



# Philadelphia's Poor

Who they are, where they live, and how that has changed

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## About this report

This report was researched and written by Octavia Howell, an officer with The Pew Charitable Trusts' Philadelphia research initiative, and Susan Warner, an officer with the initiative who recently left Pew. Assistance by Pew colleagues included methodology review by Alan van der Hilst. The report was edited by Larry Eichel, director of the Philadelphia research initiative, along with Elizabeth Lowe, Daniel LeDuc, and Bernard Ohanian. Kodi Seaton created the graphics and designed the document.

## About the data

All demographic data in this report, unless otherwise noted, are from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) one-year estimates. Because the numbers are estimates, they come with margins of error attached, meaning that small differences among data points are not significant in many cases. Most of the data were drawn from published tables; ACS microdata were used for a few tabulations. One-year estimates are not published for census tracts, so the maps in this report are based on the ACS five-year estimates. Census tract boundaries shift periodically to accommodate changes in population size. To take that into account, this report uses the Brown University Longitudinal Tract Database, which places decennial census data from prior decades into current census tract boundaries.

The ACS determines the poverty rate based on a subset of the population that excludes people who live in military group quarters and college dormitories, are institutionalized, or are under age 15 and not living with their families. In 2016, the population used as the basis for poverty calculations in Philadelphia was 1,523,651. This number is about 44,000 less than the total population as estimated by the census. In this report, city poverty rates are based on decennial census or American Community Survey data; U.S. rates are the official figures derived from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey.

## Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the following government and nonprofit organization officials for their help in developing this report: Mitch Little, executive director, and Carolyn Brown, director of planning and evaluation, Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity; Harold Epps, director, Sylvie Gallier Howard, chief of staff, and Heloise Jettison, director of talent development, Philadelphia Department of Commerce; Eva Gladstein, deputy managing director, Health and Human Services, city of Philadelphia; Mark Edwards, former president and chief executive officer, and Meg Shope Koppel, chief research officer, Philadelphia Works; Paul Chrystie, director of communications, Philadelphia Division of Housing and Community Development; and Erik Soliván, former director of research, and Michael Schwartz, former senior project analyst, Philadelphia Housing Authority.

This report benefited from the insights of the following academics and other analysts: Robert DeFina, professor and department chair, sociology and criminology, Villanova University; Carmen Whalen, history and Latino and Latina studies professor, Williams College; Johnny Irizarry, director, Center for Hispanic Excellence: La Casa Latina, University of Pennsylvania; Victor Vazquez-Hernandez, professor and department chair, social sciences, Miami Dade College; Philippe Bourgois, director, Center for Social Medicine and the Humanities, UCLA; Allen Glicksman, director of research and evaluation, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging; Mike Boyer, associate director, planning, and Greg Krykewycz, associate director, transportation, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission; Natasha O. Fletcher, associate director, and Paul Jargowsky, director, Center for Urban Research and Education, Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey.

The following local poverty experts and advocates also contributed: John Rowe, executive director, Tina Floyd, director, operations and development, and Emily Davis, director, utility housing stabilization, UESF; Jeffrey Booth, senior vice president, workforce development, JEVS Human Services; Sharon Dietrich, litigation director and managing attorney, employment unit, and Louise Hayes, supervising attorney, law center north central, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia; Amy Jones, director, health and social services, and Andy Toy, economic development and communications director, SEAMAAC Inc.; Theresa Brabson, staff attorney, and Esther Miller, managing attorney, Legal Clinic for the Disabled; Jill Roberts, executive director, Healthy Rowhouse Project; Liz Robinson, consultant and former executive director, Energy Coordinating Agency; Mariana Chilton, professor and director, Center for Hunger-Free Communities, School of Public Health, Drexel University; Andrew Frishkoff, executive director, Philadelphia LISC; Kathleen Noonan, associate vice president of board relations, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

We are grateful to our independent peer reviewers: Carolyn T. Adams, professor emeritus, geography and urban studies, Temple University; Ira Goldstein, president of policy solutions, Reinvestment Fund; and Dionissi Aliprantis, research economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

The report does not necessarily reflect the opinions of any of the people named above or their institutions.

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**The Pew Charitable Trusts** is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life.

## Overview

Poverty is one of Philadelphia's most enduring problems. At 25.7 percent, the poverty rate is the highest among the nation's 10 largest cities. About 400,000 residents—including roughly 37 percent of the city's children under the age of 18—live below the federal poverty line, which is \$19,337 in annual income for an adult living with two children. And nearly half of all poor residents are in deep poverty, defined as 50 percent below the federal poverty line.

One factor that helps explain this high poverty rate is the extraordinary degree to which the region's poor are concentrated in the city. Philadelphia has only 26 percent of the region's residents, but it is home to 51 percent of the poor, and that gap of 25 percentage points is among the largest for any region in the country. While the suburbanization of poverty has been much-discussed nationally and there are pockets of poverty in Philadelphia's surrounding counties, the phenomenon has happened less in the Philadelphia area than in many other metropolitan areas. And at 12.9 percent, the region's poverty rate is lower than that of most of the metropolitan areas that include the nation's 10 largest cities.

This report focuses on the demographics and geography of poverty in Philadelphia and makes comparisons over time and among different cities. To do this, The Pew Charitable Trusts analyzed U.S. census data in the nation's 10 most populous cities—New York; Los Angeles; Chicago; Houston; Phoenix; Philadelphia; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego; Dallas; and San Jose, California—and the 10 poorest cities with populations of at least 350,000: Detroit; Cleveland; Fresno, California; Memphis, Tennessee; Milwaukee; Philadelphia; Miami; Tucson, Arizona; New Orleans; and Atlanta.

The data showed that poverty in Philadelphia, the only city to appear on both lists, has been evolving, largely in ways that reflect the changing makeup of the city as a whole, especially in terms of race, ethnicity, and age. Compared with years past, Philadelphia's impoverished residents are increasingly Hispanic and of working age. And poverty is spread across much of the city rather than limited to a few neighborhoods. But other elements have not changed: The city is still home to most of the region's poor, and half of them are black.

Additional findings of the analysis include:

- From 1970 to 2016, the last year for which numbers were available, Philadelphia's poverty rate rose by 10.3 percentage points while the nation's poverty rate, now at 12.7 percent, was essentially unchanged. The rising rate in Philadelphia was the result both of an increase in the number of poor people living in the city and a decrease in the number of residents who are not poor.
- Among the cities that currently qualify as the 10 most populous, the increase in poverty in Philadelphia was the steepest over that 45-year period. Among the poorest large cities, the increase was about average.
- In recent years, Philadelphia's poverty rate has been relatively stable. From 2006 to 2016, it grew by less than one percentage point, although it rose sharply for a time in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Most of the 10 largest cities had relatively small net changes in their poverty rates during this period, while many of the 10 poorest large cities had significant increases.
- Among racial and ethnic groups, Hispanics have the highest poverty rate in Philadelphia at 37.9 percent, followed by blacks at 30.8 percent.
- Over the past 45 years, poverty in the city has expanded geographically from discrete areas in North, West, and Southwest Philadelphia to much of the city; 40 percent of Philadelphians now live in census tracts with poverty rates under 20 percent. Blacks and Hispanics of all income levels are far more likely than whites to



live in areas where the poverty rate is high; poor whites tend to live in neighborhoods where the poverty rate is low.

In this report, Pew looks at poverty in Philadelphia from two statistical perspectives. One is the poverty rate, which is the percentage of any group that is poor; this is the most commonly used measure. The other is the share of the city's entire poverty-level population that is attributable to any one group, a number that reflects both the group's poverty rate and the size of its overall presence in the city. For instance, the poverty rate for individuals ages 18 to 64 was 23.4 percent in Philadelphia in 2016, slightly lower than the citywide rate of 25.7 percent. But because nearly two-thirds of city residents were in this age group, they accounted for 59.1 percent of all Philadelphians living in poverty—their share of the city's poverty population.

For those in poverty, life can be filled with struggle: finding safe, decent housing; feeding a family; and seeking work in neighborhoods where opportunities are few. And the city's high level of poverty has impacts that reach far beyond those who live it on a daily basis.

Having roughly 400,000 poor people limits the tax revenue available to support government services; increases the demand for those services; and weighs on the economic performance of the city as well as the region. Many of the topics that dominate our nation's urban conversation—including crime, health, and public education—are rooted in the economic status of cities' less well-off residents. The goal of this analysis is to inform that conversation for local policymakers and for all who care about Philadelphia and its future.

## The poverty rate

To determine whether a family and its members are living in poverty, the Census Bureau uses a dollar threshold based on the size of the family, the family's composition, and the age of the individuals. A person living alone or with an unrelated housemate is considered to be a family of one. Such a person under age 65 was considered poor in 2016 if his or her income was below \$12,486; the corresponding figure for a couple with two children was \$24,339. (See Appendix A.)

Based on that definition, Philadelphia had a poverty rate of 25.7 percent in 2016, meaning that 25.7 percent of all Philadelphians were living below the poverty line. That was the highest among the nation's 10 most populous cities. (See Table 1.) Philadelphia has held this ranking since the middle of the last decade, when Detroit, which then had and still has a higher poverty rate, fell out of the top 10 because of population loss.

