

A man, a woman, and a boy are running happily in a field. The man is on the left, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and jeans. The woman is in the center, wearing a striped dress and high heels. The boy is on the right, wearing a patterned shirt and jeans. They are all smiling and looking upwards. The background is a bright, hazy sky with a palm tree visible in the distance. The entire image has an orange tint.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE ELEMENT

# 01



# COMMUNITY PROFILE

## Introduction

Pooler is located in Chatham County, just northwest of Savannah with direct access to Interstates 95 and 16. Pooler, like other southern Atlantic coastal communities, is growing for a number of economic and non-economic reasons including job opportunities, relative low cost of living, more affordable housing, weather, and lifestyle. As part of the Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area, Pooler's commercial and residential growth will continue to have significant impacts on current residents, natural and cultural resources, community services and facilities, and infrastructure.

Pooler has come a long way since its shy beginnings as a rail connection to Savannah and the Lowcountry. The now thriving Pooler started out as a railroad stop before Savannah. Named for Robert W. Pooler, an area resident who had a plan for a Georgia railroad route, the railroad station soon evolved into an actual town.

Aside from the many things to do in Pooler, the community's good quality of life has also influenced population growth. Low crime and a small-town community atmosphere have all been factors in its explosive growth. Pooler is now one of Georgia's fastest-growing cities.

# CITY OF POOLER

## Population

As of 2018, the city of Pooler had an estimated population of 23,102 with a population density of 835 people per square mile. U.S. Census records show the population was slowly but steadily increasing between 1970 and 2000 but grew by over 200% between 2000 and 2010. In the past two decades, Pooler has been the fastest growing municipality in Chatham County.

By comparison, the city of Savannah grew by 15% and unincorporated Chatham grew by 46% over the same period. With the exception of the population snapshot found in Figure 1.3, the population data presented throughout is from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) multiyear estimates covering the 2014–2018 period and was the most current publicly available ACS multiyear data at the time of reporting.

## Population Growth, 1970–2018

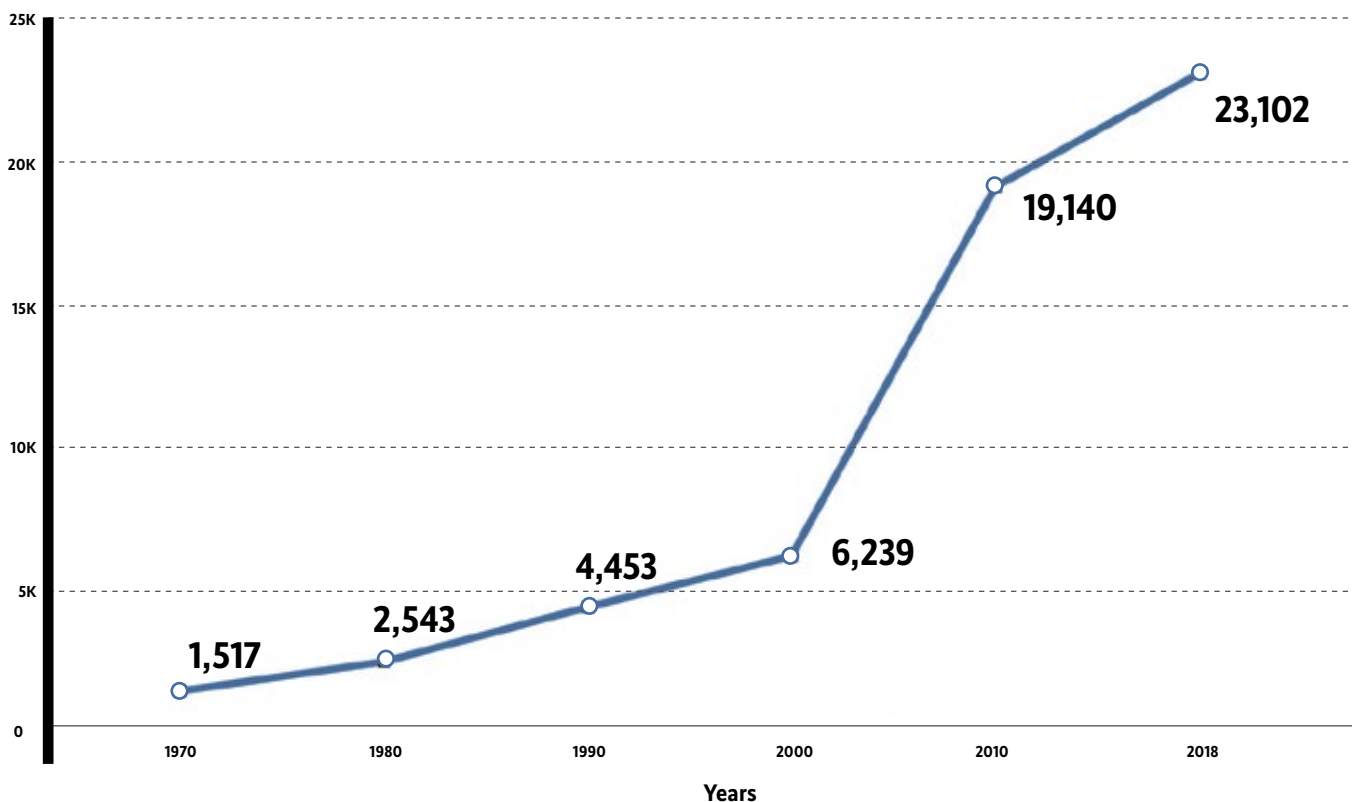


Figure 1.1–Population Growth, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

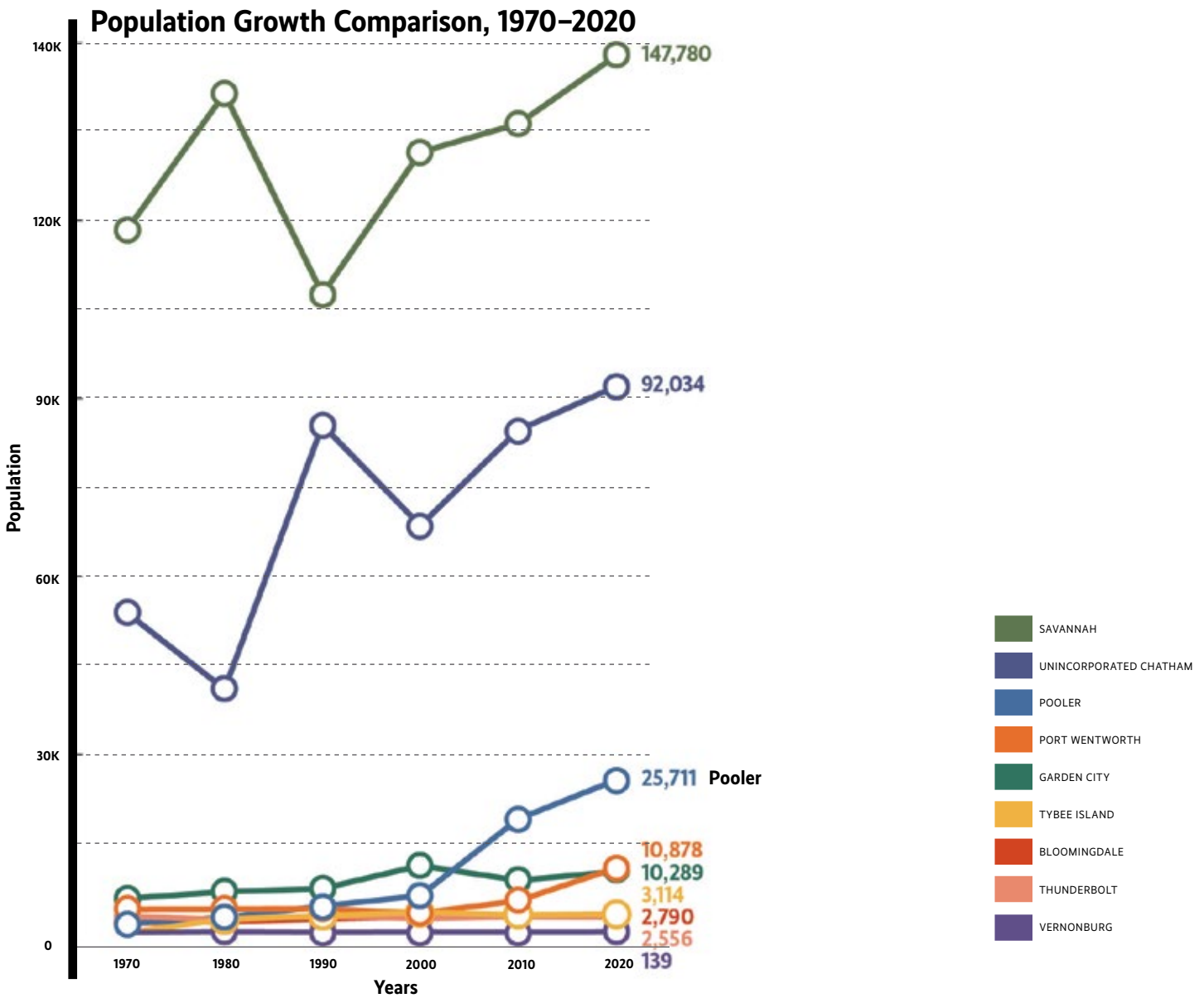


Figure 1.2–Population Comparison, 1970–2020, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Sex & Age

Of the 23,102 people living in Pooler in 2014–2018, 52.1% were female, and 47.9% were male. Residents of Pooler had a median age of 37.3 years, which is in line with the median age nationally (37.9 years).

Pooler's population has gotten significantly older since the 2009–2013 period, when the median age was 33.3 years. Possible reasons for this could be that younger people are moving out of the city, older people are moving into the city, existing older residents are staying in Pooler longer, or residents are postponing having children and/or having fewer children overall. In particular, Pooler saw a sizable decrease in the proportion of children under age 10 as well as 25–34 year olds, while the number of people aged 45–59 increased substantially. By 2018, residents who were 45–59 years old made up nearly one quarter of Pooler's total population.

