

# Indicators of Community Strength

## *Executive Summary*

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Greater Richmond & Petersburg Region

2016



United Way of Greater  
Richmond & Petersburg

**LEARNING.**  
**LEADING.**  
**UNITING.**

# Letter from the Chief Executive Officer

Our region has incredible resources that make it a great place to live and raise a family. At the same time, the challenges facing us are significant and, like many places, becoming more complex. United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg's annual Community Indicators Report provides a broad view of our regional economic and human landscape and brings attention to the trends and emerging concerns that help our region plan and respond to them.

Our most pressing concern now is the rapid increase and sustained levels of poverty across our area. With continued re-gentrification of the cities and movement of our working, lower-income residents to suburban areas, more services are needed across a broader geography. To limit and counter the negative impacts of poverty, our charge is to grow prosperity across our region.

Renewed partnerships, greater collaboration and collective action are needed to meet these challenges. Understanding that our enlightened self-interest extends beyond our neighborhoods will help us consider resources that bridge counties and cities, governments, businesses, and not-for-profit sectors. United Way is working alongside willing partners across these sectors to develop and implement strategies that build a stronger region.

**James Taylor**  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg



# Letter from the Chief Impact Officer

Astounding evidence exists that the single greatest predictor of individual resilience – the ability to thrive under stress – is positive, personal relationships. We can offer no greater social, health, or economic benefit to infants and young children than the gift of loving parents who are present and engaged every day.

Our youth and emerging adults transition more successfully to adulthood when they, too, enjoy robust social relationships. Likewise, strong social supports protect older adults by increasing access to health care, boosting immunity, and correlating to improved medical outcomes.

Our connections to each other, our collective willingness to ask for help, to give help, and to advocate for change meld to forge a Greater Richmond and Petersburg region that has bounced back from adversity time and time again. The power of this place, which arises transformed from a centuries-deep narrative of historical trauma and disparity, is our legacy of individual and community resilience.

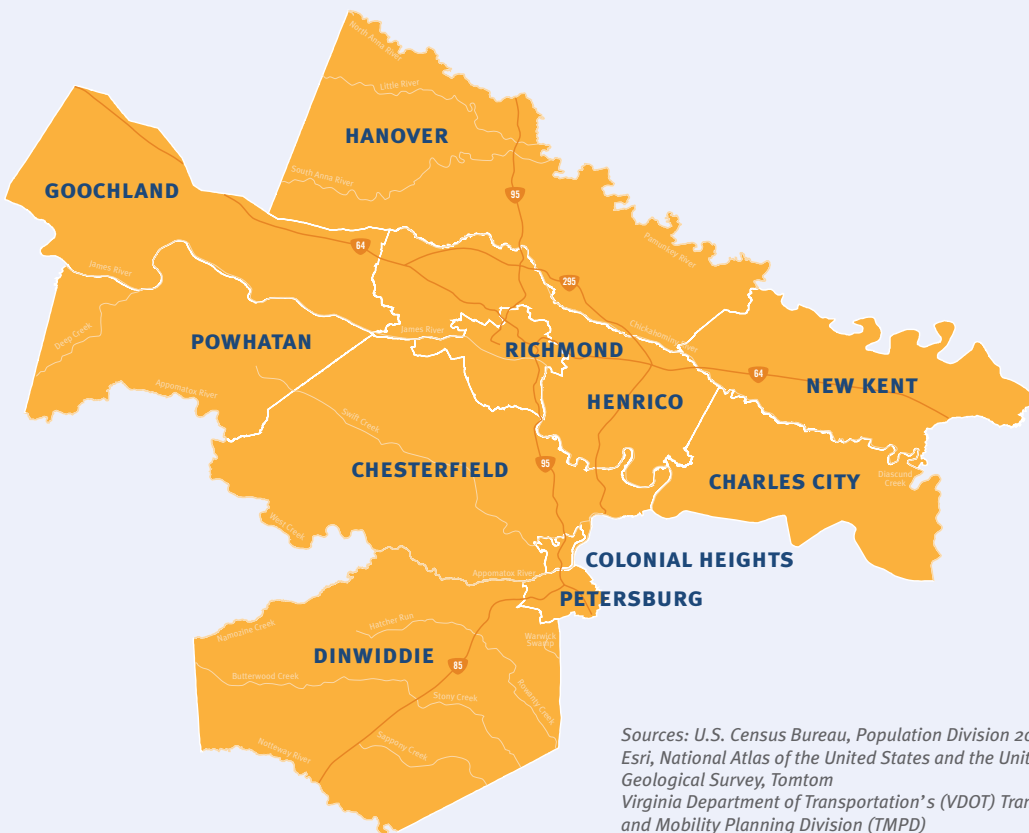
**Gigi Amateau**  
 Chief Impact Officer  
 United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg



## United Way Region Population Trends

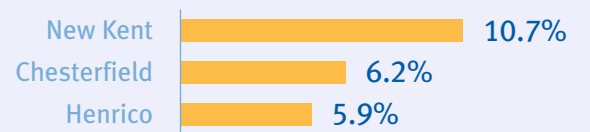
In the Greater Richmond and Petersburg area, the total population has increased by 6% since 2010 and by 21% since 2000. Of the total population, 62.5% are white (712,566 people) and 37.5% are a minority race (427,657 people).

