

2021

City of Columbia and Richland and Lexington Counties Racial Equity Index Summary



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Introduction

In spring 2021, the City of Columbia commissioned a comprehensive analysis of wellbeing, through a race equity lens, for residents of Richland and Lexington Counties and the City of Columbia. The resulting *Racial Equity Index*, released in June 2021, reports findings that promote greater awareness and understanding of the depth and breadth of the differences between the White and the Black experience in these areas of South Carolina.

Taken together, the findings reported in the *Racial Equity Index* show systematic and unjust distribution of social, economic, and environmental resources that result in poorer outcomes for Black residents in Richland and Lexington Counties and the City of Columbia. As in most other areas of South Carolina, race and place determine largely whether people have opportunity to thrive.

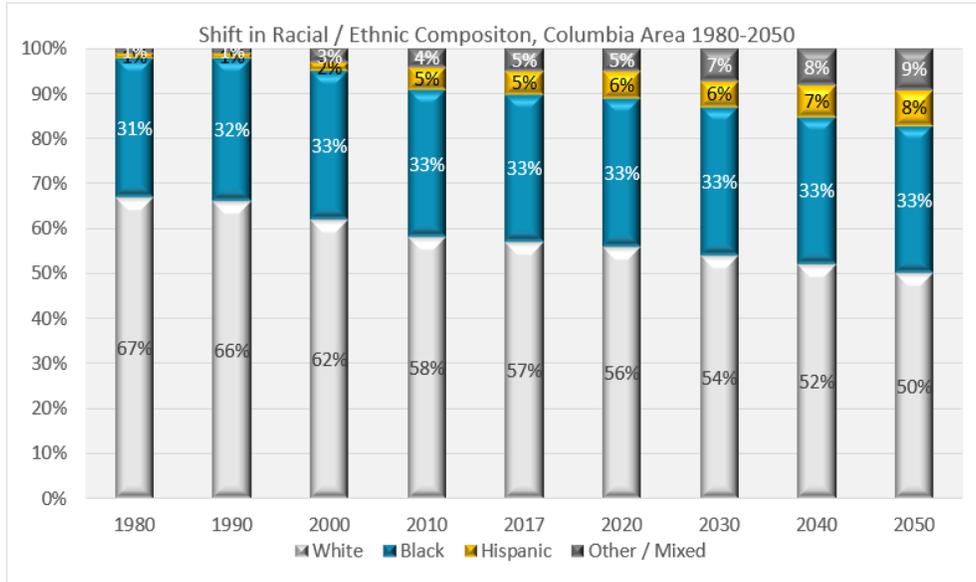
The following are highlights from the *Racial Equity Index*; however, these are limited. For further information and a deeper understanding of the data, refer to the complete document.

Demographics

Richland County and the City of Columbia are more diverse than Lexington County and more diverse than South Carolina and the U.S. in terms of race: 75% of Lexington County residents are non-Hispanic Whites; 41% of Richland County residents are non-Hispanic Whites; 52% City of Columbia residents are non-Hispanic Whites.

Racial Composition / Hispanic Ethnicity, 2019						
	White Alone, Non-Hispanic	Black Alone, Non-Hispanic	American Indian, Non-Hispanic	Asian Alone	Two or more races, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic of any Race
Columbia City	52.2%	35.4%	0.1%	2.6%	2.5%	6.9%
Lexington County	74.8%	14.8%	0.3%	2.1%	2.2%	6.3%
Richland County	41.4%	47.5%	0.2%	3.0%	2.4%	5.3%
SC	63.5%	26.3%	0.3%	1.7%	2.1%	5.8%
US	60.0%	12.4%	0.7%	5.6%	2.5%	18.4%

Racial demographics in all three geographies are shifting. The large majority of residents age 75 and older are White, but a much smaller portion of residents age 0-14 is White.

