

Section III

The Status: Child and Family Well-Being in Florida

When Tara looked at the clock, it was 3 a.m. Eddy, their 6-month-old, was crying. She quickly jumped out of bed and reached over into the crib to comfort him in hopes that he would not wake up his three-year-old sister, Katy, asleep at the foot of the bed. Katy had a bad dream a couple of hours earlier and had left her room for a blanket at the foot of her parents' bed. Tim rolled over and tried to go back to sleep. In a couple of hours, he needed to get up to begin his work day. His job site was about an hour's commute and he had to be there by 7 a.m. With two young children, lack of adequate sleep was an almost constant condition for Tim and Tara.

Tim works on a construction crew building houses. He makes \$7.50 an hour and is confident that his hourly wage will increase as his skills develop. He also puts in overtime hours as often as possible by working with a second crew. Having a little cushion set aside is important because there are a few blocks of time each year, due to weather or slow sales, when there is no work.

Before Katy was born, Tim tried to take a few courses at the community college in the hope of one day opening his own business. Now he does not have the time, energy, or money to advance his education. Nonetheless, his dream has not been forgotten; he hopes to learn enough on the job to achieve it.

Tara works for a small maintenance company that cleans offices. Making \$6 an hour, she works from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. week nights and 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays. She depends on a fellow employee for a ride. Although Tara does not particularly like this job, the family needs the extra income, and the work schedule enables the family to trade off caring for their two children most of the time. On Saturdays when Tim works or if he works overtime during the week, an elderly neighbor watches the children. This arrangement makes Tara a little nervous. Unfortunately, neither Tim nor Tara has family members close by.

Given information by a fellow employee, Tara applied for child care assistance. After providing lots of information, she was told that their income was slightly above the eligibility cutoff point. The individual accepting their application said, "There's a long waiting list anyway unless you are on welfare". Tim and Tara had a hard time understanding why it was harder to get help if you were working hard to make ends meet.

Tim and Tara Clark have a combined take-home monthly income of just under \$2,800. Monthly expenses include rent for their two bedroom apartment at \$600, utilities at \$275, food at \$600, child care at \$250, the payments to the doctor at \$50, and the car loan at \$335. There is little money left over. Although they dream of owning their own home, they have not been able to put aside any real savings. They also keep their fingers crossed that they both stay healthy. Like many small businesses, their employers do not provide health insurance coverage, but thankfully, their children are insured through the state children's health insurance program. Tim realizes, however, that the pay increase he expects in the near future will probably make the family ineligible for subsidized health coverage.

It is unlikely that any of the half-million Floridians of 1900 ever conjured up the Florida of 2000 with its 16 million-plus residents, even in their wildest dreams. Dramatic economic, social, and political changes have occurred in the last century. In 1900, Florida was a racially segregated, rural, agricultural, one political party state where the annual per capita income was only \$112 (55% of the national average).⁹⁴ It was the smallest southern state, and Jacksonville was its largest city with 28,249 residents. Miami was a distant second with a population of 17,747.⁹⁵ By 2000, Florida was the largest state in the south (fourth largest in the nation). By 2020, it is projected that Florida will move into third place behind California and Texas with a total population of approximately 22 million.⁹⁶

This chapter provides an overview of the changes that have propelled Florida into the spotlight nationally and that have shaped its current political, economic, and social climate. A brief history of the state, with attention to regional differences and unique features, provides background for the descriptions that follow regarding families, work and economic policy, race and ethnicity, immigration, poverty, and housing.

Florida – Past, Present and Future

...as Florida enters the twenty-first century, the only thing that seems certain is that it will continue to see its environment deteriorate, its infrastructure stretched beyond limits, and its population grow ever larger and increasingly grayer and more diverse.

Colburn and deHaven-Smith, 2002, p. 61

Florida has been and is a state of importance to the nation. Major changes in Florida have been marked by events at the national level, and given the state's demographics and geographic position in the country, it is likely that it will continue to garner national attention.

The Florida of the Past

National involvement certainly made its mark on Florida after 1940 with America's entry into World War II. With its vast coastline, Florida became a major site for military deployment, and the federal government poured money and materials into the state constructing naval and air bases and building transportation routes and facilities to move troops and supplies. The 2.1 million service men and women and the laborers that followed them to work on air bases and shipyards and to provide services to military families swelled the state's population almost overnight.^{97,98}

Prior to World War II, Florida was painted as a hot, bug-infested state with few redeeming qualities. With the advent of pesticides, first used during World War II,

⁹⁴ Klay, 1999

⁹⁵ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

⁹⁶ Florida Demographic Estimating Conference, 2002

⁹⁷ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

⁹⁸ Florida Department of State, 2002

and the expanded availability of air conditioning, Florida became more attractive. Governor Millard Caldwell (1945 – 1949) prevented a postwar recession by expanding the Department of Commerce and marketing Florida to tourists and potential residents.⁹⁹ Fueled by the Baby Boom and migration into the state, Florida’s population grew by almost 80 percent between 1950 and 1960 ¹⁰⁰, and the population centers of the state shifted from the north to the southeastern and southwestern regions of the state. Although Florida was seen as a two region state during this time – North Florida and South Florida – North Florida held onto the political power with the “pork choppers” beating back all efforts to reapportion the legislature.¹⁰¹

It was under the tenure of Governor LeRoy Collins (1955 – 1961) that North Florida’s domination of the state’s politics ended. In addition, Governor Collins emerged as a leader in the progress toward racial justice. Utilizing a citizen education campaign, he was able to persuade white Floridians that desegregation was only “right and proper”, keep racial militants at bay, and shore up business support for progress. Florida emerged as one of the few progressive states in the South. Once again, federal intervention, through the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, played a key role in ending the stranglehold that North Florida and its political representatives had over Florida. The balance of power shifted to the high-growth areas of South and Central Florida and the political, economic, and cultural orientation of these regions shaped the future of the state.¹⁰²

Florida’s population was also dramatically affected during the decade by the arrival of 200,000 Cuban refugees fleeing the aftermath of Fidel Castro’s communist takeover of the island. The federal government once again stepped in to provide substantial resources to facilitate their success in Florida.¹⁰³ In the 1970s, Central Florida (a “new” region that developed along the Interstate-4 Corridor) saw the highest population increases.¹⁰⁴ Despite the environmental leadership of Governors Claude Kirk (1967 – 1971), Reubin Askew (1971 - 1979) and Bob Graham (1979 – 1987), the rapid growth and increasing diversity in the state during the 70s and 80s posed tremendous challenges to Florida’s natural resources. Northerners and immigrants from Latin America and other countries flooded into the state at the amazing rate of 842 a day in this 20-year period.

