



Diverging Dynamics: The 2023 Displacement Risk Indicators Matrix (D.R.I.M.) Update for Newark

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Diverging Dynamics: The 2023 Displacement Risk Indicators Matrix (D.R.I.M.) Update for Newark

By CLiME
December 2025

The D.R.I.M. was designed as an assessment tool for policymakers, organizers, developers and the public to view the City and its five wards through select data condensed into variables that demonstrate risks associated with housing displacement. These risks are sometimes associated with typical gentrification but capture broader trends in housing affordability, demographic change and vulnerability to displacement. Using the D.R.I.M., policymakers can measure the potential impact of contemplated initiatives or proposed developments.

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Executive Summary

The 2023 update of the D.R.I.M. shows diverging patterns in market pressures, affordability, and vulnerability to displacement across Newark's five wards. As described in CLiME's recent *The Other Cities* report, citywide numbers reveal limited evidence of gentrification in Newark. However, across Newark's wards and neighborhoods, patterns of urban change vary significantly. In this report, we highlight how tenant vulnerability, housing market trends, and gentrifier population dynamics vary across Newark from 2010 through 2023.

Citywide, Newark has experienced the steady erosion of affordability over the study period. More than 30% of Newark renters pay half or more of their income in rent, leaving them with few resources for other material needs such as food, transportation and health care. Meanwhile, the supply of affordable units has diminished citywide. The erosion in affordability is due to rents rising faster than incomes, along with low rent units being replaced by high-rent units. Poverty rates are very high in Newark and mostly unchanged during the study period, with one-in-four Newark households living in poverty.

Over time, Newark's housing stock is becoming more expensive as low-rent units disappear and are replaced by high-rent units. In 2010, 39% of units rented for less than \$1000 (in 2023 dollars) and this declined to 28% of units in 2023. During this period, the number of high-rent units, renting for more than \$1,750 (in 2023 dollars) expanded from 19% to 27%.

There is limited evidence of the arrival of a gentrifier population. There is a noticeable increase in the share of college educated residents from 12 percent to 17 percent. However, the homeownership rate is mostly unchanged from 2010 through 2023, and the share of residents who identify as White Non-Hispanic declined from 13% to 9%.

The East Ward and Central Ward experienced the most dramatic increases in rents, driven by high-rise development of high-rent units and the most dramatic declines in the most affordable rental stock. The East Ward is suffering the most from the decline of affordable options because the Central Ward has many more subsidized units which are insulated from market pressure. These two wards also experienced the greatest declines in homeownership rates, likely explained by the influx of renters, many of whom are higher income. While the market pressures look similar in these two wards, the demographics and shifts are not. The Central Ward has the highest and fastest growing share of residents with BAs in the city (25%) up from just 16% in 2010, with growing numbers arriving from other parts of New Jersey and from other states. The East Ward has the lowest rate of college educated residents in the city, but the highest share of White Non-Hispanic residents (25%) and a large and growing foreign born population.



The North Ward stands out for its large increase in homeownership during the study period, with 46% more owner occupied households in 2023 compared to 2010. As of 2023, 30% of households in the North Ward are homeowners, and this is the only ward where the ownership rate increased during this period. The North Ward has fewer low-rent units available than other places in the city, but the North's affordable housing stock has stayed fairly constant at roughly one-quarter of all rental units over time. Most other wards are losing their more affordable housing stocks at a rapid clip. The North Ward's vulnerability measures are comparable to city averages, with similar rent, income and poverty levels, and slightly lower rent burden.

The South Ward's renter households are the most vulnerable in the city. Yet, the South Ward also has the most affordable housing stock compared to the others. The South Ward is the most rent burdened in the city (35% of households) and has the highest poverty rate (34% households in poverty). Both of these figures have risen sharply since 2010, faster than anywhere else, suggesting increasing vulnerability of South Ward tenants. Rents remain relatively low compared to other wards, but households' incomes are not keeping up with rent increases. Still, the South Ward has been luckier than other wards in keeping its housing stock more affordable. In 2023, 37% of units rented for less than \$1,000, which is comparable to the affordable share in 2010 after accounting for inflation. In addition, the annual rate of occupancy permits is higher in the South Ward than other places, suggesting the development of new units, most of which are small projects involving few new units. The South Ward has many fewer White NH residents (just 2 percent) but comparable rates of homeownership and bachelors' degrees to the city as a whole.

The data for the West Ward offer a mixed picture, most likely complicated by the higher share of homeowners in this ward (35% as of 2023). The West Ward has the highest median income in the city (\$54,589) and less poverty than anywhere besides the East Ward. At the same time, rent burdens are almost as high in the West Ward as the South Ward suggesting a significant gap between renter and owner incomes. The affordability of rental stock in the West Ward has improved compared to other wards. In 2010, the West Ward had fewer low-rent units and more high-rent units than the city as a whole. However, by 2023 the West Wards' housing stock looked relatively more affordable. The West Ward was the only one to increase the share of its rental units that were affordable for less than \$1,000 per month, to 28%. The West Ward also has more occupancy permits than anywhere else in the city except for the South Ward. These occupancy permits are mostly for small projects. The average number of certificates of occupancy from 2021 through 2023 was 64, and they added on average just 109 rental units per year. Still, this new development helps to explain the improved affordability of the West Ward's rental stock compared to other wards during this time.



The West and East Wards stood out from others for especially large increases in median household incomes from 2010 through 2023. Median incomes in the East Ward grew from \$40,087 to \$52,205, and in the West Ward from \$39,196 to \$54,589. Income also went up in the Central Ward but is not as high as the other two (from \$31,655 to \$45,772) which may be related to the student population and to the greater concentration of subsidized housing units who generally house lower-income people. **Supplemental analysis of employment data suggests that a higher skilled and higher paid workforce is concentrating in the Ironbound, Vailsburg, and Downtown.** Employment numbers and median earnings rose in sectors typically associated with economic transitions, including education and health services, professional, scientific and management services. In other parts of the city incomes grew but at a rate closer to inflation.

Signs of gentrification are emerging unevenly. The proportion of White non-Hispanic residents has shrunk over time from 13% to 9%. The most noticeable racial trend was a large influx of Asian residents into the West Ward, particularly in Vailsburg, along with ongoing growth in the foreign-born population. The share of college-educated residents has grown, and there are more residents working in professional employment sectors in the same places where incomes are growing fastest – in Ironbound, Downtown and Vailsburg.

This report serves as a resource for policymakers, advocates, and communities to identify where housing risks are most acute and how they have changed over time. Newark’s path forward can still center equity, but doing so will require deliberate investments in affordability, tenant protections, and community-led development strategies.

Acknowledgments

Kamya Khandelwal was responsible as the primary researcher for this update.

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Newark 2023 Displacement Risk Indicators Matrix

Color Legend:	Lower Risk	Higher Risk
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2023	Newark		Central Ward		East Ward		North Ward		South Ward		West Ward	
Vulnerability	Compared to state	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic
Extreme Rent Burden (% of HHs)	High Rent Burden	31%	Less Rent Burdened	29%	Less Rent Burdened	28%	Less Rent Burdened	28%	More Rent Burdened	35%	More Rent Burdened	34%
Rent (Median Gross Rent)	Less Rent	\$1,292	Equal Rent	\$1,214	More Rent	\$1,466	Equal Rent	\$1,277	Equal Rent	\$1,207	Equal Rent	\$1,299
Income (Median HH Income)	Less Income	\$48,285	Equal Income	\$45,772	More Income	\$52,205	Equal Income	\$48,502	Less Income	\$41,455	More Income	\$54,589
Poverty (% of HHs in Poverty)	High Poverty	28%	More Poverty	30%	Less Poverty	18%	Similar Poverty	25%	More Poverty	34%	Less Poverty	22%
Market Dynamics												
Affordable Rents (% of HHs paying <\$1000)	Equal Affordable Units	28%	More Low Rent Units	36%	Less Low Rent Units	16%	Less Low Rent Units	25%	More Low Rent Units	37%	Equal Low Rent Units	28%
High Rents (% of HHs paying >\$1750, FMR for 2-bed)	Less High Rent Units	27%	Less High Rent Units	23%	More High Rent Units	37%	Less High Rent Units	24%	Less High Rent Units	24%	Less High Rent Units	25%
Annual Certificate of Occupancy Rate (2021-2023)		204	Less Occupancy Certificates	36	Less Occupancy Certificates	35	Less Occupancy Certificates	29	More Occupancy Certificates	64	More Occupancy Certificates	64
Annual Rent Units Gained (2021-23)		1089	More rental units	362	More rental units	371	Less new rental units	50	Less new rental units	106	Less new rental units	109
Gentrifier Population												
Owner-Occupied (No. of HHs)		27,434		3,760		3,872		7,032		5,745		7,025
Owner-Occupied (% of HHs)	Few Owners	24%	Less Owners	17%	Less Owners	17%	More Owners	30%	Less Owners	23%	More Owners	33%
Non-Hispanic White (% of Population)	Low White NH	9%	Less White NH	8%	More White NH	25%	Equal White NH	9%	Less White NH	2%	Less White NH	2%
Bachelors Degree (% of Population)	Low College	17%	More College	25%	Less College	14%	Equal College	16%	Equal College	16%	Equal College	17%

Change 2010-2023	Newark		Central Ward		East Ward		North Ward		South Ward		West Ward	
Vulnerability	Change	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic	Compared to City	Statistic
Extreme Rent Burden (% of HHs)	Moderate Increase Burden	8%	Similar Increase	7%	Similar Increase	Similar	Similar Increase	5%	Faster Increase Burden	12%	Similar Increase	5%
Rent (Median Gross Rent)	Rent Increase	40%	Faster Increase Rent	64%	Faster Increase Rent	54%	Slower Increase Rent	41%	Similar increase	49%	Slower Increase Rent	33%
Income (Median HH Income)	Income Increase	33%	Faster Increase Income	45%	Similar Increase	30%	Similar Increase	30%	Slower Increase Income	24%	Faster Increase Income	39%
Poverty (% of HHs in Poverty)	No Poverty Change	1%	Large Decrease Poverty	-9%	Large Decrease Poverty	-15%	Faster Poverty Increase	6%	Much Faster Poverty Increase	20%	Decrease Poverty	-3%
Market Dynamics												
Affordable Rents (% of HHs paying <\$1000)	Decline Affordable Units	-27%	Similar Decline Affordable Units	-26%	Faster Decline Affordable Units	-35%	Slower Decline Affordable Units	-12%	Slower Decline Affordable Units	-4%	Increase Affordable Units	7%
High Rents (% of HHs paying >\$1750, FMR for 2-bed)	Increase High Rent Units	38%	Faster Increase High Rent Units	54%	Faster Increase High Rent Units	64%	Similar Increase in High Rent Units	37%	Slower Increase in High Rent Units	32%	Decline in High Rent Units	-2%
Annual Certificate of Occupancy Rate (2021-2023)	Steep drop and increase	-23%	Steep drop and increase	-65%	Steep drop and increase	-47%	Steep drop and increase	-39%	Steep drop and increase	-31%	Steep drop and increase	-5%
Gentrifier Population												
Owner-Occupied (No. of HHs)	More Owners	20%	No Change Owners	2%	No Change Owners	-2%	Large Increase in Owners	46%	Owners increasing slower than city	12%	Owners Rising Faster than City	33%
Owner-Occupied (% of HHs)	Lower Owner Occupancy Rate	-5%	Decrease Own Rate	-19%	Decrease Own Rate	-23%	Increase in Owner Occupancy	18%	Small Decrease Own Rate	-7%	No Change Own Rate	-4%
Non-Hispanic White (% of Population)	Decrease in White NH	-27%	Increase in White NH	34%	Decrease in White NH	-38%	No Change in White NH	-3%	No Change in White NH	1%	Decrease in White NH	-35%
Bachelors Degree (% of Population)	Increase in BAs	45%	Faster Increase in BAs	60%	Faster Increase in BAs	75%	Slower Increase in BAs	31%	Slower Increase in BAs	34%	Slower Increase in BAs	26%

The D.R.I.M.'s ten displacement factors are divided into three conceptual categories. Each category can stand alone or be viewed in conjunction with one or both of the others. They are:

- Vulnerability. These are indicators showing stress faced by households (rent burden, rent, income and poverty rate)
- Market Dynamics. These indicators capture housing market trends and residential construction activity
- "Gentrifier" population. These indicators identify the presence or arrival of White Non-Hispanic, college-educated, and affluent renter residents.

The categories are set up in three blocks of time: the present (2023), the past (2010) and the change in between (trends). The first and third blocks, shown here, are the most useful. The City statistic is a baseline for comparison across the individual wards. The data in the D.R.I.M. come from the U.S. Bureau of the Census American Community Survey (ACS) and administrative certificates of occupancy data provided by the City.



Vulnerability Index

In the D.R.I.M. framework, the vulnerability index captures the economic pressures and structural challenges that households face in maintaining stable housing. This includes rent burden, median rent levels, household income, and poverty rates, all of which shape a household's ability to afford and remain in place. As seen across Newark's wards and neighborhoods in 2023, vulnerability has remained high and, in many cases, worsened, deepening concerns about displacement.

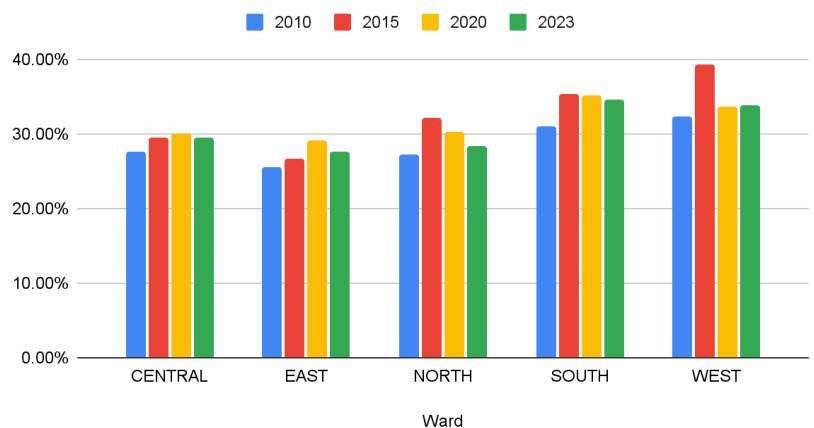
Rent Burden

Around 31% of households in Newark are extremely rent burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing costs.

This severe level of burden is driven by a lack of affordable housing options and stagnant household incomes.

In every ward, at least one in four, and in some cases nearly two in five, renter households consistently spend more than 50% of their income on rent. *This level of cost burden exceeds federal affordability standards and indicates a widespread, long-term housing affordability crisis in the city.* After paying rent, many Newark households are left with little remaining for essential expenses such as food, transportation and healthcare.