The federal government began to measure poverty in 1959. By 1970, Philadelphia had a poverty rate of 15.4 percent, fourth-highest of the 10 largest cities at that time. The official poverty rate for the United States was 12.6 percent in 1970.<sup>1</sup>

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From 1970 to 2016, the city's total population fell by about 380,000, largely because of an exodus of people who were not poor. At the same time, the number of poor people increased by about 100,000.<sup>2</sup> As a result of those two phenomena, the proportion of Philadelphians living in poverty grew by 10.3 percentage points, the biggest increase among the cities currently listed as the 10 largest but a rather typical change for the large cities currently listed as the 10 poorest. (See Table 1.) This happened during a period in which poverty became more of an urban phenomenon across the U.S., even though the national rate rose by less than one point.

Table 1  
Poverty Rate Change, 1970 to 2016

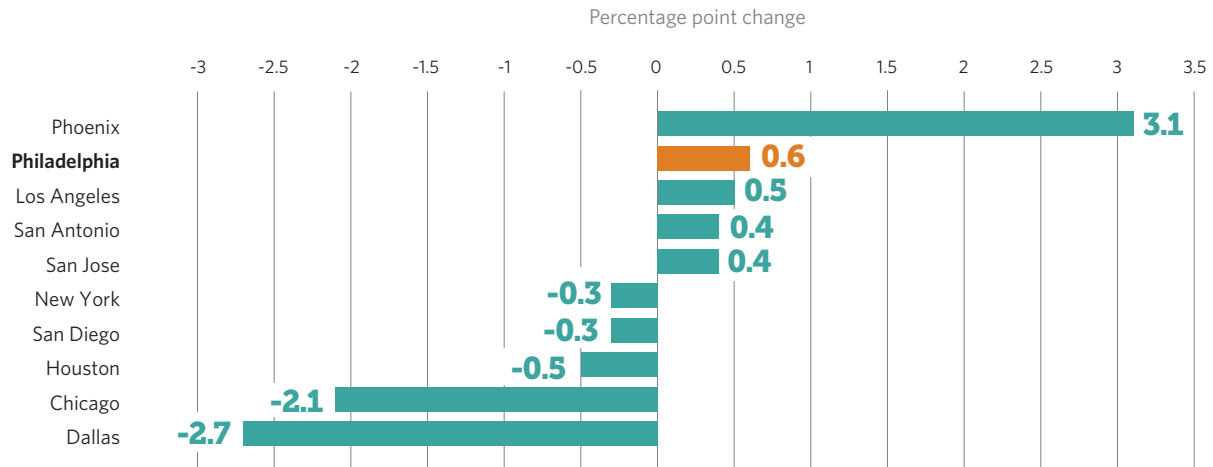
Most populous cities in 2016				Poorest large cities in 2016			
	Percentage point change	1970	2016		Percentage point change	1970	2016
Philadelphia	10.3	15.4%	25.7%	Detroit	20.8	14.9%	35.7%
Phoenix	8.5	11.8%	20.3%	Cleveland	17.7	17.3%	35%
Houston	6.7	14.1%	20.8%	Milwaukee	15.3	11.4%	26.7%
Los Angeles	6.2	13.3%	19.5%	Fresno	10.7	17.4%	28.1%
Dallas	5.9	13.5%	19.4%	Philadelphia	10.3	15.4%	25.7%
Chicago	4.6	14.5%	19.1%	Tucson	10.2	13.9%	24.1%
New York	4.0	14.9%	18.9%	Memphis	6.1	20.8%	26.9%
San Jose	2.0	8.7%	10.7%	Miami	4.3	20.6%	24.9%
San Diego	1.1	12.0%	13.1%	Atlanta	2.0	20.4%	22.4%
U.S.	0.1	12.6%	12.7%	U.S.	0.1	12.6%	12.7%
San Antonio	-3.3	21.8%	18.5%	New Orleans	-3.1	26.8%	23.7%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census, 1970; American Community Survey, 2016 one-year estimates; Current Population Survey, 1970 and 2016 annual social and economic supplements  
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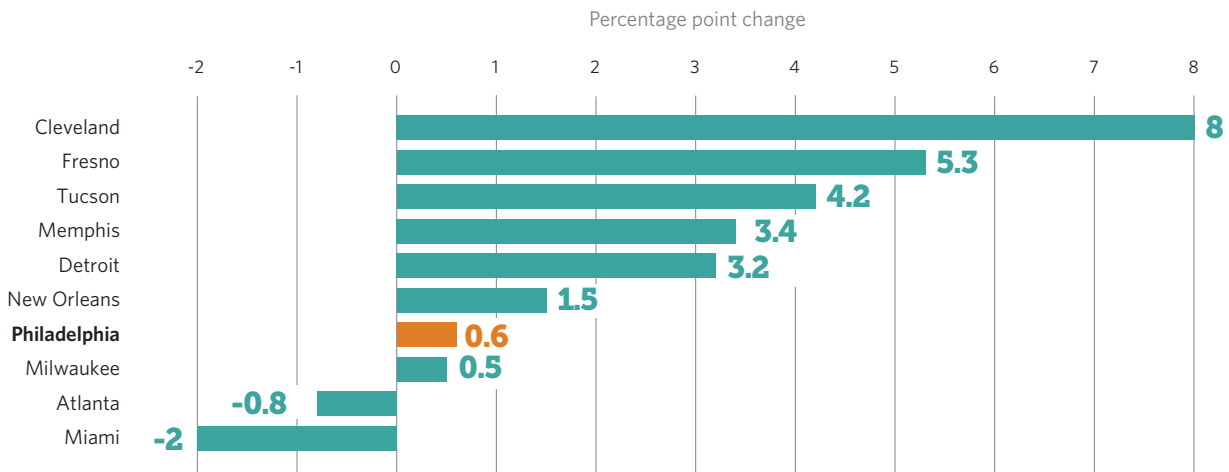
Over the last 10 years of that period, when Philadelphia's population was growing, the picture was different. From 2006 to 2016, the rate increased by less than a percentage point; in most of the 10 largest cities, the rate did not change much either, although Phoenix did record a substantial increase. Among the 10 poorest large cities, several had substantial increases; only Atlanta and Miami fared markedly better than Philadelphia in terms of the change in the poverty rate. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1  
Poverty Rate Change, 2006 to 2016

Most populous cities



Poorest large cities



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006, and one-year estimate, 2016  
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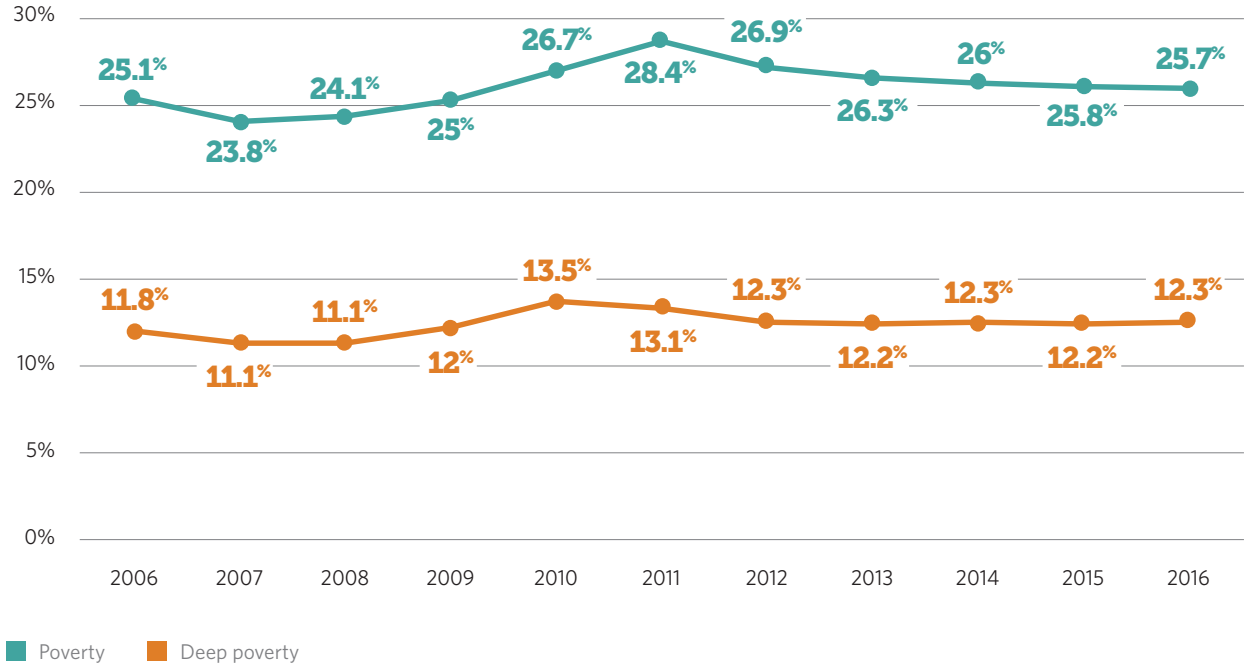
The Great Recession had a big impact on urban poverty. In Philadelphia and nearly all of the cities in this study—both big cities and high-poverty cities—the poverty rate rose sharply during and immediately after the recession and has fallen slowly since. In Philadelphia, the rate was 23.8 percent in 2007, the last year before the downturn, and peaked at 28.4 percent in 2011. Philadelphia’s 2.7 percentage point improvement since then has been slightly above the median for the 19 cities.



