

SEARCH ARCHIVES:

HOME News Business Sports FEATURES HELP

- EDITORIAL >>|
- MOVIES >>|
- OBITUARIES >>|
- TRAFFIC >>|

MORE STORIES

- [Racial divide is still apparent on payday](#)
- [3 tracts span Triangle's range](#)
- [Census: Many grandparents raising children](#)
- [Census reflects sharp increase in children with disabilities](#)
- [More in N.C. say ancestry is American](#)
- [N.C. tops in census filings](#)
- [Census shows Triangle's rise](#)
- [Surviving the landlord's bite](#)
- [Disabled but undeterred](#)
- [Wealth spreading unevenly](#)
- [A different vibe than 1995](#)
- [Triangle is multinational now](#)
- [Most commuters go it alone](#)
- [Wake leads rapid growth](#)
- [State still in growth mode, census says](#)
- [Welcome home, y'all](#)
- [More new mothers stay at home](#)
- [Census to decide on sampling](#)
- [N.C. rejects Utah's claim of census guessing game](#)
- [Census shows U.S. education passing and failing](#)
- [About 1 in 6 gay couples lives in a rural community, census reports find](#)
- [Fluency a struggle for many](#)
- [A new lot for mobile homes](#)
- [State's prosperity has eluded many](#)
- [Census error may cost North Carolina \\$162.8 million](#)
- [Census says same-sex](#)

Racial divide is still apparent on payday

Tuesday, September 10, 2002 5:03AM EDT

By RICHARD STRADLING, Staff Writer

The booming 1990s failed to bring whites and blacks much closer to economic equality in the Triangle, while an influx of immigrants taking low-paying jobs drove down median income for Hispanics, according to census numbers being released today.

The decade's prosperity lifted both blacks and whites, pushing up median household income for blacks about 20 percent, adjusting for inflation, to keep pace with the rising income of whites. But the \$33,537 median for blacks was only 61 percent of the \$54,863 median for whites. That's just slightly better than in 1989, when blacks' median was 59 percent that of whites.

Meanwhile, immigrants from Mexico and elsewhere who took jobs as landscapers, dishwashers and laborers helped depress household income for Hispanics in the Triangle. Still, at \$35,153, the median household income for Hispanics was about \$1,600 higher than that of blacks.


"That's kind of startling to me," said Ajamu Dillahunt, president of the Raleigh local of the American Postal Workers Union, who is black. "Maybe the immigrant population is much broader and more diverse than people think."

By some measures, Hispanics are not doing as well as blacks in the six-county metro area. One in four Hispanics lived in poverty, compared with less than 18 percent of blacks and about 6 percent of whites. And while Hispanic households earned more than blacks, Hispanic families -- excluding unrelated people who share a home -- earned less.

That blacks didn't lose ground to whites made the Triangle unusual among metro areas, said John R. Logan, a sociologist who directs the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research in Albany, N.Y.

Black incomes in many parts of the country stagnated or declined, falling further behind whites, Logan said.

CENSUS DATA



Compare 1990 and 2000 North Carolina census data by selecting various counties and communities.

American FactFinder: A source of population, housing, economic and geographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

RELATED STORIES

- [3 tracts span Triangle's range](#)



MORE INFORMATION

- [Previous stories in The News & Observer's census series](#)

STORY TOOLS

-  [printer friendly version](#)
-  [send this story to a friend](#)

SITE TOOLS

-  [subscribe to our e-mail lists](#)
-  [get news, weather, movies on your PDA](#)

NEWSPAPER SERVICES

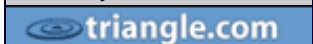
- [Full Text Archives](#)
- [Letters to the Editor](#)
- [Subscribe to The N&O](#)
- [Place a Display Ad](#)
- [Place a Classified Ad](#)
- [Contact The N&O](#)
- [About The N&O](#)

Current Print Ads



ADVERTISING

- [Criminal records instantly online](#)



- Weddings**
 - [make your announcement](#)
 - [email a friend](#)
- Travel**
 - [Travel Directory](#)
 - [FREE Travel](#)
- Brochures**
- Personals**
 - [people2people](#)
- Prize Center**

CLASSIFIED ONLINE

[Jobs:](#)

- [couples near 500,000](#)
- [Parents with practice](#)
- [State's outhouses on way out](#)
- [Blacks behind bars in record numbers, census shows](#)
- [Towns try to prove census missed a few](#)
- [Homeownership gap remains wide](#)
- [N.C. seeks dismissal of Utah census suit](#)
- [Family trends diversify](#)
- [Hispanics embrace growing clout](#)
- [States reconsider tough drug laws that put mostly blacks in prison](#)
- [N.C. Latino workers get legal ally, advocate](#)
- ['Multiracial' a youthful category](#)
- [Retirement Town, North Carolina](#)
- [Census Bureau's data to provide more details about U.S. population](#)
- [Culture pledges allegiance to statistics](#)
- [Placid park marks center](#)
- [Rise of the single dad](#)
- [Triangle homeownership rises in the past decade](#)
- [Traditional family in flux](#)
- [Baby boom echo one factor crowding state's schools](#)
- [Business successes reflect diversity's impact](#)
- [Single-father households on the rise, census shows](#)
- [Indians lead leap in growth among Asians](#)
- [Cohabiting on the rise, census says](#)
- [Mexican-American population surged in '90s](#)
- [August court date is expected in second Utah census suit](#)
- [Blacks migrate to South in '90s by the millions](#)
- [Raleigh, Durham experience opposite growth trends](#)
- [The 10-year spread](#)
- [Judges say N.C. can keep seat](#)
- [Cities' rubber meets roads](#)
- [Diversity moves in](#)
- [Durham is all-minority](#)

"We hoped the benchmark would be how much did minorities catch up," he said. "But in reality there's been very little catching up."

