



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS

Research and Policy Services Division

Coddy L. Carter, Ph.D.

Minority Statistical Summary: Progress in Key Areas from 1993 to
Present

Minority Statistical Summary: Progress in Key Areas from 1993 to Present

In 1993, South Carolina governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. signed a bill into law that would establish an agency to study the causes and effects of minority socioeconomic deprivation.¹ The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs was specifically tasked with studying these phenomena in the state's African American population. The agency was also responsible for implementing programs to address socioeconomic deprivation. At the time of the agency's founding, statistics on deprivation were limited to disparities between the state's majority population and African Americans. These gaps included the following:

- African American males received only 6% of college degrees awarded at the state's institutions,
- African American per capita income was 50 cents for every per capita white dollar,
- 40% of African American children were living below poverty,
- African American males were disproportionately incarcerated, and
- African American infant mortality was two times higher than white infant mortality.

Ten years after the founding of the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs, a 2003 bill signed by Governor Mark Sanford expanded the agency to serve all other minority groups.² In this expansion, particular focus was placed on Native American and Hispanic-Latino populations. The present statistical summary both acknowledges the disparities that led to the founding of the Commission for Minority Affairs and reflects the expansion of the agency in its presentation of statistics.

The *Minority Statistical Summary* will not be an exhaustive examination of the causes and effects of socioeconomic deprivation. Rather, it will be a reference point for other statistical reports that are drafted by the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs. It will also provide a benchmark for measuring if there has been significant change in the socioeconomic situation of minorities in South Carolina. Key findings included the following:

- Though African Americans comprised 27% of South Carolina's population, they comprised only 2.7% of Palmetto Fellows and 16% of LIFE Scholars. Native Americans and Hispanic/LatinX students are underrepresented in Palmetto Fellows recipients.
- In 2017, Hispanic/LatinX South Carolina residents had the largest per capita income gap such that they made 51 cents for every White per capita dollar. They were followed by African Americans, who made 57 cents for every White per capita dollar.

¹ *SC Commission for Minority Affairs Budget Presentation FY 2017-18*. Presented to South Carolina House Ways and Means Committee. Retrieved from <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/CommitteeInfo/Ways&MeansTransportation&RegulatorySubcommittee/January182017Meeting/Minority%20Affairs%20Budget%20Presentation.pdf>.

² *SC Commission for Minority Affairs Program Evaluation Report FY 2017-18*. Presented to South Carolina Legislative Oversight Committee. Retrieved from <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/CommitteeInfo/HouseLegislativeOversightCommittee/AgencyWebpages/MinorityAffairs/PER%20-%20Complete%20PDF.PDF>.

- African American and Hispanic/LatinX poverty (both child poverty and overall poverty) was twice that of the White population, and Native American poverty (child and overall) was almost twice as high as White poverty.
- Minority males comprised 56% of all males incarcerated in 2017. Of minority males, African American males comprised 96% of all non-White individuals admitted to South Carolina correctional institutions in 2017.
- Between 2014 and 2016, minority infant mortality was 10.5 per 1,000, while white infant mortality was 4.9 per 1,000.

South Carolina Racial Demographics

Figure 1 displays the racial demographics of the state of South Carolina as reported in the 2017 American Community Survey. The graph shows that whites comprise the majority population of South Carolina at close to 64%. African Americans represent the largest non-White group, comprising 27% of the state’s population. Though not reported in the graph, African Americans also make up approximately 75 percent of South Carolina’s minority population. African Americans are trailed by Hispanic/LatinX (5.46%), multiracial (1.84%), and Asian (1.45%) groups. Native Americans, comprising 0.28% of South Carolina’s population, are the smallest minority group.

