Greater Washington Research
at BROOKINGS

Challenges Associated with the Suburbanization of Poverty

Presentation to the Community Foundation for Prince George's County

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December 8, 2010

This presentation draws on research from several sources.

Strained Suburbs: The Rising Social Service Challenges of Rising Suburban Poverty

Paper by Scott Allard, University of Chicago

Focused on the suburbs of Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, DC

Metropolitan Opportunity Series, Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program

Research and analysis documenting the changing geography of poverty and opportunity in metropolitan America

Ongoing work of Greater Washington Research at Brookings

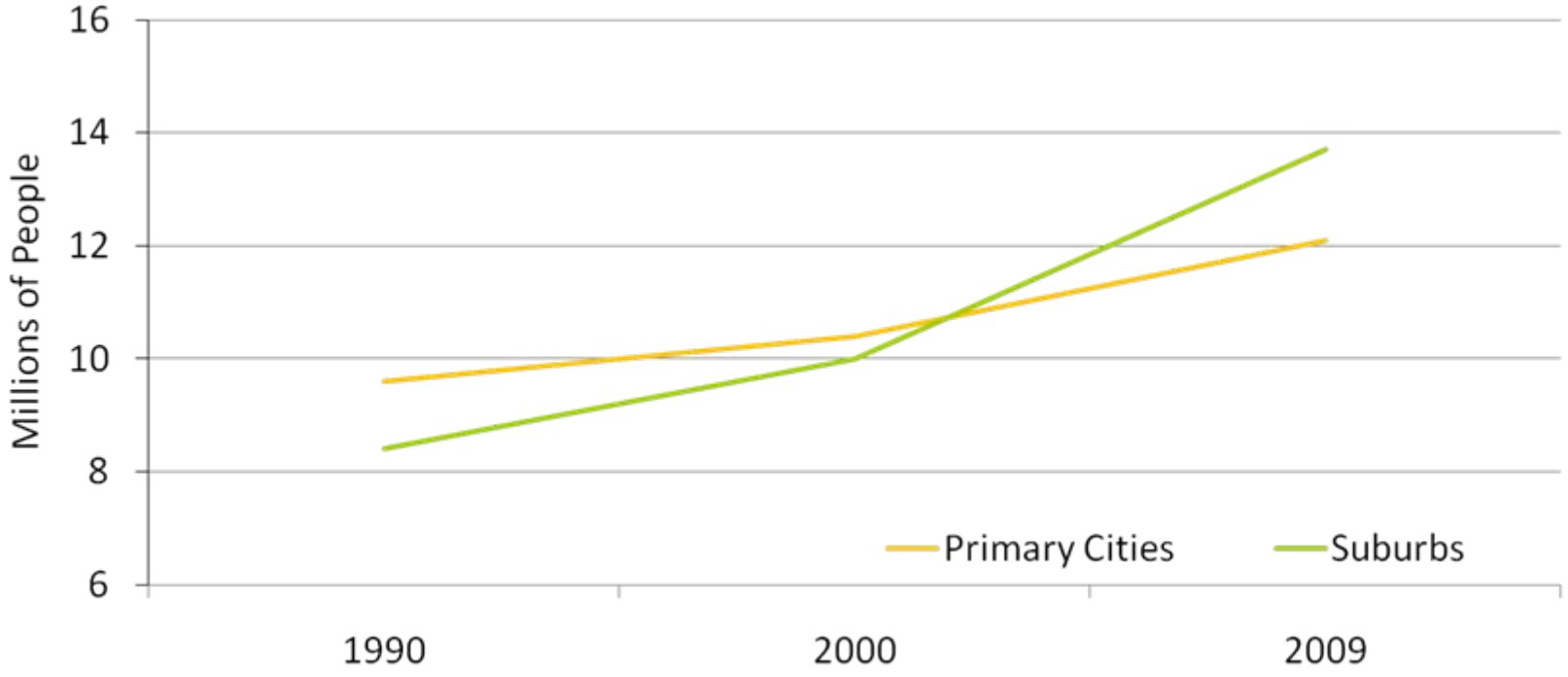
Available at www.brookings.edu/metro and www.brookings.edu/washington

Within large metro areas, the number of poor people in suburbs has now surpassed the number in cities

Poor residents, primary cities versus suburbs, 100 largest metro areas*, 1990, 2000, and 2009

In 2009, the official poverty threshold was:

- $14,787 for one parent with one child
- $17,285 for one parent with two children
- $21,834 for two parents with two children