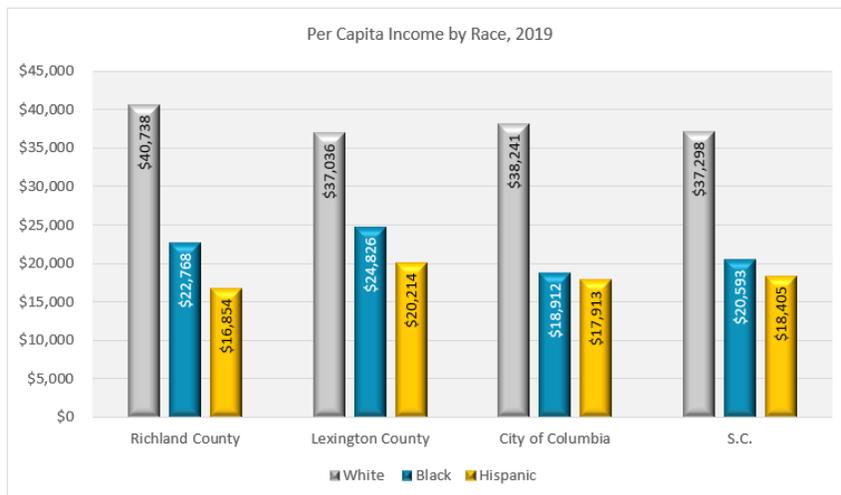


Half of residents in the Columbia area will be People of Color by 2050.

Income, Wealth, and Poverty

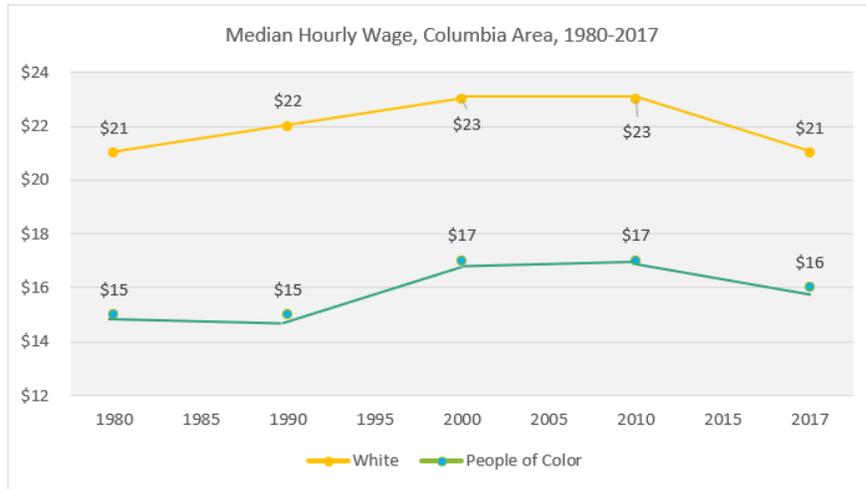
In 2017, income for Black residents in the Columbia area would have increased by 57% if racial gaps in income were eliminated.

Income for White residents in Richland County is 79% higher than for Black residents and 142% higher than for Hispanic residents. Income for White residents in Lexington County is 49% higher than for Black residents and 83% higher than for Hispanic residents. Income for White residents in the City of Columbia is 102% higher than for Black residents and 113% higher than for Hispanic residents.



In Richland and Lexington Counties and in the City of Columbia, White household income is 68%, 62% and 113% higher than Black household income, respectively.

Race-based and gender-based inequities in wages exist all three geographies. Although women earn consistently less than men within each race / ethnic category, Whites earn more than Blacks, whether men or women.



