

Areas of Concentrated Poverty

DESCRIPTION

Concentrated poverty is known to have a negative influence on residents' economic mobility and overall health and well-being. Current estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show a decline in the metro area's poverty rate (19 percent) in 2016 after rising during the recession from 2010-2013 to 23 percent. While this trend is positive, the metro's poverty rate remains higher than it was in 2000 (16 percent). Areas of Concentrated Poverty (census tracts where at least 40 percent of residents have incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty threshold) have grown. In 2016, the threshold for 185 percent of federal poverty was \$45,027 for a family of four and \$23,099 for an individual under 65 living alone. Concentrated poverty fluctuates over time, but in 2012-2016 about 30 percent of residents in the metro area lived in an Area of Concentrated Poverty.¹

HOW WE ARE DOING

In 2016, 162,777 individuals including 28,186 families throughout Ramsey County had incomes below 185 percent of the poverty level.² In 2006-2010, only St. Paul and Lauderdale in Ramsey County had census tracts with Areas of Concentrated Poverty. In 2012-2016, Roseville joined the metro cities with Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Lauderdale dropped off the list. Thirty-two census tracts in Ramsey County met the threshold for an Area of Concentrated Poverty all six years 2011-2016, leaving little doubt that these are high poverty areas. In contrast, 17 census tracts were identified as an Area of Concentrated Poverty, one to three years, signaling elevated poverty but perhaps with fewer overarching negative impacts than more entrenched poverty. Slightly more than 40 percent of St. Paul residents lived within 185 percent of the federal poverty threshold in 2015, an increase from 38.7 percent in the previous five-year period.³

DISPARITIES

Concentrated poverty intersects with race and ethnicity. Four in every five metro Areas of Concentrated Poverty were also census tracts where at least half of the residents are people of color. In fact, a person of color regardless of their income is as likely to live in an Area of Concentrated Poverty as a person living in poverty due to race-based barriers to housing choice. There are ongoing signs that concentrated poverty is receding in the metro but not in areas where a majority of residents are people of color.³

RISK FACTORS

Research points to larger systemic and societal factors such as institutional racism, racial disparities in the educational and criminal justice systems, employment barriers and other social determinants as being significant factors in determining whether an individual experiences poverty.⁴

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health provides data monitoring and reporting for this topic in order to better understand the overall health and current conditions in the community. The information may help inform community partners, policy makers or county program leadership.

Information to note

- In the metro area, 4 of every 5 Areas of Concentrated Poverty are also census tracts where at least half of residents are people of color.
- Ramsey County's Areas of Concentrated Poverty grew 20% between 2010 and 2016.

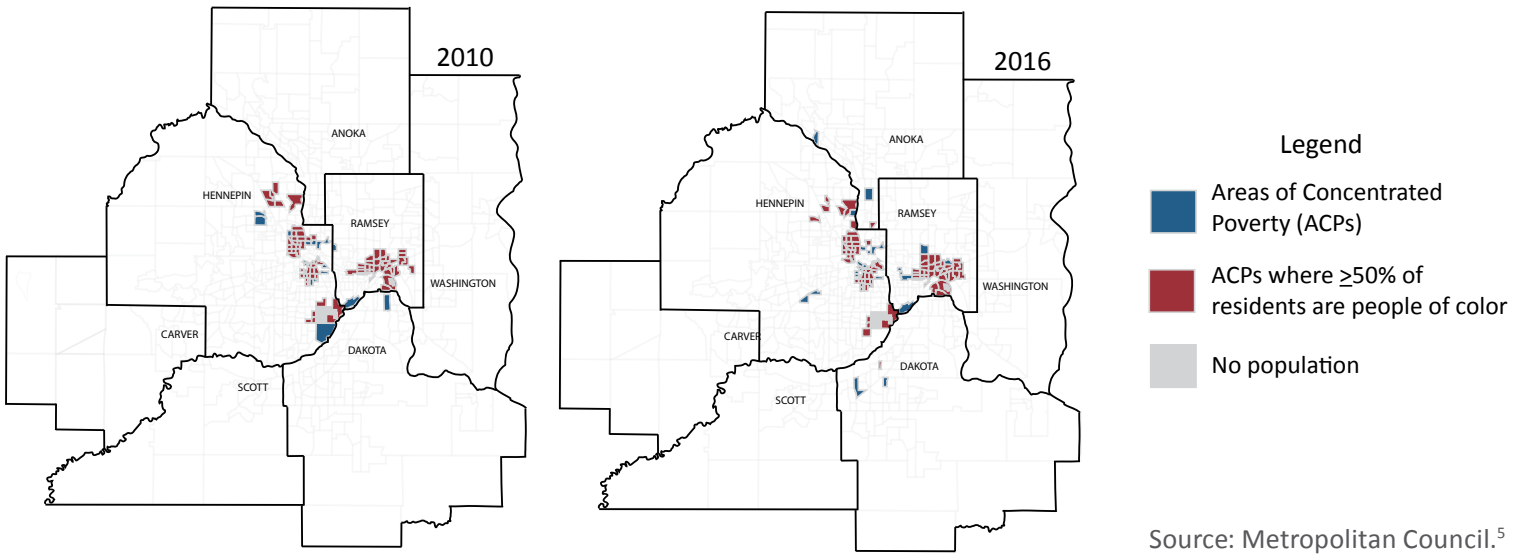
¹ Concentrations of Poverty: Growing and Suburbanizing in the Twin Cities Region. Metropolitan Council. 2015. <https://metro council.org/getattachment/f51199b2-1a77-4c4e-97a8-d9d47b75cd4f/>. Published December 2015. Accessed September 2018.

