

Forsyth County Poverty Study

Executive Summary

Peer Communities

- Forsyth Futures used a mathematical algorithm to identify the peer city/county pairs that were demographically the most similar to Forsyth County and Winston-Salem in size, population growth, age make up, race make up, and rural/urban character.
- The most notable demographic difference between Forsyth County and its peer communities is that Forsyth County has a larger percentage of residents who are Hispanic/Latino than all of its peer communities.

Poverty in Forsyth County

- The poverty rate in Forsyth County generally increased between 2006 and 2014. In 2015, Forsyth County's poverty rate was lower than at its peak in 2012 but was still higher than in 2006 and 2007.
- In 2014, Forsyth County had a higher poverty rate than most of its peer communities, but in 2015 Forsyth County's poverty rate was not significantly different from those of most of its peer communities.
- Women, children, and people of color are disproportionately affected by poverty in Forsyth County.
- Members of the Hispanic/Latino community and children in Forsyth County have higher poverty rates than Hispanic and Latino residents and children in its peer communities.

Cost of Living

- The percentage of residents in Forsyth County whose family income does not meet their estimated needs is about 43%, about double the percentage in poverty when compared to the Federal Poverty Threshold.
- The percentage of residents in Forsyth County whose family income does not meet their estimated needs is not statistically different than that of most peer communities.

Concentrated Poverty

- Forsyth County has experienced a notable increase in the percentage of residents living in concentrated poverty neighborhoods between 2006-2010 and 2011-2015, this increase has been greater than that of most of its peer communities.
- Between 2011-2015 about 10% of Forsyth County residents lived in concentrated poverty neighborhoods, a higher percentage than most of its peer communities.
- People of color are more likely to live in concentrated poverty areas than White, non-Hispanic residents. African-American residents are more than seven times as likely to live in concentrated poverty neighborhoods than White, non-Hispanic residents.
- Children are also more likely to live in concentrated poverty areas than adults. Studies suggest that living in concentrated poverty areas decreases a child's social mobility, meaning that a child born in poverty is more likely to remain in poverty.

Education

- | Forsyth County residents with higher levels of education have lower poverty rates than those with lower levels of education.
- | There are significant racial disparities in educational outcomes in Forsyth County, but the disparities do not completely account for racial disparities in poverty outcomes, for example African American residents with a high school diploma have a higher poverty rate than White, non-Hispanic residents without a high school diploma.

Employment

- | In 2014, Forsyth County had a higher unemployment rate than most of its peer communities, but in 2015 Forsyth County's unemployment rate was not significantly different from most of its peer communities.
- | There are significant demographic disparities in the unemployment rate. African-American residents have unemployment rates that are nearly twice as high as those of Hispanic/Latino residents and three times as high as those of White, non-Hispanic residents. And younger residents, especially those between the ages of 16 to 24, are more likely to be unemployed than older residents.
- | Between 2006 and 2014, Forsyth County lost approximately 10,000 manufacturing jobs.

Income

- | After controlling for inflation, incomes have generally been decreasing in Forsyth County from 2006 to 2014.
- | There are significant disparities in income within Forsyth County. People of color, young people, and families with children have lower median household incomes than other households.
- | About 60% of non-student workers in Forsyth County earn a livable wage.

Family Type

- | About 45% (nearly half) of families with children that are headed by unmarried women are in poverty.
- | About 60% (more than half) of African-American families with children are headed by unmarried women, compared to about 30% (less than a third) of families with children in general.
- | Hispanic and Latino children are at least twice as likely to be in poverty than White, non-Hispanic and African American children regardless of family structure.

Immigration

- | In Forsyth County, foreign-born residents from non-Hispanic backgrounds do not have statistically different poverty rates than native-born residents, but foreign-born residents with Hispanic/Latino backgrounds have higher poverty rates than native-born and foreign-born non-Hispanic residents.
- | Forsyth County has more foreign-born residents than most of its peer communities, and a higher percentage of those residents are Hispanic/Latino than in most of its peer communities.
- | Hispanic/Latino foreign-born residents in Forsyth County tend to have higher rates of linguistic isolation and lower rates of education than native-born residents.