

II Poverty and Education

Innumerable studies have revealed a strong relationship between education, income and poverty status. This section examines the rates of poverty and educational attainment in Houston and the other nine largest cities in the United States between 1990 and 2003.

The 2000 Census states that 9.7% of the Houston population (those 25 and older) had obtained graduate or professional degrees, which is above the national average of 8.9%, and 50% of Houston's population had some form of college education.

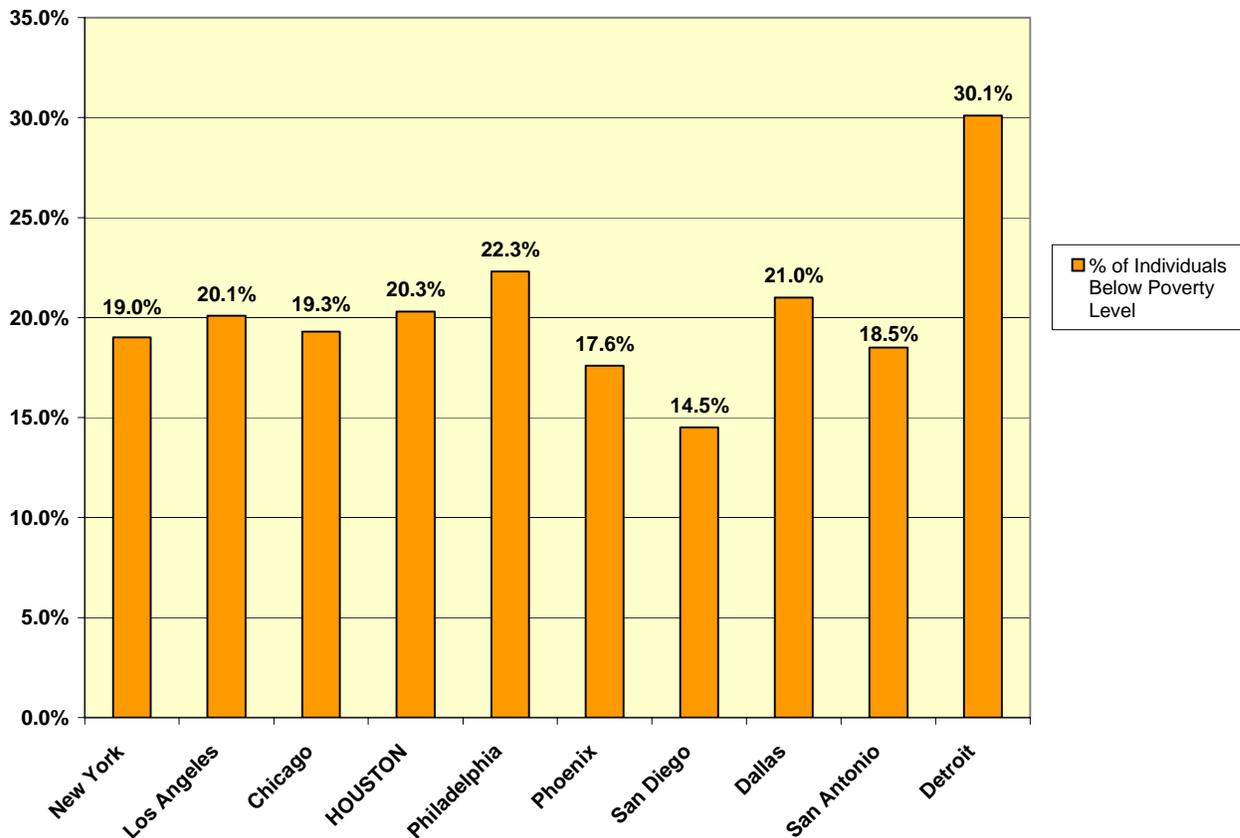
In 2003, the City of Detroit, at 16.7%, had the lowest percentage of people with a college degree and also has the highest percentage of individuals living below the poverty level (30.1%) in the ten-city comparison.

In 2003, 16.4% of the nationwide population 25 and older did not have a high school diploma. The rate was higher than the national average in all but one of the ten cities studied (San Diego, 15.3%). Houston had the third highest rate of citizens without a high school diploma at 27.1%, though this represents an improvement over the 29.6 % recorded in 2000.