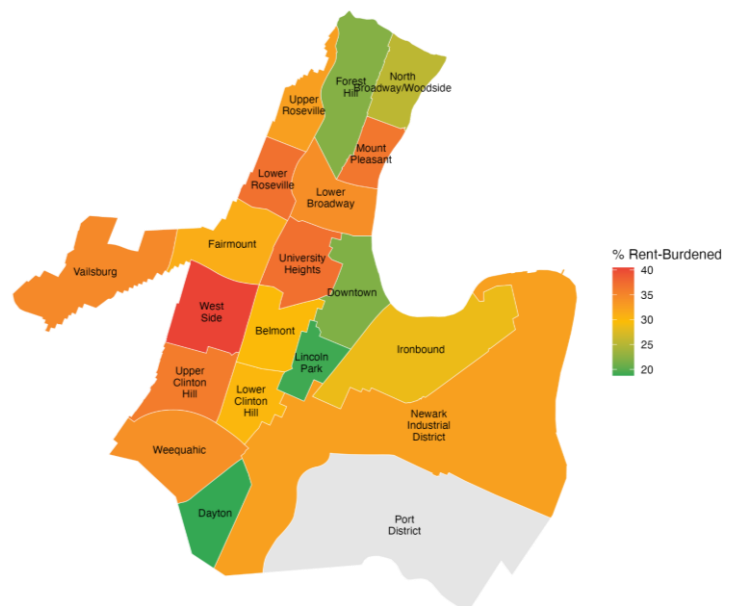
Extremely Rent-Burdened (By Ward)



The West and South Wards consistently show the highest rates of extreme rent burden.

Without targeted intervention, these patterns are unlikely to shift on their own. At the neighborhood level, Vailsburg, West Side, Fairmount and Upper Clinton Hill are particularly vulnerable, with extreme rent burden rates surpassing 40% in some years. In 2023, the most vulnerable neighborhoods in terms of extreme rent burden are West Side at 41%, Lower Roseville at 37%, Mount Pleasant at 36% and University Heights at 37%.

Percentage of Renters Paying >50% Income on Rent (2023)
Newark Neighborhoods

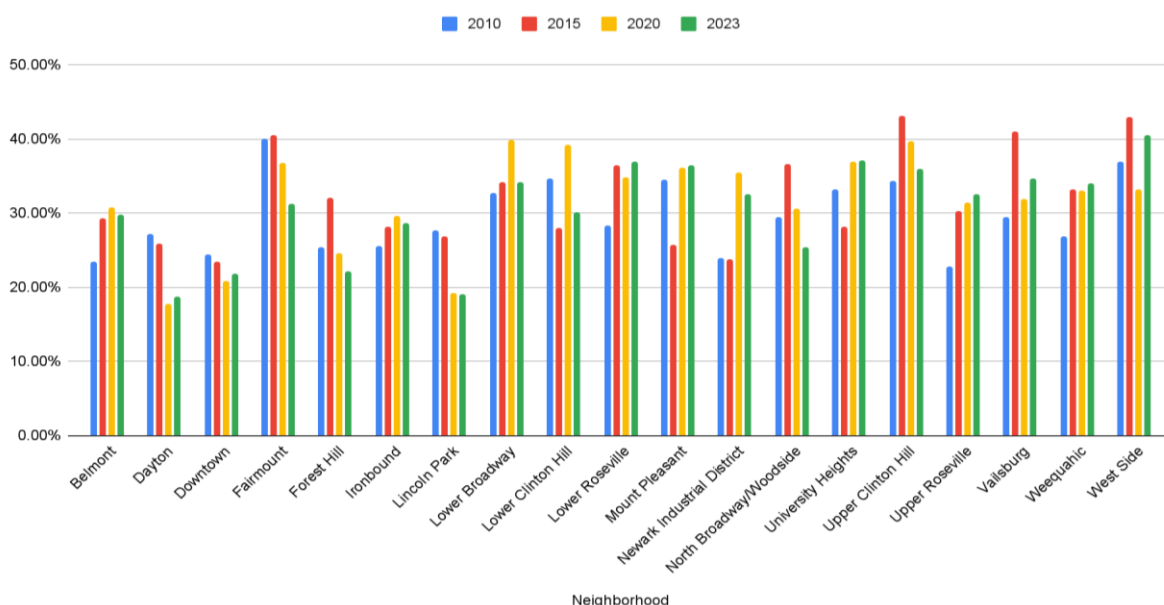


Source: 5-Year ACS 2023



Two neighborhoods stood out for having the largest increase in rent-burdened households: Vailsburg and West Side. Since 2020, 500 additional households are rent burdened in Westside. In Vailsburg, 634 additional households are *extremely* rent burdened. These increases may be related to conversions from homeownership to rental, as these are places where investors have been especially active.¹ In Vailsburg, there was a jump from 4,912 rental units in 2010 to 8,331 rental units in 2023. Ironbound and Downtown have also seen an increase in rental units, but these increases are mostly related to new development.

Extremely Rent-Burdened (By Neighborhood)

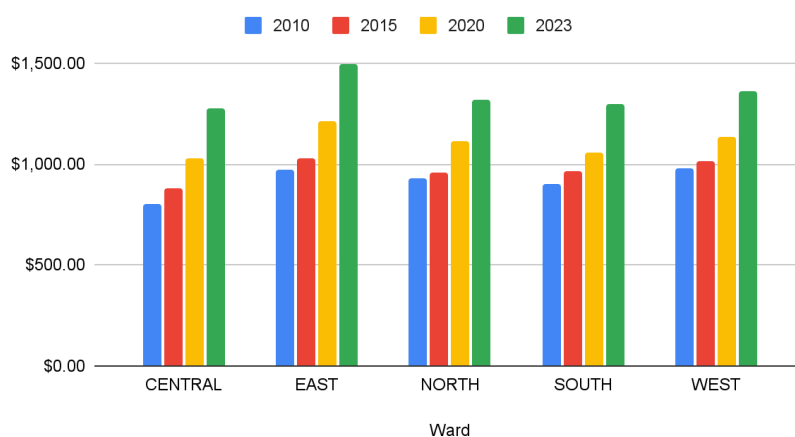


Median Rent

Rents in Newark are high and have been rising steadily for more than a decade. According to the Census, which surveys renters, the median gross rent is \$1,292. According to Zillow, which measures rents at available unit listings, the average rent in Newark is much higher, at \$2,150.

As of 2023, the East Ward had the highest median rent at nearly \$1,500, with the West and North Wards not far behind. The Central Ward, which previously had some of the lowest rents, experienced one of the steepest climbs over the decade, likely associated with new market-rate development projects. At the neighborhood level, rent disparities across Newark are particularly striking.

Median Gross Rent (By Ward)

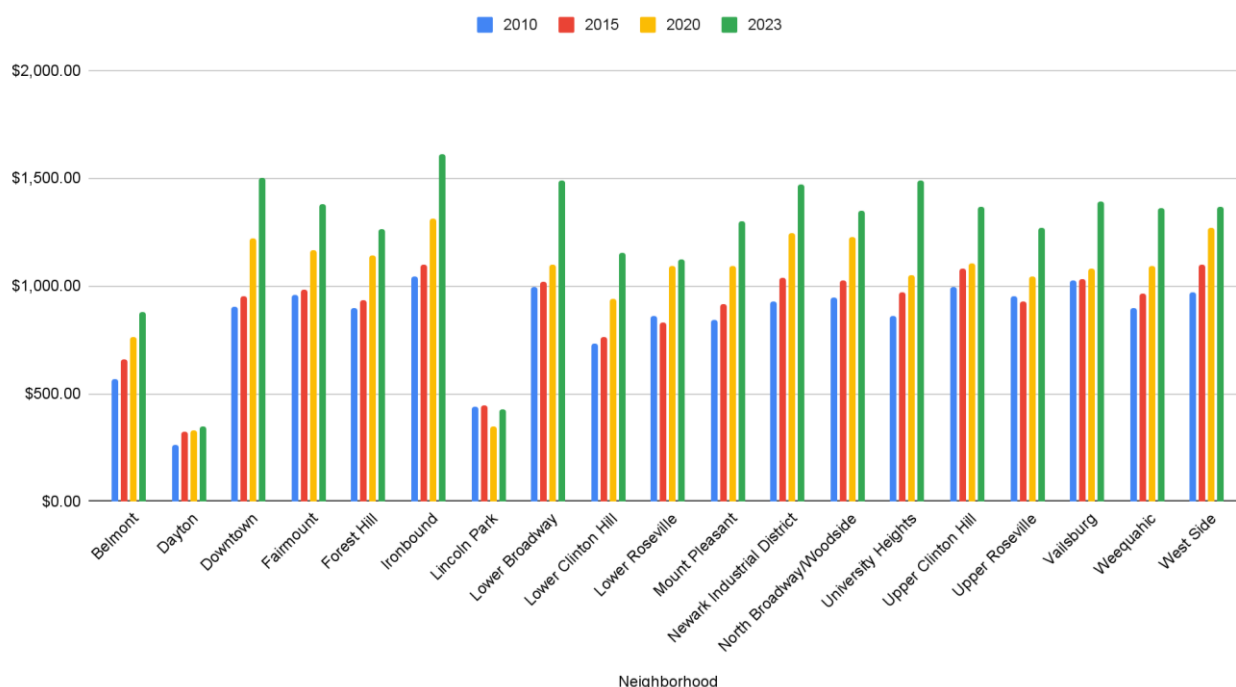


¹ [Who Owns Newark?](#)



In 2023, **Ironbound and Lower Broadway recorded the highest median gross rents, each exceeding \$1,400 per month. Lower Broadway alone saw a sharp rise of \$181 in median rent between 2020 and 2023.** Still, virtually all neighborhoods saw an increase in median gross rent over the last few years. Dayton and Lincoln Park retained lower median rents due to the concentration of subsidized units, which effectively cushion residents from the intense upward pressure seen elsewhere in the city.

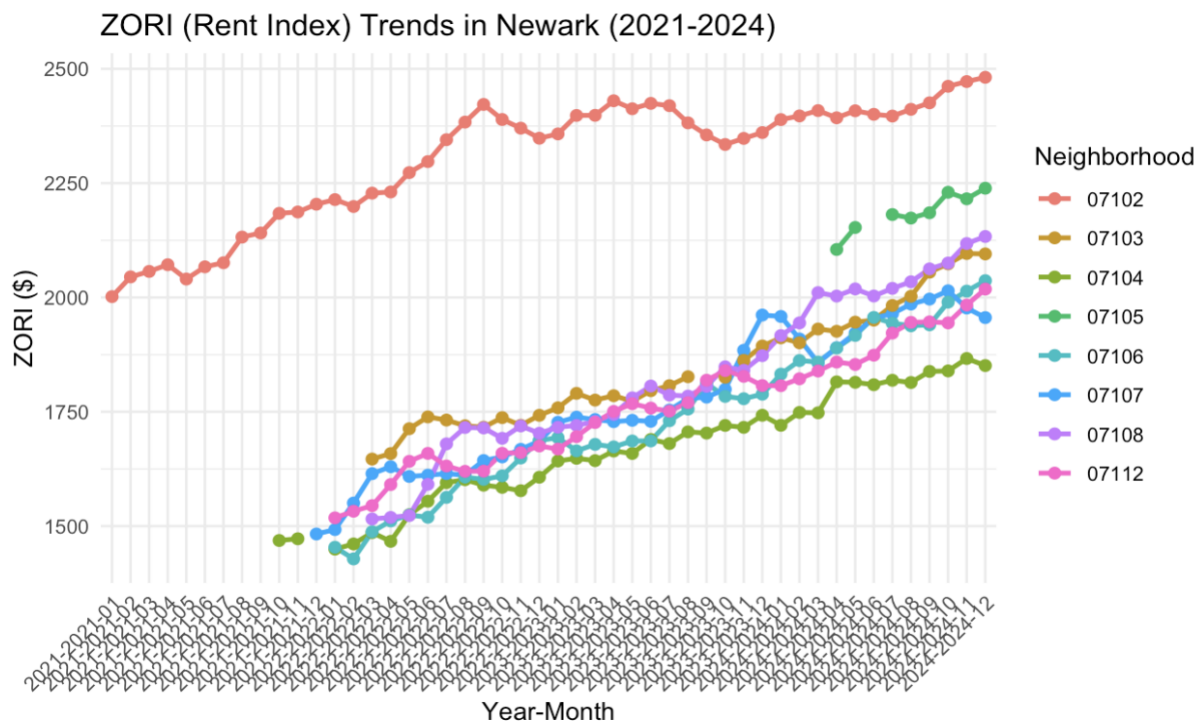
Median Gross Rent (By Neighborhood)



Several other neighborhoods experienced significant rent growth in recent years. University Heights experienced a \$192 increase in median rent from 2020 to 2023 and a total rise of \$472 since 2010—one of the steepest climbs in Newark. Meanwhile, Downtown’s median gross rent has reached nearly \$1,400, registering at \$1,399 in 2023, with an increase of \$104 since 2020 and \$287 since 2010. These sharp escalations in neighborhood rents reflect Newark’s deepening affordability crisis and highlight the urgent need for proactive housing strategies to prevent displacement and maintain affordability across all parts of the city.

Many proprietary companies, such as Zillow, provide estimates of average rents, which tend to be much higher than those reported by the Census because they measure asking rents for units that are available for rent at a particular time. **According the Zillow, the average rent in Newark is \$2,150, and the downtown area is pulling up the average across the rest of the city.**



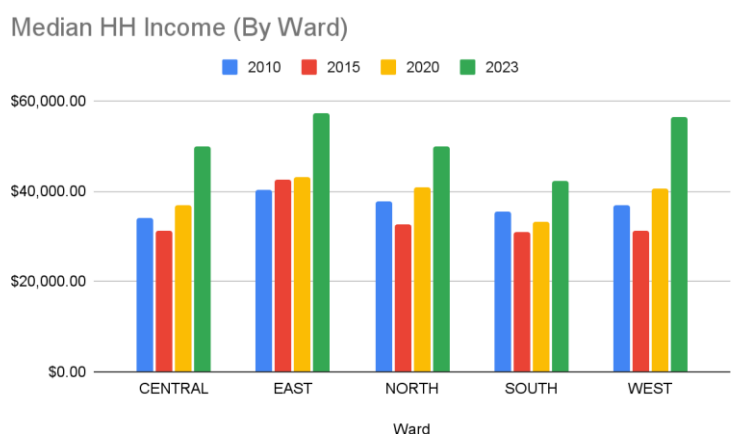


Average rents in the downtown area (ZIP code 07102) are roughly \$2,500 per month, which is \$250 more per month than some parts of Ironbound (07103) and \$500 more per month than any other section of the city. This is a very different picture than what comes from the Census because Zillow is generally not capturing any subsidized units and, as a survey sent to known households, the Census will be slower to incorporate and reflect the rents of new developments coming online downtown.

Median Household Income

Newark's median household income stands at \$48,285.

