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Demographic profile of Cuyahoga County from the 2018 American Community Survey

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March 9, 2020



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In December 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau released data from the American Community Survey (ACS) covering five-year averages from 2014 to 2018. This report highlights demographic, social and economic findings from this data release for Cuyahoga County, Cleveland and its suburbs.

Total population

In 2014-2018, Cuyahoga County had 1,253,783 residents, just under a third lived (387,398) in Cleveland and 866,385 lived in the suburbs.

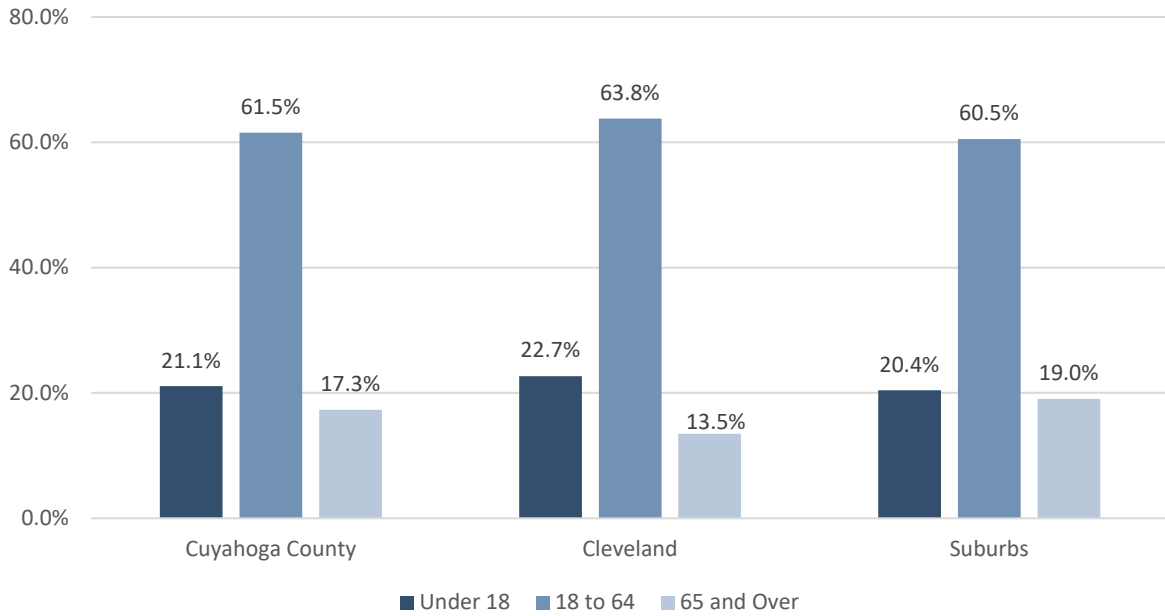
Age distribution

As shown in Figure 1, about one-fifth of county residents (265,000) were children under age 18, and three-fifths (772,000) were people between the ages of 18 and 64. It is notable that adults age 65 and older make up a smaller proportion (13.5 percent) in Cleveland than in the suburbs (19.0 percent). Analysis at the census tract level has shown that life expectancy is lower in some city neighborhoods than in many suburban ones, which may account for some of the difference.¹

¹ <https://www.communitysolutions.com/research/life-expectancy-race-ohio/>

Figure 1

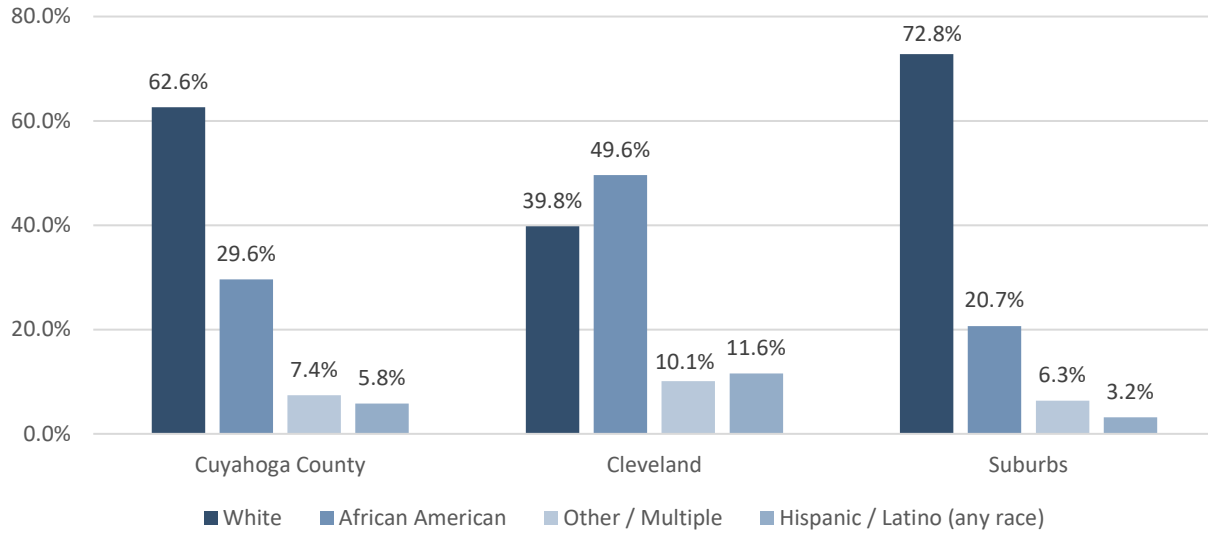
Population by Age Group, 2014-2018



Race and ethnicity

Sixty-three percent of county residents were white, 30 percent were African-American and 7 percent were 'other' or multiple races. The county remains deeply segregated, as African-Americans make up half of Cleveland residents but only one-fifth of suburbanites. Latinx people of any race made up 6 percent of the county, 12 percent of Cleveland and 3 percent of the suburbs.

Figure 2
Population by Race/Ethnicity
2014-2018



Family structure

Of the 300,000 family households in Cuyahoga County, almost two-thirds (64.2 percent) were headed by a married couple, one-quarter (27.8 percent) by a single woman and the remaining 8 percent by a single man (Figure 3-A). In Cleveland, nearly half (46.4 percent) are female-headed, compared to only one-fifth (20.9 percent) in the suburbs.

Among families with children under age 18, more than one-third (36.4 percent) in the county were female-headed, as were 60 percent in Cleveland (Figure 3B-).

Although not shown in the figures, 200,000 county residents lived alone, 75,000 of them in Cleveland.

