Fair Housing Assessment

Produced by the Mid-America Regional Council on behalf of the cities of Blue Springs, Independence and Kansas City, Missouri; the city of Leavenworth, Kansas; and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas. This assessment is required to meet Community Development Block Grant obligations for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Section VI-D

Disparities in Access to Opportunity — Low Poverty Exposure

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KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics are exposed to concentrated poverty at much higher levels than other racial/ethnic groups.

- People of Mexican descent, in particular, are significantly exposed to concentrated areas of poverty.

- The disparity in exposure to high concentrations of poverty that is evident in the region overall and in Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, is not found in the other four cities, where this exposure is fairly evenly distributed across racial/ethnic groups.

- There is a high correlation between areas with high exposure to concentrated poverty areas and the R/ECAPs.

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The Low Poverty Index presented in HUD-provided data below uses rates of family poverty by household (based on the federal poverty line) to measure exposure to poverty by neighborhood. A higher score generally indicates less exposure to poverty at the neighborhood level.

Table 1: Low Poverty Index

	Kansas City, Kansas	Kansas City, Missouri	Blue Springs	Independence	Leavenworth	KC Region (CBSA)
Total Population						
White*	40.47	61.61	69.60	45.83	55.05	66.73
Black*	24.67	27.24	65.96	39.80	47.61	36.74
Hispanic	17.98	30.79	68.62	38.37	54.11	41.50
Asian or Pacific Islander*	25.05	50.35	71.40	45.48	57.18	65.73
Native American*	31.93	45.34	68.04	40.98	57.55	56.72
Population below federal poverty line						
White*	26.54	42.33	64.37	32.18	40.39	49.61
Black*	14.32	17.48	49.39	27.12	18.70	21.85
Hispanic	12.16	15.85	56.02	22.03	61.31	23.12
Asian or Pacific Islander*	21.37	39.07	48.43	50.37	11.74	47.49
Native American*	32.73	32.32	94.00	39.09	38.69	49.74

Non-Hispanic

Disparities in exposure to poverty by protected class groups

Regional Context — According to HUD-provided data on the poverty index for the region as a whole, non-Hispanic whites (66.7) and Asians (65.7) have the least exposure to high-poverty neighborhoods. (A higher index number indicates less exposure.) Non-Hispanic blacks (36.7) and Hispanics (41.5) have the lowest scores, indicating they are more exposed to high-poverty areas. The disparities are similar for low-income residents as well, with non-Hispanic blacks at 21.9 and Hispanics at 23.1 in terms of their exposure to poverty index.


Low Poverty Index — KC Region (CBSA)
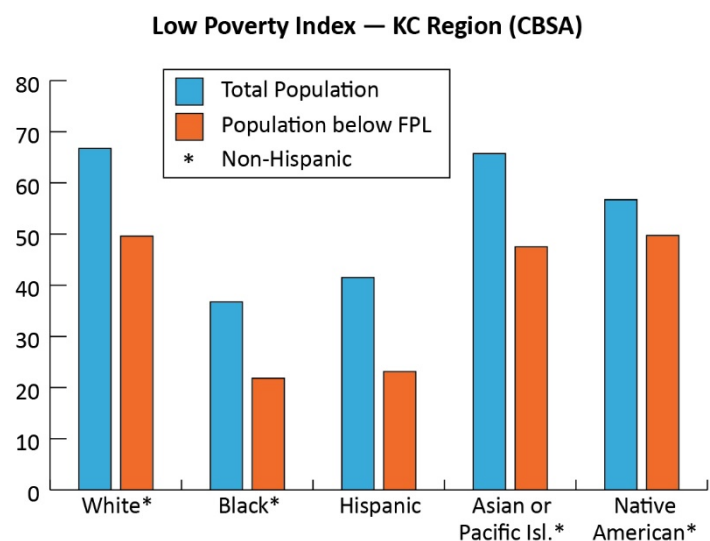
Kansas City, Missouri — According to HUD-provided data for Kansas City, Missouri, the city's pattern of exposure to poverty is similar to the region, but uniformly at higher levels, no matter the racial/ethnic group. Low-income non-Hispanic blacks (17.5) and Hispanics (15.6) have especially low poverty indexes, meaning that these groups experience very high exposures to high-poverty neighborhoods.