## Sex Characteristics, 2014–2018



## Median Age Characteristics, 2014–2018

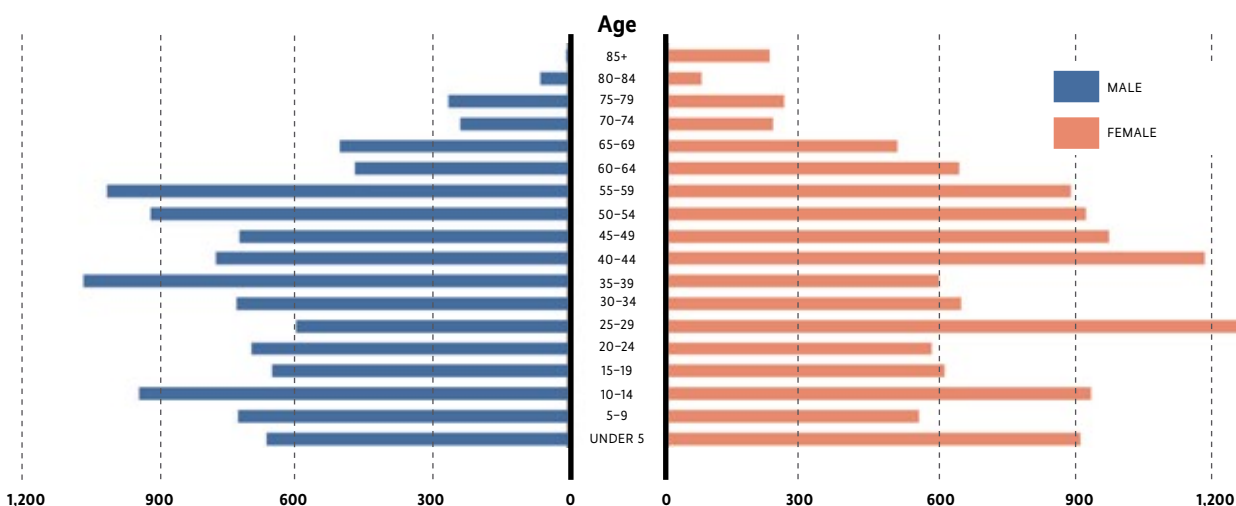
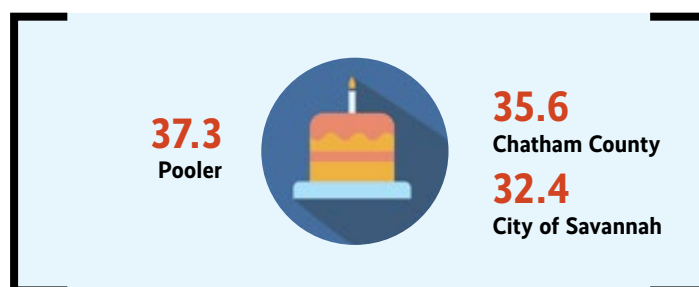


Figure 1.3–Population Pyramid, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

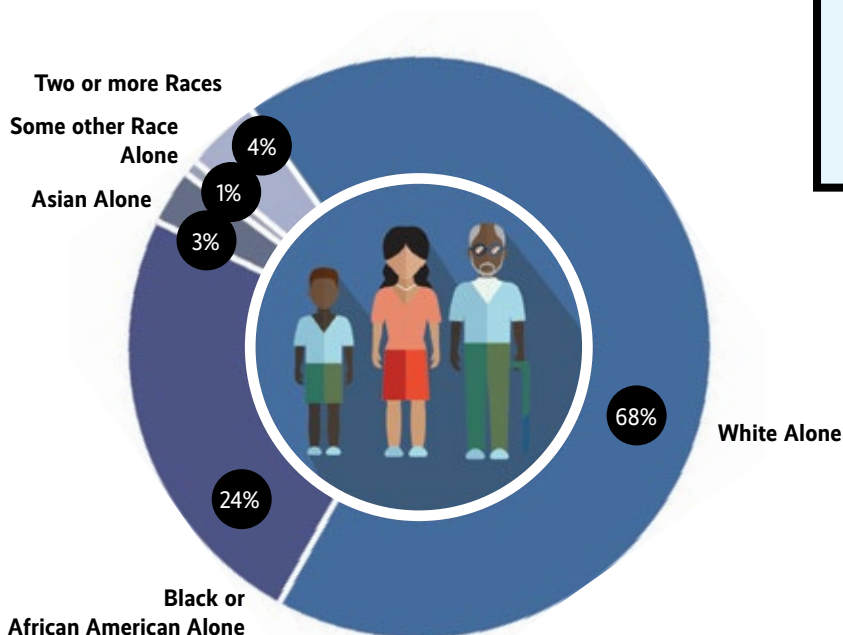


## Race & Ethnicity

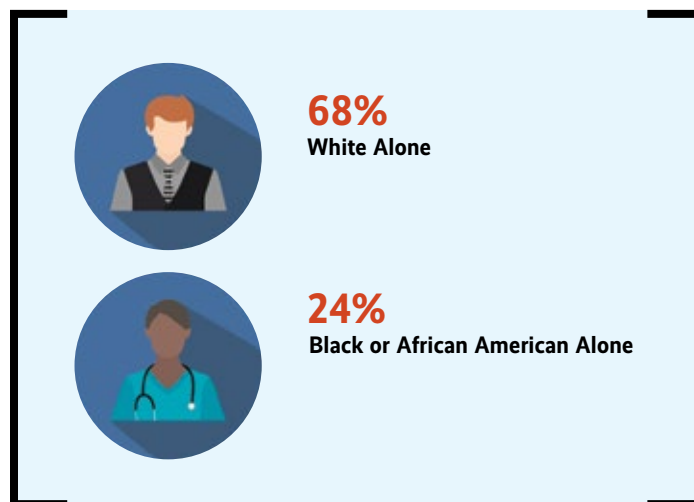
In 2014–2018, the majority of Pooler’s population identified as white alone (68.0%), while an estimated 24.1% of residents were black or African American and 3.8% identified as being of two or more races. These racial breakdowns represent people who reported only one race (aside from the “two or more races” category). Roughly 1 in 20 residents in Pooler were Hispanic or Latino (5.8%). (Those who identified as Hispanic origin may be any race(s)).

Pooler's population has grown increasingly more diverse in the past 30 years, particularly since the turn of the century. Since 2000, the non-white share of Pooler's population has more than doubled, from 13.3% to an estimated 32.0% in 2018. In 2014–2018, the likelihood that two people randomly chosen from Pooler were from a different racial or ethnic group was 48.6% (compared with 57.8% for Chatham County as a whole).

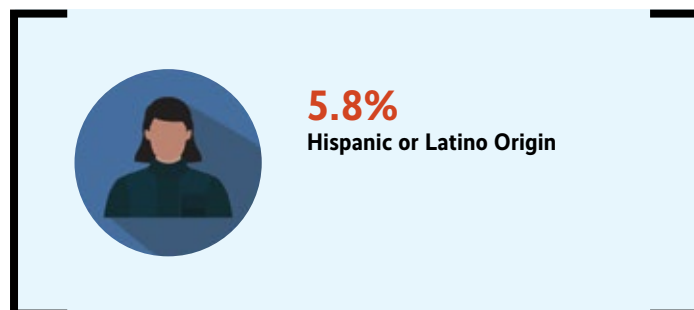
## Population by Race, 2014–2018



## Racial Majority Characteristics, 2014–2018



## Ethnicity, 2014–2018



**Figure 1.4—Population by Race, Pooler**  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Diversity Index

The diversity index determines the likelihood that two people chosen at random from a given area will be from different racial or ethnic groups. Higher values indicate more diversity in an area and lower values indicate less diversity.

On Map 1.1, block groups with high racial and ethnic diversity index scores are shown in blue. These calculations are based on the methodology described in “Mapping the USA’s diversity from 1960 to 2060” in USA TODAY.

*Philip Meyer, Shawn McIntosh, THE USA TODAY INDEX OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY, International Journal of Public Opinion Research, Volume 4, Issue 1, SPRING 1992, Pages 51–58*