Figure 3-A
All Families by Type, 2014-2018

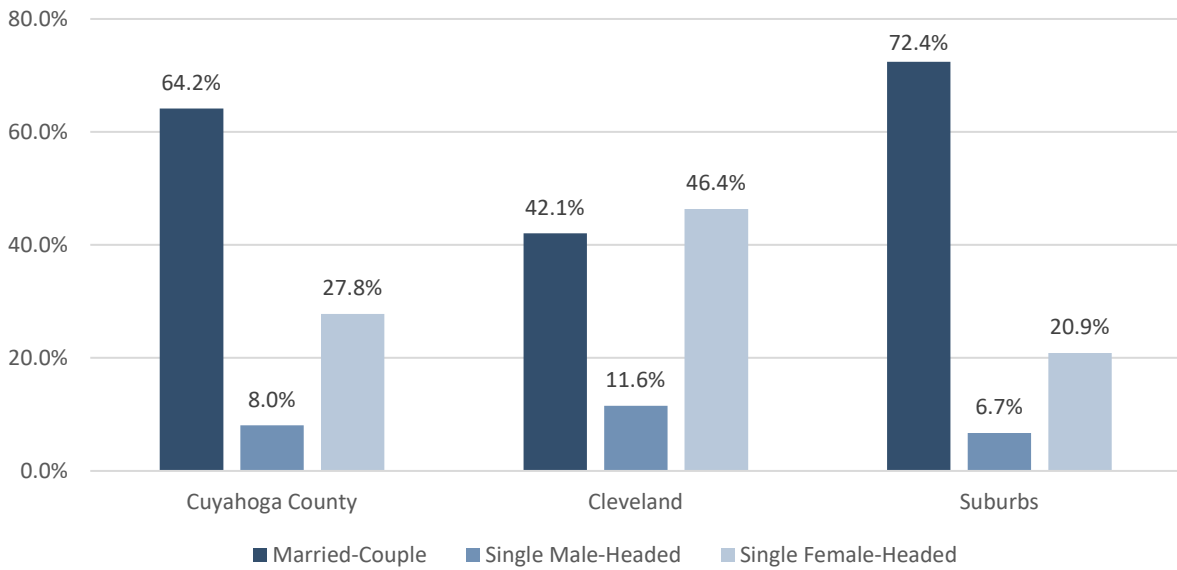
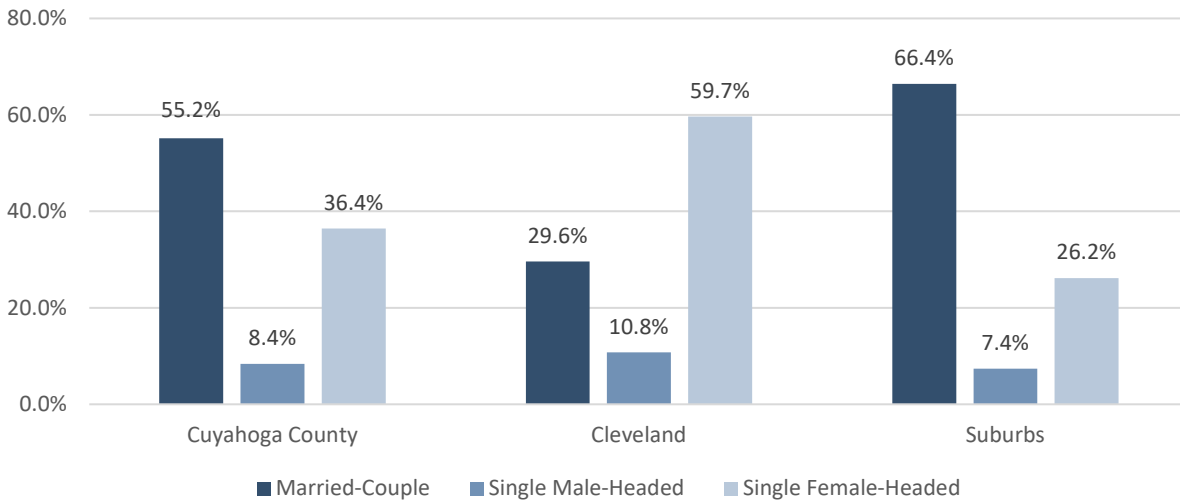


Figure 3-B
Families with Children Under Age 18 by Type
2014-2018

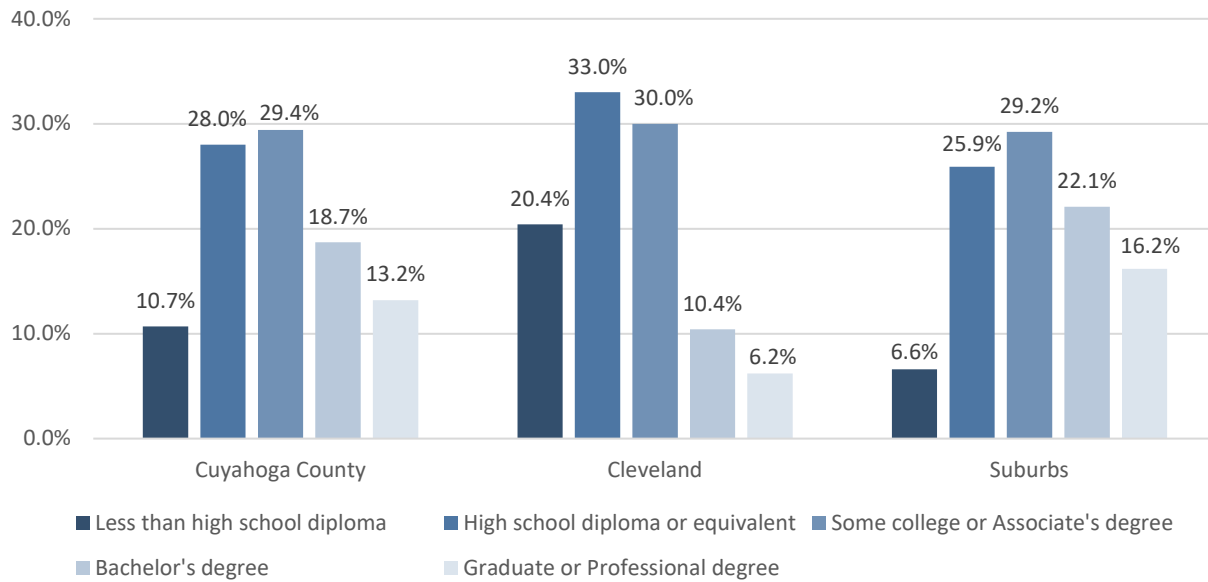


Educational attainment

Among those age 25 or older in the county, 11 percent had not graduated from high school, 28 percent had only a high school education and 32 percent had a bachelor’s degree or higher (Figure 4).

Compared to the suburbs, three times the proportion (20 percent) in Cleveland lacked a high school diploma and only half the proportion (17 percent) graduated from college.

