



CORE CITY

DISTRICT PROFILE



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District Profile

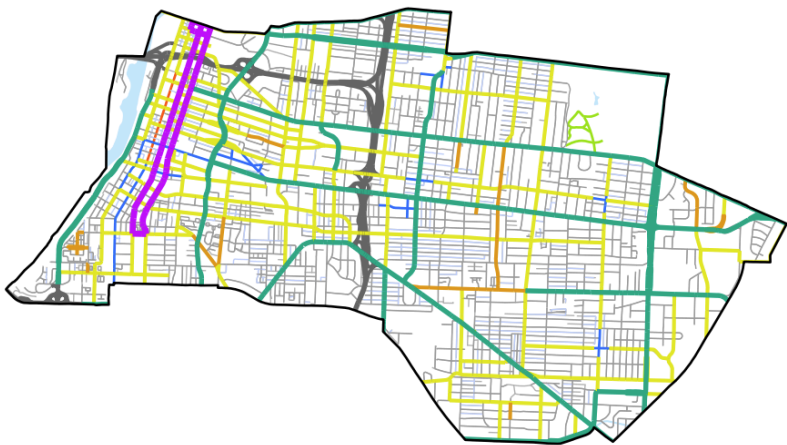
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2024)

Compiled June 2026

CORE CITY AT A GLANCE

Total Population	Median Age	Median Income	Poverty Rate
49,305	37.6	\$59,129	11%

District Boundaries



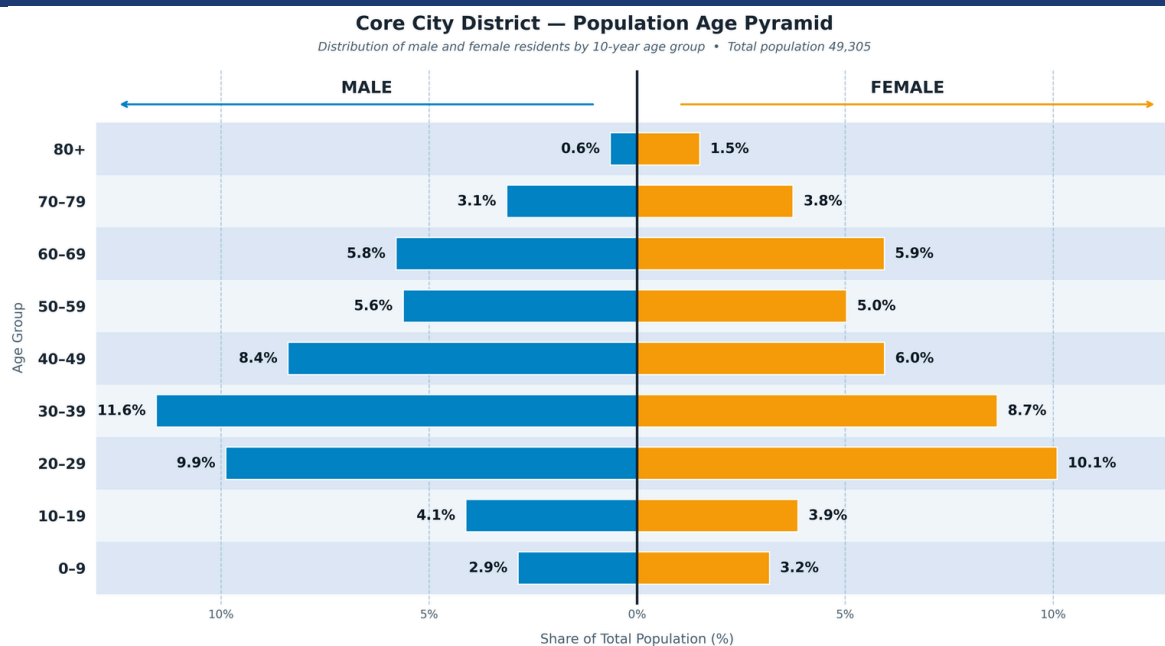
The Core City Planning District is bound by Jackson Avenue to the North, North Ferriwick Road to the East, South Parkway to the South, and the Mississippi River to the West.

