



Racial Inequities in Prince George's County

2011–15

Leah Hendey and Lily Posey

December 2017

(Updated February 2018)

Prince George's County, Maryland, faces a challenge in overcoming the racial and ethnic inequities that are highlighted in the geographic divide between council districts.

Though the residents of District 9 exceed county averages regardless of racial or ethnic group, residents of the District 2, especially residents of color, often are below county averages and struggle to graduate high school, enroll in college, find good jobs, and build up their assets.

This brief measures inequities by race and ethnicity in Prince George's County and its council districts and provides a profile on what racial equity would look like in the county. Quantifying this information will help Prince George's County agencies, policymakers, and advocates recognize the community's needs and to build new solutions and create a more equitable county.

This brief was originally developed as an internal memorandum for the Consumer Health Foundation and the Meyer Foundation to inform their strategic thinking and investments and share with grantees. It describes the major highlights on demographics, education, income, employment, housing and mobility from the tables posted here: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/racial-inequities-prince-georges-county-2011-15>.

Methodology

We present the methodology first to make it easier to understand what follows. There are important caveats to be aware of when interpreting the data. This brief includes data presented for Prince George's County and the nine councilmanic districts (figure 1):

- District 1 (including Beltsville, Calverton, and Laurel)
- District 2 (including Brentwood, Hyattsville, and Langley Park)
- District 3 (including College Park, New Carrollton, and Seabrook)
- District 4 (including Bowie, Greenbelt, and Jericho Park)
- District 5 (including Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, and Glenarden)
- District 6 (including, District Heights, Forestville, and Largo)
- District 7 (including Capitol Heights, Seat Pleasant, and Suitland)
- District 8 (including Andrews Air Force Base, Camp Springs, and Oxon Hill)
- District 9 (including Accokeek, Clinton, and Piscataway)¹

Categorizing the Prince George's County Population by Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnic population groups used in this brief provided are not mutually exclusive because of the tabulations available in the American Community Survey. Further breakouts by nationality are also not available, and the categories we use may mask some of these differences. We use the following categorization:

- White (non-Hispanic)
- Black (and no other race, regardless of ethnicity)²
- Hispanic (of any race, including those who identify as Latino)
- Asian or Pacific Islander (those who identified either as Asian or Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander and no other race, regardless of ethnicity)³
- American Indian, Alaskan Native, other or multiple races (all regardless of ethnicity)⁴

Because the groups are not mutually exclusive, percentages may not total to 100. In the above categories, Hispanic can also appear in the black, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaskan Native, other, or multiple race groups. Though there are racial inequities that American Indian, Alaskan Native, other or those who identify as multiracial face, the American Community Survey does not have sufficient sample sizes to break out the data for groups in this last category.

FIGURE 1

The map displays the nine counties of the Washington Metropolitan Area (MA) outlined in red and numbered 1 through 9. The counties are: 1. Loudoun County, VA; 2. Fairfax County, VA; 3. Arlington County, VA; 4. Loudoun County, VA; 5. Loudoun County, VA; 6. Loudoun County, VA; 7. Loudoun County, VA; 8. Loudoun County, VA; 9. Loudoun County, VA. The map also shows major roads, water bodies, and surrounding areas like Loudoun County, VA, and Prince George's County, MD.

Note: The light gray boundaries represent census tracts and the red are council districts.

Calculation of Equity Gaps

One method to explore what an equitable Prince George's County would look like is to close the *equity gaps* between whites and other racial and groups. These gaps are calculated based on the countywide white rate for the indicator. At the district level, the comparison is still with the countywide white rate. For example, to calculate the gap in the poverty rate for blacks in District 1 (10 percent), we compare it with the countywide white poverty rate (7 percent) and determine the additional number of blacks in District 1 that would leave poverty if the black rate was equal to 7 percent. The gaps are rounded to the nearest 100 people, or to the nearest 10 people if less than 100. Equity gaps for each race *should not be added together* as there is some overlap between the Hispanic population and the black or the Asian or Pacific Islander populations.

Margins of Error

The numbers and percentages in this brief and the accompanying tables are estimates based on the five-year 2011–15 American Community Survey. Because they are survey estimates and have margins of error associated with them, readers should use caution when comparing numbers. The margins of error have been provided for each indicator in the accompanying tables.

We emphasize only estimates where the margins of error were small and the estimates are reliable. But when one looks at small subpopulations, the margins of error are likely to be relatively large and the estimates less reliable. We suppressed the data where we did not consider the estimates reliable.⁵ We also did not calculate the equity gaps if an estimate for a group in a district was not statistically significantly different than the countywide white estimate.

