



2014 POVERTY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Multnomah County

Department of County Human Services
Community Services Division

Prepared by Kristina Smock Consulting • April 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Photo 2. Coalition for a Livable Future Equity Atlas Storytelling Project: JOIN and Street Roots
Photo 3. Coalition for a Livable Future Equity Atlas Storytelling Project: JOIN and Street Roots
Photo 4. JOIN
Photo 5. Coalition for a Livable Future Equity Atlas Storytelling Project: JOIN and Street Roots

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Our growing economic insecurity presents one of the greatest challenges to the future of our communities and our nation. . . By assuring access to opportunity for marginalized groups, we expand opportunity for all."

Professor john powell, University of California, Berkeley School of Law

As the United States emerges from the recession, there is growing recognition that our society is becoming increasingly unequal. Rising poverty and widening income inequality threaten the economic and social fabric of our communities. In Multnomah County, hundreds of thousands of people are unable to meet their basic needs on a daily basis, and economic disparities are increasing.

Professor john powell calls upon us to view these challenges in a new light. Our shared prosperity depends on our ability to create conditions that will allow everyone to flourish. With growing poverty threatening the county's economic security, we must work together to develop strategies to address inequities and increase opportunity for all. Only then can we ensure that we are all able to thrive.

Effectively addressing income inequality in Multnomah County requires us to understand the conditions of poverty across the county and its impacts on individuals, families, and communities. The 2014 Poverty in Multnomah County report provides a multi-layered overview of poverty in our community, including: the levels and types of poverty in the county, how poverty conditions have changed over the past two decades, the demographics of populations in poverty, the geographic distribution of poverty, and the impacts of poverty. This information enables us to have a clearer view of the causes and conditions of poverty in Multnomah County and can help to guide County policies to effectively address poverty and expand access to opportunity.

What Stands Out in This Report?

Poverty in Multnomah County is severe and it is growing. More than one-third of Multnomah County residents do not have enough income to be able to meet their basic needs. Within this group are 123,434 people – 17% of the county's population – who meet the federal definition of poverty. Communities of color, immigrants and refugees, children, single-parent households, and persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by poverty, with poverty rates for these populations far higher than their rates in the population as a whole.

One in three Multnomah County residents do not have enough income to be able to meet their basic needs.

Key Findings

- **Definitions of Poverty:** Official measures of poverty significantly undercount the number of people in poverty in Multnomah County. Many people with incomes above the official poverty level are still unable to meet their basic needs. And many more do not have the resources to enable them to achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society.
- **Types of Poverty:** The population in poverty is highly diverse, including those in long-term poverty, situational poverty, economic poverty, and social poverty. Understanding the different types of poverty allows us to target strategies to address the distinct circumstances and needs of each population.

- **Number of People in Poverty:** Approximately one-third of Multnomah County's households fall below the Self-Sufficiency Standard, meaning they are unable to meet their basic needs. This includes 7% of the county's population who are living in deep poverty, with incomes at or below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); 17% of the county's population who have incomes at or below 100% of the FPL; and 33% with incomes at or below 185% of the FPL.

- **Growth in Poverty:** The number of people in poverty in Multnomah County has increased over the past two decades at a rate much higher than the growth of the county's population as a whole. The growth in poverty can be attributed to a decline in family-wage jobs, increasing economic inequality, the impact of the recession, and the erosion of the social safety net.

- **Demographics of Poverty:** The demographics of poverty in Multnomah County reveal deep disparities. Several demographic groups have poverty rates that are higher than those for the county as a whole and are over-represented within the county's population in poverty compared with their representation in the county's population as a whole:

  Communities of color: 44% of the county's population in poverty is communities of color, and 26% of the county's communities of color are in poverty.

  Immigrants and refugees: 19% of the county's population in poverty is foreign born, and 23% of the county's foreign-born population is in poverty.

  Over the past two decades, the number of people of color in poverty has increased, and poverty has shifted eastward.

  Single-parent households: 22% of the county's households in poverty are single-parent households, and 42% of the county's single-parent households are in poverty.

  Women: 53% of the county's population in poverty is female, and 18% of the county's females are in poverty.

  Children: 28% of the county's population in poverty is children under age 18, and 23% of the county's children under age 18 are in poverty.

  Persons with disabilities: 19% of the county's population in poverty has a disability, and 27% of persons with disabilities are in poverty.

- **Geography of Poverty:** The distribution of poverty has shifted eastward over the past two decades. The highest poverty rates in the county are in outer east Portland, where almost one-quarter of the residents are at or below the Federal Poverty Level. East County, north/northeast Portland and inner east Portland all have poverty rates of 17-18%. The lowest poverty rates in the county are in west Portland and central east Portland, but even in these areas 13% of residents are in poverty.

- **Impacts of Poverty:** Poverty can have devastating impacts on the lives of children and adults who are struggling to get by on a daily basis. High poverty rates and the disparities that accompany them also impact the stability and well-being of the entire community.

Where Do We Go From Here?
A Framework for Addressing Poverty in Multnomah County

Multnomah County is at a critical crossroads. The County must take bold action to address growing inequality and reduce disparities affecting significant portions of the county's population. Understanding the current conditions of poverty in the county is a necessary first step in this process. We have developed planning principles based on the information in this report and will seek community involvement in the development of recommendations for action.

The County must take bold action to address growing inequality by defining a shared vision of success, mobilizing energy, building trust, and showing that change can happen.

Professor john powell notes that "while it might be overwhelming to consider the various factors that contribute to poverty and the myriad measures needed to reduce it . . . we can begin with smaller, strategic interventions. These initial interventions can bring various groups to the table to define a shared vision of success (a transformational, inclusive one); mobilize energy around important issues; build trust among diverse people and organizations; and show that change can indeed happen."

Multnomah County, in partnership with its local jurisdictions, the State, the county's network of nonprofit and faith-based organizations, and the business community, must develop a shared vision for addressing income inequality and a comprehensive action plan for getting there. The action plan should build on the data provided in this report, and should be guided by the following principles:

1. The elimination of inequities affecting people of color, immigrants and refugees, women, children, single-parent households, and persons with disabilities should be a high priority for our work in order to significantly decrease the number of households living in poverty.
2. Supports and services must be tailored to meet the distinct characteristics and needs of different types of poverty, demographic groups, and geographic areas.
3. The county's economic base will be stronger if we build the human capital of our residents by providing access to education and training as well as opportunities for increasing income and financial assets.
4. Securing the county's future requires a focus on and investment in the well-being and development of our children and youth.
5. We must invest in services and supports that ease the experience of poverty *and* in structural and policy actions that seek to end the conditions that cause poverty.
6. Our efforts will be more effective if they involve partnerships and strategic coordination with other jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, and the business community.

We intend to convene a process to seek community input in the development of a roadmap for building a more equitable Multnomah County. We invite you to read the 2014 Poverty in Multnomah County report and join us in taking action.

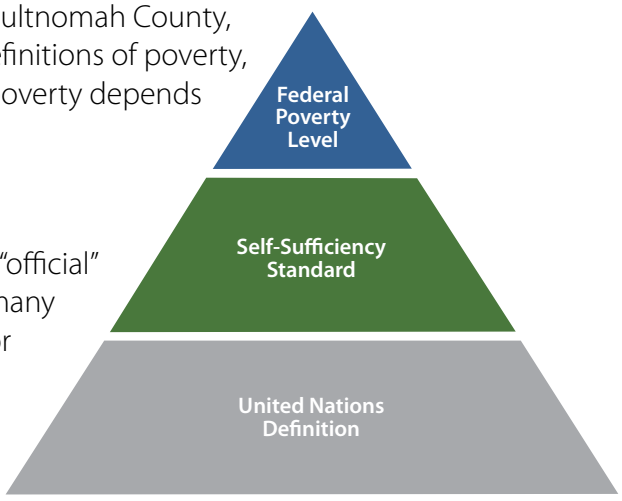
INTRODUCTION

As Multnomah County emerges from the depths of the Great Recession, a significant portion of the county's population is being left behind. More than one-third of the county's residents are unable to meet their basic needs. Growing poverty and economic inequality threaten to undermine the stability and prosperity of the entire county.

This report examines how disparities in income and access to opportunity affect Multnomah County's residents. It explores the extent of poverty in the county, how poverty conditions have changed over the past two decades, the geographic distribution of poverty, the demographics of poverty, and the impacts of poverty.

Definitions of Poverty

In order to understand the distribution of poverty in Multnomah County, we must first clarify what poverty is. There are multiple definitions of poverty, and the extent of the county's population experiencing poverty depends on how we define it.



Federal Poverty Level

The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is used to measure the "official" poverty rate, and is also used to determine eligibility for many safety net programs. The guidelines vary by family size. For example, for a one person household, the FPL in 2014 is $11,670; for a four person household the FPL is $23,850.

Official poverty measurements typically focus on people whose incomes are at or below 100% of the FPL. Multiples and percentages of the FPL are used to determine anti-poverty policies and programs. For example, persons in households with incomes at or below 50% of the FPL are commonly referred to as living in "deep poverty", a category that has recently become a focus of federal policy debates. Many key safety net programs base their eligibility guidelines on percentages of the FPL. For example, households at 185% FPL are eligible for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps), free and reduced price school meals, child care subsidies, Medicaid coverage for pregnant women and babies, and WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children).

2014 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guidelines		
Persons in Household	100% FPL	185% FPL
1	$11,670	$21,599
2	$15,730	$29,101
3	$19,790	$36.612
4	$23,850	$44,123

The formula used to set the Federal Poverty Level was developed in the 1960s and is widely criticized as outdated. The methodology is based on the cost of food, with households defined as poor when their income is less than three times the cost of a basket of nutritionally adequate food. But compared with the 1960s, a larger portion of household income today goes towards other items such as housing, transportation, and health care. The poverty level doesn't take these costs into account and, as a result, it significantly underestimates the number of people living in poverty.

Self-Sufficiency Standard

The Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS) is a more comprehensive measure of poverty that addresses many of the limitations of the Federal Poverty Level. The SSS varies geographically as well as by family type, and it is based on a more complete set of household expenses than the FPL, including child care, transportation, and taxes. It defines households living in poverty as those unable to make ends meet without extra income supports (such as public housing, SNAP, support from relatives, or food banks).[2]

The SSS is significantly higher than the FPL, and is considered by many to be a more accurate measure of whether households are struggling to make ends meet. Whereas 17% of people in Multnomah County are living at or below 100% FPL, approximately one-third of the county's households are at or below the Self-Sufficiency Standard.[3]

Households with incomes above 185% FPL but below the Self-Sufficiency Standard are unlikely to qualify for most public safety net programs, but they do not have enough income to meet their basic needs.

Self-Sufficiency Standard in Multnomah County, 2011[1]

Household Type	Self-Sufficiency Standard
Adult and Preschooler	$40,250
Adult, Infant and Preschooler	$60,694
2 Adults, Infant and Preschooler	$65,522

United Nations Definition

The United Nations offers the most comprehensive definition of poverty, framing it within a human rights lens. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

Building on this framework, UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) defines poverty as the "deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving [people] unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society".

The United Nations defines poverty as the deprivation of the "resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving [people] unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society".

Whereas the FPL and SSS use income thresholds as the determinant for poverty, a human rights conception of poverty focuses on the experience of poverty. Under a human rights definition of poverty, a household is poor if it lacks essential resources necessary for health and well-being. This includes material resources such as access to food, water, and housing, but it also includes social and emotional resources such as extended family supports and a supportive community. Under the FPL and SSS, a household may have income above the poverty threshold due to extraordinary efforts and sacrifices (e.g. multiple jobs, excessively long work hours), but may still experience poverty. Focusing on the experience of poverty rather than pre-determined income thresholds provides a more meaningful framework for defining poverty.

Data are not available to enable us to calculate the number of people in Multnomah County who are poor according to this more comprehensive definition of poverty, but we can assume that the number is higher than those not meeting the Federal Poverty Level or Self-Sufficiency Standard.

Types of Poverty

The population in poverty is diverse. Understanding the different types of poverty allows us to target services and interventions to address the distinct circumstances and needs of those in poverty.

LONG-TERM POVERTY	Persistent and ongoing poverty affecting seniors, persons with disabilities, and other populations whose options for exiting poverty are limited
SITUATIONAL POVERTY	Temporary or episodic poverty caused by a sudden or unexpected personal or economic crisis
ECONOMIC POVERTY	Persistent economic instability affecting people whose wages and benefits are not sufficient to meet their household's basic needs
SOCIAL POVERTY	Occurs when individual, societal or institutional barriers prevent people from accessing economic opportunities or fully participating in society

Long-term poverty is persistent and ongoing. It affects seniors, persons with disabilities, and other populations whose options for exiting poverty through earned income are limited. People experiencing long-term poverty will likely need ongoing income supports to enable them to meet their basic needs and live in dignity.

Situational poverty is temporary or episodic. It is caused by a sudden or unexpected personal or economic crisis such as job loss, divorce, domestic violence, a death in the family, or severe health problems. Situational poverty is most effectively addressed through short-term interventions such as rent assistance and income supports, as well as targeted services to address the causes of the crisis.

Economic poverty is persistent economic instability that affects people whose wages and benefits are not sufficient to meet their household's basic needs. This form of poverty can affect households over a long period of time, but unlike those in the "long-term poverty" category, people experiencing economic poverty can exit poverty if they are provided with pathways to family-wage jobs via job training, education, and access to better employment opportunities.

Households experiencing economic poverty are at greater risk of experiencing situational poverty, and households in both categories may move in and out of poverty over time. Research shows that about half of people who become poor are able to exit poverty within a year, but roughly half of those who get out of poverty will become poor again within five years. The longer the poverty spell, the harder it is to escape, and the more likely it is that the household will return to poverty at some point in the future.[4]

Social poverty occurs when individual, societal, or institutional barriers prevent people from accessing economic opportunities or fully participating in society. For example, people with histories of abuse or neglect may experience ongoing isolation or deprivation that makes it difficult to engage in everyday economic or social activities. People with criminal backgrounds

A Note About Generational Poverty

Many typologies of poverty include a category referred to as "generational poverty", which is defined as poverty that affects two or more generations of the same family. This report intentionally omits the "generational poverty" category and instead focuses on the specific drivers behind a household's poverty. If generational poverty is linked to a parent's disabilities, then the family would fit under long-term poverty. If the generational poverty is linked to lack of education or access to family-wage jobs, then the family would fit under economic poverty. If the generational poverty is linked to the legacy of historic and institutionalized racism, then the family would fit under social poverty.

may face discrimination that creates barriers to obtaining stable housing and employment. Immigrants and people of color may have difficulty accessing economic opportunities due to current and historic legacies of institutionalized racism. Addressing social poverty generally requires interventions that work at both the individual and the societal level.

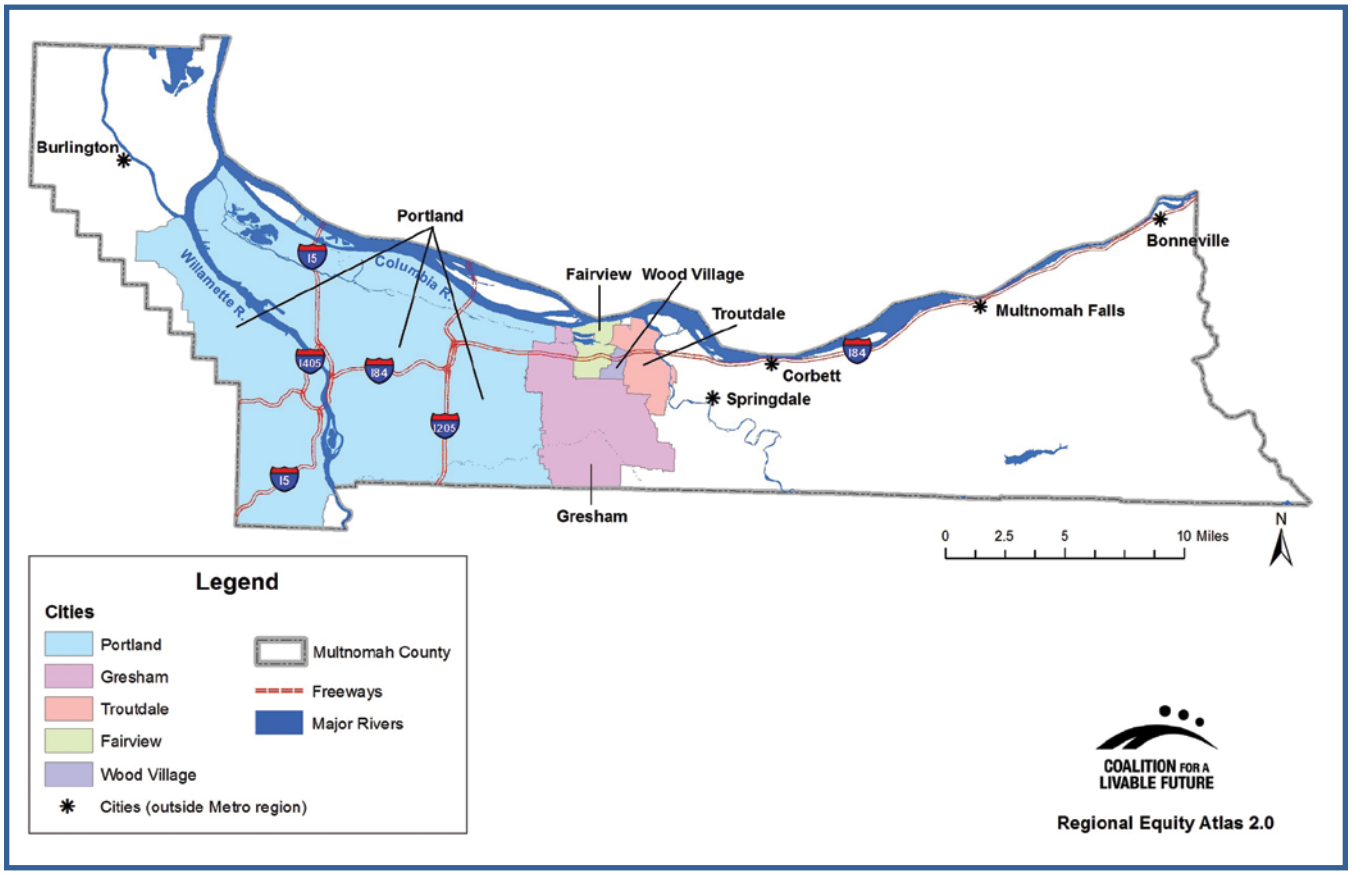
Addressing poverty requires interventions that assist individual households in meeting their basic needs and finding pathways towards greater economic security, while simultaneously working to impact the broader economic, political, and social systems that underlie their poverty.

The four types of poverty are not mutually exclusive. Social poverty, in particular, often overlaps with one or more of the other types of poverty.

While it is important to distinguish between the different types of poverty by looking at the characteristics of the individuals and households experiencing poverty, we must place these characteristics within a broader social and economic context. Individual characteristics such as age, disabilities, and lower educational attainment are highly correlated with poverty, but that does not mean that these characteristics cause poverty. The underlying causes of poverty are rooted in broader structural dynamics which make certain populations more vulnerable to economic insecurity and constrain their opportunities. Addressing poverty requires interventions that assist individual households in meeting their basic needs and finding pathways towards greater economic security, while simultaneously working to impact the broader economic, political, and social systems that underlie their poverty.

POVERTY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Multnomah County is the most populous county in Oregon, with a total population of 737,110. At 431 square miles, it is the smallest in area of all the counties in the state, but with approximately 1,705 residents per square mile, it is the most densely populated.[5] The county is home to several incorporated cities, including Portland, Fairview, Gresham, Maywood Park, Troutdale, and Wood Village. It also includes a number of unincorporated communities such as Bonneville, Burlington, Corbett, Multnomah Falls, and Springdale.



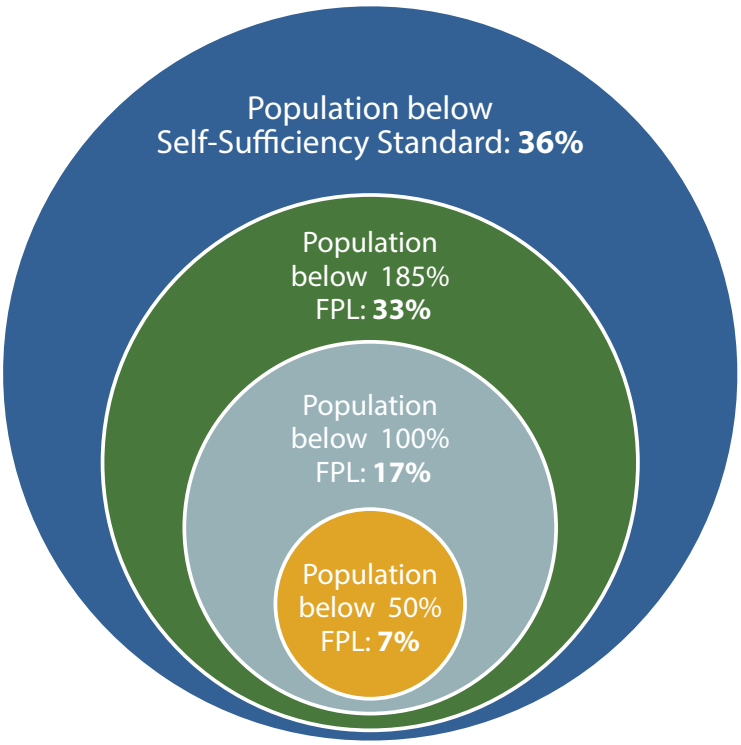
Compared to Oregon as a whole, Multnomah County's population is more highly educated, has a higher median and per capita income, but also has a higher rate of poverty:

Demographics[6]	Multnomah County	Oregon
Median Household Income	$51,799	$49,161
Per Capita Income	$29,775	$26,011
Households below 100% FPL	17.1%	15.5%
High School Graduate or Higher	90.8%	89.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	40.8%	29.9%

More than a third of Multnomah County residents are poor

Approximately 36% of Multnomah County's households fall below the Self-Sufficiency Standard, meaning they are unable to meet their basic needs without public safety net services and/or private support from family, friends, churches, or nonprofits. This population includes people at various levels of poverty:

- **Deep poverty (50% FPL):** 7% of the county's population (52,034 people) are living in "deep poverty", with incomes below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL);
- **Official poverty (100% FPL):** 17% of the population (123,434 people total, including those in deep poverty plus another 71,400 people with incomes between 50-100% FPL) meet the official definition of poverty, with incomes at or below 100% FPL;
- **Safety net poverty (185% FPL):** 33% of the population (238,419 people total, including those at or below 100% FPL plus an additional 114,985 people with incomes between 100-185% FPL) meet the definition of poverty used by many government safety net programs, with incomes below 185% FPL.



People with incomes between the Federal Poverty Level and the Self-Sufficiency Standard fall into what is often referred to as a "poverty cliff" because they are unable to make ends meet on their own but have incomes too high to qualify for many safety net programs.

There are many different types of poverty in Multnomah County

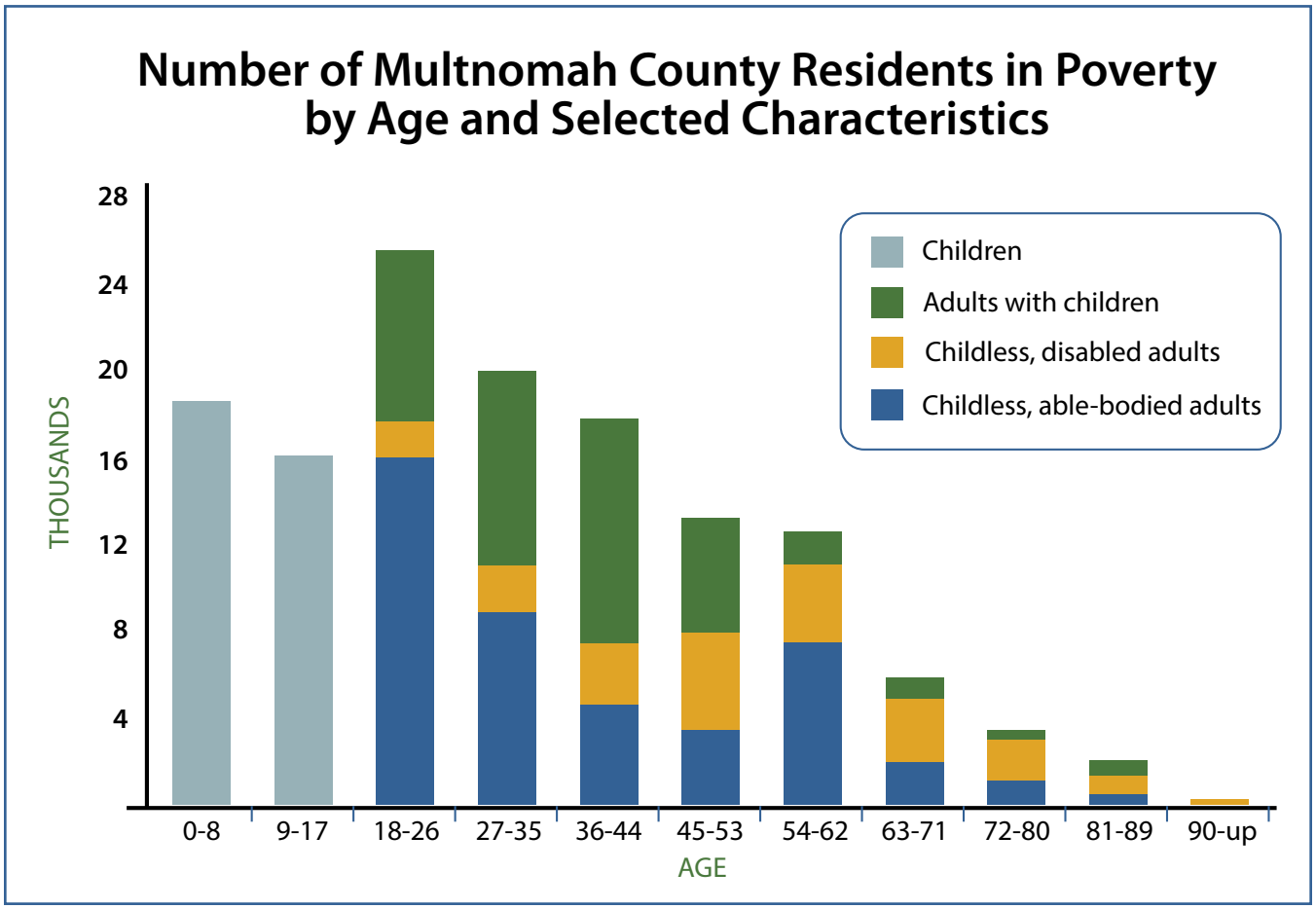
A Note on Data

Unless otherwise noted, all poverty data in this report are based on the 2008-2012 American Community Survey five-year estimates, with poverty defined as individuals with incomes at or below 100% FPL. The Federal Poverty Level undercounts the full extent of the population in poverty, but it is the only source of consistent and comprehensive data available. For more information, see Appendix B.

The population in poverty in Multnomah County is highly diverse. It includes people of all ages, races, and household types, with disproportionately high percentages of people of color, immigrants and refugees, women, children, single-parent families, and persons with disabilities. (For more detailed insights into the demographic characteristics of the county's population in poverty, see the Demographics section that begins on page 17.)

The county's population in poverty also includes people within all four of the poverty types described on pages 8 and 9. The chart on page 12 shows the population in poverty by age category. For each age category, the chart shows the number of people in poverty who are children, adults with children, disabled adults, and "able-bodied" or work-able adults. These classifications

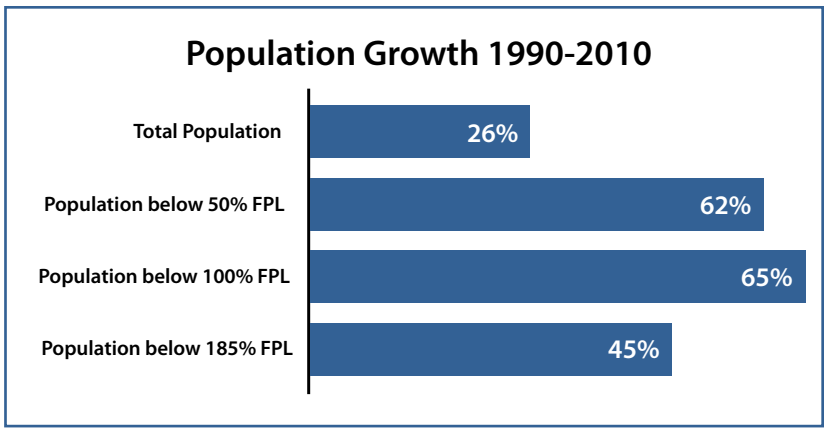
help us to visualize the types and characteristics of poverty in the county. For example, most people in the 72 and above age categories, as well as those who are classified as disabled, likely meet the definition of long-term poverty. In contrast, most of the able-bodied adults and adults with children are likely affected by situational or economic poverty. People within all of the categories could also be affected by various forms of social poverty.



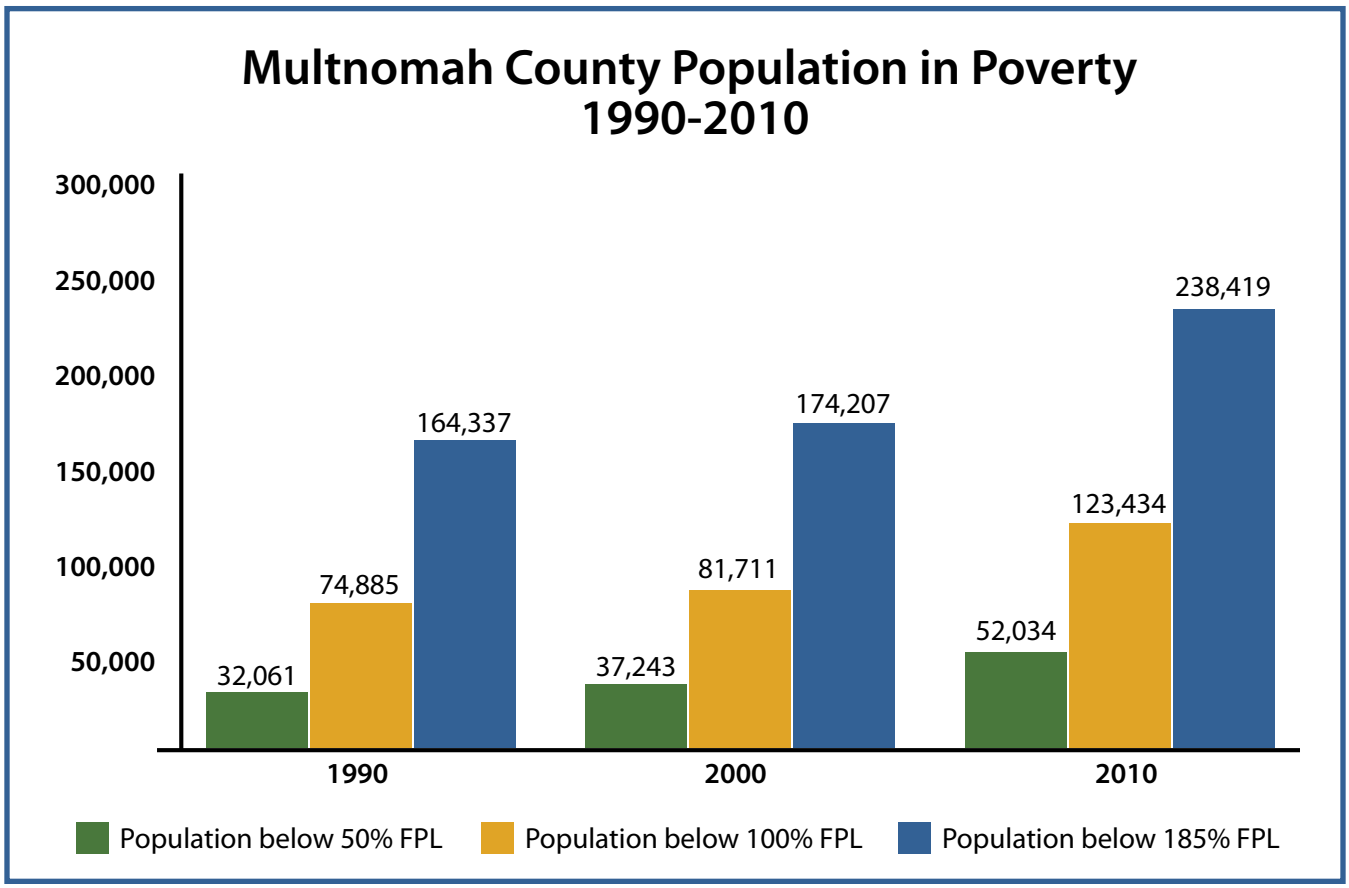
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2012 ACS 1-year estimates

Poverty in Multnomah County has grown over the past two decades

The number of people in poverty in Multnomah County has increased over the past two decades at a rate much higher than the growth of the county's population as a whole. While the overall population of the county grew by 26% between 1990 and 2010, the population in poverty grew at more than twice that rate. The growth in deep poverty (below 50% FPL) was 62%, and the growth in official poverty (100% FPL) was even higher, at 65%. The growth in the population below 185% FPL was slightly lower, at 45%.



