Confronting Suburban Poverty

CONFRONTING SUBURBAN POVERTY IN AMERICA

Elizabeth Kneebone and Alan Berube
Today, suburbs are home to the largest and fastest growing poor population

NOTE: The federal poverty threshold for a family of four was $23,834 in 2013

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data
This shift was well underway before the Great Recession

Percent change in poor population, central cities versus suburbs, 1970 to 2012. Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data

- 1970 to 1980:
  - % Change City Poor: 12%
  - % Change Suburban Poor: 10%

- 1980 to 1990:
  - % Change City Poor: 16%
  - % Change Suburban Poor: 18%

- 1990 to 2000:
  - % Change City Poor: 8%
  - % Change Suburban Poor: 19%

- 2000 to 2007:
  - % Change City Poor: 4%
  - % Change Suburban Poor: 15%

- 2007 to 2014:
  - % Change City Poor: 25%
  - % Change Suburban Poor: 40%

Percent change in poor population, central cities versus suburbs, 1970 to 2012. Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data
Today most poor people in LUCC counties live outside big cities

Source: Brookings Institution analysis of ACS and decennial census data
Neighbourhood Poverty in the Atlanta Metro Area, 2009-13

Census Tract Poverty Rate, 2009-13
- Under 10%
- 10% to 20%
- 20% to 30%
- 30% to 40%
- Above 40%

Source: Brookings Institution analysis of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data
Poverty is re-concentrating in suburbs...

Share of Suburban Poor in High-Poverty and Extreme-Poverty Neighborhoods

- 20 to 40% Poverty Rate Tracts
- 40% or More Poverty Rate Tracts

Source: Brookings Institution analysis of ACS and decennial census data
...particularly for people of color

Share of Suburban Poor in High-Poverty Neighborhood by Race, 2008-12

- All Poor: 38%
- White Poor: 23%
- Black Poor: 53%
- Hispanic Poor: 54%

Source: Brookings Institution analysis of ACS and decennial census data
Share of Metro-wide Jobs Accessible by Transit

- 4% for 45-Minute Commute
- 25% for 90-Minute Commute
Share of Suburbs with Social Services Providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Pantry</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services</td>
<td>20%</td>
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$82 billion
10 agencies
81 federal programs
Yet innovators across the country are finding creative ways to navigate this system.
Achieve Scale

- Administers wide range of programs to increase quality of/access to health care
- Works across 4 public agencies, 12 independent safety-net clinics, 10 hospitals, and range of community partners
Collaborate and Integrate

- “Partnering for Prosperity” agenda identified 9 county strategies to support local economic development
- Strategies aligned to wider regional initiatives at the metropolitan and tri-state (IL, IN, WI) scales
- Special focus on shared initiatives across municipalities in higher-poverty south suburbs
Finance Strategically

- New King County reduced-fare transit program for riders with incomes < 200% poverty
- Implemented program through existing agencies, particularly leveraging ACA enrollment
Reduce local fragmentation

• “Metro Townships” allow county’s small towns to opt into metropolitan service district while retaining some local authorities
• Reduces county’s dual role as municipal government for unincorporated areas AND managing countywide affairs
• Could reduce annexation/incorporation battles among local governments
A New Perspective on Poverty in America

GET THE BOOK

www.ConfrontingSuburbanPoverty.org

STORIES OF SUBURBAN POVERTY

East Contra Costa County

Lakewood

Tukwila