Florida’s political landscape changed dramatically with these changes in population. Seniors came to Florida for the weather, picturesque environment, low taxes, and relatively inexpensive property, and they quickly took an active role in the political process, voting at much higher rates than other voters. These retirees, many from the Midwest, tended to be more conservative than those from the metropolitan areas of the Northeast.

⁹⁹ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁰⁰ Scicchitano & Scher, 2001

¹⁰¹ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁰² Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁰³ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁰⁴ Scicchitano & Scher, 2001

In addition, the wave of Cuban immigrants entering Florida in the 1960s quickly became a powerful political, economic, and cultural force. Generally interested in foreign affairs, especially in opposition to the Castro regime, and support for capitalism, Cubans were more likely to be conservative and registered as Republican.¹⁰⁵ Cuban immigrants, however, were by no means homogeneous in their political views. For example, the wave of Cubans entering Florida (approximately 125,000 entrants) during the Mariel Boatlift of 1980 left Cuba (many under force) during dire economic and political times. Whereas the Cuban immigrants entering the United States during the 1960s were primarily middle-class and well educated, the immigrants of the Mariel Boatlift were more representative of Cuba's social and racial diversity and differed from their predecessors politically, culturally, and economically.¹⁰⁶ In 1987, Florida was the first state in the nation to elect a governor of Hispanic descent, Bob Martinez (1987 – 1991).

The 1990 election saw the victory of Democrat Lawton Chiles (1991 – 1998) over the incumbent Republican Governor Bob Martinez. The end of the recession in the mid-1990s and the emergence of a Republican majority in the state legislature after the 1994 election opened a new era. The technology industry in Central Florida and international commerce in Southeast Florida exploded, and tourism reached an all-time high in 1999. In addition, the \$11.3 billion settlement against the tobacco industry pumped money into the Florida economy. Unemployment shrank to less than 5 percent. A strong Republican Party ensured an increasing number of mostly Republican mayors elected whose priorities centered on redevelopment of inner cities, orderly growth and development, and preservation of dedicated green spaces.¹⁰⁷

The Florida of Today

Between 1990 and 2000, Florida's population grew by 23.5 percent in an uneven pattern of large and small county diversity across the state. The fastest growing counties in this decade were Flagler, Sumter, Collier, Wakulla, and Osceola. The slowest growing were Monroe, Pinellas, Putnam and Gadsden.¹⁰⁸ Florida is one of only 17 states where the rate of increase in racial and ethnic diversity exceeded that of the nation at-large during this time period (see Table 6).

¹⁰⁵ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁰⁶ National Association of Hispanic Journalists, 2001

¹⁰⁷ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁰⁸ MacManus, 2002

Table 6. Population Facts

Population Facts	Florida	USA
Population, 2001, estimate	16,396,515	284,796,887
Population percent change, April 1, 2000 – July 1, 2001	2.6%	1.2%
Population, 2000	15,982,378	281,421,906
Population percent change, 1990 to 2000	23.5%	13.1%
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2000	5.9%	6.8%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2000	22.8%	25.7%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2000	17.6%	12.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2000	22.3%	24.4%
Home ownership rate	70.1%	66.2%
Living in same house in 1995 and 2000, percent age 5+, 2000	48.9%	54.1%
White, percent, 2000	78.0%	75.1%
Black or African Americans, percent, 2000	14.5%	12.3%
Asians, percent, 2000	1.7%	3.6%
Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2000	16.8%	12.5%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent, age 5+, 2000	23.1%	17.9%
Median household money income, 1999	\$38,819	\$41,994

Source: U.S. Census, 2002

During that same period, the proportion of Hispanics in the state population grew from 12.2 percent to 16.8 percent, the African American population from 13.5 percent to 14.6 percent, and the Asian population from 1.2 percent to 1.7 percent.¹⁰⁹ Gadsden County in North Florida has a greater number of African Americans than whites, and Miami-Dade County has a greater number of Hispanics than non-Hispanic whites (75% of Hispanics classify themselves as white). For the most part, Florida's most diverse counties are in the south and central regions. African Americans comprise the largest minority group in 47 counties (mostly in North and Central Florida), and Hispanics comprise the predominant minority group in 20 counties (mostly in Central and South Florida).¹¹⁰

In sum, Florida's population of 2000 is more educated (just over 50% have at least some college)¹¹¹, older, and has a lower percentage of African Americans and a greater percentage of Hispanics in comparison to a century ago. It ranks first in the nation in the number and second to West Virginia in the percent of residents that are 65 and older. Florida also has a mobile population with less than 50 percent of its residents living in the same house for five years.¹¹²

Florida is a very regional state with each region reflecting national trends. Southeastern Florida has a vast ethnic and immigrant population and is a favorite vacation spot. Miami is a financial metropolis with major international influence with the Caribbean and South America. Central Florida is dominated by vast family-oriented tourism industries. North Florida, in many ways, reflects old Florida with alcoves of farming and lumbering. Seniors are concentrated in the southwestern and southeastern regions (especially Palm Beach and Broward).¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Census, 2002