The chart below shows the number of people in poverty in 1990, 2000, and 2010. The green columns represent people below 50% FPL, the orange columns represent people at or below 100% FPL, and the blue columns represent people below 185% FPL. The number of people in all three categories has grown steadily over the past two decades, with the biggest growth between 2000 and 2010.



Poverty has grown at an even higher rate among Multnomah County's communities of color. The number of people of color in poverty in Multnomah County has more than doubled over the past two decades. The section on the Demographics of Poverty (see page 19) includes more detailed information on the growth of poverty among communities of color.

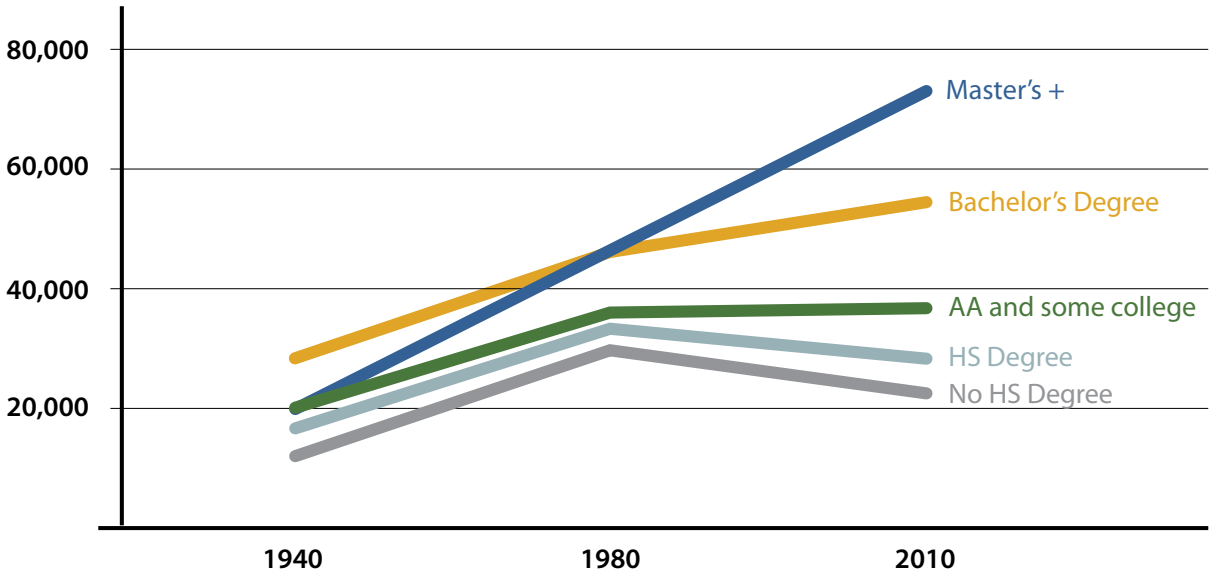
Growing poverty is linked to a decline in family-wage jobs and high levels of unemployment

While our economy has grown since the end of the Great Recession, so has income inequality, with the lowest-wage workers benefitting the least from the economic recovery. The recession eliminated many middle-wage jobs, many of which have been replaced by lower paying jobs that do not provide opportunities for workers without a college degree to earn a family wage. The economic recovery in the Portland metro region has been dominated by low-wage industries such as retail, food service, nursing homes, and temp employment.[7]

The economic recovery in the Portland metro region has been dominated by low-wage industries.

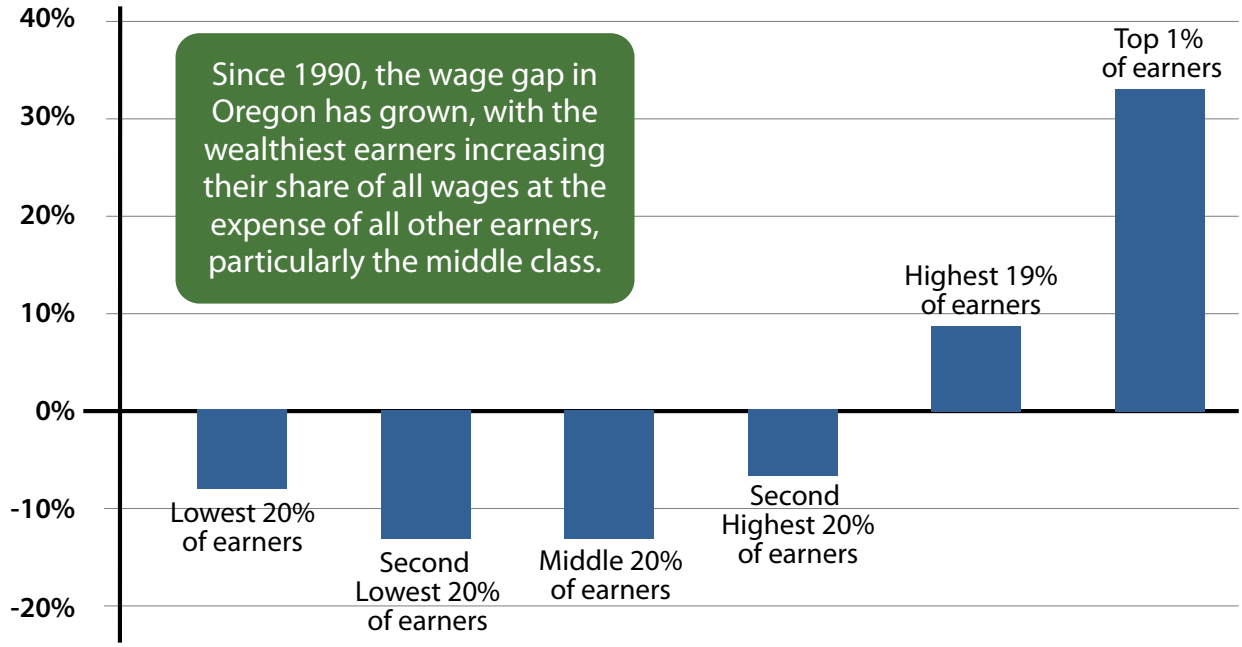
This trend coincides with a dramatic decline in the wages that can be earned by workers without a college degree. Workers with low levels of educational attainment used to be able to make good wages through manufacturing jobs. But since 1980, many of these jobs have been eliminated, leaving workers without college degrees to rely on low-wage service sector jobs. This pattern has contributed to rising poverty and income inequality within the region.[8]

Portland Wages (2010 dollars) by Educational Attainment



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Census data, originally produced for United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. Data is for laborforce participants ages 25-64.

Wage Growth by Income Level: 1990-2010



Source: Kaylor, C. (2014). Middle Class Decline in the Portland Metro Region: Exploring the Economic Causes and Effects of Shrinking Middle Wage Jobs Across the Region. *Connections - Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future,* 12(1).

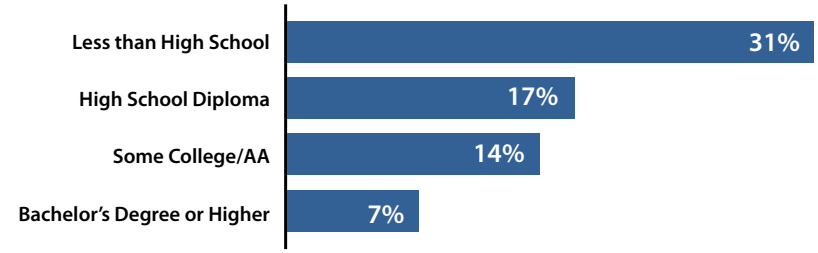
Recent data on job vacancies in the Portland metro area provide a clear illustration of how the growth in low-wage jobs has contributed to rising poverty. In 2013, the average annual earnings for all job vacancies in the three-county Portland metro area was $34,549 (assuming full-time employment). Only 69% of the vacancies were full time, so actual take-home pay for many of the jobs would have been far lower than this amount. The industry with the highest share of all job vacancies was leisure and hospitality, with an average full-time equivalent wage of $22,880, which is below the 2013 Federal Poverty Level for a family of four ($23,550).[9]

The proliferation of low-wage work has been compounded by high rates of unemployment and underemployment over the past decade. Workers with low levels of educational attainment are much more likely to be unemployed in Multnomah County than those with a college education:

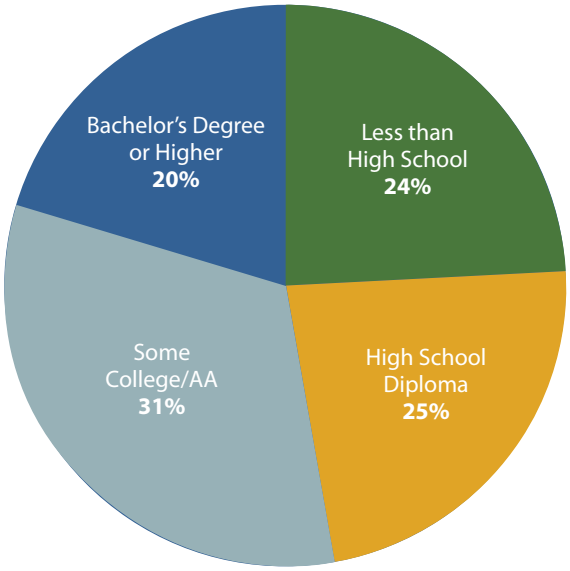
Educational Attainment (age 25-64 years)[10]	Unemployment Rate
Less than high school graduate	15.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)[11]	15.8%
Some college or associate's degree	11.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	5.8%

This puts less-educated workers at a higher risk of poverty, as demonstrated by data showing the percentage of the population in poverty by levels of educational attainment: 31% of Multnomah County's adult population over age 25 with less than a high school diploma is in poverty, compared with 7% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher. These patterns are even more pronounced for communities of color (see page 20).

Percent of each Educational Attainment Sub-Group that is in Poverty in Multnomah County



Multnomah County's Population in Poverty by Educational Attainment



While educational attainment is a high predictor of poverty, the recession and the decline in middle-wage jobs have put middle-wage workers at greater risk of poverty as well. The decline in middle-wage jobs means that middle-wage workers without a college degree who lose their jobs are either driven into unemployment or forced to take lower paying service sector jobs. Even many college educated workers have been faced with unemployment, underemployment and poverty during the past decade. Adults with some college or a bachelor's degree represent more than half (51%) of all adults over age 25 living in poverty in Multnomah County.

More than half of the county's adults in poverty have some college or a bachelor's degree.

Cuts to safety net programs have also contributed to the growth in poverty

High unemployment and the decline in family-wage jobs have been exacerbated by the erosion of critical safety net programs that help to keep low-wage workers out of poverty. For low-wage workers or those looking for work, all the other costs associated with employment, such as child care and transportation, can make it difficult to obtain or retain steady employment. Key programs such as the state's Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) subsidy play an important role in supporting low-wage workers' ability to work, but these programs have been cut to the point that they are only able to serve a fraction of the need. Many families who meet the eligibility requirements for ERDC are unable to receive benefits, and even those who do get the subsidy often find it insufficient to enable them to cover the full costs of care.

Income subsidies intended to lift poor households out of poverty have eroded to the point that most fail to bring beneficiaries above the Federal Poverty Level.

Income subsidies intended to lift poor households out of poverty have eroded to the point that most fail to bring beneficiaries above the Federal Poverty Level. Two decades ago, the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program helped 60 out of every 100 Oregon families in poverty; it now helps about 35 of every 100. Families must have incomes below 38% of the poverty level to qualify for TANF benefits – far below the threshold for what is commonly considered to be "deep poverty".[12] And the benefits those families receive aren't sufficient to lift them out of poverty. The current maximum monthly TANF benefit for a family of three is $506,[13] which is equal to 31% of the Federal Poverty Level.

In the 1990s, Oregon had a General Assistance program which provided income supports to non-disabled adults in poverty without children; that program has since been eliminated. Seniors can access Social Security, but Social Security benefits have lost 34% of their buying power since 2000. Disabled adults may be able to get Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but SSI benefits are difficult to obtain, and the average SSI benefit is only equal to 74% of the Federal Poverty Level.[14]

Federal and state budget cuts in the past few years, known as sequestration, have further eroded federal, state, and local safety nets, with cuts affecting a wide range of programs such as Head Start, Section 8, mental health services, meal programs for seniors, and other essential services.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF POVERTY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Understanding the demographics of poverty in Multnomah County allows us to identify disparities and to tailor interventions to meet the unique needs of different groups. This section examines poverty in Multnomah County from the perspective of several key demographic groups: communities of color, immigrants and refugees, families, women, children, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

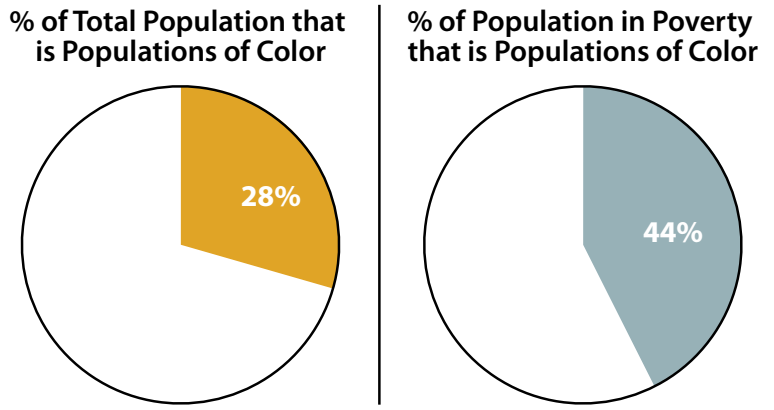
A Note on Data
Most of the demographic data in this report are based on the Census and American Community Survey (ACS). These data sources are the only comprehensive data available on Multnomah County's populations in poverty, but they also have limitations that must be kept in mind. Most notably, the Census and ACS undercount communities of color and culturally-specific communities. For more information, see Appendix B.

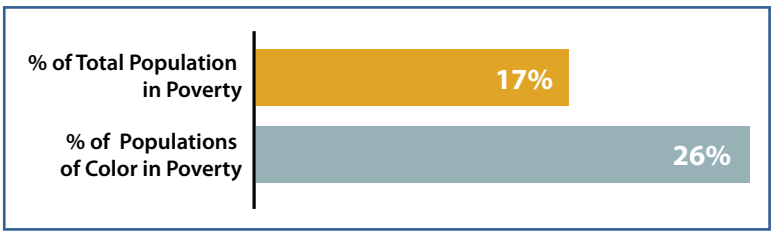
Communities of Color

Communities of color represent an increasingly larger portion of Multnomah County's population. Almost one-third of the county's population (28%) is people of color.[15] African-Americans make up 7% of the county's population, Asians make up 8%, Native Americans make up 3%, Hawaiian/ Pacific Islanders make up 1%, and Hispanics make up 11%.

Communities of color are over-represented in Multnomah County's population in poverty.

People of color are over-represented within Multnomah County's population in poverty. While people of color represent 28% of the overall population of Multnomah County, they represent 44% of the county's population in poverty – an over-representation of 16 percentage points.

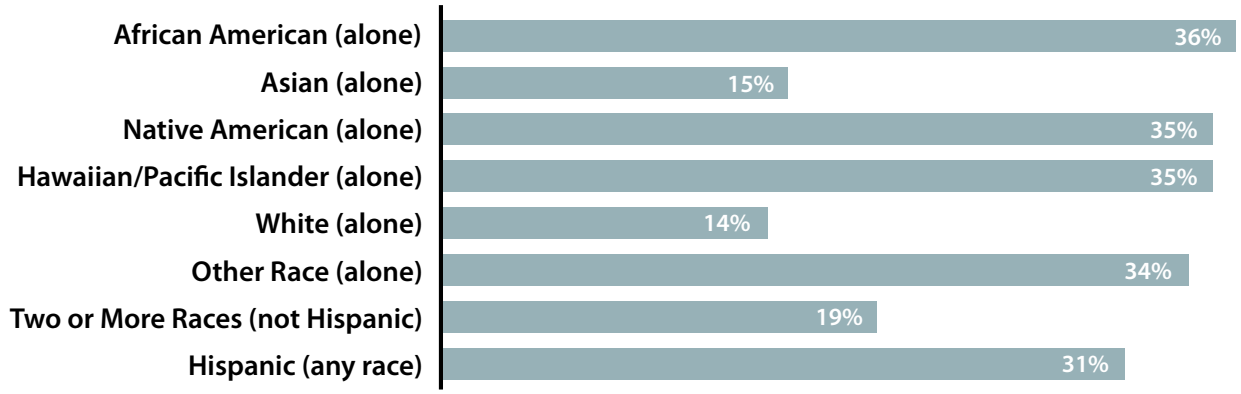




Communities of color also experience higher rates of poverty than the general population. While 17% of the county's overall population is in poverty, 26% of the county's populations of color are in poverty.

These disparities affect all communities of color, though at different rates. The chart below shows that the poverty rates for all communities of color are higher than for Whites, with the highest poverty rates affecting African-Americans (36%), Native Americans (35%), and Hawaiian/ Pacific Islanders (35%).

Percent of each Racial/ Ethnic Group's Population that is in Poverty

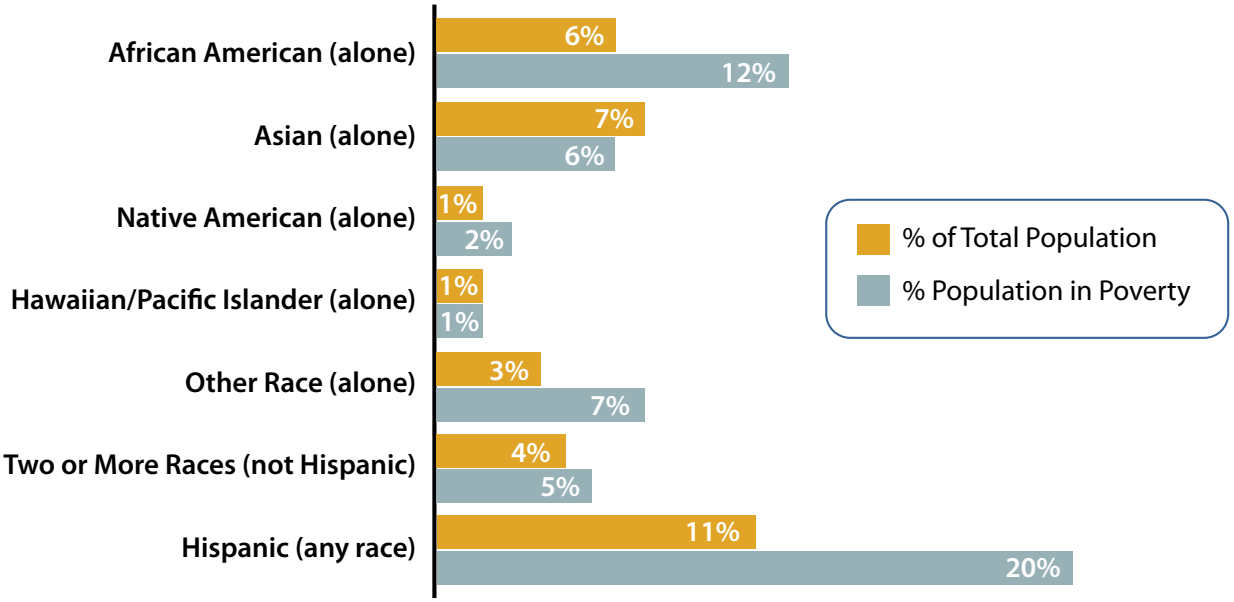


Almost all communities of color are also over-represented within Multnomah County's population in poverty. The below chart shows the percentage of each community of color within the total population of the county and within the county's population in poverty. The Hispanic, African-American, and Native American populations have the greatest rates of over-representation, with their representation in the county's population in poverty roughly double their representation in the overall population.

The Asian Pacific Islander Community

While the Asian community as a whole is not affected by the same disproportionality as other communities of color, research by the Coalition of Communities of Color shows that poverty rates among Asian Pacific Islander (API) families are almost twice the rates for White families. The Coalition's research also shows that more recent API immigrants tend to experience higher rates of poverty than the general population.

Over-representation of Communities of Color within Population in Poverty



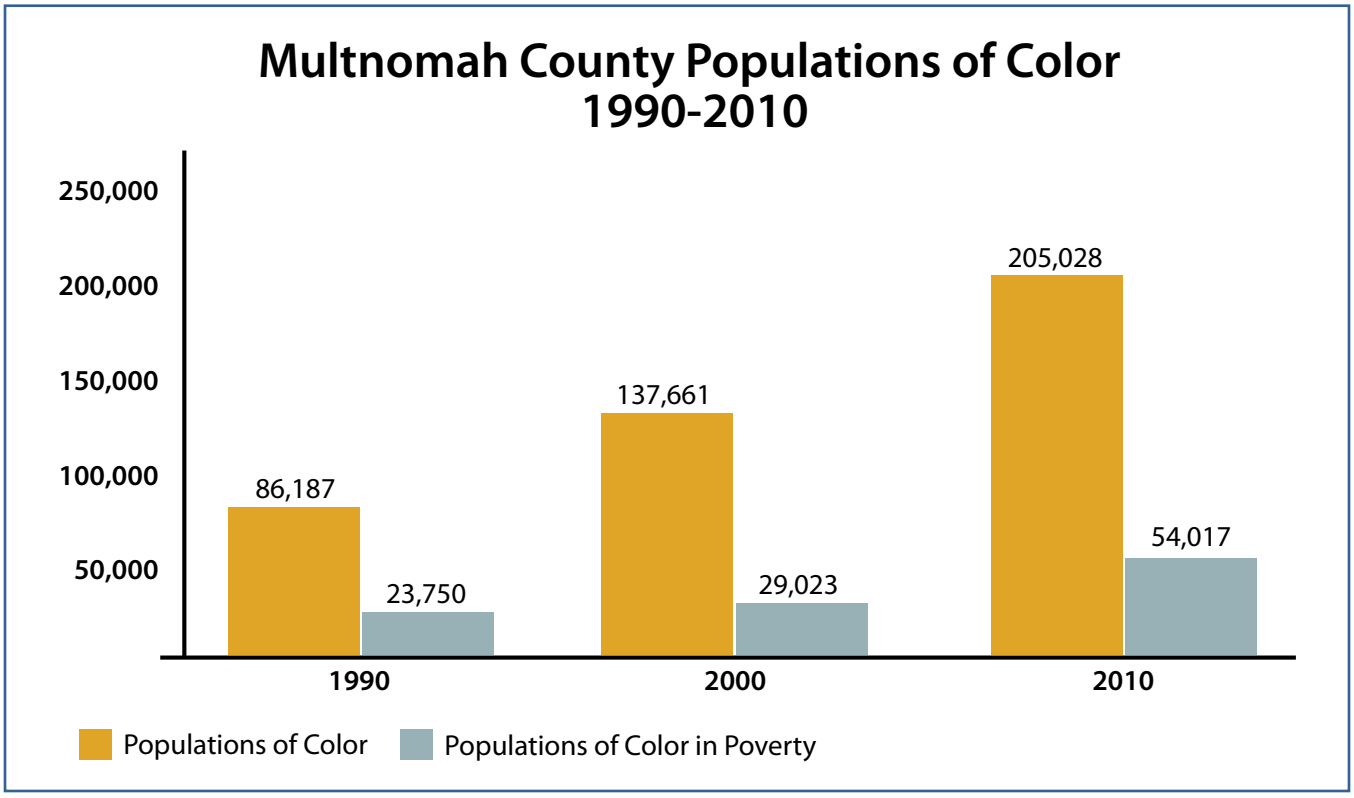
The disproportionate impact of poverty on communities of color in Multnomah County is the result of historic and present-day inequities rooted in the complex intersections of institutional, ideological, behavioral and historic racism as well as white privilege. These inequities contribute to significant disparities affecting people of color across a wide range of systems and indicators of well-being. These inequities and their consequences are well documented by the Coalition of Communities of Color and Portland State University in their series of "An Unsettling Profile" reports.[16] Any efforts to address poverty within communities of color should be framed within an understanding of these issues.

Poverty among communities of color is getting worse

The number of people of color in poverty in Multnomah County has more than doubled over the past two decades as the size of Multnomah County's population of color has grown. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people of color in poverty grew by 127%, while the number of Whites in poverty grew by 25%. The growth in populations of color in poverty from 1990 to 2010 is roughly proportional to their overall population growth during the same time period. However, during the most recent decade (2000-2010), populations of color in poverty grew at almost twice the rate as their growth in the overall population (86% vs. 49%).

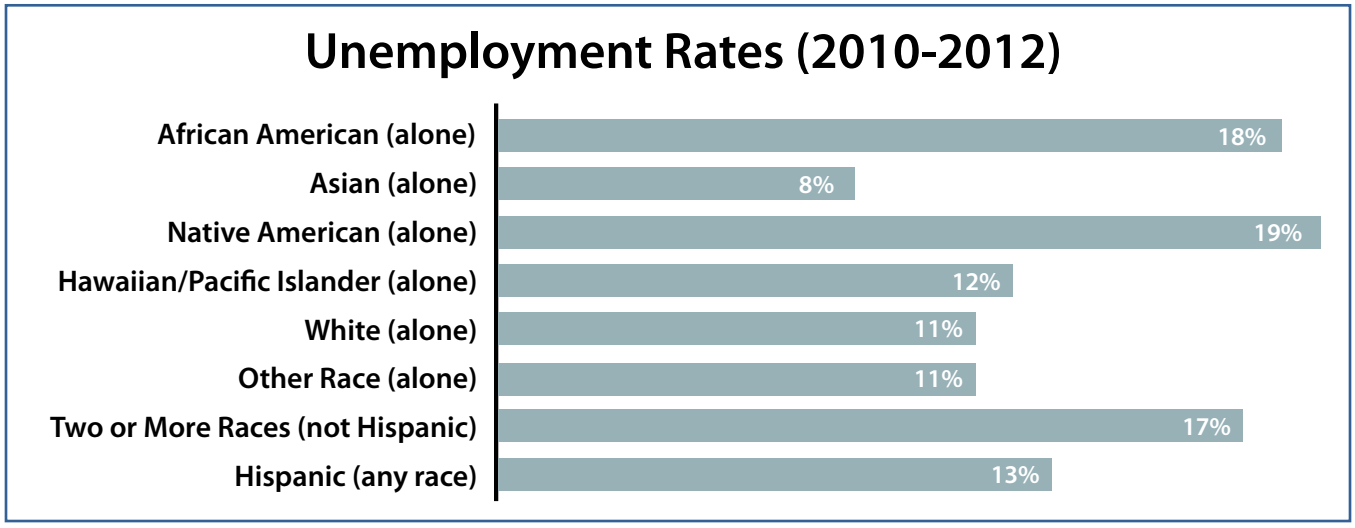
The number of people of color in poverty in Multnomah County has more than doubled over the past two decades.

Multnomah County Population	Change 1990-2000	Change 2000-2010	Change 1990-2010
Total White (non-Hispanic) Population	+5%	+2%	+7%
Total Populations of Color	+60%	+49%	+138%
Total White (non-Hispanic) Population in Poverty	-5%	+32%	+25%
Total Populations of Color in Poverty	+22%	+86%	+127%



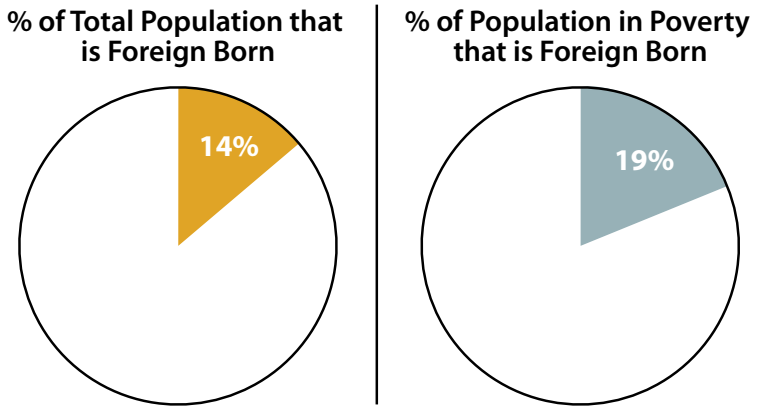
The significant growth in poverty among populations of color over the past decade is due in part to the disproportionate impact of the recession on communities of color. Fifty-six percent of the adults (age 25 and older) in the county with less than a high school education are people of color. In contrast, 14% of the adults in the county with a college degree or higher are people of color. This puts populations of color at higher risk for unemployment, underemployment, and employment in low-wage sectors. As the chart below demonstrates, unemployment rates in Multnomah County among almost all populations of color are higher than among Whites, with the rates for African-Americans and Native Americans almost twice those of Whites.[17]

Unemployment rates among almost all populations of color are higher than among Whites.



Immigrants and refugees are disproportionately impacted by poverty

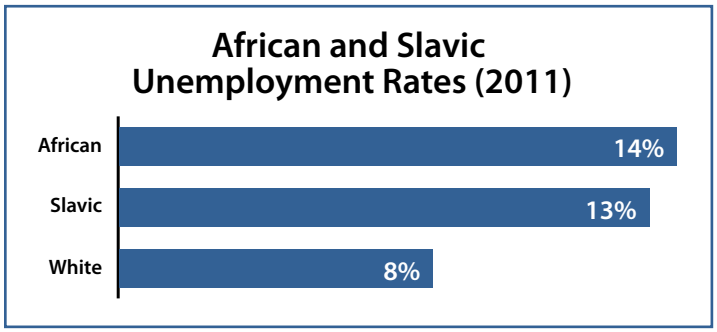
Multnomah County's immigrant and refugee populations, many of whom are people of color, are also disproportionately impacted by poverty. The best available data for measuring the percentage of immigrants and refugees in poverty in Multnomah County is the foreign-born population; this measure does not capture the entire immigrant and refugee population, but it is a reasonable proxy.

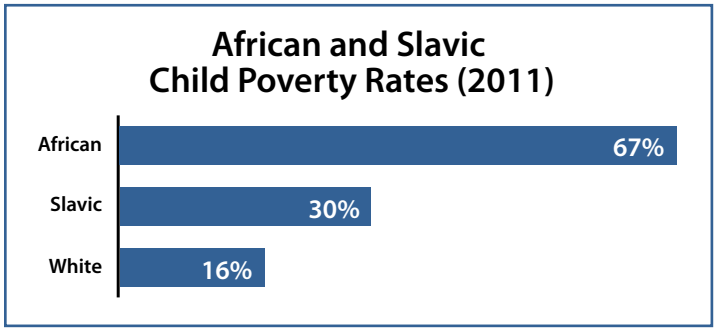


While 14% of Multnomah County's overall population is foreign born, 19% of the county's population in poverty is foreign born, an over-representation of five percentage points.

The foreign-born population also experiences higher rates of poverty than the overall population: while 17% of Multnomah County's population is in poverty, 23% of the foreign-born population is in poverty.