There was modest income growth throughout the city during the recent inflationary period. **Household incomes grew faster in parts of the East, Central and West wards, and the data suggest that growth in employment opportunities within the service industries and higher-wage fields is related to these increases.** In the East and West wards, median household incomes exceeded \$55,000 in 2023, almost \$15,000 higher than their 2020 levels.

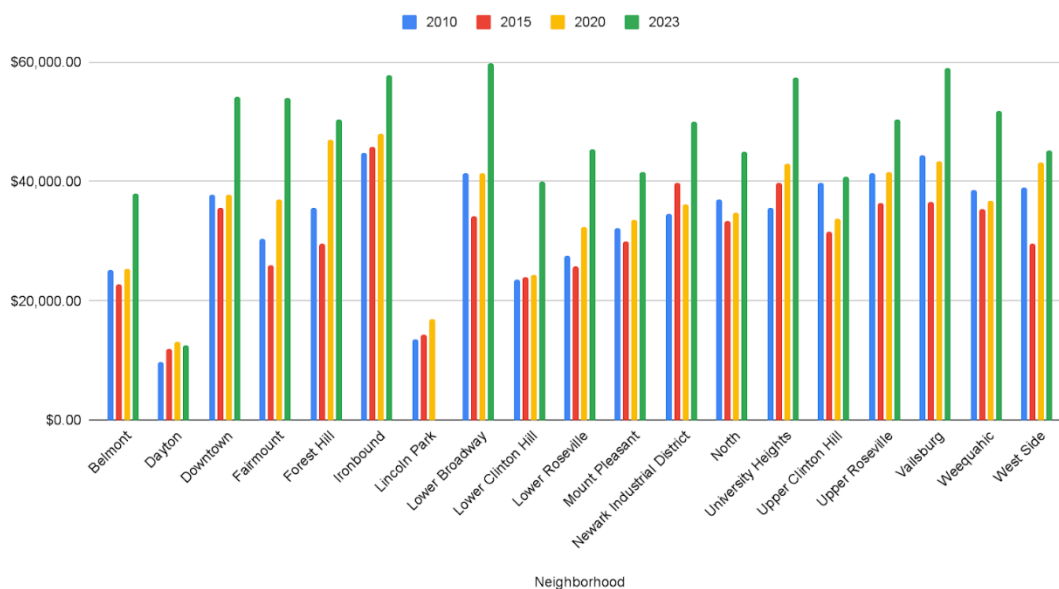


The South Ward is lagging behind the others, with lower incomes and slower growth. These disparities underscore the need for more targeted investment and support in some areas. Without such interventions, existing inequalities are likely to deepen, further limiting opportunities for economic mobility in the most affected wards.



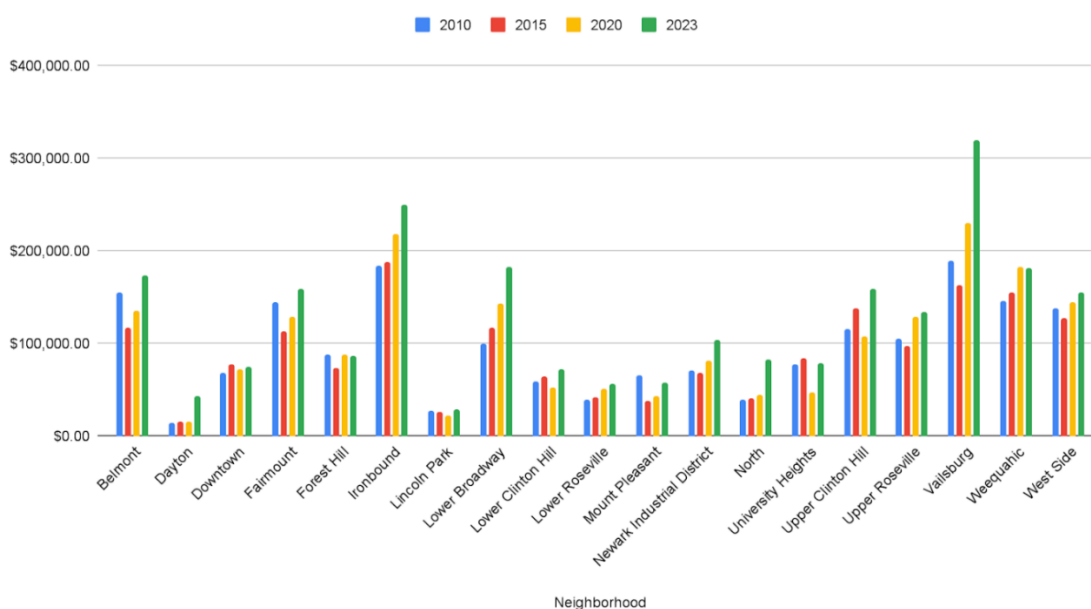
At the neighborhood level, the income gains were more pronounced. **In 2023, Lower Broadway reported the highest median household income at \$59,786, an increase of \$11,432 since 2020. Other faster-growing income neighborhoods include Vailsburg (\$58,965), Ironbound (\$57,820), and University Heights (\$57,445), Downtown (\$54,219), and Fairmount (\$54,109).** Dayton and Lincoln Park remain well below the city average, with median household incomes under \$20,000.

Median HH Income (By Neighborhood)



While inflation contributed to higher incomes during the pandemic and post-pandemic years (2020–2023), neighborhood employment data and occupational earnings suggests that job growth, especially in higher-earning sectors, played a significant role in driving real income gains in some parts of Newark.

Median Annual Earnings For Workers Under Service Occupations (By Neighborhood)



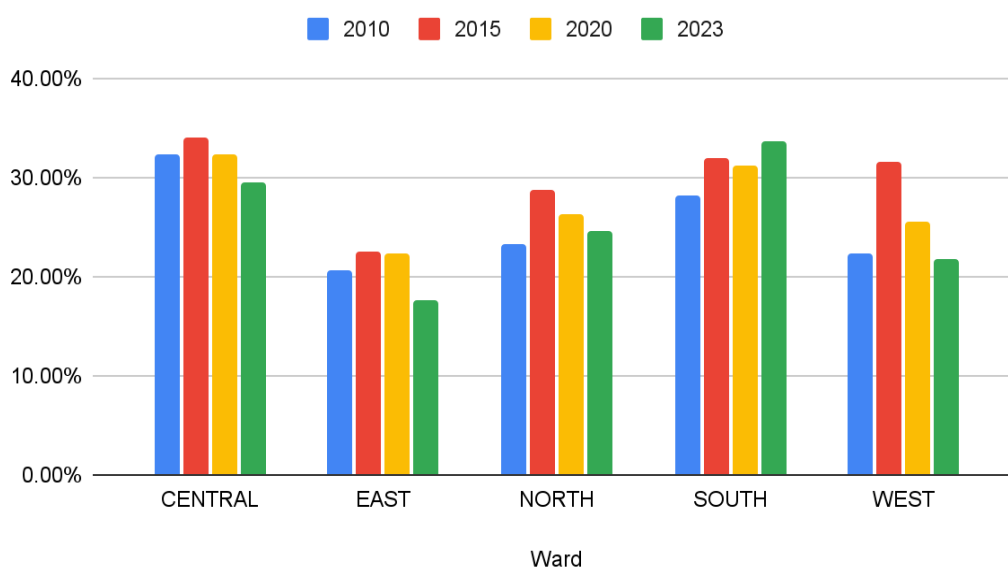
In Ironbound, Vailsburg, and Downtown, employment numbers and median earnings rose in sectors typically associated with economic transitions, such as education and health services, professional and management services and transportation. In Ironbound, the number of workers employed in professional, scientific, and management services from 2,243 in 2010 to 3,051 in 2023. In Vailsburg, the number of workers in education and health sector jobs increased from 3,918 in 2010 to 4,712 in 2023, along with an increase of 1,913 more workers in professional and managerial employment. In the Downtown area, employment in the finance and real estate sector grew threefold from 227 in 2010 to 626 in 2023. Meanwhile, education and health services jobs nearly doubled to 1,341. The transportation and warehousing sector, central to Newark's regional role, has also expanded. Vailsburg's workforce in this sector more than doubled from 967 to 2,139 between 2010 and 2023, while Ironbound increased from 1,207 to 2,060.

The employment data, alongside larger increases in household incomes, suggest Ironbound, Vailsburg and Downtown are attracting residents in logistics and industrial hubs, potentially fueling economic revitalization. At the same time, the growing unaffordability in these areas heightens the risk of displacement as housing demand grows.

Poverty Levels

In 2023, 26% of households in Newark were living in poverty, highlighting the city's continued struggle with economic precarity.

Poverty Level (By Ward)

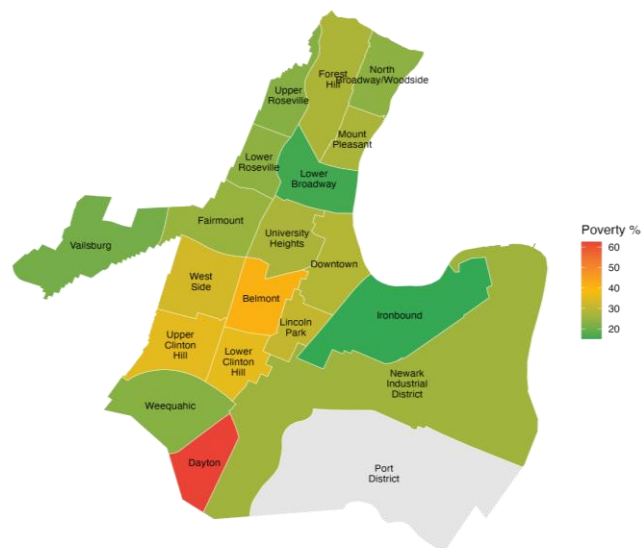


While most wards have experienced slight declines in poverty rates between 2020 and 2023, the South Ward experienced an increase, with poverty rates rising above 30% in 2023. **The persistence of high poverty, especially in South Ward, shows that income gains have not reached all communities evenly.** The East Ward has consistently reported the lowest poverty levels, with just under 20% of residents living below the poverty line in 2023.



At the neighborhood level, the disparities are more stark. Dayton and Belmont face extreme levels of poverty, with over 60% and 40% of households, respectively. Upper and Lower Clinton Hill also have elevated poverty rates of 36% in 2023. West Side has a poverty rate of 33% and saw a notable rise, adding roughly 500 households living in poverty between 2020 and 2023. Forest Hill also saw an increase, reaching 28% in 2023 with 616 additional households below the poverty line since 2020. These trends highlight the ongoing economic vulnerability in several areas, even as other parts of the city see modest improvements.

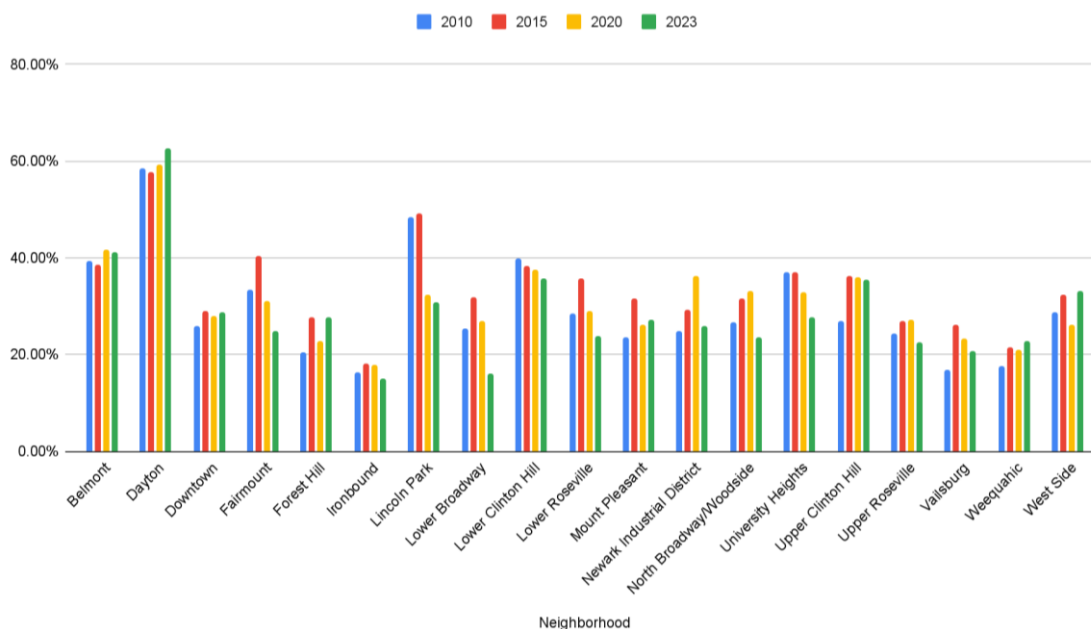
Percentage of Households in Poverty (2023)
Newark Neighborhoods



Source: 5-Year ACS 2023

Ironbound (15%) and Lower Broadway (16%) have significantly lower poverty rates. These uneven improvements suggest that certain neighborhoods are experiencing demographic shifts. For example, Ironbound has nearly 2,700 additional households with children in 2023 than in 2010, rising from 8,579 to 11,236. Vailsburg is seeing similar growth in families.

Poverty Level (By Neighborhood)



Despite signs of progress in select areas since 2015, poverty remains a deeply rooted and persistent challenge in Newark. Some neighborhoods, including Upper Clinton Hill, Belmont, and West Side, have also experienced steep increases in households receiving public assistance. Upper Clinton Hill, for instance, saw numbers grow from 1,196 in 2010 to 2,674 in 2023. Together, these conditions reinforce the limited housing security and risks of displacement for many of Newark's most economically vulnerable residents.



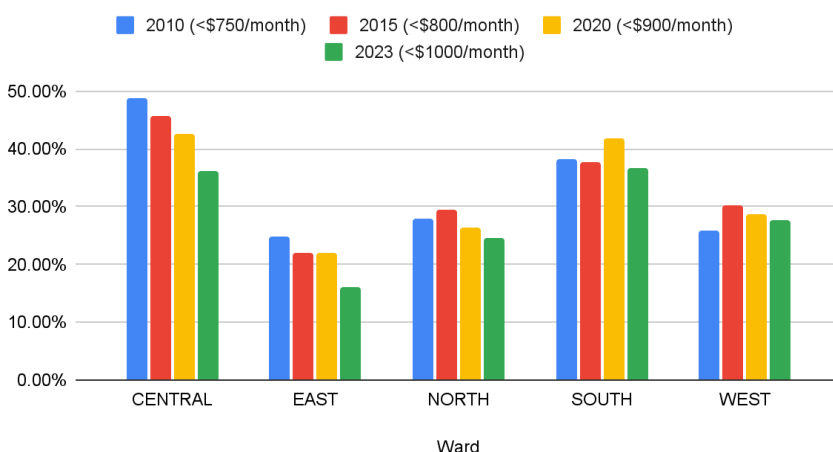
Market Dynamics

The Market Dynamics section of the D.R.I.M. assesses the evolving pressures in Newark’s housing market, focusing on indicators such as the share of affordable and high-rent units, and new development activity. These indicators show the city’s shifting housing landscape, with affordable rental units being replaced by high-rent units. These changes demonstrate deepening affordability challenges and growing displacement risks, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods.

