

BLACK-WHITE BENCHMARKS FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

The African American (black alone) population in Allegheny County in 2000 was 158,002, and the non-Hispanic white (white alone) population was 1,074,037. The purpose of this report is to assess the socioeconomic status of blacks and whites in Allegheny County based on 2000 census data. Current conditions in the county are determined by comparing black conditions, white conditions, and black-white disparities in the 50 largest counties on more than 50 social and economic variables. The 50 largest counties are compared in order to include Allegheny County, which had the 28th largest population in 2000, and to compare the county to a sizable number of other large counties.

In addition, this report contains data and findings on changes in black and white conditions in Allegheny County from 1990 to 2000. Complete data on all 50 counties and their rankings are in a separate databook.

This report and similar reports for the city of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh MSA are available online at www.ucsur.pitt.edu (see publications). The Pittsburgh Foundation provided funding for these studies.

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND WHITE CONDITIONS IN 2000 (Table 1)

Our comparison of the 50 largest counties in the US shows that:

- 1. Allegheny County has an average percentage of African Americans and a high percentage of whites in the general population.** In 2000 Allegheny County had the:
 - 26th highest percentage (12.3%) of African Americans in the population
 - Highest percentage (83.8%) of non-Hispanic whites in the population
- 2. High percentages of African American and white children in Allegheny County live in single, female-headed households.** In 2000 the county had the:
 - 4th highest percentage (65.0%) of black children living with a single mother
 - 21st highest percentage (15.5%) of white children living with a single mother
 - 5th lowest percentage (27.8%) of black children living with two parents
 - 24th lowest percentage (80.0%) of white children living with two parents

3. **High percentages of black and white families with children in Allegheny County are headed by single women.** In 2000 the county had the:
 - Fourth highest percentage (62.6%) of black families with children under age 18 that were headed by single women
 - 19th highest percentage (16.7%) of white families with children under age 18 that were headed by single women
 - Fourth lowest percentage (30.0%) of black families with children under age 18 that were headed by two parents
 - 25th lowest percentage (78.6%) of white families with children under age 18 that were headed by two parents

4. **High percentages of African American and white elderly residents in Allegheny County live alone.** In 2000 the county had the:
 - Second highest percentage (53.6%) of African American elderly age 65 and over who were living alone
 - 17th highest percentage (47.5%) of white elderly age 65 and over living alone

5. **A low percentage of African American children but a high percentage of white children age 3-5 in Allegheny County are enrolled in nursery school or preschool.** In 2000 the county had the:
 - 12th lowest percentage (40.2%) of black children age 3-5 who were enrolled in nursery school or preschool
 - 22nd highest percentage (51.7%) of white children age 3-5 who were enrolled in nursery school or preschool

6. **African Americans and whites age 16-19 in Allegheny County have low dropout rates.** In 2000 the county had the:
 - 22nd lowest percentage (9.9%) of blacks age 16-19 who were neither in school nor a high school graduate
 - 17th lowest percentage (4.2%) of whites age 16-19 who were neither in school nor a high school graduate

7. **African American women in Allegheny County with children under age 18 have low employment rates while white women with children have high rates.** In 2000 the county had the:
 - Fourth lowest employment rate (55.4%) among black women with children under age 6
 - 16th highest employment rate (60.2%) among white women with children under age 6
 - 12th lowest employment rate (65.3%) among black women with children age 6-17
 - 23rd highest employment rate (69.5%) for white women with children age 6-17