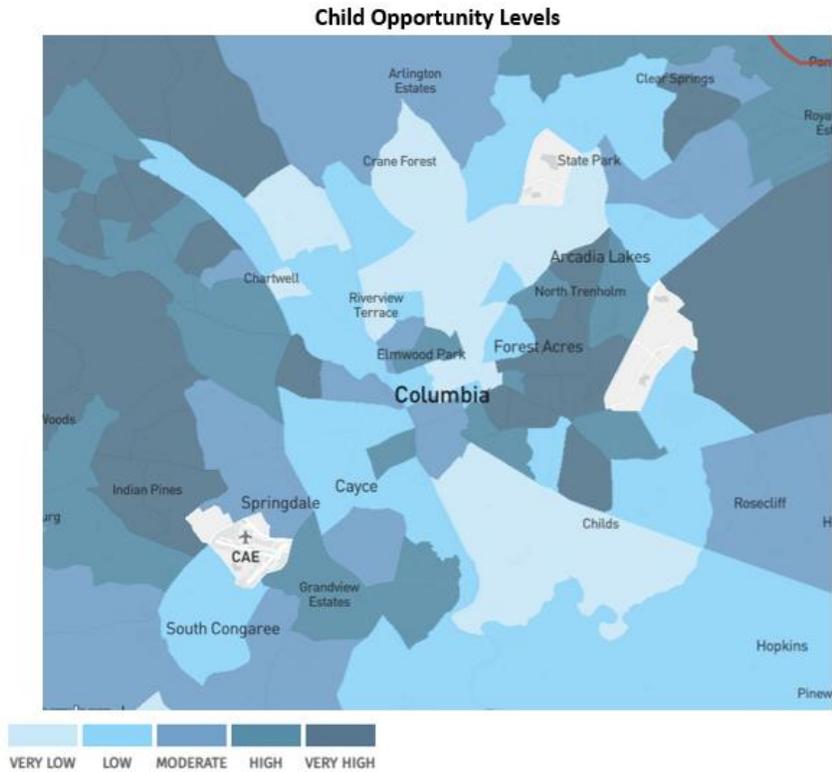
None of the demographic groups (White, Black, Hispanic) in Richland or Lexington Counties or the City of Columbia earn median wages that would support the worker him/herself and one child.

The overall poverty rate is higher in Richland County and the City of Columbia, compared to the state average. The City of Columbia also has a higher child poverty rate compared to the state average.

Blacks experience higher poverty rates than Whites in all cases. Overall poverty is 91% higher for Blacks in Richland County, 112% higher for Blacks in Lexington County, and 104% higher for Blacks in the City, compared to Whites.

Regardless of family composition, Black families have higher poverty rates compared to White families.

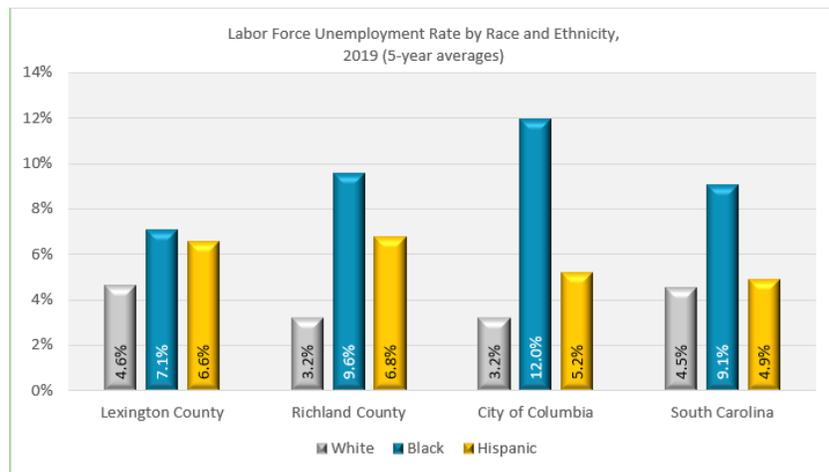
In Richland County, almost 80% of children in poverty are Black, while Black children constitute only 56% of children. In Lexington County, 30% of children in poverty are Black, while Black children constitute only 19% of children. The inverse is true for White children.



Richland County is among the worst counties in the U.S. in helping poor children up the income ladder, better than only about 1% of counties. Lexington County is slightly better but still among the worst counties in the U.S. in helping poor children up the income ladder, better than only about 11% of counties.