Figure 4
Educational Attainment, Ages 25 and Older
2014-2018

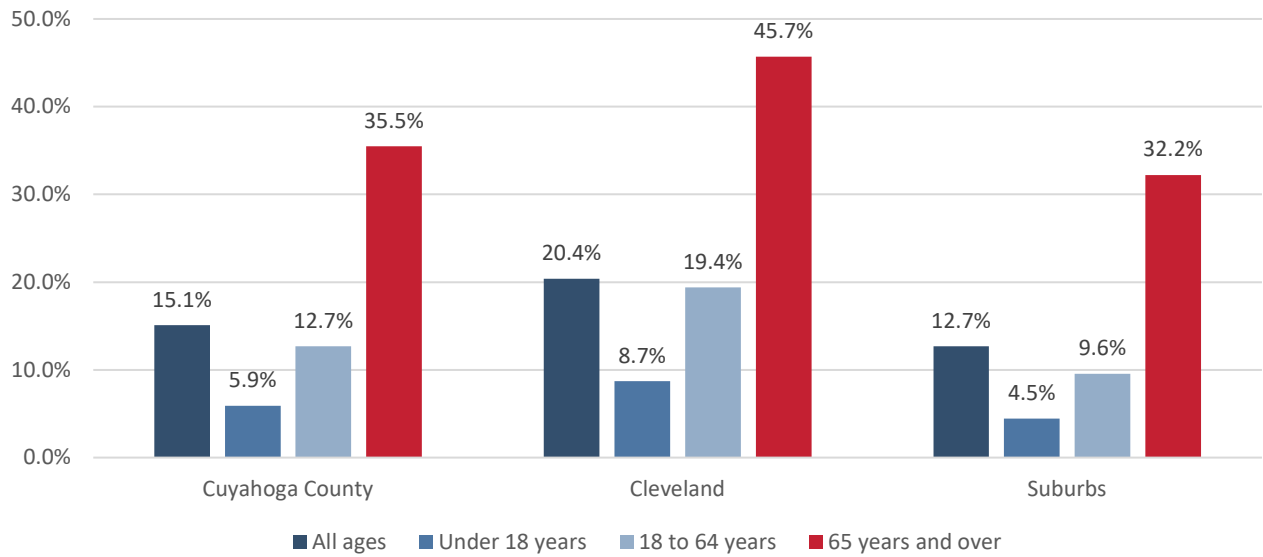


People with disabilities

Across all geographic regions, the proportion of people with disabilities (physical, cognitive, mobility and/or self-care) varied by age (Figure 5). In the county, 6 percent of those under age 18 had one or more disabilities, compared to 13 percent of those ages 18 to 64 and 36 percent of those age 65 or older. At all age levels, the proportion of people with disabilities was higher for Cleveland residents than for suburbanites, with the highest rate, 46 percent, among Clevelanders age 65 or older.

Figure 5

Percent with a Disability, 2014-2018

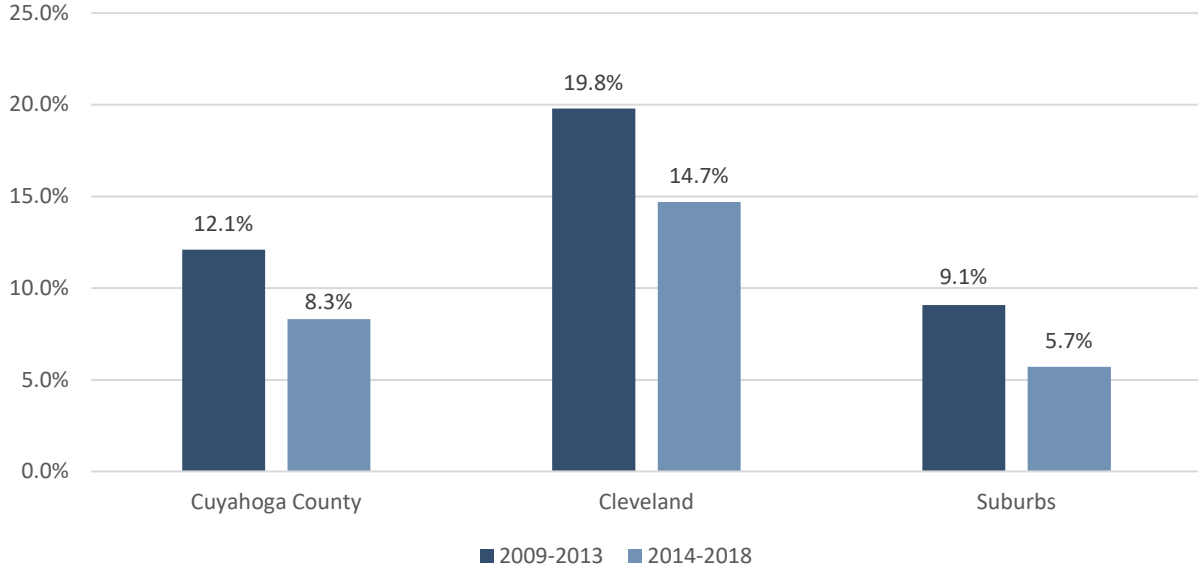


Unemployment

Both the number and rate of unemployment (those not working but actively seeking work) declined in 2014-2018 from the previous five-year period (2009-2013). The number of unemployed in the county declined by 32 percent, from 79,000 to 53,000, and the rate declined from 12.1 percent to 8.3 percent (Figure 6). In both periods, the unemployment rate was more than double in Cleveland than it was in the suburbs -- 19.8 vs 9.1 in 2009-2013 and 14.7 vs 5.7 in 2014-2018.

Figure 6

Unemployment Rate, Ages 16 and Over

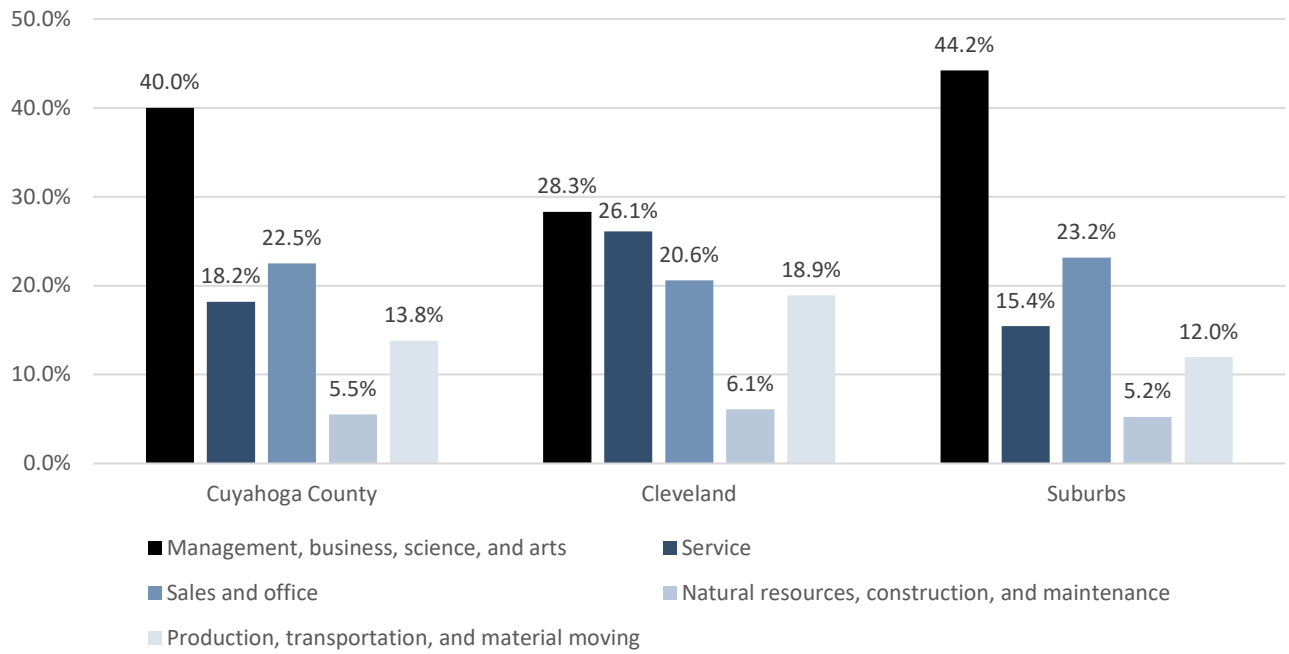


Occupation

County-wide, 40 percent of employed people worked in management, business, science and arts occupations; 23 percent in sales and offices; 18 percent in services; 14 percent in production, transportation and material moving; and 5 percent in natural resources, construction and maintenance (Figure 7). Forty-four percent of suburbanites worked in management, business and professional jobs, compared to only 28 percent of Clevelanders. On the other hand, 19 percent of workers who lived in Cleveland were in natural resources, construction and maintenance jobs, compared to only 12 percent of suburban workers.