Immigrants and refugees can face significant challenges that contribute to their high poverty rates. These include language and cultural barriers, discrimination, and lack of recognition of foreign educational and professional credentials. For example, even though a quarter of the county's African immigrant and refugee community has graduate and professional degrees (a rate that is almost double that of the county's White population), household income for African immigrants is half that for Whites, and more than one in two African immigrants lives in poverty.[18]





While comprehensive poverty data are not available for each of the county's immigrant and refugee populations, the Coalition of Communities of Color's research on the African and Slavic immigrant and refugee communities reveals significant disparities affecting these communities across a wide range of economic indicators. The charts to the left offer two striking examples of these disparities. Unemployment rates in the county's African and Slavic communities are significantly higher than for Whites. And poverty rates are exponentially higher among Slavic and African children compared to Whites.[19]

Additional data on culturally-specific populations

The extensive data and analysis provided by the Coalition of Communities of Color in their series of reports on each of Multnomah County's culturally-specific communities offer additional insights into the income disparities affecting populations of color and immigrant and refugee communities:

- **African-Americans** [20]
  - Per capita income for African-Americans in Multnomah County is less than half the per capita income for Whites.
  - One of every three African-Americans lives in poverty, while only one of eight Whites is poor.
  - African-American unemployment levels are nearly double the White unemployment rate.
  - More than half of African-American youth do not complete high school, compared to just over a third of White students.

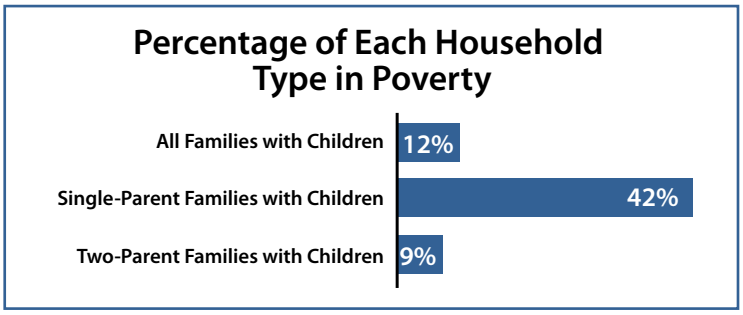
Data and analysis by the Coalition of Communities of Color offer additional insights into the income disparities affecting populations of color and immigrant and refugee communities.

- **African Immigrants and Refugees** [21]
  - African immigrants and refugees have poverty levels higher than the average among all communities of color and have the highest child poverty rate in the region.
  - African household income is half that of Whites.
  - African unemployment rates are 80% higher than Whites.
  - Data on African student graduation rates are not available, but anecdotal information and data on student performance suggest that graduation rates for African immigrants and refugees are likely far below those of White students.

- **Latinos** [22]
  - Latino individual poverty levels are 77% higher than those of Whites, and their family poverty levels are 152% higher.
  - Per capita incomes for Latinos are 57% those of Whites.
  - The Latino unemployment rate is double the rate for Whites.
  - More than half of Latino students do not complete high school, compared to just over a third of White students.
- **Native Americans** [23]
  - Poverty rates among Native Americans are triple those in White communities, and the child and family poverty rates are almost four times higher.
  - Per capita income for Native Americans is about half that for Whites.
  - The Native American unemployment rate is 70% higher than the rate for Whites.
  - More than half of Native American students do not complete high school, compared to just over a third of White students.
- **Asian Pacific Islanders** [24]
  - Poverty rates among Asian Pacific Islander families are almost twice the rates for Whites.
  - Per capita incomes for Asian Pacific Islanders are 67% those of Whites.
  - While overall unemployment rates for Asian Pacific Islanders are roughly equal to the unemployment rates for Whites, the unemployment rates for the most recent Asian Pacific Islander immigrants to arrive in the United States (post 1996) are more than twice that for Whites.
  - Asian Pacific Islander students complete high school at a rate that it is on par with White students, but 20.5% of Asian Pacific Islander adults in the county have not completed high school, compared with only 6.3% of Whites.
- **Slavic Community** [25]
  - Almost one in every three Slavic children lives in poverty – double the level of White children.
  - Slavic workers earn 1/3 less money than White workers for full-time, year-round work.
  - The unemployment rate within the Slavic community is almost double that for Whites.
  - Only 25.6% of Slavic adults in Multnomah County hold a university degree, compared with 43.1% of Whites.

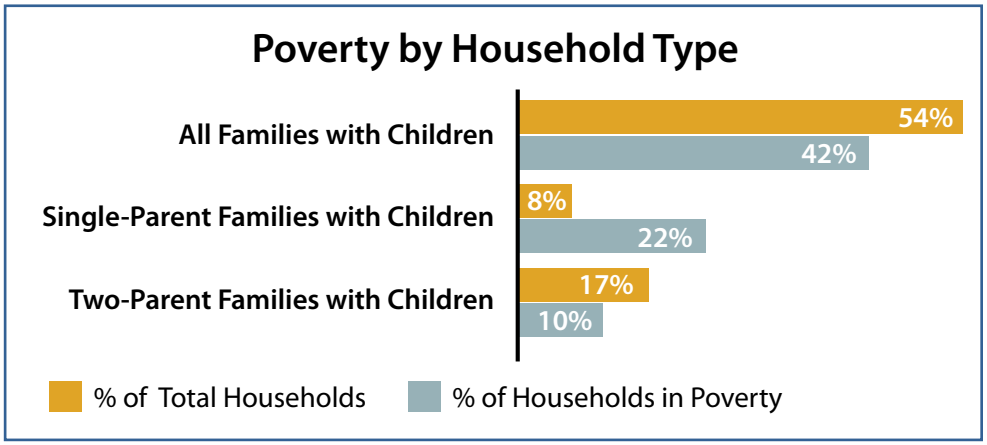
Household Types

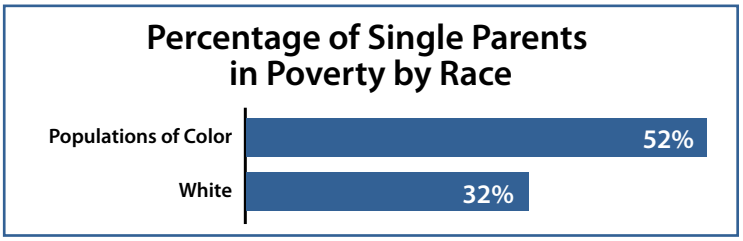
An analysis of poverty rates by household type indicates that single-parent families with children are far more likely to be in poverty than any other family type. While 12% of all families with children are in poverty, 42% of single-parent families with children are in poverty, compared with 9% of two-parent families.



While single-parent families make up only 8% of the total households in the county, they represent 22% of all households in poverty. In contrast, two-parent families with children make up 17% of all households in the county but represent only 10% of households in poverty.

The poverty rate among single-parent families of color is even higher: 52% of Multnomah County's single-parent families of color are in poverty, compared with 32% of White single parents. The single parent poverty rates are especially high for African-Americans (59%), Native Americans (76%), and Hispanics (52%).[26]





The number of single-parent families in poverty increased over the past two decades at almost three times the growth rate for single-parent families as a whole (28% vs. 10%). Interestingly, the number of single-parent families in poverty decreased by 15% from 1990-2000, but this decrease was counter-balanced by a 52% increase from 2000-2010. The number of two-parent families in poverty increased by 7% from 1990-2010, slightly higher than the overall growth rate of two-parent families, which was 4%.

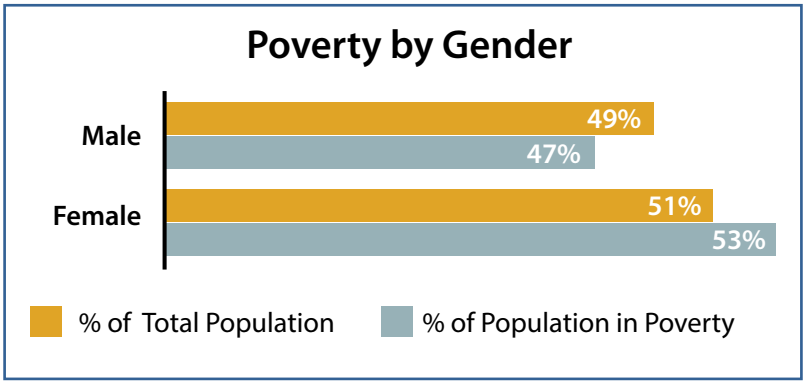
Multnomah County Households	Change 1990-2000	Change 2000-2010	Change 1990-2010
Total Single-Parent Families	+19%	-7%	+10%
Single-Parent Families in Poverty	-15%	+52%	+28%
Total Two-Parent Families	+5%	-1%	+4%
Two-Parent Families in Poverty	+1%	+5%	+7%

Poverty rates among single-parent households have historically been high because of the challenges of meeting the needs of a multi-person household with only one income. Single parents also must be able to find stable child care, which can create significant barriers to employment. The increase in the number of single-parent families in poverty over the past decade is likely due to the impact of the recession as well as the decline in benefits from safety net programs such as TANF, as described earlier in this report.

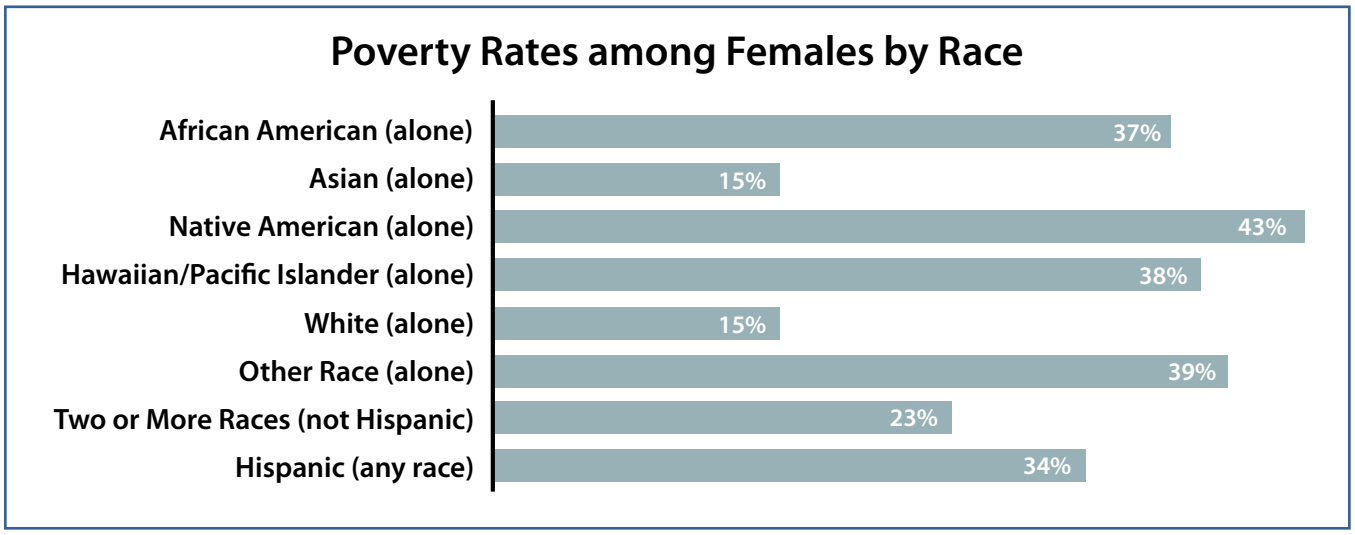
Gender

Women are slightly over-represented among Multnomah County's population in poverty. Females make up 51% of the county's population and 53% of the county's population in poverty.

The poverty rate among females is also slightly higher than the poverty rate among men: 18% of females in Multnomah County are in poverty compared with 16% of men.



Poverty rates among females vary widely by race: 15% of White females are in poverty, compared with rates more than twice that amount for most populations of color.



The over-representation of females in poverty is likely due to a combination of factors:

- Women are more likely than men to be working in low-wage, part-time, or temporary jobs.[27]
- Women tend to earn less than men, bringing home 77 cents for every dollar earned by men, on average.[28]
- Women are more likely to have primary responsibility for taking care of children. If they can't afford child care or don't have benefits like paid sick leave, they are more vulnerable to losing income and employment when they have to care for their children.[29]
- Women are disproportionately impacted by domestic violence. Studies of domestic violence victims in Multnomah County indicate that 90% have difficulty meeting their basic needs.[30] Many domestic violence survivors become homeless after fleeing an abusive relationship, making domestic violence a leading cause of homelessness and housing instability.[31]

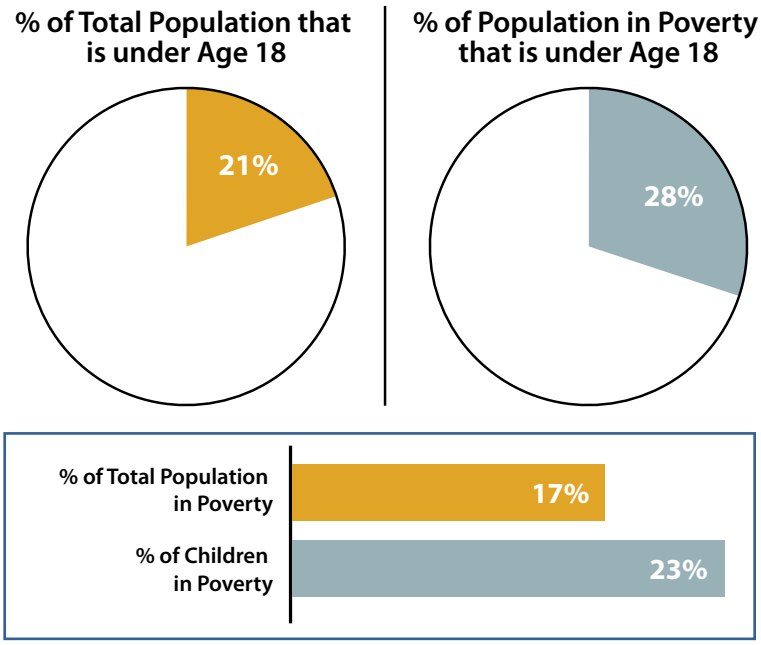
Women are more likely than men to be working in low-wage, part-time, or temporary jobs.

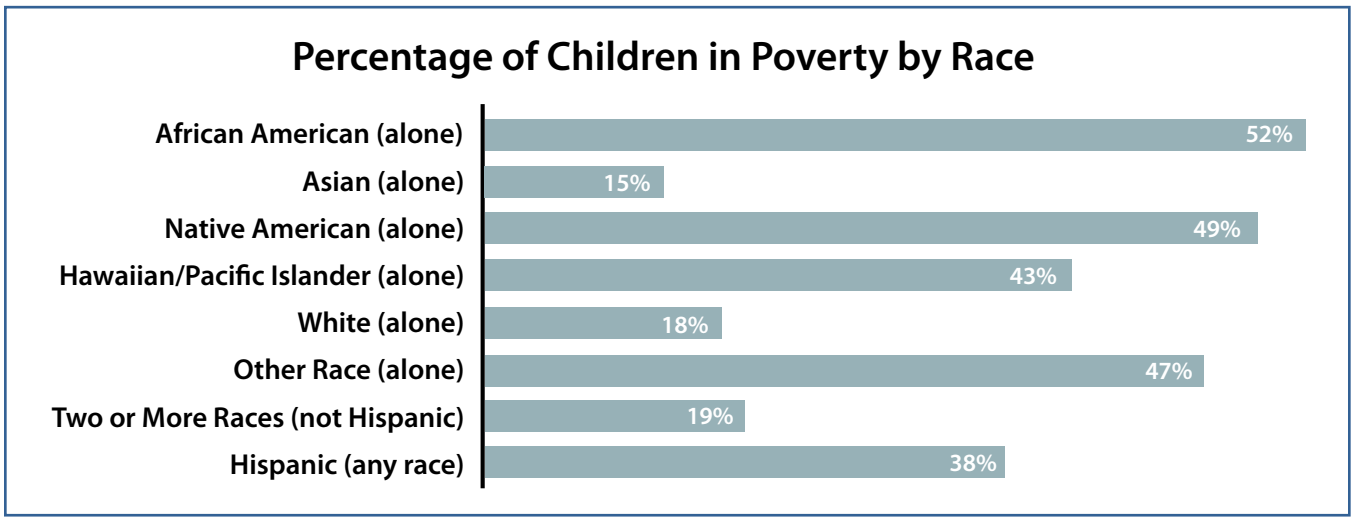
Children

In Multnomah County, children are over-represented in the population in poverty compared to their representation in the overall population: 21% of the county's population is under age 18 whereas 28% of the county's population in poverty is under age 18.

Children in Multnomah County are more likely to be in poverty than adults, with 23% of all children under age 18 in poverty, compared with 17% for the county's overall population.

Poverty rates among children of color are even higher: 33% of children of color are in poverty. In contrast, 18% of White children are in poverty. The disparities are particularly dramatic for African-American and Native American children, about half of whom are in poverty.





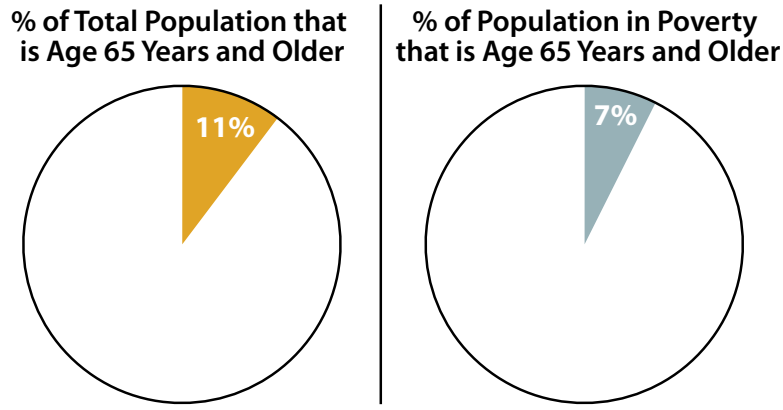
Multnomah County Population	Change 1990-2000	Change 2000-2010	Change 1990-2010
Total Population Under Age 18	+6%	+1%	+7%
Population Under Age 18 in Poverty	+5%	+29%	+35%

The number of children in poverty has increased over the past twenty years at a rate much higher than the overall increase in the county's child population. The total population under age 18 increased by 7% from 1990 to 2010, whereas the population under age 18 in poverty increased by 35% during that same time period. The bulk of the increase occurred between 2000 and 2010, when the overall population of children only increased by 1% but the population of children in poverty increased by 29%.

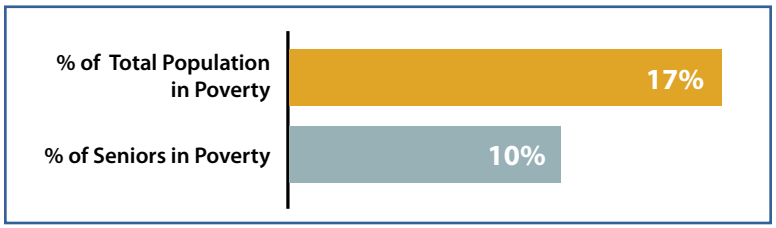
The increase in child poverty can likely be attributed to the same factors that contributed to the increase in poverty for women and single-parent households: the recession, loss in benefits from safety net programs such as TANF, and the unique challenges facing low-income families with children.

Seniors

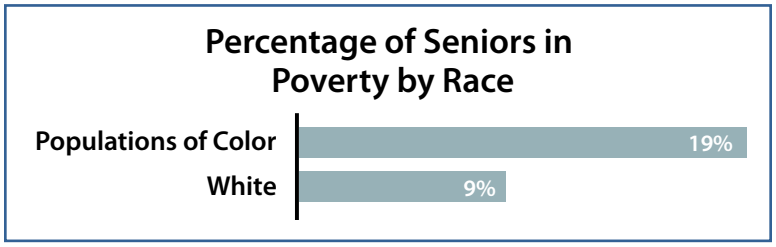
Seniors are under-represented in the population in poverty compared with their representation in the overall population: 11% of the county's population is age 65 years and older, whereas 7% of the county's population in poverty is age 65 years and older. The same pattern holds true for older adults age 55-64: 12% of the county's population is age 55-64 whereas 8% of the county's population in poverty is in that age group.



Seniors are less likely to be poor than the overall population of the county. Whereas 17% of the county's population is in poverty, 10% of the population age 65 years and older is in poverty, and 11% of the population age 55-64 years is in poverty.



The poverty rate among seniors of color is 19% -- almost twice the rate for the overall senior population. In contrast, 9% of White seniors are in poverty.[32]



The relatively low poverty rate among seniors compared with the county's overall population may reflect the benefits of key safety net programs available to older adults, particularly Social Security and Medicare. It may also reflect the limitations in the methodology used to measure the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The federal government recently developed a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) that attempts to address some of the shortcomings of the FPL. It includes a more realistic assessment of household costs, and it also takes into account the impact of benefits received from government programs such as food stamps and the Earned Income Tax Credit. In Oregon, the total SPM is statistically the same as the FPL, but the SPM for seniors is higher than the FPL for seniors.[33] The SPM is currently only available at the state level, but we can assume this same pattern would likely hold true at the county level.

Seniors are less likely to be poor than the overall population of the county.

Multnomah County Population	Change 1990-2000	Change 2000-2010	Change 1990-2010
Population Age 55-64 Years	+13%	+63%	+84%
Population Age 55-64 Years in Poverty	+28%	+74%	+122%
Population Age 65 Years and Over	-11%	+2%	-9%
Population Age 65 Years and Over in Poverty	-16%	+25%	+5%

Poverty among older adults has increased over the past two decades, with the greatest increases among the 55-64 year age group. The total population in that age group increased by 84% from 1990 to 2000, but

the population in poverty increased by 122%. Among seniors age 65 and older, the total population decreased by 9% from 1990 to 2010, while the population in poverty increased by 5%. During the most recent decade (2000-2010), the population age 65 and older increased by 2% while the population age 65 and older in poverty increased by 25%.

The Portland metro region's senior population (age 65 and older) is expected to more than double from 2010 to 2030, a rate of growth that will outpace both statewide and national trends. As the region's senior population grows, the number of seniors in poverty is likely to continue to increase.[34]

Poverty among older adults has increased over the past two decades. As the region's senior population grows, the number of seniors in poverty is likely to continue to increase.

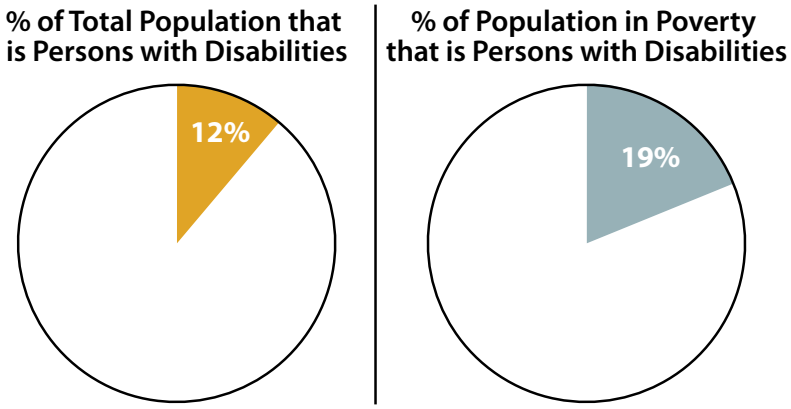
The decline in purchasing power of Social Security along with the erosion of traditional pension and retirement plans will likely contribute to further increases in the number of seniors in poverty. The National Retirement Risk Index found that more than half (53%) of working households nationally are at risk of not being able to maintain pre-retirement living standards after retiring.[35] Older adults who experienced unemployment during the recession are at even greater risk of not having enough income saved for retirement.

Given the inadequacy of many older adults' retirement savings, it is not surprising that the majority of Social Security recipients depend on it for at least half of their total income, and about one-third rely on it for 90% or more of their income. Social Security benefits have lost 34% of their buying power since 2000, a trend which likely contributed to the increase in senior poverty over the past decade.[36] If proposed reforms to Social Security -- such as reduced cost-of-living adjustments and raised eligibility ages -- are implemented, we will likely see even greater increases in the senior poverty rate in years to come.[37]

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities are over-represented within the county's population in poverty: 12% of the county's population has a disability, while 19% of the county's population in poverty has a disability.[38]

More than a quarter of persons with disabilities in the county are living in poverty.



Persons with disabilities also have a higher poverty rate than the overall population: whereas 17% of the county's overall population is in poverty, 27% of the county's population with disabilities is in poverty.

Racial and ethnic data are not available for the population of persons with disabilities in poverty, but of the overall population of persons with disabilities in Multnomah County, 23% are people of color.

Disabilities are a significant cause of poverty as well as a frequent consequence of being poor. An injury, illness, or chronic medical problem can lead to job loss and, without health insurance, steep medical bills. For households with low incomes and limited personal savings, the high medical costs can lead to poverty. Living in poverty, without stable housing or adequate health care, can exacerbate existing health, mental health, and addictions problems as well as result in new problems. These disabling conditions can also make it more difficult to exit poverty.

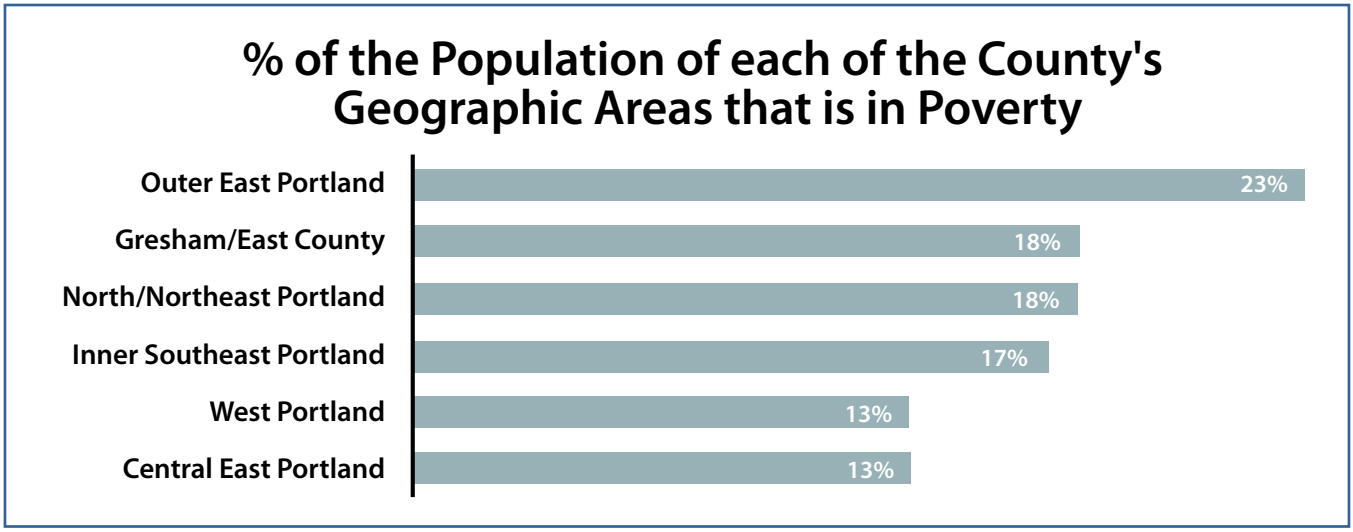
Disabilities are a significant cause of poverty as well as a frequent consequence of being poor.

National data indicate that persons with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as the general population. Those who do have jobs tend to earn about two-thirds as much as the general population. These disparities are even more pronounced for persons of color with disabilities. For example, whereas the unemployment rate for all persons with disabilities nationally is 13.4%, the rate for African-Americans with disabilities is 20.8%.[39]

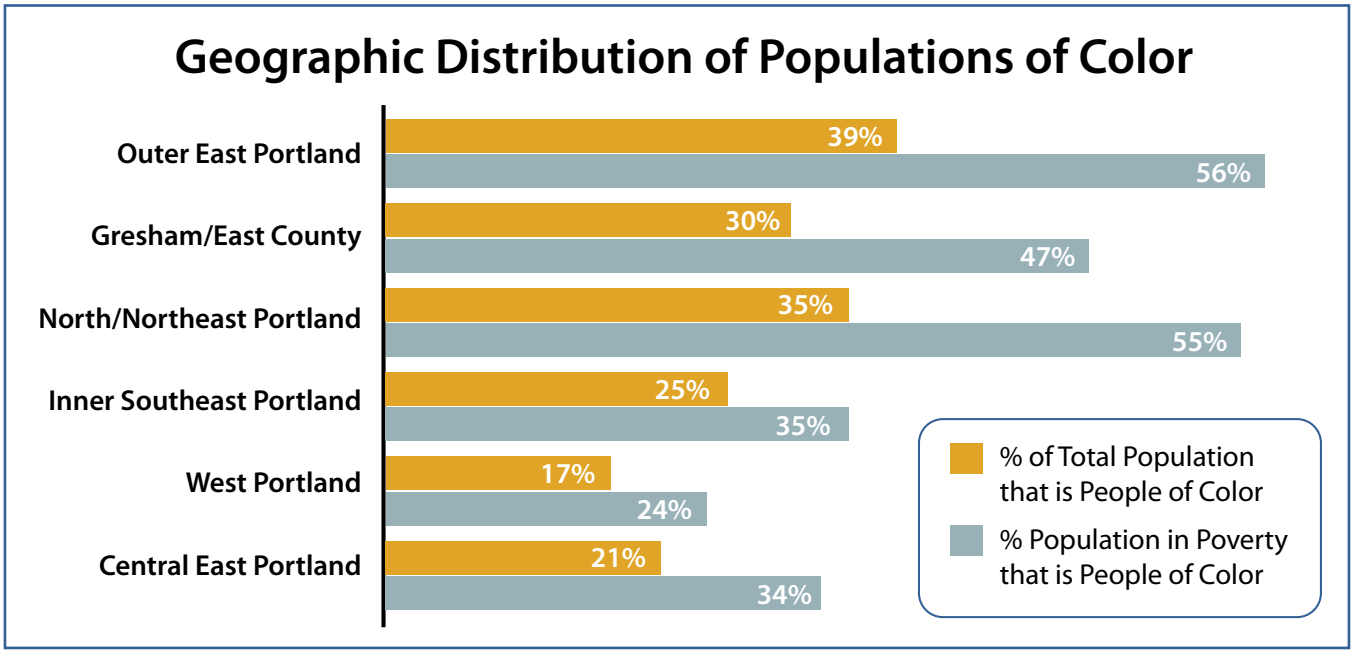
While some persons with disabilities can access income supports through the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability (SSD) programs, securing these benefits is very difficult. Successful applicants are often forced to wait years before their benefit applications are approved. And, as with so many other safety net programs, the benefits are inadequate to lift households without other income sources out of poverty. The maximum monthly federal SSI benefit is currently $721 for an individual[40], which is the equivalent of 74% of the Federal Poverty Level.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF POVERTY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

While poverty exists in all parts of Multnomah County, the rates of poverty are higher in certain parts of the county than others. Outer east Portland has the highest poverty rates, with almost one-quarter of its residents in poverty. This is followed by East County, north/northeast Portland and inner southeast Portland, each with 17-18% of their residents in poverty. West Portland and central east Portland have the lowest poverty rates, but even these areas have 13% of their residents in poverty.[41]



The past two decades have seen a dramatic shift in the region's demographics as low-income populations have increasingly moved away from the region's urban core to suburban and outlying neighborhoods. Because communities of color are disproportionately likely to be low income, these shifts have resulted in changes in the geographic distribution of populations of color. The areas of the county with the highest poverty rates also tend to have the highest percentages of people of color, though people of color are over-represented within the populations in poverty in all parts of the county.

