Association of Community Services

The mission of ACS is to improve the quality of life in Howard County by strengthening the nonprofit community.

ACS has been serving Howard County since 1963. With over 120 member organizations and two dozen community advocates our programming is designed to:

- **Advocate**: increase the strength, impact, and collective voice of member organizations.
- **Connect**: convene community leaders to engage and collaborate, share best practices, and form partnerships to serve the community.
- **Strengthen**: help nonprofits to deliver services more effectively through mentoring, education, and training experiences.

Additionally, ACS was proud to lead the effort to develop, and now manages the NonProfit Collaborative (NPC). Opened in March of 2017 through a public-private partnership, the NPC

- improves access to services for residents in need
- fosters innovative collaborations to better serve our community
- provides operating efficiencies by sharing space and resources

Please visit the ACS website at [www.acshoco.org](http://www.acshoco.org) to get a better sense of the wide range of programs and activities in which we are engaged.

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The Association of Community Services (ACS) wishes to thank those in Howard County (HC) agencies who provided data for this report. Without you, we could never have prepared this report.

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This FY 2022 Self-Sufficiency Indicators Report was prepared on behalf of the ACS Public Policy Committee by Laura Salganik, ACS Community Advocate. We would like to acknowledge the insightful comments provided by Dana Davenport, ACS Policy Associate, and Jackie Eng, ACS Community Advocate, and Thunder Grafix, Ltd. for the graphic design of this report.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Association of Community Services (ACS) presents this report to contribute to data-informed public policies that lead to effective use of community resources to resolve economic instability. When interpreting the indicators, it is important to keep in mind that there are complex factors that underlie them. It is particularly critical to recognize that indicators about human services programs reflect availability of funds, workings of systems to distribute and administer the funds, and individuals’ choices about whether to participate, not only the needs of the community. Each of these in turn reflects multiple aspects of our larger society, including economic inequality and systemic racism.

This Executive Summary combines material from the FY 2021 ACS Self-Sufficiency Indicator Report and the updated information in this report.

Financial Self-Sufficiency

Families in Howard County who have any children in the household need at least $75,000 (60 percent of Howard County median income) to meet basic needs—e.g., housing, food, healthcare, childcare, transportation—without public or private assistance. And many families need more than $75,000 to meet basic needs. For example, in 2020 a family of one adult and one infant needed $81,000, a family of one adult and two school-age children needed $88,000, and a family of two adults, one infant, and one preschooler needed $115,000. A small number of these families, particularly families with no childcare expenses, could meet their basic needs with $75,000 or less income.

In Howard County, there are about 16,000 families whose incomes are below $75,000, and 10,000 whose incomes are below $50,000 in 2020. Many of these families have incomes that are too high for them to qualify for financial assistance such as Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Demographics

The county population in 2020 was 332,317, 16 percent higher than in 2010. During this period, the percent of the population aged 65 and older grew by 47 percent, and the percent who are school-age children decreased by 8 percent.

Asian/Pacific Islander residents comprised 20 percent of the population, Black/African American residents were 19 percent, Hispanic/Latino residents were 8 percent, Native American residents were .1 percent, and White residents were 47 percent. Five percent of residents identified with two or more racial groups.

Compared to their percentage in the overall population, the percentage of White residents is higher among those 65 and older and lower among those 19 and younger.

Between 2010 and 2020, the Asian/Pacific Islander population grew by 60 percent, the Black/African American population grew by 30 percent, and the Hispanic/Latino population grew by 64 percent. The White population declined by 9 percent. The population that identified with two or more races tripled.

While racial and ethnic diversity is clearly increasing, the pattern is different in different areas of the county. The Cooksville area stands out for having the highest percent of residents who are White: 78 percent. Laurel and Columbia had the highest percentage of residents who were Black/African American, 30 and 27 percent respectively. Laurel had the highest percentage of residents who were Hispanic/Latino, 13 percent; and Ellicott City had the highest percentage of residents who were Asian, 31 percent. The Elkridge area most closely mirrors the racial and ethnic diversity seen in the total county population.

Income and Income Inequality

In 2020, the median household income in Howard County was
$124,042, which was 40 percent higher than the state and nearly double the national median incomes. About a quarter of Howard County households earned less than $75,000.

In 2020, the median income was 47 percent higher for Asian households, 38 percent higher for White households, and 12 percent higher for Hispanic/Latino households than the median income for Black/African American households. Men’s median earnings for full-time work ($96,834) were 30 percent higher than women’s ($74,484).

There are signs that income inequality is increasing. In 2010, the median income of those whose income is in the highest 20 percent was 9.3 times the median income of those in the lowest 20 percent. By 2020, that difference had increased with the median income for the highest group 11.2 times the median income for the lowest.

Income is not distributed evenly in the county. For example, in the 2020-2021 school year, there were 10 elementary schools with 8 percent or fewer of their students participating in Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs) and 8 elementary schools with 55 percent or greater of their students participating in FARMs.