## Race & Ethnicity Changes, 1970–2010

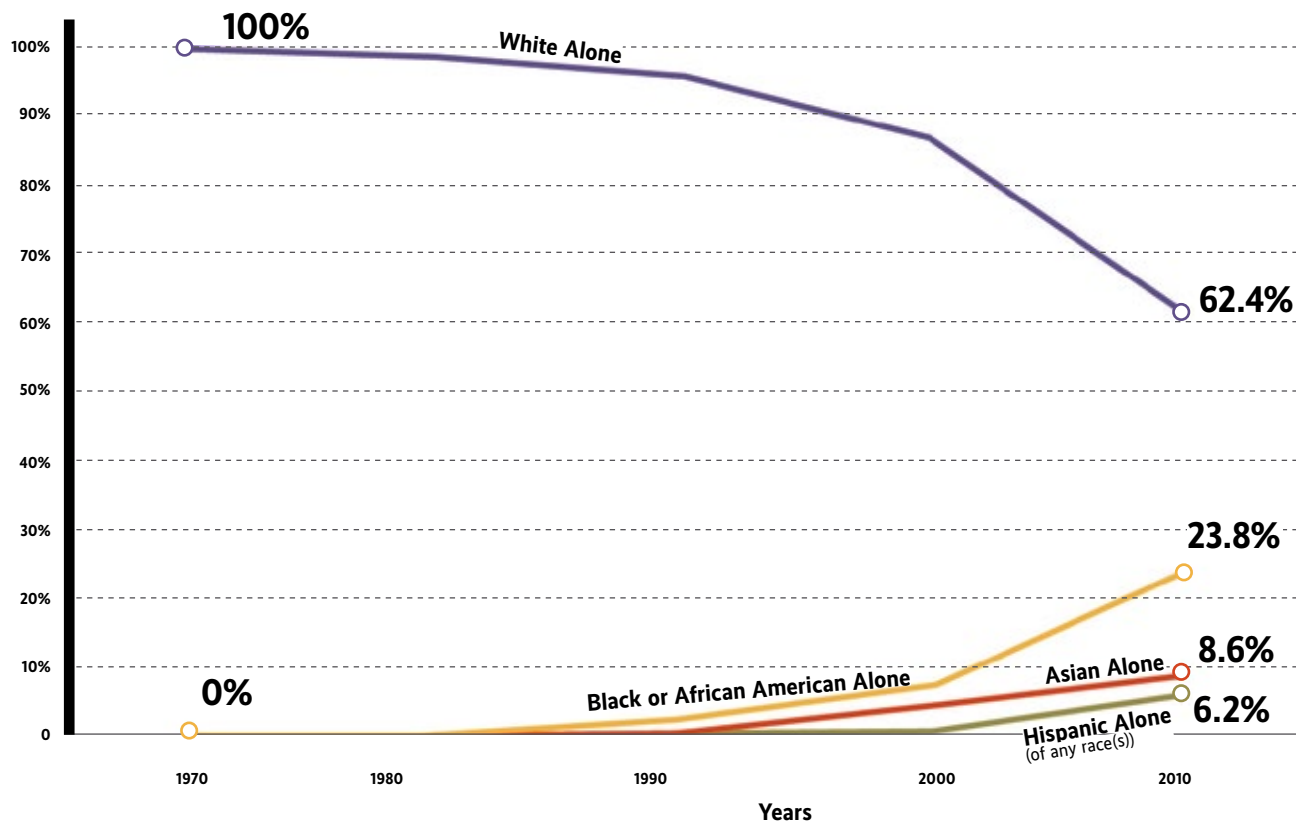
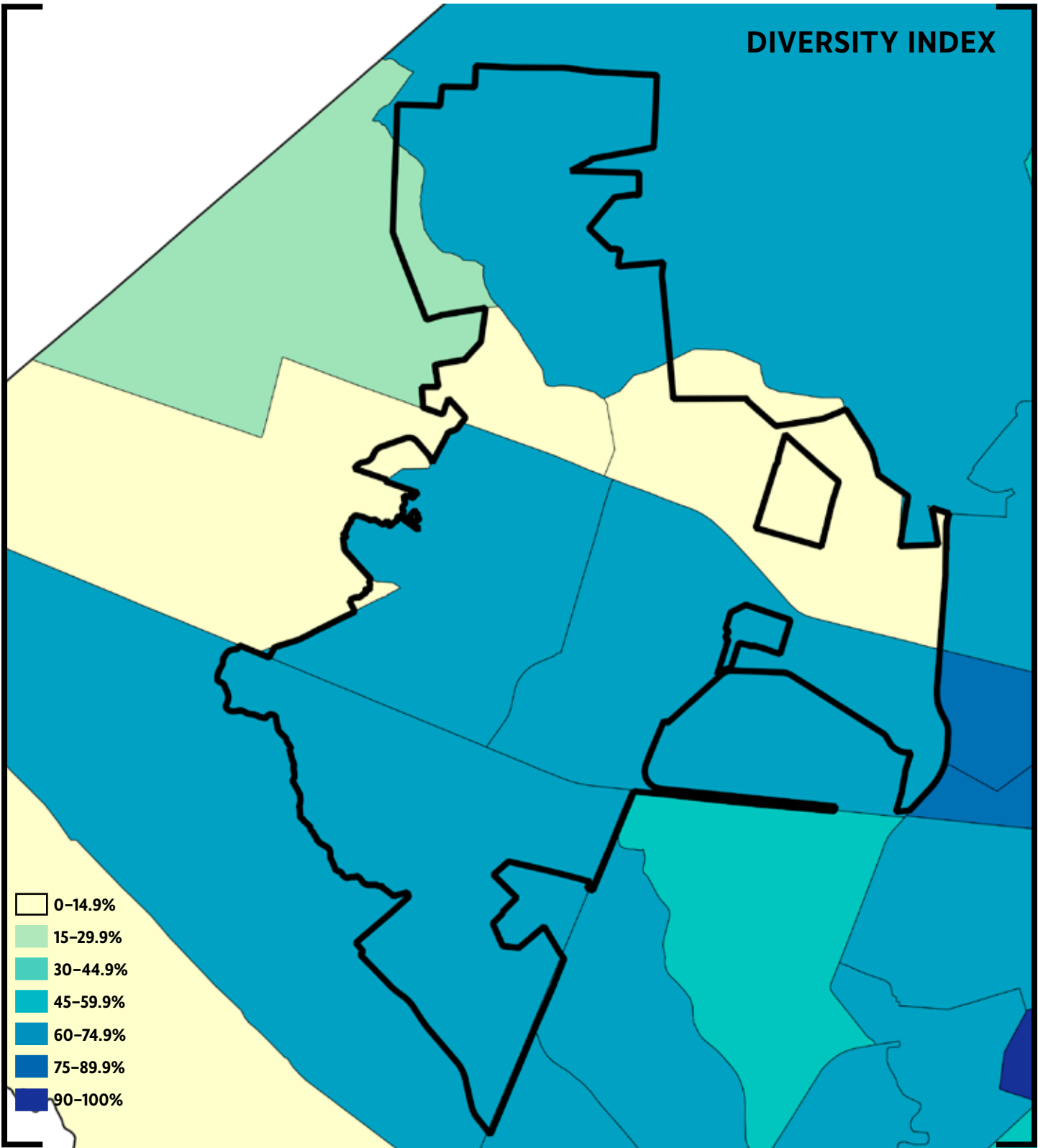


Figure 1.5–Race & Ethnicity Over Time, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.1-Diversity Index by Block Group, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates





## Employment

In 2014–2018, 67.0% of people 16 years and older were employed in the civilian labor force and 4.8% were unemployed; 27.3% of residents over 16 were not in the labor force. There was a significant decline in residents employed in the armed forces, from 3.3% in the 2009–2013 period to 0.9% in 2014–2018. An estimated 77.4% of employed people in Pooler were private wage and salary workers in 2018; 17.6% worked in federal, state, or local government; 4.7% were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business, and 0.3% were unpaid family workers.

The unemployment rate in Chatham County had been declining steadily from mid-2011 until March 2020, when the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt across the country as seen in Figure 1.6. In April 2020, the monthly unemployment rate skyrocketed to 16.5%, higher than the rates of both Georgia (12.2%) and the United States (14.8%).

### Unemployment Rate Chatham County, 1992–2019

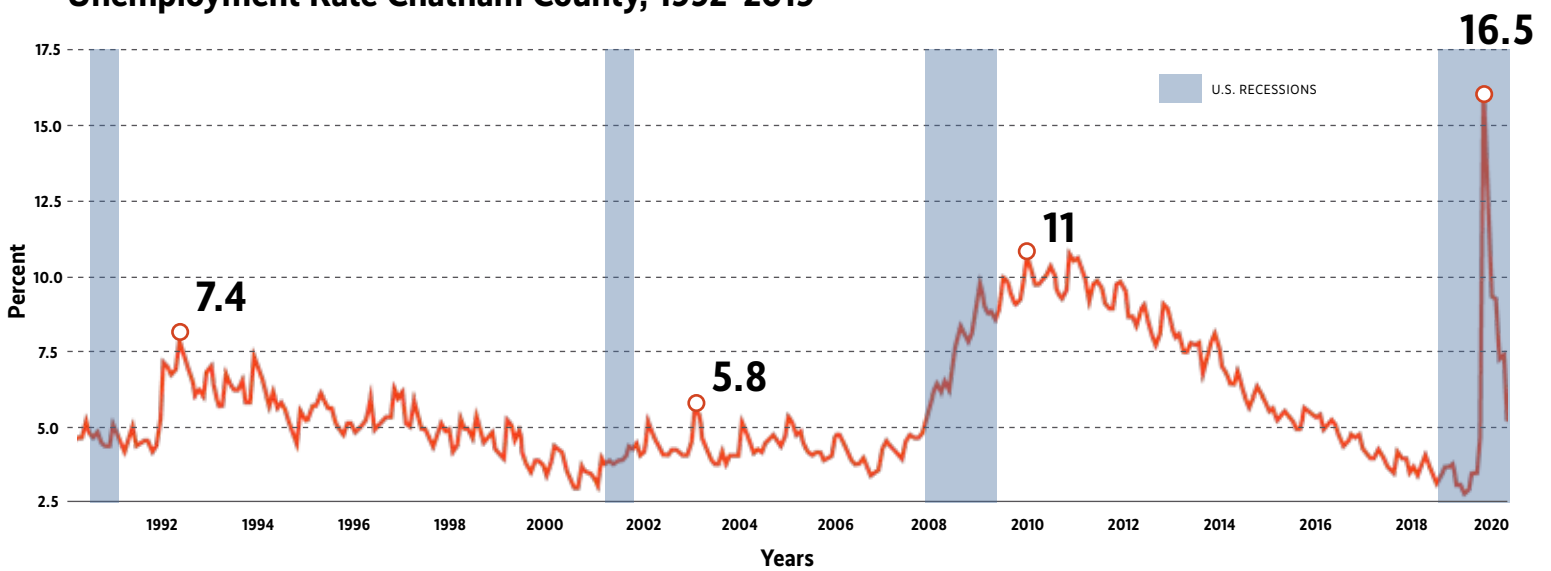


Figure 1.6—Unemployment Rate, Chatham County  
Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED)

## Industry

In Pooler, the three largest industries by employment in 2018 were educational services, health care, and social assistance (2,289 employees); manufacturing (1,817); and retail trade (1,696). Collectively, these industries added nearly 1,300 jobs since 2009–2013 period, over half of which were in the retail trade industry. This industry also saw the greatest growth in employment during that time, increasing by 4.8% points.

Location quotient (LQ) is a measurement of how concentrated a particular industry is in an area relative to the nation as a whole. It compares the industry's share of local employment to the U.S. average. A LQ of 1 indicates an industry is providing the same share of jobs locally as it is nationally, a LQ above 1 indicates a higher-than-average concentration locally, and a LQ below 1 indicates jobs in that industry are less concentrated locally than the national average. The LQ for industries in the city of Pooler is shown below.

The transportation, warehousing, and utilities industry was nearly two times more concentrated in Pooler than the national average in 2018—approximately one in ten residents were employed in the sector that year. The public administration and manufacturing industries were also more concentrated locally than the country as a whole, despite both decreasing in their share of local employment between 2013 and 2018.

## Largest Industries by Employment, 2014–2018



## Industry Concentration, 2014–2018

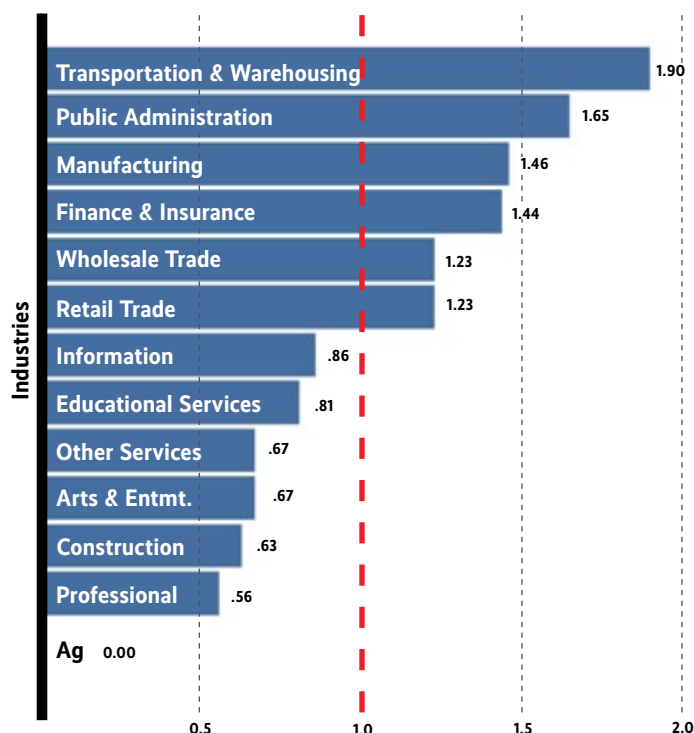


Figure 1.7—Industry Concentration, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Income & Poverty

In 2014–2018, the median income of households in Pooler was \$78,102. In general, household incomes in Pooler have increased in recent years: the average household income increased nearly \$10,000 from \$85,031 in 2009–2013 to \$94,698 in 2014–2018. The distribution of household incomes in 2009–2013 and 2014–2018 is shown in Figure 1.8. The recent rise in average household income was driven by both a significant decrease in the share of households making less than \$10,000 and an increase in the share of households making \$100,000 or more annually. By 2018, nearly four out of every ten households fell into the latter income category.

