

Maryland's Socioeconomic Diversity

The most recent release of socioeconomic data from the 2000 Census (August 13, 2002) by the U.S. Census Bureau paints a more detailed picture by age, race and Hispanic origin of Maryland and its jurisdictions for a variety of variables, including: income, poverty, educational attainment and labor force characteristics. The following are some of the highlights.

Poverty

Maryland is a wealthy state, with statewide measures of high incomes (household, family and per capita) and low poverty. The poverty rate in Maryland in 1999, as reported in the May, 2002 Census release of their demographic profiles, was 8.5 percent, well below the U.S. rate of 12.4 percent and ranked 48th in the U.S. among the 50 states and the District of Columbia (only Minnesota, Connecticut and New Hampshire were lower).

However, there is a great deal of variability in poverty among the different race groups within Maryland as seen in this latest release. The highest poverty rates in Maryland are in the Black or African American group (14.9%), nearly three times the rate of White non-Hispanics (5.3%), the two dominant groups by number in the State.¹ (See [Chart 1](#).) Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (2.9% have the lowest poverty rate among the different groups in the State. However, this is a small group in Maryland, comprising only 2,300 individuals out of a total population of nearly 5,296,500.

Although the Black or African American group has the highest poverty rate in 1999, it is the only group to experience a substantial drop in its poverty rate from 1989, 1.7 percentage points.² (See [Chart 2](#).) With the exception of White non-Hispanics, which declined 0.1 percentage points, all other groups showed increases in the poverty rate over the 10-year period, with the largest increases seen for Hispanics (1.2 percentage points).

The increase in Hispanic poverty may well have been caused by the tremendous increase in foreign immigration during the 1990s. Overall, the foreign-born in Maryland increased by 228,429 between 1990 and 2000, bringing the total foreign born in the State to over one-half million. The poverty rate for the foreign born as a group (10.3%) is

¹ The race categories reported here are: White alone, Black or African American alone, American Indian and Alaskan Native alone, Asian alone, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone, some other race alone, two or more races, Hispanic or Latino (which can be of any race and is already counted in the race categories), and White non-Hispanic or Latino alone.

² Comparisons of race data between the 1990 census and the 2000 census must be made with caution since in 2000 respondents were given the opportunity to answer more than one race. Thus, for example, the Black or African American alone category in 2000 is not quite the same as the Black group in 1990. Nearly 104,000 Marylanders classified themselves as being two or more races in 2000, about 2.0 percent of the total population. Additionally, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were included in the Asian category in 1990. However, this group was extremely small in Maryland in 2000, comprising less than 0.1 percent of the State's population.

substantially higher than native born residents of Maryland (8.3%). (See [Chart 3](#).) However, within the foreign born community, there is a substantial difference between those who are not a U.S. citizen (13.7%) and those who are a naturalized citizen (6.1%). (See [Chart 4](#).) The latter group on average would most likely have resided in the U.S. for a longer period of time than those who are not citizens and thus would have greater opportunities for both education and training and higher paying jobs.

Foreign Born

The foreign born who came to Maryland during the decade of the 1990s was dominated primarily by people from Asia and Latin America. Approximately one out of three (33.0%) of the foreign immigrants who arrived during the past decade, or 75,430, came from an Asian country. (See [Chart 5](#).) An additional 63,565 foreign immigrants (or 27.8%) came from a Hispanic or Latin American country (defined as Mexico and “other Central American country,” and South America). The third largest major source was from Africa (36,978, or 16.2 percent of the total), exceeding those who came from Europe (32,064, or 14.0%).

Statewide, the foreign born who arrived between 1990 and 2000 comprised 44.1 percent of the total foreign born in Maryland. For some areas of origin, this share of new arrivals is much higher. For instance, nearly two out of three Mexicans in Maryland (64.9%) and nearly six out of 10 Africans (59.0%) arrived in the State during the last decade. In contrast, just 36.9 percent of foreign-born Europeans and 32.7 percent of foreign-born Carribeans in Maryland arrive during the 1990s. (See [Chart 6](#).)

Language Spoken at Home

Nearly 623,000 Marylanders speak a language other than English at home, 12.6 percent of the total population ages five and older. This total and share are up significantly from 1990 reflecting the large influx of the foreign born during the 1990s. In 1990, just over 395,000 Marylanders spoke another language, comprising 8.9 percent of the population ages five and older.