Poverty
In 2020, there were 16,336 residents in Howard County, including 4,388 children, who were living below the federal poverty level. The overall poverty rate was 5.1 percent, and the childhood poverty rate was 5.7 percent.

Among county residents living in poverty, Asian/Pacific Islander residents constituted 19 percent, Black/African American residents 40 percent, Hispanic/Latino residents 8 percent, residents who identify with two or more races 5 percent, and White residents 29 percent.

When comparing experiences of poverty among racial/ethnic groups in the county, Asian residents and Hispanic/Latino residents were approximately half as likely to live in poverty than Black/African American residents; White residents were one-third as likely to live in poverty than Black/African American residents. In 2020, 2.4% of children in married families and 20.2% of children in single-mother families lived in poverty.

Participation in Self-Sufficiency Support Programs
Disparities in household income and the percentage living in poverty among different racial/ethnic groups in the county were reflected in the participation in programs for those struggling with self-sufficiency in Fiscal Year 2022.

Asian residents were consistently a lower percentage of program participants than their percentage among those living in poverty. The same was true for White participants but to a lesser extent. Black/African American residents consistently were a higher percentage of program participants than their percentage among those living in poverty. For some programs, Hispanic/Latino participants were a higher percentage than their percentage among those living in poverty, and for other programs it was lower. SNAP was the program in which the racial and ethnic diversity most closely mirrored the diversity of the residents living in poverty.

Pandemic Impacts and Continuing Needs
Fiscal Year 2021 began at the height of the pandemic. By the end of that fiscal year, June 2021, the unemployment rate had come down from its earlier peak of 8.4 to 3.9 percent, but was still higher than the pre-pandemic February 2020 rate of 3.1 percent. During FY 2021, many self-sufficiency indicators showed both increased hardships for already economically vulnerable county residents and the impact of the many efforts to alleviate the hardships.

In FY 2022, although the indicators didn’t show large increases compared to FY 2021 and some showed improvements, most continued to show that the pandemic is still negatively affecting county residents financially and that the long-standing needs shown in the FY 2019 indicators, the last complete year before the pandemic, remain.

With the eviction moratorium expiring on August 15, 2021, the number of evictions doubled from 143 in FY 2021 to 285 in FY 2022, while still being much lower than 515, the number in FY 2019. The number of households facing eviction and receiving eviction prevention grants from the Community Action Council continued to rise but dropped off in the second half of FY 2022 as federal funds for housing grants were much more limited. Disbursement of home energy assistance grants continued at pandemic levels, whereas hotline calls to the homelessness Coordinated Entry System continued to decline as they had in FY 2021.

Participation in TCA, SNAP, and the number of pounds of food distributed by the Howard County Food Bank increased sharply after the onset of the pandemic. In FY 2022, the number of households receiving TCA declined compared to FY 2021, but was higher than before the pandemic in FY 2019. The number of households who received SNAP benefits continued to increase; in FY 2022, it was 39 percent higher than in FY 2019. In FY 2022, SNAP participation was lower at the end of the year (June 2022) than mid-year (December 2022), but still above participation before the pandemic, in December 2019.
Childcare programs were still impacted by the pandemic as well. Head Start enrollment increased over the course of FY 2021 but still was below the capacity associated with the opening of the Bauder Center. Child Care Scholarships, which rose sharply in 2019-2020 after the state increased the eligibility income limit and the scholarship amount, declined in 2020-2021 and did not rebound in 2021-2022. FY 2022 was a year in which many factors that affect indicators – such as needs of residents, resources, and how administrative systems operate – were different from their levels both before and during the pandemic. The eviction moratorium ended in the early months of FY 2022. Eviction prevention assistance declined, but it was still much higher than before the pandemic in FY 2019. In addition, both pandemic-related SNAP supplemental benefits and the moratorium on Medicaid recertification continued throughout FY 2022. The SNAP supplements ended in March 2023, and Medicaid recertification reviews will begin in the spring of 2023 and are required to be completed within a year. How these pandemic-related benefits affected the FY 2022 indicators is unknown, as is the future impact of the changes in FY 2023.

**Rental Housing Shortage**

In 2022, there were no affordable apartments in the county for about 7,567 households. The shortage was particularly acute for those with annual incomes between $30,000 and $50,000 and for seniors with incomes below $30,000. The overall shortage had grown by about 1,000 units since 2018. While the number of units increased, the need for affordable housing grew at a faster rate.

The number of units available to renters from Howard County Housing Commission has stayed the same since FY 2019.

**Housing Cost Burden**

In 2020, 45 percent of rental households were cost burdened – spending more than 30 percent of income on rent – and 23 percent of households were severely cost burdened – spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent. The percentage who were severely cost-burdened rose 33 percent since 2010, when it was 17 percent.

Twenty-two percent of homeowners paid more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs in 2020, down from 35 percent in 2010. Despite the decline, there were nearly 14,000 homeowners who were cost-burdened, with 51 percent of them having an annual household income lower than $75,000.