In 2014–2018, roughly 5.1% of people in Pooler lived below poverty level. An estimated 5.1% of children under 18 lived in poverty at that time, down significantly from 15.5% in 2009–2013. Of all ages, adults aged 18–64 were most likely to be living in poverty (5.4%), with seniors aged 65 and older being least likely (2.6%).

## Median Household Income Change

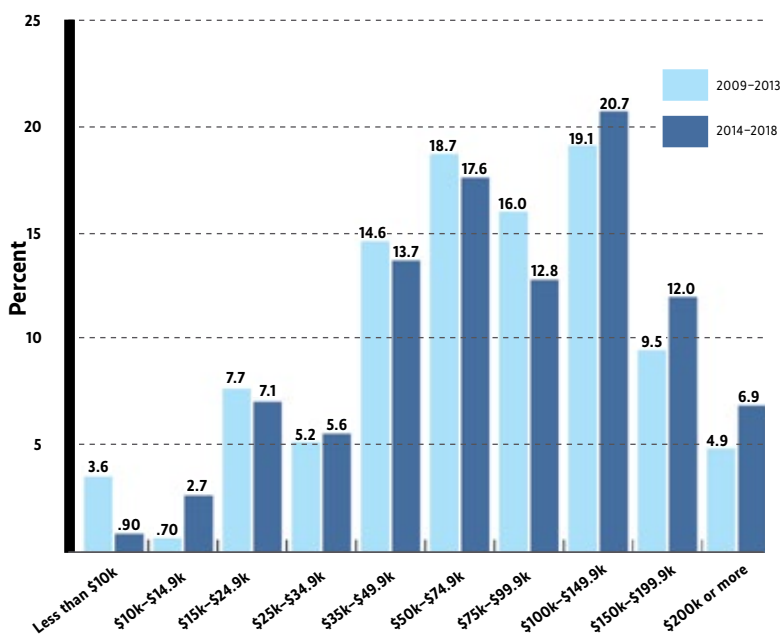
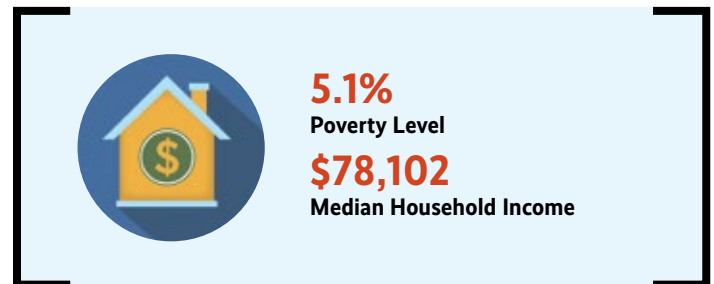


Figure 1.8–Household Income Change, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Poverty & Income Characteristics, 2014–2018



Likewise, females were overrepresented in the population living below poverty level in the city of Pooler: while females made up only 51.8% of the total population, they made up 63.4 % of the population living in poverty.

## Status of Poverty by Age, 2014–2018

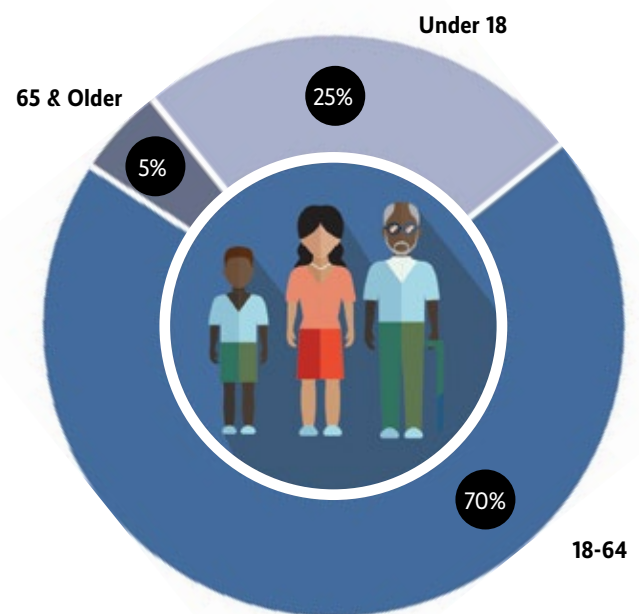
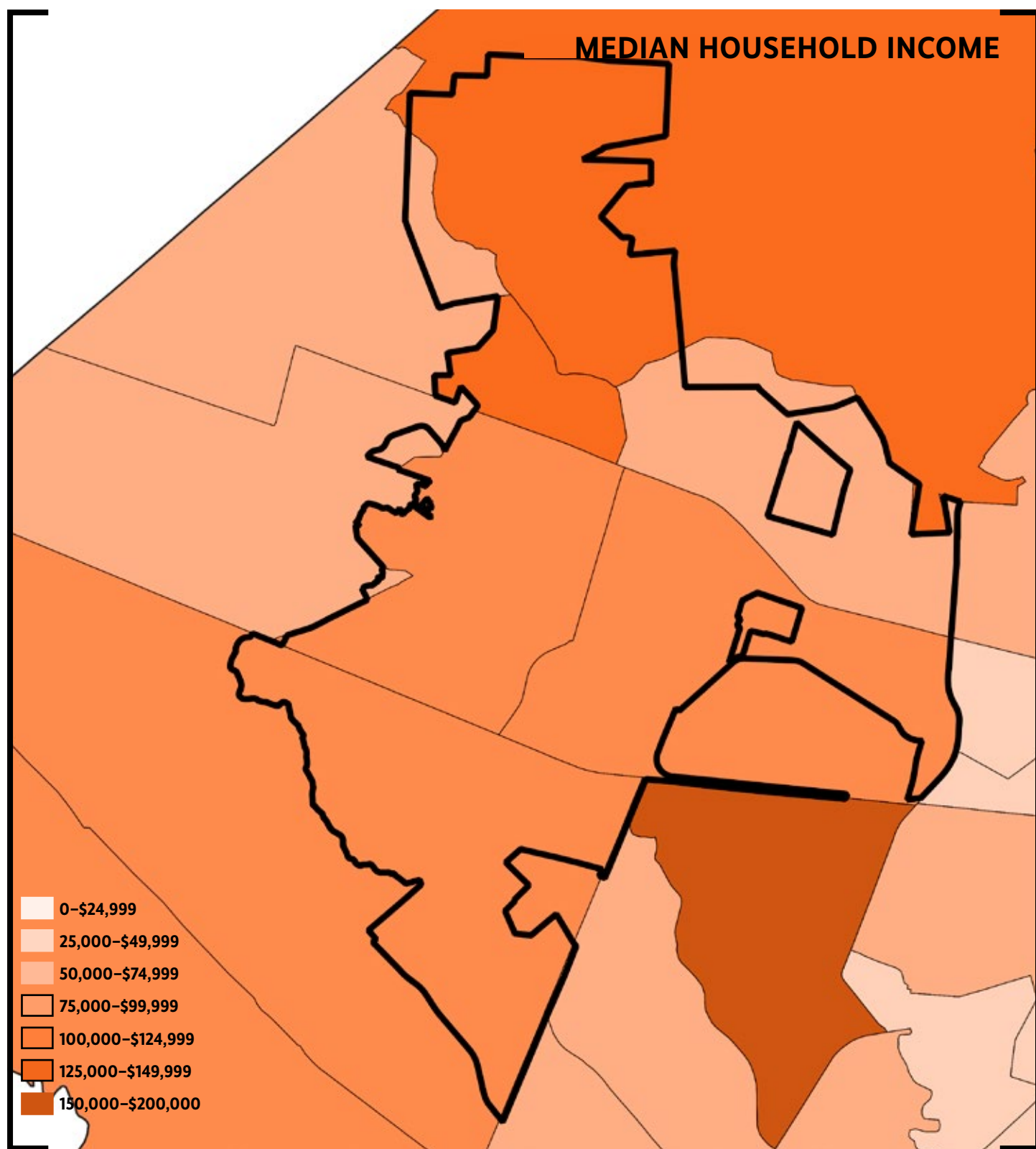


Figure 1.9–Poverty Age Status, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.2-Median Household Income by Block Group, Pooler  
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Households & Families

In 2014–2018, there were an estimated 8,655 households in Pooler. Families made up 67.0% of households, while 33.0% were people living alone or with other non-family members. National trends throughout the 20th Century, which saw a long-term decline in household size as families had fewer children over time, began to reverse in the 21st Century. This is mirrored in the change in average household size in Pooler: from 2000 to 2010, average household size decreased from 2.74 people to 2.61 people. By 2014–2018, the average household size had increased slightly to 2.70 people. This rise was likely driven by changes in household composition in recent years; although families are postponing childbearing and having fewer children overall—the share of married family households without children under 18 dropped significantly from 27.9% in 2009–2013 to 21.1% in 2014–2018—the share of young adults living with their parents increased as did the share of multigenerational households.