¹¹⁰ MacManus, 2002

¹¹¹ U.S. Census, 2002

¹¹² Scicchitano & Scher, 2001

¹¹³ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

Florida's political environment is unique because of its urban and regional diversity. Although it is an urban state (93% of the population lives in 20 metropolitan areas scattered across the regions), there is no single major urban center. This dispersion of cities has fostered many political divisions. The consequence is that Floridians have little unity, consistent identity, or sense of community.¹¹⁴ Residents in various regions share little in common with other areas of the state. In recognition of Florida's divisiveness, Leadership Florida initiated the Faces of Florida Project in the summer of 2001 to raise awareness and respect for the state's diversity. Leadership Florida is a statewide nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to building a network of leaders committed to establishing community connections and making Florida a better place to live.¹¹⁵

Florida's Future

The future for Florida holds many challenges. It is anticipated that population growth will decelerate but remain steady. Between now and 2025, approximately 579 people are expected to enter the state every day, 2.4 million each decade. As the Baby Boom generation retires, almost half of Florida's population increase will be seniors, and they will grow to represent one quarter of Florida residents.¹¹⁶ Ethnic and racial diversity will become more complex and will increase as a percentage of the population.

Florida's Families with Young Children

Children do best when they grow up in low-conflict families, with parents who are married to each other and who earn enough to meet the family's needs.

Shields & Behrman in Children and Welfare Reform, 2002

Of the 6.3 million households in Florida, fewer than 3 in 10 of them include children under the age of 18. Almost 950,000 of these children are under the age of five. The majority of Florida's children are in married couple households, but almost 30 percent are in single parent households. The median income of families with children in 1999 was \$43,100.^{117,118} Ehrenreich¹¹⁹ found that many families making \$40,000 a year, while considered middle class, were often living in a very small house in a poor neighborhood.

By the end of the 1990s in the United States, the disparities in family income had increased more than any time since the 1920s. Even with the recent economic expansion, the income of middle and lower-income families saw only modest increases while the income of the highest income families climbed dramatically.¹²⁰ From the 1940s to the 1980s, shares of income for families of different economic status remained relatively unchanged – the top fifth share received about 40

¹¹⁴ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹¹⁵ Leadership Florida, 2002

¹¹⁶ MacManus, 2002

¹¹⁷ KidsCount, 2002

¹¹⁸ U.S. Census, 2002

¹¹⁹ Ehrenreich, 2001

¹²⁰ Bernstein, Boushay, McNichol, & Zahradnik, 2002

percent, the middle three-fifths received close to 54 percent, and the poorest fifth received only 6 percent. From the 1980s to the end of the century, the middle share dropped to 48.6 percent, the bottom fifth shrank, but the top fifth increased its share to 50 percent. Furthermore, there is a widening benefits gap. The health benefits for the bottom fifth of families dropped from 41 percent in 1980 to 32 percent in late 90s.^{121,122}

Another remarkable change for Florida's families with young children is the increased likelihood of mothers working outside of the home. Beginning in the 1970s with the decline in their spouses' earnings, the decline in child-bearing, and the decline in marriage, more mothers entered workplaces outside the home. Sixty percent of children under age 6 have both parents in the labor force.¹²³ Single-mother households, as a group, struggle most. Although they are working full-time, almost 40 percent are earning less than they need to cloth, shelter, and feed themselves and their children.¹²⁴ In reality, lots of parents employed in low income jobs do not make enough to support their families even if married and both parents are working.

Despite increases in employment outside the home, mothers are not spending less time with their children. Mothers in 1985 spent more overall time on caring for their children than mothers did in the 1920s (when the chores of farming consumed the day) and as much or more time as mothers did in the 1960s.¹²⁵ In reality, working mothers put in longer hours than almost anyone else in the economy with an estimated 80 hours a week between paid work and child-caring. Single-mothers have even greater pressures. Indeed, children report that it is their fathers, whether their parents are married or single, who are "frequently" or "sometimes" missing when it comes to everyday and important events. Although father involvement has increased, it is still relatively rare for fathers to help with household activities, care for infants, or read to and with children.

Another challenge for Florida families with young children is disruption. Twenty percent of workers change jobs each year.¹²⁶ Between 1999 and 2000, 16 percent of Americans changed residences. Low-income families and young families (with the adults in their 20s) moved most frequently (21% for families with incomes below \$25,000 annually compared to 12% for families with incomes over \$100,000).¹²⁷ In the past, families stayed put for a generation or two and had a strong sense of community. Today, families frequently change neighborhoods, and families with the financial means often sort themselves into communities of roughly the same incomes, same abilities, same risks, and same needs. Families with the lowest incomes end up together in poor communities with the worst schools and fewer health access points.¹²⁸

¹²¹ Bernstein et al., 2002

¹²² Reich, 2000

¹²³ U.S. Census, 2002

¹²⁴ Reich, 2000

¹²⁵ Crittenden, 2001

¹²⁶ Reich, 2000

¹²⁷ Schachter, 2001

¹²⁸ Reich, 2000

Some families of newborns have even greater stressors. Thirteen percent of mothers of newborns in Florida are teens, and 21 percent of mothers giving birth have less than a high school education.¹²⁹ Almost 40 percent of total births in Florida are to unmarried women, higher than the U.S. average of 33 percent.¹³⁰ In the most tenuous circumstances, maternal depression and mental illness interfere with parenting and, in extreme cases, can result in infant homicide. Indeed, infant homicide is highest on the day of birth when young, mentally unstable parents are overwhelmed.¹³¹

Florida's Economy

We're proud of our successes, but the experience of other states illustrates the danger in taking our low-tax, business-friendly economic climate for granted. Lost jobs and cuts in public programs are the rule in many states, but thankfully not in Florida. Our entrepreneurs, investors and workers in every sector of our economy should take pride in leading the national economic recovery.