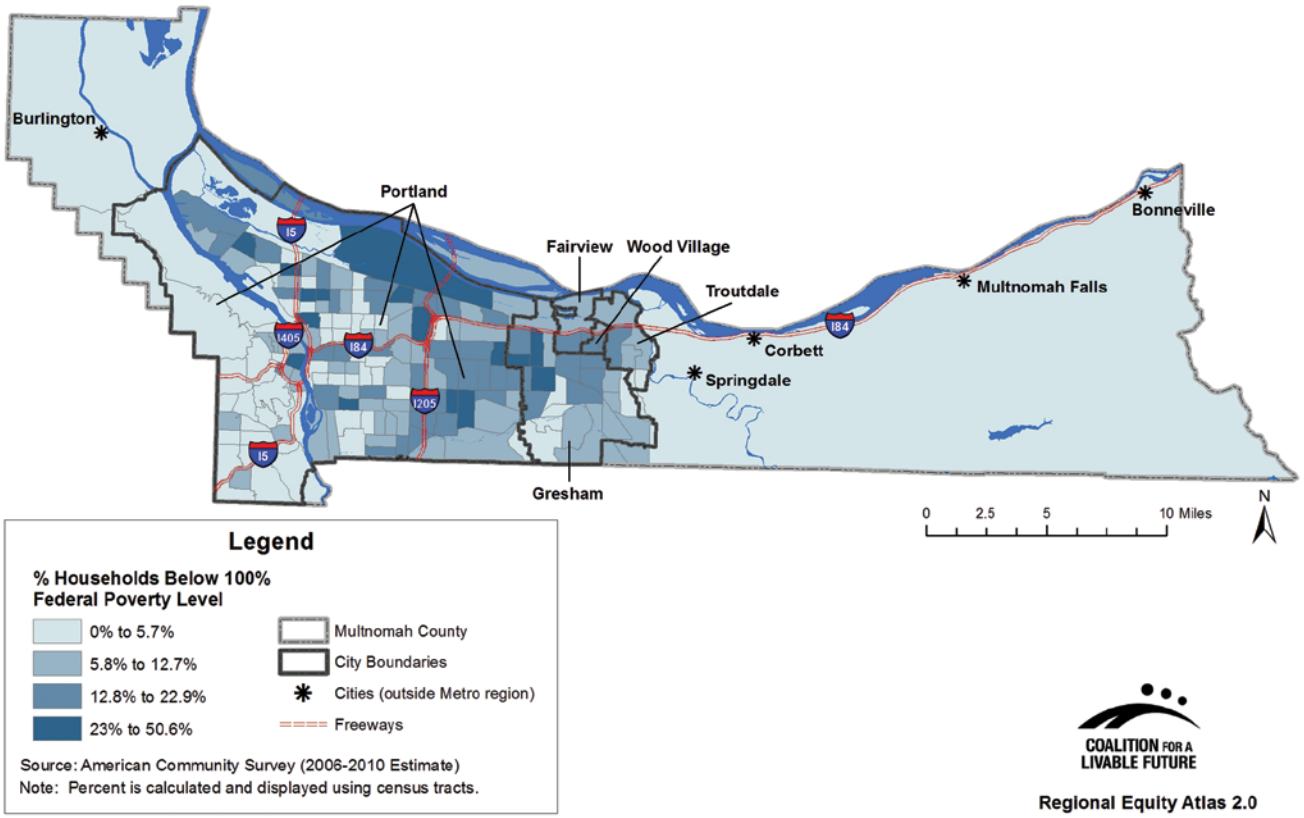


The shifting geography of poverty in Multnomah County can be viewed in a more nuanced way through maps. This section of the report includes a series of maps based on data from the Coalition for a Livable Future's Regional Equity Atlas.[42] These maps allow us to visualize the distribution of poverty across our region and how those patterns intersect with the distribution of key resources and opportunities.

The census tracts with the highest poverty rates are scattered throughout Portland's east side and Gresham.

Map 1 shows the **Percent of Households Below Poverty** by census tract. The darker the color, the higher the poverty rate. The census tracts with the highest poverty rates (23-51% of households in poverty) are scattered throughout Portland's east side and Gresham. The census tracts with moderately high poverty rates (12.8-22.9%), are concentrated in Portland east of I-205, north/northeast Portland, and in the northern half of Gresham.

MAP 1: Multnomah County Percent Households Below Poverty

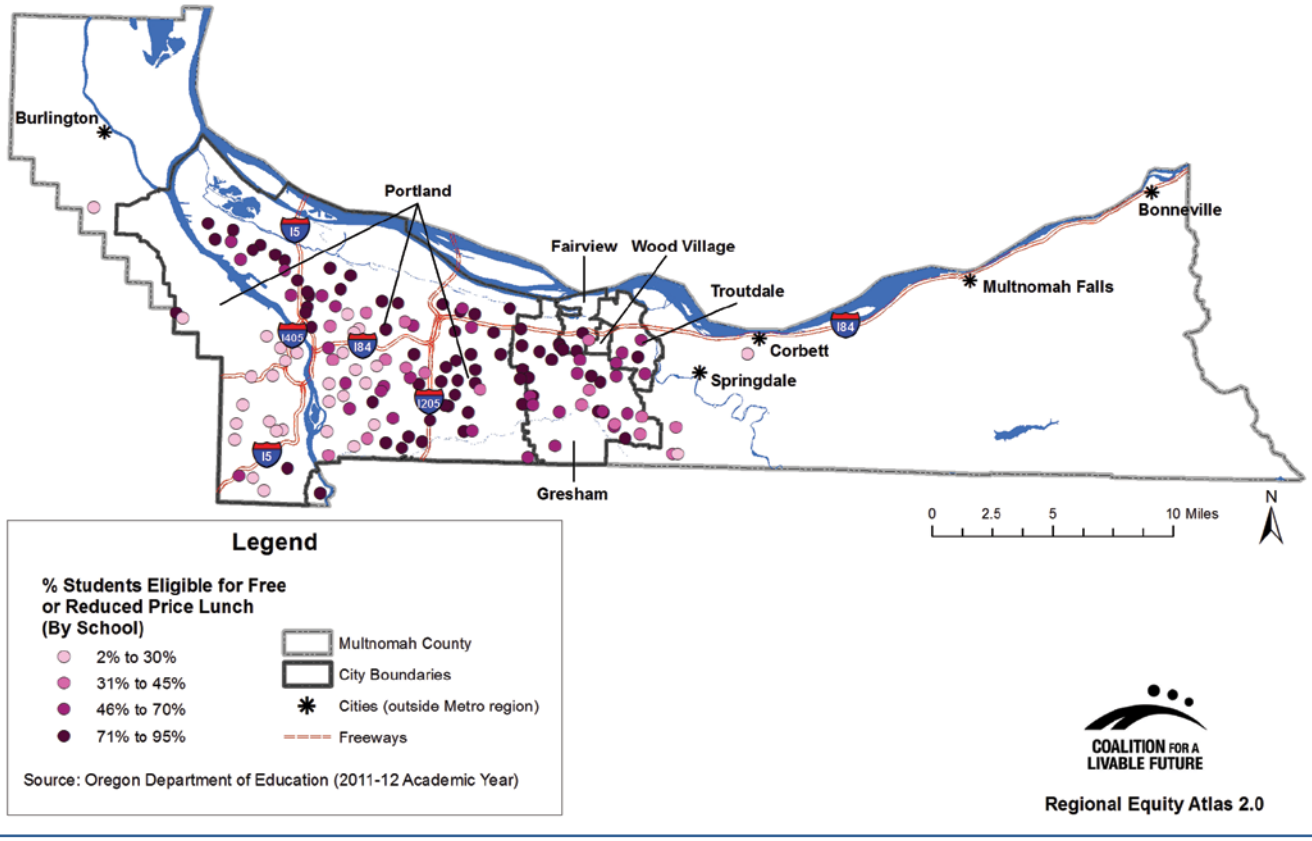


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 63 of the appendix

Map 2 shows the **Percentage of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch** (by school), which is another way to measure poverty (eligibility rates are based on 185% FPL). The darker the color, the higher the school's poverty rate. The map demonstrates that high poverty schools exist in all parts of the county, but are concentrated in north/ northeast Portland, Portland east of I-205, Gresham, and parts of Troutdale and Fairview.

High poverty schools exist in all parts of the county, but are concentrated in north/ northeast Portland and east of I-205.

MAP 2: Multnomah County
Percent Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (By School)



For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 64 of the appendix

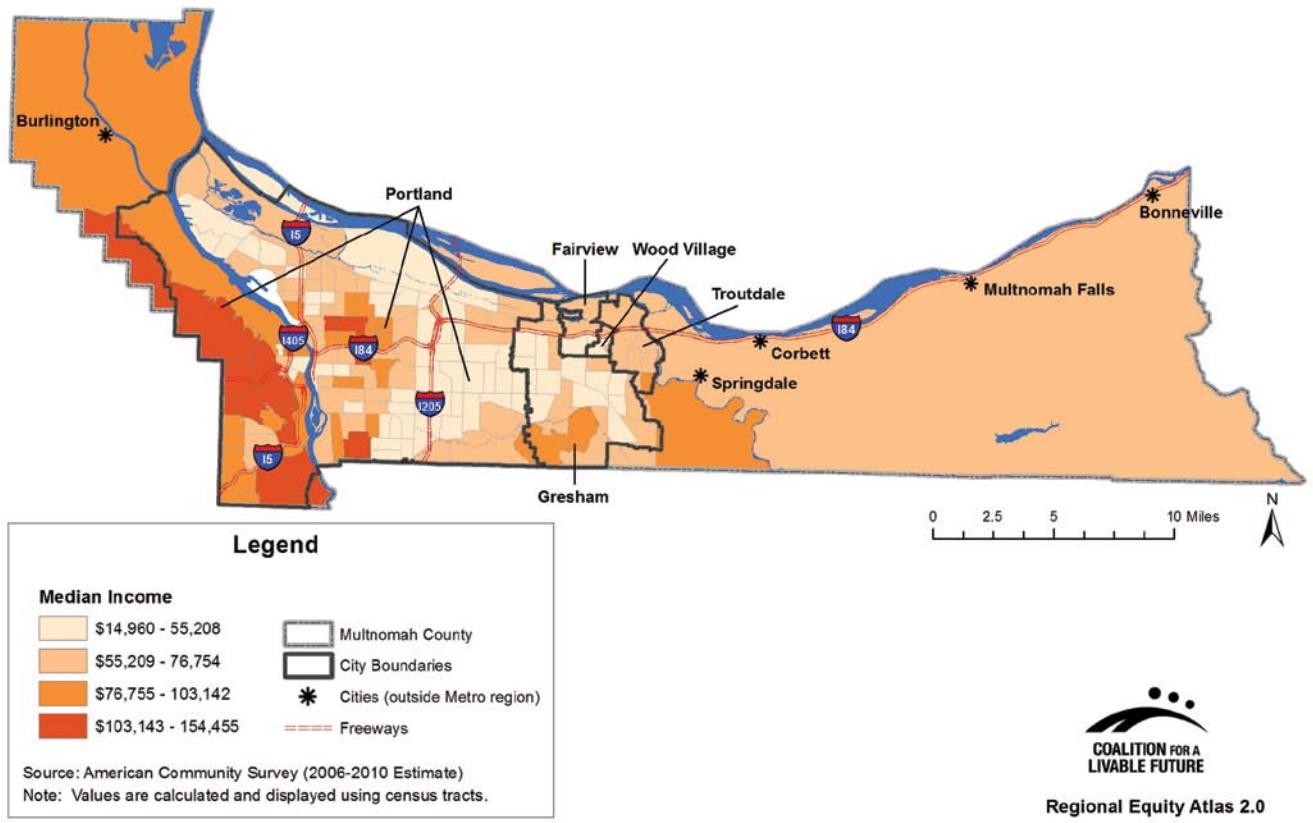
Another way to understand these patterns is by looking at the distribution of student poverty by school district:

School District	% Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch
Centennial	72%
Corbett	28%
David Douglas	78%
Gresham	54%
Parkrose	75%
Portland	42%
Reynolds	76%

Map 3 shows the distribution of **Median Household Income** by census tract. The lighter the color, the lower the median income. The census tracts with the lowest median incomes are concentrated in north Portland and on either side of the I-205 corridor, as well as in the northern half of Gresham. The census tracts with the highest median incomes are in parts of inner north and southeast Portland and on Portland's west side.

The census tracts with the lowest median incomes are concentrated in north Portland and on either side of the I-205 corridor, as well as in the northern half of Gresham.

MAP 3: Multnomah County Median Household Income

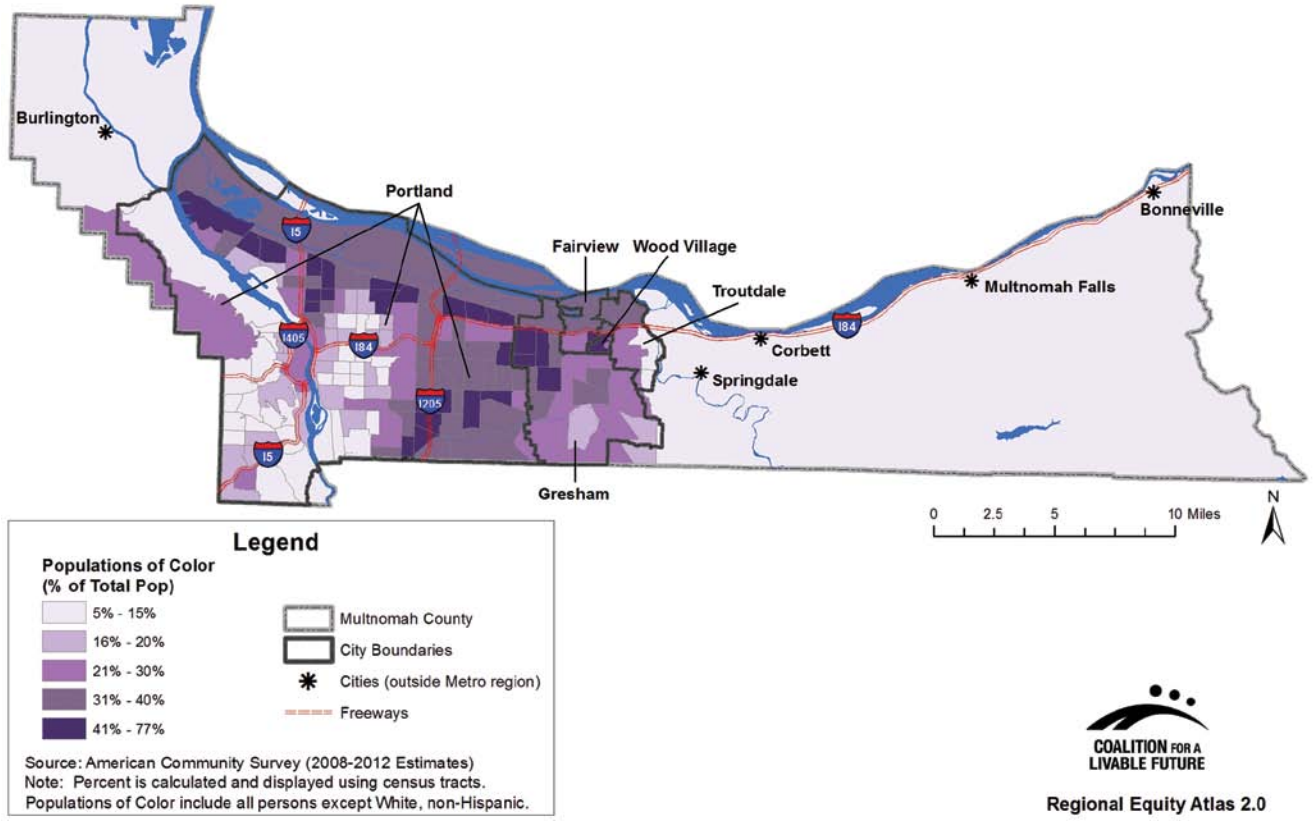


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 65 of the appendix

The census tracts with the highest percentages of people of color are located in parts of north/northeast Portland, outer east Portland, and East County.

Map 4 shows the intersection between the distribution of poverty and the distribution of **Populations of Color** across the county. The darker the color, the higher the percentage of populations of color as a share of the total population of each census tract. Because people of color are disproportionately likely to be in poverty, the areas of the county with high poverty rates also tend to have high percentages of populations of color.

MAP 4: Multnomah County Populations of Color (Percent of Total Population)



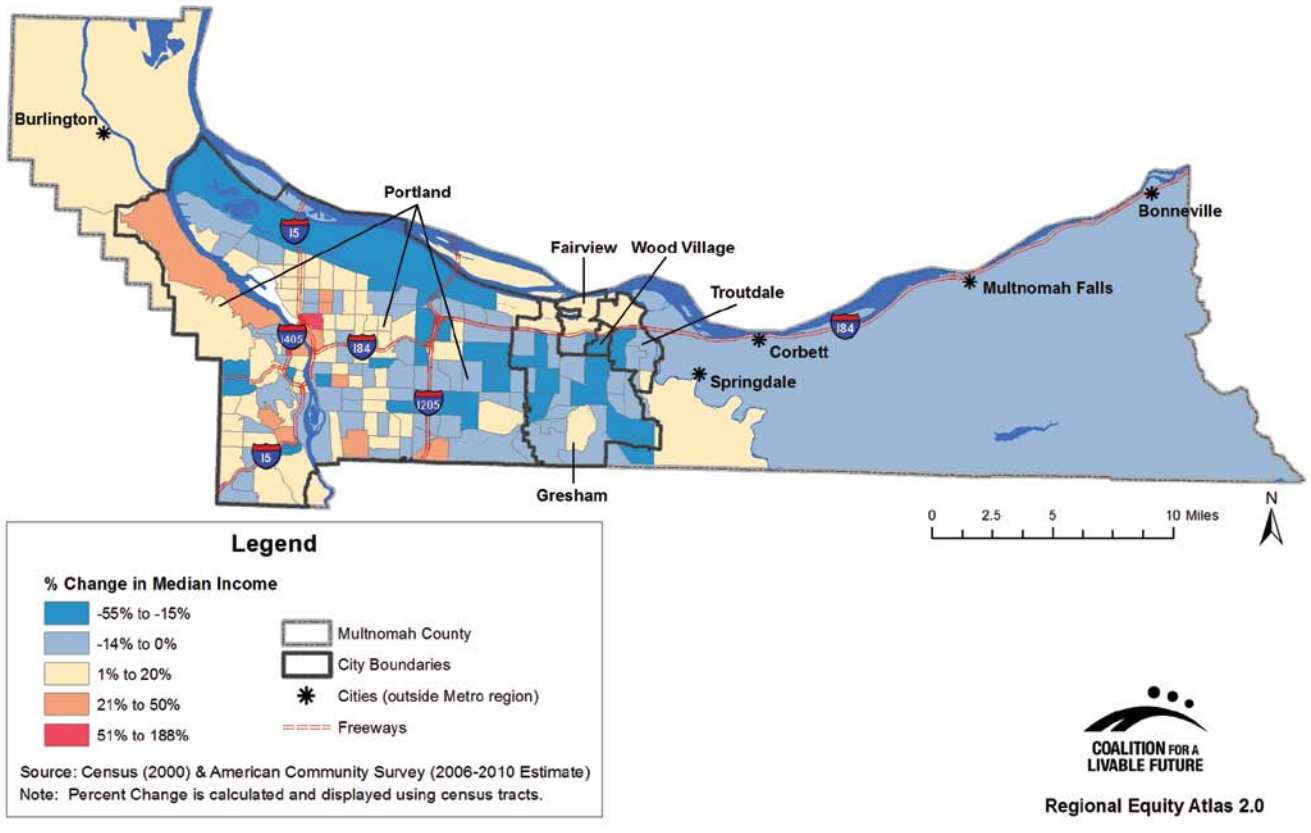
For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 66 of the appendix

Multnomah County's geography of poverty is changing

The distribution of poverty has shifted eastward over the past two decades, a pattern that is consistent with national trends of growing suburban poverty. Map 5 shows the **Percent Change in Median Income** by census tract from 2000-2010. Areas in blue had declines in median income, areas in yellow had very modest increases, areas in orange had moderate increases, and areas in red had the greatest increases. The map demonstrates the impact of the recession, with few areas experiencing significant increases in median income: the majority of the census tracts show either modest gains (up to 20%) or decreases (up to -55.49%). The areas with the greatest declines are largely the same areas that now show the highest rates of poverty – the outer northern edges of north/ northeast Portland, and areas east of I-205 in Portland and Gresham. In contrast, inner east Portland had more stable median incomes.

The distribution of poverty has shifted eastward over the past two decades.

MAP 5: Multnomah County Percent Change in Median Income (2000-2010)

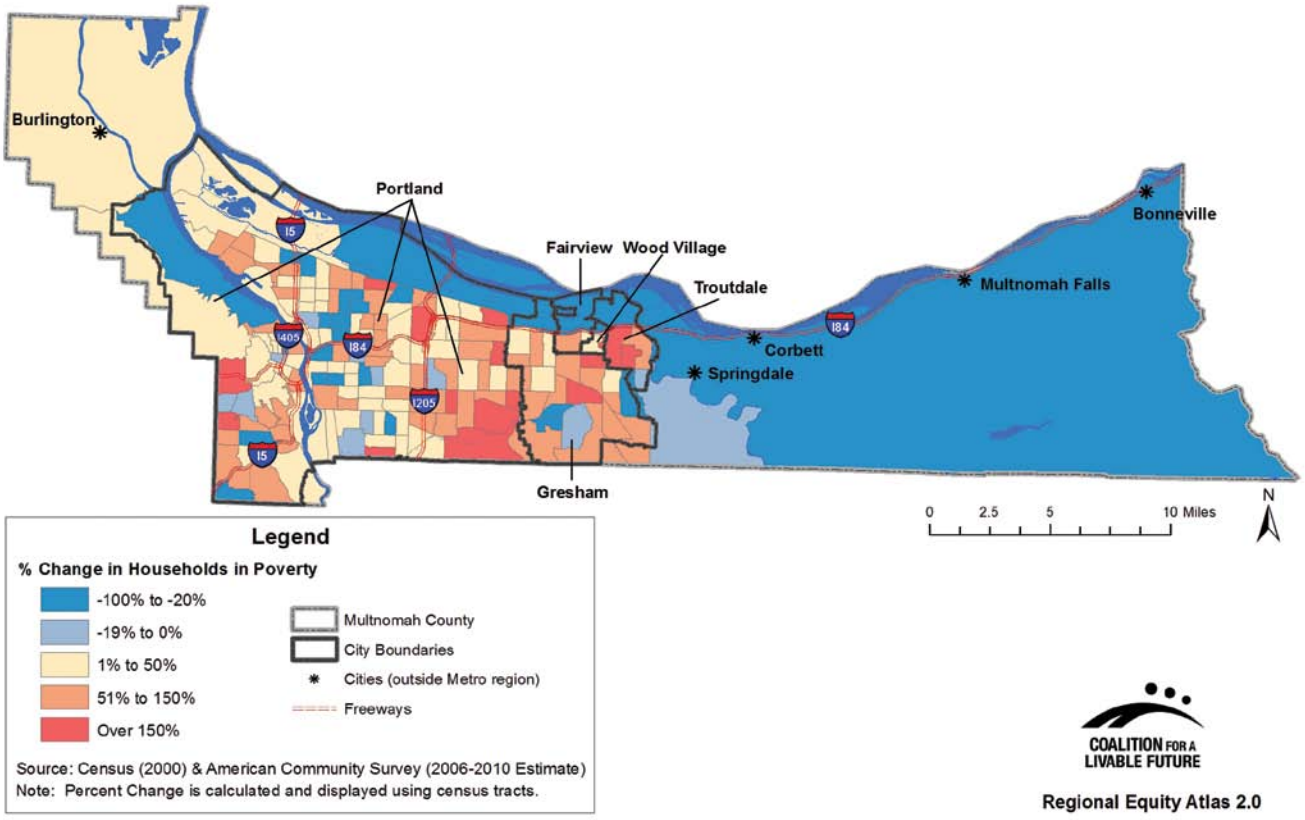


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 67 of the appendix

Map 6 shows the **Percent Change in Households in Poverty from 2000-2010**, with a similar overall pattern. Areas in blue had a decrease in the percentage of households in poverty, areas in yellow had very modest increases, areas in orange had moderate increases and areas in red had the greatest increases. The areas with the greatest increases are mostly east of I-205. It is interesting to note that some areas of southwest Portland also experienced significant increases in poverty (though not enough to put them among the highest poverty census tracts in the county), while a few census tracts in East County had declines in poverty rates.

The areas with the greatest increases in poverty from 2000-2010 are mostly east of I-205.

MAP 6: Multnomah County
Percent Change in Household Poverty (2000-2010)



For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 68 of the appendix

Factors underlying Multnomah County's shifting geography of poverty

The shift in Multnomah County's geography of poverty over the past decade can be attributed to several inter-related dynamics:

Increased housing costs

Increased housing prices in Portland's inner east side over the past two decades have driven many low-income households to seek housing in outer east Portland and the county's eastern suburbs. During the 1990s, rising housing costs in the central city forced many households to seek more affordable housing in neighborhoods further away from downtown. This pattern of gentrification and displacement continues to this day.

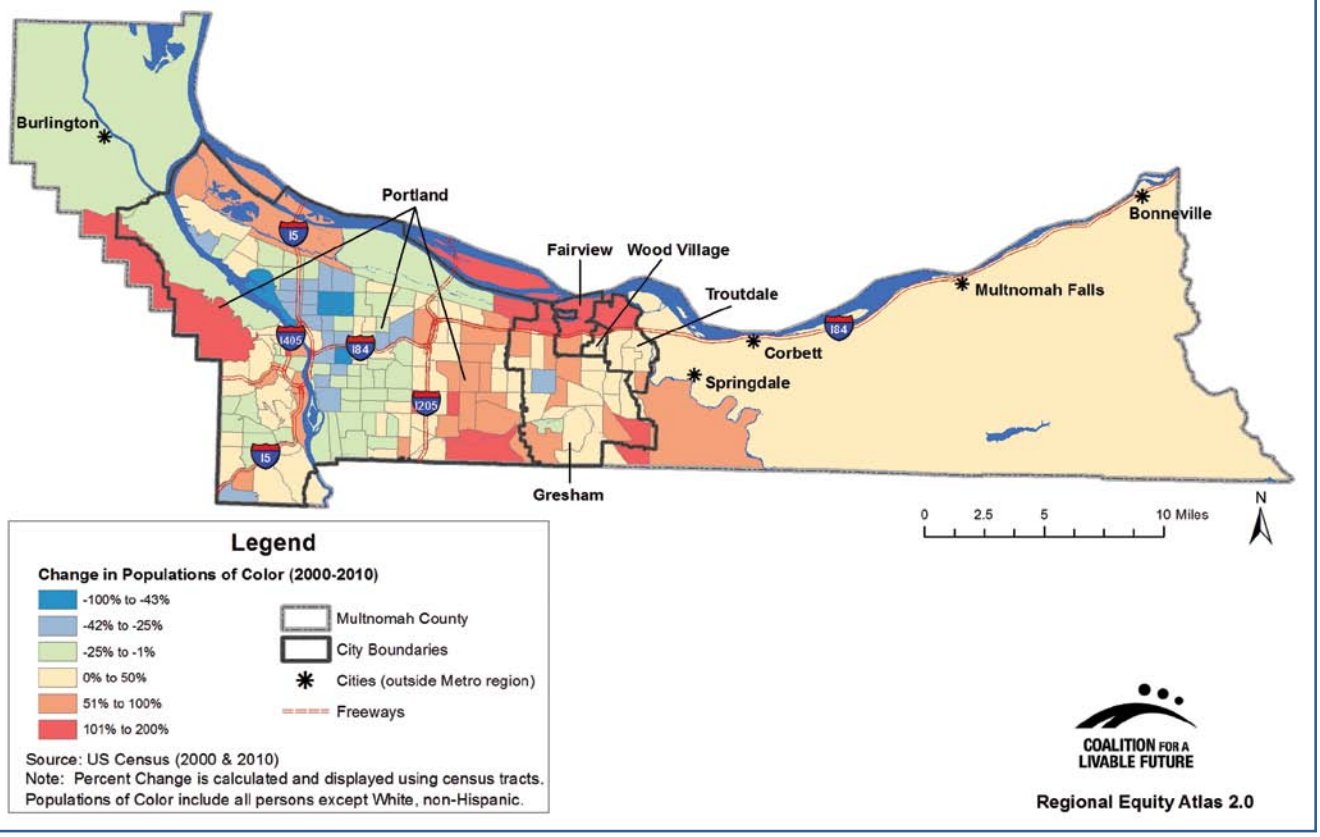
Rising housing costs in the central city have forced many households to seek housing further from downtown.

From 2000-2010, housing prices increased in almost all parts of Portland west of I-205, with the highest increases in many east and west side neighborhoods close to downtown. In contrast, housing prices east of I-205 mostly declined or stayed the same, with a few neighborhoods experiencing very modest increases. The areas of the county with the lowest median housing prices in 2010 included portions of north Portland, outer east Portland, and East County.[43]

Demographic shifts

The patterns of gentrification and displacement over the past two decades have been accompanied by demographic shifts. Map 7 shows the **Percent Change in Populations of Color** over the past decade.

MAP 7: Multnomah County Percent Change in in Populations of Color (2000-2010)



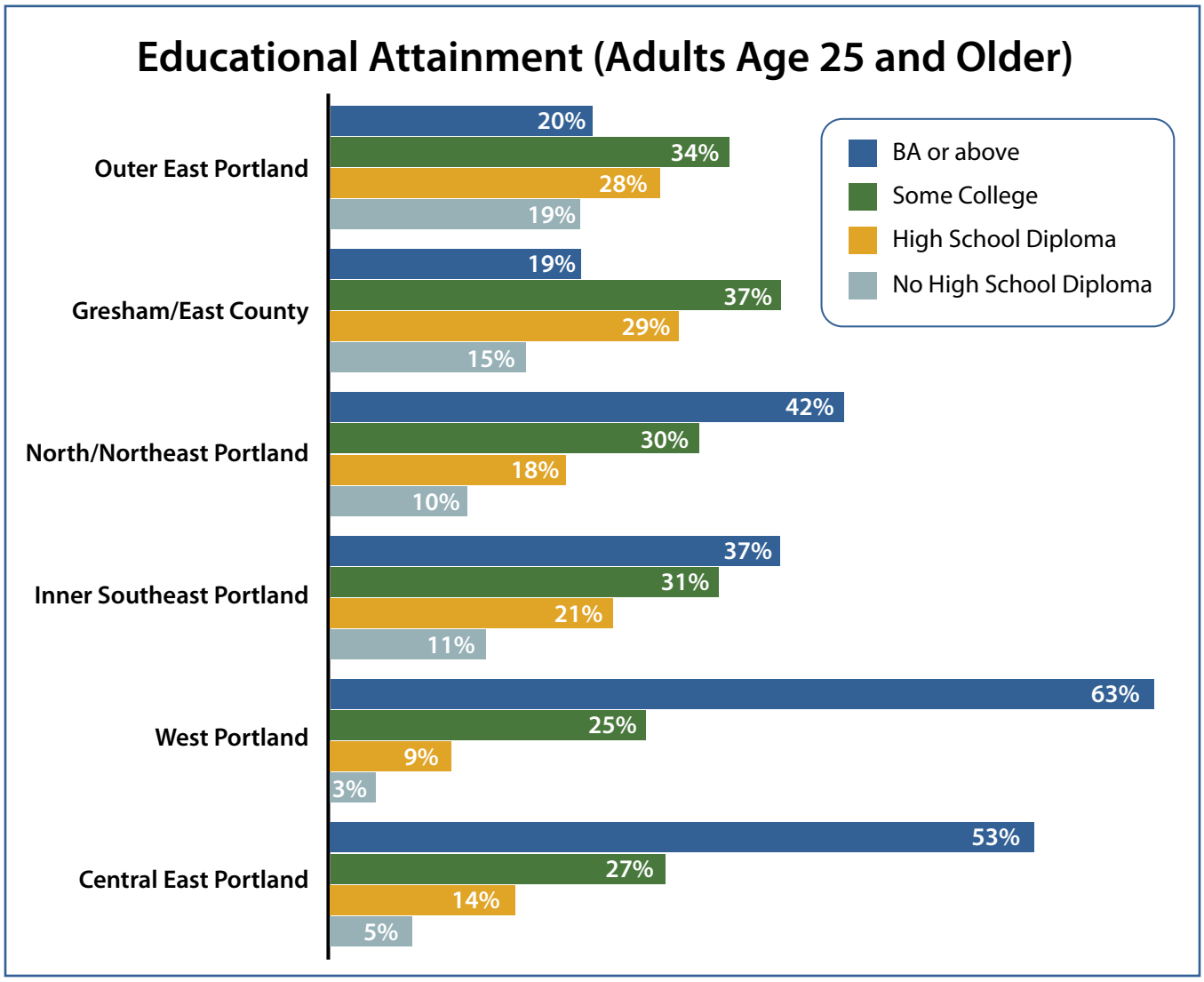
For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 69 of the appendix

From 2000 to 2010, the share of the population who were people of color decreased in inner northeast and southeast Portland census tracts, with the largest decreases occurring in inner northeast Portland. Meanwhile, most census tracts east of I-205 experienced increases in populations of color. The census tracts with rising housing values were typically also places where the share of residents who were people of color decreased.