Kansas City, Kansas — According to HUD-provided data for Kansas City, Kansas, the city has substantially lower poverty indexes than the region, meaning that its residents, in general, have a much higher exposure to high-poverty neighborhoods. People of color have very low poverty index scores compared to non-Hispanic whites (40.5) in the city. Hispanics (18.0) experience especially low poverty indexes. Low-income residents of Kansas City, Kansas, experience especially high exposure (with low index scores) compared to the rest of the region, with non-Hispanic blacks (14.3) and Hispanics (12.2) being especially impacted. Low-income Native Americans, non-Hispanic (32.7), actually experience slightly less exposure to poverty than do non-Hispanic whites (26.5).

Blue Springs — According to HUD-provided data for Blue Springs, Missouri, the poverty index is relatively high for all racial/ethnic groups (66.0 to 71.4), indicating less exposure to poverty. For low-income residents of Blue Springs there is a small, but significant, increase in
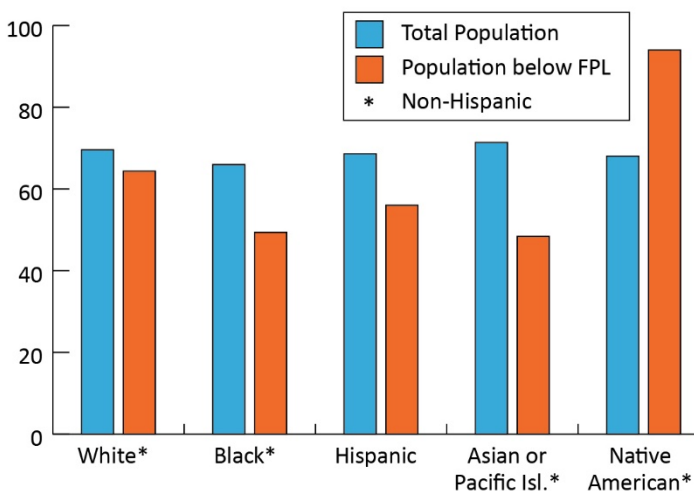
Low Poverty Index — Kansas City, Missouri
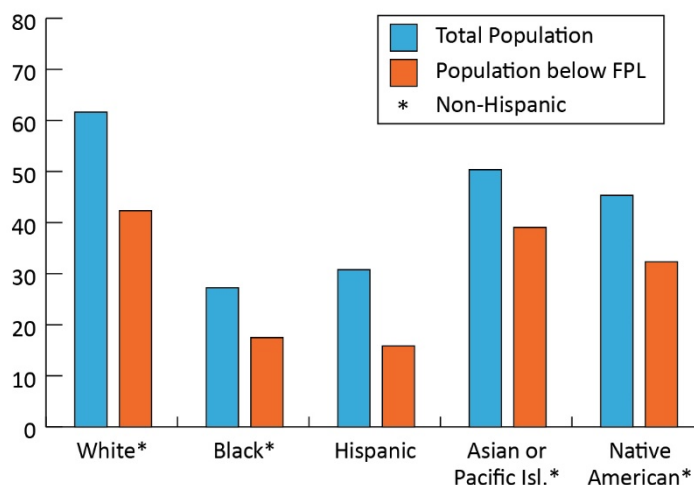

Low Poverty Index — Kansas City, Kansas
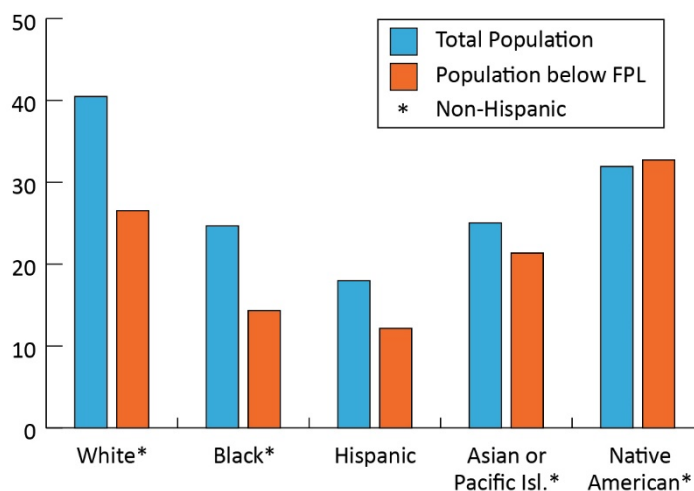
**Low Poverty Index — Blue Springs, Missouri**

