



The Realities of Poverty in Baltimore



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COMMITTEE

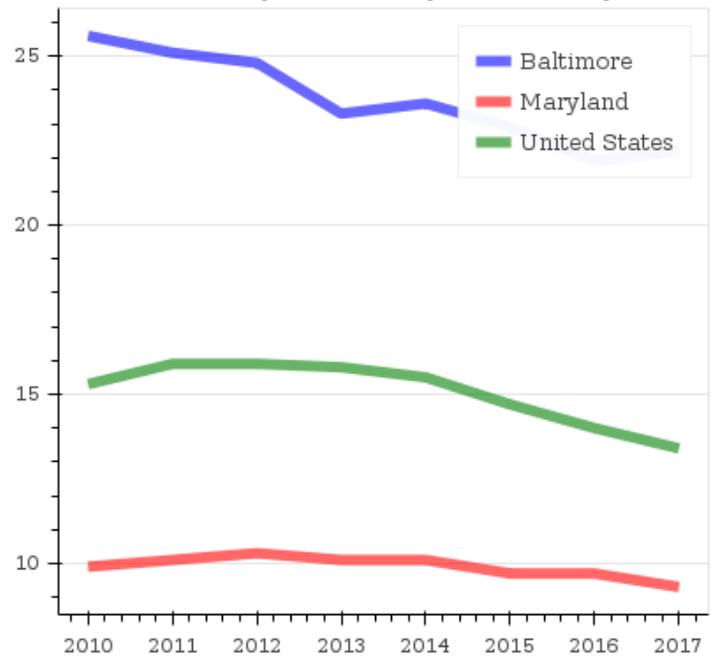
It has been half a century since legal barriers for economic advancement for minorities have been lifted, yet the correlation between race and poverty remains undeniable. People of color are more than twice as likely as white people to meet the federal definition of poverty. Given substantial progress in civil rights and antidiscrimination policies — as well as the increased ethnic

diversity of the nation — why is poverty still so colored? Why have racial differences in poverty persisted for so long — and what can we do to confront them?

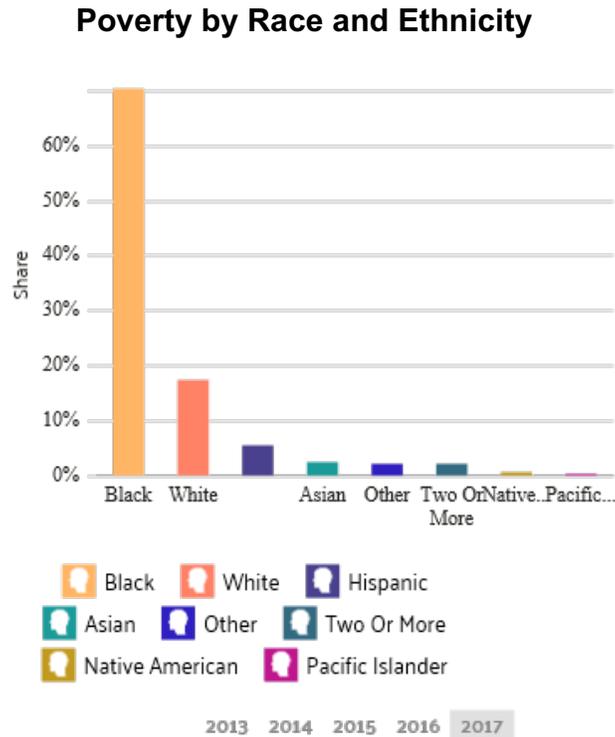
Diversity and Race

Racism continues to exist in America, whether overt or the result of implicit bias, and researchers have found that even small disadvantages in education, health, access to social networks, and housing have a cascading effect that diminishes opportunities. This is apparent in our city of Baltimore where there are concentrated pockets of poverty where residents live in unsafe and unaffordable housing, inefficient public transportation, and limited access to fresh food. **The poverty rate in Baltimore is 22.4%**, which is higher than the national average of 13.4%, and **one out of every 4.5 residents in Baltimore lives in poverty**. The poverty rate across the state of Maryland is 9.7%, meaning Baltimore has a dramatically higher number of residents below the poverty line compared to the rest of Maryland.

Baltimore, Maryland Poverty Rate History



The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who classifies as impoverished. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold than that family and every individual in it is considered to be living in poverty. The most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty line in Baltimore is Black, followed by White and Hispanic.