This shift is largely due to rising housing costs in the central city that forced many renters of color to seek more affordable housing in neighborhoods further away from downtown. In addition, some minority homeowners moved out as housing prices rose and the central city became less diverse. And, while new immigrants and refugees have historically settled in urban areas, over the past decade they have increasingly settled in the suburbs.

Economic patterns

The economic trends that have contributed to rising poverty in Multnomah County have also affected the county's geography of poverty. Higher paying jobs and quality of life amenities have attracted higher educated residents to move to areas close to Portland's downtown. The percentage of Portland's population that has a college degree has increased over the past decade, and the majority of new residents moving into Portland have college degrees. In contrast, Gresham has seen no increase in the percentage of residents with a college degree, and only about 10% of new Gresham residents



have a college degree. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle in which higher paying jobs continue to be concentrated close to downtown because it offers access to a highly educated workforce while other parts of the county struggle to attract family-wage jobs.[44]

Higher paying jobs continue to be concentrated close to downtown while other parts of the county struggle to attract family-wage jobs.

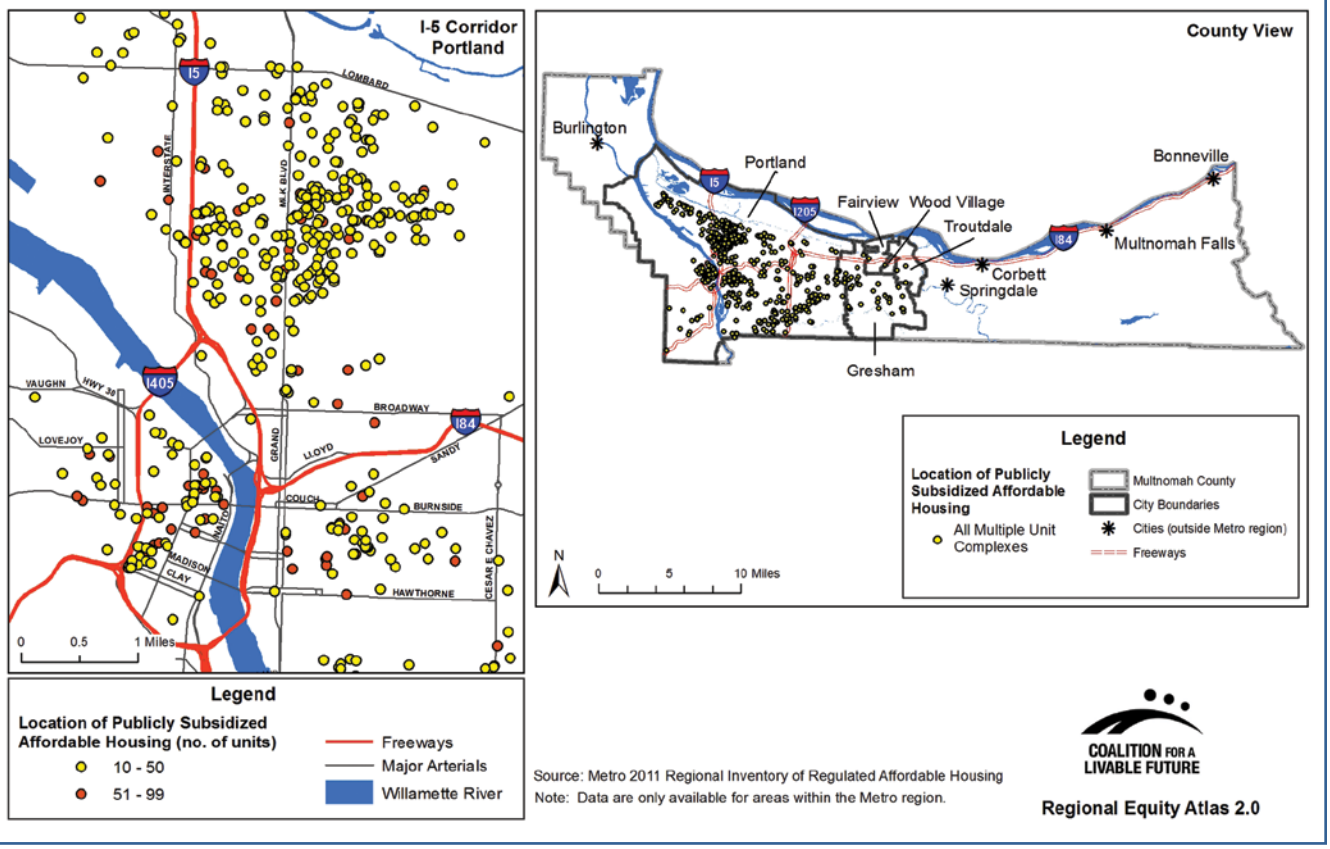
These patterns are demonstrated in the chart on page 37 which shows educational attainment by adults age 25 and older in each of the county's geographic areas. The geographic areas are listed in order of their poverty rates, with the areas with the highest poverty rates at the top of the chart. Not surprisingly, the percentage of adults with no high school diploma is highest in the parts of the county with the highest poverty rates. Conversely, the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or above is generally highest in the areas with the lowest poverty rates. North/northeast Portland shows an interesting pattern that is likely a reflection of the economic diversity brought about by gentrification: the area's educational attainment is generally better than inner southeast Portland's even though north/northeast Portland has a higher poverty rate.

Implications of the geography of poverty

The shifting geography of poverty has meant that more and more people in poverty, including increasing numbers of people of color, are living in parts of the county that aren't well equipped to meet their needs. A human rights definition of poverty emphasizes that everyone must have the ability to access essential resources and opportunities. But in Multnomah County, the areas of the county which have seen the biggest increases in poverty over the past two decades tend to have fewer resources to support people in meeting their basic needs and advancing their health and well-being. This includes access to social services, quality education, food, parks, transit, sidewalks, and jobs. These patterns are demonstrated in the next series of maps.

The mismatch between the location of poverty and services is illustrated by the map showing the **Location of Publicly Subsidized Affordable Housing** units. The densest concentrations of units are along the I-5 corridor in downtown Portland, inner north/northeast Portland and east and west side neighborhoods close to downtown. Many of these neighborhoods are areas that had high poverty rates in the 1990s but have experienced declining poverty rates over the past decade. There are affordable buildings scattered throughout the eastern portion of the county where poverty rates have increased, but there are far fewer buildings east of I-205 than in the area along the I-5 corridor.

MAP 8: Multnomah County Location of Publicly Subsidized Affordable Housing

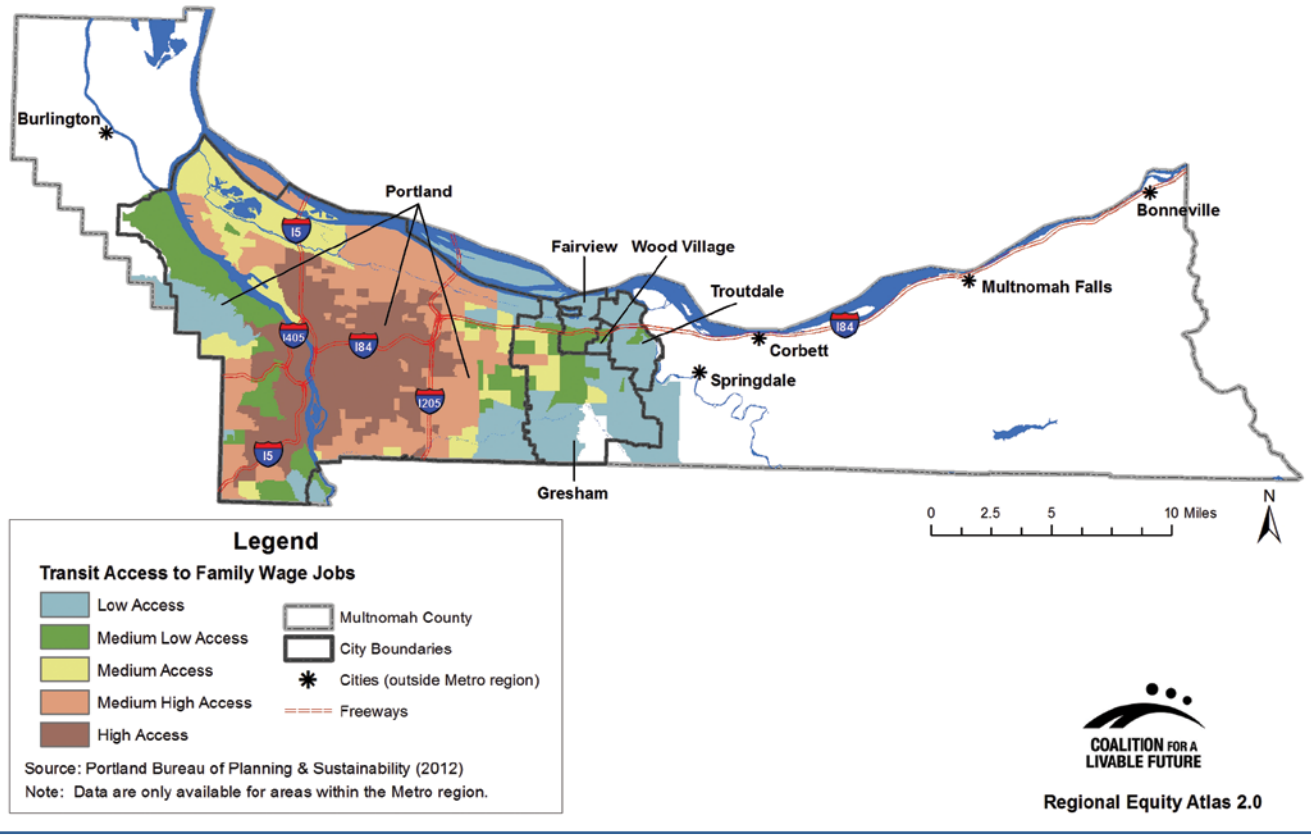


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 70 of the appendix

The **Transit Access to Family-Wage Jobs** map indicates that transit access to family-wage jobs is highest in a central ring of neighborhoods around downtown Portland. Access is medium high in parts of outer east Portland and north/northeast Portland and gets progressively worse towards the northern and eastern outer edges of the county. Transit access to jobs is particularly important for low-income workers who are often dependent on public transit to get to work.

Transit access to family-wage jobs is highest in the neighborhoods closest to downtown Portland.

MAP 9: Multnomah County
Transit Access to Family Wage Jobs (up to 60 minutes travel time)

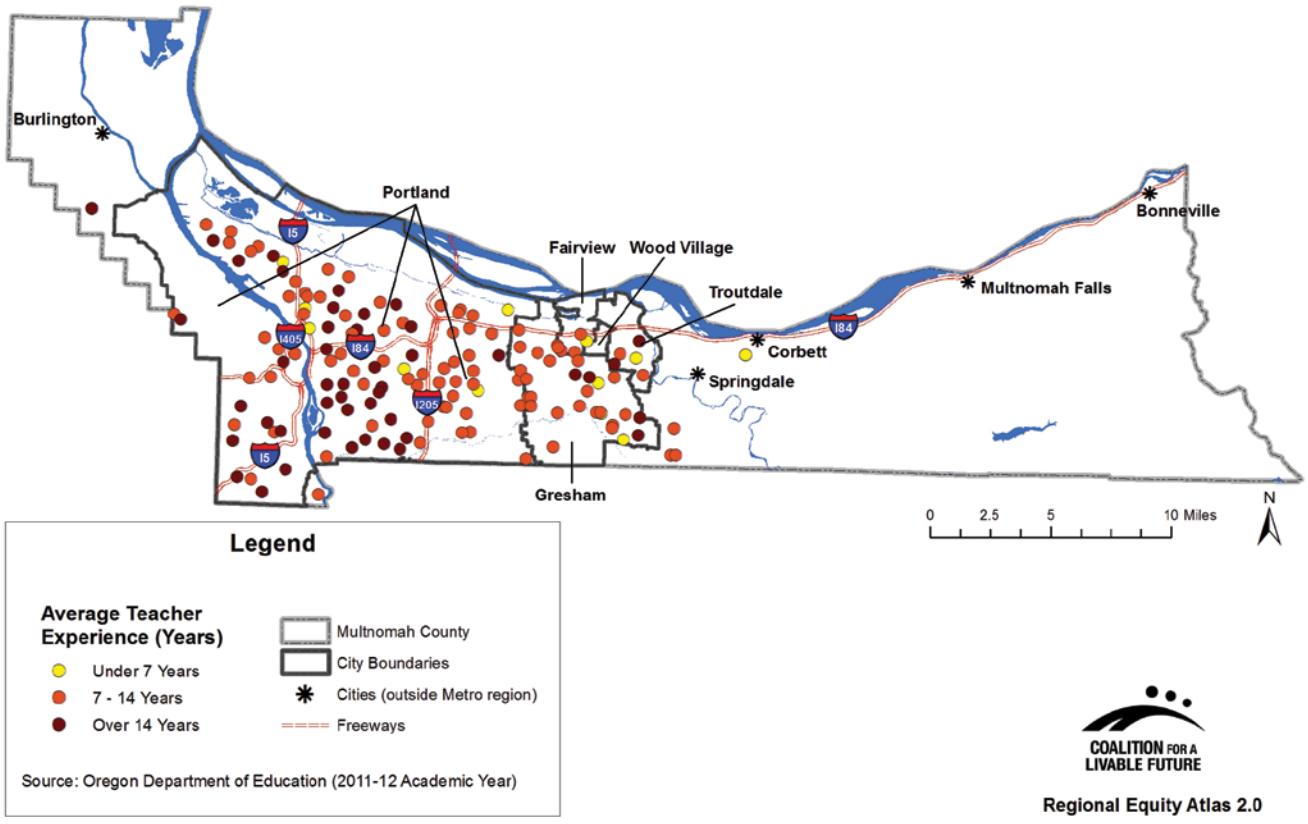


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 71 of the appendix

The **Average Teacher Experience** map uses teacher experience, measured in years, as a proxy for educational quality. The schools with the highest average teacher experience tend to be located in inner east Portland and west Portland, while the schools east of I-205 tend to have lower average levels of teacher experience. While the map shows a fairly consistent pattern, several schools in East County are exceptions to the pattern, with high levels of teacher experience. These include Glenfair Elementary, North Gresham Elementary, Highland Elementary, Walt Morey Middle School, Troutdale Elementary, Powell Valley Elementary, and Kelly Creek Elementary.

The schools with the highest average teacher experience tend to be located in inner east Portland and west Portland.

MAP 10: Multnomah County Average Teacher Experience (By School)

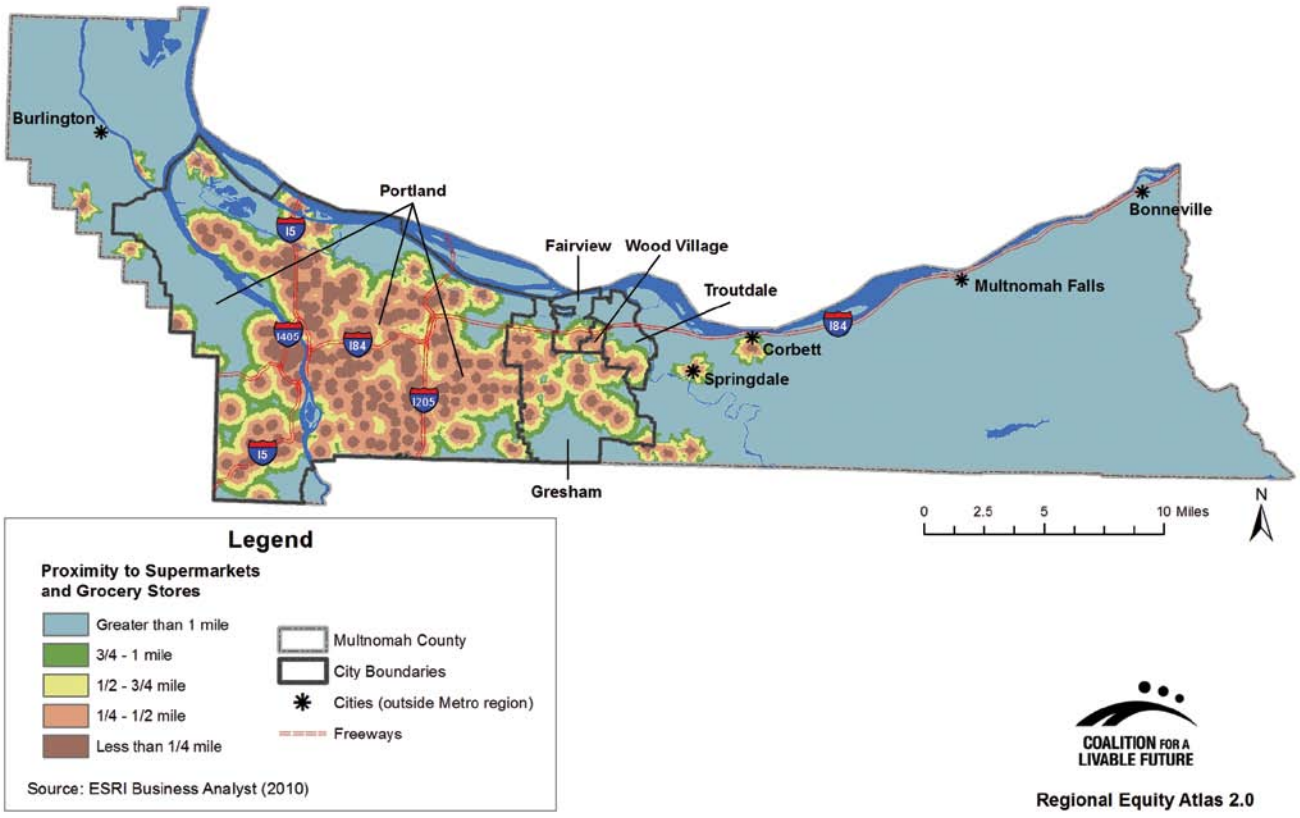


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 72 of the appendix

The map showing **Proximity to Supermarkets and Grocery Stores** uses full service food stores as a proxy for access to healthy and affordable food. Of the ten neighborhoods with the highest levels of access in the county, nine are located in inner and central northeast Portland, close to downtown. There are areas east of I-205 with good access to grocery stores, but the levels of access tend to get progressively worse the further you get from downtown on both the east and west sides. While access is the lowest in the unincorporated parts of the county, there are also areas in Gresham, Fairview, Wood Village, and Troutdale, as well as outlying parts of Portland, that have very low levels of access.

Access to grocery stores tends to get progressively worse the further you get from downtown.

MAP 11: Multnomah County
Proximity to Supermarkets and Grocery Stores

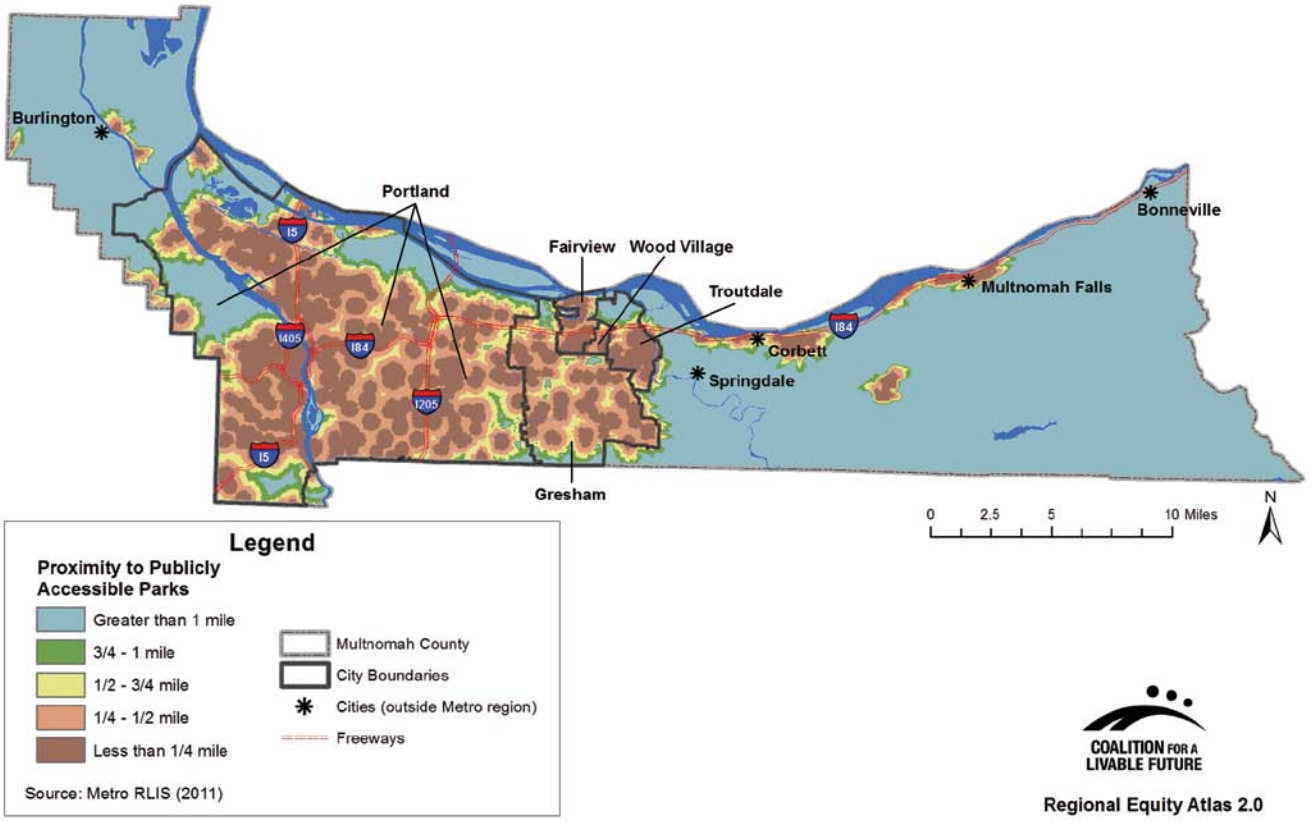


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 73 of the appendix

The map of **Proximity to Publicly Accessible Parks** suggests that while park access is the best in areas closest to downtown Portland, proximity to parks is still relatively good throughout most of the incorporated parts of the county. However, as chronicled in the Oregonian, many of outer east Portland's parks are "parks in name only". Many of the areas designated as parks are undeveloped, offering little more than weed-filled fields: "While the city's west side and close-in east side enjoy abundant greenspaces, with playgrounds and paths and ponds, east Portland offers a sparse patchwork of parks and undeveloped parkland." [45]

Many of the areas designated as parks in outer east Portland are undeveloped.

MAP 12: Multnomah County Proximity to Publicly Accessible Parks

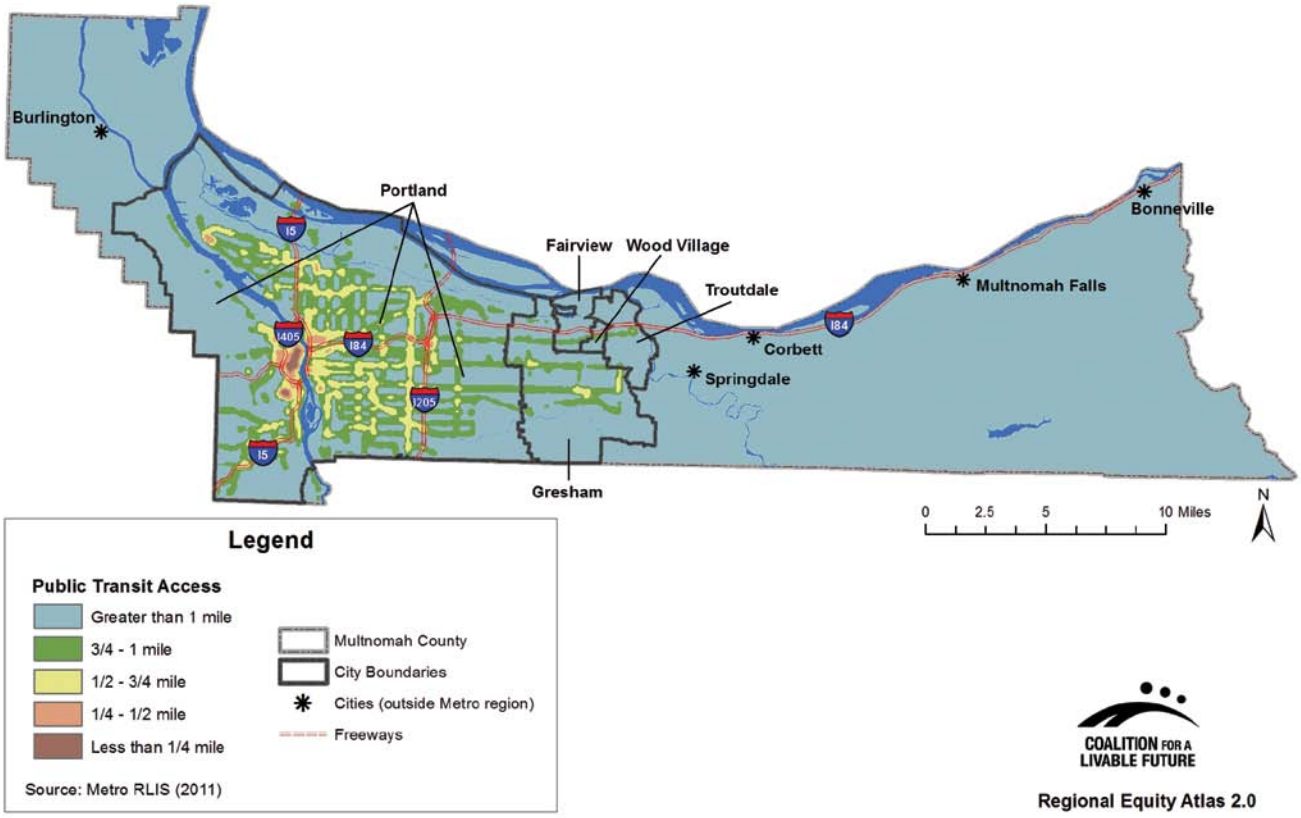


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 74 of the appendix

The map of **Public Transit Access** shows a clear pattern, with the best access concentrated within the I-405 loop around downtown Portland, good access in neighborhoods between I-205 and downtown, and relatively sparse access east of I-205. There are a few nodes in north and central Gresham with good access, but the southern portion of Gresham has very poor access, as do most of the other cities and unincorporated areas of East County.

Transit access east of I-205 is relatively sparse.

MAP 13: Multnomah County Public Transit Accesss

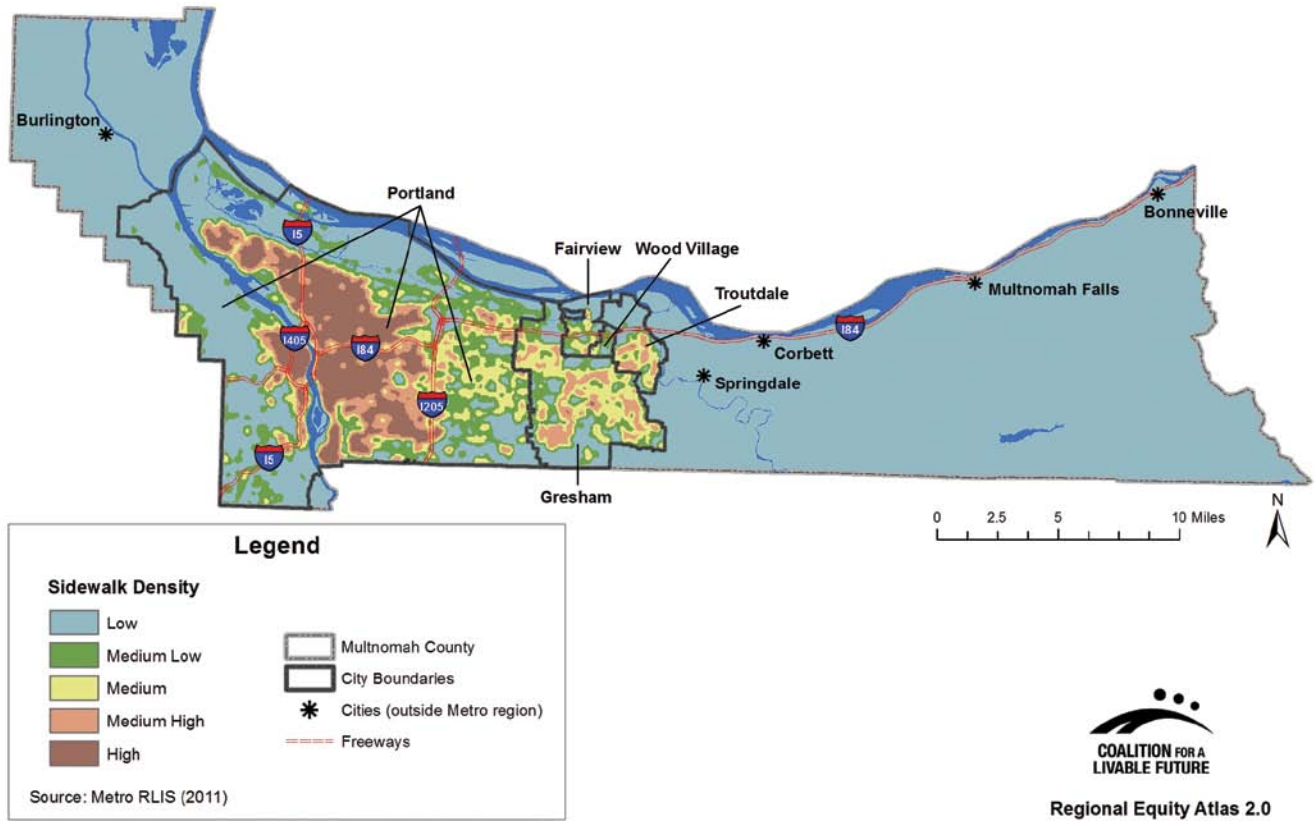


For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 75 of the appendix

The map of **Sidewalk Density** uses the presence of sidewalks as an indicator of neighborhood walkability. Walkable neighborhoods make it easier to access amenities like transit and grocery stores, and provide better opportunities for physical activity. The most walkable neighborhoods are located in and near downtown Portland and on the city's east side, west of I-205. Sidewalk coverage is spotty in most of outer east Portland. There are areas of Gresham and Troutdale with good sidewalk coverage, but the overall levels of coverage are much less consistent than in Portland's inner east side neighborhoods.

The most walkable neighborhoods are located in and near downtown Portland and on the city's east side, west of I-205.

MAP 14: Multnomah County Sidewalk Density



For a full-sized version of this map, please see page 76 of the appendix

THE IMPACTS OF POVERTY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services . . . ." In Multnomah County, people living in poverty are frequently unable to fulfill these basic human needs.

This section of the report examines the impacts of poverty on people's ability to secure housing, food, medical care, and social services. It also looks at some of the long-term impacts of poverty on health and child development, as well as the community-wide impacts of poverty.

Housing

Decent, safe, affordable housing and the stability it offers give people a foundation for meeting their basic needs and working towards self-sufficiency. Housing is considered to be affordable if it costs no more than 30% of a household's total income. Households who pay more than 30% of their income on housing are considered to be "cost burdened", because their housing costs leave insufficient income to cover the costs of other necessary expenses such as food and medical bills.

A worker would have to work for 80 hours a week at minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Multnomah County without being cost burdened.