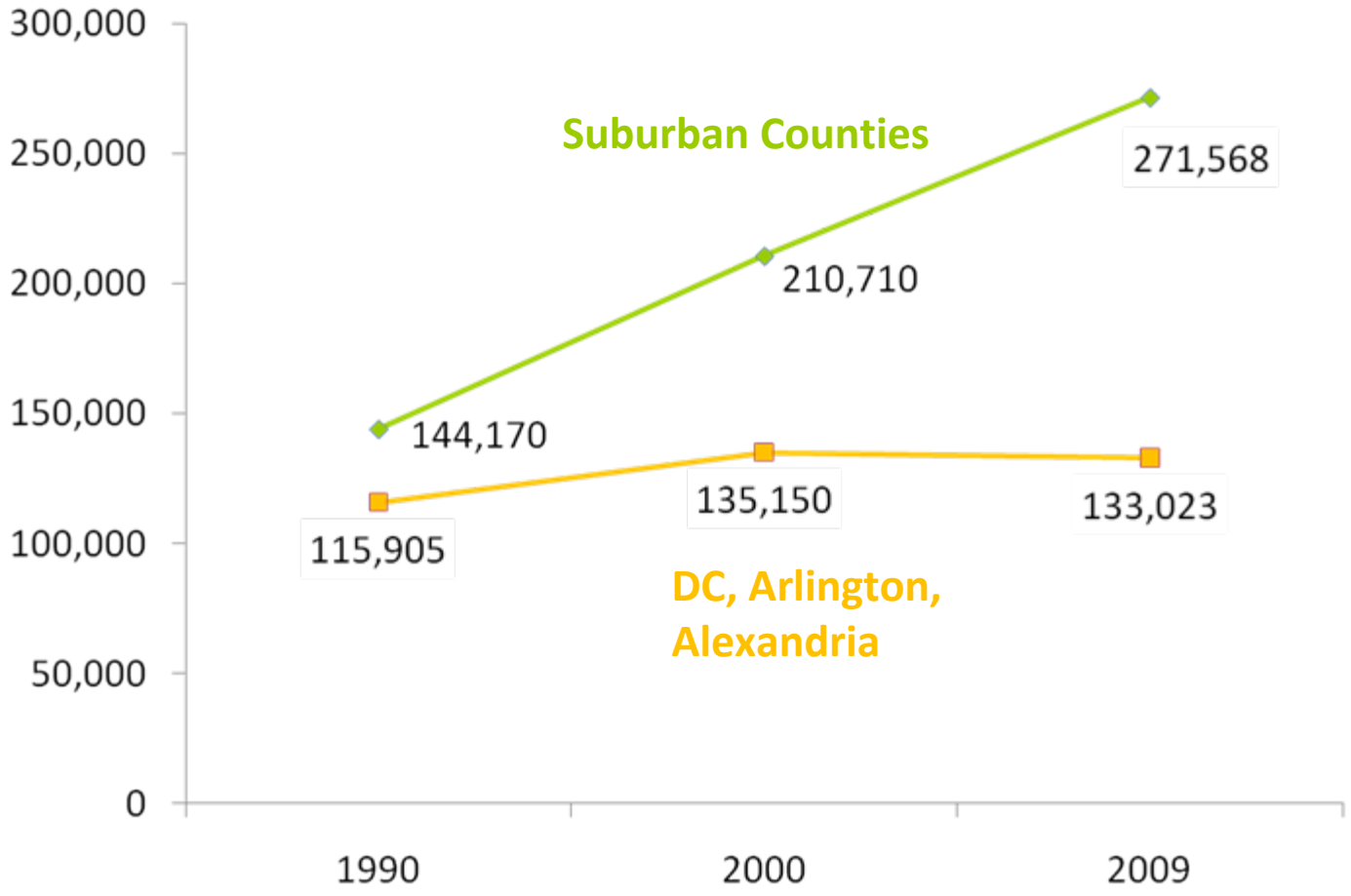


*Represent 95 of the largest 100 metropolitan areas for which data are available. Primary cities include first city in metro area title plus other named cities with populations of at least 100,000. Suburbs include residual metropolitan territory.

Source: US Census, Brookings analysis of decennial census and ACS data

Within the DC metro, suburbs were already home to more poor than the primary cities by 1990, and that gap has widened over time

Poor residents, primary cities versus suburbs, DC metro area, 1990, 2000, and 2009



Source: Brookings analysis of decennial census and ACS data

Nearly equal shares of city and suburban poor live in extreme poverty, have low education levels, work full-time, or have a disability