Population & Age Breakdown

As Memphis's dense urban center, the Core City is built around small households, often made up of individuals or unrelated adults rather than families. This is reflected in one of the smallest average household sizes recorded across the city. Additionally, the Core City's population has seen a slight decrease over the past 15 years, but still ranks among the upper half of districts in terms of population stability.

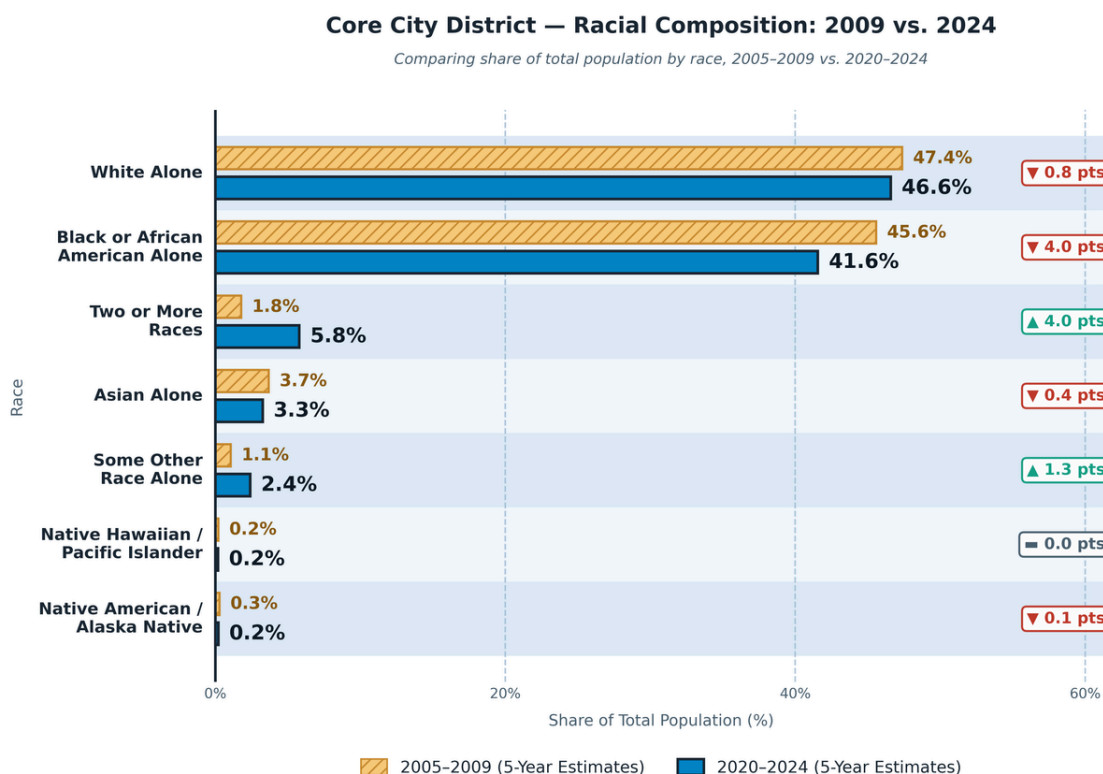
Population Change (Since 2009)	-2.3%
Total Households	26,872
Average Household Size	1.83

Distribution By Age Group, Sex and Racial Composition



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), B01001: Sex By Age, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Age distribution reveals how a community is positioned for the future, and the Core City's profile is distinctly weighted toward working-age adults. Residents in their late twenties and thirties form the largest single group, while the shares under 18 and over 70 are both comparatively thin.