In today's housing market, a full time worker would need to earn an annual income of $36,880 in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Multnomah County without being cost burdened. This would require the worker to work 40 hours a week at $17.70 per hour or work for 80 hours a week at Oregon's current minimum wage.[46]

In Multnomah County, there is a deficit of 21,910 housing units affordable to the lowest income renters.[47] For every 100 extremely low-income renter households, there are only 21 available rental units that are considered affordable for those households.[48] Given this dearth of affordable housing, it is not surprising that 89% of the county's households in poverty are housing cost burdened.[49]

Without sufficient affordable housing, households in poverty are at high risk of living in unstable or substandard housing, living doubled up with family or friends, or becoming homeless. The county's most recent point-in-time count of homelessness, conducted in January 2013, identified 1,895 unsheltered individuals sleeping on the streets, in their cars or other places not intended for human habitation. Another 974 were sleeping in emergency shelters, and 1,572 were in transitional housing for the homeless. An additional 11,476 people were estimated to be doubled up or couch surfing on the night of the count.[50]

People of color are over-represented within the county's homeless population. Forty-five percent of the homeless individuals counted during the 2013 point-in-time count were people of color. Communities of color are also disproportionately likely to be doubled up with family and friends.[51]

Homelessness can have significant deleterious short- and long-term effects. The lack of stable housing can make it extremely difficult to obtain employment or retain an existing job. The stress of being on the streets along with exposure to the elements can cause or exacerbate health, mental health, and addiction problems. Research indicates that homeless children are more likely to experience mental health and behavioral problems, poor educational outcomes, exposure to violence, and housing instability as adults.[52]

Food

Hunger negatively impacts health, productivity and the ability of both children and adults to reach their full potential. Childhood hunger and malnutrition can result in decreased cognitive ability, lower test scores, and increased behavioral problems. Hunger has also been linked to higher rates of mental illness, health problems, and reduced economic opportunities.[53]

In Multnomah County, 17% of the population is "food insecure", which means they do not always know where they will find their next meal.[54]

In Multnomah County, 17% of the population is food insecure.

In 2012, one-fifth of Multnomah County residents participated in SNAP. This represented 67% of all eligible participants. SNAP is an important resource, but for most households, it is not sufficient to meet the household's food needs for an entire month, leaving them vulnerable to hunger and food insecurity.[55]

Many households turn to food banks and food pantries to supplement their food. A survey of Oregon food pantry recipients by the Oregon Food Bank found that 74% of recipients were below the poverty level, only 27% had at least one person working full time, and 56% needed emergency food because they ran out of SNAP.[56]

Social Services

211info serves as the county's human services hotline. People seeking services call 211 to receive information about available resources and referrals to potential service providers. Of the nearly 60,000 calls to 211 in 2013, 82% of callers who provided income information had incomes below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.

More than half of callers to the county's human services hotline said they did not get the help they were seeking, either through the referral provided by the hotline or any other source.

These callers identified a wide range of needs. The most common needs were related to housing and shelter, assistance with electric service, food pantries and SNAP, dental care, health clinics, and health insurance.

While the county's public and nonprofit social service providers do their best to meet the needs of as many people as they can, limited resources make it impossible to assist everyone in the county who needs services. 211 isn't able to track the results of all callers' efforts to secure social services, but it does conduct follow up calls with a sub-set of callers to find out the outcome of their search for assistance. In 2013, more than half (51%) of callers said they did not get the help they were seeking, either through the referral provided by 211 or any other source.

Inadequate service capacity to meet the needs of Multnomah County's population in poverty is accompanied by a lack of sufficient services designed to address the specific characteristics and needs of each type of population in poverty. For example, many of the county's immigrants, refugees, and communities of color are best served by culturally-specific services. While advances have been made in recent years in funding and support for these services, the Coalition of Communities of Color argues that the available services are unable to meet the needs, particularly in the eastern parts of the county that have experienced growth in populations in poverty and communities of color over the past decade.

Medical Care

Health insurance coverage is often a necessary prerequisite for accessing medical care. Insurance coverage can improve overall wellness by increasing access to preventive care as well as ongoing treatment for chronic conditions. National studies indicate that insured children are three times more likely to have seen a doctor compared with uninsured children.[57]

While the Affordable Care Act has expanded access to health insurance for many Americans, a significant portion still lacks insurance coverage. The poorest of the poor can access coverage through Medicaid (the Oregon Health Plan), and those with higher incomes can purchase coverage if they do not have employer-provided plans. But those who make too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to purchase their own coverage, even with subsidies, must go without. Nationally, 28% of people in 2012 with incomes between 100-200% FPL lacked coverage.[58]

Insurance coverage data for Multnomah County in 2012 indicate that the parts of the county with the highest poverty rates have tended to have the lowest insurance coverage rates.

Geographic Area	% of Population in Poverty	% of Population with Health Insurance[59]
Outer East Portland	23%	82%
Gresham/ East County	18%	84%
North/ Northeast Portland	18%	85%
Inner Southeast Portland	17%	84%
West Portland	13%	89%
Central East Portland	13%	88%

This suggests that many of Multnomah County's poor have been unable to access medical care. Lack of medical care, combined with the other deleterious health effects of poverty, can have significant long-term consequences. The next section examines some of the impacts of poverty on overall health.

Health Effects of Poverty

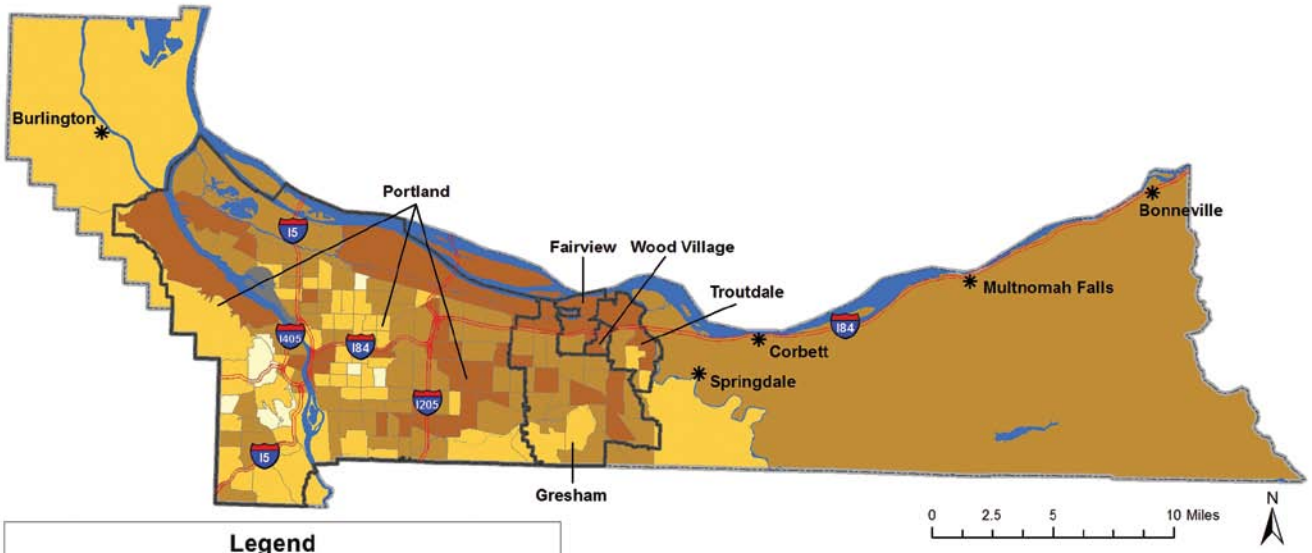
Health is highly correlated with income. Poverty contributes to poor health through a combination of factors including stress, lack of stable housing, lack of adequate nutrition, and lack of insurance coverage. Poor health can also contribute to poverty by making it difficult to maintain stable employment and by driving up costly medical bills.

In Multnomah County, data on key indicators of population health suggest that the poorest residents and poorest neighborhoods are more likely to be affected by poor health. The following examples illustrate these connections.

Disease rates

Maps showing the distribution of asthma and diabetes rates geographically across the county suggest a fairly strong correlation between disease rates and poverty. In the **Asthma Rates** map, most of the areas with the highest asthma rates (13.10% and higher) are located in north Portland and east of I-205, while the areas with the lowest rates are generally located in a cluster of inner east side neighborhoods and large swaths of the west side. In the **Diabetes Rates** map, the patterns are even more striking, with almost all of the areas with the highest diabetes rates (7.9% and above) located in north Portland or east of I-205, while almost all the west side and inner east side neighborhoods have lower rates.

MAP 15: Multnomah County - Asthma Rates



Legend

Asthma Rates

- 3.11% to 10.49%
- 10.50% to 13.09%
- 13.10% to 16.12%
- 16.13% to 25%
- Data Not Available

- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation (2011)
Note: Percent is calculated and displayed using census tracts.

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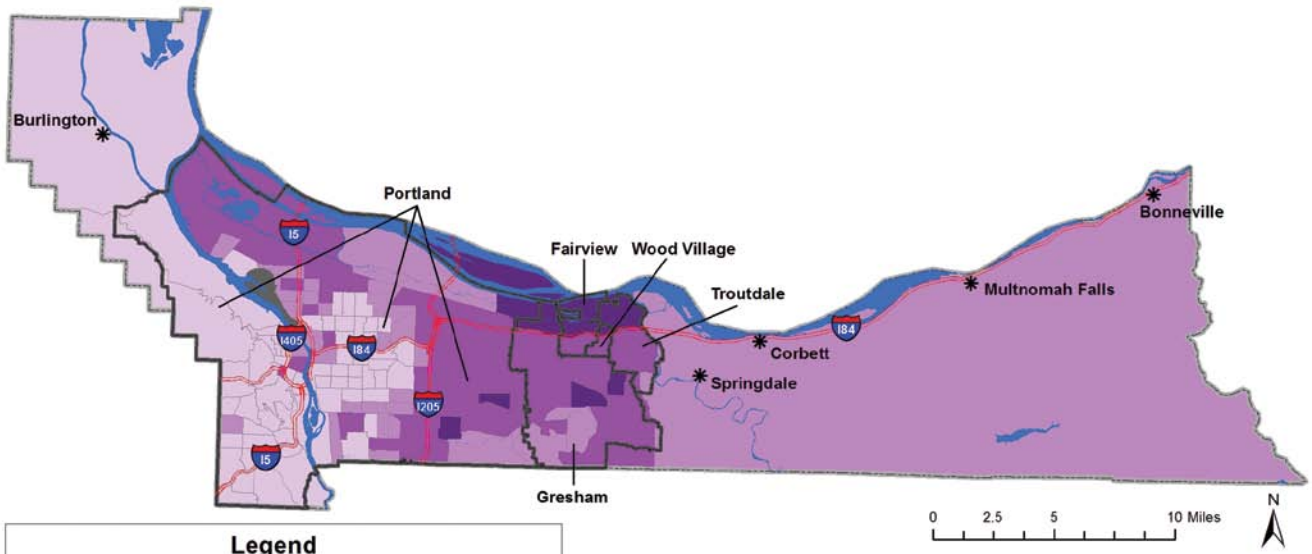
MAP 16: Multnomah County - Diabetes Rates



Legend

Diabetes Rates

- 0% to 6.1%
- 6.% to 7.8%
- 7.9% to 11.5%
- 11.6% to 19.7%
- Data Not Available

- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation (2011)
Note: Percent is calculated and displayed using census tracts.

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For full-sized versions of these maps, please see pages 77 and 78 of the appendix

Analysis of these and other related maps by the Coalition for a Livable Future provides further insights into the intersections between poverty, race, factors in the built environment, and disease rates. Across the region, the areas with the highest densities of populations of color also tend to have higher asthma rates. Asthma rates also tend to be higher in neighborhoods near the county's major freeways, with high asthma rates clustered along parts of I-5, particularly in north Portland, and along I-84 and I-205.[60]

Similarly, the areas with the lowest diabetes rates tend to be located in areas of the region with lower densities of populations of color, while the areas with diabetes rates in the mid to high levels of the range tend to have the highest densities of populations of color. And almost all of the census tracts in the region with the highest diabetes rates have low levels of access to factors that influence healthy eating and active living, such as transit, walkable neighborhoods, and parks.[61]

Mortality rates

An analysis of Multnomah County mortality rates by the county's Health Department found that mortality rates vary geographically, with the highest mortality rates from cancer and heart disease occurring in the highest poverty neighborhoods. The study concluded that people living in areas with low poverty rates can expect to live longer than those in areas with high poverty rates. This suggests that not only do individual poverty levels affect health outcomes, but living in a high poverty neighborhood can affect the health outcomes of everyone in the neighborhood, regardless of their income levels.[62]

Effects of Poverty on Child Development

Poverty can have devastating impacts on the day-to-day lives of individuals and families, but when we think about the impacts of poverty, the long-term consequences for children are perhaps the most sobering. Nearly half of children born into poverty will remain poor throughout their childhoods, and nearly one-third will remain poor into adulthood.[63] Childhood poverty is associated with a wide range of negative long-term outcomes, including lower educational attainment and lower adult earnings. According to the Children's Defense Fund, every year that a child spends in poverty results in $13,542 in lost future productivity.[64]

Children growing up in poverty are more likely to experience life-long physical and mental health problems.

Children growing up in poverty are also more likely to experience poor health. Studies show children in poverty are at an increased risk for asthma, anemia, and lead poisoning (which in turn can lead to lower IQs, speech, hearing, and behavioral problems). They are also at greater risk for physical disabilities, leaning disabilities, and problems with cognitive development.[65]

Children from low-income families, particularly children of color, are more likely to be involved in the child welfare system.[66] Youth and adults with a history of foster care are more likely to experience homelessness and poverty, with a higher rate of public assistance use in adulthood. A history of out-of-home placements is also associated with lower levels of educational attainment, with only 8% of youth who age out of foster care earning a college degree, compared to 41% of their peers. Research also shows higher rates of mental and physical health problems among youth and adults with foster care histories.[67]

Recent research suggests that the exposure to chronic stress associated with poverty and racism can have an impact on brain development and long-term physical and mental health. Studies of children who grew up poor found that they had more problems regulating their emotions as adults, putting them at higher risk for depression, anxiety disorders, aggression and post-traumatic stress disorders.[68] For children of color in poverty, these impacts are compounded by the stress of living with racism, which has been found to contribute to low birth weights, heart disease, and mental health problems.[69]

Community-Wide Impacts of Poverty

Growing poverty and rising economic and racial inequality are not only harmful for individuals, they impact the entire community. If households have less income, they have fewer dollars to spend on goods and services, which harms local businesses. They also contribute less in tax dollars, which reduces the community's ability to invest in roads, schools, and other infrastructure and resources that benefit everyone.

National studies have found that measures of racial inclusion and income equality are positively associated with a wide range of economic growth measures.

National studies have found that measures of racial inclusion and income equality are positively associated with a wide range of economic growth measures, including employment and per capita income. Research also shows that growing up in a high-poverty neighborhood increases a child's risk of ending up poor, even if the child is born to middle-class parents. In other words, inequality threatens the economic security of everyone in the community, not just those at the bottom.[70]

Examples of Programs that are Working to Address Poverty

The following examples highlight four anti-poverty programs (three sponsored by Multnomah County and one in Oakland) that have shown impressive results. The County's action plan to address poverty should build upon and expand the work of proven, effective programs like these and others.

Action for Prosperity

In 2009-2010, Multnomah County, WorkSystems Inc. and Home Forward launched a joint pilot project called Action for Prosperity (AFP). The project combined housing, workforce training, life-skills building and flexible financial assistance to provide families hit hard by the recession with the services and supports needed to increase self-sufficiency and avoid homelessness. Participating households received rent assistance, employment training, and assertive engagement, which included flexible funds for housing or other basic needs.

The AFP pilot served 287 families with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level who were recently unemployed or underemployed. Most AFP participants increased their income during their participation in the program; at exit, 89% of participants were stably housed (compared with 65% at entry), and 55% were employed (compared with 9% at entry). Twelve months after completing the program, 82% of participants remained stably housed, 61% were employed, and the percentage of participants with stable incomes had continued to increase.

Family Unification Program

The Family Unification Program (FUP) provides assertive engagement case management services, housing supports, employment assistance, and flexible dollars to culturally-specific households who have an active child welfare case and whose lack of stable housing has been identified as a direct barrier to family re-unification. The program is a collaborative initiative that pools resources and program components from Multnomah County, Home Forward, WorkSystems Inc. and the Oregon Department of Human Services.

FUP combines all components of the Action for Prosperity program with permanent housing vouchers for households who have deep child welfare involvement and are members of racial/ethnic groups that experience disproportionality in the child welfare system.

From 2011-2013, 62 clients participated in FUP for an average of 18 months. At three months, 87% of clients had achieved stable housing. By 6 months, 96% were in stable housing. At 18 months, 96% had maintained that stability. FUP was also very successful in returning children to their families or preventing out-of-home placement of the children. At program exit, 87% of the parents had physical custody of at least one child and 56% had obtained both physical and legal custody of all of their children.

Homeless Benefit Recovery

A reliable source of income is a key component to maintaining housing stability for persons with disabilities. But navigating the complex application process for federal disability and health benefits can be daunting. The documentation required, high denial rates, and required hearings cause many people to give up on the application process. Benefits acquisition programs are a

proven strategy for helping vulnerable populations navigate the complex benefits application process more quickly and have been shown to dramatically increase approval rates.

In Multnomah County there are two benefits acquisition programs serving vulnerable homeless populations: Homeless Benefits Recovery Program (HBR), funded by Multnomah County, and Benefit and Entitlement Specialty Team (BEST), funded by the City of Portland. Both programs work with individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to provide intensive coordinated assistance applying for Social Security Disability and Medicaid benefits.

From 2012-2013, the HBR/BEST program provided services to 356 individuals. Out of the 212 individuals who exited the program during that period, 156 of them (74%) secured disability benefits. This approval rate is very high compared with the national rate of just 30%. Sixty-three percent of program applicants were approved based on their first application without any appeal, compared with the Oregon average of 32%. In other words, a client who files for disability benefits with HBR/BEST is almost twice as likely to be approved on the first attempt than if they applied without using the program's services. Clients enrolled in the HBR/BEST program are also approved much more quickly than the general population.

The HBR/BEST investment of an average of 20 hours of specialized staffing assistance per client has a significant impact on clients' financial stability. At the start of services, HBR/BEST clients had an average income of just $107 per month. At exit, incomes averaged $788 per month, an increase of 636%.

Family Independence Initiative

Since 2001, the Oakland-based Family Independence Initiative (FII) has innovated and tested new approaches to economic and social mobility that demonstrate that low-income families have the initiative and capacity to move themselves and their communities out of poverty. FII's model encourages families to set their own goals, provides cash incentives if they achieve them, and fosters relationships among families so they can turn to one another for support.

Tight-knit communities have been lifting working families out of poverty for generations. FII's model builds on this tradition, bringing families together to create mutual support networks. FII also provides the families with access to financial capital to support them in pursuing their goals and to accelerate their mobility. To create capital access, FII fosters ongoing data collection that families can use to build credit, qualify for resources, and track indicators of well-being. FII also develops flexible resources—like loans and scholarships—to support families' goals.

Following the success of FII's program in Oakland, the organization has launched Demonstration Projects in five other cities across the U.S.: San Francisco, Boston, Fresno, New Orleans, and Detroit. Over two years, families in the Demonstration Projects increased their savings by an average of 120%, increased earnings by an average of 24%, and roughly 30% of the families started a small business. FII participants have also increased their home ownership rates and paid down their debts.

A FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING POVERTY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Poverty affects a significant portion of Multnomah County's population, with disproportionate impacts on communities of color, immigrants and refugees, single-parent families, women, children, and persons with disabilities.

Multnomah County's high poverty rates have devastating effects on the hundreds of thousands of county residents who are struggling to get by on a daily basis. But high poverty rates and the inequities that accompany them also undermine the stability and well-being of our entire community. Our shared prosperity depends on our ability to create conditions that will allow everyone to thrive.

With poverty rates higher than the statewide average, and increasing disparities affecting significant portions of the county's population, Multnomah County, in partnership with its local jurisdictions, the State, the county's network of nonprofit and faith-based institutions, and the business community, must develop a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for addressing poverty.

Local governments and nonprofits have an essential role to play in mitigating the impacts of poverty, equipping people to move out of poverty, and ensuring that everyone can access essential resources and opportunities.

Many of the root causes of poverty are linked to political and economic dynamics that are national (or in some cases global) in scope. But while it may be difficult to solve the structural causes of poverty at the county level, local governments and nonprofits have an essential role to play in mitigating the impacts of poverty, equipping people to move out of poverty, and ensuring that everyone in the county can access the resources and opportunities necessary for meeting their basic needs and advancing their health and well-being.

The County's action plan to address poverty should build on the data provided in this report, and should be guided by the following principles:

1. **The elimination of inequities affecting people of color, immigrants and refugees, women, children, single-parent households, and persons with disabilities should be a high priority for our work in order to significantly decrease the number of households living in poverty.**

   Identify and address the inequities that create disproportionate rates of poverty among people of color, immigrants and refugees, women, children, single-parent households and persons with disabilities. This will require the intentional examination of policies and practices (both past and present) that create and perpetuate the inequities.

2. **Supports and services must be tailored to meet the distinct characteristics and needs of different types of poverty, demographic groups, and geographic areas.**
   Recognize the diverse economic and social conditions underlying the different types of poverty in the county. Invest in services and programs that are customized to meet the distinct needs of different populations, types of poverty, and geographic areas.

3. **The county's economic base will be stronger if we build the human capital of our residents by providing access to education and training as well as opportunities for increasing income and financial assets.**

   Expand access to education, training, and workforce development programs to enable workers to secure family-wage jobs. Provide increased access to child care, transportation, and other supports to enable workers to maintain their employment. Ensure that people in poverty are able to access income supports for which they are eligible. Provide opportunities for households to build financial assets.

4. **Securing the county's future requires a focus on and investment in the well-being and development of our children and youth.**

   Provide families with the support and services necessary to give all children a strong start in life. Ensure that all children have access to a quality education from early childhood through college, including job training and employment opportunities.

5. **We must invest in services and supports that ease the experience of poverty *and* in structural and policy actions that seek to end the conditions that cause poverty.**

   The underlying causes of poverty are rooted in broader structural dynamics which make certain populations more vulnerable to economic insecurity and constrain their opportunities. Addressing poverty requires interventions that assist individual households in meeting their basic needs and finding pathways towards greater economic security, while simultaneously working to impact the broader economic, political, and social systems that underlie their poverty.

6. **Our efforts will be more effective if they involve partnerships and strategic coordination with other jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, and the business community.**

   Align the County's resources and services with those of other public and private partners to maximize effectiveness. This includes partnering with the communities most impacted by poverty, building on the effective work of local nonprofits and faith-based organizations, engaging the business community as part of the solution, and working with the State to build a more coherent and adequate safety net.

APPENDIX A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the leadership and contributions of the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families, and Community/ Poverty Action Council as well as several key partner organizations that provided essential input and assistance.

Commission on Children, Families, and Community/ Poverty Action Council

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Contributing Organizations

211info
Coalition of Communities of Color
Coalition for a Livable Future
ECONorthwest
Elders in Action Anti-Poverty Committee
Greater Portland Pulse
New City Initiative
Oregon State University Extension Family & Community Health

Multnomah County Department of County Human Services, Community Services Division

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APPENDIX B.
DATA AND METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Census and American Community Survey Poverty Data

The information in this report relies primarily on data provided through the US Census and the American Community Survey (ACS). These national surveys are often the only sources of comprehensive data available consistently over time for different populations and geographies. However, there are also significant limitations to the data available through the Census and ACS that are important to keep in mind.

The 2010 Census did not include any questions about respondents' incomes. Consequently, any data on income and poverty must be based on the ACS rather than the Census. This is problematic because the ACS is a survey of a sample of the population rather than a complete census of the entire population. This can create problems with inadequate sample sizes for some ACS data fields, limiting the way some ACS data can be analyzed.

Most of the data on poverty that are available through the ACS are based on the Federal Poverty Level. The FPL is a limited measure of poverty that significantly undercounts the full extent of the population in poverty. Despite these limitations, this report relies on the 100% FPL data because it is the only source of consistent and comprehensive data available. It is important to remember that this is a very conservative measure that leaves out a significant portion of the population that is struggling to make ends meet.

Unless otherwise noted, all poverty data in this report are based on the 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimates, with poverty defined as individuals with incomes at or below 100% FPL. The ACS does not include poverty data for students living in dorms, non-civilians, and institutionalized populations. Therefore, while the total population of Multnomah County is 737,110, the population for whom poverty status is determined (and the number used as the denominator for poverty rate calculations in this report) is 722,926.

Data on Communities of Color

Research by the Coalition of Communities of Color in partnership with Portland State University demonstrates a significant undercount of populations of color and culturally-specific communities in the Census and ACS. Factors such as language and literacy barriers, housing instability, distrust of government, and the legacies of institutional and cultural racism lead many communities of color to be left out of government-sponsored surveys. In an effort to quantify the extent of this undercount, the Coalition has conducted "community-verified population counts" that use more culturally appropriate data sources to estimate the size of each of Multnomah County's populations of color. Based on this work, the Coalition estimates that there is a 19.83 percent undercount in the 2010 Census of all populations of color. Whereas the 2012 ACS identifies populations of color as 28% of the county's population, applying the Coalition's research to the 2012 ACS figures suggests that populations of color are closer to 33% of the county's population.

In addition to this overall undercount, the way in which race data is collected and reported by the Census and ACS is also problematic. For example, the Census and ACS treat Hispanic/ Latino as an ethnicity rather than a race, and require respondents to identify their race (African-American, Asian, Native American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or White) separately from their ethnicity (Hispanic or non-Hispanic). This approach does not accurately reflect the way many people view their racial identities. Census data can be analyzed to treat Hispanic/ Latino as a race, but this approach is not possible for the ACS poverty data which is used for much of this report.

Similarly, African communities are considered to be "Black/ African-American" within the Census race categories, and Slavic and Middle Eastern communities are counted as "White" – both categories fail to reflect the distinct identities and the unique experiences of these groups. The Coalition of Communities of Color has produced detailed analyses of the African and Slavic immigrant populations' experiences. Information from this research is included in this report, but much of the report's summary data must necessarily rely on the Census and ACS race categories, which render these communities invisible.

The Census has made improvements in recent years in the way it captures information on people who identify with more than one race. However, the ACS poverty data is only available in a limited format that does not capture the distinct identifies of people who identify with more than one race, instead lumping all of them into a category called "two or more races". This results in an undercount of the number of people within each specific racial group and does not honor the distinct racial identities of people who identify with more than one race.

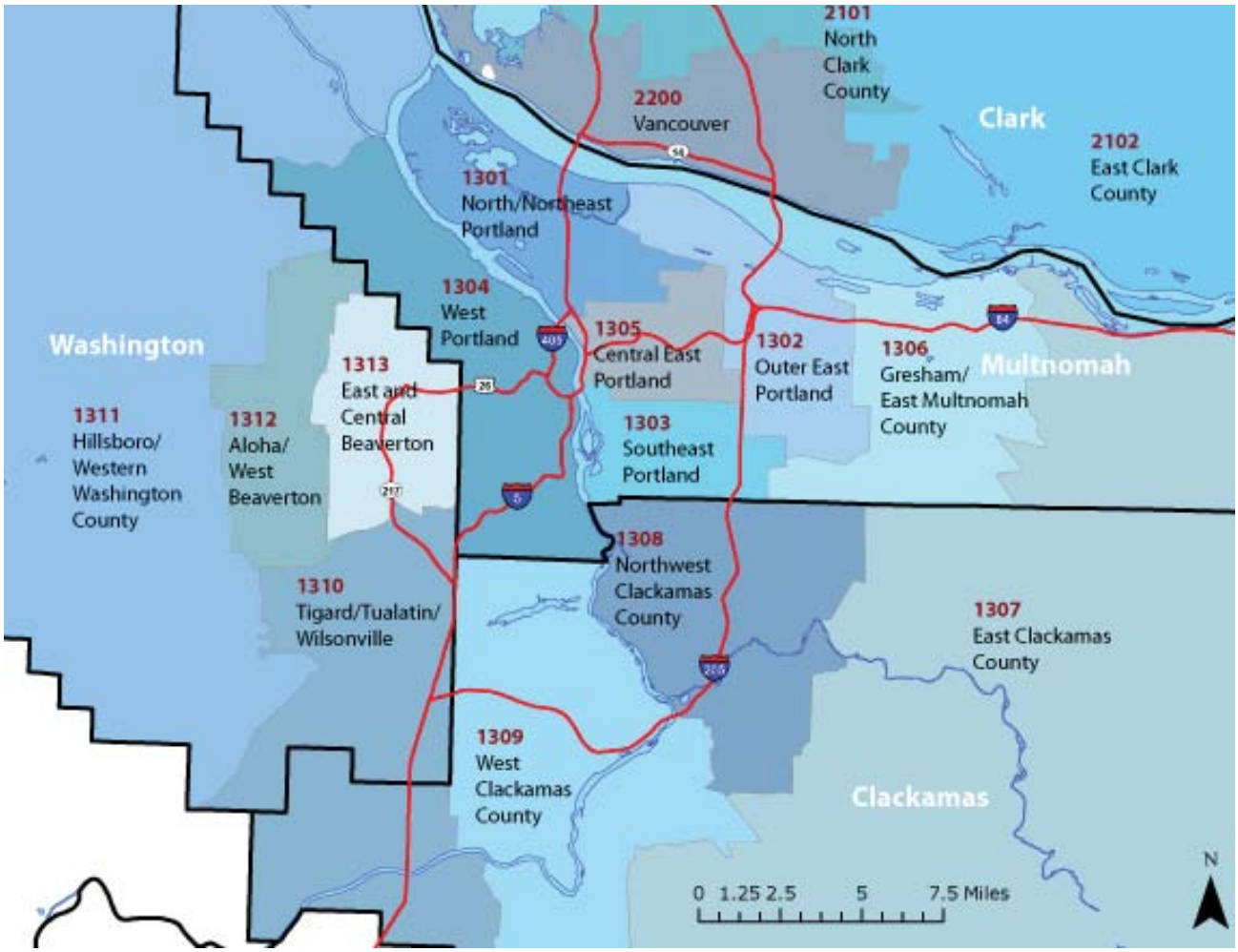
Maps

Maps have a unique ability to reveal patterns and relationships so that we can better understand the geography of poverty in Multnomah County. But there are also limitations to what maps can tell us, and it is important to keep these limitations in mind. Most of the maps in this report show data summarized by census tracts, which are pre-defined geographies based on population size. The map of poverty, for example, shows the average poverty rate for each of the county's census tracts. But viewing data summarized by census tract does not tell us precisely how the people in poverty are distributed within the census tracts. Even if there are high percentages of people in poverty in a given census tract, those people may be concentrated in one part of the census tract rather than evenly distributed across the census tract. Conversely, a census tract with low rates of poverty may still have sub-areas with high numbers of people in poverty.

Since census tract boundaries are largely determined by population (with each census tract having approximately 4,000 people), the geographic size of the census tracts can vary widely. Some of the more rural areas of the county have very large census tracts, while denser areas have smaller census tracts. It is important to remember that when a map shows a single average number for a very large census tract, it is masking the variations within that census tract.

APPENDIX C.
PUBLIC USE MICRODATA SAMPLE AREAS (PUMAS)

Some of the geographic analysis of data in this report was based on a Census geography called Public Use Microdata Sample Areas (PUMAs). The map below shows the location of the PUMAs in the Portland metro area. Those labeled 1301-1306 are the Multnomah County PUMAs profiled in this report.[71]



ENDNOTES

[1] The 2011 data are the most recent Self-Sufficiency Standard data available for Multnomah County. Source: Greater Portland Pulse, "Poverty in Our Region and Multnomah County", retrieved from http://www.portlandpulse.org/poverty.

[2] Gu, Donan, et. al. (2010), "Where the Ends Don't Meet: Measuring Poverty and Self-Sufficiency among Oregon's Families", Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies, Portland State University, Portland, OR.

[3] The SSS rate used in this report is an estimate based on an update of figures in Gu, Donan, et. al. (2010). The figures in that report are based on 2005-2007 ACS data, in which 10.3% of Multnomah County households were below 100% FPL and 23.5% were below the SSS. The data used for this report are based on 2008-2012 ACS data, in which 15.6% of Multnomah County households were below 100% FPL, an increase of 51.5% over the 2005-2007 ACS figure. If we apply this 51.5% increase to the 2005-2007 SSS data, we get an estimated 35.6% of households below the SSS in 2012. The percentage of *individuals* below the SSS is likely even higher, but the SSS methodology is based on households rather than individuals, so the estimates in this report use the household rate.

[4] McKernan, Signe-Mary, Ratcliffe, Caroline, and Cellini, Stephanie (2009), "Transitioning In and Out of Poverty", Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

[5] US Census Bureau data summarized in Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (2014), "Multnomah County Economic and Community Development Profile", retrieved from http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/data/12th-district-county-profiles/.

[6] ACS 2012 data summarized in Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (2014), "Multnomah County Economic and Community Development Profile," retrieved from http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/data/12th-district-county-profiles/.

[7] Kaylor, Christian (2014), "Middle Class Decline in the Portland Metro Region", *Connections: Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future*, Volume 12, Issue 1.