# Deep poverty

Beyond the overall poverty rate, Philadelphia has the largest percentage among the nation's most populous cities of residents living in deep poverty, defined by the Census Bureau as half the poverty income threshold. Among the poorest large cities, it has the sixth-highest percentage, lower than those of Milwaukee, Fresno, Memphis, Detroit, and Cleveland, and higher than those of Miami, Tucson, Atlanta, and New Orleans. The deep poverty rate in Philadelphia has generally been slightly less than half of the city's overall rate; in 2016, it was 12.3 percent. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2  
Philadelphia Poverty and Deep Poverty Rates, 2006 to 2016



Note: Poverty is determined by income and by family size and composition. People in deep poverty are living on no more than half the poverty income threshold for their family type.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates  
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## Limits of the Poverty Measure

The federal government's official poverty measure is limited in a number of ways. First, it does not take into account certain noncash benefits, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or housing vouchers. Nor does it consider such tax-related benefits as the federal earned income tax credit. Cash from earnings and public assistance are among the sources included in the measure.\*

Another concern is that the living costs built into the measure are outdated. The thresholds are based largely on the cost of a minimum diet in the early 1960s, but spending patterns for food and other goods have changed substantially since then.† And the poverty thresholds, while adjusted annually for inflation, are the same throughout the 48 contiguous states, ignoring geographic variations in the cost of living.

To address these issues, the Census Bureau in 2011 introduced the Supplemental Poverty Measure, which takes into account cost of living, spending patterns, and noncash benefits excluded from the traditional poverty measure. By this standard, the U.S. poverty rate in 2016 was 14 percent, slightly higher than the official rate of 12.7 percent. The supplemental rate is not available for cities, but it is calculated for regions of the country. In the Northeast, it was 12.4 percent; the official rate for the region was 10.8 percent.‡

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\* The Census Bureau counts the following sources in the poverty calculation: earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, assistance from outside the household, and other miscellaneous sources. <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>.

† Gordon M. Fisher, "The Development and History of the Poverty Thresholds," *Social Security Bulletin* 55, no. 4 (1992): 3-14, <http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/ssbul55&div=55&id=&page=>; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Expenditures—2016," news release, Aug. 29, 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cesan.pdf>.

‡ Liana Fox, "The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2016," U.S. Census Bureau (September 2017), <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-261.pdf>.

Table 2

## Philadelphia Poverty Rates by Age, Race, and Ethnic Background, 2016

	Percentage below poverty level	Estimated number below poverty level
<b>All residents</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>391,653</b>
<b>Age</b>		
<b>Under 18 years</b>	37.3%	126,521
<b>18 to 64 years</b>	23.4%	231,336
<b>65 years and over</b>	17.4%	33,796
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
<b>Black</b>	30.8%	199,654
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	14.8%	77,051
<b>Hispanic</b>	37.9%	84,634
<b>Asian</b>	22.9%	24,403

Note: Even though Philadelphia's population in 2016 was officially estimated at 1,567,872, the census determined the poverty status only of an estimated 1,523,651 residents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 one-year estimate  
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### The profile of poverty in Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, the extent of poverty varies by age, race, and ethnic background and is linked to a range of demographic, geographic, economic, and historical factors. (See Table 2.) The poverty rates of various groups have changed substantially since 1970, less so during the past decade.

#### Children

According to the most recent statistics, the poverty rate in Philadelphia in 2016 was 37.3 percent for children under age 18, with 17.7 percent of them living in deep poverty. The poverty rate for Hispanic children was higher, 48.6 percent, for black children it was 42.2 percent, and for Asian children it was 29.3 percent.

At 37.3 percent, the poverty rate for children in Philadelphia was nearly twice what it had been in 1970, when it was 19.3 percent.<sup>3</sup> In the past decade, the change in the city's child poverty rate was less dramatic, rising two percentage points while the city's total rate increased by less than one point. Among the 10 largest cities, this increase in child poverty was second-highest, behind only Phoenix. Among the 10 poorest large cities, the change in the child poverty rate was below the median.

## Seniors

Philadelphia's poverty rate for people age 65 and over in 2016 was 17.4 percent, far lower than the overall rate of 25.7 percent. Only about 6 percent of the city's seniors were living in deep poverty.

This is one group for which poverty has not increased. In 2016, the poverty rate for seniors in Philadelphia was slightly lower than it had been in 1970.<sup>4</sup> In the past decade, it dropped by 2.1 percentage points. Among the 10 poorest large cities, Philadelphia was one of four in which the rate for senior poverty declined.

Allen Glicksman, director of research and evaluation at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, cautioned that the overall senior rate masks higher poverty rates among frail and minority elderly populations.<sup>5</sup> That is particularly true for Hispanics, for whom the senior poverty rate was 34.1 percent. The senior poverty rate was 11.4 percent for non-Hispanic whites, 20.9 percent for blacks, and 17.5 percent for Asians.

## Working-age adults

For adults ages 18 to 64, the poverty rate in 2016 was 23.4 percent, with 11.6 percent in deep poverty.

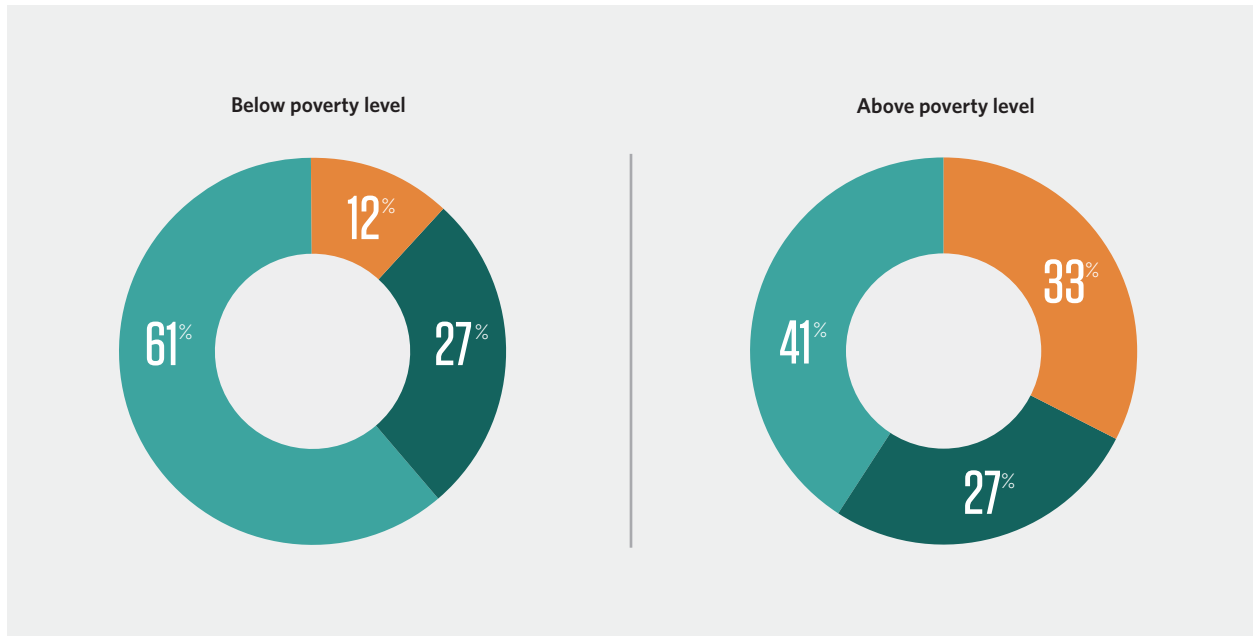
Among members of this group, as with children, the poverty rate in Philadelphia has risen dramatically since 1970. Back then, the rate for working-age adults was only 12.6 percent. The poverty rate for this group in Philadelphia increased by 1.4 percentage points from 2006 to 2016, a little more than the overall increase in poverty.

Within this age group, the poverty rate was highest among younger people. For instance, the rate was 35.6 percent for 18- to 24-year-olds, and 21.4 percent for those ages 35 to 44. By race and ethnicity, Hispanics in this age group had the highest poverty rate (32.5 percent), followed by blacks at 28.3 percent, Asians at 21.9 percent, and non-Hispanic whites at 14.9 percent.

## Households in poverty

Philadelphia's poor differ from the city's nonpoor population in the composition of households. The census defines a household as one or more individuals living in the same housing unit, regardless of the relationships among the people living there. The key differences between the poor and nonpoor in household composition are gender and marriage. Of the city's poverty households, 61 percent were headed by women in 2016, compared with 41 percent of nonpoor households. Only 12 percent of the households in poverty consisted of married couples, with or without children. The corresponding figure for the nonpoor population was 33 percent. The percentage of households headed by men was the same for the poor and the nonpoor (27 percent). (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3  
 Households by Gender and Marriage  
 Below and above poverty level



■ Households headed by married couples
 ■ Households headed by men
 ■ Households headed by women

Nearly two-thirds of poor households are headed by women.