² Poverty Status in the past 12 months. 2012-2016 American Community Survey five-year estimates. U.S. Census Bureau. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_S1701&prodType=table. Accessed September 2018.

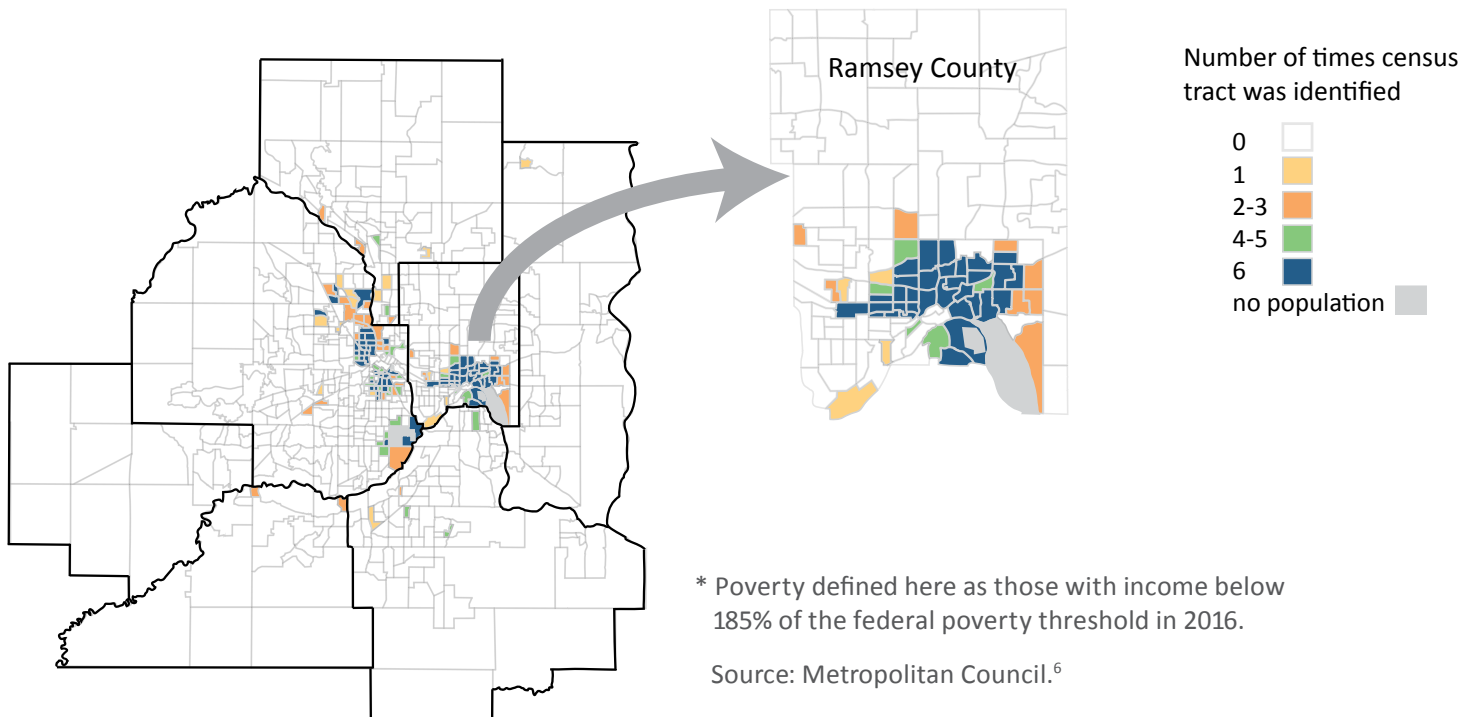
³ Areas of Concentrated Poverty in 2016. Metropolitan Council. 2018. <https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Areas-of-Concentrated-Poverty-in-2016.aspx>. Published in February 2018. Accessed September 2018.

⁴ Rodrigue E, Reeves RV. Five bleak facts on black opportunity. The Brookings Institution. 2015. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2015/01/15/five-bleak-facts-on-black-opportunity/>. Published January 15, 2015. Accessed August 15, 2018.

Areas of Concentrated Poverty, 7-County Metro



Census tracts identified as an Area of Concentrated Poverty* over past 6 years (2011-2016), Metro Counties



⁵ Metropolitan Council analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2006-2010, 2012-2016

⁶ Metropolitan Council analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2007-2011, 2008-2012, 2009-2013, 2010-2014, 2011-2015, 2012-2016.