



Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Concentrated Poverty Grows Across America's Communities

By CED Guest Author

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The Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program recently released a report outlining what has been anecdotally evident for some time now — (1) there are more poor people today than there were in 2000, and (2) poor citizens are increasingly living among one another in neighborhoods of extreme poverty.

Analyzing 2000-2009 Census Data, the study titled "The Re-Emergence of Concentrated Poverty: Metropolitan Trends in the 2000s" finds the number of poor people residing in extreme poverty neighborhoods — where at least 40 percent of individuals live below the poverty line — increased from 9.1 to 10.5 percent. Though still lower than the 14.1 percent rate that existed in 1990, the message is clear — the number of poor people residing in very poor neighborhoods is trending upward.

While these findings are seemingly 'more of the same' with regard to poverty studies, the research presented here illuminates a trend that contrasts widely held conceptions about the characteristics of concentrated poverty, i.e. urban minority, undereducated, foreign-status, etc. — *"Compared to 2000, residents of extreme-poverty neighborhoods in 2005–09 were more likely to be white, native-born, high school or college graduates, homeowners, and not receiving public assistance."* Additionally, poverty has become more 'suburbanized' which has serious ramifications for future community and economic development policy interventions.