- 8. Low percentages of African American female and male and white male workers in Allegheny County are employed full-time.** In 2000 the county had the:
- 10th lowest rate (50.3%) for full-time employment among black female workers age 16 and over
 - 25th lowest rate (52.3%) for full-time employment among white female workers age 16 and over
 - 11th lowest rate (56.2%) for full-time employment among black male workers age 16 and over
 - 19th lowest rate (68.3%) for full-time employment among white male workers age 16 and over
- 9. A high percentage of African Americans but a low percentage of whites age 16-19 in Allegheny County are neither in school nor in the labor force.** In 2000 the county had the:
- Fourth highest percentage (16.4%) of black youth age 16-19 who were neither in school nor in the labor force
 - 17th lowest percentage (4.5%) of white youth age 16-19 who were neither in school nor in the labor force
- 10. Disabled African American and white adults of working age in Allegheny County have low rates of employment.** In 2000 the county had the:
- 10th lowest rate (47.7%) of employment among black disabled adults age 21-64
 - 11th lowest rate (57.2%) of employment among white disabled adults age 21-64
- 11. African American and white full-time workers in Allegheny County have low median earnings.** In 1999 the county had the:
- Eighth lowest median earnings (\$23,928) among black female full-time workers
 - Fifth lowest median earnings (\$28,243) among white female full-time workers
 - Ninth lowest median earnings (\$28,380) among black male full-time workers
 - Eighth lowest median earnings (\$39,803) among white male full-time workers
- 12. African American and white part-time workers in Allegheny County have very low median earnings.** In 1999 the county had the:
- Lowest median earnings (\$8,020) among black female part-time workers
 - Lowest median earnings (\$8,613) among white female part-time workers
 - Second lowest median earnings (\$8,469) among black male part-time workers
 - Second lowest median earnings (\$10,517) among white male part-time workers
- 13. African Americans and whites in Allegheny County have low median household and family incomes and low per capita income.** In 1999 the county had the:

- Second lowest median household income (\$22,130) for blacks
- Fifth lowest median household income (\$40,880) for whites
- Third lowest median family income (\$26,417) for blacks
- Fourth lowest median family income (\$52,630) for whites
- Sixth lowest per capita income (\$13,093) for blacks
- Sixth lowest per capita income (\$24,034) for whites

14. African American and white poverty rates in Allegheny County are among the highest in the nation. In 1999 the county had the:

- Fourth highest poverty rate (30.9%) for African Americans and 11th highest poverty rate (8.0%) for whites
- Third highest poverty rate (42.3%) for African American children and 14th highest poverty rate (8.6%) for white children under age 18
- Fourth highest poverty rate (26.1%) for African American adults age 18-64 and 12th highest poverty rate (7.8%) for whites age 18-64
- 16th highest poverty rate (21.4%) for African Americans age 65 and older and seventh highest poverty rate (7.9%) for whites age 65 and older
- Second highest poverty rate (49.1%) for African American female-headed families with children under age 18 and sixth highest poverty rate (28.1%) for white female-headed families with children under age 18
- Second highest poverty rate (32.4%) for African American male-headed families with children under age 18 and 10th highest poverty rate (12.9%) for white male-headed families with children under age 18
- 17th highest poverty rate (9.7%) for African American married-couple families with children under age 18 and 13th highest poverty rate (3.1%) for white married-couple families with children under age 18

15. Small percentages of African American and white households in Allegheny County are overcrowded or lack telephone service, but high percentages have no vehicle available. In 2000 the county had the:

- Lowest rate (2.8%) for African American households and lowest rate (0.7%) for white households with more than one person on average per room
- 13th lowest rate (2.1%) for African American households and 19th lowest rate (0.7%) for white households with no telephone service
- Sixth highest rate (41.3%) for African American households and seventh highest rate (12.7%) for white households with no vehicle available

16. African American homeownership is low and white homeownership is high in Allegheny County, and median home values are among the lowest in the nation. In 2000 the county had the:

- 18th lowest homeownership rate (39.1%) for African American households and 19th highest rate (71.8%) for white households

- Second lowest value (\$52,000) for homes owned by African Americans and second lowest value (\$86,400) for homes owned by whites

17. Monthly housing costs for African American and white homeowners and renters are among the lowest in the nation. In 2000 the county had the:

- Fourth lowest monthly costs (\$797) for African American homeowners with mortgages and fourth lowest monthly costs (\$986) for white homeowners with mortgages
- Lowest monthly costs (\$433) for African American renters and lowest monthly costs (\$533) for white renters

FINDINGS ON BLACK-WHITE DISPARITIES IN 2000 (Table 1)

Our comparison of black and white conditions in Allegheny County shows that:

- The poverty rate for African American children (42.3%) is about five times the white rate (8.6%)
- The percentage of black children living with their mother only (65.0%) is more than four times the rate for white children (15.5%)
- The percent of African American 16-19 year-olds who are neither in school nor in the labor force (16.4%) is 3.6 times the white rate (4.5%)
- The poverty rate for African American working-age adults (26.1%) is 3.3 times the white rate (7.8%)
- The percent of African American households without a vehicle (41.3%) is 3.3 times the rate for whites (12.7%)
- The per capita income of African Americans (\$13,093) is 54% of that of whites (\$24,034)
- The median value of homes owned by African Americans (\$52,000) is 60% of that of whites (\$86,400)