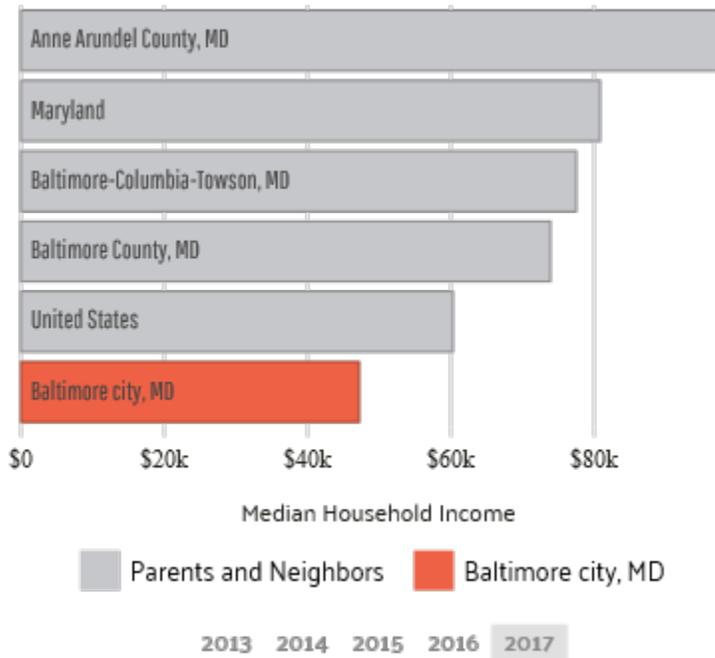


The poverty rate of black residents in Baltimore is 26.5%. 99,663 of 376,479 black Marylanders live below the poverty line. Approximately 60.7% of the total population of Baltimore are black. The poverty rate of Asian residents in Baltimore is dramatically higher than the national average of 11.9% at 20.7%. 3,070 of 14,860 Asian Marylanders live below the poverty line. The poverty rate of white residents in Baltimore is 12.7%. 20,816 of 163,767 white Marylanders live below the poverty line. Approximately 26.4% of the total population of Baltimore are white.

Economy

Wages for workers in the service sector in Baltimore have been steadily decreasing for several years, leaving devastating numbers of Baltimore residents below the poverty line. Health care has become the prominent industry in our city, and while Baltimore is home to some of the most prestigious institutions in the country, wages for many workers are low. The economy of Baltimore city, MD employs 284k people. The most common jobs held by residents of Baltimore city, MD, by number of employees, are Other Management Occupations Except Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Managers (18,074 people), Building Cleaning & Pest Control Workers (10,357 people), and Driver/Sales Workers & Truck Drivers (9,280 people).

The largest industries in Baltimore city, MD are Health Care & Social Assistance (58,953 people), Educational Services (34,013 people), and Retail Trade (26,269 people), and the highest paying industries are Utilities (\$71,018), Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (\$66,471), and Public Administration (\$60,410).



However, the median household income in Baltimore is \$47,131, which is less than the median annual income of \$60,336 across the entire United States. This is in comparison to a median income of \$47,350 in 2016, which represents a -0.463% annual growth.

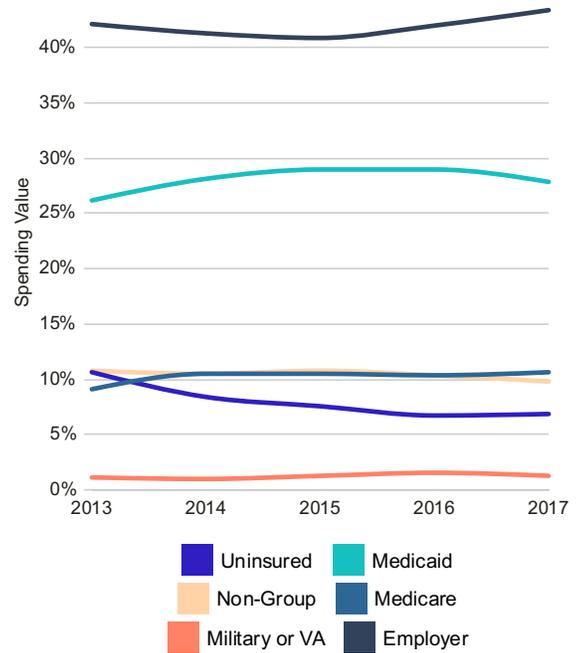
Not only is the median income for Baltimore extremely low, but research shows that gender-based wage disparities exist in the five most common occupations in Baltimore. In the same occupation, the average male salary in Baltimore in 2017 was \$78,518 while the average female salary was \$63,795.

Females ages 25 to 34 are also the largest demographic living in poverty in Baltimore, followed by Females 45 - 54 and then Females 18 - 24.