### Total Population 2015 Estimate



Total population increased 6% since 2010 and 21% since 2000.

### Areas of largest increase



### Aging Population

Since 2010, the number of older adults has increased by 25% to 31,736 people in 2015. By 2040, the number of older adults will double.

|              |              |                  |           |           |         |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Charles City | Chesterfield | Colonial Heights | Dinwiddie | Goochland | Hanover |
| 7,040        | 335,687      | 17,820           | 27,852    | 22,253    | 103,227 |
| Henrico      | New Kent     | Petersburg       | Powhatan  | Richmond  |         |
| 325,155      | 20,392       | 32,477           | 28,031    | 220,289   |         |



# United Way Region Poverty Overview

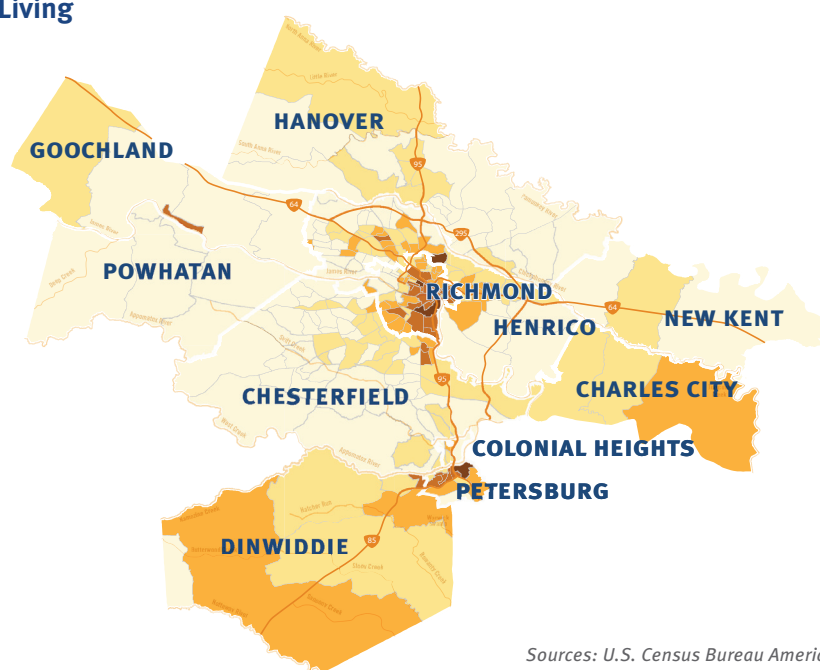
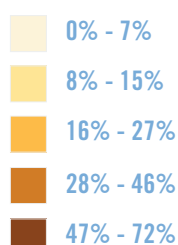
The Federal government sets a poverty level or threshold for household income each year. It is this threshold that determines which families and individuals receive support from government agencies and programs funded by government grants.

## How are Poverty Thresholds Determined?

Poverty thresholds are based on a formula of estimating the cost to feed a family for a year then multiplying by three. This formula was set during President Johnson's "war on poverty" in the early 1960s when the average family spent an estimated one-third of its budget on food. If a household earns less than the amount determined by the formula, the household is considered to be living in poverty. The measure is the same across the country, without consideration of the cost of living in different areas.

Because the poverty thresholds are extremely low and largely inadequate to meet even basic needs, United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg considers 200% of the Federal threshold as a starting point for basic economic well-being.

Percent of Total Population Living in Poverty by Census Tract



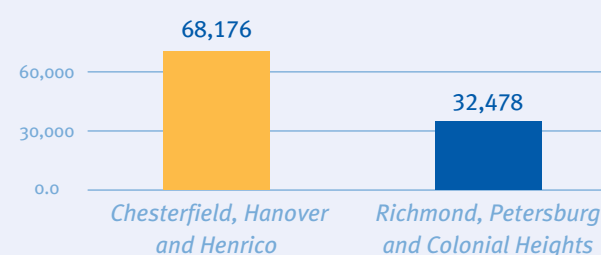
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-year estimates Esri, National Atlas of the United States and the United States Geological Survey, Tomtom

## Poverty Trends

The largest increases in poverty were in Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico counties, where poverty more than doubled (combined 68,176 people). That's more people in poverty than the cities of Richmond, Petersburg and Colonial Heights combined (32,478 people).