Governor Jeb Bush, Press Release September 20, 2002

Florida's leaders have worked to diversify the economy and to a great extent have been successful. Despite fluctuations in key job areas (e.g., tourism and the citrus industry), the economy is robust. Of the 12.7 million residents 16 years of age and older in Florida, 58.6 percent (7,471,977) are employed. Just over 400,000 in this age group are categorized as "unemployed" (actively searching for work). Three million, two hundred thousand men are in the workforce compared to 2.7 million females.¹³² Considering Florida's high senior retirement population, this is a remarkable employment force.

With Florida's dramatic growth beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, housing, road construction, and tourism dominated the economy. Agriculture (e.g., beef, sugar, and citrus) and phosphate mining began to decline as the suburbs sprawled and agricultural lands became too valuable for farming and newcomers opposed phosphate mines near their homes. Wholesale and retail trade and service jobs have grown steadily since 1960. Today, these two sectors account for 55 percent of all the non-farm jobs in the state. Service jobs, many associated with the tourism industry, have grown the fastest and now account for Florida's largest employment category.^{133,134,135}

¹²⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2001

¹³⁰ Florida Department of Health, 2002

¹³¹ Marcus, 2002

¹³² U.S. Census, 2002

¹³³ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹³⁴ Dluhy, Averch, Frank & Lipper, 1999

¹³⁵ U.S. Census, 2002

In addition to retail trade, tourism, and the service sector, Florida is recognized for its international banking and trade, the space program, and an emerging electronics sector.¹³⁶ Florida has three metropolitan areas ranked in the top 40 relative to the production of goods and services in the United States. Tampa-St. Petersburg is ranked 25th with \$82 billion in goods and services. Miami is 29th with nearly \$72 billion in goods and services, and Orlando is 38th with \$60 billion. From 1980 to 1998, Florida ranked 4th nationally in the number of black-owned businesses, 3rd in the number of white Hispanic firms, and 4th in the number of women-owned firms.¹³⁷

Government Revenues and State Economic Policy

A high proportion of state revenues (77%) are based on transaction tax receipts (sales tax plus selective sales tax – tax on motor fuels, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, etc.) compared to an average of 46 percent nationwide.^{138,139,140} Growth has placed a heavy burden on state and local governments for roads, water and sewer systems, schools, and other public facilities. Florida policymakers, in comparison to those in other states, have responded to these needs in ways that have resulted in a greater reliance on local taxes in proportion to the state tax burden. Nonetheless, Florida state and local tax burden is lower than average relative to other states. Citizens in many areas of the state have recently passed referendums increasing local taxes, signaling voter willingness to pay more for services they deem necessary and/or important.

In principle, state and local governments can raise tax revenues in three ways through a property tax, an income tax, and/or a tax on transactions or sales. Florida's tax structure relies heavily on taxes on transactions, and thus, is deliberately aimed at tourists and away from permanent residents. Floridians' property tax burden is slightly above the national average.¹⁴¹ Reich¹⁴² reports that more and more states, like Florida, are shifting the burden from higher to lower earning residents through increasing sales taxes; taxes on gas, cigarettes, and alcohol; lotteries; while at the same time decreasing corporate taxes. Florida has the fifth largest per capita general sales tax collections in the nation.

Florida is one of seven states in the nation without an individual income tax, and property taxes are restricted by both a \$25,000 homestead exemption and a 30-mill cap (ten mills for any single taxing unit). Economists argue that dependence on a sales tax makes little sense in a rapidly growing urban state and estimate that Florida's tax revenues soon will be inadequate to support its basic infrastructure.¹⁴³ Indeed, Florida has grappled with numerous shortfalls in revenue since the early 1970s.

¹³⁶ Florida Department of State, 2002

¹³⁷ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹³⁸ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹³⁹ Dluhy et al., 1999

¹⁴⁰ Florida Tax Watch, 2001

¹⁴¹ Florida Tax Watch, 2001

¹⁴² Reich, 2000

¹⁴³ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

Although Florida ranks near the top among states in several business indicators (e.g., new plants and expansions, exports, Department of Defense contracts), it ranks near the bottom in terms of the increase in the standard of living for its citizens. Indeed, Florida is 44th in average hourly earnings in manufacturing and 27th in annual pay.¹⁴⁴ These measures indicate that the growth in Florida's employment sectors are not in high wage categories, rather, they are in low to moderate wage categories.

Although Florida has made many successful attempts to diversify its economy, some economic analysts argue that it continues to pursue traditional economic development priorities that are not high-value added for the state. Currently, the bulk of the state's economic development spending is spent on marketing and advertising products produced in the state (e.g., agriculture) or selling the state as a tourist destination, employment sectors with low to moderate wage categories.¹⁴⁵ Governor Bush has emphasized the importance of increasing the presence of technology and military supply industries in Florida and has established the Emerging Technology Commission within the Governor's Office. The Commission's purpose is to guide the development of centers of excellence within state universities that focus on building partnerships with technology businesses.¹⁴⁶

Economic Challenges

The road to economic success is more difficult today for several reasons. First, today's entry level wages do not have as much purchasing power. Second, although more education is required for success, over 20 percent of Florida's 25 and older population does not have a high school education.¹⁴⁷ Third, most jobs are located away from low-income housing areas and families often lack reliable, affordable transportation. Furthermore, many jobs lack basic benefits (e.g., health care, family leave, and schedule flexibility) that are needed to achieve self-sufficiency and balance work and home demands.¹⁴⁸

These challenges are real for many of Florida's families with young children. As indicated, most of Florida's jobs are in the retail and service sectors where wages are generally lower paying than other sectors such as manufacturing, transportation, and communication and are not conducive to long-term economic prosperity.^{149, 150} One in five new jobs in the coming decade is anticipated to be in the low wage sector of health services.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ Dluhy et al., 1999

¹⁴⁵ Dluhy et al., 1999

¹⁴⁶ State of Florida, 2002

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Census, 2002

¹⁴⁸ Kids Count, 2002

¹⁴⁹ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁵⁰ Dluhy et al., 1999

¹⁵¹ Reich, 2000

Reich also highlights the new demands made on workers in the new economy. Whereas in the industrial era, experience and maturity were the driving forces behind increasing family income, pay increases in today's work world are more likely to be tied to individual creativity, education, and connections. Earnings now vary with sales commissions, bonuses, profit-sharing, billable hours, and stock options. No longer are employees likely to work for one employer for their entire career. Small businesses with less than 25 employees are creating most of the new jobs and also disappear at the highest rates.

