Office of Comprehensive Planning

October
2026

UNIVERSITY

DISTRICT PROFILE



University

District Profile

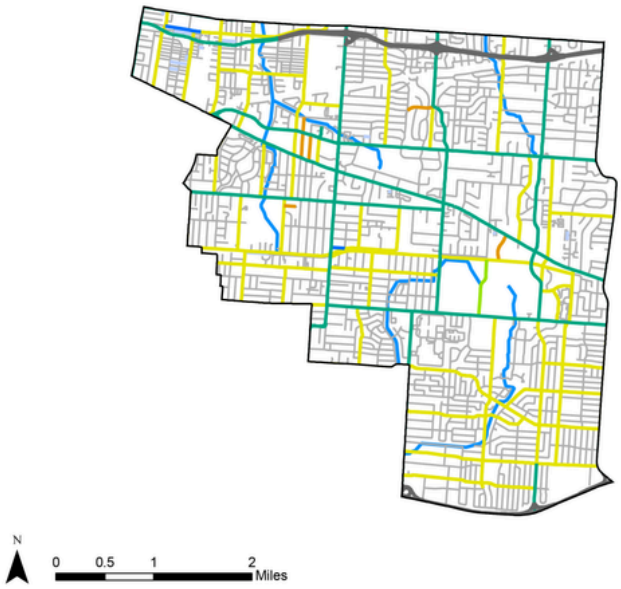
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2024)

Compiled October 2026

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

Total Population	Median Age	Median Income	Poverty Rate
56,814	34	$59,196	16%

District Boundaries



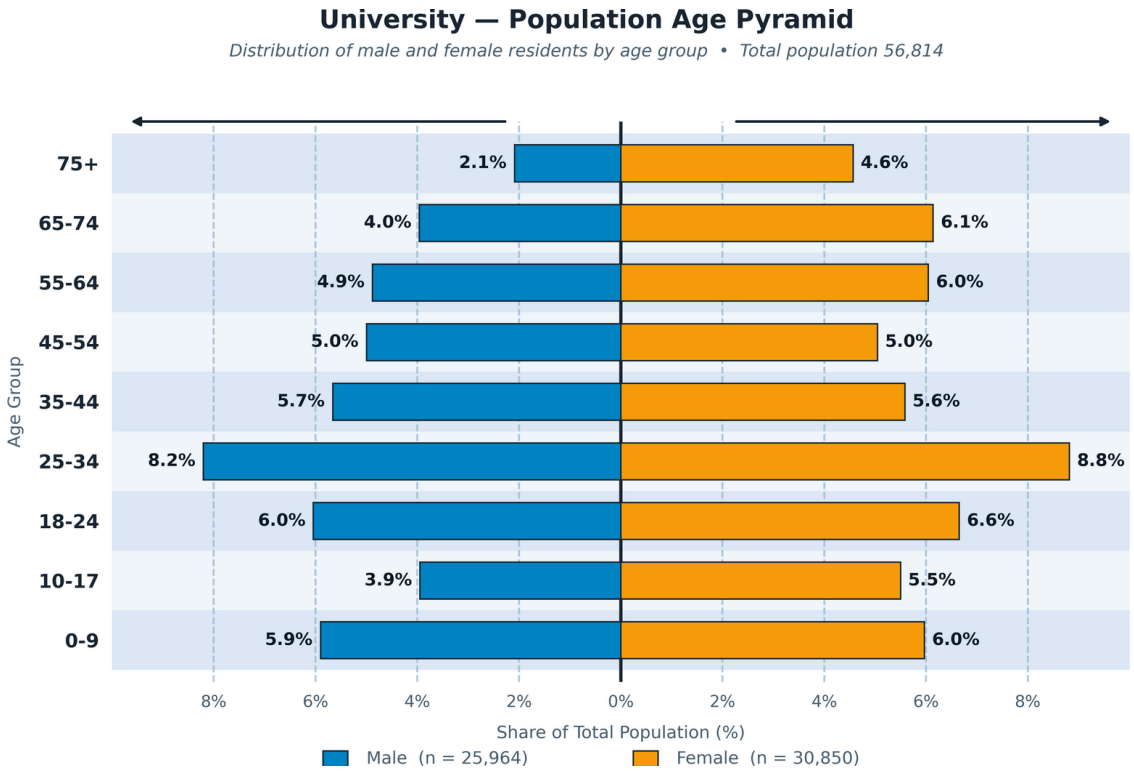
The University District is bound by Summer Avenue to the north, North Mendenhall Road to the east, the Avron Fogelman Expressway to the south, and East Parkway North to the west.