exposure to higher-poverty neighborhoods, especially for people of color — except for non-Hispanic Native Americans.

Independence — According to HUD-provided data for Independence, Missouri, the poverty index is fairly consistent across all races and ethnic groups (ranging from 45.8 to 38.4). However, these are below the regional scores for all racial/ethnic groups, except for non-Hispanic blacks (39.8). For low-income residents of Independence, poverty index scores are also fairly consistent across races and ethnicities. However, there are some differences from other communities. Native Americans, non-Hispanic (50.4), and Asian or Pacific Islanders, non-Hispanics (39.1), have higher rates than do non-Hispanic whites (32.2).

Low Poverty Index — Independence, Missouri
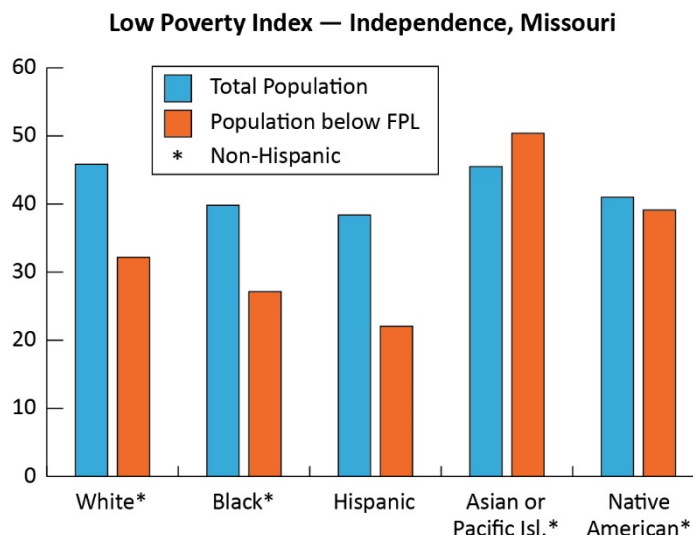
Leavenworth — According to HUD-provided data for the city of Leavenworth, Kansas, poverty index scores are very consistent across all racial/ethnic groups (47.6 to 57.6). However, when looking at low-income residents only, the scores differ markedly with non-Hispanic blacks, (18.7) and non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islanders (11.7) scoring very low (indicating a high exposure to poverty neighborhoods).

Low Poverty Index — Leavenworth, Kansas
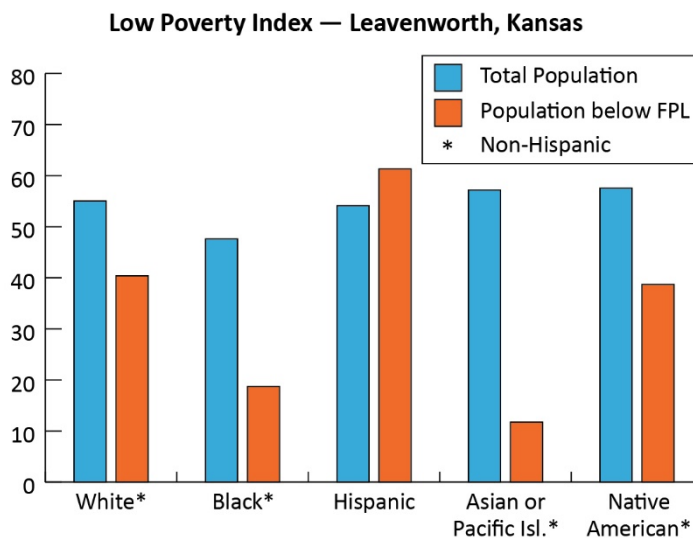
Also, low-income Hispanics (61.3) are much less likely to be exposed to high-poverty areas than low-income non-Hispanic whites (40.4).