In 1980 more than 70 percent of workers received some form of health benefit from their employers. By mid-1990, that percentage had slipped to 60 percent and the coverage provided was less generous, requiring higher co-pays, deductibles, and premiums. Furthermore, the borders between home and work are vanishing. Employees are often "on call" with cell phones, beepers, email and faxes; and almost one-third of the workforce works from home at least part of the day. Workers are traveling more for their jobs (between 1991 and 1996, there was a 21 percent increase in business travel). Although the work week is decreasing in many other advanced economies, Americans are working an average of two more weeks a year than 20 years ago.¹⁵²

Future Trends

The future promises even greater shifts from mass production to customized jobs. Innovation is the major principle of the new economy and technology is the driving force. Jobs that involve repetitive or routine tasks will continue to lose ground. Even more so than the present day economy, the future economy will treat people without advanced skills and knowledge rather harshly. Some economists argue that the state should focus its future economic development policies on top types of manufacturing (i.e., instruments and related, electronics, rubber and plastics, and printing and publishing) which produce higher value to the economy and have a greater impact on growth in real per capita income for Florida's families.¹⁵³

If efforts are not made to promote further training and education of its citizens, the gap between the minority of Floridians who are well engaged in the information era economy and the majority who are not will create greater social fragmentation in the future. Klay¹⁵⁴ asserts, "A true sense of community exists when most members, at all economic levels, share the sense that their destinies and well-being are intertwined. If those who are most successful at gaining wealth in the information era feel less dependent upon others, then they are likely to try to seclude themselves from the rest of society via exclusive suburbs, private schools, walled residential developments, private security forces, tax limitations, and so forth. All of these tactics are now evident in Florida" (p. 20).

¹⁵² Reich, 2000

¹⁵³ Dluhy et al., 1999

¹⁵⁴ Klay, 1999

Race and Ethnicity

...children of color occupy specific cultural niches in American society that expose them to a host of social, familial and community strains while providing limited resources to help them respond.

Oscar A. Barbarin, 2002, in Set for Success

Florida is one of the most diverse states in the nation (see Table 5). Florida's Hispanic population is projected to reach 24 percent (nearly 5 million) and the African American population is expected to reach 17 percent by 2025.¹⁵⁵ Florida is third in the nation, behind California and New York, in the number of foreign-born residents (2.8 million, 18.4 percent of Florida's population versus 10.4 percent nationwide). Forty-three percent of Miami-Dade's population is foreign-born, the highest proportion in the United States for metropolitan areas with one to five million population.¹⁵⁶ In 2000, nearly one in six Florida children lived with a foreign-born householder.

Foreign-born residents tend to have larger families (3.72 compared to 3.10 for native-born residents) and are less likely to have completed high school (67% completion rate compared to 86.6% for native-born). Although they have a similar labor force participation rate (67%), foreign-born residents are more likely to work as laborers (19.2% compared to 13.2%) or in service occupations (18.7% compared to 12.7%). Naturally, their earnings are lower, the incidence of poverty is higher, and homeownership is lower. The median income for male foreign-born residents is \$27,239 compared to \$37,528 for native-born male residents. Females' median incomes are \$22,139 (foreign-born) and \$26,698 (native-born). Seventeen percent of foreign-born households live in poverty compared to 11 percent of native-born households, and less than 50 percent of foreign-born residents own a house (compared to 70 percent of native-born residents).¹⁵⁷

Many of Florida's foreign-born residents are refugees or asylum-seekers. Florida is one of six states (including California, Texas, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois) that receives more than 90 percent of the immigrants, legal and illegal, entering the U.S. each year.¹⁵⁸ Refugees are persons who are unable or unwilling to return to their own countries because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Claims of persecution must be based on race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political party.^{159,160} Many refugees arrive recently traumatized. About 40 percent have been tortured, and many witnessed genocide and saw family members killed. Others were made to participate in acts of torture and murder or were beaten or raped in detainment camps.¹⁶¹ If refugees do not have family members in the United States, they are simply "assigned" by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to a particular city and given a ticket

¹⁵⁵ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁵⁶ Schmidley, 2001

¹⁵⁷ Schmidley, 2001

¹⁵⁸ Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002

¹⁵⁹ Immigration & Naturalization Service, 1999

¹⁶⁰ Pipher, 2002

¹⁶¹ Pipher, 2002

(transportation costs must be reimbursed).¹⁶² They are given \$50 a week plus food, rent, and temporary medical care. Although many do not know English, the goal is self-sufficiency within four months. Those that come alone are quite disadvantaged. Supportive ethnic communities, however, can make a tremendous difference.¹⁶³

Florida incurs serious human and economic costs as a result of restrictions on refugee status and immigrant eligibility for assistance. Many individuals that are not eligible for refugee status enter Florida as “illegal aliens” and do not have access to the social services and supports, however limited, that refugees do.¹⁶⁴ The five year federal time limit on TANF and Medicaid assistance for new immigrants is another restriction. Like most states, Florida provides TANF and Medicaid to current immigrants but does not use state funds to help new immigrants affected by the five-year time-limit.¹⁶⁵

Refugees and other immigrants often are employed in dangerous work environments. With their fears of the government, limited language skills, and incomplete knowledge of American laws, they are more vulnerable to unsafe and illegal employment environments. In the past, however, most were able to move out of low-wage jobs and into the middle class within two years. In today’s work environment, that is not as easily accomplished.¹⁶⁶ When they do find work, their earnings lag behind others. Native-born Americans’ wages have risen twice as fast as immigrants’ wages in recent years.¹⁶⁷ There are fewer jobs “in the middle”, and immigrants are getting caught at the bottom which threatens their assimilation and success in Florida.