Population & Age Breakdown

The University District has lost roughly 8,200 residents since 2009. Adults in their late 30's through 50's account for nearly two-thirds of this decline, alongside a sharp drop in school-aged children (5-9 years old). Family households (two or more related people) have fallen from 54% to 48% of all households, while young adults (25-34) and seniors (65-74) have grown their shares of the population, leaving a district increasingly made up of smaller, nonfamily households.

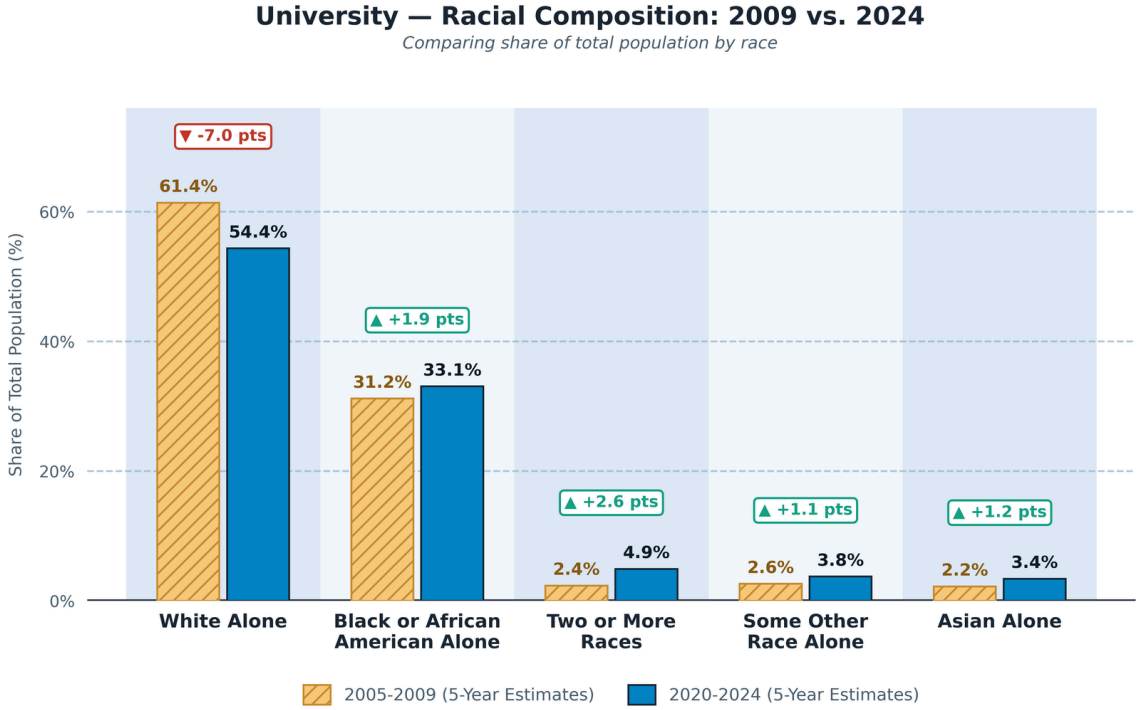
Population Change (2009-2024)	**-12.6%**
Total Households	**25,327**
Average Household Size	**2.24**