[8] Ibid

[9] Oregon Housing Blog (2014), "3 County Metro Vacancies 2013: 83% of Vacancies Paid Average Wages below 60% of Median Family Income" retrieved from http://oregonhousing.blogspot.com.

[10] American Community Survey 2010-2012 3-year estimates, prepared by Greater Portland Pulse.

[11] The ACS data on educational attainment does not distinguish between high school diplomas and GEDs. However, research by economist James Heckman indicates that the job trajectories of people with GEDs are more similar to high school drop outs than those who receive high school diplomas. See, for example, www.nber.org/papers/w16064.

[12] Oregon Center for Public Policy (2012), "TANF Income Limit Frozen for Over Two Decades" and (2011), "Oregon's Cash Assistance Program Helps Far Fewer Needy Families than 15 Years Ago", retrieved from www.ocpp.org.

[13] Oregon Department of Human Services (2014), "Temporary Assistance to Needy Families", retrieved from http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/assistance/pages/cash/tanf.aspx.

[14] Senior Citizens League (2012), "Seniors Lose 34% Buying Power Since 2000", retrieved from seniors.league.org; Social Security Administration (2014), "SSI Federal Payment Amounts for 2014," retrieved from http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/cola/SSI.html.

[15] In this report, "populations of color", "people of color" and "communities of color" refer to all of the census racial and ethnic categories except White, non-Hispanics.

[16] See http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/research/research.html for links to the reports in the series.

[17] ACS 2010-2012 3-year estimates, prepared by Greater Portland Pulse.

[18] Curry-Stevens, Ann and Coalition of Communities of Color (2013), *The African Immigrant and Refugee Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[19] Curry-Stevens, Ann and Coalition of Communities of Color (2013), *The African Immigrant and Refugee Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University; Curry-Stevens, Ann and Coalition of Communities of Color (forthcoming), *The Slavic Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[20] Bates, Lisa, Curry-Stevens, Ann and Coalition of Communities of Color (2014), *The African-American Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[21] Curry-Stevens, Ann and Coalition of Communities of Color (2013), *The African Immigrant and Refugee Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[22] Curry-Stevens, Ann, Cross-Hemmer, Amanda, and Coalition of Communities of Color (2012), *The Latino Community in*

Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[23] Curry-Stevens, Ann, Cross-Hemmer, Amanda, and Coalition of Communities of Color (2011), *The Native American Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[24] Curry-Stevens, Ann and Coalition of Communities of Color (2012), *The Asian and Pacific Islander Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[25] Curry-Stevens, Ann and Coalition of Communities of Color (forthcoming), *The Slavic Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, Portland, OR: Portland State University.

[26] Single-parent poverty rates cannot be calculated for Asians or Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders because the margins of error are too high.

[27] Oregon Center for Public Policy (2013), "Working But Still Poor," retrieved from ocpp.org.

[28] Bassett, Laura (2013), "Women Still Earned 77 Cents on Men's Dollar in 2012: Report", Huffington Post, retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/17/gender-wage-gap_n_3941180.html.

[29] Oregon Center for Public Policy (2013), "Working But Still Poor," retrieved from ocpp.org.

[30] Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (2010), "Domestic Violence in Multnomah County", Portland, OR: LPSCC.

[31] Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women (nd), "Facts on Homelessness, Housing, and Domestic Violence," Portland, OR: Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women.

[32] Further disaggregation of the senior poverty rate by race is not possible because the margins of error for several race categories are too high.

[33] ECONorthwest (2013), "A Path to Prosperity", Portland, OR: Oregon Business Plan.

[34] DeLaTorre, Alan and Neal, Margaret (2014), "Aging and Equity in the Greater Portland Metropolitan Region", *Connections: Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future*, Volume 12, Issue 1.

[35] Jonathan Walters (2013), "Poverty Among Seniors Getting Harder to Ignore", retrieved from http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-poverty-among-elderly-harder-to-ignore.html.

[36] Senior Citizens League (2012), "Seniors Lose 34% Buying Power Since 2000", retrieved from seniors.league.org.

[37] DeLaTorre, Alan and Neal, Margaret (2014), "Aging and Equity in the Greater Portland Metropolitan Region", *Connections: Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future*, Volume 12, Issue 1.

[38] These figures are based on ACS data, which does not include data on the civilian institutionalized population. For all age groups, ACS disability categories include Hearing, Vision, Cognitive, Ambulatory and Self-Care. For age groups 18 and older, disabilities also include Independent Living. For more information on the ACS disability data, see https://www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html.

[39] Szporluk, Michael (2014), "Disparities in Access and Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities in Portland", *Connections: Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future*, Volume 12, Issue 1.

[40] Social Security Administration (2014), "SSI Federal Payment Amounts for 2014," retrieved from http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/cola/SSI.html.

[41] These geographic areas are based on Census PUMAs (Public Use Microdata Areas). For a map of the PUMA boundaries, see Appendix C. All PUMA data in the report are based on ACS 2008-2012 5-year estimates.

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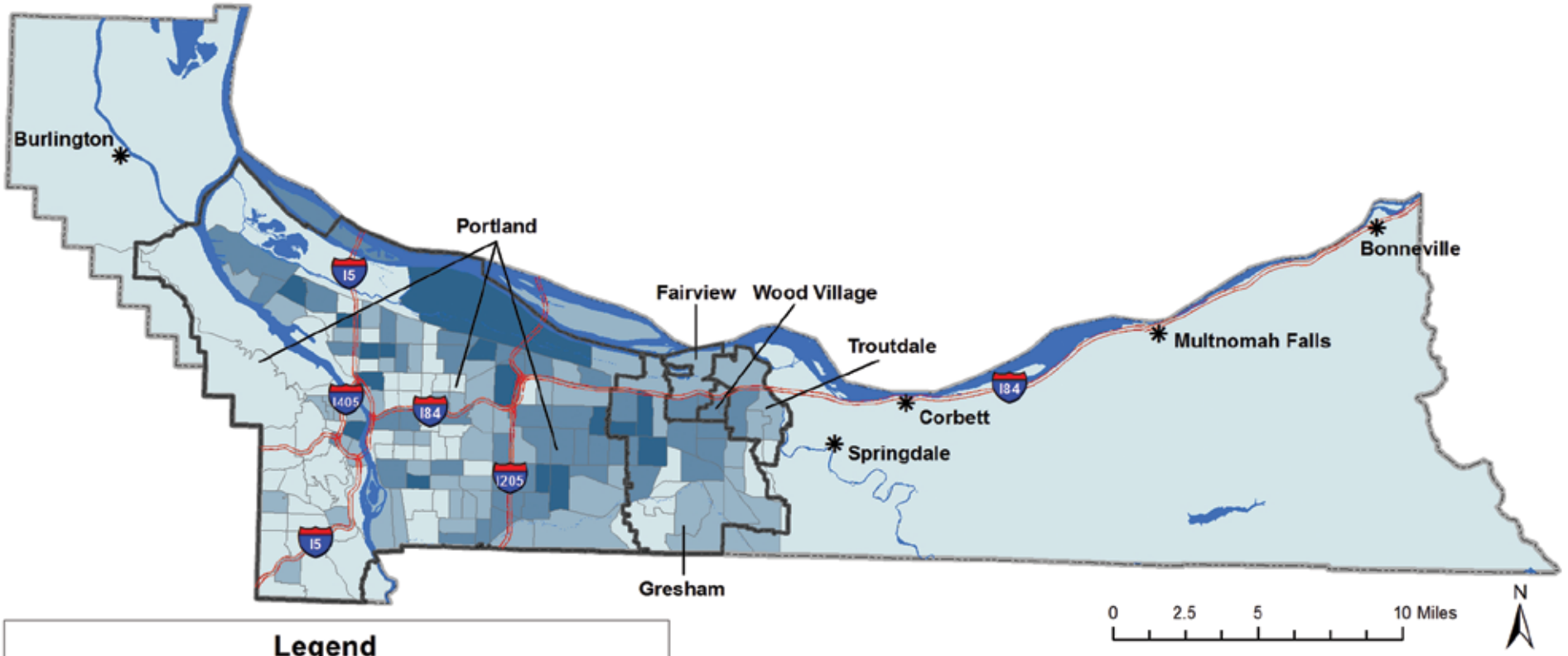
MAP 1: Multnomah County
Percent Households Below Poverty



Legend

% Households Below 100% Federal Poverty Level

- 0% to 5.7%
- 5.8% to 12.7%
- 12.8% to 22.9%
- 23% to 50.6%

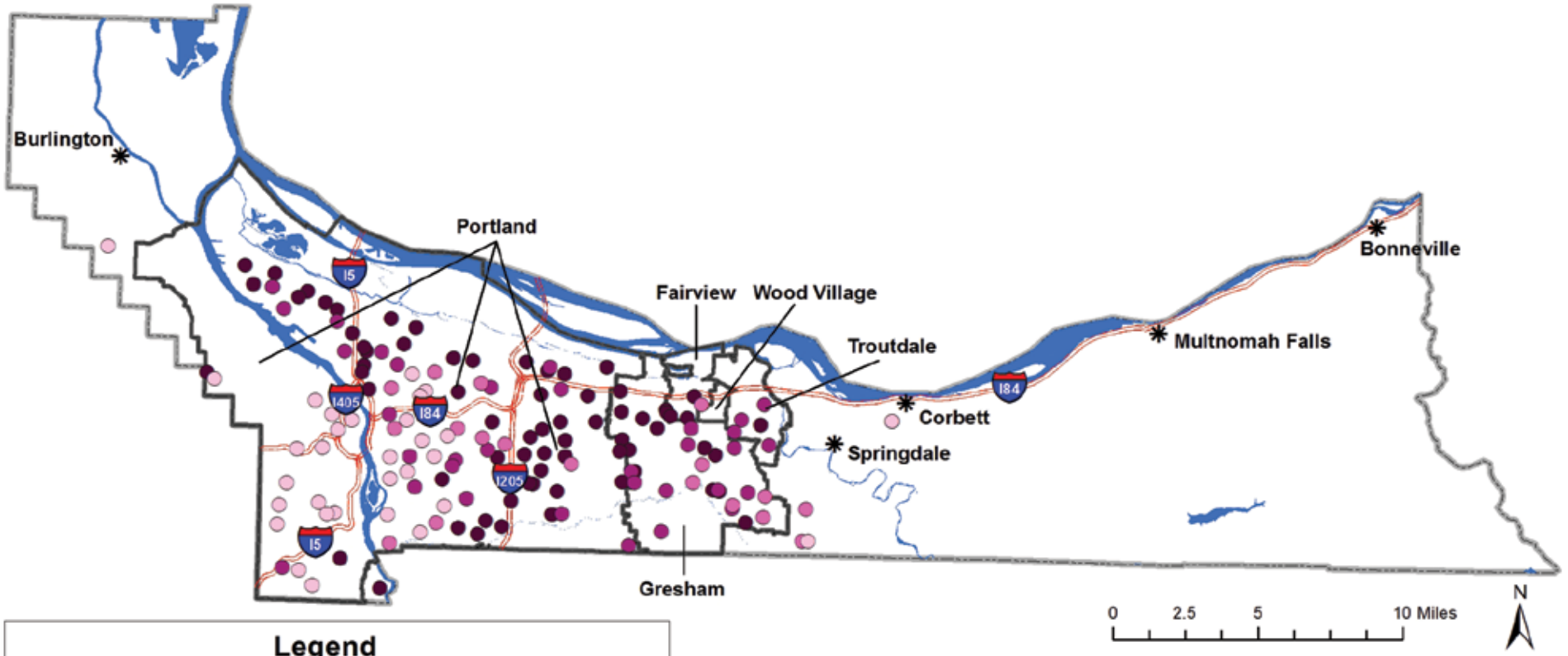
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: American Community Survey (2006-2010 Estimate)
Note: Percent is calculated and displayed using census tracts.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 2: Multnomah County
Percent Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (By School)



Legend

% Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (By School)

- 2% to 30%
- 31% to 45%
- 46% to 70%
- 71% to 95%

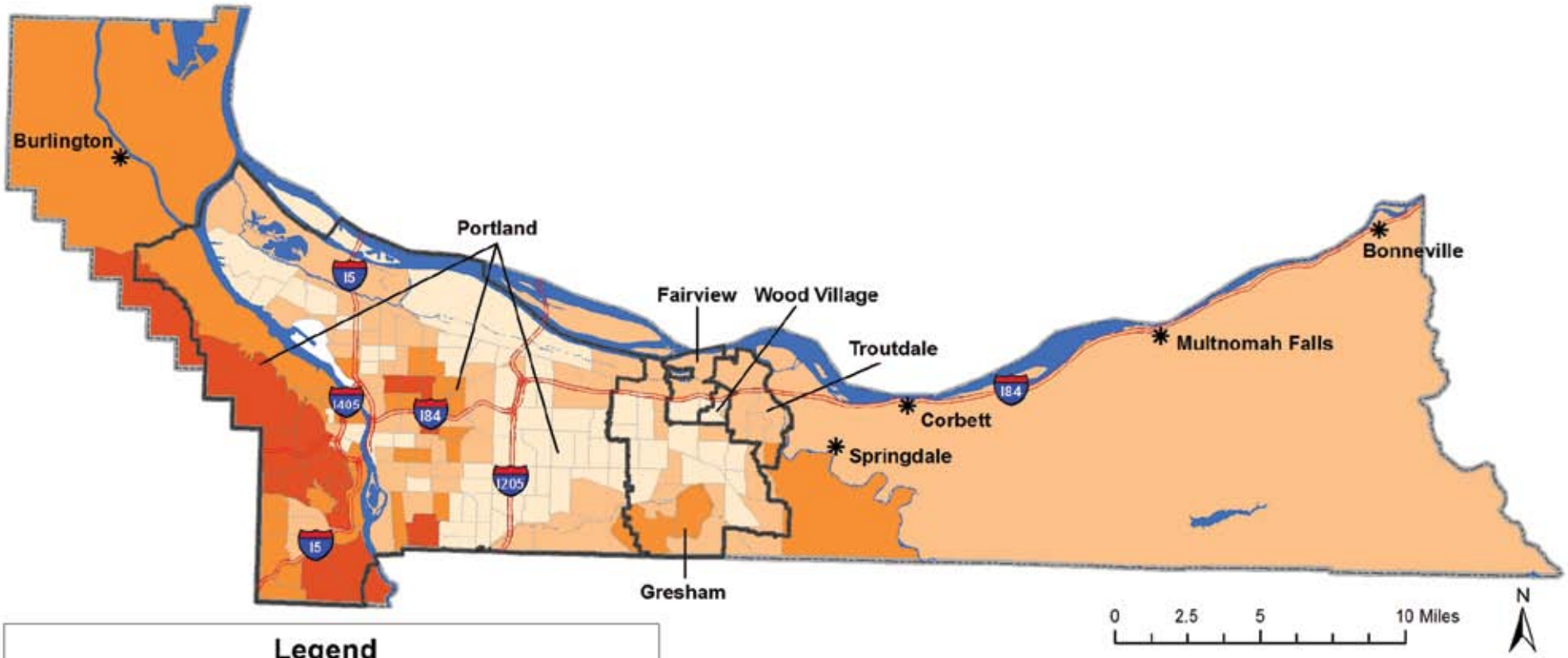
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Oregon Department of Education (2011-12 Academic Year)

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 3: Multnomah County Median Household Income



Legend

Median Income

- $14,960 - 55,208
- $55,209 - 76,754
- $76,755 - 103,142
- $103,143 - 154,455

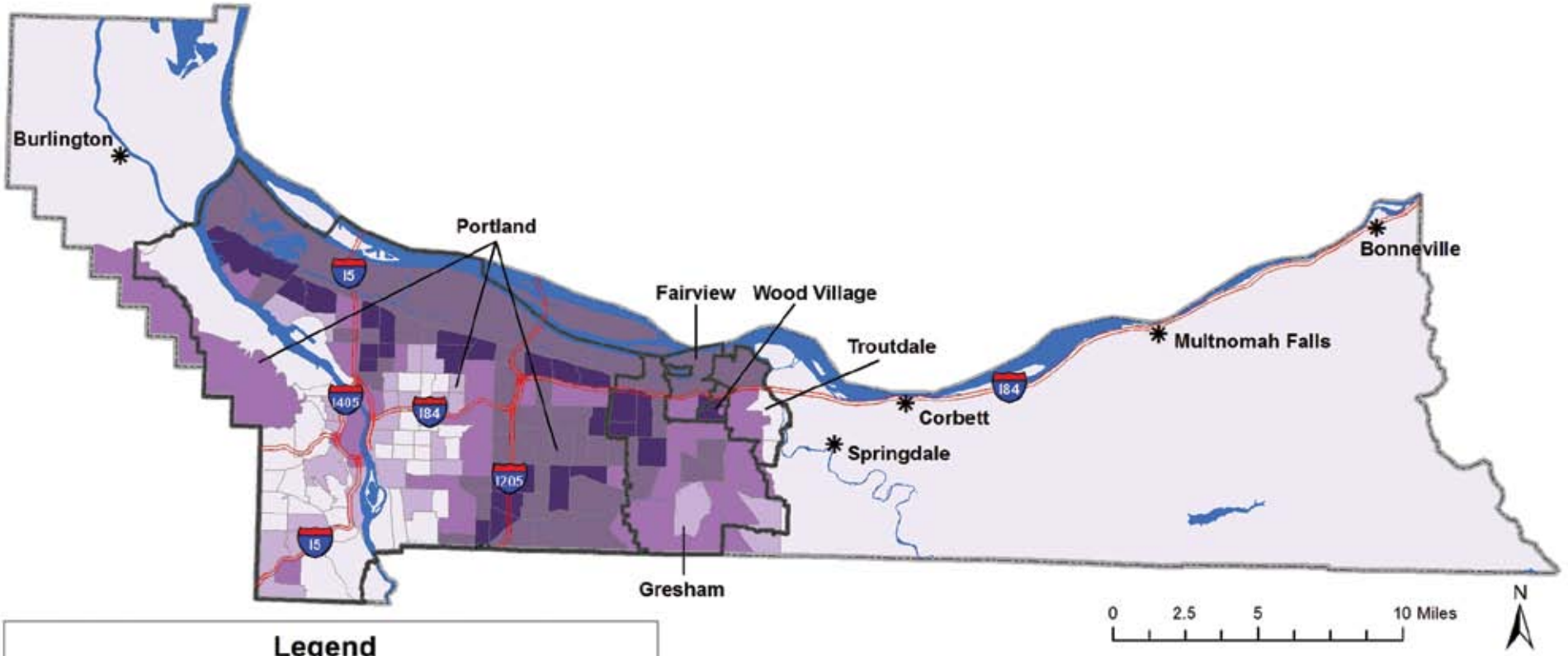
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: American Community Survey (2006-2010 Estimate)
Note: Values are calculated and displayed using census tracts.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 4: Multnomah County
Populations of Color (Percent of Total Population)



Legend

Populations of Color (% of Total Pop)

- 5% - 15%
- 16% - 20%
- 21% - 30%
- 31% - 40%
- 41% - 77%

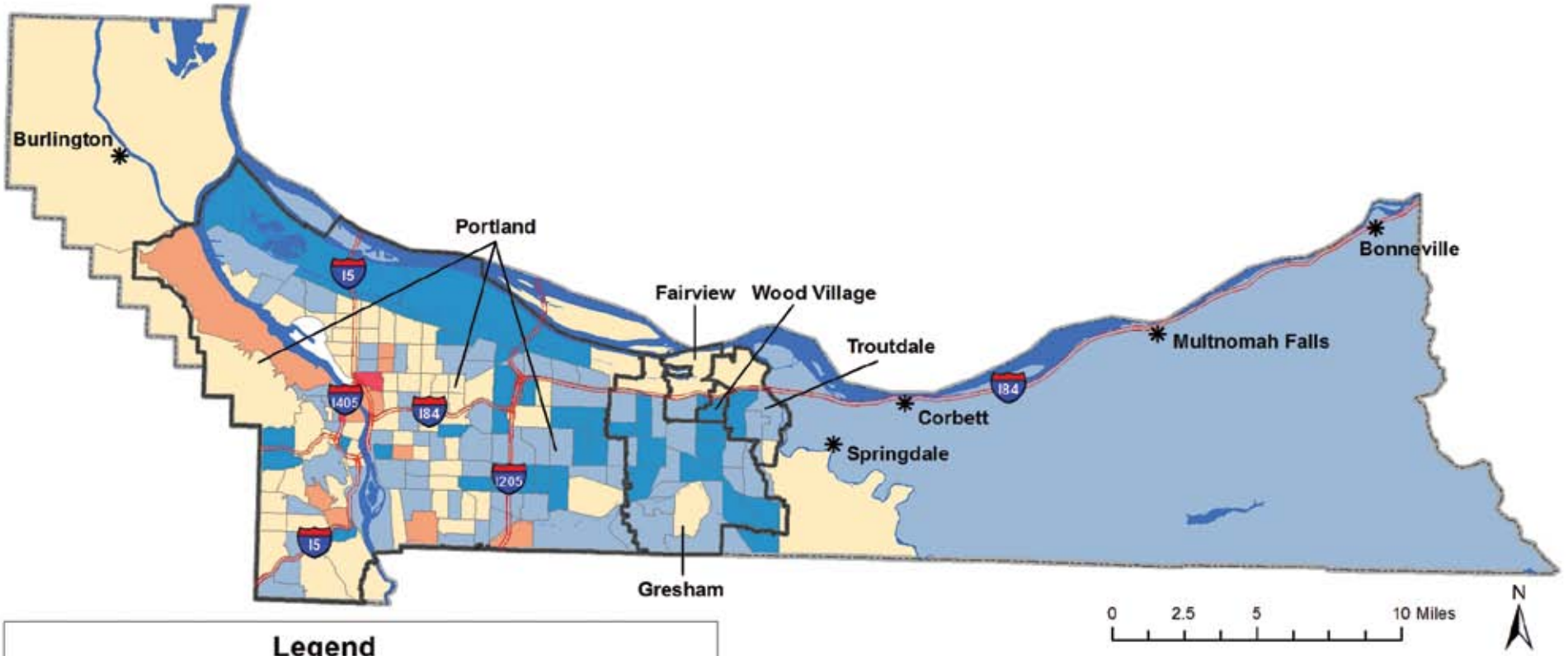
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: American Community Survey (2008-2012 Estimates)
Note: Percent is calculated and displayed using census tracts.
Populations of Color include all persons except White, non-Hispanic.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 5: Multnomah County
Percent Change in Median Income (2000-2010)



Legend

% Change in Median Income

- -55% to -15%
- -14% to 0%
- 1% to 20%
- 21% to 50%
- 51% to 188%

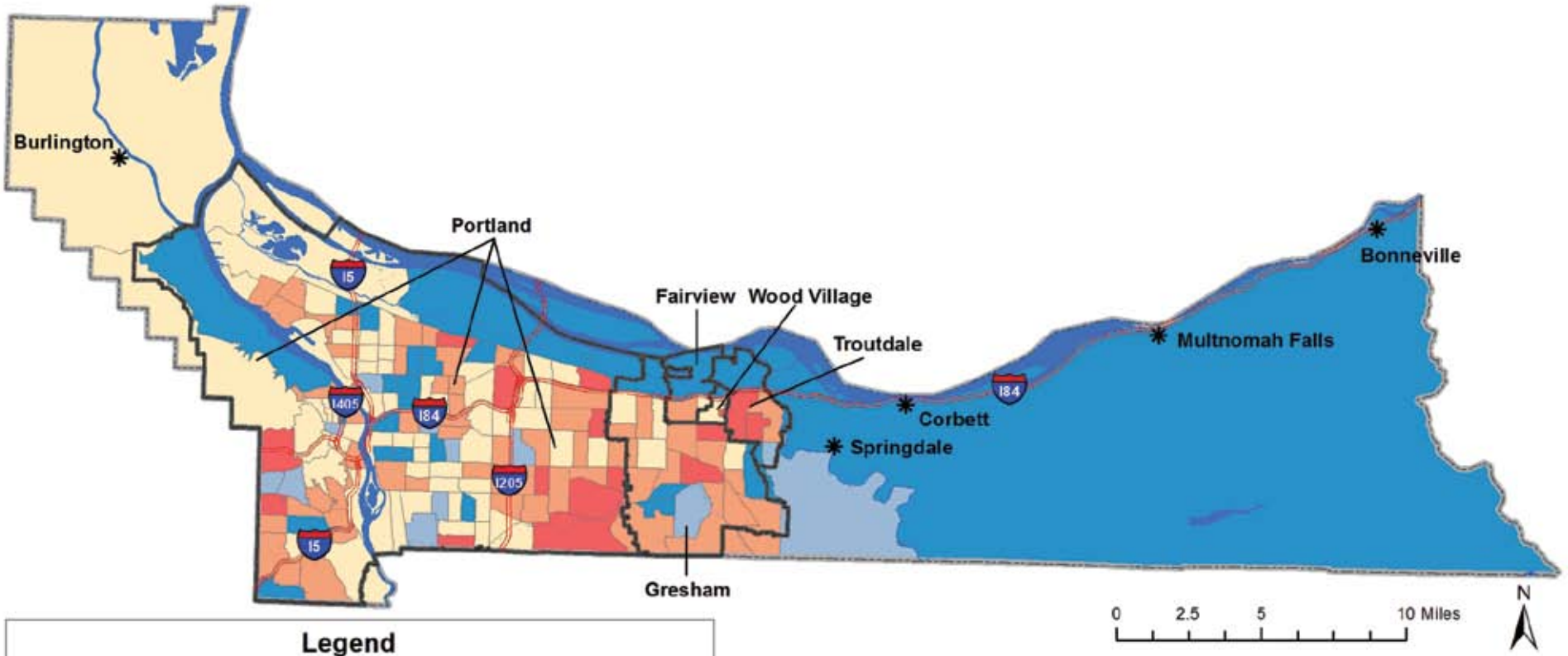
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Census (2000) & American Community Survey (2006-2010 Estimate)
Note: Percent Change is calculated and displayed using census tracts.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 6: Multnomah County
Percent Change in Household Poverty (2000-2010)



Legend

% Change in Households in Poverty

- -100% to -20%
- -19% to 0%
- 1% to 50%
- 51% to 150%
- Over 150%

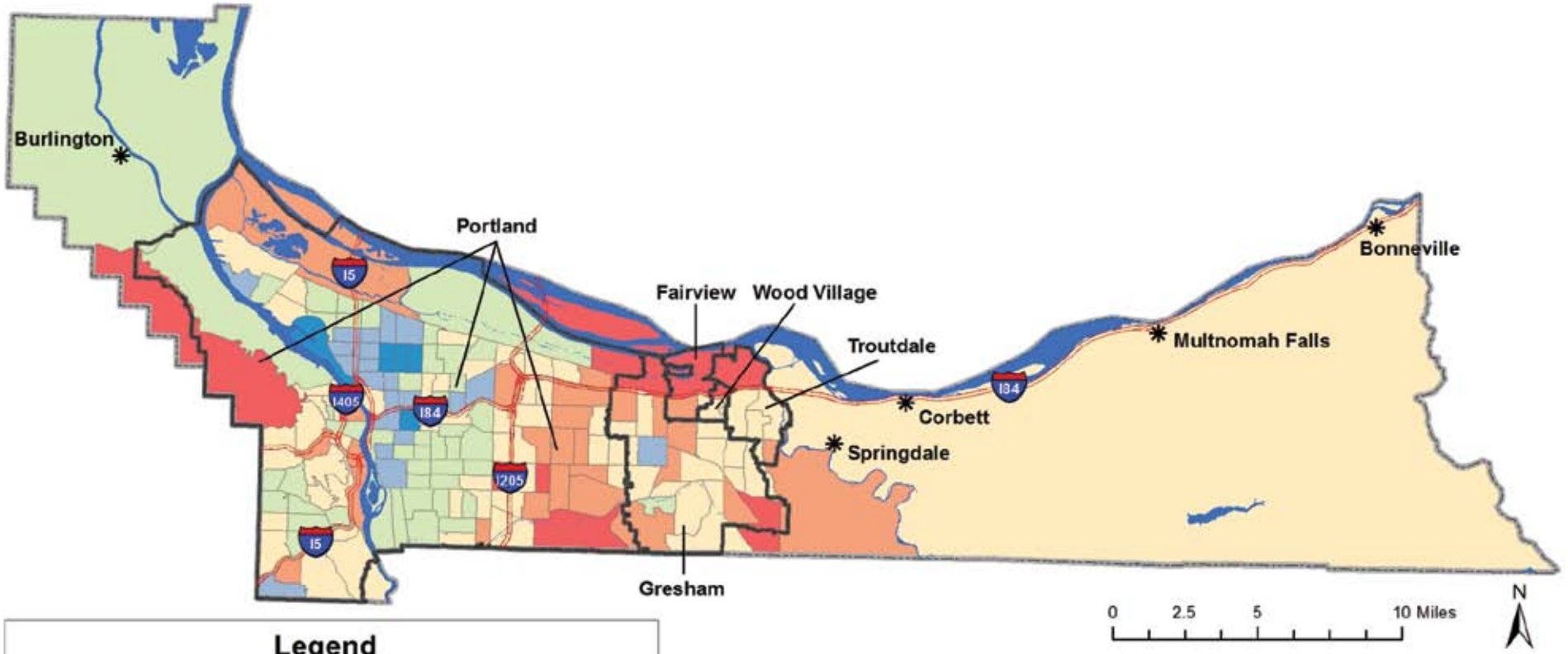
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Census (2000) & American Community Survey (2006-2010 Estimate)
Note: Percent Change is calculated and displayed using census tracts.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 7: Multnomah County
Percent Change in in Populations of Color (2000-2010)



Legend

Change in Populations of Color (2000-2010)

- -100% to -43%
- -42% to -25%
- -25% to -1%
- 0% to 50%
- 51% to 100%
- 101% to 200%

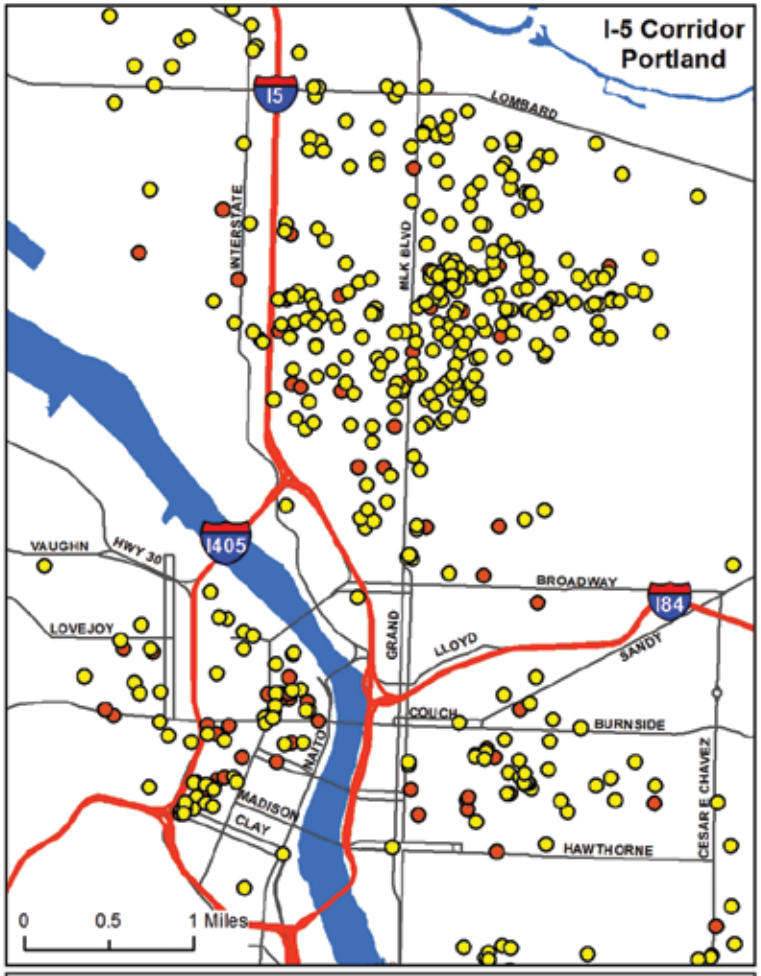
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