According to the American Community Survey, in 2003 Houston had a poverty rate of 20.3%, about average for the ten cities. San Diego, the city with the highest rates of high school and college graduates, had the lowest percentage of people living in poverty (14.5%).

Houston was one of five cities to experience a decline in the poverty rate between 1990 and 2003.

Percentage of Individuals Below Poverty: 2003



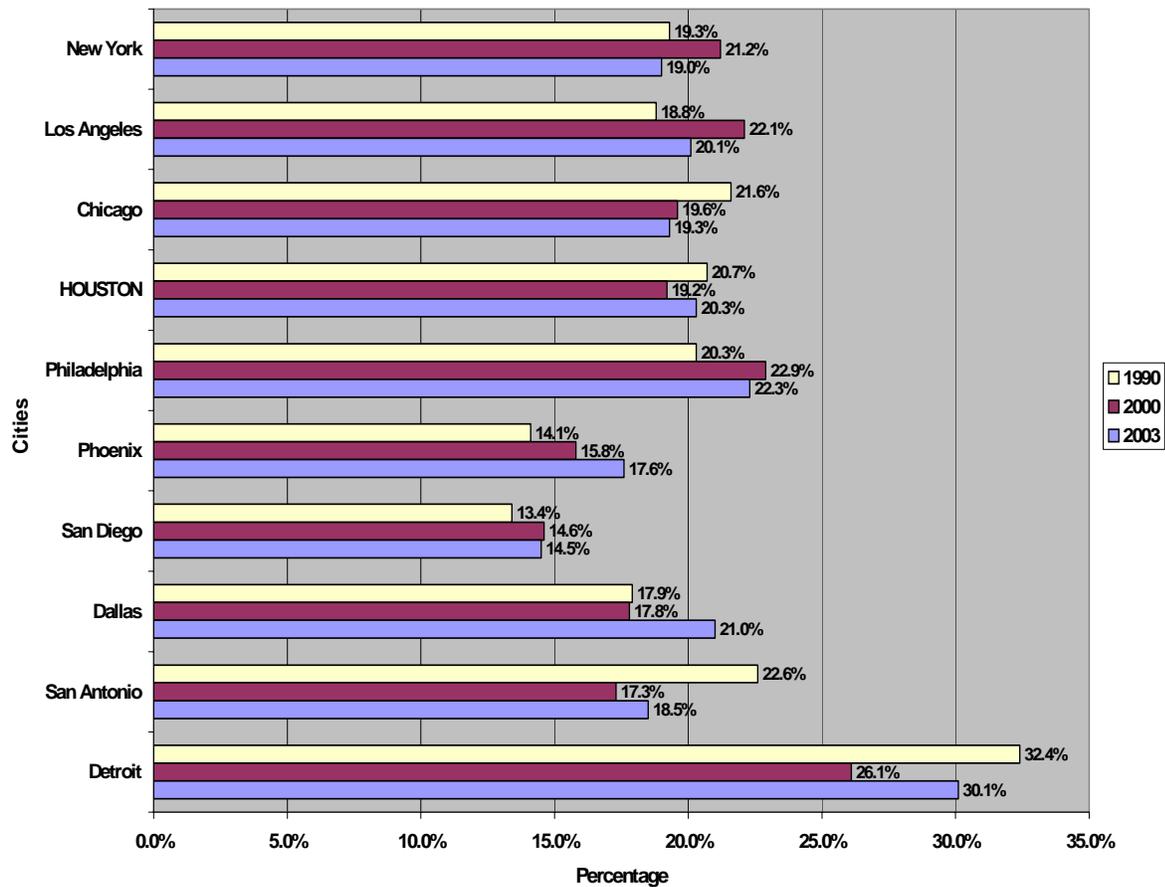
* Houston's poverty rate is similar to those of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas and San Antonio, per the 2003 American Community Survey.

* Detroit has the highest percentage of individuals living below the poverty level in the ten-city comparison, significantly higher than those of the other cities.

* San Diego has the lowest poverty rate at 14.5%.