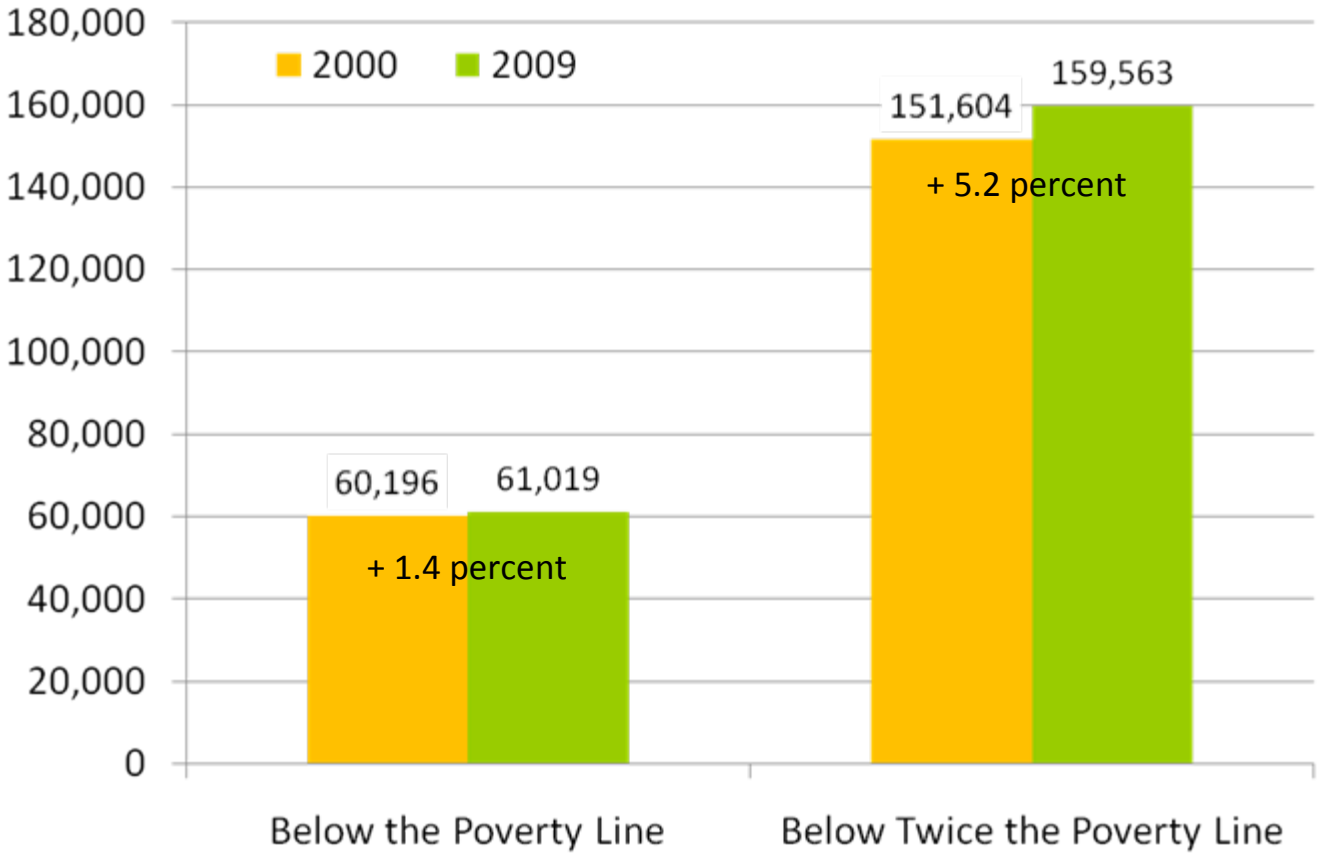
Characteristics of city versus suburban poor, 100 largest metro areas, 2008

Proportion of Poor	Primary cities	Suburbs
Overall*	18.0	9.2
Income below 50% poverty*	44.0	42.2
With H.S. diploma or less*	66.7	63.7
Have FT, year-round work*	24.2	24.2
Have PT/part-year work*	36.5	39.4
Working-age disabled	20.1	19.9

Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 ACS data

Prince George's County saw the poor population increase slightly over the decade, while the number living under 200% of poverty grew by almost 8,000