Conclusions

- Non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics are most likely to be exposed to concentrated poverty areas.
- These patterns are especially apparent in the core cities of Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas. The exposure to poverty is more severe for low-income people of color.
- Poverty index scores are fairly consistent across racial/ethnic groups in the cities of Leavenworth, Independence and Blue Springs. However, in the city of Leavenworth there

are sharp differences on exposure to concentrated poverty for low-income residents, with non-Hispanic blacks and Asian and Pacific Islanders being very exposed to concentrated poverty and Hispanics having much less exposure, even less than non-Hispanic whites.

Poverty exposure and place of residence

Using HUD-provided data and the following map we can more closely look at the impact of geography on a person's exposure to poverty.

Map 1: Low Poverty Index
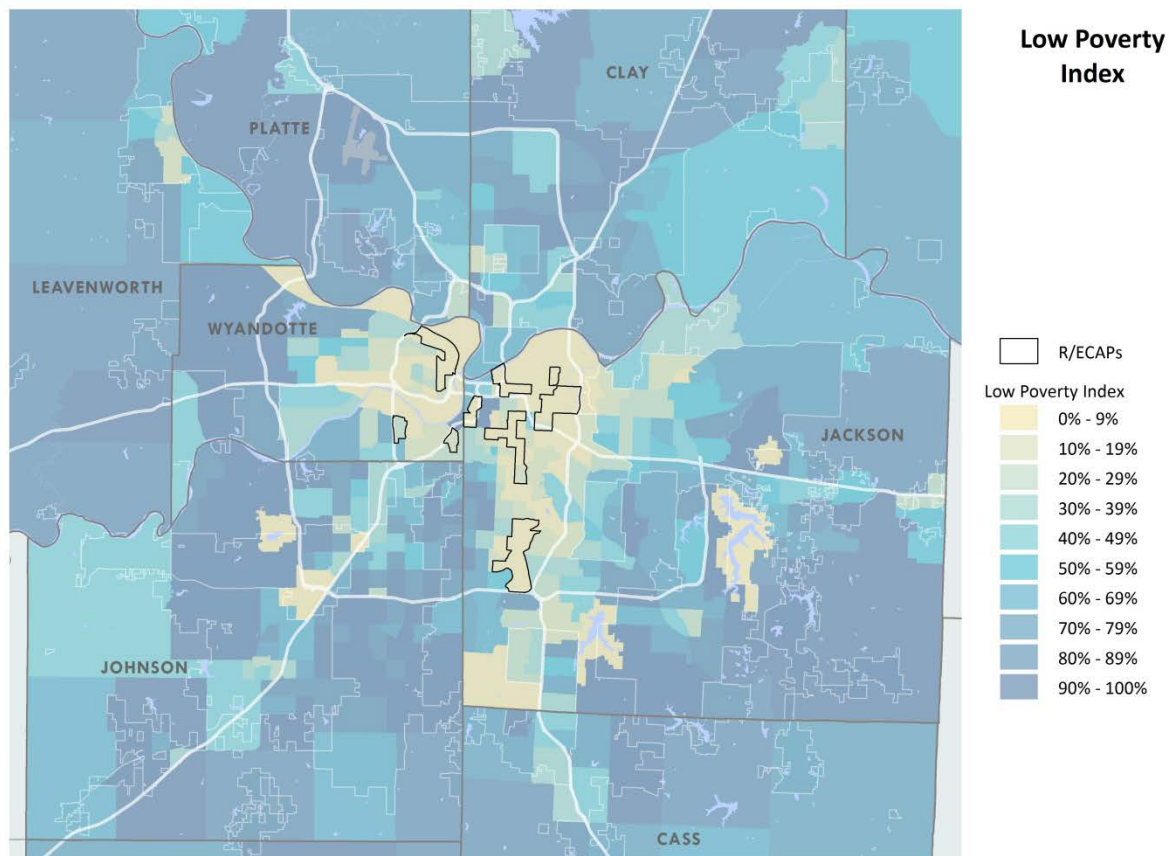
Regional Context — The maps above and below first indicate that low poverty indexes (meaning concentrated poverty) coincide with the region's R/ECAPs (Racial/Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty and adjacent areas. High index areas (low poverty exposure) are concentrated in the suburban areas of the region with a small area downtown.