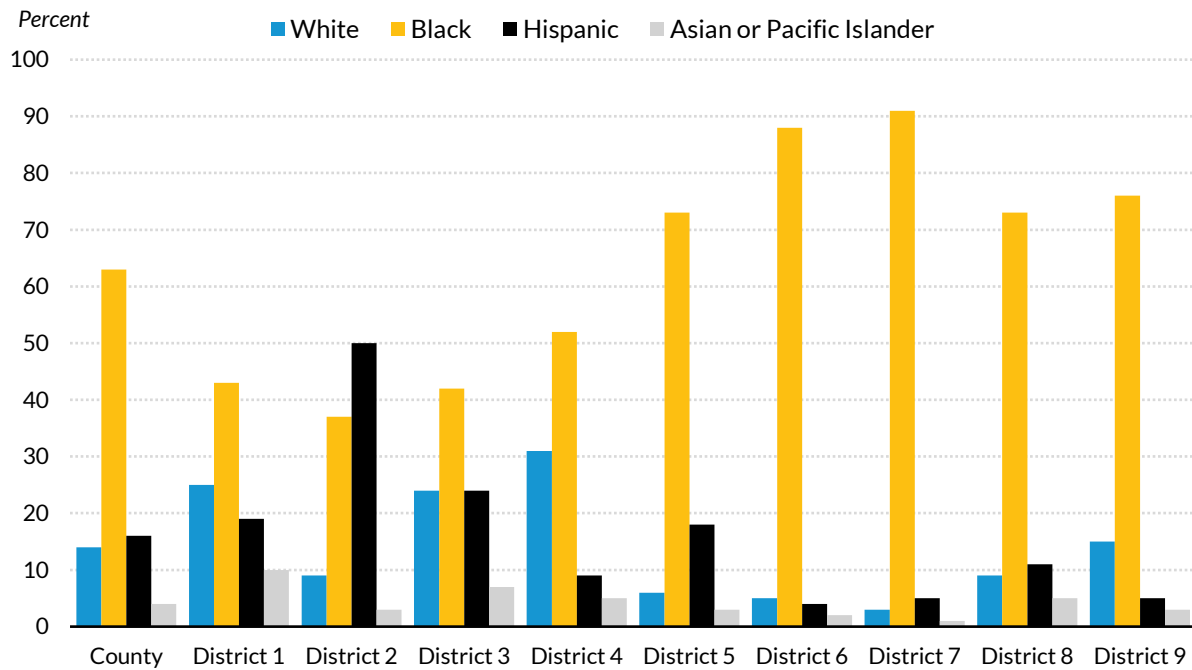
Demographics

Race and Ethnicity

The population in Prince George's County was majority black (63 percent). Hispanics made up 16 percent of the population, whites were 14 percent, Asian or Pacific Islanders were 4 percent. District 7 had the highest percentage of blacks (91 percent), and District 2 had the least (37 percent) (figure 2). In District 2, the largest racial or ethnic group was Hispanics (50 percent). Districts 1 and 3 had the most racial and ethnic diversity, with no one group reaching a majority. District 4 had the largest share of whites (31 percent), and District 1 has the largest share of Asians or Pacific Islanders (10 percent).

FIGURE 2

**Racial and Ethnic Composition of Population by Council Districts in Prince George's County
2011-15**



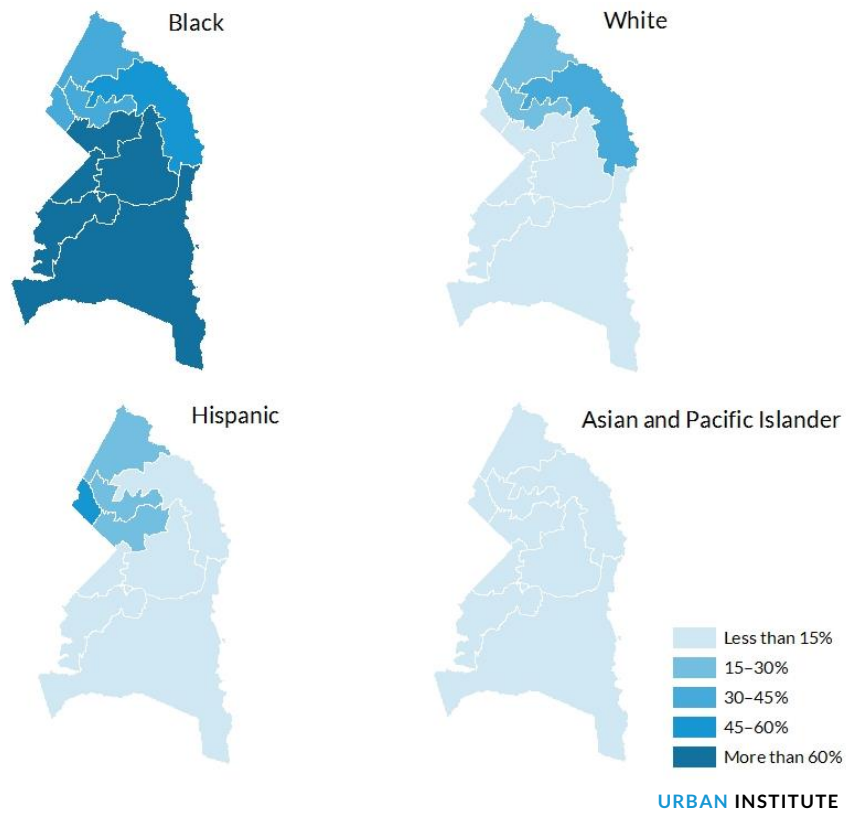
URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-15.

The maps in figures 3 and 4 show the spatial distribution of each group by council district. The southern part of the county had larger black populations and the Hispanic populations were concentrated in the northeastern part of the county closer to Montgomery County and the northeast part of the District of Columbia. Larger shares of whites were in council districts outside of the Beltway.

FIGURE 3

**Spatial Distribution of Racial and Ethnic Groups by Council District in Prince George's County
2011-15**



Source: American Community Survey, 2011-15.

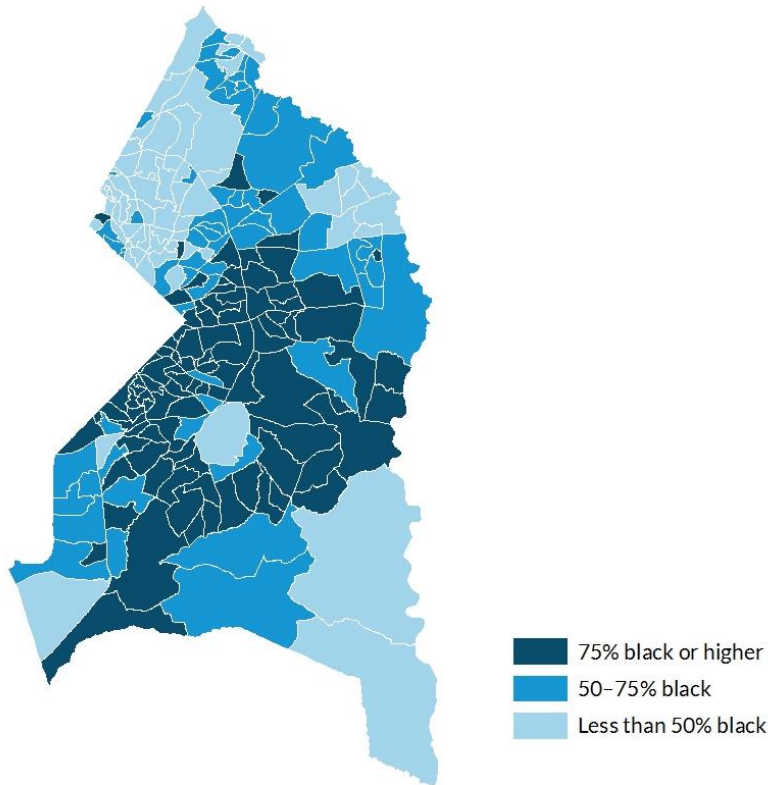
Note: In this figure, all groups are mutually exclusive.