**Cost of Childcare**

It cost more than $11,000 a year for center-based or family-based childcare for preschoolers of any age. Center-based childcare for infants (0-23 months) was $21,676 a year, up from $16,000 in 2012. Family-based care for infants was $1,500 a year. A worker earning the minimum-wage with an infant child would have needed to work at least 35 hours a week just to pay for center-based childcare. On average, a Howard County teacher would have needed to spend 28 percent of their salary on childcare for an infant.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Acknowledgements** .......................................................... 1
- **Executive Summary** ......................................................... 3
- **Table of Contents** .......................................................... 7
- **Introduction** ........................................................................ 9
- **Financial Indicators** ............................................................ 10
  - Monthly Unemployment Rate .............................................. 10
  - Temporary Cash Assistance .................................................. 10
  - Temporary Cash Assistance Households ............................... 11
  - Temporary Cash Assistance Households by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 11
- **Demographics and poverty indicators** .................................... 12
  - Age and Poverty Status of Population by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 12
- **Housing Indicators** ............................................................... 13
  - Coordinated Entry System: Calls, Case Management, and Exits .................................................. 13
  - Coordinated Entry System Services by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 14
  - Point-in-Time Count (Sheltered Only) by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 15
  - Children Experiencing Homelessness by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 15
  - HCPSS Students Experiencing Homelessness, by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 16
  - Eviction Filings and Evictions Performed ........................................ 16
  - Community Action Council Eviction Prevention Grants .................................................. 17
  - Community Action Council Eviction Prevention Grants, Six-Month Periods .................................................. 17
  - Average Size of CAC Eviction Prevention Assistance, Six-Month Periods .................................................. 18
  - Community Action Council Eviction Prevention Grants by Racial and Ethnic Identity, .................................................. 18
  - Foreclosure Filings ............................................................... 19
  - Moderate Income Rental Housing Units (MIHU) .................................................. 19
  - Housing Commission Residential Rental Units .................................................. 20
  - Housing Choice Voucher Program Rental Units and Waiting List Households .................................................. 20
  - Housing Choice Voucher Program by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 21
  - Home Energy Assistance Grants and Funding .................................................. 21
- **Food Indicators** ................................................................. 23
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation .................................................. 23
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation, Six-Month Periods .................................................. 24
  - Households Participating in SNAP by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 24
  - Women Infant and Children (WIC) Program Average Monthly Enrollment .................................................. 25
  - Howard County Food Bank Distribution ........................................ 26
  - Pounds of Food Distributed by the Howard County Food Bank .................................................. 26
  - Food Bank Participants by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 27
- **Childhood Indicators** ............................................................ 28
  - Child Care Scholarship Program .................................................. 28
  - Head Start Enrollment ......................................................... 28
  - Head Start Student Enrollment by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 29
  - HCPSS Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) .................................................. 29
  - Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity .................................................. 30
  - FARMS Participation by Racial and Ethnic Identity .................................................. 31
- **Health and Wellness Indicators** .................................................. 32
  - Medicaid Enrollment ......................................................... 32
  - Howard County General Hospital Uncompensated Care .................................................. 32
- **Appendix A: Whiteness Norms** .................................................. 33
- **Appendix B: Data Disaggregation** .................................................. 36
T his thirteenth annual Association of Community Services (ACS) Self-Sufficiency Indicator Report updates the Howard County community about the experiences of our neighbors living with the risks and realities of economic instability. The indicators in this report are from the following sectors that have been in past reports: childcare, financial, food, health, and housing. Unlike past years, however, it does not include a range of additional information. Instead, this report is designed as a companion document to the Self-Sufficiency Indicators Report for FY 2021, which includes background about each of the indicators as well as about the social and economic context in Howard County.

The report is a tool for data-informed assessments of the efficacy of our systems and policies. Its goal is to contribute to data-informed public policies that lead to effective use of community resources to resolve economic instability.

It is impossible to report about self-sufficiency in the county in Fiscal Year 2021 (July 2021-June 2022) without putting it into the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the year began, the county was over a year into the pandemic. As FY 2022 progressed and this report shows, many indicators more closely resembled pre-pandemic levels of need. But others continued to climb, even above pandemic levels.

When interpreting the indicators, it is important to keep in mind that here are complex factors that underlie the measures, both year-to-year or long-term trend patterns, in every step from deciding what data to collect through analysis and reporting. It is critical to recognize that indicators about human services programs reflect availability of funds, workings of systems to distribute and administer the funds, and individuals’ choices about whether to participate, not only the needs of residents. Each of these in turn reflects multiple factors including the particular context of FY 2022, a year when the impact of the pandemic on residents’ lives evolved, and some but not all pandemic-related resources remained in place.

One of these factors is systemic racism. Centuries of racism and whiteness norms have shaped and continue to shape not only our laws, but our historical narratives, institutional structures, and widespread assumptions about all forms of social and individual expression. Because systemic racism has created and perpetuates inequities in our community that continue to this day, many indicators in this report are disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Disaggregation helps make the outcomes and experiences of different racial and ethnic groups across our systems more visible. ACS is dedicated to continually growing using an Anti-Racism/ Anti-Oppression framework and analysis as we commit ourselves to doing our part to eliminate these disparities.

