



Family Services, Inc.

An affiliate of Sheppard & Enoch Pratt Foundation

Early Head Start Community Assessment

2010 Annual update

PROFILE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

Montgomery County is a predominantly suburban area that covers approximately 500 square miles adjacent to the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. It is also bordered by the state of Virginia and Howard, Frederick, and Prince George's Counties in Maryland. The United States Census Bureau estimated Montgomery County's population to be 971,600 in FY 2009, the most populous jurisdiction in Maryland. In 2006, the county was ranked 44th largest in the entire country (out of 3,141 counties). The population grew by 11.3% from 2000 to 2009, and will likely reach one million by 2011.

Demographics

Montgomery County has become highly diverse in recent years, both culturally and socio-economically. In 1990, 34% of births in the county were to minority women, while in 2006 minority births were 61% of the total. In addition, over 80,000 foreign-born people moved to Montgomery County between 2000 and 2006. One-third of the county's population speaks a language other than English and 40% of Montgomery County's population is non-white. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2009 population estimate, the county racial composition is 52% non-Hispanic white, 17.5% African-American, 16% Hispanic, 14% Asian and 2% bi-racial (total above 100% due to rounding).

Montgomery County's population growth came from an increase in births, migration from other states, and international migrants. The largest source of population growth in the area was births; the birth rate in the county has been climbing and is over 13,000 births annually since 2000. In 2009, the percentage of persons under 5 years of age was 7.2%, or just under 70,000 children. The percentage of persons under 18 years old is 24.5%. The county has also attracted over 181,000 new residents who moved to the county between 2000 and 2005. The new residents were mainly young married couples with children.

Income

The U.S. Census Bureau reported the 2008 county median household income was \$93,895. However, vast disparities in income levels exist, with large pockets of people living in poverty primarily in the central corridor of Germantown, Gaithersburg, Rockville and Silver Spring. While Montgomery remains one of the wealthiest counties in the United States, it has not been immune to the recent economic downturn. In 2000, the poverty rate was 5.4%, according to census data, but has climbed to nearly 6% during the recession. In a county this large, that translates to approximately 6,000 additional persons living in poverty. The county unemployment rate increased 32% in the first half of 2009 (Montgomery "CountyStat" data, July 2009).

Determination of need for federally subsidized programs like Head Start is made based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) created in the early 1960s. Although adjusted for inflation, the figures fail to take into account factors such as single-parent households, the cost of childcare, and make no adjustments for fluctuations in cost of living based on geographic location. The 2007 cost of living in Montgomery County was 44.71% higher than the national average.

The Montgomery County Commission for Women issued its decennial Report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County in June 2007. The Report found that:

- Families with incomes below the FPL comprise only 3% of the county's population, but account for 30% of families headed by a single woman with young children.
- Families headed by a single woman comprise 15% of county families, but they account for 47% of the county's families with incomes below the federal poverty line.

A quick profile of low-income single mothers in Montgomery County in 2007:

- Of 38,889 single mothers, 13% live in poverty
- 17.3% of single mothers with young children live in poverty
- 57% of children whose families have incomes less than the federal poverty level in the county have a single mother
- The median income for families living in the County is \$108,464. The median income of families headed by a single mother is \$45,022, 58.5% less than the median income for the entire county.

According to the Community Action Board Self-Sufficiency Standard for Montgomery County 2008 Summary, a family of three consisting of one adult working full-time, one school-aged child and one pre-school child requires a gross income of \$68,086 per year to be self-sufficient. The FPL for this same family is \$17,600, not taking into account the composition of the family or the area in which they live. Thus, the FPL is only 26% of the Self-Sufficiency Standard in Montgomery County.

Housing

Due to its proximity to Washington D.C. and Baltimore, housing in Montgomery County is expensive and households below the median income have very limited choices. The 247,328 owner-occupied county housing units have a median value of \$466,052 and the county homeownership rate is 68% (MC Department of Economic Development, 2009). The average monthly costs were \$1,687 for homeowners and \$1,167 for renters in 2005. The 2006 Housing Wage in the county was \$23.56 (the hourly wage needed to afford the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment). This wage is four times the state minimum wage of \$6.51 (2007 Data Book). Montgomery County has the greatest number of Section 8 Housing units in the state, with over 4,000 units. Three out of four units are in Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) Residential Communities. Even so, the county does not have enough affordable housing to meet demand. There is an acute shortage of housing for low-income families.

With the economic downturn, Montgomery County is experiencing an increase in foreclosures, a 23% rise alone from the 3rd to 4th quarter in FY 2008 and an 18% over a one year period from Q1 FY 2008 to Q1 FY 2009. Foreclosures continue to be concentrated in the Up County and Mid County areas, with 70% of activity occurring in those areas. In fact the 20877 zip code, where FSI's Early Head Start program is located, is one of the seven "hot spots" where the majority of foreclosure activity in the county occurs.

Education

Montgomery County is the sixteenth largest public school system in the United States with an enrollment of approximately 144,000 students for 2010-2011. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) operates 131 elementary schools, 38 middle schools and 25 high schools. Special education services are received by 11.9% of students. The immense growth in Montgomery County is reflected in its school system. From 1999-2009, enrollment increased by 10%, diversity increased by 20%, and the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) population has increased by 92%.

MCPS is comprised of students from over 164 countries speaking 184 languages. The 2010-2011 ethnic composition of MCPS is 37.2% white, 23.4% African American, 23.4% Hispanic and 15.7% Asian. ESOL serves 13% of the student population, with the highest concentration of students at pre-kindergarten and the lower elementary grades. Students in Pre-K to grade 2 make up 62% of the elementary ESOL enrollment and 41% of the total ESOL enrollment. Although born in the United States, most of these children have lived in non-English speaking environments and have very limited English language skills.

V. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS OF EARLY HEAD START ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children living in Poverty

The Census Bureau estimated that in 2006 there were over 6,000 families in Montgomery County with young children living under 200% of poverty. According to the Montgomery County Collaboration Council, in 2005 12,883 (18%) children under age six lived in families with low incomes (less than 200% of the FPL). The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that in 2008 there were 16,589 (7.3%) children living in poverty in the county, up from 13,145 (5.7%) in 2005. In 2007, there were 79,000 low income working families with children. The majority of young children living in poverty in the county are in the central corridor encompassing Germantown, Gaithersburg and Silver Spring, with additional pockets in Damascus and Poolesville. With the exception of Silver Spring, these up-county areas are all served by the FSI Early Head Start program.

The Interagency Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy (ICAP) estimates there are 500 pregnant and parenting teens in Montgomery County each year. Gaithersburg has the highest rate of births to adolescents in the county (23% of total in 15 to 19 age range), while comprising about 6% of the county's overall population (MD Vital Statistics Administration, 2005 Birth Records). National and county trends indicate that while the overall birth rate for teens has declined in the past decade, births to Latina girls have increased. In 2005 – 2007 the county birth rate for ages 18 to 19 was 43.8 for whites, 57.5 for African Americans and 136.4 for Hispanics (MD Vital Statistics Administration, 2007 Birth Records).

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Temporary Cash Assistance (TANF/TCA) county caseload was 750 in January 2009 (Montgomery County DHHS). Thirty five percent of all children receiving TCA were aged birth to five years. In January 2009, the number of county residents receiving Food Stamps was 13,759 (Montgomery County DHHS).

Hunger

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture ([Household Food Security in the United States, 2008](#)) indicates that hunger in the United States is continuing to grow. Even as the economy slowly recovers, hunger has become a problem that has expanded beyond the poor or unemployed and into working families. Recent data shows that dependable access to adequate food has especially deteriorated among families with children. In 2008, nearly 17 million children, or 22.5%, lived in households in which food at times was scarce -- 4 million children more than the year before. And the number of youth who were outright hungry rose from nearly 700,000 to almost 1.1 million.

Among Americans of all ages, more than 16% -- or 49 million people -- sometimes ran short of nutritious food, compared with about 12% the year before. The deterioration in access to food during 2008 among both children and adults far eclipses that of any other single year in the report's history. In Maryland, the average was 9.6% -- below the national average, but it still means 1 in 10 households in our State struggle to put food on the table.

FARMS

The number of children receiving public school Free and Reduced-price Meals (FARMS) is used as a low-income indicator because it is based on poverty levels. To date, the MCPS FARMS program has served over 12.85 million meals. Over 40% of county students have received Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) at some point while in school. Currently, 27.4% of all Montgomery County Public School students qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch and approximately one-third of county elementary schools have over 50% of their students receiving FARMS. The closest elementary schools to FSI offices are Gaithersburg Elementary (73% FARMS), Summit Hall Elementary (85% FARMS) and Washington Grove Elementary (65% FARMS). Hungry children are more likely to be absent from school, retain less knowledge, and repeat a grade. Hungry teens are twice as likely to be suspended from school. They are also 90% more likely to be reported in poor or fair health.

Homelessness

The Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County estimates that 24% of the county's homeless population is children. Homeless children face greater health problems and lower educational achievement than children with stable housing.

Montgomery County conducted a "point in time" survey in January 2009 and found 109 children living in motels, 70 children living in emergency shelters and 156 children in transitional programs. In addition, there were 398 children in permanent supportive housing (no longer homeless but receiving supportive services). These 733 children were in 354 households. In addition, it is estimated that 1,500 homeless adults live in the county.

Health Insurance

The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that 151,106 (10.5%) of children in Maryland do not have health insurance (2006) and 56.2% did not have annual dental care in 2009. The percentage of children 0-5 who receive Medicaid increased 118.3% between 1999 and 2003 to a rate of 55.2%, much higher than the state average of 39.3% (FPG Child Development Institute). In 2009, total Medical Assistance recipients in Montgomery County number 65,667 and 31,000 of them are children (MC DHHS).

Child Care Costs

The Census Bureau estimated that 48,852 children under age 6 in the county have both parents in the labor force in 2005 (55% of all children). In Gaithersburg, where FSI EHS is located, 72.5% of women with children under age 6 are employed outside the home (2005 Census Update Survey). Reliable, licensed child care in Montgomery County is out of reach financially for many low-income families. In 2008, the Maryland Child Care Resource Network estimated average child care costs in a family with two children ages 1-2 and 3-5 years to be \$20,013 per year. A family of four who makes \$55,000 a year would spend

more than a third of their income of childcare. Thus childcare is the second highest major household expense for local families.

Seventy five percent of parents rate affordable child care as the most or one of the most important factors in helping working families and more than half of families (51 percent) with children under age 5 say the economy has affected their child care in some way.

In the FSI EHS 15 zip code catchment area, there are approximately 20,000 women in the workforce who have children under age 6 (2005 Census Update Survey). With a county poverty rate of 18%, that equates to about 3,600 mothers living in poverty who need affordable care for their children. FSI operates the only Early Head Start program in the upper county and currently has a capacity of only 28 children in the Discovery Station Child Development Center.

100 Years of Service



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