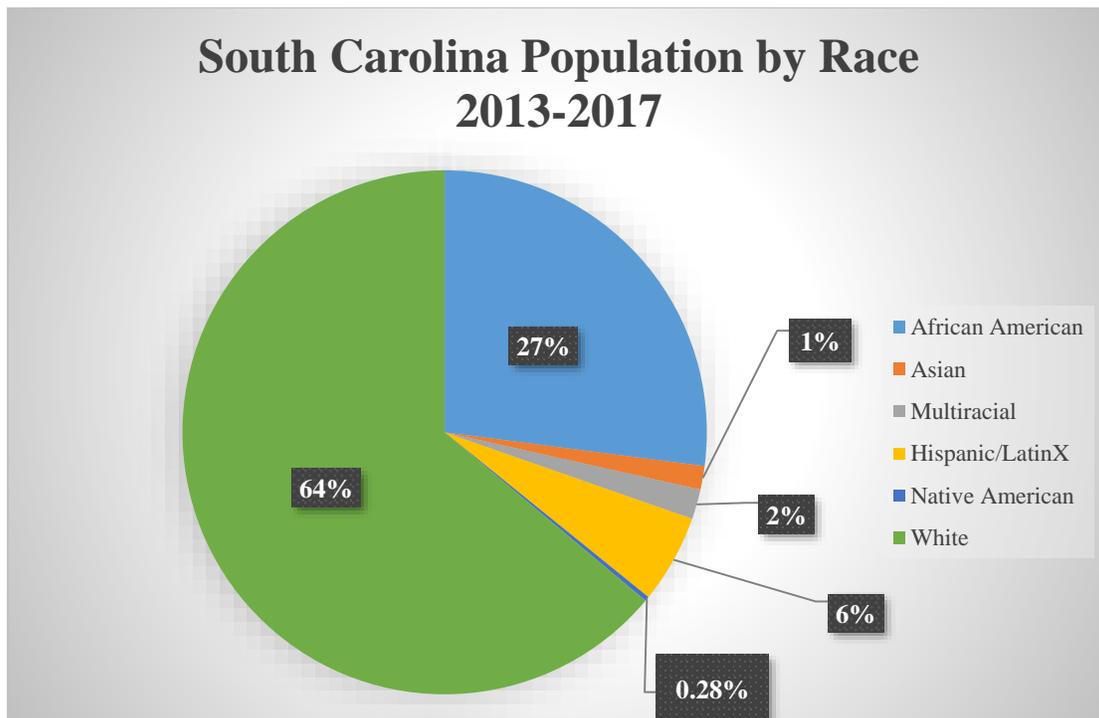


Figure 1. *South Carolina Demographics by Race*³.

³ American Community Survey 2013-2017 5 –Year Estimates, DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates.

Access to Higher Education

1993: African American males comprised 6% of college graduates.

Present: As of 2016, African American men still comprise 6.57% of college degrees recipients in the state⁴. This number is misleading as it is a demographic trend among all racial groups to have more women attending college and consequently receiving a greater share of degrees than men. As a result, African American and minority men will usually yield low figures in higher education statistics. As a result, it is preferable to examine racial demographics without looking specifically at gender. Moreover, a better point of analysis is the pathway to college and universities. Table 1 shows that among all scholarship recipients, distribution by race is proportional to the state racial demographics. Stark differences emerge when examining the LIFE Scholarship, Palmetto Fellows, need-based grants, and the HOPE Scholarship. African American students are underrepresented in proportion to the larger population in LIFE scholarships and Palmetto Fellows recipients, but overrepresented in need-based grants and HOPE Scholarships. Additionally, Hispanic/LatinX and Native American students are underrepresented in Palmetto Fellows, but fairly proportionate in all other scholarships. Conversely, Asian students are overrepresented in proportion to the larger population in Palmetto Fellows. While Asians only comprise 1.45% of South Carolina’s population, Asian students received 4.5% of Palmetto Fellows.

Table 1						
Percent of Students by Race and <i>Scholarship Type</i>						
Race	Scholarship Type					
	LIFE Scholarship	Palmetto Fellows	Need-Based Grants	HOPE Scholarship	Lottery Tuition	All Scholarships
African American	16.19	2.68	36.47	37.93	24.25	23.53
Asian	2.03	4.48	1.47	1.03	1.45	1.86
Hispanic/LatinX	4.32	2.88	4.07	3.99	4.43	4.17
Native American	0.31	0.2	0.34	0.37	0.44	0.35
White	71.61	85.5	52.18	50.9	63.83	64.63

Source: SC Commission on Higher Education, Scholarships by Race (Fall 2016).

Income and Poverty

⁴ South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. *South Carolina Higher Education Statistical Abstract 2017*.

1993: African American per capita income was less than half of whites. This means that African Americans during that time period made less than 50 cents for every White per capita dollar.

Present: Today, all minority groups still trail the majority population in per capita income. Asians have the lowest gap such that they make about 87 cents for every majority per capita dollar, while Hispanic/LatinX residents have highest racial income gap at 51 cents for every majority dollar. African Americans and Native Americans also have high racial income gaps at 51 and 66 cents for every majority dollar, respectively.