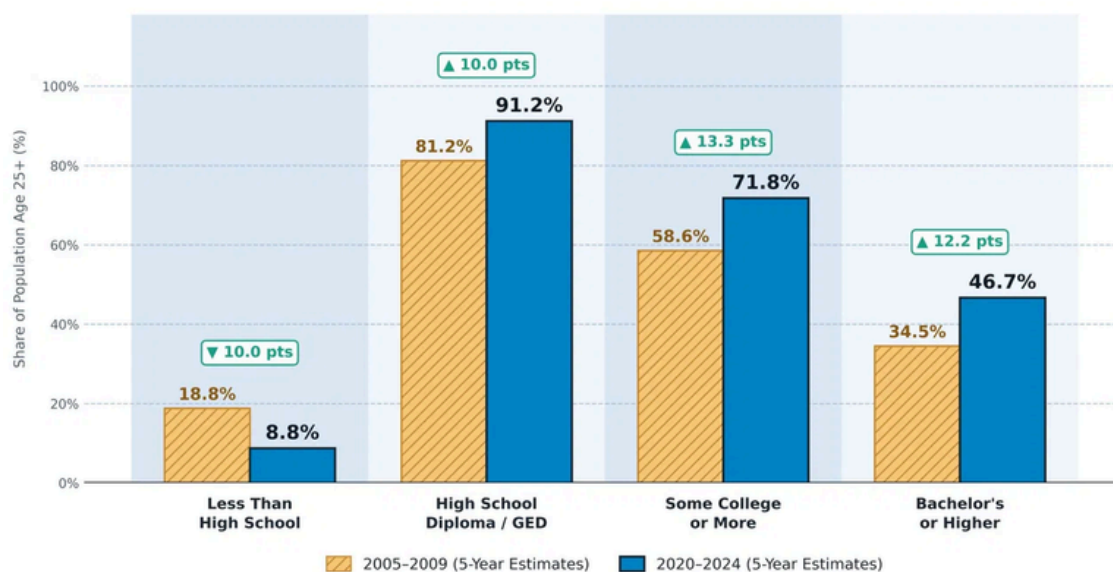
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A03001, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Racial data offers a window into who makes up our communities and helps identify potential disparities across Memphis. In the Core City District, White and Black or African American residents form the two largest groups at 47% and 42% respectively. Residents identifying as two or more races formed the third largest group at just under 6%. While several districts saw their composition shift substantially over the same period, Core City's has changed comparatively little.

Educational Attainment

Core City District — Educational Attainment: 2009 vs. 2024

Comparing share of population age 25 and older by highest credential achieved, 2005-2009 vs. 2020-2024



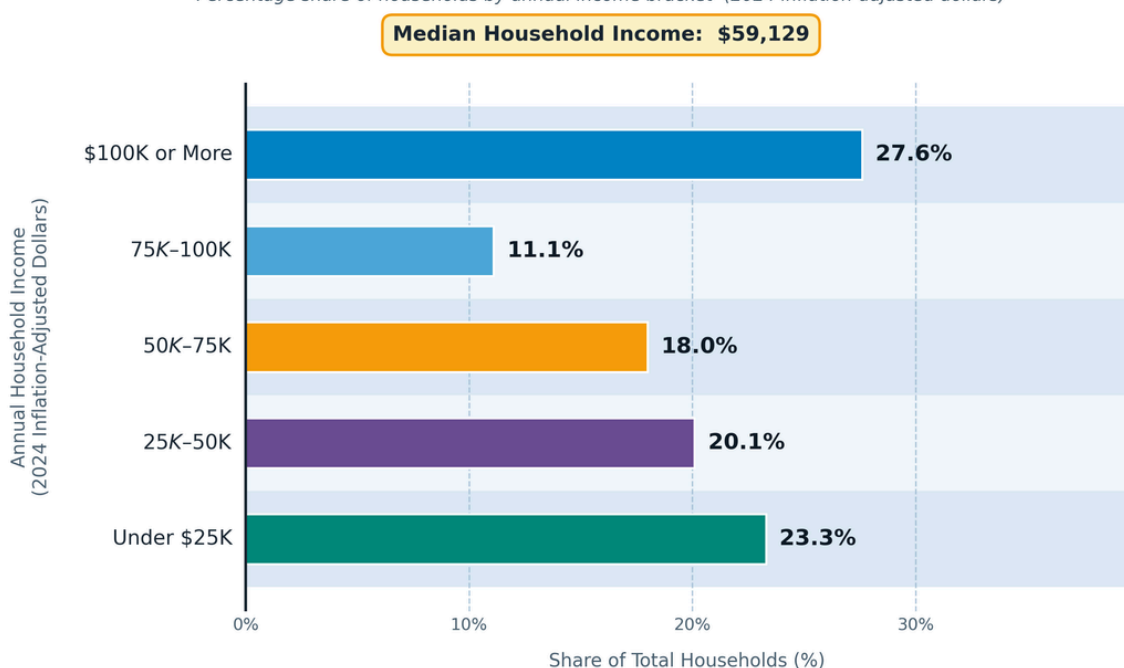
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A12001, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Educational attainment is a key indicator of long-term economic mobility, as it shapes a community's workforce competitiveness and influences the local tax base. In the Core City District, the share of residents without a high school diploma fell by 10%, while bachelor's attainment climbed 12%, and those with some college or more rose another 13%. Importantly, educational gains appeared at both ends of the scale at once, with fewer residents lacking a diploma and far more holding degrees. Over the past fifteen years the Core City has moved from a mixed educational profile toward one weighted heavily toward higher credentials, a clear upward shift across nearly every level of attainment.