CHANGE IN CONDITIONS FROM 1990 TO 2000 (Table 2)

The most important changes in Allegheny County in the past decade were:

- The African American population increased by 8,000 (5.6%) while the white population declined by 91,000 (-7.8%)
- The number of African American high school dropouts age 16-19 living in the county declined by 24% and the number of white dropouts declined by 35%
- The number of African American women age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 2,000 (42%) and the number of white women age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 22,000 (26%)
- The number of African American men age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 900 (21%) and the number of white men age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 11,000 (10%)

- The number of African American residents employed full-time increased by 8,000 (28%) while the number of white residents employed full-time declined by 1,000 (-0.3%)
- The real per capita income of African Americans increased by \$1,900 (17%) while the white per capita income increased by \$2,600 (12%)
- The number of African American residents in poverty declined by 5,000 (-9.5%) while the number of whites in poverty declined by 12,500 (-13%)
- The number of African American female-headed families with children in poverty declined by 1,000 (-11%) while the number for whites declined by 2,400 (-28%)
- The median value of homes owned by African Americans increased by \$4,000 (8.2%) while the value of the homes owned by whites increased by \$9,000 (11%)
- The number of homes owned by African Americans increased by 2,500 (12.0%) while the number of homes owned by whites declined by 4,000 (-1.1%)

CONCLUSIONS

The comparison of African American conditions in the 50 largest counties shows that African American children and youth in Allegheny County are among the most disadvantaged in America. In 2000 Allegheny County had the:

- Third highest poverty rate (42.3%) for African American children under age 18
- Fourth highest percentage (16.4%) of black youth age 16-19 who were neither in school nor in the labor force
- Fourth highest percentage (65.0%) of black children living with a single mother
- Fifth lowest percentage (27.8%) of black children living with two parents
- 12th lowest percentage (40.2%) of black children age 3-5 who were enrolled in nursery school or preschool

On the other hand, the county had an average rate for African American high school dropouts in that the county in 2000 had the:

- 22nd lowest percentage (9.9%) of African Americans age 16-19 who were neither in school nor a high school graduate

The comparison of African American conditions in the 50 largest counties shows that African American working-age adults in Allegheny County are among the most disadvantaged in America. In 2000 the county had the:

- Lowest median earnings (\$8,020) among black female part-time workers
- Second lowest median earnings (\$8,469) among black male part-time workers
- Second highest poverty rate (49.1%) for African American female-headed families with children under age 18
- Second highest poverty rate (32.4%) for African American male-headed families with children under age 18
- Fourth lowest employment rate (55.4%) among black women with children under age 6
- Fourth highest poverty rate (26.1%) for African American adults age 18-64

- Fourth lowest percentage (30.0%) of black families with children under age 18 that were headed by two parents
- Fourth highest percentage (62.6%) of black families with children under age 18 that were headed by single women
- Eighth lowest median earnings (\$23,928) among black female full-time workers
- Ninth lowest median earnings (\$28,380) among black male full-time workers
- 10th lowest rate (50.3%) for full-time employment among black female workers age 16 and over
- 10th lowest rate (47.7%) of employment among black disabled adults age 21-64
- 11th lowest rate (56.2%) for full-time employment among black male workers age 16 and over
- 12th lowest employment rate (65.3%) among black women with children age 6-17
- 17th highest poverty rate (9.7%) for African American married-couple families with children under age 18

The comparison of African American conditions in the 50 largest counties shows that African American elderly in Allegheny County are disadvantaged. In 2000 the county had the:

- Second highest percentage (53.6%) of African American elderly age 65 and over who were living alone
- 16th highest poverty rate (21.4%) for African Americans age 65 and older

The comparison of white conditions in the 50 largest counties shows that white children and youth in Allegheny County are in some ways disadvantaged and in other ways advantaged. In 2000 white children and youth were disadvantaged in that the county had the:

- 14th highest poverty rate (8.6%) for white children under age 18
- 21st highest percentage (15.5%) of white children living with a single mother

In 2000 white children and youth were advantaged in that the county had the:

- 17th lowest percentage (4.5%) of white youth age 16-19 who were neither in school nor in the labor force
- 17th lowest percentage (4.2%) of whites age 16-19 who were neither in school nor a high school graduate
- 22nd highest percentage (51.7%) of white children age 3-5 who were enrolled in nursery school or preschool