Sharing this information is a key element in this work. As before, ACS welcomes feedback and collaboration as the organization continues to be intentional about what data is collected and how it is used to move forward toward racial equity. Unless otherwise noted, residents who are reported as identifying as White do not identify as Hispanic. Appendix B provides additional information about the race and ethnicity categories used for this report.

Readers are encouraged to join ACS in further exploring the data and the stories they tell about the progress our community is making – or not making – toward ensuring the economic stability of our neighbors who are experience vulnerabilities due to our systems and structures.

* “Whiteness norms” is a term coming into wider use in policy discussions about how racism has a pervasive influence on all aspects of life. Appendix A provides more information about its meaning.
The unemployment rate in June 2022 was 3.9 percent, down from 8.4 percent in May 2020 but slightly higher than the rate in February 2020 when it was 3.1 percent, the last month before pandemic shutdowns. (Figure 1)

The monthly average of households participating in Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) dropped from 474 in FY 2021 to 405 in FY 2022. (Figure 2)
Similar to the pattern in FY 2021, the number of households participating in TCA in FY 2022 was higher in December than in June, and the June number was only slightly higher than the number in December 2019, before the pandemic. (Figure 3)

In May 2022, Asian American/Pacific Islander households constituted 3 percent of the households participating in TCA, Black/African American households were 72 percent, Hispanic/Latino households were 5 percent, and White households were 13 percent. The racial and ethnic identity of 7 percent of households was unspecified. (Figure 4)
The racial and ethnic composition of residents who are 65 and older, those who are 19 and under, and those who have incomes below the poverty level is different from the total county population. Compared to their percentage in the overall population (47 percent), the percentage of White residents is higher among those 65 and older (66 percent) and lower among those 19 and younger (36 percent).

The percentage of Asian and Hispanic/Latino residents, and residents of two or more races in the population whose incomes are below the poverty line is similar to their percentage in the population. In contrast, the percentage of residents living below the poverty line who are Black/African American (40 percent) is more than twice the percentage of all residents who are Black/African American (19 percent), and the percentage of residents living below the poverty line who are White (29 percent) is considerably lower than the percentage of all residents who are White (47 percent). (Figure 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age and Poverty Status of Population by Racial and Ethnic Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOWARD COUNTY, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income below poverty level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates
HOUSING INDICATORS

The number of eligible households who called the Coordinated Entry System (CES) for homelessness services in FY 2022 was 542, very similar to the number in FY 2021. Compared to FY 2021, the number of households receiving case management increased, although the average number in case management programs per month was stable.

The percent of those who exited case management into permanent housing was cut almost in half, from 65 percent in FY 2021 to 37 percent in FY 2022. This reflects not only the decline in the number of exits from case management programs into permanent housing from 194 in FY 2021 to 117 in FY 2022, but also a large increase in the number of exits from case management programs overall, from 290 to 370. Changing the status of households who had been in programs but not participated over a longer-than-usual time period to exits could be one factor in the large increase in exits. (Table 1)

### Coordinated Entry System: Calls, Case Management, and Exits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible households that called CES</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals from waiting list</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In programs during the year</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of households in case management in programs per month</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exits from Case Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exits from case management in permanent housing</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual percent to permanent housing</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return Rate: Percent of households who entered case management two years ago, exited to permanent housing and re-entered into the homeless system</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average days homelessness for exits to Permanent Housing (excludes domestic violence programs)</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Source: Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services
People who identify as Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, or Native American made 12 or fewer calls to the CES. There were 102 calls from White residents and 350 from Black/African American residents. Among the households who exited to permanent housing in FY 2022, 1 identified as Asian American/Pacific Islander, 88 as Black/African American, 1 as Hispanic/Latino, and 25 as White. (Figure 6)
Fiscal Year 2022

The number of sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness identified in the Point-in-Time Count increased from 82 in FY 2021 to 143 FY 2022. The number who identify as Black/African American, was 58 in FY 2020, 44 in FY 2021 and 96 in FY 2022. (Figure 7) In addition, 22 unsheltered individuals were counted in 2022: 8 identified as Black/African American, 12 as White, and 1 each as AAPI, Native American, and Hispanic. There was no unsheltered count in 2021, and 70 unsheltered individuals were counted in 2020.