Distribution By Age Group, Sex & Racial Composition



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

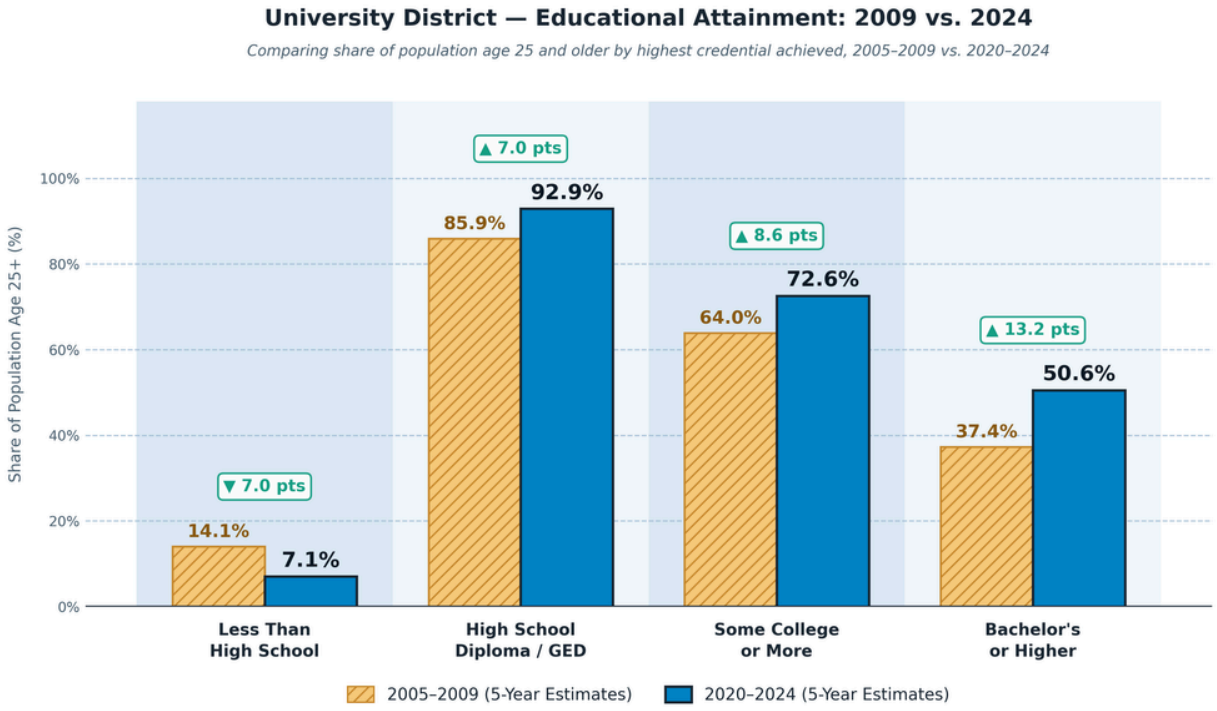
Population pyramids show how a community's population is distributed across age groups and by sex, making it easier to identify generational patterns and forecast demographic changes.The University District's population is anchored by a pronounce presence of young adults, particularly among the 18-24 and 25-34 range, making up nearly 30% of the total population. Women also significantly outnumber men.



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. Understanding this makeup is essential for recognizing and addressing disparities across Memphis. Since 2009, the University district has diversified in its racial and ethnic makeup. With the exception of the white share, each racial group has seen modest growth, ranging from one to three percentage points. Additionally, ethnic groups, such as the Hispanic or Latino population, has also grown by 3.5%.

