



Howard County Self-Sufficiency Indicators, 2019

Highlights

The *ACS 2019 Self-Sufficiency Indicators Report* provides information to inform the Howard County community about our neighbors and colleagues whose economic stability is at risk and to contribute to data-driven public policy discussion and development. 2019 refers to Fiscal Year '19: July '18-June '19.

Financial Indicators

About 24,000 Howard County households are living on an income of \$60,000 or less, 22% of all households. A single adult with two school-age children needs to earn more than that – \$68,373 (\$32.37 per hour) – to be self-sufficient.

Housing Indicators

About 700 eligible homeless households called the homeless emergency hotline; only 265 households were referred for services. Further, the households referred for services may have called during 2019.

Fewer homeless households are receiving case management than in recent years. This may be a result of fact that the percent of those served who need intensive services has increased over the past few years as a result of recent prioritization of vulnerable populations and increased requirements for those receiving rehousing services.

Eviction or notice of eviction resulted in about 1,000 renters losing their homes. About 340 households received one-time eviction prevention grants from Community Action Council, the County's major – but not only – source of such funds for renter households facing eviction.

There are no affordable apartments in the County for about 6,500 households. The shortage is particularly acute for those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$60,000 and for seniors with incomes below \$30,000.

About 4 in 10 County renters are paying more than 1/3 of their income on rent, which is considered by HUD to be “rent burdened”. Half of these are paying more than half of their income on rent.

The Howard County Housing Commission estimates that it will take 4 to 6 years to provide Housing Choice Vouchers to everyone currently on the waiting list.

During the past year, the waiting list has been reviewed by the Housing Commission, and households who couldn't be contacted or were no longer interested were removed. Each of the 776 remaining households is actively waiting for a voucher, and the list is closed to new households.

Food Indicators

In 2019, the Food Bank hit a milestone, distributing over a million pounds of food. The food went to about 33,000 people, more than 10 percent of Howard County's population.

The percent of students receiving Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) continues to inch up. In the 2018-19 school year, 22.5 percent of students received free or reduced-price meals.

In 2017, Howard County had about 20,000 food insecure individuals, including 9,000 children. These individuals have limited or uncertain ability to acquire nutritious foods without resorting to emergency food supplies. More than half of them are not eligible for government food assistance.

Child Care Indicators

It costs most then \$10,000 a year for center-based or family-based child care for preschoolers of any age. Center-based child care for infants (0-23 months) costs almost \$19,000 a year, up from \$11,000 in 2012. Family-based care for infants costs \$13,000.

The number of families receiving child care subsidies increased to 343 from 260 in FY 2019. The state doubled the family income eligibility for subsidies for 2019.

Health Care Indicators

Among Howard County residents earning less than \$50,000 a year, 83% had health care coverage in 2016. Among adults with higher earnings, 96% had coverage.

Among Howard County residents earning less than \$50,000 a year, 14% had last visited a dentist more than two years ago. Among those with higher earnings, 6% had last visited a dentist more than two years ago.

This report is available at www.acshoco.org under Resources.
Comments and inquiries should be directed to:
ACS Executive Director Joan Driessen.
Joan.Driessen@acshoco.org; 410.715.9545