Poverty in Florida

That so many of the youngest citizens of the wealthiest nation in the world are living poor is cause for concern.

Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, and Maritato in Consequences of Growing Up Poor, 1997

Poverty rates in Florida declined only slightly during the decade between 1990 and 2000 despite the best economy in a generation (see Table 7). Rates varied dramatically across Florida’s 67 counties from a low of 6.8 percent in Clay County to a high of 26 percent in Hamilton County.¹⁶⁸ Despite the decline during the decade, the number of persons living in poverty increased by nearly 22 percent, and poverty rates appear to be rising during the recent economic downturn. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the nationwide poverty rate increased from 11.3 percent in 2000 to 11.7 percent in 2001.¹⁶⁹ Of note is the dramatic increase in the numbers of persons living in poverty in Florida from 1990 to 2000. The number of persons living in poverty increased by over 348,000 people (almost 22%). The

¹⁶² Immigration & Naturalization Service, 2002

¹⁶³ Pipher, 2002

¹⁶⁴ Pipher, 2002

¹⁶⁵ Holcomb et al., 1999

¹⁶⁶ Pipher, 2002

¹⁶⁷ Shore, 2000

¹⁶⁸ Florida Legislature, 2002

¹⁶⁹ Armas, 2002

largest increase was realized for persons ages 5 to 17 — with an increase of over 110,000 youth or an increase of over 32 percent.

Table 7. Poverty in Florida

Poverty in Florida	Poverty Rate 1990	Poverty Rate 2000	Number in Poverty 1990	Number in Poverty 2000	Percent Change
All persons	12.7%	12.5%	1,604,186	1,952,629	21.7%
Persons under age 5	20.3%	18.8%	167,953	173,427	3.3%
Persons ages 5-17	17.5%	17.5%	343,642	454,570	32.3%
Persons 65 and older	10.8%	9.1%	247,426	246,641	-0.3%
All families	9.0%	9.0%	319,978	383,131	19.7%
All families with children under age 18	14.7%	14.2%	229,558	281,303	22.5%
Married couple families	5.1%	4.9%	146,151	160,336	9.7%
Female headed families with children under 5	53.9%	44.6%	68,852	75,752	10.0%
Female headed families with children under 18	38.6%	32.8%	133,078	164,596	23.7%

Source: Florida Legislature, 2002

Children and female-headed households are the most likely to live in poverty. Researchers have found that the degree to which state policies support working families and their children directly affects conditions for children, and low support states tend to have higher poverty rates.¹⁷⁰ Florida's child poverty rates exceed those of the nation. Nearly one in every five children lived in poverty in 1999 in Florida compared to less than one in ten of the 65 and older population.¹⁷¹ In the same year, 22 percent of Florida's children lived in poverty (compared to 19% nationwide) and nine percent (compared to 7% in the nation) lived in extreme poverty (below 50% of the federal poverty level). Sixteen percent of children in the state (compared to 15% in the nation) were from low-income working families¹⁷², and 52.4 percent of elementary school-age children were eligible for free or reduced lunch during the 2000-2001 school year.¹⁷³

African-American and Hispanic children are much more likely to be poor and for longer periods of time than white children.¹⁷⁴ In addition, children who live in single parent households (36% of Florida's children) are more likely to be poor (40% of children in female-headed households are poor). Furthermore, 30 percent of Florida's children live in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment, and 25 percent live in low-income working families. Despite the higher rates of poverty, children in Florida were less likely to be recipients of food stamps than children nationwide (18% compared to 24%), and Florida has lower food stamp participation rates among eligible recipients than the nation, on average. Table 8 illustrates Florida's lower than average participation rates and the drop in participation nationwide over the last seven years. This decrease is continuing in Florida; the participation rate for 2002 was 49% (C. Mathers, Florida Department of Children and Families, personal communication, April 30, 2003).

¹⁷⁰ Shore, 2000

¹⁷¹ Florida Legislature, 2002

¹⁷² Kids Count, 2002

¹⁷³ Florida Department of Education, 2002

¹⁷⁴ Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Maritato, 1997

Table 8. Food Stamp Participation Rates Among Eligible Recipients in Florida and United States, 1994-1999

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Florida	70%	64%	64%	56%	53%	53%	52%
U.S.	74%	72%	69%	64%	60%	58%	59%

Sources: Schirm, A. L., & Castner, L. A. (2002a & b)

Working full-time does not guarantee movement out of poverty, and one job is often not enough for a household to be economically stable. The number of people holding two or more jobs nationwide averaged 7.8 million or 6.2 percent in 1996 and was about the same rate for men and women.¹⁷⁵ Many Florida families struggle even though they are not considered “poor”. Even those parents holding professional positions are not exempt from financial concerns. A single parent with two children working as a nurse or teacher may struggle economically.¹⁷⁶

The Effects of Poverty

The effects of poverty are profound and often long-lasting. Controlling for family characteristics, poverty is associated with significantly lower intelligence and verbal test scores in two- to five-year-old children (about one-third of a standard deviation lower). The longer children spend in poverty, the greater the effects. Children living in poverty, during some, but not all, of their early years, have IQ scores 4 points lower than non-poor children. For children living in poverty for the entire first four or five years of their lives, their IQ scores are 9 points lower than non-poor children.^{177, 178}

Poverty may also affect parental caregiving and health. Low-wage parents often work long hours, juggle more than one job, and have irregular hours. These conditions make it very difficult to take care of family responsibilities such as taking time off to care for a sick child.¹⁷⁹ Low-income mothers are less likely to receive timely prenatal care and are more likely to smoke during pregnancy and have low birth weight babies. Almost 40 percent of unmarried mothers are earning less than needed to clothe, shelter, and feed themselves and their children. Furthermore, in a review of studies, Shields and Behrman¹⁸⁰ found that 16 percent (lowest estimate) to 37 percent (highest estimate) of welfare recipients had substance abuse problems, 22 percent to 28 percent had very poor mental health, and 10 percent to 31 percent had been victims of domestic violence.