Figure 4 maps the percentage of the population that was black by census tract. In 96 out of 218 census tracts in the county, blacks accounted for more than 75 percent of the population. A number of these tracts were inside the Beltway, adjacent to the southeastern part of the District of Columbia, and in the tracts surrounding Andrews Airforce Base.

FIGURE 4

Racial Composition by Census Tract in Prince George's County

2011–15



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011–15.

Note: In this figure, the black population is only those who are not Hispanic.

Age Distribution

In Prince George's County, about half the population was younger than 35 and more than 1 in 5 people were younger than 18. Forty percent of the population was made up of people ages 35 to 64, and those age 65 or older made up 11 percent of the population. Hispanics and blacks in Prince George's County had the largest share of people younger than age 18 (32 percent and 23 percent), Asians or Pacific Islanders and Hispanics had the largest share of people ages 18 to 34 (33 percent and 32 percent), blacks and whites had the largest share of people ages 35 to 64 (43 percent and 40 percent), and whites had the largest share of people age 65 and older, almost double all other racial and ethnic groups (20 percent).

District 5 had the largest share of children (26 percent). District 3 had the largest share of people ages 18 and 34 (38 percent), reflecting, in part, the University of Maryland's College Park campus. And Districts 6 and 9 had the largest shares of people ages 35 and 64 (45–46 percent), though District 8 had the largest share age 65 and older (14 percent).

Foreign-Born Population

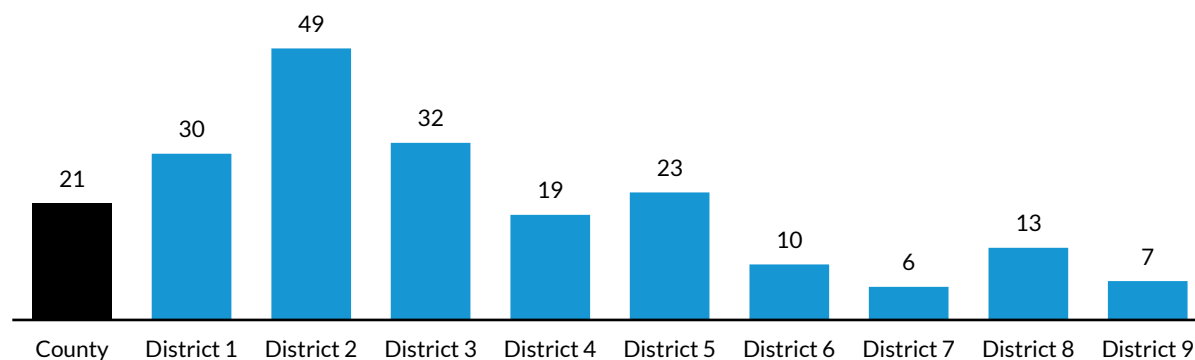
Immigrants made up 21 percent of Prince George's County's total population. The largest share (49 percent) was in District 2, and the smallest share was in District 7 (6 percent) (figure 5). The racial and ethnic group with the largest share of immigrants was Asian or Pacific Islanders (73 percent) followed by Hispanics (59 percent), blacks (12 percent), and whites (5 percent).

FIGURE 5

Share of Population That Is Foreign Born by District

2011–15

Percent



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011–15.

Educational Attainment

Eighty-six percent of adults age 25 and older in Prince George's County had high school degrees. This ranged from 64 percent in District 2 to 94 percent in District 6. District 2 also had the lowest share of adults with some college (41 percent), while District 4 had the highest (75 percent).

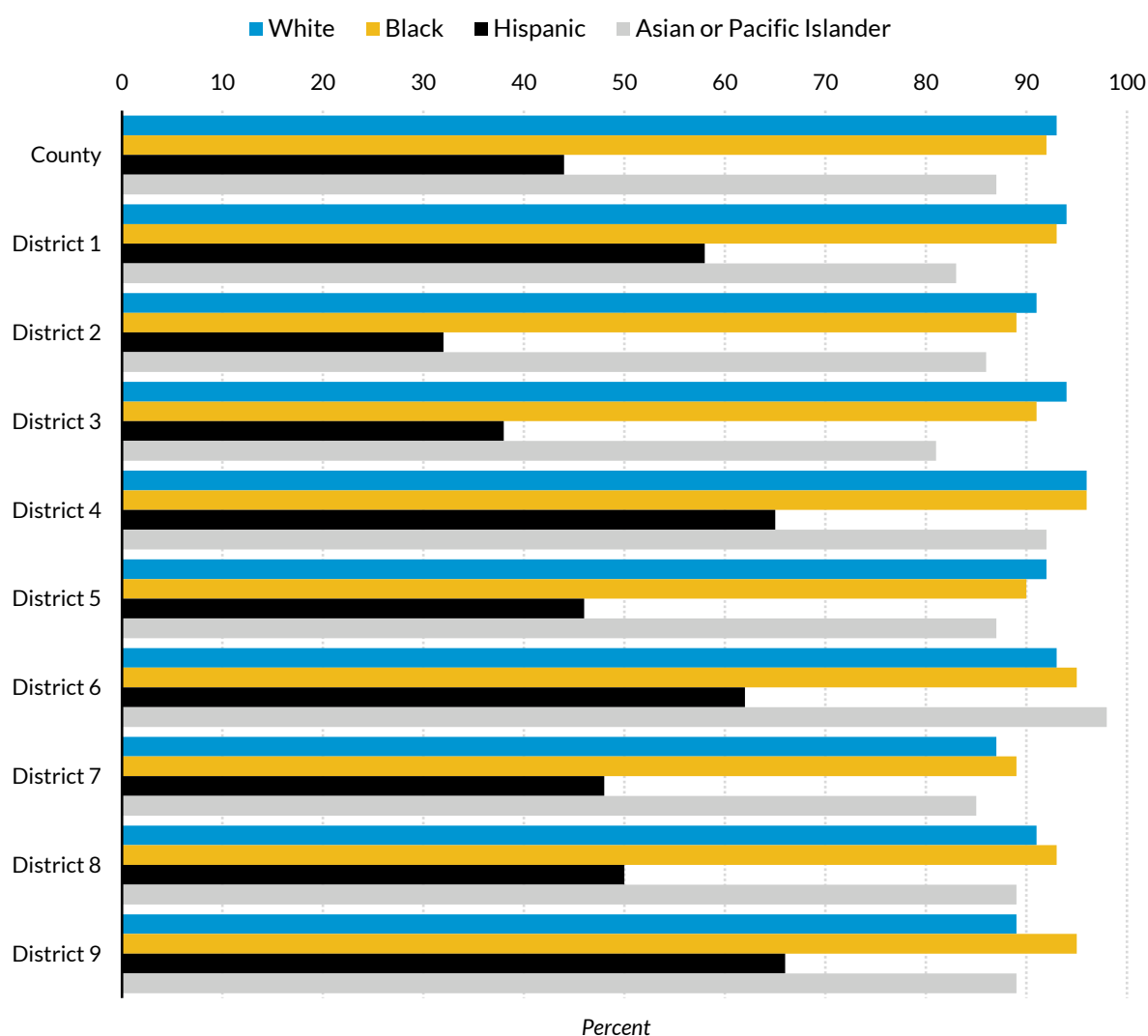
At the county level, whites and blacks had similar shares of adults with a high school degrees (93 and 92 percent). Asians or Pacific Islanders (87 percent) were at the county average for share of adults with degrees compared with only 44 percent of Hispanic adults. Asians or Pacific Islanders had the