## Household by Type, 2014–2018

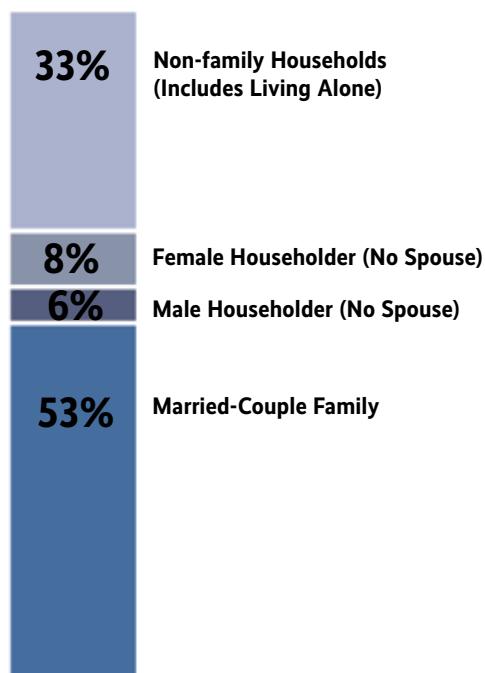
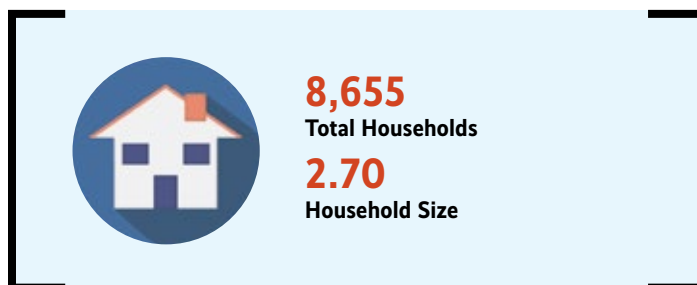


Figure 1.10—Household by Type, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Household & Size Characteristics, 2014–2018



Additionally, people living in households with non relatives nearly doubled in the same time period from 3.9% in 2009–2013 to 7.0% in 2014–2018.

## Marital Status, 2014–2018

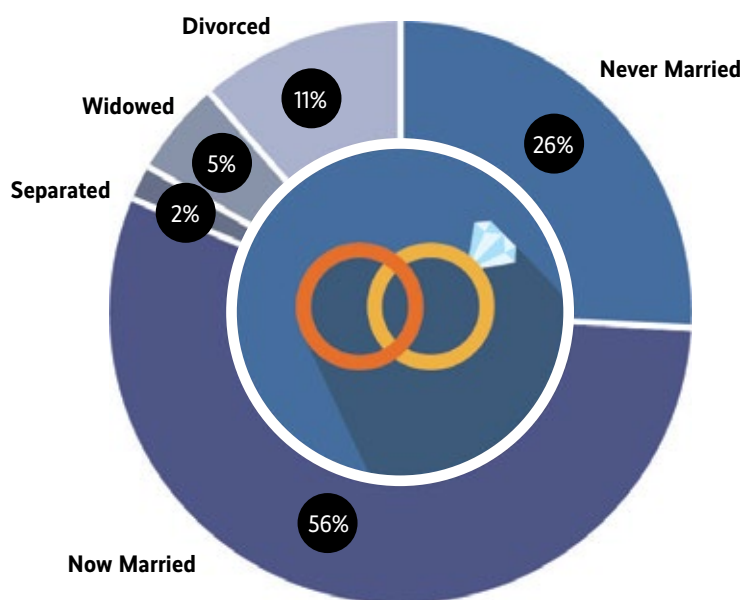


Figure 1.11—Marital Status Population 15 Years and Over, Pooler

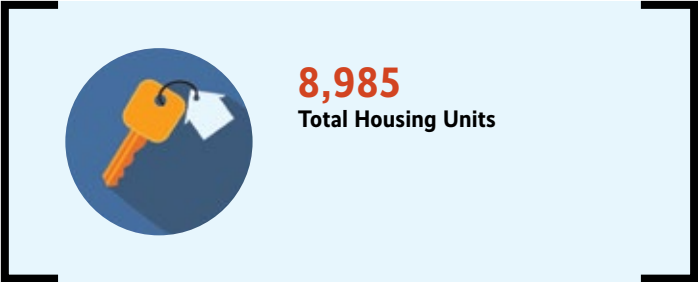
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Housing Units, Ownership & Tenure

There were an estimated 8,985 housing units in the city of Pooler in 2014–2018, the majority of which were single-unit structures (71.0%), which includes both detached and attached residences (i.e., townhomes). Notably, 96.3% of units were occupied (up from 87.9% in 2009–2013), primarily by homeowners (61.8%), with renters inhabiting roughly four out of every ten occupied housing units (38.2%).

According to American Community Survey estimates, the estimated rental vacancy rate, or amount of rental stock that is vacant for rent, was 4.0% while the homeowner vacancy rate was 0.0% (with a margin of error of  $\pm 0.7$ ). By comparison, the national rental and homeowner vacancy rates for the same time period were 6.0% and 1.7%, respectively.

## Housing Characteristics, 2014–2018



## Housing Types, 2014–2018

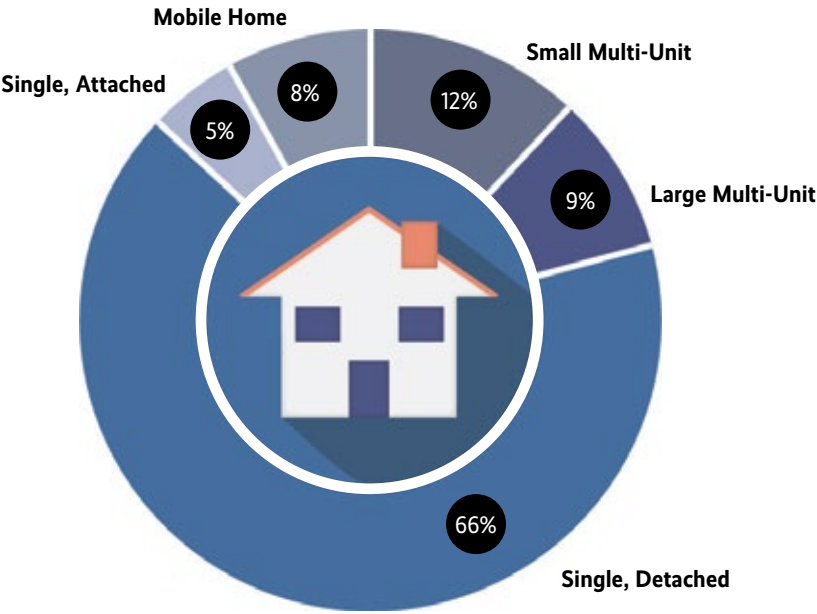
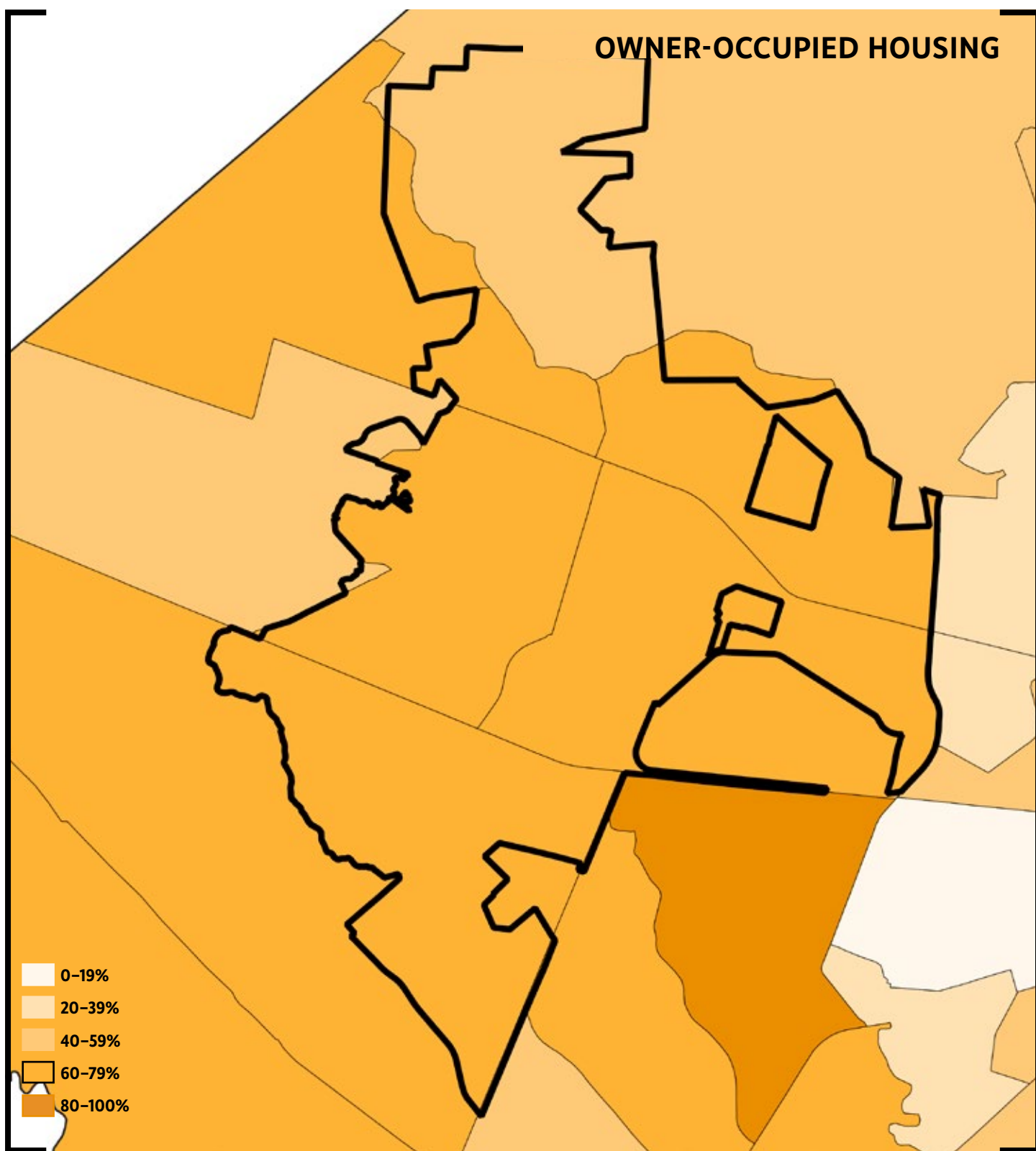