Figure 7

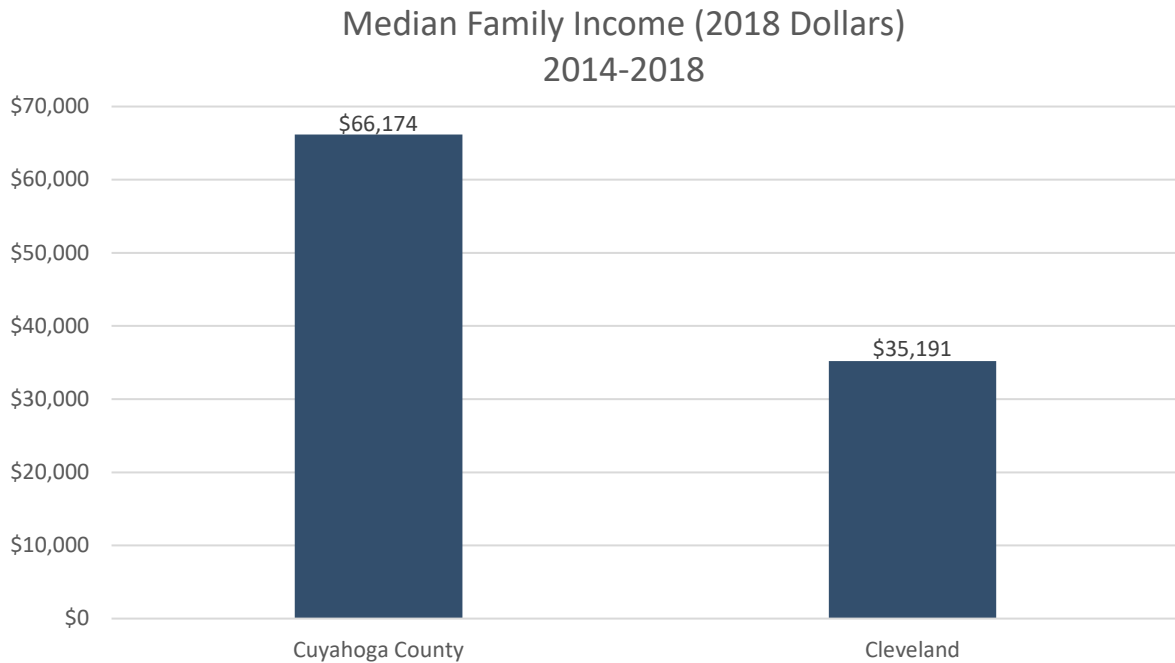
Occupation of Employed People, 2014-2018



Median family income

The median income of families in the county was \$66,174 in 2014-2018. Half of all families had incomes above the median and half below. Families in Cleveland had a median income of \$35,191, just more than half the county median level (Figure 8).

Figure 8



Health insurance coverage

Largely due to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act in 2014, the number and percent of people without health insurance coverage declined markedly between 2009-2013 and 2014-2018. In the county, 74,000 (6 percent) were uninsured in the latter period, half the number before the ACA went into effect (Figure 9-A). Although still higher than in the suburbs, the uninsured rate in Cleveland declined from 17 percent to 9 percent.

Lower than the adult rates, the proportion of uninsured children under age 19 declined from 4 percent to 3 percent and was similar in both the city and suburbs (Figure 9-B).

For working-age adults ages 19 to 64, health insurance coverage still depended to a large extent on employment status. Although the uninsured rate declined for all labor force groups in the county, it was still almost three times as high among the unemployed (22 percent) as among the employed (8 percent). For those not in the labor force, the rate was slightly higher (10 percent) than for the employed; this may reflect the status of many in this group as dependents of those with insurance or eligible for Medicaid (Figure 9-C).

