



Income and Poverty in Metro Denver

A Brief Analysis of the US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008 Data
October 2009

The Data

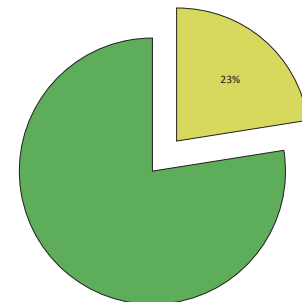
The following data comes from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) which was released on September 22 and 29, 2009 by the U.S. Census Bureau. ACS provides demographic, economic and social data for individuals and households. The data is made available for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more. The new ACS data reflects the first few months of the economic downturn at the end of 2008 and is the nation's first glimpse of the recession before most knew it was underway.

Health Insurance

The Denver Metro region suffers from disproportionately high rates of individuals without health insurance.

- **County:** There are 133,458 people, 22.6% of the population, without health insurance in Denver County. The rate is higher than both the state of Colorado with 17.2% uninsured and the nation with 15.1%.
- **Metro Area:** There are 320,983 working-age adults (18-64 years) without health insurance in the Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Area, 20% of the 18-64 age population.

Uninsurance Rate
Denver County - 2008



Income

While the Metro region's overall median income has stagnated, median income for communities of color has fallen, in some cases drastically.

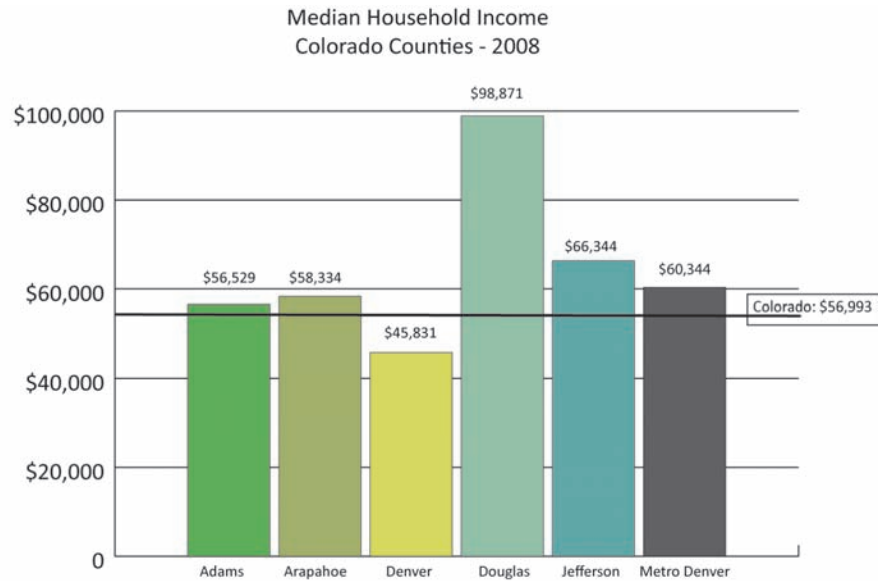
- Median household income for the Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Area remained stagnant from \$58,875 in 2007 to \$60,344 in 2008, representing a 2.4% increase without adjustment. When inflation is factored in, however, it represents a decline of 1.3%.

Median household income in the past 12 months
(not adjusted for inflation) - Denver Metro Area