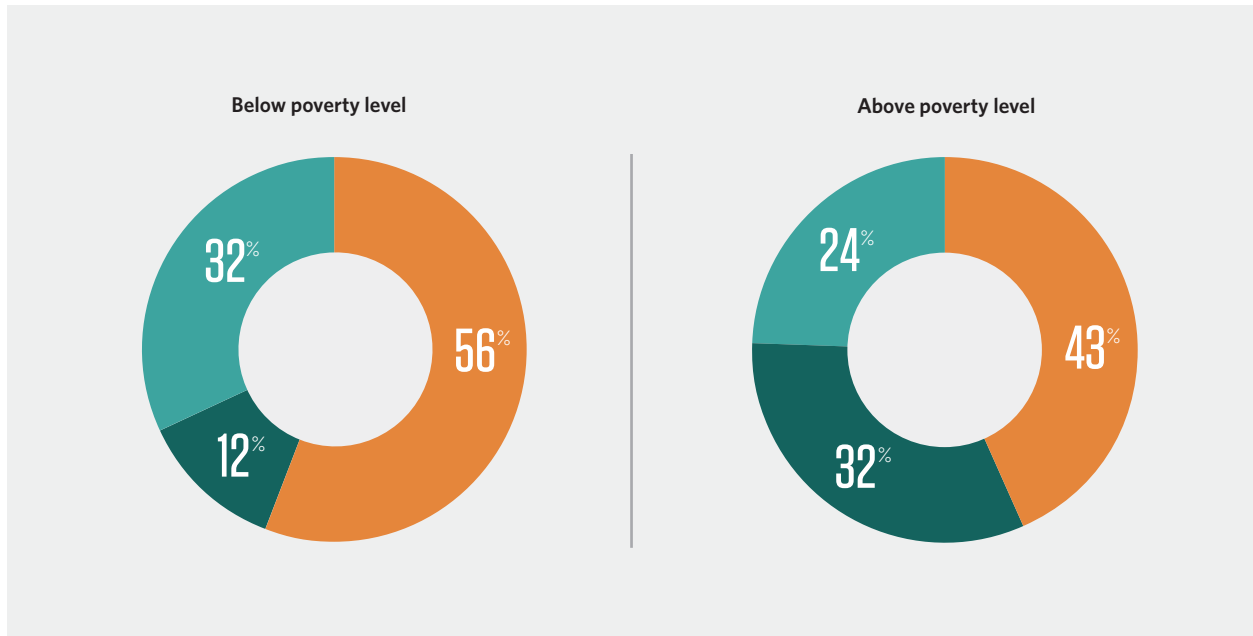
Note: Totals may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 one-year estimate  
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Another way of looking at households and poverty is by examining the presence of children. In 2016, 32 percent of poor households, accounting for 51 percent of the poor population, consisted of families with children. Sixty-five percent of those poor families with children were headed by women. Among nonpoor households, 24 percent were families with children, with 39 percent of them headed by women. Most poor families with children in Philadelphia were small; 60 percent had one or two children at home, and only 4 percent had more than four. Even so, these households tended to be larger than their nonpoor counterparts: 86 percent of the latter had one or two children, and less than 1 percent had more than four.

In addition, the city's poor households differed from the nonpoor in the share that were families with no children present. Among poor households, 12 percent were in this category; among the nonpoor, the figure was 32 percent. And poor households were more likely than nonpoor—56 percent to 43 percent—to fall into the “nonfamily” category, meaning they consisted of people living alone or with nonrelatives. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4  
 Households With and Without Children  
 Below and above poverty level



■ Nonfamily households   
 ■ Households composed of families without children   
 ■ Households composed of families with children

Compared with nonpoor households, households below the poverty level are more likely to include children.

Note: Totals may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 one-year estimate

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### College and Graduate Students

The presence of large numbers of college and graduate students can increase a city's poverty rate in ways that distort the true picture. Although the census does not include students living in dormitories in its poverty counts, it does include those living off campus. In 2016, these individuals made up 9.3 percent of the city's poor population, or about 36,400 people. Some of them may have been poor before becoming students, and others have access to economic resources that do not show up as income.

Among the 10 poorest large cities, Philadelphia was fifth in the share of its poor classified as college or graduate students; among the 10 largest cities, it ranked sixth. If all college or graduate students were taken out of the poverty rate calculations, Philadelphia's overall rate would drop less than one percentage point, from 25.7 to 25.2 percent.



## Hispanic poverty

Of the city's major racial or ethnic groups, Hispanics had the highest poverty rate in 2016 at 37.9 percent. That figure has been stable over time; it was 38 percent in 1970. But the number of Hispanics in the city has grown dramatically since 1970, from about 45,000 to about 226,000.<sup>6</sup> Those two factors—the relatively steady poverty rate and the big increase in the size of the community—caused the number of Hispanics in poverty in Philadelphia to rise fivefold from 1970 to 2016 and the Hispanic share of the city's poverty population to increase from 5.9 percent to 21.6 percent. The national Hispanic poverty rate, which is 21 percent, is 2.5 percentage points lower now than it was in 1970.

Philadelphia's Hispanic poverty rate is the highest among both the nation's most populous cities and its poorest large cities, and the gap between the Hispanic rate and the overall rate is the largest. In Philadelphia, census data show that the Hispanic unemployment rate is substantially higher than the citywide rate and that 36.7 percent of the city's Hispanics over age 25 have not completed high school; the citywide high school noncompletion rate is 16.8 percent.

Hispanic poverty in Philadelphia is largely a story of Puerto Rican poverty. Sixty-one percent of all Hispanics in the city have Puerto Rican roots, as do 67 percent of those living below the poverty line. (Another 8 percent of the Hispanic poor are Dominican, and 6 percent are Mexican.) Philadelphia has the second-largest Puerto Rican population in the nation, behind only New York City.

Philadelphia's Puerto Rican population began to grow after World War II, drawn to the area through federal workforce programs designed to bring in needed agricultural and industrial workers. Some of the newcomers found blue-collar jobs and were able to buy homes. But by the 1960s, factories in the city began to close at a rapid pace.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequent generations of Puerto Ricans grew up in city neighborhoods with low-quality schools and few jobs. Carmen Whalen, a professor at Williams College who has studied Philadelphia's Puerto Rican population, said the city's economy tends to offer low-wage jobs that may not pay enough to move individuals out of poverty, or high-paid positions for which few of them are qualified.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, experts say, many of today's Puerto Rican poor youth have little faith that they can get out of poverty because they see few examples in their community of people who have done it. "The community is embedded in structural poverty," said Johnny Irizarry, a Puerto Rican scholar and director of the Center for Hispanic Excellence: La Casa Latina at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup>

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Philadelphia's Hispanic poverty rate is the highest among both the nation's most populous cities and its poorest large cities, and the gap between the Hispanic rate and the overall rate is the largest.

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## Poverty among black residents

Of the city's major racial and ethnic groups, the poverty rate among black residents was second-highest at 30.8 percent in 2016. That rate was higher than those in eight of the nation's 10 largest cities and about the same as in the ninth, Chicago. Among the poorest large cities, Philadelphia's black poverty rate was second-lowest, with only Tucson having a lower rate.

Philadelphia's black poverty rate has risen since 1970, when it was 26 percent, 9 points below the national rate for blacks. From 1970 to 2016, the national poverty rate for blacks dropped more than 11 percentage points while Philadelphia's rose by just over 5 points.

The poverty rate for blacks in Philadelphia was less than one point lower in 2016 than it was in 2006, although there was some volatility in the rate during that decade.

In some ways, the recent poverty history of blacks in Philadelphia is similar to that of Hispanics—including the change in employment opportunities following the deindustrialization that occurred in the city in the latter half of the 20th century. By 1990, the service sector, which included many lower-paying jobs, had replaced manufacturing as the leading source of employment in Philadelphia and a number of other cities that now have high poverty rates. A 2010 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis noted that blacks continued to migrate to old manufacturing cities even as manufacturing jobs and members of other racial groups were leaving.<sup>10</sup> This history helps explain the high proportion of black residents living in formerly industrial, high-poverty cities such as Philadelphia.

## The foreign born

Foreign-born residents, who made up 14.8 percent of Philadelphia's total population in 2016, had a poverty rate of 23.8 percent, which is slightly less than that of the city as a whole. The rate is lower for naturalized citizens (19.8 percent) than for foreign-born residents who are not citizens (27.6 percent). Census data show that immigrants from Latin America and Asia had the highest poverty rates—24 and 22.6 percent, respectively—followed by those from Europe (16.1 percent); statistically reliable numbers for African-born immigrants were not available. The data do not distinguish between immigrants here legally and those who are unauthorized.

## The makeup of Philadelphia's poverty population

Another way to look at poverty in Philadelphia is to see what percentages of the overall poor population belong to various demographic groups. About half of Philadelphia's poor are blacks. About one-fifth are Hispanics, and another fifth are non-Hispanic whites, with Asians accounting for most of the rest. Two-thirds of the city's poor have no more than a high school education, and nearly 60 percent are working-age adults. Fifty-five percent are female.

These proportions differ from the population as a whole in a number of respects. For instance, blacks, Hispanics, children, and adults with no more than a high school education are present in greater percentages in the poverty population than in the city as a whole. Whites, seniors, working-age adults, and college graduates are present in lower percentages. (See Table 3.)

Table 3  
Demographic Makeup of Philadelphia's Poor

	Share of total population	Share of poor population	Difference in share
<b>Age</b>			
<b>Under 18</b>	22.1%	32.3%	10.2
<b>18-64</b>	65.1%	59.1%	-6.0
<b>65+</b>	12.9%	8.6%	-4.3
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Male</b>	47.4%	44.6%	-2.8
<b>Female</b>	52.6%	55.4%	2.8
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
<b>Black</b>	42.2%	51.0%	8.8
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	34.6%	19.7%	-14.9
<b>Hispanic</b>	14.4%	21.6%	7.2
<b>Asian</b>	7.1%	6.2%	-0.9
<b>Education</b>			
<b>Less than high school</b>	16.8%	28.6%	11.8
<b>High school diploma</b>	31.8%	39.1%	7.3
<b>Some college, associate degree</b>	22.9%	19.7%	-3.2
<b>Bachelor's degree or higher</b>	28.6%	12.6%	-16.0

Note: Shares represent proportions of the population for whom poverty status is determined. Education figures are for individuals age 25 and over. Some totals do not add up to 100 percent because of rounding and other factors.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 one-year estimate  
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## Changes in Philadelphia's poverty population

In the past decade, the makeup of poverty in Philadelphia has changed, particularly when viewed by age, race, and ethnicity.