In school year, 2021-22, 486 Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) students experienced homelessness, similar to the number during the most recent pre-pandemic year, 2018-19. An additional 155 children, primarily HCPSS students’ siblings, were also identified, resulting in a total of 641 children experiencing homelessness. (Figure 8)
White students constituted 32 percent of HCPSS enrollment; in contrast, they are only 7 percent of those who experienced homelessness during the 2021-22 school year. Similarly, Asian students were 23 percent of enrollment and 4 percent of those experiencing homelessness. In contrast, students who are Black/African American were 25 percent of the enrollment and 61 percent of those experiencing homelessness and Hispanic/Latino students were 13 percent of enrollment and 19 percent of those who experienced homelessness. (Figure 9)
After dropping to 143 in FY 2021, there were 285 evictions in FY 2022, which was still lower than any fiscal year number of evictions since at least 2015 and about half the number of evictions during the peak year of FY 2019. The number of warrants of restitution filed also rose but remained considerably lower than in previous years. Maryland’s eviction moratorium expired in early FY 2022, on August 15, 2021. (Figure 10) From July to December, the first half of FY 2023, there were 253 evictions and 3,891 warrants received, a pace similar to FY 2019.

Community Action Council awarded 730 eviction grants in FY 2022, up from 620 in FY 2021. (Figure 11)

The number of eviction prevention grants continued their pandemic-related increase through the first half of FY 2022 when the number reached 573, and then declined to 240 as pandemic-related funding dropped dramatically. (Figure 12)
The average size of eviction prevention grants to renters, which in the years between 2010 and 2022 ranged from $500 to $900, shot up with the arrival of pandemic-related funds, peaking at $7,522 in the second half of FY 2021. The average grant size remained over $7,000 in the first half of FY 2022 and then declined by 40 percent to $4,312 in the second half, January-June 2022. Taken together, the decline in both the number and size of grants reflect a drop in funding from $4,140,240 in July-December 2021 to $905,575 in January-June 2022.

In the first half of FY 2023 (July-December 2022), CAC’s eviction grant program increased compared to the previous six months (January-June 2022). There were 379 grants with an average size of $6,261, provided by funding of $2,315,894. However, as of January 12, 2023, the amount of available funding was only $208,590.

Grassroots, Luminus, the Howard County Housing Commission, Bridges to Housing Stability, Springboard, and Making Change also distributed pandemic-related rental assistance funds that came to the county. By the end of FY 2022, rental assistance had been provided to about 2,500 households. Households with three persons were eligible for aid if their income was $80,500 a year or less.
In FY 2022, 4 percent of the households receiving eviction prevention grants from Community Action Council were to households identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander, 65 percent were to households identifying as Black/African American, 10 percent were to households identifying as Hispanic/Latino, fewer than 1 percent were to households identifying as Native American, 10 percent were to households identifying as White. Two percent were to households who identified with “Other” for race and 3 percent were unspecified. (Figure 14)

![Foreclosure Filings](image)

*Figure 15 Source: Howard County Circuit Court

In FY 2022, there were 87 mortgage foreclosures, up from 22 in FY 2021, but that was only about a third the number in FY 2020, 241. Between FY 2013 and FY 2021, the number of foreclosures had been steadily decreasing. (Figure 15)

![Moderate Income Rental Housing Units (MIHU)](image)

*Figure 16 Source: Howard County Department of Housing and Community Development

The number of Moderate Income Rental Housing Units (MIHUs) was relatively stable in FY 2022 compared to FY 2021. (Figure 16)
There were about 100 more Housing Choice Voucher Rental Units leased in FY 2022 (958) compared to FY 2021 (853). The waiting list, which remained closed, declined from 656 to 439. (Figure 18)
In FY 2022, 2 percent of the households in the Housing Choice Voucher program identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 61 percent as Black/African American, 4 percent as Hispanic/Latino, 35 percent as White, and 2 percent with another race. Hispanic households are also included in the other racial group counts. (Figure 19)

The number of home energy assistance grants provided by Community Action Council in FY 2022 increased slightly to 5,870 compared to FY 2021 when CAC provided 5,654 grants. Households may receive more than one grant during the year. In FY 2021, 2,980 households received grants; the number was 2,555 in FY 2022. (Figure 20)
**Housing Subsidy Support Program**

There were 22 Housing Subsidy Support Program (HSSP) vouchers at the end of FY 2022, one fewer than in FY 2021 because of rent increases combined with level funding.
Food Insecurity

Howard County is one of Maryland’s richest counties with a 2020 median income of $124,042, but being the richest county does not stop food insecurity. Feeding America estimates that 23,390 individuals living in the county, including 4,900 children, faced food insecurity in 2020. Over half, 54 percent, of those who are food insecure, including 33 percent of the children, had incomes above cutoff for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).1

1. Food Insecurity in Howard County  
https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2019/overall/maryland/county/howard  
https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/child/maryland/county/howard

In FY 2022, the number of households and individuals participating in SNAP continued to climb although not as steeply as in FY 2021. In FY 2022, there was a monthly average of 22,843 individuals and 11,924 households participating in the program. Compared to FY 2019, the most recent full pre-pandemic year, the number of households participating in SNAP increased 39 percent, and the number of individuals increased 47 percent. (Figure 21)
Household SNAP participation in December 2021 exceeded the number of participants in July 2020. In June 2022, the number dropped, but was higher than the number in December 2019. (Figure 22)

The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 terminates emergency allotments (supplements) after the issuance of February 2023 benefits. This may reduce household SNAP allotments starting March 2023 as aligned with pre-pandemic income guidelines.