largest share of adults with some college education (72 percent), followed by whites (69 percent), blacks (64 percent), and Hispanics (23 percent).

Blacks and whites had similar levels of high school degree attainment across council districts (figure 6). Hispanics had lower levels of high school degree attainment across districts, ranging from only 32 and 38 percent in Districts 2 and 3, respectively, to about 50 percent or higher in Districts 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. In an equitable Prince George's County, 40,200 more Hispanic adults and 1,600 more Asian or Pacific Islander adults would have high school degrees.⁶

FIGURE 6

Share of Adults Age 25 and Older with a High School Degree
2011–15



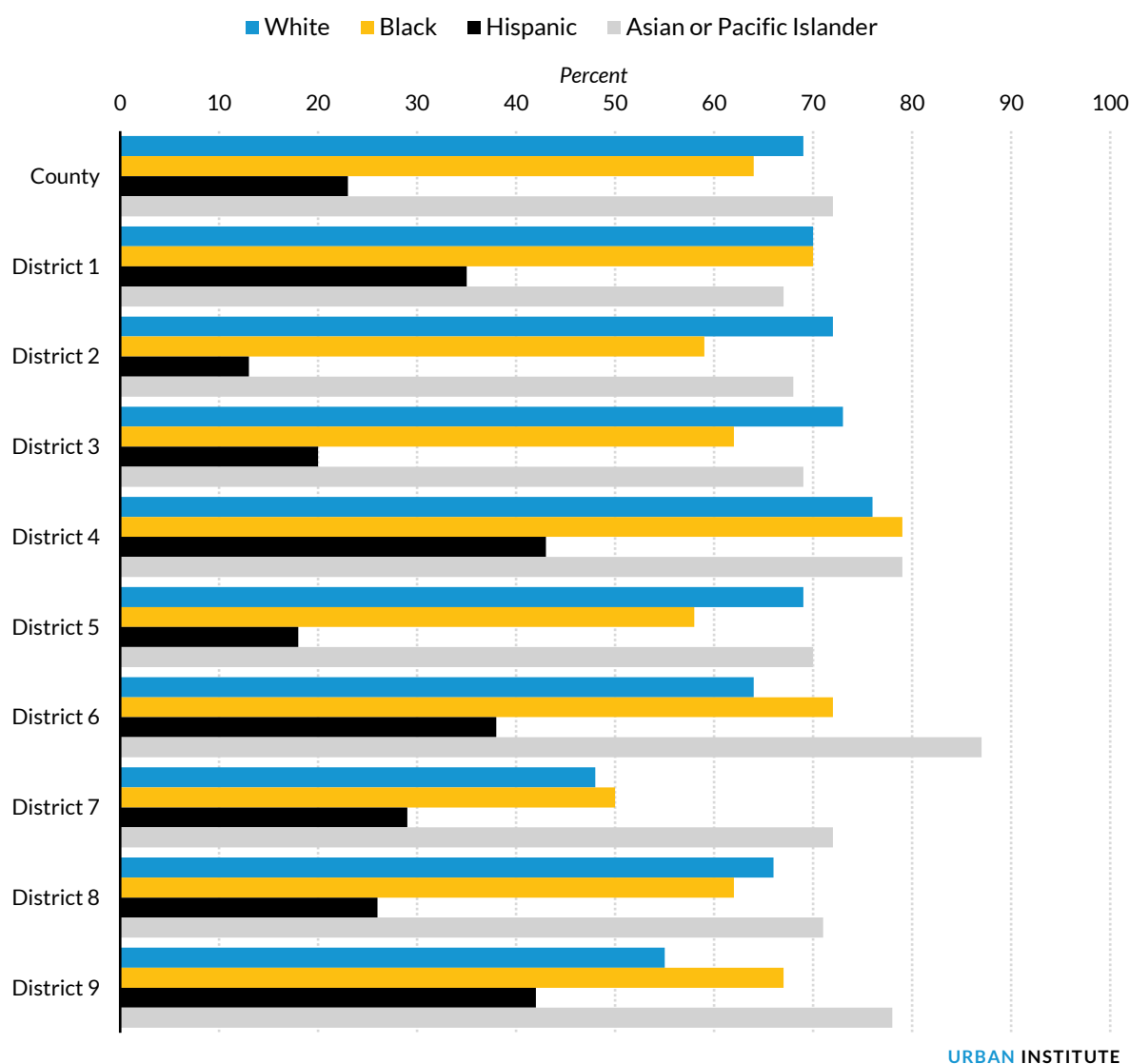
URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011–15.

When looking at the share of adults with some college, blacks and whites had similar levels of education in Districts 1, 4, 7, and 8 (figure 7). In the other districts, blacks and whites differed on the share of adults with some college. In Districts 2, 3, and 5 whites had a higher share, and in Districts 6 and 9 blacks had a higher share. In an equitable Prince George's County, 38,100 more Hispanic adults and 20,200 more black adults would have some postsecondary education.

FIGURE 7

**Share of Adults Age 25 and Older with Some College
2011–15**



Source: American Community Survey, 2011–15.

Compared with the share of native-born adults with a high school degree (93 percent), the share for immigrants was much less (67 percent). Similarly, a smaller share of immigrants had completed some

college (46 percent) compared with native-born adults (65 percent). In an equitable Prince George's County, 42,800 more immigrants would have a high school degree and 38,200 more would have some college education.