The share of the city's overall poverty population that consists of working-age adults has grown significantly while the proportions of seniors and children have fallen. For seniors, the main reason for the change was a drop in their poverty rate. For children, the key factor was that there were fewer children in Philadelphia, poor and

nonpoor, in 2006 than in 2016. Among racial and ethnic groups, the Hispanic share has increased substantially; the Asian share has stayed about the same; and the shares of blacks and non-Hispanic whites have fallen. (See Table 4.)

Table 4

## Change in Share of the Overall Population and the Poverty Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2006 to 2016

	Share of the total population			Share of the poor population		
	2006	2016	Percentage point change	2006	2016	Percentage point change
<b>Age</b>						
<b>Under 18 years</b>	25.9%	22.1%	-3.8	36.3%	32.3%	-4
<b>18 to 64 years</b>	61.4%	65.1%	3.7	53.8%	59.1%	5.3
<b>65 years and over</b>	12.8%	12.9%	0.1	9.9%	8.6%	-1.3
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
<b>Black</b>	44.3%	42.2%	-2.1	56.1%	51.0%	-5.1
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	38.7%	34.6%	-4.1	21.2%	19.7%	-1.5
<b>Hispanic</b>	10.5%	14.4%	3.9	16.4%	21.6%	5.2
<b>Asian</b>	5.3%	7.1%	1.8	6.1%	6.2%	0.1

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006, and one-year estimate, 2016  
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As the data in Table 4 indicate, these shifts in the makeup of Philadelphia’s poor population have generally tracked the changes in the city’s overall population, though not in all cases. The shares of children under 18, working-age adults, and Hispanics in poverty changed about as much as did their shares of the overall population. On the other hand, the share of blacks in poverty declined by 5.1 percentage points, substantially more than the 2.1-point drop in their share of the overall population. Non-Hispanic whites declined less as a share of the poor than of the population as a whole.

## Employment and poverty

For the most part, families live in poverty when adults are unable to work because of infirmity, age, or family responsibilities; when they choose not to work; or when they fail to earn enough money to get above the poverty threshold. Nearly a third of poor adults in Philadelphia (30.1 percent) reported that they were working in 2016, according to the census; the rest were unemployed or not in the workforce. Research by the Brookings Institution found that employment had the largest impact on poverty compared with factors such as marital status, education, family size, and the level of welfare benefits.<sup>11</sup>

## The changing nature of work

In 1970, when Philadelphia's poverty rate was more than 10 points lower than it was in 2016, industrial production and other blue-collar occupations made up the largest share of the city's jobs. By 2016, the number of Philadelphians working in such jobs had fallen by more than half. In 2016 dollars, median annual earnings for male Philadelphians over age 16 were \$48,460 in 1970 compared with \$36,210 now, while earnings for women increased from \$26,420 to \$31,505.<sup>12</sup>

Over the same period, the number of Philadelphians working in management and professional positions grew 85 percent. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, most of these jobs require a bachelor's or higher degree, which 87 percent of the city's poor residents do not have.<sup>13</sup> Another sector, service employment, which includes food preparation, grew by 56 percent. Most of this work does not require advanced education, and the pay is relatively low. Of the 10 sales and service job categories with the most employees in Philadelphia and Delaware County in May 2016, all had median annual earnings below \$29,250.<sup>14</sup>

In Philadelphia, as elsewhere, those with higher education levels tend to be better equipped to get high-paying jobs and to avoid poverty. (See Table 5.) For Philadelphians age 25 and over, the poverty rate is 35.7 percent for those without a high school education, 25.5 percent for those with a high school diploma or equivalent, 17.6 percent for those with some college or an associate degree, and 9 percent for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 5

### Median Income for Philadelphians Age 25 and Over by Level of Education, 2016

Level of education	Median income
Less than high school graduate	\$21,864
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	\$26,323
Some college or associate degree	\$31,639
Bachelor's degree	\$47,496
Graduate or professional degree	\$60,593

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 one-year estimate  
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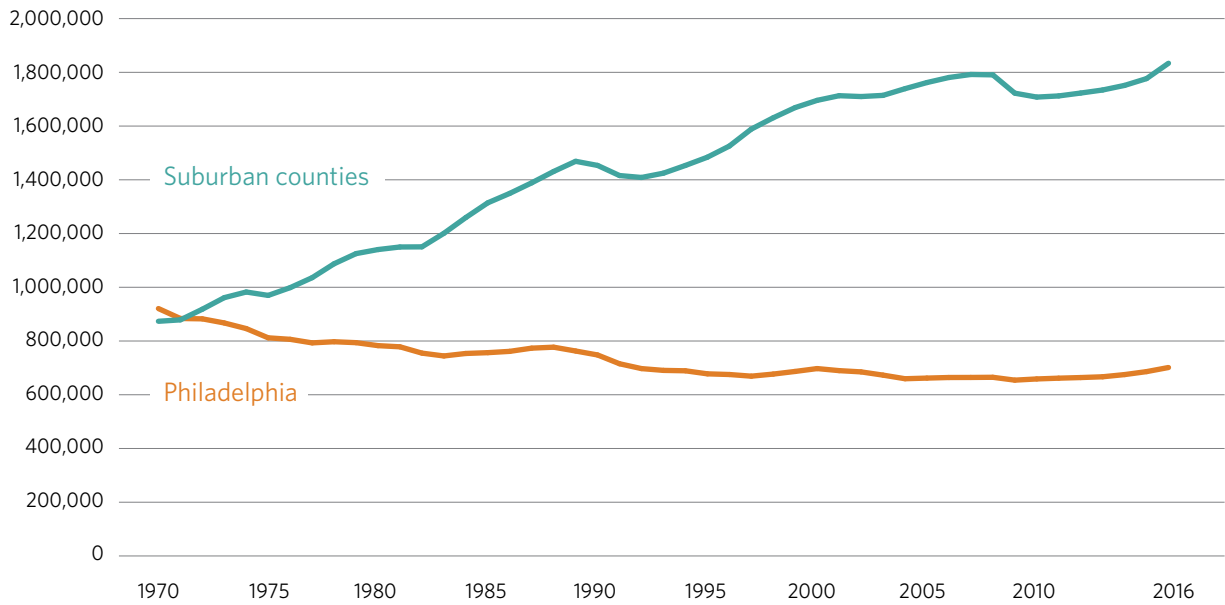
## Suburbanization of jobs

Coinciding with the growth in poverty in Philadelphia has been the movement of jobs from the city to the suburbs. Since 1970, the number of jobs in Philadelphia has declined substantially, although it has increased somewhat in recent years. At the same time, total employment has more than doubled in the seven suburban Pennsylvania and New Jersey counties closest to Philadelphia. That combination—fewer jobs in the city and more in the

suburbs—has made it harder for many city residents to find work.<sup>15</sup> (See Figure 5.) In addition, overall job growth in the region has been slow compared with the nation as a whole. “The key driver of poverty is a lack of jobs and good jobs,” said Robert DeFina, professor of sociology at Villanova University.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 5

## Number of Jobs in Philadelphia and Suburban Counties, 1970-2016



The total number of jobs in the city fell 24 percent from 1970 to 2016 while employment increased by 110 percent in the suburbs. Since 2010, the number of jobs in the city has been going up.

Note: Suburban data are for Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties in Pennsylvania and Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties in New Jersey.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, State and Area Employment, Hours, and Earnings

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## The geography of poverty

In the Philadelphia metropolitan region, the poor are more highly concentrated in the city itself than is the case in nearly all of the other regions studied in this report.<sup>17</sup> Poor whites tend to be less concentrated within the city limits than other racial groups. Within Philadelphia, the poor, particularly those who are black or Hispanic, tend to live in areas of concentrated poverty.

### Poverty in the region

Philadelphia is a high-poverty city in a relatively low-poverty region. Of the regions incorporating the 19 cities studied in this report, only four had lower 2016 regional poverty rates than metropolitan Philadelphia’s 12.9 percent, and of those, only San Jose has a substantially lower rate. Of the metropolitan areas incorporating the 10 poorest large cities, Philadelphia has the lowest poverty rate, although it was virtually the same as that of the Atlanta region. Poverty in the Philadelphia region has remained inside the city to a striking degree. Within the



city, the poor are largely found in communities with high levels of poverty, and the number of neighborhoods characterized by poverty is increasing. (See Table 6).