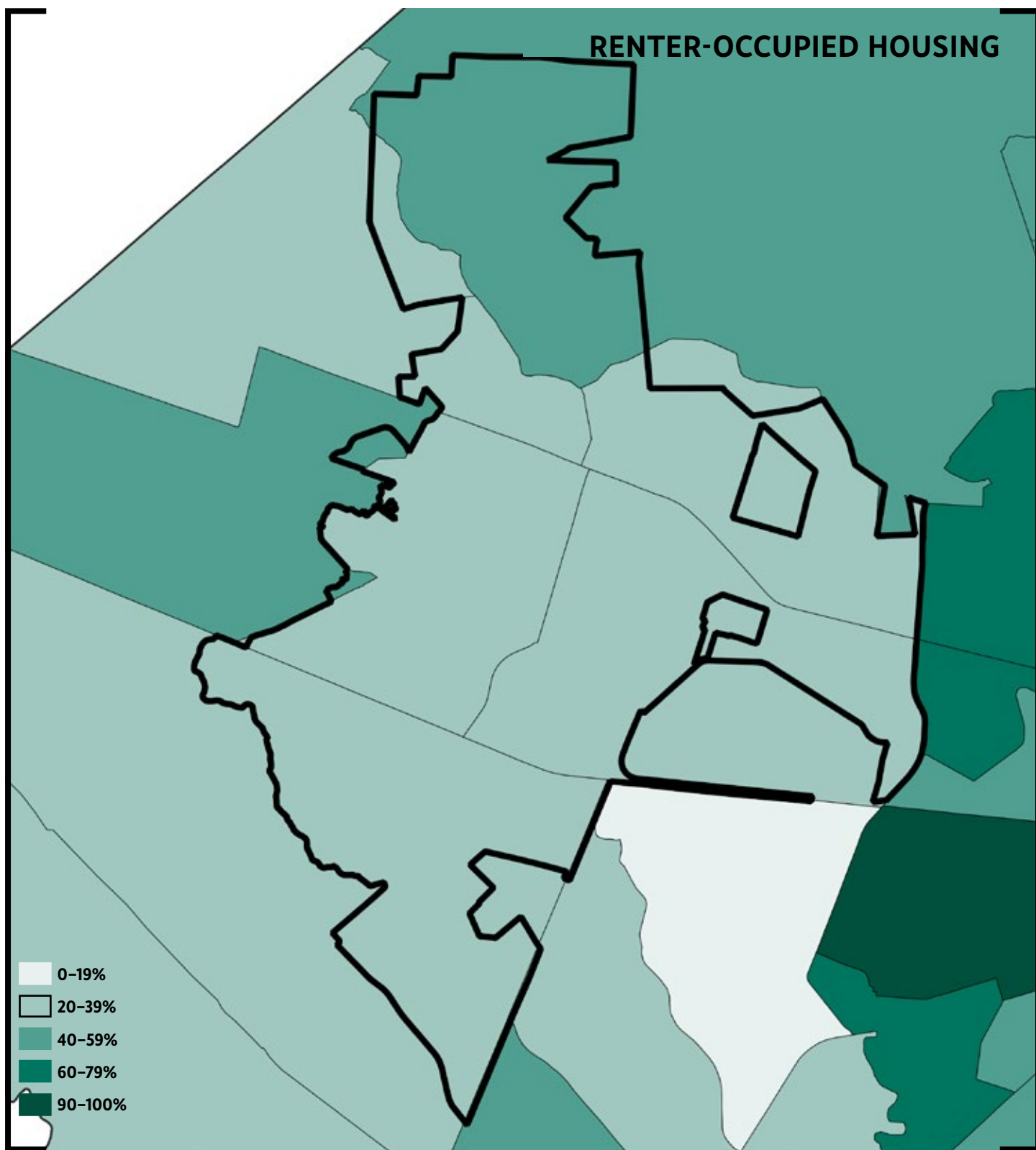
Figure 1.12–Housing Type, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates







Map 1.3—Percent Owner-Occupied Housing by Block Group, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.4—Percent Renter-Occupied Housing by Block Group, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Housing Value & Costs

In 2014–2018, the median property value of owner-occupied residences in Pooler was \$215,500. The 80.7% of owner-occupied units that had a mortgage typically spent an estimated \$1,597 per month on housing costs, while those without a mortgage (19.3%) spent an estimated \$424 per month. Of households with a mortgage, 26.4% were considered cost-burdened, paying at least 30% of their monthly income toward housing expenses.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, cost-burdened households “may have difficulty affording [other] necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.” This is a decrease from 2006–2010, when 32.1% of households with a mortgage were cost-burdened.

## Housing Characteristics, 2014–2018



For renters in Pooler, the median gross rent was \$1,217 in 2018 and 44.4% of rental households were cost-burdened, up 4.4% points from the share of cost-burdened renters in 2006–2010.

Significantly, one in five rental households (20.5%) were severely cost-burdened in 2018, paying at least half of their monthly income towards housing.

## Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income, 2014–2018

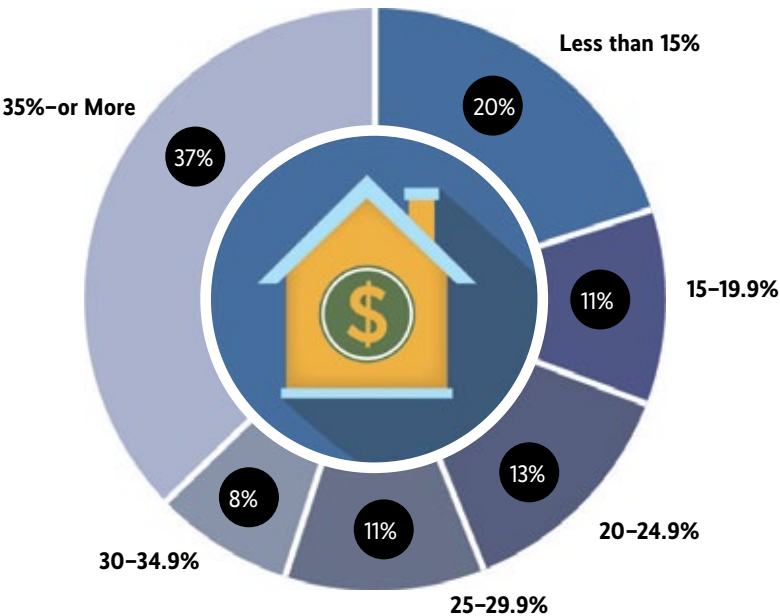
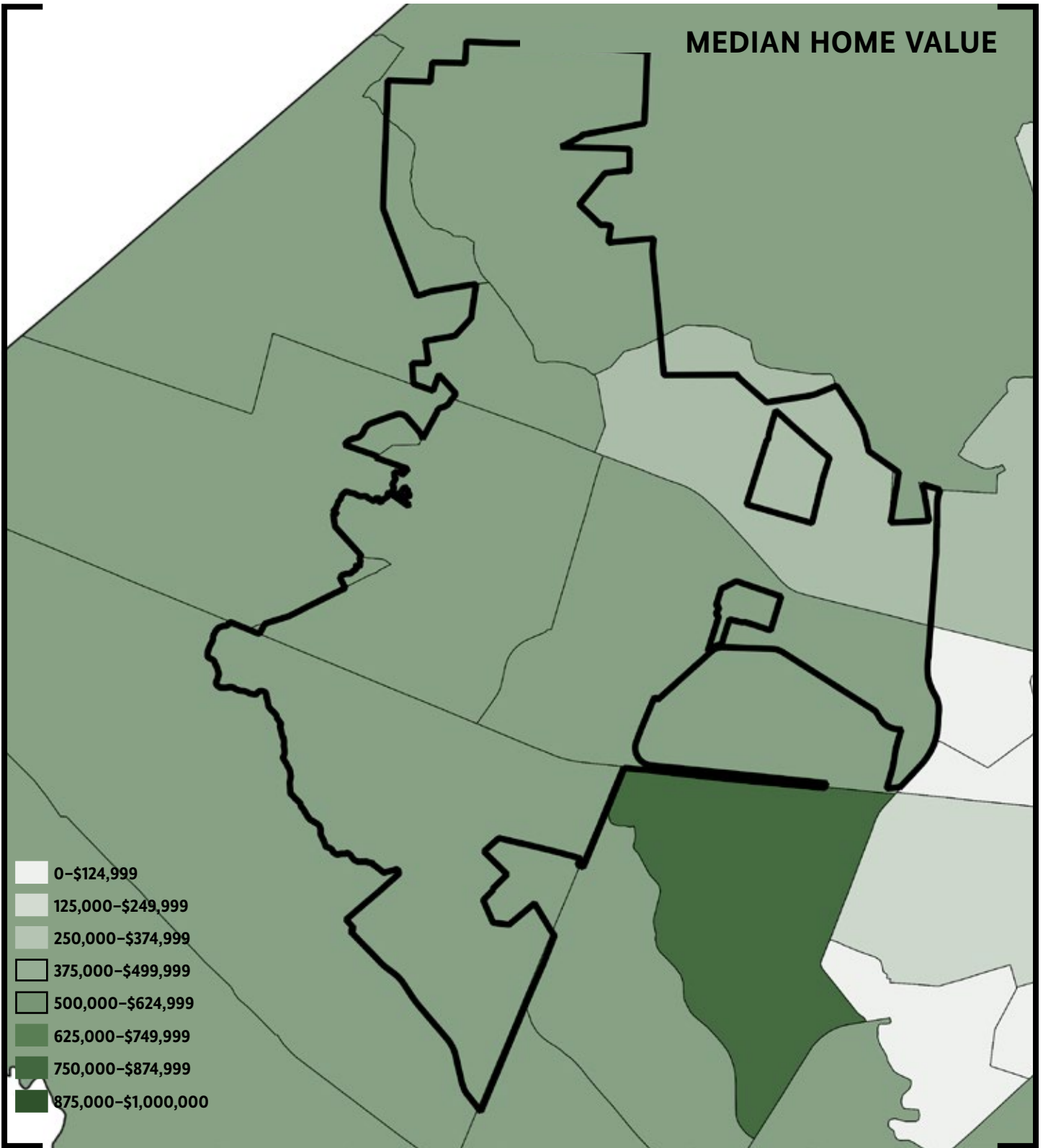


Figure 1.13–Cost–Burdened Renter, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.5-Median Home Value by Block Group, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



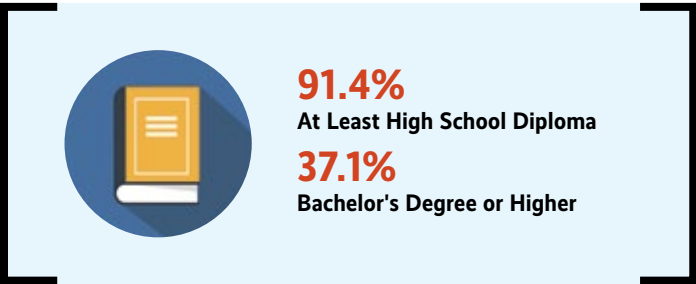


## Educational Attainment

In Pooler, most people over age 25 held a high school diploma (including high school equivalency degree) or higher in 2018 (91.4%), while 37.1% held a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.