Affordable Rents

The percentage of affordable rental units in Newark has declined across all wards over the last few years. The Central Ward, which previously offered the largest share of affordable units, has seen that proportion drop from nearly 50% in 2010 to around 36% in 2023. The East Ward has the smallest share of affordable units, declining to below 20% in 2023—a steep drop that aligns with the sharp rise in high-rent units observed in the same ward.²

Affordable Rents (By Ward)



In 2023, Dayton, Belmont, and Lincoln Park continue to offer the highest shares of affordable rental units, with Dayton standing out at 87%, an increase of 91 units since 2020. Lower Roseville (43%) and West Side (32%) also saw modest increases in affordable units, showing that some areas are increasing opportunities for lower-income renters, though not enough to meet the great need. North Broadway/Woodside also saw growth in affordable units, rising to 23% in 2023 with an increase of 135 units since 2020.

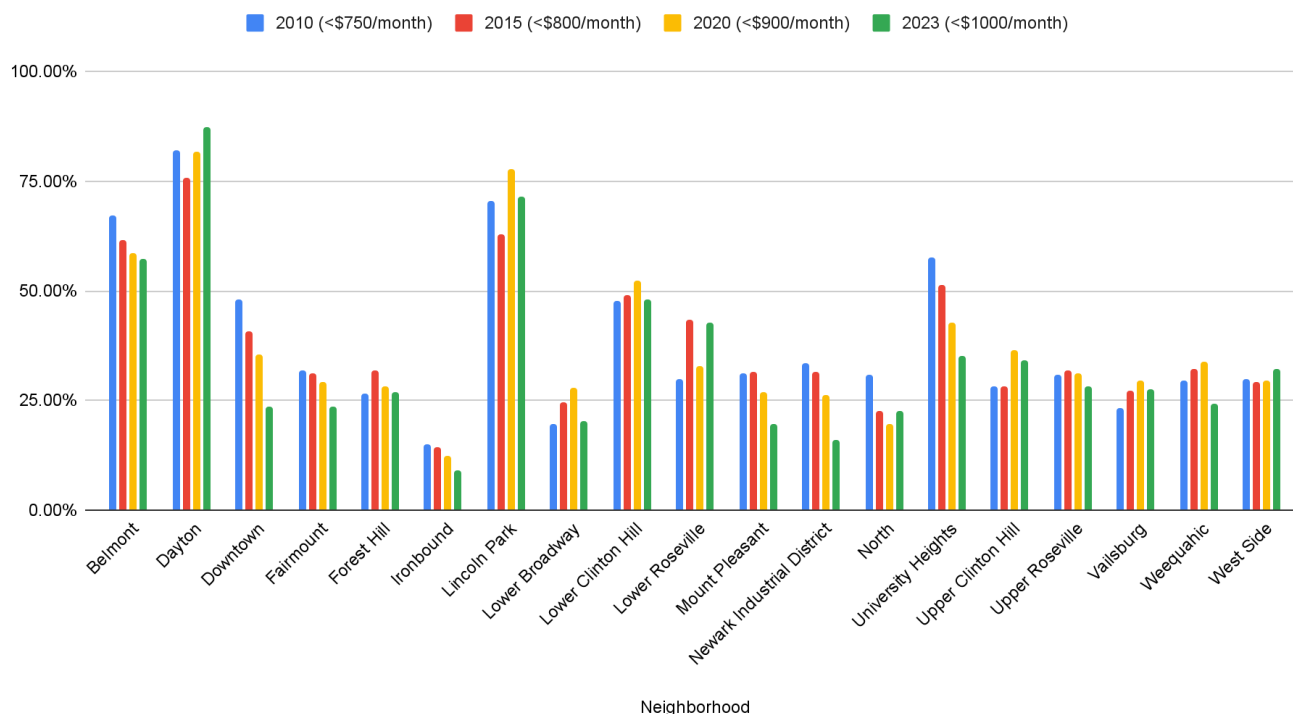
In contrast, those areas where incomes are going up the fastest are experiencing sharp declines in affordability. Ironbound, for instance, had the lowest share of affordable rental units at just 9.2% in 2023, despite a surge in renter-occupied units from 9,246 in 2010 to 13,463 in 2023. Downtown also saw a decrease, with only 24% of households paying affordable rents, down by 237 units over the same period. Weequahic experienced a loss of approximately 500 affordable units, falling to 24.1% in 2023.

² Affordable rents were defined using inflation-adjusted thresholds over time: households paying less than \$750 per month in 2010, less than \$800 in 2015, less than \$900 in 2020, and less than \$1,000 in 2023. These thresholds provide a consistent basis for comparing access to lower-cost rental housing across time. In 2023, only 28.4% of Newark households were paying under \$1,000 in rent, highlighting the limited availability of affordable rental units citywide.



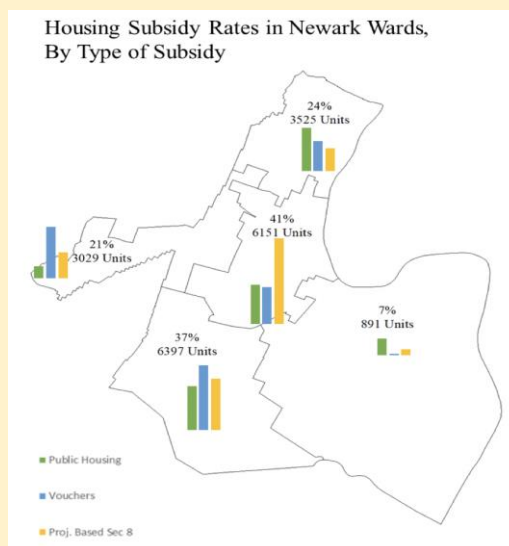
These shifts point to an uneven affordability crisis deepening in Newark, with lower-income renters increasingly concentrated in some neighborhoods. **As rental demand grows and new development accelerates in the central parts of the city, the shrinking availability of affordable housing raises the risk of displacement and exacerbates spatial inequality across the city.** The influx of new residents and investment into transit-accessible and centrally located neighborhoods is pushing area rents beyond reach for lower-income households. Without meaningful policy interventions to preserve and expand affordable housing in these areas, these patterns are likely to intensify.

Affordable Rents (By Neighborhood)



Housing Subsidy in Newark Wards

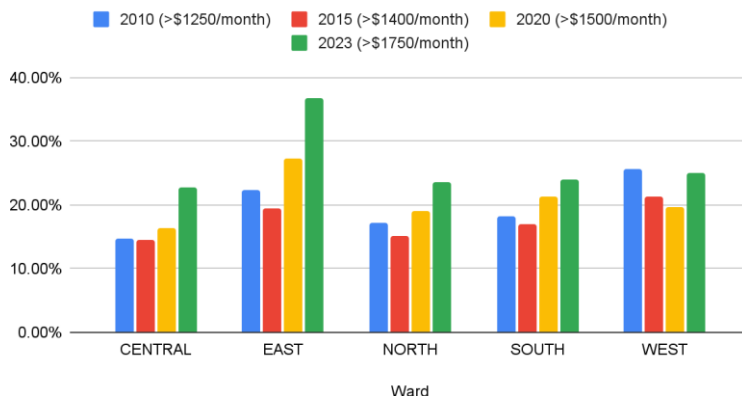
More than a third of Newark's rental stock is subsidized. Differences in subsidy rates among wards play a large role in the relative affordability of the housing stock throughout the City. Most of the subsidized units in the North and East Wards are through Public Housing. The largest source of subsidy in the South and West Wards is Housing Choice Vouchers. The Central Ward is unique in having many project-based subsidies, often used in concert with the state-level housing finance subsidies (LIHTC, bonds).



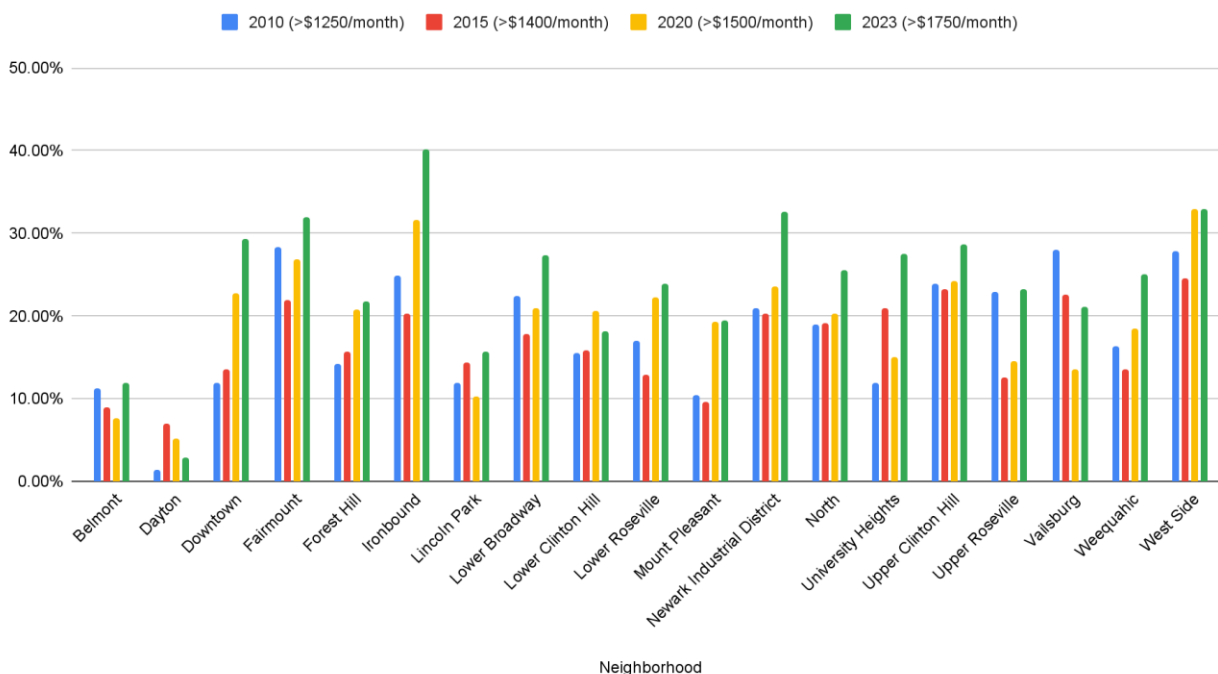
High Rents

The proportion of high-rent units in Newark has increased notably across most wards, signaling a growing presence of higher-end housing stock. The East Ward had the sharpest increase, rising from 22% in 2010 to over 37% in 2023, making it the least affordable ward. The Central, West, and South Wards also saw steady increases in high-rent units. In the Central Ward, the proportion rose from under 15% in 2010 to over 20% in 2023.³ The growth in high-rent units is tied to redevelopment in the downtown areas, especially areas close to transit. The increase in more high-rent units everywhere places increased pressure on existing residents and narrowed housing options for lower-income households.

High Rents (By Ward)



High Rents (By Neighborhood)



³ High-rent thresholds in this analysis were based on the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom unit in Newark, adjusted for inflation to reflect changing housing costs over time. Households paying more than \$1,250 per month were considered high-rent in 2010, with the threshold rising to \$1,400 in 2015, \$1,500 in 2020, and \$1,750 in 2023. These benchmarks provide a consistent framework for measuring the share of households facing high-rent burdens across different years. In 2023, 26.6% of Newark households were paying more than \$1,750 in rent, underscoring the growing strain on renters as housing costs continue to climb.

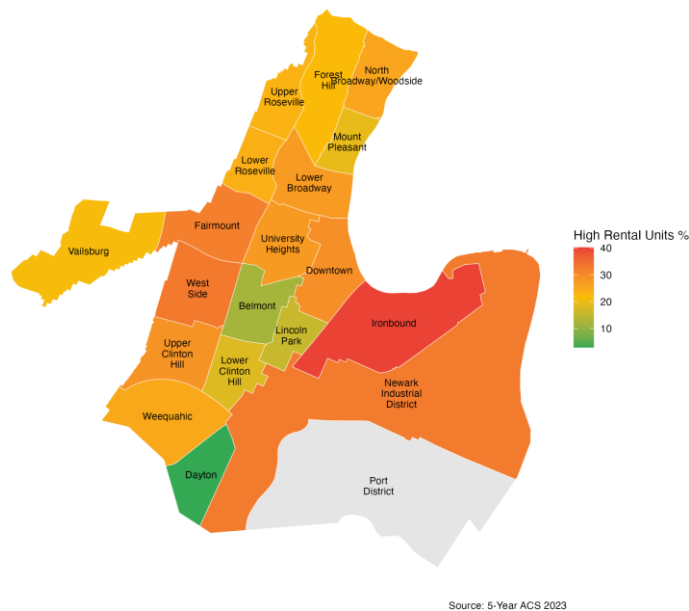


Ironbound's central location and character have so far attracted the greatest residential investment interest; a staggering 1,905 high-rent units were added between 2020 and 2023. In Ironbound, 40% of households were paying above the high-rent threshold in 2023.

Other neighborhoods with large increases in high-rent units are Downtown, West Side and Fairmount, all where over 30% of their rental units are classified as high-rent. As of 2023, the West Side stood at 33%. Downtown followed closely at 29%. University Heights also saw a notable rise, reaching 28% and adding 322 high-rent units between 2020 and 2023. Other neighborhoods are showing more modest growth in high-rent units, including Vailsburg (21% in 2023, with an increase of 686 units since 2020) and Upper Roseville (23% in 2023 with an addition of 307 high-rent units since 2020).