Table 6  
Poverty Rates for the Metropolitan Areas That Include the Most Populous and Poorest Large Cities, 2016

Metro areas with the most populous cities		Metro areas with the poorest large cities	
	Percentage		Percentage
San Jose	9.4%	Philadelphia	12.9%
San Diego	12.3%	Atlanta	13.1%
Chicago	12.4%	Milwaukee	13.9%
Dallas	12.7%	Cleveland	14.5%
Philadelphia	12.9%	Detroit	14.9%
New York	13.5%	Miami	15.4%
Houston	14.8%	New Orleans	17.0%
San Antonio	15%	Tucson	18.4%
Los Angeles	15%	Memphis	19.4%
Phoenix	15%	Fresno	25.6%

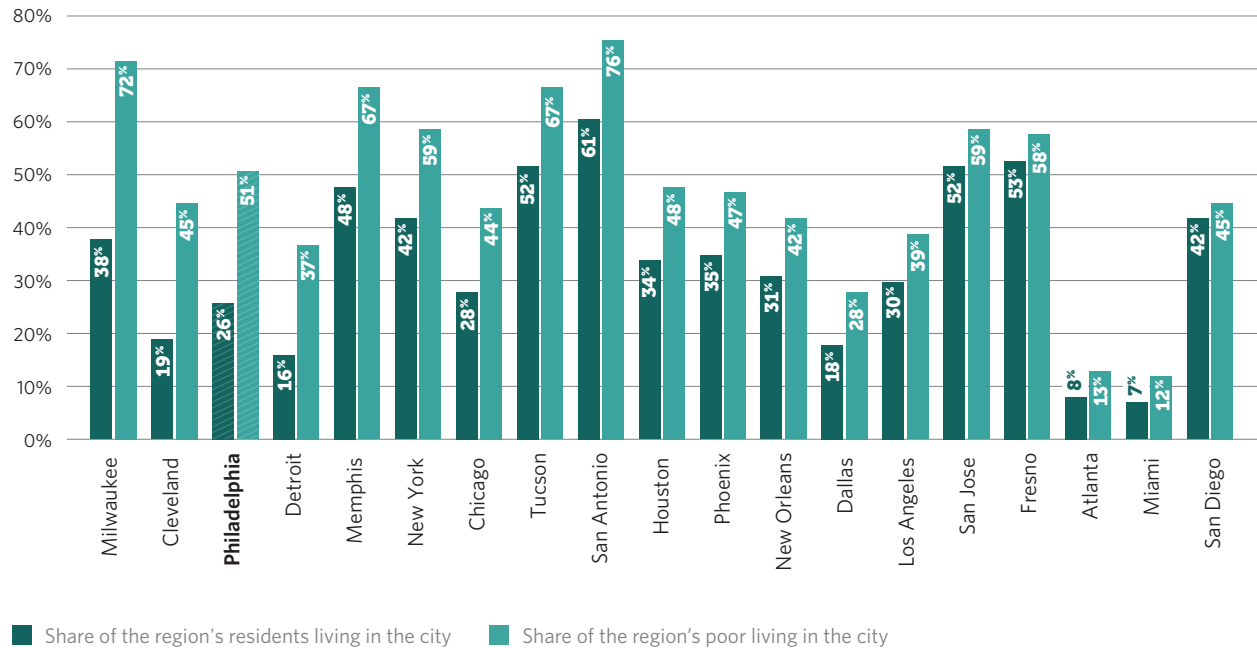
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016  
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## City vs. suburbs

Another way of looking at poverty within these metropolitan areas is by examining the share of the poor who live in the core city as opposed to the rest of each region. In the Philadelphia region, the poor are more highly concentrated in the city than they are in nearly all of the other regions studied in this report. Although the city has 26 percent of the region’s residents, it accounts for 51 percent of the region’s poor, a difference of 25 percentage points. Only the Milwaukee region has a significantly larger city-suburban gap, while Cleveland’s gap is slightly larger than Philadelphia’s. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6

## Core City's Share of Each Metropolitan Area's Poor and Total Populations, 2016



All 19 cities in this report were home to a higher share of their region's poor than of their region's overall population. In this graphic, regions are arranged by the size of the gap between the share of a region's residents who live in the city and the share of the region's poor who live in the city. Milwaukee has the largest gap, San Diego the smallest.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016  
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In the Philadelphia region, poor whites are less concentrated within the core city than are the poor of other racial groups. Twenty-nine percent of the region's poor whites live within the city limits, compared with 57 percent of poor Hispanics and 69 percent of poor blacks.

To be sure, there are more poor people living in the suburbs, both in Philadelphia and elsewhere, than there once were. Since 1970, the number of poor residents living outside the core city of the region has increased in each of the 19 metropolitan areas studied.<sup>18</sup>

In some of the regions, including Philadelphia, the growth in the number of poor people living in the suburbs has been outpaced by the growth of the suburban population as a whole. The percentage of the Philadelphia region's poor living outside the city increased by five percentage points, while the share of all residents living outside the city grew by 11 points.

In other regions, including Chicago, Atlanta, and Cleveland, the increase in suburban poor has been greater than overall suburban growth. In the Chicago area, for instance, the number of poor living beyond the city limits tripled from 1970 to 2015, while the overall suburban population increased by 50 percent. The contrast between the Philadelphia and Chicago areas is depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 7

## Concentration of Poor Residents in the Philadelphia and Chicago Regions, 1970 and 2015



These maps of the Philadelphia and Chicago metropolitan areas highlight census tracts with at least 1,000 residents living below the poverty line, with the cities of Philadelphia and Chicago outlined. In both regions, the number of poor residents living in the suburbs has increased since 1970, but the suburbanization of poverty has been far less pronounced in Philadelphia than in Chicago.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2011-2015; Brown University Longitudinal Tract Database  
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## Factors That Influence Where the Poor Live in the Philadelphia Region

In conversations with experts and reviews of literature, the following elements emerged as possible explanations for why poverty is more concentrated in the core cities of some regions, including the Philadelphia area, than others.

**Transportation.** The city of Philadelphia has an extensive transit system. In the region's suburbs, the network is less complete. In addition, the cost of car ownership in the region is among the highest in the nation, increasing the value of the city's public transit for families with limited financial resources.\*

**Housing costs.** In the regions that include seven of the nation's 10 largest cities, housing is less expensive in the suburbs than in the city.† In the Philadelphia region, however, the least expensive homes are found within the city limits. In addition, a relatively high 28 percent of poor households in Philadelphia own their homes, giving people a reason to stay put.‡

**Land use regulations.** Land use in the Philadelphia area is highly regulated—more so than in 43 of 47 regions studied by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania—and particularly in the suburbs.\*\* Studies indicate that such regulations impede development of affordable housing there.††

Assessing the impact of these factors—and how they interact—is beyond the scope of this report.

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\* Deutsche Bank, "Pricing the Car of Tomorrow, Part 2—Autonomous Vehicles, Vehicle Ownership, and Transportation" (March 28, 2016); Edward Glaeser, Matthew Kahn and Jordan Rappaport, "Why Do the Poor Live in Cities? The Role of Public Transportation," *Journal of Urban Economics* 63 (2008) doi:10.1016/j.jue.2006.12.004.

† Zillow, "United States Home Prices and Values," accessed March 20, 2017, <https://www.zillow.com/home-values>. Price refers to median price per square foot.

‡ According to data from the American Housing Survey, the homeownership rate among poor households in Philadelphia has long been the highest among large cities in the United States. This number has recently been on the decline, however. From 2014 to 2015, the rate dropped five percentage points, tying Detroit and falling behind Miami for the first time.

\*\* Joseph Gyourko, Albert Saiz, and Anita Summers, "A New Measure of the Local Regulatory Environment for Housing Markets: The Wharton Residential Land Use Regulatory Index," *Urban Studies* 45, no 3 (2008): 693-729 doi:10.1177/0042098007087341; Joseph Gyourko and Anita A. Summers, "Residential Land Use Regulation in the Philadelphia MSA," working paper, Zell-Lurie Real Estate Center, the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (Dec. 1, 2006).

†† Sanford Ikeda and Emily Washington, "How Land-Use Regulation Undermines Affordable Housing," Mercatus Research, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia, November 2015.

## Poverty areas within Philadelphia

Over the past several decades, social scientists have shown renewed interest in the effects of concentrated poverty.<sup>19</sup> High-poverty neighborhoods have been associated with elevated blight and crime as well as decreased psychological and physical health at the community level. For children, growing up in a poor neighborhood is linked to lower educational attainment and incomes in adulthood.<sup>20</sup> The Census Bureau considers any tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher to be a poverty area. Fifty-nine percent of Philadelphia's census tracts are poverty areas, according to this threshold.

In a study of cities, it is difficult to analyze the spatial dynamics of poverty using only this standard, because so many urban tracts meet or exceed it. Research focused on urban policy has instead used a 40 percent threshold.<sup>21</sup> In this analysis, we use both thresholds and the following terms:

- **Poverty area:** A census tract where the poverty rate is 20 percent or higher.
- **High-poverty area:** A tract where the poverty rate is 40 percent or higher.
- **Racially or ethnically concentrated high-poverty area:** A tract where the poverty rate is 40 percent or higher and where residents in a single racial or ethnic group make up at least 50 percent of the total and poor populations.<sup>22</sup>

