



A Portrait of Women & Girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area **Montgomery 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.

Montgomery County Strengths:

Earnings: Women's median annual earnings in Montgomery County outpace those for women in the nation and are one of the highest for all women in the region. Women in Montgomery County earn \$40,714 compared to \$27,194 nationally.

Education: Fifty-three percent (53%) of all women in the county hold some type of college degree compared to 28% of women nationally. Montgomery County has the second highest percentage of women in the region with advanced degrees (at 21%).

Heart Disease: Montgomery County has one of the lowest mortality rates from heart disease for women in the region at 348 per 100,000 people. However, it is still significantly higher than the national mortality rate for women at 260 per 100,000.

Leadership: Maryland is among the top ten states in the country with high proportions of women in elected office.

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

Teen Pregnancies: Teen pregnancies are declining both locally and nationally. Montgomery County has one of the lowest teen birth rates in the region (at 12.4%).

Unemployment: Female unemployment in Montgomery County is one of the lowest in the region at 3.4%, compared to 4.9% regionally and 5.8% nationally.

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 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 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).
- 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.

Montgomery County Weaknesses:

Education: Not all women in the county are achieving educationally. More than a third of Latinas ages 18 and over (36%) lack a high school diploma. Young Latinas also have the lowest graduation rates of nearly all girls in the local school system. Ninety percent (90%) of Latinas graduate from high school compared to 95% of white girls, 93% of African-American girls and 97% of Asian girls.

Family Supports: In Montgomery County, women-headed families at the median income level of \$43,053 can only afford to purchase 15% of the homes in the county.

- The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services recommends that childcare costs not exceed 10% of median incomes, but the estimated cost of childcare in Montgomery County for an infant and a preschooler is \$15,329, more than one-third the median income for women-headed families in the county.

Health: The lack of health insurance is a major barrier affecting the health of many in the county, including working families, minority populations and low-wage workers.

- According to one study, estimated uninsured rates for Latinos in the county range from 40% to 80%. Latino residents have a higher percentage of self-pay hospital admissions than any other racial/ethnic group in the county.
- Statewide estimates show that 12% of adult women (ages 18-64) in Maryland are uninsured. These figures are below the national average of 17%.
- A recent Maryland study found that uninsured women were twice as likely to not have received a Pap smear or physical breast exam in the past two years, both important diagnostic tools for women's health.

Infant Mortality: While Montgomery County has one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the region, 4.4 deaths per 1,000 births, it has the *third highest African American infant mortality rate* in the region, 9.7 per 1,000 births, just behind the District of Columbia and Prince George's County.

Leadership: Montgomery County has one of the lowest percentages of elected women in local government compared to other jurisdictions. Only 22% of the County Council is made up of women compared to 43% in Alexandria and 60% in Fairfax.

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Women in Montgomery 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	2.1%	70%	3.5%	4.6%	310
African-American Women	5.4%	94%	9.8%	11.5%	473
Hispanic Women	6.4%	85%	12.2%	36%	105
Asian Women	4%	73%	6.5%	15.3%	202
All Women	3.4%	75%	5.9%	10.6%	348

In the region, Montgomery County has:

- The 3rd highest women's unemployment rate.
- The 2nd largest wage gap for median earnings (% of women's earnings to men's).
- The 2nd lowest women's poverty rate.
- The 2nd smallest percentage of women without a high school diploma.
- The lowest women's mortality rate from heart disease, tied with Arlington County.

Women in Montgomery 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
46.3% married couples	47% married couples	5.2% Associates degree	27 per 100,000 (in Maryland)	12.4 per 1,000	22%
9.1% male-headed families (no wife present)	26% male householders (no wife present)	26.8% Bachelor's degree			
44.6% women-headed families (no husband present)	15% women-headed families (no husband present)	21.4% Masters or Professional degree			

In the region, Montgomery County has:

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

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.

Montgomery County Weaknesses (cont.):

Violence: In Maryland in 2000, there were more than 20,000 incidences of intimate partner violence tracked by the state through police reports. In 75% of the cases, the victims were women.

Wage Gap: Like women across the region, women in Montgomery County face a wage gap with their male counterparts. Women's median earnings in the county are \$40,714, which is 75% of men earnings of \$54,005. 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. While there is more equality in earnings among African American and Hispanic women and men, this is due to the relatively lower wages of both women and men in these groups, compared to whites.

- White women earn 70% of white men's earnings in the county (\$46,050 vs. \$65,902).
- Asian women earn 73% of Asian men's earnings in the county (\$36,589 vs. \$50,013).
- African-American women earn 94% of African-American men's earnings in the county (\$36,369 vs. \$38,585).
- Hispanic women earn 86% of Hispanic men's earnings in the county (\$25,453 vs. \$30,084).

Women-headed Families: Out of all families living in poverty in Montgomery County, 47% are women-headed families.

- Women-headed families have the lowest median earnings compared to all other family types in the county. The median annual earnings for women-headed families in Montgomery County is \$43,053, compared to \$94,424 for married-couple families and \$54,590 for male-headed families.

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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