In 2000, 22.2% of the United Way Greater Richmond-Petersburg Region met the 200% of Federal Threshold of Poverty. That number increased to 27.2% in 2014, from 203,162 people to 293,360.

Poverty Increases in Unexpected Counties



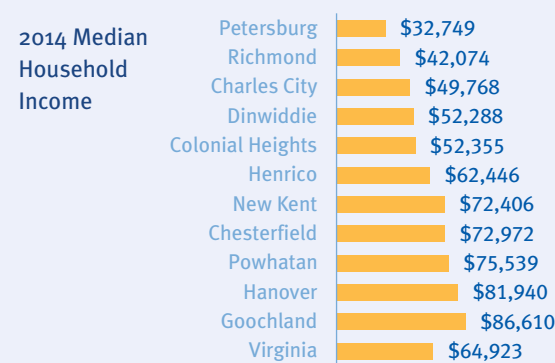
Percent of Total Population with Income Below 200% of Poverty



# United Way Region Financial Well-Being Overview

Financial well-being indicators examine income and the factors that support or hinder the ability of individuals and families to thrive financially. Poverty, employment, affordable housing, and financial literacy all affect an individual's financial well-being.

Helping families and individuals move from poverty to long-term financial stability requires a holistic approach that works over time on key stabilizing features: stable and affordable housing, adequate banking, household sustaining income, employment, and income equality. United Way develops and invests in whole-family approaches that promote household financial well-being that create system-level pathways to prosperity.

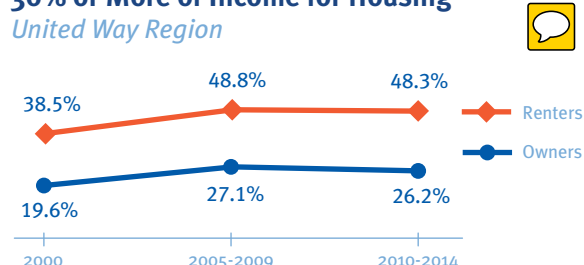


## Hidden Restrictions on Growing Stability

According to Brookings Institution research, the average full-time worker without a bank account can spend \$40,000 in fees in their lifetime simply cashing paychecks.

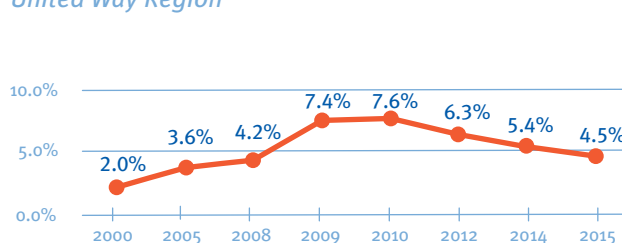
For more information, see [www.brookings.edu/articles/bringing-unbanked-households-into-the-banking-system](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/bringing-unbanked-households-into-the-banking-system)