These are down slightly from 2009–2013, when an estimated 94.2% of residents had at least a high school diploma and an estimated 39.4% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Figure 1.14 illustrates the breakdown of educational attainment in Pooler.

## Educational Characteristics, 2014–2018



## Educational Attainment, 2014–2018

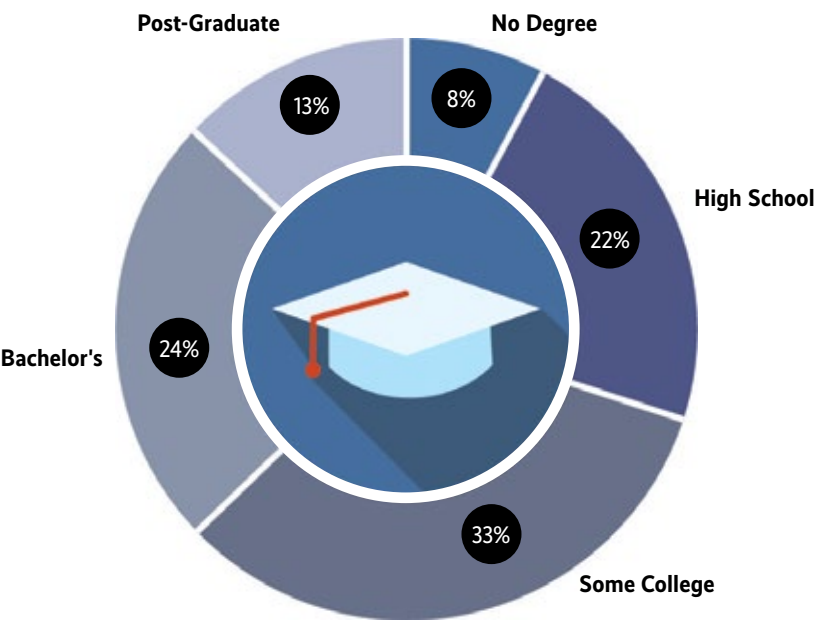
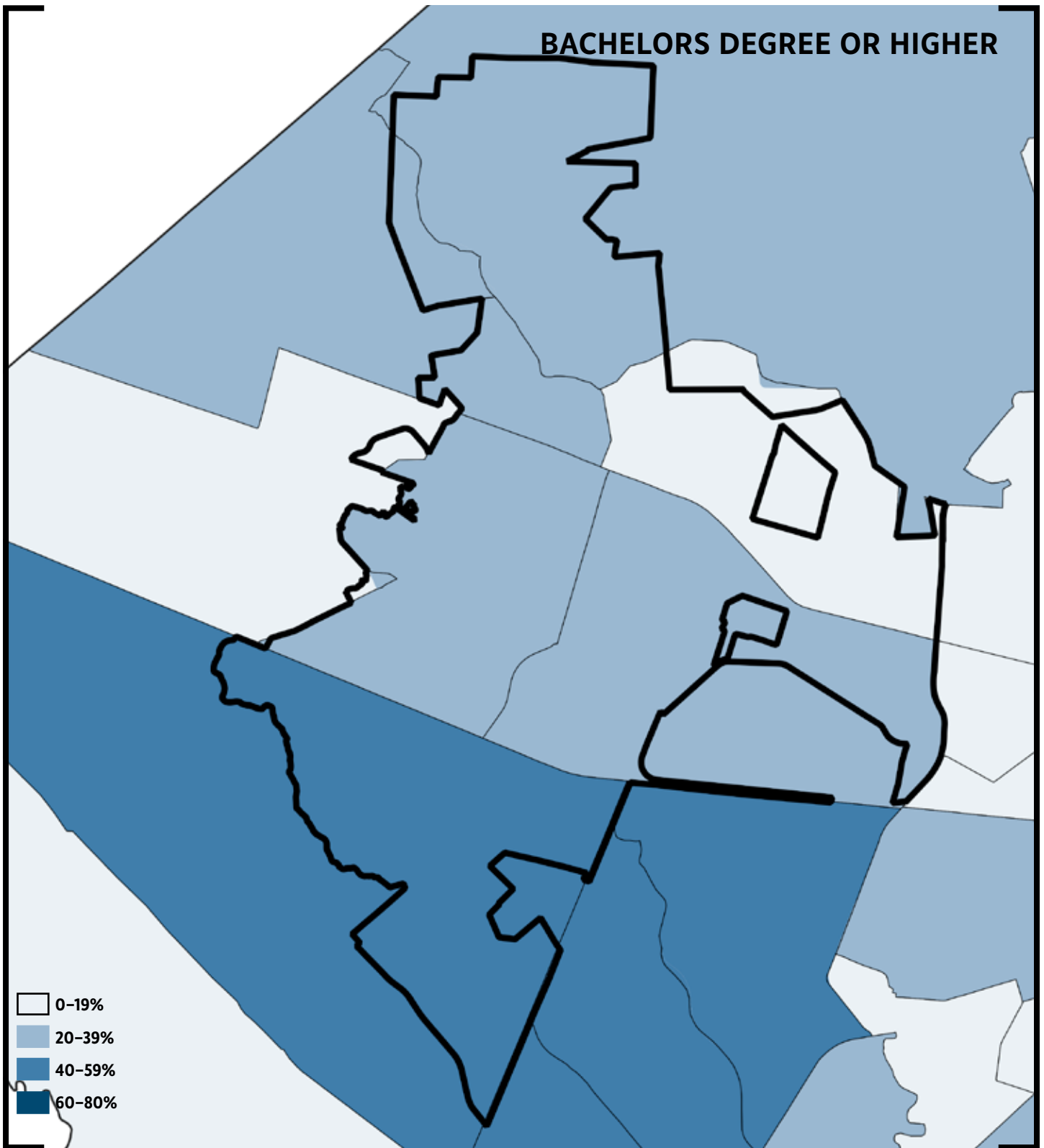


Figure 1.14–Educational Attainment, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER



Map 1.6—Percent Bachelors Degree or Higher by Block Group, Pooler  
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates





## Nativity

In 2014–2018, 93.3% of the population in Pooler were U.S. natives and 6.7% were foreign-born, the latter of which decreased 3.8% points from the 2009–2013 period. Of those residents born outside the United States, 83.1% came from Latin America (including the Caribbean, Central America, and South America) and Asia. In particular, the percentage of residents born in Latin America increased significantly from an estimated 17.8% in 2009–2013 to an estimated 48.4% in 2014–2018.

## Veteran Status

In 2014–2018, approximately 16.6% of adults living in Pooler were veterans, which is over twice the proportion in the state of Georgia (8.2%) and the country as a whole (7.5%). Most veterans served during and after the Vietnam war, with only approximately 150 out of 2,869 veterans serving before then. The period of military service for veterans living in Pooler is shown below. Please note that some veterans may have served in more than one of the periods listed, so percentages in the graph may not sum to 100%.

## Veteran Characteristics, 2014–2018



## Military Service for Adult Veterans

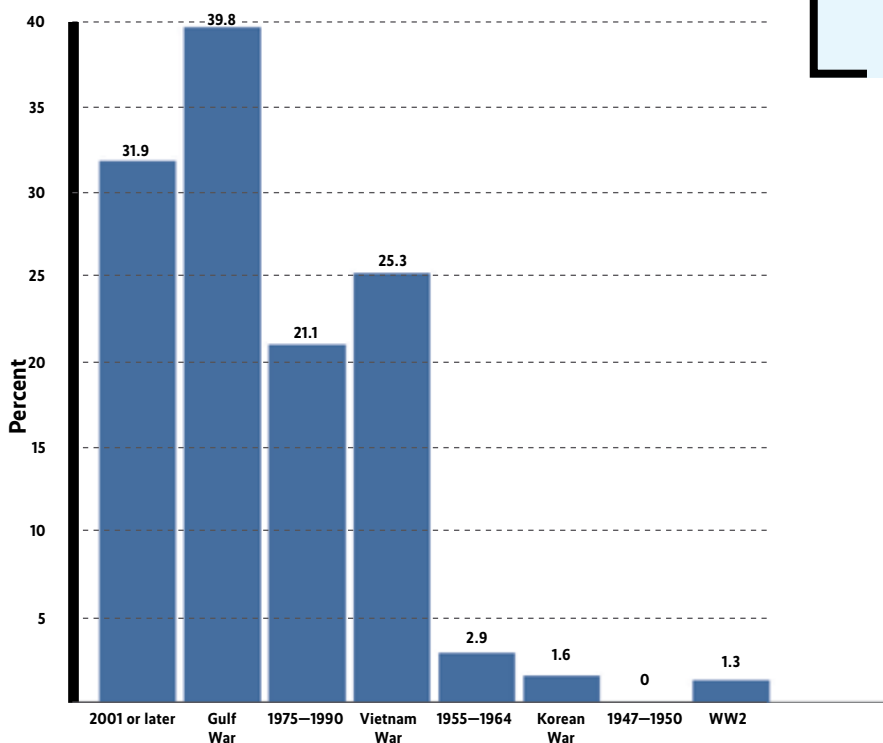


Figure 1.15–Period of Military Service for Adult Veterans, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Construction

The construction of residential buildings is generally a good indicator of a community's growth. There has been a substantial increase in building activity in Pooler in recent years, with the majority of new construction being single-family detached homes.

Figure 1.16 shows the recent residential construction trends for the city of Pooler. Estimating the population based on the number of building permits is useful in planning for roads and utilities because a residential dwelling unit represents the potential for population regardless of the occupant's official residence.