(Poverty Level: the minimum dollar amount needed for individuals, couples or families to purchase food and meet other basic needs.)

Percentage Change of Individuals Below Poverty: 1990, 2000 and 2003



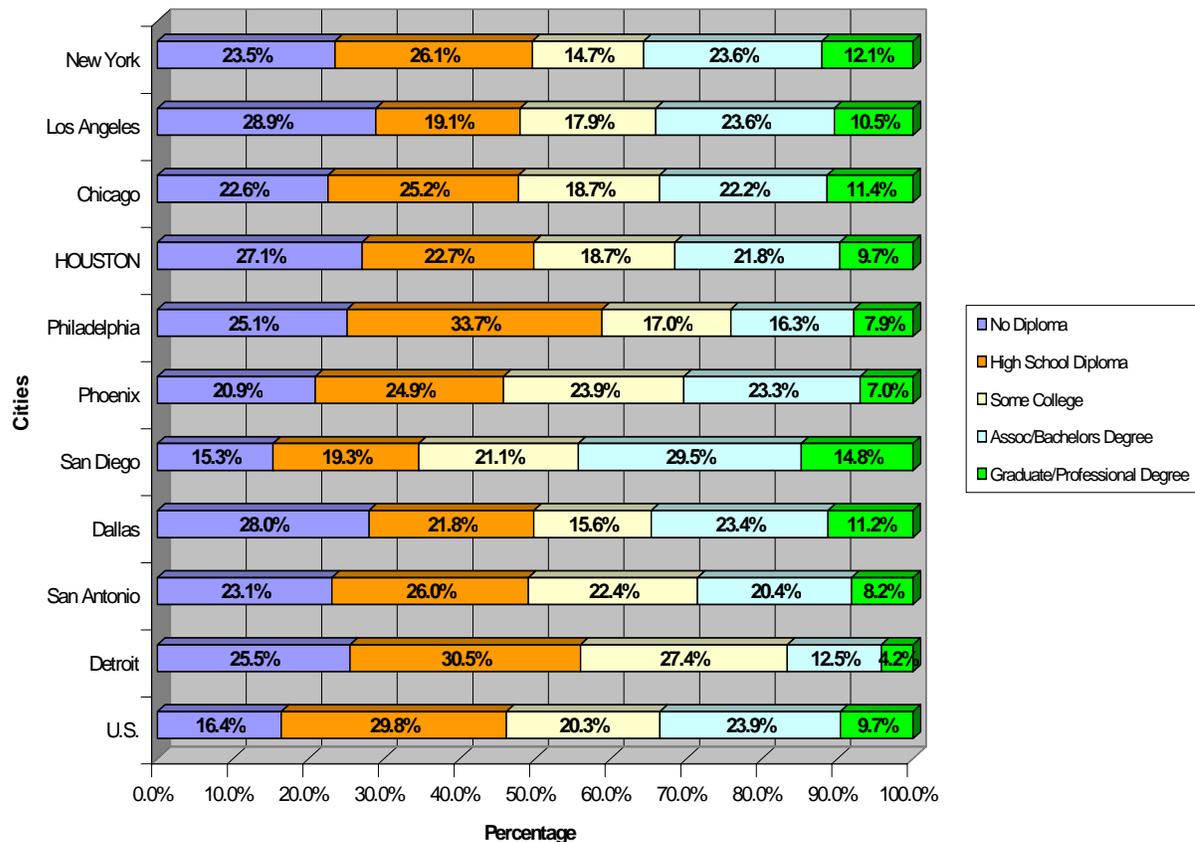
* The percentage of individuals below poverty has decreased in five of the ten largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. including the city of Houston, where it decreased from 20.7% in 1990 to 20.3% in 2003.

* The percentage of individuals below poverty increased in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego and Dallas between 1990 and 2003.

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Figure 2.3

Educational Attainment: 2003
(For persons 25 year & older)



* Houston, at 9.7%, equals the national average for persons with graduate or professional degrees.

* 50% of Houston's population has some form of college education.

* Los Angeles has the highest proportion of persons with no high school diploma, followed by Dallas.

* Philadelphia has the lowest percentage of citizens with some form of college education.