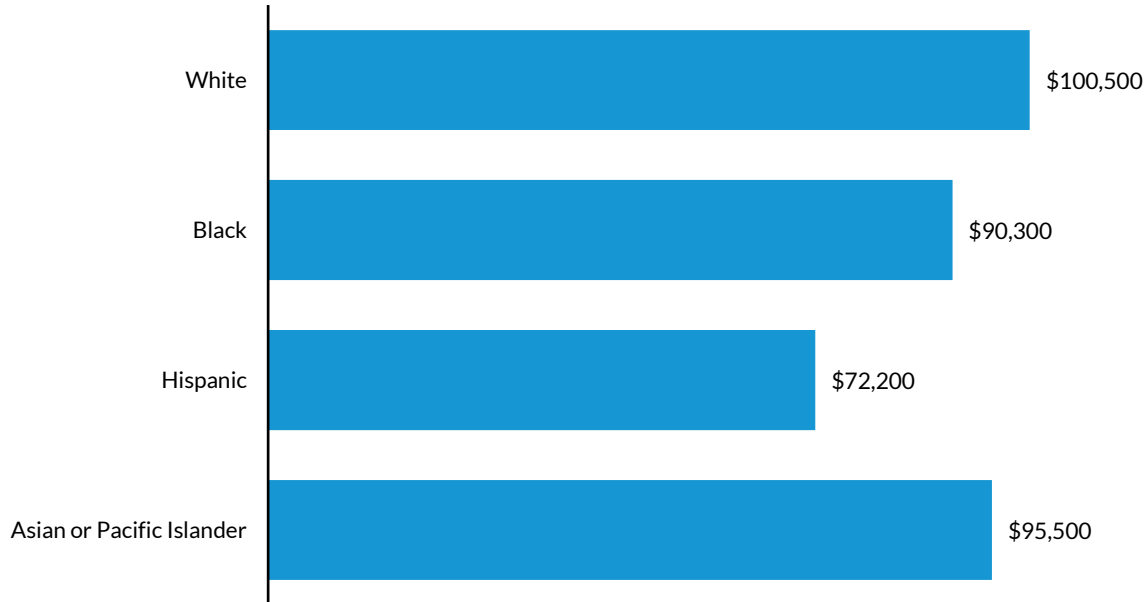
In an equitable Prince George's County, 40,200 more Hispanic adults and 1,600 more Asian or Pacific Islander adults would have high school degrees, and 38,100 more Hispanic adults, and 20,200 more black adults would have some postsecondary education. And 42,800 more immigrants would have a high school degree and 38,200 more would have some college education.

Income

Among households, which include both families and households where single adults or nonrelated persons are living together, the average household income in Prince George's County was \$90,300. Households headed by white or and Asian or Pacific Islander adults had the highest average household incomes, \$100,500 and \$95,500, respectively (figure 8). The average household income for those headed by blacks (\$90,300) matched the county average, while those headed by Hispanic adults had the lowest for all racial and ethnic groups with \$72,200. Across council districts, household income ranged from \$66,900 in District 7 to \$117,400 in District 9.

FIGURE 8

Average Household Income in 2015 dollars
2011–15



URBAN INSTITUTE

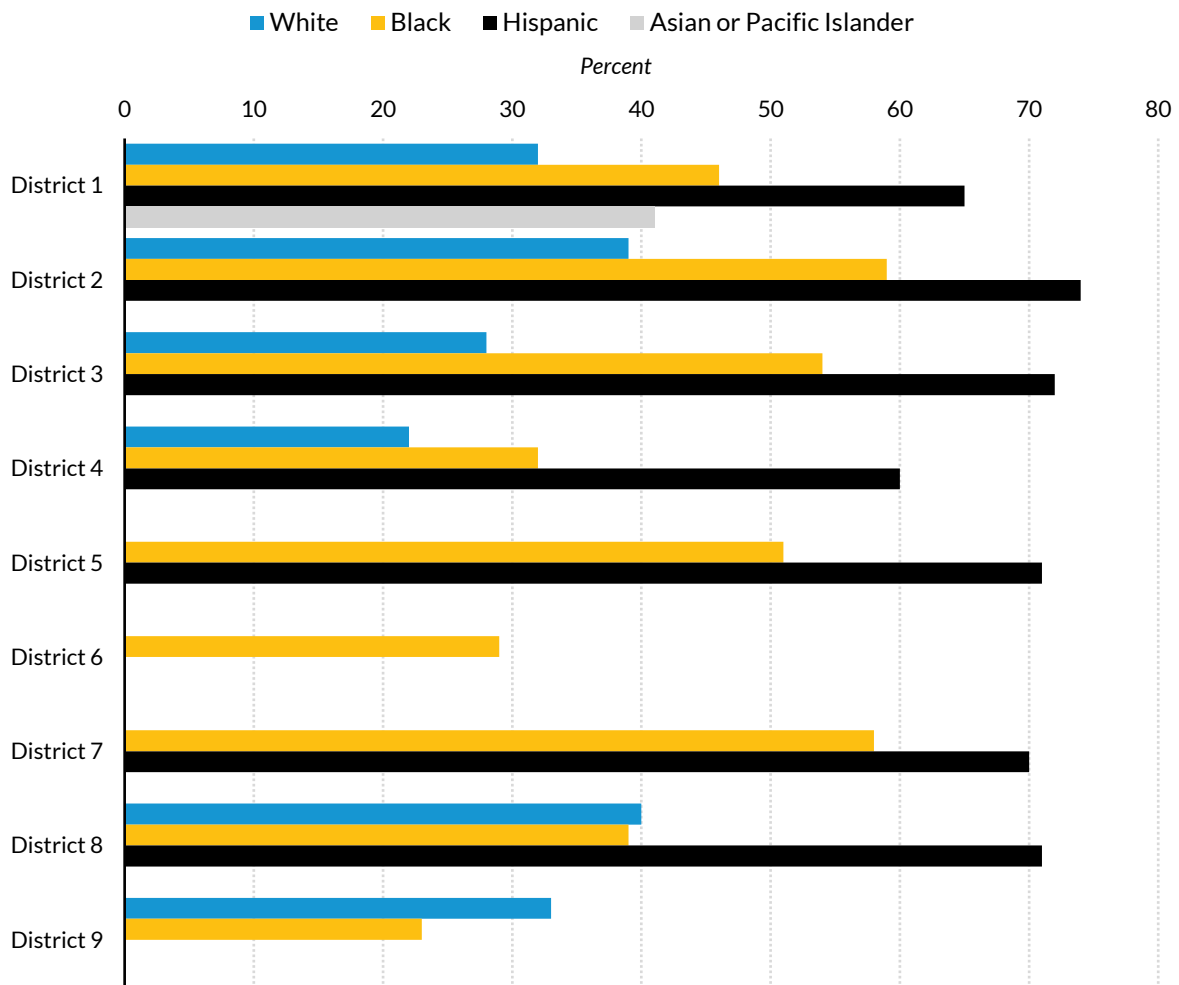
Source: American Community Survey, 2011–15.