These areas of high poverty exposure also coincide with concentrations of non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics. However, as more minority population groups are moving to suburban locations throughout the metro area, there are many areas of substantial black or Hispanic concentration that are now located in areas with higher (less exposure to poverty) index scores. The most numerous group by national origin is people from Mexico, who are concentrated in and around R/ECAP areas. The second largest group by national origin people from several south Asian

countries including India, China, Vietnam and Korea. These groups are concentrated in high index (low poverty exposure) areas, particularly southern Johnson County, Kansas.

Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas — In general terms, the cities of Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, are more likely to have low poverty indexes (high poverty exposure) which coincide with significant populations of non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics, as well as people of Mexican descent.

Independence and Leavenworth — These two cities are characterized by a mix of lower and higher poverty index scores. This is the same for concentrations of vulnerable groups.

Blue Springs — This city has higher than average poverty indexes, meaning lower exposure to poverty. It also has relatively low numbers of recent immigrants.

Conclusions
- There is a high correlation between R/ECAPs and low poverty index scores (concentrated poverty).
- Low poverty index scores correlate with higher numbers of Black, Non-Hispanics and Hispanic populations. However, many Blacks and Hispanics are dispersing into the larger metro area meaning a substantial numbers of people of color reside in higher poverty exposure areas.
- People of Mexican descent tend to live in areas of high poverty concentration.