The census numbers, from the long-form questionnaire sent to one in six households in April 2000, don't reflect the sagging economy of the past two years.

But they show that even a decade of good times couldn't overcome differences in education, wealth and other measures that have kept blacks trailing whites for decades.

For example, women raising children alone made up a quarter of all black family households in 2000, compared with 6 percent of white family households and 9 percent for Hispanics.

"Everybody was coming up, if you will, but that didn't necessarily mean that anything else was changing," said Andrea Harris, president of the N.C. Institute for Minority Economic Development, a nonprofit group in Durham that promotes minority-owned businesses.

Many blacks say race still holds them back in hiring and promotion. Warren H. Arrington Jr., president of American Safety Products, a medical and laboratory distribution business in Raleigh, believes his company has more difficulty winning and keeping clients because he is black.

"Those of us who are African-American or minority seem to be the first people to go when there's layoffs, or where a company wants to get rid of a business," said Arrington, who started his company in 1985.

Some also think Hispanics are displacing them in the workplace or holding down wages for blacks in low-skill manufacturing or service-sector jobs.

"You hear that all the time: They're taking our jobs," Dillahunt said. "You ask the question: Where are the black workers at? They're not in poultry anymore. What happened to them? They're not in hotels as maids or custodians. Well, where are they?"

A study by sociologists at N.C. State University two years ago concluded that in the mid-1990s Hispanics were mostly taking jobs that blacks left behind as they moved up economically.

Don Tomaskovic-Devey, an author of the study, suspects Hispanic households did better because they're larger on average and are more likely to include friends and extended family with two or more working adults.

"If you take a household of three people with crappy jobs in it and compare it with a household with one person with a crappy job in it, the three-person household is going to have a way higher income," he said.

Hispanic breadwinners also are more likely to be working two jobs and have large families to support, said Andrea Bazan-Manson, executive director of El Pueblo, an advocacy group based in Raleigh. "So the income may be higher, but it goes to support more people," Bazan-Manson said.

Eliseo and Maria, Mexican immigrants who have lived in Durham for seven years, say their family is just getting by on three incomes.

Eliseo, 39, who declined to give their last name because they are here illegally, sat beneath a tree at La Fiesta del Pueblo in Chapel Hill on Saturday and explained in Spanish that his job installing aluminum windows and doors, hers cleaning hotel rooms and their son-in-law's work building houses brings in about \$50,000 a year to support seven people.

"It's also true that if he has some free time from his job, he looks for other work" as a car mechanic, said Katie Pomerans, a senior fellow at El Pueblo who translated. "They find it hard to make do."

Previous census reports revealed that overall income rose 18 percent in the Triangle in the 1990s. Today's release shows for the first time how the gains were distributed among racial and ethnic groups.

Asians, another group of mostly immigrants, had the highest median household income, topping \$57,500 in the Triangle, up 46 percent from 1990. Nearly 73 percent of Asians in the Triangle were born outside the United States, compared with 68 percent foreign-born for Hispanics.

It's not clear how the economic downturn has affected wages since 2000.

- [Post your resume](#)
- [Search 1658 jobs](#)
- [Jobs at The N&O](#)

Cars:

- [Find a car](#)

Real Estate:

- [Commercial Properties](#)
- [Apartments](#)

Place an ad by phone:

919.829.4600
800.662.6040

- [Place an ad online](#)

[2000 population growth tops baby boom record](#)

[Triangle's growth in '90s makes top 10](#)

[N.C., Utah argue their cases for U.S. House seat](#)

[N.C., Utah debate rights to new seat](#)

[Racial choices in census applauded](#)

[The faces of change](#)

[Editorial: All those Tar Heels.](#)

..

[Priorities change with population](#)

[Count may have missed students](#)

[N.C. more urban, diverse](#)

[Some wary of census's multirace checkoff](#)

[Minority numbers grew in '90s, census shows](#)

[Census figures show huge increase in Asians](#)

[Census confirms growing diversity in U.S.](#)

[Number crunchers eager for release of census data](#)

[Commerce chief stands by census data](#)

[Census panel advises against count adjustment](#)

Staff writer Richard Stradling can be reached at 829-4739 or rstradli@newsobserver.com.

News researcher David Raynor contributed to this report.

[Help](#) || [Feedback](#) || [Parental Consent](#) || [Privacy Policy](#) || [User Agreement](#)

© Copyright 2002, The News & Observer Publishing Company. All material found on [triangle.com](#) (including [newsobserver.com](#), [carynews.com](#), [chapelhillnews.com](#), [knightdaletimes.com](#), [smithfieldherald.com](#), [wendellclarion.com](#) and [zebulonrecord.com](#)) is copyrighted The News & Observer Publishing Company and associated news services. No material may be reproduced or reused without explicit permission from The News & Observer Publishing Company, Raleigh, North Carolina.

The News & Observer Publishing Company is owned by [The McClatchy Company](#).