

- Latinos make up 62% of those without a high school diploma followed by African-Americans (26%), Asians (20%), and whites (13%).
- In the decade between 1980 and 1990, the proportion of adults with less than a fifth grade education increased by 70%.

### Economic Resources

Poverty and income disparities, employment rates, and housing characteristics are important factors that influence the health of a community. Median household income is a useful indicator to characterize household/family economic resources and the distribution of income in a given community. Income is a predictor of a family's economic well-being, which subsequently determines a family's ability to obtain adequate housing, nutrition, and health insurance, and may be related to health behaviors. Table 1.6 highlights a number of key figures related to income. In addition:

- The median income in Los Angeles County was \$43,942 in 1998.
- 13% of Los Angeles County households had incomes over \$100,000, and 18% had incomes below \$15,000 in 1998.

**Table 1.6: Income, Poverty and Unemployment, Los Angeles County, 1998**

Household Income	Households	Percentage
Less than \$15,000	552,036	18
\$15,000–\$34,999	806,930	26
\$35,000–\$49,999	475,317	15
\$50,000–\$74,999	579,840	19
\$75,000–\$99,000	295,132	9
\$100,000+ and over	397,479	13
Total Households	3,106,734	100

  

Persons Below Poverty Level	Number	Percentage
All Persons	2,151,885	22
0–4	257,559	34
5–14	451,424	32
15–24	333,637	27
25–34	386,134	23
35–44	297,622	18
45–54	180,847	16
55–64	103,757	15
65–74	77,215	14
75 and over	63,690	14

  

Labor Force Status <sup>1</sup>		
Unemployed	326,488	7.0

*1. All persons aged 16 and over.*

Source: United Way of Greater Los Angeles, 1999. State of the County Report: Los Angeles 1998-99.

- 22% of Los Angeles County residents lived below the poverty level in 1998.
- 34% of children ages 0 to 4 lived below the poverty level in 1998.

Like income, unemployment has adverse consequences such as poverty, lack of health insurance, and stress. Several studies have shown unemployment as one of many socioeconomic factors that explain differences in risk factors, morbidity and mortality between population groups.

- 7% of persons age 16 and over were unemployed in Los Angeles County, compared to 6% in the entire state in 1998.
- The unemployment rate (7%) did not vary by gender in Los Angeles County in 1998.

Availability and affordability of adequate housing impacts the health and economic well-being of individuals and communities. Los Angeles County has one of the most expensive housing markets in the United States, causing problems for the poor and low-income population. The availability of affordable housing in the county has declined. These factors have forced many low and moderate-income families out of the market.

- Median rent in 1995 was reported at \$654, and median home value was \$192,800.<sup>8</sup>
- 53% of housing units were rented, and 47% were owner occupied in 1995.<sup>9</sup>

## **Violent Crime**

Violence and violent crime impacts the health and safety, quality of life, and economic and social well-being of a community. Indicators of violent crime include rates of homicide, suicide, firearm-related deaths, assault injuries, rape, domestic violence, and child abuse.<sup>10</sup> Crime statistics have significant limitations; it is estimated that 43% of violent crime in the U.S. is not reported.<sup>11</sup> In addition, statistics typically reflect the characteristics of the perpetrator rather than those of the victim, and can reflect law enforcement activities rather than true prevalence of crime. For example, drug arrests are not an accurate measure of drug use but of the activities enlisted to curb use. However, these statistics do reflect an important dimension of social and environmental conditions related to community health.

- Los Angeles County's homicide arrest rate (11.7 per 100,000) was higher than the state's (7.3 per 100,000) in 1996.
- In 1996 juvenile felony arrests in Los Angeles County numbered 24,013 (724.3 per 100,000 youth ages 10 to 17) and accounted for just under half of all juvenile arrests.<sup>12</sup>
- From 1975 to 1997, arrests in Los Angeles County declined by 45% for youth and 28% for adults.<sup>13</sup>
- Gang-related deaths decreased by 44% from 1995 to 1997 in Los Angeles County.<sup>14</sup>

More specific information on violence and unintentional injury is presented in Chapters Three and Four of this report.

## Demographic and Social Indicators—Data Sources

1. California State Department of Finance  
Demographic Research Unit

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2. County of Los Angeles, Urban Research Division

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3. United Way of Greater Los Angeles

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4. Children’s Planning Council  
Los Angeles County

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5. Los Angeles County Office of Education

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6. California Department of Education

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*See Appendix for complete references on these and other data resources.*

### Endnotes

1. Institute of Medicine. *Durch, JS, Bailey, LA, and Stoto, MA, eds. Improving Health in the Community: A Role for Performance Monitoring.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1997.
2. Russell Sage Foundation. *Waldinger, R, Bozorgmehr, M, eds. Ethnic Los Angeles.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996.
3. See note 1 above.
4. See note 2 above.
5. See note 1 above.
6. See note 1 above.
7. See note 1 above.
8. *United Way of Greater Los Angeles, 1999. State of the County Report: Los Angeles 1998-1999.*
9. See note 8 above.
10. See note 1 above.
11. See note 8 above.
12. See note 8 above.
13. See note 8 above.
14. See note 8 above.