Map 2: Poverty exposure and race/ethnicity or national origin
Low Poverty Index with Race/Ethnicity
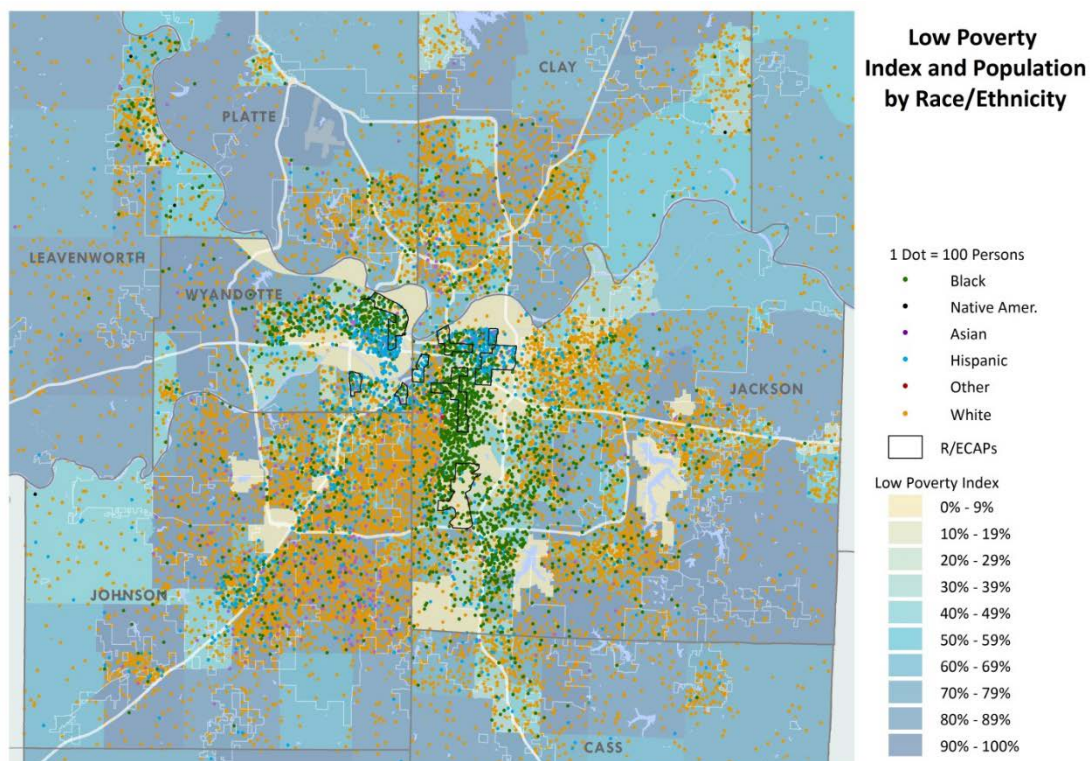
Map 3: Low Poverty Index with National Origin
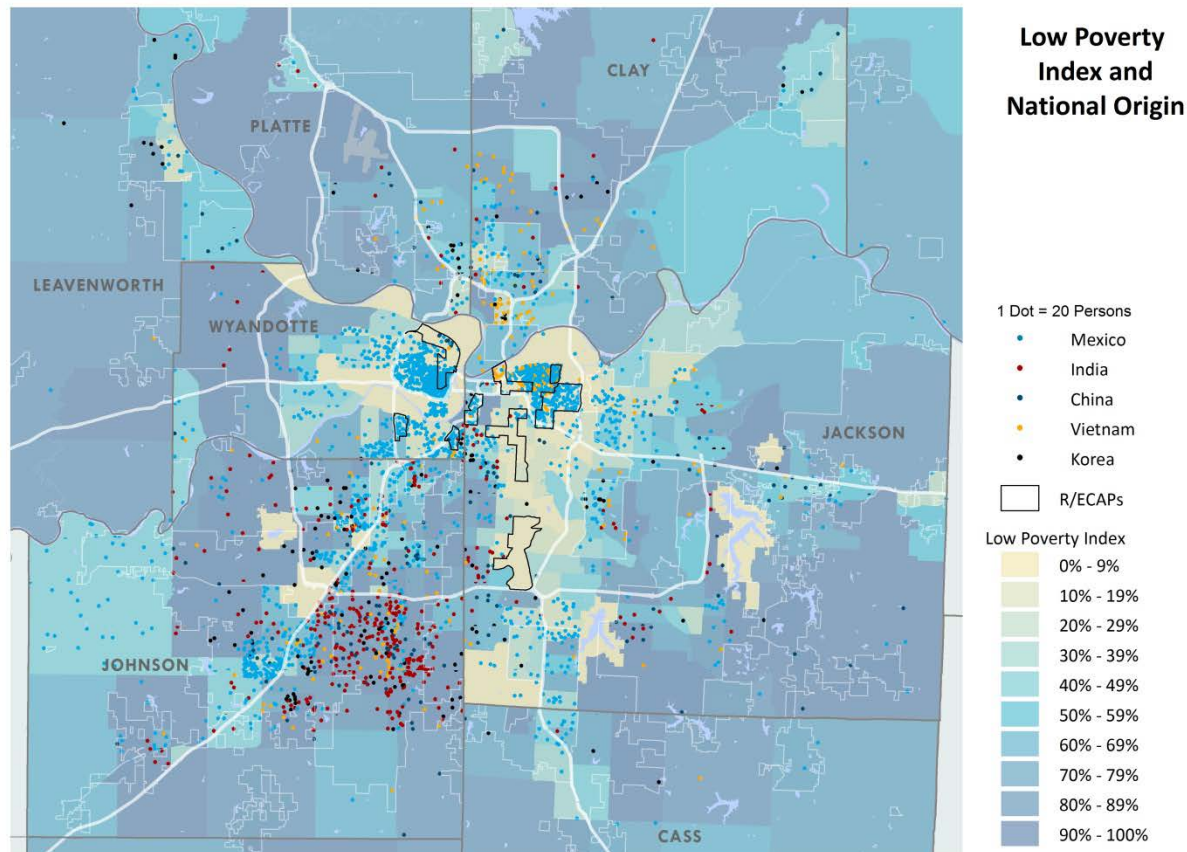
Regional Context — The most impacted groups in the region are non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics. This holds true for both the population as a whole and for the low-income population. People of Mexican heritage also are found to be affected by exposure to concentrated poverty areas.

Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas — As in the region as a whole, Non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics are the most affected groups in Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas. These are also the cities where people of Mexican heritage are most affected by exposure to high poverty concentrations.

Blue Springs and Independence — The poverty index is fairly consistent across all races for these two cities. No specific racial or ethnic group is particularly affected. However, persons in Independence experience a higher exposure to poverty than do those in Blue Springs.

Leavenworth — The city of Leavenworth has consistent poverty index scores across all races. However, low-income blacks and Asian and Pacific Islanders (non-Hispanic) have significantly lower index scores than do other racial/ethnic groups.

Poverty exposure and family status

Families with children are concentrated in and around R/ECAP areas. However, such families are also widely distributed across the metro area and it is more difficult to discern any specific relationship between family status (children) and geography (areas of low poverty index scores).

Map 4: Low Poverty Index with Family Status
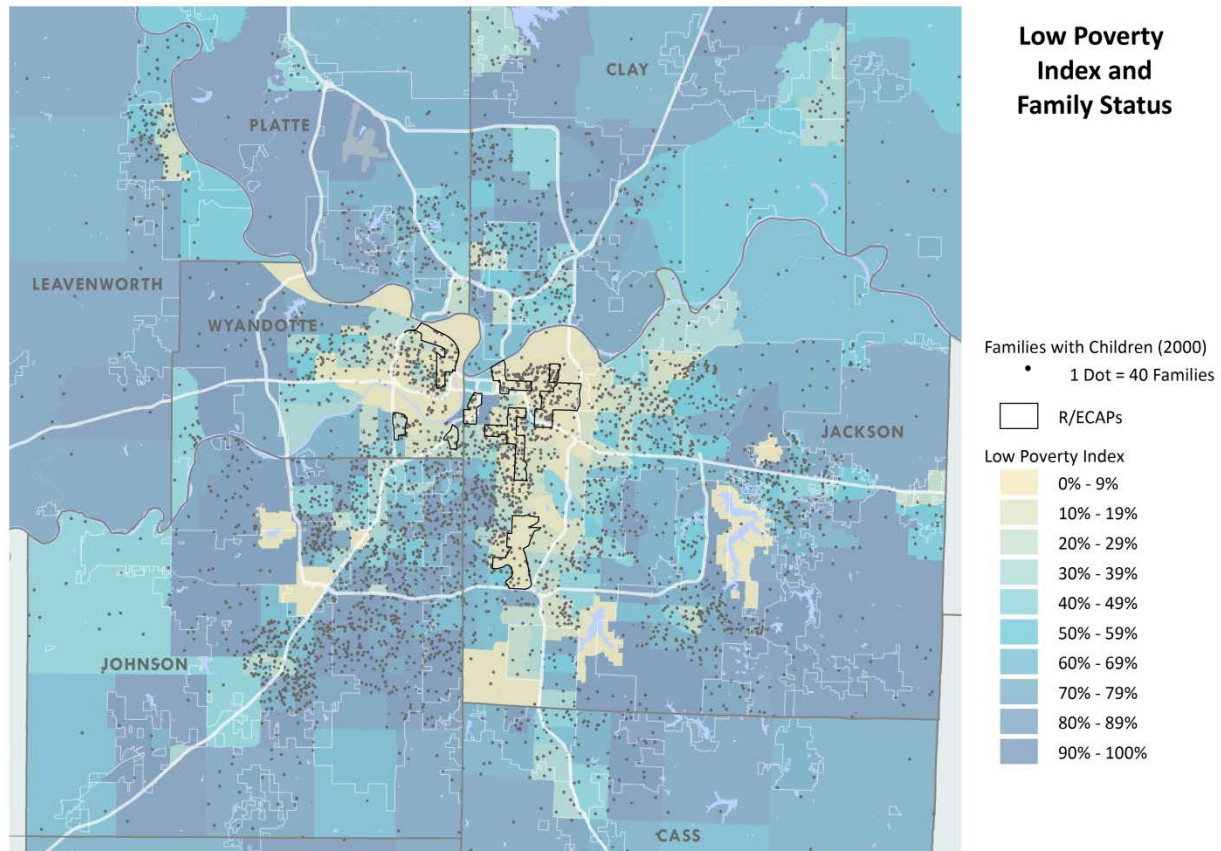
Conclusions

- The racial/ethnic groups most impacted by exposure to high poverty areas are non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics.
- The core cities, Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, experience the most disproportionate exposure to concentrated poverty, while such exposure is more evenly distributed across racial/ethnic groups in the other three cities.
- People of Mexican heritage are also significantly affected by exposure to concentrated poverty.