In May 2022, 12 percent of the households participating in SNAP identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 48 percent as Black/African American, 7 percent as Hispanic/Latino, and 20 percent as White. The racial/ethnic identity of 13 percent of the households is not known. (Figure 23)
The average monthly enrollment in Women Infant and Children (WIC) program increased from 3,800 in FY 2021 to 3,966 in FY 2022. In Fiscal Year 2022, 12 percent of WIC participants were Asian, 32 percent were Black/African American, 4 percent identified with two or more races, and 51 percent were White. Further, 45 percent were Hispanic/Latino with their racial group is unknown. Given Howard County’s population, it is likely that almost all of them were in the White race category, and thus, fewer than 10 percent of WIC participants were non-Hispanic White women, infants, and children. (Figure 24)
The number of pounds of food distributed by the CAC Howard County Food Bank dropped by 34 percent, from 1,610,543 in FY 2021 to 1,058,760 in FY 2022. At the same time, the number of services (visits to the Food Bank) also declined, but only by 11 percent from 52,276 in FY 2021 to 46,315 in FY 2022. As a result, the average number of pounds of food per visit that clients received dropped from 31 to 23. (Figure 25)

These changes in FY 2022 were likely related to a number of factors, including discontinuing some pandemic-related special projects that distributed large quantities of food en masse without tracking individual recipients, the return to the marketplace model that allowed individuals to select items depending on their household needs, and Food Bank efforts to enable more clients to apply for and receive SNAP benefits.
Dividing the fiscal years in half, the number of pounds of food distributed by the Food Bank increased steadily from the first half of FY 2020 through the first half of FY 2021. Beginning in the second half of FY 2021, the number of pounds dropped to the level of the first half of FY 2020 and remained at that level through the second half of FY 2022. (Figure 26)

Although the number of pounds of food distributed by the food bank in FY 2022 was similar to the months preceding the pandemic, additional efforts to distribute food that were established as a result of the pandemic continued to operate. For example, Columbia Community Care distributed food to close to 400 households each week, and the number did not decline between 2021 and 2022.

**Figure 27 Source: Howard County Department of Social Services**

In Fiscal Year 2022, 7 percent of food bank clients (individuals who received food) identified as Asian American/Pacific Islander, 47 percent as Black/African American, 22 percent as Hispanic/Latino, 1 percent as Native American, 4 percent identified with two or more races, 14 percent as White, and 5 percent were listed as Other or Unspecified. (Figure 27)
After a pandemic-related drop in FY 2021, the number of Child Care Scholarships remained stable from FY 2021 to FY 2022. There were 652 children and 453 families who received Child Care Scholarship in FY 2022. (Figure 28)

After dropping in FY 2022, Head Start enrollment increased from 283 in FY 2021 to 325 in FY 2022, still below capacity, which is 362. (Figure 29)
Eight percent of the children enrolled in Head Start were Asian American/Pacific Islander, 63 percent were Black/African American, 16 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 5 percent were White, 4 percent identified with two or races, and 3 percent were Other or Unspecified. (Figure 30)

The number and percentage of students who participate in the Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs) program continued its gradual increase in the 2021-22 school year, as it has at least since the 2010-2011 school year. In the 2021-22 year, 15,588 students participated in the program, 26.9 percent of those enrolled in Howard County public schools. (Figure 31)
The 7,704 students who identify as Hispanic/Latino utilize the FARMS program at the highest rate, 53 percent. Only 6 percent of the 18,373 students who identify as White participate in FARMS. (Figure 32)
Among FARMs participants, 12 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander students, 46 percent were Black/African American students, 30 percent were Hispanic/Latino students, fewer than 1 percent were Native American students, and 9 percent were White students. Racial and ethnic identity was not specified for 5 percent of the students. Among students enrolled in HCPSS, 24 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, 25 percent were Black/African American, 13 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 6 percent were two or more races, 32 percent were White, and fewer than 1 percent were in the Other category. (Figure 33)
Medicaid enrollment continued to climb, increasing 10 percent from 51,854 in FY 2021 to 57,007 in FY 2022. Compared to FY 2019 when there were 45,972 residents enrolled in Medicaid, FY 2022 enrollment is a 24 percent increase. These increases must be understood in the context of the federal government’s pandemic suspension of redeterminations or recertification, meaning that enrollees did not have to re-submit eligibility information to maintain Medicaid enrollment for the duration of the federal public health emergency due to COVID-19. The suspension of redeterminations has been extended to spring 2023. (Figure 34)

At Howard County General Hospital, uncompensated care accounted for $12,722,135 in Fiscal Year 2022, down $3 million from Fiscal Year 2020. (Figure 35)
APPENDIX A: WHITENESS NORMS

ACS formed a Community of Practice for Racial Equity (CPRE) in 2021 comprised of executive directors of Howard County nonprofits and members of the ACS Racial Equity Team. As part of its work, the curator and facilitator of the CPRE, Adar Ayira of Ayira Core Concepts, LLC, shared the following definitions as part of the groups’ ongoing education in and practice of racial equity.