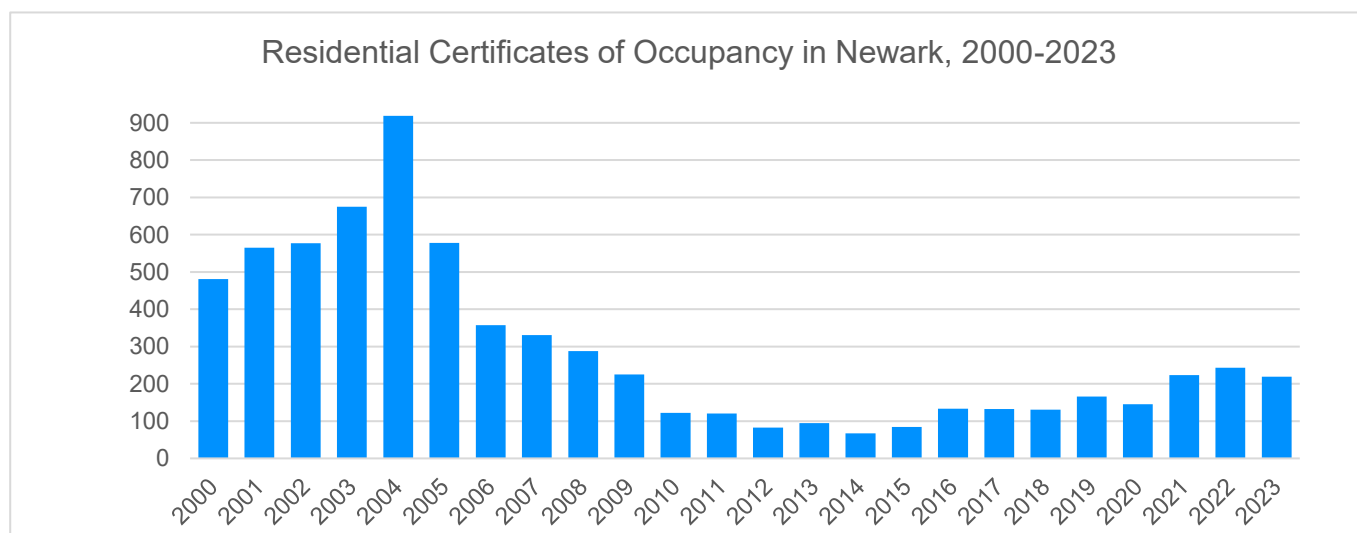
Some neighborhoods still retain lower shares of high-rent households. Lower Clinton Hill had 18% in 2023 and Dayton remains mostly affordable, with only 3% of households in the high-rent category.

Percentage of High Rental Units (2023)
Newark Neighborhoods



Certificates of Occupancy

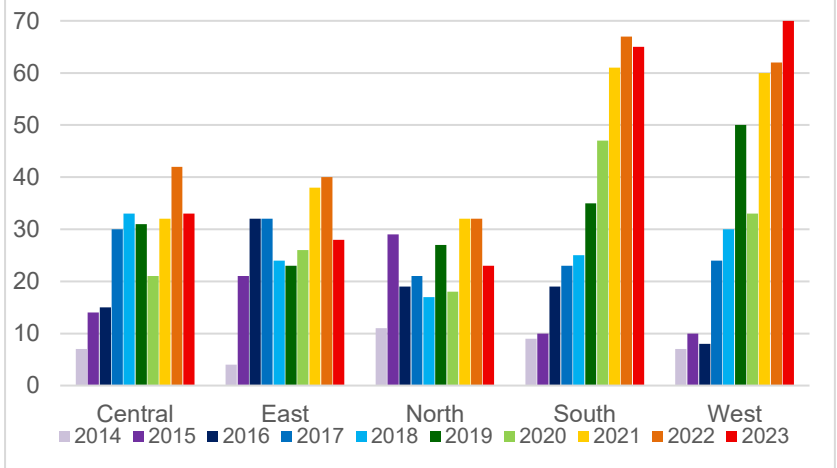
The number of certificates of occupancy in Newark has trended steadily upward for the last decade but remains far below what they were in the early 2000s. Certificates of occupancy (COs) are required for new construction of a residential unit, an alteration or upgrade, and when tenants move in. Therefore, they are a strong indicator of development and real estate activity.



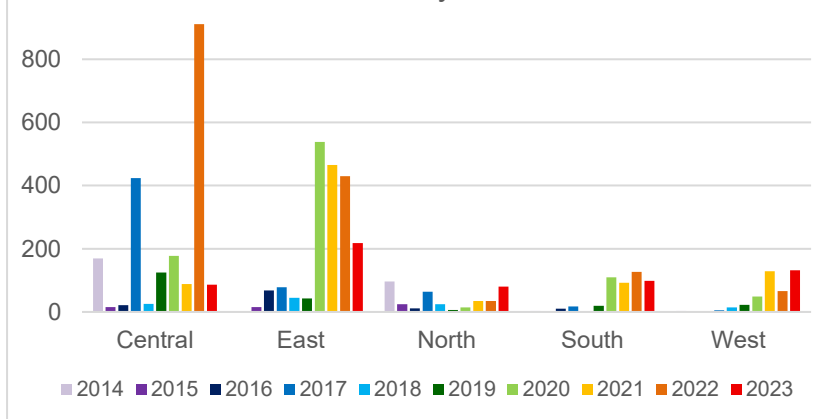
After plummeting during the Great Recession, there was an average of 90 residential COs annually from 2011-2015. Since then, there has been a steady increase in COs, albeit nowhere near the numbers from the early 2000s. From 2016-2020, the average was 141 COs annually. Since 2020, the annual average is 204.

In many cases, a single certificate of occupancy is issued for an entire building or residential project. Therefore, the CO count captures the number of residential new construction, alteration, redevelopment or expansion *projects* in an area. **The West and South Wards have more certificates of occupancy being issued than the other wards, with an annual average of more than 60 since 2019.** The Central, West and North Wards average between 30 and 40 annually in recent years.

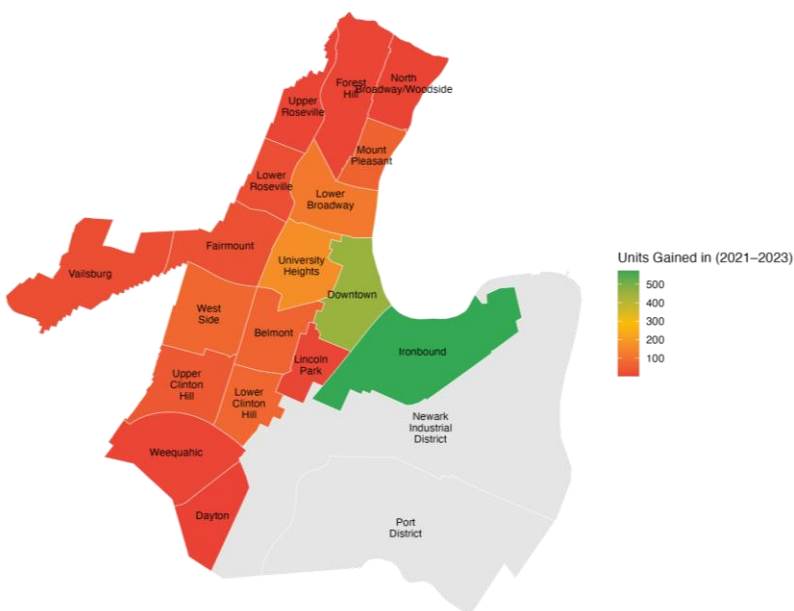
Residential Occupancy Permits by Ward, 2014-2023



Rental Units Added by Ward, 2014-2023



New Residential Units by Neighborhood (2021-2023)
Newark Neighborhoods



However, most of the new units are being added in the Central and East Wards because of highrise construction. The North, South and West Wards are adding fewer than 120 rental units each in recent years.

Most units are being added in Downtown and in the Ironbound. Between 2021 and 2023, Ironbound added nearly 600 units, and Downtown added more than 400 units. Other neighborhoods showing notable, though less intense, development include University Heights (with 180 units) and Lower Broadway (with 100 units).



Gentrifier Population

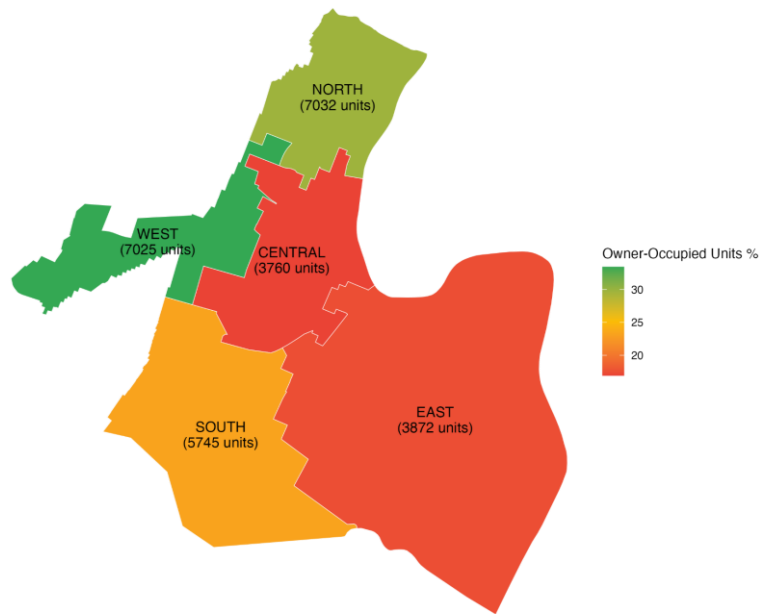
The Gentrifier Population in the D.R.I.M. measures the influx of new residents frequently associated with gentrification and displacement. This index includes three variables: the share of owner-occupied housing units, the percentage of residents identifying as White non-Hispanic, and the percentage of residents holding at least a bachelor's degree.

Owner-Occupied Units

Owner-occupancy rates in Newark remain low, especially when compared to state and national averages. As of 2023, only 24.1% of Newark households were owner-occupied, in stark contrast to New Jersey's statewide average of 63.7%.

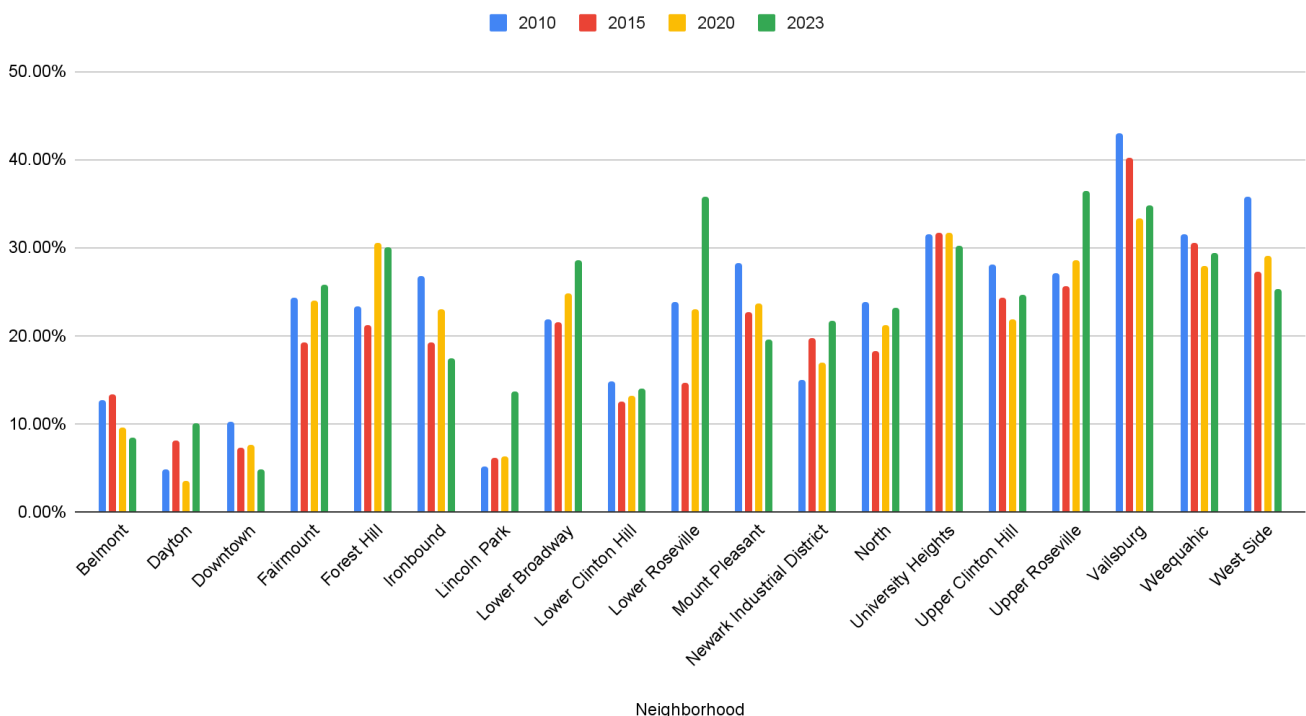
The Central and East Wards recorded the lowest ownership rates at just 17%, which aligns with their higher-density and commercially active urban cores. The West Ward continues to have the highest homeownership rate. The North Ward saw the largest increase in homeownership over the study period.

Percentage of Owner-Occupied Units (2023)
Newark Wards



Source: 5-Year ACS 2023

Owner-Occupied Units (By Neighborhood)



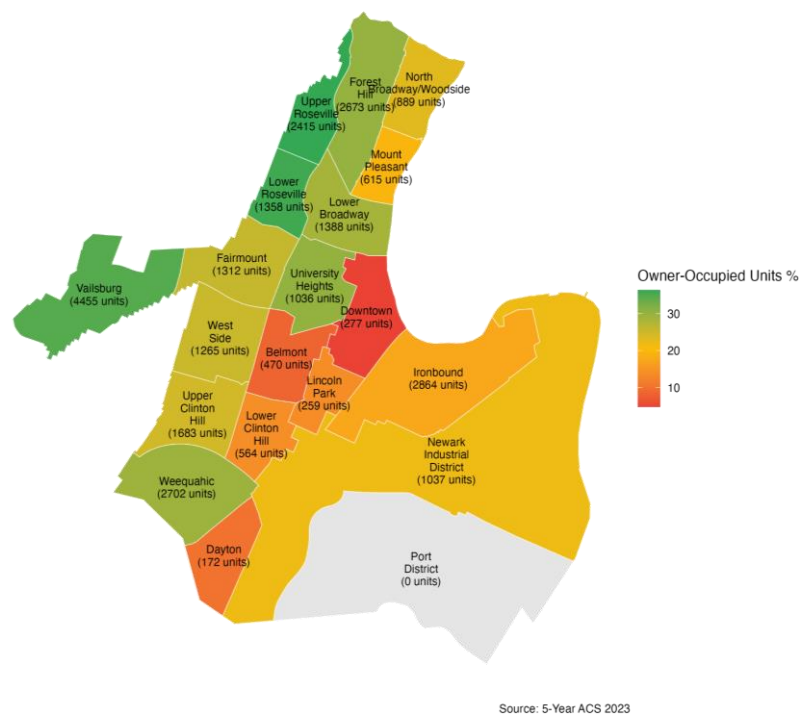
Ironbound experienced a sharp decline in owner-occupied units, dropping to just 17.4% owner-occupancy in 2023, with a loss of 512 owner-occupied units since 2020. Downtown recorded an even lower rate at 4.8%, losing 86 owner-occupied units during the same period—underscoring the dominance of rental housing in the city’s commercial core.

Belmont, Dayton, and Lincoln Park continue to have some of the lowest ownership rates citywide. However, Dayton and Lincoln Park did show modest gains, adding 268 owner-occupied units from 2020 to 2023.