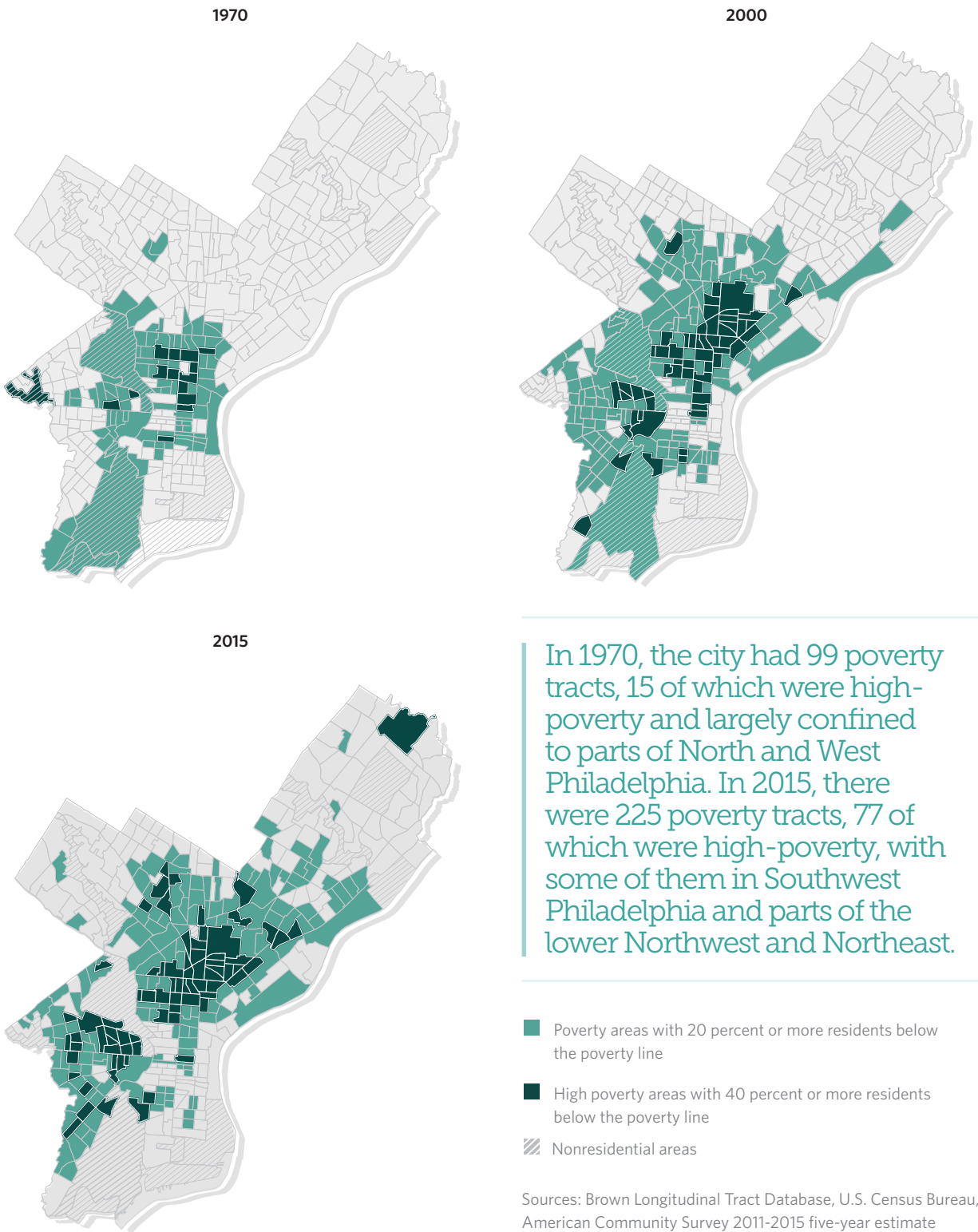
Figure 8 shows the poverty and high-poverty areas in Philadelphia in 1970, 2000, and 2015. In 1970, the city had 99 poverty tracts, 15 of which were high-poverty and largely confined to parts of North and West Philadelphia. In 2015, there were 225 poverty tracts, 77 of which were high-poverty, with some in Southwest Philadelphia and parts of the lower Northwest and Northeast. Poverty has become a defining characteristic of a large part of the city; much of this change took place before 2000. The spread of poverty from compact clusters to larger dispersed areas is a common trend among the cities studied in this report.

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In the Philadelphia metropolitan region, the poor are more highly concentrated in the city itself than is the case in nearly all of the other regions studied in this report. Poor whites tend to be less concentrated within the city limits than other racial groups. Within Philadelphia, the poor, particularly those who are black or Hispanic, tend to live in areas of concentrated poverty.

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Figure 8  
 Poverty Areas in Philadelphia, 1970, 2000, and 2015





Sixty percent of all Philadelphians and 82 percent of the poor live in poverty areas. Forty-six percent of the poor live in areas where the poverty rate is 20 to 39 percent, and 36 percent live in tracts where the rate is 40 percent or higher. (See Table 7.) This is a stark change from 1970, when 25 percent of all Philadelphians and 53 percent of the poor lived in such areas.

Table 7  
Share of Philadelphians Living in Poverty and Nonpoverty Areas

	Living in nonpoverty areas	Living in poverty areas	
		20-39% poverty	40+% poverty
<b>All residents</b>	40%	41%	19%
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	69%	26%	5%
<b>Black</b>	22%	53%	25%
<b>Hispanic</b>	20%	41%	39%
<b>Asian</b>	43%	46%	12%
<b>Residents below poverty level</b>	18%	46%	36%
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	44%	38%	18%
<b>Black</b>	11%	51%	38%
<b>Hispanic</b>	8%	37%	54%
<b>Asian</b>	21%	58%	21%
<b>Residents above poverty level</b>	48%	39%	13%
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	73%	24%	3%
<b>Black</b>	26%	54%	19%
<b>Hispanic</b>	29%	43%	28%
<b>Asian</b>	51%	41%	8%

Note: Some figures do not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2011-2015

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As Table 7 shows, 89 percent of the city's poor blacks live in census tracts where the poverty rate is 20 percent or higher, along with 73 percent of black residents with income above the poverty line. Twenty-five percent of all black residents live in high-poverty areas, as do 38 percent of the black poor.

Ninety-one percent of the city's poor Hispanic residents and 71 percent of those above the poverty line live in poverty areas. Thirty-nine percent of all Hispanics live in high-poverty areas, as do 54 percent of the Hispanic poor.

Forty-three percent of Asians in the city live in census tracts where the poverty rate is below 20 percent. This rate is slightly above the citywide average. Fifty-eight percent of poor Asians live in neighborhoods where the poverty rate is 20 to 39 percent, and the remainder are evenly split between high-poverty and low-poverty census tracts.

On the other hand, 69 percent of non-Hispanic whites live in areas where the poverty rate is lower than 20 percent. Forty-four percent of poor whites live in nonpoverty areas, compared with 11 percent of blacks and 8 percent of Hispanics. Only 26 percent of nonpoor blacks and 29 percent of nonpoor Hispanics live in such areas.

## Racially and ethnically concentrated poverty

Many of the city's high-poverty areas—places with poverty rates of at least 40 percent—also qualify as racially or ethnically concentrated, meaning that one group accounts for at least half of the total population.

Twenty-nine percent of Philadelphia's poor blacks live in racially concentrated poverty. These areas can be found in many parts of North and West Philadelphia. (See Figure 9.)

Concentrated poverty areas for Hispanics are clustered in eastern North Philadelphia and the lower Northeast. Although there are fewer such areas for Hispanics than for blacks, the share of poor Hispanics who live in them (40 percent) is higher. In fact, this level of concentration of poor Hispanics is higher than in most of the other cities studied for this report.<sup>23</sup>

Poor white residents are more widely dispersed. Only 5 percent of them live in areas of racially concentrated poverty, and those are adjacent to university campuses in North and West Philadelphia. This suggests that a large proportion of the individuals living there are college or graduate students rather than families and individuals for whom poverty is often a long-term condition.

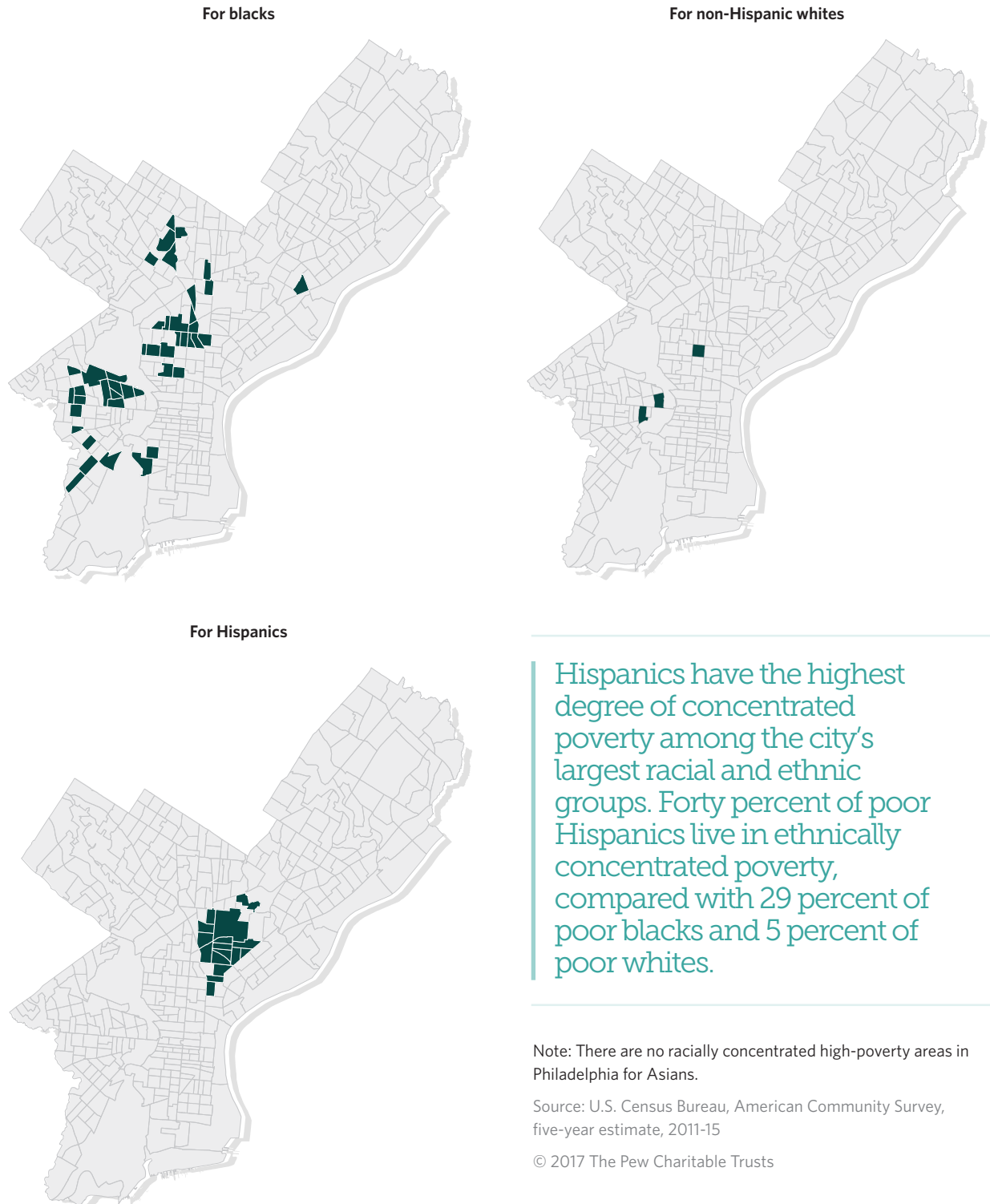
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Many of the city's high-poverty areas—places with poverty rates of at least 40 percent—also qualify as racially or ethnically concentrated, meaning that one group accounts for at least half of the total population.