Figure 9-A
Percent Uninsured -- All Ages

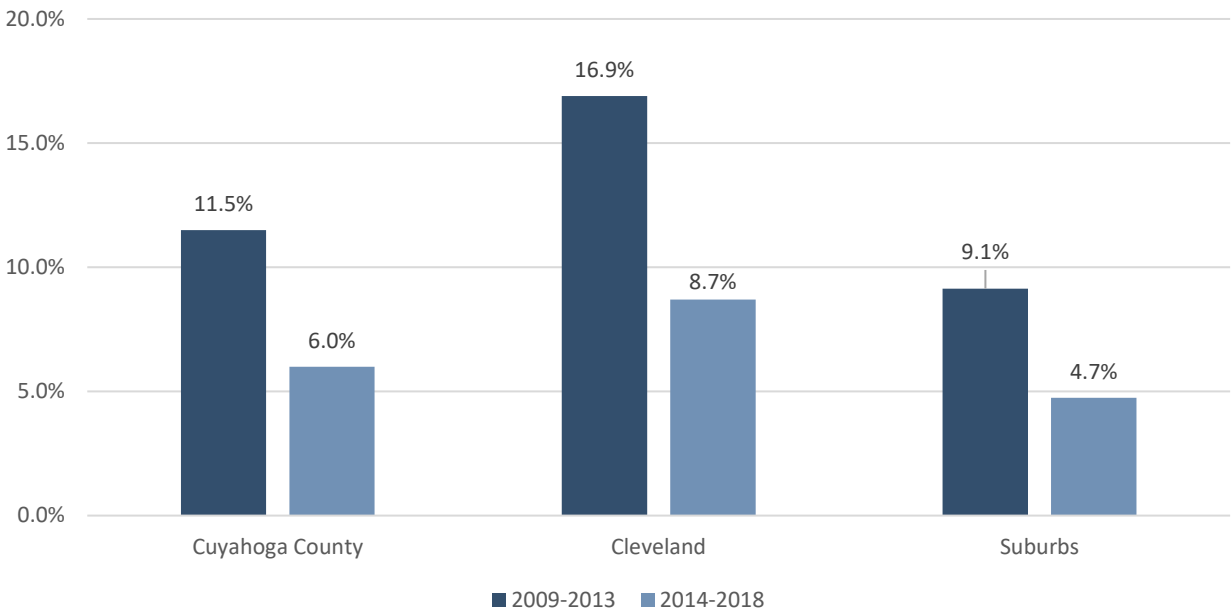


Figure 9-B
Percent Uninsured -- Under Age 19

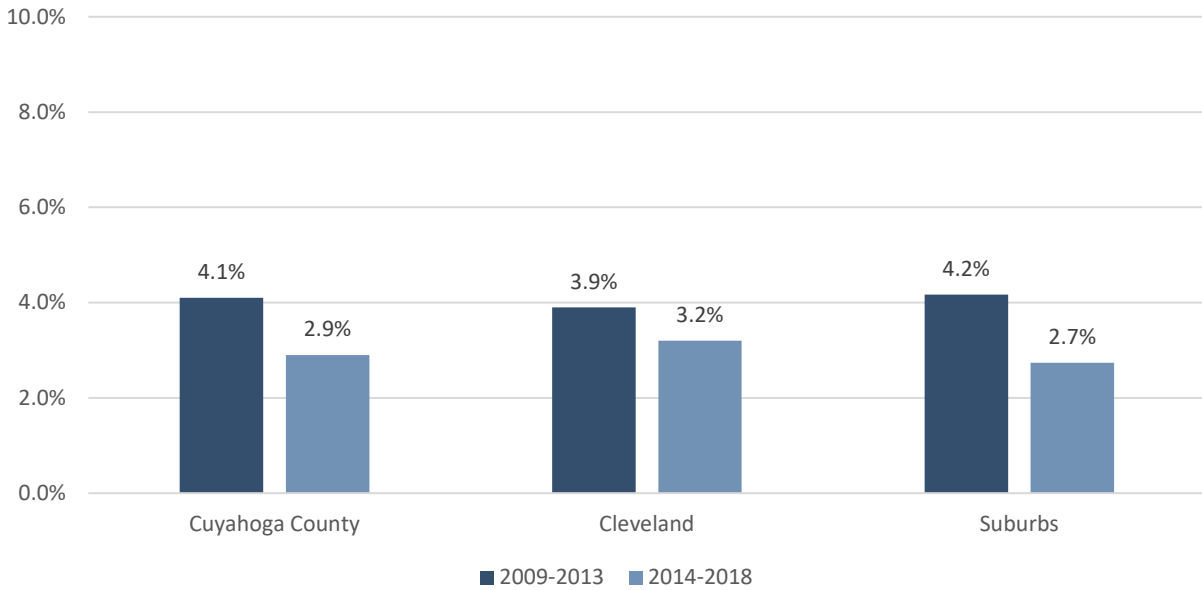
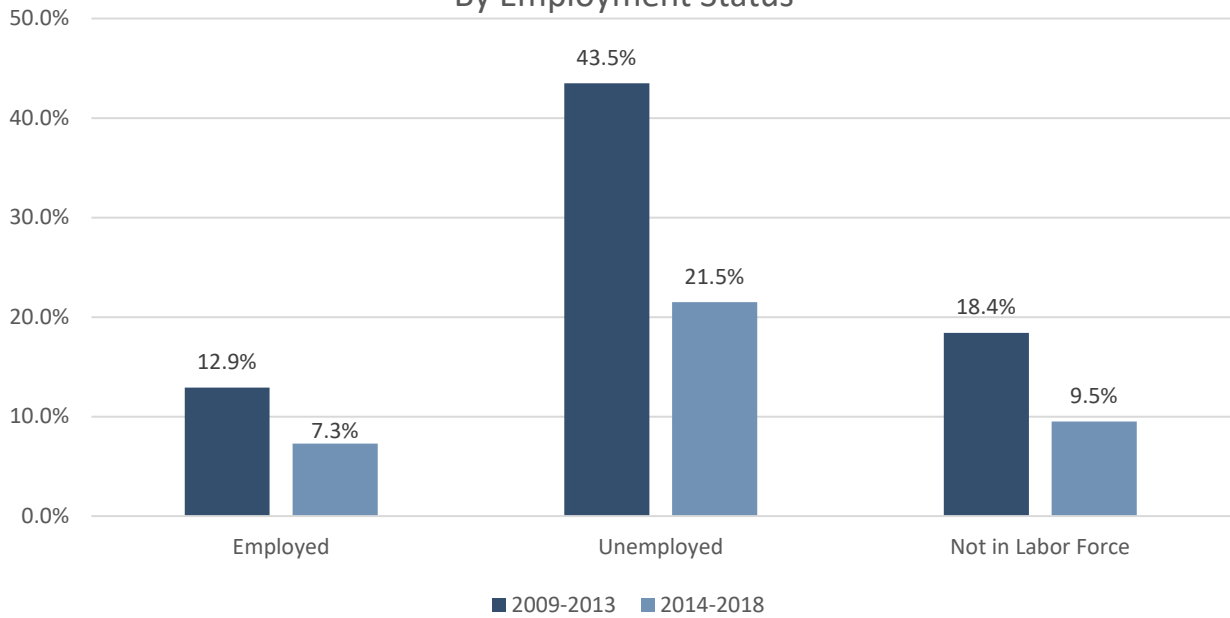


Figure 9-C
 Percent Uninsured -- Ages 19 to 64 -- Cuyahoga County
 By Employment Status

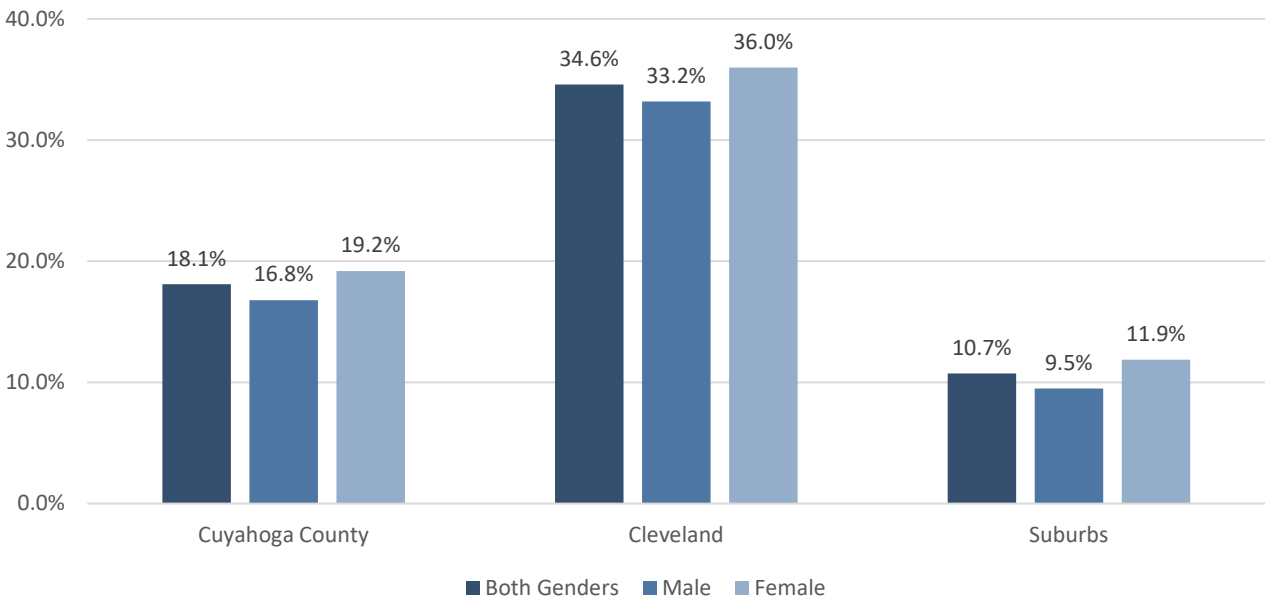


Poverty status of individuals

More than 220,000 people in Cuyahoga County (18 percent), had household incomes below the federal poverty line (\$19,985 for a family of three) in 2014-2018. Poverty rates were slightly higher among women (19 percent) than men (17 percent). In Cleveland, more than one-third of people were poor (130,000), compared to only 1 in 10 in the suburbs (Figure 10-A).