According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator, the living wage in Prince George's County, which would enable a full-time worker to provide for a family with two children, is approximately \$34.87/hour or about \$72,500 in annual income.⁷ Yet, more than 2 in 5 families in Prince George's County struggled to earn a living wage and have annual incomes below \$75,000.⁸ Only 30 percent of white families had incomes below \$75,000 compared with 41 percent of black and Asian or Pacific Islander families, and 69 percent of Hispanic families. A higher share of families in Districts 2 (64 percent) and 7 (58 percent) had incomes under \$75,000, though only 25 percent in District 9 and 29 percent in District 6 did. Figure 9 shows that inequities in income varied by council district. There were no disparities on this indicator between the county average for whites (30 percent) and blacks in Districts 4, 6, and 9. Elsewhere large inequities in income remained, particularly for Hispanics. In an equitable Prince George's County, 15,100 more black families, 10,400 more Hispanic families, and 900 more Asian or Pacific Islander families would have incomes above \$75,000.

Less than 10 percent of families in Prince George's County had annual incomes of more than \$200,000, ranging from 2 percent in District 7 to 14 percent in District 9. Only 2 percent of Hispanic families had incomes over \$200,000, compared with 9 percent of black families, 10 percent of Asian or Pacific Islander families, and 13 percent of white families.

FIGURE 9

Share of Families with Annual Income of below \$75,000 in 2015 Dollars
2011–15



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011–15.

Note: Data are suppressed for estimates that were not reliable.

In an equitable Prince George's County, 15,100 more black families, 10,400 more Hispanic families, and 900 more Asian or Pacific Islander families would have incomes above \$75,000.

The overall poverty rate in Prince George's County was 10 percent. Blacks and whites had lower poverty rates at 8 percent, followed by Asians or Pacific Islanders at 9 percent, while Hispanics and immigrants had higher poverty rates at 15 and 12 percent, respectively. Across council districts, the poverty rate was highest in Districts 2 and 3 (14 percent) and lowest in District 9 (4 percent). In an equitable Prince George's County, 9,100 more Hispanic residents and 6,400 more immigrants would live above the federal poverty level with nearly half of the gains of both groups in District 2.

The poverty rates for black and Asian or Pacific Islander residents are not significantly different from those for whites. The child poverty rate for whites (6 percent) was less than half of the county average (13 percent). Children who are Asian or Pacific Islander also had a below average poverty rate (9 percent). Both black (12 percent) and Hispanic (19 percent) children had poverty rates at least two times higher than those for white children. By district, the child poverty rates ranged from 6 percent in District 9 to 18 percent in Districts 2 and 7.

In an equitable Prince George's County, 9,100 more Hispanic residents and 6,400 more immigrants would live above the federal poverty level with nearly half of the gains of both groups in District 2.

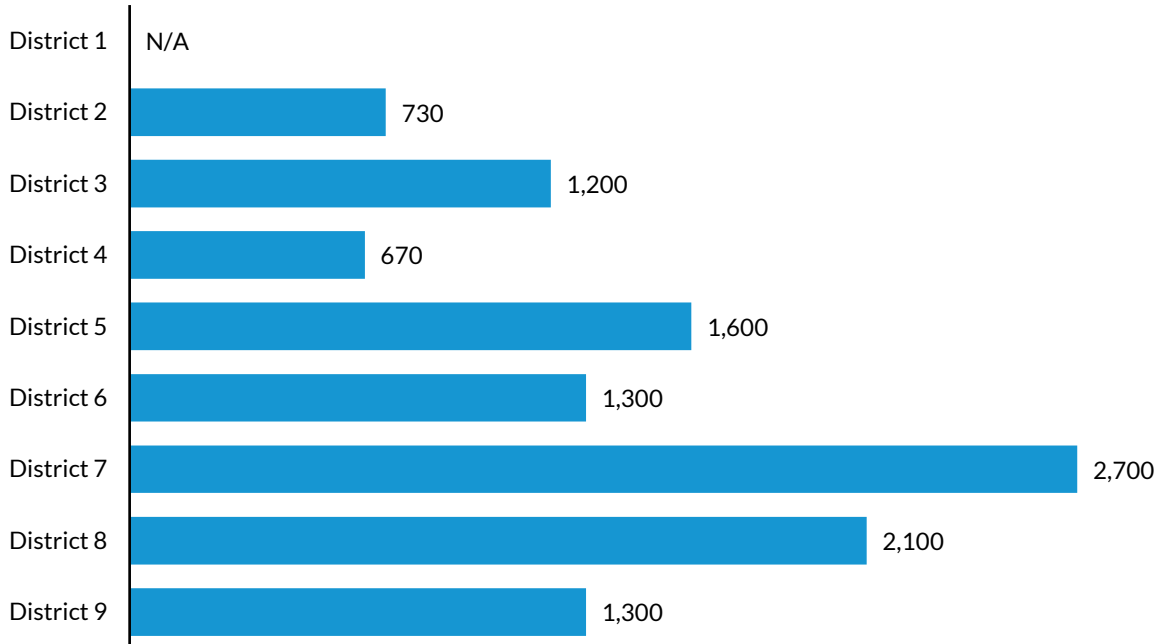
Employment

For the population ages 16 to 64, Hispanics had the highest employment rates (77 percent), followed by blacks (73 percent), whites, (69 percent), and Asians or Pacific Islanders (66 percent). Across council districts the employment rates were similar, with slightly higher rates in Districts 1, 2, and 4 (76–78 percent) and lower rates in District 3 (63 percent) compared with the other districts (71–73 percent). As both black and Hispanic residents have higher employment rates than whites, there are no changes in an equitable Prince George's County reported for those groups.

