



A Portrait of Women & Girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area District of Columbia Fact Sheet

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.

District of Columbia Strengths:

Earnings: Women's median annual earnings in the District outpace those for women in the nation, yet they are the second lowest among women in the region. Women in the District earn \$36,361 per year compared to \$27,194 nationally.

Business Ownership: The District of Columbia is ranked 4th out of the top 50 metropolitan areas for women's business ownership (based on number of businesses, total sales and the rate of employment).

Teen Pregnancies: Teen pregnancies are declining both locally and nationally. In the District of Columbia, the teen pregnancy rate declined from a 1993 high of 238.7 per 1,000 girls, ages 15 to 19, to a low of 81.4 per 1,000 girls in 2000. Similar declines can be seen in teen birth rates.

District of Columbia Weaknesses:

Education: While more District women have some sort of college degree compared to women nationally (37% vs. 28%), the District has the 2nd lowest educational attainment level for women across the region (37% vs. 46%).

- The percentage of African-American women without a high school diploma in the District (29%) is slightly higher than the national average.
- Fifty percent (50%) of Latinas in the District of Columbia lack a high school diploma, compared to 45% of Latinas nationally. This is the highest percentage in the region.

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.

District of Columbia Weaknesses (cont.):

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.

Family Supports: Key family supports such as affordable childcare and housing are difficult to access for those who need them most. In 2000, women-headed families at the median income (about \$26,500) could only afford to buy 8% of homes in the city. The District had the lowest percentage of homes in the region affordable to women-headed families.

- A family in the District with an infant and a preschooler would pay \$22,900 for childcare. For married couples at the median income of \$77,000, this would represent almost one-third of their salaries. Childcare would consume more than 70% of the median income of women-headed families, which is \$26,500 a year.

Health: Women in the District fare poorly when it comes to several health indicators. The District of Columbia has the highest incidence (new cases) of AIDS among women in the nation at 92 per 100,000, more than *ten times* the national rate for women (9 per 100,000 people). Women in Wards 7 and 8 in the District are increasingly at risk; in these wards, women comprise nearly one-half of all new AIDS cases, compared to the District as a whole where women account for only one quarter of all new AIDS cases in the District.

- A woman with no prenatal care is three times more likely to have a low birth weight infant. Forty six (46%) of women in the District did not receive prenatal care in the first trimester, a higher average than that of women in the neighboring jurisdictions. This average is also more than triple the national average of 17%.

Heart Disease: African-American women in the District had the highest mortality rate from heart disease (514 per 100,000) than all other women in all jurisdictions.

Infant Mortality: While decreasing, the District still has the highest infant mortality rate in the region (12 per 1,000 births vs. 6.9 nationally). The District's African-American infant-mortality rate is the highest for the region at 15.1 per 1,000 compared to only 13.5 nationally.

Poverty: The District has the highest percentage of women in poverty in our region. Twenty-one percent (21%) of women and one out of every three children live in poverty.

- Poverty rates for adults and elderly women are also disheartening, at 19% and 18% respectively – the highest for these groups in our region.
- African-American and Hispanic women have the highest rates of poverty, at 26.3% and 23.2% respectively, among women of all races in the District. Their rates are also higher than those of other African-American and Hispanic women in the surrounding counties.

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Women in the District of Columbia Key Statistics by Race & Ethnicity

	Unemployment Rates	Wage Gap (% of Women's Median Earnings to Men's)	Poverty Rates	Educational Attainment (% of women with less than a high school diploma)	Heart Disease Mortality Rates (per 100,000)
White Women	8%	82%	8.7%	2.9%	279
African-American Women	14%	98%	26.3%	29.2%	514
Hispanic Women	10%	99%	23.2%	50%	94
Asian Women	6.8%	88%	22.8%	17.2%	209
All Women	11%	90%	21.4%	21.4%	444

In the region, the District of Columbia has:

- The highest women's unemployment rate.
- The 2nd smallest wage gap for median earnings (% of women's earnings to men's).
- The highest women's poverty rate.
- The highest percentage of women without a high school diploma.
- The highest women's mortality rate from heart disease.

Women in the District of Columbia Key Statistics for All Women in the District

Families in Poverty (by Family Type)	% of Homes Affordable to Families for purchase	Women's Higher Educational Attainment	Women and AIDS Incidence Rates (new cases)	Teen Birth Rates for Girls (ages 15-17)	Women in Local Government
17.2% married couples	64% married couples	2.6% Associates degree	92 per 100,000	65.1 per 1,000	43%
9.1% male-headed families (no wife present)	21% male householders (no wife present)	18.3% Bachelor's degree			
73.7% women-headed families (no husband present)	8% women-headed families (no husband present)	16.2% Masters or Professional degree			

In the region, the District of Columbia has:

- The highest percentage of families in poverty headed by women.
- The lowest percentage of homes affordable to women-headed families (at the median income level).
- The 2nd lowest percentage of women with some sort of college degree.
- The highest AIDS incidence rates (new cases) for women (by state).
- The highest teen birth rate for girls (ages 15-17).
- The 3rd highest percentage of women's representation in local government.

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. Comparisons for AIDS incidence rates include the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland.

Unemployment: Compared with women in neighboring counties, women in the District of Columbia are unemployed at a substantially higher rate (11%), which is almost double the national rate for all women (6%). Young women, ages 16-21, in the District have an even higher unemployment rate at 19%.

- African-American women in the District have the highest unemployment rate at 14% compared to all other women in every jurisdiction.
- Hispanic women in the District have the 2nd highest unemployment rate in the District at 10%. This is also the 2nd highest unemployment rate for all other women in every jurisdiction, tied with Hispanic women in Prince George's County.

Violence: According to police records, more than 22,500 reports of violence against women were made in 2000 alone, and women made up 50% of all reported violent crime victims in the District of Columbia that year.

- In 2001, the District had a record number of new civil-protection orders filed in the District's Superior Court Domestic Violence Unit. Women filed 85% of them. This is the highest number of protection orders filed in a year since the Court began tracking the data. A review of civil protection orders filed in the District over the last 5 years indicated that 64% of filings came from women in Wards 7 and 8.

Wage Gap: Even though the District of Columbia has one of the smallest wage gap between women and men's earnings (90%), wage gaps still exist. Women's earnings are \$36,361 compared to \$40,513 for men. The wage gap is the largest among white women and white men (at 82%) and Asian women and men at (88%). The smallest wage gap is between African-American women and Hispanic women and their respective male counterparts.

- White women earn 82% of white men's earnings in the District (\$50,835 vs. \$61,746).
- Asian women earn 88% of Asian men's earnings in the District (\$38,370 vs. \$43,646).
- African-American women earn 98% of African American men's earnings in the District (\$30,941 vs. \$31,674).
- Hispanic women earn 99% of Hispanic men's earnings in the District (\$22,589 vs. \$22,795).

Women-headed Families: Thirty percent (30%) of women-headed families live in poverty, while the national average is 27%. The District has the greatest percentage in the region of families in poverty headed by women. Of all families in poverty in the city, 74% are women-headed families and more than half of these have children under the age of 5 years old. Women-headed families in the District have the lowest incomes regionally at \$26,500 in 1999, compared to a median income for all families of \$46,300 and a median income for male-headed families of \$34,800.

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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