Figure 10-A

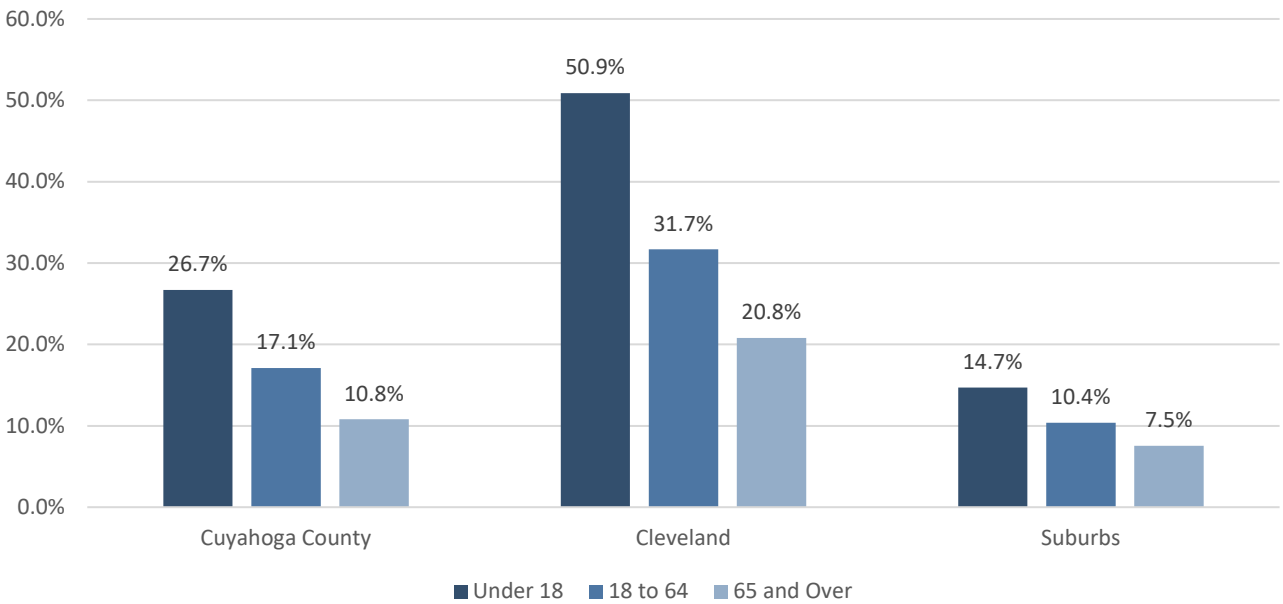
Percent Below Poverty by Gender, 2014-2018



Age: More than one-quarter (27 percent, or 70,000) of children under age 18 in the county were poor, including half of all children in Cleveland (44,000). One in 10 seniors age 65 and older in the county were poor, and the senior poverty rate was almost three times as high in Cleveland (21 percent) as in the suburbs (8 percent). Although three times as many seniors (160,000) live in the suburbs than live in the city (50,000), the number of seniors in poverty was almost the same in the two areas – 10,500 in Cleveland and 12,000 in the suburbs (Figure 10-B).

Figure 10-B

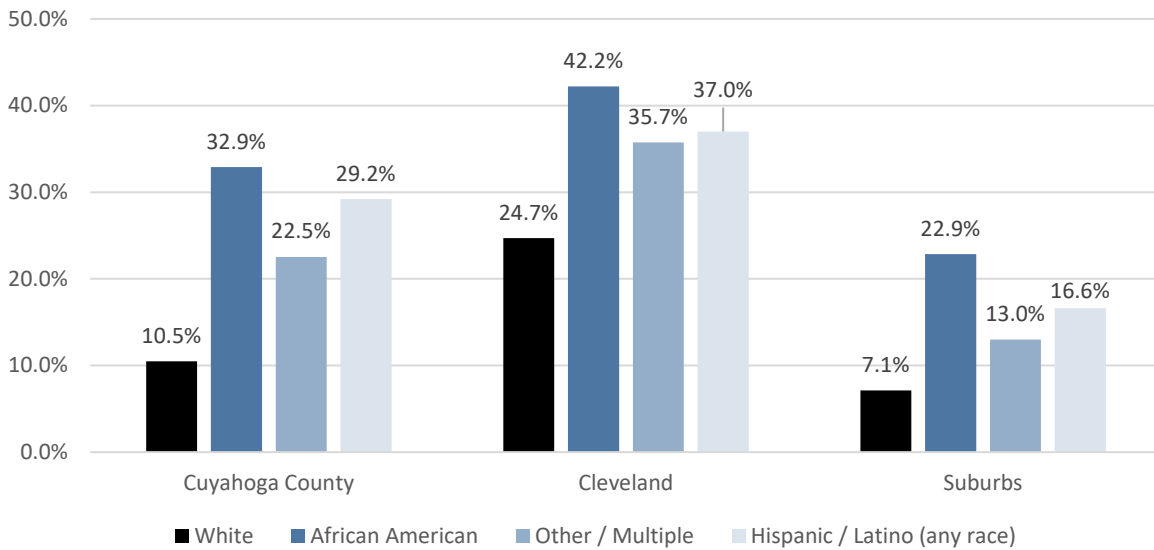
Percent Below Poverty by Age, 2014-2018



Race/ethnicity: Poverty rates for African-Americans, Latinos and other racial minorities had substantially higher poverty rates than white people. In the county as a whole, almost one-third of African-Americans and Latinos (of any race) were poor, as were one-fifth of Asians and those of other or multiple races, compared to just 1 in 10 white people. The African-American poverty rate was 42 percent in Cleveland and 23 percent in the suburbs (Figure 10-C).

Figure 10-C

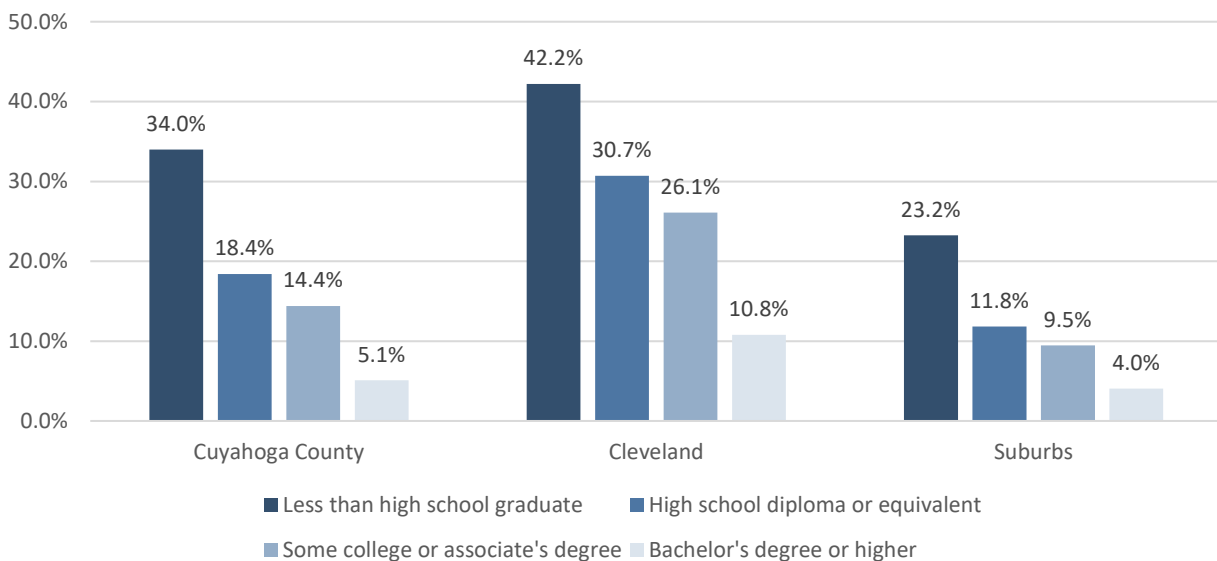
Percent Below Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, 2014-2018



Education: Poverty rates in the county were highest for those who lacked a high school diploma (34 percent), and declined at each level of additional educational attainment; just 5 percent of college graduates in the county were poor. However, poverty rates were higher in Cleveland than in the suburbs at all levels of education (Figure 10-D).