Employment

Although a greater proportion of Black residents in Richland and Lexington Counties are employed or looking for work compared to the proportion of White residents, greater proportions of Blacks are unemployed.

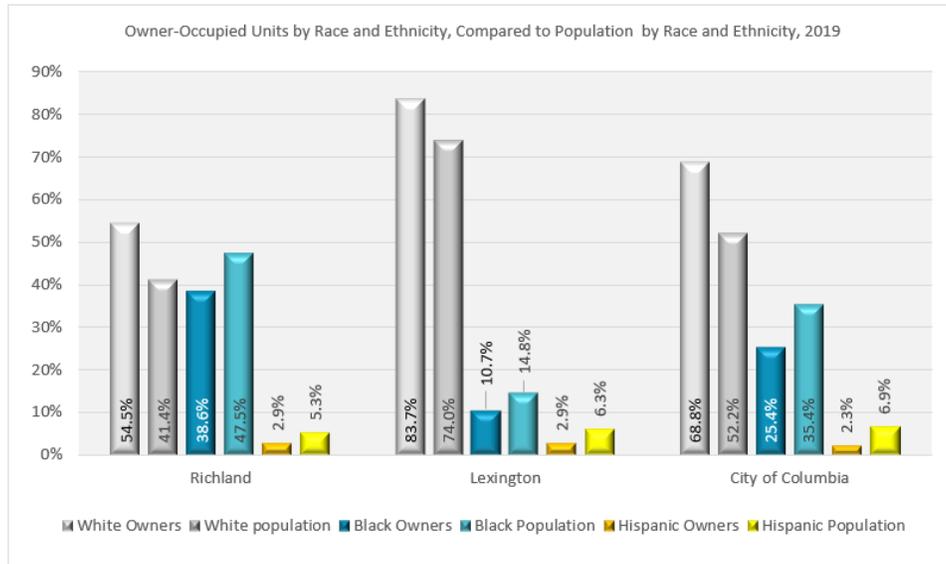


Richland County has a much larger share of minority-owned business, compared to Lexington County and to the state.

Housing

67% of homeless persons in the Midlands identified in the 2019 Point in Time Count were Black, while 29% were White.

Blacks are overrepresented as renters and underrepresented as homeowners in Richland and Lexington Counties.



Richland County is the fourth most racially segregated of the state's counties, and Lexington County is the 14th most segregated.

Democracy and Inclusion

that in the 2020 election in Richland County, Whites comprised 47% of voters and 41% of the county population. In Lexington County, Whites comprised 83% of voters while comprising only 74% of the county population.



Currently, 34% of Lexington County’s children, and 45% of Richland County’s children live in single parent families. This measure has not improved in the last ten years.

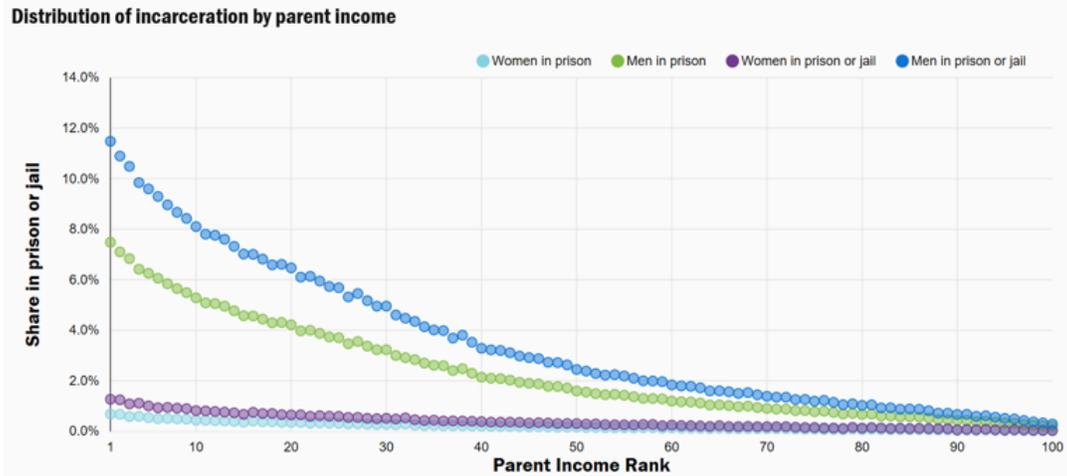
The majority of White families in all three geographies are headed by a married couple. For Black families, less than half in each geography are headed by a married couple. In the City of Columbia, 53% of Black families are headed by single females.

