poverty rates of all women in every jurisdiction at 42.1 and 37.4% respectively (compared to Montgomery, Prince George's, Arlington, Fairfax and Alexandria).

Unemployment Rates:

Asian women have the second lowest unemployment rates among all women in the region at 4.2%. The unemployment rate for all women in the region is 4.9%. In fact, in the District, Asian women have the lowest unemployment rates compared to all women.

Wage Gap: One of the largest wage gaps exists between Asian women and men's median annual earnings. Asian women's earnings in the region range from being 68% of Asian men's earnings in Fairfax County (\$33,822 for women compared to \$49,589 for men) to 88% of their earnings in the District (\$38,370 for women compared to \$43,646 for men).

Asian Women in the Washington Metropolitan Area Key Statistics

	National	Regional	District of Columbia	Montgomery County	Prince George's County	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Alexandria
Demographics (% of All Women in the Region)	4%	8%	3%	11%	4%	9%	13%	6%
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	4.2%	6.8%	4.0%	3.8%	3.2%	4.0%	7.0%
Earnings								
Women	\$31,049	N/A	\$38,370	\$36,589	\$30,597	\$35,244	\$33,822	\$29,804
Men	\$40,650	N/A	\$43,646	\$50,013	\$36,360	\$44,386	\$49,589	\$41,875
Percent of Women's Earning to Men	76%	N/A	88%	73%	84%	79%	68%	71%
Poverty								
All Women	12.7%	8.9%	22.8%	6.5%	9.8%	15.7%	7.7%	13.9%
Child	14.2%	8.2%	22.3%	5.6%	8.0%	15.3%	8.7%	9.9%
Adult	12.2%	8.4%	22.7%	6.0%	9.9%	14.1%	6.9%	11.3%
Elderly	13.0%	16.7%	24.5%	13.9%	13.0%	37.4%	14.7%	42.1%
Educational Attainment								
No High School Diploma	22.2%	17.2%	17%	15.2%	18.8%	20.6%	17.9%	17.3%
High School Graduates	17.1%	15.4%	13.5%	13.6%	16.5%	11.5%	17.5%	14.4%

In the region, Asian women:

- Have the 2nd highest median earnings (after white women) in the District, Montgomery County and Arlington County.
- Have the 2nd widest wage gaps between their earnings and those of the male counterparts compared to all women in the region.
- Have the second lowest rate of unemployment among women (just behind white women) in the region.
- Have the 2nd highest women's poverty rate in the region and the highest poverty rates for elderly women in the region. Elderly women in Alexandria and Arlington have the highest poverty rates of all women 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 to view the full report.



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