Percent of Renters and Owners Paying 30% or More of Income for Housing



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

Unemployment

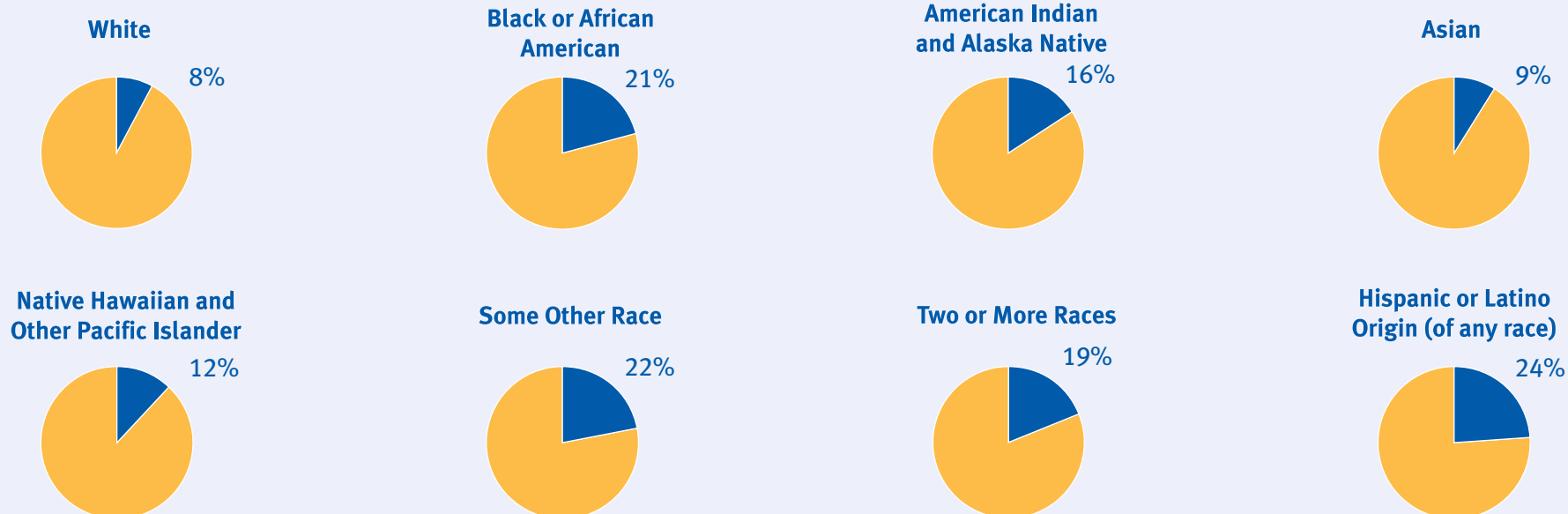


Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program and Bureau of Labor Statistics

Note: These are conservative estimates of unemployment because they may not capture those who have stopped searching for work, settled for part-time work, or are underemployed.

# United Way Region Financial Well-Being Overview

## Percent of Total Population in Poverty by Race United Way Region



American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Poverty & Race

There are significant disparities in income levels across our region and nationally. By examining differences in household income and financial well-being across populations, we better understand – and can better address – the underlying issues of long-standing and multi-generational poverty. While our society has made and is making strides to change these dynamics, the work of creating a more equitable nation and region requires our continued consideration.

For information, see:

[www.npc.umich.edu/publications/policy\\_briefs/brief16/PolicyBrief16.pdf](http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/policy_briefs/brief16/PolicyBrief16.pdf)

## Poverty & Older Adults

One in four older adults in our region live at or below the poverty threshold. With the 65 and older population expanding in our region, demands on public and health systems are likely to increase. It's crucial that our region's built environment and community-based supports are accessible, available, and affordable to support optimal aging for everyone, regardless of income. Older adults who maintain a strong network of positive relationships enjoy better health, greater happiness, and longer lives. Poverty, living alone, limited mobility, and lack of encouragement during trauma or transitions can have particularly damaging effects on well-being and longevity.

# United Way Region Childhood Well-Being Overview

Understanding child health and well-being is crucial in fostering healthy environments for children to learn and grow. Children who are in good health and enjoy positive home, school and social experiences are more likely to have healthy, resilient brains and good social and emotional development.

Research shows that poverty can have long-lasting effects on children's health and development. Childhood experiences, opportunities, traumas and obstacles are also effective predictors of lifelong financial stability and whole-life well-being. For these reasons, children's experiences, environment, opportunities – especially education, home stability, and access to health care – are priorities for United Way's work in creating systemic community change.

In the last ten years, United Way has taken a particular interest in key areas that determine long-term, holistic well-being for children, including early childhood education, school readiness, grade level reading, teen pregnancy, and on-time high school graduation. Since then, kindergarten readiness in our region has improved, teen pregnancy has dropped dramatically, high school drop-out rates have declined, and graduation rates have increased.

United Way continues to support the programs that lead to these gains for our children and community because new families are made every day and circumstances in people's lives bring some to seek support for the first time. We have also set new priorities to ensure more of our children have the best chance for a healthy, successful life.

## From Learning to Read to Reading to Learn

Third Grade is a watershed moment in reading and learning. Until third grade, children are learning how to master reading. After third grade, reading is the primary tool that enables children to learn all other subjects and, therefore, supports educational success and a good life after graduation.

**1 in 3 children**  
in our region live in poverty

**1 in 4 children**  
in our region are not reading  
at grade level by the 3rd grade

## Conclusion

Our region has the financial, skill and knowledge capacity to create a more robust life for all in our region. The challenges to our children and families, our older adults and the organizations and programs that support their and all our well-being are considerable but not insurmountable. Our strongest future is best created and achieved together.

Financial well-being and success of our residents results from a combined effort of the business community, government, the human service and development organizations, and citizens at-large. Fortunately, the Greater Richmond and Petersburg region has a strong foundation in each area. Increasing our effectiveness together by improved planning,

focused goal-setting and clear action plans will make the best use of all our resources.

United Way continues to lead this effort through its strong ties to businesses, local governments and state agencies, regional organizers, associations and community leaders.

To learn more and join us, please visit [www.yourunitedway.org](http://www.yourunitedway.org)  
Or contact United Way at [sjohnsononeil@yourunitedway.org](mailto:sjohnsononeil@yourunitedway.org) or by phone at 804-771-5827



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