Income Distribution

Core City District — Household Income Distribution

Percentage share of households by annual income bracket (2024 inflation-adjusted dollars)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A14001, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Income Distribution Continued

Household income distribution is one of the most direct indicators of a community's economic health, showing how income is actually spread across households at different financial levels. Core City households have done very well over the past fifteen years, with the median income rising 21.1%. That is the largest gain of any district in Memphis. However, that growth has not reached everyone evenly. The top bracket, households earning \$100,000 or more, is now the district's largest, while close to a quarter of households still get by on under \$25,000. So while the gain is notable, it has mostly lifted those already near the top, leaving Core City more divided between its highest and lowest earners.

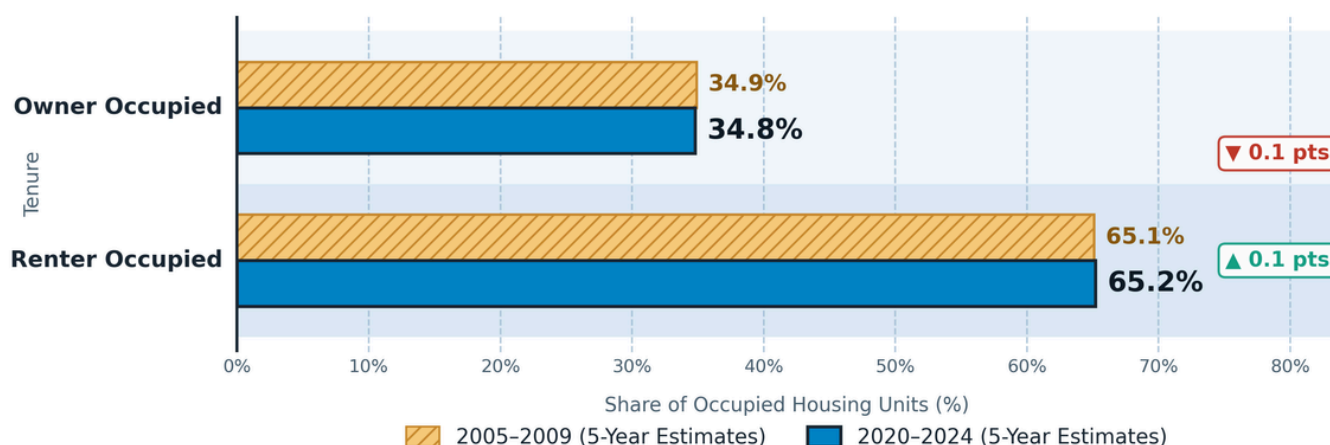
Housing Characteristics

Total Housing Units	Median Rent	Total Occupancy Rate	Median Year Built
31,099	\$1,147	86.4%	1945

Housing characteristics offer a broad snapshot of a district's residential landscape, encompassing the age, cost, and tenure of its housing stock. With a median year built of 1945 and an average rent of \$1,147, Core City's housing is unsurprisingly among the oldest in Memphis; however, it still remains moderately priced among district averages. About two-thirds of homes are still renter occupied, a rate essentially unchanged from 2009, making Core City one of the very few districts where the tenure balance did not move toward renting. For residents, this means the district's recent economic gains have not opened a path into ownership, and its renters remain exposed to a market where real rents rose 22.3% over the same fifteen years.