When looking at the population age 16 and older in the labor force, which includes people who are employed or actively looking for work (unemployed), inequities in employment for blacks were evident. Blacks had the highest unemployment rates at 10 percent with rates for whites, Hispanics and Asian or Pacific Islander ranging from 6–7 percent (and not significantly different from each other). Unemployment rates for black residents were lowest in District 1 and highest District 7. In an equitable Prince George's County, 11,800 more black residents would be employed. Figure 10 shows how many more black residents in each district would be employed if inequities in employment were addressed.

FIGURE 10

**Increase in the Number of Employed Black Residents with Equity in Prince George's County
2011-15**



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-15.

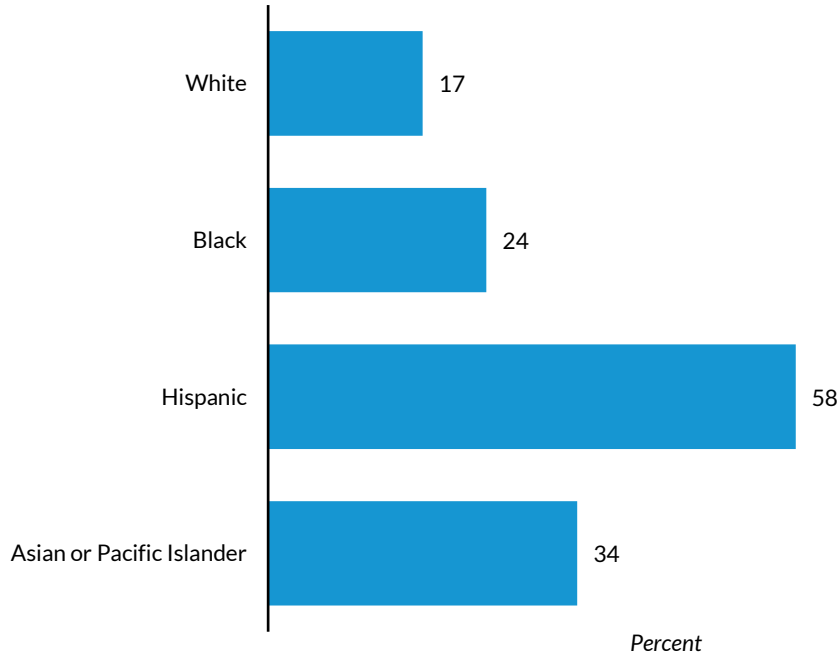
Note: The unemployment rate for black residents in District 1 was not significantly different from the countywide rate for white residents.

Across racial and ethnic groups, black (51 percent) and Hispanic (54 percent) residents age 16 and older had higher rates of working full time compared with the county average (49 percent), and white and Asian or Pacific Islander residents who have lower rates (42 percent).

Of those working full time, Hispanic residents were more likely to earn less than \$35,000 annually (figure 11). Fewer than 1 in 3 residents age 16 and older in Prince George's County working full time earned less than \$35,000, but nearly 3 in 5 Hispanic residents working full time did so. This was more than three times the rates for whites (17 percent) and more than double the rate for blacks (24 percent). Thirty-four percent of Asian or Pacific Islander residents working full time earned less than \$35,000. In an equitable Prince George's County, 22,300 fewer Hispanics, 14,000 fewer blacks, and 2,300 fewer Asians or Pacific Islanders working full time would have earnings below \$35,000.

FIGURE 11

Share of Population Working Full Time with Earnings below \$35,000
2011-15



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-15.

There were similar inequities for those working full-time and earning less than \$75,000 annually. More than 9 in 10 Hispanic residents, 7 in 10 black residents, and 7 in 10 Asian or Pacific Islander residents working full time did not earn this living wage, compared with 6 in 10 white residents. In an equitable Prince George's County, an additional 23,300 Hispanic residents, 17,800 black residents, and 1,700 Asian or Pacific Islander residents working full time would earn a living wage.

Some of the inequities in income may be attributable to occupational differences. About half of white and Asian or Pacific Islander residents worked in management, business, science or art occupations, compared with 40 percent of black residents and only 11 percent of Hispanic residents. About one-third of Hispanics worked in service occupations and another one-third worked in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, with 14 percent in sales and office occupations. For blacks, 26 percent worked in sales and office occupations, and 20 percent in service occupations.

In an equitable Prince George's County, 22,300 fewer Hispanics, 14,000 fewer blacks, and 2,300 fewer Asians or Pacific Islanders working full time would have earnings below \$35,000. And additional 23,300 Hispanic residents, 17,800 black residents, and 1,700 Asian or Pacific Islander residents working full time would earn a living wage.