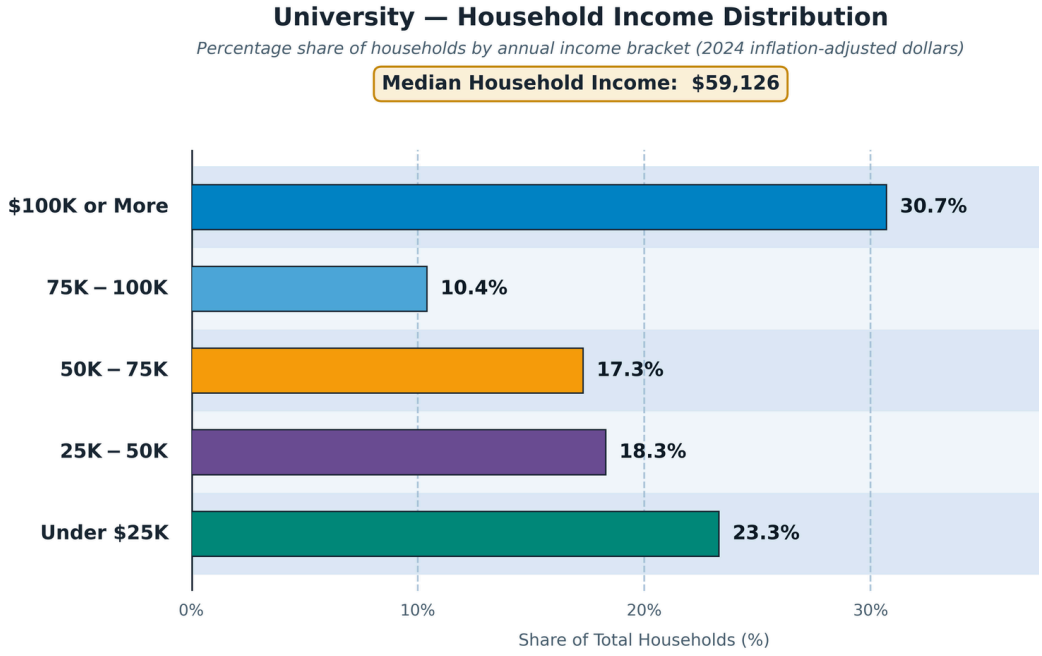
Educational Attainment



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

Educational attainment rates improved across every category in the University District since 2009. The largest growth occurred at the top-end of the spectrum, with the share of individuals holding a bachelor's degree or higher increasing by 13%. Every other category saw substantial and even growth, hovering around 7-8%. While many districts saw educational attainment rates improve during this period, few saw progress to the same level the University district was able to achieve.

Income Distribution



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

Household income distribution is one of the most direct indicators of a community's economic health, revealing not just average prosperity but how wealth is actually spread across residents at different financial levels.