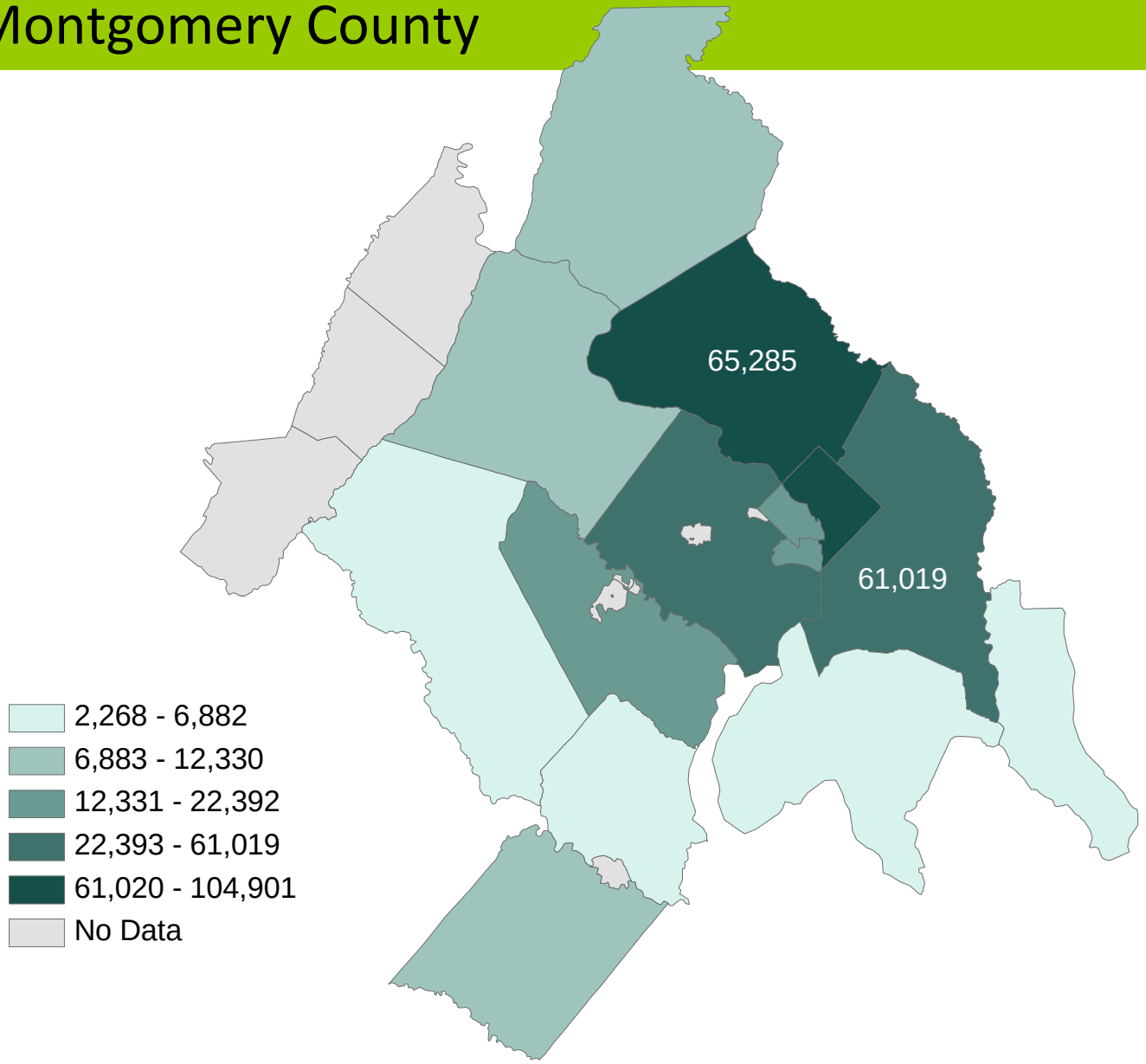
Low-income residents, Prince George's 2000 and 2009



Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and ACS data

Of DC's suburban counties for which there was data in 2009, Prince George's County was home to the second largest poor population after Montgomery County