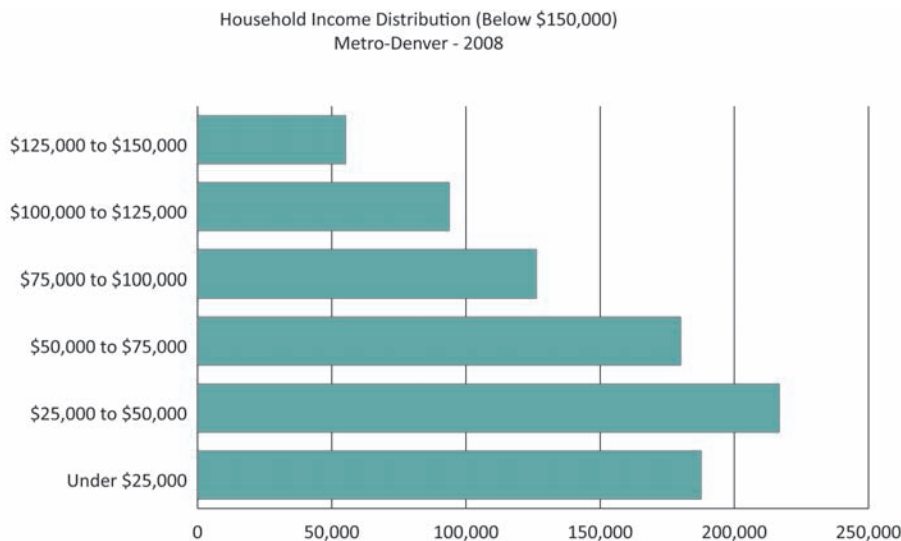
Race	Estimate 2007	Estimate 2008
All	\$58,875	\$60,344
Black/Af. Am.	\$40,048	\$31,991
Asian	\$60,418	\$59,830
Latino	\$38,058	\$38,355
White	\$66,013	\$67,809

- A wide racial disparity exists in the region. Median household income for Black/African Americans and Latinos was \$31,991 and \$38,355, respectively, which is significantly lower than \$67,809 for White residents. The median income for Hispanic households was 64% of the overall median, and Black households was 53% of the overall median.
- For full-time, year-round work, males earned a median of \$49,662 a year, whereas females earned \$40,055. The overall gender gap in wages is 19% across all industries.

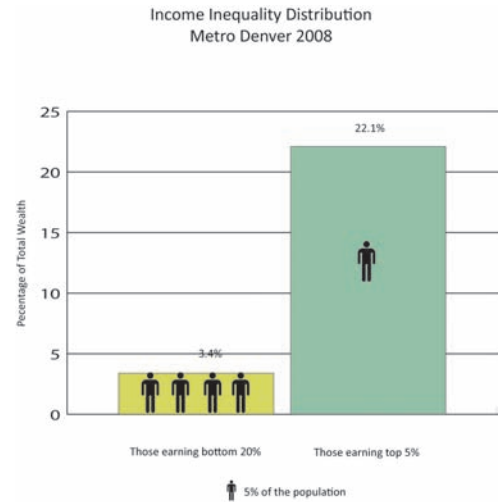
- Colorado’s median household income has typically been higher than the national (U.S. median was \$52,029 in 2008 while Colorado was \$56,993). However, Denver is among the poorest of all counties in the state. It should be noted that Douglas County, with a median household income of close to \$100,000, pulls up the overall median of the Metro area.



- Among the region’s households, 41.8% have an annual household income of less than \$50,000.



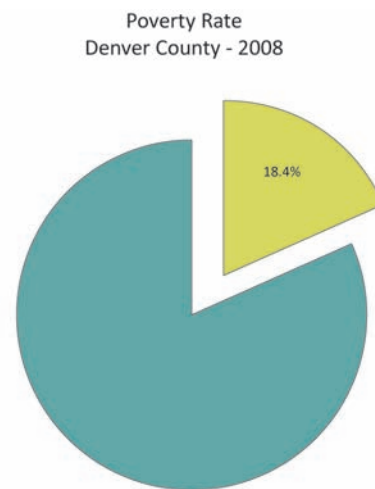
- In 2008, income disparity in the Metro area continued to be high. While the top 20% of households held 49.7% of the total household income, and the top 5% held 22.1% of all household income, households at the lowest quintile shared a mere 3.4% sliver of the pie – an even smaller portion than in 2007.



Poverty

Poverty in Denver has not improved since 2007 and has risen steadily since the beginning of the decade.