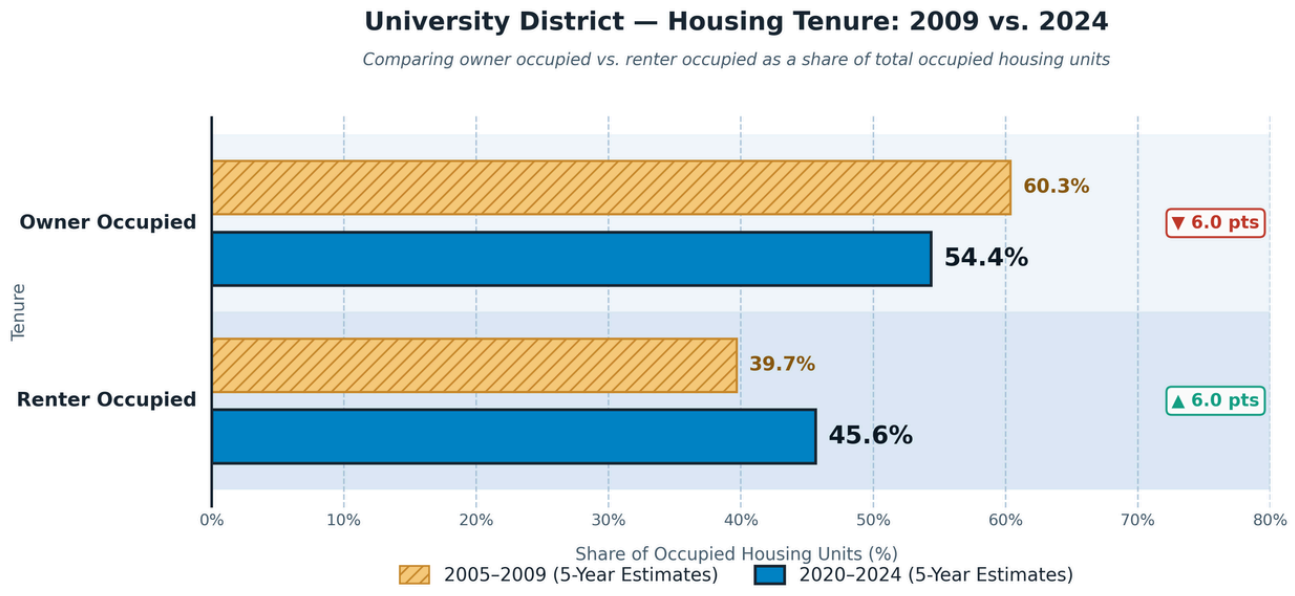
Income Distribution Continued

The University District's income distribution is split between the two ends of the spectrum. Households earning more than $100,000 are the single largest group at about 31 percent, followed by households earning under $25,000 at about 23 percent, with each of the middle brackets holding a smaller share. In inflation-adjusted terms, the top of the distribution has held steady since 2009, while the share of households under $25,000 has grown by roughly five percentage points. The $25,000 to $50,000 range has thinned by about 4.4 percent. Median household income has also lost ground, with buying power down about 5 percent.

Housing Characteristics

Total Housing Units	Median Rent	Total Occupancy Rate	Median Year Built
28,046	$1,198	90%	1942

Housing characteristics offer a broad snapshot of a district's residential landscape, encompassing the size, condition, cost, and availability of its housing stock. Since 2009, the University District has shifted toward renting, with the share of owner-occupied households falling from 60% to 54%. It remains one of the few districts with an owner majority, but that margin has narrowed. Over the same period, the typical household lost about 5% of its buying power while median rent rose about 13%, putting added strain on existing residents.