Definitions

The terms and definitions are from a variety of Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression resources, including Baltimore Racial Justice Action, among others, as presented by Ayira Core Concepts, LLC to the ACS Community of Practice for Racial Equity.

Whiteness Norms or White Normativity are those cultural and societal assumptions, policies, and practices that promote and take for granted whiteness as “natural” and “right.” They are promoted and sustained in societal and institutional structures, policies, practices, cultural assumptions, historical narratives, laws, etc., even when attempting to be attentive to those factors.

White Supremacy Culture refers to the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior, cultural norms, practices, and ways of functioning that maintain the dominance of the racial group characterized as white. White supremacy culture operates as unacknowledged “mainstream” culture in the United States. This may be a “hot button” term because white supremacy is often associated with extremist groups. However, white supremacy covers a broader terrain; it also refers to normalized beliefs that are pervasive in our society. (Baltimore Racial Justice Action www.Bmoreantracist.org).

Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression (ARAO) is an analysis and framework centering U.S. history – policies, laws, culture, etc. – in understanding past and current racialized disparities, as well as current ways in which racism and white supremacy continue to be centered in U.S. policies, laws, culture—and in our institutions. Its strategies are centered more on transformational (expanding and reshaping power and function, opportunities, and access outside of what is considered “mainstream” or “the norm”) than transactional (expanding presence) impact (Ayira Core Concepts, LLC, www.ayiracoreconcepts.com).

Whiteness Norms Explored and Explained

Often, when talking about racism and anti-racism, we think of being inclusive of people who have historically been and are often presently excluded. More specifically, we need to actively rethink history beyond White, European perspectives to fully include people who are not White and those with non-European ancestry as full participants in history and culture.

Utilizing an Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression analysis means going deeper to surface how both whiteness norms (or white normativity) and white supremacy implicitly and explicitly tell us what group holds power, what and who is often seen as the “default” for how things should be, what and who should be valued, how one should behave, how structures should be set up, etc. It is also an acknowledgement that anyone – whether white or not, can uphold whiteness norms and white supremacy because we are all educated and socialized into them to maintain our systems and structures as they presently exist.

We recommend that you explore Tema Okun's website on White Supremacy Culture and the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s topics page that explains origins and impacts of whiteness. One aspect of ARAO analysis that inevitably emerges as soon as the work is presented in writing is capitalization of names of racial and ethnic groups. This report capitalizes the names of all groups. ACS recognizes this is an ongoing discussion and learning about the racial dynamics involved with the style selected.

Whiteness Norms and Interpreting Data

When it comes to data, whiteness norms work to center whiteness and white people as the reference point for decisions about how to collect, analyze, and report data, as well as in the meaning we make from data that give us narratives (or explanations) about how outcomes come to be and inform the policy decisions we make. Recognizing that the field of data equity has expanded recently into all aspects of data science (We All Count: The Data Equity Framework. https://weallcount.com/), this discussion is limited to one aspect—narrative descriptions of data that are disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

Even though disaggregating data by race and ethnicity is an important step in challenging whiteness norms and white supremacy, it is possible and very easy to unintentionally rely on white supremacy ideas when analyzing and reporting this data. It is critically important to be attentive to which group is seen as the baseline (i.e., standard or reference point) to which the others are compared. For example,
Typically, data points for people who are White become both the standard to determine which groups are doing better or worse and, either explicitly or implicitly, the goal that all other groups should aim for. This decision results in a focus on the story of disadvantage. Additionally, whenever groups experience oppression at a higher percentage than their percentage in the population, there is another side in which other groups experience the outcome at or below their percentage in the population. Groups can also experience advantage and privilege at high or low percentages compared to their percentage in the population.

To illustrate the importance of the reference point selected, let's compare two ways of writing about poverty rates for different groups presented in the Poverty section of the chapter on Demographics.

**The first**, and most commonly used approach, is to focus on the poverty rate for Black/African American residents, noting how high it is in comparison to the rate for White residents. Here, the reference point is on the group that is the rate for White residents and the group considered “other” has a relatively high rate.

Black/African American residents are more likely to live below the poverty line than residents from other racial and ethnicity groups. The poverty rate for residents who are Black/African American is about twice the rate of any other racial/ethnic group, except for White residents where the rate for residents who are Black/African American is three times higher.

**The second**, which we use in the FY 2021 Self-Sufficiency Indicator Report (page 26)< focuses on the rates of White residents and notes how they are low relative to those of Black/African American residents. Here, the reference point is Black/African American residents' rate of experiencing poverty, and the other residents are compared to it and have a relatively low rate.

Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and White residents are less likely to live below the poverty line than Black/African American residents. Asian residents and Hispanic/Latino residents are approximately half as likely to live in poverty than Black/African American residents; White residents are a third as likely to live in poverty than Black/African American residents.