These patterns suggest a deepening divide in the housing market, where ownership opportunities are increasingly out of reach in high-demand neighborhoods but expanding in middle market areas in the North Ward. Upper Roseville led in 2023 with the highest owner-occupancy rate at 36.4%, adding a significant 709 units since 2020. Lower Roseville followed closely at 35.9%, gaining 587 units over the same period.

Homeownership in the West Ward is still high, but showing few signs of the expansion of homeownership in the North Ward. Vailsburg maintained a relatively strong statistic of 34.7%, with an increase of 463 owner-occupied units, but West Side lagged at 25.3%, showing a net loss of 68 units—a concerning trend in a neighborhood traditionally known for strong Black homeownership.

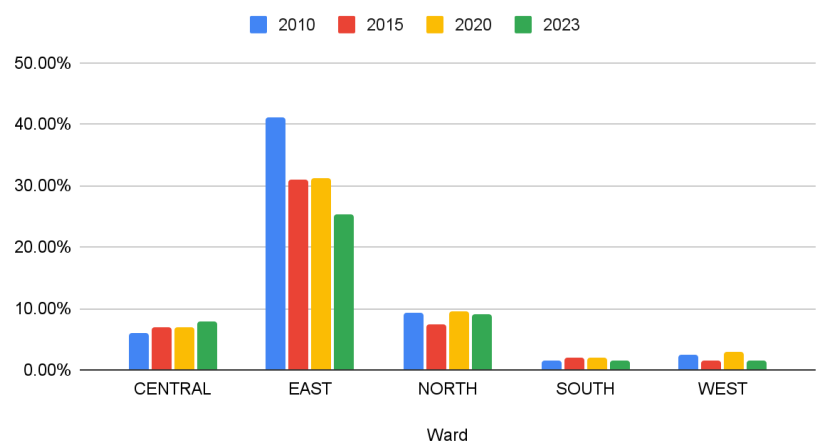
Percentage of Owner-Occupied Units (2023)
Newark Neighborhoods



Non-Hispanic White Population

In 2023, Newark had a total population of 307,188. The White population in the city has steadily declined over time, from 12.7% in 2010 to 9.3% in 2023. Newark’s population has steadily grown between 2010 and 2023, driven largely by increases in Hispanic and Black residents, who continue to represent the city’s majority racial groups.

White Non-Hispanic Population % (By Ward)



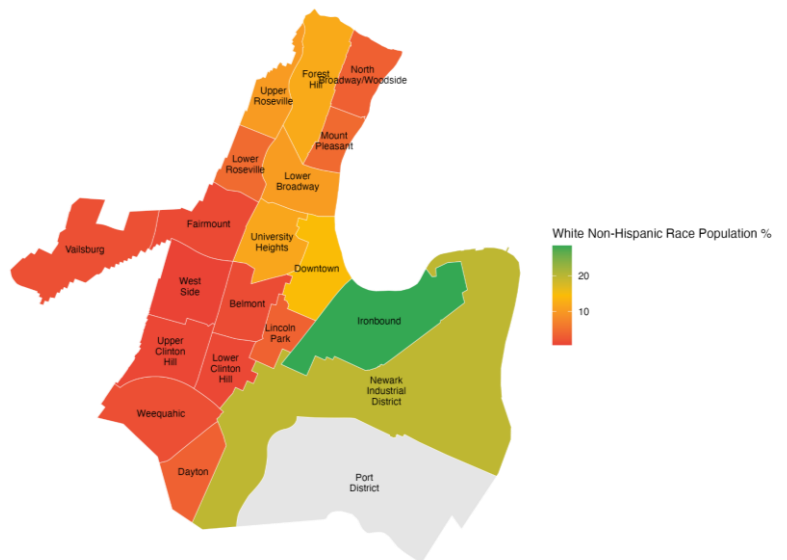
Despite housing and economic changes, the city has not seen significant racial turnover, suggesting that gentrification in Newark may be unfolding differently than in other U.S. cities. The proportion of White residents remains low across most wards. While the East Ward continues to have the highest share of White Non-Hispanic (NH) residents, its proportion has steadily dropped, from over 40% in 2010 to around 27% in 2023.

In the Central and North Wards, the share of White NH residents has hovered between 5% and 10% over the years, showing little variation. The South and West Wards report the smallest White NH proportions, consistently under 5%, with minimal change since 2010.

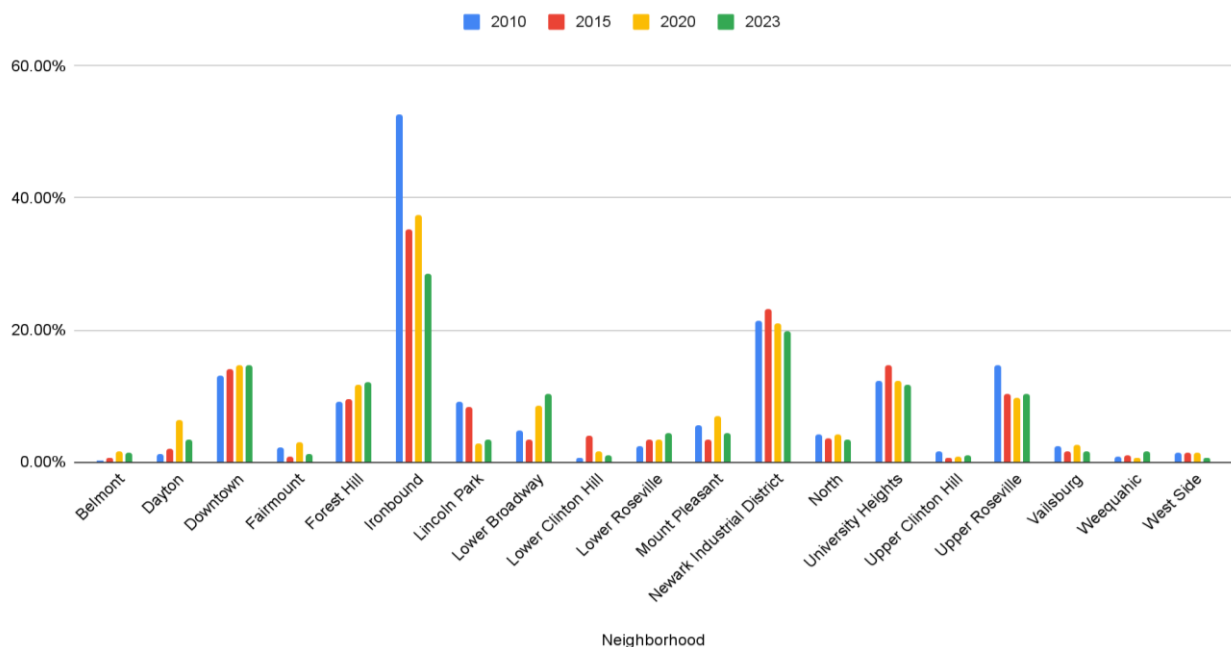
West Side had the lowest share of White NH residents at just 0.54%, followed by Upper Clinton Hill at 0.91%, Lower Clinton Hill at 0.96%, Fairmount at 1.1%, and Belmont at 1.3%. Weequahic, while still low at 1.6%, showed a modest increase of 222 White residents between 2020 and 2023. Vailsburg recorded 1.7% and experienced a decline of 263 White residents over the same period.

These figures illustrate how the White NH population is minimal in many of Newark's neighborhoods, especially in South and West Wards. Ironbound has the largest population of White NH residents at 28.5%, but its White population has declined sharply over time, from 19,397 in 2010 to 12,771 in 2023, including a loss of 2,507 residents just between 2020 and 2023. This may signal a broader demographic transition to fewer White residents rather than more.

Percentage of White Non-Hispanic Race Population (2023)
Newark Neighborhoods

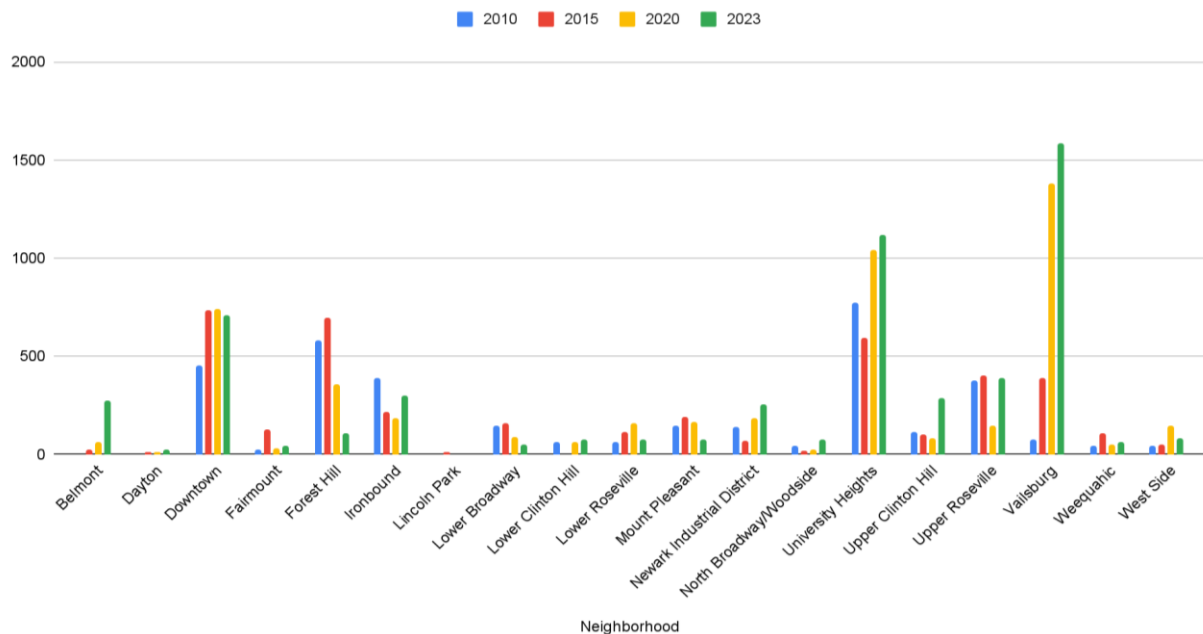


White Non-Hispanic Population % (By Neighborhood)



One notable trend is that Vailsburg and University Heights are experiencing rapid growth in Asian residents.⁴ Vailsburg increased from just 78 in 2010 to 1,588 in 2023, suggesting a demographic transformation that challenges traditional gentrification narratives centered on White in-migration.

Asian Population (By Neighborhood)

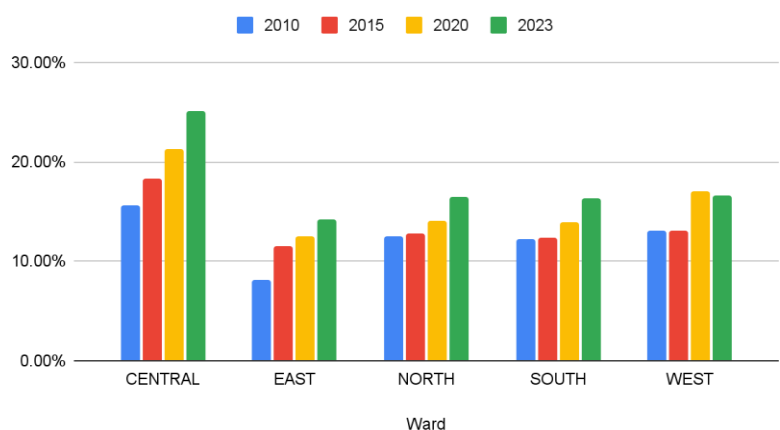


Bachelor's Degree or Higher

In 2023, 17.4% of Newark's population held a bachelor's degree or higher, a steady increase from 12.1% in 2010, 13.4% in 2015, and 15.5% in 2020. While educational attainment has been gradually rising in the city, Newark still lags significantly behind the statewide average of 42.9%, highlighting persistent disparities in access to higher education.

The share of Newark residents with a bachelor's degree or higher has risen modestly across all wards from 2010 to 2023. The Central Ward experienced the most notable increase, growing from around 15% to over 25%, likely influenced by its proximity to the University. This trend may also relate to the reinvestment near Newark Penn and Broad Street Stations, now key hubs for college-educated, higher-income residents.

Bachelor's Degree of Higher % (By Ward)



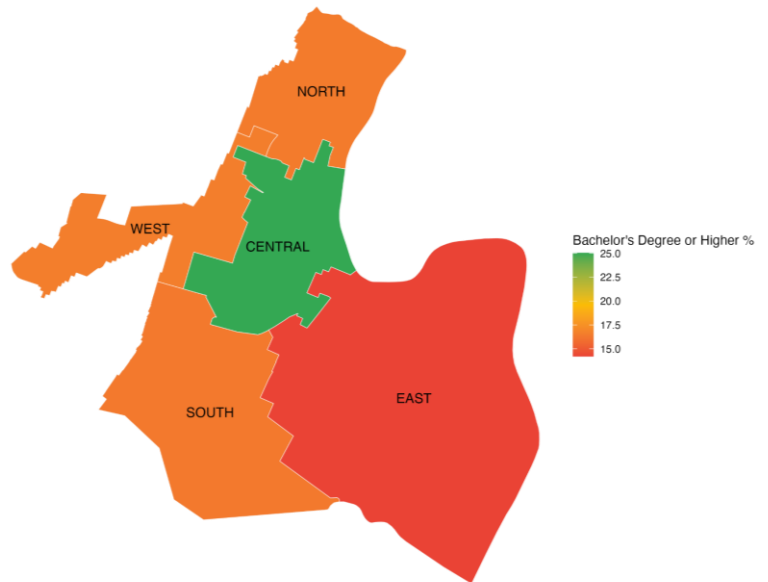
⁴ ACS data does not delineate Asian identities (i.e. East Asian, South Asian). Thus, we are unable to further characterize the larger Asian populations in Downtown, University Heights, and Vailsburg into more discreet ethnic demographic groups.



Other wards have also experienced consistent but modest gains, now hovering around 15% of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher by 2023. While these trends suggest a gradual shift in Newark's educational profile, the city still trails far behind the state average, indicating continued disparities in access to higher education and upward mobility. Sustained investment in education, workforce training, and affordable housing are key to ensuring more equitable growth across all neighborhoods.