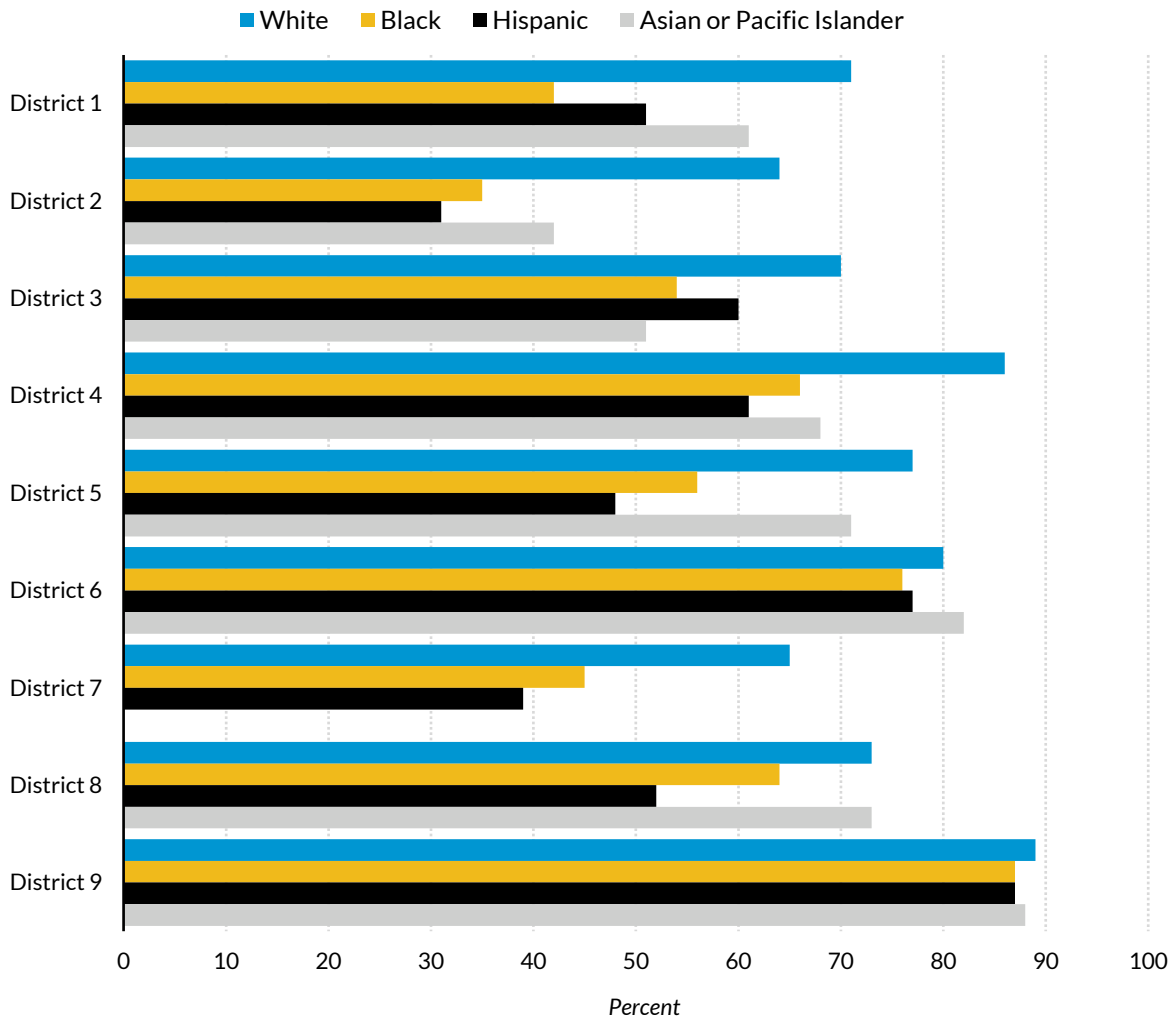
Homeownership and Mobility

The overall homeownership rate for Prince George's County was 62 percent. Hispanics had the lowest homeownership rate (47 percent), followed by blacks (60 percent), compared with Asians or Pacific Islanders (64 percent) and whites (77 percent).

District 2 had the lowest homeownership rates in the county (37 percent), and District 9 had the highest (87 percent). The variation in homeownership rates across districts was similar for different racial and ethnic groups (e.g., all have lower rates in Districts 2, 5, and 7), but the inequities in overall levels of homeownership between whites and other groups remained (figure 12). There were two exceptions though, in Districts 6 and 9 there were few differences by racial and ethnic groups in homeownership. In an equitable Prince George's County, 33,700 more blacks would be homeowners, as would 9,500 more Hispanics and 1,400 more Asian or Pacific Islanders. District 7 would see the largest increase of any district for black homeowners, District 2 would have the largest increase in homeownership for Hispanics, and District 1 would have the largest increase for Asians.

FIGURE 12

**Homeownership Rate by District in Prince George's County
2011-15**



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-15.

Note: In District 7, data for Asian or Pacific Islanders was suppressed because of reliability.

In an equitable Prince George's County, 33,700 more blacks would be homeowners, as would 9,500 more Hispanics and 1,400 more Asian or Pacific Islanders. District 7 would see the largest increase of any district for black homeowners, District 2 would have the largest increase in homeownership for Hispanics, and District 1 would have the largest increase for Asians.

About 15 percent of Prince George's County residents moved in the previous year, which mirrored the national rate. Mobility was slightly higher in District 3 (19 percent) and lower in District 9 (9 percent). All racial and ethnic groups had mobility rates equaling the county average except for whites (10 percent).

About 6 percent of Prince George's County residents had moved in from somewhere outside of Prince George's County in the previous year. Asian or Pacific Islanders were the most likely to have moved into Prince George's from somewhere outside the county (9 percent), followed by whites (7 percent), Hispanics (6 percent), and blacks (5 percent). As with overall mobility, District 3 had the highest share of residents who moved in from outside the county (11 percent).

Notes

1. "Councilmanic Districts," Prince George's County Council, accessed December 12, 2017, <http://pgccouncil.us/443/Councilmanic-Districts>.
2. Less than 2 percent of blacks in Prince George's County in 2011–15 who identified as their race as black alone also identified as Hispanic.
3. Less than 1 percent of Asian or Pacific Islanders also identified themselves as Hispanic.
4. There is more overlap between this category and the Hispanic category in Prince George's County than we find for blacks and Asians or Pacific Islanders. About 97 percent of those who identify as some other race, 34 percent of those who identify as American Indians, and 19 percent of those who identify as two or more races also identify as Hispanic.
5. Estimates have been suppressed if the Coefficient of Variation for the estimate is greater than 30 percent. See US Census Bureau (2009).
6. Because the comparison with calculate the gaps is always to the countywide share for whites, though the countywide share of blacks with a high school degree was not statistically significantly different from whites, the district rates for blacks in Districts 2, 5, and 7 were different from the countywide white rate. In those districts, 4,600 more black adults would have a high school degree if the district rate matched the countywide white rate.
7. Represents the living wage in 2015. See "Living Wage Calculation for Prince George's County, Maryland," Living Wage Calculator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, accessed August 15th, 2017, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/24033>.
8. Earnings are discussed in the employment section. This section focuses on all income for a family. The American Community Survey tabulations do not break out income at \$72,500, so we have used \$75,000 as the closest proxy.

Reference

US Census Bureau. 2009. *A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What Researchers Need to Know*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

Errata

We replaced the data for Hispanics in figure 6 to show the share of adults with a high school degree (the earlier version showed the share without a degree).

About the Authors



Leah Hendey is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she focuses on housing policy and on policy to improve neighborhoods. Experienced in working with national and local administrative datasets, she has been involved in Urban's work with the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership and is its deputy director. Leah has led Urban's efforts to describe the racial inequities in the District of Columbia and the Washington, DC, region.



Lily Posey is a research assistant in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Her research interests include homelessness and housing instability, housing policies and programs, and the intersection of housing with health and economic mobility.

Acknowledgments

This brief was funded by the Consumer Health Foundation and the Meyer Foundation. We are grateful to them and to all our funders, who make it possible for Urban to advance its mission.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute's funding principles is available at www.urban.org/support.



2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
www.urban.org

ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

Copyright © December 2017. Consumer Health Foundation, the Eugene and Agnes Meyer Foundation, and Urban Institute. Permission is granted for reproduction of this file, with attribution to the Urban Institute.