Figure 10-D

Percent Below Poverty by Educational Attainment
Ages 25 and Older, 2014-2018



Employment status: As can be expected, poverty rates among the unemployed were high: 42 percent of the county unemployed, 57 percent in Cleveland and 27 percent in the suburbs. What is notable, however, is the high poverty rates among the employed, especially in Cleveland, where 16 percent were poor. The poverty rate among working women in Cleveland was even higher, 18 percent. This may reflect the lack of full-time jobs that pay a living wage and/or a lack of available transportation to better-paying jobs (Figures 10-E and 10-F).

Figure 10-E
 Percent Below Poverty by Gender
 Employed People Age 16 and Older, 2014-2018

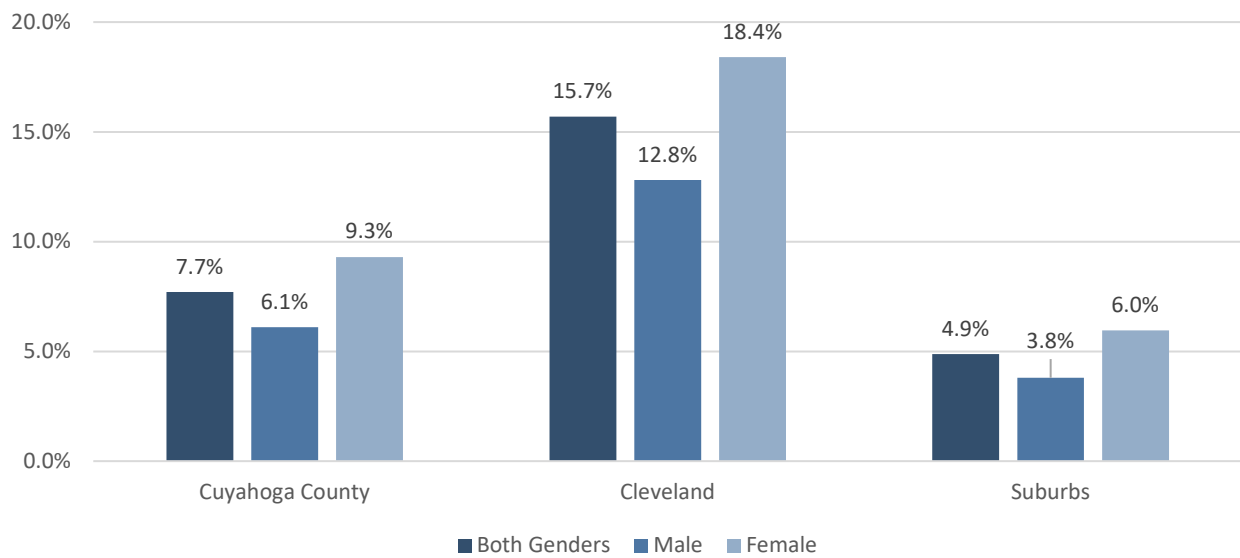
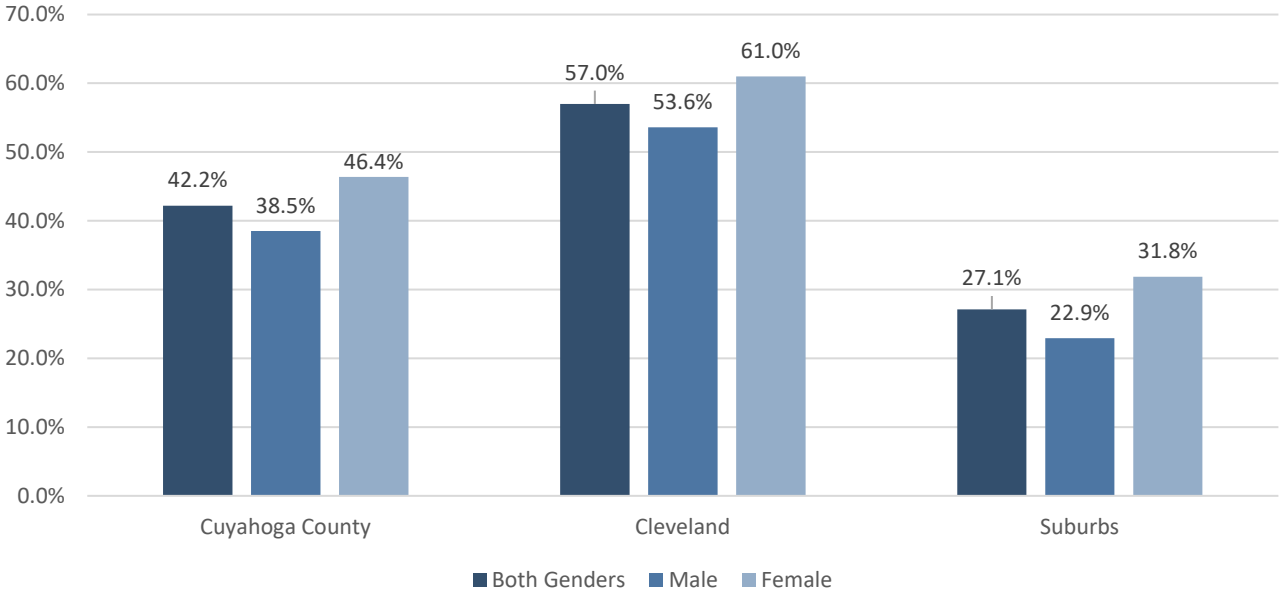


Figure 10-F

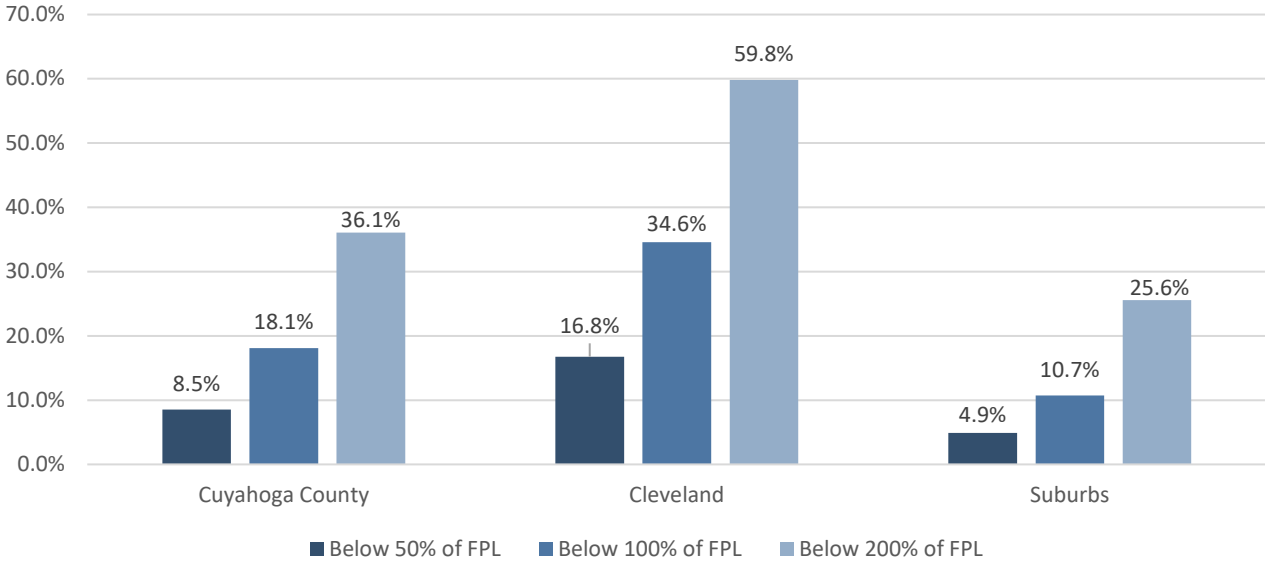
Percent Below Poverty by Gender
Unemployed People Age 16 and Older, 2014-2018



