

## DESCRIPTION

Poverty is strongly linked to poor health, shorter life expectancy, infant mortality and mental health disorders. Low-income adults have higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, COPD, kidney and liver disease, and other chronic disorders than wealthier individuals.<sup>1</sup> Those living in poverty are more likely to live in areas with poor quality housing (including lead-based paint), have less access to healthy foods, and live in close proximity to traffic and crowding.<sup>2</sup> Illness can also cause or perpetuate poverty by straining household savings, reducing income through lost employment and disrupting education.<sup>3</sup> The relationship between health and income is described as a “gradient;” people at the highest levels of poverty experience the worst health outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

## HOW WE ARE DOING

Ramsey County has a higher rate of poverty (16 percent) than any other county in the metro area, with the percent of population living below the poverty level varying by city from a low of 2 percent in Gem Lake to a high of 21.6 percent in Saint Paul. Poverty varies by age, race/ethnicity, gender and education: those under 18 years of age are three times as likely to live in poverty than those 65 years or older; Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and those who self-report as being of two or more races are approximately three times more likely to live in poverty than white people, while Black/African-American and American Indian individuals are four times more likely; the number of people with less than a high school education who live in poverty is more than twice the number for people who have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

## BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People 2020<sup>5</sup>: Reduce the proportion of persons living in poverty.  
U.S. Target: 14.3 percent.

## DISPARITIES

Age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, educational attainment and English language fluency are all correlated with poverty status.<sup>6</sup> Racial inequity related to poverty is high in Ramsey County. More than one in three African-American and American Indians live in poverty compared to one in 10 white residents.<sup>3</sup> Women are also more likely to live in poverty than men in Ramsey County. In general, Ramsey County residents with higher education are less likely to live below the poverty line than residents who do not have a high school or GED diploma. However, women with an associate degree or some college are more likely to live in poverty than men who don’t have a high school degree or equivalency.

## RISK FACTORS

While personal characteristics are often credited for contributing to one’s likelihood of living in poverty (such as not graduating from high school, being un- or under-employed, having children while unmarried or younger than 21, and being divorced or growing up in a single-parent household), other research points to larger systemic and societal factors such

## Information to note

- Ramsey County has more resident living in poverty (16%) than any other county in the metro area.
- Children (24%) are three times more likely to live in poverty than seniors (8%).
- Ramsey County African-American (36%) and American Indian (36%) residents are four times more likely to live in poverty than whites (9%).

<sup>1</sup> Woofe S, Aron L, Dubay L, Simon S, Zimmerman E, Luk K. How are income and wealth linked to health and longevity? Urban Institute. 2015. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/49116/2000178-How-are-Income-and-Wealth-Linked-to-Health-and-Longevity.pdf>. Published April 2015. Accessed August 8, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Poverty and Income. Minnesota Department of Health. <https://apps.health.state.mn.us/mndata/poverty>. Accessed September 11, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Poverty and Health. The World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/brief/poverty-health>. Published August 25, 2014. Accessed August 8, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Deaton, A. Policy implications of the gradient of health and wealth. Health Affairs. 2002;21(2). <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.21.2.13>. Published March 1, 2002. Accessed August 8, 2018.

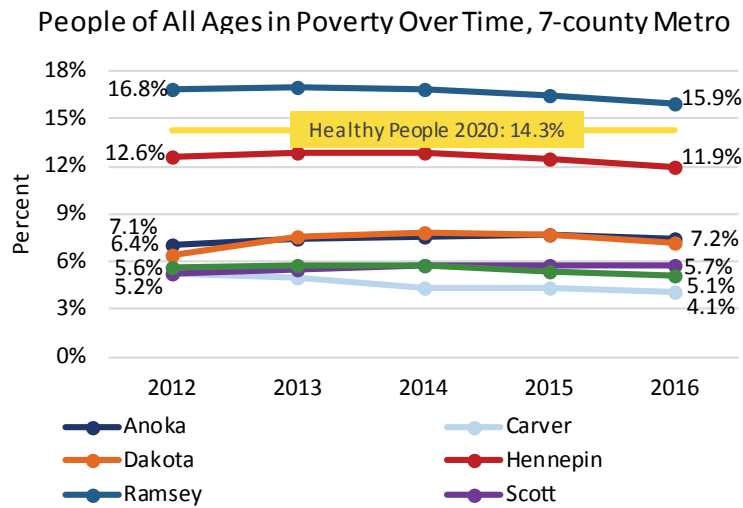
<sup>5</sup> Proportion of persons living in poverty. Healthy People 2020. [https://www.healthypeople.gov/node/5249/data\\_details#revision\\_history\\_header](https://www.healthypeople.gov/node/5249/data_details#revision_history_header). Accessed August 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Selected Characteristics of people at specified levels of poverty in the past 12 months 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. U.S. Census Bureau. [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_16\\_5YR\\_S1703&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_S1703&prodType=table). Accessed September 12, 2017.