The comparison of white conditions in the 50 largest counties shows that white working-age adults in Allegheny County are among the most disadvantaged in urban America. In 2000 the county had the:

- Lowest median earnings (\$8,613) among white female part-time workers
- Second lowest median earnings (\$10,517) among white male part-time workers
- 12th highest poverty rate (7.8%) for whites age 18-64

- 19th lowest rate (68.3%) for full-time employment among white male workers age 16 and over
- Eighth lowest median earnings (\$39,803) among white male full-time workers
- Sixth highest poverty rate (28.1%) for white female-headed families with children under age 18
- 10th highest poverty rate (12.9%) for white male-headed families with children under age 18
- Fifth lowest median earnings (\$28,243) among white female full-time workers
- 11th lowest rate (57.2%) of employment among white disabled adults age 21-64
- 19th highest percentage (16.7%) of white families with children under age 18 that were headed by single women
- 13th highest poverty rate (3.1%) for white married-couple families with children under age 18

On the other hand, the county had average or better than average white conditions in that the county had the:

- 16th highest employment rate (60.2%) among white women with children age 0-5
- 23rd highest employment rate (69.5%) for white women with children age 6-17
- 25th lowest percentage (78.6%) of white families with children under age 18 that were headed by two parents
- 25th lowest rate (52.3%) for full-time employment among white female workers age 16 and over

The comparison of white conditions in the 50 largest counties shows that white elderly in Allegheny County are disadvantaged. In 2000 the county had the:

- Seventh highest poverty rate (7.9%) for whites age 65 and older
- 17th highest percentage (47.5%) of white elderly age 65 and over living alone

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Leadership The African American share (12%) of the county's population suggests that African Americans should have a substantial role to play in the community, such as in politics, government, business, and nonprofits. To the extent the African Americans are not well represented, reasons for lack of representation need to be studied and strategies for increasing representation need to be developed.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity While the percent of the county's population that is non-white increased from 13% in 1990 to 16% in 2000, Allegheny County continues to be the least racially and ethnically diverse large county in America. This suggests that racial and ethnic understanding and tolerance are likely to be low in the county.

Single-Parent Families and Poverty The high percentages of black (65%) and white (16%) children in the county living with their mothers make it likely that many children will be disadvantaged. In fact, half (49%) of the African American and 28% of white female-headed families with children are in poverty in the county.

Need for Services The large numbers of African Americans and whites age 65 and over living alone suggest that more services for these groups are needed in this county than in most large cities of the US. The extent to which the needs of these groups are being met should be examined.

Preschool Early education is critical to primary and secondary school success. African American children, who generally have education disadvantages, continue to participate at low levels in nursery school and preschool. Much more effort needs to be made to increase the percentage of poor children who receive quality early education.

Teen Idleness A high percentage (16%) of African American youth age 16-19 in Allegheny County are neither in school nor employed. Many serious social problems can be avoided if these youth can get the help that will enable them to have greater success in school and in the labor force.

Lack of Full-Time Jobs African American female and male workers and white male workers in Allegheny County have some of the lowest rates of full-time employment in urban America. Much more needs to be done to create full-time jobs and connect these workers to better jobs.

Low Wages Full-time and part-time, African American and white, female and male workers in Allegheny County have some of the lowest earnings in urban America. The quality of jobs needs to be greatly improved.

Labor Supply The low rate of full-time employment in Allegheny County and the low wages of full and part-time jobs suggest that there is a large pool of workers in the county who would like better jobs. Further, the increasing numbers of African Americans and whites in the county with a bachelor's degree or higher suggest that the quality of the workforce is improving. The supply of workers, quality of the workforce, and the low wages in the county should be locational advantages that are marketable to businesses.

Poverty Poverty rates for African American and white children, working-age adults, and elderly in Allegheny County are among the highest in urban America. This suggests that residents of the county have greater than average need for assistance with food, utilities, health care, and other basic needs. However, there was an absolute decline from 1990 to 2000 in the number of poor African Americans and whites living in the county.

Transportation The shares of African American (41%) and white (13%) households in the county without a vehicle is high. This suggests that public transportation is more critical to the lives of people in the county than in most other large counties.

Home Values and Housing Costs Home values and housing costs are not likely to be as low now as they were in 2000 because of the reassessment of property values that occurred after the census was taken.