While both approaches are factually true, we must consider the messages they communicate. In the first, White residents are the baseline or default for how things “should be” and everyone who is not is an “other” and comparatively disadvantaged as well. Even as the phrasing above calls attention to the group experiencing significant negative disparities compared to the baseline reference point (White people), it can further add to perceptions that there is something “wrong” with a specific group because they are not having the same experience as people who are White. Furthermore, focusing only on the comparative disadvantage of the individuals in a group risks contributing to a narrative that ignores the social systems that to lead to the outcomes.

In the second, we shift the reference point to Black/African American residents and show how residents from the other racial and ethnic groups are comparatively advantaged. By highlighting how groups experience poverty in comparison to the group experiencing the highest rate of poverty, we create a narrative that invites readers to see privilege/relative advantage without overemphasizing which groups experience higher rates of oppression. In sum, the first approach emphasizes disadvantage and the second points to relative advantage.

Please note that we say relative advantage here to bring attention to the fact that just because certain groups are less likely to be living below the poverty line does not mean that they are not experiencing a difficult outcome as well. Put another way, recognizing that Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and White residents are less likely to experience poverty than Black/African American residents does not take away from the big picture that everyone in this data point is living in poverty.

It is important to note that this type of work around surfacing norms goes beyond race and ethnicity. In the same table about people living below the poverty line, for example, we can see how the poverty rate changes in relationship to educational attainment. It would be accurate to say, “People who did not graduate from high school are close to seven times more likely to live below the poverty line than people with a bachelor’s degree or higher.” At the same time, we can flip the narrative to surface assumptions such as “everyone has a college degree” or “if they would just get a degree, then they wouldn’t be in poverty,” and demonstrate comparison in a way that shows the advantages of some groups and the disadvantages of some groups. The shift would change that statement to something like: “In Howard County, people with a bachelor’s degree or higher are one seventh as likely to live below the poverty line than
people who did not graduate from high school.” This focuses on the advantages of having a bachelor’s degree rather than the disadvantages of not having one.

The shift in language explores inequities in a manner that tries to intentionally change which group is seen as the baseline (which calls attention to implicit and explicit biases) and highlight the relative advantage of one or more group(s) that is often invisible. The information is accurate both ways and expands the focus beyond people who are experiencing the worst outcomes. Again, we emphasize that a crucial component of the work of understanding whiteness norms and white supremacy with an Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression framework lies as much in the narratives about data—how the data are interpreted—as it lies within all of the aspects of gathering, analyzing, and sharing data.

This appendix is offered to help develop a greater context for reading data in the report, to give insight into the intentionality behind the contexts and narratives around the data, and to generate discussion about how racial advantage and disadvantage are built into social structures and systems that give us the outcomes reported here.
Data disaggregation is important to the Association of Community Services because identifying racial disparities can help to identify inequities in the community and make them more visible to policymakers. There are many ways data can be disaggregated – for example by gender status, age, or income – but this report focuses on disaggregated by racial and ethnic groups, based on definitions of the US Census Bureau and other government agencies.

The Census and federal programs ask individuals to identify with one or more racial group. Individuals also are asked separately whether they identify as Hispanic (in addition to one or more racial groups).

In this report, unless otherwise indicated, individuals reported as a member of a racial group do not identify as Hispanic. Individuals who are reported as Hispanic may identify with any racial group. In Howard County, almost all those who identify as Hispanic also identify as White.

Different programs use slightly different systems for reporting data, and this report uses the data as supplied by our providers. Data reported for Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders (always 0 or a very small number) was combined with data listed as Asian American/Pacific Islander (or AAPI). For data from the American Community Survey, the sample is too small to provide estimates for Native Americans and Pacific Islanders. The chapter on Demographics provides additional information about those who are Native American in the county.

For racial and ethnicity categories, we use the definitions adopted by the US Census. The following provides this information for the larger groups in the county.

- **Asian.** This is a very diverse group that includes those with origins in East Asia, South Asia or Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, and who may identify also, for example, as Chinese, South Korean, Indian, Pakistani, Lao, Hmong, or Vietnamese. Please note Americans with an origin of Western Asia such as Iran and Turkey are considered White.

- **Black or African American.** This is a diverse group that includes those with origins of Black African nations and who may identify also, for example, as African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, and Somali, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, Kenyan, Liberian, and Bahamian. Those with an origin of Northern Africa are considered White.

- **White.** This is a diverse group that includes those originating in Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa, including, for example, those may identify also, for example, as American, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Polish, French, Iranian, Slavic, Cajun, and Chaldean.

- **Hispanic or Latino.** The Census category Hispanic or Latino refers to people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. It includes those who may also identify as Mexican or Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Salvadorans, Dominicans, and Colombians. In some contexts, the terms Hispanic and Latino are distinguished from each other.
The digital version of this report and data infographics can be found at:
https://www.acshoco.org/self-sufficiency-indicators/

For questions about this Report and presentations on the data, contact us at:
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