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 or not.<sup>7</sup>

## WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Ramsey County provides financial assistance to families living in poverty through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Diversionary Work Program, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Families may also receive emergency assistance to help with utility shut-off or to prevent eviction. Most families receiving MFIP are referred to Ramsey County Workforce Solutions for help in finding a job.



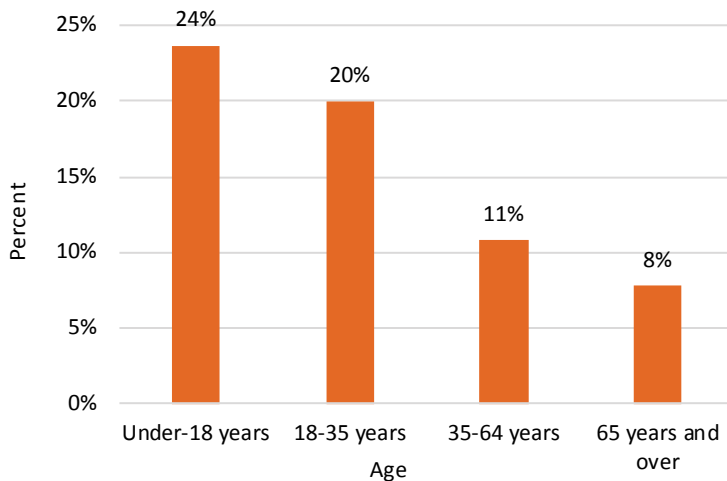
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year

Ramsey County City	Percent below Poverty in the last 12 months (2016)
Gem Lakes	2.0%
North Oaks	2.6%
White Bear Township	3.5%
Shoreview	4.3%
Arden Hills	4.4%
Vadnais Heights	6.0%
White Bear Lake	6.2%
Maplewood	9.2%

Ramsey County City	Percent below Poverty in the last 12 months (2016)
Little Canada	10.0%
New Brighton	10.9%
Roseville	11.5%
Falcon Heights	11.7%
Saint Anthony	12.0%
Mounds View	12.7%
North Saint Paul	13.7%
Lauderdale	17.6%
Saint Paul	21.6%

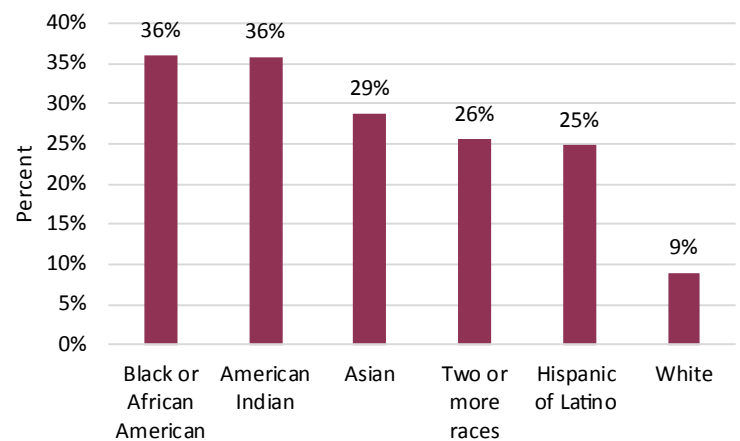
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates.<sup>8</sup>

## People Living in Poverty by Age Group, Ramsey County, 2016



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates.<sup>8</sup>

## Poverty by Race/Ethnicity, Ramsey County, 2016



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Rodrigue E, Reeves RV. Five bleak facts on black opportunity. 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.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census. American Community Survey 5-year estimates. [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?\\_ft=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?_ft=table). Accessed August 2018.