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Figure 9

## Racially or Ethnically Concentrated High-Poverty Areas in Philadelphia



Hispanics have the highest degree of concentrated poverty among the city's largest racial and ethnic groups. Forty percent of poor Hispanics live in ethnically concentrated poverty, compared with 29 percent of poor blacks and 5 percent of poor whites.

Note: There are no racially concentrated high-poverty areas in Philadelphia for Asians.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimate, 2011-15

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## Conclusion

For years, Philadelphia's high poverty rate has been a focus of attention in the city. Poverty is a heavy burden on individuals, families, and the community as a whole. High poverty rates diminish tax revenue, place added demand on public services, and undercut economic growth. Patrick Harker, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, has written: "It is not just a moral imperative to ensure everyone has a fair shot at success, but there is also a practical argument: Regions are best off when all their communities do well."<sup>24</sup>

Some individuals do manage to move out of poverty in Philadelphia, but many others are hindered by an economy that largely generates two kinds of jobs: low-paid service jobs that do not support a family or high-salary positions that require skills and training that most poor people lack or have a difficult time obtaining.

In the past decade, a lot has changed in Philadelphia. After a half-century of population decline, the city's population has grown, gotten younger, and become more diverse with an influx of immigrants. The nature of the poverty population in Philadelphia has changed as well, with Hispanics and working-age adults representing higher shares of those who are poor.

What has not changed is Philadelphia's claim to an unwanted title: the poorest of the nation's 10 largest cities.

### Appendix A

## Poverty Thresholds for 2016 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under Age 18

Size of family unit	Related children under 18								
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
<b>One person (unrelated individual)</b>									
Under 65 years	\$12,486								
65 years and over	\$11,511								
<b>Two people</b>									
Householder under 65 years	\$16,072	\$16,543							
Householder 65 years and over	\$14,507	\$16,480							
<b>Three people</b>	\$18,774	\$19,318	\$19,337						
<b>Four people</b>	\$24,755	\$25,160	\$24,339	\$24,424					
<b>Five people</b>	\$29,854	\$30,288	\$29,360	\$28,643	\$28,205				
<b>Six people</b>	\$34,337	\$34,473	\$33,763	\$33,082	\$32,070	\$31,470			
<b>Seven people</b>	\$39,509	\$39,756	\$38,905	\$38,313	\$37,208	\$35,920	\$34,507		
<b>Eight people</b>	\$44,188	\$44,578	\$43,776	\$43,072	\$42,075	\$40,809	\$39,491	\$39,156	
<b>Nine people or more</b>	\$53,155	\$53,413	\$52,702	\$52,106	\$51,127	\$49,779	\$48,561	\$48,259	\$46,400

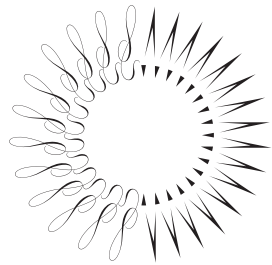
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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## Endnotes

- 1 The 12.6 poverty rate for 1970 comes from the Current Population Survey, which is the source of the official poverty rate for the U.S., at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html>, Table 9. The decennial census, which uses different sampling techniques, reported a national poverty rate of 13.7 in 1970.
- 2 A number of older, manufacturing-based cities experienced similar changes during those 45 years. Five other cities among the 10 largest in 1970—Washington, Chicago, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Detroit—had both smaller overall populations and higher poverty rates in 2016.
- 3 The child poverty rate for 1970 was based upon the poverty status in 1969 for children ages 5 to 17 living with parents or other relatives, the only data available. In 2016, the poverty rate for children ages 5 to 17 was 37.3 percent.
- 4 The 1970 senior poverty rate for Philadelphia of 18.1 percent is found in U.S. Census Bureau, “1970 Decennial Census, Poverty Status in 1969 of Families and Persons for Areas and Places: 1970,” Table 90.
- 5 Pew interview with Allen Glicksman, director of research and evaluation, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, Dec. 6, 2016.
- 6 Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States,” U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (February 2005), <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/twps0076.html>.
- 7 Carmen Whalen, *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Workers and Postwar Economies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).
- 8 Pew interview with Carmen Whalen, history and Latino and Latina studies professor, Williams College, Oct. 25, 2016.
- 9 Pew interview with Johnny Irizarry, director, Center for Hispanic Excellence: La Casa Latina, University of Pennsylvania, Sept. 30, 2016.
- 10 Dan A. Black, Natalia Kolesnikova, and Lowell J. Taylor, “The Economic Progress of African Americans in Urban Areas: A Tale of 14 Cities,” *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review* 92, no. 5 (2010), 353-79, <https://research.stlouisfed.org/publications/review/2010/09/01/the-economic-progress-of-african-americans-in-urban-areas-a-tale-of-14-cities/>.
- 11 Isabel V. Sawhill and Ron Haskins, “Work and Marriage: The Way to End Poverty and Welfare,” Brookings Institution (Sept. 1, 2003), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/work-and-marriage-the-way-to-end-poverty-and-welfare/>.
- 12 U.S. Census Bureau, “1970 Decennial Census, Occupation and Earnings for Counties,” Table 122. Adjusted for inflation using Consumer Price Index calculator, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- 13 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Education and Training Assignments by Detailed Occupation, 2014,” [https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_table\\_112.htm](https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_112.htm).
- 14 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Employment Statistics,” May 2016.
- 15 Current and recent employment data for the counties can be found at [https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/pa\\_philadelphia\\_msa.htm#eag](https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/pa_philadelphia_msa.htm#eag). Data from years before 1990 are at [https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/SAU4261600000001?output\\_view=data](https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/SAU4261600000001?output_view=data) and [https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/SAU4261610000001?output\\_view=data](https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/SAU4261610000001?output_view=data).
- 16 Pew interview with Robert DeFina, sociology professor, Villanova University, Dec. 1, 2016.
- 17 The regional definition used for this analysis is the 11-county metropolitan statistical area, established by the Census Bureau, which includes Cecil County, Maryland, and New Castle County, Delaware, as well as five counties in Pennsylvania and four in New Jersey.
- 18 Changes in regional populations were calculated using historic data from the Brown University Longitudinal Tract Database and American Community Survey 2011-2015 five-year data. Only census tracts that had data recorded for 1970 were used in the comparison.
- 19 William J. Wilson’s book *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) is largely credited with the increased interest in concentrated poverty since the 1980s.
- 20 George C. Galster, “The Mechanism(s) of Neighborhood Effects: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications,” paper for presentation at the Economic and Social Research Council Seminar, “Neighbourhood Effects: Theory and Evidence,” St. Andrews University, Scotland, February 2010, [http://archive.clas.wayne.edu/Multimedia/DUSP/files/G.Galster/St\\_AndrewsSeminar-Mechanisms\\_of\\_neigh\\_effects-Galster\\_2-23-10.pdf](http://archive.clas.wayne.edu/Multimedia/DUSP/files/G.Galster/St_AndrewsSeminar-Mechanisms_of_neigh_effects-Galster_2-23-10.pdf).
- 21 Paul Jargowsky, *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997), 9-12.

- 22 This definition differs from the Department of Housing and Urban Development definition of racially/ethnically concentrated poverty. HUD designates all census tracts with poverty rates above 40 percent and where 50 percent or more of the residents are nonwhite as racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (R/ECAP). Pew's definition does not aggregate all minorities into the nonwhite category but identifies census tracts where people of a given race or ethnicity—including non-Hispanic whites—make up 50 percent or more of the population as well as 50 percent of the poor in that census tract.
- 23 In Fresno, 49 percent of poor Hispanic residents live in an area of ethnic poverty concentration. The figure is 44 percent for poor Hispanics in Detroit.
- 24 Patrick Harker, "Fed Promoting Local Growth—Inclusively," Philly.com, Sept. 30, 2016, [http://www.philly.com/philly/news/pennsylvania/philadelphia/20160930\\_Commentary\\_\\_Fed\\_promoting\\_local\\_growth\\_-\\_inclusively.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/news/pennsylvania/philadelphia/20160930_Commentary__Fed_promoting_local_growth_-_inclusively.html).



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