Table 2		
Per Capita Income Disparities		
Race	Per Capita Income	Per Capita Ratio for Every Majority Dollar
African American	\$17,745	\$0.57
Asian	\$26,842	\$0.87
Hispanic/LatinX	\$15,846	\$0.51
Native American	\$20,616	\$0.66
White	\$31,016	---

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5 –Year Estimates, B19013A-I: Per Capita Income by Race.

1993: Four out of ten African American children were living in poverty

Present: Today, even more African American children (45.22%) are below poverty. Hispanic/LatinX children trail closely with 41.16% living below poverty. About 31% of Native American children live below poverty. These findings mean that African American and Hispanic/LatinX children are twice as likely as White (17.62%) and Asian (17.21%) children to live below poverty. Overall poverty results mirror child poverty as Hispanic/LatinX (28.62%) and African American (26.69%) residents appear to be twice as likely as White (11.96%) residents to be below poverty. Native Americans (22.22%) are almost twice as likely as the majority population to be below poverty. Asians were comparable to the majority population in both child poverty (17.21%) and overall poverty (14.86%).

Table 03		
Percent below Poverty by Race		
Race	% of Children below Poverty	% of All Residents below Poverty
African American	45.22	26.69
Asian	17.21	14.86
Hispanic/LatinX	41.16	28.62
Native American	31.39	22.22
White	17.62	11.96

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5 –Year Estimates, B17001A-I: Poverty by Sex by Age.

Incarceration

1993: African American men were disproportionately incarcerated.

Present: Minorities as a whole comprised 36% of South Carolina’s population. Though this is the case, minority men comprised 56% of all men incarcerated in 2017. Of the minority men admitted to South Carolina prisons in 2017, 96% of them were African American.

Table 3				
South Carolina Male Incarceration 2017				
African American	Other	All Minority	White	Total
3,911	166	4,077	3,160	7,237
<i>Source: South Carolina Department of Corrections. Distribution of Committing County for Inmates Admitted FY 2017.</i>				

Infant Mortality

1993: African American women were two times as likely to experience infant mortality as white women.

Present: Minority infant mortality exceeded white infant mortality in raw number by 57 deaths. In proportion to their respective populations, minority infant mortality rate was 2.14 times higher than white mortality rate.

Table 4		
Infant Mortality 2014-2016		
	Minority	White
Number of Infant Mortalities	614	557
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000	10.5	4.9
<i>Source: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. South Carolina Vital and Morbidity Statistics 2016.</i>		

Future Directions

Infant mortality and incarceration rates showed disparities between minorities as a whole and the majority population. Moreover, these disparities appeared to have been unchanged over the past 25 years. The racially disaggregated results for poverty, income, and education showed that African American, Hispanic/LatinX, and Native American populations were acutely deprived in comparison to Whites. The racially disaggregated results also found that Asians were comparable to Whites across the measures. These findings indicate that future studies need to be

conducted to examine between-group differences among South Carolina's minorities. Moreover, this research has to be careful in not juxtaposing Asians against the other three minority groups. Though it may appear that Asians are doing well socioeconomically, there could always be exceptions to what the statistics show.

The *Minority Statistical Summary* has ultimately shown that very little measurable progress has been made in closing the gap between the minority and majority populations in South Carolina since the founding of the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs. Though it established a benchmark for examining the problem, recommendations for remedying socioeconomic deprivation were outside the scope of the report. Though this was the case, the present report does set the stage for future studies on deprivation by identifying some key problem statistics.

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies recently published a series of reports on congressional staff diversity across a number of states that were comparable to the present report.⁵ These reports paired demographic tables that showed the breakdowns of senate staffs along with recommendations for improving staff diversity. For example, the reports recommended that programs be developed to recruit more minority staffers in order to create pipelines to top congressional staff for minorities.⁶ In the context of the present report, recommendations might include methods that could decrease poverty in minority groups or increase the share of scholarships awarded. Future studies developed by the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs must balance research rigor and practical recommendations. This means that research must be consistent with the agency's mission to be an authority on issues of socioeconomic deprivation and translating these concerns to policymakers who can effect change in South Carolina's minority populations.

⁵McCray, Karra W., Bell, Donald, & Overton, Spencer. *Racial Diversity among Top Staff of the Mississippi Congressional Delegation*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

⁶ Ibid.