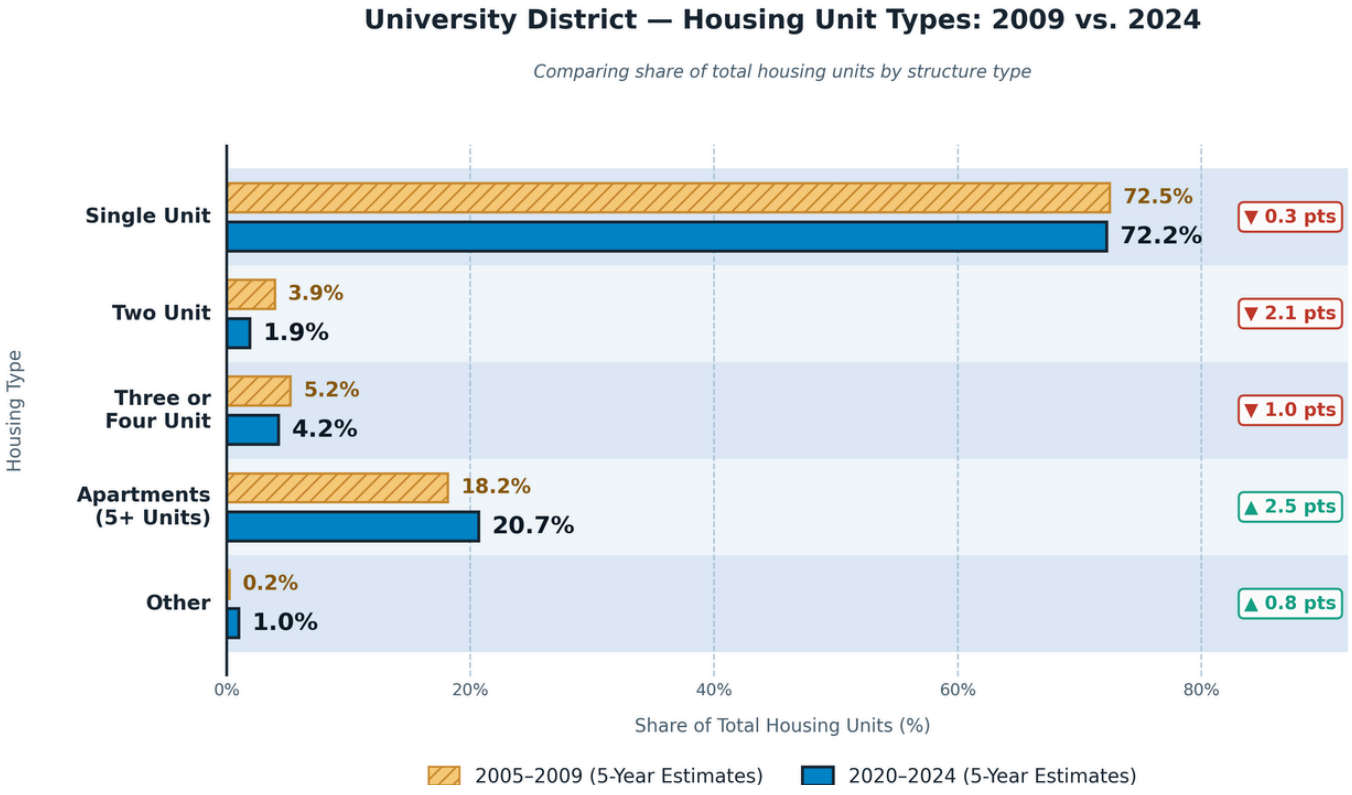


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020-2024 (5-Year Estimates), A10060, Compiled by the Office of Comprehensive Planning

Housing Characteristics Continued

Percentage of Off-Market Vacancies	Homeowners with a Mortgage or Similar Debt	Cost-Burdened Renters (>30% of Income)	Cost-Burdened Homeowners (>30% of Income)
55%	60%	55%	22%

Housing cost burden and vacancy data offer a deeper look into the financial pressures residents face and the availability of housing within the market. In the University District, a majority of renters are paying more than a third of their income to housing costs. This figure is especially concerning as the rate of renters has increased significantly over the last 15 years, exposing more residents to rising costs. Homeowners aren't doing much better either, as nearly two thirds still have a a mortgage, and 22% are meeting the same threshold to be considered cost-burdened.