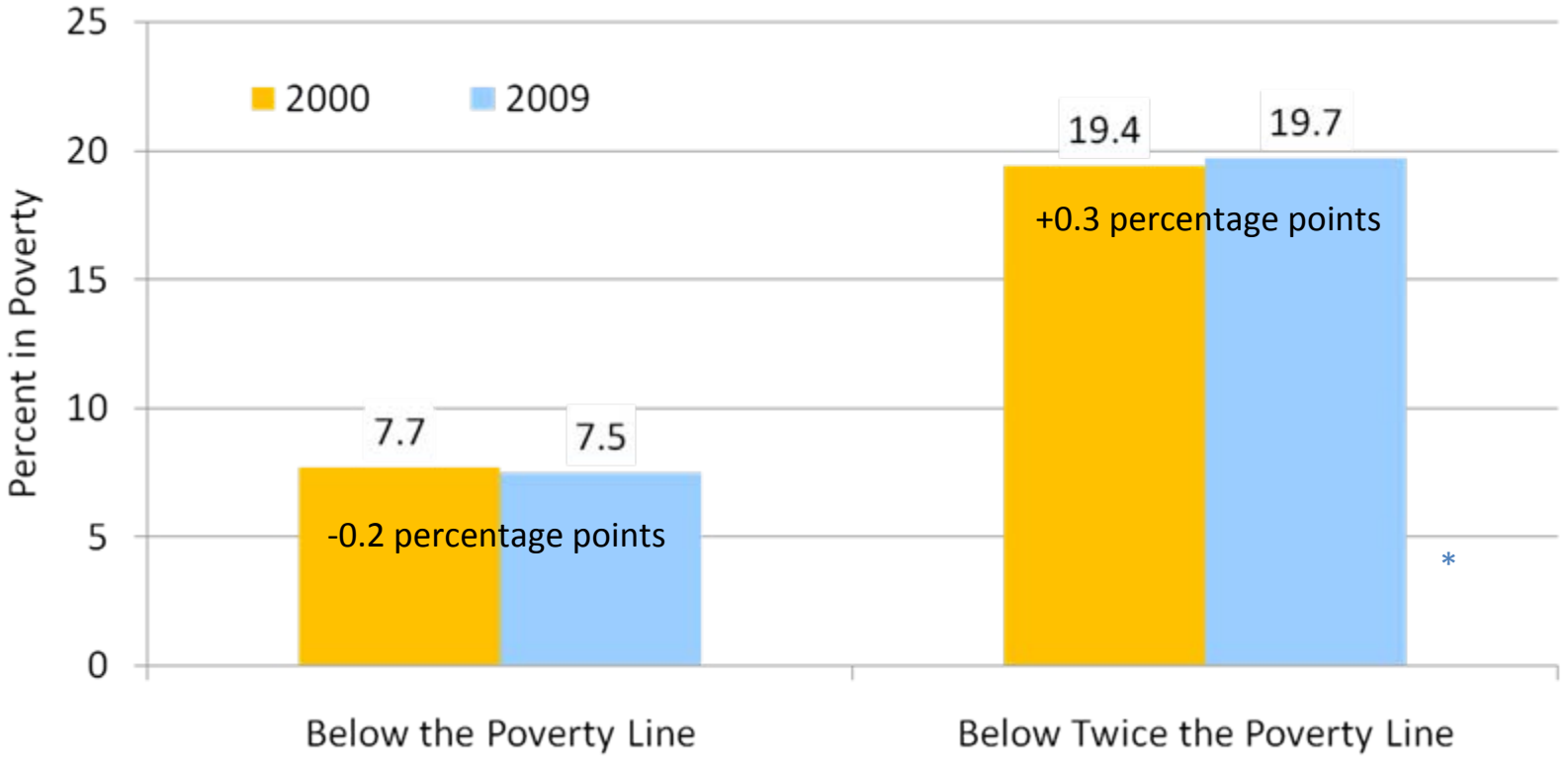
Poor residents: Prince George's County versus other suburban counties in the DC metro area, 2009



Source: Brookings analysis of ACS data

In general, Prince George's County's poverty rate held steady over the decade

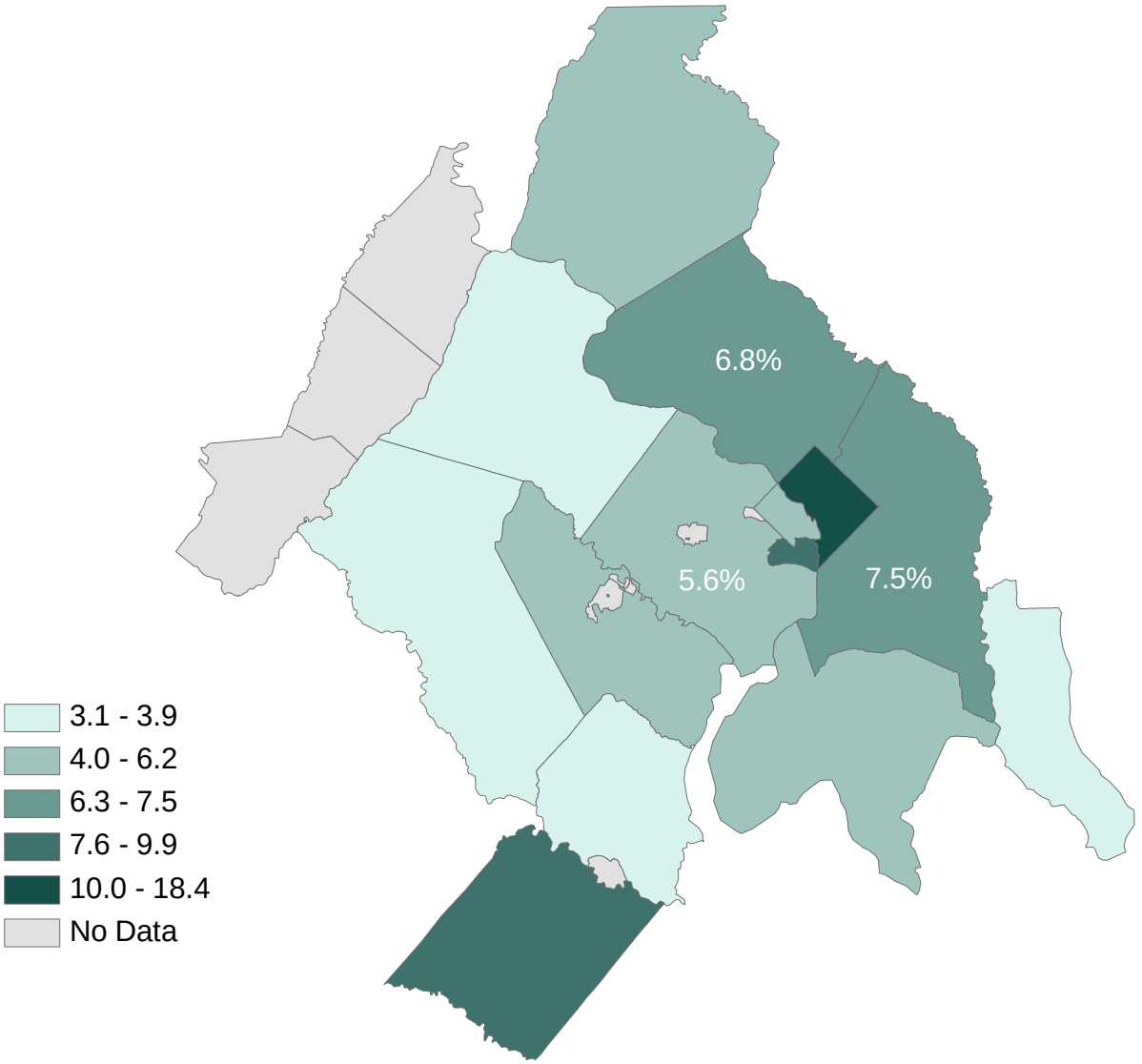
Share of population that is low-income, Prince George's County, 2000 and 2009



Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2009 ACS data

Prince George's County's poverty rate of 7.5 percent exceeded DC's overall suburban rate in 2009 (7.0), and is the second highest in the metro area. Loudoun County had the lowest rate (3.1)

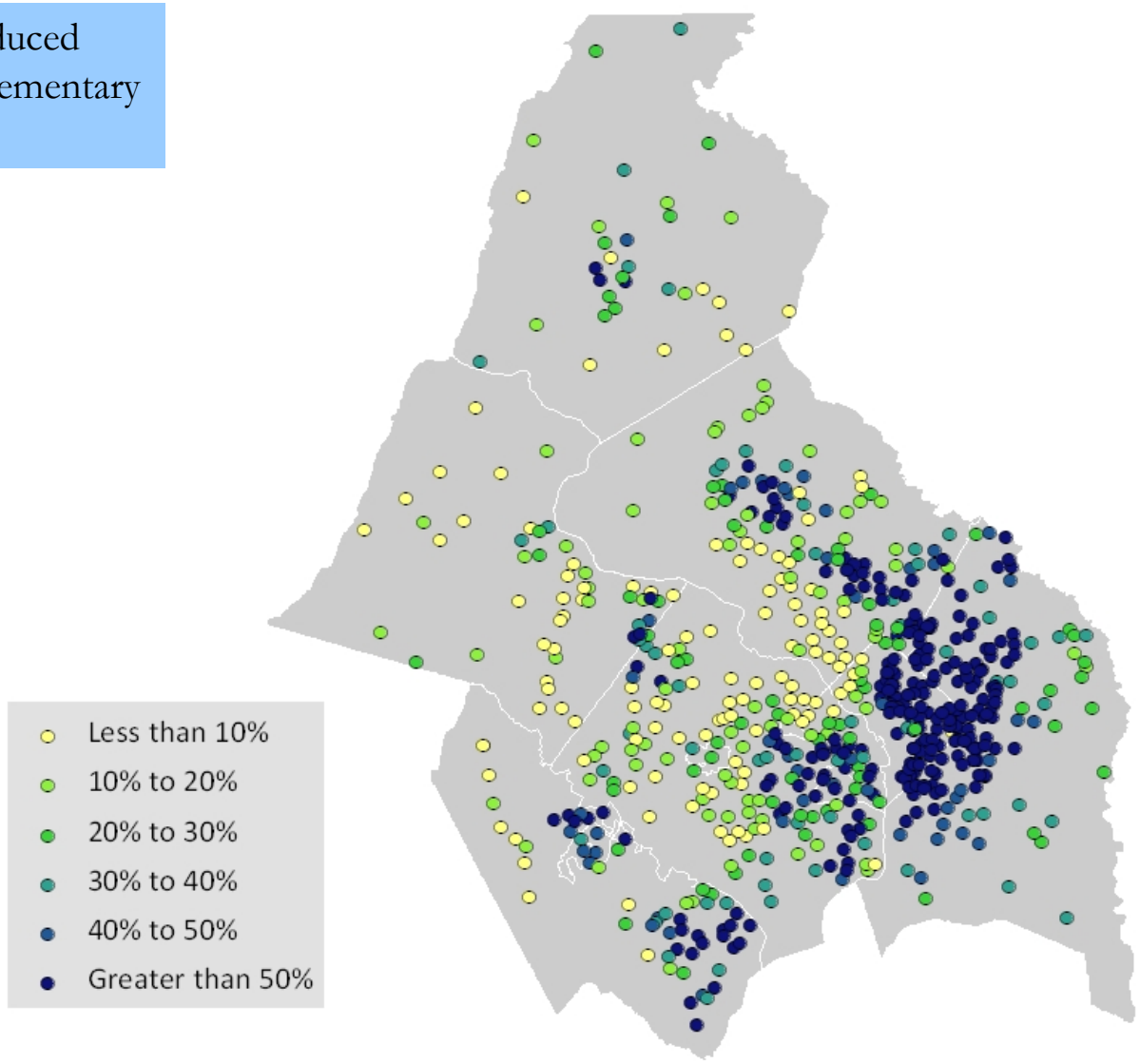
Poverty rate, Prince George's County versus other metropolitan counties, DC metro area, 2009