Health and Education

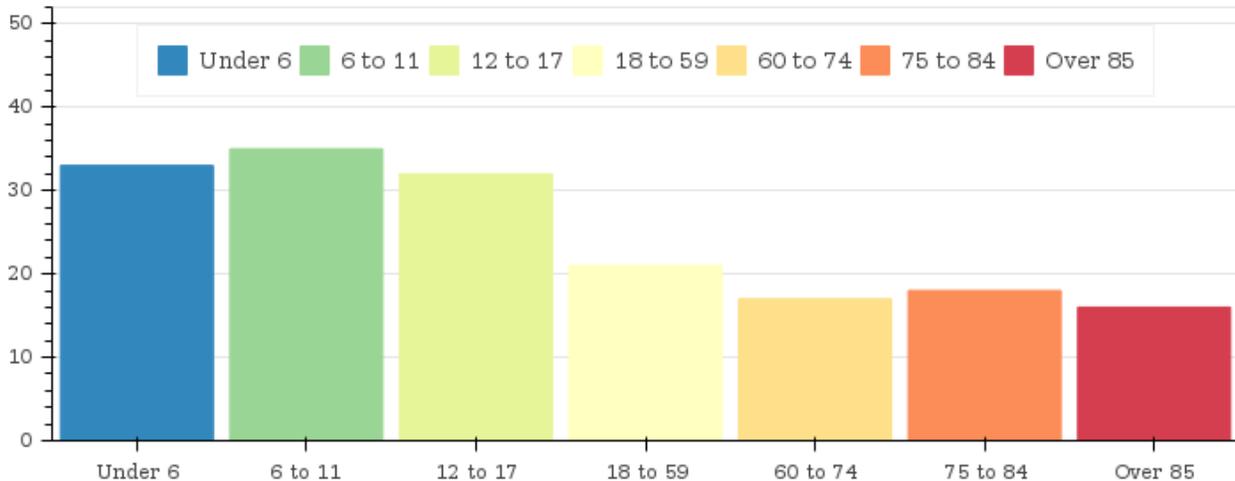
In a study from the University of Michigan, researchers analyzed data from the California Health Interview Study (CHIS) — the most comprehensive health database with information on race and immigration — to examine links between health, socioeconomic status (SES), and ethnicity, and migration. SES differences are larger than racial differences in health: differences in health between poor and high-income persons are more than three times the overall black-white difference in health. However, race carries its own burden for health beyond those associated with SES. These burdens are different, not only across racial groups, but also across national origin groups that are generally consolidated into the same race.

93.1% of the population of Baltimore has health coverage, with 43.4% on employee plans, 27.9% on Medicaid, 10.6% on Medicare, 9.79% on non-group plans, and 1.32% on military or VA plans. Per capita personal health care spending in the county of Baltimore was \$8,602 in 2014. This is a 4.27% increase from the previous year (\$8,250). Primary care physicians in Baltimore see 1056 patients per year on average, which represents a 2.13% decrease from the previous year (1079 patients). Compare this to dentists who see 1470 patients per year, and mental health providers who see 268 patients per year. Between 2016 and 2017, the percent of uninsured citizens in Baltimore grew by 2.65% from 6.77% to 6.95%.



The same study from the University of Michigan analyzed how disparities in household resources, parenting time, and stressors shape a substantial racial and ethnic achievement gap before children even enter school. Children experiencing poverty enter kindergarten with very different levels of preparedness and achievement levels. These initial differences are exacerbated by class differences, ability grouping, and teacher attention. By fourth grade, black children score more than 25 points lower, Hispanic children about 15 points lower, and Asian children between 5-10 points lower than white children on reading and math tests. Second language learners of any race lose roughly 20 more points on reading and 15 more points on math.

Baltimore, Maryland Poverty Rate By Age



These disadvantages feed each other. Children raised in poverty often enter school with smaller vocabularies not because their parents don't understand the importance of reading to them, but because they spend far more time than more affluent parents

getting to and from work, often multiple low-paying jobs, to make ends meet and cannot afford the kind of high-quality child care that middle and upper-class families can. Absenteeism in school likely isn't the result of parents who don't emphasize education, it's a product of poor health and unreliable transportation.

Student vs Non-Student

Understanding where poverty hits hardest in Baltimore can be better understood by segmenting poverty by whether or not the resident is in school or not.

- **Enrolled in School** in Baltimore, Maryland have a Poverty Rate of **30.0%**.
- **Not Enrolled in School** in Baltimore, Maryland have a Poverty Rate of **19.4%**.

Young Children

Poverty for younger ages in Baltimore is seen as the most undesirable for the future of the community.

- **Enrolled in Nursery School** in Baltimore, Maryland have a Poverty Rate of **28.2%**.
- **Enrolled in Elementary School(Grades 1-4)** in Baltimore, Maryland have a Poverty Rate of **36.8%**.

Middle and High School

Poverty for developing children and young adults in Baltimore can have drastic impacts on graduation and college attendance rates.

- **Enrolled in Middle School(Grade 5-8)** in Baltimore, Maryland have a Poverty Rate of **30.3%**.
- **Enrolled in High School (Grades 9-12)** in Baltimore, Maryland have a Poverty Rate of **30.5%**.

These are not just alarming statistics and facts, these are the harsh realities of poverty that are specifically affecting our city, our community, and our neighbors. When faced with the blatant injustice of poverty around our street corners, we must be called through our faith and humanity to combat poverty...but how? What role does the

Catholic Church play in ending poverty as an entity and employer in Baltimore? These are the questions we will explore in future articles.

Sources:

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