Core City District — Housing Tenure: 2009 vs. 2024

Comparing owner occupied vs. renter occupied as a share of total occupied housing units



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A10060, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Housing Characteristics Continued

Percentage of Off-Market Vacancies

64.1%

Homeowners with a Mortgage or Similar Debt

63.9%

Median Gross Rent Burden

29.1%

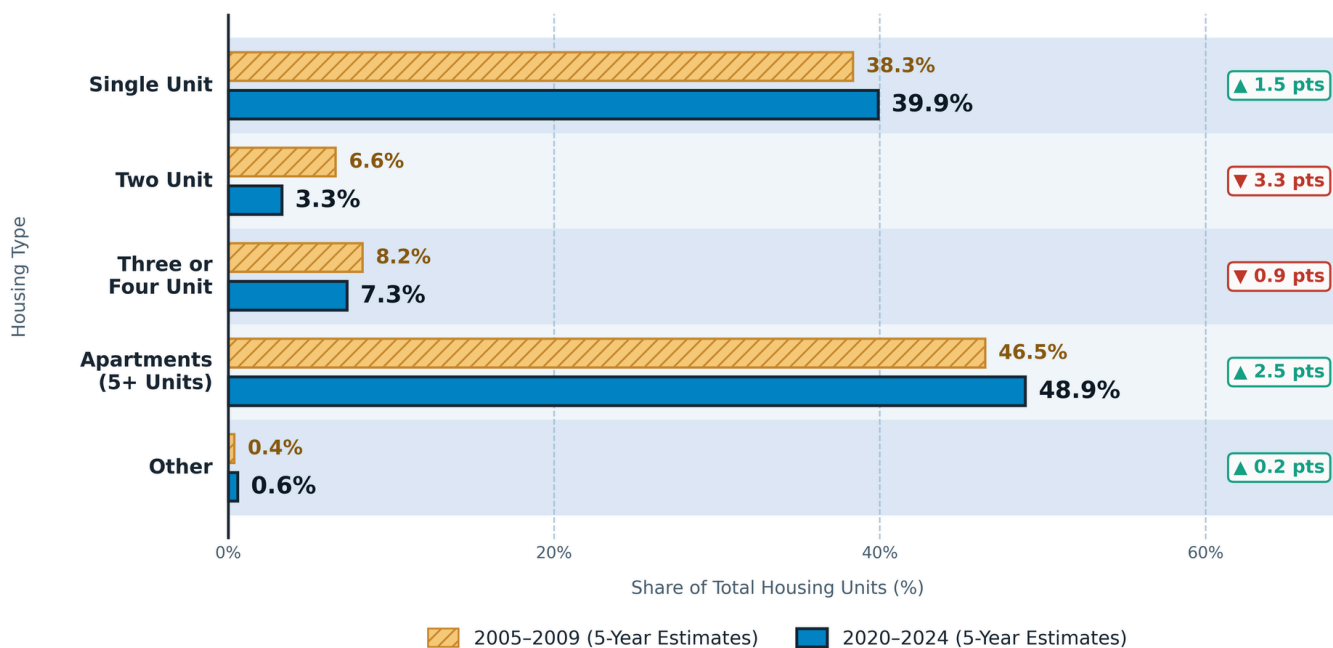
Median Owner-Cost Burden

21.5%

Housing cost burden and vacancy data offer a deeper look into the financial pressures residents face and the availability of housing within the local market. In the Core City, 63.9% of homeowners carry a mortgage or similar debt, while the remaining third own outright. The typical renter spends 29.1% of household income on rent alone, just under the standard cost-burden threshold of 30%, while owners with a mortgage spend an average of 20.8%. This disparity reflects how much more exposed the district's majority-renter population is to housing costs than its owners, and it carries added weight in a district where real rents rose 22.3% over the study period, potentially erasing most real income gains made.

Core City District — Housing Unit Types: 2009 vs. 2024

Comparing share of total housing units by structure type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A10032, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Housing unit type data describes the physical composition of a district's residential stock, offering insight into the character, and variety of housing available to residents. In the Core City, the stock is dominated by two forms, apartments of five or more units at 48.9% and single-family homes at 39.9%, which together account for just under 90% of housing. Over the past fifteen years the district has polarized further toward these two types. Both grew their share while the small multifamily middle contracted, with two-unit structures falling 3.3% and three-or-four-unit buildings easing by about 1%. The result is a housing stock increasingly split between two ends of the traditional housing spectrum, with fewer of the moderate-density and middle-housing options that once sat between them.