¹⁷⁵ Ehrenreich, 2001

¹⁷⁶ Shore, 2000

¹⁷⁷ Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Maritato, 1997

¹⁷⁸ Shore, 2000

¹⁷⁹ Shore, 2000

¹⁸⁰ Shields & Behrman, 2002

Family income is a stronger predictor of ability and achievement than parental schooling or family structure.¹⁸¹ Increases in income are associated with richer learning environments for younger children, and studies show that programs that raise the incomes of poor families enhance the cognitive development of children and may improve their chances for future economic success during adulthood.

Defining Poverty

The definition of poverty was originally developed by taking the minimum cost of food and multiplying it by three. In the early 1960s when the formula was established, food accounted for 24 percent of the family budget and housing was 29 percent. Even though the federal poverty level (FPL) is updated yearly to reflect changes in the consumer price index, critics argue that food is relatively inflation proof, especially when compared to housing costs. In 1999, only 16 percent of the family budget was spent for food; housing absorbed 37 percent of the budget.¹⁸² Health care and child care costs, a growing demand on family budgets, are also not considered in the current formula.

Many have argued that arbitrary determinations of need do not provide sufficient information as to whether families perceive and are adversely affected by financial hardship. Up to 65 percent of non-poor families that fall between 100 percent and 200 percent of the federal poverty level experience one or more serious hardships (e.g., inability to pay bills, food insecurity, lack of adequate child care, and lack of health insurance).^{183,184} These day-to-day hardships may be the impetus for increased parent stress, isolation, depression, and harsh parenting, all associated with deficits in behavioral and psychological functioning in children.

Several alternatives to the federal poverty measure have been proposed.¹⁸⁵ One alternative is the development of a “self-reliant” measure that determines how much welfare recipients would need to earn in order to leave all welfare supports (estimated at \$10 an hour in 1999). Another recommendation is the development of a “basic needs” budget that includes food, housing, child care, transportation and health care (estimated at \$28,031 in 1999). Using one-half of median income as the measure of poverty (\$25,595 in 1999) has also been suggested.

In the early 1990s, a panel of academic poverty experts was convened by the National Research Council under the direction of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress to review the poverty measure.¹⁸⁶ In 1995, the panel published a study that included the following recommendations:

- ❖ use actual costs of food, clothing, and shelter to determine poverty level
- ❖ develop a better method to adjust the poverty level for family size
- ❖ use adjustments to reflect geographic differences in housing costs

¹⁸¹ Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997

¹⁸² Ehrenreich, 2001

¹⁸³ Lewit et al, 1997.

¹⁸⁴ Gershoff, Aber, & Raver, 2001

¹⁸⁵ Lewit, Terman, & Behrman, 1997

¹⁸⁶ Porter, 1999

- ❖ include government food and housing benefits not in the form of cash, and tax-related benefits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, as family income to be compared to the poverty level
- ❖ deduct mandatory expenses such as taxes, work expenses, child care costs, child support payments, and out-of-pocket medical care costs from family income before comparing income to the poverty level

Although there are differences of opinion regarding how poverty should be measured, most (including the National Research Council) agree that the current measure is inadequate.

The Role of Welfare Reform in Addressing Poverty

Many policymakers highlight the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (the federal welfare reform law) as a success in addressing family economic security and reducing family risk factors. Indeed welfare reform has moved many families from dependence to work. As part of this effort, child care subsidies were expanded, child health insurance was extended to low-income families, and refundable tax credits for low-wage workers were boosted.¹⁸⁷ There were reductions elsewhere, however. Two funding streams for the prevention of child maltreatment and family reunification were restricted and funding potentially reduced: definitions of childhood disability were modified restricting eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and services for new legal immigrants were restricted for the first five years in the country.¹⁸⁸ There are also concerns regarding the 48-month life-time limit to eligibility imposed by Florida.

Based on the stated legislative goal of ending families' dependence on government benefits, the effort has been largely successful. Upon closer scrutiny, however, success is less apparent when measured in terms of improving outcomes for children and families. In general, evaluations show that families' participation in welfare reform programs has had no widespread positive impact on children. This was the case because employment was not synonymous with increases in family income. For example, children (particularly school-age children) in families participating in programs that increased employment and income did better in school and had fewer behavior problems. The same results were not found for families where employment did not significantly increase their family income. For too many families working full-time and year-round did not generate enough income to lift them out of poverty.^{189, 190, 191, 192}

In a study of unmarried women with young children participating in welfare reform programs in five counties across three states, Fuller and Kagan¹⁹³ found over half

¹⁸⁷ Fuller, Kagan, & Loeb, 2002

¹⁸⁸ Shields & Behrman, 2002

¹⁸⁹ Fuller & Kagan, 2000

¹⁹⁰ Kids Count, 2002

¹⁹¹ Shields & Behrman, 2002

¹⁹² Tout, Scarpa, & Zaslow, 2002

¹⁹³ Fuller & Kagan, 2000

of the women went to work quickly but most often in low-wage positions. In the Florida sample, the median hourly wage was \$5.45. Many reported little social support and high levels of stress. One-fifth of the Florida mothers reported that they shared a house with someone with an alcohol or drug abuse problem. At least one-quarter seemed to be socially isolated. Researchers found uneven parenting practices and high rates of maternal depression. Most children were placed in settings providing low-quality child care while their mothers worked. Child care subsidies reached an unequal fraction of poor families (50% in Florida) and encouraged the use of unlicensed care.¹⁹⁴

