

The Diversity of Maryland's Jurisdictions

Recently released population profiles from the 2000 Census reveal the wide demographic diversity among Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. Maryland is comprised of fast growing newer suburban jurisdictions; aging but still vibrant older suburban jurisdictions; and, rural areas that are growing and declining as well as a major central city that continues to lose population. The following are some highlights of this jurisdictional diversity.

I. Population by Age

A. Median Age

There is a 10-year difference in median ages between the oldest and youngest jurisdictions in Maryland. (See [Chart 1](#) and [Map 1](#).) Talbot (43.3 years) and Worcester (43.0 years) counties have the oldest median ages in Maryland, approximately seven years older than the statewide average of 36 years. Talbot County's relatively high median age is a function of a population that is aging in place, and in migration of wealthy retirees locating to high-end waterfront housing. Worcester County's high median age is also a function of aging in place and in migration. However, the in migration to Worcester County is mostly middle-class retirees locating to ocean or Bay-related retirement communities.

Prince George's County, with a median age of 33.3 years is 10 full years younger than Worcester County. The characteristics of Prince George's population which gives it a relatively low median age is a large population gain through net natural increase (i.e. births exceeding deaths) as well as a large number of foreign immigrants who tend to be younger, mostly in their 20s.

For St. Mary's (34.2 years) and Charles (34.6 years) counties, their relatively low median ages are mostly a function of net natural increase and in migration of young families, many of which are from Prince George's County (to Charles County) and Montgomery and Prince George's counties to St. Mary's County. In addition, St. Mary's County also experienced in migration in the late 1990s due to relocations of federal personnel to the Patuxent River Naval Air Station from other parts of the U.S., principally Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Virginia.

B. Percent Ages 65 and Over

The share of a jurisdiction's population ages 65 and over varies from more than one out of five to less than one out of ten. (See [Chart 2](#) and [Map 2](#).) Corresponding to their relatively high median ages, Talbot (20.4%) and Worcester (20.1%) counties have the highest share of population ages 65 and over. As mentioned above, this concentration is due mainly to in migration of retirees and little population gain from net natural increase.

Of the six jurisdictions with elderly shares of less than 10 percent, five can be classified as newer suburban jurisdictions: Howard (7.5%), Charles (7.8%), Calvert (8.9%), St. Mary's (9.1%) and Frederick (9.6%). (Prince George's County – 7.7 percent, is the remaining jurisdiction with an elderly share of less than 10 percent.) These five jurisdictions are all growing through net natural increase and in migration of younger families, mainly from the older suburban jurisdictions of Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince George's counties. It is precisely these newer suburban jurisdictions that are likely to have large percentage increases in the elderly population in Maryland over the next 20 years.

III. Race - Percent Minority

The share of a jurisdiction's minority population (defined as all persons who are *not* "non-Hispanic white alone") varies from just over three-quarters to just under two percent. (See [Chart 3](#) and [Map 3](#).) Prince George's minority share of 75.7 percent leads the State and is a function of in migration from Washington, D.C. as well as foreign immigration of Asians and Hispanics and out migration of white families. Prince George's County's minority population is mostly African American, as the County has become an attractive location for African American professionals from around the country.

Baltimore City's second highest minority share (69.0 percent) is mostly due to white out migration over the last 50 years. Out migration of the African American population has also occurred over the last two decades resulting in a slower growth in the share of the total population that is minority.

Garrett County's minority share of 1.6 percent is the smallest in Maryland. Little in migration or foreign immigration, combined with historical patterns of settlement of white Europeans has left this County with a low minority share.

Carroll County has the second lowest minority share (4.9%), but in contrast to Garrett County is experiencing rapid population gain with strong in migration. Most of the in migration to Carroll County has been white, chiefly from Baltimore, Howard and Montgomery counties.

IV. Relationship – Group Quarters

The share of group quarters population varies from nearly 20 percent to less than one percent across the State. (See [Chart 4](#) and [Map 4](#).) Somerset County has by far the highest share of group quarters population (19.8%) in the State, principally due to the rural nature of the County and to the presence of the Eastern Correctional Institution and the University of Maryland at the Eastern Shore (both of which expanded during the 1990s). Of the 3,621 group quarters population in Somerset, nearly seven out of ten (69.3%) are institutionalized (mostly prisoners).

Somerset's gain in group quarters population over the 1990s was almost entirely responsible for the total population increase for the decade. Of Somerset's reported increase of 1,307 people (5.6%), 1,283 were due to gains from group quarters facilities and only 24 were from the household population category.

Allegany County's 8.2 percent group quarters share is the second highest in the State and is also chiefly due to a rural population being impacted by a relatively large prison facility. In Allegany's case it is a Federal prison as well as the State's Western Correctional Institution, both of which were established in the 1990s. Institutional group quarters makes up over 72 percent of the County's total group quarters population.

Similar to Somerset County, Allegany's population change during the 1990s was heavily influenced by the growth of the group quarters population. Group quarters population grew by 3,107 between 1990 and 2000, in contrast to a decline of 3,123 in household population – giving the County a net change of 16 people for the decade.