Criminal Justice

South Carolina data show that Blacks who commit petty crimes are almost 50% more likely to be jailed compared to their White counterparts, and Black offenders will likely serve longer sentences for low severity crimes.

In South Carolina, two-thirds or more of individuals serving life and virtual life sentences are Black.

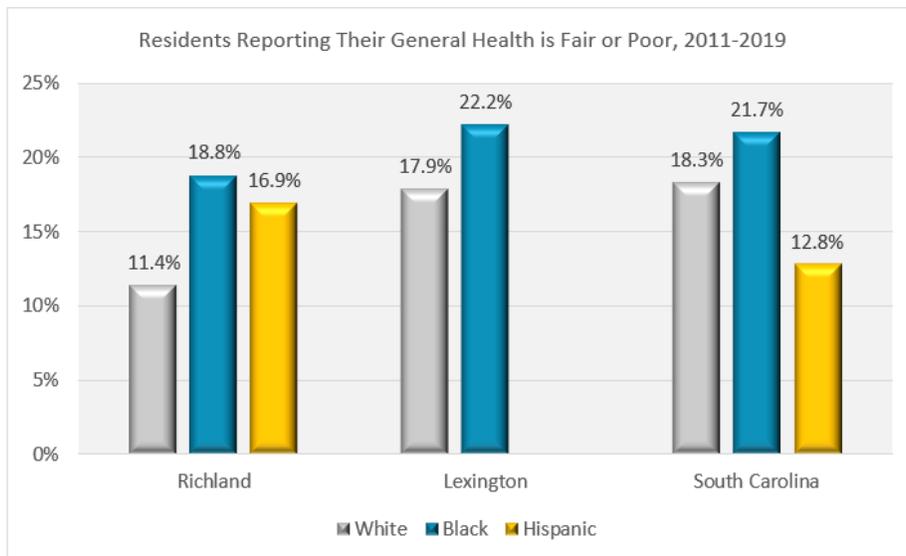
Black students bear a disproportionate share of disciplinary actions in Richland and Lexington County school districts, supporting the concept of a school-to-prison pipeline.



Data across all states demonstrate that race and socioeconomic status are strong predictors of interaction with the criminal justice system at every level.

Health

Blacks in Richland and Lexington Counties reporting that their general health is only “fair” or “poor” at significantly higher rates than White residents.