### Construction Permits, 2018–2020

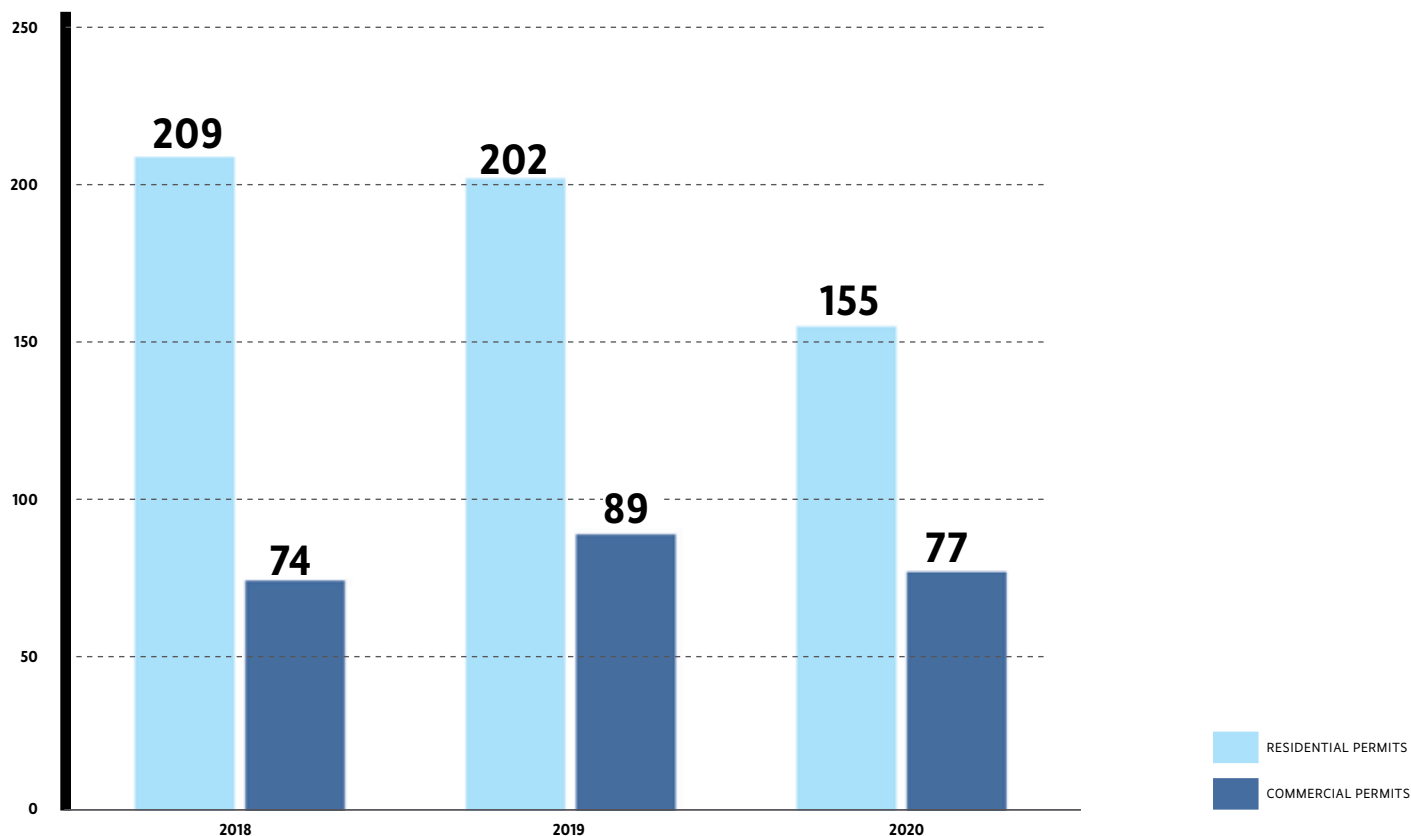


Figure 1.16–Construction Permits, Pooler  
Chatham County Building Safety & Regulatory Services

## COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has touched nearly every aspect of the community and the lives of citizens in the past year. Chatham County, like every county in the country, suffered the economic, social, educational, and health consequences of the pandemic that, at the time of this writing, has killed over 569,000 Americans. As of April 5, 2021, Chatham County had a total of 19,608 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 394 confirmed deaths, and 1,561 hospitalizations due to COVID-19. At the time these data were acquired, there were an additional 24 probable deaths due to COVID-19 in Chatham County as well.

At the time of writing, the world is still seeing the impacts of COVID-19. Although Pooler-specific data is unavailable, limited data is available at the county level and is represented here. As of February 2021, the employment rate in the county had decreased 5.8 percent compared to January 2020. These job losses have been concentrated primarily in low and middle wage jobs; in fact, the employment rate among workers in the top wage quartile has been above January 2020 levels since statewide stay at home orders were lifted on April 30, 2020. Workers in the bottom wage quartile, however, have remained hardest hit since last March, when the employment rate for low wage jobs dropped nearly 45 percent by mid-April 2020.

Unemployment claims in the county reached their peak the first full week of April 2020, when roughly 14,500 people filed an initial claim for unemployment benefits. This corresponds to a rate of 10.4 claims per 100 people in the labor force. The number of unemployment claims has generally been decreasing since then—as of the week ending October 31, 2020, there were 0.88 unemployment claims per 100 people in the County's labor force.

Small businesses have also been negatively impacted. As of February 2021, 33 percent fewer small businesses were open in Chatham County compared with January 2020, and total small business revenue had decreased by 38.5%. By mid-March 2021, however, total consumer spending in Chatham County had nearly rebounded back to January 2020 levels.

Overall, Chatham County residents spent 5% less time away from home in April 2021 compared with the start of 2020 when the pandemic began. When people did leave their residence during this time, the average amount of time spent elsewhere varied significantly depending on their destination.

- The total time spent at grocery stores in Chatham increased 2.9%
- Total time spent in parks increased 64.7%
- Total time spent at retail and restaurant locations increased 1.6%
- Total time spent at transit locations decreased 24%
- Total time spent in the workplace decreased 29.6%



## Percent Change in Employment

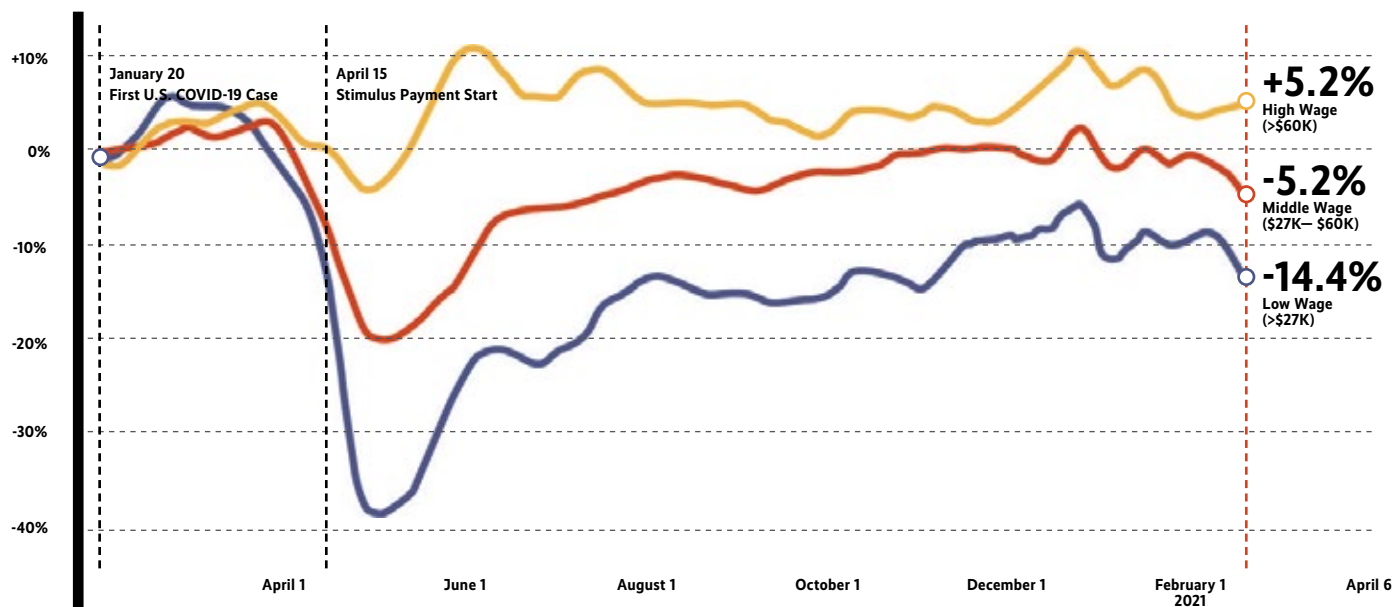


Figure 1.17–Percent Change in Employment, Chatham County

## Time Spent Outside Home Chatham County

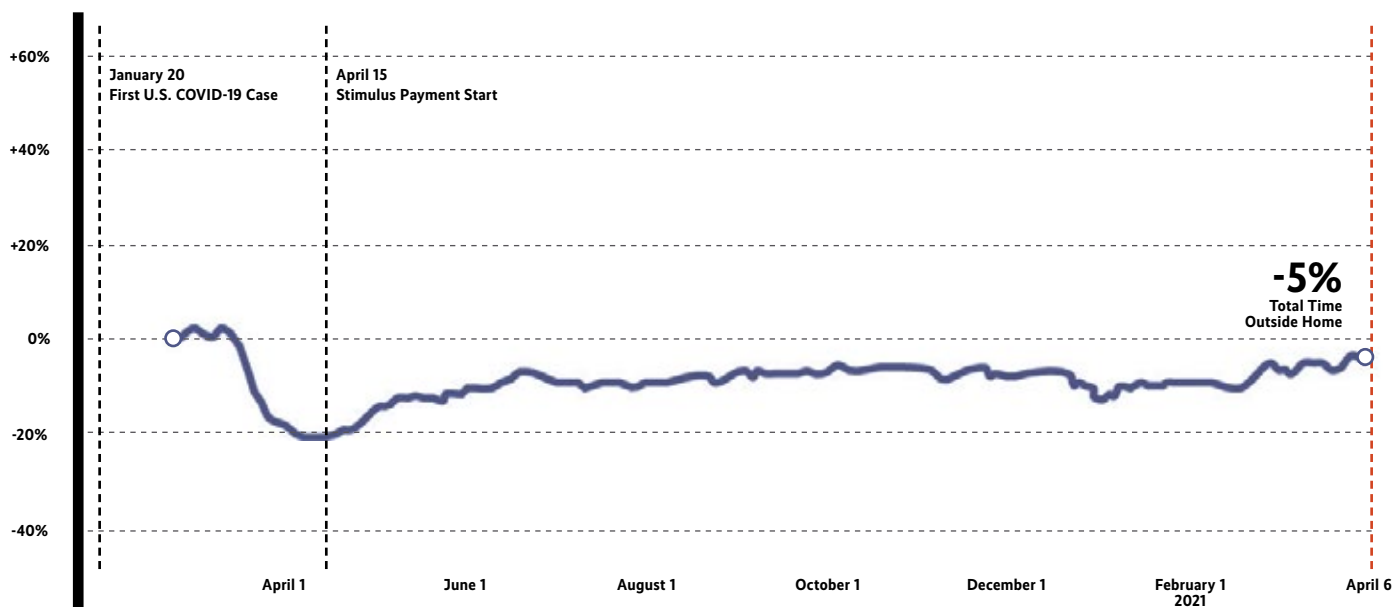


Figure 1.18–Percent Change in Time Spent Outside Home, Chatham County