Strategies and policies to affect regional and jurisdictional change

One way to look at exposure to concentrated poverty is through the lens of the separation of R/ECAPs and areas of opportunity. The region has a three-pronged strategy to address inequalities (not just in housing, but also income and other dimensions) generated by the separation of R/ECAPs and areas of opportunity:

1. **Undertake programs to turn R/ECAPs into areas of opportunity.**

   Reduce concentrated areas of poverty through investment — Currently both public and private entities, including but not limited to city governments, economic development agencies, community development corporations, affordable housing developers and others, have efforts underway to not only invest more in urban core (R/ECAP) areas, but also to better coordinate these efforts among myriad investors and projects. The emphasis is on projects that are of scope substantial enough to create catalytic, self-sustaining change in these communities. In Kansas City, Missouri, the Urban Neighborhood Initiative (UNI) launched by the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce is working with the city of Kansas City, Missouri, LISC, MARC and others to catalyze reinvestment in the area from Troost to Prospect and 18th to 51st Streets. The Housing Authority of Kansas City (MO) and the city of Kansas City, Mo., are working together and with other community stakeholders to implement a Choice Neighborhood initiative to replace old public housing units with scattered site mixed income housing in the northeast area of Kansas City, Mo. and other parts of the city. The Unified Government is working to implement a Healthy Communities initiative in the northeast portion of the city of Kansas City, Kansas, beginning with investments in a new full service grocery store and new community center. LISC is working with community partners, including a community development corporation CHWC to build new housing in R/ECAP neighborhoods. Increased coordination is occurring through involvement by community partners such as LISC, United Way, local community development corporations and the cities.

2. **Undertake programs to better connect R/ECAPs with areas of opportunity.**

   Increase incomes in concentrated areas of poverty by connecting low-income residents to jobs and other resources in opportunity areas — The public transit system in the metro area currently does not serve employment centers very well, with only 9 percent of the region's jobs being accessible by public transit within one hour for 41 percent of the population.. East-west connections are especially poor. With funding from a U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER planning grant, the Mid-America Regional Council is currently working with the cities participating in this assessment to conduct a study to directly address this issue by identifying ways to double job access by transit in the next 10 years. In general, R/ECAP areas in Kansas City, Missouri, have reasonable transit service; however, the transit system doesn't connect these residents to many of the employment centers where available jobs might be available to them. In Kansas City, Kansas, transit service exists, but is less robust. A large challenge for many adults living in the R/ECAP areas is limited educational attainment, which limits job prospects. Other

challenges include felony convictions, mental and physical health challenges preventing work, and lack of affordable child care. Community organizations are working to address these challenges, but resources are limited.

3. **Undertake programs that make it easier for residents of R/ECAPs to reside in areas of opportunity.**

   Reduce concentrated poverty by making it easier for low income, people of color to move to opportunity areas — Affording low-income people of color the opportunity to relocate to opportunity areas is very difficult. Many communities are reluctant to accept or facilitate affordable housing choices. In addition, rents — although more affordable than many metropolitan areas — are increasing, making it more difficult to afford such a move. Because the administration of housing vouchers is fragmented among a number of housing authorities across the metro area, it is difficult to tailor the use of vouchers to facilitate such moves. The Housing Authority of Kansas City (MO) has cooperative agreements in place with five other housing authorities supporting efforts to move residents to opportunity areas. Information on available affordable housing in opportunity areas is limited. The community launched www.kcmetrohousing.org but it is not well known and individual counseling services to help residents find housing that meets their needs in opportunity areas is limited.