Of the nearly 623,000 Marylanders who spoke another language at home in 2000, over 230,000, or 37.1 percent, speak Spanish at home. (See [Chart 7](#).) Those who speak another Indo European language (other than Spanish) number 199,000 (31.9%), while Asian/Pacific Islander speakers total about 136,000 (21.8%).

Of the total who speak another language at home, just under 104,000 (or 2.1%) of the total population ages five and older speak English “not well,” or “not at all.” The majority of these people are Spanish speakers (59,300) and represent just over one out of four (25.7%) of the population who speak Spanish at home. (See [Chart 8](#) and [Chart 9](#).) For Asian/Pacific Islander speakers, those that speak English not well/not at all are just over 23,000 or 17.0 percent of these speakers at home.

Median Household Income

Overall median household income in Maryland in 1999 was \$52,868, over 25 percent higher than the U.S. figure (\$41,994) and the third highest in the U.S. (trailing only New Jersey and Connecticut). But as with poverty, there are substantial differences between the races. Asians have the highest median incomes in Maryland (\$59,589), followed by White non-Hispanics (\$58,005). (See [Chart 10](#).) The wide difference between the highest and lowest incomes is evidenced by the Black/African American median income of \$41,652 being 43.1 percent below the median incomes for Asians. The median household incomes for Blacks are by far the lowest of any group in Maryland. In fact the next lowest median income is for those who classified themselves as “some other race” (\$46,374), over \$4,700, or 11.3 percent, higher than the median incomes of Blacks.

Maryland’s median household income, after adjusting for inflation, increased by just \$1,750 (3.4%) between 1989 and 1999. (The U.S. gain was \$2,985, or 7.7 percent during the same time period.) All but Hispanics participated in this increase in Maryland. Hispanic median household incomes decreased by \$1,054, or 2.1 percent, for the decade and, as mentioned above, may be associated with the large number of new foreign immigrants. (See [Chart 11](#).)

By far the largest increase in median household incomes was in the American Indian/Alaskan Native group, \$6,500, or 14.2 percent. With such a small group (15,423 people in 2000, or just 0.3 percent of the total population), and with the complication of multiple race categories in 2000 for the first time, it is difficult to conclude how significant this increase really is. Among the numerically larger groups, the biggest increase was in the White non-Hispanic group (\$3,540, or 6.5%) while the smallest increase was among Asian households (\$349, or 0.6%). The increase in the Asian group may also have to do with the large influx of Asian immigrants during the 1990s.

Educational Attainment

According to the 2000 Census, 31.4 percent of Maryland’s adults ages 25 and older, had a bachelor’s degree or higher, well above the 24.4 percent nationwide average and ranked fifth highest in the country. Within Maryland there is a substantial difference in educational achievement among the different race groups. The highest achievement by far is among the Asian population where well over one-half (55.0%) have a bachelor’s degree or higher. The Asian share is substantially above the next highest group, White non-Hispanics (34.9%). (See [Chart 12](#).)

On the opposite end, those that classified themselves as “some other race” had the smallest share holding four-year college degrees or higher (14.6%), just over one fourth the rate of the Asians. Three other groups had rates that were well under one-half of the Asians: Black (20.3%), American Indian (21.2%) and Hispanic (21.4%). One characteristic of these three groups is that the percent of females with higher education is

greater than males. The biggest difference is among Blacks, where the percent of females with bachelor's degrees or higher (21.4%) is 2.5 percentage points greater than black males (18.9%). (See [Chart 13](#).)

Among those groups with the highest educational attainments, a higher percentage of males than females have four-year college or professional degrees. In most cases the differences are relatively small, within a few percentage points of one another. For Asians, however, the differences are quite large, with Asian males with degrees (60.1%) nearly 10 percentage points higher than Asian females with degrees (50.6%). Still, the percent of Asian females with bachelor's degrees or higher is well above any other race/sex group in 2000.

Overall, the share of Marylander's with college/professional degrees climbed 5.0 percentage points between 1990 and 2000 (from 26.5% to 31.4%). Most of this increase is the result of females coming closer to males in educational attainment. The percent of females with bachelor's degrees or higher increased 6.5 percentage points (23.6% to 29.6%), over the decade compared to a 3.2 percentage point gain for males (30.3% to 33.5%). (See [Chart 14](#).)

All groups had increasing educational attainment during the 1990s except for Hispanics. For Hispanics, those with bachelor's degrees or higher dropped by 3.7 percentage points (from 25.2% to 21.4%). (See [Chart 15](#).) Again, as with income (down) and poverty (up) measures for Hispanics over the last decade, the drop in educational attainment may be due to the large number of foreign immigrants during the 1990s. The largest gains in educational attainment were in White non-Hispanics, a 6.0 percentage point increase, from 28.9 percent in 1990 to 34.9 percent in 2000.