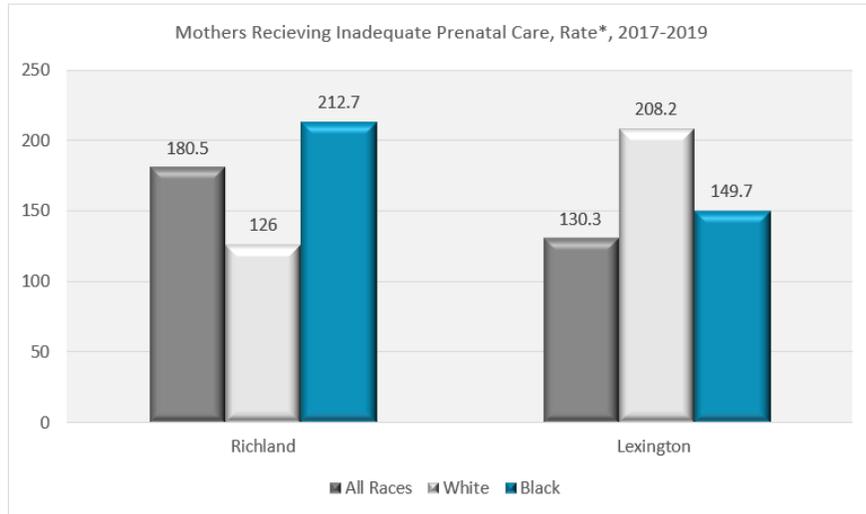


6% of Richland County residents and 12.7% of Lexington County residents report excessive “poor mental health” days. There is no race inequity in Richland County on this measure, but in Lexington County, Blacks report a higher rate of poor mental health days.

White and Black residents of Lexington County report significantly greater poor physical health days compared to Richland County and the state average. For both the state and Lexington County, Whites report more poor health days than Blacks.

The infant mortality rates in Richland and Lexington Counties are more than twice as high for Black babies compared to White babies.

In Lexington County, 172 babies were born in 2017-2019 to mothers who received no prenatal care at all, constituting 20 of every 1,000 babies born in those years. In Richland County, 423 babies were born in 2017-2019 to mothers who received no prenatal care at all, constituting 19.5 per 1,000 babies. Black mothers are significantly more likely to have had no prenatal care or inadequate prenatal care.

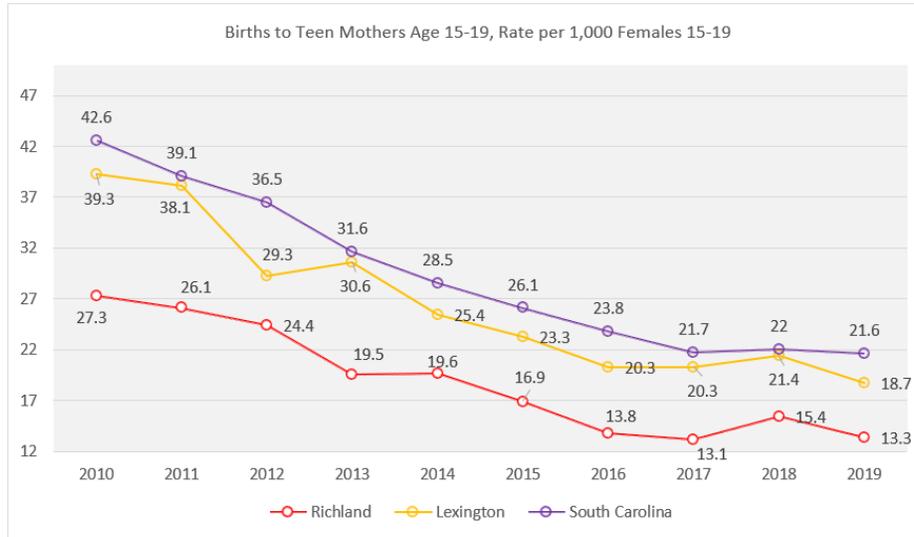


7% of White newborns in Richland and Lexington Counties have low birth weight, but 13% of Black newborns in Richland and 17% in Lexington have low birth weight. This measure has not improved over time.

