



Voices of the Community: Prince George's County

Perceptions of the County Vary Widely by Income; Residents of Color More Satisfied, Hopeful

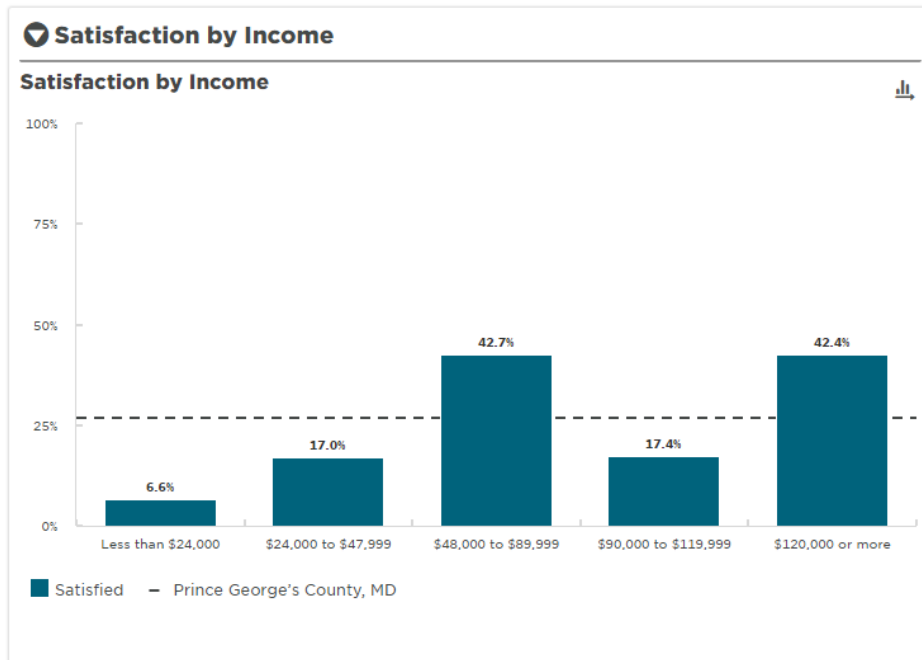
Though Prince George's County is the area most likely to feel that economic conditions are currently getting worse (30%), and its residents are the least likely to recommend the county as a place to live, its residents of color are demonstrably more satisfied and hopeful than their white neighbors. Residents of color— despite being 13 percentage points more likely to say that economic conditions are growing worse (32%) – are four times more likely than white residents to believe living conditions will be better in five years (42%), and more than twice as likely to be “likely” or “very likely” to recommend the area as a place to live (63%).

Still, it bears noting that while 72% of all Prince George's County residents – including 77% of its residents of color – believe that the changes happening in the community are benefiting everyone or people like them, just 54% of those with an annual household income of less than \$48,000 say the same. Twenty-six percent of those residents say the changes are not benefiting anyone. This represents a theme that emerges in many sections of the data: perceptions of the county vary widely by income.

Wealthier Residents Believe Area is More Accommodating than Lower-Income Residents

At a glance, Prince George's County's responses reflect the highest scores in the Greater Washington region when asked whether the area is “good” or “very good” for low-income residents (36%) and availability of affordable housing (27%). However, these numbers drop precipitously when looking at residents with household incomes of less than \$48,000: just 20% of these residents say it is a “good” or “very good” place for low-income people, and 12% say the same about the availability of affordable housing.

How would you rate the availability of affordable housing in the place where you live?



This may provide some insight into another critical finding: While 87% of the county’s residents say they never use nonprofit services, just 54% of those residents say it is because they do not need the assistance. This means that 40% of Prince George’s County residents say that they do not use these services because they are unaware of any organizations that can help, the quality is not high, or they are not convenient. This may be connected to the lack of visibility around organizations that are needed – but not accessed – by many.

Housing Costs an Important Issue -- Though Perhaps Not the Most Important

When asked how they are managing financially, 16% of Prince George’s County residents are finding it at least “somewhat difficult” to manage, and an additional 25% are “just getting by.” While 39% also say that they are at least “somewhat worried” about their ability to pay their rent or mortgage, the ratio of those two groups – those having financial difficulties or just getting by, and those worried about paying for housing – is actually lower than every other area but Fairfax County.

Generally, in the Greater Washington region, more people worry about their rent or mortgage than say they are struggling with finances. As the opposite is true in Prince George’s County, this may suggest that the 30% of its residents who could not maintain their current lifestyles for even one month, were they to lose their current sources of income, are more likely to be worried about non-housing costs, rather than making rent.

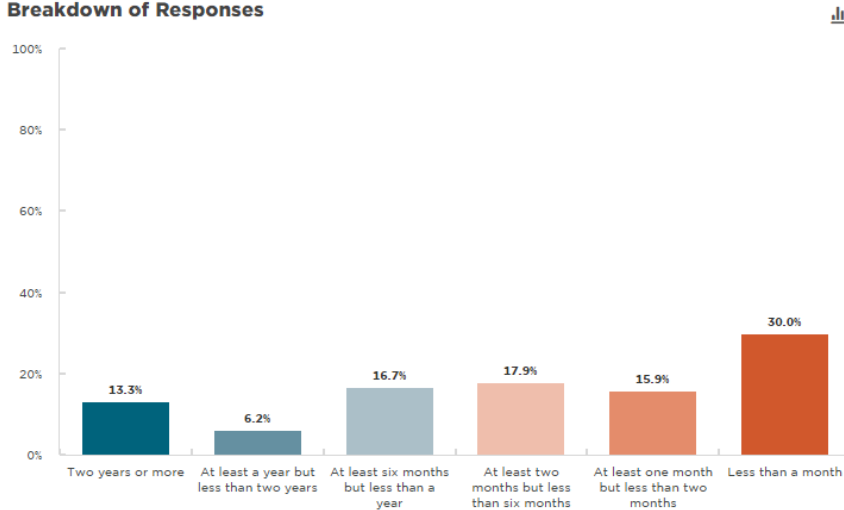
Without income, how long could continue to live as you live today?

Prince George's County, MD

36.2%

Six months or more

Breakdown of Responses



Part of this may be attributed to barriers to quality employment: 61% of the county's residents are employed, and 51% are employed full time. Both represent the lowest rates in the Greater Washington region. While in most cases, barriers to employment look similar to regional averages, one type of employment barrier is particularly pervasive in Prince George's County: credit history and financial problems. Fifteen percent of residents cited this as a barrier, more than twice the region's overall percentage.

Moreover, 12% of residents who said they had been discriminated against in the past year said this had manifested during banking or while applying for a loan. While there are several finance-based challenges that surface in the data, it seems that one area which uniquely impacts Prince George's County is discrimination in banking, and the impact that can have on employment prospects.