Women Disproportionately Affected by Poverty

An analysis of the 2016 American Community Survey by The Women’s Foundation finds that women continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty in the City of Alexandria, and that among women, single women with children and women of color are more likely to live below the poverty threshold—$20,420 for a family of three in 2016.

Close to 19,256 residents in the City of Alexandria were living below the poverty threshold during 2016. Close to 60 percent (11,282) were women and girls. This figure translates to a poverty rate of 14.0 percent. In comparison, the poverty rate for men and boys is 10.8 percent.

As in other jurisdictions in the Washington region, the Great Recession had a substantial impact in the City of Alexandria: the poverty rate more than doubled since 2006 for both men and women. Declines occurred during 2008 and 2011 but were not large enough to offset the upward trend.

Women Raising Families on Their Own

An estimated 2,272 families in Alexandria with children under 18 had incomes below the poverty level in 2016. Single parent families—especially female-headed households—were more likely to live in poverty.
Female-headed households with children reached a poverty rate of 42.5 percent, while married-couple families had a poverty rate of 6.1 percent. Of families with children living in poverty, 59.3 percent were headed by single women.

**Women’s Poverty Across Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Women of color experience disproportionate levels of poverty across racial and ethnic groups and have a greater probability of falling below the poverty threshold than men or their White counterparts.

As in other jurisdictions in the region, Black and Latina women face high rates of poverty in the City of Alexandria; 19.5 percent of Black women and 14.6 percent of Latinas live below the poverty level, rates well above the 6.6 percent rate for White, non-Hispanic women.

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1. Estimates for the Washington region include data from: Washington, DC; Montgomery County, MD; Prince George’s County, MD; Arlington County, VA; Alexandria City, VA; and Fairfax County, VA.

2. The BEST Index measures the income a working adult requires to meet his or her basic needs—without public or private assistance. Each BEST Index component is a conservative estimate of need, and the BEST does not include any “extras” such as vacations, entertainment, electronics, gifts or meals out. As a result, those living below an economically secure income may go without, make difficult choices among basic needs, or forgo economic security by not fully developing savings. For detailed information on expense components, including data sources and assumptions used in specific calculations, see the Index expenses and savings definitions. Additional information can be found in The Basic Economic Security Tables: United States Methodology and Supplemental Data, available at [http://www.wowonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Basic-Economic-Security-Tables-United-States-Methodology-Report-2010.pdf](http://www.wowonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Basic-Economic-Security-Tables-United-States-Methodology-Report-2010.pdf).

This Fact Sheet was prepared by Claudia Williams, Research and Evaluation Program Officer at the Washington Area Women’s Foundation. To obtain more related data on the status of women and girls in the Washington region and details on the methodology to obtain such data please consult our issue briefs available at [https://thewomensfoundation.org/resources/](https://thewomensfoundation.org/resources/).