The decline in Hispanic educational attainment was precipitated entirely by males. The share of Hispanic males with a bachelor's degree or higher declined an enormous 7.6 percentage points, from 28.0 percent in 1990 to 20.4 percent in 2000. (Measures for female Hispanics increased by 0.1 percentage points.) At the opposite end of the spectrum, females spearheaded the increase in White non-Hispanic educational attainment – increasing by 7.7 percentage points, from 24.4 percent to 32.1 percent. (See [Chart 16](#).)

Labor Force Participation by Age

One of the more puzzling pieces of information from the first Census release of socioeconomic profiles in May of 2002 was the overall drop in the labor force participation rate. The labor force participation rate is the percent of the population, ages 16 and over, that are in the labor force, i.e., either working or unemployed and actively seeking work. The data in May revealed that overall participation rates had declined by 2.9 percentage points, from 70.6 percent in 1990 to 67.8 percent in 2000. This statewide decline exceeded the 1.4 percentage point drop for the U.S. as a whole, although the

State's overall participation rate of 67.8 in 2000 is still well above the U.S. rate of 63.9 percent and is ranked 11th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Within Maryland, the decline in participation rates were led by males, dropping an unprecedented 5.5 percentage points, from 78.6 percent in 1990 to 73.3 percent in 2000. For females, the decline was much more modest, 0.5 percentage points (from 63.4% to 62.8%), but historic, most likely representing the first time female participation rates have declined in the last 50 years.

For males, the decline in participation rates was across all age cohorts from 16 to 19 year olds up to and including those who were 60 to 64 years of age. (See [Chart 17](#) and [Chart 18](#).) Declines were the greatest for those who might still be furthering their education, 20 to 24 year olds (-6.1 percentage points), and for those who are in their prime working years, 35 to 44 year olds (-6.4 percentage points). It may well be that the prosperity of the times allowed a greater number of men to leave the labor force and engage in other pursuits.

Only the "elderly" males, ages 65 and older, increased their participation rates between 1990 and 2000. Among the elderly, the largest increase in participation rates was in 65-69 year olds, from 31.0 percent in 1990 to 34.3 percent in 2000. As the baby boom generation continues to age during the current decade and beyond, economic growth in Maryland may well depend on the willingness and ability of the elderly cohorts to continue to participate in the labor force.

The female participation rate declines by age were not quite as extensive as the males. For females, the declines in labor force participation rates went from the youngest cohorts (ages 16 to 19) up to and including the prime working years of 35 to 44, which actually had the greatest decline (-3.6 percentage points) between 1990 and 2000. (See [Chart 19](#) and [Chart 20](#).) Increased prosperity at the end of the decade, as well as increasing births may have been behind the drop in female labor force participation for these groups. All other female cohorts, however, from 45-54, to 76 and older, experienced increase in labor force participation. The largest increase was in the 55 to 59 year olds, from 59.6 percent in 1990 to 65.4 percent in 2000, a 5.8 percentage point gain.

Labor Force Participation by Race

Overall participation rates – which can be greatly affected by the age structure of the population, was highest in 2000 among those groups with relatively small populations in Maryland: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (76.2%); those of two or more races (71.0%) and American Indians/Alaskan Natives (69.7%). The lowest rate, and the only one significantly below the statewide average, was in the Black or African American cohort (66.6%). (See [Chart 21](#).)

Across all groups the participation rates of males exceeded that of females in 2000 with the biggest differences (14.9 percentage points) between Asian males (75.8%)

and Asian females (at 60.9% the lowest of any female group despite the highest educational attainment). The smallest difference (0.3 percentage points) was between black males (at 66.8 % the lowest for all males) and black females (66.5%). (See **Chart 22** and **Chart 23**.)

The declines in participation rates over the 1990 to 2000 period were seen in nearly all race/sex cohorts. Only White non-Hispanic females showed an increase in participation rates – a tiny 0.1 percentage point. The largest declines were in both male and female Hispanics. Hispanic male participation rates declined by 12.1 percentage points, from 86.7 percent in 1990 – by far the highest in the State – to 74.6 percent in 2000, slightly below many other groups. Hispanic female participation rates dropped 8.5 percentage points, from 71.1 percent in 1990 – the highest among females – to 62.6 percent in 2000, below the Statewide average for females. (See **Chart 24** and **Chart 25**.)

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