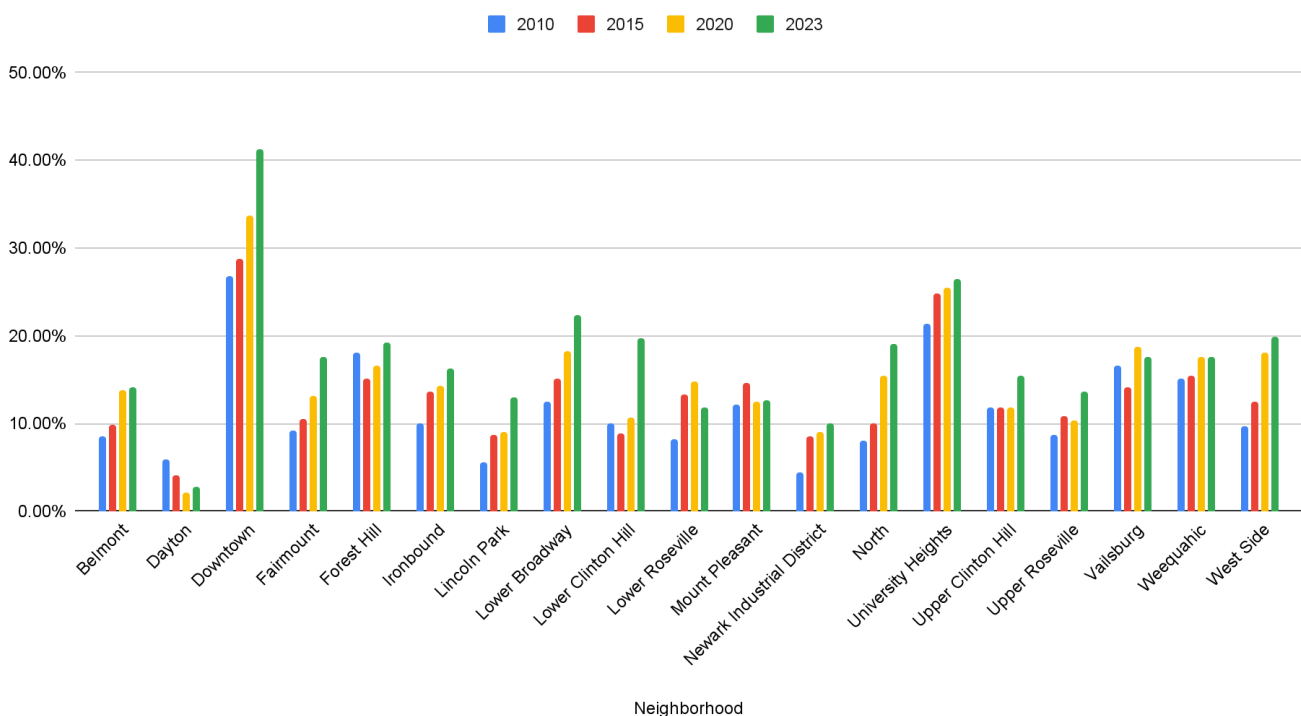
At the neighborhood level, educational attainment in Newark varies widely. Downtown stands out with the highest share of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher, 41.4% in 2023, and an increase of 740 individuals in that category between 2020 and 2023. This sharp rise aligns with broader redevelopment and rising rents in the area, suggesting Downtown is a focal point of Newark's ongoing transformation. University Heights follows with 26.4% of its population holding a degree in 2023, reflecting its proximity to local universities and a younger demographic (median age 28.7 in 2023).

Percentage of Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2023)
Newark Wards



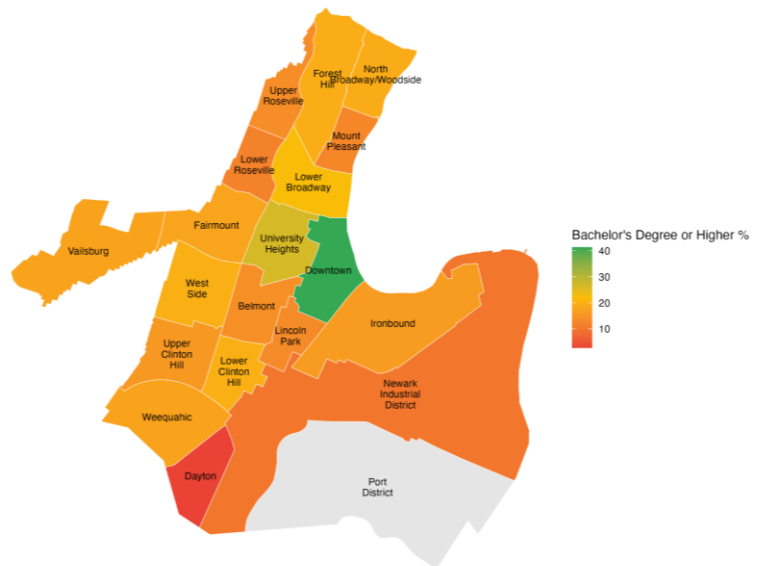
Source: 5-Year ACS 2023

Bachelor's Degree of Higher % (By Neighborhood)



Similarly, Lower Roseville has shown notable growth, reaching 22.3% with an increase of 704 degree-holders since 2020. West Side (19.8%) and Lower Clinton Hill (19.7%) also saw moderate gains, adding 140 and 507 college-educated residents, respectively, between 2020 and 2023. In Ironbound, the number of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher grew from 2,607 in 2010 to 4,853 in 2023, with 16.2% of the population now holding degrees and an increase of 822 in recent years. Fairmount also saw improvement, reaching 17.6% with a gain of 576 educated residents between 2020 and 2023.

Percentage of Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2023)
Newark Neighborhoods

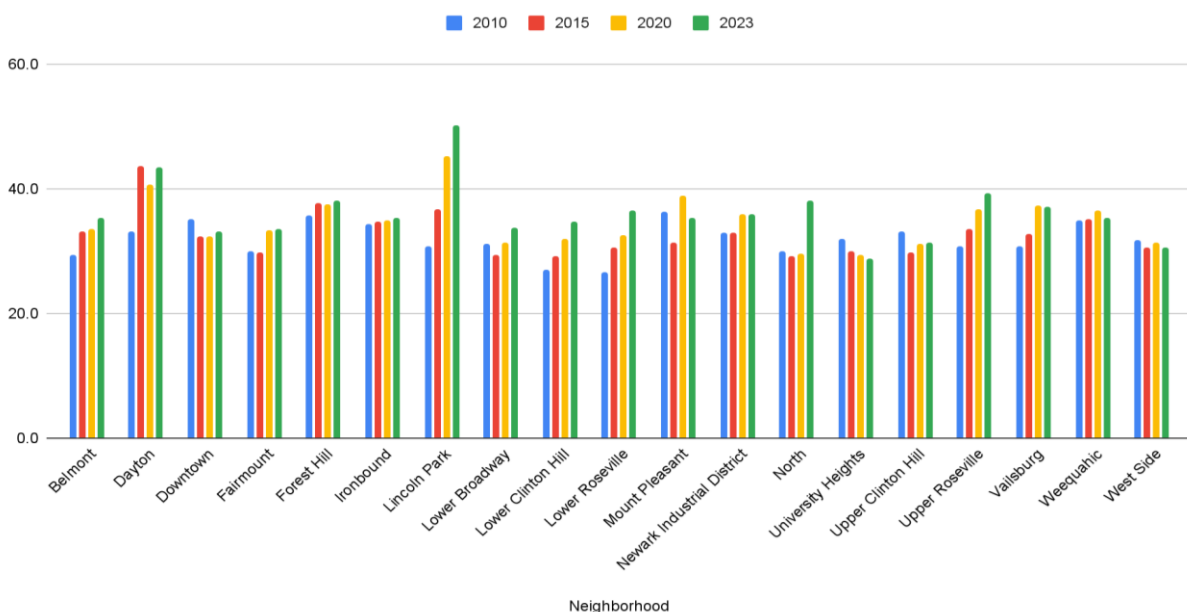


Source: 5-Year ACS 2023

On the other end of the spectrum, several neighborhoods are showing a different picture. Vailsburg, at 17.6%, saw a slight decline of 24 residents with bachelor's degrees or higher from 2020 to 2023. Lower Roseville experienced a similar dip, falling to 11.9%, with 71 fewer degree-holders in that period. Dayton, which recorded just 2.7% of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher in 2023, has only 80 individuals out of 3702 total population, which highlights persistent educational inequality. Newark Industrial District and Belmont also remain below the 15% threshold. These neighborhood-level patterns emphasize how educational attainment is closely tied to investment, redevelopment, and shifting demographics.

University Heights' youthful population, with a median age 28.7 in 2023, aligns with its rising college and college-educated demographic and housing demand. Lincoln Park's aging population may reflect limited in-migration and highlights the need for elder-supportive housing policies.

Median Age (By Neighborhood)



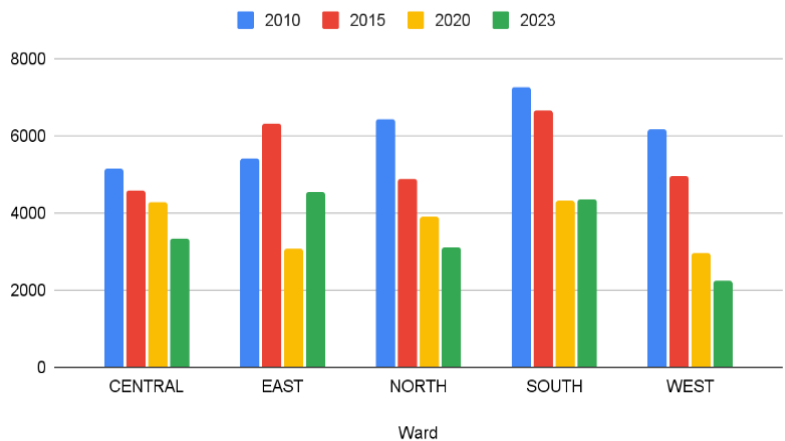
Migration and Mobility

Newark is a destination for both regional and international movers.

Inflows

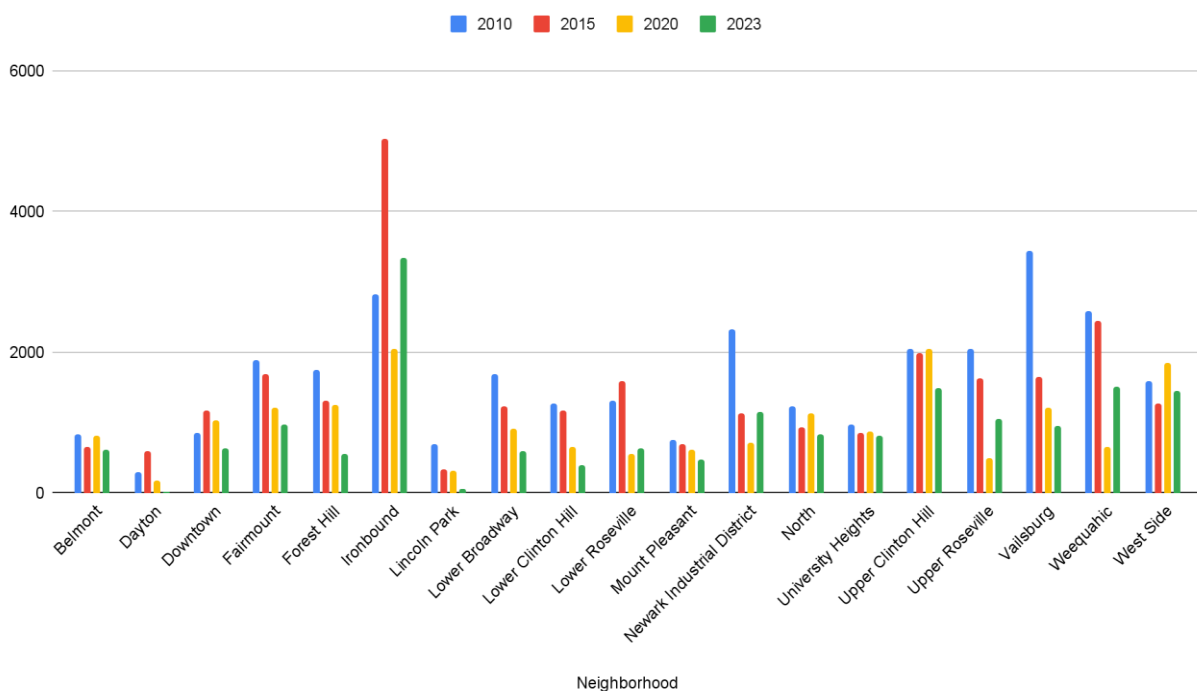
Moves within Essex County. Intra-county movement from other parts of Essex County into Newark have decreased over time throughout the city. From 2010 to 2023, all wards saw substantial drops in the number of people moving from other parts of Essex County. This may signal that Newark's role as an affordable housing destination within the region is shifting. Rising rents and reduced availability of affordable units could be discouraging lower-income movers from elsewhere in Essex County, compounding risks of exclusion and limiting Newark's accessibility to its surrounding region.

Moved Within Same County (By Ward)



Drilling down to the neighborhood level amplifies the universal nature of this decline. Fewer people are moving into Newark from the immediate region in Essex County.

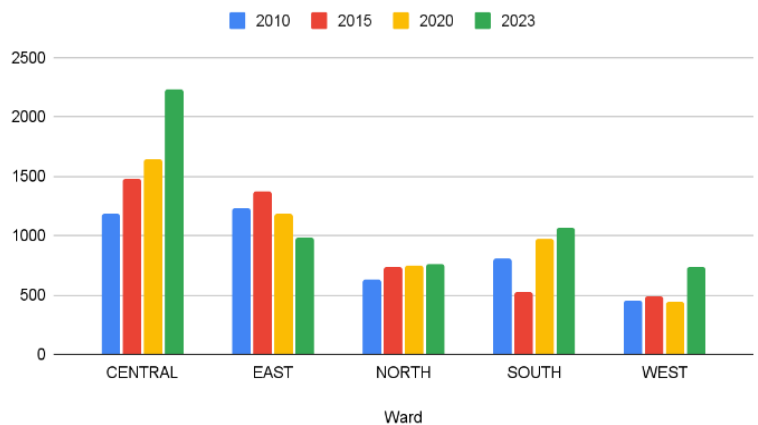
Moved Within Same County (By Neighborhood)



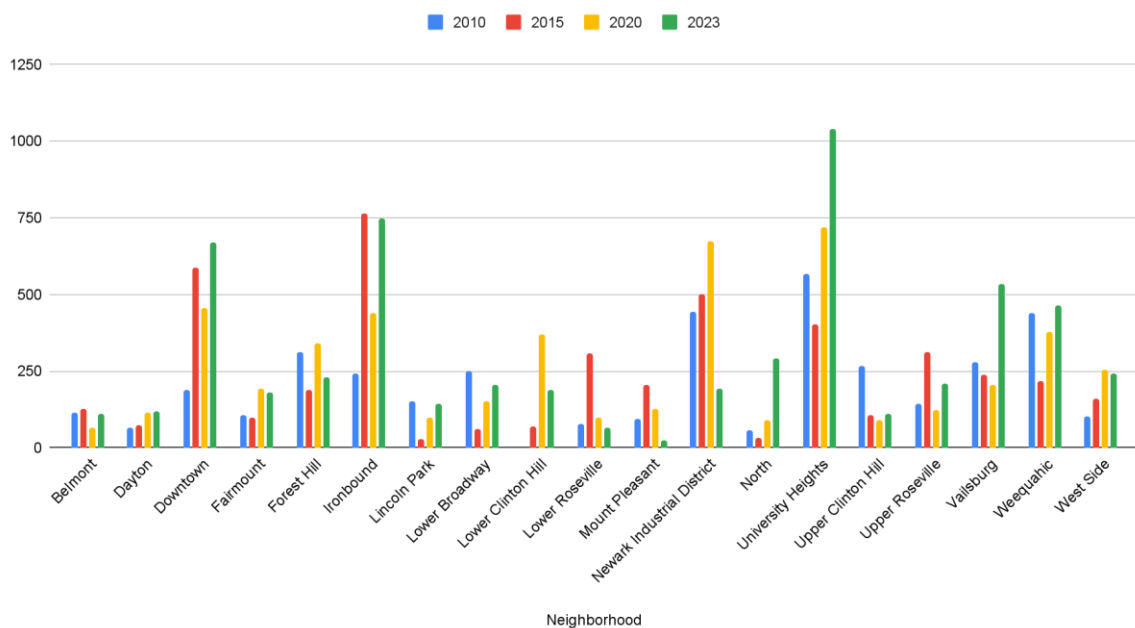
Moves from Other New Jersey Counties.