Source: Brookings analysis of ACS data

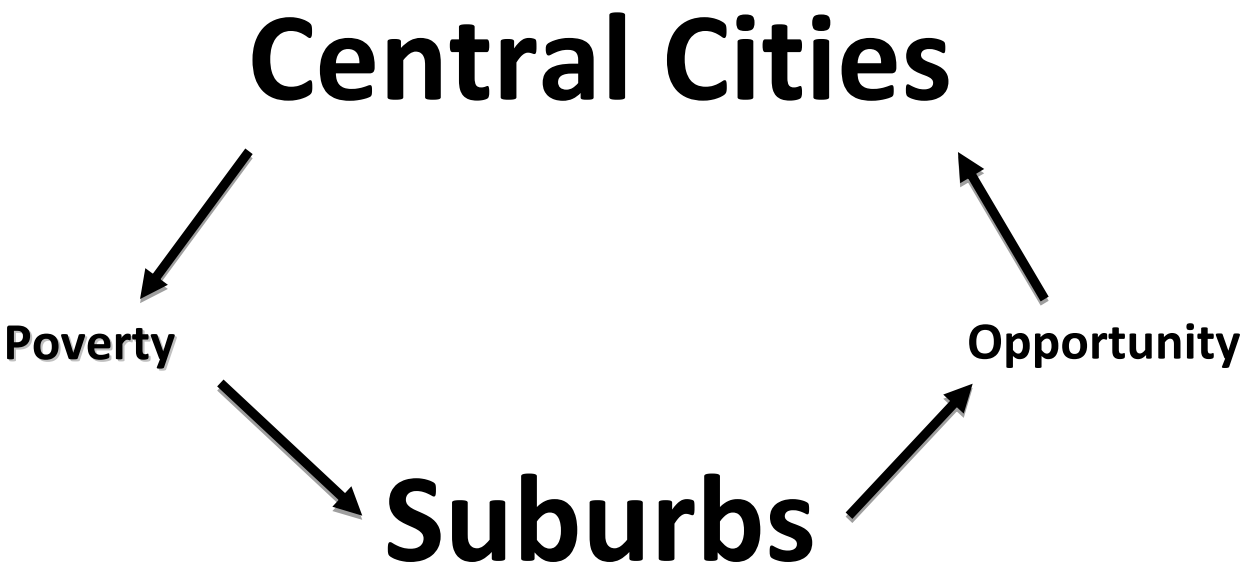
Eligibility for subsidized school lunches is concentrated in DC, Prince George's, and other suburban areas

Eligibility for free and reduced price school lunches in elementary schools, 2008-2009