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

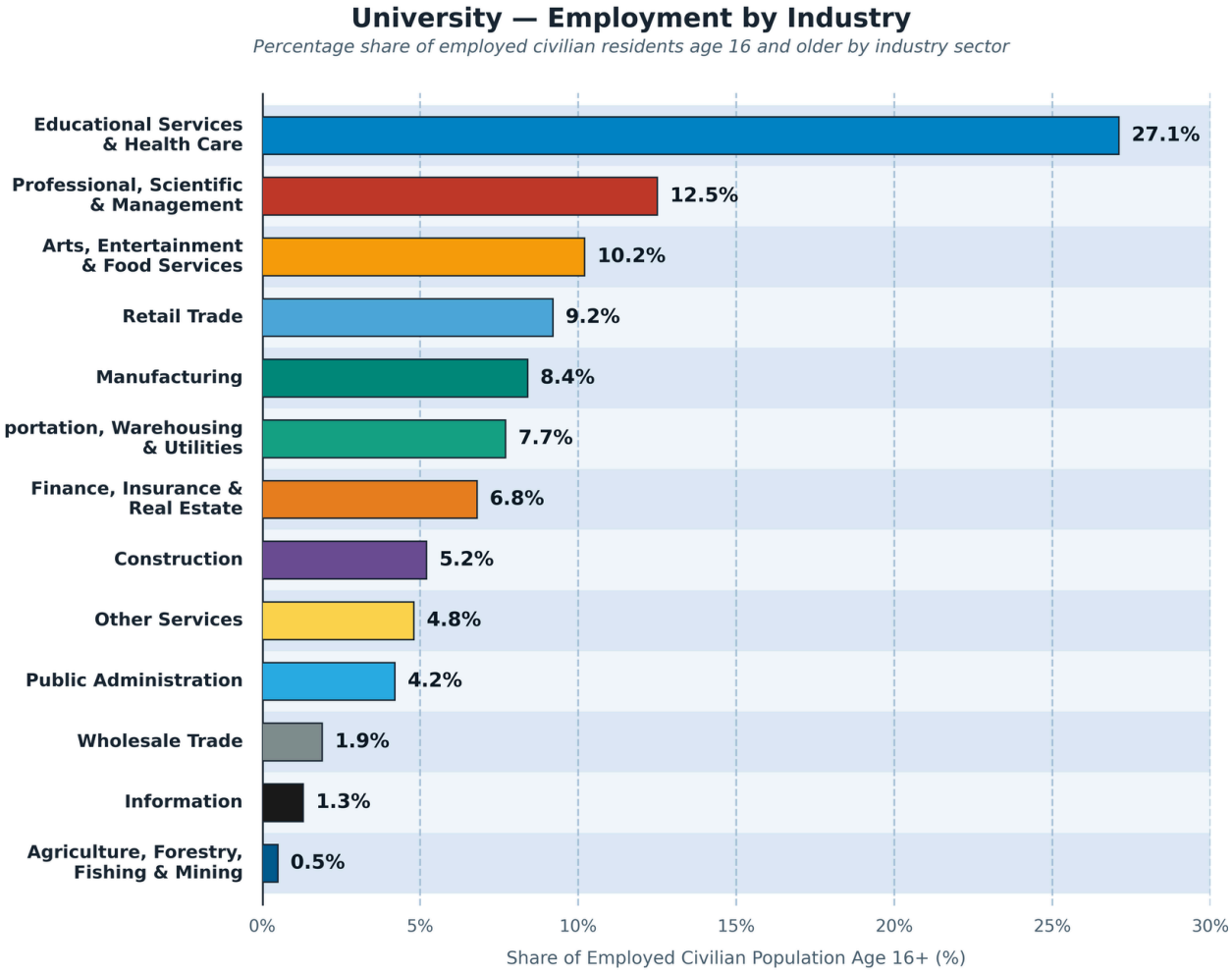
Housing unit type data describes the physical composition of a district's residential stock, offering insight into the character, and variety of housing available to residents across different living arrangements. The University District is predominantly single-family, with single unit structures making up 72% of all housing options. This figure has held remarkably steady as well, only shifting down by a third of a point during the study period. However, the share of apartments has seen modest growth, increasing its share by 2.5%. What little middle housing did exist prior to 2009 has since become more uncommon, falling between one to two percentage points resepctively. Additionally, the minimal shifts in the existing housing stock dynamics confirm that the growing share of renters is not due to a more diversified market. Instead, houses that were once owned outright are now being increasingly leveraged as rentals, ultimately exposing more residents to rising rent costs.

Poverty Rates - 2024 vs. 2009

Family Poverty Rate	Seniors Living in Poverty	Children Living in Poverty
16% (+1.6%)	15% (+3.5%)	28% (-4%)

Like most of the City, poverty concentrates most among children in the University District. However, child poverty has seen slight improvements since 2009, falling by about 4%. Rates among families and seniors saw poverty worsen, increasing by 1.6% and 3.5% respectively.

