

# Income and Poverty in the District of Columbia: 1990-2004

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## Overview

### Median Household Income

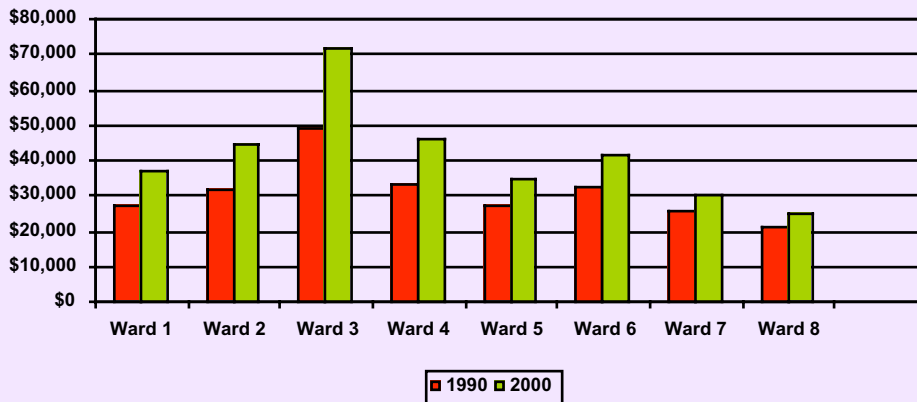
Median household income is the amount which divides the income distribution of households into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. Median household income for the District of Columbia increased by 16% between 2000 (\$40,127) and 2004 (\$46,574) for all types of family and non-family households. When compared to 1990s, median household income for District residents was relatively stable over the decade of the 1990s. The 1990 figure was \$40,088 (using 1999 dollars) which was \$39 less

than in 2000. For surrounding jurisdictions, Maryland's median household income was \$52,868 in 2000 and \$57,424 in 2004 while for Virginia it was \$46,677 in 2000 and \$51,689 in 2004.

The 1990 and 2000 median household income was not homogenous across the city. In 2000, Ward 3 had almost double the city average with a median household income of \$71,875, followed by Ward 4 with a much lower rate at \$46,408, Ward 2 at \$44,742, Ward 6 at \$41,554, Ward 1 at \$36,902, Ward 5 at \$34,433, Ward 7 at \$30,533, and Ward 8 at 37% below the city average at \$25,017 (Figure 1). Data by ward for 2004 are not available.

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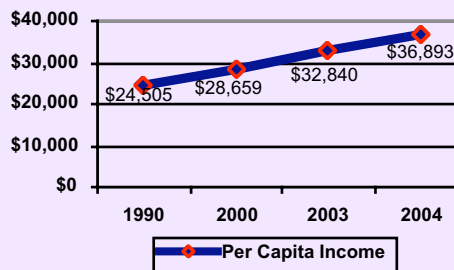
**Fig. 1: Median Household Income by Ward: District of Columbia 1990 & 2000**



### Per Capita Income

In 2004 per capita income (total personal income in an area divided by the number of people in that area) for District of Columbia residents was estimated at \$36,893. This was higher than census 2000 figure of \$28,659 and reflects an increase of 28.7% from 2000 to 2004. In 1990 per capita income for District residents was \$24,505. Using current dollars, the growth rate over the period from 1990-2004 was 50% (Figure 2).

**Fig. 2: Per Capita Income in Current Dollars District of Columbia, 1990-2004**

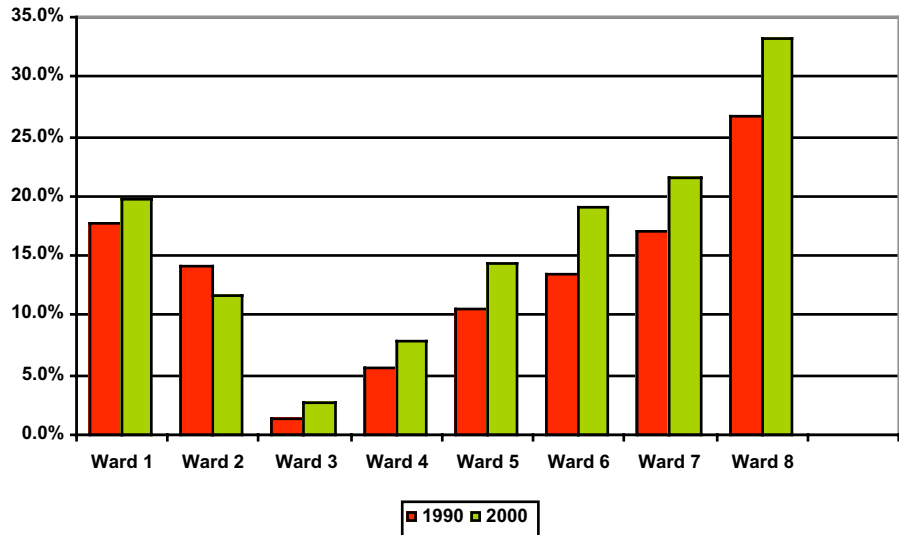


## Poverty Overview

The number of individuals below the poverty threshold (see definition below) numbered 98,000 in 2004, or 11,500 less individuals than in 2000 (109,500). This represented a poverty rate of 20.2% in 2000 and 18.9% in 2004. Although the poverty rate decreased slightly from 2000 to 2004, this rate is still higher than the 1980 rate of 18.6% and the 1990 rate of 16.9%. Individuals in poverty for the nation average about 13% from 1990-2004. The poverty rate for families in the District increased slightly from 16.8% in 2000 to 16.9% in 2004.

As with income levels, poverty levels by Ward show a diverse pattern in the District of Columbia. In census 2000 the percent of families in poverty ranged from a low of 2.7% in Ward 3, to a high of 33.1% in Ward 8. Looking at individuals in poverty, again Ward 3 had the lowest rate of 7.4% while Ward 8 had the highest

**Fig. 3: Percent of Families in Poverty by Ward: District of Columbia, 1990 & 2000**



rate at 36%, which was almost four times higher than for Ward 3 (Figure 3).

Data by Ward for 2004 are not available.

## Poverty Thresholds 2004

Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status. Each person or family is

assigned one out of 48 possible poverty thresholds as shown in the table below. Thresholds vary according to size of family and ages of the

members. Each person or family income falling below the dollar amount listed is considered to be in poverty.

Poverty Threshold 2004									
Size of family	Related Children Under 18 Years								
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual) Under 65 years 65 years and over	\$9,827 \$9,060								
Two persons Householder under 65 years Householder 65 years and over	\$12,649 \$11,418	\$13,020 \$12,971							
Three persons	\$14,776	\$15,205	\$15,219						
Four persons	\$19,484	\$19,803	\$19,157	\$19,223					
Five persons	\$23,497	\$23,838	\$23,108	\$22,643	\$22,199				
Six persons	\$27,025	\$27,133	\$26,573	\$26,037	\$25,241	\$24,766			
Seven persons	\$31,096	\$31,290	\$30,621	\$30,154	\$29,285	\$28,271	\$27,159		
Eight persons	\$34,778	\$35,086	\$34,454	\$33,901	\$33,115	\$32,119	\$31,082	\$30,818	
Nine persons or more	\$41,836	\$42,039	\$41,480	\$41,010	\$40,240	\$39,179	\$38,220	\$37,983	\$36,520

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

All 2004 data are obtained from the American Community Survey (ACS). All other data are from the decennial census 1990 and 2000. The Office of Planning can be contacted at 202-442-7600 or visit our website at [www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)