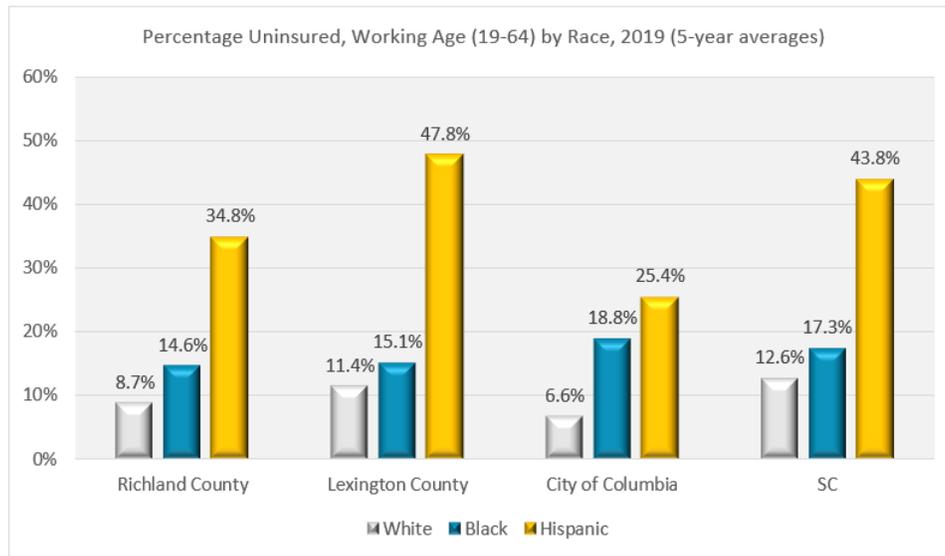
South Carolina, which ranks 10th among the 50 states for adult obesity prevalence at 35.4%. Obesity prevalence is much higher for Blacks (children and adults) compared to Whites and Hispanics.

For all cancers combined, Richland and Lexington Counties have higher cancer incidence for Blacks than for Whites. This is the inverse of the state average. The rate of cancer mortality is also higher for Blacks in Richland and Lexington Counties, as it is with the state average.

Although Richland and Lexington Counties have lower teen birth rates than the state average, and have had declining rates over the past ten years, disparities exist by race with Black teenagers having higher birth rates than their White counterparts.



In all three geographies, Blacks lack health insurance at higher rates than Whites. In all three geographies, Black working-age residents are more likely to be uninsured, compared to White residents. In the City of Columbia, the Black-White inequity is widest.



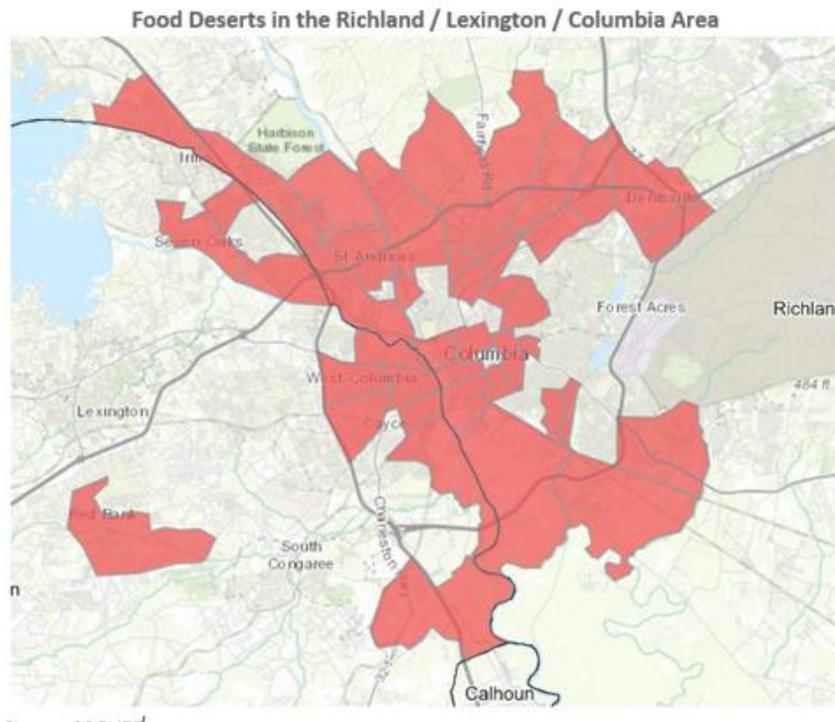
Life expectancy is highly correlated with race and place. Life expectancy is 74.8 years for Richland County and 75.6 years for Lexington County, both lower than the state average. The range (highest minus lowest) of life expectancy at birth in Richland County census tracts is 22.7 years; lowest life expectancy is 64.3 years, and the highest is 87.0 years. The range of life expectancy for Lexington County census tracts is 17.9 years; lowest life expectancy is 71.0 years, and the highest is 88.9 years. The range in the City of Columbia is 20.1; lowest life expectancy is 69.9 years, and the highest is 87.0 years