Most women remained in low-paying jobs after two years in the program (median wage of \$7.82 an hour in Florida) and below the federal poverty line after two to four years in the program. There was little change in social support, stress levels, maternal depression (four in ten mothers in Florida reported symptoms of depression that passed a clinical threshold) and parenting practices. Geographic mobility was high, over half of the sample in Florida had moved at least once. Florida had the lowest rates of participants covered by Medicaid of the three states (58% of mothers and 8% of children compared to 97% of mothers in California and 100% of children). Compared to California and Connecticut, Florida had the lowest benefit levels, strictest sanctions, strongest work incentives, and highest child care co-payments.¹⁹⁵

Furthermore, welfare reform laws have restricted eligibility for many services and benefits (including cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid) for legal immigrants. Although some restrictions have been lifted, most legal immigrants remain ineligible for food stamps and those entering the country after passage of the law are ineligible for nearly all federal benefits for five years. Children born in the United States to immigrants are U.S. citizens and are eligible for benefits. Many immigrant families, however, do not access services and supports, possibly due to parental concerns regarding immigration status or confusion regarding eligibility status given changes in TANF eligibility for immigrants.¹⁹⁶ For example, food stamp participation by American-born children of immigrants fell by 74 percent between 1994 and 1998, compared to a 24 percent decline among other families with children.¹⁹⁷

The majority (approximately two-thirds) of the welfare caseload is not participating in welfare-to-work programs. Some are subject to work requirements and are not participating. About one-half are not subject to work requirements. They may be families that are exempt for “good cause” (i.e., poor health or a disability, caring for a household member with a disability, being advanced in age, being the victim of domestic violence, not being able to find suitable child care, or caring for a young child) or families with no adult recipients in the household, referred to as “child-only” cases (usually occurs when a child is not living with their parents, when parents receive SSI benefits, or when citizen children are living with non-citizen parents). These families often have special vulnerabilities but such exemptions often remove any sense of urgency in providing services to the families. Without

¹⁹⁴ Fuller & Kagan, 2000

¹⁹⁵ Fuller et al, 2002

¹⁹⁶ Shore, 2000

¹⁹⁷ Shields & Behrman, 2002

intensive interventions, functioning in these families can deteriorate to domestic violence, child neglect or abuse, and removal of children from the home.¹⁹⁸

Finally, many eligible families may not be enrolling in welfare programs. Changes in requirements, sanctions, time-limits, and new administrative requirements discourage many families from seeking assistance according to many experts. Table 9 demonstrates the complicity of the rules and regulations regarding welfare policy programs. Little is known about the development and well-being of children in families disconnected from or not receiving welfare benefits.

Table 9. Different Sets of Rules and Regulations Complicate Benefit Eligibility for Low-Income Families with Children

Program	Funding & Governance	Categorical Eligibility	Role of Work & Earnings	Maximum Income	Asset Tests	Maximum Benefit
SSI	Federal entitlement	Severely disabled	Must have limited ability to work	70% of FPL (Federal Poverty Level)	\$3,000 per family	70% of FPL
TANF	Federal grant to states; states determine eligibility standards within federal guidelines	Families with children	Florida limits work hours & requires work history for two-parent families	Between 18 and 144% of FPL, depending on state Up to 200% for some TANF funded activities in FL	Financial asset limit set by state Vehicle value limited	15 to 66% of FPL
Food Stamps	Federal government funds and defines eligibility	All households	Eligibility limited to three months for nonworking able-bodied adults without dependents	130% of FPL	Financial assets < \$2,000 Vehicle value limited	29% of FPL
Child Care	See TANF	Families with children	Must be working, in training, or in job search	Income at or below 85% of state median income or lower at state discretion (150% of FPL for initial eligibility in FL)	-	Up to full cost of care In FL –75 th percentile of market rate with rate differential for quality indicators
Housing	See Food Stamps	Renters	-	-	-	Rent limited to maximum of 30% of income
EITC	Federal entitlement	Primarily workers with children	Must have earned income	230% of FPL	Investment income limited to \$2,400 per year	29% of FPL (at earnings of 72% of FPL)
Health Insurance	Medicaid: Federal and state funded entitlement; states determine eligibility standards within federal guidelines SCHIP: see TANF	Pregnant women, families on and recently off TANF, and low-income children	-	All on SSI All who meet AFDC eligibility as of 1996 Children between 133% & 200% of FPL in FL (up to 350% of FPL in some states)	-	Health insurance

Source: Zedlewski, S. R., 2002, *Urban Institute*

It is important to note that most working-poor families have never received welfare. Most are white, and half are married couples. They live in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. What they do have in common is lack of educational credentials. In an economy that values education, only about a quarter of the working poor have any education beyond a high school diploma.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Shields & Behrman, 2002

¹⁹⁹ Shore, 2000

Housing

Florida is predominately a home ownership state. Home ownership rates in the state have slowly but steadily increased from 65.1 percent in 1990 to 69.2 percent in 2001 (compared to 67.8% nationwide in 2001).²⁰⁰ Home ownership increases with the age of the householder and with household income. Florida has 3,352,275 housing units, and 75 percent of them are owner-occupied; the remainder is renter-occupied or vacant. An increase of 1.7 million households is projected by 2010. Given this projection and the need to replace aging housing units, it is estimated that between 1.75 and 2 million housing units will need to be built by 2010.²⁰¹

Although housing affordability improved in Florida during the 1990s, most low-income families live in cramped quarters. It is not unusual for 3 to 4 roommates to share an efficiency or for a one bedroom apartment to be home to an extended family. Many families are living in hotels/motels because affordable apartments are hard to find. To be considered affordable, rent has to be less than 30 percent of income. Fifty-nine percent of poor renters spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. Service and retail jobs that employ many low-income workers (e.g., tourist attractions) are often near areas with predominantly high cost housing, forcing the workers to make long commutes.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ U.S. Census, 2002

²⁰¹ Archer et. al., 1999

²⁰² Ehrenreich, 2001