- The poverty rate remained stagnant in the Metro area between 2007 and 2008, but it rose in Denver County from 17.7% to 18.4%. In 2000, the Denver County poverty rate was 14.3%.
- 108,567 Denver County residents are living below the federal poverty level (6,275 more than in 2007), with household incomes of less than \$10,400 for an individual or \$21,200 for a family of four.
- It is widely recognized that the federal poverty level is an inaccurate gauge of poverty. The Self-Sufficiency Standard, documented in FRESC's study, *The American Dream Denied?*, is still conservative but a much better measure of family living standards. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado for one adult is \$16,666 annually, and for a two adult family of four is around \$37,000, depending on the age of the children. By this measure, an even greater number of households in Denver have incomes below what it costs to make ends meet.
- Between 2007 and 2008 the number of people in poverty in Denver Country grew at a much faster rate than in the state or the nation. U.S. poverty grew 0.2% and Colorado poverty fell by 0.5%, while Denver County poverty grew 0.7%.

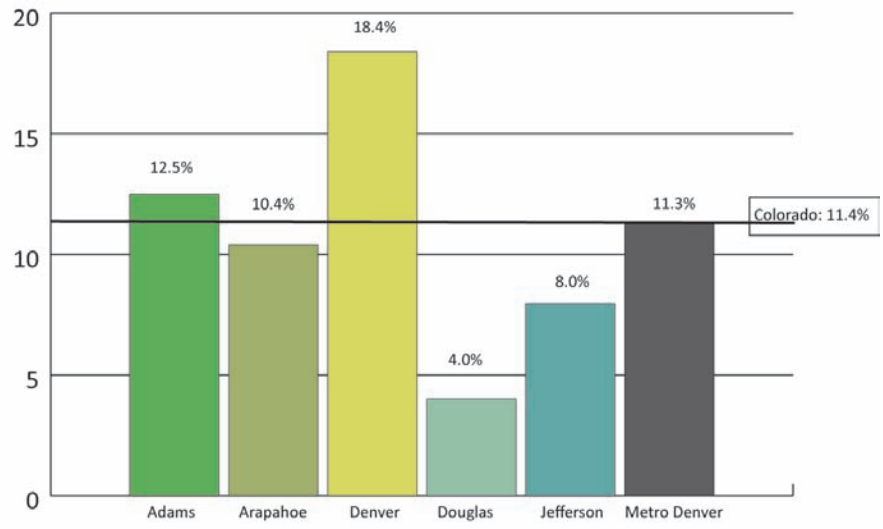


Rate of Poverty Growth

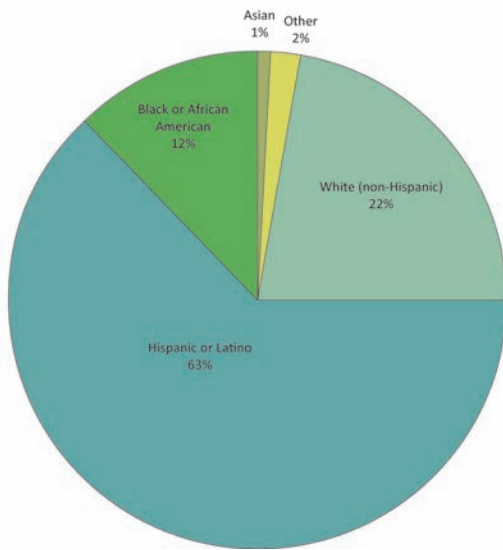
US	CO	Denver Metro	Denver County
0.2%	-0.5%	-0.2%	0.7%

- Colorado’s poverty rate is lower than the national rate of 13.2%; however, at 18.4%, Denver surpasses the national average.

Poverty Rate
Colorado Counties - 2008



Racial Distribution of 99,967 Children in Poverty
Metro Denver 2008



- 16% of the Metro area’s children were living in poverty in 2008. Children of color were far more likely to live in poverty than their white counterparts. Although Hispanic and Black/African American children make up only 37% of the population, they make up 75% of the children in poverty in Metro Denver.

FRESC: Good Jobs Strong Communities is a non-profit organization whose mission is to ensure that Colorado jobs pay livable wages with family-supporting benefits, and that families have access to affordable housing and a good quality of life.