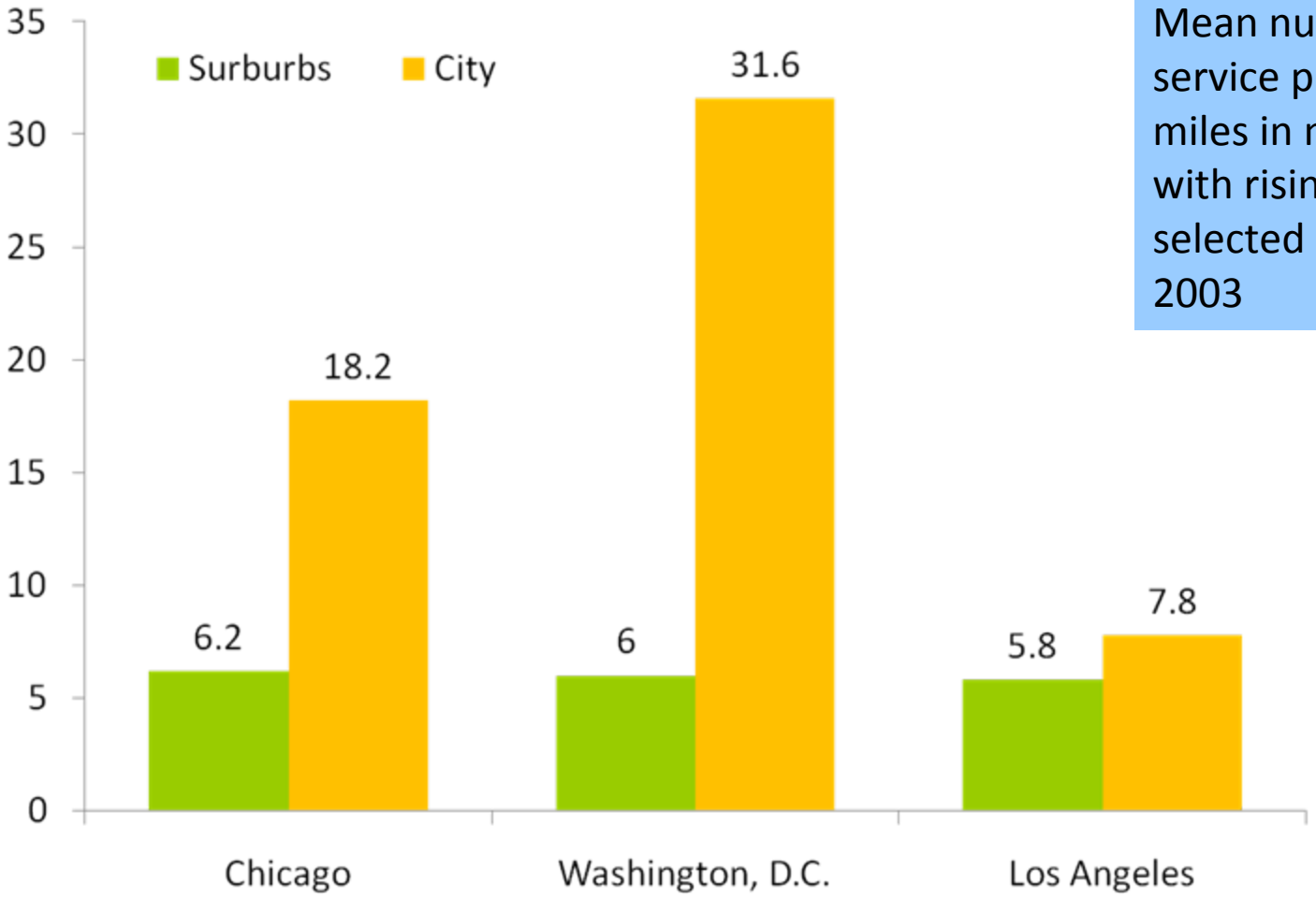
Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Why focus on these trends?



Safety net policy is predicated on the concentration of poverty in cities

Though demand for services is growing in diversifying suburbs, the social service infrastructure is generally smaller than in central cities



Mean number of social service providers within 1.5 miles in neighborhoods with rising poverty rates, selected cities and suburbs, 2003

Source: Allard 2004

Suburban social service providers are stretched

Findings from Scott Allard's interviews with suburban service providers in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

Demand is up considerably during the recession

- On average providers saw demand increase 30%, with one-fifth seeing increases of 50% or more
- Three-quarters of nonprofits are seeing more clients with no previous connection to the safety net, and the types of demands are changing too

Revenues are down

- 47% report decrease in key revenue source

Tougher times ahead

- 66% expect cuts in government funding
- 47% expect philanthropic dollars to fall

How are service providers coping?

Findings from Scott Allard's interviews with suburban service providers in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

Cutting back

- 28% cut staff, 22% reduced services, 13% cut caseloads

Making resources stretch

- Collaboration has helped some providers improve quality and efficiency. Others have turned to call centers. tried co-locating services, or fostered partnerships with local (e.g. community colleges) and non-local (e.g., Americorps) institutions.

Recruiting more volunteers

- Turning to volunteers to handle previously paid positions. Recruiting recently unemployed individuals.

Seeking new funding

- Some started a new social enterprise or fee-based program. Others have put more time into private fundraising. Many are working to tap into federal stimulus dollars , government contracts, and foundation grants

What do we do? To maintain and build support for safety net services, tie them to core American values

Work Activity

Families

Support Services

Self-sufficiency

Community-based

Private

Children

Education

Opportunity

We are just beginning to wrestle with what these trends imply for policy, practice, and systems

- Improve links to existing help
- Find good models of coordination and collaboration across jurisdictions in metro areas
- Strengthen community-based nonprofits
- Maintain public commitments

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