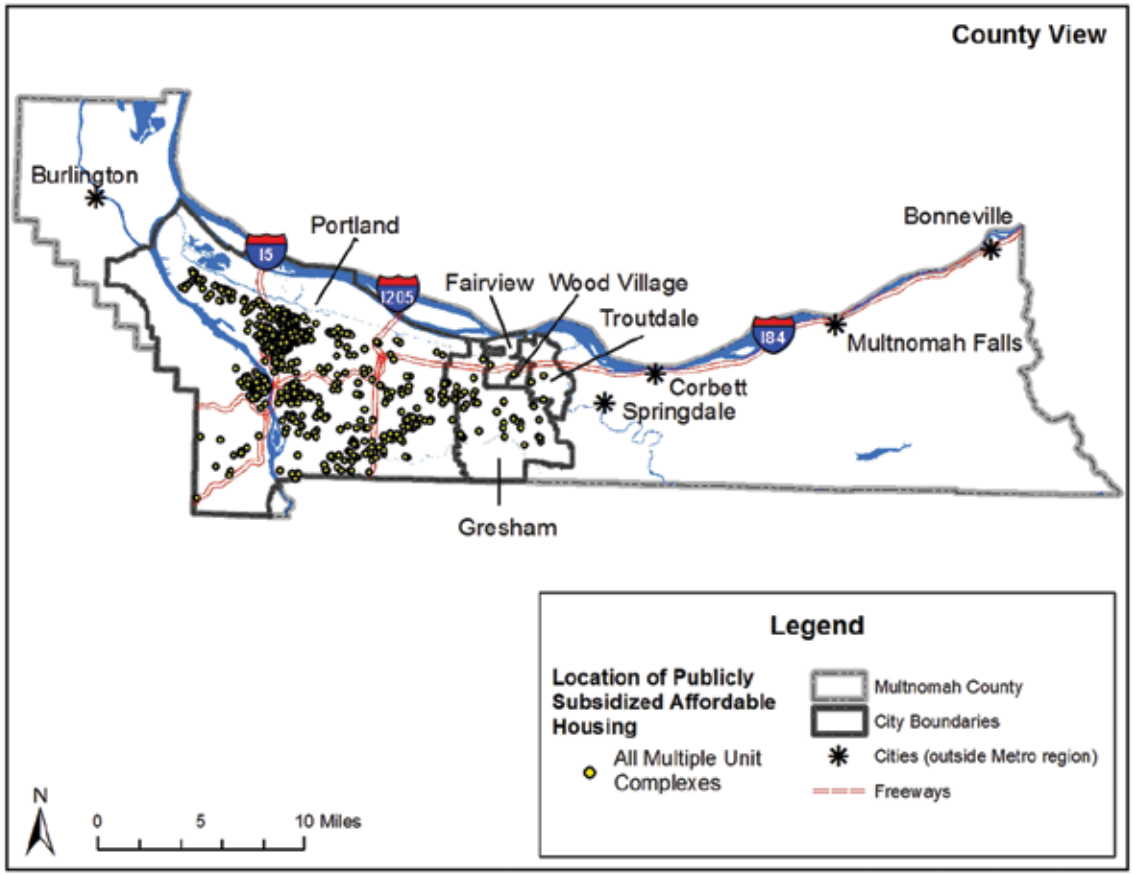
Source: US Census (2000 & 2010)
Note: Percent Change is calculated and displayed using census tracts.
Populations of Color include all persons except White, non-Hispanic.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 8: Multnomah County
Location of Publicly Subsidized Affordable Housing





Legend

Location of Publicly Subsidized Affordable Housing (no. of units)
- 10 - 50
- 51 - 99

Freeways
Major Arterials
Willamette River

Legend

Location of Publicly Subsidized Affordable Housing
- All Multiple Unit Complexes

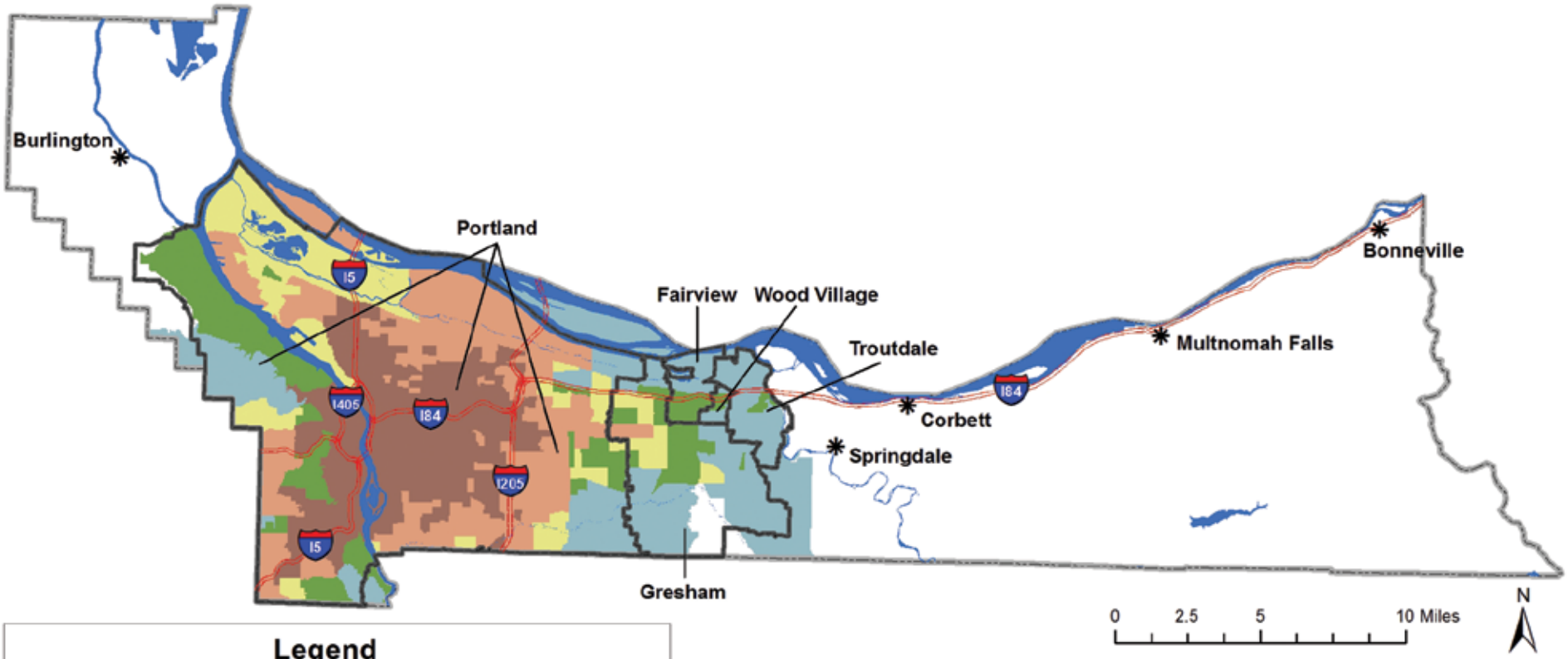
Multnomah County
City Boundaries
Cities (outside Metro region)
Freeways

Source: Metro 2011 Regional Inventory of Regulated Affordable Housing
Note: Data are only available for areas within the Metro region.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 9: Multnomah County
Transit Access to Family Wage Jobs (up to 60 minutes travel time)



Legend

Transit Access to Family Wage Jobs

- Low Access
- Medium Low Access
- Medium Access
- Medium High Access
- High Access

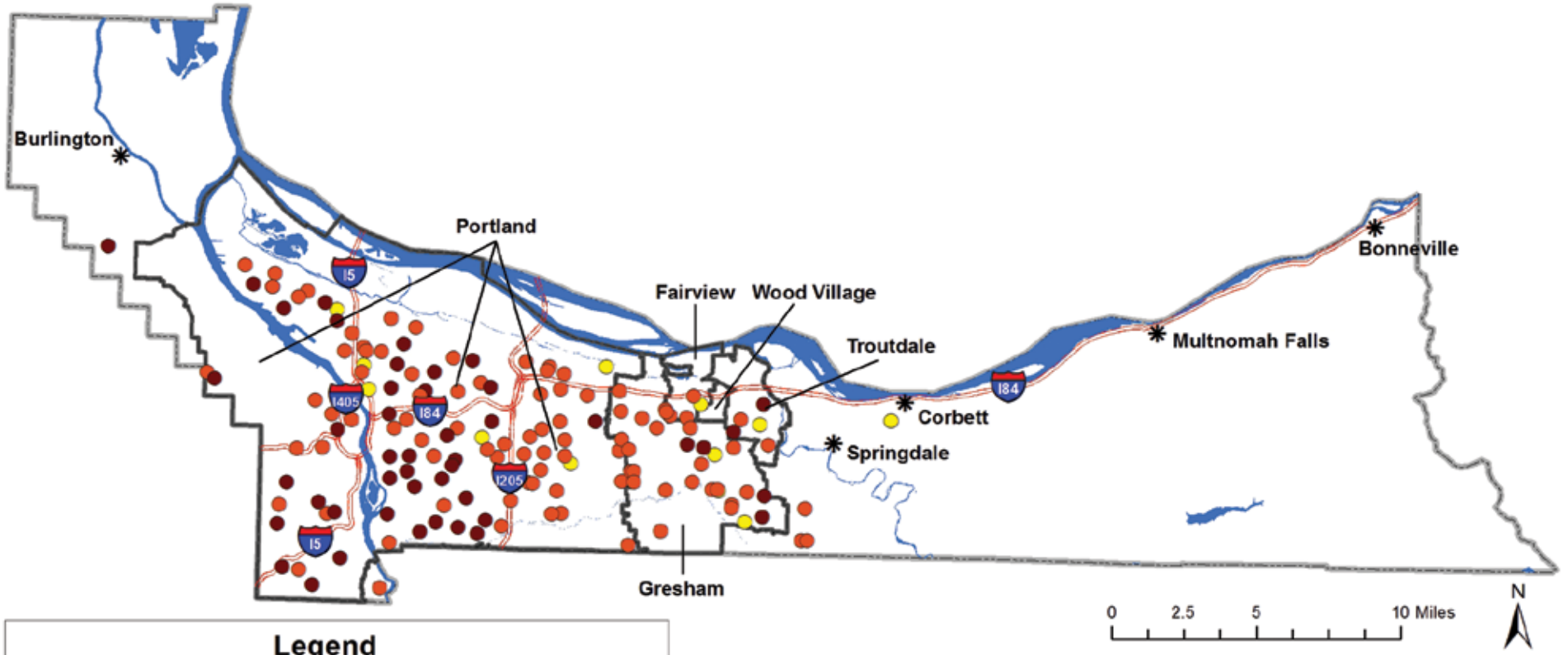
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability (2012)
Note: Data are only available for areas within the Metro region.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 10: Multnomah County
Average Teacher Experience (By School)



Legend

Average Teacher Experience (Years)

- Under 7 Years
- 7 - 14 Years
- Over 14 Years

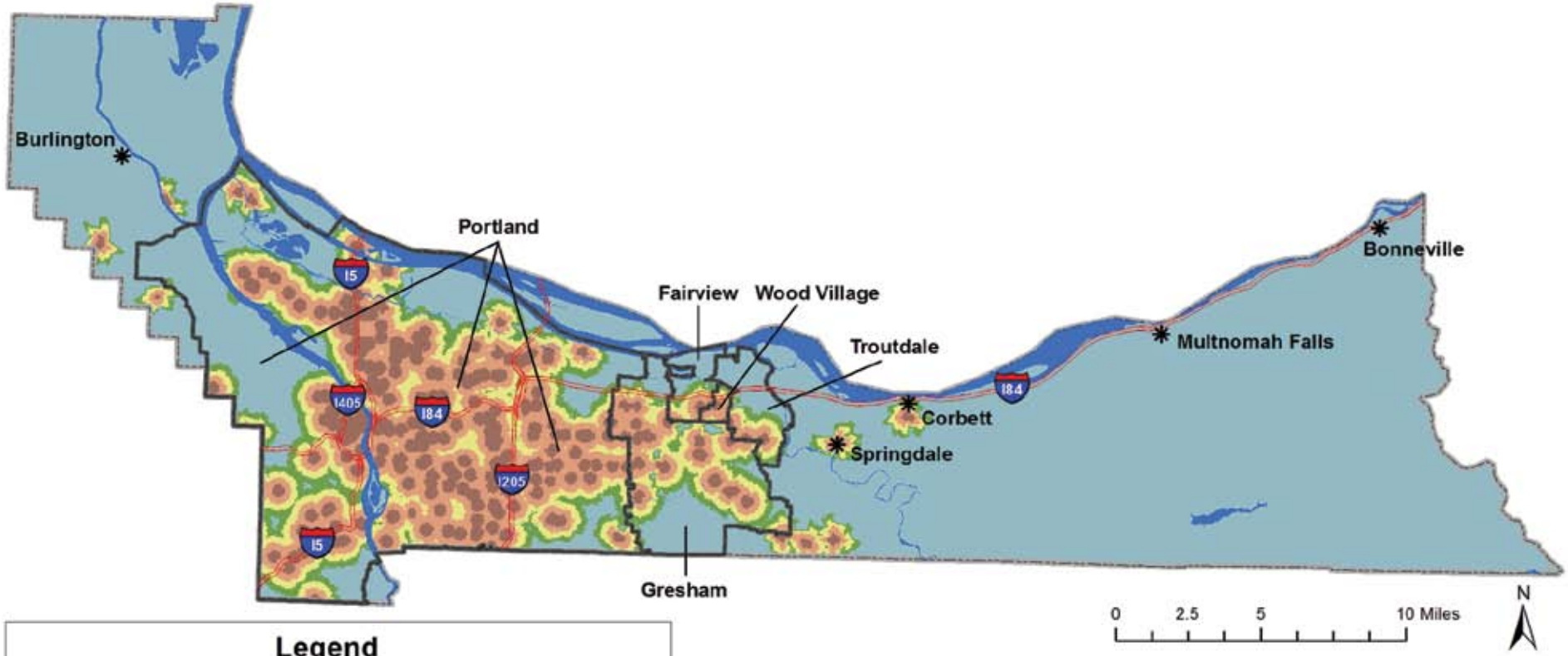
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Oregon Department of Education (2011-12 Academic Year)

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 11: Multnomah County
Proximity to Supermarkets and Grocery Stores



Legend

Proximity to Supermarkets and Grocery Stores

- Greater than 1 mile
- 3/4 - 1 mile
- 1/2 - 3/4 mile
- 1/4 - 1/2 mile
- Less than 1/4 mile

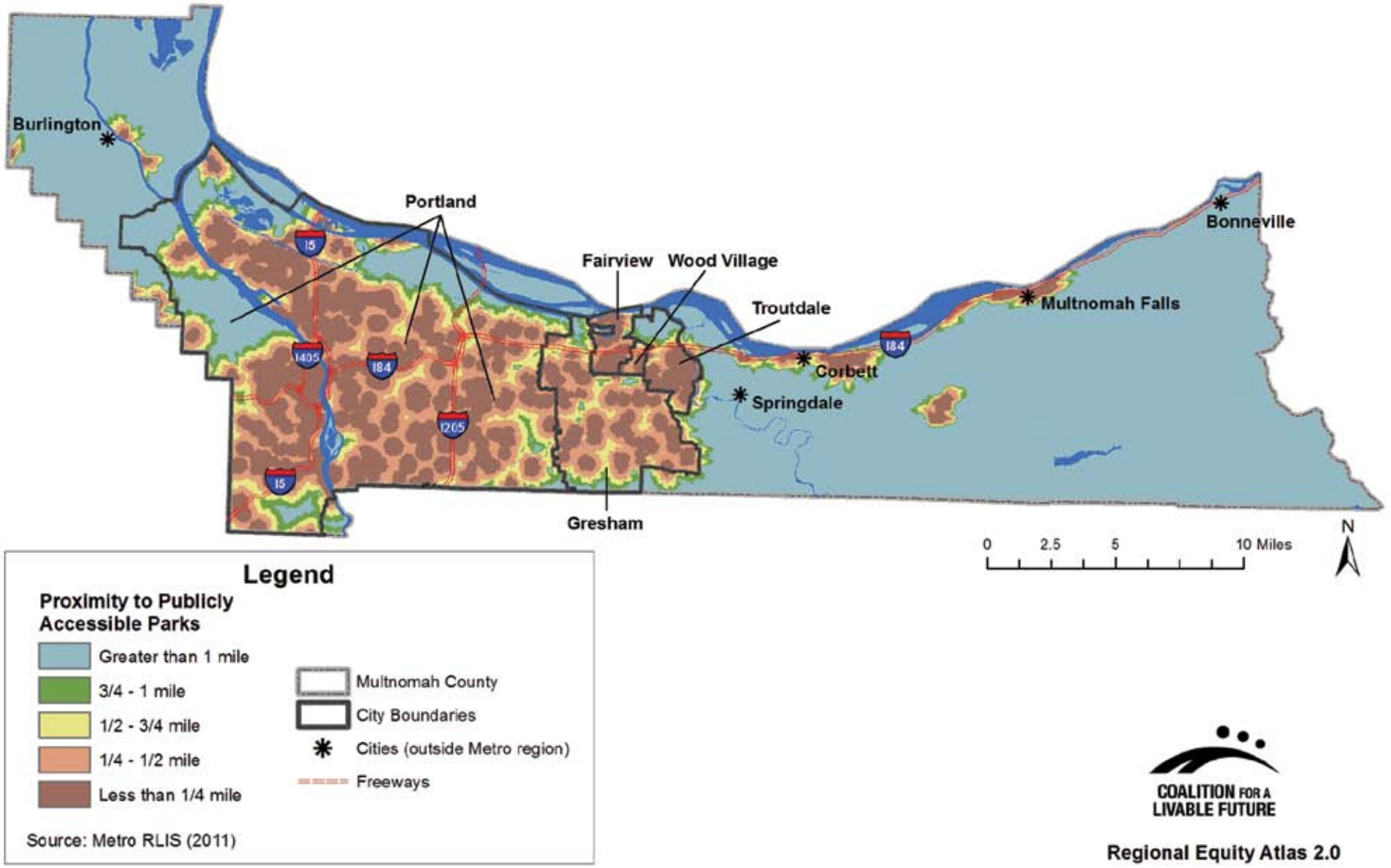
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2010)

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 12: Multnomah County
Proximity to Publicly Accessible Parks



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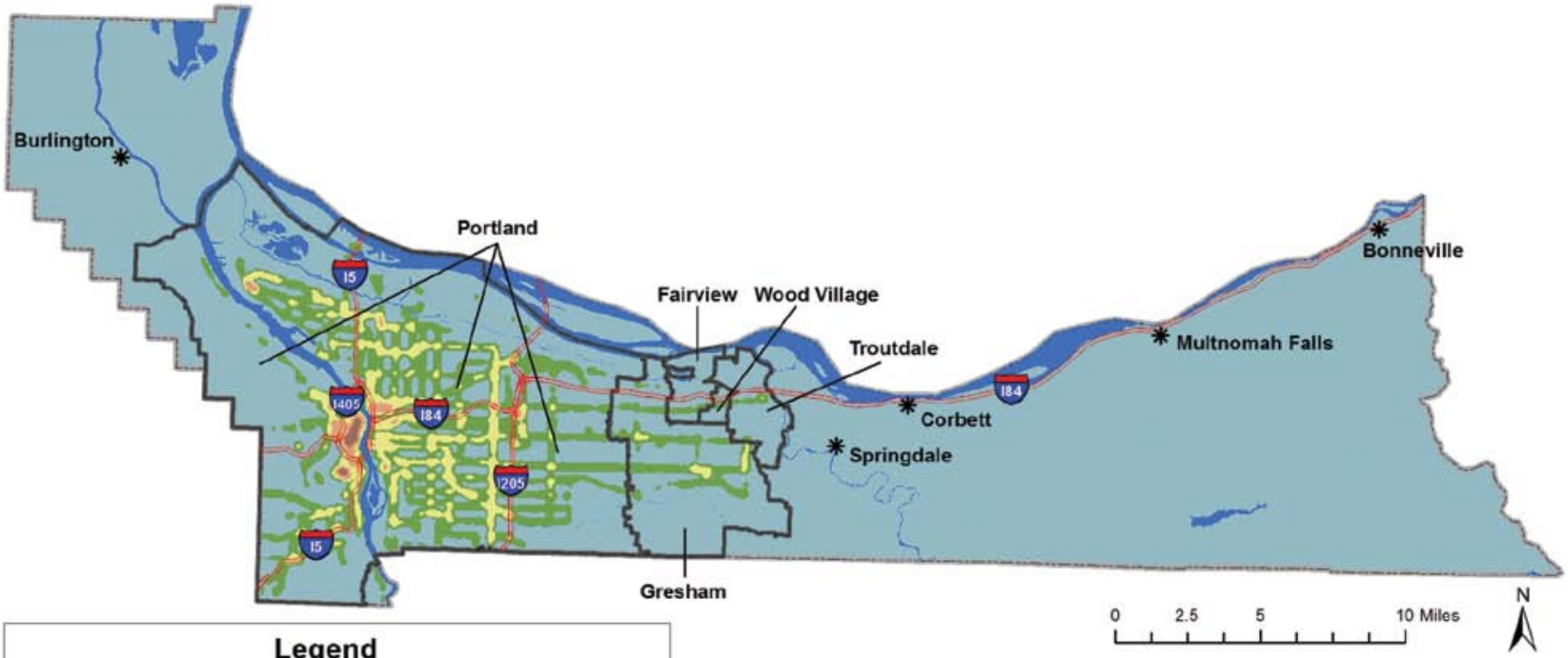
Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 13: Multnomah County Public Transit Accesss



Legend

Public Transit Access

- Greater than 1 mile
- 3/4 - 1 mile
- 1/2 - 3/4 mile
- 1/4 - 1/2 mile
- Less than 1/4 mile

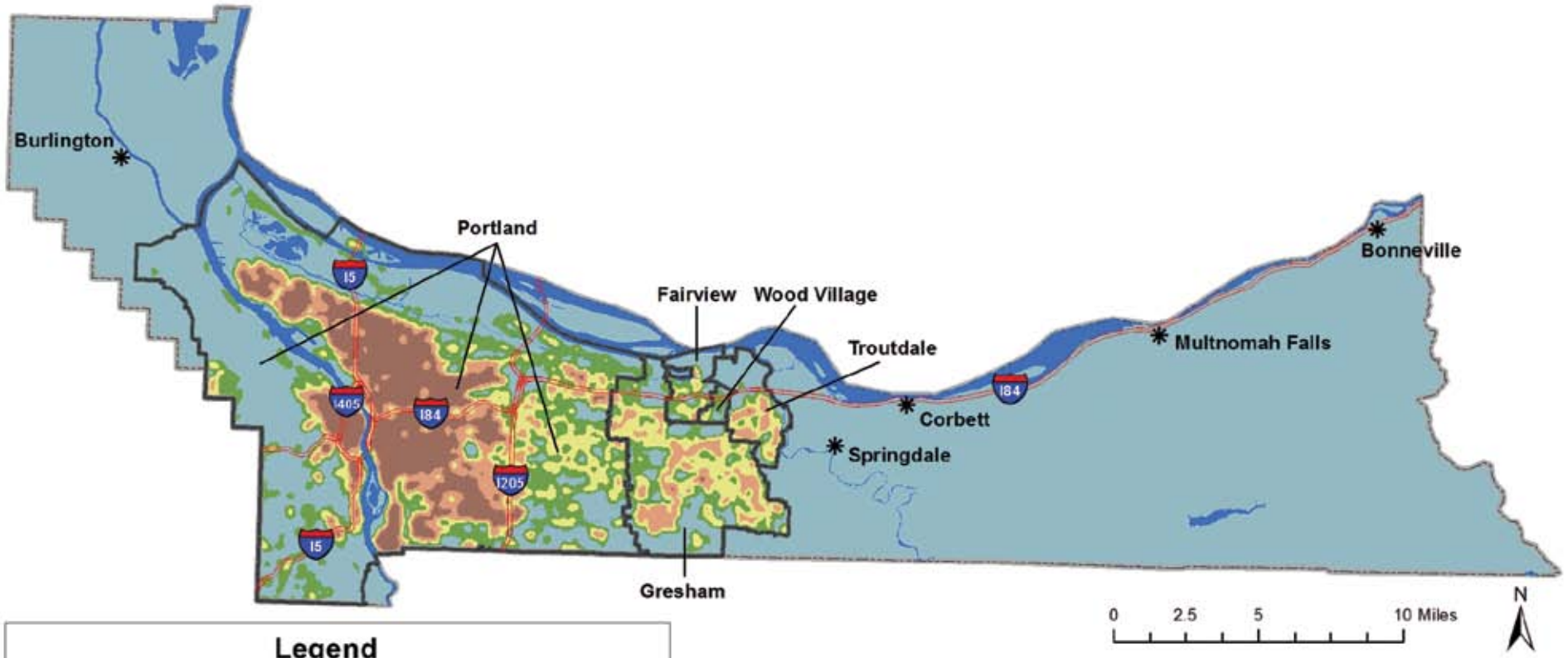
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Metro RLIS (2011)

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 14: Multnomah County Sidewalk Density



Legend

Sidewalk Density

- Low
- Medium Low
- Medium
- Medium High
- High

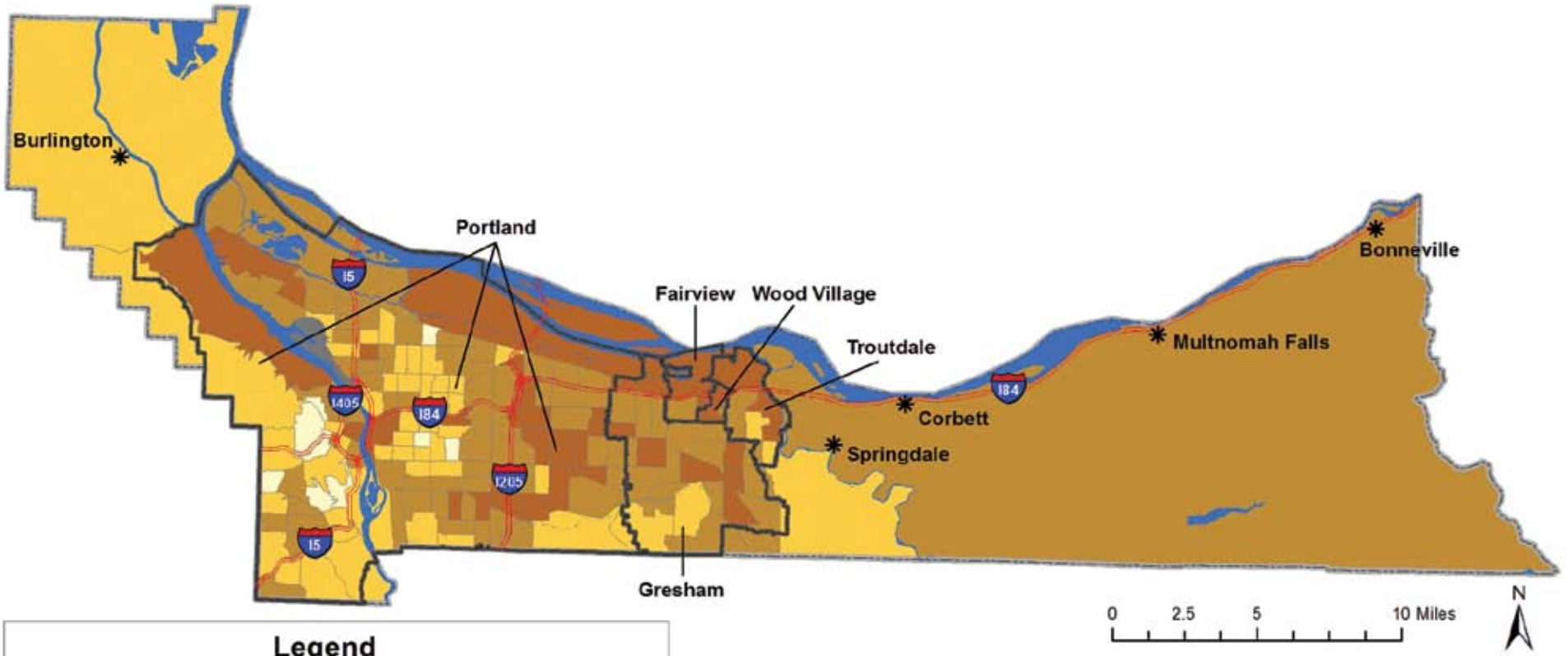
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Metro RLIS (2011)

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 15: Multnomah County Asthma Rates



Legend

Asthma Rates

- 3.11% to 10.49%
- 10.50% to 13.09%
- 13.10% to 16.12%
- 16.13% to 25%
- Data Not Available

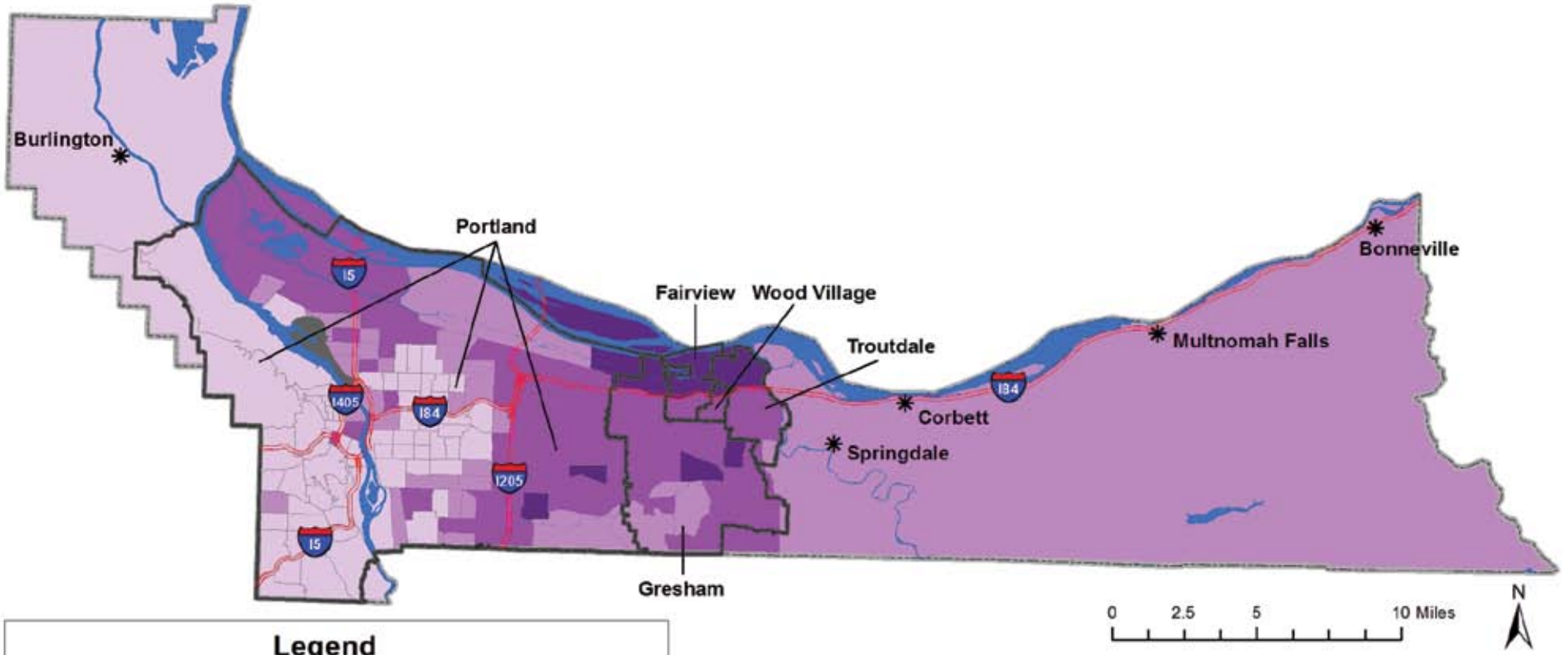
- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation (2011)
Note: Percent is calculated and displayed using census tracts.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0

MAP 16: Multnomah County Diabetes Rates



Legend

Diabetes Rates

- 0% to 6.1%
- 6.% to 7.8%
- 7.9% to 11.5%
- 11.6% to 19.7%
- Data Not Available

- Multnomah County
- City Boundaries
- Cities (outside Metro region)
- Freeways

Source: Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation (2011)
Note: Percent is calculated and displayed using census tracts.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0