Poverty Rates

**Family Poverty
Rate**

11.2% (-11.3%)

**Seniors Living in
Poverty**

18.9% (-6.8%)

**Children Living
in Poverty**

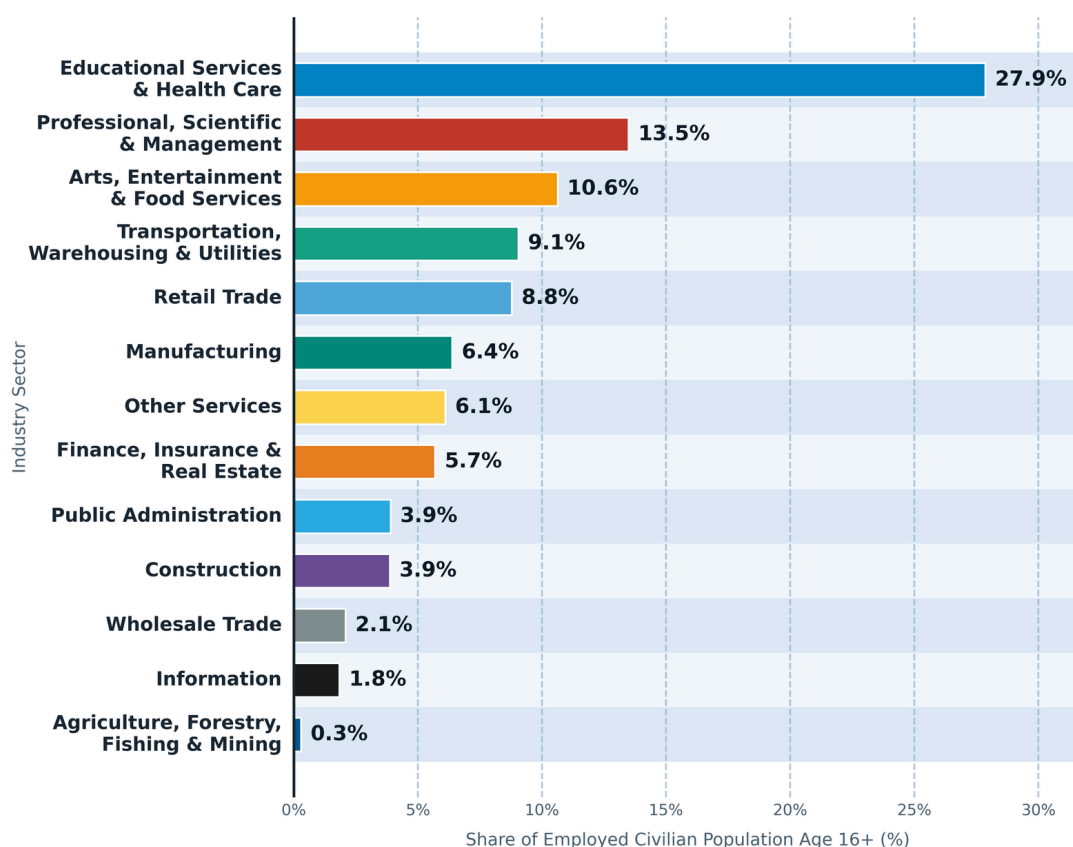
21.3% (-26.5%)

Core City has recorded some of the largest reductions in poverty since 2009. The share of children living in poverty saw the largest reduction, dropping by more than 26%. Notable decreases also occurred among families and seniors, both dropping by 11% and 6% respectively. Despite this progress, children still remain as the most impacted by poverty.