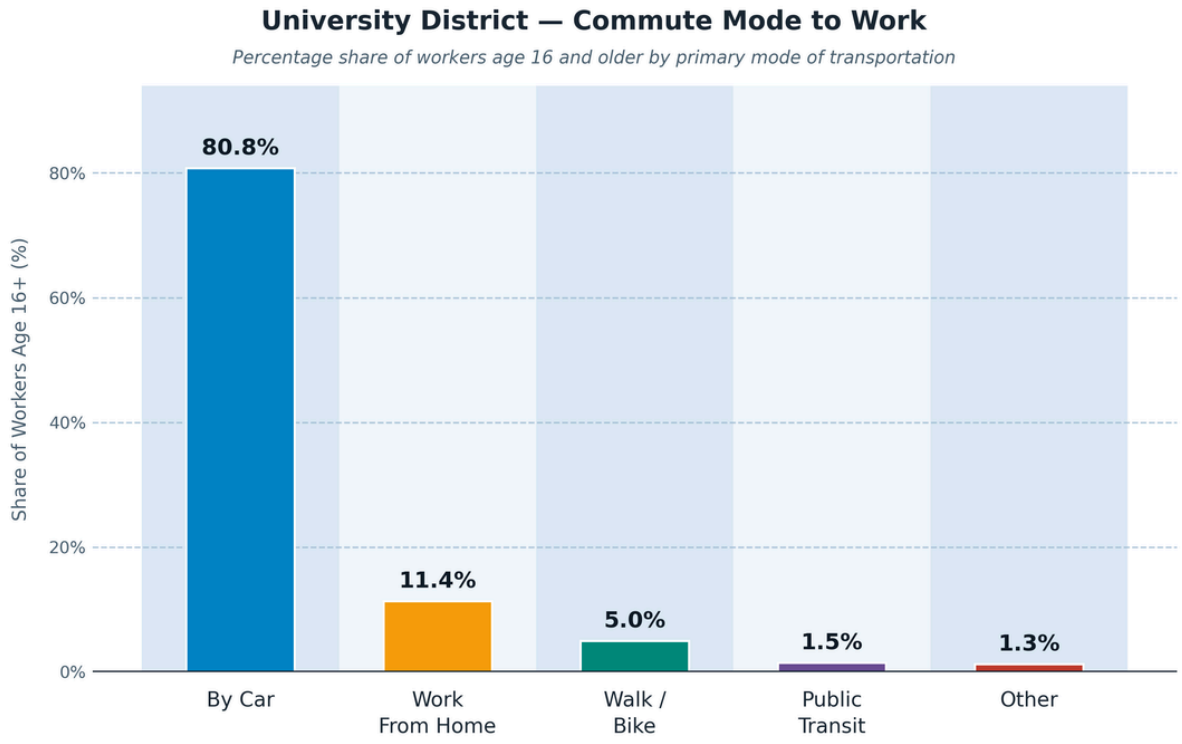
Employment by Industry



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

Educational services and health care together employ more than one in four residents in the University District. These sectors have become more concentrated recently, increasing their share of the workforce by over 5% — the largest gain measured. Public administration follows with 2% growth. Most credential-based industries showed little change and remained largely stable, while finance experienced a small decline. Because local institutions are central to the University District's economy, downturns in these areas could have outsized effects on the community.

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. Like most planning districts, University is almost entirely car dependent, with only 8% of the population using alternative commute methods. Without reliable alternatives to owning a car, already under strain residents are further economically burdened through ownership, fuel, and maintenance costs to reasonably access most jobs and destinations. This is especially true in a district where the average household is earning less, and paying more in rent.

District Summary

The University District is a smaller place than it was in 2009, and not simply a shrunken version of the same community. Losses have fallen hardest on mid-career adults and young school-aged children, while residents in their mid-60s to mid-70s and young adults have grown as a share of the population. As a result, the median age has barely moved even as the district's makeup has changed. Fewer households are now families, and renting has gained ground within a district that still holds an owner majority. These shifts have come with added pressure on household budgets, as buying power has slipped about 5 percent while inflation-adjusted rents have climbed about 13 percent. The district has also grown markedly more educated, with the share of adults holding a bachelor's degree rising from 37 to 51 percent. How the district responds to rising housing costs and the thinning of its family households will shape its direction in the years ahead.

For more information on the University Planning District, please visit https://www.memphis3point0.com/district-home/university-district