

Community Profile

Cleveland Heights: A Diverse Mix, Then and Now

By Terry Lenahan

The earliest residents of the area that would become Cleveland Heights were primarily farmers and quarrymen. A notable exception was industrialist John D. Rockefeller, who purchased a “water cure” hotel in 1873. When the business failed, he turned the hotel into his summer home, Forest Hill. In 1938, his son donated this land to Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland for the development of Forest Hill Park.

The village of Cleveland Heights was incorporated in 1903. Residents who arrived in the early 20th century were among Cleveland's social elite, building large homes in the western portions of the village. Over the 20th century, Cleveland Heights became home to a diverse mixture of immigrants and people of different ethnic backgrounds. This neighborhood developed a high percentage of racially integrated neighborhoods; in 2000 (most recent available data), 53 percent of residents were White and 42 percent were Black.

Cleveland Heights is bounded by Cleveland to the west, East Cleveland to the north, University Heights and South Euclid to the east, and Shaker Heights, including Shaker Lakes Park, to the south. Forest Hills Park and Lakeview Cemetery are located on the western edge of Cleveland Heights. Its population peaked at 60,800 people in 1970; by 2006, the number declined to an estimated 47,500 residents. Between 1980 and 2006, the population decreased 16 percent, which was also the transitional suburbs' average decline, but was less than Cleveland's 21 percent decrease.

Cleveland Heights' 2007 Ohio Graduation Test¹ score was *below* the transitional suburbs' average, but the 2007 high school graduation rate was *above* the average. For persons 25 and over in 2000, the high school graduation rate was also above the transitional suburbs' average; the proportion with an Associate's degree or more was 55 percent, 23 percentage points higher than the average transitional suburb.

Nearly 11 percent of all Cleveland Heights residents lived *below* the poverty level in 2000, two percentage points higher than the transitional suburbs' average.² The proportion of residents 75 and over that lived below the poverty level was 17 percent, the same as in Cleveland and nearly twice the transitional suburban average.

Cleveland Heights' 2006 property and violent juvenile delinquency rates were both higher than the average transitional suburb. The property delinquency rate, 43 offenses per 1,000 juveniles 10 to 17, was also considerably higher than Cleveland's average of 29 per 1,000 juveniles.

The average death rates for all causes, heart disease, and cancer were lower than the transitional suburbs' average.

Nearly four of 10 Cleveland Heights residents rented their homes in 2000, higher than the transitional suburban average but below Cleveland's rate of 51.5 percent. The 2006 median home value was \$126,400, well above Cleveland's median of \$69,300 and slightly above the county median value of \$125,800.

A map of community resources and a data table for this suburb with comparisons to Cleveland, transitional suburbs, remaining suburbs, and Cuyahoga County can be found on our Website: www.CommunitySolutions.com. More information is available in our 2003-2005 *Social Indicators* series and the 2005-2008 *Social Indicators Updates*. The reports are available for free from our Website, as are previous *Planning & Action* Cleveland neighborhood and transitional suburban profiles. For more information, contact Terry Lenahan at (216) 781-2944, ext. 101, or e-mail at tlenahan@CommunitySolutions.com. History includes information gathered from *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, sponsored jointly by Case Western Reserve University and the Western Reserve Historical Society (<http://ech.cwru.edu>).



Terry Lenahan is a policy and planning associate on The Center for Community Solutions' Research team. She may be reached at tlenahan@CommunitySolutions.com.

Notes:

1. Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2007, students must pass all five parts of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) in order to receive high school diplomas.
2. 2000 poverty data are the most recent available. The percentage of all Cleveland Heights residents receiving Medicaid in 2006 was also higher than the transitional suburban average.