There is significant racial disparity in Years of Potential Life lost before age 75 (YPLL). In Lexington County, Whites have a YPLL rate of 7,600 years per 100,000 population, while Blacks have a YPLL rate of 9,100 years. In Richland County, Whites have a YPLL rate of 6,200 years per 100,000 population, while Blacks have a YPLL rate of 9,800.

Environment

Richland County is considered “moderately vulnerable” to natural and man-made disasters, and Lexington County is considered “low to moderately vulnerable”.

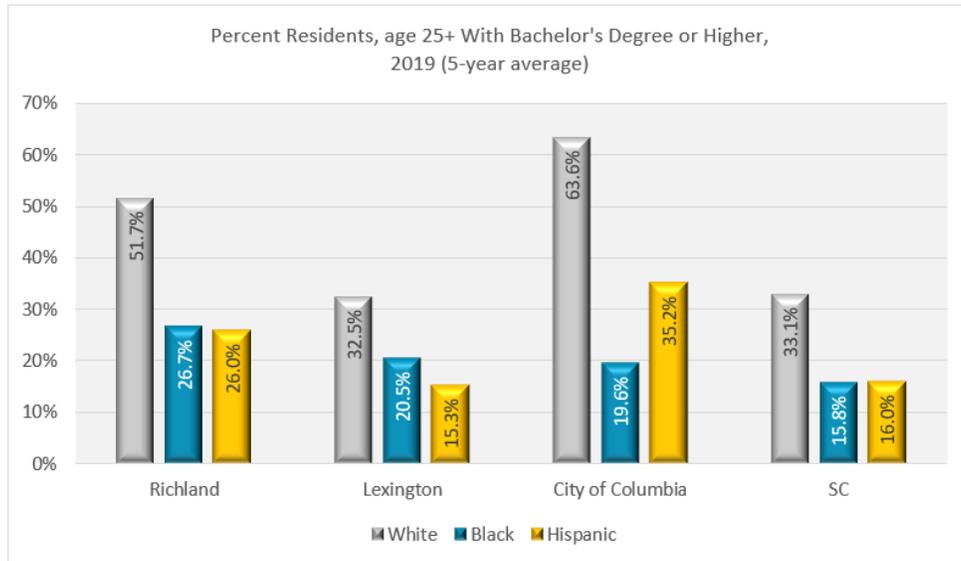
Food deserts occur largely in low-income and minority areas. Out of the 89 census tracts in Richland County, 43 are classified as food deserts. Out of the 74 census tracts in Lexington County, 12 are classified as food deserts.



Black and Hispanic children bear disproportionate exposure to lead. Richland and Lexington Counties are counties of concern for lead exposure, given large areas of low screening and multiple known sites of lead contamination.

Education

In all three geographies, there are marked racial inequities in education attainment.



White students meeting the third-grade reading standard range from 36% to 70% across Richland and Lexington school districts, whereas Black students meeting the reading standard range from 11% to 37%.

White students meeting the third-grade math standard range from 39% to 81% across districts, whereas Black students meeting the math standard range from 9% to 53%.

White students meeting the eighth-grade math standard range from 13% to 64% across districts, whereas Black students meeting the math standard range from 6% to 30%.

White students meeting the eighth-grade reading standard range from 27% to 74% across districts, whereas Black students meeting the reading standard range from 6% to 39%.

Black households have lower access to both computers and to the Internet in all three geographies.

In all but one district, Black students graduate from high school at lower rates than White students. However, compared to the state average, all Richland and Lexington County districts have higher graduation rates for Black students.

“Idleness” for Black teens is markedly higher than for White and Hispanic teens in all three geographies.