Employment by Industry

Core City District — Employment by Industry

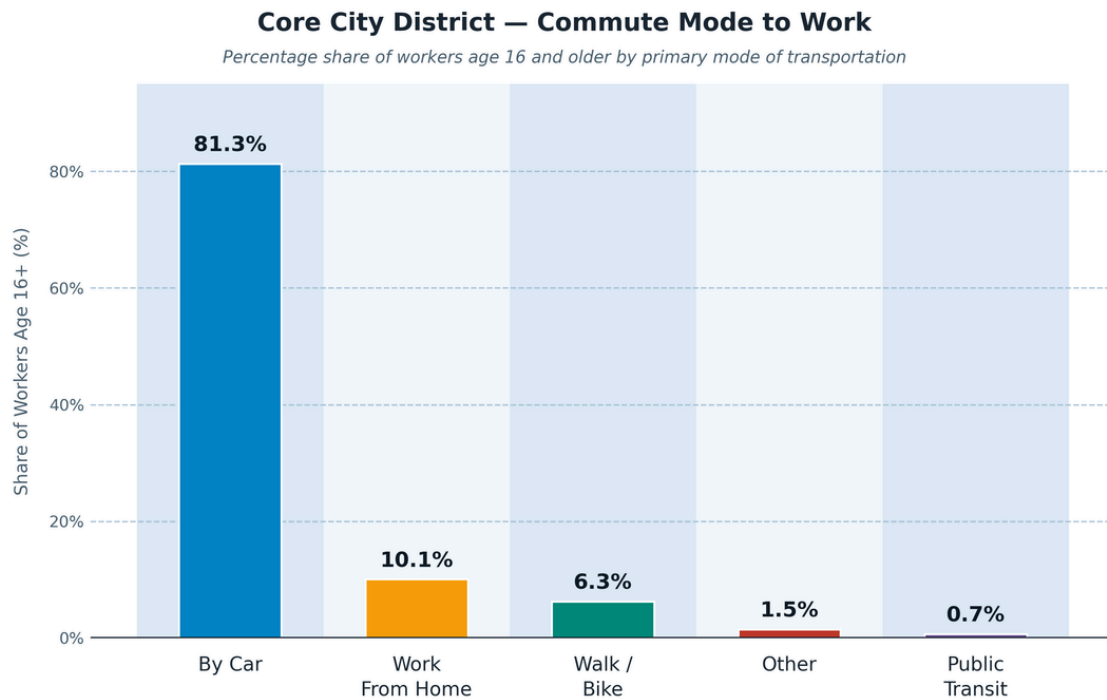
Percentage share of employed civilian residents age 16 and older by industry sector



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A17004, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Core City's employment data points to a workforce anchored in institutional and white-collar employment. Educational Services and Health Care alone accounts for more than a quarter of all employed residents, reflecting the hospitals, schools, and social-service institutions concentrated in and around the urban core. Typically, an overconcentration of employment within one industry leaves communities vulnerable to economic change, as shifts within select industries can have a cascading effect on the local labor market. However, established institutions, such as hospitals or state universities, are able to provide some insulation from industry downturns via their access to capital streams which extend beyond the local and state economy.

Commute Data



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A09005, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Commute mode data captures how residents travel to and from work, serving as a key indicator of transportation infrastructure demand, transit accessibility, and the degree to which a district's land use patterns support alternatives to personal vehicle travel.

In the Core City, 81.3% of workers age 16 and older commute by car, with public transit, walking, and biking accounting for just 7%. Even in the city's densest district, driving remains the default way to get to work. Without viable alternatives, car ownership imposes meaningful fixed costs upon the district's lower-income and renter households. Strengthening transit access and reliability can alleviate some of these mounting financial pressures while also making our communities more equitable and accessible.

District Summary

The Core City Planning District occupies a distinctive position in Memphis as its dense urban center, and its profile reflects that role. It is one of the few districts with a nearly even split between its two largest groups, with White and Black or African American residents each accounting for a little over 40% of the population. That balance has changed little over the past fifteen years, with the district holding close to its 2009 composition rather than tipping toward any one group. Its housing is among the most renter-oriented and apartment-dense in Memphis, reflecting the built form of a city core. That stock has shifted over time, polarizing toward large apartment buildings and single-family homes while the moderate-density options between them thinned out. Additionally, the Core City has grown measurably stronger, with incomes rising, education levels climbing, and poverty falling across every age group. However, those gains have not reached everyone evenly, as a substantial share of households remain low-income even as the top earners have pulled further ahead. Ultimately, these features mark Core City as a district on a strong upward trajectory, one that has strengthened its economic footing while holding onto the mixed, urban character that defines it.