However, the Central Ward, particularly Downtown and University Heights, is attracting more people from other counties in New Jersey. The Central Ward saw a steady increase in movers from different NJ counties between 2010 and 2023, with the sharpest growth happening between 2020 and 2023. On the neighborhood level, University Heights stands out, probably due to the presence of Rutgers University, NJIT and Essex County College, showing the highest increase in such in-migration in 2023 across all neighborhoods.

Moved From Different County Within Same State (By Ward)



Moved From Different County Within Same State (By Neighborhood)



This shift may indicate increasing appeal of Central Newark as a residential destination, potentially due to proximity to transit, new development, or educational institutions. These areas may be in earlier or active stages of gentrification, drawing in more college-educated or higher-income residents from other parts of the state. This supports the interpretation that amenity-rich, transit-oriented neighborhoods like Downtown and University Heights are undergoing change in residential composition.

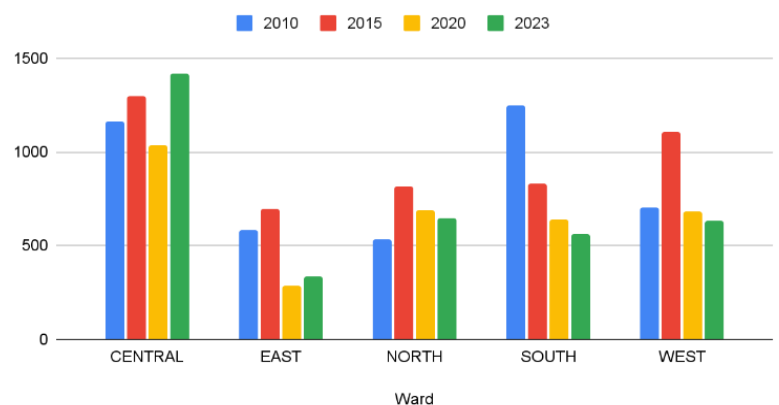
Moves to Newark from Other States. The data on people moving to Newark from other states shows a modest but notable increase concentrated primarily in the Central Ward, especially in Downtown. While overall numbers remain relatively low compared to intracity or in-county mobility, the steady growth of out-of-state movers into this core area aligns with other indicators of gentrification such as rising educational attainment, increased housing development, and proximity to transit hubs like Newark Penn Station.



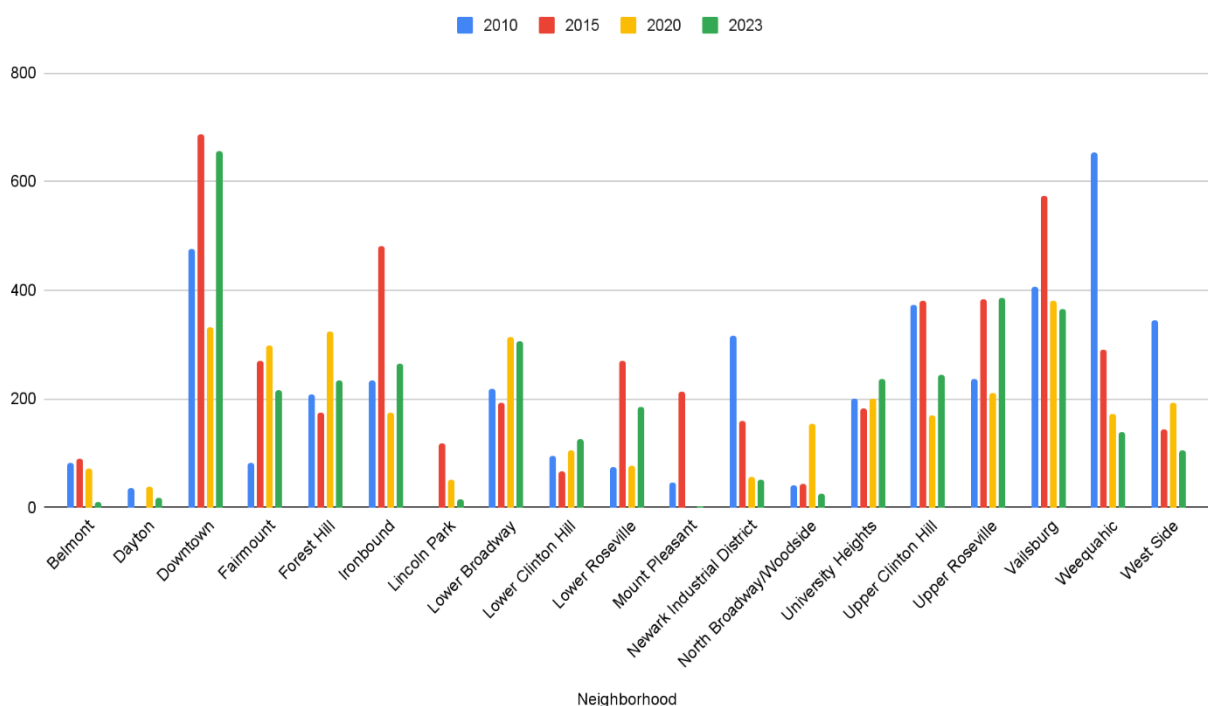
This trend may suggest that Downtown is becoming increasingly attractive to more mobile, often higher-income individuals relocating from out of state, reinforcing its role as a focal point in Newark’s ongoing transformation.

People moving from other states and from other counties in New Jersey are most likely to settle in the Central Ward. The South Ward used to attract more movers from other states, but the numbers have declined steadily during the study period. The East Ward has the fewest in-movers from other states.

Moved From Different State (By Ward)



Moved From Different State (By Neighborhood)

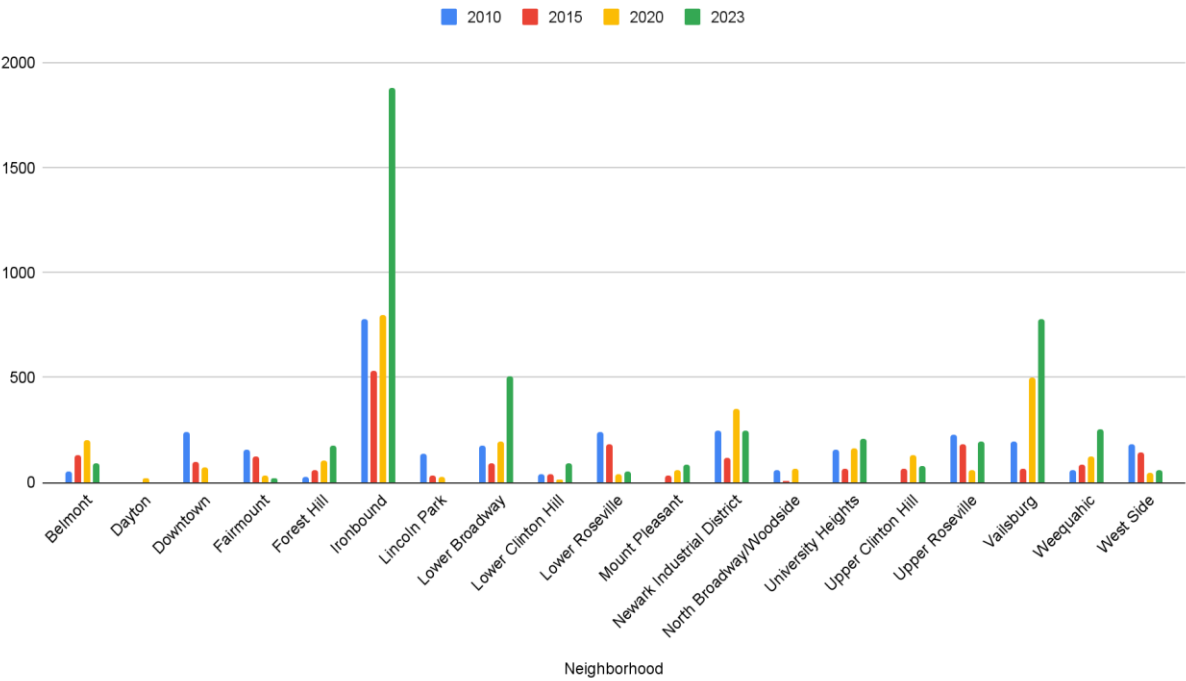


Moves to Newark from Abroad. The most common Newark destination for international arrivals, by far, is the Ironbound with its longstanding role as a gateway for immigrant communities, offering affordable housing, proximity to transit, and established ethnic networks. In 2023 alone, over 2,000 international movers settled in the East Ward, with more than 1,800 specifically in Ironbound. The foreign-born population in Ironbound grew from 22,361 in 2010 to 30,229 in 2023. Still, Ironbound's role as a receiving neighborhood is increasingly complicated by rising rents and dense new development, which threaten the very affordability and stability that attract immigrants in the first place.

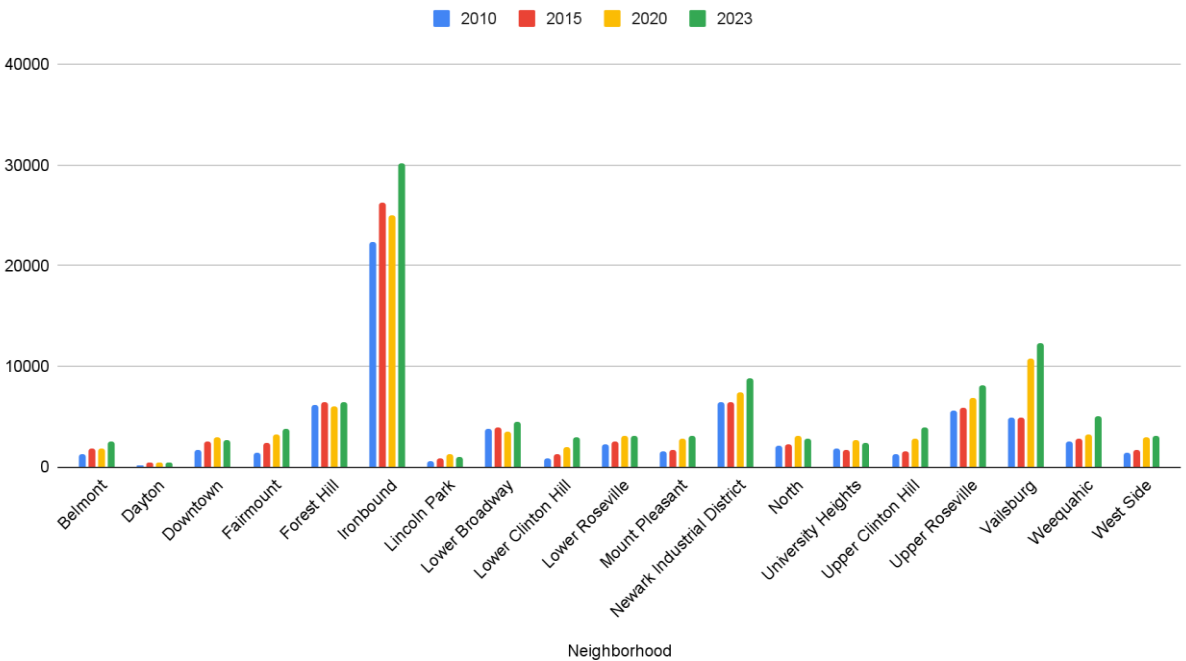


Meanwhile, Vailsburg is emerging as a new destination for foreign-born residents, signaling a potential shift in Newark’s immigrant geography. Vailsburg’s foreign population nearly tripled from 4,898 to 12,256 in the same period. These shifts point to a growing need for culturally responsive services and equitable, stable housing policies that prevent displacement of both new and long-term residents.

Moved From Abroad (By Neighborhood)



Foreign-Born Population (By Neighborhood)



Outflows

The data on where Newark residents go when they leave is more limited. By far the most popular destinations are in New Jersey. Those Newarkers who leave the state most often go to Florida, New York and Pennsylvania.

Black Outflows by State (Top 10):

State	total_outflow
New Jersey	6230
Florida	438
New York	436
Pennsylvania	244
Georgia	239
Connecticut	125
Virginia	91
North Carolina	79
South Carolina	77
Texas	69

White Outflows by State (Top 10):

State	total_outflow
New Jersey	6131
New York	834
Florida	463
Pennsylvania	248
North Carolina	168
Maryland	165
Massachusetts	157
Virginia	142
California	113
Texas	91

Conclusion

The 2023 update to Newark's Displacement Risk Indicators Matrix (D.R.I.M.) paints a sobering picture of intensifying housing pressures, growing inequality, and early signals of neighborhood transformation. While income levels and educational attainment have risen in parts of the city, these gains have not kept pace with the rapid escalation in housing costs. Across Newark, rents and home values have surged, affordability has deteriorated, and development activity has accelerated in ways that disproportionately impact low-income renters. The East and Central Wards, in particular, are becoming increasingly unaffordable, with historically disinvested neighborhoods like Ironbound, University Heights, and Lower Broadway experiencing steep increases in both rent and new residential development. Simultaneously, the South and West Wards continue to face deeply entrenched economic vulnerability, with high poverty rates and extreme rent burdens persisting despite rising median incomes citywide.

Taken together, these trends point to a widening affordability gap and a growing risk of displacement for long-time residents, particularly those in lower-income Black and Hispanic communities. The influx of higher-income and college-educated residents in certain neighborhoods, coupled with the increase of high-rent units and owner-inaccessibility, suggests Newark is entering a period of significant transition.

Newark has the opportunity to chart a more equitable future, one that preserves affordability, protects vulnerable renters, and centers community voices in development decisions. The D.R.I.M. is designed as a tool to support that vision. *By making risk visible*, it empowers policymakers, organizers, and residents alike to take informed and targeted action to resist displacement and build a city that works for all Newarkers.

