



A Portrait of Women & Girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area Fairfax County 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, of more than 20 leading research organizations that shared time, data, and expertise 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; and Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax Counties in Virginia.

Fairfax County Strengths:

Earnings: Women's median annual earnings in Fairfax are much higher than the national average and the highest in the region. Women in the Fairfax County earn \$41,802 compared to \$27,194 nationally.

Education: Fairfax women have the 4th highest educational attainment level in the region. Fifty-three percent (53%) of all women in the county hold a college degree compared to 27% of women nationally. Seventeen percent (17%) of women in Fairfax hold advanced degrees.

Infant Mortality: Fairfax County has the 2nd lowest infant-mortality rate in the region at 3.6 per 1,000 births and the third lowest African-American infant-mortality rate in the region at 8.6 per 1,000 births.

Leadership: Women comprise sixty percent of Fairfax County's local government, the highest female representation in local government. Fairfax County also has a commission for women.

- Virginia is among the few states to have both a commissions for women and formal women's caucus in each house of the state legislature.

Poverty: Fairfax County has the lowest women's poverty rate in the region at 4.8%.

Teen Pregnancies: Fairfax has the lowest teen birth rate in the region at 9.4 per 1,000 births.

Key Facts on the Washington Metropolitan Area:

Regional Strengths:

- The median yearly income for women throughout our region outpaces the national median earnings for women by large margins—from \$8,500 more in Prince George's County to more than \$14,000 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:

- At 58%, women-headed households make up the majority 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 making the median income (\$36,361) in the District can afford to purchase only 8% of the homes there; those making the median income in Arlington (\$47,188) 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) are higher than the national average (6.9 per 1,000 births), while teen pregnancy rates and births to teens have declined.
- 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 have been created in the region since 1996 that have assets of at least \$1 million. Only \$1.97 million of the \$68.8 million in grants made by these foundations went to women's and girls' programs or activities.

(\$46,854 vs. \$69,081).

Fairfax County Strengths (cont.):

Unemployment: Female unemployment in Fairfax is the lowest in the region (at 2.7%) compared to 4.9% regionally and 5.8% nationally.

Women-headed families: Of all families in poverty in Fairfax County, 36.4% are women-headed families, which is the lowest percentage in the region. The median annual earnings for women-headed families in Fairfax is \$49,408 compared to \$100,753 for married-couple families and \$58,703 for male-headed households. However, the median earnings for women-headed families are the highest in the region.

Fairfax County Weaknesses:

Education: Not all women in the county are achieving educationally, putting them at a critical disadvantage in the labor market. Thirty-five percent (35%) of Latinas in the county are without a high school diploma, compared to 18% of Asian women, 12.3% of African American women, and 4% of white women.

- In Fairfax County, boys are much more likely to enroll in technology classes than girls. For example, in 2000 the enrollment breakdown for a high school computer science class was 77% boys and 23% girls. A computer graphics class was slightly better with 34% girls, while a design and technology class enrolled only 7% girls.

Family Supports: In Fairfax, women-headed families at the median income level of \$49,408 can afford to purchase only 21% of the homes in the county. Fairfax ranks 2nd in the percentage of homes affordable to women-headed families at the median income level.

Health: State estimates show that 14% of adult women (ages 18-64) in Virginia lack insurance. These figures are below the national average of 17%. However, some women in our region, especially low income and minority women are even more likely to be uninsured.

Heart Disease: Fairfax has the 3rd highest mortality rates from heart disease for women in the region at 351 per 100,000 people (tied with Prince George's County).

Wage Gap: Fairfax County women's earnings represent 69% of the earnings of their male counterparts, the largest wage gap in the region. Women's median earnings are \$41,802 compared to \$60,503 of men's earnings in Fairfax County. White women and Asian women experience the largest wage gaps with their male counterparts. African-American and Hispanic women experience the smallest wage gaps between themselves and their male counterparts.

- White women earn 68% of white men's earnings in the county

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Women in Fairfax County 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	1.7%	68%	2.3%	3.9%	312
African-American Women	4.4%	88%	8.7%	12.3%	478
Hispanic Women	6.4%	84%	11.4%	35%	110
Asian Women	4%	68%	7.7%	17.9%	201
All Women	2.7%	69%	4.8%	10.4%	351

In the region, the Fairfax County has:

- The lowest women's unemployment rate.
- The largest wage gap for median earnings (% of women's earnings to men's).
- The lowest women's poverty rate.
- The lowest percentage of women without a high school diploma.
- The 3rd highest, tied with Prince George's County, women's mortality rate from heart disease.

Women in Fairfax County Key Statistics for All Women in the County

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
54.6% married couples	73% married couples	5.9% Associates degree	8 per 100,000 (in Virginia)	9.4 per 1,000	60%
9% male-headed families (no wife present)	31% male householders (no wife present)	29.9% Bachelor's degree			
36.4% women-headed families (no husband present)	21% women-headed families (no husband present)	17.1% Masters or Professional degree			

In the region, Fairfax County has:

- The lowest percentage of families in poverty headed by women.
- The 2nd highest percentage of homes affordable to women-headed families (at the median income level).
- The 4th highest percentage of women with some sort of college degree.
- The lowest AIDS incidence rates (new cases) for women (by state).
- The lowest teen birth rate for girls (ages 15-17).
- The 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.

Fairfax County Weaknesses (cont.):

Wage Gap (cont.):

- Asian women earn 68% of Asian men's earnings in the county (\$33,822 vs. \$49,589).
- African-American women earn 88% of African-American men's earnings in the county (\$36,965 vs. \$42,000).
- Hispanic women earn 84% of Hispanic men's earnings in the county (\$23,947 vs. \$28,556).
- While there is more equality in earnings among African American and Hispanic men and women, these two groups have lower median earnings than whites.

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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