IV. Households by Type

A. Families with Children

Much has been made over the last several decades of the decline of the nuclear family, consisting of two parents and one or more children. Indeed, the nuclear family, as a percent of all households, has declined from 47.5 percent in 1970 to 23.3 percent in 2000 in Maryland, matching similar declines nationwide.

Among the jurisdictions, the nuclear family's share of all households ranges from a high of 33.4 percent in Calvert County to a low of only 10.0 percent in Baltimore City. (See [Chart 5](#) and [Map 5](#).) In general, the jurisdictions with the highest share of nuclear families consist of newer suburban jurisdictions such as Carroll (33.0%), Howard (32.5%), Frederick (30.8%), Harford (30.4%) and Charles (29.2%) counties, which have been the major recipients of young family migrants from the older suburban jurisdictions. Those jurisdictions with the lowest share of families typically are rural and slow growing with little migration and include Somerset (16.3%), Dorchester (16.5%) and Kent (17.3%) counties on the Eastern Shore; or where there is migration, it is mostly the elderly, like Worcester County (16.6%).

B. Non-family Households

With the decline in family households, and family households with children as a share of total households, has come the rise in non-family households – people living alone (the majority of non-family households) or living arrangements where there are two or more unrelated individuals. As a mirror image of family households, non-family household share is highest in Baltimore City (43.0%) where families have been out migrating for decades and in slow growing and rural jurisdictions like Allegany (35.6%) and Somerset (34.9%) counties. (See [Chart 6](#) and [Map 6](#).) The lowest share of non-

family households is in the fast growing newer suburban jurisdictions of Calvert (20.8%), Carroll (21.7%) and Charles (22.5%) counties.

C. Single-Parent Families with Children

Another trend that has been tracked over time has been the rise of single-parent families (mostly female-headed). In 2000, single-parent families with children in Maryland comprised 30.3 percent of all family households with children under 18, up from 12.8 percent in 1970.

Single-parent families with children range from a high of 60.9 percent in Baltimore City to a low of 17.1 percent in Carroll County. (See [Chart 7](#) and [Map 7](#).) Baltimore's single parent share is over 20 percentage points higher than the next highest share in Dorchester County (39.7 %). Other counties with a near 40 percent single parent with children family share include Prince George's (39.4%) and Somerset (37.2%) counties. With the exception of Prince George's County, single-parenthood seems to have greatly influenced child poverty rates. According to 1997 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the child poverty rates for Baltimore City (34.7%), Dorchester (25.3%) and Somerset (29.1%) counties are the highest in the State. (Prince George's estimated child poverty rate of 15.1 percent is not much different than the statewide estimate of 14.9 percent.) (See [State and County Poverty Estimates for Income Year 1997](#).)

It is no coincidence that the jurisdictions with the smallest share of single-parent families with children – Carroll (17.1%), Howard (18.9%), Calvert (20.0%), Frederick (20.0%) and Montgomery (20.9%) counties, are some of the wealthiest counties in the State. Howard, Carroll, Frederick, and Montgomery counties were estimated to have the lowest child poverty rates in the State in 1997.

Still, it is very much a barometer of the times that the county with the lowest single-parent family rate – Carroll – had a higher rate in 2000 (17.1%) than the statewide rate was in 1970 (12.8%).

V. Housing Occupancy

A. Average Household Size

In general, those jurisdictions with the highest proportion of families have the largest household sizes. Calvert (2.91) Charles (2.86) and Carroll (2.81) counties had the largest household sizes in Maryland in 2000. (See [Chart 8](#) and [Map 8](#).) Those with the smallest persons per household, Talbot (2.32), Kent (2.33), Worcester (2.33), and Allegany (2.35) also had the highest elderly population share in 2000.

B. Vacant Units

Housing vacancy is a function of the strength of the local economy as well as the local housing market, and whether an area is a major recreation destination. The highest

vacancy rates in Maryland in 2000 were recorded for Worcester County (21.1%) even after subtracting units classified as for “seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.” (See [Chart 9](#) and [Map 9](#).) Even so, a majority of the vacant houses in Worcester County are probably tied to part-time homeowners.

Baltimore City has the second highest vacancy rate (13.7%), representing just over 41,000 units (when seasonal housing is subtracted), by far the largest number of vacant units in the State. In fact, when seasonal units are discounted, the City’s vacant units comprise nearly one-third (32.6%) of all vacant units in the State.

Jurisdictions with the lowest vacancy rates include Montgomery (2.5%), Howard (2.6%) and Carroll (3.0%) counties. These generally are areas which are fast growing with high housing demand, and, in the case of Montgomery and Howard counties, relatively expensive housing.

C. Homeownership Rates

There is over a 30-percentage point difference in homeownership rates among Maryland’s jurisdictions. (See [Chart 10](#) and [Map 10](#).) Homeownership rates are highest among newer suburban jurisdictions that are the recipients of migrating families. Calvert (85.2%), Queen Anne’s (83.4%) and Carroll (82.0%) counties all have homeownership rates exceeding 80 percent.

Just over one-half (50.3%) of Baltimore City households are homeowners. This low percentage, which is well below the statewide average of 67.7 percent, is a function of both the poverty in the City, the high percentage of non-family households and the availability of rental units.