Deep poverty and near-poverty: In addition to those who live below 100 percent of the poverty line, it is also useful to count those with incomes below 50 percent of poverty (“deep poverty”) and those below 200 percent of poverty (“below or near poverty”). Using the same federal poverty measure for 2018, the 50 percent level is \$9,993 for a family of three, and the 200 percent level is \$39,970. As shown in Figure 10-G, 9 percent of the county’s population, or more than 100,000 individuals, lived in deep poverty from 2014 to 2018, and 36 percent (443,000) were below 200 percent of poverty. In Cleveland, 63,000 (17 percent) lived in deep poverty and 225,000 (60 percent) lived below or near poverty

Figure 10-G

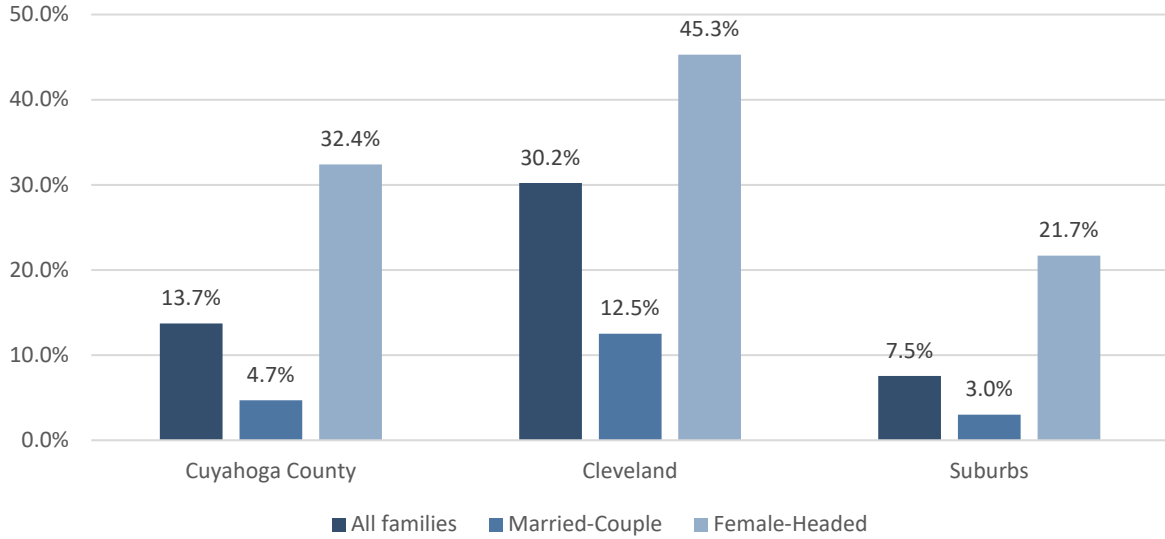
Percent Below Multiples of the Federal Poverty Level
2014-2018



Poverty status of families

All families: Of the 303,000 families in the county, both with and without children under age 18, 41,000 (14 percent) were below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Less than 5 percent (9,000) of married-couple families were poor, compared to 32 percent (27,000) of female-headed families. In Cleveland, 30 percent (25,000) of all families were poor – 13 percent of married-couple families and 45 percent of female-headed families. In the suburbs, more than one-fifth of female-headed families were poor. (Figure 11-A)

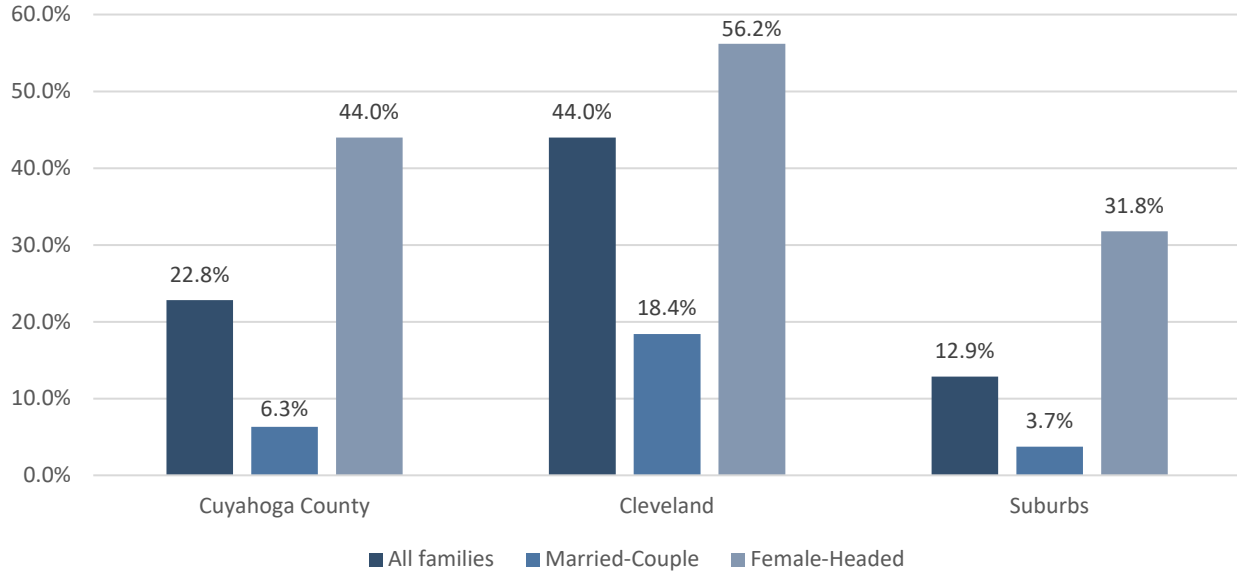
Figure 11-A
 Percent of All Families Below Poverty, by Type
 2014-2018



Families with children: Of the 138,000 families in the county who have children, more than one-fifth (32,000) lived below poverty – 6 percent of married-couple families (5,000) and 44 percent (23,000) of female-headed households. In Cleveland, of the 44,000 families with children, 44 percent (19,000) were below poverty – 18 percent (2,000) of married-couple families and 56 percent (15,000) of female-headed families. In the suburbs, almost one-third of female-headed families with children were poor. (Figure 11-B)

Figure 11-B

Percent of Families with Own Children Below Poverty, by Type, 2014-2018



Implications

We conducted this demographic analysis of Cuyahoga County in order to shed some light on the quality of life in the county, Cleveland and the suburbs. One of the most striking findings is the persistence of social, economic and racial disparities throughout the community. We have referenced above an analysis of life expectancy at the census tract level in the county. This analysis concluded not only that life expectancy is lower in many Cleveland neighborhoods than in suburban ones, but that this disparity is strongly correlated with poverty and racial segregation. This fits in well with the theory of social determinants of health, where such conditions as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, poor public safety, unavailability of nutritious food, inadequate access to health care and the stresses of racism all contribute to shorter life spans.

Nor are these unhealthy conditions limited to the boundaries of the City of Cleveland. In the suburbs, more than one-quarter of families with children are headed by a single female, and one-third of these families live below poverty. One-third of suburban residents ages 65 and older have disabilities, which presents a challenge to transportation and community-based health and social services in these areas.

We hope that these findings will help stimulate awareness and discussion regarding the maintenance and improvement of the health and social services in the community.



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